

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

15-Jul-67

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The twelfth F-105 RTU Class 67JR graduated at McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 13 Feb 67 with 22 pilots, all but two from the Air Defense Command. However, one pilot was eliminated due to a fear of flying. The class was named "Roaring 20 + 1".

Maj James D. Murray, Jr. was the "Top Gun" in the class.

The class deployed for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 30 Jun - 14 Jul 1967 with the 560 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Louis D. Braun, Jr.

The graduating pilots and their SEA squadron assignments (where known) were:

Col Carl M. Hagle - Did not graduate	Maj Donald Eugene "Digger" Odell - 34 TFS
Lt Col William C. Decker - 469 TFS	Maj Paul F. Swanson - Korat
Lt Col Orland W. Jensen - 354 TFS	Capt Anthony Charles Andrews - 34 TFS
Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. - 34 TFS	Capt Douglas A. Beyer - 34 TFS
Maj Robert W. Hagerman - 469 TFS	Capt Lawrence R. Klinestiver - 34 TFS
Maj Leslie J. Hauer - 469 TFS	Capt William H. Nottingham - 333 TFS
Maj Stanley Henry Horne - 469 TFS	Capt Robert A. Zang - 469 TFS
Maj David D. Igelman - 34 TFS	1Lt William Wallace Butler - 469 TFS
Maj Ronald Ruynan King - 333 TFS	1Lt Earl J. Henderson - 469 TFS
Maj Thomas P. Larson - 354 TFS	1Lt James L. Taylor - ?
Maj James D. Murray, Jr. - 469 TFS	

Col Hagle did not complete his F-105 training due to ulcers.

Maj Dickson was a former ADC F-106 pilot from Selfridge AFB, MI. Before starting his F-105 training at McConnell, he settled his wife, Carolyn and children near her hometown of Sherman, Texas, near Perrin AFB where he had been stationed earlier. His family remained there during his combat tour. When he departed for Korat in August, he was seen off at the airport by his wife's two uncles, George and Ben Blanton, Carolyn's mother's brothers. As a departing gift, they gave him a box of cigars and instructions to smoke one with a drink after each combat mission. During his stay at Korat, Dickson used the backs of the cigar bands to record each of his combat missions. (Dickson interview)

1Lt Bill Butler and 1Lt Earl Henderson were two ADC F-106 pilots from the 94 FIS at Selfridge. After their F-105 training, both pilots went to Jungle Survival School at Clark AB, Philippines, en route to Korat.

Maj Odell and Capt Zang were also F-106 pilots from the 71 FIS at Selfridge.

Maj Igelman came from Ent AFB, Colorado, where he was a computer programmer in the 1st Aerospace Surveillance and Control Squadron. This squadron kept track of all space objects orbiting the Earth. In prior assignments he had flown F-86Ds and F-102s at Selfridge and F-102s at Goose Bay, Labrador. He arrived at Korat in August 1967 and flew his first combat mission in early September.

Capt Beyer had been an F-104 pilot assigned to the 331 FIS at Big Spring TX. Both he and Capt Andrews reported to the 34 TFS in August 1967. (Doug Beyer, e-mail 27 Apr 10)

23 TFW History, Jan - Jun 67, USAF microfilm MO554 & telephone interview, Carolyn Dickson, 23 Apr 2009 & Earl Henderson, e-mails 13 July 2007 and 3 Aug 2009 & Dave Igelman, e-mail 4 Apr 10.

21-Sep-67

6563

In a published order, Maj George G. Clausen, 34 TFS commander, designated 29 squadron pilots as

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Combat Ready in the F-105. The same pilots were listed in a separate order as qualified to be Flight/Element Leaders in F-105s. The pilots were:

Maj Almer L. Barner, Jr.	Capt Douglas A. Beyer
Maj Charles E. Bishop	Capt Robert M. Crane
Maj William M. Blakeslee	Capt Hugh W. Davis
Maj George G. Clausen	Capt Nicholas J. Donelson
Maj James E. Daniel, Jr.	Capt Robert M. Elliot
Maj David C. Dickson, Jr.	Capt George W. Hamlin IV
Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr.	Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe
Maj Roderick G. Giffin	Capt Lawrence R. Klinestiver
Maj David D. Igelman	Capt Irving R. LeVine
Maj William J. L. King	Capt Robert L. Martin
Maj Kenneth W. Mays	Capt Robert B. Middleton
Maj Donald E. Odell	Capt Sam P. Morgan
Maj Dwight E. Sullivan	Capt Harry G. Paddon III
Maj James L. Taylor	1Lt Lee E. Hollingsworth
Maj Raymond W. Vissotzky	

34 TFS Special Orders 45 and 46 dated 21 September 1967 provided by Larry Hoppe, May 2010.

13-Oct-67

1436

On this Friday the 13th, the 388 TFW struck Kep Airfield (JCS 9.1) (616-8438) at coordinates 21-23-37N and 106-16-05E in RP-6A, North Vietnam. They also attacked the Dap Cau highway bridge.

A draft news release from the 388 TFW described the mission against Kep. "Things went pretty good. It was just one of those lucky days.' This was the assessment of a 388 TFW strike against the Kep MiG airfield, North Vietnam, given by Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, 34 TFS. Capt Hoppe was the mission commander for the October 13 attack." It was his 75th counter and he flew for 3.6 hours. "He went on to describe the mission. 'The target was a runway. It was difficult to find it going in because it was all overcast. For a minute, I thought I was going to have to abort the run and take the force out, but just as we got to the target, it was just on the edge of the clouds. The cloud buildup made it difficult to find the target but it made it hard for those 85-mm gunners to find us. They didn't start firing until we rolled in. There was quite a bit of flak coming down the slide. You could see the ringing off on the ground and the flak coming up. It was going off pretty much around us. The bombs looked good. They were hitting on the runway. When we got together again coming off, the flak subsided considerably. I didn't see any secondaries but I did see bombs hitting on the runway. There were a few MiG calls but we were kind of ready for them this time and they didn't bother us at all.'

"Capt Steven W. Long, Jr., 469 TFS, also participated in the Kep strike. He said, 'We were coming in over a cloud bank and the target was partially hidden. We were the second flight in. We were going against nearby flak sites. However, they were under the cloud banks themselves and by the time we were diving, the 85s were going off so bad that we dropped on the airfield itself rather than going across and getting any lower. I didn't see any bombs going off myself, but the two bomber flights had good runs.'

"Flight leader, Capt Hal P. Henning, 469 TFS, described the mission. 'My particular target was the runway itself. As I rolled in, I saw the flight ahead of me already bombed and I could see their bombs going off on the runway. There was quite a lot of flak and we got out fast after bombing. I don't know, but looking back it appeared that my flight's bombs had also hit on the runway. There were a few MiG calls but none of them seemed to be in our area.'

"Another flight leader, Maj Floyd E. 'Skeet' Heintzig, 34 TFS, led his flight against gun sites near Kep Airfield. 'It was a very good mission', the major said, 'we flew it exactly as fraggged. On the way in, the

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weather was pretty bad over the coast line of North Vietnam, pretty solid undercast. However, when we got to within one minute of the target, the airfield was wide open. We wound up with just about a perfect roll-in. I got one each 85-mm site with secondaries coming out of it. I didn't get an opportunity to see the bombs hitting on the runway. It looks like all the bombs on the gun emplacements did a real fine job.' Describing the secondary explosions, the major went on to say, 'Coming out of the 85 sites, there were plumes of orange flames trailing grey smoke coming above it. The site had definitely been firing before that by the distinctive black rings on the ground. After the fireballs and smoke coming out of it, I didn't see any more firing from that site. I didn't have any opportunity to look for any MiGs on the field as my target was to the north of the airfield.'

"Other pilots participating in the Kep strike were Maj Dalton L. 'Lefty' Leftwich, Fort Walton Beach, Fla.; Capt Lawrence R. Klinestiver, Albuquerque, NM; and Capt Douglas A. Beyer, Seguin, Tex, all of the 34 TFS. Also, Lt Col William C. Decker, Accord, Tex; Major Leslie J. Hauer, Detroit, Mich; Capt Peter B. Lane, Manasquan, NJ; Capt Robert A. Zang, Verona, Mo; Capt Russell E. Temperley, Newton Centre, Mass; and 1Lt Earl J. Henderson, Houston, Tex. [all from the 469 TFS]" (Draft News Release - 388 TFW - provided by Larry Hoppe, May 2010.)

For 1Lt Earl J. Henderson, the attack on Kep Airfield was his 28th combat mission.

"Target: Kep airfield.
"Armament: 6x750 .025

"Kep Airfield on Friday 13th. YGBSM! Overcast layer almost all the way. Split-S roll-in, 60-degree dive angle really hairy. Had piper right on runway. Flak was really light for Kep. Tore panel loose on outboard pylon during flight."

Also today, Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS flew his 23rd combat mission into North Vietnam, his 12th to Route Pack 6. His target was the Bac Ninh railroad bridge and he encountered AAA.

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO583 frame 1756 & 355 TFW history, microfilm NO463 frame 1566 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 13 Oct 67 & Earl Henderson, combat diary & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

24-Oct-67

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After President Johnson had approved it as a target on 18 October 1967, coordinated Air Force and Navy strikes against Phuc Yen MiG airfield (JCS 6) commenced on the afternoon of 24 October followed by combined re-strikes on 25 October. The airfield was hit by bombs and CBUs. Post-strike photos showed that 5 MiG-21s and 5 MiG-17s parked in Area H were either damaged or destroyed, and that two MiG-17s in Area G were destroyed. (Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967)

On Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday, 24 and 25 October, F-105s from the 388 TFW from Korat and the 355 TFW from Takhli struck Phuc Yen for the first time. The airfield (BE 616-8520) was located 18 miles northwest of Haiphong at coordinates 21-13-15N and 105-48-32E in RP-6A, North Vietnam. The US launched a total of 64 sorties against the airfield.

"... USAF bombs made several craters in the airfield runway and taxi areas. Also during the strike, a MiG-17 was downed by an F-4 crew assigned to the 8 TFW." (Chronology)

The Air Force Times newspaper gave an overview of the Phuc Yen airfield strike. "For the first time in the airwar over North Vietnam, F-4 crews and F-105 pilots recently attacked Phuc Yen airfield, 18 miles northwest of Hanoi.

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"The tactical fighter-bomber pilots thundered in through SAMs, heavy flak and MiGs to bomb the 9170-foot runway and parking revetments on the east and west end of the main runway. Another 31 revetted hardstands three miles north of the airfield and the taxiway joining them to the air strip were also hit.

"The strike pilots from the 8 TFW, 355 TFW and 388 TFW reported all bombs on target and the mission highly successful as they rendered the sprawling MiG interceptor base unserviceable and downed a MiG-21 in the process.

"Thunderchief pilots from the 355th TFW led the massive armada in on the installation.

" 'A new target is a great feeling, especially since I was in the first flight in and put the first holes in the MiG haven,' said Capt James G. Thomas, one of the 355th pilots [from the 333 TFS].

"Capt Cal W. Tax [also from the 333 TFS] reported, 'I wanted to make sure so I went in low. In fact, I was so low I heard and felt my bombs exploding -- it was just beautiful.'

"Another 355th F-105 pilot commenting on the mission was Capt James L. Aldrich [333 TFS], who said, 'It was a sensational mission. We hit an untouched target and turned it into a mural of huge fireballs and towering smoke.'

"The F-4 crews from the 8 TFW were the second wave of AF fighters to hit the airfield.

" 'Strings of bombs impacted in trail straight down the eastern third of the runway, causing multiple craters' reported Maj Arley W. McRae who led one of the F-4 flights in. Another string of bombs cratered the middle third of the runway.

"Leading the 8 TFW strike force was Maj Carl F. Funk, who said, 'We rolled in inverted and dove to the target. We completely demolished it.'

" 'From my position, it looked like all our bombs were right on the money', said Capt Paul W. Showalter, one of the Wolf Pack pilots. 'Phuc Yen airfield is now out of commission,' he concluded.

"While Phantom crews were unloading their ordnance over the target, other 8th TFW crews were keeping enemy MiGs busy.

" 'It was absolutely great, ' said a smiling, elated Maj William L. Kirk, a Phantom aircraft commander and now a double-MiG killer, as he described his latest MiG-21 kill.

"Flying combat air patrol (MIG-CAP) for strike fighter pilots, Kirk caught the enemy aircraft as it attacked the bomb-laden aircraft.

" 'They came at us from behind and I turned my flight around and had a good old knock-down, drag-out rat-race with him for almost 10 minutes. I ran him down and got him with the gun,' said the veteran of more than 30 missions into the heavily-defended Hanoi area.

"Kirk's weapon was the 20-mm cannon, a pod-mounted Gatling gun, which hangs under the belly of the F-4.

" 'This kill wasn't quite the same as my first one last May 13,' said Kirk. 'That one was a MiG-17 and there was only one pass. I got him with my air-to-air missile. This time it was a good, old-fashioned dog-fight and we fought him for a long time.'

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"The rear seat pilot in Kirk's F-4 was 1Lt Theodore R. Bongartz. 'It was my 91st mission,' said the excited Lieutenant. 'I've been waiting since my first flight to get a MiG and it was quite a thrill.'

