

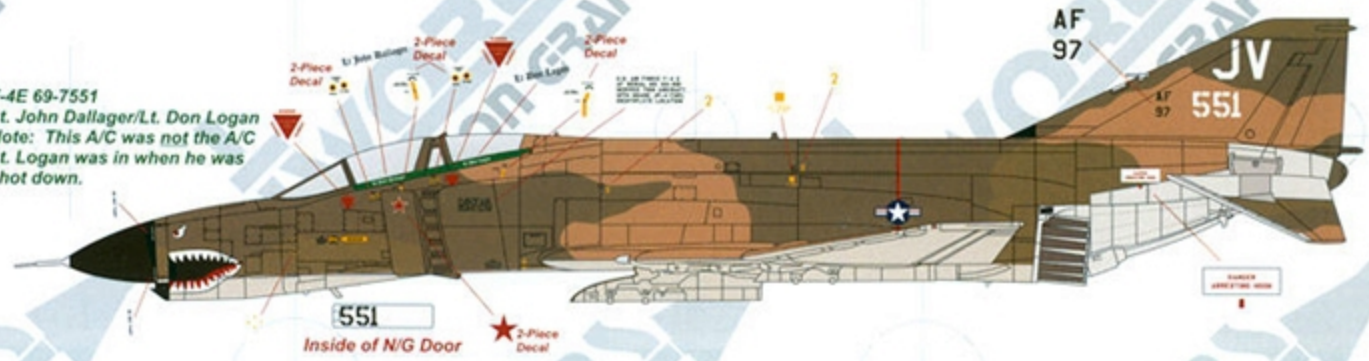


Two Accurate, Two Colorful Twobobs!

- WHAT'S OUT THERE?  
1/48th Hasegawa F-4E (Unslatted)  
1/48th Fujimi F-4E (Unslatted)  
1/48th Italeri F-4E  
1/48th Revell/Monogram F-4E  
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Kendall Model Company Cockpit Set  
Black Box Cockpit Set  
Cutting Edge Ejection Seats  
Eduard Detail Set  
Verlinden Update Set



F-4E 68-339  
Col. J.D. Pewitt  
"Chico the Gunfighter"

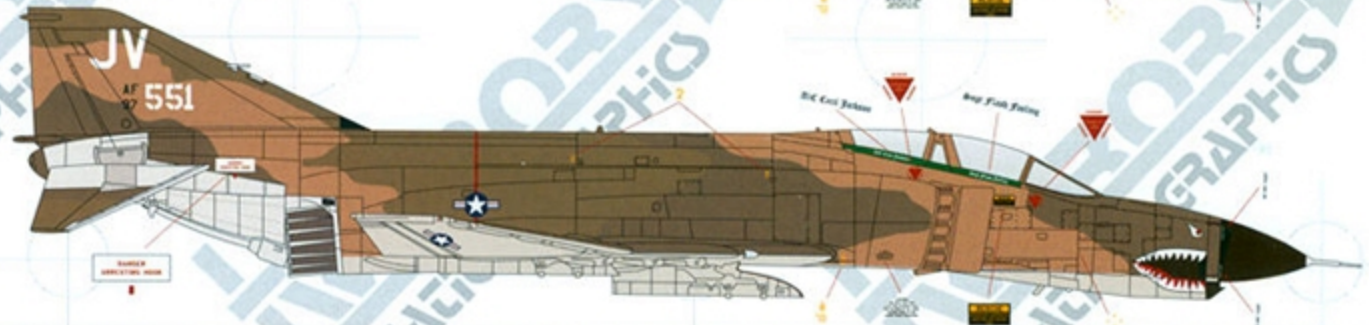


F-4E 69-7551  
Lt. John Dallager/Lt. Don Logan  
Note: This A/C was not the A/C Lt. Logan was in when he was shot down.

Lt. John Dallager retired in 2003 with the rank of Lt. General. At the time he was the commandant of the USAF Academy. He is a command pilot with over 2,900 hours in the F-4, A-10 and F-15. He has also accumulated over 600 combat hours over Southeast and Southwest Asia as well as Bosnia.

F-4E 69-7551 had an unconfirmed MIG-21 kill during late Sept./early Oct. 1972. The kill marking was applied but the kill was never confirmed.

