

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

18-May-67

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In the 23 TFW, the tenth F-105 RTU class graduated at McConnell AFB KS. Class 67HRM started on 28 Nov 66 with 21 pilots. It was named "The Spartans" and consisted of 8 Maj's, 8 Capt's, and 5 1Lt's. However, two students washed back one class, two students were eliminated, and one was gained from Seymour Johnson AFB when the 4 TFW closed their F-105 RTU course. Nineteen students graduated.

The class began flying on 4 Jan 1967 and deployed 20 F-105 aircraft for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 23 Mar - 7 Apr 67 with the 562 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col James A. Young. The class was originally scheduled to graduate on 20 April 1967, however, on 29 March 1967, while the class was at George, Hq TAC extended RTU courses for an additional 15 sorties.

The students were:

Maj Franklin A. Billingsley	Capt John E. Nolan
Maj James L. Davis	Capt Russell Edwin Temperley
Maj Richard C. Fontaine	1Lt Jeffery Thomas Ellis
Maj Earl M. Freeman	1Lt Vernon D. Ellis
Maj Jack W. Hart	Maj Alan R. Iverson
Maj Robert R. Huntley	Maj Harold J. "Jim" Steinke, Jr.
Maj Myron L. Savage	Capt Lawrence P. Gould
Capt Clyde L. Falls, Jr.	Capt Jacob C. "Jake" Shuler
Capt David A. Holland	Capt Herbert W. Moore
Capt Irving E. LeVine	

Maj James L. Davis won the Top Gun award and Maj Robert R. Huntley won the Outstanding Pilot plaque. Huntley's previous assignment had been at Aviano AB, Italy, where he ran the command post in the 7227 Combat Support Group. In this job, he scheduled rotational F-100 units to the Maniago air-to-ground bombing range. Previously he had flown F-89s, F-94Bs and F-102s in ADC units.

Both Davis and Huntley left the class early since they were selected to train as Wild Weasel pilots. Huntley recalled, "My instructor pilot, Bob Pielin, told me that I needed to volunteer since I was going to Weasel school whether I volunteered or not." They attended Wild Weasel Class 67WWIII-12 that started on 9 May 1967 at Nellis AFB, NV. Both men were then assigned to the 354 TFS at Takhli. (Bob Huntley telephone interview 20 May 2010)

Capt Clyde L. Falls came from Laredo AFB, TX where he was an Academic Instructor in the 3641 Student Squadron (ATC). After F-105 training, he arrived at Korat on 6 July 1967 and was assigned to the 34 TFS.

Capt LeVine had come from assignments flying B-47s and B-52s in SAC and C-130s in MAC. After his F-105 training, he went to jungle survival school in the Phillipines; "... short course ... no Escape and Evasion." He also was assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat, where he arrived on 14 June 1967.

Capt Jeffrey T. Ellis was a T-37 IP at Laughlin AFB, Texas. He set an academic record for the RTU program with his 99.7% average for the Top Academic Award. After his F-105 training, he was assigned to the 469 TFS.

Capt Ellis and Capt Jacob C. "Jake" Shuler, another T-37 IP from the 3645 Pilot Training Squadron

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at Laughlin, had initially received orders to RTU Class 67-CRS at Seymour Johnson. (Shuler, then a 1st Lt, received 3646 PTW PCS Order A-1286 dated 27 Sept 1966. Ellis' order # was A-1287.) This class would have been the third F-105 RTU at Seymour. However, the class was cancelled when the 4 TFW was notified in September 1966 that their F-105s were to be replaced by F-4Ds. On 5 October 1966, Shuler's and Ellis' orders were amended (by HQ 3646 Plt Tng Wg SO A-1314) to send them to McConnell's RTU Class 67-GRM. They ended up joining the next class at McConnell 67-HRM.

Capt Shuler had received his wings in December 1963 in UPT Class 64-D at Webb AFB, Big Spring TX. He attended Pilot Instructor Training (PIT) at Williams AFB AZ, , then served as a T-37 Instructor Pilot in the 3645 Pilot Training Squadron at Laughlin AFB, Del Rio, TX, from May 1964 until receiving his F-105 assignment in September 1966. After marrying on June 18th, he moved his wife into a duplex in Del Rio then to on-base housing in August. Upon receipt of his F-105 assignment, he moved his wife to St. Matthews, SC while he attend survival training at Fairchild AFB, WA, then to Wichita, KS for F-105 training at McConnell in December 1966.

While at McConnell, between 6 December 1966 and 17 April 1967, he flew 50 F-105 training sorties. After completing his F-105 upgrade, his assignment to SEA was deferred pending the birth of their child and he returned to Laughlin as a T-37 IP. Their son was born on 13 July 67 and, after moving his wife for the 6th time in 13 months, he reported to McConnell on 25 August for F-105 Category IV refresher training. This time he flew an additional seven F-105 sorties between 25 August and 7 September 1967. With 90.8 hours in the F-105, he then departed for his combat assignment to the 34 TFS.

En route to Korat, between 22 - 27 September 1967, he completed the PACAF Jungle Survival School at Clark AB, Phillipines.

23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 67, USAF microfilm MO554 & Clyde Falls AF Form 11 & Irv LeVine, letter received 16 Apr 10 & Jake Shuler, biographical sketch, via e-mail 19 May 2010, and F-105 mission spreadsheet, and e-mail 5 Jul 2010 forwarding PCS orders.

31-Jul-67

3824

The 34 TFS history for July 1967 did not describe specific combat missions for the month but did acknowledge that "... medium altitude run-in techniques were utilized in conjunction with QRC-160 ECM pod formation. ... Limited use was being made of the AGM-12 missile against point targets." During the month, the squadron flew 345 combat missions, 342 into North Vietnam and 3 in Laos. "A slight decrease in the intensity of enemy AAA fire was noted during the month and no MiG encounters were reported."

"Combat pilot strength stood at 21 line pilots [up from 19 pilots reported in June's history].

"During the month of July, six squadron pilots completed their tour of 100 missions over North Vietnam. Those completing were: Majors Raymond F. Jauregui, Earl Johnston, James N. McClelland, John R. Whaley, and Captains Donald O. Austin and Jackie R. Youngblood. [Not listed in the unit history for completing 100 missions this month was Maj Charles E. Irwin who left Korat in early August 1967.] No losses were suffered during this month and six replacements were received during this period of time."

His 100th mission was the last flight in the F-105 for Maj Jauregui. Since starting his RTU class at McConnell in June 1966, he accumulated 351 hours in the airplane.

Maj McClelland's 100th mission on 22 July was also his last in the F-105. He had accumulated 340.6 hours in the airplane.

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His 100th mission on 25 July was the last F-105 flight for Maj Whaley. He had accumulated 333.8 hours in the airplane. (F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.)

The incoming PCS pilots in July were: Maj Robert T. Campbell, Capt Irving E. LeVine, and Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr.

Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe, Capt Rodney A. Skoglund and 1Lt Morris R. Schulmister arrived prior to 12 July 1967 on TDY from the 18 TFW at Kadena. By the end of July 1967, Capt Hoppe had flown 9 combat missions with the 34 TFS bringing his total counters to 31. (Larry Hoppe, AF Form 5.)

The squadron commander was Maj George G. Clausen. Maj Roderick G. Giffin was the Operations Officer.

388 TFW history, Apr Dec 67, Vol II, 34 TFS history, July 67, microfilm NO584, frame 0078 & 34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & Chuck Irwin e-mail 6 Apr 10.

13-Aug-67

3359

On 9 August 1967, in response to the Senate Armed Services Committee investigation into the bombing of North Vietnam led by Senator John Stennis, President Johnson had authorized strikes against several targets in the 25-mile deep Chinese buffer zone as add-on targets to Rolling Thunder 57.

On the morning of 13 August, PACAF forces simultaneously struck 3 main rail yards located in the China buffer zone along the Northeast rail line (RR 2). "As an additional harassment factor, time delay bombs were dropped on these three rail yards." (PACAF Briefing)

F-105s from the 388 TFW struck the Lang Son railroad yard east, less than 10 miles from the Chinese border. The Lang Son railroad yard (BE 616-00042) was at 21-50-25N and 106-45-44E. Same-day BDA photos showed the yard was unserviceable with 8 of 30 rail cars damaged or destroyed. Strike photography acquired during the attack on the main Lang Son railroad yard confirmed the pilots' report of multiple rail cuts with direct hits on the center of the yard. Post-strike coverage of the yard showed at least 4 damaged or destroyed rail cars and all 4 though rails interdicted. (388 TFW History)

Three of the F-105D pilots from Korat who flew on this strike were Maj Donald W. Revers from the 34 TFS, Capt Hal P. Henning from the 44 TFS flying F-105D 58-1157 and Capt Irving E. LeVine from the 34 TFS flying F-105D 62-4378. (Nat'l Archives film record)

Irv LeVine recalled this mission. "I was an airborne spare ... and ended up filling in as Green 16, Tail End Charlie. ... Our attack was from a feet-wet, east-to-west heading with a left roll in. Their guns were hammering us and Lead had us sliding and floating further and further north into China ... to get away from the flak. I was soon well into China and since we'd been climbing I was soon out of airspeed. I let the Thud 'float' and gave it time to get it's nose down then chased after everyone else who had gone down the chute ahead of me. I was well behind and watched the yard exploding in front of me. I think it was the only time I attacked a target at a 45-degree angle like we did at McConnell. The Force turned east and the guns followed them. I pulled the trigger back to the first detent [to activate the gun camera] as glorious plumes of white smoke were shooting thousands of feet into the air. I assumed these were [railroad] engines blowing up as I'd seen such in combat films from WW II and Korea. No one shot at me all the way down that slide as they concentrated on the main force. I pickled my bombs and while keeping the camera going, I turned east and caught up with the Force.

"I really wanted a copy of that film but Photo Lab said they had fired it off to Saigon because it

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showed the hits and devastation we caused and they didn't have it to give me. I forgot to ask if they ever got a copy back from Saigon and so don't have any from that flight." (Irv LeVine, letter received 16 April 10.)

