

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

14-Oct-67

236

The fourteenth F-105 RTU Class 68BR graduated at McConnell AFB KS. The class, named "The Many Splendored Studs", began on 20 Apr 67 but didn't start training until 15 May 67. It took the place of class 68CR that was deleted due to the extension of RTU training from 70 to 92 flying hours. The class had 22 student pilots and deployed 24 F-105s for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 29 Sep - 13 Oct 67 with the 562 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col James A. Young.

"Experience level in this class ranged from 760 to 5,500 flying hours. ... This was considered to be one of the outstanding classes to have graduated from the 562 TFS and the 23 TFW. Reason for this was due to nearly unanimous high performance aircraft background of the students, who were assigned exclusively from tactical fighter, fighter interceptor and trainer aircraft units."

Capt George D. Graves was Overall Outstanding Student and Capt Kenneth D. Thaete was Top Gun. Col Thomas H. Curtis had graduated early, in July 1967, for his assignment as Deputy Commander for Operations at the 355 TFW, Takhli RTAFB, Thailand.

One of the students, Maj Billy J. Dulin, was awarded the TAC Pilot of Distinction for the month of December 1967.

The student class roster included:

Col Thomas H. Curtis	Capt Edward Y. Cleveland
Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen	Capt Robert J. Furman
Lt Col James B. Ross	Capt George D. Graves
Maj Thomas W. C. "Robert" Birge	Capt Eric B. Nelson
Maj Richard J. Bono	Capt Frank E. Peck
Maj Francis J. "Frank" Byrne	Capt James E. Sehorn
Maj Kenneth W. Dickson	Capt Anthony Cameron Shine
Maj Billy Joe Dulin	Capt Kenneth D. Thaete
Maj Kenneth M. Hiltz, Jr.	Capt Forrest S. Winebarger
Maj James G. LaChance	1Lt William C. Jones
Maj Grayson C. Powell, Jr.	
Maj Clair L. Thompson	

Lt Col Ross had been a squadron commander of a pilot training squadron at Vance AFB, OK. He was next assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat.

23 TFW History, Jan - Jun 67, USAF microfilm MO554, frames 0986 and 1058 & Jim Ross, e-mail 30 Apr 10.

29-Nov-67

4845

"Hatchet" flight from the 34 TFS took off at 07:55. They refueled with Tan 23 going to the target and post-strike refueled with Tan 66. Their lineup was:

#1 - Maj Clyde L. Falls, Jr. flying F-105D 59-1759
#2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler flying 61-0072 on his 25th combat mission.
#3 - Capt Carl William Lasiter flying 62-4359
#4 - Capt Irving E. LeVine flying 61-0132

The flight worked with the FAC "Nail 70" against a target at location 21-36N and 106-32E. "75% coverage. 100% on target." Their mission lasted 4.3 hours.

At 14:10, four pilots from the 34 TFS comprising "Scuba" flight took off from Korat on a mission to Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 50 minutes. The flight line up was:

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- #1 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0445.
- #4 - Capt Hugh W. Davis

It was Maj Armstrong's 28th combat mission. "The regular afternoon strike was cancelled and we were fortunate to get an add-on flight of four. We went up into Laos just above the Thailand border where we worked with an O-1E FAC. The clouds were thick all about but we were able to roll in on a shallow pass and drop. All of our bombs were on target and the FAC said we destroyed 12 buildings and an area where 200 enemy troops had been reported. After that, we swung into North Vietnam for a road check and counter. It was the first time that my tape recorder worked properly and I was really pleased."

Jake Shuler's mission log spreadsheet & Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 12.

30-Nov-67

4846

At 0705, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Pistol" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a target in Mu Gia Pass in RP-1 North Vietnam. The mission lasted 2 hours 45 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj William J. King
- #2 - Capt Robert M. Crane
- #3 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0132.

The mission was Maj Armstrong's 29th. "Weather was bad in VIA [RP-6A] again so we went to 1st alternate target. We dropped on Mu Gia Pass via Sky Spot through clouds. No assessment of BDA."

After this mission, Maj Armstrong went on R&R and attended the 2nd quarterly River Rats Conference at Takhli and Bangkok.

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. also from the 34th flew his 42nd mission into North Vietnam today where he attacked trucks, probably in Mu Gia Pass, too.

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 12 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 30 Nov 67.

07-Dec-67

4848

"South-southwest of Dien Bien Phu Dec. 7, 388 TFW Thunderchief pilots bombed a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft artillery site, cave storage area, and truck park. One sustained fire was reported following a strike on the AAA site, 8 miles south-southwest of the town. A large secondary explosion with multiple detonations was visible from the cave storage complex, 3 miles beyond the flak site." (Sawadee Flyer, Vol I, No. 11, Friday, Dec 15, 1967, pg 1.)

At 1430, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Bass" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb this gun site in RP-5 North Vietnam. The mission lasted 2 hours 40 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong in F-105D 58-1152
- #2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #3 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #4 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe on his 95th counter. He logged 2.8 hours.

It was Maj Armstrong's 30th combat mission and his first since returning from his second R&R that began on 30 November. "The main strike force was cancelled for bad weather in Pack VI. My flight was launched against a flight in Barrel Roll (Northern Laos). We got refueled and headed on up there. We swept down through the lower half of

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Pack V and rendezvoused with our A-1 FAC. A flight of 2 F-105s from Takhli was already there and they hit the target first. The target was a gun emplacement in Pack V south of Dien Bien Phu. We put our bombs on it and knocked it out. We even started a fire there. We exited with no further problems."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 12 & Larry Hoppe AF Form 5.

08-Dec-67

4850

At 1545, four pilots from the 34 TFS of "Gator" flight took off from Korat on a mission to bomb a target in Laos. The mission lasted 2 hours 10 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270.
- #2 - Capt Douglas A. Beyer
- #3 - Capt Lawrence G. Hoppe flying his 96th mission. He logged 2.2 hours
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

It was Maj Armstrong's 31st combat mission. "This was the first alternate target. A Combat Sky Spot under "Wager" control [Commando Club] on a target 5 miles east of Sam Neua, Laos. The refueling and vectoring into the target went like clockwork and the bomb run was smooth. It was completely undercast below us at 6,000'. We swung right off the target and made a weather reconnaissance into Pack IV. #4 had to punch off a bomb over there as it wouldn't drop normally. Otherwise uneventful."

