



Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame

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Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame announces 2017 honorees for recognition at November 18 dinner

Largest group ever includes three father-son duos; seven World War I veterans (one a prominent business leader who flew with the Royal Flying Corps); a World War II bomber pilot who flew for Chennault in China; the founder of the Dayton airport; a former RI State Police Officer, and a world speed record-holding Naval Aviator

Awardees have Warwick, Pawtucket, Newport, Providence, Portsmouth and Lincoln connections, and include alumni of Slater Junior High School, Moses Brown School, Warwick, Aldrich, Westerly and Pawtucket High Schools, and the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and Providence College

PROVIDENCE— The Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame will induct eight new members and recognize the contributions of five other individuals at their 15th annual ceremony and dinner to be held at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center in Cranston on Saturday evening, November 18th. The event will also commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Cadet Programs of the Civil Air Patrol.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Tickets cost \$60 each (\$110 per couple) and can be obtained by emailing riahof@aol.com, or logging in to our website at www.riahof.org. For further information, please call 401-398-1000 or 401-831-8696.

This is the largest number of honors presented in the organization's fifteen-year history. "This year and next year mark the centennial of the US involvement in the First World War," notes Hall of Fame President Frank Lennon. "That research and outreach has netted another 30 or so combat veteran nominations, including five fliers from RI who were killed in action or in training."

"Based on the publicity from our previous inductions, we have received many nominations from the general public," said Hall of Fame founder and president Frank Lennon. "We now have a pool of well over 150 people under consideration for recognition."

Honorees are selected by an ad hoc committee representing a number of aviation groups. The committee includes all previous inductees, such as Robert Crandall, former chairman of American Airlines; Jennifer Murray, the first woman to fly a helicopter around the world; and Apollo 8 Astronaut Bill Anders.

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Thumbnail sketches of this year's honorees are listed below; short bios of each are included in the attachment. (LTC Warren Smith, Albert Schmid and MG William Gorton are still living.)

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Raymond Blake, USAF, (Ret) 1897-1958

World War I Ambulance Volunteer; World War I Bomber Pilot, Lafayette Flying Corps; RI State Police Officer; World War II Counterintelligence Officer

Born in Westerly, graduated from Westerly High School

and his son

Captain Roger Holland Blake, USAF (1921-1952)

World War II Transport Pilot; Berlin Airlift Pilot; Cold War Test Pilot

Lived in Warwick; graduated from Aldrich High School

Captain Adolphus W. Gorton, USN (Ret) (1897-1989)

World War I Ambulance Volunteer; Naval Aviator; US Navy Air Race Team; Test Pilot and Aviation Pioneer

Born in Pawtuxet; attended Moses Brown School

and his son

Major General William A. Gorton USAF (Ret) (1933-)

Fighter Pilot; Vietnam Forward Air Controller; Commander, 16th Air Force

Born in Providence; graduated from Moses Brown School

Lieutenant Colonel Horace LeRoy Borden, USAF (1892-1951)

World War I Aerial Observer; WWII Training Squadron Commander; Cold War Support Squadron Commander

Born in Portsmouth; attended Moses Brown School

and his son

Lieutenant Horace LeRoy Borden, Jr. USAAF (1922-1944)

World War II Fighter Pilot, KIA Phillipines 1944

Richmond Viall (1896-1973)

World War I Pilot, Royal Flying Corps; RI National Guard Artillery Officer; Manufacturing Executive and Civic Leader

Born, raised and lived in Providence most of his life; second home in Saunderstown

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John B. Chevalier (1887-1955)

World War I Army Pursuit Pilot; Asiatic Affairs Expert; Proponent of Aviation Causes

Born in Providence

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Lieutenant Colonel John M. Lepry (1917-2003)

World War II Fighter Pilot; RI Air National Guard Transport Pilot

Born in West Warwick; graduated from Warwick High School, Providence College, RI College; Warwick school teacher

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Clifton Badlam Thompson (1892-1928)

World War I Ambulance Volunteer; World War I Pursuit Pilot, Lafayette Flying Corps; General Aviation Pioneer

Chief Pilot for first Providence Airport; killed in Buttonwoods (Warwick) crash in 1928

Edward Albert Johnson (1885?-1949)

Aviation Pioneer, World War I Instructor, Air Mail Pilot, Test Pilot, General Aviation Leader

