



A Word from Willie

Society of Wild Weasels Newsletter February 2023



CINCWW's Corner

Fellow Weasels,

In the February issue of Word from Willie we have some great updates and interviews for you. We want to thank everyone for their participation in the Zoom call in honor of the 50th Anniversary of Linebackers 1 & 2. Many thanks to our participants and we have set the link to both an audio and a video version in the Virtual Museum. As I read up on the Linebackers and Rolling Thunder to prepare for the call, I found lots of tactics that Weasels used to destroy SAMs and the combined Vietnamese/Soviets/Chinese used against us. We would like to dig a little deeper in that effort and will be hosting another Zoom call to talk primarily F-105 tactics with a follow on to other tactics/countertactics used throughout Weasel history. Lastly, the courage and capability of the Weasels that flew throughout our history continue to inspire me!

We have an interview with Fred Shannon who together with Jim McInerney were Air Force Cross recipients during Vietnam and a great crew. We ask John Boy Walton what it was like to take a squadron he just took command of to war and what he learned and Gary Roberts for his thoughts on the last Weasel mission in Linebacker 2.

Your board has been busy working on the website conversion, and we will soon ask for your review, testing and feedback. We are doing tentative planning for the 2024 reunion and will have a place and time we hope by the next Word from Willie.

We have an active mentor program and will soon advertise that to the Air Force Academy and other Weasel units. If you are interested and would like to participate please go to the mentor section of the Wild Weasel Website and contact us at WildWeaselReports@gmail.com. Also as this school year goes into its last 3 months we are looking for interns that would like to add to their resume. Please let us know if you have a High School rising junior or senior interested in this 6-month program. It will be worth adding to their resume if they are applying for ROTC or an Academy.

Lastly, to close out this update I want to honor Brig Gen Leslie "Toro" Hauck, who was our October interviewee, for his promotion to Brig Gen! Well done and well-earned Toto!

Very Respectfully
Budman Redmond
WW Society CINC
YGBSM
FILO

Fallen Wild Weasels

Robert V. "Bob" Crawford, WW #2511, Weasel Keeper, F-105G, F-4C, F-4G, 11 Sep 2022
Dean R. "Elvis" Piatt, WW #688, EWO, F-4C, 09 Jan 2023
Ralph D. Waddell, Jr., WW #480, Pilot, F-105, 21 Oct 2022
Douglas R. "Doug" Young, WW #788, Pilot, F-105F/G, 21 May 2019

Our Condolences to their families, friends, and brothers in arms. Hand Salute! Rest in Peace!

L.A. Bud

Membership Update

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

James "Jim" Bowling, WW #2862, ECM Repairman, F4C, F4D, F4E
Brandon "Mascot" McBrayer, WW #2863, Pilot, F-16
Karl J. Eschmann, WW #2864, Maintenance Officer, F-105G
Delphin "Haole" Gantt, WW #2865, Pilot, F-16CJ
Garrett "Wedge" Bain, WW #2866, Pilot, F-16CM
David "Crow" Gabler, WW #2867, Pilot, F-16

L.A. Bud

Surviving Family Members

If you know of family members who qualify, have them contact us at:
LABudF4G@gmail.com

L.A. Bud

Financials Dave Brog
\$57,793.55

**Stanry gives the Wild Weasel Society history briefing to the Village Rat Pack
at Quack Bear's invitation!**



Stanry briefing other great Veterans!



Stanry and Quack Bear

*Editor's Note: The Society has an approved **Wild Weasel History** briefing that our members can request, and we will even go over some of the slides on how we brief them if you are not familiar with weasel particular aircraft or such. Let us know either writing the board or through the email WildWeaselReports@gmail.com*

50th Anniversary of Linebackers 1 & 2 Zoom call 18 December

The Zoom call on 18 December in honor of the Wild Weasels who flew in Linebackers 1 & 2 50 years ago was a great success. Hats off to General (ret) Myers, Al Lamb, Paul Metz, Bearly and others that told their stories and made that history come alive. Many thanks to Abu who toasted the Airmen we lost in those campaigns with a brief history of each and closed our ceremony with a toast to Al Lamb and Jack Donovan and the first SAM Kill. We are proud of what all those great Airmen accomplished, and I was fascinated by the tactics that were created. We had over 100 participants and there were some great life lessons. Listening to Paul Metz's audio tapes from the missions was amazing. If you missed it then the full 1 hour and 24 minute video tape is available in the Virtual Museum. One of our last briefers was Jeff Duford who tells the Weasel story to acquisition captains in a professional development course. Focusing on innovation and rapid acquisition are two key points he emphasizes and has been a continuing heritage of the Weasels and we appreciate that our history teaches young Airmen from all career fields.

