

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

→ → → Plane Talk → → →

The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field Topeka, Kansas

December 2013 January 2014 • Vol. 29, No. 6

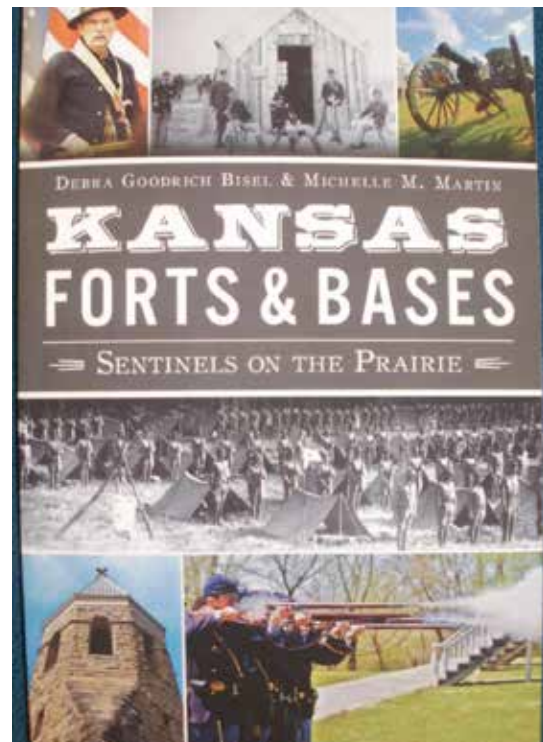
Historian tells CAM members about the background of forts and bases across our state

Historian and author Debra Goodrich Bisel was our guest presenter at the October Membership Luncheon. Her topic was Kansas Forts and Bases, based on a book published in 2013 she co-authored with Michelle M. Martin titled *Kansas Forts & Bases: Sentinels of the Prairie*. This is her fourth book.

Debra, a native Virginian, is a graduate of Washburn University in Topeka, with a B.A. in history. She serves as president of the Shawnee County Historical Society and serves on the selection committee of the Kansas Hall of Fame, located in the Great Overland Station in Topeka. She has appeared in a number of documentaries and on talk radio shows across the US on subjects related to the American Civil War. Debra consults at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, on media training, and she is writing a dual biography of the Civil War's first ladies, Mary Todd Lincoln and Marina Howell Davis. She also contributes to several magazines and websites, and blogs for Mother Earth News. Her work *The Civil War in Kansas: Ten Years of Turmoil*, also published by The History Press, was released in 2012. Debra describes herself as a "History Missionary."

Her co-author, Michelle Martin, currently lives in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. She serves as the historian and director of the Little House on the Prairie Museum located south of Independence, Kansas. Martin is the founder of Discovering History, a historical consulting company. She is an historian, photographer, and multimedia producer who has co-authored *The Prairie Table Cookbook* with noted Kansan Bill Kurtis and produced a film for Kurtis Productions.

When planning *Kansas Forts*, Debra said she and Michelle listed their favorite forts and bases. They traded off forts and decided which ones to write about, then wrote about their respective choices. Over 80 installations are in the book, although not all have writings



devoted to them. The majority of the writings deal with installations prior to the 20th Century. The final chapter covers "War: Hot, Cold & Beyond, 1900-Present." Those installations not written about are mentioned under general headings, such as the World War II Prisoner of War camps and Kansas Airfields (Army Airfields and Naval Air Stations.)

"Kansas Forts," con't. on Page 4

Inside This Issue

<i>From the Chairman's Desk</i>	2
<i>Fog of War - A Kansas family's experience</i>	8
<i>National Aerobatic Champion visits CAM</i>	12

Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field • Hangars 602 & 604

P.O. Box 19142

Topeka, KS 66619-0142

Telephone (785) 862-3303

FAX (785) 862-3304

www.combatairmuseum.org

Provided by

Rossini Management Systems, Inc.

Email: office@combatairmuseum.com

Museum Curator

Danny San Romani

Office Manager

Deloris Zink

Board of DirectorsGene Howerter - *Chairman*Dave Murray - *Vice Chairman*Tad Pritchett - *Secretary*

Les Carlson

Don Dawson

Stu Entz

Raymond Irwin

Doug Jacobs

Ted Nolde

Dick Trupp

Museum Hours

January 2 - February 28/29

Mon. - Sun. Noon - 4:30 P.M.

Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

March 1 - December 31

Mon. - Sat. 9 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Last Entry Every Day is 3:30 P.M.

Closed New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving, Christmas Day***Newsletter******Layout & Design***

Toni Dixon

785-865-4221

Plane Talk, the official newsletter

of Combat Air Museum

of Topeka, Kansas,

is published bi-monthly.

Your comments are welcomed.

From the Chairman's Desk

Gene Howerter, Chairman, BOD

Most people who know me know that I am an avid Kansas State sports fan. Now that does not mean to imply I have anything against other state institutions of higher learning. The fact is I am a graduate of Pittsburgh State, and I have taken at least one college course from each of the various State Colleges in Kansas. That is what happens when you are a career educator required to take summer classes for certification. I became a KSU sports fan in the mid 1980's while my kids were attending there. It was a way of bonding with each other on game days. Some of you may know that Kansas State's football coach, Bill Snyder, has implemented a new plan implying that fans of Kansas State University are all "One Big Family."

As I was pondering this idea of "Family," the thought crossed my mind that, without a doubt, all of us at the Combat Air Museum are one big family. Members of the Museum look out for one another and share each other's joy's, as well as find sadness in each other's sorrows. We laugh with each other and joke kindly with each other, almost daily. I think most of us feel like the Museum is our home away from home.

