

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

23-Jun-67

233

The eleventh F-105 RTU Class 67IR graduated at McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 9 January 1967 with 21 pilots. However only 17 pilots graduated with the class, which was named "The Reluctant Hog-Herders".

The class deployed for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 25 May - 16 June 1967 with the 563 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Joe W. Pickett.

Capt Steven W. Long, Jr. won both Outstanding Pilot and Top Gun awards. Maj Kenneth W. Mays won the Academic award. The other 15 pilots in the class were:

Maj Robert Warren Barnett	Maj William L. King, Jr.
Maj James Arlen Clements	Maj Donald W. Revers
Maj Rudolph Edward Fiedor	Maj James L. Taylor - 34 TFS
Maj Crosley James Fitton, Jr.	Maj Raymond Walter Vissotzky
Maj Billy R. Givens	Maj Jay M. Barker
Maj Robert W. Kennedy	Capt Robert M. Elliot
Capt George D. Smith	Maj Donald Myrick Russell
Maj Robert B. Abernathy	

23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 66, USAF microfilm MO554 & Ken Mays, e-mail 4 Mar 2005.

15-Jul-67

4328

F-105 pilot Maj Kenneth W. Mays arrived at the 388 TFW, Korat RTAFB, Thailand. After graduating from F-105 RTU Class 67IR at McConnell on 23 June 1967, he attended jungle survival school near Clark AB, Philippines. When he first got to Korat, he was originally assigned to the 469 TFS. "... But that evening I met an old friend, George Clausen who was the commander of the 34th. He said he wanted me in his unit and was so assigned the next day."

Maj George G. Clausen had been commander of the 34 TFS since 1 July 1967.

Maj Mays' jungle survival training in the Philippines turned into a real survival situation. "We arrived in the field and set up camp under the supervision of the Nigritos. About dark rain started coming down in sheets and the water started to rise. The next morning we had about one foot of water in our campsite. Rain continued and the water continued to rise. Attempts were made to rescue us by helicopter, but they could not get to us. The Nigritos told us to abandon camp and move to a mountain area. We were soaked to the bone and everything we had was wet. With the help of the Nigritos we constructed shelters from bananas leaves, which helped to keep the rain off. That afternoon they decided we must get out of the area and to a road where we could be picked up. I got on one of the radios an AF NCO who was with us had and wanted to know who was coordinating our extraction. After long silence a Major came on who assured us they were organizing a recovery team. About an hour later we started moving toward a creek that was out of its bank and running very swift. The Nigritos managed to get a large vine across the creek and then each of us crossed the creek holding on to the vine. We then hiked about a mile to a road where we were picked up by a Navy bus and taken to Subic Bay. We were given dry clothing and fed. The next morning we were transported back to Clark. This was a real survival situation, but was disappointed we could not have spent more time on jungle training with the Nigritos."

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

22-Jul-67

4329

Having arrived in the 388 TFW at Korat on 15 July 1967, F-105 pilot Maj Kenneth W. Mays from the 34 TFS flew his first combat mission. "After lengthy in-country briefings, I flew my first mission on 22 July 1967 with George Clausen [Maj George G. Clausen, the 34 TFS commander] against a

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nothing target in RP 1. The remainder of my orientation was flown with Rod Giffin [Maj Roderick G. Giffin] and Sam Morgan [Capt Sam P. Morgan].

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

31-Jul-67

6534

(Date estimated based on strikes against Kep rail yard on this day.). Maj Kenneth W. Mays from the 34 TFS flew his first combat mission into RP-6A, North Vietnam. "My first mission [to] RP 6 (my number six mission) was to Kep Airfield (JCS 9.1). I was on the wing of George Clausen [Maj George G. Clausen]. I could not believe the amount of flak that was put up. In retrospect this was a very successful mission. It had been cloudy for some time and the clouds broke on the way into the target and MiGS were caught on the ground and parked in revetments. Ten to 12 MiGS were destroyed on the ground. I assume the NVN thought we were going to abort the mission. I always dreaded hitting the Air Fields because I knew the odds were high we were going to lose a pilot and aircraft."

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

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. Boyer, 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.

02-Sep-67

3378

Air Force planes struck three targets along the Kep-Thai Nguyen rail line (RR 9) in RP-6A.

F-105s from the 388 TFW bombed the Hung Vi railroad yard (BE 616-M9173) (ART 5163) at 21-27-50N and 106-13-05E. Pilots reported the yard was interdicted. It was struck again on 15 September.

The Mo Trang railroad yard (BE 616-M2142) at 21-31-03N and 106-07-15E was struck on 2 September. Pilots reported their bombs hit the SE end of the yard and seeing 12 to 15 pieces of rolling stock. The yard was again struck on 16 and 17 September.

