

# Ben J. Fuhrman

## F-105 History

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22-Dec-67

239

The sixteenth F-105 RTU Class 68ER graduated at the 23 TFW, McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 27 Jul 67 with 26 student pilots but was reduced to 21 prior to graduation.

Capt Thomas J. Coady was the first RTU student to score 100% on all written exams and quizzes. Capt Ronald L. Shepard was the Top Gun and Outstanding pilot. The class also included Lt Col Felix A. "Doc" Blanchard, who made football history as a West Point cadet during the 1944, '45, and '46 seasons.

The class deployed for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 1 - 21 Dec 67 with the 560 TFS. During the deployment, on 7 December 1967, Maj Robert F. Delaney successfully ejected from his F-105D while practicing aerial maneuvers and went into a flat spin. During this flight, his instructor pilot was Maj William S. Koenitzer.

The 560 TFS squadron commander was Lt Col Robert L. Fair.

The student pilots and their SEA assignments (where known) were:

Col George J. Nelson	Maj Carl B. Light - 34 TFS
Col Charles T. Watkins, Jr.	Maj Thomas J. Phelan, Jr. - 44 TFS
Lt Col Felix A. "Doc" Blanchard - 388 TFW	Maj Thomas W. Stinson - 354 TFS
Lt Col Francis R. Lawson	Capt Christopher Heath Brown - Korat
Maj Dillard D. Rolls	Capt Thomas J. Coady - 357 TFS
Maj Eugene A. Bonfiglio - 44 TFS	Capt Ben J. Fuhrman - 34 TFS
Maj Robert F. Delaney - 354 TFS	Capt Ronald R. Myers - 469 TFS
Maj James R. Dunbar - 354 TFS	Capt Dan W. Riggs - 333 TFS
Maj William M. Dillion	Capt Douglas A. Roysdon - 34 TFS
Maj Ivor K. Goodrich - 34 TFS	Capt Ronald L. Shepard - 44 TFS
Maj Bryant Heston - 469 TFS	

After completing RTU training, Maj Robert F. Delaney attended Wild Weasel Class 68WW III-19 and Capt Ronald L. Shepard attended Wild Weasel Class 68WW III-20. Both classes began on 9 February 1968 at Nellis AFB, Nevada, but finished on different dates.

*23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 67, USAF microfilm MO554, frame 1067.*

19-Feb-68

3848

F-105s from the 388 TFW struck Phuc Yen (JCS 6) airfield using radar signals from Commando Club. "The Iron Hand flight providing support for the strike fired one Shrike at a Fansong signal located approximately one mile from Phuc Yen. Aircrews estimated some damage to the radar, which ceased to operate 70 seconds after launch."

Another 388 TFW flight, also under Commando Club control, dropped 24 MK-117s on Yen Bai airfield in RP-5. There was no BDA due to weather. Four pilots from the 34 TFS in "Scuba" flight flew this mission. The flight took off at 1355. Their line up was:

#1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 59-1760  
#2 - Capt Ben J. Fuhrman  
#3 - Capt Harry Guy Paddon III  
#4 - Maj Melvin L. Irwin

It was Maj Armstrong's 70th combat mission. "This was a first alternate radar drop on Yen Bay."

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There were no MiG calls on the way up or back. We had some 85-mm bursts out of Yen Bay as usual but it wasn't too close. All in all it was a pretty uneventful mission." Their mission lasted 3 hours. (Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 28.)

Former West Point football star, Lt Col Felix A. "Doc" Blanchard, flew his first combat mission 5 days after arriving at Korat on 14 February 1968. He was assigned as the 388 TFW Assistant Deputy Commander for Operations.

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS flew his 86th combat mission against Route 7 in RP-3 -- his target area for his last two missions.

Using the Commando Club radar, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Gator 3" against the Ban Nakay truck park in Northern Laos. He then flew armed recce in RP-3. "No significant sightings." It was his 44th combat mission.

