

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

11-Jan-72

7692

On 11 January 1972, the Air Force Reserve officials learned that three reserve components would receive the F-105. "The F-105 was becoming surplus to U.S. requirements in Southeast Asia, and Reserve C-124 units at Tinker AFB, Carswell AFB in Texas, and Hill AFB in Utah would convert to it."

"The F-105 provided the Air Force Reserve with its most demanding conversion yet. The immediate problem was the usual lack of notification. From rumor in January 11 to organization of the first unit at Tinker on May 20, the Air Force Reserve had slightly more than four months in which to prepare. Moreover, declassification of the action on March 29 left fewer than two months for open preparations. At any rate, on May 20, 1972, the C-124-equipped 937th Military Airlift Group at Tinker was replaced by the 507th Tactical Fighter Group which began transitioning into the F-105Ds and Fs.

"The time-phasing of other Air Force programs involving the F-105 indicated that the first reserve group accept at least one aircraft in June and the first two groups be fully equipped by the end of July 1972. In view of the pressing need for the Air Force Reserve to accept aircraft before the 507th Tactical Fighter Group would be prepared to inspect and maintain them, General Lewis [Maj Gen Homer I. Lewis, Air Force Reserve Commander] agreed to accept immediately at Tinker eight aircraft if Tactical Air Command personnel conducted the acceptance inspections. The first aircraft arrived on April 14, and a seven-man Tactical Air Command team performed the acceptance inspection and placed the aircraft in flyable storage.

"The 506th Tactical Fighter Group, [457 TFS] which converted on July 8, received its first F-105D at Carswell AFB on May 10 under similar circumstances.

"The 506th Tactical Fighter Group was activated at Carswell on July 8, and on July 25 the 301st Tactical Fighter Wing was also activated at Carswell, where the 506th and 507th were assigned to it. On January 1, 1973, the wing was rounded out by the activation at Hill AFB of the 508th Tactical Fighter Group."

"Citizen Airmen: a History of the Air Force Reserve 1946 - 1994", by Gerald T. Cantwell, Air Force History and Museums Program 1997, pg 314.

07-Dec-72

7702

The 119 TFS NJ ANG at Atlantic City Airport transferred F-105B 57-5820 to the 466 TFS AFRES, Hill AFB UT. The plane remained at Hill until October 1980 when it was assigned to the Aircraft Battle Damage Repair (ABDR) program at Robins AFB GA.

AFHRA tail number microfilm AVH-18 & AFLC GO33B report 22 Jan 81.

01-Jan-73

610

The 508 TFG AFRES was constituted and activated at Hill AFB UT. The unit absorbed the F-105Bs assigned to the 945 MAG AFRES which was inactivated at the same time.

"History of Hill AFB" by Kenneth L. Patchin, Chief History Office, 1 June 1981

04-Apr-73

7698

The 141 TFS ANG at McGuire AFB NJ transferred F-105B 57-5814 to the 466 TFS AFRES, Hill AFB UT. In 1964 the aircraft had flown as Thunderbird 1.

AFHRA tail number microfilm AVH-20.

02-May-73

7701

After keeping the airplane for a little over two years, the 119 TFS NJ ANG at Atlantic City Airport transferred F-105B 57-5817 to the 466 TFS AFRES, Hill AFB UT. The plane remained at Hill until October 1980 when it was sent to the boneyard at Davis-Monthan AFB AZ.

AFHRA tail number microfilm AVH-20.

10-May-74

7043

Maj Norman E. Powell flew the F-105 for the last time. He was an advisor to the 508 TFG AFRES at Hill AFB, Utah. Since his first flight in the F-105 on 1 May 1961, he had accumulated 2342.9 hours in the airplane ranking him 35th in the list of pilots with hours flying the F-105.

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

Norm Powell, e-mail 19 Nov 2011 & F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.

08-Aug-76

F-105B 575840 466 TFS Hill AFB Operational loss. The front landing gear collapsed. Crashed on landing at Hill AFB, Utah. Maj Clayton Bane Lyle III 466 TFS pilot survived collapsed nose gear at Hill AFB. Call sign: "Raid 92". "A local Air Force reservist major escaped injury Sunday when his F-105 jet fighter crash-landed on the base runway. Maj. Clayton B. Lyle of 1630 Navajo, South Ogden, was in the process of landing his jet when a front landing gear collapsed. A base spokesman said the aircraft skidded along the runway for some distance before stopping. The pilot walked away unhurt. Maj. Lyle was on a training exercise with the 508th Tactical Fighter Group, a reserve unit stationed at Hill Air Force Base. The aircraft has been impounded and is being examined by a team of inspectors. The spokesman said the aircraft will be put into use again once repairs are completed by 508th mechanics." (Later, it was found to be not cost effective to repair this aircraft and it was scrapped.)

