

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

15-Dec-65

6572

(Approximate date). Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe completed training in the F-105 at the 4520 CCTW at Nellis AFB NV. His class started in June or July 1965. He was next assigned to the 12 TFS, 18 TFW, at Kadena AB, Okinawa.

Larry Hoppe e-mail 14 Jun 2010.

29-Jan-66

4523

F-105 pilot Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe reported in to the 12 TFS at Kadena AB, Okinawa, from Nellis AFB, Nevada.

12 TFS History, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 66, pg 2.

14-May-66

4520

For the first 4 1/2 months of 1966 the pilot roster of the 12 TFS in the 18 TFW, Kadena AB, Okinawa included:

Lt Col Charles W. Reed - Commander
Lt Col Robert L. Fair - Operations Officer
Capt Dana B. Cromack - Asst. Operations Officer

Maj Paul M. Kunichika - Flight Commander, INDIA Flight
Maj Robert T. Campbell - Flight Commander, JULIET Flight
Maj Ralph H. Bowersox - Flight Commander, KILO Flight
Maj Pike G. Grubbs - Flight Commander, LIMA Flight.

Pilots in INDIA Flight were:
Capt Vernon E. Frank
Capt Thomas E. Boatman
Capt George A. Bogert
Capt Samuel E. Waters, Jr.
Capt Malcolm B. Robertson

Pilots in JULIET Flight were:
Capt Allen L. Anderson
Capt Wesley G. Cary
Capt Anatole Semenov, Jr.
1Lt Charles C. Large
1Lt Vernon V. Sisney

Pilots in KILO Flight were:
Capt Samuel Chapman "Max" Maxwell
Capt Raymond V. Moss
Capt John H. Busbee
Capt James R. Hostetter
Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe
1Lt William W. Koelm

Pilots in INDIA Flight were:
Capt Eddy J. Doerschlen
Capt John C. Jones
Capt Richard Smith
1Lt Charles G. Hoflelich, Jr.

12 TFS History, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 66, pgs 1 and 12.

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F-105 History

30-Jun-66

4533

The following 20 F-105 pilots were assigned to the 12 TFS during the period 15 May - 30 June 1966:

Lt Col Robert L. Fair - Commander
Maj Robert T. Campbell - Operations Officer
Capt Dana B. Cromack - Asst Operations Officer
Capt Veron E. Frank - Flight Commander, INDIA Flight
Capt Anatole Semenov, Jr. - Flight Commander, JULIET Flight
Capt Eddy J. Doerschlen - Flight Commander, KILO Flight

LIMA flight had no personnel.

Pilots assigned to the three flights were:

INDIA Flight

Capt Malcolm B. Robertson
Capt Thomas E. Boatman
Capt George A. Bogert
Capt Samuel E. Waters, Jr.
1Lt William W. Koelm

JULIET Flight

Capt Samuel Chapman "Max" Maxwell
Capt John C. Jones
Capt Philip C. Montagne
1Lt Vernon V. Sisney

KILO Flight

Capt Raymond V. Moss
Capt Richard Smith
Capt John H. Busbee
Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe
1Lt Charles G. Hofelich, Jr.

12 TFS history, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 66, pgs 1 and 12.

18-Aug-66 20-Sep-66

4545

Two F-105 pilots from the 12 TFS, 18 TFW, at Kadena AB, Okinawa, went TDY for a month to augment aircrew manning in the 354 TFS, 355 TFW at Takhli. They were:

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe who flew his first combat mission on 22 August 1966 and returned home on 19 September after flying 22 counters.

Capt Malcolm B. Robertson who returned home on 20 September.

12 TFS history, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1966, pg 3 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5 Pilot Individual Flight Record.

31-Aug-66

1027

The 355 TFW history included a list of eleven 354 TFS pilots arriving and departing Takhli in August 1966.

The arrivals were:

Lawrence G. Hoppe

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Lt Col Donald Henry Asire
Maj Gordon Mickelson
Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe (TDY from the 12 TFS). He arrived at Takhli on 20 August 1966. On 31 August, he flew his 8th 0-1 combat mission, which lasted 2 hours 20 minutes, half flown in weather.
Capt Malcolm B. Robertson (TDY from the 12 TFS)
Capt Dennis Kevin Duff
1Lt Lowell Stein

Departing pilots were:
Capt Gary Johnson
Capt Peter Potter Pitman
Capt Richard E. Steere
1Lt Leonard C. "Lucky" Ekman
1Lt George W. Hamlin IV

355 TFW History, Jul - Dec 66, USAF microfilm NO462 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5, Pilot Individual Flight Record.

04-Sep-66

992

F-105s from the 355 TFW struck two POL storage areas in North Vietnam. They " ... struck the Viet Tri Petroleum Product Storage area (JCS 51.14) dropping a total of fifteen 2,000-pound bombs and two CBU-24s. They inflicted heavy damage on five POL tanks, light damage to one POL tank, destroyed two large buildings and made six other hits inside fragged target boundaries. ..." This target was located at 21-17-46 and 105-26-05. It served as a transshipment point for POL supply movement to the northwest and western regions of NVN. The four F-105D pilots in "Anzac" flight were from the 333 TFS. They dropped five 2,000-pound bombs and reported destroying their target.

"Nguyen Khe (or Kha - JCS 51) (located at 21-10-08N and 105-51-29E) is one of North Vietnam's largest POL storage areas. (When) it was struck, ... heavy black smoke indicated that it was damaged heavily. This target was hit with 18 X 500-pound bombs." The four F-105D pilots in "Catnip" flight were from the 333 TFS. They dropped six 500-pound bombs on a railroad bridge.

During the strike, two F-105D pilots from Takhli were shot down and became POWs. They were 1Lt Thomas M. McNish from the 354 TFS and 1Lt Ronald Glenn Bliss from the 357 TFS.

The Wild Weasel crew of Maj Kenneth R. Ryckman and EWO Capt Clyde A. Hayman from the 13 TFS, 388 TFW, led a flight of four F-105s that destroyed an SA-2 missile site near Kep Airfield using 2.75 inch rockets and 20-mm cannon fire. Both crewmen were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, on TDY to the 354 TFS from the 12 TFS, flew his 11th combat mission today.

355 TFW History, July 1966 - Sep 1967, USAF microfilm NO462 & Clyde A. Hayman, e-mails to Ron Thurlow, 21 and 29 March 2001 & Larry Hoppe, AF Form 5.

12-Sep-66

1003

Lt Col Donald H. Asire replaced Lt Col Douglas E. Whatley as the commander of the 354 TFS, 355 TFW, at Takhli RTAFB, Thailand.

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe from the 12 TFS on TDY to the 354th, flew his 19th combat mission today.

355 TFW History, July 1966 - Sep 1967, USAF microfilm NO462.

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

17-Sep-66

6571

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, on TDY to the 354 TFS from the 12 TFS, flew his 22nd and last combat mission during his 30-day TDY. He returned to the 12 TFS at Kadena.

Larry Hoppe, AF Form 5, Pilot Individual Flight Record.

09-Dec-66

4547

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe from the 12 TFS lost a canopy during takeoff in his F-105D at the 18 TFW, Kadena AB, Okinawa.

"On 9 December 1966, [1Lt Vernon V. Sisney] was number three in a four ship flight taking off on runway 05 left. All aircraft were checked prior to flight. Shortly after take off, [Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe] flying number four, positioned slightly forward and high, saw the canopy locking handle pop out and the master warning light come on. The canopy opened approximately an inch and separated from the aircraft shortly thereafter. The aircraft was landed after the fuel was sufficiently burned down to permissible landing weight. The canopy was recovered. No mechanical malfunctions could be found and the cause of the incident was undetermined."

Larry Hoppe, e-mail 27 Apr 10 & 12 TFS history, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1966, pg 9 AFHRA Call # K-SQ-FI-12-HI, IRIS # 419691. NOTE: The 12 TFS history had the names reversed.

31-Dec-66

4535

The 12 TFS at Kadena AB, Okinawa, had 21 F-105 pilots assigned as of 31 December 1966. They, and the number of combat missions each had flown, were:

Lt Col Russell L. Rogers - Commander - 142 (Korea F-51)
Maj Robert T. Campbell - Operations Officer - 22
Capt Dana B. Cromack - Asst Operations Officer - 100
Capt Vernon K. Frank - Flight Commander, INDIA Flight - 100
Capt Anatole Semenov, Jr. - Flight Commander, JULIET Flight - 64
Capt Eddy J. Doerschlen - Flight Commander, KILO flight - 64

Lt Col Robert L. Fair - Previous commander and now 18 TFW DO - 58

Squadron pilots were:

INDIA Flight

Capt Malcolm E. Robertson - 17
Capt George A. Bogert - 43
1Lt Leon L. Garner - Not listed.
1Lt William W. Koelm - 84

JULIET Flight

Capt Samuel Chapman "Max" Maxwell - 28
Capt John C. Jones - 52
Capt William R. Jolly - "SEA tour complete"
Capt Philip C. Montagano - 103 (RF-101)
1Lt Vernon V. Sisney - 30

KILO Flight

Capt Eugene P. Beresik - Not listed.
Capt Richard E. Smith - 24
Capt John H. Busbee - 51
Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe - 22 (Eight to RP-6 during TDYs with the 354 TFS at Takhli)

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1Lt Charles G. Hofelich - 79
1Lt Gordon L. Clouser - 46

Capt Thomas E. Boatman, who had resigned from the Air Force, had flown 67 F-105 combat missions.

12 TFS history, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1966, pgs 1 and 14 and 17 & Larry Hoppe, e-mail 27 Apr 10 and AF Form 5.

17-Jul-67

3261

USAF aircraft struck four targets along the Northeast rail line (RR 2) in RP-6, North Vietnam.

The Bac Le vulnerable rail segment (BE 616-G0706) at 21-31-19N and 106-26-40E, previously struck on 10 July, was interdicted again on 17 July. Pilots expended a total of 44 M-117s and six MK-82s during 5 sorties against this target.

The Vu Chua railroad yard (BE 616-01401), at 21-28-21N and 106-22-58E, struck on 12 July, was bombed again on 17 July and 19 July in 29 sorties expending a total of 131 M-117s, 12 MK-117s with time delay fuzes, and 6 MK-118s. Five destroyed or damaged pieces of rolling stock were in the yard on the 17 July strike.

