

John Bernard Sullivan III

F-105 History

18-Apr-66

5176

The 6441 TFW selected the pilots for the squadron that became the 34 TFS to deploy to Korat. Most would come from the 36 TFS; consequently, the 36 TFS was slated to disband.

Bob Pielin from the 36 TFS, who had already flown 87 combat missions during temporary duty tours to Korat and Takhli, remembered how he helped select the pilots for the new squadron. "Fitz [Maj Richard P. Fitzgerald, the squadron's Operations Officer] and I initially made out a list of 25 pilots from the Wing resources to go as 34th members. The list was bounced back from HHQ as being too overloaded in pilots with over 50 missions. They recommended 6 guys in the 0 to 20 mission category, 6 in the 21 to 40, 6 in the 41 to 60, 6 in the 61 to 80, and anyone with over 80 to go TDY."

This distribution was to spread out their eventual departures from Korat as each pilot completed his 100-mission tour. Capt Pielin and Maj Fitzgerald reworked the list "... with some pronounced disapproval from those that were removed from the [original]. ... A 1.5 aircrew/aircraft ratio was authorized for 27 pilots plus Commander and Operations Officer. ... Bob Jones [Capt Robert H. Jones] was removed from the first list since he had his papers in to be discharged. When he found out about the 34th going PCS to Korat, he volunteered to go with [them] and get 100 missions before he got out. Red Dog [Lt Col Howard F. 'Red Dog' Hendricks the squadron commander] worked a 'deal', and he went TDY." (Bob Pielin e-mails, 23 Sep 2006 and 7 April 2007.)

The following list contains the positions and names of the initial twenty-nine pilots assigned to the 34 TFS. This is the revised list after Capt Pielin and Maj Fitzgerald reworked their original to provide a broader base of experience. One of the pilots, Gordon Walcott, annotated his copy of the printed list, dated 18 April 1966, with this comment: "This was the original 34th TFS crew roster when formed as an all-volunteer squadron from the 35 TFS, 36 TFS, and 80 TFS (Yokota AB, Japan)"

Commander - Lt Col Howard F. "Red Dog" Hendricks who had been commander of the 36 TFS.
Operations Officer - Maj Richard P. Fitzgerald

India Flight

Flight Commander - Maj Wayne N. Whatley
Capt Robin K. Nierste
Capt James I. Miholick
Capt Douglas G. Lauck
Capt Robert H. Jones
Capt Robert R. Reed

Lima Flight

Flight Commander - Capt James E. Hayes
Capt Merrill R. Lewis, Jr.
Capt Gordon M. Walcott
Capt Stanley S. Gunnersen
1Lt John Bernard Sullivan III

Juliet Flight

Flight Commander - Maj Kenneth T. Blank
Capt Carl L. Hamby
Capt Thomas H. Curtis
Capt David H. Groark
1Lt Phillip J. Kelley

Metro Flight

Flight Commander - Capt Robert D. Pielin
Capt Alan K. Rutherford
Capt Ralph D. Watkins
Capt Wayne D. Hauth
Capt Rainford "Ray" McMaster Tiffin - 80 TFS

Kilo Flight

Flight Commander - Maj Jack R. Stresing
Capt William O. Lessard
Capt John R. Layman
Capt Rex L. Dull
Capt Clarence E. Fox
1Lt Denis D. O'Donoghue

E-mail from Monty Pharmer, 22 Sep 2006 forwarding letter to him from Lt Col (Ret) Gordon Walcott dated, 29 July 1988, which included a roster of 36 TFS pilots, dated 18 April 1966.

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F-105 History

25-May-66

4957

On Wednesday morning, twenty F-105Ds (18 aircraft and 2 spares) now assigned to the 34 TFS left the 6441 TFW at Yokota for Kadena on the first leg of their movement to the 388 TFW at Korat. The aircraft took off in flights of four using call signs "Yule". Each flight departed Yokota at half-hour intervals beginning at 0800. The deployment's flight line-up consisted of:

Pilot	Call Sign	Acft Tail No	Yokota TO Time	Kadena Arr Time	Acft Maint Status at Kadena
Lt Col Howard F. Hendricks	Yule 01	62-4361	0800	0955	Tacan/Doppler probs
Capt Robin K. Nierste	Yule 02	62-4288	0800	0955	O/R
Capt James I. Miholick	Yule 03	62-4336	0800	0955	O/R
Capt Wayne D. Hauth	Yule 04	62-4303	0800	0955	Gnd blower inop
Maj Wayne N. Whatley	Yule 11	62-4306	0830	1025	O/R
Capt Robert H. Jones	Yule 12	62-4318	0830	1025	O/R
Capt Robert R. Reed	Yule 13	62-4308	0830	1025	Autopilot
Capt Douglas G. Lauck	Yule 14	62-4358	0830	1025	O/R
Maj Kenneth T. Blank	Yule 21	62-4370	0901	1058	O/R
Capt Thomas H. Curtis	Yule 22	62-4380	0901	1058	O/R
Capt Carl L. Hamby	Yule 23	62-4364	0901	1058	O/R
1Lt Phillip J. Kelley	Yule 24	62-4277	0901	1058	O/R
Capt Alan K. Rutherford	Yule 31	62-4270	0930	1134	Autopilot
Capt Rex L. Dull	Yule 32	62-4312	0930	1134	O/R
Capt Ralph D. Watkins	Yule 33	62-4378	0930	1134	CIN
1Lt John B. Sullivan III	Yule 34	62-4356	0930	1134	Fire Ctrl/Elec
Capt James E. Hayes	Yule 41	62-4352	1000	1200	Fire Ctrl
Maj Jack R. Stresing	Yule 42	61-0132	1000	1200	O/R
Capt Lothar A. "Andy" Olman	Yule 43	62-4379	1000	1200	Fuel Leak
Capt Robert D. Reichart	Yule 44	62-4354	1000	1200	O/R

