



Dave Klain

by Mike Taylor

This edition of the MU-2 Magazine features an owner/operator each of you are likely to be familiar with, Mr. David Klain. If you've had any involvement with the Web-based MU-2 Owner/Operator Forum you've heard of "Dave." If not there, perhaps you saw him in a PROP 2014 video interview. Then again, a photo of Dave Klain's MU-2 was featured on the January 2015, 5th edition, cover of this magazine. Regardless, Dave is an active participant in the MU-2 community and in many ways an advocate of flying with the public at large.



Mike Taylor is a former aircraft design engineer, 24-year aviation industry veteran, current marketing consultant and private pilot.

MU-2 Owner/Operator Forum

Dave described the O/O Forum he manages on behalf of the MU-2 owner/operator community's 400-plus members this way: "The MU-2 mailing list originated as a Yahoo Group around 2005. It was started by Dr. Alan Kozarsky. In 2011, after I joined the group and was looking at possibly purchasing an MU-2, I contacted Alan and offered my IT expertise. We ultimately migrated it over."

There are many familiar names posting frequent messages in the MU-2 O/O Forum. These include Dick Shine, Ross Russo, Pat Cannon, Earle Martin, and Rick Wheldon among others. "They are all folks who have owned and/or flown MU-2s for a long time, 15 to 20-plus years," Dave said. He added, "It's no surprise to see them active on the site."

"We have 425 registered members. Of them, I'd say about 30 to 40 are people interested in MU-2s, potential purchasers. Another 100 to 150 are owner/operators who just lurk (i.e. read) the list to keep up-to-date, and the remainder are active participants comprised of owners/operators/pilots/instructors and service-related personnel. Of course as in any forum there is a core group of the most active people who post all the time and they are probably in the 50 to 100 range."

The MU-2 O/O Forum, sometimes referred to as the MU-2 "blog," is an interactive website allowing participants to leave comments and message each other. As such it is a form of social networking and aids in building relationships among readers and posters.

From a technical standpoint, however, a "forum" is much more than a blog. The MU-2 O/O Forum with its specific jargon and organization fits the broader definition. For example, it lists conversations about a single topic into "threads." Whether you're a techie or not, every MU-2 owner/operator can benefit from participation in the O/O Forum. It is a place where like-minded individuals meet frequently to discuss a variety of topics, and the learning possibilities are endless. For Dave Klain, the O/O Forum was a great place to start when looking to purchase his MU-2.

Dave is something of a Swiss army knife in the MU-2 community. Not only does he administer the O/O Forum, he's often busy flying his aircraft for charitable purposes and can be seen in other places online, and on location, promoting the MU-2 and its abilities.

PROP 2014 Video

In the above introduction, I mentioned a video produced for PROP 2014. Dave describes the self-narrated video as "some spectacular air-to-air footage flying in and around the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia."

Dave is good on camera, professional in my opinion, and he multitasks the interview while flying his MU-2. The Blue Ridge Mountains form the eastern boundary of the Shenandoah Valley not far from where he lives in Fairfax, Virginia. Dave calls it "a suburb of Washington DC." Twenty-five miles west of DC, he bases his aircraft at Manassas Regional Airport (KHEF).

The video is available on YouTube in several places, but here Dave highlights a version in full HD <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO6dIDBk2Aw>>.

Wounded Warrior Project

Dave Klain is a retired naval officer, having spent 26 years in the service. While aircraft owners often fly for business reasons, Dave now flies his airplane for a variety of causes. These activities subsist as an extension of his military career.



Dave enjoys volunteering with Veterans Airlift Command. He flies often for the group's Wounded Warrior Project <<http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org>>, transporting service members undergoing rehabilitation to and from Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Wounded Warrior Project serves veterans and service members who incurred a physical or mental injury, illness, or wound, co-incident to their military service. The organization's mission is to foster the needs of wounded or injured service members providing unique, direct programs and services. Focus is often on their families. The organization was established following events on September 11, 2001.

Dave pointed out that a typical stay at Bethesda is one to three years. He operates his MU-2 assisting service members with their travel needs. "Often both families and service members need to get somewhere. They go home for holidays. They travel back-and-forth. Their disability prevents them from flying commercially, or from sitting in a car for eight to ten hours." Dave adds, "It's been my privilege to fly Wounded Warrior missions."

Recalling a flight made on Veterans Day a few years back, Dave described the task of transporting a Marine Staff Sergeant and his wife. "The Marine had sustained an IED injury while on duty. He asked to attend the funeral service of one of his team members in Ohio. The trip was sad and bittersweet. Yet afterwards I recognized how gratifying it felt to assist a fellow serviceman."

He added, "With Wounded Warriors, the MU-2 is very helpful as many have lost one or both legs. In a King Air with its airstair door, one must climb five steps to enter the plane. With the MU-2, it's one step to get in. For the mobility impaired, the MU-2's low-to-ground profile is a big benefit."

