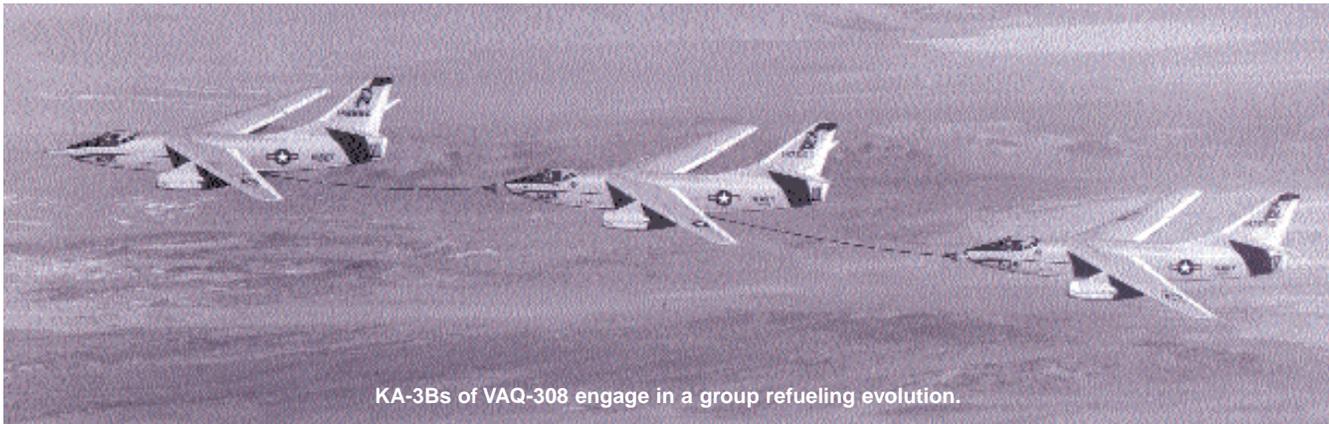


By Cdr. Peter B. Mersky, USNR (Ret.)



KA-3Bs of VAQ-308 engage in a group refueling evolution.

Smith, Richard K. *75 Years of Inflight Refueling Highlights, 1923–1998*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9328. 1998. 87 pp. Ill. \$8.50.

Published by the Air Force History and Museums Program, this informative booklet is a find. Including snippets of early long-range aircraft development in the U.S. and UK, it is an interesting look at aerial refueling, albeit from a USAF viewpoint.

The booklet is a great historical survey of pre-WW II and postwar activities and developments. The British receive much of the credit for methods in extending the ranges of their strategic bombers using older types of tankers, but U.S. Army Air Forces experiments in 1943 using B-24 tankers and B-17 receivers are also mentioned.

The Navy finally appears in the discussion of post-Korea operations, especially in Vietnam. There's a little crowing about Southeast Asia ops, during which the author claims that 30 percent of KC-135 *Stratotanker* activities serviced the Navy. But that's a fair trade considering that today's EA-6B *Prowler* crews, including USAF pilots and electronic countermeasures officers, protect Air Force strike groups. The Navy was also the choice in 1986 when the ability of EF-111A *Ravens* to cover the various strike groups flying against Libya proved wanting.

This book contains several good historical accounts, and anyone with an interest in the vital operation of air-to-air refueling and its strategic ramifications should have a copy.

Bowman, Martin W. *U.S. Naval Aviation, 1946–1999*. Sutton Publishing, 260 Fifth Avenue., New York, NY 10001. 1999. 185 pp. Ill. \$34.95.

The first half of this large-format picture resume is pretty good; the black and white photos are well presented and interesting, but the selection's

quality then deteriorates. Also, there are major mistakes in the captions, particularly in squadron numbers and aircraft designations: Cdr. William Amen was the CO of VF-111, not the CAG, p. 34; the photo on p. 111 shows an A-4 *Skyhawk* so the squadron is not VF-111; and regarding the photo on p. 133, the OV-10 *Bronco* was not a V/STOL type like the AV-8 *Harrier*.

This book could have been much better.

Williams, Nicholas M. *Aircraft of the United States' Military Air Transport Service, 1948 to 1966*.

Specialty Press Publishers, 11605 Kost Dam Rd., North Branch, MN 55056. 1999. Ill. 191 pp. \$39.95.

While perhaps not glamorous, transport aviation is vital. Thus, this knowledgeable, well-illustrated labor-of-love publication by someone who should be considered an authority on the subject is welcome. Nick Williams served as an enlisted technician in Fleet Tactical Support Squadron 21 during the 1960s, and he has written in depth about long-range heavy haulers.

The photos are well reproduced and show the wide range and number of Navy and Air Force aircraft used by MATS. There's a splendid color folio, too. This book is a modeler's dream with its wide assortment of markings and color schemes. How about a B-47B with huge orange lightning flashes along its fuselage, or an F-89 serving as MATS' interceptor defending Iceland in the 1950s?

Established in 1948 with the merging of the Air Transport Command and the Naval Air Transport Service, MATS's routes were worldwide and included several miscellaneous divisions, such as weather and rescue sections. It figured prominently in the 1948 Berlin Airlift.

The book's final section describes all the aircraft used by MATS, including photos and specifications. This is an excellent effort which serves as a ready reference on U.S. military transport aviation.