Special thanks to Don Logan and Wade Meyers for all the great help and references on this sheet. Finally got it done Wade!!



### Chico's Story

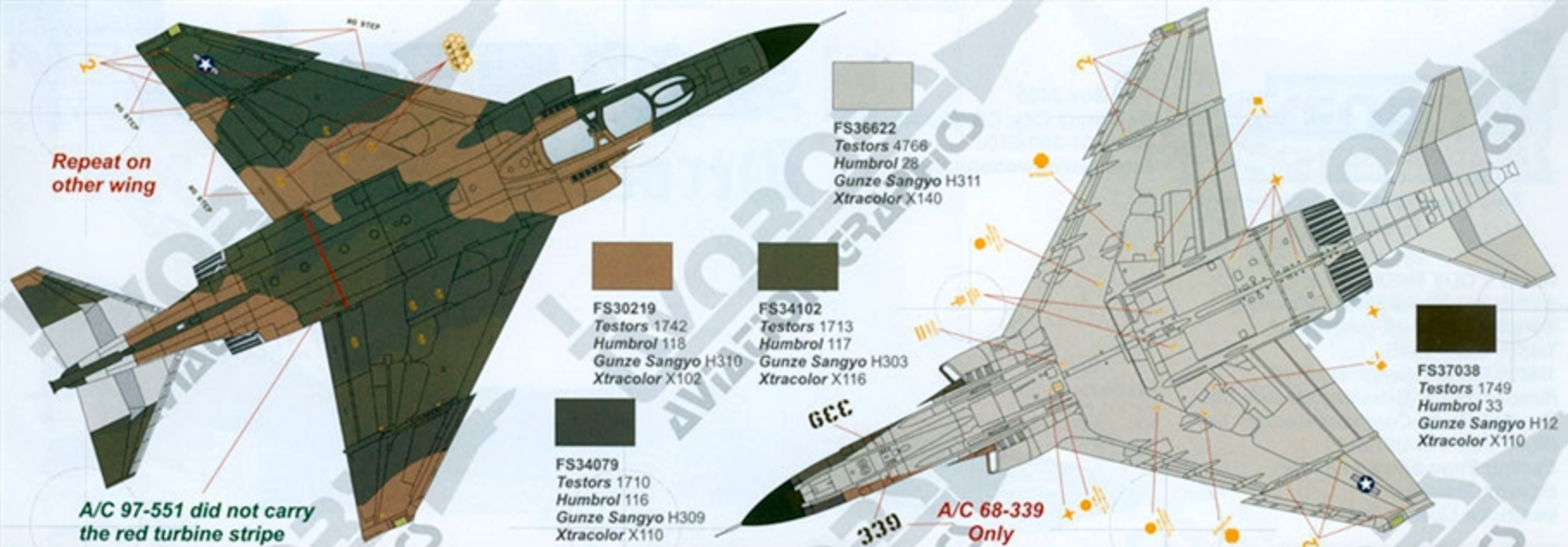


All of Wade Meyer's artwork can be found at <http://www.http://wademeyersart.tripod.com>. Receive a 20% discount on Chico the Gunfighter when you mention this decal sheet! E-mail [chicoartist@yahoo.com](mailto:chicoartist@yahoo.com) for details.

Things were getting pretty hot in upper South Vietnam during the spring 1972 North Vietnamese Army invasions across the DMZ. As a result, a somewhat unique mission for one F-4E Phantom, little known until this painting, was born of opportunity and circumstance, and not a little initiative on one officers part. At the time of this bold enemy offensive, the Da Nang based 366th Tactical Fighter Wing Gunfighters was the last F-4 Wing in South Vietnam, and very close to the DMZ. These factors inspired Gunfighters Director of Operations Colonel J. D. Pewitt to conceive the idea of operating one of the Wings F-4Es as a free-roaming and heavily armed strike-recce aircraft to help stem the fast-moving enemy tide and collect up to the minute feedback on rapidly changing NVA positions and operations.