The Bac Le railroad yard (BE 616-01383) at 21-30-47N and 106-26-13E, previously bombed on 12 July, was struck again on 17 July by 4 sorties expending 4 MK-82s and 12 M-117s. "Pilots reported one rail cut." Four pilots from the 34 TFS struck this target in RP-6. They were:

- #1 - Capt Jack A. Phillips Mission Commander flying his 90th combat mission over NVN.
- #2 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe
- #3 - Maj George G. Clausen 34th squadron commander
- #4 - Maj Robert T. Campbell who had recently arrived in the 34th.

This mission, his 90th, made Capt Phillips "Golden". He flew his next 10 missions between 21 July and 2 August in the lower threat region of Route Pack 1.

In the afternoon, the Kep railroad yards, (BE 616-01371, BE 616-01931, and BE 616-01932) on the Northeast rail line were struck 17 July, 18 July, and 21 July as a single target complex. Thirty-one sorties expended a total of 143 M-117s, 5 M-117s with time-delay fuzes, and 4 MK-82 against this complex. A total of 95 pieces of rolling stock were sighted during these strikes with an unknown number destroyed or damaged.

Maj Thomas H. Maus from the 357 TFS flew F-105D 62-4384 against the Kep railroad yard at coordinates 21-24-48N and 106-17-36E. His strike camera film showed bomb impacts on the yard.

PACAF 27 July 67 Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 8 Jul - 23 Jul 67 & Jack Phillips Mission Summary via e-mail 18 Mar 11 & National Archives Strike Camera Records, Archive Control No. NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42718A.

31-Jul-67

3824

The 34 TFS history for July 1967 did not describe specific combat missions for the month but did acknowledge that "... medium altitude run-in techniques were utilized in conjunction with QRC-160 ECM pod formation. ... Limited use was being made of the AGM-12 missile against point targets." During the month, the squadron flew 345 combat missions, 342 into North Vietnam and 3 in Laos. "A slight decrease in the intensity of enemy AAA fire was noted during the month and no MiG encounters were reported."

"Combat pilot strength stood at 21 line pilots [up from 19 pilots reported in June's history]."

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F-105 History

"During the month of July, six squadron pilots completed their tour of 100 missions over North Vietnam. Those completing were: Majors Raymond F. Jauregui, Earl Johnston, James N. McClelland, John R. Whaley, and Captains Donald O. Austin and Jackie R. Youngblood. [Not listed in the unit history for completing 100 missions this month was Maj Charles E. Irwin who left Korat in early August 1967.] No losses were suffered during this month and six replacements were received during this period of time."

His 100th mission was the last flight in the F-105 for Maj Jauregui. Since starting his RTU class at McConnell in June 1966, he accumulated 351 hours in the airplane.

Maj McClelland's 100th mission on 22 July was also his last in the F-105. He had accumulated 340.6 hours in the airplane.

His 100th mission on 25 July was the last F-105 flight for Maj Whaley. He had accumulated 333.8 hours in the airplane. (F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.)

The incoming PCS pilots in July were: Maj Robert T. Campbell, Capt Irving E. LeVine, and Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr.

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, Capt Rodney A. Skoglund and 1Lt Morris R. Schulmister arrived prior to 12 July 1967 on TDY from the 18 TFW at Kadena. By the end of July 1967, Capt Hoppe had flown 9 combat missions with the 34 TFS bringing his total counters to 31. (Larry Hoppe, AF Form 5.)

The squadron commander was Maj George G. Clausen. Maj Roderick G. Giffin was the Operations Officer.

388 TFW history, Apr Dec 67, Vol II, 34 TFS history, July 67, microfilm NO584, frame 0078 & 34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us/34tfs/scarf.htm> & Chuck Irwin e-mail 6 Apr 10.

02-Aug-67

3335

Lt Col Mervin M. Taylor from the 34 TFS was mission commander against the steel mill complex NE of Hanoi. (Probably the Thai Nguyen Iron & Steel Complex, (JCS 76.00)). He flew for 2.8 hours and was awarded the Silver Star under Special Order 1581, Hq 7 AF, 4 Oct 67. "Led force of 20 F-105s. ... Opposition - MiGs, Missiles, AAA fire. Bombs center target."

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, also from the 34 TFS, flew his 32nd combat mission today for 3.0 hours.

Capt Jack A. Phillips, 34 TFS, flew his 100th combat mission into NVN. He flew his assigned F-105D 59-1760 named "Warlord II". "Lower Pack; tour complete!" Including his "non-counters" to Laos, he had flown a total of 120 combat missions, 41 against targets in Route Pack 6 around Hanoi.

BG Mervin Taylor, letter 30 May 2000 to Ron Thurlow & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5 & Jack Phillips Mission Summary via e-mail 18 Mar 11.

04-Aug-67

1418

F-105s from the 388 TFW struck AAA sites in the Kep area of North Vietnam.

Maj Louis L. Levy from the 469 TFS flew a mission on this day for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (Third Oak Leaf Cluster). " ... Major Levy flew over some of the most dangerous territory in North Vietnam en route to attack anti-aircraft sites near the Kep Railroad Yard and Airfield [JCS 9.1]. With unhesitating determination he flew through withering anti-aircraft fire to destroy his assigned site. His achievement enabled later flights to bomb this strategic area exposed to decreased hostile fire. ... "

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F-105 History

Maj George G. Clausen, the 34 TFS commander, led a flight from Korat that also attacked AAA sites. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross (2nd OLC). "Major George G. Clausen distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as an F-105 pilot over Southeast Asia, Republic of Vietnam on 4 August 1967. On that date, Major Clausen was mission commander of 'War Hawk' flight. The objective of his twenty-aircraft strike force mission was the destruction or neutralization of a vastly diversified and highly sophisticated network of radar controlled antiaircraft defenses surrounding areas of the hostile forces. As a result of his skillful leadership and expert navigation, and the full awareness of the danger in attacking a flak site, Major Clausen directed and delivered his ordnance accurately and effectively. He then assembled his flight in minimum time and led them to safety. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Major Clausen reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (Award citation provided by George Clausen, received 12 Apr 2010.)

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe from the 34 TFS flew two missions into North Vietnam, one for 3.7 hours, the other for 3.8 hours. They were his 34th and 35th counters.

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1756 & Lou Levy, award citation provided in reply to Ron Thurlow letter, 1 Oct 2001 & Larry Hoppe, AF Form 5.

11-Aug-67

6573

In the morning, Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe from the 34 TFS flew a two-ship flight into North Vietnam. It was his 40th combat mission and he logged 1.8 hours.

Larry Hoppe e-mail 14 June 2010 & Form 5.

11-Aug-67

318

For the first time, F-105s from the 355 TFW and the 388 TFW, and F-4Cs from the 8 TFW, struck the Hanoi Rail and Highway bridge (JCS 12) (BE 616-0012). The bridge was on the Northeast rail line (RR 2) at coordinates 21-02-32N and 105-51-59E in RP-6A, North Vietnam. North Vietnam's Paul Doumer bridge was an add-on target to the Rolling Thunder 57 strike package first approved on 20 July. The 19-span bridge, crossing the Red River near downtown Hanoi, was 5,532 feet long and 38 feet wide. It supported two highway lanes and a rail line carrying an average of 26 trains a day.

The bridge was named for Paul Doumer, the French governor of Indo China between 1897 and 1902. In those five years, he exploited the country financially to favor French interests, building railroads and bridges as well as opium dens to transport goods and generate income for his home country. Understandably, the Vietnamese Communists renamed the bridge, calling it the Longbien Bridge, but the U.S. military continued referring to the target under its French colonial name. ("Vietnam" by Stanley Karnow, pgs 115 - 118.)

"On the morning of August 11, 1967, Seventh Air Force told the F-105 wings at Takhli and Korat, together with the F-4 wing at Ubon, to bomb the Doumer Bridge that very afternoon." After the wings received the frag, the strike was delayed by an hour to allow weapons load crews to reconfigure the planes from 750-pound bombs to 3,000-pound bombs. ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 85.)

Capt Richard E. Guild from the 333 TFS at Takhli recalled details of the bridge's vulnerability used at Takhli in mission planning. "The reason the Doumer is one of the easier, err weaker, err simpler bridges to drop, is because it has single cantilever tresses with non-cantilever (through-thrust) spans between cantilever spans. Hit either end of a non-cantilever through-thrust span, and that span of the bridge drops into the Red River. That knowledge, which I shared with Intel prior to the mission briefing, was one of my contributions to the dropping of the Doumer on 11 Aug 1967." (Dick Guild, e-mail to CASBAR, 25 Nov 04.)

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

The 31-plane strike force from Takhli consisted of a Wild Weasel flight (with call sign "Barracuda"), one flak suppression flight (with call sign "Kingfish"), four bomb flights (with call signs "Bear", "Marlin", "Scotch", and "Shark"), and cover, consisting of one F-4 MiG CAP flight from the 8 TFW.

The Wild Weasel and flak suppression flights preceded the attack on the bridge. The four F-105Fs in the Wild Weasel "Barracuda" flight attacked five AAA and SAM sites. At 0856Z, "Barracuda 3" launched an AGM-45 Shrike missile at a 3 ½-ring Fansong signal at coordinates 21-19N and 105-52E but the SAM site remained active and later fired four SA-2 missiles at the strike force.

At 0858Z, "Barracuda 4" dropped 4 CBU-24s on an active 57-mm AAA site at coordinates 21-21N and 105-34E. The crew did not see their results "... due to evasive maneuvers from numerous defenses encountered in area."

At 0859Z, a plane in the flight dropped two 750-pound bombs on a possible AAA site at coordinates 21-45N and 105-20E. The bombs hit near the site but the flight could not determine bomb damage due to "... evasive maneuvers from defenses in area." The plane returned to Takhli still carrying one AGM-45 missile.

At 0901Z, another plane in the flight fired an AGM-45 missile at a 2 ½ ring Firecan signal near the coordinates 21-07N and 105-54E. The crew was "... unable to determine if signal was damaged due to numerous other signals from same vicinity."

At 0903Z, a plane in the flight fired three AGM-45 missiles at a 3-plus Fansong signal from a SAM site near the coordinates 21-31N and 105-12E. The "... signal went abruptly off (the) air 45 seconds after missile launch." (355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI 4718 OPREP-4/RT/05 in USAF microfilm NO463, frame 251.)

