

Gary G. Catren

F-105 History

15-Jul-66

6805

(Approximate date) An F-105 training class, Course 111106E, graduated from the 4520 CCTW at Nellis AFB NV. The six-month class started in January 1966. The nine students and their SEA assignments were:

1Lt Gary G. Catren - 34 TFS at Korat
1Lt Eugene L. Haggerty - 333 TFS at Takhli
1Lt Edward T. McCaffrey - 333 TFS at Takhli
1Lt Glen Francis Bullock - 34 TFS at Korat
1Lt John R. Casper - 421 TFS at Korat
1Lt Henry R. Hutson III - 357 TFS at Takhli
1Lt Lowell L. Stein - 354 TFS at Takhli
1Lt Glenn Gidel - 354 TFS at Takhli
Maj Bruce A. Brandt - 357 TFS at Takhli

1Lt Catren had received pilot training at Webb AFB between Sept 64 and October 1965. He had attended survival school at Stead AFB in November 1965 prior to reporting to Nellis for F-105 training.

Gary Catren, e-mail 1 Apr 11.

03-Aug-66

1002

Colonel William H. Holt, 355 TFW Commander at Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, submitted his End-of-Tour Report to CINCPACAF. Among his comments, Colonel Holt wrote, "... The unusually high loss rate the first two weeks in July as a result of concentrated F-105 strikes in NVN was a new experience which in my estimation did not receive the quick response due to the significance of the situation. When this situation became evident ... an immediate reevaluation of the operation was in order. In this instance emphasis should have been shifted to kill the SAM and suppress the AAA. This may not be a quick or especially news-worthy effort, however, it would appear to be a better approach for a long term war. With elimination of the SAMs and suppression of AAA, selected targets will be struck with greater accuracy. This is still a requirement of urgency if fighters are to operate in Route Package V and VI with impunity."

Due to pilot losses, the 355 TFW requested TDY help from units outside of Takhli. Two of the pilots on TDY to Takhli from the 34 TFS at Korat were 1Lt Glen Francis Bullock and 1Lt Gary G. Catren. Both pilots had recently arrived at Korat from F-105 training at Nellis. Gary Catren recalled, "To insure Takhli had enough bodies to fill the frag, Korat sent about 12 (could have been 15) of us TDY to Takhli until fresh meat could arrive from state side. What Takhli needed at that time was flight leads. What Korat sent was lieutenants and a couple captains and all of us newbies. I arrived at Takhli not having finished the initial check out at Korat. The Takhli ops guys took good care of us. They didn't schedule us for anything up North, but neither did they have the resources to complete our check out before we were flying the lower pacs, sometimes with the newbie captains as lead. As soon as enough replacements arrived, we were all sent back to Korat at the same time."

355 TFW History, July 1966 - Sep 1967, USAF microfilm NO462, frame 0038 & Gary Catren, e-mail 1 Apr 2011

30-Sep-66

1022

There were 55 pilots assigned to the 333 TFS, 355 TFW, Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, during July - Sep 1966:

Lt Col James A. Young. Assigned between 5 Dec 65 - 4 Jul 66. 100 missions.
Lt Col Donald K. "Danny" Salmon. Assigned 16 Aug 66.
Maj Duwade E. Hornsby. Assigned between 5 Dec 65 - 17 Jul 66. 100 missions.

