TeamRocket
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Team Rocket Newsletter 8-4-2026

Airventure 2026 Report

How to properly display an F1 Rocket...

Step One - Water the dry grass before Paul Dye arrives on Friday, July 17. I know for a fact that the grass will need all the help it can get once the masses arrive to trample all around the airplane.

Step Two - Make sure that Paul's Rocket is looking good. It is.

Step Three - Eavesdrop while Paul Dye chats with Dick Van Grunsven, who seems to have set aside all his past admonishments to avoid the Rockets. After all, he was clearly in "Indian Territory" here. And he stayed at our display for at least 30 minutes or more.*

I imagine that their conversation went something like this:
Dick: "Hey Paul, that's a mighty fine machine you've got there."
Paul: "Well shucks, I did my best. And is does cruise at 190KTAS** or more."
Dick: "Yowza! Where can I get one?!"
Paul: "Talk to Vince."

Well, that's how it went in my head anyway. ;)

**I can understand that maybe he just needed to get out of the Van's Aircraft display for a few minutes. He's a celebrity and probably needed the break!*

*** Paul Dye Flight report*

Step Four - Stand back! A swarm of homebuilt judges has descended on Paul's F1. Paul calmly explained that he built this plane to FLY, not to impress any judges. Nonetheless, the judges certainly gave NX835PD plenty of attention.

Step Five - Listen to Paul inform the masses about all of the Rocket's fine qualities at the EAA "Homebuilts in Review" presentation at 1:00P.M. on Wednesday.

Paul is a busy guy.

Step Six - Take lots of photos. Paul was honored with a huge fireworks, laser, drone display and airshow on the evening before he had to depart. At least that's what I understood. I could be wrong, but I do know that Ed Hicks, who shoots photos for the EAA, was standing immediately to my left shooting similar photos while I was shooting this one.

Step Seven - Prepare for Paul's departure. Paul had to depart on Thursday morning. It was our honor to have had him display his aircraft with us.

We sent him off with tears in our eyes, after all, we were going to drive home, pulling trailers, and he was FLYING home. Ugh! Not fair!

Step Eight - Take more photos. Paul gets the "Dead Grass Award" in spite of my best grass watering efforts.

We subsequently had the pleasure of also showing off Chris Robl's red F1 and Erick O'connor's gray F1 as seen below.

All in all, it was a good week!

Chris Robl's F1 Rocket, built by his dad, Craig Robl. We had several comment on this very nice paint scheme.

Erick O'connor's gray F1 also received several positive comments on its unique satin finish. Erick won a workmanship award a few years back... if I recall correctly.

How fast is your average F1 Rocket?

Here is a panel shot from Paul's F1 Rocket, NX835PD. 190KTAS on 10GPH is pretty darn nice.

Repeated link from above: *Paul Dye* *Flight report*

Thoughts on aft ballast for flight testing

Paul Dye commented on the value of using ballast weights in your F1 Rocket to minimize nose heaviness. I'd like to expand on his comments.

The F1 Rockets have a big engine on the nose. Duh. You're not likely to really notice that unless:

- You are slow, i.e. during the approach to landing.
- You haven't optimized the elevator trim travel. It is helpful to bias the travel to get more "nose up" travel.
- Perhaps you have a 3-blade aluminum prop (which is not usually optimal), or otherwise are simply more nose heavy than other F1s.
- Other rigging or CG problems could cause this, but you've already ruled those things out, right?

So, yes, the F1s can be a bit nose heavy, but it's usually not a problem. Paul is using a few iron gym weights wrapped in foam. I used a 5-gallon jug of water. The jug of water is nice because you can simply dump it out if you need to put something, or someone, in the back. And you can fill it up at most airports. Another idea is to use gallon milk jugs, which can be obtained almost for free and disposed of in the trash if needed.

I used the 5-gallon jug of water in the baggage compartment until I optimized my trim tab travel. Then I stopped carrying any extra ballast. Once you're accustomed to the aircraft, it isn't a problem.

I found that my Rocket would trim to fly about 75 - 80 knots, which I felt was fine for the landing pattern until on short final. At that point the big fan up front has no problem slowing the plane down for landing.

Your mileage may vary! Fly safely!
Vince

Respect for Van... no jokes here!

I took this photo. It sums up everything you need to know about homebuilt aircraft.

In the foreground we see Van's original RV-4, the plane that truly revolutionized kit aircraft. It's not a stretch to say that most, if not all of us, owe our entire homebuilding experience to this aircraft.

