

# THE 461<sup>ER</sup> PILOT PROFILE:



## CHAD CARLSON

### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF EAA 461?

I have been a member of EAA 461 for a little more than two and a half years. I became an EAA member in the early 1990s and joined EAA 461 in December 2015.

### WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN AVIATION?

I hold my dad fully responsible for giving me the gift that is aviation. He grew up building and flying "Midwest Fubar 36" free-flight model airplanes ( <https://bit.ly/2MypQbj> ) with his dad (my grandfather) in the 1950s and 1960s. I came along in 1972, just as they were venturing into radio-controlled model airplanes.

In 1979, they decided to corrupt... ah, um... I mean indoctrinate... er, uh... introduce (!?) me to their affliction (a.k.a. "the family business") by giving me an electric-powered, radio-controlled airplane of my own. From that day forward, my head has been in the clouds.

### WHAT RATINGS DO YOU HOLD?

At present, I hold a PPL (Airplane, Single Engine, Land) with a high-performance endorsement (via Cirrus SR-22); however, I am planning to add an Instrument Rating in the next 9-12 months.

### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN FLYING?

I began flying model airplanes in the late 1970s and moved up to full-scale airplanes with my dad when he earned his PPL in 1988. There were some gaps between then and now wherein I didn't do much flying, but ultimately I've been involved with aviation in some capacity for nearly 40 years.

### HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU HAVE TO DATE?

To date, I have 565 hours.  
(300+ x/c; 100+ night; 1000+ landings)  
and more than 450 of those hours were earned aboard N8ML.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE AVIATION BOOK AND/OR MOVIE?

I've been doing aviation for far too long to have just one. ☺

Book #1: My Pilot Logbook.

It is a first-person account of an aviation love story.

Book #2: "I Could Never Be So Lucky Again"

by General James Harold "Jimmy" Doolittle

Book #3: My autographed hard-cover copy of "YEAGER"

by Brigadier General Charles Elwood "Chuck" Yeager

Movie #1: "The Right Stuff"

Movie #2: "Always" (I consider it the feel-good story of my life.)



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

Yes, I served in the United States Air Force as a Ground Radio Maintenance Technician (30474 / 2E173) from 1992 to 2004.

<https://bit.ly/2KDOxd7>

<https://bit.ly/2MwU4eT>

<https://bit.ly/2OqIbrk>

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

I was training in a 1978 Cessna 152, tail number N89366 ( <https://bit.ly/2M6t2yM> ), and my instructor and I had just landed following an hour of instruction. As we came to a stop on the ramp, the instructor said: "Set the parking brake, leave it running, and hand me your logbook, please." I did as he asked. He then opened his door, stepped out, smiled, and said: "Go have some fun! Make three trips around the pattern, then meet me back here."

After a few minutes spent taxiing (and pondering the gravity of what I was about to do,) I lined up on runway 36 for my first takeoff, uttered Alan Shepard's "prayer," and advanced the throttle. That little C-152 accelerated like a rocket ship without the instructor on board! Seconds later, with just 6 hours in my logbook, I lifted off and left the world behind. Yeehaw!

### WHEN DID YOU SOLO AND WHERE?

I soloed August 12, 2005, at Waterbury-Oxford Airport (KOXC) in Oxford, Connecticut.

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

My favorite aviation museum is the Illinois Aviation Museum, of course!

My runner-up favorite is the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center ( <https://s.si.edu/2afKdl5> ), part of the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum, in Chantilly, Virginia, because they have two of the world's most iconic aircraft (aside from the 1903 Wright Flyer) on display:

Space Shuttle Discovery (OV-103): the most complex, majestic, and well-traveled manned exploration vehicle ever built (IMHO).

Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird: the fastest jet-propelled aircraft.

## WHAT'S YOUR BEST PERSONAL AVIATION MEMORY OR STORY ?

I love the LA Speed Story ( <https://bit.ly/2Outfc7> ) but that one is (obviously) not mine. 😊

On September 11, 2010, I was flying myself and some friends back to Waterbury-Oxford Airport, Connecticut (KOXC) from Block Island, Rhode Island (KBID) in a Piper Archer, tail number N2222B.

It just so happened that the Collings Foundation was at KOXC that day and offering rides in their P-51 Mustang "Betty Jane."

At 15 miles out, I called Oxford Tower and received instructions to report when I was on a two-mile right base for runway 36.

The tower also advised that the P-51 was in the area set up for some high-speed passes down the runway.

At two miles, I reported as instructed while watching the P-51 start a pass down the runway. The exchange went like this:

Me: "Oxford Tower, Archer two-two-bravo is on a two-mile right base for runway 36."

Tower: "Archer two-two-bravo, roger. The P-51 is passing in front of you on a high-speed run, traffic is no factor. You are cleared to land runway 36."

Me: "Roger, two-two-bravo has the Mustang in sight and we're coming around on his six now. Copy cleared to land runway 36."

Mustang: "He's been waiting his whole life to say that!"

He was not wrong!

## WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE AIRPLANE and WHY?

My favorite airplane is N8ML, my 1972 Piper Cherokee 180 named "Melody" ( <https://bit.ly/2MdKNvu> ).

I bought Melody in 2013, and have since flown her all over the United States. She has taken my family and me as far north as Bangor, Maine, as far south as Picayune, Mississippi, and as far west as Billings, Montana.

Melody may never set performance records or win awards for her appearance, but that is okay with me because I happen to agree with a famous pilot who once said:

"She may not look like much, but she's got it where it counts, kid."

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

I want to help keep General Aviation (GA) alive and affordable because I think GA is the foundation upon which all other aviation interests and endeavors are built.

What would I say to inspire young people to fly? Nothing, because strapping a kid into the right seat and giving him or her the flight controls is going to be far more inspirational than anything I can put into words.

Aviation is about dreaming and doing, not wondering and waiting – unless you're flying commercial, of course!

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

I am not sure if it is practical or palatable, but I sure would like to see us do another public airplane build.

## WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE CHAPTER ACTIVITY?

My favorite chapter activities are our Young Eagle rallies. I look forward to every rally because each one is an opportunity to break down some of the bigger misconceptions about aviation (not rich enough, not smart enough, too young, too old) and help build a bridge to reach and inspire the next generation of aviators (and their parents.)

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF AVIATION?

Wait - what kind of question is this?

Is there anything worth doing outside of aviation?

Eat. Sleep. Fly. Repeat. Am I right?

Okay, so when I can't break the surly bonds, I default to my profession of nearly 27 years as a UNIX System and Software Engineer.

Additionally, I look after and play with Biscuit ( <https://bit.ly/2KIYYnf> ) the best furry co-pilot and Golden Retriever a pilot could ask for.

I also keep tropical fish in a high-tech, fully-planted freshwater tank.

## FINALLY: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE COOKIE? 😊

My favorite cookie is chocolate chip, of course!

**THANKS, CHAD !  
It was fun interviewing you  
and learning a bit more  
about you and your  
Aviation Adventures !  
Thank you also  
for your Service  
in the USAF !**