This aircraft attacked targets based on intelligence information regarding troop movements, ammunition storage, POL, riverboat traffic and other assets in the areas near to and above the DMZ. There being no existing provision under the Rules of Engagement for such a unique aircraft operating alone, Chico operated administratively as a Stormy Fast FAC, which was one callsign of then-existing F-4 high-speed FACs at Da Nang. Under the ROE, this allowed Chico to roam alone and unescorted. HQ TAF assigned the callsign "Chico" for two reasons: First, it was an established FAC callsign (in keeping with the FAC persona). Secondly, the callsign was no longer in use, so there would be no confusion with real FACs performing controller duties. Accordingly, the Chico name alerted airborne FACs that a special F-4 was available.

After consulting with armament technicians, and subsequent approval for the unique mission from HQ TAF, an F-4E-37-MC (68-339) belonging to the 421st TFS Black Widows was fitted with SUU-23/A gun pods on the outboard pylons; a pair of Navy Mk 20 Rockeye II Cluster Bombs on each inboard station; one ALQ-87 ECM pod carried in the right front Sparrow missile bay; and one 600-gallon centerline drop tank. The USN Mk 20 munition was readily available at Da Nang from the Marine Corps F-4 contingent deployed there, and was selected because it was deemed the best weapon for tank, boat, and ammunition dump attacks. It also provided more reliable coverage -OVER-



-CONT.- For highly transient targets such as trucks and missile transports than the usual Air Force Mk 82 Snakeye 500 lb. bombs or Napalm canisters. I believe, and the body of evidence suggests, that Chico was likely the only USAF Phantom to employ Mk 20 Rockeye IIs in Vietnam. The SUU-23/A gun pod, an improvement of the SUU-16/A Ram Air Turbine driven pod, had been in use with the Gunfighters since the late 1960s. The Chico loadout was easily reconfigured so the aircraft could be used for normal daily strike missions.

Col. Pewitt flew this Phantom frequently from April to June 1972. In fact, there were only five pilots who flew 68-339 in her Chico configuration: Col. Pewitt; Lt Col Al LaGrou, 366 TFW Stan/Eval Chief; Capt. Jack G. Merrell, Jr., 366 TFW Command Post, and supplier of these five names; Col. George W. Rutter, 366 TFW Wing Commander; and a Brigadier General from Saigon (HQ MACV), who came up to Da Nang for a visit and one Chico mission. In June, the Wing moved to Takhlit RTAB, Thailand, and, due to the distances involved, it was no longer practical to operate the relatively short ranged/short notice Chico the Gunfighter. The aircraft was utilized with devastating success in its intended purpose, but remained the only USAF F-4 operated in this configuration and mission. She was truly a special aircraft. The accompanying painting depicts a mission flown on 21 May 1972 in the Ashau River Valley just below the DMZ. Col. Pewitt and his WSO Lt. Steve "Bubba" Craighead earned their nomination for the Silver Star medal this day for successful repeated gun-strafts attacks on a very heavily armed enemy site pinning down friendly troops.

"There were a total of three F-4 Fast FAC call signs in 1972, all with the 366 TFW at Da Nang: Chico, the subject of my painting (there was only one aircraft, F-4E 68-339, which operated as Chico), and the two regular high-speed FAC groups, Stormy and Gunsmoke. The all out North Vietnamese Easter invasions on three fronts into South Vietnam called for radical changes to the traditional way FAC operations were conducted up to that time. Now the enemy was pouring tremendous numbers of troops, AAA guns and SAMs, the latter including the SA-2 radar guided missile and the brand new SA-7 heat-seeker, into the region encompassing the DMZ and the northern sectors of Military Region I, in which Da Nang was located. With all this enemy firepower, it became necessary for Fast FACs to sustain speeds of at least 400-450 knots IAS at the very low altitudes they were forced to operate lest they come back with big holes! The Chico concept was but one 366 TFW innovation at this critical time. Chico complimented the Strike Lead tactics Stormy and Gunsmoke FACs were employing. Strike Lead meant that a Stormy or Gunsmoke FAC (flown by a seasoned crew) would take off with a bombed up F-4 on his wing, and together they would go hunting. The FAC, or Strike Lead, would mark the target with smoke rockets (and sometimes by strafing the target with his internal cannon, the rising dust marking the target), and while his wingman immediately attacked the fresh target, the FAC would move ahead to another hot area.

