

# Oral L. Bell

## F-105 History

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**05-Apr-68**

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The eighteenth F-105 RTU Class 68HR graduated at the 23 TFW, McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 2 Nov 67 with 26 students. Twenty five graduated -- 2 Lt Cols, 13 Maj's and 10 Capt's. This was the 23 TFW's first RTU class in which the students reported to McConnell PCS instead of TDY. This status allowed the 23 TFW to obtain each student's follow-on assignment rather than requesting it from the student's previous base.

The class deployed 30 F-105s for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 12 - 28 Mar 68 with the 562 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col James L. Flowers. Maj Elwyn R. Capling was the Outstanding Graduate.

The class graduates were:

Lt Col Lewis R. "Benny" Bennington	Maj Daniel P. Van Sickel
Lt Col Robert J. Klingensmith, Jr.	Maj Richard E. White
Maj Joseph H. Brotherston	Capt Harry I. Axakowsky
Maj Elwyn Rex Capling	Capt Oral L. Bell
Maj David J. Carroll	Capt Ronald M. Cole
Maj Forrest G. "Dupe" Dupree	Capt Ralph E. Durnbaugh
Maj Victor R. Hollandsworth	Capt Gene D. Hartman
Maj Edwin C. Johnson	Capt Jack S. Houser
Maj Donald E. Kelley	Capt Ronald A. Shoemake
Maj Walton G. Kilbourn, Jr.	Capt William M. Snow, Jr.
Maj Joseph W. O'Toole	Capt Tom E. Steward, Jr.
Maj Curtis Patterson	Capt Willis M. Thompson
Maj Jimmy N. Phipps	

Prior to his F-105 training, Capt Durnbaugh was a T-37 Stan/Eval pilot in the 3510 TFG (Air Force Instructor Training) at Randolph AFB, TX. After completing F-105 upgrade, he was assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat, where he arrived in April 1968.

*23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 67 & Jan - Jun 68, USAF microfilm MO554 & Ralph Durnbaugh, e-mail 7 April 2010.*

**26-Aug-68**

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"388 TFW F-105 pilots used 20-mm cannon fire to uncover 100 yards of bunkers and a tunnel complex, 21 miles northeast of Mu Gia Pass ... . Other pilots damaged five sampans, 26 miles northeast of Dong Hoi, (North Vietnam). Four of the pilots on the strikes were Lt Col Mike Monts [469 TFS], Maj William P. Shunney [ 34 TFS], and Captains Jack S. Houser [469 TFS], and Oral L. Bell [34 TFS]."

*Sawadee Flyer, Saturday, September 7, 1968, pg 1.*