

Peter Bugbee Christianson

F-105 History

22-Sep-61

300

The sixth F-105D operational training Class 62C, Course 111506E, graduated 18 pilots at the 4520 CCTW, Nellis AFB NV. The class began training on 24 Jul 1961. The class was attached to the 4526 CCTS at Nellis, commanded by Lt Col James Ellis Bean. The students were:

Lt Col William H. Lacey	Capt William F. Loyd, Jr.	1Lt Donald M. Ware
Capt Henri H. Andrews	Capt Fred L. Tracy	
Capt Phillip O. Bradley	Capt Fred A. "Fritz" Treyz	
Capt Eleas Casillas	Capt Gayle D. Williams, Jr.	
Capt Peter B. Christianson	1Lt James E. Bayles	
Capt Henry W. Harsfield, Jr.	1Lt Henry W. Goetz	
Capt Edward M. Jones	1Lt Lloyd H. Langston	
Capt John M. Lowery	1Lt Bruce G. Taylor	

After training, Capt Treyz was assigned to the 36 TFW, Bitburg AB, Germany. He had flown P-51s in Japan in 1945 and B-29s during the Korean War, where he flew 32 combat missions over North Korea. Prior to his F-105 assignment, he was an F-101 and F-102 test pilot in the 6520 Test Group at Hanscom Field, Mass. He arrived at Nellis after completing Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell.

Lt Ware also went to the 36 TFW and the 53 TFS where he remained for 18 months.

Capt Lowery's next assignment was also to Bitburg. "From Dec 62 to October 65, I was Flight Test Maintenance Officer at first Bitburg, 36th TFW and then in July 63 sent to Nellis, Seymour Johnson AFB 64, Takhli AB November 65."

4520 CCTW History, Jul - Dec 61, USAF microfilm MO2195 & Don Ware 15 Apr 86 letter to Bauke Jan Douma & John Lowery e-mail 18 Mar 13.

16-Nov-64

2027

The 53 TFS, 36 TFW, Bitburg AB, Germany, published orders authorizing squadron pilots as flight leads and instructor pilots. "The following named officers, 53rd Tac Ftr Sq, except as indicated, are appointed as Flight Leaders." Order also included 23 named as instructor pilots effective 1 Nov 1964 and 19 pilots with Sq Clearance Authority:

Col James F. Hackler, Jr. attached pilot as flight lead.
Lt Col Robert M. "Bob" White flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Maj John M. Rowan flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Maj James Helms Kasler flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Maj Ewald G. Kuggel flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Maj Moss K. Fletcher attached to 53 TFS as flight lead and Instructor Pilot.
Maj Clement D. "Dix" Billingslea attached to 53 TFS as flight lead.
Capt Milton V. Rickman flight lead and Instructor Pilot.
Capt Henry W. "Bill" Goodman flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Capt Harry J. "Jim" Hennigar, Jr. flight lead.
Capt James T. Craig, Jr. flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Capt John R. Keeton flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Capt Peter B. Christianson flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Capt Dale R. McKenzie flight lead and Instructor Pilot.
Capt Larry William Biediger flight lead and Instructor Pilot.
Capt Charles N. "Charlie" Warner flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Capt Ronald W. Scott flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.
Capt Lewis Wiley "Lew" Shattuck flight lead and Instructor Pilot also Squadron Administrative Officer with Sq

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Clearance Authority

Capt Charles Edward "Chuck" Franklin flight lead

Capt Robert E. "Bob" Phillips flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.

Capt Corneil M. "Neil" Dollarhide flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.

Capt Homer D. Villarreal flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.

Capt Joseph E. Robeson flight lead.

Capt Alfred J. "Lash" Lagrou, Jr. attached to 53 TFS as flight lead and Instructor Pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.

Capt Harry E. Payne attached to 53 TFS as flight lead and Instructor Pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.

Capt Jebson "Jeb" Baker attached to 53 TFS as flight lead and Instructor Pilot.

Capt Neil L. Eddins attached to 53 TFS as flight lead and Instructor Pilot

Capt George W. Behran Squadron Clearance Authority.

Capt Gobel Dale James Sq Clearance Authority.

Capt Robert N. "Bob" Johnston, flight lead and instructor pilot with Sq Clearance Authority.

Order signed by Lewis W. Shattuck, Captain, USAF Administrative Officer.

53rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, 36th Tactical Fighter Wing, Special Order 17, 16 Nov 1964

31-Dec-64

1642

Key personnel in the 53 TFS, 36 TFW, Bitburg AB, Germany, as of December 1964 were:

Lt Col Robert M. White - Commander

Maj John M. Rowan - Operations Officer

Maj James Helms Kasler - Assistant Operations Officer

Maj Ewald G. Kruggel - "A" Flight Commander

Capt John R. Keeton - "B" Flight Commander

Capt Gobel Dale James - "C" Flight Commander

Capt Peter B. Christianson - "D" Flight Commander

Capt Robert N. "Bob" Johnston - 53 TFS C Flight Pilot

Capt Larry William Biediger - 53 TFS B Flight Pilot

Capt Charles W. McConnell - 53 TFS A Flight Pilot. Joined squadron in October 1964

Capt Carl W. McKenzie was a 53 TFS pilot who rotated to the ZI since 1 July 64.

