

## 'Flying boats' captivate alum, who celebrates them on film

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***This legendary plane was used by the Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard on search and rescue missions***

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Working at an independent movie rental store was the perfect job for young Dirk Braun (Film'11), growing up in Connecticut.

"I loved working there; it was a highlight of my youth," Braun said. "My mother is a cineaste and loves foreign and independent films. She was always encouraging us to watch those types of films."

This was during the VHS era, so Braun would rewind the cassettes, restock them and even watch a few movies while on shift, adding, "I watched as many movies as I could."

That little snapshot of his youth underscores the long path to where Braun has arrived today, a professional filmmaker who is debuting his film—a documentary called "[Flying Boat](#)"—this summer.

It's a 77-minute piece on the legendary Grumman Albatross, a seaplane the Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard used in search and rescue missions during the latter half of the 20th century. Braun resurrects the plane's story and history through 10 passionate mechanics and pilots who restore, fly and maintain the few remaining planes.



Dirk Braun (Film'11)

After more than five years of production, Braun will unveil the film on July 25 for one of the aviation industry's most prominent weeks, the 68th annual Experimental Aviation Association meeting in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where more than 600,000 people are expected attend. Additionally, the plane featured in the film will do a special appearance on July 24.

The first time Braun saw an image of the plane was during his freshman year at the University of Colorado Boulder. A friend had started a men's accessories business and chose the plane as his company's logo. It left an indelible mark.

"The image never left me," Braun said. "I deemed the albatross the greatest adventure machine and was fascinated by its capability and design, and all of that transferred to my making this film. As a person interested in film, I pictured flying the albatross to iconic and exotic places and could envision that being something very spectacular."

Braun also credits his CU Boulder film classes where he dissected and analyzed movies.

"The way we did it was something that has greatly helped in the film's development," he said. "The screenwriting class was also a highlight ... hearing other people's work and discussing the stories as a class."

He said the film started out "very small, but my ambitions were big, and the ideas grew, especially after meeting the potential characters of the film who speak with a sincere appreciation of this great machine."

Braun describes the work behind the film as, "a huge rollercoaster ride" of efforts and emotions.

"There are so many years of effort of not knowing where the film would go and whether or not I actually had a worthy enough story and whether or not I could finish it," he said.

"We were well into postproduction, and I continued to go back and film new scenes or had ideas for different ones. It was a very long process, but after each shoot was accomplished, it was extremely satisfying."

After the showing in Oshkosh, Braun anticipates a larger theatrical run by making the movie available via streaming and on DVD.

In celebration of the movie, Braun donated sales from 100 signed and framed limited edition fine art "Flying Boat" film posters to the Pan Am Museum Foundation, the Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh and the Aspen Flight Academy.

Braun has plans for more filmmaking on aviation and surfing.

"I also welcome other projects and love to explore and investigate them in as much capacity as I can," he said.

*More information on the film is available on the [Flying Boat website](#).*