AFEHRI File 19-10

Research Materials/Source Documents
ENLISTED FIRSTS

FILE TITLE: 1st Enlisted Person to have an Air Force Base Named in his Honor and 1st Enlisted Person Killed in an Aircraft Accident - Corporal Frank Scott

Reviewed by:

AFEHRI Representative  

EPC Representative  

Scanner Operator  

APPROVED BY:

GARY R. AKIN, CMSgt, USAF  
Director  
Air Force Enlisted Heritage Research Institute
Corporal Frank Scott: First Enlisted Aerial Fatality.

Corporal Frank S. Scott, the first enlisted man to lose his life in an air accident, was killed at College Park, Md., Sept 28, 1912, while flying as a passenger with 2nd Lt. Lewis G. Rockwell, who was engaged in a course of tests for Military Aviator ratings.

Corporal Scott was born in Braddock, Pa., part of suburban Pittsburgh, on Dec 2, 1883. Little is known of his early life except that he became orphaned in 1889 after losing his parents in the great Johnstown flood that year, and that an aunt reared him.

In 1908, at the age of 24, he enlisted in the Field Artillery. Discharged in 1911 with character "excellent," he reenlisted the same year and was subsequently assigned to the Signal Corps.

Corporal Scott had talent for things mechanical. He rose from the task of releasing ballons to become chief mechanic of one of the Wright Type-B biplanes which the Army had purchased.

Scott's ill-fated flight started out in routine fashion on Sept 28, 1912. Lieutenant Rockwell, the pilot, and Corporal Scott took off in the open biplane; and, after reaching an altitude of 150 feet, levelled off and soared for about 10 minutes. Coming in for a landing, the frail craft developed trouble and nosed downward. For tragic seconds, its 30-horsepower, 4-cylinder engine popped at full power. But the biplane continued its long dive, hurtling to earth with a crushing impact.

Nothing was left but a heap of splintered wood and torn canvas. Corporal Scott was dead when the running soldiers reached the scene of the crash. Lieutenant Rockwell was rushed to Washington's Walter Reed Hospital, but died on the operating table. More than 300 people had witnessed the crash.

In 1917, following the procedure of naming military aviation fields after American airmen who had lost their lives during the "experimental" era, today's Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, located near St. Louis, Mo., was officially designated "Scott Field."

Corporal Scott is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, VA gravesite No. 53315.
twon Army Aviators Dashed to Death

LIEUT. ROCKWELL AND CORP. SCOTT THE VICTIMS

College Park Tragedy Is Unexplained

Officers Unable to Account for Fall of "Old War Horse," Veteran Aeroplane of More Than Thousand Flights.

Lt. L. C. Rockwell, of the Tenth United States Infantry, detailed at the Army Aviation School at College Park, Md., and Corporal Frank S. Scott, Signal Corps, met death on the aviation field yesterday afternoon 4:40 o'clock, when the machine in which they were flying at a height of about seventy-five feet, collapsed and fell like a plumb bob to the earth.

Corporal Scott was instantly killed. Lieut. Rockwell was taken to the Walter Reed Hospital at Takoma Park, where he died shortly afterward.

The aeroplane in which the aviators were flying at the time of the accident was affectionately dubbed "Old War Horse." It was one of the first machines purchased by the government and had successfully made more than 1,000 flights. It was officially designated as No. 1, and was used Friday evening in making the exhibition flight over the Speedway.

Scott Instantly Killed.

Lieut. Rockwell was instantly killed. The machine crashed to the ground a mass of worthless splinters and torn canvas. It was a terrible sight for the crowd watching the funeral. Lieut. Rockwell and Corp. Scott were lifted from the wreckage. When the army surgeons, who had arrived, saw the scene of disaster, Lieut. Rockwell was found in a dying condition. He was crushed almost beyond recognition.

Dr. John F. Kelley, the army physician stationed at the school, made a hasty examination and found that Lieut. Rockwell was still alive. He was placed in an ambulance belonging to Edward Beegie, of 380 First Street Northwest, and hurried to the Walter Reed Hospital, where he was placed upon the operating table. An operation was ordered, but everything known to modern science failed to save his life. He died at 7:15 o'clock.

