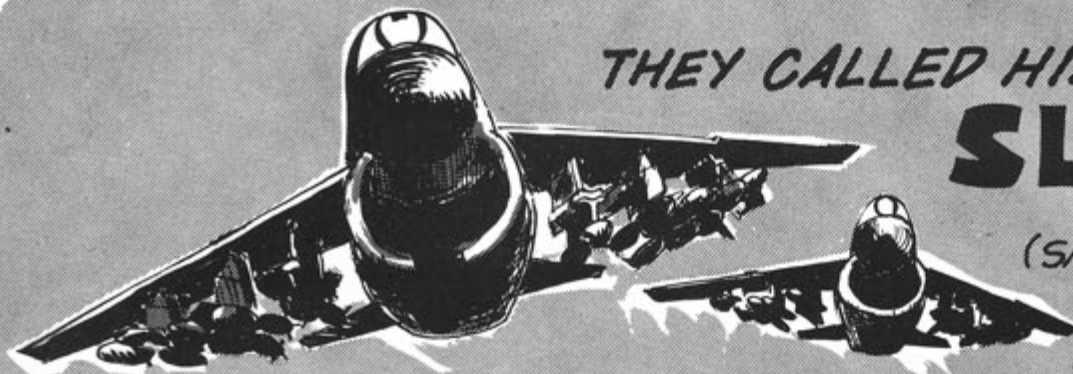


THE ADVENTURES OF **SUPERSLUF** IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



true accounts
from the men
who fly and work with
the United States
Air Force A-7D ...



THEY CALLED HIM **SLUF**

(SHORT LITTLE
UGLY FELLER..
OR SOMETHING
LIKE THAT)

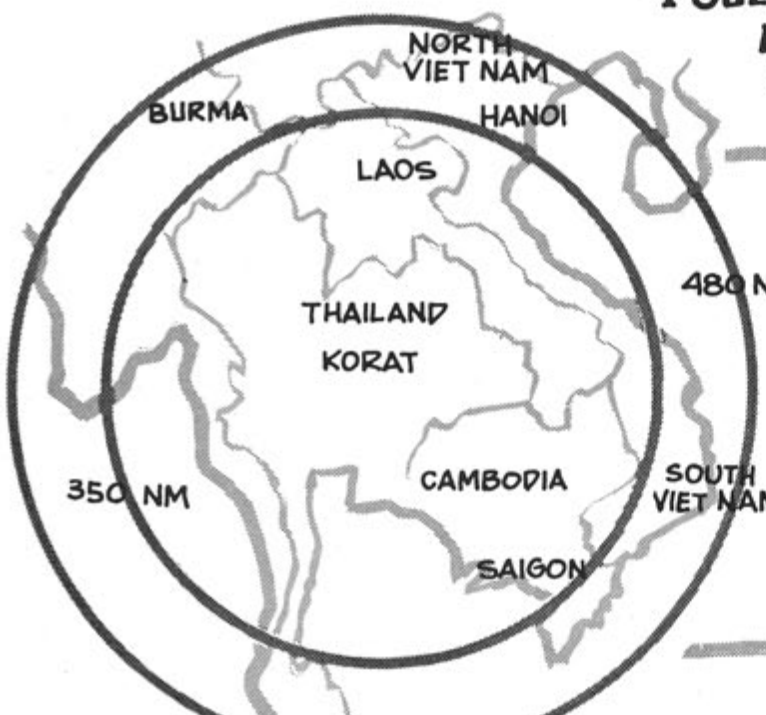
IN COMBAT HE BECAME

SUPERSLUF

THE 354th TACTICAL FIGHTER WING WAS THE FIRST TO TRY OUT THE A-7D IN COMBAT, THEY WENT TO KORAT TO FLY INTERDICTION AND CLOSE AIR SUPPORT. THAT THEY DID, AND GUNSHIP NIGHT ESCORT, SEARCH AND RESCUE, HELICOPTER ESCORT AND LINEBACKER II DAYTIME STRIKE MISSIONS IN AND AROUND HANOI. THEY DID A LOT OF THINGS THAT NO TACTICAL FIGHTERS HAVE DONE BEFORE AND SOME THINGS OTHER FIGHTERS HAVEN'T DONE AS WELL.

NO ONE IN THE 354th BAD MOUTHS THE A-7D, NOT THE PILOTS, WHO CAME FROM F-100, F-105 AND F-4 UNITS. NOT GROUND CREWS OR SUPPORT PEOPLE.

CAPT. DON CORNELL OF THE 354th ONCE SAID,
"I GUESS ABOUT THE ONLY THING
I'D DO WOULD BE TO MAKE
IT A LITTLE PRETTIER!"



- RADIUS OF ACTION**
- COMBAT RADIUS - 480 NMI
 - TWO 300-GAL. EXT. TANKS
 - 8 MK-82 BOMBS
 - 1,000 ROUNDS OF AMMO
 - 20 MIN. LOITER AT ALTITUDE
 - 10 MIN. ORDNANCE DELIVERY LOW ALTITUDE
 - 1,500 LBS. FUEL RESERVE - KORAT
- TYPICAL MISSION - 350 NMI**
- SAME FUEL AND ORDNANCE
 - 10 MIN. LOITER/ORDNANCE DELIVERED LOW ALTITUDE
 - 2,300 LBS. FUEL KORAT

26 October 1972

MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM ADVISORY TEAM 36 PLEIKU PROVINCE



LETTER TO: COMMANDING OFFICER
354th TACTICAL FIGHTER WING

"You cannot know the depth
and sincerity of our gratitude
without knowing of the desperate
situation of our . . ."

ON 16 OCTOBER 1972,
**250 BATTLE WORN* TERRITORIAL
FORCES WERE UNDER ATTACK AT MY THACH.**

BY 1015 HOURS THE 48th REGIMENT OF THE
NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY HAD BEEN
SHELLING MY THACH
FOR MORE THAN 10 HOURS.

INCESSANT BOMBARDMENT
FROM MORTARS,
RECOILLESS RIFLES,
ROCKETS AND SMALL ARMS
HAD PUSHED THE MY THACH
DEFENDERS TO THE
EDGE OF DESPAIR.

COMMANDING GENERAL,
II CORPS DECLARED A
TACTICAL EMERGENCY.

AIR SUPPORT
WAS CALLED IN
ON A PRIORITY BASIS!



* FIGHTING CONSTANTLY SINCE MARCH

**FOR THE NEXT SIX HOURS A-7D'S
FROM THE 354th TFW AND
AIRCRAFT FROM THE USS SARATOGA
ALTERNATED WITH U.S. ARMY
"COBRA" GUNSHIPS TO PROVIDE
AIR SUPPORT FOR
THE ENTRAPPED DEFENDERS**



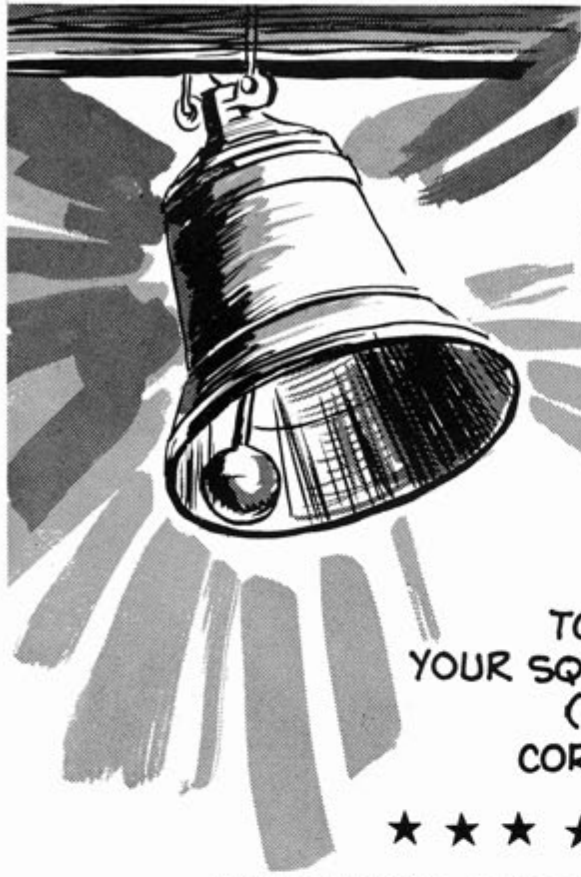
**THIS PERSISTENT
AIR SUPPORT DROVE
THE ENEMY ATTACKERS
OUT OF THE MY THACH
AREA. LEFT BEHIND
WERE WEAPONS, COMMUNI-
CATIONS EQUIPMENT, FOOD
AND OTHER MATERIAL
NECESSARY FOR ANOTHER
SUSTAINED ATTACK**

" - - - Your support in simple fact,
saved the lives of 250
Vietnamese RF officers and men . . .

