

Francis P. "Frenchy" Walsh

F-105 History

13-Feb-67

230

The eighth F-105 RTU Class 67FR graduated at McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 22 Sep 66 with 15 pilots and consisted of 1 Lt Col, 4 Maj's, 7 Capt's, and 3 1Lt's.

They named themselves "The Untouchables".

The class deployed 16 F-105s for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 13 Jan - 3 Feb 67 with the 560 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Louis D. Braun, Jr. One of the students, Maj Francis P. Walsh, was the 100th pilot to enter the RTU program since it started in Jan 66. Student Lt Col Harry W. Schurr was awarded the Top Gun and Outstanding Pilot plaques.

The graduates were:

Lt Col Harry W. Schurr	Capt Robert D. Reese
Maj Robert T. Cavanaugh	Capt William J. Schaff
Maj Ward Kent Dodge	Capt Francis T. Torikai
Maj Benjamin M. Pollard	Capt Konrad Wigand "Konnie" Trautman
Maj Francis P. "Frenchy" Walsh	1Lt John William Bischoff
Capt Aquilla Friend Britt	1Lt Neil F. Blake
Capt Douglas G. Glime	1Lt John W. Ronemus
Capt Frank R. Jenkins	

Three of the pilots received Wild Weasel training at Nellis AFB, NV before reporting to South East Asia. They were Lt Col Schurr assigned to the 469 TFS, and Maj Cavanaugh and Capt Schaff who were both assigned to the 357 TFS.

Born in France, "Maj Frank P. 'Frenchy' Walsh ... saw his home in France destroyed three times during World War II bombing raids." (Sawdee Flyer, Feb 23, 1968)

Unfortunately, these guys were hardly "untouchable". Within 8 months of graduation, five of the 15 graduates were lost. Two were killed in SEA and three others become POWs, one of whom died in prison.

23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 66, USAF microfilm MO554.

22-May-67

3814

By 22 May 1967, eleven more Ryan's Raiders pilots had arrived at Korat from training at Yokota. These were the third set of crews for the Ryan's Raiders flying F-105Fs. The men, all pilots, were assigned to the 34 TFS.

This group was the last of the original pilot/pilot crews assigned to the Ryan's Raider program. Don Henry, one of the front seat pilots who had arrived from Kadena on 4 May 1967, recalled that these crews "... traveled by various modes of transport (military cargo to Korat or commercial to Bangkok etc.) and arrived on various days." (Don Henry, E-mail, 28 March 2005.)

The pilots were:

Maj Kenneth D. Oliver
Maj James B. Register
Maj Harold D. Wilson
Maj James R. Bassett

Capt Tom T. Walker, graduated from McConnell's RTU Class 67ER on 6 January 1967.

Five other pilots graduated from F-105 RTU Class 67FR on 13 February 1967. They were:

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Maj Francis "Frank" P. Walsh
Capt Konrad W. Trautman
Maj Robert D. Reese
Capt Douglas G. Glime
Capt Neil F. Blake

Don Henry recalled, "... during May and June, there were more backseaters than frontseaters and crew pairings were not always the way we flew each mission. (Don Henry, E-mail, 28 March 2005.)

Maj Oliver was teamed with Maj Walsh. "I was very fortunate to have Major Frank Walsh as my backseater. In addition to being a pilot he was a former SAC Navigator/Radar Specialist and we really made a good team. Frank and I flew about 52 missions over North Vietnam before we ever saw it in the daytime. We had about 65 missions when he was moved to the F-105D day mission. From there on, I flew with a number of different backseaters and 'graduated' to flying Wild Weasel support missions for the B-52 'Arc light' strikes in the southern part of North Vietnam." (Frank Oliver letter to Rick Versteeg, dated 9/11/98.)

The crews who arrived in April and May, "... flew a total of 98 missions in the high risk Route Packages 5 and 6A during the next 80 days. They are credited with the first night, low-level, single ship attacks on targets such as the Thai Nguyen steel mill, Kep airfield, Yen Bai railroad yard, and the Bac Kan trans-shipment point."

388 TFW history, Apr Dec 67, Vol II, 13 TFS history, 1 Apr - 31 July, microfilm NO584, frames 0044 - 0045 & "A Special Report on 'Ryan's Raiders', by Maj Albert L. Michael for Project Corona Harvest, Jan 1970, pg 6.

