

# COMBAT AIR MUSEUM

## → → → Plane Talk → → →

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The Official Newsletter of the Combat Air Museum

Forbes Field Topeka, Kansas

February / March 2008 • Vol. 24, No. 1

### Professor of Military History presents a program on the Soviet Union during "The Great Patriotic War"

**Richard Faulkner**, Lieutenant Colonel, US Army (retired) was our guest speaker for the December Membership Luncheon. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Military History at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Colonel Faulkner's presentation was on the Soviet Union during the "Great Patriotic War" (World War II) and specifically the fighting between Russia and Germany on what most of us know as the Eastern Front (Western Front to Russians). He used a power point projector during his presentation showing slides with information sheets and tables, photographs, and maps. He also brought a number of Soviet World War II military artifacts.

Colonel Faulkner said that because of the Cold War, Western countries were locked out of Soviet archives about World War II. What we learned about the campaigns on the Eastern Front came from ex-German Generals and came with a biased view. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, access to the archives became more relaxed, but Colonel Faulkner said this access is becoming more difficult under the current Russian regime.

Reasons given for Adolf Hitler's attack on Russia included ideological (anti-Bolshevik and anti-Communist); and economic (the Soviet Union had a wealth of

**"Soviet Union", con't. on page 10**



**LT COL (Ret) Richard Faulkner, Associate Professor at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, spoke at our December Membership Luncheon.**

*Photo by Don Mathers*

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**Museum Hours**

Monday - Saturday

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

Last Admission 3:30 P.M.

Sunday Noon - 4:30 P.M.

Last Admission 3:30 P.M.

**Plane Talk**, the official newsletter  
of Combat Air Museum  
of Topeka, Kansas,  
is published bi-monthly.

Your questions and comments are  
welcomed. Submit information for  
**Plane Talk** to CAM office.

## Take a closer look at our 2007 visitors

The following is a summary of recorded visitor attendance at Combat Air Museum for calendar year 2007.

Total attendance was 9,719.

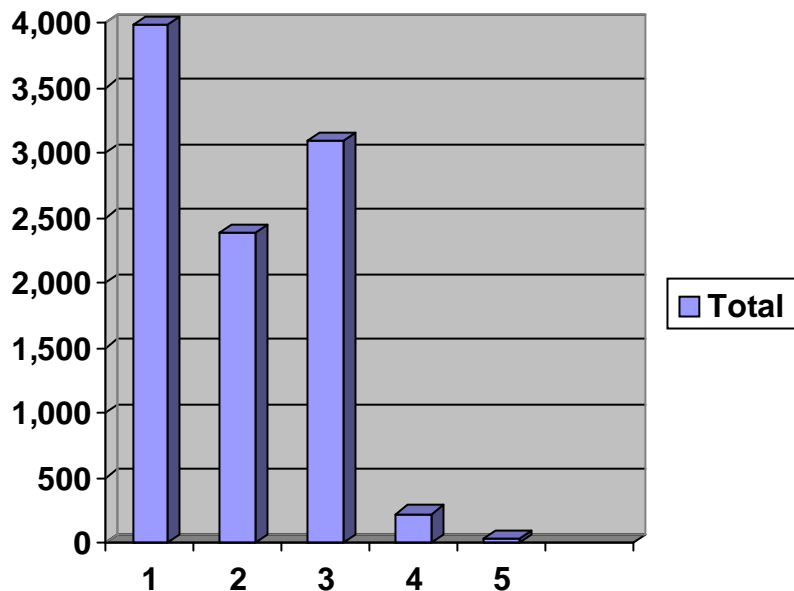
(1) 41% of the total (3,981) were from Kansas, outside of Shawnee County.

(2) 24.5% of the total (2,385) were from Shawnee County.

(3) 31.8% of the total (3,090) were from all 50 States and Washington D.C.

(4) 2.3% of the total (226) were from 26 other Countries.

(5) 0.4% of the total (37) were from residences unknown.



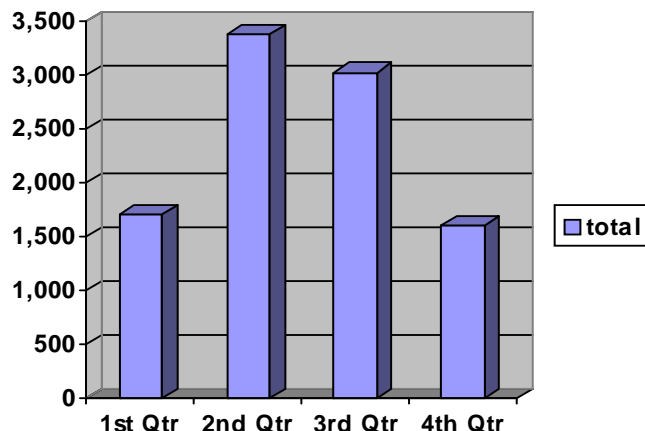
Attendance by quarters was

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 1,706

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 3,384

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 3,026

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 1,603



Museum tour-guides conducted 59 scheduled tours for a total of 1,807 visitors. Six of these were motor coach tours.

# CAM's Top Ten Lists for 2007

## How did you learn about Combat Air Museum?

#10 - No Response: 117 blanks

#9 – Just Knew: 118 responses

#8 – Heartland Park + Sports Car Club of America: 139 responses

#7 – Drove By: 164 responses

#6 – Relative: 261 responses

#5 – Internet: 289 responses

#4 – Friend: 330 responses

#3 – Local, Live/Lived in Topeka/Shawnee County: 398 responses

#2 – Repeat Visitor: 413 responses

#1 – Sign/Billboard: 520 responses

## Top 10 States Outside of Kansas

#10 – Tennessee (116)

#8 – Iowa (119)

#8 – Nebraska (119)

#7 – Minnesota (127)

#6 – Oklahoma (128)

#5 – Illinois (139)

#4 - Colorado (181)

#3 - California (185)

#2 – Texas (225)

#1 – Missouri (645)

## Top 10 Countries Outside of US

#10 – Ireland (5)

#7 – Japan (6)

#7 – Dominican Republic (6)

#7 – Denmark (6)

#6 – Norway (7)

#5 – South Korea (8)

#4 – Australia (13)

#3 – Germany (23)

#2 – Great Britain (43)

#1 – Canada (78)





## New exhibit features Battle of Midway

**Tom Witty** completed his latest exhibit in early December and did an outstanding job with the subject of the Battle of Midway. This World War II naval battle in the Pacific was a turning point in the United States' war against Japan. The new exhibit fills one of our largest cases and was put together around 16 model aircraft,

seven model aircraft carriers, and artifacts donated to CAM from the family of a survivor of the battle.

**Mr. Robert Costanzo** of Temperance, Minnesota built the model aircraft. They are 1/48 scale and painted in specific markings of Japanese and US aircraft that participated in the battle. Tom arranged the aircraft in the case with the Japanese carrier and floatplanes on glass shelves in one end. US carrier planes are on glass shelves in the opposite end. US aircraft that flew from Midway atoll are arranged along the front of the case. Tom labeled the name and types of each aircraft.

There is a "it's a small world" story involved with one of the models. Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority's recently departed President was **Mr. Mike Humberd**. One day, **Gene Howerter** was visiting with Humberd and mentioned the exhibit being built about the Battle of Midway. Humberd immediately related to Gene that his father had flown at the Battle as a Marine Corps fighter pilot, flying a Brewster F2A Buffalo. He even copied a magazine article for Gene that was about a painting showing Humberd's father shooting down a Japanese Zero fighter during the battle. As it turned out, Robert Costanzo built the Brewster Buffalo fighter in the markings of the senior Humberd's aircraft.

