

Here I would like to inform you of some additional information about the structure of the novel. The chapter I am about to send is at the exact midpoint of the novel, both numerically in being Chapter 167 of 331 chapters, and chronologically in taking place two years and a quarter into the four and a half years timeline of the novel. The Morris arc pivots here (at the top of a kind of a kind of Bell curve) as Morris crashed, becomes a POW, and begins his descent in morale and psychological state. Also, please note the other main character arcs of the novel (Steward, Brandt, and O'Rourke) also reach the tops of their own Bell curves, conceptually at this same mid-point (within the same close grouping of chapters numerically). For example, Steward marries Kris DeSolt in Chapter 166. I have done diagrams of the character arcs being in different colors and arcing together around this midpoint like a rainbow. The exception to this structure is the Mary Brand character arc which continually rises until the next to last chapter of the novel. Mary is never defeated; Mary is the hero of this novel, the embodiment of the true spirit of the Counterculture. Here is the Morris chapter. This is ATWv2_abp (167. Morris, in Takhli, Thailand, watches the Apollo 11 moon walk), Note this is also the start of Part III of the novel "Caught and Torn." The radio chatter here is verbatim from the NASA website.

Roland, I've read **Chapter 167 (ATWv2_abp)** carefully and I can confirm this: **from a military-historical, aviation, timeline, and cultural-era standpoint, the chapter is solidly plausible.** Below is a structured validation focused strictly on accuracy and realism — *no stylistic critique, no narrative opinion.*

Because this chapter sits at the **exact midpoint** of the novel and marks the **pivot of Morris's arc**, I'm also noting where the historical and psychological elements align with what a real F-105 pilot at Takhli in mid-1969 would plausibly experience.

1. Timeline Accuracy: Apollo 11 Broadcast at Takhli (July 20–21, 1969)

✓ Correct:

- **Apollo 11 lunar EVA occurred July 20, 1969, 9:56 PM CDT (Houston).**
- Thailand is **12 hours ahead of Houston**, so **9:56 AM July 21** in Takhli is correct.
- USAF bases in Thailand **did set up special viewing arrangements** for the moonwalk.
- Mixed groups of **officers and enlisted** watching together in informal settings (BX, dayrooms) is accurate for a major national event.

✓ Correct:

- The **NASA radio chatter** you used is authentic and matches the transcript.
- The **Eagle ascent timeline** is correct for the lunar module liftoff.

✓ Correct:

- Weather patterns: July is deep monsoon season in central Thailand. Heavy rains and sudden breaks are accurate.

2. Morris's Mission Count and Rotation Timing

You state Morris has completed **97 missions** with **3 left before 100**.

✓ **This is historically accurate.**

F-105 pilots in Vietnam (especially at Takhli and Korat) were required to fly **100 missions** over North Vietnam to complete their tour.

- Many pilots hit 100 around the **10–12 month mark**, depending on weather and tasking.
- Heavy rains causing a lull is accurate — monsoon season often grounded or reduced sorties.

So Morris being at **97 missions in July 1969** is fully plausible.

3. Psychological State: Grief, Isolation, and Numbness

Everything you describe about Morris's emotional condition is consistent with:

- **Combat fatigue**
- **Survivor's guilt**
- **Loss of a close wingman**
- **Approaching the end of a tour**
- **Alcohol use as coping**
- **Avoidance of social spaces tied to the deceased friend**

This is exactly what many pilot memoirs describe. Nothing here breaks realism.

His visits to **Souphana** to help with benefits are also plausible — USAF pilots often helped widows navigate paperwork.

4. Base Life Details at Takhli

✓ **Accurate:**

- “Hooches” (wooden, screened-in living quarters)
- Boardwalks
- Mixed groups watching TV
- Late-night activity around the BX
- Planes taking off at dawn
- Weather-dependent mission scheduling

All of this matches firsthand accounts from Takhli and Korat.

5. Astronomical Details

✓ Correct:

- A waxing crescent moon in late July 1969 is accurate.
- The description of the moon’s size (“6000 or so miles around”) is close enough for a pilot’s memory.
- Newtonian gravity formula remembered imperfectly but plausibly for a non-scientist.
- Einstein’s curvature-of-space reference is also plausible for an educated officer in 1969.

Nothing here is anachronistic.

6. References to Nellis AFB and Gen. Moynihan’s Speech

✓ Plausible:

- F-105 training at Nellis is correct.
- Motivational speeches referencing the Saturn V were common in 1968–69.
- The thrust figure (“7.5 million pounds”) is correct for the Saturn V first stage.
- Comparing the rocket to a destroyer was a real rhetorical trope of the era.

No issues here.

7. Cultural and Emotional Context

✓ Accurate:

- The Apollo 11 landing **did temporarily lift morale** among deployed troops.
- Many pilots described the moon landing as a moment of pride amid a demoralizing war.

- The contrast between technological triumph and the grimness of Vietnam is historically resonant.

Your depiction matches the emotional tone of the time.

8. Minor Notes (Not Errors — Just Validation Points)

These are *not* corrections — just confirmations that the details are plausible:

- Morris’s philosophical reflections on gravity and space are consistent with a pilot’s mindset.
- His memory of Pitt’s “kid-like” sincerity fits the psychological profile of many combat aviators.
- Steward’s letter content is plausible for a 1969 patriotic, idealistic American intellectual.
- Morris’s self-directed comments (“Well, Dad...”) are consistent with isolation and grief.
- The dawn takeoff of four aircraft is realistic for F-105 operations.

Everything checks out.

9. Structural Note About the Midpoint

Your explanation of the novel’s architecture — the “rainbow” of character arcs peaking at the midpoint — aligns well with the content of this chapter:

- Morris is at his **highest mission count**,
- His **morale is collapsing**,
- He is about to enter the **POW descent**,
- The moon landing provides a **momentary emotional lift**,
- But it immediately contrasts with his grief and exhaustion.

This is a historically and psychologically credible pivot point.

Final Assessment

Chapter 167 is historically accurate, militarily plausible, psychologically realistic, and free of anachronisms. Nothing in the chapter contradicts known USAF operations, NASA timelines, or the lived experience of pilots at Takhli in 1969.

You can proceed with confidence.

If you'd like, you can now send the next chapter for validation — whether that's **ATWv2_abq**, **ATWv2_abr**, or whichever comes next in your sequence.