The Mo Trang railroad bridge (BE 616-G0522) at 21-30-30N and 106-07-50E was struck on 2

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September. BDA on 8 September showed the bridge was still serviceable. It was struck again on 16 September.

The 388 TFW from Korat struck the Quang Hien railroad causeway (ART 5451).

Maj George G. Clausen, 34 TFS commander, received the Silver Star for a mission he flew today. "Major George G. Clausen distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force over North Vietnam on 2 September 1967. On that date, Major Clausen was the force commander leading a strike force of twenty aircraft against a heavily defended railyard, located thirty three miles northeast of Hanoi. In spite of extremely adverse weather, intense antiaircraft fire and a barrage of fourteen surface to air missiles, Major Clausen led his force on the attack, resulting in the destruction of numerous pieces of rolling stock and severe damage inflicted to the railyard. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Major Clausen has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (Award citation provided by George Clausen, received 12 Apr 2010.)

Having arrived in the 34 TFS in August 1967, Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flew his first combat mission today. As instructed by his wife's uncles when he left the States, he smoked a cigar to celebrate the completion of the mission.

Maj Kenneth W. Mays, also in the 34th, was Dickson's roommate during their stay at Korat. "... I too had to absorb some of the smoke." (Ken Mays, e-mail, Tuesday, May 19, 2009.)

Starting with this first cigar, Dickson began the practice of annotating the back of the cigar band with the mission number, the date, and the name of his target and mailed them in letters to his wife, Carolyn. She saved the bands displaying them on a board as she received them, which formed a unique record of her husband's 100-mission combat tour. (phone interview with Dickson's cousin, Charlie Weaver, Winston-Salem, NC & letter from Carolyn Dickson giving annotation on cigar band dated 2 Sep 67.)

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1756 & PACAF briefing to CINCPAC for the period 28 August - 17 September 1967.

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	

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34 TFS Special Orders 45 and 46 dated 21 September 1967 provided by Larry Hoppe, May 2010.

03-Oct-67

850

F-105s from the 388 TFW "heavily damaged the Dap Cau railroad and highway bridge (JCS 16), 20 miles northeast of Hanoi. Pilots also damaged at least three anti-aircraft sites near the bridge." The Rolling Thunder mission was RT56A-153 and the coordinates of the target were 21-12-15N 106-05-42E.

The 388 TFW also struck the Dap Cau bypass bridge one mile south of JCS 16 where one F-105D was lost and its pilot, Maj Robert W. Barnett from the 469 TFS, was captured.

1Lt Earl J. Henderson was a 469 TFS pilot in Bob Barnett's flight. It was his 19th combat mission into North Vietnam.

"Target: Dap Cau Railroad Bridge 15 miles NNE of Hanoi
"Armament: 6x750 .01.

"Never made it to target. Lead aircraft hit by SAM one minute prior to target. Jettisoned everything and turned toward water with him. He bailed out about 1 mile inland. During RESCAP, two MiG-21s made two passes on me. Chased them for 30 miles, fired out of range, no hits."

Lt Henderson received the Silver Star for this mission. "... Lieutenant Henderson was a member of a flight of F-105 Thunderchiefs assigned to attack a target deep in hostile territory. When the lead aircraft in his flight was shot down, he circled the area, giving cover for his downed flight leader. During the rescue operation, he dodged a surface-to-air missile and evaded two attacks by MiG aircraft. Then by maneuvering his aircraft, he gained the advantage and successfully chased the MiGs out of the area and thus prevented their interference in the rescue operation. ..."

Pilots from the 34 TFS participating in the Dap Cau bridge strike were Maj Dwight E. Sullivan, Maj Kenneth W. Mays, Capt Robert B. Middleton flying F-105D 62-4283, Capt Robert M. Crane flying F-105D 62-4359, and Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying his 16th combat mission and his 7th in Route Pack 6. Dickson struck a target 8 nautical miles NE of Hanoi. He noted on the band of his post-mission cigar, "Rough. B. Barnett down". Dickson had known Barnett during their assignment to Perrin AFB, TX. (Nat'l Archive records & 20 Apr 09 letter from Carolyn Dickson giving annotation on cigar band dated 3 Oct 67.)

Maj Aquilla F. Britt from the 469 TFS was awarded an Distinguished Flying Cross (5 OLC) for extraordinary achievement for a mission he flew this day. "... Maj Britt led a flight on a flak suppression mission in support of a major strike on a high priority military target. Major Britt overcame four SA-2 missiles and heavy hostile fire to personally destroy an active firing site. ..." (Citation to Accompany the Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross (Fifth Oak Leaf Cluster) (Posthumous) to Aquilla F. Britt provided by his son Bryan Britt.)