Tom built the seven aircraft carriers and the aircraft on their flight decks. Each model carrier is 1/700 scale.

*Robert Costanzo's models of Japanese carrier and float planes.*





To give you an idea of this scale, none of the wingspans of the aircraft are wider than 7/8-inch. Tom had to assemble propellers and landing gear on all the US aircraft, and all the miniature aircraft had to be painted and marked with decals. There are 234 of the 1/700 scale aircraft in the exhibit.

CAM member **Ted Nolde** gave us much needed assistance with the carrier model kits. Some of them were no longer in production and unavailable through hobby stores. Through diligent searching on the Internet, Ted found and acquired the kits we needed.

Tom also studied accounts of the battle so he could place the aircraft on the carrier decks in the order they took off during the initial strike launches of the battle. A large nautical chart of the North Pacific Ocean is spread on the floor of the exhibit case. Tom placed the four Japanese carriers on glass plates on one side of the chart and the three US carriers on similar plates on the opposite side. The carriers are each identified with labels. In between the carriers Tom placed a spread of seven Japanese scout aircraft to represent the scouts launched to find the US ships. He placed the model planes on compass headings the actual aircraft flew. A label plate on the chart points to Midway atoll.

The artifacts in the case belonged to the late **Fred Andrus**. Mr. Andrus was an Aviation Ordnanceman Second Class (AOM2/c) originally assigned to Torpedo Squadron Five (VT-5) aboard the aircraft carrier USS YORKTOWN (CV-5). The squadron flew the Douglas TBD-1 Devastator. YORKTOWN was seriously damaged at the Battle of the Coral Sea and put into Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii for repairs. While there, Air

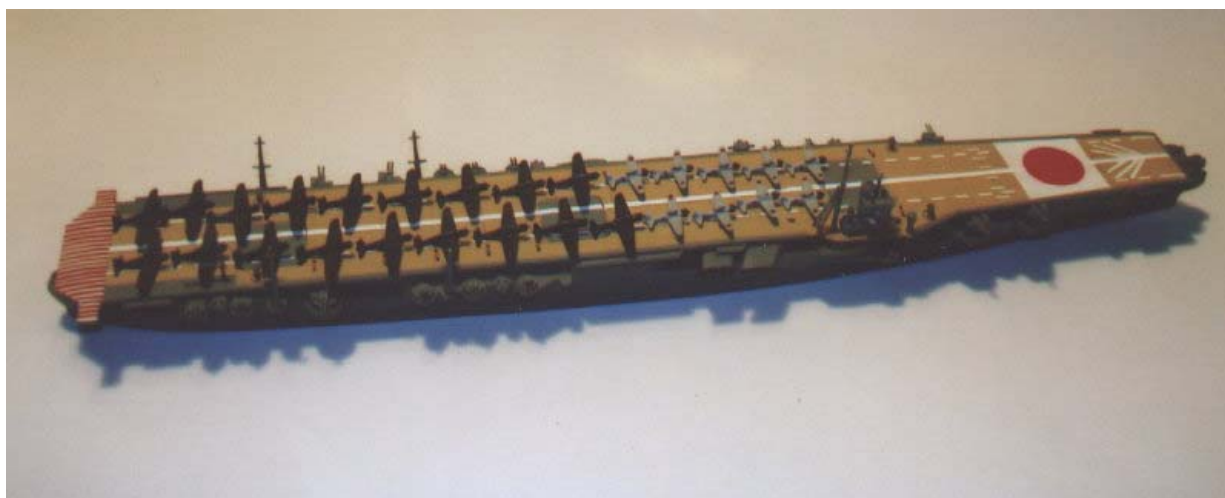
**"Midway", con't. on page 6**



ABOVE: Costanzo's models of US Navy carrier aircraft.

**BELOW: Model of Japanese aircraft carrier SORYU, one of seven carrier models Tom Witty built. The largest aircraft wingspan is seven-eighths of an inch.**

*This photo by Tom Witty*



**"Midway", con't. from page 5**

Group Five was replaced with USS SARATOGA's Air Group Three, and Andrus was assigned to Torpedo Squadron Three (VT-3) which also flew the Devastator.

YORKTOWN suffered crippling aerial torpedo hits on June 4 during the Battle of Midway and its crew, including Andrus, abandoned ship. The artifacts we have on exhibit were on his person when he abandoned YORKTOWN. They include his jacket, gloves, a set of keys, a cigarette lighter, mechanical pencil, and a pocket notebook. The pocket notebook is of particular interest. For the most part, its entries reflect the maintenance and repairs Andrus made to squadron aircraft of VT-5. But it also contains comments made about YORKTOWN's actions after the US entered World War two, including Andrus' account of YORKTOWN's damages received during the Battle of the Coral Sea. No comments were made about maintenance on VT-3 aircraft, but on the last page of the notebook are notes about YORKTOWN at the Battle of Midway. Andrus indicated the notes were written at 0701 (just after seven o'clock A.M.) on June 7. YORKTOWN had sunk just over two hours earlier. Andrus made topical notes about YORKTOWN's damages on June 4, when he abandoned ship, as well as the ship he was initially placed on and another ship to which he was transferred. He notes the events of June 6 when YORKTOWN was hit by submarine torpedoes, USS HAMMANN sinking, and finally, notes of how YORKTOWN sank.

Other artifacts in the exhibit from our collection include a pair of Japanese binoculars and a US Navy Dead Reckoning Computer.

Tom used the back of the case to tell the story of the battle. He broke the story down into individual days, and within the days, by hours. We acquired a number of photographic reprints of the battle from the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C. Photocopies were made from these and placed with the texts of the battle. As written above, we used the largest of our cases available. Tom could crawl inside to do his work. But there is no wasted space with this exhibit. It gives an excellent overview of one of history's greatest naval battles, key to United States' role in the eventual Allied victory of World War II.

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**Visit our  
website  
at  
www.  
combat  
air  
museum.org**

**2008 Events Calendar**

*Event dates subject to change*

**March**

17 – 20 Aviation Education Class

**April**

5 – All Kansas Air Tour, 80<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Flight  
CAM provides lunch to the fliers  
and dignitaries

26 – Celebrity Pancake Feed

**June**

9 – 12 Aviation Education Class

**July**

14 – 17 Aviation Education Class

**August**

4 – 7 Aviation Education Class

**September**

27 – Winged Foot 5K Run/Walk

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## Volunteers, we need your help for a luncheon - part of the All Kansas Air Tour -

We are **asking for volunteers** to help put on a luncheon **Saturday, April 5 in Hangar 602**. The luncheon will be for pilots and dignitaries participating in the **All Kansas Air Tour**, an 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Flight of aircraft over Kansas. The luncheon will be very similar in setup and operation as our pancake feeds. However, it is not open to the general public.

The All Kansas Air Tour is scheduled to take place April 2–7 and is scheduled to visit some 22 airports around the state. It is an anniversary re-enactment of a 25 aircraft caravan that toured Kansas in 1928, starting from Wichita. The flight of aircraft took place to promote aviation and help cement Kansas' claim to be the Air Capital of the World.

