



BIOGRAPHY OF

Major Frank T. Stookey, US Army (Retired)

For Willie Flight 82, Order of Daedalians

I was born in Spokane, Washington on a Friday, December 13, 1940. I grew up in a small farming community in central Washington known as Ellensburg. My first flight took place in the spring of 1945 at Ellensburg's local airport known as Bowers Field (an Army Air Corps base during WWII), in a 1928 Curtiss Robin C-1, powered by a Curtiss Challenger radial engine. I can still remember that ride as though it was yesterday. That was all it took to hook me on airplanes. Over the years that followed, I flew with anyone who would give a kid a ride.

At the age of 14, I started flying lessons (thanks to my Dad), in a PA-18 Super Cub at Bowers Field. This was the era of the Civil Aeronautics Administration, and low frequency ranges for navigation. During the next year, I joined the Civil Air Patrol as a cadet, and the lessons came as often as my ability to earn money doing odd jobs. At that point, all I wanted to do in life was be an Air Force pilot as soon as possible. Eventually, I went to work for the local FBO (Midstate Aviation), and by the time I reached 18 years of age, I had Commercial, Instrument, single engine and multiengine ratings. During those years with Midstate, I had the good fortune to get checked out in a number of interesting airplanes, such as a Navy N-3N, Navy SNJ-5, Ercoupe, Luscombe Silvaire, Stinson 108-3, and the recently new Cessna 172 and 310. I was trained by a group of instructors who flew Grumman Wildcats and Hellcats in the Pacific Theatre of Operations; so I have always claimed to be taught to fly by the Navy.

After high school, I tried to apply for the Air Force Aviation Cadet Program only to learn they didn't need many pilots at the time. In search of work, I moved to Seattle, Washington and landed a job with the Boeing Commercial Airplane Co. in their Quality Control Dept.; working on the B-707, KC-135, and the new B-727. During the next 5-6 years I joined the Army National Guard, got married, flew part time for the US Forest Service, gave up trying to be an Air Force pilot, and managed to get a commission in the Guard. By the end of 1967, I decided I would try out for Army flight school, by going on active duty as a 1st Lt. in a voluntary indefinite status. It worked! I attended the Army's Fixed Wing Flight School beginning at Ft. Stewart, Georgia (flying the Cessna T-41B) and finishing at Ft. Rucker, Alabama (Beech T-42A and Cessna O-

1) in late 1968. Good fortune struck again when I was picked to attend the transition course into the Grumman OV-1 Mohawk .

Then it was off to Vietnam in 1969, and flying the Mohawk in the Mekong Delta (4th Corps area). To say flying the Mohawk in combat was exciting is an understatement. I was assigned to flying low-level infrared missions at night and photo recon during the day. The whole year was riddled with in-flight emergencies, and getting shot-up half of the time! But that faithful machine always brought me home; and lucked out with no injuries.

Following the tour in Vietnam, I again had good fortune by being assigned to form and command a new Mohawk unit at Ft. Wainwright, Alaska (next to Fairbanks). We made a lot of history there, including the aerial mapping of three routes for the Alaska pipe line from the North Slope to Valdez. The US Department of Interior picked the current location of the pipe line from our imagery. Other missions included mapping ice flows in the Arctic Ocean, search and rescue operations, and keeping an eye on activities of the Russians in the Bering Straits from time to time. Another major event, was the birth of our one son (Aaron Michael) at Bassett Army Hospital in the middle of the record-breaking winter of 1970-1971. 72F below zero (with no wind chill), and 161 inches of snow on the ground!

In late 1972 the Army, against my will, sent us off to Ft. Rucker for the Rotary Wing Qualification Course. The last thing I wanted to do was fly a machine that beat the air into submission! After three months of vertical flight, I came away qualified in the OH-58A Kiowa and the good old UH-1H Huey; and a rotary wing instrument rating to boot. Over the years I grew to like that old Huey.

To keep a long bio short, the remainder of my military service (minus military schooling) consisted of the following:

1974-1975	Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona, Beach, FL (two BS degrees).
1975-1976	S-3, 2/77 Armor Battalion, Ft. Lewis, WA.
1976-1977	Army Airfield Commander, Ft. Lewis, WA.
1977-1978	GLO, 56 th Tactical Fighter Wing, MacDill AFB, FL.
1978-1978	XO, 4/7 Air Cavalry Squadron, South Korea (six months)
1978-1979	Deputy G-3, 2 nd Infantry Division, South Korea (six months)
1980-1983	Program Manager, Grumman OV-1 Mohawk program, St. Louis, MO.
1983-1985	Director of Contracts/Government Contracting Officer, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
1985-1986	Army Aviation Advisor to the Missouri and Arkansas Army National Guard.

Following my retirement from the Army in November 1986, I flew a short while as a first officer for Alaska Air Group in the Fokker F-27. With a type rating in the F-27 and Boeing 727, I had high hopes for the airline career that had eluded me. It was not to be, for that was the most boring flying job in the world. I moved back to Boeing Seattle (for three times the money!), and spent the next 18 years as manager of Corporate Agreements and International Contracts. The last six of those years were spent at the Boeing AH-64 Apache Attack Helicopter plant in Mesa, AZ.

I finally retired for good in June 2005. I figured 26 years in a green uniform and 23 years with Boeing was quite enough. Today, my bride (Judi), of 47 years, and I are enjoying our retirement . I still pass those flight physicals, and continue to defy gravity (old habits are hard to break). I may not have realized that dream of flying in the Air Force, but we sure had one heck of a ride with the Army. Looking back, I wouldn't trade it for anything.