

AOPA PILOT

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IN-FLIGHT EMERGENCIES

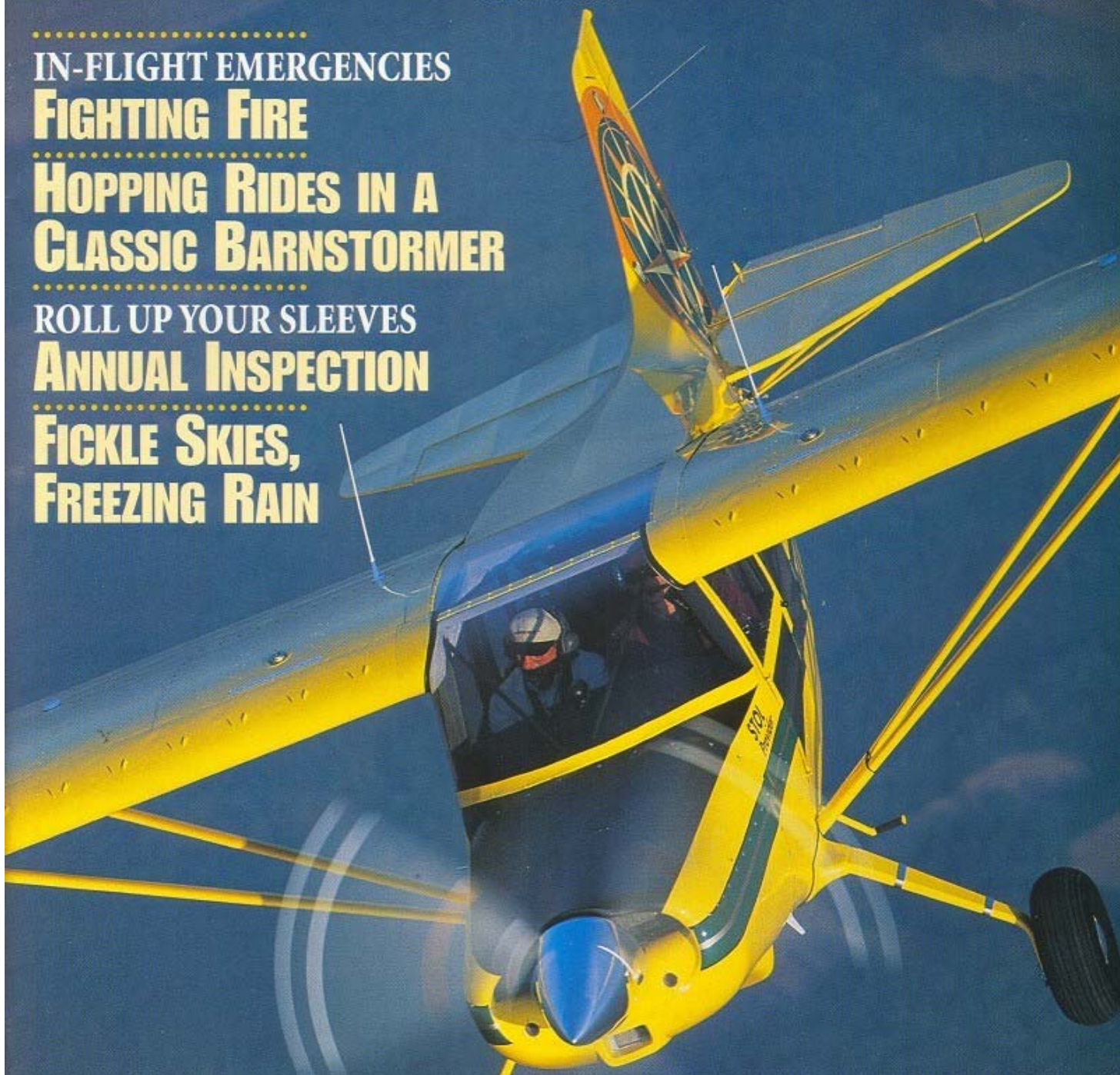
FIGHTING FIRE

.....
HOPPING RIDES IN A
CLASSIC BARNSTORMER

.....
ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVES

ANNUAL INSPECTION

.....
FICKLE SKIES,
FREEZING RAIN



If you're flying VFR in a MOA, rediscovering the art of see and avoid is the only course of action for civilians.

weather and speed restrictions as civilian pilots. The basic 1,000-and-3 ceiling and visibility requirements apply, as do the speed restriction to maintain 250 knots or less below 10,000 feet. It's not unusual to see A-10 Warthogs or C-130 Hercules airplanes in a LATN area skimming along above the treetops at only a few hundred feet. For civilian pilots unaware of the existence of a LATN, it could come as an awful

surprise to takeoff from a private strip and be face-to-face with an A-10 snorting toward them at more than 200 knots.