At CAM, many members fellowship at our Membership Luncheon meetings while sharing some delicious covered dish delights. As I write, it is only a few day before we celebrate our traditional Thanksgiving Holiday. This year when celebrating Thanksgiving, I hope you will join me in giving thanks that all of us have a home away from home at the Combat Air Museum where we can experience friendship and fellowship as "One Big Family." I am convinced we are one large "Family" by virtue of the fact that we are supporting CAM in different capacities. Keep in mind, at the Combat Air Museum all are welcome. Please come and be a part of our "Family." If you live outside the Topeka area, you can join us on Face-

book as well as on our website www.combatairmuseum.org. Thanks for being a part of our "Family."

As we approach the day we all look forward to each year, Christmas, I would like to thank those of you who have responded generously by sending a little extra monetary donation with your dues. Your donations have been one of the best Christmas gifts you could give the Museum. CAM has not increased the dues to be a paying member over the past number of years. We do not want to exclude anyone from membership because of personal finances. On the other hand, your dues are, as you may guess, a partial key to the Museum's future existence. We do not have other sources of outside income, other than two fund raising events each year. We always appreciate it when members add a little extra in support of the Museum when paying their dues, and it is tax deductible. Also you can help the Museum considerably by sending your dues when you receive the first letter. The cost of sending a second letter is considerable, taking into consideration the stamp, paper, envelope, ink and office manager time. Thank you in advance for your support in this matter, and please hang in there with us as a dues paying member. You are more than just a number to us.

As we turn the last page on our 2013 calendar and welcome in the New Year, the Combat Air Museum will strive to do everything we can to create a facility which all can be proud of. At this time plans are being developed to educate the public about our World War I history through various rotating displays during 2014. Across the United States of America those veterans who fought in WWI will be remembered in honor of the one hundredth anniversary of that conflict. If you have any interesting knowledge which possibly could enhance our year of honoring WWI,

consider sharing it with our Museum Committee as they are planning this year's remembrances. Please keep up with us for more details.

In September of 2014 we will welcome to Topeka and our museum the National Reunion of the Navy Veterans who served on the USS ORISKANY Aircraft Carrier throughout the years it was in service. At this time planning and the agenda are being finalized for this event. For this gathering of ORISKANY Veterans, the Museum will unveil the museum-quality ORISKANY Ship Model we have commissioned. The model's hull and flight deck are being built by CAM member and master ship modeler Larry Todd. Museum member Ted Nolde constructed the island superstructure, and it is ready for attachment to the model. Both of these craftsmen utilized detailed and accurate scaled down blue prints for reference. You won't want to miss seeing this very exciting addition to the Combat Air Museum. Keep tuned in for more activities as plans develop. Let's make this New Year the best ever for the Combat Air Museum. My wish for each of you is a blessed 2014.

As I close, please remember to do some Christmas shopping at the Museum Gift Shop. It is stocked up with a large variety of items bound to please aviators and aviation buffs of all ages.

In Memoriam
Thomas G. Cunningham

October 4, 2013
 Member 4025
 Topeka, Kansas
 Seven Year Member

Guest speaker for our next Membership Luncheon

Major Roger Locher, US Air Force (Retired) is our guest speaker for the December Membership Luncheon.

Major Locher is a former F-4D Phantom weapons officer and pilot who was shot down during the Vietnam War only 40 miles (64km) from Hanoi, North Vietnam.

The 23 days Major Locher spent behind enemy lines evading capture was a record for downed airmen during the war.

US Air Force General John W. Vogt sent 119 aircraft into enemy airspace over the three weeks Locher was evading capture to recover him. His rescue was the deepest rescue penetration inside North Vietnam during the entire war.

→ → →

2014 Events

December 2013

- 9 - Membership Luncheon
- 25 - Museum Closed, Christmas Day

2014

January

- 1 - Museum closed, New Year's Day

February

- 1 - Boy Scouts Aviation Merit Badge Class
- 10 - Membership Luncheon
Diving on Wrecks with Tom Gorrell

March

- 17-20 - Young Aviators Education Class

April

- 14 - Membership Luncheon
History Day Presentations
with Seaman High School Students
- 20 - Museum closed, Easter Sunday
- 26 - Annual Celebrity Pancake Feed

June

- 2-5 - Young Aviators Education Class
- 9 - Membership Luncheon
Wright Flyer Machine
with Professor Fredrick J. Schieszer

July

- 7-10 - Young Aviators Education Class

August

- 4-7 - Young Aviators Education Class
- 11 - Membership Luncheon
NOTE: Will be held at Museum
of Kansas National Guard
The Kansas National Guard Museum
with Big. Gen. Ed Gerhardt (Ret) and
Lt. Col. Doug Jacobs (Ret)
September

- 27 - 10th Annual Winged Foot 5K/10K Run

October

- 13 - Membership Luncheon
with Officers of the US Army
Command and General Staff College

November

- 27 - Museum Closed, Thanksgiving Day

December

- 8 - History of the Citizen
Potawatomie Nation
with Col. Jon Boursaw (Ret)
- 25 - Museum closed, Christmas Day

→ → →

"Kansas Forts," con't. from Page 1

Debra took a moment to say she was starting some Osher Lifelong Learning Institute classes on the American Civil War. Her first class was scheduled in November at Brewster Place Retirement Community in Topeka. She mentioned her Kansas Civil War book and said that it covered the period 1855-1865. General Richard B. Meyers, US Air Force (Ret) and a former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote the foreword to this book.

