Coming to Grips With SAM Sites July – Dec 1965

Presented by W. Howard Plunkett Lt Col USAF (Ret)



7th Triennial Vietnam Symposium 11 March 2011

July - Dec 1965

Significant Period in Air Power History

First Combat With Surface-to-Air Missiles

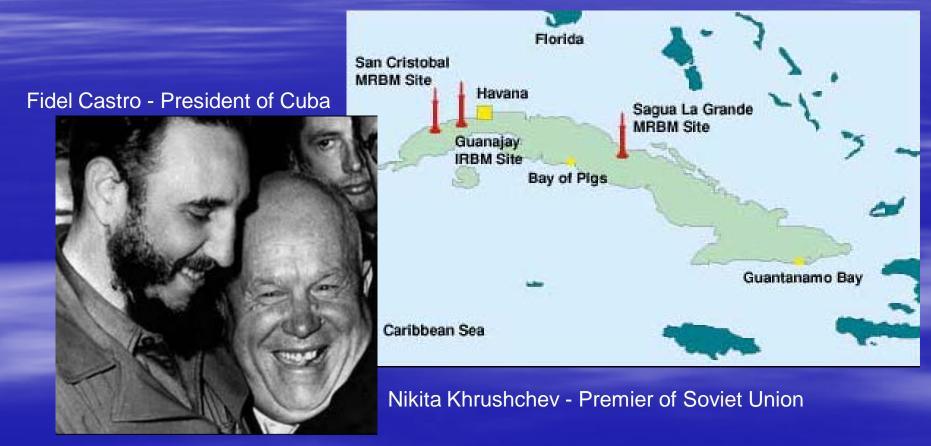
U.S. Slow to Recognize SAM Threat

U.S. Paid a High Price in Men and Planes

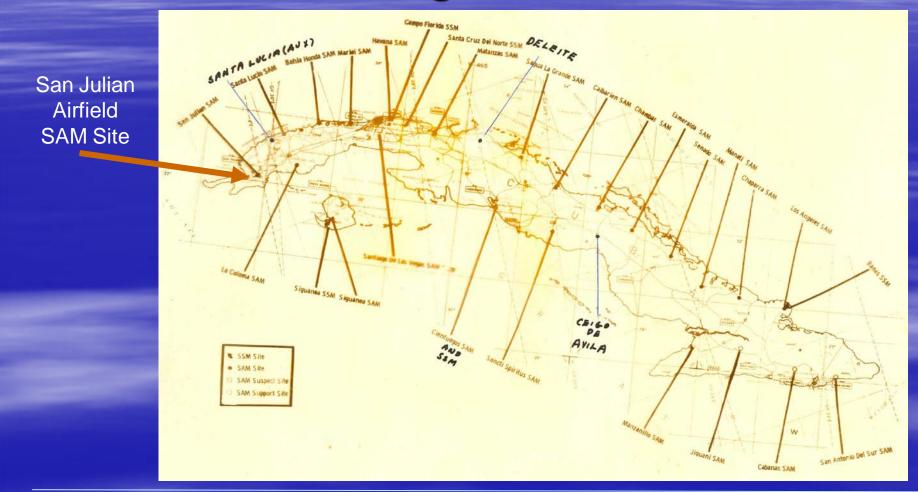
Anti-SAM Tactics & Equipment Developed

Prologue October 1962

Nuclear Missile Threat From Cuba

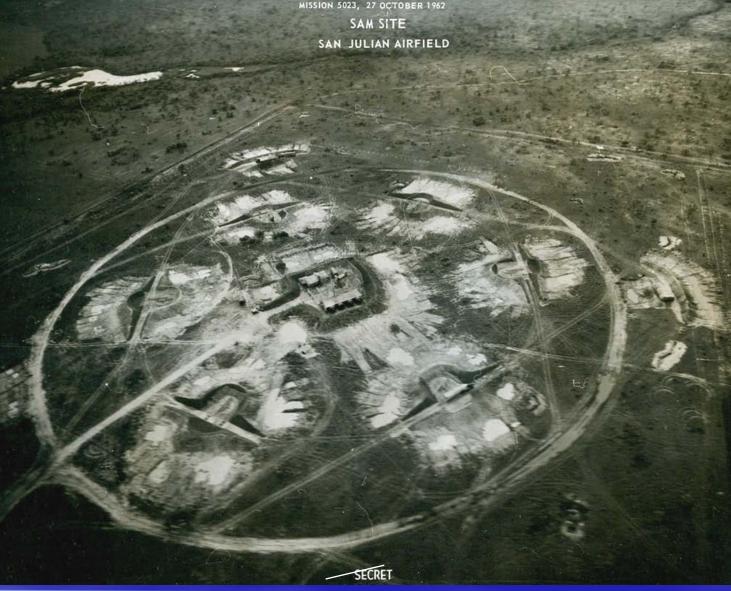


24 SAM Sites Protecting MiG Bases and SS-4 Sites



MISSION 5023, 27 OCTOBER 1962 SAM SITE SAN JULIAN AIRFIELD

SAM Site San Julian Airfield Cuba



Executive Committee – EXCOM – Developed U.S. Strategy on Cuban Missiles



John F. Kennedy President



Key EXCOM Members Who Had Roles in SAM-Site Decisions in Vietnam:



Lyndon B. Johnson Vice President



Robert S. McNamara Sec of Defense



Dean Rusk Sec of State



Gen Maxwell Taylor JCS Chairman



EXCOM Developed 2 Options:

