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# FWD: RE: (SW/TLC) B-52 losses over North Vietnam [was Stealth debate]

Date: Thu, 26 Aug 1999 22:45:09 -0700

From: "Terry W. Colvin"

Subject: FWD: RE: (SW/TLC) B-52 losses over North Vietnam [was Stealth debate]

Terry,

This is a VERY late response to your comments below, but I was doing some "catch-up reading in my TLC files and ran across the following comment.

> The main cause of the losses was, IMHO, the inflexible  
 > tactics imposed by  
 > PACAF, which controlled all Air Force ops. USAF until the late '80s was  
 > dominated by SAC and SAC's types of thinking in many ways set  
 > tactics.

I have to defend PACAF on these points.

To keep the record straight, I have no dog in the fight - I was still in SEA for almost two months after Linebacker ended and during that time I belonged to Headquarters Command - not to PACAF or to SAC. However, I know how the Buffs worked because I did a LOT of Arclight targeting during my last (4th) year in SEA. From SEA (Vientiane) I went to PACAF Air Defense Analysis Center (ADAC).

There I was shown a file copy of the message drafted at PACAF, and signed for release by the Commander (Gen Lucius D. Clay, Jr.) warning SAC, on the basis of the first night's operation, that the Vietnamese understood their tactics completely, and would take advantage of the sequential bombers "in trail" formation in the future. SAC dictated the tactics, which are well described in the earlier email. PACAF did not own the B-52s, and specifically did NOT dictate tactics to them.

I was also shown the very brusque SAC reply to the PACAF warning which said, in essence, "nobody knows more than we do about flying heavy bombers, so mind your own business." Two days later, after they had lost at least 6 Buffs as I recall, they changed to multiple run-in and egress headings. I too have heard that the aircrews had to force the issue of tactics to get them changed, but don't know the full truth on this point.

The problem you (or Art) described - inflexibility - was right on, but the

guilty party was in Omaha, not Honolulu.

For what its worth,

Best Regards,

Gerry Frazier  
NKP TFA intel 1969-70  
Udon HQ 7/13AF Intel 1970-72  
Project 404 Intel 1972-73  
TLC Brotherhood #261

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Terry W. Colvin, Sierra Vista, Arizona (USA) < fortean@primenet.com >  
Home Page: < <http://www.geocities.com/Area51/Shadowlands/8832> >  
Sites: Fortean Times \* Northwest Mysteries \* Mystic's Cyberpage \*  
TLCB \* U.S. Message Text Formatting (USMTF) Program

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