The itinerary of the day's activities for Forbes Field is tentative. A pathfinder aircraft and the first wave are scheduled to arrive at 9:30 A.M. Lunch is scheduled for 11:30 A.M.–2:00 P.M. Aircraft are scheduled to depart at 3:30 P.M. The aircraft will probably be parked near the Forbes Field terminal and the pilots/dignitaries transported to CAM.

We do not yet know how many aircraft will be coming. Forbes is the second of three airports the Tour is to visit on April 5<sup>th</sup> after they depart Manhattan. For now, April 5<sup>th</sup> seems to be the most concrete part of the schedule. But we want to be ready and are asking for volunteers now. Please remember, this is not a luncheon for the general public. Friends and family should not show up that day expecting to be fed lunch.

Our annual Pancake Feed will still take place on the last Saturday of April (the 26<sup>th</sup>).



## February 11th Luncheon will feature a former gunner in the "Bloody Hundreth"

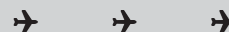
**Merton Wilch**, CAM member #29, is our scheduled speaker for the February 11 Membership Luncheon. Merton will talk to us about his experiences as a gunner on B-17 Flying Fortresses during World War II.

He was in the 100<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group of the Eighth Air Force. During the war, the 100<sup>th</sup> was referred to as the "*Bloody Hundreth*." The luncheon will be in the Jean Wanner Education Conference Room at 11:30 A.M. →

## Visitors

During **November**  
the Museum had  
**579 visitors**  
**from 28 states,**  
Washington D.C.  
and  
Canada  
South Korea

During **December**  
we had  
**283 visitors**  
**from 18 states**  
and  
Dominican Republic  
Germany  
Spain







## The F-84F gets a new look

The Republic F-84F Thunderstreak has new stripes. In somewhat marathon fashion the markings were painted on in nine days over four weekends. Member-volunteer **Robert Johnston** was the painter and other members assisted him with the layout of the markings and masking and unmasking the aircraft. For just about everyone but Robert, this was a new experience.

The Thunderstreak now carries the red and white stripes of the 389<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Squadron, 366<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Group from the mid-1950s. The 366<sup>th</sup> was our Thunderstreak's first assignment in March 1955 after being accepted by the US Air Force. At that time, the 366<sup>th</sup> was based at England Air Force Base (AFB), Alexandria, Louisiana. The 366<sup>th</sup> Wing still exists today at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. In 2005, CAM Curator **Danny San Romani** acquired from the 366<sup>th</sup>'s historian two e-mail images of 389<sup>th</sup> F-84s at Aviano AB, Italy in late 1955, early 1956. These two images became our reference material for painting the F-84's markings. We referred to them continually. Robert had the images and sections of the images enlarged to better see the detail.

The photos here show the end results of our efforts. There is still some detail work to be painted and touch up painting. Once this is done, the entire aircraft will get a clear coat applied. But this work will have to wait for warmer weather.

Not having a paint booth at the Museum required a temporary alteration in the area of Hangar 604 where the F-84 is parked. We bought several 18-foot X 24-foot tarps and suspended these from the overhead rafters. This formed a curtain around both sides and the tail of the jet. The hangar doors formed the front curtain.





Our air-hydraulic lift was used for all work on the tail surfaces as well as stepladders of various heights. Depending on the wind direction outside, we set up exhaust fans at either the east entrance or the wheelchair ramp entrance to 604 to exhaust paint fumes. All in all, the homemade booth worked well. We have not yet found paint or spray on any adjoining aircraft or other surfaces.

Over 230 man-hours went in to the application of the markings, including time to make the necessary stencils. When we started, the aircraft was over-all silver with no other colors or markings. When a color was being sprayed on a particular area, the rest of the aircraft was covered with plastic and paper. We sometimes spent a few hours masking off areas to be painted. The painting itself took considerably less time, then all the masking was immediately removed.

Robert, Danny and **Don Dawson** put in 63 man-hours the last weekend of painting. Robert and Danny worked together Saturday until 11 P.M. and all three worked on the plane on Sunday. Don left at 9 P.M. that evening. The other two stayed until 10:30 P.M. as they removed all of the masking, plastic and paper to reveal the finished product. It was well worth another late evening. Did we mention that Robert was driving over 140 miles from Derby, Kansas to Topeka to do the painting?

This was a labor-intensive project, and sometimes Danny wondered what we had gotten ourselves into. He could not complain, though. He chose the paint scheme. And we really did end up with a great looking F-84.

When the weather warms up enough, Robert will be back to put on the finishing touches. In the meantime, he is working on the F-86 Sabre and its new paint scheme. This will be another colorful set of markings, but should not be as labor-intensive. They will also be accurate to the F-86 in our collection, showing how it looked when it flew with the Massachusetts Air National Guard.

Other volunteers who put some time into the F-84 markings include **Zak Amos**, **Richard Novak**, **Jack Vaughn**, along with **Eric Piland** and **Melanie Morris**, two students from Shawnee Heights High School doing community service hours for a Government course.

While we are on the topic of painting, **Dave Houser** recently finished refurbishing and painting the propeller blades for the Bf-109 Messerschmitt mockup. The blades' backsides were pretty rough fiberglass and



Dave spent some time sanding them down, then applying filler to smooth them out. When the assembly was done, Dave, **Dick Trupp** and **Martin Moyer** installed the blades onto the mockup's propeller shaft. Dave is now repainting the propeller spinner.

Don Dawson has been doing some primer painting on pieces of the Hiller helicopter. The crew/engine section of the helicopter is currently in the workshop. Don and Martin removed some dents from the underside of the cockpit area, and Don, Danny, and **Gary Naylor** riveted an aluminum patch to the bottom front of this section. **Bob Crapser** has been working on several wiring bundles to remove deteriorated protective coverings that will be replaced later.

Don has also been doing some lawn mower repair. Last summer one of our rider mowers broke down beyond economical repair. Martin recently attended an estate auction and purchased a rider mower and donated it to the Museum. It does run. Martin drove it around inside 604 the other day and tested its various functions. Don is doing some minor repairs to the choke assembly so the mower will be ready to go this coming spring.

**"F-84", con't on page 10**

### "Soviet Union", con't. from page 1

resources Germany could use, including food, iron and other minerals), and oil. Colonel Faulkner also said Hitler's motives were racial. He saw the peoples of the Soviet Union as sub-human Slavs, worth little more than slave labor. He encouraged unmerciful and unrelenting harshness towards Soviets by not only the Nazi Party but also the German Army (Wermacht). Hitler said to kill the intelligentsia and make the underclass slaves.

Hitler also felt the timing was right for invading the Soviet Union in 1941, but initially did not have the full backing of his Generals. The historical lesson of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812 was there to serve as an example of why not to invade. Napoleon's forces invaded during the summer and by mid-September were at Moscow. They entered the city to find it virtually deserted and in flames. His offers of peace to Czar Alexander I went ignored, and Napoleon abandoned Moscow as winter began setting in. The French withdrawal became a disastrous retreat because of the winter and harassing Russian forces. Before quitting

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### "F-84", con't. from page 9

Before the weather turned cold, **Jim Braun** applied the final coats of paint to skirt boards he installed along the base of the Olathe Naval Air Station exhibit cases. Installing the skirts really improved the appearance of these cases. Jim has also been doing a lot of cleaning work in the 602 hangar bay and plumbing repairs in the 604 workshop.

