

F-4C Wild Weasel History

09-Aug-66

5043

The Air Force Chief of Staff sent a message telling AFLC and AFSC to expedite Wild Weasel and RHAW modifications to the F-4C. "The F-4C Wild Weasel and F-4C APR-25/26 programs are failing to maintain schedule. It must be emphasized that the F-4C Wild Weasel aircraft are also the prototypes of the APR-25/26 installations for the F-4C fleet. The retrofit of F-4C units in SEA with the APR-25/26 was to start in August 66; however, until the WW IV problems are solved, the program is at a standstill. The problems involve interference with the warning function of the APR-25 and false alarms on the APR-26.

"In the meantime, F-4Cs are flying increased numbers of sorties in North Vietnam without RHAW with attendant risks. The APR-25/26 system has been successfully installed in the F-100, RF-101, F-105D/F and RF-4C through outstanding performance by AFLC and AFSC. The first F-100F Wild Weasel I and F-105F Wild Weasel III installations were completed four weeks after go-ahead and took approximately three weeks to correct deficiencies. The F-4C Wild Weasels were directed by Hq USAF on 19 Feb 66 and Wild Weasel IV system is unsatisfactory. The excessive time involved in this program is unjustified. The penalties paid for delays are the combined losses of lives and combat aircraft. AFSC and the contractor organizations involved must be applied to solve the problems remaining and expedited action taken to equip the F-4 fleet in SEA."

CSAF TWX 091937Z Aug 66, Subject: "F-4C Wild Weasel IV (Mod 1778) and F-4C APR-25/26 RHAW (Mod 1805)" in AFHRA folder PACAF DO Read File 9 - 10 Aug 66, Call # K717.312 19660809, IRIS # 01118236.

16-Aug-66

6870

In a message to CINCPACAF Hq 7th Air Force addressed several of their concerns over air operations in NVN. Essentially, they were calling for more of everything involved in contending with SAMs and AAA.

"Enemy electronically controlled and directed defenses have multiplied and become vastly more effective. Equipment is needed on a crash basis that will detect and precisely locate his radar."

Equipment cited in the message included improvements to EB-66s, and a self-contained ECM system in strike and recce aircraft. "End configuration should be internal, however, for the short term, external pod jammers are acceptable."

"The installation of the APR 25/26 RHAW equipment in the F-4C and F-104 must be accelerated

"Action on my request for 10 additional F-105F Wild Weasel aircraft should be expedited as a means of reducing the enemy missile threat. ... The F-4C Wild Weasel IV Program must be accelerated insofar as possible.

"The capability of the Shrike missile is inadequate. An emergency requirement exists for a means to follow the flight path of the Shrike. The missile should not only destroy the antenna but contain a means of marking the target for subsequent attack by the strike aircraft with other munitions. An accelerated R&D effort is required for a follow-on anti-SAM missile as established in SEAOR 52

"The recent increase in CBU-24s to 350 per month is an assist but still inadequate. Our request for 1500 per month is required to improve our effectiveness in attacking enemy missile and gun defenses.

"... Replacement programs must be responsive to losses. The recent shift of effort from Laos to

F-4C Wild Weasel History

Route Package One has resulted in more NVN missions being flown thereby accelerating the 100-mission aircrew turnover rate. Programmed replacements are not arriving as required, resulting in the use of TDY personnel to make up for shortages of available aircrews. Combat missions were recently cancelled by the 8 TFW due to the lack of aircrews."

7th Air Force Message to CINCPACAF from Col A. L. Hilpert, 'Evaluation of Recent Air Operations in NVN', AFHRA C: # K717.312-7, IRIS # 01065763.

27-Oct-66

6872

The USAF TFWC hosted a conference at Nellis in an effort to resolve the technical problems with the four F-4C Wild Weasels being tested at Nellis. "The following solutions were finalized:

"A. All electronic plug and cable problems were resolved. ...

"B. [Approved was] a significant reduction in the quantity of fasteners required for access to the IR-133 receiver ...

"C. ... McDonnell Aircraft will conduct a more detailed vibration analysis to determine the optimum vibration solution for these [four aircraft] and follow-on WW IV C.

