

Joseph Clair Austin

F-105 History

21-Nov-66

531

Twenty pilots of Class 67BRS completed the 4 TFW's second F-105 RTU course 111506E at Seymour Johnson AFB NC. The class had begun on 15 July 1966 with 25 students. This was the final F-105 RTU class for the 4 TFW. The class was initially assigned to the 335 TFS and then to the 354 TFS after they had completed training Class 67ARS that graduated on 23 July 1966.

On 8 Nov 66, student pilot Maj Donald J. Hemmer was killed when he ejected from F-105F 63-8322.

The class' graduation speaker was Lt. Gen. A. P. Clark, Vice Commander, TAC who had been a POW in Germany during WW II.

The pilots and their SEA assignments were:

Lt Col Richard F. B. Gimmi, Jr. - 13 TFS	Maj Harold E. "Hal" McKinney - 13 TFS
Maj Joseph Clair Austin - 34 TFS	Maj Kenneth D. Oliver - Yokota, Ryan's Raider tng
Capt Paul A. Seymour - 354 TFS	Maj Charles B. Penney - 421 TFS
Maj Earl Johnston - 34 TFS	Maj Herbert B. Schimsk - 421 TFS
Maj Peter H. Karalus - 421 TFS	Maj Jack C. Spillers - 469 TFS
Maj Clarence J. Kough, Jr. - 34 TFS	Maj William T. "Ted" Twinting - 13 TFS
Maj Francis D. Leonard, Jr. - 13 TFS	Maj Glen R. Wilson - 13 TFS
Maj Raymond L. Loiselle - 469 TFS	Capt James F. Gunby, Jr. - 421 TFS
Maj Eugene D. Main - 13 TFS	Capt Harry Pawlik - 34 TFS
Maj Thomas H. Maus - 357 TFS	Capt Charles A. Priester - 35 TFS at Yokota

Forty-five years old, Lt Col Gimmi, with over 5,000 flying hours, was the oldest graduate of his class. Gimmi had earned his wings on 30 August 1943 and by 9 November 1944 had flown 70 combat missions over Italy as a B-25 pilot. As a major in 1956 at Bergstrom AFB, he began flying F-84Fs in SAC. In 1957 he was assigned to Osan AB, Korea, where he flew the F-86. On 19 January 1966 when he was an instructor at ACSC at Maxwell AFB, he received orders to fly F-105s in SEA.

4 TFW History, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1966, USAF microfilm MO293 & "Airman. The Life of Richard F. B. Gimmi by Russell M. Gimmi, pp 11, 97 - 98, 225.

02-Jan-67

2399

Maj Marlin R. Blake from the 13 TFS flew in one of the Iron Hand flights that supported Operation Bolo. It was his 32nd combat mission over North Vietnam.

Mission 32. One F-105F and three F-105Ds carrying six 500-pound bombs.

"Harpoon" flight. Take off at 1240. TOT 1428.

Harpoon 1 - John/Cher (Maj Robert N. "Bob" Johnston/Capt Martin E. Cherone) flying F-105F 63-8302

Harpoon 2 - Fred (Capt Charles F. Wilhelm) flying F-105D 59-1752

Harpoon 3 - Maj. Marlin R. Blake flying F-105D 61-0126

Harpoon 4 - Joe (Lt Col Joseph Clair Austin) flying F-105D 61-0208

Spare - Soupy in F-105D 61-0194

"Refueled and went overwater to RP-6B. Iron Hand for MiG sweep over Hanoi (Operation Bolo). Had one confirmed MiG kill. Saw no action ourselves while there. Returned by water route refueling on way home."

100 Mission Log of Maj. Marlin R. Blake

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10-Mar-67

880

On 10 and 11 March 1967, seventy-eight F-105s from Korat and Takhli and 22 F-4Cs from Ubon bombed the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel plant, JCS 76, BE 616-00214, at location 21-33-29N and 105-52-08E in RP-6A. The Air Force had scheduled missions against this target twice each day since 24 February, when the target was first added to Rolling Thunder 54, but all missions up to today's had been diverted due to bad weather over RP-6A. (PACAF Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for the period 20 Feb - 19 Mar 1967.)

