



**“Ready for contact”**

VOLUME 11,  
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# **46TH Air Refueling Squadron**

**Reunion 2012**

**October 10—14, 2012**

**Branson, MO**

**Save the dates, more information will be forthcoming from the Association and our organizers in Branson.**

**From the DeFacto Editor:**

The 46th cruise of 2011 is over. We had a good time going to New England and Canada. Weather was good, the sea smooth and the group of seven couples fun. We are looking forward to a cruise in 2013 and would like to include anyone interested.

Elsewhere in the Newsletter you will find the preliminary information on the 2012 reunion. We will be in Branson, MO, October 10—14. As soon as plans are finalized a mailing will be sent out with information and a registration form. Rooms have been set aside in the Grand Plaza hotel just off the strip. Room registration information will also be included.

If you look at the list of Commanders on the last page you will see a new name added, Donald Broaddus. I was going through a folder of old clippings from the “Northern Vanguard” at the museum and came across his name in the Feb. 22, 1960 issue. He was a former air refueling squadron commander at Little Rock and was returning from an assignment in Japan. Evidently he was the Commander for just a very short time.

I also came across what appears to be the Wing Emblem for the 4042nd. The only evidence is in a clipping of the “Northern Vanguard” which shows a black and white illustration but also gives the colors (The AF Historical Center at Maxwell did not even have the info). We are working to digitize the photo and color it. When we get it done I will include it in a newsletter and on the website for all to see. *John Stevens*



The 59-1497 Lithograph is still available from the K.I. Sawyer Heritage Air Museum. Check their website.

# Remember These?



**Don Croston**



**Chuck Augustine**



**Nick Carter**



**McCarty, Schmit, Bethke, Joyner**

## In Memory

**James Pettingill**

**John Holovar**

**John E. (Jack) Young**

**Dempsy Clinard**

**Lee Hommer**

**Ray Carter**

**Frank Carretto**

**Crew Trailers at UT**





**October 10-14, 2012**

**Headquarters Hotel - Grand Plaza**

**The tentative schedule is:**

**Wednesday:** Arrive, check in at the hotel. Hospitality Room will be open and there will be a Welcome Reception.

**Thursday:** Breakfast, Morning Show, Hospitality Room open, Afternoon and Evening free.

**Friday:** Breakfast, Morning Free, Hospitality Room open, Dinner Cruise and Show on the Showboat Branson Belle.

**Saturday:** Breakfast, Business Meeting, Afternoon Free, Hospitality Room open, Evening Banquet.

**Sunday:** Breakfast. Depart

Rooms have been reserved for the 46th reunion. Room reservations are to be made by those attending the reunion.

The cost will include Hospitality Room, Show Tickets, Banquet, Dinner Cruise and transportation to events. There will be ample free time to enjoy some of the other shows in Branson, to golf and to shop.

As soon as the schedule is finalized we will have a mailing with all the details and a reservation form. Deadlines for room reservations and reunion reservations will be included as will the costs, banquet menu and other information.

## **Transportation**

The Branson Airport (10 miles from Branson) is serviced by AirTran and Sun City airlines. The Springfield Airport (43 miles from Branson) is serviced by American, Delta, United and Allegiant airlines.

## FLIGHT OF THE QUESTION MARK

by Ellery D. Wallwork  
Air Mobility Command History Office

On Jan. 1, 1929, a tri-engined Fokker C-2 aircraft with a crew of five climbed into the southern California sky. This aircraft, dubbed the "Question Mark," was not history's first air refueling mission, but it played a crucial role in the beginning of air refueling efforts and the development of the U.S. Army Air Corps.

The flight, born from the ingenuity of Airmen through their experiences in World War I, lasted from Jan. 1-7, 1929; a total of 150 hours and 40 minutes. The crew flew a 110-mile racetrack from Santa Monica, Calif., to San Diego, Calif. They also flew over the New Year's Day Rose Bowl football game. During the flight, they made 43 contacts with the tanker aircraft. Each contact lasted about 7.5 minutes, with the aircraft about 15 to 20 feet apart. Day-time contacts took place at an altitude between 2,000 and 3,000 feet, and the 10 night-time contacts took place between 5,000 and 7,000 feet.