Lieut. Rockwell just prior to starting on the flight which fate desired should be his last, remarked to Capt. De Forrest Chandler, commanding of the army aviation school, "Captain, I intend to try the air out, and if conditions are favorable, I would like to complete my test for my army aviator's license."

FATALITIES OF THE U. S. ARMY FLYERS

Lieut. Harry Selfridge, killed in test flight with Orville Wright, at Fort Myer, Va., June, 1908.


Lieut. Leopold von Hazehurst, killed in test flight at College Park, Md., June 12, 1912.

Lieut. L. C. Rockwell, killed in flight College Park, September 23, 1912.

Corp. Frank S. Scott, killed in flight College Park, September 23, 1912. Corp. Scott is the first enlisted man of the army to be killed.

The ill-fated machine was nicknamed "Old War Horse." It made more than 1,000 flights and was the first Wright machine purchased by the government. It was engineless less than three months and was the same machine Lieut. Kelley met his death.

Making Long Glide.

It was with this purpose in mind that Lieut. Rockwell made the flight. In order to thoroughly test the machine and its engine, he carried a passenger, as is required in the test he hoped to pass. Corp. Scott, chief mechanic of the ill-fated machine, was seated near him, and Lieut. Rockwell motioned for him to climb in the machine. He did not follow the direction, but waved his hands to the people below in response to their cheers. Circling the aviation field several times and after being in the air about eight minutes, Lieut. Rockwell, when at a height of about 500 feet, throttled his engine to quarter speed and made a long, gradual glide downward, as if to make a landing. As they descended, the machine seemed to be working perfectly. When about seventy-five feet from the ground, Lieut. Rockwell opened the throttle of the engine as if he intended to rise in the air again. For some unaccountable reason the machine, instead of pointing upward, made a straight dash to the ground. It crashed to the earth at a speed estimated by Capt. Chandler to be about 100 miles per hour.

Board to Probe Deaths.

Immediately following the departure of the bodies to the hospital Capt. Chandler telephoned a brief account of the accident to the War Department and appointed Capt. F. B. Hennessy, Lieut. Harry Graham, and Lieut. Thomas De Witt Milling as a board to make a careful investigation of the wrecked aeroplane for the purpose of determining if possible the cause of the accident. Capt. Chandler said last night it was exceedingly doubtful if the cause of the accident would ever be learned, for the machine was literally demolished. A guard has been stationed over the pile of debris so it will not be disturbed.

Last night a gleaming light marked the spot where the two aviators lost their lives. It was the lantern of the military guard. Lieut. Rockwell was twenty-eight years old and unmarried. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 22, 1889. He was appointed a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1905. He was graduated in the class of 1908. He was appointed a second lieutenant June 14, 1907, and assigned to the Third Infantry. Later he was transferred to the Tenth Infantry, and on June 22 he was assigned to the aviation corps. Although a member of the aviation school a trifle over three months, Lieut. Rockwell was regarded as one of the most useful of the army aviators. He was always cautious. He was a good pilot, his pilot's license August 15, 1912, and only had one more requirement to fill to gain his army aviation license.

The machine in which Lieut. Rockwell and Scott were flying was an old Wright Type A machine, which had been rebuilt three times. This is the same machine in which Lieut. John Kelly met his death on March 10, 1911, in College Park.

Fifth Victim in Army.

The death of Lieut. Rockwell yesterday afternoon makes the fifth fatal accident in the history of army aviation in the United States. The first army officer to sacrifice his life in the advancement of army aviation was Lieut. Selfridge, who was killed in September 1908, at Fort Myer, Va., when a Wright monoplane collided and plunged to the ground.

The second officer to sacrifice his life on the altar of advancement of army aviation was Lieut. Kelley, who was killed at San Antonio.

The third officer to meet his death was Lieut. Leopold von Hazehurst, who was killed on June 12, 1912, at the army aviation field, College Park, when a Wright machine collapsed.

Corporal Frank S. Scott is the first enlisted man of the United States Army to sacrifice his life. Othlvs have been injured, but none have been killed or died of the results of injuries.