"The Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Combine, located approximately three miles southeast of Thai Nguyen, was the first large plant of its kind built in NVN. According to official estimates by the NVN government, the complex would satisfy 20 percent of the country's iron and steel requirements when it was in full production. Important products produced at this plant in early 1967 included steel barges, POL tanks, and bridge trusses." (Project CHECO, Rolling Thunder, 17 November 1967, pg 7.)

"This showpiece of North Vietnamese industrialization was located thirty-five miles due north of Hanoi and about three miles south of the small city of Thai Nguyen. The Chinese began construction of the plant in 1958 to take advantage of iron ore deposits on the northern edge of the delta. Pig Iron production began in 1963, and by 1967 the plant made barges and fuel drums out of imported steel. The plant's own steel mill was nearly ready to begin operation. There were only two other ironworks in the country, both of them much smaller. While they produced perhaps fifteen thousand metric tons a year, the Thai Nguyen works were designed to produce three hundred thousand of pig iron and two hundred thousand of steel. The complex, including its power plant, occupied two square miles along the railroad that connected it with Hanoi. About ten thousand people worked at this, the largest industrial facility in North Vietnam." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 57).

F-105 pilots from the 388 TFW flew the first wave in the attack.

The 469 TFS was fragged to form a flight without bombs to provide weather reconnaissance and MiG CAP to precede Korat's main strike force. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj John M. Rowan, 469th Operations Officer
- #2 - Maj Ray H. Bryant, 469th Assistant Ops Officer
- #3 - Lt Col Gordon Albert "Swede" Larson, 469th commander
- #4 - Maj Roy S. Dickey flying his 48th mission into NVN.

Maj Dickey described his mission. "The weather reconnaissance flight trolled the area for over 30 minutes and received no enemy fire whatsoever. As it turned out, the weather over target was CAVU, we saw no MiGs, and had no bombs with which to kill, maim women and children, or blow up the steel mill. It was a perfect day for putting the bombs down the stack. ... I did wish that we had bombs aboard that day." (Roy Dickey, "The Saga of the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Works", in his scrapbook.)

The 8 TFW from Ubon contributed F-4Cs to the mission as "Strike-Cap" flights in which the F-4s carried bombs as well as air-to-air missiles. The F-4s were assigned to strike the target but were to jettison their bombs and protect F-105s if MiGs became a clear threat on ingress. To continue their protection against MiGs, the F-4s were to follow F-105s out of the target.

The 388 TFW provided four F-105 strike flights. Korat's "... mission commander and the first three strike flights were provided by the 34 TFS." The 34th's flight lineup was:

"Chevrolet"

- #1 - Lt Col Joseph C. Austin, Mission Commander
- #2 - Capt Jack A. Phillips flying his 16th combat mission. Awarded the DFC.

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#3 - Maj Edward C. Jones flying his 95th combat mission. He was awarded the DFC*.

#4 - Maj Harry Pawlik, awarded DFC 1st OLC*.

"Possum"

#1 - Maj Homer T. Terry, awarded Silver Star

#2 - Maj Dewey Lee Smith

#3 - Maj William C. Eagle

#4 - Capt Jackie R. Youngblood.

"Random"

#1 - Maj Robert W. Johnson

#2 - Maj Charles E. Irwin, awarded DFC*

#3 - Maj William W. Augsburg, awarded DFC 5th OLC*

#4 - Maj Robert G. Miner, awarded DFC*

(* DFCs awarded under Hq 7 AF Special Order # G-1093)

The 469 TFS provided Korat's fourth strike flight, "Harpoon", led by Capt Charles C. "Clint" Murphy.

Unlike the earlier weather reconnaissance flight, most of these strike flights encountered enemy MiGs, AAA, and SAMs. "Enemy defense reaction was withheld until just prior to CBU release at which time the area erupted with heavy, accurate 37/57/85/100-mm. A layered barrage of light AAA formed an almost continuous carpet at 5 - 6 M. This barrage was largely suppressed when the CBUs impacted. 85 & 100-mm continued to burst at higher altitudes in the target area and up to 10 NM out along the egress route. ..." (388 TFW OPREP 3, TWX 101254Z Mar 67, in PACAF DO Read File folder, 9 - 11 March 1967, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 898698.)