(History of the 6441 TFW, 1 Apr 65 to 15 Nov 66, Supporting Documents, Mobility Control Center Log, pg 6, in AFHRA folder K-WG-6441-HI, IRIS# 0462464.)

Capt Alan K. Rutherford was one of the pilots on the deployment. "I recall so well how we formed up with 16 Thuds and midst many tears (from wives) and go get um's from the troops we launched to the war. We were going to 'kill the Cong'. We intended to overnight at Kadena, and then launch the next day with the squadron to Korat. Needless to say it got drunk and rowdy that night ...". (Al Rutherford, e-mail, 21 Sep 2006.)

Capt Douglas G. Lauck was another of the 34 TFS pilots moving to Korat. "We packed our household goods [at Yokota] and sent them along with our cars back to the States. Our wives and dependents had flights booked back to the States." (Doug Lauck, e-mail 21 Sep 2006.)

The pilots from the 34 TFS were to join with pilots from the 13 TFS at Kadena on 25 May and deploy to Korat. Unfortunately, circumstances required the 34th pilots at Kadena to return to Yokota on 26 May.

In the 13 TFS, "the squadron was cocked to move as planned on the 25th of May, but a staying order was received, delaying departure for thirty days. Rumors were rife that perhaps the move would not be made at all. Unfortunately, on the basis of the rumors and the lack of further communications, after numerous inquires to higher headquarters on the subject, many members of the new squadron cancelled proceedings to return their dependents to the United States.

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As a result, when the order to deploy on 23 June was received with a week's advance notice, many dependents were left to arrange their own moves. Much help was rendered by friends and Wing personnel, of course, to facilitate these peoples' departure. On 23 June, support personnel departed for Korat via C-130. Aircrews departed the following day."

388 TFW History, Jul - Dec 66, USAF microfilm NO583 frame 1742 & 44 TFS history, 1 Jan 65 - 30 June 1967, pp 4 - 5.

21-Jun-66

F-105D 624358 34 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit twice by heavy 85-mm AAA while attacking the Dao Quan POL storage area (BE 616-01748). Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. 21-24N 106-14E 1Lt John Bernard Sullivan III 34 TFS pilot was MIA. Call sign: "Anvil 02". The POL target was about five miles northwest of Kep airfield.

Other members of Anvil Flight were Capt Stanley S. Gunnerson, Capt James E. Hayes and Capt Gordon M. Walcott. Their target was the Dao Quan POL Storage Area at location 21-26-10N and 106-12-22E, 6 miles NW of Kep, North Vietnam. The flight took off from Korat at 06:04 and Lt Sullivan was shot down at 07:25.

"Following initiation of pullup for bomb delivery, Lt Sullivan called, 'I'm hit; smoke in the cockpit. I think I've had it.' A member of his flight saw Lt Sullivan's aircraft hit a second time by 85-mm just below the canopy. Smoke was observed and he was told to eject. His aircraft was last seen proceeding on a heading of 160 degrees. No member of his flight saw Lt Sullivan eject or his aircraft impact the ground. No chute was observed and beeper signals were not heard. His last known position was over an area of flat terrain, spotted with small villages. Two Navy aircraft completed four high-altitude electronic searches over water on a line between 2102N/10605E and 2003N/10636E with negative results. The search was terminated at 1000 hours local, 21 Jun 66." ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 2-085, AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3, IRIS # 1028640.)

Capt Gordon M. Walcott was in Lt Sullivan's flight and recalled his loss. "Lt Sullivan was shot down over Kep AF and probably KIA. Hayes [Capt James E. Hayes, Lima Flight Commander], Gunnerson [Capt Stanley S. Gunnerson], and myself were with him" (Gordon Walcott, letter to Monty Pharmed, 29 July 1988.) Capt Victor Vizcarra from the 80 TFS knew Lt Sullivan from Yokota. "He was a real good old country boy. An interesting fact about him, he never learned how to drive a car! He always rode a bike."

SSgt Aaron D. Farrior was a PJ with the Jolly Greens from NKP. He recorded in his diary some details about the attempted rescap for Lt Sullivan. "Listened to mission up north. F-105 pilot ejected 100 miles north of Hanoi. Wingman had a visual. Scrambled J.G. out of [Lima Site] 98. ..."

Lt Sullivan was born 28 June 1940. He entered the service from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He was declared dead on 9 January 1978. His remains were returned to the U.S. on 13 September 1990. His name appears on the Vietnam Memorial Wall on Panel 08E - Line 73.

U.S. Navy CNA Loss/Damage Data Base & Col Victor Vizcarra, e-mail, 4 Sep 00.