

# Charles E. Irwin

## F-105 History

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03-Nov-66

6557

In the 4520 CCTW at Nellis AFB, NV, F-105 Class 68-B graduated 13 pilots from USAF Operational Training Course number 111506E. The pilots were TDY en route to their SEA assignments. The class had started with 14 students on 21 June 1966 and had been assigned to the 4523 CCTS. The student pilots, their home bases and commands, and their SEA assignments (where known) were:

Lt Col Gordon A. "Swede" Larson - Homestead AFB FL (SAC). Assigned to the 469 TFS.  
Maj Alan H. Allison - Hamilton AFB CA (ADC)  
Maj Clarence H. "Klu" Hoggard - Vandenberg AFB CA (SAC). Assigned to the 421 TFS.  
Maj Jack W. Hunt - Bunker Hill AFB, Peru IN (SAC). Assigned to the 354 TFS at Takhli.  
Maj Charles E. Irwin - Truax Field, WI (ADC). Assigned to the 34 TFS.  
Maj Rial D. Lowell - Edwards AFB, CA (AFSC). Assigned to the 469 TFS.  
Maj Robert G. Miner - Vance AFB OK (ATC). Assigned to the 34 TFS.  
Maj John B. Owen, Jr. - Lackland AFB, TX (ATC). Dropped from the class.  
Maj Donald L. Tarver - Randolph AFB, TX (ATC). Assigned to the 421 TFS.  
Maj William S. Van Gilder - Wright-Patterson AFB, OH (AFSC). Assigned to the 469 TFS.  
Capt Franklin A. Caras - Oklahoma City AFS, OK (ADC). Assigned to the 421 TFS.  
Capt James P. Gauley - Carswell AFB, TX (SAC). Assigned to the 34 TFS.  
Capt Raymond F. Jauregui - Fairchild AFB, WA (SAC). Assigned to the 34 TFS.  
Capt John L. Smith - Sembach AB, Germany (USAFE). Assigned to the 421 TFS.

Lt Col Gordon A. "Swede" Larson was born 15 Nov 1927, and entered aviation cadet training at Waco TX on 29 Sept 1948. In May 1949 he went to Nellis for advanced training in P-51 Mustangs and got his pilot wings in Sept 1948. He flew P-47s and F-84s in Germany and then, in Nov 1952, was assigned to Del Rio TX as a gunnery instructor. Following assignments at Luke AFB and Osan AB, he flew B-47s from Lockbourne AFB OH in 1958, then, in 1960, B-52Hs at Homestead AFB, FL. After his F-105 training, he was assigned to the 469 TFS at Korat. (Autobiography of Gordon Albert Larson at <http://www.soft-vision.com/hanoi/larson/index2.php>)

Maj Charles E. Irwin graduated from Oklahoma State University under AFIT with an engineering degree in 1965 and "... barely got settled at Truax when selected for F-105s. ... [After F-105 training] I went through survival schools in Washington State and Clark AB, then reported to the 34 TFS in January 1967." (Chuck Irwin, e-mail 6 Apr 10.)

Maj John B. Owen was dropped from the class on 8 Sept 66. He was "... placed in ' Holdover' status due to medical causes." (SO MD-33) On 10 Sept 66, under SO MD-41, he was dropped from the class and "... reassigned to Sewart AFB Tenn for humanitarian reasons."

*Special Orders MD-22 ( provided by Chuck Irwin, 5 May 10 ) and MD-33, Hq 4520 Combat Support Group, dated 21 June 1966 and 9 Sep 66 & History of USAF TFWC, 1 Sep - 31 Dec 66, AFHRA Call # K417.0735 Vol III.*

10-Mar-67

880

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

"The Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Combine, located approximately three miles southeast of Thai Nguyen, was the first large plant of its kind built in NVN. According to official estimates by the NVN

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government, the complex would satisfy 20 percent of the country's iron and steel requirements when it was in full production. Important products produced at this plant in early 1967 included steel barges, POL tanks, and bridge trusses." (Project CHECO, Rolling Thunder, 17 November 1967, pg 7.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Chevrolet"

- #1 - Lt Col Joseph C. Austin, Mission Commander
- #2 - Capt Jack A. Phillips flying his 16th combat mission. Awarded the DFC.
- #3 - Maj Edward C. Jones flying his 95th combat mission. He was awarded the DFC\*.
- #4 - Maj Harry Pawlik, awarded DFC 1st OLC\*.