We learned that Bill Cody, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody 1846-1917, is Debra's favorite American in history. Cody was a buffalo (bison) hunter, Pony Express rider, US Army scout, actor, and showman. He had more than one Kansas connection. Cody's family came back to Kansas from Ohio in 1853 and settled near Fort Leavenworth. His father, Isaac, provided hay for horses and mules. Isaac Cody was an abolitionist, and in the early 1850s north-east Kansas had pro-slavery people in its population, as well as those who crossed the border from Missouri. In 1855 Isaac was at Rively's Trading Post in Leavenworth County when he was badgered into stating his position on slavery. When he stated he was against it, pro-slavery types stabbed him. Debra said he never fully recovered from these wounds and died a year later.

She went on to say that when Isaac was sick in bed, a pro-slavery man came to the house to kill him. Isaac told William if he came upstairs to the bedroom Will was to shoot him and his sister was to ax him. The man did not come upstairs. After Isaac's death, William Cody became the family patriarch.

Debra told us she wrote *Kansas Forts & Bases* because she wanted the general public to learn about the military heritage in Kansas. She told us the earliest fort in present day Kansas was built long before there was even a Kansas territory. It was Fort de Cavagnial, built by the French in 1744, in present-day Leavenworth County.

Frenchman Etienne de Veniard, sieur de Bourgmont established a relationship with the Kansa Indians as early as 1714. In 1725 he took Chiefs from the Illinois, Missouri, Osage and Oto tribes, and a daughter of the Missouri Chief to France. Bourgmont staged his travels into the future Kansas from Fort d'Orleans, built along the Missouri River, about midway in present day Missouri. During the 1725 trip to France, Fort d'Orleans fell into disrepair and relations between French fur traders and Indians deteriorated. The French abandoned Fort d'Ole-ans in 1729, and construction of Fort de Cavagnial began 14 years later. The fort was active until 1764.

Debra said Fort de Cavagnial was in ruins when Lewis and Clark found it in 1804. She said historians believe they know where the location of the Fort de Cavagnial was, but it is on private property and the current owners will not allow any excavation to take place. She added that a lot was going on in Kansas before 1854, when it became the Kansas Territory.

Fort Leavenworth was the next earliest, permanent fort established in present day Kansas. In response to a need to protect travelers and trade on the Santa Fe Trail, it was established in 1825. Colonel Henry Leavenworth was dispatched from Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri, in the spring of 1827 to survey a site. Leavenworth established Cantonment Leavenworth on bluffs overlooking the Missouri River. It was temporarily abandoned in 1829 due to Malaria, but its need was so great, troops came before year's end. Leavenworth was upgraded to a fort in 1830 and remains active today.

In relation to the installations (this author's choice of words) written about in the book, the terms camp, post, fort, station, redoubt, and base are all used. It is interesting in some cases what constituted a fort. Many of us may think of the frontier forts portrayed in western movies or on television or as shown in the old J.C. Penny, Montgomery Ward, and Sears Christmas toy catalogs. As we learned from Debra, some of the "forts" of Kansas were no more than fortified log cabins, some single story, others two story. This was particularly true of various abolitionist and pro-slavery militias of Territorial Kansas and early Kansas statehood during the Civil War. Other "forts" were earthen works four to five feet high.

Present day Mount Oread (Hogback Ridge) in Lawrence, Kansas, was the site of Fort Lane from 1856-1857, and Camp Ewing (a.k.a. Camp Lookout, a.k.a. Fort Ulysses) from 1864-1865. Nothing remains of either fortification.

Debra spoke about Fort Floyd, erected in 1857. Historians argue over its location. It was somewhere in the vicinity of present day Morland, Kansas, Graham County, along a fork of the Solomon River. Debra chose this fort because of one of the cavalrymen involved with its construction, occupancy, and naming. The cavalryman was Lieutenant J.E.B. Stuart, who became a General under Robert E. Lee during the Civil War, the "eyes and ears" of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

Debra said Stuart is in the Fort Leavenworth Hall of Fame. He was stationed at the Fort in 1855 with the 1st Cavalry Regiment under the command of Colonel Edwin Sumner. Stuart was at Leavenworth during the "Bleeding Kansas" days of 1856 with anti-slavery vs. pro-slavery factions fighting, including the battle of Black Jack, the Pottawatomie Creek Massacre, and the sacking of Lawrence by pro-slavery forces.

By 1857, the federal army was basically done with the Missourians to the point they turned their interests and forces westward to fight Indians. One such fight occurred in July 1857 along the Solomon River. Three hundred cavalrymen under Colonel Sumner drew sabers and charged against some five hundred Cheyenne warriors. A running battle ensued along the Solomon River. Stuart was shot in the chest during the battle. The Cheyenne eventually scattered. Stuart and eleven other men were left near the Solomon River to recuperate and built and established Fort Floyd. It was a square earthen works about five feet

high and fifty feet to each side. No traces of the fort's existence have been found.

While Stuart recuperated at Fort Loyd he developed a device to improve on how a cavalry saber was attached to its belt, to allow a quicker release of the saber from its scabbard. He forwarded his idea to the War Department in Washington, D.C.

In 1859, Stuart was stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas, and he was in Washington, D.C., to sell his idea on the improved saber belt, which had been patented. Debra said that while in Washington, he and Colonel Robert E. Lee were sent to visit President James Buchanan. Buchanan dispatched Lee, with Stuart as his aide, to relieve the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, from abolitionist John Brown. At the time Brown was using an alias, Smith. Lee sent Stuart to the engine house where Brown and his followers were gathered to demand their surrender. Stuart and "Smith" had a long conversation, and Stuart immediately recognized John Brown from Kansas. Brown refused to surrender to Lee's terms, and Marines stormed the engine house, capturing him.