My last mission started early in the morning of July 5, 1972, about 2:00 AM when my pilot, Captain "Nordie" Norwood (also the squadron flight scheduler) awoke me from sleep with a phone call. Captain Norwood and I had been scheduled for two days off (July 4th and 5th) and I had just gone to bed following Independence Day celebration at the O-Club. Nordie told me that Major Bill Elander's backseater had gone DNIIF (duty not involving flying) due to a cold, and asked me if I wanted to fly backseat for Major Bill Elander on the "north go" in the morning. Bill, my flight commander, was an excellent pilot and knew the F-4 well, having just come from the Thunderbirds where he had served as Material Officer and pilot of the -6 aircraft. I told Nordie I would fly and asked him for the details.

The TOT (time over target) was scheduled for 9:30 AM with takeoff at 7:30 AM. Flight planning and briefings started at 4:00 AM. Major Elander and I would be flying as BASS 04 the fourth aircraft (67-339) in a flight of four F-4Es, all crewed by members of the 469th TFS. BASS flight was one of four F-4E four ship formations which made up the strike force from the 388th TFW. The first three four ships were the strike aircraft and were armed with 12 MK-82 500 pound bombs each. BASS flight was the Strike Escort flight, with each aircraft loaded with two AIM-7s in the aft Sparrow wells; four AIM-9s, two on each of the inboard pylons; and 20mm ammo in the nose. The two forward Sparrow wells were occupied with ECM jamming pods. All 16 of the aircraft had chaff bundles loaded in the speed brakes. Opening the speed brakes in flight caused the chaff to fall out and deploy. The 16 aircraft took off and flew east over Laos, South Vietnam, and performed a rendezvous with six KC-135 tankers over the Gulf of Tonkin. After receiving fuel, the aircraft formed up into the ingress formation of four rows of four aircraft each, the spacing between each row was about 1000 feet and the spacing between rows was about one half mile. The 12 strike aircraft were in the first three rows, with BASS flight in the "cannon fodder" position across the rear. Our aircraft (67-339 assigned to the 34th TFS with JJ tail code), flying as 04 was on the outside right corner of the formation. A low cloud bank obscured the ground below as we crossed the eastern coast of North Vietnam, due east of Hanoi. With the top of the clouds at about 5,000 to 6,000 feet, we remained at an altitude of around 20,000 feet to give us plenty of clear air below to allow visual acquisition of any SAMs which might be fired at us. We were receiving no activity on our RHAW gear and as a result the ECM pods were still in standby. Things all seemed uneventful as we continued our ingress to the target.

"BASS 02's been hit" broke the radio silence. We looked to our left and saw BASS 02 (67-296 assigned to the 469th TFS with JV tail code) going down as Lieutenant Brian Seek, the WSO ejected followed immediately by Captain Bill Spencer the pilot. I remember thinking that at least they were able to get out of the aircraft. About 30 seconds later, "BASS 04 break right" came over the radio, an immediately I felt a hard bank and pull to the right, followed by a strong bump, similar to bumps felt in rough air. I scanned the instrument in the backseat and noticed the engine tachometer readings. No. 1 was at 0% and No. 2 was windmilling at around 28%. I looked over at the circuit breaker panels above the right side console, and noticed the white collars, which indicate when a circuit breaker had popped (opened), were visible on most of the circuit breakers. Bill's voice came over the interphone, "We've been hit! I'm trying an airstart." I replied, "Roger, I'm holding in the ignition circuit breakers, turn right 180 for the shortest distance feet wet", as I reached over to and held in the circuit breakers for the No. 2 engine ignition. Since the aircraft had been trimmed for airspeed of about 420 knots, and with neither engine supplying thrust nor hydraulic pressure for the flight controls, the nose lowered to the dive angle which would hold 420 knots. Bill later said that he had applied right stick to start the turn, watched the System 2 hydraulic pressure drop to 0, and then watched the spoilers on the right wing slowly deploy as the aircraft banked into the turn. As we were turning I looked over to my left and saw a North Vietnamese MiG-21 flying about 200 feet off our left wing. The aircraft was painted with a transparent medium green paint which allowed the silver tint of the aluminum to show through. As soon as the MiG pilot saw me look at him, he broke left and away. Covering the bottom of each wing was a larger red rectangle with a five pointed star cutout in the center. I later determined that these markings represented the North Vietnamese flag. I looked back at the engine instruments and noticed that the No. 2 engine rpm had not changed. Bill called over the interphone "I think we'll have to eject, get ready." As I looked at the altimeter I replied, "Roger ready to eject". We were just starting to enter the clouds and the altimeter reading was passing 7,000 feet. I heard the canopy jettison and felt the cockpit depressurize as it left. Passing through 5,000 feet I saw the cockpit around me blur as the seat fired from the aircraft. It had been just a little over 20 seconds since we had taken the hit. I felt the seat fall away and looked up and saw the parachute blossom above me. The parachute canopy was properly inflated so I made the modification to the parachute canopy which releases four lines at the aft of the canopy, making it more controllable by giving the parachute forward velocity. I looked around, saw Bill in his parachute about one half mile away and the fire ball caused when 339 hit the ground. I removed my survival radio from my vest and made a radio call on Guard channel, "BASS 04B in the chute, I have a visual on 04A with a good chute".

