

# INVADER Magazine



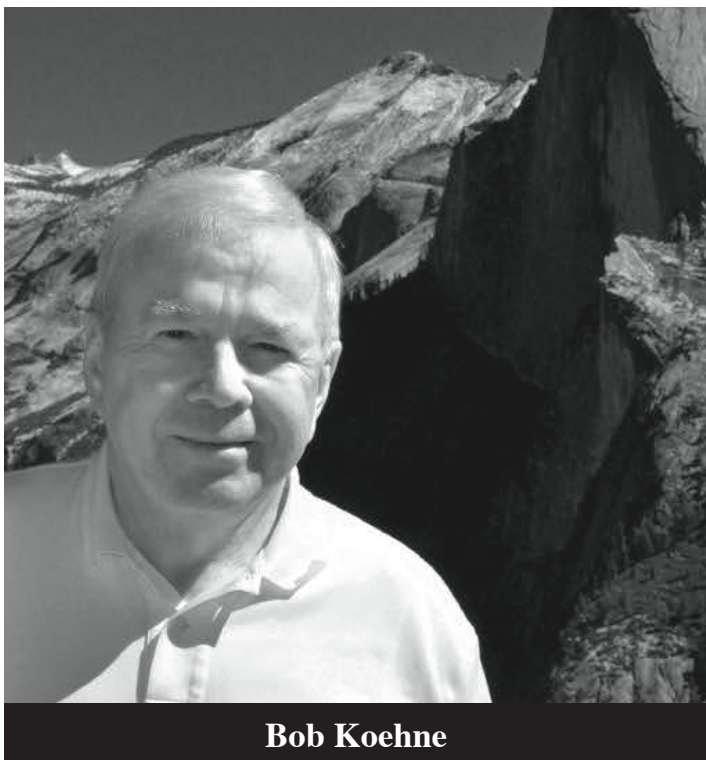
Official Publication of the 13th Bomb Squadron Association

*In this issue:*

- 13th CoC
- 509th CoC
- Gold Star Children
- Gunners of the 13th



## Superstitions & Tradition



**Bob Koehne**

Welcome to our 2021 Spring Invader. I know it's running somewhat late, but I had asked Don to hold off because of the pending 13th Bomb Squadron change of command at Whiteman AFB on May 21st. Bob Parks and Charlie Breitzke, joined Carole and I to represent our association at the ceremony. As always, we were well received by the active duty Reapers, and our association's presence was acknowledged by speakers during the ceremony. I continue to be impressed with the professional credentials and achievements of 13th Bomb Squadron Commanders and I enjoy following their careers after they leave the 13th. One great example is that of Colonel Jeffery Schreiner (Opie), current 509th Wing Commander at Whiteman, 13th commander 2012-2014. We had a nice conversation with Opie and expressed our concerns about the need for new, younger leadership in the association, similar to what our Korean era charter members went through back around 2000. Col. Schreiner is leaving the 509th in June for a position with the Strategic Command at Offutt AFB. That will be the second former BGen. position that he will be filling. We learned that USAF had lost several general officer positions to form the new Space Force. Afterwards, we joined the reception at the squadron building where we had a chance to talk to the new Commander, Lt. Col. Robert W. Sturgill, Jr. (Ripper)

and presented him with an association challenge coin as he gave Charlie his membership information. Also, one of my most enjoyable activities at these changes of command is talking to the young squadron members in the squadron lounge and swapping stories.

As mentioned in the last Invader, the board agreed to postpone the reunion to Spring 2022. Bob Parks thinks the early-mid April time frame would be best weatherwise, and before conflicts with school graduations. We want to be able to attend a basic training graduation at Lackland AFB and those are held every third week. San Antonio's "Fiesta Days" when hotel rates would spike, are usually held in April, so Bob needs to get firm dates on those events before firming up and recommending a reunion date to the board. We are still hopeful that a B-2 fly over can be arranged for the BMT graduation with our association being recognized in the bleachers.

I would like to note the recent passing of two association members. Don Kassen was remembered in our Winter Invader issue. Don and his wife Betty were regular attendees at our reunions for years, and Don usually handcrafted very nice wooden gifts of various sorts to be given to a lucky member on banquet night. His presence and his contributions will be missed.

Former association 2nd vice-president Jerry Dorwart's passing is noted in this issue. Jerry and Faye were also regular attendees for many years, and as 2nd VP Jerry worked with military reunion companies, back when our numbers justified using such companies, to plan our reunions. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Faye.

Just yesterday, I learned that our oldest serving board member, Ron Jarrett, age 90 passed away after a brief illness. Ron was our Korean era representative and he and Norma attended our reunion in Boise in 2019. We could always depend on Ron and Norma's support of the association.

While era representatives are to be selected by their peers at reunions, I have taken it upon myself to ask members to serve in those positions until either confirmed at the next reunion, or others are chosen. I would like to provide more information on those who

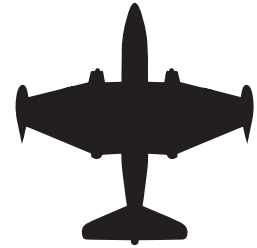
have volunteered, but these comments are getting too long as it is. More in the next issue, meanwhile, check out the officer's page.

As mentioned above, in our conversation with Opie, the future of our association should be of great concern to all our members. The reunion in San Antonio next Spring is a critical one if we are to continue. We need folks to step up and assume leadership positions. All options are on the table. If the prospect of continuing with yearly reunions in the current format is too daunting, changes can be made. I think the three per year frequency of the Invader is a good number to stick with, and very important to provide association information to those who do not attend reunions, not to mention all the interesting historical articles Don Henderson comes up with. I am going to continue to beat the drum on this issue right up to the 2022 San Antonio reunion.  
Reaper Pride,

# New B-57 Book

Lou Drendel is working on a new book for his Illustrated series. "B-57 Canberra Illustrated" will cover all versions of the Canberra. He would like to hear from B-57 combat vets and will include narratives, TINS, and photos. He can accept digital photos or can scan and promptly return any loaned photos from contributors...who will be gratefully acknowledged. Photos can be sent to:

Lou Drendel  
429 Nassau St S  
Venice, FL 34285  
loudrendel@verizon.net



*Editor's Note: To all the B-57 guys out there, this is a great opportunity to get your stories told and to get published. Please contact Lou directly. If you are unable to scan your photos, you can send them to me and I will scan them for you and send the scans to Lou.*

James F. McKague January 9, 2020 Pilot, 1954-57	In Memoriam	Robert J. McAvoy March 13, 2021 Radio Mech, 1954
Theodore Reinke April 29, 2019 Armament, 1951-52	Rest In Peace	Roy W. Rebstock January 5, 2021 Gunner, 1952-53
Dr. James D. McBride April 29, 2020 Crew Chief, 1953 & 63		Frank L. Reddout August 14, 2020 Pilot, 1951-52
Gerald E. Dorwart March 31, 2021 Navigator, 1966-68	Lewis E. Maxson August 17, 2016 Pilot, 1952	Ronald R. Jarrett May 30, 2021 Maint Officer, 1954-55

**13th Bomb Squadron**  
ASSOCIATION  
THE DEVIL'S OWN GRIM REAPERS

The INVADER is the official newsletter of the 13th Bomb Squadron Association, a non-profit organization. The INVADER is published three times yearly for the benefit of the Association members. Views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Association or of the Department of the Air Force.  
\*Members of the 13th Bomb Squadron Association must maintain contact with the Association or "after two years of not communicating with the Association, a member will no longer receive the INVADER or the Directory".  
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## Officers of the 13th Bomb Squadron Association

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**2nd Vice President**



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**Member at Large Korea**



Perry Nuhn  
15 Osprey Circle  
Okatie, SC 29909-4228



**Member at large**



Brian Gallo  
711 N. Washington Ave.  
Warrensburg, MO 64093



**Member at Large Vietnam**



Dan Pipkins  
112 Golden Oak Dr.  
Macon, GA 31216-5776



# 509th Bomb Wing Change of Command

Col Daniel C. Diehl is Commander, 7th Operations Group, Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. In this position, he commands Air Force Global Strike Command's largest B-1 bomb group, a team of more than 450 Airmen, and oversight of an annual budget of \$1.7M. He is primarily responsible for organizing, training, and equipping his group to conduct combat operations, B-1 Formal Training, airfield operations, air traffic control, aircrew flight equipment, operations weather support, combat intelligence, crew communications, aviation resource management, electronic warfare and mission training. Col Diehl received his commission as a Distinguished Graduate from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1999. Following the Academy, Col Diehl earned his wings as the Top Flyer in his Undergraduate Pilot Training class. He then graduated as a Distinguished Graduate from both the B-1 Formal Training Unit and Weapons Instructor Course. Col Diehl has flown combat missions in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM. Prior to assuming his current position, Col Diehl was an Air Force Fellow serving as a Research Fellow for RAND project Air Force at RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA.