Leading the entire strike force as "Kingfish 1" was Col Robert M. White, the 355 TFW DO, flying with the 357 TFS from Takhli. Col White's element lead, "Kingfish 3", was Capt Theodore G. Moeller from the 357 TFS. "... We were the flak suppression guys. ..." (Ted Moeller, letter to Ron Thurlow, 17 Oct 2001.)

At 0901Z, the four F-105Ds in "Kingfish" dropped sixteen CBU-24s and four CBU-29s on flak sites 7,000 feet east and 7,500 feet northeast of the bridge. The pilots did not see the results of their ordnance due to heavy AAA. While approaching their targets, the pilots saw two MiG-17s take off from Phuc Yen and circle the airfield. These MiGs were soon joined by two more. The pilots lost track of the MiGs among the many flights of F-105s. Two minutes before the target, while flying at 8,000 feet, the flight saw two SA-2s arch over them at 13,000 feet and explode at 20,000 feet in a white fireball. A minute later, they saw another SA-2 launch straight up and explode at 25,000 feet. (355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI 4714 OPREP-4/102 in USAF microfilm NO463, frame 248.)

The strike aircraft from the 355 TFW, "Scotch", "Bear", "Marlin", , and "Shark" flights, used 3,000 pound bombs to drop the number 5 span of the bridge.

At 0902Z, four 355 TFW F-105Ds in "Scotch" flight, followed one minute later by four others in "Bear" flight, dropped 16 M-118 bombs on the bridge. Four bombs hit the center span of the bridge engulfing the structure in smoke. Strike camera film from "Scotch 4" (F-105D 62-4336) confirmed the hits.

Capt Richard E. Guild from the 333 TFS was "Scotch 3". "We were mass-briefed to aim at the third pylon from the eastern shore of the bridge, which was one of two mid-span pylons between cantilever tress spans, i.e., the pylon was supporting two non-cantilevered spans. Bill "Col Mac"

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McDonald (Bear 1) was slightly long, Mal Winter (Bear 2) was slightly short, Dick Guild (Scotch 3) saw only those hits before he released, and thinks he got it, as Bob Lindsey (Bear 3) saw the third set hit before he released, and he might also have hit it, and John Piowaty (Bear 4) stated he aimed mid-span and he might have hit it, too. In any case, we aimed to take out the second non-cantilevered span from the eastern shore, and that is what we got, which established Takhli's claim as the 355th TFW 'Bridge Busters.' " (Dick Guild, e-mail to CASBAR, 25 Nov 04.)

While approaching the target, flying between 8,000 and 10,000 feet, both flights saw a SAM pass 7 miles away and burst at 10,000 feet in a white donut shape. The flight also saw four MiG-17s from Phuc Yen flying at 8,000 feet. "The MiGs made no attempt to engage." As they got closer to the bridge, the flight encountered 85-mm AAA from Phuc Yen "... picking up in intensity as the flight neared the target." As they rolled in to the target, an 85-mm site on the northern bank of the river continued to fire at the planes. "Bear 4" (Capt. John Piowaty) was hit by shrapnel and landed at Udorn. (355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI 4715 OPREP-4/103 in USAF microfilm NO463, frames 249 and 250.)

"Bear" flight from the 354 TFS, 355 TFW, was led by Squadron Commander, Lt Col Nelson J. McDonald in F-105D 59-1824. "Bear 02" was Capt Malcolm D. Winter on his 26th combat mission flying F-105D 62-4367. "Bear 03" was Maj Robert Lindsey in F-105D 62-4372, and "Bear 04" was Capt John Piowaty in F-105D 60-0415.

After leaving the target area, strike planes went supersonic and overflew the Hanoi Hilton POW prison.

Capt Winter recorded these comments in his mission log. "We were led in by Col. White - his flight was flak suppression. We dropped the bridge. Piowaty took a hit but made it to Udorn. NO LOSSES. It's most gratifying to know I got the bridge. Also the guys in the POW camp (and this by far supersedes anything else) know again that we have not stopped. Their faith will be renewed. This was George Guss' 1st 6A. Quite memorable as MiGs & flak were everywhere. (Stores of George may have gotten MiG with jettison of ordinance & tanks when they were at 6 o'clock)." (Combat mission log of Mal Winter transcribed by his son, Mike Winter.)

In November, after his promotion to Major, Mal Winter was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. "In spite of numerous surface-to-air missile launches directed at his flight and intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire, Major Winter conducted a bombing attack which destroyed one span of the bridge and seriously damaged the remaining structure." (Takhli Times, November 24, 1967.)

While exiting the target area, "Bear 04" was hit by 85-mm AAA severely damaging the aft fuselage. Capt Piowaty landed at Udorn. Due to combat damage, his drag chute did not work and the plane ran off the runway. The landing gear snagged the barrier cable blowing the right main tire. The plane was repaired at Udorn and returned to Takhli on 22 August 1967. ("Thud" by Lou Drendel, pgs 30 - 38.)

Capt Piowaty, "Bear 04", recalled more details of the mission. "... Mo (Maj Elmo Clinnard Baker) and Tom Kirk (Lt Col Thomas Henry Kirk, Jr., the 357 TFS Ops Officer) in flights behind me said I got the one span downed. Two were damaged. Funny how many big awards went to guys who missed! Lindsey missed the tanker, going back to Green [refueling track] when the 135s had moved over to Orange for our post strike. Lotzbire got a tiny hole from flak in his windscreen. I got hit in the tail by an 85, but made it to Udorn where a new empennage (from an F, I was told) was emplaced." (John Piowaty, e-mail to Ron Thurlow, 7 Feb 2001.)

"Marlin", the third flight from Takhli, was led by the 357 TFS Squadron Commander, Lt Col Obadiah A. Dugan in F-105D 62-4284. Other 357 TFS pilots were Maj Elmo C. "Mo" Baker, Capt. Bruce J.

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Lotzbire, flying F-105D 62-4262 as "Marlin 3", and Capt George S. Balog in 61-0181.

Four minutes from the target, flying at 9,000 feet altitude, the flight spotted four MiG-17s at their 2 o'clock position circling 3,000 feet over Phuc Yen airfield. Three minutes from the target, while flying at 8,000 feet, a SAM exploded 3,000 feet above the flight. The pilots also saw smoke from the ground indicating the launch of another SAM but did not see the missile. During their approach to the target, flying 3 to 4 NM north of Phuc Yen airfield, the flight encountered a fairly accurate light barrage of 85-mm AAA bursting at their altitude of 6,000 feet.

At 0901Z, "Marlin's" four F-105Ds dropped eight M-118 bombs on the bridge. The flight couldn't see their bombs hit the target but did see bombs from a previous flight hit directly on the center of the bridge. While diving on the target, the flight flew through very heavy and accurate 85-mm flak that lasted until they got beyond 5 NM south of the bridge. Pulling out of his bomb run in a left jinking turn, "Marlin 3" (Capt Lotzbire) was struck by shrapnel that punched through the plane's front and right windscreen and landed on the instrument panel. The flak also put a one-inch hole in the right side of the plane's nose. The pilot landed safely at Takhli. His strike camera film showed one of his bombs making a direct hit on the bridge.

Lt Col Dugan was awarded the Silver Star for leading "Marlin" flight. His award citation read, "... Col Dugan led a flight of four Thunderchiefs on a highly significant strike mission that resulted in the destruction of the largest and most important railroad/highway bridge in North Vietnam. Colonel Dugan courageously led his flight through multiple concentrations of surface-to-air missiles, MiG aircraft, and bursting flak to insure that all bombs would impact on the bridge. When his number three man sustained a hit, Colonel Dugan selflessly turned back into the intense flak barrage to provide directions and escort his crippled flight member to safety." (355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI 4713 OPREP-4/101 in USAF microfilm NO463, frame 247 & National Archives Gun and Strike Camera records, archive control no. NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42718A.)

The fourth strike flight from the 355 TFW was led by Lt Col William C. Norris, commander of the 333 TFS. (Bob White, e-mail to Ron Thurlow, 12 Sep 2001.)

The 8 TFW and 388 TFW, attacking several minutes behind the 355 TFW planes, dropped two highway spans on the northeast side of the bridge. The flak suppression flight dropped CBUs to knock out one 85-mm AAA site. The two F-105Fs and two F-105Ds of the SAM-suppression flight destroyed six SAM sites. During the mission, the 36 strike aircraft dropped 92 tons of bombs.

Lt Col Harry W. Schurr, commander of the 469 TFS at Korat, led the 20 F-105s from the 388 TFW, while Col Robin Olds, Commander of the 8 TFW, led the F-4Cs from Ubon.

Korat's AAA and SAM suppression flight, "Splendid", was led by Lt Col James F. McInerney, Jr., commander of the 13 TFS from Korat, with his EWO Capt Fred W. Shannon. His 388 TFW Iron Hand flight consisted of one other "F" and two F-105Ds. Lt Col Richard F.B. Gimmi, Jr., was "Splendid 02" in an F-105D.

The four lead pilots, Col White from Takhli, Lt Col Schurr, Lt Col McInerney, and his EWO Capt Shannon from Korat, and Col Olds from Ubon, were awarded the Air Force Cross.

Col White's Air Force Cross citation read, in part, "... Colonel White led the entire combat force against a key railroad and highway bridge in the vicinity of Hanoi. In spite of fourteen surface-to-air missile launches, MiG interceptor attacks, and intense anti-aircraft artillery fire, he gallantly led the attack. By being the first aircraft to dive through the dark clouds of bursting flak, Colonel White set an example that inspired the remaining attacking force to destroy the bridge without a single aircraft being lost to the hostile gunners ...". (Extract from "For Extraordinary Heroism - The Air Force

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

Cross" by Maj Jeffery B. Floyd, provided by Ron Thurlow.)

"Penetrating heavy AAA fire and SAMs, the force reported dropping the center section and walking their 3,000-pound bombs down the multi-span bridge. ... A crew member in the Iron Hand flight, Capt Fred Shannon, said, 'we visually acquired a SAM site, eight miles north of Hanoi, and were lining up to roll in on it when another SAM site, 13 miles northwest of Hanoi, fired at us and missed. We attacked both sites, with resulting secondary explosions sending smoke to 3,000 feet. We destroyed both positions as well as their associated equipment."

"Leader of the third element [from Korat] attacking the bridge was Lt Col Harry W. Schurr, 469 TFS. 'Our flight rolled in and all hits appeared to be right in the area and quite a few were right on the bridge. You could see the 3,000-pounders popping like big orange balls as they struck the bridge.'" (388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO583 frames 1575 and 1576.)