Factual Summary of Circumstances

"Raid 92 was number two in a flight of two F-105Bs returning to Hill AFB, UT from Nellis AFB, NV. The aircrew had attended a Red Flag SII briefing at Nellis AFB in the morning. Preflight, engine start, takeoff, and low-level procedures were normal. Raid 91 flight was vectored to a VFR initial for low approach. After the low approach, both Raid 91 and Raid 92 requested a closed pattern to a full stop landing. Raid 91 called his gear check and landed normally. Raid 92 called his gear check. Raid 92's aircraft touched down on runway 14 on his lower speed brake pedal, 450 gallon wing fuel tanks and centerline multiweapon pylon. The aircraft caught on fire and came to rest after 7,200 feet of skid at the 4,000 feet remaining marker near the runway centerline."

Deseret News, 9 Aug 76, & note from John Coon & AF Form 711 USAF Mishap Report 76-8-8-1, dated 23 Aug 76 signed by Col Donald G. Waltman, President, Investigating Board.

15-May-78

599

Col Roger P. Scheer was appointed commander of the AFRES's 301 TFW at Carswell AFB TX. The wing had three F-105 squadrons, the 457 TFS at Carswell with T-Stick II F-105Ds, the 465 TFS at Tinker AFB OK, and the 466 TFS at Hill AFB UT.

After upgrade training at Nellis AFB NV as a First Lieutenant, Col Scheer began flying F-105s in 1961 at Spangdahlem AB, Germany. In his 4,100 hours of flying time, Col Scheer flew over 3,000 hours in F-105s, 450 of them in combat during two F-105 tours in South East Asia.

301 TFW History, Apr - Jun 1979, USAF microfilm 34382.

03-Mar-79

F-105B 575831 466 TFS Hill AFB Operational loss when the pilot flew into the ground during a low-level left turn. Crashed at the Utah Bombing Range, 70 NM WSW of Hill AFB and 23 NM SE of Lucin, Utah. Maj Bruce A. Brandt 466 TFS pilot ejected but received a serious neck fracture. Call sign: "Furl 42". The plane skipped off the ground and started to roll. The pilot ejected at 1526 MST.

Factual Summary of Circumstances

"The mishap F-105B aircraft, Furl 42, was scheduled as the IP in a four-ship weapons delivery (WD) mission to Eagle Range (R-6404), Utah. Two F-15 aircraft (Nickel 01/02) participated as aggressor aircraft for Furl 41 flight as well as the preceding flight, Furl 31. All F-105 aircraft were configured with two 450 gallon external tanks and a centerline MER with six BDU-33D/B practice bombs. Furl 31/Furl 42 received a face-to-face debriefing from Nickel 01. Furl 41 briefed that the flight would fly the Thud departure, then IR 418 into the north MOA for a low-level. Entry into R-6404 was to be from the west, south of Campbell Peak, where the elements were to split for separate IPs. The lead element was to use the south tip of the Newfoundland Mountains and the second element the north tip. Both elements were to go from the IP to the conventional target at Eagle range for a split-pop attack followed by entry into the box pattern. The flight was to fly a tactical box formation at 1000 AGL at 480 KTAS until Campbell Peak and then 540 KTAS at minimum authorized altitude to the pop-up. Intercepts from the F-15s were expected from entry into R-6404 through the IPs.

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB) F-105 History

"Weather in the MOA caused Furl 41 to abort the low-level early and the flight entered R-6404 from the NW waiting for Furl 31 to clear Eagle Range. The F-15s made intercepts on Furl 41 flight during tactical maneuvering west of the Newfoundland Mountains. When Furl 31 cleared Eagle Range, Furl 41 called for the flight to go to their respective IPs. Furl 41 made a left turn to head for the south IP. During a left turn to regain position the mishap aircraft contacted the ground. The aircraft was flown back into the air and began to roll left. The pilot ejected in a near inverted attitude. The pilot received a broken neck and shoulder on ejection. The aircraft crashed in a 45-degree dive. An Army UH-1H picked up the pilot and transported him to the Hill AFB Hospital."

