

**JOLLY ROGER**

*Tailgunner*



**David Ray Skinner**



**M**Y FATHER RARELY TALKED ABOUT THE WAR WHEN my sister and I were growing up in the Nashville of the late '50s and early-to-mid '60s. We did know, however, that he had been a tailgunner for a bomb group stationed in the South Pacific called *The Jolly Rogers*. And, we were vaguely aware of the dark green, skull-and-crossed-bomb logo'd Jolly Rogers *Bombs Away* "yearbook" that he kept in the closet (next to the rifle he eventually traded for a guitar).

Also, he did occasionally mention his good friend Jerry Manchel, who had served as his crew's radio operator and waist gunner, and the pilot from Nebraska, Lt. Jasper Skinner, who, much to our disappointment and confusion, was *not* directly related to us and the rest of the Skinner clan from Tennessee and Kentucky.

When I was nine or ten, during one of the rare occasions I was allowed to flip through *Bombs Away*, I became aware of the asterisk beside Major Stanley P. Robeck's name just under the introduction that he had written. At the bottom of the page it explained: "Regrettably killed in action shortly after this section of book was on the press." Suddenly I realized that war was a much more serious business than the army games we played in the woods and out in the backyard.

**A**fter a rich and rewarding life, my father passed away a week before Christmas, 1997. While going through his papers, I came across the old *Bombs Away* yearbook, and I brought it home with me.

Not too long after that, I saw Steven Spielberg's incredible *Saving Private Ryan* and, after reading Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*, I began to get a clear picture in my mind of the enormous impact that my father and his generation had made.

Gradually, I began to turn a few ideas around in my head, and the concept for this album began to take shape. In my father's papers were the phone numbers of the surviving members of *Jasper's Jokers*, the *Jolly Roger* crew that my dad had served with, and on a whim I called Jasper Skinner, my dad's pilot and the namesake of *Jasper's Jokers*. I wasn't

sure what to expect, but that phone call led to another, and another after that, all of which resulted in a warm, long-distance relationship with someone I consider to be one of the unsung heroes of World War II. Jasper became a sounding board for this project, offering more than a few insights and inspirations which evolved into various songs. He also provided some of the pictures that illustrate this booklet. I was really taken with the contrast of the "just-out-of-flight-school" photograph (on the previous page) versus the "seasoned veteran" shot on the back page of this booklet. The latter shot was taken in the Philippines a mere five months later, but the entire crew, to a man, looked much older and wiser.

I also contacted my dad's good friend, Jerry Manchel, who had been a waist gunner as well as the radio operator. I had briefly spoken with him on the day of my father's funeral, but after contacting him about this project, he became an invaluable resource, even going as far as to send me a copy of his mission diary. Jerry's account of one particular event became the blueprint for *Big Blue Battlefield*, the centerpiece of this album. Shortly before my father died, he had mentioned a bombing mission which put a lot of things into perspective for me. He said that during a raid over Formosa, his squadron leader, Maj. Robeck, had taken a flak hit and had radioed back to them that they were going to drop out of formation and bring up the rear so as to not slow down the other planes. My father's plane was currently in that slot, so when the squadron leader's plane pulled back, my father's plane relinquished the rear to the major. As soon as the major's plane pulled up into formation, it took a direct hit in the bomb



bay and went down in flames. "Thirty seconds earlier," my father told me, "we had been in that exact position." Had that switch not occurred at the point it did, there would have been someone else telling you this story.

I had written *Jordan Springs* (the song that serves as the intro and reprise *bookends* of the album) more than 20 years ago, and *John Frum* in the early '90s; those two would be the only songs from this album that my dad would ever hear. The remainder of the collection was written after his death. Once I decided I wanted to put all of this together as a story, I began by trying to imagine how he was affected by the attack on Pearl Harbor. Ironically, the horrific events of September 11, 2001 occurred as we were finishing the recording of this album. For the first time, I realized what my dad must have felt on that awful December Sunday. It also made real the painful truth that freedom isn't free. And for that reason, this album is dedicated to *The Jolly Rogers*, and to *Jasper's Jokers* and to all of the brave people of that generation who made our freedom possible, and in particular, Jasper Skinner, Jerry Manchel, and my father, Horace E. Skinner, the greatest man I ever knew.

—DAVID RAY SKINNER

## JORDAN *Springs* (Intro)

*My dad was born and raised in Tennessee on a farm in Jordan Springs (pronounced Jurden Springs), a rural community which straddled the Tennessee and Kentucky state line northwest of Nashville, between Clarksville and Dover, Tennessee. At the top right is a picture of my father's family taken at Jordan Springs*

*in 1942, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor.*

I was born on a hot Summer evenin'.