"Bongartz exclaimed, 'After we shot him down, we made a pass around him and saw the MiG pilot under the canopy of his parachute. We wagged our wings at him and came on home.'

"As the Phantom crews completed their runs on the military installation, Thunderchief pilots from the 388 TFW took their turn at hitting the target.

" 'There were a lot of MiGs up there preceding our strikes,' said Maj Clyde Falls, Jr., a 388th TFW pilot [from the 34 TFS]. 'However, by the time we got there they were all gone. I suppose most of them were low on fuel and were probably looking for a place to land. It's a cinch they couldn't land at Phuc Yen.'

"Maj Donald W. Windrath [from the 13 TFS] estimated that his flight destroyed or damaged three SAM sites which threatened the strike force.

"The aerial reconnaissance following the strike revealed four MiG-21s, four MkG-17s and one MiG-15 were destroyed or damaged by the fighter-bomber pilots. The runway was damaged beyond use and fireballs 280 feet in diameter erupted near the west parking ramp while another huge secondary explosion engulfed the entire western half of the northeast revetments." (Air Force Times newspaper article, Nov 15, 1967, pg 22)

"This highly successful raid left smoking ruins of much of the airfield support complex and large craters in the runway. 354 TFS pilots [from Takhli] were present in the flak-filled skys over Phuc Yen on both ... days." Pilots from the 357 TFS also flew this mission. (355 TFW history, Microfilm NO463, frame 1565).

Four flights of 355 TFW F-105Ds attacked Phuc Yen. "Scotch" and "Wildcat" flights began their attack at 0815Z, followed by "Marlin" and "Wolf" at 0816Z, and "Bison" at 0817Z.

The flights encountered AAA from the east tip of the runway, and two sites 1,100 feet southeast of the runway's center crossover. The AAA sites were firing 85-mm in rings. All flights experienced light to moderate, increasingly accurate, barrages of 37/57-mm AAA bursting between 6,000 to 8,000 feet. The last strike flights also reported moderate, inaccurate, 85-mm bursting between 8,000 and 12,000 feet.

The six M-118s and six M-117s dropped by "Wildcat" flight impacted directly on aircraft revetments, providing a huge secondary explosion that engulfed the entire western half of the revetted area and leaving the eastern half in flames belching black smoke up to 4,000 feet. While coming off the target at 0817Z, when the flight was at 3,000 feet, "Wildcat" flight saw a SAM detonate at 9,000 feet. Approximately 30 seconds later, the flight saw a second missile detonating at 20,000 feet at coordinates 21-26N and 105-43E. The flight was then at 2,000 feet. At approximately 0819Z, the flight saw a third SAM detonating at 8,000 feet, at 21-35N and 105-43E. The flight was at 7,000 feet at 21-35N and 105-35E. Pilots couldn't determine the sites that launched the missiles. All SAM detonations were orange in color.

"Marlin" left their target area covered with smoke and estimated their twenty-four MK-117s hit directly on the target.

"Wolf 2" had AC power failure on ingress 20 nautical miles short of the target and, accompanied by "Wolf 3", diverted to Udorn. "Wolf Lead" and "Wolf 4" expended twelve M-117s that resulted in explosions across the central portion of the airfield.

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"Bison flight's two MK-118s hit directly on the runway at the junction of the western taxiway crossover. Their eighteen M-117s cratered adjacent sections of the western center of the runway. On egress, at approximately 0819Z, "Bison" flight saw a SAM launch from the vicinity of missile site VN 120. The missile appeared to go straight up and detonate at approximately 25,000 feet. This missile also detonated with an orange cloud. (355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI ??? OPREP-4/??? in USAF microfilm NO463, frames 1389 and 1585.)

Capt Malcolm D. Winter of the 354 TFS from Takhli led "Bison" flight. He flew F-105D 59-1731 on his 56th combat mission. Other members of this flight were Capt Edward P. Larson, and Capt Gary S. Olin. "Big one today - Phuc Yen. We went Green Anchor. 1430 launch for my flight. ... Fergie (Maj Alonzo L. Ferguson) was lead, Larson, Me, Olin. But, Fergie crumped so I took the flight. We had a good roll in & out (with) bombs on target - the NW end, last taxiway exit. The F-4's shot down a MiG-21 inbound while our Iron Hands - Bruce Stocks, Moyer - got a SAM site. I saw the missile's orange cloud about 2 miles off my left wing on egress. It went to 25 miles or so & exploded." (Combat mission log of Mal Winter transcribed by his son, Mike Winter.)

"On October 24, two MiG-21s had taken off against the first wave of attackers -- Air Force F-105s and F-4s from Thailand. As the MiGs were attempting to get behind the attacking force, an F-4 escort used a twenty-millimeter cannon to shoot one down." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 90). The F-4D from the 433 TFS, 8 TFW, at Ubon was flown by Maj William L. Kirk and his WSO 1Lt Theodore R. Bongartz.

Maj James D. Gormley from the 333 TFS at Takhli was one of the 355 TFW pilots on the mission. "Phuc Yen airfield had been off limits ever since the bombing began. Whenever we flew a mission near Hanoi, we would go right over Phuc Yen. We could look down at 'MiG Haven' and see the planes coming at us. It gave us a futile feeling not to be able to bomb them in their sanctuary. ... (When the strike was approved), ... every pilot in the wing wanted to go, ... and I was proud to be one who got a chance. Everything went as we had been briefed. We rolled in through heavy defenses but destroyed the target and got every bird back home safely." (Takhli Times, 29 Mar 68, reporting Maj Gormley's comments after his 100th mission.)

"... A wing of F-4s from Ubon held third place in the attack stream (to be followed later by Navy attackers), second place being taken by the F-105s from the 388th Wing ... and our 355th TFW leading the parade. Our 333rd TFS led our wing ... " (Frank Moyer, letter to Ron Thurlow, 21 Sept. 2001).

"The Iron Hand flight estimated it destroyed three SAM sites which had threatened the force." Leading the Iron Hand flight from Takhli was 354 TFS pilot Maj Bruce D. Stocks with EWO Maj Frank N. Moyer from the 333 TFS. Also flying an Iron Hand mission from Korat, were Maj James Mirehouse with EWO Capt Albert L. Michael from the 44 TFS.

It was Maj Moyer's 45th combat mission as an F-105F EWO. In his diary entry for the day he wrote, "THE BIG ONE! After all our waiting and frustration, the 355 TFW led forces of F-4s from Ubon and F-105s from Korat against the Phuc Yen MiG airfield, and our 333 TFS had the Force Commander + 3 of the five strike flights + Iron Hand flight - which Bruce and I led! How about them potatoes!

"Perfect weather except for clouds on Thud Ridge. Our Weaseling was good, too, despite AC power problems that left our Doppler nav system inoperative. Practically perfect bombing put 18 bomb craters in the runway, destroyed or damaged several parked MiGs, and wiped out four flak sites. Had two valid SAM launches, but our warning call kept all planes out of missile range. Bruce saw blast smoke from one launch, so we went into the flat country and bombed the site, thus earning our SAM Slayer patches. Score for the day: 1 runway, 5 SAM sites, and the F-4s got a MiG-21. What a day!" Maj Moyer and Maj Stocks were awarded the Silver Star for the mission. (Combat diary of Frank N. Moyer.)

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F-105s from the 388 TFW were third in the attack stream. They dropped their bombs on the MiG parking revetments.

"Olympia" flight from the 34 TFS was the first from Korat to attack the airfield. Take Off: 1405. Mission Length: 3+10. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Dalton L. Leftwich who was also Korat's Mission Commander
- #2 - Capt Hugh W. Davis
- #3 - Maj Floyd E. Henzig
- #4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0124.

It was Maj Armstrong's 11th combat mission into North Vietnam. "Today was the big one, Phuc Yen! This airfield is the major airfield in NVN and had previously been off limits. Today our wing, Takhli, the F-4s from Ubon, and I think the Navy all zeroed in on Phuc Yen Airfield. We went in of course the land route. Lefty was also mission commander so that meant our flight was the first of 20 F-105s to bomb the field. The F-4 MiGCAP drew about 8 SAMs as they preceded us in to the target. There was quite a bit of 85-mm flak as we rolled in and as we pulled off plus some 37/57-mm. At least 2 aircraft got hit though they didn't know it until they got home. We dropped CBUs and as I pulled off, I could see a number of secondary explosions. We picked up several more volleys of 85-mm flak as we came too close to Yen Bay going out. (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 4.)

Armstrong commented further on this mission in his memoir. "This was their primary MiG-21 base just Northwest of Hanoi. Up to this point it had been off limits for attack. We never did strike the civil airfield (Gia Lam) outside Hanoi although it was widely known that MiGs sometimes used it. LBJ and McNamara had this dumb idea that we would gradually increase the targets we were willing to strike and this was the way to get the North Vietnamese to sue for peace. Our wing came in first using the land route and dropped CBU's along the flight line to hit the MiGs in their revetments. Takhli rolled in just behind us with 3,000# bombs to destroy the runway. The F-4C's followed them with bombs and maybe even the Navy got in on this historic attack. I think we surprised them and did some considerable damage. There were no U.S. losses. No SA-2s were fired and the 85-mm flak was spotty. I was written up for a Silver Star on this mission but it was downgraded to a Distinguished Flying Cross. This was the first of three Silver Star downgrades -- so I never got one although most Thud pilots did." (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 11.)

"The 388 TFW pilots were fragged against the revetted aircraft parking areas. They encountered heavy AAA, SAMs and MiGs. Force commander, Maj Dalton L. Leftwich, 34 TFS, said, 'we caused secondary explosions in the target area.' A flight leader, Lt Col Harry W. Schurr, 469 TFS commander, saw many secondaries. He described them as 'the type you would expect from aircraft.' Later ... BDA from the raid gave three MiGs destroyed and four damaged, and extensive damage to the runway." Maj Leftwich received the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star for his actions during the mission. (388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO583, frame 1577.)

Two pilots in the flak suppression flights from Korat, both from the 34 TFS, were Lt Col Robert W. Smith, flying F-105D 61-0068, and Maj Floyd E. Henzig ["Olympia 3"] in F-105D 61-0152. They dropped CBUs on the airfield at coordinates 21-13-07N 105-48-22E. Also from the 34 TFS was Capt Douglas A. Beyer in F-105D 62-4356. (NARA Record NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649B, "Air Strike Films, Vietnam")

Maj Kenneth W. Mays, also from the 34 TFS, flew in this raid. "I was most pleased to be a flight lead on the first attack on Phuc Yen. As expected we received a lot of fireworks. Without exception every pilot put good bombs on the target and numerous MiGs were destroyed on the ground (I have several

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photos). I came back from this mission with 151 holes in my acft and have a collection of Russian metal that the crew chief picked from my acft." (Col Ken Mays, USAF (Ret), unpublished memoir, "Tour At Korat -- July 67 to Feb 68", dated 15 Dec 2003.)

1Lt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, was another pilot from Korat on the first Phuc Yen strike. It was his 31st combat mission into North Vietnam.

"Target: Phuc Yen airfield.

"Armament: 4xCBU-24s 1 CBU-29

"First-time target. Went in with bad pod. Flak wasn't too bad but thought I got hit coming off target. 70 airplanes total hit target. Did really good work. Many big secondary explosions and fire. Several MiGs destroyed. Waited long time for this!"

Lt Henderson received the Distinguished Flying Cross (3rd OLC) for this mission. "...Captain Henderson was a member of a flight of four F-105 Thunderchiefs assigned to deliver ordnance against the most heavily defended airfield in North Vietnam. Flying through almost continuous surface-to-air missiles and some of the heaviest anti-aircraft fire of the conflict, he delivered his ordnance precisely on his assigned target causing extensive damage to the airfield complex. ..." (Earl Henderson, combat diary and award citation.)

Maj Francis P. Walsh from the 44 TFS was another Korat pilot who dropped 750-pound bombs on the nearby Lang Dang railroad complex at coordinates 21-38-03N 106-35-11E. He flew F-105D 61-0219. (NARA Record NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649B, "Air Strike Films, Vietnam")

388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO583 frame 1577 & Chronology of Seventh Air Force 1 July 1967 - 30 June 1968, pg 5 & River Rats Album I, pgs 118 and 120.

22-Nov-67

4842

At 1915, four pilots from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, comprising "Pistol" flight took off from Korat on a mission to RP-6 but weather diverted them to RP-4. The mission lasted 3 hours 5 minutes.

The flight line up was:

#1 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer

#2 - Maj David D. Igelman

#3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0512

#4 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer

It was Maj Armstrong's 25th mission to North Vietnam. "Jim Daniels was the Mission Commander for a programmed strike on a rail line 6 miles northeast of Hanoi. I was the Deputy Mission Commander and assisted him in the planning. We were first delayed for 3 hours waiting for the weather up there to clear. We took off finally and got almost to the tankers over the water, when the word came to abort the mission into Pack VI because of weather. We refueled and proceeded all of the way back up into northern Laos (300 miles) and then when the FAC ran out of gas, we dropped in the 'Fish's Mouth', Pack IV, and came home."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 11.

