

# James Hardin Metz

## F-105 History

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22-Dec-67

4358

The last F-105 training class 68-C conducted by the 4520 CCTW at Nellis AFB, Nevada, graduated 18 pilots in course number 111506A. The class, assigned to the 4523 CCTS, the "Hornets", started in July 1967.

The students and their SEA assignments were:

Maj James Hardin Metz (Class Leader) - 34 TFS  
Capt Donnie M. Tribble - 333 TFS  
Capt Harold E. Murk - 44 TFS  
Capt John S. Murphy - 34 TFS  
Capt John H. Wambough, Jr. - 34 TFS  
Capt Joseph S. Sechler - 34 TFS  
Capt Anthony F. Germann - 34 TFS  
Capt Lawrence L. Bogemann - 34 TFS  
Capt William P. Shunney - 34 TFS  
Maj William S. Pachura - 357 TFS  
Capt Thomas T. Hensley - 469 TFS  
Capt Kenneth D. "Don" Harten - 354 TFS  
Capt Olin K. Everett - 34 TFS  
Capt Charles E. Metzger - 469 TFS  
Maj Donald J. Sisk - 469 TFS  
Capt John E. Hartman - 34 TFS  
Capt Mark B. Foxwell - 357 TFS  
Capt Robert J. Casey - 333 TFS

Joe Sechler described how he got into the F-105 program. "Following a mediocre academic & military performance in UPT, I was assigned to B-52s at Seymour Johnson. In 1967, I was on a Stan/Eval crew and checking out in the left seat, having the greatest fear that if I became an AC, I'd be stuck for life in SAC. Thank God, a buddy of mine knocked on my door one day in May of 1967 with a message from the squadron saying I was to report for F-105 training. (My buddy was later killed flying a B-58.) My wife cried and I jumped for joy. Despite my assignment to SAC, I truly believe I was destined to be a fighter pilot and especially a THUD pilot ... I was the only co-pilot from my wing (B-52 & KC-135) - who I know of - to be sent to F-105s." (Joe Sechler, e-mail 28 April 2010.)

"This [F-105 training] program has since been transferred to McConnell AFB, Kansas. More than 400 'top gun' pilots were trained here at Nellis in the 23rd squadron." The transfer was to allow Nellis to begin training for the F-111A.

The commander of the 4523 CCTS during the period of July to December 1967 was Lt Col Henry L. Parker and the Operations Officer was Maj Robert E. Green. "The two flight leaders of 'A' flight were Maj Julius Calloway and Maj Edward M. Dobson, and for 'B' flight during the same period was Maj Richard P. Cisco and Maj Doyal L. Wyrick."

During the last six months of F-105 training the squadron flew the following hours and sorties:

	Hours	Sorties
July	634:45	474
August	577:10	489
September	686:10	555
October	648:45	394
November	298:15	213
December	188:50	118

The 4524 CCTS was also involved in F-105 training at Nellis. This squadron "provided academic and flying support

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of the F-105 operational training courses and Military Assistance Program. They provided facilities and personnel to operate and assist instructor pilots in operation of training devices as necessary to accomplish the pilot training program. This included all training of student F-105 pilots in the proper use of the R-14A and the APN-131 Doppler Radars in the T-39B aircraft."

Capt Henry R. Hutson III was an Instructor pilot in the 4523 CCTS. "Maj Dean Elmer [Maj Dean A. Elmer] and I flew the last two F-105s of the 4520 CCTW to McConnell AFB, KS. That was the end of the THUD training program at Nellis."

*History of the Tactical Fighter Weapons Center, 1 July - 1 December 1967 & 15 Apr 86 letter from Col Henry R. Hutson III to Bauke Jan Douma & John Murphy, e-mail 5 May 2011 with class roster and photo.*

### 20-Feb-68

5872

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 87th combat mission against a target near Dien Bien Phu, in RP-5, North Vietnam.

Capt Joseph S. Sechler, also from the 34th, flew his fourth mission over North Vietnam. His flight lineup was:

- #1 - Maj William M. Blakeslee
- #2 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler
- #3 - Maj James Hardin Metz
- #4 - Capt Anthony F. Germann

Capt Sechler logged 3:00 flying hours.

