

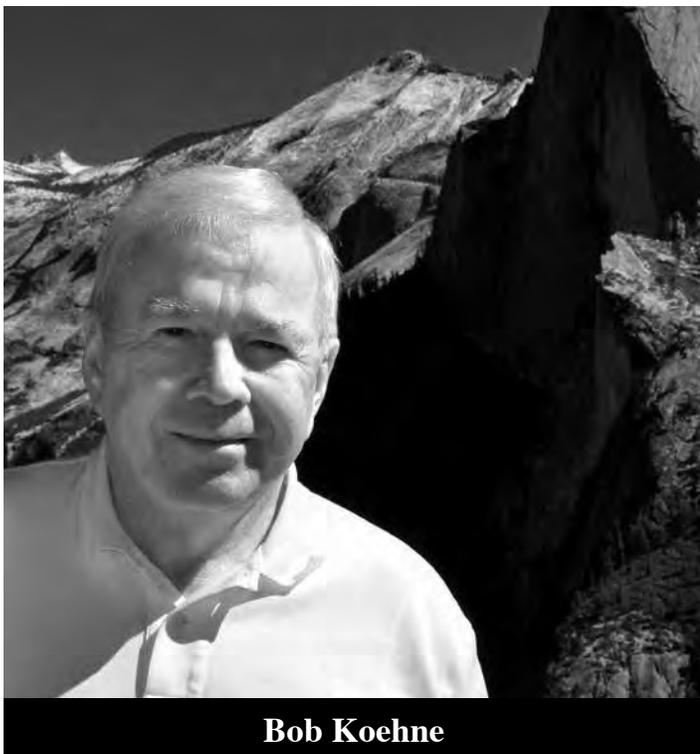
INVADER Magazine



Official Publication of the 13th Bomb Squadron Association



The Pilot & the Pin-Up



Bob Koehne

President's Corner

In a normal year, you would be receiving this spring Invader with all the details and the registration form for the annual reunion which was to be held in late September in San Antonio. Well, this is anything but a normal year given the Covid-19 pandemic we are experiencing. Having said that, I hope that all of you and your families are safe and coping with the stay at home orders and the economic shutdown. The board has decided that it was best to err on the side of caution and postpone the reunion until spring of 2021, probably sometime in April. San Antonio should be nice in the spring and hopefully the country will be back to somewhat normal by then. Decisions about subsequent reunions will be made then.

Speaking of reunions, we have learned that the Canberra association reunion last year will be their last. I know that a number of our members belong to both organizations, several attending Canberra reunions regularly.

Charlie Breitzke, our locator, has done a study of the association data base that I think you will find interesting. Check out his groupings of 13th members in all our past conflicts.

It doesn't look like any of us will be attending change of command ceremonies at Whiteman this spring. Lt. Col. Mike "Ox" Polidor has indicated that he will remain in command for another year. The immediate

past squadron commander, Lt. Col. Geoffrey "Fletch" Steeves is on the 0-6 list for full Colonel. No new assignment has been announced yet. Fletch is now running two years ahead of his contemporaries.

At the Boise reunion, Ox gave us a rundown on the status of the bomber fleet, and mentioned the problems with the B-1 component. The B-1's heavy engagement in the middle east after 18 years had taken it's toll. There was a long list of major repairs, including ejection seat issues, and last summer it's mission capable rate had fallen into single digits. Well, by late fall the Bone was back after an urgent effort, according to AF magazine.

Here in Seattle, Boeing is in the news most every day, one only has to open the paper to see what is going on with the new KC-46 tanker. USAF has accepted 33 of them in spite of the flaws with the remote refueling system, whereby the boomer sits up front and uses cameras and computers for the display system. It doesn't work well when the sun is directly in front of or behind the tanker. Boeing is doing a complete redesign of the system at their expense, but it is expected to take 3 1/2 years. Meanwhile, in April, Airbus successfully demonstrated the first fully automatic air-to-air refueling contact with a Portuguese F-16. The boomer simply monitors the process.

I would like to end my comments with a few words about the future of our association. It's no secret that our numbers are declining due to the aging of the majority of our members and few new ones joining. Unlike aircraft model associations like our sister Canberra group, which can last only as long as those who flew them, we are fortunate to still be part of an active B-2 squadron, with the strong possibility of the 13th becoming a B-21 Raider squadron. So, our association could have an indefinite future. I believe that the key to that happening is if past B-1 and B-2 squadron commanders who view their time in the squadron favorably and still have an interest, contact past members and bring them on board. Otherwise, our association may only last a few more years. I would also like to remind all current and past 13th members that dues have always been voluntary.

One consideration might be to hold future reunions at Whiteman to build on the recent interest shown by active duty members, thereby developing some new leadership in the association.

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Please note, due to the sad passing of Ed Connor and Dave Clark, we are without representation for both WWII and Vietnam War-era Veterans of the 13th Bomb Squadron Association. Since this is an appointed/volunteer position, if you are interested in representing the Association, please contact Bob Koehne at info@13thbombsquadron.net for consideration.

As always, we are looking for your stories and photos for future issues of the INVADER, please contact Don Henderson with your stories and photos so that we can continue to build the history of the 13th Bomb Squadron!



Charlie Breitzke, Locator

Locator's Radar

Are you on our Radar?

Please contact Charlie Breitzke at

info@13thbombsquadron.net



I thought this issue would be a Sesame Street/Mr. Rogers episode of Fun With Numbers. As the data guy for the Association, I often find myself stumbling over interesting facts and groupings. Most of this comes as I search online for new contact information for members who've moved after each INVADER or contribution packet mailing (hint, hint). Don't hold me to total accuracy, as I and all those in the past who developed and maintained the database are amateurs – but we've all tried our best.

The biggest number I have is 7,025. That's the number of entries in the database, including everyone who was assigned to or interested in the 13th from 1917 until now. Active, Inactive, Unknown, Deceased, Friend, Honorary, Associate, Survivor and even some units to which the 13th was attached.

I thought the next most interesting group of numbers

would be those assigned to the 13th during the various conflicts. WWI accounts for 409, with obviously none active. WWII had 509 entries, with three of those still active. Korea jumps up to 2,174 total and 105 still active. That's no surprise, since it was those guys who put the Association together. I lumped all those in Vietnam together, getting to 952 total and 88 active. And, whether we call it Global War on Terror or just the 21st century, the B-1/B-2 folks come in at 282 in the database, with 29 active.

There's another number that came up at the Boise reunion, and it speaks to why, if the Association is to continue on for more than a couple of years, the B-1/B-2 folks need to begin taking the reins. I knew I was one of the younger members from before the break, but I just turned 75 as I type this. At Boise, I ran across one of the younger enlisted folks, and he'd be about 72 now. So, it doesn't take much imagination to see what's going to happen otherwise.

If anyone has other data they'd like to see put together, let me know. I'll see if I can put something together for the next issue.

The son of John Beckwith has informed us that John is in rapidly failing health and requested that anyone who knew John contact him. Our records show that John was a flight engineer in 1953. The son is Frank Beckwith, who can be contacted at 901-687-0377 or nightwolf8285@gmail.com.

