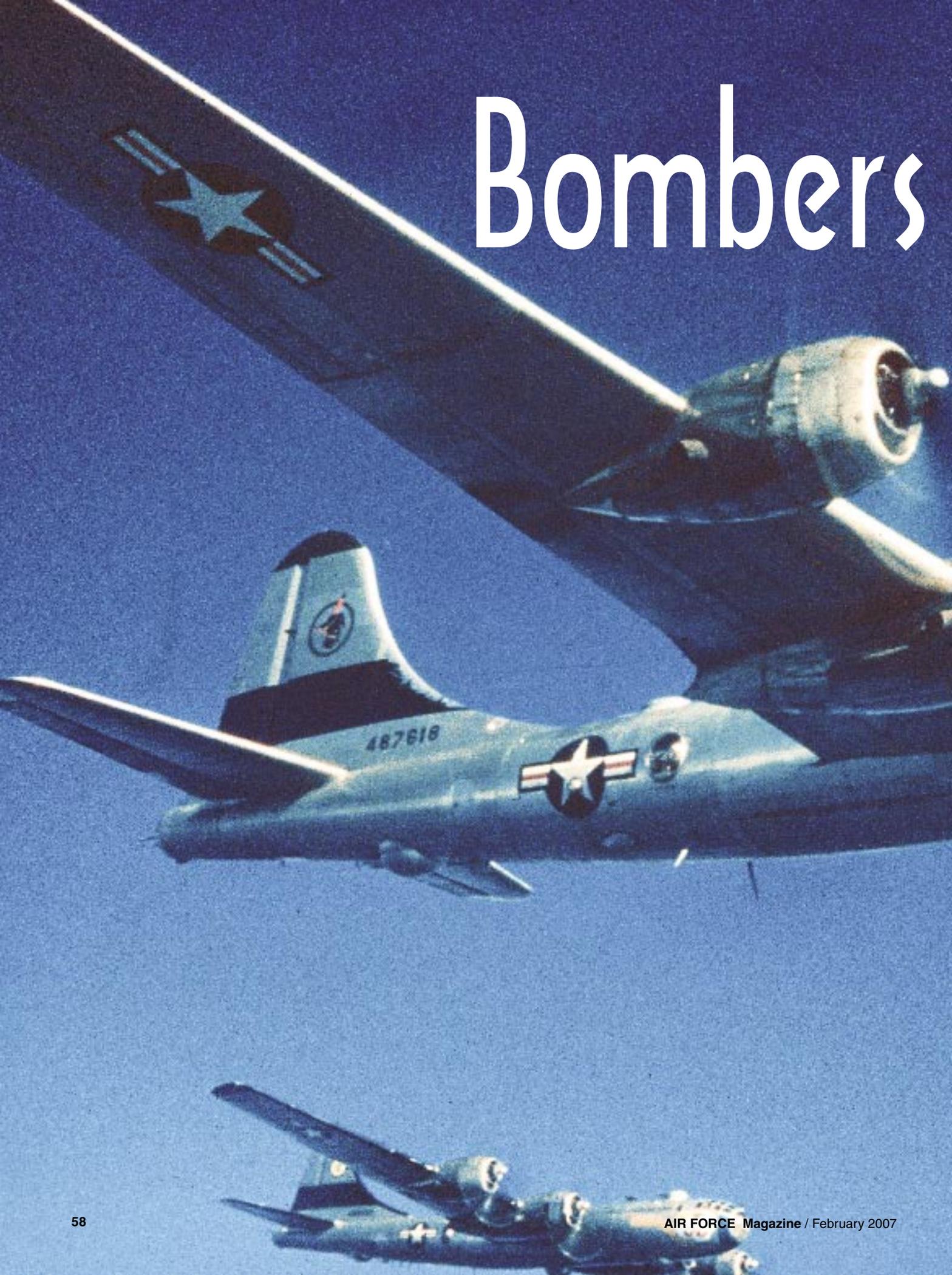


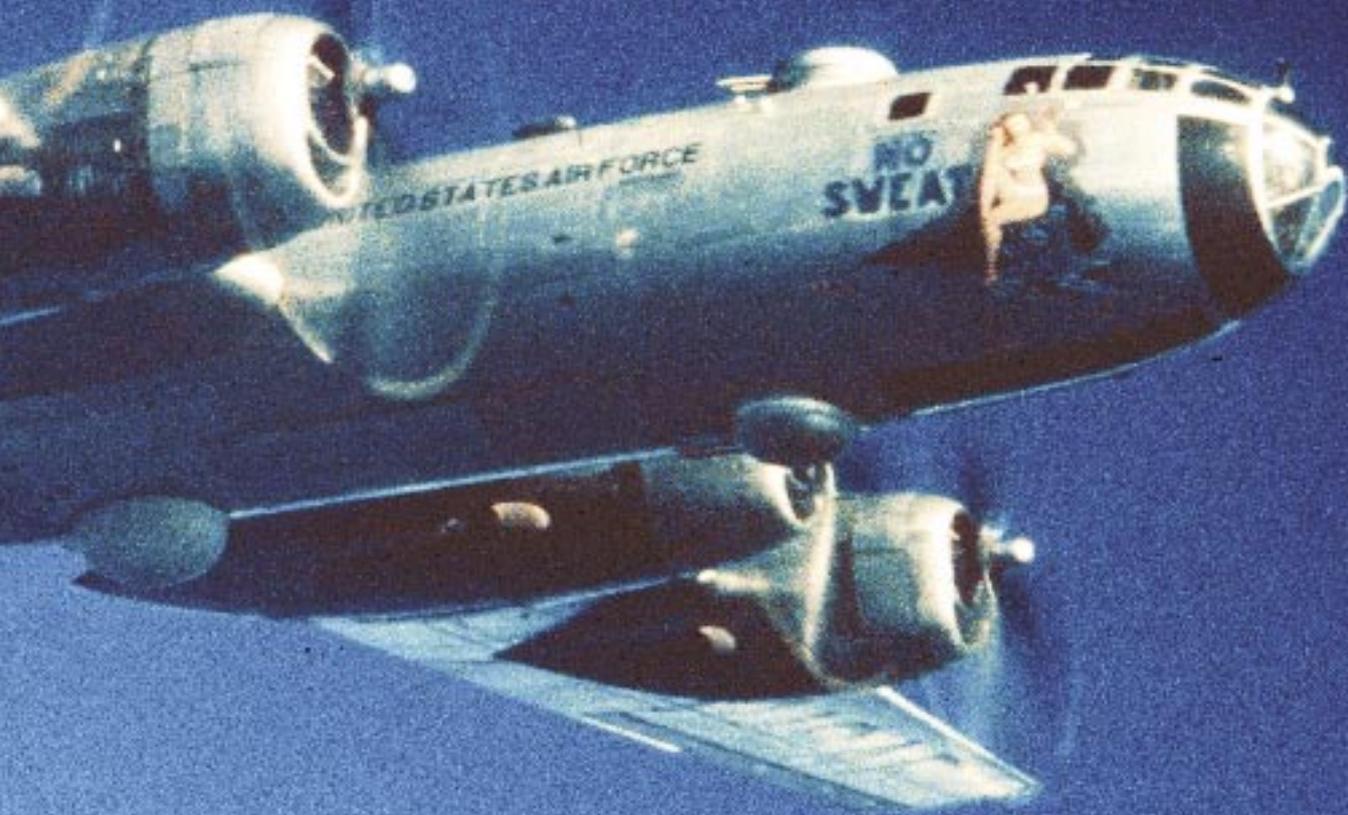
Bombers



Over Korea

The Superfortresses and Invaders seemed over the hill, until they were needed in Korea.

Photographs from the collection of Warren E. Thompson



When North Korea crossed the 38th parallel, the closest bombers were the B-29s of the 19th Bomb Group. Here, No Sweat, part of that group's 28th Bomb Squadron, and a companion B-29 head out.

After North Korea's June 25, 1950 invasion of the South, US Air Force bombers—B-29 Superfortresses and B-26 Invaders—stood in the gap. These rare color photos make clear that both types were in widespread service around the war theater. B-29 Superfortresses of the 19th Bomb Group became the first bombers to attack targets on the peninsula, striking railways, bridges, and ground traffic. They ultimately flew some 650 combat missions and dropped more than 52,000 tons of ordnance. At first, President Harry S. Truman kept them on the southern side of the 38th parallel. Later, B-29s carried the fight north to the border of China.

Right: An American airman works on the gun of the B-29 Dixie Babe.

Below: Superforts of the 93rd Bomb Squadron strike targets near Pyongyang in early 1951, after communist China entered the war.