Dick Trupp has been painting sign stands of various shapes and sizes and putting them around the aircraft and engine exhibits. His most recent painting had been on metal donation boxes we have spotted around both hangars. Dick has been painting them in the colors of our armed forces. **Tel Nolde** made decals with the service logos, acronyms of the service branches, and pilot's wings, and Dick puts these onto the respective boxes. He and Ted also prepared a donation box for the USS ORISKANY exhibit that has the carrier's hull number and service ribbons on it.



Russia, Napoleon lost some 70 percent of his troops.

Hitler's thinking that the Soviet Union could not take on the German Army in 1941 had some merit. His Soviet counterpart, Joseph Stalin, had done much to greatly weaken the Soviet Army's abilities to fight.

After he gained the seat of power, Stalin made sure his position was secure. He took steps to rid any threats of overthrow, politically or militarily. Anyone perceived of threatening his position was imprisoned or killed during purges in the 1930s. Colonel Faulkner said that during the purges of 1937-1938, Stalin sacked three of five Army Marshals, 13 of 15 Army Commanders, 95 of 110 Division Commanders, and 186 of 406 Brigade Commanders. In all, some estimated 35,000 of the Red Army's most talented commanders were eliminated. Most were accused of treason, including spying for Germany. Adolf Hitler felt the Soviet Army would only get stronger, and Germany needed to strike while it was weak and disorganized. Colonel Faulkner said that Stalin killed several million of his own people during the purges. Hitler also felt this would be to his advantage, as the Russian people would see the German army as conquerors freeing them from Stalin's oppression. This, too, had some merit, particularly in the Ukraine. However, Hitler's basic policy to rid the world of Slavic peoples and the treatment of the welcoming Ukrainians by the German Army ensured the support of most Russians remained primarily with Stalin. The Germans treated the Ukrainians very badly. As Colonel Faulkner put it, "Go with the devil you know, not the devil you don't know."

Germany and Russia signed a nonaggression pact on August 22, 1939, 10 days before Germany invaded Poland. Hitler and Stalin entered into the pact because each saw it as buying time. For Hitler, it was to buy time to prepare for an eventual invasion of the Soviet Union. For Stalin, it was to buy time to better prepare the Soviet western frontier against a possible German incursion while getting out of a sizeable border war with Japan in the Soviet Union's Far East.

As part of the pact, Russia was to get a share of Poland plus Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania and a northern province of Rumania. The Soviets took eastern Poland in mid-September 1939. When Germany launched its blitzkrieg in the west in the spring of 1940, Russia moved into Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, then took Bessarbia province, Rumania and Rumania's North Bucovina re-

gion, which was not part of the 1939 pact.

Stalin also saw a need to put Soviet forces into parts of Finland to protect the western approaches to Leningrad. The initial Soviet approach to Finland was political, and they asked Finland to cede certain land areas and one port to Russia. Finland rejected the proposal and Soviet forces invaded on November 30, 1939. The dismal shape of the Soviet Army soon became apparent. It took the Soviets four months and one million men to defeat a Finnish Army of 200,000 men, the same number of casualties the Red Army admitted to suffering before defeating the Finns in March 1940. The four-month battle for Finland did prove to Stalin that he needed to modernize his Army both in material and in leadership and troop coordination. Belated efforts were begun to do that. Hitler was angered by Russia's move into Finland, but his planned invasion of France kept him from doing anything for the time being. In less than a year after the Nonaggression Pact, the Soviet Union had added some 175,000 square miles and 20 million people to its borders. It also meant that if Germany did attack from the west, they would have that much more territory to fight through before reaching the western border of the USSR. It made sense in theory, but proved almost meaningless when Germany invaded in June 1941.

Planning for the invasion of Russia began in July 1940 with the operation codename Barbarossa. The operation covered a frontier some 2,000 miles long, from the Barents Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. Hitler's goal was to become ruler of all Soviet territory west of the Ural Mountains. In some areas this covered some 1,100 to 1,200 miles from the Russia's western border east to the Urals. Hitler believed the campaign would take 8 – 10 weeks. He viewed taking Russia as a war of extermination. German forces would attack to the east as they had to the west, in blitzkrieg fashion. Unknown to them, Barbarossa would be Germany's last blitzkrieg of the war.

Stalin continued a policy of appeasement to Germany. Never trusting Hitler, he still felt it necessary to be nice in order to buy time. The buildup of German forces in the east was intended to provoke the Red Army into an attack, thus giving the Germans an excuse to invade. Stalin did not bite, though. But by June 22, 1941, it no longer mattered. In the pre-dawn hours, Germany began its invasion of the Soviet Union.

Colonel Faulkner described the fighting on the

eastern front as brutal. He had already described Hitler's view towards Russians, and German troops carried out Hitler's expectations. Stalin was almost as brutal towards his citizens as Hitler was. He told the Russian people to not ask for nor give any quarter. He told them to not be a German slave. He expected them to kill Germans. Stalin wrote off any Soviet prisoners. He said that if they were captured, they were taking part with the Germans. This view even applied to his son, Yakov, who was captured. Stalin refused to negotiate his release and even put Yakov's wife in prison for two years because he felt the two had plotted for Yakov to intentionally surrender. If generals or admirals did poorly, they were sent off

**"Soviet Union", con't. on page 12**

## ***February/March Calendar of Events***

### **February**

#### **Monday, February 11**

Membership Luncheon

Jean Wanner Education Conference Center

11:30 A.M.

Merton Wilch, CAM member,  
will be our speaker.

Merton will talk about his  
World War II experiences  
in the 100th

Bombardment Group  
on B-17 bombers

### **March**

#### **Monday March 17 - Thursday March 20**

Aviation Education Class

JWECC

9 A.M. – 12 P.M.

There is no Membership Luncheon in March.

The next luncheon is Monday, April 14.

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## **"Soviet Union", con't. from page 11**

to Siberia, or death. Colonel Faulkner said that between 1941 – 1945 Stalin had nearly 250 generals and admirals executed. He also told us about the plight of Russian POWs captured between June and December 1941.

Some 3.9 million Russian military were taken prisoner during the first six months of the German campaign. The Germans were not ready to take that many prisoners under their guard, and they did not care about the prisoners' welfare, anyway. By February 1942 only 1.1 million of the prisoners were still alive. Of that number some 400,000 were capable of hard labor. By May 1945 less than 100,000 of the original 3.9 million POWs were alive.

Initially, the blitzkrieg worked as it had in 1939 and 1940. During the first three weeks of the campaign tanks under Colonel General Heinz Guderian advanced over 400 miles. In the first week, some five Soviet Armies, 22 infantry divisions, 7 tank divisions, and 6 mechanized brigades were knocked out of the war. Colonel Faulkner told us that while the initial gains were large, only some 20 percent of the 151 German Divisions involved were Panzer forces. The vast majority of the German army was foot-bound and horse-bound. He said that within the first 19 days of Barbarossa about 25 percent of the German army's motorized supply vehicles had permanently broken down. Where western Europe had many paved highways, Russian roads were often unimproved dirt tracks. When the October rains came, these roads caused motorized vehicles to bog down. The lack of logistics for the German advance began to grind the German army down, and priorities had to be made as to what went to the advancing units. Food, fuel and ammunition were given priority. Winter clothing had little priority even when forward thinking German commanders requested it. When Colonel General Guderian requested winter clothing in October, he was told not to make further unnecessary requests of this sort.

