

AERO CLUB AT PETERSON CELEBRATES 60TH YEAR

By Margie Arnold, 21FSS Marketing

An aero club is all about flying ... safely ... so you can get up and fly again the next day ... and the next.

An aero club gives people wings with which to soar, dive, spin, glide and flip for joy. Above the earth, man and machine become one.

When World War II was over, passions about plane and flying remained high. General Curtis LeMay lost several of his friends, veterans who had survived the war, to accidents involving civilian aircraft, and one day in 1948 he found some of his officers rebuilding a small aircraft in a hangar at Offutt AFB. To paraphrase a song, *how ya gonna keep 'em down on the ground once they've been in the air*. A new avenue for pilots was needed.

Wanting pilots to do it right – as safely as possible, LeMay started the first aero club in 1951. In that same year, three more sprang up, one of which was the Aero Club at Pete Field.

Flying safety was the top priority of aero clubs. It still is. According to Greg Cortum, manager of the Rocky Mountain Flight Training Center, a.k.a. the Peterson Aero Club, “Flying is safe and easy, thanks to our highly trained, competent instructors, supervised and completely regulated by the FAA.” In fact, Cortum continued, “Peterson’s Flight Training Center is one of the very best aero clubs in the Air Force and one of the best flight training schools in the world. It is one of the larger aero clubs and, historically, has one of the best safety records, many times better than any civilian flight school.”

The first step to becoming a pilot is the Private Pilot Ground School, offered periodically through the year. Or, to see if you would like to become a pilot, the Aero Club offers a special two-hour Introductory to Flight Training, which includes one hour of ground instruction and one hour of flight instruction. For more information about learning to fly, call 719-556-4310.

This year the Peterson Aero Club celebrates its 60th year of flight training (1951-2011) with festivities on Saturday, October 22 (rain date is October 29), that will include flights from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. for \$30/seat and free hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages served from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. As a special way to commemorate the occasion, anyone going on a flight will receive a complimentary photo taken of them in or next to the aircraft.

Flights will be 30 minutes in length; children younger than 12 must be accompanied by an adult during the flight for safety reasons. Because appropriate attire must be worn when flying in Aero Club aircraft, passengers may not wear shorts or open-toed shoes.

To schedule your flight, call (719) 556-4310. We recommend that you call early because flight reservations will fill quickly.