

AEAviators features an employee from an AEA member company who currently has their pilot's license. In the avionics industry - whether you're selling the product on the trade show floor, maintaining it or installing it in the cockpit - it's all for the flight. Every pilot has a unique story, and AEAiators showcases them and reminds those in the avionics industry what it's all about.

# AE AVIATORS

Featured Pilot:

Kirk Fryar

of Sarasota Avionics

**A** avionics News recently visited with Kirk Fryar, president of Sarasota Avionics, to learn more about his experience as a pilot.

**What is your favorite or most memorable moment as a pilot?**

My most memorable flying moment was when I went

into IFR conditions unexpectedly while descending into an airport. I was at 1,000 feet, then went down to 800 feet and then to 600 feet. At that point, I decided I needed to get out of there. So I turned sharply to go back where I knew the weather was clear; a big no-no. I immediately got spatial disorientation and was completely lost. The GPS failed at the same time, and it felt like I could not control the airplane; I was all over the sky. I remember looking at the altimeter reading 400 feet, and I couldn't tell if I was going up or down. I remember thinking my dad would say, "Just fly the airplane you dummy, and trust your instruments." My dad never thought he had such an impact on me, but that is exactly what I did. I got my horizon centered and turned to HDG of west because I knew it was clear and returned back to my home airport.

**How long have you been flying?**

I have been flying since I was a boy with my dad; I think I could fly an airplane before I could drive a car. I received my license in 1998, while I was attending Colorado Aero Tech at Jefferson County airport - back when you could fly over the Mile High Stadium at 500 feet and not get in





trouble. I flew in a brand new Cessna 172 that had a GPS and autopilot, which I had no clue how to use.

#### **What aircraft do you fly?**

I'm a lucky pilot. Due to the amount of installs we do on a wide variety of aircraft, I get the opportunity to fly many different planes. We insist that after each install, no matter how big or small, we provide a flight with a pilot so the owner can get some one-on-one time with the new equipment. Otherwise, I fly a Piper PA32R-300 Saratoga, or Piper PA 28-140, or my dad's Cessna 210.

#### **What is your favorite aircraft to fly?**

My favorite is the Piper Saratoga; it is just comfortable to fly. I can put my whole family in it, pack bags for a week and still have room to relax.

#### **When did you know you wanted to become a pilot?**

It was in middle school. Our basketball team was traveling for a game, and I knew how late we would be getting home after the long bus ride. I also knew because of the travel time that my dad would not be able to attend after work since we were so far away. To my surprise, my dad made it to the game. I was happy but confused. I asked him how he got to the game, and he said that he flew. He had a Mooney at the time. He flew a friend and me home instead of riding the bus. That was my first night flight. I thought it was cool; you could see all the towns, hundreds of miles away, and they just looked so close with all the lights. At that moment, I knew I wanted to fly.

#### **How does being a pilot impact your job?**

It's "instrumental." I realized it early during my first job out of school as a bench technician. I realized how important it was to understand and communicate what the discrepancy was with the radio in flight conditions. Today, it's more important than ever. With the new NextGen pilots redesigning and customizing new equipment for their aircraft, I'm able to offer a pilot's perspective to both the customer and our engineers. I get into the aircraft, sit in the pilot's seat and relate to the customer on how they fly the plane and what's important to them. Together, we configure the layout from this conversation.

#### **What are your current ratings?**

I am private pilot and have been continually working on my IFR for the past few years. I told myself when I got my VFR, I would get my IFR later. But with the work schedule and kids, I don't see it happening for a few more years.

#### **As a pilot, what are your thoughts on ADS-B?**

I love ADS-B. We have the GDL 88D in our aircraft with so much more information on the traffic. It doesn't jump around like I see on some TCAS boxes. I love how you can see ground speed and closure speed. We have ours displaying on the new Garmin GTN 750 touchscreen. You're able to easily interface with the aircraft. □

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*Would you like to be featured in AEAiators? Contact Geoff Hill at [geoffh@aea.net](mailto:geoffh@aea.net) or 816-347-8400 to discover how.*