



Inside NFlightCam

An Inside Look at NFlightCam

By Mike Jones

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Many of the GoPro accessories I own are from Sporty's and GoPro itself, which is probably where most G.A. pilots will start. But following Ewart's advice, I jumped onto the NFlightCam web site and ordered more goodies.



My favorite GoPro mounting system for airplanes with struts. Made of heavy aluminum, this clamp firmly grips the strut without damage to the structure or the paint. The lengthy strap allows it to fit struts of any size. A rock-solid design from NFlightCam.

A couple of items caught my attention as I shopped. First, this little company gets great reviews for both its products and its customer service. Secondly, their prices were very reasonable, lacking the typical aeronautical mark-up. I also noticed their service was excellent; delivery from Texas was just a couple of days. I decided to learn more about these people and what they are doing.

I caught up with Patrick Carter in the back of his camper van, outside of Santa Barbara, CA as he was preparing to jump off a cliff (paragliding, not suicide). Carter knows his way around

things-with-wings: he is a pilot for a major airline, a CFI, an A&P with an IA, and has six years of Alaskan bush flying under his belt. A decade or so ago he was a test pilot for Cessna, performing post-production flight tests for the new airframes coming off the assembly line.



Patrick Carter and Courtney Martin, owners of the NFlightCam specialty web-store which features unique aviation accessories for GoPro cameras. Carter flies for an airline while Courtney keeps the company's web site up-to-date; both offer excellent customer assistance by phone or email.

He's a big Cessna fan, he told me, although he currently owns a Super Cub. "I fly anything I can get my hands on," he said. "I'm a complete addict. My life revolves around flying."

His partner, Courtney Martin, also is a pilot. She runs the NFlightCam web site and keeps customers happy. Although they live in Alaska, to keep their business streamlined they manufacture and ship from a facility in Texas. "All

the manufacturing and machining is contracted out, and the pieces arrive into Dallas,” Carter explained. “We assemble them and ship everything by 3pm.”

Carter originally became interested in cockpit cameras while teaching aerobatics. “I was flying a Pitts at the time, and the cockpit is a terrible classroom, noisy and bumpy and full of distractions,” Carter remembers. “I needed a better way to help my students retain the information. I began to video the experience in the air and then debrief it on the ground. It worked great.” People asked to buy Carter’s specially configured video systems but it was only after he was furloughed from Cessna — during the 2008 recession — he realized he could make a living selling them. “That was not a bad decision, many times over,” he laughed.

“Our external mounts are our biggest sellers,” Carter said about his product line. “We’ve really solved a lot of problems for pilots. I like the way the mounts work, on a tie-down hook or by using a machine screw to attach it to any part of the plane. They’re aviation-grade, and they’re not going to blow off in the airstream.”

I found it odd that I couldn’t buy a GoPro from NFlightCam. In fact, despite their origins they neither make nor sell cameras anymore, and they only support the GoPro product line. “GoPro has about 80% market share, and we have a really close relationship with them,” Carter said. “We couldn’t have that with



On this GoPro 10 camera, notice the NFlightCam replacement battery cover. This hatch voids the waterproofing of the GoPro 10 but allows access to the micro-USB port. With access to that port you can power the camera or record intercom audio, depending upon the cables you employ.

every other knock-off out there. We take care of the big guy, they take care of us, and we can take care of our customers.”

Carter said that he has even called GoPro engineers on behalf of customers who were having problems and together they figured out what's going on. “These new cameras, they're feature rich, they're a bit complex and frustrating at times,” he acknowledged.

Similarly, NFlightCam has no interest in expanding to other markets, such as motorcycle camera mounts or surf board camera mounts. “I run from that stuff. I am obsessed with things that fly and our focus is airplanes,” he said. “I'm a pilot, through and through. I know aviation, and I can't do that with motorcycles or race cars.”

As for their favorite video creators, Carter doesn't play favorites. “There's a lot of great content out there, guys like FlightChops, Trent Palmer, Mike Patey; they're the super-stars. I can tell you our accessories are used by many of the biggest names. We've worked with quite a few of them, and our stuff is everywhere.”

Neither Carter nor Martin spend much time making their own videos these days. Like most of us, Carter struggles with video editing. Editing chews up hours and hours, even with all the horsepower in Final Cut Pro 10. “I shoot video pretty well, but editing definitely is not a strength of mine,” he explained. “When I give flight instruction I debrief with the student using the video. But we never have to chop it up; it never gets published.”

Carter isn't finished with his innovations. In 2017 they launched the Nomad line of microphones accessories which attach to consumer headphones, like the Bose QC35, and turn them into aviation headsets. “This means you get Bose quality for half the price, and you can use the headphones anywhere besides in your airplane,” he said. “It gives you a lot more choice, and when the

technology changes you can upgrade that headset less expensively because microphones haven't changed in 50 years but headsets change every five.”

About the Author

Jonesy is a 3,000-hour commercial-rated pilot who flies a Cessna T210 with most of the seats removed. This allows him to carry tents, sleeping bags, a desk, a cot, two computers, golf clubs and even a generator without noticing the load. Now his poor Cessna is going to be burdened with even more junk, both inside and out, as he videos his arrival at Sun-n-Fun in just two months. He's always accessible at PilotMike2012@gmail.com.