SRs are slow-speed, low-altitude training routes used by military aircraft. As in a LATN, military pilots flying these routes must adhere to visual flight rules, which explains why they are not charted. Again, don't be surprised to see military aircraft flying at low altitudes at

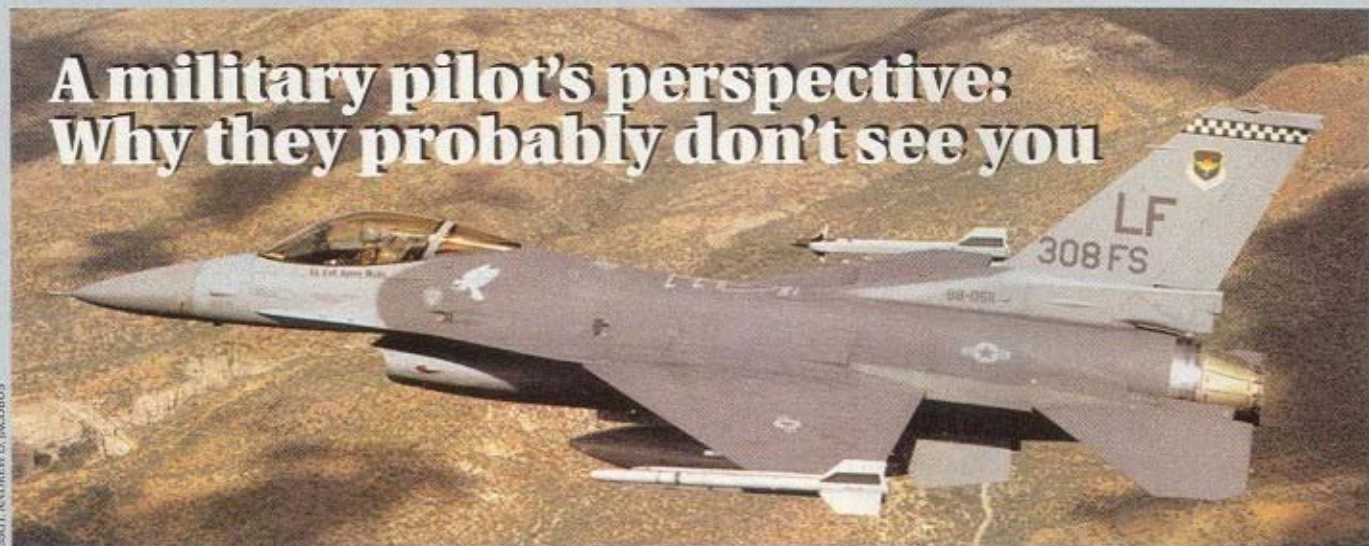
speeds as high as 250 knots in areas not protected by a MOA or restricted area. SRs are published, but only in the Department of Defense's Flight Information Publication (FLIP) chart. These charts are available for viewing at flight service stations.

What to do?

If you're flying VFR, rediscovering the art

A military pilot's perspective: Why they probably don't see you

SGT. ANDREW D. JACOBUS



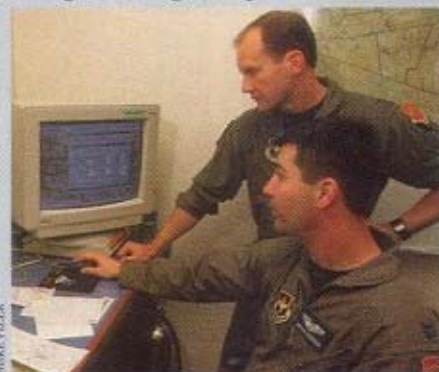
Part of the research for this story involved riding in the rear cockpit of an F-16D with the 309th Fighter Squadron "Wild Ducks" at Luke Air Force Base near Phoenix, Arizona. My front seater was Maj. Ned Linch, who graciously arranged to give *AOPA Pilot* a "red-carpet ride," allowing me to gain a pilot's perspective of a day in the life of a military pilot.

Our mission involved 10 F-16s, which are also known as Vipers. (For reasons not readily shared by them, F-16 pilots hate the airplane's official moniker, Fighting Falcon.) We would be the lead of a two-ship portion of this mission. We blasted out of Luke and headed for the Gladden MOA. Once in there, we started with a G warm-up, which, on this day, consisted of two 90-degree-bank, seven-G turns. Maintaining consciousness was first on my mind, followed closely by the rude realization of the power of a G suit, which in a fabulous boa-constrictor method, squeezes the legs and torso in order to keep your blood up where it belongs.

Our mission was to drop bombs on

"airfields" from both high and low altitudes. These runs involved sudden and abrupt aerobatic maneuvers involving G loads so high that it's a wonder the pilot can maintain the concentration to maneuver the airplane precisely, monitor the targeting display, and retain situational awareness with the ground and the other airplanes at all times.

In the midst of these mind-scrambling maneuvers, it's no wonder that looking for traffic is probably the last thing on a fighter pilot's mind. Of



MARK FITZGER

Pilots load their flight-planned routes into "cans" that slide into the F-16.

course, these pilots were immersed step-by-step into this type of flying; but, on the civilian side, it would be safe to say that only seasoned aerobatic pilots would have a chance to maintain total situational awareness throughout such maneuvers.

Were an intruder aircraft to be spotted during such training, pilots would be informed and suspend operations until the threat was gone. If collision with an intruder was imminent, among many other factors, the pilot of the lead airplane must take into consideration his wingman who may be mere feet off his wingtip. A turn in the wrong direction would obviously spell disaster.

Besides being an absolute kick in the pants, the purpose of the mission at hand was to demonstrate that military pilots—in the midst of high-G aerobatic maneuvers—probably will not be able to do their part in the see-and-avoid game. After this demonstration you can bet that this pilot will certainly take VFR passage through a MOA much more seriously. —PAB