

EAA Chapter 526 Article by Phil Vardara

Building a Zenith STOL CH 750 in my garage: PHASE 1

This whole project started with visiting a former 526 member who had partially completed 2015 Zenith kit in his garage. As the saying goes, "life got in the way" of completion. I went to visit with my friend Jack (name NOT changed to protect the guilty), a builder himself, who said "if you don't buy this you're an idiot." Not wanting to be thought of as an "idiot" (though that has never seemed to bother me in the past knowing it's (probably) not true - though this may contradict that), I agreed. I wrote the check and a week later it arrived.

Here's the "carcass" arriving:



Wanting to "get something done," I immediately decided to put in one of the side windows. First mistake. It is much easier to do later work if one has arm and head access through the fuse opening.

As the builder owner of QSP (Quality Sport Planes, Cloverdale, CA) said to me: "you'll become an expert in removing rivets." So true!

Here's me in an ungainly position putting in the inside mounts for the engine mount structure. Being a contortionist helps.



Here's how the project looks in my garage. The nose wheel is on the ground because there were 2-30lb sandbags in the front of the cockpit.



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First order of business was ordering the horizontal stab, as well as the slats and flatirons from Zenith in Mexico, MO. While waiting I reviewed the plans and DVDs I ordered from homebuilthelp.com. These have turned out to be a huge help as John goes step-by-step building the exact plane that I have sitting in my garage. Of course, there have been changes, so, as he pointedly and frequently says, these instruction do not replace the actual plans. Cleco heaven (or hell) is my current status, depending on your viewpoint. I've now completed the horizontal stab, flaperons, and slats, have ordered the wings, and am waiting for them to arrive in late April or early May. I've decided to use the Rotax 912 iS which is the FADEC fuel injected engine. Final thought: unlimited thanks to the person who invented the pneumatic riveter! Without that I'd have forearms like I've been hand milking a herd of cows.



Our EAA chapter president says if you're not bleeding, you're not doing right. He also said if "it doesn't need stitches, it doesn't count." So . . . I guess this doesn't "count."



Here's Izzy, my chihuahua sidekick, keeping me company in the garage, and getting used to sitting in the plane.

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