

# ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR

by Sam Pizzo



Dick Campbell and Bob Hubbard were the best of friends during their time of joint service flying the RB'S out of Forbes AFB, and that friendship continues to this day. However, that being said, they were fierce competitors, each striving to reach a higher level of crew performance, and mission accomplishment. This indeed, an outstanding trait to possess.

This trait manifested itself one day while flying a mission out of Thule AFB Greenland in support of Operation Home Run. These sorties required air refuelings from KC-97 Tanker aircraft. On this particular sortie, the mission distance was such that a single tanker could provide the necessary off load to an individual RB.

Campbell and Hubbard, flying at 35,000 feet, in a loose formation, headed for the refueling point, expecting to see two tankers with perhaps a spare tanker awaiting them. Hubbard was flying to the left and slightly to the rear of Campbell. As they approached the scheduled start descent point, Paul Caselton, Campbell's Nav, advised him that there was only one tanker in the refueling area, not two. It is assumed that Bob Mayer, Hubbard's Nav, informed him of the situation as well, since Hubbard started closing up and flying abreast of Campbell's aircraft. It's evident that these two fast friends sure wanted to be the one to get that solo tanker and not have to abort and return to Thule.

These sorties were flown in strict radio silence, with hand signals being the only method to communicate between aircraft, and it's a certain fact that there was not a signal which stated, that's my tanker back off !

This of course led to a furious number of hand signals, which we can be sure did not imply, ok, you take him, I'll abort. I'm informed that fist shaking was one of the made-up hand signals. Abort was not a word in Campbell's vocabulary, and I'm sure this was also true in Hubbard's case.

Campbell then proceeded to take action to get that tanker. Now while this hand signaling was taking place both aircraft had passed the descent point, ie no straight in approach to the tanker who was at 15,000 feet, some 20,000 feet below them. Telling his Co-Pilot, Joe Gyulavics, to keep an eye on Hubbard so that they didn't run into him, Campbell started a hard right descending bank, in order to come up behind the tanker. Hubbard in the meantime had peeled off to the left and was doing his thing in order to get the tanker. The race was on.

Gyulavics stated he watched Hubbard by looking up through the top of the canopy ! The Ravens were to later state that they had never experienced G forces like they felt that day, and probably never did so again in their Air Force careers.

Campbell is now screaming down in his steep bank, and with Caselton's directions, lined up on the tanker, but closing much too rapidly even with the throttles at idle. Campbell called for the drag gear to slow the closure rate and though Gyulavics predicted the gear doors would peel off, they didn't, and it did the trick allowing Campbell to hook up and take on the fuel. Hubbard then becoming a spectator being forced to abort.

Might be most interesting to have been able to hear the conversation taking place on Hubbard's aircraft as they watched Campbell pull these maneuvers!

Seems like the last hand signal seen by Campbell's crew was Hubbard pulling up along side Campbell while he was taking on the fuel and Hubbard was seen shaking his fist at Campbell just before he peeled off and headed back to Thule. As stated earlier these missions were radio silent, but I bet it wasn't too silent when these two Aircraft Commanders met on the ground back at Thule!

All of this begs to question whether or not the saying should be ...

## **All's Fair in Love and War**

**or should it be**

## **All's Fair in Love and Air Refueling**

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*This article has been reviewed and approved by crew members who participated on the mission. Dick and Joe, many many thanks for your input. Nick, thanks for the photo. Had Copper do a bit of her magic to reflect only two birds. And last but most important, once again thanks to Copper for her help on this one. Hope all enjoy. ... Sam*

**VO**  
**Sam Pizzo**