Oh, how long ago

It seems.

I coulda sworn

I'd never believe in

Faded memories

Of Jordan Springs.

As a boy,

I ran through

The forest

With the blues,

The yellows and greens.

But the meadow was always the farthest

I ever wandered to in Jordan Springs.

Just a curly-headed farm boy

With no place to run.

Fate grabbed me by the arm, boy

To give me a Bible and a gun.

### Bridge

I don't ask why I've heard the dreams

That say goodbye to Jordan Springs.

*Bass* Mike Shetler

*Drums* Joe Lee

*Harmony Vocals* Jann Marthaler, Barry

Kiefaber, and Hunter Ramseur

*Piano* Jann Marthaler

*Guitar and Lead Vocal* David Ray Skinner

All songs written by David Ray Skinner

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WAR RATION BOOK No. 3

WHO WILL GO *With Me*

*Before the events of 9-11-01, I had often wondered what it was like to have gotten the news about Pearl Harbor on that fateful Sunday. My Aunt Sara (pictured here with my father) says that my dad was out hunting rabbits with his friend, John that Sunday after church. And, since my grandparents had one of the few radios in the community, naturally it was where everyone gathered.*

The preacher preached on Sunday habits,  
And after church, we brought our rifles  
Out into the cold to see what would unfold.  
Me and John went hunting rabbits,  
And we never had a thought of the bigger guns  
That soon we'd have to hold.  
And I can still remember the setting scarlet sun,  
Against the frozen hues of Tennessee blues.  
It was the seventh of December, 1941,  
And when we got back to the house,  
We heard the news.

### Bridge

Someone said, "There's war clouds blowing  
From across the shining sea.  
And tell me, do you know if you intend to go—  
Tell me, who will go with me?  
Tell me, who will go with me?"

We had some friends and kin from Dover  
At the house the night before to hear

The Opry show  
On our radio.  
That afternoon they  
Came back over  
To hear about  
The coming war,  
And to worry over  
Who would have to go.

### Repeat Bridge

We went to church that evening,  
And we heard the preacher pray:  
"Lord, see us through what we're about to do.  
Soon, our young men will be leaving."  
And then we heard him say: "Guess you'll be  
Surprised to know I'm going, too."

### Bridge

He said, "There's war clouds blowing..."

*Bass* Mike Shetler | *Drums* Joe Lee  
*Harmony Vocals* Jann Marthaler, Barry  
Kiefaber, and Hunter Ramseur  
*Dobro* Kerry Brown  
*Mandolin* Ken Pritchard  
*Fiddle* Michael Thornburgh  
*Acoustic Guitar, Piano and Lead Vocal*  
David Ray Skinner





## WILLOW Run

*Because so many men were overseas fighting, the factories which produced the tanks and planes and the guns and ammo were staffed mostly by women. My mother, Ruth Sexton Skinner, was part of that aspect of the war effort. After she graduated from high school, she left her small hometown of Dover, Tennessee and headed to Detroit to work in a factory which had been converted from an automotive plant. Willow Run was the converted Ford plant which was "a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide" and was an amazing sight to behold. That is where Consolidated's "Liberator," the B-24, was mass-produced. My parents met after the war and were married in February, 1947.*

Just out of school,  
And the talk of war was everywhere.  
She was no one's fool,  
But she knew she couldn't linger there.  
She was no one's wife, stuck in the middle  
Of Tennessee. Then somewhere in *Life*  
She read about the factory.  
They built the plant in '41. A mile long,  
And a quarter wide. They called it Willow Run,  
And she knew she had to take that ride.

### Bridge

Oh, she would dream of a sunny day when  
The war was won, but 'til then it seemed  
She would be running up to Willow Run.

So she took that bus to Detroit,

All the way from Tennessee.  
And, sure her mama fussed,  
But she knew she'd never make her see.  
On the assembly line  
She was watching over every B-24.  
The work was hard, but she didn't mind.  
She thought it would help 'em win the war.  
And for reasons that she never understood  
She remembered plane two-fourteen.  
She was careful and she checked it good,  
But sometimes she'd see it even in her dreams.

### Repeat Bridge

#### Middle 8

And there came that summer day  
When the last plane was finally done



And she moved away  
Running south from Willow Run.

And they met after the war and had a  
Valentine's Day Wedding, short and sweet,  
And they were never rich, but never poor.  
Somewhere in the middle is where they'd meet.  
Now in an attic there's a dusty book  
Of wedding pictures and a wartime shot or two,  
Including one that his buddy took  
Of his B-24 crew.

