

Aviators Who Served Our Nation

Many brave men from Calloway County have served their country as military aviators/ pilots.

Though not a complete list, it is important to recognize those we know about.

Bennie Talton Wilson served in the Army Air Corps as a pilot and aerial photographer over France in WWI.

W. Lewis Drake II, William T. McCage, and James Knight Parker all lost their lives flying in combat during World War II, and Ellis Cartell Lassiter was killed while undergoing combat pilot training. Other local military aviators in WWII included James L. Boyd, Harold Brandon, Thomas Nathan Brandon, Solon Bucy, Robert Carlton, James D. Clopton, William B. Collins Jr., Rudell Coursey, Jean G. Crawford, Thomas Perry Crawford (who died as a result of injuries), Willard Dill, James Edward Diuguid, Gene Dulaney, Mason Duran Edwards, 'Hamp' Erwin, James Warren Erwin, Thomas Fenton, Gaylord Forrest, 'Jud' Fortenbery, Pat Gingles, Kelly Guy, Isaac Harris, Tass Hopson, H. I. Hosick, Thomas Howard, Harlan Inglis, Edwin James, Richard E. Jones, Herbert A. Mardis, Corvel Myers, Thomas Ross Sammons, Earl Sherffius, Lewis Stark, John E. Stevens, R. C. Stewart, Brown C. Tucker, Charles G. Walsh, Teddy Webb, Fred Milton Wells, Joseph D. West, Rupert Woodall, and Oteen White. Dr. Hugh Oakley, who later served as Airport Board chair for 22 years, was a classroom instructor at the Great Lakes Naval Station for the WWII pilots who flew off aircraft carriers.

The Army Air Corps became the U S Air Force in 1947. Hamp Erwin was called back to active duty by the Air Force in 1948, flew combat missions in Korea, and completed his career in the Air Force before returning to Murray to continue flying as a civilian. Hamp was the first KY pilot to receive the D.O.T. Wright Bros. Master Pilot Award for flying 50 years without an accident. Billy Thurman was another Air Force pilot during the Korean War, and Gaylord Forrest flew for the Navy.

During the Vietnam War, two Calloway County aviators lost their lives in combat: Edwin Sholar and Jimmy Futrell. Other Vietnam pilots included David Carr, David Graham, Woody Herndon

Jr., Jimmy Hopkins, George James, and Thomas Schmittou, who also flew during the Korean War.

Donna Herndon

###

Sources: The Story of Calloway County 1822-1976 by Dorothy and Kirby Jennings; Lynn Grove-Harris Grove Family History; Dozens of personal conversations with family members and individuals included in this list.