Another of the targets struck was the Lang Son railroad yard NNE (BE 616-M2588) on the Northeast Rail Line (RR 2) in RP-6A at 21-52-07N and 106-45-45E. KA 71 BDA photos showed the yard interdicted and unserviceable and 30 of 40 rail cars damaged or destroyed.

Maj Aquilla F. Britt from the 469 TFS received a Distinguished Flying Cross (3 OLC) for extraordinary achievement for the mission he flew on this day. "... Major Britt was a member of the lead flight in a force of twenty Thunderchiefs assigned to make the first strike against a strategic rail yard in the Chinese border buffer zone. The outstanding manner in which the strike was carried out and the exceptional results obtained were greatly enhanced by his courage and exemplary airmanship. ..." (Citation to Accompany the Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross (Third Oak Leaf Cluster) (Posthumous) to Aquilla F. Britt provided by his son Bryan Britt.)

Air Force planes attacked eight other targets along the Northeast Rail Line (RR 2) in RP-6A. The Lang Son railroad and highway bridge (BE 616-00025) at 21-50-52N and 106-45-42E was struck on 13 August. BDA photos of 13 August showed the bridge was destroyed and one pier and possible 2 spans were down.

The Lang Son railroad bypass bridge (BE 616-02190) at 21-49-55N and 106-46-00E was struck. BDA photos from 14 August showed the bridge was probably serviceable.

The Na Phuoc railroad yard (BE 616-01372) at 21-45-56N and 106-44-22E was struck on 13 August. BDA photos from 13 August showed the yard was serviceable with serviceable rolling stock still in the yard.

The Bac Le railroad bridge (BE 616-01382) at 21-30-42N and 106-26-01E was struck. Pilots estimated the bridge was damaged.

A train on rail tracks at 21-42-00N and 106-44-00E was struck on 13 August. Pilots reported destroying or damaging 3 cars.

Another 10-car train was attacked at 21-36-00N and 106-32-20E but there was no BDA. A rail segment on the Northeast Rail Line at 21-33-13N and 106-30-15E was struck with no BDA given.

The Lang Giai railroad yard (BE 616-00041) at 21-41-50N and 106-39-58E was struck. BDA photos on 13 August showed the yard was unserviceable with only 2 damaged railcars out of the 52 recognizable in the photos. Pilots striking the Lang Giai railroad yard reported the destruction of 30 to 35 pieces of rolling stock, multiple secondary explosions, and damage to the support facilities. Post-strike photography revealed that all rail lines in the yard had been severed and the storage/transshipment area extensively damaged. Five damaged or destroyed pieces of rolling stock were visible in the yard.

PACAF 16 August 67 Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 24 Jul - 13 Aug 67 & 388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frames 1756 and 1533 & Nat'l Archives record NWDNM(m)-342-USA-42649B.

15-Sep-67

6151

1Lt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 14th combat mission into North Vietnam.

"Target: Dac Muong railroad yard 3 miles NW of Kep.

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"Armament: 4xCBU-24

"Night take off in rain shower. Weather all way to package. Land route, long way in! 85-mm barrage beginning at roll in 37/57-mm coming off target. CBU's went into 85-mm flak site that was firing. Some flak came close. Whew!"

Capt Irving E. LeVine from the 34 TFS received a Distinguished Flying Cross (1st OLC) for the mission he flew this day. "Captain Irving E. LeVine distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as an F-105 Pilot over North Vietnam on 15 September 1967. On that date, Capt LeVine attacked a vital military target in a heavily defended area in North Vietnam. In spite of extremely adverse weather and intense anti-aircraft fire that inflicted severe damage to one aircraft in the flight, Captain LeVine pressed the attack and accurately released his ordnance directly on the target. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain LeVine reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."

Earl Henderson, combat diary & Citation provided by Irv LeVine in letter received 16 April 2010.

21-Sep-67

6563

In a published order, Maj George G. Clausen, 34 TFS commander, designated 29 squadron pilots as Combat Ready in the F-105. The same pilots were listed in a separate order as qualified to be Flight/Element Leaders in F-105s. The pilots were:

Maj Almer L. Barner, Jr.	Capt Douglas A. Beyer
Maj Charles E. Bishop	Capt Robert M. Crane
Maj William M. Blakeslee	Capt Hugh W. Davis
Maj George G. Clausen	Capt Nicholas J. Donelson
Maj James E. Daniel, Jr.	Capt Robert M. Elliot
Maj David C. Dickson, Jr.	Capt George W. Hamlin IV
Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr.	Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe
Maj Roderick G. Giffin	Capt Lawrence R. Klinestiver
Maj David D. Igelman	Capt Irving R. LeVine
Maj William J. L. King	Capt Robert L. Martin
Maj Kenneth W. Mays	Capt Robert B. Middleton
Maj Donald E. Odell	Capt Sam P. Morgan
Maj Dwight E. Sullivan	Capt Harry G. Paddon III
Maj James L. Taylor	1Lt Lee E. Hollingsworth
Maj Raymond W. Vissotzky	

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

04-Oct-67

851

From Korat, "F-105 Thunderchief pilots from the 388 TFW participated in strikes against four railyards, (the Ha Gia) railroad and highway bridge, and (the Lang Son bypass) railroad bridge on the main Hanoi to Red China supply line. Twenty-five pieces of rolling stock were destroyed or damaged at a trans-shipment point near the Kep railroad yards. Bombs impacted directly on the Ha Gia railroad and highway bridge, 20 miles north of Hanoi and destroyed the structure.

"Participating in the Ha Gia strike were Lt Col Harry W. Schurr [commander of the 469 TFS] and double MiG-killer 1Lt David B. Waldrop [from the 34 TFS]."

Also from the 34 TFS, Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flew his 17th combat mission, his 8th in RP-6, against the Ha Gia railroad bridge. (20 Apr 09 letter from Carolyn Dickson giving annotation on cigar band dated 4 Oct 67.)

Lt Col Richard F. B. Gimmi, Jr., director of the 388 TFW command post but flying with the 469 TFS

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flew his 100th mission in F-105D 62-4242, which he had named "My Bitt", his nickname for his wife Marie. He remained at Korat and flew another 15 missions to complete the 1-year tour required by his wing staff position. (Dick Gimmi, phone message, 10 Nov 09)

Capt Irving E. LeVine from the 34 TFS received a Distinguished Flying Cross for the mission he flew this day. "Captain Irving E. LeVine distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as an F-105 Pilot over North Vietnam on 4 October 1967. On that date, Capt LeVine attacked a vital military target in a heavily defended area in North Vietnam. Despite numerous surface-to-air missiles, intense antiaircraft fire, and hostile aircraft, Captain LeVine pressed the attack and dropped his ordnance directly on the target. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain LeVine reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (Citation provided by Irv Levine in letter received 16 April 2010.)

Maj Rudolph E. Fiedor from the 388 TFW, flying F-105D 61-0124 through anti-aircraft fire and flak, struck the Lang Son railroad yard at coordinates 21-49-28N, 106-46-40E. In a letter to MiG Sweep, Maj Fiedor's son, Eric Fiedor, described his father's last mission. "Around his 40th mission near the China border his plane was hit and only an angel, as he told me, saved him. His spinal cord was splintered and (it) was his last flight. He was a big man from Pennsylvania/graduate of ROTC at Mississippi State University/fought in the Korean war/ trained Japanese pilots/ and retired in 1972."

From the 355 TFW out of Takhli, Capt James S. Aldrich from the 333 TFS, flying F-105D 62-4367, struck the Kep railroad yard at coordinates 21-24-57N 106-17-46E. His strike camera film showed his bombs impacting on the target and flak bursts. Pilots from the 357 TFS also bombed the Kep railroad yard. The 4 October strike force noted severe damage from the prior strike flights. The railroad yard appeared unserviceable. Approximately 25 pieces of rolling stock in the shipment yard were destroyed as well as the yard itself being damaged. Later flights noted impacts at the NE and SW choke points.

Sawadee Flyer, Friday, October 13, 1967, pg 3 & National Archives strike and gun camera film records, Archive Control No. NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42718A & MiG Sweep, Issue 119, Fall 2002, pg 19.

07-Oct-67

6535

Four flights of F-105s from the 388 TFW attacked the Tuanh Moi Railroad Yard (BE 616-01398, ART 1682) at 21-35-57N and 106-32-17 in North Vietnam.

Col John P. Flynn, 388 TFW Vice Commander, led the third flight with Capt Irving E. LeVine, 34 TFS, as his number 2. Irv LeVine recalled, "We were looking for trains. .. The yard was briefed as being 'UNSERVICABLE' and having only two Triple A sites ... and both of them as being 'Empty'. A 'milk run' if we ever saw one, right? Wrong.

"Coming into the sun from Feet Wet, Force Lead had the sun directly in his eyes and missed seeing the entire N.E. Rail Line. Luckily, he looked back and saw it. Swinging more sharply left than he should have, he threw #2 Flak Suppression Flight out and our #3 Flight went down the chute behind Lead. The 'empty sites' were shooting like crazy and, while checking out our 'aiming point', I kept a close eye on Flynn's aircraft. I saw Force Lead flight's bombs overshoot the track area and explode in the middle, eastern part of the yard. Our 'aiming point' was [an] access road .

"I saw 'a' train sitting across our aiming point and put my pipper on the last car and, pulling back on the stick, slightly, to spread the bombs out, I released and my pipper continued to walk up the length of the train. I stuck to Flynn's bird and we exited the area with the rest of the Force. No one was hit but it wasn't because they weren't shooting.

