

THE 461^{ER} PILOT PROFILE:



DENNIS MIENDERSMA

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF EAA 461?

About 15 months. I joined in February '17.
However, I already knew many members thru the
Woodland Aero Modelers.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN FLYING?

I am very UN –current – I have not been PIC for about 36
years, but flew for about 7 years

WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN AVIATION?

Watching airplanes land at Meigs Field, I remember a Bonanza
coming in with its gear up in an emergency landing!

WHAT RATINGS DO YOU HOLD?

Private Pilot, Single & Multi Engine Land, Instrument Rating

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

Honestly, I don't really remember, except that my
Instructor was ready to solo me after 4 hours, but the
school rules wouldn't allow because it was a ten hour
minimum. After ten hours my instructor stopped us
right on the runway, got out, and sent me on my Solo
journey around the pattern!

WHEN DID YOU SOLO AND WHERE?

I soloed in 1968, at Parks College Bi-State Airport,
Cahokia, IL. (just up the street from Dupo!)

HOW MANY HOURS DO YOU HAVE TO DATE?

A little over 285 hours

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

I am very supportive of the Military, but regretfully I never served.



WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE AIRPLANE and WHY?

Vlado Lench's P-51 Mustang "Moonbeam McSwine"
He gave me a ride circa 1994.

I enjoyed flying a Cessna 182 when I was flying;
that was a nice plane.

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

I'd like to see us continue to promote what we do with
Young Eagles at more local events, as we have done in the
past. I would like to see the Chapter start to cross pollenate
the R/C Clubs with the Young Eagles program in order to
generate more interest in flying;
especially since EAA and AMA have been working
together to further Youth in Aviation.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE CHAPTER ACTIVITY?

Young Eagles!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE AVIATION BOOK AND/OR MOVIE?

Movie – "TOP GUN" of course!

Book – I am always reading aviation
books & mags; I do not have a
particular favorite.

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

I have been to:

AF Museum in Dayton

Helicopter Museum at Ft. Rucker, AL

Naval Museum in Pensacola

EAA Museum in OSH

WWII Museum in New Orleans – including the Boeing Aircraft Museum

USS Midway in San Diego, with airplane museum on the lower and upper decks

Pacific Aviation Museum on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor

National Air & Space Museum on the National Mall & Udvar-Hazy Center at Dulles Airport

Want to make it to:

Air Zoo in Kalamazoo

Strategic Air Command Museum in Omaha, NE

Boeing Museum and Paul Allen Museum in Seattle

WHAT'S YOUR BEST PERSONAL AVIATION MEMORY OR STORY?

In 1969, I flew home from Parks College in a 182. I took my father, my girlfriend and one of her friends up in the middle of winter to see the lakefront. It was January, cold out, and nighttime. On the return, I circled around, lined up, and greased it in for one of the nicest landings I've ever made! The only problem was that I had landed on a frozen sod runway at Brookeridge when I should have been at Hinsdale Airport. Oops! (It was just a short hop back to Hinsdale.)

But... One of the most harrowing moments I experienced while attending school at Embry Riddle was surviving a flat spin in a Cessna 152 Aerobat as a passenger with my college roommate as PIC.

If you want the rest of the story, come see me... It was eye opening.

(Aymee says you might want to hear the rest of this one....)

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF AVIATION?

I have been flying control line model airplanes since 1963, and have been flying R/C planes for the past 22 years. I actively participate in the Woodland Aero Modelers and Palos R/C Flying Club.

After I came out of college, I was primarily involved with oval short & long track stock car racing. Locally, I drove at Santa Fe, Sycamore, and Kankakee Speedways, then ventured out and ran a variety of different tracks in the Midwest area including Wilmont, Hales Corners, the Milwaukee Mile, and a little bit of everywhere.

I have been a car builder, owner, driver, crew member, crew chief. When I stopped driving, I became a NASCAR track official at Santa Fe Speedway until it closed in 1996.

I am still connected to NASCAR racing via my employment.

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

Simply put: GET INVOLVED!

You only get out of something what you put into it.

Nothing worth having comes easy, so stick with it!

If this was easy, everybody would do it.

Look at the big picture; invest in yourself for the long term!

**FINALLY: WHAT IS YOUR
FAVORITE COOKIE? 😊**

Chocolate Chip
(to be honest, that's the real
reason I joined the Chapter)

**THANKS, DENNIS !
It was fun interviewing you and
learning a bit more about you
and your Aviation adventures !**