Prior to enlisting with the Wounded Warriors Project, Dave had flown with Angel Flights operating a Mooney he previously owned. But the Veterans Airlift Command is a mission he feels a personal connection with. "It was an easy decision to make." After 26 years in the Navy, Dave concluded, "My body is broken but not nearly as bad as these guys."

Pilots N Paws

Another organization Dave flies with is Pilots N Paws, transporting rescued animals from shelters to homes. "If I'm not flying to go somewhere, what's a better way to maintain proficiency than by helping animals, or deserving service men or women?" Dave queries.

Pilots N Paws <<http://www.pilotsnpaws.org>> is best described as a gathering place for volunteer pilots and plane owners. Much like the MU-2 O/O Forum there are discussions, including guidelines, for purposes of volunteering or assisting in an effort to save animals. It's a place to connect volunteers with rescue needs.

"My wife had been transporting animals by driving prior to our involvement with Pilots N Paws. Now, we spend time together by flying them," said Dave. "It was an automatic connection. I feel blessed to be able to do the charity flying."

Innovations in Flight Family Day

There's also an educational component to Dave's hobby of flying. In June of this year, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum held its Innovations in Flight Family Day and Outdoor Aviation Display at its Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia <<http://innovationsinflight.si.edu/2015/04/22/mu-2b-60-2/>>.

Dave flew his MU-2 in for the event. His was one of more than 50 aircraft – vintage, recreational, and home-built – on display. Visitors of all ages enjoyed a variety of presentations and demonstrations, including large aircraft tours and hands-on activities. It's a free event and one he's keen to participate in. Dave reckoned, "Each year I speak with thousands of people in attendance."

In connection with his proximity to the nation's capital, I inquired about the possibility that Dave might be involved in other ways with governmental affairs. He conceded his only FAA involvement thus far has been support for the "Be a Pilot Day," referring to the Udvar-Hazy event by its former name. He noted he's always eager to support this activity, and suggested a willingness to do more in support of GA.

While off duty from his numerous volunteer activities, Dave "works" as a consultant. He's been a civil adviser to NATO since 2011. Dave was also one of several who commented on an FAA review and subsequent AD on the MU-2 (AD 2015-01-02).

More Dave Online

Dave can be found online in other places where it's easy to see his passion lies in flying. In a separate Yahoo Group, he led a discussion comparing twin-engine aircraft (Baron, King Air, Aerostar). Dave props up the MU-2 as, "The BMW M5 with more horsepower but lower fuel burn, superbly engineered for maximum performance yet built like a tank." In the same conversation, he recognizes, "The King Air is a Toyota Camry, reliable, well built and dependable." His comments are backed up with numbers <<https://beta.groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/dcpilots/conversations/messages/52094>>.

Dave is also active in places like Twitter, Quora, and AirplaneGeeks. From quora.com, the "best answer to any question" website, a user posed the following question: "Can you name fixed-wing aircraft widely used in the 70s & 80s as pax utility planes... [that] meet

the following criteria: Single-pilot certified, seat more than seven (but less than 20), pressurized cabin, very rugged with STOL abilities to operate from grass strips, relatively high cruise speed and endurance (greater than 320–350 knots, 5–6 hours)?”

Dave’s reply: “Your best bet for these would be either the MU-2 or Cessna Conquest. The Conquest is a bit faster. The MU-2 is more capable of handling the rougher strips. Your speed numbers are a bit high and your endurance numbers are high absent additional fuel tanks for a turboprop of that size, but they are not impossible. The MU-2 Marquise could seat up to 11, had a 5-hour endurance and was just under a 300-knot cruiser.”

On AirplaneGeeks.com, an online weekly audio program that looks at the world of aviation, Dave was featured in a podcast <<http://www.airplanegeeks.com/2015/06/23/airplanegeeks-355-innovations-in-flight-family-day-2015/>> describing his participation in the “Be a Pilot Day.” At 1:03:30 into the audio file, Dave admits to being an airplane geek and speaks of his involvement with the museum. He’s joined by his 12-year-old daughter and “co-pilot.”

In the “social media” world of today, it’s difficult to predict where the next “trending article” or “viral video” is going to pop up. These online communities often intertwine with each other. Dave is there to satisfy people’s browsing cravings.

Meet Dave

“I’ve been interested in aviation since I was a little kid,” Dave revealed, adding that he started flying back in 1990 in mainly light general aviation (GA) aircraft. He also alluded to having had access to a variety of aircraft including King Airs and Cessna 421s.

Today Dave considers himself to be “fairly knowledgeable about GA in general.” But despite his vast flying experience and broad knowledge, he’s only previously owned one airplane, a Mooney K-model. The Mooney M20K was the first to introduce a six-cylinder engine. Subsequent models would continue to be modified to increase speed.

