

The Air Force Song

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun;
Here they come zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun!
Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,
Off with one helluva roar!
We live in fame or go down in flame.
Nothing'll stop the U.S. Air Force!



32^d AIR REFUELING SQUADRON

CHANGE *of* COMMAND CEREMONY



7 September 2004
1000 Hours
McGuire Air Force Base
Enlisted Club



Welcome



Welcome to the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron Change of Command Ceremony. The men and women of the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron are honored to have you in attendance and hope you enjoy the ceremony. We take great pride today in saluting our outgoing commander, Lt Col Gordon D. Bridger, his wife, Lisa, and their children, Lauren, John, and Nicole. We congratulate our new leader, Lt Col John M. Wood, his wife, Lina, and their children, Matt and Zach.



Tradition



The change of command ceremony is deeply rooted in military tradition that predates the Norman conquest of England. In the Middle Ages it was not uncommon for soldiers to be unaware of who their commanders were and what they looked like. The formal change of command ceremony afforded troops the opportunity to actually see their commanders.

The Continental Army of the United States carried this tradition to America, and we continue it today as we witness the formal transfer of total responsibility, authority, and accountability from one officer to another. By tradition, the squadron flag is the symbol of command and is passed from the outgoing commander to the new commander. In total, only eight words are spoken, but in these words lie not only an end but also a new beginning.

Thank You



The men and women of the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron appreciate your attendance at today's ceremony. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to be with us. The 32^d Air Refueling Squadron cordially invites you to join us for a reception to congratulate our new commander and his family immediately following this ceremony.

History of the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron



The 32^d Air Refueling Squadron is presently equipped with the McDonnell-Douglas KC-10 Extender. The KC-10 is a major contributor to Air Mobility Command's mission of providing responsive global reach every day. Just as impressive are the credentials of the crewmembers themselves who have been handpicked for this challenging mission. The squadron is proud of its history and confident of its present and future role within the Air Mobility Command.

Initially organized on 13 June 1917 as the 32^d Aero Squadron, it was later redesignated the 32^d Bombardment Squadron on 24 March 1923. The squadron saw extensive action during World War II in notable campaigns within Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Sicily, Naples-Foggia, Anzio, Normandy, France, the Rhineland, and Central Europe. Aircraft flown by the squadron during this period included the C-26, O-27, B-12, B-3, B-10, B-18, and B-17.

Transferred to Lockborne AFB (later Rickenbacker AFB) in 1958, the squadron was redesignated the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron on 23 December 1964 and assigned the KC-135 and later the EC-135 aircraft. During this period, the unit saw several deployments to the Western Pacific, flying combat refueling missions in support of Vietnam operations. At the termination of hostilities, the unit assumed the primary role of supporting our strategic nuclear bomber and later Post Attack Command and Control Communications relay. The unit was deactivated on 30 September 1979 at Lockborne AFB and then reactivated at Barksdale AFB on 1 November 1981 after completion of the KC-10 Follow-on Test and Evaluation.

The squadron's reactivation in November 1981 marked its second tour at Barksdale AFB, having previously been assigned there from 7 December 1949 to 15 April 1958. Since then, the squadron has been involved in some of the most sensitive and necessary actions of the present day. The squadron played a key role in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, when it won a campaign streamer. On 1 June 1992, the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron began supporting a multitude of command and Air Force interests worldwide as a proud member of the 458th Operations Group and Air Mobility Command. The 32^d's dedicated support and courageous efforts in Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, RESTORE HOPE, PROVIDE COMFORT, DELIBERATE FORCE, DECISIVE ENDEAVOR, and DESERT STRIKE were instrumental in helping the 305th Air Mobility Wing earn the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award in 1996.

