

128 TFS Georgia ANG

F-105 History

01-Oct-78

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The 128 TFS, 116 TFW ANG, Dobbins AFB GA began converting from F-100D/Fs to F-105Gs, assuming the Wild Weasel mission from the 35 TFW TAC, George AFB CA. By 6 November 1978, the wing had received six F-105Gs from the 35th but, by the end of 1978, still retained eight F-100Ds and five F-100Fs. BG Ben L. Patterson, Jr. was the 116 TFW commander. Major Don V. Hubbard was the commander of the 128 TFS. Maintenance personnel from Dobbins received F-105 hands-on training at George and McConnell Air Force Bases and from the Virginia ANG at Richmond. By the end of 1978, three of the five formed F-105G weapons load crews were fully qualified.

116 TFW History, Oct - Dec 1978, USAF microfilm 33958

18-Apr-80 26-Apr-80

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The 128 TFS GANG deployed 15 F-105Gs to Travis Field, Savannah GA, the unit's largest deployment with the F-105G. The 9 AF IG "...conducted an Operational Readiness Inspection of the 128 TFS and 116 TFW. ... The purpose of the ORI was to evaluate mobility, generation, deployment, regeneration, and employment operations of the 128 TFS. ... Employment sorties were tasked ... for Wild Weasel support and surface attack operations. ... The grand finale of the inspection was a joint Army-Air exercise dubbed 'Quick Thrust 80-1'...".

History of the 116 Tactical Fighter Wing, 1941 - 1983.

12-Jul-80

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The F-105 was retired from active USAF service in a "reunion" hosted by the 562 TFS, 35 TFW, at George AFB CA. An example of every production model of the F-105 participated in the ceremony. A "Sawadee Party" for the F-105 was held the previous day.

During the ceremonies, Wild Weasel F-105G 62-4416 was placed on display at George as a memorial to F-105 pilots.

F-105 units participating in the Sawadee were: 301 TFW AFRES, Carswell AFB TX; 113 TFW ANG, Andrews AFB MD; 508 TFG AFRES, Hill AFB UT; 108 TFG ANG, McGuire AFB NJ; 116 TFW ANG, Dobbins AFB GA; 192 TFG ANG, Byrd Field VA.

An article in the Summer 1980 issue of the USAF Fighter Weapons Review, former F-105 pilot Blake C. Morrison, wrote a tribute to the F-105 titled "Requiem for a Heavyweight". On 20 December 1962, Morrison had ejected from an F-105D (61-0087) when the engine flamed out on a ferry flight from Ramstein AB to Spandahlem AB, Germany. The ejection broke his spine and he spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

"The standard joke around the bar in the Officers' Club in the early sixties would go something like this: an F-4 driver would raise his voice and demand, 'What's the sound the F-105 makes when it hits the ground?' Came the rousing chorus response, 'THUD!!!' Numerous chortles, snickers and guffaws.

"THUD."

That's one of the most respected names in the history of American aviation.

"She was called a lot of things then -- hyper-hog, ultra lead sled, ultra hog, Drop Forged by Republic Aviation and a lot more names that are unprintable. No one ever called the F-105 by her official name, 'Thunderchief', except the press. She was one big joke early in that decade. That is, she was to all except those of us who flew her.

"But, 'THUD' stuck. And we Thud drivers just smiled a knowing smile and quietly continued separating the gin from the ice. We knew something the others didn't. She was one of a kind. She was as stable as a Swiss franc and she could hit. She could hit with the Gatling gun and she could hit with bombs -- lots of bombs. She had long legs at low altitude. She was fast. It was very easy to go fast with her -- especially on the deck. And nobody else could go that fast.

"Then we were presented with Vietnam and we found out some other things. From 1966 to 1968 she was THE one to carry the big iron downtown. She wasn't exactly designed for it, but Thuds hauled seventy-five percent of the smash carried down Route Pack Six. And in combat, she maintained a 90% in commission rate.

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"Maybe it was because she was used to taking hits from anyone and everyone, for we found out that she could take other kinds of hits -- the real kind as well -- and still fly. As an example, numbers 512 and 376 (two dash tens) took direct SAM hits aft and came back home. So did number 167 (a dash five) return with the entire right stabilator shot off.

"But she wasn't perfect. No real lady is. She couldn't turn worth a damn. We found that early on in USAFE any time we tried to engage a Hunter or a Mark Six. We figured even a Frisbee would outturn the Thud. To improve her chances in the air combat arena, there was a proposal in 1967 to upgrade each Thud by extending the wings 18 inches, removing the duct plugs and displacement gear to decrease weight, increasing internal fuel capacity by sealing the bomb bay and installing a larger tank, increasing thrust by 5,000 pounds and adding other combat improvements. Ah, what might have been. She would have been a Super Thud.

"And she didn't always come back. Her corpses line Thud Ridge, Hanoi, Thanh Hoa and a lot of other places up north. But she wrote the epitaph for a lot of good men like Karl Richter. She died a lot. Over half the inventory was gone by the end of 1968 -- most lost in combat.

"She became a legend and legends flew her: Robbie Risner, Karl Richter and Leo Thorsness, to mention a few. She was flown by other greats such as Dave Waldrop, Billy Sparks and Pete Foley. And she was handled by many unknown like Bob Gerlach, Jim Stiles and me.

"As a Weasel she reigned supreme. She killed SAM sites, SAMs, MiGs and earned medals of honor for two men, Leo Thorsness and Merlyn Dethfelsen.

"The Thud piled up thousands of combat hours on each bird and she was said to be weary and worn out. But ask any F-15 driver who tried to pace her at low altitude during Red Flag 80-2. It was, 'Check twelve, Turkey, and I'll be waiting for you at the Club back at Nellis.' She's the only bird I know that can give you 'the bird' whether parked on the ramp, taxiing out or in-flight.

