

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

20-Aug-67

235

The thirteenth F-105 RTU Class 68AR graduated at McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 17 Mar 67 with 18 pilots. However, three pilots with no single-engine background were eliminated due to T-33 flying deficiencies and were re-assigned to PACAF. One pilot was eliminated because he could not roll the aircraft. One was washed back to another class due to an appendectomy. Fourteen graduated with the class.

The class deployed 20 F-105s for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 4 - 14 Aug 67 with the 561 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Lawrence E. McKenney.

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong won the Top Student award. He was assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat. Maj Kenneth E. Stout won the Top Gun award. He was assigned to Takhli.

Other pilots in the class and their SEA assignments were:

Lt Col William N. Reed - 469 TFS Korat	Capt Eddie Vernon Deck - 357 TFS Takhli
Maj William C. Diehl, Jr. - 469 TFS Korat	Capt Harold E. Forman - 357 TFS Takhli
Maj Lucian A. Ferguson - 469 TFS Korat	Capt Rodney W. McLean - 357 TFS Takhli
Maj Robert F. Grubb - 469 TFS Korat	Capt Ronald D. Patchett - 333 TFS Takhli
Maj Donald W. Hodge - 34 TFS Korat	Maj James J. Reynolds - 357 TFS Takhli
Lt Col Robert W. Smith - 34 TFS Korat	Maj Frank D. Shultz, Jr. - 333 TFS Takhli

23 TFW History, Jan - Jun 67, USAF microfilm MO554 & Airpower History, Spring 1996, "Were We Sitting Ducks" by Spence M. Armstrong.

01-Oct-67

4824

Seven F-105 pilots from RTU Class 68AR arrived at Korat RTAFB, Thailand. The men were assigned as strike pilots to the 388 TFW's two strike squadrons. Those assigned to the 469 TFS were:

Lt Col William N. Reed
Maj Robert F. Grubb
Maj Lucian A. Ferguson
Maj William C. Diehl, Jr.

The pilots assigned to the 34 TFS were:

Lt Col Robert W. Smith
Maj Donald W. Hodge
Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong

Maj Armstrong, who had been an Air Force pilot for 11 years, along with Lt Col Smith, and Lt Col Reed, had departed the States from Travis Air Force Base and had stopped at Clark AB, Phillipines where they attended Jungle Survival School for a week. They arrived at Korat on a C-47 from Bangkok.

Maj Armstrong kept a notebook log in which he documented each of the 102 combat missions that he flew during the next 6 1/2 months.

Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished manuscript, chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 1 - 3.

05-Nov-67

3460

On the afternoon of 5 November, there were some breaks in the cloudiness over North Vietnam with occasional scattered conditions over the mountains and a generally scattered condition over

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the Red River delta. Typhoon Emma moving toward the China coast created strong ridging and provided clearing weather conditions.

The clearer weather allowed the strike force to attack Phuc Yen airfield for the third time.

Korat's weekly newspaper, the "Sawadee Flyer" described the 388 TFW's effort in the attack. "Pilots from the 388th TFW struck Phuc Yen airfield, North Vietnam, making the main runway unserviceable Sunday.

"It was a very interesting mission and the people in the 388th TFW did an outstanding job in hitting that air base,' commented Lt Col William C. Decker [469 TFS Ops Officer], 45, Kerhonkson, N.Y. and St. Petersburg, Fla., a flight leader on the Phuc Yen strike.

"Describing the mission he went on to say, 'When we heard we were going against the Phuc Yen airbase, I think everyone realized it was going to be an interesting one, and also a very important one to do a good job on.'

"It seems the last one down always get a very nice reception from our friends up north and they didn't deviate at all today. I was in the outside rear flight.'

"Prior to roll-in we had received heavy and accurate 85-mm anti-aircraft fire. I saw the flak suppression flight's bombs striking right on target, which was a very nice thing to see. But it didn't seem to impede any of the anti-aircraft fire that was coming up at us. It was heavy and very accurate.'

"As I rolled in on the target, I was hit in the canopy right next to my head. Some glass came through and I knew I was hit in the neck with something but not very seriously. On the way down, I saw the first bombs going off from the flight in front of me. They struck right on the target and right on their desired aiming point. The runway prior to that was clean and looked good and serviceable, but it certainly wasn't after the (the flight ahead) flight's bombs impacted.'

"On pull off I was hit again -- nothing serious but lost airspeed indications and standby indicator and attitude gyro went out.'

"There were MiG calls at the time but none were sighted in the area.'

"Captain Irving E. LeVine [34 TFS], 32, DeLavan, Wis. also participated in the Phuc Yen strike. Commenting on the mission he said, 'I took a few scrapes on my aircraft from the flak. It was pretty clear in the target area and we could see the runway pretty well.'

"I could see bombs hitting all along the runway. I saw one string of bombs hit right off the runway and start digging holes in the runway. They gradually started walking off to the north.

"The sites were firing very close to the runway.'

"As I looked back to find the bombs hitting the target, I [saw] some ordnance walk across one of those large sites, it looked like an 85 site, they completely covered and silenced the site. After the bombs stopped exploding, there was no more firing from that particular site.'

"Others participating in the mission were Majors Raymond W. Vissotzky [34 TFS], 38, Stoughton, Mass., Donald W. Hodge [34 TFS], 37, Panama City, Fla., Robert W. Hagerman [469 TFS], 45, Deerfield, Ill., and James D. Murray, Jr. [469 TFS], 34, Bayonne, N.J. and 1st Lt Earl J. Henderson [469 TFS], 26."

Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 1 - 15 November 1967 & Sawadee Flyer, Vol I, No. 6, Friday,

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Nov. 10, 1967, pp 1 & 3.

17-Nov-67

6985

"Bad weather over North Vietnam finally broke recently and pilots of the 388 TFW took advantage of clear skies to launch an attack on the Bac Mai airfield south of Hanoi.

"The Thunderchief pilots dodged MiGs, surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and heavy flak to strike the main base support area, including underground command post and personnel bunkers, a communications site, and flak sites around the airfield. All pilots reported good results.

"Maj Lawrence R. Klinestiver [34 TFS], 38, Albuquerque, N.M., led a flight of F-105s that went after the flak sites with bombs and air-to-ground missiles.

"We had MiGs hampering us all the way in, but a flight of F-4s was working with us and when the MiGs started to close in, we lit the afterburners, took the ole 'Chief down and separated from the attackers. We weren't bothered at all on the way in.'

"Well planned, well managed and almost perfectly executed,' said Maj James R. Bassett [44 TFS], 32, Dennison, Tex. He led his flight against the command post bunker and termed his roll-in and run-in on the target as, 'picture perfect; just like on the practice ranges back in the States. I also saw numerous bombs from the flights ahead striking the target.'

Pilots reported a number of SAMs launched at the strike force and Bassett also reported seeing two MiG-21s waiting to 'bounce' his flight as he approached the target.

"However, our timing was perfect and when we broke off and dove toward the target, they overshot, and we were in and out before they could get reorganized.'

"Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. [34 TFS Ops Officer], 37, Fort Worth, Tex., who led his flight against the communication site on the southeast end of the runway was the last flight in and reported extremely heavy flak of all calibers. He reported bombs going right through the roofs of a personnel area on hits from another flight.

"The last man in Daniel's flight, Capt Douglas A. Beyer [34 TFS], 33, Seguin, Tex., saw the comm site completely engulfed in smoke and debris as he pulled out and also observed some bombs causing a cut in the airfield runway.