Lt Col Richard F. B. Gimmi, Jr. and Capt Steven W. Long, Jr., both also from the 469 TFS, flew a mission against a nearby target at 21-09N and 106-46E. Gimmi flew F-105F 63-8268 and Capt Long flew F-105D 62-4387 on this Rolling Thunder RT56A-153 mission. (Nat'l Archives camera records)

Sawadee Flyer, Friday, October 13, 1967, pg 3 & National Archives gun camera records, Archive Control No. NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649B & 388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1756 & Earl Henderson, combat diary and award citation.

18-Oct-67

1440

F-105s from the 388 TFW struck the Lang Dang railroad storage yard (BE 616-01586) on the

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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 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

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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-USA-42649B & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

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 - Maj Larry R. Klinestiver flying 61-0220

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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 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

24-Oct-67

342

After President Johnson had approved it as a target on 18 October 1967, coordinated Air Force and Navy strikes against Phuc Yen MiG airfield (JCS 6) commenced on the afternoon of 24 October followed by combined re-strikes on 25 October. The airfield was hit by bombs and CBUs. 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. (Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967)

On Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday, 24 and 25 October, F-105s from the 388 TFW from Korat and the 355 TFW from Takhli struck Phuc Yen for the first time. The airfield (BE 616-8520) was located 18 miles northwest of Haiphong at coordinates 21-13-15N and 105-48-32E in RP-6A, North Vietnam. The US launched a total of 64 sorties against the airfield.

"... USAF bombs made several craters in the airfield runway and taxi areas. Also during the strike, a MiG-17 was downed by an F-4 crew assigned to the 8 TFW." (Chronology)

The Air Force Times newspaper gave an overview of the Phuc Yen airfield strike. "For the first time in the airwar over North Vietnam, F-4 crews and F-105 pilots recently attacked Phuc Yen airfield, 18 miles northwest of Hanoi.

"The tactical fighter-bomber pilots thundered in through SAMs, heavy flak and MiGs to bomb the 9170-foot runway and parking revetments on the east and west end of the main runway. Another 31 revetted hardstands three miles north of the airfield and the taxiway joining them to the air strip were also hit.

"The strike pilots from the 8 TFW, 355 TFW and 388 TFW reported all bombs on target and the mission highly successful as they rendered the sprawling MiG interceptor base unserviceable and downed a MiG-21 in the process.

"Thunderchief pilots from the 355th TFW led the massive armada in on the installation.

" 'A new target is a great feeling, especially since I was in the first flight in and put the first holes in the MiG haven,' said Capt James G. Thomas, one of the 355th pilots [from the 333 TFS].

"Capt Cal W. Tax [also from the 333 TFS] reported, 'I wanted to make sure so I went in low. In fact, I was so low I heard and felt my bombs exploding -- it was just beautiful.'

"Another 355th F-105 pilot commenting on the mission was Capt James L. Aldrich [333 TFS], who

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said, 'It was a sensational mission. We hit an untouched target and turned it into a mural of huge fireballs and towering smoke.'

"The F-4 crews from the 8 TFW were the second wave of AF fighters to hit the airfield.

" 'Strings of bombs impacted in trail straight down the eastern third of the runway, causing multiple craters' reported Maj Arley W. McRae who led one of the F-4 flights in. Another string of bombs cratered the middle third of the runway.

"Leading the 8 TFW strike force was Maj Carl F. Funk, who said, 'We rolled in inverted and dove to the target. We completely demolished it.'

" 'From my position, it looked like all our bombs were right on the money', said Capt Paul W. Showalter, one of the Wolf Pack pilots. 'Phuc Yen airfield is now out of commission,' he concluded.

"While Phantom crews were unloading their ordnance over the target, other 8th TFW crews were keeping enemy MiGs busy.

" 'It was absolutely great, ' said a smiling, elated Maj William L. Kirk, a Phantom aircraft commander and now a double-MiG killer, as he described his latest MiG-21 kill.

"Flying combat air patrol (MIG-CAP) for strike fighter pilots, Kirk caught the enemy aircraft as it attacked the bomb-laden aircraft.

" 'They came at us from behind and I turned my flight around and had a good old knock-down, drag-out rat-race with him for almost 10 minutes. I ran him down and got him with the gun,' said the veteran of more than 30 missions into the heavily-defended Hanoi area.

"Kirk's weapon was the 20-mm cannon, a pod-mounted Gatling gun, which hangs under the belly of the F-4.