"Back at Korat we gathered in the debriefing room and the usual 'hubbub' of pilots discussing the

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mission made for a continual racket. Lead called for quiet, and apologized for not seeing the yard. He apologized for turning back too tightly and throwing the force out of position. He said, 'The yard was empty'. Lead 2 also apologized for not getting down-the-chute and keeping the guns off us but noted that all aircraft had come safely home. He agreed with Force Lead that the 'yard was empty'. Flynn was busy making out his post-flight paperwork and asked us, 'What did you guys see?' Three and Four agreed with the other flights that 'the yard was empty'. I said, 'WE BOMBED A TRAIN'. Flynn jerked toward me (I was sitting on his left) and said, 'Where was it?' I told him, 'It was across our aiming point'. He said, 'I didn't see it'. About that time Force Lead said, "Col Flynn, what did you see? He said, "WE BOMBED A TRAIN'. The pilots had gone back to talking about the flight, or whatever, and there was a solid, low murmur of male voices that stopped DEAD. Force Lead said, 'Uh, Colonel, did you SEE a train?' Flynn answered, "NO, IRV DID.' "IRV DID'S' vibrated off the walls and from every corner of the room. The shouted laughter was close to deafening. Flynn, always a man of action, grabbed me by the front of my flight suit, hauled me to my feet and dragged me from the room through those tall doors about 10 feet to the right of where we were sitting. He shoved me up against the wall and asked, "ARE YOU SURE YOU SAW A TRAIN?' I assured him I had telling him it was across our aiming point. He said, 'I'm going to request a Photo Recce bird go take a look and there'd better be a train there.' The laughter and hilarity stopped dead when John Flynn reentered the room.

"The next day I got word that I was to 'report' to the Head Shed. I got there and found myself surrounded by a lot of Wing Brass and they didn't look happy. They demanded I tell them what I saw and I told them. They took me in a small room where a film projector was set up and it had the usual LARGE composite rolls of small films from each of the birds in our force. The lights went out and camera action showed Force Lead's bombs going off in the empty, sandy area east of the tracks. A voice in the dark said, 'Skip all that and go to LeVine's film and put the projector on one-frame-a-second'.

"It was done and suddenly there was the yard again AND THE TRAIN; MAKE THAT 'TWO' TRAINS. They were side by side and my pipper walked up the length of the trains and gradually lifted and showed the initial phase of climb out. I turned toward the projector and where I had seen the colonels sitting and the light came on. I and the projectionist airman were the only ones in the room. He grinned and said, 'Nice work Captain'. I stumbled out of the room and into a 'gaggle of Brass' who were now grinning ear to ear and who shook hands with me and pounded me on the back while spouting congratulations.

"Later at the club, I discovered that no one would talk to me. I was commissioned through OCS and knew of such [treatment] but this was the first and only time for me. I realized I'd come onto something akin to being silenced. The next day or so, I had 3 or 4 pilots at various times and places walk by me and surreptitiously say, 'Well done, Irv' or 'Nice going, Irv', but for the most part the rest of them said nothing. I really didn't think much of it as I figured they were embarrassed and fighter pilots don't like to be embarrassed. ... After a week, the guys were all back talking to me"

Irv LeVine, letter received 16 April 2010.

26-Oct-67

3445

Air Force planes attacked six targets along the Hanoi-Thai Nguyen Rail Line (RR 5) in RP-6A.

1) The Thai Nguyen railroad yard #2 (BE 616-G0777) at 21-33-21N and 105-51-31E. "Pilots reported all ordnance on target."

2) The Tung Tu railroad siding (BE 616-M1892) at 21-29-30N and 105-52-59E. Pilots reported all their bombs hit the target with at least one track cut.

3) A railroad bridge at 21-26-20N and 105-53-00E. "No BDA."

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- 4) A rail segment at 21-27-20N and 105-53-00E. "No BDA."
- 5) A vulnerable rail segment at 21-25-00N and 105-53-00E. "No BDA."
- 6) A railroad segment at 21-30-00N and 105-52-00E. Pilots reported the rail was cut.

The Ha Gia Railroad Bridge was the primary target of "Olympia" and "Crossbow" flights from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW. "Olympia" took off from Korat at 14:05; the mission lasted for 2 hours 50 minutes. Olympia's flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Floyd E. Henzig
- #2 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0134
- #3 - Maj Donald W. Revers
- #4 - Capt Vernon D. Ellis

This was Maj Armstrong's 13th combat mission to North Vietnam. "We were directed to hit our first alternate target which was the Ha Gia Railroad Bridge, between Hanoi and Thai Nguyen on the north rail line. Coming in via the land route, the clouds were almost completely undercast around the entire route. The target was completely clobbered with clouds as we traversed down 'Thud' Ridge. Skuts Henzig very wisely decided as mission commander, to roll in on the rail line between Ha Gia and Thai Nguyen instead. We cut the rail line in several places which I think is more trouble for them than cutting a bridge in one spot. There was considerable 37/57-mm fire from Thai Nguyen as we pulled off the target. This was the first mission where I had carried two 3,000# bombs. It is a good load to carry. No MiGs seen, only 2 SAMs, and no 85-mm although other guys saw 85-mm fire." (Maj Spence M. Armstrong, combat mission log for period 5 Oct 67 - 14 Apr 68, pg 5.)

In his memoir, Sam Armstrong further described the mission. "... I carried 3,000# bombs for the first time and was impressed how much sleeker the F-105 was with this load as opposed to the 750# bombs carried on the centerline. The target, Ha Gia between Thai Nyugen and Hanoi, was clearly under the clouds so the mission commander wisely directed us to hit the part of the rail line that was clear and we did so nicely. Two SA-2's were fired without effect. (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished memoir titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 11.)

"Crossbow" flight's lineup against the Ha Gia Railroad Bridge was:

- #1 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr.
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying his 9th combat mission
- #3 - Maj Lawrence R. "Larry" Klinestiver
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine

The flight time was 3.2 hours. A draft award justification described the flight's mission. "Major Barner was leader of Crossbow Flight, which was one of five flights in Olympia Force. ... Olympia Force had been ordered to strike the Ha Gia Railroad Bridge located east of Ha Gia and 3 miles south of Thai Nguyen. This rail line is the major link between the huge industrial complex at Thai Nguyen and Hanoi to the south.

"Just after the final turn toward the target, the Ironhand Flight informed the Force Commander that the primary target was overcast and acquisition would be impossible. The force Commander immediately briefed a new attack heading through an opening in the clouds along the rail line to the north of the primary target and south of Thai Nguyen. Quick and decisive action was required making it necessary for Major Barner to reposition his flight for attack while under intense and

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accurate barrage type flack of 37, 57 MM size.

"The railroad line was visible through a broken deck of clouds but the late afternoon sun reflecting on a thin haze layer made target acquisition extremely difficult. With coolness and precision, [each pilot] maneuvered his aircraft through the flack and clouds to place his 3000 pounders directly on the tracks. Strike photos showed three large cuts on the tracks and attest to the accuracy of [the pilots] while under fire."

Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967 & Jake Shuler mission log spreadsheet and e-mail 5 July 2010.

27-Oct-67

1188

Also on Friday, twelve F-105s from the 388 TFW pounded the Hanoi storage area located at the southeast end of the Bac Mai airfield runway (JCS 7) at coordinates 20-59-06N 105-50-35E. As a target, the storage area was designated ART 5434 and BE 610-00698. The airfield itself was not yet an approved target.

Strike crews reported that numerous secondary explosions and fires erupted from the target area. Post-strike photos from 28 October showed a total of 32 buildings destroyed or extensively damaged. (Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967.)

"This was the first time for the complex to be bombed since August 1967."

Six F-105 pilots from the 469 TFS participated in this strike. They were Capt Hal P. Henning in F-105F 62-4439; Col James Ellis Bean, the Wing's Deputy for Operations, in F-105D 62-4359; Lt Col William N. Reed in F-105D 59-1743; Capt Richard A. Frederick flying F-105D 61-0124; Navy exchange officer Lt James Karg in 59-1759; and Capt Russell E. Temperley flying in an Iron Hand support flight in F-105D 61-0126.

Capt Henning was awarded the Air Force Cross for this mission. "The President of the United States of America, authorized by Section 8742, Title 10, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Captain Hal P. Henning for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as an F-105 pilot in Southeast Asia on 27 October 1967. On that date, Capt Henning was the leader of a force of twenty F-105s assigned to attack an extremely vital military storage area in the vicinity of Hanoi, North Vietnam. En route to the target, his aircraft was extensively damaged by shrapnel from a surface-to-air missile. Without hesitation and with complete disregard for his own safety, Capt Henning continued on to the assigned target with his crippled aircraft. Diving through intense antiaircraft fire, delivering his bombs precisely on target, he was successful in heavily damaging the storage complex. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness, Captain Henning reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." ("Recipients of the Air Force Medal of Honor and Air Force Cross", by Eric R. Caubarreaux, pp 148 - 149.)

His flight records show he flew an F-105D for 3.0 hours on this date.

In October or November 1968, the TAC commander, Gen William W. Momyer, presented the award to Capt Henning who, by then, was assigned as an instructor pilot in the 563 TFS at McConnell AFB, Kansas.

Also participating, was a pilot named Wilson (probably Maj Harold D. Wilson) from the 44 TFS who flew F-105D 61-0068.

During the attack, a SAM shot down Capt Temperley, Warhawk 2, from the 469 TFS flying F-105D

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

61-0126. He became a POW, the fourth Air Force pilot the North Vietnamese captured on this day.

The Wild Weasel crew of Capt Rowland F. Smith, Jr. and EWO Capt David H. Williams from the 44 TFS at Korat flew as Warhawk 1 in F-105F 62-4446. Both pilot and EWO were also awarded the Air Force Cross. Capt Smith's award citation read, in part, "... with his aircraft hit and burning, Captain Smith exhibited the highest order of courage as he continued to fly through intense and accurate antiaircraft fire to attack and destroy a hostile surface-to-air missile complex that was threatening a large F-105 strike force. With his aircraft still in flames, he remained in the target area while initiating rescue efforts for his downed wingman. Captain Smith then flew his crippled aircraft 300 miles to a skillful emergency landing ...". (Extract from "For Extraordinary Heroism - The Air Force Cross" by Maj Jeffery B. Floyd, provided by Ron Thurlow.) The wording of the AFC citation for Capt Williams was nearly identical; the only changes reflected his role as EWO.