Standing by the plane as the shadows fell,  
A bunch of Jolly Rogers in the Philippines,  
A skull and cross bombs on the tail  
Just below the number two-fourteen and—

### Repeat Bridge

**Bass Mike Shetler | Drums Joe Lee**  
**Harmony Vocals Jann Marthaler**  
*Keyboard, Acoustic and Electric 12-String*  
**Guitars and Lead and Harmony Vocals**  
**David Ray Skinner**

## LIBERATOR

*The B-24 heavy bomber, known as "The Liberator" was produced in greater quantities and flown in more theaters of war by the air forces of more countries than any other four-engine bomber in World War II. Over 19,000 planes (in several versions) were produced by Consolidated Vultee, Ford Motor Company, Douglas Aircraft and North American Aircraft between the years of 1939 and 1945. Today there are only two flight-worthy B-24's in existence.*

Liberator! It's Consolidated!  
Liberator! Gotta B-twenty-four.  
Liberator! Ain't you glad we made it?  
Liberator! And it's gonna win the war!

Wewak—We whacked 'em hard.  
Rabaul—And chained their yard.  
Formosa—We punched their card,  
Every night and day.

From the Philippines to Tokyo,  
We've got the ways and means  
To make it snow.  
Nightfall brings a fireworks show.  
They don't know it,  
But we're gonna blow it away—hey!

Liberator! Gonna hit the beaches.  
Liberator! Or maybe Borneo.  
Liberator! We ain't droppin' peaches.  
Liberator! So, hey, look out below!  
Borneo—We took some flak.  
The radio—says more ack ack.  
But before you know, we'll be back.  
Hear us when we say—  
We're Iron Rangers, don't you know?  
We're deranged, but maybe no?  
We've arranged to put on a show.  
It's gonna be a hot night,  
So put us in your spotlight tonight!

Liberator! It's Consolidated!  
Liberator! Gotta B-twenty-four.  
Liberator! Ain't you glad we made it?  
Liberator! And it's gonna win the war!

**Bass Mike Shetler | Drums Joe Lee**  
**Harmony Vocals Jann Marthaler, Barry Kiefaber, and Hunter Ramseur**  
**Trumpet & Arrangements Todd Motter**  
**Trumpet & Solo Marty Martin**  
**Sax John Jeffres | Trombone Phil Guice**  
**Electric Guitar Solo Skip Benicky**  
**Rhythm Guitars and Lead Vocal**  
**David Ray Skinner**



## JOLLY ROGER *Tailgunner*

*Dad loved the Grand Ole Opry, and he loved to flatpick a guitar. His style of guitar playing was the first country music that many of his non-Southern squadron mates were exposed to.*

When I stepped off the plane with my old guitar, somebody yelled, "Hey there's a shootin' star, but that's alright—we could use some country hits today. Yeah, hits on countries like Borneo. Through the static on the radio." So I pulled out my Gibson and I began to play.

### Bridge

And they said, "If you're as fast on the trigger as you are on the strings of that Gibson flattop guitar, cross your bombs and fingers and you can bet we'll make a Jolly Roger Tailgunner of you yet."

We were trained in Walla Walla, but now, here's the deal—  
The flak those guys are shootin' up is really real.  
It goes pingin' off the wing like pennies on a steel dobro.  
And the spotlights they are shinin' ain't the Opry stage.  
In Jerry's mission diary it's just one more page.  
One more mission down and who knows how many more to go.

### Repeat Bridge

#### Middle 8

Staring down at the farms and fields I feel alone.  
And I wonder how the folks are doing back at home.

Cause it would take a zillion guitar strings to stretch from  
here way back to Jordan Springs, and the Philippines, well,  
don't feel like Tennessee. Just a few more raids—well, you  
know that tune—maybe it will all be over soon and we'll  
be driving down to Nashville, just my ol' guitar and me.

### Repeat Bridge

Bass **Mike Shetler**  
Drums **Joe Lee**  
Dobro **Kerry Brown**  
Slide Guitar **Skip Benicky**  
Guitars and Lead Vocal **David Ray Skinner**

## JOHN *Frum*

*One of the stranger phenomenon encountered by U.S. servicemen in the South Pacific was the cult of John Frum, a religious practice in which American G.I.'s were hailed by the natives of various islands as the long-awaited white gods and were literally worshipped. This song was written from their point of view as a tongue-in-cheek hymn.*

Oh, we're so blue (*Where's John Frum?*),  
Just missing you (*Come back, John*),  
And gosh, no other myth can do.  
(*Gee, I miss you, Johnny*).  
You brought trinkets here (*Where's John Frum?*),  
And cargo dear (*Come back, John*),  
And why you left us isn't clear.  
(*Gee, I miss you, Johnny*).  
The Wise Ones told us long ago someday there  
Would come—from air or land or sea below—  
The *Great One* they called Johnny Frum.

