

# Stanley S. Gunnerson

## F-105 History

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**10-Jun-61**

1528

Seven pilots from the 23 TFS, 36 TFW, departed Bitburg AB, Germany, for F-105 upgrade training at Nellis AFB, Nevada. They were Capt Joe B. Jordan, 1Lt Robert E. Nine, 1Lt Stanley S. Gunnerson, 1Lt Theodore G. Moeller, 1Lt Charles F. Gladish, 1Lt Philip L. Misenheimer, and 1Lt John G. Schroeder. The pilots attended Class 62B that graduated on 25 August 1961.

*History of 36th Tactical Fighter Wing 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1961, USAF microfilm MO627 frame 0883.*

**25-Aug-61**

294

The fifth F-105D operational training Class 62B, Course 111506E, graduated 18 pilots at Nellis AFB NV. The class began training on 26 Jun 1961. The class was attached to the 4526 CCTS under the 4520 CCTW at Nellis, commanded by Lt Col James Ellis Bean. Its students included members of the 53 TFS, 36 TFW, based at Ramstein AB, Germany. The graduates were:

Col James K. Johnson - from Carswell AFB  
Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr. - 36 TFW  
Maj Lester L. "Birdlegs" Johnson - 53 TFS  
Maj Raymond W. Staudte - 53 TFS  
Capt Fred T. Coleman - 53 TFS  
Capt Brown G. Howard III - 53 TFS  
Capt Robert D. Janca - from Nellis AFB  
Capt Joe B. Jordan - 23 TFS 36 TFW  
Capt John R. Keeton - from Cannon AFB

Capt John A. McCurdy - from George AFB  
1Lt Donald O. Faust - 4 TFW  
1 Lt Stanley S. Gunnerson - 23 TFS 36 TFW  
1Lt Theodore G. Moeller - 23 TFS 36 TFW  
1Lt Philip L. Misenheimer - 23 TFS 36 TFW  
1Lt Robert E. Nine - 36 TFW  
1Lt James W. Petit - from George AFB  
1Lt John G. Schroeder - 23 TFS 36 TFW  
1Lt Charles F. Gladish - 23 TFS 36 TFW

*4520 CCTW History, Jan - Jun 61, USAF microfilm MO2195, Special Order AA-10.*

**15-Dec-62**

1586

(Approximate date.) Capt Paul R. Gregory and 1Lts Stanley S. Gunnerson and Russell R. Schoonover from the 23 TFS ferried three F-105Ds from the 36 TFW, Bitburg AB, Germany, to the depot at Brookley AFB, Alabama, for Phase II of Project Look Alike.

*36 TFW history, 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1962, USAF microfilm MO627, frame 1269.*

**31-Dec-62**

1643

In a 1 July - 31 December 1962 roster of 64 pilots assigned or attached to the 23 TFS, 36 TFW, Bitburg AB, Germany, Capt John M. Lowery was the 36 TFW Chief, Flight Test attached to the 23rd.

Capt Frederick B. Green was a 23 TFS B flight pilot (added in 1 Jan 30 Jun roster. In C flight after Jul 63.)  
1Lt Stanley S. Gunnerson was a 23 TFS D Flight Pilot (Rotated Apr 63)

*ROSTER OF SQUADRON PERSONNEL, 23 TFS, 1 July - 31 December 1962, 36 TFW history, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1962, USAF microfilm MO627 frames 1272, 1411, and 1542.*

**01-Jul-64**

**01-Aug-64**

2922

(Date approximate). The cause of a series of fires and explosions in F-105s over the last several months was thought to be inadequate cooling of the aircraft's aft fuselage. Hq TAC suspected the fuselage was overheating beyond the flash point of hydraulic fluid. To confirm the cause and prevent further Thunderchief losses, TAC directed a test to be conducted at Eglin AFB, Florida. On 18 June 1964, program participants attended a planning meeting at Hq Logistics Command at Wright-Patterson AFB.

The test began around 1 July and was conducted at Eglin by a joint team of TAC and Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) aircraft and people with the support of Republic Aviation field representatives. The project was called the "Category X Test Project" and involved five F-105Ds and over 83 people including six pilots. TAC provided four of the planes and AFSC the fifth. The test required that each plane be flown for 100 hours in 30 days, which required

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flying seven days a week to accumulate the needed 500-flight hours on this small fleet. The planes were instrumented with thermocouples and telemetry for recording temperatures during flight. The aft fuselage of each plane was painted white to better show leaks of red hydraulic fluid. Test flights consisted of normal training sorties to the Eglin range where pilots dropped practice bombs from the center-line MN-1/A bomb dispenser.

The test director was Lt Col James C. Pedersen, the APGC Chief of Fighter Systems Division responsible for F-105 Category I testing at Eglin. Other AFSC pilots were Capt John V. Corbisiero, the Senior Project Officer for the F-105D Category I test program, and Capt Richard A. Haggren, the Senior Project Officer for F-105D Category II testing. The senior TAC pilot was Maj Bill Jurcsyn. Also supporting the test was Maj Douglas E. Whatley, the commander of the 333 TFS, a TAC squadron from Seymour Johnson AFB that had moved to Eglin on 12 March 1964 to support F-105D testing at Eglin. The last two TAC pilots were Capt Stanley S. Gunnersen, and Capt Richard W. Simons. Maj Vernon Frye, a TAC F-105 pilot from Nellis AFB, was the project's maintenance officer. The two technical representatives from Republic Aviation Corporation (RAC) who supported the test were Jack Owens, the senior Republic field rep on the F-105D Category II test program, and George Kallmeyer, the RAC project engineer on the F-105D Category I test program.

