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## **ying The Wildcat!**

**Pilot Report  
On CAF's Hot  
Navy Fighter**

*Details, Page B23*

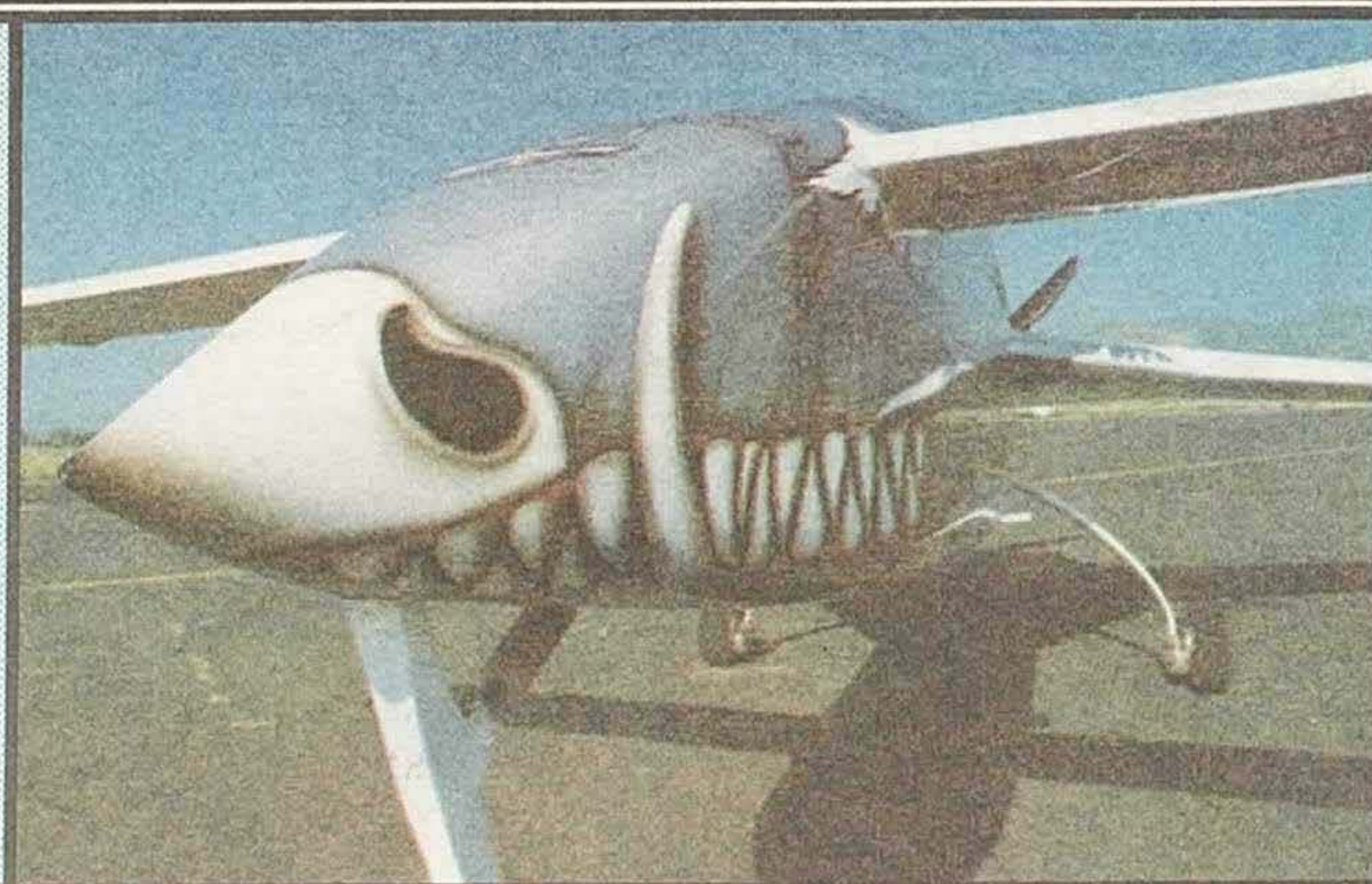
## **9TH ANNUAL**

**Swimsuit  
Edition  
Included In  
This Issue**

*(For subscribers only)*

## **Now What? Joel Taylor's 'Top Hog,' That's What**

*Details On Page A13*



# **PACIFIC** **Flyer** AVIATION NEWS

### **Also In this Issue:**

- **Riverside Open House**
- **Page's Breezy Air Show**
- **PF's England Air Tour**
- **Customs Caught At It**
- **Hollister All-Jet Fly-In**
- **PHX 500 Crash Details**



