

A close-up photograph of a man in a helicopter cockpit. He is wearing a black headset with a microphone, aviator sunglasses, and a dark green polo shirt with a Red Bull logo on the chest. He is smiling slightly. The background shows the cockpit interior and a view of blue water through the window.

Rotorheads

Scott Urschel

Pylon Aviation

Story by Ryan Mason

There are many instantly recognizable names in the helicopter industry. Some recognized for their larger than life personas, or for their many achievements and roles within the industry, such as the late Michael Farikh and would-be-around-the-world-adventurer Sergey Ananov who famously ditched his R22 in the ocean, rescued from an ice floe off the coast of Canada after fears he would not make it.

Scott Urschel is a name that you may not hear mentioned often. But rest assured many people know this quiet achiever in the world of helicopter aviation. With a calm demeanor and quiet tenacity, Urschel has over many years developed a successful business, more ratings than many and flown more helicopter types than some in the industry have flight hours.

His resume lists references that are more of a who's who of accomplished aviation professionals. Those listed – some of the most well known in the industry, call him a loyal and trusted friend.

Urschel started his aviation career in 1986, gaining his private helicopter rating in 1986. Followed in 1989 with a fixed wing rating, gained in a T34 Mentor in a mere 15 hours. Urschel has gone on to obtain commercial single engine and multi-engine and instrument ratings in fixed wing aircraft, CFI and CFII ratings in helicopters and too many other ratings to the list.

Urschel this year, also became one of only two certified by the FAA to fly aerobatics in a helicopter. Gaining a statement of aerobatic competency in the MD500 airframe after learning the craft from aviation legend, friend, and pioneer of helicopter aerobatics Rich Lee. Many in the industry knew Lee as the flight testing brains behind the development of the Hughes (now

MD) 369/500 and the Boeing AH-64 Apache as the Chief Test Pilot for many helicopters over his decades of flight experience.

In another industry first, Urschel was the first of only four pilots ever certified to fly pylon racing, the same type commonly seen in the Red Bull Air Racing circuit and the Reno Air Races. Urschel, along with owner of Dillon Aero, Mike Dillon, Tom Hauptman Owner of Pacific Helicopters and Neil Jones Owner of Quantum Helicopters, still the only four pilots ever to be signed off to race helicopters, in an event that took place, only once, in 1995 in Phoenix, Arizona all flying variants of the MD500.

Ultimately the once-in-a-lifetime event honors went to Hauptman, with Urschel in the 520N coming in second followed by Dillon and Jones at the Phoenix 500.

The idea for the race was originally thought of by Dillon and Urschel who had a constant friendly rivalry. That rivalry led to the challenge being thrown

down by Dillon, leading to a long road of approvals, eventually triumphant with the support of engineering tasks completed by MD to prove the event safe and intervention by Rich Lee to assist in vouching for the safety of the event, leading to the FAA giving once only approval for the event to take place.

When asked about his plethora of ratings and accomplishments, Urschel is typically humble in his response detailing that it hasn't been a desire to learn, but something that has just evolved over time relating to his many ratings.

Over the last 20 years, aerial videography, long-line, flight test for Aerometals, Donaldson, Bell Helicopter and H5 productions as well as the chief pilot for Vertical Aviation and also served as the chief pilot for Dillion Aero.

Below: Urschel with friend and fellow pilot Mike Kennedy flying a P-51D. Kennedy is a conservationist, exotic pet owner and stars in reality television show Airplane Repo.





Top and Middle: Urschel has flown many helicopters, including the Bell 47G (above) and is also on of the few to fly the Eurocopter X-3 at over 200 MPH. Below: Son Caden flying a Ford Tri Motor, one of the many aircraft he has also flown.



#rotorheads Scott Urschel

Dillon Aero manufactures and sells mini guns among other things for the helicopter industry.

As with his accumulated ratings over the years, Urschel's resume of aircraft types flown is extensive, to say the least. Having flown all Robinson models available, the Hughes TH-55 and 269,

all variants of the MD500, the Bell 47G, 206, 206B, 206 L1-L4, 407, 204, 212 and 429. Urschel has also flown almost every commercial Airbus Helicopter available in the USA, including the EC120, EC130, all models of the AS350 and AS355, the H135, H145, and BO-105. Urschel is one of only sixteen pilots in the world that has




flown the Airbus/Eurocopter X3 (also at over 200 Knots.) When he is not flying for business or fun, Urschel also instructs in the H125, H135, H145, Bell 206, MD500 and all Robinson helicopter models. Rarely going more than a day or two without flying either a plane or helicopter, Urschel has amassed almost 9,000 hours in

a helicopter and almost 2,500 hours in fixed wing aircraft that vary from a Ford Tri-Motor, more than a dozen civilian aircraft and warbirds like the P51D Mustang and North American T6A Texan. When not flying aircraft, Urschel spends his time in the business sector of helicopter aviation. Starting out in business in 1987, Urschel opened manufacturing

business Urschel Manufacturing, which made aftermarket Jetski and Harley Davidson parts under brand UMI Racing, later moving into making reloading equipment for Dillon Precision for mini guns. Urschel purchased an MD500D in 1989 under the new business of Pylon Aviation, which was later sold to allow for



A photograph of a helicopter cockpit, showing the instrument panel with various gauges and a digital display. A pilot's hand is visible on the controls. The background shows a view of the ocean and a coastline from an elevated perspective.

the purchase of more CNC machines for the manufacturing business. Urschel later purchased an MD500C used for external load work and local TV news gathering. Pylon no longer operates helicopters for hire, instead now focusing on the sale of helicopters worldwide. Pylon is the launch customer for the new Bell 505. Urschel is also the co-founder of Startstick. A portable APU solution for helicopters that can fit in the baggage compartment, available for helicopters from an R44 all the way up to an EC145, 212, 214. Urschel is also father to daughter Jenna, 29, Kendall 25 and son Caden, who at 13, is taking to

aviation like a fish to water. "Caden first expressed interest in flying at age nine" said Urschel, who would let Caden take the controls of an R44 and the Astar occasionally under close supervision. The younger Urschel has now flown a list of helicopters and fixed wing aircraft that would make some seasoned aviators envious. "I never pressured Caden to follow in my footsteps; he developed his love for aviation purely by osmosis in being around the many aircraft that he sees living on an airpark. Once he expressed that he wanted to learn, I asked a

friend to give him some lessons, which just fueled his passion for it more, and to his credit, he works at it harder than people twice his age" said Urschel. A family man to the core, Urschel when not selling or flying aircraft, can usually be found with Caden, exposing him to adventures that feed his son's passion for adventure. From diving with whale sharks in the Sea of Cortez to indoor skydiving or deep sea fishing, the bond between father and son is obvious to all that encounter

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the pair on one of their many adventures. Caden shares his father's quiet yet friendly persona and thirst for knowledge in both aviation and adventure, his travels now regularly going viral on social media as he learns to fly new aircraft with his father, or embarking on one of many adventures around the country. At the tender age of 13, you can rest assured that the younger Urschel, like his father, will likely continue going from strength to strength in the aviation world quietly achieving his goals and making a difference.

