

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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**11-Oct-65**

5080

"The Wild Weasel I [OT&E] test started on 11 October [at Eglin AFB] and was completed on 18 November 1965, and the four F-100F aircraft departed Eglin AFB on 21 November and arrived in SEA on 25 November 1965,"

The test was conducted under the "... joint TAWC/APGC Wild Weasel I Test Plan and the APGC Wild Weasel I PD (Project no. 0510T1)." Lt Col Richard "Dick" F. Bailey was the Project Director.

*"First In, Last Out: Stories by the Wild Weasels", pp 114 - 115.*

**25-Nov-65**

622

The first four Wild Weasel I F-100Fs arrived at Korat RTAFB, Thailand. The planes had left Eglin AFB, Florida, on 20 November 1965, where they had been training since 11 October 1965. The tail numbers of the four F-100Fs were:

58-1221  
58-1226  
58-1227  
58-1231

The deployment of the four Wild Weasel F-100Fs from Eglin coincided with the last flights from McConnell of the F-105s with the 421 TFS and the Wild Weasels took advantage of the 421st's deployment support.

The four Wild Weasel I aircraft launched from Eglin in the morning of November 21 and headed west. The crews ferrying the F-100Fs were:

#1 - Maj Garry A. Willard, Jr. the deployment commander, with pilot Capt Maurice G. Fricke in the rear cockpit  
#2 - Capt Leslie L. Lindenmuth with EWO Capt Robert D. Trier  
#3 - Capt Allen T. Lamb with EWO Capt John E. "Jack" Donovan  
#4 - Capt George H. Kerr with EWO Capt Donald J. Madden

Al Lamb recalled, "We took off at 1000 hours on Sunday 21 November 65 on the first leg of our flight from Eglin AFB to Hickam AFB, Honolulu, Hawaii. We rendezvoused with three aerial refueling tankers that were there just for us, over St. Louis, MO. We did this in radio silence. We had cancelled our normal flight plan with air traffic control, switched to a special frequency just for the tankers and us, and went to a new call sign that would take us to Korat. We were trailing the 421st TFS, which was deploying from McConnell AFB, KS to Korat at the same time and along the same route of flight we were using. This was so that we would have air sea rescue support ... while crossing the pond between California and Korat. They were on different radio frequencies and they never knew we were there.

After stops at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, and Andersen AFB, Guam, all four Wild Weasel aircraft landed at Korat on Thanksgiving Day, November 25, 1965. Al Lamb remembered that they "... landed ... around 1430 hours local time. By the time we got to the Club all of the turkey was gone." (Ed Rock, "First In, Last Out", story by Allen Lamb, pg 90.

The SEA deployment was the second phase of a test program for the Radar Homing and Warning Equipment (RHAW) equipment. The first phase had started at Eglin under TAC Test 65-85 and was completed on 19 November 1965. "The primary objective of this evaluation was to determine, in a combat environment, the overall effectiveness of F-100F aircraft, equipped with special Radar Homing and Warning Equipment, to detect locate and, in conjunction with strike aircraft, destroy SA-2 installations. Proposed tactics to effect this mission were also evaluated and modified." (Wild

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Weasel Report pg iii.)

The Vector Homing and Warning System was produced by Applied Technology, Incorporated and was installed in the four F-100Fs under Modification 1778. (Wild Weasel I Report, pg 1.)

"Each aircraft had a radar homing and warning (RHAW) system, a panoramic Scan Receiver (IR-133), and a missile guidance warning receiver (WR-300) that were controlled by an electronic warfare officer in the rear cockpit. The front cockpit had a duplicate scope of the RHAW for the pilot." (SAM Suppression Story)

During their deployment, the Wild Weasel I Team was assigned to the 6234 TFW at Korat and flew SAM hunter-killer missions with the 469 TFS and 421 TFS, the first two F-105 squadrons to be permanently assigned to Korat.

Maj Garry A. Willard, Jr. was the deployment commander and Maj Robert J. Swartz was the Operations Officer. There were six pilot/EWO crews on the deployment:

Capt Leslie L. Lindenmuth with EWO Capt George Low  
Capt Allen T. Lamb with EWO Capt John E. "Jack" Donovan  
Capt George H. Kerr with EWO Capt Donald J. Madden  
Capt Maurice G. Fricke with EWO Capt Truman Walter Lifsey  
Capt Edward B. White with EWO Capt Edward E. Sandelius  
Capt John J. Pitchford with EWO Capt Robert D. Trier (WW I Report, pp i & 2)

*"Wild Weasel The SAM Suppression Story" by Larry Davis, pg 11 & Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase), K143.5072-5.*

## 28-Nov-65 30-Nov-65

4919

Three days after their arrival at Korat, the F-100F Wild Weasel I crews flew the first of their eight orientation sorties into North Vietnam. "Sorties were flown using F-100F aircraft in formation with RB-66C and B-66B aircraft which were regularly frugged ECM and ELINT missions. The purpose of the orientation sorties was to provide area familiarization, experience in the multiple threat environment of the DRV, establish preliminary verification of the radar warning and homing capabilities determined during the Eglin phase of Wild Weasel I testing, and observe effects of jamming on the Vector and the IR-133." (pg 20)

"On these sorties, twenty-three signals were received simultaneously by two F-100F aircraft and verified as to type and frequency. Four of these signals (Fan Song radiations) were also verified by RB-66C signal intercepts." (pg 21)

Capt Maurice Fricke was one of the F-100F Wild Weasel pilots who flew an orientation mission. "Our first WW 1 in-theater ride was to fly on the wing of an EB-66 for an orientation ride in NVN. All was going pretty well until an SA-2 locked onto us. We asked the 66 if he was going to jam the signal or what. He said what signal? I'm looking at a three ringer and (EWO Capt) Walt Lifsey in back is almost going blind from the bright light coming from his (IR-) 133. Since we were already violating our rules for straight and level flight, I informed the EB-66 crew of their situation and broke down and away. The 66 never saw the signal and we think the only thing that saved him was we may have drawn the radar off him when we broke away. The irony of the whole episode was that was our best chance to get an SA-2 on our tour and we had no ordnance nor Thuds with us -- rats!"

The Wild Weasel I Final Test Report commented on this situation. "The relatively high percentage of Fan Song intercepts that were neither heard nor identified by the RB-66C crews is attributed to the transmitting procedures of the Fan Song operators. Short intermittent bursts could be detected by the Wild Weasel more readily than by the RB-66C crew and because of the difference in

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receiver capabilities." However, this situation was not the norm during later missions since the 84 signals of the 109 received during ELINT missions between 5 through 26 January 1966 were also received and identified by the RB-66C crews. (pg 92)

*Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase), K143.5072-5, pp 20 - 21 & e-mail 22 May 2001, Maurice Fricke <mf@QWEST.NET>.*

## 01-Dec-65

561

The first F-100F Wild Weasel mission escorting F-105s was flown from Korat RTAFB, Thailand. Maj Gary Willard and EWO Capt Walt Lifsey, in F-100F 58-1231, and Capt Edward B. White with EWO Capt Edward "Sandy" Sandelius, in a second F-100F led F-105s on the Wild Weasel's first IRON HAND mission of the Vietnam war.

"... Each led a flight of F-105s to 'troll' past a missile site to provoke it into action. For the attack on any site found, each Super Sabre carried two pods of 2.75-in unguided rockets. The F-105Ds carried various armament loads. The mission failed to stir any response from the SA-2 sites, however, as did similar missions in the weeks to follow."

*"Wild Weasel. The SAM Suppression Story" by Larry Davis, pg 11 & "History of U.S. Electronic Warfare, Vol III", pg 68.*

## 02-Dec-65

5516

After a 36-hour delay of the mission against a military area northeast of Dien Bien Phu, "Spruce" flight from the 469 TFS, 6234 TFW, took off from Korat at 08:05 and refueled from White Anchor 30 at 08:35. Each plane carried five 750-pound bombs. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Phillip O. Bradley in 60-0473
- #2 - Capt William S. Koenitzer in 59-1768
- #3 - Maj Robert M. Krone flying 62-4315 on his mission #10
- #4 - Capt Eugene D. "Dave" Hamilton in 61-0068
- Spare Capt Anthony J. "Tony" Gangol in 61-0120

The mission was cancelled, probably due to weather in the target area.

That evening, Maj Krone wrote a letter home that described what he and the squadron were doing. "I know you would like to hear more about the missions and I will tell you as much as I can. They are pretty serious about restrictions, however, and a tour in Leavenworth is hardly worth the risk. My ten missions to date have been fairly 'routine'. One of my problems is that I cannot fly when Coop does and as a result I have missed a couple of the good missions. Our mission is primarily interdiction - cutting lines of transportation, supply areas, etc. Two or three of my missions have been aborted due to weather when once we got in the area and the others really have not been significant other than from the standpoint of building up some experience and learning the area of operations. I think this is better than being thrown into the tough ones immediately. There is a real variety of types of missions and almost every one has been with a different weapons load and to a different area. We are moving into a new activity, which is very sensitive at the moment and I won't be able to discuss it at all."

He was referring to the F-100F Wild Weasels, which arrived at Korat on 25 November. Maj Krone flew on the first completed mission of the Weasels into North Vietnam on 3 December 1965.

"... Today was a slow day. I got cancelled again and I took my first trip into town. It reminds me a bit of Adana [Turkey] except that the standard of living is higher.

"We have started an R and R program to Bangkok. Two pilots will be gone all the time. At first we started for three or four days and may jump to a week for the second round. We sent all the pilots who have been here with the 357th and McCurdy is the first of our group. Nobody really wants to

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go right now but I am insisting that we keep it going because I suspect that in another month everyone will want a break and two is the most we can let go until we get some more pilots.

"Tomorrow is another 5:30 A.M. briefing day; I'm getting tired of briefing at horrible hours and then getting cancelled."

*Combat mission cards of Maj Robert M. Krone in Archives of the National Museum of the United States Air Force & Bob Krone "Copy of part of letter from Bob, Korat, 2 Dec 1965".*

### 03-Dec-65

5517

In the morning of December 3, the F-100F Wild Weasels flew their third hunter-killer mission (the first two weather aborted). This was the first one to fly into North Vietnam and was flown with a flight of F-105s from the 469 TFS. Maj Garry A. Willard and EWO Capt Truman Walter Lifsey were in F-100F 58-1226. (WW I Test Report)

Other F-100F Wild Weasels on the mission were:

Capt Edward B. White with EWO Capt Edward E. "Sandy" Sandelus.  
Capt George H. Kerr with EWO Capt Donald J. Madden -- F-100F Wild Weasel airborne spare.

The four F-105D pilots in "Bamboo" flight from the 469 TFS, 6234 TFW, accompanied the Wild Weasels. They took off at 8:15 a.m. and refueled from Orange Anchor 50 at 08:40. Each plane carried four LAU-3 rocket pods. Their flight lineup was:

#1 - Maj Robert M. Krone flying 62-4242 on his mission #11  
#2- 1Lt Jerry Donald Driscoll in 62-4341  
#3 - Maj Fred T. Coleman in 59-1769  
#4 - Capt Steven R. Sanders in 62-4302  
Spare - 60-0428

The Wild Weasel flight failed to rouse an SA-2 site in North Vietnam and so they "... experimented with some tactics and coordination between the Weasel birds and the strike flight, then hit a military barracks area southwest of Son La, about 15 nm north of the Laos border [at coordinates 21-09N and 104-09E]." (Bob Krone's flight lineup card and undated explanatory memo on file in the archives of the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.)

Willard and Lifsey landed back at Korat after flying for 3 hours. (Test Report)

*Final Report TAC Test 65-85, APGC-TR-66-22, "Test and Evaluation of Threat Radar Homing and Warning Systems "Wild Weasel I" (Southeast Asia Phase)", AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5, IRIS # 0470670, pg 74.*

### 03-Dec-65

5792

In the afternoon of 3 December, four F-105D pilots in "Ebony" flight from the 469 TFS, 6234 TFW, took off from Korat RTAFB at 12:45 p.m. They escorted another F-100F Wild Weasel aircraft. The flight refueled from KC-135 "Orange Anchor 51" from Takhli. Their time over target was 1400.

The flight lineup was:

#1 Maj John J. "Jack" Gaudion in 61-0181  
#2 Capt Gordon E. Lewis in 60-0473  
#3 Capt William Thomas May in 59-1820  
#4 Capt Anthony J. "Tony" Gangol in 61-0051  
#5 Wild Weasel: Capt Lesley L. Lindenmuth and EWO Capt Robert Douglas Trier in F-100F 58-1221  
F-105D Spare: Maj James L. Jones  
Wild Weasel Spare: Capt Allen T. Lamb and EWO Capt John E. "Jack" Donovan in F-100F 58-1227

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The Wild Weasel landed after flying for 2 hours 40 minutes. The mission was completed but they did not locate a SAM site. "Completed - No Homing"

*Undated combat mission cards of Capt William T. May in Archives of the National Museum of the United States Air Force (Wild Weasel crew matches Wild Weasel report for 3 Dec 65); Final Report TAC Test 65-85, APGC-TR-66-22, 'Wild Weasel I'.*

## 04-Dec-65

5936

On December 4, the F-100F Wild Weasels flew their fifth hunter-killer mission with a flight of four F-105s from the 469 TFS. Capt Edward B. White and EWO Capt Edward "Sandy" Sandelius were in F-100F 58-1221. Flying as an airborne spare in F-100F 58-1226 were Wild Weasels Capt George H. Kerr with EWO Capt Donald J. Madden.

The full F-105D flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Robert M. Krone flying 62-4242 on his mission #12
- #2 - 1Lt Jerry Donald Driscoll flying 62-4341
- #3 - Maj Fred T. Coleman flying 61-0068
- #4 - Capt William S. Secker, Jr. flying 61-0196
- Spare - Capt Steven R. Sanders in 61-0051

The four F-105D pilots in "Spruce" flight from the 469 TFS, 6234 TFW, took off at 13:25 and refueled from Orange Anchor 51 at 14:00 using the drogue from the tanker and probes on the F-100F and F-105Ds. Maj Krone told of some difficulty in refueling. "Jerry Driscoll was number two and we pulled up behind a tanker for some gas. It was a probe-and-drogue tanker rather than the normal boom type and when I had completed refueling, this little voice said, 'How do you do it?' This was the first clue I had that he had never refueled with the probe and drogue system. He hadn't said a word during the briefing nor had his flight commander Fred Coleman. Fred was number three and the two of us talked him through his hookup. I was sweating it out thinking I might have to send two airplanes back if he couldn't get hooked and the resulting investigation would have been pretty embarrassing for all - especially me. Fortunately after numerous stabs, he got hooked up and refueled successfully. Probably the only pilot ever to check out in probe and drogue refueling under those conditions. I had to congratulate him for a good job after chewing him out for not telling me - he missed part of the briefing somehow." (Bob Krone, letter home "Dec 6 Letter # 12". Note: Based on its information, the letter was probably written on 5 Dec 65.)

The targets were three SAM sites N.W. of Hanoi. However, the mission was scrubbed due to weather at the IP. "Struck Hanoi-China Red River R/R line as alternate target." Target coordinates were 21-56N and 104-37E.