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 13.

14-Dec-67

3488

From Korat, two pilots from the 44 TFS and eight from the 34 TFS flew in today's strike against the Paul Doumer bridge (JCS 12). The mission was designated RT56A-225 and the target coordinates were 21-02-31N and 105-51-43E. The pilots were:

Maj White flying F-105D 60-0422 and Capt Thomas A. Tobin, Jr. flying 60-0435, both from the 44 TFS.

Four of the pilots from the 34 TFS were: Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. in 59-1759. On 24 April 1968, under SO G-1210, Maj Daniel was awarded his 10th to 16th oak leaf cluster to the Air Medal for missions he flew between 4 Oct 67 - 29 Feb 68.

Capt Sam P. Morgan in 62-4387. On 27 April 1968, under SO G-1244, Capt Morgan was awarded the second oak leaf cluster to the DFC for this mission.

Both Capt Robert M. Crane and Maj David D. Igelman from the 34 TFS received the DFC (2nd OLC) for today's mission.

Four 34 TFS pilots formed "Simmer" flight that took off at 1105. The mission lasted for 3 hours 35 minutes. The flight line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4359.
- #2 - Maj William M. Blakeslee in 62-4270. On 27 April 1968, under SO G-1250, Maj Blakeslee was awarded the 3rd Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for this mission.
- #3 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW Assistant DO
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen in 61-0068. On 27 April 1968, under SO G-1250, Lt Col Christensen was awarded the 4th Oak Leaf Cluster to the Air Medal for this mission.

It was Maj Armstrong's 36th combat mission. "We finally got in on the Doumer Bridge [JCS 12] in downtown Hanoi. We were delayed 5 hours waiting for the weather to clear. When we dropped off of the tankers we could see (coming up the Gulf of Tonkin) that the entire delta was clear. They launched 6 SAMs at us from the Red River south of Hanoi

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as we headed up but nobody got hit. As we approached the target for a left roll-in, we had swung further to the north than we anticipated. Consequently I wound up rolling-in almost straight ahead with a split 'S' maneuver. I had to maneuver the aircraft quite violently to get lined up and I'm not sure I hit the bridge. I saw two bomb impacts to the south of the bridge when I bombed. My #2, 3, & 4 men all lost me as I pulled off and I went out by myself. There was heavy 85-mm, & 37/57-mm in the target area. Cactus #4 did not come back [Capt James Eldon Sehorn, 469 TFS, POW]. His situation is unknown." (Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 15.)

In his memoirs, Lt Gen Sam Armstrong described additional details of this mission. "On 14 December we bombed the Paul Doumer bridge in Hanoi for the third time in the war. It was back on the 25th of October when we last struck it and when Major Britt had been so tragically killed after leading the mission. The weather was questionable so we delayed our take-off for five hours waiting for clearance. When we got a look at North Vietnam from the Gulf of Tonkin, we could see that the clouds were all gone so this one was for real! Earlier, the tactic was to go further North up the Gulf of Tonkin and head almost due West to parallel 'Little Thud Ridge' and attack the Hanoi area from the Northeast. We had concluded that the shielding by these low mountains was really not very effective so that it was smarter to head directly at the target from the Gulf. So when we headed inbound on a Northwesterly heading, we had about 70 miles to cross before getting to the target. I saw six SA-2s being launched against us but they apparently weren't guided so were not a threat. I must say, however, that watching an SA-2 launch -- knowing what the consequences to you might be -- did get one's attention whether it guided or not.

"I was leading 'Simmer' flight, which was the third flight in the formation. My #2 man was Major Bill Blakeslee who was a poor pilot by day and a drunk by night (he lived in my hooch and was apparently so apprehensive about the next day's mission that he drank himself to sleep each night). #3 was Col. Stewart who was our Assistant Deputy Commander for Operations in the wing. Three weeks later when Col. Jim Bean, the D.O., was shot down this very young colonel was elevated to this important position. But this was his first Pack VIA mission. The #4 man was Lt. Col. Christensen who was a recent arrival in our squadron and this also was his first Pack VIA mission. So I sensed the apprehension of the new guys as the flak started coming up in our midst after the SA-2's subsided so I transmitted: 'Steady Simmer. Steady as she goes'.

"That might have reduced their tension some but we were shortly confronted with a difficult roll-in. We got a MiG warning call before the SA-2's started up so the whole formation had increased speed and swung further North than planned. Rather than a roll-in with about a 20-degree angle to the bridge, we were headed right down it. I transmitted: 'This is going to be steep'. With that I rolled upside down and pulled the nose of the aircraft down to achieve a straight-ahead dive angle. Instead of diving at 45 degrees, I was closer to 60 degrees which felt more like vertical. The bridge was only about 10 feet wide so it wasn't easy to line up directly down it for the bomb run. That's where the 'pendulum effect' becomes a factor. Explanation: The orange bomb sight is projected on the combining glass in the windscreen. The sight is depressed a number of mils depending upon the effect that gravity will have on the ordnance being fired/dropped. In other words, depressing the sight caused the pilot to aim long to compensate for gravity. A mil is defined as a foot drop at a thousand feet. About 20 mils depression was enough for the Gatling gun or rockets fired at long range since they had a velocity above that imparted by the F-105. For gravity bombs, more depression was necessary which was greatly dependent upon dive angle, airspeed and release altitude. Normally this was about 120 mils since we planned for a 45-degree release at 500 knots at 8,000 feet altitude. Since the F-105 had tapes for airspeed and altitude, it was convenient to set the markers respectively at those airspeeds and altitudes. When those markers flashed by - hopefully at the same time - it was the instant to hit the bomb release button. So 120 mils depression of the sight put it much lower than the vector of the aircraft through space. If you were left of the target, you rolled right to put the sight on the target. The 'pendulum effect' meant that you would roll to the point that the velocity vector was aligned but when you rolled wings level, the sight was off to the right. Since this defied common pilot logic, the usual outcome was that the pilot never got properly lined up prior to bomb release. That's what happened to me although I should have known better. So my bombs probably didn't hit that narrow target. Fortunately, some of the other guys had better luck since we did do some damage.