28-May-67

5138

The 34 TFS Ryan's Raider crew of Maj Kenneth D. Oliver and Maj Francis "Frank" P. Walsh flew a night North Scope mission in F-105F 63-8312 using call sign "Portland". They manually dropped six 500-pound bombs on target 1474, the Quang Khi Ferry. "Takeoff was on time. Radar calibration was accomplished as briefed. Refueling was normal. En route flight to target area was normal. Turning on IP, it was evident that flares were being dropped over our target area. Target area was highly illuminated by four flares at approximately 3,000' to 2,500' (above our altitude) so attack was not possible on the precise target. Bombs were dropped manually in an attempt to hit Route 1A to the north of ferry. Bombs impacted at the approximate position of Route 1A, [5000 feet north of target]. Escape from target area was normal and mission completed as planned. ... [There was] a conflict in scheduling of TOT. Attack by other aircraft and flaeships over designated target at our TOT. This conflict prevented our strike from hitting designated target. Alleycat Control did advise us of a possible conflict when entering his control area." The aircraft encountered intermittent 1-ring Firecan signals for 30 seconds while turning over Nakhon Phanom.

388 TFW TWX 280720Z May 67 to 7 AF in PACAF DO Read File for 27 - 29 May 67, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 00518474.

01-Jun-67

4107

Lt Col James E. McNerney, Jr. replaced Lt Col Gerald F. "Jerry" Fitzgerald as commander of the 13 TFS. Lt Col Fitzgerald had just completed 100 missions over North Vietnam as well as 13 missions over Laos. On this same date, the Ryan's Raider crews in the 34 TFS transferred to the 13 TFS.

Lt Col McNerney, along with his EWO Capt Fred W. Shannon, had reported in to the squadron in March 1967 after they both had completed Wild Weasel Class 67WWIII-8 at Nellis. Lt Col McNerney was the squadron's Wild Weasel Operations Officer. He continued transitioning the Wild Weasel crews into the Ryan's Raider operation and releasing the Ryan's Raider back-seat pilots into the strike force as F-105D pilots.

Most Ryan's Raider back seat pilots transferred as strike pilots to other 388 TFW squadrons. For

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example, Capt Aquilla F. Britt transferred from the 34 TFS to the 469 TFS. Maj Francis "Frank" P. Walsh a rear seat pilot transferred to the strike mission in the 13th. However, pilots Maj James B. Register and Maj Kenneth D. Oliver remained with the Ryan's Raider Commando Nail mission when they transferred to the 13 TFS and flew together. The Ryan's Raider crew of Capt George A. Bogert and Capt Donald S. Aunapu also transferred to the 13 TFS.

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO 583, frame 1494 & Jim McInerney, e-mail 1 Nov 2004 & Nancy Fitzgerald 5 Nov 85 letter to Bauke Jan Douma.

02-Aug-67

3818

The F-105F Ryan's Raider crew of Maj Kenneth D. Oliver and Maj Francis P. Walsh from the 13 TFS led 16 F-105s on an experimental strike against the Phu Tho army barracks (JCS 39.38) in North Vietnam. Using its enhanced radar, the Raider plane was used as a pathfinder for the main strike force that flew formation on the lead plane and dropped their bombs on a signal from the F-105F.

"The purpose of this flight was to determine the feasibility of maneuvering a large number of airplanes while maintaining ECM jamming mutual support and a defensive posture against any potential aggressors and to bring all the aircraft to a common release point in order to hit the target. In this respect the mission was extremely successful; however, incorrect range calibration of the radar equipment in the lead aircraft resulted in the bombs being long and to the north of the target area. All aircraft assigned to Raider missions have since been recalibrated and peaked to the maximum possible in order to preclude similar results in future operations."

388 TFW history, Apr Dec 67, Vol II, 13 TFS history, 1 - 31 August, microfilm NO584, frame 0053.

31-Aug-67

3816

As of 31 August 1967, the 13 TFS possessed one F-105D and 20 F-105Fs to perform their three separate operations. "The day Strike pilots visually attack all assigned targets. The Wild Weasel crews destroy enemy defenses i.e., surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft artillery. The 13th [Ryan's Raiders] operate singly against point-targets at night or in weather."