Debra then talked about Fort Wise (1859-1862), another fort associated with J.E.B. Stuart. This fort was built along the Arkansas River in the Kansas Territory in 1859. Stuart was stationed at Fort Wise in January 1861. Built as another fort to protect the Santa Fe Trail, it was named after Virginia Governor Henry Wise. Debra said it was one of Bent's Forts, originally called Bent's New Fort.

Following Abraham Lincoln's election in November 1860, the long simmering free states vs. slave states differences came to a head. South Carolina seceded from the Union in December 1860, soon followed by other southern states. In January 1861, Stuart wrote his brother from Fort Wise that that if Virginia seceded, he would go with his state. In April 1861, Virginia voted to secede. Stuart resigned from the US Army in May 1861, to join the Confederate States Army.

Fort Wise was renamed Fort Lyon in June 1862 in honor of Union General Nathaniel Lyon, killed at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Missouri, in 1861.

When Kansas became a state on January 29, 1861, Fort Wise became a part of the Colorado Territory. Flooded by the Arkansas River 1866, a new Fort Lyon was built on the north bank of the river. The fort was abandoned in 1897, but in 1906 remaining buildings were converted to a sanatorium to treat soldiers and prisoners of war with tuberculosis. The Fort Lyon National Cemetery is located at the site, off US Highway 50, east of Fort Lyon, Colorado.

The Kansas Territory and the State of Kansas are vastly different in size. The Territory extended westward to the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains in present day Colorado. Had the Territory become the State, cities such as present day Boulder, the entire Denver Metropolitan Area, Castle Rock, Colorado Springs, Canon City, and Pueblo would have been within the State's boundaries. At least eight mountain peaks over 11,000 feet, six of these



Gene Howerter presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Debra Goodrich Bisel.

over 14,000 feet, would have been in Kansas, in lieu of our highest elevation of Mount Sunflower at 4,039 feet in Wallace County.

Another little fact for those readers who live outside the state of Kansas deals with the Arkansas River. A number of installations mentioned in the book were built along this major river in the Territory and State. In Kansas it is called the Ar-Kansas River. Outside of the State is called the Ar-Kan-Saw River.

Debra spoke of Fort Row (1861-1865). This fort was built a few miles south of Coyville, Kansas, Wilson County. It was built after Confederate forces burned the town of Humboldt about 27 miles to the northeast in September 1861. By 1862 the fort was all but abandoned, but it played a role in processing thousands of Indian refugees from Oklahoma during the winter of 1861-1862. The refugees began trickling into the fort in January 1862. They were led by Creek Chief Opothleyahola. He and his followers chose not to support the Confederacy. Those Creek who did support the Confederacy branded Opothleyahola a renegade and enemy. The Confederate Creek and Cherokee Indians fought a series of battles against Opothleyahola and his followers as they escaped northward from Indian Territory into Kansas.

Fort Row could not sustain all the refugees and some 250 died during the winter. Hundreds more suffered amputations from frostbite. Some of the Creek were sent

"Kansas Forts," con't. on Page 6

"Kansas Forts," con't. from Page 5

to Fort Scott and many others continued walking north to Fort Belmont, situated about two miles west of present day Buffalo, Kansas, in Woodson County. Nothing remains today of Forts Row and Belmont.

Debra spoke highly of Native Americans and their commitment to service in the US Armed Forces, dating back to alliances during the Revolutionary War. She wrote in the book that many Creek men who fled Indian Territory with Opothleyahola joined Indian Home Guard Units and served with Union forces in the Indian Territory (Oklahoma.)

Confederate Major General Stirling Price began his raid into Missouri in the fall of 1864. Debra pointed out that Missouri never seceded from the Union, and Price was fighting Union forces from the eastern side of Missouri all the way westward. He did win some of these engagements and appeared to threaten Kansas City and Fort Leavenworth with victories at Independence, Missouri, and the Battle of the Little Blue River. He was defeated at the Battle of Westport, Missouri (Kansas City), coined by some historians as "The Gettysburg of the West," on October 23, 1864. On October 24 the second largest cavalry battle of the Civil War took place at the Battle of Mine Creek, Kansas, south of present day Pleasanton, Kansas, Linn County. Two brigades of Union cavalry defeated Price's two divisions of cavalry. Price retreated southward out of Missouri after Mine Creek.

Debra talked briefly of Koss Construction Company headquartered in Topeka, Kansas. She wrote about the company in the book as they constructed roads and runways at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Fort Smith, Arkansas, and most of the Army Air Fields in Kansas, including Topeka Army Airfield. By April 1943, the company had built 34 miles worth of runways using some 3,000,000 square yards of concrete.

At the conclusion of Debra's presentation, Gene How-erter presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Kansas history buffs, especially those who like to travel the state and see historic sites will find *Kansas Forts & Bases: Sentinels on the Prairie* a welcome addition to their bookshelf. It is an excellent reference to carry in the car when sightseeing around the state. The book is by Debra Goodrich Bisel and Michelle M. Martin, published by The History Press, Charleston, South Carolina, 2013, ISBN978-1-60949-826-9. Copies are for sale in the Museum Gift Shop for \$20.95.



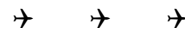
**Join the Combat Air
Museum!**

**Thanks to the volunteers
who help with our activities during
Warbirds and Legends event**

The following members of the Rolling Thunder Chapter, Military Vehicle Preservation Association volunteered at CAM during the Warbirds and Legends event held at Topeka Regional Airport in August.

- Leon Dultmeier
- Loren Thormodsgard
- Frank Lowery
- George McGurk
- Andrew Ginn
- Stephen Eschmann
- Corbin Adams
- Mike Alderson
- Bernie Carlson
- Jim and Mary Braun
- Chester and Judy Ginn

We thank them for helping us with hangar and flight line security over the three day event.



