

John O. Rollins II

F-105 History

04-Oct-63

5230

At the 4520 CCTW at Nellis AFB NV, Class 64-D of F-105D Operational Training Course 111506E graduated 25 pilots. The course started on 8 August 1963 and was assigned to the 4523 CCTS commanded by Lt Col Claude D. Phillips. The student pilots and their home bases were:

Lt Col William L. Janssen - 388 TFW McConnell

Maj Phillip A. Coll - England

Maj William Earl Cooper - 355 TFW George

Maj Dean F. Skinner - 8 TFW Itazuke

Maj Elvis H. Walker - 388 TFW McConnell

George

Capt Roscoe E. Anderson - MacDill

Capt Roderick G. Beckett - Cannon

Capt Richard K. Ely - 355 TFW George

Capt Audrey D. Hare - 355 TFW George

Capt Vernon D. Hesterman - 8 TFW Itazuke

Capt David B. Hubbard, Jr. - 8 TFW Itazuke

1Lt Dan R. McKinney - 8 TFW Itazuke

Capt William S. Koenitzer - 355 TFW George

Capt Michael F. McNamara - 8 TFW Itazuke

Capt Willard F. Millner, Jr. - 8 TFW Itazuke

Capt John O. Rollins II - 8 TFW Itazuke

Capt William E. "Bill" Sanders - 355 TFW

Capt Thomas W. Sima - 8 TFW Itazuke

Capt William D. Stigers - 355 TFW George

Capt Marvin A. Wicks - 388 TFW McConnell

1Lt William A. Becker - 8 TFW Itazuke

1Lt James A. Fowler - 8 TFW Itazuke

1Lt George E. Gifford - Myrtle Beach

1Lt Gilbert B. Holmes, Jr. - 355 TFW George

1Lt Robert L. Keller - England

Special Order AA-1 dated 9 August 63 in History of the 4520 CCTW, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 63, AFHRA Call # K285.5435, IRIS # 0488615.

30-Dec-63

8021

Capt William G. Donovan from the 35 TFS, 8 TFW, satisfactorily completed his Standardization Instrument Flight Check in the F-105 at Itazuke. His check pilot was Capt John O. Rollins II.

Donovan's Individual Flight Record

13-Jul-64

8022

F-105 pilot Capt William G. Donovan from the 35 TFS, 41 Air Division at Yokota satisfactorily completed his Annual Tactical Proficiency Flight Evaluation. His evaluator was Capt John O. Rollins II.

Donovan's Individual Flight Record

16-Dec-64

5472

Lt Col Robinson Risner, commander of the 67 TFS, 18 TFW, "... led eight other Bomb Commanders to Itazuke Air Base to participate in Operation Peace Check."

In the 35 TFS, 41 Air Division, at Yokota, F-105 pilot Capt William G. Donovan satisfactorily completed his Annual Tactical Proficiency Flight Evaluation. His evaluator was Capt John O. Rollins II.

History of 18 TFW, Jul - Dec 1964, pg 43, USAF microfilm MO496, frame 1438 & Donovan's Individual Flight Record

04-Mar-65

04-May-65

95

The 36 TFS from Yokota AB, Japan, deployed F-105s to Takhli RTAFB, Thailand. "By 6 March 20 F-105 aircraft were in place at Takhli Air Base, Thailand. Local flying began on 7 March and the first 0-7 mission was flown on 9 March. The 36 TFS maintained 20 aircraft at Takhli until 20 March, at which time two were returned to Yokota to aid in SIOP commitments."

One of the deploying pilots was Capt Douglas G. Lauck who had been with the 36th since February 1964 when the squadron was with the 8 TFW at Itazuke AB, Japan. He had moved to Yokota on 24 May 1964 when the squadron transferred to the 41 Air Division. This was his second combat

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deployment with the 36th; his first was in August 1964 to Korat in response to the Gulf of Tonkin episode. (Doug Lauck, e-mails 25 and 27 Sep 06 & 348 CSG SO A-1019 dated 28 April 1964.)

