

PROFESSIONAL PILOT



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Dr Ian Fries has used business aircraft to support his orthopedic and aeromedical practice around the US for decades, and recently bought a Daher TBM 960. Both are shown here on the Corporate Air ramp at VRB (Vero Beach FL).



Ian Blair Fries, MD

Senior HIMS Aviation Medical Examiner Ian Fries flies all over the United States to educate and evaluate pilots with aeromedical concerns.

Rafael Henríquez
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Doctor Ian Blair Fries is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and FAA Senior Human Intervention Motivational Study (HIMS) aviation medical examiner (AME). He evaluates orthopedic patients concerning causality, impairment, disability, and their ability to return to work. His aeromedical practice focuses on pilots with medical conditions that require special issuance to return to the cockpit. He is proud to serve as aeromedical consultant for several teamster airlines, and as chairman of the AOPA Board of Aviation Medical Advisors (BAMA). Active in the HIMS program, Dr. Fries assists pilots with

recovery from alcohol and/or drugs. "Every pilot I speak to has a potentially disqualifying condition," explains Dr. Fries. "It is rewarding to facilitate pilots motivated to recover, and to show the FAA they can safely return to flying."

Becoming a flying doctor

After finishing medical training at Columbia P&S, New York Hospital, and Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, Dr. Fries joined the United States Air Force (USAF) and stayed there for more than 2 years as an orthopedic surgeon. During that time, he learned how to fly, and actually soloed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (AFB). "The advantage of soloing there was the 12,000-ft-long runway, which meant I could do 3 touch and goes in a Cessna 150 without re-

entering the pattern," he says.

Shortly after, Dr. Fries purchased a Bellanca Super Viking. As a consultant to the Air Force Surgeon General, he visited various AFBs to examine orthopedic patients. He was provided special permission to fly his own airplane into AFBs where he was assigned temporary duty. "That's when I first realized the value of general aviation as a medical practice tool," he adds.

After he completed his military service, Dr. Fries entered private orthopedic practice. Because he was a trained flight surgeon, he qualified for appointment as an FAA AME. He later became a senior AME, substance abuse professional (SAP), and medical review officer (MRO). In aviation, he progressed as an ATP, certified flight instructor – instrument (CFII), and a Learjet type rating.



Dr Ian Fries with his new Daher TBM 960 on the Corporate Air ramp at VRB (Vero Beach FL).



"For many decades, Dr Ian Blair Fries has been an accomplished accordion player, and he carries his instrument everywhere he travels. The image of a red carnation adorns his TBM 960, symbolizing his commitment to his patients. This iconic paint design is by Craig Barnett of Scheme Designers."



man was Nicolas Chabbert, who is now senior vice president of Daher's aircraft division," he reveals. "He's been a wonderful friend ever since."

Dr Fries has operated TBMs for more than 20 years. After the 700, he moved on to an 850, a 900, and then a 940 before upgrading to the 960 model he purchased recently. "In each case, the trade-in and sale were expertly handled by Vice President of Daher Sales Michel Adam de Villiers," he says. "Each model bested the previous one in terms of avionics and performance. And this has furthered my friendships at Daher."

TBM 960

Dr Fries's experience with his new TBM 960 gets even better. "If you buy a new TBM, it comes with a 5-year warranty, which means Daher handles everything, including warranty repairs and the first 5 annuals. I know what my new TBM will cost for the next 5 years. Yes, I may have to purchase tires, engine oil, and fuel, but Daher is handling essentially everything else."

The new TBM 960 is powered by an improved version of Pratt & Whitney Canada's PT6 engine – the PT6E-66XT. It is equipped with full-authority digital engine control (FADEC), which lowers fuel burn and improves the aircraft's range (1730 nm) and max cruise speed (330 kts). "There are many advantages to having a FADEC-equipped engine, but a major one to me is that I press a button and the system handles the engine start entirely," he explains. "Obviously you have to monitor it, but if there's a problem, FADEC will likely handle it."

Dr. Fries continues, "The engine is very smooth. You don't use the

Daher turboprops

Dr Fries flew a Piper Malibu and a Malibu Mirage before purchasing a turboprop (TP). "I have offices in Vero Beach FL and also in New Jersey. I need to fly back and forth," he explains. "If you look at the map, the shortest distance takes you some 150 nm offshore. I had experienced engine failures – once over the Midwest and once in New Jersey – so my wife insisted I acquired a TP. Considering the long-distance and over-water flying, I needed the added safety and altitude offered by a pressurized turbine engine aircraft."

At that time, Dr Fries was president of the Flying Physicians Association, and met a TBM salesman at one of their meetings, who would put him in the left seat of a TBM 700, which Dr Fries ultimately bought. "That sales-



With practices in Florida and New Jersey, Dr Fries performs orthopedic and aeromedical evaluations.



TBM 960 comes equipped with a Garmin G3000 flight deck and is certified for single-pilot operations. Bose noise cancelling headsets come with the airplane, too.



thrust lever much while in flight. You tell your plane what you want, and FADEC adjusts the thrust to the necessary parameters. For example, if you want a 1500-ft-per-minute descent at 215 kts, you just program it, and the airplane will do it."