"Late in August several of the initial crew members assigned to the Raiders were released to the day strike force. This was brought about by the imminent arrival of specially trained Wild Weasel crews from Nellis AFB. These crew members will remain in the 13 TFS and will still be available for Raider operations should the need arise." The six Ryan's Raider pilots transferred to strike missions were:
Maj James B. Register
Maj Francis P. Walsh
Maj Harold D. Wilson
Capt Thomas T. Walker
Capt Neil F. Blake
Capt Calvin H. Markwood.

By the time he transferred to the strike force, Maj Walsh had flown 41 night, low-level Ryan's Raider missions. (Sawadee Flyer, Friday 23 Feb 1968)

Thirteen pilots departed the 13 TFS after completing 100 missions in August 1967. They were:

Maj William E. Underwood departed 3 August.
Capt Christopher D. Dascalos departed 3 August.
Maj Russell A. Starkman departed 3 August.
Capt William M. Milstead departed 3 August.
Capt Donald M. Majors departed 4 August.
Maj Charles E. Van Driel departed 4 August.
Maj David H. Coats departed 5 August.
Maj William T. "Ted" Twinting departed 5 August.
Maj John R. Des Jardins departed 7 August.

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Maj Robert J. Lines departed 8 August.
Maj George V. Wish departed 22 August with 1003.6 hours in the F-105.
Maj Anthony Gardecki departed 26 August.
Maj Edwin F. "Tiny" Malone departed 26 August.

Capt Rowland F. "Frank" Smith, Jr. and EWO 1Lt David H. Williams and Maj James H. Mirehouse and EWO Capt Albert L. "Mike" Michael, were credited with destroying SAM sites in August 1967.

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 67, Vol II, 13 TFS history, 1 Apr - 31 July, microfilm NO584, frames 0052-0056.

24-Oct-67

342

After President Johnson had approved it as a target on 18 October 1967, coordinated Air Force and Navy strikes against Phuc Yen MiG airfield (JCS 6) commenced on the afternoon of 24 October followed by combined re-strikes on 25 October. The airfield was hit by bombs and CBU's. Post-strike photos showed that 5 MiG-21s and 5 MiG-17s parked in Area H were either damaged or destroyed, and that two MiG-17s in Area G were destroyed. (Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Another 355th F-105 pilot commenting on the mission was Capt James L. Aldrich [333 TFS], who said, 'It was a sensational mission. We hit an untouched target and turned it into a mural of huge fireballs and towering smoke.' "

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

" 'Strings of bombs impacted in trail straight down the eastern third of the runway, causing multiple

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craters' reported Maj Arley W. McRae who led one of the F-4 flights in. Another string of bombs cratered the middle third of the runway.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The aerial reconnaissance following the strike revealed four MiG-21s, four MiG-17s and one MiG-15 were destroyed or damaged by the fighter-bomber pilots. The runway was damaged beyond use and fireballs 280 feet in diameter erupted near the west parking ramp while another huge secondary explosion engulfed the entire western half of the northeast revetments." (Air Force Times newspaper article, Nov 15, 1967, pg 22)

"This highly successful raid left smoking ruins of much of the airfield support complex and large craters

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in the runway. 354 TFS pilots [from Takhli] were present in the flak-filled skys over Phuc Yen on both ... days." Pilots from the 357 TFS also flew this mission. (355 TFW history, Microfilm NO463, frame 1565).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"On October 24, two MiG-21s had taken off against the first wave of attackers -- Air Force F-105s and F-4s from Thailand. As the MiGs were attempting to get behind the attacking force, an F-4 escort used a twenty-millimeter cannon to shoot one down." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 90). The F-4D from the 433 TFS, 8 TFW, at Ubon was flown by Maj William L. Kirk and his WSO 1Lt Theodore R. Bongartz.

Maj James D. Gormley from the 333 TFS at Takhli was one of the 355 TFW pilots on the mission.

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

Maj Robert L. Stirm from the 333 TFS received a Distinguished Flying Cross for flying this mission. "... Major Stirm was the element leader of the first bomb flight executed against a high priority military target. In spite of aggressive MiG fighters, surface-to-air missiles, and intense flak, he delivered his ordnance directly on target, destroying major elements of this vital airfield. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Major Stirm reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (<http://militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/recipient.php?recipientid=24781>.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was Maj Armstrong's 11th combat mission into North Vietnam. "Today was the big one, Phuc Yen! This airfield is the major airfield in NVN and had previously been off limits. Today our wing, Takhli, the

