

Clifford Ball was born in Banksville, Pennsylvania (a small community outside of Pittsburgh) in 1891. During Army service in World War I, he saw combat for 101 consecutive days at Chateau Thierry and the Argonne.

One Sunday afternoon after the war, Cliff Ball went to a field in Dravosburg to see Eddie Stinson and his Zephyr Fliers. For \$15, Cliff bought a ride in a Jenny aircraft that shook so badly that Cliff feared for his life. When Eddie and the Zephyr flew out of Pittsburgh, they left behind a changed Clifford Ball. He was no longer just an auto salesman, he was an aviation convert who had hit the glory road for aviation.

Cliff began talking flying to anyone who would listen. He wanted airports built. His slogan was "build nests and the birds will come." In 1924, he hocked everything, raised \$35,000, and bought 40 acres of a hilltop in Dravosburg to build an airport. In 1927, Ball established the first air mail line from Pittsburgh to Cleveland, and in 1928, decided a night mail service was needed. Over the rugged countryside, without aid of radio or guiding beacons, he and his pilots flew into the darkness delivering the ever increasing volume of mail.

In 1946, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania received authorization to organize a number of National Guard units, both flying and nonflying with missions to support the U.S. Army Air Force. But before federal recognition for the future Pittsburgh units could be granted, facilities at the airport needed to be constructed. Ball led negotiations for the first 25-year lease of lands that became the PaANG installation at Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. Ball loved aviation and everything connected with it and his efforts helped the Air National Guard to become a reality in Pittsburgh.

Clifford Ball was the first Director of Greater Pittsburgh Airport. His accomplishments resulted in his election to the Aviation Hall of Fame, and he is widely known as Pittsburgh's "Patron Saint of the Air." Until Cliff's death in 1972, at 80 years of age, he was still active as the driving force behind Pittsburgh Aero Club and as the National Secretary of the Famous OX-5 Club, the Aviation Pioneer's Group he founded and organized in 1955.

The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Clifford Ball as a pioneer of aviation in the Pittsburgh area reflected great credit upon himself and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and contributed immeasurably to the establishment of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard installation at Pittsburgh. The civilian service of Clifford Ball truly warrants his posthumous induction into the Pennsylvania Air National Guard Hall of Fame.