Karl Eschman (a maintenance officer and participant in these campaigns) whose book *Linebacker: The Untold Story of the Air Raids over Vietnam* gave us the strategic context of both campaigns. I asked him to give us his favorite anecdote from his book about the Weasels and he chose the following one which we are presenting courtesy of Gary Porter WW #1074 who flew in that mission:

“On 28 December, (Linebacker IIK Day 10), I was back up as Condor 01, leading a Hunter Killer flight protecting the chaff forces. The Hanoi Railroad/Highway bridge was to be struck by 8 F-4s with LGBs while the Quinh Loi storage area was struck by 32 A-7s led by 8 Pathfinder F-4s. Rick Silz was flying as my wingman and, strangely, his aircraft was loaded with an AGM-78, something we generally only loaded on the Flight and Element Lead aircraft. My aircraft only had two Shrikes, so I gave Rick the lead of the flight as we left the tanker. It was better to have an AGM-78-loaded aircraft out in front of the flight because you could never tell what the missile was going to do once launched. The AGM-78 had exceptional range and could even be fired at targets to your rear. I remember one day I was flying on LtCol Rock's wing as we egressed from around Hanoi. He still had his “blivet” as we affectionately called them and fired it at a signal some distance off. Ed had apparently not noticed that we were following a flight of F-4s out of the target area. The big missile went streaking up through the F-4 flight and gave them a bit of consternation.

So, Rick got the lead. As we headed for Hanoi we passed over VN017 (editor's note: VN numbers represent SAM sites) and it appeared unoccupied. As we headed east along the northeast side of Hanoi I looked south at VN159 saw what appeared to be equipment in the

revetments. Due north of Hanoi we looked for but couldn't find VN266 so we started a right turn to come back west and hit VN159 and VN014. Both were under scattered cloud cover. I located VN159 and called out a visual but the F-4s said they couldn't see the site, so I rolled in from south to north and fired a Shrike at the site, using it as a marking rocket. The missile went wide to the right but the F-4s were still able to use the smoke trail to locate the SAM site. Condor 03's CBU's came off, but Condor 04's hung and he ended up bringing them home. Condor 03's CBU's produced secondary explosions and fires.

My Shrike had gone wide and at the time I couldn't figure out why. Months later, while serving TDY at 7AF headquarters I located some recce photos taken that day and confirmed not only that empty SA-2 launchers were in some of the firing positions but that there was a Fansong radar sitting about a quarter mile away on the other side of a small canal, right where my Shrike was headed. It appears the Shrike may have been pulled off course by some signal we didn't detect from the Fansong radar. I still have those recce photos. As the flight headed southwest we passed over VN004 and saw it was unoccupied. As we left the Red River delta I took back the lead of the flight and looked for SAM equipment in the Hoa Binh Valley, without success. Also hit that day by other HK teams were VN017 and VN266.

F-105Gs expended 13 Shrikes and 1 AGM-78 against signals that day.[1] The Hunter-Killer F-4s dropped 24 CBU's on VN-159, VN-266 and VN-549. VN-549 had been responsible for downing or damaging at least five B-52s in previous nights raids. Eschmann's book says that the attack on VN549 was accomplished by Condor 01 firing a Shrike at the site when the F-4s couldn't locate it. This seems to be a mixup with my mission, we attacked VN159 and I was Condor 01 that day. After the flight debriefing was complete my number three man, Major Mike Stevens, said to me that he thought what I had done that day -- marking the SAM site with my Shrike -- was "a brave thing." I didn't think so at the time, and still don't. He indicated he was going to put me in for an award based on my actions and eventually I was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Second Oak Leaf Cluster for the action that day.

Later that night it started to become obvious that the North Vietnamese were running out of SAMs; very few launches were reported by the B-52s. A MiG was shot down by the MIGCap F-4s. I had flown five Linebacker II day missions with hardly a reaction on the part of the enemy. I had sat enraptured as the crews from the night missions had spoken of the veritable "4th of July" atmosphere they encountered and realized that this level of activity couldn't go on much longer. If Bob and I were going to see some action we had to act fast. We lobbied the scheduler to let us shift to the night schedule and on 29 December (Linebacker IIL - Day Eleven), I was scheduled to lead Wire Flight. The primary target that night was a SAM Support Facility west of Phuc Yen Airfield, although 18 B-52s were also fraggged against the Lang Dang rail yards to the northeast of Hanoi. The Phuc Yen SAM Support Facility was to be hit from 2320-2326 local time, a 6-minute period that would put three waves of B-52's, 42 bombers in all, over the target. Ten F-111s were also fraggged to hit several SAM sites and airfields to attempt to suppress these threats. Three different attack headings were used; west, southwest and northeast. Bob and I came up with a tactical plan, but when we briefed the rest of the flight they didn't think too highly of it and so the Bears when off to come up with another, better, plan. Somehow I ended up with a force consisting of 5 F-105's and 3 F-4's. We planned to position them in a ring stretching from the southwest of Hanoi to the northeast. My orbit point was over Bac Giang

Airfield and one wave of B-52's ingressed from the east right over top of Bob and me. Once we got to the target area we received several Blue Bandit MiG calls from Red Crown. The MiGs apparently tried to engage both us and the Buffs but were kept busy by the MiGCap flights and never came into our immediate vicinity. At 2320, four SAMs were fired at the B-52s ingressing from the Northwest. All detonated without hits and I and a couple of other Weasels fired Shrikes in the general area of the site since we were not receiving Fansong radar signals.