In Memoriam
As of Winter 2020

Ralph G. Watt
January 30, 2019
Navigator, 1951-52

Russell V. McManus
April 5, 2020
Gunner, 1953-56

Alfred T. Gingras
June 29, 2019
Electrician, 1952-53

Rest In Peace

Robert L. Caris
December 15, 2016
Pilot, 1953

Robert A. Rohleder
February 17, 2020
Gunner, 1951-52

Robert C. Harpster
April 2, 2019
Navigator, 1952-53

James L. Camden
June 30, 2019
Crew Chief, 1952

The Flying Bucket of Blood

Established 27 June 1924

While doing some research on an illustration I had done a few years back, I discovered an interesting connection between the Grim Reapers and the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

On 1 June 1920, the Militia Bureau issued Circular No.1 on organization of National Guard air units.

The Pennsylvania Air National Guard was formed on 27 June 1924 as the 103d Observation Squadron, Pennsylvania National Guard, received federal recognition as a Corps Aviation unit. The 103d was founded and commanded by Major Charles Biddle, who had flown in World War I as part of the famous Lafayette Flying Corps. Biddle joined the Lafayette Flying Corps in France on 8 April 1917. He was assigned to Escadrille 73 as a private on 28 July 1917, under the command and mentorship of Albert Deullin. He was promoted to corporal on 2 June and to sergeant on 1 December. Biddle initially fought several indecisive combats with a Spad VII, but success evaded him until 5 December 1917. Flying a SPAD XIII, he downed the Albatros two-seater of Leutnants Fritz Pauly and Ernst Sauter of FFA 45 despite a malfunction by both his SPAD's machine guns.

When the United States entered the war, Charles Biddle transferred to the American 103d Aero Squadron on 10 January 1918 and was commissioned as a captain in the Aviation Section of the U.S. Army Signal Corps on 12 January 1918. Flying a SPAD VII on 12 April he gained his first win over a Halberstadt CL.II over Corbeny. On 24 June 1918, Capt. Charles Biddle became Commander of the 13th Aero



Maj. Charles J. Biddle, Commander, 13th Aero Squadron, became the first Commander of the 103d Observation Squadron, Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

Squadron, and went on to become the squadron's first ace. On 1 August, he shared his first two victories with William Howard Stovall, John Seerly, and H. B. Freeman. Biddle shot down three more enemy planes afterwards - his 5th official credit was a Rumpler CIV of Fliegerabteilung 46LB, pilot Eichler (POW) and observer Gröschel (DOW) on 16 August 1918. He was at one point entrusted with the only SPAD XII issued to Americans. He was promoted to the rank of major on 1 November and was given command of the 4th Pursuit Group. He returned to the United States on 19 December and was discharged from the Army on 25 January.

In recognition of his service, the French awarded him both the Legion of Honor and the Croix de Guerre, and he received the American Distinguished Service Cross and the Belgian Order of Leopold II.

After the war, Biddle, a Philadelphia native, became the commander of the 103d Observation Squadron. The new National Guard squadron was based on the sod fields of Philadelphia Airport as a unit of the famed 28th Infantry Division, the famed "Bucket of Blood", called so because of the blood red keystone

shoulder patch worn by the soldiers of the division. The 103d is one of the 29 original National Guard Observation Squadrons of the United States Army National Guard formed before World War II.

The 103d flew a wide variety of observation aircraft for the next 18 years. The most well-known of these aircraft was the JN-4 Jenny. The Jenny was an open-cockpit biplane; but was replaced in the 1930's and early 1940's with metal-skinned, prop-driven observation

monoplanes. The list is long but shows the steady improvement in aircraft. The squadron also flew liaison-type aircraft such as the L-4 and L-1B. The 103d Observation Squadron was ordered into active service on 25 November 1940 as part of the buildup of the Army Air Corps prior to the United States entry into World War II.

Postwar Era

On 24 May 1946, the United States Army Air Forces, in response to dramatic postwar military budget cuts imposed by President Harry S. Truman, allocated inactive unit designations to the National Guard Bureau for the formation of an Air Force National Guard. These unit designations were allotted and transferred to various State National Guard bureaus to provide them unit designations to re-establish them as Air National Guard units.

The modern Pennsylvania ANG received federal recognition on 17 January 1947 as the 53d Fighter Wing at Philadelphia International Airport. The 53d was a command and control organization, controlling the 148th Fighter Squadron at Reading Airport, receiving federal recognition and activated on 27 February 1947. Other units of the newly formed PA ANG were the 146th Fighter Squadron and 147th Fighter Squadron at Pittsburgh IAP, receiving federal recognition and activated on 20 December 1948 and 111th Bombardment Group (Light) and its subordinate 103d Bombardment Squadron, at Philadelphia IAP. The 111th and 103d received federal recognition and were activated on 20 December 1948.

The Reading and Pittsburgh units were equipped with F-51D Mustangs, with a mission of air defense of the Commonwealth. The 111th Bombardment Group in Philadelphia was equipped with B-26 Invaders, assigned to Tactical Air Command as a light bombardment unit. The 53d Wing was also the headquarters for an Aircraft Control & Warning Group (AC&W Gp) located at Harrisburg State Airport and three Air Service Groups, which were colocated with its flying groups and had flights located with each of the squadrons assigned to the flying groups.

The 112th Fighter Group was federally recognized and activated at Pittsburgh on 22 April 1949,

controlling the 146th, 147th and the 148th Fighter Squadrons.

At the end of October 1950, the ANG converted to the wing-base (Hobson Plan) organization. As a result, the wing was withdrawn from the Air National Guard and inactivated on 31 October 1950. Its personnel and those of its 211th Air Service Group formed the cadre for the 111th Composite Wing, while its elements in Pittsburgh formed the cadre for the 112th Fighter Wing, which were simultaneously allotted to the ANG and activated. The 153d AC&W Gp was transferred directly to the PA ANG.

Korean War

The Philadelphia 103d Bomb Squadron was federalized on 10 October 1950 along with its parent 111th Composite Wing due to the Korean War. Many of the pilots and maintenance personnel were split off and sent for duty overseas as individuals assigned to other combat units there. Eventually the B-26 bombers were sent as reinforcement aircraft to Far East Air Force for use in Korea. On 10 April 1951 the squadron and Wing were moved to Fairchild AFB, Washington and re-equipped with RB-29 Superfortress reconnaissance aircraft.

On 13 June 1952, two PA ANG pilots were flying an RB-29 over the Soviet Union when they were shot down by a pair of MiG-15's. The RB-29 was never recovered, having crashed in the waters off of Vladivostok, Russia. The Pennsylvanian families of the Air Guard pilots were told they had simply "vanished" in a weather-reconnaissance flight near Japan. It wasn't until the fall of the Soviet Union and the opening of communist archives that the relatives found out the truth in 1993. It is unknown as to whether any of the pilots or crew of this aircraft were captured by the Soviets at that time.

In February 1951, the 148th Fighter Squadron at Reading was activated for the Korean War. The squadron was sent to Dover AFB, Delaware where it assumed an air defense mission.

By 1 November 1952, all federalized PA ANG units were returned to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's control.



