

Robert B. Middleton

F-105 History

02-Nov-65

6226

Nine pilots in F-105 Class 66-C graduated from the 4520 CCTW at Nellis AFB, NV. The class began on 14 May 1965 and was assigned to the 4523 CCTS commanded by Maj Lloyd C. Smith. Capt Buddie R. Reinbold, Capt Richard A. Doucette, and Capt Capt Roger L. Counts were three of the Nellis instructor pilots for this class.

On 7 Sep 1965, one of the students, 2Lt David W. Poyner, was killed in the crash of his aircraft, F-105F 63-8270.

The graduates were:

Capt Peter Potter Pitman
1Lt Roger A. Ayres
1Lt William W. Koelm
1Lt Stephen Whitman Diamond
1Lt James Edwin Ray
1Lt Robert B. Middleton
1Lt James M. Kroyer
1Lt Kenneth J. Kerkering
1Lt Phillip J. Kelley

Capt Pitman was next assigned to the 35 TFS. He was later one of the original Ryan's Raider pilots in the 34 TFS. He was KIA on 12 May 1967.

1Lt Koelm had entered F-105 upgrade as a 2nd Lieutenant directly from undergraduate pilot training at Williams AFB, AZ. His next assignment was to the 12 TFS, 18 TFW, Kadena AB, Okinawa, arriving there on 6 January 1966.

1Lt Ayres was next assigned to the 354 TFS.

1Lt Diamond was assigned to the 354 TFS. He was KIA on 19 July 1966.

1Lt Ray was next assigned to the 469 TFS. He was shot down on 8 May 1966 and became a POW.

1Lt Middleton was assigned to the 80 TFS at Yokota. He had TDY combat assignments to the 354 TFS at Takhli and the 34 TFS at Korat.

1Lt Kelley had graduated from UPT Class 65-G at Moody AFB, GA. His next assignment was to the 35 TFS, 6441 TFW, Yokota AB, Japan. He was one of the original pilots selected to form the 34 TFS. He was shot down and rescued on 15 June 1966.

Bill Koelm, AF Form 11 Officer Military Record and AF Form 475 Training Report, dated 22 Nov 65, signed by Capt Buddie R. Reinbold.

19-Sep-66

7178

The 41 Air Division, Yokota AB, Japan, published blanket TDY orders for F-105 pilots of the 80 TFS. The orders covered TDYs to Takhli and Korat for "performing operational mission in support of 5th AF Ops Order 141-65. ... This order becomes effective 1 October 1966 and expires 31 December 1966. Trips are limited to not more than 10 trips and not more than 70 days per individual."

The names in the order were:

Lt Col William L. Janssen	1Lt Robert B. Middleton	Capt Jack W. Stover
Maj William J. McClelland	1Lt Steven L. Dongus	Capt Robert J. Straubinger
Maj Arthur S. Mearns	Capt Lester W. Sundt	Capt Donald L. Heiliger

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Maj Robert P. Taylor	Capt Donald N. Orth	Capt Wilburt H. Blatter
Capt Dennis R. Fanning	Capt John J. King	Capt William T. Williams IV
Capt James S. Hildebrand	Capt George E. Gifford	1Lt Richard P. High
Capt David L. Hatten	Capt Melvin C. Boswell	
Capt Robert L. Keller	Capt Victor Vizcarra	
Capt William A. Becker	Capt Benjamin D. Ulrich	
1Lt Robert W. Ferrel	Capt Giles W. Gainer	

Seven other officers assigned to Yokota were also included on the orders:

Col Allen K. McDonald - Hq 6441 TFW
Col Evens G. Stephens - Hq 41 AD
Col George L. Jones - Hq 5 AF/ DO
Maj Henry Shudinis - Hq 6441 TFW
Maj James R. Arthur - Hq 6441 TFW
Capt Robert D. Reichart - Hq 6441 TFW
Capt Rodney B. Beckman - Hq 6441 TFW

41 Air Division Temporary Duty Order - Military, TB-1083, 23 Sep 66, provided by Victor Vizcarra.

13-Jul-67

2983

Capt Malcolm D. Winter from the 354 TFS, 355 TFW, flew his 11th combat mission into North Vietnam. Capt Robert B. Middleton was also in his flight. "Back to 6A. Looks like 3 refuelings each go is standard, one going, one coming, & one recycle. We hit the railroad yard at Phu Tho. No AAA except a couple 37-mm bursts Bob Middleton saw."