Wire 03 was positioned over Thud Ridge and did receive a TWS signal so he fired an AGM-78 at the site. At 2322, three SAMs were fired on a southwest heading again without us receiving any signals or, fortunately, producing any hits on the B-52s. At 2325, a third set of three SAMs were fired from the vicinity of Hanoi, again without hits. A total of 23 SAM firings were reported that night but the B-52 bombs obliterated the SAM Storage Facility. The bombs from the last B-52 cell struck at 17 minutes before midnight. We all egressed at bingo without incident. This was the last Linebacker mission of the war. For this mission I was awarded the DFC, First Oak Leaf Cluster. This turned out to be the last mission of the war over the North. While the B-52s were airborne and heading for their targets that night, the order was flashed to all the U.S. bases that Linebacker II was to end at 6:59 A.M., December 30, Hanoi time."



Fansong (SA-2 Radar)



AGM-45 on its way to the target!

Hats off to Gary Porter for Valor in Combat and letting us publish these missions!

Congrats to Brig Gen (Select) “Toro” Hauck, 52nd Wing CC



Brig Gen

(Select) Toro “Let’s be first one in and the last out so that others stay protected. It’s what we do.

That is the Weasel ethos and we are proud of that. Of course, I have the YGBSM and FILO saying in my hip pocket for use “on the fly! I was talking to newcomers this morning and told them to go to our air park. Go look at the POW/MIA memorial that talks about the Wild Weasel mission and the F-4s lost in Vietnam, largely in the ‘70s. Or go look out there at the F-4 and F-105 and read the story of those aircraft and the heroes that flew them—learn of the stories about Airmen and those who have gone before us, and what they did to save other Airmen. If I can impart our heritage, I feel it will go a long way toward building a warrior ethos and team that results in full-up mission capability that will stand the test of time.”

Word from Willie is proud of you Toro and wishes you the best as you go to your next job!

Editor’s Note: At Word from Willie we try hard to bring you interviews of successful wartime Commanders. This is another in those series and for future Squadron Commanders you can do no better than JohnBoy Walton.

Interview with Col (ret) George “JohnBoy” Walton, former wartime Commander of the 561st Black Knights for Desert Shield/Desert Storm

1. You picked up the squadron as the new Commander a few days before they went on a no-notice deployment, what were your objectives for the squadron?

I assumed command some four days after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. I was already aware we would be among the first to deploy to the Middle East to counter his aggression. I knew there was a lot to be done and looking back, I was a bit overwhelmed by the near term. I knew two things up front. I had to trust the experience and capabilities of the Squadron I was to command, and I needed to learn (in measured doses) as much as I could about the Wild Weasel mission, its ordnance and systems as I could. Although I had previously flown the F-4G and knew its mission, both had evolved considerably in the previous three years.

One of the very few people I knew in the Squadron was “MikeBob” Connor, a Weapons Officer who I trusted and respected for his abilities and his integrity. I asked him very early on (probably before I took command of the Squadron) who is the best EWO (Electronic Warfare Officer) we have? Without hesitation he said “Budman” Redmond, another Weapons Officer. Immediately, I crewed myself with Bud. What was to be a short term learning experience for me turned out to be a bit more permanent. Budman and I remained crewed from that point until we returned to George AFB. The best decision I would ever make as Commander of the 561st.

Because I knew so few people in the Squadron, my next order of business was to find out who they were. I trusted MikeBob and Budman to help me with that and learned a great deal from them. My first assumption was the Squadron as a whole knew the mission and were good at their job. They did and they were.

We deployed first from George AFB, California to Seymour-Johnson AFB, North Carolina where we would stage to somewhere in the Middle East. We were in North Carolina for several days, allowing me some time to observe and get to know the guys in the Squadron. Time well spent for me, but I could tell, they were all very eager to get underway.

Our destination in the Middle East changed probably four times in as many days, settling finally on a place called Sheikh Isa on the Island of Bahrain. Information about this location was very limited. In fact, it wasn't until I was in the cockpit ready to start engines for the deployment, that one of our Intelligence people handed me a satellite photo of our destination. He could not tell me anything about it, other than the base was brand new and located on the southern end of the island. I passed on what I knew to the other flight leads, and we departed for a flight that lasted 15.5 hours with 21 in-flight refuelings. This gave "Budman" plenty of time to provide me with some much needed academics on the F-4G systems and ordnance.

When we arrived at Sheikh Isa, we were surprised by an English speaking air traffic controller who cleared us to land, and on the ground, we were greeted by the US Ambassador to Bahrain. We were the first American assets to arrive at Sheikh Isa and about the fourth squadron in the theater at that time.

2. What did the initial situation look like from your eyes?

Initially, everything was about priorities. We needed to "bed down" the airplanes, find quarters for some very tired aircrews, and then concern ourselves with preparing ourselves and our equipment to be combat ready. Quarters and food were a priority and our host, the Bahraini Air Force, did all they could to provide initial food and lodging.

