



NEWS RELEASE

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DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION, Headquarters Seventh Air Force
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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE Monthly Summary, October, 1968

NORTH VIETNAM

SOUTH VIETNAM

NOTE: This item has been cleared for release by MACV.

NORTH VIETNAM

Air Force tactical-fighter bombers flew 1,906 missions over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam during the month of October, as they concentrated on resupply lines, truck parks and military storage areas.

Total bomb damage assessment for the month revealed the pilots and crews destroyed or damaged 96 trucks, 256 cargo craft, 55 antiaircraft artillery (AAA) positions, 43 crates of supplies, 2 bulldozers, 2 tanks, 22 bunkers, 9 warehouses, 5 highway ferrys, 2 ferry slips, 1 radar site, 1 tunnel, 104 military storage structures, 8 railroad cars, 12 highway bridges, 2 railroad bridges, 1 radar van, 4 automatic weapons positions, 1 artillery position and 3 caves.

They also caused 1,332 sustained fires, 777 secondary explosions, 50 petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) fires, 63 road slides and cut 386 roads, 14 highway fords, 6 bridge approaches, 2 railroads and 5 ferry approaches.

Forward air controllers credited the pilots and crews with killing eight enemy soldiers.

A moonlight attack on a military storage area in a valley near Mu Gia Pass on Oct. 6 by F-4 Phantom crews from the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing highlighted the strikes during the month.

"The entire valley erupted in a series of petroleum and ammunition explosions which could be seen for 150 miles," remarked Major Jack. C. Trabucco, 39, San Antonio, one of the crew members on the strike.

Planning the strike on the previously unmolested area took more than 150 man hours. "We looked at this area and highway intersections and determined that this was probably one of the most lucrative targets in the allowable bombing zone," Trabucco said.

In the initial attack, the 8th TFW pilots destroyed 5 trucks, 3 AAA positions, caused more than 100 medium-to-large secondary explosions, 20 medium POL fires, 10 large POL fires and damaged a large two-story warehouse

The following night other Phantom crews from the 8th TFW bombed the same storage area and accounted for 75 sustained fires, 35 secondary explosions, and silenced an additional AAA position.

Twenty eight secondary explosions and 19 sustained fires were caused by Phantom crews from the 366th TFW when they struck a storage area 35 miles (56 km) northwest of Dong Hoi on Oct. 4.

On the same day, other Phantom crews from the 366th TFW caused 25 secondary explosions and 10 sustained fires when they blasted a storage area 20 miles (32 km) south-southeast of Dong Hoi.

A highway segment 26 miles (42 km) west of Dong Hoi was the target for F-105 Thunderchief pilots from the 388th TFW on Oct. 5. The pilots reported cutting the road in six places and causing a slide.

Storage areas, one 20 miles (32 km) southeast of Dong Hoi and the other 34 miles (54 km) northwest of that coastal city were struck by Phantom crews from the 366th TFW on Oct. 6. The crews caused 36 sustained fires and 20 secondary explosions.

Thunderchief pilots from the 355th TFW and Phantom crews from the 366th TFW teamed up to blast a storage area 12 miles (19 km) north-northeast of Dong Hoi on Oct. 9.

Forward air controllers from the 37th TFW, flying F-100 Supersabres and directing the strike, credited the Thunderchief pilots with sinking five supply barges and a two-masted sampan while the Phantom crews destroyed two concrete storage structures and caused three sustained fires.

On Oct. 12, Phantom crews from the 366th TFW destroyed or damaged 21 military storage structures when they bombed an area 41 miles (66 km) northwest of Dong Hoi. Other crews from the 366th TFW sank three 50-foot supply boats and caused a sustained fire when they fired 2.75-inch rockets into enemy boats 18 miles (29 km) north-northwest of Dong Hoi.

A radar site 38 miles (61 km) north-northwest of Dong Hoi was the target for Thunderchief pilots from the 355th TFW on Oct. 13.

