

COMBAT

AIR MUSEUM PLANE TALK

April-June 2026
Vol. 42, No. 2



Painting "The Red Baron's Kills"

By Kevin Drewelow

Acclaimed illustrator Tom La Padula spoke at the Combat Air Museum's membership luncheon on Monday, April 13. Tom created the collection of 80 paintings depicting each of Baron Manfred von Richthofen's aerial victories in World War I that had been on display since August of last year. The July-December 2025 issue of Plane Talk covered Tom's delivery of the paintings to CAM in late July; in February, Tom donated the complete collection to CAM. Late last month, Chuck Watson and Sharon Nolde removed, packed, and transported the collection to the Mid-America Air Museum in Liberal, Kansas where they will be on display through the end of the year before returning to CAM.

Tom just retired from a 48-year career as a freelance illustrator. He is a graduate of Parsons School of Design and Syracuse University, and later taught illustration classes at Parsons and Pratt Institute. His career has involved all kinds of illustrations, from magazines, advertising, sports, publishing houses, to even animation including Thomas the Tank Engine, the Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon. But after four decades of illustrating everything, Tom was getting bored and was looking for a project "that he could sink his teeth into."

He looked back to his childhood and remembered a DC comic book called "Enemy Ace" drawn by Joe Kubert. The comic series featured Hans von Hammer, based loosely upon Manfred von Richthofen. Tom feels there are too many artists painting World War II aircraft, and very few painting aircraft from the Great War. Tom wondered about who von Richthofen's first victim was and started researching. Tom said history is full of errors and he wanted to be as accurate as possible. His friend Michael works at a museum in Munich and was able to provide Tom with all of von Richthofen's after-action reports. Those reports do not include everything Tom needed, and since the Red Baron flew most of his sorties over Belgium, Tom was able to ask his friend Hein, who lives there, to help him fill in the blanks.



The Red Baron's Kills (amazon.com photo)

Tom painted von Richthofen's first aerial victory and put it on Instagram. The response was overwhelming! Tom's wife, Jean, Michael and Hein all encouraged him to continue with the theme, so he researched and painted von Richthofen's second victory, put it on Instagram and received another great response. Pen & Sword Books, a publisher in the United Kingdom, contacted Tom and invited him to produce a book about the Red Baron's

Continued on page 3

INSIDERS

2 From the Chairman's Desk
Gene Howter

4 New Doolittle Raider Display
Kevin Drewelow

5 The Doolittle Raider - Part 4
Keith Fulton

8 Museum Notes
Kevin Drewelow

11 New and Renewing Members |
Calendar | Visitors

12 In the Hangar: Pratt & Whitney J57
Kevin Drewelow

14 In Remembrance

15 Ways You Can Support CAM

16 Vectors to the Tanker
Geno Redmon

PLANE TALK

COMBAT
AIR MUSEUM

2

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE COMBAT AIR MUSEUM
COMBAT
AIR MUSEUM

Topeka Regional Airport

Hangars 602 & 604
7016 SE Forbes Avenue
Topeka, KS 66619-1444
Telephone (785) 862-3303
www.combatairmuseum.org

Website Hosted by
Rossini Management Systems, Inc

Email: office@combatairmuseum.com
https://www.facebook.com/CombatAirMuseum

Board of Directors

Wes Barricklow, Jon Boursaw, Stu Entz,
Tim Felks, Mike Madden,
Dave Murray, Ted Nolde, Mike Welch

Officers:

Dave Murray ~ **President, CEO**
Vacant ~ **Vice President, CFO**
Stu Entz ~ **Secretary**
Judy Murray ~ **Treasurer**

Operations Staff:

Kevin Drewelow ~ Museum and Education Director
Nelson Hinman, Jr. ~ Office & IT Manager,
Volunteer Coordinator
Nathan Benfield ~ Grounds Maintenance
Klio Hobbs ~ Museum Photographer
Deb Lamere ~ Chinook Restoration Manager
Mike Madden ~ Flight Simulator CIO
Ted Nolde ~ Director of Engineering, Facilities
John Plumb ~ Flight Simulator Instructor
Gary Naylor ~ Maintenance Manager
Chuck Watson ~ Art Curator
Mike Welch ~ Director of Facility Projects
Steve Wodtke ~ Librarian
Joe Wulfkuhle ~ Restorations Manager
Huw Thomas ~ International Consultant
Richard Knight ~ International Correspondent

Museum Guides:

Bruce Couch, Paul Frantz,
Dan Hinnah, Bill Newman, Joyce Parker,
Madison Slater, Garrett Viets, Chuck Watson

Gift Shop Staff:

Filip Garner-Lonsky ~ Admissions & Gift Shop Manager
Jon Boursaw, Gabriel Brown, Kay Foster,
Paul & Betty Frantz, Ron Gray,
John Moyer, Sharon Nolde, Bill Stumpff

PLANE TALK, the official newsletter of the Combat Air Museum of Topeka, Kansas, is published quarterly.

We welcome your comments!

Newsletter Layout by Megan Garner

MUSEUM HOURS

January 2 - February 28/29

Mon.-Sun. Noon - 4:30

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

March 1 - December 31

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

Sun. Noon - 4:30 P.M.

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

Closed

New Year's Day, Easter,
Thanksgiving, Christmas Day

Your membership is important to us! Join the
COMBAT AIR MUSEUM



From the Chairman's Desk

By Gene Howerter, Chairman, Board of Directors

I would like to get all of you caught up on what is going on at the Museum. This may not be the entire story, but there are some notable things. As you all know by now, on April 25th, the Museum celebrated its Golden Anniversary. Can you believe I have been a member for all those 50 years? We had a great day with a record turnout for pancakes by Perkins Restaurant, with hamburgers and games for youngsters in the afternoon.

I started at the very outset of the formation of this Museum, when it began as Yesterday's Air Force-Kansas Wing, as encouraged by Bob Schneider and his group of aviation enthusiasts. The idea was to lure David Tallichet to bring some of his collection of WWII aircraft to Topeka. We were successful and many valuable aircraft started arriving from California.

A year or two later we reformed as the Combat Air Museum and our fortunes as a viable museum flowed from there. We started in Hangar 626 on Forbes Field and, after a number of years, moved to our present hangars #602 and #604, along the airport flight line. At very few aviation museums can one visit historic artifacts and still thrill to the experience of air refueling tankers and army helicopters right outside our doors!

In the very early days, the 190th was stationed at the north end of the field, flying Martin EB-57B Canberras and on the verge of converting to Boeing KC-135A Stratotankers. To the south of our location the Kansas Army National Guard was flying Sikorsky CH-54A Tarhes, better known as Skycranes.

