

Press Release

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Chris Heintz honored with "Aeronautical Medal" of France

Engineer, innovator, builder, entrepreneur, educator and author, aircraft-designer Chris Heintz was recently recognized for his lifetime contributions to aviation by France, his country of origin. Awarded the prestigious "Médaille Aéronautique" (Aeronautical Medal) at a ceremony in Montélimar, France, on September 10, 2017, Chris humbly accepted the accolade saying: *"It has been a privilege to help so many people fly in aircraft that they were able to build themselves"*.

Indeed, thousands of Heintz-designed amateur-built aircraft are flying around the world today. These were primarily assembled from kits manufactured by Zenair Ltd., a company he founded in Canada in the seventies, and Zenith Aircraft Company, the leading US aircraft kit manufacturer specializing in making kits for Heintz designs for the past 25 years.

An aeronautical engineer by trade, Heintz was involved in a number of prominent aircraft projects during his prolific career: He worked on the Concorde SST in the sixties, then designed and certified the Robin "HR" series of 2-4 seat aircraft, models that are still popular in many European flying clubs today. Having moved to Canada in the early seventies he worked for DeHavilland on a number of projects including the Dash-7 turboprop-powered regional airliner. He then founded and successfully operated Zenair Ltd. for 35 years before retiring.

During that time, Chris designed over a dozen traditional recreational aircraft models; he developed a full line of aircraft floats and also manufactured wood aircraft propellers. He created a unique ultralight utilizing never-before applied Princeton sail-wing principles, built a number of "proof-of-concept" prototypes and obtained full type-certification for a two-seat trainer. While developing his successful line of all-metal STOL aircraft, he also certified two of his designs to ASTM Light Sport (LSA) standards.

Throughout his professional life, Chris participated at countless shows, fly-ins and pilot gatherings where he spoke on aerodynamics, aircraft design and construction. He consulted actively and provided high-level guidance to various groups, agencies and departments on the subject appropriate regulations for light aircraft and played a major role in drafting Canada's ultralight regulations and the early drafts of the international ASTM light-sport aircraft (LSA) rules & standards.

After pulling back from day-to-day operations at Zenair, Chris still continued consulting for a number years while writing his book: a tell-all guide on how to design your own easy-to-build and easy-to-fly recreational aircraft. With this textbook now widely available ("[How to Fly on Your Own Wings](#)" – by Chris Heintz), Chris has returned to his native France to pursue other interests and to enjoy his retirement.

For more information on Chris Heintz and the many aeronautical accomplishments for which he received the "Médaille Aéronautique", see here: <http://www.zenithair.com/c-heintz.html>



Designer Chris Heintz (left) accepting the Aeronautical Medal at a ceremony in Montélimar, France, on September 10, 2017. The prestigious Médaille de l'Aéronautique was presented by French minister Ségolène Royal to Chris for his lifelong contributions aviation around the world.