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Bass 4" to bomb Vinh airfield in RP-3. "... Fired at SAM ring." It was his 45th combat mission.

*Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 20 Feb 68 & Joe Sechler flight log via e-mail 28 Apr 10 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.*

### 21-Feb-68

5873

"Gator" Flight from the 34 TFS flew a mission into Laos and North Vietnam. The lineup was:

- #1 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying F-105D 59-1760
- #2 - Capt John S. Murphy flying 60-0436 on his 3rd combat mission
- #3 - Maj Carl B. Light flying 61-0162
- #4 - Capt David C. Dickson flying 60-0435 on his 88th combat mission
- Spare - 60-5375

Each aircraft carried six 750-lb bombs, two AIM-9s on a dual-mount pylon on one outboard and an ECM pod on the other outboard. Each of the 20-mm cannons had a full load of ammo.

The flight left Korat at 15:30 for a 16:30 TOT. Inbound to the target, they refueled at 16:00 from White Anchor 44 at 16,000 feet, the same tanker they used for post-strike refueling. Their fragged target was the Ban Van NE military complex in Laos but they ended up in North Vietnam strafing trucks in RP-1 near Quang Khe.

John Murphy recalled the mission. "The target area was, as was most of Southeast Asia on that day, completely obscured by clouds. We most likely dropped our ordnance via "COMBAT SKY SPOT" (ground controlled/directed radar-guided release), straight and level above the cloud deck, all four aircraft in route formation, and all at the same time. I am sure we did drop while over Laos.

"Following the drop, Lead asked the airborne command post for permission to enter N. Vietnam for armed road recce.

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Permission was granted, though cloud cover might prevent access. Again, I don't remember who came up on the same radio freq. though most likely it was a "Misty FAC" (F-100 Forward Air Controller), and he told us there were trucks on a road north of Dong Hoi. We continued on in an easterly direction. Cloud cover prevented us from seeing anything below; the terrain was completely blocked from view.

"Maj. Falls told the flight he was going to lead us down through the cloud deck and hopefully get under the cloud cover while we were out over the South China Sea. We tucked our aircraft in tight and flew on his wing in close fingertip formation, and started down through the clouds. We finally broke-out, over the sea at ... an altitude of 2000 to 3000 feet above the water, perhaps lower. We turned back to the west and proceeded to cross the NVN shore line. The cloud base was ragged, varying in height above the ground. Lead found the trucks and we all started to take separation on Lead in order to establish our individual gun runs. To me, it seemed as though we were in a very tight opening, almost like being inside an enclosed football field, low clouds with very limited horizontal visibility. The fact that we were traveling at 450 - 500 kts inside a 'mixing bowl' did not help me to acquire the target(s). I was busy keeping Lead and the other flight members in sight, and staying within the limits of the 'bowl'.

"I set up my first firing pass, trying to gain separation from Lead and pick out my target, but not very successfully. I saw Lead get off his first firing pass while I was still fighting to get into a firing position. At that point I made the decision to abandon my pass, stay out of the way of the flight members behind me, and to join on Lead in a fighting wing position. I did not want to screw up this opportunity for the flight, I did not want to get forced back up in to the cloud deck, I did not want to become separated from the flight and become an issue for Lead, so I decided to jump on his wing and hang on. And, to complicate matters, I really didn't know exactly where we were.

"Over the next few minutes, I was not able to look at anything but to keep my Lead's 'light in the star' and say 'Two.' I don't remember how many passes the flight made on the trucks, but I would guess two or three. We were flying in a very tight 'circle' and pulling lots of G's. Lead finally called it off and we headed west, climbing back up through the clouds, and all joining up on top. We proceeded back to the Tanker for a post-strike refuel and then on back to Korat. Maj. Falls complemented me for staying out of the way."

Capt Joseph S. Sechler, also from the 34th, flew his fifth mission over North Vietnam. His flight lineup was:

- #1 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #2 - Capt Anthony F. Germann
- #3 - Maj James Hardin Metz
- #4 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler

Capt Sechler logged 3:05 flying hours.

