

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

24-Nov-67

237

The fifteenth F-105 RTU Class 68DR graduated at McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 23 June 1967 with 22 student pilots. They deployed for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 3 - 22 Nov 67 with the 563 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Joe W. Pickett.

Members of the class and their SEA squadron assignments were:

Maj Julius W. "Z" Szenegeto - 357 TFS	Maj Otto M. Stewart - 357 TFS
Lt Col Rufus M. "Mike" Monts III - 469 TFS	Maj William A. Wiese - 354 TFS
Lt Col Donald L. Nangle - 354 TFS	Capt Roger T. Chesson, Jr. - 333 TFS
Maj Robert E. Belli - 354 TFS	Capt Gary G. Durkee - 34 TFS
Maj David B. Coon - 357 TFS	Capt Nobe Ray Koontz, Jr. - 469 TFS
Maj Robert F. Daley - ???	Capt James J. Mizner - 469 TFS
Maj John P. Gee - 354 TFS	Capt George M. Nygaard - 354 TFS
Maj Melvin L. Irwin - 34 TFS	Capt Lamont H. "Monty" Pharmer - 34 TFS
Capt William A. Thomas, Jr. - 34 TFS	Capt Robert L. Riedenauer - 469 TFS
Capt Dean C. Wood - 357 TFS	Capt David M. Roeder - 469 TFS

"On 22 November 1967, the unit returned to McConnell AFB [from George AFB]. On this return mission the 563 TFS and Class 68DR completed the first 'Operation Full Sweat'. Operation Full Sweat was designed to simulate very closely conditions that exist during F-105 operations in Southeast Asia. This was very realistic and very appropriate to complete training, since the entire class had received assignments for combat duty in SEA." (23 TFW history)

When asked about "Operation Full Sweat", Capt Monty Pharmer replied, "I don't ever remember hearing that name. Towards the end of our training at McConnell, we made live ordnance deliveries, did night refueling and in general, flew in more mission oriented flights. ... I thought what we were doing was part of the normal training sequence." (Monty Pharmer, e-mail 16 Sep 2006.)

Maj Robert E. Belli was presented the top over-all student award.

Capt William A. "Bill" Thomas, Jr. won the Top Gun and top academic awards. Thomas had earned his wings while assigned to the 3615 Student Squadron, Craig AFB AL in 1962 and 1963. Since 28 December 1963, he had been assigned to the 34th Bomb Squadron, Wright-Patterson AFB OH, first as a B-52 copilot then as pilot. As a 1Lt copilot, he had been a member of the senior standardization board. (Bill Thomas, AF Form 11)

Thomas was a 1962 graduate of the Citadel. Jake Shuler, also a student at the Citadel, recalled, "Although Bill and I were in different companies/battalions, we were close friends since we were both in Air Force ROTC and had pilot contracts. ... He was the most physically fit member of our class and an exceptional individual in so many other ways." (Jake Shuler e-mail 1 June 2010).

One of the student pilots in this RTU class, Monty Pharmer, recalled vying for class honors with Thomas. "Bill was a great guy and a real competitor. In F-105 training at McConnell he and I were in constant competition to finish number one in the class. As I remember, he finished No. 1 and I was No. 2." (Monty Pharmer e-mail 2 June 2010.)

Pharmer first entered pilot training as an Aviation Cadet in 1956. He graduated from Basic Pilot Training at Bryan AFB, Texas, in November 1957. From there he went into Advanced Pilot Training and Fighter Gunnery in the F-86 at Williams AFB, Arizona, and then into the F-100 Fighter Gunnery program at Nellis AFB, Nevada. "At the time of graduating from that program my entire class was "Shanghai'd" into SAC B-47s. What a bummer. It was my last choice out of Pilot

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

Training. ... I spent 5 years [in B-47s] and finally was upgraded to Aircraft Commander in 1962. Still trying to get out of SAC, I volunteered for the Air Commando program and was fortunate enough to get an assignment to Panama in the C-47."

In June 1964, he was assigned to the 605th Air Commando Squadron located at Howard AFB, CZ. For three years he flew counterinsurgency missions throughout South and Central America and the Caribbean area. There he also trained Latino pilots in the C-47 in counterinsurgency operations and how to land at night in sugar cane fields, highways, golf courses, etc. As he recalled, "In retrospect it was almost as hazardous as combat."

Capt Pharmer was initially assigned to F-105 training at Nellis AFB, Class 68-B in April 1967, and attended a jet re-qualification course in the T-33 at MacDill AFB, Florida prior to arriving there. At Nellis he found that the program was backed up with entrants and he would have to remain there for several months before he could start training. As a result, he requested a transfer to the F-105 training program at McConnell AFB in Kansas and was reassigned there to F-105 RTU Class 68DR. (Monty Pharmer, e-mails 16 and 25 Sep 2006 & 1 and 4 June 2010.)