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Maj Howard W. Leaf. Assigned between 13 Feb 66 - 20 Sep 66. 100 missions.
Maj Douglas D. Brenner. Assigned 26 May 66.
Maj Gordon W. Atkinson. Assigned 18 Jun 66.
Maj Robert Gordon Rilling. Assigned 25 Jul 66.
Maj John C. Brown. Assigned 21 Jul 66.
Maj Robert A. Perkins. Assigned 12 Sep 66.
Maj Roger J. Mathiasen. Assigned 26 Jun 66.
Maj J. D. Tindall. Assigned 12 Sep 66.
Maj William J. McClelland. Assigned between 24 Jun 66 - 15 Jul 66. Returned to Yokota.
Maj Willard Selleck Gideon. Assigned TDY between 15 Jul 66 - 7 Aug 66. MIA.
Maj Henry Shudinis. Assigned TDY 26 Sep 66.
Maj Charles E. Bishop. Assigned TDY 18 Aug 66 - 17 Sep 66. Returned to Kadena.
Capt Donald J. Mattasolio. Assigned between 5 Dec 65 - 10 Jul 66. 100 missions.
Capt James C. Sharp. Assigned between 5 Dec 65 - 5 Jul 66. 100 missions.
Capt Robert J. Straubinger. Assigned between 5 Dec 65 - 10 Jul 66. 100 missions.
Capt Paul H. Dwyer. Assigned between 5 Jun 66 - 15 Jul 66. 100 missions.
Capt John H. Wendell, Jr. Assigned between 15 Apr 66 - 7 Aug 66. MIA.
Capt Jim G. Pinson. Assigned 21 Jun 66.
Capt Donald G. Weidman. Assigned TDY between 24 Jun 66 - 10 Jul 66. Returned to Yokota.
Capt Lloyd A. Sjulstad. Assigned 19 Apr 66.
Capt Ronald W. Scott. Assigned 28 Aug 66.
Capt Thomas A. Loken. Assigned 4 Jul 66.
Capt Gerald L. Hawkins. Assigned 11 Jul 66.
Capt John E. Cozine. Assigned TDY 24 Jun 66 - 9 Aug 66. Returned to Kadena.
Capt Samuel Chapman "Max" Maxwell. Assigned TDY 2 Jun 66 - 11 Aug 66. Returned to Kadena.
Capt William C. Butler. Assigned 22 Jul 66.
Capt Edward D. Nowokunski. Assigned TDY between 25 Jul 66 - 22 Aug 66. Returned to Kadena.
Capt Walter J. Brug. Assigned 16 Aug 66.
Capt Rodney A. Skoglund. Assigned TDY between 18 Aug 66 - 17 Sep 66. Returned to Kadena.
Capt Anthony J. Farrington, Jr. Assigned 20 Sep 66.
Capt Kenneth D. Edwards. Assigned TDY 26 Sep 66.
1Lt Jerry C. Smith. Assigned 20 Mar 66.
1Lt Fred A. Wilson. Assigned 20 Mar 66.
1Lt Ralph Thomas "Tom" Browning. Assigned between 21 Jun 66 - 8 Jul 66. MIA.
1Lt Martin J. Neuens. Assigned between 21 Jun 66 - 12 Aug 66. MIA.
1Lt Alan V. Rogers. Assigned 24 Jun 66.
1Lt Milton R. Rutter. Assigned 19 Jun 66.
1Lt Jack T. Stone, Jr. Assigned TDY between 26 Jun 66 - 12 Aug 66. Returned to Kadena.
1Lt Eugene L. Haggerty. Assigned 31 Jul 66.
1Lt Edward T. McCaffrey. Assigned 31 Jul 66.
1Lt Glen Francis Bullock. Assigned 17 Aug 66 - 3 Sep 66. Returned to 34 TFS at Korat.
1Lt Gary G. Catren. Assigned TDY 17 Aug 66 - 26 Aug 66. Returned to 34 TFS at Korat.
1Lt Richard L. Pack. Assigned TDY 26 Sep 66.
1Lt Randolph S. Reynolds III. Assigned TDY from the 35 TFS 26 Sep 66.
1Lt Richard E. Guild. Assigned TDY 26 Sep 66.
Col William H. Holt. Attached pilot. Reassigned 11 Jul 66.
Col Robert Ray Scott. Attached pilot. 18 Aug 66.
Lt Col Robert E. Borden. Attached pilot. Reassigned 22 Aug 66.
Maj Harry D. Sultzer, Jr. Attached pilot. Reassigned 10 Sep 66
Maj Dale Alonzo Johnson. Attached 20 Sep 66.
Capt Robert F. Gadd III. Attached. Reassigned 14 Jul 66.

