

Archie F. Saccio

The FSSK Veteran Who Owned the Sky

Archie F. Saccio was born October 27, 1918 in Manhattan, NY, and died at the age of 92, on January 2, 2011. He is buried at the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Wrightstown, New Jersey. His wife, Carol, still lives here at South Knolls. Archie was born "Baby-Boy Saccio." As an adult Baby-Boy legally changed his name to Archie, the name that his father called him. He was named after Teddy Roosevelt's son, Archibald. Archie's father was born in Italy, grew up in a tough Italian American neighborhood. He wanted his son's name to be associated with Teddy's Rough Riders. Archie also grew up in a poor neighborhood, however he had the drive to accomplish something special with his life. He got the flying bug during the early days of aviation. At age 9 Archie visited an Army Air Corps recruiting center, and from then on knew he was meant to be a pilot.



SERIAL NUMBER 33	1. NAME (Print) Archie — Saccio	ORDER NUMBER 3401
2. ADDRESS (Print) 597 New Lots Ave. Bklyn Kings N.Y.		
3. TELEPHONE None	4. AGE IN YEARS 21	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Manhattan
DATE OF BIRTH 10-27-18		6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U.S.A.
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Sophie — Saccio		8. RELATIONSHIP OF THAT PERSON Mother
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON 597 New Lots Ave. Bklyn Kings N.Y.		
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME Part time Atlas Lathing Corp.		
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Student - St. John's College, Bklyn 815 Broadway Bklyn Kings N.Y.		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. S. FORM 1		Archie Saccio (Signature)

Draft Card of Archie F. Saccio

Archie was a veteran of WWII. He served from 1942 to 1948. He then moved to the reserves through to 1969. He served in the US Army Air Corps, and US Air Force, as a pilot. He started as a 1st Lieutenant and then in 1945 was promoted to Captain. He served in both the European Theater of Operations and the Korea Police Action. He stayed in the reserves and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel after 26 years of service.

Early in 1942, prior to his military service, Archie interviewed with TWA, but he did not meet the minimum pilot height requirements, of 5 feet 7 inches. Feeling rejected, Archie walked into the Army Air Corps recruiting office that same day and asked if he qualified for flight school. The recruiter asked three questions, "Are you between 5 feet 2 inches and 6 feet 4 inches?" "Are you afraid to fly?" and "Do you have any college education?" Archie answered in the affirmative to all three and was recruited into the Army Air Corps. A day later he reported to Flight School at Maxwell Field in Alabama. Upon his arrival Archie was mesmerized with planes roaring in the sky above, and those lined up on the field. Archie

went to his barracks and met 3 other pilots, whom he would train and live with, they were Stanley, Hank and Walter.



Photo Courtesy of Saccio Family Archives. Archie is in the middle, standing.

After Archie introduced himself to his bunk mates, he mentioned that he noticed hearses were there line up along Main Street. Hank told Archie that 10 to 12 plane accidents happen every day. Archie said to himself "What have I gotten myself into?"

Archie continued his training in Alabama, and Flight School at Milton Airport in Milton, PA. After the weeks of training and flight tests, Archie qualified and received his commercial license.

Ironically, few weeks into training Archie received a telegram from TWA offering him a job as 2nd officer. Archie asked his commander for a release from the military. His commander replied, "If I release you from Army Air Corps you would be in the infantry the next day." The US draft was in progress and drafting directly into the infantry. Archie stayed in the Army Air Corps and had a remarkable career.

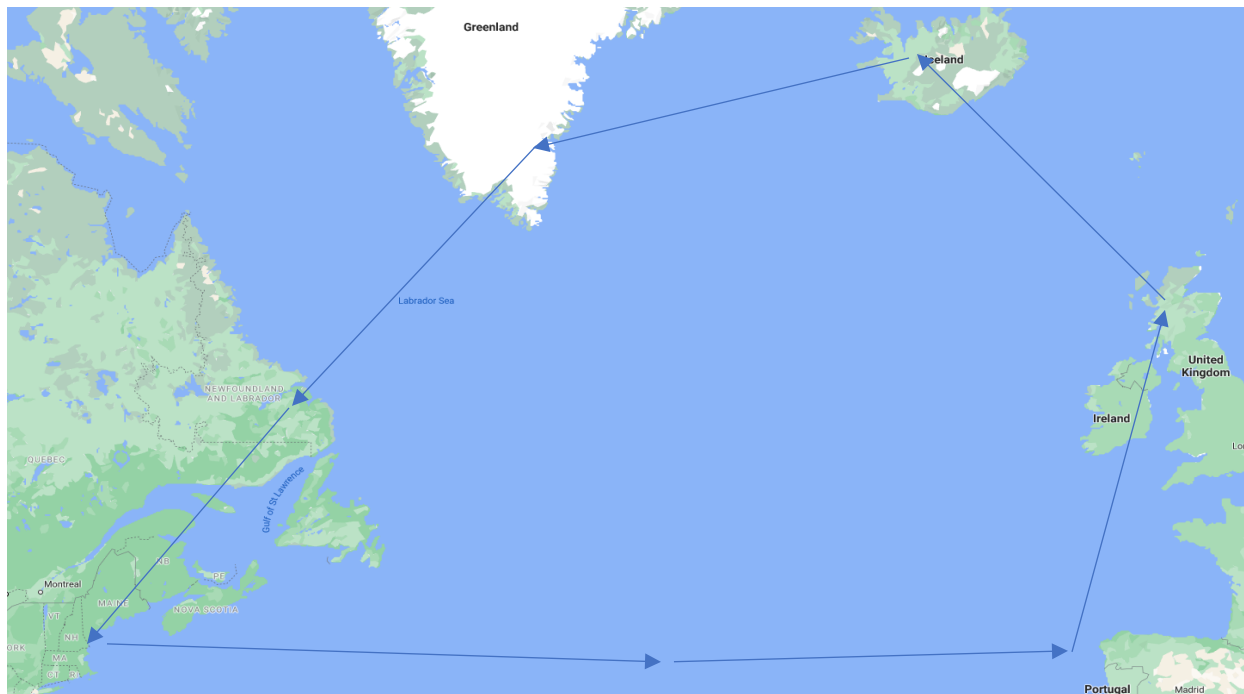
In late 1942, he was assigned to the Ferry Command (transport of newly built planes to Air Bases) in Wilmington, Delaware. As Archie walked onto the base, he was astonished to see hundreds of planes line up ready for transport. The plane tails of B-26, P-40, B-24, B-17, B-25, PT-22, and PT-17 were all line up against the fence. It looks like the entire Army Air Corps was there to greet him.