In an article titled "I'm Alive! I'm Alive!" published four months later, Bruce Brandt, a native of Nebraska, described his accident and aftermath. "I've wondered all my life what the last few seconds before death would be like. Happily for me, I still don't know, but on March 3, 1979, I almost found out first hand.

"I am a pilot with the 508th Tactical Fighter Group, Air Force Reserve, flying F-105Bs at Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

"My day on March 3rd was filled with a series of miracles. I ejected successfully from my F-105 jet fighter after a malfunctioning flight control had forced my aircraft to crash while flying at 100 feet and 500 miles an hour.

"Although my neck was broken during the ejection, any ejection is termed successful if you don't die.

"The first 'miracle' occurred as I was getting ready to start my aircraft for that flight. My crew chief, Ron Speaks, noticed that I had forgotten to hook up the firing gun for my parachute. I would not have caught the mistake if he hadn't seen it. I will be forever grateful to Ron because essentially he saved my life.

"The second 'miracle' happened after the aircraft initially impacted the ground. The fact that I was able to get the aircraft in the air again and have time even to attempt an ejection was indeed amazing.

"Anyone who is knowledgeable about aviation knows that once an aircraft hits the ground, it doesn't usually fly again. I've flown jet fighters for over 14 years and I had never known it to happen before.

"After I got the F-105 in the air again, the aircraft started an immediate left roll and headed for the ground. At this point, it was either eject or die in the crash.

"Strangely enough, it is at this specific point that many pilots before me have made the fatal decision to stay with the aircraft and try one more attempt to save it. No one knows why this strange phenomenon happens, it just does.

"As my fighter started its left roll, I made my decision to eject, but I stopped to check that my seat safety pin was out, and almost lost my life because of this delay in the decision to eject. If the pin were still in, my seat would not have fired.

"The extra time was costly because instead of looking up through my canopy and seeing the blue sky, I was looking at the desert floor -- the aircraft had almost completely turned upside down at this moment and was headed at the ground at a high rate of speed.

"I thought to myself as I pulled the handles up and squeezed the firing trigger, 'I'm dead. I waited too long.' So, I guess in that regard I did expect death within a few seconds because I assumed the parachute would not have time to open before I hit the ground.

"Obviously, the seat did have time to work its magic. Some experts have said that I must have ejected (upside down!) at 900 feet and the chute opened at 200 feet. I had 5 - 10 seconds in the chute before I hit the ground, but I remember being in a daze thinking, 'I'm alive, I'm alive.'

"I knew my neck was injured at the time because I tried to look up and was met with excruciating pain. I couldn't move my head at all. I plunged into the ground like a ton of bricks but miracle No. 3 occurred: No further damage

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

was done to my neck even though my spinal cord was just lying there between the broken neck bones waiting to be cut or damaged.

"After I hit the ground, I remember looking at my watch (1530 hours, or 3:30 p.m.) and thinking it would be well past dark before anyone would be able to reach me.

"I surveyed my situation and I remember thinking how lucky it was that I didn't end up on my face and drown in the three to six inches of water and mud that was around me. That qualifies as 'miracle 4'.

"Essentially, I could not move anything at all because of the condition of my neck, and my decision to lie still proved to be a smart one. I could have easily damaged my neck or spinal cord.

"About 25 minutes later, as I was already starting to get cold and was shaking badly from the cold water, I heard the familiar but unbelievable 'WOP, WOP, WOP, WOP' sound of a helicopter coming to pick me up. I still couldn't believe it -- 25 minutes!

"I didn't know it at the time, but an Army helicopter from Dugway, Utah, was out on a search and rescue mission trying to find a light aircraft that had crashed the day before in Wendover, Utah, area.

"The crew, consisting of Sgt Michael Morris, CW3 John D. Fergusson and CD2 Edward L. Helquist, got word of my accident and did a super job in spite of the conditions. The mud made it almost impossible to walk, let alone carry anyone on a stretcher.

"But they did get me on the stretcher and on my way to Hill Air Force Base within five minutes. There is no question about this one -- 'miracle number 5' for sure. I had not only been picked up quickly, but I had been moved the first time and had escaped any further neck injury.

"After my arrival at Hill AFB, I started to see a familiar face now and then as I was being wheeled from room to room. I was choked with emotion, but only when I saw my wife, Kay, did I break down and start to let it out. I just knew I was the luckiest guy in the world to be in that nice, warm emergency room instead of being out in the desert, all broken up and lying in six inches of water.

"My thoughts at this time were those of relief and of the critical situation I was in, broken neck, etc. It was even a great feeling to feel the pins that the doctors were sticking into my legs and feet. It meant my legs and extremities were okay.