"Possum"

- #1 - Maj Homer T. Terry, awarded Silver Star
- #2 - Maj Dewey Lee Smith
- #3 - Maj William C. Eagle
- #4 - Capt Jackie R. Youngblood.

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"Random"

#1 - Maj Robert W. Johnson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Later, Maj Terry described what happened to him during this mission. "We came upon some pretty fierce defenders, but again we got all 16 aircraft on and off the target without anyone being hit, although I got the scare of my life when I thought I was hit. Fuel from our droppable fuel tanks was fed into the main fuel supply by compressed air from the engine compressor. When the droppable tanks are empty, air gets into the main fuel system and causes a hammering effect just like when air gets into your water pipes at home. To avoid air getting into your main fuel supply, we had a

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'saber drain' relief near the rear of the aircraft and some fuel is ejected with the air. Fuel released from the drain pipe causes a visible vapor that can be seen by ground defenses, ergo, we had a checklist item to turn off the external fuel flow before entering the target area. On this day, I forgot to follow the check list! As I was pulling off the target, a greater than normal hammering noise started and simultaneously, #2 called and said 'lead you are hit and on fire'. I almost swallowed my tongue. The best way to extinguish a fire is to climb as rapidly as possible and starve the fire of oxygen, so I maintained the afterburner climb and shortly thereafter my wingman called that my fire was out. My engine instruments never gave any indication of a problem. When we got into a safe area, my wingman carefully checked me over and there was no apparent damage. An after landing check confirmed 'no damage'. My wingman said that just before the fire began a cluster of AAA rounds had been tracking right up to my tailpipe. We surmised that they ignited the fuel from my saber drain." (Homer Terry, "Destroying the Steel Making Capability of the NVN", via e-mail 27 Mar 2010.)

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

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

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

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

#### 23-Apr-67

1318

F-105s from the 355 TFW and the 388 TFW, and F-4Cs from the 366 TFW, again struck the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel works (JCS 76.00). The strike force had a total of 31 USAF aircraft expending 137 750-pound bombs and 20 CBU-24s. Other aircraft provided Iron Hand support to the attackers. It was the 11th USAF attack on this target since it was first struck on 10 and 11 March 1967.

The 355 TFW had 20 F-105s in 5 flights, one of which was an Iron Hand flight; the 388 TFW launched three flights with 15 F-105s; and the 366 TFW from Da Nang had one flight of four F-4Cs. One of the F-4Cs was shot down by AAA and the crew of another was credited with shooting

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down a MiG-21.

Lt Col Alan G. Nelson, commander of the 34 TFS, flying as "Hambone 1", was the strike force commander. Other pilots in "Hambone" flight were:

- #2 - Maj Charles E. Irwin
- #3 - Maj Raymond F. Jauregui
- #4 - Capt Jackie R. Youngblood

Korat's force "... comprised 16 F-105s plus Wild Weasel support. Camera film showed direct hits on the blast furnaces." The works were knocked out of operation.

"The purpose of the strike was to destroy the blast furnace area. This area had been struck previously but suffered minimal damage. Ordnance selected for this strike was 2 x 3,000# bombs (M-118) per aircraft. Four flights composed the strike force, with the 34 TFS flying lead and mission commander. Heavy thunderstorm activity was encountered during ingress and egress, but target area was clear to scattered. 'Hambone 3' had 57-mm engulf him to the extent that he could not be seen by 'Hambone 4' during the pulloff. Two MiG-21s trailed the flight during egress looking for stragglers. ... " (34 TFS history, 1 - 30 Apr 67, USAF microfilm NO584, frame 0067.)

Col Nelson received the Silver Star for this mission.