Over the years, Tallichet's fleet gradually grew smaller, one by one and when that happened, we were on the hunt for museum quality aircraft to replace the flying planes that we had.

For years we were the face of air shows in Topeka with our Superbatics held every year in the fall and we sure attracted many of the aerobatic teams like the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds. If you wanted to see enthusiasts operate first-class airshows, we were it.

Eventually bad weather, diminishing crowds and financial strain forced us to discontinue our annual airshows. Since that time other groups have been able to pick up the baton and stage airshows every other year.

Our hangars eventually swelled with today's 47 aircraft, numerous valuable engines, displays that chronicle the advent of flight, through all the conflicts that the United States has been involved in. Visiting the Combat Air Museum today is truly a lesson in the military history of this country and, although we cannot boast the incredible facilities available to the military museums in Dayton, Ohio and Pensacola, Florida, or some of the terrific aviation museums of the east and west coasts, financed by well-heeled sponsors, we are a beacon of public education and tourism for the great state of Kansas.

What I am trying to say is the Museum has truly grown into a community asset.

Over these last 50 years we have attracted visitors from all corners of the globe and the fifty states, and we are understandably proud that we have been able to maintain a seven-day-a-week open schedule for the public to visit whenever they want. Our membership has grown steadily, even while other organizations have seen a decline in membership due to an aging-out of their membership base.

All of this would not have been possible without the valiant and consistent efforts of volunteers over the last half-century. Love and labor have gone into building this facility; the volunteers have always been our backbone, and I have always enjoyed my 50 years of experience with this great organization.

Unfortunately, I must report to you that this will be the last time I shall be penning my version of "From the Chairman's Desk." As of May, I stepped down as the Museum's President and Chairman of the Board of Directors.

I was one of the founding fathers of this Museum 50 years ago and as I will turn 86 years old soon, it is time for me to step away. I have no intention of dropping out of the Museum but only resigning my present positions.

My one last request is that each of you continue to support the Museum with your membership while adding a few extra dollars as you are able. Your donations go a long way in keeping the Museum open. For all of you who have always supported the Museum in any way, or with a sponsorship in support of the pancake feeds, Young Aviators classes and scout Aviation merit badge courses, Fun Runs (in past years), aircraft and truck pulls, the annual Car Show on the Tarmac and Girls in Aviation Day, thank you. I would like to thank all of you who have been incredibly special and helpful in support of me in all ways during my office tenure.

What a blessing you have been, have a blessed future! ♦

Gene, Thank you for your 50 years of commitment to the Combat Air Museum!

Painting Continued from page 1

80 victories. Since no one had ever produced such a book before, Tom agreed and got busy.

He ordered 20" x 16" gesso prepared panels in lots of ten and painted every day for two and a half years. He assembled model airplanes and positioned and illuminated them to make his initial sketches. Friends and family members even got to pose for him to help him get the figures in the paintings right. He kept at it, even in September of 2021 when Hurricane Ida came to town and left Tom with water three feet deep in his studio!

Tom said he composed all the paintings on his computer to set the lights and darks, completed an initial pencil composition, then a final sketch which he then used a carbon graphite transfer method to apply the lines of the sketch to the gesso panel. Finally, he could begin painting.

He completed the 80 paintings and provided the images and text to Pen & Sword, who went to work preparing the book for publication. What was he to do with the collection now? Tom's friend Hein wanted the collection to go to a museum in Belgium. They soon found out it would cost \$10,000 just to ship them to the nearest airport in Belgium, plus the substantial fee for an art transporter to take it to the museum. Tom



Tom La Padula (K. Hobbs photo)

contacted several museums but their concerns about space, timing, et cetera, just could not work out. The July-December issue of Plane Talk covered how Tom's daughter Elise visited the Combat Air Museum and began a conversation that led to Tom bringing the collection to CAM, but Tom added more details. Chuck Watson called Tom several times, but each time Tom could not hear Chuck's voice on the phone and presumed Chuck was a telemarketer! When Chuck called back a third time, Tom shouted, "DON'T CALL ANYMORE!" He hung up and took his dog for a walk. Chuck called again, Jean answered and was able to hear Chuck. Tom and Chuck finally connected, and Tom and his son delivered the collection on July 29, 2025. Tom kindly donated the collection to CAM and encouraged us to

rent it out to other museums when the opportunity arises. In late May, Chuck and Sharon Nolde took down the collection and transported it to the Mid-America Air Museum in Liberal, Kansas, where it will be on display into November before returning to CAM. Chuck is busy improving the display space for the collection during its absence.

After Tom concluded his presentation, Topeka Mayor Spencer Duncan spoke briefly and gave Tom a proclamation thanking Tom for his visit. Mayor Duncan

Continued on Page 14

New Display Honors Kansas Doolittle Raider

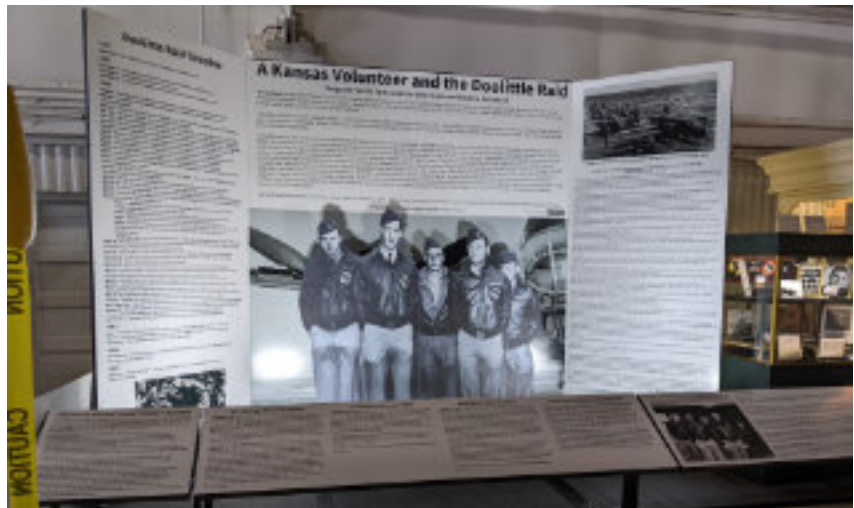
By Kevin Drewelow

The Combat Air Museum dedicated a new display to honor the memory of Sergeant Harold Spatz on April 18, 2026, the 84th anniversary of the Doolittle Raid. Sergeant Spatz was born in Lebo, Kansas, and was the flight engineer and gunner on "The Bat," the last of 16 North American B-25s to depart the U.S.S. Hornet to bomb the Japanese home islands in 1942, four months after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The Combat Air Museum was interested in creating a display about Spatz and his role in the Doolittle raid and we asked Keith Fulton to help. Fulton, a retired Air National Guard inflight refueling specialist, developed a display for the Museum about Major Daniel Forbes, the namesake for Forbes Air Force Base, now Forbes Field at Topeka Regional Airport. Fulton researched the Spatz story, spoke with Spatz family members, and designed the display, which HME, Inc. and FastSigns completed. A generous grant from Dr. James Barnett, nephew of Harold Spatz, made this display possible.