"The two buildings making up the site were dug into a ridge," commented Major Warren J. Kerzon, 34, Fort Walton Beach, Fla., one of the strike pilots.

"The roofs of the buildings came up flush with the ground and were very hard to spot but we had pinpointed them a couple of days before. We bombed and strafed the buildings which were about 15 feet high and 20 feet wide."

Weather hampered most missions flown Oct. 15 but one flight of Thunderchief pilots from the 355th TFW reported having a successful mission when they hit enemy river traffic 20 miles (32 km) northwest of Dong Hoi.

"We got underneath the clouds and strafed and rocketed the barges," said Captain Donnie Tribble, 28, Lebanon, Tenn., one of the pilots.

"I could see Alder's (Major James Alder, 37, Phoenix, Ariz.) pass. He had about seven or eight barges in a line going up the river. He peppered them and really chopped them up," Tribble explained.

Phantom crews from the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing dropped 500-pound bombs and fired rockets into a truck park 38 miles (61 km) north-northwest of Dong Hoi on Oct. 16.

SuperFACs from the 37th TFW credited the crews with damaging 10 enemy trucks.

On Oct. 18, Phantom crews from the 13th Tactical Fighter Squadron of the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and 8th TFW teamed up to destroy or damage

16 enemy supply craft 19 miles (30 km) north-northwest of Dong Hoi.

Six crew members, two from an F-4 Phantom and four from an HH-3 "Jolly Green Giant" helicopter, were rescued from the storm tossed Gulf of Tonkin near Tiger Island after being downed by enemy ground fire on Oct. 20.

The F-4 was hit while striking an enemy target on Tiger Island while the chopper took a direct hit from a shore battery while attempting to rescue the Phantom crew. A second Jolly Green helicopter successfully rescued all the downed flyers.

Another Phantom was downed by enemy ground fire Oct. 24 southwest of Dong Hoi in the southern panhandle of North Vietnam. One of the two crew members was rescued the following morning while the second is listed as missing in action.

Phantom crews from the 8th TFW and 13th TFS of the 432nd TRW teamed up to destroy or damage 18 enemy supply craft 14 miles (22 km) north-northwest of Dong Hoi on Oct. 26.

An F-105 Thunderchief was downed by enemy ground fire Oct. 26 while on a strike mission west of Dong Hoi in the southern Panhandle of North Vietnam. The pilot is reported as missing in action.

On Oct. 28, a truck park 26 miles (42 km) north-northeast of Mu Gia Pass was hit by Phantom crews from the 8th TFW. SuperFACs from the 37th TFW, directing the strike, credited the crews with heavily damaging five enemy trucks.

Storage areas 30 and 34 miles (48 and 54 km) northwest of Dong Hoi were struck by Phantom crews from the 8th TFW on the same day. The crews reported causing 13 medium-to-large sustained fires and 11 secondary explosions.

An Air Force RF-4 Phantom on a reconnaissance mission over the southern panhandle of North Vietnam Oct. 29 was downed by suspected enemy ground fire. The two-man crew is listed as missing in action.

Twenty-five secondary explosions and two sustained fires were caused by

Phantom crews from the 8th TFW on Oct. 31 when they fired rockets into a storage area 19 miles (30 km) west of Dong Hoi.

An F-4 crew from the 8th TFW flew the last United States tactical air strike against a target in North Vietnam prior to the 9 p.m. bombing halt on Nov. 1.

Leading the flight was Major Frank C. Lenahan, 36, Tucson, Ariz., completing his 100th mission at the same time. First Lieutenant Chuck Sarff, 24, Glendale, W. Va., accompanied Lenahan on the mission.

They struck five road interdiction points in the panhandle, using radar bombing techniques.

SOUTH VIETNAM

Throughout the month of October, Air Force tactical fighter bombers flew 10,154 combat sorties over the Republic of Vietnam. They provided close air support for friendly ground forces and bombed and strafed enemy base camps, fortifications, bunkers, sampans, and gun emplacements.