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

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

Capt Davis, "Olympia 02", was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Second Oak Leaf Cluster for this mission. "Captain Hugh W. Davis distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial fight as an F-105 pilot over North Vietnam on 24 October 1967. On that date, Captain Davis was wingman for the mission commander on the highly successful mission against the heavily defended Phuc Yen Airfield. Despite hostile aircraft threats, a barrage of surface-to-air missiles, and intense antiaircraft fire in the target area, Captain Davis successfully struck his assigned target and contributed to the destruction of five hostile aircraft on the ground. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain Davis reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (Hugh Davis award citation)

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

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

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

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Another flight lead from the 34 TFS, Maj Raymond W. Vissotzky, received a DFC for the mission he flew today. "The President of the United States of America ... takes pleasure in presenting a Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster in addition to a previously awarded Silver Oak Leaf Cluster in lieu of a Seventh Award of the Distinguished Flying Cross to Major Raymond Walter Vissotzky ... for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as an F-105 Pilot over North Vietnam on 24 October 1967. On that date, Major Vissotzky was Flight Commander of four F-105's ordered to perform armed reconnaissance along a heavily defended segment of a high priority military target. Despite intense anti-aircraft fire, numerous hostile aircraft warnings, and a possible surface-to-air missile threat, Major Vissotzky successfully led his flight to the target area and dropped his ordnance directly on target. The professional competence, aerial skill and devotion to duty displayed by Major Vissotzky reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (<http://militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/recipient.php?recipientid=24829>)

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

"Target: Phuc Yen airfield.

"Armament: 4xCBU-24s 1 CBU-29

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

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

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

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

28-Oct-67

3657

On 28 October, during an attack on the bridge over the Canal des Rapides to the immediate north of Hanoi, an Iron Hand Flight from the 44 TFS destroyed three missile sites during three separate attacks. The flight lead was Major Porter Thompson and EWO Capt Anthony W. Platek, Maj Francis "Frank" P. Walsh was number 2, Maj Oscar M. Dardeau, Jr. with EWO 1Lt Alfred T. Barnard EWO was #3, and Capt Douglas G. Glime was # 4.

History of the 44 TFS 18 Oct - 30 Nov 67 in 388 TFW history Apr - Dec 67, Vol II, USAF Microfilm NO584 frame 0090.

28-Oct-67

179

For the second day in a row, F-105s struck the Hanoi railroad and highway bridge, in RP-6A, North Vietnam. As they did on Friday, "F-105s of the 355 TFW teamed (again on Saturday) with F-105s of the 388 TFW in a combined effort to insure success on the Canal des Rapides Bridge (JCS 13) near Hanoi, North Vietnam. The 388th went ahead of the 355th by mere seconds, its entire force laden with flak suppression ordnance (CBUs). This cleared the way for an unhampered bomb run by the 355th." (355 TFW Outstanding Achievements.)

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North Vietnamese SAM sites countered the attack by barrage firing more than 10 SAMs "... using track-on-jam tactics." ("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, pg 194.)

Post-strike coverage on 28 October disclosed that one span was destroyed, one span dropped into the canal, and a third span was damaged. F-105s from the 355 TFW had destroyed the bypass bridge on 22 August and it still was unserviceable. (Rolling Thunder Status and Analysis Report to CINCPAC for the period 16 - 31 October 1967.)

Beginning at 0050Z, four flights of 355 TFW F-105Ds attacked the bridge. Fifteen planes, four F-105Ds in each of "Shark", "Marlin, and "Wolf" flights, and three F-105Ds in "Cheetah" flight, dropped a total of 30 M-118s on the bridge.

The flights saw impacts near the center of the bridge and also on the southwest end of the bridge with black smoke coming from some of the impacts.

The F-105s encountered heavy AAA and numerous SAMs. However, the pilots acknowledged that excellent CBU flak site coverage provided by the 388 TFW decreased AAA response noticeably from yesterday's strike on the same target. The majority of flak came from south of Hanoi and the Gia Lam airfield. The first flight on the target noticed no flak until pull-off and egress where they encountered moderate, accurate 37/57-mm AAA.

The following flights received heavy, accurate barrage, predominately 85-mm from roll-in through pull-off, and primarily moderate to heavy 37/57-mm bursting at aircraft altitudes of 7,000 to 8,000 feet on egress south of Hanoi. The last flight on the target started receiving 85-mm AAA five nautical miles on ingress to the target but it did not become intense until roll-in. The flak continued through pull-off. Numerous 37-mm AAA sites fired along the east-west road.