Harold Spatz graduated from Lebo High School in June 1939 and joined the US Army five months later. He became an aircraft mechanic and was assigned to the 17th Bombardment Group as a flight engineer and gunner on the new North American B-25B Mitchell medium bombers.

Two months after Japan attacked the US Navy base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, Lieutenant Colonel James "Jimmy" Doolittle was selected to lead a secret mission to bomb Japan using B-25 bombers flying from aircraft carriers. Doolittle asked for volunteers from the 17th Bomb



The completed Spatz display (K. Drewelow photo)

Group and Harold Spatz answered the call.

The volunteers began intensive training and by April the Navy loaded their 16 bombers aboard the aircraft carrier USS Hornet which, with its task force, set sail for Japan. As the task force neared Japan but still many hundred miles from their planned takeoff point, it encountered Japanese vessels, so they launched the 16 B-25s. All aircraft reached and bombed their targets in Japan, but they exhausted their fuel before reaching safe parts of China. The Japanese captured all five members of Harold's crew and three other airmen. The Japanese court-martialed the eight prisoners and executed three of them by firing squad, one of whom was Harold Spatz. All the other Raiders returned to the United States.

HME technicians delivered the display framework on April 15th, and Museum volunteers helped them unload the display materials. The team erected the display framework along the south wall of hangar 602. FastSigns delivered and installed the signage on Friday while Keith, his wife Teri and Dave Murray placed the showcase and filled it with related artifacts. Mike Madden later installed additional lighting.

Museum volunteers held the dedication ceremony on Saturday, April 18 in hangar 602. A large contingent of people from Lebo, Kansas attended, including many members of American Legion Harold "Skinny" Spatz Post 323 from Lebo and Spatz family members as well.

Keith Fulton hosted the dedication ceremony, and Dr. Barnett spoke about his uncle. The poignant ceremony underscored the important story of a young man from rural Kansas who answered the call to serve and made the ultimate sacrifice for his nation and our future. ♦



Dr. Barnett speaks at the dedication (K. Drewelow photo)

The Doolittle Raider from Kansas

By Keith Fulton

Kevin Drexel, the director of the Combat Air Museum, asked me several months ago if I was interested in assisting with the development of a new display in the museum for a fellow Kansan. This individual participated in the famed "Doolittle Raid" on Japan in April 1942. Sergeant Harold A. Spatz, a native of Lebo, Kansas, was a member of the unit participating in this raid, a retaliation to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii five months prior. Planners did not design the raid to satisfy a strategic goal, but it sure provided a morale boost for the American forces that were preparing to go to war in the Pacific and let the world know that this island nation was susceptible to attack. My recent visit to the United States Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio, inspired me to author this article as a forerunner of the future display at the Combat Air Museum for Sgt. Spatz.

Part Four

Initial news broadcasts from Japanese radio stations indicated Tokyo was bombed and they had shot down nine enemy bombers. As these broadcasts continued, the propaganda intensified by stating schools and hospitals were the targets and several thousand citizens were killed and injured.

After the bomb runs were completed all the aircraft descended to tree top level again to egress from the area. Fifteen of the B-25s proceeded southwest hoping to reach an airfield in China. One B-25 (Capt. York's crew #8) elected to fly northwest to Russia (against orders from Doolittle) as they were extremely low on fuel and burning fuel at a higher rate than planned. It was either head to Russia or ditch in the East China Sea with the strong possibility of being picked up by the Japanese.

Immediately after the bombings the Japanese Navy launched a large armada of ships toward the last reported location of Task Force 16. This force included five aircraft carriers, six heavy cruisers, nine submarines, ten destroyers, and several support ships. From the Japanese carriers and land base airfields a total of 208 aircraft were launched to find the American ships their patrol vessels reported a few hours earlier.

As Task Force 16 headed east they intercepted a couple more of the small Japanese patrol vessels and attempted to sink them. Bombs were dropped by Navy bombers but reported only possibly damaging one of the vessels. The weather helped the task force tremendously as the overcast skies prevented the Japanese aircraft from spotting them. The American carriers were aware of the Japanese search plane's location from radar detection but elected not to pursue them. Enterprise and Hornet continued to send out patrol aircraft as they headed east.

While flying over the East China Sea heading toward the east coast of China each of the "Doolittle Raider" crews throttled back again to conserve fuel. Luckily a tail wind enabled these aircraft to fly further than anticipated to reach the coast. Still over 8 hours out one crew member in each aircraft removed a radio receiver from its stowed position. These small radios were set to receive a beacon signal that was to be transmitted from various inland airfields in China. Each crew was briefed they should head to one of these airfields in the Zhejiang province of China, well away from Japanese occupied areas, using the beacon signal to aid in navigation. Fuel and other logistical support waited for them once they landed, before continuing their journey further inland to Chongqing (until 1997 was in the Sichuan province) where the aircraft would be held for future Allied forces to incorporate into their unit once established in country. A member of each crew had to rotate a crank handle on the radio unit to supply power to receive the anticipated signal. For several hours the crew of each aircraft took turns cranking but no signal was received. Unknown to each crew Admiral Halsey failed to send a planned message to the Chinese government advising them of the mission and to expect the arrival of 16 bombers. Halsey immediately headed back toward Hawaii with the two aircraft carriers and the remainder of Task Force 16.

Early on the morning of April 21, 1942, the task force approached their support ships they had left behind for the raid. Later that morning one of the Hornet's patrol aircraft was running short of fuel; all the other patrol aircraft had already returned. As the controllers on the Enterprise, the duty carrier that morning, were directing this lone aircraft toward the task force by radar, at 11:10 the Douglas SBD-3 Dauntless, crewed by pilot Lt G. D. Randall and radio operator/gunner Radioman Second Class (RM2c) T. A. Gallagher found the task force but could not make it to the Hornet. The aircraft was able to ditch next to a destroyer but immediately sank, taking the two crew members with it.

