

William J. "Jim" King

F-105 History

31-Aug-67

3825

The 34 TFS history for the month of August 1967, reported that, "... numerous targets were struck by pilots of the squadron in the Chicom Buffer Zone and within the Hanoi restricted area. A marked increase was noted in all modes of defense (AAA, SAMs, MiGs) due primarily to the sensitivity of the targets." Squadron pilots flew 411 combat missions during the month, 407 to North Vietnam and 4 to Laos for a total combat time of 1063:20 hours.

"Combat pilot strength stood at 36 line pilots. During the month of August, four squadron pilots completed their tour of 100 missions over North Vietnam. Those completing were: Maj Harry Pawlik, Maj Donald F. Fryauf, Capt Jack A. Phillips [on 2 Aug] , and Capt David C. Carter. [Not listed in the squadron history for completing his 100th mission this month was Maj John O. Rollins II.] No losses were suffered during this month and 13 replacements arrived during this period of time. Two officers, Captains Skoglund and Shulmister, that had been on temporary duty with the squadron from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, returned to their home station."

The 13 pilots arriving in the 34th in August were: Maj William M. Blakeslee, Maj Kenneth W. Mays, Maj Donald Eugene "Digger" Odell, Maj James L. Taylor, Maj David C. Dickson, Jr., Maj William J. King, Maj Raymond Walter Vissotzky, Capt Robert M. Elliot, Capt Robert B. Middleton, Capt Lawrence R. Klinestiver, Capt Douglas A. Beyer, and 1Lt Lee E. Hollingsworth.

The Squadron Commander was Maj George G. Clausen. Maj Roderick Gene Giffin was the Operations Officer and Maj William M. Blakeslee the Executive Officer.

388 TFW history, Apr Dec 67, Vol II, 34 TFS history, 1 - 31 Aug 1967, microfilm NO584, frame 0080.

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.

15-Oct-67

4832

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

Mission 6. F-105D 60-5376. Call Sign: "Vegas". Take Off: 1525. Mission Length: 2+25. Flight Lineup:

#1 - Jim King [Maj William J. King]

William J. "Jim" King

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#2 - Me

#3 - Skeets Henzig [Maj Floyd E. Henzig]

#4 - "Lefty" Leftwich [Maj Dalton L. Leftwich]

"This was my first mission that was scheduled to go into Pack VIA. Weather in the Bac Ninh railway area was forecast to be bad so 7th AF cancelled the primary and first alternate targets and put us in on targets in southern Laos with a FAC. We hit a tanker and went off Nakon Phanom [TACAN] for 103-degrees [radial]/ 83 [nautical miles] & hit a wooded area where the FAC marked it for us. We got all of our bombs right on the target but couldn't get any BDA due to the trees. The FAC said that there were V.C. down there shooting at him. We came out and got 2500# of fuel from a post-strike tanker and practiced some ECM pod formation & roll in on the way home. VFR landing."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 2.

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 [Capt 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

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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 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

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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 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 [Capt 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.

19-Oct-67

4833

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

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

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

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

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control & landed. Uneventful but it was officially a Pack VI mission and a counter."

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

"Target: Troops in trenches in southern Laos.
"Armament: 4xCBU-24s 1 CBU-29.

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

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

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

The planned targets were:

Primary: 19-30N and 103-59E where they were to meet FACs Firefly 15 and 16.
Secondary: 21-04N and 102-36E where they were to meet FACs Firefly 17 and 18.

Both targets were in Laos.

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

The mission lasted 2.7 hours.

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

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

21-Oct-67

6159

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

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

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

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

"Target: Bridge pack I.
"Armament: 6x500

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

Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet and "Mission # 7 Narrative" via e-mail 28 July 10 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5 & Earl Henderson, combat diary.

22-Oct-67

4335

In a mission designated RT56A-172, F-105 pilots from the 388 TFW struck the Cau Dau railroad segment on the Northeast Rail line in RP-6A, North Vietnam. The target was located at 21-35N and 106-00E.

Three pilots on this mission from the 469 TFS and their F-105Ds were:

Capt Russell E. Temperley flying 60-0428
Maj Roger P. Scheer flying 61-0208
1Lt Earl J. Henderson flying 61-0134 (Note: His combat diary has no mission this day.)

Lt Col Richard F. B. Gimmi, Jr., flying with the 469 TFS, flew his 115th and last combat mission during his one-year assignment as the director of the 388 TFW command post. (Dick Gimmi, phone message, 10 Nov 09)

Maj Kenneth W. Mays from the 34 TFS flew F-105D 62-4359 on this mission.

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Warhawk 2" attacking a road segment in RP-6A. "Road cut." It was his 8th combat mission.