Col Schurr's aircraft was hit by flak. "Just as I was getting ready to roll in, a 100-mm went off just under me flipping me up-side-down and the smoke made me disappear from my flight for a short while. I had holes all over the belly of my Thud but limited damage." (Harry Schurr, e-mail, 21 July 2003.)

His Air Force Cross citation said he "... distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as commander of a strike force of twenty F-105 Thunderchiefs against the most heavily defended target in North Vietnam on 11 August 1967. Though intense, accurately directed hostile force had damaged his aircraft prior to reaching the target, Lt Col Schurr, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill, led the strike in a devastating attack against the primary target in the very capital of the adversary. ... One span was destroyed and others heavily damaged. As a result, the flow of war materials into this area was appreciably reduced ... "

The leader of "Splended", the SAM-suppression flight from Korat, Lt Col James E. McInerney, Jr. and his EWO, Capt Fred W. Shannon flying F-105F 63-8295, were also awarded the Air Force Cross "for extraordinary heroism". "... Colonel McInerney suppressed six active surface-to-air missile sites defending a strategic highway and railroad bridge. Despite concentrated barrages of anti-aircraft fire and three missiles directed against his flight, Colonel McInerney displayed the highest degree of courageous leadership in destroying two missile sites and forcing the other four into sporadic operation. As the direct result of his actions, the strike force suffered no losses and imposed extensive damage on this vital target" The wording of Capt Shannon's award citation was nearly identical. (Extract from "For Extraordinary Heroism - The Air Force Cross" by Maj Jeffery B. Floyd, provided by Ron Thurlow.)

Col Olds' Air Force Cross citation read, "... Col Olds led his strike force of eight F-4C aircraft against a key railroad and highway bridge in North Vietnam. Despite intense, accurately directed fire, multiple surface-to-air missile attacks on his force, and continuous harassment by MiG fighters defending the target, Colonel Olds, with undaunted determination, indomitable courage, and professional skill led his force through to help destroy this significant bridge. As a result, the flow of war materials into this area was appreciably reduced. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressive leadership, Colonel Olds reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." ("Recipients of the Medal of Honor and Air Force Cross" by Eric Caubarreux, pg 214.)

Lt Col Richard F.B. Gimmi, Jr., 469 TFS, flying as "Splendid 02" in Korat's Wild Weasel flight, received the Silver Star for this mission. "On 11 August 1967, Colonel Richard F.B. Gimmi, Jr., (then Lt Colonel) distinguished himself by gallantry in action against an enemy force as the pilot of the number two F-105 aircraft in a four aircraft flak suppression flight (call sign, Splendid) over

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

North Vietnam. On that date, Colonel Gimmi, as Splendid Two, helped to suppress six enemy surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites which were defending an important strategic transportation link - the Doumer Bridge over the Red River near Hanoi - against an incoming 388th Tactical Fighter Wing strike force of twenty-four F-105 aircraft carrying two 3,000 pound high explosive bombs each. Despite three surface-to-air missiles launched at Splendid Flight, which were outmaneuvered by aggressive evasive action; the threat of airborne MiG fighters in the target area; and intense anti-aircraft artillery fire, which did damage Splendid Two's aircraft, Colonel Gimmi, with undaunted determination and courage, destroyed a SAM radar control center and three surface-to-air missiles. In addition, several other surface-to-air missile sites were forced into sporadic operation which greatly reduced the SAM threat to the F-105 Strike Force. Before returning to its base at Korat, Thailand, Splendid Flight remained in the target area providing continued enemy anti-aircraft artillery, SAM and radar suppression until all strike aircraft had entered and departed the target area. The extraordinary performance of each Splendid Flight member, individually and as a team, greatly reduced the amount and accuracy of the awesome fire power focused on the Strike Force. Thus, the F-105 strike aircraft were able to drop their bombs with concentrated accuracy inflicting severe and extensive damage to the target without a single loss of USAF aircraft or aircrew. By his gallant actions and devotion to duty, Colonel Gimmi reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (Gimmi Silver Star award citation in "Airman. The Life of Richard F. B. Gimmi", by Russell M. Gimmi, iUniverse, Inc., pp 309 - 310.)

Maj Donald W. Revers from the 34 TFS flew on this mission.

Four pilots on TDY to the 34th made up another of Korat's flights. The lineup was:

#1 - Maj Robert T. Campbell

#2 - Capt Rodney A. Skoglund

#3 - Maj John O. Rollins

#4 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying his second sortie of the day and his 41st mission to NVN. He logged 3.0 hours. (Larry Hoppe e-mail 14 June 2010 & AF Form 5.)

In conjunction with the attack on the Doumer Bridge, Wild Weasel pilot Maj George O. Guss from Takhli's 333 TFS (reported to be flying F-105F 63-8320) claimed an unusual MiG kill. "... Maj ... Guss cleared the aircraft wings of ordnance and jettisoned the racks in preparation for a dogfight with a flight of four MiG-17s. A MiG flew straight into the ejected rack and was destroyed." (He was not officially granted a MiG kill.) (USAF Museum Friends Bulletin Vol 3, No. 1, Spring 1980.) "The story about me downing a MiG with ejection racks happened on my first flight over North Vietnam. I was #2 in our flight of two F-105F's when four MiG-17's jumped us. My leader tried to turn with them which was impossible. One of them was firing and he couldn't get enough lead. The other three were beginning to move under me which didn't look good. At that time, I pushed what we called the 'master panic button' that jettisoned everything on the plane - bombs, pylons and rockets - and went for the deck. My leader looked back and saw a ball of fire and thought I had been hit. He swears he saw an airplane go down. All I know is I had a full load and they had a lot of garbage to dodge." (Letter from the late Lt Col George O. Guss, USAF Ret, to Rick Versteeg posted on Thud Ridge Web site.)

Post-strike bomb damage assessment confirmed the bridge was downed. A gun camera film clip showed one bomb impact directly on the bridge. Film from an aft-looking camera showed smoke from numerous impacts covering portions of the bridge. "...Strike photos showed numerous impacts on or adjacent to the bridge and a large gap where a span had been dropped into the river. Post-strike photos taken shortly after the strike clearly showed the extent of damage. In addition to the downed span, the superstructure of the adjacent span had been heavily damaged and the highway decking destroyed at three locations. The transmission lines crossing the bridge were severed and a fire, probably from a burning vehicle, could be seen. Numerous other vehicles

Lawrence G. Hoppe F-105 History

were still on the bridge with several appearing to be damaged. Destruction of JCS 12 effectively denied through traffic to Hanoi on all northern rail lines." (PACAF 16 August 67 Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 24 Jul - 13 Aug 67)

"Since the North Vietnamese could no longer send trains across the Doumer Bridge, they had to transfer cargo to trucks and ferry them across the river, delaying cargo moving west from Haiphong as well as south from China. The efficiency of the northeast railroad was further reduced by attacks on rail yards and bridges in the buffer zone along the Chinese border." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 85.)

BDA photos on 11 and 12 August showed the bridge having two spans destroyed but the bridge was being bypassed with rail ferries. (PACAF briefing.)

By 3 October 1967, North Vietnam had repaired the bridge. F-105s returned to strike the bridge for the second time on 25 October 1967.

355 TFW History, Jul - Sep 67, USAF microfilm NO463 & "Battle at the Bridge", by Ted R. Sturm, Airman Mag, Dec 69 & National Archives Gun and Strike Camera Film List, Control Number NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42718A & "The Tail of Two Bridges", pgs 67 - 77.

20-Sep-67

6562

In a published order, Maj George G. Clausen, 34 TFS commander, designated six squadron pilots as qualified Mission Commanders. They were:

Maj George G. Clausen
Maj Roderick G. Giffin
Maj Dwight E. Sullivan
Maj Charles E. Bishop
Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, who by this time had flown 64 combat missions.
Capt Hugh W. Davis

34 TFS Special Order 47 dated 20 September 1967 provided by Larry Hoppe, May 2010.

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:

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.

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

01-Oct-67

848

On 1 October, 388 TFW aircraft destroyed two of four missiles visible in a SAM site near Hanoi. Black smoke rose to 500 feet from the site, 20 miles east-northeast of the capital city. The pilots also reported destroying an electronics support van and seeing their ordnance heavily damage the radar support equipment within the site.

"Another 388 TFW strike force cut both approaches and heavily damaged the center support of the Dap Cau railroad and highway bridge (JCS 16), 20 miles northeast of Hanoi. Capts Robert L. Martin and Lawrence G. Hoppe, 34 TFS, were members of the strike force. Approaches were also cut to a nearby bypass railroad bridge, one mile south of the main bridge.

"Near the DMZ, the 388th joined [F-4C] aircraft from the 366 TFW in a strike against an artillery site 42 miles southeast of Dong Hoi. Secondary explosions resulted. Also struck was the Lang Thip railroad siding 118 miles northwest of Hanoi. Five secondary explosions resulted."

Also on 1 October 1967, the "... 388 TFW F-105s struck the Kep airfield (JCS 9.1). Smoke and dust covered the area. Other 388th aircraft struck an army barracks area 24 miles northwest of Dong Hoi destroying seven buildings. Maj. Donald S. Aunapu, 469 TFS and Capt Hal P. Henning, 44 TFS, were on the Kep airfield mission."

1Lt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, was another 388 TFW pilot who struck Kep Airfield. It was his 18th combat mission into North Vietnam.

"Target: Kep airfield 32 miles NNE of Hanoi
"Armament: 4x750 .025 2x750 TD

"Water route in. Not one MiG call. At least 4 SAMs launched at us. Bright orange clouds. First 85s real close. Lead flipped over. Three took a hit. Good bombing by all. Four aircraft total hit. None lost. What a way to spend a lazy Sunday afternoon!"

Lt Henderson received his first of eight Distinguished Flying Crosses for this mission. "... Lieutenant Henderson was a member of the lead flight of F-105s assigned to attack Kep Airfield. Flying through intense antiaircraft fire he delivered his bombs precisely on target, heavily damaging this vital airfield. ..."

Under 7 AF SO G2384 dated 30 December 1967, Capt George H. Teas, also from the 469 TFS, received the DFC (3rd OLC) for extraordinary achievement in attacking Kep airfield. "... Captain Teas successfully attacked a vital airfield in North Vietnam. In spite of intense hostile fire over the target and SA-2 missiles launched at him, Captain Teas accurately bombed the runway, helping to render it unserviceable. ..."

