23-Jan-64 5223

F-105D Operational Training Course 111506E, Class 64-G, graduated from the 4520 CCTS, Nellis AFB, NV. The class began training on 6 November 1963 and was assigned to the 4526 CCTS commanded by Maj Warren Foss. The 25 student pilots in this class were:

Lt Col Aaron J. Bowman Capt Bruce G. Seeber (Held over on 1 Dec)

Maj Joseph W. Brand

Maj James L. Glessner, Jr.

Maj William C. Redeen

Capt James Q. Collins, Jr.

Capt Homer D. Deavult

Capt Kenneth D. Furth

Capt Glen H. Hales

Capt Delbert F. Smith

Capt Harold Victor Smith

Capt Jack R. Stresing

Capt Lester W. Sundt

Capt David E. Weaver

1Lt James E. Foston, Jr.

1Lt Wayne D. Hauth

Capt John R. Layman 1Lt Douglas G. Lauck (Assgnd to 36 TFS, 8 TFW, Itazuke)

Capt Robert N. Middlebrooks
Capt Robert G. Moore
Capt Elmer R. Olson
Capt William W. Raitt

1Lt Larry C. Mahaffey
1Lt Robert H. Schuler, Jr.
1Lt Benjamin D. Ulrich

Consist Orders AA 40 and AA 40 (Conbart dated C Nov. C

Special Orders AA-12 and AA-19 (Seeber) dated 6 Nov 63 in History of 4520th Combat Crew Training Wing, 1 July - 31 Dec 1963, AFHRA Call # K285.54-3, IRIS # 0488615.

12-Jan-65 18-Jan-65

541

Six F-105s and pilots from the 67 TFS, 18 TFW, deployed from Kadena AB, Okinawa, to Da Nang AB, South Vietnam. The pilots were: squadron commander Lt Col Robinson Risner, and Captains William H. Bollinger, Robert G. Moore, Wesley D. Schierman, William H. Meyerholt, and Carroll N. Rather.

"The six aircraft and crews departed Kadena on 12 January 1965, refueled in the Philippines area and then proceeded to Da Nang Air Base where they recovered in low weather conditions." The deployment was to participate in a strike on the Ban Ken Bridge in Laos. They struck the bridge on 13 January.

"The crews remained at Da Nang for five days, flying Yankee Team missions or airborne spare each day. On 18 January the crews returned to Kadena."

67 TFS History, 1 January - 30 June 1965, pgs 12 - 14.

13-Jan-65 542

Two elements from the 44 TFS and 67 TFS, 18 TFW, each with eight F-105s, struck the Ban Ken Bridge on Route 7 during a Barrel Roll mission (BR-9) in northern Laos at location 19-35N and103-40E. The units were on temporary duty at Korat, Thailand, but flew the mission from Da Nang AB, South Vietnam.

"Route 7 has been a main LOC through the mountains from Vietnam into Laos for hundreds of years. It was not much more than a beaten path worn by foot, oxcart, or as in 1965, trucks and bicycles which carried supplies to North Vietnamese troops in Laos. The road winds its way from the coast near Vinh, west through the lush vegetation of the mountains, crosses the border into Laos through the Berthelemy Pass, then down through the small village of Ban Ban where it intersects with Route 4, just before reaching the Plain of Jars. Roughly twelve kilometers to the east of Ban Ban the Nam Mat River winds its way through the rolling hills of jungle and elephant grass, passing under the Ban Ken Bridge, a small, reinforced, wooden structure." ("The First Bridge", by Lt Col Robert Hanson, USAF (Ret), in Daedalus Flyer, Spring 2007, pg 8.)