The Wild Weasel report documented their mission as "Completed - No Homing."

*Combat mission card of Maj Robert M. Krone & Final Report TAC Test 65-85, APGC-TR-66-22, "Test and Evaluation of Threat Radar Homing and Warning Systems 'Wild Weasel I' (Southeast Asia Phase)", AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5, IRIS # 0470670, pg 74.*

## 08-Dec-65

5793

"Spruce" flight from the 469 TFS, 6234 TFW, took off from Korat at 12:35 and refueled from KC-135 "Orange Anchor 51" at 13:00. They accompanied an F-100F Wild Weasel. The mission was an 'Iron Hand' armed reconnaissance in North Vietnam.

The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Robert M. Krone flying 61-0196 on his mission #15
- #2 - Capt William Thomas May in 58-1161
- #3 - Capt John Anthony McCurdy in 62-4302

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#4 - Capt Anthony J. "Tony" Gangol in 62-4410  
#5 - Capt Allen T. Lamb and EWO Capt John E. "Jack" Donovan in F-100F 58-1231  
Airborne F-105D Spare - Capt Eugene "Dave" Hamilton in 60-0425  
Airborne F-100F Spare -: Capt Maurice G. Fricke and EWO Capt Truman Walter Lifsey in F-100F 58-1227

Configuration for the F-105s was 76 2.75-inch rockets carried in four LAU-3 pods, one on each of the four wing stations. The aircraft had full internal fuel plus a 390-gallon bomb bay tank and 650-gallon external centerline tank. The two F-100Fs were to take off first, join the F-105 flight in the refueling area, refuel, and proceed to the target area.

Bob Krone wrote on his mission card what happened. "McCurdy flamed out 40 miles north of Korat. Aircraft caught on fire and McCurdy bailed out. Picked up by chopper from Korat. Gangol, May, and I capped until he was picked up then proceeded on with the mission, striking possible AAA site and bridge at 20-55N and 103-55E." These target coordinates were just north of the border of Laos into North Vietnam about 60 nautical miles SE of Dien Bien Phu.

The mission lasted for 3 hours 5 minutes.

*Combat mission cards of Maj Robert M. Krone and Capt William T. May in Archives of the National Museum of the United States Air Force; USAF Accident/ Incident Report 65-12-8-1 dated 9 Jan 66.*

## 12-Dec-65

5795

"Ebony" flight from the 469 TFS, 6234 TFW, took off from Korat at 14:20 and refueled from KC-135 "Red Anchor 21". The four F-105Ds escorted an F-100F Wild Weasel. Their time over target was 15:40.

Flight line up was:

#1 - Capt Gordon E. Lewis in 62-4242  
#2 - Capt Frank R. O'Neill in 62-4248  
#3 - Maj John J. "Jack" Gaudion in 62-4315  
#4 - Capt William Thomas May in 60-0426  
#5 - Capt John Joseph Pitchford and EWO Capt Donald J. Madden in F-100F 58-1231  
F-105D ground spare - Capt Glenn E. "Wally" Belew in 59-1768

*Undated combat mission cards of Capt William T. May in Archives of the National Museum of the United States Air Force (Wild Weasel crew matches Wild Weasel report for 12 Dec 65); Wild Weasel I' Final Report, pg 76.*

## 19-Dec-65

5056

Today, the F-100F Wild Weasels in the 6234 TFW at Korat flew two missions hunting for SAM sites. During this first mission, the Wild Weasel equipment detected the SAM site, giving indications of overflying the site, but the crew couldn't find the site visually. The Wild Weasel I final report described the mission.

Aircraft F-100F 227. Take off at 0645Z. Pilot was Maj Garry A. Willard, Jr. EWO was Captain Truman Walter Lifsey. Flying time was 2 + 45.

Route: Korat, 18-06N and 103-19E, 19-00N and 103-29E (REFUEL), 21-13N and 104-02E, 21-57N and 104-36E, 21-57N and 105-13E, 21-42N and 104-53E, 21-05N and 104-19E, 20-28N and 104-06, Korat.

"Formation was one F-100F and four F-105s. F-100F flew in #5 position until within target area, then took over lead. F-105s flew in elements of two, on each side of F-100F approximately 3000 feet behind. Ordnance: F-100F carried 2 each LAU-3 Rocket Pods plus full 20-mm HEI. Each F-105 carried 4 each LAU-3 Rocket Pods plus full 20-mm HEI." (pg 104)

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"This was a mission in support of a JCS strike north of Hanoi and was to seek and destroy radiating SAM installations posing a threat to the strike force. When 60 miles from the Vietnam border, the Weasel began picking up Fire Can signals from the north. By the time the border was reached, these returns had become so numerous on the IR-133 that interpretation was difficult. Fire Can returns continued as the flight turned on an easterly heading north of Yen Bay. When 23 miles northeast of Yen Bay, a Vector Fan Song strobe of two ring intensity was received. Flight turned to the right toward the signal and starting descent from 8000 to 3000 feet. As the aircraft descended, Fire Can signals began disappearing from the IR-133 scope. The initial Fan Song return on the Vector scope remained up through station passage, which was a mile west of Yen Bay. While descending inbound toward the target, the IR-133, in low sensitivity, presented a signal. The Fan Song return was in high PRF. The aural return was clear and distinct, verifying a Fan Song signal. Upon approaching Yen Bay, the Vector strobe at 12 o'clock grew to full scope deflection. As the flight passed over Yen Bay, Weasel pitched up to 5000 feet, and Vector scope indicated station passage by decreasing length from 12 o'clock, and backing out to full scope deflection at 6 o'clock. Both the, Weasel and lead F-105 pilot saw a cleared area but no indication of activity or an installation. The area was no longer discernible after pitch up. The Weasel pilot did not mark the target because of inability to acquire; the F-105 leader fired 76 rockets into an AAA site. None of the other three F-105s fired his rockets because of inability to acquire target.

"The flight experienced heavy and continuous barrage flak while on attack run and in the target area, but suffered no battle damage. On departing the area, when approximately 20 miles from Yen Bay, heading 200 degrees, altitude 13,000 feet, Weasel received a steady signal with the IR-133 in low sensitivity, three rings at 6 o'clock position on the Vector. These returns disappeared from scope as flight broke down through 8000 feet. No further activity." (pg 29)

*"Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase)", AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5.*

### 19-Dec-65

5057

A second mission today by the F-100F Wild Weasels from Korat to find a SAM site also resulted in the electronic equipment detecting the site but the crew not spotting it due to camouflage. The Wild Weasel I final report described the mission.

Aircraft F-100F 231. Take off at 0720Z. Pilot was Maj Robert J. Swartz. EWO was Captain Robert D. Trier. Flying time was 2 + 20.

Route: Korat, 20-30N and 102-35E (Refuel), 21-20N and 103-50E, 21-40N and 104-20E, 21-45N and 105-00E, 21-25N and 105-20E, 21-20N and 104-20E, Udorn, Korat.

Formation and ordnance same as Mission #1. (pg 106)

"This mission was in support of a JCS strike north of Hanoi and was to seek out and destroy radiating SAM installations posing a threat to the strike force. Weasel aircraft took the lead when 30 miles west of Yen Bay, heading eastward, altitude 12,000 feet. Fire Can activity was visible from the east and southeast on IR-133 and Vector. When 20 miles from Yen Bay, 4000 feet AGL, the Weasel received Fan Song audio, low then high PRF, low intensity on IR-133, Vector strobe 2 rings from 12 o'clock. This signal disappeared and flight passed over Yen Bay at 5000 feet AGL, then turned ESE down the valley. Three Fan Song signals were received on the Vector from 1, 3, and 4 o'clock. The EWO selected the strongest one, from 1 o'clock, and began homing; he went from sweep to manual to DF and low sensitivity on IR-133. The DF mode was so strong both strobes went off scope, making homing on the IR-133 impossible; EWO used Vector for final homing. Vector strobe started at 2 rings and kept increasing to full scope strobe. The Fan Song went off for 15 to 20 seconds, and pilot saw a recently cleared area and what appeared to be a small village adjacent to this area. The cleared area, although of sufficient size, contained no visible evidence of being a SAM installation. Prior to the station going off the air, the Vector strobe

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was taking the aircraft toward the small village. When the Vector strobe came back on, it was from 6 o'clock. The pilot transmitted information that he was over target, pitched up, but could not visually acquire target. The F-105s were trailing Weasel at about 3000 feet, but had been taking maximum evasive action because of heavy flak, and ended up 2 to 3 miles behind. Approach to target made at from 4000 to 6000 feet. The F-105 leader saw an area which was similar to that described by the Weasel pilot, pitched up, and as he broke down, entered thin clouds at 5000 feet, pulled out and broke away. Remainder of F-105 flight had no visual contact, and no ordnance was expended. Because of fuel requirements, the flight departed the area and returned to home plate." (pg 29)

*"Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase)", AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5.*

## 20-Dec-65

562

The first Wild Weasel I F-100F was lost to combat while leading a strike by twelve F-105s on Kep Airfield (JCS 9.1). This target was part of the Rolling Thunder 45 strike on the Vu Chua Bridge (JCS 18.74). The specific target for the Wild Weasel flight was SA-2 site VN 33 at location 21-20-15N and 106-20-15E, 30 miles from Hanoi. The five-ship flight left Korat at 13:25 and the F-100F was shot down at 15:25.

On their third mission, 28-year old Capt John Joseph Pitchford and 32-year old EWO Capt Robert Douglas Trier, in F-100F 58-1231, call sign "Apple 05", were hit by heavy 100-mm AAA. Their plane crashed at location 21-25N and 107-05E.

Two other members of the flight flying F-105Ds were Maj John C. Shay and Capt Richard K. Ely, both from the 421 TFS. Capt Pitchford was captured by the North Vietnamese and became a POW. He was released on 12 February 1973. The North Vietnamese also captured Capt Trier but they shot and killed him as he tried to defend himself. His remains were returned to the U.S. on 3 November 1982. His name is on the Vietnam Memorial Wall Panel 04E, Line 32.

The Wild Weasel I Final Report described what happened. "This mission was in support of a JCS strike, and was to seek out and destroy any radiating SAM installations in the area 30 to 40 miles NE of Hanoi. ... The Weasel aircraft took the lead when 35 - 40 miles SE of Haiphong, heading to the north. Weather along the coast forced flight to descend to 1500 feet AGL, but flight proceeded on westward heading because weather ahead was improving. Moderate flak was observed while on westerly heading, approximately 30 miles ENE of Kep Airfield. Flak was extremely heavy, and appeared to be concentrated on Weasel lead. Altitudes were varied between 4000 and 6000 feet MSL. The F-105 lead saw Weasel pitch up when 5 miles SE of Kep, break right, then roll level to the left and fire marking rockets. Weasel then pulled off to the right and called, 'I am hit.' Although F-105 lead saw only some small buildings and trees, he fired his rockets into the area marked by the F-100F; his wingman also fired his rockets into the same area. Second element F-105 lead got separated from the flight when passing Kep on southerly heading, circled once, and flew, while in right turn, over Kep Airfield. At this point, he spotted the F-100F heading to ENE, and observed pieces of the aircraft falling off. The F-105 followed the F-100F to approximately 21-25N and 107-05E, at which point the pilot saw the canopy come off the F-100, saw one parachute open, then observed the F-100F pitch forward and disappear into the clouds. No further reports were received on the aircraft or crew."

"The following is an extract from the statement of [Maj] J. C. Shay, Apple 3: '... Apple 5 ... Was leading the flight. Apple 5 made a pass on the target and I joined with him as he came off. He was hit in the turn and large pieces of his aircraft were seen coming from his tail. Seconds later he said he was hit, had lost both hydraulic pumps, and that the aircraft was hard to control. I capped him and we flew for 6 or 7 minutes on a general heading of 080 degrees. Radio contact with Apple 5 was sporadic, and he gave no call when I saw some greenish yellow smoke, parts of the aircraft, and one parachute. Seconds later, the aircraft nosed over, went into the clouds and moments later a large white cloud was observed. Due to overcast conditions, Apple 3 was unable to determine



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whether more than one chute was deployed. Apple 3 heard a clear beeper while making orbit over the crash site, but was unable to descend due to mountainous terrain and had to leave the area due to fuel shortage. No organized search was initiated because of the distance of missing aircraft from nearest friendly territory. Crash area was mountainous terrain with heavy vegetation, making possibilities of concealment and evasion good." ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW Southeast Asia", AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3, IRIS # 1028640, pp 1-075 - 1-076)

*"Wild Weasel. The SAM Suppression Story" by Larry Davis, pg 12 & Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase), K143.5072-5, pg 30.*

## 20-Dec-65

1775

A "... JCS target strike against the Vu Chua Railroad Bridge ( JCS 18.74, BE 616-1150 at coordinates 21-26-35N and 106-21-28E) was flown on 20 December but reports indicated the bridge (remained) serviceable. On this mission, one [355 TFW] F-105D [from the 354 TFS at Takhli], one F-100F Wild Weasel aircraft [from the 6234 TFW, Korat], and one F-4C [from the 8 TFW, Ubon] were shot down. ..."

Capt Anthony S. Cushenberry, 333 TFS, flew his 6th combat mission against the Vu Chua Bridge.

"Had a hot JCS target today. Way up north above Hanoi. The run-in was picked for the same one as the power plant when everyone got shot to hell but we picked one further north. We took off at 12:40 and hit our tanker at Ginger about an hour later. We all filled up and pressed on into the target. The weather as usual was real bad. We punched through the stuff at about 8000' and there were broken clouds above, below, and everywhere. Really bad. We stumbled on at 4000' and I was saying to myself why don't we go back since that is what we are told to do. The mission commander never said one damn thing so we pressed on. Cal did a pretty good job of flying and navigation.

"The target was clear and we didn't get shot at until we hit the target area. We didn't find our IP lake but saw fires so assumed it was the target. 1 & 2 popped up through the clouds and rolled left towards what we thought was the target. 3 & 4 popped up behind them. In burner I finally rolled in at 16,000' and picked up a perfectly good railroad bridge. I aimed for it and had about 70-degree dive angle. Pickled and pulled, broke to the left back out and saw my bombs in the mirror. Direct hit! Confirmed by #3. He said they went through the bridge ....

"Couldn't help but hit it with some of them. It wasn't the correct bridge but it's the same railroad and it's down so who cares. Anyway, I'm nothing but a damn wingman so it's not my responsibility to navigate.

"We got the hell out of there on the deck at 575K with flak eating at our tail. Returned same route and didn't get shot at. Lost one plane from here on the mission but pilot was picked up in the harbor." The pilot was Capt John S. Ruffo from the 354 TFS who was rescued by an HU-16 that landed in Haiphong Harbor.

"Col Young was kinda short on fuel returning. 3+20. Six 750s. The radio was terrible."