*Happy Holidays
from the
Combat Air Museum*

Calendar of Events

December

Monday December 9

Membership Luncheon

Jean Wanner Education Conference Room

11:30 am

Major Roger Locher, USAF (Ret) is our guest speaker. He will speak about being shot down over North Vietnam and evading capture over 23 days behind enemy lines.

Wednesday, December 25

The Museum is closed

January

Wednesday, January 1

The Museum is Closed.

There is no Membership Luncheon in January. The next luncheon will be Monday, February 10.



Supporters

New Supporters

Justin Gordon
 Todd, Kim & Katie Morgentern
 John Pickett
 Jeremy, Amber, Aden,
 & Alison Rathburn
 Roger Thomas

Renewing Supporters

Carol Ballentine
 Charie Broughton
 Duane, Tameka, Don, Darin,
 & Alberta Coash
 Bob Crapser
 Kevin Drewelow
 Rodney & Martha Duerkson
 Donald Duncan
 Norm Edee
 Donald Fluke
 Charles & Dagmar Gorges
 Tom & Diane Gorrell
 Dennis & Mary Ann Hill
 Dave Houser
 James & Mary Hunt
 Doug Jacobs
 Louise Langberg
 Terry Love
 Ron & Nancy Lutz
 David Lybarger
 Greg Moser
 Edward Navone
 Elikot Potter
 Tad & Dee Pritchett
 Carl & Betty Quarnstrom
 Sharon Rosenow
 Bud Spencer
 James & Marion Taylor
 Tom & Pat Thomas
 Chuck & Marlene Urban
 Conrad Youngblom

→ → →

Thanks to the sponsors of our Ninth Annual Winged Foot 5K/10K Run and Walk held in September.

JB Turner & Son's Roofing & Sheet Metal
 Perkins Family Restaurant
 Sunflower Striders
 Will & Kritstin Price Family
 Zona's Engraved Creations, Inc.
 B&B Signs Co., Inc.
 Blue Dot of Kansas
 BRB Contractors
 Briman's Leading Jewelers
 D.M. Bruce Associates, LLC
 Carlson Family Trust
 Citizen Potawatomi Nation
 Couselman/Wade Chiropractic
 Peggy & Don Dawson
 Dehn Heating & Cooling, Inc.
 Entz & Entz, P.A.
 Stu & Elinor Entz
 Paul & Betty Frantz
 Heartland Park Topeka
 Hobbs Ranch
 Gene Howerter Family
 HTK Architects
 Doug Jacobs-Museum of the KS National Guard
 Greg Johnson DDS/Eric Johnson DDS
 Jostens Printing & Publishing
 Bob & Mary Ann Kelly
 Key Staffing
 Adam Conlee Kincaid
 Col. Hollis B. Logan
 Larry & Ann Mah
 Million Air Topeka
 Mize, Houser & Company
 Penny Morgan Financial Services
 Martin Moyer Family
 Dave & Judy Murray
 Parrish Hotel Corporation
 Tad & Dee Pritchett
 The Pulliam Family
 ReMax-Bill Haag
 Service First@Anderson Peck Agency
 Sharp Honda
 Pete & Anne Stauffer
 South Village Mobile Home Park
 Subway Sandwiches & Salads
 Super 8 Motel at Forbes Landing
 Tom & Pat Thomas
 Jeanne & Dick Trupp
 Chuck & Marlene Urban
 Jack & Carlene Vaughn
 Dan & Lynn Weaver
 Combat Air Museum
 → → →

The Fog of War:

A Kansas family's experience during and after World War II

The Fog of War: The uncertainty in situational awareness experienced by participants in military operations. The term seeks to capture the uncertainty regarding one's own capability, the adversary's capability, and the adversary's intent during an engagement, operation, or campaign.

This concept was introduced by the Prussian military analyst Carl von Clausewitz in his posthumously published book, *Vom Kriege* (1837), which appeared in English translation in 1873 under the title *On War*. The book is still studied today in military academic institutions around the world.

For one Kansas family during and after World War II, the Fog of War affected their lives in regard to a son who went Missing in Action (MIA) in August 1943 thousands of miles from Concordia, Kansas. The core of this article is taken from loose pages of a family scrapbook and letters, documents, clippings, and photographs cut from the scrapbook's pages. The collection was donated to the Museum some years ago. Other historical references were used to help fill in facts of the story. We do not know how much information is and may be missing from the scrapbook pages.

Clayton Eugene Heller was born April 27, 1924, in Osage City, Kansas. His parents were **Parmer C. and Jennie Heller**. He completed grade school in Clay Center, Kansas, and attended high school in Bellville, Kansas, for three years before enlisting in the US Army. During his time in service, his family lived in Concordia, Kansas. He was inducted into the Army on August 23, 1942.

There is not much detail from the scrapbook dealing with his military training, but a sequence of assignments included Kearns, Utah; Las Vegas, Nevada; Alamogordo, New Mexico; Lincoln, Nebraska; then overseas to England. A letter sent home from then Staff Sergeant (S/Sgt) Clayton postmarked June 17, 1943, is about him getting settled at his base somewhere in England and meeting other "kids" from Kansas and from his training bases in the US. He briefly describes the countryside and how nice the English people are to them. The return address on the envelope shows that he was assigned to the 68th Bomb [Bombardment] Squadron, 44th Bomb [Bombardment] Group. The 44th Bombardment Group, known as The Flying Eightballs, flew the Consolidated B-24 Liberator, four engine heavy bomber. The group was assigned to the Eighth Air Force. Heller was assigned to the crew of a B-24D named Natchez Belle, serial number 42-40373.