Earlier, between November 1959 and May 1960, the CIA flew C-130s from Takhli dropping insurgents and supplies into Tibet. During World War II, Takhli was a Japanese fighter base.

The 36 TFS was the first squadron to operate F-105s from Takhli. They replaced the 428 TFS, an F-100 squadron of the 474 TFW from Cannon AFB NM. The 428 TFS had moved into Takhli from Da Nang on 3 January 1965. The Cannon wing had been rotating its F-100 squadrons to Takhli since 1962. When they were relieved at Takhli, the 428 TFS transferred its damaged F-100s to PACAF and flew its 13 remaining F-100Ds and F-100Fs back to Cannon. (Corona Harvest Chronology of Significant Airpower Events in Southeast Asia, 1954 - 1967, pg 57.)

The pilots deploying with the 36 TFS were:

Col Max T. Beall - 41 AD	Capt John O. Rollins II
Lt Col Donovan L. McCance - 36 TFS commander	Capt Vernon D. Hesterman
Capt Stanley S. Rynear	Capt James I. Miholick
1Lt William A. Becker	Capt Jerry L. Stamps
Capt Robert H. Schuler, Jr.	Capt Onofino J. Andrews
Capt Dwight P. Bowles	1Lt Dan R. McKinney
1Lt Robert H. Jones	Capt Wayne D. Hauth
Capt Michael P. Cooper	Capt Lester W. Sundt
Capt Douglas G. Lauck	Capt Bruce G. Seeber
Capt David S. Graben	Capt Roderick G. Beckett
Capt Bernard G. Lyons	Maj Robert A. Farnsworth, Jr.
1Lt Benjamin D. Ulrich	Capt Edward S. Johnson - 41 AD

"During the deployment, the greatest problems encountered were in the areas of support and communications. Facilities at Takhli were poor and communications with other headquarters were often totally unreliable. The airlift of maintenance personnel and equipment was likewise difficult and delays all too common. The formation of the 6441 TFW on 1 April aided somewhat in relieving these problems; however, they continued as a source of irritation for several weeks to come. In fact it was not until the 6441 TFW had completed its organization at Yokota that the communication and airlift problems began to improve. Maintenance and operations personnel pulled together as they never had before and in spite of the grim living and working conditions, morale became high and stayed high. The base support personnel, many of whom were not from the 41 AD or the 6441 TFW did not share in this feeling of cohesiveness and the result was that separation in purpose occurred. This, in turn, led to conflicts between the support and tactical complexes that could have been avoided if all would have been members of the same command under a common leader." (6441 TFW history)

6441 TFW History, Apr - Jun 65, USAF microfilm PO231 & History of the 355 TFW, USAF microfilm NO460 & "Secret Mission to Tibet", Air & Space Magazine, Jan 98, Pgs 62 - 71 & 441 Cbt Sup Gp SO TB-463 dated 2 March 1965.

26-Aug-65 **28-Oct-65**

309

In a continuing series of TDY combat rotations by the three squadrons of the 6441 TFW at Yokota AB, Japan, the 36 TFS deployed for their third combat tour. Their first was to Korat in August 1964. This was their second deployment to Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, to replace the 80 TFS. The 36 TFS commander was Lt Col Howard F. "Red Dog" Hendricks.

Capt Douglas G. Lauck was one of the 36 TFS pilots on this deployment. This was his third 60-day TDY deployment with the 36th to Thailand and his second one to Takhli. During this deployment,

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he raised his total North Vietnam combat missions to about 48.