" 'This kill wasn't quite the same as my first one last May 13,' said Kirk. 'That one was a MiG-17 and there was only one pass. I got him with my air-to-air missile. This time it was a good, old-fashioned dog-fight and we fought him for a long time.'

"The rear seat pilot in Kirk's F-4 was 1Lt Theodore R. Bongartz. 'It was my 91st mission,' said the excited Lieutenant. 'I've been waiting since my first flight to get a MiG and it was quite a thrill.'

"Bongartz exclaimed, 'After we shot him down, we made a pass around him and saw the MiG pilot under the canopy of his parachute. We wagged our wings at him and came on home.'

"As the Phantom crews completed their runs on the military installation, Thunderchief pilots from the 388 TFW took their turn at hitting the target.

" 'There were a lot of MiGs up there preceding our strikes,' said Maj Clyde Falls, Jr., a 388th TFW pilot [from the 34 TFS]. 'However, by the time we got there they were all gone. I suppose most of them were low on fuel and were probably looking for a place to land. It's a cinch they couldn't land at Phuc Yen.'

"Maj Donald W. Windrath [from the 13 TFS] estimated that his flight destroyed or damaged three SAM sites which threatened the strike force.

"The aerial reconnaissance following the strike revealed four MiG-21s, four MkG-17s and one MiG-

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15 were destroyed or damaged by the fighter-bomber pilots. The runway was damaged beyond use and fireballs 280 feet in diameter erupted near the west parking ramp while another huge secondary explosion engulfed the entire western half of the northeast revetments." (Air Force Times newspaper article, Nov 15, 1967, pg 22)

"This highly successful raid left smoking ruins of much of the airfield support complex and large craters in the runway. 354 TFS pilots [from Takhli] were present in the flak-filled skys over Phuc Yen on both ... days." Pilots from the 357 TFS also flew this mission. (355 TFW history, Microfilm NO463, frame 1565).

Four flights of 355 TFW F-105Ds attacked Phuc Yen. "Scotch" and "Wildcat" flights began their attack at 0815Z, followed by "Marlin" and "Wolf" at 0816Z, and "Bison" at 0817Z.

The flights encountered AAA from the east tip of the runway, and two sites 1,100 feet southeast of the runway's center crossover. The AAA sites were firing 85-mm in rings. All flights experienced light to moderate, increasingly accurate, barrages of 37/57-mm AAA bursting between 6,000 to 8,000 feet. The last strike flights also reported moderate, inaccurate, 85-mm bursting between 8,000 and 12,000 feet.

The six M-118s and six M-117s dropped by "Wildcat" flight impacted directly on aircraft revetments, providing a huge secondary explosion that engulfed the entire western half of the revetted area and leaving the eastern half in flames belching black smoke up to 4,000 feet. While coming off the target at 0817Z, when the flight was at 3,000 feet, "Wildcat" flight saw a SAM detonate at 9,000 feet. Approximately 30 seconds later, the flight saw a second missile detonating at 20,000 feet at coordinates 21-26N and 105-43E. The flight was then at 2,000 feet. At approximately 0819Z, the flight saw a third SAM detonating at 8,000 feet, at 21-35N and 105-43E. The flight was at 7,000 feet at 21-35N and 105-35E. Pilots couldn't determine the sites that launched the missiles. All SAM detonations were orange in color.

"Marlin" left their target area covered with smoke and estimated their twenty-four MK-117s hit directly on the target.

"Wolf 2" had AC power failure on ingress 20 nautical miles short of the target and, accompanied by "Wolf 3", diverted to Udorn. "Wolf Lead" and "Wolf 4" expended twelve M-117s that resulted in explosions across the central portion of the airfield.

"Bison flight's two MK-118s hit directly on the runway at the junction of the western taxiway crossover. Their eighteen M-117s cratered adjacent sections of the western center of the runway. On egress, at approximately 0819Z, "Bison" flight saw a SAM launch from the vicinity of missile site VN 120. The missile appeared to go straight up and detonate at approximately 25,000 feet. This missile also detonated with an orange cloud. (355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI ??? OPREP-4/??? in USAF microfilm NO463, frames 1389 and 1585.)

Capt Malcolm D. Winter of the 354 TFS from Takhli led "Bison" flight. He flew F-105D 59-1731 on his 56th combat mission. Other members of this flight were Capt Edward P. Larson, and Capt Gary S. Olin. "Big one today - Phuc Yen. We went Green Anchor. 1430 launch for my flight. ... Fergie (Maj Alonzo L. Ferguson) was lead, Larson, Me, Olin. But, Fergie crumped so I took the flight. We had a good roll in & out (with) bombs on target - the NW end, last taxiway exit. The F-4's shot down a MiG-21 inbound while our Iron Hands - Bruce Stocks, Moyer - got a SAM site. I saw the missile's orange cloud about 2 miles off my left wing on egress. It went to 25 miles or so & exploded." (Combat mission log of Mal Winter transcribed by his son, Mike Winter.)

