

*"I do not choose to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon. I seek opportunity - not security. I do not wish to be a kept citizen; humbled and dulled by having the State look after me.*

*I want to take the calculated risk;  
to dream and to build; to fail and succeed.*

*I refuse to barter for a dole. I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence. The thrill of fulfillment to the stale, calm, Utopia.*

*I will not trade freedom for benevolence, nor my dignity for a hand out. I will never cower before my master, nor bend to any threat.*

*It is my heritage to stand erect, proud and unafraid;  
to think and act for myself; enjoy the benefits of my creations and to face the world boldly and say,*

*THIS I HAVE DONE!!"*

*-Allen H. Meyers  
From his notebook*

**ALLEN H. MEYERS**

**PIONEER PLANE BUILDER**



*Al Meyers beside a WACO 10, a pioneer plane, early 1930's. He learned to fly in this aircraft, and very soon became an instructor. This experience inspired him to create his own design of a plane for improved performance and greater safety for the pilots.*

*IN MEMORY  
of  
ALLEN H. MEYERS*

*THE ALLEN H. & NYDIA MEYERS FOUNDATION FUND  
1984*



## **ALLEN H. MEYERS A LEGEND IN HIS OWN TIME**

The Allen H. Meyers Foundation was formed by Allen H. and Nydia Meyers, in 1966. In 1976, Al Meyers passed away. It was the Bicentennial Year, when the whole country was reviewing its heritage and pioneers who had pushed westward in covered wagons searching for land and work. It was at this time that Tecumseh, Michigan was settled. It was here that Al Meyers was to do his life's work. He was a different kind of pioneer – one who helped to develop a new kind of personal transportation by building a better and safer airplane for the private pilot. Now it was possible to cross the country, from coast to coast, more quickly and comfortably.

Al Meyers is a special example of a passing era in United States history. He is one of the few remaining examples of the American legend – a poor farm boy who rose from the ranks. He was almost self-educated in his field, single minded in his purpose, and to this was added a tremendous drive.

When he graduated from Middleburg High School, in upstate New York (1926), aviation was the new frontier. Even as a boy he had made up his mind to join the exhilarating group of flying pioneers. In those days there were no formal university curricula or departments for aviation studies – certainly no scholarships for that purpose. He learned to taking flying lessons and later he became an apprentice with early pioneer builders such as Curtiss-Wright, Chance Vaught, and later, Stinson in Wayne County, Michigan. Flying came naturally to Al Meyers, as if he had been born with the information.

At age 27, he had already designed, built, and was flying his first original design of an open cockpit biplane. This time, however, it had an all metal body of aluminum. His first concept was to make the wings of aluminum as well, but World War II was developing, and aluminum was rationed for the military. Because of this, he was obliged to compromise and make the wings of cloth.

After a long and rigorous testing period by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Al Meyers received a Type Certificate which gave him the right to manufacture his first airplane. He called it the OTW (OUT TO WIN). Because World War II was threatening at this time, and there was an urgent need for more pilots here, he was approached by the military to build as many of his biplanes as possible for the Civilian Pilot Training Program.

## **THE AIRPLANES**

The city of Tecumseh encouraged him to settle there and build a factory to manufacture the Meyers OTW. Al, as everyone soon called him, bought an old dairy farm at the north end of town. He set aside 75 acres of pasture land for an airport and manufacturing area. An adjoining section and house became his farm home. The story of how he was obliged to borrow money, hire people to work with him, and sell the airplane is still a favorite with the old timers in the town.

Al had a gift for working with people. He often said, "If you want people to notice you, start building an airplane. They'll gather around and offer to help. Let them!" Al Meyers did, but he also gave them the opportunity to express themselves in the fast growing technology of aviation.

During World War II, the Meyers OTW was one of two biplanes approved by the FAA as a trainer, as well as for aerobatics, in the military flying program. At the end of the war, training plane contracts were stopped. The biplane was considered obsolete, and its era was coming to an end. All of aviation was going through a transition period. Al Meyers was suddenly faced with the prospect of either closing his factory, or developing a product which would keep his staff working while he completed the design of his first post-war airplane.

He and his associates decided to use their know-how, gained from welding and riveting aluminum in airplane production, to produce sport and fishing boats. The Meyers were amongst the first in the country to manufacture all-purpose aluminum boats. The name had become associated with quality, safety, and reliable performance; the boats, like the airplanes, found ready acceptance.