On 12 August 1968, General William W. Momyer, TAC commander, presented the award to Captain Smith.

Four 34 TFS pilots in "Hatchet" flight formed a flak suppression flight for the strike near Bac Mai airfield. The flight left Korat at 14:35 on the mission, which lasted 3.8 hours. The lineup was:

- #1 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith flying F-105D 62-4270
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0134 on his 10th combat mission.
- #3 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr. flying 61-0194
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 58-1157

Over 42 ½ years later, Jake Shuler described how he flew this mission. "My 9th mission on 26 October had partially restored my self-confidence following the total depletion of same during my 8th mission during which I inadvertently released my ordinance over the Gulf of Tonkin on the way to the Thanh Moi Railroad Yard northeast of Hanoi. ... The opportunity to continue the restoration process availed itself on the afternoon of 27 October, my third trip to Route Pack VI (RP-6), but my first trip 'downtown', Hanoi that is.

"I was scheduled to fly on Lt. Col. Bob Smith's wing as Hatchet 2 (Bob was soon to become the 34th TFS Commander upon George Clausen's rotation back to the States). Buddy Barner was to fly as Hatchet 3 with Irv LeVine on his wing as Hatchet 4. Hatchet Flight was to be the flak suppression flight in the Olympia Strike Force, each of us carrying six 750 pound canisters of cluster bomb units (CBU's). The other twelve aircraft in Olympic, Vegas, and Crossbow Flights each carried six 750 pound bombs.

"The flight planning, briefings, 14:10 engine start, 14:35 takeoff, join-up, and pre-strike refueling thankfully went without a hitch. The only thing out of the ordinary was being notified at the mission briefing that Colonel John Flynn, our Vice Wing Commander, had been shot down over Hanoi that morning -- my apprehension factor kicked up a notch.

"The primary target was the Bac Mai Storage Area, which is located on the southern edge of Hanoi and abuts the Bac Mai Airfield to the southeast Hatchet Flight was assigned to drop its CBU's on four gun emplacements adjacent to the Bac Mai runway. ...

"Pre-strike refueling occurred over Thailand and our route to the target took us over Laos with a final heading to the target of 064 degrees and a left roll-in. For a fleeting moment while passing over the mountains of southwestern NVN and looking in the distance at the Red River Valley, I marveled at the beauty of the landscape below, but reality set in abruptly when, about twenty miles out, the tone of a SAM site radar began to buzz in my helmet earphones. At this point, time seemed to speed up exponentially along with my heart and respiration rates. Instincts kicked in

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

and I realized that my only chance to successfully complete this mission was to hang on to Bob Smith's wing. When 85 MM shells started exploding at our elevation but ahead of the Strike Force, the Force Commander gave the call to plug in the afterburner (AB) and begin a climb. It was amazing to see the 85 MM bursts climb with us but thankfully staying slightly below.

"Soon after encountering the 85 MM flak, SAM launches were called out. In the continuing blur of the moment, I do recall seeing one SAM launch from just south of Hanoi and one SAM passing through the Strike Force formation without exploding. During mission debriefing I was informed that there were more.

"The Strike Force Commander made the call to 'take it down' (one of several tactics designed to defeat the SAM) and Bob Smith responded by 'pushing over'. Almost immediately I heard the call, something to the effect, 'Hatchet Two you are on fire, eject'. The slight negative G's on my aircraft caused fuel to flow from the fuel vent and the flame of the AB ignited the fuel resulting in what was commonly called 'torching'. Even though I was in a highly stressed state of mind, I was able to conclude that I still had a good airplane since I had felt no impacts, there was no fire warning light or any other warning lights for that matter, and there was no smoke or fumes in the cockpit. I elected to stay with the airplane.

"After roll-in and establishing the 60-degree dive angle on Bob's wing, I took my eyes off of his aircraft to acquire a visual on my target. To my amazement and relief, I found my sight reticule right on the northwest end of the runway, which was his target. Pushing forward on the stick slightly my target was easily acquired and I picked my CBU's at 9,500 feet simultaneously plugging in AB again and pulling out of the dive and beginning the target egress process.

"The Thud accelerates quite rapidly in AB and soon I could not see out the sides or top of my canopy due to condensation. This situation required me to keep Bob in front of me and jink with him. Even in min-burner I found that I was overtaking him and came out of burner. Buddy Barner, flying not far behind me, saw this and said, 'Keep it in burner two'. When I pressed the mike button to respond 'roger', my larynx was so dry from hyperventilation it stuck together and I think my transmission sounded something like 'RAAAAAAK'.

"On the way to the tankers for post-strike refueling, I was able calm down and reflect somewhat on my performance. Only one major screw-up and that occurred during roll-in. Instead of staying on Bob's left wing as he rolled in to the left, I pulled up slightly then rolled left temporarily losing sight of him. Not good and not pleasing to Bob. So after dropping off of the tanker and on our way back to Korat, we practiced the 4-ship roll-in maneuver, I'm sure much to the consternation of Buddy and Irv. Can't say why I made such a bonehead move since I had performed it right on my 8th mission, albeit without bombs. Thankfully, it was not to happen again during my next 36 missions. Also following this mission I found the ability to remain reasonably calm and more focused with better situational awareness."

Capt Shuler was nominated for the Silver Star but "... I was awarded my one and only DFC." His award nomination read, "Captain Shuler distinguished himself by extraordinary heroism while participating in aerial flight as an F-105 combat strike pilot in SEA on 27 Oct. '67.

"Capt Shuler was number two man in Hatchet flight, which was designated the flak suppression flight of Olympia Force. Olympia Force consisted of five flights of F-105 Thunderchiefs and was ordered to attack the Bac Mai Storage Area at Hanoi. Located on the southern edge of Hanoi and 39 NM north west of Nam Dinh, Bac Mai Storage Area abuts Bac Mai Airfield to the southeast. Tightly packed warehouses, vehicle maintenance buildings make up the largest single facility of its kind in NVN and had never previously been attacked. The target area is heavily defended by numerous surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites and was also ringed by over 2000 antiaircraft batteries

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

of 37, 57, and 85 MM guns that are so dispersed as to give maximum coverage and overlap of fire patterns to the adjacent sites.

"Captain Shuler was ordered to attack designated reveted, hard AAA sites deployed along the southwest perimeter of the runway at Bac Mai Airfield. By effectively suppressing these flak sites, the main strike force was able to follow Hatchet Flight into the target area and successfully destroy it.

"Approximately twenty miles prior to the target area, missiles were sighted in a head on attack on Captain Shuler's aircraft and Hatchet Flight. On 'pushing-over' in a typical SAM evasive maneuver, negative G's caused fuel to dump and it ignited behind Captain Shuler's aircraft, giving the effect of the aircraft being on fire. Told to 'eject' by other aircraft in the force, Captain Shuler coolly assessed the situation. Calmly regaining his position in the flight's protective Pod formation, he determined his aircraft to be sound and that the fire was out, then pressed on to the target. In spite of a steady barrage of missiles and antiaircraft fire, Captain Shuler positioning his aircraft for optimum target acquisition and rolled in. Ignoring the intense and accurate antiaircraft barrage that buffeted his aircraft, Captain Shuler, with total disregard for his personal safety, pressed the attack on the designated gun positions, delivering his ordinance with maximum destructive force, he single handedly succeeded in silencing 9 reveted gun positions.

"Egressing from the target area, Captain Shuler quickly rejoined his flight lead in a formation that would provide maximum protection for the rest of his flight members while maneuvering through continuous heavy 85, 57, and 37 MM barrages. Hatchet Flight turned back into the high threat area to locate the position of a downed pilot for possible rescue. The pilot position was located and voice contact established at which point Hatchet Flight was forced to withdraw because of fuel considerations. Orbiting with the post-strike tankers for possible Res Cap, Hatchet Flight was subsequently RTB'd because of approaching darkness and temporary curtailment of the rescue attempt.

"The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Captain Shuler reflect great credit upon himself and the USAF." (Jake Shuler, combat mission spreadsheet & e-mail 5 July 2010)

Capt Shuler also received the Air Medal for the period 7 - 27 October 1967. (Jake Shuler medal citation via e-mail 11 Jan 2011)

Capt LeVine, "Hatchet 04", received a Silver Star for the mission. "Captain Irving E. LeVine distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force over North Vietnam on 27 October 1967. On that date, Captain LeVine silenced eight active antiaircraft guns on an airfield near Hanoi, greatly reducing the hazard to the following three flights of the mission force. Disregarding the intense, concentrated flak barrage, interspersed with more than twenty surface-to-air missiles, he accurately bombed the large site, destroying the guns and ammunition supply. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Captain LeVine has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (Irv LeVine Citation in letter received 16 Apr 10.)

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr from the 34 TFS flew his 9th combat mission against the Bac Mai storage complex. He flew as "Crossbow 02" on his 9th combat mission. "4 buildings destroyed/7 damaged/observed 10 SAMs - DFC - Warhawk 2 down (SAM)" (Rufus Dye Mission History log)

Chronology of Seventh Air Force 1 July 1967 - 30 June 1968, pg 5 & National Archives camera list, record number NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649B & Thunderchief Worldwide Report Vol IV no 4, December 1968.

30-Oct-67

3456

Ten F-105D pilots from the 388 TFW at Korat attacked the Dap Cau railroad bridge (JCS 16) at

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

coordinates 21-23-21N and 106-15-58E in RP-6A, North Vietnam.

The pilots from the 34 TFS were: Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 58-1157, Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying 61-0152, and Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr. flying 59-1759.

Pilots from the 44 TFS were: Capt Douglas G. Glime flying 61-0162, Capt Wayne Wright flying 59-1760, and Capt Calvin H. Markwood flying 62-4270.

