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Stan The Man

by JOSH RITTENBERRY



When this writer began traveling the convention circuit fifteen years ago, there was no one better to introduce me to the world of networking with vendors and customers than Stan Hunter. “Stan’s the man,” everyone would say. “Stan is always good to travel with.”

After that first convention and the many more that have come after it, Stan and I got to know each other better, making small talk on the airport tarmac and during breaks at conventions. It was at those moments I began to piece together Stan’s experiences and all that he had accomplished. While interviewing him for this article, I learned a few more things I didn’t know during our small talks. And now it’s time you hear about them, too.

Stanley Hunter was born one of eight children to a family of farmers in Van Wert County in northwest Ohio. Farming was hard, gritty work. On



a piece of land used to raise cows, sheep and hogs, Stan was introduced to aviation at an early age when his uncle landed his Cessna 140 and Cessna 170 on the farm strip.

As the years went by, Stan traded farm life for work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. Through the conservation service, he was offered the chance to further his education at Tri-State College, where he entered the engineering program. Throughout the

seven years he attended college, Stan had an opportunity to take flying lessons, notably in a J3 Cub, which was used to obtain his commercial license years later.

Like many who had come of age or were starting to make their path in life at that time in the late 1960s, Stan was drafted during the Vietnam War in his final year of college at the age of 27. Trained as a swimmer for the army, Stan took part in Underwater Demolition Team training. These "frogmen" were amphibious units established during WWII. In Vietnam, the units carried out surveys of South Vietnam's coastal waters and reconnaissance missions often while under fire. Stan was fortunate not to be led into harm's way, benefiting from the U.S. Department of Defense's Sole Survivor Policy. Because he already had two brothers who were in combat zones at the time, Stan was instead based at the deep water harbor of Charlotte Amelie in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

After his time abroad, Stan returned stateside when he was transferred to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Louisville, Kentucky. During his time of military service, he had earned his commercial pilot license and his CFI rating. Post-service, he became part owner of an FBO in Fort Wayne, Indiana. While in Fort Wayne, he gave flying lessons, chartered cargo and acquired his A&P mechanic license. Soon, he was able to buy out his partner and became full owner of the FBO.



Stan eventually said goodbye to the FBO after securing a job as a pilot with Eastern Airlines, running up and down the U.S. eastern seaboard and South America, based out of Miami for 14 years. While on leave from the airline, he took ag training in Beloit, Kansas where he not only trained but also taught other pilots and did maintenance on the school's trainers.

After Eastern Airlines was sold, Stan had completed ag training, started his own spray business in Litchfield, Kentucky. He then went to work for Britt Airways. He certainly had a friend in airline owner Bill Britt, who, himself, had been a scrappy crop duster from Mississippi in his early years.

As if he didn't have enough responsibilities, Stan decided to buy another FBO in Mayfield, Kentucky, which he ran with the help of his wife Jean for the better part of 15 years.

Stan's next endeavor brought him out of the skies and down to earth. With his brother unable to continue his trucking business, Stan began running the business and running big rigs all over the map, hauling aluminum and then entire households under a contract with Mayflower Movers.

Once the contracts had been exhausted, Stan had every intention to slow down and retire, but fate had other plans. It was while running the Mayfield FBO that Stan first met Dick



Reade. Dick would often deliver Ag Cats across the mid-south region and stop at Stan's airport for just enough fuel to make it back to Hayti, Missouri. Before he knew it, Stan had bought six Ag Cats from Dick. Years later, while trying to get a regional association started to benefit Kentucky operators, Stan had ongoing conversations with Dick, who managed to convince him to come to work for Mid-Continent.

"Dick knew I was a mechanic, instructor and was in the ag business," Stan says. "It was a new opportunity and an intriguing one, so I took it."

In April 1997 Stan began his career here at Mid-Continent, with a great deal of emphasis on Cessnas as Mid-Continent had recently become a Cessna dealer. Borrowing from his ag career, ag airplanes were also an area of strength for Stan.

