

My name is Richard "Tex" Coe, and I'm the owner and Chief Operating Pilot of Las Vegas' (and probably the world's) most extreme adventure, Sky Combat Ace. We see so many crazy things during our job flying regular people (and sometimes celebs) through the air at 250 mph that we decided we should start a blog documenting what goes on behind the scenes here. This will be the first of many more to come, so stay tuned, and enjoy:

As the city that knows no bounds, Las Vegas has everything one could ever dream of ... except, of course, a place where you can re-enact a scene from "Top Gun" in a real fighter plane. That's where we at Sky Combat Ace help. My team of fighter pilots and I have taken "high roller," a term synonymous with Las Vegas, and made it literal — you're doing loops, barrel rolls, hammerheads, stalls and spins high above the Strip in one of our state-of-the-art Extra 330 aircrafts. As one of a few civilian aerial combat training centers in the world, Sky Combat Ace promises a thrill of a lifetime. Guided by one of our expert aerobatic pilots, we allow you to take the controls and live out your Iceman and Maverick fantasies by engaging in world-class aerobatics and air-to-air dogfights.

You'll battle it out 6,000 feet in the air against your favorite (or least-favorite) friends and family members in one of our 330-horsepower Extra 330LCs, giving you the thrill of an actual aerial dogfight. Chase your opponent through the Nevada skies as you aim to shoot your adversary using SCA's special effects, and you'll get instantaneous feedback as smoke flows from your opponent's plane.

Not for you? Ditch the tricks and enjoy one of our sightseeing tours, like our breathtaking Las Vegas Night Lights Tour, where we fly you and someone special over the neon lights of the Strip. We provide complimentary transportation to and from the Strip for all aerobatic and sightseeing experiences, and we'll even throw in champagne for the night-flight option.

Even with the busy schedules of the celebrities passing through Las Vegas, many have made time to get in on the ultimate adrenaline rush that is Sky Combat Ace, including UFC's Gray Maynard, Apl.De.Ap of the Black Eyed Peas, Christopher Knight, aka "Peter Brady," the fellas from Incubus and Chelsea Handler of E!'s Chelsea Lately Show, to name a few.

As a former Air Force F-16 fighter pilot, I'm fully aware that any aerial adventure wouldn't be complete without the digs to talk about your flight aerobatics afterward. And seeing as we're in Viva Las Vegas, we built a hangar unlike any other you've ever seen.

Sky Combat Ace's hangar is one of the most unique venues you'll ever visit. We host any kind of party you can imagine complete with a bar (available, of course, only post-flight), darts, pool tables, hoops, a stage, flat-screen TVs and planes — the ultimate bachelor pad or party venue. Our spot is so rad, the Killers filmed their music video in our hangar in recent weeks.

No Las Vegas experience should be complete without the ultimate Sin City thrill ride and a view from the best seat in the city high atop the Strip in one of Sky Combat Ace's aircrafts. Hold on to whatever seat you're reading this from and see for yourself by checking out the video of SCA's high-flying experience:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R XR5YQrplQ&noredirect=1>

Ever wanted to embrace your adventurous side by flying at top speeds and pulling up to 10 Gs upside down, sideways and even backwards?...In Sky Combat Ace's Extra 330LCs you can. We use these planes by choice and design, because, well, as best stated by Ricky Bobby, "I wanna go fast!!"

What makes the planes we use better than the rest? Allow us to tell you! The Extra 330LC is a German-made aircraft that was designed lighter, faster, and more maneuverable than its competition. And for that adventurous side of yours that brought you to us in the first place, this means you can experience speeds of up to 250 mph as well as performing crazy aerobatic maneuvers like Hammerheads, Tailslides, and our favorite—Lomcevaks (Polish for "hangover").

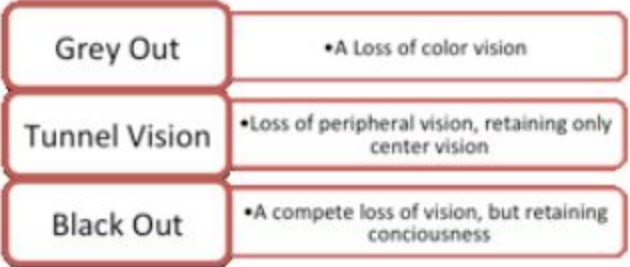
The design of the Extra 330LC allows us to pull speeds up to 418 km/h (or for us Americans who use the Imperial system, 253 mph) with roll rates that can be as fast as 420 degrees per second. We feel it was best described from a recent Wall Street Journalist reporter who recently flew with us when he said: "Like toy jacks, we spin on every axis; the sky and earth swapping places."

The adrenaline-rush you get from our flights comes not just from pulling top speeds, but also from pulling Gs. The Extras in our fleet are tested to withstand up to + or – 20 Gs (this is the force of gravity pushing against your body). Don't worry though, we don't pull more than + or – 10 Gs for your own safety...and ours... because most people cannot withstand more than 9 Gs without passing out. For those of you that don't know what G-force feels like—a rollercoaster loop typically puts 4 Gs on the body, and you can recognize negative Gs as the feeling when a park ride suddenly drops.