Mooney had a history with Mitsubishi. In 1963, Mitsubishi granted Mooney Aircraft rights in North America to assemble, sell and support the MU-2. In 1965, Mooney established a facility to assemble MU-2s at its new factory in San Angelo, Texas.

By 1969 Mitsubishi took over the facility and production of MU-2 aircraft.

While working in a Naval office, Dave was able to use his Mooney for travel to visit sailors under his command. As a recruiter, he traveled a four-state territory in his aircraft while others performing similar duties were driving to meet recruits. Dave acknowledged he had a bit of an advantage.

The Mooney was sold prior to his being stationed overseas. Upon Dave’s retirement from the Navy in 2010, he began work for a tech company. “I was in a fortunate position of being well compensated,” and this afforded him the opportunity once again to buy an airplane for which he was grateful and eager.

Discussions between Dave and his wife took into consideration his airplane hobby as well as their personal needs. Under her criteria, she defined the Mooney as not comfortable for what was now their growing family. She wanted two things, the ability to get up and move around, and a toilet in the plane.

Swallowing heavily, he began a serious look at cabin class aircraft, including the Beech Queen Air and Duke. But with these aircraft, “there was not a lot of excess power,” Dave noted. He also desired a more reliable turbine engine.

Dave looked at Walter-converted King Airs and Cessna Conquests. Pointing out what a nice airplane the Pilatus is, he knew it was out of his price range. Similarly, the TBMs were “too small” for a walk in the cabin by his chief of family.

On discovering the MU-2, Dave was impressed by its performance numbers. It looked to be the most promising. He found the then MU-2 Forum and joined to start looking and listening with regards to owner/operator experiences.

Later, he spoke with training provider Reece Howell who offered Dave a look and test flight in the aircraft. Enthusiastically, he booked a one-day round trip flight to see the MU-2. His first exposure was “an informed look at the plane,” noting he even “sat in on a training session.”

“What I believed to be true was absolutely right.” Dave concluded the MU-2 is a high performing aircraft and one that must be flown correctly. He added, “Like the Mooney, if you control speed everything is as it should be.”

Dave soon set about learning all about the MU-2 models, including the long fuselage MU-2G through “Marquise” models and the earlier short body and “Solitaire” models. He started watching the market, hoping for a chance to become an aircraft owner for the second time. While talking to brokers and community members, Dave was impressed that all were generous with their time, recognizing Pat Cannon, Rick Wheldon and Authorized Mitsubishi MU-2 Service Center owner Mike Laver.

At one point, Dave uncovered an available MU-2 and made plans for its acquisition. Regrettably though, he was unable to finalize the deal prior to the seller’s end of 2011 deadline. Waylaid by the purchase, and fellow MU-2 owner Ken Andrews, Dave pressed on confident he’d find another.

Dave’s newly befriended guru/consultant, Mike Laver, informed him of a Marquise he thought “might come available soon.” Excitedly, Dave contacted its owner, Herb Coussons, and began a comprehensive pre-buy review that included having the aircraft checked out by Jet Air, Coussons’ nearby Authorized MU-2 Service Center.

To Dave, the plane sounded good. He bought it sight unseen on April 2, 2012. Two days after taking delivery at his hometown airport of Manassas, Virginia he started training with Reece Howell and Jerry Adcock.

Of the experience, Dave said, “The value of the MU-2 training speaks to its present reputation for safety.” He likened it to the military, “where you take young 22-year-olds and have them flying high performance fighter jets. There is a very well reasoned discipline about learning such a complex machine.” On the MU-2, Dave added, “If you follow the steps, the SFAR makes it inherently safe.”

Why an MU-2

In speaking of the bird he flies, Dave tells his story, “The MU-2 is the first airplane in the world designed from the start to use a turboprop engine. 2013 marked the 50th anniversary of the first flight of this incredible performer long known for extracting every bit of speed out of the available horsepower due to the unique nature of the wing which features double-slotted fowler flaps that substantially increase the wing size when extended and permit slow approach speeds for takeoff and landing while also permitting high speed cruise with the wing ‘cleaned up.’

“N130MS is a Marquise – the last long body variant of the MU-2 produced. It is powered by two Garrett TPE-331-10 engines delivering 759 shp each (715 from the propeller and another 44 from the engine exhaust) giving the plane a total of over 1500 shp and a cruising speed approaching 300 knots (345 miles per hour). The previous owner of this particular plane was based in Europe, and the aircraft crossed the Atlantic numerous times. To support the trans-Atlantic flights, it is equipped for HF radio communications as evidenced by the HF antenna wire stretching between the fuselage and the top of the vertical stabilizer.”