Sawadee Flyer, Friday, October 13, 1967, pg 3 & Earl Henderson, combat diary and award citation.

13-Oct-67

1436

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

A draft news release from the 388 TFW described the mission against Kep. "'Things went pretty good. It was just one of those lucky days.' This was the assessment of a 388 TFW strike against the Kep MiG airfield, North Vietnam, given by Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, 34 TFS. Capt Hoppe was the mission commander for the October 13 attack." It was his 75th counter and he flew for 3.6 hours. "He went on to describe the mission. 'The target was a runway. It was difficult to find it

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

going in because it was all overcast. For a minute, I thought I was going to have to abort the run and take the force out, but just as we got to the target, it was just on the edge of the clouds. The cloud buildup made it difficult to find the target but it made it hard for those 85-mm gunners to find us. They didn't start firing until we rolled in. There was quite a bit of flak coming down the slide. You could see the ringing off on the ground and the flak coming up. It was going off pretty much around us. The bombs looked good. They were hitting on the runway. When we got together again coming off, the flak subsided considerably. I didn't see any secondaries but I did see bombs hitting on the runway. There were a few MiG calls but we were kind of ready for them this time and they didn't bother us at all.'

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

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

"Another flight leader, Maj Floyd E. 'Skeet' Heintzig, 34 TFS, led his flight against gun sites near Kep Airfield. 'It was a very good mission', the major said, 'we flew it exactly as fragged. On the way in, the weather was pretty bad over the coast line of North Vietnam, pretty solid undercast. However, when we got to within one minute of the target, the airfield was wide open. We wound up with just about a perfect roll-in. I got one each 85-mm site with secondaries coming out of it. I didn't get an opportunity to see the bombs hitting on the runway. It looks like all the bombs on the gun emplacements did a real fine job.' Describing the secondary explosions, the major went on to say, 'Coming out of the 85 sites, there were plumes of orange flames trailing grey smoke coming above it. The site had definitely been firing before that by the distinctive black rings on the ground. After the fireballs and smoke coming out of it, I didn't see any more firing from that site. I didn't have any opportunity to look for any MiGs on the field as my target was to the north of the airfield.'

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

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

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

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

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

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

encountered AAA.

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

16-Oct-67

1438

Thirteen days after Maj Bob Barnett from the 469 TFS was shot down on a raid against this target, F-105s from the 388 TFW bombed the Dap Cau railroad bypass bridge (BE 616-02440) on the Northeast Rail Line (RR 2) in RP-6A at 21-12-40N and 107-05-27E. Reconnaissance photos on 17 October revealed the bridge was still serviceable.

The 388 TFW also bombed the nearby Dap Cau Railroad Bridge (JCS 16). Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, 34 TFS from Korat, flew his seventh combat mission into North Vietnam against this target.

Mission 7. F-105D 58-1152. Call Sign: "Hatchet". Take Off: 1410. Mission Length: 3+35. Flight Lineup:

Mission Commander - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying his 77th counter for 3.6 hours.

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

"This was my first mission into Package VIA and what an eye opener. The length of the flight was one thing and the intensity of the AAA fire was the other. We went the sea route which meant we refueled out over the Gulf of Tonkin and entered NVN north of Hanoi heading due west. There were 16 strike aircraft in the gaggle plus 4 MIGCAP F-4s and 4 F-105Fs for Iron Hand (SAM suppression). I saw 2 SAM launches on the way in to the target (Dap Cau Railroad Bridge [JCS 16], 16 miles N.E. of Hanoi) and one on egress. Our flight carried CBU to suppress flak. When we rolled in, I saw many, many orange and grey flashes coming right at me. I was told later that these were 37 & 57 mm fire, but I didn't see how we could get through them unscathed but we did. I dropped when & where Lefty did. We were attacked on the way out by 4 MiGs who fired a missile ineffectively because of our turn." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pp 2 - 3.)

"This particular target was the Dap Cau railroad bridge 16 miles Northeast of Hanoi. We went the water route which meant that we crossed the Northern part of South Vietnam and rendezvous with the tankers out over the Gulf of Tonkin. The tankers took us up to the 19th parallel where we dropped off with a full load and headed inland just North of Haiphong. On the way in I observed my first two SA-2 launches but they were not a threat to my flight. There was a lot of flak in the air and I lost track of the target so when Left Leftwich, the flight leader, rolled into his dive I followed him down the chute and dropped my bombs a couple of counts after I saw his released. There was 57-mm and 37-mm flying by my cockpit in the dive. The red hot ingots reminded me of fireflies in the headlights of a car on a country road at night. It was hard to figure why one of those didn't hit me but it didn't. There was one more SA-2 fired as we exited and a report of some MiGs who fired missiles at us without effect. We didn't lose any aircraft and the photos showed we got some good hits on the bridge. We refueled on the way home and I logged a 3+35 flight and put a red mark on my Aussie hat back in the locker room to signify that I had flown in Pack VIA. We used blue ink marks around the hat band for non VIA missions. This was my 'baptism under fire!' (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 10.)

Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967 & 388 TFW

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1756 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

18-Oct-67

1440

F-105s from the 388 TFW struck the Lang Dang railroad storage yard (BE 616-01586) on the Northeast Rail Line (RR 2) in RP-6A at 21-38-02N and 106-35-11E in the northeast buffer zone. Pre-strike photo coverage obtained on 17 October revealed 38 pieces of rolling stock in the yard. Post-strike coverage acquired on 18 October revealed 12 pieces of rolling stock damaged or destroyed, two repair buildings were damaged, the yard was unserviceable, and all through rail lines were interdicted. The target was struck again on 23 and 24 October 1967.

A draft news release from the 388 TFW described the mission. "F-105 Thunderchiefs of the 388 TFW struck two railroad yards in the buffer zone south of Lang Son, about half way between Lang Son and Kep airfield complex.

"The mission commander, Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, 34 TFS, said, 'The weather was clear, which was a change from the usual. It's usually cloudy and pretty overcast. Target acquisition was very simple -- you can always find a railroad. There's a whole slew of them along that northeast rail line. We rolled in on it and saw some strings of bombs going through the yards. We saw one exceedingly large secondary just off the yard. It was rather large, brilliant white flash, several hundred feet in diameter, I'd say, and a good cloud of smoke coming off of it. It wasn't POL -- there was no black smoke. It was probably munitions storage of some sort. Coming off the target, the reaction of flak wasn't as fast as usual. They started shooting and 37/57 was going off around everybody. They've got a lot of guns up there and they used them all today. Our flak suppression troops got some of the guns. They had 85s up there. There were quite a few sites going off. It was quite a bit slow in reacting, quite surprisingly. I think we got them a little bit by surprise. We used a little different approach this time and it seemed to work. Nobody got hit, which is nice. It seemed to be a rewarding mission. We had secondaries and good bombs. We got all our planes in and all of them out. I think it was a good mission. There was a train with about 40 cars sitting down there. We just walked our bombs through. They had apparently unloaded it already -- there weren't any secondaries. There is a few less rolling stock in North Vietnam today.

"There were a few MiG calls. They didn't press the attack on the strike force. Nobody in the strike force saw any MiGs. The calls were mostly about the MiGs being around us but quite a distance away. Our MiG CAP did a pretty good job. It was a smooth mission." It was Capt Hoppe's 78th counter. He flew for 3.3 hours.

"Also on the mission was Maj Dalton L. 'Lefty' Leftwich, 39, Fort Walton Beach, Fla. He is a member of the 34 TFS." (Draft 388 TFW News Release, undated, provided by Larry Hoppe, May 2010.)

Two pilots from the 469 TFS were on this strike. Lt Col William C. Decker flew F-105D 61-0132 and his gun camera film showed M-117s dropping and smoke on the railroad complex. Lt Col William N. Reed flew F-105D 59-1743 and his camera film also showed M-117s dropping and a small impact on the complex.

Maj Kenneth W. Mays from the 34 TFS also flew on this mission. "On October 18, 1967 I was fortunate to be a flight lead on what was thought to be a tough mission. The target was a railyard and bridge at Lang Dang just south of the Chinese Border. We headed in like we were going to hit Kep and then headed up the North East railway for Lang Dang railyard. All flights dropped good bombs and little to no AAA was seen until we were departing the area. Some MiGs launched from China, but they did not pursue.

"The importance of this mission was that 7th AF had planned our route to the target directly from

Lawrence G. Hoppe F-105 History

the coast to the target, but cooler heads prevailed and we did our own planning and successfully completed the mission. Heavy damage was done to the railyard and the approach section to the bridge was dropped. I never understood why the Pentagon and 7th Air Force thought they were superior planners when we executed the missions, were familiar with the area, and knew for the most part where the threats were. On missions that we did the planning for at Korat, a higher level of success was achieved and fewer aircraft were lost." (Col Ken Mays, USAF (Ret), unpublished memoir, "Tour At Korat -- July 67 to Feb 68", dated 15 Dec 2003.)

Four other pilots from the 34 TFS in "Crossbow" flight also attacked this rail yard. It was Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong's eighth combat mission into North Vietnam.

Mission 8. F-105D 61-0208. Call Sign: "Crossbow". Take Off: 1615. Mission Length: 4+00.

Flight Lineup:

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

"This was a water route mission against the Lon Dong Railroad Siding. It is on the N.E. railroad about 20 miles from Red China. Our flight was the rear flight and I was the rear man. The weather was perfectly clear and we picked the target up about 15 miles out. There was moderate 37- & 57-mm flak thrown up at us as the lead flight went in. The flak suppression flight laid their CBU's in pretty close and the flak diminished considerably. I released at 10,000' with a good sight picture. All of the bombs ahead of me were in the target area. No MiGs or flak on the way out." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 3.)

Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967 & 388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1756 & Nat'l Archives camera record NWDNM(m)-342-USAFA-42649B & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

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. Heizing 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.

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

"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 Form 5 & Earl Henderson, combat diary.

23-Oct-67

3436

Air Force planes bombed three targets along the Northeast Rail Line (RR 2) in RP-6A.

Struck earlier on 18 October, the Lang Dang railroad storage yard (BE 616-01586) at 21-38-02N and 106-35-11E in the northeast buffer zone was struck again on 23 and 24 October.

Air Force planes also struck the Lang Nac railroad spur (BE 616-03745) at 21-40-40N and 106-36-42E. Pilots estimated the northern and central parts of the spur were cut.