(Continued on next page)
Capt. Chandler last night, in discussing the accident, said:

"There is not much that I can tell you about the accident, it all happened so quickly. Rockwell had been up in the air about eight minutes. The machine seemed to be working perfectly. He had never reached an altitude of over 500 feet. I was watching him closely. When about 200 feet in the air he throttled his engine to quarter speed and began descending at a gradual angle. I was expecting him to shut his engine off and make a landing. Suddenly he threw his engine wide open. I thought he intended to rise in the air again, and turned my head away. Although I don't know what his intentions were, I am sure he intended to rise again. For some unaccountable reason the machine plunged downward. I cannot advance any theory as to the cause of the accident, as the circumstances have been in the air. The tail flew up and it struck the ground almost on its axis. Both men were thrown out and buried under the debris. Scott was one of the finest troopers in the army. Lieut. Rockwell, although he reported late in July, was an out-pupil and quickly attracted attention by the ease with which he handled machines.

Made Exhibition Flight.

The accident resulting in the death of the two men is such a shock to me that I am really at a loss to speak of it. It is greatly to be regretted and all officers connected with the school are overcome with sorrow.

"I do not believe any one is to blame and think that the cause of the accident will never be determined. Unfortunately it is a heavy toll for the development of a new science."

Lieut. Rockwell Friday made an extended flight over the city of Washington for the benefit of the hundreds of foreign delegates to the Fifteenth International Congress of Hygiene and Demography. He circled about over the meeting place of the Congress for a quarter of an hour, and then flew back to College Park, whence he had come.

High Tribute to Rockwell.

Col. George P. Scriven, acting chief signal officer of the army, in speaking of the accident last night, paid a high tribute to Lieut. Rockwell as one of the brightest and ablest of the young officers composing the military aviation corps.

"The accident," said Col. Scriven, "was one of those most regrettable things that happen in aviation. Not only has the army lost one of its most promising young officers, but it has suffered an almost irreparable loss."

Lieut. Thomas De Witt Milling, a brother officer of the aviation school, feels particularly disheartened by the loss of Lieut. Rockwell. Lieut. Milling acted as Lieut. Rockwell's instructor at the school. In speaking of the accident, Lieut. Milling said:

"I am sure that the accident was not the fault of Lieut. Rockwell, for he was one of the most cautious and skilful operators stationed at College Park. He thoroughly demonstrated this Friday in his flight over the city. The shock has been a terrible one to me. I have lost one of my closest friends, and the aviation school has lost one of its most promising officers. I cannot talk about it."

Rockwell starting on tragic journey with Corp. Scott seated beside him.
Army Board Probes Double Tragedy at Aviation Grounds

Funeral Arrangements for Lieut. Rockwell and Corp. Scott Not Completed.

Capt. Charles DeForest Chandler, commanding officer of the Signal Corps Aviation School at College Park, Md., announced today the work of the Army fliers would not be stopped by the tragic occurrence of yesterday of Lieutenants C. Rockwell and Corp. Frank S. Scott, who were killed when a Wright biplane in which the two men were being poled into the air grounded about 1:30 o'clock.

"It is sad, of course, to lose our men. But the work will not be stopped. It has begun and although it is a blow to have such accidents occur, we cannot quit." An investigation into the cause of the accident which resulted in the death of the two men will possibly be concluded tomorrow.

Hundreds Saw Accident.

More than 200 persons watched in horror when the biplane crashed into the earth.

Lieutenant Rockwell, early in the afternoon, had made a flight by himself. The biplane behaved perfectly. Then he decided to carry a passenger. Corporal Scott, an expert mechanic and the man in charge of the hangar in which Lieutenant Rockwell kept his machine, wanted to make the trip.

Together the two men climbed into the machine. Corporal Scott occupied the right-hand seat, and Lieutenant Rockwell the left.

They ascended about 500 feet, and then flew about the field for ten minutes. Lieutenant Rockwell then planned to within 100 feet of the earth, and continued to fly about the field. After about five minutes of flying at this attitude he headed the biplane's nose downward.

Since learning to fly, it was one of Lieutenant Rockwell's dreams to come to the earth with motor cut almost entirely off, and when within a few feet from the earth to put the machine down smoothly and go up again. It is believed he was doing this "stunt" that the machine, instead of raising, smashed nose downward into the ground.

Hit at Full Speed.

Another theory advanced in considered plausible by many who witnessed the accident, was that Lieutenant Rockwell, when but thirty feet from the ground, reached up to cut off the motor so that he could land and that for some reason the engine refused to stop. The machine was driven at a terrific speed, and crashed into the earth.