Born in Newport

Albert F. Schmid (1929-)

Naval Aviator, General Aviation Pilot

Lived 18 years in Exeter (lives there now); worked at Newport and Quonset State Airports

Lieutenant Colonel Warren H. Smith, Jr. USAF (Ret) (1920-)

World War II Bomber Pilot, China; Cold War Reconnaissance Pilot; Strategic Air Command Bomber Pilot

Born and raised in Lincoln; attended Moses Brown School, Slater Junior High School and Pawtucket High School

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARIES

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Raymond Blake, US Air Force, (Ret) (1897-1958) World War I Bomber Pilot, Lafayette Flying Squadron; RI State Police Officer; World War II Counterintelligence Officer

Blake was born on November 8, 1897 in Westerly and graduated in 1916 from Westerly High School, he was the star center on the football team and a member of the track team. After a semester of college in Boston, he volunteered for the American Ambulance Service in January 1917 before the US entered the war. He sailed for France shortly thereafter, and participated in the Battle of Verdun. He applied for French Army Aviation and was accepted June 1917, becoming a member of the Lafayette Flying Corps. He was commissioned a First Lieutenant in the US Aviation Service on March 17, 1918, and was sent back to his former French unit on detached duty. He flew more than 100 hours over enemy territory and completed 37 bombing missions. He and his observer/gunner earned the Distinguished Service Cross and the French Croix de Guerre on August 9, 1918, when they fought off a number of German airplanes and completed their mission. He joined the Rhode Island State Police in 1930 and had reached the rank of Lieutenant when he was recalled to active duty in February of 1941. He served as director of counterintelligence (renamed security services) for the Office of the Chief of Army Corps for the remainder of the war, He retired in 1945 and died in 1958. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

His son:

Captain Roger Holland Blake, US Air Force (1921-1952) World War II Transport Pilot; Berlin Airlift Pilot; Cold War Test Pilot

Roger Holland Blake was born October 15, 1921. His father, a World War I aviator, was attending RI State College at the time. Roger graduated from Aldrich High School in 1939. and left college after one year to enlist in the Army Air Corps on May 1, 1942. He flew with the Air Transport Command until leaving active duty in 1946. In 1949 he volunteered to return to active duty, getting back in the Air Force just in time to fly in the final days of the Berlin Airlift. In 1951 the Air Force established a special unit at Eglin AFB, Florida. Its mission was to operate obsolete aircraft (mostly B-17 Flying Fortress bombers) as radio-controlled aerial targets for various tests. Captain Blake was assigned to that squadron as a pilot; his crew's job was to guide the target drones during the missile and rocket tests. On August 25, 1952, a rocket fired by the pilot of an F-86D Sabre jet, the Air Force's newest all-weather fighter, hit the director B-17 instead of the drone, sending the manned aircraft spinning in flames into the Gulf of Mexico. Two of the eight crew members survived by parachuting into the sea. Captain Roger H Blake, 30, was on the list of six missing. His remains were never recovered. A plaque at Eglin Air Force base is dedicated to the six crew members who were killed in this incident, honoring those who "Gave their lives to their country in furtherance of the mission of the United States Air Force."

Lieutenant Colonel Horace LeRoy Borden, US Air Force (1892-1951) World War I Aerial Observer; WWII Training Squadron Commander; Cold War Support Squadron Commander

He was born April 25, 1892 in Portsmouth, attended Moses Brown School and graduated from Dartmouth College in 1914. He enlisted in the Army, and earned his commission in August, 1917. Shortly thereafter he applied for Air Service duty. He went overseas on February 27, 1918, and trained to be an aerial observer. He was assigned to the 90th Aero Squadron, performing short-range, tactical reconnaissance. He flew combat missions during the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives. On October 29, 1918, Borden, flying as an observer/gunner, succeeded in fighting off three Fokkers, but while completing his observation mission a six-star rocket exploded in the plane, setting the canvas fuselage afire. Borden grabbed the flaming rocket and threw it over the side. He then crawled back along the fuselage and put out the fire. Borden earned a Distinguished Service Cross and a Purple Heart for his actions. He worked as an investment banker in Springfield for many years. He was recalled to active duty early in World War 2. He served throughout the war with a Bombardier Training Group at Big Springs, TX . On April 22, 1943, Borden pinned pilot's wings on his own son Roy, who had just graduated from flight school. The elder Borden stayed in the service after the war. He served with Army of Occupation forces in Italy and Germany. Major Borden became part of the Air Force when it was formed in 1948, and was assigned to Westover AFB near his home in Springfield. He died suddenly in 1951 of a cerebral hemorrhage.