Cold War

In 1953, the 111th units at Philadelphia Airport were re-equipped with North American F-51D Mustangs and assumed an air defense mission. At Reading, the 148th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (FIS) continued its air defense mission with the Mustang until 1956. With the end of the line for the Mustang in USAF service, the United States Air Force, in an effort to upgrade to an all jet fighter force, required Air National Guard Air Defense Command units to upgrade to jet-powered aircraft. The Reading Airport Commission and National Guard authorities found themselves in a conflict over the use of Reading Municipal Airport for tactical jet operations. Unable to resolve these differences, the USAF inactivated the 148th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron on 30 June 1956.

The 140th Aeromedical Transport Squadron was bestowed the lineage and history of the inactivated Pennsylvania ANG's 148th FIS. The unit was re-equipped with the Curtiss C-46 Commando, and in 1958 the Fairchild C-119 Flying Boxcar. In 1960, the 140th was notified that it would be converting once again to the much larger and faster Lockheed C-121 Constellation. Due to longer runway requirements, the C-121s could not fly from Reading Airport, and on 1 February 1961 the unit relocated to its current location at Olmsted Air Force Base

(present day Harrisburg Air National Guard Base) due to the inadequate facilities at Reading.

At Pittsburgh, the 147th Fighter Squadron was authorized to expand to a group level, and the 171st Air Transport Group was established on 1 February 1961. The air defense mission was changed to a military airlift mission.

In 1962, the 111th transitioned from flying air defense missions to flying a large, heavy transport—the Boeing C-97 Stratofreighter, a double-decked, four-engine airplane. In 1963, the 111th ended its 39-year history at Philadelphia Airport and moved to brand new facilities on the north end of the Willow Grove Naval Air Station. From Willow Grove, the C-97 was used to transport troops and cargo all over the world

During the Vietnam War, the PA Air Guard flew 134 supply missions to Vietnam in 1966-1967, becoming the first reserve air force ever to enter a combat zone without actually being mobilized.

In 1972, widespread flooding in the aftermath of Hurricane Agnes resulted in 45 deaths and \$3 billion in property damage. Nearly 13,000 Army and Air Guard members were called to state active duty to help with relief operations.

In 1975, the 112th Tactical Fighter Group ended its air defense mission, receiving its first A-7D Corsair II aircraft and was reassigned to



Former Pennsylvania Air National Guard trainer T-33 Shooting Star, TR-513, at Memorial Park in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. While researching this aircraft, I found a “Keystoner” connection through Major Charles Biddle who after serving as commander of the 13th Aero Squadron in WWI, went on to become the first commander of the 103d Observation Squadron of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard, part of the famed “Bucket of Blood” - the 28th Infantry Division of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

the Tactical Air Command. In 1991, with the retirement of the A-7D, the 112th TFG became the 112th Air Refueling Group (ARG) under Strategic Air Command, receiving KC-135 Stratotankers that it operated jointly with the 171st, which had become an Air Refueling Wing at Pittsburgh in October 1972.

Several Air Guard units from Pennsylvania were mobilized in 1990-1991 for duty in Southwest Asia during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. Every member returned home safely.

Modern era

In 1992 the 112th ARG became a part of the Air Combat Command (ACC). On 1 October 1993, with both the 112th Air Refueling Group and the 171st Air Refueling Wing at Pittsburgh, the two tanker units were consolidated with the 146th Air Refueling Squadron being reassigned to the 171st Operations Group and once again reuniting with the 147th under the same group. The 112th Air Refueling Group was inactivated.

Hundreds of Pennsylvanian soldiers and airmen were deployed to Germany, Hungary and Bosnia in 1996-1997, in support of United Nations peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

In 2003, some 2,000 Pennsylvania citizen soldiers and airmen were deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, searching for weapons of mass destruction, providing convoy security, rebuilding infrastructure and protecting senior officials.

2,500 Pennsylvania Army and Air National Guard members were deployed in September 2005 for a month-long mission in support of hurricane disaster relief efforts along the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This was the largest state activation of Pennsylvania National Guard troops since Hurricane Agnes in 1972. These Guard members also assisted with relief efforts following Hurricane Rita.

In its 2005 BRAC Recommendations, DoD recommended the 111th Fighter Wing be inactivated and its assigned A-10 aircraft be reassigned to the 124th Wing (ANG), Boise Air Terminal Air Guard Station, Boise, ID (three primary aircraft); 175th Wing (ANG), Warfield Air National Guard Base, Baltimore, MD, (three primary aircraft); 127th Wing (ANG), Selfridge Air National Guard Base, Mount Clemens, MI (three primary aircraft) and retire the remaining aircraft (six primary aircraft).

This recommendation was part of a larger BRAC recommendation that would close NAS JRB Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. DoD claimed that this recommendation would enable Air Force Future Total Force transformation by consolidating the A-10 fleet at installations of higher military value. Despite appeals from Ed Rendell, the Governor of Pennsylvania, the recommendations were upheld and the A-10's departed during 2010. The 103d Fighter Squadron inactivated on 31 March 2011.

The Pilot & the Pin-Up

Back in 2002, at Charley Hinton’s suggestion, I do a vector illustration based on a B&W photo of a 6-Gun B-26B Invader that Charley shared with me. The photo, he believed was taken by Harry Galpin. The photo struck a nerve with me on several levels. Number one, it was a classic pin-up. Two, it was a 13th Bomb Squadron aircraft. Three, the artist’s toolbox, paint brushes and paint cans were sitting on the ground in front of the plane. This was probably the first photo taken of the nose art. The other thing that intrigued me was the name! That was all we knew about the aircraft, we didn’t even have a serial number. I did the illustration, posted it online with several other 13th Bomb Squadron nose art illustrations and that was it. With each one of the pin-up style nose art paintings on the planes, we tried to connect the dots with known pin-up art of the day. Charley and I had concluded after some research that the sources or references for almost all of the pin-up style nose art on 13th aircraft were based off popular Esquire Magazine Calendar pin-ups and mostly by the artist Al Moore, who was working for Esquire in the late 1940’s and early 1950’s. We determined that the nose art for “Don’s Other Wife” was based off of the October 1950 Esquire pin-up by Al Moore. Jump ahead to 2020 and this all takes an interesting twist, but before I go into that, I wanted to share a little background on the artist Al Moore.



Institute and Academy of Art and later opened a commercial art studio in New York City where he had great success as an illustrator.

In the 1940’s, Al Moore began doing pin-up art for Esquire Magazine. Esquire was a popular men’s magazine that employed several of the great pin-up artists

of the era, including George Petty with his “Petty Girls” and Alberto Vargas with his “Varga Girls”. Both the Petty and Varga Girls were the basis for the nose art on hundreds of WWII aircraft. The most famous nose art of WWII was a Petty Girl pin-up on both sides of the nose of an 8th Air Force B-17, the “Memphis Belle”. Vargas had a famous Varga Girl painted on the nose of a 7th Air Force B-24 Liberator called “Night Mission” that appeared in LIFE Magazine.