Next, our combat readiness as a Squadron was essential. All of our aircraft were armed, and had enough fuel to fly a brief but effective mission if necessary, but I worried less about that, than I did about when we could expect the remainder of our support personnel to arrive. Within 48 hours, at least some of our support began to arrive at the base with a logistics officer who had a brief case full of cash. With the cash, he immediately went into action to arrange for refueling, quarters, and food for our people. Our initial objective was to get reconstituted as quickly as we could to be ready for our own defense and ultimately for the defense of Saudi Arabia.

With the arrival of maintenance and logistic support, and weeks of constructing facilities, we were able to house and sustain our group. At the same time, it was important that we shift our operation to look for training opportunities as soon as we were able. Negotiating for airspace to operate and train was more problematic than I could have imagined. We incrementally expanded those opportunities. I was both impressed and grateful for the ability of our Squadron to adapt to these circumstances. The entire Squadron was impressively innovative and thorough in its approach to training. It took time to coordinate and expand airspace that we could use, but eventually, Desert Shield had arrived, and we were both equipped and well trained to perform our mission.

3. You sent your Weapons Chief to a planning conference, but you had him take some plans to show General Henry the Wild Weasel focus, can you expand on that?

Early in Desert Shield, all of the Squadron Commanders in Theater were called to Riyadh, in Saudi Arabia for an initial look at the plan that became known as Desert Storm. This was a macro look for us to see the plan objectives and to get the ball rolling on flows and coordination. The real planning for the Wild Weasels, the nuts and bolts, would happen a few weeks later with Brigadier General Larry Henry (the architect of the Electronic Combat piece of Desert Storm).

We received a copy of the Fragmentary Order in late September 1990, and I asked our flight commanders to select a limited number of our best planners who could put together the details for implementing our part of the Frag and keep that information secure, at least for the time being. These planners became known as the “Secret Squirrels”. I asked our Squadron Weapons Chief, Budman who was also in charge of the “Squirrels”, to go to Riyadh with our execution plan to present to BG Henry. BG Henry was well respected within the Electronic Combat world with extensive combat experience in Viet Nam. He was absolutely the right man for the job. With approval from our acting Wing Commander Col “Tip” Osterthaler, Budman presented our plan to BG Henry. Our plan was approved and this gave us the green light to focus our training for execution based on that plan.

4. Once you saw the DESERT STORM plan how did that affect your training and how you organized?

As I said previously, once BG Henry had seen and approved what we saw as our role in Desert Storm, we shifted our focus to accomplish that goal. I have always been a proponent of basic skills. Initially, we made sure that all of our crews were proficient in basic fighter maneuvers. We also knew that missions to Baghdad would be long and require refueling on ingress and egress. As tankers became available, we scheduled refueling missions to be incorporated into our missions along the Kuwait border where we would monitor the electronic order of battle of the Iraqi forces. Training missions became more and more complex as it became probable that Saddam was not going to withdraw from Kuwait. By the time President Bush issued his final ultimatum establishing a deadline (January 16, 1991), I was very confident about our preparations, our training, and our leadership. We had created eight four-ship crews that operated together as a team. I wanted to make sure that, when the shooting started, every crew member in each of the eight four ships, knew what to expect of the other.

5. How much did the plan deviate from what was originally thought?

The plan did not change a great deal from the one I was originally presented with in late September. As additional assets arrived, adjustments were made to accommodate those new capabilities. But the overall plan remained firm. The deception, the avenues of attack, the targeting for all involved in Desert Storm was an absolute stroke of genius on the part of the planners. Colonel John Warden and the plan he and his staff assembled in the Pentagon should be commended. Also, to the staff in Riyadh, from Lt Gen Horner on down, who allowed all of

us to do our job as we had been trained, without interference or micro-management, I am grateful beyond words.

We executed the first 72 hours of Desert Storm with only minor exceptions and with outstanding success. One of the surprises for me personally was that I thought we had plenty of aircrews and would run out of airplanes due to mechanical breaks. The reverse happened. Our maintainers had an exceptional Operational Readiness rate for our fleet. (In excess of 90%). Airplanes would land, hotpit refuel, park and then loaded with ordnance, ready for the next crew to fly. I found that as fast as our maintainers were turning the aircraft, it was our aircrews, who became fatigued trying to maintain the pace. After more than 30 years, I am still amazed and grateful for the finest maintenance team I have ever had the opportunity to serve with.

6. What did we miss?

Casualties were a concern for me, naturally. As a Commander, that responsibility was always at the top of my thinking. I was presented with computer models at the early planning meeting in Riyadh in September that estimated I would lose at least three airplanes and six crewmembers on our first wave in Desert Storm. My goal from the beginning was to bring everyone home. Being presented with this information, I went back to Sheikh Isa, and wrote six “generic” condolence letters to families. I tried to write them as though I were writing to my own. I kept those letters locked in my desk from that point all the way through Desert Shield and Desert Storm. When George Bush said the fighting has ended, the war is over... I went straight to that desk, removed all six letters and had a small bonfire out behind my building. Three weeks later, we ALL returned home.

Word from Willie is proud to recognize JohnBoy for his leadership under fire!