Tributes to Dead.

Tributes to the memory of both men were paid today by the officers and enlisted men.

The aviators one and all expressed their sentiments that Lieutenant Rockwell was a "prince among pilots."

"He was always jolly, lovable and kind, and it was a pleasure to work with him," said Lieut. Harry Graham, officer of the day at College Park, today. The officers will contribute a handsome sum for his mother.

Enlisted men at the school are mourning the death of Corporal Scott. Sergeant A. C. McCrear, speaking of Scott said:

"Scott was a gentleman. I remember two years ago while protecting a lady and one of the streets east of the city, the military members of the colored men, all but our badly injured. He was particularly brave and square. The men most sincerely regret his loss."

A floral tribute was given by Corporal Scott's comrades.

Lieutenant Rockwell's Career.

Lieutenant Rockwell was twenty-eight years old, the son of the late Col. Charles Rockwell, of the Fifth Cavalry. He was detailed to aviation duty last May from the Tenth Infantry, and had been in the school out a few weeks until he began taking lessons. He learned to fly in the remarkably short time of ten days after he took his first lesson, and quickly developed into one of the best aviators in the service.

Within the past two months he had made some splendid flights, including a cross-country trip to Laurel, Md., and return. It was only Friday afternoon that he trained 800 delegates to the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography with his flight around the Washington Monument and over Potomac Park. He flew over from College Park, maintaining an altitude of 2,500 feet, and at times cutting some wonderful figures in the air.

Besides being a model pilot in the technical sense of the word, Lieutenant Rockwell was a student of the atmospheric conditions. He considered it certain the air pockets and currents, and, at College Park, knew before he flew where he would strike conditions apt to cause accidents.

Corporal Scott, considered by Commanding Officers to be the best mechanic in the service, was in charge of the two fatal machines. The first machine was under no repairs when the accident occurred, but the second was undergoing a complete overhauling.

Lieutenant Rockwell makes the fourth officer killed in the Wright biplane, a machine cost ten thousand dollars, which was sold to the Army for five thousand dollars and in use about one month.

Since the United States Government became interested in aviation in Europe four years ago, this month, flying has meant a life in the advancement of the science.

The first officer killed was Lieut. Thomas E. Selfridge, who met death at Fort Myer, four years ago. The second officer to be killed in a heavier-than-air machine was Lieut. Frank A. Kelly, who met death in San Antonio, Tex., May 10, 1911.

On the afternoon on June 11 at College Park, Lieut. Leighton W. Hazelnut, of the Wright Brothers, was killed in a full flight. A third pilot, the city professional pilot in the employ of the Wright brothers, was killed.

Lieutenant Rockwell makes the fourth officer killed in the United States Army in the advancement of the science at Fort Myer, four years ago. The third, and this country fourth, of the victims were two Washington men. Capt. C. L. Welsh, killed in College Park, June 11, lived in Southeast Washington, and Paul Peck, who was killed at Chicago two weeks ago, was also a resident of the District.

Funeral Plans Incomplete.

The funeral arrangements for Lieut. Rockwell, who was a Corporal Scott, will not be known until some time later this afternoon or tomorrow. Lieutenant Rockwell's mother and two sisters, of Cincinnati, Ohio, and a relative, of Raleigh, N. C., were notified, but as yet it is not known whether they will come to Washington to take charge of the funeral. Until they are heard from the plans for the interment will not be made.

The body may be laid to rest in Arlington, near the grave of Lieut. Leighton W. Hazelnut, who met death in June, or his family may insist that it be brought to his old home.

Corporal Scott formerly lived in Ridgeway, N. Y. This will be the third man from the state to be killed in the service.

She was notified of his death, but up until this afternoon she had not definitely decided where the burial will be.
Aviators Killed and Wreck of Wright Biplane Which Crashed to Earth.

LIEUT. LOUIS C. ROCKWELL.  
Showing How Airship Crumpled When it Struck the Ground.  
FRANK S. SCOTT.

PHOTOS BY MACCARTEE

Wright Biplane After Victims Had Been Removed.

Article follows.
mislioned officer of the United States army to meet death in an army aeroplane, the total death rate so far being
the air again. Baby _____ was taken to College Park and repaired and was thought to be an easy job, as it was said in this machine that Capt. Hendness, together with Milling, was teaching Capt. Hendness at College Park.