Colonel Faulkner talked about the differing views of German and Russian warfare. The Germans favored maneuver warfare, the blitzkrieg. They wanted a quick, decisive victory. The Russians favored warfare of

attrition, prolonged actions that wore an opponent down. They had planned for a long, attritional war since the 1920s, and in spite of the effects of the Stalin purges and having outdated materiel, German tactics were not going to change the way Russians fought. If nothing else, the Russians had a vast supply of men to send to battle. Colonel Faulkner said that a conservative estimate showed the Russian suffering 15,000 men killed per day between June 1941 and May 1945. He talked about a "Tank Badge" awarded to Russian soldiers who engaged in the hand-to-hand kill of a tank. His research had turned up one Russian who had four such badges and another who had 18. He also spoke about a Soviet class of 1941. By 1946, 97 percent of that class were dead. Another point he made was that the Soviets mobilized their economy for war almost immediately while Germany did not do so until 1944, five years into the war.

Colonel Faulkner gave an example of the extent the Soviet Union could mobilize its populace and economy. In 1941, 85 percent of Russian factories were in the western USSR, an area that the Germans would eventually occupy.

**The reality was that  
if you did not work or did not fight,  
you did not eat.**

The Russians literally began moving the factories, dismantling them, transporting them to the eastern side of the Ural Mountains, and then reassembling them. The Germans lacked the strategic air power to stop the move. By 1942, 70 percent of Russian factories were operating east of the Urals. What could not be moved was destroyed. The move came at a great human cost. Some 20 million workers moved with the factories, and the new locations could barely cope with the influx of people. The factories came first. Some were even operating before the walls were put up around the machinery. Homes and food for the workers came after the factories, and both were scarce. The reality was that if you did not work or did not fight, you did not eat. Males, ages 16 – 55, and females, ages 16 – 45, were mobilized for the duration of the war. They were either in battle or in factories.

Colonel Faulkner also said that production philosophies differed between the Germans and Russians. The Germans were precise and emphasized quality over quantity. He specifically referred to German tanks, saying they were over engineered and hard to maintain in the field. They had to go back to the factory for overhaul,



and at any given time there were 10–14 percent out of action for overhaul. The Russian philosophy was quantity, quantity, quantity. And that is not to say they necessarily manufactured inferior equipment. The Russian T-34 tank was a capable opponent against German armor and an unpleasant surprise when it entered battle around Moscow in October 1941. It was built with a wider track than German tanks giving it more maneuverability in the Russian terrain and mud that would especially plague the Germans.

To give us an example of a Russian mass-produced weapon, Colonel Faulkner held up a Russian PPSH submachine gun. It was of simple construction, and actually rattled when shaken. He said it had a terrible long rang accuracy, but also had the highest rate of fire of any submachine of World War II. It was extremely reliable and could be dropped in the mud or water and still fire.

The philosophies of warfare, mobilization, and production all had an impact on the Eastern Front campaign - not all right away, but they did have an impact. In spite of the tremendous losses of the Soviet armed forces, and similar losses among its civilian populace, the German campaign did not end after 8 to 10 weeks as Hitler believed. After two months of fighting, the Germans controlled the westernmost 500 miles of the Soviet Union but were far short of their goal. They had suffered some 440,000 casualties, including 94,000 dead. While several key cities fell to the Germans, two other significant cities held up to the onslaught.

The first was Leningrad. German forces reached the city in September. In August, Hitler ordered that the city be encircled, cutting off all supplies. It would then be bombed, shelled and left to die during the winter. Thus began the Siege of Leningrad that would last 900 days. The Germans and Finns were never able to fully encircle the city. Supplies came in and refugees left over ice roads on Lake Ladoga in winter and by boat when the lake ice melted. Although suffering a loss of some 240,000 lives to the bombing, shelling, and starvation that first winter, Leningrad did not fall. German forces would be tied up for some two and one-half years laying siege to the city.

The second major city that Hitler wanted leveled and made uninhabitable was Moscow, the Soviet capital. He gave the order to take the city on October 2, and 69 German divisions began attacking in the direction of the capital. The battle of Moscow lasted over a period of four months along a 250-mile front, 180 miles deep.

It consisted of several battles and involved dozens of cities and villages that formed two broad semicircles to the west of Moscow. Hitler expected a quick, knockout blow to the Soviet capital, but other elements came into play, not the least of which was the weather.

German men and materials were worn down and no longer at full strength. Unfortunately for the Germans, only three major roads lead to Moscow, and these proved barely suitable for the German armor. Although paved, the roads didn't always support the weight of a tank, and German engineers spent much time repairing the road surfaces for the tanks to continue on. The infantry had to travel cross-country, pulling their supporting guns with horses. The autumn rains came which soon made dirt roads almost impassable. Thousands of logs were put down to form corduroy roads. During the summer, Guderian's motorized forces had advanced over 400 miles in three weeks. Now, his forces struggled for two months to cover 100 miles. The greatest problem caused by the muck and mire of the roads was that it stalled the supply lines. Tanks and other vehicles ran out of fuel and troops went hungry. Many German commanders realized that winter would catch them before they reached Moscow. They requested winter clothing for their troops, only to be turned down. Requests to dig in for the winter were also made, but Hitler would have none of that. They were to press on and take Moscow.

November brought weather cold enough to freeze the mud and allow motorized units to advance again. But the same cold brought great suffering to German troops. Cold-related illness, injury, and death took their toll. The Soviets were prepared. After all, this was their backyard. The battles around Moscow were bitterly fought, but the Germans never got into the city. One German battalion reached the suburban village of Gorky, and Field Marshal von Bock, overall commander of the German forces, got close enough to see the spires of the Kremlin through his field glasses. But that was as close as the Germans came to Moscow. With the beginning of December 1941, the Russian winter brought a halt to the German advances. Units withdrew to holding positions to winter over and wait until spring to renew their advance. On December 8, Hitler officially called off his eastern offensive because of "a surprisingly early and severe winter." The fighting by no means ended, but the summer blitzkrieg was over. Moscow was not the

## **"Soviet Union", con't. from page 13**

turning point in the war in the Eastern Front. That would come in 1942. The winter of 1941- 1942 became a stalemate.

As early as mid-October 1941, the population of Moscow panicked with the approach of German forces and started to flee the city. Roads heading eastward out of the capital were clogged with refugees. On October 18, Communist Party official V. P. Pronin broadcast to Russian citizens to stand fast, and the main newspaper announced that key party officials were staying in the city. Another radio broadcast announced that Stalin was staying. Then Stalin himself announced a state of siege for the city and imposed a curfew and martial law. His choosing to stay and the imposition of martial law stemmed the flow of refugees from Moscow. But perhaps the best psychological effect for the citizens of Moscow and Russians countrywide was yet to come.

November 7 was the anniversary date of the outbreak of the 1917 Revolution. It was ordinarily the occasion for a large military parade in Moscow's Red Square. On the evening of November 6, Stalin met with several hundred Soviet leaders in an underground location. Instead of talking the communist party line, as in the past, Stalin made an appeal to the Russian people and Russian nationalism. He spoke of how the Germans had failed to cut up the Soviet Union and of the losses they had suffered. He spoke of the defense of Leningrad and Moscow and how the Soviet armed forces were building and would soon take the battle to the Germans. Stalin referred to Hitler's references to the peoples of Russia as being sub-human and how the Germans wanted a war of extermination against the Soviet population.

