

Robert "Bob" Bushby - the designer of the Mustang II

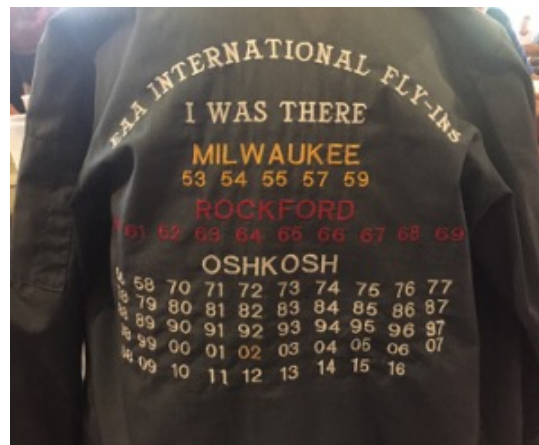
Robert "Bob" Bushby Autobiography - used with permission

My airplane interests started in grade school as a model airplane builder, usually rubber band powered models. Aviation has always been my hobby, even to this day. My first airplane ride, at age ten was in a Ford Trimotor and my second ride was in a Stinson SR-5. My family moved to rural Minooka, IL in 1941. Attending high school in Minooka was very compatible with my desire to fly. As a High School junior I would skip classes in the afternoon, hitch hike eight miles to the Joliet airport for a flying lesson and arrive home at the time I usually arrived home from school. My first solo flight was in a J-3 Cub in 1943 and I graduated from high school in 1944. I earned money for flying lessons working for neighboring farmers at \$3.00 per day. Not much by today's standard, but Cub rental was only \$6 per hour. I obtained my Private Pilot license in 1945.



I attended the University of Wisconsin a short time prior to military service, which consisted of aircraft maintenance school at Keesler Field in Biloxi, MS, followed by time on Guam in the 4th Emergency Rescue Squadron as a B-17 flight engineer. In 1948 I graduated from the Lewis College in Lockport, IL aircraft maintenance course as an A&E mechanic. I added the IA rating to that certificate when that program became available. I am still active in aircraft maintenance. In 1948 I established the Bushby Restricted Landing Area (RLA) on the family farm. This "RLA" is still in operation. During the 50's and 60's this was a mecca for the local aerobatic fliers. A good weekend would often find three or four Clip Wing Cubs, Pitts and other aerobatic types. It was of interest to observe the evolution of the Pete Meyer Clip Wing Cub to the highly modified aircraft it is today as displayed in the EAA Museum.

I joined the EAA [Experimental Aircraft Association] in January, 1953 at the inaugural meeting. I had attended previous meetings at the Curtis Wright airport after seeing a notice by Paul Poberezny in the Popular Aviation / Flying magazine. My EAA number is 26 and my Technical Counselor number is 20. I have attended every EAA national convention - 1953 through 2016.



I attended the first Oshkosh convention in 1956 - flying a Cessna 195 from Joliet, IL. I have had Homebuilt aircraft at EAA National Conventions continuously from 1960 to 1992, at which time I terminated my Mustang business. My prototype M-II, N1117M still attends with the new owner.

The FAA pre-cover inspection of the first wing of my prototype Midget Mustang was January, 1953. Completion was not until 1959 due to employment changes and time spent in San Antonio, TX where six Midget Mustang aircraft were built. The FAA inspector's statement after inspecting the wing that I was constructing was discouraging. He asked if I planned to obtain a type certificate for the plane - if not, I would not be permitted to fly it. Fortunately, the EAA has been able to change this policy and this is no longer a problem.

I closed my aircraft maintenance shop in 1953 for a short session in San Antonio, TX to build Midget Mustangs. Six aircraft were built there in 1954 and 1955. My "prototype" Midget Mustang N35J has a unique history - it was the first of six built in San Antonio.



It was severely damaged in a 1966 accident in Iowa. I used parts from N35J to complete my Mustang, and as registration would be the same, I used that number on my plane. The FAA had cancelled that registration and I changed it to N15J. Pictures of N35J and N15J are of the same airplane.

After returning from San Antonio in 1955, and knowing that full-time employment is needed to support my aviation hobby, I went to work for Sinclair Oil Co. engine research laboratory, continuing the Mustang business as a part-time venture. Following three years of design and construction, the first flight of my two-place Mustang II was in July, 1966.