## Proud Owner Calls His New Creation

# THE 'TOP HOG'

Joel Taylor *really* wants an A-10.

No, I mean he wants one *so bad* that he spent \$10,000 to have artist Bob Koller create the illusion in paint of a Warthog metamorphosing from beneath the skin of his custom Vari-Eze.

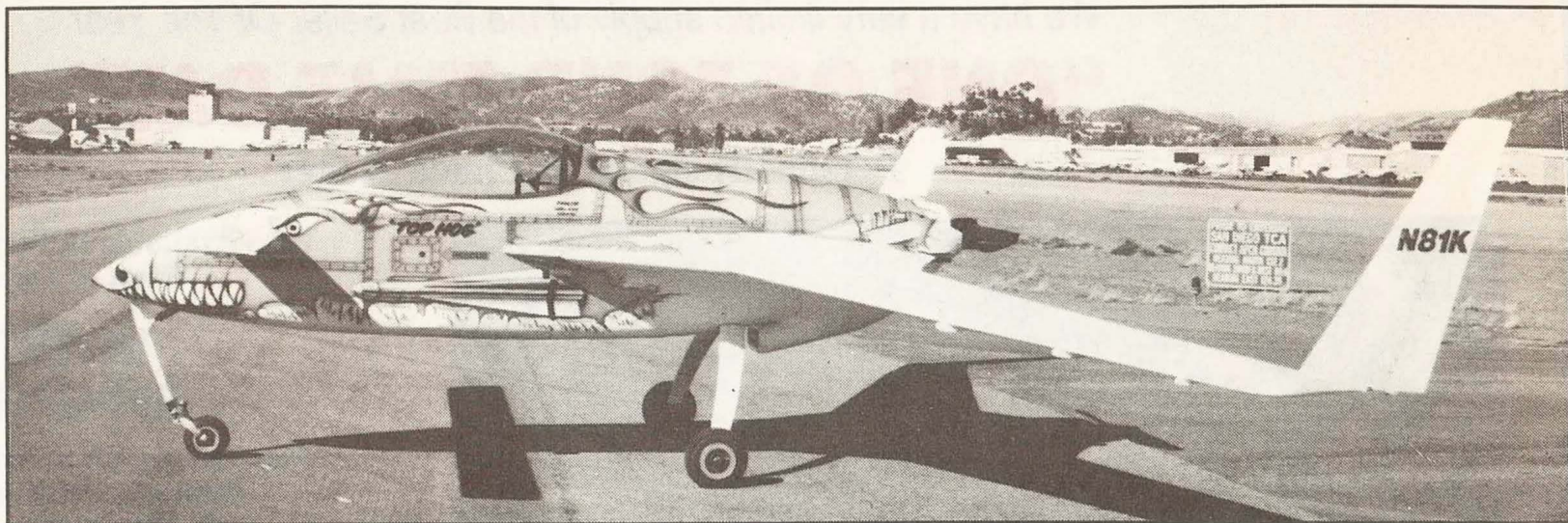
Peer closely and you can see the General Electric turbofan popping from beneath the melting pseudo-plates; the rivetted aluminum skin emerging from the melted fiberglass (complete with rockets).

On the top of the wing roots, the white fiberglass appears to be peeling back from sheer speed, showing the gray metal underneath. Oh yes, there are flames, too, and a detailed representation of the 30 mm cannon that A-10s carry slung under the nose (although this one is one top).