"The 388th TFW's SAM suppression flight was led by Capt Robert E. Dorrrough, Jr. [44 TFS], 29, Dallas, and they reported damaging two fire control sites and one SAM site.

"Other pilots taking part in the mission against Bac Mai included: Capt Robert M. Elliot, 38, Newberry Springs, Calif., Major Spence H. Armstrong, 33, Columbia, Tenn., Capt Robert M. Crane, 29, Duarte, Calif., Maj Donald W. Hodge, 38, Panama City, Fla., Capt Raymond W. Vissotzky, 38, Stoughton, Mass. [all from the 34 TFS], Maj Stanley H. Horn, 41, Madison, Wisc., Maj James D. Murray, Jr., 34, Bayonne, N.J., Capt Hal P. Henning, 27, Contoocook, N.H. [all three from the 469 TFS] and Lt Col Robert A. 'Red' Evans [44 TFS commander], 45, Rangeley, Maine."

Hq 7th Air Force News release 11-67-515, pp 1 - 3.

18-Nov-67

184

On 18 November 1967, the 388 TFW flew their third Commando Club mission using the TSQ-81 radar at LS-85 in Laos. It was one of seven such missions the wing flew in November. The mission turned into the disaster that the 355 TFW Commander, Col Giraudo, had feared. Also, the events occurred that had been predicted exactly one year earlier by Hq 7th Air Force in their initial objection to the installation at LS-85 of an MSQ radar.

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Korat's target was the MiG airfield at Phuc Yen (JCS 6), 14 nautical miles northwest of Hanoi in Route Pack 6A. Using regular daylight bombing attacks, both Korat and Takhli had hit Phuc Yen, the home of MiG-21s and IL-28 bombers, for the first time on 24 and 25 October 1967. (388 TFW TFW history, Apr - Dec 67, Vol II, USAF microfilm NO584, frames 0030 - 034 & Chronology of Seventh Air Force, 1 July 1967 - 30 June 1968, pg 5.)

The mission on 18 November included the large force typical of those assembled for conventional strikes against major targets in North Vietnam. Since clouds obscured the target, sixteen F-105s from Korat, flying at 18,000 feet, were to bomb the airfield shortly after 8 a.m. using the Commando Club radar. The F-105s carried a total of 27 ALQ-71 ECM pods that, when flown in a specific pod formation, had proven effective in jamming SAM radars. The force also included one flight of Wild Weasels from Korat with call sign "Waco" consisting of three F-105Fs and an F-105D. The Weasels flew 25 miles ahead of the strike force to suppress SAM sites around the airfield. Also protecting the strike force were four F-4Ds from Ubon for MiG CAP, three EC-121s with surveillance radar using call signs "Ethan Alpha" flying off the coast of North Vietnam to warn of MiGs, and five EB-66s for jamming SAM and AAA radar signals. To help conceal the location of the Commando Club radar in Northern Laos, one of the EC-121s acted as a communications relay between the strike force commander and the radar controller at LS-85 who used the call sign "Wager Control". (Thompson, pp 103 - 104 & USAF Fighter Weapons Center Report, Red Baron II, Vol IV, Event 59, pp 67 - 72.)

The strike force consisted of four flights of F-105s. The lead flight was "Laredo" led by the strike force commander. The second flight was "Vegas"; the third was "Garage". "Hatchet" flight, split into two elements straddling "Vegas" flight, provided additional MiG-CAP for the force. "Hatchet 1" and "Hatchet 2" flew on the right of "Vegas" while "Hatchet 3" and "Hatchet 4" on the left. (Armstrong mission log)

En route to the target, the strike force commander, "Laredo 1", talked on his radio over the UHF strike frequency using the awkward relay to Wager Control about details of setting up the strike formation for the bomb drops. Unfortunately, their lengthy radio discussions blocked three MiG warning calls from Ethan Alpha. Suddenly, two silver-colored MiG-21s swooped down on the Wild Weasels who had failed to hear Ethan Alpha's MiG alerts. The first MiG fired a missile at Waco 4 and the second launched one at Waco 1. Both missiles hit their targets and the MiGs headed north at high speed -- a hit and run tactic that was becoming all too successful.

Waco 1 was F-105F 63-8295 with Major Oscar Moise Dardeau, Jr. and EWO Capt Edward William "Tiny" Lehnhoff, Jr. from the 44 TFS. Their plane immediately began shedding parts and trailing black smoke then disappeared into the clouds below. Both men died in the crash.

Waco 4 was luckier. He was Lt Col William N. Reed from the 469 TFS (flying F-105D 60-0497) who managed to nurse his crippled plane to Laos. He ejected near the Commando Club radar site at LS-85 where a Jolly Green HH-3 helicopter picked him up.

The strike force continued toward the target but with the loss of the Wild Weasels, became more vulnerable to the SAM sites protecting Phuc Yen airfield.

The F-105 pilots were even more vulnerable than they realized. In recent months, the North Vietnamese had developed a track-on-jam tactic for their SAM operators who used it this morning when the Commando Club formations made it even more effective. As a translator of North Vietnam's military history reported, "... on 18 November, the [North] Vietnamese missileers got the target they wanted. A USAF Commando Club strike of twenty-four F-105s flew in to attack Noi Bai [Phuc Yen] airfield. ... After a sneak attack by two MiG-21s shot down two F-105s, the MiGs peeled off to allow the SA-2s to take over" ("The -ology War: Technology and Ideology in the

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Vietnamese Defense of Hanoi", 1967, Merle L. Pribbenow II, in The Journal of Military History, Jan 2003, pgs 195.)

As the first of the four strike flights approached the target, the pilots in the flight closed their formation from a 1,500-foot separation between their planes to 500 feet so their bombs would hit in a tighter cluster. Unfortunately, the maneuver degraded their precisely spaced ECM pod formation, which sharpened the jamming patterns on the radar screens of the SAM operators. With their track-on-jam technique, SAM crews from six missile battalions fired 13 missiles. Two of them found their targets. One hit Garage 3, Col Edward Burdett, the 388 TFW commander. He was on his 37th mission over North Vietnam and flying F-105D 62-4221. The other blasted Vegas 1, Maj Leslie John Hauer from the 469 TFS. Maj Hauer was killed and Col Burdett was captured but died as a POW.

"Wager Control" then announced that they had lost the strike force on their Commando Club radar and directed the F-105s to turn around so they could reacquire the planes. The pilots decided that they had had enough and, jettisoning their bombs, headed for home. (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, e-mail, 11 July 06)

Capt William Wallace Butler from the 469 TFS flew on this mission and received the Silver Star. "Captain William W. Butler distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force over North Vietnam on 18 November 1967. On that date, Captain Butler was a member of a flight of F-105 Thunderchiefs assigned the task of attacking a high priority military target, using an experimental method of ordnance which required that the entire force assume a formation that left them defenseless against hostile aircraft attacks. Even though he had experienced afterburner failure, he then, with his element leader, egressed the area while under hostile aircraft attack, called a timely break which forced the hostile fire to disengage. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Captain Butler has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (<http://www.veterantributes.org/TributeDetail.php?recordID=1708>)

The 388th wing history for the period tried to put a positive spin on this tragic event that resulted in the loss of their wing commander and one fifth of the F-105s on the mission. "The first COMMANDO CLUB attempt ... used the entire strike force to execute level bombing against Phuc Yen airfield. This mission was significant in that it resulted in the revision of COMMANDO CLUB tactics due to the degradation of ECM pod effectiveness when the entire force closed up from the normal pod formation to decrease bomb dispersal; and resulted in the shooting down of four aircraft (two by SAM and two by MiGs) including the wing commander. After this experience, COMMANDO CLUB missions were executed in single flights in high threat areas and the standard pod formation was adhered to." (388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilms NO583 and Vol II in NO584, frame 0030.)