The target (BE 616-01829) was on the northwest rail line (RR 1) at coordinates 21-24-05N and 10513-35E and had been struck on 12 July.

Combat mission log of Mal Winter transcribed by his son, Mike Winter & PACAF Rolling Thunder briefing to CINCPAC for period 8 - 23 Jul 67.

05-Aug-67

2989

Four pilots in a flight from the 354 TFS at Takhli flew a combat mission into RP-1, North Vietnam. The flight members were Maj Dale W. Leatham, Capt Malcolm D. Winter, Capt Robert B. Middleton, and Capt David A. Holland. Capt Winter flew F-105D 59-1758 on his 22nd combat mission. He carried six 750-pound bombs and logged 2 hours 50 minutes of flying time. "Weather was bad in 6A. Originally scheduled to go against Thai Nguyen area - bridge just south. ... Bombed some RR cars between karsts. Right on target. Used FAC. Holland did not get release, almost pulled doors off. Went to Mu Gia Pass area and got rid of them there. Checked new patches today. A OK. Early go tomorrow - max - 4 ½ hours sleep before I must get up - will be dragging in the a.m."

Combat mission log of Mal Winter transcribed by his son, Mike Winter.

15-Aug-67

1310

F-105D 60-0449 assigned to the 388 TFW was damaged in a major aircraft accident. The aircraft was number four of a flight of four using the call sign "Pintail". "At 0918L, (the aircraft), piloted by Captain Robert B. Middleton, 34 TFS, was recovered at Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, with Air Turbine Motor (ATM) failure. During the landing roll both main gear tires were blown and a partial barrier engagement collapsed the left main landing gear inflicting substantial damage to the aircraft. The pilot was not injured."

History of Flight

"(1) At 0918G, 15 August 1967, F-105D-10RE, piloted by Captain Robert B. Middleton, 34 Tactical Fighter Squadron, was recovered at Udorn RTAFB, Thailand, with Air Turbine Motor (ATM) failure. During the landing roll

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both main gear tires were blown and a partial barrier engagement collapsed the left main landing gear inflicting substantial damage to the aircraft. The pilot was not injured.

"(2) The aircraft involved was number four of a flight of four using the call sign of 'Pintail'. The mission was a Tactical Combat Mission. The aircraft was configured with two full 450-gallon integral drop tanks on each inboard pylon station, a full bomb bay tank, a centerline Multiple Ejector Rack (MER) with six 750-pound GP bombs, and an ECM pod on each outboard wing station. Gross weight for takeoff was approximately 50,830 pounds.

"(3) The mission was briefed IAW AFM 55-105. The preflight, engine start, taxi, and arming were normal with takeoff accomplished at 0701G. Pre-strike refueling was accomplished en route to the target but adverse weather caused the flight to divert to the control of a FAC. The FAC directed the flight on two different targets. One attacking pass was made at each target. Both attacks were high-angle, 45-degree attacks with recoveries at approximately 4,500 feet AGL. On the first attack, Pintail Flight dive bombed. The second attack was a strafing attack. During recovery from the strafing attack, Pintail Four heard his ATM lose speed and noted the AC Gen caution light illuminate (a normal indication of ATM failure). Numerous attempts to restart the ATM were unsuccessful.

"(4) At this time Pintail Two notified leader that he was low on fuel and would have to divert to the nearest base. Pintail leader elected to escort number Two and directed Pintail Three to escort number Four. Post-strike refueling had been fragged and briefed but Pintail Three decided a post-strike refueling attempt would be inadvisable considering the degree of difficulty involved in boom/receptacle refueling with no utility hydraulic pressure to lock the boom and no stability augmentation. Pintail Four's fuel remaining would not allow a recovery at home station with an adequate fuel reserve so Pintail Three elected to recover the aircraft at Udorn RTAFB.

