



Jack R. Hunt
1918 – 1984

Aviation Record-Setter, Visionary,
Entrepreneur, and Founding President
of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical
University

Known as the “father of the modern aviation university,”

Jack R. Hunt is the visionary pioneer of aviation higher education. As founding president of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Hunt transformed a small, for-profit corporation into the only non-profit, fully accredited university in the world dedicated to aviation and aerospace education. Under his leadership, Embry-Riddle grew from an institute with less than 500 students in 1963 to a university with two residential campuses, over 130 teaching centers worldwide, and over 100,000 graduates.

Hunt joined the United States Navy in 1942, and received both lighter-than-air and heavier-than-air training. His airship piloting was legendary, culminating with his most famous flight in 1957. Hunt, along with a crew of 14, flew a non-stop and non-refueled flight of over 9,400 statute miles, crossing the Atlantic Ocean twice in an eleven-day period. His flight record remains unsurpassed for the longest non-refueled flight. Commander Hunt received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Harmon International Trophy.

In 1963, Hunt became President of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Institute (ERAI) based in Miami, Florida. His unique idea that students should be able to earn college credit for classes such as flight and maintenance training changed the institute, and the university system in the United States. Once accredited, Hunt established a second residential campus in Prescott, Arizona and Teaching Centers on military bases in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. In just twenty years, Hunt transformed Embry-Riddle from a nearly bankrupt pilot and mechanic certificate school to as a world-class university.