In addition to confirming the over-temperatures in the aft fuselage, the test also uncovered serious fuel and hydraulic problems. At the start of one test sortie, Capt Haggren was taxiing a project F-105 and stepped on the brakes as he pulled out of the parking area. Fuel began pouring out of the bomb bay doors and the plane's crew chief frantically signaled him to shut down. The trouble was traced to a failed O ring caused by a poorly designed coupling of the plumbing to the afterburner bypass valve. Capt Corbisiero experienced a second incident involving hydraulic leaks. "During the test program, I conducted a low level, supersonic run with the bomb-bay doors open to simulate a low-level, nuclear toss bomb run. While on the run, I lost all hydraulic pressure and had to land using the emergency landing gear extension. After landing and turning off the runway, hydraulic fluid was pouring out of the bomb-bay, very similar to what happened to Dick Haggren. A hydraulic line coupling had loosened causing the leak. This was typical of the hydraulic and fuel leaks which were occurring during operational situations and causing F-105D accidents."

Less than two months after the test program, Republic completed the design for the Safety Pack II modification that added cooling scoops on the sides of the aft fuselage, elongated the Sabre drain to get spilled fuel out of the boundary layer air flow and prevent it from being drawn into the afterburner compartment, and improved the reliability of hydraulic and fuel plumbing throughout the fuselage. John Corbisiero summed up the significance of the Category X test program. "In my opinion, the F-105D, Cat X test was one of the most productive and successful test programs ever conducted. This test program resulted in aircraft design changes which were included in the F-105D Safety Pack Modification Program. There is no doubt that these aircraft modifications significantly reduced F-105D aircraft losses and saved many combat crew lives during the Vietnam conflict."

"Safety Pack 1 and 2 was one of the largest modification programs -- in numbers of technical orders and cost -- accomplished on the F-105. The first phase of the program, called Safety Pack 1, involved 19 different tech orders and cost a little over \$12 million. The second phase, named Safety Pack 2, involved five Engineering Change Proposals and cost almost \$45 million. Engineering costs for both phase 1 and phase 2 added another \$2.2 million to the program's overall costs."

"The main objective of the Safety Pack Program was to correct certain flight deficiencies in the F-105. This included such things as improving the aircraft's basic fuel system and enlarging the ventilation and cooling systems in the engine section of the fuselage."

"The Mobile Air Materiel Area began the Safety Pack modification program and the Sacramento Air Materiel Area completed it." The switchover was made in August 1965 when MOAMA closed down as directed by the Secretary of Defense in November 1964.

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"Three contractors were also involved in the program. These were Republic Aviation Corporation, Casa Getafe in Spain, and Air America on Taiwan." Republic modified the F-105s at its Crestview, Florida, facility.

*Dick Haggren interview, & John Corbisiero, e-mails, 28 Apr, 12 May, 19 May 03 & "Air Force Logistics Command Support of Forces in Southeast Asia", June 1972, pg 52.*

**31-Mar-66**

5338

In the 357 TFS, 355 TFW, "... there was great interest and competition among the pilots regarding the total combat missions flown in Southeast Asia versus the number of combat missions that counted toward the 100 mission completion of a combat tour. Many of the pilots had flown missions while on temporary duty to Southeast Asia, in 1965, and these previous missions counted toward their tour completion. As of 31 Mar 66, the total combat missions and those which counted toward the 100-mission tour completion were as follows:

	Counters	Total
Lt Col Kenneth L. Skeen	45	58
Maj Richard A. Bevan	26	32
Maj Charles P. Busick	30	44
Maj John O. Colton	80	93
Maj Rex A. Hill	24	36
Maj Joseph L. Hutto	29	34
Maj Virgil D. Loken	33	42
Lt Col Douglas E. Whatley	23	27
Maj William N. Wright	20	33
Capt James W. Alder	28	42
Capt Paul W. Hanson	76	90
Capt Willis E. Hedgepeth	28	42
Capt Larry G. Lighty	86	97
Capt Stanton G. Lockley	86	96
Capt George H. Peacock	27	45
Capt Hugh M. Milton III	31	42
Capt Harold A. Shelton	11	17
Capt Robert E. Steiner	1	1
Capt Stanley S. Gunnerson	33	48
Capt John J. King	60	71
Capt Robert D. Pielin	85	98
Capt Gary L. Retterbush	35	43
1Lt Michael L. Brazelton	30	41
1Lt Gordon L. Clouser	29	39
Capt Robert L. Keller	64	74
Col Aaron J. Bowman	38	40
Lt Col Joseph M. Pelter	12	20
Lt Col Robert F. Herman	57	62
Maj Robert P. Randall	10	17
Capt Alfred R. Mason	3	4
1Lt David K. Dargitz	2	2

*355 TFW history, Jan 66 - March 66, USAF microfilm NO461, frames 1394 - 1395.*

**18-Apr-66**

5176

The 6441 TFW selected the pilots for the squadron that became the 34 TFS to deploy to Korat. Most would come from the 36 TFS; consequently, the 36 TFS was slated to disband.

Bob Pielin from the 36 TFS, who had already flown 87 combat missions during temporary duty tours to Korat and

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Takhli, remembered how he helped select the pilots for the new squadron. "Fitz [Maj Richard P. Fitzgerald, the squadron's Operations Officer] and I initially made out a list of 25 pilots from the Wing resources to go as 34th members. The list was bounced back from HHQ as being too overloaded in pilots with over 50 missions. They recommended 6 guys in the 0 to 20 mission category, 6 in the 21 to 40, 6 in the 41 to 60, 6 in the 61 to 80, and anyone with over 80 to go TDY."

This distribution was to spread out their eventual departures from Korat as each pilot completed his 100-mission tour. Capt Pielin and Maj Fitzgerald reworked the list "... with some pronounced disapproval from those that were removed from the [original]. ... A 1.5 aircrew/aircraft ratio was authorized for 27 pilots plus Commander and Operations Officer. ... Bob Jones [Capt Robert H. Jones] was removed from the first list since he had his papers in to be discharged. When he found out about the 34th going PCS to Korat, he volunteered to go with [them] and get 100 missions before he got out. Red Dog [Lt Col Howard F. 'Red Dog' Hendricks the squadron commander] worked a 'deal', and he went TDY." (Bob Pielin e-mails, 23 Sep 2006 and 7 April 2007.)