*Project CHECO, Rolling Thunder, July 1965 - December 1966, pg 18 & Tony Cushenberry combat diary.*

## 20-Dec-65

1776

Four F-105Ds in "Healey" flight from the 355 TFW provided MiG-cap support to B-66s that were part of the forces attacking JCS 18.74, the Vu Chua railroad bridge. The flight left Takhli at 11:55 led by Maj. John M. Lowery from the 333 TFS. "Healey 4" was Capt Robert D. Gobble flying F-105D 61-0135 on his 4th combat mission. Each plane carried four GAR-8 (AIM-9B) air-to-air missiles. "I don't know why the tough ones always get cancelled until it's my turn to go then the mission goes, but it has been five days since I had flown and I was ready. We were giving top cover to the B-66s. They were 'Goose' flight and we were supposed to keep the MiGs off their

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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backs. The target was a railroad bridge just a few miles from Kep airfield. I'm not sure if they got the bridge but we lost three aircraft: two F-105s and an F-4. The F-4 was hit by a missile and the guys didn't get out. There were MiGs around but we didn't see any. We refueled on the way out. ... " The flight logged four hours and 15 minutes of flying time.

There was only one F-105D lost, 61-0090 shot down by AAA. The second plane was a Wild Weasel I F-100F 58-1231 also lost to AAA.

The F-4C lost to 85-mm AAA was 64-0678 from the 433 TFS at Ubon. The plane was in "Deer" flight and its two crew members were not rescued. 1Lt George Ivison Mims, Jr., flying his first combat mission, was KIA and Capt Robert Duncan Jeffrey became a POW. Lt Mims' name appears on the Vietnam Memorial Wall at Panel 04E, Line 30.

*F-105D Combat Diary of Capt. Robert D. Gobble & CNA Loss/Damage Database, loss 190, pg O17.*

### 22-Dec-65

5060

The Wild Weasel I final report included the mission debriefing statement of the F-105D pilot #2 (Spruce 2), Capt Van F. Heywood from the 421 TFS, for the first successful Wild Weasel attack on a SAM site in North Vietnam.

"After the F-100 took over the lead, I followed the F-105 leader by about 1000 feet. We used a scissors or basket weave formation moving from one side to the other on the F-100F. Formation altitude was varied and maintained on the lead F-105. When the F-100 began his pull-up, I moved into trail position approximately 1500 feet behind lead. I locked onto lead and followed him around in the turn. I noticed a village but did not have any time to look at it closely. The Weasel fired his rockets and I heard lead ask if that was a mark. I saw the smoke from the F-100's rocket launch and then heard lead say 'I've got it'. I had followed lead around so I saw where he was aiming. I went into afterburner as I rolled in on the rocket pass and fired all four rocket pods into the tree area. I stayed in AB the rest of the time. I pulled off to the left, climbed, and toggled off the centerline tank. As I looked back and down to watch the tank go, I saw a long white pole on the west or northwest fringe of the village. It looked like a missile and was pointed in the direction of Nghia Lo Airfield (Northwest of the village). I pulled up to about 3500 feet and followed lead around for my second pass. On this pass, I fired 20-mm working my rudder pedals and walked the 20-mm back and forth across the target area. Smoke and dust was billowing up to the tree tops and I could not determine the damage to the target area. After pulling off the target toward the Southwest I climbed to 3000 feet and jettisoned my rocket pods. SAM threat was called so we descended to about 500 feet. I followed leader and we returned to Korat." (pg 115)

*"Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase)", AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5.*

### 22-Dec-65

563

At 12:41 p.m., an F-100F Wild Weasel led four F-105s in destroying their first SAM site in North Vietnam. Capt Al Lamb and EWO Capt John E. "Jack" Donovan, in F-100F 58-1226, call sign "Spruce 05", led four F-105Ds from Korat RTAFB, Thailand, in an attack on a SAM site near the rail yard at Yen Bai. The five aircraft destroyed the SAM site with rockets and 20-mm gunfire. For leading the mission, the F-100F crew was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

The four F-105D pilots of "Spruce" flight from the 421 TFS were Capt Donald E. Langwell, lead; Capt Van F. Heywood, #2; Capt Robert Edward "Bob" Bush, #3; and Capt Arthur L. Brattkus, #4.

Probably due to security restrictions, a Republic Aviation news release did not identify the F-100F Wild Weasel, calling it an F-105 instead. The release reported that "five ... F-105 pilots caught a missile site by surprise 58 miles northwest of Hanoi. Pilots said they slipped up on the SAM site while enemy missile men were apparently tracking a second flight of Air Force jets in the same area. 'There were several missiles elevated on launchers within the site. They were long, white-colored objects,' the Thunderchief flight leader said. Pilots struck with 2.75 rockets and reported

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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fires, explosions and heavy smoke. Thunderchiefs dropped 72 tons of 750-pound bombs during the attacks."

Nearly forty years later, Van Heywood described his experience as "Spruce 2".

"To start off, I flew about 12 "IRONHAND" missions (4 Thuds following a Wild Weasel F-100F). The technique that we used was what we described as trolling (like the technique used in fishing). We acted as the bait, the SAM site was the fish. In the designated area we would fly in loose and flexible formation. At about 15,000' and 400 to 450 KTS, we would try to present an irresistible target for SAM sites. Many times a missile site would come up and start tracking us. We would start a turn towards the site to try and set up for an attack. It seemed that the missile guys got the word about who we were and what we were up to, and when we turned toward the site it would go off the air. Sometimes the lead F-105 carried a Shrike missile and we got close enough for him to fire it. One Shrike hit an empty field and devastated the dirt. Another time we were receiving heavy 57MM flak when the Shrike was fired. The firing stopped suddenly and an F-4 with camera pods dashed in to get a shot of the Shrike hit. The Shrike really messed up the firecan radar that was aiming the guns. We didn't seem to be getting anywhere with the tactics we were using.

"On the 22 of December 1965, we launched as Spruce flight with the area of patrol up around Route Pac 5. Leading the flight was Don Langwell, I was Spruce 2. #3 was Bob Bush with #4 Art Brattkus on his wing. Spruce 5 was the F-100 Wild Weasel with pilot Al Lamb and EWO Jack Donovan.

"After refueling enroute, we started on our way in what seemed to me to be a repeat of previous missions. Spruce 5 was now in the lead. Somewhere along the way Spruce 5 said something like 'Spruce lets take it down' and made a fast descent to several hundred feet above the forest. There is a video that depicts the stalking phase of our attack (First In, Last Out). It is a most accurate representation of the sequent of events. Rolling, green hills with the terrain rising off of our left wing. I could tell that this was a very different thing going on here from previous Ironhand missions that I had been on. Al would start a climb with the 4 F105s in trail and suddenly drop down again. This went on for a number of cycles. On the combat frequency I could hear another flight in our area trying to join up after attacking some target. One of their flight had been hit and they were trying to get him out of the target area which was along the Red River. We started out heading about North East, but were gradually turning around to the North all the time keeping the rising terrain to our left. Somewhere just to the west of the Black River, and heading toward the Red River we came on one last finger of hills running North. There was no more hiding behind hills. We were coming into the flat, open area bordering the Red river. Al turned to the North West and paralleled the river. We were fairly low, and the Weasel was making as many knots as I think he could get out of the F-100F. In not more than 2 minutes (it seemed to me), the Weasel called the Sam site swinging off our left. He started a turn as likewise we all did. A voice transmitted excitedly 'I've got him'. At that point, things started happening really fast. I had lost the Weasel in the turn, but was locked on to Langwell. As we continued turning, I looked at the grove of trees almost immediately beneath our flight path. As we continued turning, I saw two long, slender tubes on a what appeared to be a transporter. They were pointed up at about 60 degrees and stuck out just barely beyond the tree line. 'Missiles', I said to myself. I took spacing on Langwell and set up my own attack. We had 4 LAU-3 rocket pods with 19 rockets in each pod. On the tip of each 2.75 " FFAR (Folding Fin Aerial Rocket) was a hand grenade looking HEAP head (High Explosive Anti-Personnel). I had armed up all 4 pods to fire at once. If I got only one shot, I wanted it to be a memorable one. I saw Langwell pulling off. Dirt and debris was rising from the North West side of the grove of trees. That left me the untouched rest of the grove. Sometime while this was happening, someone transmitted 'Watch it Spruce, we're getting flak from the river'. I was concentrating on my run and wasn't about to let the flak deter me. My gun was set up to fire and just before firing the rockets, I fired a long burst while gently walking the rudders. It was quite a stretch for the gun, but I figured that with the mils of depression set in the gunsight for the

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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rockets, surely some of the rounds would lob in. I steadied just long enough to get my sight picture for the rockets, and fired. What an impressive sight! 76 rockets spewing out in front of my aircraft. I was sure that the guys on the ground were impressed. But, I had to pull out. As I was bottoming out over the target, I could hear the explosions from my salvo. I started a left turn for a gun pass, reached down and pushed the jettison button for the 650 gallon centerline fuel tank. In the turn I picked up Spruce 1 who was setting up for another attack. I never saw the Weasel or Spruces 3 and 4 during the attack. I was too busy to even look for them. On my second attack I elevated the gunsight pipper, held the trigger down and gently walked the rudders until the gun fired out. The target was by now a roiling, boiling mass of dust and debris in which nothing could be seen except a few of the taller trees. When I picked up Spruce 1 again he was headed out from the target, so I made knots to join back up. I felt a little disturbed when the Weasel started calling out 'Everybody get down, he's on us'. After a couple of calls like that I started thinking 'How is that possible, we just killed him didn't we?'. It wasn't until later, at the Intel debriefing when I asked Donovan what he meant, that I found out a SAM site over by the river came up and was trying to get a shot at us." (Van Heywood, e-mail 29 Mar 05.)

*"Wild Weasel. The SAM Suppression Story" by Larry Davis, pg 12 & Allen Lamb, e-mail to Weasel Net, 22 Dec 00 & Republic Aviation Thunderchief Report, Vol. 1 No 5, January 1, 1966.*

## 22-Dec-65

5061

The Wild Weasel I final report included the mission debriefing statement of the F-105D pilot #3 (Spruce 3), Capt Robert Edward "Bob" Bush from the 421 TFS, for the first successful Wild Weasel attack on a SAM site in North Vietnam.

"After the Weasel pilot told the rest of the flight that we were tracking an active SAM installation, he began using terrain masking. The nature of the tactics used (close to ground, up and over ridges and frequent turns) made it necessary that I concentrate on the formation; consequently, I couldn't look around for the target. As the Weasel got an offset station passage, he called a visual 'tally-ho'. At this time, I had no idea where the target was. Because I was approximately 5000 feet from the Weasel when he fired his marking rockets, I did not see them impact; only the smoke as they were fired. I then transferred my attention to the F-105 leader and decided to watch his delivery pass hoping to identify the site. The number one and two F-105s fired their rockets and strafed on their first pass, creating a great deal of dust. This made identification of a specific aiming point difficult. The aiming point I selected was the trees, which the F-105 lead and Weasel pilot said covered the missiles. In order to completely saturate the site, I decided to switch to sequence-single, firing my rockets individually. I fired my rockets from a 20-degree dive, starting at 2000 feet AGL and pulling out at 500 feet AGL. As I made a left turn for a second pass in order to strafe, I noticed ground troops who appeared to be in a state of confusion. I never did observe hostile ground fire of any sort. On the second pass (strafe only), I yawed the aircraft to get better dispersion, and again fired into the foliage. I recovered at 300 feet AGL and immediately made a sharp left escape turn. With the left wing down, I again saw the troops and some objects, which I couldn't identify. It occurred to me that the objects did not appear native to a village. In departing the target area, the flight was basically in trail. Ascending to 7000 feet MSL, I heard the Weasel call another SAM threat so we descended. My wingman and I then joined up with Weasel and escorted him home." (pg 116)

*"Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase)", AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5.*

## 22-Dec-65

5059

The F-100F Wild Weasel I final report included the mission debriefing statement of the F-105D formation leader (Spruce 1), Capt Donald E. Langwell from the 421 TFS, for today's first successful Wild Weasel attack on a SAM site in North Vietnam.

"When the F-100F took over the lead, the 105 formation used a basket weave as depicted in Figure 12. Altitude varied from about level with the F-100F to two thousand feet above. The 105s maintained this weaving formation on the F-100F throughout the approach to the target. On the

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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final run in to the target, the 105s pulled into a trail formation.

"As the F-100F passed about 100 yards right of the target, I had the village about 100 to 200 feet off to my left. My attention was drawn to an earthen dike just south of the village area. As the 100-F pulled up and to the left going from about 500 feet climbing to 2500 feet, I slid to the outside in the turn and the others probably pulled into trail. As about 180 degrees of turn had been completed, the F-100F pilot called out that he had identified the target. I did not have it yet. My attention was still on the dike since it stood out so plainly and was obviously man made. We continued on around to a N NW heading and the Wild Weasel fired his rockets and called 300 feet left. This focused my attention on the trees and area that I had dismissed as a small village. The trees were small and looked like fruit trees because the underbrush and area around the trees was cleared out. Then I saw three missiles on the left hand and top portion of the area. I could see about half of each missile. They appeared to be at about 20 to 30 degrees elevation. The hootch in the center of the clearing had a large dark object next to it but I could not positively identify what it was. I had followed the F-100F around and was lined up on the area so as soon as I saw it was the target I fired my outboard rockets. The rockets hit short of the target. I walked 20-mm through the area and then pulled up and to the left to about 6 thousand feet to make another pass on the target. I saw the rockets from No. 3 and No.4 impact into the tree area containing missiles. I pulled into my second pass on a more westerly heading, fired inboard rockets and strafed. Trees were obscured by dirt and smoke - black smoke and dust rose to 200 - 300 feet in the air. My rockets impacted in the center of the area on the second pass. I pulled off to the left again, saw AAA fire and about 1 1/2 miles from the target saw some 37-mm bursts. I climbed to 5 or 6M to pick up the Wild Weasel on the way out from the target. The Wild Weasel called for a descent because of a Fan Song threat. The flight descended and continued southwest until clear of the SA-2 area; then climbed and returned to home plate." (pg 114)

*"Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase)", AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5.*

### 22-Dec-65

5058

The Wild Weasel I final report included the mission debriefing statement of the F-100F Wild Weasel pilot (Spruce 5), Capt Al Lamb, for the Wild Weasel's first successful attack on a SAM site in North Vietnam.