This is particularly helpful for single pilot operations in busy metropolitan areas such as Miami or New York, where Dr Fries often operates. If ATC mandates a specific speed, all the pilot has to do is set the speed, and the autopilot and autothrottle will handle it.

In the cockpit, Dr Fries benefits from a Garmin G3000 suite with touchscreen controls, emergency descent on depressurization, emergency autoland, and controller-pilot datalink communications (CPDLC). GWX 8000 radar automatically adjusts gain and tilt, suppresses ground

returns, and interprets imaging findings. "While there's a lot of artificial intelligence and automation, the complexity of the systems and how they could malfunction results in a steep learning curve," he declares.

Training

Dr Fries attends Simcom, the official training center for Daher TBM aircraft. New TBM owners are provided with 2 training seats for the first year of aircraft ownership. "I'm actually on the Simcom committee representing the TBM Owners and Pilots Association (TBMOPA), he remarks. "We have monthly meetings to discuss TBM training. This is important as the complexity of the TBMs has increased, as has our need for expanded training and revised teaching tools."

Home base support

Dr Fries operates out of VRB (Vero Beach FL), where Corporate Air has taken care of his FBO needs for approximately 30 years. VRB authorities recently announced that they will have US Customs there, which will be of advantage to pilots, particularly those who live in the Vero Beach area.

With offices in New Jersey that he visits frequently, Dr Fries flies into MJX (Toms River NJ). But his TBM 960 really takes him all over the US. "Recently, I was a speaker at Cornerstone of Recovery in Knoxville TN," he says. "This is a major alcohol and drug rehabilitation facility with a dedicated pilot program. At any given time, there will be a group of pilots there. It's one of several places where I refer pilots who need resi-



Dr. Fries does a walk-around inspection of his TBM 960 inside a Corporate Air hangar, removing protectors before a flight.



Corporate Air has taken care of Dr Fries's aircraft for more than 30 years. He calls the FBO in advance, and they can have his plane filled up and ready to go.



And I said, 'You ought to start to learn to be a pilot. It'll make a difference in terms of how FAA looks at you. Yes, you're collecting data for them – that's your job. But if they also know that you're a pilot, that makes a very big difference in how they look at you. And, more importantly, it will change how you look at aviation.'

An advocate for pilots

Dr Fries is actively involved in modernizing medical certification for pilots. He is well aware of the lengthy wait times for FAA decisions concerning special issuances, and the lengthy and expensive testing and consultations often required. He recognizes difficulties pilots have communicating with the Aeromedical Certification Division (AMCD), and the often confusing and legally threatening letters they received from FAA. He is concerned the time, expense, and complexity required for special issuances may discourage pilots from sharing their medical information with the FAA. This in turn may adversely impact aviation safety. If you develop a medical condition, begin taking a medicine, have a DUI or positive drug test, or are hospitalized, do not just walk into you AME's office expecting certification. First discuss how to facilitate certification with your AME and/or an aeromedical consultant before taking formal steps.

dential rehabilitation. I plan to be in Denver CO teaching new HIMS AMEs at the HIMS basic course. And I expect to entertain and report at AirVenture at OSH (Oshkosh WI)."

Dr Fries uses his TBM 960 predominantly for work. "Wherever these meetings are, I'll fly there," he says. "I can use smaller airports that are closer to my destinations. It's a very effective business tool because it saves time. Otherwise, leaving Vero Beach requires a 2-hour drive to Orlando or West Palm Beach, and arrival one or more hours before the flight leaves. Having my own aircraft, all I need to do is call Corporate Air in advance, drive 15 minutes to VRB where my TBM is fueled and ready, and 3 hours later I'm in New Jersey. There is no way I can beat that with a commercial airline."

An advocate for aviation

Dr Fries recommends his fellow AMEs become pilots, because it makes a difference when talking to pilots seeking medical certification. "The type of work I do addresses complex medical issues," he points out. "When a pilot comes to my office, typically we need to talk about a DUI, or a mental or medical condition. When they find out I am a pilot, suddenly their eyes open, because now the communication is different."

But Dr Fries also has a message for anyone who may be interested in a career in aviation. Even if it is not to be a pilot, he strongly recommends at least becoming a student pilots, because that's how you truly become a part of the aviation community. "Of course, it is even better to learn to fly as pilot in command!" he says.

"Recently, I was speaking to a person who has decided to work for FAA, looking into and collecting data for them.



Daher TBM 930 flies over the French Alps. This aircraft belonged to Dr Fries before he upgraded to a brand new 960 model.

The logo for Daher, featuring a stylized red square icon to the left of the word "DAHER" in white, uppercase letters.

TBM **960** *DIGITAL* *POWER*

Our latest TBM very fast turboprop aircraft delivers the full benefits of digital power. Taking maximum advantage of today's turboprop technology, the single-engine TBM 960 provides high efficiency for more sustainability. In its Prestige cabin, passengers regulate temperature and ambiance lighting with exactitude. Featuring outstanding safety systems such as the TBM e-copilot® and HomeSafe™ emergency autoland, the TBM 960 is the quintessential TBM.

***SAFETY & EFFICIENCY
ARE OUR PRIORITIES.***



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