ROSTER OF SQUADRON PERSONNEL 53 TFS Dec 1964, from Goble James via John Revak & Charles McConnell letter to Bauke Jan Douma, 7 Feb 89.

26-Nov-65

2028

The 36 TFW at Bitburg AB, Germany, published a flight duty roster of 52 pilots for each of the three F-105 squadrons in the wing, the 22 TFS 23, TFS, and the 53 TFS. Duties were: IP - Instructor Pilot, IFE - Instrument Flight Examiner, FCF functional check flights in F-105D/F aircraft, CA - Clearing Authority.

Capt Gobel Dale James from the 53 TFS was designated an IP.

Capt David Jay Allinson from the 22 TFS was designated an IP, IFE, CA, and FCF.

Capt Robert N. "Bob" Johnston - 53 TFS pilot. IP and FCF

Capt Ray H. Bryant - 22 TFS pilot. IFE, CA

Capt Charles W. McConnell - 53 TFS pilot. IP

Capt Roger K. Parrish - 53 TFS pilot. IP

Capt Frederick B. Green - 23 TFS pilot. IP, CA.

Maj Don L. "Rock" Campbell - 23 TFS pilot. IP, CA.

Capt Peter B. Christianson - 53 TFS pilot. IP and FCF

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36 TFW Special Order M-191, 26 November 1965.

31-Oct-66

1091

Five F-105 pilots reported in to the 421 TFS at Korat RTAFB, Thailand, during the month of October 1966. They were:

Maj Walter E. Carson III
Maj Robert Earl Kline
Capt George R. Hennigan
Capt Norman L. "Norm" Suits
Capt Peter B. Christianson (TDY from Weapons School)

388 TFW History, Jul - Dec 1966

03-Apr-69

F-105D 624269 34 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit by AAA while attacking a storage area in Laos. Crashed in Laos. 19-34N 103-21E Maj Peter Bugbee Christianson 34 TFS pilot ejected but was KIA. A rescue helicopter crew recovered his body. Call sign: "Hatchet 01". "Maj Christianson was pulling up from his second pass on his second target. RAVEN 43 (FAC) saw a smoke trail but was unable to contact Hatchet 1 on either guard or tactical frequencies. There was no observation of bailout or descent, nor was the chute beeper heard. Neither voice nor beeper contact was established with Major Christianson on the ground. The chute was seen on the ground and Jolly Green 71 (from the 40 ARRS) lowered a pararescuman who reported Major Christianson killed in action. His body was recovered.

"Followup evaluation of Major Christianson's death noted a similarity with injuries received by two other officers in previous attempts to eject from the F-105 (with the new rocket seat and force-deployed parachute). (Maj Vincent Colasuonno who was killed on 12 Feb 69 and 1Lt David T. Dinan who survived an ejection on 17 Nov 68). Queries led to a Pacific Air Force compilation of related incidents and initiation of studies, but initial analysis did not implicate the egress system as a cause of injury."

Maj Christianson was born 9 November 1929. He entered the service from Abington, Massachusetts. His name appears on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall on panel 27W line 4.

In February 1970, Ninth Street at Nellis AFB, Nevada, was renamed in honor of Maj Christianson.

388 TFW History, Apr - Jun 69, USAF microfilm NO586 & Thunderchief Worldwide Report, Vol V No 7 April 1970.

09-May-69

410

The 34 TFS flew its last F-105 mission before it converted to F-4Es at the 388 TFW, Korat RTAFB, Thailand.

The F-4Es were delivered on 11 May 1969 by the 40 TFS from Eglin AFB FL. The 40th changed its designation to the 34 TFS when it arrived at Korat. "...They were met with cold beer, a lei, a parade of smoke bombs, water hoses, and welcomed through most of the streets of Korat ...". The 40th designation returned to Eglin.

The final 34 TFS squadron commander with F-105s was Lt Col Harvey W. Prosser, Jr. When the squadron converted to F-4Es, he was replaced by Lt Col Joseph M. Potts. Col Prosser was reassigned to Kirtland AFB, NM where he flew the F-4 and F-104.

On 10 May 1969, Capt Clayton Bane Lyle III was one of the F-105 pilots who transferred from the 34th to the 44 TFS. (Bane Lyle, e-mail 20 Aug 2010.)

1Lt Joseph W. Widhalm, assigned to the 34 TFS in January 1969, also transferred to the 44 TFS. (Joe Widhalm, e-

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mail 7 May 2012)

Maj William R. McDaniel was another 34 TFS pilot who transferred to the 44th.