"Meanwhile, I pulled a lot of 'g's' after I released my 3,000-pound bombs and turned left to head towards the Gulf.

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None of my flight was with me! I don't know what happened to Blakeslee at that moment. Stewart and Christensen were so disoriented that they pulled out straight ahead and flew down the main street of Hanoi supersonically. Eventually we all got back together on the tanker." (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pg 20.)

On 27 April 1968, under SO G-1250, Maj Armstrong was awarded the 3rd oak leaf cluster to the Air Medal for this mission.

National Archives air strike films, archive control number NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649C & 388 TFW history, Jan - Mar 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frame 1387.

15-Dec-67

1449

In addition to planes from the 355 TFW, F-105s from the 388 TFW also struck the Canal des Rapides bridge (JCS 13) in RP-6A, North Vietnam.

Maj Louis L. Levy from the 469 TFS from Korat flew F-105D 62-4270 on a mission for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (Fourth Oak Leaf Cluster). " ... Major Levy was a member of a force of F-105 Thunderchiefs assigned to attack a vital railroad and highway bridge in the vicinity of Hanoi. Major Levy bravely fought his way through heavy defenses to successfully hit his target. ... "

Three other F-105D pilots from the 469 TFS were also on this strike, designated RT56A-226. They were Maj Wintford L. Bazzell flying 61-0220, Maj Stanley Henry Horne flying 61-0068, and Navy exchange officer Lt James Karg flying 62-4269.

Two pilots from the 34 TFS also bombed the nearby Trung Quang railroad yard at coordinates 21-05N and 105-55E. They were Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen flying 61-0132 and Maj Kenneth W. Mays flying 60-0435.

" ... It was necessary to strike the canal's two bypass bridges as well. All three were short and easily repaired, so the effect was at best temporary. In any case, the weather closed in again before much could be done to attack rolling stock backed up in railyards and on rail spurs. The big railyard at Yen Vien was hit, as was the rail car repair shop at Gia Lam, but the North Vietnamese put over a hundred cars on spurs that had not been authorized for attack. On the last day of clear weather (on 19 December), Seventh Air Force's request to hit these rail spurs was making its way too late through channels to Washington; approval did not reach Saigon until early the next morning." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 112).

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 1967, USAF microfilm NO463 frame 1757 & Lou Levy, award citation provided in reply to Ron Thurlow letter, 1 Oct 2001 & National Archives air strike films, archive control number NWDNM(m)-342-USAF-42649C.

17-Dec-67

F-105D 600422 469 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit by a MiG-21 AAM while en route to the Lang Lau RR Bridge. Crashed in RP-6A, North Vietnam. 21-31N 105-40E Capt Jeffery Thomas Ellis 469 TFS pilot ejected on his 44th mission and became a POW. Released 14 Mar 73. Call sign: "Bass 01". "Bass" flight left Korat at 14:00. The flight lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Jeffrey Thomas Ellis
- #2 - Maj Thomas W. C. "Robert" Birge
- #3 - Lt Col William N. Reed
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen (34 TFS)

The target was the Lang Lau railroad bridge (BE 616-00524) (ART 1524) at 21-33-06N and 105-53-40E]. Capt Ellis was downed at 15:30. CNA Loss/Damage Database, USAF loss 777, pg H24.)

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"Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen, Bass 04, reported that 'Bass Lead (Capt Ellis) was downed by an air-to-air missile fired by a silver MiG-21 from about 2000'. When I observed the MiG, two missiles were in flight, the first of which appeared not to guide. The second hit Lead. He (or someone else) called, 'Lead hit.' The aircraft rolled inverted and aft belly was on fire. Bass 03 and I turned toward the MiG, which accelerated up and away.' Maj Thomas W. C. Birge made the following observations: '... Numerous MiG calls were made both on guard and primary frequencies, particularly from about 4 minutes to target. Bass Flight had assumed the optimum pod formation just prior to Lead being hit. Airspeed was approximately 425 KCAS. (Bass 02) was flying approximately 1000' low, 1000' out, and 30 degrees behind Lead. I heard two distinct 'break' calls but did not discern the call sign. Bass Lead began burning immediately after missile impact and rapidly rolled on his back. The aircraft entered an immediate spin still on fire. Bass 02 went into a tight spiral following Lead down. The rocket seat was observed at about 5000' and the chute blossomed simultaneously with the aircraft's exploding mid-air. The aircraft debris impacted shortly after, just off from a small wooded hill. Bass 02 circled until Lead's parachute was observed going into a wooded area about one half mile from the wreckage. Several more 360-degree turns were executed by Bass 02; however, random 37-mm bursts were noted and Bass 02 left the area. Voice contact was attempted on egress on guard channel, but only the beeper was heard. Bass 02 could not see Lead after landing due to trees. There were many farm type buildings in the immediate vicinity, i.e., 1 - 2 miles of where he landed." ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW Southeast Asia", AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3, IRIS # 1028640, pg 3-218.)

"While inbound to bomb the Lang Lau railroad bridge, F-105D, lead ship in 'Bass Flight', suffered an Atoll hit which set him on fire. As the MiG 'accelerated up and away,' the damaged Thud rolled over on its back and entered a flaming spin. As one witness recalled, 'The rocket seat was observed at about 5,000' and the chute blossomed simultaneously with the aircraft's exploding in mid-air.' Capt. Jeffery T. Ellis survived, but fell into enemy hands."

The pilot had earned the highest academic honors in the RTU program at McConnell AFB with a score of 99.7%. His RTU Class 67HR had graduated on 18 May 1967.

Robert L. Young, History Thesis, pg 53 & 23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 67, USAF microfilm MO554.