"On October 24, two MiG-21s had taken off against the first wave of attackers -- Air Force F-105s

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

and F-4s from Thailand. As the MiGs were attempting to get behind the attacking force, an F-4 escort used a twenty-millimeter cannon to shoot one down." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 90). The F-4D from the 433 TFS, 8 TFW, at Ubon was flown by Maj William L. Kirk and his WSO 1Lt Theodore R. Bongartz.

Maj James D. Gormley from the 333 TFS at Takhli was one of the 355 TFW pilots on the mission. "Phuc Yen airfield had been off limits ever since the bombing began. Whenever we flew a mission near Hanoi, we would go right over Phuc Yen. We could look down at 'MiG Haven' and see the planes coming at us. It gave us a futile feeling not to be able to bomb them in their sanctuary. ... (When the strike was approved), ... every pilot in the wing wanted to go, ... and I was proud to be one who got a chance. Everything went as we had been briefed. We rolled in through heavy defenses but destroyed the target and got every bird back home safely." (Takhli Times, 29 Mar 68, reporting Maj Gormley's comments after his 100th mission.)

" ... A wing of F-4s from Ubon held third place in the attack stream (to be followed later by Navy attackers), second place being taken by the F-105s from the 388th Wing ... and our 355th TFW leading the parade. Our 333rd TFS led our wing ... " (Frank Moyer, letter to Ron Thurlow, 21 Sept. 2001).

"The Iron Hand flight estimated it destroyed three SAM sites which had threatened the force." Leading the Iron Hand flight from Takhli was 354 TFS pilot Maj Bruce D. Stocks with EWO Maj Frank N. Moyer from the 333 TFS. Also flying an Iron Hand mission from Korat, were Maj James Mirehouse with EWO Capt Albert L. Michael from the 44 TFS.

It was Maj Moyer's 45th combat mission as an F-105F EWO. In his diary entry for the day he wrote, "THE BIG ONE! After all our waiting and frustration, the 355 TFW led forces of F-4s from Ubon and F-105s from Korat against the Phuc Yen MiG airfield, and our 333 TFS had the Force Commander + 3 of the five strike flights + Iron Hand flight - which Bruce and I led! How about them potatoes!

"Perfect weather except for clouds on Thud Ridge. Our Weaseling was good, too, despite AC power problems that left our Doppler nav system inoperative. Practically perfect bombing put 18 bomb craters in the runway, destroyed or damaged several parked MiGs, and wiped out four flak sites. Had two valid SAM launches, but our warning call kept all planes out of missile range. Bruce saw blast smoke from one launch, so we went into the flat country and bombed the site, thus earning our SAM Slayer patches. Score for the day: 1 runway, 5 SAM sites, and the F-4s got a MiG-21. What a day!" Maj Moyer and Maj Stocks were awarded the Silver Star for the mission. (Combat diary of Frank N. Moyer.)

F-105s from the 388 TFW were third in the attack stream. They dropped their bombs on the MiG parking revetments.

"Olympia" flight from the 34 TFS was the first from Korat to attack the airfield. Take Off: 1405. Mission Length: 3+10. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Dalton L. Leftwich who was also Korat's Mission Commander
- #2 - Capt Hugh W. Davis
- #3 - Maj Floyd E. Henzig
- #4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0124.

It was Maj Armstrong's 11th combat mission into North Vietnam. "Today was the big one, Phuc Yen! This airfield is the major airfield in NVN and had previously been off limits. Today our wing, Takhli, the F-4s from Ubon, and I think the Navy all zeroed in on Phuc Yen Airfield. We went in of

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

course the land route. Lefty was also mission commander so that meant our flight was the first of 20 F-105s to bomb the field. The F-4 MiGCAP drew about 8 SAMs as they preceded us in to the target. There was quite a bit of 85-mm flak as we rolled in and as we pulled off plus some 37/57-mm. At least 2 aircraft got hit though they didn't know it until they got home. We dropped CBUs and as I pulled off, I could see a number of secondary explosions. We picked up several more volleys of 85-mm flak as we came too close to Yen Bay going out. (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 4.)