25-Nov-67

6712

The 388 TFW flew an afternoon Commando Club mission from Korat RTAFB. The sequence of the flights was:

"Cactus" Iron Hand. Refueled from Red Anchor 46

"Ozark" Iron Hand. Refueled from Red Anchor 42

"Scuba". Refueled from Red Anchor 40

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"Locust". Refueled from Red Anchor 43

"Bass". Refueled from Red Anchor 41

"Gator". Refueled from Red Anchor 44

The 34 TFS launched the four-ship "Scuba" flight at 13:55 for a TOT of 15:30. The flight lineup was:

#1 - Maj William J. King flying F-105D 58-1157

#2 - Capt Harry Guy Paddon III flying 61-0068

#3 - Maj Donald W. Revers flying 60-0518

#4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0161 on his 23rd combat mission.

Spare - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr. in 60-0435

Jake Shuler recalled details of the mission. "This was apparently a strike force Commando Club mission of which I do not recall any particular details. Although the mission itself was not exciting, the landing pattern was. As Jim King positioned our flight of four on initial, we heard Col. James L. Stewart, 388th TFW Assistant DO, call an engine problem on a long final, but he did not declare an 'emergency'. Being low on fuel, since our mission did not call for post-strike refueling, Jim elected to continue with our pattern and pitched out. As I initiated my turn to final, I saw Col. Stewart about a mile out and, since he had still not declared an 'emergency', and I would have been in a 'minimum fuel' situation if I initiated a 'go around', I continued my turn to final and final approach. Purposefully, I landed on the far right side of the runway allowing plenty of room for Col. Stewart to land on the left side. When I was about half way down the runway on roll-out, I heard Col. Stewart in an irritated tone call 'going around' plus some other choice, harsh words. As he advanced the throttle, a very loud and very abnormal noise emanated from his engine and as he passed me (at an altitude of about 500' and about 500' left of the runway), now about two thirds down the runway, I heard the tower on guard channel (I think it was Doug Beyer on tower duty) call Col. Stewart's call sign and 'eject, eject, eject'. Thankfully, Col. Stewart was able to nurse his plane around in a circling approach and land safely. I think he called an 'emergency' during the circling approach. Needless to say, Bob Smith, [Lt Col Robert W. Smith] our soon to be Squadron Commander had a 'conversation' with our flight prior to our mission debriefing. In hindsight, there is no doubt that I should have gone around and requested a 'closed pattern'. I had enough fuel to do so.

"Of further note, Major William J. "Jim" King, Jr. was a T-38 IP (Kingfish) at Webb AFB, Falcon Flight. I flew with him several times as a student -- he taught me how to minimize induced drag during over- the-top maneuvers. Small world."

Jake Shuler 25 Nov 67 mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011

07-Dec-67

4848

At 1430, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Bass" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a gun site in RP-5 North Vietnam. The mission lasted 2 hours 40 minutes. The flight line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong in F-105D 58-1152

#2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

#3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer

#4 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe on his 95th counter. He logged 2.8 hours.

It was Maj Armstrong's 30th combat mission and his first since returning from his second R&R that began on 30 November. "The main strike force was cancelled for bad weather in Pack VI. My flight was launched against a flight in Barrel Roll (Northern Laos). We got refueled and headed on up there. We swept down through the lower half of Pack V and rendezvoused with our A-1 FAC. A flight of 2 F-105s from Takhli was already there and they hit the target first. The target was a gun emplacement in Pack V south of Dien Bien Phu. We put our bombs on it and knocked it out. We even started a fire there. We exited with no further problems."

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 12 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

08-Dec-67

4850

At 1545, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Gator" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a target in Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 10 minutes. The flight line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270.

#2 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer

#3 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying his 96th mission. He logged 2.2 hours

#4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

It was Maj Armstrong's 31st combat mission. "This was the first alternate target. A Combat Sky Spot under "Wager" control [Commando Club] on a target 5 miles east of Sam Neua, Laos. The refueling and vectoring into the target went like clockwork and the bomb run was smooth. It was completely undercast below us at 6,000'. We swung right off the target and made a weather reconnaissance into Pack IV. #4 had to punch off a bomb over there as it wouldn't drop normally. Otherwise uneventful."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 13.

12-Dec-67

4601

Fourteen flights of F-105s from Takhli and Korat and F-4s from Ubon targeted Kep Railroad Yards at 21-25N and 106-18E and Kep Air Field (JCS 9.1) at 21-23N and 106-16E in Route Pack 6B.

The strike force had a total of 56 aircraft that included F-105 Iron Hands from Takhli, one F-105 flak suppression flight from Takhli, three F-105 strike flights from Korat, and two F-4C MiG CAP flights from Ubon. One MiG CAP flight was supporting the Iron Hand flight, and the other supported the flak suppression and strike flights.

The aircraft departed their bases, refueled over the Gulf of Tonkin, joined up, turned left at the Ile Madeleine, and headed inland north of MiG Ridge. While the strike force was over water, DEEP SEA warned of MiGs airborne from Phuc Yen and later from Kep and Haiphong.

Solid undercast at 8,000 feet caused the Takhli F-105 strike flights to weather abort at 0845L just short of the northeast railroad, followed shortly afterwards by Korat's strike flights. The F-4C MiG CAP aircraft continued ahead to search for MiGs.

One of the MiG CAP flights and two of Korat's egressing F-105 strike flights and its flak suppression flight (Hatchet Flight) encountered MiG-21s. MiG CAP number three fired three AIM-7 missiles at a MiG but all three missiles failed. The F-4C pilot and his wingman pursued the MiG-21 until they received a warning call and broke off 10 to 15 miles from the Chinese border.

A "dirty gray/black" MiG-21 fired an ATOL missile at number four F-105 in Korat's flak suppression flight. "The ATOL exploded just aft of [the plane's] right wing, blowing off half the external fuel tank, igniting the fuel, punching two holes in the right horizontal stabilizer, and tearing the right half of the fuselage from the flap on back." (Red Baron Report)

This pilot was Capt Douglas A. Beyer, "Hatchet 04" from the 34 TFS flying F-105D 60-0512. He was "... a 100-mission pilot who was attached to the 388 TFW. [He] said that during a mission near the Kep Airfield an air-to-air missile, fired at his aircraft by a MiG-21, exploded directly behind him. 'Fragments struck the right drop tank causing it to explode,' the pilot recalled. Although shrapnel also damaged the fuselage and the alternate and utility hydraulic systems were lost, Byer was able to safely return to a friendly base. ..." The pilot landed at Da Nang AB, South Vietnam. A photo of the plane with the "JJ" tail code, showed holes along the right side of the aft fuselage above and below the stabilator. He received the DFC (3rd OLC) for this mission. (USAF microfilm AVH-7 & Thunderchief Worldwide Report Vol III No 11 July 1968.)

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

"Hatchet 02", Capt Irving E. LeVine, 34 TFS, fired 121 rounds at the same MiG-21 at point-blank range, 90-degree angle off without hitting the MiG. LeVine was 33 years old with 2,500 flying hours, 225 in the F-105, flying his 76th combat mission, 70 over North Vietnam.

During a Red Baron interview on 25 November 1970, he described his actions. "At first, that MiG looked like an F-4 with a bad paint job. It came up so lazy; most of the MiGs I'd seen had come up very fast, but this one didn't seem to be in any hurry at all until he suddenly snapped up and fired, like the snap-up they do with the F-89. I expected him to go to 35,000 feet and I started to roll right into him, nose down and I didn't think I'd be able to bring my nose up in time. Anyway, I ceased my roll, started up, and he simply made a lazy left bank just like he was on a GCA. At first I thought we were going to collide; I shoved the nose over as far as I could and hosed off the 20-mm rounds. It seemed like a tremendously long fighter. It was silver but not bright silver; there was a gray band of paint behind the cockpit and halfway on the wings and it looked like somebody made a quick attempt to camouflage it. He pulled around (to the right) to parallel my course and I thought if I barrel-rolled to the left I could pull in behind him but my main concern was to help number 4 (who was hit and burning)."

Capt LeVine accompanied Capt Beyer toward Danang where Beyer landed safely after his fire blew out. Capt LeVine flew on to Korat.

Doug Beyer's comments on his experience are posted on Robert W. Smith's autobiography web site. "Early on the morning of 12 Dec 67, we went through the normal mission briefings. Sam Armstrong, Irv LeVine and I were three members of the flight. My memory fades on the fourth. Target was Kep Airfield, northeast of Hanoi. We went the water route, hit the tankers, and entered the area south of Haiphong. The weather was solid, and we were in and out of the clouds the whole time. The Weasel flight kept us advised as to what they found - no breaks, anywhere.

"Finally, they called for a weather abort, and the strike force began a port turn to go feet wet again. About half way through the turn, someone yelled 'Lead, break left'. About eight or nine leads responded, what lead? About that time, I felt a heavy jolt at the rear of the aircraft, and the bird started a roll to the right. My first thought, this is the truth, was 'I don't like rice!' I corrected the attitude with normal aileron, no problem. I lit the burner, punched off the MER, and tried to get rid of both drop tanks. The left one jettisoned, but the right one remained with me.

"Sam joined up with me and gave me a quick rundown on what he could see. I was receiving constant vectors and distances to the coast from those guys we always heard, but never saw.

"As soon as I was feet wet, we turned south to Da Nang. As I began my penetration, I entered the clouds and was under GCA control. They advised me of deteriorating weather, with a rainstorm in progress. There was no problem controlling the aircraft, but not having a chance to run a control check, I had to press forward. I had no hydraulic brakes, but the [backup] air system was in good shape. I broke out at about 500' with good visibility, hit the runway, popped the drag chute, and began braking to a stop. No problems.

"I opened the canopy, and slid down onto the wing. At that time, the aircraft began to move, and I thought I was in deep trouble. I was wrong. Ground crewmen already had a Euclid hooked up, and was towing me off the runway. First class service, to say the least!!

"Several hours after I landed, a friend of mine in the maintenance squadron called to say he had something he wanted to show me. He's also the guy that got the pictures of the aircraft for me.

"He met me at Base Ops, and handed me a rolleron that they had gotten out of the rear of my engine area. It had no serial numbers on it, so I assumed it had to be from an Atoll missile. One of the oldest

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

master sergeants I've ever seen explained that the US had quit numbering the rollerons as well, and he was certain the rolleron was from a Sidewinder. Interesting.

"I hitched a ride back to Korat on a T-39 and, upon arrival, joined the squadron party, already in progress. At that point, Irv LeVine began to tell me exactly what had happened. He said that he had seen a MiG 21 pop up out of the clouds, hose off an air-to-air missile, and dive back down into the clouds. He further stated that he had gotten off some rounds of 20 mike mike, and felt sure he had hit the guy in the vertical stabilizer.

"Several days later, I got the pictures of the aircraft. One most noteworthy picture shows a hole in MY vertical stabilizer. The old master sergeant says Sidewinder rolleron. You can understand my doubts about what really occurred that day in December 1967, 35 ½ years ago!"
(http://www.nf104.com/ab/ch_5/iv.html)

Irv LeVine told how he remembered this mission. "We were inbound when an airborne abort was called. We had a solid undercast from the coast inland and it was several thousand feet below us. The sky was basically clear and visibility was 15 to 20 miles or more. Our flight did a right turn and headed for the coast. I saw no flak or SAMs. I was in a gentle right turn, almost level, and busy cleaning up the cockpit. Out of the corner of my right eye I saw an aircraft lazily climb out of the undercast a mile or so to my 3 o'clock position and it seemed to be moving rather slow. It was a mottled dark gray and I thought, 'It must be one of ours'. I was startled when it snapped up and fired a missile. The missile hit one of our flight and 70 feet of flame shot rearward from that plane. Radio chatter made me realize it was Doug Beyer's bird that was hit. I didn't know how badly but thought he might not make it to the coast. That fire was really burning and streaming rearward. At the same time I thought the MiG, like so many of the MiGs before him, was now going to grab for altitude and possibly head for China. I hoped to get on his tail and get a shot before he could escape to a much higher altitude. I dumped my bombs and hustled getting my switches to 'Guns Air', lower my seat, get into burner while keeping an eye on the MiG all at the same time. To my surprise, he didn't keep climbing but swung into a 90-degree left turn that would take him across my path but well below me. I came out of burner and shoved the nose of my bird down hard. As he started his turn, my bird's nose was well above the horizon at a 45 to 50-degree angle. The Thud reacted perfectly and I thought we were going to collide. He passed directly across my line of flight and just below me. I pulled the trigger as he shot by but I don't think he even knew I was there. He certainly didn't try to take any evasive action or try to engage me. He reversed to his right leveling off a couple thousand feet above me and appeared to be watching Doug's burning aircraft. I felt confident doing the barrel roll attack and for a moment I considered trying one to get at his 6 o'clock position. I was low at about his 5 o'clock position and we were on approximately the same heading. Guilt took over at the same time and told me my job was to guard Doug's ass as he headed for feet wet. I turned hard to my right and using burner caught up with them. I stayed in a weave pattern behind Doug until we were well out over the water and headed south. He went south to Danang and I RTB'd" (Irv LeVine, letter received 16 April 2010.)

