

# James E. Daniel, Jr.

## F-105 History

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**28-Jul-61**

293

The fourth F-105D operational training Class 62A, Course 111506E, graduated 17 pilots at Nellis AFB NV. The class began training on 29 May 1961. The class was attached to the 4526 CCTS under the 4520 CCTW at Nellis, commanded by Lt Col James Ellis Bean. The graduates were:

Col LeRoy J. Manor - from HQ USAF	1Lt Richard W. Cullen - 36 TFW
Capt James E. Daniel, Jr. - from Cannon AFB	1Lt Paul R. Gregory - 36 TFW
Capt John F. Dudash - from Cannon AFB	1Lt Phillip D. Griggs - 36 TFW
Capt James L. "Foxy" Flowers - from Cannon AFB	1Lt John Henry Hoskins - 36 TFW
Capt Everett Wayne Harris - 36 TFW	1Lt John E. Jordan - 36 TFW
Capt Theodore E. Hurt - from Cannon AFB	1Lt Vernon M. Kulla - 36 TFW
Capt Gene Thomas Pemberton - from Nellis AFB	1Lt William E. Prather, Jr. - 36 TFW
Capt Thomas Wheeler, Jr. - 36 TFW	1Lt Russell R. Schoonover - 36 TFW
TFW	
1Lt Larry W. Crotts - 36 TFW	

*4520 CCTW History, Jan - Jun 61, USAF microfilm MO2195 Special Order AA-6.*

**15-Oct-61**

1542

The 23 TFS ended its F-105D nuclear qualification training at Wheelus AB, Libya. It transitioned the Bitburg Detachment at Wheelus to the 53 TFS, the third and last fighter squadron of the 36 TFW to transition from F-100s to F-105s.

After returning to Bitburg, the 23 TFS "... underwent changes in its staff structure." Key squadron people were: Maj Everett W. Harris, Operations Officer; Capt Joe B. Jordan, Asst. Operations Officer; Capt John G. Siran, "A" Flight Commander; Capt James L. Flowers, "B" Flight Commander; Capt Gene Thomas Pemberton, "C" Flight Commander; and Capt James E. Daniel, Jr., "D" Flight Commander.

*History of the 36th Tactical Fighter Wing, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1961, USAF microfilm MO627, frame 1003.*

**30-Jun-64**

1711

A roster of personnel in the 23 TFS, 36 TFW, Bitburg AB, Germany, between 1 January - 30 June 1964, included:

Lt Col Robert E. "Bobby" Wayne - Commander  
Maj Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Jr. - Operations Officer  
Maj James L. "Foxy" Flowers - Assistant Operations Officer  
Capt Theodore E. Hurt - Weapons Officer

Maj Albert A. Funk - A-Flight Commander  
Capt Lloyd A. Sjulstad - B-Flight Commander  
Capt Gene Thomas Pemberton - C-Flight Commander  
Capt Fredrick Funston III - D-Flight Commander

Capt Joseph R. Steen - 23 TFS C Flight Pilot  
Capt James E. Daniel, Jr. - 23 TFS A Flight (Rotated Apr 64)

*36 TFW History, 1 Jan 64 - 30 Jun 64, USAF microfilm MO627, frame 1676.*

**21-Sep-67**

6563

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

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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.*

**19-Oct-67**

4833

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, 34 TFS, 388 TFW from Korat, flew his ninth combat mission into North Vietnam.

Mission 9. F-105D 60-0462. Call Sign: "Vegas". Take Off: 0600. Mission Length: 3+45. Flight Lineup:

#1 - King [Maj William J. King]  
#2 - Me  
#3 - Lefty [Maj Dalton L. Leftwich]  
#4 - Klinestiver [Maj Larry R. Klinestiver]

"This was a water route mission against the Bac Le Railroad Yard on the northeast railroad between Hanoi & China (midpoint). Approaching Pack I, we started picking up an undercast cloud deck. Out over the water refueling we were in and out of the weather. Regrouping and turning inbound into NVN, the weather was solid undercast up to about 15,000 feet. The Iron Hand flight went inland about 30 miles and reported all undercast towards the target. The F-4 flight came in from the northwest and confirmed this report, so we made a sweeping left turn dangerously close to Haiphong and came back over the water. We dropped our bombs in Pack I with a Sky Spot control & landed. Uneventful but it was officially a Pack VI mission and a counter."

1Lt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, also attempted to fly into a target in RP-6 but was turned away by weather. Instead, he flew his 29th combat mission into Laos.

"Target: Troops in trenches in southern Laos.