355 TFW History, Jul - Dec 66, USAF microfilm NO462.

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F-105 History

17-Jan-67

1090

F-105 pilots of the 421 TFS and 34 TFS, 388 TFW, struck the Thai Nguyen Railroad classification yard (JCS 21.11) at 21-33-33N and 105-51-05E. Returning pilots reported, "... 8 - 10 large sections exploded and numerous smaller explosions. CBU impacts were on flak sites northwest of target. Whole area covered with black and brown smoke. Of 14 rail lines, 1 is serviceable and 1 possibly serviceable, 12 pieces of rolling stock derailed and damaged. Repair and service area heavily damaged. Fairly accurate 37/57/85-mm also heavy barrage. Heaviest flak from northwest of the target. Saw MIGs inbound but they could not get behind the flights."

"Three of the strike flights were flown by members of the 34 TFS. The Force Commander was Maj Carl W. McKenzie [the squadron's Operations Officer] ... and the Deputy Commander was Maj William E. Augsburg Flight assignment was as follows:

"Dallas" - Maj McKenzie, Capt William W. Kennedy, Maj Augsburg, Capt Jackie R. Youngblood.

"Blackjack" - Maj Leo F. Callahan, Maj Earl Johnston, Maj Robert G. Miner, Capt John W. Swanson, Jr.

"Flapper" - Maj Homer T. Terry, 1Lt Gary G. Catren, Capt Alan J. Fick.

"Flak in the target area was described as light to moderate 37/57-MM. Bomb damage was extensive as supported by bomb damage assessment photos."

Homer Terry described the mission. "We ... received orders from the White House to take out the railroad marshalling yard adjacent to the steel mill by a maximum effort of forces from Korat and Takhli; 16 aircraft each from Korat and Takhli. Korat was in first and I was leading the fourth flight. We rolled into our dive bomb runs and were off target in very quick order. I had a problem! When I pushed my bomb release button, my bombs did not release. As I started to pull off target, I ejected my entire rack. No one ever asked about the collateral damage that was inflicted on the roundhouse.

"Takhli followed close behind us. Neither base suffered an aircraft loss. Photo recon showed the marshalling yard was obliterated, but about ten days later recon photos showed the North Viets had laid several tracks back into place and the steel mill had not yet suffered any great loss of production from the actions we had taken." (Homer Terry memoir, "Destroying The Steel making Capability of NVN #2", via e-mail 27 March 2010.)

As Flapper Lead, Maj Terry was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for this mission. "Major Homer Terry distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as an F-105 pilot in Southeast Asia on 17 January 1967. On that date, while attacking a high priority target, despite concentrated and accurate ground fire, continuous missile warnings and MiG warnings, he delivered his ordnance with unerring accuracy causing extensive damage to the target. ... "

Maj Raymond D. Anderson from the 421 TFS was awarded a Silver Star for gallantry for flying on this mission. (7AF SO G-374 14 Mar 1967)

The F-105F Wild Weasel crew of Capt Jerry N. Hoblit and EWO Capt Thomas W. Wilson, Jr. from the 357 TFS at Takhli, were each awarded a Silver Star for supporting a mission near Hanoi on this date. They decoyed SAM sites to protect the force, bombed one site, and suppressed two others with anti-radiation missiles. (E-Mail, Tom Wilson to Ron Thurlow, 7 Jul 2003.)

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1218 & Homer Terry, letter to Ron Thurlow, undated.

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F-105 History

18-Jan-67

1512

Four flights of F-105s from the 388 TFW "... struck the Don Muc Railroad Bridge (21-27-12N 106-14-01E). Especially significant, was the fact that the entire strike force was flown by pilots of the 34 TFS. This was the first time in the history of the 388 TFW that one of its assigned squadrons conducted a complete strike from within its own resources."