Forward air controllers (FACs) credited Air Force pilots and crews with killing a total of 466 enemy soldiers, setting off 340 secondary explosions and causing 550 sustained fires. They also destroyed or damaged 902 enemy sampans and numerous fortifications and bunkers.

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On Oct. 1, Air Force F-4 Phantom crews from the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base struck an enemy bunker complex 44 km (27 miles) north of Tay Ninh City and destroyed 35 bunkers, uncovered 25 more and destroyed three anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) sites. The strike was in conjunction with the Allied TOAN THANG OFFENSIVE.

The strike crew members were Major Peter K. Nicolas, 33, Tampa, Fla.; First Lieutenant Richard C. Bethurem, 25, Green Bay, Wis., and Captains Albert A. Gagliardi, 30, San Antonio, and George P. Vierno, 28, Staten Island, N.Y.

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F-100 Supersabre pilots from the 31st TFW at Tuy Hoa Air Base and the 35th TFW at Phan Rang Air Base and A-37 pilots from the 3rd TFW at Bien Hoa Air Base blasted active enemy base camps in four consecutive strikes Oct. 3 in Hau Nghia Province 17 km (11 miles) south of Dau Tieng. The pilots destroyed 88 bunkers, uncovered 27 more and destroyed 30 meters of trench. FACs credited

the pilots with killing three enemy soldiers.

Two of the Supersabre pilots from the 31st TFW were Major David P. Kling, 33, Brodman, Pa., and First Lieutenant Richard J. Clark, 24, Haverstown, Pa.

Supersabre strike pilots from the 35th TFW were Lieutenant Colonel Randall L. Steffens, 40, Bellevue, Wash., and Captain Ferdinand J. Funke, 28, Evansville, Ind.

A-37 strike pilots were Captain Robert L. Holtz, 29, Milwaukee, Wis., and First Lieutenant Richard L. Calcara, 23, Great Bend, Kan.

"Man, that target was so lucrative that we were ready to go back for another load of bombs," related Holtz, "At first we figured it would be a normal mission, and from the air it didn't look like much until we started laying in our 500-pound bombs."

The FAC, who was directing the strike, briefed them on the target, describing it as a large bunker complex used for infiltration and staging into the Saigon and Tan Son Nhut areas.

"That FAC marked individual targets with smoke rockets and every time he put one in, we hit it dead center with a bomb," Holtz continued, "We dropped all our bombs in singles and the FAC called it a fantastic display of pinpoint bombing."

"After about the fourth pass, he told us if we kept it up, we would run out of targets. We held high in the target area for about 15 minutes following the strike to let the FAC check out the damage. He was amazed at the size of the complex and ended up saying, 'Fellas, it looks like you've uncovered the world down here.'"

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On Oct. 4, Phantom crews from the 366th TFW at Da Nang Air Base reported destroying 30 occupied bunkers and two military fortifications and damaging two other fortifications as they blasted an enemy location 60 km (37 miles) southwest of Quang Tri City. The immediate strike was in conjunction with Operation Scotland II.

Two of the crew members were First Lieutenants Kevin B. Mullen, 24, North Bellmore, N.Y., and Allen L. Hostetler, 24, Fort Wayne, Ind.

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An enemy location 17 km (10 miles) northeast of Quang Ngai City was the target for Supersabre pilots from the 31st TFW and the 37th TFW at Phu Cat Air Base on Oct. 9. The pilots destroyed a total of 28 military fortifications and 11 sampans while damaging 20 fortifications and 2 sampans in the three consecutive strikes which were in support of Americal Division troopers conducting ground operations in the area.

Two of the strike pilots from the 31st TFW were Major Norman G. Smith, 37, Torrance, Calif., and First Lieutenant Ernest W. Lloyd, 24, Shreveport, La. One of the pilots from the 37th TFW was Captain Darrell E. Lake, 33, Sioux City, Iowa.

