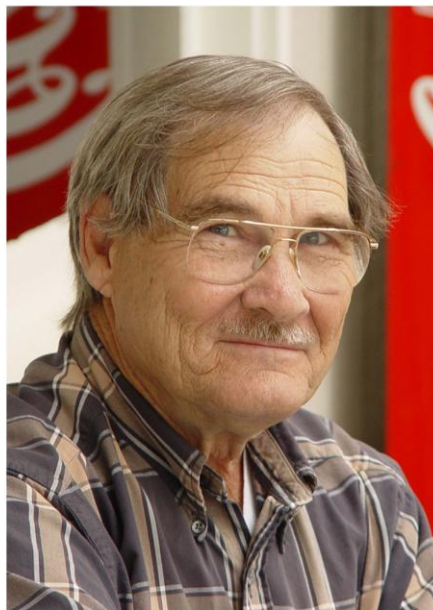


## **Jerry Davis**



## **Jerry Davis**

### **MEMBER PROFILE**

**Where to Start? Born Jerry M. Davis, May 15, 1936. Raised on a small farm about one mile south of a small town of Stedman, NC, eleven miles east of Fayetteville. Attended school at Stedman one through twelve grades same school building. Graduated last Thursday of May 1954. Next day enlisted in the United States Air Force. Basic training at Lackland AFB, Texas. Technical school, (Radar Operator) at Keesler AFB, Biloxi, Mississippi. First assignment French Morocco, near**

**Casablanca. Made the ocean crossing on a troop ship, USS General Blatchford. Arrived in Casablanca on November 6, 1954. While in Morocco, I joined a French Flying Club, the club had two J-3 cubs and a PT-26. Got my French Private ticket in Morocco. Took the Air Force exams for Aviation Cadets, the final exam being in Germany. Rotated back to the States in May 1957, assigned to Keesler AFB as radar instructor.**

**Got my Pilot Training Class assignment and went back to Lackland AFB for pre-flight training. Pre-flight was July, August and September 1957. Primary training was at Mariana Florida. Primary was civilian contract training. Thirty hours in the Beechcraft T-34, then 100 hours in the North American T-28A. Left there for Basic Pilot Training at Greenville AFB, Mississippi. Basic training was in the Lockheed T-33A. Training there was back to Air Force instruction. We got 120 hours in the T-33, graduated in the latter part of November 1958 and was commissioned as Second Lieutenant with wings.**

**First assignment out of Pilot Training was advanced training at Phoenix, Arizona, Williams AFB. Aircraft was the famous North American F-86F. That was six months and a little over 100 hours in the F-86. From there was drafted in to the Strategic Air Command.**

**After a month of Survival School at Stead AFB, Reno, Nevada, my assignment to SAC started in Wichita, Kansas, McConnell AFB. B-47E ground school and flying . That took about six months, left there in December 1959 and was assigned, (I call it exiled), to Schilling AFB, Salina, Kansas, near the center of the United States, just 80 miles north of Wichita and about 200 miles or so west of Kansas City. The only bright side to the B-47 assignment was the fact that we were gone from Salina probably about fifty percent of the time. We also had a real good Aero Club on the base, the Aero Club had two T-34 aircraft, several Cessna 172's and 150's and a Cessna 195 with a 300 HP Shaky Jake engine. The requirements for the T-34 were over 100 hours and a private ticket, not many qualified for that, so myself and another B-47 pilot had a T-34 that was almost exclusive. I liked mine and he liked his, so we didn't have a conflict. It's hard to understand but most of the B-47 pilots did not enjoy flying light aircraft and believe it or not most of the Airline Pilots are the same, not interested in fun flying. In the spring of 1964 for the lack of anything else exciting to do, I joined a Glider Club at Wichita, Kansas and experience the joy of soaring. I purchased a Cherokee II sailplane from a fellow at McCook, Nebraska. The exile to Salina, Kansas lasted till February 1965, the base was**

closing and I had an assignment to Plattsburgh AFB, New York, but luck shined of me and I got a voluntary assignment to the Lockheed U-2 program at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona. My last B-47 flight was to deliver a B-47 to Boneyard at Tucson.