"I took over flight lead at the IP, 20-50N, 103-38E, at 16,000 feet MSL. The EWO reported a Fan Song signal on the Vector, gave the bearing of the signal, and we descended until we lost the signal. Heading was approximately 070 degrees. We maintained this general heading in the direction of the signal descending until the signal was lost then climbing until we picked up the signal, got a bearing and then descended. After we had proceeded toward the signal in this manner for approximately 40 miles, I started using terrain masking by keeping a hill between the Fan Song and us. In the mountains there were a series of four or five valleys that were generally perpendicular to the direction we wanted to go so I would pull up over a ridge, roll the wings level and as soon as the EWO called a bearing to the signal I would roll on over using a half barrel roll descending into the next valley, turning sometimes up the valley and sometimes down the valley. The valleys varied from approximately one to three miles across and maybe as little as 500 feet to over a thousand feet below the tops of the hills. These maneuvers rolling up over the ridge, popping the wings level, and rolling down into the next valley kept an almost constant load of 4 to 6 gs on the aircraft. By continuing in this way pulling up to get a signal, popping the wings level to get a bearing, and rolling over into the next valley we proceeded toward the Fan Song. This wasn't homing per se because the turns as we rolled into the valleys were sometimes as much as 120 degrees from the bearing to the signal. Each time the EWO called a bearing I would fix a landmark along that bearing and the next time compare the landmark with the new bearing. By doing this and noting the rate at which the bearing changed, I could get a good estimate of where the site was and how close we were getting to it. As I pulled up over the next to the last ridge I could see the Red River Valley ahead and was certain that the Fan Song was on the West (near) side of the river and about 3 to 5 miles away. There was one small hill beyond the last ridge between us and

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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the site so I turned south, descended to stay down below the top of the last hill and turned around the hill into the valley heading toward the point where I thought the Fan Song must be. The hill appeared to be about 700 to 1000 feet above the valley floor and we were about 300 feet above the valley so I started a gradual climb to get back to 4500 feet altitude. There was no sign of automatic weapons or small arms firing so I didn't climb too fast. I didn't want to use AB (afterburner) because the noise might alert the gun defenses. Just as I rolled the wings level and started the climb, the EWO called the signal on the nose at 12 a clock. As we started the run-in on the Fan Song I aimed a little to the right because of the past experience at Eglin where we had almost always gone to the left of the station. As we went on in I made a couple of turns left and right so as not to stay on one heading all of the time. A second Fan Song signal came up on the right side but I continued in on the first signal. As the EWO called the signal moving toward the 9 o'clock position, all I could see were fields and rice paddies and a small group of buildings and trees that looked like a little village. At station passage the village was about 300 yards to the left; I pulled up with about 45-degree left bank to gain altitude to attempt to make visual acquisition of the missile installation and mark it for the F-105s. When I had pulled up to about 2500 feet and was in a 75-degree left bank I saw a Fan Song radar sitting in about the center of what I had thought was a village. The radar was parallel to a long hootch. The radar van blended into the background, which kept it from standing out prominently. As I followed through on the turn, I continued around the installation and saw three missiles. I could see only the front part - long white tips - because the missiles appeared to be partially covered by a semi-circular thatched hut. I had called out station passage to the "fives" but none of them had seen the target. I started my pass to mark the target by rolling into a 45-degree dive. I realized I was a little too low and slow to get on the target so I pulled up the nose and fired the rockets. The rockets hit about 300 feet left and short of the target. I called out the target location with respect to the rockets. As I continued the pull up from this pass, saw 18 - 20 men running across the clearing. I fired a 20-mm burst through them, pulled up, and pitched left. Turning off the target, I could see the 105 lead's rockets hit short of the trailer; as he fired his 20-mm I could see hits in the van and hootch area. Number two's rockets hit in the center of the van and hootch area. The Fan Song signal went off at about the time No. 2 aircraft was making its pass. I was about 2 1/2 miles south of the target when No. 3 rolled in and made his pass. After making a 360-degree turn, I saw lead pull off from his second pass so I turned left and departed the area. The EWO reported the Fan Song across the river was now in high PRF so the flight descended down into the hills on the outbound heading. The target area became covered with smoke and dust as soon as firing began. Smoke, white and black, and mixed with dust rose to from 400 to 500 feet. There was a road going NW to SE paralleling the river and about 2500 to 3000 feet from the target. The area in the village, around the buildings, and under the trees appeared to be hard packed earth." (pp 112 - 113)

An article Al Lamb wrote about this mission was posted to a Web site called Situational Awareness. Situational Awareness is a blog by the FORMER editors of eDefense Online. Now it's just a sounding board. Is there anybody...OUT THERE?

In Their Own Words #8: Eleven Stories For Veterans Day

Lt Col Allen Lamb, USAF (ret.), is currently president of The Lamb Group LLC, an international industrial safety consulting firm based in Lumberton, NC.

The first SAM kill by Wild Weasels showed that good technology and solid tactics are fine things to have, but great teamwork is what gets the job done.

I was taking off from Korat Air Base in Thailand two days after Bob Trier became the first Wild Weasel killed in action. Bob and his pilot, John Pitchford, had fallen to a SAM site while leading a strike package of F-105s against the Kep airfield, located about thirty miles northwest of Hanoi. After punching out of their stricken F-100F, Bob had apparently shot it out with North Vietnamese

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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militia and lost, while John would spend seven years as a POW. Of course, we didn't know any of that at the time. All we knew is that the Wild Weasels were off to a bad start.

It was December 22, 1965, and we hadn't killed a single SAM, yet. At least the mission we were rolling on that morning was more to our liking. It was a so-called "Iron Hand" strike, which was code for a Wild Weasel mission, with the objective of hunting and killing a SAM site, as opposed to leading a strike against a known target. Our F-100F was loaded with LAU-3 canisters of 2.75-in. HEAT and HEAP rockets and two external fuel tanks. Jack Donovan, my EWO, had flown back seat to Bob Schwartz, the operations officer, on the day Bob Trier was killed. Their F-100F has been leading a second strike package against the same target. Like Pitchford and Trier, they were supposed to sniff out radar threats with their Vector IV and IR-133 radar-warning receivers. Weasels also carried the WR-300 launch-warning receivers, which could detect the increased signals when a SAM was about to launch.

The most dangerous threats were the SA-2 Guideline SAM sites with their Fan Song radars. This is what the Wild Weasels were born to tackle. These missiles had come as a nasty shock to US aircrews operating over North Vietnam in 1965. On July 24 of that year, a SA-2 exploded in the middle of a strike force of F-4 Phantom IIs, knocking down one aircraft and damaging all the others in the flight. Losses to SAMs became regular occurrences. Something had to be done about it.

I had been the first pilot picked for the Wild Weasel program per request of General Benny Puttman, who was commander of the Tactical Air Warfare Center at Eglin AFB. This is where the Wild Weasels would be pulled together. Col Charlie Joseph, Tactical Air Command Coordinator, had come down to Myrtle Beach AFB where I was stationed on September 15, 1965, to have lunch and ask me to volunteer for something without telling me what the job was. I knew Col Joseph from Misawa, and I said yes. He handed me orders TDY (Temporary Duty) to Eglin with variations in itinerary authorized (these carried me all the way to Nam).

I disappeared from Myrtle Beach the next morning, and the rest is history. The original orders said the assignment would be to fly a F-100F command post (another job for the two-seater), but Joseph told me after I was on board that I would be hunting and killing SAM sites in North Vietnam. Quite hush-hush on everything. One of the first pilots broke security by talking to a nurse at the beach club at happy hour. We were being watched. He was gone the next morning and lost his career. We were all chewed out and kept isolated from then on. There were to be two birds, but later this was upgraded to four in case we lost one and one was out of commission, etc. Ultimately, there were five crews assembled for the four aircraft. In the days before the Shrike anti-radiation missile, Wild Weasels attacked enemy SAM sites with cannon and rockets and initially fin napalm, although this latter weapon was the 7th Air Force's idea, not the aircrews'. We didn't like napalm, nor bombs for that matter, because the parameters for using dropped ordnance were more restrictive than for rockets. We could get off snap-shots with rockets, something we couldn't do with fin napalm or bombs. Iron Hand strikes typically consisted of a Wild Weasel leading four F-105s heavily laden with bombs or rockets or both for pasting the SAM sites. The "Thuds" didn't carry any special electronics for ferreting out enemy radars. That was our job.

Nevertheless, we didn't just mark the target, as some have claimed. We went in first with rockets and came back around with cannon even before some of the Thuds had started on a first run. The F-100F was an excellent hunter-killer in that it was very agile. I was very fond of it, and of my ability to fly it. In those days, I had "World's Greatest Fighter Pilot" printed on my helmet - backwards so I could read it in the mirror. No apologies for youth: That was the sort of attitude we all had. I just put my attitude in writing.

Jack Donovan's contribution to the vernacular when introduced to the Wild Weasel concept was more enduring, and became the semi-official motto of the Wild Weasel profession: YGBSM - "You

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gotta be shitting me." This was the natural response of an educated man, a veteran EWO on B-52s and the like, upon learning that he was to fly back seat to a self-absorbed fighter pilot while acting as flypaper for enemy SAMs. What would you say?

Our flight that December morning was call sign Spruce, and our F-100F was Spruce 5. The F-105s - Spruce 1-4 - took off after right after we did. Everything was standard through form-up and and refueling at tanker over Laos. We took the lead at our pre-briefed initial point, and with two Thuds on each wing, we headed for the Red River Valley, a flood plain that was home to some of the best air-defense systems in North Vietnam. The mission parameters were fairly fluid after that. We didn't have a specific objective or a series of known targets. Our job was to probe the enemy's air defenses until they warmed up to take a shot at us.

There was complete radio silence after going to the strike frequency. A little after noontime, Jack told me that the Vector IV had picked up a Fan Song radar in search mode about 100+ nautical miles out. I pushed the engine up to 98 percent and locked the throttle. This gave us 595 knots airspeed, just under max while carrying ordnance. After I started homing in, I transmitted "Tallyho." That was it. I kept the SAM at 10 to 11 o'clock so he wouldn't get the idea I was going after him. When I could, I dropped into shallow valleys to mask our approach. Every now and again, I'd pop up for Jack to get a cut. This went on for about 10 to 15 minutes.

After breaking out into the Red River Valley I followed the strobes on the Vector and turned up with the river along side. The IR 133 had receiver antennas located on either side of the fuselage in line with the cockpit for homing on target. The strobes started curling off at 12 o'clock, both to the right and left. And I knew we were right on top of him. I started climbing for altitude and Jack kept calling out SAM positions literally left and right. The right one turned out to be a second site. I was passing through 3,000 feet, nose high, and I rolled inverted while still climbing to look.

Jack started calling the first site to the right. I said it was to the left, because I could see it below. "Right!" he said. "Left!" I said. "Right!" he said. "Look outside!" I said. Jack did and saw that we were inverted, so the signals from the left and right antennas were reversed. "OK, left," he agreed.

I rolled in to line up the site but came in way too low. Later, some of the Thud drivers told me they thought I was going to mark the target with my aircraft. My rockets hit short, but as I pulled off there was a bright flash. I figured I must have hit the oxidizer van for the SA-2s' liquid-fuel motors. I called out the site, and the F-105 lead, Don Langwell, said that he had it. He went in, and Spruce 2, Van Heywood, came after him, firing rockets on the site. We all broke the cardinal rule - "one pass, haul ass" - to assure the kill. I came back around for a second pass in front of Spruce 4, Art Brattkus (the F-100s were agile birds!), and went down in beside Spruce 3, Bob Bush, who was hitting the AAA along side of the Red River (Bob Bush would be KIA on a subsequent mission). On this pass I strafed the control van, and he went off the air. Each of the Thuds came around again, expending all their 20mm ammunition. Jack was now calling out the second SAM site, but we had nothing left to hit it with. But we really blew away the site that we did hit.

We got out of there, rejoined, and refueled. There was a USO show with Bob Hope that day at Korat, and we made a fly over with the F-100 leading and two F-105s on each wing. A number of people down there knew that meant we had made a SAM kill and left the show early to celebrate.

After landing, we debriefed and went to the club. What a party. Jack drank martinis. After a while, he started holding them by the rim with his thumb and finger. And began dropping them. The more he drank the more he dropped. The club was raising Cain as they were running out of glasses, so we taped a glass in his hand. After dinner he drank creme dementhe and went around sticking out his green tongue.



# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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All six of us in Spruce Flight received the Distinguished Flying Cross for killing the first SAM site. Jack would fly twelve more missions with me before going stateside in February 1966 to get the ball rolling on what would become the Wild Weasel School at Nellis AFB. I stayed in Southeast Asia for a total of six months and received credit for two more SAM kills. When we flew together, Jack said he would sleep through my air refuelings and would tell me to wake him up on ingress for him to go to work. The only time he looked outside was when I told him to take a look at Hanoi and the flak. Jack and I were a very strong team; we lived together and flew together, and we always knew what the other was thinking, even before he thought it. We were closer than many marriages. Jack also named his second son after me.

October 2001

posted by Michael Puttre @ Friday, November 11, 2005

Michael Puttre

Age: 43

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About Me

Michael Puttre is editor-in-chief of eDefense Online and JED, the Journal of Electronic Defense, both published by Horizon House in Norwood, MA. He has eighteen years experience in the technology and engineering media as a writer and an editor. He began his career with InformationWEEK in 1987 and went on to write for a number of magazines including Mechanical Engineering and Design News. Michael came to Horizon House in 2000 as managing editor of JED. He became editor-in-chief in 2002 and assisted with the launch of eDefense Online in 2004. Michael is a graduate of the University of Rochester and has degrees in political science and history.

Blogs

Blog Name

Team Members

Situational Awareness      Michal A. Fiszer    Brendan P. Rivers    TMcKenna

*"Wild Weasel I Final Report (Southeast Asia Phase)", AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5.*

**22-Dec-65**

5801

"Aspen" flight from the 469 TFS, 6234 TFW, took off from Korat at 14:00 and refueled from KC-135 "White Anchor 21" at 14:30 at 20,000 feet. The four F-105Ds escorted an F-100F Wild Weasel on an Iron Hand Strike mission. Their time over target was 15:10.

Flight line up was:

#1 - Maj Robert M. Krone in 62-4242 flying his 23rd mission

#2 - Capt Gordon E. Lewis in 58-1161

#3 - Capt William Thomas May in 60-0409

#4 - Capt Anthony J. "Tony" Gangol in 62-4334

#5 - Capt Edward B. White and EWO Capt Edward "Sandy" Sandelius in F-100F 58-1221.

The F-105D spare was Capt Frank R. O'Neill in 58-1163

The crew in the F-100F Wild Weasel spare aircraft was Capt Leslie L. Lindenmuth and EWO Capt Donald J. Madden.

The flight struck two targets in North Vietnam - a military area at coordinates 20-13N and 105-28E, which was 30 NM NNW of Thanh Hoa, and a nearby bridge at 20-12N and 105-30E. Maj Krone's

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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aircraft received AAA damage to its right wing. The Wild Weasel crew from "Aspen" flight did not find a SAM site.

However, the F-100F Wild Weasel crew from another flight ("Spruce") escorted by four F-105D pilots from the 421 TFS found and destroyed a SAM site, the first (and only) success for the Wild Weasel I detachment that had arrived at Korat from Eglin on 25 November 1965.

Maj Krone was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission. "Major Robert M. Krone is awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism while participating in aerial flight as a F-105 pilot over North Vietnam on 22 December 1965. On that date, Major Krone led a flight of F-105 aircraft against a hostile missile site. With outstanding leadership and superior airmanship, Major Krone dangerously exposed himself for lengths of time well above and beyond normal mission requirements. The outstanding heroism and selfless devotion to duty displayed by Major Krone reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."  
([http://www.dfcsociety.org/citation\\_detail.asp?ID=1649](http://www.dfcsociety.org/citation_detail.asp?ID=1649))

*Combat mission cards of Capt William T. May (undated) and Maj Bob Krone in USAF Museum Archives (May's lineup, daily code words, and SIF code entries match Krone's card for 22 Dec 65); Wild Weasel I final report, pg 77.*

## 24-Dec-65 31-Jan-66

164

U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson halted the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign over North Vietnam as well as the bombing of targets in Laos "... to try to reach a peaceful settlement with the communist country." The halt was effective at 6:00 PM Saigon time.