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

"Originally scheduled Pack VI. Weather aborted just past wart. Refueled and worked with FAC. Dropped CBUs on troop area then strafed down road (530 rounds). FAC said 5 KIA and 5 probable KIA. Very easy mission but long. Almost ran out of gas."

Two pilots from the 34 TFS formed "Hartford" flight that took off at 14:30. The flight lineup was:

#1 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr.  
#2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 60-0518 on his 6th combat mission.

The planned targets were:

Primary: 19-30N and 103-59E where they were to meet FACs Firefly 15 and 16.

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Secondary: 21-04N and 102-36E where they were to meet FACs Firefly 17 and 18.

Both targets were in Laos.

"We each had three tanks and two 500# bombs. Our mission was primarily to work with "Wager A", a MISQ site up north just being tested [Lima Site 85]. We refueled behind OA 67 and I did a little better than the last time with three tanks. We dropped off and had quite a communications problem at first and had to orbit a while. Finally we got "Wager A", us, "Cabana" (an RF-4C taking pictures of the hits) and Fireflies 15, 16 (O-1s who were spotting the hits. Comments from the FAC: 'Has he dropped yet - is that it over there on the hill?' I then took the lead and we went for the second target. We never could raise Firefly 17 & 18 but I got permission from "Wager A" to go ahead and drop. As soon as I dropped, I rolled to the right and saw Firefly 17 & 18 flying away from the target. Dropped at 20M, 350 CAS, and 323-degree heading. Saw the bombs hit long. Coming back, we did a little trail acro after I finally figured out what a porpoise meant."

The mission lasted 2.7 hours.

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr. from the 388 TFW was another pilot who diverted today due to weather. He flew as "Crossbow 02" in a flight whose original target was in RP-6A. Instead, he dropped in southern Laos, the Ban Laboy complex. "Divert due WX/No BDA - WX". It was his 7th combat mission.

*Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pp 3 - 4 & Earl Henderson, combat diary & Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet & Rufus Dye Mission History log.*

**21-Oct-67**

6159

Four F-105 pilots in "Olympia" flight from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, took off at 05:55 on a bombing mission against a target at location 21-26N and 105-16E 43 NM NW of Hanoi in RP-6A. However, they were diverted to another target to work with a Cricket FAC and Nail 61. Flying time was 2.2 hours. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. flying F-105D 60-0458
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 62-4242 on his 7th combat mission
- #3 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying 58-1152 on his 79th combat mission
- #4 - Maj Floyd E. Heinzig flying 61-0161
- Spare - Maj William J. King in 60-0464

Jake Shuler described the mission in his log. "This was my first four ship. We took off at 0555 just day break and refueled behind RA 30. After we dropped off the tanker, we contacted Cricket who told us to contact Nail 61 who was circling above the upper deck. He had another FAC (O-1) below on the target. We finally spotted him and the target and weaved ourselves through the clouds. Larry kept pretty tight to lead forcing me to watch him a lot. We tried for road cuts but all missed. We ended up with 10- to 15-degree dive angle and pickled about 2000' AGL. Glad there was no AAA. I accidentally pickled twice but one bomb hit about 50' from the road. I was way behind and really not used to this type of delivery. Recced Route 7 then RTBd."

1Lt Earl J. Henderson from the 469 TFS flew his 30th combat mission into North Vietnam.

"Target: Bridge pack I.

"Armament: 6x500

"Airborne spare for strike force. Not used, so diverted to pack I. Hit 'papa' tanker first. What a nightmare! FAC marked small bridge and we clobbered it. Saw a couple of muzzle flashes during dive."

*Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet and "Mission # 7 Narrative" via e-mail 28 July 10 & Larry Hoppe AF*

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*Form 5 & Earl Henderson, combat diary.*

**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.*

**10-Dec-67**

6713

"Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS took off at 07:00 for a TOT of 08:05. They refueled from Red Anchor 23 going to and returning from the target. Their flight lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying F-105D 60-0530
- #2 - Maj William J. King flying 61-0072
- #3 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 62-4361 on his 29th combat mission
- #4 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. flying 60-0449

Jake Shuler recalled, "This was the second time working with Misty 11 and with good results, 100% on target & 100% coverage. The target, 17-22N and 106-13E, the Ho Chi Minh Trail in RP-1."

*Jake Shuler 10 Dec 67 mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011*

**14-Dec-67**

3488

From Korat, two pilots from the 44 TFS and seven from the 34 TFS flew in today's strike against the Paul Doumer bridge (JCS 12). The mission was designated RT56A-225 and the target coordinates were 21-02-31N and 105-51-43E. The pilots were:

Maj White flying F-105D 60-0422 and Capt Thomas A. Tobin, Jr. flying 60-0435, both from the 44 TFS.

