

## Dan Johnson

After High School I went to the U of W. Graduated in 1964 with a degree in Radio-TV (Broadcast News), but really my major was secondary to AFROTC with the goal of becoming an airline pilot, the military being the primary way of getting there in those days. Figured the radio-tv background would help with my PA announcements. Took a year off to work in public radio in Portland, then went to Air Force pilot training in 1965 at Williams AFB near Phoenix, Arizona.



After pilot training I was based at Altus, Oklahoma flying the KC-135 tanker for the next four years with a couple of side trips to Thailand in support of the war. Left active duty in the summer of 1970.

How I won the war passing gas!





The airlines were in a hiring freeze in 1970 so I managed to get into the AF Reserve flying C-141's out of McChord AFB, near Tacoma. Flew all over the world, Europe, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Viet Nam, Australia, a lot of Alaska. After completing 20+ years I retired from the AF as a Lt. Colonel in '87.



Finally, in 1973 I got hired by Eastern Airlines. Based in Miami, New York, but most of the time in Orlando. When things started going bad for Eastern in the late 80's, they closed the Orlando base, so I let them move us to Atlanta. We settled in Gainesville, a nice little town on Lake Lanier north of the Atlanta metroplex. A couple of years later Eastern, in its death spiral, sold the Northeast Shuttle to some New York real estate guy and when he said he'd take pilots with the deal I volunteered and got it.



Whatever happened to that guy, anyway?

Things went great for a while. The family stayed in Georgia and I commuted to DC for the next 10 years or so as a First Officer(co-pilot). In the airline business the seat you fly is based on seniority. After a couple of years the real estate guy fell on hard times and unloaded his airline to US Airways. They managed it for several years as a separate entity. Finally, enough guys retired and I upgraded to Boeing 727 captain in 1999, having to go to New York to do it. US Airways merged us into their system in 2000 and replaced the ancient 727 with the Airbus 320. The Airbus is 144 computers with wings so I was in



my element! I flew it as captain until 2001. My last flight was from Boston to New York on the night of September 10th. The next morning at LaGuardia I boarded a Delta flight for Atlanta, but before leaving the gate the first plane hit the North Tower. Ended up renting a car and driving home. I retired after that since I was close to the mandatory retirement age anyway. US Airways later merged with American Airlines, so I'm now retired from AAL without ever having worn their uniform.



Meanwhile, in 1992 we moved to 40 beautiful acres in North Georgia. We went through the horse phase, the cattle phase and finally settled on sheep, the fiber kind. The girls mastered spinning, weaving, and I played with my computers, maintained the website and did the heavy lifting. Computers have been a hobby of mine since the early 80's so after I retired from the airline my son-in-law and I started a computer service business which he eventually took over. I still do a little free-lance computer work...well did until the Corona thing came up.

Wife, daughters,  
granddaughters  
and some wooly  
friends doing a  
little spinning on  
a fine Georgia  
autumn  
afternoon some  
years ago.



View from  
the living  
room  
window.

Social  
distancing  
not much  
of a  
problem  
here.



The flock has now gone to Sheep  
Heaven, so anymore I've pretty  
much just become cat furniture.

I was kinda going for the Wolf  
Blitzer look, or maybe Shelby  
Foote, but might be closer to  
Gabby Hayes.

“yer durn tootin’...young whipper  
snapper.”

