

DENNIS COUNTS

Dennis Lee Counts of Granbury, Texas was born in Florissant, St Louis County, Missouri in November of 1961. He was 60 years old at the time of his death. Dennis is survived by his wife, Stacy Counts, and children, Eva, Conor, and Chloe and their spouses. He even got the chance to meet his first grandson, August Lee. He also leaves his mother, Letha Counts, and siblings David, Diane, and Debbie along with their spouses and children.

Dennis graduated from Central Missouri State University in 1985 with a degree in Electrical Engineering and then received his master's degree in 2000 from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He hired on with Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company in Fort Worth, Texas in 1985. Dennis received several awards throughout his career as a Field Service Engineer for the F-16 and then as a Flight Controls Engineer on the X-35 and F-35. His career took him and eventually his family to several countries and bases. He first went to Kunsan Air Base in Korea, then Hill AFB in Utah where he met his wife. They then went to Sheikh Isa Air Base in Bahrain and Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany, during which time they had three children. After spending time overseas, they moved to California for his work on the X-35 and once the fighter was commissioned as the F-35, they moved one last time to Granbury, Texas.

Shortly after Dennis turned 40, he started having health issues that were eventually diagnosed as Late Onset Pompe Disease or Acid Maltase Deficiency. For Dennis, the disease mainly affected his diaphragm to breathe and trunk muscles to walk. He was able to get on a trial of the Genzyme enzyme replacement drug and he continued that treatment through the rest of his life. Dennis still worked full time and telecommuted during his weekly infusions. He was very thankful and blessed that there was a treatment for Pompe soon after he was diagnosed. When Dennis was diagnosed with Pompe, he started to slow down physically and couldn't do as many things around the house. Instead of hiring out the labor, he taught his three children how to do regular maintenance on their vehicles, and how to replace and repair household items.

Dennis had a great life and got to do so many things and see so many places around the world that he never thought he'd have the chance to. He often said that his greatest achievement was his family. Each of his children were able to follow Dennis's example and graduated college. His son, Conor, even worked alongside him at Lockheed Martin on the F-35 for a few years. Dennis was so proud of all three of his children and his wife for all their accomplishments and the people they became. His family will miss him, but he gave them his all while he could.

A Lt Col in the Air Force wrote the following:

Dennis was a significant member of the F-35 Engineering Team. The F-35 is the United States' most advanced fighter jet plane and the largest program in the Department of Defense's history. Dennis' contributions will keep our country safe for generations to come and the technology he helped develop will pay dividends to our next development age.