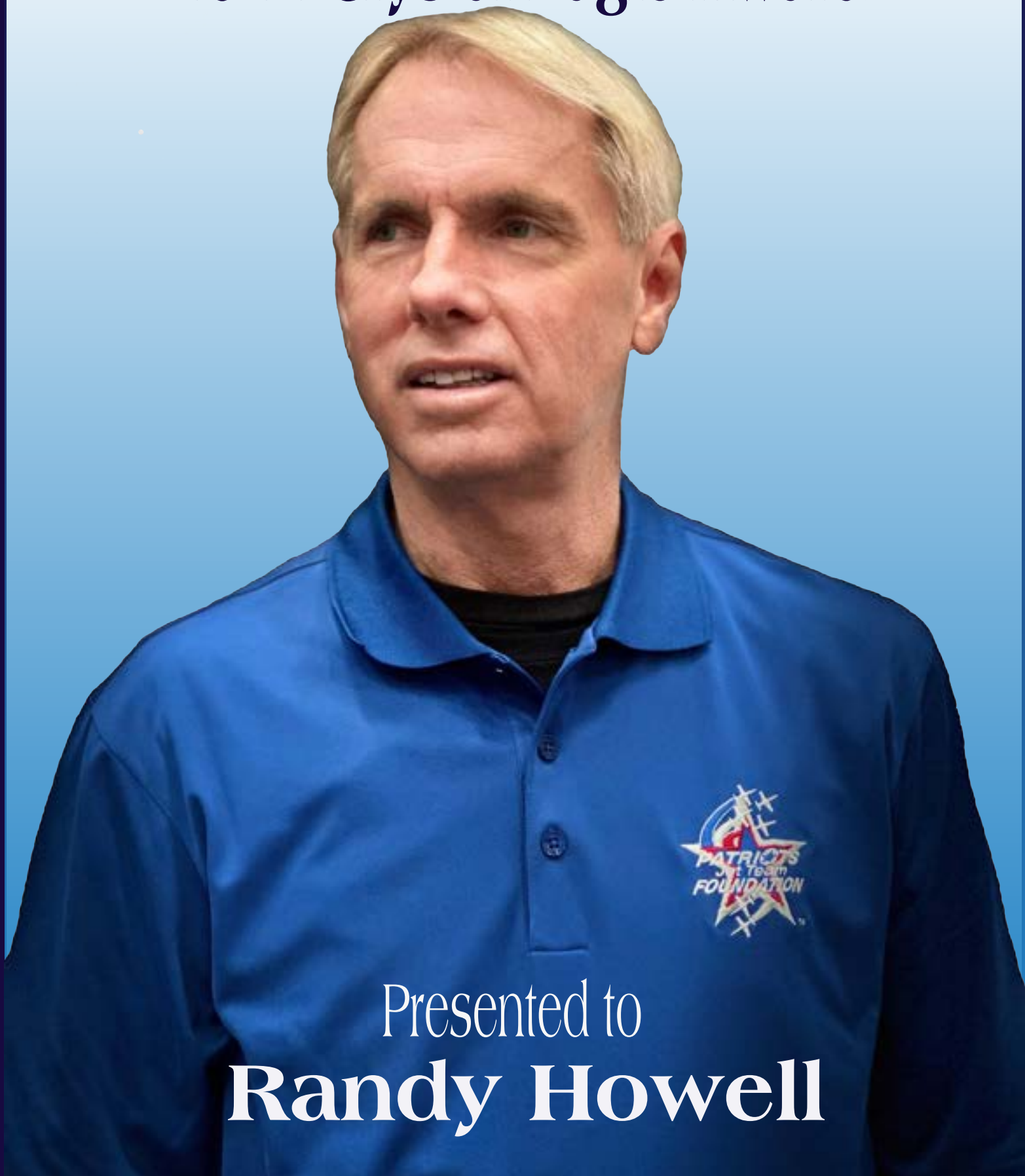


# The Aero Club of Northern California 2022 Crystal Eagle Award



Presented to  
**Randy Howell**



### **Randy “Howler” Howell**

Randy Howell, the Patriots Jet Team founder/owner, has more than 26,000 hours of flight time including more than 30 years of airline flying with United Airlines. In addition to a B747 Captain, Randy has been an advanced instructor in

aerobatics, formation, Upset Prevention and Recovery Training (UPRT) as well as a Check Airman and Simulator Instructor in a multitude of Airliners and Warbirds. This vast experience in the training world combined with his Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Florida fuels his passion to make the corporate, airline and aviation filming industry a safer and more educated environment.

