

## Johannes Hendrik “Pikkie” Rautenbach

### The Druine Turbulent - ZS-UAI Pikkie’s “pride and joy”.

By Noel Otten, January 2009

“Pikkie” Rautenbach was a legend in SA Aviation circles. A WW2 pilot, saw active service in Korea flying Mustangs and F86 Sabre Jets, and the first “official” National Aerobatic Champion of South Africa.

“Pikkie” had many “firsts” in SA aviation. One I remember was Pikkie’s attempts to fish from an aircraft in flight. The picture here shows him with the fishing tackle he was going to use. Whilst he was stationed at Langebaanweg he used to tow target drogues. This gave him the idea that he could “trawl” for fish. Pikkie rigged up a line to his Piper Pawnee for the attempt. I am not sure how successful he was or if he ever got a “nibble”.



In July 1966 I accompanied Mike van Ginkel, Nick Turvey and the other partners in the Zlin 226, (Piet Nutt, Ewald Wessels, Twisty Winternitz and Bill Holden), to Durban for the Aerobatic nationals. I was like the gofer/cleaner, you know ... "Wipe the bugs and seagull sh\$t off the windshield and then fetch some drinks". The great ones had spoken! I would reply with a "Yes master!"

With a total of about 8 - 10 hours of aerobatic time in my log book I had entered the contest in Emeraude ZS-DTZ. The compulsory sequence for the "unlimited" category was exactly what it is today for Sportsman. The "free" sequence however was a very different story 25 manoeuvres - 700K sequences!!! And this was in a big heavy aeroplane with a 160 HP motor. (For those of you who are interested, I am attaching Tomas Castano, (1st place), and Nick Turvey's, (40th place), Free Sequences that they flew at the 1966 World Aerobatic Championships). For the record, I was simply going to fly the "mirror image" version of the compulsory sequence. I had no hope of placing anywhere, but as Mike v G said "you've got to start somewhere!"

The plan was for Jimmy Deal, (he and I started our PPL training on the same day at Avex Air), would bring ZS-DTZ to Durban 3 or 4 days before the contest so we could practice. The Zlin crew went down about 10 days before. This meant that for the better part of a week I had nothing to fly!

Now it just so happened that Pikkie Rautenbach was also flying the Zlin 226. Mike v G, without my prompting, asked Pikkie if I could fly ZS-UAI. Now Pikkie was of shortish stature, but I was terribly intimidated by him.

He was a legend in his own time. WW2 and Korean War veteran, Air Force aerobatic champion and lots of other things as well. He looked at me for a moment and asked "How many tail-draggers on your licence?" "Two!" I replied. "Get one more and you can fly ZS-UAI" he promised. "Go and speak to Dennis Bishop to fly the Citabria. If he OKs you on that I'll be happy" said Pikkie.

Within 4 hours I was back with my conversion onto the Citabria, (ZS-DWX), signed by Dennis Bishop. Pikkie's staff thought he had completely "lost it". But they pulled it out of the hangar and then my conversion onto the Turbulent began. It was supervised by his staff. It was the most gruelling conversion I have ever had. When they were finished, Pikkie grilled me for another 30 minutes. He then sent me off in 'UAI with a "Don't come back here if you break it".

It was a lovely little aeroplane. VW1200 up front just purring away at about 3 gals per hour. Over the next week I put in about 12 hours in it.

Sadly, it was this aeroplane that Pikkie lost his life in some years later over the sea off Virginia.



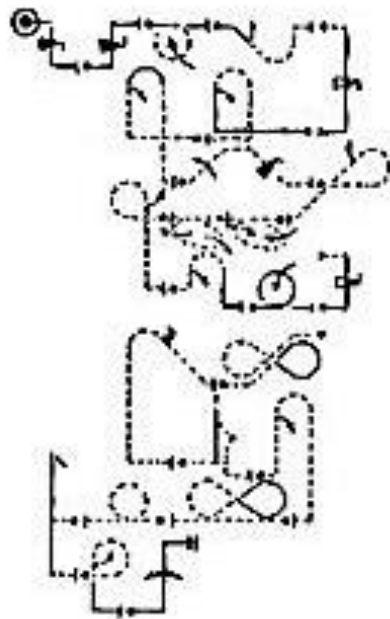
The Turbulent ZS-UAI with ZS-DTZ on the right 10th July 1966



The Turbulent "SMILE" - ZS-UAI 7th July 1966

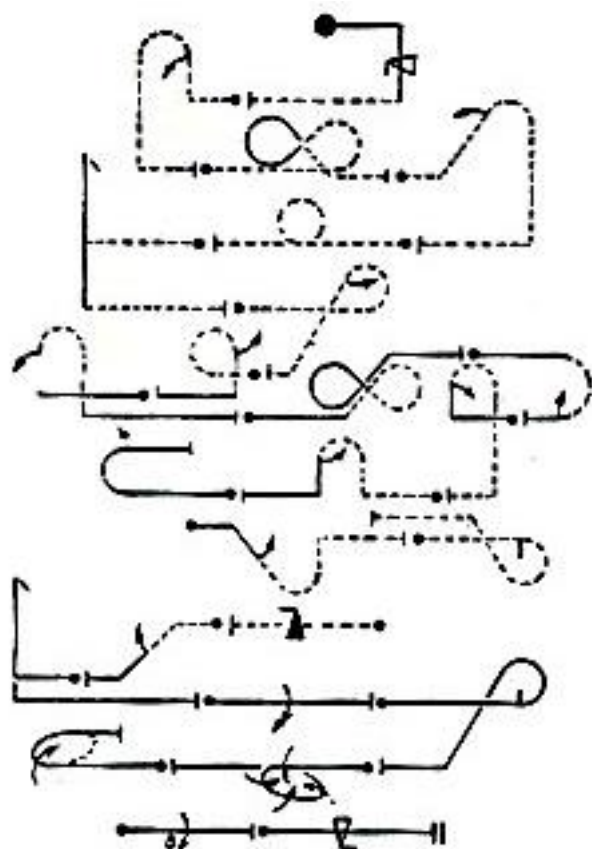
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**25 Figuras máximas**



**1.º T. CASTANO (España)**  
**P.: 14.865 + 15.568 = 30.431**

*Tomas Castano's Free Sequence 1966 - 1st Place*



**40.° R. A. N. TURVEY (Africa del Sur)**

**P.: 9.828**

*Nick Turvey's "WAC 1966 Free Sequence"*