In 1949, Al Moore replaced Alberto Vargas at Esquire after Vargas sued Esquire over the trademark “Varga Girl”. Vargas won the suit, but never worked again for Esquire. Enter Al Moore,



“Esquire Girl” October 1950, Esquire Calendar pin-up by Al Moore. ©Esquire Magazine. Image courtesy of the Pin-Up Files, <http://www.thepinupfiles.com>

Al Moore played football at Northwestern University and went on to play professional football for one season, 1932 with the Chicago Bears. After 1932, he attended Chicago’s Art

The Pin-Up

Now let's jump to the present, 2020. More specifically March 4th, 2020. I got a phone call from a guy named Chris MacDonald, the grandson of the late Donald MacDonald, a pilot who served with the 13th in Korea and the pilot of



“Don’s Other Wife”! Chris had found my illustration online and tracked me down from there. We had a great conversation over the phone about his grandad and about his grandmother, June, who it turns out

was a pin-up model herself and the inspiration behind the nose art on “Don’s Other Wife”. Later in the day, I got a call from Chris’ dad, Colin, and he shared some stories as well about his mom and dad. One story that I found interesting about his mom happened in occupied Japan after WWII. She was the first blonde caucasian woman to visit post-WWII Japan. She caused quite a stir and was the subject



B-26B, #44-34287, Versatile Lady with nose art based on a Al Moore Pin-Up from Esquire Magazine, August 1951..

of much curiosity and interest since a blonde caucasian woman was a rarity in Japan.

In follow-up emails, Chris and Colin shared many photos and stories. June Elizabeth Swan MacDonald was a model with John Powers Modeling Agency based in New York City. The pretty blonde appeared in illustration on many magazine covers, and pin-up calendars including True Detective and Esquire Magazine. Many of her Esquire pin-ups, ended up on the noses of aircraft in Korea. I have found up to half a dozen so far, including the most famous B-26 of the Korean War, the 13th Bomb Squadron’s “Old Able”/“Versatile Lady”! June auditioned for the Mary Hartline show, but turned it down to be with Don in Japan.



ILT. D. MACDONALD

PILOT

ILT. C.G. MOODY

NAV.

T/SGT. R.L. BLACK

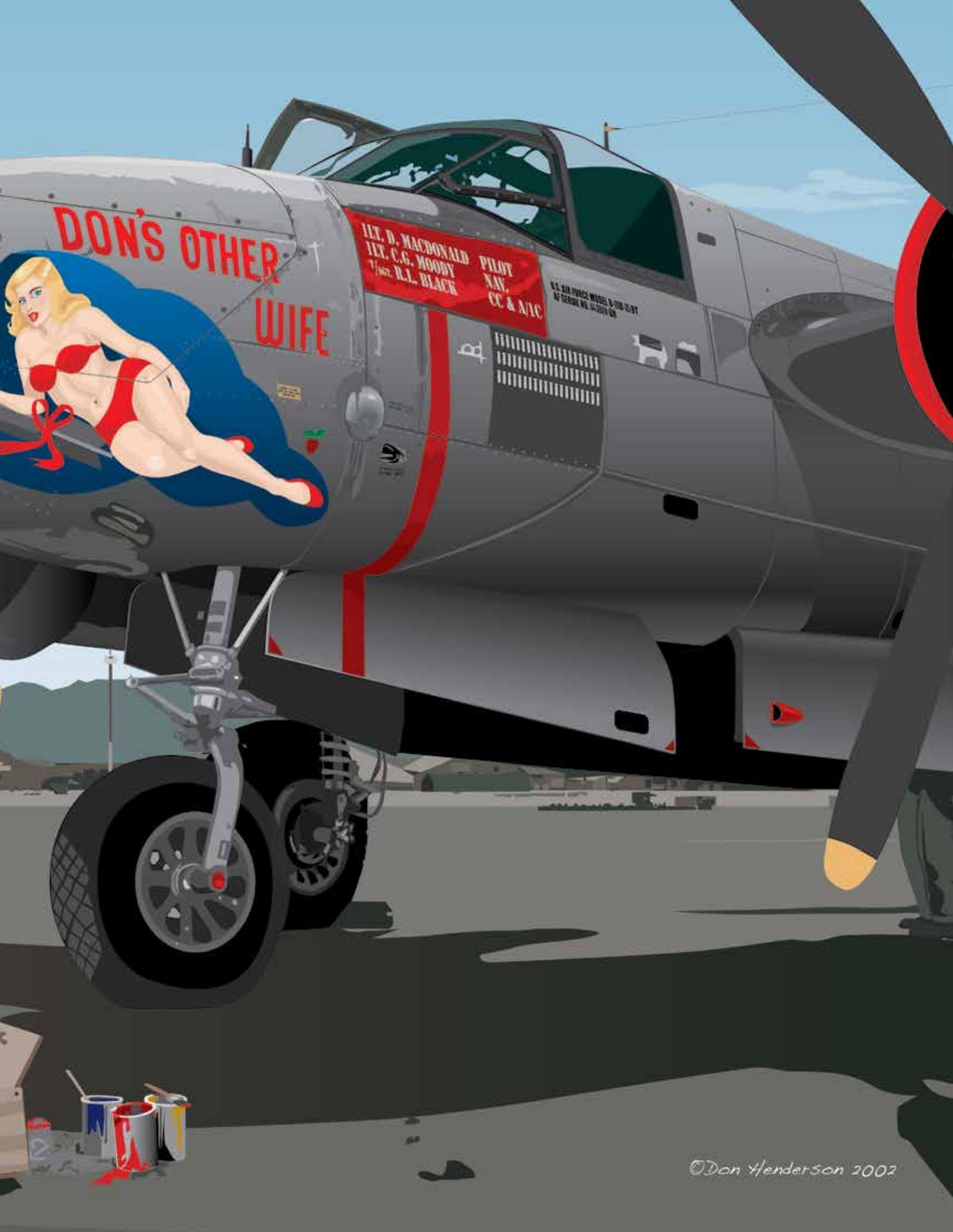
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U.S. AIR FORCE MODEL B-26B-35-DT

AF SERIAL NO. 44-39574 GH

TAIL LETTER B "BAKER"





DON'S OTHER
WIFE

1LT. D. MACDONALD
1LT. C.G. MOODY
1/ser. R.L. BLACK
PILOT
NAV.
CC & A/C

U.S. AIR FORCE MODEL B-26B-10-47
AF SERIAL NO. 44-2014 DN

The Pilot

He entered the Army Air Corps in 1944 and finished B-17 Advanced Bombardment School on June 6th, 1944 – D Day. He saw some action over Germany toward the end of WWII serving with the 8th Air Force flying B-17's. After WWII, he was stationed at Hanscom AFB flying T-6 Texans before attending A-26 school.

Don MacDonald graduated from the US Army Western Training Command on March 11th, 1948, Class 45-A, Stockton Field, California.

June and Don were high school sweethearts and they married in 1949. Shortly after their marriage, Don was assigned to the 13th Bomb Squadron operating out of Yokota AFB, Japan. June accompanied him and stayed at Yokota until the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. June MacDonald, pregnant with their first child, Colin, returned to the safety of the States, while Don prepared for war. The 13th Bomb Squadron flew the first combat missions of the Korean War.

Don spoke with his son Colin about a night mission. He was taking small arms fire from what his map said was an apple orchid. He circled back and unleashed the Invader's mighty firepower. What he hit was a hidden major ammunition dump of the North Koreans. He said the initial explosion, and the subsequent explosions, reached as high as 5000 feet. He received the



Don and June MacDonald above, and below with their newborn son, Colin.



Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission. Another mission in Korea, this time a daylight mission, he was leading a flight of two B-26's and spotted two North Korean ammunition trains on the same track. He and the other B-26 took out the lead locomotive, which trapped the second train and made the trains stationary targets. Don said they destroyed both trains. He also said there was a lot of smoke and

secondary explosions. That's the story about the two trains markings next to the number of bomb missions by the cockpit.

After the Korean War, Don was a B-26 flight instructor at Langley AFB for 2 years before being transferred back to Japan as a B-26 flight instructor at Tachikawa AFB. He eventually made the transition to the jet age in the B-47, flying out of McConnell AFB in Wichita, KS.

Don retired from the Air Force in 1964 as a Major after serving in SAC. He finished his

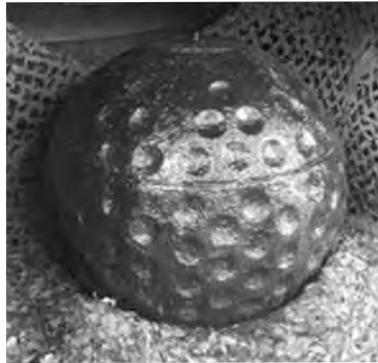
flying career at McConnell AFB as a B47 flight instructor. Don MacDonald passed away in 1975. His pin-up girl June passed away in 2014.

Editor's note: I'd like to thank Colin and Chris MacDonald for not only reaching out to me, but for sharing this fascinating story about Don & June MacDonald, what a great legacy to hang your hat on!

Invader Top Secret Weapon: Bouncing

-Johnathan Clayborn, Invader Historical Foundation

Don Henderson asked if I would be interested in writing a regular column for the INVADER, and I told him absolutely. In this article, which will be the first of my regular contributions, will discuss a little-known Top-Secret project carried out on the A-26 Invader. Before I get to that, allow me a moment to explain some context.



During the night of May 16th, 1943 the British Royal Air Force launched Operation Chastise – better known by the colloquial name “The Dambuster Raid”. The Royal Air Force sent No. 617 Squadron to attack and destroy the Mohne and Edersee dams with special high-speed bouncing bombs. The mission was a resounding success and caught the attention of the rest of the allies, including the US Army Air Force.

The special bomb used in the Dambuster Raid was developed by British Engineer Barnes Wallis. In 1942, Wallis wrote a paper called “Spherical Bomb – Surface Torpedo” describing a process by which surface ships could be attacked and sunk by any bomber that could be fitted to carry special bombs. The bombs were round, completely spherical, and spun up in the bomb bay prior to being dropped so that they hit the water with a back spin that allowed the bombs to skip across the water akin to skipping a rock across a lake. The bomb would sink under the water near the target and explode below the waterline, like a depth charge, using water pressure dynamics called “bubble pulse” to rip holes in enemy ships. He also mentioned they might be suitable for use against hydroelectric dams.

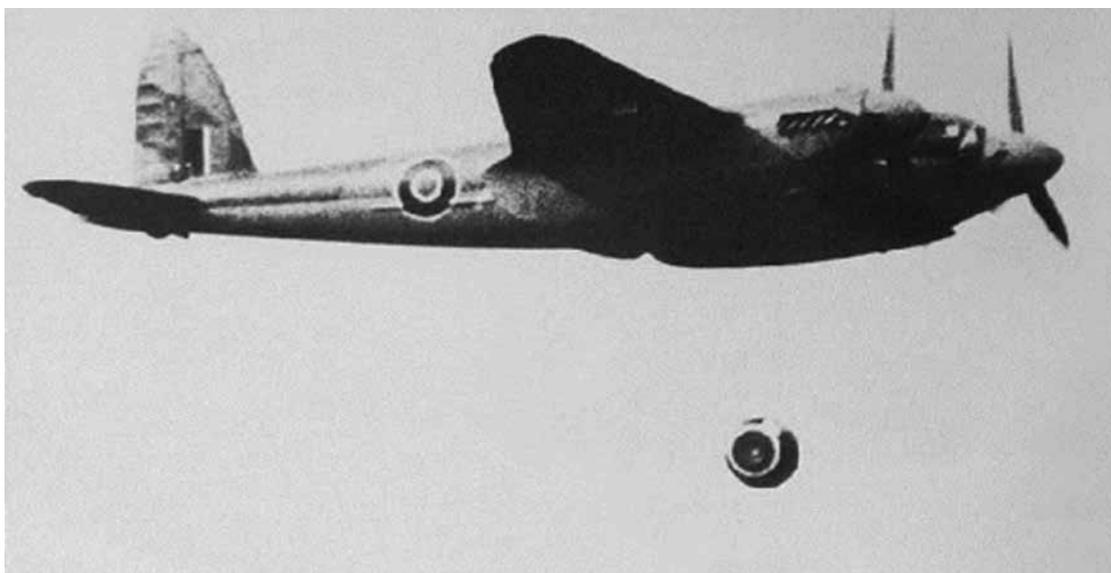
In July of 1942, a British researcher named A. R. Collins carried out a test of Wallis’ hypothesis by destroying an extra dam in Wales by planting a mine underwater beside the dam. When the dam was destroyed in a manner described as “spectacularly successful” the British government moved ahead with testing.

Wallis and Collins assembled a team of researchers and engineers at Road Research Laboratory and set to work creating prototype bombs and modifying a few Vickers Wellingtons to carry them. Two different versions of the bomb were created. The smaller, spherical version intended to be used against ships was developed under the name “Project Highball”, while a larger cylindrical version was developed under the codename “Project Upkeep”.

Unlike the Project Upkeep bombs that were carried on the Wellingtons for testing and then on Lancasters during the actual Dambuster Raid, the smaller Project Highball bombs were carried on a modified DeHaviland Mosquito Mk. IVb, with a cruising speed of 200 mph and a top speed of 400 mph.

The original testing of Project Highball on May 9th and 19th, 1943, was hampered with problems. The original tests were carried out on Loch Striven against an old French battleship in mothball, the “Courbet”. The range finding buoys were misplaced, the prototypes had several construction errors which caused them to bounce off-course, there were problems with the bombs’ release causing them to go too hard and too fast against the target, and some of the planes had problems with the bomb jigs, causing them to either not release at all, or to simply fall off prematurely.

Despite these setbacks, the RAF formed No. 618 Squadron on 1 Apr 1943 with the specific intent of sinking the German battleship “Tirpitz” with these bouncing bombs in an operation codenamed “Operation Servant”. The pilots trained for this mission and the engineering crews worked on resolving the problem. By May of 1944, the bombs were ready for testing again, but this time the target was the mothballed battleship “HMS Malaya”. The bombs worked and punched two

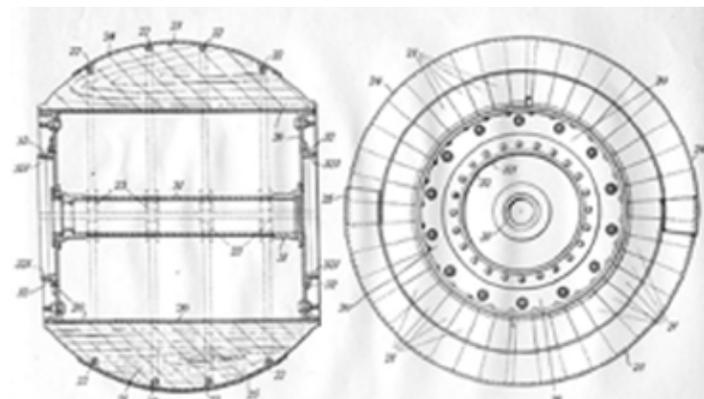


One of the Mosquitoes during Project Highball dropping a Highball bomb, via British National Archives.

holes into the side of the ship.