Randy has flown air shows for 24 years and raced in three different classes at the Reno Air Races. He holds an ATP with 24 type ratings from MiG fighters to the Boeing 747. He also holds an unlimited surface formation aerobatic air show waiver in four jet aircraft and a motion picture movie waiver.

With a passion for aviation since childhood, it became Randy’s mission to create a six-jet precision demonstration team that would inspire, entertain, and educate aviation enthusiasts. In 2003 he started the Patriots Jet Team, the only civilian owned 6-ship precision, aerobatic formation demonstration team in the world.

Dedicated to improving safety in the aviation industry, in 2008 Randy started the Patriots Jet Team UPRT Program. With his many years of expertise in aerobatic formation flying, Flight and SIM instructor, as well as Check Airman in a variety of transport category aircraft, he brings a tremendous amount of experience for UPRT to the airline and corporate

aviation community.

Over the years Randy has been asked to work on a multitude of formation air-to-air photo shoots including a 12-episode series with Discovery Channel Canada. His many years of expertise in aerobatic formation flying in a variety of airplanes, brings a tremendous amount of experience to any aviation film team for any motion picture project.

Most recently Randy was instrumental in the design, development, build and flight testing of the Cinejet, the most advanced high-speed aerial movie shooting platform to date. The Cinejet was designed for air to air filming of TV commercials and feature film movies. The Cinejet was the platform used to film the air-to-air aerial sequences of the recent blockbuster movie “Top Gun Maverick” and new yet to be released movie “Devotion”. In addition, Randy flew as a Stunt Pilot for “Top Gun Maverick” and was the Aerial Safety Consultant for both movies “Top Gun Maverick” and “Devotion”.

The accomplishment that Randy is most proud of is the Patriots Jet Team Foundation, an all volunteer, non-profit 501 c (3) which he founded in 2011. The Foundation enhances the lives of students by offering them experiences that are both valuable and life changing. It is dedicated to get middle and high school students excited about aviation, space and STEM subjects and careers through its school outreach programs, learning center activities, mentorship, and scholarships. It engages about 4,000 students annually across the San Francisco East Bay and Central Valley. The Foundation has also partnered with other STEM based Foundations, as well as public, private, charter and University school programs.



# National Aero Club Association 2022 Awardees



## **Julie and Pat Belanger**

It was 1994, Pat Belanger, fighter pilot with the Fresno ANG and airline pilot with thousands of PIC hours shared an idea with his wife, Julie, who is also a pilot. Why don't we start an aerial photography business? Julie remembers that "I thought it was the stupidest idea I had ever heard." And one more thought, "What would my mother think?" She needn't have worried on that front, her mother was the famous Flying Lady, Jan Perch, who, with Julie's dad, built *The Flying Lady Restaurant and Museum* in Morgan Hill, California.

They borrowed Jan's airplane, a 1969 Cessna 182 that Jan bought new from the factory, borrowed a friend's camera, and took off to see if they could actually do aerial photography. At first, Julie did the flying and Pat was going to take the pictures, but after enduring a bit of criticism about her flying from Pat, Julie said, "You fly, and I'll take the pretty pictures." That was the magic moment that it all literally clicked and their business, The 111th Aerial Photography Squadron, began.

Nearly 30 years later, they are still taking pretty pictures but have added an impressive client list that boasts some of the biggest names in Silicon Valley business, construction, and commercial real estate. They were hired to document the construction progress of the Apple Campus, Levi's Stadium, and the Chase Center and are currently photographing Google's newest buildings and the High-Speed Rail as it makes its snail-paced trek through the Central Valley., all while still flying Julie's mother's 182!

Aerial photography from an airplane, though, has become a dying art with a dwindling number of airborne photographers. Where it had once been a

way for pilots to make gas money for their expensive flying habit, drones have now taken the lion's share of the customers needing low altitude views such as residential real estate. Now, anyone with a few hundred dollars to buy a drone can be an aerial photographer, but only up to 400 feet as mandated by the FAA. This restriction plus other limitations -including not flying after dark or near an airport- has left the rest of the airspace open for Julie and Pat and their company to thrive. And it is not the first time technology seemed to spell doom and gloom for the aerial photography business. Google Earth opened up endless aerial views for free, but when it was shown that the imagery was not often updated, The 111th would get the call.