"I've been flying for a lot of years and I decided that low and fast is where I like to live," the 55-year-old business entrepreneur and 1,200 hour pilot said. "I've done it all (including helicopters and sailplanes) and have been chasing the ultimate thrill for a long time; the best I can come up with is low and fast."

The former owner of a replica Swiftfury and de Havilland Chipmunk, Taylor said he thinks he's now found his Valhalla. Especially considering his minimal requirements.

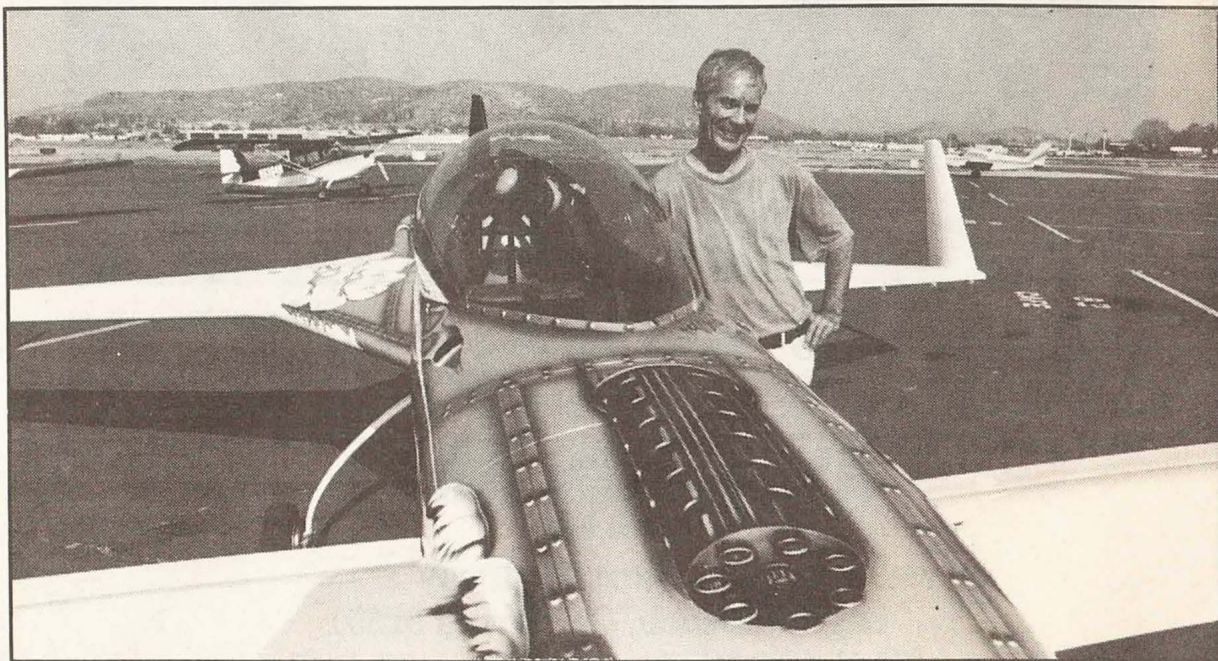
By Wayman Dunlap



PICTURES DO NOT do justice to Joel Taylor's unconventional Vari-Eze, which not only has many custom touches — notice the shape of the canopy — but features a \$10,000 paint job which aims to make it look like an A-10 Warthog is metamorphosing from inside. Rod Smith

"I had a concept in mind when I started — low, fast and as safe as possible under those conditions," he explained. "That's so in case I was charging along at a couple of hundred miles over the desert and I flamed out, I could pop up to a couple of hundred feet and blow the ballistic chute and, if the gods are good, float to earth."

To that end, he contacted the BRS (Ballistic Recovery System) folks, who had already proved their BRS chutes could float a Cessna 150 to earth. With some design work, engineering and technical assistance from Grove Aircraft at El Cajon, Calif.'s Gillespie Field (where Taylor keeps his plane), they came up with a three point



TAYLOR is proud of his new machine and has plans to terrorize small animals, cactus, sagebrush, dirt and anything else he can find at low level in the desert (in uncontrolled airspace, of course).

