



Commander's Report

Fellow Reapers,

I'm proud and very grateful to report to you the safe return of the 13th Bomb Squadron from Operation Iraqi Freedom and PACIFIC WATCH. I'm also proud of the manner in which your very own Grim Reapers conducted themselves in such a demanding environment so far from home. The men and women of your 13th Bomb Squadron completed their job in a professional manner, and I feel honored to be their commander.

We deployed to the Pacific region as a prudent measure to enhance the U.S. defensive posture in the region. Our country has treaties and obligations to support our allies in the region, and the Reapers are committed to supporting those friends and allies.

We, along with our brothers in the 9th Bomb Squadron were dual tasked to provide support to the Iraqi theater of operation and maintain peace and stability in the Pacific region. We were joined in the largest bomb group since Vietnam by B-52's from the 20th Bomb Squadron, Barksdale AFB LA. Though we never had the opportunity to fly over Iraq, I can assure you that the North Koreans were very aware that the Reapers were standing watch once again in the Pacific.

We participated in many combat-prep exercises with Air Force and Navy fighters and flew training missions all over the Pacific. At one point the Group flew 103 sorties in a 36-hour period. Though the opportunity never came to deliver weapons to our enemy, I've never seen this unit more prepared for combat.

Sadly, I must also report to you all that I will relinquish command of the Mighty 13th on 8 July to Lt Col Buck Shawhan. This has been, without a doubt, the finest assignment of my 21-year career. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to command a squadron with the heritage of the 13th and to have had the privilege to command such a superb group of aviators, maintainers and support personnel. It was also a privilege to be associated with the greatest aviation association in the world and I hope to see many of you again at future Reaper reunions.

"To the Reapers of Yesterday," REAPER PRIDE!!!

Lt Col Jerry Plourde
Commander, 13th Bomb Squadron