Pilots from the 469 TFS were: Lt Col William N. Reed flying 60-0464, Maj Robert F. Grubb flying 62-4221, Maj William Calvin Diehl, Jr. 62-4359, and a pilot named Wilson flying 61-0208.

"Waco" was a Wild Weasel flight supporting strikes in this area. Their target was SAM site VN780 at location 21-17N and 106-17E. The flight took off at 05:50 and the mission lasted 3.9 hours. The flight's lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Rowland F. "Frank" Smith, Jr. and EWO 1Lt David H. Williams from the 44 TFS in F-105F 63-8302
- #2 - Capt Fred R. Nelson and EWO Capt James T. Wallace from the 44 TFS in F-105F 63-8312
- #3 - Maj Oscar Moise Dardeau, Jr. and EWO Capt Edward William "Tiny" Lehnhoff, Jr. from the 44 TFS in 63-8306
- #4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler from the 34 TFS flying F-105D 60-0445 on his 12th combat mission.

National Archives camera film archive control number NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649C & Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet.

31-Oct-67

5843

"Vegas" flight from the 34 TFS launched at 07:40. The lineup for the 2.6-hour flight was:

- #1 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying F-105D 61-0194
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 62-4361 on his 13th mission.
- #3 - 1Lt David B. Waldrop III flying 61-0208
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 62-4221
- Spare - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr. in 58-1159

"Flak 21-10N and 102-48E. Orbit 20-10N and 104-15E."

Also from the 34 TFS, Maj David C. Dickson, Jr., flew his 31st combat mission. His bombs closed a cave and produced a secondary explosion.

Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 31 Oct 67.

07-Nov-67

3467

Today's surveillance photography on the Hanoi railroad and highway bridge (JCS 13) on the Northeast Rail Line (RR 2) showed the bridge was now serviceable. The gap at the north end had been closed and all spans were back in place.

Air Force planes bombed two other targets along the Northeast Rail Line (RR 2). They hit the Lang Giai railroad siding (BE 616-G0778) at 21-43-53N and 106-39-59E. There was no BDA. "At the Lang Giai Railroad Yard four rail interdictions, eight damaged freight cars and a large secondary explosion were noted by Korat-based crews after a strike by 12 F-105s. The flak suppression flight reported damage to four AAA sites." (7 Air Force Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (WAIS), 67-46 dated 11 Nov 67, for week of 3 - 9 Nov 1967, pg 4.)

After F-105s bombed the Lang Giai railroad yard (BE 616-00081) 30 miles north of Kep at 21-41-

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

48N and 106-39-59E, BDA photos indicated the yard was still serviceable and no new rail cars had been damaged or destroyed.

The flight lineup from the 388 TFW was:

"Waco" Iron Hand. Refueled from Tan Anchor 22
"Pistol". Refueled from Tan Anchor 20
"Hatchet". Refueled from Tan Anchor 23
"Vegas". Refueled from Tan Anchor 21
"Garage". Refueled from Tan Anchor 24

One F-105D from Korat was lost to AAA on the strike and the pilot, "Pistol 02", Maj William C. Diehl, Jr., 469 TFS, was captured. He later died as a POW.

1Lt Earl J. Henderson, also from the 469th, flew his 36th combat mission on this strike against the Lang Giai rail yard.

"Target: Rail line in the northeast buffer zone.
"Armament: 6x750#

"Clear and a million. Could see 30 miles into China. Very light flak right before roll in but second guy in got it. He bailed out one minute later. Too deep to rescue. 37/57 extremely heavy on egress. Not much of a day off."

"Waco", the Ironhand flight from the 388 TFW supported today's strikes. They left Korat at 05:20. "Waco" flight's lineup was:

#1 - Capt Richard W. Arnold and EWO Capt James F. Bartsch from the 44 TFS flying F-105F 63-8306
#2 - Capt Fred R. Nelson from the 44 TFS flying F-105D 60-0428
#3 - Maj Oscar Moise Dardeau, Jr. and EWO Capt Edward William "Tiny" Lehnhoff, Jr., 44 TFS, flying F-105F 63-8347
#4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler, 34 TFS, flying F-105D 62-4359 on his 17th combat mission
Spare - Capt Robert M. Crane, 34 TFS, in F-105D 62-4242

The locations of "Waco" flight's targets were:

Primary - 21-42N and 106-40E (Near the Lang Giai railroad yard)
Secondary - 21-12N and 105-52E
Tertiary - 17-23N and 106-36E

Jake Shuler recalled this mission. "This was my second Iron Hand mission and my sixth mission to RP-6. The Pistol Strike Force struck the northeast railroad about 10 miles southwest of Lang Son. This was the furthest north I had been, not that far from China." (Jake Shuler combat mission spreadsheet, mission card, and mission narrative via e-mail 11 Jan 2011.)

Capt Irving E. LeVine from the 34 TFS received a Distinguished Flying Cross (2nd OLC) for the mission he flew this day. "Captain Irving E. LeVine distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement in aerial flight as an F-105 Pilot over North Vietnam on 7 November 1967. On that date, Capt LeVine was personally responsible for suppressing numerous antiaircraft gun positions in support of a fighter bomber force attacking a heavily defended military target in North Vietnam. His unwavering determination and complete disregard for personal safety in penetrating formidable defenses and then returning to the target area in an effort to effect the rescue of a downed pilot,

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

exemplify the highest degree of professional airmanship. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain LeVine reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (Citation provided by Irv Levine in letter received 16 April 2010.)

Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 1 - 15 November 1967 & Earl Henderson, combat diary.

09-Nov-67

4836

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11-Nov-67

3470

During the period 11 through 15 November, weather was below minimums for strikes in RP-5 and RP-6 with ceilings running from 1,000 to 2,000 feet and one mile visibility with widespread rain.

In RP-1, the emphasis continued to be against truck parks, ferries, fords, and interdiction points. Moving targets were continually being sought out by armed reconnaissance aircraft.

"Locust" flight from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, used the newly operational Commando Club radar to guide them to their tertiary target at location 21-02N and 105-30E. Their takeoff time was 14:10. The lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr. flying F-105D 59-1750
- #2 - Capt Carl William Lasiter flying 60-0445
- #3 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 60-0458
- #4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 62-4221 on his 20th combat mission. He logged 3.1 hours.
- Spare - F-105D 62-4248

"Although I do not recall any specific details of this mission, it was apparently a Commando Club

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

mission, target coordinates 21-02N and 105-30E, which is the Hoa Loc Airfield (noted on chart as 'Under Construction'), about 15 miles due west of Hanoi."

Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 1 - 15 November 1967 & Jake Shuler mission log spreadsheet & e-mail 11 Jan 2011.

19-Nov-67

3482

The U.S. lost nine aircraft in Vietnam combat today, eclipsing the four F-105s lost over North Vietnam yesterday, 18 November. In addition to the three F-105s shot down (and the one damaged) by SAMs, the USAF also lost an RF-4C to a SAM site near Phuc Yen and an F-100D and an F-4C to ground fire in South Vietnam. The Navy also lost two F-4Bs to combat over Haiphong and an F-8C to a bad catapult launch from the USS Oriskany. Of the 14 crewmen involved, only three returned home by the end of the day. Five others became POWs and six were killed.

The F-105D pilot killed was Capt Harrison H. Klinck from the 469 TFS. The F-105D pilot who became a POW was Major Raymond W. Vissotzky from the 34 TFS. The F-105F Wild Weasel crew of Maj Gerald C. Gustafson and EWO Capt Russell F. Brownlee from the 333 TFS were rescued.

Captain Irving E. LeVine, 34 TFS, was "Tampa 02" on the mission in which Maj Vissotzky, "Tampa 03", was lost. Maj Vissotzky was the squadron Life Support Officer and Capt LeVine replaced him.

"In four days, North Vietnamese missiles had shot down between eight and ten U.S. aircraft. U.S. planners, finally realizing they had a problem, thought the Vietnamese were using new radars, new radar frequencies, or an optical guidance system. They did not suspect the Vietnamese were aiming at the jamming signals themselves."

CNA Loss/Damage Database & "The -Ology War: Technology and Ideology in the Vietnamese Defense of Hanoi", 1967, Merle L. Pribbenow II, in The Journal of Military History, Jan 2003, pgs 195 & Irv LeVine, letter received 16 Apr 10.

29-Nov-67

4845

"Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS took off at 07:55. They refueled with Tan 23 going to the target and post-strike refueled with Tan 66. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying F-105D 59-1759
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0072 on his 25th combat mission.
- #3 - Capt Carl William Lasiter flying 62-4359
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 61-0132

The flight worked with the FAC "Nail 70" against a target at location 21-36N and 106-32E. "75% coverage. 100% on target." Their mission lasted 4.3 hours.

At 14:10, four pilots from the 34 TFS comprising "Scuba" flight took off from Korat on a mission to Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 50 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0445.
- #4 - Capt Hugh W. Davis

It was Maj Armstrong's 28th combat mission. "The regular afternoon strike was cancelled and we were fortunate to get an add-on flight of four. We went up into Laos just above the Thailand border where we worked with an O-1E FAC. The clouds were thick all about but we were able to roll in on

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

a shallow pass and drop. All of our bombs were on target and the FAC said we destroyed 12 buildings and an area where 200 enemy troops had been reported. After that, we swung into North Vietnam for a road check and counter. It was the first time that my tape recorder worked properly and I was really pleased."

Jake Shuler's mission log spreadsheet & Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 12.

02-Dec-67

4793

The Wild Weasel crew of Capt Robert E. Dorrrough, Jr. from the 44 TFS and EWO Maj Clarence S. "Bud" Summers flew their 78th combat mission over North Vietnam.