**COLONEL DANIEL C. DIEHL**

**EDUCATION**

- 1999 Bachelor of Science, Biology, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO
- 2006 Squadron Officer School, Maxwell AFB, AL
- 2006 Masters in Business Administration, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD
- 2009 Air Command and Staff College, by correspondence
- 2012 Master of Science, Operations Analysis, Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH
- 2013 Master of Philosophy, Military Strategy, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, AL
- 2014 Joint Professional Military Education Phase II, Joint Forces Staff College, Naval Station Norfolk, Norfolk, VA
- 2014 Air War College, by correspondence
- 2019 Senior Development Education, Air Force Fellow, RAND Project Air Force, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA

**ASSIGNMENTS**

- 1. Oct 1999 – Oct 2000, Student, SUPT, Columbus Air Force Base, MS
- 2. Nov 2000 – Jun 2001, Student, B-1B Initial Qual Course, Dyess AFB, TX
- 3. Jul 2001 – Oct 2006, B-1B Instructor Pilot, Chief of Training, Assistant Flight Commander, Standardization and Evaluation Liaison Officer, Unit Deployment Manager, 37th Bomb Squadron, Ellsworth AFB, SD
- 4. Nov 2006 – Dec 2006, B-1B Instructor Pilot, 28th Bomb Squadron, Dyess AFB, TX
- 5. Jan 2007 – Jun 2007, Student, B-1B Division USAF Weapons School, Dyess AFB, TX
- 6. Jul 2007 – Jun 2008, B-1B Instructor Pilot, Chief of Weapons and Tactics, 28th Bomb Squadron, Dyess AFB, TX
- 7. Jul 2008 – Apr 2011, B-1B Evaluator Pilot, Assistant Director of

- Operations, Flight Commander, 77th Weapons Squadron, USAF Weapons School, Dyess AFB, TX
- 8. May 2011 – Jun 2012, Student, Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH
- 9. Jul 2012 – Jun 2013, Student, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell AFB, AL
- 10. Jul 2013 – Jun 2014, Policy Analysis Officer, J-5, US Southern Command Headquarters, Doral, FL
- 11. Jul 2014 – Jan 2015, Chief, Policy Branch, J-5, US Southern Command Headquarters, Doral, FL
- 12. Feb 2015 – Jun 2015, Chief, Policy Division, J-5, US Southern Command Headquarters, Doral, FL
- 13. Jul 2015 – Feb 2016, Deputy Commander, 28th Operations Group, Ellsworth AFB, SD
- 14. Mar 2016 – Feb 2018, Commander, 37th Bomb Squadron, Ellsworth AFB, SD
- 15. Mar 2018 – Jun 2018, Deputy Commander, 28th Operations Group, Ellsworth AFB, SD
- 16. Jul 2018 – Jun 2019, Air Force Fellow, RAND Project Air Force, Santa Monica, CA
- 17. Jul 2019 – present, Commander, 7th Operations Group, Dyess AFB, TX

**SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS**

- 1. Jul 2013 - Jun 2015, Policy Analysis Officer, Chief, Policy Branch, Chief, Policy Division, J-5, US Southern Command Headquarters, Doral, FL

**FLIGHT INFORMATION**

Rating: Command Pilot and Basic Parachutist  
 Flight Hours: 2,500+  
 Combat Hours: 664  
 Aircraft Flown: T-37, T-38, B-1B

**MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

- Joint Meritorious Service Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
- Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters
- Aerial Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters

**OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

- 1999 Distinguished Graduate – United States Air Force Academy
- 2000 Top Flyer Award – Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training
- 2001 Distinguished Graduate, Academic Excellence Award – B-1B Initial Qualification Course
- 2007 Outstanding Graduate, Academic Award, Flying Award – B-1B Division USAF Weapons School
- 2012 Mervin E. Gross Award – Air Force Institute of Technology

**EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION**

- Second Lieutenant June 2, 1999
- First Lieutenant June 2, 2001
- Captain June 2, 2003
- Major November 1, 2008
- Lieutenant Colonel May 1, 2014
- Colonel March 1, 2019
- (Current as of July 2019)



## 13th Bomb Squadron Change of Command

Lt Col Bobby “Ripper” Sturgill is currently serving as the Inspector General for the 509th Bomb Wing.

Lt Col Sturgill, a Fort Worth, Texas native and Eagle Scout was commissioned through Air Force ROTC at Brigham Young University in December 2001, just months after the 9/11 attacks. He graduated from Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training at Sheppard AFB, TX whereupon he was selected to fly the F-16. He completed Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals at Sheppard AFB, TX and F-16 Initial Qualification Training at Luke AFB, AZ. During his first operational tour in the 18th Fighter Squadron at Eielson AFB, AK, he was selected to join the B-2 program. After completing B-2 Initial Qualification Training at Whiteman AFB, MO, Lt Col Sturgill spent three years in the 393rd Bomb Squadron where he was a Flight Commander, Assistant Director of Operations, nuclear command and control procedures instructor, instructor pilot, and evaluator pilot. During this time he led Low Observable-Navy integration with B-2, F-22, and Carrier Strike Group assets in Continuous Bomber Presence deployments and Joint Task Force Exercises in the Pacific. Subsequently, he was selected to attend the U.S. Air Force Weapons School in class 11A. He then returned to the 393rd Bomb Squadron as Chief of Weapons and Tactics for six months before returning to the Weapons School as an instructor and later as Director of Operations for the 325th Weapons Squadron. He served as an Inspector and Interim Inspector General for the Whiteman AFB Wing Commander before attending Command and Staff College at the Marine Corps University. He then served the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a Presidential Strike Advisor and Assistant Deputy Director for Operations in the National Military Command Center on the Joint Staff at the Pentagon. He is a Command Pilot with over 2000 hours. Lt Col Sturgill’s hobbies include sports, music, outdoor activities, and spending time with his family. He is married to the former Deborah Romney from Salt Lake City, Utah and has six children, Joshua, Elizabeth, Christine, Gretchen, Leandra, and Adelaide.



**Lt Col Bobby “Ripper” Sturgill**

AFB, TX  
 2004 F-16C/D Initial Qualification Course, Luke AFB, Arizona  
 2007 B-2 Initial Qualification Course, Whiteman AFB, MO  
 2008 PDE (resident), Squadron Officers School, Maxwell AFB, AL  
 2011 USAF B-2 Weapons Instructor Course, Nellis AFB, NV  
 2012 IDE (non-resident), Air Command and Staff College, Air University, AL  
 2012 Masters of Military Operational Art and Science, Air University, AL  
 2016 IDE (resident), Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, VA

2016 Masters of Military Studies, Marine Corps University, VA

### ASSIGNMENTS

1. Jan 02 – Sep 02, Officer in Charge, Student Training Flight, 80th OSS, Sheppard AFB, TX
2. Oct 02 – Oct 03, Student Pilot, ENJJPT, 80th FTW, Sheppard AFB, TX
3. Nov 03 – Oct 04, Student Pilot, F-16 IQT, 62nd FS, Luke AFB, AZ
4. Nov 04 – May 06, Assistant Scheduling Officer/F-16 Pilot, 18th FS, Eielson AFB, AK
5. Jun 06 – Dec 06, Assistant Chief of Scheduling/T-38 Pilot, 394th CTS, Whiteman AFB, MO
6. Jan 07 – Mar 07, Executive Officer/T-38 Pilot, 509th OG, Whiteman AFB, MO
7. Apr 07 – Oct 07, B-2 IQT Student, 394th CTS, Whiteman AFB, MO
8. Nov 07 – Dec 10, Flight Commander/B-2 IP/T-38 Pilot, 393rd BS, Whiteman AFB, MO
9. Jan 11 – Jun 11, Student Pilot, USAF Weapons School, 325th WPS, Whiteman AFB, MO
10. Jul 11 – Dec 11, Chief of Weapons & Tactics/B-2 EP/T-38 Pilot, 393rd BS, Whiteman AFB, MO
11. Jan 12 – Dec 12, ADO/B-2 Instructor Pilot/T-38 Pilot, 325th WPS, Whiteman AFB, MO
12. Jan 12 – Oct 14, Director of Operations, 325th WPS, Whiteman AFB, MO
13. Nov 14 – Jun 15, Director of Inspections, 509th BW, Whiteman AFB, MO
14. Jul 15 – Jun 16, Graduate Student, US Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Marine Corps