Each of the 15 "Raider" aircraft flying over the East China Sea enjoyed a tail wind to take them further than anticipated to the coast of China, however, after flying over 13 hours they approached the coast as a weather front was observed limiting their visibility with ground references and it was getting dark. The navigators could not even see any stars for a celestial fix to find their location. Navigation at this point was by compass only, trying to get as far west, away from the coast, as possible. The maps they were given did not indicate the terrain and several of the B-25s had to climb at the last second to avoid mountainous areas.

Was bailing out an option? Of the 75 crew members who approached China's east coast only Doolittle had bailed out of

Continued on page 6

The Doolittle Raider Continued from page 5

an aircraft. The primary bailout exit in the B-25 was the floor hatch next to the navigator's crew position.

Aircrew survival training at the beginning of WWII was merely a topic of discussion during flight training. Actual hands-on equipment use was non-existent, each was shown the equipment, where it was stowed on the aircraft, and simply told how to use it. Lt Miller (Crew #15 flight surgeon) instructed several classes while on the Hornet stressing the procedure of water purification the crews may come across.

Today all US Air Force aircrew positions, including life support specialists, and intelligence personnel are required to attend a course, lasting several days, in what is now called Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) training. After a few days of classroom instruction small groups are sent out into the forest areas to live off the land seeking their own food, water, and shelter using only what nature supplies, the equipment from their survival kits, and items they may find on an aircraft. They are then forced to evade capture from several of their instructors out searching for them. Once captured they experience the reality of enemy interrogations and confinement as POWs. Doolittle's men were not prepared for what faced them arriving over China but most of them tried to make the best of it.

Of the 15 aircraft approaching China, two pilots elected to ditch at sea as close to the land mass as possible and one pilot tried to crash land in a rice paddy after flying low enough to see the ground through the thick fog. One pilot tried to land on the beach, but a wave struck the landing gear and the aircraft crashed in the water.

That left 55 of the "Raiders" to try their luck at falling out of a black hole in a B-25, not knowing what awaited them below. The parachute harness had to be snugly tightened to the body, then tightened again, so the sudden shock of the chute opening did not cause injury to the individual. This inexperience played out as several of the crews did not tighten the harnesses properly. The brief free fall was not a problem but as the chute snapped open there were several chin injuries as the chest strap buckles were forced upward as the inflated chute slowed their fall. Also, groin bruises were experienced caused by the loose straps between their legs. One pilot unbuckled a portion of the harness as he was leaving his seat and did not reattach it as he left his aircraft. One chute pack opened in the aircraft, he had to hold the silk and lines close to his body and release them after exiting the aircraft hoping they would work, it was either that or go down with the aircraft. One pilot separated his shoulder as his arm was caught in the parachute lines and, after landing, could not release his harness as he laid there in a shallow stream.

Some of the bailout crews gathered several items from the aircraft before departing. This included weapons, flashlights, food items, canteens, and other personal items they wanted to



Doolittle's B-25 in China (af.mil photo)

take with them. Most of these items were not secured properly and fell from the body when the parachute opened, not to be seen again.

The parachute landing was another ordeal. Most of the crews interviewed indicated they could not see the ground and did not have a sense of falling, just suspended in midair as the rain fell overhead, even when the wind rocked them back and forth. Landings included in trees, streams, mountain sides, and a couple of the "Raiders" landed in a freshly fertilized rice patty including Doolittle himself. A few were lucky enough to land softly on level terrain.

With no signal to guide them to a safe airfield, the crew of "The Bat" flew on as long as they could and reached the coast of China just south of the city of Ningbo, in the Zhejiang province. The crew discussed their options; they had less than an hour's worth of fuel remaining but elected to continue circling to find their location or receive a signal from the radio before they ran out of fuel well after dark. With the very last bit of fuel remaining Lt Farrow climbed to a safe altitude for bailout and ordered his crew to don parachutes and exit the aircraft. DeShazer (the bombardier) was the first to leave, the order of bailout for the remaining crew is not documented. All five of the crew successfully bailed out of "The Bat" as it continued to fly westward until both engines quit due to fuel starvation and crashed. DeShazer landed in a graveyard and believed he broke a couple of ribs when he hit the ground.

Once on the ground each of the "Raiders" checked for injuries, what equipment they were able to hold on to, and provisions they had. Most sustained minor cuts and bruises, some had twisted ankles and had to find a stick or a length of bamboo to aid in walking. Many remained where they landed through the night and tried to find some cover, out of the rain, or simply covering themselves with the parachute and tried to get a little sleep. A couple even remained in the parachute harness suspended from a tree or hillside waiting for daylight to scope out the best possible escape from their situation.

Most Chinese residents encountered through that first night did not understand what the Americans were trying to

convey or avoided these strangers from the sky altogether. Communication technologies, such as a telephone or radio, was nonexistent in these rural areas of China. But as the night progressed into daylight the word of mouth spread rapidly between the small towns and communities in southeastern China of the strange men from the sky.

There are a couple references in the materials researched that handguns were fired that first night. The first was only an attempt to signal other members of his crew to his location after his parachute landing. Another reference indicated a "Raider" was confronted by a Chinese guerilla band who pointed their rifles at him. They exchanged fire before the Chinese ran off into the woods. Only one B-25 successfully landed: Capt. York (Crew #8 pilot) and his crew landed in Russia where they were interned due to the neutrality pact Russia signed with Japan prior to the war.

Lt Hallmark (Crew #6 pilot), in the B-25 named "The Green Hornet", was one of the aircraft that ditched in the sea at Wenzhou, China, in the Zhejiang province. They were forced to ditch as their B-25 ran out of fuel and could not go any further. About two miles from shore the aircraft broke apart causing severe head injuries to two members of his crew, Sgt William "Billy Jack" Dieter (bombardier) and Sgt Donald Fitzmaurice (flight engineer). Both were severely dazed and had to be assisted by the others during their egress from the aircraft. The five men finally made it to shore, Lt Nielson (navigator) and Lt Meder (co-pilot) assisting both Dieter and Fitzmaurice and finally Hallmark, who was injured as well. Once on shore Nielson and Meder tried to revive the two critically injured crew before being confronted by Chinese guerillas. The bodies of Dieter and Fitzmaurice were later checked by the Chinese and through very broken communication lines indicated both had died of their injuries. Hallmark's injuries were treated and the three-remaining crew of "The Green Hornet" spent several days hidden by the guerillas and local Chinese residents. The locals constructed caskets for the two dead crew and assisted in a military style burial ceremony. Hallmark, Meder, and Nielsen were able to avoid capture, aided by Chinese civilians, for nine days before they were turned over to the Japanese Army by local Chinese government puppet officials on April 27, 1942.

