



DEDICATION

FOR his understanding of aviation cadets and the Air Corps spirit he has inspired in the men under him, we dedicate this issue of Preflight to Major Clifton G. Brown, Commanding Officer of Wing 2. A graduate of The Citadel, one of America's oldest and outstanding military schools, Major Brown entered active service in 1941, was at Turner Field, Georgia, before being transferred to Maxwell.

Foreword...

BECAUSE this is a war to protect the fundamental freedoms of mankind, because democracy is the heritage of all Americans, we fight today secure in the belief that our way of life is right, that oppression and bondage must disappear from the world. Here at Maxwell, we prepare for combat. Our training is basic. There are no flight lines for Preflight cadets. Instead, there is school, drill and calisthenics. But in preparing for missions that will take us over Europe, the Pacific area, China and Japan, we are also preparing to safeguard the freedoms we win. When the last flight has been completed it will be our task to make certain those freedoms and our way of life shall never again be threatened.

We are ready for that task. For Pre-Flight School is more than a toughening of mind and muscle. It's more than a practical background for future officers and pilots. It's the shapening process which in an intangible way has matured us for responsibility in the flight line as well as for the job ahead after the war. We know the kind of world we want. We know because we know why we're fighting.

This issue of Preflight records the tangible things at Maxwell, things like the Burma Road, range and gunnery school, Open Post, Squadron life, code and math. It also tells the story of a class—the Class of 43-K. To most of us, as we prepare to leave, this is the beginning of a new experience. Primary, Basic and Advanced lie ahead and with them the goal for which all of us are striving—to fight this war in the air. These nine weeks have been tough. The weeks ahead will be tougher. But we will go forward, certain that our force will be felt both in combat and in peace.

The Editors



ONCE A MONTH THE TRAINS BRING A NEW LOAD OF "ZOMBIES" TO MAXWELL FOR INDOCTRINATION IN THE CLASS SYSTEM

by A/C Lawrence Swift

THIS is Maxwell Field. Red earth covered by green spots of grass, yellow stucco barracks reflecting the bright sunlight and shimmering heat of an Alabama day, paved streets and sun-baked squadron areas. Cadets, pilots, engineers, mechanics, instructors, tactical officers; BT's along the flight line throwing off silver streaks of lights in the mid-afternoon. The roar of motors overhead and a thousand craned necks taking a quick look at the future. Drills, classes, calisthenics and parades; rat lines, inspections; dental appointments and rec privileges.

Maxwell is many things. It has a present and a past. It's a school and a flying field. It's the beginning and the end of cadet life. Its earth has felt the touch of many feet and many wheels and even airplane bodies and

noses. It has sopped up the grease, the oil, the sweat and blood of men. In infancy, its earth fought progress, fought stubbornly to down the men who sat on the controls. Some fell, more continued on. Today, thousands of young men pass through on their way to a greater undertaking. To them, it's a flight check for the fundamental knowledge they'll need ahead. A few may return to fly the BT's and AT's that cut through white clouds into blue sky. The majority will go on to other fields, to other places where the red earth has fought the battle to keep man out of the sky—and lost.

All will remember Maxwell as the beginning. They will remember when they fly alone over tropical jungles and blue water, they will remember in the thunder of a dive, they will

remember as they tighten parachutes on the flight line in the shadow of a heavy bomber.

This is the story of the present. This is the Maxwell Field they knew.

FROM the time they lined up for their first formation on a stretch of uneven ground by the side of a railroad track to the day they marched straight and proud on graduation parade, two months passed. It wasn't long, as time is measured on the battlefield, but it held days and hours that seemed endless. That was when the cadets learned to take it—on cross country runs when they wanted to fall out, but never did; in the mess hall eating at attention; on the rat line; the first days on the parade; code and the first sickening feeling of not being able to tell a dot from a dash. That was underclass days.

The underclass arrives at Maxwell tired, worn from their trip down, but still excited and curious about the field and Pre-Flight School. Usually, they've heard many stories about it, have preconceived notions concerning the routine and system under which they'll be trained. Most of those stories are exaggerated. In the first few days, however, no underclassman will believe it. He sleeps, eats, drinks, walks and talks. But though the muscles function, the brain does not. He has come face to face with the class system.

Deep rooted in its conception, adopted after careful study of its functioning in other military schools, the class system at Maxwell is essentially the same as practiced at West Point. It has been condemned and praised; derided and lauded. But its final evaluation comes from the record of the men themselves. The Air Corps is proud of the cadets who graduate from Maxwell, proud because they're well-trained—physically fit and mentally conditioned to accept advanced instruction with proper spirit and proper discipline.

These Things They Never Forget

These are the things they never forget about Maxwell. The rat line and the countless times they hit it as an underclassman, hit it at what they thought was 140 steps a minute only to hear an upperclassman shout:

"Halt, mister! Are you strolling?"