Takhli's Iron Hand flight that supported the strike against the steel plant was from the 357 TFS. Their flight consisted of:

- #1 - Capt Charles A. Hanson with EWO Capt John E. Geiger
- #2 - 1Lt Gordon L. "Gordy" Jenkins
- #3 - Capt Jerry N. Hoblit with EWO Capt Thomas W. Wilson, Jr.
- #4 - 1Lt Henry R. Hutson III  
(Jerry Hoblit, e-mail 20 Mar 10)

Capt Hoblit and Capt Wilson were both nominated for an Air Force Cross for this mission. They destroyed a SAM site, engaged another site with anti-radiation missiles, and suppressed another using a high-angle strafe. They also supported the search and successful rescue of the crew of a downed escort F-4C from the 389 TFS, 366 TFW, out of Da Nang that was hit by flak while the strike force was flying toward the target. The Wild Weasel's F-105F was combat damaged and the crew landed at Udorn.

Capt Wilson's award was downgraded to a Silver Star (2nd OLC). Capt Hoblit's award was lost in the review process and delayed for over 36 years. Prompted by research done by Tom Wilson, Capt (by then Colonel, retired) Hoblit received the Air Force Cross on 20 June 2003, in ceremonies at Davis-Monthan AFB. (E-Mail, Tom Wilson to Ron Thurlow, 7 Jul 2003 & Air Combat Command news service announcement, 11 July 2003 & MiG Sweep Fall 2003, pg 5.)

The citation for Jerry Hoblit's Air Force Cross read: "The President of the United States of America, authorized by Section 8742, Title 10, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Jerry N. Hoblit for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 pilot near Thai Nguyen, North Vietnam on 23 April 1967. On that date, Captain Hoblit and his Electronic Warfare Officer flew the F-105F Wild Weasel in support of a strike force of fighter-bombers targeted upon the Thai Nguyen steel mill in North Vietnam. Once the flight separated, Captain Hoblit set his element up as a decoy to draw fire from a surface-to-air missile site. After outmaneuvering three missiles, Captain Hoblit led his wingman into a dive bomb to destroy this complex. As he fired his anti-radiation missiles at a second site, yet another site launched a

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missile and severely damaged the Wild Weasel leader's aircraft. Captain Hoblit diverted attention from the wounded aircraft, narrowly evading missiles fired at him. Despite having expended his bombs and missiles, Captain Hoblit pressed the attack, leading his wingman into a high angle strafe pass in the face of fierce automatic weapons fire; he continued the attack until assured his team leader had safely egressed the area. Captain Hoblit remained behind to assist in the successful rescue of an RF-4C Phantom reconnaissance jet aircrew that had been shot down earlier. [NOTE: It was an F-4C from Da Nang.] When Captain Hoblit finally landed at a forward air base, maintenance personnel confirmed high explosive incendiary rounds of ground fire had damaged his aircraft. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, Captain Hoblit reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." ("Recipients of the Air Force Medal of Honor and Air Force Cross", by Eric R. Caubarreaux, pp 151 - 152.)

KA-71 film from today's strike showed bombs hitting the machine shop and in the fabrication area for barges, POL tanks, and bridge trusses. Approximately 200 feet of the center portion of the ore processing building had been collapsed from an earlier strike. Night IR photos showed the eastern and center blast furnaces were cold but the coke oven battery gave a hot return. (PACAF Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for the period 3 - 23 Apr 1967.)

"KA-71 strike photos on 1 May depicted the results of a bomb impact in the foundry area. The entire roof of one building had collapsed. An open hearth building in another area received additional damage as the result of direct hits which collapsed a portion of the roof and caused heavy internal damage."

"The status of the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Combine in early May as a result of the combined Air Force/Navy efforts [since 10 March] showed extensive destruction and damage to the machine shop/foundry area, the locomotive repair area, and the blast furnace area. Of the total 125 buildings located in the complex, approximately 50 buildings had been destroyed or damaged, and the target's function as a producer of pig iron terminated."