Sure, Van had the RV-3, but it was never going to be a huge seller. Then the RV-4 appeared and I, for one, went completely bananas. My marriage was in

danger because I only had eyes for this airplane. Thankfully, my wife said that I could build one and my life has never been the same.

Now, look behind it. Mmmmmmmmmmm.... oh yeah... the aircraft that caused my eyes to wander. A Rocket. Oh baby. Just when I thought that a better aircraft wasn't realistic, along comes the Rocket. Oh yeah. You know the rest of that story.

And finally, look behind the Rocket. It's a row of Rutan plastic. They were great planes, but they just didn't really hold up against the sands of time.

I'll wager that in another 25 years that pilots will still be flying RVs and Rockets. Any takers? (Not that I'm likely to be around, but the planes will be!)

A new F4 Raider makes its debut

C-FGND

It's done! I haven't flown it yet, still waiting on paperwork.
Russ Want (and Phil Kite)

FlyLEDs Introduces Mach 2 Wingtip Lights

FlyLEDs, an Australian company that has been making strobe, nav, and landing light kits with high-powered LEDs for several years now, is introducing a new light system specifically designed to fit in the wingtip cutouts of Van's RV aircraft. The new "Mach 2" wingtip lights are basically plug and play, with a template provided to cut the necessary hole in the fiberglass RV-10 or RV-14 wingtip cove and easy mounting that takes minutes, not hours. The light modules include

strobe, nav, and landing lights, connecting with just a few wires to the aircraft's harness. (A version to fit the Rocket wingtips is planned.)

FlyLEDs founder, Paul McVitty, has been providing light kits for RVs and other homebuilts that are assembled by the builder in a few hours using simple soldering techniques to attach resistors and LEDs to the pre-made circuit boards. Assembly takes just a few hours and this builder found it an interesting (and educational) diversion from both metal and fiberglass work. The latest lights require no fabrication—builder takes them out of the box and installs them—no soldering required.

These, and other FlyLED products, are also available from Blake and company at Flyboy Accessories HERE.

Wildfire residue... the odd things you see at Oshkosh

This isn't something that most of us ever deal with... sooty prop blades.

As you may have heard, the weather on the opening Friday and Saturday at Oshkosh was awful. The heat was hot and the wildfire smoke was terrible. KOSH was IFR for most, if not all, of the opening days.

The prop shown is on Jay DeRossier's award winning Javron Super Cub. I wonder how Craig Catto would interpret those soot trails coming off of the bug splats?

I might surmise, and I'm no engineer, that the vortices created by the bug splats are a great visualization of how the VGs on the leading edge of many aircraft can influence the airflow over an entire wing. Cool stuff! Who doesn't love science?

Our Oshkosh Crew

Our Oshkosh Crew, minus Becky and Tara, who were still working while we all goofed off taking photos.

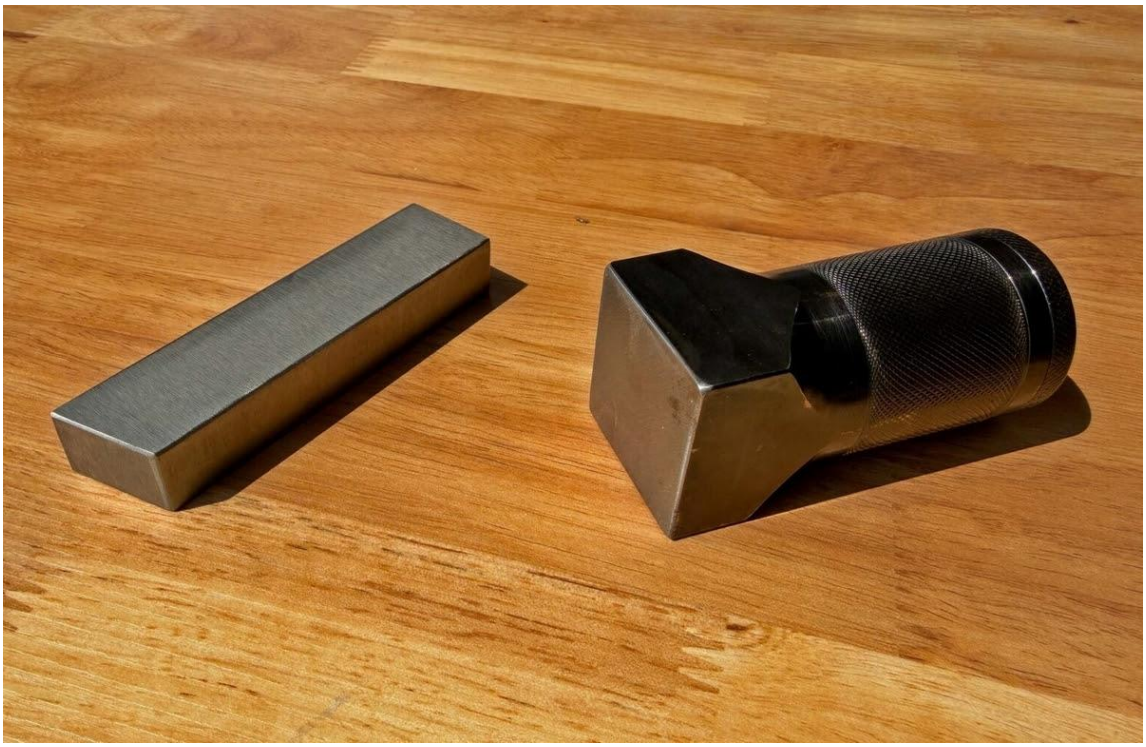
Clare, Paul, and Roger. All Aussies. All here to promote their great FlyLEDs products.