Two pilots from this RTU class received seven weeks of Wild Weasel training at Nellis in WW Class 68WW III-18 before reporting to their SEA squadrons. They were:

Maj Elmer W. Otto to the 354 TFS at Takhli.
Maj Francis A. "Frosty" Sheridan to the 44 TFS at Korat.

Since 19 April 1960, Maj Frosty Sheridan had been a B-52 copilot and B-52 Aircraft Commander, where his last assignment was with the 337 Bomb Squadron, Dyess AFB, TX.

23 TFW History, Jan - Jun 67, USAF microfilm MO554, frames 1063 - 1066 & Francis A. Sheridan's AF Form 11 Officer Military Record.

11-Feb-68

4873

"Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS flew a mission to support the Marines at Khe Sanh in South Vietnam but weather diverted them to hit a target in Laos. The flight took off at 0545. Its line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0167
#2 - Capt John E. Hartman
#3 - Capt Gary G. Durkee
#4 - Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.

It was Maj Armstrong's 63rd mission. "This was a Bravo frag all of the way. Our assigned target was near the besieged town of Khe Sanh in South Vietnam. The weather was clobbered there so we bombed a supply area, which was just across the Laotian border. All of the bombs were on target and were swung up through Pack I for a weather check and counter. The wingmen did a good job!" Their mission lasted for 2 hours 30 minutes.

Capt Lawrence L. Bogemann, who had arrived in the 34 TFS this month, flew his local check-out flight today. He was a KC-135 copilot in SAC and had trained at Nellis in the F-105. (Larry Bogemann, e-mail 27 April 10.)

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 25 - 26.

13-Feb-68

4875

The 34 TFS flew a mission into Laos that lasted for 3 hours 30 minutes. "Scuba" flight took off at 1405. Its flight line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4269
#2 - Capt Gary G. Durkee

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

#3 - Maj Almer L. "Buddy" Barner, Jr.
#4 - Capt Harry Guy Paddon III

This was Maj Armstrong's 65th combat mission. "The reason this mission was so long was that the assigned #2 man (Bill Shunney) [Maj William P. Shunney] had a speed brake problem after take off and I had to take him up to Udorn to drop his bombs and escorted him back to the field since this was his first mission. I went up to the tanker, refueled and we went to a target in Laos. An O-2 FAC put us in on a storage area and we hit it fairly well although the presence of scattered clouds obscured the target at times. We then went up to Dong Hoi and made an armed recce although we couldn't see the ground."

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 26.

14-Feb-68

2705

"... Seventh Air Force used the rare day of clear weather to attack Hanoi's canal bridge, one of the targets President Johnson had again released only a week earlier. Since the bridge raids of December, the Canal Bridge (JCS 13) had returned to operation, while the Doumer Bridge over the Red River (JCS 12) was still down."

"Late in the afternoon, strike forces from Takhli and Korat converged on the bridge from opposite directions. Sixteen bomb-laden F-105s from the 355 TFW at Takhli came down Thud Ridge from the west, with eight F-105 escorts to threaten the SAM sites and eight F-4s to guard against the MiGs. A similar force escorted a like number of F-105s from the 388 TFW at Korat as they penetrated North Vietnam from the Gulf of Tonkin. Although the two wings dropped forty-eight 2,000-pound and 3,000-pound bombs, only one hit the bridge, and three days later trains were using it. An escort F-105 from Korat was lost to a SAM and the pilot, ["Pancho 02"] Capt. Robert M. Elliot [from the 34 TFS], was never seen by Americans again." (To Hanoi and Back")

"The two wings expended 22 3,000-pound bombs and 26 2,000-pound bombs in the target area. KA-71 strike photography showed one direct hit on the south end of the bridge and several craters on the southern approach. It was estimated severe damage was inflicted on the bridge." (388 TFW history)

Maj Cecil G. Prentis from the 333 TFS at Takhli received the Distinguished Flying Cross (Second Oak Leaf Cluster) for heroism on this mission. "... Major Prentis led the last of four flights against a heavily defended bridge. After flying through intense barrages of flak and surface-to-air missiles to deliver his ordnance directly on target, he successfully broke up an impending attack by MiG interceptors which allowed the force to egress without loss." (Cecil G. Prentis, DFC (2nd OLC) citation)

Maj Roger D. Ingvalson from the 34 TFS from Korat was awarded the Silver Star for a mission he flew on this day. He was presented the award on 25 July 1968 under SO G-2248. "Major Roger D. Ingvalson distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force over North Vietnam on 14 February 1968. On that date, Major Ingvalson exhibited extraordinary courage as a member of a surface to air missile suppression flight of F-105 Thunderchiefs assigned to protect a large strike force. Despite electronic equipment malfunctions, his aggressiveness and skill enabled him to successfully decoy numerous surface to air missiles as well as intense, accurate anti-aircraft fire away from the main force and to his own aircraft. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Major Ingvalson has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." (Citation posted on-line at <http://www.veterantributes.org/TributeDetail.asp?ID=13>)

Lt Col James B. Ross from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, led the CBU flight attacking the four corners of Gia Lam airport (JCS 3) in Hanoi to provide cover for 388 TFW flights bombing the Canal bridge. His call sign was "Locust Lead". This was the first attack on this airport. "No AAA fire on mission

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

aircraft! One A/C lost to SAM on egress." Col Ross was awarded the Silver Star for this mission. (Jim Ross, undated note circa May 2001 to Ron Thurlow.)