"I remember when Ag airplanes cost \$15,000, and now new models are easily over \$1 million."

Stan has a great appreciation for the opportunity to work for Mid-Continent, a one stop shop for all aviation. His time here has not been limited to only domestic customers; Stan has built strong relationships with airplane buyers in South America, Canada, Israel and Africa.

"Aviation is a good vocation for young people because the industry is always growing and evolving" Stan says. "The pilot shortage is worrisome, so I encourage people to jump at the chance to take lessons and learn to fly. But the future of aviation is growing by leaps and bounds, and I am optimistic."

When he is not busy selling airplanes, Stan—who is type rated in four different airplanes—still instructs and gives flight reviews. With all that he has accomplished, all that continues to keep him busy, and after having just turned 80 years old this past September, this writer can say with sure certainty that Stan is still "the man."


The logo for the NAAA AG Aviation Expo features a stylized city skyline with colorful buildings. Above the skyline, the text "100 Years of Aerial Application" is written, with "100" in large orange numbers. Below the skyline, the text "NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL AVIATION ASSOCIATION" is written in a smaller font, followed by "AG AVIATION EXPO" in large, bold, dark blue letters. At the bottom, "SAVANNAH, GA" is written in a smaller font. The date "December 6-9, 2021" is displayed in orange text at the bottom of the graphic.

NAAA AG AVIATION EXPO

December 6-9, 2021

Mid-Continent Donates Ag Aviation Books

To mark 100 years of aerial application Mid-Continent was proud to donate two copies of *Agriculture's Air Force: 100 Years of Aerial Application* to the Caruthersville Public Library and the Conran Memorial Library in Hayti, MO. We hope these publications, which feature Mid-Continent and Dick Reade's role in the history of Ag Aviation, will inspire others in the area to take up an interest in Ag Aviation.



Pictured L-R: Chris Cobb, Caruthersville Librarian Teresa Tidwell, and Josh Rittenberry



Pictured L-R: Laurie Curtis, Hayti Librarian Amy Boone, and Heather Riggs

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N61481**

10,300 A/F TT, P&W 750 HP, Bantam GPS, New Left and Right Landing Gears, New Tail Spring 2300.0 TT on Wings Since New Wing Spar ADs



**1989 AIR TRACTOR AT-
402
N1012B**

13,025 A/F TT, Left & Right Bottom Load Fuel, Left & Right Loader Value, Flow Control, Vortex Generator, Heat & A/C, Aluminum Boom, Satloc GPS

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**1978 AYRES S2R-600
N4001X**

13,066.9 A/F TT, 6365 TT Engine, 2679.8 TSOH, 750 HP, Bantam GPS, Smoker, Bottom Load Fuel, Vortex Generators (Micro), 190 Gallon Fuel, Wing Extension Installed, Weatherly Tail, Zee A/C & Heat

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**1978 AYRES S2R-T34
N4009J**

19,811.85 A/F TT, 750 HP, Smoker, Vortex Generators, Single Point Fuel, Aileron Servo, Winglet, Zee A/C, 500 Gallon Hopper, 190 Gallon Fuel, 12,173.9 TT Wing Spars Replaced

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**197878 PIPER PAWNEE
BRAVE
N3787E**

45,950 A/F TT, Lycoming TIO-540, 1851.0 TT Engine, 446 Hrs on New Carbine, Cylinders Top OH, Spreader, Boom & Nozzles, 86 Gal Fuel, Satlock GPS, 3656 Hrs Left on Wing Spars

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**2011 AVIAT HUSKY
A-1C-180
N61WY**

1595 Since Factory New, Low Time Two Owner, 819.7 Useful Load, 150 Since Factory New MTV Three-Blade Propeller, Becker 720 Channel Com, Becker Transponder with Encoder, Garmin 560 GPS, ADS-B In/Out, Electronics International Digital Manifold Pressure EGT/CHT, EI Digital Tachometer, EI Digital Oil Pressure and Oil/Temp, Wing Tip Strokes, Landing Light, Front and Rear Seat Heat, 2 Place Intercom, Pilot/Co-Pilot PTT Switches, Extended Landing Gear, Rear Extended Baggage, Micro Dynamics Vortex Generators, 31-Inch Alaskan Bush Wheels, Alaskan Bush Tail Wheel, Like New Interior with Two Tan Fabric Seats.