"Sat - Finally flew mission #78. We flew with a four-ship strike flight on a radar drop in Pack 6. The weather was really bad, a real MiG day even though we were supported by two F-4 flights. However, the WX must have been too bad for the MiGs; they never took off. Really got painted by the Firecan radars at Yen Bai, and my flight had quite a few 85-mm shells thrown at it. Capt Jim Wright got #100 today [Capt James H. Wright, Jr., 44 TFS]."

Four pilots from the 34 TFS flew a mission controlled by the Commando Club radar. The radar site use the call sign "Wager" at the primary frequency of 396.2 MHz. "Pistol" flight took off at 06:55 for a TOT of 08:07. They pre-strike and post-strike refueled from Red Anchor 20. Their lineup was:

#1 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr. flying F-105D 60-0462
#2 - Capt Carl William Lasiter flying 60-0445
#3 - Maj Donald W. Revers flying 62-4248
#4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0132 on his 26th combat mission
Spare - Capt Irving E. LeVine in 61-0194

Bob Dorrrough's Combat diary & Jake Shuler mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011.

07-Dec-67

4796

The 388 TFW launched a four-ship Iron Hand flight against a target at location 21-43N and 105-51E in RP-5. "Bobbin" flight took off at 06:00. Their lineup was:

#1 - Capt Robert E. Dorrrough, Jr. and EWO Maj Clarence S. "Bud" Summers from the 44 TFS flying F-105F 63-8306
#2 - Capt Irving E. Levine, 34 TFS, flying F-105D 60-0435
#3 - Capt Fred R. Nelson and EWO Capt James T. Wallace, 44 TFS, flying F-105F 62-4416
#4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler, 34 TFS, flying F-105D 61-0162 on his 28th combat mission. He logged 2.7 hours.
Spare - Maj David D. Igelman, 34 TFS, in F-105D 61-0055

Jake Shuler recalled that he launched two Shrikes at 21-30.5N and 104-33E at Yen Bay in RP-5. Also, "Bob Dorrrough, Bobbin Lead, graduated from Webb AFB, TX, UPT Class 63-D, a year ahead of me. His roommate was Rod Omrod. They were suitemates of me and my roommate Roscoe H. 'Ross' Fobair. Ross was in the back seat of the first aircraft (F-4C) shot down by a SAM in SEA, 24 July 1965."

After target weather cancelled their missions during each of the last two days, this was the 80th combat mission for Capt Dorrrough and Maj Summers. "Thurs - Flew I.H. with radar mission to Pack 5. Tried some new high altitude tactics for bad weather. They seemed to work okay, but need more evaluation.

"Capt Porter Thompson and Capt Tony Platek finished today. They are the first of our Wild Weasel class to finish - chit hot.

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

"Only 10 more missions and I'll be 'golden'".

Later today, the flight's spare, Maj Igelman, flew a mission in another flight. He flew F-105D 60-0464 under a mission designated RT56A-218 and struck a target at 20-23N and 104-13E. (Nat'l Archives film record Archive Control # NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649C)

Jake Shuler's combat mission spreadsheet and mission card via e-mail 11 Jan 2011 & Bob Dorrough's Combat diary.

10-Dec-67

6713

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

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

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

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

12-Dec-67

4601

Fourteen flights of F-105s from Takhli and Korat and F-4s from Ubon targeted Kep Railroad Yards at 21-25N and 106-18E and Kep Air Field (JCS 9.1) at 21-23N and 106-16E in Route Pack 6B.

The strike force had a total of 56 aircraft that included F-105 Iron Hands from Takhli, one F-105 flak suppression flight from Takhli, three F-105 strike flights from Korat, and two F-4C MiG CAP flights from Ubon. One MiG CAP flight was supporting the Iron Hand flight, and the other supported the flak suppression and strike flights.

The aircraft departed their bases, refueled over the Gulf of Tonkin, joined up, turned left at the Ile Madeleine, and headed inland north of MiG Ridge. While the strike force was over water, DEEP SEA warned of MiGs airborne from Phuc Yen and later from Kep and Haiphong.

Solid undercast at 8,000 feet caused the Takhli F-105 strike flights to weather abort at 0845L just short of the northeast railroad, followed shortly afterwards by Korat's strike flights. The F-4C MiG CAP aircraft continued ahead to search for MiGs.

One of the MiG CAP flights and two of Korat's egressing F-105 strike flights and its flak suppression flight (Hatchet Flight) encountered MiG-21s. MiG CAP number three fired three AIM-7 missiles at a MiG but all three missiles failed. The F-4C pilot and his wingman pursued the MiG-21 until they received a warning call and broke off 10 to 15 miles from the Chinese border.

A "dirty gray/black" MiG-21 fired an ATOL missile at number four F-105 in Korat's flak suppression flight. "The ATOL exploded just aft of [the plane's] right wing, blowing off half the external fuel tank, igniting the fuel, punching two holes in the right horizontal stabilizer, and tearing the right half of the fuselage from the flap on back." (Red Baron Report)

This pilot was Capt Douglas A. Beyer, "Hatchet 04" from the 34 TFS flying F-105D 60-0512. He was "... a 100-mission pilot who was attached to the 388 TFW. [He] said that during a mission near the Kep Airfield an air-to-air missile, fired at his aircraft by a MiG-21, exploded directly behind him. 'Fragments struck the right drop tank causing it to explode,' the pilot recalled. Although shrapnel also damaged the fuselage and the alternate and utility hydraulic systems were lost, Byer

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

was able to safely return to a friendly base. ... " The pilot landed at Da Nang AB, South Vietnam. A photo of the plane with the "JJ" tail code, showed holes along the right side of the aft fuselage above and below the stabilator. He received the DFC (3rd OLC) for this mission. (USAF microfilm AVH-7 & Thunderchief Worldwide Report Vol III No 11 July 1968.)

"Hatchet 02", Capt Irving E. LeVine, 34 TFS, fired 121 rounds at the same MiG-21 at point-blank range, 90-degree angle off without hitting the MiG. LeVine was 33 years old with 2,500 flying hours, 225 in the F-105, flying his 76th combat mission, 70 over North Vietnam.

During a Red Baron interview on 25 November 1970, he described his actions. "At first, that MiG looked like an F-4 with a bad paint job. It came up so lazy; most of the MiGs I'd seen had come up very fast, but this one didn't seem to be in any hurry at all until he suddenly snapped up and fired, like the snap-up they do with the F-89. I expected him to go to 35,000 feet and I started to roll right into him, nose down and I didn't think I'd be able to bring my nose up in time. Anyway, I ceased my roll, started up, and he simply made a lazy left bank just like he was on a GCA. At first I thought we were going to collide; I shoved the nose over as far as I could and hosed off the 20-mm rounds. It seemed like a tremendously long fighter. It was silver but not bright silver; there was a gray band of paint behind the cockpit and halfway on the wings and it looked like somebody made a quick attempt to camouflage it. He pulled around (to the right) to parallel my course and I thought if I barrel-rolled to the left I could pull in behind him but my main concern was to help number 4 (who was hit and burning)."

Capt LeVine accompanied Capt Beyer toward Danang where Beyer landed safely after his fire blew out. Capt LeVine flew on to Korat.

Doug Beyer's comments on his experience are posted on Robert W. Smith's autobiography web site. "Early on the morning of 12 Dec 67, we went through the normal mission briefings. Sam Armstrong, Irv LeVine and I were three members of the flight. My memory fades on the fourth. Target was Kep Airfield, northeast of Hanoi. We went the water route, hit the tankers, and entered the area south of Haiphong. The weather was solid, and we were in and out of the clouds the whole time. The Weasel flight kept us advised as to what they found - no breaks, anywhere.

"Finally, they called for a weather abort, and the strike force began a port turn to go feet wet again. About half way through the turn, someone yelled 'Lead, break left'. About eight or nine leads responded, what lead? About that time, I felt a heavy jolt at the rear of the aircraft, and the bird started a roll to the right. My first thought, this is the truth, was 'I don't like rice!' I corrected the attitude with normal aileron, no problem. I lit the burner, punched off the MER, and tried to get rid of both drop tanks. The left one jettisoned, but the right one remained with me.

"Sam joined up with me and gave me a quick rundown on what he could see. I was receiving constant vectors and distances to the coast from those guys we always heard, but never saw.

"As soon as I was feet wet, we turned south to Da Nang. As I began my penetration, I entered the clouds and was under GCA control. They advised me of deteriorating weather, with a rainstorm in progress. There was no problem controlling the aircraft, but not having a chance to run a control check, I had to press forward. I had no hydraulic brakes, but the [backup] air system was in good shape. I broke out at about 500' with good visibility, hit the runway, popped the drag chute, and began braking to a stop. No problems.

"I opened the canopy, and slid down onto the wing. At that time, the aircraft began to move, and I thought I was in deep trouble. I was wrong. Ground crewmen already had a Euclid hooked up, and was towing me off the runway. First class service, to say the least!!

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

"Several hours after I landed, a friend of mine in the maintenance squadron called to say he had something he wanted to show me. He's also the guy that got the pictures of the aircraft for me.

"He met me at Base Ops, and handed me a rolleron that they had gotten out of the rear of my engine area. It had no serial numbers on it, so I assumed it had to be from an Atoll missile. One of the oldest master sergeants I've ever seen explained that the US had quit numbering the rollerons as well, and he was certain the rolleron was from a Sidewinder. Interesting.

"I hitched a ride back to Korat on a T-39 and, upon arrival, joined the squadron party, already in progress. At that point, Irv LeVine began to tell me exactly what had happened. He said that he had seen a MIG 21 pop up out of the clouds, hose off an air-to-air missile, and dive back down into the clouds. He further stated that he had gotten off some rounds of 20 mike mike, and felt sure he had hit the guy in the vertical stabilizer.