Despite the success of the test, the Highball bombs were never used operationally by the RAF. The intended target, the Tirpitz, was sunk by conventional bombing and all of the other targets had either already been destroyed or surrendered. Despite this, the US Army Air Force was still very interested in this system.

In January 1945, a single Douglas A-26 Invader was modified by the Vickers experimental facility at Foxwarren, Surrey. The British RAF division called the Aeroplane & Armament Experimental Establishment (A&AEE) was given two A-26's by the US Army Air Force in 1944 for testing and evaluation because the RAF had expressed interest in purchasing a number of the planes. Of these two planes, one of them was destroyed during a test flight in September 1944, but the other was outfitted by the team at Vickers. This plane was RAF serial number KL690 (USAF



Serial 43-22479). The team at the Vickers facility managed to convert the RAF A-26 to carry a pair of Highball bombs by using parts from a Mosquito conversion. The bombs were almost completely encased in the bomb bay. They flew some test flights with the system and then pulled the whole

conversion components back out of the plane and shipped it as a complete kit, along with 25 inert Highball bombs, to Wright AFB, Ohio.

The USAAF tested this new system out under the codename "Project Speedee". A single plane, serial number 43-22644, was converted using the RAF kit. This plane was formally assigned the 611th Base Unit at Wright Field, OH.

The modified plane was then flown to Eglin AFB, FL under the orders of AAF board Project No. F 4480, "Program for Test of Capabilities, Suitability, Tactics & Techniques, & Comparisons of Speedee".

The personnel at Eglin met with one of the researchers from Road Research Lab who gave them the rundown of specifics on the bomb. The British planes were doing drops from between 40' to 50' above the water and a speed of 365 mph to ensure good distance and bounce.



The bombs were tested in the nearby Choctawhatchee Bay at Water Range 60. The British researcher stayed for the first day and observed the tests to ensure that everything went smoothly, which it did. The plane's pilot, 1st Lt. Bryce L. Anderson, and the other 2 members of the crew were debriefed.



On Saturday, the 28th of April, 1945, 1st Lt. Anderson and his crew took off from Eglin for additional tests. For some reason, Anderson's plane was flying at an altitude of only 10 feet above the water. It's not clear if he was instructed by the test supervisors to try the bomb at that height or if he chose that height himself, but the results were disastrous.

A camera recording the tests from the shore caught the entire event. 1st Lt. Anderson comes in fast at an altitude of just over 10 feet.

By comparison, look at how high the RAF Mosquito pilots were when they dropped the bombs in *Fig. 1*.

The bomb from Anderson's plane released without incident and exactly one second later, the bomb struck the surface of the water. *Fig. 2* One second after that, the 950 lb bomb bounced up directly into the aft section of the plane, just behind the gunner's compartment, completely shredding the entire tail assembly and tearing it from the plane. *Fig. 3*

The sudden absence of the tail caused the plane to become very nose-heavy and it pitched forward. *Fig. 4* Without any of the necessary control surfaces still on the plane, there was nothing that could be done to save the plane from its fate.

Three seconds after the bomb release occurred, the plane slammed into the water at more than 350 mph, killing all three crewmen aboard instantly. *Fig. 5*

After the loss of the only Speedee modified prototype and the three crewmen aboard the plane, the American interest in the Highball skipping bombs waned and no further tests were ordered.

The project was quietly closed with mixed results. The bombs could work, but were ultimately deemed too dangerous.

<http://claybornglobal.com/invader/>

<https://www.facebook.com/InvaderHistorical/>



Rambling of a Navigator

The time is 1965 through 1968. The place is a country called Viet Nam, both north and south. The people are members of the 13th Bomb Squadron, call sign "Redbird" and our sister squadron the 8th Bomb Squadron, call sign "Yellowbird". The plane is the B-57 Canberra.



How do we remember this time in our lives? Do we recall particular events, special people, anxieties or humorous episodes? We relate to our experiences in our own particular way. To be sure, at that time we were a group of young gung-ho warriors out to prove ourselves. Give us a job, get out of the way, and look at the results.

Now let's fast forward to May 24, 2019 The site is the golf country club on the outskirts of the small village of La Porte City, Iowa. The people are a gathering of friends and relatives of one of our brethren warriors. The family of Dean Kruse (Steely Blue) have planned a wonderful tribute to his life and accomplishments. Kathy, Dean's wife and Anita, Dean's daughter, with their two sons spoke of heartfelt memories of love and happiness and how Dean will be missed. It was both a joyous and somber occasion.

Bob Koehne gave an excellent history of the development and use of the B-57 Canberra. He explained how the aircraft and air crews were employed in Viet Nam on close air support missions, day and night interdiction sorties and numerous other profiles including some remarks on enemy defenses. Observing the audience, you could feel that they had gained some understanding of what Dean and the air crews had undergone on a daily basis.

Patches have a special significance to crew members. Ours was and still is the Doom Pussy and Oscar, the Grim Reaper. Bob Galbreath, Godzilla, originated the patch. It was designed after a statue of a cat (pussy) that sat on a shelf in the bar at the Da Nang Officer's Open Mess (DOOM). Hence the name DOOM PUSSY. The wording around the periphery of the patch means: I have flown into the mouth of the Cat of Death. If this is not the correct interpretation, Godzilla knows how it was originally intended. As the flying day began, the cat was turned to face the back wall. When flying was finished, it was turned to face forward. Crews normally went for a "honk or two", or more depending on how the sortie of the day went. The cat was the first indicator of any bad news if word had not already spread through the squadron. Seeing the cat facing the wall would bring on a deep feeling of remorse. We all wear the patch with pride on special occasions. Each of us understands the proud heritage we feel. It reminds us of Reaper Pride.

Not all of our time was grim and serious. When you earned your commission, you were told you were now an officer and a gentleman and expected to conduct yourself accordingly. This did not always hold true. You were always an officer but not always a gentleman. Case in point: When we returned home to Clark AFB, at some point, there would be a formal dinner. The

"gentlemen" were to wear their Mess Dress and the ladies their finery. At the end of the dinner on one of those evenings we gathered outdoors around the

swimming pool. Who would have guessed it would be dyed red in honor of the Red Bird call sign? The next thing we knew we heard sirens coming up the street. The Base Commander came in screaming and hollering, "Who's responsible for this? You'll be court martialed!" Just then our General emerged from the pool. He was sputtering, coughing, laughing and having a great time. There was a side conference where the General quietly explained to the Colonel, "These are my boys letting down their hair and relaxing after their tour of combat." The Colonel and his security forces quickly departed the area. Later the rumor circulated that there was a new Base Commander at some remote base in the Arctic. Is this fact or fiction?