Next is Blake. Just another Hoosier like the rest of us in this photo. Blake (and Becky and Tara) are at Oshkosh to represent Flyboy Accessories and Cleaveland Aircraft Tools, which are Blake's companies.

And finally, the Team Rocket reprobates, miscreants, and vile wretches: Vince,

Scott, and Larry, all from beautiful NW Indiana, home of the Carroll County Bacon Fest. No joke. It's awesome.

Cool tool idea from Flyboy Accessories/Cleaveland Aircraft Tools



We stopped by the Flyboy Accessories/Cleaveland Tool tent at AirVenture last week to chat with Blake Frazier and see what they had in the way of interesting new ideas. He showed us the now-standard “skinny” tungsten bucking bar—all the cool kids are using tungsten bucking bars these days—and told us that the price of the metal has skyrocketed in the past year or so. That bar that we used to buy for an expensive $100 now costs him closer to $700, due to the need for tungsten in advanced weapons systems.

The result is that if you already have a few, you are in good shape, but you should track who you loan them to very carefully … if you are looking to get a new one, you may be priced out of the market. But Blake might just have an answer for the homebuilding community: a steel-shelled, lead-filled bar that feels about as heavy as the tungsten.

The new lead-filled bar is a bit larger than the typical tungsten tool, but should fit in many, if not most, places you need to buck rivets. For those few spots where you need a smaller “head,” Blake has thought about a drilled and tapped hole in which you can insert custom faces—but that would be for a future iteration. We hope to give the new lead-filled bar a tryout when Frazier can spare one to loan!

Paul Dye - From AvBrief

Thoughts on the kit industry

Avbrief discusses the state of the kit industry:
https://avbrief.com/for-immediate-release/

Many of you have heard me bloviate on the things that have impeded our operations here at Team Rocket / Frazier Aviation Products. Things were going great until Covid hit. Then Van's Aircraft declared bankruptcy. Then (insert your choice of newsworthy event here) happened. In short, external events have conspired against virtually every kit manufacturer. I know, I have personally talked with quite a few of the other manufacturers.

HOWEVER, the future is looking very good for those who have persevered, including us. After a few false starts related to buying used equipment (my fault!) we now have good NEW equipment and we've learned how to use it.