"I was taken to McKay-Dee Hospital to experts in the field of neurosurgery. The emergency room personnel at Hill Air Force Base and McKay-Dee hospitals were marvelously professional and competent. I was elated to hear that Dr. Donald Bryan was waiting for me at McKay-Dee. He is not only our group flight surgeon and has an excellent reputation in his field, but he is a good friend. That definitely helped my outlook on a lot of things.

"The accident has made me a different person. I feel that maybe there is a purpose for all those miracles; there may be something I haven't completed yet in this world. I don't know what it is for sure, but I do know that I intend to enjoy each minute of each day because I was truly a fortunate man that day.

"I have been out of the hospital for over a month now and am doing exceptionally well in my 'halo cast.' I am completely mobile except for being able to move my head. I expect to be free of all medical apparatus in about a month and am looking forward to it like you wouldn't believe.

"I think every day how fortunate I am to have my beautiful, healthy family to look after. I love the feeling."

(Sunday World-Herald Magazine of the Midlands, Omaha Nebraska, July 8, 1979, pg 4, provided via e-mail by Bauke Jan Douma, 12 Dec 2010.)

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

508 TFG History, scanned by Rick Versteeg and sent via e-mail on 18 Nov 2000 & Interview with Capt James McArthur at Hill AFB & AF Form 711 USAF Mishap Report 79-3-3-1, dated 26 Mar 79, signed by Col Peter B. Lane, Board President.

23-Jun-79 30-Jun-79

597

Fourteen F-105s from the 508 TFG AFRES, Hill AFB UT deployed to Volk Field WI for seven days of training under "Operation Redoubt Phase III", the largest AFRES exercise ever to be held. "... The operation ... focus(ed) on tactical deployment of fighter aircraft and tactical airdrops. Participating in the exercise ...(were) gunships from Eglin Auxillary Field and four F-4 Phantoms from Homestead AFB, ... and special operations helicopters from Luke AFB. ..."

The Salt Lake Tribune, Sunday, June 24, 1979.

28-Mar-80

7697

The 184 TFG Kansas ANG at McConnell AFB KS transferred F-105D 62-4299 to the 466 TFS AFRES, Hill AFB UT. It was one of the first "D" models that the 466th received to replace their older "B" models. The 466th "... completed the conversion process with the departure of the last F-105B on 5 January 1981."

Also on 28 March, the Kansas ANG transferred F-105D 62-4347 to the 466 TFS with 6,070.9 flying hours on its airframe. The 466th flew it until 3 October 1983 by which time it had accumulated 6,730.5 flying hours, the highest time of any F-105. On 25 Feb 1984, during the "Thud-Out" ceremonies hosted by the 419 TFW AFRES, at Hill, the plane was mounted on a pylon and "... dedicated as a monument to all Air Force personnel who lost their lives while flying the Thunderchief ...".

USAF aircraft status report GO33B 24 Jun 80 & "The Republic F-105 Thunderchief Wing and Squadron Histories" by James Geer, pg 294, & Wings Magazine, Apr 91 & Thud-Out Program Handout.

12-Jul-80

72

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

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

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.

"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..

30-Jul-80

7695

During their transition from F-105s to F-4Ds, the 465 TFS AFRES, Tinker AFB, OK, transferred some of their F-105Ds to the 466 TFS AFRES, Hill AFB UT. At Hill, the "D" models replaced older "B" models. The F-105Ds transferred on this date had some high-time flying hours for airframes that had a 4,000-hour design life:

Tail Number	Flying Hours
61-0088	3,679.3

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

61-0106	4,249.4
61-0146	4,560.6
61-0199	4,277.1
61-0099	4,144.5
62-4242	4,762.7
62-4301	4,137.0

USAF aircraft status report GO33B 22 Jan 81.

01-Oct-80

7693

(Approximate Date) The 465 TFS, AFRES, Tinker AFB, OK, "... exchanged its Thuds for F-4Ds in fall of 1980."

F-105s that transferred on 1 October 1980 to the 466 TFS AFRES at Hill AFB UT included:

61-0069
62-4279
62-4259
62-4361
63-8287 (F)

"The Republic F-105 Thunderchief Wing and Squadron Histories" by James Geer, pg 291 & GO33B 22 Jan 81 & AFTO Form 95.