Sgt William John "Billy Jack" Dieter, age 29, was born in Iowa before the family moved several times finally landing in Tulalake, CA. His nickname is believed to derive from his first and middle names. He only attended one year of high school. In 1936 Dieter first enlisted in a U.S. Army Field Artillery unit in Vancouver Barracks, WA and served a three-year term. In 1940, not able to find a suitable civilian job, Dieter reentered military service as a bombardier in the AAC. His first aircraft was the Douglas B-18 Bolo at McChord Field, WA before the 17BW transferred to Pendleton Field, OR with the B-25.



Doolittle sits by the wing of his B-25 in China (af.mil photo)

Sgt Donald E. Fitzmaurice, age 23, grew up in Lincoln, NE and graduated from high school in 1937 as the class valedictorian. Fitzmaurice attended one year of college hoping for a degree in agriculture, but funding issues forced him to drop out. In 1940 he enlisted in the AAC as an aircraft mechanic / flight engineer and later assigned to the 95th BS at McChord Field, WA.

Lt Gray (Crew #3 pilot), in the B-25 named "Whiskey Pete", and his crew bailed out southeast of Quzhou, China, also in the Zhejiang province. A member of his crew, Corporal Leland Faktor (flight engineer), was killed during bailout after hitting the ground and falling down a cliff. His body was recovered first by the local Chinese residents and later given to the Japanese where he was given a military burial.

Corporal Leland Dale Faktor, age 20, grew up on the family farm just outside of Plymouth, Iowa, where he graduated from high school in 1940. When he was old enough and after his own daily chores, he sought employment from other local farmers assisting as a farm hand. A neighbor friend owned a Waco biplane and almost every Sunday afternoon Faktor rode along enjoying the thrill of flying. In August 1940, a few months after his high school graduation and with the plan to become a pilot himself, Faktor joined the AAC as an aircraft mechanic/flight engineer. After training he was assigned to the 95th Bomb Squadron based at McChord Field, Washington, crewing the B-25.

During the early morning hours on April 19th while it was still dark Doolittle (Crew #1 pilot) composed himself as best he could from the fertilizer odor and immediately set out to notify friendly Chinese officials to expect 15 additional aircraft along the coast of China but found communication a major problem, even with the phrases they were taught before leaving the USS Hornet. Doolittle later related to his crew, as they continued to evade capture, that he would probably be court martialled because he lost 16 aircraft and an unknown number of men trying to accomplish what Roosevelt wanted. But before departing China, Doolittle was notified through China's government communication channels that he was

Continued on page 10

Museum Notes

By Kevin Drewelow

Aviation merit badge classes...CAM has been offering Aviation merit badge classes for years and they are especially popular in the winter. Scouting America Troop 360 from Kearney, Missouri camped at CAM on January 10-11 and earned their Aviation merit badges while raising \$194 for the Museum. Troop 218 from Overland Park did the same on the weekend of March 9-10 and raised \$339 for CAM. If you know a troop that would like to know more about our merit badge classes, have them contact Kevin at director@combatairmuseum.com.



Kevin, Joyce and Dave at Aviation Day at the Capitol
(K. Drewelow photo)

Aviation Day at the Capitol...The Kansas Association of Airports held their annual Aviation Day at the Capitol on March 2 and once again invited the Combat Air Museum to participate. Dave Murray, Joyce Parker, and Kevin Drewelow staffed an information table where we told visitors about the Museum, our educational programs, and other activities. Joyce made some novel small airplanes with a roll of Lifesavers, a stick of gum and rubber bands and handed them out as people stopped by our display. We appreciate opportunities like Aviation Day at the Capitol to go out in the community and tell people about CAM.



Our EC-121 became a spaceship (K. Drewelow photo)

“Quiet on the Set!”...Some film students from Washburn University transformed our Lockheed EC-121T Warning Star, Sikorsky NCH-53A Sea Stallion, and our Curtiss-Wright Dehmel Flight Trainer into convincing spaceships in early January. “Losing Hope” will be a short film about a crew of two who encounter difficulties while transporting people in suspended animation to a new world. With creative angles, lighting, and a bit of imagination, on the screen our vintage aircraft and trainer became credible spaceship interiors!

Well, after all, it IS Kansas!...The Combat Air Museum advertises that we only close four days per year, but the Kansas weather sometimes gets a vote. Due to subzero windchills and four inches of snow, we closed on January 23 and reopened four days later. Nathan Benfield, our groundskeeper, donates much of his time and expertise cutting grass and clearing our parking lots and he did not disappoint us: he was moving snow early the next day! Our volunteers are the heart of CAM!



Paul repairing the beacon (K. Drewelow photo)

Speaking of volunteers...Our volunteers accomplished quite a bit early this year. Joe Wulfkuhle designed and fabricated wheel stands for several of our aircraft to get the tires off the floor. He and Gary Naylor jacked the aircraft and installed the stands. That is an ongoing project and we are fortunate to have Joe apply his knowledge, skills, and time to make this happen. Gary, Joe, and Paul Williams worked on both of our aircraft tow tractors to improve reliability despite a lack of direct replacement parts. They replaced a radiator and added an electric cooling fan on one tug and brought the other back from the dead. It's quite nice to have a pair of tugs to choose from when we need to tow aircraft! Paul devoted his electrical skills to restoring the second airport beacon; they removed the first, smaller restored beacon for later use in hangar 602 and put the larger beacon in its place atop the workshop in hangar 604. Paul added a timer, so the beacon turns on and off to coincide with museum hours. Joe fabricated some parts needed to install the rocket pods on our Bell UH-1M Huey gunship and has a friend who is 3D-printing rockets for the launchers! Other volunteers were busy outside the hangars. Ted Nolde, Mike Welch, and others rebuilt one of the handrails on the footbridge west of hangar 602. Mike Madden dug a deep hole on the south side of hangar 602 so he and Mike Welch could plumb a water line to the fountain in the same hangar. And the entire Fix-It Friday crew completed work on the climate-controlled artifact storage annex on the south side of 602. Spring has sprung and Nathan Benfield has cut grass several times at the Museum already. Chuck Watson and Sharon Nolde packed up the La Padula Richthofen collection and transported them for a temporary show at the Mid-America Air Museum in Liberal, Kansas. He has developed a superb plan for the permanent display of the paintings when they return and will be busy while they are away. Our Museum depends upon our volunteers, and we can always use more; just tell us what you would like to do here, and we'll provide any training you need to be successful!