### EDUCATION

- 2001 Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, Brigham Young University, UT
- 2003 Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training, Sheppard

University, Quantico MCB, VA

15. Jul 16 – Jun 19, Presidential Strike Advisor/  
Assistant Deputy Director for Operations, National  
Military Command Center, Operations Directorate  
(J-3), the Joint Staff, Pentagon

16. Jul 19 – Present, Inspector General, 509th BW,  
Whiteman AFB, MO

### **MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**

Weapons Officer

Air Combat Maneuvering Top Gun, Alaska Air to Air  
Turkey Shoot 2006

Distinguished Graduate, Squadron Officers School  
2008

Chief of Staff Flight (#1 Flight), Squadron Officers  
School 2008

Robert W. Williams Tuskegee Airmen Company  
Grade Officer of the Year 2009

Distinguished Graduate, USAF Weapons School 2011

Flying Award, USAF Weapons School 2011

Defense Meritorious Service Medal

Meritorious Service Medal

Air Force Commendation Medal

Air Force Achievement Medal

Meritorious Unit Award with 3 oak leaf clusters

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 2 oak leaf  
clusters

Combat Readiness Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters

National Defense Service Medal

Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal with 1  
oak leaf cluster

Air Force Overseas Ribbon Short

Air Force Longevity Service with 3 oak leaf clusters

Air Force Training Ribbon

### **FLIGHT INFORMATION**

Rating: Command Pilot

Flight Hours: Over 2000 hours

Aircraft Flown: T-37, T-38, F-16, and B-2

### **EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION**

Second Lieutenant Jan 2002

First Lieutenant Jan 2004

Captain Jan 2006

Major Jan 2012

Lieutenant Colonel Jan 2017

(Current as of Feb 2021)



# A Family Story

By Tony Cordero

## Family Story:

To understand where we are, it's vital to look at how we got here.

A few years ago, at the send-off party for 'Run for the Wall' – the annual cross-country motorcycle ride leading up to Memorial Day – a Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War noticed my lapel button and asked if I was a Gold Star Father. I responded, "No, I'm a Gold Star Son from the Vietnam War. I am what happens when Gold Star children grow up."

In June of 1965, our family had just a month left before we could return to the US for dad's next assignment at Mather AFB in Sacramento. Living just off Clark AFB at the time, mom was expecting baby #5: Jim. The eldest child,

Bill Jr., had just completed kindergarten. After Bill Jr., the Cordero Five consisted of sister Terry, me and Dicky, and we all eagerly awaited baby Jim's arrival.

Dad's first tour in Vietnam ran from November 1963 to August 1964 with the legendary 1st Air Commando Squadron. In that time, he advised the Vietnamese Air Force, helped establish the Pacific Air Forces Survival School and navigated B-26's on 'training missions' from Bien Hoa Air Base. Near the end of that second tour, dad volunteered to navigate a B-57 for the 8th Tactical Bomb Squadron's mission over the North Vietnam-Laos boarder. Operating with the call signal "Jade 22" – dad and his pilot, Charlie Lovelace, flew from Tan Son Nhut Air Base to DaNang, and then joined another B-57 (Jade 21) and a C-130 flare ship bound for their targets. Then everything changed. There was no indication of where or why their B-57 was lost in the early hours of June 22, 1965 during that overnight strike mission.

Evidence today shows the subsequent search and rescue missions over Vietnam were nowhere close to the wreckage some 25 miles inside the Laos boarder.



*Maj William Cordero, 8th Bomb Squadron*

Despite her grief, unanswered questions and pregnancy, mom summoned the strength to move her family 7,500 miles back home to California. Much of her Irish-Catholic family lived in the Los Angeles area and immediately formed a support network for us. On January 3, 1966, Jim was born in the port town of San Pedro, CA, never knowing the father he so strongly resembles. For the next four years, our family juggled both wonder and hope as dad and Charlie Lovelace were officially classified as "Missing in Action" (MIA). Were they shot down? Did a mechanical mishap bring them down? Where was the plane lost? Are they POW's, or even alive?

In March of 1969, a small box of evidence mysteriously

arrived at the US Army mortuary in Saigon, and we learned to re-associate ourselves with a new acronym: KIA. The contents in the box led the mortuary to conclude that dad and Charlie Lovelace were killed when their B-57 went down four years earlier. While many questions remained, our hope turned to grief. After four years of exposure to the brutal elements in the jungles of Laos, our family was asked to accept the forensic conclusion that the box's contents of "minimal remains" represented dad.

Air Force Mortuary Affairs shielded our family from the trauma of seeing the contents of the box, knowing once such an image had been viewed, it cannot be unseen. That decision was emblematic of how young children need to be protected from harsh realities when the tragedies of war hit home. On May 1, 1969, the contents of that mysterious box – representing Majors Charles K. Lovelace and William E. Cordero – were buried together in Section 46 of Arlington National Cemetery. Gold Star Wife Kathleen Cordero was barely 30 and her five young Gold Star Children were then aged 10, 9, 8, 6 and 3. Gold Star



Wife Patsy Lovelace was left to raise her two young daughters.

After WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam, the surviving families of America’s fallen often used home remedies to bandage their wounds of war. Very often, those remedies didn’t work, or masked a wound not fully healed. For the vast majority, there was no clinical protocol to address these traumas. And they did what survivors do – they pulled themselves up by the bootstraps, and persevered as best they knew how.

**SDIT Formation & History**

In 1989, a realization hit me: on my upcoming 30th birthday I will have outlived my father! My curious nature prompted me to wonder, “Besides my four siblings, were there others who lost their dads in the Vietnam War?”

Without the conveniences of email, internet and cell phones, and avoiding costly long-distance phone charges, the research process was poised to be a lengthy one. But I called a Vietnam Veteran in Sacramento known for his work on behalf of veterans – and I lucked out!

“Mike, my dad was killed in the Vietnam War and I’m told you may have an answer to my question. Do you know if there’s an organization for others like me?” Mike Kelly replied, “If there was, I’d know about it. You should call Wanda Ruffin in Washington, DC. She lost her husband in Vietnam and has a daughter about your age.”

My call to Wanda, who worked for a non-profit supporting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, led to a conversation with her daughter Wende. Neither of us really knew others who lived this experience. Certainly, there had to be others like us, and we had to fix this.

Wanda and I

pitched a story idea to a few journalists, and because the Vietnam War was still somewhat fresh in America’s mind at that time, there was interest. Parade Magazine, Maria Shriver on NBC

Sunday Today, and another syndicated columnist separately reported on the “common bond” being forged by the now-grown Gold Star children whose dads were killed or unaccounted for in the Vietnam War.

America knew about Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Wives. Those groups dated back to WWI and WWII respectively. But what about these kids? This was an unprecedented effort in our nation’s history and the media exposure worked. Though it was very antiquated by today’s standards of instant communication, those wanting to join us had to mail a letter expressing interest our movement. To our astonishment, more than 1,500 survivors wrote those letters!

The founding leaders – in their 20’s and 30’s and having lived the unique experience – agreed the fledgling group should be known as “Sons and Daughters In Touch” (SDIT), which was a subtle admission we didn’t really know who we were. In 1990, had we known of our entitlement to the Gold Star title and military-awarded pin, the name of the organization would likely be different and more clearly state who we are.

It was also decided that Father’s Day 1992 would be our first national gathering – at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. That inaugural weekend of events drew more than 400 ‘sons and daughters’ to finally meet others who shared similar life stories. They shared photos and memories. They cried many tears. They laughed and hugged, and upon seeing ‘The Wall’ for the first time, placed roses at the panels bearing their fathers’ names. And they deepened a common bond that was several decades in the making.