"Although SAMs did not destroy any aircraft on ... smaller Commando Club raids ... , aircrews remembered the big raid on Phuc Yen and called the smaller raids Commando Kaze." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 104).

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong from the 34 TFS led "Hatchet" flight, four F-105s that provided MiG-CAP protection for the other three flights in the strike force. It was his 22nd combat mission and the flight's line up was:

- #1 - Maj Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270
- #2 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #3 - Maj Raymond Walter Vissotzky, POW 19 Nov 67
- #4 - Maj Eugene L. Main, 469 TFS

The flight took off at 0605 and the mission lasted for 3 hours 30 minutes. Maj Armstrong's mission

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log and a portion of his memoirs provided an eye-witness account of this mission. "This was my first try as a flight leader up into Pack VIA. The mission was a complete disaster; we lost 4 airplanes and didn't drop a bomb on the target. We were going to Phuc Yen Airfield. The weather was forecast to be bad so we were to use radar vectors from a ground control station to drop through the clouds. My flight carried CBUs and our job was to provide MiG coverage during the bombing run and to drop on SAM or flak sites if the weather over the target happened to be clear. We went up the land route and left Channel 97 heading northeast. The 'Iron Hand' flight was out ahead of us about 3 minutes as we were over a solid cloud deck at 8,000'. Suddenly MiG-21s fired missiles at the Iron Hand and hit #s 1 & 4. #1 said he was hit and had to bail out immediately with his back seat EWO [Maj Oscar Moise Dardeau, Jr. and EWO Capt Edward William "Tiny" Lehnhoff, Jr., 44 TFS, both KIA.]. We heard one good beeper. #4, L/C Bill Reed [Lt Col William N. Reed, 469 TFS, rescued], was hit and he headed back out with the other 2 and got back to 97 with the burning aircraft before he had to eject. He was picked up OK. #1 and his EWO had no chance as they were on the NW end of Thud Ridge.

"We continued on and turned down Thud Ridge toward Phuc Yen. About 90 seconds from bomb release, the three flights of 4 were in tight, flights in trail to hit the target, and I was on the right side with my wingman while #3 and #4 were on the NE side. We then saw 2 SAMs pass behind the force and explode high. Then in rapid succession about 10 - 12 more SAMs exploded (the orange cloud of debris) right among the three flights at their altitude. They were coming straight up out of the clouds and we couldn't see them until they exploded. 'Vegas' lead [Maj Leslie John Hauer, 469 TFS, KIA] was hit and caught on fire. He turned left for 5 seconds and ejected safely. Then 'Garage' #3, Col Burdett the wing commander [Col Edward Burke Burdett, KIA] was hit. He turned out to the right followed by his wingman. We were getting two MiG calls from 'Castaway' during this 3-minute bomb run. Then about 15 - 30 seconds from bomb release, the radar vector said he had lost contact and was aborting the run. People started going everywhere to get out of there and avoid the SAMs, which were still bursting. I called my flight to punch off our stores and turn, which we did. We (#2 and me) broke right and went back up Thud Ridge to see if there were any MiGs closing on the force. Shortly thereafter, 'Garage' #3 burst into flame and spun down into the undercast. No chute or beeper was heard. The two of us rejoined our flight over 97 and made one circle to see if we could help Bill Reed, but the rescue aircraft were already headed towards him. So we refueled and headed home much the worse for wear and frustration. Jim King [Maj William J. King] was also hit in the target area but he got back to Udorn safely." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pp 9 - 10)

Lt General Armstrong's memoirs added more details of this mission and its aftermath. "The ... morning of 18 Nov. 1967, was another Pack VIA Sky Spot -- what an oxymoron! As my 22nd mission, this was my first in Pack VIA as a flight leader. I was leading Hatchet flight, which was always the call sign for the morning CBU flight. The target was the Phuc Yen Airfield and we were going the land route. MiG-21's attacked the Weasels which were a couple of minutes ahead of us. They scored hits on the #1 and #4 aircraft. #1 was piloted by Oscar Dardeau and both he and his EWO ejected and we definitely heard one emergency beeper which meant that a parachute had opened. However, neither turned up as POW's and were later declared KIA. (They and the others whom I will mention as casualties on this mission can be found on panel # 30E on the Vietnam Wall in Washington. That's the panel I go to when I take a break from a meeting across the street at the National Academy of Science.)

"The #4 pilot was my McConnell classmate, Lt. Col. Bill Reed, who was able to fly back far enough to bail out in Laos and be rescued. I never will forget the specter of his aircraft burning brightly, turning to head south. The other Weasels accompanied him so we had no SA-2 protection from that time forward. The strike force crossed Thud Ridge and headed southeast for the bombing run. There were three flights of aircraft carrying 750# bombs just like on the first Pack VIA Sky Spot. My flight was on the outside of the three flights. As briefed, since we carried CBU's, we were to provide some MiG protection or drop on any flak site that we might be able to attack. A

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smarter move would have been to have us as the fourth flight carrying 750# bombs but the command post at 7th Air Force in Saigon really didn't have any clue what we were facing since none of them had ever experienced the defenses in Pack VIA and kept ordering the bomb loads that they ordered for clear weather targets. (More on this idiocy later.) Anyhow, I was on the right side of the strike force with Don Hodge on my wing. My #3 man was Ray Vissotsky with Gene Main on his wing. They were on the other side of the strike force.

"There was a thick cloud level just a few thousand feet below our 17,000-foot altitude as the strike force came within 3 minutes from bomb release. The next thing I noticed was two SA-2s self-destructing at about 30,000 feet. When this happened to an SA-2, there was a large orange burst that was unmistakable. Their position indicated that they had passed behind us. Then about 10-12 SA-2s exploded at our altitude in the vicinity of the three flights carrying 750# bombs. The leader of the second flight, Major Les Hauer, was hit by one close enough to catch his aircraft on fire. He ejected a few seconds later. Col. Burdett, our wing commander, was flying in the third flight and he was hit next. I watched his aircraft spin down into the undercast burning fiercely. There was no visual or audio indication that he had ejected.

"Despite these losses, we were pressing on when we received a call from the Skyspot controller that he had lost radar contact and that we needed to go out and start over again! SA-2's were still exploding and we were receiving MiG calls from the radar aircraft over the Gulf. What we said to that controller would be 'R' rated by today's classification. I called my flight to punch off the CBU's and break right towards the area where the MiGs were reported. The four of us got back together and headed back for our post flight refueling and a safe landing at Korat. We had lost four aircraft and Jim King was hit badly enough for him to make an emergency landing at Udorn Air base on the Northern border of Thailand.

"This was the most disastrous mission I personally experienced up to that time and for the next 78! This mission took three pages for me to record in my log whereas I needed only one for all the others. What happened when we got back was equally bizarre. After landing, we stopped into the maintenance trailer to dutifully debrief the aircraft's condition -- we were disciplined to do this even under the emotional low we all felt. Then I stopped by the Intelligence Office in the command post for a personal debriefing. There was an intelligence officer, a major wearing fatigues, who sat in on my debriefing. When I mentioned the SA-2s that were fired at us, he said that I was mistaken in my identification because his data showed conclusively that there were no SA-2 batteries in that area. I protested in a matter-of-fact manner but he was convinced that all of us who had survived were mistaken although we had seen numerous SA-2 bursts previously. I had not the stomach to argue further. I threw up my hands and left!