"Aerial photos showed thirty-four antiaircraft guns (37-mm and 57-mm) in place, with up to seventy more firing positions built but not occupied. The planners scheduled an RF-101 as pathfinder and another for bomb damage assessment, eight F-100s carrying CBU-2As for flak suppression, and sixteen F-105s from the 44th and the 67th Tactical Fighter Squadrons as strike aircraft. The two flights of F-100s were to fly low-level and abreast across the gunsites to knock them out with cluster bombs. Immediately thereafter the F-105s would attack the bridge. Each of the first eight F-105s were to drop eight 750-pound bombs. This would be followed by eight F-105s loaded with six bombs and two AGM-12B Bullpup air-to-ground missiles. An Air America C-123 was to serve as airborne control for rescue helicopters."

Lt Col William B. Craig, the 44 TFS Commander, led the raid's first element of eight F-105s. "This was the first large scale mission of the Vietnam War. It involved 16 F-105s and 12 F-100s plus 2 F-101 recce a/c. Because of the French Accords in force at that time, we were unable to launch the strike from Thailand. We therefore had to deploy to Danang, South Vietnam, where the strike force took off from. We air refueled going in. I led the first section of 8 F-105s. I was first in on the bridge and my section destroyed it. Robbie Risner led the second section of 8. With the bridge down, he moved up the road a bit and knocked down another bridge. We carried 8 750-pound MK-118 bombs. Several F-105s were carrying the AGM-12 (Bullpup). One of these, Al Vollmer, was shot down on his pass. He was picked up later that day and returned to Korat. One of the F-100s was also shot down, Charlie Ferguson by name, and he was also recovered. The recce pilot, Al Parks, was also hit and recovered at Danang. After Al's debrief in Saigon, he was flown to Washington where he briefed General LeMay, SecDef McNamara, and [the] President ... All participants of this mission were awarded Air Medals; I was awarded the DFC." (Bill Craig, e-mail to Ron Thurlow, 18 Mar 2001).

Capt Robert J. Lines, on his first combat mission, flew with the 44th element. In a British aviation magazine, Capt Lines described the attack. "The weatherman forgot to tell us it hadn't rained for three months, so when Risner dropped his first bomb there was nothing but a cloud of dust rising up to 12,000 feet, obscuring the bridge, road, etc. Everybody's flying into it, coming out the other side. So now they're just shooting the crap out of us. As the smoke clears, we find that one RF-101C has battle damage and is returning. One F-100 went down We lost an F-105 ..."

"The plan was to refuel and land at Da Nang. We had airplanes all over the place. You tried to find your tanker. You were mated with tankers and when it wasn't your tanker he wouldn't refuel you. Larry Guarino, who was later a POW from June 1965 to March 1973, told one of the tanker guys he'd shoot him down if he didn't give him some gas."

"Returning to Da Nang, there was a thunderstorm over the area. Da Nang had just one runway. Many of us diverted to Korat, which got headquarters in Saigon upset. From this, we learned a lot about tactics, etc. For one thing, flights of four were best."

Capt Dean Franklin Vikan from the 44 TFS also flew on this mission. His Form 5 shows it was the first of two combat missions he flew that day. It was his 4th combat mission and he flew for 2 hours 35 minutes with 15 minutes in weather. (Dean Vikan in note replying to to Ron Thurlow's letter dated 9 Oct 2001 that included his Form 5 for Jan - Mar 65).

Capt Willard H. Snell from the 44 TFS flew on this mission. "I was part of the first large fighter strike force of the Vietnam war. We attacked the Ban Ken Bridge in Laos on January 13, 1965. We had 16 F-105s (strike aircraft; eight from the 44th TFS and eight from the 67th TFS); eight F-100s (flak suppression aircraft from DaNang); two RF-101s (recce from the 15th TRS in Saigon); four pre- and post-strike KC-135 tankers; and one C-130 ABCCC.

"I was number four in the second F-105 flight carrying 750-lb bombs. We had a briefing at DaNang

(F-105s, 'were never allowed to conduct strikes from the country of [Thailand],' and also, our operations out of Thailand were Top Secret ...no one knew, except the enemy). The plan was to deploy the F-105 force from Korat to DaNang. The reason was that, at that time, no strikes were to fly from Thailand, although some 'combat actions' were taking place regularly (Yankee Team Escort), and it was too complicated to send the weapons from Korat to DaNang. The first attempt to launch was cancelled for bad weather, after we had taxied to the runway. So much for secrecy. We ended up at the DOOM Club (DaNang Officers Open Mess) to drink, BBQ steaks, and watch the artillery strikes near Monkey Mountain. What a war.