His son:

First Lieutenant Horace LeRoy Borden, Jr. US Army Air Forces (1921-1944) World War II Fighter Pilot, Killed in Action, Phillipines 1944

Horace LeRoy Borden, Jr. was born in 1921. His father was Horace LeRoy Borden, Sr. of Portsmouth, RI and his mother was Margaret Hayden of Fall River. MA. The family moved to Springfield, MA in about 1924. Roy Borden attended Georgia Tech in the class of 1943, but left in 1942 to join the Army Air Corps. On April 22, 1943, he graduated from the Eagle Pass, TX advanced single engine pilot school. The graduation speaker that day was his father, who pinned the wings on his son's chest. He joined the 311th

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Fighter Squadron, 58th Fighter Group and served as a P-47 Thunderbolt pilot, initially in the New Guinea area. He was chosen as the typical Air Force aviator for the patriotic poster that was put up in the many aviation spare parts plants throughout the country. Lieutenant Borden was also an accomplished poet, the author of a number of inspiring and excellent poems which reflected the thoughts of our young servicemen at war. In 1943, he wrote one of the nation's immortal war poems. Entitled "Flier's Reward" it was included in the book "Reveille", a historical collection written by members of the Armed Forces. The day after Christmas, 1944, Roy was reported missing. It is presumed that he was lost at sea during the battle for Mindoro in the Philippines. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross. He had previously been awarded the Air Medal. His remains were never recovered, but he is remembered at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, Fort William McKinley, The Philippines.

Captain Adolphus W. Gorton, US Navy (Ret) (1897-1989)

World War I Ambulance Volunteer; Naval Aviator; US Navy Air Race Team; Test Pilot and Aviation Pioneer

A.W. Gorton was born January 29, 1897 in Pawtuxet, a direct descendant of the Gortons who founded the City of Warwick. He graduated from Moses Brown and entered Dartmouth in 1916, but left to join the American Volunteer Motor Ambulance Corps in France. He sailed abroad on May 5, 1917, and with Section 61, participated in the second battle of Verdun. In November, 1917 he was operated on for appendicitis—one of the lucky few in those days to survive the procedure. He was invalidated home. After his recovery, he enlisted in the Navy at Newport on February 11, 1918 and was accepted for flight training. He earned his wings and commission on October 25, 1918. With the war ending, he volunteered for the aerial mail service. On February 5, 1919, he earned a special commendation from the Secretary of the Navy for laying stretched out on the wing of an airplane for two hours and thirty minutes, holding open the throttle of the engine of the crippled plane while his assistant pilot flew two hundred miles, carrying mail between Hampton Roads and Washington. By 1922 he had become a member of the Navy air race team. In October, 1922 he won the Curtiss Marine Trophy Race for seaplanes. On August 8, 1923, while preparing for the Schneider Cup races in England, he broke two aviation speed records in one day. In addition to his racing, Gorton was a member of the crew that set seven endurance and distance records with a seaplane in 1928. In 1929 he became the first pilot to ever dock with an airship. In December, 1929, he resigned from the Navy to become chief pilot for Curtis Publishing Company, flying their new Ford tri-motor. He was called back into the Navy in March 1941 and served as squadron commander at NAS Jacksonville, then in 1942 as the first CO of NAS Banana River (later Patrick AFB). He became CO of NAS Puunene, Hawaii in 1944, and CO of Johnson Island in the Pacific in 1945. Gorton retired as a Captain in 1949. He died September 28, 1989 at Merritt Island, FL at age 92.