In 1943, 1st LT Archie F. Saccio was transferred to the Air Transport Command (ATC), Prestwick, Scotland. The United States created an Army Air Force Unit during World War II as the strategic airlift component of the United States Army Air Forces. It had two main missions, the first being the delivery of supplies and equipment between the United States and the overseas combat theaters; the second was the ferrying of aircraft from the manufacturing plants in the United States to where they were needed for training or for operational use in combat. ATC also operated a worldwide air transportation system for military personnel and equipment.

Insignias of the Air Transport Command (ATC)



From 1943 to 1948 Captain Saccio flew missions across the North Atlantic from Scotland, Iceland, Greenland, Labrador, and New York. These missions were critical to the allies to bring supplies to support the war effort.



This route was over 4,000 miles, 4 re-fueling stops and two days of travel. Captain Saccio flew the C-47 and C-54 as displayed below.



One of the most difficulties times ATC faced was the winter weather over the North Atlantic. Until Lajes Field in the Azores was opened in late 1943, eastbound operations over the North Atlantic ceased because of extremely high winds and other adverse conditions. When Lajes Field became operational, all eastbound flights resumed, and by March of 1944 most transport flying between the United States and Great Britain or North Africa went by way of the Azores.

Bermuda was used as a weather alternate to Newfoundland. When able, flights to Prestwick, Scotland, continued to be flown via Labrador and Iceland. Through the winter of 1943-44, ATC provided a sizable eastward lift for the movement of key personnel, mail, and critical cargoes to the European and

Mediterranean theaters, as well as casualty evacuation of American personnel back to the USA after D-Day 1944. At the end of WWII Capt. Saccio flew missions into Berlin, Germany as part of the Berlin Blockade Air Lift.



Mess Hall for pilots in Prestel, Scotland



ATC Military Cap

Capt. Saccio also flew missions around the world, including most of Europe, North Atlantic countries Venezuela, North Africa, Turkey, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, India, and China. As the Post War was nearing its end, Capt. Saccio was sent to Tent City, outside Casablanca, Morocco. Where he waited for his discharge. He was told it could take weeks to get back to the States. One day Capt. Saccio overheard his Colonel state that he needed a pilot to fly him to Florida because his crew came down with Malaria. Capt. Saccio jumped at the chance to go home sooner and got permission to fly his Colonel back to Florida.

After being discharged from active duty in late 1948, he started his civilian Pilot career with Colonial Airlines on June 9, 1949. In 1956 Colonial Airlines merged with Eastern Airlines. Capt. Saccio flew for Eastern Airlines for remainder of his career, retiring in 1978 at age 60. Archie came full circle. Ironically, he finished his career while working for Eastern Airlines, the company that also told him he was too short to be a pilot.



As a reservist (1948 – 1969) Capt. Saccio had to report for reserve duty 4 days a month, plus two full weeks a year. Leading up and during the Korean Police Action (1950 – 1953), Archie flew training missions for paratroopers simulating mock war maneuvers. He flew a C-36 out of Mitchell Air Force Base in Long Island, NY, and Pope Field at Fort Bragg, South Carolina.



C-46 Commando Military transport aircraft and cockpit

On Oct 1, 1950, Capt. Saccio, reservist, was flying a C-46 back from Goose Bay Labrador to Westover AFB, Massachusetts, in poor weather conditions. Capt. Saccio reported on his radio that his plane only had 10 minutes of fuel and they were lost. He also reported seeing a river running from north to south and streetlights from a town. His co-pilot and 36 service men were also aboard the C-46. He was about to ditch the plane when a control tower operator, Capt. David Larson, heard Capt. Saccio's radio call and the C-46 engines overhead. Capt. Larson tried to contact the plane, but the C-46 was having radio problems. After 3 attempts using different radio frequencies, Capt. Larson contacted Capt. Saccio and informed the Capt. that he was over Newburgh, NY. He was told to follow the lights from the river to Stewart Field, West Point Airport. A few minutes later Capt. Saccio landed the plane safely with only 2 minutes of fuel left. That river was the Hudson.

Flying was not Archie's only interest. He loved boating, including power boat racing. He collected model trains and drove and collected classic automobiles. During his military and civilian career Captain Archie F. Saccio booked over 100,000 flight hours and flew over 30 million air miles. A special thank you to Archie's wife, Carol Saccio, for assisting with this tribute.



In 2008 Retired Lieutenant Colonel Archie F Saccio was honored by the FSSK community at its Veterans Day celebration.

Written by Vincent Scatuccio

References:

- John Allen
- Ancestry.com
- Newspaper.com
- Carol Saccio