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Two A-37 pilots from the 3rd TFW were credited by a FAC with killing 18 enemy soldiers Oct. 13 during a strike in Dinh Tuong Province 31 km (19 miles) west-southwest Cai Lay.

Major Nathan S. Goldberg, 37, Colchester, Conn., and Captain Henry M. Rogge, 28, Brenham, Tex., were the pilots.

"Our target was an area where the FAC had seen several enemy troops run into a fortification," said Rogge.

Delivering two bombs near the fortification, the pilots destroyed it and one other while damaging a third. They then clobbered sampans and enemy soldiers on both sides of a canal.

"The FAC became real excited when he took a closer look at the battle scene," continued Rogge. "He said we had apparently opened up something hot."

Assessing the damage further, the FAC credited the pilots with destroying three sampans,

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Phantom crews from the 12th TFW teamed up with Supersabre pilots from the 31st TFW to blast an enemy base camp on five consecutive strikes 16 km (10 miles) northeast of Tay Ninh City Oct. 14. The pilots and crews were credited by a FAC with killing six enemy soldiers in the strike which was in support of the Allied TOAN THANG OFFENSIVE. They also destroyed 49 bunkers, 11 military fortifications and 60 meters of trench.

Four of the F-100 pilots were Colonel Frank D. Henderson, 46, Columbus, Ohio; Major Richard E. French, 38, Glendale, Ariz.; Captains Roger J. Welch, 26, Chelmsford, Mass.; and James R. Klein, 25, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Five of the Phantom crew members were Majors Jerry D. McClain, 38, Montgomery, Ill.; Gordon J. Milliken, 37, Old Orchard Beach, Maine; Edward D. Goetze, 36, Lubbock, Tex.; Francis H. Miller, 38, Swanton, Ohio; and First Lieutenant MacGregor E. Poll, 26, Lansing, Mich.

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A-37 and F-100 pilots from the 3rd TFW and Supersabre pilots from the 31st TFW smashed an enemy base camp 15 km (9 miles) south of Tay Ninh City Oct. 16 in support of elements of the U.S. 25th Infantry Division conducting

the TOAN THANG OFFENSIVE. The pilots reported a total of 12 bunkers and one fighting position destroyed, one cave damaged and one secondary explosion set off. FACs also credited the pilots with killing 21 enemy soldiers.

One of the Supersabre pilots from the 31st TFW was Major Edward W. Cardwell, 37, Glendale, Ariz. The F-100 pilots from the 3rd TFW were Captains Thomas F. McGuire, 29, Work, Maine, and Edward V. Murphy, 29, Melverne, N.Y. The A-37 pilots were Captain Henry R. Rogge, 28, Brenham, Tex., and First Lieutenant Charles M. Carter, 24, Luling, Tex.

"After we arrived over the target, the FAC mentioned he had seen quite a bit of activity in the camp," said Carter, "He suspected it to be an overnight camp because he noticed some hammocks down there. We came right in after the F-100s left the area and placed our 500-pound bombs in between the craters they left."

As the pilots angled in for their attack, the FAC directed them to hit a "patch of green" on the ground that was made up of a fortification and large command bunker.

"When we finished, there was nothing left of the area," said Carter, "In fact, we got six enemy soldiers in the command bunker."

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On Oct. 19, Supersabre pilots from the 31st and 35th TFWs hit an enemy base camp 31 km (19 miles) north of Tay Ninh City. They were credited by FACs with destroying 22 bunkers, damaging 13 and uncovering 35, and causing a large secondary explosion. The pilots also destroyed 25 meters of trench.

Two of the Phan Rang-based pilots were Captain Robert M. Staples, 30, Big Springs, Tex., and First Lieutenant Roland D. Stanley, 25, La Mesa, Calif.