I often wonder if Bill Madison and Joe Krasniewicz had anything to do with the dunking. No accusations, no derogatory comments intended. Both were fun loving, true professionals. Only conjecture; feel free to deny. It's one of those closely held secrets.

Question: Are officers always gentlemen? This should settle the argument. Bob finished this story with an appropriate remark. The red pool is the reason that all 13th members had a surcharge on their officer's club dues for a year to pay for draining and cleaning the pool, even though they were assigned to the squadron after it even happened". Some things defy explanation.

Have you ever been engaged in a conversation, a thought or a project and your mind suddenly fastens on a memory out of the blue, with no warning? It has happened to all of us at one time or another. How about the time the crew at Phan Rang landed with a full bomb load? The plane just kept rolling and rolling. We found out they had landed with no brakes. Aerodynamic braking wasn't enough to stop on the runway. The lunch crowd on the hill couldn't believe what was happening. Finally, the plane went off the end of the runway in a big cloud of dust. Happily, and with a sigh of relief, the crew evacuated without incident. How about the time at Da Nang when the Squadron Commander's Jeep was parked at Squadron Ops and was damaged in a mortar attack? Fortunately there were no casualties. Finally, a two ship formation doing barrel rolls. Better judgment dictated this not be done over the air patch at Da Nang. No names, just a memory!

We all have fond memories of our warrior friends in the B-57. Lest we forget people like Steely Blue or our flying flight surgeon, or our comrades who gave their last full measure and those who suffered as prisoners of war. Let us always remember and keep touch with one another.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to the maintenance crews, the bomb loaders and all the ground personnel. These people can be extremely proud of the way they conducted their responsibilities. Every aircrew member was critically aware of how lives depended on their professional conduct. THANK YOU!

Silent

Letter to the Editor

I'm Raymond A. Ritter. I was a pilot with the 13th Squadron from March 1944 to August 1945. I flew 61 missions in New Guinea and the Philippines. I am 97 years old and I am cleaning out my collection of pictures, etc.

I read in the INVADER that you would like anything related to Oscar that we might have. I am including some things that will soon be discarded. If you see anything that you might use, please do so.

Yours Truly,
RAR

Armaments Officer MacArthur



Executive Officer Williams



Raymond A. Ritter 13th Attack Squadron



Ray Ritter and A-20 Kalifornia Kueen.



Operations at Hollandia

L to R: Jack Ross, John Linzmier, Ray Ritter, 13th Attack Squadron, 3rd Attack Group, Nadzab, New Guinea.

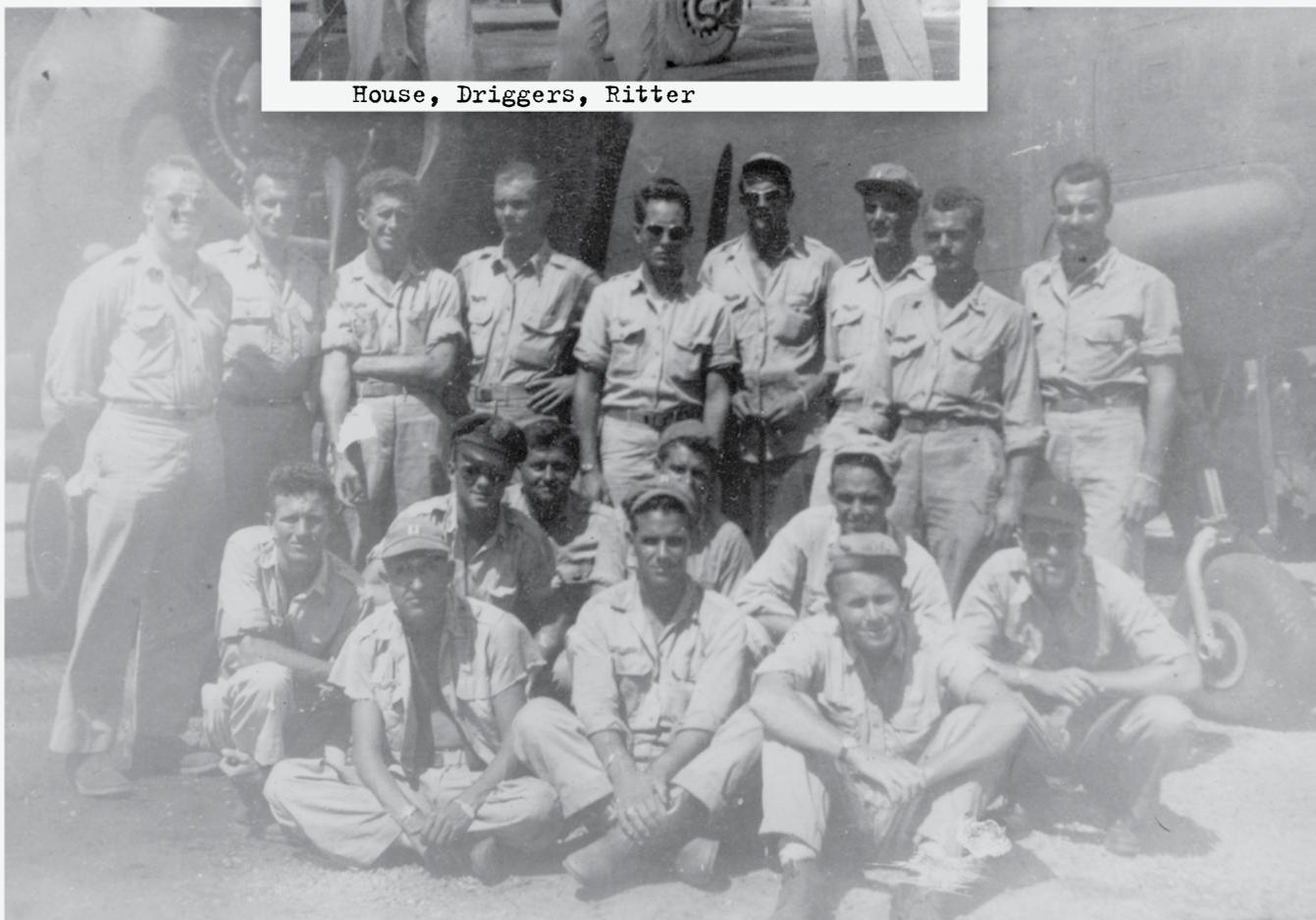
Ray Ritter with 13th SQ OPS Jeep



New Guinea Police Boys



House, Driggers, Ritter



L to R, Back Row: Cox, Festini, Sanders, Inman, unknown, Dixon, Burns. Middle, Standing: Farman, Seated: Braid, Herrin, Kent, unknown, Boiter. Front: Spence, Moorfield, Linzmier.

eBay Finds and More...

If you aren't on Gerry Kersey's email mailing list, you are missing out on a lot of great info and more importantly photos. Lots and lots of photos. Jerry's web site deals primarily with the 3rd Bomb Group in WWII that encompasses not just the 13th Attack Squadron, but the "Friendly 8th", the 89th and 90th Attack Squadrons. Jerry does a masterful job scanning and researching the squadrons of what was collectively called the "Grim Reapers" in WWII.