Armstrong commented further on this mission in his memoir. "This was their primary MiG-21 base just Northwest of Hanoi. Up to this point it had been off limits for attack. We never did strike the civil airfield (Gia Lam) outside Hanoi although it was widely known that MiGs sometimes used it. LBJ and McNamara had this dumb idea that we would gradually increase the targets we were willing to strike and this was the way to get the North Vietnamese to sue for peace. Our wing came in first using the land route and dropped CBU's along the flight line to hit the MiGs in their revetments. Takhli rolled in just behind us with 3,000# bombs to destroy the runway. The F-4C's followed them with bombs and maybe even the Navy got in on this historic attack. I think we surprised them and did some considerable damage. There were no U.S. losses. No SA-2s were fired and the 85-mm flak was spotty. I was written up for a Silver Star on this mission but it was downgraded to a Distinguished Flying Cross. This was the first of three Silver Star downgrades -- so I never got one although most Thud pilots did." (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 11.)

"The 388 TFW pilots were fragged against the revetted aircraft parking areas. They encountered heavy AAA, SAMs and MiGs. Force commander, Maj Dalton L. Leftwich, 34 TFS, said, 'we caused secondary explosions in the target area.' A flight leader, Lt Col Harry W. Schurr, 469 TFS commander, saw many secondaries. He described them as 'the type you would expect from aircraft.' Later ... BDA from the raid gave three MiGs destroyed and four damaged, and extensive damage to the runway." Maj Leftwich received the First Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star for his actions during the mission. (388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO583, frame 1577.)

Two pilots in the flak suppression flights from Korat, both from the 34 TFS, were Lt Col Robert W. Smith, flying F-105D 61-0068, and Maj Floyd E. Henzig ["Olympia 3"] in F-105D 61-0152. They dropped CBUs on the airfield at coordinates 21-13-07N 105-48-22E. Also from the 34 TFS was Capt Douglas A. Beyer in F-105D 62-4356. (NARA Record NWDNM(m)-342-USA-42649B, "Air Strike Films, Vietnam")

Maj Kenneth W. Mays, also from the 34 TFS, flew in this raid. "I was most pleased to be a flight lead on the first attack on Phuc Yen. As expected we received a lot of fireworks. Without exception every pilot put good bombs on the target and numerous MiGs were destroyed on the ground (I have several photos). I came back from this mission with 151 holes in my acft and have a collection of Russian metal that the crew chief picked from my acft." (Col Ken Mays, USAF (Ret), unpublished memoir, "Tour At Korat -- July 67 to Feb 68", dated 15 Dec 2003.)

1Lt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, was another pilot from Korat on the first Phuc Yen strike. It was his 31st combat mission into North Vietnam.

"Target: Phuc Yen airfield.
"Armament: 4xCBU-24s 1 CBU-29

"First-time target. Went in with bad pod. Flak wasn't too bad but thought I got hit coming off target. 70 airplanes total hit target. Did really good work. Many big secondary explosions and fire. Several MiGs destroyed. Waited long time for this!"

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

Lt Henderson received the Distinguished Flying Cross (3rd OLC) for this mission. "...Captain Henderson was a member of a flight of four F-105 Thunderchiefs assigned to deliver ordnance against the most heavily defended airfield in North Vietnam. Flying through almost continuous surface-to-air missiles and some of the heaviest antiaircraft fire of the conflict, he delivered his ordnance precisely on his assigned target causing extensive damage to the airfield complex. ..." (Earl Henderson, combat diary and award citation.)

Maj Francis P. Walsh from the 44 TFS was another Korat pilot who dropped 750-pound bombs on the nearby Lang Dang railroad complex at coordinates 21-38-03N 106-35-11E. He flew F-105D 61-0219. (NARA Record NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649B, "Air Strike Films, Vietnam")

388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO583 frame 1577 & Chronology of Seventh Air Force 1 July 1967 - 30 June 1968, pg 5 & River Rats Album I, pgs 118 and 120.

04-Nov-67

4571

"On 4 November, a strike by eight F-105s on a troop concentration southwest of Ban Ban [in the Barrel Roll region of northern Laos] resulted in one secondary explosion with smoke to 500 feet. Strike photography also indicated approximately 200 KBA [Killed By Air]."

"Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS took off at 06:55. The lineup was:

#1 - Maj Kenneth W. Mays flying F-105D 62-4387
#2 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying 60-0488
#3 - Maj Raymond Walter Vissotzky
#4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 62-4221 on his 15th combat mission.
Spare - Maj David D. Igelman

"Diverted by Cricket UG 31142134 Firefly 11, 12." 19-11N and 103-24E.

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr., also from the 34 TFS, flew his 33rd combat mission. He struck a target in northeast Laos. "250+". Since this was a "counter" he must have crossed into North Vietnam.

7 Air Force Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (WAIS), 67-46 dated 11 Nov 67, for week of 3 - 9 Nov 1967, pg 7 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 4 Nov 67 & Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet.

