

JOHN OREN EARNEST

U. S. Army Private, Machine Gun Company, 148th Infantry Regiment

Killed in Action in France on October 31, 1918

Compiled by Linda Cunningham Fluharty.

Born in Glen Easton, Marshall County, West Virginia, John Oren Earnest was the son of Owen Earnest and Maggie Belle Daugherty.

In the 1900 census, the family is found in McMechen, Marshall County. The data is error-laden, but it is certainly this family, based on later information about the spouse and children. "O. C. Ernest" and wife, May, had four children, Maud May, Mary M., Hettie Ide, and John R. – According to Maggie's obituary, Mr. Earnest died in 1904. There are newspaper articles about an Owen Earnest of Marshall County who was arrested for non-support of his family, and in 1904, he was sent to jail for 60 days. If this is the same Owen Earnest, he was alive in 1905. No grave or death record has been located.

Mary M. Earnest married James M. Reece in Wheeling in 1902. **Maud May Earnest** married George Winship in Wheeling in 1904.

At the time of the 1910 census, Maggie Earnest, a widow, lived in Benwood, Marshall County. She had given birth to 6 children and 5 were living. The children at home were Hettie, 18, John, 16, and Harold, 9. John worked at the Tube Factory. - **Hettie Earnest** married Louis Kershkey in 1910 in Wheeling. She was later married to Delbert Kesterson.

John Oren Earnest married **Elsie Leona Roberts**, born in Flushing, Ohio, on April 28, 1916, at Wheeling, Ohio County.

When John O. Earnest registered for the World War I Draft, he was employed at National Tube Company in Benwood. He and his wife lived on Jacob Street, South Wheeling.

Form 1 4416 REGISTRATION CARD No. 23		47-1-32-A	
1	Name in full <u>John Oren Earnest</u> <small>(Given name) (Family name)</small>	REGISTRAR'S REPORT	
2	Home address <u>4006 Jacob Wheeling W. Va</u> <small>(No.) (City) (State)</small>	1	Tall, medium, or short (specify which)? <u>Short</u> Slender, medium, or stout (which)? <u>Slender</u>
3	Date of birth <u>September 20 1893</u> <small>(Month) (Day) (Year)</small>	2	Color of eyes? <u>Gray</u> Color of hair? <u>Dark</u> Bald? <u>No</u>
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? <u>a natural Born citizen</u>	3	Has person lost arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)?
5	Where were you born? <u>W. Va</u> <small>(Town) (State) (Nation)</small>	I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:	
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?	<u>Adam Honecker</u> <small>(Signature of registrar)</small>	
7	What is your present trade, occupation, or office? <u>pipe furnace worker</u>	Precinct <u>5</u>	
8	By whom employed? <u>National tube co</u>	City or County <u>Benwood, Glen Easton</u>	
9	Where employed? <u>Benwood W. Va</u>	State <u>West Va</u>	
10	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? <u>Yes</u>	Date of registration <u>June 5, 17</u>	
11	Married or single (which)? <u>married</u> Race (specify which)? <u>white</u>	<u>Henry Prohman</u>	
12	What military service have you had? Rank <u>Private</u> ; branch <u>-</u> ; years <u>-</u> ; Nation or State <u>-</u>		
13	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?		
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.			
703 <u>John O. Earnest</u> <small>(Signature of registrant)</small>			

John Oren Earnest's brother, Harold Owen Earnest, traveled to France to find John's body.

Daily Intelligencer, 9 June 1919

SOUTH SIDE BOY GOES TO FRANCE TO LOCATE GRAVE OF HIS BROTHER

**JOHN O. EARNEST, MEMBER OF
314TH MACHINE GUN COMPANY,
KILLED IN FRANCE.**

**Government Has Been Unable to Locate
His Burial Plot and Brother Is
Now Hunting It.**

Harold O. Earnest, well-known young man of the South Side, is somewhere in France, in an effort to locate the body or grave of his brother John O. Earnest, who met death at the hands of a German machine gunner just nine days before the signing of the armistice. The government notified his mother, Mrs. Maggie Yates of Sixteenth street, that her son had been killed but no trace of his grave, nor the location of his body, could be found by the relatives.

Every effort of the family to locate the grave of the soldier boy has been without avail and finally after almost giving up hope, it was decided by the brother to make a special trip to France and try and locate his brother's grave. He arrived in Brest a few days before the Eightieth Division started for this country and from the boys who were with his brother, he gathered as much information as it was possible for him to secure and he is now upon what was formerly the battle-front making every effort to locate the grave and have the body properly taken care of.