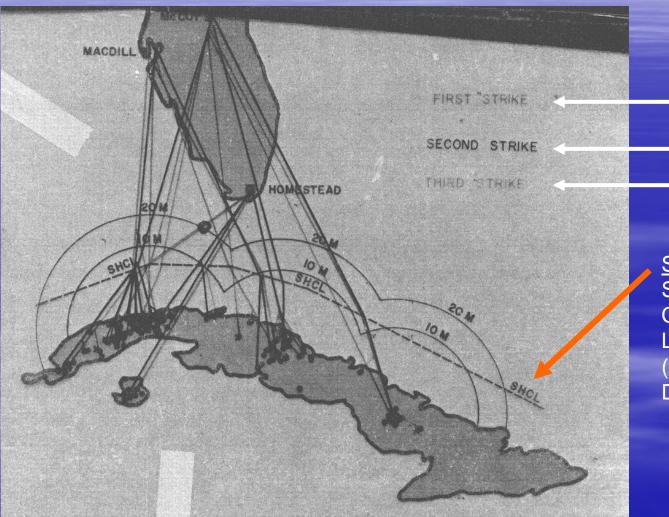
Naval Blockade

 Air Strikes ... Under CINCLANT OPLAN 312

 Then Invasion by 82nd & 101st ABN Divisions OPLAN 316

CINCLANT OPLAN 312 Complete Destruction of Cuban AOB SAM Radars No. 1 Priority Then EW/GCI, Aircraft, AAA Sites Three Strikes, Multiple Waves 573 Strike Acft: F-105, F-100, F-84F, A-4D, AD (Skyraiders) Napalm, LAU-3, GAM-83, Iron Bombs

CINCLANT OPLAN 312 - USAF Strikes



<u>SHCL</u> = Strike Hour Control Line (Cuban Air Defenses)

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites



21 Oct 62 – EXCOM Meeting

- Gen Sweeny (TAC CC) Briefed on OPLAN 312
- Kennedy: Be Prepared to Carry Out Attacks Within 24 Hours

Fortunately

$\bullet \bullet \bullet$

26 Oct 62 – Khrushchev Offered to Remove Missiles if U.S. Didn't Invade Cuba

However ... - 27 Oct 62 – SAM Downed U-2 - Maj Rudolph Anderson, Jr. - KIA



1st Person Awarded Air Force Cross





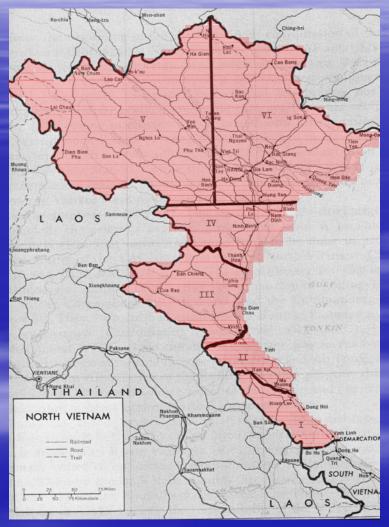
Kennedy: Don't Strike SAM Sites Yet

Give Diplomacy a Chance

28 Oct 62 – Khrushchev: Russia Will Dismantle Nuc Missiles

Diplomacy Precluded SAM Site Strikes in Cuba

July – Dec 1965 Air War Over North Vietnam



Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

Rolling Thunder Mar 1965 – Oct 68

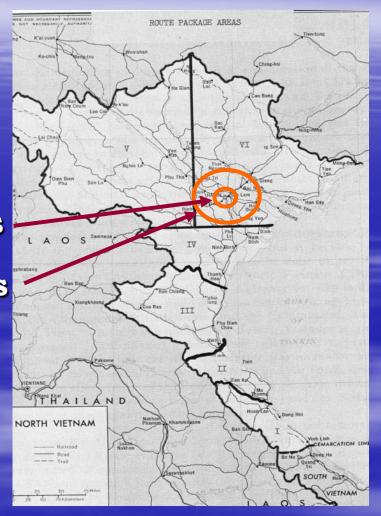
Sustained, Graduated Bombing of NVN

Numbered "Phases"

Each Phase Specified Targets & Rules of Engagement (ROEs)

Rolling Thunder

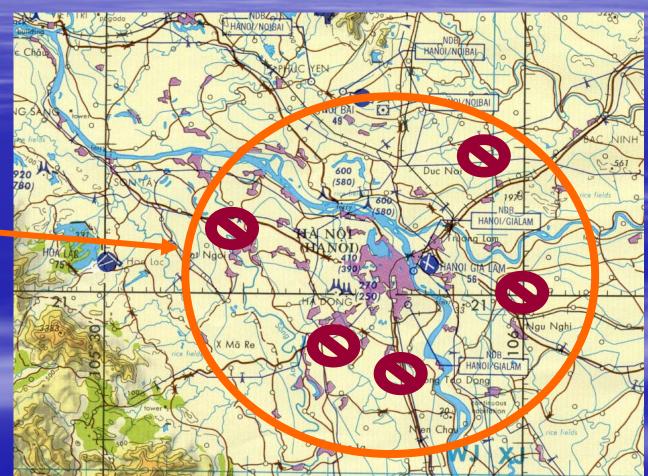
- Most Significant ROEs:
- <u>Hanoi Zones</u>
 Prohibited 10 Nautical Miles
 Restricted 30 Nautical Miles
- Strikes Directed by White House



April 1965 JU.S. Detected 5 SAM Sites in NVN ...

 All Within Hanoi's Prohibited Zone

Missiles
 Not Yet
 Installed



3 May 1965

NVN 236th SAM Regiment Began Tng

Formed 7 Jan 65

Training Site Near Son Tay

"... Highest National Priority"

Seventy Soviet Missile Advisors

Four Missile Launch Battalions ... 61st 62nd 63rd 64th

April - May 1965 - Two CIA Directors ...





