

Infrared Invaders



Photo by Col. Sigmund Alexander, USAF (Ret.), via Robert F. Dorr

The glow of Baghdad at night was a defining image of the Persian Gulf War. But it wasn't the first battle to see infrared systems used to illuminate enemy targets. During the Korean War, the noses of a few Douglas B-26 Invaders, such as this one, were fitted with infrared capability. The night-fighting systems were heavy and bulky, but they allowed the B-26s to intercept

North Koreans and Chinese as they tried to move troops and equipment under cover of darkness. None of the modified aircraft, flown by the 13th Bomb Squadron, 3d Bomb Group, have been preserved, but the technology they pioneered has become entrenched in warfighting strategy.