09-Jan-68

4861

Due to a weather diversion, "Waco" flight from the 34 TFS flew a mission in northern Laos instead of North Vietnam. The flight took off at 1430. Its lineup was:

- #1 - Capt Sam P. Morgan
- #2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270 on his 50th mission.
- #4 - Capt Carl William Lasiter (POW 4 Feb 68)

Maj Armstrong described the mission in his 100-mission log. "Sam Morgan was Mission Commander and I was the Deputy for the primary target. However, weather was bad and we went North Star. We hit a troop concentration in middle upper Laos with an A-1E FAC. We got our bombs right on target and got 2 secondary explosions. We made a recon of Rt 7 on the way back for a counter. Cricket has changed its policy apparently on clearing people into the Packs." They returned to Korat after flying for 2 hours 20 minutes.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 21

21-Jan-68

4869

"Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS bombed a target in RP 1 using Sky Spot radar. The flight took off from Korat at 0700. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4361
- #2 - Maj William M. Blakeslee
- #3 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #4 - Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. flying his 68th combat mission.

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It was Maj Armstrong's 59th combat mission. "This was another practice brief for me as Mission Commander but we went over to Pack I as the weather was bad up in Pack VI. We did a Combat Sky Spot on a target south of Mu Gia Pass but couldn't see our bombs impact due to clouds." Their mission lasted for 2 hours 15 minutes.

On his cigar band, Maj Dickson recorded the mission as against Dong Hoi in RP-1.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 24 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 21 Jan 68.

04-Feb-68

F-105D 605384 34 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit by a MiG-21 AAM while en route to the Thai Nguyen Barracks (JCS 60). Crashed in RP-5, North Vietnam. 21-37N 105-17E Capt Carl William Lasiter 34 TFS pilot ejected and became a POW. Released 14 Mar 73. Call sign: "Pistol 04". "... A small strike force (from the 388 TFW) attacked a target in the Thai Nguyen area. The force consisted of one F-105 Iron Hand flight, one F-105 strike flight, and two F-4D MIGCAP flights. ... Inbound to the target, the strike force had received MIG warnings ... indicating two MIG-21's headed northwest out of Phuc Yen While the (F-4D) flight turned left to attack, the flight members lost sight of the MIG-21, and an F-105 was destroyed by his air-to-air missile. The American pilot safely ejected moments before his aircraft rolled over and disappeared into the undercast."

Capt Carl W. Lasiter flew as Pistol 04, in a flight of four, on a strike mission to Thai Nguyen Barracks. Other members of Pistol flight were:

- #1 Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #2 Maj Carl E. Light
- #3 Maj James E. Daniel, Jr.

The flight took off from Korat at 06:25. Maj Lasiter was shot down at 07:52.

"Major Carl B. Light, Pistol 2, described the incident involving Capt Lasiter as follows: '... As we approached a point about 30 miles west of the target, I saw Pistol Four burst into flames and immediately afterward a MIG-21 approached from his six o'clock position and pulled up and to the left of Pistol Flight (Pistol 4 was on the left and Pistol 2 on the right). I called that Pistol Four was hit and called the MIG-21 when I saw it. Another MIG-21 then crossed over the flight from right to left. I heard Pistol 4 make no calls. His wings rocked once and he went into a right descending turn, burning from the fuselage and right wing. I saw the pilot eject and separate from his seat, but due to watching the MIG's I did not see his chute open.' Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen, Pistol 1, confirmed a good chute: '... Downed member was hit by AIM/MIG-21 at 0725L in the vicinity of 2137/10517. I last saw him in the vicinity of 2137/10517. I did not see him eject. I did see man-seat separation. I did see a good chute. I did not hear a beeper. Weather in the area where member is down was overcast about 6000. Type of terrain is mts. and lightly populated. Received a call that #4 was hit by a MIG-21. Observed #4 on fire. A/C rolled inverted and pilot ejected at about 12 to 14,000'. No beeper was heard, but pilot was observed in chute. MIG observed in very nose high climbing turn.' Search and rescue operations were not conducted due to location." ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 4-025, AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3.)

On Robert W. Smith's autobiography web site, Capt Monty Pharmer described Lasiter's loss.

"My special friend Gary Durkee and I were in separate flights. I was with Bill Thomas [Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.] and two others. Gary's flight included Carl Lasiter. Carl had more missions and we respected him as one of the 'Old Heads'. We all had breakfast together.....it was raining and still dark when we got to our planes. The mission was uneventful into Laos. We crossed into North Vietnam in the vicinity of Dien Bien Phu, the battlefield of the French downfall. The weather ahead looked bad with a solid overcast and a lower cloud deck that could preclude us from descending into the target area. About that time our F-4 flight cover started calling out Migs at our rear. No sooner had they called than Carl reported that he had been hit by an air-to-air missile.... he was ejecting. He had a good chute

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as he drifted down into NVN. The F-4s pursued the Migs and got a hit on one.

"The mission was cancelled due to weather and we weren't too disappointed about that. It was a shame that Carl was down and the mission was never accomplished. The one good bit of news we received almost immediately from our excellent intelligence was that the Mig that shot Carl down had been hit and had crashed on landing at Yen Bai-the pilot was killed-he had been one of the NVN 'aces'-their best. Carl was captured and spent the next 5½ years as a P.O.W." (Robert W. Smith's autobiography web site at http://www.nf104.com/ab/ch_5/iv.html)

Carl Lasiter was born in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Aces & Aerial Victories, pg 76 & U.S. Navy CNA Loss/Damage Data Base

16-Feb-68

4878

"Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS flew an ineffectual radar bombing mission into North Vietnam and Laos. The flight took off at 0540. Its line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0518
- #2 - Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.
- #3 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #4 - Capt Lamont H. Pharmer

This was Maj Armstrong's 68th combat mission. "Today was really a farce. My flight had the radar drop in Pack V, near Phu Tho as a first alternate target since the weather was too bad for visual bombing. We got almost to drop and they lost us on radar so we went down into Laos to an alternate target and tried twice to radar drop down there but again they lost us. We wound up with no fuel and no place to bomb so we dropped our bombs safe at Udom Range and came home. 3+30 and 24 wasted bombs!"

