

Edward V. Rickenbacker



The most successful "ACE" pilot of World War 1

Background



- Born Edward Vernon Rickenbacker in Columbus, Ohio, 1890.
- Eddie, as he was known, was a successful race car driver before WWI, and at one time had proposed to form a flying squadron made up entirely of racing drivers.

Eddie Enters the Army



- In May, 1917 he sailed to France as part of the Army, where he became the staff driver of General Pershing himself, because of his knowledge of auto mechanics.

He becomes a Flyer



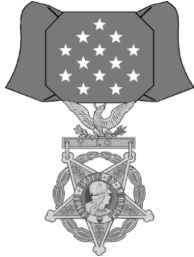
- He eventually transferred to the U.S. Army Air Corps (the beginning of the U.S. Air Force), and in March 1918, joined the 94th Aero Pursuit Squadron, the famous "Hat in the Ring" squadron, so called because of their insignia.

Flying "Ace"

- Two months before the end of the war, Rickenbacker was named commanding officer of the 94th.
- He had achieved 26 victories (22 aircraft and 4 balloons) and received the honorary title "American Ace of Aces."
- Many of those victories occurred while Rickenbacker was ill with serious ear infections.



Recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor



Rickenbacker received the Congressional Medal of Honor for attacking a formation of 5 German planes, downing 2 and chasing the others away. He also received the Distinguished Service Cross, and the French Croix de Guerre.

The later part of his life



On his return home, he went back into the automobile business working for General Motors, and eventually became the leader of Eastern Airlines.

General Doolittle describes Eddie Rickenbacker



• *"Eddie exemplifies those qualities which made America great: courage, integrity, intelligence, humanity, spirituality and patriotism; together with the ability to plan ahead and then a willingness to work hard and sacrifice to achieve and prevail."*
General Jimmy Doolittle