Please accept our trust and
profound gratitude. You were our
only hope and our trust was
abundantly upheld. Both the
Vietnamese and we thank you."

**THE LETTER WAS SIGNED BY THE SENIOR
ADVISOR WHO ALSO SENT THE 354th
TFW A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION...**





*... A COVETED BRASS BELL!
WITH THIS INSCRIPTION*

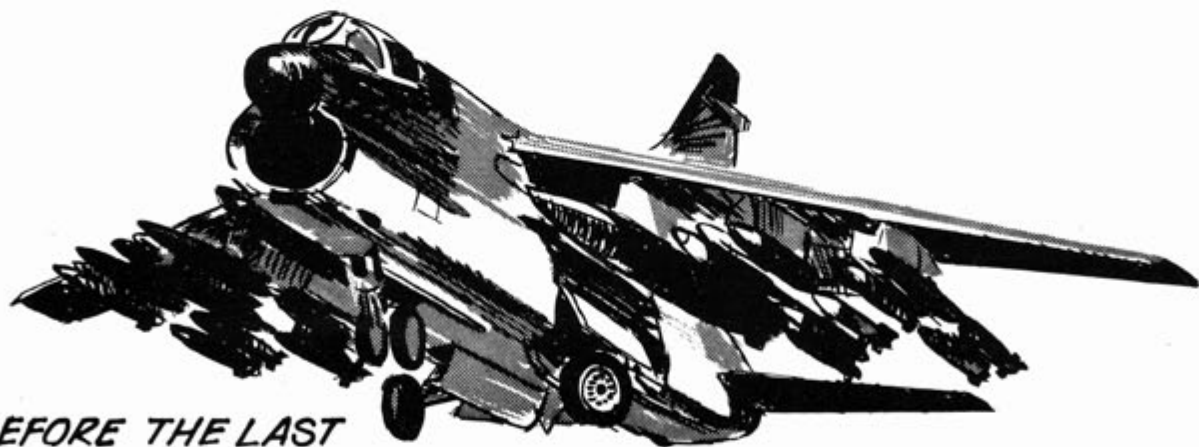
"TO THE BRAVE PILOTS OF THE 354th TFW,
IN DEEPEST AND MOST SINCERE APPRECIATION
FOR THEIR VALIANT SUPPORT OF
THE TERRITORIAL FORCES OF PLEIKU
PROVINCE, VIET NAM IN THEIR
DESPERATE DEFENSE OF THEIR VILLAGE
OF MY THACH, 19 AND 20 OCTOBER
1972. THE SIGNIFICANT VICTORY
ACHIEVED AGAINST THE 320th NVA
DIVISION IS DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE
TO THE PRECISION AND PERSISTENCE OF
YOUR SQUADRON. 'VIET NAM CONG HOA MUON NAM'
(LONG LIVE VIET NAM)
CORPS ADVISORY TEAM 36, PLEIKU"



THREE DAYS PRIOR TO THE MY THACH MISSION

16 October 1972

KORAT ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE, THAILAND



BEFORE THE LAST

354th TFW AIRCRAFT

*FROM MYRTLE BEACH, N.C. TOUCHED DOWN
SCORE KEEPERS HAD STARTED ADDING UP SUCCESSFUL
COMBAT MISSIONS FOR THE LITTLE A-7D.*

*HOWEVER, THE WING DEPLOYMENT FROM MYRTLE BEACH
ACTUALLY STARTED A STRING OF ACCOLADES THAT
WOULD CONTINUE TO GROW UNTIL THE END OF U.S.
INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM.*

**BY THE END OF THE A-7D'S FIRST
 10 WEEKS IN COMBAT SCORE-
 KEEPERS HAD TALLIED:**

COMBAT MISSIONS -----	6,568
AVG SORTIE PER DAY -----	62
FLIGHT HOURS -----	16,819
MAINTENANCE	
MAN-HR/FLT HR -----	16.5
BOMBING ACCURACY* --- 10 METER CEA	
RADIUS OF ACTION	
COMBAT RADIUS -----	480 NMI
TYPICAL MISSION -----	350 NMI
MISSION TYPES	
STRIKE/ATTACK -----	5,796
SEARCH & RESCUE -----	542
LINEBACKER -----	203
COMBAT LOSS RATE -----	0.03%

*AVERAGE FAC ESTIMATES

**THE 354th TFW'S DEPUTY
 FOR OPERATIONS
 LATER STATED:**

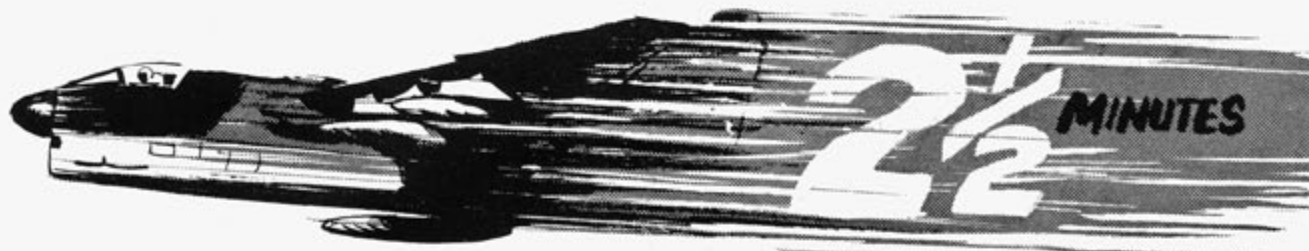
"THIS WAS ONE OF THE FEW
 TIMES IN AIR FORCE HISTORY
 THAT A WING OF FIGHTER
 AIRCRAFT DEPARTED THE
 U.S. AND ARRIVED AT
 ITS OVERSEAS DESTINATION
 WITH ALL AIRCRAFT ON
 SCHEDULE"



COL. JOHN RHEMANN

SLUF'S BELIEVE IT OR KNOT!

**ON APRIL 15, 1974 CAPT. NICK NICOLAI FLEW AN
 A-7D FROM THE ATLANTIC COAST
 TO THE PACIFIC COAST IN...**



THE DIRECTION OF FLIGHT WAS DUE SOUTH, THE HEADING
 180°, ACROSS THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA WHERE THE
 SUN RISES OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND SETS OVER THE
 ATLANTIC OCEAN.

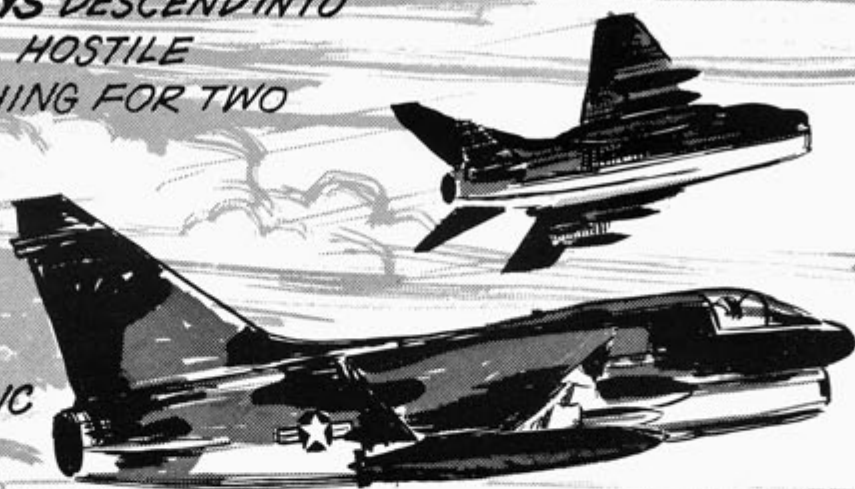
17 November 1972

IN THE AIR, ABOVE THANH HOA, NORTH VIET NAM



THREE A-7D SANDYS DESCEND INTO CLOUD COVERED, HOSTILE TERRITORY SEARCHING FOR TWO DOWNED AIRMEN.