Capt Lamont H. Pharmer also from the 34 TFS was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement for supporting this mission. The award citation read, "Capt Pharmer was a member of the flak suppression flight for a force of F-105s assigned the mission of destroying a vital military target in the heavily defended Hanoi area. Despite heavy missile and antiaircraft artillery fire, Captain Pharmer unhesitatingly selected and attacked a lethal antiaircraft artillery site over the one originally assigned him in order to suppress a more potent threat to the strike force. Capt Pharmer displaying outstanding courage and flying skill, delivered his ordnance directly on target, contributing significantly to the safety of the main force on an important and highly dangerous mission." (Lamont H. Pharmer DFC Award Citation.)

Years later, Monty Pharmer still remembered details of this mission. "It was my first Pac 6 mission and it amazed me how much fire power, AAA, SAMs, etc. the NV sent up at us. Before the flight, I rode out to the flight line in the van with Bob Elliott. He was trying to ease the tension for some of us new heads. He said it won't be as bad as some had told us. Unfortunately, he got hit by a SAM that day and his body wasn't recovered until sometime in the 1990s. Sq. CO, L/C Bob Smith was leading the mission and I was Number 4 on (I believe) Jim Ross' wing [Lt Col James B. Ross]. Gary Durkee was on Bob Smith's wing as No. 2." (Monty Pharmer, e-mail 22 Sep 2006)

On his 43rd combat mission, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Bass 3" against the Canal bridge. "On target. Heavy 37/57/85 mm/SAMs. Pancho 2." (Rufus Dye Mission History log.)

"To Hanoi and Back", pg 128 & 388 TFW history, Jan - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO 584, frame 0501.

14-Feb-68

4876

"Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS was one of the Korat flights that struck the Canal des Rapides bridge (JCS 13) in downtown Hanoi. The flight took off at 13:55. Its line up was:

- #1 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander
- #2 - Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0464
- #4 - Capt Gary G. Durkee

This was Maj Armstrong's 66th combat mission. "The target was the Hanoi Railroad & Hiway Bridge [JCS 13]. The weather was clear for the first time in several weeks. We came up the delta into the target. Col Smith inadvertently dropped his bombs crossing the coast. The visibility was restricted but we picked up the target about 20 miles out. I hit about where I aimed but the winds they gave us were wrong. Nobody hit the bridge consequently, and post-strike photography showed there were 30 cars on the bridge at the time. #2 couldn't get his bombs off and carried them out. The flak was lighter than reputed and we only saw about 6 SAMs, which weren't too close. However, Pancho #2 was hit by a SAM on the way out and went down [Capt Robert Malcolm Elliott, 34 TFS, KIA]. We went on down to Pack I in northern Mu Gia Pass and #2 got his bombs off. The rest of us made 3 strafing passes on a building along the road." Their mission lasted for 3 hours 45 minutes.

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Armstrong further described this Valentine Day mission. "The weather cleared in Pack VIA so we launched against the Hanoi Railroad and Highway Bridge (alternately called the Canal des Rapides Bridge) which I hadn't bombed since 28 October. Bob Smith was the mission commander and I was flying #3 in the lead flight which meant that I was the deputy mission commander. We went the water route and dropped off on a Northwesterly heading towards Hanoi in unusually clear weather. As we neared the cost line of the Delta, I noted Bob's two 3,000# bombs drop and impact with violent explosion on the beach. I called out: 'Scuba lead, why don't you turn around and I'll take the force in'. There was absolutely no reason to risk oneself and an

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

aircraft that had no bombs. His response was: 'Negative'. I should have expected as much from hard-headed Bob Smith. He knew that I was perfectly capable of taking the force to the target but he wasn't about to retreat.

"So Bob led us in for a run on the bridge. He made his dive bomb run as if he had bombs to drop. Post strike photography showed that there were about 30 cars on the bridge when we arrived and the locomotive was valiantly trying to back off which apparently he was able to do. I released my bombs and joined up with Bob for our egress. Our #2 man, Bill Thomas and our #4 man, Gary Durkee were nowhere to be seen so the two of us headed to the tankers. When we coasted up to the tankers, we observed that the two of them were already there. I should mention that this was the first Pack VIA mission for both of them and that probably accounts for their actions.

