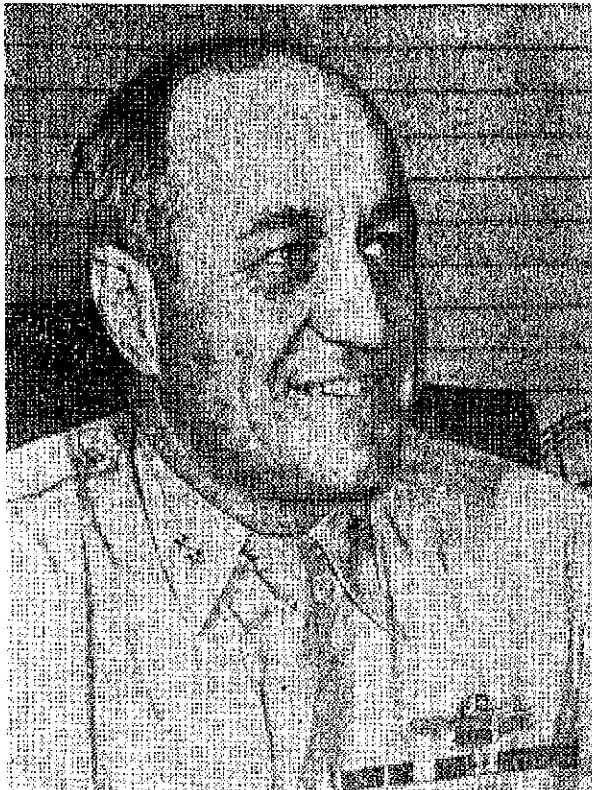


# AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



## **Major General Ralph Royce Pilot US Army**

Ralph Royce was born in June of 1890 in Marquette, Michigan. After early schooling in Hancock, he entered the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and graduated there in 1914. This was the beginning of a military career that spanned 32 years with action in World War I and World War II.

After finishing the Signal Corps Aviation School in 1916, he was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Aero Squadron at Columbus, New Mexico. In late 1917, he took the 1<sup>st</sup> Aero Squadron to France as its commander. Royce was reputed to have been the first flyer to negotiate passage over enemy lines in France during WWI.

Following the war, he held various command positions and attended both the Air Corps Tactical and the Army Command and General Staff Schools. In 1928, he became commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group Selfridge Field Michigan. Major Royce won the Mackay Trophy for leading the January 1930 "Arctic Patrol" flight from Selfridge to Spokane, Washington and return.

Following a General Staff assignment in Washington, D.C., he attended the Army War College. Appointment as Post and 1<sup>st</sup> Pursuit Group Commander at Selfridge Field preceded his assignment to the Philippines in 1937 where he served as Air Officer until August 1939. In 1941, he was stationed in Australia with the Allied Air Forces and in April 1942, ten days before

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the Doolittle raid on Tokyo, he lead a bomber force of three B-17 and ten B-25 aircraft on the first retaliatory raid against Japanese targets in the Philippines. The two-day assault against Manila, Cebu and Davao was the longest aerial offensive to that date.

After two brief stateside commands, General Royce became commander of all U.S. Forces in the Middle East, then Deputy Commander 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force, and Senior Air Officer afloat during the Normandy invasion.

He retired from active duty in 1946 and made his final flight in August 1965, after logging more than a million miles of military flying.

General Royce's decorations include Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, and the French Croix de Guerre with gilt star.

He was enshrined into the Michigan Aviation Hall of Fame. On August 7, 1965 he died. His ashes were scattered over Selfridge Field Air Force Base, Mount Clemens, Michigan where he was twice commanding officer.

It is of note that Ralph Royce's brother Donald also had a distinguished military career. After attending the Naval Academy at Annapolis and graduating with distinction, placing seventh in a class of 154, he went on to become a Rear Admiral, many times decorated for accomplishments in WWI and World War II.

TJ Mudge, Aug. 2004