Seven SAMs were launched during the flights' ingress from 20-44N and 106-20E to the target while the F-105s were at 10,000 to 12,000 feet altitude and heading 344 degrees. Pilots could not see the SAMs until they were within 2,000 to 3,000 feet of them due to heavy haze in the area. The flights saw one SAM from L-17 (VN 003) pass approximately 2,000 feet below them. Thirty seconds later, the force saw two SAMs from the vicinity of L-27 (VN 159) or L-5 (VN 19) and four from the area of L-9 (VN 14). The SAMs from L-27 or L-5 passed 2,000 feet below the force. The four from L-9 passed through the force. Three of these SAMs were seen to detonate in the vicinity of 20-45N and 105-56E, at 14,000 to 17,000 feet. Detonations were one mile behind the flights. On egress, at least two SAMs were seen launching from L-5 (VN 19). These two SAMs detonated at approximately 300 feet in the vicinity of 21-07N and 105-52E. All missiles appeared to be unguided.

For their 39th mission, the 354 TFS Wild Weasel crew of Maj James L. Davis and EWO Capt Phillip H. Walker flew on this strike. "Downtown, Canal des Rapides Bridge. Entered Thud Ridge. Fired a Shrike at a SAM site and took it down. Crossed the Delta five miles west of Hanoi. Shot at by flak the whole way. Fired a Shrike at another SAM site and took it down. Bombed a radar site and hit it with two 750-lb bombs. Many SAMs fired." Maj Davis was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (4th OLC) for Heroism. (James Davis mission notes transcribed by his son, Geoffrey Davis.)

At 0050Z, while pulling off the target at 6,000 feet, heading 060 degrees, 550 knots, 37/57-mm AAA hit "Shark Lead", the force commander, Lt Col Thomas H. Kirk, Jr., the 357 TFS Commander flying F-105D 61-0169. The AAA punched a three by four foot hole in the aft fuselage and the engine became engulfed in flame. The hit blew off part of the panel behind the cockpit. The cockpit was smoking when the pilot ejected at approximately 20-50N and 105-47E. The aircraft impacted at approximately 20-50N and 105-46E. The pilot had a good chute and beeper but no voice contact made. (355 TFW JOPREP JIFFY DOI ????? OPREP-4/1??? in USAF microfilm NO463, frame 1393.)

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Lt Col Kirk became a POW and was awarded the Air Force Cross. Maj James E. Light, 357 TFS operations officer, replaced Lt Col Kirk as commander of the 357 TFS.

Other 357 TFS pilots flying against the bridge who received the Silver Star were Capt Francis T. Torikai, Capt George A. Miklos, Lt Col Obadiah A. Dugan (1 OLC), and Maj Robert T. Cavanagh.

An F-105D pilot also from the 357 TFS at Takhli was Capt Ronald A. Venturini, Shark 4, flying 61-0109. His gun camera footage showed strafing of the bridge at coordinates 21-04-35N 105-54-43E.

F-105D pilots from the 469 TFS at Korat hitting the same target coordinates were Maj Robert M. Clark in 61-0055 and Navy exchange officer Lt James Karg flying 60-0458. Other 469 TFS pilots who struck the bridge at coordinates 21-04-55N 105-54-46E were Capt Steven W. Long, Jr. in 62-4283, Maj Eugene L. Main flying 62-4359, Capt Hal P. Henning in 59-1750, and Maj Roger P. Scheer in 61-0219.

Maj Dalton L. Leftwich from the 34 TFS at Korat flew F-105D 62-4248.

Three other F-105D pilots from the 34 TFS in "Crossbow" flight also struck the bridge. The flight took off at 0605 and the mission lasted 3 hours 5 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Capt Sam P. Morgan in 62-4270
- #2 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. in 59-1760, on his 29th combat mission
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong in 60-0488
- #4 - Maj Larry R. Klinestiver who aborted on tanker for fuel problems.