About flying the MU-2, Dave says, “What’s not to love? It’s fast, it’s efficient, it’s a pilot’s dream of an airplane, it’s cost-effective, it’s comfortable, it’s very easy to fly, and it handles well. I generally fly single-pilot IFR. When weather is lousy it flies like it’s riding on train rails. It’s perfect, it’s a great plane to fly.”

New Owner

After Dave bought his MU-2, he took over administration of the email list of the Mitsubishi Pilot’s Online Group, the forum and owner/operator website <<http://mu-2aopa.com>>. Now, he’s devoted to sustaining delivery of useful content and relishes the opportunity to socialize with like-minded MU-2 pilots and professionals.

The MU-2 for Dave is part tool, part hobby. This meshes well with his diverse reasons for flying. He divulges, “I would say half of my flying has been done for charity.”



For Dave, aircraft ownership was never seen as follow-on to a military flying career. In fact, he had no particular flying experience, or flight training, while in the Navy Air Defense Command. Although he welcomed the opportunity to join the Navy, he simply did not have the required 20/20 vision. “But I did spend time in naval aircraft,” he noted.

PROP Participant

As should all MU-2 pilots, Dave attends PROP (Pilot’s Review of Proficiency) < <http://turbineair.com/prop/>>. He’s done so twice, in 2012 and 2014, since his MU-2 purchase. Of the event, he says “It’s the best safety and pilot education I’ve ever been to. It’s great to interact with community. There’s a willingness to help each other out.”

In 2012 Dave brought a co-worker with him. Though not an MU-2 pilot, his co-worker at the time was a student pilot intent on learning about aviation. PROP is an open event with the purpose of promoting safe operation for any pilot. Accordingly, both were encouraged to attend.

AirVenture MU-2

As a writer/marketer/consultant, I’ve been to the renowned AirVenture Oshkosh fly-in numerous times. When someone says, “It’s a must-see event,” take their word for it. It’s the place to see just about every aircraft ever made, especially if one of its type is still in flying condition. For years it was strange to me that the contingent of MU-2 aircraft went unrepresented at the show. Understandably, for an out-of-production aircraft, Mitsubishi has limited interest in an appearance.

Nevertheless, Dave is one of the few MU-2 drivers I’m aware of to immerse in the full AirVenture experience. He’s attended twice, each time having camped in the North 40—the non-show-plane camping area. As Oshkosh’s off-pavement taxiways and camping spots, when wet, can swallow the wheels of heavy aircraft, Dave said the MU-2 proved itself more than capable of mixing well with other “light” aircraft.

In fact in 2014, “There were three ‘Mits’ parked on the end of a row.” Dave underscored, “These end cap slots were due to the aircraft’s size. It was an impressive site to see them lined up with the other smaller aircraft.”

In 2013, Dave took his children for the first time, including his 12-year-old daughter and 18-year-old son. Dave tells of how his daughter “really shows a love for aviation and flying.” Meanwhile, his son “just enjoyed

being at the big event with many things to see.” Now in college, Dave says his son sees his aircraft-owner father as merely a means to a destination.

Family Transportation

When asked about other family trips or memorable flights, Dave identified two. First was a cross country to Arizona with destinations Monument Valley and the Grand Canyon, which Dave recalled as “spectacular flying and scenery.” Next was a flight to New York where the Klains flew the Hudson River corridor. 1000 feet above the river, Dave delightedly commented how “stunning it was to see the Statue of Liberty and Freedom Tower above us,” adding “The MU-2 allowed us to safely execute such a flight.”

In speaking of his daughter, for whom flying is about the journey, Dave highlighted that she is likely to begin flying lessons when old enough. While seemingly more enthusiastic about the transportation aspects of flying, Dave took pleasure in hearing his son remark it was impressive to see buildings “right off their wing tip.”

Can’t Say Enough Good Things About the MU-2

In talking about things that make a flying hobby possible in the MU-2, Dave summarized, “Economics. There’s not another twin turboprop that could operate as cheaply and cost effectively as the MU-2. The engines are reliable and it’s fuel efficient relative to other turboprops.”

Not content stopping there, Dave expanded, “Low cost of ownership, low acquisition cost usually equals less performance. Not so with MU-2, you get all the performance and lower costs. Speed and high wing loading means it’s stable in turbulence and this adds to its comfort. The MU-2 does well at high speeds and it is still capable of maneuvering slowly. Plus it offers excellent performance off grass, gravel, dirt, and short fields.”

Only once was Dave unable to fly his MU-2, and that was the same day the airlines were not flying. Referring to the events on September 11, 2001 Dave accentuated his involvement with the Wounded Warrior Project.

Dave is an owner/operator who can’t say enough good things about the MU-2. “It simply does a lot well.”

To visit the MU-2 Owner/Operator Forum, go to <<http://www.mu-2aopa.com/fudforum/index.php>>. You can also get there by visiting www.mu-2aopa.com and clicking on “Forum.”