On 11 May 1969, the 34th distributed its F-105s to the 355 TFW at Takhli, RTAFB and to the 44 TFS, the only unit still flying F-105s at Korat. The 44 TFS possessed 23 F-105s. Its squadron commander was Lt Col Herbert L. Sherrill who had replaced Lt Col Guy J. Sherrill on 12 March 1969.

F-4E pilots of the 388 TFW called the F-105 "Thud" ("... cause that's the sound it makes when it crashes!") while Korat F-105 pilots referred to the F-4E as the "Thumb" (Two-Hole-Ugly-Mini-Bug). (388 TFW history)

Harvey Prosser commented on the attitude of the F-4 pilots. "They were not a happy bunch. I could have as many F-4 guys switch to 105s as I wanted. All the 34th young guys and the old F-4 pilot Gibs much preferred the Thud. We put up a big sign at the entrance to the O Club stating 'Tiny Tim flies F-4s'. The new F-4 guys refused to take it down and it stayed up for at least a month when the Wing Commander commanded the 34th pilots to remove it because it hurt the F-4 pilots' feelings. Also, the nickname for the F-4 at Korat at that time was Mini-Buff. Again, at the Wing Commander's order, we desisted." (Harvey Prosser, e-mail 2 Feb 10)

During the time the 34th flew F-105s, the squadron received three Outstanding Unit Awards and a Presidential Unit Citation. After it began flying F-4Es, the squadron received its fourth Outstanding Unit Award for the period 1 July 1968 to 15 September 1969 as well as the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross With Palm for the period 15 May 1966 to 29 January 1973. (James Geer, "The Republic F-105 Thunderchief Wing and Squadron Histories", Schiffer, 2002, pg 241.)

However, in its 3 years of flying the F-105, the 34 TFS paid a high price. Pilots assigned or attached to the squadron lost 39 planes to combat and accidents -- 37 "D" models and two "F" models -- enough to equip the squadron more than twice over. Thirteen squadron pilots died in combat (KIA), three more in accidents. Four pilots survived accidental crashes, ten were rescued, and 11 more became POWs, one of whom died in captivity. The following recaps each of the squadron's 39 losses, the pilots involved, and their fate:

Date	F-105	Last Name	Fate
1. 03 Jun 66	58-1171	Pielin	Rescued
2. 15 Jun 66	62-4377	Kelley	Rescued
3. 21 Jun 66	62-4358	Sullivan	KIA
4. 30 Jun 66	62-4224	Nierste	Rescued
5. 15 Jul 66	59-1761	Hamby	Rescued
6. 20 Jul 66	62-4308	Lewis	KIA
7. 21 Jul 66	62-4227	Tiffin	KIA
8. 06 Aug 66	62-4315	Rutherford	Rescued
9. 17 Sep 66	61-0191	Rutherford	Rescued
10. 10 Oct 66	62-4300	Bullock	Died
11. 10 Jan 67	62-4265	Gauley	KIA
12. 19 Mar 67	61-0123	Austin	KIA
13. 05 Apr 67	62-4395	Youngblood	Survived
14. 12 May 67	63-8269 (F)	Stewart	KIA
		Pitman	KIA
15. 15 May 67	62-4429 (F)	Heiliger	POW
		Pollard	POW
16. 02 Jun 67	61-0190	Smith	POW
17. 04 Jun 67	61-0148	Kough	Rescued
18. 15 Jun 67	61-0213	Swanson	KIA

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19.	17 Oct 67	61-0205	Andrews	POW
20.	17 Oct 67	62-4326	Odell	POW
21.	17 Oct 67	60-0425	Sullivan	POW
22.	27 Oct 67	62-4231	Flynn	POW
23.	28 Oct 67	62-4356	Waldrop	Survived
24.	19 Nov 67	58-1170	Vissotzky	POW
25.	04 Feb 68	60-5384	Lasiter	POW
26.	14 Feb 68	60-0418	Elliot	KIA
27.	15 Apr 68	61-0206	Metz	POW Died
28.	25 Apr 68	60-0436	Givens	Died
29.	14 May 68	61-0132	Bass	Died
30.	28 May 68	61-0194	Ingvalson	POW
31.	31 May 68	60-0409	Beresik	KIA
32.	08 Jun 68	61-0055	Light	Rescued
33.	13 Jul 68	60-0453	Confer	Survived
34.	01 Sep 68	60-0512	Thaete	Rescued
35.	17 Nov 68	61-0092	Dinan	Survived
36.	11 Feb 69	62-4256	Zukowski	KIA
37.	17 Mar 69	61-0104	Dinan	KIA
38.	29 Mar 69	62-4270	Stafford	Rescued
39.	03 Apr 69	62-4269	Christianson	KIA

388 TFW History, Apr - Jun 69, USAF microfilm NO586