I picked registration number N1117M as it was easy to paint. To get familiar with control response since I had been flying an Ercoupe the previous three years, I may have carried the "high speed taxi" to extreme. My grass airstrip is 1900 ft. long. The procedure was to take-off,

maintain three feet for a few hundred feet, then land. Then repeat the process going back the other way. The canopy and cowling were not installed at this time, creating lots of drag and preventing me from floating into the neighbor's corn field. Three weeks later in July, 1966 at EAA Rockford I received the third place award for outstanding design.

My Mustang work became too much for a part-time venture, so I left Sinclair in 1970. I operated the Mustang business full-time until September, 1992, at which time Mustang Aeronautics took over.

EAA ACTIVITIES:

I conducted metal aircraft building forums at Rockford and Oshkosh for 25 years. I developed tools (hole flanger and fluting pliers) and techniques for working with 2024-T3 "hard" aluminum, and demonstrated these techniques at the forums. These tools and processes made it possible for the homebuilder to fabricate metal aircraft without the need for heat treatment or special equipment. With the advent of today's quick-build kits, these techniques are seldom used.

I was an early member of EAA Chapter 15, meeting at St. Rita high school when the prototype EAA Biplane was constructed. Chapter 15 now meets at their building on Lewis Lockport airport. In 1956 I was instrumental in forming EAA Chapter 95, now located at the Morris, IL airport. In 1975, 76 and 77 Chapter 95 hosted the Morris, IL stop of the AC Flight Rally. This was a three stop efficiency race from Flint, MI to the Rockford Fly-In

I contributed to the formation of EAA Chapter 260 and am a Lifetime Member of that Chapter. Chapter 260 is based at Lansing, IL and I am still active in these three Chapters.

Prior to the EAA I operated an aircraft maintenance shop at Ottawa, IL from 1948 to 1953, specializing in fabric aircraft. Aircraft fabric then was cotton and linen - Ceconite had not yet been invented. Restorations completed there were: a "totaled" Piper J-3 in 1949 and a Waco AGC-8 in 1952. After closing that shop, working in my hangar at home I restored a Myers OTW in 1958 and a Taylorcraft L-2 in 1994.

Since retirement in 1992 my hobby is visiting airports, having visited more than 200. I enjoy travelling throughout the Southern states by means of Motorhome. I have an 18" by 24" poster in the rear window showing homebuilt aircraft. This poster was given to me in early 1960 by then EAA Director, the late Marty Haedtler. This poster has lots of miles on it and gets attention at airports and on the road. In areas where there are a lot of airports I may travel less than 200 miles per day. When not travelling or hanging out at the local airport, I have a partially completed Mustang II in the hangar that keeps me busy.

CHRONOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY:

Born: February 24, 1927 in Joliet, IL

Wife: Sharon

Three children: Wesley, Paula, Sandra

Two Step-children: Kimberly, John

Four grandchildren

1937: First flight in a Ford Trimotor

1943: Solo in J-3 Cub
1944: Graduated High School
1945: Private Pilot License #300894
1948: A & E Mechanic certificate #1001861
1948: Established Bushby RLA (Restricted Landing Area)
1949: Restored Piper J-3
1950: Commercial Pilot license
1952: Restored Waco AGC-8 airplane.
1953: Joined EAA - Member No. 26
1953: Started Mustang kit business
1954: Multi-engine rating
1954-55: Midget Mustang construction - San Antonio, TX
1966: Outstanding Design award (Third place) for Mustang II
1967: August Raspert award
1973: August Raspert award
1986: Stan Dzik award
1992: Charles Taylor Master Mechanic award - honoring 50 years activity in aircraft maintenance
1994: Restored Taylorcraft L-2 airplane
2003: I was technical counselor for N120BS - an ANTALIS homebuilt that was awarded a Bronze Lindy that year.
2005: Wright Brothers Master Pilot award - given to pilots with continuous flying for 50 years - I have 62 years.

Founding member of EAA Chapters 95 and 260.

Mustang Builders have had SIX Oshkosh Grand Champions. (More than any other design).

EAA AirVenture 2016 Homebuilders Dinner

Bob receives recognition for his Mustang II design flying for 50 years