There is a V-mail letter from Heller's mother to him July 12, 1943, saying they received his letter and filling him in on family news and wishing him well. His mother sent another V-mail on August 27, 1943, again passing on family news and news about people Clayton knew who were also in service.

The next sequential correspondence is a Western Union telegram dated AUG 29, 1943, from the Adjutant General, Washington, D.C. to Parmer C. Heller, Clayton's father. The text begins with, "I REGRET TO INFORM YOU..." In this instance the telegram reported that S/Sgt Heller had been missing in action since 16 August and that "IF FURTHER DETAILS OR OTHER INFORMATION OF HIS STATUS ARE RECEIVED YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED." As with thousands of Western Union telegrams received by families across the US during World War II, the signature line reads, Ulio The Adjutant General. His mother's V-Mail of July 12 may have reached S/Sgt. Heller. The one of August 27 certainly did not.

The telegram does not provide where S/Sgt Heller went missing, and this leads to the first Fog of War mistake. Subsequent newspaper clippings varied in their reporting of S/Sgt Clayton's status. He is listed in some as



Staff Sergeant Clayton Eugene Heller.

being the bombardier on his aircraft. He was actually the left waist gunner on Natchez Belle. Second Lieutenant Elwood Collins was the bombardier. Other clippings reported S/Sgt Hiller went missing on a low level raid against Romanian oil refineries on August 15.

Natchez Belle and her crew did, in fact, take part in the famous low level raid on oil refineries around Ploesti, Romania. The raid took place on August 1, 1943, not August 15 as reported in some clippings, and Natchez Belle successfully returned from the mission with all her crew. There are clippings about this raid in the scrapbook, including one about the award of the Congressional Medal of Honor to Colonel Leon Johnson of Moline, Kansas. Johnson commanded The Flying Eight Balls during the raid.

A page from General Order No. 90, published by Headquarters, Ninth US Air Force on 16 September 1943, lists S/Sgt Heller as being awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross for his participation in the August 1st raid.

Kansas US Senator Arthur Capper wrote a letter to Parmer Heller dated September 20, 1943, with his condo-

lences of learning of S/Sgt Heller's missing in action status. This is followed by a similar letter from Kansas US Senator Clyde M. Reed dated September 21. Senator Reed's letter refers to S/Sgt Heller's MIA status in the Middle East Area.

The Fog of War comes to the front in two newspaper clippings, both dated September 22. The newspaper source for one clipping is not known. The second came from the Concordia Blade-Empire newspaper. The first paragraph of both clippings is almost identical with a major exception. The unknown clipping reported correctly on Kansas men listed as missing in action. The Blade-Empire clipping reported incorrectly these same Kansas men being killed in action. The Blade-Empire topic line reads "Clayton Heller Listed As Killed in War Area." The clipping lists the names of two Kansas soldiers listed among 249 killed in action as reported by the War Department. Heller was listed as being killed in the Middle Eastern Area, and a S/Sgt Ira L. Metzker of Anthony, Kansas, as being killed in the Asiatic Area. The clipping accurately reported Heller being MIA since August 16 but incorrectly reported him as a bombardier. Imagine the shock the Heller's Family must have felt to read this in the newspaper.

Two clippings from September 23 correct the erroneous reports of the previous day. The Blade-Empire reported "Clayton Heller Death Report is Incorrect." The article reported that the Associated Press was erroneous in its prior report, and that it should have listed S/Sgt Heller as missing in action in the Middle East.

This Fog of War gaff in the press may have prompted Parmer Heller to write a letter on September 23, 1943 to the Cloud County Chapter, American Red Cross, requesting information on his son's status. A letter from the Cloud County Chairman of the Red Cross dated October 1, 1943 is in the scrapbook, and he wrote Mr. Heller that



he was writing their congressman, "to see if he can give us further details about your son."

October 1943 correspondence also includes an official document and official and personal letters. General Order No. 163 published by Headquarters, VIII Bomber Command on 2 October 1943, lists S/Sgt Heller being awarded an Air Medal and an Oak Leaf Cluster to go with the Air Medal for "bomber combat missions over enemy occupied Europe."

An official letter, dated 11 October 1943, is from Headquarters, Army Air Forces, Washington, D.C., and is a form letter relating the success of the raid against the Romanian oil fields. Enclosed with this letter was one written 20 August 1943, by General H. H. Arnold, Commanding General, Army Air Forces, to the officers and men of the 201st Combat Wing of the Eighth Air Force, congratulating them on their heroic mission. Neither letter gives the date that the Ploesti raid took place, and the third paragraph of the 11 October letter reads, "To the homes of those who were less fortunate, the same letter is being sent, in order that you may share our great pride in this daring exploit." One can understand how the Heller family and others may have believed S/Sgt Heller was downed on the August 1, raid.

The personal letter is dated October 14, 1943, and was written by a Miss Elsie Mosseau, fiancée of Technical Sergeant Dennis E. Slattery, Engineer of the Natchez Belle. She wrote that Slattery was reported missing in action in the Middle Eastern Area, but knew nothing else of the circumstances. She did know, however, that the rear gunner, [S/Sgt] Robert I. Vogel, had returned to his unit [44th Bombardment Group] and that, "quite a few members of the crew did bail out."

Miss Mosseau wrote again on November 4, 1943, passing on that her fiancée's sister had received a telegram saying he had, "been back in service since October 16" and she guessed "he was one of the wounded ones who escaped from the hospital." Yet, there is no mention where the "hospital" had been or where the plane went down.

The second personal letter is incomplete, but is from the wife of the Natchez Belle bombardier, 2nd Lt. Elwood E. Collins. On November 14, 1943, she wrote that she received a telegram November 10 with the news her husband was a German prisoner. She also wrote that, "Three of the boys - Vogel, Rothrock & Slattery are back with their units."