"D. [An ATI fix] to increase the APR-26 audio level... .

"E. ... Inclusion [of non-glare glass in the APR 25/27 and IR-133 CRTs] in the Wild Weasel IV C aircraft, if possible, prior to this deployment.

"F. ... A November 66 deployment date for Wild Weasel IV C aircraft could be met with all noted fixes installed."

USAF TFWC TWX 282207Z Oct 66 in PACAF DO Read File 29-31 Oct 66, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 01118240.

03-Nov-66

6875

The Air Force Tactical Fighter Weapons Center (TFWC) at Nellis provided status of the F-4C Wild Weasel IV test and deployment program.

"... Only if the IR-133 receivers are returned to Nellis by 6 Nov and the mod to HHE adapter box to increase APR-26 audio completed by 4 Nov can a deployment date from McClellan AFB of 10 Nov be made."

TFWC TWX 030001Z Nov 66 in PACAF DO Read File 2-3 Nov 66, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 00518404.

12-Nov-66

6878

A message from the Air Force Tactical Fighter Weapons Center announced the status of the Wild Weasel IV program at Nellis. "As of 12 Nov 66 testing of the Wild Weasel F-4C aircraft at Nellis AFB is being terminated. A total of 10 sorties have been flown of which 8 or 80 percent were determined to be unacceptable for combat employment. Further flight testing, at this time, will only subject the IR-133 receivers to additional damage and deterioration. In that there remains only a total of six such receivers for the WW IV/C program it is imperative these not be abused more than is absolutely necessary if use in SEA is contemplated. Based on the sorties flown, all participants, McDonnell company, Applied Technology, Inc. and TFWC, unqualifiedly agree shock mounting of IR-133 receivers must be accomplished prior to further use."

The problem was the installation of the IR-133 receivers in an external pod that resulted in destructive vibration of the electronics.

After describing activities to mitigate the problems, the message concluded, "... recommend

F-4C Wild Weasel History

critical review and study of proposal for redesign of F-4C installation to mount all system components within the airframe."

The Air Staff (AF/AFRDQRT) concurred with delaying the program. "HQ USAF recognizes that the WW IV C program with the four aircraft at Nellis is a test program. In view of the experimental nature of [the system] in the F-4C and the unique problems encountered in installing the equipment in a new fuselage-mounted pod, some problems were to be expected. Therefore, USAF concurs with the deployment delay. If, by 22 Nov 66, the four aircraft are not combat ready (93 percent or better reliability) the entire program will be delayed until the proper engineering redesign has been accomplished and tested. A concurrent pod redesign effort, including shock mounting/beef-up of the electronics, will be pursued with all speed."

USAF TFWC TWX 122315Z Nov 66 "Wild Weasel IV/C Status Report" and CSAF TWX 121942Z Nov 66 in PACAF DC Read file 12 - 14 Nov 66, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 1035223.

30-Nov-66

6893

The Tactical Fighter Weapons Center at Nellis announced status of the F-4C Wild Weasel program.

"... The first modified pod and IR-133 is undergoing shake tests at McConnell Aviation. The three additional pods will be delivered to Mc Donnell for modification when pod verification is complete. Date of completion - Unknown. Get well date - unknown."

USAF TWX 300122Z Nov 66 in PACAF DO Read File 30 Nov 66, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 1035231.

15-Mar-70

6630

(Approximate date) The six crews in Wild Weasel Class 71-CWW graduated from the 66 FWS, 4520 CCTW, Nellis AFB, NV.

Except for one pilot, the "... class [was] made up of troops who were activating the 561 TFS as a Wild Weasel Squadron at McConnell. ... It was a short class in that we were only checking out in the Standard ARM and the APR 35, 36, and 37. All the troops in the 561st had a complete tour in SEA as Weasels. That was a requirement to be assigned to the Squadron..." (Norm Frith, e-mail 15 Aug 2010)

The 561 TFS started converting to a Wild Weasel squadron at McConnell on 1 April 1970 from its F-105 RTU mission, which it had had since January 1966.

