



Eugene J. Zepp, LCDR, USNR (Ret.)
"Gene"

Date of Designation: 3 August 1943

Dates of Active Duty: 24 June 1942 - 3 February 1946.
26 August 1952 - 29 March 1955.

Total Flight Hours: 18,000 plus

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 2,800 Prop: 16,000 Helo: 25 VR/VP: 8,750

Combat Tours:

None. Flew VR-3, VR-11 Pacific area, VRE evacuation of Marines from Okinawa, VRJ, Pacific Command 1500th Air Transport Group Navigation Officer. Set up flight procedures for first non-stop flight on R7V from Tokyo to Honolulu.

Aviation Commands: Civilian

Director of Aviation General Motors Corp. Certified the C-4 Inertial Navigation System for airlines, Navy and Air Force (Also used by NASA). Chief test pilot for GM and flew 20 different jet and turbo-prop aircraft.

Summary of Significant Career Events

LCDR Zepp started flying in 1939 at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In 1942, he enlisted in the U. S. Navy and served with Naval Air Transport Squadrons VR-3 and VR-11 as aircraft commander and check pilot, along with temporary duty to VR-E and VR-J in the south pacific area.

Following his release from active duty, LCDR Zepp was active with reserve air transport squadrons VR-64 and VR-864 at the Naval Air Station Oakland, California. During this period he was squadron Training Officer. At this time LCDR Zepp worked for the Borden Company and the General Motors Corporation. He was recalled to active Naval service in 1952, and served overseas with air transport squadron VR-8 until 1955. While at VR-8, LCDR Zepp was squadron Navigation Officer and served on the 1500th



Air Transport Group navigation staff. He assisted in the development of the Sink Down system of cruise control and navigation for the R7V non-stop Tokyo to Honolulu flights. At the time this was the longest overwater flight flown with passengers.

In 1955, LCDR Zepp returned to General Motors and served as co-pilot, captain, supervisor pilot, Assistant Director and Director of the General Motors Air Transport Section. He was the principal flight test pilot for General Motors and flew some twenty jet and turbo-prop type aircraft and accumulated some 18,000 flight hours. He was also in charge of the purchase and outfitting of all aircraft for General Motors Corporation. He managed the transportation of all GM executives to and from all executive conferences in the US and overseas Directors meetings. He managed a transportation program dealing with a highly classified Navy submarine project.

While at General Motors, Mr. Zepp was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Business Aircraft Association, Corporate Advisory Board of Flight Safety Foundation, Chairman of the NBAA Technical Committee, member of the Aviation Committee-Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, member of the Michigan Aeronautics and Space Association, Michigan Airport Planning Committee, SEMCOG Task Force, Wings Club, American Preparedness Association, past President, Stonycroft Hills Club, past President, Fairlane East Association and a member of the Government Industry Advisory Committee. He was elected to the Aviation Hall of Fame in 1965.

Mr. Zepp played a key role in obtaining certification of the Carousel Inertial Navigation System, a GM manufactured system used by most major airlines. Mr. Zepp received the NBAA and MATS million miler Safety Award.

He retired from his position as Director, General Motors Air Transport Section on July 1, 1978.