John A. McCone 29 Nov 61 - 28 Apr 65 William F. Raborn 28 Apr 65 – 30 Jun 66

... Recommended SAM Site Strikes
 The President & DoD Ignored Advice

April - May 1965 EB-66s From Shaw AFB Arrived at Tan Son Nhut AB Then Went to Takhli RTAFB

Detected SAM Radar Signals



Warned F-105 & F-4 Strike Pilots

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

USAF Fighters



F-105D

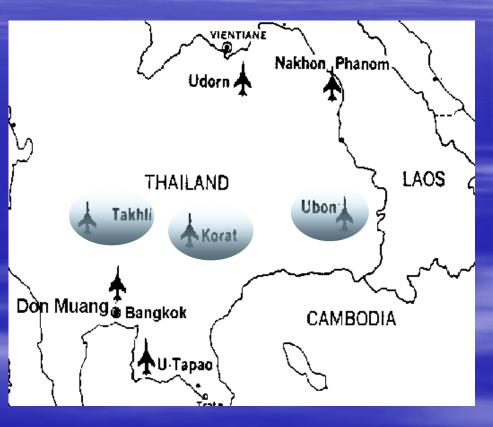




Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

April - June 1965

- USAF Added Fighters to Thai Bases
- <u>7 Apr</u> 45 TFS 18 F-4Cs From MacDill to Ubon
- <u>8 Apr</u> 563 TFS 18 F-105s From McConnell to Takhli
- <u>12 Jun</u> **357 TFS** 18 F-105s
 From McConnell to Korat
- <u>15 Jun</u> <u>12</u> TFS 18 F-105s
 From Kadena to Korat
- <u>26 Jun</u> <u>30</u> TFS 18 F-105s From Yokota to Takhli



May - July 1965

U.S. Gov't Refused to Strike SAM Sites

- <u>16 May</u> Security Council Target Meeting. Pres Johnson: "How about SAM sites?" McNamara: "Go after MiG airfields With B-52s first."
- <u>25 May</u> Rolling Thunder 16 Prohibited Strikes Against MiG Bases and SAM Sites
- <u>27 May</u> JCS Recommended B-52s Bomb SAM Sites. McNamara: "Not yet. SAMs had not interfered with Rolling Thunder."
- <u>26 June</u> JCS to McNamara: Go After SAM Sites "... as they near operational status." Denied.

 <u>3 July</u> – JCS to McNamara: Strike SAM sites before they are completed. Denied.

18 July 1965

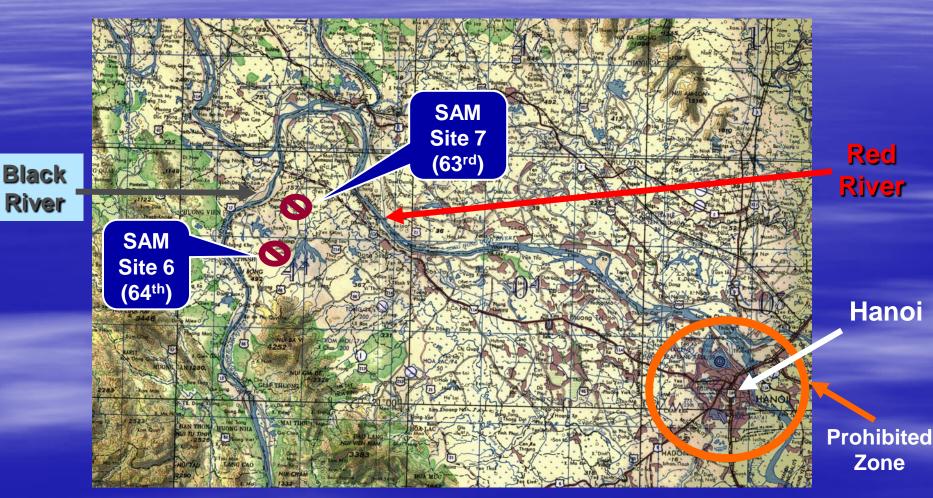
NVN's 236th SAM Reg. Completed Tng

• 63rd & 64th Battalions Moved to Two New SAM Sites 30 Miles NW of Hanoi

Ringed Both Sites With AAA ~ 130 Guns

Located in Path of Rolling Thunder Strikes





SAM Site 7

HANOI SAM SITE NO. 7

Recon Photo Taken 20 July 65



NVN Sets Trap

"… send our missile forces outside the Hanoi area …"

"... secure the element of surprise ..."

"... conduct a mobile ambush ..."

Have Available "... fake missiles ... made from bamboo and bamboo matting ..."

21 July 1965 NVN's Trap

<u>06:00 Hours</u>: AAA units "... were in position and ready to fight to protect the missiles ..."

<u>20:30 Hours</u>: "... missile battalions were fully prepared and ready for battle ..."

