

1973

C I T A T I O N
TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE
KOREN KOLLIGIAN, JR. TROPHY

First Lieutenant David L. Sonnenberg, Navigator and F-4E Weapon Systems Officer, distinguished himself by successfully recovering an F-4E Phantom aircraft on 20 March 1973.

Thirty-five minutes after takeoff on a combat tactical air support mission, the aircraft commander became incapacitated to the extent he was unable to control the aircraft. Lieutenant Sonnenberg, though not a rated pilot, took control of the aircraft from the aft cockpit. Reasoning that to eject the aircraft commander, who was slumped to one side of the cockpit, would have inflicted grievous injury or worse, Lieutenant Sonnenberg elected to return to base and attempt landing. Enroute he flew wing position on the flight leader, overcoming frequent erratic control inputs from the front seat pilot. Due to low visibility, the first approach was aborted, but on his second attempt, Lieutenant Sonnenberg made a successful landing and barrier engagement.

Lieutenant Sonnenberg's unparalleled feat of airmanship in saving a multimillion dollar aircraft and very probably the life of the aircraft commander reflects great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

GEORGE S. BROWN, General, USAF
Chief of Staff