08-Jan-81 22-Jan-81

67

The 419 TFW, AFRES, Hill AFB UT made the last major F-105 deployment within the United States during "Condor Taco 82" to Kirtland AFB NM. The unit deployed 12 F-105s, 250 people, and flew approximately 285 sorties. "The deployment ... featured training in low-level flying on unfamiliar routes, air-to-ground weapons delivery and dissimilar air combat training. ... Additionally, the 419th participated in a composite force training exercise sponsored by the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing at Holloman AFB NM. The exercise 'Bushwacker 83-1', provided the F-105 aircrews additional dissimilar air combat training with a variety of fighter aircraft."

Kirtland Focus, 21 Jan 1983, pg 10.

15-Aug-81 29-Aug-81

65

The 466 TFS AFRES, Hill AFB UT deployed 18 F-105s to Skrydstrup, Denmark, under Operation "Coronet Rudder". This deployment was part of "Condor Redoubt '81", the "... most comprehensive readiness exercise ever conducted by the Air Force Reserve". The aircraft were flown to Skrydstrup from Westover AFB MA.

The F-105s that deployed to Denmark from Utah were:

61-0061	62-4301
61-0069	62-4328
61-0084	62-4346
61-0099	62-4347
61-0108	62-4353
61-0115	62-4372
61-0199	62-4375
62-4242	63-8287 (F)
62-4279	63-8365 (F)

During this final F-105 deployment to Europe, F-105D 62-4372 crashed into the Skaggerak on 26 Aug 81. The pilot, Capt Dennis J. Mason, was killed. Capt Mason was the last F-105 pilot to die in the crash of a Thunderchief.

British Aviation Review, Dec 1995 & Air Force Magazine, Oct 81, pg 18.

26-Aug-81

F-105D 624372 466 TFS Hill AFB Operational loss during the "Coronet Rudder" deployment to Denmark. Crashed in the North Sea near the Jutland Peninsula in Denmark. 57-13N 08-28E 1Lt Dennis J. Mason 466 TFS pilot crashed in the North Sea. His body was never recovered. "An F-105D Thunderchief, piloted by a member of the 508th Tactical Fighter Group from Hill Air Force Base, crashed today during a training exercise off the coast of

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

Denmark. The pilot was identified by Squadron Commander Jon Gardner as Lt. Dennis L. Mason, 28, of Fruit Heights. Gardner said three helicopters and the Danish navy were searching for the pilot. It was not known if he survived."

"A spokesman for the reserve unit in Denmark said the jet was engaged in an attack exercise against ships in the North Sea approximately 20 to 30 miles off the Jutland Peninsula. Mason was alone in the aircraft. According to the spokesman, other pilots at the scene reported that the jet attacked the ship in a strafing run and that, when it pulled up, it 'just exploded.' Pilots also reported, seeing a parachute but it was not known if it was the pilot's chute or drag chute, the spokesman said."

"The accident happened at about 3:30 p.m.. Denmark time, or 7:30 a.m. today, Ogden time. A spokesman at Hill AFB said a board of qualified officers will be convened to investigate the crash."

"The 508th is in Denmark for two weeks of training exercises with other NATO air units. More than 400 members of the unit from around Northern Utah are involved in the deployment, which is being called 'Operation Condor Redoubt.' Eighteen F-105 aircraft from the Hill group flew to Skrystrup Air Field in Central Denmark for the exercise."

"Mason is a 1975 graduate of Texas A&M and was commissioned in the Air Force in 1975."

This was the 612th and last F-105 lost to accidents and Vietnam combat.

Factual Summary of Circumstances

"The mishap F-105D aircraft was scheduled as number four man in a four-ship close air support (CAS) mission to Oksboel Range, Denmark. All F-105 aircraft were configured with two 450 gallon external wing tanks and a centerline Multiple Ejector Rack (MER) with one BDU-33/B practice bomb. The mission was a standard VFR departure with joinups in the box formation, and subsequent low level training. The flight then flew through the Low Fighter Engagement Zone (LOFEZ) to practice defensive lookout training. Shortly after entry into the LOFEZ, an F-5 aggressor made a 'knock it off' call because of an observed fireball/explosion. Rescap of the area began immediately but the search revealed no survivor."

GO33B Report Dec 81 & Ogden Standard Examiner, 26 Aug 81, pg 1 & AF Form 711 USAF Mishap Report 81-8-26-1 dated 28 Sept 81, signed by Col Donald C. Armstrong, Board President.

01-Oct-82

692

The 419 TFW AFRES replaced the deactivated 508 TFG AFRES at Hill AFB UT. The wing's subordinate unit, the 466 TFS at Hill was the last unit to fly F-105s.

