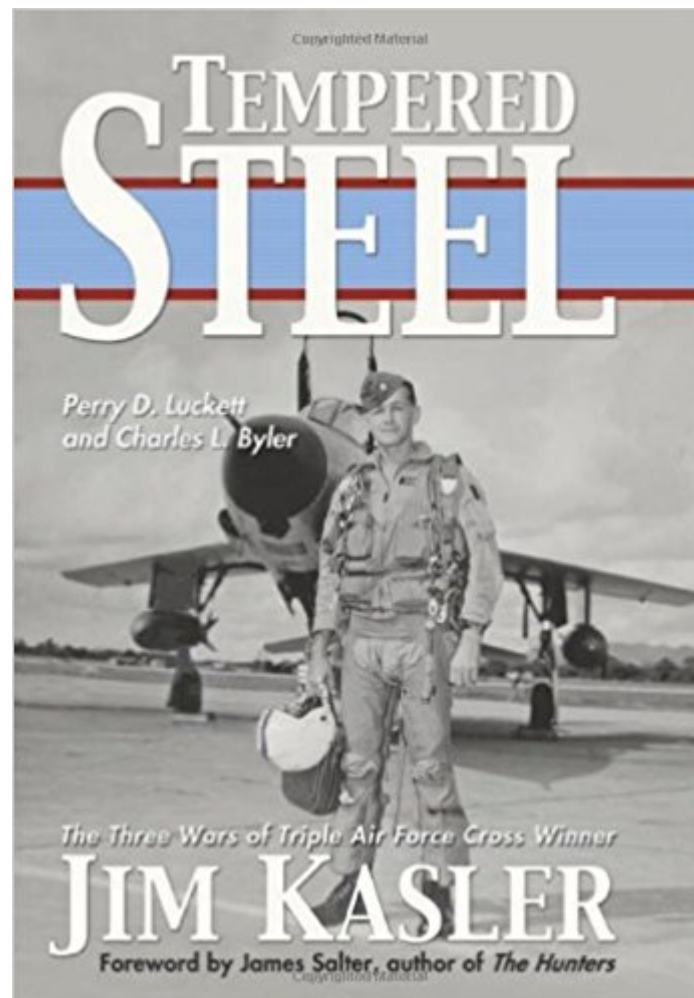




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Tempered Steel: The Three Wars Of Triple Air Force Cross Winner Jim Kasler



Synopsis

Perry Luckett and Charles Byler have written the first biography of Col. James Kasler, who is the only three-time recipient of the Air Force Cross, the second highest medal for wartime valor. Kasler served as an eighteen-year-old B-29 tail gunner in World War II, became a legendary jet ace in Korea, and was so famous in Vietnam that he was known by name in the White House. Major General Hoyt Vandenberg put Kasler, along with Chuck Yeager and Robbie Risner, as "head and shoulders above the rest as stick-and-rudder pilots." Kasler planned and led the most effective bombing mission of the Vietnam War. He was shot down and had to endure six and a half years of torture in a POW camp. His courage under those brutal conditions earned him the respect of such men as John McCain and James Stockdale. This book captures the essence of a genuine American hero who fought in three wars and traces the history of the U.S. Air Force during its formative period.

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Customer Reviews

“I was privileged to serve in the company of heroes . . . like Jim Kasler. They were the ones who sustained me.”
“Jim Kasler is an indestructible man who persevered over death.”
“Experience the deeds and thoughts of a remarkable hero.”
“James Helms Kasler won three Air Force Crosses, the only man in history to do so, and is thus a hero to the third power. His life is told in powerful terms in this excellent biography, which benefits greatly from having two highly qualified writers and researchers as authors.”
“This is not your usual

run of the mill biography. This is the story of a warrior. There are many types in the military: diplomats, politicians, sycophants, citizen soldiers, patriots, war lovers, otherwise unemployable, etc. They are all needed and, with good leadership, most perform well under stress. But, surprising as it may seem, the warriors are marked by their rarity. Jim Kasler is a WARRIOR. Having been a POW with Jim and being an aviator (Navy), I can verify that this account is reliable, factual, and even-handed. It doesn't try to tell any one else's story but Jim's own. It is not a revisionist history. It pulls no punches. It tells it like it is (was). It makes you proud to be an American. Thank God Jim Kasler was on our side. –Â•

Perry D. Luckett, Ph.D. is a retired Air Force officer and professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He is the author or editor of many articles and fourteen other books, including Charles A. Lindbergh: A Bio-Bibliography. He lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Charles L. Byler is the author of After Nam: A Police Story. He lives in Boyertown, Pennsylvania.

