

# American Aircraft CEO Dies After Wingsuit Helicopter Jump

DAREDEVIL BOSS

Kirk Hawkins leapt to his death in the Swiss Alps on Tuesday.

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Reporter

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Ann Johansson/Corbis via Getty Images

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The CEO of an American aviation company has died after jumping out of a helicopter in the Swiss Alps. Kirk Hawkins, the 58-year-old founder of ICON Aircraft, leapt from a helicopter in a wingsuit near the peak of the 13,000-foot Eiger with three others. Hawkins, a former U.S. Air Force F-16 pilot, was gliding along the mountain's east face when he collided with trees and crashed, Swiss police confirmed. An investigation into the accident is underway. Hawkins co-founded ICON Aircraft in 2006 with longtime friend Steen Strand, building the company around their signature A5 light sport aircraft. Strand announced the death in an emotional LinkedIn post

Wednesday, calling Hawkins “the most extraordinary person I’ve ever known, or ever will know.” “He devoured life experiences most of us would never touch,” Strand wrote. “He was damn good at assessing risks, probably because he took so many ... He’d get you into tricky situations, but he’s also the one you wanted beside you when things got dicey.” Hawkins’ résumé included degrees from Clemson and Stanford, combat flying for the Air Force, and business school at Stanford before launching ICON. Strand wrote that in his final moments, his friend likely “laughed one last time before the exit.”