"I called out: 'Hey, #2, you've still got a bomb on your right wing'. Gary Durkee called: 'And you've got one on your left wing, too'. Bill apparently didn't realize that his 3,000# bombs had not released when he hit the button. He never had dropped that size bomb before and felt the quiver in the aircraft when they were blown off the pylon station. Even with this extra load, he had out run us and Gary was so mesmerized by the 6 SA-2's that we saw and the 85-mm flak which popped around us just before roll-in that he hadn't noticed the bombs on Bill's aircraft. They were justified in having adrenaline up to their eyeballs because of the enemy defenses since Capt. Bob Elliot from our squadron was hit by a SA-2 on the way out and killed.

"When we landed Bob Smith told us what happened to him on the way in. He was flying on auto-pilot as the mission commanders always did to give some stability to the many aircraft using him for guidance when the auto-pilot 'burped' and he hurriedly grabbed the control stick. In his haste he inadvertently hit the already armed bomb release system. Explanation:>>There were a dozen things that one had to do before entering North Vietnam. Maybe some pilots used a checklist but I memorized the steps since I wanted to keep my head out of the cockpit. I made up a little jingle which contained the first letter of what needed to be done and had rehearsed it enough so that it came naturally even in times of extreme stress! Some of those steps were to dump the cabin pressure so that you would not ingest fumes in case of a hit in the compressor section. You also had to verify that you had selected the correct mil setting for the attack, selected the proper ordnance on the appropriate station, gone to 100% oxygen, etc. All of this time you had to maintain your formation position and look for MiGs and SA-2's. This was not easy and the less competent/current pilots had all they could handle! Bob had already done all of this and now was concentrating on positioning the force for the attack when the auto-pilot 'burped'.<<

"Bob was now faced with two thoughts. The first was what to do with Bill's bombs. 3,000# bombs were a precious commodity so he was loathe to just drop them safe. Secondly, he was still smarting over the inadvertent loss of his bombs. So after we all took on our post strike fuel (Bob told us to take a couple thousand pounds more than every other flight was taking on board) Bob called for a FAC in Pack I. All of the other flights proceeded down the Gulf and headed back to Thailand across South Vietnam -- except the four of us. We flew into Pack I and made contact with a FAC who said that he had spotted a building at the North end of Muy Ghia Pass where some bad guys were hanging out. It was easy to see so Bob told Bill Thomas to bomb it. Bill made his run but the bombs failed to release a second time -- an obvious material malfunction. Bob then told him to do it again but this time to hit the jettison button which caused the bombs to impact still attached to the pylon and thus not armed.

"This was done. Then Bob asked the FAC if he wanted us to strafe the building since we had 1,000 rounds of 20-mm ammo each. Of course the FAC said yes. So Bob made the first firing pass by flying below the heights of the pass to get the right attack dive angle. We all followed and made 3 passes each until we had fired all of our ammo. I'm sure it looked to a casual observer that we doing a gunnery practice on a range back in the states. In fact, Muy Ghia Pass was known to have the fiercest defenses on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Reconnaissance aircraft transited it at 600

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

knots and still were shot at by the flak sites situated on the hill sides. As far as any of us could tell, they never fired a shot at us while we made these vulnerable, multiple passes. We concluded that this was such an unusually bold effort that the North Vietnamese just knew it had to be a trick! From my standpoint, I had just hung my precious bottom out twice on one mission for just one counter. This was vintage Bob Smith! He had no fear of anything."

As "Scuba 02", Capt William A. "Bill" Thomas, Jr. received the Distinguished Flying Cross for Extraordinary Achievement on this mission. "... Capt Thomas was a member of the lead flight of a force of F-105 aircraft assigned the mission of destroying a key military target in the vicinity of Hanoi. Despite heavy barrages of surface-to-air missiles and antiaircraft artillery fire, Captain Thomas skillfully and at great risk made a precise bomb run on the target. ..." (Award citation under Hq 7th AF SO G-1844, 24 June 68.)

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 26 - 27 & Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, unpublished memoir in chapter titled "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 39 - 40.

15-Feb-68

4877

"Crossbow" flight from the 34 TFS bombed a road in RP 4. The four-ship took off at 0950. Its lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0161
- #2 - Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Capt Gary G. Durkee

This was Maj Armstrong's 67th combat mission. "We were going to an army barracks 8 miles SW of Hanoi and were on the tankers when we got word to divert to Cricket Control. Apparently, they found that the weather was clobbered when they got the satellite picture after we were airborne. Cricket was flooded and there were no FACs up so I took my flight into Route 7 and went in about 35 miles into the Package (Pack IV) and when we didn't find anything, we dropped our bombs on a road and came home." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 55 minutes.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 27

02-Mar-68

6548

"Gator" flight from the 34 TFS flew a mission over North Vietnam. The lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Gary G. Durkee
- #2 - Capt John S. Murphy
- #3 - Maj David D. Igelman
- #4 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 11th mission

Capt Sechler logged 2:30 flying hours.

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Bass 2" to bomb two storage areas in the Steel Tiger region of southern Laos. "... Light 37 mm.." He then flew armed recce in RP-1. "No significant sightings." It was his 46th combat mission.