"The Force Commander was Lt Col Richard M. Heyman, Jr., and the Deputy Force Commander was Capt David E. Weaver. Flight assignment was as follows:

"Muskrat" - Lt Col Heyman, 1Lt Donald O. Austin, Capt Weaver, 1Lt Catren.

"Rip" - Maj William E. Augsburger, Maj Clarence Kough, Jr., Maj Edward C. Jones, Capt Alan J. Fick.

"Tamale" - Maj McKenzie, Capt Kennedy (two members were forced to air abort).

"Cheeta" - Maj Callahan, Maj Johnston, Capt John W. Swanson, Jr. (one member air aborted)."

"The flights reported heavy AAA in the target area and also 15 NM from the target during ingress and egress. Heavy 85 mm was encountered during the ingress and egress to the target. BDA photos ... substantiated pilot observations as two spans of the bridge were destroyed, leaving it in an unservicable condition."

Maj Augsburger was awarded a Silver Star for galantry for flying this mission. (7th AF SO G374 14 March 1967)

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frames 1218 and 1219.

28-Feb-67

5155

Four pilots assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat completed flying 100 missions during February 1967. They were:

Capt Phillip A. Goodwin

Capt John T. Stadler on TDY to the 34th from the 67 TFS at Kadena.

Capt David E. Weaver

1Lt Gary G. Catren

This was the last time Capt Goodwin flew the F-105. He had accumulated 340 hours in the airplane.

This was also the last time Capt Weaver flew the F-105. He had accumulated 651.5 hours in the airplane.

Lieutenant Cartren flew his 100th mission as #2 in a two-ship flight led by Lt Col Richard M. "Dick" Heyman, Jr., the 34th squadron commander. He flew the mssion "... somewhere toward the first of the month as I was able to get home and married by the 26th of Feb 66. ... We were working in Laos and I begged a weather recce into Pac 1 so I could finish. We got shot at, we shot back and I took a 37/85 (?) mm through one of the fins of my left wing tank while I was inverted pulling into the dive. Without that lucky shot, I would have finished 100 still cherry."

His 100th mission was the last time 1Lt Catren flew the F-105. In six months of training at Nellis and six months of combat, he had accumulated 374.1 hours in the airplane. "That was the end of my relationship, but not my love affair, wth the Thud." His subsequent assignments were:

Mar 67 - July 67 - McChord - Base Ops - T-33 - (TDY Randolph - IPIS - T-39 - May 67)

Aug 67 - Sep 67 - Tyndall - F-106 conversion

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Sep 67 - Jul 68 - Paine Field - 498th FIS - F-106
Jul 68 - Jan 70 - F-106 - Hamilton - 84th FIS
Jan 70 - July 73 - RAF Exchange Program - RAF Coltishall - British Electric Lightning conversion/intercept instructor
Sep 73 - Dec 74 - Clark - Nuclear Release Officer (T-33)
Jan 75 - Mar 75 - TDY Tyndall F-106 Requal
Mar 75 - Jul 77 - McChord - 318th FIS - F-106
Aug 77 - Jun 78 - Newport News - Navy Staff College
July 78 - Jun 81 - Vicenza, Italy - 5 ATAF Conventional Attack Officer
Jun 81- Jan 84 - Davis Monthan - AGS Squadron Commander
Jan 84 - Jul 85 - Langley - TAC Hq - ADTAC IG Aircraft Maintenance
Jul 85 - Jul 86 - Langley - TAC Hq - Asst. DCM Fighter Maintenance
Aug 86 - Jul 89 - RAF Alconbury - DCM (RF-4, A-10, Aggressor Sq)
Jul 89 - Dec 90 - Bergstrom - 12th AF HQ - Asst. DCM

He retired as a colonel in December 1990.

34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma & Gary Catren, e-mails 1 & 2 Apr 11.