I looked down and saw I was getting close to the ground, so I put the radio away and started to steer the parachute towards a small stand of trees. The rest of the area was rice paddies, and I could see the farmers looking up and pointing at me. I figured my best chance was to land in the trees. As I hit the trees the parachute caught first swinging me like a pendulum below. As I swung forward, the parachute broke loose from the tree allowing me to fall about twenty feet to the ground, landing flat on my back. I got out of my parachute harness, and looking around realized I no longer had my helmet. I had lost it on ejection. I felt a sharp pain in my right shoulder, realizing I had dislocated it; I pulled my arm against my chest which popped my shoulder back into its socket. It was 10:30 AM.

I moved away from my parachute looking for a place to hide. I could hear the barking of dogs and the farmers coming to look for me. About 14 men with rifles surrounded me. The first thing they took was my Seiko watch, followed by my 38 pistol and the rest of my survival gear. I was marched to a village near by and put in one of the huts. After about two hours I was removed from the hut by about six men in uniform (members of the Peoples Militia) and told through sign language and by the soldiers pointing with their guns to start walking down the trail. While I was walking a couple of teenage girls with guns joined in, a camera was brought out, and the typical propaganda pictures of the girls marching the captured American were taken. As the march continued, my shoulder dislocated again. Again I reset it. The soldiers could see that my shoulder was quite painful, so one of them produced a First Aid kit, took a hypodermic syringe out of the kit and proceeded to give me a shot of pain killer. At dusk we arrived in a small village. I was again placed in a small hut and given a cup of hot tea and a small bowl of rice. I was kept in the hut all night.

The next morning the six uniformed men had been replaced by two officers and about 15 soldiers from the North Vietnamese army. We marched for about an hour until we arrived at another village. This village was on a road and two army trucks were waiting in the center of the village. I was blindfolded and put in the back of one of the trucks. We drove most of the day. In the late afternoon we arrived in Hanoi at the prison called the Hanoi Hilton by the U.S. POWs held there.

I spent nine months as a POW being kept in both the Hanoi Hilton and the "show camp" called the Zoo. I was released along with Bill Elander, Bill Spencer, Brian Seek and other POWs in the last group of U.S. POWs to leave Hanoi (released on 29 March 1973).

In discussions with the other members of BASS flight, and based on comments made to me by the North Vietnamese, the tactics used by the MiGs to shoot us down were very simple. The two MiG-21s, directed by a ground radar site, flew a heading, 180 degrees different from the strike force, which aimed them directly at the strike force. They were at a very low altitude, below the clouds, and therefore could not be detected visually by the strike aircraft. The red flags I had observed painted on the bottom of the MiG's wings were there to identify the aircraft as North Vietnamese to prevent ground gunners from accidentally firing on their own aircraft. The MiGs passed under the strike force at high speed, and then performed an Immelmann and rolled out behind the strike force. The MiGs then closed in to Atoll missile range, staying in the F-4's blind spot (an F-4 aircrew cannot see another aircraft as long as it remains below and behind them). Using visual references to determine when they were in range they fired their missiles using the engine exhaust heat from the back row of F-4s as the target. After the missiles were fired, the MiGs "unloaded" and accelerate down and away from the flight. By the time they were detected by the strike flight they were supersonic and about 10,000 feet below the strike force. In this manner the two MiGs were able to shoot down BASS 02 and BASS 04 and escape safely.

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