

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



Lloyd W. Heinonen

Lloyd Heinonen was born in Negaunee, Michigan in 1913. His interest in flying began early, fashioning models out of balsa wood, parachute silk and bamboo powered by windup rubber bands to a hand carved propeller. By the time he reached high school, he was able to join a glider club fostered by the physics teacher, Lorraine A. Barnaby. The group included Rudy Thorne, Bob Theriault, and Hartley Haines, among others. Lloyd, Rudy, and Hartley are on the board, along with Rudy's brother Ted and Bob's brother Paul.

In 1930, they built a glider and went out on Teal Lake where they shoveled out a landing and take off strip. They then hooked the glider to a car with chains on the back wheels and managed to become airborne and circle around a bit before coming back to the ice. Crashes did occur. Bob Theriault cracked up twice and in the first episode ended up in the Ishpeming hospital with a severe concussion. It was a week before he came to. One might expect such events to put an end to what most people viewed as similar to going over Niagara Falls in a barrel. But this intrepid gang was not to be deterred by mundane thoughts of sudden death. The thrill of flying was a magnet that could not be resisted. They added a Henderson four cylinder engine and moved to powered flight from mere gliding.

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Upon graduation from high school in 1930, Lloyd looked out on a rather bleak world. The depression was in full swing and the mining industry had cut back so that there were times when a miner might only work once or twice a week. Lloyd used self-learned carpenter skills to get employment at the Negaunee, the Athens, and the Maas mines, the only ones operating at the time. It took ten years before Lloyd had saved enough money to enter the University of Michigan School of Aeronautical Engineering. Following graduation in 1944, he was recruited by Lockheed and moved to Burbank, California.

As flight test engineer, he progressed from the world famed commercial passenger plane, "The Constellation", to such prototypes as the Mach 2 F-104 fighter.

Lloyd is retired in Lancaster, California. His wife Joan died in 1994, but he has three sons, Richard in Lancaster, Louis in Boise, Idaho, and Robert in Dallas, Texas. The love of flying runs deep; all three sons have pilot's licenses.

TJ Mudge, May 2004