Other aircraft owners use some of the Extra 330LCs counterparts for their aerial maneuvers. These planes (such as the Pitts S2C, Extra 300L, and Marchetti SF260) are good aerobatic planes, but they are nowhere near as advanced as our planes. These other planes can perform aerobatic tricks and maneuvers, but they are more limited regarding the type of stunts they can perform and cannot hit the same top speeds as the Extra 330LC. This means our planes allow fellow adrenaline junkies to experience crazier stunts being performed at faster speeds for the adventure of a lifetime—only at Sky Combat Ace.

Here at Sky Combat Ace, we regularly knock the socks off of any and everyone that comes through our doors seeking the ultimate adventure. One thing that some people actually have started to request after seeing videos of our customers who have experienced “G-LOC” aka G-Induced Loss of Consciousness (in Laymen’s terms- you pass out via our planes pulling more G’s than your body can handle...most of the time the customer knocks themselves out from pulling back too hard on the controls trying to recreate a maneuver we show them).

That got us thinking, we perform these crazy aerobatic stunts at up to 250 mph sometimes 14 times a day — and a former F-16 fighter pilot myself, I’m able to pull up to 12 G’s safely and unaffected, but what EXACTLY happens to those of you who request to pass out, and sometimes take that little 7 second nap after sometimes only pulling as little as 5 G’s? Here’s the research to help you better understand the coveted G-LOC, which, will come as good news to all you would-be adrenaline junkies who actually are daring enough to request it— turns out it’s safer than most think, and most of you knuckleheads lose more brain cells knocking a few back at the local casino here in Vegas than knocking yourselves out in our Extra 330’s.



Gravity induced loss of consciousness is better known as G-LOC. It occurs when excessive gravitational force is applied on the body causing a loss of consciousness. G-force is force times the force of gravity, on average a person can withstand anywhere between 2-5 g-forces relatively unaffected. A healthy person will G-LOC around 5-6 Gs, but can withstand up to 9 Gs. When extreme positive G-force is applied (IE Tail slides, Hammerheads, and our favorite, the Lomcevak) , blood drains away from the head towards the feet (which is why we flip you knuckleheads upside down to get that blood going back towards your nogins). After high intensity or longer duration, a few things can happen before a G-LOC (IE times when we instruct you in the safety briefing to tell us when you’re experiencing any or all of these symptoms so we can ease off the throttle):

Recovery is prompt following the removal of the G-force. A period of disorientation can occur and vivid dreams have reported during unconsciousness... we once had a member of the Canadian Tenors who came out to fly with us that he was so glad he experienced G-LOC with us because he was back at home having Christmas dinner with his family who he hadn’t seen in months! Glad we could oblige! While anyone who goes into a G-LOC can look a little like they’re either doing the funky chicken dance or just plain have been sleeping for hours on end, here are the more politically-correct symptoms:

After proper oxygenation (again, the part where we wake you up from your quick slumber by inverting the plane), the only symptoms that may persist are a little fatigue. No one has ever died from a G-LOC, except maybe die from embarrassment from their video.

5. How safe is Sky Combat Ace?

Safety is the #1 priority at Sky Combat Ace. The Extra 330 is built of carbon fiber construction, which is 9 times stronger than steel. It has zero prohibited maneuvers, which is a testament to its strength and engineering. All pilots are certified flight instructors and go through a rigorous training program to qualify for Sky Combat Ace. In addition, the FAA requires all participants to wear parachutes on aerobatic flights.

Just like skydiving and other extreme activities, advanced aerobatics, air combat and low level flying comes with an inherent amount of risk that cannot be entirely eliminated without jeopardizing the inherent nature of the experience. The pilots at Sky Combat Ace do their best to mitigate those risks, but there will always be a risk of accidents due to a variety of factors. All participants must sign a waiver and liability release prior to flying.

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Many have asked me "What does it take to fly and perform maneuvers like a Sky Combat Ace pilot?" and the answer is very simple really— you have to have a passion for it.

When I speak of passion, I mean you have to really love what you are doing. Not the go-through-the-motions type of response many have about their respectable fields of work as in, "Yeah it is cool to do, it and lots of fun, and I can see myself doing this every day." What I mean by "love what you are doing" is that for me, as a pilot, there is not a moment when I am sitting on the ground and not thinking about, talking about and dreaming about flying— strapping on the airplane and letting it become part of you.

When I moved to Henderson for the opportunity to fly for SCA I found a house that is right up against the airport fence so I can see every plane that takes off and lands all day every day. I have told many people who asked me why I came here to do this job, that in a nutshell, this is every pilot's dream job. Our aerobatic maneuvers are the ultimate form of expression for what we do, and the best thing about it is that we get to show people every day from all over the world just how special it is to be able to do what we do.

We are thanked several times a day for making dreams come true for people and the smile alone on their faces is why we are Sky Combat Ace pilots. We share our passion with our customers and make the dreams of others come true, which is the greatest reward that anyone can ask for. Without the bucket-list and dare-to-live dreams of all of you, we could not do what we do— so I thank you all for coming to fly with me and allowing me to let your dreams take flight!

Denis "Smokey" Boissonneault

Sky Combat Ace – Aerobatic Instructor