"We went on the Ban Ken strike the next day. The frag stated that we had boom refueling tankers, not probe and drogue, even though the Thud could do both. I had never refueled with a boom, nor was I briefed on it. I decided not to mention this small item to my squadron commander, Lt Col Bill Craig (RIP), who was our flight leader on this mission, since I figured he would replace me. The boom pre-strike refueling for me was a disaster, and I had great difficulty getting fuel. I finally got fuel when the Boss said I'd have to return to base unless I got hooked up. It wasn't pretty, but I learned about boom refueling OJT, alternately using AB and speed brakes, and wiping the controls throughout the cockpit.

"Approaching the target, I noticed a broken deck of 'clouds' below us. The forecast was clear weather. Then I realized that it was flak from 37 and 57mm gun sites. They were shooting with vigor at my pink body!

"We unloaded our bombs and dropped the bridge, which looked like a footpath, and then set up for strafe as per the briefing from my element leader, Ed Skowron. Since I was hanging on for dear life, I flew fairly close wing on Ed, and just fired my gun when he did. On the strafe run, I was astounded to see an AGM-83 Bullpup missile come smoking down between Ed and me, ten feet away, headed toward some ground target. The missile was fired by Al Vollmer (RIP) who apparently did not see us when he launched that beauty. Al was hit on his pull-out and ejected some distance from the target. He was picked up by Rescue Forces. Ed Skowron and I CAPed the rescue until Al was picked up.

"The radio was pure mayhem, just one loud squeal, since all aircraft were on the same frequency. Two were shot down and others had damage. Emergency beepers were blaring on Guard channel. The radios actually turned out to be useless.

"On post-strike refueling, using NORDO procedures, we used visual signals with the boomer to haggle for gas. There were about seven Thuds in right echelon to receive fuel. I requested 3,000 pounds. The boomer shook the boom side-to-side saying, 'No,' and I got almost 1,000 ... just enough to return to Korat. The poor tanker guys had to ration the fuel so everyone could get some. It was a bizarre mission from which we all learned a LOT." (Story by Will Snell in the E-Newsletter of the F-105 Pilots Association, FINAL EDITION - Issue Number 4 - October 12, 2011, THE BAN KEN BRIDGE --- ONE OF THE FIRST HO-HUM DAYS - BY WILL SNELL)

Members of the second element, led by Lt Col Robinson Risner, commander of the 67 TFS were: Capt William H. Meyerholt, Capt Robert G. Moore, Capt Wesley D. Schierman, Major Lawrence N. Guarino, Capt Albert C. Vollmer, Capt William H. Bollinger, and Capt Carroll Noell Rather.

"The F-100s pummeled the gun positions but some firing continued. The first wave of F-105s cut the bridge with their sixty-four bombs. The F-100s and the second wave of F-105s made multiple runs on the gunsites, the mixed ordnance of the F-105s requiring at least three passes to expend. Moreover, the Thunderchiefs had to descend into flak range to control their missiles, and one plane was downed. An F-100 on its fifth pass was also shot down. Four other aircraft were damaged."

The first section of the strike force hit the bridge dropping its east span and damaging other sections. The second strike element dropped all other spans, severely damaging the abutments and the footing of the bridge.

An F-105D (62-4296) and F-100 (56-3510), flying flak suppression, were hit by ground fire. F-100 pilot, Capt Charles L. Ferguson, and F-105D pilot Capt Albert C. Vollmer, were rescued.