Republic F-105 Thunderchief by David Anderton, Pg 152

04-Jun-83

66

The 419 TFW, Hill AFB, Utah, flew the final F-105 mission. "Some 2000 spectators watched the final flyover of the F-105 Thunderchiefs... . The flyover paid tribute to the Thunderchief from its present home unit, the Air Force Reserve's 419th Tactical Fighter Wing at Hill, the last military unit flying the F-105. ...After the (24-plane) flyover, the aircraft practiced a mass launch strike attack at the Utah Test and Training Range Flying in one of the F-105s was retired Col. Leo K. Thorsness, a Medal of Honor recipient and a former prisoner of war in North Vietnam. The flight was Colonel Thorsness' 93rd F-105 mission. Maj. Gen. Leo Marquez, commander of the Ogden Air Logistics Center at Hill, and Brig. Gen. Stanton R. Musser, center vice commander, also flew in the strike force mission.

"Following the mission, seven of the F-105s continued to San Antonio, Texas, where they'll be used as static training aids at Lackland AFB." The 419 TFW converted from F-105s to F-16As, the first Reserve unit to be equipped with the F-16.

"A picture-perfect formation of F-105 Thunderchiefs roared a farewell salute over several thousand spectators at Hill Air Force Base Saturday morning. The noisy ceremony wrote a final, peaceful chapter in the saga of the F-105s,

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

which once roared over Asian skies on missions of destruction and death."

The Thunderchiefs are now flown only by the 419th Tactical Fighter Wing, a reserve unit based at Hill. But the 25 craft, nicknamed 'Thud' by the pilots who flew them, will be replaced by F-16 Fighting Falcons during a six month transition period that starts in October. 'Some of us hate to see them go,' said Maj Bruce Brandt, a pilot who participated in the formation. 'They're big, heavy and fast and take a lot of punishment.'"

"The original plan, to swoop in from the north was thwarted by storm clouds. So the noisy 'Thuds.' about 20 minutes behind schedule, flew over the base runway from the south. Under dark clouds that hugged the mountain peaks, the crowd murmured approval as the formation loomed on the southern horizon, like a distant flight of geese. Twenty-four planes comprised the formation, as originally planned. Twenty-five planes had originally taken off about 10 a.m., for a bombing mission at the test ranges west of the base, followed by a mid-air refueling for planes that needed it, then the pass over the base. One of the planes developed a minor problem and had to abort the mission, pilots reported after the flight. Fourteen of the pilots in the formation also flew in Vietnam. Eight of them flew the F-105s during that war."

Col Jon Gardner, 466 TFS commander, "... noted the planes were highly successful in bombing raids in and around Hanoi, an area defended by the 'greatest concentration of anti-aircraft batteries in history.' The Thuds were heavy, but fast, and all weather fighter-bomber capable of flying twice the speed of sound."

"Referring to their heavy flying weight, Col. Leo K. Thorsness, said after his 93rd mission in the plane: "It was marvelous to see all those Thuds up there. I thought we would sink the sky.'"

"The plane that dropped out of the formation, returned to the base for a quick repair, then was airborne again, pilots said in the de-briefing room after the flight. It and five of the planes did not return to the base. Instead, they turned south for a mid-air refueling en route to a Texas airbase, where they will be used for training ground security forces, Gardner said."

Kirtland Focus, 24 June 1983, pg 9 & Ogden Standard-Examiner, Sunday, June 5, 1983.

08-Oct-83 09-Oct-83

2120

"One of a vanishing breed of aircraft - the F-105 Thunderchief - will make a farewell appearance at the Amarillo Air Show '83, October 8 and 9 at Amarillo International Airport. The two-day show is sponsored by the Amarillo Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee. To be retired in April of 1984, the Thunderchiefs are flown by the 419 TFW at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. ... The Thunderchief joins 22 other aircraft exhibits in the ground displays at the Air Show Saturday and Sunday, October 8 and 9. ... Gates will open Saturday at 10:00 a.m. and the show will be at 1:30 p.m."

Unidentified newspaper clipping received from Bud Young.

11-Jan-84

594

As one of the last "Ds" to fly, F-105D 61-0146 was flown from the 419 TFW at Hill AFB UT to Edwards AFB CA for display at the Air Force Flight Test Center where the first F-105 flew 29 years earlier. During its 22 years of service, 61-0146 accumulated 5,120.3 flying hours.

Aircraft's AFTO Form 95, Significant Historical Data.