The third target was the Thanh Moi railroad yard (BE 616-01398) at 21-35-57N and 106-32-17E. The 388 TFW last struck this target on 6 October 1967. "Olympia" flight from the 34 TFS attacked the yard. The flight took off at 05:55. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying F-105D 60-0512 as mission commander on his 80th mission.
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying his 8th combat mission in 61-0162.
- #3 - Maj Dalton L. Leftwich flying 62-4359
- #4 - Maj James L. Taylor flying 59-1743.
- Spare - Maj William M. Blakeslee in 62-4248

It was Capt Shuler's first mission to RP-6 and it did not go well for him. "When I arrived at the aircraft, the crew chief advised that cartridge start was inoperative so engine start would be by air cart. I had never done an air cart start in the Thud. I signaled for air and at about 10% RPM brought the throttle forward instantly realizing that I should have hit the ignition button first (the fire from the cartridge provides ignition of the fuel). The result was a loud boom, illumination of the flight line around spot 16, and burning fuel dripping from the tail of aircraft 61-0162. I asked the crew chief if I should shut it down to which he responded 'No sir, I think you are suppose to keep it running.' About that time the Line Chief came running towards the aircraft giving the speedbrake signal and gesturing for me to move the throttle back and forth. When the fire was out I was cleared to go.

"... During the join-up after takeoff, I misjudged my rate of closure on lead ... and had to slide under and beyond him then sheepishly back in to position delaying three & four's join-up. Not a good start to my first trip to Route Pack 6.

"After dropping off the tanker and greening up, I decided to check the 'cage' button in case we jumped any MiGs during target area egress. Stupidly I depressed the 'pickle' button instead and dropped my bombs. ... Reluctantly, I keyed the mic button and said something to the effect, 'Olympia Lead, Olympia 2, I just had an ordinance release'. After checking to see that my bombs hadn't blown any Navy ships out of the water, Larry asked me to show him my belly and when I did he said, 'Yep, you're clean -- tag along'. Feeling totally useless, we pressed on to the target. I thought about hosing off a few seconds of 20 mm going down the chute but figured with the way the mission was going for me, I'd end up shooting Larry down, so I refrained from a 60° strafing pass.

"While post-strike refueling over the Gulf, Larry noticed that I still had one bomb on the MER. After

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

leaving the tanker he asked me to drop the bomb safe but several attempts failed to release it. So the next option was to jettison the ... rack. Lefty Leftwich, flying as Olympia #3, suggested that I zoom up to reduce airspeed before jettisoning the rack. After checking below again, I zoomed and hit the Jettison External Stores button and the ... rack separated from the aircraft."

He had one more screw-up to endure. "After landing, I followed Larry to our parking spots, he was in Spot 15 and I was in Spot 16. ... Still fuming about my horrible performance and not focused on the simple task at hand, parking the aircraft, I failed to realize that we were coming in to the parking area from the east and that the spot numbers were descending. ... Before I could say 'not again', I passed Spot 16 and had to make a misery lap around the parking area. Red faced again, I shut down the engine without incident -- the only thing I did right the entire mission."

He logged 3.7 hours for the flight.

BDA photos from 24 October revealed the yard was unserviceable and nine rail cars were damaged or destroyed. (Report to CINCPAC)

Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967 & Jake Shuler mission spreadsheet and "8th Mission Narrative" via e-mails 27 May and 28 July 2010 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

25-Oct-67

3062

In the morning, for the second day in a row, the 355 TFW and 388 TFW attacked Phuc Yen airfield (JCS 6), in RP-6A, North Vietnam. Takhli pilots from the 357 TFS were again in this airfield strike. The four flights of F-105Ds attacked in one-minute intervals, "Shark" at 0100Z, "Marlin" at 0101Z, "Scotch" at 0101Z, and "Wolf" at 0102Z, and dropped a total of 54 M-117s, six M-118s, twelve CBU-24s, and eight CBU-29s.

"Shark" flight dropped CBUs on flak sites south of the runway. While over the target, one pilot in the flight inadvertently fired an AIM-9 while he was dropping his CBUs. "Shark 2", Capt Raymond A. Horinek from the 357 TFS, was hit by 57-mm or 85-mm AAA while in his dive bomb run over the target. He ejected and was captured on the ground.

"Marlin" flight dropped all six of their M-118s and six M-117s on the northeast revetments in Area L. KA-71 strike camera film showed two of the M-118s cratering the parking apron immediately south of Area L.

Strike camera film also verified "Scotch" flight's interdiction of the runway in at least two places. Two impacts were noted at the junction of the west crossover link, one at the junction of the center crossover link, and a string of five good interdictions running immediately west of the center crossover.

"Wolf" flight dropped 18 M-117s on the southwest revetments, Area E. The flight couldn't see their bomb impacts due to evasive maneuvers. "Wolf Lead" was unable to release his bombs over the target and, while on egress at 9,000 feet at 0106Z, jettisoned his six M-117s with their MER in an uninhabited area at 21-42N and 105-25E. The flight received moderate, accurate 37/57-mm, but very little 85-mm AAA, from roll-in through egress, bursting at aircraft altitudes between 6,000 and 15,000 feet. While on roll-in at 15,000 feet, "Wolf" flight saw two SAMs heading in a westerly direction in a steep climb through the strike force. The first SAM detonated over the west end of the target area at approximately 3,000 feet resulting in a large orange fireball. The second SAM passed through the strike force and detonated at 15,000 feet. Both SAMs, which appeared to be unguided, came from an unknown location and detonated within a half mile of the force. On egress, "Wolf" flight also received moderately accurate 37-mm AAA two nautical miles east of the target.

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

Three F-105 flights from the 388 TFW - "Hatchet", "Olympia", and "Vegas" - struck the airfield. The draft of an expanded strike report, written by 388th Public Affairs, described the mission. "'Today's mission had a little bit of everything ... MiGs, SAMs, and flak,' commented Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, 28, from Roselle, Ill. Capt Hoppe went on to say, 'Inbound to the target, the MiGs had at the back flights and we had to break. About six to eight total came in on the deck and popped up behind us. They tried to hit at us but didn't get anybody, but then we didn't get any MiGs either. Getting in closer to the target, we saw a couple of SAMs come boiling off the ground. We could see the SAMs ignite and the cloud of smoke they create. They just start rising off the ground and arc over and come at us. Just prior to roll-in we got quite a few bursts of 85. You could see them on the ground right next to the runway. One site was really ringing off and throwing up a bunch of flak. The flak was heavy and very accurate. We could also see 37/57 going off beneath us. We had to dive through that. We dropped our ordnance on the runway. Coming around I had a chance to look back and saw four strings of bombs cutting the runway. It looked real pretty. We had good bombing.'

"Capt Hoppe also reported flak and SAMs being fired on the way out from the target, but no MiGs were encountered by his flight.

"Summing up the mission, the captain said, 'All totaled, it was a very good mission; you might say a satisfying mission. You got to do what you've wanted to do for a long time. We felt pretty good.'

"Describing the physical appearance of the airfield, Capt Hoppe said, 'The runway had been hit yesterday and had been cratered, but it looked like during the night, they had filled it in. They had just filled them with dirt. You couldn't determine any pock marks -- it looked like it had been filled in. But they have some more holes they have to fill in now.'" This was Capt Hoppe's 82nd counter. He flew for 3.8 hours.

"A flight leader on the mission, Maj Harold J. Steinke, 35, Midwest City, Okla., said, "I observed one string of bombs impacting about two thirds down the runway right on the target. The first string of bombs that went off were right in the middle of the runway and no doubt cratered it pretty well. This was a real good mission. We've been waiting a long time to hit Phuc Yen.'

"Major Almer L. Barner, Jr., 37, Ruleville, Miss., was also a flight leader on the second Phuc Yen raid. He said, 'We were the second flight to hit the airfield. We broke and rolled out and jettisoned our bombs but the MiGs had gone. We accomplished the task of getting the MiGs off the strike force. Talking to the other fellows in the flight, they think they did a pretty good job on the runway.'

"Others on the strike were: Capt Russell E. Temperley [469 TFS], 32, Newton Center, Mass; Major James D. Murray, Jr. [469 TFS], 34, Bayonne, N.J.; Maj David D. Igleman [34 TFS], 35, Richmond, Ind; Capt Lawrence R. Klinestiver, 38, Hobbs, N.M. and Silverton B.C., Canada; 1Lt David B. Waldrop, 25, Nashville, Tenn; and Maj Spence H. Armstrong, 33, Columbia, Tenn." (Draft Expanded Strike Report - 388 TFW - 25 Oct 67 provided by Larry Hoppe, May 2010 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5. NOTE: His Form 5 shows two missions flown on 24 Oct 67 and none on the 25th so I assume the second entry is a typo and should be 25 Oct 67.)

The flight lineup of "Vegas" flight , all from the 34 TFS, was:
#1 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr.
#2 - Maj Larry R. Klinestiver
#3 - 1Lt David B. Waldrop III
#4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4221

This was Maj Armstrong's 12th mission over North Vietnam. Take off: 0600. Mission length:

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

2+45. "This was the same target, Phuc Yen Airfield, as I had hit yesterday. Today things were pretty uneventful until we spotted some MiGs as we were coming down 'Thud' Ridge. They were low and coming in at our 5 o'clock position. Since our flight was primary for MiG defense of the strike force of 20 aircraft, we punched off our bombs and tanks, went into afterburner and broke into the MiGs. They fired something but I never saw them again. They must have been trying to avoid the falling tanks and bombs and ducked down to the left. At almost 90-degrees of hard turn, a SAM detonated about 3,000' off my right wing and slightly high. We got down on the ridge and headed NW out of there. On the way out we saw one lone MiG-17 (silver, the other two were camouflaged) high and going away. No chance to get him. Sure was nice chasing MiGs rather than braving the flak." (Maj Spence M. Armstrong, combat mission log for period 5 Oct 67 - 14 Apr 68, pp 4 - 5.)

" ... Iron Hand Shrikes hit the radar and the site went off the air. Photo BDA showed the runway to be heavily cratered from this raid. Many support buildings and the Air Defense Center appeared to be badly damaged." (355 TFW Report on Outstanding Achievements, 1 Mar 67 - 29 Feb 68.)