This was Maj Armstrong's 14th combat mission into North Vietnam. "This was the hairiest of them all so far. The target was the railroad bridge over the Canal des Rapides [JCS 13], downtown Hanoi. Korat was to put 16 birds in to drop CBUs for flak suppression and Takhli was to come in and put 3000# bombs on the bridge. We approached Hanoi from due south, 35 bombs. We started getting SAMs fired at us from the time that we were 4 minutes out until we had dropped and back to the same point. Our flight of three had to evade 7 missiles ourselves. The last four were fired at us in volley and came over and ahead of us by less than 500'. The 85-mm, & 37/57-mm coming up from the target was heavy. The film showed that we put our CBUs on the target. L/C Kirk [Lt Col Thomas Henry Kirk, POW], the Takhli mission commander, was shot down coming off the target & bailed out right in the area. My mouth was dry from all of the action until we were clear of North Vietnam. Nobody else got knocked down." (Maj Spence M. Armstrong, combat mission log for period 5 Oct 67 - 14 Apr 68, pp 5 - 6.)

In his memoir, Maj Armstrong elaborated on this mission. "Our wing and Takhli were both going to hit the Canal Des Rapides railroad bridge just outside of Hanoi. We were to go in first again and again carry CBU's for defense suppression and Takhli carried 3,000# bombs to knock down the bridge supports which were so hard to hit. We all flew the land route then turned Eastward to come up the East side of the Red River. On the way in our flight of three (one guy had aborted and there was not a spare available) ducked 7 SA-2s. The last one passed in front of me close enough that I thought I could see its flight control fins move.

"... We carried jamming pods which transmitted on the same frequency as the SA-2 tracking radars. We could put enough static on their scopes that they couldn't pick out the returns from our aircraft. We had some faith in the pods but sometimes one couldn't be sure so we tried to keep them in sight to see if they were guiding on us. If there were no clouds, we could easily see the swirl of dust as the SA-2 lifted off. Shortly afterwards the booster would fall off and the SA-2 would then be propelled only by a small sustainer motor which emitted a nice flame. If you could see that the missile had a profile, then it wasn't a danger to you. However, if it looked like a 'burning bowling ball' then it was wise to 'take it

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down'. This called for a firm forward push on the stick, pulling some negative g's, with the wings level. Keeping the wings level was important because the pods radiated in a conical downward pattern and banking would uncover their radar scopes. If the missile was guiding on you it would turn downward and you could then do a rapid pull up and outmaneuver it because of the speed it was traveling it couldn't adjust in time. If it wasn't, you eased up on the stick and let your aircraft climb back to the original altitude.

"So by the time I had done this 7 times, most of them I didn't personally see because my area of responsibility was to the East, I was exhausted. When the time came to roll in on our target, my mouth tasted like it was filled with cotton. The Takhli guys hit the bridge but their mission commander, Lt. Col. Tom Kirk, was shot down and captured.

"Besides the abort in our flight, there were several others to the result that there were other three ship flights between us and Takhli which was close behind. Before we got into the target area, I noticed a lone F-105D trying to join up with us and then visiting other three ship flights when we didn't look familiar. When we got back to Korat and had the mass debriefing, which we held after every Pack VIA mission, I asked if anyone else had noticed this lone F-105D? A voice spoke up: 'It was me. I was taking a leak and I lost my flight'. This was Francois 'Frenchy' Walsh [Maj Francis "Frank" P. Walsh, 44 TFS, flying an F-105D as #2 in a 4-ship Iron Hand flight]. He had been a C-141 pilot and was barely adequate in the F-105. He was born in France of a French mother and an American father. He came to America, as he liked to say, to avoid being drafted by the French and sent to Vietnam. Everybody got a laugh out of this since Frenchy was quite a character if not a good pilot. He would frequently lose the rest of his flight and have to egress by himself. He was lucky he wasn't picked off by an alert MiG." (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968" in unpublished memoir, pp 11 - 12.)

355 TFW Report on Outstanding Achievements, 1 Mar 67 - 29 Feb 68, in USAF microfilm NO462 & National Archives camera records, control #s NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649B & NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42718A

31-Jan-68

6564

(Approximate Date) Maj Francis P. "Frenchy" Walsh, from the 44 TFS, flew his 100th mission. An article in Korat's Sawadee Flyer weekly newspaper featured his accomplishment. "Flying both strike and low-level radar bombing missions with the 44th ('Vampires') Tactical Fighter Squadron, the colorful, French-born pilot accumulated 349.9 combat flying hours during his nine months of duty in South East Asia. ... Like those who flew it before him Major Walsh holds the F-105 in high esteem. 'I'm really sorry I probably won't be flying it any more. I will always be very proud to say 'I flew the '105'. It's an incredible machine. It's sensitive, responding to command perfectly. It's fast, solid and reliable; everything you want in a fighter. The '105' is number one.'

