

William (Bill) Gardner



Bill was raised in the Mass. area and when he turned the age of 18 decided to join the service, he was an only child for the elder Gardner's. Bill's tour of duty was in Italy. He was based in Wichita Falls and was sent to Italy where he was the Top Turret Gunner, crew chief and "jack of all trades" while overseas.

After serving 9 months overseas, and four years in the service, he was eligible for the GI Bill. Upon his return he married his bride Betty of 60 yrs., and together they parented 4 children, two boys and two girls. Bill attended Kingsville A&I College and after the completion of college he was a shop teacher in Alice Texas. As most educators, he completed enough college courses to retire as an advanced to become an Advanced Educator and Curriculum Resources person for Alice City Schools.

While still in Alice, he decided to "have building project" so in 1977 he started on a Thorpe T-18. He received his private ticket through his wife, paying for his private lessons, and soloed in a Cessna 150 and says, "He soloed on his fourth lesson". Building continued and when they moved to the valley to be near his in-laws, he moved his plane in bags, and buckets (the way most of the guys did things in those days). He had his hangar at the Weslaco airport and worked on the plane until it was completed.

The pictures are of his Thorpe T-18, one in the process of working on it and one of Bill with and one of Betty with it.



His later years, he moved to the valley where they have been the last 20 years and decided to build an Airplane and they have made their home in Weslaco, TX.

Bill served as our chapter president for a total of eight years and has been Instrumental in working for the good of the club and has now gone into full retirement.