LITTLE DID THE 354th PILOTS REALIZE THAT THIS MISSION* WOULD BECOME A CLASSIC IN THE SEARCH AND RESCUE BUSINESS



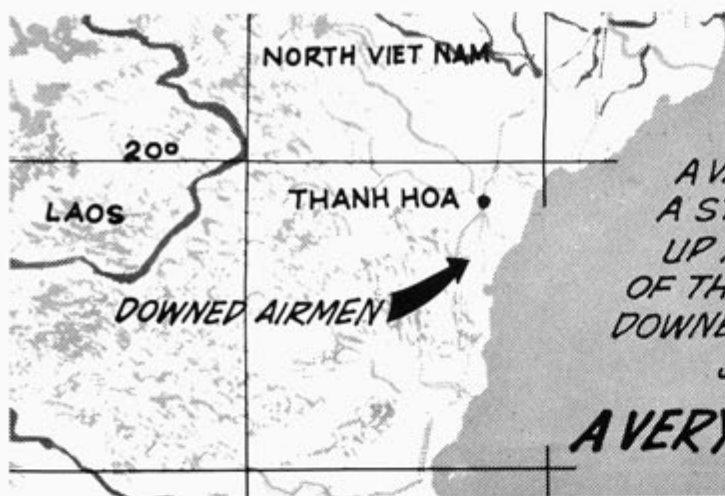
AN F-105 WILD WEASEL HAD BEEN HIT BY A SAM AT ABOUT 1100 HOURS ON THE 16TH. THE CREW BAILED OUT AND WERE ON THE GROUND SOMEWHERE UNDER A SOLID CLOUD COVER THAT THE SANDYS WERE NOW PENETRATING



THE SANDYS LOCATED THE WILD WEASEL CREW ABOUT 20 MILES SOUTH OF THE 20TH PARALLEL JUST SOUTH OF THANH HOA... AND HEADED HOME TO PREPARE FOR THE ACTUAL RESCUE MISSION

***THREE WEEKS AFTER ARRIVING IN KORAT THE 354th WAS ASSIGNED THE SANDY ROLE IN SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSIONS (LOCATING, PROTECTING, PROVIDING COVER AND COORDINATING ACTION IN THE PICK-UP AREA) THIS WAS THEIR FIRST MISSION**





*JUST TO THE SOUTH OF
THE SURVIVORS IS
A VALLEY LACED WITH AAA.
A STRING OF SAM SITES SPACED
UP AND DOWN THE AREA, WITH ONE
OF THEM ALMOST ON TOP OF THE
DOWNED F-105 CREW, PLUS A MIG FIELD
JUST NORTH OF THANH HOA.*

A VERY HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT!

18 November 1972

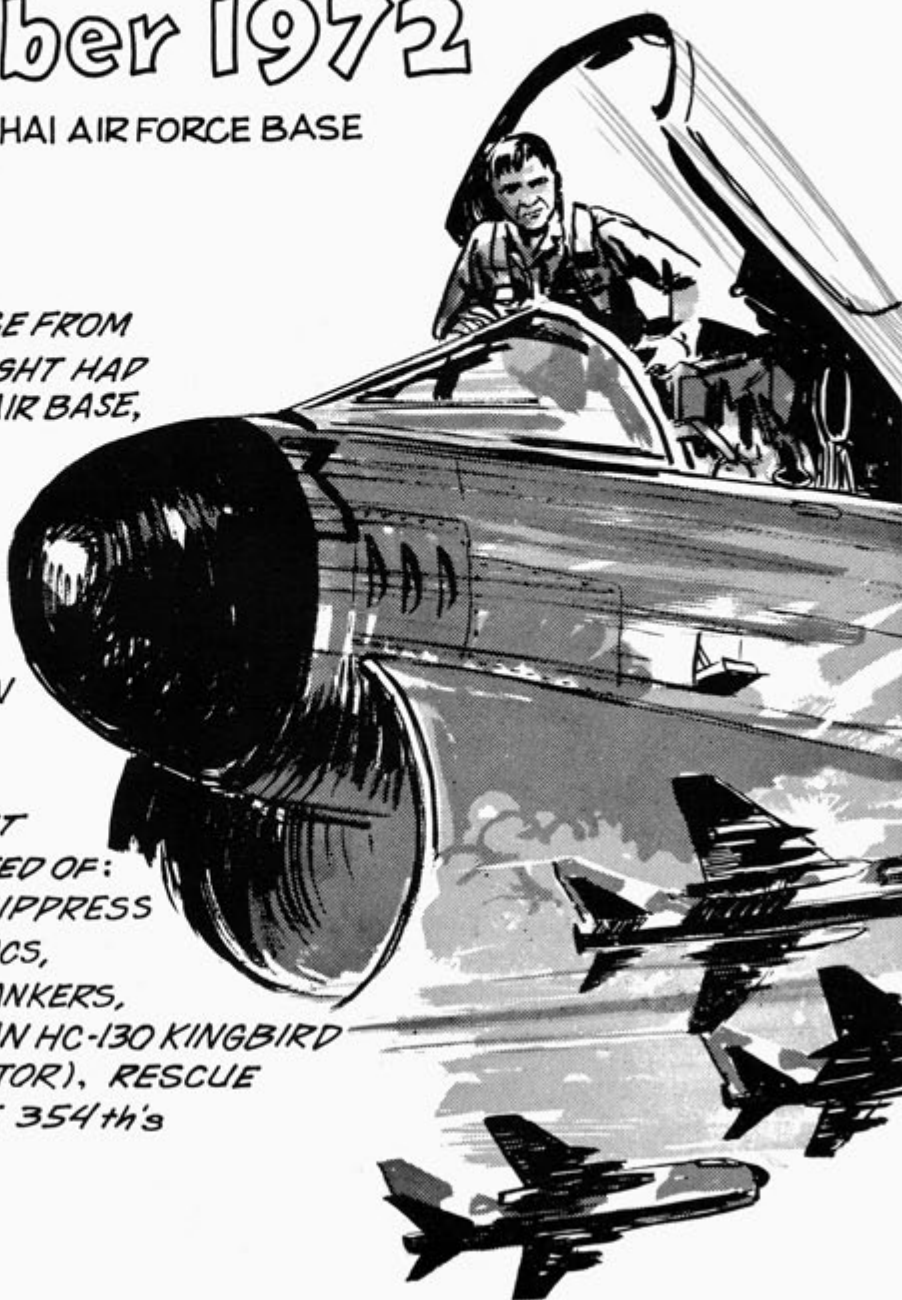
0430 - KORAT ROYAL THAI AIR FORCE BASE

*AS SOON AS INTELLIGENCE FROM
YESTERDAY'S SANDY FLIGHT HAD
REACHED TAN SON NHUT AIR BASE,
THE JOINT RESCUE
COORDINATION CENTER
SWUNG INTO ACTION.*

*MAJOR COLIN A.
(ARNIE) CLARKE WOULD
LEAD THE SANDY MISSION
TO THANH HOA.*

*A SAR FORCE OF ABOUT
60 AIRCRAFT CONSISTED OF:
F-105 WILD WEASELS TO SUPPRESS
THE SAMs, F-4 WOLF PACS,
F-4 MIG CAP AIRCRAFT, TANKERS,
A-7D's WITH SMOKE, AN HC-130 KINGBIRD
(MISSION COORDINATOR), RESCUE
HELICOPTERS AND THE 354th's*

A-7D SANDYS.