"Shortly thereafter, we all assembled in the command post for the mass debriefing. A Maj. Gen. Worley from 7th Air Force walked up on the stage. He had flown up from Saigon in a T-39 when they got word by radio that we had lost so many aircraft, including the wing commander. The intelligence major must have come with him. The general's first words to us were, 'Well, did anybody get any bombs on the target?' This was probably the dumbest question that I have ever heard. But it substantiated my belief the guys in Saigon didn't have a clue what the Pack VIA world was like. We sat in stony silence -- not believing what we were hearing from this insensitive and unknowledgeable senior officer. Finally, he had the good sense to ask us to tell him what happened. We did and he flew back to Saigon to pass this on to General Momyer. Ironically, General Worley was later killed in an F-4C accident in South Vietnam. He's listed on the Vietnam Wall as well as the four brave men who lost their lives on this mission. We never knew what happened to any of the four but they were eventually declared KIA. I've always worried that our escapades the day before had unknowingly kept Col. Burdett up the last night of his life." (Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished memoir in chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 16 - 17.)

388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilms NO583 and Vol II in NO584, frame 0030.

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1Lt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 44th combat mission into Laos.

"Target: POL storage area in Laos.

"Armament: 6x750#.

"Led flight on pretty good mission. I had real good bombs but no real results. Came back low level again. We just missed a radio tower. Happy Thanksgiving. R&R to Hawaii tomorrow!"

Pilots from the 34 TFS attacked a target in Route Pack I, North Vietnam. Take off time for "Simmer" flight was 07:10 for a TOT of 09:00. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Hugh W. Davis flying F-105D 62-4270
- #2 - Maj James L. Taylor flying 62-4361
- #3 - Maj Donald W. Hodge flying 61-0132
- #4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0161 his 21st mission.
- Spare - Capt Clyde L. Falls, Jr.

Jake Shuler recalled, "Although I do not recall any specific details of this mission, it was apparently a secondary target about 10 miles northwest of Dong Hoi in RP-1. The notation 'Mis 11' on the Mission Data Card indicates we joined up with Misty 11, Captain Paul T. Magill, and he led us to the target. Working with the Misty FACs was enjoyable in that the performance of the F-100F was similar to the F-105 and these guys were experienced fighter pilots and knew target areas well."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., also from the 34 TFS, flew his 15th mission as "Gator 04" against the Ban Laboy ford in southern Laos. "Combat Sky Spot - no BDA weather."

Earl Henderson, combat diary & Jake Shuler, 23 Nov 67 mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

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4845

"Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS took off at 07:55. They refueled with Tan 23 going to the target and post-strike refueled with Tan 66. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying F-105D 59-1759
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0072 on his 25th combat mission.
- #3 - Capt Carl William Lasiter flying 62-4359
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 61-0132

The flight worked with the FAC "Nail 70" against a target at location 21-36N and 106-32E. "75% coverage. 100% on target." Their mission lasted 4.3 hours.

At 14:10, four pilots from the 34 TFS comprising "Scuba" flight took off from Korat on a mission to Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 50 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0445.
- #4 - Capt Hugh W. Davis

It was Maj Armstrong's 28th combat mission. "The regular afternoon strike was cancelled and we were fortunate to get an add-on flight of four. We went up into Laos just above the Thailand border where we worked with an O-1E FAC. The clouds were thick all about but we were able to roll in on a shallow pass and drop. All of our bombs were on target and the FAC said we destroyed 12 buildings and an area where 200 enemy troops had been reported. After that, we swung into North

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Vietnam for a road check and counter. It was the first time that my tape recorder worked properly and I was really pleased."

Jake Shuler's mission log spreadsheet & Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 12.

06-Dec-67

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The 34 TFS, 388 TFW published additional duties assigned to squadron officers. Squadron commander, Lt Col Robert W. Smith, signed Special Order 67 dated 6 December 1967.

Name	Additional Duty
Maj James E. Daniel, Jr.	Operations Officer
Maj Almer L. Barner	Executive Officer
Maj Clyde L. Falls	Navigation and Plans Officer
Maj William M. Blakeslee	Awards and Decorations Officer
Maj Donald W. Hodge	Flight Manuals Control Officer PIF Control Officer
Maj Donald B. Zimmerman	Mobility Officer Training Officer
Capt Douglas A. Beyer	Asst Awards and Decorations Officer
Capt Hugh W. Davis	Safety Officer
Capt Robert M. Elliot	Personal Equipment Officer
Capt Vernon D. Ellis	Squadron Fund and Recreational Officer
Capt Lawrence R. Klinestiver	Wing Life Support Officer
Capt Irving E. LeVine	Athletic Officer Fire Marshal Security Officer Voting Officer Vehicle Control Officer Asst Wing Life Support Officer
Maj James L. Taylor	Administrative Officer
Maj David D. Igelman	Bomb Damage Assessment Officer
Capt Sam P. Morgan	Standardization Officer Weapons and Gunnery Officer
Capt Jacob Shuler	Unit Historian Information Officer Asst Squadron Fund and Rec Officer
1Lt John T. Latz	Training Officer Retention Officer FOD Officer Disaster Control Officer
1Lt Philip J. Parisi	Explosive Safety Officer Ground Safety Officer Mission Safety 70 Officer Zero Defect Project Officer Unit Fund Council Custodian

34 TFS SO 67 dated 6 Dec 67 provided by Jake Shuler, e-mail 23 Apr 12.

17-Dec-67

612

In the afternoon, F-105s in the Korat strike force from the 388 TFW attacked the Lang Lau railroad bridge. "Fragged against the Lang Lau Railroad Bridge (21-33N and 105-54E) were four F-105D strike flights ..., one F-105F and three F-105Ds flying Iron Hand..., and two Ubon F-4D MIGCAP flights (TOT: 1631H). ... One F-105D aborted shortly after takeoff ... because of a radio malfunction and returned to Korat. There were no spares; hence the Korat strike force was reduced to fifteen strike aircraft." The Korat strike force "... rendezvoused with their tankers, refueled, and set course

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

on their initial track from Channel 97 northeast to the loop in the Red River." MiGs disrupted their planned ingress. F-4Ds in Hornet flight engaged at least four MiG-17s just after crossing the Red River. Multiple engagements followed involving almost all the aircraft of both forces. (Red Baron II Report, Event 75-B, pp 196 - 207.)

F-105D 60-0422, "Bass 1", Capt Jeffery T. Ellis, was downed by a MiG-21.

A MiG-17 shot down "Hornet 3", F-4D 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, USAF loss 776, pg H24.)

F-4D 66-8719, "Gambit 3" from the 13 TFS, 432 TFW, shot down a MiG-17. The crew was Marine exchange pilot Capt Doyle D. Baker and 1Lt John D. Ryan, Jr. ("MiG Killers", Don J. McCarthy, Jr., pg 90.)

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. His was the only flight that reached the bridge. Hq 7th Air Force approved the award on 20 June 1968 under SO G-1834.