"Tempered Steel" is an inspirational and astonishing book about Colonel James H. Kasler, the only three-time winner of the Air Force Cross, and a veteran of World War Two, Korea, and Vietnam. Authors Perry D. Luckett and Charles L. Byler have done a wonderful job of researching the life and career of this amazing American hero, and the book is as near-perfect as any combat biography could be. The book chronicles Kasler's career starting as a B-29 tail gunner in World War Two, becoming a pilot and jet ace in Korea in the F-86, and chronicling his aggressive leadership and flying style that won him admiration from friend and foe alike flying the mighty F-105 over the skies of Vietnam. Kasler was shot down on August 8, 1966 and was a POW for the next six and a half years, undergoing the most brutal torture imaginable at the hands of the North Vietnamese. Throughout it all, Kasler embodied the American fighting spirit and the very definition of what it meant to be a warrior, eventually being released in 1973, returning to flying status and a flying command in the USAF, and finally finishing his career in the F-111 after overcoming years of neglect, malnutrition, injury, and abuse. The picture that Luckett and Byler paint is one of a supremely talented and confident pilot, a skilled leader and tactician, an incredibly brave warrior, and man of good morals and values who did more than his duty under truly terrifying circumstances. This is one of the best wartime biographies of recent years, and I highly recommend it. The United States owes its very existence to men like Colonel Jim Kasler, and this book should be read by anyone who cherishes freedom.

If you have read of Chuck Yeager's or Robin Old's Air Force careers, you can picture piston-engine flying, then the arrival of jets. Same for Kasler. New posts, exciting assignments, family, sometimes the loss of friends to accidents fill the first part of this bio. Fully half of the book is Viet Nam and Kasler's treatment as a POW. This is a shining episode- where he passively resisted the pressure by his captors to give them confessions, participate in sham photo ops. They tortured him, besides primitive treatment for his injuries suffered during bail-out from his F-105. And he did not break; eventually he returned to Air Force and family. We owe him and the other POWs a debt we can never repay. You can also read "In Love and War: The Story of a Family's Ordeal and Sacrifice During the Vietnam Years" by Stockdale, who was confined during the same time period.

This is not your usual run of the mill biography. This is the story of a warrior. There are many types in the military, diplomats, politicians, sycophants, citizen soldiers, patriots, war lovers, otherwise unemployable, etc. They are all needed, and, with good leadership, most perform well under stress. But, surprising as it may seem, the warriors are marked by their rarity, Jim Kasler is a WARRIOR. Having been a POW with Jim and being an aviator (Navy) I can verify that this account is reliable, factual and even handed. It doesn't try to tell any one else's story but Jim's own. It is not a revisionist history. It pulls no punches. It tells it like it is (was). It makes you proud to be an American. Thank God Jim Kasler was on our side.

Great book

Great story of an awesome pilot that covered so much of the evolution of air power, from old recip's through the birth and growing pains of the modern jet age of warfare. Well worth the read.

Jim is a friend of the family. I read it before having dinner with him one night. I am amazed by the strength that man had and still does to this day. His wife Martha shows the same strength. These two are the nicest people you will ever meet. Hard book for me to read when you know the person. He is for sure MY HERO.

I found the book to be well researched, interesting and good reading. Having heard of Col. Kasler during my flying career I was not aware of his thrice awarded Air Force Cross. Great pilot, patriot and family man! Recommended reading.

A fellow fighter pilot that I flew with in the Airforce for many years. A very good book for a very outstanding hero. Boyd

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