*AS THEY LEFT KORAT, ARNIE CLARKE'S SANDYS HEADED FOR THE
LAOS-VIET NAM BORDER TO RENDEZVOUS WITH THE JOLLY GREENS.*

THE HILL COUNTRY ALONG THE BORDER BELOW
THE SAR FORCE RENDEZVOUS TOSSED
MAJOR CLARKE (SANDY-1) HIS FIRST
CURVE, A **SOLID OVERCAST!**



TOPS WERE AT 8,500 FEET,
HIGHER THAN MOST OF THE
MOUNTAIN PEAKS, AND RAN WELL OUT
PAST THE COAST LINE. THE VALLEY FLOORS IN
THIS AREA RAN AS HIGH AS 2,000 FEET.

SANDY-1 NEEDED TO SLIP A COUPLE A-7's AND A HELICOPTER
INTO ONE OF THESE VALLEYS WHILE THEY WERE STILL WELL OUT
OF THE SAM ENVIRONMENT. ONCE IN A VALLEY THE HELICOPTER
COULD STAY IN THE TREES AND RUN DOWN TO THE SURVIVORS'
POSITION OUT OF SAM THREAT. THIS WOULD HOLD THEIR
PRIMARY THREAT TO THE LAST 15 MINUTES - AAA RIGHT
AROUND THE SURVIVORS' POSITION.



IN GOOD WEATHER PICK-UP WOULD PROBABLY
HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED EARLY IN
THE MORNING. HOWEVER, WITH
THIS DAY'S WEATHER, THE JOLLY GREENS
COULDN'T FIND THEIR WAY THROUGH
THE CLOUDS AND SANDY-1
SPENT MOST OF THE MORNING
FOLLOWING THE A-7's
PROJECTED MAP DISPLAY AND
RADAR ALTIMETER INTO THE
CLOUDS LOOKING FOR A VALLEY
LARGE ENOUGH TO ASSEMBLE A
PICK-UP TEAM.

HE WOULD LET DOWN INTO THE
CLOUDS UNTIL HIS RADAR ALTIMETER
STARTED JUMPING OR IT
GOT TOO DARK. SEVERAL TIMES
HE BROKE OUT IN LITTLE
VALLEYS THAT WERE NOT BIG
ENOUGH TO TURN AROUND IN.

HE'D PULL BACK UP AND TRY AGAIN!



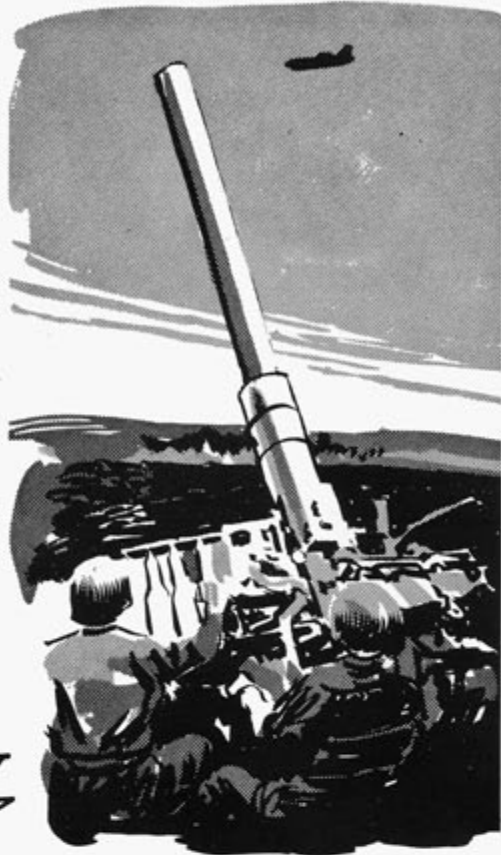
AS THE MISSION DRAGGED ON...

ARNIE CLARKE REALIZED HE WOULD HAVE TO CHANGE THE GAME PLAN OR ABORT.

HE FLEW IN OVER THE SURVIVORS FROM THE GULF SIDE TO VERIFY CONDITIONS AND NOTE THEIR POSITIONS ON HIS A-7 PROJECTED MAP DISPLAY. HE WAS ALSO HOPING TO FIND A PATH TO WORK A JOLLY GREEN IN FROM THE COAST.

THE HEAVILY DEFENDED COASTAL RIDGES ERUPTED WITH AAA FIRE.

ARNIE STAYED ABOUT 2,000 OR 2,500 FEET PULLING 1½ TO 2 Gs WHILE FLYING AT BETTER THAN 400 KNOTS. THIS KEPT THE AAA FIRE BEHIND HIM AND OUTSIDE THE TURN RADIUS.



It would be suicide to bring the Jollys in from the coast. The approach has to be from the border. Weather around the pick-up area won't change for days: 2,500 feet ceiling with broken clouds and 3 miles visibility... The survivors are still in limbo. They won't last till better weather. **THE RESCUE HAS TO BE NOW OR NEVER!**

BACK ABOVE THE OVERCAST SANDY-1 PICKED UP HIS WINGMEN. TO BE EFFECTIVE DURING PICK-UP HE'D HAVE TO LEAD SOME OF THEM BACK IN TO GET FAMILIAR WITH THE AREA AND THE AAA DEFENSES.

ON ONE PASS THRU THE PICK-UP AREA, SANDY-1 AND HIS WINGMEN SWUNG INTO THE WRONG VALLEY... ACROSS A BRIDGE AND RIGHT THROUGH THE MIDDLE OF THANH HOA WITH EVERYONE IN TOWN SHOOTING AT THEM!

WHILE THE SANDYS WERE LOOKING FOR AN APPROACH BY WORKING THEIR WAY BACK THROUGH THE VALLEYS, A JOLLY GREEN PENETRATED THE OVERCAST NEAR THE BORDER. HE BROKE OUT IN A VALLEY AND CALLED FOR SANDY-1