December 1943 correspondence includes both personal and official letters. S/Sgt Heller's mother received a letter written December 14, 1943, by [S/Sgt.] Robert I. Vogel, tail gunner on the Natchez Belle. Vogel was answering a letter he received earlier from Mrs. Heller. He wrote, in part, "I very deeply regret that I am unable to tell you anything

"Fog of War," con't on Page 10

Mrs. Jennie Heller receives her son's Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster January 10, 1944, at Smoky Hill Army Air Field.

"Fog of War," con't. from Page 9

because of military restrictions. Any news you receive will have to come through war department channels. I'm very sorry that is the way things must be." He went on to write that he was answering her letter so she would not think him, "entirely careless or thoughtless" and that he, "certainly can understand your anxiety."

A second personal letter was also from a Natchez Belle crew member. This was written December 15 by [T/Sgt.] Dennis Slattery. He referred to S/Sgt. Heller as "Jackie" and wrote that everyone called him by that name as he was always singing. His letter is full of accolades for S/Sgt. Heller, but everything is written in past tense. The second page of the letter contains the crushing news. Slattery wrote, "I would give anything in this world to be able to tell you that Jackie is still alive but I can't do that." A little further on he wrote, "I'm writing this because I know Jackie would want you to know the truth and I feel that he is watching over you from some other world sending out to you some of his courage." Slattery did not write anything of the circumstances of S/Sgt Heller's death or where.

It was not until April 21, 1944, that the War Department issued a telegram that included, "REPORTS RECEIVED IN THE WAR DEPARTMENT ESTABLISH THE FACT THAT YOUR SONS DEATH OCCURRED ON SIXTEEN AUGUST IN NINETEEN FORTY THREE IN ITALY LETTER FOLLOWS." What makes this telegram profound is that after receiving T/Sgt. Slattery's letter, S/Sgt Heller's mother wrote a letter to the War Department on January 3, 1944, requesting information about her son. The War Department responded on January 13, 1944, and the second and third paragraphs of this letter read, "The copy of the letter which you forwarded to this office [most probably a copy of Slattery's letter] will be considered together with other pertinent information which may become available and in the event such consideration results in an official change of status for your son, you will be informed promptly. Allow me to extend my sympathy during this period of uncertainty." The letter was signed by J. A. Ulio, Major General, The Adjutant General.

The official letter of December is also dated December 15. It came from the Adjutant Generals Office to Parmer Heller, telling him the Office had the honor to inform him his son had been awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. Because the awards could not be formally presented to his son, they would be presented to him. The awards would be forwarded to a nearby Air Corps installation for formal presentation to Mr. Heller. We do not know if this letter and T/Sgt. Slattery's letter of December 15 arrived to the Heller family at the same time.

Mrs. Jennie Heller wrote her letter to the War Department on January 3, 1944. On January 5, she received a letter from Mrs. Beatrice Hersh, mother of the Natchez

Belle copilot, 2nd Lt. George P. Hersch. She wrote asking if Mrs. Heller had heard anything officially or otherwise since the first MIA reports? Mrs. Hersch had also received a letter from T/Sgt. Slattery and she wrote he, "gave me a very clear picture of just what happened." Her son left the cockpit to bail out and forgot his parachute. He could not reenter because of fire and was last seen heading to the tail of the plane where spare parachutes were kept. The pilot, 1st Lt. Eunice Shannon, offered Hersch to jump with him, holding on to each other, but Hersch declined.

In a ceremony held on January 10, 1944, Colonel Arthur A. Melanson, Smoky Hill Army Air Field [Salina, Kansas] commanding officer, presented a Distinguished Flying Cross and an Air Medal with Oak Leaf cluster to Mrs. Jennie Heller. Officially, S/Sgt. Heller was still MIA, but subsequent newspaper clippings reported the awards as posthumous and that Heller died on the attack on Romanian oil refineries on August 1, 1943. One clipping still reported him as a bombardier.

Elsie Slattery, nee Mosseau, wrote a letter to Mrs. Heller on March 11, 1944. She married T/Sgt. Slattery in January. She wrote of his physical condition and that she had met S/Sgt. Vogel. She also wrote about the mission when Natchez Belle was shot down on August 16, 1943. She referred to the bomber as "Z-bar" which would have been a large letter Z with a horizontal bar below it painted on the aircraft tail. She wrote the plane dropped its bombs over target and was on its way home when it was hit by anti aircraft fire and dropped out of formation. Enemy fighters attacked the bomber and S/Sgt. Heller was killed during the fighter attack. She continued with accolades for S/Sgt Heller and how well all the crew liked him.

After the telegram of April 21, 1944, confirmed S/Sgt. Heller's death on August 16 in Italy, a letter from the War Department dated 25 April 1944, confirmed the telegram. The letter reported S/Sgt. Heller's B-24D was lost, "on an operational mission over Italy," and that he was, "killed in action on 16 August 1943, as the result of the destruction of his airplane by enemy action over Foggia, Italy." Subsequent newspaper clippings reported S/Sgt. Heller's Killed in Action status, in Italy, but one still reported him as bombardier. This clipping also reported he was on his 25th mission when shot down, and had he completed this mission would have been eligible to come home. It is not likely this was his 25th mission. The raid on the Ploesti Oil refineries was mission number 11 for the Natchez Belle crew. It is doubtful that crew flew another 14 missions between August 2 and August 16. Records show Natchez Belle was one of six B-24s lost by the 44th Bombardment Group on the Foggia mission.

Three official letters, all dated May 17, 1944, are in the collection. One informs Parmer Heller his son was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart. The other two letters are letters of sympathy from Senators Arthur Capper and Clyde Reed.