Today was the first combat mission over North Vietnam for Capt Joseph S. Sechler, also from the 34th. His flight lineup was:

- #1 - Lt Col James B. Ross
- #2 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler
- #3 - Maj Roger Dean Ingvalson
- #4 - Capt John S. Murphy

Capt Sechler logged 2:30 flying hours.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 27 & Joe Sechler flight log via email 28 Apr 10.

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

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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. 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.

26-Feb-68

4884

"Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS took off from Korat at 1400 and dropped their bombs near Khe Sanh, South Vietnam. Their line up was:

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

- #1 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #2 - Capt Lawrence L. Bogemann
- #3 - Maj Douglas A. Roysdon
- #4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0445

This was Maj Armstrong's 75th combat mission. "We were diverted because of weather from Pack VI down into South Vietnam to aid the Marines at Khe Sanh. First of all, though, we made an armed recce into Pack I and got our counter. Then we dropped around Khe Sanh using the Marine radar site. The weather was pretty heavily overcast." They flew for 3 hours 5 minutes.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 29.

04-Mar-68

4888

The four pilots in "Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS bombed a target in the southern part of North Vietnam. They took off at 1410 and returned after 3 hours 5 minutes. Their line up was:

- #1 - Capt William A. Thomas, Jr.
- #2 - Capt John S. Murphy
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

This was Maj Armstrong's 79th combat mission. "We were first alerted that we would be going to Pack VI but were diverted before we could brief. We finally wound up going all of the way to the Gulf to refuel and coming back to drop our bombs via Combat Sky Spot in the southern extremity of North Vietnam."

Under Hillsboro control, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Gator 2" to attack troops and trenches in South Vietnam. "50%. 20 KBA. Small arms fire." He then flew armed recce in RP-1. "No significant sightings." It was his 48th combat mission.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 30 - 31 Rufus Dye Mission History log.

05-Mar-68

5876

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS, 388 TFW, flew his 94th combat mission against Route 7 in RP-3.

"Pistol" flight from the 34th flew a mission over North Vietnam. The lineup was:

- #1 - Bob Moore
- #2 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 13th mission
- #3 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #4 - Capt John S. Murphy

Capt Sechler logged 2:20 flying hours.

Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 5 Mar 68 & Joe Sechler, e-mail 28 Apr 10.

11-Mar-68

4903

The four pilots in "Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS were diverted to a target in Laos as a result of the North Vietnamese attack on Lima Site 85. They took off at 0715 and returned after 2 hours 55 minutes. Their line up was:

- #1 - Maj Ivor K. Goodrich
- #2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 58-1152
- #4 - Maj Douglas A. Roysdon

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

This was Maj Armstrong's 85th combat mission. "We were diverted up to Lima 85 up by the North TACAN station. The bad guys were trying to storm the hill. The hill was sticking up through the clouds but we couldn't detect any enemy action. The A-1Es were working over the enemy but they wouldn't let us in on the action. Instead they put us in on an enemy gun emplacement about 10 miles away."

Maj David C. Dickson, Jr. from the 34 TFS flew his 96th combat mission today. (The printing on his cigar band for this and his last four missions was too faded to determine his target.)

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 32 & Carolyn Dickson, 20 Apr 09 letter giving annotation on cigar band dated 11 Mar 68.

12-Mar-68

4904

The four pilots in "Simmer" flight from the 34 TFS bombed a road in Laos. They took off at 0600 and returned after 2 hours 40 minutes. Their line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0428
- #2 - Maj Ivor K. Goodrich
- #3 - Maj Eugene Paul Beresik (KIA, 31 May 68)
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

This was Maj Armstrong's 86th combat mission. "The primary reason for my flying this a.m. was to try the new configuration of 4 x 750# bombs on the inboard stations and a centerline 650-gallon tank. This swaps 1500# of fuel for 1500# of explosive and would make our configuration more standard. It worked pretty well. The fuel flow was the same as the old configuration and the bombs came off cleanly. Our target was a road down in Laos just west of Khe Sahn, South Vietnam. We got 4 road cuts."

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 32.

03-Apr-68

6722

Under Special Order G-1017, dated 3 April 68, Hq 7th Air Force awarded Air Medals to pilots in SEA. "By direction of the President, each of the following is awarded the Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight. During the period indicated, outstanding airmanship and courage were exhibited in the successful accomplishment of important missions under extremely hazardous conditions. The highly professional efforts of each individual cited contributed materially to the mission of the United States Air Force in Southeast Asia."

Among those listed in the order were:

Name	Period	Award	Unit
Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen	28 Nov 67 - 14 Dec 67	3rd OLC	34 TFS
Maj George F. Baird	8 Aug 67 - 18 Feb 68	2nd - 10th OLC	354 TFS
Capt Jacob C. Shuler	28 Oct 67 - 2 Jan 68	1st - 3rd OLC	34 TFS

Hq 7th AF SO G-1017 via Jake Shuler, e-mail 11 Jan 2011

09-Apr-68

4913

"Gator" flight from the 34 TFS hit a road in South Vietnam and some boats in North Vietnam. The flight took off at 1510 and returned after flying for 2 hours 45 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Capt Gary G. Durkee
- #2 - Maj Billy R. Givens (killed in accident 25 Apr 68)
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0435
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

This was Maj Armstrong's 95th combat mission. "Our target was a road in South Vietnam. We went in and dropped on it although the ceiling was about 9,000' and the visibility was poor but 3 of us hit where we were supposed to. Afterwards, we went up to Pack I and strafed some boats just north of the DMZ."

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 36.

11-Apr-68

4915

"Simmer" flight from the 34 TFS hit a "Sky Spot" target in RP-1, North Vietnam. The flight took off at 0830 and returned after flying for 3 hours 10 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 62-4270
- #2 - Moore [???
- #3 - Maj Melvin L. Irwin
- #4 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen

This was Maj Armstrong's 97th combat mission. "The weather over along the coast was really rotten this morning. We were originally scheduled to work with a FAC in South Vietnam. The weather there was too bad for a visual delivery. They were going to set us up for a Sky Spot in the same area. Fortunately for us, the Sky Spot facility was pretty well stacked up with flights so I got Hillsboro to set us up with another agency for a Sky Spot just over the DMZ and got a 'counter' the only possible way."