**2013 THRUSH S2R-H80
N3046N**

3,600 A/F TT, 800 HP, Load Hawg, VGs, Bottom Fuel/Dual Load, Intelliflow with Smart Pump, Leading Edge Lights, Stainless Steel Booms, Hopper Rinse, Bantam, Smoker, Spreader with Kicker Plate, CPs, MVP 50T Glass Panel

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**1981 CESSNA A185F
N61955**

7300 A/F TT, 770 SFRM, Continental IO520, 285 HP, Audio Panel w/ 3 Light Markers, Garmin 430 WAAS, Garmin 255 Com, Garmin GTX 345 w/ ADSM In and Out, Glide Slope, Stormscope, S-TEC-50 Auto Pilot with Altitude Hold, Rosen Sun Visors, VG Kit, Horton STOL Kit, Float Kit, Cessna Turbo Vents for Cabin Cooling, Backup Altimeter, Backup Artificial Horizon

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1996 THRUSH S2R-G1



2010 Dream Tundra,



1983 AIR TRACTOR AT-

N2237D

9688.0.0 A/F TT, Hatfield Bottom Load Fuel, A/C, Vortex Generators, New Satlock Bantam, Flow Control, Stainless Steel Spray System, AFS Check Valves, CP Nozzles, Agrinautics Pump, Lane Electric Brake, Aircraft Radios, Fresh Eddie Current, Spar Caps 3220 of 6,200 Hour Life

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**1998 Air Tractor AT-802A
N5094H**

12,152.6 A/F TT, 1230 HP, 2000 SPOH, Reabe Digital Hopper, Quantity & Spray Boom Pressure, E-TEC Inc Fast Start System, Comm Radio, Hemisphere G4 GPS, RT Side Boom Shut Off, Smoker, Hydraulic Gate, Air Conditioner, Wipaire Vortex Generators, Wingman Wing Due at 15,823.2, Gear Due at 12,798.2, Eyebolt Stabilizer Due at 14,798.2, 4479.7 Hobbs

[More info](#)

N523MM

90.0 A/F TT, Aerosport IO375 210 HP, PMA-8000B Switching Panel with 4 Place Intercom and Three Light Markers, Garmin SL-40 Com, Garmin 430 GPS, Garmin GTX-330 Transponder, Garmin 496 GPS (Panel Mounted), Digiflight II Autopilot w/ Altitude Hold, PFD/MFD

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**1988 AIR TRACTOR AT-301
N69WN**

8,900 A/F TT, 600 HP, 530.0 SPOH, 320 Gallong Hopper, Ag Pilot X GPS, Flow Control, Smoker, Stainless Steel Boom, Air Conditioner, VGs, Lane Electric Brake, Botton Load Fuel, 25-Inch Gate, 2 Each Spreaders

[More info](#)

301**N31580**

9679.2 A/F TT, 600 HP, 550 Engine TT, 350 Gallon Hopper, Bantam GPS W/ G4, Light Bar, Intelliflow, Stainless Steel Boom, Nozzles CP-03, Smoker, A/C, Bottom Load Fuel, New Side Windows

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**1997 Ayres, S2R-G10
N773CC**

6500.0 A/F TT, 400.0 SPOH, Cool Start System, Hatfield Single Point Fueling, ATS-VGs, Ag-Tips-Marburger, Kawak Hydraulic System, Satloc, G4, Load Hawg

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Mid-Continent Aircraft Corp. is located in Hayti, Missouri, 80 miles north of Memphis, Tennessee. Although Hayti is not the geographical center of our nation, Mid-Continent is the center for all ag aviation needs. With excellent daily truck freight lines, air freight, Federal Express, and UPS delivery capability, MID-CONTINENT has and will continue to cover the world.