On the day he flew as Korat's mission commander, Lt Col Joseph C. Austin assumed command of the 34 TFS replacing Lt Col Richard M. Heyman, Jr. Austin, "Chevrolet 1", "... led the force with a flak suppression flight being first on target. Ingress to target was conducted in defensive box formation at 16,000 feet. Low ceilings prevailed over the entire route, breaking up short of the target area. Preselected flak sites were struck by the CBU flight and strike flights struck assigned targets within the complex. Heavy 37/57-mm fire was encountered as strike aircraft initiated their roll-in and the flak suppression flight dropped a portion directly on the target complex, thus silencing many of the gun emplacements. Bomb damage was extensive, ... although a blast furnace area escaped damage completely. As aircraft egressed the target area, they encountered moderate to heavy 85-mm fire within five miles of the target. This barrage necessitated continuous jinking to slip through the barrage." (388 TFW history)

As "Chevrolet 3", Maj Edward C. Jones from the 34th received the Distinguished Flying Cross. "At this time pilots weren't required to fly into Route Pack VI (Hanoi) after the 95th mission. This was my 95th. Shortly after, the criteria was changed to 90 missions. I would have really been upset if I got nailed on that mission." (Ed Jones, letter to Ron Thurlow, 25 March 2001.) His award citation read, in part, "... Maj Jones delivered his ordnance with precise accuracy on the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel complex through one of the heaviest concentrations of AAA fire ever encountered over NVN. Major Jones's task was compounded by the attack of hostile aircraft and SAMs upon his formation. ..." (Ed Jones, e-mail 26 April 2010.)

As "Possum Lead", Maj Homer T. Terry received the Silver Star for gallantry. "... Major Terry led the first attack upon the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Works which is in one of the most heavily defended areas known to modern aerial warfare. Major Terry's conduct during this mission displayed his total disregard for his own personal safety while under continuous and extremely heavy fire. ..." (Homer Terry, letter to Ron Thurlow, undated.)

Later, Maj Terry described what happened to him during this mission. "We came upon some pretty fierce defenders,

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but again we got all 16 aircraft on and off the target without anyone being hit, although I got the scare of my life when I thought I was hit. Fuel from our droppable fuel tanks was fed into the main fuel supply by compressed air from the engine compressor. When the droppable tanks are empty, air gets into the main fuel system and causes a hammering effect just like when air gets into your water pipes at home. To avoid air getting into your main fuel supply, we had a 'saber drain' relief near the rear of the aircraft and some fuel is ejected with the air. Fuel released from the drain pipe causes a visible vapor that can be seen by ground defenses, ergo, we had a checklist item to turn off the external fuel flow before entering the target area. On this day, I forgot to follow the check list! As I was pulling off the target, a greater than normal hammering noise started and simultaneously, #2 called and said 'lead you are hit and on fire'. I almost swallowed my tongue. The best way to extinguish a fire is to climb as rapidly as possible and starve the fire of oxygen, so I maintained the afterburner climb and shortly thereafter my wingman called that my fire was out. My engine instruments never gave any indication of a problem. When we got into a safe area, my wingman carefully checked me over and there was no apparent damage. An after landing check confirmed 'no damage'. My wingman said that just before the fire began a cluster of AAA rounds had been tracking right up to my tailpipe. We surmised that they ignited the fuel from my saber drain." (Homer Terry, "Destroying the Steel Making Capability of the NVN", via e-mail 27 Mar 2010.)

On egress, "... fifty miles from the target, a MiG-21 engaged 'Random' flight [led by Maj Robert W. Johnson] just after they had recovered from a SAM attack. The MiG launched one air-to-air missile at the flight, but evasive action caused the missile to burn out short of its intended target and the MiG-21 broke off his attack. No aircraft were lost or damaged during this strike." (388 TFW history)

A 388 TFW OPREP 3 described this MiG encounter in more detail. "Random 1 - 4 was on egress route heading 270, location 21-55/104-55, altitude 20,000, speed 500 knots, time 0753Z. Flight observed a MiG-21 approaching them from 6 o'clock position heading 270, altitude 18,000 ft. When MiG-21 was approximately 5 miles away, he fired a missile at the flight. Missile appeared to have a white streamer trailing behind it. Flight took evasive tactics by turning approximately 45 degrees, climbing toward the sun. Flight observed missile to approach about 2 miles behind flight, then began to lose momentum and arch toward the ground. Missile impact not observed. MiG did not pursue attack and broke away after missile launch. Flight then continued on egress route." (388 TFW OPREP 3, TWX 101139Z Mar 67, in PACAF DO Read File folder, 9 - 11 March 1967, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 898698.)