The attacks from yesterday and today, " ... cratered Phuc Yen's runway and damaged its tower, thanks to a direct hit on the latter by a Navy Walleye guided bomb. Most of the eighteen MiGs then based at Phuc Yen were caught on the ground; reconnaissance photography indicated that perhaps a dozen of them suffered severe damage." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 90)

F-4s from the 8 TFW flew air cover for the F-105s. They had several engagements with North Vietnamese MiGs but no planes from either side were damaged. (Video, "F-105 Missions Over North Vietnam", report ending 25 November 1967, Film Report FR-856, Produced by the Aerospace Audio Visual Service.)

The JCS history reported the results of yesterday's and today's strikes, as well as a third strike against Phuc Yen on 26 October, as "three MiGs were destroyed, three were damaged, and the runway was made unserviceable."

The PACAF briefing to CINCPAC on 7 November 1967 listed different results and also reported on North Vietnamese progress in restoring the runway. Post-strike photos showed that 5 MiG-21s and 5 MiG-17s parked in Area H were either damaged or destroyed, and that two MiG-17s in Area G were destroyed. Photos on 26 October showed at least 39 craters on the main runway and extensive damage to the adjacent revetted area. Photos from 28 October revealed repair activity on the runway but the runway remained unserviceable. Photography dated 30 October revealed that the runway had been repaired and was serviceable once again.

F-105s from the 355 TFW also struck the main runway at Hoa Lac airfield, dropping 750- and 3,000-pound bombs on the northwest and southeast ends of the center of the runway. Pilots reported large secondary explosions. (Video, "F-105 Missions Over North Vietnam", report ending 25 November 1967, Film Report FR-856, Produced by the Aerospace Audio Visual Service.)

355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI 5481 OPREP-4/1?? in USAF microfilm NO463, frame 1390 & History of the JCS, Vol III, pg 44-10 & Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967.

10-Nov-67

4837

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong from the 34 TFS flew his 18th combat mission over North Vietnam.

His flight took off at 0615 and the mission lasted 3 hours 50 minutes. The line up of "Laredo" flight from Korat was:

#1 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe (Mission Commander) on his 87th combat mission

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

- #2 - Maj Larry R. Klinestiver
- #3 - Maj William J. King
- #4 - Maj Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0124

"The target was a railroad siding up on the northeast railroad, 20 miles down from China. The weather was forecast to be problematic and it was. We crossed a solid undercast on the eastern edge of Thailand and seldom saw the ground again until we came back over the same area. We dropped off the tankers, proceeded up to the 'island' and the 'wart' and inbound. The 'Iron Hand' flight ahead of us said that there was no way to see the target. We made a left turn and got out of there when about 3 minutes out from the target. We came back and dropped our bombs just north of the DMZ on a spot marked by an O-2 FAC. The target was in the sandy area of the beach. We didn't hit it too well because of working under an overcast of 7,000' and a poor dive angle."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 7.

15-Nov-67

4784

In one of the first missions using the recently installed Commando Club Skyspot radar in northern Laos, the radar station guided F-105s from Korat on a strike of Hoa Lac airfield. The airfield's target designations were BE 616-08593 and ART 5026 at coordinates 21-02-00N and 105-30-00E in RP-6A.

The Wild Weasel crew of Capt Robert E. Dorrrough, Jr. and EWO Maj Clarence S. "Bud" Summers from the 44 TFS at Korat flew on this mission, their 73rd over North Vietnam.

"Wed - Led a flight to Pack 6 in the afternoon. The target weather was bad at Hoa Lac Air Field so the strike flights dropped on radar. We kept three SAM sites busy, but could not roll in on them because of the weather. Mission #73."

The 34 TFS from Korat flew one of the strike flights on this mission, The flight's call sign was "Fresno"; takeoff time was 1430. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj William J. King
- #2 - Capt Harry Guy Paddon III
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0458
- #4 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe on his 89th counter.

This was Maj Armstrong's 19th combat mission into North Vietnam. "The target was Hoa Lac Airfield using a radar Sky Spot for drop. The weather was completely undercast from dropping off the tankers, northern Thailand until right at the target. We released from 17,000' on command, straight and level. Once we released and looked down we could see the field below in the clear. Had we seen it earlier we could have effectively dive bombed it. As it was, all of our bombs hit 2 - 4 miles past the target. There was light 37/57 flak low as we pulled away. No SAMs or MiGs. Also no post-strike refueling. This was first time Sky Spot was used in the Hanoi delta and it was an unsuccessful venture." Maj Armstrong logged 2+20 on this mission.

Maj Armstrong described this mission in more detail in his memoirs. "On the 15th of November we flew a different kind of mission. Once again, somebody back in Washington was anguishing over the fact that the Navy was able to get Pack VI mission with its A-6's while the Air Force wasn't making its presence felt up there. So the solution was to use a Combat Sky Spot radar site on a mountain in Northern Thailand [Note: It was Lima Site 85 in northern Laos] which would hopefully have enough range to give level bombing directions into the Hanoi area. The difference between this and previous and future Sky Spot missions was that we were going in mission strength with Weasels, a CBU flight and F-4C's for MiG protection.

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

"The target was the Hoa Lac Airfield Southwest of Hanoi. It was a short runway and we had not bothered hitting it before during my tenure. I was flying #3 in the third flight carrying 750# bombs. We were briefed that the radar site would guide the lead flight which was in fairly tight formation. They would release their bombs on the countdown. The following flights had about two mile spacing and were to also hit the bomb release button on the countdown. The second flight set the release timer on 12 seconds and we set ours at 24 seconds. On cue, everybody hit the bomb release button. We watched the bombs drop from the lead flight and their turning away. Then the bombs came off the second flight as advertised and they broke away from the target area. Then my own came off and I looked down and there was the airfield just sticking out of the overcast and the bombs from the other flights were hitting long. It was clear enough that we could have dive bombed it had we known it was that open. The good news was that there was no SA-2s, flak, or MiGs so everyone returned safely."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., also from the 34 TFS, flew his 12th mission into North Vietnam as "Locust 02" against Hoa Lac airfield. "Runway hit/light 37/57mm." (Rufus Dye Mission History log.)

Bob Dorrrough's Combat diary & Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pp 7 - 8 & Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished memoir in chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 14 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

19-Nov-67

1445

F-105s from the 388 TFW struck rolling stock on the Yen Vien railroad classification yard (JCS 19) in North Vietnam. The yard was another RT-57 add-on target approved on 8 November. At the time of the strike, the yard held 52 pieces of rolling stock.

The 388 TFW also struck the Thuy Phoung barge construction yard north of Hanoi. Lt Col Robert W. Smith from the 34 TFS was the strike force lead. He was awarded the Air Force Cross for "extraordinary heroism" in leading this mission. "... Colonel Smith led a strike force of twenty F-105 and four F-4 aircraft to the vicinity of Hanoi for the initial strike on an important military target. Colonel Smith gallantly led his force through a hostile aircraft attack, an awesome and extended attack by missiles which downed two aircraft, and into the heavy antiaircraft defenses to strike crippling blows to the assigned target and to a large active surface-to-air missile site. Colonel Smith never wavered from his goal, and with complete disregard for his life, displayed great courage and determined leadership to accomplish an extremely hazardous and difficult mission ...".

Col Smith received the award on 17 August 1968 under CB-161, DAF.

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe from the 34 TFS received the Distinguished Flying Cross (6th OLC) for heroism on his mission today, his 91st over North Vietnam. He flew for 3.3 hours. "... Capt Hoppe was the flight leader of the flak suppression flight which attacked a vital military target in the vicinity of Hanoi. Braving hostile aircraft, and intense barrage of surface to air missiles, and concentrated, accurate antiaircraft fire, Captain Hoppe headed his flight in the successful neutralization of a surface to air missile site and several antiaircraft gun sites. ..." (Award citation provided by Larry Hoppe, May 2010, and his AF Form 5.)

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., also from the 34 TFS, flew his 14th mission as "Dallas 04" against the Thuy Phuong barge yard. "Released safe due UI. Acft/57/85 mm." (Rufus Dye Mission History log.)

1Lt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, supported the attack on the barge yard. It was his 41st combat mission into North Vietnam.

"Target: Barge Yard near Hanoi.
"Armament: 6x500# 1xAGM-45.

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

"Wild Weasel flight. Weather overcast up to target. Many, many SAMs -- 20 or more. We pulled up and launched five Shrikes. Then dodged a few SAMs. Rolled in on SAM site that had just fired. Clobbered it. Egressed at 1,000 feet and Mach 1.2. We lost two airplanes to direct hits by SAMs. They must be reading through the pods!"

Lt Henderson received the Distinguished Flying Cross (2nd OLC) for this mission. "...Lieutenant Henderson was a member of a flight of four aircraft assigned to suppress the surface-to-air missile sites in support of a strike against a vital target in the most heavily defended area of North Vietnam. While evading numerous missiles, which were tracking his aircraft, he located and began a diving attack on a missile site that had just fired. Bombing from a dangerously low altitude, he delivered his ordnance directly on the center of the site, almost totally destroying the complex. ..." (Earl Henderson, combat diary and award citation.)

Post-strike film from 20 November showed 4 buildings in the area were damaged or destroyed.

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1757 & Extract from "For Extraordinary Heroism - The Air Force Cross" by Maj Jeffery B. Floyd, provided by Ron Thurlow & Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 16 - 30 November 1967..

07-Dec-67

4848

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

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong in F-105D 58-1152
- #2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe on his 95th counter. He logged 2.8 hours.

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

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

08-Dec-67

4850

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

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270.
- #2 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #3 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying his 96th mission. He logged 2.2 hours
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

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

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

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

11-Dec-67

4852

At 14:25, four 388 TFW pilots of "Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a target in Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 5 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Capt Sam P. Morgan
- #2 - Capt Carl William Lasiter (POW 4 Feb 68)
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 58-1152
- #4 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying his 98th mission. He logged 2.1 hours.

It was Maj Armstrong's 33rd combat mission. "This was another Laos mission. We went to an F-100 FAC who was operating in an area just south of Mu Gia Pass. The area to the east of this particular location was completely covered with clouds. Our target was a rock and gravel ford across a river. Carl hit right in the center and the other three of us hit just on the west bank. There was quite a tailwind at release altitude. We weather reced all of the way over to the coast afterwards."

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr., also from the 34 TFS, was in another flight from Korat that attacked targets in southern Laos. It was his 46th combat mission and he struck guns and POL supplies.

