



2023 VETERANS DAY PARADE

Saluting TCU Warriors

Carswell Biographical Sketch

Horace Seaver "Stump" Carswell Jr. (July 18, 1916 – Oct. 26, 1944) was a United States Army major who was killed in action while serving as a member of the Army Air Forces during World War II. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. He was the namesake of Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth, Texas, since 1948, renamed Naval Air Station-Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base in 1993.



Education

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, to Horace Seaver Carswell, Sr. and Bertha (Rea) Carswell, Carswell attended North Side High School, where he played football, with his highlight being the winning touchdown he scored on Armistice Day in a game against Wichita Falls in 1933. After graduation from North Side, Horace attended college at Texas A&M University for a year as a member of the class of 1938, and then began attending Texas Christian University (since four of his uncles were Methodist preachers) where he graduated in August 1939 with a bachelor's degree in physical education. Among his teammates on the Horned Frog football team were quarterbacks Sammy Baugh and Davey O'Brien.

On a double date while still at TCU, Horace met a co-ed featured in one of the yearbook's beauty pages, by the name of Virginia Adaline Ede. Virginia was from a ranching family from the west Texas town of San Angelo. They were married in October 1941.

Military service

After the German invasion of Poland, Carswell decided to join the U.S. Army Air Forces. He was appointed a flying cadet in Dallas on March 26, 1940, and trained at Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Randolph and Kelly Fields, Texas, getting his commission and wings toward the end of 1940. He instructed at Randolph and Goodfellow Fields in Texas, with promotion in February 1942, to first lieutenant.

World War II

Carswell attended the Army Air Force Combat Crew School at Hendricks Field, Florida. He was an instructor and flight commander with bomb squadrons at Davis Monthan Field, Arizona; Biggs Field, Texas. In December 1942 he was promoted to Captain.

In January 1943, he was assigned to the 356th Bomb Squadron at Clovis Army Air Field, New Mexico, where he was promoted to Major (United States) in April. The next month he was transferred to Headquarters 302nd Bombardment Group. During this period Virginia gave birth to their only child, Robert Ede Carswell, at Clovis Army Air Field in September 1943.

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Shortly thereafter he was transferred to Langley Field, Virginia, in operations and group command assignments. Major Carswell went to the Pacific Theater of Operations in April 1944, as pilot and operations officer of the 374th Bombardment Squadron in the 308th Bombardment Group of the 14th Air Force.

Carswell was assigned as the commander of a detachment of B-24Js (radar-equipped bombers used for low-altitude missions) at Liuchow. On October 15 Carswell's B-24 crew experienced success in a night sweep over the South China Sea when it sank two enemy warships.

Medal of Honor mission

Carswell was flying a B-24 Liberator on the night of October 26, 1944, on a single-aircraft mission against a Japanese convoy in the South China Sea. He elected to make a second low-level run over a thoroughly alerted convoy and scored two direct hits on a large tanker. His co-pilot was wounded, and his aircraft had two engines knocked out, a third damaged, the hydraulic system damaged, and a fuel tank punctured.

He managed to gain enough altitude to reach land, where he ordered the crew to bail out. Eight did, but the bombardier's parachute was too badly damaged to use. Instead of bailing out, Carswell stayed with the bombardier and the wounded co-pilot, and attempted a crash landing. The badly damaged aircraft crashed against a mountain, and all three aboard were killed.

Carswell was buried at a Catholic mission in Tungchen, China. He was survived by his wife and son. Carswell Memorial Park – where his remains now rest – in Oakwood Cemetery, is named in his honor.

Military awards

Carswell was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Air Medal, and the Purple Heart. These medals were presented to his wife, Virginia, on Dec. 20, 1944, and July 21, 1945. Major Carswell also received the Medal of Honor posthumously on Feb. 4, 1946.

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