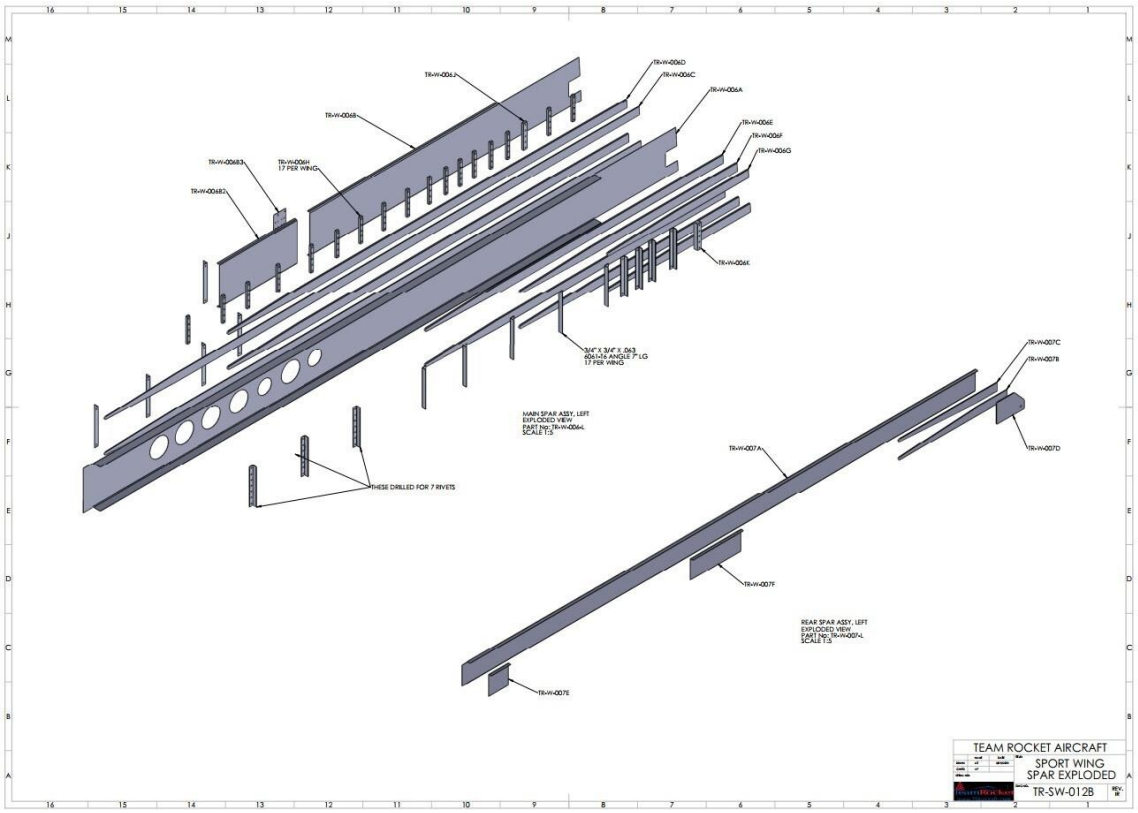
And Van's self-inflicted disaster actually was a gift for us. It caused us to reexamine what we're doing and make a few minor adjustments.

Indeed, we've got several 3D printers churning out all manner of prototype parts, form blocks, press dies, and other goodies. To say that these things are game changers would be a gross understatement.

And we have some very capable, brand new CNC equipment to make parts. We're even making parts for some other kit companies now, which certainly helps to keep the bills paid. And we're bringing on a new guy, Larry, to help in the shop.

All in all, we're still showing up at Oshkosh, Rockets and Raiders are still being finished, and we're planning for the next steps. We had hoped to have a flying tapered wing Rocket at Osh '26, but it just wasn't in the cards. Hopefully soon!

Thanks for being patient. We're the tortoise, not the hare, and we plan to stay that way.



Sport wing spar production

There are still dozens, if not hundreds, of cheap RV-4 wing kits out there. This creates a real dilemma for us. It's a bad business decision for us to make Sport wing kits for $12K or more when you can buy the equivalent RV-4 parts for far less. In fact, I saw an RV-4 wing and tail kit for sale online yesterday for less than 1/3 of what it would cost for us to make the same set of parts.

Yes. The RV-4 wing parts are equivalent to F1 Rocket or F4 Raider wing parts. They are simply assembled a bit differently.

Nonetheless, it would be relatively easy for us to put the spars back into production, thus replacing the spar parts that we previously bought from the late Wayne Stonecipher of Phlogiston Products.

Since virtually all of the differences between the RV-4 layout and the F1/F4 layouts begin at the spars, it might make good sense for us to offer the spars. The other parts could still come from an inexpensive RV-4 wing kit, with the exception of the fuel tank main skin and tank baffle... assuming that most F1/F4 builders wouldn't want the smaller RV-4 fuel tanks.