Top—Capt. Hendness, who escaped fall when Lieut. Rockwell refused to take him up because of inability of the aviator to balance the machine as I watched Lieut. Rockwell's brother officers, who has three
widows to support in the city. Whenever he is asked how he maintains his family, he answers that he has it all right, all ready for the trip.

Capt. Hendness Escapes Fall.

One of the sad features of the fatality is that Capt. Hendness probably owes his death to a careless remark made by Lieut. Rockwell, who was anxious to make a successful flight in his test for a military aviator's license. The same remark which brought death to Capt. Hendness saved the life of Capt. Frederick Hendness, one of Lieut. Rockwell's brother officers, who has three
widows to support in the city. Whenever he is asked how he maintains his family, he answers that he has it all right, all ready for the trip.

Board is to Investigate

Immediately following the accident, Capt. Chandler, commanding officer of the school, convened a board of officers to make an investigation into the cause of the accident. The board consists of Lieut. Harry Graham, who was officer of the day at College Park; Lieut. Thomas Milling, who lived with the dead aviator at 190 N Street, northwest; Lieut. J. W. Nesbit, who was the instructor of the aviation school, and Lieut. Arthur Hendness, who was the instructor of the aviation school.

Machine in Previous Accident.

He was flying in the same machine in which he met his death yesterday, as the time, and, in attempting to avoid the launch of a very fatal accident, he struck a tree, the machine being a very poor condition. Immediately one of the wings tipped open, and the aviator fell. He was rescued from the water at that time by Capt. Hendness, who was on the launch. The aviator was taken to College Park and repaired and was thought to be an easy job, as it was said in this machine that Capt. Hendness, together with Milling, was teaching Capt. Hendness.

Popular at the School.

He was the most popular instructor of the aviation school, and to-day was the first time of his name as such. Milling was also in the school, and it is said that he is very eyeful with the aviators, who are very much interested in the matter.

Proud of the Wright Plane

attitude of 50 feet and the landing within 12 feet of the river. There were four people in the machine, the aviators

One of the objects of the experiment was to test the machine as I watched Lieut. Rockwell. The machine had a very hard time, and the aviators had a very hard time. I think that the aviators are very much interested in the matter.
Visitors to Washington

Vizitantoj en Washingtono

Are invited to visit our establishment, which is one of the recognized places of interest in the National Capital.

A half hour can be pleasantly spent in viewing the magnificent display of Rare Jewels, Silver, and Cut Glass.

Inspection implies no obligation to purchase.

Galt & Bro.

Established Over a Century

Jewelers, Silversmiths, Stationers

1107 Pennsylvania Avenue

Estas kore invitataj viziti nian butikon, kiu estas unu el la plej estmataj lokoj de granda intereso en la Nacia Cefurbo.

Duo horo de granda plezuro oni povas pasigi rigardante najbrocian elmontraon de aliaj jeweloj, objektoj el argento kaj polurubra kristalo.

La vizitanto tute ne estas devigata aceti.

Sister Facts at News

Thurs., Oct. 8—Lieut. Louis C. Rockwell, who was killed in an aviation accident today, was the son of Mrs. Carla Little, of Cincinnati. Mrs. Little, who was at the time of the accident, is one of the officers of the United States Army, although she was not given a rank, and their pay was increased by amounts of $10 to $50 per month. It was also reported that the wife of a lieutenant would receive about $2 for each child of an aviator would receive $2 per month. As a result of the accident, it is expected that the next section of Congress will at least double the pay of the officers of the aviation service if they hold a commission in the army.

Col. Scriven Dues to Lieut. Arnold Makes Three Trips

Three flights were made by Lieut. Arnold yesterday in the new Wright machine, which has six cylinders and is of 50 horsepower. It was equipped with an electric propeller engine and one passenger. Lieut. Arnold carried a passenger on each flight. The first flight was made with Capt. Williams, of the medical corps, as passenger. It lasted for 20 minutes. On his second flight Lieut. Arnold took as passenger Private William H. Flood, of the signal corps. The first flight lasted about fifteen minutes. The last flight of the day was made with Sergeant Morgan of the signal corps as passenger. They were up about twenty minutes.

