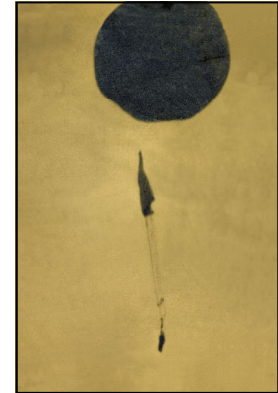


CAPTAIN EDWARD B. (EDDIE) ALLEN



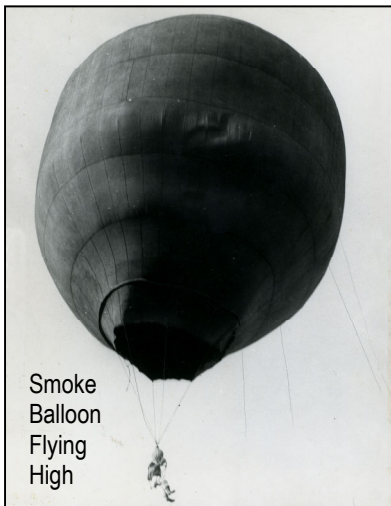
Public Relations Balloon photo



Eddie flying at age 15

**INDUCTED INTO THE U. S. BALLOONING HALL OF FAME
July 27, 2008**

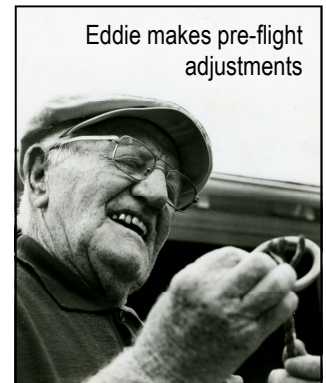
**By The Balloon Federation of America at the
National Balloon Museum, Indianola, Iowa**



Smoke
Balloon
Flying
High



Eddie's Smoke Balloon Ready for flight
at Princeton, Indiana in 1950



Eddie makes pre-flight
adjustments



Eddie in 1974



Flight Preparations
in 1918

In the picture at left are left to right, Great Uncle Martin, Captain Eddie, Eddie Jr., Edgar, who is Eddies twin brother and Eddie's other brother Jim. Three generations of balloonists together as the "torch" is being passed to the youngest, Edward Jr. in about 1935.

CAPTAIN EDWARD B. (EDDIE) ALLEN

August 24, 1896 – October 9, 1984

Edward B. (Eddie) Allen was born into a ballooning family on August 24, 1896. Ballooning in the Allen family had begun with James Allen who functioned as an assistant to Thaddeus Lowe in the Union Army balloon program during the Civil War. Then Eddie's uncle Ira Allen, who was either James Allen's nephew or 2nd cousin also became associated with Lowe while a Private in the Army and assisted with the operation of the observation Civil War balloon *Intrepid* for the Union Army. After Ira was discharged from the Army in 1866 he went home where he, together with his brothers, Comfort and Martin decided to build their own balloon. They flew their first smoke filled balloon in the spring of 1878. They would erect poles with ropes stretched between them to hold the balloon up and then they would build a fire below, using gasoline and old tires to make black smoke. When the balloon was filled with smoky hot air they would cling to their trapeze type assembly and the balloon would be cut loose from its moorings. The balloon would rise quite rapidly and when it cooled the balloon would come down in an uncontrolled descent.

With his father and two uncles and other relatives involved in the various facets of ballooning, it was only natural that Eddie would follow in their footsteps. Eddie's first flight into the air was in 1912 at the tender age of 16. This initial ascent was followed by a lifetime of 3,253 ascensions often with parachute drops from a trapeze. His flights were propelled upward by a large muslin balloon filled with smoky hot air. The smoke helped to seal the pores of the muslin fabric to hold the heat longer. A volunteer ground crew hung on until launch was possible. The problem of the uncontrolled descent of the balloon prevailed until Eddie developed a simple counter weight mechanism using 4 bricks in a bag which would be activated when the last jumper left the balloon. This mechanism turned the balloon upside down and caused it to come down in a more controlled manner and land closer to the launch field.

Married to Louise in 1917, Eddie became the head of his own flying family. As their six children grew they too became involved either as balloonist or ground crew. These valiant Allens ascended beneath a mass of superheated air while clinging to a trapeze bar suspended from a parachute. In their heyday prior to WW II, the Flying Allens; Eddie, his son Eddie, Jr. and Eddie's daughters Gloria & Florence performed at fairs and air shows in many states. Some time after lifting off they would release the parachute and float back to earth. Their acts included the famous cannon act where one of his daughters would be carried aloft by the balloon in a "cannon" and then they would be "shot" out of the cannon and parachute to earth. This was accomplished by activating an explosive device which created sound and smoke and at the same time the end of the "cannon" was allowed to drop putting it into a vertical position where up on Florence would easily slide out and activate her parachute. This "cannon" is now on display at the National Balloon Museum.

During the early 1950s Captain Eddie (a title given to him by the spectators) performed for several seasons with the Joey Chitwood Thrill Show. Members of the family who did not balloon, including wife Louise and daughter Millie were often his faithful ground crew. Over the years, in spite of numerous injuries and family tragedies the Allen adventurous ballooning spirit never faltered.

Newspaper accounts tell how in 1963, when ballooning was outlawed in New York State, Eddie took one of the many balloons that he had constructed to Vermont and Connecticut for numerous ascensions.

In 1974, at the age of 78, Eddie again returned to the skies to commemorate the Centennial of the Allens in ballooning. Captain Eddie wanted the world to see what ballooning was like in the old days. At the National Balloon Championships in Indianola, Iowa Captain Eddie ascended to 3000 feet, cut loose the parachute and landed one foot from a barbed wire fence to the amazement of the 40,000 spectators. For this feat he was awarded the Federation Aeronautique International Mongolfier Diploma for 1974.

Captain Eddie ended his active flying career in 1976 at the age of 80. During the U. S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships in Indianola, Iowa that year he sustained severe injuries when his parachute malfunctioned and he dropped from 1000 feet with his parachute only partially opened.

In August 1983, just before his 87th birthday, this honorary balloonmeister of several national ballooning events was feted as part of the Great American Balloon Extravaganza held at Darien Lake Fun Country.

In 1984 the ballooning world lost this Smoke Balloonist Extraordinaire. During his lifetime Captain Eddie had actively participated in the growth of ballooning from the smoke filled balloons to the current multi-colored balloons with propane burners. A man of great courage and daring as well as foresight who is featured in many books and articles, Captain Eddie Allen was indeed a barn-stormer of ballooning.