The U.S. Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, had been trying for "... a month ... to persuade Johnson to order a bombing pause with the hope that it would open the door to negotiations with Hanoi. The Joint Chiefs, Clark Clifford and many other advisers opposed the idea. But when (National Security Advisor McGeorge) Bundy made it clear that he supported McNamara, a skeptical president finally agreed on December 18 to order a pause."

Bombing resumed in Laos on 25 December 1965 but the halt over North Vietnam lasted 36 days and 15 hours, ending on 31 January 1966. The 355 TFW never was officially notified of the bombing halt over North Vietnam. The wing was just not fragged for targets in that area.

A total of 25,000 Rolling Thunder sorties were flown in 1965, the first year of the bombing campaign.

The bombing pause interrupted the Iron Hand campaign being conducted by the F-100F Wild Weasels and F-105s at Korat.

*355 TFW History, Jul - Dec 65, USAF microfilm NO461, frame 1101 & "The Color of Truth" by Kai Bird, pg 345 & "Interdiction in Southern Laos 1960 - 1968", pg 103 & "Rolling Thunder", by John T. Smith, pg 335.*

## 01-Jan-66

6934

At the start of 1966, the halt to the bombing of North Vietnam, initiated by President Johnson on 24 December 1965, was still in effect. It would last the whole month of January. 1966 was the first full year of the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign begun in March 1965. "... The American-South Vietnamese and allied military posture in Southeast Asia had improved over that of [1964]. The U.S. decision in 1965 to alter its mission from advice and support of the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) to open participation in air and ground combat had saved the Saigon government, now headed by Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, from certain defeat."

"... Most of the U.S. air and ground units in South Vietnam and Thailand had arrived in the last half of 1965 in accordance with a 'Phase I' deployment plan adopted in July of that year. Phase II deployments were about to begin."

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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1966 would be the year in which the anti-SAM programs initiated in 1965 would be fielded. The Wild Weasel I team had deployed with its four F-100Fs to Korat in November 1965 and had proven its SAM hunter-killer concept with a success against a SAM site less than a month later.

In the first part of 1966, the Wild Weasel III F-105Fs began flying from Korat and then in July from Takhli.

After imparting their hard-learned lessons to the F-105F Weasel crews at Korat, the F-100F Wild Weasel team returned to Eglin in July 1966. These returning combat veterans started the Wild Weasel training program at Nellis.

Both Wild Weasel programs proved to be technical and operational successes.

Also successful were the radar-homing, Navy-developed, AGM-45 Shrike missiles that reached the Navy fleet in March 1966 and which the Air Force first fired a month later from its F-100F Wild Weasels.

Two other successes in 1966 were the Radar Homing and Warning equipment being rapidly installed in fighters and ECM jamming pods that dramatically degraded the effectiveness of the SAMs. Both systems, scarce at first, became so vital that the equipment was deemed necessary to fly into the highly defended north-east regions of North Vietnam.

The one unsuccessful anti-SAM program in 1966 was the F-4C Wild Weasel. In tests at Nellis, the equipment, mounted in a pod in a Sparrow well in the four aircraft, did not meet operational needs. The program's combat deployment was delayed several times throughout 1966. The program was eventually deferred until the system could be redesigned.

However, due to expectations that the defects would be corrected, the team's six two-pilot Wild Weasel crews and two EWOs deployed to Ubon to await the arrival of their aircraft, which never showed up. The skilled pilots didn't wait for their special airplanes but jumped into combat, contributing to the achievements of the MiG-downing 8 TFW. The two EWOs found employment as crew members on EB-66s at Takhli.

The systems deployed and lessons learned in 1966 would influence air combat over North Vietnam for the remainder of the war.

*"USAF Deployment Planning for Southeast Asia 1966", pp 1 - 2, by USAF Historical Division Liaison Office, AFHRA Call # K168.011-28, IRIS # 01056941."*

### 10-Jan-66

6859

"On 10 January 1966, Headquarters USAF directed that an increased Wild Weasel capability be provided to counter the expanding SAM threat. This included the modification of three additional F-100F aircraft to Wild Weasel I configuration, two of which would be deployed to SEA for the Wild Weasel I force after completion of the crew training at Eglin. The third aircraft was to remain in the CONUS for further crew training. TAWC was tasked to establish a training program to qualify ten F-100F aircrews in the operation of the Wild Weasel equipment and in tactics and techniques. Eight of these aircrews would deploy to SEA as replacement of the Wild Weasel I force and the remaining two would stay in the CONUS as crew training instructors. Each crew consisted of an F-100F pilot and an electronic warfare officer (EWO)."

This Eglin class was designated 65WW 1-2.

"The TAWC plan for this training was published in TAWC Oplan 154, Wild Weasel I Replacement Training, January 1966.

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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"During the period 31 January - 25 February 1966, the Tactical Air Warfare Center trained and qualified ten (10) aircrews in F-100F Wild Weasel equipped aircraft.

"The program was conducted in two phases. The first, a one-week session at North American Aviation, Long Beach, California, gave the aircrews an introduction to the equipment and the mission and allowed them to fly missions in an aircraft simulator equipped with Wild Weasel type equipment. The second phase was ground and flight training at the Tactical Air Warfare Center at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida.

"During the flight training phase, the crews simulated attacks against several radars in the Eglin complex including a mobile radar used in conjunction with several simulated missile sites and Vietnamese villages with varying degrees of camouflage. These flights trained the aircrews in the operation of the Wild Weasel equipment and in tactics.

"Ground training included review of the Wild Weasel program and results, both at Eglin and in Southeast Asia, general and specialized intelligence, escape and evasion, equipment theory and operation, mission planning, and tactics. Approximately 55 hours of ground instruction was given to each crew member during his training at Long Beach and Eglin.

"Each crew departed Eglin after its second week of training, the last two crews ferrying the aircraft to Southeast Asia. A total of eight crews were deployed, two remaining in the CONUS as crew training instructors."

*TAWC Report "Wild Weasel I Replacement Training" dated March 1966, AFHRA Call # K417.0732-20, IRIS # 1008602.*

### 18-Jan-66

5531

An F-100F Wild Weasel I crew attached to the 6234 TFW at Korat flew with a flight of four F-105Ds flown by pilots from the 469 TFS on an Iron Hand mission over Laos. "Spruce" flight took off at 06:20 and refueled from "Ginger 22" at 0710 to meet a TOT of 08:00. The flight lineup was:

#1 - Maj John J. "Jack" Gaudion in 59-1768  
#2 - Capt William Thomas May in 61-0181 three days after flying his 100th mission  
#3 - Capt Gordon E. Lewis in 61-0188  
#4 - Capt Frank R. O'Neill in 62-4315  
#5 - Capt Allen T. Lamb and EWO Capt John E. Donovan in F-100F 58-1226. 3:35 flying time  
F-105D Spare - Capt Anthony J. "Tony" Gangol in 62-4410  
F-100F Airborne Spare - Capt George H. Kerr and EWO Capt Donald J. Madden in 58-1221. 1:30 flying time.

Shortly after this mission, Capt May left Korat. "When the four guys finished their 100, they had no orders so they were told to go and hide in Bangkok until they could cut the orders. They were also told they could pick their next assignment. So, In February of '66 we were at Williams AFB in AZ where Willie was an IP in the T-38 -- which he loved -- said it was like driving a sports car after the 'Thud'. ..." (Betty May, e-mail)

After his combat tour at Korat in F-105s, Willie May's assignments were:

Feb 1966 - 1 Jan 1969 - T-38 Instructor Pilot, Williams AFB, AZ.  
1 Jan 1969 - 15 July 1971 - Chief of Safety, 3525 Pilot Training Wing, Williams AFB.  
30 Jul 1971 - 6 July 73 - Flying Safety Officer, Hq 13 Air Force, Clark AB, Philippines.  
July 73 - Sept 1974 - Remote assignment to Korat and then back to the Philippines.  
27 Sept 1974 - 31 Jul 1977 - Safety Division Chief, 31 TFW, Homestead AFB, FL.

He retired in August 1977 as a Lt Col at Homestead and moved his family to California.

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# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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*William T. May mission card in Nat'l USAF Museum archives & "Test and Evaluation of Threat Radar Homing and Warning Systems 'Wild Weasel I' (Southeast Asia Phase)" pg 80, AFHRA Call # K143.5072-5, IRIS 0470670 & Betty May, e-mail May 31, 2009.*

## 10-Feb-66

6861

Three F-100F Wild Weasel I crews left Eglin AFB for the 6234 TFW at Korat. They were the first set of eight replacement crews for the pilots and EWOs in the original Wild Weasel test team who had arrived at Korat on 25 November 1965. The new crews were:

Capt Abraham B. Brand (WW # 110) and EWO Capt Charles F. "Frank" O'Donnell (WW # 119)  
Capt Anton M. Taylor (WW # 124) and EWO Capt Paul R. Legan (WW # 113)  
1Lt Robert P. Breault (WW # 109) and EWO Capt James A. Peterka (WW # 121)

These three crews had arrived at Eglin on 31 January 1966 and, in their training program, had flown 8 practice missions for 15 hours on the Eglin ranges. They were the first increment of crews from F-100F Wild Weasel Class 65WW 1-2.

*TAWC Report "Wild Weasel I Replacement Training" dated March 1966, pg 9, AFHRA Call # K417.0732-20, IRIS # 1008602.*

## 15-Feb-66

6864

(Approximate date). As their replacements began arriving from training at Eglin, the pilots and EWOs of the F-100F Wild Weasel I test team departed Korat. Most of the EWOs were assigned to Nellis to form the Wild Weasel training program for the crews being assigned to the F-105F Wild Weasel III program. For example, EWO Capt John E. "Jack" Donovan "... came home in February of 1966 to instill some of his combat knowledge in the fledgling Weasel 3 program."

Maj Garry Willard, the Wild Weasel I detachment commander, remained at Korat during the arrivals of the replacement crews. He recalled the crew changeovers took place very quickly, in two or three days. The new crews got one orientation mission and were briefed on procedures. "Guys would say, 'This is where you're bunking.' And of course, they were all interested in talking to the guys that had been there."

*Larry Davis, "Wild Weasel, the SAM Suppression Story", pg 14 & Oral History Interview with BG Garry Willard, 15 Apr 08, AFHRA Call # K239.0512-2655, IRIS # 1154721.*

## 18-Feb-66

6862

Two more F-100F Wild Weasel I crews left Eglin AFB for the 6234 TFW at Korat. They were the second set of eight replacement crews for the pilots and EWOs of the original Wild Weasel test team who had arrived at Korat on 25 November 1965. The crews were:

Maj Clyde Duane Dawson (WW # 193) and EWO Capt Donald E. Clark, Jr. (WW # 108). Capt Clark had been a B-52 EWO from the 69 BS, 42 BW, Loring AFB, ME.

1Lt Daryl P. Olson (WW # 120) and EWO Capt Richard E. Morgan (WW # 118)

These two crews had arrived at Eglin on 7 February 1966 and, in their training program, had flown 7 practice missions for 13 hours on the Eglin ranges.

They were the second increment of crews from F-100F Wild Weasel Class 65WW 1-2.

*TAWC Report "Wild Weasel I Replacement Training" dated March 1966, pg 9, AFHRA Call # K417.0732-20, IRIS # 1008602.*

## 25-Feb-66 28-Feb-66

6863

On 25, 27, and 28 Feb, three more F-100F Wild Weasel I crews left Eglin AFB for Korat's 6234 TFW. They were the third increment of crews from F-100F Wild Weasel Class 65WW 1-2. These crews had all arrived for training at Eglin on 14 February 1966. They were the final set of eight

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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replacement crews for the pilots and EWOs of the original Wild Weasel test team who had arrived at Korat on 25 November 1965. The crews were:

Capt James Marquis (WW # 116) and EWO Capt Marshall Goldberg (WW # 275) departed Eglin 25 Feb.

Capt Glenn L. Farnsworth (WW # 115) and EWO Capt John P. Mojica (WW # 117) departed 27 Feb.

Maj Marion A. Tuttle (WW # 125) and EWO Capt John H. Elmer (WW # 111) departed 28 Feb. Maj Tuttle had come from the 352 TFS, 354 TFW, Myrtle Beach AFB, SC.

The crews Farnsworth/Mojica and Tuttle/Elmer flew replacement Wild Weasel-modified F-100Fs to Korat. The aircraft were 58-1227 and 58-1232.

Two more crews who had arrived at Eglin on 21 February 66 received training but remained at Eglin as Wild Weasel instructors.

However two pilots and one EWO who trained in this class later deployed to Korat and flew combat missions as F-100F Wild Weasel crew members. The two pilots were:

Maj Donald L. "Buns" Fraizer (WW # 116)

Capt Jerry L. Proctor (WW # 122)

The EWO was:

Capt Arthur D. Oken (WW # 262)

*TAWC Report "Wild Weasel I Replacement Training" dated March 1966, pg 9, AFHRA Call # K417.0732-20, IRIS # 1008602 & Larry Davis, "Wild Weasel, the SAM Suppression Story", pg 13.*

### 04-Mar-66

856

"A flight of F-105 strike pilots reported spotting enemy fighters. Also during the day -- busiest in air activity over North Vietnam since strikes resumed there on January 31 -- an Air Force F-105 flight struck a SAM site. It was the first SAM site attacked since strikes resumed. Located about 34 miles west of Hanoi, the site was the closest target to Hanoi of any struck by Air Force pilots since strikes resumed. Pilots said the site was heavily camouflaged. Striking it with rockets, they set off a secondary explosion and fires. Dense, black smoke rose from the flames. No SAMs were fired during the attacks, but intense flak was encountered. One pilot reported flak bursts less than one hundred feet above him as he dived on the site." (Thunderchief Report)

"Striking a SAM site for the first time since December, Air Force F-100F Supersabre and F-105 Thunderchief pilots flew a late-afternoon attack 34 miles west of Hanoi. The site was the closest target to Hanoi of any struck by Air Force pilots since strikes resumed." (7th Air Force)

The F-100F Wild Weasel crew was Capt Allen T. Lamb with EWO Capt Charles F. "Frank" O'Donnell. "... O'Donnell, a follow-on EWO, was ... on his first combat mission.

"Their Thud leader had aborted, so it became a flight of four [three F-105Ds and the F-100F]. Just outside of Hanoi, on a hazy day near the Black River, the Fan Song came up. Lamb homed in on the site and fired his 38 rockets, but they missed the radar van. The Thuds carried a new weapon, a mix of napalm and white phosphorous, but they all missed the van as well. The visibility was down to three miles -- not a good day to be there. As they turned to egress the area, surprisingly, the radar stayed on the air. Lamb turned back, homing again on the signal. As he neared the site at 3,500 feet, he pushed over, tracking the strobe. When he broke out of the haze at about 1,800 feet, there it was, right at twelve o'clock! He put a long 20-mm burst into the radar van, and the signal stopped as the cannon shells ripped through it. This time, the site stayed off the air.