Interview with Maj (Ret) Fred Shannon

Editor's note: Fred Shannon received the Air Force Cross, 3 Silver Stars, 5 Distinguished Flying Crosses and 13 Air Medals while crewed with Maj Gen (ret) McInerney who sadly passed away on 14 October 2022. The Word from Willie staff wanted to recognize this great crew who were instrumental in developing some of the great tactics that the F-105 Weasels used to save lives and protect other aircraft. Fred's story is one of courage and tactical innovation and we are proud to share it with you! In the list of the 50 most highly decorated Vietnam veterans from all branches of the armed services list Lt. Col. James E. McInerney as #43 & Capt. Fred Shannon as # 44. We as Weasels stand on the shoulders of giants and that legacy is as much a part of our ethos as YGBSM and FILO. I toasted Jim and Fred as I worked on this article with a few libations, and I will do it again when it is published. Our WfW nickel on the grass!



Jim McInerney on the left and Fred Shannon on the right

(1) Tell us a little bit about your early experiences in the Weasel?

After volunteering for the Wild Weasel program, our group got to Nellis with 6 pilots and 6 EWOs, to form aircraft teams and familiarize ourselves with Weasel tactics. We met together during ground school and after hours at the O-Club to get a feel of how we would work together. The first couple of pilots I homed in on were a Lieutenant Colonel from Bitburg, who I thought should be relatively safe and conservative driver and the other was a hot shot captain IP from ADC. This was Captain Glenn Griffith, whose most recent experience was in F-106's. The third day I started concentrating on the lieutenant colonel from Bitburg. The best decision I ever made was taking advantage of the

opportunity to team up with a superior individual named Jim McInerney. After we became partners everything for the next six months was pure teamwork under the excellent guidance of Lieutenant Colonel Jim McInerney. He helped temper a sometimes over eager Bear. However, until the day he died he thought he selected me to fly with him. If I did not influence his decision, I wasted a gallon of martinis at the Officer's Club over the next two weeks. I selected Jim McInerney to ask me to go fly with him. He was the one who proposed, "Fred how would you like fly with me and go kill SAMs, and I will keep you alive?" I took him at his word.

(2) Your time together in North Vietnam was intense, can you share it with us?

Jim and I flew together for 75 combat missions over North Vietnam, with approximately 56 in RP-5 and RP-6. We never lost an aircraft on any mission where we supported bomber flights. One of the assignments that I took on in the 6 months I was at KORAT was to develop and maintain a photo library that contained all available photos of all the currently photo-reported occupied SAM sites in North Vietnam. On preflight briefings I briefed the Weasel flight if there were any SAM sites in the general area that we might attack. Lieutenant Colonel Mcinerney and I found that if you got close enough to any threat area in North Vietnam you could detect 23MM cannon fire. If it was a SAM site it was fair game.

Once we settled in, were cleared to lead in RP-5 and RP-6, and Lieutenant Colonel Jim McInerney became squadron commander, we decided that trolling for SAMs was not the best use of the available Weasel force, even if you could sucker a SAM into firing a missile at you occasionally. Lieutenant Colonel McInerney decided that the available force should be used primarily in support of the bomber force.

The following is the general pattern that Jim and I used on bomber support missions and, as Squadron Commander this was also Jim's Squadron policy. We would go into the target area about 10 minutes ahead of the strike force to survey the situation to evaluate the threat. If time and situation permitted, we tried to decrease the threat. We would then return to escort the bomber flight into the target area. After the bomber formation left the target area and if we had enough fuel, we stayed in the area to see if we could find a SAM site to harass. If there were any photo occupied SAM sites near the bomber target area, we went after them. All members of the Weasel flights would have been briefed on them and given photos of the sites. "General Jeb Stuart wagon hunting" was only permitted after the bomber flights had left the area or had aborted. The primary mission of the Weasels was to protect the bomber crews and "wagon hunting" was only "extracurricular" activity.

Probably the most significant mission for me was the mission when, by all odds, we should have been killed. It was about our 4th or 5th mission after arriving at KORAT. Jim and I were in the lead for the first time since arriving at KORAT. Major H. K. White and

Fred J. Bell were the second element lead and were shepherding us through our first RP-5 lead. At about Yen Bay the bomber flight aborted because of weather. Since we had a lot of gas and a full complement of bombs Lieutenant Colonel McInerney decided, with my eager consent, to start down the Red River to see if we could engage a SAM site. It was partially undercast as we got close to the flat area west of Hanoi. Three SAM radars started painting us intermittently from three directions. We started playing with the three signals trying to get a Shrike launch on one of them. Suddenly the LAUNCH light came on and two missiles came up through the clouds, one at 3 o'clock and apparently one at 6 o'clock. I could see the one at 3 o'clock and was calling it out to Jim when there was an explosion directly behind the aircraft. A fire ball completely engulfed our plane. After what seemed like an eternity, probably about 10 seconds, H. K. said, "Hot Rod Lead, Hot Rod Lead are you still in the air?" We were just fine and when we landed we found about a half dozen pellets in one wing. Apparently, what happened was that the radar fuse malfunctioned, or they were using ground control detonation. The missile went off outside of its effective kill zone, and the frag pattern went all around our aircraft. The second missile passed in front of us and exploded some miles past the formation. It passed so close that if it had had "Fred and Jim" painted on the nose, we could have read it.