Their daughter, Niki, also a pilot, joined The 111th team, perfecting the very rare art of night aerial photography. Niki now works full time for AOPA, but will still fly along when her specialty is required.

Both Julie and Pat have served as President of the Professional Aerial Photographers Association International, and Julie continues as the Senior Executive Director of the organization. Niki organized the very successful Food Truck Fly-In at South County Airport to help encourage support and an appreciation for the airport from the neighboring community. And both Pat and Niki are on the Board of the San Martin Airplane and Pilots Association.

Julie and Pat created a long-lasting, aviation-based business that continues to let them do what they love.

## James M. Nissen Scholarship



James (Jim) M. Nissen (1915-1994) was born in Livermore, California. In 1937, after receiving his engineering degree at the University of California at Berkeley, he was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Navy, and later became a naval aviator and flew various military aircraft including the PBY Catalina. He briefly flew trans-Pacific seaplanes for Pan American Airways before accepting a research test pilot position in 1941 with Ames Research Center at Moffett Field known as National Advisory Committee on Aviation (NACA), now NASA. In 1945 he joined North American Aviation as a test pilot. At the same time, with two partners, he founded an aviation company and developed 16.4 acres of land leased from the city of San Jose, creating a small airport. In 1946 he sold his share of the business and was hired by the city of San Jose as its first Airport Manager. Over the next 29 years (1946-1975) he developed the small airfield into the Bay Area's third major jetport--Mineta San Jose International Airport (SJC). At the time of his retirement as Director of Aviation, SJC had achieved national status with service to every major U.S. destination city, including non-stop flights coast-to-coast and service to Hawaii. The airport at the time was also home to more than 600 general aviation and corporate aircraft. The \$1.3 billion dollar Terminal B at SJC, which opened in 2010, is named the James M. Nissen Terminal Complex. Mr. Nissen was a past member of the Aero Club Board of Directors. This endowed scholarship was funded by a contribution from Sallie (Nissen) Moran.

Joseph Edwards is a current San Jose State University student studying Aviation with a professional flight concentration. Joseph was inspired to pursue aviation when at the young age of ten, he saw the film Kiki's Delivery Service. That started him on an effort to turn his mountain bike into a pedal powered helicopter, which ultimately led him to pursue his dream job of professional flight through SJSU. Joseph is currently one cross-country flight and a check ride away from obtaining his instrument ticket. He also has a commercial Unmanned Aerial Systems Certificate which he uses, with his drone, to capture real estate photos.

His longterm goal is to fly for one of the airlines. In the mean time he is looking into flight instructing, aircraft delivery, air tours, jump pilot, banner towing and crop dusting. Basically anything with wings. We wish him good fortune!



Joseph Edwards

## Robert L. Hamilton Scholarship



Robert (Bob) L. Hamilton (1936-2002) was born in Hanford, California. In 1954 he joined the United States Army and was initially trained in helicopter maintenance. After a tour in Germany, he was accepted into the Army helicopter pilot program and following his training served two tours in Vietnam as a rescue helicopter pilot. He was awarded the prestigious Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Stars, and 30 Air Medals. In 1986, he was inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame at Fort Rucker, Alabama. While most of his 6,300 flight hours were in helicopters, he also piloted fixed-wing aircraft and flew professionally for several companies in the San Jose area. Many of his flight hours were in the large twin-rotor Chinook CH-47 -- the first helicopter to utilize fly-by-wire flight controls systems. Mr. Hamilton was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. Mr. Hamilton was a past officer and member of the Aero Club Board of Directors. Funds for this scholarship were donated by a very close friend of the Hamilton family at the time of Mr. Hamilton's death.

William is current an Aviation student at San Jose State University. He began his flight training in February 2021 and has since obtained his ASEL Private certificate and his IFR rating with the checkride for his Commercial certificate quickly approaching. William is active in the SJSU chapter of Alpha Eta Rho, where he has met many similarly minded peers. He currently works at NASA ASRS which has provided additional insight into the field of aviation. Once William has his CFI, he expects to give back to other SJSU students by teaching at the Flying 20's. After accumulating enough hours, he plans to apply to SkyWest Airlines where he will continue his drive to be the best he can be. From there he hopes to fly for United Airlines or Southwest Airlines.