The following list contains the positions and names of the initial twenty-nine pilots assigned to the 34 TFS. This is the revised list after Capt Pielin and Maj Fitzgerald reworked their original to provide a broader base of experience. One of the pilots, Gordon Walcott, annotated his copy of the printed list, dated 18 April 1966, with this comment: "This was the original 34th TFS crew roster when formed as an all-volunteer squadron from the 35 TFS, 36 TFS, and 80 TFS (Yokota AB, Japan)"

Commander - Lt Col Howard F. "Red Dog" Hendricks who had been commander of the 36 TFS.  
Operations Officer - Maj Richard P. Fitzgerald

### India Flight

Flight Commander - Maj Wayne N. Whatley  
Capt Robin K. Nierste  
Capt James I. Miholick  
Capt Douglas G. Lauck  
Capt Robert H. Jones  
Capt Robert R. Reed

### Lima Flight

Flight Commander - Capt James E. Hayes  
Capt Merrill R. Lewis, Jr.  
Capt Gordon M. Walcott  
Capt Stanley S. Gunnersen  
1Lt John Bernard Sullivan III

### Juliet Flight

Flight Commander - Maj Kenneth T. Blank  
Capt Carl L. Hamby  
Capt Thomas H. Curtis  
Capt David H. Groark  
1Lt Phillip J. Kelley

### Metro Flight

Flight Commander - Capt Robert D. Pielin  
Capt Alan K. Rutherford  
Capt Ralph D. Watkins  
Capt Wayne D. Hauth  
Capt Rainford "Ray" McMaster Tiffin - 80 TFS

### Kilo Flight

Flight Commander - Maj Jack R. Stresing  
Capt William O. Lessard  
Capt John R. Layman  
Capt Rex L. Dull  
Capt Clarence E. Fox  
1Lt Denis D. O'Donoghue

*E-mail from Monty Pharmer, 22 Sep 2006 forwarding letter to him from Lt Col (Ret) Gordon Walcott dated, 29 July 1988, which included a roster of 36 TFS pilots, dated 18 April 1966.*

**21-May-66**

4956

On Saturday, 21 May 1966, an advance party of the 34 TFS deployed by C-130 from Yokota AB, Japan, to Korat RTAFB, Thailand. The C-130, "Chalk 1", took off from Yokota at 0503. The group consisted of four pilots and

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maintenance and administrative personnel along with maintenance equipment. The four pilots were:

Maj Richard P. Fitzgerald, the squadron Operations Officer  
Capt Robert D. Pielin  
Capt Stanley S. Gunnersen  
Capt Merrill R. Lewis, Jr.

Capt Lewis brought with him on the C-130 the squadron mascot, a dog he owned named "Roscoe". Roscoe was from a litter of pups originally belonging to Capt Roscoe E. "JR" Anderson from the 80 TFS who had died in an F-105D accident near Yokota on 8 September 1964.

*E-mail from Lamont Pharmer, 22 Sep 2006, with attached letter to him from Bob Pielin dated 11 July 1988..*

### 02-Jun-66

F-105D 610160 421 TFS 388 TFW Korat Operational loss. Engine failed after takeoff. Crashed 55 nautical miles northeast of Korat, Thailand. 15-34N 102-36E Capt Clarence A. Stewart 469 TFS pilot survived with minor injuries. Call sign: "Willow 03". The pilot was from the 469 TFS. This was his 22nd or 23rd mission since his arrival at Korat on 21 April 1966. He had flown F-105s in the 23 TFS at Bitburg beginning in 1962.

The accident report, originally classified SECRET, described the events leading up to the accident and the pilot's recovery by helicopter.

"(U) On 2 June 1966 at 1125 local time F-105D-20RE, SN 61-0160 flown by Captain Clarence A. Stewart crashed into an area of rice paddies 55 nautical miles northeast of Korat Air Base, Thailand on CH 90 045-degree radial, following an in-flight engine failure. The pilot made a successful ejection sustaining only minor injuries. The aircraft was destroyed on impact.

"(S) Captain Stewart was number three in Willow flight, a flight of four F-105Ds scheduled for a combat mission in North Vietnam. The remainder of the flight consisted of Major Don L. Campbell, as Willow One, Captain Stanley S. Gunnersen, as Willow two, and Captain Ronald Schaertl, as Willow four. Mission briefings and aircraft preflight were accomplished in accordance with existing policies and directives. Each aircraft was configured with two M-118, 3000 pound bombs carried on the inboard wing stations and one 650 gallon centerline fuel tank.

"(U) Engine start, taxi, arming, runup and take off were normal. Take off was on runway 24 with 15 second spacing. The take off heading of 240 degrees was maintained for 5 nautical miles followed by a right turn to 060 degrees while accelerating to 350 knots airspeed. As the flight joined up the 045-degree radial of the Korat Tacan was intercepted and tracked outbound. A climb check was accomplished at 4,000 feet. Climb out was accomplished in fingertip formation to 15,000 under GCI control. After level off, the flight was spread out to combat formation and a cruise airspeed of .74 mach was established. After about four minutes of cruise flight, Willow 3, Capt Stewart, experienced an explosion and flame-out, accompanied by stab aug and aft overheat warning lights. His wingman, Willow 4, observed a large orange ball of fire emit from the tail pipe and the speed brakes open to the AB position then close. Captain Stewart stopcocked the throttle, noted the aft overheat light was out and received verification that he was not on fire. He then made a left turn to about 030 degrees toward an area that appeared clear of habitation, determined to retain his ordnance, selected emergency fuel and attempted an airstart. Ignition was obtained and power slowly added as engine RPM increased. As RPM reached 60 percent a series of mild compressor stalls occurred accompanied by a loud banging, grating noise from the engine. Captain Stewart saw the EGT go rapidly through 750 degrees, stopcocked the throttle again and prepared for ejection. Ejection was normal. The pilot and seat were separated by the seat/man separator followed by chute deployment. After seat separation the pilot received a hit on his helmet that knocked the helmet from his head. Following chute deployment Captain Stewart noticed the lanyard from the survival kit was wrapped around his neck and tangled in the right riser. The lanyard was broken and the survival kit missing. Captain Stewart's descent and landing were normal.

