

## Aviation News

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### ICON Aircraft co-founder Kirk Hawkins dies in wingsuit crash in Switzerland

ICON Aircraft co-founder and former Air Force pilot Kirk Hawkins died on Tuesday in a wingsuit crash in Switzerland.

According to Swissinfo, Hawkins jumped from a helicopter with three other people then flew along the east ridge of the Eiger summit. He then collided with trees west of the summit and fell to the ground. Emergency services, along with a Swiss-Air Rega crew and a specialist from Swiss Alpine Rescue were deployed and found his body. It is currently unknown how the incident happened.

Local police did not immediately release Hawkins's identity, but said that the accident will be investigated.

"Kirk was the most extraordinary person I've ever known, or ever will know," said Steen Strand, who cofounded ICON Aircraft with Hawkins in 2006. "He started life with nothing and climbed to the top—Clemson, Stanford, the Air Force (F-16's), then Stanford again for business school. At ICON, he led the charge to create the most badass recreational aircraft in history. His new startup was poised to transform the world again."

According to AOPA, ICON Aviation announced the amphibious A5 light sport aircraft at EAA AirVenture Oshkosh in 2008. The aircraft earned FAA exemption to the LSA weight limit in 2013. The company and Hawkins introduced the A5 to market as deliveries began in 2016.

AOPA reports that Hawkins was forced out of his job as CEO in Nov. 2018. He issued claims against the company afterward, which were eventually used in its bankruptcy case in 2024. While the court approved ICON selling its assets and its settlement agreements, Hawkins was excluded from the settlements. He reportedly remained a party in the still-open bankruptcy case at the time of his death.

"In recent years, he became more philosophical and emotional, always pushing to evolve into a better version of himself," said Strand. "And in the end, he went out as he lived—doing something thrilling that he loved. I just wish it happened 30 years later."