The four pilots in "Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS were targeted against Kep Airfield. The Korat flight took off at 0555 and flew for 3 hours 50 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Donald W. Revers
- #2 - Capt Robert Malcolm Elliot (KIA 14 Feb 68)
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0449
- #4 - Capt Sam P. Morgan

It was Maj Armstrong's 34th combat mission. "This was the first Pack VI mission for me in 3 weeks. The weather was too bad around Hanoi so we were sent to Kep Airfield, the water route. I was Deputy Force Commander for this force but I lost my DC generator on the tanker and finally got it reset. After that I had to turn off all my navigation equipment to keep it on the line. Don Revers lost his AC

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

generator just before landfall so Sam Morgan wound up leading the force. We were 5 minutes behind Takhli going in. The weather was completely undercast all up the Gulf and inland. Takhli made a weather abort about 15 miles from Kep and we did also a minute later. Consequently, we were all turning through the same airspace. About halfway through the turn back to the coast, we were jumped by MiG-21s. They fired missiles. One hit Hatchet #4, Doug Beyer, but he landed at Danang OK. Some flame shot out of Don Revers' airplane and we thought he was hit but apparently not. What a fiasco. We shouldn't have been sent up there in that weather." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pp 14)

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Armstrong elaborated on this mission. "The weather over Pack VIA was generally bad so most of the missions were flown in flights into Laos or Pack I. The next Pack VIA mission was on the Kep Airfield Northeast of Hanoi. It was primarily a MiG-17 base. The weather was bad so we wound up doing a weather abort where we could bank only 20 degrees without compromising the effectiveness of our jamming pods. After having seen SA-2's coming up through the clouds and hitting aircraft like they did on 18 November, taking this long to turn and exit the area seemed like an eternity! No SA-2's were fired but two MiG-21's intercepted us and fired a heat seeker which impacted Doug Beyer's aircraft causing him to land at Danang with the missile sticking in the side of his aircraft." (Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished manuscript, chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 20.

Red Baron II Report, Event 69, pp 134 - 145 & 7 Air Force Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (WAIS), 67-51 dated 16 Dec 67, for week of 8 - 14 Dec 1967, pg 10.

16-Dec-67

1450

F-105s from the 388 TFW struck the Yen Vien railroad classification yard (JCS 19) (BE 616-0221) at coordinates 21-05-03N and 105-55-12E in RP-6A, North Vietnam.

The 44 TFS Wild Weasel crew of Maj Robert S. Beale and EWO Capt Paul John Mongillo supported this mission and were both awarded the Air Force Cross. Both award citations credited each man with braving " ... many concentrations of heavy antiaircraft artillery fire and eighteen surface-to-air missiles as he successfully led his missile suppression flight in diverting the hostile defenses away from the main strike force. He contributed to the destruction of one missile site only three miles from the center of a heavily defended target area and damaged at least one other missile complex. As a result of his actions, the main strike force suffered no losses, encountered only four missiles, and successfully destroyed this vital target ... "

Maj Beale's award was approved on 5 April, and he received it at Korat on 27 May 1968. He completed 100 missions in June 1968.

The 34 TFS also participated in this strike. The four pilots in "Hatchet" flight took off at 0745 and flew for 3 hours 45 minutes during the mission. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0530
- #2 - Col James Ellis Bean, 388 TFW DO (POW 3 Jan 68)
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Capt William D. Scott, 469 TFS

It was Maj Armstrong's 37th mission. "Another 'Downtown' mission. This time it was the Yen Vien RR yards just north of the bridge across the Canal des Rapides. We went up the water route without incident and turned westward over the 'Wart'. One of the Iron Hand flights with a MIG CAP flight came up the delta the same way we had come the two previous days. They drew some 24 SAMs. We only saw 3 the way we came in. Takhli was coming in from the west and they drew all of the MiGs. They wound up aborting for weather but it cleared the air of MiGs. I was leading the flak suppression flight and we rolled in second on the target. We were in a bad position to roll-in. There were quite a few

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

sites shooting at us but they were bursting above us. The following flights got quite a bit of flak hurled at them. We got in and out with nobody hit. One of the [MIG CAP] F-4s was shot down leaving the target. Don't know the status of the crew." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 15.)

Capt Beyer received the DFC (4th OLC) for this mission.

A MiG-21 shot down F-4D 66-7631 from the 555 TFS out of Ubon, and its crew, Maj James Frederick Low, and 1Lt Howard John Hill, became POWs. (CNA Loss/Damage Database, USAF loss 774, pg H24.)

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1757 & extract from "For Extraordinary Heroism - The Air Force Cross" by Maj Jeffery B. Floyd, provided by Ron Thurlow.

17-Dec-67

612

In the afternoon, F-105s from the 388 TFW attacked the Lang Lau railroad bridge. Maj Sam P. Morgan from the 34 TFS was mission commander. "... We had eight F-4s behind us, four weasels out front, and the sixteen thuds. The F-4 leader was Bogislofski (?) and we talked the night before about the MIGs. I told him to not stay with us but to patrol and go after the MIGs. He said he was told he had to stay with us. I told the Weasels to stay out front and not come back when the MiGs jumped us. We were three minutes from the target when the MiGs came down. They got one F-4 and one F-105 right away. I called for burners and take it down as we could race them to the target. We were Mach 1.2 in the dive when the lead Weasel started hollering that he was hit and his back seater looked dead. It turned out he hit a CBU in flight with the back canopy.

"We almost passed the target due to the speed and confusion. I did a very high speed pop up and hit the bridge which was the target. On the pull out I was hit in the left wing root which rolled the airplane to the right and I almost hit my wingman.

"The wingman was Neal Graham, the new wing commander, and it was his first mission in Pack VI. We went into Laos, refueled, and went back over Thud Ridge until it got dark. We could see the F-4 and the F-105 burning on the ground below us.

"When we got back to Korat it was dark and it was late. When I went to the debrief I was alone, no one else showed up. I never saw Neal Graham again as he must have been ill and died a few days later. [NOTE: Col Neil J. Graham had become 388 TFW commander on 22 November 1967 and died of a heart attack on 19 January 1968.]

Capt Morgan was awarded a Silver Star for leading this mission. Hq 7th Air Force approved the award on 20 June 1968 under SO G-1834.

In the Wild Weasel flight, EWO, Capt Paul John Mongillo, 44 TFS, 388 TFW, Korat RTAFB, Thailand, was killed instantly when he was struck by a CBU pellet dropped by a USAF aircraft. "... Beale and Mongillo were working their Weasel mission below the strike force. The strike force got jumped by MIGs and had to jettison their loads. One of the CBU's apparently opened and Paul got the BeeBee through the canopy and helmet." The pilot, Maj Robert S. Beale, brought the airplane (F-105F 63-8347) down at Udorn RTAFB, Thailand.

Capt Ralph D. Bohr replaced Capt Mongillo as Maj Beale's EWO. (Dave Brog, e-mail to Weasel Net, 1 Dec 2002.)

Capt Mongillo was born 22 January 1933. He entered the service from Riverside, New Jersey. His name appears on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall on panel 32E line 15.

In addition to a MiG-21 shooting down Capt Ellis in his F-105D, a MiG-17 shot down "Hornet 3", F-4D

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

66-7774 from the 497 TFS out of the 8 TFW from Ubon. The plane was flying MiG CAP for the Lang Lau railway bridge strike. The two crewmen, Maj Kenneth R. Flenor, and 1Lt Terry Lee Boyer, became POWs. (CNA Loss/Damage Database.)

Four pilots from the 34 TFS formed "Locust" flight that took off at 1345 and flew for 3 hours during the mission. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #2 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0530
- #3 - Maj William M. Blakeslee
- #4 - Capt Harry Guy Paddon III

This was Maj Armstrong's 38th combat mission. "The target was a bridge south of Thai Nguyen [the Lang Lau Rail Road Bridge]. We were going in the land route on a heading of due east when some MiG-21s came swooping down from 9 o'clock and fired at the force. Bass 1 who was flying the left rear corner was hit directly by the second air-to-air missile fired by the MiGs. [Capt Jeffery Thomas Ellis, 469 TFS, POW.] He was burning badly and finally got out just west of Thud Ridge OK. No rescue possible there. Locust 1 had called Bass to break but for some reason he hadn't. Ozark Lead was hit by flak and the EWO in the rear seat was killed instantly. [44 TFS Wild Weasel crew of Maj Robert S. Beale and EWO Capt Paul John Mongillo, KIA.] We jettisoned our CBUs and broke hard right about the same time. Locust 4 reported 4 MiGs turning in on us and two missiles bracketing my aircraft but I never saw them. We continued the turn and looked for other MiGs but no luck. #4 says he got a shot at a MiG and wound up coming out by himself. Ozark 1 recovered safely at Udorn." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 16.)

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Armstong provided more details of this mission. "My next mission was on the 17th of December and it was memorable ... [as] the mission that I think I was the closest to being shot down. The target was a bridge South of Thai Nguyen and we were going the land route. We knew that this meant MiG action! Sure enough, we were attacked by two MiG-21's after we crossed the Red River. The first one launched two heat seeker missiles at our formation. The first one hit Bass lead who was Captain Jeff Ellis of the 469th that day. The second missile was apparently headed for me but one of the guys in our flight called for us to jettison the bombs and break right. They tell me that the second missile passed right through the position that I would have occupied had we not made the break. Then we heard the sound over the radio of a parachute beeper going off and that was our first indication that Jeff Ellis had bailed out (He became a POW and after being repatriated became a wing commander in Air Training Command). We continued our turn and exited the area. The other aircraft in the formation continued on to the target and successfully dropped their bombs.

"Ozark lead, the lead Wild Weasel called that he had been hit. We listened as Don Hodge [Maj Donald W. Hodge, 34 TFS] came along side and told him (Bob Beale) that his backseater looked like he had been hit and was in bad shape. Bob safely recovered at Udorn but his backseater, Captain Mongillo, was dead. We thought that he had been hit by flak although the shrapnel that killed him had come through the canopy rather than from the bottom of the aircraft. It was later suspected that he had been killed by a CBU from one of the bomblets that we punched off. Normally the Weasels were far enough out in front that this could not have happened but the true facts never came out because we were too busy worrying about the next mission."

388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilms NO583 & NO584 & Dave Brog, former F-105 EWO, E-mail, 27 May 1998.

19-Dec-67

2577

In the morning missions from Korat, for the second day in a row, four F-105Ds in "Crossbow" flight from the 469 TFS, 388 TFW, struck the Hanoi Railroad Classification Yard (JCS 21) at coordinates 21-01-18N and 105-50-39E. Crossbow flight consisted of:

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

- #1 - Maj Stanley Henry Horne
- #2 - Maj Francis J. "Frank" Byrne
- #3 - Lt Col William N. Reed
- #4 - Capt Dennis W. Jarvi, flying F-105D 60-0435.

Each pilot dropped six 750-pound bombs on the south end of the yard. Capt Jarvi was awarded the Third OLC to the Distinguished Flying Cross. (Dennis Jarvi, undated letter to Ron Thurlow) Maj Byrne was awarded the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Flying Cross. (Francis Byrne, letter to Ron Thurlow, 22 Sep 2001.)

Capt Earl J. Henderson, also from the 469 TFS, was in another flight that attacked the rail yard. It was his 51st combat mission into North Vietnam. His plane carried six 750-lb bombs.

"Short water route to downtown. SAMs started at 3 minutes out. One SAM detonated 50' from me. Heard and felt explosion. Total of 30 SAMs fired. Heavy 85s started as we crossed Hanoi. Steep dive. Good bombs. Intense 37/57 right after pull off. More 85s two minutes later. Worst yet!"

Capt Henderson received the Distinguished Flying Cross (4th OLC) for this mission. "...Captain Henderson was a member of a strike force of twenty-four F-105s assigned to attack an important railroad car repair facility in the vicinity of Hanoi, North Vietnam. Despite extremely heavy and accurate antiaircraft fire, attacks by over fifteen surface-to-air missiles, and greatly restricted visibility, Captain Henderson ... placed his ordnance on target, causing extensive damage to this vital repair complex. ..." (Earl Henderson, combat diary and award citation.)

The 34 TFS also participated in today's morning strike. The four pilots in "Simmer" flight took off at 0600 and flew for 3 hours 20 minutes during the mission. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj William M. Blakeslee in his first and only mission that he led during his 100-mission tour.
- #2 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #3 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO
- #4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0134

This was Maj Armstrong's 39th combat mission. "The first airplane I started up this morning was bad so I had to go to another one and got off about 20 minutes late. I went out to the tankers in the Gulf (350 miles) all by myself but got there in time to make the mission. Our target was a railroad yard [JCS 21] between the Doumer Bridge and the Hanoi Railroad Bridge. There were 3 trains stopped there as we had knocked down the bridges on either side. As we approached up the delta, they fired about 16 SAMs at the force. One came as close as 500' to me but most were no threat. The flak, mostly 85-mm, was the heaviest and most accurate that I have seen. It was bursting all around me for a full minute prior to roll-in. We rolled in and I had a real good bomb run. We really tore up the yard and I could see cars already burning as I dove down. We got in and out with nobody lost although 4 guys got minor hits. No MiGs seen." (Armstrong combat log)

Lt Gen Armstrong provided additional details in his memoirs. "Our target was a railroad yard close to the Doumer Bridge. This was a morning mission so it was dark as I started my aircraft. I discovered some serious problems with this aircraft and aborted it. They hurried me to a spare aircraft and that one was okay. But this delay caused me to takeoff several minutes behind the rest of the guys. I proceeded by myself to join everybody on the tanker in the Gulf. They had already refueled and were just about to get topped off before heading for the target. So I took all of my fuel at once as we dropped off the tanker at the 19th parallel and headed for the target some 170 miles away.