*John C. Murphy's mission card and narrative via e-mail 22 Jan 2011 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 21 Feb 68 & Joe Sechler flight log via e-mail 28 Apr 10.*

### 15-Apr-68

F-105D 610206 34 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit by 37/57-mm AAA during an armed reconnaissance mission. Crashed 20 miles north of Dong Hoi in RP-1, North Vietnam. 17-40N 106-25E Maj James Hardin Metz 34 TFS pilot ejected but rescue efforts were unsuccessful. He died as a POW. Call sign: "Pancho 01". Maj James H. Metz was Lead of a flight of two, on an armed reconnaissance mission in North Vietnam at 1718N/10644E. Maj Eugene P. Beresik was Pancho 02. The flight took off from Korat at 13:01 and Maj Metz was shot down at 15:00.

"Major Eugene P. Bereski [sic], Pancho 02, described the circumstances surrounding the loss of Pancho 01 as follows: '... On 15 April 1968, I was pilot of an F-105 flying armed recce following an AGM-12C launch. While flying at 4000' AGC/420KCAS, I observed intense flak at co-altitude. While attempting to notify Lead, I observed his aircraft on fire, apparently hit by the flak. I notified him that he was on fire and to turn and climb to the right since the coast was only about 8 NM away. Approximately 15 seconds after I first noticed the aircraft on fire, I observed the canopy and pilot

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in the ejection seat depart the aircraft at 4500/400KCAS. I observed a good seat separation and immediate chute deployment. I made a circle to the right and observed the aircraft impact and the chute in a tree about 1½ NM from the aircraft site. I heard a strong chute beeper shortly after chute deployment and until approximately 5 minutes after the pilot landed. Due to a strong interference on guard channel, I was unable to make contact with the pilot. The pilot landed on the side of a hill in dense trees. I made several passes over a road approximately 400' from the chute but did not see anyone. After refueling, I returned to the area for approximately 30 more minutes. The chute was no longer visible and despite repeated attempts to contact the pilot on guard channel, contact was not made. ... I did not observe anyone on the ground in close proximity to the downed crew member.' SAR operations were conducted for approximately one and one half hours, terminating at 1652 local, without any sightings or contact with Major Metz." ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 4-057, AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3.)

"Maj James H. Metz, 34th TFS, was shot down 20 miles north of Dong Hoi while on an armed reconnaissance mission in RP-1. He was declared missing in action. ... At the time, Maj Metz was lead of a two-ship flight on an armed reconnaissance mission en route to strafe enemy trucks. His aircraft experienced heavy damage while flying at 4,000 feet AGL, 420 KCAS and heading 330 degrees magnetic. Following a direct hit, Maj Metz's aircraft caught fire immediately, after which he attempted to guide the crippled aircraft toward the Gulf. Apparently, the aircraft was uncontrollable, and Maj Metz ejected. He was observed to have a good chute and good beeper. At no time was voice contact made following ejection. By combining observations of the wingman, a Misty FAC, and the RESCAP flight, Intelligence indicates that the chute was observed hanging in the trees for a short period, after which it was pulled out of the trees. At that time the chute beeper stopped. Currently, Maj Metz is listed as Missing in Action."

The F-100F crew of the Misty FAC, Misty 41, were Lt Col Don Jones and Capt Dick Rutan. They had been shot at by the same 37-mm flak site that had hit the F-105 and were coming back to the area to find the gun. "As they were getting close to their trigger-happy nemesis, a bright flame appeared out of nowhere, on the left side of the plane. Jones could even feel Rutan grab the rear-seat controls, preparing to execute a hard evasive maneuver himself if Jones hesitated.

"But the flash wasn't a SAM. It was an F-105 that they hadn't even seen - and the back half of it was completely ablaze. Must have gotten nailed by the same gun they were after, the two pilots reasoned. A couple of seconds after they spotted the burning Thud, the canopy flew off and a parachute came streaming out. The radio suddenly came alive with the blare of a parachute beeper, triggered once the chute opened up." The Misty crew called for rescue forces.

