
LETTER TO THE EDITORS

EDITORS' NOTE: Through its regular features, whether book notes and reviews or feature articles, Kansas History always strives to keep its readers abreast of the most recent scholarship and endeavors to publish materials that increase our understanding of the history of Kansas and the central plains. The journal thus serves as a vital forum for scholarly discourse, and we appreciate those readers who, from time to time, point out possible errors of fact or express their opinions on various issues raised within its pages. The following was received from Bob Kimball via email on February 16, 2012, in reference to Frederick D. Seaton's "Man in the Middle: The Career of Kansas Senator James B. Pearson," published in our winter 2011–2012 issue.

To the editors:

As a life member of the Kansas Historical Society I look forward to receiving the quarterly journal. I was especially interested in the article regarding U.S. Senator James B. Pearson in the winter 2011 issue and the comments on page 309 concerning his opponent in the 1972 election. At that time I was president of the Kansas City, Kansas, Rotary Club. Senator Pearson spoke to our Rotary Club and invited me to serve as his Wyandotte County campaign chairman. Although a Republican, I declined.

At one point in the 1960s, Arch Tetzlaff, MD, Pearson's opponent in the 1972 general election, was a member of our Rotary Club. I recall asking Tetzlaff about his experiences growing up in World War II Germany. My memory is that he told me he was a member of the Hitler Youth organization (the "Brown Shirts"), as German boys were expected to be. He said near the end of the war German Army ranks were so depleted that he and other

Hitler Youth boys were pressed into service manning anti-aircraft batteries around Berlin.

Mr. Kimball then understandably asked where the article's author got the information that the Democratic Party's 1972 nominee was "a former German Luftwaffe pilot." He wrote: It would appear that the Luftwaffe was in ruins by 1945 with the allies ruling the skies over Germany, let alone sending young boys to pilot aircraft; further Tetzlaff did not include such service in his memories.

In response to Mr. Kimball's queries, the article's author, Dave Seaton, one-time press secretary and legislative aide to Senator Pearson, explained: "It was widely reported that Tetzlaff was a Luftwaffe pilot. However, the information from your correspondent is interesting. I got the idea Tetzlaff was a pilot in the German Air Force from many comments by Senator Pearson and his staff members during the election, and from press reports with the same information."

Unfortunately, those "press reports" have not been uncovered, and it seems unlikely that Tetzlaff, a respected Kansas City anesthesiologist for many years before his death at Weatherby Lake, Missouri, on September 30, 2009, would have been piloting military aircraft at age eighteen. He was born in Danzig on May 6, 1926, and raised in Berlin, Germany, where the family moved in 1931. Nevertheless, according to his Kansas City Star obituary, October 4, 2009, Dr. Tetzlaff's high school years were interrupted by "service in the anti-aircraft defenses of Berlin; followed by service in the German Wehrmacht, where he underwent training as an Artillery Reserve Office[r] applicant during the last year of the war; followed by time as a POW in Russian prison camps." Tetzlaff graduated from the University of Hamburg Medical School in 1951 and moved to Wichita, Kansas, in 1953, where he completed a one-year internship and three-year residency at St. Francis Hospital.