

## MEMBER PROFILE – Guilford Mooring

I grew up on a small farm in south Rocky Mount about halfway between RWI and the old Rocky Mount downtown airport. Capital Airlines had DC-3 Service into Rocky Mount and would turn final over our place when they were using runway 3. There was a lot of flying activity at the old airport and I spent a lot of Sunday afternoons sitting on the fence watching airplanes come and go, and sometimes actually getting a ride. I got my first airplane ride in 1952, and was in the Civil Air Patrol for a while. I also built many model airplanes during this period. I remember the small models were 10 cents, nest size was 25 cents and the really big ones were one dollar. Dad would usually go to town on Saturday morning and would bring me one back.

After graduation from high school I enlisted in the Air Force to fly. Now it makes sense to join the Air Force if you want to be around airplanes and flying. Right? Wrong! I spent my entire Air Force career on early warning radar sites on such exotic places as the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. If you ever saw the movie Dancing with Wolves, there it is. Now ain't that a nice place to be for a nineteen year old young man looking for adventure in aviation? The only excitement in South Dakota was the Cuban Missile Crisis, now that really got my attention. My next duty station was on a radar site in Montana just outside Glacier National Park. I loved the mountains and the activities up there, both summer and winter. I finished my Air Force career and got married. We moved to Wilmington, NC and we had our first son. I worked in Wilmington for about three years, still wanting to fly but could not afford the ten dollars an hour for the airplane and four dollars for the instructor.

While living in Wilmington I was fortunate to get a job as a Radar Operator down at Cape Canaveral, Florida, working at tracking stations at the Cape and throughout the Bahamas and South Atlantic. This was my life's work. Our country was on the way to the moon and beyond, and it was exciting to be part of it. I worked many interesting launches from the Cape; some successful, some not so successful.

The evening that the three astronauts died in the accident on the pad, the crew I was on was running transponder code tests with them. Chaffey, Grissom, and White were really nice people, especially Gus Grissom. Many of those early astronauts were arrogant and aloft, especially John Glenn.

I was working second shift at the cape and going to flying school during the day. Ralph Neal was also working at the Cape and learning to fly. I was flying at Melbourne, FL and he was flying at Merritt Island, FL, but we never met down there. I decided if I could not fly in the Air Force I would do it on my own. I completed my Private, Multi-engine, and Commercial ratings during this time. While working at the Cape I worked with and met some interesting people. There was Peter Hoffmanheiden, who was a scientist with Walker Van Braun working on the German V2 rocket program during WWIL I also met Ernest Gahn author of many flying novels including the Fate is the Hunter. This should be required reading for anyone getting a license to fly, I also met some of the astronauts, some foreign leaders of government. It was during this time frame that our great president from Texas was making speeches about butter and bullets, and how he was going to abolish poverty and make the world safe for democracy. The money for bullets and butter came straight out of the space program. The cuts in the program included my job. Our family, which now included two boys, moved back to the Raleigh Durham area.

I continued working on my flying at Raleigh Durham Aviation in Raleigh and finished my instrument rating.

Job demands dictated a move to Winston-Salem, working on a project with RJ Reynolds Tobacco Co. I met Herman Sutton, an electrician with Reynolds. Herman was a part time flight instructor building time to get on with Piedmont Airlines. Herman owned the champ that we are all so familiar with. We spent many happy hours flying that airplane all over the Piedmont of North Carolina. The stories can now be told, because the Statute of Limitations have run out. Not enough room here to tell all. Herman died in an accident at Twin Lakes Airport just west of Winston-Salem in a Globe Swift Density Altitude accident.

The job now required a move to Canada. This move included one more son. Did not fly any in Canada. Too cold.

The job now took us to Columbus, Ohio for nine months. Columbus had a lot of aviation activity, but it is not my favorite place to live. Glad to get back to North Carolina. The next move was to Durham, NC and I continued flying at Raieigh Durham Aviation. I completed my instructor ratings there and began instructing at the Chapel Hill Flying Club at the UNC airport in Chapel Hill. We taught many Doctors, Lawyers and others to fly. If you want to see a successful flying club operation you should check them out. They are no longer on the Chapel Hill Airport, but have moved to Sanford, Lee County airport and operate under the Carolina Flying Club name ( I think.)

While at Chapel Hill, I taught John Miller, the builder of Steve Redding's Sky Bolt to fly. The whole time I knew John his passion was to build a Sky Bolt. We worked many hours on this project, and my fingerprints are all over the inside of that airplane. Hunter Sullivan assures me that he has removed all those parts. John was from Australia and the circle with kangaroo and boomerang represents his home. The N number N919JM was the area code for Chapel Hill and his initials. The top wing of the airplane was built in John's dining room continuing on into the living room of his home. This may have had something to do with John's divorce. There was also another student that was obsessed with Stearmans. Pete Chestnut spent many years collecting Stearman Parts, Pieces and information on these WWH Primary Trainers. These Parts and Pieces were stored in a cow stable on Hogan's Airport just west of the current Chapel Hill Airport. This airport has long been the victim of the developer's bulldozer's blade. This stable also housed the mascot of the tUVC's football team's mascot, Ramaseas the RAM. This the Ram that NC State Students would kidnap every State, Carolina game and Paint State Red, returning it to Carolina during the halftime. The Tarheel Goat was in one stall and the stearman parts were in the next stall. Pete and Joe Hurdel, a mechanic with many years' experience with round engines, steel tube and fabric aircraft started restoring the airplane. Joe had a little airport just west of Mebane, NC. This airport is still on the chart but Joe has long ago flown into the sunset. Quite a source of flying stories and nostalgia, or nausea. Pete collected parts and pieces from ail over the southeastern United States. This aircraft was also involved in a divorce. Be careful Tom. The aircraft pieces were purchased by Tom Gregorski and moved to Lake Ridge Aeropark. I also did a lot of instruction off that field. It is so rewarding to see that airplane flying. If while standing close to this airplane you detect the faint odor of goat, remember it spent part of its life with a goat for a hangar mate. I was close to all three of these aircraft and I am feeling fortunate to see all

three of them flying again. It is through the efforts of dedicated EAA members that keep these classic aircraft flying.

Keep up the good work!  
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