Lt. Elwood Quesada adjusts an aircraft gas line during a 1929 operation dubbed Question Mark.

The receiving aircraft, the Question Mark, a Fokker C-2, was a high-winged monoplane with two 96-gallon wing tanks supplemented by two 150-gallon tanks installed in the cabin. The two refueling aircraft were Douglas C-1 single-engine bi-planes with two 150-gallon tanks for offloading and a refueling hose passed through a hatch cut in the floor.

A large question mark was painted on each side of the receiver aircraft's fuselage, intended to "provoke wonder at how long the aircraft could remain airborne," according to Air Force history experts. During the operation, which began on New Year's Day in 1929 and ended 150 hours and 40 minutes later on Jan. 7, the Douglas refueling aircraft passed 5,660 gallons of

fuel. All told, the tankers completed 43 sorties, 12 of which occurred at night.

During the contacts, the tanker crews also passed oil, food, water and other miscellaneous items, by means of a rope. Neither the Question Mark nor the two refuelers were equipped with radios because of the radios weight and unreliability. The crews maintained communications via notes dropped to the ground, hand and flashlight signals, and written messages displayed by ground panels and both planes.

The Question Mark's crew consisted of Maj. Carl Spatz (he later changed the spelling to Spaatz), Captain Ira Eaker, Lieutenant Elwood Quesada, Lt. Harry Halverson, and Staff Sgt. Roy Hooe. The crews of the tankers were Capt. Roy Hoyt and Lts. Auby Strickland and Irwin Woodring in the No. 1 aircraft, and Lts. Odas Moon, Joseph G. Hopkins and Andrew F. Salter were in the No. 2 aircraft. Capt. Hugh Elmendorf was in charge of ground operations and logistics for the mission.

Air refueling was still considered by many to be a modern marvel, and it had humble beginnings. The first attempts were in 1921 with the employment of five-gallon gas cans when a U.S. Navy lieutenant, in the back of a Huff-Daland HD-4, used a grappling hook to snag a gas can from a float in the Potomac River. In another attempt, a wing walker with a gas can strapped to his back, climbed from an airborne Lincoln Standard to a Curtiss JN-4 to pour gas into the aircraft's tank.

While these two publicity stunts deserve mention, the first air-to-air refueling using a gravity-flow hose occurred in 1923. Earlier that year, the Army Air Service had equipped two de Havilland DH-4Bs with in-flight hoses. After installation, testing and preparation, the Army Air Service was ready to put it to use. On June 27, one of the DH-4s flew a six-hour-and-38-minute flight that included two air refuelings.

However, the early days of air refueling weren't without danger. Navy Lieutenant P. T. Wagner, the pilot of the refueler was killed during testing in 1923 when the refueling hose became entangled in the right wings of the two aircraft.

At that time, the Army's budget was very limited, and the aviation branch in particular, had not recovered from the 1919 demobilization. The tests in 1923 attempted to show the practicality of air refueling with a flight demonstration that consisted of a 37.25 hour long record-setting 3,293 mile distance record set in August, and again with a border-to-border flight from Lamas, Wash., to Tijuana, Mexico, in October.

Between the budgetary constraints and the lack of an actual application, the air refueling testing slowly ground to a halt. The Nov. 18 accident caused the Air Service to stop it altogether.

The idea for the Question Mark flight started with Lt. Quesada. Years later, General (retired) Quesada recalled that the mission was actually an incidental thought rather than a planned objective.