Two of the pilots from the 34 TFS were: Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. in 59-1759. On 24 April 1968, under SO G-1210, Maj Daniel was awarded his 10th to 16th oak leaf cluster to the Air Medal for missions he flew between 4 Oct 67 - 29 Feb 68.

Capt Sam P. Morgan in 62-4387. On 27 April 1968, under SO G-1244, Capt Morgan was awarded the second oak leaf cluster to the DFC for this mission.

Maj David D. Igelman from the 34 TFS received the DFC (2nd OLC)

Four of the 34 TFS pilots formed "Simmer" flight that took off at 1105. The mission lasted for 3 hours 35 minutes. The flight line up was:

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- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4359.
- #2 - Maj William M. Blakeslee in 62-4270. On 27 April 1968, under SO G-1250, Maj Blakeslee was awarded the 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for this mission.
- #3 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen in 61-0068. On 27 April 1968, under SO G-1250, Lt Col Christensen was awarded the 4th Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for this mission.

It was Maj Armstrong's 36th combat mission. "We finally got in on the Doumer Bridge [JCS 12] in downtown Hanoi. We were delayed 5 hours waiting for the weather to clear. When we dropped off of the tankers we could see (coming up the Gulf of Tonkin) that the entire delta was clear. They launched 6 SAMs at us from the Red River south of Hanoi as we headed up but nobody got hit. As we approached the target for a left roll-in, we had swung further to the north than we anticipated. Consequently I wound up rolling-in almost straight ahead with a split 'S' maneuver. I had to maneuver the aircraft quite violently to get lined up and I'm not sure I hit the bridge. I saw two bomb impacts to the south of the bridge when I bombed. My #2, 3, & 4 men all lost me as I pulled off and I went out by myself. There was heavy 85-mm, & 37/57-mm in the target area. Cactus #4 did not come back [Capt James Eldon Sehorn, 469 TFS, POW]. His situation is unknown." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 15.)

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Sam Armstrong described additional details of this mission. "On 14 December we bombed the Paul Doumer bridge in Hanoi for the third time in the war. It was back on the 25th of October when we last struck it and when Major Britt had been so tragically killed after leading the mission. The weather was questionable so we delayed our take-off for five hours waiting for clearance. When we got a look at North Vietnam from the Gulf of Tonkin, we could see that the clouds were all gone so this one was for real! Earlier, the tactic was to go further North up the Gulf of Tonkin and head almost due West to parallel 'Little Thud Ridge' and attack the Hanoi area from the Northeast. We had concluded that the shielding by these low mountains was really not very effective so that it was smarter to head directly at the target from the Gulf. So when we headed inbound on a Northwesterly heading, we had about 70 miles to cross before getting to the target. I saw six SA-2s being launched against us but they apparently weren't guided so were not a threat. I must say, however, that watching an SA-2 launch -- knowing what the consequences to you might be -- did get one's attention whether it guided or not.

"I was leading 'Simmer' flight, which was the third flight in the formation. My #2 man was Major Bill Blakeslee who was a poor pilot by day and a drunk by night (he lived in my hooch and was apparently so apprehensive about the next day's mission that he drank himself to sleep each night). #3 was Col. Stewart who was our Assistant Deputy Commander for Operations in the wing. Three weeks later when Col. Jim Bean, the D.O., was shot down this very young colonel was elevated to this important position. But this was his first Pack VIA mission. The #4 man was Lt. Col. Christensen who was a recent arrival in our squadron and this also was his first Pack VIA mission. So I sensed the apprehension of the new guys as the flak started coming up in our midst after the SA-2's subsided so I transmitted: 'Steady Simmer. Steady as she goes'.

"That might have reduced their tension some but we were shortly confronted with a difficult roll-in. We got a MiG warning call before the SA-2's started up so the whole formation had increased speed and swung further North than planned. Rather than a roll-in with about a 20-degree angle to the bridge, we were headed right down it. I transmitted: 'This is going to be steep'. With that I rolled upside down and pulled the nose of the aircraft down to achieve a straight-ahead dive angle. Instead of diving at 45 degrees, I was closer to 60 degrees which felt more like vertical. The bridge was only about 10 feet wide so it wasn't easy to line up directly down it for the bomb run. That's where the 'pendulum effect' becomes a factor. Explanation: The orange bomb sight is projected on the combining glass in the windscreen. The sight is depressed a number of mils depending upon the effect that gravity will have on the ordnance being fired/dropped. In other words, depressing the sight caused the pilot to aim long to compensate for gravity. A mil is defined as a