This scholarship will allow him to complete his commercial training.

William Longthorne



# Scholarships

## Thomas E. Leonard Scholarship



Thomas (Tom) E. Leonard (1922-2016) was born in San Francisco, California. Tom attended California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) in San Luis Obispo. But, the onset of WW2 interrupted his college education. During the war years, Tom worked for Pan Am at Treasure Island and served in the U.S. Army Air Corps. After the War, Tom returned to Cal Poly and completed his degree in Aeronautical Engineering. Although he intended to rejoin Pan Am after graduation in 1946, Tom accepted an invitation to teach for one year at San Jose State College. He soon discovered that he loved teaching and his one-year commitment ended up lasting more than four decades. By 1950, he had become the Department Chairman of the Aeronautics program. He developed the first four-year college-level aeronautics program at San Jose State,

secured an FAA Air Agency Certificate authorizing the college to operate an approved Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) program in 1954 and completed his Master's degree in Education in 1956. As the school curriculum expanded, so did the need for facilities. He successfully negotiated a 50-year land lease to build a state-of-the-art off-campus facility on San Jose Airport. The new on-airport facility was completed in 1962 and became a flagship aviation program in California. By the 1980's, enrollment exceeded 800 students majoring in aircraft maintenance, flight operations and administration. Tom retired from SJSU in 1985, but continued to teach part-time until 1994. Mr. Leonard was a past president and a long-time member of the Aero Club Board of Directors. Funds for this scholarship have been contributed by many of the thousands whose lives were touched by this unique man.

**John Borden IV is a SJSU Aviation Student. His love for aviation was discovered after his mother, an Alaska Airlines Flight Attendant, recommended that he take a discovery flight near their home in southern California. After completing that flight, John exclaimed to his father "Dad, yeah... that's what I'm going to do for the rest of my life." He then set about figuring out how to make that happen. After graduating from high school, John enrolled at SJSU where he quickly joined the San Jose Precision Flight Team, Alpha Eta Rho, Women in Aviation and the Theta Chi Social Fraternity. In between all of his classwork and social engagements, John works as a ramp agent for Airport Terminal Services and at NASA's Aviation Safety and Reporting Systems.**

**John has an interest in aviation and environmental change and the effects that avgas has on the environment.**

**His longterm goal is to fly for United Airlines.**

**John Borden IV**



## Changing the World Scholarship

**Tram Do**



Tram is living the concept of Changing the World. As a young girl growing up in Vietnam, she watched planes overhead with a feeling of awe and amazement. It was there that she decided to become an airline pilot, but it wasn't for many more years before, on her birthday in 2019, that she took her first flight at Reid-Hillview Airport. Tram has since started her flight training and is currently working on her Private certificate at Squadron 2. Tram has found a great deal of support in the SJSU chapter of Women in Aviation club where she currently serves as the Vice President. In that role, Tram aspires to inspire young people to follow their dreams. In addition, Tram works with 5th grade students teaching them to code through a program sponsored by College Corps. She also volunteers with the Spartan Food Pantry, a program designed to address food insecurity among SJSU students.

Tram's long term goal is to become a pilot, but more importantly she strives to be a part of something greater than herself where she can inspire and support others to follow their dreams. Talk about changing the world!

## Randy Howell

## Crystal Eagle Award Recipients



- 2022: Randy Howell
- 2021: no award (covid)
- 2020: no award (covid)
- 2019: Patty Wagstaff
- 2018: Barry Schiff
- 2017: John and Martha King
- 2016: Steve Hinton
- 2015: Alan Eustace
- 2014: Prof. Thomas Leonard
- 2013: Rod Machado
- 2012: Julie Clark
- 2011: Clarence E. "Bud" Anderson
- 2010: Brian Shul
- 2009: Mike Melvill
- 2008: Phil Boyer
- 2007: Steve Fossett
- 2006: Sean D. Tucker
- 2005: Eileen Marie Collins
- 2004: Elgen M. Long
- 2003: Clay Lacy
- 2002: A. Scott Crossfield
- 2001: Igor I. Sikorsky
- 2000: Wayne Handley
- 1999: Paul H. Poberezny
- 1998: Donald D. Engen
- 1997: Robert L. "Hoot" Gibson
- 1996: Darryl G. Greenamyer
- 1995: James S. Ricklefs
- 1994: Frank L. Christensen
- 1993: Robert T. Jones
- 1992: Jeana Yeager
- 1991: Allen E. Paulson
- 1990: George S. Cooper
- 1989: Elbert "Burt" L. Rutan
- 1988: Anthony W. "Tony" LeVier
- 1987: James M. "Jim" Nissen
- 1986: William "Bill" Lear, Sr.
- 1985: Stanley Hiller, Jr
- 1984: Brigadier General Charles E. "Chuck" Yeager
- 1983: General James "Jimmy" Doolittle