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"(S) After the pilot ejected, the aircraft continued descending on a 030 degree heading until impact on a small dike between rice paddies. Impact was slightly tail and left wing low with a high rate of descent. The aircraft bounced back into the air, flipped over to the right and disintegrated. The engine departed the airframe, struck and knocked down a tree and came to rest in a rice paddy. Both 3000 pound bombs separated from the aircraft and continued approximately 1500 feet where they came to rest in two separate rice paddies. All wreckage was scattered over shallow paddies and on the small dikes between paddies. No injury to personnel or livestock resulted and only superficial damage to property occurred. The M-61 gun and 20MM ammunition were found in the same general area.

(S) Upon receipt of information that Willow 3 had ejected, and HH-43 helicopter was dispatched from Korat to recover the pilot. When the helicopter returned the pilot was met by a flight surgeon, the flying safety officer and the accident investigating officer. The pilot received a thorough medical examination and was then interviewed by the accident investigation officer and the flying safety officer."

*Louie Alley, AF Safety Center, E-mail 11 Apr 00 and USAF Accident/Incident Report, provided by Jeffrey L. Kolln, 29 Nov 2004.*

### 21-Jun-66

F-105D 624358 34 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit twice by heavy 85-mm AAA while attacking the Dao Quan POL storage area (BE 616-01748). Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. 21-24N 106-14E 1Lt John Bernard Sullivan III 34 TFS pilot was MIA. Call sign: "Anvil 02". The POL target was about five miles northwest of Kep airfield.

Other members of Anvil Flight were Capt Stanley S. Gunnerson, Capt James E. Hayes and Capt Gordon M. Walcott. Their target was the Dao Quan POL Storage Area at location 21-26-10N and 106-12-22E, 6 miles NW of Kep, North Vietnam. The flight took off from Korat at 06:04 and Lt Sullivan was shot down at 07:25.

"Following initiation of pullup for bomb delivery, Lt Sullivan called, 'I'm hit; smoke in the cockpit. I think I've had it.' A member of his flight saw Lt Sullivan's aircraft hit a second time by 85-mm just below the canopy. Smoke was observed and he was told to eject. His aircraft was last seen proceeding on a heading of 160 degrees. No member of his flight saw Lt Sullivan eject or his aircraft impact the ground. No chute was observed and beeper signals were not heard. His last known position was over an area of flat terrain, spotted with small villages. Two Navy aircraft completed four high-altitude electronic searches over water on a line between 2102N/10605E and 2003N/10636E with negative results. The search was terminated at 1000 hours local, 21 Jun 66." ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 2-085, AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3, IRIS # 1028640.)

Capt Gordon M. Walcott was in Lt Sullivan's flight and recalled his loss. "Lt Sullivan was shot down over Kep AF and probably KIA. Hayes [Capt James E. Hayes, Lima Flight Commander], Gunnerson [Capt Stanley S. Gunnerson], and myself were with him" (Gordon Walcott, letter to Monty Pharmed, 29 July 1988.) Capt Victor Vizcarra from the 80 TFS knew Lt Sullivan from Yokota. "He was a real good old country boy. An interesting fact about him, he never learned how to drive a car! He always rode a bike."

SSgt Aaron D. Farrior was a PJ with the Jolly Greens from NKP. He recorded in his diary some details about the attempted rescap for Lt Sullivan. "Listened to mission up north. F-105 pilot ejected 100 miles north of Hanoi. Wingman had a visual. Scrambled J.G. out of [Lima Site] 98. .. "

Lt Sullivan was born 28 June 1940. He entered the service from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was declared dead on 9 January 1978. His remains were returned to the U.S. on 13 September 1990. His name appears on the Vietnam Memorial Wall on Panel 08E - Line 73.

*U.S. Navy CNA Loss/Damage Data Base & Col Victor Vizcarra, e-mail, 4 Sep 00.*

### 20-Jul-66

F-105D 624308 34 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit by 85-mm AAA near the Vu Chua RR bridge (JCS 18.74). Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. 21-34N 106-40E Capt Merrill Raymond Lewis, Jr. 34 TFS pilot ejected. MIA. ("Rosco's"

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master) Call sign: "Crab 01". Capt Merrill R. Lewis, Jr. flew as Crab Lead, a flight of four on a strike on Vu Chua Railroad Bridge, 12 miles NE of Bao Chiang, North Vietnam. Other members of the flight were Capt Gordon M. Walcott, Capt Stanley S. Gunnersen, and 1Lt Denis D. O'Donoghue. The flight took off from Korat at 05:52 and Maj Lewis was shot down at 07:43.