Four of Ubon's F-4Cs in a "CAP-Strike" flight that followed Random flight were involved in this MiG 21 encounter. "They first met up with the F-105s over northern Laos inbound to the target and maintained position above and behind the last F-105 flight for ingress and egress. After the MiG-21 fired its missile at Random flight, number 3 in the F-4C flight rolled inverted, nose down, and fired a Sparrow missile without a radar lockon in an attempt to divert the MiG. His missile followed a ballistic path and missed the MiG by about 1/2 mile. Later, at a point on the Red River just below Yen Bai, with the flight of F-4Cs trailing the last flight of F-105s by 3 to 4 miles, at 14,000 feet altitude, the flight spotted four MiG-21s closing in on the F-105s from 5 o'clock at the same altitude. The F-4Cs turned toward the MiGs who did a hard turn away and escaped." (Red Baron Report)

Red Baron Event III-87, pgs 97 - 98 & 388 TFW history Jan - Dec 67, AFHRA microfilm NO 583, frame 1226 & "100 Missions North", pgs 193 - 199.

12-Mar-67

1274

Twenty-one F-105s and four F-4Cs struck the Viet Tri Thermal Power Plant (JCS 82.17) for the first time. Pilots reported one large secondary explosion with orange fire from the generator hall/boiler house and numerous fires. The coal treatment building and the transformer yard were heavily damaged. "... We estimate it will take approximately 18 months to repair this plant." However, the plant was struck again a week later, on 19 March.

Three flights from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, struck the Viet Tri Power Plant at coordinates 21-17-57N and 105-25-26E. Flight lineup was:

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"Finch"

- #1 - Maj William E. Augsburg, mission commander
- #2 - Maj John R. Whaley
- #3 - Maj Robert W. Johnson
- #4 - Capt John W. Swanson, Jr.

"Nelson"

- #1 - Lt Col Joseph C. Austin
- #2 - Capt David C. Carter
- #3 - Maj Donald F. Fryauf
- #4 - Maj Earl Johnston.

"Possum"

- #1 - Maj William C. Eagle
- #2 - Capt Jack A. Phillips flying his 17th & 18th missions into NVN. He was awarded an Air Medal.
- #3 - Maj Harry Pawlik
- #4 - Maj James N. McClelland.

The flight was probably recycled for RESCAP.

""Finch" flight acted as flak suppression and each member had a preselected gun emplacement to attack. The two strike flights carried two 3,000-pound bombs each and were to attack the boiler room and generator hall. Gun emplacements attacked were completely neutralized and the only ground fire encountered came from a suspected hospital area north of the target."

Pilots from the 469 TFS also flew on this strike.

"Pilot BDA reported complete destruction of the target. The photo aircraft covering this strike was shot down by a surface-to-air missile while egressing the target area."

The photo aircraft, "Neptune 2", was RF-4C 65-0877 from the 11 TRS, 460 TFW, from Tan Son Nhut. Capt Edwin Riley Goodrich, Jr. was KIA and 1Lt John Walter Clark became a POW.

An attempt to rescue the downed RF-4C crew was called off. "At 12/0309Z, Neptune Two was reported down at coordinates 20-55N and 104-45E [65 miles west of Hanoi]. No report of either chute or beeper. High performance aircraft as well as A-1Es made a search of the area with negative results. At 12/0429Z, the forces were withdrawn after SAMs were launched against the jets. At this time, 7th AF directed the SAR activity on this mission be suspended." (Rescue Opening Report 2-3-19 12 Mar 67, TWX 120719Z Mar 67 from 3 ARR GP OL 2, Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, in AFHRA Folder Call # K318.2411-5, IRIS # 1017063.)

"With no BDA available another strike was scheduled and pilots reported the target destroyed before they dropped their ordnance. Film strips taken from KA-71 strike cameras verified the boiler room and generator hall 50% destroyed with the remaining portion totally gutted."

PACAF Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for the period 20 Feb - 19 Mar 1967 & 388 TFW history Jan - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO 583, frame 1226

19-Mar-67

1133

In the program paralleling the "Ryan's Raiders", both the 355 TFW and 388 TFW flew F-105 radar bombing missions using the techniques developed by the Tactics Working Group directed on 13 March 1967 by the PACAF

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Commander, General Ryan. During the Sunday morning missions, both wings practiced the technique for the afternoon missions.