His son:

Major General William A. Gorton US Air Force (Ret) (1933-)

Fighter Pilot; Vietnam Forward Air Controller; Commander, 16th Air Force

General Gorton was born in Providence in 1933. He entered the Air Force as an aviation cadet in February 1954, and earned his wings and commission in June 1955. He flew F-100 Super Sabre fighters in France and Germany in the late 1950s. He returned to George Air Force Base, CA as an F-104 flight commander in October 1961. In August 1965 he went to Vietnam where he flew 171 combat missions as a forward air controller. On his return he completed a number of staff assignments and earned his BA from the University of Nebraska in 1968. While attending Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell AFB he also earned an MA from Auburn in 1969. He took command of the 602nd Tactical Air Control Wing at Bergstrom Air Force Base, Texas, in June 1976. In August 1977 he was named deputy assistant chief of staff, operations, at Tactical Air Command headquarters. He held this position until August 1978 when he became commander of the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing, Homestead Air Force Base, FL. General Gorton is a command pilot with more than 4,500 flying hours. He has flown every fighter from the F86 through the F-16. His military decorations and awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star Medal, and the Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters. His last assignment was commander of 16th Air Force, headquartered at Torrejon Air Base, Spain, with responsibility for U.S. Air Forces located in Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. He was promoted to major general Oct. 1, 1982, and retired 1 October 1, 1985. He now lives in St. George, Utah.

John Bayard Chevalier (1887-1955)

World War I Army Pursuit Pilot; Asiatic Affairs Expert; Proponent of Aviation Causes

He was born in Providence on January 31, 1887. His family moved to Medford, MA where he attended high school. He graduated from Harvard with the class of 1908, and went to work for Standard Oil Company. He spent the next three years in Bombay, and from 1912 to 1917 he was in Shanghai. His first military experience came from three years of service with the American Company of the Shanghai Volunteer Reserve Corps. He returned home after the US entered the war and enlisted in the Signal Enlisted Reserve Corps with the intention of becoming a pilot. After graduating from ground school he sailed for France as an enlisted man, aviation cadet. He trained with the French Army and earned his commission and pilot wings in June, 1918. He then headed the American Aviation Detachment at the Avord advanced flying school, and was CO of the Aviation Instruction Center at Cavaux when the war ended. By the time he re-entered the business world (the wholesale tea business) in 1919 he spoke five foreign languages. He spent the rest of his life in foreign trade and banking, specializing in Asian affairs. He died September 14 1955 in Cambridge, MA

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NOTE: His brother, Godfrey de C. Chevalier, was one of our inaugural inductees in 2003. He was a WW1 Naval Aviator who made the first-ever landing on a moving ship (USS Langley) in 1922. Less than a month after Chevalier's successful landing, he was badly injured in a plane crash near Norfolk, and died two days later. Godfrey was the second of his family to die in the service of his country. In 1898, an older brother, Harold Frye Chevalier, Private, 21st U. S. Infantry, died while en route to the Philippines, in the Spanish-American War, and was buried at sea.

Edward Albert Johnson 1885-1949

Aviation Pioneer, World War I Instructor, Air Mail Pilot, Test Pilot, General Aviation Leader

Johnson was born in Newport, RI in January of 1885. He developed an interest in aeronautics and spent May-October, 1915, at the Curtiss school in Buffalo. He first soloed in 1915 and received Pilot License No. 32. He joined the Curtiss Aeroplane Company and became its representative in England. After the US joined the war he became a civilian instructor operating at various airfields around the country. He finished out the war as a test pilot at McCook Field in Ohio. In 1918 Al helped to lay out the first air mail routes. and was one of the group of pilots who flew that momentous opening day mail route from New York to Chicago. In late 1919, he founded the Johnson Airplane & Supply Company in Dayton, Ohio. He sold aircraft parts and manufactured three planes that he helped design. By 1921 he was operating a flying service, carrying passengers and making air mail deliveries. He also taught aspiring pilots to fly. He was a prime mover in promoting the growth of commercial aviation in Dayton, which started in 1921 with a small, 70-acre flying field that was moved to a 320-acre site in Vandalia in 1928 that has grown into the 4,500-acre James M. Cox Dayton International Airport. The combination of a destructive hangar fire, the great Depression, and the 1934 government takeover of air mail service spelled the doom for his company. Nevertheless, Al Johnson was a true pioneer of aviation who did not quit commercial flying until 1937 after 22 years in the air. He was a charter member of the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences and The Early Birds. In World War II he served in a technical capacity at Wright-Patterson field. He died July 14, 1949, in an auto accident in San Diego.