Using Sky Spot radar, Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Crossbow 3" to attack a road segment in South Vietnam. It was his 58th combat mission.

Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 37 & Rufus Dye Mission History log..

09-Jun-68

3766

In RP-1, between 0400Z and 0535Z, six EB-66B/Es supported eight strike sorties, three F-105F Iron Hand aircraft, and one "Bumby Action" photo drone. "Although three aircraft were lost to AAA fire during this day, operational reports indicated that none of the AAA fire was radar-directed."

The three aircraft lost were a Marine A-4E from Chu Lai hit by 50-caliber ground fire, an HH-3E Jolly Green helicopter trying to pick up the Marine A-4E pilot, and an F-4D supporting the rescue of a pilot of an F-105D downed the previous day, on 8 June. The crew of the F-4D, call sign Hudson 82, Maj William Bergman and 1Lt David Willett, were rescued.

The rescued F-105 pilot was Maj Carl B. Light from the 34 TFS who had been shot down yesterday by 37-mm AAA while attacking a truck park. Maj Light was Capt Lamont H. Pharmer's flight commander. While supporting Maj Light's rescue, Capt Pharmer received his third Distinguished Flying Cross, this one for heroism. His award citation read, in part, "... Capt Pharmer purposely exposed himself to intense hostile antiaircraft fire from some well camouflaged gun positions in close proximity to a downed pilot in order that his wingman might pinpoint their exact location from the muzzle flashes and attack them. Captain Pharmer then attacked a firing gun position, pressing a shallow dive through intense fire to low level to deliver his ordnance precisely on target. By his courageous and selfless actions, Capt Pharmer made a significant contribution to a search and rescue operation which succeeded against great odds." (Award Citation DFC (2 OLC) to Lamont H. Pharmer.)

"A lot of us rescaped for Carl Light. ... Gary Durkee and I were having a great time flying just out of range of the AAA and watching where it was coming from and then bombing the hell out of them. We were both put in for Silver Stars for this mission but some 'weenie' in Saigon must have thought there were already too many of them for that month." (Monty Pharmer, e-mail 22 Sep 2006.)

"Crossbow" was one of the RESCAP flights from the 34 TFS. The pilots were:

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

- #1 - Capt James V. Barr
- #2 - Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
- #3 - Capt Joseph S. Sechler flying his 11th non-counter (52 counters).
- #4 - Capt John E. Hartman

Capt Sechler logged 3:10 hours. "I aborted into Ubon (RON) for malfunction. Carl Light recovered."

355 TFW history Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO464, frames 0629 - 0631 & "Vietnam Air Losses", pgs 151 - 152.

30-Jun-68

5166

Three pilots assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat completed flying 100 missions during June 1968. They were:

Lt Col James B. Ross - 100th on 21 June 1968
Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen
Col James L. Stewart, the 388 TFW DO

In July 1968, Col Ross was assigned to the 8 TFS, 49 TFW, flying F-4s at Holloman AFB, NM. Initially he was the Operations Officer. He became the 8th TFS squadron commander in January 1969. He retired on 1 July 1970.

34 TFS web site on 2 April 2007 at <http://s88204154.onlinehome.us.34tfs/scarf.htm> & John Revak 13 Mar 2011 interview with Jim Ross.

31-Aug-68

4199

Ten pilots from the 34 TFS received medals approved by 7 AF in August 1968 for missions flown earlier. They were:

Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen DFC (10 OLC) SO G-2685 29 Aug 1968 (14 Dec 67)
Maj James E. James, Jr. DFC 5 (OLC) SO G-2627 24 Aug 1968 (14 Dec 67)
Capt Arthur G. Duston AM SO G-2606 22 Aug 68, (6 Jul - 28 Jul 68)
Capt Chester H. Thatcher, Jr. AM SO G-2606 22 Aug 68 (28 Jun - 17 Jul 68)
Lt Col Earl F. Bancroft AM (10 OLC) SO G-2607 22 Aug 68 (7 Jul - 28 Jul 68)
Maj Vincent Colasuonno AM SO G-2607 22 Aug 68 (4 Jul - 23 Jul 68)
1Lt David S. Hartman, Jr. AM SO G-2605 22 Aug 68 (4 Jul - 21 Jul 68)
1Lt Ronald A. Hoffmeyer AM SO G-2605 22 Aug 68 (4 Jul - 21 Jul 68)
Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr. AM (19 - 27 OLC) SO G2603 22 Aug 68 (7 Nov 67 - 19 Jul 68)
Capt William A. Thomas, Jr. AM (1 - 9 OLC) SO G-2601 22 Aug 68 (2 Feb - 29 May 68)

Capt Thomas departed Korat on 31 August 1968 for his next duty assignment with the 12 TFS, 18 TFW, Kadena AB, Okinawa, where he arrived on 1 September. He was joined in Okinawa by his wife, Mary Jane, and a son and daughter.

388 TFW history, Oct - Dec 68, USAF microfilm NO585, frame 1765 & Capt Bill Thomas, AF Form 11.

10-Feb-69

4264

Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen assumed command of the 561 TFS at McConnell AFB, Kansas. He replaced Lt Col Harry D. Sultzer. On 1 March, Lt Col Sultzer was assigned to Washington DC. After his return from a combat tour with the 34 TFS at Korat, Lt Col Christensen was initially assigned as the 23 TFW Plans Officer.

During the 23 TFW's Dining In on 15 February 1968, Col Hartinger, the wing commander, presented Lt Col Sultzer the first wing gunnery competition trophy. "This trophy was won by a squadron team consisting of Sultzer, Maj Fred T. Coleman, Maj William S. Koenitzer, and Maj Sam P. Morgan."

23 TFW history 1 Jan - 30 Jun 1969, USAF microfilm MO555, frame 0399.

11-Feb-69

4283

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

At the 23 TFW, Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen replaced Maj William C. Campfield, Jr. as commander of the 561 TFS.