Jim and I got back to KORAT, regrouped and never went trolling for SAMs in undercast conditions again. We didn't get any awards for that flight. They didn't give out awards for stupidity. I think that mission circumstance was in play on 11 August 1967. The US had been in the Vietnam War for about 4 or 5 years, depending on who is keeping score. All that time there was a 30-mile circle around Hanoi and Haiphong which was off-limits. A mission inside that circle would be significant. On 11 Aug. there was a scramble in ops planning to jockey for positions on the mission to bomb the Paul Doumer Bridge, which was inside the 30-mile limit. This mission could be a significant mission and one that the Weasels could play a major role. I believe that mission importance was a factor on who lead the various formations. On the other hand, I could be wrong, and all the wing commanders were the best fighter pilots available that day to lead this mission.

That day's task force consisted of:

- A. 24 ship flight of F-105Ds from TAKHLI led by Wing commander Colonel Robert White.
- B. 8 ship flight of F-4Cs, MIG CAP from UBON Led by Wing commander Colonel Robin Olds.
- C. 24 ship flight F-105Ds from KORAT led by 469th TFS commander Lieutenant Colonel Harry Schurr. Probably the reason the wing commander from KORAT did not lead the flight was because Colonel Chairsell had been selected for BG and 7th Air Force did not want their generals flying over North Vietnam

D. KORAT Weasel flight of 4 F-105s (2 Fs and 2 Ds) led by Lieutenant Colonel Jim McInerney 13th TFS commander and Captain Fred Shannon, Jim's Bear.

There were 5 Air Force Crosses awarded on that mission and they were all awarded to the leaders of the formations. Lieutenant Colonel McInerney's squadron policy was that the Weasel Team was a unit and whatever recognition one received went to both. In my 75 missions Jim and I received identical awards.

The Wild Weasel flight's approximate sequence of events in the target area was as follows. We went into the target area about 10 minutes ahead of the bomber flight and I noted to Jim that I had never seen so many SAM radars on the air at one time. There were 6 "three ringer-full vector scope" radars tracking our flight (I will comment on my theory on why so many later). If given a choice you would never take a Weasel flight into a threat area where 6 SAM radars were tracking your flight. We, however, did not have a choice. As mentioned earlier, we were there to protect the bombers, and the bombers were going in. Therefore, the Weasel flight must go in. Jim and I discussed the situation and decided to home in and dive on one of the six strobes for a straight-in Shrike launch. When we saw what appeared to be a SAM Radar van, Jim may have switched to guns and strafed the site. This action appeared to cause the rest of the SAM radars to switch from continuous transmission to sporadic, on-off transmission. We proceeded back up Thud Ridge and escorted the KORAT bombers into the bridge. I believe there were 14 missiles "reported" launched that day (there were no hits). After the bomber flight left the area, the Weasel flight headed toward a SAM site at the end of Kep Airfield runway. I recall that this site was photo-occupied most of the time Jim and I were at KORAT. We proceeded to bomb the site. When we came off the target Jim said, "Give me a heading to get us out of here". I had no idea where we were. I said, "Turn to a heading of 260°", which was the shortest route to the tankers. The other option was to turn around back across Hanoi and follow the bombers to Thud Ridge. I thought those folks in Hanoi might be pissed at us by then. We made it across the flat "high threat area" southwest of Hanoi with no interference from the ground.

Now for the 6 SAM radars in and around Hanoi. Jim and I had been in the Hanoi area about 40 to 50 times and we had not detected more than 1 SAM radar inside the 30-mile ring around Hanoi and that site was the one at the end of Kep runway. We had not received any pre-mission photo of occupied site updates for that area. Our flight of 4 aircraft was painted by 6 SAM radars for more than 5 minutes with no missiles fired!!! My theory is that there was no way and no logical reason that there should have been an additional 5 SAM sites moved in and around Hanoi on the day before this mission unless there were some form of an alert. I think that the Vietnamese were somehow alerted to the attack and quickly drove in with 5 SAM radar vans with *limited missiles* and hastily set up the operation that fired the reported missiles, resulting in no hits. To get better information on that you will probably need to talk to someone in Vietnam.

It appears to me that for some reason the North Vietnamese tried to strengthen the Hanoi area defenses with limited resources, making it look stronger than the results indicated that it was. If they really had six active, fully operational SAM sites, these sites did a poor job of defending the

bridge. Also, if North Vietnam really had six active SAM sites around Hanoi, you would think that our intelligence service would have given us some warning when the frag was sent out on the 11th of August.

(3) Reading the history of how you and Lt Col McInerney checked out as Ryan's Raiders is fascinating, can you elaborate?

Lieutenant Colonel McInerney and Captain Shannon flew the first Pilot/EWO Ryan's Raiders mission. The initial Ryan's Raiders aircraft team consisted of two F-105D pilots, one in front and one in back to handle the bomb navigation system. Lieutenant Colonel Jim McInerney and I were instrumental in convincing General Momyer that the EWO could handle the bomb navigation system in the back seat and free up one of the pilots to fly the F-105Ds. Since we told General Momyer that we could handle it, Jim thought we should prove it. We were awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission. While I don't remember the exact details of the threat, I do remember that we hit a hornet's nest with radar-controlled guns and missiles in the target area. I kept busy by navigating to maintain our wings between the 10,000-foot-high rocks on either side of the aircraft, and our anti-SAM systems probing the anti-social activity all around us. Like I said before, sometimes heroism is just keeping calm and trying to stay alive while doing the job at hand.