Joe Sechler flight log via e-mail 28 Apr 10 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

07-Mar-68

4890

The four pilots in "Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS bombed a target in southern Laos. They took off at 0540 and returned after 2 hours 25 minutes. Their lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Gary G. Durkee
- #2 - Maj William P. Shunney

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

#3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0505
#4 - Maj Billy R. Givens (Killed in accident 25 Apr 68)

This was Maj Armstrong's 81st combat mission. "We were carrying CBUs today. Bill Shunney was a spare so he had 500# bombs. We went to Steel Tiger, Laos, south of Mu Gia Pass about 30 miles and worked with a FAC. The visibility was really bad in the haze and we had a hard time seeing the ground. Our target was some suspected AAA sites along the road. We put all of our ordnance on the target but didn't get any secondary explosions. Afterwards, we crossed Pack I all the way over to the coast and back but the undercast was solid."

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 31.

17-Mar-68

4905

Two pilots from the 34 TFS who were airborne spares for the morning launch flew a mission as "Goose" flight into Laos. They took off at 0720 and flew for 2 hours 50 minutes. The line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0428
#2 - Capt Gary G. Durkee

This was Maj Armstrong's 88th mission. "Gary Durkee and I were the airborne spares today. I put myself on as a spare because I didn't think they would take-off and it wasn't my day to fly. But they did send us off as a flight of two. We were carrying 6 CBUs apiece. We worked with an O-1 FAC in middle Laos and got one good secondary fire out of our drops. After that we went over to recce Pack I and didn't see anything although the weather was clear."

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS flew his 100th combat mission today. (The printing on his post-mission cigar band was too faded to read his target.)

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 33 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 17 Mar 68.

01-Apr-68

4104

"On 1 April 68, Maj Roger D. Ingvalson succeeded Maj James E. Daniel as 34 TFS Operations Officer. Major Daniel completed a one year SEA tour in both the F-105 and O-1E aircraft. Major Ingvalson was an assigned flight leader in the 34 TFS prior to becoming Operations officer."

During the month of April 1968, four squadron pilots completed 100 missions over North Vietnam. They were: squadron commander Lt Col Robert W. Smith, Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong, Maj Donald W. Hodge, and Maj David D. Igelman.

Maj Igelman flew his 100th on 1 April 1968. He led "Bass" flight whose lineup was:

#1 - Maj David D. Igelman
#2 - Capt Lamont H. Pharmer
#3 - Capt Gary G. Durkee
#4 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 26th mission into North Vietnam.

Their mission lasted 2 hours 55 minutes.

Igelman remained at Korat until mid-May. "After completing my 100, I was held for awhile by the Wing DO who thought we would be in jeopardy of returning if we didn't stay a full overseas tour of 9 months. ... During that period, I was sorta in limbo. I was given the task of devising a monthly 'Ops Report' for the 388th."

After Igelman left Korat, he was assigned to the Air Staff, Studies & Analyses in the Pentagon.

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

By the end of April, the squadron had 29 combat pilots authorized and 26 available. They were authorized 18 F-105Ds with 21 assigned and 18 available.

388 TFW History, Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frames 1385 - 1386 & 34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & Dave Igelman, e-mail 4 Apr 10 & Joe Sechler's flight log spreadsheet.

09-Apr-68

4913

"Gator" flight from the 34 TFS hit a road in South Vietnam and some boats in North Vietnam. The flight took off at 1510 and returned after flying for 2 hours 45 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Capt Gary G. Durkee
- #2 - Maj Billy R. Givens (killed in accident 25 Apr 68)
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0435
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

This was Maj Armstrong's 95th combat mission. "Our target was a road in South Vietnam. We went in and dropped on it although the ceiling was about 9,000' and the visibility was poor but 3 of us hit where we were supposed to. Afterwards, we went up to Pack I and strafed some boats just north of the DMZ."

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 36.

30-Apr-68

3167

The 44 TFS flew a four-ship Iron Hand mission over North Vietnam. "Cactus" flight took off from Korat at 05:50, refueled at 16,000 feet from "White Anchor 27", struck its target at 07:00, and post-strike refueled from the same tanker before returning to Korat. The four pilots, all flying F-105Fs, were:

- 1) Maj Robert S. Beale flying 63-8327
- 2) Maj John J. Doyle, Jr. flying 63-8302
- 3) Lt Col Guy J. "Jack" Sherrill and EWO Capt John A. Stetson flying 63-8319.
- 4) Capt Ben J. Fuhrman from the 34 TFS flying 63-8280

Capt Gary G. Durkee from the 34th was the flight's spare in 63-8336, a Combat Martin F-105F with the rear ejection seat removed.

Mission Cards of Lt Col Guy J. "Jack" Sherrill

25-May-68

4110

"On 25 May several flights from the 34 TFS were instrumental in the destruction of a SAM site, under construction, in RP-1 of North Vietnam. The attacks took place during the late afternoon between 1430 and 1800 hours. Each of the attacking flights were worked by a Misty (F-100) FAC. Defenses were extremely heavy with 37/57 barrage and tracking firing. Strike flights were therefore restricted to high angle dive bomb and strafe tactics, yet, continued to encounter intense AAA from all quadrants, especially when attempting to make a second pass."