John O. Earnest was employed at the National Tube Company at Benwood, and resided at 4646 Jacob street, South Side. A few days before he was killed he raided a machine-gun nest and captured a number of very important photographs and also a camera, which he shipped to the United States. Boys arriving yesterday told of how he was killed in action, while driving back the German machine gunners.

Wheeling Intelligencer, 31 July 1922

**PRIVATE JOHN OREN EARNEST
LAID TO REST WITH ALL MILITARY RESPECT.**

Former Service Men and Friends of
Boy Twice Decorated for Bravery
Turn Out in Tribute.

With the Kiehn-Phillips-Rhodes post No. 845, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Wheeling chapter of the Service Star Legion and the A. A. Moun-lan post No. 25 of the American Legion collaborating in honor of the last of Wheeling heroes to come home from Flanders field, impressive services were held yesterday afternoon for Private John Oren Earnest, local young man whose body arriving here winds up the toll of Wheeling boys who made the supreme sacrifice.

The services were carried out in full military style, with the Rev. O. J. Terry officiating. The funeral was attended by a host of relatives and friends and many of the soldier's loving comrades. Following a short service at the Latter Day Saints' church, Forty-seventh street, the military procession proceeded to the Mc-Meehan cemetery, where the body was laid to rest, and at which time a firing squad of World war veterans fired three volleys as their last tribute to the dead hero.

It will be recalled that Private Earnest left Wheeling on September 20, 1917, his twenty-fourth birthday, with a number of local boys who made up the 314th Field Artillery and whose station was at Camp Lee, Virginia. After eight months' training his company was sent overseas, and on June 12, 1918, was fighting the front lines in the Argonne Forest region. A sad coincidence of his death, which came on October 31, 1918, was just eleven days previous to the signing of the armistice. Private Earnest had the distinction of serving with one of the best brigades in the U. S. army, the 147th Infantry, machine gun company, which outfit saw some of the hardest fighting of the World war.

Twice Decorated.
The local hero was twice decorated by the French government for bravery. He was the son of Mrs. John W. Yates of No. 119 Sixteenth street, and was affiliated with the local Order of Moose.

EARNEST JOHN ORAN		X	C	117 017
Pv MG Co 148th Inf		K		
1051 McCulloch Wheeling W Va A		3 866 263		
Ssn	1 851 632	Died	10/31/18	T 1 758 630
Born	9/20/93	R		
Enl	9/20/17	Dis	Cl	
		I		
U. S. VETERANS BUREAU MAIL AND RECORDS FORM 7202—Rev. Sept., 1926		INDEX CARD		GPO 2-12969

Buried at McMechen Cemetery, Marshall County.

Elsie Leona Roberts Earnest, the widow of John Oren Earnest, married Henry Leo Rose in St. Clairsville, Belmont County, Ohio on April 15, 1922.

As stated in the articles about John's death, his mother was "Maggie Yates" and "Mrs. John W. Yates." She had married John W. Yates in Brooke County, West Virginia in 1915. Yet, when she died in 1947, her obituary doesn't mention Mr. Yates. Maggie Earnest is buried at McMechen Cemetery.

Wheeling Intelligencer, 16 June 1947

Earnest Rites To Be Tuesday

Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, funeral services will be held in the Altmeyer funeral home for Mrs. Maggie D. Earnest, 83, widow of Owen Earnest and a resident of East Wheeling until 1943, who died Saturday morning at the home of her son, Harold Earnest, in Hundred, W. Va.

Rev. Byron H. Keesecker, minister of the Chapline Street Methodist church, will conduct the service and interment is to be made in McMechen cemetery.

Mrs. Earnest, who was a native of Greene county, Pa., was educated in the schools of that county. She was a daughter of the late John and Amanda Reed Daugherty.

A former resident of Benwood, Mrs. Earnest had made her home in East Wheeling for many years, prior to taking up her residence with her son in Cameron. In ill health for the past seven years, she had been critically ill for ten days.

Married to Owen Earnest in 1883, her husband died in 1904.

Surviving, in addition to her son, Harold Earnest, of Hundred are three daughters, Mrs. George Winship and Mrs. Mary Reece, of this city, and Mrs. D. F. Kesterson, of Hundred. Ten grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild also survive.