In "Ozark", the Wild Weasel flight, EWO Capt Paul John Mongillo, 44 TFS, was killed instantly when he was struck by a CBU pellet dropped by a USAF aircraft. His pilot was Maj Robert S. Beale. "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 CBUs apparently opened and Paul got the BeeBee through the canopy and helmet." The pilot 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 is on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall Panel 32E Line 15.

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

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 OK just west of Thud Ridge. 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

3134

On Tuesday afternoon F-105s from the 355 TFW and 388 TFW and F-4s from Ubon and Udorn struck targets in North Vietnam. "This afternoon sixty-four aircraft, in two forces, were fragged on three targets in Route Package 6A. ... Only one of the three fragged targets was successfully struck. Of sixty-four aircraft fragged as two forces, only one force, the one from Takhli, made it to the target.

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

"This afternoon's effort was supported by six EB-66 aircraft that provided ECM from orbits over the Laos/NVN border and the Gulf of Tonkin, four and two aircraft respectively.

"ALPHA force, composed of four F-105D strike flights ... from Korat, two F-4D strike flights ... from Ubon, an Iron Hand flight (... two F-105Ds and two F-105Fs) also from Korat, and two F-4D MIGCAP flights [call signs "Nash" and "Calico"] from Ubon were fragged on the Viet Tri and Tien Cuong Railroad Yards; they never made it to their targets. Call signs of Korat's strike flights were: "Scuba", "Locust", "Blivet", and "Gator". (Jake Shuler's mission card)

"ALPHA force included four F-105D strike flights from Korat fragged to strike the Viet Tri Railroad Yard (21-18N and 105-26E) and two F-4D strike flights from Ubon fragged to strike the Tien Cuong Railroad Yard (21-22N and 105-18E); never made it to their targets. ALPHA force, in its entirety, including an Iron Hand flight (two F-105Fs and two F-105Ds) also from Korat, and two F-4D MIGCAP flights from Ubon, were attacked by six MiG-21s and four to eight MiG-17s.

"Gator" was the fourth 388 TFW F-105 strike flights fragged against Viet Tri. The pilots, all from the 34 TFS, were:

- # 1 - Maj Donald W. Hodge flying F-105D 60-0462
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0132 on his 30th combat mission
- #3 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying 59-1743 on his 48th combat mission, his 27th into RP-6
- #4 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying 61-0086

The flight took off 13:50 and refueled from Red Anchor 44 at 14:40 for a TOT of 15:33. Jake Shuler recalled, "Aside from the chewing out we all received from Bob Smith upon return (for allowing a few MIG's to cause the ALPHA Strike Force to jettison stores and abort the mission), the thing I remember most is the departure of my two wing tanks. As we lined up on our final heading to the target, MIG calls increased in number as did radio chatter causing confusion, at least for me, as to the actual threat to the strike force. When the call came from the Strike Force Commander to abort the mission, Don Hodge, Gator Lead, started accelerating, as did the other flights. By the time Don called for us to jettison stores, we must have been doing close to 600 Kts. I punched the Jettison External Stores button and in my peripheral vision saw the tanks nose dive about 20-degrees and descend about 10' relative to my aircraft, then immediately nose up and do a 180-degree flip barely skimming over the top of my wing tips. I made a mental note never to do that again." (Jake Shuler combat mission card and "Mission #30 Narrative" via e-mails 28 July 2010 and 11 Jan 2011.)

"The force was intercepted by six MiG-21s and four to eight MiG-17s, probably vectored out of Phuc Yen and Gia Lam Airfields, respectively. ...

"BRAVO force, composed of four F-105D strike flights from Takhli, [Wildcat, Bison, Kingfish, and Marlin] ... an Iron Hand flight (... four F-105Fs) [Otter] also from Takhli, and two F-4D MIGCAP flights ... from Udon fragged on the Dai Loi Railroad Bridge, followed behind ALPHA force. ... The Iron Hand and MIGCAP flights with the BRAVO force engaged MiGs, as the BRAVO strike aircraft continued to their target. ...

"The flights of ALPHA force, then BRAVO force at a later time, departed their respective bases and headed north to the overland refueling tracks, rendezvoused with their tankers, and refueled. From drop-off, ALPHA force set course to the northeast directly toward their targets; BRAVO force continued north to Channel 97. Passing Channel 97, BRAVO force turned to 060 degrees, toward 21-07N and 105-10E. In the 'elbow' of the Black River, south and west of these last coordinates, ALPHA force, followed by elements of BRAVO force, were engaged by MiGs and, hence, egressed the reverse of ingress. The BRAVO strike aircraft and their Iron Hand were the only ones to

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

continue as planned, subsequently egressing via Thud Ridge, Yen Bai, Channel 97, and after post-strike refueling, home.

"The force was later attacked by an estimated six MiG-21s and four to eight MiG-17s. All of the ALPHA strike flights jettisoned stores and, generally, commenced egress. Of ALPHA's many engagements, only [Nash 01] ... met with success ... a one-half MiG-17 kill. Following ALPHA force, elements of BRAVO force, which included [Otter] (Iron Hand) ... [and two of the MIGCAP] flights, engaged the same MiGs." "Nash 01" was an F-4D from Ubon flown by Maj Joseph D. Moore and 1Lt George H. McKinney, Jr. from the 435 TFS.

"As for BRAVO force, its Iron Hand flight (four F-105Fs from Takhli) and its two F-4D MIGCAP flights from Udorn had MiG encounters. However, the four F-105D strike flights from Takhli made it to the target, the Dai Loi Railroad Bridge (21-15N and 105-14E)" (Red Baron report)

The four strike flights of four F-105Ds from the 355 TFW, "Wildcat", "Bison", "Kingfish", and "Marlin", dropped a total of 90 MK-117s and six MK-82s on the Dai Loi railroad bypass bridge (ART 1600) at coordinates 21-15-33N and 105-41-35E in RP-6A, North Vietnam. It was their second alternate target that had been previously struck on 8 and 18 October and on 8 November. Pilots from the 357 TFS flew in all four strikes.

All ordnance impacted in the target area. Heavy haze made BDA difficult but flights estimated moderate to heavy damage to the bridge. "Bison" flight saw a large secondary explosion resulting in fragments trailing white smoke being thrown approximately 200 feet into the air. The last flight to strike the target saw light automatic weapons fire in the target area.

At 0838Z, while at 21-15N and 105-41E, "Marlin 3" saw two SAMs detonate 30 seconds apart approximately 1/2 mile from the flight. The first detonation was behind and below the flight, while the second was at the flight's altitude of 13,000 feet. The pilots couldn't determine the site that fired the missile. At 0842Z, while at 21-25N and 105-30E, on a heading of 320 degrees, "Marlin 3" saw a third SAM detonation approximately 4 nautical miles away at his 7 o'clock position. The SAM burst at 12,000 feet altitude but no aircraft appeared to be in the burst area. (355 TFW JOPREP)

The 355 TFW Wild Weasel "Otter" flight, led by Maj Robert R. Huntley and EWO Capt Ralph W. Stearman from the 354 TFS with other flight members from the 333 TFS and 357 TFS, encountered MiG-17s in supporting this strike. Takhli's Wild Weasels claimed three MiG kills. One kill was credited to Capt Phillip M. Drew and EWO Maj William H. Wheeler, "Otter 03", from the 357 TFS. Maj William M. Dalton and EWO Maj James M. Graham, "Otter 02" from the 333 TFS, 355 TFW, received 1/2 credit for shooting down another MiG-17. This was the other half of the MiG kill credited to the F-4D crew of "Nash 01". However, after two year's investigation, Seventh Air Force's Enemy Aircraft Claims Evaluation Board disallowed the MiG-17 claimed by Huntley and Stearman, "Otter 01".

