

COME FLY WITH ME!® by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, Florida – June 23, 2026

As a person who has enjoyed a career in commercial aviation Customer Support for over 40 years as a non-pilot, during the past 30 years or so I enjoyed the hobby of designing, building, and flying radio-controlled (RC) model airplanes! As you may imagine, during these times, I learned a great deal about many principles of flight with a few of my highly-modified designs. For example, one of the models I built had flaps that were permanently set at about 30 degrees. The performance of this airplane was exactly as expected; that is, during takeoff at full power, after rotation and climb out, the airplane continued to “balloon” vertically and pitch up to the point of stalling until the power was reduced to regain level flight! So, now I know why flap settings for takeoff on private & commercial airplanes is required - yet at minimal angular settings! For some past years, my interest in the RC airplane hobby diminished to the point that I lost my interest and I am no longer an active participant. However, things have recently changed and I have suddenly found myself starting anew – albeit this time in learning to fly a model drone! So here is that story.

My son Rich, who is the owner/operator of Carson Valley Aviation Services at the Reno (NV)/Tahoe (CA) airport, has provided support services to General Aviation airplane owners for many years. Considering my own career in aviation, I could never have been any happier when my son elected to pursue his own career in aviation shortly after graduating from high school! And now here he is, many years later! Well, let’s just say at this point that we have many shared interests in the “wonderful world of aviation” and we do our best to keep in touch and share experiences for our mutual interests and benefits! And now, Rich’s son Andrew (my grandson) is also studying for a future in the aviation business! Wow – I’m truly blessed and loving all of this!

Just as I had encouraged Rich years ago to keep his interests in aviation alive, now the roles are somewhat reversed. He knows all about my past & continuing passions related to aviation very well and, even if RC model airplanes are not amongst my interests these days, he wanted to keep me on the “aviation playing field”! Unknown to Rich, I had previously done some research and was considering buying a drone, but it never happened! And then, on June 21, 2026, Father’s Day, I received a package from Rich containing a RC drone - my first ever! And now, just today, after following all the flight preparations to the letter, my new drone took to the sky’s on a very successful first flight and I was “re-born” into the world of aviation! Amongst all the amazement about this drone, when the controller was initialized, it actually picked up signals from 15 satellites! In the earlier part of my career at Douglas Aircraft Co. long before SATNAV (GPS), I was a member of the Flight Guidance & Navigation group in Customer Service. In those days, we primarily had RNAV, Inertial, Area-inertial, and Omega navigation systems aboard commercial airplanes for navigation. When most of these systems were initialized before a flight, it was always necessary to enter the current airplane position at an airport gate or elsewhere. After the airplane took off and engaged its navigation system, we used to jokingly say that “the navigation system will always know where it is because it knows where it isn’t”! Hey, after my drone detected the positions of 15 satellites after I “told” the controller its current position, it always knows where it is at – relative to the starting point! Amazing technology in such a small package as seen below!