The Invader medium bomber also played a key role in the war. It was well-suited to interdiction because it could fly low at night and carry a wide variety of ordnance. Two above: An 8th Bomb Squadron B-26 Invader at Kunsan, Sweet Bettye, readies for a spring 1952 mission. Directly above: Pasadena Pistol

Packer II, a B-26 loaded with napalm and rockets, is readied at Miho AB, Japan, for a night interdiction raid over Korea. Left: B-26s of the 95th Bomb Squadron at Pusan East AB, South Korea, adorned with the "kicking mule" emblem.



The 3rd Bomb Wing flew B-26 Invaders through the entire 37-month Korean War. By late 1950, nearly all strategic targets in North Korea had been destroyed, and B-29 missions then were aimed at disrupting Chinese logistics near the Yalu River.

Counterclockwise, from left: The B-26 Midnight Rendezvous of the 8th BS at Kunsan in spring 1952. • The colorful B-26 The 7th Chadwick was flown by the commander of the 13th BS, 3rd BW (at the time of this photo, Lt. Col. Alvin R. Fortney). • B-29s of the 28th BS on a daytime mission to targets in North Korea, circa late 1950. Relentless MiG-15 attacks eventually forced the B-29s to bomb at night.



Left: An all-black B-26 Invader of the 90th Bomb Squadron on June 15, 1952 makes a rare daytime raid on communist forces. This airplane was part of the Air Force Reserve's 452nd Bomb Wing, Long Beach, Calif. By law, the Reserve wing could only be deployed a year. When the airmen went home,

the deployed airplanes stayed in Korea. Above, this B-29 of the 98th BG crashed at Taegu after taking heavy damage from MiG-15s and anti-aircraft batteries based north of the Yalu.

Right: B-29s embark on the long trip from Okinawa for an Oct. 22, 1951 mission against North Korea. The 19th BG made a maximum effort, two-squadron strike on Taechon, an air base in the North.

Below, top to bottom: The "Grim Reaper," painted on this B-26, was the emblem of the 13th BS. • The business end of a 92nd BG B-29 is seen in this shot of the airplane at Yokota AB, Japan, in fall 1950. • A row of 500-pound general-purpose bombs represented the payload of one B-29. North Korea's heavy industry was leveled within weeks.



Two above: Another Chadwick, also belonging to the 13th BS, is shown at Johnson AB, Japan.

Above: B-29 Command Decision crew members. These airmen were held in special regard; the nonfighter crew held unofficial "ace" status, having shot down five MiG-15 jet fighters with their defensive guns.



Counterclockwise from left: The B-26 Invader Bostonians Express, part of the 13th BS, was painted black for night strikes. At the start of the war, it flew out of Iwakuni AB, Japan. • Invaders of the 729th Bomb Squadron depart Pusan in late afternoon, hoping to catch North Korean supply vehicles heading out at dusk. • A black Invader of the 34th Bomb Squadron returns to Pusan after a dawn mission.



Clockwise from left: Stateside Reject, a B-29 based at Kadena, was flown by the 19th BG; the unit was called to action early and flew combat missions until the fighting stopped in July 1953. • An Invader assigned to the 8th Bomb

Squadron at Kunsan AB, Japan, in spring 1953. • Mrs. Myk, a B-26 of the 13th BS, had a nose full of .50 cal. guns that proved highly effective against trucks and railcars.

Right: Involuntary of the 731st Bomb Squadron, on the ramp at Iwakuni, displays many mission markers.

Below: The mission of this Invader, already loaded with napalm and rockets, is delayed by an engine problem.

Below right: The blue trim on this black Invader denotes it as a 95th Bomb Squadron bird.



Counterclockwise from above: A B-29 of the 307th Bomb Wing, based at Kadena, shows the unit's distinctive "Box Y" tail marking; the wing was one of the war's longest-serving units. • The B-29 Mission Inn was one of the bombers that Strategic Air Command dispatched to Korea early in the war. • Another B-29 of the 19th BG shows off a huge number of mission markers.



Left: The aircraft of the 37th BS spread out along a primitive airstrip in front of a rugged mountain chain. The Invaders flew dangerous low-level attacks up North.

Below left: Blue Tail Fly, a B-29 of the 30th BS, returns from an early 1951 daylight mission.

Below: The heavily damaged Invader Dream Girl of the 34th BS gets a nose job at Pusan East Air Base.



Counterclockwise from above: The 452nd BW Invader Brown Nose was an aircraft that stayed in Korea when the wing's personnel went home after a year. • The colorful B-29 My Assam Dragon III used artwork adapted from a World War II unit. • Kadena-based B-29 The Outlaw con-

tures up actress Jane Russell in the Howard Hughes movie of the same name. ■