On Father’s Day 2005 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, it was altogether fitting that a group of Vietnam combat veterans finally presented the Department of Defense Gold Star award pins to more than 300 SDIT members. Though decades overdue, that moment was powerfully poignant.

SDIT



*1st Air Commandos at Bien Hoa, early 1964*

repeated its Father's Day celebrations in 1993, 1997, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and COVID-19 forced us to hold a virtual Father's Day ceremony in 2020.

At the conclusion of the Father's Day ceremony in 2000, I spontaneously remarked, "The climate is right and the time has now come for us to travel to Vietnam to see the places where our fathers fought and died."

In March 2003 - after nearly three years of planning, fifty SDIT members made the largest-ever Gold Star Family pilgrimage to Vietnam. Twenty combat veterans accompanied SDIT on the 18-day journey with its primary mission to get these 'sons and daughters' to the places where each of their fathers were lost. Meticulous planning called for our group to break into small teams led by the combat veterans and travel to distant regions of Vietnam and visit those personal "ground zero" sites. It was perfect planning and "mission accomplished."

We didn't know it then, but our journey was following the example of the Gold Star Pilgrimages of the early 1930s. In those days, American Gold Star Mothers and wives sailed from New York to Paris to visit the European grave sites of their sons and husbands who fell in World War I.

After more than thirty years, Sons and Daughters In Touch is one of America's oldest Gold Star Families organization. SDIT was granted official non-profit status in 1993 and continues to be an all-volunteer effort sustained by its members' hard work and financial donations. It is estimated that 20,000 American children lost their fathers in the Vietnam War. To date, SDIT has connected with nearly 5,000 of them and the search for others continues.

### **Gold Star Families Older & Younger**

In a way, SDIT is a form of corrective surgery – helping repair the not-fully healed wounds with an approach that was ahead of its time in 1989. Though not clear to us in those early days, each generation of survivors needs a group like SDIT with whom to laugh, cry, share and grieve.



Maj William Cordero, 8th Bomb Squadron

Today, many SDIT members are willing to share their life experiences with older and younger Gold Star Families who have endured the loss of a loved one in military service.

In 2005, a Gold Star Daughter/SDIT member in Orange County, CA collaborated with a group of Vietnam Veterans and community members to launch an initiative to benefit younger, post-9/11 Gold Star children. That program came to be known as Snowball Express which is now operated by the

Gary Sinise Foundation and benefits thousands of children who have survived the loss of a parent in military service.

SDIT members also function as mentors sharing their life experiences and guiding others during programs and events provided by Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS).

In the early 1990s, the Gold Star "children" of WWII used SDIT as a template when forming the American WWII Orphans Network (AWON) to unite those who lost their fathers in Europe and the Pacific during that war.

### **Impact of SDIT**

In those darkest days, when we Gold Star Families faced the peril knocking at the door, sheer human instinct helped us survive. Along the way we clung tightly to something – sometimes anything – to stabilize us and confront the days and years ahead.

Today, most would agree those of us who lost our fathers in the Vietnam War endured a form of Post-Traumatic Stress. Our lives have been filled with success and a few setbacks.

Within SDIT, it is not surprising that our members are a close representation of their fathers - the servicemen lost, or who are unaccounted for, as a result of the Vietnam War. They come from every state in the Union. They represent every ethnicity and socio-economic condition. Today, these "children" are not far from retirement! Along the way, many raised their own families and some are now grandparents. They have had a variety of



careers, operated their own businesses and some followed their dads’ footsteps and joined the military. Coincidentally, two of these Gold Star “sons” played together on the same Kansas City Chiefs football teams in the 1990s, and one of them is now in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

**Family Conclusion**

In his brief career, dad triumphed over several obstacles: the financial constraints from his blue-collar family; being the first in his family to attend and graduate from college; the 1950’s and 1960’s stereotypes ascribed to Hispanics.

Bill Cordero’s ultimate goal was to retire from the Air Force and return home to be the Mayor of Santa Barbara. If that happened, his election would have brought the family full-circle. Bill’s ancestors arrived in Santa Barbara in 1769; though his parents did not attend high school, he graduated from the ROTC program at Loyola University in Los Angeles. He washed out of flight school but went on to navigate jets in the Vietnam War and receive the Distinguished Flying Cross for those heroics. As mayor, he would have returned home to lead the city he dearly loved. But that story wasn’t meant to be.

In a 2015 article for Hispanic Heritage Month, the USAF remembered William E. Cordero for his roles as an inspiration for the Hispanic community and the Air Force. A few months later, Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein recalled that story and personally thanked our family for the Air Force legacy we share.

**Jade-22 Update:**

In the spring of 2021, a ‘story coin’ was made to help tell the story of Jade-22.

On the front, the coin features a B-57 with Jade-22’s tail ID number: F 0-33910 heading towards the Vietnam-Laos border in a night sky, just as the Canberra Night Fighters always did. It also features the names of the two-man crew and the flags of their hometowns: New Bern, NC and Santa Barbara, CA.

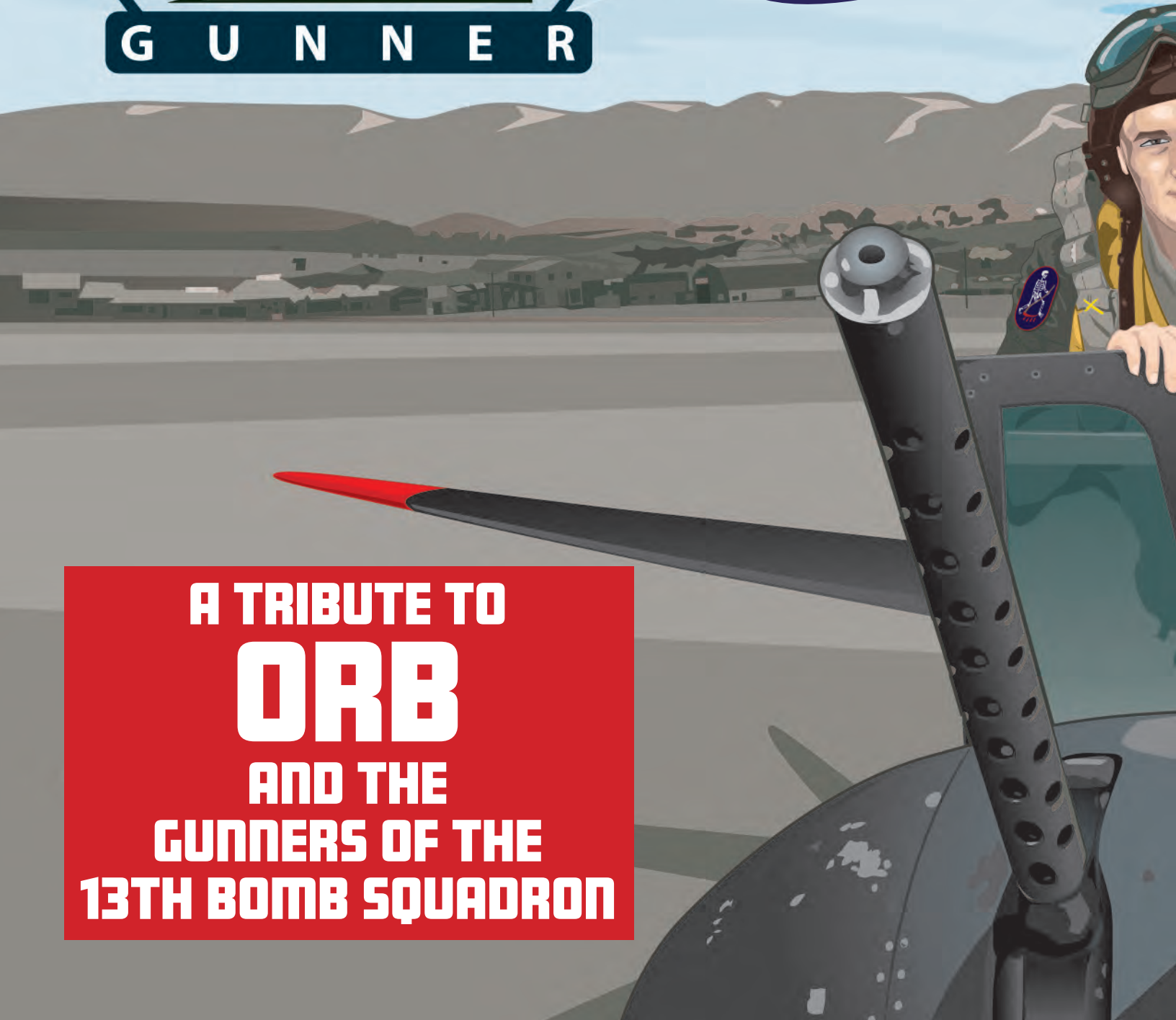
The reverse shows the date of their loss – June 22, 1965 – the insignia of the 8th Tactical Bomb Squadron, and the decorations awarded to both men: the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal and the Purple Heart. Those awards are set against some of the names found on Panel 2 East of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, where William E Cordero (line 15) and Charles K Lovelace (line 16) are remembered forever. The rim of the coin features nine DoD Gold Star images representing the two Gold Star Wives and seven Gold Star Children whose lives were forever altered that day.