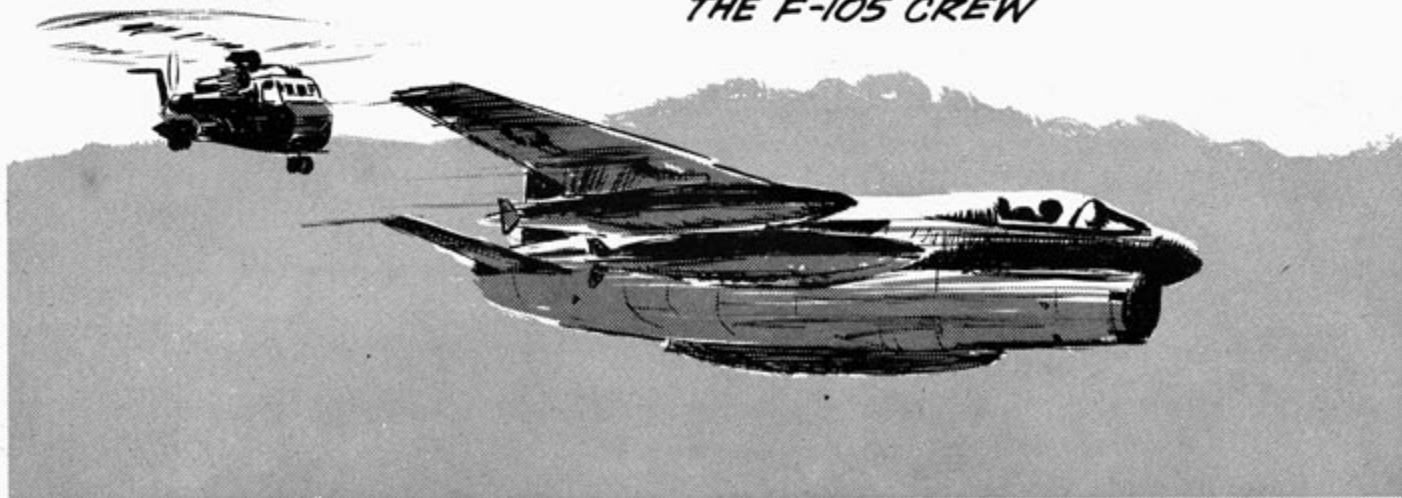
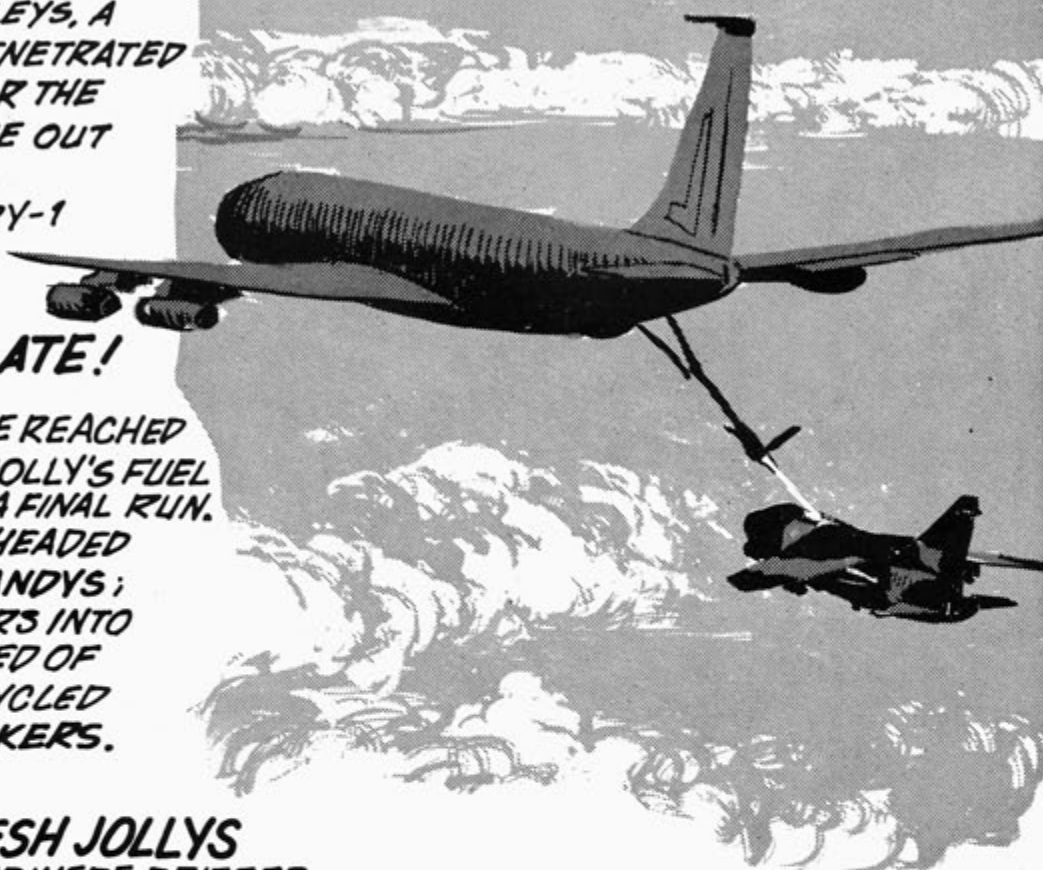
IT WAS TOO LATE!

WHEN ARNIE CLARKE REACHED THE VALLEY THE JOLLY'S FUEL WAS TOO LOW FOR A FINAL RUN. THE HELICOPTER HEADED HOME AND THE SANDYS; ALREADY SIX HOURS INTO THE MISSION, IN NEED OF REST AND FUEL, CYCLED BACK ONTO TANKERS.

WHEN FRESH JOLLYS ARRIVED AND WERE BRIEFED, SANDY-1 POINTED HIS NOSE

INTO THE CLOUDS ABOVE THE VALLEY. ENTERING AT 8,500 FEET AND BREAKING OUT AT ABOUT 800 FEET ABOVE GROUND, ARNIE FINDS JUST ENOUGH ROOM TO PULL A 1½ G CONTINUOUS TURN AND STAY IN THE VALLEY.

A JOLLY GREEN FOLLOWS HIM INTO THE VALLEY AS THEY HEAD FOR THE F-105 CREW





THE JOLLY CAN ONLY DO
ABOUT 150 KNOTS.

THE A-7D HAS TO FLY
360° TURNS IN FRONT OF
HIM AS THEY WORK THEIR
WAY TO THE COAST.

TIMES ARE PINPOINTED AND
THE NEW GAME PLAN
IS COMMITTED. SMOKE IS
LAID IN THE PICK-UP AREA AND ARNIE
CLARKE RUNS IN TO ALERT THE
SURVIVORS.

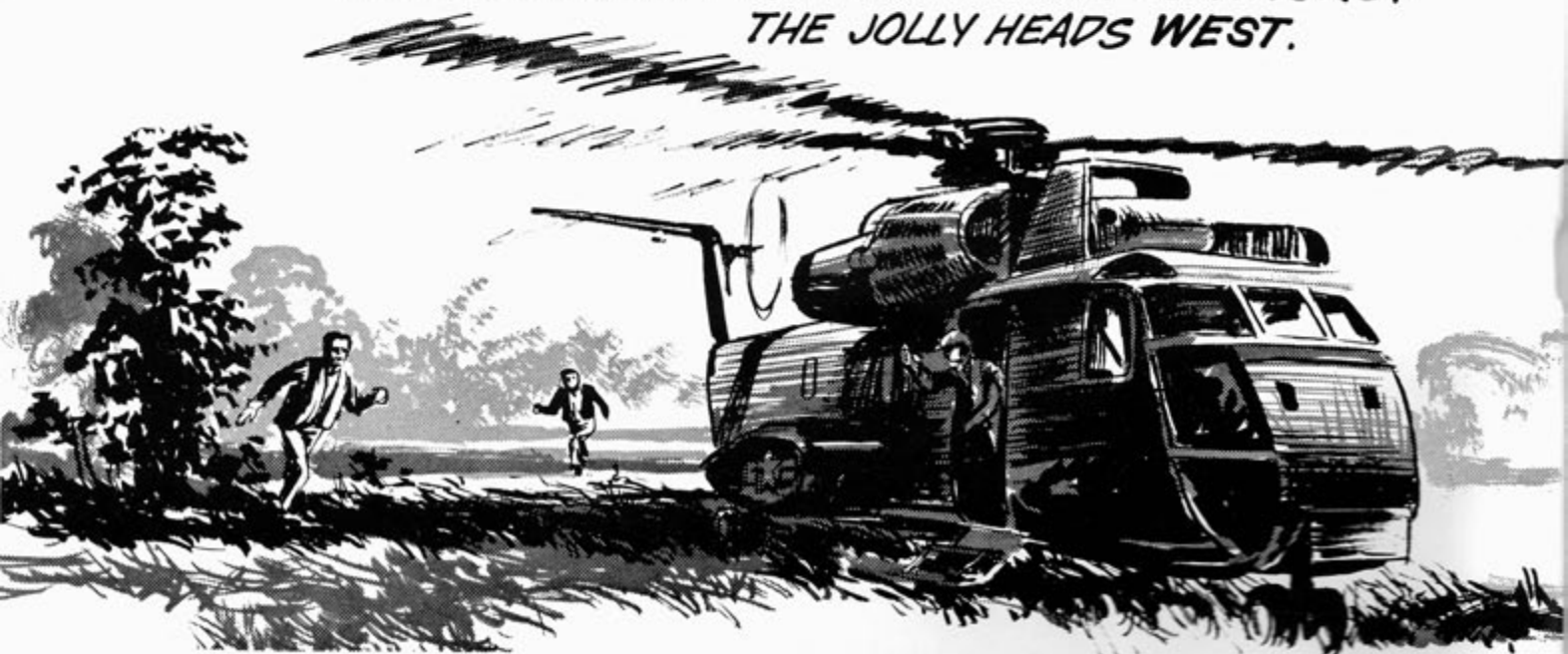


**AAA FIRE
IS HEAVY!**

A GUN SITE IS JUST
ABOVE ONE OF THE SURVIVORS.
ARNIE SETS UP THREE A-7Ds IN
A DAISY CHAIN, STRAFING THE GUN POSITION.

COMMUNICATIONS ARE DIFFICULT... TOO MUCH NOISE
AND CHATTER! UNAWARE OF THE GUN, THE JOLLY
COMES IN...

SUCCESSFUL PICK-UP! BOTH SURVIVORS!
THE JOLLY HEADS WEST.





MORE ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY!