Other pilots on the deployment were:

Col Chester L. Van Etten, the 6441 TFW Commander
Maj Dean A. Pogreba, the 36 TFS Operations Officer
Capt John O. Rollins II
Maj Richard P. Fitzgerald
Capt Lester W. Sundt
Capt John R. Layman
Capt Rex L. Dull
Capt Clarence E. Fox
Capt Jerry L. Stamps
Capt William A. Becker
Maj Wayne N. Whatley
Capt Fredrick William Shattuck, Jr.
Capt David L. Hatten
Capt Bernard G. Lyons
Capt James I. Miholick
Lt Col William L. Janssen from the 6441 TFW Staff
Capt Michael F. McNamara from the 6441 TFW Staff
Capt Jack R. Stresing from the 41 AD Staff

Capt Robert H. Jones
Capt Vernon D. Hesterman
Capt Thomas W. Sima
Capt Onofiro J. Andrews
Capt Roderick G. Beckett
Capt Donnie R. Duplissey
Capt Robert H. Schuler, Jr.
1Lt Delbert F. Miller
Capt Bruce G. Seeber
Capt Paul H. Stormont
Capt Wayne D. Hauth
Capt David S. Graben
Capt Stanley S. Rynear
1Lt Benjamin D. Ulrich
1Lt Denis D. O'Donoghue

6441 TFW History, Jul - Dec 65, USAF microfilm PO232 & Doug Lauck, e-mail 25 Sep 2006 & 441 Cmbt Spt Gp Special Order TA-424 dated 5 Aug 65.

11-Aug-67

318

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Lotzbire, flying F-105D 62-4262 as "Marlin 3", and Capt George S. Balog in 61-0181. Maj Baker received a Silver Star (1 OLC) for gallantry for this mission. "... Major Baker led a flight of four F-105 Thunderchiefs on a strike against the most vital railroad/highway bridge in North Vietnam linking important transportation routes from Hanoi to China. Major Baker led his flight on a successful bomb run resulting in the complete destruction of the center span of the bridge. ..." (Valor Awards at <http://projects.militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/recipient.php?recipientid=24074>.)

Capt Robert W. Spielman was one of the 357 TFS pilots on this mission. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross. "New York Times (12 Aug reporting 11 Aug ops) ... Page 1: 'U.S. Bombs Bridge That Links Hanoi to China and Port of Haiphong' ...United States fighter-bombers cut the rail and highway bridge across the Red River at Hanoi today ... an important link to China, the port of Haiphong and the Hanoi airport... In a special announcement the Air Force fighter-bombers, Thunderchiefs and Phantoms ...knocked out a section of the span called the Paul Doumer Bridge with four direct hits. ... No planes were lost although the pilots flew through intense anti-aircraft fire and surface to air missiles ... the bridge is a 19-section steel structure set on piles across a mile-wide river. An island divides the waterway into two channels of which only the eastern is navigable for deepwater vessels. A section over the eastern channel was knocked out by the bombing ... the pilots cut the capital off from China, Haiphong and the airport at Gia Lam. The Red River bridge was among a number of important targets that were immune to attack up to now. The list still includes the port of Haiphong, three MIG air bases, dikes, dams and number of industrial installations." (<https://supersabresociety.com/biography/robert-w-spielman/>)

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

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

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

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

Wild Weasel pilot Capt William J. Schaff from the 357 TFS flew in a Wild Weasel flight to support

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the Hanoi Bridge strike. "I was in an F-105D model 'glued' to the wing of an F-105F Weasel crew from Takhli. Of my 100+ missions over N.Vietnam as a Weasel, I flew 85 missions in an F-105F, but due to lack of having enough F models for all the 355th TFW missions, we Weasel pilots were sometimes allowed to fly a D model, on the wing of an F-105F in the Weasel flight-of-4 just to maintain our flying proficiency -- thus my 'D' ride on 11 August 1967. If I remember correctly, the weather was not very good. I believe we altered our normal ingress route to approach the Hanoi area. We flew more directly across the flat Vietnam delta to approach the Hanoi area from the South West direction. Our approach was from the West-Southwest instead of our normal fragged route which was to come down from the north along Thud Ridge. I remember flying at low level, in a hazy weather day, and as we got closer to Hanoi the SAMs and AAA radar signals were numerous. Our Weasel element was on the left side of the main strike force and the Korat Weasels were on the right side of the 'gaggle'. I remember our Weasel element making several passes toward the Hanoi area (about three 'circles') to fire Shrikes if necessary. It was during my second turn around to go back into the target area (during a steep port turn where I was looking 'down' at my lead) when I spotted an occupied flak site on the ground below us. Called lead and we kept turning to attack that flak site. Remember using a shallow dive angle to drop some bombs - 750 pounders? I think. Due to the haze and clouds I don't know the bomb assessment. But we survived and came back home with no bombs, no shrikes, but some 20-MM left! Good day at black rock. No holes in our aircraft!!" (Bill Schaff e-mail to Ron Thurlow, 22 Aug 17.)