Capt Al Parks was the pilot of the RF-101C. "I was to be the Pathfinder, because the fighters, F-105s, F-100s, had little knowledge of the terrain in Laos. George Hall was my back up or spare. George later that year got shot down over North Vietnam and spent 7 and one half years in the Hanoi Hilton. The entire package all started their engines at the same time by cartridge start. Awsome. We hit the tanker over the southern most part of Laos. They were B-29s all trailing three baskets each. The refueling was quite difficult and much longer than planned. I elected to not take on fuel since I would have been last and it would have been hard for me to get ahead of the lead flight and do my job as pathfinder. I got into position and the 105s all had me in sight and we flew to the Plains of Jars and up the right side of them until we reached the river the bridge was on. As soon as we turned right down the river at 17,000 feet, I had the bridge in sight. The 105s acknowledged and a few minutes later the 100s did so also. The flight leads of 105s and 100s all took over on their own and proceeded to do their jobs. I took up a postion to film the strike damage on the bridge. I was so concerned with the bridge, I did not notice the 100s. The 105s hit the bridge on the first pass and then just blew it away. Col Risner took his flight east to another bridge and I filmed that strike also. The 105s all left the target area to the south and returned to base. The 100s were low on fuel and capped the incoming helicopters, as long as they could before they had to recover to Danang. I had filmed the raid from 15.000 feet with split vertical cameras. The bridge was in a valley running east and west. I elected to depart the area, just beyond the mountain to the south, drop down to tree top level back to the bridge for some low level film of the bridge. As I went over the bridge at tree-top level, my canopy turned orange and all the fire lights came on then went out. I pulled up vertical and got out of there. A few minutes later I noticed I was bleeding from my left forearm. I also had a hole in the side of the aircraft. I was about 600 to 800 miles from Danang and since I had not taken any fuel on during the refueling. I was very low. All my instruments were out so I climbed to 37,000 feet to save fuel. Thailand was cloudy so it was on to Danang. I only had the whisky compass, so I took up a heading that was in error by 10 degrees to the north. That way if I missed the base, I could hit the coast and turn right. I saw the coast through the clouds, let down, and after a right turn the base was in sight. I put my gear down by the emergency method My canopy was still on, but the ground crew had to cut it off as the 37-mm had jammed it closed. The 37-mm entered the cockpit on a downward angle, hit the side panel of the seat and went behind the seat and blew up. I was met by the General and they got the film out of the aircraft and put it into the spare aircraft. ... The RF-101 I flew ... stayed in the hanger at Danang because no one could fix the egress system. The 37-mm blew it up. George Hall was the spare and I was primary. We flew the mission and George stayed at Danang until everyone returned and there was no word on my status. He took off and flew to the bridge looking for me. ..." (Al Parks, e-mails to Ron Thurlow, 22 Oct and 10 Nov 2001.)

"General Moore (2 AD commander) said that poor judgment was displayed in the attack. To escape the losses, the planes should have broken off the engagement after knocking out the bridge."

On 16 January 1965, despite his pronouncement, General Moore presented Air Medals to all pilots participating in the strike.

"While it seemed impossible for ground transportation to bypass the Ban Ken bridge, the communists within three days converted the top of the dam just upriver into a traffic route. Press reports of the two lost aircraft prompted Senator Wayne L. Morse to charge that the air operation

violated the 1962 Geneva agreements on Laos."

67 TFS History, 1 January - 30 June 1965 & "The United States Air Force in South East Asia, The Advisory Years to 1965", pg 257 & "Interdiction in Southern Laos 1960 - 1968", pg 48 & Air Combat Magazine, "The 'Thud' at War".

16-Jan-65

At Da Nang AB, General Joseph Moore, commander of 2nd Air Division, presented Air Medals to some of the F-105 and F-100 pilots who flew in the raid against the Ban Ken Bridge on 13 January 1965. The aircrews were:

Lt Col Robinson Risner - 67 TFS
Maj Robert Ronca - 613 TFS TDY from England AFB LA.
Maj James A. McLaughlin - 613 TFS
Capt J. Cutler - 613 TFS
Capt William H. Meyerholt - 67 TFS
Capt Robert G. Moore - 67 TFS
Capt Wesley D. Schierman - 67 TFS