World War II ended in September 1945 aboard the battleship USS MISSOURI in Tokyo Bay, but the Fog of War did not end for the Heller Family. At some point in time the Hellers apparently made efforts to locate S/Sgt. Heller's remains in Italy. There are no documents to show to whom they may have made their queries.

The collection does have a letter from the Office of the Quartermaster General dated 15 September 1948 that addressed the effort to find S/Sgt. Heller's remain. The letter relates the destruction of the B-24. Seven men successfully bailed out and were taken Prisoner of War. Three, including S/Sgt. Heller, never left the bomber. The other two were copilot 2nd Lt. George Hersh, who left his parachute in the cockpit, and S/Sgt. Nick Smith listed as the hatch gunner. After the seven bailed out, "the plane rolled over all aflame, and blew up."

The letter reports that search team members of the American Graves Registration Service made an extensive search over the Italian countryside, including coastline and offshore islands in the area the plane came down, but with negative results. The letter reported S/Sgt. Heller's dental records were compared to all unidentified deceased recovered from the area, with no matches. The letter goes on to report, "the Department of the Army has been forced to conclude that the remains of your son are not recoverable." This is followed by, "...you may rest assured that this does not forever end the possibility of future investigation, should any credible evidence come to our attention."

About seven and one-half months later, Parmer Heller received another letter from the Office of the Quartermaster General, dated 28 April 1949. This letter refers to the letter of 15 September 1948, and reiterates some of its content. The newest letter goes on to inform Mr. Heller that further investigation conducted by American forces in the field, "has resulted in the identification of the remains of your loved one." The letter goes on to recognize that such conflicting information between the two letters might, "be difficult to comprehend," and explains the circumstances by which the remains were found.

American Graves Registration Service personnel recovered remains from a civilian cemetery at San Fele, Italy, and moved them to the United States Military Cemetery, Bari, Italy. Initially, these remains were associated with another aircraft that crashed near San Michele, Italy, on August 16, 1943, but the remains had not yet been processed. When that was done, Graves Registration Personnel definitely determined the remains were of Mr. Heller's son and his two crew members. Each set of remains was positively identified.

The letter goes on to explain how the remains were positively identified, using tooth charts and other forensic evidence. The exact grave site location of where S/Sgt. Heller's remains were interred in the Bari Cemetery is in the letter, but once identified, they were casketed and

held pending final disposition instructions from the next of kin. The letter indicated pamphlets and forms were enclosed for the next of kin to use if they wished to have the remains returned to the United States.

Copies of documents dealing with the return of remains are in the collection. An In Memoriam program is also in the collection. Its date and origin are not known, but it does include the grave plot location of where S/Sgt. Heller was interred in Bari, Italy, placing it sometime after April 28, 1949. Remarkably, the program reads that S/Sgt Heller died on the Ploesti, Romania, mission.

There is a lengthy telegram dated 1949 OCT 26 from the Quartermaster Corps to Parmer Heller telling him that, "THE REMAINS OF THE LATE S SGT CLAYTON E HELLER ARE ENROUTE TO THE UNITED STATES." The telegram confirmed that the remains are to be delivered to a funeral home in Concordia and that it may take several weeks for them to arrive, being delivered by railroad. The remains would have a military escort and would arrive in the US at a New York port.

There is a letter dated November 21, 1949, from the Mayor of the City of New York to Parmer Heller expressing his sympathy as Mayor and on behalf of the citizens of New York City to the family of S/Sgt, Heller. It is signed William O'Dwyer.

The remains of S/Sgt. Clayton Eugene Heller arrived in Concordia, Kansas, Wednesday, December 7, 1949. Newspaper clippings report this fact and the funeral services were held the following day. S/Sgt. Heller is buried amongst other military veterans in the northwest corner of Pleasant Hill cemetery in Concordia. His father's headstone is about 100 yards to the north of his son's.

→ → →

Visitors

During **September**
the Museum had
632 visitors
from **32** states, Puerto Rico,
and
Canada
China
Croatia
Great Britain
Netherlands
New Zealand

During **October**
we had
648 visitors
from **39** states, and
Australia
Bulgaria
Denmark
Germany
Great Britain
Switzerland

→ → →

First woman to win the title of US National Aerobatic Champion offers a little lesson on the flight simulator

World famous aerobatic pilot **Patty Wagstaff** toured the Museum on October 12. She was in Topeka as guest speaker of Aviation Explorer Post 8's annual Leadership Banquet held that evening at the Ramada West hotel.

Ms. Wagstaff is a six time member of the US aerobatics team. She is the first woman to win the title of US National Aerobatic Champion, and she has won this title three times. Ms. Wagstaff has also competed in the World Aerobatics Championships and flies demonstrations internationally. Since 1985 she has earned a smörgåsbord of aviation awards, medals and trophies. Her Extra 260 aerobatics airplane was put on exhibit in the National Air and Space Museum in 1994. Today, she flies aerobatics in an Extra 300.

In 2004 she was elected to the National Aviation Hall of Fame, and in December 2006 she was inducted into the International Council of Air Shows Foundation Hall of Fame.

Jack Vaughn gave Ms. Wagstaff a tour of the Museum and took her to our computer flight simulator. Jack asked her if she wanted to fly it. She declined but visited with him about our setup. He mentioned that he enjoyed flying the Extra 300 on the simulator but was not happy



with his landings. At that point Ms. Wagstaff became flight instructor and sat with Jack and instructed him as he flew and landed the computer simulated Extra 300.

At the banquet that evening, **Gene Howerter** got an autographed photo of Patty for Jack. It is now posted on the wall by the simulator.

→ → →