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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"Interestingly, it turned out this site, some 17 miles from Hanoi, was an SA-2 training site, where Russian technicians helped teach. Lamb was subsequently told by 7th Air Force that intelligence indicated they had indeed killed some Russian technicians in the SAM attacks over North Vietnam." ("First In ... Last Out. The Wild Weasels", by Jack Doub, The Intake. Journal of the Super Sabre Society, Spring 2008, Issue Six, pg 29.)

"U.S. Air Force F-4Cs and F-105s chased five MiG-17s to Hanoi during one of the biggest American bombing raids over North Vietnam to date. It was the first sighting of MiGs since the strikes resumed after Tet. A SAM site 34 miles west of Hanoi was wiped out. It was the closest target to Hanoi struck by the USAF." (CHECO)

"No U.S. aircraft were hit during the [MiG] encounter. The MiGs used cannon. Two flights of Phantoms chased the MiGs, but the enemy jets safely reached the Hanoi area before the U.S. pilots could open fire on them.

"The Phantoms were protecting F-105 Thunderchief pilots carrying out dive-bombing attacks on railroad and highway bridges in the vicinity. Pilots reported the late-afternoon weather as scattered clouds.

"Meanwhile, following a highly-successful attack on the strategic Lang Bun railroad bridge (JCS 18.27) about 120 miles northwest of Hanoi, an F-105 flight also encountered MiG-17 jets. Thunderchief pilots were returning from the attack on the bridge and were low on fuel. Two MiG jets were spotted above and behind them and the U.S. pilots began a turn. The MiGs quickly turned and fled toward Hanoi. Neither side fired a shot and the planes never came closer than 5 - 10 miles. It was the first time MiGs have made an appearance since strikes resumed. Last December, MiG pilots made several attempts on unarmed RF-101 Voodoo reconnaissance aircraft.

"Thunderchief and night-flying Phantom pilots cut the Red River railroad bed in 21 places, in addition to damage inflicted on bridges. One F-105 flight leader reported wiping out one-half mile of track at a spot just southeast of the Lang Bun bridge. Six rail cars carrying cross-ties were heavily damaged."

In other strikes, "Air Force pilots continued to bomb highway bridges, roadbeds, and attack river shipping and military storage areas in other parts of the country.

"A rebuilt bridge on Rt. 1A, about 90 miles southeast of Vinh, was heavily damaged. Its south span was dropped. Four other bridges, ranging from just north of the border between the two Vietnams to the northwest mountains near Dein Bien Phu, were wiped out.

"In a strike on a supply storage area about 110 miles northwest of Hanoi, a Phantom flight set off a large, orange secondary explosion indicating a hit on a big ammunition dump.

"Other pilots caught two barges making way around a bend in the Black River about 60 miles southwest of Hanoi. The barges were sunk. Other vehicles struck during the day included four trucks -- three of which were destroyed.

"All told, Air Force pilots flew 20 day missions and seven night missions over North Vietnam ... They sank two barges; destroyed four highway bridges and rail crossings while damaging nine highway bridges and eight rail crossings; destroyed 11 buildings and damaged one; destroyed a ferry landing; cratered a river ford; struck a missile site; damaged six rail cars; cut rails in 21 places and roads in 28 places; strafed a troop staging area; bombed four supply storage areas; destroyed three trucks and damaged one and set off at least two secondary explosions." (Air Force news release, Mar 66 020, Air Force Daily Summary - Communist North Vietnam, 5 Mar 66 in AFHRA

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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file K526.951-1 IRIS 509370.)

*Republic's Thunderchief Worldwide Report Vol. 1 No 8 April 1, 1966 & Seventh Air Force Chronology 1 July 65 - 30 June 1966 CHECO 66-0044.*

## 13-Mar-66

6858

Wild Weasel F-100F 58-1221 crashed when its engine failed during a training flight from Korat. The crew ejected successfully. The aircraft was one of the original four F-100Fs that had arrived at Korat on 25 November 1965.

The crew was Maj Marion J. Tuttle and EWO Capt Donald E. Clark, Jr. from the Wild Weasel I Detachment of the 6234 TFW. "The aircraft crashed in an unpopulated area approximately 30 miles southeast of Ubon AB, Thailand, and was totally destroyed on impact."

"[Copy 12] was number 2 in a flight of two F-100Fs. The first aircraft, Copy 11, was flown by 1Lt Daryl P. Olson (pilot) and Captain John H. Elmer (EWO). The flight was scheduled for a 1300 departure to conduct an ELINT training mission in the local area."

Twenty-eight minutes after takeoff, the flight leveled off at 15,000 feet altitude. Half a minute later Copy 12 experienced compressor stalls. The pilot attempted two unsuccessful airstarts. The crew ejected 33 minutes after takeoff at approximately 2500 feet. Both crewmen survived.

*CNA Loss/Damage Database, USAF Operational loss 82, microfiche frame A09 & USAF Accident/Incident Report 66-3-13, AF Form 711, dated 31 Mar 66.*

## 15-Mar-66

6917

The F-105F Wild Weasel III Rework Team at SMAMA "... reported that it had completed its task and that, in its opinion, the Wild Weasel III system was now properly installed and would do the job for which it was intended.

"... SMAMA returned the F-105F test aircraft to Eglin for further flight tests. The first aircraft had departed on 11 March 1966 and the last one on 18 March 1966. By 22 March 1966, the aircraft had flown eight test flights with good results. TAWC reported that they had performed as good as or better than previous F-100Fs, F-105Ds, and RF-4Cs with Wild Weasel I equipment."

In a 26 May 1966 TWX, the Wild Weasel III test team at Eglin described the improvements they saw during their retesting. "The APR-25V and IR-133A are now performing as designed. The APR-25V provides warning in all three bands throughout 360 degrees around the aircraft and at ranges of radar line of sight up to 9,000 feet when in the main beam of the simulated threat radar.

"Homing accuracy is the same as with Wild Weasel Roman 1. The approximate 10-degree left bias still exists but is constant and with appropriate corrections, station passage can be achieved within plus or minus 75 feet.

"An additional feature incorporated into the Wild Weasel Roman 3 APR-25/26 combination provides for identifying on the APR-25V, the station that is transmitting an 'L' band signal.

"The APR-26 did not perform in a completely satisfactory manner and, in addition, was susceptible to false alarms. ... APR-26s on deploying aircraft were modified to the new specifications.

"The Pointer Roman 3 'Heads-Up' homing system was produced by two different manufacturers and both systems received an initial OT&E at Eglin. The system produced by Applied Technology Incorporated (ATI) proved to be more constant and reliable and was substituted for the American Electronics Laboratory (AEL) system. The ATI system is being retained in aircraft tail nr. 62-4416 for further OT&E through 16 June 66. The ATI system displays the target on the fire control combining glass at a 1 to 1 ratio with ground images and, [when] deployed, will provide the pilot an



## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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extremely accurate and useful aid in acquiring the target visually during the critical 'run-in' phase."

(After supporting Wild Weasel training in the 4520 CCTW at Nellis, F-105F 62-4416 transferred to the 44 TFS at Korat in October 1966. (George AFB Hi-Desert Flyer, 11 Jul 1980.))

The Eglin test team described results of their testing of the tape recorder and the combat documentation camera installed on the five F-105Fs that were deploying to Korat.

"... Initially a single-channel, battery-powered Mohawk Midget tape recorder, Model 400, was tested but proved to be unusable due to excessive tape noise. The aircraft were rewired for a two-channel, aircraft-powered, Stancil-Hoffman Model M9-4117. This system also had some tape noise and the recorders on hand were returned to the manufacturer for a fix, which produced an acceptable system prior to deployment.

"... The KA-71 cameras were not available during this test phase; however, the Fairchild Company provided a KA-60 camera for installation of group-A components and the aircraft have now been modified to accept the KA-71 strike camera. Installation and system checkout will have to be performed in theater."

"... The SEE-SAMs (North American Aviation, Model B) did not perform as expected and is not installed in the deployment aircraft. The NAA Model D, if acceptable, will be installed in-theater. The SEE-SAM equipment, when installed, should provide the following threat information:

"(1) That an 'S' Band SAM installation is on the air in high PRF.

"(2) That the aircraft is within the range-gated launch area (plus or minus 5 degrees of center) of an 'S' band SAM installation.

"(3) That the 'L' Band missile command guidance frequency is radiating in conjunction with the SAM installation performing the tracking."

The Eglin test team also described training given to the Wild Weasel crews.

"...A total of ten aircrews (pilot/EWO) were trained, of which eight will deploy to SEA and two will be retained in the CONUS to meet further test and/or training requirements of the follow-on Wild Weasel Roman 3 force.

"... Approximately 200 total test/training sorties have been flown ... for an average of 16 sorties per deploying aircrew. The training program for aircrews included 31 hours of diversified ground training at North American Aviation and approximately the same amount at Eglin AFB, Fla. The EWOs received an additional four hours of audio training.

"... Tactics training included refinement of those provided Wild Weasel Roman 1 aircrews based on lessons learned in SEA and debriefings and guidance from returning Wild Weasel Roman 1 combat aircrews. The parameters of the search techniques were raised from 4500' through 15,000' and utilization of terrain masking as a proven tactic for homing on the threat radar emphasized. The capabilities of the specialized aircraft in protecting the withdrawal of the attacking aircraft were also included in the program.

"... All five deploying aircraft are modified to deliver the Shrike air-to-ground missile. Each aircrew received three hours of ground training on the Shrike and have flown four sorties each utilizing a captive Shrike for this portion of the checkout. An airborne checklist was prepared and certified for delivery of the Shrike from the F-105 RHAW aircraft.

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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"... The decision to integrate the Wild Weasel Roman 3 aircraft and aircrews into an existing organization in SEA precluded the requirement to deploy a support capability. ... Only two specialized ground support personnel were trained at Eglin for this deployment. These two airmen received 150 hours of OJT on the installed RHAW equipment in addition to factory training."

*"SMAMA Participation in Southeast Asia Build-Up", SMAMA Historical Study No. 61, Sept 67, pp 175 - 177, AFHRA Call # K205.104-61, IRIS # 00916497 & USAF TAWC TWX 262155Z May 66 in PACAF DO Read File 28 - 31 May 66, AFHRA Call #K17.312, IRIS # 1035162.*

**23-Mar-66**

6860

F-100F Wild Weasel I 58-1212 (call sign "Elm") was shot down by 37/57-mm AAA and the crew KIA. The pilot was Maj Clyde Duane Dawson (WW # 193 ) and EWO Capt Donald E. Clark, Jr. (WW # 108 ). They were one of the eight replacement Wild Weasel I crews who had trained at Eglin in February. They had left Eglin for Korat on 18 February 1966 and were then assigned to the Wild Weasel detachment in the 6234 TFW.

Maj Dawson was supposed to replace Maj Garry A. Willard, Jr., the Wild Weasel I detachment commander, who recalled, "His nickname was 'Heavy'. And Heavy on his 2nd or 3rd mission ran into a hill with his backseater, Clark. ... It was in a combat area where he was lost not due to enemy action." (Willard interview)

They were lost in RP-3 North Vietnam at location 18-48N and 105-13E.

This was the third Wild Weasel I F-100F lost and the detachment's second and last combat loss.

Dawson, 35 years old and married, entered the service from Fond Du Lac, WI. His body was recovered.

Clark, 26 years old and also married, entered the service from Lynchburg, VA. His body was recovered.

Both names are engraved on the Vietnam Wall, Panel 06E - Line 41.

*CNA Loss/Damage Database, USAF loss 241, microfiche frame 118 & Oral History Interview with BG Garry Willard, 15 Apr 08, pg 15, AFHRA Call # K239.0512-2655, IRIS # 1154721.*

**23-Mar-66**

1819

Maj. John M. Lowery from the 333 TFS led "Caddy" flight that left Takhli at 14:30 returning over two hours later. Number 2 was Capt. Robert D. Gobble in F-105D 62-4358 flying his 68th combat mission (57 counters). The flight also included Capt Martin H. Mahrt on his 73rd combat mission (62 counters).

Gobble: "We were going to bomb in the Steel Tiger area (of Laos) but were diverted to Route 15 North of Mu Gia (Pass) because (of) some trucks on the road. We got a little flak looking for the trucks. We saw several but before we could set up well "Willow 4" (1Lt. Kenneth Deane Thomas, Jr. from the 469 TFS at Korat) jumped out. We got rid of our bombs and helped to CAP."

Mahrt: "Scheduled for a SL and after we refueled we were diverted by Invert to Mu Gia Pass and the truck convoy. So we got a couple of trucks with bombs then had to RESCAP a guy down from Korat. They also shot (down) an F-100 (Wild Weasel I F-100F 58-1212, Maj. Clyde D. Dawson (pilot), and Capt Donald E. Clark, Jr. (EWO) from Korat, both KIA). Maj. Hill was shot down also (Maj. Rex A. Hill, 357 TFS, rescued). He made it 9 miles across the Mekong and had to eject. Ralph had a VT start to arm with him (Maj. Ralph A. Ritteman). He jettisoned the bombs."

The F-100F was the second combat loss of a Wild Weasel I aircraft that had arrived at Korat on 25

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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November 1965.

*Combat diaries of Capt Robert D. Gobble and Capt Martin H. Mahrt & "Wild Weasel. The SAM Supression Story" by Larry Davis, pg 13.*

## 17-Apr-66

6140

Three F-105Ds and an F-4C in "Bamboo" flight from the 469 TFS, 388 TFW, went hunting for a SAM site with an F-100F Wild Weasel carrying an AGM-45 Shrike missile. This was one of the first times that the F-100F Wild Weasels had carried a Shrike into combat. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Anthony J. "Tony" Gangol flying 62-4409
- #2 - An F-100F flown by Maj Marion A. Tuttle (WW #125) and EWO Capt John H. Elmer (WW #111)
- #3 - Maj Robert M. Krone flying 61-0126 on his 76th mission (99 total missions).
- #4 - Capt Gordon E. Lewis flying 60-0422
- #5 - An F-4C carrying a camera pod piloted by Capt James V. "Jim" Meyers..
- F-105 Spare - 1Lt Nicholas A. Pool in 59-1768

The flight took off from Korat at 07:35 and at 08:05 refueled from Red Anchor 21 at 13,000 feet. It's time-over-target was 08:45. Their primary targets were three SAM sites in RP-1 south of Vinh:

VN-F-75 at 18-27N and 105-42E  
VN-F-76 at 18-22N and 105-51E  
VN-F-77 at 18-18N and 105-38E

The flight encountered thunderstorms, which prevented them from reaching any of the SAM sites. "... Milled around trying to get in. Went to RP-I and hit same target as yesterday [a storage area at 17-14N and 106-41E].

Maj Krone's letter home today highlighted mission counts and arrivals of new pilots in the squadron.

"... The counters have started up again and I have had three in a row so the count is now 76/99. Hopefully by the 28th of April (when and if I go to Australia) I can have around 85 plus or minus 3. We now have seven people in the 90s and Chastain flew 95 today.

"New pilots are coming in fast and we now have seven lieutenants. Another Captain, Mike Steen, came in yesterday from Billings. It's good to see some experienced pilots arriving along with the Lieutenants.

