



Ernest "Hod" Hutson

1922

"Hod" Hutson was reared on a dairy farm in Wisconsin and began his career in aviation when he entered the US Army Air Corps in 1942. He completed his flight training and was assigned to the 447th Bomber Wing as a plane commander in Europe during 1944. Hod flew fifty-eight missions into the Balkans, Italy and southern France. He attained the rank of Captain, received two presidential unit citations with his squadron, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters. He finished his military career as a multi-engine flight instructor. He was rated to fly C-47s, B-25s and B-17s. Re-entering civilian life in 1948, Hod became a flight instructor and charter pilot for Dan Wakefield at Devils Lake. In 1951, he bought Grafton Aero Service and established a GI flight school, an airframe and powerplant shop, a charter service and one of the earliest aerial application businesses. Hod was the Grafton Airport manager from 1951 until 1970. For over fifty years Hod introduced aviation to aspiring pilots in the northeast corner of North Dakota. Many of his students have gone on to become airline and military pilots, flight instructors, fixed-base operators and aerial applicators. Hod's son Don, one of seven children, manages Grafton Aero Service today. Hod was a two-term president of the North Dakota Aviation Association and a state director of the North Dakota Flying Farmers. Hod has been active in numerous community organizations and served as an active member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Eagles. As a war hero, commercial pilot, aerial applicator and instructor, Hod has served as a worthy role model for many aviators in North Dakota.