

# INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS: DAVID JACOBSON

Meet the Melbourne man who revolutionised pilot training in the eighties by developing a universal approach to landing aircraft, the Jacobson Flare

## ... When I was a boy...

David Jacobson was born in Melbourne in 1947 and learned to fly out of Moorabbin Airport from age 17. Even back then, he was dismayed by the widespread acceptance of trial-and-error practices in aviation training. These were developed haphazardly through to the end of World War I and recycled without question ever since.

Prior to that, he watched a movie about the famous WW2 Dambusters squadron. During this he had noticed the use of triangulation by the Lancaster crews to accurately position their aircraft at exactly the right altitude above the dam water level. This was a critical element to allow the innovative bouncing bombs

designed by Sir Barnes Wallis to cause maximum structural damage to the dam walls of the Möhne and Eder dams in Germany.

While David was keenly focused on the geometry, the rest of us only noticed the unmistakable roar of the Merlin engines and stuff getting blown up. Or maybe that's just me.

During his ab initio training, the Dambusters lessons of all those years ago came flooding back. He also realised that the same principle might be useful when trying to land an aircraft without wiping out major infrastructure.

But as an 18-year-old with more important things on his mind, that idea was relegated to the afterburner.

## Mid-life crisis

Fast forward 20 years and instead

of finding a trophy wife and buying a sports car, David had begun to ponder why landing an aircraft was treated as an art or science rather than a skill. Feel and guesswork were the primary skills taught and used for landing, which had been much the same since Orville & Wilbur changed the world forever.

In 1985, David finally began to research and develop a new universal, quantifiable and comprehensive approach and landing training technique. This was first published in a paper for the 1987 Australian Aviation Symposium, and later became known as the Jacobson Flare. In retrospect, had he done this a decade earlier, 'Jacobson Flares' might have taken fashion in a whole new direction.

## Overnight success

The Jacobson Flare was an instant hit. Landing an aircraft could finally be taught as a logical skill instead of mysterious black magic. This shortened the time it took for a pilot to go solo, as well as reducing training costs and potential damage to aircraft.

Since 1987, David has personally helped hundreds of airline and GA pilots to improve their landing skills. Several flying schools and colleges have adopted the Jacobson Flare as a standard practice, and countless pilots around the world have sought out the process to help improve their own technique.

Even so, many in the aviation industry still have not heard of it or cannot understand what all the fuss is about.

## High inertia industry

Despite the successes achieved,

the regulator will not endorse any proprietary techniques, and leaves this to the industry to deal with. Despite this, and to CASA's credit, they did allow David to present the Jacobson Flare at its 1997 Flight Safety Seminar series.

The industry still has a few stalwarts who believe in the philosophy of status quo, or 'That's how we have always done it'. Not to be confused with the philosophy of Status Quo ('Down, down, this plane's going down'). Then there are some who live under rocks and are not aware of the program. But we think you would be hard-pressed to find anyone who properly understands the process and does not agree with or support it.

## So, what is it exactly?

The Jacobson Flare provides pilots at all experience levels with a set of clear and simple facts that make landing an aircraft a repeatable skill. It reduces the need for guesswork, perception, judgement and experience. It augments these with the answers to where and how to aim on final, and the timing, extent and speed of the flare.

This simple technique works regardless of variables such as flap settings and flight path angle variations. It eliminates errors from visual illusions due to sloping runways or varying runway widths. It also transfers easily from the smallest training aircraft to the largest airliner.

The result is smooth and accurate landings, in the right place, every time.

## There's an app for that

The system is presented via apps that are available for both Android and iOS (available via their app stores), which cost about the same as one circuit in a light trainer. For more information about the concept, check out [jacobsonflare.com](http://jacobsonflare.com) or watch out for our upcoming in-depth investigation on the [aerocircus](http://aerocircus.com) website.

The Jacobson Flare may at first appear complicated but, to quote a highly experienced jet captain, "it has the elegant simplicity of the safety pin". If a couple of Aero Circus clowns can get their heads around the concept in an hour or two, anyone can.

Maybe it's time to put some flair in your flare. 🍷



David Jacobson flying a B737