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

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

Korat's AAA and SAM suppression flight, "Splendid", was led by Lt Col James F. McInerney, Jr., commander of the 13 TFS from Korat, with his EWO Capt Fred A. Shannon. His 388 TFW Iron Hand flight consisted of one other "F" and two F-105Ds. The line-up for "Splendid" flight was:

1. F-105F 63-8302 Lt Col James E. McInerney and EWO Capt Fred A. Shannon, 13 TFS
2. F-105D 62-4242 Lt Col Richard F. B. Gimmi, Jr., 388 TFW/DO Staff flying with the 13 TFS
3. F-105F 63-8295 Maj John H. Reddoch and EWO Capt Robert K. Wilson, 13 TFS
4. F-105D 60-0488 Maj Wintford L. Bazzell, 388 TFW staff flying with the 469 TFS

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

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

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

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We destroyed both positions as well as their associated equipment."

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

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

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

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

Lt Col Richard F.B. Gimmi, Jr., 469 TFS, flying as "Splendid 02" in Korat's Wild Weasel flight, received the Silver Star for this mission. "On 11 August 1967, Colonel Richard F.B. Gimmi, Jr., (then Lt Colonel) distinguished himself by gallantry in action against an enemy force as the pilot of the number two F-105 aircraft in a four aircraft flak suppression flight (call sign, Splendid) over North Vietnam. On that date, Colonel Gimmi, as Splendid Two, helped to suppress six enemy surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites which were defending an important strategic transportation link - the Doumer Bridge over the Red River near Hanoi - against an incoming 388th Tactical Fighter Wing strike force of twenty-four F-105 aircraft carrying two 3,000 pound high explosive bombs each. Despite three surface-to-air missiles launched at Splendid Flight, which were outmaneuvered by aggressive evasive action; the threat of airborne MiG fighters in the target area; and intense antiaircraft artillery fire, which did damage Splendid Two's aircraft, Colonel Gimmi, with undaunted determination and courage, destroyed a SAM radar control center and three surface-to-air missiles. In addition, several other surface-to-air missile sites were forced into sporadic operation which greatly reduced the SAM threat to the F-105 Strike Force. Before returning to its base at Korat, Thailand, Splendid Flight remained in the target area providing continued enemy antiaircraft artillery, SAM and radar suppression until all strike aircraft had entered and departed the target area. The extraordinary performance of each Splendid Flight member, individually and as a team, greatly reduced the amount and accuracy of the awesome fire power focused on the Strike Force. Thus, the F-105 strike aircraft were able to drop their bombs with concentrated accuracy inflicting severe and extensive damage to the target without a single loss of USAF aircraft or aircrew. By his gallant actions and devotion to duty, Colonel Gimmi reflected great credit upon

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himself and the United States Air Force." (Gimmi Silver Star award citation in "Airman. The Life of Richard F. B. Gimmi", by Russell M. Gimmi, iUniverse, Inc., pp 309 - 310.)

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

Maj William W. Raitt, flying with the 44 TFS, received the Silver Star. "The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 8, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Major William W. Raitt ,,,, United States Air Force, for gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force while serving with the 44th Tactical Fighter Squadron, in action on 11 August 1967, over North Vietnam. On that date, Major Raitt led a flight of four F-105 Thunderchiefs against the Hanoi Railroad/Highway Bridge. Major Raitt completely disregarded his own personal safety and flew through heavy 85-mm. flak, evaded four SA-2 surface-to-air missiles and delivered his ordnance precisely on target. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Major Raitt has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (General Orders: Headquarters, 7th Air Force, Special orders G-2166 (December 4, 1967), on-line at <http://militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/recipient.php?recipientid=24674>)

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

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

- #1 - Maj Robert T. Campbell
- #2 - Capt Rodney A. Skoglund
- #3 - Maj John O. Rollins
- #4 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying his second sortie of the day and his 41st mission to NVN. He logged 3.0 hours. (Larry Hoppe e-mail 14 June 2010 & AF Form 5.)