67 TFS History, 1 January - 30 June 1965, pp 14 - 16.

30-Jun-65 4580

The following is a list of 10 key personnel in the 67 TFS, 18 TFW, Kadena AB, Okinawa, as of 30 June 1965:

Lt Col Robinson Risner - Commander

Lt Col Lawrence D. Damewood - Operations Officer

Maj James W. Mathews - Asst Operations Officer

Capt Paul E. Dillon - Administrative Officer

Maj Ronald E. Byrne, Jr. - Alert Task Force (ATF) Echo Commander

Maj Raymond J. Merritt - AFT Foxtrot Commander

Capt Glen Ward - ATF Golf Commander

Capt William H. Bollinger - ATF Hotel Commander

Capt Wesley D. Schierman - Flying Safety Officer

1Lt Duane H. Zieg - Personal Equipment Officer.

"The Alert Task Force Commander is responsible for assignment and performance of the duties by the line pilots in accomplishing the 67th TFS's mission." During the period 1 Jan - 30 Jun 65, "Captain John T. Stadler, Capt Edward Nowokunski and 1Lt Dean Albert Klenda were assigned to the squadron directly from the F-105D operational fighter course at Nellis AFB, Nevada. This was the 'long' course (approximately 150 flying hours) and the pilots arrived at Kadena requiring only a few missions to bring them to combat ready status. Captain Edgar Lee Hawkins and Capt James Goode were assigned to the squadron from the Direct Air Support Flight here at Kadena. The officers possess a broad background in the fighter field primarily in the F-100s. They received a local checkout in the F-105 and are rapidly approaching combat ready status."

Officers departing the squadron during this period were: Capt Edward L. Carron, Capt Gene Goodwin, Capt Robert G. Moore, and Capt Carroll Noell Rather.

67 TFS history, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 65, pp 3 - 4, USAF microfilm KO492.

21-Feb-68 4880

"Bass" flight from the 34 TFS bombed an underwater ford in Laos. The flight took off at 14:50. Their line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0505

#2 - Bob Moore [???] [Maj Robert G. Moore]

#3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer

#4 - Maj Ivor K. Goodrich

This was Maj Armstrong's 71st combat mission. "This was the first flight for Bob Moore and the 5th flight for Goodrich. They did real well. We were first alternate target of course and we hit an underwater ford down in Laos near Khe Sanh. Our bombs were pretty good. Afterwards, we made an armed recce of Red Route but the weather was bad." Their mission lasted 2 hours 40 minutes.

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

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 [???] [Maj Robert G. 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.

05-Mar-68 5876

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 94th combat mission against Route 7 in RP-3.

"Pistol" flight from the 34th flew a mission over North Vietnam. The lineup was:

#1 - Bob Moore [Maj Robert G. Moore]

#2 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 13th mission

#3 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

#4 - Capt John S. Murphy

Capt Sechler logged 2:20 flying hours.

Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 5 Mar 68 & Joe Sechler, e-mail 28 Apr 10.

04-Apr-68 7941

The 388 TFW issued an order designating F-105 Instructor Pilots, Flight Examiners, and Functional Check Flight Pilots and EWOs. The names on the order were:

Instructor Pilots (34 TFS)	Instructor Pilots (469 TFS)	Instructor Pilots (44 TFS)
Maj Roger D. Ingvalson	Lt Col Dwight E. Mason	Maj Michael S. Muskat
Maj Spence M. Armstrong	Maj Thomas W. C. Birge	Maj Robert S. Beale
Maj Donald W. Hodge	Maj Charles C. Vasiliadis	Maj William Baechle
Maj Eugene P. Beresik	Maj Francis J. Byrne	Maj Robert H. Braden
Maj Robert G. Moore	Maj John H. Tobin	Maj Richard E. Steere
Maj James H. Metz	Capt William O. Harris III	Maj Harrison W. Matthews
Maj William P. Shunney	Capt Robert J. Furman	Maj Allan L. Young
Maj Carl B. Light	Capt Peter K. Foley	Capt Charles W. McConnell