Red Baron II Event 79 (extracts) pp 266 - 300 & 355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI 5802 OPREP-4/059 in USAF microfilm NO463, frames 1420 and 1585 & 20 Apr 09 letter from Carolyn Dickson giving annotation on cigar band dated 19 Dec 67.

26-Dec-67

5853

"Locust" flight from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, attacked targets at Quang Khe in RP-1 at location 17-43N and 106-26E north east of Dong Hoi. The flight took off at 13:50 for a TOT of 15:38. Their mission lasted 2.5 hours. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Maj William M. Blakeslee flying F-105D 60-0530
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0092 on his 36th counter
- #3 - Capt Carl William Lasiter flying 58-1157

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

#4 - Maj Donald W. Hodge flying 60-0428

The flight encountered three firing AA gun sites.

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 52nd combat mission into North Vietnam. His target was the Ron Ferry complex near Dong Hoi in RP-1.

On his 26th mission, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Gator 2" against gun bunkers in RP-1. "100%. Two bunkers destroyed."

Capt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, 388 TFW, also hit a target in RP-1. It was his 55th combat mission into North Vietnam.

"Target: Truck park in pack I.

"Armament: 6x750

"Combat Skyspot mission. After drop, we looked for moving equipment on road. Nothing. Came home."

Jake Shuler's combat mission spreadsheet & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 26 Dec 67 & Earl Henderson, combat diary & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

27-Dec-67

5854

"Simmer" flight from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, attacked barges at the Ron Ferry complex near Dong Hoi in RP-1 at location 17-37N and 106-17E. The flight took off at 06:40 and their mission lasted 2.3 hours. Their lineup was:

#1 - Maj William M. Blakeslee flying F-105D 60-0464

#2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 60-0152 on his 37th counter

#3 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying 60-0505 on his 53rd counter

#4 - Maj Donald W. Hodge flying 61-0220

Spare: Lt Col James B. Ross in 58-1157

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Gator 3" against a truck park in RP-1. "100%. Numerous road cuts. One large secondary. Two trucks. Moderate 37/57 mm." It was his 27th combat mission.

Jake Shuler's combat mission spreadsheet & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 27 Dec 67 & 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 F-105 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 led 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.

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

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.

17-Feb-68

4879

"Crossbow" flight from the 34 TFS dropped bombs using radar on a target in Laos. The flight took off at 0620. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #2 - Maj Ivor K. Goodrich
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0167
- #4 - Maj William P. Shunney

It was Maj Armstrong's 69th combat mission. "This was a 1st alternate target divert to Laos for a radar drop. It was all real quick and simple. I'd take 31 more just like it." Their mission was 2 hours 20 minutes long.

Capt Joseph S. Sechler, also from the 34th, flew his second mission over North Vietnam. His flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Kenneth W. Mays
- #2 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler
- #3 - Maj William M. Blakeslee
- #4 - Capt John S. Murphy

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

Capt Sechler logged 2:30 flying hours.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 27 - 28 & Joe Sechler flight log via e-mail 28 Apr 10.

18-Feb-68

5871

In a repeat of his 6 and 12 February missions, Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 85th combat mission against Route 7 in RP-3.

Capt Joseph S. Sechler, also from the 34th, flew his third mission over North Vietnam. His flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Billy R. Givens
- #2 - Maj William P. Shunney
- #3 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #4 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler

Capt Sechler logged 2:25 flying hours.

Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 18 Feb 68 & Joe Sechler flight log via e-mail 28 Apr 10.

23-Feb-68

4334

Maj Kenneth W. Mays from the 34 TFS at Korat flew his final combat mission into North Vietnam. "I finished my 100 missions on 23 Feb 1968 with a Sky Spot to a target near Yen Bai. They were mad. When we finished our drop, the sky was filled with 85. I am sure they wanted to let me know they appreciated what I had done for them over the past 7 months. I decided it was time to head home and celebrate with those who cared."

Maj Donald W. Hodge was #2 in Ken's 100 mission flight.

Maj Donald W. Revers, who was still at Korat after flying his 100th in January, flew as #3 on Ken's 100th mission. He "... wanted to fly on my 100th on 23 Feb 68 which he did. We went to Yen Bai and I think they shot every 85 mm gun they had available." (Ken Mays e-mails 7 & 8 Jan 2013)

"The following day our DO, James Stewart (who I had known for many years), [Col James L. Stewart, the 388 TFW Deputy Commander for Operations] called me in and asked me to stay for a while longer and fly a few more missions as Korat was short of experience. He also stated he needed an executive officer.

"I went and talked to Bob Smith (Lt Col Robert W. Smith, the 34 TFS commander who had replaced Maj George G. Clausen on 1 December 1967] who told me to get off the base and be on my way, that I had flown my 100 missions. I immediately left for Bangkok by taxi and thanks to Don Hodge, my roommate, the balance of my personal items were shipped home. Thanks to Bob for having the courage to put the welfare of his men first. That decision probably saved my life. Thanks, Robert W. Smith.

"What a great group of people to serve with. They gave so much to have our Washington leadership let it slip away. My thanks to all who helped me get home safe."

Col Ken Mays, USAF (Ret), unpublished memoir, "Tour At Korat -- July 67 to Feb 68", dated 15 Dec 2003.

27-Feb-68

5874

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 91st combat mission. He struck five trucks in Mu Gia Pass, in RP-1, North Vietnam.

Another flight of 34th pilots also flew a mission over North Vietnam. The lineup was:

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

- #1 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #2 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his eighth mission
- #3 - Maj Melvin L. Irwin
- #4 - Maj Douglas A. Roysdon

Capt Sechler logged 2:35 flying hours.

Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 27 Feb 68.

29-Feb-68

5164

Four pilots assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat completed flying 100 missions during February 1968. They were:

- Capt Irving E. LeVine - Flown 5 Feb 68 on his birthday.
- Capt Vernon D. Ellis
- Maj Kenneth W. Mays - 23 Feb 68
- Capt Harry Guy Paddon III - Flew his 100th on 29 Feb 1968. "Good old leap year."

Capt Paddon left Korat in March 1968 and was next assigned to Moody AFB, GA as a T-38 IP.

Capt LeVine had flown 99 missions in December 1967, "... and could have gone home when my 100 were done but Ray Vissotzky [Maj Raymond Walter Vissotzky], a real, trained LSO, had been shot down [and had become a POW on 19 November 1967] and they needed someone to fill his shoes as Life Support Officer. I had 120+ parachute [jumps] but as Ray had 'penciled me in' as his assistant, the Powers That Be thought that was good enough. I said I'd stay if they let me fly my 100th Mission on my [34th] birthday ... Feb 5th 1968 and the deal was sealed."

Capt LeVine left Korat in May 1968 and was assigned to the F-111 program at Nellis AFB, NV. He remained at Nellis until he retired on 1 October 1972.

Also on this day, a flight of 34th pilots flew a mission over North Vietnam. The lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Melvin L. Irwin
- #2 - Capt John S. Murphy
- #3 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #4 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his tenth mission.

Capt Sechler logged 2:55 flying hours. (Joe Sechler flight log via e-mail 28 Apr 10)

34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & Harry Paddon, e-mail 31 March 2010 & Irv LeVine, letter received 16 Apr 10 & Irv LeVine, e-mail 17 Apr 10.