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

Post-strike bomb damage assessment confirmed the bridge was downed. A gun camera film clip showed one bomb impact directly on the bridge. Film from an aft-looking camera showed smoke

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from numerous impacts covering portions of the bridge. " ...Strike photos showed numerous impacts on or adjacent to the bridge and a large gap where a span had been dropped into the river. Post-strike photos taken shortly after the strike clearly showed the extent of damage. In addition to the downed span, the superstructure of the adjacent span had been heavily damaged and the highway decking destroyed at three locations. The transmission lines crossing the bridge were severed and a fire, probably from a burning vehicle, could be seen. Numerous other vehicles were still on the bridge with several appearing to be damaged. Destruction of JCS 12 effectively denied through traffic to Hanoi on all northern rail lines." (PACAF 16 August 67 Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 24 Jul - 13 Aug 67)

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

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

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

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

30-Aug-67

2957

The 355 TFW history listed the officers arriving and departing the 354 TFS in August 1967.

Arrivals

Maj Charles Edward Cappelli
Maj Robert W. Kennedy
Maj John O. Rollins
Capt Gene I. Basel
Capt Eric C. Lunde
Capt Lawrence G. "Jerry" Evert
Capt Martin D. Scott

Departures

Maj Everett M. "Ed" Sutton
Capt Howard L. Bodenhamer
Maj William R. Powers
Maj Paul A. Seymour
Capt Robert B. Middleton - Transferred to the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, Korat.
1Lt Roger L. Prather

355 TFW history, Jul - Sep 67, USAF microfilm NO463, frame 0343.

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.

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"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."

Maj Pawlik last flew the F-105 in February 1968. He had accumulated 436.1 hours in the aircraft.

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

03-Sep-67

3005

Pilots from the 354 TFS at Takhli formed "Bear" flight and struck a JCS target in North Vietnam. The flight line-up was:

- #1 - Maj John O. Rollins
- #2 - Capt Malcolm D. Winter flying F-105D 60-0415 on his 34th combat mission
- #3 - Maj Anton J. Mickech
- #4 - Maj Robert H. Bennett

They were scheduled to strike Kep airfield (JCS 9.1) but weather diverted them to Kep Ha airfield (JCS 9.11).

The 354 TFS Wild Weasel crew of Maj James L. Davis and EWO Capt Phillip H. Walker flew their mission #15. "Route Pack VI. No SAMs, no flak. Chased by MiGs. Dropped CBU's on Kep Ha Army Barracks. Bombs on target."

Combat mission log of Mal Winter transcribed by his son, Mike Winter & James Davis mission notes transcribed by his son, Geoffrey Davis.

09-Oct-67

4828

In the afternoon, two 2-ship flights from the 34 TFS attacked targets in North Vietnam.

Maj John O. Rollins, flying his 100th mission, led Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong in F-105D 61-0132 on his second combat mission into North Vietnam. "Cambo" flight took off at 15:25 for a mission lasting 1 hour 50 minutes. "2-ship flight fragged against a natural river ford in Laos just west of Vietnam but was unable to go to target due to heavy cloud coverage in eastern Thailand and Vietnam. Instead we received a Combat Sky Spot (CSS) and dropped our 12 bombs together from level flight at 18,000 ft. Target was Mu Gia Pass. Could not see impact because of clouds. Came back to Korat and made low pass in trail and tactical pitchup to honor Maj Rollins completing his 100 missions."