Additionally, by 1928, Belgium had restarted air refueling experiments, picking up where other countries had left off. In the process, the Belgians set a new record of 60 hours and 7 minutes aloft. Also in 1928, a German aircraft, The Bremen, attempted to fly across the Atlantic. However, it was forced to land in a barren area of Labrador. When the German government requested help from the U.S. State Department, the Army Air Corps accepted the task. Major Gen. James Fechet, head of the Air Corps, led



Pictured is the crew of the "Question Mark," including, from left to right, Lieutenant Halvorsen, Capt. Ira Eaker, Staff Sgt. Roy Hooe, Maj. Carl Spaatz (mission commander), Lt. Elwood "Pete" Quesada, and an unidentified crewmember

a flight team which consisted of Quesada and Capt. Eaker. Despite poor weather and periods of heavy ground fog, they found The Bremen and her crew safe and sound. Quesada said he was surprised when Captain Eaker "decided to go over the ground fog. I said, my God, what are we going to do if we get caught up here. So then I began to think, my God, wouldn't it be nice if we had a gas station. We could just pull in to a gas station and fill up with gas again." Captain Eaker took that idea a step further and began organizing the effort for a prolonged refueling technique, with a demonstration that would attract a lot of attention for the Air Corps.

The Question Mark's mission portended little militarily. Based on the success of this air refueling mission, the Army Air Corps scheduled a formal demonstration in the spring of 1929 as part of an Army war game maneuver.

During the demonstration, a Keystone B-3A bomber was to fly, accompanied by a Douglas tanker, from Dayton, Ohio, on a simulated bombing mission over New York City's harbor, and then return. Refueling was to occur over Washington, D.C., during both parts of the mission. However, a network of thunderstorms between Ohio and Washington caused the aircraft to become separated.

Icing conditions forced the tanker to make an emergency landing in Uniontown, Penn., where it lodged itself in the mud. The bomber successfully pressed on to New York City and returned to Washington without the tanker's support.

With this disappointment, the U.S. Army Department shelved the idea of air refueling for another 12 years. Still, in its primary objective, the Question Mark was a huge success. "It got tremendous public attention, which is exactly what [we] had in mind," said General Quesada. "The Question Mark had no noble purpose. It wasn't going to create an operational procedure that would plunge the Air Force into a great superior power that would make it unnecessary to have an Army or a Navy. The purpose was to attract attention. I think it would be somewhat abusive not to recognize that."

In fact, it captured the public's imagination. American aviators were enthralled with the concept of air refueling. By May 26, 1929, a pair of commercial pilots in Texas, using a reconditioned Ryan Brougham monoplane, broke the Question Mark's record with 172 hours and 32 minutes in the air.

For the next several years, the record continued to be extended. It also sparked more interest among British aviators. One of them, Flight Lt. Richard Atcherly, invented one of the first formal air refueling systems.



59-1497 on delivery at the Boeing factory. McCarty's crew is lined up in front of the aircraft.

59-1497 now on static display at McGuire JFB in New Jersey.



## 46th ARS Commanders

Donald Broaddus	Martin D. Klana	Dale R. Liesch
Winfred H. Meibohm	Frank Elliott	William G. Manire
C. Hunter Smith**	Alvin W. Langford	Richard W. Salsbury
Laurence Maher, Jr**	Donald D. Luenenberg	William E. Rutter
Ronald L. Brumbaugh**	Richard E. Ring	Brian W. Horst
Wilson W. Howard**	Donald S. Croston	Russell Deming
Samuel E. Dyke**	Richard L. Trail	James Nakauchi
Bertram G. Brunner**	Robert L. Hohman	** Deceased
Edward G. Palm**	Ronald B. Childers	

## 46th ARS Boom Section NCOICs

Florian Spiczka**	Duwayne Benson
Ed Caldwell**	Richard Stephens
Ken Courtright	Carl Criscillis
Bob Labo	Craig Blessing
Steve Lonergan	Dave McNeil**
Scott Harris	Kermit Gunther
Brad Arnsperger	Jim Hank
Edward Christopherson	

**We are still looking for Frank Elliott,  
anyone know his whereabouts?**

We need more names here. If you were a Boom Section NCOIC or know of one we do not have on the list please send the info to: [46thars@sbcglobal.net](mailto:46thars@sbcglobal.net)

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### 307th Commanders

John Horesek  
John Irwin  
Lynn Guenther  
Raymond Amtmann

### 46th ARS Website

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