

REGARDING ALABAMA VETERAN WILLIAM C. MAXWELL:

Most people associate stories of heroism by veterans with action taken during battle, but there are plenty of instances of bravery during peacetime, too. One such case is the story of William Maxwell from Monroe County. It was a clear day on August 12, 1920 in the Philippines, a perfect day for flying one might say. Bill was flying his DH4 to Manila to pick up mail for the American servicemen he was stationed with. Everything was going along like normal when, without warning, Bill's plane began having engine trouble. Knowing he had to make an emergency landing, he began steering the plane slowly downward.

As he approached the ground, he saw that the safe landing he thought he could make would only be possible if he landed dangerously close to a playground full of children below him. Bravely, and without regard for his own safety, he chose to swerve the plane hard right. He struck a flagpole and died instantly. None of the civilians on the ground were injured, thanks to his sacrifice. For his bravery and commitment to his country, the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot at Montgomery, Alabama, was renamed "The Maxwell Air Force Base."