

# NORTH DAKOTA AVIATION HALL OF FAME

## Jack and Bob Watts

Inducted: 2001



Jack Watts launched his aviation career in 1939 when he earned his private pilot's license. Shortly afterward, when Bob found out, sibling rivalry motivated him to take flying lessons, too. The quest was on. Jack and Bob worked together in aviation for over thirty years.

Jack became an instructor at the Bismarck Flying School while Bob continued to work as a radio engineer for a local station. During the early part of World War II both brothers taught in the War Training Service program; Jack in gliders at Grand Forks, ND and Bob in Huron, SD. When those contracts ended both became civilian ferry pilots for the Air Force. Jack enlisted in the Air Force in 1943 and was stationed to India. Bob enlisted in 1944 and by fate joined Jack in India. They both flew cargo and passenger missions over the Himalayas into China ("THE HUMP") until the end of the war.

Upon returning to Bismarck in 1945, the two brothers founded Capital Aviation. Hundreds of pilots and many career mechanics got their start at Capital. Jack and Bob worked on all sorts of planes from J-3s to jetliners. Bob was awarded the FAA Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award in 1996. The brothers became one of the leading Cessna dealers in the region. Capitol

Aviation pioneered many services. When FFA rules allowed scheduled-on-demand service, Capital provided service between Bismarck and Williston during the early oil field development in western North Dakota. Their planes flew missions using scintillometers and magnetometer instruments that confirmed the existence of oil in the Tioga Basin.

Capital Aviation ferried equipment and supplies during the construction of the Garrison Dam. Capital pioneered game counts, grassland surveys and power line patrols. Capital Aviation certified the first twin-engine aircraft in North Dakota for Part 135 air taxi service. The brothers provided the first air ambulance service to Bismarck.

Throughout his career Bob has stressed safety and expecting perfection of his students. Many students have a common memory of Bob's booming voice reminding them:

"An airplane flies on airspeed."