"Chastain [Capt Robert L. Chastain] had a hair-raising flight on the 15th. He was hit by two 37-mm shells. One came completely through the nose into the cockpit and set his maps on fire and the other put a big hole in the tail. He flew it over 300 miles on a 'wing and a prayer' and landed safely. We're going to put him in for the Silver Star for this one.

"Dick Mitchell (421st now) [Capt James R. Mitchell] had a tremendously successful mission today and you will probably hear some publicity on it."

*Combat mission cards of Maj Robert M. Krone in Archives of the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Accession Number AR.2007.032 & Bob Krone letter dated 17 April 66 - Korat.*

## 17-Apr-66

3650

"F-100Fs and F-105s smashed two SAM sites 15 miles south and 17 miles southwest of Hanoi, in what were the closest strikes to the NVN capital since bombing of the north began February 7, 1965."

The lineup consisted of three F-105D pilots from the 421 TFS and one F-100F from the Wild

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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Weasel I detachment at Korat. The crews were:

#1 - Capt James R. Mitchell

#2 - The F-100F Wild Weasel crew of Capt Glenn L. Farnsworth and EWO Capt John P. Mojica.

#3 - Capt Harlan C. Wyman

#4 - Capt Charles Graham Boyd

"On the 17th of April 1966, Jim Mitchell led a Weasel flight in support of F-105Ds that were attacking bridges in the Red River delta northwest of Hanoi. ...

"As the flight crossed the Black River, Jim Mitchell led them down to the deck at high speed and turned the lead over to the Weasel. The EWO had been receiving a variety of radar signals for some time. He directed his pilot to turn east toward the most promising FAN SONG signal -- toward the SAM sites that ringed Hanoi. The game of cat and mouse between the Weasel and the SAM sites began.

"A site would begin to track them with a strong signal and then go off the air as the flight turned and streaked across the plain towards it. Over the UHF radio the calls of the Rolling Thunder strike flights were heard as the Weasel began a sweeping left turn back towards Hanoi after an unsuccessful southeasterly run. Chuck Boyd, as 'tail end charlie' in the flight, attempted to keep sight of the three aircraft in front of him as the F-105Ds weaved on the outside of the Weasel's turn. The in-flight visibility was restricted by thick haze and a few scattered cumulus clouds hung above the low flying hunters. Occasionally Chuck could see the natural clouds joined by the artificial ones created by AAA. At times the murky sky was laced with orange and red of tracer fire. He had flown on a great many missions over North Vietnam and had seen these displays many times before, and had seen them occasionally knock an aircraft down. Although he had seen SAMs in flight, he had never actually seen one being launched.

"The Weasel had just called that he was working an active signal when suddenly he saw a bright burst of light off Chuck Boyd's right wing that quickly expanded into a blossoming orange-brown ball of smoke. From the ball of smoke emerged a SAM headed directly towards him at fantastic speed. He called, 'Missile away,' over the UHF and broke down toward the site as he lit his afterburner. Mitchell reported that he saw the launch and pulled up to attack it from east to west. As Chuck took his F-105D down so low that he thought he must be cutting grass, another missile was fired at him from the same site. Both SAMs passed above him at very high speed and he pulled his aircraft up into a climbing turn to follow Mitchell who was beginning his attack on the site.

"The Wild Weasel and Wyman saw two more missiles fired from a site a few miles to the east and immediately took the second site under attack. Chuck saw Mitchell's 76 rockets strike a broad pattern around the lingering smoke from the launch of the missiles fired at him. The area was enveloped in smoke and fires and he fired his rockets at what he knew must be a dying SAM site. Amidst a hail of flak and tracers, the flight rejoined and headed back to Korat, elated with the knowledge that they had killed two active sites. Post-strike photography by an RF-101 positively confirmed their double kill."

F-100F pilot Capt Farnsworth received the Silver Star for this mission.

In their Air Defense history, the North Vietnamese confirmed the success of this strike. "On 17 April enemy aircraft damaged the Phu Luong Bridge on Route 5. More seriously, when the enemy attacked one of our missile sites at Van Dien, not only did our troops fail to shoot down any enemy aircraft; our units suffered losses in both personnel and equipment." (Vietnamese History of the Air Defense Service, Volume II, Chapter 5, pg 45, translated by Merle Pribbenow.)

*Seventh Air Force Chronology 1 July 65 - 30 June 1966 CHECO 66-0044 & Lt Col Cowan G. Nix, "Wild Weasel I:*

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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*Response to a Challenge", USAF SEA Monograph Series, June 1977 Air War College, pp 70 - 73, AFHRA Call # 168.7041-158, IRIS # 1028276.*

**25-Apr-66 26-Apr-66**

6868

In one of their background papers prepared for the Vice Chief of Staff's Air Force conference scheduled for 25 - 26 April 1966, Hq PACAF addressed their concerns for the Wild Weasel program.

"The major problems affecting Wild Weasel activity to date have been weather, the lack of workable signals, and the inability to visually acquire sites after station passage is indicated electronically, due to camouflaging or inaccuracy of radar homing equipment.

"An average of 65% of all Iron Hand search and destroy (Wild Weasel) missions were cancelled monthly because of weather. 30% of the missions flown were considered ineffective because of the following reasons: Weather prevented homing, missions were recalled or diverted because of weather in primary target area, or signals did not stay on the air long enough to permit homing. However, for the 12 flights where overflights were accomplished, three occupied sites were attacked and heavily damaged. Although visual acquisition was not possible on the other overflights, damage was reported on one, and concurrent photo coverage of location attacked was obtained on another.

"While RHAW allows the search and destroy strike force to operate at altitudes well above the effective range of most AA guns, the Wild Weasel forces have not been taking advantage of this feature. Upon Fan Song detection, the Wild Weasel strike force drops down to minimum altitude to use terrain masking to achieve the element of surprise and to keep the Fan Song signal on the air. This tactic has been successful, but costly. For the relatively few missions where the Wild Weasel strike force encountered flak, they sustained three combat losses and three aircraft received flak damage.

"Wild Weasel I aircraft have been modified to carry the Shrike missile. This will give the Wild Weasel force a better stand-off capability. Wild Weasel III, consisting of eleven F-105Fs, will have added capability in that the signal is married to the optical gun sight and a pipper will point to the radar emission. The first six F-105Fs will deploy to Takhli on 1 May 66. Another five will deploy to Korat in July. At this time, the F-100F Wild Weasel I aircraft will return to CONUS.

"PACAF desires that the Wild Weasel effort continue as a special project to be treated with the same high priority and to continue to receive the same outstanding support from CONUS facilities that have made Wild Weasel I a success. To counter the most urgent problem in SEA, the best equipment, technical support and crew composition available is desirable. 25% of the F-4 fleet and 6 - 8 F-105F aircraft per wing should be Wild Weasel configured."

Capt Abraham Brand, an F-100F Wild Weasel pilot, recalled firing Shrikes after their aircraft were modified at Korat. "I was flying F-100 Weasels at Korat from January to June, 1966 and fired several Shrike missiles. We carried them on the left inboard station mounted on either the GAR-8 or Bulpup pylon, can't remember which. All mods were done at Korat, but I don't know by whom. As I recall, each missile was hand-wired to the pylon. Audio indicating sensing radar was passed to the pilot using the Sidewinder circuitry. The missile antenna movement was made available using the ILS indicator. Aiming was a mathematical nightmare. We had hand-made tables for various heights above the SAM site. As we approached the site, we would dive to center the ILS needles and then note our angle of dive on the attitude indicator. Repeat as necessary until the angle of dive to center the ILS needles was sufficient to tell us we were 15 miles (I think) from the site, using the hand-made tables. Then, we pulled up to 45 degree climb and hosed it off. Objective was to lob the missile so it would come down within the cone of maneuverability over the SAM site. I never saw one impact." (A.B. Brand, e-mail 17 June 2014.)

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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*Hq PACAF background material for Vice Chief of Staff Air Force conference, 25 - 26 Apr 66, pg 12, AFHRA Call # K717.312-6, IRIS # 01065761*

## 22-May-66

965

Shortly after the graduation of the first F-105F Wild Weasel class (66WW III-1) held at Eglin AFB, Florida on 22 May 1966, ten of the 16 class members flew the first five F-105F Wild Weasel aircraft from Eglin to Korat RTAFB, Thailand. These aircraft (63-8262, 63-8286, 63-8302, 63-8273, 63-8330) were assigned as a fifth flight to the 13 TFS, 388 TFW, after the 13 TFS moved on 14 June 1966 to Korat from the 18 TFW at Kadena.

The Wild Weasel crews in Class 66WW III-1 that started at Eglin AFB, Florida, on 13 March 1966 were:

Maj James W. O'Neil (WW #72) with EWO Capt George E. Kennedy (#85).  
Maj William P. Robinson (#73) with EWO Maj Peter Tsouprake (#75)  
Maj Kenneth R. Ryckman (#74) with EWO Capt Clyde A. Hayman (#82)  
Maj Richard D. Westcott (#76) with EWO Capt Herbert L. Friesen ((#81)  
Maj Robert B. Brinckmann (#79) with EWO Capt Vincent A. Scungio (#99)  
Maj Roosevelt T. Hestle (#83) with EWO Capt Charles E. Morgan (#71)  
Capt John E. Hill (#84) with EWO Capt John R. Buick (#80)  
Capt Marion M. Angel (#91) with EWO Capt Robert E. Tondreau (#77).

Mack Angel recalled their training and deployment to Korat. "We were ordered to report to North American Aviation at Long Beach, CA for training on 7 Mar 66. I have a training completion certificate dated 11 Mar 66. Upon completion of training at North American, we were to report to TAWC at Eglin NLT 13 Mar 66. Initial estimates of the length of crew pairing/training and aircraft prep at Eglin were optimistic, so we got extended and extended in order to get the airplanes and systems right.

"As far as I can tell from my Form 5 and flight logs we finally departed Eglin for McClellan, via Nellis, on 22 or 23 May. We left McClellan for Hickam on 25 May. Hickam to Andersen, Guam on 26 May. Andersen to Kadena on 28 May. Kadena to Korat, via Clark and Danang, on 30 May (I can't for the life of me remember why we landed at Danang because we were scheduled to go direct to Korat, but I have photos taken on the flights and they reflect the 'diversion'. Must have been a weather or fuel problem). I remember that when we landed at Korat no one was expecting us. Surprise!! I have 21a's for most of the deployment flights. I flew my first mission on 3 June."

Maj Brinckmann was the detachment commander.

These F-105F Wild Weasel crews flew with and learned from the F-100F Wild Weasel crews who had been at Korat since November 1965. Mack Angel recalled, "... that ... during our in-theatre orientation the F-100 guys taught us the technique of turning into the missile (suspected launch site), 'taking it down' with the maneuvering that followed, and attempting to locate the site visually for a follow-up attack." They also learned to "toss" Shrikes to increase their range. However, their "... combat orientation training was of short duration and all missions were limited to RP-1 due to lousy weather."

The flight crews at Korat had comfortable living conditions compared to conditions at Takhli at the time. Mack Angel described what he found when he got to Korat. "We had new eight-man airconditioned hootches --- four two-man rooms and a community toilet/shower room and a comfortable screened-in porch. The sound of the air conditioner filtered out most flight-line noise so sleeping, even during the day, was not a big problem."

*"Wild Weasel The SAM Suppression Story" by Larry Davis, pg 14 & Class Roster for 66WWIII-1 & Mack Angel (thudwzl@charter.net) e-mail to Weasel Net, 2 Jan 2007 & e-mails 29 Sep 2002 and 8 May 2011.*

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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**26-May-66**

6228

Three F-105Ds in "Elm" flight from the 469 TFS, 388 TFW, flew an Iron Hand mission with an F-100F Wild Weasel. The planes carried AGM-45 Shrike missiles and LAU-3 rocket pods. The flight left Korat at 13:25 and at 14:15 refueled from Red Anchor 60 at 16,000 feet for a TOT of 15:05. The lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Robert M. Krone flying 58-1165 on his 118th mission (93 counters).
- #2 - Maj Marion A. Tuttle the F-100F Wild Weasel pilot flying 58-1226 with EWO ??? (Mission card is too messy to read.)
- #3 - Capt Patrick V. Hughes on TDY from Kadena flying 62-4278
- #4 - Maj Don L. "Rock" Campbell flying 61-0160
- Spare - Capt George A. Ball in 58-1156.

The mission commander flew in "Edsel" flight. "Teal" flight provided EB-66 ECM support. Elm flight wasn't successful. "Went to Ma Son. Nothing there. Weather abort. Campbell JC on tanker and bugger probe -- air abort."

*Maj Robert M. Krone, mission card dated 26 May 66.*

**31-May-66**

6867

The Air Force Fighter Weapons School at Nellis compiled an analysis of USAF AGM-45 Shrike firings during May 1966.

"... Seventh Air Force scheduled 140 Shrike missions in NVN during May with 391 strike sorties (103 Wild Weasel F-100F and 288 F-105) and 293 Shrike missiles. Seventy-five missions were actually flown involving 211 strike sorties (50 F-100F and 161 F-105) and 156 missiles. Of the 75 missions flown, suitable targets for launch were acquired on 22 (target acquisition rate of 29.3%).

"Thirty-three Shrike missiles were launched during May. Thirty-one were single firings and two were fired in ripple. Twenty-seven launches were against Fire Cans, three were against Fan Songs, and three were against EW/GCI type radars. Fifteen were launched into single target environments and the remainder were fired into multiple target environments. Ten impacts were observed by strike pilots but no radar vans were observed. Of the 13 reported hits, nine were based on radar emission stoppage at the expiration of the estimated missile flight time. Four impacted in likely areas and were accompanied by immediate shutdown of signals. ... Only one photo confirmation of a hit was obtained.

"An optimistic evaluation of the data would indicate that eleven Fire Can radars and two Fan Song radars were hit; however, a more realistic appraisal would be more like eight Fire Cans and one Fan Song."

*USAF Fighter Weapons School Combat Analysis Division, Bulletin-5, 14 July 66, pg 5, AFHRA Call # K417.316, IRIS # 00503559.*

**31-May-66**

1750

After six months of combat from Korat RTAFB, Thailand, the 469 TFS documented the consensus of their pilots on the effectiveness of Iron Hand operations and on tactics used on missions in which they participated. The comments were compiled under the guidance of Maj Robert M. Krone.

"These comments also reflect the opinions of Lt Col. Cooper, the Squadron Commander from 15 November 1965 to 24 April 1966." (The 469 TFS arrived at Korat from McConnell AFB, Kansas, on 15 November 1965, and Lt Col Cooper, who arrived with the squadron, was shot down and killed on 24 April 1966 during an attack on the Bac Giang bridge in North Vietnam.)

## IRON HAND OPERATIONS

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## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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"As the Wild Weasel I Detachment of F-100 electronic equipped aircraft was stationed at Korat [on 25 November 1965], the 469th participated in the first Iron Hand missions and continued to participate in them throughout the period. In the beginning of the program, it was felt that the concept of search-and-destroy for the SA-2 missile sites was premature for the equipment capabilities and the weapons available. As the Weasel aircraft had no range estimation capability the searching was haphazard and could not be carefully preplanned. The SA-2 sites were invariably in heavily defended areas and protecting the 'hard' targets. In many areas there was more than one site within range of the Iron Hand flight. This forced the Iron Hand flight to expose itself to the heaviest concentrations of enemy anti-aircraft, automatic weapons, and small arms fire in North Vietnam, in addition to the SAM threat. The use of free fall bombs or unguided rockets by the strike aircraft necessitated visual acquisition of the site before destruction could be expected. The necessary maneuvers to deliver these weapons also required considerable exposure to enemy defenses."