Recently a batch of 13th Attack/Bomb Squadron photos came up for auction and Gerry and his network were able to secure them and they are donating them to the Association! Here are some of the photos that were acquired and a few others that Gerry has been researching. Of particular interest is the photo of Walter King and, of course, the Officers of the 13th Bombardment Squadron on the next page.

Big thank you to Gerry Kersey and his crew for all they do to preserve the history of the 3rd Attack Group. And thank you for acquiring these photos for the 13th Bomb Squadron Association!



13th Attack Squadron B-25D, "P. I. Joe".



13th Attack Squadron, A-20G-20-DO "Scotch and Soda" 42-86568.



Air & Ground Crew of B-25 C "Hell's Belle" #112501

Air Crew, L to R: Capt. Raymond I. Petersen, Pilot; Lt. Ernest C. Canes, Co-Pilot; Lt. Ralph A. Orth, Navigator; T/Sgt. Robert S. Mallard, Bombarier; S/Sgt. John A. Manovich, Gunner; S/Sgt. Gordon D. Bawsel, Gunner

Ground Crew L to R: T/Sgt. Alman, Crew Chief; Cpl. Kirkland, Asst. Crew Chief; Pfc. Lurey Mech.; Pfc. Lawson, Mech.; Pvt. Lenhartz, Mech.

Officers of the 13th Bombardment Squadron (L) 17 December 1943



L to R, Row 1:

Capt. Charles D. Hewes, Capt. Charles C. Smith, Lt. Fred T. Potter, Lt. Gerald Prokopovitz, Capt. Theodore G. Fitch, Lt. Robert D. MacKoy, Lt. Gilbert S. Stiles, Lt. Donald W. Dover, **X** Lt. William T. Pearson

L to R, Row 2:

Lt. John C. Baldwin, Jr., Lt. Robert Tyrrell, Jr., **X** Lt. James L. Scarlott, Lt. Frank L. Dixon, Lt. L. Spruce, **X X** Lt. Walter A. Roidan, Lt. Stanley D. Kline, Lt. Charles L. McCrayfield, Lt. Joseph M. Shaltz

L to R, Row 3:

Lt. Melville W. Holmes, Lt. Jack H. Cress, **X** Lt. James F. Quinn, Lt. Donald T. Lees, Major Arthur Small, Lt. Kenneth G. Petz, F/O Ansel L. Boiter, Lt. John Holoc, **X** Lt. Herbert E. Rothery

L to R, Row 4:

Lt. Billy D. Sanders, Lt. Elliot Hickam, **X** Lt. Monroe G. Adelman, Lt. Joseph G. Brown, Jr., Lt. David C. Herrin, Capt. Herbert J. Turner, RAAF

L to R, Row 5:

X Lt. Edward Tenenbaum, Capt. William A. Smith, Capt. Edward F. Giesler, Lt. John E. MacArthur, Lt. Alvin H. Fail, Jr., Lt. Roland L. Bell, Lt. Vernon R. Fering, Lt. John M. Wallace, Lt. Ragan S. Williams

L to R, Row 6:

X 1st Lt. Saul Schwartz, 1st Lt. C.P. Taylor, 1st Lt. W.H. Shaw, Lt. Edwin P. Cove, Lt. Oscar J. Bryant, Jr., Lt. Horace J. Kisele, Capt. George E. Brown, Capt. John Hamilton, **X** 1st Lt. Sam L. Ferris

***Bold X** indicates MIA/KIA. Please note that every effort was made to correctly spell each name, but due to the quality, distortion, and degradation of the image, some names may be incorrect. If you have additional info or corrections, please contact me and I will update the file.

THE HOT SEAT

Editor's Comments

This surely is a brave new world that we have entered. I hope all of you are safe and well. The whole Covid-19 experience has been both frightening and productive for me. I usually spend a lot of time alone here at the studio, except for our two Weimaraner dogs. They keep me busy with their needs and I get my exercise running up and down the steps from my 3rd floor studio. On an average day, my Apple Watch claims I do 28-30 flights of stairs. Within the first week of the Coronavirus crisis, I was furloughed from the Frick Art Museum. Then a little over two weeks into this, my wife also got furloughed, so we are both home for the first time in over 35 years. A totally new experience for both of us. I've been keeping busy with doing some jobs for a few clients. Pam has been busy making face masks for family and some friends who are essential workers. Now that we are required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to wear masks in public, she has been making them everyday. As a result of Pam's mask making, I have some new skill sets to add to my resume: Bobbin Spooler, Needle Threader and Needle Replacement Engineer.



Our trip to Daytona Beach last month for Jeep Beach was canceled, and a planned trip to Williamsburg/Virginia Beach, we canceled on our own. The Bantam Jeep Festival first postponed, then canceled, and the Ocean City Jeep Crawl was canceled.

With all the free time and no vacations, I have been dedicating a lot of my time to creating artwork and reacquainting myself with film photography. I rigged up a darkroom in my basement where I have been developing mostly medium format film with a contraption called a Lab-Box. It's an interesting tool that allows you to develop film in broad daylight. The film itself is in a light tight box, but I don't have to be in total darkness. The Lab-Box is based on an earlier system developed by Agfa in the 1940's and 50's, but with some improvements. I've been developing 35mm film too, with the help of a homemade changing bag and some Patterson tanks. I haven't developed 35mm film since art school in 1976. The 120 film I have been shooting with is tried and true Kodak Tri-X 400, a film that has been

in continuous production since the end of WWII! The cameras that I'm using are Mamiya C series Twin Lens Reflex cameras from the early 1970's. I think the newest one, a C220, is from 1972. This quarantine hasn't been without a bit of excitement and terror either. Early in the morning on April 9th, a tornado ripped through New Kensington, knocking out power and damaging several homes and businesses as well as tearing part of the roof off and damaging one of the steeples on St. Mary's Catholic Church a few blocks from my house! I found debris from the church on my street 3 blocks away. Luckily, we only had minor damage, but that was a close one. In the morning, I walked down to the church and took some photos and video of the damage. A video of mine was used by the news agency Storyful and was shared on ABC News, the Weather Channel, USA Today, Weather Nation, Fox and others. No money, but my byline appeared with the video that I took with my iPhone!



Don Henderson, Editor

Another benefit of being in lockdown mode is that I have been getting more organized in my studio. I found an envelope of photos from Raymond A. Ritter, a pilot with the 13th Attack Squadron in WWII! Those photos appear in this issue along with some WWII photos that were acquired by Gerry Kersey from an eBay auction that he is donating to the 13th Bomb Squadron Association archives! Also in this issue is the article on "Don's Other Wife", a B-26 that served with the 13th Bomb Squadron during the Korean War! I had the pleasure of talking to both the son and grandson of Lt. Don MacDonald. Chris MacDonald and his dad, Colin, shared some stories as well. Something interesting about the MacDonalds, they are both pilots and Colin even flew B-57 Canberras with the Air National Guard!

I want to welcome Johnathan Clayborn of the Invader Historical Foundation. Johnathan has agreed to contribute articles to the INVADER. I hope you enjoy his first article on the "Bouncing Bomb" tests and the tragic results of those tests.



13th Bomb Squadron Association

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13th Bomb Squadron

A flight of 13th Bomb Squadron B-26C soft nose Invaders on a mission from Johnson AB, to Clark AB, Philippines in 1955.
(Photo by Perry Nuhn)