

Compact Workshop 12—Flying Sherline Workshop/Jason Chastain



Home, sweet home and Jason's travelling shop. Jason is the copilot of an aerial tanker. He and the crew are constantly on call during the fire season and travel from fire to fire. They can't venture far from the plane, so his tiny shop is on board. He builds small IC engines between fires but must be ready to pack up and go at a moment's notice.



As you can see, the compact work area is a good fit for the Sherline Model 4000 lathe. The tool box was purchased at Lowes.

And you think you don't have much shop space...

Jason Chastain has been flying for 12 years, the last six of which are in aerial tankers. He is under contract with Neptune Aviation out of Missoula,

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Montana as copilot of one of their Lockheed P2V “Neptune” tankers. He flies in the USA during the summer fire season and then goes to Australia for the winter, which is summer over there and does the same thing. It's a pretty nomadic existence, and the runway is his home for most of the year. Each night the crew checks into a motel. The next morning they pack up their belongings, load them into the plane and stand by near the aircraft awaiting a call to fight a fire out of the current airport or another somewhere else. If no call comes, they go back into town and check into the motel for another night. When not flying, there is time for hobbies, but very little room for tools.

One day, Sherline dealer Jim Clark of Billings, Montana got a call from Jason who was in town to fight a large forest fire nearby and had a day off. His firefighting aircraft was parked at the nearby airport and he wanted to acquire a small lathe to keep on board to help him build small IC engines between flights. Jim loves airplanes and this sounded interesting, so he took a ride out to the airport to get these photos after delivering a lathe and accessories to Jason. Jim says the nifty black box into which the lathe fits so nicely is an SUV box from Lowes and costs under \$30.00. It would work work well for a traveling shop in any kind of RV, not just an airplane.



For you aircraft buffs, here is another of the company's aerial tankers. It is an [AirTractor 802F](#) made in Texas. It may look small, but take a closer look at the size of the seat in the cockpit, the 5-bladed, turbine-driven prop and other details to get a better idea of how big it really is. The manufacturer claims it is the world's largest single engine airplane. The 802 is designed as a crop duster, with the “F” model being specialized as a water dropping fire fighter. (No, there is no machine shop in this plane...yet.)