*388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1755 & Alan Nelson, letter to Ron Thurlow, undated but around April 2001 & Project CHECO, Rolling Thunder, January 1967 - November 1968, pg 6 & Project CHECO, Rolling Thunder 17 Nov 67, pg 8.*

### 30-Apr-67

5157

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

Maj William E. Augsburg  
Maj Homer T. Terry

When Maj Terry left Korat, Maj Charles E. Irwin replaced him as "Blue" flight commander.

*34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & Chuck Irwin e-mail 6 Apr 10.*

### 03-Jul-67

6536

Capt Jack A. Phillips from the 34 TFS flew his 80th mission to North Vietnam. "Pack 6; battle damage to aircraft; Mo Trang Railroad Yard. ..." Other pilots in his flight were:

Maj Roderick G. Giffin  
Capt Hugh W. Davis  
Capt Robert L. Martin

"I wrote home: 'Had heavy flak and some shrapnel hit my bird and put a hole in the aft section."

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Was just as I was dive bombing and it knocked my cooling turbine all apart and filled the cockpit with smoke." (Jack Phillips e-mail 21 Mar 11)

Capt Phillips received the Silver Star (2 OLC) for gallantry on this mission. "... Captain Phillips attacked and destroyed a firing antiaircraft battery that had already damaged his F-105 Thunderchief. Despite marginal weather and intense ground fire, Captain Phillips completely disregarded his own personal safety to successfully complete the attack. This greatly reduced the volume of antiaircraft fire encountered by following flights and measurably contributed to the overall mission's success."

Charles E. Irwin, 34 TFS, participated in the rescue of Capt Dale M. Pichard from the 44 TFS who had been shot down in Mu Gia Pass the afternoon of 2 July 1967. "One of our wing pilots was shot down in Pk 1 in the afternoon of July 2. My flight was scheduled for the strike force for the next morning, but at about midnight, we were called out and diverted to ResCap. We met the tankers at first light and took up a holding pattern in Pk1 waiting to be directed in. We finally were called in to bomb the bad guys climbing the hill to get our guy and then we returned to strafe.

"That was the greatest 4th of July fireworks show I have ever seen. There must have been eight to ten flights bombing and strafing, then the Sandys dropping Willie Petes for the helicopters. Tremendous show."

Capt Pichard was rescued and returned to Korat. The HH-3E pilot and the pilot of a supporting A-1E were awarded the Air Force Cross for their actions.

*Jack Phillips Mission Summary and citation via e-mails 18 Mar & 20 Mar 11 & Chuck Irwin e-mail 6 Apr 10.*

#### 06-Jul-67

1341

F-105s from the 388 TFW struck the Vu Chua railroad yard (ART 1084).

"Two B-52 bombers were lost in the South China Sea as a result of a mid-air collision over the northern part of RVN."

Capt Jack A. Phillips from the 34 TFS flew his 83rd mission into North Vietnam. "Flight lead ..."  
Other pilots in his flight were:  
Capt Robert L. Martin  
Maj Raymond F. Jauregui  
Capt Charles E. Irwin

*388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1756 & Chronology of Seventh Air Force 1 July 1967 - 30 June 1968, pg 8 & Jack Phillips Mission Summary via e-mail 18 Mar 11.*

#### 07-Jul-67

1342

F-105s from the 388 TFW bombed Kep airfield (JCS 9.1 BE 616-8438) at coordinates 21-23-37N and 106-16-05E, in RP-6A, North Vietnam.

A strike flight on this mission was from the 34 TFS. The pilots were:

Capt Jack A. Phillips flying his 84th and 85th combat missions  
Capt Nicholas J. Donelson  
Maj Charles E. Irwin  
Maj Paul F. Koeltzow

After the strike on Kep, their flight recycled for a RESCAP. Capt Phillips logged 5 hours 5 minutes of flight time for the total mission. The RESCAP was probably for Marine A-4E pilot Maj Ralph E. Brubaker who had been shot down in the DMZ the day before. He was rescued on 7 July.