### Bridge

Where's John Frum? (*We miss you everyday*).  
Come back, John (*Since you went away*).  
Won't you listen to us when we say:  
"Where's John Frum? (*We miss you everyday*).  
Come back, John (*Since you went away*).  
Come back and open up the cargo bay."

We need radios (*Where's John Frum?*),  
And picture shows (*Come back, John*),



So why you left  
Nobody knows. (*Gee, I miss you, Johnny*).  
We built a church for you (*Where's John Frum?*),  
And a birch canoe. (*Come back, John*),  
And we miss those days of '42.  
(*Gee, I miss you, Johnny*).  
The Wise Ones said he won't be late,  
And beneath the volcano's dome,  
Fifty thousand soldiers wait  
For Johnny to come marching home.

### Repeat Bridge

Bass **Mike Shetler** | Drums **Joe Lee**  
Harmony Vocals **Jann Marthaler**, **Barry Kiefaber**, and **Hunter Ramseur**  
Trumpet & Arrangements **Todd Motter**  
Trumpet **Marty Martin**  
Sax **John Jeffres** | Trombone **Phil Guice**  
Electric Guitar Solo **Skip Benicky**  
Piano and Lead Vocal **David Ray Skinner**



## BIG BLUE *Battlefield*

*This song is based on a story my father told me a few years before he passed away. The missing pieces of the story were filled in by Jasper Skinner, and by Wiley O. Woods, Jr., who wrote a book about the Jolly Rogers, and most important, an excerpt from Jerry Manchel's mission diary from March 2, 1945. The excerpt is narrated at the end of the song.*

Same ol' song with a different verse,  
For the three hundred twenty-first.  
And the day went from bad to worse.  
Yes sir, we know, sir, target: *Formoser*.  
This time get closer to the streets,  
Where they hid the Zekes.  
Our crew's thirteenth mission.  
First pass, we missed 'em,  
Then we saw their guns glistering  
With flame as they took aim.

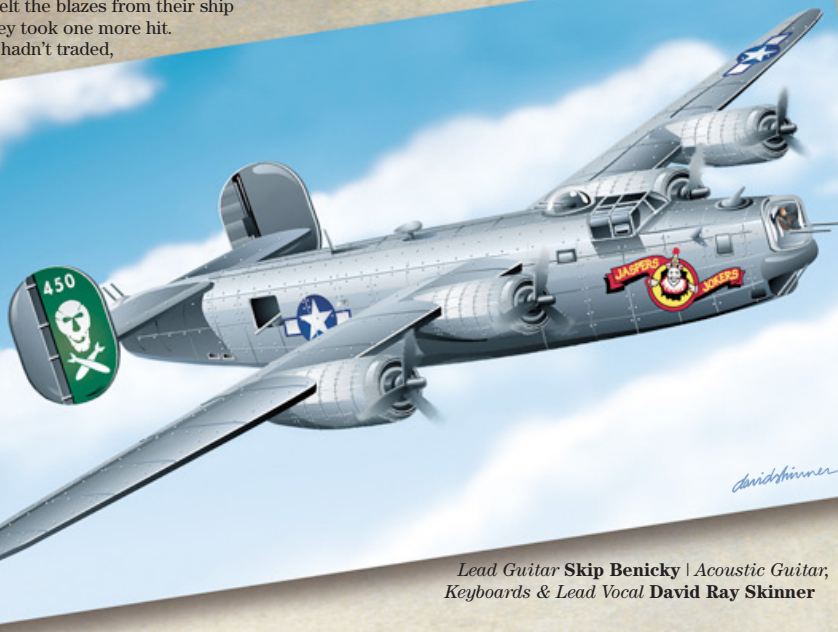
### Bridge

The ack ack bloomed like flowers  
Everywhere (in the Big Blue Battlefield),  
Like Roman candles at the fair (in the Big Blue Battlefield),  
Illuminated by the glare (in the Big Blue Battlefield).  
We dug our Trenches in the air (in the Big Blue Battle—).

Stan Robeck didn't see  
What the future'd come to be  
When he joined the group in '43.  
Not many braver, and they all wagered  
That he'd make major and command  
Our squadron's Jolly Band.  
That day in March he led us.  
At dawn they fed us.  
And then they'd head us toward the sky,  
And wave goodbye.

