

Taking Wing with History

Written by Mark Shaffer

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Up and Away with The World-Famous GEICO Skytypers

Story by Mark Shaffer

Photos by Mark Shaffer and courtesy of the GEICO Skytypers

Once again I'm sitting in the back seat of an airplane built to train the pilots of the Greatest Generation, staring at an instrument panel that makes my car look like a starship. It's a blustery day in the Lowcountry as we prep for to take off from the Marine Corps Air Station to fly wing-tip-to-wing-tip with the world-famous GEICO Skytypers. This is the second of three media flights scheduled for the day and all four planes have a reporter strapped into the backseat sporting a 40-pound parachute and a life vest.

We've all signed disclaimers and gone through the safety briefing. I'm in the number 4 plane with senior lead solo pilot, Steve Salmirs. The canopy is open and as the engine roars to life it sends a hot blast of exhaust over me. Like the first time I flew with the Skytypers prior to the 2015 Beaufort airshow, my adrenaline hits the red line. The radio crackles. "Let's go have some fun," says Salmirs.

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effort to make the flight a success. But the flight was a disaster. The plane was too heavy and the engine was too small. The plane was too slow and the engine was too noisy. The plane was too expensive and the engine was too complicated. The plane was too dangerous and the engine was too unreliable. The plane was too ugly and the engine was too ugly.