"The following is an extract from the statement by Captain Gordon M. Walcott, Crab 2: '... the flight was approaching pullup for bomb delivery as 85-mm radar-controlled guns began firing with bursts at #1's altitude. Shortly thereafter, Lead called that he had been hit and started a right climbing turn. Crab Lead jettisoned bombs and called that he was jettisoning his canopy. I observed the canopy separate from the aircraft and that fuel was streaming from the aft section. Crab Lead continued to turn to 060 and rolled out. I called Lead to turn to 090 several times with no response. Approximately 1½ - 2 minutes later, the aircraft caught fire and porpoised. Lead ejected at approximately 4 thousand feet, 450 knots, and about 5 deg nose down. I observed the seat leave the aircraft but lost sight of the seat during it's descent. I made 3 orbits at 2 - 4 thousand feet and then descended through a scattered cloud layer and made 3 more orbits at approximately 1000 - 1500 feet. Doppler read out was 2134/10640, but I believe the position may have been at 2147/10652. There was no beeper and I could not get contact with Lead on UHF Guard....' SAR was not conducted due to the location of the crash site. The area of the pilot's last known position consisted of a farming area within a flat valley and was sparsely populated". ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 2-096, AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3, IRIS # 1028640.)

Later, Gordon Walcott recalled Lewis' loss. "I was with him when he bailed out with a fouled chute near the China border." (Gordon Walcott, letter to Monty Pharmer, 29 July 1988.)

Stan Gunnersen was element lead in Lewis' flight and recalled more details. "#1 Ray Lewis, #2 Gordy Walcott. #3 Gunnersen, #4 Denis D. O'Donoghue. We went the water route and the target was, I think, a submerged bridge on the NE road system. We were loaded with two 3,000-lb bombs. We were at medium altitude, probably about 8,000 feet because there were no SAMs in the area. A few minutes out from the target 85-mm guns were walking their rounds up #1s tail. I called it out to Ray at least twice and told him move it. He stayed straight and level. I had just started to break into him to try and break their radar lock. He was hit before I could swing my element behind him. Not sure why he didn't respond because his radio was working and he transmitted he was hit. Suspect he was concentrating on navigating since there were lots of lower broken clouds. As #3, I was having a hell of time figuring out where we were. I just knew we were about 2 min out and the target was on our nose.

"I next made a bad decision and told Gordy to escort Ray out and I took Denis on in to the target. Figured we would catch back up with them in a few minutes. Could not get to the target because of weather. On the way out Gordy said Ray had bailed out but did not separate from the seat. Do not know if you remember how well armed Ray was when he flew but he carried a 2' machete and a machine gun that I think was an Israilie Uzzi (sp?). Never looked at how he strapped that stuff on but suspect it caused him to hang up with the seat."

Capt Lewis was the owner of the mascot of the 34 TFS, the dog "Roscoe", that he had brought with him from Yokota when he had arrived at Korat on a C-130 on 20 May 1966 as one of the four F-105 pilots in the 34 TFS advance party. After Ray Lewis' loss, the pilots in the 34th continued to care for Roscoe.

"The day Ray went down I sat on the steps of our hooch with Roscoe for a long time. I swear I think that dog knew something bad had happened to Ray." (Stan Gunnersen, e-mail to Bob Pielin, 3 Oct 06.)

Captain Lewis was born 17 August 1932 in Kansas City, MO and entered the service from Indianola, Iowa. He was declared dead on 15 January 1979. His body was recovered. His name appears on the Vietnam Memorial Wall panel 09E line 48.

*U.S. Navy CNA Loss/Damage Data Base & Robert P. Taylor, former 80 TFS pilot, letter 13 Mar 1994.*

**20-Jul-66**

6528

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1Lt Denis D. O'Donoghue from the 34 TFS received the Air Medal (8th OLC) for the mission he flew as "Crab 04" when his flight lead was shot down and KIA. The members of Crab flight were:

- #1 - Capt Merrill Raymond Lewis, Jr.
- #2 - Capt Gordon M. Walcott
- #3 - Capt Stanley S. Gunnensen
- #4 - 1Lt Denis D. O'Donoghue

Their target was the Vu Chua RR bridge (JCS 18.74) in RP-6A.

"First Lieutenant Denis D. O'Donoghue distinguished himself by meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight as an F-105 pilot over Southeast Asia on 20 July 1966. On that date, as a member of a flight of four F-105s bombing a heavily defended railroad bridge, Lieutenant O'Donoghue continued to press his attack through intense flak which had downed his lead. After finding he could not strike the bridge because of adverse weather conditions, he continued still deeper into hostile territory to search out and bomb a main highway. The professional skill and airmanship displayed by Lieutenant O'Donoghue reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."

*Award Citation provided by Denis O'Donoghue via e-mail 6 April 2010.*

### 09-Sep-66

6843

"Buick" flight from the 388 TFW flew an Iron Hand mission in RP-6A with one F-105F leading three F-105Ds on Mission RT51C-63. "Buick 1" and "Buick 2" encountered three MiG-21s and may have entered Chinese air space.

The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Marion M. Angel and EWO Capt Robert E. Tondreau from the 13 TFS flying F-105F 63-8295.
- #2 - Capt Stanley S. Gunnensen from the 34 TFS.
- #3 - Maj James E. Hayes from the 34 TFS
- #4 - Capt Alan K. Rutherford from the 34 TFS

Mack Angel recalled that, "... Hayes and Rutherford hit 'Bingo Fuel' and were directed to RTB, which they did via post-strike refueling. 'Gunner' and I continued to work the area northeast of Hanoi until hitting Bingo ourselves."

In a message to the Air Force command post and the PACAF Commander, Hq 7th AF described the MiG encounter. "... Buick 1 and 2 were heading 090 degrees, altitude 6000 ft, air speed 425K, in normal tactical formation. MiGs approached slightly high from 6 o'clock position, tracking and firing. Buick 2 called break and flt broke left and down, clearing all positions at the same time. As flt broke left, all 3 MiGs were on Nr 2. Lead called break back to right. This occurred at tree-top level and lead lost sight of Nr 2 and MiGs. Approx one minute later, Lead saw 1 MiG 12 o'clock slightly high at 5000 ft range. Lead closed to about 2000 ft and opened fire. He believes he missed as no hits or smoke observed. MiG started to turn into lead, who rolled off diving back to the deck in AB and egressed. Nr 2 had firewalled and egressed during the interim, never seeing the MiGs again. MiGs were silver, no markings observed. No missiles observed. No radar lock-ons indicated on F-105 Vector box. No Buick acft were damaged by MiGs."