"(5) Udorn Tower was contacted and notified of Pintail Four's emergency and the landing pattern was cleared for his approach. A teardrop VFR approach was made to runway 30 and Pintail Four was advised by Udorn Tower to plan on a midfield barrier engagement, which he acknowledged. At ten miles on a straight-in final approach, Pintail Three confirmed that Pintail Four had his landing gear down and locked and trailing edge flaps full down. At this time Pintail Three confirmed Pintail Four had no other difficulties and proceeded while he still had adequate fuel, to the tanker for post-strike refueling and recovery at the home field.

"(6) Final approach speed was 200 knots and Pintail Four estimated his touchdown speed to be 170 knots. Touchdown was accomplished on the runway centerline approximately 1,000 feet down the runway. On touchdown, Pintail Four immediately stop cocked the engine, pulled the emergency brake handle full aft and actuated the arresting hook down switch. Shortly thereafter wheel brakes were applied lightly. The pilot noted that the left brake appeared to grab and attempted to release a small amount of pressure on that brake. The aircraft was now veering to the left of the runway and right brake pressure was increased to correct the path of the aircraft. The aircraft was still drifting to the left side of the runway when the mid-field barrier was engaged 6,000 feet down the runway. The left landing gear strut engaged the barrier four feet from the left side of the runway, at the point the metal buckle connects the barrier tape to the barrier cable. The right main gear strut also engaged the cable. The left strut then rode over the buckle allowing the cable to veer the aircraft sharply back across the runway to the right, rotating it 160 degrees. The lateral loading on the landing gear caused the left main landing gear strut to collapse inward. This allowed the aircraft to drop on the left wingtip and come to a halt 5 feet off the right side of the runway, approximately 300 feet beyond the barrier. The pilot shut off the battery switch and evacuated the aircraft." (AF Form 711 USAF Accident/ Incident Report 67-8-15-1, undated, signed by Maj Gerald A. Robinson, Investigating Officer.)

"The primary cause: Pilot error in that he misjudged deceleration requirements and used improper braking techniques. Contributing causes: Pilot error in that the pilot neglected to deploy the drag chute." The accident investigating officer was Maj Gerald J. Robinson from the 469 TFS.

The aircraft was repaired at Udorn. When it was flown back to Korat on 22 November 1967, it made an emergency landing with an unsafe gear. "The left main landing gear was completely removed and inspected. Several parts

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required replacement. The gear was re-installed and aligned."

388 TFW History, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilms NO583 frames 1886 and 1887, and NO584, frame 0217.

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.

"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.

21-Sep-67

6563

In a published order, Maj George G. Clausen, 34 TFS commander, designated 29 squadron pilots as Combat Ready

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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 E. 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.

03-Oct-67

850

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maj Sullivan received a Silver Star for this mission. "Major Dwight E. Sullivan distinguished himself by gallantry in

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connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as mission commander over North Vietnam on 3 October 1967. On that date, Major Sullivan led the force of twenty aircraft against the heavily defended military target. Despite heavy anti-aircraft fire and the ensuing attack by numerous surface-to-air missiles, Major Sullivan maintained the force's composure and led the force in on the target, delivered his ordnance with devastating accuracy causing severe damage to the target. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Major Sullivan has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (<http://www.veterantributes.org/TributeDetail.asp?ID=1085>)

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

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

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

14-Oct-67

3049

Beginning at 0925Z, four flights of F-105Ds from the 355 TFW bombed the Kep railroad yards (BE 616-01931 and BE 616-0932 ART 1270) at coordinates 21-24-48N and 106-17-36E in RP-6A, North Vietnam. "Shark", "Marlin", "Bear", and "Wolf" flights dropped a total of 10 M-118s and 66 M-117s on the yards. Finding the target was extremely difficult due to the westerly run-in into bright, late afternoon sun, glistening haze, and elongated ground shadows. Pilots reported all bombs impacted in various areas of the yard but that they encountered one of the heaviest concentrations of AAA ever seen at Kep with aircraft being buffeted by flak during their dive bomb run.