The success of the Meyers boat company made it possible for Al to use all of his energies to make his concept of a new personal airplane a reality. Just as the OTW resembled the biplanes of World War I, his new design followed the pattern of the low wing military planes of World War II. By the 1950's, he had certified and put into production the MEYERS 145 – a sleek, all aluminum, two-place airplane with retractable front wheels. The lessons learned from the two-place "145" led naturally to the development of a four-place airplane with retractable tricycle gear. This design met the needs of a new generation of pilots who wanted a family or executive type plane. It was called the MEYERS 200, and was produced in Tecumseh from 1959 to 1965.

The Meyers 200 gained immediate recognition, and the fame of its performance spread throughout the United States and abroad. It set a world's record in its class for around-the-world flight, and won first place positions in every race it entered; but its real worth was the built-in safety of design for the plane and pilot. It was the most advanced plane of its type at that time, and even now is considered a forerunner of the modern personal plane.

In 1965, North American Rockwell Corporation decided to add to its existing line of large commercial airplanes, the manufacture of a small executive type plane. After an extensive survey of available small private aircraft, interviews with manufacturers and dealers, they offered to purchase the design and manufacturing rights of the "200" from Al Meyers. The "200" name was to indicate its available cruising speed.

It was with some reluctance that Al Meyers agreed to the sale. The growing cost of materials and labor for mass production required vast amounts of capital and investment, which he alone could not raise. He accepted the offer with the expectation that the larger company would accomplish this. The Rockwell Corporation renamed the Meyers 200, "Aero Commander 200", and began its manufacture under the Meyers Type Certificate. For the first time, Al Meyers was able to pay off the mortgage on his land. Previously, all his funds had been in constant use to finance his production, prepare new models, and meet the payroll.

## THE AL MEYERS FOUNDATION

From the sale to North American Rockwell, also arose the opportunity to set up the ALLEN H. MEYERS FOUNDATION. At that time, the government had a program which encouraged the creation of private non-profit organizations to support education and research by matching private funds. This program was utilized to establish the Allen H. Meyers Foundation.

Since its existence, the Foundation has assisted approximately 300 individuals and institutions. The students have majored in such fields as biology, chemistry, engineering, medicine, and nursing. The projects explored such areas as leukemia, cancer chemotherapy, and sickle cell anemia. Grants-in-aid to medical departments have helped to convene scientists from all over the world to exchange their experiences in the frontiers of research, scientific concepts and philosophy.

A governing board presides over the Foundation. It consists of a broad representation from the community. They may be doctors, nurses, research persons, teachers, bankers, Certified Public Accountants, and skilled tradesmen. All applicants for grants meet personally with an individual board member. Decisions are made after all the reports on the interviews, references, and recommendations from each of the board members are brought together for the assigning of awards. All awards are of equal amount, based on the earnings of the Foundation from its investments. This makes it possible for the Foundation to be a perpetual one, or even grow in size through additional contributions to the endowment funds.

From 1971 to 1976, Allen H. Meyers made the greatest of his life's efforts. Because of life-long hypertension, a condition had developed which required surgery and blood transfusion. A stroke followed the surgery and two months later, serum hepatitis set in. All of this left him with a weakened right side and considerable speech loss. Without complaint, he worked at restoring his health with the same **will to win** which led him to complete the designing, testing, certification, and manufacture of three types of airplanes in his life time.



In 1974, Al Meyers was elected to the Pioneer Aviation Hall of Fame. Even though weakened by illness, he stood proudly to receive his citation. Later, he placed his own bronze plaque on the wall-sized steel plate hanging in the Curtiss Aviation Museum. This roster of names includes Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, Stinson, Rickenbacker, and many other aviation pioneers.

His citation reads in part:

"As an individual, Allen H. Meyers designed and put into production, three airplanes, each an advanced concept in its time. Meyers put quality, integrity, and safety in his engineering. The pilot's welfare was at the base of all his designs. Insurance Underwriters published that no student or instructor was killed in an OTW during the entire World War II training program. No corrections, 'Airworthiness Directives', were needed for the OTW (the biplane), the Meyers 145 (two-place airplane), or the Meyers 200 – the most efficient and fastest four-place, single engine, personal plane in the 1960's."

The present address of the  
Pioneer Aviation Hall of Fame is:  
Aerospace Museum, 2001 Pan American Plaza,  
Balboa Park, San Diego, California 92101

The latest configuration of the Meyers 200 is called the "Interceptor 400", which is a turbo-prop version of the original airplane.

On March 15, 1976, Allen H. Meyers passed away in his sleep. His memory lives on in the Al Meyers Airport, the Allen H. Meyers Foundation, the planes he designed and built, and in the hearts of the hundreds of pilots and people everywhere to whom he brought the joy and inspiration of flying.

by Nydia Meyers, PhD  
(Mrs. Allen H. Meyers)  
1984 - Second Edition

Most of this information was obtained from Al Meyers, his log books, co-workers, and personal papers.