"They fired about 16 SA-2's at us on the way in and the 85-mm flak was the most intense I had ever

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

seen. One of the 85-mm batteries fired their 8 barrels and I noted the flak exploding around me at my altitude, 100 feet away in the sequence in which it was fired. I was sitting right in the middle of it!" (Armstrong memoir manuscript)

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 16 & Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 22.

22-Dec-67

4856

The four pilots in "Cookie" flight were from the 34 TFS. The four-ship took off at 7:05 for a TOT of 08:00. They refueled from Brown Anchor 72. The lineup was:

- #1 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying F-105D 59-1759 on his 51st combat mission
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 60-0530 on his 33rd mission
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. flying 60-0462
- #4 - Col James L. Stewart, the 388 TFW DO, flying 62-4270.

The flight met FAC Nail 49 and was over the target from 08:10 to 08:20. Target coordinates were 16-46N and 106-09E. The mission lasted for 2.1 hours. (Jake Shuler combat mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011)

On his 42nd combat mission, Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong from the 34 TFS led a two-ship flight that carried Bullpup missiles into southern Laos. Flying F-105D 61-0219, he led "Machette" flight that took off at 07:25 and returned after flying for 2 hours 15 minutes. His wingman, "Machette 2", was Capt Douglas A. Beyer.

"This was a scheduled GAM 83C (Bullpup) missile mission into southern Laos. My airborne guidance system didn't check out after I was airborne so I didn't fire my missiles but brought them back instead. Doug Beyer fired 2 and I chased him on his passes. He thought he over controlled them because they got away and didn't hit very close to the intended target. Afterwards, I strafed a road that the FAC marked for me but couldn't see the results. We were in Pack I for a counter as a result of our attack heading on the target."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Bass 2" against the Ban Phoungong truck park in the Barrel Roll region of Laos. "Commando Club. No BDA - Weather." It was his 23rd combat mission. (Rufus Dye Mission History log.)

Capt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, 388 TFW, was another Korat pilot who bombed a target in Laos. It was his 54th combat mission. "Target: Road cut in southern Laos. Armament: 6x750. Led two-ship airborne spare flight. Right before drop off from main strike force, we broke into flight of F-4Cs that looked like attacking MiGs. Then drug bombs 200 miles south. Got road cut. No flak. Long, boring mission. Sneaked into pack V for counter."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 17 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 22 Dec 67 & Earl Henderson, combat diary.

23-Dec-67

24-Dec-67

1301

"President Lyndon B. Johnson visited (the 388 TFW at) Korat RTAFB the evening of 23-24 December. The Commander-in-Chief spent the night at the base and made a pre-dawn address to base personnel. He presented medals to six pilots from Thailand-based wings. More than 5,000 personnel gathered for the speech at the base flightline. The President arrived from funeral services (on 21 December) for Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt [who had drowned in the ocean], on the first leg of an around-the-world tour."

"... A new and as yet unoccupied dormitory helped to house the presidential entourage of about three hundred, including some seventy-five reporters. George Christian, the President's press secretary, told

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

reporters that for security reasons they could not file stories until after the president left early in the morning. But the Thai press broke the story, and reporters spent all night using telephones and typewriters at wing headquarters." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 113).

President Johnson arrived at Korat at 10:10 PM Friday 23 December. That night, he met in the Officers Club with General Momyer, 7 AF Commander, and pilots who briefed him on their missions. F-105 pilots speaking were Capt Dennis W. Jarvi from the 469 TFS who described the recent raid (on 14 December 1967) in which he participated against the Paul Doumer highway and railroad bridge. Maj Michael S. Muskat, "... a veteran of 25 combat missions briefed the President on the anti-aircraft and ... SAM suppression missions flown by his squadron, the 44 TFS." Capt John H. Schaub also from the 469 TFS briefed on the role of the mission commander "... including the over-all planning and execution of a combat strike ... " Capt Schaub had "... flown 83 combat missions and served as mission commander on several occasions."

"When asked by General Momyer for an opinion of the value of the bombing and its affect on the abilities of the North Vietnamese to sustain their aggression in the South, ... " Capt Irving E. LeVine from the 34 TFS, who had flown 82 combat missions, outlined "... the tremendous destructive power being unleashed on key communist targets by Air Force strikes"

Many years later, when shown this description of this event, Irv LeVine commented, "B.S. I never said anything like this." (Irv LeVine letter, received 16 Apr 10.)

President Johnson also greeted Capt Douglas A. Beyer, 34 TFS, from Seguin, Texas, who had flown 60 combat missions and had attended Southwest Texas State college, the same school from which the President had graduated in 1930.

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong from the 34 TFS attended the President's talk at the Officer's Club and documented his observations in his memoirs. "President Johnson visited us just before Christmas. We had only 12 hours warning. Since Col. Burdett had been shot down in November, the Air Force had sent in a senior colonel from Okinawa, Col. Neil Graham. He was all excited about the visit and worked hard to see that we presented a good image to LBJ. The most obvious thing was to remove some embarrassing things from the club. Some artisans in the Philippines made a good living from carving large aircrew wings from mahogany. They changed the middle part of the wings to designate pilot, navigator, etc. But some time earlier, a pilot from Korat had ordered a set of wings with an Edsel grill in the center and it was proudly displayed in the bar where the pilots recognized this as an indictment of Secretary of Defense McNamara. This had to be removed for the time being but I'm not sure LBJ would have understood the significance.

"He gave a speech to all of the pilots at the club that night and a speech to all Korat folks plus Camp Friendship the next morning at 5:00 a.m. before he departed. I don't remember what he had to say except that he didn't understand what we were going through and he looked awfully tired!

"LBJ had heard about Roscoe, our canine mascot. ... Somebody had briefed LBJ about Roscoe because he asked for him that night at the club. Just then Roscoe strolled up for dinner as he always did. LBJ squatted down on his haunches and called for him to come. Roscoe walked right by and into the dining room without acknowledging the President of the United States there on his haunches! We all thought that it was hilarious but couldn't laugh out loud. Our base leadership was already in a tizzy because of the visit and it would have been too much to have done so." (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 23 - 24.)

The President was "...quartered in a series of trailers -- his trailer was number one. The trailer had two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. The President's large double bed filled one of the small bedrooms."

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

Early the next morning, "the President was up and dressed by 5:00 a.m. -- in khaki shirt and pants and battle jacket. Walt Rostow and Wm Bundy came in the trailer briefly and the President greeted them and then suggested they leave and find a way to get him into Karachi without the press finding out prior to arrival."

"In the dark of the early morn..." the President, with Gen Momyer, traveled by car to a flightline hanger where, on a stage, he presented awards to eight pilots.

Receiving Silver Stars were:

Capt William Griger, 30, Goldsboro, N.C. - 355 TFW

Capt Donald F. Miles - 432 TRW

Receiving Distinguished Flying Crosses were:

Maj. Myron L. Savage, 35, Ste. Genevieve, Mo -355 TFW

Maj Wintford L. Bazzell, 42, Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. - 388 TFW

Maj James R. Bassett, 32, Ithica, N.Y. (44 TFS) - 388 TFW

Maj. Lloyd W. Boothby, 36, Washington, D.C. - 8 TFW

1Lt John C. Putnam - 355 TFW

1Lt George H. McKinney, Jr., 24, Bessemer, Ala., - 8 TFW

(The President's Daily Diary: Dec 23, 1967, pg 1 LBJ Library and Museum, on line at <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/diary/1967/671223-01.asp>)

After presenting the awards, President Johnson spoke to a crowd gathered in the pre-dawn darkness near the reveted F-105 parking stalls. "In the history of air power, no such difficult set of tasks has ever been assigned as those assigned to you Guerrilla combat provides no easy targets and that is why aggressors here - as elsewhere - have been tempted to choose guerrilla tactics as the means of their aggression. Yet here, for the first time, air power is actually depriving the aggressor of his advantage. ... Air power is denying access to cheap success or to ultimate victory. ... And no man can come here for even a short period and shake your hand or look you in the eye, and have the slightest bit of doubt for a moment that America is going to hold firm and America is going to stay faithful throughout the course - until an honorable peace is secured. ... God keep you, every one of you - and we shall always be deeply in your debt. Thank you and good morning."

The President departed Korat at 5:41a.m.

President Johnson went from Korat to Cam Ranh AB in South Vietnam where he arrived at 0841. " ... The Korat speech marked the apex of good feeling between President Johnson and the military. Since the Stennis hearings in August, he had approved some long-sought targets and shown Secretary of Defense McNamara the door." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 114).

388 TFW history Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO 583 frame 1685 & Sawadee Flyer, Friday Dec 29, 1967 in NO583, frames 1968 - 1973

23-Dec-67

6715

The four pilots in "Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS took off at 14:40 and refueled with Red Anchor 40. Their lineup was:

#1 - Capt Vernon D. Ellis flying F-105D 62-4387

#2 - Maj William M. Blakeslee flying 61-0072

#3 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 58-1157

#4 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer flying 61-0132

Spare: Capt Irving E. LeVine in 60-0505

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

This was Capt Shuler's 34th mission. "This apparently was another Commando Club mission, target coordinates 20-25N and 104-10E, 094 degrees at 25 NM from Channel 97."

Jake Shuler 23 Dec 67 mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011.

25-Dec-67

2772

"Christmas day was celebrated with many 354 TFS flights [from the 355 TFW, Takhli] striking targets in Laos. Laos was not included in the one-day truce that covered North and South Vietnam."

At the 388 TFW, Korat, the 44 TFS Wild Weasel crew of Capt Robert E. Dorough, Jr. and his EWO Maj Clarence S. "Bud" Summers flew a combat mission into Laos. "Monday - Merry Christmas to Ho Chi. Hit his supply route in early A.M. in Laos. Our flight carried 24 x 750-pound bombs. Sure lit up the sky. Unfortunately this was a non-counter."

Another pilot from Korat, Capt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, also flew a non-counting mission into Laos.

"Merry Christmas!

"Flew non-counter in far southern Laos. Took off at 3:00 AM. Still very dark when we landed. Combat Skyspot mission. Bombs lit up sky."

"Pancho" flight from the 34 TFS at Korat launched at 10:05 on a two-hour non-counting mission against a target at location 15-51N and 106-47E. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying F-105D 59-1759
- #2 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 60-0435
- #3 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying 60-0425
- #4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0132 on his first non-counting combat mission. He had 35 counters to date.

"The reason this was a non-counter was that we were not allowed to bomb NVN on Christmas Day. I believe this was my first and only time working with a Covey FAC, in this case Covey 239 flying an O-2A Covey FACs with 2xx call signs flew primarily in Zone 2 of southern Laos designated 'Tigerhound'. We made contact on UHF frequency 338.8 after flying towards coordinates 15-50.5N and 106-46E. After making visual contact, Dave (Dickson) started a counterclockwise orbit around Covey 239 who was well below us. He explained that our target was a camouflaged 37MM gun emplacement that had been giving him fits. He fired a white phosphorus rocket then called the target's location relative to the white smoke. Dave dropped his bombs (I'm pretty sure we were carrying 500 pounders) and Covey 239 called the target relative to the bomb impact. Successively, Irv (LeVine) and Clyde (Falls) dropped their bombs and after each drop Covey 239 called the relative location of the target to the bomb impact points. So, by the time I rolled in I had a pretty good idea of where the target was, the advantage of being #4 in the formation. Well I was fortunate enough to get a direct hit, probably the only reason I remember this mission in such detail. I'm sure I would have gotten a lot of ribbing if I hadn't come closer than the other three." (Jake Shuler's combat mission spreadsheet & e-mail 11 Jan 2011)

The 34th also launched the five-ship "Gator" flight into Laos. The flight took off at 11:45 and returned after flying for 2 hours 15 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4387
- #2 - Maj Wintford L. Bazzell, 469 TFS
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Capt Vernon D. Ellis

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

#5 - Capt Edward L. Jones

This was the first non-counting combat mission that Maj Armstrong had flown since his arrival at Korat in October. "Christmas present. Even though there was a 24-hour truce in effect, we launched a number of strikes against infiltration routes in Laos. We had a 5th man as he was originally in another flight and had to change aircraft. Our target was in Laos, about the same latitude as Hue, South Vietnam, and about 5 miles inside Laos. The weather was supposed to be overcast there so we were set up for a Combat Sky Spot. We dropped via Sky Spot but as we released we looked down and saw our bombs hit very close to the target." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100-mission combat log.)

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Ozark 3" against a road segment in southern Laos. "100%. Two road cuts. One possible secondary." It was his 25th combat mission.