All but three of the men had completed an earlier Wild Weasel class where they had received Wild Weasel numbers. The class roster, the pilot-EWO crews, and their earlier Wild Weasel classes were:

Lt Col Donald L. "Buns" Fraizer (WW # 114) Class 65WW 1-2
EWO Capt George L. Shamblee (WW # 348) Class 67WW III-11

Maj Benjamin R. Fuller (WW # 129) Class 67WW III-7
EWO Maj Norman L. Frith (WW # 128) Class 67WW III-7

Maj William H. Talley (WW # 554) Class 68WW III-25
EWO Capt William E. Freeman (WW # 403) Class 68WW III-16

Maj Edwin C. Johnson (WW # 604) Class 69-DWW
EWO Maj Eddie M. Adcock (WW # 100). No previous class

F-4C Wild Weasel History

Capt Joe T. Short (WW # 919) No previous class
EWO Capt Joseph P. "Jay" Burchfield III (WW # 698) Class 69-HWW

Capt William A. Thomas, Jr. (WW # 907). No previous class.
EWO Capt Victor M. Ripley (WW # 561) Class 69-HWW

Maj Adcock had been assigned to the failed F-4C Wild Weasel program at Ubon. When the program was cancelled, he flew 100 missions from Takhli in 1966 as an EB-66 EWO. (First In ...)

Capt Thomas was from the 12 TFS at Kadena and had flown 104 F-105D missions with the 34 TFS from Korat in 1968. He was the only class member who was not assigned to the 561 TFS. He returned to Kadena and flew additional combat missions while TDY to Korat as a Wild Weasel pilot.

Wild Weasel Class rosters & Wild Weasel Classes database & "First In Last Out. Stories by the Wild Weasels." by Ed Rock, pg 531 & Bill Thomas, AF Form 11.

25-Aug-72

4465

Despite the pressing need for Wild Weasel aircraft to support Linebacker and Arc Light missions over North Vietnam, six of the 12 F-105Gs assigned to the 561 TFS at Korat and nine aircrews returned home to McConnell AFB, Kansas. These planes and crews were needed to enable TAC to train replacement Wild Weasel aircrews for future SEA needs.

The requirement to return these six F-105Gs to McConnell was first expressed in a Hq TAC message on 5 July 1972. The 388 TFW objected to the loss of these planes from their Wild Weasel fleet that included the F-105Gs in the 17 WWS. "The current level of air activity required 20 to 24 Wild Weasel sorties daily, and the combined 17 WWS and 561 TFS assets were 'just able' to meet these demands with 31 F-105G aircraft. Withdrawal of six F-105s would reduce mission capability to 16 to 19 daily sorties, unacceptable unless there was a decrease in the air offensive."

However, TAC stated that "... the return of the F-105 aircraft was necessary in order to insure the availability of aircrews subsequent to the expiration of the Constant Guard/Palace Dog TDYs, and that failure to provide for replacement aircrews would jeopardize future operations."

"Since seven of the F-105Gs at Korat did not have the ALQ-105 modification installed (three belonged to PACAF and four of TACs), the CINCPACAF maintenance office suggested that these aircraft be considered for the swap."

On 25 August 1972, the six planes left Korat in two flights separated by one hour, and arrived at Clark AB, Phillipines on their first leg. The return flight was supported by 93 squadron maintenance personnel who "hopped two Military Airlift Command flights ... with a spare engine and 104,000 pounds of unit mobility equipment."

A month later, on 22 September 1972, these six F-105Gs were replaced by six Wild Weasel F-4C's from the 18 TFW at Kadena.

388 TFW history, July - Sep 72, Vol 1, pgs 15 - 17.

23-Sep-72

4466

Under OPLAN C-106 "Operation Commando Flip", six Wild Weasel F-4Cs from Detachment 1 of the 67 TFS, 18 TFW, arrived on 179-day TDY to the 388 TFW. These aircraft were to compensate for the loss of six F-105Gs from the 561 TFS that had returned to McConnell on 25 August 1972.

