

Pilot Profile: Earl Evans

by Russell Knetzger

Like other older members, the path of Earl Evans' life, which is now 84 years, was greatly affected by World War II, and by his basic interest in aviation.

Born in northern Minnesota at Hibbing, but raised in Lake City MN and Minneapolis, MN, both on the Mississippi River, he graduated from a Minneapolis High School in the fateful year of 1941.

Somewhat in the fashion of the German training model, Earl enrolled in the National Youth Authority, with 6 hours a day classes and practice for aircraft maintenance, and 3 hrs. in the school's woodworking shop earning school tuition.

Graduating in the Spring of 1942, he shifted to war related duties with Northwest Airlines at Holman Field in St. Paul. His team outfitted new B-24 and B-25 bombers. The B-24s were modified to a pink-tan color for desert duty, and given extra oxygen capacity. The B-25s were given glycol windshield deicers for Arctic duty in Alaska. At only age 18, Earl was made crew chief of his team.

Wanting to serve more actively in the war effort, in November, 1942 he enlisted in the Army Air Force. Sent to Salt Lake City, Utah, then to Lowry Field, Denver, he was trained as a Norden Bombsight & Autopilot mechanic. But he and a few others got stuck with a unit near Savannah, GA, that would not release them to a unit that would utilize their skills, which would be an active European bomber air base. In a true "MASH" tactic, they got a friendly base clerk to get their transfer papers signed by mixing them in a stack of other papers.

In August, 1943 they zig-zagged to Edinburgh, Scotland on the famed Queen Elizabeth ocean liner, but crammed in with 18,000 other troops, 12 to a state-room, shift sleeping 6 at a time. Also trained in England on the Sperry Triangulation Radio, a month after D-Day an LSI landed them on Utah Beach, France. Stuck in St. Mere Eglise awaiting transport, Earl hitched rides on Patton's Red Ball Express to Cherbourg, France, seeing the terrible devastation of French towns along the way. Once at a Depot Repair shop he got to do his work, first in France, then Liege, Belgium until V-E Day.

During a later 1945 month-furlough home to await Pacific duty, Earl married Delores Behslich. Luckily, new duty point rules earned Earl release from service. Earl took advantage of the G.I. Bill that winter to attend the Univ. of Minnesota, graduating in mechanical engineering in 3 years by utilizing all



Earl Evans and his "Spad Gnat" combat model made from coro plast plastic sign stock, powered by the usual OS .15 engine, from plans in this newsletter.

of the summer sessions. His first job was with EBASCO, a power plant construction & operating company. Assigned to Brazil for 2 years, daughter Lark was born there in 1949. In 1952 Earl returned his family to the USA, taking work with the turbine and generator division of Allis-Chalmers, in West Allis, WI. Linda was born in 1952, Stephen in 1956, and David in 1958, while the family lived for 35 years near S.68th & W. Rawson Av. The Allis job required world-wide travel to be part of the setup team for steam power turbine generators, until Earl requested work mainly in West Allis.



The Three-Mile Island nuclear plant accident created such a moratorium in power plant construction of all types, that Allis-Chalmers was forced out of the turbine generator business, selling to Siemens, a German rival. Unpleased with the condition of the West Allis facilities, Siemens built new in Florida. From 1984 to retirement in 1989, Earl worked at the Florida plant, and watched his first R/C flying. He and Delores moved in 1991 to their present home in eastern Muskego. Upon the death of Delores in Sept., 2006, after 4 years of home care by Earl, he joined the RAMS to take actual R/C flight training.

RAMS Horn, February 2008, Bill Stillely, Editor
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