355 TFW history, Oct 67 - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO463, frame 1573 & Bob Dorrough's combat diary & Earl Henderson, combat diary & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

02-Jan-68

4859

The 34 TFS at Korat launched the four-ship "Scuba" flight against Yen Bay Airfield in North Vietnam. The flight took off at 1430 and returned after flying for 2 hours 40 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270
- #2 - Capt Vernon D. Ellis
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Maj David D. Igelman

This was Maj Armstrong's 45th combat mission. "I was supposed to be Mission Commander today but the weather in Pack IV prohibited the mission. Instead, we went to our first alternate target. I had a force of 8 F-105Ds with bombs, 4 F-105s Iron Hand, and 8 F-4s MIG CAP. Our target was the Yen Bay Airfield in Pack V. We drove up on a Commando Club vectoring and dropped over the clouds. We had some flak (85-mm) as we approached Yen Bay as usual. MiGs were up but never got close enough to be a threat. A very simple and uncomplicated mission. Yen Bay is now in Pack VIA."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 19.

03-Jan-68

2229

Although strike activity in the RP-6A area was confined to the period on 3 through 5 January, "... significant results were achieved against the rail network during those three days."

"Beginning in January 1968, MiG pilots were less prone to flee toward China. Instead, they became more aggressive and frequently returned for a second pass against American strike aircraft. The number of their kills increased and the MiG threat became more significant. U.S. forces therefore scheduled more MIGCAP missions and, at the same time, reduced the size of strike forces to provide better force protection." (Aces)

"On January 3, two large Air Force raids, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, hit North Vietnamese railroad yards." (Clashes)

The first MiG confrontation of the new year took place on the morning of 3 January. (Aces)

A major strike effort was frugged this morning to strike targets in the Hanoi area. The aircraft were divided into two forces [ALPHA and BRAVO].

"ALPHA force was scheduled to strike the Kinh No Railroad Classification Yard, 21-09N and 105-51E. The mission was subsequently cancelled due to adverse weather and the force was diverted to an alternate target the Dong Dau Railroad Bridge at 21-06N and 105-54E. (TOT: 0845 - 0853H.)

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

The force consisted of four F-105 strike flights from Korat with call signs "Hatchet", "Simmer", "Pistol", and "Crossbow". Two F-4D flights from Udorn provided MIGCAP and two flights of F-105 from Korat flew IRON HAND anti-SAM missions. This force was attacked by MiG-21s on its approach to the target.

"Cactus" was one of Korat's Iron Hand flights supporting the morning strike against the Kinh No rail yard. The flight took off at 05:50; their mission lasted 3.4 hours. The lineup was:

#1 - Maj Michael S. Muskat and EWO Capt Kyle Stouder from the 44 TFS flying F-105F 63-8306
#2 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr., 34 TFS, flying F-105D 58-1152 on his 58th mission, his 29th into RP- 6.
#3 - Capt Harry N. Gainer and EWO Capt John A. Stetson from the 44 TFS flying F-105F 63-8353
#4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler, 34 TFS, flying F-105D 60-0449 on his 5th IH and 41st combat mission
Spare: Capt Harry Guy Paddon III from the 34 TFS in F-105D 58-1157. (NOTE: This plane was downed in today's afternoon mission and its pilot, Col James E. Bean, the 388 TFW DO, became a POW.) (Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet, mission card, and e-mail 11 Jan 2011 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 3 Jan 68.)

"Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS was one of Korat's four strike flights in the ALPHA force. The flight left Korat at 0600. Its line up was:

#1 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
#2 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0072.
#3 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO
#4 - Maj Billy R. Givens (killed in accident 25 Apr 68)

This was Maj Armstrong's 46th combat mission. "The target was Kinh No railroad yard 6 miles north of Hanoi. We went in via the land route with the sun in our face. There were no clouds in the delta but the visibility was very poor with the haze and sun. We should never have continued in. We started getting MiG calls shortly after crossing the border. They closed to 15 miles and the F-4s went after them. As we came into the delta along the Red River, the MiGs stayed on our tail and the SAMs and flak stayed down. One MiG-17 came up along side Simmer and fired a missile at Pistol 3 but miraculously missed. Two MiG-21s fired 4 missiles at Crossbow flight. The flak (mainly 85-mm) got real heavy on the way out 'til Hoa Lac. Everybody had to jettison bombs as the MiGs plus weather caused us to not get to the target. Nobody got hit luckily." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 50 minutes. (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 19.)

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Armstrong described this mission in more detail. "The next morning, 3 January, was barely clear enough over Pack VIA for Saigon to order us to go primary target which was the Kinh No railroad yard 6 miles North of Hanoi. This time I was flying #2 in the CBU flight. We flew the land route and were going to be making a right hand roll-in so my flight was north of the lead flight and I was on my lead's right wing looking to the north for MiGs. There were several MiG calls so we accelerated and raced them to the SA-2 ring as was our normal tactic hoping that the MiGs would break off short of the SA-2 ring for their own safety. Much to our surprise, they held the SA-2's and flak down this day and let the MiGs follow us right up to roll-in. A MiG-17 pulled up on my right side and fired a missile at Pistol #3. Simmer lead, Lt. Col. Red Evans [Lt Col Robert A. Evans, the 44 TFS commander], spotted the missile launch and called: 'Simmer #3 break right!' Obviously Pistol #3 didn't do anything. The next call from Red was: 'It's okay, he missed you'. Since this all took place on my blind side the first thing I saw was our #4 man, Billy Givens, roll over the top of us. He said he took a shot at the MiG but he certainly didn't hit him.

"Then two MiG-21's fired 4 missiles at our trailing flight, Crossbow, but fortunately nobody got hit. By this time the flak started coming up and the mission commander couldn't find the target due to these

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

distractions and the morning sun glinting off the rice paddies. So we were all ordered to jettison our bombs safe and get out of there. We didn't lose any aircraft but were shook up over the audacity of the MiG pilots.

"In the mission debrief, Red Evans asked Vern Ellis [Capt Vernon D. Ellis] who was Pistol #3 that mission why he didn't break when he called him. Vern naturally replied that nobody called him to break. I verified that this was the case and played the transmissions back to Red from my tape recorder. Red then acknowledged that he had screwed up big time and that Vern was lucky the missile missed because the rest of us had let him down." (Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished manuscript, chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 25 - 26).

"BRAVO force was fragged against the Trung Quang Railroad Yard at 21-06N and 105-56E (TOT: 0850 - 0853H) [on the Northeast Rail Line (RR 2)]. The force consisted of three strike flights (twelve F-4Ds) from Ubon, ... one F-4D flak suppression flight from Ubon; two F-4D MIGCAP flights ... from Ubon and two F-105 IRON HAND flights from Takhli." (Red Baron II, Event 82, pp 316 - 331)

The BRAVO force was attacked by MiG-17s during withdrawal. One strike F-4D and one MIGCAP F-4D from the 8 TFW at Ubon each shot down a MiG-17. The crew of the strike F-4D was Lt Col Clayton K. Squier and 1Lt Michael D. Muldoon from the 435 TFS. They shot an AIM-4 to down the MiG-17. The crew of the MIGCAP F-4D was Maj Bernard J. Bogoslofski and Capt Richard L. Husky from the 433 TFS who fired a 20-mm gun pod to hit their MiG-17. (Aces)

One of the IRON HAND flights from Takhli on the BRAVO force included the Wild Weasel crew of Capt Malcolm D. Winter and EWO Maj William H. Wheeler from the 354 TFS. They flew F-105F 63-8301 as "Barracuda 4". It was Maj Winter's 78th combat mission. "Supported 8th TFW on RR yard. 5462; about 10 miles from Hanoi on NE RR. ... 4+00, 4 refuelings."

"Post strike photography obtained on 5 January revealed that 5 of the 7 tracks were interdicted and 3 pieces of rolling stock were destroyed or damaged." (Briefing)

"Aces and Aerial Victories", pgs 74 - 75 & "Clashes", pg 143 & Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 1 - 15 January 1968 & combat mission log of Mal Winter transcribed by his son, Mike Winter.

05-Jan-68

3840

F-105s from the 388 TFW, struck the Yen Bai airfield on a Commando Club mission.

Additional F-105s struck the Thai Nguyen Railyard (JCS 21.11).

Twelve other F-105s from the 388 TFW struck the Lang Son railroad bridge bypass. Strike pilots dropped 72 M-117s on the 400' x 10' bridge. Post-strike BDA revealed one pier destroyed and one pier probably damaged. The approaches to the bridge remained serviceable. Flak suppression aircraft dropped 13 CBU-24s and four CBU-29s on firing flak sites. Pilots estimated four AAA sites destroyed or severely damaged.

A successful visual attack was also made on the Kep airfield (JCS 9.1) at location 21-23-37N and 106-16-05E in RP-6A. Korat's flights attacking the airfield were: "Pistol", "Hatchet", "Simmer", and "Crossbow". "Bobbin" was the Iron Hand flight. (Jake Shuler's mission data card.)

The strike force commander was Capt Sam P. Morgan from the 34 TFS flying as "Pistol 01".

"While attempting to suppress air defenses along the ingress route, Iron Hand F-105s launched four AGM-45s at a SAM site near Hanoi. Pilots estimated they destroyed a Fansong radar and a van. At the airfield, Iron Hand aircraft expended two CBU-24s and reported heavy damage to an AAA site.

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

They observed two secondaries near the site. The follow-on strike force, consisting of three flights of F-105Ds, struck the airfield and reported several interdictions on the southwest and center sections of the runway. The crews expended 72 750-pound bombs over the target area. One F-105 was downed by AAA fire as it was pulling off the target. Post-strike BDA revealed the runway was cratered in these areas, rendering it unserviceable and non-operational." (388 TFW history.)

Capt William E. Jones from the 469 TFS, flying as "Crossbow 03", was shot down by AAA on the mission.

Capt Robert W. Ferrel from the 44 TFS was "Bobbin 02" in the Iron Hand flight. "... I was wingman on the Iron Hand flight going to Kep airfield. Bill Jones was knocked down on that mission and we heard his beacon but never heard from him again. That strike was from the Gulf and he went down north of Haiphong. Our Iron Hand flight successfully destroyed a SAM site while evading MiGs and we were awarded a Silver Star." Ferrel had to land at Da Nang when his refueling door failed to open and he couldn't post-strike refuel. (Bob Ferrel, e-mails 14 & 15 July 2009.)

"Simmer" was Korat's third flight striking Kep Airfield. The flight from the 34 TFS left Korat at 06:00. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4248
- #2 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #3 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying mission # 60
- #4 - Capt Carl William Lasiter (POW 4 Feb 68)

This was Maj Armstrong's 48th combat mission. "We had a last minute target change and went to Kep A.F. We went in the water route and had no threat from the MiGs. The visibility was good and we had no problem picking up the field on approach. They started filling the air with 85-mm bursts right in our flight path about 15 miles before we rolled in. We had to climb above the flak and consequently were high at roll-in and fast at release. I saw three strings of bombs hit as I rolled in; one on either side of the runway and one in the middle of the runway. The AAA was still heavy pulling off the target. Several aircraft took hits. Crossbow #3 [Capt William Eugene Jones, 469 TFS, KIA] was hit on pull off and had locked the slab when he lost #1 & 2 flight control pressure. He flew it for about 30 seconds that way and finally had to get out when it went into a steep spiral. He got out safely and landed on the west end of Little 'Thud' Ridge. I think rescap was possible but it was poorly handled and was finally called off." The mission lasted for 3 hours 35 minutes. (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 20.)

Lt Gen Armstrong elaborated on this mission in his memoirs. "Kep was primarily at this time a MiG-17 base and had been hit before, but not recently. I was leading Simmer, the #3 flight and Sam Morgan was the mission commander. We came in from the east and started picking up 85-mm flak well before roll-in. As the 85-mm shells exploded in an orange burst before becoming the black smoke that gave flak its name many years before, Sam began a shallow climb. Consequently we stayed just above the burst until roll-in. We got some good hits on the airfield with our 750# bombs but the flak was very intense all the way. Several aircraft got hit. Bill Jones of the 469th, flying that morning as Crossbow #3, took a pretty bad hit and lost his #1 and #2 flight control hydraulic pressure and had to bail out close to the point where Bob Barnett [on 3 October 1967 also from the 469 TFS] landed some months earlier. I thought that rescue could have been possible but it was not attempted for some reason ... " (Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished manuscript, chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 26.)

"Crossbow" was Korat's fourth flight in the attack on Kep Airfield. It's lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Robert F. Grubb from the 469 TFS flying F-105D 60-0464

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

- #2 - Maj David D. Igelman from the 34 TFS flying 61-0206
- #3 - Capt William E. Jones from the 469 TFS flying 61-0068
- #4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler from the 34 TFS flying 60-0511 on his 42nd mission.

The flight left Korat at 05:50 and refueled from Brown Anchor 24 at 07:00 at 16,000 feet for a TOT of 07:48.

Forty-two and a half years later, Jake Shuler recalled details of the mission. "On the morning of 5 January 1968, Dave Igelman and I were scheduled to fly with the 469th TFS, a first for me. I was pleased to see that Bob Grubb was to lead our flight. Bob had been a B-52 co-pilot with my brother [Buck Shuler] at Carswell AFB, TX. Then both were transferred to Dyess AFB, TX where they upgraded to Aircraft Commanders. Dave was to fly as Crossbow 2 and I was to fly as Crossbow 4 on Bill Jones' wing. I had never met Bill before but instantly found him to be easy going and very likeable. The Strike Force Commander was Sam Morgan, Pistol 1. The second flight was Hatchet Flight and Sam Armstrong was leading Simmer Flight, the third flight. Our flight, Crossbow, was the fourth flight of four.