An F-105D from Korat crashed during the morning practice run and the pilot, Lt Col Joseph Clair Austin, the commander of the 34 TFS, was killed. Other members of "Warhawk" flight were #2 Capt Jack A. Phillips, #3 Maj Carl W. McKenzie, and #4 Capt David C. Carter. This was Capt Phillips' 21st combat mission into NVN.

Phillips recalled the circumstances of the mission. "The 34th had been tabbed to do a risky low level run on a power plant in bad weather; Carl McKenzie picked Dave Carter and me since it would be a 3 ship, in-the-trees run. The new squadron commander, Joe Austin, told Carl that he would lead the mission. Carl did not want this to occur and Austin told him it was an order. So we planned everything, but due to Austin's lack of experience, Carl insisted that we do a practice mission. Carl briefed the whole thing and went into great detail regarding the snake-eyes we would be using since Austin had never even seen one before. We headed off to a lower package and flew around 100 feet to get Austin some practice. He got the word that the primary weather was socked in and chose an alternate, which was only a bit better. We found the target okay, but for some reason Austin pulled up to about 3,000 feet and started a shallow dive run instead of a level delivery. I was number 2 and saw him pull hard enough to envelop the aircraft in vapor, then hit the side of a hill. No ejection and no beeper. I never even saw him release the bombs.

"After we recovered, the head shed would not let us fly the planned mission [in the afternoon], so we helped John Rowan and gave him all our stuff. They flew it later that day and it was a success. They went to give Rowan a silver star and he refused, saying it was an AF Cross mission; they relented and he got it. All in all, an unusual day. I think Chairsell was afraid of losing both the commander and ops officer of the 34th if he let us take the mission." (Jack Phillips, e-mail 21 Mar 2011.)

Also in the morning, a flight of four F-105s from the 355 TFW, at Takhli "... took off for a practice mission in Laos." "Gainful" flight consisted of Lt Col Danny Salmon lead, Maj Randy Plumb number 2, Maj Kenneth H. Bell, the Stan Eval Officer number 3, and Maj Ted Tolman number 4. "The plan was to penetrate the clouds over a target in Laos where a FAC could observe our radar bomb delivery and report the accuracy of the weapons. We would drop 500-pound retarded Snakeye bombs using a simple radar technique called 'lay-down bombing'. ... Once in the air, we got to our rendezvous point with the FAC only to learn that he was too busy to handle us. Colonel Salmon decided to divert to Route Pack One and find a target on our own. ..."

After flying to the coast where the weather was bad and a SAM site threatened them, they flew back to the Mu Gia Pass area. "Colonel Salmon finally found a suitable radar target on a road junction in a narrow valley, and we dropped our bombs together on his command. Twenty-four Snakeye bombs rippled off the racks and disappeared into the murk below us. The bombing system worked, but it was impossible to tell how accurately."

For this mission, Lt Col Salmon received the Silver Star "for gallantry while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force" (Hq 7th AF SO G-582 dated 21 April 1967.)

Jack Phillips mission summary via e-mail 18 Mar 11 & "100 Missions North", pp 202 - 207

19-Mar-67

F-105D 610123 34 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit by unknown gunfire while attacking a roadway in the Mu Gia Pass. Crashed in RP-1, North Vietnam. 17-47N 105-45E Lt Col Joseph Clair Austin 34 TFS Commander was MIA. Call sign: "Warhawk 01". In the morning, Lt Col Austin was practicing the radar bombing technique to be used by the 355 TFW and 388 TFW for the afternoon missions. He was "... on the west side of Mu Gia Pass in the Doghouse area. The weather there was ... bad, and they were having a difficult time. On their last pass, Warhawk One hit the top of a hill and was probably killed instantly. Miraculously, the other aircraft in the flight pulled up in time and returned to Korat to prepare for the afternoon mission. ... Warhawk One was Lieutenant Colonel Joe Austin, an upperclassman at West Point, who was an All-American lacrosse player and captain of the Army national

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championship lacrosse team." He shared trailer quarters with the commander of the 421 TFS, Lt Col Kenneth Hite. Lt Col Alan G. Nelson took over the 34 TFS and moved into Col Austin's quarters.

Lt Col Joseph C. Austin flew as Warhawk Lead, a flight of four on a strike mission on a River Ford in North Vietnam. Other members in the flight were Maj Carl W. McKenzie, Capt David C. Carter, and Capt Jack A. Phillips. The flight took off from Korat at 07:40 and Lt Col Austin was lost at 09:00.

