



Paratrooper Patch, 1945, KHS Collection

Van Meter's Parachute

Kentuckians have frequently made innovations in military equipment. The "Tommy Gun" and the fully automatic grenade launcher were innovations made by Kentucky natives. Moreover, on March 27, 1911, Solomon Lee Van Meter Jr., applied for a patent on a device that would be known as the "Van Meter parachute."

An inventor, Van Meter, was born in **Fayette County**. In 1911, he applied for a patent on his device, the first manually operated freefall parachute. After the outbreak of World War I, Van Meter joined the military. He became a pilot and even self-tested his parachute.

The United States military eventually adopted Van Meter's parachute design, forever changing military aviation and saving countless pilots' lives.