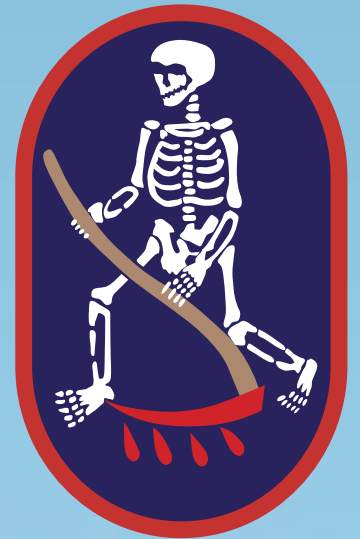
More about the unfinished status of these two men can be found on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/Jade22InLaos>

*Editors Note: Please share Tony’s story with others who lost a father in Vietnam. If any of you knew Tony’s dad, or can contribute any information please contact Tony and share what you know. The 13th and the 8th Bomb Squadrons share a lot of history together, even flying the same aircraft, any bit of information could be another piece to help complete the puzzle.*



**A TRIBUTE TO  
ORB  
AND THE  
GUNNERS OF THE  
13TH BOMB SQUADRON**





**William Alexander “Bill” Cowan, Jr., better known to his friends as Old Rotten Bill or ORB. He served with the 839th Bomb Squadron, 487th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, in England and the 13th Bomb Squadron (The Devil’s Own Grim Reapers), 3rd Bomb Group, 5th Air Force, in Korea. ORB was instrumental in the reactivation of the 13th Bomb Squadron, now assigned to Whiteman Air Force Base in Knob Noster, MO.**

# Superstitions, Traditions & Mysteries

-Don Henderson

In the history of war, certain things were considered bad luck. The very number of the squadron, "13", carries with it many superstitions and traditions dating back to biblical times. The 13th Bomb Squadron is not without its traditions or superstitions.

I remember my uncle telling me about his B-17 crew buying a bottle of Canadian Club whiskey that they were going to drink at the completion of their 25th mission. Well, things didn't go as planned. Their first mission in a B-17G named the Wild Hare was so stressful that they polished off the fifth of CC after their first mission! That bottle, along with many others, became a tradition after every mission. My uncle always carried the same handful of coins in his pocket for the rest of the war that he carried on his first mission. Others carried good luck charms, St. Christopher medals, a lucky rabbit's foot (not so lucky for the rabbit). Some wore the same uniform each mission, one guy always wore the same pair of socks, until they wore out. Rituals and superstitions abound in the air warrior community. The old saying, "never make or break a tradition", plays true in so many souls who took to the air in so many wars.

When the 13th Aero Squadron was in France in WWI, the squadron's insignia wasn't painted on any of the 13th's SPADs until one of the pilots became an Ace. To do so beforehand would have been bad luck. It wasn't until Capt. Charles Biddle, CO of the 13th shot down his fifth enemy aircraft that Oscar, the Devil's Own Grim Reaper, was painted on his plane.

In his epic poem, *Riders of the Sky*, Leighton Brewer often talks about luck. In this exchange between the fictional character Bob Wainwright who may or may not be Leighton Brewer himself, and the real Jim McAteer, the subject of luck comes up:



*Original canvas of Oscar from a 13th Aero Squadron SPAD.*

*Bob Wainwright entered  
by the canvas flap  
That served as door to  
Operations' Tent.  
A draught of cold air  
swirled in causing stove  
To smoke, and papers  
rustled. He removed  
A letter from his tunic,  
broke the seal  
And slumped into a  
chair. Jim McAteer  
From Arkansas eyed  
him with disapproval.  
'You mean to say you  
didn't read that letter  
Before you went up on  
your last patrol?'*

*'Why, no,' said Bob; 'I never like to read  
My letters in a hurry. I'd rather wait  
Until I can be warm and comfortable,  
And then enjoy them thoroughly.'  
'My God!  
Some fellows are just asking to be killed.  
Don't you realize that you might not have returned?  
Then when would you have read it?'  
'Well, maybe  
You're right, Mac, but I didn't think of that.  
Somehow I counted on my luck to last.'*

In another passage, this time with Stu Elliot:

*The smouldering damp logs of a wood-fire smoked  
In the stone fireplace, and Stu Elliott said:  
'How did you feel today, Bob when you saw  
Planes falling all around?'  
'Damn scared, and yet  
Somehow I never thought I would be killed.  
I think one often gets a premonition  
About these things, for instance, take George Kull;  
In spite of his good-humour, there always lurked  
Death in his mind: he was the first to die.'  
'You're right, he was. They say a man will last  
As long as he believes in his good luck;  
And you believe in yours. With me it's different:  
I've figured out the pros and cons, and if  
The War ends soon – say by Thanksgiving, then  
I may come through, but if it lasts till Spring –  
Well, I'll be pushing poppies with the rest.  
And I don't take much stock in that "other world" stuff.'*

*'No, we're a godless bunch of bums,' said Bob. 'You'd think that being so close to death all day, We'd pray our heads off; but we don't – just go From hour to hour, not thinking much about it.'*

From the book on his WWI experiences as a pilot with the 13th Aero Squadron, *Wooden Crates & Gallant Pilots*, Stuart Elliot writes of the unwritten rule and the creation of 13th's insignia:

*"Lieutenant Earl Richards, one of our pilots, having some talent as an artist, had skillfully drawn the insignia for our squadron, on which we had decided, after discussing various ideas. Our emblem was Death, in the guise of a grim skeleton running down the foe, and swinging a big scythe. A metal stencil was cut for this, and it was to be painted on the fuselage of each SPAD, for the double purpose of distinguishing our 13th Squadron from other squadrons, and to add to our general esprit de corps, in being marked with a distinctive emblem. Other squadrons had their respective emblems, one of the first and most famous being the 94th's Hat In The Ring. This was the beginning of this form of heraldry in our infant air corps, although it was not new on the front. The French may have started the idea. Certainly the emblem of their famous escadrille, Les Cigones, the Storks, the squadron of Guynemer, had long been familiar to all flyers. The Germans, likewise, had their insignias, but in that war, most were the work of individuals belonging to the outfit in question, and were, to my mind, more appropriate, if more unprofessional in technique, than the usual Disneyish and rather cutie-pie insignia on our warplanes in World War II. We now had our own coat of arms, but there was a more or less unwritten law, that no fighter squadron-should paint its emblem on its planes until the squadron had officially accounted for a minimum of five enemy airplanes."*

Capt. Charles Biddle became the 13th's first ace and the grim reaper was soon painted on his SPAD. How the 13th's grim reaper became known as Oscar, the Devil's Own Grim Reaper remains a mystery, but the story of how Oscar came to be painted on all squadron aircraft is recounted in another passage from Leighton Brewer's epic poem, *Riders of the Sky*, he recounts the morning that Capt. Biddle became the 13th Aero Squadron's first ace thus allowing Oscar to be applied to all the Squadron's SPADs:

*So, while the stars yet shone, he had his SPAD Wheeled out, and in he climbed and warmed her up,*