23 July 1965 Friday

1st Day of Rolling Thunder 24

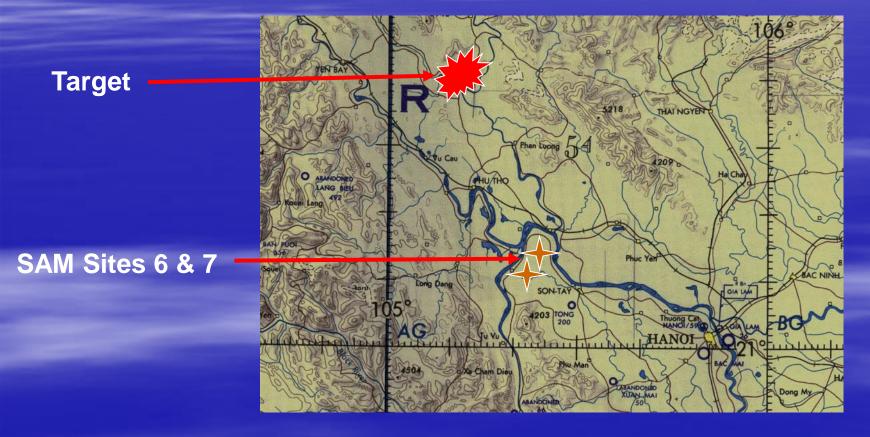
EB-66s Detected New Fan Song Signals West of Hanoi

Coincidentally ...

Advance Party of 47 TFS Arrived at Ubon to Replace 45 TFS (F-4Cs)

24 July 1965 Saturday

Target: Lang Chi Munitions Factory (JCS 47.2)



Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

24 July 1965 Lang Chi Munitions Factory

- Four Flights of F-105s from Takhli to Bomb Factory Storage Area
- Two Flights of F-4Cs From Ubon For MiG CAP
- F-4C Crew of "Leopard 02": Capt Richard Paul "Pop" Keirn – 47 TFS Capt Roscoe Henry Fobair - 45 TFS



24 July 1965 1st SAM Shoot-Down

- RB-66C Detected SAM Radar Signals
- Called Warning: "Bluebells Ringing"
- 63rd & 64th Battalions Each Fired 2 SAMs
- Launches Controlled by Soviet Advisors
- F-4C 63-7599 "Leopard 02" Direct Hit -Crashed

24 July 1965 1st SAM Shoot-Down



24 July 1965 F-4C "Leopard 02" Crew

Keirn Ejected and Was Captured the Next Day

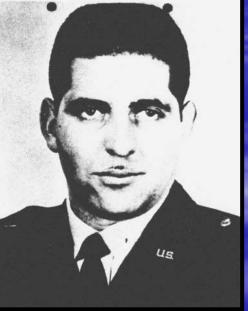
Fobair Was KIA





POW





KIA

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

24 - 25 July 1965 NVN Reset Their Trap

- 63rd & 64th Batt'ns Moved to Other Sites

Relocated by 10:00 AM 25 July

AAA Guns & Dummy Missiles Remained

Ready For Expected U.S. Retaliation

26 July 1965 NSC Decided on SAM Site Strikes - Two White House NSC Meetings

VP Humphrey

Pres Johnson



Dean Rusk

Similar to EXCOM Debates During Cuban Crisis

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

Robert

McNamara

26 July 1965 **NSC Decided on SAM Site Strikes** Three Main Issues: - How Many Sites to Strike – 2, 3, or all 7 - Soviet Union Reaction - Affects on Other Targets if SAM Sites **Not Struck**

26 July 1965 White House Decision

- Pres Johnson: If SAM Sites Not Destroyed, Rolling Thunder Targets Must be Removed.
- Unlike Cuba, No Diplomacy to Preclude Attack
- JCS Decided on Attacking Sites 6 & 7
- SAM Sites Blocked Rolling Thunder Targets

6:55 PM - Pres Johnson: "Take Them Out."