### Repeat Bridge

Major Robeck had begun to lead us on that  
Second run when he took a hit in engine one.  
We traded places; we saw their faces,  
And felt the blazes from their ship  
As they took one more hit.  
If we hadn't traded,



Or if we'd waited, we'd have been  
The fated ones to learn we'd not return.

### Repeat Bridge

*Bass* Mike Shetler | *Drums* Joe Lee  
*Harmony Vocals* Jann Marthaler, Barry Kiefaber, and Hunter Ramseur

*Lead Guitar* Skip Benicky | *Acoustic Guitar,*  
*Keyboards & Lead Vocal* David Ray Skinner

## JASPER'S *Jokers*

*This bio of the crew is based on a true story called  
"The Almost Last Mission" written by Jasper Skinner.*

The lieutenant's a Nebraska man,  
And Jerry is from Michigan.  
And me, I hail from Jordan Springs.  
Now we all live in the Philippines.  
We're up for anything tomorrow brings.  
And without a doubt we'll be watching out  
For meatballs on the wings.

### Bridge

We're Jasper's Jokers. We're Camel smokers.  
We're go-for-brokers, and we may talk too loud.  
'Cause we're Jolly Rogers.  
We're mean ol' codgers, and artful dodgers  
With our heads in a cloud.

One routine mission was almost our last.  
We were lost and low on gas.  
Lost two engines out above the sea,  
And with the base in sight, old number 3.  
As we landed, engine 4 spun to a stop.  
Then we gave thanks and checked the tanks  
And there was not a drop.

### Repeat Bridge

There's Jasper's *Joker* on the nose.  
But who the jokes on, no one knows.  
The lieutenant's going to keep his wings.  
And for me, it's back to Jordan Springs.  
There's plans for Tom and Bob  
And Jerry, too. As for the rest,  
I wish them the best in everything they do.

### Repeat Bridge

*Bass* Mike Shetler | *Drums* Joe Lee  
*Acoustic Guitar, Piano, Lead and Harmony*  
*Vocals* David Ray Skinner

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## JOLLY ROGER *Moon*

*Between missions there was always a lot of time to write letters to the folks back home or to an anxious wife or sweetheart. Or, to think about the wife or sweetheart that was yet to come.*

There's a Jolly Roger moon overhead.  
Soon I'll be dreamin' of a soft featherbed,  
But I'll be sleepin' on a cot here instead,  
Or I'll lay my head on the ground.  
Then I'll be dreamin' of a dream by and by,  
With a tear or two or three in her eye,  
While I'm listenin' to the bomb lullaby,  
Up in the sky all around.

### Bridge

I'll bet some day we'll laugh  
At this old photograph.  
We'll haul out the phonograph and say, "Hey—  
Here's to that foreign place,  
And here's to better days!"  
Somehow it seems so far away—hey.  
For the one who's dreamin' of me,  
There's a Jolly Roger moon for her to see.

That ol' Jolly Roger moon's going down,  
And we'll be gettin' pretty soon off the ground  
Just to fly above another town.  
It's just another round in the air.  
And Jolly Roger moon do you know—

Who is the girl who will love me so?  
If I only knew her name I would go  
Write a note to show her I care.

### Bridge

I can't even say: "Well, that's all she wrote,"  
'Cause first I'd have to get a note.  
I guess I've missed the boat today—hey.  
But tonight, somewhere she dreams,  
In Chicago, Maine, or Jordan Springs.  
Her picture seems a ways away—hey.  
For the one who's dreamin' of me,  
There's a Jolly Roger moon for her to see.

**Bass Mike Shetler | Drums Joe Lee**  
**Shadow Vocal Jann Marthaler**  
**Harmony Vocals Jann Marthaler and**  
**Barry Kiefaber**  
**Trumpet & Arrangements Todd Motter**  
**Trumpet Marty Martin**  
**Sax John Jeffres**  
**Piano and Lead Vocal David Ray Skinner**

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## FAT *Cat*

*The "Fat Cat" was the beloved C-47 that brought such luxuries as beer, milk and movies to the Jolly Rogers. Overloaded with corrugated tin destined for Mindoro, the Fat Cat crashed on February 4, 1945. Although nobody was seriously injured, there was quite a bit of mourning among the men over the loss.*

### Bridge

The Fat Cat's gone (Gonna miss the Fat Cat).  
We'll move on (Gonna miss the Fat Cat).  
And be strong (That is where we're at).  
That Fat Cat's gone.  
The Fat Cat's gone (Gonna miss the Fat Cat).  
With this song (Gonna miss the Fat Cat).  
Say, "So long!" (That is where we're at).  
That Fat Cat's gone.

