

Allen AMERICA 250 Transcript

Biographical Note: Archie Clayton Allen was born in Speigner, Alabama which is located in Elmore County, on May 8, 1918. He was the oldest son and named after his father, Archie Clayton Allen, Sr. and his mother was Mary Richardson Allen. Mr. Allen's only sibling was a younger brother born in 1924, Leonard Allen. Mr. Allen attended Holtville High School all twelve years and graduated in spring of 1936 after which he entered Auburn University. In 1941 Mr. Allen joined the Naval Air Program as a cadet and then joined the Marines. After he received his commission in 1943, Mr. Allen married Elizabeth Sophronia Martin on February 23, 1943. After more than five years of military service, Mr. Allen received his discharge and returned to Speigner where he served as a vocational agriculture teacher while he obtained his Master's degree in Administration from Auburn University. Mr. Allen later became the principal and administrator for Holtville High School then in 1967 became Superintendent of Dothan City Schools. He died in 2007.

00:00:00 Marty Olliff

Archie Allen was born in Speigner, Alabama, in 1918. He attended the renowned Holtville High School, then entered Alabama Polytechnic Institute, now Auburn University.

He enlisted in the Naval Air Program as a cadet, became a flight instructor, then joined the Marines, where he flew F-4U Corsairs or VMF-211, Air Group 12, 1st Marine Air Wing. He was deployed to the Philippines, then to Beijing, China. He received three air medals.

After his 1946 discharge, he returned to Spigner, where he served as a vocational agricultural teacher, then Holtville High School principal. Then Mr. Allen came to Dothan in 1967 as the superintendent of Dothan City Schools. He died in 2007.

In this first clip, Allen notes his pre-war life in Holtville and interest in flying.

00:01:02 A. C. Allen

When I grew up, my father operated a country store.

When I attended Holtville High School, graduated there in the spring of 1936 and at Auburn University.

I always envisioned flying airplanes

not too far away, it would be cheap people flying all the time.

I just was fascinated by them. So the Navy gave me an opportunity to do something that I always wanted to do, but I thought it was far beyond possibility.

00:01:38 Marty Olliff

Mr. Allen enlisted in the Naval Air Cadet Program on December 7, 1941. He talks about becoming a flight instructor for the Marines, then deploying to the South Pacific as a single-engine fighter pilot. He eventually became squadron commander of VMF-211.

00:01:55 A. C. Allen

On the morning of December 7, 1941, I hitchhiked from Auburn to Opelika to the Naval Recruiting Office and to the Naval Air Cadet Program.

After completion of flight training in the Navy, you have an option of going to the Marines. And as strange as it may seem, I wanted to go all seas immediately. After I finished flight training at Jacksonville, Florida, I went to Pensacola Naval Air Station as a flight instructor.

Cadets would be assigned to us and grab our parachute and go out to the airplane and make it cadet.

And then we take off and do various maneuvers and learn how to operate the aircraft.

I remained there until new naval personnel decided to send us overseas. Then I went to Cherry Point, North Carolina, for specialized fighter training.

Then prepared there for Columbia, South Carolina, Hungary Airfield.

00:02:55 Marty Olliff

Mr. Allen describes the iconic F-4U Corsair used by the Marines in the war in the Pacific.

00:03:02 A. C. Allen

We did mostly ground support, strafing, Napalm, and 500 pound bombs, one on each side.

Then 580 rocket pods, 650 pounds of machine guns.

They told us it was 13,000 pounds, 1,300 gallons per head.

Another thing about the Corsair had a great armor plate, similar to the P-47, which is built for the same purpose. The radial engines were good, so you could take more fire than your inline engines.

00:03:37 Marty Olliff

At the end of the war, Mr. Allen and his air group were redeployed from the Philippines to Beijing, China, first to accept the surrender of Japanese soldiers there, then in military support of Chiang Kai-Shek's nationalist forces.

Mr. Allen describes the trip and the mission.

00:03:56 A. C. Allen

What about our course in the Philippines?

The atom bomb was off.

On the transporter, they had loaded all the mechanics for the ship that we had in the airplane, from the northern tip of the Philippines, and three B-25s on the first plane for the navigators

And we flew up to Gloria to the Galic Sea, all up to Beijing in China.

put everything up there set up camp into patrol hometown the Nigeria water to protect and come back here.

00:04:36 Marty Olliff

Mr. Allen talks about being discharged from the military.

00:04:42 A. C. Allen

I don't know.

I'm sorry.

I missed it for the duration and it's over.

Well, what you going to do for a living when you get back to the States?

You don't know anything but airplanes.