 Four F-105 Squadrons Tasked to Strike Two SAM Sites – 12 Planes Each, 46 Total

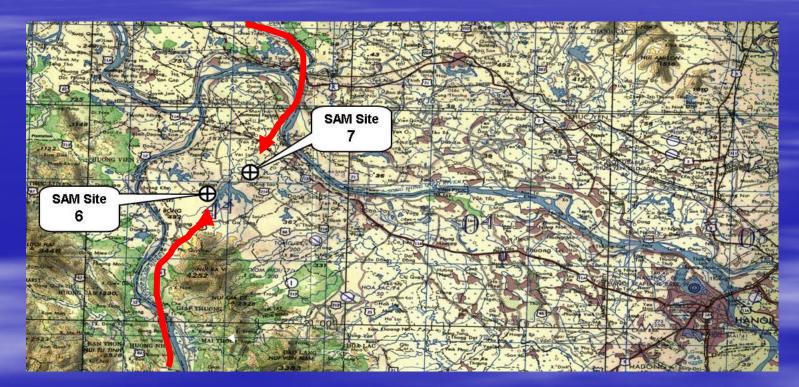
Korat – 357 TFS & 12 TFS – SAM Site 6

Takhli – 563 TFS & 80 TFS – SAM Site 7

Napalm, Rockets, & CBUs

One of Air War's Most Significant Missions ...
 Lessons Learned

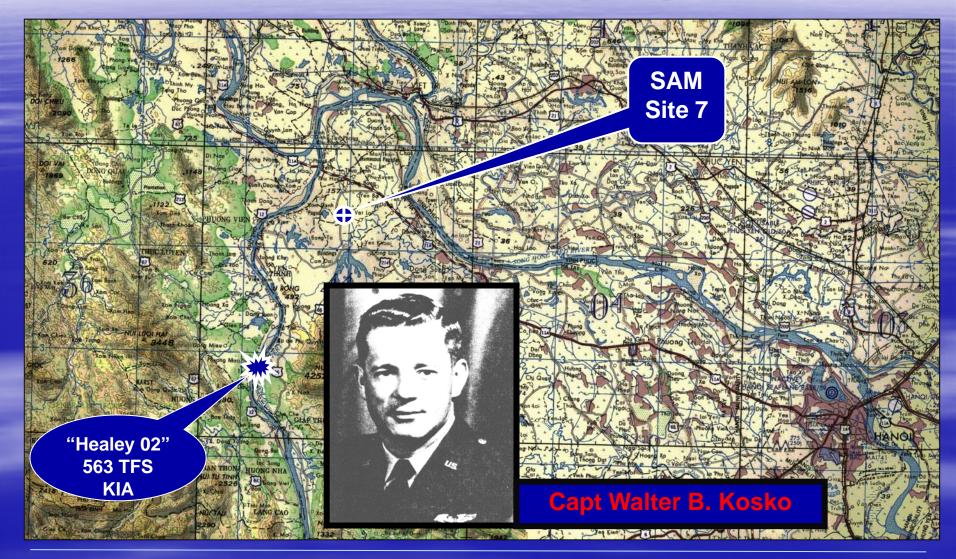
Takhli to Attack SAM Site 7 From North



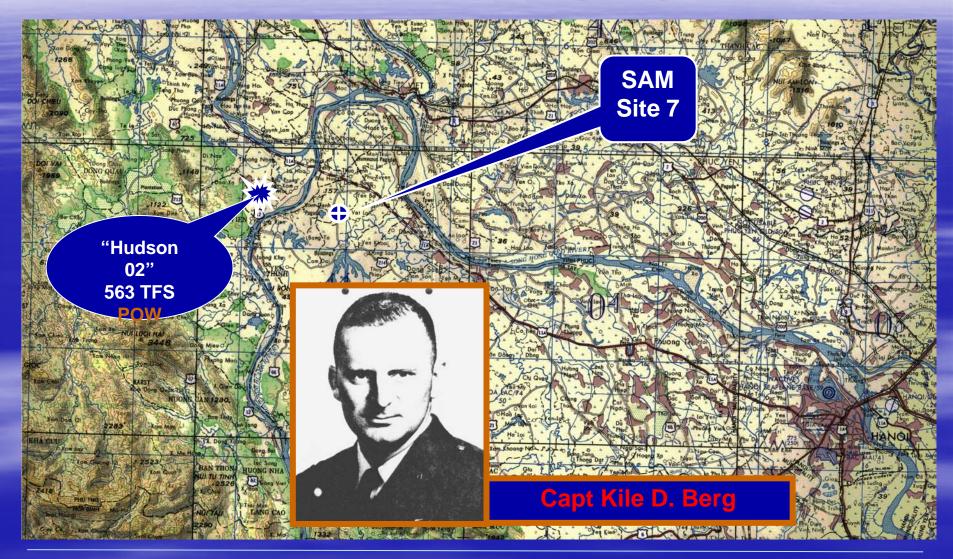
Korat to Attack SAM Site 6 From South

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

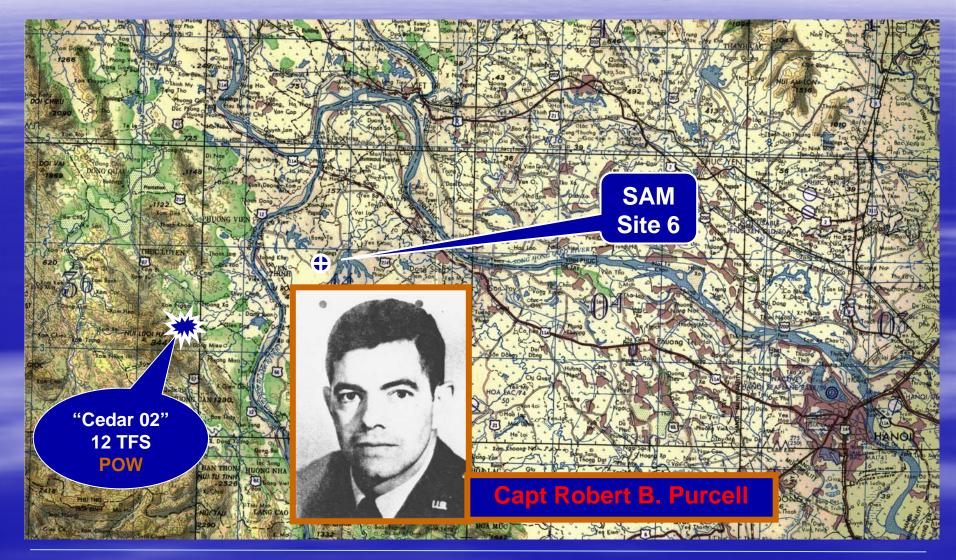
27 July 1965 **"Operation Spring High"** Low Altitude Ingress – 50 feet, 500+ Kts AAA Burst <u>Above</u> Attacking F-105s NVN Gun Crews Hacked Down **Earthen Berms To Fire Lower** Four F-105s Downed in **Target Area**