Lieutenant Colonel John M. Lepry US Air Force (Ret) (1917-2003)

World War II Fighter Pilot; RI Air National Guard Transport Pilot

Warwick resident John Lepry flew 101 combat missions in a P-47 Thunderbolt over Italy, France and Germany in 1944 and 1945. He was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross, five single action Air Medals and the Soldier's Medal. He was born July 17, 1917 and graduated from Warwick High School in June, 1934. Before WWII he worked as a clerk in the Warwick post office. He enlisted in the Aviation Cadet program in 1942 and earned his wings in 1944. In June, 1944, he arrived in Italy and was assigned to the 86th Fighter Group, 526th Squadron, which was based in Corsica and was equipped with P-47s. The Group's primary mission was to cut off supplies to enemy forces. He took part in the destruction of bridges, railroads, trains, trucks, ammunition dumps, and anything that moved on the highway. He also flew many close support missions. In January, 1945, the 86th Fighter Group moved to France where they flew the same types of missions into Germany. He flew 101 missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with 3 clusters. But he was perhaps most proud of the Soldier's Medal awarded for his part in the rescue of eight elderly and infirm people during a flood in Grosseto, Italy. Released from active duty in December, 1945, he enrolled at Providence College and graduated with the class of 1950. He taught English and social studies in the Warwick School system until he retired in June, 1979. He became a member of the 152nd Fighter Squadron, Rhode Island Air National Guard when it was formed in 1948. He remained with the Guard, transitioning to transport aircraft, until he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1972.

Albert F. Schmid (1929-)

Naval Aviator, General Aviation Pilot

Schmid pursued a lifelong career in general aviation after he left Naval Aviation. He has resided in Rhode Island for the past 18 years, most recently in Exeter. He was born on September 7, 1929 in Springfield, Illinois and entered Western Illinois University in 1947, where he earned a business degree. He enlisted in the Navy as an Aviation Cadet, learned to fly at Pensacola NAS and took advanced training in seaplanes in Corpus Christi, Texas. He earned his wings and was commissioned in 1953. Schmid was assigned to Chincoteague, VA where he flew the F6F Hellcat, the F8F Bearcat and the TBM Avenger. He also flew multi engine aircraft such as the UF-1 Albatross seaplane, the Martin PBM-5A Mariner and the PBY Catalina. He towed targets with the Navy version of the B-26) and was also qualified in the F9F-2 Panther jet, the F9F-6 Cougar and the T-33. When his duty tour ended he returned to Springfield as an executive pilot for Sangamo Electric Company, whose fleet included a Lodestar, Learstar, and a twin Beech-18. His aviation career then took him to Oklahoma City and then Pittsburgh where he flew Commanders for North American Rockwell. In 1970 he went to Denver with Gates Learjet Corporation, and in 1971 transferred to Connecticut where he became their Eastern Regional Sales Director, earning a Learjet type rating. When Learjet closed their Connecticut office, Albert moved to Air Kaman at Bradley Airport where he developed an Air Taxi department. After Air Kaman closed their Bradley operation in the early 1980s Schmid began to work with other air taxi operators, helping them to get their certification. Following the death of his wife in 2000, Albert moved to Rhode Island. For several years he worked with Air Newport, a company started by Regis de Ramel. After an

aviation career that spanned more than 54 years, Albert officially retired from flying in 2005 at the age of 78. He continues to promote aviation both in Rhode Island and the New England area. Schmid is an ordained Baptist minister and enjoys providing volunteer services at several Rhode Island Nursing Homes and other churches in the area.

Lieutenant Colonel Warren H. Smith, Jr. US Air Force (Ret) (1920-)

World War II Bomber Pilot, China; Cold War Reconnaissance Pilot; Strategic Air Command Bomber Pilot

He was born March 22, 1920 in Lincoln, RI, and still lives in the house he was brought up in. He attended Moses Brown School, Slater Junior High School and then Pawtucket High School. He went to Middlebury College in Vermont where the plan was to earn his BA degree, then transfer to MIT for his BS. On his Christmas vacation in 1941 he enlisted as an Army aviation cadet. After a delay of several months he was finally sent to the aviation cadet center at Kelly Field, San Antonio, TX. After earning his wings and commission he went through B-24 combat training in Colorado. He and his crew then picked up a brand-new B 24 in Wichita with orders to fly to the 14th Air Force in Kunming, China. They finally arrived in Kunming in early November 1943. He served in the 374th Bombardment Squadron of the 308th Bombardment Group, flying 75 combat missions. Most were skip bombing attacks against Japanese shipping coming out of Saigon. When the war ended he was offered a regular Army commission as a Captain and was assigned to McDill Field in Tampa. During the cold war Smith flew classified missions out of Alaska in a B-29 modified for ELINT (electronic intercept) missions. In an understatement, Smith called flying over Soviet airspace performing reconnaissance missions "edgy work". The B-29s were phased out as the Boeing B-47 came on the scene, This was a long-range, six-engine bomber designed to fly at subsonic speed at high altitude. Its primary mission was to drop nuclear bombs on the Soviet Union. As the B-47 came on line he was selected to be one of the first to transition. All pilots also had to become rated as navigators, bombardiers and radio operators for this airplane. For the next six years he was one of Curtis LeMay's ready crews of the Strategic Air Command in Nebraska, sitting on the flight line with a nuclear weapon in his bomb bay. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel, and at the time he left the Air Force he had more command time and more flight time in the B-47 than anyone else in the Air Force.