He gave a second speech the following day on Red Square, complete with a military review. His words were directed to Soviet troops going to the front. In another turn-around from typical party speeches, Stalin made references to historical Russian figures and heroes before the 1917 October Revolution. He talked of heroes dating as far back as the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and he talked about

the greatness of Russia. He told the troops and people in Red Square they were fighting a war of liberation.

The two speeches and holding the November 7<sup>th</sup> celebration in Red Square had a huge impact on the morale and support of the Russian people. To those who had suffered in any way at the hands of the Germans, it became less a war of Communism against fascism and more a patriotic war, "their war." The war was no longer anti-Nazi; it was now anti-German. Copies of the two speeches were made by the millions and air dropped into German-occupied Russia and distributed throughout the rest of the country. Stalin took other steps to appeal to national pride and patriotism including reopening churches throughout the Soviet Union.

As 1941 ended, major changes took place in the German command on the Eastern Front. Hitler relieved more than 30 generals of their commands and said he would personally conduct the military operations in Russia. In effect, Stalin gained a new ally. Changes also took place with the Soviet forces. They managed to go on the offensive around Moscow during November and

December. While they enjoyed some successes in forcing German forces to withdraw in several areas, the Soviets were not yet ready to deal a deathblow to the Germans. These early successes were important, though, in that the myth of the German Army's invincibility was shattered.

January 1942 revealed an Eastern Front that extended from the Barents

Sea, west of Murmansk to the Crimea peninsula in the Black Sea. By spring, some 2.5 million Wehrmacht soldiers stretched along a 1500-mile front from Leningrad in the north to Sevastopol in the south, preparing to launch a new offensive. The spring thaw brought the return of mud and kept the fighting down until May.

About 70 miles southeast of the important industrial city of Kharkov was a bulge in the front lines called the Izyum salient. Soviet forces in the salient were preparing to launch an offensive through the bulge that would carry them to Kharkov where they would retake the city. Apparently unknown to the Soviets, German forces were gathering at the salient to launch an attack on May

**Stalin referred to Hitler's references  
to the peoples of Russia  
as being sub-human  
and how the Germans wanted  
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against the Soviet population.**

18 to remove the bulge. The Soviets launched their attack on May 12. Initially, they gained ground rapidly over a two-day period. But the front units outran their supply lines. The Soviets noticed that German prisoners were from panzer units they were not aware of. The Soviet commanders felt they would soon be counterattacked, and as soon as they realized they were in real danger of being cut off, they requested permission to halt the offensive. Their request was denied from the Kremlin. On May 18, the Germans counterattacked and narrowed the corridor holding the Soviet troops. Four days later, the German encirclement was complete, and some 200,000 Russians were captured.

Forces on both sides continued to prepare for the summer fighting. When the German offensive resumed, it appeared victory would be won by summer's end. By mid-July nearly 500,000 Soviets were taken prisoner. The fortress city of Sevastopol fell on July 3, 1942 after an eight-month siege. German armies battled into the oil-rich Caucasus before the end of July. Then, there was Stalingrad.

The German summer offensive began in June 1942, named Operation Blau (Blue) by Hitler. He personally took charge in planning the operation, down to its smallest details. The main objective of Operation Blau was the Caucasus, between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. The northern anchor of the operation was the industrial city of Stalingrad.

On June 28, two German armies attacked eastward from Kursk toward Voronezh. This Soviet city, located on the Don River, was a key rail, highway, and river center for north-south traffic from Moscow to the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. Two days later, the Sixth Army attacked northeast from Kharkov to Voronezh. The plan was to clear Soviet forces from the area, capture Voronezh, then turn south along the Don River, seal off Stalingrad, and enter the Caucasus.

Initially, the advance of Army Group B was reminiscent of the previous summer. In two days, the northern force was halfway to Voronezh. To the south, the Sixth Army met virtually no resistance, which caused concern for the Germans. It was not like the Russians to give up territory without a stubborn fight. The Germans had a right to be wary. Stalin had ordered Soviet forces to withdraw in the direction of Stalingrad and make a stand there.

By July 3, Hitler figured the Sixth Army was probably wasting time, fuel, and supplies in attempting to

trap the Russians at Voronezh. He flew to Field Marshal von Bock's headquarters to announce he had changed the plan for Operation Blau and gave Bock the freedom to drive to the south if he so desired. Unaccustomed to operating on his own discretion, Bock gave a series of conflicting orders that would seriously disrupt Operation Blau. Initially, the southern force of Army Group B was told to head directly east to the Don River. This order was changed the next day to head north again, as the northern force of the Group was already near Voronezh. Bock figured he could take the town on the run, then head south. Unfortunately for Bock, there were nine Soviet divisions and 13 brigades at Voronezh. It took the northern force until July 13 to clear out the city and gave the Soviets more time to strengthen their defenses around Stalingrad.

Also on July 13, Hitler made another change to Operation Blau. Originally, the First Panzer Army was to form the southern arm of a pincer movement against Stalingrad. Army Group B formed the northern arm. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, Hitler ordered the First Panzer to avoid Stalingrad and move south to take the city of Rostov, on the northeast end of the Sea of Azov. Hitler also ordered the Fourth Panzer Army, part of the northern force of Army Group B, to divert southward to assist the First Panzer. Field Marshal Bock protested the division of his forces and was sacked by Hitler for his effort.

The splitting of the forces also meant the splitting of supplies, and the forces attacking toward Rostov got the larger share of ammunition and fuel. General Ewald von Kleist, commander of the First Panzer Army later wrote that he felt Stalingrad could have been taken without much of a fight by the end of July. But Hitler's decision to split the forces cost General Friedrich Paulus and his Sixth Army the fuel they needed to meet that deadline.

The battle of Rostov began July 22. After two days of hard fighting, the Germans won the city. The first German units crossed the Don River that same day and headed to the Caucasus. Meanwhile, Sixth Army kept advancing eastward unopposed. Chief of General Staff Halder correctly told Hitler that the Russians were deliberately avoiding contact. Hitler discounted this view and said the Russians were in full retreat.

Sixth Army was heading to Kalach, which had a key bridge for crossing the Don River. The Russians were using the same bridge to get troops across, all the

**"Soviet Union", con't. on page 16**

## **"Soviet Union", con't. from page 15**

while looking over their shoulders, expecting to see Sixth Army appear. When the Sixth did not show, the Soviets thought the Germans had changed their plans. In fact, the Sixth Army had run out of fuel 150 miles west of Kalach, and there it sat for the next 18 days. The commander of Soviet forces around Kalach saw this as an opportunity to stop the German advance at the Don River and concentrated elements of four armies into a narrow front on the west bank of the river at Kalach. When the Sixth Army got its fuel and re-started its advance, it used a pincer movement against the Soviet forces at Kalach and on August 8 encircled them. Over 70,000 Soviet troops and some 1,000 tanks and armored vehicles were trapped in the Kalach pocket.

The way to Stalingrad, only 40 miles distant, had been cleared, but the Sixth Army remained in the Kalach area for two weeks mopping up operations and waiting for the Fourth Panzer Army to return from its drive to the Caucasus. Soviet forces used the time to join and form their defenses for Stalingrad.