"The flight was diverted from its assigned primary target due to weather conditions. Upon arrival at the secondary target at 1742N/10456E, the flight spaced out for a normal bomb run. The target was a visible river ford or road in the Mu Gia Pass, which was to be interdicted. No antiaircraft fire, SA-2 or MiGs were observed in the target area. Warhawk 2, trailing Lt Col Austin, observed him initiate his recovery at which time his aircraft impacted with the ground during pull out. Warhawk 2 did not observe a chute and stated that the canopy appeared to be intact. The aircraft exploded and burned upon impact at 1742N/10550E. The terrain in the impact area was hilly, tree-covered, and sparsely populated. No villages were located in the vicinity. Warhawk 3 and 4 did not observe the aircraft impact due to the distance separating them from Warhawk Lead. Beeper signals were not heard. SAR attempts were not conducted due to location. ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 3-041, AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3.)

Lt Col Austin had accumulated 241.6 hours in the F-105. He was born 30 June 1929 at (and entered the service from) Moundsville, West Virginia. He was declared dead on 25 May 1979. His body was not recovered. His name appears on the Vietnam Memorial Wall on Panel 16E line 109.

"100 Missions North", pg 204 & U.S. Navy CNA Loss/Damage Data Base & interview with Col Ken Hite, Slaton TX, 20 May 00 & F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.

19-Mar-67

6324

Capt Charles C. "Clint" Murphy, 469 TFS, did not fly today but described in his mission log the PACAF efforts to get F-105s to fly combat missions using the planes' on-board radar.

"For the last week there has been an awful lot of pressure from above for us to hit some targets. The Navy has been getting quite a bit of publicity because they have been sending their A-6 in despite the weather to hit targets using radar. The people in the higher Air Force echelons are in a complete panic because the Navy was getting all the press lately.

"We have had three visits and multiple phone calls from General Officers in the past week. It was mentioned that we may be able to get in visually under the weather at low level. 7th jumped at it and fragged us for one flight this evening. Major Rowan was to lead it. He wanted Sam Martin and me to go because of our low-level experience. I told him that I would if he wanted me, but that personally I would rather not have anything to do with it. He wound up taking Sam and Buddy Bowman.

"This type of strike had a good chance of making it the first time, but purely because of the element of surprise. To send daily missions would be suicide. We felt that if the Wing could keep control of the how, when, and where, we went, it could work; however, from past history we have seen that 7th won't allow that. I don't mind going in to hit a target, if the objective is to destroy it. That was not the primary mission of this strike. They really didn't care whether we destroyed the target or not. They just wanted the target hit for the prestige of the Air Force.

"I feel that we had nothing to gain and everything to lose by flying the mission. One way would be that it would take losing a couple of the airplanes to prove it wouldn't work. Almost worse than that, would be for the mission to be a success. 7th, being in such a panic, would then have found their way to regain Air Force prestige and they would start fragging flights. This will eliminate the element of surprise and the aircraft will be lost needlessly. Because of

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the low-level delivery, each aircraft can carry three 500-pound high-drag bombs. That is hardly enough ordnance to blow the windows out of a building, much less destroy it.

"The flight did go this evening and did hit the target. The strike film showed the plant was completely undamaged. The bombs managed to miss all the buildings. When our DO called 7th they didn't even care that the target was undamaged. They were all excited about the publicity potential. I may be wrong, but I have the distinct feeling that we will get some proficiency in low-level navigation and bombing in the near future.

"Lt Col Austin, the C.O. of the 34 TFS, went out this morning to fly a practice low-level mission [Lt Col Joseph Clair Austin, 34 TFS, KIA]. After it was over, they went to Mu Gia Pass to drop their ordnance. For some unknown reason, he failed to pull out of his run and hit the side of a mountain. The squadron flag was at half mast all day today."

Clint Murphy, mission log.

20-Mar-67

2099

Lt Col Alan G. Nelson replaced Lt Col Joseph C. Austin as commander of the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, at Korat RTAFB, Thailand. Previously, Lt Col Nelson was operations officer in the 13 TFS.

E-mail, 26 Feb 2002, from Lt Col Donald T. Bolling, 34 FS Commander, Hill AFB & River Rats Album I, pg 120.