23 TFW History, Jan - Jun 69, USAF microfilm MO555, frame 04??.

01-Mar-69

4294

Maj Gen Jay T. Robbins, Commander 12 AF, visited McConnell AFB on 1 March 1969 and presented DFCs to 15 F-105 pilots for missions they flew in South East Asia. Five receiving the awards were from the 562 TFS. They were: Lt Col Louis D. Braun, Lt Col Robert T. Campbell, Maj Robert R. Huntley, Maj William S. Pachura, and Capt Richard W. Arnold. Lt Col Braun was the commander of the 562 TFS, Lt Col Campbell was the Operations Officer, and the others were instructor pilots assigned to the 562 TFS.

Other F-105 pilots receiving the DFC were: Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen, Maj Gene W. Goodwin, Maj Paul F. Koeltzow, Maj David L. Nichols, Maj Lloyd R. Partridge, Maj Richard A. Smith, Capt James T. Hannam, Capt Douglas F. Mahan, Capt Robert V. Hannah, Jr., and Capt William H. Striegel.

Six enlisted men also were awarded the DFC.

23 TFW history, Jan - Jun 1969, USAF microfilm NO555, frames 0539 and 0609.

03-Jun-69

4267

The TAC commander, General William W. Momyer, visited McConnell AFB, Kansas, and presented Silver Stars to Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen and Capt Kenneth D. Thaete, both F-105 instructor pilots in the 561 TFS, for missions they flew during their Vietnam combat tours.

23 TFW History, Jan - Jun 1969, USAF microfilm MO555, frames 0402 and 0509.

11-Aug-69

201

F-105 RTU class 69JRM, the "CIN-PACK", graduated 16 students in course 111106B at the 23 TFW, McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 10 Feb 69 with AT-33 lead-in training and consisted of 8 Majors, 6 Captains and two 1st Lieutenants assigned to the 561 TFS commanded by Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen.

"Class 69JRM began their training with a really good flying background as a group and proved to be an exceptional class in basic flying skills. However, their gunnery scores were not as impressive as expected prior to entry into that phase. A large consideration could be given to the extreme cross-wind conditions experienced during their entire gunnery phase.

Student Capt Hugh G. Connelly was killed in the crash of F-105D 60-5379 near Lyons KS on 29 April 1969 while doing captive AIM-9 training. 1Lt William V. Streigel was eliminated from the class by a "... faculty board for lack of progress."

The class deployed 23 F-105s to George AFB CA for weapons training between 6 - 21 May 1969. "Deployment of the entire squadron was accomplished on 6 May with 23 aircraft. Inflight refueling enabled a non-stop flight for all but three aircraft. These aircraft were forced to divert to Edwards Air Force Base because weather at George was below student landing minimums of 800 feet ceiling and 3 miles visibility. These aircraft flew to George Air Force Base later the same day when weather conditions improved. Operationally speaking, this was the best George deployment of any previous class. Non-effective missions/ground aborts were at a minimum and all required student air-to-air training plus instructor dart continuation training was accomplished prior to redeployment back to McConnell on 21 May 69."

The outstanding graduates were Maj William H. Scott, III and Capt Roland J. Land. The Top Gun was Maj William J. Wycoff. Other student pilots were:

Maj William R. Davis

Maj Curtis R. James

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

Maj Robert D. "Rock" Lane
Maj James W. Pape
Maj Ronald C. Senac
Maj David B. Talbott
Capt Paul S. Lasen
Capt Richard Joseph Mallon
Capt James D. Manning, Jr.
Capt Robert E. "Bob" Venkus
1Lt Larry J. Hanley
Capt Douglas Frank Mahan

23 TFW History, Jul - Sep 1969, USAF microfilm MO555 frames 0520 - 0521 and 0707.

01-Jan-70

4348

As of 1 January 1970, the twelve key officers in the 561 TFS at McConnell were:

Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen -- Commander
Maj Richard E. Moser -- Operations Officer
Maj Robert D. Pielin -- Assistant Operations Officer
Capt Guy H. Morgan, Jr. -- Stan/Eval officer
Maj Teddy Gay -- "A" Flight instructor
Maj Jackie R. Youngblood -- "A" Flight instructor
Capt Kenneth D. Thaete -- "A" Flight instructor
Maj Donald M. Majors -- "B" Flight instructor
Capt Robert Dunkelberger -- "B" Flight instructor
Capt Donald O. Austin -- "B" Flight instructor
Capt Roger Prather -- "B" Flight instructor
Lt Col Myron D. Ulrich -- Materiel Branch Officer

23 TFW History, Jan - Mar 70, USAF microfilm MO555, frame 1256.

09-Mar-70

205

F-105 RTU class 70CRM graduated 16 students in course 111106B at the 23 TFW, McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 29 July 1969 and consisted of 5 Majors, 2 Captains and 9 1st Lieutenants assigned to the 561 TFS commanded by Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen. Maj Richard E. Moser was the squadron's Operations Officer.

On 15 August 1969, nine UPT students joined the class from AT-33 lead-in training at Myrtle Beach AFB.

"A problem new to McConnell's RTU program came up with the arrival of Class 70CR in two groups. The first segment of seven pilots were experienced fighter pilots and were on-board from two to three weeks earlier than the UPT grads. The nine UPT grads had to complete the AT-33 lead-in training at Myrtle Beach AFB that formerly was accomplished at McConnell. The split class resulted in increased scheduling and duplicated phase briefings. When an additional student was added from an earlier class and the number of IPs was reduced due to PCS assignment, the 561 TFS had an extra scheduling problem to keep within crew rest regulations. Additionally, the split class required special handling by academic and simulator personnel. To bring the two segments of 79CR to graduation at the same time required a higher flow rate of sorties for the UPT pilots."

On 23 October 1969, student 1Lt Arthur P. Kendall was killed when his F-105D 61-0079 crashed during a GCA approach to McConnell.

The class deployed 22 F-105s to George AFB CA for weapons delivery training between 12 and 26 November 1969. The outstanding graduate was Maj John P. Stroud.