The above narrative had been transmitted in an earlier message but in this message the following paragraph was added.

"FROM GEN MOMYER: At the time the MiGs moved into firing position at 6 o'clock, the flight leader took a self-protective maneuver for himself and his wing man. The hard break to the left was a mandatory maneuver in my judgment for self preservation. With this break, it appears there may have been a possible border violation. Under these circumstances of the right of all commanders to take protective action for the preservation of his force, the possible border violation was a logical application of their principle. It is noted that flight lead made a subsequent hard break to the right in order to shake the MiGs and put himself in a better position to beat off further attacks. This break to the right tended to bring him in a better position for subsequent withdrawal, without further possible violation. This

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possible violation can be attributed to enemy action and not through any error on the part of the flight in navigation or positioning for a launch against enemy ground to air weapons in the area. Flap report follows."

The Red Baron report on this incident added other details. The encounter was at 09:00 in the vicinity of 21-20N and 107-15E, 60 NM NE of Hanoi, which is well below the Chinese border. Buick 1 expended 600 rounds of 20-mm in two bursts. "Due to the low altitude of operation, the EC-121 (Big Eye/Ethan Alfa) orbiting at 20N/107E contained no radar plots of this engagement. At refueling, Buick 1 had 1000 pounds of fuel."

Mack Angel described how he recalled the encounter. "I don't believe that we came anywhere close to the border. Strange. We were never asked about it ... On egress I caught something out of the corner of my left eye. I thought, 'that must have been a bird.' I then quickly realized that what I might have seen was traveling from 7 o'clock to 11 o'clock ... could not have been a bird. Duh!! (It was probably a missile but I could not confirm it.) I then checked 7 o'clock and observed three MiG 21s and called for Buick 2, who was at my 8 o'clock position, to 'break left, we have MiGs behind us.' During this break the MiGs fell between me and Buick 2 and I called for another break to the right. During this maneuver the MiGs were evaded successfully but both Buick 2 and I lost sight of the MiGs and I was separated from Buick 2...he was now several miles in front of us.

"We continued to communicate to confirm fuel state and status as we headed for the water to egress and post-strike refuel. A minute or so later I observed an aircraft at my 12 o'clock, slightly high. It was one of the MiG-21s performing a slight weave to the right and left as if looking for us. Before closing enough to positively identify the airplane as a MiG I called on 'Guard' channel for 'any friendly in RP-6 to rock your wings.' (Sounds dumb now, but seemed like a good idea at the time). I continued to close on the MiG and attempted to get a radar lock-on but was unable to do so. As I recall, I then electrically caged the gunsight...I think it was supposed to provide a computing sight good for about 750'-800' range. I then 'wagged it' and began firing at about 2000' and continued to close. No hits were observed and the MiG made a hard breaking turn to the left...don't know if he saw us (doubtful, since we were slightly low at 6 o'clock), we hit him, or he had GCI warning. I then broke to the right and down in AB to disengage and continued to egress at low altitude.

"After reaching 'feet wet' Buick 2 began to climb as he headed south for the tanker. Shortly thereafter, I did the same while attempting to contact the tanker. By this time Buick 2 began to 'con' and I regained visual contact. Due to our location SE of Haiphong he was concerned about presenting a good target for the gomers, but I advised him to stay there so that the tanker could gain visual contact with him and I could keep him in sight. Meantime, the tanker crew extended quite a bit further north than fragged and began a turn back to the south after Buick 2 got visual contact and descended to join up. Buick 2 and I both successfully refueled and recovered at Udorn. I don't remember why we landed at Udorn (may have been directed to do so?) but we debriefed with Intel, refueled and returned to Korat with my head hung-low for missing my one big chance to get a MiG.

"I must admit, however, that we kinda broke even with the bad guys that day...they didn't get us either."

*Mack Angel, e-mail 9 May 11 & Hq 7th Air Force TWX 090933Z Sep 66 in PACAF DO read file 8 - 9 Sep 1966, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 1035195 & Red Baron I Event II-39, pp 151 - 152.*

**31-Dec-66**

678

One year after the start of their RTU mission, the 23 TFW at McConnell AFB KS, had trained a total of 105 pilots to fly the F-105. The wing had 30 F-105 instructor pilots who had completed at least 100 missions in South East Asia. The 560 TFS and 561 TFS each had 7 pilots, the 562 TFS had 12, and the 563 TFS had 4. Five additional 100-mission pilots were attached to the 23 TFW. 1Lt Leonard C. Ekman, assigned to the 561 TFS, had completed 185 missions in SEA, the most of any Air Force pilot.

The 100-mission instructor pilots in the 560 TFS were:

Maj Eleas Casillas

Capt Jack L. Graber

Maj Robert E. Phillips

Capt William S. Koenitzer

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Capt Marion M. Angel  
Capt Rex L. Dull

1Lt William E. Ardern

The 100-mission instructor pilots in the 561 TFS were:

Maj Fred T. Coleman	Capt Robert Kieth Hannah, Jr.
Maj John C. Shay	1Lt Roger A. Ayres
Capt Ralph J. Beardsley	1 Lt Leonard C. "Lucky" Ekman
Capt Roderick G. Beckett	

The 100-mission instructor pilots in the 562 TFS were:

Lt Col James A. Young	Capt Wayne D. Hauth
Maj Phillip O. Bradley	Capt Robert L. "Bob the Wedge" Keller
Maj Robert D. Pielin	Capt Douglas G. Lauck (SEFE)
Capt Arthur L. Brattkus	Capt Robin K. Nierste
Capt Teddy Gay	Capt William S. Secker, Jr.
Capt Stanley S. Gunnersen	Capt Joseph R. Steen