"Several days later, I got the pictures of the aircraft. One most noteworthy picture shows a hole in MY vertical stabilizer. The old master sergeant says Sidewinder rolleron. You can understand my doubts about what really occurred that day in December 1967, 35 ½ years ago!"
(http://www.nf104.com/ab/ch_5/iv.html)

Irv LeVine told how he remembered this mission. "We were inbound when an airborne abort was called. We had a solid undercast from the coast inland and it was several thousand feet below us. The sky was basically clear and visibility was 15 to 20 miles or more. Our flight did a right turn and headed for the coast. I saw no flak or SAMs. I was in a gentle right turn, almost level, and busy cleaning up the cockpit. Out of the corner of my right eye I saw an aircraft lazily climb out of the undercast a mile or so to my 3 o'clock position and it seemed to be moving rather slow. It was a mottled dark gray and I thought, 'It must be one of ours'. I was startled when it snapped up and fired a missile. The missile hit one of our flight and 70 feet of flame shot rearward from that plane. Radio chatter made me realize it was Doug Beyer's bird that was hit. I didn't know how badly but thought he might not make it to the coast. That fire was really burning and streaming rearward. At the same time I thought the MiG, like so many of the MiGs before him, was now going to grab for altitude and possibly head for China. I hoped to get on his tail and get a shot before he could escape to a much higher altitude. I dumped my bombs and hustled getting my switches to 'Guns Air', lower my seat, get into burner while keeping an eye on the MiG all at the same time. To my surprise, he didn't keep climbing but swung into a 90-degree left turn that would take him across my path but well below me. I came out of burner and shoved the nose of my bird down hard. As he started his turn, my bird's nose was well above the horizon at a 45 to 50-degree angle. The Thud reacted perfectly and I thought we were going to collide. He passed directly across my line of flight and just below me. I pulled the trigger as he shot by but I don't think he even knew I was there. He certainly didn't try to take any evasive action or try to engage me. He reversed to his right leveling off a couple thousand feet above me and appeared to be watching Doug's burning aircraft. I felt confident doing the barrel roll attack and for a moment I considered trying one to get at his 6 o'clock position. I was low at about his 5 o'clock position and we were on approximately the same heading. Guilt took over at the same time and told me my job was to guard Doug's ass as he headed for feet wet. I turned hard to my right and using burner caught up with them. I stayed in a weave pattern behind Doug until we were well out over the water and headed south. He went south to Danang and I RTB'd" (Irv LeVine, letter received 16 April 2010.)

The four pilots in "Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS were targeted against Kep Airfield. The Korat flight took off at 0555 and flew for 3 hours 50 minutes. The flight line up was:

#1 - Maj Donald W. Revers

#2 - Capt Robert Malcolm Elliot (KIA 14 Feb 68)

#3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0449

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

#4 - Capt Sam P. Morgan

It was Maj Armstrong's 34th combat mission. "This was the first Pack VI mission for me in 3 weeks. The weather was too bad around Hanoi so we were sent to Kep Airfield, the water route. I was Deputy Force Commander for this force but I lost my DC generator on the tanker and finally got it reset. After that I had to turn off all my navigation equipment to keep it on the line. Don Revers lost his AC generator just before landfall so Sam Morgan wound up leading the force. We were 5 minutes behind Takhli going in. The weather was completely undercast all up the Gulf and inland. Takhli made a weather abort about 15 miles from Kep and we did also a minute later. Consequently, we were all turning through the same airspace. About halfway through the turn back to the coast, we were jumped by MiG-21s. They fired missiles. One hit Hatchet #4, Doug Beyer, but he landed at Danang OK. Some flame shot out of Don Revers' airplane and we thought he was hit but apparently not. What a fiasco. We shouldn't have been sent up there in that weather." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pp 14)

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Armstrong elaborated on this mission. "The weather over Pack VIA was generally bad so most of the missions were flown in flights into Laos or Pack I. The next Pack VIA mission was on the Kep Airfield Northeast of Hanoi. It was primarily a MiG-17 base. The weather was bad so we wound up doing a weather abort where we could bank only 20 degrees without compromising the effectiveness of our jamming pods. After having seen SA-2's coming up through the clouds and hitting aircraft like they did on 18 November, taking this long to turn and exit the area seemed like an eternity! No SA-2's were fired but two MiG-21's intercepted us and fired a heat seeker which impacted Doug Beyer's aircraft causing him to land at Danang with the missile sticking in the side of his aircraft." (Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished manuscript, chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 20.

Red Baron II Report, Event 69, pp 134 - 145 & 7 Air Force Weekly Air Intelligence Summary (WAIS), 67-51 dated 16 Dec 67, for week of 8 - 14 Dec 1967, pg 10.

20-Dec-67

4854

At 0705, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Seabird" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a target in northern Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 40 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 59-1759
- #2 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO
- #3 - Maj James E. Daniel, Jr., 34 TFS Ops Officer
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine

It was Maj Armstrong's 40th combat mission. "This was planned as a primary Barrel Roll mission for a change. We refueled and went straight to the area which was about 10 miles south of Sam Neua. The FAC put some smoke on suspected troop concentration and we put our bombs right on the area. We had swung up through the spur of North Vietnam that sticks out at 19 ½ N so we had a counter. Otherwise a very uneventful counter."

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. was another 34 TFS pilot who flew a mission into an area of North Vietnam just above the DMZ. He was in an Iron Hand flight on his 49th mission.

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 17 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 20 Dec 67.

23-Dec-67

24-Dec-67

1301

"President Lyndon B. Johnson visited (the 388 TFW at) Korat RTAFB the evening of 23-24 December. The Commander-in-Chief spent the night at the base and made a pre-dawn address to base personnel. He presented medals to six pilots from Thailand-based wings. More than 5,000 personnel gathered for the speech at the base flightline. The President arrived from funeral

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

services (on 21 December) for Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt [who had drowned in the ocean], on the first leg of an around-the-world tour."

"... A new and as yet unoccupied dormitory helped to house the presidential entourage of about three hundred, including some seventy-five reporters. George Christian, the President's press secretary, told reporters that for security reasons they could not file stories until after the president left early in the morning. But the Thai press broke the story, and reporters spent all night using telephones and typewriters at wing headquarters." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 113).

President Johnson arrived at Korat at 10:10 PM Friday 23 December. That night, he met in the Officers Club with General Momyer, 7 AF Commander, and pilots who briefed him on their missions. F-105 pilots speaking were Capt Dennis W. Jarvi from the 469 TFS who described the recent raid (on 14 December 1967) in which he participated against the Paul Doumer highway and railroad bridge. Maj Michael S. Muskat, "... a veteran of 25 combat missions briefed the President on the anti-aircraft and ... SAM suppression missions flown by his squadron, the 44 TFS." Capt John H. Schaub also from the 469 TFS briefed on the role of the mission commander "... including the over-all planning and execution of a combat strike ... " Capt Schaub had "... flown 83 combat missions and served as mission commander on several occasions."

"When asked by General Momyer for an opinion of the value of the bombing and its affect on the abilities of the North Vietnamese to sustain their aggression in the South, ..." Capt Irving E. LeVine from the 34 TFS, who had flown 82 combat missions, outlined "... the tremendous destructive power being unleashed on key communist targets by Air Force strikes"

Many years later, when shown this description of this event, Irv LeVine commented, "B.S. I never said anything like this." (Irv LeVine letter, received 16 Apr 10.)

President Johnson also greeted Capt Douglas A. Beyer, 34 TFS, from Seguin, Texas, who had flown 60 combat missions and had attended Southwest Texas State college, the same school from which the President had graduated in 1930.

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong from the 34 TFS attended the President's talk at the Officer's Club and documented his observations in his memoirs. "President Johnson visited us just before Christmas. We had only 12 hours warning. Since Col. Burdett had been shot down in November, the Air Force had sent in a senior colonel from Okinawa, Col. Neil Graham. He was all excited about the visit and worked hard to see that we presented a good image to LBJ. The most obvious thing was to remove some embarrassing things from the club. Some artisans in the Philippines made a good living from carving large aircrew wings from mahogany. They changed the middle part of the wings to designate pilot, navigator, etc. But some time earlier, a pilot from Korat had ordered a set of wings with an Edsel grill in the center and it was proudly displayed in the bar where the pilots recognized this as an indictment of Secretary of Defense McNamara. This had to be removed for the time being but I'm not sure LBJ would have understood the significance.

"He gave a speech to all of the pilots at the club that night and a speech to all Korat folks plus Camp Friendship the next morning at 5:00 a.m. before he departed. I don't remember what he had to say except that he didn't understand what we were going through and he looked awfully tired!

"LBJ had heard about Roscoe, our canine mascot. ... Somebody had briefed LBJ about Roscoe because he asked for him that night at the club. Just then Roscoe strolled up for dinner as he always did. LBJ squatted down on his haunches and called for him to come. Roscoe walked right by and into the dining room without acknowledging the President of the United States there on his haunches! We all thought that it was hilarious but couldn't laugh out loud. Our base leadership was already in a tizzy because of the visit and it would have been too much to have done so." (Lt

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 23 - 24.)

The President was "...quartered in a series of trailers -- his trailer was number one. The trailer had two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. The President's large double bed filled one of the small bedrooms."

Early the next morning, "the President was up and dressed by 5:00 a.m. -- in khaki shirt and pants and battle jacket. Walt Rostow and Wm Bundy came in the trailer briefly and the President greeted them and then suggested they leave and find a way to get him into Karachi without the press finding out prior to arrival."

"In the dark of the early morn..." the President, with Gen Momyer, traveled by car to a flightline hanger where, on a stage, he presented awards to eight pilots.