With a takeoff time of 16:00, Capt David L. Burney flying F-105D 61-0126 led "Laredo" flight. It was his 95th mission. "Laredo 02" was Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying his second combat mission in 60-0409. The flight's spare was Capt Robert M. Crane in 60-0428. Their three targets were:

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Primary: 19-37N and 103-27E
Secondary: 20-02N and 103-43E
Tertiary: 16-59N and 106-56E

Jake Shuler described the flight in his log. "Proceeded directly to Orange Anchor and refueled with OA 52. 'Rainbow' flight from Takhli was on the tanker when we got there and we were told that all four of us were to orbit with tanker for possible rescap. Before I finished my one gulper, we were notified to go to primary target. Had comm problems with Cricket but finally was turned over to Firefly 17 and 18 (an A-1E and an Air America O-1E). Rainbow flight was already there and the A-1E dropped some 500# bombs to mark the target for them and they got 100% on target, 50% coverage. I still had not acquired the target but Dave had. Firefly 18 told us that he would mark our target with Willie Peter and as he rolled in, I caught sight of him but did not pick up the WP just before Dave rolled in. I rolled in and pickled 9000' above the target. We got 100% on target and 75% coverage and the FAC was pleased. Saw the bomb craters but couldn't see much. We came on home and landed uneventfully.

"Maj James Clements [469 TFS, POW] was shot today by a MiG-21. A chute was seen but no voice contact or beeper. This was the seventh aircraft we have lost since I have been here. Maj Barnett (SAM), Maj Clements (MiG-21), Capt Trautman, Maj Fullum (85), Joe Howard (MiG-21) and his GIB all in Route Pack Six. A Weasel went in in route pack five for unknown reasons and another Weasel ran off the end of runway due to a chute & hook fail and no utility hydraulic pressure. Logged 2+05".

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr. flew his 2nd combat mission as "Cleveland 02". His target was a Ba Nam highway segment in RP-1. Due to weather, he dropped his bombs by Sky Spot.

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 1 & Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet and "Mission #2 Narrative" via e-mail 28 July 2010 & Rufus Dye, Mission History log.

01-Oct-68

2597

"Forty-four F-105 pilots were honored this month for completing 100 missions in the Thunderchief fighter-bomber over North Vietnam. During a special ceremony at Phoenix, Arizona, the following pilots were awarded special recognition certificates by Republic:

Lt Cols William C. Decker, James B. Ross, Jr., Randy R. Renken, and Maurice E. Seaver. Mo Seaver made his last flight in the F-105 in August 1967. He had accumulated 1016.6 hours in the aircraft.

Majs Robert A. Zang, Fontaine, Dave Parker, James Steinke, Porter Thompson, R. K. Ely, H. W. Goodman, William O. Harris, James G. LaChance, Robert C. Green, John O. Colton, Walter C. Swaney, William D. Stigers, John O. Rollins, Dale W. Leathan, John R. Desjardins, Thomas J. Murch, James S. Walbridge, and Francis J. Byrnes;

Cpts George E. Gifford, John L. Smith, Thomas H. Platt, Lamont H. Pharmer, Robert G. Lanning, Larry J. Wright, J. M. Thigpen, John W. Gross, V. V. Sisney, Frank R. O'Neill, Lee Hollingsworth, John C. Morrissey, Russel F. Brownlee (EWO), Richard Koehnke, Arthur A. Powell, Paul E. Dillon, George D. Graves, Richard E. Guild, James M. Kroyer, David L. Ferguson, and Jerad P. Lowe a Commando Nail radar navigator.

Thomas J. Murch last flew the F-105 on 19 Aug 1968. He had accumulated 1214.6 hours in the plane.

While at Korat with the 13 TFS, Capt John M. Thigpen last flew the F-105 on 28 Nov 1967 by which

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time he had accumulated 698 hours in the aircraft. He was now assigned as a T-33 Instructor Pilot at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ.

Robert G. Lanning had accumulated 803.6 hours by his last flight in the F-105 in May 1968.

Thunderchief Worldwide Report Vol IV No 2, October 1968 & F-105 Aircrew Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma..