"Wolf Lead" in aircraft 59-1758 was damaged by AAA while on his bomb run between 12,000 and 5,000 feet. The right wing tip was sheared off and the right drop tank, ECM pod, outboard pylon, and the right wing had numerous holes.

Capt Malcolm D. Winter from the 354 TFS, flying his 50th combat mission, was "Wolf Lead". "Took hit by flak. Tore off right wingtip, damaged the (ECM) pod, and put many holes in aircraft. Brought it back to home plate. When going on for post strike, pulled refueling handle and MER came off. ... ". Capt Winter logged flying time of 4 hours 5 minutes on this mission. His aircraft (F-105D 59-1758) was placed in depot maintenance (WM & VM) by a SM-ALC maintenance team at Takhli. It was declared operational on 4 November 1967. (355 TFW History, Oct - Dec 67, USAF microfilms NO463 & AVH-7.)

Capt Robert B. Middleton from the 354 TFS was one of the pilots striking the Kep yards. He flew F-105D 62-4284 and his gun camera film showed smoke lifting in and near the target area at coordinates 21-25N and 106-18E.

Capt Calvin F. Jewett from the 357 TFS was another pilot on this strike. He flew F-105D 62-4262 and his gun camera film showed another F-105D flying in over the target of the Kep railroad bridge (at coordinates 21-44-48N and 106-17-36E), explosions, and return ground fire.

355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI 5394 OPREP-4/095 in USAF microfilm NO463, frame 1377 & Combat diary of Malcolm Winter as transcribed by his son, Mike Winter & Nat'l Archives film, control # NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42718A

20-Oct-67

2493

Maj Frank Moyer recorded in his daily diary that all combat missions by the 355 TFW scheduled for today were cancelled due to weather from Typhoon Carla.

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However, in his diary, Capt Malcolm D. Winter from the 354 TFS records that he flew his 53rd combat mission in F-105D 61-0181. "This A/C turned 1500 hours on this flight." Members of his flight were Capt Robert B. Middleton, Maj Richard C. Fontaine, and Lt Col Orland W. Jensen, the 354 TFS Commander. "T-5, just below Dien Bien Phu. ... We worked with a FAC. 3+15."

Diary of Frank N. Moyer, 4 Jun 67 - 15 Mar 68 & Combat log of Malcolm D. Winter as transcribed by his son, Mike Winter.

23-Oct-67

3059

This Monday began three days of attacks against North Vietnamese MiG airfields.

Beginning at 0816Z, the four 355 TFW F-105Ds in "Marlin", "Wolf", and "Bison" flights bombed Hoa Lac airfield (BE 616-98593 ART 5026) 15 miles west of Hanoi at 21-01-40N and 105-29-24E, in RP-6A, North Vietnam. Pilots from the 357 TFS flew in the airfield strike. Attacking nearby AAA sites one minute earlier, "Shark" flight provided flak suppression. All four flights dropped a total of 72 M-117s and 7 M-118s.

The flak suppression flight dropped 3,000-pound bombs on flak sites 1,200 feet and 2,000 feet southwest of the southeast end of the runway. One of the two M-118s on "Shark 4" would not release on a flak site. The pilot attempted to jettison it in the river but the bomb dropped long and impacted in a rice paddy located at 21-01N and 105-18E.

The three strike flights dropped on the northwest and southeast ends and center section of the runway. Two 3,000-pound bombs struck aircraft revetments adjacent to the southeast end of the runway causing a bright secondary explosion. No defenses were encountered.