"Although he has flown 100 dangerous missions against the roughest targets in North Vietnam, Major Walsh is ready to do it again. Explaining why, he said, 'We had one side of the argument and they (the North Vietnamese) hold one side. If we don't succeed we are going to vindicate their side of the argument. If I could contribute a little more to the eventual victory of our cause by flying another hundred missions, I'd do it.'

"Major Walsh leaves Korat RTAFB for a new assignment to Military Airlift Command headquarters at Scott, AFB, ILL."

He last flew the F-105 on 31 January 1968 by which time he had accumulated 362.5 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 newspaper article included a photo of Maj Walsh with a handlebar mustache grinning in his dripping wet flying suit. "Major Frank P. 'Frenchy' Walsh ... is not at all unhappy about having been

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thrown into the Korat RTAFB Officers Open Mess swimming pool by his fellow F-105 Thunderchief pilots -- he has just completed his 100th combat missions over North Vietnam. The French-born major is wearing the pale blue scarf he wore on each of his hundred missions."

Sawadee Flyer, Friday, 23 Feb 1968.

19-Oct-03

7735

Francis Philippe Robert Walsh

Obituary

(10/26/2003) Francis Philippe Robert Walsh, Ph.D., 73 years old, died in his home in Austin, TX, surrounded by his family on October 19, 2003, following a brief illness. He was born July 26, 1930 at l'Hopital Americain in Paris, France to Marie-Therese Leger Walsh, who worked for the American Legion in Paris, and Joseph Aloysius Walsh, a WWI veteran and journalist from New York City. He married Monique Stuckelberger on January 6, 1955, in St. Pierre de Chaillot Church in Paris, France.

Frank came to the United States at the age of 19 to enlist in the United States Air Force. In 1954 he was commissioned a second lieutenant and served as a navigator and navigator instructor. In 1957 he received his pilot wings and flew the B- 47 and later the C-141 before volunteering for combat duty in South East Asia. Frank was especially proud of his service as a fighter pilot and in 1967-68, flew 108 combat missions over North Vietnam in the F-105D with the 44th Tactical Fighter Squadron based in Korat, Thailand. Frank was awarded the Distiguished Flying Cross in 1968 and was a member of the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association. He served at the US Embassy in Tunis, Tunisia from 1968-1970 as the USAF attach and was instrumental in coordinating US efforts in the establishment of the Tunisian Air Force. He was the liaison officer and interpreter for the Apollo XII astronauts, Charles Conrad Jr., Richard F. Gordon Jr., and Alan Bean, when they visited Tunisia and brought a piece of the moon to then President Bourguiba.

He retired in 1970 from the Air Force. Following his first retirement, Frank worked for 14 years in the oil business in Denver, Houston, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Tunisia, and Guinea. In 1985, Frank enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin where he earned his Ph.D. in History. In 1996 he published his dissertation ``An Inquiry into the Boundary of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau (1886- 1895)". He was a member of Phi Alpha Theta and Phi Kappa Phi honor societies.

Frank was fiercely loyal to his family and friends. He was an absolutely brave and trustworthy wingman and an outstanding teacher and mentor. He is survived by his wife, Monique Stuckelberger Walsh, Austin, TX; his children and their spouses; Catherine Walsh, MD, Dallas, TX; Anne-Christine and Joe B. Estill, Aledo, TX; Marc P. and Whitney A. Walsh, Houston, TX; Michael P. Walsh, Austin, TX; his grandchildren, Eric P.H. Estill and Sutton M. Walsh; his brother, Patrick J. Walsh, St. Barthelemy, France; his sister, Elizabeth B. Clavel, Reims, France; their spouses and children; and numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews in California, New York, Ireland, Switzerland, and France. His remains will be cremated and the ashes scattered in the places he loved most: Austin, TX, Belle-Isle, France, and Switzerland. Memorial services will be held in Houston and Paris at later dates.

Monique Walsh and her children wish to express their gratitude to Dr. Mark Clark and Dr. Mark Pirwitz for their support, concern and excellent care. They wish to thank the staff of Seton Hospital and Hospice Austin. Memorial donations may be made to Hospice Austin, Seton Hospital in Austin, or any favorite charity.

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Rick Versteeg, e-mail 2 Nov 16.