"The Wing mission briefing revealed that we would be going to the primary target, Kep Airfield. Intelligence had briefed us to expect heavy AAA which turned out to be an understatement

"The Kep runway headings are 070 degrees & 250 degrees. The Strike Force final heading to the target was 283 degrees which gave us a 33-degree angle with Runway 25. Sam Morgan skillfully positioned the Strike Force just north of Kep so with a 20-degree left turn during roll-in, we would only have about a 13-degree angle with the runway. A small angle enhanced the likelihood of getting more of your string of bombs on the runway.

"Sam Morgan rolled Pistol Flight in closely followed by Hatchet Flight. Moments later, Sam Armstrong rolled in with Simmer Flight and then it was Crossbow Flight's turn. Bob and Dave rolled in immediately followed by Bill. I rolled inverted with Bill but instinctively saw that we were going to have less than a 60-degree dive angle so I held my pull for a moment. I do not know the reason for the shallow dive angle, perhaps the fact that Crossbow Flight was the back right flight and we were rolling in to the left. A shallow dive angle increases the time from roll-in to bomb release thus providing the AAA gunners more time to track you. Plus the fact that Bill and I were the 15th & 16th aircraft down the chute didn't increase our odds of remaining unscathed.

"When I rolled out in the dive, I had to sit up straight and lean forward to keep Bill in sight just below and to the left of my nose. As soon as I saw him pickle his bombs and begin his pull up and hard left turn, I took my eyes off him and put my sight mid-way down the runway, my assigned aiming point. I pickled my bombs at 7,500' and started my pull up and hard left turn to follow Bill. I did not see Bill get hit but heard his call just prior to my weapons release. I initiated my pull up and turn to our egress heading of 100 degrees, varying my backpressure in an attempt to spoil AAA tracking. I did not pick Bill up visually during the turn because, unbeknownst to me, he had rolled wings level when hit and was headed approximately 134 degrees. (The direction from Kep Airfield to where Bill ejected, 106-28N and 21-12E, was a distance of 16 NM.) I had turned past him. Bob called and asked if I had Crossbow 3 in sight and I said 'negative.' To this very day, I question whether I was the wingman I should have been.

"Bob and Dave were ahead of Bill but got a visual on him after making a 360-degree turn ending up behind him. I do recall Bill's transmission indicating that he had locked the slab but had lost oil pressure. Very shortly thereafter Bob was telling Bill to 'get out'. By this time I had turned back to the right and, although I did not see the ejection, I immediately heard his beeper and picked him up in his chute. Moments later I saw the fireball when his aircraft impacted the ground. The time between Bill calling being hit and his ejection was a blur to me then and is certainly not clear in my memory now.

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

Assuming Bill averaged a groundspeed of 550 KTS and traveled 16 NMs, the elapsed time would have been approximately 1 minute 40 seconds. As Sam Armstrong mentioned in his combat log, Bill flew the aircraft on slab lock for about 30 seconds, so he was apparently nursing the aircraft for just over a minute before engaging the slab lock configuration.

"I began circling Bill at a safe distance so as not to draw AAA in his vicinity. Due to that distance, I could not tell what kind of shape he was in. Bob tried several times to raise him on his survival radio without success. On one circle going through a northwest direction, I picked up two aircraft approaching almost head on. I leveled my wings in preparation for a head-on attack and was greatly relieved to find that they were two Thuds and not MiGs. I think [they were] an Iron Hand element. Eventually, I rejoined with Bob and Dave and we remained in the area for about 15 minutes then went to the tanker to top off and wait for a possible rescue effort, which, regrettably never materialized.

"The flight back to Korat was somber. In honor of Bill, I flew initial in the number 4 position."

388 TFW history, Jan - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO 584, frames 0459 and 0495 - 0497 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on Dave Dickson's cigar band dated 5 Jan 68 & Jake Shuler, "42nd Mission Narrative" via e-mail, 28 July 2010.

06-Jan-68

2883

Three days after the 388 TFW DO, Col James Ellis Bean, was shot down by a MiG-21, and a year after the first successful MiG sweep in Operation Bolo on 2 January 1967, General Momyer at 7th Air Force attempted another MiG sweep.

Forty-two F-105s and "... 16 F-4Ds were fragged for MiG sweeps in the Kep, Phuc Yen, Mo Trang, and Tung Tu areas. As part of the same mission, 12 Navy aircraft were fragged to hit coastal defense targets in the Thanh Hoa area. In support of this mission, six ... EB-66s (from the 355 TFW) provided electronic jamming support with four aircraft in the North West Laos orbit areas ... and two in the North East Gulf of Tonkin orbit area."

"On 6 January, the entire strike force of F-105s (from the 388 TFW), each aircraft armed with four AIM-9Bs went on an unsuccessful 'MiG sweep' in RP-6A. None of the flights sighted MiGs." (388 TFW history, Jan - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO 584, frame 0497.)

"Instead of F-4s pretending to be F-105s as in Bolo, Momyer's new sweep featured thirty-four F-105s stripped of their bombs and ready to dogfight. Most of them crossed Thud Ridge at fourteen thousand feet and turned east as if intending to strike Kep airfield or the railroad bridge at Mo Trang, fifteen miles west of Kep on the line to Thai Nguyen. Not surprisingly, their ruse was soon discovered, when two pairs of MiG-21s attacked from the rear. Typical of North Vietnamese tactics since August, it was a hit-and-run attack out of the late afternoon sun. The MiGs and the strike force traded heat-seeking missiles without doing any damage, and the MiG pilots escaped to tell their controllers that the F-105s were not carrying bombs. The best opportunity for destroying an enemy aircraft that afternoon came a few minutes later, when an F-105 pilot noticed an Il-14 Crate transport several thousand feet below, headed for Hanoi. While the F-105 pilot was getting his force commander's permission to attack this gray cargo plane with a red star, it dove into the nearest cloud; the F-105 got off one burst of gunfire and missed."

General Momyer justified this unsuccessful MiG sweep by telling General Ryan, "... while he had no illusions about another Bolo, there was nothing better to do with his aircraft during the northeast monsoon."

"Momyer also indicated that he had resorted to a fighter sweep only after trying other means for defeating the MiGs. He had sent F-4 escorts ahead of the strike force by as much as a quarter of an hour; he had added a flight of them at forty thousand feet, far above the strike force; he had sent two

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

flights below enemy radar to pop up and surprise the MiGs; he had combined a close escort with a roving flight. But the fundamental problem remained that Seventh Air Force was 'operating with less than real time information, while the enemy has this information available to him.'"

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, the 34 TFS operations officer, was the 388 TFW mission commander for this mission. He led "Waco" flight from the 34 TFS. The flight took off at 1355. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0162 on his 49th combat mission.
- #2 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #3 - Capt Sam P. Morgan
- #4 - Capt Vernon D. Ellis

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. also from the 34 TFS flew in another 388 TFW flight on this MiG-sweep mission, his 61st over North Vietnam. (20 Apr 09 letter from Carolyn Dickson giving annotation on cigar band dated 6 Jan 68.)

In his combat log, Maj Armstrong told how the mission was planned and flown. "I was the Mission Commander for this strike which was flown as a MiG sweep. We had no bombs each aircraft had 2 tanks and 2 AIM-9s. Two flights of F-4s were to precede us by 5 minutes and go to Phuc Yen and Kep and get the MiGs. Takhli was to come in on roughly the same route with the same configuration 5 minutes behind. Actually the F-4s and Takhli were right along beside us. We got a call that a Blue Bandit was closing on us first at 30 miles, then 18 miles, and finally 7 miles. Then we did the break maneuver I had briefed and the MiG broke off and we couldn't see him and radar lost him. All 4 flights then went to the designated orbit areas to look for MiGs. Nobody got a shot at any unfortunately and we turned around and came home. We did prove that we could defeat a MiG attack as a strike force and still get to the target." The flight landed after flying for 3 hours 10 minutes. (Maj Armstrong's combat mission log, pg 21.)

Lt Gen Armstrong expanded on the description of the mission in his memoirs. "As the mission commander for the afternoon mission on the 6th, I was surprised when I arrived at the command post early that morning to plan what I thought was to be a standard Pack VIA mission. Instead I learned that it was to be a MiG Sweep much like the previous one. Two flights of F-4C's were to proceed first up the water route and harass the Kep and Phuc Yen Airfields. Then the Korat force would fly up the land route, followed by the Takhli force and finally a full force of F-4C's from Ubon. The frag order also specified that the lead and #3 flights in the F-105 forces would not carry bombs or jamming pods. The #2 and #4 flights would carry a full load of 750# bombs. All F-105D's would carry a pair of Sidewinder heat seeking missiles on each wing. There were to be no Weasels in this plan. If we were not successful in luring MiGs up, then we were to bomb the Thai Nyugen. Incidentally, the weather was forecast to be totally undercast all over Pack VIA.

"The frag order didn't make any sense to me. I complained to the chief of the command post. First, with no jamming pods, we would look very different to their radar sites. Secondly, there seemed to be no reason to carry two pods of Sidewinders at the expense of those jamming pods. Two missiles each was plenty since we still had the Gatling gun. Thirdly, by requiring the #2 and #4 flights to carry bombs, they would be unnecessarily weighted down and couldn't keep up with the rest of us much less engage the MiG's with any chance of success. The reply was that we needed to carry bombs just in case we were got to the target without being intercepted. I declared that I wouldn't take the strike force into the SA-2 ring since it was undercast and we had no Weasels, pods or any Sky Spot for bombing.

"I thought that my argument was solid but it fell on faint-hearted ears. The command post chief did agree to check with 7th again with my concerns. He came back shortly with the answer that the frag order was to be flown as originally written. I told him that I wasn't going to take the strike force into the

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

SA-2 ring no matter what they said and they could court martial me now or later. Just about then I was called to the secure phone to talk to the Takhli mission commander. Those secure phones were really poor so the conversation was difficult. I did recognize the voice on the other end as Col. Giraud, the Takhli wing commander. His concerns were exactly the same as mine. He said he was going to order his maintenance folks to load his aircraft just the way I had wanted. But since we were 5 minutes ahead of them, we'd have already blown the mission by the time they entered the area. I said that we had asked 7th for a change and been denied. He said he was used to 'telling' 7th what he was going to do, not ask them! He told me to hand the phone to our senior officer, Col. Stewart who had only been the D.O. since Col. Bean was shot down three days earlier. I heard Col. Stewart's end of the conversation which was largely: 'yes sir, yes sir'. He hung up and told the chief of the command post to have maintenance load the aircraft just the way I wanted. And they did in short order.

"I planned and briefed the force on what we would do. We would proceed up the land route into Pack VIA anticipating that we would be intercepted by MiG-21's from Phuc Yen. Their practice was to take-off and climb out to about 25,000 feet on a course opposite to ours. The lead aircraft would key his Identification Friend or Foe (IFF) once to give their ground radar controllers their precise position. Then they would squawk their IFF one more time to get a turn in vector. When they squawked their IFF, our radar aircraft over the Gulf could also see them. Incidentally, we squawked all of the time because with our jamming pods, we lit up the radars anyhow. My plan was to wait until our radar guys called the MiG's position from its second squawk and then we would go into a 360-degree hard turn. My flight and the #3 flight would turn left and the other to the right. If we timed it just right, we would come back to our original heading just as the first MiG-21 popped up from the undercast looking for us -- only we'd be behind him in a position to fire instead of vice-versa. Usually there was a second MiG-21 about 3 miles in trail. My plan was that the last two flights would be ready for him.

"It worked just like I briefed. The radar aircraft warned me when the MiGs were 30 miles, 18 miles and finally at 7 miles. This was one more call than I expected. At the 7 mile call, I called the break. When we all came back to the original Northerly heading, there were no MiG's in sight. They had obviously been warned once we started our maneuver and stayed below the clouds and headed North for a safe recovery. Takhli was closer than 5 minutes behind us as were also the F-4C's. So we had a whole bunch of Air Force aircraft flying around in the same area with armed missiles and itchy trigger fingers! People were calling out bogies all over the place and thinking they might be MiG's only to discover that it was only some of our own. I soon decided that the MiGs were laying low and the situation was becoming hazardous from 'friendly fire'. So I called for my 4 flights to head home.

"The MiG Sweep was unsuccessful but we did discover that we could negate a MiG attack in the future, keep our bombs, and proceed on to the target. The trick was the turn which upset their attack geometry."

355 TFW history Jan - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO463, frame 1651 & "To Hanoi and Back", pgs 96 and 97 & Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished manuscript, chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 27 - 28.

10-Jan-68

4862

For the second day, a weather diversion sent "Gator" flight from the 34 TFS into Laos instead of North Vietnam. The flight took off at 15:10. Its lineup was:

- #1 - Lt Col James B. Ross
- #2 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 58-1172
- #4 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr.

This was Maj Armstrong's 51st combat mission. "Again the primary target was cancelled due to weather and we wound up doing North Star. We went down into southern Laos outside of Mu Gia

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

Pass and hit a karst and tumbled it down on the road. Cricket cleared us into Pack I to let #4 drop his tanks as they wouldn't feed. I had P-2 flight control system failure on way back and had to land straight-in." The mission lasted 2 hours five minutes.

