

# William W. Berkman

## F-105 History

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**14-Nov-67**

F-105D 610143 561 TFS 23 TFW McConnell The pilot flew into the ground during an air-to-ground rocket pass. Crashed at Smokey Hill Gunnery Range, Kansas. 38-39N 97-50W Maj Kenneth J. Lamberton 561 TFS student pilot died. RTU Class 68FR. Call sign: "Cherokee 02".

### History of Flight

"(1) At 1044 CST (Zulu minus 6 hours), on 14 November 1967, F-105D, serial number 61-0143, assigned to the 561st Tactical Fighter Squadron, McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas, crashed at Smoky Hill Gunnery Range, located 14 nautical miles southwest of Salina, Kansas, Municipal Airport (formerly Schilling Air Force Base). The aircraft crashed while performing a rocket event on a ground attack training sortie. Upon impact, the aircraft disintegrated and the pilot, Major Kenneth J. Lamberton, received multiple severe injuries resulting in immediate death.

"(2) The flight consisted of four aircraft using the call sign of Cherokee 1 through 4 and a VFR clearance was filed at the squadron operations on a TAC Form 175. The line-up was as follows:

Cherokee One - Capt Jackie R. Youngblood, Instructor Pilot  
Cherokee Two - Major Kenneth J. Lamberton  
Cherokee Three - Major William W. Berkman  
Cherokee Four - Captain Jack D. Brooks

"Cherokee One was assigned an F-105B and the remainder of Cherokee flight given F-105Ds.

"(3) Cherokee flight was to accomplish a Ground Attack 5 sortie as outlined in TAC Syllabus for Course 111506B (Operational Training Course, F-105). The briefing began on time at 0810 and was conducted by Captain Youngblood using the 23d Tactical Fighter Wing briefing guide. The briefing covered normal and emergency procedures, the route to and from the range, and the sequence of events while on the range. The sequence of events was 30-degree rockets, 45-degree dive bomb, and 30-degree strafe, and if time permitted, low-angle bomb. The flight members were specifically briefed to use afterburner in their pull-up for rockets and as necessary prior to the range to insure that their wing tanks were empty for the initial rocket delivery. Procedures and techniques required for each event were covered in detail with emphasis placed on positioning of armament switches, airspeeds, dive angles, release altitudes, recoveries, minimum altitudes, and error analysis. The briefing was concluded at 0915 and the flight members arrived at their aircraft at approximately 0925.

"(4) All aircraft in the flight were configured with full internal fuel, bomb bay fuel, and two 450-gallon wing tanks on the inboard stations. Armament configuration consisted of a SUU-21 practice bomb dispenser on the centerline station, one LAU-59A rocket launcher on each outboard wing station, and 20-mm ball ammunition. All aircraft were loaded with four 2.75-inch rockets, two in each of the LAU-59A launchers.

"(5) A 1030 observation by the McConnell AFB weather detachment showed takeoff weather to be 31,000 feet thin overcast with 15 miles visibility. Surface winds were 210-degrees at 2 knots and an altimeter setting of 30.20. A special 1040 observation by the weather observer at Smoky Hill Range showed the range weather to be 10,000 scattered, high thin scattered with 8 miles visibility. Surface winds were 270-degrees at 9 knots and the altimeter setting, 30.14.

"(6) All Cherokee aircraft started engines on time at 0940 after normal preflights. After start, Major Lamberton's aircraft had a small P-2 hydraulic system leak that was repaired in the chocks by a hydraulic specialist. After check-in, the flight was marshaled and began to taxi. An emergency by another aircraft forced Cherokee flight to hold their position on the taxiway for approximately 10 minutes, thereby delaying the take-off past the scheduled time of 1010. Arming was standard and a normal take-off was made at 0929.

"(7) Climb, level-off and tanks feeding checks were normal. The flight then proceeded directly to Smoky Hill Range

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for their schedule range period of 1040 to 1105. En route, Cherokee 1 contacted the range and gave the flight line-up and order of events. The Range Officer directed the flight to use the right range with left traffic and gave them the latest winds, current altimeter, and newest delivery settings. Each flight member acknowledged the range and direction of traffic as the flight made a spacer pass. As the flight passed over the range, Cherokee 1 pulled up for the first rocket delivery with each member taking 5 seconds spacing. Cherokee 1's first rocket pass was dry due to sight problems. Cherokee 2 called base with 7600 pounds of fuel followed by 'in, right and white.' The Range Officer cleared Cherokee 2 for a hot rocket pass and visually acquired the aircraft slight before normal release altitude. Cherokee 2 passed through the recovery altitude, and the Range Officer called 'pull up, two.' Noting no response, the range officer then transmitted, 'pull up, pull up.' Shortly thereafter, the aircraft rotated rapidly to a nose-up attitude and maintained this attitude until contacting the ground. The aircraft was immediately engulfed in flames and disintegrated." (USAF Accident/ Incident Report)

At 1705Z, an HH-43B rescue helicopter from McConnell responded to the crash. "Primary crash at 1650Z. ... HH-43B crew located crash scene. Discharged medic and returned to McConnell. Negative assistance required." (Opening/Closing Report 16-06-14 Nov 67, TWX 142230Z Nov 67 from Det 16 Central ARRC McConnell AFB, KS.)