In September of 1994, the entire squadron moved from Barksdale to its present home at McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey. Shortly thereafter, on 1 July 1995, the squadron became a member of the newly-created 305th Operations Group, under the control of the 305th Air Mobility Wing. Exemplary service and exceptional performance continued during Operations DESERT FOX, PHOENIX SCORPION, JOINT ENDEAVOR, ALLIED FORCE, and after the terrorist attacks of 11 Sep 2001, Operations NOBLE EAGLE, ENDURING FREEDOM, and IRAQI FREEDOM. Distinctive anytime but currently an air mobility phenomenon, the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron is the home of proud and ready airmen, with a noble history and an unmatched record of excellence and professionalism. Through sustained, guaranteed excellence in Global Reach, the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron is a cornerstone of Global Engagement. Our motto says it best: simply put, the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron is "The Best of the Best."

Sequence of Events



Presiding Officer
Colonel Jon VanGuilder
Commander, 305th Operations Group

Opening Remarks

Entrance of Official Party

Presentation of Colors

National Anthem

Invocation

Colonel VanGuilder's Remarks

Lt Col Bridger's Remarks

Change of Command

Lt Col Wood's Remarks

Air Force Song

Departure of Official Party



Lieutenant Colonel Gordon D. Bridger

Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Dean Bridger entered the United States Air Force in May 1986 upon graduation from the United States Air Force Academy with a Bachelor of Science degree in Management. After commissioning, he entered Undergraduate Pilot Training at Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas. Following graduation from pilot training in September 1987, Lieutenant Colonel Bridger remained at Laughlin as an instructor pilot in the T-38 supersonic trainer aircraft. In February 1992, he was assigned to Travis Air Force Base, California where he performed duties as C-141 instructor pilot, squadron flight examiner, and Flight Commander. In June 1996, following his assignment at Travis, he proceeded to Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, where he served in the Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC) as Command and Control Regional Operations Director, Command and Control Directorate Executive Officer, and Chief of the Commander's Action Group. Following his staff assignment at Scott, Lieutenant Colonel Bridger served as C-12 instructor pilot and Operations Officer, United States Military Training Mission, United States Central Command, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. In August 2000, he was selected to attend Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, where he received a Master of Military Operational Art and Science Degree from Air University. Following graduation in June 2001, he was assigned to the 2^d Air Refueling Squadron, McGuire Air Force Base, where he served as instructor pilot and Assistant Director of Operations. In April 2003, Lieutenant Colonel Bridger was reassigned as Director of Operations of the 32^d Air Refueling Squadron, managing the operations of over 180 aircrew members and support personnel. Lieutenant Colonel Bridger subsequently assumed command of the squadron on 4 May 2004.

Lieutenant Colonel Bridger is a command pilot with over 4,500 flying hours in the KC-10, C-141, C-12, T-37, and T-38. His awards and decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal.

Lieutenant Colonel Bridger and his wife, Lisa, have three children, Lauren, John, and Nicole.



Lieutenant Colonel John M. Wood

Lieutenant Colonel John Wood is from Fremont, California, and was commissioned in 1989 after receiving his degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of California at Davis. He is a senior pilot with 3,500 flying hours, primarily in the T-38, C-130, and KC-10.

Colonel Wood has served in several MAJCOMs, and most recently served at Headquarters United States Transportation Command and Headquarters Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. He is married to his high school sweetheart and has two sons.

EDUCATION

- 1989 Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering, University of California, Davis
- 1996 Masters of Science in Aeronautical Science, Embry Riddle University, Florida
- 1996 Squadron Officer School
- 2001 Air Command and Staff College

ASSIGNMENTS

1. November 1989 - November 1990, student, undergraduate pilot training, 71 FTW, Vance AFB, OK.
2. November 1990 - October 1993, First Assignment T-38 Instructor Pilot, 25 FTS, Vance AFB, OK.
3. October 1993 - December 1998, C-130H Pilot, Instructor Pilot, Flight Examiner Pilot, and Group Standardization and Evaluation Pilot, 317 AG, Dyess AFB, TX.
4. December 1998 - September 2001, KC-10 Pilot, Instructor Pilot, Flight Examiner Pilot, and Chief of Squadron Standardization and Evaluation, 6 ARS, Travis AFB, CA.
5. September 2001 - May 2003, Assistant Executive Officer to AMC/CC, Headquarters Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, IL.
6. May 2003 - August 2004, Aide de Camp to Commander, United States Transportation Command, Scott AFB, IL.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

- Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Air Medal
- Aerial Achievement Medal