24-Feb-84

2135

On a cold, snowy, overcast weekend in February 1984, over 200 former F-105 pilots and maintenance crews gathered at Hill AFB in Utah to celebrate the final farewell to the Thunderchief. The affair was called "The Thud Out" and the gathering was hosted by the Air Force Reserve's 419 TFW, the last unit to operate the F-105. A couple of months before the event, an announcement letter from the 419th's Project Officer, Major Tom "Waldo" King, circulated throughout the Air Force and units of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve. Maj. King invited everyone. "If you (or your unit) were ever associated with the F-105, you should be here." He had carefully planned the festivities that included sorties by the last three flyable F-105s, all two-seat F-105Fs, a memorial dedication for all F-105 pilots killed while flying the Thunderchief, and a sit-down steak dinner for all.

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

The Thud Out started Friday morning with arriving guests registering and encountering people they had known during their F-105 days. On Friday evening they gathered in the officer's club for drinks and the telling of favorite Thud stories. MSgt John Coon, a former F-105 maintenance troop who made it to the Thud Out, remembered, "that evening at the Officers Club was another gathering of old friends, many of whom had not seen each other for some time. The atmosphere was social and convivial with everyone exchanging remembrances and 'war stories'." Vendors in hallway booths exhibited Thunderchief memorabilia and sold pins, T-shirts, and made-to-order hand-carved models. A popular item was a plastic F-105 model on an arrowhead base that sold for \$45.00. The party lasted until well after midnight and prepared the group for the next day's more formal activities.

Among the 306 attendees listed in the sign up roster were former Wild Weasel pilot Francis A. "Frosty" Sheridan and former POW Col Robert B. "Percy" Purcell. Col Ray H. Bryant, who flew 100 missions with the 469 TFS in 1966 - 1967 also attended. Lt Col Edward L. Sykes, who flew with the 34 TFS in 1969 at Korat, was on the attendance roster as was Robert V. "Boris" Baird who had flown missions with the 67 TFS in 1965. Benjamin W. Bowthorpe, who had flown 100 missions with the 354 TFS in January 1966, was registered for the Thud Out. Barry G. Swarts and Lt Col Jack L. Graber were registered as attendees.

Lt Col Bruce A. Brandt, an F-16 pilot from the Reserve's 466 TFS at Hill, attended. He had previously flown the F-105. His last F-105 flight was in November 1983. He had accumulated 1,459.2 hours in the airplane. "It will always be my favorite aircraft and I've flown the F-16 for several years. ..."

On 25 Feb 1984, Saturday's Thud-Out ceremonies began at 9:30 a.m. when the 419 TFW hosted an open house in their hanger. John Coon described the mood as "... more somber and nostalgic, in keeping with the motto of Thud Out - 'Let me tell you about my best friend'. The mood was also reflected in the weather - low, gray overcast, cold temperatures (in the 20s), and it was snowing off and on." Two restored F-105s were parked inside, gleaming under the hanger lights. F-105B 57-5814, which, twenty years earlier, had flown as "Thunderbird 1", was now camouflaged and marked with the 419th "HI" tail code. The 419th had flown the plane since April 1973, when they received it from the New Jersey Guard, and had retired it at the end of 1980. (It later ended up displayed at the Salt Lake City airport where it was left to deteriorate so badly it was eventually scrapped.)

At the other end of the hanger, parked beneath a large American flag hanging from the rafters, was F-105D 59-1743 with bombs loaded on all of its stations. A Vietnam combat veteran from 1967 to 1970, it had ended up its career in 1981 with the Virginia ANG, and was now in the collection of the Hill Aerospace Museum across the base from the 419th hanger. It was marked with the "JJ" tail code of one of its earlier units, the 34 TFS from Korat, Thailand.

Beginning at 10:45 a.m., three F-105Fs flew over the crowd that had gathered on the flightline. Flying the planes from the front seats were all highly-experienced F-105 pilots from the 419th's 466 TFS. The men in the rear cockpits, "Backseat Honorees", were well-known F-105 pilots from the Vietnam war.

Flying 63-8287 with call sign "Thud 01" was Lt. Col. James K. "Gringo" Webster, who had flown 137 F-105 combat missions. In his back seat was Col. Thomas J. Coady, who had over 1,000 combat hours in the F-105, the most of any F-105 pilot. (After this flight, his total F-105 flying time was 1859.7 hours accumulated since his first F-105 flight on 1 July 1967.)