Clifton Badlam Thompson (1892-1928)

World War I Ambulance Volunteer; World War I Pursuit Pilot, Lafayette Flying Corps; General Aviation Pioneer

Thompson was born in Hyde Park, Massachusetts on 9 November 1892. He entered Dartmouth College with the Class of 1917. In May of 1917 he sailed for France with the First Dartmouth Ambulance Unit. Chafing at the delay in processing volunteers in Paris, he enlisted in the French Aviation Service a month later. He earned his wings in October, 1917 and flew with the Lafayette Flying Corps. In May of 1918 he transferred to the US Air Service, but continued to fly with his French unit on detached service until the war ended. He earned a Croix de Guerre with star. In 1919, while still in France, he married Adeline Leger. Eventually, three sons and a daughter were born. In 1921 he moved his office to Providence where he began working for the Lovejoy Shock Absorber Company. He maintained an interest in aviation and served as instructor and general manager for the Providence Flying Club. He also actively promoted an airport for Providence, and according to the 5/22/28 Providence Journal, "Lieut. Clifton R. Thomson...whose office is in this city and who, for a year and eight months during the World War was a member of the Lafayette Flying Corps, will be chief pilot of the Providence Airport here." On the evening of 26 July 1928 Thompson's wife had driven from their summer cottage with three of her children to the Pothier aviation field at Buttonwoods, near Warwick, where she was to meet her husband. She stopped to watch a Monocoupe stunting above her. The plane fell into a tail spin from a height of 100 feet, crashed, and burst into flame. She soon learned that her husband had been a passenger in the plane. Pilot Osmond Mather, another WWI flier, was trying to interest Thompson in buying the Monocoupe for the Providence airport. Both men were killed. Thompson was 35 years old at the time of his death. His widow and children moved back to Massachusetts, and eventually she returned to France with the children.

Richmond Viall (1896-1973)

World War I Pilot, Royal Flying Corps; RI National Guard Artillery Officer; Manufacturing Executive and Civic Leader

Viall was born in Providence on June 26, 1896; his father was second-in-command at Brown & Sharpe Manufacturing Company when it was a global force in the machine tools business. He attended Williams College, but left in 1917 to join the British forces in Canada. He joined the Royal Canadian Flying Corps as an Aviation Cadet. After initial training in Canada he sailed for England in February 1918, and was eventually assigned to 46 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. He flew in combat until the end of the war, being credited with one aerial victory. On his return, he joined Brown & Sharpe in which his father had played such a prominent role. He eventually became vice-president, secretary, and director of that firm until he left in 1946 to become chairman of the board of Marshall & Williams Corporation, manufacturers of textile machinery, a position he held until 1965. He joined the 103rd Field Artillery, RI National Guard in February, 1925, serving until 1935. In September of 1930 he was appointed chairman of the Providence committee of the American Engineering Council, established to help determine ideal airport locations, with particular emphasis on surfaces and drainage. Richmond Viall was close to the Chafee family and had known John Chafee since he was a baby. Viall guided Chafee's political campaigns for 15 years, through his terms as Governor and as US Senator. Viall was a prominent Republican from a long-established family who had served on numerous Boards of Directors, such as Plantations Bank of Rhode Island, Providence Washington Insurance Company, Providence National Bank and Peoples Savings Bank. His community involvement was also legendary. When Viall died in 1973 at the age of 77, his obituary described him as "a manufacturing executive and civic leader long active in the affairs of the United Way, RI School of Design and local financial circles."