*And leaving as the light was just beginning To come, he crawled up through the cold pale sky, And hung a mile or two east of the place Where the Rumpler crossed the line. For an hour he waited, And the red sun rose, and still there was no Boche. He was hungry and chilled, and his fingers commencing to ache With the cold, when at last he saw some white Archies break A thousand metres away to the west, and he watched A black speck that was traveling south, and keeping the sun On his left, he followed along till he noticed the Hun Had taken his pictures and turned. Then he shoved on his stick, And down on the Boche from above he fell like a brick; And attacking that part unprotected just under his tail Where the blind angle lay, unloaded his blistering hail, And got in a bright burst of gold dollars that made the observer Slump down in his seat; but the pilot was heading her home – So he pumped in a half-dozen more, and hit him, and he had enough and turned back, and in slow-circling spirals came down By the Captain escorted, and made a safe landing amid the cheers and delight of pyjama-clad flyers at Toul. This was the Captain's fifth Boche; and he now Was numbered with the aces, who to Bob Were like the gods that lived upon Olympus. Five times in combat had he conquered Hun And so, at last, the 13th could put on Its war-paint – its insignia. It had won Its spurs, and on each fuselage appeared A grinning Death – a skeleton with a scythe, The blade tipped red with blood, and a notch for each downed foe.*



# Aerial Gunners: Unsung Heroes

by Johnathan Clayborn, Invader Historical Foundation

There are many jobs in today's modern air force, some of them we would have never even dreamt of 100 years ago – like Drone Pilot, for example. Thinking about jobs that existed in the Air Force during WWII and Korea, there is one that has passed into memory – the aerial gunner. Pilots often received the glory, and Navigators, too, held a place of distinction, but combat gunners as a role were often overlooked.



*Sgt Freddie Carroll, 13th Bomb Squadron, checks the upper turret before a mission.*

fought by looking through a periscope and had to be able to tell where the target was in relationship to the plane, and when to switch between the upper and lower turrets. They had to have excellent night vision, as most of the B-26 missions in Korea were night-time interdiction missions. And they had to have nerves of steel to ride into combat in a plane flown by someone else, with nothing but the guns at their disposal and a distant voice in their ear for comfort.

Make no mistake, these men

were braver than most give them credit for and deserve all the recognition that can be bestowed upon them.

The aerial gunners of Korea achieved success early. On 29 June, 1950, just 4 days after the start of the Korean War, SSgt Nyle S. Mickley of the 3rd Bomb Group became the first aerial gunner to shoot down an enemy aircraft when he shot down a Yak-9. Several more aerial victories followed. Records of gunners shooting down enemy aircraft are spotty and sporadic, partially due to the availability of the records, but also because of the nature of the missions. In comparison, aerial gunners aboard the B-29 Superfortress squadrons are credited with shooting down 34 enemy aircraft during the course of the war. This clearly demonstrates that skilled gunners aboard propeller driven bombers were capable of shooting down jets. But, the B-26 Invader gunners had a lower count than their B-29 counterparts, despite using the same periscope gun system.



*Diehl Picket, 13th Bombardment Squadron.*

Unlike the flight crew, combat gunners were enlisted men. In the Douglas Invader, these men faced solitary missions, often riding alone in the back of the plane in a tiny compartment with only a radio to connect them with their crew mates. They couldn't see much from their compartment and went along for the ride, but they had one very important job – to keep the plane safe.

When describing the B-26 Invader pilots of Korea, two terms were used by the airmen – Tigers and Pussycats. Pussycats were those pilots who flew it safe, did things by the book, took no unnecessary risks, flew the missions, dropped the ordnance, and returned to base. Tigers, well, they were a different breed. They attacked targets with a ferocity that made their enemies wish they'd never seen an Invader. Regardless of what kind of pilot was flying the plane, the gunners were Tigers, almost to the man.

The gunners had a lot of requirements on them. They had to be excellent with high-speed tracking and marksmanship – a feat which required pretty good trigonometry skills. They had to have excellent 3D spatial acuity – the gunners



*Some of the 13th Bomb Squadron gunners relaxing.*





*TSgt Charles Ledbetter, 13th Bomb Squadron, July 1951. Ledbetter was a former Tuskegee Airman who fought again in Korea.*

The reason for this disparity isn't because the B-29 gunners were that much better – the reason is due to the nature of the mission. The B-29 bombers flew daylight raids against targets of strategic importance. The B-26s started the war the same way, but during July 1951 the B-26

crews were reassigned to Operation Strangle, which was tasked specifically with targeting supply lines. As a result, most of the B-26 missions after this point were flown at night. A handful of units were kept in silver-painted planes for daytime missions, but most Invader received black paint and carried out night time raids. These dark-of-night operations provided little in the way of targets of opportunity for Invader gunners.

Despite the lack of aerial targets, the B-26 night intruder gunners had plenty to shoot at. They especially loved it when the planes had lower turrets. The standard configuration of the Invader was a twin .50 caliber remote operated turret on top, and a second twin .50 remote operated turret on the bottom. The gunner could control both turrets from his periscope, flipping a switch on the handle to change the view between them. During WWII, the 5th Air Force requested special versions of the Invader for use in the Pacific. One of those changes was replacing the lower turret with an extra 175 gallon fuel tank. By the time of the Korean War, the B-26's that made it to the front lines were a curious mixture of these purpose-built Pacific versions and the stock versions. It was hit or miss if the planes would have one turret or two.

The gunners always had interesting stories to tell. William "Sam" Lowery, a gunner of the 13th Bomb Squadron, related a tale from the outbreak of the Korean War. On the 3rd mission, July 6, 1950 – his plane was doing a strafing run 25' off the ground when they took a hit on their engine. The pilot climbed to 400' and he and the Corporal riding up front bailed out. After a day in the Korean countryside they ran across Americans – who were also lost. Lowery, a Staff Sergeant at the time, became the de facto leader and managed to get all seven of these lost men back safely across the front lines.

My grandfather, Freddie Carroll, was a gunner for the 13th Bomb Squadron. He often talked about using that lower turret during missions. One mission, which his crew was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for, he used the turret to attack enemy spotlights and anti-aircraft guns while his pilot, Emil Pindzola, flew in for strafing runs on train engines. Between the two of them, they left a wake of destruction in their path that set the enemy back weeks.

I recall another story that my grandfather told me, about their journey to attack a rail yard in the middle of the night. It might have even been the same mission where they won the DFC, my memory is fuzzy on that part. But what I do remember is him telling me how he would sit in the back of the plane on missions, straining his hearing to listen on the ear piece for any mention of "bogies" from the flight crew. It was too dark for him to see much from where he sat, especially if the moon wasn't out. He was listening to their chatter as the pilot, Emil Pindzola, flew into the clouds.

Almost immediately, pinging thuds could be heard. For a second, he thought it was hail in the cloud striking the plane. Then, a moment later, the unmistakable sound of anti-aircraft fire raked along the back half of the fuselage, all around where he was sitting. Freddie quickly looked



*Sgt Jim Wise, 13th Bomb Squadron peers through the periscope that the gunners used to sight in the enemy.*

out the side window, horrified to find the clouds glowing. "The lights!" he shouted to the flight crew. "Turn off the running lights!" The clouds went dark and the pilots flew some evasive maneuvers and the bullets stopped. The rest of the mission was largely uneventful, but when they got back to base, Freddie climbed out on top of the plane and hugged the tail of the "old girl" and told her things like "you're a good girl", "you're my favorite girl", much to the amusement of the crew.

The gunners came from all walks of life, but one thing united them, they were great men all. Many who survived the war came back to the states and took roles of civic leadership or mentorship. Others stayed in the military and made it a lifelong career. Some left the service after their enlistment and lived their lives to the fullest. But during



*Sgt Freddie Carroll, 13th Bomb Squadron, hugging the plane and giving it praises after a tough mission. Note the bullet holes in the tail.*

their deployment, they paid their dues without hesitation, riding into harm's way and did what was asked without hesitation or delay.

In total the Invaders flew many sorties – the 3rd Bomb Group alone flew over 100,000 sorties. I don't have exact figures at this time for how many planes, trains, or trucks were attributed specifically to the aerial gunners of the Invaders in the Korean War, but I do know that they paid a heavy price. 109 Gunners were killed or missing in Korea.