"F-105 pilots felt that the Weasel capability was valuable for the detection and avoidance of enemy radar controlled weapons and for harassment. It was noted that the enemy radar transmissions were curtailed after the commencement of Iron Hand operations. However, it was the consensus of pilots of the 469th Squadron that the early concept of operations should have been the protection of the strike force through detection and avoidance of the SA-2 site rather than search-and-destroy."

"With the addition of the AGM-45A (Shrike) Missile there was no longer the requirement for visual acquisition of the target and the same harassment could be effected without the high degree of risk to the attacking flight. However, the small warhead, the inability of the early Shrike to discriminate and track one radar signal, and lack of an adequate tracking flare and spotting charge were limitations to effective Shrike employment."

"The addition of the APR 25/26 (Vector) system in the F-105 aircraft added a significant capability to the Iron Hand mission as well as providing other strike missions with a warning device for enemy radar controlled weapons and GCI coverage."

### TACTICS

"... The consensus of opinion by the 469th F-105 pilots is that large strike forces consisting of multiple flights striking the same target at close intervals is poor utilization of modern tactical airpower. The movement north of ECM, MIGCAP, SAR, and tanker aircraft invariably alerted the enemy defenses and made each succeeding flight subject to heavier anti-aircraft, automatic weapons, and small arms. There were invariably losses on those missions. The concept of fragging individual flights of four at random times and days, with no support but with the element of surprise, was never attempted on JCS-type missions. The utilization of MIGCAP flights of F-4C aircraft only on JCS missions was another clue to the enemy of an impending large strike force. Our recommendation would be for continual random targeting of MiG-screen flights in Package VI regardless of the day's frag."

"It was the general feeling of pilots in this squadron that there was too little interest or consideration by 2nd AD (7th AF) of opinions from the operational units concerning tactics of the F-105 in North Vietnam. During the seven-month period covered in this report, there were no 'Tactics Seminars' conducted at Korat or Takhli with the representatives from the operational units and higher headquarters freely discussing tactics. Visits by members of the 7th Air Force staff responsible for planning and fragging of F-105 operations in North Vietnam and Laos were extremely rare at Korat."



# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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The first such "Tactics Conference" was held at Korat a year later on 22 May 1967, which became the beginning of the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association, the "River Rats".

*469 TFS Historical Remarks, Nov 65 - May 66, undated, in Air Force Museum Archives.*

## 02-Jun-66

5007

Five Iron Hand flights by the F-100F Wild Weasel Detachment 1 with the 388 TFW at Korat were scheduled for 2 June 1966.

"Bamboo flight with crew Farnsworth/Mojica flew into Package 1; no threat signals observed. (Capt Glenn L. Farnsworth/ Capt John P. Mojica).

"Tulip flight with crew Proctor/Legan flew into Package VI. Intercepted Fan Song from Haiphong area, no threat to strike force therefore no attack was made on this JCS support mission. Six AAA radars noted radiating from Haiphong and Hanoi area and north.

"Cactus flight with crew Fraizer/Goldberg flew into Package VIA. Received two Fan Song signals from Hanoi area, no attack made. Signal not threat to strike force.

"Oak flight with crew Olson/Morgan [Richard E. Morgan] flew into Package 1, picked up Fan Song signal from Vinh airfield, turned to line up for AGM-45 fire. Signal went off the air. Picked up second Fan Song signal from area 30 NM west of Vinh. Turned to fire AGM, signal went off the air.

"Elm flight with crew Tuttle/Oken flew into Package 1, no threat signals observed."

*Wild Weasel Activity Report for 31 May, 1 & 2 Jun 66, TWX 050655Z in PACAF DO Read File 4 - 6 Jun 66 AFHRA Call # K717.312 IRIS # 1035164.*

## 03-Jun-66

6851

The F-105F Wild Weasel crew of Capt Marion M. Angel and EWO Capt Robert E. Tondreau flew their first combat mission since arriving at Korat on 30 May 1966. They were led by an F-100F Wild Weasel crew. "We were #4 in a 5-ship flight: 1/F-100F, 2/F-105D, 1/F-105F and 1/RF-101 for BDA."

*Mack Angel e-mail 8 May 2011.*

## 04-Jun-66

5005

Five Iron Hand flights by the F-100F Wild Weasel Detachment 1 with the 388 TFW at Korat were scheduled for 4 June 1966. The flights included F-105F Wild Weasel crews that would be attached to the 13 TFS when the squadron arrived at Korat from Kadena on 14 June.

"Elm flight with F-100F crew Tuttle/Oken flew into Route Package 1 with Ryckman/Morgan [Charles E. Morgan] (F-105F) and two F-105D acft. One Firecan signal was intercepted by the IR-133A receiver but was too weak to be displayed on the APR-25.

"Brinckmann/Scungio (F-105F) scheduled on Walnut flight air aborted prior to entering target area because of UHF radio failure.

"Cactus flight was flown by Capt Marion M. Angel/Capt Robert E. Tondreau (F-105F) with three F-105D aircraft in Route Package one. It was their second combat mission. Three Firecan signals were received by the IR-133A but were too weak to be displayed on the APR-25.

"Tulip flight flown by Farnsworth/Mojica (F-100F) and three F-105D aircraft intercepted no threat radar signals. (Capt Glenn L. Farnsworth/Capt John P. Mojica)

Robinson/Tsouprake (F-105F) scheduled with Tulip flight ground aborted because of a faulty

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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oxygen regulator. (Maj William P. Robinson/Maj Peter Tsouprake)

"Fir flight (F-100F) scheduled to support B-66/B-57 night buddy bombing in Route Package One was cancelled by higher Hq."

*Wild Weasel Activity Report for 4 Jun 66, TWX 060800Z in PACAF DO Read File 4 - 6 Jun 66 AFHRA Call # K717.312 IRIS # 1035164.*

## 06-Jun-66

6852

The F-105F Wild Weasel crew of Capt Marion M. Angel and EWO Capt Robert E. Tondreau flew their third combat mission since arriving at Korat on 30 May 1966. They were led by an F-100F Wild Weasel crew. "We were #4 in a 5-ship: 1/F-100F, 3/F-105D (one camera bird), 1F/105F."

*Mack Angel e-mail 8 May 2011.*

## 07-Jun-66

5009

Five Wild Weasel flights from the F-100F Wild Weasel detachment and the F-105Fs in the 388 TFW at Korat flew missions on 7 June 1966. The day's Wild Weasel Activity Report listed each mission.

"Fir flight consisted of Proctor/Legan (F-100F) and Maj Richard D. Westcott/Capt Herbert L. Friesen (F-105F) with three F-105D aircraft on a search and destroy mission in Route Package 1. No threat radar signals were intercepted.

"Oak flight consisted of three F-105 aircraft and one F-4C led by Brinckmann/Scungio (F-105F) in support of Buddy Bombing in Route Package 1. Several weak Fire Can signals were intercepted on the IR-133A receiver which were too weak to gate into the heads up display or the APR-25V. Flak was reported in the target area but no associated gun laying radar signals were received while the AAA was firing.

"Cactus flight consisted of Robinson/Tsouprake (F-105F) and Frazier/Goldberg (F-100F) with three F-105D aircraft on an Iron Hand search and destroy mission in Route Package 1. One very weak Fire Can signal was received on the IR-133A receiver only. In entering the target area, The F-100F Weasel observed what appeared to be a GCI [TWX blank] 17-40N and 106-30E. The F-100F Weasel photographed the area with the KA-60 camera, then returned to fire a salvo of 2.75 rockets from both LAU-3 pods at what appeared to be a radar dome. The F-105F Weasel followed with a salvo of 38 rockets on the target. Rocket passes were made at a thirty degree dive angle from different azimuths using manual release from 3000 feet indicated altitude at 450 KCAS. One of the other F-105D aircraft in the flight was carrying two AGM-45 missiles only, while the third F-105D carried two BDA cameras. All of the aircraft carried 20-mm ammunition. Other than 2.75 rockets no ordnance was expended on the target. Because the BDA cameras in the F-105D were malfunctioning, the F-100F Weasel made a final photo pass over the target after which the flight departed the area. Small arms fire was observed coming from a nearby village during the attack, after the initial photo pass, however no battle damage was sustained.

"Walnut flight consisted of Capt Marion M. Angel/Capt Clyde A. Hayman (F-105F) with two F-105D aircraft and one F-4C BDA aircraft performing an Iron Hand search and destroy mission in Route Package 1. It was this crew's 4th combat mission. No threat radar signals were intercepted." (Mack Angel believed Capt Robert E. Tondreau, his regular EWO, flew this mission with him. "As far as I know, and I don't think my memory is that far gone, I never flew with an EWO other than my assigned crew-mate Bob Tondreau. (Mack Angel, e-mails 15 and 21 Oct 2013.))

"Redwood flight was flown by Marquis/Morgan (F-100F) in support of night buddy bombing in Route Package 1 and weak intermittent Fire Can signal was intercepted. Some light AAA and ground fire was observed."

*Wild Weasel Activity Report for 7 Jun 66, TWX 091000Z in PACAF DO Read File 7 - 8 Jun 66 AFHRA Call #*

# F-100F Wild Weasel History

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K717.312 IRIS # 1035165.

**08-Jun-66**

6853

The F-105F Wild Weasel crew of Capt Marion M. Angel and EWO Capt Robert E. Tondreau flew their fifth combat mission since arriving at Korat on 30 May 1966. They were accompanied by an F-100F Wild Weasel crew. "We led a 5-ship: 1/F-105F, 1/F-100F, and 3/F-105D (one camera bird)."

This was the end of their "combat indoctrination" training from the F-100F Wild Weasel crews. "We experienced no significant emitter activity at all on these missions ... seeing flak for the first time and observing how the flight was managed were the biggest benefits gained. Otherwise, our

*Mack Angel e-mail 8 May 2011.*

**30-Jun-66**

5010

The 388 TFW scheduled seven F-100F and F-105F Wild Weasel flights for 30 June 1966. The F-100Fs were from the Wild Weasel I Detachment and the F-105Fs were from the 13 TFS.

Four of the F-100F flights, "Flip", "Rebel", "Thunder", and "Peanuts" "... flew in support of night strikes in Route Package I. No signals were intercepted from threat radars located in Package 1. Thunder intercepted four Fire Can signals and one Fan Song signal from one of the northern packages, but current restrictions do not allow the Weasels to pursue signal intercepts out of the package to which the flight has been assigned."

"Kingpin (F-105F) was cancelled for maintenance non-delivery.

"Zebra (F-105F) flew an Iron Hand mission in Package 6A. Two Fan Song radars were intercepted and attacked with AGM-45-1A missiles. Both attacks were flown using the APR-25(V) because the heads up display was inoperative. During the attack on the first site, the pilot discovered the missile indicator needles to be inoperative. He lined up on steers from the EWO, and fired the AGM-45-1A from 6,000 ft altitude using five degrees of loft when the S TWS HI display was two rings long. The other AGM-45-1A carried by the Weasel was fired at a second Fan Song radar, while the acft was level at 5,000 ft when the APR-25(V) S TWS HI display was two rings long. The pilot of Zebra Two reported that the missile indicator needles in his acft were centered on the Fan Song signal when the Weasel fired. Zebra Two did not fire during the pass, in order to save one AGM-45 against a later threat. Both Fan Song signals remained transmitting after the Shrike missiles had been fired.

"Cutter (F-105F) flew an Iron Hand mission in Package 6A. Five Fan Song signals were intercepted. The aircrew reported that they did not have time to set up a heads up display. The Weasel fired one AGM-45-1A from 7,000 ft, using thirty degrees of loft, when the APR-25(V) strobe from the strongest signal was one and one half rings long. Cutter Two fired at the same signal, from the same altitude, using fifteen degrees of loft. Both missiles were observed to gradually merge towards the same target. As soon as the Shrikes were launched, the Weasel saw three SA-2 missiles fired at one half second intervals from the ground. The pilot stated that the Guideline missiles looked like 'Roman Candles'. The Weasel immediately broke down and hard right, lit AB, and headed for the hills. On the way down the pilot saw a fourth missile guiding in the direction that the flight had been heading before they began evasive maneuvers. The APR-26(V) did not display any L-Band activity or launch warning at any time during the period the flight was in the target area."

*Wild Weasel Activity Report for 30 Jun 66, TWX 040410Z in PACAF DO Read File 2 - 5 Jun 66 AFHRA Call # K717.312 IRIS # 1035171.*

**11-Jul-66**

5027

One day before the the F-100F Wild Weasel I aircraft at Korat were scheduled to return to the

## F-100F Wild Weasel History

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States, Hq 7th Air Force cancelled the redeployment. In a secret message to the 388 TFW, 7 AF directed "cancel F-100 Wild Weasel redeployment planned for 12 July. Details concerning redeployment cancellation to follow." The cancellation was to allow time to consider a plan to move the planes to Udorn. (TWX 111438Z Jul 66)

However, on 12 July, in a secret message to CINCPACAF/DMM, Hq 13 Air Force pointed out that "all manning spaces for support of this weapons system have been deleted. Personnel from other weapons systems have been utilized to support these acft because replacement personnel have not been programmed. Request we be advised of plan to provide continued support for this weapon system." (TWX 120937Z Jul 66)

*7 AF TWX 111438Z Jul 66 and 13 AF TWX 120937Z Jul 66 in AFHRA folder PACAF DO Read File for 11 - 12 July, Call # K717.312, IRIS # 1035172.*

### 30-Jul-66

5037

The F-100F Wild Weasel I team at Korat RTAFB submitted their final weekly activity report. "During the period 26 - 30 July 66, thirty-one Iron Hand missions were scheduled to be flown by the 388 TFW. Twenty four flights were successfully completed. Five flights were cancelled by higher headquarters prior to scheduled take-off. Two flights ground aborted.

"This is the last activity report which will be prepared by the Wild Weasel I Evaluation Team. The Evaluation Team is departing Korat AB on 1 August 1966 for Eglin AFB via Hq PACAF."

F-100F Wild Weasel pilot Capt Glenn L. Farnsworth was one of the members of this team who left Korat.

F-105Fs "... 63-8273 and 63-8295 now have fully operational heads up displays. ... KA-71 cameras are now in place at Korat AB, and are being installed and checked out in the F-105F Wild Weasel aircraft."

*13 TFS Wild Weasel TWX 010845Z Aug 66, Subject: Wild Weasel Activity Report for 26 - 30 July 66, in AFHRA folder PACAF DO Read File for 2 - 3 Aug 66, Call # K717.312, IRIS # 1035181.*

### 02-Nov-79

8238

Wild Weasel pilot Lt Col Anton Mark Taylor flew the F-105 for the last time. Since his first flight in the Thunderchief on 1 Feb 75, he had flown 581.8 hours in the aircraft. Previously he had been an F-100F Wild Weasel pilot.

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