

Harold "Pappy" Kahler

F-105 History

04-Nov-68

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The twenty-fourth F-105 RTU Class 69DR graduated at the 23 TFW, McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 11 Jun 68 with 16 students. Fourteen graduated: 1 Lt Col, 4 Maj.s., 8 Capt.s., and 1 1Lt.

On 10 Jul 1968, student Maj Robert S. Schaumberg successfully ejected from F-105D 60-0534 after a mid-air collision with F-105D 60-0448 piloted by student Lt Col Thomas M. Bowe who did not complete F-105 training.

The class deployed 20 F-105s for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 1 - 17 Oct 68 with the 563 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col William N. Dillard.

While at George AFB, on 14 October 1968, student Maj David G. Steinke successfully ejected from F-105D 60-0532 when it experienced engine failure.

The graduates were:

Lt Col Jasper C. Brown	Capt Harald G. Hermes
* Maj Harold Kahler	Capt Thomas H. Krach
* Maj William R. McDaniel	* Capt Eugene G. Lamothe
Capt Robert S. Schaumberg	* Capt Clayton Bane Lyle III
Maj George B. Wallace	* 1Lt Alan B. Reiter
* Capt James D. Cottingham	Maj David G. Steinke
* Capt Charles J. Ferrari	Capt James D. Cox

* Pilots were assigned to the 34 TFS at Korat.

The class called themselves "The Thudbusters". The Outstanding Graduate was Capt Harald G. Hermes.

Lt Reiter received his wings at Williams AFB AZ. He along with Capt Lyle attended Jungle Survival School in the Philippines between 10 - 15 December. Capt Lyle arrived at Korat RTAFB, Thailand, on 17 December 1968, and Lt Reiter on 24 December when they were assigned to the 34 TFS, 388 TFW.

23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 68, USAF microfilm MO555 & Bane Lyle, e-mail 20 Aug 2010 & Al Reiter, e-mail 19 Feb 15 & AF Form 11.

25-Jan-69

04-Mar-69

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The runway at Korat RTAFB was closed for repairs. During the last months of 1968, "preliminary surveys showed [the need for] replacement for approximately 64 top slabs of the eight-inch overlay, replacement for some 50 bottom slabs, repair of 220 slabs with broken corners, repair of some 500 spalled (chipped) areas on the runway and probable repair to some of the foundation structure." Significant runway deterioration had been noticed since March 1966. Some of the runway concrete "was initially laid down during the Imperial Japanese forces occupation in World War II."

Fighter squadrons of the 388 TFW deployed to and operated from two other bases during the period. Forty-four F-105s and 1,068 personnel of the 34 TFS and 44 TFS operated from Takhli RTAFB, Thailand, while the F-4Es of the 469 TFS deployed to Ubon RTAFB, Thailand. The 388 TFW retained operational control over their deployed squadrons and maintained their level of combat sorties from the deployed locations. The 388 TFW's F-105s "enjoyed a higher mission effectiveness" while TDY to Takhli. The F-105s flew 901 sorties, of which 848 were combat missions with an operationally ready rate of 78.4 percent.

Lt Col Jack Sherrill was the commander of the 44 TFS when the squadron operated from Takhli. "Excellent flight line facilities but hooches and O Club were not nearly up to par as Korat. Such perks assumed more importance than justified when we were no longer 'at war' after the Nov 1 halt."

The 56 pilots and EWOs from the 44 TFS who flew from Takhli included Maj William H. Talley, Maj Ronald L. Shepard, Lt Col Richard A. "Dick" Haggren, Maj Richard P. Cisco, Capt Thomas P. Doubek, Maj Thomas J. Phelan,