Maj Melvin L. Irwin

Capt Robert W. Ferrel

Flight Examiners (34 TFS) Maj Roger D. Ingvalson Maj James H. Metz Flight Examiners (469 TFS)
Capt Robert J. Furman
Capt Peter K. Foley

Flight Examiners (44 TFS) Maj Harrison W. Matthews Maj Robert H. Braden

Functional Check Flight Pilots (44 TFS)

Maj Michael S. Muskat

Maj Robert S. Beale

Maj John F Unangst

Maj Emmett E. "Ez" Ott

Maj William Bechle

Maj Richard E. Steere

Maj Robert H. Braden

Maj Allan L. Young

Maj Harrison W. Matthews

Maj John H. Revak

Capt Joseph A. Grimaud

Capt David L. Ferguson

Instructor EWOs (44 TFS)

Capt John W. Gross

Capt Kyle Stouder

Capt Lary G. Burleigh

Capt John A. Stetson

Capt James G. Violette

Capt Charles W. McConnell

Capt Thomas J. McGuire IV

Capt Donald E. Samanski

Functional Check Flight EWOs (44 TFS)

Maj Stanley E. Goldstein

Capt Thomas J. McGuire IV Capt Robert W. Carter

Capt Kyle Stouder

Capt Ronald L. Hager

Capt Lary G. Burleigh

Capt Donald E. Samanski

Capt Anatole Radko

Capt James T. Wallace

Capt John A. Stetson Capt Ralph D. Bohr

Capt James G. Violette

Capt Richard R. Gordy

Capt Herman E. Chelette

1Lt Leonard M. Marsico

388 Combat Support Group, Special Order AA-58 dated 4 April 68 from John Revak.

11-Apr-68 4915

"Simmer" flight from the 34 TFS hit a "Sky Spot" target in RP-1, North Vietnam. The flight took off at 0830 and returned after flying for 3 hours 10 minutes. The line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270

#2 - Moore [???] [Maj Robert G. Moore]

#3 - Maj Melvin L. Irwin

#4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

This was Maj Armstrong's 97th combat mission. "The weather over along the coast was really rotten this morning. We were originally scheduled to work with a FAC in South Vietnam. The weather there was too bad for a visual delivery. They were going to set us up for a Sky Spot in the same area. Fortunately for us, the Sky Spot facility was pretty well stacked up with flights so I got

Hillsboro to set us up with another agency for a Sky Spot just over the DMZ and got a 'counter' the only possible way."

Using Sky Spot radar, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Crossbow 3" to attack a road segment in South Vietnam. It was his 58th combat mission.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 37 & Rufus Dye Mission History log..

15-Apr-68 2288

Capt Bill Harris, 469 TFS, 388 TFW, flew F-105D 60-0505 on his 54th combat mission from Korat RTAFB, Thailand. It was a FAC-controlled mission followed by armed reconnaissance in RP-1, North Vietnam. Sortie length was 3 hours 10 minutes.

"Locust" was a flight of pilots from the 34 TFS. The lineup was:

- #1 Maj Clarence E. Langford
- #2 Capt James V. Barr
- #3 Bob Moore [Maj Robert G. Moore]
- #4 Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 30th combat mission. He logged 2:55 flying time.

As part of an Iron Hand flight, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Ozark 4" to attack a SAM site in RP-1. "100%. One secondary. Light 37-mm." It was his 61st combat mission.

Capt Craig M. White with Radar Bombardier/WSO Capt Jared P. Lowe, 44 TFS 388 TFW, flew F-105F 63-8363 as the single-ship "Hotrod" to a target in RP-1. They logged 1+30 night flying hours.

Bill Harris, letter, 19 March 2001 & Joe Sechler mission log via e-mail 29 Apr 10 & Rufus Dye Mission History log & Craig White log book, pg 8, e-mail 21 Nov 17.

06-Apr-70

Maj Robert G. Moore flew the F-105 for the last time. Since his first flight on 1 November 1963, he had accumulated 479.4 hours in the Thunderchief.

F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.