



Earl Thomas Halloran, Sr.

Earl Thomas Halloran was born July 1, 1896 in Hinton, West Virginia, to a prominent railroad family. 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. Upon announcement of the United States' involvement in the war, 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. In addition to flight instructing, he trained his students on various positions, such as gunner and mechanic, to ensure they could be cross-utilized in the aircraft. 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

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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. The contributions he made 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 that many support. The unfortunate state capitol building fire in 1921 destroyed the proof of this honor.

He was a respected businessman with interests beyond aviation. The West Virginia Department of Transportation recognized his contributions both here and abroad and inducted him into the West Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame in 2016.

Earl Thomas Halloran, Sr. We Salute You!

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