

Earl Thomas Halloran, Sr.

March 1, 1897 - September 23, 1978

(From Ancestry and Findagrave.com)

Earl Thomas Halloran, Sr., 81, died September 23, 1978 in Hinton, WV.

Born at Hinton March 1, 1897, he was the son of the late Daniel and Emma Humphreys Halloran.

He was a graduate of Hinton High School, Class of 1916.

He was known to be an intelligent man with many talents including a knack for flying. Halloran attended West Virginia University to study Engineering before the eruption of World War I. He decided to enlist in the U.S. Army where he was assigned to the U.S. Army Signal Corps to become a pilot. His flight training at Rich Field in Waco, Texas exposed his natural ability to aviate. He successfully soloed after just four and a half hours of flight instruction in a Curtiss JN-4D aircraft (aka "Jenny") and was commissioned a First Lieutenant in March of 1918. Instead of being sent overseas, he was retained as a flight instructor because of his flying expertise and radio skills. Halloran remained a flight instructor for the duration of the war. With his training and guidance, his students went on to assist the Allied Powers in defeating the enemy.

At the conclusion of the war, Halloran returned to Hinton where he formed the Hinton Aero Club. He purchased a surplus "Jenny" aircraft by soliciting funds from local individuals. The "Jenny" was then used by the Aero Club to barnstorm across the state carrying passengers and thrill seekers alike. Halloran's barnstorming days were halted in August of 1919 when he was hired by the Island Creek Coal Company to "scout" the area and provide aerial information on the location of 5,000 armed miners planning a march in order to unionize. At the most volatile point of the miners' unionization efforts, Halloran was made a captain of a group of five other aircraft hired by the coal company and prepared homemade bombs to drop if necessary to thwart any attack on law enforcement personnel. Countless lives were saved with the aerial information Halloran provided.

Earl Halloran's aviator days were not without incident. He once survived an accident in Logan after clipping wires during takeoff and, ultimately, it was a nose dive into a fence at the end of a cornfield that effectively ended his flying career when it was determined that his aircraft was damaged beyond repair.

Unable to secure capital to purchase a new aircraft, he sought other opportunities to earn a living and started a bus service, automobile dealership and the first cable TV company in Hinton, WV.

His contributions to aviation in the state of West Virginia and abroad lives on. Earl Halloran was believed to be the first registered pilot in the state, a fact many support.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his brother, Lloyd Crescent Halloran and sister, Ferne Virginia Halloran Broaddus.

He is survived by his wife, Grace M. Parker Halloran and son Earl Thomas Halloran, Jr.

Earl was laid to rest in the Greenbrier Burial Park in Hinton, WV.