At the time that Lieut. Rockwell took his place in the machine at Cleveland, it was reported that the Wright brothers had increased their speed. The Wrights have met with two of the official requirements. They will not be flown by the officers and will not be used until the middle of October. They made no flights yesterday.
Corpl. Frank S. Scott was at the Arny Mavie School, were plunged to their death shortly before 4:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon at the aviation field at College Park, and two more victims were added to the list of fatalities which have already occurred in the conquest of the air. While nothing definite could be learned to explain the sudden plunge of the aeroplane to the ground, at top speed, it is generally accepted that of those who witnessed the accident that the control wires of one of the elevators refused to work, making the machine striking the ground almost on end.

Corpl. Scott was killed outright, his face being torn off by one of the guide ropes against which he was thrown, while Lieut. Rockwell, who was buried with Corpl. Scott beneath the debris of the wrecked machine, sustained a double fracture of both legs, possible fracture of the skull, and internal injuries. He was rushed to the Walter Reed General Hospital in an automobile, and died without having regained consciousness, at 6:00 o'clock, a few hours after he had partly left the ground at College Park.

Corpses See Death Plunge.
The terrible death plunge from an altitude of a bare 50 feet came without warning, while Lieut. Rockwell was preparing for an attack on the machine, as a military aviator, and was in full view of Col. George F. Stockton, acting chief of the officers of the army, and Capt. C. De Forest Chandler, head of the aviation school. Practically every army aviator witnessed the catastrophe.

Lieut. Rockwell, who had just descended from a successful flight in the same machine, started on his fatal flight between 1 and 2 p.m. as a passenger. Rouse, being the second, circled around for a few minutes, and soon reached an altitude of between 200 and 300 feet. He then started the descent, making a long glide until about 60 feet from the ground.

The speed of his motor had been reduced when he reached this point he started to turn his elevating planes for the speed of the aeroplane to its highest point. The planes for some reason did not seem to work, and in another instant the machine went into a spin and plunged to the ground at full speed.

Machine Crumples Like Paper.
The machine, which ran its nose several feet into the ground, crumpled into a mass of twisted steel, and had been paper. The left wing, which was the highest in the air, folded over the machine the most, crushed and covered the mandible of the two aviators and the wheel of the motor.

The other officers on the field rushed to the scene and frantically pulled aside the debris they found the body of Corpl. Scott lying with his head crushed, his face torn off, and most of the brain, blood and flesh from his body. A medical examination sufficient to state that he had been killed outright. Lieut. Rockwell was not, however, when he struck the ground too hard upon landing at San Antonio, Tex., May 10, 1911. Lieut. Thomas E. Selfridge, dashed to death at Fort Myer, Va., yesterday morning, flying with Orville Wright, who had his leg broken in the fall.

Paul Peck Departed to Washington, September 11, 1912

Lt. C. Rockwell and Corpl. Frank S. Scott, both stationed at the Army Aviation School, were plunged to their death shortly before 4:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon at the aviation field at College Park, and two more victims were added to the long list of fatalities which have already occurred in the conquest of the air. While nothing definite could be learned to explain the sudden plunge of the aeroplane to the ground, at top speed, it is generally accepted that of those who witnessed the accident that the control wires of one of the elevators refused to work, making the machine striking the ground almost on end.

Corpl. Scott was killed outright, his face being torn off by one of the guide ropes against which he was thrown, while Lieut. Rockwell, who was buried with Corpl. Scott beneath the debris of the wrecked machine, sustained a double fracture of both legs, possible fracture of the skull, and internal injuries. He was rushed to the Walter Reed General Hospital in an automobile, and died without having regained consciousness, at 6:00 o'clock, a few hours after he had partly left the ground at College Park.
Corporal Frank S. Scott, the first enlisted man to lose his life in an air accident, was killed at College Park, Md., Sept. 28, 1912, while flying as a passenger with 2nd Lt. Lewis G. Rockwell, who was engaged in a course of tests for Military Aviator ratings.

Corporal Scott was born in Braddock, Pa., part of suburban Pittsburgh, on Dec. 2, 1883. Little is known of his early life except that he became orphaned in 1889 after losing his parents in the great Johnstown flood that year, and that an aunt reared him.

