

NORTH DAKOTA AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Oscar Ness

Inducted: 1997



Oscar Ness began his career in aviation at the North Dakota State School of Science studying air frame and engine mechanics under Art Sampson. After college he went to work for Northwest Airlines in Fargo, ND as an aircraft mechanic. A week after Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Navy with the high rank of aircraft mechanist mate first class because of his experience. Less than a year later, he applied for and was selected for flight school. He became a Navy pilot and flew many missions in the Pacific Theater in the PB4Y-2 "Privateer", the Navy version of the B-24.

After the war, Oscar returned to Fargo and became a flight instructor for Dakota Skyways and is a charter member of the North Dakota Air National Guard.

In 1948, Oscar moved to Walhalla, ND, and served as airport manager and started a GI-Bill Flight School Program. During the next 6 years at Walhalla, he taught more than 100 GI-Bill vets to fly. In 1949, Oscar and partner Bob Wells started an aerial application business.

Business growth in Walhalla was geographically limited by the Canadian border and the Pembina Hills so Oscar relocated his business to Lisbon, ND, in 1957 and expanded his services to include aerial and ground fertilizer application.

Oscar developed the first under the engine mount for the fan spray pressure pump on PA-18s, which later became the standard for the industry. Ness' Airspray was among the first to use the PA-28 as a workhorse spray plane.

Over the years Oscar has been an effective advocate for the aerial application industry on both the state and national level. He is a charter member of the North Dakota Aviation Association and was instrumental in the development and adoption of aerial applicator rules and regulations.