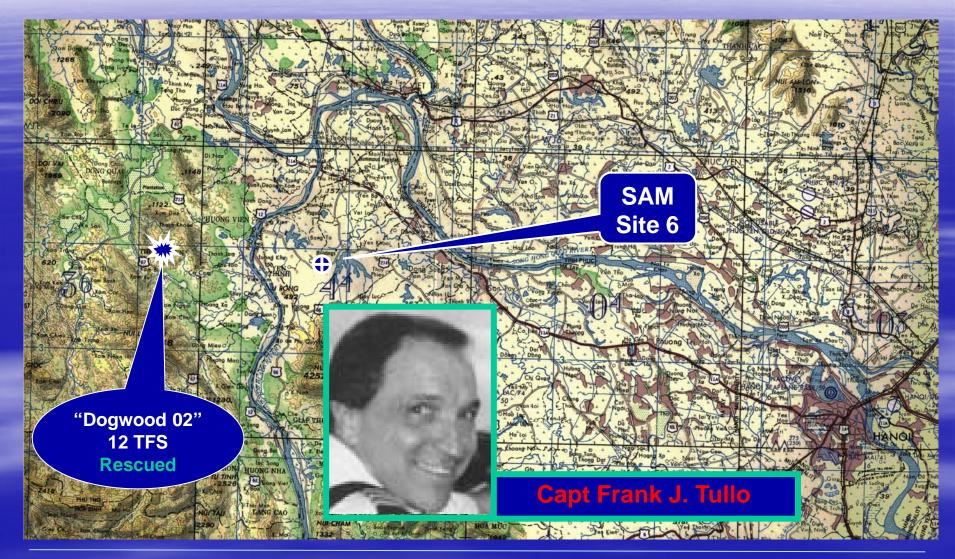
Coming To Grips With SAM Sites



Coming To Grips With SAM Sites



Coming To Grips With SAM Sites



Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

27 July 1965 Tullo Rescue First Rescue Use of CH-3C Helicopter Tail Number 63-9635 - "Shed 35" Pilots - Capt George Martin, 1Lt Keese



27 July 1965 Tullo & His Rescuers

Capt Tullo



Capt Martin

1Lt

Keese

27 July 1965 More F-105 Losses

Two F-105s in Mid-Air Collision



Both 357 TFS Pilots Died



Maj Jack G. Farr

Capt William J. "Black Bart" Barthelmas, Jr.

27 July 1965 "Spring High" Results Six of 46 F-105s Lost (13%) Three Pilots Killed Two Pilots Captured One Pilot Rescued

Lessons Learned:

- SAM Sites and Their AAA a Serious Threat

- Major Improvements Needed

Aug - Dec 1965 Critical Period in Air War

See-Saw Battles With SAM Sites

Fast-Track Pentagon Tech Programs

6 August 1965 Rolling Thunder 26 & 27

SAM Sites And Their AAA Guns Now on Target List

But ...

Only Those Outside Hanoi & Haiphong

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

11 August 1965 SAMs Scored Again

SAMs Downed A-4E From USS Midway

Lt JG Donald Hubert Brown, Jr. KIA

NVN's Second SAM Success

12 - 13 August 1965 **"Operation Iron Hand"** Navy Acft Hunted For SAM Site 124 Sorties Over Two Days AAA Downed 5 Acft, Damaged 7 Three Pilots Rescued, Two KIA "Iron Hand" Became Name of All SAM **Site Hunter-Killer Missions**

12 - 13 August 1965 JCS & HQ USAF Anti-SAM Programs

JCS "Prong Tong" Study & Report

- Study North Vietnamese SAM Employment
- Identify Short-Term Improvements to U.S. Air Ops
- Study AAA Integration With SAM Defenses

Air Staff Formed a Task Force

- Study SAM Threat
- Recommend Means for Coping With Threat

Air Staff Anti-SAM Task Force

Headed by BG Kenneth C. "KC" Dempster

- Research Division, Directorate of Tactical Fighter Requirements (AF/RDQRT)

- 48 Years Old. WW II B-26 Pilot

- His Leadership Critical to All USAF Anti-SAM Programs



Air Staff Anti-SAM Task Force Problem Statement

"What is the most effective means of neutralizing the threat posed by SAMS and the complementing heavy AAA in Southeast Asia?"

Air Staff Anti-SAM Task Force Approach

Accept Political Constraints, i.e. ROEs

Two Time Frames:

Group A – Short Term Solutions

Group B – Longer Term Solutions

Involve Contractors & Encourage All Ideas

Expedite Procurement (QRC)

Eglin AFB Anti-SAM Seminar 16 – 18 Aug 1965

USAF & Navy Agencies Briefed Their Programs

Developed Concept of Operations For Special Anti-SAM Aircraft – Genesis Of Wild Weasels

Recommended Near-Term Solutions:

- Refine Navy's Shrike Anti-Radiation Missile

- Field ECM Radar Jamming Pods

- Improve Radar Homing & Warning Systems (RHAW)

Solutions Adopted by Dempster Committee

Shrike Radar-Homing Missile Navy Developed AGM-45 at China Lake



Reached SEA in March 1966

Radar Jamming Pod

Carried on Outboard Wing Stations of F-105s and F-4s



Reached SEA in September 1966

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

Aug - Sept 1965 SAMs Growing Threat

18 SAM Sites Confirmed, 18 More Suspected

Sites Camouflaged & Equipment Mobile

Finding SAM Sites Was Main Problem

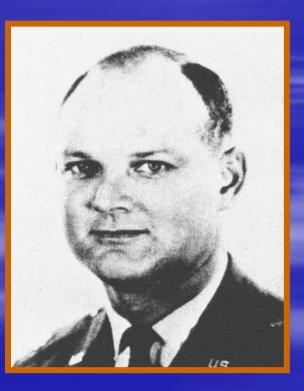
More F-105 Losses

F-105 Pilots Continued Hunting for SAM Sites ... the Hard Way 16 Sept 65 – Two Losses to AAA on SAM–Site Search