The 100-mission instructor pilots in the 563 TFS were:

Maj Kenneth G. Frank  
Capt Robert V. "Boris" Baird  
Capt James I. Miholick  
1Lt John C. Russell

23 TFW attached 100-mission pilots were:

Capt Clarence E. Cox  
Capt John R. Layman  
Capt Charles Loucks  
Capt Clifford H. "Ted" Rees, Jr. (chief of tactical operations, 835th Air Division)  
Capt Robert L. Chastain

*23 TFW History, 1 Jul - 31 Dec 1966, USAF microfilm MO554.*

**15-Feb-68**

2354

(Approximate date) "At a special presentation ceremony last month at McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas, 55 Thunderchief pilots were awarded special certificates by Republic for completing 100 missions over North Vietnam."

"Air Force Cross Awarded To Thunderchief Pilot -- The Air Force's highest award for heroism was recently awarded to Lieutenant Colonel Harry Schurr, a 100-mission F-105 pilot who is now stationed at McConnell Air Force Base. The decoration was presented to the pilot by Lieutenant General Albert P. Clark, vice commander of the Tactical Air Command. Lt Col Schurr was cited for extraordinary heroism while leading a strike force of 20 Thunderchiefs over North Vietnam. Although his aircraft had been heavily damaged by enemy anti-aircraft fire, Schurr successfully destroyed a key railroad and highway bridge. He is now assigned to the Kansas base as commander of the 4519th Combat Crew Training Squadron." He previously commanded the 469 TFS at Korat. He was one of three F-105 pilots and one Wild Weasel EWO, along with F-4C pilot Col Robin Olds, who received the Air Force Cross for the successful attack on Hanoi's Paul Doumer Bridge on 11 August 1967.

Capt Bruce J. Lotzbire, an F-105 instructor pilot at McConnell, was among those who received Republic Aviation's 100-mission certificates. He had flown 100 missions while assigned to the 357 TFS at Takhli between April and October 1967. He remained as an instructor pilot at McConnell until December 1971. After 33 years in the Air Force, he retired as a Major General on 1 June 1995.

Capt Howard L. Bodenhamer, also assigned to McConnell, was one of the pilots who received a certificate. He had

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completed 100 missions in August 1967 while flying with the 354 TFS at Takhli.

Lt Col Gerald F. "Jerry" Fitzgerald, was one of the 55 pilots who received his 100-mission certificate. Previously he had commanded the 13 TFS at Korat, RTAFB, Thailand.

Capt Donald O. Austin was one of the pilots who received a 100-mission certificate. He was a former 34 TFS pilot who had flown from Korat but was now assigned to the 561 TFS as an F-105 RTU instructor pilot.

Maj Edward C. Jones, who had flown with the 34 TFS, received a 100-mission certificate.

Capt Steven J. Savonen, an instructor pilot in the 562 TFS, also received his 100-mission certificate. He had been assigned to the 469 TFS at Korat.

Capt Richard L. O'Connor was one of the pilots receiving a 100-mission certificate.

Capt Winfield Scott Harpe, and IP in the 23 TFW who had flown with the 469 TFS, received a Republic 100-mission Certificate.

Lt Col William E. Augsburger was a former 34 TFS pilot who received a 100-mission certificate.

Maj Bobby L. Martin, the first Wild Weasel pilot to have flown 100 missions, received a 100-mission certificate. He had been assigned to the 354 TFS at Takhli but had flown missions with the 13 TFS from Korat.

Capt Jack A. Phillips, an IP with the 560 TFS, flew his 100th mission with the 34 TFS on 2 August 1967.

Capt Robert L. Martin, who flew his 100th with the 34 TFS, received his Republic 100-mission Certificate at McConnell.

Maj Earl L. Thornton had flown his missions with the 469 TFS. He last flew the F-105 on 8 Aug 1968, accumulating 1183.9 hours in the airplane. (F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.)

Maj Paul F. Koeltzow received his 100-mission certificate.

Capt Jackie R. Youngblood, Capt Stanley S. Gunnersen in the 562 TFS and Capt Robert M. Crane were former 34 TFS pilots who received their Republic 100-mission Certificates at McConnell.

Capt John F. Rehm was one of the pilots receiving his 100-mission certificate. He had flown as a Ryan's Raider pilot with the 34 TFS and 13 TFS.

Capt Guy H. Morgan, Jr. was an F-105 pilot who flew 100 missions as a strike pilot with the 13 TFS at Korat.

Capt Rowland F. "Frank" Smith, Jr. received a 100-mission certificate. He had been a Wild Weasel pilot in the 44 TFS.

1Lt Paul J. Sheehy who flew his 100 missions with the 354 TFS in July 1967 received a certificate.

*Thunderchief World Wide Report, Vol III, No 7, March, 1968 & Gen Lotzbire's biography on  
[www.af.mil/news/biographies/lotzbire\\_bj.html](http://www.af.mil/news/biographies/lotzbire_bj.html).*

**21-Sep-69      03-Oct-69**

204

The 23 TFW participated in "Brass Strike V" at Pope AFB and Ft. Bragg NC. This exercise was to conduct a static

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display and joint demonstration for students of the senior service colleges and selected groups to portray the rapid reaction capabilities of USSTRICOM in joint operations. Two final demonstrations were flown, one on 1 Oct 69 (bad weather) and the second on 3 Oct 69 (successful).

Lt Col William N. Dillard, 563 TFS commander, led the contingent of 94 23 TFW personnel and 10 F-105s under 23 TFW OPOD 20-69. "... The wing contingent deployed to Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C., which included 11 aircrews, 2 maintenance officers, a safety officer, and 83 support personnel. Each of the four tactical squadrons [560 TFS, 561 TFS, 562 TFS and the 563 TFS] provided two F-105s and two aircrews with the 4519 CCTS providing an extra aircraft and crew for static display and the 563 TFS providing an extra aircraft and two additional aircrews."