The German Sixth Army finally started its final advance to Stalingrad the third week of August 1942. The city was the third largest industrial city in the Soviet Union, so had strategic importance. But the battle was to also become a test of wills between Hitler and Stalin. Both would insist on no retreat and ultimate victory. German troops were confident they would be victorious, and their commander, General Paulus, felt they would take the city in a day. The battle for Stalingrad lasted five months and through another bitter Russian winter. Over 1 million soldiers and civilians were killed. The city was 99 percent destroyed and street-to-street, house-to-house fighting became common. The Germans at one time controlled 90 percent of the city, but that meant little after Soviet forces surrounded the Sixth Army by the end of November. Before the Russian pincers closed, General Paulus requested freedom of action to break out of the pocket. Hitler would hear nothing of it, despite pleas from others on his staff. An attempt was made mid-December to open a corridor from the west to the Sixth Army, but it failed. Finally, on January 31, 1943, General Paulus, so

confident of victory the previous August, surrendered and was taken captive. The German Sixth Army ceased to exist. Hitler was enraged that Paulus surrendered. He had promoted the General to Field Marshal on January 30, knowing that no German Field Marshal had ever surrendered his command. Hitler's expectations were that Paulus would die in battle or commit suicide.

The Battle of Stalingrad was the Soviet's first victorious strategic offensive, albeit at a high cost. It was also the turning point of the war on the Eastern Front. But the Russians did not rest on the laurels of their victories.. As soon as they could, the armies around Stalingrad and Kalach turned south to try to trap the German armies in the Caucasus. This was significant. Russian armies were now capable of making sustained advances upon the Germans. For a while, it appeared the Soviets would trap the German First Panzer and Seventeenth Armies in the Caucasus. At one point they were 40 miles north of

Rostov with the German armies extended 390 miles east of the city. Hitler ordered the armies not to withdraw under any circumstances, then the following day rescinded that order and told Army Group A to retreat and bring all their

equipment. General von Kleist got Army Group A out of the trap, just barely, and the Soviets retook Rostov on February 14, 1943. The Caucasus were once again in Russian hands.

For Russian citizens living in German occupied territory, news of these victories could not come soon enough to bolster their spirits. They were suffering terribly at the hands of the Germans who exploited both the people and the land. Most food production was sent to Germany. Russians lived at near starvation levels during the winter of 1941-42. Colonel Faulkner stated that an overall decline in birth rates occurred in Russia during the war, and he said it still has not recovered. In 1944 the Soviet government awarded patches and medals to mothers for having children. Colonel Faulkner had examples of these with him.

At Stalingrad, the Russians' war of attrition had trumped the Germans' war of maneuver. Colonel Faulkner said one of the major questions raised by the Germans was where did the Soviets keep getting men? The answer lay with the physical vastness of the USSR.

**The battle of Stalingrad  
was to also become a test of wills  
between Hitler and Stalin.**



The Soviets had a manpower base to draw on. Often, these men were barely trained beyond firing weapons. It would have taken far too much time to train them in the intricacies of maneuver warfare, so they became the forward, blunt instruments of battle in the Russian style of fighting war.

Also, by 1942, lend-lease items from Britain and the United States were having a greater impact for the Soviet Union. The US provided thousands of trucks and other vehicles, aircraft, foodstuffs, Spam being one of the largest, and uniforms. Some of the artifacts Colonel Faulkner had with him included American-made Russian uniforms.

On February 8, Soviet forces retook the city of Kursk, some 260 miles to the north and east of Rostov. This put a westward bulge in the German lines they could not ignore. Eight days later, the Russians retook Kharkov, their fourth largest city. This seizure did not hold, though, and the Germans took back the city on March 15. This would be their last major victory of the war. Shortly after, early thaws and heavy spring rains forced a three-month lull along the battle lines. Both sides used the time to plan their summer campaigns. For the Germans, the key area of interest would be salient around Kursk.

The eventual Battle of Kursk involved the largest tank and air battle in history. It is viewed as the battle that more than any other decided the outcome of the war on the Russian front. The Germans called their offensive Operation Citadel, and it was their intent to encircle the Soviet forces in the Kursk salient. The battle began July 5, 1943 and involved 2.2 million men, some 6,000 armored vehicles, and 5,000 planes. It consisted of a series of battles and engagements over a 170 mile front that lasted until July 19. Hitler ordered an end to Citadel on July 13 because of the Allied landings on Sicily that had occurred three days earlier.

When the Battle of Kursk ended, the Germans suffered approximately 30,000 killed and over 60,000 wounded. Reliable numbers of Russian losses were not disclosed. The German panzer force never fully recovered from the battle. After Kursk, the Germans were slowly but continually shoved westward. On August 22, the city of Kharkov was once again in Soviet hands. The Soviets were able to put nearly 6 million men on the Eastern Front with 1 million more in reserve. Against this, the Germans had some 3.5 million men.

While talking about the Battle of Kursk, Colonel Faulkner pointed out one Soviet general of interest to

him. This was Major General Konstantin Rokossovsky. Rokossovsky was unique in that he was a survivor of Stalin's purge of the Soviet Military in 1937-38. He was tried for allegedly dealing with both the Germans and Japanese. He had been arrested, beaten almost senseless, then interrogated by Stalin's secret police. As a result of these interrogations, Rokossovsky ended up with two rows of metal teeth. When informed at his trial as to who had made the allegations against him, Rokossovsky pointed out that the individual had been killed in action in 1920. This was confirmed and Rokossovsky was eventually released and sent back to the Red army.

Rokossovsky had an independent manner about him and was known as an excellent tactician who was tenacious on defense and fierce on offense. In short, he was an inspiration to his officers and men at a time when the Soviets needed such inspiration. In August 1941, Rokossovsky had dealt the Germans their first defeat of Operation Barbarossa when his forces attacked and threw back a German column. Commanding Soviet Armies on the northern face of the Kursk salient, he played a key role in the German defeat. He would play further key roles in the battles of 1944.

On September 4, 1943 Allied forces landed in Italy. On November 6, Soviet forces liberated the city of Kiev, the capital city of the Ukraine.

The winter of 1943-1944 found German forces all along the Eastern Front in a worrisome position. No more fresh troops or supplies were being sent to the Russian front. This was because of the expected Anglo-Saxon landings. Thoughts of German offensives were over. By March 1944 Hitler came up with a tactical plan for "fortified places." These would be specific cities and towns that were key to communications lines and would essentially become forts. Hitler's bottom line for these fortifications was they would be defended to the last man. Twenty-six cities and towns in German-occupied Russia were chosen.

This particular winter was different in that the Soviets did not ease up with their offensive campaigns. After Stalingrad, they felt they had an opportunity to trap more German armies in the Ukraine. With this in mind, they launched an offensive on Christmas Eve 1943. Three army groups drove west from Kiev and from areas southeast of Kiev. The Germans were surprised by the

## **"Soviet Union", con't. from page 17**

drive, thinking the Soviets would be too worn from the fall campaigns.

The Soviet drive formed a horseshoe shaped salient in the vicinity of Cherkassy, on the Dnieper River, about 150 miles southeast of Kiev. On January 24, the Soviet pincer closed on this salient, trapping six German divisions with some 45,000 troops. The Germans managed a breakout of 30,000 of these troops on February 18, but the survivors were no longer considered suitable as a fighting force and were sent to Poland. The Germans lost some 26,000 men killed or wounded in this battle.

A few days after the pincers closed on the Cherkassy Pocket, and far to the north, the siege of Leningrad was lifted, and German forces were shoved westward along a front extending nearly 200 miles south of Leningrad. This offensive finally bogged down in the mud of the spring thaws in March.