Capt Lamont H. Pharmer from the 34 TFS was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross (1st Oak Leaf Cluster) for extraordinary achievement for this mission. The award citation read, "... Capt Pharmer led a flight of F-105s against a heavily defended surface to air missile site. In spite of intense and accurate antiaircraft fire, Captain Pharmer made repeated attacks placing one hundred percent of his ordnance precisely on target and contributing greatly to the complete destruction of the missile site." (Citation to the DFC (1 OLC) to Lamont H. Pharmer.)

Years later, Monty Pharmer recalled the background to this mission. "I don't exactly remember working with a Misty FAC but we may have. This was in the time period after RP-6 missions were cancelled that the NVN had moved a lot of their defensive weapons south into RP-1, etc. We knew

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

it was coming and they were really laying for us. I led a 4-ship flight that day. I believe several planes were hit but no losses. I don't remember who was in the flight with me. Gary Durkee led another 4-ship flight in the same area." (Monty Pharmer, e-mail 22 Sep 2006.)

"Locust" was another flight from the 34th attacking the SAM site. It's two-ship line up was:

#1 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 49th counter. He logged 3:15 flying hours.

#2 - Olin K. Everett

"Ken & I took some really tough AAA on this one going after a SAM site. Uncharacteristic of RP-1."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr. was another 34 TFS pilot attacking the SAM site. He flew as "Speedo 2". "100% in target area. One secondary. SAM equipment damaged." He then attacked trucks in southern Laos. "100% in target area. Two trucks stopped." It was his 76th combat mission.

388 TFW history, Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frame 1391 & Joe Sechler mission log via e-mail 28 Apr 10 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

09-Jun-68

3766

In RP-1, between 0400Z and 0535Z, six EB-66B/Es supported eight strike sorties, three F-105F Iron Hand aircraft, and one "Bumby Action" photo drone. "Although three aircraft were lost to AAA fire during this day, operational reports indicated that none of the AAA fire was radar-directed."

The three aircraft lost were a Marine A-4E from Chu Lai hit by 50-caliber ground fire, an HH-3E Jolly Green helicopter trying to pick up the Marine A-4E pilot, and an F-4D supporting the rescue of a pilot of an F-105D downed the previous day, on 8 June. The crew of the F-4D, call sign Hudson 82, Maj William Bergman and 1Lt David Willett, were rescued.

The rescued F-105 pilot was Maj Carl B. Light from the 34 TFS who had been shot down yesterday by 37-mm AAA while attacking a truck park. Maj Light was Capt Lamont H. Pharmer's flight commander. While supporting Maj Light's rescue, Capt Pharmer received his third Distinguished Flying Cross, this one for heroism. His award citation read, in part, "... Capt Pharmer purposely exposed himself to intense hostile antiaircraft fire from some well camouflaged gun positions in close proximity to a downed pilot in order that his wingman might pinpoint their exact location from the muzzle flashes and attack them. Captain Pharmer then attacked a firing gun position, pressing a shallow dive through intense fire to low level to deliver his ordnance precisely on target. By his courageous and selfless actions, Capt Pharmer made a significant contribution to a search and rescue operation which succeeded against great odds." (Award Citation DFC (2 OLC) to Lamont H. Pharmer.)

"A lot of us rescaped for Carl Light. ... Gary Durkee and I were having a great time flying just out of range of the AAA and watching where it was coming from and then bombing the hell out of them. We were both put in for Silver Stars for this mission but some 'weenie' in Saigon must have thought there were already too many of them for that month." (Monty Pharmer, e-mail 22 Sep 2006.)

"Crossbow" was one of the RESCAP flights from the 34 TFS. The pilots were:

#1 - Capt James V. Barr

#2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

#3 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 11th non-counter (52 counters).

#4 - Capt John E. Hartman

Capt Sechler logged 3:10 hours. "I aborted into Ubon (RON) for malfunction. Carl Light recovered."

355 TFW history Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO464, frames 0629 - 0631 & "Vietnam Air Losses", pgs 151 - 152.

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

03-Aug-68

4925

Four pilots from the 388 TFW flew their 100th mission over North Vietnam.

Seven months after his arrival at Korat on 17 January 1968, Capt Lamont H. Pharmer from the 34 TFS was one of the pilots on this mission. "My last mission was a flight of four. There were two pilots from the 469 TFS that had gone through McConnell with me, Jim Mizner [Maj James J. Mizner] and Ray Koontz [Capt Nobe Ray Koontz, Jr.] and then there was Gary Durkee [Capt Gary G. Durkee] and myself from the 34th TFS. It was a big event, four finishing 100 at a time and also the flight made up of the two squadrons. Both events were unusual.