Capt Stanley S. Gunnersen, Capt Bruce J. Lotzbire, and Capt Edward D. Cherry from the 562 TFS were three of the pilots who deployed to Seymour Johnson. In addition to Lt Col Dillard, the 563 TFS provided three other pilots -- Maj Richard L. O'Connor, Capt Philip C. Montaganano, and Capt Thomas O. Carlson. Two pilots from the 561 TFS also participated: Capt Roger A. Ayres and Capt Roger L. Prather.

On 1 October 1969, Capt Thomas O. Carlson, 563 TFS, and Sgt William F. Moore, an electrical technician with the 4519 CCTS, were killed when their F-105F (62-4419) and an F-4D (66-7492 from the 4 TFW) impacted the ground during the demonstration.

"A total of 46 professional and business men and public officials from the Wichita area left McConnell AFB Tuesday (30 September 1969) to view an armed forces firepower demonstration scheduled Wednesday at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina. After the demonstration, the Wichita group, guests of Col Leroy J. Manor, commander of the 835 Air Division, will fly to Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, for a tour of Cape Kennedy's NASA Space Center. ... The group will make the tour on military aircraft at no cost to themselves, but will pay for their own incidental expenses such as food and lodging."

The accident report on F-105F 62-4419 further described Brass Strike.

"1. BRASS STRIKE is a joint tactical demonstration conducted by USSTRICOM for the senior service colleges and other distinguished visitors. Units of ARSTRIKE and AFSTRIKE participate in a day-long demonstration of the latest U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force tactical weapons and equipment. This demonstration is conducted semiannually, usually during May and October of each year.

"2. The daily activities include the following events: A USSTRICOM briefing is given to all visitors at 0900 outlining the mission, tasks, and capabilities of STRIKE forces. Next, a static display is presented at Pope AFB including an airlift initial ready force outloading, C-130 aircraft on display, JACC/CP, and a fighter static display. Spectators are then transported to Sicily Drop Zone to observe a joint Special Forces Warfare Demonstration and static displays of equipment. After lunch in the field, a joint airborne assault is presented along with techniques for reinforcement and resupply of this force. Finally, a live firepower demonstration is conducted at Observation Post #5 (OP-5) from 1500 to 1630. SOF aircraft drop live ordnance, employment of U.S. Army helicopter and fixed wing aircraft is demonstrated, U.S. Army small arms and organic artillery weapons are fired, tactical fighter aircraft demonstrate various capabilities and deliveries.

"3. BRASS STRIKE V was one of the largest joint demonstrations conducted during the year. It involved forces from the 82d Airborne Division, U.S. Army aircraft and helicopters and various types of weapons and artillery firing. AFSTRIKE forces included: Sixty-eight (68) tactical fighter aircraft, thirty-three (33) Special Operations Forces aircraft, and approximately thirty-five (35) airlift C-130 aircraft. The Air Forces Commander, Brigadier General Paul P. Douglas, had operational control of this AFSTRIKE force. Tactical airlift was to fly approximately 1400 hours during this exercise. Airlift and SOF aircraft were programmed to deliver approximately 4,000 troops and 500 tons of cargo. Fighter aircraft would deliver over 5,000 pieces of ordnance plus over 55,000 rounds of machine gun and cannon ammunition.

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"4. Fighter aircraft participating were F-4s from the 4th Tactical Fighter Wing and the 4531st Tactical Fighter Wing, F-105s from the 23d Tactical Fighter Wing, F-111s from the 474 Tactical Fighter Wing, F-100s from the 57th Tactical Fighter Wing and RF-4s from the 363d Tactical Reconnaissance Wing.

"5. Fighter events were to include simulated ordnance delivery with planted charges at Sicily Drop Zone and subsequent top cover during the airborne assault. An RF-4 aircraft was to make aerial photographs of the spectator stands at the Drop Zone, which after processing and printing were to be dropped by an F-100 aircraft in front of the reviewing stands. Fighter aircraft would conduct simulated air refueling, a supersonic pass and air intercept, AIM-9 Sidewinder firing, and demonstration passes by an F-105 and F-111. The live firepower demonstration would include such munitions as 20MM, 2.75" rockets, CBU-24 (Cluster Bomb Units), Snakeye Bombs, Napalm, and 750 lb bombs. Dependent on the weather conditions, the fighter force was prepared to conduct either an ALPHA Show (2500' and 5 miles) or a BRAVO Show (700' and 2 miles) with a reduction of events in the BRAVO Show. For the BRAVO Show, complete IFR procedures were planned except for the actual delivery which would be made with visual contact with the target. After one week of practice and rehearsals, time on target (TOT) had averaged plus or minus five seconds and ordnance delivery was extremely accurate."

*23 TFW History, Oct - Dec 1969, USAF microfilm MO555, frames 0701 and 0750 & The Wichita Eagle, Wednesday 1 October 1969, pg 3A..*

#### 15-Jul-70

6962

(Approximate date) Maj John R. Stell from the 333 TFS flew the F-105 for the last time. He had accumulated 1437.6 hours in the airplane.

Maj Stanley S. Gunnensen flew the F-105 for the last time. Since his first flight on 1 July 1961, he had accumulated 2032 hours in the Thunderchief. He was ranked number 69 in the number of flying hours of any F-105 pilot.

On 14 July 1970, Lt Col Paul F. Koeltzow flew the F-105 for the last time. He had accumulated 1407.1 hours in the aircraft since November 1962.

Also, on 17 July 1970, Maj Robin K. Nierste made his last flight in the F-105. Since his first flight in December 1964, he had flown 1287.3 hours in the airplane.

*F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.*