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Released: June 13, 2000

13th Bomb Squadron to be reactivated Wednesday

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DYESS AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (ACCNS) -- June 14, 1917, was a hot summer day in San Antonio. At Camp Kelly, now Kelly AFB, Texas, a group of officers were called into a tent and told the adjutant general of the Army had authorized the formation of a dozen more aero squadrons. The senior ranking captain was asked to choose a number between nine and 20. In the face of superstition, he chose 13. With that, the 13th Aero Squadron was born.

Exactly 83 years later and 261 miles to the north, the 13th Bomb Squadron will be reactivated in a ceremony here Wednesday as a B-1B Lancer unit. When fully operational, the unit will consist of 230 people and six Lancers.



The unit, which received 49 awards and battle ribbons in both world wars, Korea and Vietnam, was last operational as a B-57 Intruder unit based in Thailand during the Vietnam War.

The 13th will join two other B-1 squadrons - including the B-1 Formal Training Unit - to support the 7th Bomb Wing in meeting Aerospace Expeditionary Force taskings by providing combat ready aircrews, aircraft and maintenance people for worldwide deployment.

The 13th B-1B built will be the first Lancer to wear "Oscar," the unit's "Grim Reaper" skeleton logo. The Lancer is far removed from the SPAD biplanes that wore the emblem during World War I.

In early 1999, a group of nine officers and senior non-commissioned officers were tasked with the sometimes-daunting task of bringing the unit back to life.

"The devil is in the details. In reforming a unit from scratch you have to identify, purchase and install every piece of equipment you'll need from wastebaskets and desks to tool boxes and test equipment," said Chief Master Sgt. Michael White, squadron maintenance superintendent. "The task

was made a lot easier with the help we got from a lot of professionals around the base who helped with everything from getting equipment to graphic arts support."

After the formal ceremony, there will be an open house in the unit's new \$8.9 million squadron operations building. People also will see a vintage B-26 Invader in the base airpark. It's fresh coat of paint features the unit's red and black paint scheme used during the Korean War.

The reactivation ceremony will be attended by hundreds of squadron veterans who held their annual reunion in conjunction with the event.

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