MiG-21 main gear stand
(K. Drewelow photo)



Joe installing the Huey's rocket pods
(K. Drewelow photo)



The Fix-It Friday team repairing the bridge (K. Drewelow photo)



Ft. Riley Soldiers visit CAM (K. Drewelow photo)

Black Hawk crews visit CAM...13 Soldiers with the 3-1 Assault Helicopter Battalion at Ft. Riley arrived in two Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for a team building exercise and a lesson in military aviation history. They parked at Million Air and walked to CAM, where Chuck Watson greeted them and began their tour. Many of the Soldiers said they enjoyed the visit and planned to return with their families.

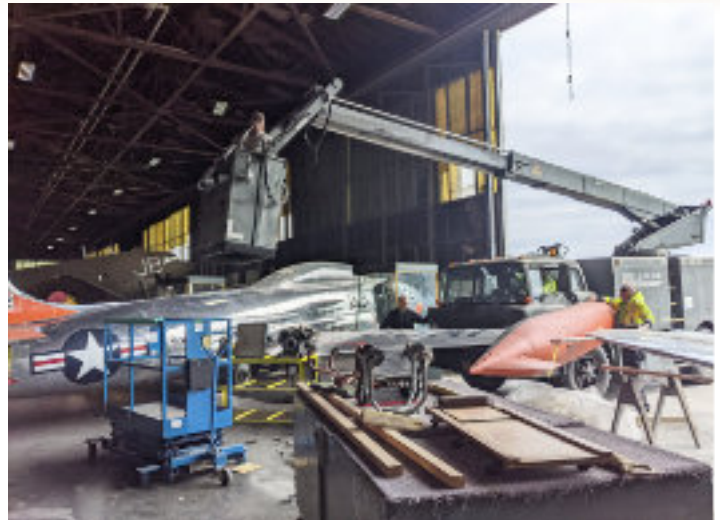
Continued on page 10

Museum Notes *Continued from page 9*



Evergy veterans group at CAM (Evergy photo)

Evergy veterans group make a difference at CAM...A group of over 50 Evergy employees comprised of mostly veterans and their supporters visited CAM to make a difference in the community. They arrived on March 18 and began with a one-hour tour to learn more about the Museum. They then broke into teams and got busy sweeping, cleaning, dusting and even replacing some missing sealant in a floor joint in hangar 602. We learned that the group came from all over Evergy; several had traveled from outside Kansas City to spend the day with us! They were all busy and engaged and left CAM much better than they found it, and all in time for our 50th anniversary celebration in April! They enjoyed their visit and look forward to doing it again. We are fortunate to have friends like them!



Million Air assisting Gary with curtains (K. Drewelow photo)

With friends like Million Air...Million Air Topeka keeps busy providing all kinds of ground support for aircraft visiting Topeka Regional Airport, but they often make time to help the Combat Air Museum. On March 24, manager Kyle Rohr and one of his team members arrived at hangar 604 with a high lift. With their help, Gary Naylor was able to rig three plastic sheets around our North American F-86H Sabre to create a paint booth for the jet. We simply could not have accomplished this task without our friends from Million Air looking out for us once more! ♦

The Doolittle Raider *Continued from page 7*

already promoted to brigadier general (1-star promotion dated April 23, 1942), skipping the rank of colonel.

The Japanese Army occupied a large portion of the east coast region of China and several large cities further south since the Second Sino-Japanese War started in 1937. "The Bat" happened to run out of fuel over one of the Japanese heavily occupied areas and the crew was soon captured after attempting to evade. Corporal Jacob DeShazer (Crew #16 bombardier) had walked for several hours before being surrounded by ten heavily armed Japanese soldiers; he was the first to be captured early the next morning. Lt Farrow (Crew #16 pilot) and the rest of his crew were all finally rounded up by the Japanese and the five, now POWs, were transported initially to a local police station. A few days later they were joined by the remaining members of Lt Hallmark's (Crew #6 pilot) crew. After spending a period in China enduring extreme interrogation and torture the eight men were later transported by air to Tokyo, Japan for more intensive

interrogation by the Kempeitai, the Japanese version of the German Gestapo, where they were forced to sign confessions prepared by the Japanese.

Once translated Harold Spatz' confession included: "I aimed at the children in the school yard and fired only one burst before we headed out to sea."

The confession statements for two of the other prisoners included the deliberate strafing of civilian targets such as residential homes, schools, and hospitals. Of course, these statements were written in Japanese that the POWs could not translate and they were ordered to sign or be shot.

After several weeks in Tokyo, it was determined that the Japanese could not obtain any additional valued intelligence, the POWs were trucked to Nagasaki, Japan and later transported by ship back to Shanghai, China; each hoping that an American submarine would locate the ship and sink it either giving them a chance to escape or be killed to end their suffering captivity. During their imprisonment the eight men

Continued on page 15

New & Renewing Members

2026 Calendar of Events

New Lifetime Members:

Samuel Carkhuff | Mary Ann Naylor

New:

Satish Kumar Dharmavarapu & family | Scott Meyer & family | Joyce Parker | Maj David & Lorrie Powers
| Calvin Sarver & family | Madison Slater
| Marilyn Spencer

Renewing:

David Bainum | Gary Bender | Harold & Carol Benoit | Michele Borgarelli | Lynne Bourne | Chuck & Connie Bradshaw | Les Carlson | Bradley & Star Caywood | John Davis | John Dietrick & family | Dennis & Mary Donahue | Kristen Duncan & family
| Norman Dysart | Russ & Kyle Elliott | Tim & Suzanne Felks | Virginia Kay Foster | William & Donna Gilliland | John & Julie Goehring | Tom & Diane Gorrell | Ron & Judi Gray | Nancy Gruentzel & family | Shawn Guinty | David Hargitt | Connie Houser | Mike & Pat Kozubek | Tim & Mary Johnson | Darrell Jones & family | Louise (Cookie) Langberg | James & Ruby Leighton | Roland Mayhew & family | Jerry Milbradt | Ronald Morrison | Steve & Monica Morrison | John & Rita Moyer | Dave & Judy Murray | Bruce Nall & family | Michael Rockefeller & family
| Dennis & Galene San Romani | Lt Col. Thomas & Carole Rost | Chris Rundel & family | David Salguero | Gipsy Schneider | Dennis & Marise Ann Smirl | R.J. Soldani & family | Steve & Sheryl Speier | Jay & Marty Stevenson | Mike & Kimberly Stewart | Bill Stumpff | Terry Wages | Ramon Washington & Anna Kaboyo | Chuck Watson | Patrick Wilson | Dustin Wise & family | Steve Wodtke | Joe Wulfkuhle | Dr. James Young

June

8—Membership Luncheon, brown bag
15-19—Young Aviators Class

July

20-24—Young Aviators Class

August

10—Membership Luncheon, brown bag

September

12—Girls in Aviation Day

October

4—CAM “Car Show on the Tarmac”
12—Membership Luncheon, brown bag

November

1—Daylight Savings Time ends
26—Thanksgiving, Museum closed

December

14—Membership Luncheon, bring a covered dish
25—Christmas, Museum closed

Visitors

561 people from 24 states, Canada, Japan, Lithuania, Norway and South Africa visited the Combat Air Museum in January.