Four other pilots from the 34 TFS made up "Vegas" flight. Flying as "Vegas 2" was Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong on his 10th combat mission to North Vietnam. Take Off: 1440. Mission Length: 3+05. The flight line up was:

#1 - Maj William J. King
#2 - Maj Armstrong flying 61-0132
#3 - Maj Dalton L. Leftwich flying 61-0219
#4 - Captj Larry R. Klinestiver flying 61-0220

Mission Commander - Col John Peter "Sky" Flynn, 388 TFW Vice Commander (POW 27 Oct 67).

Maj Armstrong describe this mission in his combat log. "Mission was alternate target at Dau Ca, 15 miles east of Thai Nguyen. We went the land route which was the first land route for me. We

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dropped off the tankers and entered NVN on a northeasterly heading then turned east and finally south to hit the target which was roughly 40 miles due north of Hanoi. There were considerable MiG calls both going in and retracing our path out but no one actually saw MiGs. No SAMs were sighted either. There was considerable 37/57-mm fire rolling in on the target but no one got hit. Larry Klinestiver saw some 85-mm burst but no one else saw it. Col Flynn was mission commander and he's not sure the rail yard we bombed was the right one. I had no idea as I was looking for MiGs all of the time."

NARA Record NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649B, "Air Strike Films, Vietnam" & Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 4 & Rufus Dye Mission History log

09-Nov-67

4836

Two days after returning from his first R&R in Japan, Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong from the 34 TFS flew his 17th combat mission over North Vietnam.

His flight's call sign was "Fresno" that took off at 0645. The mission length was 2+00. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Larry R. Klinestiver
- #2 - Maj Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0445
- #3 - Capt Robert M. Crane
- #4 - Maj William J. King

"We went to our 2nd alternate target over in Pack I for some reason. The weather in Pack VI was forecast to be fairly good. We refueled, went directly east and got a CSS from Bravo to the target. The target was a truck park 5 miles inland from Ron Ferry. The target was in the clear but we took a Sky Spot drop and surprisingly enough, covered the target completely. Afterwards, we flew around over there and made a strafing pass on what looked like a truck just off a main road."

Capt Jacob C. Shuler, also from the 34th, flew his 19th mission this day. His mission card shows his flight's call sign was also "Fresno". The takeoff time was 0755 and TOT was 0900. This flight's lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Erving E. LeVine flying F-105D 62-4387
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 60-0435
- #3 - Capt Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying 61-0161
- #4 - Capt Carl William Lasiter flying 61-0124

"I do not recall any specific details of this mission. The target coordinates, 17-38N and 106-31E, suggests a recce mission in RP-1 near Dong Hoi."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 7 & Jake Shuler's mission card and narrative via e-mail 11 Jan 2011.

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
- #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

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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.

"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

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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 Dorough'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.

18-Nov-67

184

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

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

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

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

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

Waco 1 was F-105F 63-8295 with Major Oscar Moise Dardeau, Jr. and EWO Capt Edward William

William J. "Jim" King F-105 History

"Tiny" Lehnhoff, Jr. from the 44 TFS. Their plane immediately began shedding parts and trailing black smoke then disappeared into the clouds below. Both men died in the crash.

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

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

The F-105 pilots were even more vulnerable than they realized. In recent months, the North Vietnamese had developed a track-on-jam tactic for their SAM operators who used it this morning when the Commando Club formations made it even more effective. As a translator of North Vietnam's military history reported, "... on 18 November, the [North] Vietnamese missileers got the target they wanted. A USAF Commando Club strike of twenty-four F-105s flew in to attack Noi Bai [Phuc Yen] airfield. ... After a sneak attack by two MiG-21s shot down two F-105s, the MiGs peeled off to allow the SA-2s to take over" ("The -Ology War: Technology and Ideology in the Vietnamese Defense of Hanoi", 1967, Merle L. Pribbenow II, in *The Journal of Military History*, Jan 2003, pgs 195.)

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

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

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

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

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pod formation was adhered to." (388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilms NO583 and Vol II in NO584, frame 0030.)

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

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

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

The flight took off at 0605 and the mission lasted for 3 hours 30 minutes. Maj Armstrong's mission log and a portion of his memoirs provided an eye-witness account of this mission. "This was my first try as a flight leader up into Pack VIA. The mission was a complete disaster; we lost 4 airplanes and didn't drop a bomb on the target. We were going to Phuc Yen Airfield. The weather was forecast to be bad so we were to use radar vectors from a ground control station to drop through the clouds. My flight carried CBUs and our job was to provide MiG coverage during the bombing run and to drop on SAM or flak sites if the weather over the target happened to be clear. We went up the land route and left Channel 97 heading northeast. The 'Iron Hand' flight was out ahead of us about 3 minutes as we were over a solid cloud deck at 8,000'. Suddenly MiG-21s fired missiles at the Iron Hand and hit #s 1 & 4. #1 said he was hit and had to bail out immediately with his back seat EWO [Maj Oscar Moise Dardeau, Jr. and EWO Capt Edward William "Tiny" Lehnhoff, Jr., 44 TFS, both KIA.]. We heard one good beeper. #4, L/C Bill Reed [Lt Col William N. Reed, 469 TFS, rescued], was hit and he headed back out with the other 2 and got back to 97 with the burning aircraft before he had to eject. He was picked up OK. #1 and his EWO had no chance as they were on the NW end of Thud Ridge.