G. I. party and inspections and the things they forgot to do when they left the room for classes. The hot sun beating time in cadence on their foreheads as they marched across the squadron area in a series of column and flanking movements. Dust blowing across the ground in tiny particles; the cool sight of the officers' swimming pool just before the take-off on the Burma Road hop; the music of the band as they marched to mess and the stern command:

"Pick up the step, misters. Pick it up!"

First Night Out

There were other things they might remember. The name of the girl they took out on their first Open Post; the smell of green grass and clover when spring turned into summer at Maxwell and the heat lines formed wavy columns across the field; the symbol for a "bench mark" or an explanation of hydronamics. They might not remember the name of the grossest underclass man or the meanest upperclassman. But they wouldn't forget the interchange of horseplay between the two classes, the things that made life pleasant for the upperclass, singled them out as "zombies".

They'll remember their "tac" officers, the sight of the Rec Hall on the first night out of quarantine and the glorious but futile attempt they made to complete just one dance before being tapped by another cadet. They'll remember their first parade and the last. A cloud of dust rising from the ground as the entire corps passes in review on graduation day. It's a proud, stirring sight and for both classes it's a red-letter day. To the upperclass it means the beginning of a new adventure. For as they step on the field, marching proudly to the roll of drums, they carry with them shipping orders for primary. To the lowerclass, it's the day of enlightenment, the day when they become upperclass, when they can look forward to "instructing" a new group of "zombies". Both classes for a moment become as one, symbolizing the spirit of Maxwell.

They'll remember this because it's what they lived for two months, in a way they've never lived before. They'll remember because it was the beginning.



Like the cadets who came to it, Maxwell Field also has a beginning. It is in the past. This is the story of the past.

THE TIME was 1910. The place was the Montgomery Commercial Club. The event—Fred S. Ball, president of the Club, met Wilbur Wright there on an early February morning, discovered he was looking for a site to continue experiments in air work. The Wrights believed Montgomery offered ideal conditions for a flying field, were interested in finding a place fairly free of obstacles. Finding land to suit all conditions was difficult and Wilbur Wright was almost ready to give up in disgust when Ball introduced him to Frank D. Kohn who owned 300 acres of what is now the exact location of Maxwell.

"Just what I want," Wright said on seeing the land.

Beginning of Maxwell

That was the beginning. There were innumerable details to be worked out, building to be completed. But on March 26, 1910, the first airplane took off from Maxwell Field. It was an odd looking contraption. The citizenry called it an "airyplane". With a full load of gasoline, it weighed 902 pounds, including the four cylinder engine which came to 190 pounds. Although Wright had announced those first flights would be for instruction rather than exhibition, the people flocked in from Alabama and throughout the South. They came in such numbers that the Mobile and Ohio Railroad ran a special shuttle train to the field.

Those first flights ran little more than five minutes and at alarmingly low altitudes. "They flew three telephone pole heights. No higher," one witness states. Eventually, they reached 500 feet, flights sometimes lasted an hour. But flying was in its infancy and when Wright left for Dayton, Ohio, to supervise instruction at Wright Field, Montgomery was to see no more activity in the air until 1918.

When world war came to this country for the first time, a civic committee from Montgomery induced Washington to build a repair shop on the field. Work was begun April 18, 1918, completed 90 days later and the field became the

Engine and Repair Depot No. 3, servicing nearby Army air fields. After the war, the field was given the name it now holds. At the suggestion of the commanding officer, Major Roy S. Brown, the field was called Maxwell in honor of the memory of Lieut. William C. Maxwell, an Atmore, Alabama boy who crashed to his death in the Philippines while serving with the 3rd Aero Squadron.

Grows In Size

From then until today, Maxwell has grown—in size as well as reputation. Its pilots, during peacetime, assisted in the greatest flood disaster Alabama has ever seen in March of 1929; it was the locale for the Air Corps Tactical School from 1931 to 1942; Captain Laurence S. Kuter taught bombardment aviation here nine years ago. Now, he's a brigadier-general at 36, the foremost expert on precision bombing. There was Captain Claire L. Chenault, now commanding general of our Air Force units in China. And countless others who attended the special courses at Maxwell.

When the Tactical School was transferred to Washington, it was replaced by Advanced Training School and also by the Pre-Flight training school. The first class at Pre-flight was grouped for Pilot and Bombardier-Navigator. As the training program in the Air Forces expanded, however, separate Preflight Schools were evolved for the three different air crew jobs and Maxwell became one of the largest Pilot Preflight schools in the country. Before the RAF brought its cadets back to the dominion for training, six classes of British pilots were graduated from Maxwell's Advanced Flying School. The list of Maxwell's Post commandants is long and awesome.

Present commandant is Col. Elmer J. Bowling.



This is Maxwell—its present and past. For those who come now the red earth and the blue sky hold no terror. The way has been prepared through the years by the first men in flying suits and through the months by those who fly to victory over Europe and Asia. Look proud, mister! This was your beginning.