*ARNIE MAKES A STRAFING PASS...
HE PULLS INTO THE CLOUDS... HE'S HIT!
FEELS LIKE A 57MM*. ALL ALTITUDE REFERENCE SYSTEMS GONE!...
PICKED UP BY SAM RADAR... THE SAM DOESN'T FIRE...
WITH INSTRUMENTS GONE - INSTINCT ALONE
GUIDES ARNIE THRU THE CLOUD COVER!*

*ONCE ABOVE THE CLOUDS - TWO A-7Ds LEAD MAJOR CLARKE
INTO DA NANG FOR AN IFR LANDING.*

*FOR THIS 9-HOUR SAR MISSION, MAJOR COLIN A. (ARNIE) CLARKE
WAS AWARDED THE AIR FORCE CROSS. 354th TFW PILOTS WERE
ONCE AGAIN LIVING UP TO THEIR HERITAGE AND WERE PROVING THE
WORTH OF THE LITTLE A-7D.*

*BY THE END OF THE U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN VIET NAM, 354th TFW WITH
THE A-7D SANDY AIRCRAFT WEARING "FLYING TIGER" MARKINGS
RESCUED 22 DOWNED AIRMEN. EACH OF THESE AIRMEN RECEIVED A
BRASS PLAQUE WHICH IN PART
READ...*

*"IF YOU'RE
OUTA AIR...
WE'LL BE
THERE."*



* THE 57MM HIT WAS ACTUALLY A 12.7 CALIBER TRACER THAT EXPLODED AN EMPTY EXTERNAL WING TANK.
(THE A-7D NOW CARRIES FOAM-FILLED EXTERNAL FUEL TANKS.)

"Diplomacy
has rarely been
able to gain at the
conference table what cannot be
gained or held on the battlefield"
General Walter Bedell Smith, USA-1954

19 December 1972



WITH THE VIET NAM PEACE TALKS
HOPELESSLY STALEMATED - AN
AERIAL ASSAULT WAS LAUNCHED
INTO THE HEART OF NORTH VIET NAM.
THIS OPERATION, LINEBACKER II,
PROVED GENERAL SMITH'S WORDS
TO BE TRUE AND GAVE OUR NEGOTIATORS
THE LEVERAGE NECESSARY TO CLOSE
OUR NATION'S LONGEST WAR.



LINEBACKER II WAS THE REAL TEST OF THE A-7D'S MULTIMISSION CLAIMS. CLOSE AIR SUPPORT, STRIKE, INTERDICTION, SEARCH AND RESCUE AND ESCORT MISSIONS

ALL FIGURED IN THIS OPERATION. THE 354th TFW WAS ALWAYS IN THE THICK OF THE ACTION.

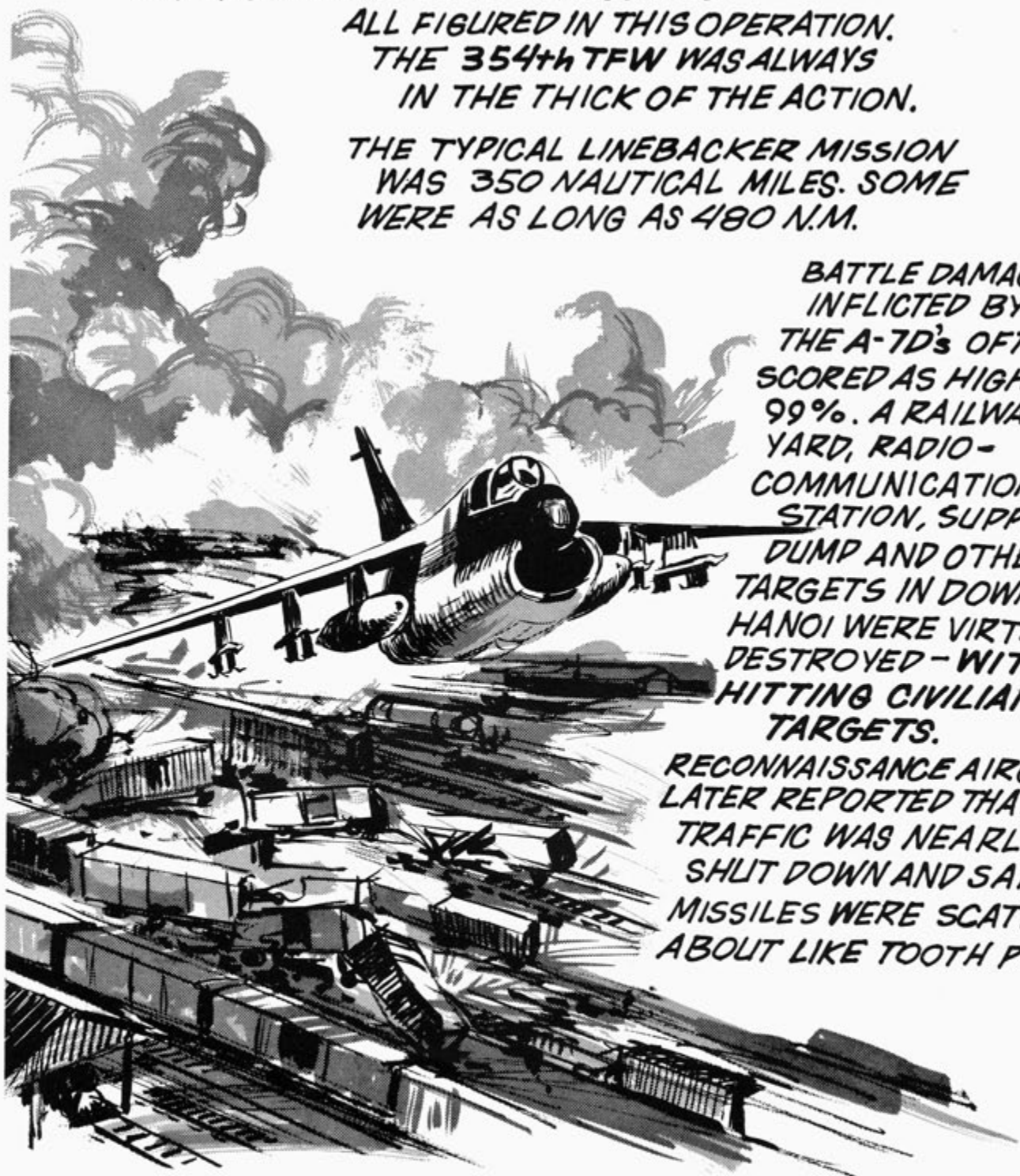
THE TYPICAL LINEBACKER MISSION WAS 350 NAUTICAL MILES. SOME WERE AS LONG AS 480 N.M.

BATTLE DAMAGE INFLICTED BY THE A-7D'S OFTEN SCORED AS HIGH AS 99%. A RAILWAY YARD, RADIO-COMMUNICATION STATION, SUPPLY DUMP AND OTHER TARGETS IN DOWNTOWN HANOI WERE VIRTUALLY DESTROYED - WITHOUT HITTING CIVILIAN TARGETS.

RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT LATER REPORTED THAT RAIL TRAFFIC WAS NEARLY SHUT DOWN AND SAM MISSILES WERE SCATTERED ABOUT LIKE TOOTH PICKS.

ESTIMATED OVERALL BOMB RELEASE RELIABILITY FOR THE A-7D IN VIETNAM WAS 99% AND GUN RELIABILITY WAS SET AT 96.6%. BATTLE DAMAGE TO THE A-7D'S IN A 10-WEEK PERIOD WAS MINIMAL... ONLY 16 INSTANCES.

IN ITS SHORT TENURE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE 354th TFW PROVED BEYOND DOUBT THAT AN A-7D AIRCRAFT CAN PERFORM A VARIETY OF MISSIONS AND PERFORM THEM EXCEPTIONALLY WELL!



The Youngest Pilot

SEPT.
14

EDITED FROM THE "SAWADEE FLYER" KORAT RTAFB, THAILAND, MAY 18, 1974.

"It is the beauty of being up there alone, and knowin' that it's just you. Kind of an indescribable thing; just you, your machine and God, or whoever controls the air space. It gives me a feeling deep down in my soul."

Troubled over the statement, 2nd Lt. Jamie Baker added, "I'm sure everybody who's been there knows the feeling to take off in the morning and watch the sun come up over the clouds and . . . just seeing it . . . the way it is."