Capt Malcolm D. Winter from the 354 TFS at Takhli flew F-105D 60-0498 as "Bison 2" on his 55th combat mission. "Hoa Lac Airfield - Clear (weather). Gave Bob Middleton (Capt Robert B. Middleton) 6A supervised lead. Great! He's #1. We put bombs on the runway, but the roll in was very bad. I think we need to do some thinking about our formation. We had good discussion at the debriefing. Hope it gets back to a flight lead, FC (? flight crew?) only meeting."

KA-71 strike camera film, while not covering the entire airfield, showed four impacts in the center of the runway, and two impacts and another probable hit on the southeast end of the runway.

Three days after the attack on Hoa Lac, Blue Tree coverage on 26 October reported that all runway craters had been repaired and the facility was serviceable.

355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI 5468 OPREP-4/143 in USAF microfilm NO463, frames 1386 and 1585 & Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967.

17-Nov-67

F-105D 624258 354 TFS 355 TFW Takhli Hit by a SAM while attacking Hanoi's Bac Mai Airfield (JCS 7). Crashed in RP-6A, 40 miles SW of Hanoi, 10 NM SW of Hoa Binh, North Vietnam. 20-44N 105-13E Maj Charles Edward Cappelli 354 TFS pilot ejected but rescue attempt was unsuccessful and he was KIA. Call sign: "Zebra 01". Major Charles E. Cappelli flew as Zebra 01 leading a flight of four F-105s on a strike mission to Bac Mai Airfield in North Vietnam. Other members in Zebra flight were:

- #2. Maj Robert W. Kennedy,
- #3. Maj George F. Baird
- #4. Capt Robert B. Middleton.

The flight from the 354 TFS took off from Takhli at 06:39 and Major Cappelli was hit by a SAM and was lost in the

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target area at 08:10.

"The following is an extract from the statement of Major Robert W. Kennedy, Zebra 02: '... Before roll-in, while in afterburner and left echelon, Major Cappelli (Zebra Lead), received a SAM hit. I called to break right and pickle them off. He broke right and after roll-out he cleaned off his wings. He was torching badly from behind the canopy and smoke was in the canopy. I told him to depressurize his cockpit and shortly afterwards he jettisoned his canopy. His helmet stayed on and I could observe him clearly in the cockpit. When he ejected, his aircraft nosed in and exploded on contact. I estimate ejection at 15000 feet and between 470 - 500 knots. I made a big circle and clearly observed a chute and heard a beeper. Zebra 02, 03, and 04 remained in the area for at least 10 - 15 minutes attempting to establish voice contact. I heard a garbled transmission for several minutes and believe they were oriental voices. I continued to ADF a signal in the area but never established contact with Zebra Lead. I Doppler fixed him at coordinates 2057N/10525E but had not updated my Doppler since 143 miles out from CH95 while refueling. I definitely observed a good chute about 6000 feet above the ground but could not maintain visual contact because of a cloud shelf.' SAR was requested. Later, a beeper was heard again, but it was not believed to belong to Zebra 01 due to location. Voice contact was never established. SAR was terminated. Zebra Flight withdrew due to low fuel state." ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 3-197).

"As he was leading ... [Takhli's BRAVO] strike force to the Bac Mai Airfield, Maj Cappelli's F-105 was hit in the aft section by a SAM. Maj Cappelli [from the 354 TFS] was able to turn his aircraft around and was headed back towards the mountains when he had to eject. A SAR effort was initiated but was later terminated when the Sandys were unable to establish voice contact with Maj Cappelli. He was listed as MIA." (355 TFW history)

His wingman, Maj Robert W. Kennedy, described what happened. "We started out across the plains east of Hoa Loc, and the SAMs came up early. It was one Intel hadn't charted that got us. Right under our nose, and out of sight. We never saw it until it blew up. They must've moved it in there last night; nobody knew it was there. ... Cappy took it directly under the nose. His bird was on fire instantly, from the nose all the way back. ... We got turned just about south when the canopy came off and the bird pitched over, controls burned through. That's when Ed got out, I think ... There was so much flame, hard to see anything. I circled back and followed the chute down. I could see him. He didn't move or wave ... anything. I stayed around after the chute hit the ground. It was in a gully. Never got an answer on Guard. ..." ("Pak 6")