05-Nov-67

4331

Maj Kenneth W. Mays from the 34 TFS flew in today's strike against Phuc Yen airfield and participated in the rescap for Capt Bill Sparks from the 333 TFS at Takhli. "On Nov 5, 1967 I was number 3 in a flight led by Floyd Henzig [Maj Floyd E. Henzig]. The target was Phuc Yen Air Field. Takhli was first in and they stirred up the hornet's nest. Korat had good bombs and did not lose an acft. We were the last flight in and as we pulled off the target ... Billy Sparks, indicated he was hit Floyd picked him up and we joined on him. As he crossed the Black River the acft was engulfed with flames and he ... bailed out Floyd and I set a pattern above him ---one element high and another low and called for rescue. A tanker came north and we took turns cycling to the tanker. Some F-4s came and set up high cap. We spent the next 1.5 hours running MiGs out of the area and shot up some trucks/troops trying to get to Sparks

"Sandys (A-1s) arrived and our concentration was providing them cover. After the Sandys assured the area was safe the Jolly Greens came in and made the pick up of Sparks This was the only real opportunity I had for shooting down a MiG, but had no missiles and when we pursued they left the area. A long day, but a successful day---good bombs on the target and a successful pick up of a fellow F-105 crew. ..."

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

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

19-Nov-67

4332

As "Tampa 1", Maj Kenneth W. Mays from the 34 TFS flew a combat mission to RP-6A. "On Nov 19, 1967 I was flight lead with the target being the Canal De Rapides river bridges (JCS 13) near Hanoi. My number 3 was Ray Vissotsky [Maj Raymond W. Vissotzky], a long time acquaintance and friend. We made a good run on the bridge and had good bombs, dropping a number of the spans.

"We were just south of Hanoi and I noticed Ray was on fire. I slowed down and got on his wing. The acft was burning like an Atlas missile in the engine area [with flames] ... moving toward the cockpit area. When the fire approached the cockpit, I told Ray he had to punch before the acft exploded. He ejected and I circled with the remaining flight and watched him get a good chute and sail toward the ground. [Maj Vissotzky was captured and became a POW.] Thank God he came home."

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

27-Nov-67

1447

"The Kep Ha Army Barracks (JCS 39.29), located 32 nautical miles north of Haiphong, on Highway Route 13, ... was struck by crews from the 388 TFW and the 355 TFW. ... This target consists of 16 major areas with a multitude of barracks, storage buildings and support facilities. It can supply vehicle support for the enemy logistics network and can act as a major training center. One notable possibility is the use of this area as a billeting and training area for the vast AAA defense network around Haiphong. The continuing attacks on this target have caused some loss of troops, a loss of vehicles and the destruction of valuable supplies. (pg 3)

"The Kep Ha Army Barracks were struck by 388 TFW pilots from Korat with seventy-two 750-pound bombs (M117s). Strike crews claimed damage or destruction of an unspecified number of structures." (pg 4)

Maj Kenneth W. Mays from the 34 TFS was probably on this strike. "Hugh Davis [Capt Hugh W. Davis] was my number 3 and we had hit Kep Ha military barracks as they kept shooting at us from there. We went in under a cloud deck to the target as the weather was marginal, but after going that distance and risking people and acft to get to the target we pressed on. Excellent bombs on the target as most acft carried CBU's (have photos of the barracks burning).

"On the way out from the target and just as we got feet- wet we started to climb. As we broke out of the clouds, we had a near mid-air collision with two MiG 21's. We were canopy to bottom of their acft for awhile. They went burner and cleared the area. Again no missiles on the acft. Hugh and I had a big laugh when we returned."

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. also from the 34 TFS, flew his 39th mission against the Kep Ha barracks. It was his 24th mission into RP-6. (20 Apr 09 letter from Carolyn Dickson giving annotation on cigar band dated 27 Nov 67.)

"F-105s from Takhli's 355 TFW delivered 54 M117s and 10 CBU-24s in a second attack, but no BDA was reported." (7 Air Force Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (WAIS), 67-49 dated 2 Dec 67, for week of 24 - 30 Nov 1967, pp 3 - 4.)

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1757 & Col Ken Mays, USAF (Ret), unpublished memoir, "Tour At Korat -- July 67 to Feb 68", dated 15 Dec 2003.

15-Dec-67

1449

In addition to planes from the 355 TFW, F-105s from the 388 TFW also struck the Canal des Rapides bridge (JCS 13) in RP-6A, North Vietnam.