Spring thaws and rain hampered the Soviet drives in the Ukraine but did not stop them for long. On March 4, the southern offensive set off again. Because of the huge influx of lend-lease vehicles from the United States, the Russians could advance like never before and maintain lengthy supply lines. On March 21, Soviet forces encircled the First Panzer Army, but General Hans Hube managed a near miraculous breakout on April 11. The First Panzer survived, but Hube died in a plane crash nine days later after being decorated by Hitler.

By mid-April the German lines in the south had been driven back 300 miles to pre-1939 boundaries with Poland and Rumania. The whole of the Ukraine was back in Russian hands. The city of Sevastopol, in the Crimea, was liberated on May 12, 1944, and the whole Crimea peninsula was liberated before the end of the month. In the north, the Germans had been driven back to the shores of the Baltic Sea. The center of the Eastern Front, in Belorussia, had held but only because the German Army Group Center had not been targeted by an offensive. That was soon to change.

Army Group Center's lines stretched some 450 miles from the upper reaches of the Dnieper River north and included a bulge within 300 miles of Moscow. The situation along this front had changed little since the Battle of Moscow in 1941. The Soviets' northern and southern offensives had dangerously exposed Army Group

Center's northern and southern flanks. The Group's commander, Field Marshal Ernst Busch, was not overly concerned about the situation as he felt the Soviets' next offensive would remain in the south, moving into the Balkans. Hitler agreed with this assessment and stripped Busch of men and materiel to reinforce the southern sector of the Russian Front. Busch gave up 15 percent of his divisions, 50 percent of his tank destroyers, 88 percent of his tanks, and 33 percent of his heavy artillery. His manpower was reduced from nearly 1 million troops to 400,000. The problem was, Busch and Hitler guessed wrong as to the Soviets' intentions.

Stalin had given serious consideration to moving into the Balkans, but he also saw a real opportunity to nip off the Belorussian Bulge formed by Army Group Center. Towards this end, he ordered an offensive planned to destroy the German's Army Group. It was named Operation Bagration, named after a Russian warrior prince who had fought against Napoleon in 1812. June 22, the third anniversary of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, was chosen as the starting date.

Planning of Operation Bagration had begun in April, and during May and June a force of 2.5 million was formed. More than 1.2 million of these were combat troops. Colonel Faulkner talked again about General Rokossovsky, the General with metal teeth. Rokossovsky commanded the First Belorussian Front and was to advance on the city of Minsk from the southeast. This meant taking the fortified town of Bobruisk which sat on the northern edge of an immense swamp. Soviet doctrine called for a single, massive blow at the start of an offensive. Rokossovsky's plan to get around the swamp to Bobruisk was to launch a two-pronged attack. His plan became the subject of debate with Stalin and others in Moscow. Stalin said no and Rokossovsky told him why the two-pronged attack was best. Stalin told Rokossovsky to go out and think it over. The General did and came back into the room. Stalin said the single thrust would work, and Rokossovsky replied the two-pronged attack would be best. Others in the room were stunned by Rokossovsky's response. Stalin sent him out of the room again to think about it. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov and Secretary of the Central Committee Malenkov came out to Rokossovsky to persuade him to change his mind. When Rokossovsky was ushered back into the room, Stalin asked him which of the two attacks were better. Rokossovsky replied the

two-pronged attack. After a few moments, Stalin told everyone he agreed with Rokossovsky and that he generally liked a commander who stood by his principles. Colonel Faulkner used this story to point changes that occurred with Stalin and Hitler. As the war went on, Stalin listened to his Generals. Hitler increasingly micro-managed his.

By the end of May, the Germans detected the Soviet buildup on the opposite bank of the Dnieper River. The buildup continued to be more apparent, indicating something very big was in the works. When Field Marshal Busch told Hitler of this activity, he dismissed it as merely a deception. The Soviets were just trying to pin down Army Group Center while they carried out their southern offensive.

On June 6, 1944, Stalin got something he had virtually demanded from the Allies since 1942, a second front. Hitler now had to face the Soviets in the east and the Allies on the beaches of Normandy, France. And it did not help matters when Rome fell to the Allies on June 4th.

Operation Bagration began as planned on June 22. For the next three weeks the Soviets hammered the Belorussian Bulge, driving the Germans back 300 miles. By July 11, Army Group Center ceased to exist, along with 28 German divisions. Between 300,000–350,000 Germans had been killed or captured.

Stalin could now strike at will toward the Baltic States, East Prussia, and central Poland. Once his southern forces were built up, they could invade the Balkans. By late summer 1944, all of this occurred.

In early January 1945, military forces of the Soviet Union launched their assault to take Germany. The official watchword for the offensive was “Vengeance,” and the Soviets would take an exacting vengeance upon the German people, military and civilian, during their final offensive of the war.

Colonel Faulkner took several questions from the audience. This was followed by door prize drawings. Afterwards, he talked with several members and showed them more of the artifacts he brought with him. ➔

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Additional information taken from:  
Russia Besieged (1977), Red Army Resurgent (1979),  
The Soviet Juggernaut (1980), Time-Life Books  
National Geographic Atlas of the World, Fourth Edition

## Status of the MiG-17 remains in limbo following owner's death

The donation of a MiG-17, on exhibit at CAM since 1994, has stalled after the death of owner David Tallichet on October 31, 2007.

Paperwork requesting the donation of the MiG-17 to CAM was initiated in December 2006. The aircraft had been on consignment to CAM from Tallichet's Military Aircraft Restoration Corporation (M.A.R.C.) since 1994. During November 2006, CAM's Board of Directors Vice Chairman **Gene Howerter** and CAM member **Bob Schneider**, in Hawkins, Texas, were in phone contact with representatives of M.A.R.C. Mr. Joe Kzeminski of M.A.R.C. said to make a written request for the aircraft, which we did. Verbally, everything sounded positive for the donation to take place.

In the following months, Gene sent a series of images of the MiG-17 to Bob and M.A.R.C. so the latter could get an appraisal on the Polish-built fighter for income tax purposes. Follow-up calls by Gene and Bob took place. Answers were always that the paperwork was with M.A.R.C.'s attorney. Then Bob, a personal friend of Tallichet, told us that he had terminal cancer. The MiG-17 was not high on the list of things that needed to be done before Tallichet passed away.

Bob attended the memorial service for Tallichet in Anaheim, California in November 2007 and afterwards visited with a friend who was conducting the day to day

operations of M.A.R.C. and Tallichet's Specialty Restaurant Corporation. Mr. Howard Bell said that no donations, especially aircraft, could be made for the next five years due to a number of legal matters involving the Restaurant Corporation and M.A.R.C., including one regarding a sizeable land donation by Tallichet to the state of California. Bob asked if there was a chance that CAM could lease the aircraft in the interim period for a small amount of money per year until such time the aircraft could be donated, and that may be the approach CAM takes.

Gene and Bob now have a new point of contact with M.A.R.C., Maria Osario. We learned that John Tallichet, David Tallichet's son, is now heading both Specialty Restaurant Corporation and M.A.R.C. The business dealings of these two corporations seemed to be tied together because what happens with Specialty Restaurant Corporations effects M.A.R.C. Maria reaffirmed that no aircraft donations could be made for the next five years. In the meantime, we will explore the option of a five-year lease of the MiG-17 with eventual transfer of ownership to CAM. Unless a real surprise pops up, the MiG will stay in Topeka, and Gene will continue to work with Maria and M.A.R.C. to effect, hopefully, its eventual donation to CAM. ➔



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