

The first time by Brian Green

The year was 1971 and I was the current national Aerobatic Champion "F3A." So, why not enter the World Championships to be held at Doylestown USA later in the year, "But how." The M.A.A.A. did not know so a letter to the American Modelling Association came back with how and an entry form. The form had to be signed and stamped by the F.A.I. affiliated National Aero Club which then was the Royal Federation of Aero Clubs, "Full size types." Off went the request and the response was, I had to be interviewed to see if I was of suitable character to represent Australia. Large office, highly polished desk, smart tailored jacket and a large handlebar moustache was the picture. I must have passed as the form was signed and stamped.

Next step was how to get the models, two DragonFli's there? A letter to the airline listing the model box size and weight and explanation asking if it was OK to go with us as baggage was replied yes. With transport booked with AVIS on arrival in the US, it was time to go. Dot and I get to the checkin counter but no way would they accept the model box as luggage. Explained about the letter of agreement but still no way. At the time I was a L.A.M.E with a local airline so knew a bit about procedures, departure delays are costly. Dot and I refused to get on board unless the box came too. The stand-off continued until YES! Well into the flight and along came the hostess, Mr. Green? "Yes" "Here is a bottle of champagne compliments of the airline." What could you say!

After a few days in LA it was off to the other side. Some hour or so into the flight, the hostess walked up and down the aisle asking for Dr. Green, but no response. She then came to me and asked, are you Dr. Green? My name is Green but not a doctor. OH, we have a message for you from the A.M.A, there will be someone to meet you on your arrival. American Medical Association or American Modelling Association, hence the doctor bit. It turned out that one of the air traffic controllers was a modeller involved with the Champs and he had radioed the captain with the message for me. Now what pilot would disobey an air traffic controller!

On arrival, there was no one to meet us and with the luggage and model box in our hands it was off to Avis to pick up the pre-booked vehicle. Sorry sir but we do not have any cars available. But we booked it weeks ago. Sorry sir, we cannot help you, we have had really, really bad storms and all our cars are out. Can you tell me where we can hire a truck then? Why would you need a truck, was the reply. To carry that box and our luggage of course. Will it fit in a Station Wagon? Yes. Well we have plenty of those available!

So with it all loaded it was off to Doylestown, in the dark. On the map, there was a freeway and we could hear it the distance but could not find how to get to it. And the car radio was blaring, the bridge over the XXX river at YYY is down and motorists should deter through NNN! Exciting times.

Made it, met all the names I had been reading about and watched them in action. Had the four flights without any problems and finished in forty-second place. Back on home soil, the questions asked were, how come our National Champion finished down there! Must have had radio or engine problems. Simple, the flying standard in the rest of the world is so much higher. Why, because of the depth of numbers competing in their events. When there is a hundred or so, to get to the top you simple have to be good. And the judges get to see and judge that standard.

Since that first time, apart from South Africa in 1979 when the M.A.A.A. refused to enter a team because of the sporting ban then in place, Australia has fielded a full team of three. Tom Prosser, Jeff Tracey and I made it to ninth in Springfield, 1977 and the best result ever was fifth at Wangaratta 1991. David McFarlane, Steve Coram and Peter Goldsmith, were that team. Currently Australia ranks in the low teens at Aerobatic World Championships.

A final anecdote was that in their report on the 71 world championships, a UK magazine published a pic of Dot and I sitting on log, captioned like, "First ever entry from Australia." When the magazine hit our shores the rumours started. Look at this, Greenie went to the States and picked up a girlfriend and is now sprung!