"Our target was a truck staging area on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. When we got in the target area and as we looked down we could see that a cloud bank was covering where we were supposed to drop but we could see some of the Trail. We fiddled around a bit and finally decided it wasn't worth trying to wait for it to clear up and none of us were going to fly under the clouds (a good way to get your ass shot off). We backed off on a fairly high perch and rolled in at a more shallow than usual angle and dropped our bombs into the cloud bank where we could actually see portions of the Trail. Of course we couldn't get any BDA because we couldn't see exactly where our bombs had landed.

"It was a great day for all of us and we drug the field when we came back to Korat. Wing DO, Col. Stewart, chewed our butts out for the display at Korat and said he ought to court martial all of us. He was a complete ass. We had a great reception, the largest I had seen at Korat. Everybody, nurses, waitresses and all were thrown in the O'Club pool."

Thirty-eight years later, Capt Pharmer recalled his combat tour with the 34th. "I flew my 100 missions ... and about another 15 non-counters into the South in about 7 months. The camaraderie and esprit de corps in the 34th TFS was great. We had a good Squadron Commander, Robert 'Bob' Smith, who I still keep in touch with, and a great bunch of courageous guys. My room mate there was Gary Durkee who is now deceased. Towards the end of our assignment, and after most of the 'old heads' had left, there were few of us that had flown PAC 6 missions. Because of this, he and I were designated Mission Commander qualified. Gary led one 16-ship mission into one of the lower PACS, one of the last of its kind. I didn't get a crack at it although I led a number of 4-ship missions. ..."

After leaving Korat, Capt Pharmer was assigned to F-111s at Nellis for a year during which he was promoted to Major. His last assignment was to TAC Hq as the F-111 Stan Eval Officer. He retired on 1 June 1973.

Monty Pharmer, E-mails, 16, 18, and 22 Sept 2006.

31-Aug-68

5167

Two pilots assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat completed flying 100 missions during August 1968. They were:

Capt Gary G. Durkee
Capt Lamont H. Pharmer

Capt Durkee made his last flight in the F-105 this month. He had accumulated 401.9 hours in the airplane. Capt Pharmer also flew the F-105 for the last time this month. He accumulated 395.5 hours in the plane.

34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & F-105 Flying Hour Report, dated 18 Nov 1985 provided by USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.

Gary G. Durkee F-105 History

31-Aug-68

4134

The 388 TFW history listed the aircrews assigned to the 34 TFS and the number of sorties each had flown as of the end of August 1968.

34 TFS	Sorties	Counters
Lt Col Klingensmith	59	43
Maj Langford	91	86
Capt Barr	84	67
Capt Sechler	105	87
Capt Murphy	107	97
Lt Col Christensen	118	105
Maj Roysdon	109	89
Capt J. Hartman	116	94
Col Douglas	47	43
Capt Durnbaugh	65	56
Maj Goodrich	115	97
Maj Matthews	75	61
Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.	109	104
Capt Ahrens	79	59
Lt Col Dye	114	101
Capt Germann	97	86
Capt Thatcher	34	29
Maj Shunney	107	95
Capt Brooks	80	66
Capt Bogemann	115	97
Capt Fuhrman	118	99
Lt Col Shaver	80	66
1Lt Confer	33	28
Capt Pharmer end of Aug)	114	99 (Capt Pharmer had flown 100 missions by the
Capt Durkee end of Aug)	111	99 (Capt Durkee had flown 100 missions by the
Capt Everett	69	56
Lt Col Ross	122	108
Col Stewart	118	110
Capt Bell	70	57
Maj White	75	58
1Lt Venturi	36	29
1Lt Hoffmeyer	38	33
Capt Ducton	31	27
Capt Crouch	32	27
Lt Col Bancroft	20	16
Maj Colasuonno	33	29
1Lt Stafford	34	31
1Lt D. Hartman	33	27
Lt Col Glass	6	6
Maj Holly	4	3
Maj Knapp	8	5

388 TFW History, July - Sep 68, USAF microfilm NO585, frames 0250 - 0251.

30-Sep-68

4155

"A total of nine 34 TFS pilots completed one hundred combat missions over North Vietnam during August and September 1968. One pilot, Maj Douglas A. Roysdon, has completed his second

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

Southeast Asia tour. His first tour was spent at Bien Hoa and Pleiku where he accumulated a total of 500 combat hours in the A-1E and A-1H aircraft."

The other eight pilots were: Maj Clarence E. Langford, Capt Joseph S. Sechler, Capt John S. Murphy, Maj William P. Shunney, Maj Ivor K. Goodrich, Capt Ben J. Fuhrman, Capt Lawrence L. Bogemann, and Capt John E. Hartman.

Maj Langford flew his 100th on 26 September 1968. This was his last flight in the F-105. Since his first flight during RTU training in August 1967, he had accumulated 385.8 hours in the airplane.