06-Mar-68

4889

The four pilots in "Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS bombed a target in northern Laos. They took off at 0610 and returned after 2 hours 15 minutes. Their line up was:

- #1 - Maj Eugene Paul Beresik (KIA, 31 May 68)
- #2 - Capt Anthony F. Germann
- #3 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr.
- #4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-5375

This was Maj Armstrong's 80th combat mission. "I was Mission Commander again today and got all of the way through the briefing. We finally executed 1st alt and had a radar drop in northern Laos near Sam Neua. I let Gene Beresik pinch hit for me and lead. It was an uneventful drop. We then made an armed recce of Rte #7 and didn't spot anything though it was partially clear."

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

"Crossbow" was another 34th squadron flight that went to North Vietnam. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr. flying his 49th mission.
- #2 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 14th mission. He logged 2:35 flying hours.
- #3 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #4 - Capt Lawrence L. Bogemann

Col Dye recorded his call sign as "Crossbow 02". In his mission log, the flight was fragged for a strike in the Steel Tiger (SL) region of Laos. Due to weather, the flight dropped their bombs using Sky Spot radar on the Ba Nam Highway segment in RP-1.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 31 & Joe Sechler, flight log via e-mail 28 Apr 10 & Rufus Dye, Mission History log.

01-Apr-68

4104

"On 1 April 68, Maj Roger D. Ingvalson succeeded Maj James E. Daniel as 34 TFS Operations Officer. Major Daniel completed a one year SEA tour in both the F-105 and O-1E aircraft. Major Ingvalson was an assigned flight leader in the 34 TFS prior to becoming Operations officer."

During the month of April 1968, four squadron pilots completed 100 missions over North Vietnam. They were: squadron commander Lt Col Robert W. Smith, Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, Maj Donald W. Hodge, and Maj David D. Igelman.

Maj Igelman flew his 100th on 1 April 1968. He led "Bass" flight whose lineup was:

- #1 - Maj David D. Igelman
- #2 - Capt Lamont H. Pharmer
- #3 - Capt Gary G. Durkee
- #4 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 26th mission into North Vietnam.

Their mission lasted 2 hours 55 minutes.

Igelman remained at Korat until mid-May. "After completing my 100, I was held for awhile by the Wing DO who thought we would be in jeopardy of returning if we didn't stay a full overseas tour of 9 months. ... During that period, I was sorta in limbo. I was given the task of devising a monthly 'Ops Report' for the 388th."

After Igelman left Korat, he was assigned to the Air Staff, Studies & Analyses in the Pentagon.

By the end of April, the squadron had 29 combat pilots authorized and 26 available. They were authorized 18 F-105Ds with 21 assigned and 18 available.

388 TFW History, Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frames 1385 - 1386 & 34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us/34tfs/scarf.htm> & Dave Igelman, e-mail 4 Apr 10 & Joe Sechler's flight log spreadsheet.

07-Apr-68

4912

"Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS hit trucks in North Vietnam. The flight took off at 1240 and returned after flying for 2 hours 20 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Maj Melvin L. Irwin
- #2 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flyiing F-105D 61-0167
- #3 - Capt John E. Hartman
- #4 - Maj Donald W. Hodge

This was Maj Armstrong's 93rd combat mission. "We were going to a fragged target in Pack I.

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

Cricket diverted us to a Misty (F-100) FAC at the north end of Mu Gia Pass as he had some trucks cornered. We dropped our 750# bombs in the area and I fired 36 x 2.75" rockets at the area. We then strafed some trucks on a road just south. We got one truck destroyed and 3 damaged. I fired 281 rounds of ammo. The weather there was clear with good visibility."

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 35 - 36.

08-Apr-68

755

"Thunderchief pilots from the 355 TFW struck a petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) storage area 12 miles north-northeast of Mu Gia Pass"

"Using 750-pound bombs, 388 TFW pilots destroyed the eastern approach to a bridge 38 miles southeast of the coastal city of Dong Hoi." The pilots were in "Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS. They took off from Korat at 1240 and flew for 2 hours 50 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #2 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flyiing F-105D 60-0488
- #3 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander
- #4 - Lt Col Robert A. "Red" Evans, 44 TFS Commander?

This was Maj Armstrong's 94th combat mission. "We were fraged to hit a bridge just north of the DMZ in Pack I. Surprisingly enough they cleared us in to hit it. We couldn't find the bridge we were supposed to hit so we hit a causeway across a river in the same location. Don Hodge hit long, I hit on the approach, and Bob Smith hit it dead center. They shot some 85-mm flak at us on the way up and some 37-mm after we dropped. It was the first time I had seen flak in Pack I. I also had a SAM launch light on for 10 seconds."

Takhli Times, Friday, April 19, 1968 & Sawadee Flyer, Saturday, April 20 1968 & Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 36.

12-Apr-68

4916

"Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS hit a road in southern Laos. The flight took off at 0910 and returned after flying for 2 hours 55 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander
- #2 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0436
- #3 - Col Paul P. Douglas, Jr., 388 TFW Commander
- #4 - Maj Donald W. Hodge

This was Maj Armstrong's 98th combat mission. "We bombed a road down in southern Laos southeast of Sarravane. The weather was clear but hazy. There was quite a crosswind and #1 and myself put our bombs a little to the left of the road. Don Hodge picked up the wind from our bombs and put his right on the road. Col Douglas missed by 100 yards or more. They fired about 20 rounds of 37-mm flak at us but not too close. 'Hillsboro' invited us to go recce the Pack. Smith and I let down through the clouds and got underneath at 1,000' and ran up and down the coast. The visibility was really good underneath but we couldn't see anything moving."

In commenting on his last 10 missions in his memoirs, Lt Gen Armstrong further described this mission. "On one of these flights, Bob was leading and we were cleared into Pack I for a reconnaissance. We crossed into Pack I at about 18,000 feet which was enough to get a counter. But not enough for Bob. He told the other two to hold at that altitude and signaled for me to close in on his wing. We descended through the clouds towards the Gulf of Tonkin using our radar to denote the water. We broke out under the clouds over the Gulf at about 800 feet. We then spread out and turned around towards Pack I. We ran down Route #1 at high speed. They were shooting at us and we were so low and fast that there was no way we could attack any worthwhile target. After a few minutes I joined up on his wing again and we climbed out through the clouds to rejoin

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

the other two guys and go back to Korat. I guess the extra excitement was okay!"

Under Hillsboro control, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Waco 3" to attack a road segment in Steel Tiger. "100%. Three road cuts." He then flew armed recce in RP-1. "No significant sightings." It was his 59th combat mission.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 37 & Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished memoir in chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 47 & Rufus Dye Mission History log

13-Apr-68

4917

"Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS hit a road segment in RP-1 using Sky Spot radar. The flight took off at 1245 and returned after flying for 2 hours 15 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flyiing F-105D 59-1760
- #2 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #3 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander
- #4 - Maj Seymour R. Bass (died in mid-air with flight lead, 14 May 68)

This was Maj Armstrong's 99th combat mission. "We were fragged in on a target in Pack I. It was a road segment on Rt 1A just south of Dong Hoi. The weather was completely undercast so they set us up for a radar drop on our target. We had so much fuel that we didn't even have to post-strike refuel on the way back. A real effortless mission."

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 37 - 38.

14-Apr-68

189

The 388 TFW, Korat RTAFB, Thailand, passed the 100,000 combat flying hour mark. This represents "... the flying equivalent of 11 years and five months, in just over two years of combat operations in SEA." The wing started flying F-105 combat missions on 8 April 1966.