*388 TFW history, Jan - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO 584, frames 0462, 0504 and 0511 - 0512 & Sam Armstrong mission log & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 19 Feb 68 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.*

### 02-Apr-68

4909

The four pilots from the 34 TFS in "Bass" flight bombed a target in RP-1. They took off at 1425 and returned after flying for 2 hours 50 minutes. Their line up was:

- #1 - Maj Eugene Paul Beresik (KIA, 31 May 68)
- #2 - Maj Seymour R. Bass (died in mid-air with flight lead, 14 May 68)
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0167
- #4 - Capt Ben J. Fuhrman

It was Maj Armstrong's 91st combat mission and the first mission after returning to Korat from his 4th R&R. "This was my first mission after the President's announcement of the 'bombing pause'. All of our flights and several flights from Takhli and F-4s were hitting a road segment up at the north end of Mu Gia Pass. The weather was clear but very hazy. We couldn't spot the FAC and when we did we couldn't see his white smoke rocket. Consequently, we stooed around for 15 minutes and finally desperately threw our bombs. The greatest danger in the area was a mid-air collision with another of our aircraft."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Locust 3" to attack a highway segment in RP-1. "100% road cut." It was his 57th combat mission.

*Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 34 - 35 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.*

### 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.

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

**14-Jun-68**

3974

F-105 pilots from the 388 TFW "destroyed an estimated 350 barrels of POL in a storage area north of Mu Gia Pass."

"Four flights of F-105s, a total of ten aircraft (seven 'Ds' and three 'Fs') struck the target located north of Mu Gia Pass." The four flights and the order in which they attacked were "Locust", "Waco", "Kaiser", and "Hayfire". Each of the flights struck other targets before checking in with the F-100F Fast FAC, "Misty 51", who controlled the strikes against the POL storage area.

"One flight of two F-105s (Hayfire) dropped four MK-82 (500-lb.) bombs while the other three flights strafed the area with 20-mm cannon fire. They destroyed at least 350 barrels of POL.

"Flying in the second flight to strike the target ["Waco"], Capt John E. Hartman, 34 TFS, said, 'Maj Goodrich (Maj Ivor K. 34th) made the first strafing pass, blowing up close to 50 barrels.'

"Goodrich and Hartman made several more passes on the area. Hartman continued, 'We got three explosions which turned into sustained fires, plus three additional sustained fires.'

"The FAC gave Goodrich and Hartman credit for approximately 200 barrels of POL destroyed. As they left the target area, the two pilots saw smoke rising 2,000 feet over the area.

"Another 34th pilot, Capt William A. Thomas, Jr., was in a succeeding flight ["Kaiser" or "Hayfire"]. 'When we got into the area,' Thomas related, 'the flight ahead of us already had the area burning. Major Matthews (Maj Richard D. 34th) and I made several passes.'

"On his first pass, Thomas caused two large secondary explosions. Making one last strafing pass, Thomas and Matthews accounted for two additional large secondary explosions and sustained fires. 'The FAC credited us with destroying about 50 drums,' Thomas said. 'By the time we left the area, smoke was really billowing.'

"Captains Ben J. Fuhrman and Lawrence L. Bogemann, both 34th, also took part in the attack. Fuhrman made four strafing passes, accounting for 50 barrels of POL, three secondary explosions and a sustained fire."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Bobbin 1" attacking a bulldozer in RP-1. "Possibly damaged bulldozer." It was his 85th combat mission.

*388 TFW history, Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frames 0730 - 0731 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.*

**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

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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 of Aug)	111	99 (Capt Durkee had flown 100 missions by the end
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 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

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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 (1 Mar - 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. Pharmed 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 (9 Jun 68)  
Maj Clarence E. Langford DFC SO G-2797 11 Sep 68 (25 May 68)  
Lt Col James B. Ross AM (14 OLC) SO G-2732 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.*