"This SAR mission was to recover the pilot of an F-105D down approx 40 mi S.W. of Hanoi. Another F-105D flt (Bison) had a visual on the chute and beeper contact on Zebra One's descent. Alerted by Crown One (HC-130P) SAR forces consisting of one HH-3E and four A-1s were diverted from SAR orbit and sent across the border. Sandy Lead and Olds flt (F-4) reported intermittent beepers and foreign voices on guard. The general area was searched with 50% effective by electronics only. As the SAR area was heavily populated and had 6500 overcast, it was recommended that a SAR was doubtful and believed the ACM had been captured. SAR was suspended. No rescue or recovery accomplished. Total 7 sorties and 18 + 15 hours on mission. Briefed on 20 Nov 67." (Rescue Mission 2-3-88/ 17 Nov 67 in hand-written document titled "Open/ Suspending" in AFHRA folder Call # K318.2411-5, IRIS # 1017063.)

"Jolly Green 37, while en route from Ch 89 to L-36, single ship heard a call on guard at 0809 that Zebra Lead was down. The initial position was 070/ 96 from Ch 97 which was 20 NM southwest of target area. A good chute was reported and a beeper signal was picked up. UHF radio was very cluttered so channel 1 was used for a DF joinup with Sandy 3. North Station was off the air making navigation very difficult due to a solid undercast with tops at 7000 feet. Our flight altitude was 8000 feet. LF ADF was used for primary navigation. ETA to North Station was 0830L and to the border was 0905L. Both ETAs were good. At 0845, Zebra 2 reported a revised position of 080/ 96 from Ch 97. At that time foreign language voices were heard on guard channel. We departed the border at 0905 with an ETA of 0945L to the SAR area, beeper and voice had all been lost. At 0912L the effort was started and Jolly Green 37 proceeded toward the area. At 0916L Olds flt reported an intermittent beeper. At 0927L instructions were received to hold at present position which was approximately 15 NM out of scene. Weather was still a solid undercast. At this time Olds flight again reported a beeper. Jolly Green computed a bingo time of 0957L to make pickup and hit the

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tanker at North Station. We advised Crown 1 to start towards that position. At 0934L were directed by Compress to proceed to North Station for aerial refueling. Olds flight and Sandys report constant foreign language voices on guard. The effort was called off at 0946L. Jolly Green 37 completed air refueling at 1025L and recovered at L98 at 1125L. Weather was a solid undercast throughout total effort. Considerable foreign voices on FM frequency caused communication problems with Sandy aircraft. A new frequency might be advisable. Crown 1's assistance during air refueling effort was excellent. No hostile activity was encountered.

"The name of the survivor(s) is unknown.

"Crew of Jolly Green 37 were:

Maj Powell Moore RCC
1Lt Andrew J. Gonos RCCP
SSgt Bernard W. Grau FE
Sgt Jules C. Smith PJ

(Rescue Mission Narrative Report 2-3-88 17 Nov 67, signed by Maj Powell Moore, RCC Jolly Green 37, in AFHRA folder Call # K318.2411-5, IRIS # 1017063.)

"... Cappelli was flying southwest of Hanoi in Hoi Binh Province as part of an expanded Rolling Thunder program when his plane was hit and went down. Cappelli was observed ejecting and his parachute looked normal. That was the last anyone knew of Charles Cappelli for the next 21 years. ... On 15 December 1988, the Vietnamese returned the remains of Charles Cappelli to U.S. control. These remains were positively identified on 5 May 1989, (when) the return was publicly announced." (scopesys)

Maj Cappelli was born 14 March 1930 in Providence, Rhode Island and entered the service from his hometown. He was declared dead on 24 January 1974. His name appears on the Vietnam Memorial Wall on panel 30E line 6.