"I was right over the target when the large secondary explosion ignited," exclaimed Stanley, "There was no doubt in my mind what had happened as the explosion occurred about half a second after the bomb impacted and threw a bunch of debris in the air about the same height as a bomb would have.

"I couldn't see too much from where I was but the FAC was frantic down there. He would say, 'you destroyed three bunkers but you just opened up about 10 more,' and it just seemed to go on and on every time we dropped a bomb.

"The FAC did a good job of directing us in on targets," Stanley continued, "Even though we destroyed quite a few bunkers, when we left the FAC had more to be destroyed than when we started because we uncovered so many of them."

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F-100 pilots from the 3rd and 35th TFWs and F-4 crews from the 12th TFW teamed up to smash an enemy base camp, a possible enemy headquarters complex and a storage area in six strikes 14 km (8 miles) northwest of Phuoc Long City in Phuoc Long Province Oct. 23. The pilots and crews destroyed a total of 58 fortifications, and 4 bunkers, damaged 29 fortifications, set off 11 secondary explosions, ignited 18 sustained fires and obtained 1 road cut.

Two of the Supersabre pilots from the 35th TFW were First Lieutenants Richard W. Buickerood, 25, Woodbridge, N.J., and Milton R. Sanders, 25, Washington, D.C.

The F-100 pilots from the 3rd TFW were Majors William M. Keller, 34, Stockton, Calif., and Buddy E. Dees, 34, Dyersburg, Tenn.; Captains Eric L. Slader, 28, Kingston, R.I., Francesco P. Frulio, Long Island, N.Y.; and First Lieutenant Gary S. Eglinton, 24, Denver.

F-4 crew members were Lieutenant Colonel Harry Falls, Jr., 42, Dallas; Major Herbert R. Rochelle, 35, Hurricane Mills, Tenn.; Captain William E. Holcomb, Jr., 31, Jackson, Miss.; and First Lieutenant Frank A. Kuhl, 26, Breese, Ill.

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Air Force B-57 Canberra crews from the 35th TFW hit an enemy base camp on a preplanned strike 47 km (29 miles) northwest of Tay Ninh City Oct. 26, and destroyed 26 bunkers and four fortifications damaged a fortification and uncovered 9 bunkers and 125 meters of trench. The strike was in support of the TOAN THANG OFFENSIVE.

AIR SUPPORT FOR TROOPS IN CONTACT

During the month, Air Force pilots and crews were scrambled 371 times to provide close air support for friendly ground forces engaging enemy troops in contact throughout the Republic.

DRAGONSHIP SUPPORT

AC-47 Dragonship crews from the 14th Special Operations Wing flew 636 night missions, dropping flares and providing 7.62mm minigun fire support for friendly ground forces in South Vietnam.

VNAF AIR STRIKES

Vietnamese Air Force A-1 Skyraider and F-5 Freedom Fighter pilots were airborne 1,979 times during October. They were credited by FACs with killing 234 enemy soldiers and causing 91 secondary explosions and 46 sustained fires. The pilots also destroyed or damaged a total of 1,333 fortifications, 1,263 bunkers and 212 enemy sampans.

PSYWAR ACTIVITIES

Air Force psychological warfare crews from the 144th SOW dropped more than 469 million leaflets urging the enemy to come over to the side of the Republic of Vietnam government. They also broadcast more than 1,440 hours of tape recorded messages over suspected enemy locations in the Republic.

TACTICAL AIRLIFT SUMMARY

U.S. and Royal Australian Air Force tactical airlift crew flew 39,333 sorties during the month as they delivered 392,081 troops and other passengers and 78,889 tons of cargo. The combined payload was 125,938 tons.

B-52 STRIKES

B-52 Stratofortress crews struck enemy base camps, storage, supply and bivouac areas, bunker complexes and weapons positions during 284 strikes in October. All of the strikes were in South Vietnam with the exception of 15 in North Vietnam's southern panhandle and two in the demilitarized zone.