Capt Jacob C. Shuler, also from the 34 TFS, flew F-105D 60-5381 on his 46th mission into NVN. It was his final combat mission before his reassignment to Hq 7th Air Force in Saigon. Prior to his Hq assignment, he went on an R&R between 12 - 18 January and returned to Korat.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 21 & Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet.

12-Jan-68

4863

After dropping their bombs under Sky Spot control, "Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS strafed a line of trucks in Mu Gia Pass. Their flight took off from Korat at 0635. The flight's line up was:

- #1 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO
- #2 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4242
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer
- #4 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer

It was Maj Armstrong's 52nd combat mission. "This was a divert to Cricket from the planned Pack VI strike. They joined us up with the two airborne spares for a 6-ship Combat Sky Spot on a target in the north of Mu Gia Pass. We dropped and watched the bombs impact in a wooded area with no explosions from secondaries. Jim Daniels looked down and saw some trucks in the pass. We came back and made some strafe passes on the trucks. Jim went in first and got one to burning. I came in next and set 2 or 3 afire right next to his. We damaged 4 or 5 more. We then saw some 12 more north but couldn't strike them. I fired 783 rounds." The mission lasted 3 hours.

Also under Cricket control, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Ozark 02" against a road segment in RP-2. "100%. Road cut." It was his 31st combat mission.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 21 - 22 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

14-Jan-68

4865

Weather diverted "Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS to a Sky Spot radar drop in RP-1. The flight took off at 1430. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Kenneth W. Mays
- #2 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr.
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0505
- #4 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer

This was Maj Armstrong's 54th combat mission. "Again a Cricket divert to Pack I. We did a Combat Sky Spot in Mu Gia Pass as weather was soaked in. Practiced some formation on way home. Nothing very spectacular." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 15 minutes.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 22.

19-Jan-68

4868

"Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS attacked a train near a village in North Vietnam. The flight took off at 0525. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4361
- #2 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer
- #4 - Capt Robert Malcolm Elliot (KIA 14 Feb 68)

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

This was Maj Armstrong's 58th combat mission. "The target this a.m. was an army barracks 8 miles southwest of Hanoi. I was Mission Commander. I planned to drop off the tankers in the Gulf and ingress just north of Thanh Hoa going up the west side of the Red River keeping the SAMs off to our right. One Iron Hand was to go up on the east side with a MIGCAP as a diversion. As we got close to the coast, the weather, which was supposed to be clear, turned out to be almost completely overcast as far as the eye could see. We turned towards the target and continued on until about 20 miles south of the target. At that time, I could see that there was no way. I called a weather abort to the left and told everyone to pick a target in an open area southwest of our run-in course. We found a train and a convoy of trucks that we dropped on. My bombs were a bit short of the train and I didn't know if I did more than damage the cars. After expending our bombs, we came on home." Their mission lasted 3 hours 40 minutes.

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Armstrong, described this mission and its significance in much greater detail. "I was the mission commander and the target was an army barracks 8 miles Southwest of Hanoi. It was a certainty that we would encounter SA-2's as we ingressed from the Gulf. I sent the Weasels and the MiG CAP up the west side of the Red River when we dropped off the tankers with the hope that they would draw the SA-2 response first. They were equipped to deal with this threat which would allow us to get to the target without losses. This actually worked. I was also very mindful that the weather was likely to be unsuitable for dive bombing and the standard 20-degree turn weather abort was quite hazardous (it seemed to take forever to make 180-degree turn while a lucky SA-2 might come unseen through the undercast).

"Therefore, I had a very radical idea and this was what I briefed at the mission briefing. When I called: 'Weather abort, left' everyone would roll left to an inverted position, pull the throttle to idle and pull back enough on the control stick to keep the aircraft in a light burble. This would result in a minimum altitude loss maneuver. It was the functional equivalent to a 'to the rear march' in that Tail-end Charlie would briefly be the lead aircraft and the leader Tail-end Charlie. I briefed that we would then break into individual flights and the flight leaders would move into the lead positions as soon as possible.

"There were at least two problems/unknowns associated with my plan. The first was that I had never done a Split 'S' in the F-105 in any fuel/weight configuration and our configuration at this maneuver was predictably as severe as could be imagined. We were starting from about 17,000 feet so my assumption that even our weakest pilot could perform a Split 'S' from this altitude before hitting the ground. But I hadn't test flown this maneuver so I was mindful that if I had badly miscalculated, my command could result in 16 'smoking holes' in North Vietnam. The second problem which was easier to predict was what this maneuver would look like on the SA-2 radar. As long as we were in our regular formation approaching the target area, our jamming pods would obliterate their scopes. However, the moment we rolled inverted with the pods pointing straight up, the jamming would disappear from their scopes and they would see the naked radar returns from each of our aircraft. An SA-2 would guide very nicely in this situation. I was betting that our maneuver would catch them by surprise. They would suddenly see our 'blips' and wonder why the 'blips' seemed to become stationary and then quickly move backwards with the resumption of jamming on their scopes.

"Meantime on the mission, as my Doppler indicated 20 miles from the target, it was evident that it was completely overcast. I'm sure that my comrades wondered why I went this far when I called the weather abort break as I had briefed. It worked just fine. Everybody was able to recover from their Split 'S' above the undercast. Some might have had some trouble completing the pull-out in the clouds using instruments. No SA-2's were observed. So far, so good. I simultaneously resumed the leadership of my flight while directing the other flights to: 'Hit targets of opportunity'. It wasn't until later that I heard that LBJ bragged that not a s---house in North Vietnam is bombed without my okay and here was Major Armstrong exercising on-the-spot direction which was inconsistent with the president's claim. Oh well!

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

"I headed my flight south in the hope of finding breaks in the overcast where we could find a suitable target to bomb. The clouds started to diminish the further south we went. One of my flight members called out that there was a train in a village over by the river. It took me only an instant to spot the village and train and call: 'Pistol lead is up and in'. With that I pulled up and banked left to position for a bomb run. The train was about ten cars with half of it inside the village environs and the other half sticking out. I established my 45-degree dive aiming at that part sticking out of the village. I didn't see anybody shooting at us so I released my bombs on cue and pulled out of the dive. I kicked the left rudder so I could see my bombs hit as I gained altitude. I was able to see all six of the 750# bombs impact. The first ones were short of the train. The very last one hit the edge of the track--not the train. I was upset with myself that I had missed hitting the train since this was indeed a very rare opportunity. I am not aware of a train ever being attacked this far outside of Hanoi.

"A little calculation would show that at 125 milliseconds between release of the 6 bombs at 500 knots, at 45 degrees dive angle they would impact 75 feet apart. The train was only about 8 feet wide and from a 90-degree attack angle, missing the train was not a disgrace. I didn't stop to make this calculation at this time -- I was determined to take advantage of this opportunity. I leveled off and raised the mils of depression in the sight to 20 and selected 'guns' on the armament panel. As I turned 270 degrees to make a strafing pass down the length of the train, I had a sudden thought. We had flown South far enough to be in Pack IV which was Navy territory. Consequently, this was an area that was unfamiliar to me. The train could be a trap that was used to lure aircraft into gun range. I could see that the last member of my flight had completed his bomb run and we didn't have a direct hit on the train. With my finger on the armed trigger, my better instincts took over and I banked sharply to the east and called: 'Pistol, were going feet wet' (meaning heading out to the Gulf for post strike refueling). Nobody objected and we returned safely to Korat.

"During the debriefing, I mentioned the train. I suggested that I thought that I had damaged the track enough that the train might be stuck there and the Navy should be aware of this intelligence so they could target it tomorrow. It was too late for the afternoon mission. I thought no more about this mission since I had only one more benign mission before I met Beth in Hawaii on R&R. It was only 22 years later when I was ready to retire that I matched this mission data, the tape of this mission, and the recognition that Tet 68 started 12 days later that I realized that the train I could have destroyed with my Gatling gun was probably carrying war goods for that Tet Offensive. We had no warning that Tet was coming. Otherwise, I would have risked the danger of the village defenses to strafe the train and destroy the goods that Tet would need. In retrospect, this was the mission, out of 100, that could have been the most important! This was a reflection of the failure of our intelligence system."

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 23 - 24 & Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished memoir in chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 33 - 35.

12-Feb-68

4874

"Simmer" flight from the 34 TFS used Commando Club to hit a target in Laos. The flight took off from Korat at 0650. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0161
- #2 - Capt John E. Hartman
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.

It was Maj Armstrong's 64th combat mission. "This was a 1st alternate Commando Club target in Laos. It was about 10 miles east of Sam Nuea. The tankers got fouled up on our fraged drop-off time. Consequently, we dropped off late and had to hustle to try to make up the time. When we dropped, we dropped our bombs through a 10,000 ft overcast so we couldn't see the impact. We made a weather recce of Pack III and IV near Laos for our counter." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 20 minutes.

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 26.

15-Feb-68

4877

"Crossbow" flight from the 34 TFS bombed a road in RP 4. The four-ship took off at 0950. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0161
- #2 - Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Capt Gary G. Durkee

This was Maj Armstrong's 67th combat mission. "We were going to an army barracks 8 miles SW of Hanoi and were on the tankers when we got word to divert to Cricket Control. Apparently, they found that the weather was clobbered when they got the satellite picture after we were airborne. Cricket was flooded and there were no FACs up so I took my flight into Route 7 and went in about 35 miles into the Package (Pack IV) and when we didn't find anything, we dropped our bombs on a road and came home." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 55 minutes.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 27

21-Feb-68

4880

"Bass" flight from the 34 TFS bombed an underwater ford in Laos. The flight took off at 14:50. Their line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0505
- #2 - Bob Moore [???
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Maj Ivor K. Goodrich

This was Maj Armstrong's 71st combat mission. "This was the first flight for Bob Moore and the 5th flight for Goodrich. They did real well. We were first alternate target of course and we hit an underwater ford down in Laos near Khe Sanh. Our bombs were pretty good. Afterwards, we made an armed recce of Red Route but the weather was bad." Their mission lasted 2 hour 40 minutes.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 28.

31-Mar-68

5165

Five F-105 pilots assigned to the 34 TFS in the 388 TFW at Korat completed flying 100 missions during March 1968. Since Capt Robert D. Pielin flew his 100th mission in July 1966, the first pilot in the 34th to do so, these five were the 76th through the 80th pilots from the 34th to achieve this goal.

- #76 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr.
- #77 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer - 12 March 1968
- #78 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. - 17 March 1968
- #79 - Maj William M. Blakeslee
- # 80 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr.

After arriving home on 23 March 1968, Maj Dickson's assignment returned him to the Air Defense Command this time to Tyndal AFB where he flew F-106s. He remained there until he retired as a major in 1970.

Maj Falls was also assigned to the Air Defense Command as an F-106 pilot. He belonged to the 318 FIS, McChord AFB, WA. He died in the crash of F-106A 59-0148 on 22 April 1969 near Mt. Rainier, WA.

Capt Beyer was reassigned to Wurtsmith AFB MI as a KC-135 aircraft commander. (Doug Beyer, e-

Douglas A. Beyer

F-105 History

mail 27 Apr 10)

34 TFS web site accessed on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & Carolyn Dickson, telephone interview, 23 Apr 09 & F-106 Delta Dart Forum at <http://forum.f-106deltadart.com/>

27-Apr-68

4109

Seven F-105 pilots from the 34 TFS were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for missions they flew over North Vietnam.

Under SO G-1243, those receiving the DFC were:

Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. (3rd OLC) for a mission on 20 Nov 67

Maj Harry G. Padden III (2 OLC) for a mission on 17 Nov 67

Under SO G-1244, those receiving the DFC were:

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong (1st OLC) for a mission on 16 Dec 67

Maj David D. Igelman (2nd OLC) for a mission on 14 Dec 67

Capt Douglas A. Beyer (3rd OLC) for a mission on 12 Dec 67

Capt Douglas A. Beyer (4th OLC) for a mission on 16 Dec 67

Capt Robert M. Crane (2nd OLC) for a mission on 14 Dec 67

Capt Sam P. Morgan (2nd OLC) for a mission on 14 Dec 67

On 2 Apr 68, under SO G978, Maj David D. Igelman was awarded the 1st OLC to the DFC for a mission on 31 Dec 67.

388 TFW history, Apr- Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frame 1387.

30-Jun-68

2592

(Approximate date). "Thirty-six Thunderchief pilots honored -- for the completion of 100 missions in the F-105 fighter-bomber over North Vietnam. Thirty-six pilots were honored with recognition certificates this month during a ceremony at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida. The recipients were: Lt Cols Reddock and Carl W. McKenzie; Maj. Barner, Leftwich, J. G. McGukin, J. H. Bobel, Jr., W. Fredlund, David C. Dickson, Jr., H. Wilson, W. Bazzell, J. Hildebrand, Alonzo L. Ferguson, J. Light, John R. Whaley, A. Lenski, R. S. Beale, Irwin, Donahue, Huntley, R. C. Fontaine, Maj Malcolm D. Winter, Robinson, and Mitchell; and Capt. W. F. Bryant, T. G. Cline, P. H. Walker, W. Grieger, H. G. Paddon, C. Jewett, R. Venturini, J. Wright, Earl J. Henderson, V. Ellis, D. Tucker, Beyer, and Dentino."

Thunderchief Worldwide Report Vol III No 10 June 1968.