

**Otto C. Pobanz** is a 1939 graduate of PHS. He grew up as an only child on a farm in Repaupo and it was life on the farm and in his community that inspired the perpetual ingenuity, tenacity, integrity and humor for which he was known.

Otto began his lifelong passion for flight in 1927 at the age of 5, inspired by Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic, leading to his first flight lesson at the age of 16. After only four hours of instruction in a Taylor Cub, Otto made his first solo flight. By the time he was 18, he was teaching flying and by the age of 19, he had accumulated over 1,000 flight hours.

Otto joined the United States Navy and directed advanced flight training programs during WWII. He was one of only three commissioned officers under the age of 21 and was assigned the responsibility of improving instrument flying skills. His squadron flew more than 15 million miles, accident-free, following Otto's heightened pilot training.

In 1956, Otto was hired as RCA's Executive Pilot/Captain for the president. A year later he began a 30-year career with Federated Department Stores as Chief Pilot and Flight Operations Manager.

Otto devoted his life and career to aviation safety. He served on an industry-wide ad hoc group that worked with and advised the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on how to properly manage NiCad batteries which led to industry acceptance of the FAA's final ruling. He served on an FAA industry board which established Cockpit Resource Management to improve crew coordination. Concern over landing control and safety led Otto to present concepts and initiate development of thrust reversers, significantly enhancing the safety of landing control of the Lear 20 series aircraft. Otto participated on the FAA industry panel to help develop flammability and toxicity standards for the interior components on aircraft.

Otto's work with noise abatement inside aircraft led to him being described as the "alpha male of the noise-reduction ubermeisters," and in a *Vanity Fair Magazine* article as the "acoustic consultant of the cognoscenti among private jet owners." He was hired by kings, heads of state and leaders of global corporations to help construct the safest and quietest airplanes in the world.

Otto served 20 years with the Flight Safety Foundation and was a significant force with the National Business Aircraft Association, serving as Director for 11 years. He was named Business Pilot of the Year in 1975, was the 1992 recipient of the Flight Safety Foundation's "Business Aviation Meritorious Service Award," and is an honored veteran in the Tri-State Warbird Museum in Batavia, Ohio. In addition to his technical achievements, Otto amassed over 20,000 accident-free hours as a Pilot in Command. He was a mentor and teacher to numerous aviators who were encouraged and inspired by his leadership, skill, innovation and determination.

Otto died in June 2015. Surviving him are his daughter Gina Siegel and two grandsons, Marco and Nico Siegel.