Capt Joe Grimaud, who flew F-100s with Charles Cappelli at Misawa AB, Japan, and went through F-105 training at Nellis AFB, Nevada, with him wrote this tribute to his friend and posted it on the web site <http://thewall-usa.com>.

Remembering Our Special Times Together

"We flew F-100s together in Misawa, Japan, and five of us got F-105 assignments together. We lived in the same apartments in Las Vegas as we went through training and you and I car pooled to work each day. Boy! Do I remember some of those conversations. You told me about your wise father who was Lt Gov of Rhode Island and how, as a young man still living at home, you were worrying your Mom by not coming in until the wee hours of the morning. How he invited you to go on a flying trip with the head of the State Police to visit a prison. When you walked with him into a cell, he came out and left you there. You thought he was kidding around but he left you there for three days until you got over your anger and asked for a phone to plead for mercy and promised to honor your Mom. Boy, how many times have I wished for those kinds of resources as my own boys went through their teen years. But you also had a fatalistic attitude about our assignment. I remember being in awe and wonderment as you said, "Joe, if one of us doesn't come back, I know it'll be me." I asked "Why do you say that, Ed?" And you said, "That is just the way my life is." I have never understood that, Ed. But one thing I have understood, Ed, is that you are a great patriot. I stayed at Nellis for another six weeks to go through the Wild Weasel program and you and the others went on to Takhli. The day I arrived in Takhli, six weeks later, we were in the bread truck with the radios tuned to the frequency of the returning flights. Then the call came in. "One didn't make it. It was Cappelli." I have thought of you so often. Knowing you were missing in action all that time and wondering what had happened in the ejection. Remembering that you had a previous neck problem while flying in F-100s out of Kunsan. You said it still bothered you but you wouldn't tell them, because you wanted to fly. You gave your all, Ed. Evert gave his all. Kirk spent five years in Hanoi, and Basel had two legs broken from an ejection over RP-1. Only Olin and I somehow didn't get shot down. I sense you know all of this now, as you serve in a much better place. May God give you a special place with your Dad to reminisce, as you go over old times.

Robert B. Middleton

F-105 History

And save a little place for me. For "life is just a vapor that appears and quickly vanishes away." I love you, Ed. Jan 19, 2007"

355 TFW History, Oct - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO463 & "Pak Six", by G. I. Basel, pgs 110 - 112 & <http://www.scopesys.com/cgi/bio2.cgi?bio=C006>

02-Dec-67

3115

For various reasons over the next five days, Maj Malcolm D. Winter from the 354 TFS was not able to add to his count of 64 combat missions. "No fly - 1145 "Kingfish". #3 slashed with Middleton (Capt Robert B. Middleton) - Bob flew."

Combat diary of Capt Malcolm D. Winter as transcribed by his son, Mike Winter.

31-Dec-67

2773

"In December 1967, 354 TFS pilots and EWOs flew a total of 976:30 hours and 372 combat sorties and 24 non-combat flights. Of the combat sorties 39 were flown against JCS targets.

"During the month, two of our assigned pilots, one EWO and one of our TDY pilots completed the magic 100 missions over North Vietnam. They were Captain Chrisman R. Lawrence, Captain William Grieger, Captain Erick A. Koch, and Captain Robert B. Middleton."

On the night he flew his 100th, Middleton "... went to Airman's Club to buy the bar. Sometime late, the GIs thought it would be fun to throw the Lieutenant into the pool. They did -- from over the fence. Broke an ankle on the pool side going into the water. He went home [to Yokota] with his leg in a cast!!" (John Francis, e-mail forwarded by Waldo King, 5 Jul 19.)

"On 31 December 1967, the 357 TFS had a total of 30 pilots and 5 Electronic Warfare Officers (EWOs). Of these, two pilots were on temporary duty and two were attached."

355 TFW history, Oct 67 - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO463, frames 1573 - 1574 & 1578.

15-Feb-68

8100

Capt Robert B. Middleton flew the F-105 for the last time. Since his first flight at Nellis on 1 June 1965, he flew 724.3 hours in the Thunderchief.

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