

NAILING YOUR FIRST 'BOGEY'

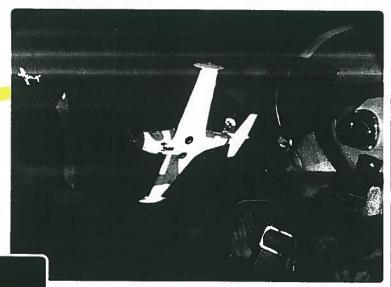
BY BARNEY GIMBEL

T 4,000 FEET OVER the Pacific, the pilot started yelling, "Pull up! Pull up! There he goes!" With my right hand on the plane's stick and my left hand holding on for dear life, I craned my neck to spot my enemy. I yanked back on the stick. My stomach hit the floor. All I could see was the ocean. Whoa. I was upside down.

As I looped the aircraft around, the G-forces hit 5. Suddenly my vision turned black. Ah ha! I remembered what to do from the hour of training I had before I strapped on my parachute. Grunt. Loudly. I did, and as my vision returned, there he was. I lined up my plane behind his. "Pull the trigger! Pull it now!" yelled the piplanes, selling the closest thing to being a military pilot without joining the Air Force. For upwards of \$900 a day, you're briefed on flight safety and aircombat strategy on the ground, thrust behind the cockpit controls alongside an instructor in

real dogfight." (A pilot's license may be a handicap, experts say, because normal pilots spend most of their time avoiding this kind of flying.)

If this sounds like your cup of high-octane tea, look for a program that will keep you



HE'S ON YOUR SIX: Air Combat USA (above) and Fighter Combat International (left) let you experience a dogfight

lot. All the sudden, billows of smoke poured out the back of the other plane.

"Nice job," said my instructor at Air Combat USA (aircombat usa.com), Jim Neubauer, a Navy vet known by his military call sign, "Nails." After flying the plane by myself for almost four hours, it was a relief to hand over the controls to a pro.

Forget simulators, this was the real thing-and anyone can do it. There are half a dozen air-combat schools in the country-programs that put civilians in the cockpits of fighter

the air. And it's more popular than everespecially since the war on Iraq. Air Combat USA, which

operates out of 15 airports nationwide, says its business is growing by 30 percent a year.

And it's not just adrenaline junkies, according to the company's owner, Mike Blackstone. Everybody from grandmothers to 8-year-olds has flown sorties in his 15 years in business. The day I flew, there was a teenage brother and sister duo, a Marine pilot and a printing salesman. "My wife read about it, and here I am," says Clint Penfold, 56. "I'm a huge World War II fan and I really wanted to see what it was like to be in a

safe. Over 15 years, air-combat simulation has led to just three accidents (one of them fatal)an accident rate about half that of private aviation overall, according to the FAA. To maintain that safety record, B. J. Ransbury, co-owner of Arizona's Fighter Combat International (fightercombat.com), says schools follow similar rules of engagement-no dogfighting below 3,000 feet-so instructors have time to recover from a novice's mistakes. Fly with an outfit that has been around for at least three years and has carried customers on at least 1,000 dogfights. Gene Westback, of Sky Fighters (skyfighters.com) in Denver, recommends only flying with military pilots.

TO:

Joe Ozaki

FROM: DATE:

Chad Mashita March 30, 1995

RE:

S.M. Bill

The following is a list of charges that AMFC has paid for SM:

		Date	Amount //
1.	Air Combat USA, Inc.	10/27/94	\$645.00
2.	Micro League Inc Computer Workstation	12/22/94	777.13
3.	New York/Russia trip - personal allocation of 3.29%	10/14/94	177.35
			\$1,599.48

Please find attached copies of the support documents.

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