

Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...

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Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame Names 2009 Inductees Five to be honored at October banquet

OSHKOSH, WI. February 7, 2009 – The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame (WAHF) will induct five aviators at a ceremony to be held this fall. John Jerstad, Paul Johns, LaVern Reller, Gunter Voltz, and Giles Meisenheimer will be honored for their achievements and contributions to aviation in Wisconsin.

Racine native John Jerstad was a B-24 pilot in the Ploesti Raid during World War II. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously on October 28, 1943.

Paul Johns soloed a glider in 1929 and a Curtiss Pusher in 1931. During WWII, he crossed the Pacific 230 times in Consolidated PBYs and Boeing 314s. He has served as a corporate pilot, has built and flown a Kitfox, and at 95, continues to sell a VHF aircraft antenna of his own design. He flew for 67 years.

LaVern Reller served as chief pilot for the State of Wisconsin and flew seven governors during his tenure. He built a Smith Mini and flew it for 30 years. Reller passed away in 1995.

Gunter Voltz was born in Germany. Drafted in 1939, he flew a Fieseler Storch and fought on the Eastern Front until 1945. He came to Wisconsin in 1951 and started glider instruction at West Bend and Hartford, eventually soloing more than 400 glider pilots. He was inducted into the Soaring Society of America's Hall of Fame and in 2008, received the FAA's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award.

Giles Meisenheimer will be inducted in the Pioneer category, for those who made significant aviation achievements before 1927. The Milwaukee native served in the 1st Wisconsin Cavalry National Guard on the Mexican border in 1916. He joined the Royal Air Force when he was injured and unable to serve the United States in World War I. He served as an airport manager and a flight instructor in southeast Wisconsin. He died in 1963.

October 17 is the date of the 2009 induction banquet, which will be held at the EAA AirVenture Museum in Oshkosh. All current WAHF members will receive an invitation. Alternately, e-mail Michael Goc at Goc@aviationhalloffamewisconsin.com, or call 608-339-7191 to be included. Learn more at www.aviationhalloffamewisconsin.com

The Wisconsin Aviation Hall of Fame has inducted more than 80 men and women since its inception in 1985. Its mission is to collect and preserve the history of aviation in Wisconsin, recognize those who made that history, inform others of it, and promote aviation education to future generations.

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