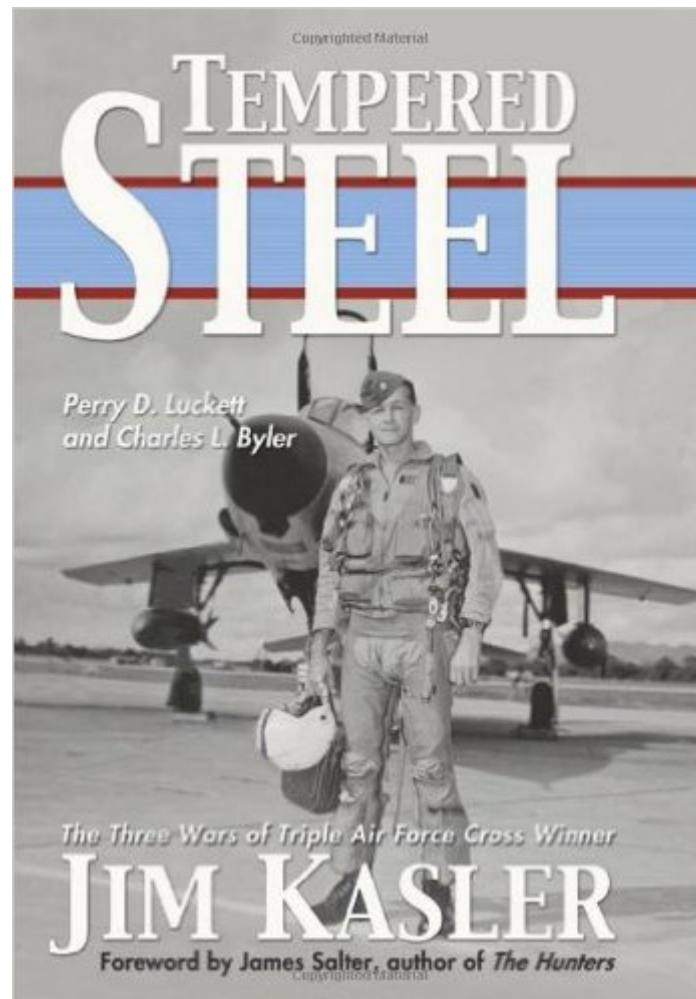


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Tempered Steel: The Three Wars Of Triple Air Force Cross Winner Jim Kasler



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.

Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: Potomac Books; First Edition edition (February 18, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 157488834X

ISBN-13: 978-1574888348

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.1 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (23 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,201,030 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #61 in [Books > History > Military > Korean War > Aviation](#) #694 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Military > Vietnam War](#) #2068 in [Books > History > Military > United States > Vietnam War](#)

Customer Reviews

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.

In a word: WOW! Jim Kasler has given so much of himself to his country it is nothing short of incredible. I don't usually read or enjoy biographies, but this is one that I could not put down. While the book encompasses his entire life, a good portion of the book gives a detailed account of the 6 1/2 years he spent as a POW in North Vietnam and the infamous Hanoi Hilton. His survival during that time is nothing short of miraculous. I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys reading about leadership, history, military, Air Force, patriotism, or just one tough guy who survived brutality.

TEMPERED STEEL is a portrait of a time, an inside look at a culture of speed and machines, but most of all it's the life of a man who endured what few ever have. That Jim Kasler survived his time of trial through fire is a testament to his courage and toughness. His biographers, Byler and Luckett, have with meticulous research recreated the life of an authentic American hero.

Perry Luckett and Charles Byler have opened a new generation's eye's to a period of time that many would rather like to forget. After all the political embarrassment and face-saving, it's time to honor the actions of the honorable. The legacy that the pilots left through their deeds is one worth telling. Men such as Col. James Kasler have paid their dues in full by standing to be counted for what they firmly believe in even when that meant torment and punishment. Luckett and Byler have compiled a great account of a very honorable man!

"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 Lockett 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.

An excellent book outlining the life and military career of James Kasler. His patriotism to his country was vividly displayed in the chapters dealing with his prisoner of war years during the Viet Nam war. He endured more pain and torture than most men could bear. Every American should read this book.

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.

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