In February, 818 visitors from 27 states, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Poland and South Africa toured your Museum.

1,434 people from 39 states, Washington, D.C., Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Great Britain, Japan, Nicaragua, Spain, Switzerland and Venezuela visited the Combat Air Museum in March.

In April, 2,040 people from 35 states, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Sweden and Thailand toured your Museum.

In The Hangar: the Pratt & Whitney J57

By Kevin Drewelow



J57 components (CAM photo)

Tucked away in hangar 604 in front of our Douglas C-47 is a jet engine displayed as if in an exploded view, spread out over 13 individual stands. This is our Pratt & Whitney J57 turbojet engine. These brown and grey components seem unimpressive, especially when compared to today's mammoth jet engines, but the J57 was an important pioneer in the development of American jet propulsion.

Frederick Rentschler and others established the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company in 1925 and by the end of that year produced their first aircraft piston engine, the R-1340 Wasp, which provided 425 horsepower. The Wasp was the first of a line of very successful and increasingly more powerful engines, which propelled many of the military aircraft of the United States in World War II.

Germany introduced the first jet powered aircraft into combat during the war. Great Britain was the leading Allied nation in the development of jet engines and shared their knowledge with American companies, who bought licenses and began producing British-designed engines. Pratt & Whitney gained experience with these turbine engines but began to think about designing and building their own designs. British jet engines of the time were centrifugal-flow engines, in which the air flowing through the engine changes direction several times before combining with fuel, ignites and is ejected through the exhaust nozzle. Pratt & Whitney began developing an axial flow engine, where the air flows straight through the engine, mixes with fuel, ignites and exits through the exhaust nozzle.

The J57 evolved from the Pratt & Whitney XT45 experimental turboprop engine that was to be fitted to the

first Boeing B-52 bombers (think of the Russian Tupolev Tu-95 Bear bomber with its four turboprop engines), but as the design evolved, it required more and more power which led Pratt's engineers to move to a turbojet engine. They had several challenges to overcome which are beyond the scope of this article, but it led to the J57's two-spool design, featuring a low-pressure compressor and a high-pressure compressor.

The low-pressure compressor has nine sets of rotating compressor blades (rotors) and stationary blades (stators). The compressor is mounted on a shaft which is nearly as long as the engine and connects to two sets of rotating and stationary blades known as the low-pressure turbine. Hot, high pressure exhaust gas spins the turbine, which spins the compressor. Immediately behind the low-pressure compressor is the seven-stage high-pressure compressor, which is connected by a shaft to the single stage high-pressure turbine. The shafts are concentric and allow the low- and high-pressure spools to spin independent of each other.



J57 cutaway (USAF photo)

The J57 used high pressure compressed air from a ground support unit or a starter cartridge to spin the engine fast enough to support combustion until the engine was running on its own.

Pratt & Whitney's J57 was the first American turbojet engine to produce over 10,000 pounds of thrust. The National Aeronautical Association awards the Robert J. Collier Trophy each year for "...the greatest achievement in aeronautics or astronautics in America, with respect to improving the performance, efficiency, and safety of air or space vehicles, the value of which has been thoroughly demonstrated by actual use during the preceding year." Pratt & Whitney received the Collier Trophy in 1952 for designing and producing the J57.

The J57 lent itself for use in a wide range of aircraft, including Boeing bombers and tankers as well as Convair, Douglas, McDonnell, North American and Vought fighters, among others. Pratt & Whitney added an afterburner for the fighters, where fuel sprayed into the hot exhaust gas and produced much more power and made supersonic speeds possible. The J57 was extraordinarily loud, and when KC-135s and B-52s used water injection during takeoff to produce extra thrust, they produced thick, black clouds of smoke, as seen in the classic scenes in "A Gathering of Eagles."

Boeing and Douglas also fitted these engines to their 707 and DC-8 airliners, where they were designated JT3C. Pratt later added a fan section in front of the low-pressure compressor which produced more thrust with improved fuel consumption and less jet noise. Pratt & Whitney built over 21,000 J57s between 1951 and 1965.

The Combat Air Museum received its first J57 artifact years ago when the University of Kansas donated a 1/4th scale model of a J57, located on the north wall in hangar 602. The engine is cutaway to reveal the various components and visitors can push a button which causes the spools to rotate. We use this model in every Aviation merit badge and Young Aviators class to explain how a jet engine works. Later, the Museum received a pair of J57 training devices, a full-sized replica of the external part of the engine, used to train prospective mechanics about the location and size of components such as the oil tank and bleed air valve, among others. Volunteers used parts from both trainers to complete one device, and it is located near the right wing of our C-47 in hangar 604. About eight years ago, a group of volunteers traveled to the former Octave Chanute Museum of Flight located on the former Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul, Illinois. The city of Rantoul continued to operate the museum after the Air Force closed Chanute, but they closed and the Air Force invited other museums to select artifacts to borrow from the Air Force Museum. Chanute had been a training base for jet engine mechanics and many other occupations, and they had a J57 separated into major components and displayed on 13 carts. That engine is now displayed under the nose of the C-47 in hangar 604.

The Air Force operated J57s for over 40 years and while they are now no longer in service, our J57 and related training aids are still serving, teaching our visitors about the parade of progress in military aviation propulsion and the fundamentals of jet engines. ♦



1/4 scale J57 model (CAM photo)

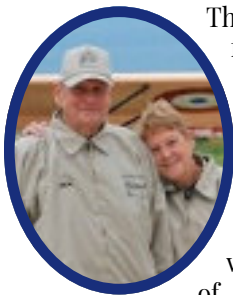


J57 training device (CAM photo)

In Remembrance

Richard “Dick” Starks

December 4, 1943-January 29, 2026
CAM #6351



The Combat Air Museum lost a good friend when Dick Starks passed away in January. Dick and his wife Sharon built, flew, and donated four of the replica World War One aircraft in our collection: the Nieuport 11, Rumpler Taube, Morane-Saulnier Type L and the Aircro DH-2. They were also responsible for the donation of seven other WWI aircraft replicas.

