

59-0028

19 Mar 74

49th FIS

Major Aircraft Accident
F-106A, SN 59-0028
19 March 1974, 1045EDT

HISTORY OF FLIGHT

On 19 March 1974, an Air Combat Tactics qualification mission was scheduled and flown in a flight of four F-106 aircraft with the following aircrews participating: Capt Fronzaglia, KH01, Flight Lead, (Element IP); 1/Lt Mehrlich, KH04, Two; Lt Col Gardella, KH10 (Element IP), Three; Capt Rumberg, KH02, Four. 49th FIS Form 13 (Tab K) Daily Flight Authorization/Clearance Form was utilized for flight authorization. Capt Rumberg, the pilot involved in the accident flew Aircraft 59-028 configured with no external tanks, one MSR and two WSEM's.

BRIEFING: The Flight Briefing commenced at 0815 EDT and included: Flight weather, alternate airfields, NOTAMS, aircraft assignments, and flight positions. Estimated time enroute (ETE) was filed for 1+00 hour with 1+30 hours fuel on board for the mission profile. Capt Fronzaglia, D Flight Commander and Flight Lead for this mission conducted the briefing in accordance with the ADCM 51-106 format. Specifics were briefed to include: Formation procedures, runway line up and join up, tactical formation procedures, maneuvers to be conducted on ACT Qualification Mission Number One, fuel checks, and ACT Safety rules. Bingo fuel was briefed as 4000 lbs due to forecast terminal weather at Griffiss AFB. Recovery was briefed to be dependent upon Griffiss AFB weather conditions and consisted of three alternatives: four ship, two ship element, or individual recoveries. Capt Fronzaglia and Lt Col Gardella then briefed their wingmen on specific element procedures. Capt Rumberg, the pilot involved in the accident, was originally assigned Aircraft 59-083, however, due to discrepancies noted on its previous flight, it was replaced by the spare aircraft, 59-028.

PRE-FLIGHT, TAXI, AND TAKEOFF: All aircrews reported to their aircraft at least 40 minutes prior to the scheduled 1000 EDT takeoff time in accordance with 49th FIS local operating procedures. Pre-flight, engine start, and taxi were normal. Aircraft end of runway inspection revealed no discrepancies. Takeoff was delayed until 1009 EDT due to a B-52 departure. Takeoff was performed using 20 second interval between aircraft due to weather and RCR, followed by radar trail departure until on top. Join-up as a four ship flight was accomplished routinely.

FLIGHT: Tactical Patrol Formation as a flight of four was flown for approximately 15 minutes as briefed. The flight of four then split into their respective elements with Lead and Two proceeding to the northern portion of RUM airspace, and Three and Four into the southern portion. Three and Four were assigned a discrete frequency of their own for the maneuvering portion of the mission. After completing the mission objectives, Three and Four returned to the original Air Defense Control Facility (ADCF) frequency. Shortly thereafter, and while performing mild "Fighting Wing" maneuvering

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with Four on the wing, Three, lost visual and radio contact with Four. No further visual, radio, or radar contact could be established by Three. One and Two returned to base at Bingo fuel while Three, after being alerted by GCI of a possible radar target behind him, turned toward it but could not establish visual, radar or radio contact. The GCI radar contact is believed to have been chaff from Four's ejection seat. None of the aircraft nor Incognito, the Air Defense Control Facility, heard any distress calls, nor did they receive any parachute beacon signal. Three was finally forced to discontinue his search efforts due to his fuel state. Two I.D. Alert aircraft were scrambled and attempted to establish radio contact with Four to no avail. Weather conditions in the area, consisting of low ceilings precluded visual search of the terrain. The aircraft wreckage was located approximately 85 NM northeast of Griffiss AFB the afternoon of the accident. Nineteen days later, on 7 April 1974, the pilot, ejection seat, and survival equipment were located $4\frac{1}{2}$ NM southeast of the aircraft wreckage.

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