

15 March 1967

F-100D 56-3277 3 TFW, USAF, Bien Hoa
1Lt Victor Hugo Thompson (KIA)

An F-100 was lost and its pilot killed on the 15th during an attack on a VC base camp near the mouth of the Cua Solrap River, 20 miles south of Saigon. 1Lt Thompson was making his first strafing run against the camp when his aircraft ran into a hail of ground fire and dived straight into the ground allowing no time for the pilot to escape.

F-105D 59-1825 357 TFS, 355 TFW, USAF, Takhli
Lt Col Peter Joseph Frederick (KIA)

A flight of two F-105s on a road reconnaissance along Route 7 came under fire near the Bartholomew Pass, on the Laotian border with North Vietnam. The leading aircraft dived to attack a target on the road and was followed by Lt Col Frederick. However, after the attack the leader could not see Lt Col Frederick's aircraft and could not raise him on the radio. No beeper was heard and the wreckage could not be found but it was assumed that the aircraft had either been hit by flak or flew into the ground during the attack. At 42, Peter Frederick was one of the older fast jet pilots in Southeast Asia and was actually approaching his retirement point when he volunteered for combat duty.

F-8C 147027 VF-34, USN, USS *Bon Homme Richard*
Lt(jg) Dean Smith (KIA)

The *Bon Homme Richard* arrived back on Yankee Station on 26 February for its third tour of duty off Southeast Asia. The cruise started badly as on the next day after taking up position one of its UH-2B Seasprite SAR helicopters crashed into the sea when it was taking off from the carrier's deck and four crewmen died. The ship's first loss on a combat mission took place during a coastal reconnaissance mission on 15 March. Two Crusaders were flying just off the coast south of Thanh Hoa at 1,500 feet when they flew over several fishing boats. The wingman, Lt Smith, started to turn and descend so the leader warned him to watch his altitude but the Crusader continued to descend until it hit the water near the island of Hon Me. No flak was seen at the time and it was surmised that the pilot may have been fixated on the fishing boats as potential targets and did not realise he was losing altitude despite his leader's warning.

A-4E 151188 VMA-223, MAG-12, USMC, Chu Lai
Capt Stanley P Krueger (survived)

VMA-223 arrived back at Chu Lai on 1 March after a well-earned three-month break at Iwakuni. During a night-time armed reconnaissance mission just north of the DMZ a section of Skyhawks spotted and attacked an automatic weapons site. At 3,000 feet in the dive, Capt Krueger's aircraft was hit in the starboard wing but, although the aircraft caught fire, he was able to reach the sea and fly south before he was forced to eject about 15 miles off the coast. He was picked up safely by a USAF helicopter.