The Aero Club of Northern California  
**Thirty-Eighth Annual Awards Banquet**  
 Hiller Aviation Museum  
 November 12, 2022

Welcome and Introduction of Aero Club Board and Guests .....		Pamela Svrclin
Aero Club Scholarship Awards Presentations		
James M. Nissen Sr. Scholarship	Joseph Edwards .....	Michelle Tripp
Robert L. Hamilton Scholarship	William Longthorne .....	Richard Bandy
Thomas E. Leonard Scholarship	John Borden IV .....	Edger Mora
Changing the World	Tram Do .....	Wendy Hales Mora

**DINNER**

Aero Club - NAA Awards .....		Walt Gyger
Julie & Pat Belanger		

Silent Auction End

Crystal Eagle Recipient Introduction .....		Pamela Svrclin
Guest Speaker .....		Randy Howell
Crystal Eagle Award Presentation .....		Pamela Svrclin

## The Crystal Eagle Award

### The Crystal Eagle:

#### A distinctive work of art

The Crystal Eagle Award is a unique work of art handcrafted in Italy of the finest crystal.

It is fitting that the eagle should be the symbol for the Aero Club's annual award. The North American eagle is recognized as a bird possessing great strength, natural grace, keenness of vision and power in flight. The eagle has historically been used by man to identify with flying.

The Crystal Eagle is mounted on a California redwood base, unique to Northern California. In its natural state, redwood has unusual durability, commensurate with the recipients of this coveted award.

The Crystal Eagle Award is presented annually by the Aero Club of Northern California to recognize an individual whose accomplishments have significantly contributed to the advancement of aviation or space technology.



## Our Special Thanks to:



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## About Our Club

The Aero Club of Northern California was formed to promote activities which advance aviation and aerospace within Northern California.

We are a regional affiliate club of NAA, the National Aeronautic Association, which having been founded in 1905 as the Aero Club of America is the oldest independent, non-profit aviation organization in the United States, and the sole U.S. representative to the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI).

So central to aviation was the Aero Club that until 1926 it issued all pilot licenses in the United States.

The first five pilot licenses issued by the Aero Club were: 1) Glen H. Curtiss, 2) Lt. Frank P. Lahm, 3) Louis Paulham, 4) Orville Wright, and 5) Wilbur Wright. Until 1926, all other pilot licenses issued in the United States subsequent to these five were issued by the Aero Club of America.

We embrace the goals of our parent organization in our efforts to support a vigorous aviation and space program for students at all levels of learning, and to recognize and honor those who have made outstanding contributions to the advancement of aviation and space flight.

## Donate

Use this QR code to make a tax deductible donation to our Scholarship Program.



## About Our Logo

Incorporated in the logo of The Aero Club of Northern California are some of the most significant contributions the Northern California area has made to the art and science of flight.



*Montgomery Flight - 1904*

Often referred to as "*The Father of Basic Flying*" Dr. John Montgomery was a true aviation pioneer. San Jose was the site of many of his historic achievements. Alexander Graham Bell noted that, "All subsequent attempts in aviation must begin with the Montgomery Machine."



*Moffett Field - 1933*

Dedicated April 12, 1933, Moffett Field was the United States guardian of the Pacific. It continues to be a major aviation facility supporting federal, military and private operations.



*China Clipper - 1935*

Lifting from San Francisco Bay waters on November 22, 1935, the Clipper became the first airplane to fly the Pacific non-stop. Cutting over 15 days off the best surface time from San Francisco to Manila, it led to the elimination of the barriers of space and time.



*NASA Ames Research Center - 1939*

Northern California's continued contributions to the quest for our ultimate destiny is assured by the ongoing advancements in aerospace science and technology at NASA's Ames Research Center.



