

F-105 History of Sheldon H. Cooper

15 July 1968

The twenty-first F-105 RTU Class 69AR graduated at the 23 TFW, McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 19 Feb 68 with 21 students: 2 Lt Cols, 10 Maj's, 5 Capt's and 3 2Lts. Twenty students graduated. The class deployed 24 F-105s for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 18 Jun - 3 Jul 68 with the 561 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Harry D. Sultzer, Jr.

Student pilots were:

Lt Col Isaac M. Glass	Capt Walter E. Ackerlund
Lt Col Herbert L. Sherrill	Capt Peter Beeble
Maj Richard Doran	Capt Carl W. Blough
Maj Billy G. Dornberger	Capt Robert M. Howard, Jr.
Maj Manford C. Holly, Jr.	Capt Barry G. Swarts
Maj Albert E. Oppel	Capt Doug R. Young
Maj Ernest J. Ratliff	2Lt John W. Crotty
Maj Joseph Reynes	2Lt Ed J. Gabriel, Jr.
Maj Wycliffe Steele, Jr.	2Lt Gerald A. Vink
Maj William H. Talley	
Maj James R. Turpen	
Maj Sheldon H. Cooper	

The Outstanding Graduate was Capt Sheldon H. Cooper who went to the 34 TFS at Korat. The Top Gun was Capt Peter Beeble who was assigned to the 333 TFS at Takhli.

During their two weeks at George AFB, the class practiced missions for air refueling, navigation, ACM, AGM-12B, AIM-9B and air-to-air dart firing. ... ACM training was hindered because scissors maneuvers were removed from the program." The class flew a total of 412 sorties and 488 hours and fired 20 AIM-9Bs and 20 AGM-12Bs.

Four pilots from this class went on to complete follow-on "Combat Nail" training for radar bombing with the 4519 CCTS at McConnell. These pilots were joined in their training by four Navigator/Bombardiers and were the first of the crews of this type who received this training to be assigned to the F-105F Commando Nail missions in SEA. They completed their training under course 111506K on 9 August 1968 and were assigned to the 44 TFS at Korat.

Four other pilots went to Wild Weasel training at Nellis. They attended WW Class 68WW III-25 (69-C-WW) and were also assigned to the 44 TFS. They were:

- Maj Billy G. Dornberger (WW# 548)
- Maj Joseph Reynes (WW# 551)
- Lt Col Herbert L. Sherrill (WW# 545)
- Maj William H. Talley (WW# 554)

On 2 May 1968, Maj Dornberger and his wife "... were sailing on Cheny Reservoir in a 21-foot fiberglass sailboat. Mrs. Dornberger was heard to fall and slip overboard. All search efforts were unsuccessful and dragging operations were underway when two fishermen observed her body floating in shallow water." She was 29 years old. (TWX 031510Z May 68 rescue report, Det 16 03-2 May 68 in AFHRA folder K318.241-2 IRIS 1008898.)

Source: 23 TFW History, Jan - Jun 68, USAF microfilm MO554, frames 0117 - 0118.

Major Cooper accumulated 400.4 hours in the F-105 between his first flight on 1 Sep 65 and his last in April 1969.