"... Help started to show up: First, a Navy helicopter that volunteered to go in and try to pick up the downed pilot. Then the pilot's squadron-mate, call sign Poncho 2, who said all he knew was that he looked over at his lead at one point and the plane had erupted in flame. While they awaited the all-important Sandys that would locate the survivor and provide cover for the helicopter, Misty 41 and Poncho 2 began flying a CAP, combat air patrol, over the area. ... Repeated calls to the pilot to shut off his beeper drew no response.

"Misty 41 had to head off to the tanker for gas, and Poncho 2 was right behind. For thirty minutes nobody was overhead keeping an eye on the parachute nestled in the trees. When Jones and Rutan arrived back on station, the chute was gone. ... The downed pilot had never established voice contact. Misty 41 stayed overhead long enough to burn through the better part of another tank of gas, but finally had to call it a day -- there was now nobody to rescue." ("Bury Us Upside Down", pp 199 - 201.)

"On April 15, 1968, Maj. Metz was assigned a mission near the city of Quang Khe in Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam. During the mission, Metz' wingman radioed that Metz' aircraft had been hit by enemy flak and that he should follow the emergency procedure and head for open waters for ejection and rescue."

"Although Metz did not respond to the radio transmission, he turned his aircraft toward the sea, but was forced to eject before he could reach it. The wingman observed his ejection and saw him land in a clump of trees near a highway in a

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heavily populated area."

"Enemy fire forced the wingman to leave, but not before he had plotted the location where Metz had landed. Rescue forces arrived 45 minutes later. Metz' parachute was gone, and there was no sign of activity except for heavy ground fire which prevented further searching."

A mission report from Crown 4 summarized Maj Metz's rescue attempt. "Crown 4 received a Mayday call from Poncho 2 at 1635L that Poncho Lead had bailed out with a good chute and beeper. The position was given as XE-485-525. Misty 31 who was also over the scene, reported that a parachute was visible in the trees halfway up a wooded mountain, just east of a river and railroad. He gave the position as 17-47N and 106-25E and stated that Poncho Lead had been hit by triple A ground fire. The weather was reported as clear in the area at this time. Jolly Green 07, 25, and Spads 11/12 were launched, but were kept feet wet while electronic and visual searches were conducted in the area. The Navy helicopters Big Mother 72, 73 and Clementine 2 were dispatched and held at a safe distance off of the coast.

"There was a report of possible smoke coming from the survivor at 1703L. His chute disappeared from the tree at 1718. Many flights were used for the search including Locust, Hammer, Champ, Tomcat, Green Fighters, and Battle Cry. The Spads and Jolly Greens were given RTB at 1750L with the electronic search continuing until all forces were given RTB at 1845L. Positive contact with Poncho Lead was never at any time established." (Mission Narrative 1-3-35 in history of 39 Aerospace Rescue & Recovery SQ, 3 Aerospace Rescue & Recovery GP, Jan - Jun 68, Capt Lyndon J. Stretton, Rescue Crew Commander. AFHRA Call # K318.2411-5, IRIS # 911233)

"On 16 April 1968 'Radio Hanoi' reported the downing of an F-105 aircraft over Quang Binh Province at 1530 hours that day, and also reported that the pilot had bailed out and was captured. Metz was the only pilot shot down in that area on that day. Three weeks later, intelligence sources reported that Metz had been seen alive on the ground with his captors shortly after the crash. [In May 1968,] the Defense Department changed Metz' status to Captured."

"When 591 Americans were released in 1973 Operation Homecoming at the end of American involvement in Southeast Asia, Jim Metz was not among them. Military officials expressed their dismay at the time that hundreds of Americans known or suspected to be prisoners were not released."

"For years, the Vietnamese denied knowledge of the fate of Jim Metz, even though the U.S. believes he was captured. Then on March 18, 1977, the Vietnamese returned the remains of Jim Metz. He was finally home."

Maj Metz was born 12 July 1931. He entered the service from Poplar Bluff, Missouri. He had accumulated 208.5 hours in the F-105. His name appears on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall Panel 50E - Line 6.

*388 TFW History, Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frame 1384 &  
<http://www.pownetwork.org/bios/m/m112.htm>*