Con't on Page A15



# Taylor's Top Hog ...

Con't from Page A13

anchor system.  
The BRS chute sits where therear seat would be and is covered by a "turtle hatch" — an oval layer of thin fiberglass through which the parachute would be fired should Taylor find himself in need.

"When I pull the lanyard, if everything goes as prescribed, it'll blow the rocket through the hole, pulling the chute. There's a tripod harness inside the turtleback attached to a 10 foot riser," Taylor added.

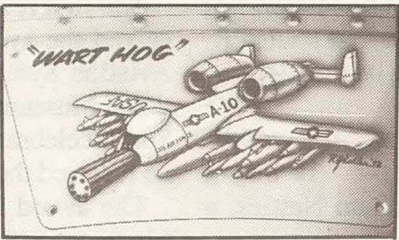
"I hope to never have to use that because it would sure as hell ruin the paint job," he laughed. Of course, the alternative is more unacceptable.

And for those who wonder at all that paint on fiberglass — something the genre hasn't particularly cared for in the past — Taylor points out that he used carbon fiber for the areas where the paint is located.

We understood the intent of an A-10 evolving from a Vari-Eze, especially after seeing the plane in person, but what about all those flames?

"Simple, I was a hot rodder when I was a kid and we all had flames."

Oh.  
Powered by a fresh O-200 Continental engine, the little plane bristles with Taylor's own modifications and improvements, including that unusual canopy. Inside, he's lengthened the side stick for roll control — just in a dogfight, for



example.  
"On the surface, you might think that this is some sort of egotistical endeavor," Taylor conceded. "Actually (the Vari-Eze) was supposed to be just a fun toy that I could screw around with and have a good time but it turned out to be such a one-off, pretty bitchin' airplane that I wanted a (special) paint job."

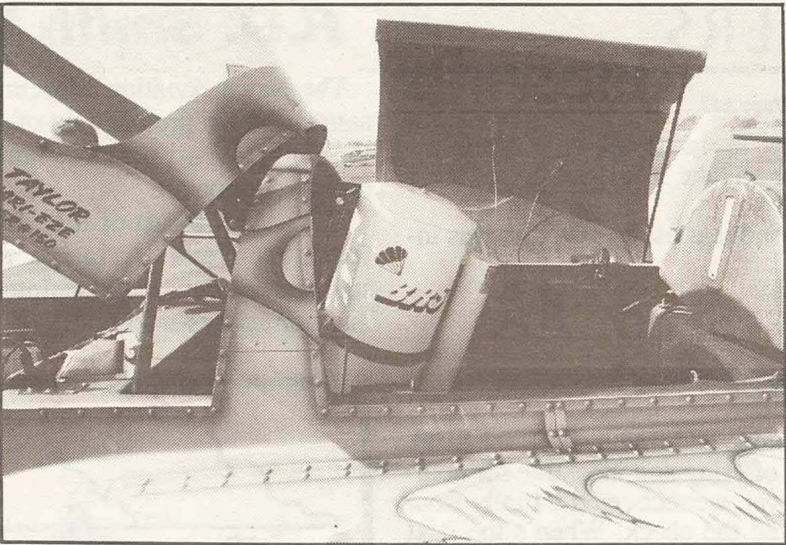
He contacted Koller and explained his ideas, giving the artist an outline for the paint job and the idea behind it.

"No problem," Koller said, and three months later it was ready.

Taylor calls his machine "Top Hog" and grins that now that it's done and all checked out safety and aerodynamic wise, "there's an awful lot of rocks up on the hills that are going to be tanks."

That is, as soon as his custom helmet is ready. The one with the inscription that says: "Not for use above 1,000 feet."

Now, if he and Top Hog could only be adopted as a mascot or something by an A-10 Warthog squadron, his joy would be complete. Until then, there's not a desert rock, bush, rabbit or ground squirrel that can ever feel safe again.



A BRS BALLISTIC parachute occupies rear seat area.



CONTROL stick was extended.



SQUIRREL'S-EYE VIEW of Taylor's Top Hog, a much modified Vari-Eze with a custom paint job and a testament to the desire of some folks to put their fantasies into action.

Wayman Dunlap Photos