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

Lt General Armstrong's memoirs added more details of this mission and its aftermath. "The ... morning of 18 Nov. 1967, was another Pack VIA Sky Spot -- what an oxymoron! As my 22nd

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

"The #4 pilot was my McConnell classmate, Lt. Col. Bill Reed, who was able to fly back far enough to bail out in Laos and be rescued. I never will forget the specter of his aircraft burning brightly, turning to head south. The other Weasels accompanied him so we had no SA-2 protection from that time forward. The strike force crossed Thud Ridge and headed southeast for the bombing run. There were three flights of aircraft carrying 750# bombs just like on the first Pack VIA Sky Spot. My flight was on the outside of the three flights. As briefed, since we carried CBU's, we were to provide some MiG protection or drop on any flak site that we might be able to attack. A smarter move would have been to have us as the fourth flight carrying 750# bombs but the command post at 7th Air Force in Saigon really didn't have any clue what we were facing since none of them had ever experienced the defenses in Pack VIA and kept ordering the bomb loads that they ordered for clear weather targets. (More on this idiocy later.) Anyhow, I was on the right side of the strike force with Don Hodge on my wing. My #3 man was Ray Vissotsky with Gene Main on his wing. They were on the other side of the strike force.

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

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

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

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

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

25-Nov-67

6712

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

"Cactus" Iron Hand. Refueled from Red Anchor 46
"Ozark" Iron Hand. Refueled from Red Anchor 42
"Scuba". Refueled from Red Anchor 40
"Locust". Refueled from Red Anchor 43
"Bass". Refueled from Red Anchor 41
"Gator". Refueled from Red Anchor 44

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

#1 - Maj William J. King flying F-105D 58-1157
#2 - Capt Harry Guy Paddon III flying 61-0068
#3 - Maj Donald W. Revers flying 60-0518
#4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0161 on his 23rd combat mission.
Spare - Maj Almer L. "Buddy"Barner, Jr. in 60-0435

Jake Shuler recalled details of the mission. "This was apparently a strike force Commando Club mission of which I do not recall any particular details. Although the mission itself was not exciting, the landing pattern was. As Jim King positioned our flight of four on initial, we heard Col. James L. Stewart, 388th TFW Assistant DO, call an engine problem on a long final, but he did not declare an 'emergency'. Being low on fuel, since our mission did not call for post-strike refueling, Jim elected to continue with our pattern and pitched out. As I initiated my turn to final, I saw Col. Stewart about a mile out and, since he had still not declared an 'emergency', and I would have been in a 'minimum fuel' situation if I initiated a 'go around', I continued my turn to final and final approach. Purposefully, I landed on the far right side of the runway allowing plenty of room for Col. Stewart to land on the left side. When I was about half way down the runway on roll-out, I heard Col. Stewart in an irritated tone call 'going around' plus some other choice, harsh words. As he advanced the throttle, a very loud and very abnormal noise emanated from his engine and as he passed me (at an altitude of about 500' and about 500' left of the runway), now about two thirds down the runway, I heard the tower on guard channel (I think it was Doug Beyer on tower duty) call Col. Stewart's call sign and 'eject, eject, eject'. Thankfully, Col. Stewart was able to nurse his plane around in a circling approach and land safely. I think he called an 'emergency' during the circling approach.

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Needless to say, Bob Smith, [Lt Col Robert W. Smith] our soon to be Squadron Commander had a 'conversation' with our flight prior to our mission debriefing. In hindsight, there is no doubt that I should have gone around and requested a 'closed pattern'. I had enough fuel to do so.

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

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

30-Nov-67

4846

At 0705, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Pistol" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a target in Mu Gia Pass in RP-1 North Vietnam. The mission lasted 2 hours 45 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj William J. King
- #2 - Capt Robert M. Crane
- #3 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0132.

The mission was Maj Armstrong's 29th. "Weather was bad in VIA [RP-6A] again so we went to 1st alternate target. We dropped on Mu Gia Pass via Sky Spot through clouds. No assessment of BDA."

After this mission, Maj Armstrong went on R&R and attended the 2nd quarterly River Rats Conference at Takhli and Bangkok.

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. also from the 34th flew his 42nd mission into North Vietnam today where he attacked trucks, probably in Mu Gia Pass, too.

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 12 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 30 Nov 67.

10-Dec-67

6713

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

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

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

This mission was the last time Maj King flew the F-105. He had accumulated 276.5 hours in the aircraft. "... Pulled out of combat in Dec 1967 due to medical reason (Hernia) and returned to the U.S...." (Jim King, posting to 34 TFS web site guestbook 30 Aug 2012.)

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