

THE 461^{ER} PILOT PROFILE:



ARNIE ZIMMERMAN

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF EAA 461?

About 29 years

WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN AVIATION?

In 1943, I was building model airplanes on the kitchen table with my Mother's help, and I have been involved with model aviation ever since.

From hand-launched gliders, to free flight, to radio control, and now electric RC.

My first model was a Wright Flyers model airplane. I used to build RC planes with Carl Goldberg, who was a kit manufacturer, I built the first twin engine RC model that Carl made a kit out of.



HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU HAVE TO DATE?

I have over 8,000 hours.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN FLYING?

I received my Private Rating June 2, 1955 63 years ago.
I soloed in February of 1955.

YOUR FIRST SOLO IS A DATE YOU'LL NEVER FORGET... TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST SOLO EXPERIENCE?

February 1955, in a 1946 7AC Champ.
My Instructor and I went out for a lesson. Midway, we landed and talked about what we did.
I got in the airplane, he went and propped it for me, then came up to me and said "Take it around three times..." I sang all the way around the pattern, by myself. ☺

WHEN DID YOU SOLO AND WHERE?

I soloed February of 1955 at University of Illinois Champagne, Urbana

HAVE YOU EVER SERVED IN THE MILITARY, IF SO, WHAT BRANCH AND WHEN?

No, I was exempt.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE AVIATION MUSEUM THAT YOU HAVE VISITED OR WANT TO GO TO?

I have been to the Dayton Museum and the Palm Springs, California Aviation Museum

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE AVIATION BOOK AND/OR MOVIE?

I enjoy reading Richard Bach books.
I am also very proud of my 8 aviation log books.
MASH is my favorite TV show.

WHAT RATINGS DO YOU HOLD?

Instrument, Single Engine Sea, Glider, Multi Engine,
Instrument, Commercial

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE CHAPTER ACTIVITIES?

I was the Treasurer of Chapter 461 for many years, and I was the original Young Eagles Coordinator for 18 years.
Wayne has been a big inspiration for the past several years to Chapter 461.
I wish I was 30 years younger,
I would follow in his footsteps!
Meanwhile:
Oshkosh is always a great time,
and I am happy that we host Young Eagles.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE AIRPLANE and WHY?

Breezy – I flew N3AZ for 38 years, and gave over 12k rides to youngsters and adults, from all over the World. It was an interesting plane, originally built by Carl Unger in 1964. In 1968, I bought my first Breezy. In 1998, Friling, Tichy, Steichen and Hager all helped built the ARNY Breezy.

Piper Aztec – I owned for N7AZ 46.5 years. I had always taken care of it, and it had always taken care of me... I've flown all over the Northern Hemisphere... Jamaica, Puerto Rico, British West Indies, Bahamas, Canada, Mexico, California and New York. I'd flown over Cuba, too. I made many great memories with this plane.

Aeronca Champ – I learned how to fly in a Champ in 1955. I had always wanted one, and in 1990 we found a basket case. It took three years to build thanks to Friling and crew. January 1993, was her first flight in 20 years, and I've been flying it ever since.

Also my Grandson recently soloed in the Champ. We ended up taking a 500 mile Cross Country to Ava, Missouri, shortly after his solo. It was about 12 hours round-trip, we hit a little weather, but she flew like a Champ and we made a great memory.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF AVIATION?

Spend time at my Ranch in Ava, Missouri.

ARE THERE ANY ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE CHAPTER PARTICIPATE IN FOR THE FUTURE?

I'd like to have more Chapter gatherings and outings.

I really like the BBQs.

WHAT LEGACY WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE FOR YOUTH IN AVIATION? WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO INSPIRE YOUNG PEOPLE TO FLY?

Flying YE for 28 years, with 1,400 Young Eagles registered, I have seen many of the youngsters go on to do more with aviation and give back.

One Young Eagle, for instance, is working for SpaceX sending shuttles to ISS; another is flying F17s out of Seymour Johnson Naval Airstation, and is now flying UAVs over Iraq and Afghanistan from Las Vegas, NV; another is our first Aviatrés, Miss Skye McKinnon, who is now working for GE Aerospace. Another I am very proud of is Angelina Kapp, who has received a full ride scholarship to Southern Illinois University. There are many others.

It is great to see young people follow through in Aviation.

You have to want to. My Grandson is a classic example of it. He soloed on his 16th birthday and I am looking forward to him earning his rating on his 17th Birthday.

With that I sign off.

WHAT'S YOUR BEST PERSONAL AVIATION MEMORY OR STORY ?

Taking 4 different trips with Captain Chuck Downey in his Myers Biplane, tandem with the Champ. We flew the Oregon Trail, the Chisolm Trail, we flew to Manteo First Flight, up to Booth Bay, Maine, and on the way back we landed at Old Rhinebeck.

FINALLY: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE COOKIE? 😊

Chocolate Chip, but they are bad for my diet!

THANKS, DAD...

I mean ARNIE ! 😊

It was fun interviewing you and learning more about you and your Aviation Adventures !