Capt Sechler flew his 100th on 28 September 1968. It was his last F-105 flight. He had accumulated 421.4 hours in the airplane. He was reassigned in December 1968 as a T-38 IP at Laughlin AFB, TX. He later had two tours in F-5s. (Joe Sechler, e-mail 28 Apr 10)

Maj Goodrich flew his 100th mission on 3 September 1968. This was his last flight in the F-105. He had accumulated 404.1 flying hours in the airplane.

Capt Fuhrman flew his 100th on 3 September 1968 with Larry Bogemann and Ivor Goodrich. (Ben Fuhrman, e-mail 19 Feb 2011.) When he retired as a Lt Col he had accumulated 456.5 hours in the F-105.

Capt Bogemann flew his 100th mission on 3 September 1968. It was his last flight in the F-105. He had accumulated 416.8 hours in the plane. He was reassigned to the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena CA under AFIT, where he received an MS in Aeronautical Engineering. (Larry Bogemann, e-mail 27 Apr 10)

Capt Hartman flew his 100th on 2 September 1968. It was his last flight in the F-105. He had accumulated 416.1 flying hours in the airplane.

During this period, the 34 TFS commander was Lt Col Robert J. Klingensmith, Jr. and the Operations Officer was Lt Col Earl F. Bancroft.

"During August and September the 34 TFS received eight new pilot inputs from the replacement training unit (RTU) at McConnell AFB, Kansas. All eight pilots fall under the one year tour criterion which began on 1 July 1968, rather than the 100 mission criterion which affects pilots with arrival dates prior to July 1968. After receiving three days of procedural briefings, the new pilots are given one local area training flight prior to flying combat. On this flight, pilots are shown the emergency landing fields available, jettison ranges and range procedures, and local landing pattern procedures. Pilots are also given practice refueling and several practice bombing runs at the Chandy RTAF bombing range located twenty miles west of Korat. The Chandy Range facility has proven itself valuable for checking out pilots in the use of the continuous solution sight modifications which is now installed on all but one aircraft possessed by the 34 TFS."

Fourteen pilots from the 34 TFS received medals approved by 7 AF during September 1968. They were:

Lt Col Robert J. Klingensmith, Jr. DFC SO G-2978 26 Sep 1968 (10 Jun 68)
Maj William P. Shunney AM (1 - 9 OLC) SO G-2910 21 Sep 68 (1Mar - 5 Sep 68)
Capt Lawrence L. Bogemann AM (3 - 11 OLC) SO G-2913 21 Sep 68 (1 Mar - 3 Sep 68)
Capt Ben J. Fuhrman AM (1 - 9 OLC) SO G-2913 21 Sep 68 (27 Feb - 3 Sep 68)
Capt Joseph S. Sechler DFC (1 OLC) SO G-2809 11 Sep 68 (9 Jun 68)
Capt Lamont H. Pharmer DFC (1 OLC) SO G-2809 11 Sep 68 (25 May 68)
Capt John E. Hartman DFC SO G-2799 11 Sep 68 (25 May 68)
Capt Edward C. Jones DFC SO G-2799 11 Sep 68 (7 Nov 66)
Capt James V. Barr DFC SO G-2798 11 Sep 68 (9Jun 68)

Gary G. Durkee

F-105 History

Maj Clarence E. Langford DFC SO G-2797 11 Sep 68 (25 May 68)
Lt Col James B. Ross AM (14 OLC) SO G2732 3 Sep 68 (21 Jun - 2 Aug 68)
Maj Melvin L. Irwin AM (1 - 9 OLC) SO G-2731 3 Sep 68 (7 Feb - 31 Jul 68)
Maj Carl B. Light AM (11 - 15 OLC) SO G-2731 3 Sep 68 (11 Feb - 5 Jun 68)
Capt Gary G. Durkee (AM (3 - 11 OLC) SO G-2727 3 Sep 68 (4 Feb - 3 Aug 68)

388 TFW History, Jul - Sep 68, and Oct - Dec 68, USAF microfilm NO585, frames 0807 and 0808 and 1766 & F-105 Flying Hour Report, dated 18 Nov 1985 provided by USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma & Jack Phillips, e-mail 18 Mar 11.

01-Oct-93

4922

"Gary Durkee died of lung cancer in San Antonio, Texas on 1 Oct. 1993. He had a full military burial service at the National Cemetery at Ft. Sam Houston. I attended the funeral and burial service. By the way, Gary was a West Point grad."

"Dad passed away on October 1, 1993 of cancer .. he was retired (after 30 years military service) but was teaching ROTC at the time he became ill." (Carol Durkee (beachitmd@comcast.net)
Date: Sun 29 May 2005 12:25:44 PM EDT on Jack Phillips' 34 TFS web site
<http://s88204154.onlinehome.us/tinc?key=jQcqK03c&start=12&epp=10&reverse=1>)

E-mail, Lamont Pharmed (BILLJIMTOM@aol.com), 18 Sep 2006, roommate at Korat with Gary Durkee.