### Missing in Action:

SSGT Allred, Robert E., 729th Bomb Squadron (Light)

SSGT Barr, Joseph L., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

A2C Beacham, Thomas H., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

TSGT Bendinsky, Leonard J., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

A1C Billingslea, Jr., Charles L., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

A3C Brennan, John C., 95th Bomb Sq (L)

SSGT Bunn, George W., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

PFC Campbell, Reynold G., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

A1C Cave, James A., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

SSGT Chant, II, Harry L., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

A2C Cheston, Ronald W., 728th Bomb Sq (L)

SGT Chitwood, John V., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

A1C Cooper, Jr., Spencer R., 90th Bomb Squadron (L)

A2C Corona, Victor G., 34th Bomb Sq (L)

A1C Croshaw, Howard L., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

A2C Davis, Charles E., 728th Bomb Squadron (L)

SSGT Davis, Norman G., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

TSGT Dorsey, Joyce M., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

A2C Fuller, Richard C., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

TSGT George, Winifred R., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

TSGT Grabosky, John E., 8th Bomb Squadron

SSGT Guthrie, Marvin L., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

A2C Hart, Donald L., 34th Bomb Sq (L)

A2C Hickey, John M., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

A1C Ingold, William R., 728th Bomb Squadron (L)

A1C Jack, Daniel (NMI), 90th Bomb Squadron (L)

A2C Jones, Gerald (NMI), 95th Bomb Sq

A1C Karpowicz, Jerome (NMI), 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

A1C Lambert, Charles A., 90th Bomb Squadron (L)

MSGT Lausberg, Jr., John W., 731st Bomb Squadron (L)

A1C Lewis, Wayne E., 730th Bomb Sq (L)

SSGT Lindsey, Ray E., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

SGT MacArthur, Douglas J., 729th Bomb Sq (L)

SSGT Madsen, JR., John (NMI), 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

A1C Mase, Robert R., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

SSGT McFee, Claude D., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

A2C McGrath, Ronald G., 729th Bomb Sq (L)

A1C McHaney, Leslie E., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

TSGT McManaman, Bernard L., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

CPL McNulty, John W., 729th Bomb Squadron (Light)

SGT Mitchell, Bernard (NMI), 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

SGT Mutschler, Forrest M., 729th Bomb Sq (L)

SSGT Olson, Maurice A., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

SGT Overton, Donald W., 730th Bomb Sq (L)



*A1C Charles L. Billingslea, Jr., MIA, 13th Bomb Squadron (L).*

SSGT Palmiotti, Nicholas M., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A1C Parham, Jr., Charles E., 730th Bomb Sq (L)  
 A3C Peterson, Norman W., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Phelps, Ralph L., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 TSGT Proud, Jr., Robert L., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 TSGT Quider, Chester D., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Raney, William H.B., 729th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Raymond, Gerald W., 729th Bomb Squadron (Light)  
 SSGT Ross, Richard C., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Smiley, Paul A., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 PFC Solem, Norris A., 729th Bomb Sq (L)  
 SGT Soto, George J., 728th Bomb Sq (L)  
 A1C St. Mary, Robert R., 37th Bomb Sq (L)  
 SGT Stefas, Frank (NMI), 729th Bomb Sq (L)  
 A3C Story, Glen F., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Vanwey, William H., 34th Bomb Sq (L)  
 A1C Vernon, Jr., Harold M., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Viveiros, Manuel J., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Watson, William J., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Weeks, Grady M., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Wheelwright, Clarence W., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Wiley, Kenneth D., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Yamakawa, Timothy S., 37th Bomb Sq

**Killed in Action:**

SSGT Abbott, Richard D., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 CPL Aiken, James R., 729th Bomb Sq (L)  
 CPL Alder, Jules, 90th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Brekke, Charles F., 34th Bomb Sq (L)  
 SGT Bruzelius, Jr., David (NMI), 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 TSGT Cadena, Jr., Daniel (NMI), 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Campos, Jr., Jose C., 8th Bomb Squadron  
 PFC Chumak, Edward (NMI), 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SGT Colvard, Jr., Roy P., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A1C Condron, Thomas J., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 AB Estrumsa, Shaya,  
 A2C Festa, Robert K., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Fluke, Robert W., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Foglietta, Ronald J., 37th Bomb Sq (L)  
 SSGT Glakeler, Robert T., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A1C Gliniak, Joseph S., 95th Bomb Sq  
 SSGT Goodwin, William J., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)

SSGT Hardy, Martel (NMI), 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A1C Hilycord, William R., 90th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 TSGT Hollyfield, James R., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 CPL Jeffords, Jacques M., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A1C Kiernan, James E., 37th Bomb Sq  
 SGT Lang, Richard (NMI), 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SGT Matton, Andre J., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SGT McAfee, James T., 730th Bomb Sq  
 SSGT McNeill, Lewis O., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Mechaney, James L., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)



SSGT Richard C. Ross, KIA, 13th Bomb Squadron (L).

MSGT Morar, George (NMI), 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Obzina, Frank (NMI), 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SGT Raihl, Frank A, 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Root, Jr., Voorhees S., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 CPL Rovira, Jr., Harold J., 729th Bomb Sq (L)  
 PFC Simmons, Thurman N., 729th Bomb Sq (L)  
 TSGT Sloppy, Clifford O., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Snider, Norman E., 728th Bomb Sq (L)  
 SSGT Stanphill, Verlyn L., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 A2C Staudenmayer, Thomas E., 90th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SGT Upton, Richard R., 728th Bomb Sq (L)  
 SGT Vanderford, Kenneth J., 730th Bomb Sq (L)  
 A1C Ward, Fred A., 13th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Wilkins, Robert M., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)  
 SSGT Zeiher, George T., 8th Bomb Squadron (L)

# Col. Schreiner's Final B-2 Flight

*from the Whiteman AFB Facebook page*



## WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo. --

Col. Jeffrey Schreiner flew his final flight in the B-2 Spirit as the wing commander last week. He has accomplished 1,272.1 flying hours since he began his career in the B-2 in 2001. His final flight was in the aircraft bearing the name of his home state, the *Spirit of Missouri*.

Col. Schreiner was accompanied during his flight by Col. Matthew Calhoun, 131st Bomb Wing, Missouri Air National Guard commander in his

wing's flagship and was launched by a team of Missouri Air National Guardsmen.

Airmen with the 509th and 131st Maintenance Groups saluted Col. Schreiner as he taxied before take off, while his family, the 509th Operations Group, and Airmen from around the base greeted him at his landing.



# “In Good Hands”: Diehl Takes Command of 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base

*By Chelsea Ecklebe, 509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs / Published June 16, 2021*

## WHITEMAN AIR FORCE BASE, Mo. --

U.S. Air Force Col. Daniel Diehl took the reins of the 509th Bomb Wing from outgoing commander Col. Jeffrey Schreiner during a change-of-command ceremony June 16, at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri.

Military change-of-commands are a time-honored tradition that formally symbolizes the continuity of authority as the command passes from one individual to another. The transfer of command is physically represented by handing the command flag, the tangible symbol of the unit, from the outgoing commander to the new.

“As I take my position at this historic base and storied unit, I want to congratulate Colonel Schreiner on a masterful job leading the world’s most lethal stealth platform,” Diehl said. “I have big shoes to fill and it is an honor to continue the impressive work he began.”

After two years in command and leading Team Whiteman through the global COVID-19 pandemic, Schreiner is headed for a new leadership position with the United States Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska.

Maj. Gen. Mark Weatherington, Eighth Air Force and Joint-Global Strike Operations Center commander, presided over the ceremony and assured Airmen in attendance that the Wing has transitioned into very capable hands.

“It was an honor to preside over the event and to pass the 509th Bomb Wing reins from one remarkable leader to another,” Weatherington said. “The Airmen,



*U.S. Air Force Col. Daniel Diehl, 509th Bomb Wing commander, renders his first salute to the unit during the 509th BW change of command ceremony, Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, June 16, 2021. Over the past months, Diehl has trained and qualified in the stealth bomber and over the next couple of weeks will meet with representatives of each group on base to immerse himself in Team Whiteman’s wide-ranging missions and community. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman First Class Victoria Hommel)*

civilians and families of Whiteman Air Force Base and the vital, strategic mission of the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber are in good hands.”

