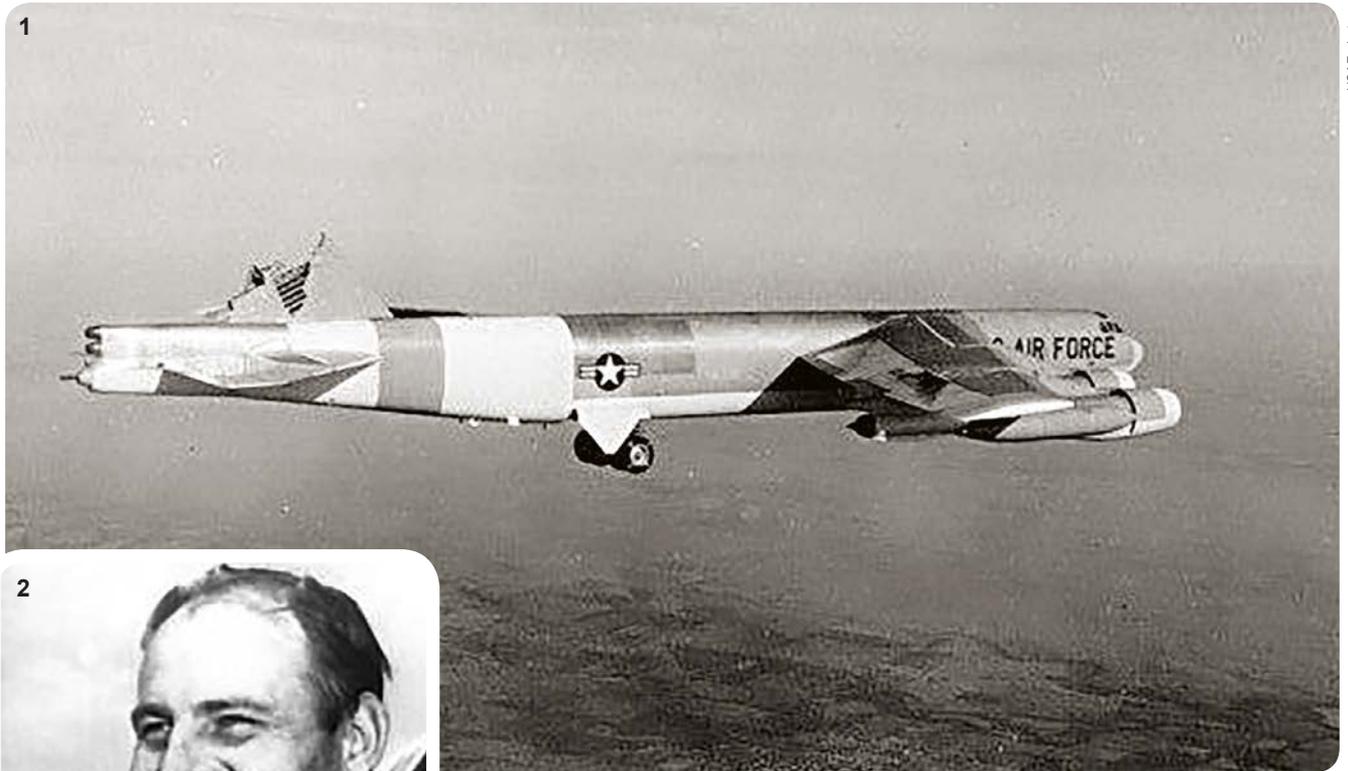


Lucky—and Good



USAF photo



IAF



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1. USAF B-52H bomber, sans vertical stabilizer. 2. B-52 pilot Charles Fisher. 3. The miracle F-15 fighter, safely on the ground. 4. The Israeli F-15. 5. Lacking an entire wing, the Eagle comes in for a landing.

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At times, aviation gods smile on a pilot. Here are two cases in point. First was the Jan. 10, 1964, flight of B-52H bomber, serial No. 61-0023. It was on loan to Boeing with an all-Boeing crew. Flying over Colorado, the BUFF hit ferocious turbulence, which sheared off its huge vertical stabilizer. The pilot, Charles Fisher, got the floundering bomber under control with speed changes, differential thrust, fuel transfers, and application of speed brakes. Somehow, after a six-hour white-knuckle flight, Fisher landed the big bomber safely at Blytheville AFB, Ark. Case No. 2: On May 1, 1983, an Israeli F-15D and an A-4 Skyhawk collided. The A-4 sheared off all of the F-15's right wing. Diving in a tight spiral, the F-15 pilot, Zivi Nedivi, lit the augmentors, which somehow stabilized the fighter and allowed the Eagle to regain altitude. Nedivi landed at a nearby airfield. Only after he exited the cockpit did Nedivi see he had flown and landed a one-wing Eagle.