(4) What have we missed that you would like our readers to know?

I would like to add one more mission (our 76th mission). On 13 Sept 1967 Jim & I were scheduled to fly a mission to support the B-52's bombing in RT-1 in North Vietnam. This was an 8 hr night mission with two night refueling & 8hr of boring holes in the sky over RT-1. We departed KORAT at about 2,000 ft and climbed to 25,000 ft and had contacted the tanker for our first refueling when we had an engine fire. Jim shut down the engine and I grabbed my flashlight and check list and started reading the engine fire checklist to Jim (which I am sure he didn't need). Jim restarted the engine and the fire started again. I started calling out the altitude 20,000, 15,000, 10,000 (as you know the F-105 glided like a streamlined brick). Jim restarted the engine a couple more times with a fire each time. At about 4,000ft Jim calmly said "Well Fredrick my boy I think we are going to have to leave—" With that I was out. All this was happening at night in the middle of a thunderstorm. After I ejected, separated from the ejection seat & my chute opened it was pitch dark and I could not see a thing, not even the ground for a proper landing. When I landed, I hit hard and had severe pain & significant swelling in my left hip. I contacted the tanker & told them that I thought my left hip was broken. They contacted me and reported that a rescue chopper was on the way. About 30 minutes later I reported that I could see flashlights moving around in the area. The tanker replied, "Don't worry you are in friendly territory". I replied, "you know they are friendly & I know they are friendly, but do they know they are friendly". I stayed still and made no attempt to contact the "friendly's". About 30 minutes later the tanker stated that they had to leave the area and for me to contact "Looking Glass". I established contact with Looking Glass and after about an hour on the ground Looking Glass reported that the rescue chopper had an engine fire and aborted but another was on the

way. After being on the ground for about one and one-half hour I contacted the second chopper, and they stated that they had Jim's emergency beacon but could not establish voice communication with him. They reported that they would proceed to rescue Jim. When they got to Jim, he was OK but hanging in a tree and could not shut off his beacon. After being on the ground for about 3 hours I was picked up by a third chopper and the broken hip ended my Vietnam experience. I will never know if the "Friendlies were friendly".

Word from Willie salutes both Jim McInerney and Fred Shannon for courage, skill and innovation!

Wild Weasel History Update

The official opening of the River Rats Museum will be from 11-15 Oct 2023 in Bowling Green Kentucky. Frank Alfter (our Assistant Historian and a big thanks to him) is our leader for donations for the Wild Weasel Section. Special thanks to Bob Pettit WW # 1073 for his many donations. Here are some of the things that have been donated:



As you can see we want to see anything that you think is worthwhile please let us know!
Museum Link--[MUSEUM - Red River Valley Fighter Pilot Association \(river-rats.org\)](http://river-rats.org)

Please let Bearly or Frank review your donations prior.

Bearly Larry
Frank Alfter
SoWW Historians

Medical Update:

The VA Secretary McDonough directed that the VBA would accept Veteran claims and sort them for processing before the January 1 2023 mandated by the legislation.

However, the VBA is now rendering PACT Act claims decisions. An update below follows:

(1) What the PACT Act specifically as qualifying for VA medical care and disability compensation:

Testicular cancer, Penile cancer, Prostate cancer, Cervical cancer, Ovarian cancer, Uterine cancer, Vaginal cancer, Vulvar cancer, and Breast cancer.

(2) The following cancers now qualify for VA medical care and disability rating when your medical records, service locations, dates of service, and exposure details support a disability rating award and compensation:

Brain cancer, Gastrointestinal cancer (of any type), Glioblastoma, Head cancer (of any type), Kidney cancer, Lymphatic cancer (of any type), Lymphoma (of any type), Melanoma, Neck cancer (of any type), Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer (of any type), and Respiratory cancer (breathing, of any type).

(3) These illnesses now qualify for VA medical care and disability rating when your medical records, service locations, dates of service, and exposure details support a disability rating award and compensation:

Asthma (diagnosed after service dates), Chronic bronchitis, COPD, Chronic Rhinitis, Chronic Sinusitis, Bronchiolitis (constrictive or obliterative), Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease, Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, Sarcoidosis.

Quack Bear wanted everyone to know every Vietnam era vet is advised now to submit a PACT Act claim even though you may not be currently suffering from one of the eligible diseases listed above.

“I quote from Aztec, the River Rats AMIC Director: **If you wait until diagnosed with a cancer and/or disease listed, your time from diagnosis to death may be so time-compressed and fraught with treatment interventions, that one loses track of filing because of the imminence of the cancer's progression. SO: file now as a SEA Vet. Your service in-theater while on active duty will fully qualify you for Service Connection but at a 0% disability rating.** Good advice. If you do (God forbid) ever come down with one of those eligible diseases, you will already have established service connection.”