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Maj Ralph L. Kuster, Jr. from the 469 TFS was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for supporting this mission. "Maj Kuster was directed to strike at numerous flak sites surrounding Kep airfield. Undaunted when surrounded by exceptionally heavy ground fire, Maj Kuster in a voluntary act of bravery, relentlessly pressed the attack and silenced the hostile guns."

For a book, Kuster described his mission. "I guess the worst mission I flew would be July 7, 1967, against Kep Airfield, only a week after my shutdown. Usually out of twenty airplanes we put into Route Pack 6, two would be Weasels and two would be flak suppression. We flew flak suppressors in a flight of two, and each airplane pretty much operated independently. We were armed with four CBUs that we could drop individually or in twos. The idea was that when you saw some batteries firing, you dropped the CBUs over the batteries and had the gunners dive into their little foxholes, and the CBUs went off as they came back out. We had a formula for the attacking formation. The goal was to get all sixteen airplanes on and off the target in twenty seconds. The goal of twenty seconds was established as the time it took a gunner to pick out an airplane; track the airplane through the dive, bomb release, and pullout; and then crank the gun back up to vertical and try to select another target. We wanted him not to have a target when he got the gun back to vertical."

"Kep airfield was on the northeast highway from Hanoi to China. Mine was one of the flak-suppression airplanes. We split up and took on the flak on the field. There were two batteries firing: one 85-mm, which consisted of six guns, and one 57-mm battery. Apparently, they got ticked off at me and decided I was going to be their target for the day. I went checking out to the south, jinking right and left, and they did their damndest to shoot me down. I flew along and thought, 'I go to the right. No, I go to the left.' Actually, I had to go left to get out of the area and into the protection of the mountains. I turned back to the left, they'll think I'd turn right, so I turned a little more left. I tried to outguess those batteries, and they were trying to outguess me. And they were winning. Boy, they were really getting close with their big rectangular barrages. Those 85s must have been firing one barrage every two seconds. The barrages would overlap, and before one rectangle ran out, they would have another rectangle up there. And they were tracking me with those barrages, back and forth across the sky, until I didn't know which way to turn. You can jink up and fly over a barrage, but you can't fly through the rectangle, because of the fragments in there. They'll tear your airplane apart. You have to kind of dive and roll, the thing I used to do with clouds."

"I finally pulled to the left -- all the time in afterburner, the 85s still tracking me -- and I headed for the other side of Thud Ridge. Then I jinked from one side of the ridge over to the other, back and forth, not to give any gunners a chance to line up on me. When I finally leveled out at altitude, getting ready to join my tanker, I was drenched in sweat. I happened to look at my right hand. There is an area where the glove ends and the sleeve of my flight suit had pulled up. The hairs on my arm were standing straight up. I brushed them down like you brush down the hairs on a dog to get them to lie down. I touched the back of my neck, just below the helmet, and my hairs were standing straight up. That was my worst mission."

The 13 TFS Wild Weasel crew of Capt Robert E. Dorrrough, Jr. and his EWO Maj Clarence S. "Bud" Summers flew their first combat mission supporting this strike against Kep Air Field. Capt Dorrrough recorded their experience in his diary. "Fri: Our first mission was a "White Knuckler" (W.K.) to Kep Airfield. We were supposed to keep the SAMs down, and we did. In addition, our flight struck a known SAM site with 750s and CBUs. My CBUs hit a 37-mm and scared the hell out of any farmers who might have been nearby. Our Check Point going into the target area was an island called the "elephant's ear". Some high 85-mm and a lot of 37- and 57-mm barrage at about 5,000 ft were around the site we struck. Maj Bill Underwood [13 TFS Wild Weasel pilot Maj William E. Underwood] hit a Firecan (85-mm) on the NE RR; Maj Lefty Frizzel [13 TFS Wild Weasel pilot



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Maj Frederick N. Frizzell] cut a road with 750#. After G.I.s for 7 days, Bud & I blacked out on our pull out and lost flight for awhile."

*388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1756 & Jack Phillips e-mail 18 Mar 11 & "I Always Wanted to Fly -- Hambone 02", pgs 267 and 293 - 295 & Bob Dorrough's Combat diary.*

**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].

"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.*