"Honors to the milestone flight went to the wing's 34th Tactical Fighter Squadron. The flight [call sign "Gator"] was led by 388th TFW Commander Col. Paul P. Douglas Jr., who is assigned to the 34th TFS for flying duties, Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Robert W. Smith, 39, Albuquerque, N.M., and Maj. Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, 33, Columbia, Tenn. and Donald W. Hodge, 37, Panama City, Fla." On this flight, Lt Col Smith, Maj Armstrong, and Maj Hodge each achieved their 100th mission over North Vietnam.

The 34 TFS launched "Gator" flight at 15:10. The mission lasted 3 hours. The line up was:

- #1 - Col Paul P. Douglas, Jr., 388 TFW Commander
- #2 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flyiing F-105D 60-0435
- #3 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander
- #4 - Maj Donald W. Hodge

Maj Armstrong recorded the events in his combat log. "This was a big occasion being the 100th mission for Bob Smith, Don Hodge, and myself and the celebration of the 100,000th combat hour for the wing. Our target was down in Laos just outside Khe Sahn. The 3 of us put our bombs right on the FAC's mark. Col Douglas didn't have a sight so consequently his bombs were way off. We had already coordinated with 7th AF to assume that our flight would be cleared into Pack I. So we buzzed through the Pack at altitude over the clouds and came back to the field for a diamond fly-by and VFR landing pattern. Unfortunately, Col Douglas taxied off the taxiway coming in and had to shut his aircraft down on the spot. It's beautiful to be finished!" (Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 38)

He also described this mission in his memoir. "Bob Smith, Don Hodge and I were slated to fly our

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

100th missions the same day. We had arrived on the same day so it was appropriate to end it the same way, same day. Normally, the person finishing would lead the flight so how would we work this out? Col. Douglas had already indicated that our last mission would represent the 100,000 combat hour for the wing and to commemorate this, he would lead the flight. Our target was in Laos just outside Khe Sahn. The weather was hazy and he couldn't find the target. My tape recorder told the story. The three of us were directing the flight!

"Col. Douglas claimed that he didn't have a sight but his bombs were well off the target so he might have been correct. He was so non-proficient in the F-105 that it could have just been a goof on his part. Because of the celebration planned upon our return, it had already been coordinated with 7th Air Force in Saigon for us to be cleared into Pack I afterwards. So we got our 100th counter effortlessly and formed up on Col. Douglas to head back to the field. Unfortunately, he couldn't find the field in the haze and we were no help because we were in tight formation.

"He asked the tower to get him a radar approach to initial. The tower replied that there was another flight on radar final. Did he want them to break out? Col. Douglas asked them to do just that and we flew down initial with this help and made the pitch-out for landing. We had briefed that we would taxi in formation back to the flight line for the celebration. I was #2 and I quickly performed my after landing checks from memory. I was taxiing on Col. Douglas and observed that he had to use his checklist to do his checks. As he took his eye off the taxi way, his left wheel rolled off into the soft mud. He was obviously stuck! We continued on around him and headed for the planned celebration. Col. Douglas joined us later from the back of a pickup truck.

"We each got the usual treatment: champagne from a hollowed-out pineapple, a Thai ornament around the neck and a squirt down from a fire truck. Then we mounted the Snoopy trailers for the parade to the club. They tossed us into the swimming pool and we managed to take a few squadron mates with us. Dripping wet, we went into the bar and each rung the bell signifying that the drinks were on us. Then we had a formal cutting of the cake to commemorate the 100,000th combat hour of the wing. Col. Douglas and the three of us did the honors. We celebrated into the wee hours!"

"... My 100th mission was on Easter Sunday, 1968. ... Normally, Bob, Don and I would be heading home after completing our 100th mission. However, in typical bureaucratic fashion, the Pentagon decided that pilots were completing their 100 missions over North Vietnam (otherwise, the tour length was one year) tours too quickly. So we had to hang around for awhile. I stayed three weeks but Bob stayed even longer. I was not required to fly any more missions and I didn't. It would have taken missions away from my comrades who were trying to finish in this now relatively benign environment." (Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished memoir in chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 47 - 48.)

Maj Armstrong flew 283 combat hours during his tour at Korat and a total of 378.5 hours in the F-105. He arrived home on 8 May 1968 and was assigned to Edwards AFB where he became deputy commandant at the Aerospace Research Pilot School. In subsequent assignments he was base commander at Randolph Air Force Base, commander of the 80th Flying Training Wing at Sheppard AFB, Assistant Deputy for Operations of Air Training Command, DCS for R&D at Hq USAF, commander of the Military Training Center at Lackland AFB, the senior defense representative in Saudi Arabia, Vice Commander of MAC, and Vice Commander of Air Force Systems Command. He was promoted to Lt General on 28 August 1985 and retired on 1 April 1990. (USAF Biography)

After retirement, he became head of NASA's Aeronautics and Space Transportation Technology Enterprise with overall responsibility for each of NASA's four aeronautical research centers.

This was Don Hodge's last flight in the F-105. He had accumulated 395.5 hours in the airplane.

Donald W. Hodge

F-105 History

Lt Col Smith last flew the F-105 on 22 April 1968 by which time he had accumulated 323.4 hours in the airplane.

388 TFW History, Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frame 0685 & Korat's Sawadee Flyer, Apr 20, 1968, Pg 1 & F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.

28-Apr-15

7460

Lt Col (Ret) Donald W. Hodge has fallen ill.

28 Apr 15 - Ken received a call from Ginger Hodge last night with word that Don is in the Birmingham Hospital with congestive heart failure. She said that he is not doing well at all and the prognosis is not good.

3 May 15 - Ken Talked with Ginger yesterday and received an update on Don's condition. Don is stable but very weak. Ginger is in the process of making preparations for him to come home, i.e. hospital bed, oxygen, home care, etc., with the hope that he will be able to be transported home next week. She expressed heartfelt appreciation to all of you for keeping them in your thoughts and prayers.

Jake Shuler, e-mails 28 Apr, 3 May 2015.

14-Jul-15

7475

Just received a call from Ken Mays - Ginger Hodge call him with the sad news that Donald W. Hodge passed away this morning. Service has been tentatively scheduled for Saturday morning in Birmingham, AL. Specific details will be emailed to you as they are finalized.

Jake Shuler

Information on Don's service:

Southern Heritage Funeral Home
475 Cahaba Valley
Pelham, AL 35124

Visitation---11AM to 1 PM
Service at 1 PM at the funeral home.

Lt. Col. Donald W. Hodge Obituary

9-24-1930 - 7-18-2015 Lt. Col. Donald W. Hodge USAF retired, passed away at the age of 84, on July 14, 2015. He is preceded by his wife, Virginia C. Hodge; siblings, Donna, David, Joe, Faye. Donald is survived by his wife, Ginger G. Hodge; sons, Scott and Clay (Donna); daughters, Leah and Laurie; grandchildren, Cooper, Larson, Mitchell, and Madison. The funeral service will be at Southern Heritage Funeral Home on Saturday 7-18 at 1pm with the visitation starting at 11am. The burial will be at Southern Heritage Cemetery immediately following the service with Military Honors present.

Jake Shuler's, e-mails 14 July 2015 & <http://obits.al.com/obituaries/birmingham/obituary.aspx?n=lt-col-donald-w-hodge&pid=175289904&fhid=5979>