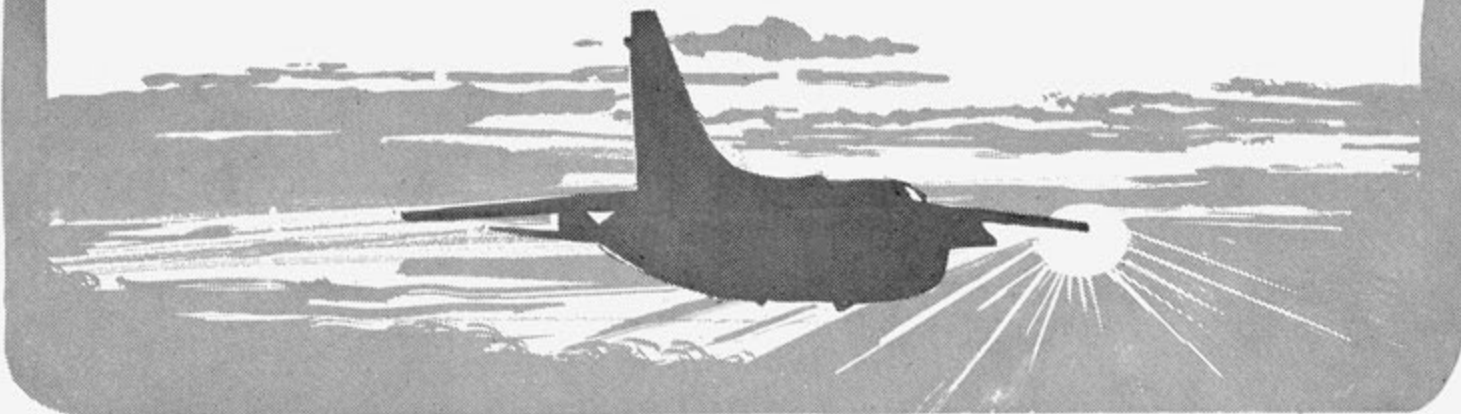
While in AFROTC Training Jamie Baker ranked fifth in his pilot training class and is likened to Steve Canyon. That's a bit of a turnabout for a guy who was pushed into an Air Force fighter pilot's cockpit. September 14, his birthdate, was on the first ping pong ball pulled from the bin in the 1971 draft lottery.

Now, at 23, he is the youngest pilot sitting in a 3rd Tactical Fighter Squadron A-7 Corsair II cockpit. From what he says, buying the winning Irish Sweepstakes ticket would be the second greatest piece of luck in his life.

Screaming through the skies and clouds by himself in a single engine, single seater — that's a big part of job satisfaction, Baker says.

Innocently mentioning the 3rd TFS and its famous callsign, SANDY, lights a spark in his eyes.

"It gives one the opportunity to be individually involved with aiding another guy who's really in trouble." The lieutenant chose the A-7 "SANDY" because of its mission, Search and Rescue (SAR). SANDY is the nickname of the rescue mission, the aircraft, and the men who fly them.



JAMIE BAKER'S SQUADRON, THE 3rd TFS, WAS PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED TO THE PACIFIC AIR FORCE AND REMAINED IN KORAT WHEN U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIET NAM WAR ENDED.

THE REST OF THE 354th TFW RETURNED TO MYRTLE BEACH.

THE LITTLE A-7D RETURNED TO ITS MILD-MANNERED SLUF CHARACTER - READY AND WAITING, BUT HOPING TO NEVER AGAIN HAVE TO PROVE HIMSELF SUPERSLUF.

USAF A-7D UNITS

354th TACTICAL FIGHTER WING - TAC
MYRTLE BEACH AFB, S.C.

355th TACTICAL FIGHTER WING - TAC
DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB, ARIZ.

23rd TACTICAL FIGHTER WING - TAC
ENGLAND AFB, LA.

3rd TACTICAL FIGHTER SQDN - SAR
KORAT RTAFB, THAILAND

65th TACTICAL FIGHTER WEAPONS
SQDN - 57th FIGHTER WING
NELLIS AFB, NEVADA

Air National Guard

JOINS A-7 COMMUNITY

"A NEW ERA OF AVIATION HISTORY HAS BEEN USHERED IN," SAYS MAJ. GEN. JOHN J. PESCH, DIRECTOR OF THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD. HE REFERS TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF A-7D AIRCRAFT TO THE ANG, NOW NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE A-7 COMMUNITY.

PILOTS OF THE 150th TACTICAL FIGHTER GROUP (TFG), NEW MEXICO ANG AND THE 140th TFG, COLORADO ANG, NOW HAVE THEIR FULL COMPLEMENT OF A-7D'S AND DELIVERIES HAVE BEGUN TO THE 121st TFG OF THE OHIO ANG.

THE GUARDSMEN HAVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY ACCEPTED THEIR NEW AIRPLANE AND HAVE BEGUN SETTING RECORDS WITH IT.

"IT'S A MAGNIFICENT AIRPLANE ...
... YOU CAN DRIVE NAILS WITH IT!"

COL. JOHN L. FRANCE
COMMANDER, 140th TFW
COLORADO AIR NATIONAL GUARD



AIR NATIONAL GUARD UNITS

140th TACTICAL FIGHTER GROUP
BUCKLEY ANG BASE, AURORA, COLO.

150th TACTICAL FIGHTER GROUP
KIRTLAND AFB, NEW MEX.

121st TACTICAL FIGHTER GROUP
RICKENBACKER AFB, COLUMBUS, OHIO

**OUR MR. MITTY
TRIES OUT BRAVADO
IN A SCREAMING JET...**

PAUL TURK,

**JOURNALIST, IMAGINES HIMSELF TO BE ANOTHER
WALTER MITTY WHILE FLYING THE A-7 WITH
JAMES READ, VETERAN TEST AND EXHIBITION PILOT**

Queasy Rider:

EDITED FROM "THE JOURNAL HERALD," DAYTON,
OHIO - SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1974

Mitty adjusted his glasses above his oxygen mask, gave the thumbs-up sign to the ground crew and faced forward as his stumpy, screaming white jet moved away from the ramp.

The ejection seat was armed, the wings dripped weaponry, the navigation computer was programmed, and the radar was working properly. Strong winds from the south.

Coupla hundred miles to the target. Trucks and armor, intelligence says, upside an old airstrip over in Luzeanna.

"Guess I can let Jim (Read, the backseater) taxi it out. I'll get it lined up," he thought as the parched, wind-blown field rolled by outside the tightly planned cockpit.

"Canopy coming closed," Read says on the intercom.

"Ahh," he mused, "Read's got it well in hand. Good man. But this is my mission, the first one." There was a thump and whine as the clear canopy closed and sealed.

The ends of Mitty's handlebar moustache peeked from behind the tight oxygen mask. He'd scrubbed away the carefully applied wax an hour or so before. Mustn't let sweat and hair chafe the face. And lord it's hot in Texas in June.

"Navy Dallas, this is Corsair Two, ready to roll."

That's Read's voice again. Take it up to military power, Jim, that's it.

The keening of the jet engine rises through the thick canopy, through the white helmet with the green-and-orange sunburst on the forehead.

If Mitty weren't real, he'd wake up now, to the clanking of traffic on Broad Street outside. He'd sniff the stagnation of Thurber's Columbus, maybe pad to the bathroom for a glass of water and move on to the next dream.

But today, Mitty'd better be real, because when Read says to release the brakes, 30,000 pounds of armed jet attack fighter is going to start rolling south on the runway and into the cloudy blue above. There'll be no waking up for a glass of water for the next two hours.

Ol' Walter's got nodamnbusiness in the front seat of this blowtorch gone mad. This is not a "wind-in-the-wires, open cockpit, scarf-in-the-slipstream number."



East Texas seems mostly trees, an occasional river, and the random scar of a settlement, but they blend in a rush, and you have to accept the screen, with its green bug and green airplane at faith.

By now, we're over wooded West Central Louisiana, waiting for clearance to use the range. Some National Guard F100 jocks are using it, and we listen to them on the radio as they invent things to shoot at, like a submarine with a purple periscope sticking out of a tiny lake.