Diehl is an experienced pilot with more than 2,500 flight hours in the T-37 Tweet, T-38 Talon and B-1B Lancer and has accumulated 664 combat hours throughout his Air Force career.

He transitioned to Whiteman AFB from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, where he commanded the 7th Operations Group -- Air Force Global Strike Command’s largest B-1

bomb group. At Whiteman, Diehl will be responsible for the combat readiness of the Air Force’s only B-2 Spirit wing and supporting installation functions.

Over the past months, he trained and qualified in the stealth bomber and is slated to meet with representatives of each group on base to immerse himself in Team Whiteman’s wide-ranging missions and community.

“I have already felt extremely welcomed by the members of Whiteman Air Force Base and I am humbled to become a part of this elite group,” Diehl said. “The mission of the 509th is absolutely vital to our national defense and every member of Team Whiteman is an invaluable asset in keeping our Air Force the greatest air force the world has ever known. I look forward to working alongside these talented and dedicated team members!”





Charlie Breitzke, Locator

# Locator's Radar

**Are You on Our Radar?**



Please contact Charlie Breitzke at [info@13thbombsquadron.net](mailto:info@13thbombsquadron.net)

As Bob Koehne noted in his President's Corner, the future of the association is in jeopardy. There are a number of circumstances that have served to put us in this position, but the bottom line is that the participation of the 21st century members will shortly determine if the association will continue.

In a recent article, I addressed the number of Inactive and Unknown folks, hoping that some of the current B-1/B-2 members might be in contact with some of those and could urge them to join. The statistics for the big-bomber members are not encouraging. Give or take a couple (for data entry errors), there are 200 Dyess Reapers in the database, of which 8 are still active, and 3 have made any contribution in the last few years. There are 44 Reapers total from Whiteman, of which 20 are active. I imagine anyone looking at those figures would come to pretty much the same conclusion, and it's not encouraging.

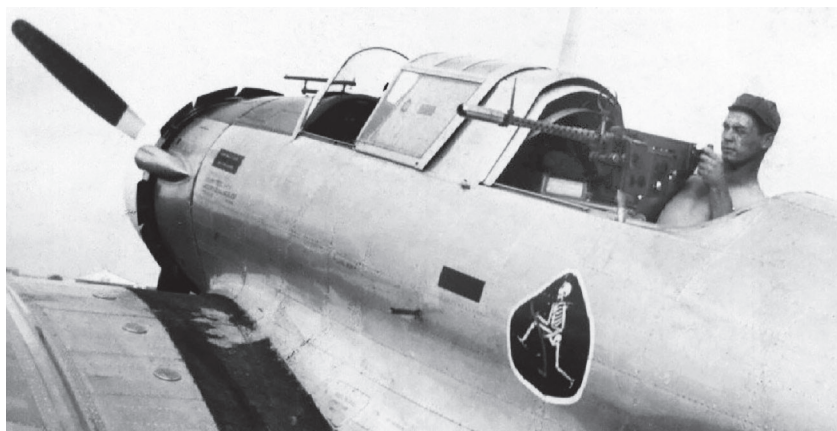
*The 13th Bomb Squadron Association wants you!*

Joining the 13th Bomb Squadron Association is easy, membership is open to Veterans of the 13th Bomb Squadron, their families, friends of the 13th Bomb Squadron including veterans of other squadrons that served alongside the Reapers, and maintenance squadrons. Simply contact the 13th Bomb Squadron Association Locator, Charlie Breitzke at [info@13thbombsquadron.net](mailto:info@13thbombsquadron.net) with your name & address and Charlie will get a membership info packet to you.

**I WANT YOU FOR THE 13th BOMB SQUADRON ASSOCIATION!**

**ENLIST @**  
[www.13thbombsquadron.com](http://www.13thbombsquadron.com)

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Gunner Position on a Northrop A-17A.

*The Northrop A-17, a development of the Northrop Gamma 2F model, was a two-seat, single-engine, monoplane, attack bomber built in 1935 by the Northrop Corporation for the U.S. Army Air Corps.*



# THE HOT SEAT

## *Editor's Comments*

As best as I can tell, this is the 23rd issue of the INVADER that I have had the honor of editing since stepping into some very large shoes left by my predecessors. I had helped Charley Hinton and Bud Compton, mostly restoring and retouching photos, creating graphics and illustrations, as well as doing some research, but that was all done behind the scenes. The first issue that I edited on my own was in March of 2013. Back when I started, I was just a fledgling, but back then, I could always turn to Charley or Bud for advice. With both Charley and Bud flying West, I was forced to fly alone for the most part, but I had a lot of much appreciated help from the Association's Presidents who have always had my six in this arduous task of producing the INVADER. Onward and upward!

This issue, as you might have guessed, is dedicated to the "Gunners". I guess because of my uncle "Hink" Henderson, I have always had an affinity with gunners. The 13th had a long history of gunners going all the way back to 1917. By the time the Vietnam War rolled around, gunners were a thing of the past in the 13th. By then, the mission and the weapons of the 13th had changed dramatically. The last of the 13th's gunfighters served during the Korean War. These guys had a swagger about them. One of them, who is featured as our centerfold in this issue, "ORB" Old Rotten Bill Cowan, had so much swagger, he pushed the Air Force to resurrect the 13th Bomb Squadron! If you want to get something done, give it to a sergeant and if that sergeant happens to be a 13th gunner, you better be ready for a gunfight. Needless to say, we all know how that ended. The 13th is still flying.

Looking back at 13th gunners, there is no shortage of swagger. Probably the most famous gunner to have served with the 13th had so much swagger it couldn't even be contained in one war! Chief Master Sergeant Lucien Thomas, 400 missions, 3 wars, serving with the RCAF, the RAF, the U.S. Army Air Corps and the United States Air Force! Talk about a gunfighter.

From my own family history, during WWII, my uncle Hink had initially trained to be a fighter pilot, but after several incidents and mishaps in his class, including the fatal crash of his friend Kenny Heasley, the Army Air Corps washed out his entire class and sent them off to gunnery training at Mountain Home Army Air Field. This additional stay in the



Don Henderson, Editor

states may have saved his life. By the time he arrived in the UK with the 457th Bomb Group, unbeknownst to him, there were only 21 missions left for him as a waist gunner in the ETO. Although he flew on several mercy missions dropping food and supplies into France and Belgium, his days as an aerial combat gunner were over.

I recently found out that my cousin's oldest son, Sean Ging, is piloting an AC-130 Spooky Gunship. Although not a gunner himself, he has a few gunners that have his six. Sean serves with the 73rd Special

Operations Squadron out of Hurlburt Field, Florida.

I hope you all enjoyed this look into the Gunners of the 13th Bomb Squadron in this issue. These unsung heroes, from their isolated position, put their lives and trust in the hands of the pilot, and the pilot put his trust in the hands of these gunners.

I remember years ago reading that during the Korean War, a CO complained that the 13th was trading B-26's for North Korean trucks at an alarming rate. When you look at our "In Memoriam" section, we have more members flying West than we have new members coming in to the Association. I don't know the answer, but it was great to see our friend Brian Gallo step up to represent the ranks of the B-1 and B-2 Reapers. Welcome Brian! Brian has already hit the ground running. Also, welcome Perry Nuhn as our new Korean War rep and Dan Pipkins as our new Vietnam rep!



Your editor posing at the waist gunner's position on the B-17 Flying Fortress 44-83575 "909" at the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport in Latrobe, PA. Sadly, "909" had a fatal crash on October 2, 2019 at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, while attempting to return shortly after takeoff.



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*Former 13th Bomb Squadron CO, Col. Jeffrey Schreiner flew his final flight in the B-2 Spirit as the wing commander last week. He has accomplished 1,272.1 flying hours since he began his career in the B-2 in 2001. His final flight was in the aircraft bearing the name of his home state, the Spirit of Missouri. Col. Schreiner was accompanied during his flight by Col. Matthew Calhoun, 131st Bomb Wing Missouri Air National Guard commander in his wing's flagship and was launched by a team of Missouri Air National Guardsmen. Airmen with the 509th and 131st Maintenance Groups saluted Col. Schreiner as he taxied before take off, while his family, the 509th Operations Group, and Airmen from around the base greeted him at his landing.*