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Thirty-four pilots from the 34 TFS deployed to Takhli. They were: Lt Col Harvey W. Prosser, Jr., Lt Col Isaac M. Glass, Maj David J. Carroll, Maj Paul F. Swanson, Maj Manford C. Holly, Jr, Maj Sheldon H. Cooper, Maj Harold Kahler, Maj William R. McDaniel, Maj Guy E. Pulliam, Capt Oral L. Bell, Capt James V. Barr, Capt Darrell J. Ahrens, Capt Robert M. Howard, Jr., Capt Richard E. Tracey, Capt Ralph E. Durnbaugh, Capt Douglas R. Young, Capt Kenneth G. Lindell, Capt Charles J. Ferrari, Capt Clayton B. Lyle III, Capt Eugene G. Lamothe, Capt John F. Schell, Capt Eben D. Jones, 1Lt David S. Hartman, Jr., 1Lt Ronald A. Hoffmeyer, 1Lt Marshall D. Tilley, 1Lt Ronald D. Stafford, 1Lt Robert E. Bryan, 1Lt Robert J. Zukowski, 1Lt David T. Dinan, 1Lt John W. Crotty, 1Lt Alan B. Reiter, 1Lt Daniel P. Seals, 1Lt Joseph W. Widhalm, and 1Lt Edward L. Sykes,

The runway repairs at Korat required 2,416 cubic meters of concrete and was done under contract to Gerson and Sons from Bangkok who employed 600 Thai workers. The work was completed on time despite a 100-percent increase in the amount of repair required.

388 TFW History, Oct - Dec 68, USAF microfilm NO585, frame 1106 and Jan - Mar 69 & Jack Sherril, e-mail, 14 May 2003 & Hq 388 Cmbt Spt Gp SO TA-375 dated 22 Jan 69 from Al Reiter, e-mail 19 Feb 15

14-Jun-69

F-105D 605381 354 TFS 355 TFW Takhli Hit by 37-mm AAA while attacking a river ford in Laos. Crashed in Laos. 20-10N 103-54E Maj Harold Kahler 354 TFS pilot was MIA then KIA. Call sign: "Mantis 02". Major Harold Kahler flew as Mantis 02 in a flight of two F-105s on a strike against a ford and road segment in the Barrel Roll region of northern Laos. Col Adrian E. Drew was Mantis 01.

The flight from the 354 TFS took off from Takhli at 11:43 and Major Kahler was lost over the target at 13:12.

"Rainstorms in the target area caused Mantis Flight to divert to an alternate target. Mantis Lead noted a bridge and a ford and requested permission to expend on the bridge. Mantis Lead called for Number 2 to arm his bombs and advised him he was rolling in. Mantis 2 acknowledged this call. It was the last transmission that Mantis Lead received from Mantis 2. Mantis Lead started his run and told Mantis 2 to expend all the bombs on one pass. As Mantis Lead pulled off target he did not climb steep but eased off on the G's to maintain airspeed for reconnaissance. He saw an explosion flash in his mirror. Mantis Lead at first thought he had obtained a good secondary explosion on his delivery, but as he continued to see a billowing ball of black smoke from orange fireball he thought that it might have been Mantis 2. Mantis Lead immediately called for Mantis 2 to respond, but got no answer. Mantis Lead then flew over the target area and the area where the apparent aircraft crash occurred. Mantis Lead called several more times on Guard channel but again obtained no response. Mantis Lead departed the area because of low fuel upon arrival of the Firefly aircraft. No parachute was seen and electronic SAR efforts produced no results." (PACAF Intelligence Index).

"... lost during a bomb pass on a bridge in the 'B' sector of Laos. The lead aircraft noted a flash in his mirrors after pull off, and later located the impact area on a steep ridge beyond the target. There were no observed enemy defenses in the target area. No chute was seen, no beeper heard, and the pilot is listed as MIA." (355 TFW history)

"Kahler was raised in Lincoln, Nebraska, and took pilot training in Lubbock, Texas, where he received his wings in 1943. He trained pilots during World War II. Following the war, he remained in the Air Force until he was sent to Vietnam. His wife and two children lived in Tempe, Arizona in 1974. Kahler was promoted to the rank of Colonel during the period he was maintained Missing." (<http://www.pownetwork.org/bios/k/k052.htm>)

Maj Kahler was born 27 January 1923. He entered the service from Lincoln, Nebraska. He had logged 256 hours in the F-105. His body was not recovered. He was declared dead on 17 August 1979. His name appears on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall on panel 22W line 47.

"PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 5-051, AFHRA Call # K717.6031-3 & 355 TFW History, Apr - Jun 69, USAF microfilm NO468.