Got to the U-2 assignment in February of 1965, I reported about a week early and was the first of seven new pilots assigned to the program. The training was assigned, first come first served. I was the junior in time and rank of the seven but for once being early made a difference. The training was one pilot at the time. The second one didn't start till I was finished and so on. My first duty after training was at Barksdale AFB, La. We were flying the Cuban missions from that location at the time. It was Operating Location 19, (OL-19). Was there for two months and back to Tucson for a month then to the Far East to Operating Location 20 at Ben Hoi, AFB, about 15 miles from Saigon. That was November 1965, January and February 1966. Then back to Tucson for a while and back to Vietnam for a third tour, November & December 1966 and January 1967. While on that tour another pilot suggested that we get out and go to the Airlines. I told him that I had too much time in the Air Force to consider that. He told me that I could finish my twenty in the Reserves or National Guard. When we got back stateside I checked with the Administrative Sargent to see if it as possible to finish my twenty in the Reserve or Guard, he informed me that it was possible, retirement pay would not start till age sixty. While at Tucson the glider flying was continued and the soaring in Arizona was fabulous. I made a side trip to Colorado Springs and experienced the joy of Mountain Wave soaring, attained an altitude of 34,200 feet in 1966. Got rid of the Cherokee II and got a Schweizer I-23 sailplane.

June 1967, I was released from Active Duty and was on my way to Kansas City and Trans World Airlines. I had a little over thirteen years active duty in the Air Force. My domicile out of training was Kansas City.

At the Kansas City Domicile I flew the Convair 880, Boeing 727 and Douglas DC-9. Of the three the DC-9 was my favorite, we had the first model of the DC-9 with no leading edge devices, we called them our little red racers. Joined the Air National Guard at Lincoln, Nebraska. Checked out and flew the Republic RF-84F till 1972 then we got the RF-4C. I finished my twenty and departed the Guard in June 1974. I bought a 1956 Cessna 182 to commute to the Guard at Nebraska and tow the sailplane. I think maybe in 1969 or 1970 I managed to acquire the love of my life, the J-3, N-2139M. I always knew there was

something that was not J-3 about that J-3. in 1976 I found out why, decided to rebuild, when we got the fabric off we learned that it has an L-4 fuselage, so I decided to bring it back to life looking like a L-4.

While based at Kansas City, I met my wife on a flight from Kansas City to Detroit, back through Kansas City to Phoenix. That was June 1971. She was based at Kansas City, was from Rocky Mount, NC, she didn't drink or smoke so I had finally met a mate. We were married in August 1974. Her father was an old time surveyor in Rocky Mount, her mother was the owner of Virginia's Dress Shop.

In 1976, we purchased a home in Rocky Mount and visited home quite often from Kansas City. In January 1980, we decided to transfer to New York and experience the international operation of TWA. So we moved to Rocky Mount and commuted to New York for our flights.

From the time I met my father-in-law in 1972 till he died in 1983, I followed him around, on his survey jobs, getting in the way as much as possible. When he died in 1983, my wife and mother-in-law wanted me to keep the survey business alive. An Engineer and Surveyor, (employed at Mitchell Building Co.) was a church member at the same church as my in-laws told me, he would be the resident Surveyor while I prepared for the exams. I took the surveyor in training test in the spring of 1985 and the final surveyor test in the fall of 1985. Was registered in January 1986, my Engineer-Surveyor partner transferred to Maryland in the fall of 1986. I was left with a surveying business and flying for TWA.

In 1991, it appeared that Carl Ichan was attempting to scuttle TWA. I decided to take early retirement, age 55. When reaching 55 and had enough employment at TWA, it was possible to retire at no actuarial reduction in retirement pay. I managed to retire before Carl completely screwed TWA. I retired the last day of May 1991 and gave complete attention to surveying.

I met Frank Kidd several years ago and entered an agreement with him concerning the J-3 (L-4). We have an agreement that seems to function good, we both love the aircraft and through him I met the EAA group at WO3.

Every year since retirement from TWA, I have taken at least one long vehicle trip. It generally lasts about two weeks. Have hit all the lower 48 states and Alaska. This year I have made three trips. I have an old

**school mate from Stedman that enjoys traveling by vehicle. So we just head west most of the time and drive till we think it's about time to head back. My brother-in-law from Stedman has started going with me on the fall trips. For the past several years I have attended the 310<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing reunion. That was the Bomb Wing at Salina, Kansas. Have been to one U-2 reunion, that was in 2000. I might go to the next one in 2005, that will be the fifty year mark for the U-2.**

**My Mother-in-Law died last Thanksgiving Day, leaving the dress shop to my wife. She continues to operate the dress shop as Virginia's, her name is Virginia and goes by Jenny. She is thirteen years my junior. When TWA was bought by American she became an American flight attendant, the TWA group was put on the bottom of the American seniority list, and in June 2003 she was furloughed and there doesn't seem to be much of a chance of her being recalled. We have discussed her taking retirement but no decision has been reached. My survey office is the second floor of the Dress Shop building. No children, one dog that I found as a pup on a survey job in northeast Edgecombe County, he was living in a culvert.**

**- Jerry Davis**