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

A problem of high failures of AGM-12Bs developed during RTU deployments to George. "The percentage of guidance problems increased to about 40%. An indoctrination program was started to insure maintenance, loading, and operations personnel were familiar with the timer feature of the missile transmitter in the aircraft. This timer is a cumulative timer. It does not reset itself when turned off. It only resets when it reaches its maximum timeout (50 + or - 10 seconds) or, during a live firing if guidance is lost due to time-out of the transmitter, the 'pickle button' must be depressed again to reset the timer and regain guidance. During ground and air checks the timer was not allowed to time out and consequently the pilot sometimes lost guidance after 10 - 20 seconds. Through the indoctrination program and assistance by the [23 TFW] Munitions Staff, the last live firing attained a 94% successful fire and guide rate."

The 16 graduating pilots were:

Maj Charles C. Edgar	1Lt Harold R. Crookes
Maj Samuel M. Hauck III	1Lt Robert E. Gatliff
Maj John P. Stroud	1Lt Gary D. Haines
Maj Claude C. Underwood	1Lt Ward H. Hindman
Maj Russell G. Westcott, Jr.	1Lt Joseph H. Lanoux
Capt Ronald M. Brekke	1Lt Clifford N. Montgomery
Capt Jerry Twaddell	1Lt David A. Sawyer
1Lt Glenn D. Cloes	1Lt Jack W. Smith

This was the 561 TFS's last full RTU class before converting to F-105Gs and the Wild Weasel mission. They began training the students in RTU Class 71BR but this class transferred to the 562 TFS to allow the 561st to concentrate on converting to a Wild Weasel combat squadron.

Three of the pilots went on to Nellis for Wild Weasel training in Class 70-FWW that began on 20 March 1970. They
23 TFW History, Jan - Mar 70, USAF microfilm MO555, frames 0694 - 0695, 0713, 1226 - 1227, and 1257.

01-Apr-70

28

The 561 TFS, 23 TFW, McConnell AFB KS began conversion to the Wild Weasel mission with F-105Gs. The squadron gave up its RTU mission. The unit transferred out all its F-105B and D aircraft and, by 30 June 1970 had 8 F-105Fs and 9 F-105Gs. However, none of the Gs had all the programmed Wild Weasel equipment and some of the F-105Fs were formerly "Combat Nail" aircraft without aircraft controls or Wild Weasel equipment in the rear cockpit. As of 30 September 1970, the squadron possessed 16 F-105F/Gs but only three "G"s were fully equipped and operationally ready.

The squadron commander was Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen. Maj Richard E. Moser was the squadron Operations Officer.

23 TFW history, USAF microfilm MO555.

30-Jun-70

1125

As of 30 June 1970, the 561 TFS, 23 TFW, at McConnell AFB, Kansas, possessed 17 F-105Fs and F-105Gs. Since the squadron was transitioning to the Wild Weasel mission, the unit had sent its F-105Ds and F-105Bs used in RTU training to other units. They possessed 9 F-105Gs and 8 F-105Fs. Some of the "Fs" were formerly "Combat Martin" aircraft lacking a rear seat and cockpit equipment. Furthermore, "none of the F-105G models we received have all the programmed Wild Weasel equipment. This is a definite handicap to our training program to become an OR Wild Weasel Squadron."

The squadron was commanded by Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen.

561 TFS History in the 23 TFW History, 1 Apr - 30 Jun 1970, USAF microfilm MO555

Nevin G. Christensen

F-105 History

18-Aug-70

4188

Twelve pilots and EWOs graduated from Wild Weasel class 71-BWW at Nellis AFB, NV. The class started on 13 July 1970 and was assigned to the 4537 FWS. The six crews and their Wild Weasel numbers were:

Capt Roger L. Prather, pilot WW# 458 and EWO 1Lt Samuel S. White, WW # 918
Capt William L. Bryant, pilot WW # 521 and EWO 1Lt Edwin A. Thomas, WW #917
Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen, pilot WW # 909 and EWO Maj Richard W. Moore, WW # 913
Maj Richard E. Moser, pilot WW # 914 and EWO Maj Orville L. McPherson, WW # 912
Maj Jackie R. Youngblood, pilot WW # 915 and EWO Maj Edward C. Kennedy, WW # 911
Capt Roger A. Ayres, pilot WW # 916 and EWO Maj Robert G. Crawford, WW #910

The pilots were from the 561 TFS at McConnell and all returned to their squadron. The EWOs received combat assignments to the 6010 WWS at Korat. For example, on 19 August 1970, Maj Moser returned to his previous squadron, the 561 TFS, at McConnell AFB, Kansas, where he was Operations Officer. His Wild Weasel training was to support the conversion of the 561 TFS from an RTU to a Wild Weasel squadron that had begun on 1 April 1970. His training EWO, Maj Orville L. McPherson went to Korat where he eventually crewed with Maj Kenneth W. Lyon, from Wild Weasel Class 71-EWW graduating on 16 December 1970. Both were assigned to the 6010 WWS at Korat.

Moser was promoted to Lt Col on 1 September 1970.

Wild Weasel Class Database from WW Class Roster & Col Moser's AF Form 11 provided by his son Rick Moser.

30-Nov-70

4479

(Approximate date.) Lt Col Edward T. Rock replaced Lt Col Nevin G. Christensen as commander of the 561 TFS at McConnell AFB KS. Col Christensen was reassigned to the headquarters staff of the 23 TFW. Col Christensen last flew the F-105 on 21 April 1971. He had accumulated 825.3 hours in the airplane.

Col Rock had come from Hq TAC where he was told of being chosen to command his first squadron. "When I was first assigned to TAC Headquarters in early 1967, the TAC Commander, then General Gabriel P. Disosway, met with all new officers assigned to his headquarters staff. There were probably five men at the meeting I attended, mostly Majors, and one of the things he told us is that we would, more than likely, never return to flying again as an operational pilot or crew member. Well, I had just defied the odds and was on my way back to an operational unit as a Squadron Commander. It was really awesome. I believed it was a real honor to be picked to command a flying unit, especially to be picked out of a staff job and sent back to a fighter unit."

The squadron had a Wild Weasel mission.

Ed Rock, e-mail 17 June 2005 & Ed Rock, "561st Tactical Fighter Squadron Assignment" in "First In, Last Out: Stories by The Wild Weasels", pg 466.