[The PACT Act And Your VA Benefits | Veterans Affairs](#)

Quack Bear



Keep your coin handy! ROE is in effect!
The Search for Weasel Aircraft

We have had a good response on our search for Wild Weasel Aircraft. The following are some of the places you can find them:

- (1) F-105 #8274 which is in the process of being brought up to museum artifact quality (thanks to WW #457 Big Don Carson for finding this). This is at the Glenn Martin Museum in Maryland.

[Home | The Glenn L Martin Maryland Aviation Museum \(mdairmuseum.org\)](http://mdairmuseum.org)



(2) F-4G #263 at the National Museum of the Air Force



(3) F-105G #320 at the National Museum of the Air Force



(4) F-105G #278 at the VA facility at the former Mather AFB in Sacramento, CA



George Connolly and Bearly Lemieux's names were on this during Ubon operations!

We continue this search—let us know if you find another Weasel Aircraft

Wild Weasel Store

We have a store for Wild Weasel Products—we are using the same organization that the River Rats use. If you go on our website, you will see the beginnings of a store with some luggage tags and patches. We will be adding t shirts in the next two months (so far Generic Society of Wild Weasels with our coin log on the back, F-4G and F-16 Swamp Foxes). Over the next two months we will add hats and other things. If you are an F-100, F-105, F-4C Aircrew or an F-16CJ Pilot or F-35 Pilot, then you can work with us to design your Wild Weasel T Shirt or other things. The store is ready to work with you for the Wild Weasel apparel you want!

Upcoming Events:

River Rats Scholarship open now

[Scholarship - Red River Valley Fighter Pilot Association \(river-rats.org\)](http://river-rats.org)

River Rats Museum Grand Opening 11-15 Oct 2023, Bowling Green Ky which will be in conjunction with the River Rats Reunion

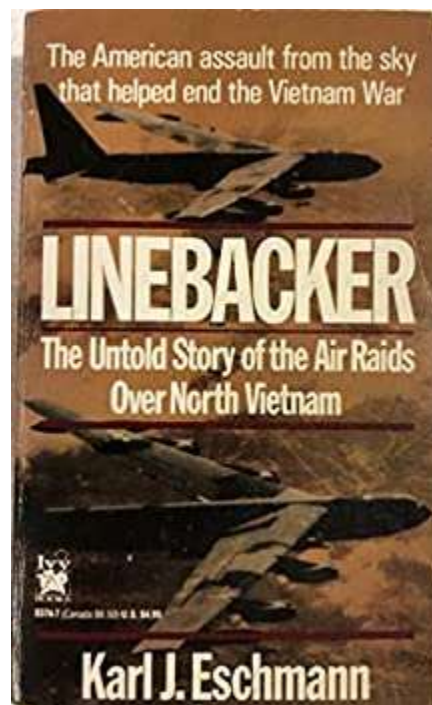
Next Issue:

- (1) Interview with Lt Gen (Ret) Sam Angellela from new F-16 Weasel Driver to 3-time WG/CC
- (2) Interview with Lt Gen (Ret) Denny Larson on his F-4G and F-16CJ Weasel Experience
- (3) Tactics, tactics and countertactics, a discussion with crews from all Weasel aircraft on what they saw and how they countered the enemy—my money is on the Weasels.
- (4) A section on models of the Wild Weasels, MSgt (Ret) Clint Beal has built some fantastic models and we want to see yours and show them. We will add a section in the Virtual Museum. Please forward to WildWeaselReports any pictures of your models you want published.
- (5) An update on M & M and KJ who start pilot training. Both are excelling in their transition to pilot training. M & M has 55 F-16CJ hours and KJ has finished all the prereqs for pilot training.



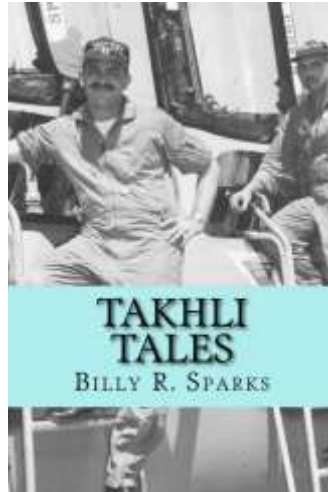
C. Beal's good looking F-16 model loaded for War!

Links of Interest: (in this section we will periodically scan links for reading)



Col (Ret) Karl Eschmann WW # 2864 was a maintenance officer during Linebackers I & II and his history above is a good read for all Weasels.

Editor's Note: I just finished reading Takhli tales by Billy Sparks. I really enjoyed reading about how they learned to assess tactics of the Vietnamese. I am a kindle unlimited member so the book was part of the library for this capability.



[World War I ace, hero Luke AFB namesake > Luke Air Force Base > Article Display](#)

In honor of the Chinese balloon shootdown, we go back to the original “Arizona Balloon Buster” Medal of Honor Winner Frank Luke

[Making Sure Vets Get PACT Act Benefits Is New House Veterans Affairs Chairman's Top Priority | Military.com](#)

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