"Don't bomb dam," it says on the chart. Presumably, if practicing pilots bomb the dam it will go away and there'll be no water in the lake for the submarine with the purple periscope.

We warm up by practicing strafing lumberyards. The computer solves gun-aiming problems. The A7 carries the 20-millimeter M61 "Vulcan" gatling-type gun.

By now I don't need a mirror to know my face is a deplorable shade of green. I try a switch to 100 percent oxygen. It helps, even as we flip back over for another pass at a make-believe target.

I wonder how long I'll last as we pick up some old fuel trucks by an abandoned dirt runway. We've got six practice bombs, and we'll dive and drop one at a time to see if a novice like me can hit anything.

The trucks are hard to pick up. They're tiny from up here. And they're hard to spot as we pull away after a run. I manage two or three hits out of six, which I figure is decent. LTV thinks I should have done better. Consider the nearsighted driver, fellers.

We pull up from the last run, and I know exactly how long my stomach is going to last. But I fight it back down, three times, as I get the oxygen mask off.

Read offers the airsick bag I'd declined on the ground. I refuse it again. You'd think I'd learn.

The ride back to Dallas is a demonstration of the navigation system's bag of tricks. We miss by a couple of hundred feet a bridge end whose coordinates we'd punched in on the ground two hours and countless maneuvers before.

"Want to try some aerobatics," he asks. Sadist. He knows how sick I was.

I grin into the mirror and what is usually the voice of some reason says, "Sure. Can I loop this thing?"

I can, and do, up through 18,000 feet over on our backs looking at the ground above us, and down the chute.

The kid who never bothered to ride the roller coaster because he tends to get nervous about heights. I think my neck is still sore from the four-G compression of the pullout.

Read has to suspect I want to land this large hunk of somebody else's money, and he'd prefer I do as little damage as possible.

Again, the handy computer is in the act, using a system of lights on the windshield brace to tell me if I'm too fast or slow.

The A7 loses all that nice stability in the gusting winds as we slow for the runway. Read will do a touch-and-go, then turn it back over to me.

His landing isn't too hot. "Humph. Haven't made one from the back seat in a long time." Naturally, his landing is far better than the two touches I fly, complete with bounces and wobbles.

The canopy pops up and open as Mitty taxis to the anxious crew on the ramp. They're checking the ship for bullet holes, waiting for the wave from the cockpit. Mitty after all, isn't the kind of hot dog who does a victory roll over the field with his wheels and flaps down. It just isn't sporting.

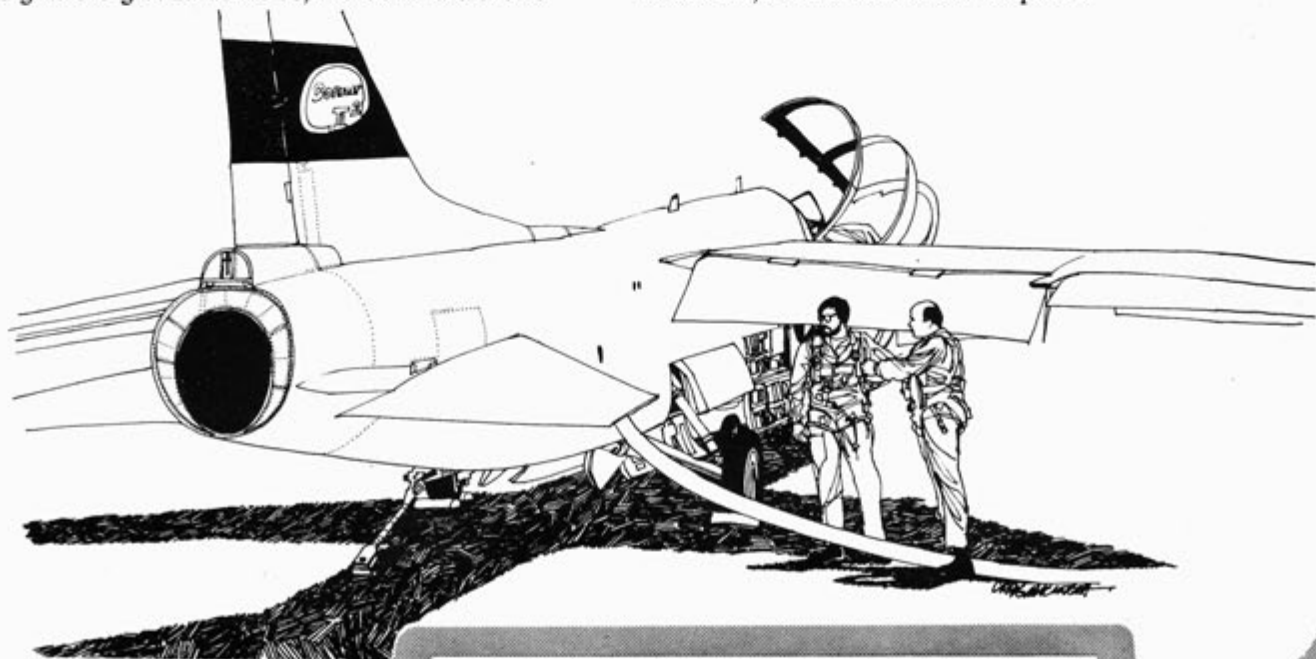
They've had the decency to keep the ambulance and the crash trucks hidden, since Mitty bristles at the very notion he'd bend an airplane, or be so unlucky as to stop a bullet.

The magical mystery machines are all turned off, and the jet whines and dies. Suddenly, there is only the watery sun and whipping wind and what seems a great silence.

Dawn has broken and Walter Mitty's dream is over. His Cherokee will never fly the same way again.

The aircraft, the only one of its kind — was a two-seat version of the A7 attack jet flown by the Air Force and Navy. It is made in Dallas by LTV Aerospace.

LTV calls it the "Corsair II," after the company's famous Navy fighter of World War II. This one, being the two-seater, is called the Corsair II squared."



VOUGHT SYSTEMS DIVISION
LTV AEROSPACE CORPORATION

DALLAS, TEXAS

In the beginning there was created an airplane, and being created in the form of a bird it had but one heart. And the creators, Orville and Wilbur, did look upon their hard work and did say one to another, "It is good."

And the heart was called an engine, and it did labor mightily and lift and propel the creation through the air. Long it labored, and faithfully, until the heart would burst within the body . . . at which time the craft would settle back to earth as would a falling stone.

And the detractors, being of the tribes SAC and MAC, did ruefully shake their heads and say in mock wisdom, "It is not good. For lo, if one heart is good – two are better, three are comfortable, four are relaxing, six are becoming fashionable, and ten are desirable."

But the Tribe of Real Jocks did disagree saying, "Man has only one heart, his horse has only one. Let us not build graven images with two or more." But theirs was a small voice crying in the wilderness that went unheeded, and the Tribe of Real Jocks did fall upon hard times.

But, they sayeth all the while, "This adversity shall pass. It is good." Still the Tribe of Real Jocks continued to wither, because, failing to prosper, they did also fail to propagate. They thus became few in number and were absorbed by the larger Tribe of TAC. And they sayeth, one to another, "It is not good, for we are warriors and subsist on battle as ordinary men need food and drink."

And they did build another one-heart bird, very large and very fast, and called it

"Thud." Then, sallying forth into battle in the Land of Nam, they did prove their courage and that of their new creation, and people did say, "The one-hearts do well. It is good."

And the inner Tribe of Real Jocks was inspired to build still another one-heart bird, and it was called "Sluf," (Short Little Ugly Feller).

It was a magnificent bird, and one day after the great battle in Nam had diminished to a skirmish, the Family of Thud, Tribe of Real Jocks, did send emissaries to the East to visit the Family of Sluf, also of the Tribe of Real Jocks. And the Chief of the Family of Sluf did say, "It is good." And in the



East by the Lake of Atlantis they did affirm their friendship and purpose, and the Chief of Sluf did say to his Thud brothers, "Go again to your family and bear me this token, this fruit of the vine, and say to your brothers, 'In the beginning it was intended there would be one man in one airplane with one engine. It is left to the Tribe of Real Jocks to validate that intent so that all men shall say of the one-hearts, They are Good.' "