Lt Col Robbie	Maj Ray
Risner	Merritt
CO of 67 TFS	67 TFS

Both Pilots POWs. Released 12 Feb 73



20 & 23 Sept 1965 Pilots Learned to Avoid SAMs

Navy And USAF Pilots Devised "SAM Break" Maneuver

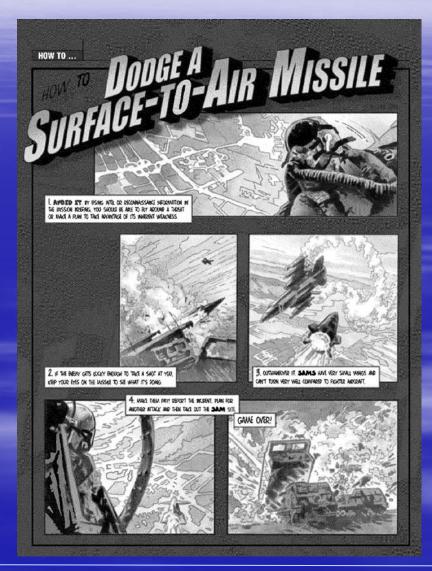
"...a high-speed dive past the rising missile, followed by a sharp pull up and change of direction."

SAM Break Still Used

Airman Magazine Summer 2005

"How To Dodge A Surface-To-Air Missile"

... In Your **F-16**



Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

23 Sept 1965 Dempster Air Staff Committee Anti-SAM Roadmap

Seminal Document ...

- Started USAF Programs to Counter the SAM Threat
- 22 Short-Term & 25 Long-Term Actions
- Identified Air Staff Action Offices
- Provided Priority, Direction & Funding

Dempster Committee Anti-SAM Directives

Develop Radar Homing & Warning Systems (RHAW) for Fighters

 Develop & Deploy "Hunter/Killer" Force. (Became Wild Weasels)

Field Improved ECM Jamming Pods

Dempster Committee Anti-SAM Program Management Used Quick Reaction Capability (QRC) Procedures

Allowed Contractors to Work to "Best Commercial Practices" Vs MILSPEC

 Program Managers Worked Fast, Communicated Informally, and Relied on Trust

Dempster Committee Anti-SAM Program USAF Program Manager

Maj Irwin Joel "Pierre" Levy

Worked For
 Gen Dempster
 in The
 Pentagon

Electronic Warfare
 Expert



Dempster Committee Anti-SAM Program Contractor PM - Applied Technology Corporation (ATI)

 Dr. John Grigsby VP Engineering

Provided "Vector" RHAW Systems

Designated APR-25/26



Applied Technology CorporationRHAW Cockpit Display Called "Vector"



Dempster Committee Anti-SAM Systems Two-Seat F-100F Selected for Hunter/Killer Platform (Wild Weasel I)



Used ATI Vector System

Four Acft Modified at North American Aviation (NAA) in Long Beach, CA

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

Wild Weasel I Testing at Eglin AFB FL Highest Priority of All Testing at Eglin Testing Combined With Aircrew Tng Two Project Officers – TAC & AFSC

Maj Jim Odem – Pilot TAWC TAC



Capt Joe Telford – EWO APGC AFSC

Wild Weasel I Aircrew Test Team

Six Pilots & 5 EWOs – All Volunteers

<u>Pilots</u>

Capt Al Lamb Capt Maury Fricke Capt Ed White Capt Les Lindenmuth Capt John Pitchford

Capt George Kerr

 Maj Garry Willard – Team Lead

<u>EWOs</u> Capt Ed Sandelius Capt Don Madden Capt Jack Donovan Capt Walt Lifsey Capt Bob Trier



Wild Weasel I Test Plan

Three Objectives:

- Determine Accuracy of ATI's RHAW System

- Determine Crews' Ability to Locate SA-2 Radar

- Develop Tactics For Killing SAM Sites

Deploy to Korat For Combat After Eglin

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

Eglin Wild Weasel I Tests

I1 Oct 1965 – Testing Started

Two F-100Fs Initially

Early Nov 65 – Two More F-100Fs Arrived From NAA

Sept – Nov 1965 Meanwhile the Air War Continued ...

... More Losses to Planes and Pilots

Some Successful Attacks Against SAM Sites

30 Sept 1965 SAMs Downed Another F-105 - Target: Ninh Binh Bridge (JCS 10) 43 NM South of Hanoi

Lt Col Melvin J. Killian, 334 TFS Commander, Downed by SAM

Second USAF Squadron Commander Lost to SAMs or Their AAA



Lt Col Melvin J. Killian - KIA

17 Oct 1965 1st Successful SAM Site Attack

Navy Attack on SAM Site Near Kep Airfield

Iron Hand A-6A and A-4Es From Carrier USS Independence Destroyed Missiles, Transporter, & Radar Van





A-6A Intruder

A-4E Skyhawk

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

31 Oct 1965 Iron Hand Attack

A Navy A-4E Led F-105s From Takhli in Attacks Against Two SAM Sites

- A-4E Equipped with Melpar APR-23 RHAW
- F-105 Carried More Bombs
- Led by Lt Cmdr Trent Richard Powers From USS Oriskany
 - SAM Sites Destroyed ...
- Lt Cmdr Powers KIA From AAA

31 Oct 1965 Iron Hand Attack

Powers Posthumously Awarded the Navy Cross



Lt Cmdr Trent Richard Powers - KIA



U.S. Navy Cross

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

5 Nov 1965 Another Iron Hand Loss

A-4s With RHAW to Lead F-105s From Korat

A-4s From USS Midway Aborted

F-105s Pressed On

Lt Col George C. McCleary

 357 TFS Commander –
 KIA by a SAM

 Third USAF Squadron Commander Lost to SAMs or Their AAA



Lt Col George C. McCleary - KIA

6 - 8 Nov 1965 McCleary RESCAP Losses

Two A-1Es. Both Pilots POWs

CH-3C 63-09685 "Jolly Green 85"

- Same Chopper That Rescued Capt Tullo

- Three Crewmembers POWs, One Rescued

Searches Called Off After 3 Days & Many Damaged Planes

5 - 8 Nov 1965 SAM Sites Didn't Always Win

Air Force and Navy Planes Found & Attacked
 4 SAM Sites Over 4 Days

NVN's 236th Missile Regiment Out of Action

Same Unit That Had Downed F-4C on 24 July

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

Destroyed SAM Radar



Oct - Dec 1965 Anti-SAM Equipment Delivered

In 19 Nov 65 – USAF Ordered 500 Sets of RHAW Systems For F-105s From ATI

Draft \$6.7M Contract Written on Blackboard
 & Documented by Polaroid Photo

APR-25/26 Installed at Takhli in Dec 65 ...