In "Thud 02", F-105F 63-8261, was Maj. Frank P. "Black Jack" Bernard who, on 6 October 1970, was one of four pilots flying the last F-105D combat mission of the Vietnam war. In his rear cockpit was a former Wild Weasel pilot who had been awarded the Medal of Honor, Col. Merlyn H. Dethlefsen.

Flying 63-8309, "Thud 03", was Maj. Barry D. "Taco" Wytttenbach who had flown 159 combat missions from Korat and Takhli. Behind him was the Wild Weasel pilot and ex-POW who had also been awarded the Medal of Honor, Col. Leo K. Thorsness.

Thud-Out Program Handout & Thud Out attendee, Victor Vizcarra, e-mail, 4 Jan 01, & Thud Out List of "Known Attendees" & Bruce Brandt letter dated 18 Jan 88 to Bauke Jan Douma.

25-Feb-84

4168

466 TFS AFRES (Hill AFB)

F-105 History

The Thud Out at Hill AFB, Utah, hosted by the 419 TFW AFRES, displayed a long computer printout around the hanger walls listing the names and F-105 flying hours of all pilots who had flown the plane. There were also placards displaying the twenty F-105 pilots who had flown the plane the most number of hours. These top 20 F-105 pilots were:

Order	Name	F-105 Flying Hours	Date Last Flew F-105
1.	Col Raymond F. Kingston	3709.6	23 Aug 73.
2.	Maj James A. Caldwell	3691.6	18 Nov 83.
3.	BG Roger P. Scheer	3493.3	26 Feb 82.
4.	Maj Joe T. Short	3045.1	12 Oct 79.
5.	Lt Col James K. Webster	3012.5	28 Feb 84.
6.	Lt Col Clayton B. Lyle III	3010.5	17 Oct 83.
7.	Maj Carl L. Womack	2962.0	17 Oct 83.
8.	Lt Col Roger L. Prather	2906.1	20 Oct 78.
9.	Col Donald R. Yates	2831.0	2 Nov 76.
10.	Lt Col Russell R. Schoonover	2795.9	29 Apr 81.
11.	Col Leonard C. "Lucky" Ekman	2791.6	21 Jul 78.
12.	Col Harrison W. Matthews	2737.7	21 Mar 80.
13.	Lt Col Frank E. Peck	2725.5	26 May 81.
14.	Lt Col Edward L. Sykes	2703.7	13 Mar 80.
15.	Lt Col Richard W. Simons	2702.5	6 Sep 78.
16.	Lt Col Jimmy L. Boyd	2564.1	7 Oct 80.
17.	Col Richard E. Moser	2558.1	23 Jun 73.
18.	Lt Col Robert N. "Bob" Johnston	2516.7	13 Jun 75.
19.	Lt Col James J. Butler, Jr.	2515.1	14 Dec 79.
20.	Col Arthur E. Martone	2500.5	30 Jun 80.

Not noted on the display, but an indication of the hazards of flying the Thud, nine of the 20 high-time pilots had ejected from an F-105, all but one due to accidents.

Col Moser, number 17 on the list, contracted lung cancer that was cured by an operation that removed one lung. He died on 14 June 2004 in Atlanta, Georgia, of pneumonia in his remaining lung.

John Coon letter and photos of Thud Out displays & Rick Moser, e-mail, 24 Jan 05.

27-Feb-84

1203

Two days after the "Thud Out", Lt Col. James "Gringo" Webster from the AFRES 466 TFS flew F-105F 63-8309 to Robins AFB, Georgia. The plane was used for ABDR training by the 2955 CLSS and was scrapped on 5 July 1995.

Mr. Theodore W. Van Geffen, F-105 historian, e-mail to the RATNET, 27 Feb 1999.

03-Mar-84

598

The next to last Thunderchief to fly was F-105F 63-8261. It was flown from Hill AFB UT to Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, for static display at Camp Robinson. The pilot was Maj Kent 'Supe' Clark from the 466 TFS AFRES and his rear seat passenger was Mr. Theodore W. Van Geffen, an F-105 historian and aviation writer from Holland.

Mr. Theodore W. Van Geffen, e-mail to the RATNET, 27 Feb 1999

10-Mar-84

317

F-105F 63-8287 was the last Thunderchief to fly when the aircraft was flown from Hill AFB, Utah to Chanute AFB, Illinois, for static display. The pilot of the last flight was Capt Joe Gelingner from the 466 TFS AFRES who did not have a rear-seat passenger.

Mr. Theodore W. Van Geffen, F-105 historian, e-mail to the RATNET, 27 Feb 1999