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foot drop at a thousand feet. About 20 mils depression was enough for the Gatling gun or rockets fired at long range since they had a velocity above that imparted by the F-105. For gravity bombs, more depression was necessary which was greatly dependent upon dive angle, airspeed and release altitude. Normally this was about 120 mils since we planned for a 45-degree release at 500 knots at 8,000 feet altitude. Since the F-105 had tapes for airspeed and altitude, it was convenient to set the markers respectively at those airspeeds and altitudes. When those markers flashed by - hopefully at the same time - it was the instant to hit the bomb release button. So 120 mils depression of the sight put it much lower than the vector of the aircraft through space. If you were left of the target, you rolled right to put the sight on the target. The 'pendulum effect' meant that you would roll to the point that the velocity vector was aligned but when you rolled wings level, the sight was off to the right. Since this defied common pilot logic, the usual outcome was that the pilot never got properly lined up prior to bomb release. That's what happened to me although I should have known better. So my bombs probably didn't hit that narrow target. Fortunately, some of the other guys had better luck since we did do some damage.

"Meanwhile, I pulled a lot of 'g's' after I released my 3,000-pound bombs and turned left to head towards the Gulf. None of my flight was with me! I don't know what happened to Blakeslee at that moment. Stewart and Christensen were so disoriented that they pulled out straight ahead and flew down the main street of Hanoi supersonically. Eventually we all got back together on the tanker." (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 20.)

On 27 April 1968, under SO G-1250, Maj Armstrong was awarded the 3rd oak leaf cluster to the Air Medal for this mission.

*National Archives air strike films, archive control number NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649C & 388 TFW history, Jan - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frame 1387.*

### 20-Dec-67

4854

At 0705, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Seabird" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a target in northern Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 40 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 59-1759
- #2 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine

It was Maj Armstrong's 40th combat mission. "This was planned as a primary Barrel Roll mission for a change. We refueled and went straight to the area which was about 10 miles south of Sam Neua. The FAC put some smoke on suspected troop concentration and we put our bombs right on the area. We had swung up through the spur of North Vietnam that sticks out at 19 ½ N so we had a counter. Otherwise a very uneventful counter."

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. was another 34 TFS pilot who flew a mission into an area of North Vietnam just above the DMZ. He was in an Iron Hand flight on his 49th mission.

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

### 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

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#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.*

**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.*

**15-Jan-68**

3865

F-105s from the 388 TFW bombed the Thai Nguyen iron and steel complex (JCS 76) using Commando Club radar. There was no BDA due to weather.

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"Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS attacked the Thai Nguyen Army Barracks (JCS 60) in Route Pack 6A. The flight took off at 0630. Its flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4248
- #2 - Capt Carl William Lasiter (POW 4 Feb 68)
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer
- #4 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander

This was Maj Armstrong's 55th combat mission. "I was Mission Commander again today but the weather in VI was bad so we went first alternate. Our flight, along with 8 F-4s and an Iron Hand flight, went Commando Club to Thai Nguyen Army Barracks. We went in and dropped with no MiG or SAM reaction. An easy red mark." Their mission lasted 2 hours 45 minutes.

*388 TFW history, Jan - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO 584, frames 0460 and 0497 & Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 22 - 23.*

**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)

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.



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"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!

"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

# James E. Daniel, Jr.

## F-105 History

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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.*

**23-Jan-68**

4870

On the day that North Korea captured the Navy intelligence ship USS Pueblo off the coast of North Korea, "Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS flew a mission into North Vietnam directed by the Commando Club radar. The flight took off at 0615. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 58-1152
- #2 - Capt Harry Guy Paddon III
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer
- #4 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr.

It was Maj Armstrong's 60th combat mission. "This was a 1st alternate target execution. I was Mission Commander and the primary and secondary targets were the same as they had been for several days. Our first alternate target was an army barracks southeast of Phu Tho in a Commando Club. The weather was marginal; several decks of clouds with the top one being at about 11,500 feet. There was one call of Blue Bandits (MiG-21s) being airborne from Phuc Yen but no contact. We went ahead and dropped on schedule. On the way out, we got a call that we had some Red Bandits (MiG-17s) at 3 miles that they were sleepers. Never saw them. Otherwise an uneventful Pack V mission." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 45 minutes.

After flying his 60th combat mission since his first on 5 October 1967, Maj Armstrong met his wife in Hawaii for R&R. He returned to Korat on 8 February 1968.

Under Combat Skyspot, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Gator 2" against an interdiction point in RP-1. It was his 33rd combat mission.

*Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 24 - 25 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.*

**28-Jan-68**

4333

Maj Kenneth W. Mays and Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, were pilots from Korat on today's strike against the Thanh Hoa bridge (JCS 14). It was Maj Dickson's 74th mission into North Vietnam.

Maj Mays described the attack. "On Jan 28th 1968, I flew my last big mission up North. The target was the Thanh Hoa Bridge. The weather had been lousy, so the target was scheduled for the AM and then for the PM depending on the weather. If it went in the AM the 469 TFS would lead the mission and in the PM the 34th would lead the mission. The mission was weather cancelled in the morning so the 34th lead the mission in the afternoon.

"I was selected for Mission Commander and planned the mission together with a very dear friend of mine and class mate from Texas A&M, Steve Long of the 469th [Capt Steven W. Long, Jr. from the 469 TFS]. Steve was to be the Mission Commander if the mission went in the morning.

As mission commander of Korat's F-105s that attacked the bridge, Maj Mays led "Scuba" flight.

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# James E. Daniel, Jr.

## F-105 History

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His flight's lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Kenneth W. Mays
- #2 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. - 34th Ops Officer and Deputy Mission Commander
- #4 - Maj David C. Dickson

Maj Donald W. Rever, also from the 34th led another flight from Korat.

"Again 7th AF had the mission planned for us and had us headed straight from the refueling track to the target. During the mission planning, we came up with what we thought was better mission execution. Permission was received from our squadron commanders and the DO to ignore the 7th AF suggested route. We planned the mission like we were headed for a target near Hanoi. When we hit the river that runs under the Than Hoa bridge we turned down the river and headed toward the bridge. ... The mission was executed as planned. Good bombs were put on the target; however the most significant target was a secondary target. As I rolled in, I saw train cars marshaled in a railyard waiting to cross on a ferry. I called these out to flights behind me and good bombs were put on them. Takhli also hit the rail cars. With the diversion down the river we had no MiG threat and very little flak. In fact on our way in to the target, MiGs launched and headed to the northwest thinking we were headed to Hanoi.

"Steve still gives me a hard time about stealing his mission. There are some things one has to laugh about. On this mission, Jim Daniel was the Deputy Mission Commander. When I called to go hot about the time we hit the Fishes Mouth, Jim accidentally hit his jettison button and dropped his stores before we got to the target. I told him he could go back, but he said he was coming along for the ride. He did not want to miss the fun and continued on to the target --- clean."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Gator 3" against the Thanh Hoa bridge in RP-4. It was his 36th combat mission. (Rufus Dye Mission History log.)

*Col Ken Mays, USAF (Ret), unpublished memoir, "Tour At Korat -- July 67 to Feb 68", dated 15 Dec 2003 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 28 Jan 68 & Ken Mays e-mails 27 & 28 Nov and 3 Dec 2010.*

### 09-Feb-68

4871

"Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS bombed a target in the Barrel Roll region of northern Laos. The flight took off at 1500. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer
- #2 - Col Paul P. Douglas, Jr., 388 TFW Commander
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4359
- #4 - Capt John E. Hartman

This was Maj Armstrong's 61st mission, the first since his return from Hawaii after 10 days of R&R. "Weather bad in Pack VI still so we went to northern Laos to work with some A-1E FACs. A flight of 4 F-105s was in right ahead of us and started a number of fires with their CBUs. We came in behind and started some more. The target was a group of structures where some gasoline and ammo was apparently stored since the fires were definitely POL type fires. We did good work today." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 55 minutes.

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Armstrong commented on this mission. "It was a planned Pack VIA mission which wound up going single flight to Laos. This was the first time I had flown with our new wing commander, Col. P. P. Douglas. He was the division commander at Yokota so he was sorta current in the F-105D. He had been an ace in WWII in the P-47 but I quickly experienced that he was out of his element in February 1968."

# James E. Daniel, Jr.

## F-105 History

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*Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 25 & Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished memoir in chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 38.*

**10-Feb-68**

4872

"Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS flew a Sky Spot mission into Laos. The flight took off from Korat at 0700. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0530
- #2 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW DO
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer
- #4 - Maj Melvin L. Irwin

This was Maj Armstrong's 62nd mission. "Weather bad in Pack VI. Our flight was diverted prior to take-off to Laos. We were instructed on the tankers to go Sky Spot over southeast of Mu Gia Pass, which we did. An easy counter." Their mission lasted 2 hours 50 minutes.

*Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 25.*

**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.*

**15-Jan-95**

6951

Col (Ret) James E. Daniel, Jr. died.

Born: 13 Nov 1929

Died: 15 Jan 1995

*Rick Versteeg, e-mail 17 July 2011*