Other reports are:

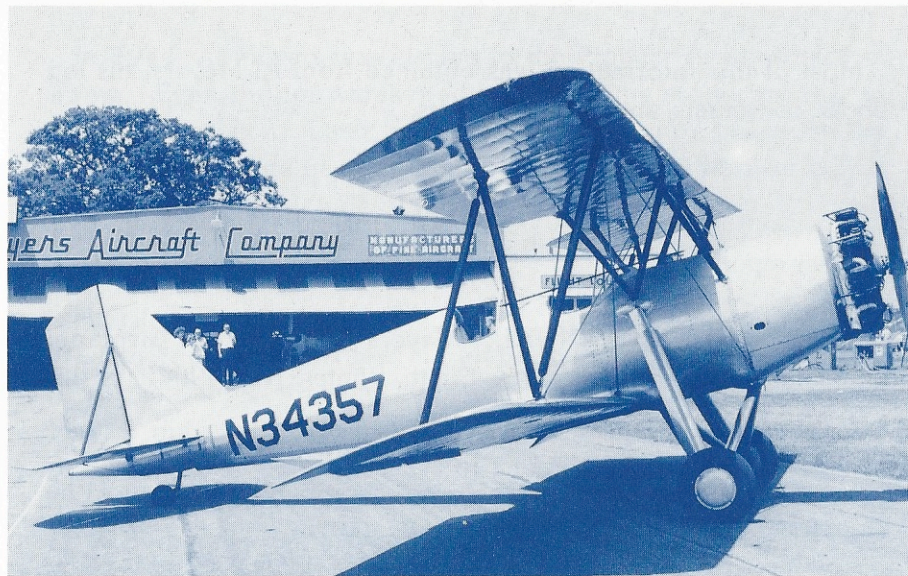
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AVIATION NEWS, "Allen H. Meyers Thoroughbreds", As told by Gid Miller, September, Vol. 8, No. 9, p. 27, (1976)

For further information write to:

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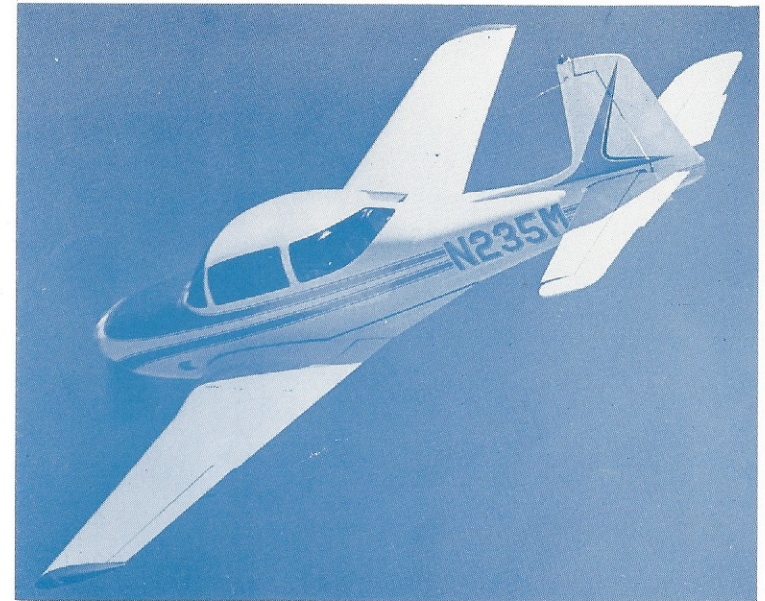




Al Meyers first designed this biplane, the OTW in 1935 with completion and test flight May 10, 1936 at the old Wayne County Airport (presently called Detroit Metro Airport). The OTW was used during WWII as a trainer, as well as for aerobatics, in the military flying program.



The Meyers 145 was certified and put into production in the 1950's - a sleek, all aluminum, two-place airplane with retractable front wheels.



The Meyers 200 is the most famous of the Meyers' designed and manufactured airplanes. It has 285 H.P., fuel injection engine, complete retractable landing gear, and full instrument panel. It carries four people and 200 pounds of baggage, while cruising 190 to 200 miles per hour.



The most recent configuration of the Meyers 200 is "The Interceptor". It has a "turbo prop" engine with three bladed propeller made for travel at altitudes around 30,000 feet. It will travel at speeds of about 350 miles per hour.