In 1908, at the age of 24, he enlisted in the Field Artillery. Discharged in 1911 with character "excellent," he reenlisted the same year and was subsequently assigned to the Signal Corps.

In July 1911, Corporal Scott was the victim of a lengthy illness, the nature of which is not known. Upon convalescence, he was pronounced unfit for "mounted" duty and assigned to the Army College Park Flying Field in Maryland, a meteorological station of the pioneer Army Aeronautical Division.

Corporal Scott had talent for things mechanical. He rose from the task of releasing balloons to become chief mechanic of one of the Wright Type-B biplanes which the Army had purchased. Apparently he was keenly enthusiastic to go on the flight that carried him to his death.

A visitor to College Park, retired Army Capt. Bernard Rome, saw Corporal Scott a day before the ill-fated flight. "He was in high spirits when I spoke to him," Captain Rome recalled. He added, "A Lieutenant Rockwell had promised to take him flying the following day, and Scott jokingly referred to himself as 'ballast.'" Another officer had asked to accompany the lieutenant on the flight but had been turned down because of excess weight. Corporal Scott, on the other hand, had never fully recovered from his illness, and carried no excess poundage.

The flight started out in routine fashion on Sept. 28, 1912. Lieutenant Rockwell did a solo. The clumsy craft banged and coughed its way into the air, fluttering over College Park at the remarkable speed of 40 mph. Assured that everything was in proper working order, the lieutenant landed and picked up Corporal Scott. The two men took off in the open biplane; and, after reaching an altitude of 150 feet, levelled off and soared for about 10 minutes. Coming in for a landing, the frail craft developed trouble and nosed downward. For tragic seconds, its 30-horsepower, 4-cylinder engine popped at full power. But the biplane continued its long dive, hurtling to earth with a crushing impact.

Nothing was left but a heap of splintered wood and torn canvas. Corporal Scott was dead when the running soldiers reached the scene of the crash. Lieutenant Rockwell was rushed to Washington's Walter Reed Hospital, but died on the operating table. More than 300 people had witnessed the crash.

In 1917, following the procedure of naming military aviation fields after American airmen who had lost their lives during the "experimental" era, today's Scott Air Force Base was officially designated "Scott Field."
Remembering the Early Years of Scott Air Force Base 1917-1957

By Betty R. Kennedy
Office of History, Military Airlift Command

The beginnings of Scott Air Force Base date to 1917 when local business and civic leaders in St. Louis, Missouri, and nearby Belleville, Illinois, banded together and offered the War Department land to establish a military aviation station. Their offer was part of a larger dream—namely to make the Midwest a center for aviation. Perhaps the most influential member among the group was Missourian Albert Bond Lambert, whose father had founded a pharmaceutical company famous for its antiseptic 'Listerine.' Lambert was an avid and nationally-known supporter of aviation and later helped the city of St. Louis establish the airport which today bears his name. Led by Greater Belleville Board of Trade President C.P. Tomlinson and Board Secretary Edward A. Daley, the Illinois contingent put together an attractive lease arrangement for a plot of land, six miles northeast of

Corporal Frank S. Scott, left, with his friend Private First Class James S. O'Brien at College Park, Maryland. Scott, who was an airplane mechanic at College Park, died in an airplane crash along with the pilot, Second Lieutenant Lewis G. Rockwell, on 28 September 1912. The Signal Corps later honored both men by naming flying fields after them.
FRANK S. SCOTT
CORPORAL, U.S. ARMY
1883 - 1912

ONE OF THE MANY WHO HELPED TRANSFORM THE FRAGILE FLYING MACHINE INTO THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE. BORN IN BRADDOCK, PA., ON DECEMBER 2, 1883, CORPORAL SCOTT WAS A CREW CHIEF MECHANIC WITH THE U.S. ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL AT COLLEGE PARK, MD. ON SEPTEMBER 28, 1912, HE BECAME THE FIRST ENLISTED MAN TO BE KILLED IN A MILITARY AIRPLANE CRASH. IN 1917, A SMALL ARMY AIRFIELD NEAR BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS, WAS NAMED IN HIS HONOR. THIS INSTALLATION IS THE ONLY U.S. AIR FORCE BASE TO BEAR THE NAME OF AN ENLISTED MAN.

DEDICATED JULY 20, 1976