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew his 19th mission as "Gator 04" against a target in southern Laos. "Ban Senkua ford. 100%/heavy damage/light 37 mm. " He also flew armed recce in RP-1. "No significant sightings." (Rufus Dye Mission History log.)

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pp 13 - 14 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 11 Dec 67.

13-Dec-67

4853

At 0640, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Crossbow" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a target in southern Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 20 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270
- #2 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying his 100th counter. He logged 2.3 hours.
- #3 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO
- #4 - Maj Donald W. Revers

It was Maj Armstrong's 35th combat mission. "Bad weather again in Pack VI. Our flight was sent over to 'Steel Tiger', southern Laos, for FAC control. There were several flights waiting to get on the target so we had to wait. Our target was a storage area along the river south of Mu Gia Pass. We bombed it pretty accurately and had one small secondary explosion to develop from the target. 'Cricket' wouldn't clear us into Pack I for a reconnaissance but fortunately we had swung into North Vietnam while orbiting the target. We logged it as a 'counter' but will have to wait and see if it holds up."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 14.

16-Dec-67

1314

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe from the 34 TFS was the ninth F-105 pilot this week to complete 100 combat missions with the 388 TFW at Korat RTAFB, Thailand. He flew his 100th mission on 13 December and another counter for 101 missions on 15 December 1967.

During his two TDY combat tours, the first one for 30 days with the 354 TFS at Takhli in August and September 1966, and his second of five and half months with the 34th, Capt Hoppe flew 297.5 combat hours. He returned to Kadena AB, Okinawa, and the 12 TFS.

Sawadee Flyer, Friday Dec 29, 1967 in USAF microfilm NO583, frame 1974 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

31-Dec-67

5162

Five pilots assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat completed flying 100 missions during December 1967. They were:

Maj George G. Clausen - Squadron Commander. Flew his 100th on 27 December 1967.
Maj Dalton L. Leftwich
1Lt David B. Waldrop III
Maj Floyd E. Heintz
Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe

Maj Clausen was reassigned to the F-111A program at Nellis AFB, NV.

34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & George Clausen, phone interview, 5 April 2010.

05-Jan-68

4695

During the week 5 through 11 January 1968, "the air activity over North Vietnam brought significant results with strikes being directed against the enemy's supply routes and their defensive air capability." (pg 8)

Significant targets attacked in North Vietnam during the week were: Kep Airfield (JCS 9.1), Lang Son Railroad bridge bypass, the Bac Giang Railroad Yard, "and rolling stock along the Northeast Railway three miles south of Lang Son". (pg 8)

In Route Package 6, "of the 586 day strike sorties fragged, 190 were flown. In the night strike activity, 12 sorties were scheduled and eight were flown." (pg 8) "There were 176 sorties in RP VI with 146 reporting ground fire reactions." (pg 33)

In RP 5, "seventy-three sorties were flown during the daylight hours. In night activity, nine sorties were fragged and eight were flown." (pg 10) "There were 49 combat strike sorties flown in RP V and 21 reported ground fire reactions." (pg 33)

In RP-1, "thirty-six targets were struck under COMBAT SKYSPOT conditions." (pg 12)

"MiGs were sighted/ engaged on 16 occasions. [On 5 January,] [t]hey downed an F-105." (pg 2) The downed plane was F-105F 63-8356 flown as "Barracuda 01" by Wild Weasel crew Maj James C. Hartney and EWO Capt Samuel Fantle III from the 357 TFS at Takhli.

There were 46 reported SAM firings, one of which downed MiG CAP F-4D 66-8704 on 10 January. The crew was pilot Capt Keith Norman Hall who became a POW and WSO 1Lt Earl Person Hopper who was KIA. They were from the 13 TFS, 432 TRW at Udorn. Their F-4D was the squadron's first loss since the unit moved from Korat where they had flown F-105s.

"Major changes in the SAM envelope occurred in the Than Hoa area with the addition of VN-156 which appeared occupied on photography; and southwest of Hanoi with the deletion of VN-259 due to lack of activity. Active SAM high-threat areas decreased from 33 to 30. Prepared positions increased from 229 to 233 with the addition of four new sites and then decreased back to 229 with the deletion of four positions which have returned to cultivation."

Thirty five of the SAM firings this week were at USAF aircraft and 11 at Navy aircraft.

"The growing sophistication of the North Vietnamese air defense system will place increasing pressure on aircrews operating over North Vietnam. Aircrew skills and currently available

Lawrence G. Hoppe

F-105 History

equipment must respond to ever-increasing demands placed upon them to offset this expanding capability." (pg 7).

7th Air Force Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (WAIS), 13 Jan 68, AFHRA IRIS # 1015490, pp 2, 7, 8, 12, 33 & CNA Loss/Damage Database, USAF losses 795 (Hartney/Fantle) & 801 (Hall/Hopper), microfiche frames K-24 and L-24.

31-Jan-68

2915

(Approximate date) The 12 TFS, 18 TFW, published a crew roster of 64 names that included "Whisky" Flight, the Wild Weasel crews from Nellis that deployed on TDY to Osan due to the USS Pueblo crisis. Two of the crews were Maj Harrison W. Matthews and EWO Maj David Brog, and Maj John J. Revak and Maj Stanley E. Goldstein, whose Wild Weasel training at Nellis had been curtailed due to the deployment to Osan.

Other pilots on the roster included:

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe was a pilot in Lima Flight.
1Lt James Benton West was a pilot in Kilo Flight.
Col William L. Janssen was an attached 12 TFS pilot.
Capt Jack A. Phillips - 12 TFS. Nympho Flight pilot.
Maj Anatole "Tony" Semenov, Jr. 12 TFS. Juliet Flight Flt Cmdr

Capt Robert D. Pielin was listed as Asst Flt Commander of "Metro" Flight. Captains Douglas G. Lauck and Stanley S. Ryneer were listed as pilots in "Nympho" Flight. Capt Clifford H. "Ted" Rees, Jr. was an Assistant Flight Commander in Nympho Flight. Lauck and Pielin were F-105D instructor pilots with the 562 TFS at McConnell while Ryneer was an instructor pilot with the 561 TFS. Rees was a 100-mission pilot assigned to the 23 TFW. All four had been deployed from McConnell on TDY to Osan.

12 TFS Roster from John J. Revak.

15-Jan-69

2610

(Approximate date) "Twenty-eight Thunderchief Pilots Cited -- For completing 100 missions or combat tours in the F-105 fighter-bomber, twenty-eight pilots received special recognition certificates this month at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, from the Republic Aviation Division.

"The recipients were: Col Monroe S. Sams; Lt Col Dwight E. Mason; Maj Edward Y. Cleveland, Eddie V. Deck, Edgar W. Michie, Jr., Gerald C. Gustafson, Frank D. Schultz, Jr., Charles E. Bishop and Roger P. Scheer; Capts Thomas H. Edge, Lawrence G. Hoppe, Kenneth W. Mathews, Frank E. Peck, Rodney A. Skoglund, William A. Thomas, Jr., Forrest S. Winebarger, J. Leon Garner, Edwin L. Harvey, Dennis Jarvi, Bruce L. Melton, William D. Scott, Anthony C. Shine, Gordon L. Clouser, Robert W. Ferrel, Joseph W. Ralston, James Benton West, Harry E. Murk, and Thomas Coady."

Several of these pilots had been assigned to the 34 TFS and the 469 TFS when they flew their 100th mission.

Thunderchief Worldwide Report, Vol. IV, No. 5, February 1969.

01-Apr-69

6634

"At the beginning of April, the 12 TFS, [18 TFW,] was rated C-4 with only 17 crews counted for C status."

"In early April, the squadron was assigned seventeen F-105D and seven F-105F Wild Weasel aircraft." The 12 TFS was the only squadron at Kadena still flying F-105s.

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"In April, The Wild Weasel alert requirement at the FOL was manned by two TDY crews from SEA. ..." The squadron's Forward Operating Location was Kwang-ju AB, Korea. The alert commitment was under "Combat Fox", which resulted from the capture by the North Koreans of the USS Pueblo 15 months earlier, on 23 January 1968.

The roster of officers assigned to the 12 TFS at Kadena on 1 April 1969 included:

Lt Col Dwight E. Mason - Commander
Maj Charles E. Bishop - Operations Officer
Maj Howard K. White - Asst Ops Officer
Maj Eddie V. Deck - Asst Ops Officer
Maj Rodney A. Skoglund - Scheduling Officer
Capt Joseph W. Ralston - Stan/Eval
Capt John W. McCarey - Maintenance Officer
1Lt Joseph T. Rinella - Munitions Maintenance
2Lt Charles O. Hanson - Flight Line Maintenance
2Lt David C. Dixon - Flight Line Maintenance
2Lt Deane C. Drury - Intelligence Officer

Attached Wing Staff Officers

Col Monroe S. Sams - 18 TFW Wing Commander
Col Kenneth B. Glover - 18 TFW DCO
Capt William R. Jolly
Maj Leon D. Nedbalek - Flying Safety (1 Apr - 12 Jun 69)
Maj Roger P. Scheer - Chief, Stan/Eval (1 Apr - 9 Jun 1969)
Capt Edwin L. Harvey
Maj Edgar W. Michie, Jr. - Emerg Actions Off & Alert Pad Cmdr (1 Apr - 30 Jun 69)
Capt Harry E. Murk
Maj Benjamin Dailey
Capt William J. Binkley - Flight Surgeon

India Flight

Capt John P. Schoeppner
Capt Frank E. Peck
Capt James B. West
Capt Gordon L. Clouser

Juliet Flight

Capt Thomas J. Coady
Capt Carl D. Eliason
Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.
Capt Forrest S. Winebarger
Capt Henry L. Sherard
Capt William A. Stout, Jr.

Lima Flight

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe
Capt Thomas H. Edge
Capt Bernard F. Ellrodt
Capt Jeffrey G. Cliver
Capt Joe T. Short

Kilo Flight (Wild Weasels)

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Maj Donald R. Yates - Pilot (WW # 106)
Capt Tracy P. Rumsey - EWO (WW # 317)
Capt Harold W. Stoll - EWO (WW # 137)
Capt George C. Connolly - Pilot (WW # 450)
Capt Kemper J. Gleason - EWO (WW # 421)
Capt Jeffrey K. Pepperell - EWO (WW # 428)

History of the 18 TFW 1 Apr - 30 June 1969, AFHRA Call # K-WG-18-HI, IRIS # 448509, Appendix III Exhibit 2, pp 4, 9 and 23.