

Stunting at 450 MPH 'Safer than Football'

BY FRED TEW
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Flying at 450 miles an hour and doing acrobatics within two feet of another jet plane is "just business" with the four Acrojets.

Their "just business" produces cold chills and gasps of admiration among the hundreds of thousands who have seen them at various events throughout the nation.

The Air Force stars performed at the National Air Races which ended Sunday at Detroit-Wayne Major Airport.

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THE PILOTS are Major Bruce Carr, the leader; Capts. Harry Chapman and Eldon Klupal, and Lt. Elwood McCary. All are 27 except McCary who is 26.

They want it understood they do not think their stunts are heroic.

"Look," Chapman said, "some people are trained to operate a lathe. They don't get nervous or thrilled when they work on their lathes day-in and day-out.

"Well, we are trained to fly. We fly all the time. It's our business and we don't get nervous about it, either."

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CARR BROKE in: "The only difference is the lathe operator can throw away his mistake and start again."

McCary contends stunt flying is less dangerous than football.

"In football, the players deliberately run into each other and try to knock each other sky high.

"We deliberately stay at least two feet away from the other planes."

The Acrojets keep the two-foot separation as they perform their precision acrobatics in unison at 450 miles an hour. They dive, roll, loop and fly inverted.

THEY SEE nothing thrilling or unusual in that. But, they still are talking about the "wild" ride they got at Indianapolis this year.

One of the drivers in the 500-mile classic picked them up at the airport and drove them to the speedway at 70 miles an hour.

"We were glad to get out of that car," said Major Al Brown, Acrojet alternate. "All of our knees felt watery and our stomachs were doing flip-flops."

The Acrojets say they get no sensation of tremendous speed except when they fly on "the deck" (close to the ground) where they can see stationary objects whizzing by.

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CARR AND Chapman are World War II aces. Carr shot down 25 German planes and Chapman got six. Both are regular Air Force officers. Klupal and McCary are reserve officers.

All except McCary are married. Carr has three children, Klupal two. Chapman is an expectant father.

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