Dick's father was a mechanic at TWA and gave Dick his love of aviation. Dick and Sharon were schoolteachers, and Dick ran aviation clubs that resulted in a lengthy line of students who went on to aviation careers. Dick and Sharon were founding members of the Kansas City Dawn Patrol flying group, known around the Midwest and elsewhere flying their four Nieuport 11 replicas, later augmented by others who built and flew their own replica fighters. Dick's self-deprecating humor came through in the many magazine articles and books he wrote about the Dawn Patrol's misadventures, which inspired countless other people to start building and flying. He often mentioned the Combat Air Museum in his articles, and we hear many of our visitors comment about Dick when they see his Nieuport on display. As he turned short final, he asked that people donate to the Combat Air Museum in his memory. He would have been pleased with the response!

Becky Mathers

November 28, 1933-February 7, 2026
CAM #3898



Becky Griffy married fellow Topeka High graduate Don Mathers, who joined the Air Force, became a navigator and was part of the initial cadre on the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird. She donated Don's flight jacket and distinctive Kansas personal license tag, "BNMACH3" which is part of our SR-71 display.

John Musgrave

1948-May 3, 2026
CAM #5763



As the son of a World War II B-17 bomber pilot, John Musgrave developed an interest in aviation at an early age, but one of his father's friends, a Marine combat veteran, inspired John to join the Marine Corps in 1966. He had nearly completed his tour in Vietnam in 1967 when he was shot in the chest and nearly died. He shared his story with noted filmmakers Ken Burns and Lynn Novick in their 2017 documentary, "The Vietnam War." His book, "The Education of Corporal John Musgrave" provides much more information. John visited the Combat Air Museum often and spoke about the importance of close air support at our membership luncheon in February of 2018. It was such a privilege to hear history from someone who was there - and survived to tell the story.

Painting *Continued from page 3*

then invited Tom and Jean to return for a book signing event at CAM and offered to cover their airfare!

Tom's next project is a similar treatment of the United States Army Air Service's 94th Aero Squadron and its victories during the Great War. Eddie Rickenbacker flew with the 94th and earned the Medal of Honor during his tour.

Pen & Sword will release "The Red Baron's Kills: An Illustrated Portrayal of Manfred von Richthofen's Victories" by Thomas La Padula in November and is available for advance orders at amazon.com and at penandswordbooks.com for \$32.95. ♦



Mayor Duncan, Tom and Chuck Watson (K. Drewelow photo)

Ways You Can Support the Combat Air Museum

Dillon's Community Rewards Program



If you shop at Dillon's and have a Plus Shopper's Card, you can help support the Combat Air Museum with just a phone call or a few keystrokes. Dillon's Stores donates millions to non-profit organizations. Our Museum benefits from CAM members who have registered with Dillon's Community Rewards Program. **Enrolling in this program will not increase your grocery bill and will not affect your fuel points.**



Enrolling in the Community Rewards program is a one-time event. Go to <https://www.dillons.com/i/community/community-rewards> to create a Dillon's account before enrolling in the Community Rewards program. You can also call 800.576.4377 and the Dillon's customer service representative will register you. You will need to provide them with the Combat Air Museum's five-character Non-Profit Organization (NPO) account number, GA302. Thanks to your generosity, each quarter the Museum receives a check from Dillon's that really helps us maintain the collection and facilities and provide the classes and service our visitors enjoy. **Last year, Dillon's donated \$593 to CAM; that amount is over \$200 less than the previous year because we have fewer donors than before.** If you would like to join, why not take a moment now to do so: Dillon's and CAM will do the rest!

Volunteer

The Combat Air Museum exists solely upon the money we raise from admissions, donations, fundraising events, grants, and gift shop sales. We rely on volunteers to run our gift shop on weekends and the need for these volunteers has become even more urgent. We will train you for this crucial and enjoyable task. Our volunteers also lead tours, assist with aircraft restoration, building maintenance and groundskeeping, among other opportunities. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering, please call the Museum Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and noon at 785.862.3303 and ask for Nelson, our office manager and volunteer coordinator.

The Doolittle Raider Continued from page 10

were beaten, tortured, subjected to unsanitary conditions, and placed on a starvation diet. They wore the same clothing without a chance to bathe throughout this time; some of the interrogators wore heavy perfume as an attempt to cover the stench from each POW during questioning. The Americans contracted beriberi and suffered further from dysentery. In this writing I will not go into specific details as to the torture techniques the Japanese used on their prisoners. In his book **"The First Heros"** Craig Nelson describes in some detail the torture practices and other psychological methods the Japanese used to gain any intelligence they could.

Crew #16

Lt William Farrow
Lt Robert Hite
Lt George Barr
Cpl Jacob DeShazer
Sgt Harold Spatz

Crew #6

Lt Dean Hallmark
Lt Robert Meder
Lt Chase Nielsen

(To be continued. Abridged from the original article by Keith Fulton, a retired KC-135 Stratotanker inflight refueling specialist with the 190th Air Refueling Wing, Kansas Air National Guard, Topeka, Kansas). ♦



Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Topeka, KS 66603
Permit #181

COMBAT AIR MUSEUM
7016 SE Forbes Avenue
Topeka, KS 66619



PLANE TALK

Visit the Combat Air Museum for fun, information and an educational experience.

Vectors to the Tanker

By *Geno Redmon*



I've got troops in contact
Pinned down by the Tali
Made one more pass, way low on gas
"I need vectors to the tanker."

Tonight my wounded warriors
Need medevac to Landstuhl.
A double A/R out of Kandahar
"I need vectors to the tanker."

The Kims and their kin are at it again,
In faraway Korea
We are looking tough with my cell of Buffs
"I need vectors to the tanker."

NKAWTG!
We take pride in this expression.
Day or night, we fuel the fight.
"I need vectors to the tanker."

*Written in honor of the crew of SHELL 77,
a KC-135 lost over Kyrgyzstan 3 May 2013,
adapted for the loss of the crew of ZEU 95,
a KC-135 over Iraq on 12 March 2026*



A CSAR helo has been launched
A grim hunt for 6 survivors.
A burned patch is found, now hallowed ground.
"I need vectors to the tanker."

Today a crew is coming home.
Boom stowed and bound for heaven.
They passed their gas, now haulin' ass.
"I need vectors to the tanker."

All SAC aircrews please standby
This is GOD on "Guard"
LeMay and I from up on high.
"Are giving vectors to the tanker."

*Bufs...Boeing B-52 bombers
NKAWTG...No Kickin' Ass Without Tanker Gas
CSAR...Combat Search and Rescue
SAC...Strategic Air Command*