Receiving Silver Stars were:

Capt William Griger, 30, Goldsboro, N.C. - 355 TFW

Capt Donald F. Miles - 432 TRW

Receiving Distinguished Flying Crosses were:

Maj. Myron L. Savage, 35, Ste. Genevieve, Mo -355 TFW

Maj Wintford L. Bazzell, 42, Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. - 388 TFW

Maj James R. Bassett, 32, Ithica, N.Y. (44 TFS) - 388 TFW

Maj. Lloyd W. Boothby, 36, Washington, D.C. - 8 TFW

1Lt John C. Putnam - 355 TFW

1Lt George H. McKinney, Jr., 24, Bessemer, Ala., - 8 TFW

(The President's Daily Diary: Dec 23, 1967, pg 1 LBJ Library and Museum, on line at <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/diary/1967/671223-01.asp>)

After presenting the awards, President Johnson spoke to a crowd gathered in the pre-dawn darkness near the reveted F-105 parking stalls. "In the history of air power, no such difficult set of tasks has ever been assigned as those assigned to you Guerrilla combat provides no easy targets and that is why aggressors here - as elsewhere - have been tempted to choose guerrilla tactics as the means of their aggression. Yet here, for the first time, air power is actually depriving the aggressor of his advantage. ... Air power is denying access to cheap success or to ultimate victory. ... And no man can come here for even a short period and shake your hand or look you in the eye, and have the slightest bit of doubt for a moment that America is going to hold firm and America is going to stay faithful throughout the course - until an honorable peace is secured. ... God keep you, every one of you - and we shall always be deeply in your debt. Thank you and good morning."

The President departed Korat at 5:41a.m.

President Johnson went from Korat to Cam Ranh AB in South Vietnam where he arrived at 0841. " ... The Korat speech marked the apex of good feeling between President Johnson and the military. Since the Stennis hearings in August, he had approved some long-sought targets and shown Secretary of Defense McNamara the door." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 114).

388 TFW history Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO 583 frame 1685 & Sawadee Flyer, Friday Dec 29, 1967 in NO583, frames 1968 - 1973

23-Dec-67

6715

The four pilots in "Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS took off at 14:40 and refueled with Red Anchor

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

40. Their lineup was:

#1 - Capt Vernon D. Ellis flying F-105D 62-4387
#2 - Maj William M. Blakeslee flying 61-0072
#3 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 58-1157
#4 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer flying 61-0132
Spare: Capt Irving E. LeVine in 60-0505

This was Capt Shuler's 34th mission. "This apparently was another Commando Club mission, target coordinates 20-25N and 104-10E, 094 degrees at 25 NM from Channel 97."

Jake Shuler 23 Dec 67 mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011.

24-Dec-67

6716

The four pilots in "Oakland" flight from the 34 TFS took off at 06:40 and refueled with Blue Anchor 14. Their lineup was:

#1 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying F-105D 58-1157
#2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0132
#3 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO, flying 60-0505
#4 - Capt Robert M. Crane flying 60-0435

The unneeded spare was 60-0462.

It was Jake Shuler's 35th combat mission. "On this mission we worked with Misty 11 who directed us to drop our bombs on a target with coordinates 17-42N and 105-46-30E, the Ho Chi Minh Trail in RP-1."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Locust 3" against guns and a troop area in the Barrel Roll region of Laos. "100%. Two gun positions silenced. Passed through RP-5 on egress." It was his 24th combat mission.

Jake Shuler 24 Dec 67 mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

25-Dec-67

2772

"Christmas day was celebrated with many 354 TFS flights [from the 355 TFW, Takhli] striking targets in Laos. Laos was not included in the one-day truce that covered North and South Vietnam."

At the 388 TFW, Korat, the 44 TFS Wild Weasel crew of Capt Robert E. Dorrrough, Jr. and his EWO Maj Clarence S. "Bud" Summers flew a combat mission into Laos. "Monday - Merry Christmas to Ho Chi. Hit his supply route in early A.M. in Laos. Our flight carried 24 x 750-pound bombs. Sure lit up the sky. Unfortunately this was a non-counter."

Another pilot from Korat, Capt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, also flew a non-counting mission into Laos.

"Merry Christmas!

"Flew non-counter in far southern Laos. Took off at 3:00 AM. Still very dark when we landed. Combat Skyspot mission. Bombs lit up sky."

"Pancho" flight from the 34 TFS at Korat launched at 10:05 on a two-hour non-counting mission against a target at location 15-51N and 106-47E. Their lineup was:

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

- #1 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying F-105D 59-1759
- #2 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 60-0435
- #3 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying 60-0425
- #4 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0132 on his first non-counting combat mission. He had 35 counters to date.

"The reason this was a non-counter was that we were not allowed to bomb NVN on Christmas Day. I believe this was my first and only time working with a Covey FAC, in this case Covey 239 flying an O-2A Covey FACs with 2xx call signs flew primarily in Zone 2 of southern Laos designated 'Tigerhound'. We made contact on UHF frequency 338.8 after flying towards coordinates 15-50.5N and 106-46E. After making visual contact, Dave (Dickson) started a counterclockwise orbit around Covey 239 who was well below us. He explained that our target was a camouflaged 37MM gun emplacement that had been giving him fits. He fired a white phosphorus rocket then called the target's location relative to the white smoke. Dave dropped his bombs (I'm pretty sure we were carrying 500 pounders) and Covey 239 called the target relative to the bomb impact. Successively, Irv (LeVine) and Clyde (Falls) dropped their bombs and after each drop Covey 239 called the relative location of the target to the bomb impact points. So, by the time I rolled in I had a pretty good idea of where the target was, the advantage of being #4 in the formation. Well I was fortunate enough to get a direct hit, probably the only reason I remember this mission in such detail. I'm sure I would have gotten a lot of ribbing if I hadn't come closer than the other three." (Jake Shuler's combat mission spreadsheet & e-mail 11 Jan 2011)

The 34th also launched the five-ship "Gator" flight into Laos. The flight took off at 11:45 and returned after flying for 2 hours 15 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4387
- #2 - Maj Wintford L. Bazzell, 469 TFS
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Capt Vernon D. Ellis
- #5 - Capt Edward L. Jones

This was the first non-counting combat mission that Maj Armstrong had flown since his arrival at Korat in October. "Christmas present. Even though there was a 24-hour truce in effect, we launched a number of strikes against infiltration routes in Laos. We had a 5th man as he was originally in another flight and had to change aircraft. Our target was in Laos, about the same latitude as Hue, South Vietnam, and about 5 miles inside Laos. The weather was supposed to be overcast there so we were set up for a Combat Sky Spot. We dropped via Sky Spot but as we released we looked down and saw our bombs hit very close to the target." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100-mission combat log.)

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Ozark 3" against a road segment in southern Laos. "100%. Two road cuts. One possible secondary." It was his 25th combat mission.

355 TFW history, Oct 67 - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO463, frame 1573 & Bob Dorrrough's combat diary & Earl Henderson, combat diary & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

28-Dec-67

4857

The 34 TFS at Korat launched the four-ship "Scuba" flight into North Vietnam. The flight took off at 1430 and returned after flying for 2 hours 45 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0505
- #2 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying mission #54
- #3 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine

Irving E. LeVine F-105 History

This was Maj Armstrong's 43rd combat mission. "I was supposed to be Mission Commander again today but the weather continued to be bad so everybody went to their first alternate target. Ours was a Commando Club on a target 25 miles west of Channel 97. We had approval before hand to swing up into North Vietnam after bomb drop to see if we could draw some MiGs and keep them off the second flight 30 minutes behind us going to Hoa Lac. We trolled up to about 20 miles NE of Phu Tho and no MiGs came up. We had two missiles fired at us on the way back down south. They didn't look like SAM bursts, they were grayish-white. No MiGs were known to come up and no missiles were fired on the flight going to Hoa Lac. We finally gave up and came home."

Maj Dickson's comment on his after-mission cigar band was "MiG hunt. Only SAMs."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 18 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 28 Dec 67.

29-Dec-67

5855

"Crossbow" flight from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, at Korat launched at 07:30 on a two-hour mission against a target at 19-36N and 103-40E, near Dong Hoi in RP-1. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying F-105D 62-4361 on his 55th combat mission
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 60-0152 on his 38th combat mission.
- #3 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying 60-0530
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 61-0072

In reading his mission card many years later, Jake Shuler commented, "On this mission, according to the Mission Data Card, our assigned target was just east of Ban Ban in northern Laos, coordinates 19-36N and 103-40E. Other notations indicate that we may have been diverted to a target at coordinates 16-53N and 106-01-30E, 113 degrees, 90 NM from Channel 89. This target is about 60 NM southwest of Dong Hoi in southern Laos."

Jake Shuler's combat mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 29 Dec 67.

01-Jan-68

6178

Capt Earl J. Henderson, 469 TFS, 388 TFW, flew a non-counter into Laos.

"Took off at 3:00 AM. Combat Skyspot mission."

Pilots from the 34 TFS also flew a non-counter into Laos. "Pistol" flight took off at 02:20 for a TOT of 03:00. They post-strike refueled from Blue Anchor 20. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Vernon D. Ellis flying F-105D 58-1150
- #2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0162
- #3 - Capt Hugh W. Davis flying 58-1172
- #4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 60-0436.

Jake Shuler recalled, "As with Christmas Day, we were not allowed to bomb NVN on New Year's Day. According to the Mission Data Card, we attacked targets at coordinates 16-42N and 106-13E, which is in the vicinity of inactive Tchepone airfield in southern Laos, about 70 NM southwest of Dong Hoi."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Bass 3" against a road segment in the Steel Tiger region of Laos. "100%. Road cut." It was his 29th combat mission.

Earl Henderson, combat diary & Jake Shuler mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011. Rufus Dye Mission History log

Irving E. LeVine

F-105 History

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)

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.

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(Approximate Date). "100 Mission Pilots Honored at Nellis AFB -- Special recognition certificates were awarded by Republic Aviation this month to eighteen F-105 fighter-bomber pilots. The recipients were Lieutenant Colonels Ken Hiltz and Robert Jondahl; Majors Richard Westcott, William Shunney and Thomas Murch; and Captains Robert Wilson, Anthony W. Platek, Donald Simanski, Chester Griffin, Irving LeVine, Robert Bigrigg, Phillip Drew, Donald Langwell, Joseph Howard, Roger Hermeling, James Padgett, Lamont Pharmer and David L. Ferguson."

Thunderchief Worldwide Report, Vol. IV, No. 7, April 1969.