I can still recall that dreadful morning,  
And the awful words  
We heard the chaplain say.  
He said the plane came down  
Without a warning,  
And yes, it's true, the Fat Cat's passed away.

### Repeat Bridge

The Fat Cat brought us milk  
And beer and movies,  
And we assumed the worst  
When we saw the chaplain's face.  
He said it was the saddest of his duties  
And there was not a dry eye in the place.

### Repeat Bridge

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**Harmony Vocals Jann Marthaler**  
**and Barry Kiefaber**  
**Piano, Organ and Lead and Bass Vocal**  
**David Ray Skinner**

*Top Photo: Stephen J. Novak*

*Bottom Photo: William C. Tinsley*

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## BIG Chief

*Born and raised on Oklahoma's Wyandotte Indian Reservation in 1921, Leaford Bearskin had always wanted to fly. When WWII broke out, he got his chance. He flew with the Jolly Rogers and called his plane "Big Chief." After the war, he had a career as an Air Force officer, retiring in 1960. He returned to his home in Oklahoma, and in 1983, the Wyandotte tribe appointed him "Big Chief."*

Bearskin's people met the French in 1610, And their warriors numbered 10,000 men, And though battle and disease nearly did them in, Their pride never died. And their Iroquois neighbors wanted them All dead and the British and the French Watched as they bled, So they followed those rivers to see Where they led down southward routes.

### Bridge

A hundred broken promises, And at least two hundred years Pointed them west Down their own trail of tears. But the Great Spirit Of the Wyandotte people never disappears. Blood and tears in stone relief—Big Chief.



Bearskin was a native son, Born on the reservation in '21. And as a boy he said someday He'd grab the sun and sky and fly. So he became a crew chief in '39 and when The war broke out, he knew it was his time To fly with the Jolly Rogers and to hold That line—In brief, a Big Chief.

### Bridge

One day on a run flying over old Wewak, There were Zero's in the sun, And you could walk on all the flak. And Bearskin wondered if he'd ever make it back. But they couldn't shoot down his belief—Big Chief

### Middle 8

And the war paint said, "Big Chief" On the nose of his B-24, And he was dropping smoke and fire and grief From his bomb bay doors. And in the South Pacific rain

You could watch it pour, But they couldn't shoot down his belief—Big Chief.

Bearskin won his medals throughout the war, Flying with the Jolly Rogers 'til '44. And for 16 years, he'd serve some more, To fly so high. But he came home to find his destiny. His tribe made him Big Chief in '83, And he made plans to make them free, And to stay that way.

### Bridge

Through broken promises and about 300 years They have stood the test Through all their trials and tears, And the Great Spirit of the Wyandotte people Never disappears. Blood and tears in stone relief—Big Chief.

**Bass Mike Shetler | Drums Joe Lee**  
*Keyboard, Acoustic and Electric 6-String and 12-String Guitars and Lead Vocal*  
**David Ray Skinner**

## A HOME Up in the Skies

*This song was written in the style of gospel songs made famous by Roy Acuff, the Carter Family and Ralph Stanley. As a devout Christian, my dad loved to play and sing songs like this. Jasper's Jokers must have felt like their B-24 was indeed a home in the skies...only a direct hit away from Heaven.*

Troubles and trials keep me down, And keep my feet upon the ground. Then there's death's icy breath upon my back. But with my eyes turned toward the light,

The future shines so bright, Like a lantern in the midnight's darkest black.

### Bridge

One of these days when life is o'er, I'll be on that other shore. Where the soul never grows old, And never dies. And this death and darkness all around Stays forever on the ground. The light is on up in that home up in the skies.

And when this conflict's finally done, I'll keep my eyes upon the Son. And in the shade, I will wade in Jordan's springs. And I'll be cleansed in crimson red By His blood that He has shed, And I'll forever put aside these earthly things.

### Repeat Bridge

My dad and mother will be there, Friends and family everywhere. Never alone, it will be home forevermore. And my Savior, He will wait For me there at the gate, And He will take me to that fair And peaceful shore.