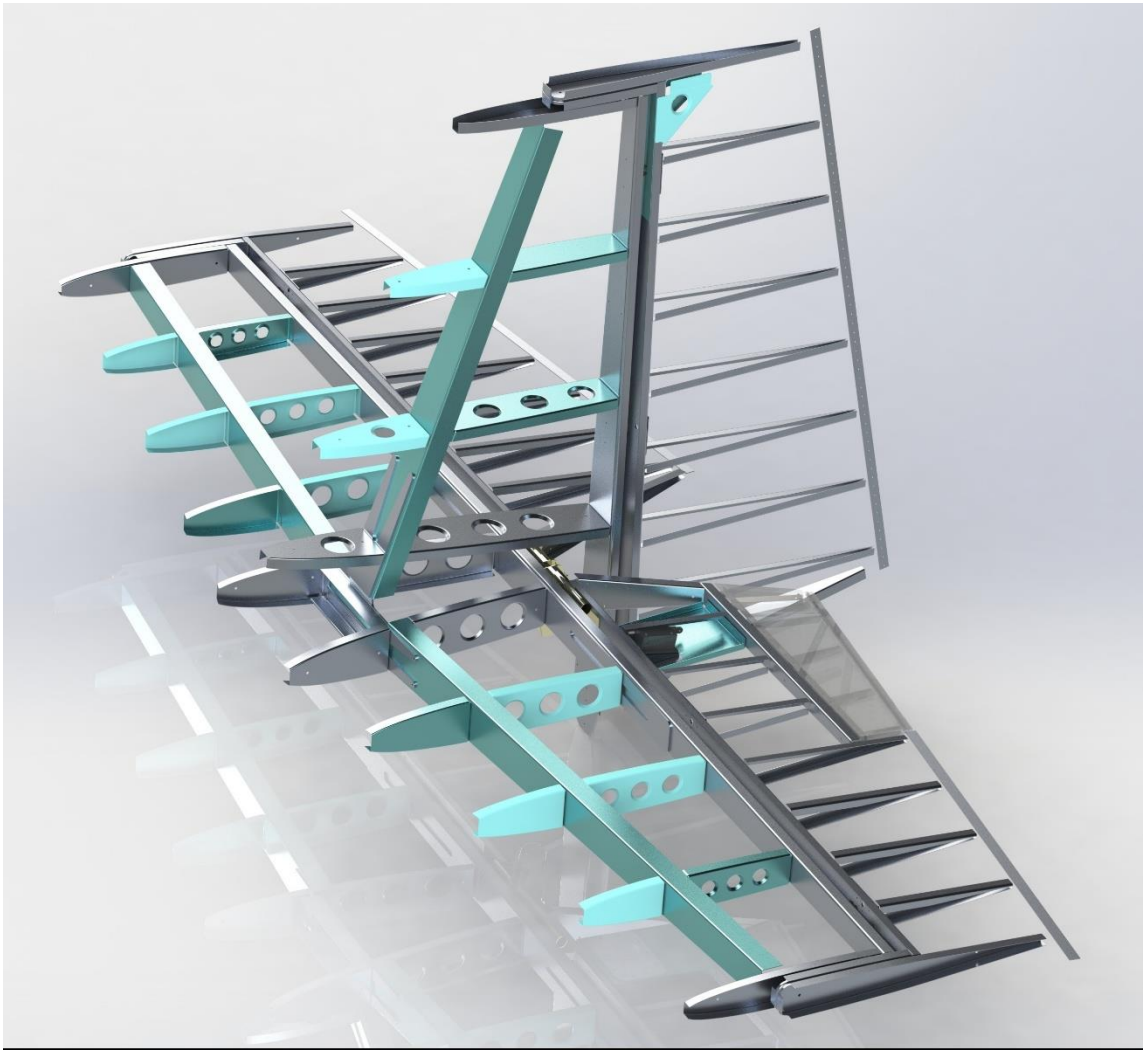
We always tried to offer inexpensive alternatives. The idea is still to save you money. Even with the cost of a brand new F1/F4 spar kit from us, a pile of RV-4 wing parts should still save you a ton of money.

We could also put the tank, main, and leading edge ribs back into production if

needed.

So, if you're sitting on the fence about starting an F1/F4 because you're concerned about finding a wing, please let us know if this interests you. We'll make decisions based on the level of interest out there.

Contact Vince at vince@f1aircraft.com



Mk3 empennage kit update - last call for Oshkosh special pricing

Having finished most of the updates to our tail kit parts production, we're going to accept orders for the Mk3 tail kits for Fall/Winter delivery. Prices are being held at the previous price point for paid orders ASAP. The price of $4070 includes the complete empennage kit and the optional Ray Allen servo. This price is hundreds less than our closest competitor price. Don't delay. Offer ends

on 9-1-2026.

Contact Vince at vince@f1aircraft.com

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Thanks,
Vince

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