... Less Than 3 Months After Dempster Committee Direction

APR-25/26 RHAW System



Nov 1965 F-100F Wild Weasels Deployed

19 Nov 65 – Testing at Eglin Completed

25 Nov 65 – Four F-100Fs Arrived at Korat



28 Nov 1965 F-100F Wild Weasel Test Team At Korat



Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

Dec 1965 2 Types of Wild Weasel Missions

Hunter-Killer Missions With F-105 Flights



Strike-Force-Protection Missions

3 Dec 1965 1st Wild Weasel Hunter-Killer Mission "Bamboo" Flight With 469 TFS F-105 Pilots #1 – Maj Bob Krone – 469th Ops Officer **#2 – Capt Jerry Driscoll #3 – Capt Fred Coleman #4 – Capt Steve Sanders** F-100F – Maj Garry Willard & EWO Capt Walt Lifsey F-100F – Capt Les Lindenmuth & EWO Capt Bob Trier

Did Not Detect SAM Site ...

- ... So Bombed Army Barracks in NVN

20 Dec 1965 First Wild Weasel Combat Loss

- F-100F Wild Weasel Part of Strike Package of 12
 F-105s Attacking Kep Airfield
- F-100F "Apple 01" Hit by AAA & Crew Ejected





Pilot Capt John Pitchford – POW

EWO Capt Bob Trier – KIA

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

22 Dec 1965 First Wild Weasel SAM Site Kill SAM Site Near Yen Bai 58 NM NW of Hanoi F-100F & Four F-105s From 421 TFS

 "Spruce" Flight: #1 – Capt Don Langwell
 #2 – Capt Van Heywood
 #3 – Capt Bob Bush
 #4 – Capt Art Brattkus



#5 – Capt Al Lamb & EWO Capt Jack Donovan

22 Dec 1965 First Wild Weasel SAM Site Kill



Keith Ferris Painting "First In"

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

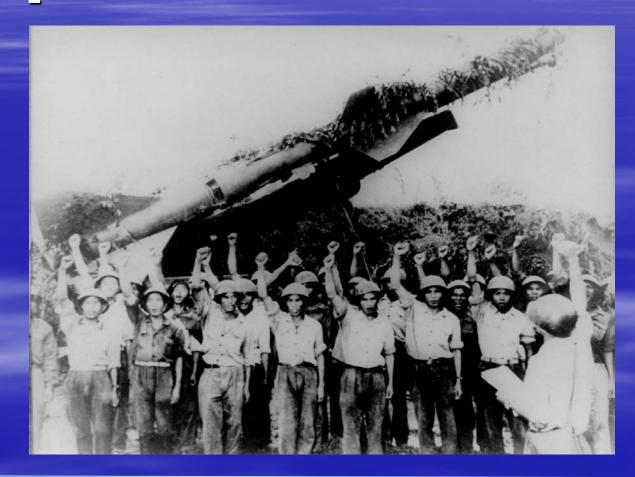
23 Sept 2005 Wild Weasel Reunion Keith Ferris Donated Painting to AF Museum



Keith Ferris Al Lamb Jack Donovan Van Heywood

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites

25 Dec 65 – 31 Jan 66 36-Day Bombing Halt Over NVN Interrupted SAM-Site Battles



1965 U.S. Anti-SAM Program Accomplishments

- Fielded RHAW Equip For Fighters
- Developed Flight Tactics For Evading SAMs
- Fielded Improved Shrike Missiles
- Started Stand-Off Jamming (EB-66s)
- Developed Anti-SAM Acft (Wild Weasels)

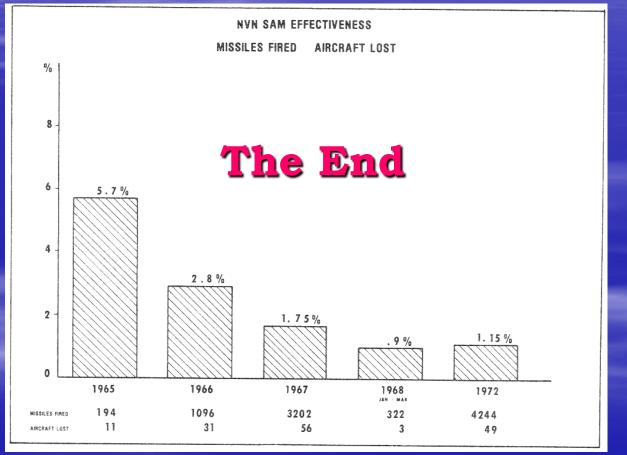
• • •

Fielded Jamming Pods For Fighters

All Programs Still Used In Some Form Today

U.S. Anti-SAM Program Results

Decreased U.S. Acft Losses Per SAM Firings



Momyer "Airpower in Three Wars" pg 136

Coming To Grips With SAM Sites