### Repeat Bridge

**Bass Mike Shetler | Drums Joe Lee**  
**Harmony Vocals Jann Marthaler, Barry Kiefaber, and Hunter Ramseur**  
**Dobro Kerry Brown**  
**Mandolin Ken Pritchard**  
**Fiddle Michael Thornburgh**  
*Acoustic Guitar, Piano and Lead Vocal*  
**David Ray Skinner**





## NAGASAKI *Lullaby*

After the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan on August 6, 1945, and a second one was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan three days later, the Japanese surrendered. On August 19, a Japanese peace envoy landed on Ie Shima, the island the Jolly Rogers called home at that time. The Japanese were put aboard a C-54 to be taken to Manila where they would receive surrender instructions from Gen. MacArthur's staff. On August 25, 18 crews from the Jolly Rogers, including Jasper's Jokers, were selected to fly a reconnaissance mission over Japan. Even with all the fighting and destruction the men had witnessed, nothing prepared them for the devastation they saw as they flew over what had been the city of Nagasaki.

Thirty minutes over Tokyo, just to know  
That ol' red sun went down,  
To be found behind the rolling sea,  
Finally to be peaceful and free.  
And softly we sail so low and we go  
To that Nagasaki town  
Where we'll forever see the silence will be  
In our memory.

### Bridge

So close your eyes and count those sheep.  
Hush-a-bye and go to sleep.  
But there is no baby's cry.  
Just a Nagasaki Lullaby.

There's a melody our engines bring.  
Hear them sing a sad, sweet, lonely song.  
Gone, forever far away,

Like a dream of yesterday with no more to say.  
But in the distance,  
There's the promise of Spring.  
Hear it ring in a silent, waiting dawn.  
Long nights of shadow grey  
Fade slowly away with the coming of day.

### Bridge

So close your eyes and count those sheep.  
Hush-a-bye and go to sleep.  
But there is no baby's cry.  
Just a Nagasaki Lullaby.

Harmony Vocals **Jann Marthaler** and  
**Barry Kiefaber**  
Acoustic Guitar and Lead Vocal  
**David Ray Skinner**

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## THE JAPANESE *Breakdown*

Bass **Mike Shetler**  
Dobro **Kerry Brown**  
Mandolin **Ken Pritchard**  
Fiddle **Michael Thornburgh**  
Acoustic Guitar and Banjo  
**David Ray Skinner**

## JORDAN *Springs* (Reprise)

After the war was over, my father finished out his stint in the Army Air Corps and returned to civilian life and back to Tennessee in late 1945. The Skinner family farm and Jordan Springs, however, were gone. The government had bought the land and built Camp Campbell which is now Fort Campbell and is home to the 101st Airborne. My father's parents and sister had relocated to nearby Clarksville, Tennessee. After he met and married my mother, they moved to Nashville where my sister and I were born. In the early '50s my father got a job at Dixie Electrotape which was located right off Broadway in downtown Nashville, literally around the corner from the Grand Ole Opry's famed Ryman Auditorium. After my mother's death in 1972, he married Dorothy Britt Piper in 1973, and they settled in Lebanon, Tennessee. My father passed away in Lebanon on December 18, 1997.

She was a blue-eyed daughter of Dover.  
Her wavy hair would catch on the breeze.  
The midnight air smelled just like clover,  
When we walked together  
Through Jordan Springs.  
I took her with me when I left for the city,  
Through traffic jams and telephone rings.  
When the children were born,

I thought: "What a pity—  
They'll grow up far away from Jordan Springs."  
Just a level-headed father with no place to run.  
Each day slipping farther  
From that morning sun.

### Bridge

I don't ask why I've heard the dreams  
That say goodbye to Jordan Springs.

Then she was gone,  
And the children were leaving  
For bigger cities and prettier things.  
A thousand miles away,  
I guess they don't even  
Give a second thought to Jordan Springs.  
The jets on maneuvers fly over the meadow.  
Through the forest, the artillery screams.  
The setting sun paints the base  
A buttercup yellow,  
Above the ruins of Jordan Springs.  
Just a frosty-headed drifter  
With no place to run.  
I'll just let the Spirit lift her  
From what the past has done.

### Bridge

I don't ask why I've heard the dreams  
That say goodbye to Jordan Springs.

Bass **Mike Shetler** | Drums **Joe Lee**  
Harmony Vocals **Jann Marthaler**, **Barry Kiefaber**, and **Hunter Ramseur**  
Keyboard **Jann Marthaler**  
Guitar and Lead Vocal **David Ray Skinner**

Words & Music by David Ray Skinner  
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## SPECIAL Thanks

There are so many people that were invaluable to the creation and completion of this project. First of all, I'd like to thank my wife, **Karen**, and my children, **Rachel** and **James** for putting up with all the time I spent writing (and rewriting) the songs, my time in the studio recording the material, and all the hours at the computer designing and illustrating. I'd also like to thank my sister and her husband, **Jann and Lance Marthaler**, for their input. Jann not only provided keyboards and harmony vocals, she helped with the vocal arrangements and helped keep me "on track" with a production schedule. Thanks also to my stepmother, **Dorothy Skinner** for her love and support, and to my aunt, **Sara McCormack**, for providing me with facts and photos, both of which were used in this project.