"An F-105 Thunderchief failed to pull up from a rocket training pass and carried a McConnell Air Force Base pilot to his death Tuesday at the Smoky Hill gunnery range southwest of Salina, Kan. Base officials identified the pilot as Maj. Kenneth J. Lamberton, 35. ... His jet plunged into the ground about 10:45 a.m. He was undergoing a four to five-month program of transitional training in the supersonic fighter-bomber prior to almost certain duty in the Southeast Asia war zone. Maj. Lamberton was the sixth F-105 pilot to lose his life in 15 crashes of the McConnell-based aircraft since the jets were assigned here in 1963. ... An Air Force spokesman said the crash Tuesday was almost identical to that which took the life of Capt. Charles R. Curry, Tampa Fla., Dec. 21, 1966. At least seven of the F-105 crashes occurred while the aircraft were en route to, over, or returning from the Smoky Hill range. Three of those crashes caused fatalities. ... A 13-year Air Force veteran, Maj. Lamberton was assigned to the 561st Tactical Fighter Squadron. ... " (Wichita Beacon)

"Ken Lamberton was killed on the Gunnery Range at Salinas, he was in the midst of diving on the target when the Range Officer saw that he was getting dangerously close to the ground and yelled for him to "Pull up, Pull up!" on the UHF. Ken did pull up, and got the nose up, but the tremendous downward momentum of the airplane took it into the ground. The theory was that Ken had not set his switches correctly and was looking down into the cockpit to see what the settings were when his bombs did not release. His airplane impacted at 12 O'clock on the Target Bulls Eye." (Gene Cirillo)

*AF Form 711 USAF Accident/ Incident Report 67-11-14-2, dated 24 Nov 67, signed by Col Paul E. Adams, President & The Wichita Beacon, 15 Nov 67 & Gene Cirillo, e-mail 18 Feb 00.*

### 11-Feb-68

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The seventeenth F-105 RTU Class 68FR graduated at McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 27 Aug 67 with 29 students, but 25 completed the course. Maj David Carroll dropped out for medical reasons. Lt Col George M. Wentch joined the class in the formation phase on 1 October 1967.

Maj Kenneth E. Lamberton became the fourth RTU student killed in the crash of F-105D 61-0143 on 14 Nov 67 during air-to-ground rocket training at the Smoky Hill Range.

The class deployed for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 23 Jan - 8 Feb 68 with the 561 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Harry D. Sultzer, Jr. Maj Richard Matthews was the top student and shared Top Gun with Maj Russ Youngblood.

This was the largest RTU conducted at McConnell to date and required two IPs on a 30-day TDY from Nellis AFB to aid the transition of the class. The students were:

Col David William Winn            Maj Robert E. Evans  
Lt Col Guy J. "Jack" Sherrill    Maj Arthur E. Hood

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Lt Col George M. Wentsch	Maj Clarence E. Langford
Lt Col Jack Modica, Jr.	Maj James R. Gibbons
Maj George C. Avila, Jr.	Maj Richard D. Matthews
Maj William W. Berkman	Maj Samuel L. Ray, Jr.
Maj Bill V. Brown	Maj Albert L. Villaret
Maj Seymour R. Bass	Capt Richard Kenneth Allee
Maj Russell A. Youngblood	Capt Darrell J. Ahrens
Maj Ralph D. Waddell, Jr.	Capt Robert C. Amos
Maj Raymond M. Viscarra	Capt Thomas O. Carlson
Maj Eugene E. Cirillo	Capt Jack D. Brooks
Maj David J. Carroll	Capt Donald D. "Dudley" Swofford

The ranking class member, Col Winn, "... was born in Austin, Minn., in 1923. He graduated from Austin Central High in 1941 and attended Carroll College, Waukesha, Wis., until he enlisted as an aviation cadet in the U.S. Army Air Corps in February 1942. He was commissioned a second lieutenant and received his pilot wings in February 1943.

"During World War II, General Winn served with the Twelfth Air Force and flew combat missions in the B-26 and P-38 aircraft from Sardinia and Italy. He returned to the United States in November 1944 and flew Mustangs, Thunderbolts and P-80s as a gunnery instructor in the Air Training Command fighter-gunnery research squadron. General Winn separated from the Air Force in 1948 and returned to school at the University of Minnesota. He was a member of the Minnesota Air National Guard until he was recalled to active duty in February 1951.

"General Winn served with the 109th Fighter Squadron at Minneapolis until August 1952. He then was transferred to Germany where he became a squadron operations officer in the 86th Fighter Wing. In August 1955 he was assigned to the 94th Fighter Squadron at Selfridge Air Force Base, Mich. In 1958 General Winn resumed studies at the University of Minnesota under Project Bootstrap and graduated in August of that year with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism.

"His next assignment was to Headquarters Air Defense Command at Ent Air Force Base, Colo., where he served until July 1962 as a member of the Air Defense Command tactical evaluation unit and operational readiness inspection team as chief of the Operational Readiness Inspection Branch and flew F-102 and F-106 aircraft.

"From July 1962 to May 1964, he was an exchange officer with the Royal Air Force, flying Hawker Hunters and English Electric Lightnings. He completed this tour of duty as an operations staff officer at Fighter Command Headquarters.

"He next was assigned to the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as military secretary of the United States section of the Canada-United States Military Cooperation Committee and of the Canada-United States Regional Planning Group, NATO, in Washington, D.C. From July 1966 to June 1967, General Winn attended the National War College and completed graduate studies in international affairs at The George Washington University.

"In March 1968 he was assigned to the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing at Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, as assistant deputy commander, operations. ... " (USAF general officer bio at <http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/Biographies/Display/tabid/225/Article/105193/brigadier-general-david-w-winn.aspx>.)

*23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 67, USAF microfilm MO554, frames 1024, 1071, and 1138.*