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

Maj Louis L. Levy from the 469 TFS from Korat flew F-105D 62-4270 on a mission for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (Fourth Oak Leaf Cluster). " ... Major Levy was a member of a force of F-105 Thunderchiefs assigned to attack a vital railroad and highway bridge in the vicinity of Hanoi. Major Levy bravely fought his way through heavy defenses to successfully hit his target. ... "

Three other F-105D pilots from the 469 TFS were also on this strike, designated RT56A-226. They were Maj Wintford L. Bazzell flying 61-0220, Maj Stanley Henry Horne flying 61-0068, and Navy exchange officer Lt James Karg flying 62-4269.

Two pilots from the 34 TFS also bombed the nearby Trung Quang railroad yard at coordinates 21-05N and 105-55E. They were Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen flying 61-0132 and Maj Kenneth W. Mays flying 60-0435.

" ... It was necessary to strike the canal's two bypass bridges as well. All three were short and easily repaired, so the effect was at best temporary. In any case, the weather closed in again before much could be done to attack rolling stock backed up in railyards and on rail spurs. The big railyard at Yen Vien was hit, as was the rail car repair shop at Gia Lam, but the North Vietnamese put over a hundred cars on spurs that had not been authorized for attack. On the last day of clear weather (on 19 December), Seventh Air Force's request to hit these rail spurs was making its way too late through channels to Washington; approval did not reach Saigon until early the next morning." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 112).

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1757 & Lou Levy, award citation provided in reply to Ron Thurlow letter, 1 Oct 2001 & National Archives air strike films, archive control number NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649C.

21-Dec-67

4855

Four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Scuba" flight took off from Korat at 14:30 on a mission to bomb a target in northern Laos. They refueled from Red Anchor 40. The flight line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 59-1759
#2 - Capt Lawrence R. Klinestiver flying F-105D 62-4248
#3 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander flying F-105D 60-0462
#4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying F-105D 62-4270 on his 32nd mission.
Spare - Maj Kenneth W. Mays in 60-0449

It was Maj Armstrong's 41st combat mission. "This was to be my first flight as Mission Commander of the strike force. The weather was bad up in Pack VI so we went as individual flights instead up into northern Laos to work with a FAC. We had to wait for about 20 minutes orbiting the target, just penetrating Pack IV for a counter. We finally hit a road segment. All four of us put our bombs squarely on the target. Other than that, an uneventful mission." The flight lasted 2.7 hours.

Jake Shuler described how he remembered the mission. "Due to bad weather over the primary target, we were directed to work with FACs, Firefly 17 & 18, target 120 degrees 20 NM from Channel 97. We may have also worked with Raven FACs 40 & 41 with a time on target of 1510 hours, both targets in northern Laos."

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. in another flight with the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 50th combat mission, this one into Laos and Route Pack 2. He struck some trucks.

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Gator 3" against a truck park in the Barrel Roll region of Laos. "100%/ 1 large secondary." It was his 22nd combat mission.

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 17 & Jake Shuler's mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 21 Dec 67 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

14-Jan-68

4865

Weather diverted "Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS to a Sky Spot radar drop in RP-1. The flight took off at 1430. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Kenneth W. Mays
- #2 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr.
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0505
- #4 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer

This was Maj Armstrong's 54th combat mission. "Again a Cricket divert to Pack I. We did a Combat Sky Spot in Mu Gia Pass as weather was soaked in. Practiced some formation on way home. Nothing very spectacular." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 15 minutes.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 22.

28-Jan-68

4333

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

northwest thinking we were headed to Hanoi.

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

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

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

17-Feb-68

4879

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

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

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

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

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

Capt Sechler logged 2:30 flying hours.

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

22-Feb-68

4881

"Simmer" flight from the 34 TFS flew a morning mission into Laos. They took off at 0625. Their flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0409
- #2 - Bob Moore [???
- #3 - Maj Kenneth W. Mays flying his 99th combat mission
- #4 - Lt Col Dorwyn D. Shaver

This was Maj Armstrong's 72nd mission. "We made a radar drop on a target in Laos, east of Sam Nuea. There was fog and stratus in the valley so we couldn't assess our bombs. L/C Shaver had one bomb hang up and we had to jettison the bomb and rack in Pack III. We practiced some on the way home and that was it. Pretty easy." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 30 minutes.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 28.

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

23-Feb-68

4334

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

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

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

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

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

29-Feb-68

5164

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

Capt Irving E. LeVine - Flown 5 Feb 68 on his birthday.

Capt Vernon D. Ellis

Maj Kenneth W. Mays

Capt Harry Guy Paddon III - Flew his 100th on 29 Feb 1968. "Good old leap year."

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

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

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

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

#1 - Maj Melvin L. Irwin

#2 - Capt John S. Murphy

#3 - Maj Donald W. Hodge

#4 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his tenth mission.

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

Kenneth W. Mays

F-105 History

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