I'd also like to thank all the musicians who helped with this album, including **The Dog and Pony Band**, **Jordan Crossing**, and **Southern Gothic**. Their various members provided support and feedback, and some of them such as **Kerry Brown**, **Michael Thornburgh**, **Barry Kiefaber**, **Hunter Ramseur**, and **Ken Pritchard** lent their talents in the studio.

Production-wise, **Barry Piacente** made it all happen at **Gabriel Studios**. He mixed and mastered all the songs, *plus* he introduced me to the rhythm section, **Mike Shetler** on bass, and **Joe Lee** on drums. Barry also enlisted the help of his friend, **Todd Motter**, who arranged all the horn parts and played in the horn section along with **Marty Martin**, **Phil Guice** and **John Jeffres**. Also assisting in the studio were **Andy Waddell**, who engineered and helped tremendously with the vocal arrangements, and **Skip Benicky**, who doubled as engineer and

lead electric guitar player on selected tracks.

Thanks also to **Val and George Pearce** and to **Bruce Jones** for their graphic help on this project and their friendship over the years.

As far as the research and reference for this album, I'd like to thank some of **The Jolly Rogers**, themselves. My father's pilot, **Jasper Skinner** provided a historical perspective as well as a number of the photos used in this booklet. Jasper's radio operator and my dad's good friend, **Jerry Manchel** shared his invaluable mission diary with me, and I used his dramatic March 2, 1945 entry as the tag on *Big Blue Battlefield*. I also learned a lot from the Jolly Rogers' historian, **Wiley O. Woods, Jr.**, whose book, *Legacy of the 90th Bombardment Group*, provided a day-by-day account of the bomb group (which often perfectly paralleled and complemented Jerry Manchel's mission diary). Also, when I spoke with Wiley, he directed me to **Chief Leaford Bearskin**, who graciously consented to let me write *Big Chief*, a song about his life and experiences as a Jolly Roger that became a part of this project.

Finally, this album is dedicated to my parents, **Horace and Ruth Skinner** and the *great-est generation* that put everything on the line. This project is also dedicated to **The 5th Air Force**, **The 90th Bomb Group (Heavy)**, **The Jolly Rogers**, and my dad's squadron, **The 321st**. In particular, I'd like to thank and remember **Jasper's Jokers: Jasper D. Skinner, Pilot; Thomas E. Anderson, Co-pilot; Paul R. Schoeffler, Navigator; Elmer J. Schwane, Bombardier; James H. West, Top Gunner; Kenneth E. Meyer, Engineer; Jerome N. Manchel, Radio Operator; Waist Gunner; Frank W. Baur, Armorer/Gunner; Robert E. Arraj, Nose Gunner; and of course, Horace E. Skinner, Jolly Roger Tailgunner.**

## THE Musicians

**Skip Benicky** Lead  
Electric Guitar

**Kerry Brown** Dobro

**Phil Guice** Trombone

**John Jeffres** Sax

**Barry Kiefaber**

Background Vocals

**Joe Lee** Drums

**Jann Marthaler** Background Vocals and Keyboards

**Marty Martin** Trumpet Solo

**Todd Motter** Trumpet & Horn

Arrangements

**Ken Pritchard** Mandolin

**Hunter Ramseur** Background Vocals

**Mike Shetler** Bass

**David Ray Skinner** Acoustic and

Electric 6- and 12-String Guitars,

Keyboards, Banjo, and Lead and

Background Vocals; Album Design and

Cover & Inside Illustrations

**Michael Thornburgh** Fiddle

## PRODUCTION People

**Andy Waddell** Engineer

**Skip Benicky** Engineer

Engineered, Mixed and Mastered by **Barry Piacente** at **Gabriel Studios, Atlanta.**







- 1** Jordan Springs (Intro) **2** Who Will Go With Me **3** Willow Run  
**4** Liberator **5** Jolly Roger Tailgunner **6** John Frum  
**7** Big Blue Battlefield **8** Jolly Roger Moon **9** Jasper's Jokers  
**10** Fat Cat **11** Big Chief **12** A Home Up In The Skies  
**13** The Japanese Breakdown **14** Nagasaki Lullaby  
**15** Jordan Springs (Reprise)

*Produced by* **David Ray Skinner**

*All songs written by* **David Ray Skinner**

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MUSIC

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