"She entered the inventory on 26 May 1958.

"On 12 July 1980 she made her last scheduled operational Air Force flight at George AFB. She goes on to the Guard and Reserve. But she stays with us as an American classic and a real thoroughbred. She could break your back but never your heart. She is genuinely loved by all who flew her and a lot who didn't

"The epitaph for a great American, 'Feo, Fuerte y formal,' fits the F-105 -- 'She was ugly, she was strong, but she had dignity.'"

"F-105 Thunderchief" by J. C. Scutts, pg 108 & Hi-Desert Flyer, 11 Jul 80 & Article, "Requiem for a Heavyweight" by Blake C. Morrison, Production & Design Mgr. 57 FWW/DOWN, Nellis AFB, NV, reprinted in Aerospace Safety Magazine, October 1980, pp 14 - 15..

27-Sep-80 12-Oct-80

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The 128 TFS ANG deployed eight Wild Weasel F-105Gs to Murted AB, Turkey under Operation "Coronet Power" in support of NATO's "Display Determination 80". "...The aircraft involved were flown to Torrejon AB, Spain from Dobbins AFB GA ... and continued to Turkey the following day..." after 17 hours of crew rest. "More than 200 116th Guardsman, including additional aircrews, maintenance and support personnel, were included in the deployment." The unit flew more than 100 sorties in the two week period.

British Aviation Review, Dec 1995 & History of the 116 TFW, 1941 - 1983

06-Mar-82 20-Mar-82

604

The 116 TFW Georgia Air National Guard deployed eight Wild Weasel F-105Gs from the 128 TFS to Nellis AFB NV for "Red Flag 82-3". This was the last time the Thunderchief participated in this exercise.

116 TFW History, Jan - Dec 82, USAF microfilm 45509.

30-Apr-82

607

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The National Guard Bureau announced that the 116 TFW, flying Wild Weasel F-105Gs from the 128 TFS at Dobbins AFB GA, had been selected to receive their fifth Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

116 TFW History, Jan - Dec 82, USAF microfilm 45509.

11-Jun-82

608

Lt Col Robert C. Bigrigg, Senior Air Force Advisor to the 116 TFW ANG, Dobbins AFB GA, nominated the wing for their sixth AFOUA for exceptionally meritorious service in flying and supporting Wild Weasel F-105Gs in the 128 TFS from 2 June 1981 to 1 June 1982. During this period, the wing participated in 17 exercises, eight at deployed locations, and flew over 5,000 hours with no accidents, continuing a nine-year accident-free trend with their aging Thunderchiefs.

116 TFW History, Jan - Dec 82, USAF microfilm 45509.

11-Jul-82 16-Jul-82

605

The 116 TFW Georgia Air National Guard conducted a Composite Force Training exercise, "Sentry Weasel". The exercise involved thirteen flying units and three services and was staged from Savannah Field Training Site. The wing deployed 15 Wild Weasel F-105Gs from the 128 TFS. Flying operations included low-level navigation, air refueling, high and low intercepts, AWACS, GCI and the dropping of 150 MK-82 inert bombs on interdiction

116 TFW History, Jan - Dec 82, USAF microfilm 45509.

01-Sep-82

1513

(Approximate date). In late Summer 1982, F-105G 62-4425, assigned to the 128 TFS, Georgia ANG, was severely damaged while landing from a local night mission at Dobbins AFB GA. Pilot, 1Lt Mark "Woodstack" Woodhouse, and EWO, Capt. Bill Bryan, "... impacted the runway almost vertically ... landing at over 200 knots." The afterburner petals were crushed, the ventral fin shoved into the aircraft and engine, the fuel dump torn off and the nose gear almost destroyed when the plane slammed down onto the runway. In repairing the aircraft, the ANG swapped the damaged aft section with the good one from F-105G 63-8345 that had been grounded by wing cracks and was being prepared for static display. The aircraft crew chief was TSgt Mike Donahoo.

SMSgt. Jerry L. Powell, 116 BW GA ANG, e-mail 27 July 2000.

30-Oct-82

606

The 116 TFW, Georgia Air National Guard, received their first F-4D to begin replacing their Wild Weasel F-105Gs in the 128 TFS at Dobbins AFB GA. The F-4D was transferred from the 155 TRS, Lincoln ANGB, Nebraska. The wing's conversion from Thunderchiefs to Phantoms was scheduled to begin 1 January 1983 under 116 TFW Programming Plan 82-1, code named "Pacer Change". The conversion was to be completed by 1 October 1983. By 31 December 1982 the wing possessed eighteen F-105Gs, two F-105Fs and seven F-4Ds.

116 TFW History, Jan - Dec 82, USAF microfilm 45509.

25-May-83

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The last official flight of an ANG F-105 flew from Dobbins AFB GA. The 128 TFS flew F-105F 63-8299, call sign "Peach 91". The pilot was Maj Duff Green whose crewchief was MSgt. J. Nance. The aircraft was flown to Patuxent River NAS MD as one of thirteen Wild Weasel F-105Fs and Gs to be barged to Aberdeen Proving Ground for use as targets for missile tests.

Republic F-105 Thunderchief by David Anderton, pg 151 & Weekly Navy News, 14 Apr 83.

01-Sep-83

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The 128 TFS, 116 TFW, Georgia Air National Guard, completed their conversion from the F-105G to the F-4D. *AFHRA abstract for 116 TFW history 01-01-83 to 12-31-1983 Call: K169.011-116 (TFW) IRIS 1111604.*