12-Jun-69

7095

The 474 Combat Support Group published an order listing 73 officers assigned to Nellis who were credited with combat missions over North Vietnam. Many were F-105 pilots and EWOs.

"The following officers, organization indicated, TAC, this stn, have flown the number of Out-Of-Country Combat Missions as indicated below in SEA. Authority: AFM 36-11 & AFM 35-9."

The 11 officers from the 4525 FWW were:

NAME	MISSIONS
Maj Robert K. Hanna	91
Maj Jimmy L. Jones	122
Maj Llewellyn Kenison	6
Maj Rezk M. Mohamed	76
Maj Glenn E. Peake	100
Maj Leonidas D. Richardson	30
* Maj Billy R. Sparks	145
Maj Harris J. Taylor	100
Capt Byron P. Favre	33
Capt Anthony W. Platek	100
Capt Michael D. Thomas	100

* Maj Sparks last flew the F-105 on 16 July 1969. He had accumulated 2066.9 hours in the airplane, placing him as the 65th pilot with the most F-105 flying hours.

Those assigned to the 4536 FWS (F-100s) were:

Maj James A. Braster	15
Maj William H. Fletcher	50
Maj John L. Mesenbourg	100
Maj J. L. Pennington	1
Maj Joe C. Robinson	4
Maj Edward P. Schmit, Jr.	2
Maj Bernard W. Stewart	2
Capt Athos E. Guillot, Jr.	15
Capt Samuel H. Holmes	96
Capt Paul F. Kimminau	59

Those assigned to the 4537 FWS (F-105s) were:

Maj George W. Acree II	133
Maj William Baechle	100
Maj Gene I. Basel	79
Maj Anthony Gardecki	100
Maj Robert N. Johnston	100
Maj James P. Padgett	100
Maj John O. Rollins	100
Maj Robert M. Thompson	100

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Maj William E. Underwood	100
Maj Richard D. Westcott	100
Capt Robert C. Bigrigg	100
Capt Philip M. Drew	161
Capt John E. Geiger	100
Capt Joseph C. Howard	69
Capt George E. Kennedy	100
Capt Robert F. Lewis, Jr.	100
Capt Donald J. Mattasolio	100
Capt Richard E. McDowell	100
Capt Charles F. O'Donnell	49
Capt Roger L. Peden	80
Capt Norman E. Powell	100
Capt George H. Vipond	100

Officers assigned to the 4538 FWS (F-4Cs) were:

Lt Col Emmett S. Walden, Jr.	51
Maj Samuel O. Bakke	102
Maj Lloyd W. Boothby	101
Maj James T. Craig, Jr.	100
Maj Edwin T. Hawks, Jr.	60
Maj Rex D. Howerton	100
Maj David A. Jacobsen	90
Maj Maurice B. Johnston, Jr.	23
Maj William L. Kirk	100
Maj Dale G. Nelson	1
Maj Norman A. Ruby	83
Maj Kenneth R. Ryckman	100
Maj Thomas S. Swalm	105
Maj Daurice C. Vest	42
Capt Jerry D. S. Bolt	104
Capt David L. Burney	100
Capt William S. Gordon III	116
Capt Marvin M. Gradert	27
Capt Roger A. Hermeling	100
Capt Jerry W. Jameson	100
Capt Richard K. Koehnke	100
Capt Richard S. Ritchie	77
Capt Donald E. Simanski	100
Capt Norman E. Wells	100
Capt Robert K. Wilson	101

Other officers on the list were:

Capt Albert C. Vollmer	82	474 TAC Hospital (Recovering from injuries)
Maj Thomas L. Hennagan	41	474 TFW
Maj Willam C. Coltman	6	430 TFS
Maj Willard M. Lindsay	35	Det 1, 4538 FWS
Maj George L. Pritchard	1	Det 1, 4538 FWS
Maj John L. Winkler	15	Det 1, 4538 FWS

474 Combat Support Group Special Order P-121 dated 12 June 1969 provided by Norm Powell via e-mail 7 Jan 2012.