

Richard R. Venturi

F-105 History

07-Jun-68

243

The nineteenth F-105 RTU Class 68IR graduated at the 23 TFW, McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 5 Dec 67 with 27 students. Twenty six graduated. The incoming class consisted of 2 Capts and 25 2nd Lts, all recent graduates in the top 10% of the Undergraduate Pilot Training program.

"This class is unique in that it is the first class in which all members are recent graduates of the Undergraduate Pilot Training Program. ... They have no pilot experience other than that received in pilot training. This represented a marked contrast with previous F-105 RTU classes composed of older, more mature and experienced pilots."

To compensate for their inexperience, their course was increased from 92 to 120 flying hours for a total of 78 sorties (RTU course 1111106). On 8 Mar 68, student 2Lt Frank F. Perry III was killed in the crash of F-105D 62-4226 near Raymond KS.

The class deployed for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 16 Apr - 9 May 68 with the 563 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Joe W. Pickett. Capt Wyrewood Gowell was Top Student.

On 30 Apr 1968, while at George AFB, instructor pilot Maj Robert V. "Boris" Baird, ejected successfully from F-105D 61-0083 when it developed a flight control problem after takeoff.

The 10 May 1968 edition of The Wichita Eagle reported on the 563 TFS's return to McConnell after their deployment to George. "The 563rd Tactical Fighter Squadron at McConnell Air Force Base returned to Wichita Thursday after 23 days at George AFB, Calif. where it achieved a record 725 successful practice sorties.

"The student fighter squadrons at McConnell are sent to George for special aerial combat training as a routine but this was the first group of F-105 students to contain all recently commissioned second lieutenants.

"None of them are experienced pilots, but they are a good group,' said Maj. Robert B. Baird, flight commander. 'I experienced the only mishap during the 23-day exercise.' Baird was forced to eject from his craft April 30 when it developed flight control difficulty shortly after takeoff from George.

"McConnell is the training center for pilots in the F-105 Thunderchief fighter-bomber prior to assignment in Southeast Asia. Most students up to now had been experienced pilots who were converting from other aircraft to the 105, Baird said.

"This group of students had logged about 90 hours flying time in the Thunderchief during their training here before going to George where they flew about another 20 hours each.' Baird said. 'They will be required to complete about 10 additional hours flight time here, but they already have overseas orders for mid-June.'

"Most practice flights are over Smokey Hill Bombing and Gunnery Range near Salina, Kan.

"But when it comes time to fire on airborne targets, Kansas lacks sufficient air space.' Maj. Baird explained, so the squadron retreats to skies over the southern California desert. There they concentrate efforts on air-to-air combat practice and use of the Sidewinder missile.

"After graduation from flight training, the 26 class members will begin water survival training at Homestead AFB, Fla., before going overseas."

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The students were:

Capt Wyrewood A. "Goose" Gowell	2Lt Eldon W. Joersz
Capt Kenneth G. Lindell	2Lt Charles A. Kennedy
2Lt Salvatore A. Bonacasa	2Lt Peter J. Linsley
2Lt Donald S. Brown II	2Lt Harvey A. Marshall
2Lt Robert E. Bryan	2Lt Phillip A. Miller
2Lt Gary R. Confer	2Lt Frank F. Perry III
2Lt David Thomas Dinan III	2Lt John C. Pluta
2Lt Preston T. "Pres" Duke	2Lt Cecil L. Snell
2Lt Curtis S. "Scott" Hamme	2Lt Ronald D. Stafford
2Lt James N. Hammond	2Lt Marshall D. Tilley
2Lt Ronald A. Hoffmeyer	2Lt Richard R. Venturi
2Lt Clarence J. "Skip" Holm	2Lt Barry D. Wytttenbach
2Lt David S. Hartman, Jr.	2Lt Robert John Zukowski
2Lt Lynn A. Aikman	

Twelve lieutenants -- Holm, Miller, Bryan, Wytttenbach, Tilley, Confer, Dinan, Hoffmeyer, Hartman, Stafford, Venturi, and Zukowski -- were assigned to the 34 TFS and 469 TFS at Korat. Most arrived in early July 1968. Three of them were shot down: Dinan (twice) (KIA the second time), Zukowski (KIA), and Stafford (Rescued). On 13 July 1968, Confer's plane was hit over NVN and he crash landed at Udorn. He had minor injuries but the plane was destroyed.

23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 67 & Jan - Jun 68, USAF microfilm MO554 frame 2025.

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

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Capt Pharmer	114	99 (Had flown 100 missions by the end of Aug)
Capt Durkee	111	99 (Had flown 100 missions by the end of Aug)
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 FFW History, July - Sep 68, USAF microfilm NO585, frames 0250 - 0251.

28-Sep-68

6556

Capt Joseph S. Sechler from the 34 TFS led "Ozark" flight on his 100th mission to North Vietnam. "Wish I could tell you it was an exciting mission, but, alas, it was anticlimactic and not the type mission you'd have liked for your last one. Overcast at the airfield and overcast at the target. We just did what we called a 'sky dump', a radar ground-directed bomb run while flying over an overcast, not seeing anything. Hit a post-strike tanker and came home for the big celebration."

The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Sechler flying F-105D 62-4346 with name of fuselage side "Good Golly Miss Molly"
- #2 - 1Lt Richard R. Venturi
- #3 - Lt Col Robert J. Klingensmith, Jr., the 34th squadron commander
- #4 - 1Lt Ronald A. Hoffmeyer

Lieutenants Venturi and Hoffmeyer had completed F-105 RTU at McConnell AFB on Class 68 IR on 7 June 1968.

"I was so excited or drunk, I forgot to log the time. My mom's birthday. Little did I know that the 100-mission program was coming to a screeching halt. That Misty exchange trip and the typhoon about cost me my 100 mission patch." The 100-mission program was halted on 30 October 1968 when the U.S government stopped the Rolling Thunder bombing of North Vietnam.

Joe Sechler, e-mail 1 Dec 18 & mission log via e-mail 28 Apr 10.

19-Aug-81

8096

Lt Col Richard R. Venturi flew the F-105 for the last time. Since his first flight on 1 January 1968, he had accumulated 2146.4 hours in the Thunderchief.

F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.