F-4C Wild Weasel History

The nine 67 TFS F-4C Wild Weasel crews who deployed were:

Pilot Lt Col Don Parkhurst (67 TFS Commander) with Bear Major Dick Taylor
Major Bob Belles (Ops Officer) with Major Pat Kelly
Captain John Bremer with Captain Hal Bergman
Captain Tom Floyd with Captain Al Palmer
Captain Rich Graham with Captain John O. S. Williams
Captain Bill McLeod with Major Don Lavigne
Captain Dick Myers with Captain Don Triplett
Captain Stu Stegenga with Captain Hans Zimmerman
Captain Robert Lee Tidwell with Captain Denny Haney

(Denny Haney, e-mail to Weasel Net, 26 Sep 2005.)

The 388 TFW initially objected to receiving the F-4Cs as F-105G replacements. "... The proposal to trade F-105s for F-4Cs was also considered unacceptable by Seventh Air Force, because of the inherent limitations of the aircraft and an undesirable impact on maintenance capabilities. The 388 TFW Deputy Commander for Operations suggested that ... a better option would be using an F-4E aircraft configured with AGM-45 missiles as wingman for each remaining F-105G. He said that although the F-4Cs were faster than the F-105s, they did not have built-in jamming or electronic intelligence recording equipment, and they could not carry the AGM-78 missiles."

"... Even as the 18 TFW was making plans to send six F-4Cs to Thailand, the 388th made one last effort to talk higher headquarters out of sending F-4Cs. The 388th Commander said that the Wing was using hunter/killer teams very successfully, and that he would prefer additional F-4E aircraft in lieu of F-4Cs. 'In our opinion, six Wild Weasel F-4C aircraft would create more supply, support and operational problems than they would alleviate. From a mission effectiveness standpoint we recommend six additional F-4Es.' The Commander said that if they had to deploy F-4Cs, they should send a full 18 UE squadron, complete with all equipment and personnel to maintain the aircraft.

"At the beginning of September, it looked like the 388th had won its case. Noting the hunter/killer tactics, Seventh Air Force said that the redeployment of six F-4Cs from Kadena was not required, and that CINCPACAF was staffing a Seventh AF request for six F-4Es to complement Wild Weasel requirement and improve Korat's capability to meet other strike sortie demands."

"Meanwhile, the Commando Flip deployment plan had already been completed on 29 August. Due to the political situation in the Philippines, Clark Air Base could not openly advertise its position as a staging base in direct support of Vietnam operations, so the previously requested deployment with one AGM-45 on each aircraft was changed to airlift the missiles separately.

"The Commander in Chief, Pacific, apparently acting on an earlier request, approved implementation of Commando Flip OPLAN C-106 on receipt of country clearance, and when this approval was received from COMUSMACV in 18 September, it meant that six F-4Cs and 104 support personnel were on their way for a 179-day TDY. They arrived on 23 September 1972."

The 17 WWS history had a different view of the arrival of the six Wild Weasel F-4Cs. "The 67th came TDY to Korat to supply additional aircraft needed for Iron Hand missions. The number of sorties for the 17 WWS increased monthly, and by September 1972, the 17th was experiencing an almost crippling maintenance problem. The number of OR F-105G aircraft available daily was

F-4C Wild Weasel History

dwindling. The answer to this problem was the 67 TFS, who fly the F-4C Wild Weasel configured aircraft. Within two weeks after arriving, the 67th was leading flights to cover the Arc Light missions. As soon as an adequate number of crews completed their Theater Indoctrination check, the F-4Cs supported the mission without F-105Gs. They adapted to the new environment and performed exceptionally as well as relieving the pressure on the F-105G maintenance situation."

F-4C EWO, Denny Haney recalled his theater indoctrination checks by the 17 WWS F-105G Wild Weasel Crew of Maj Edward Y. Cleveland and his EWO Capt Michael B. O'Brien. "When we got to Korat out of Kadena in September 1972, we all had to fly five orientation missions with the F-105 folks, so I'm sure some flew on the wing with Sweet Jesus and O'B. That is if we could keep up the speed. Which we couldn't unless the F-105 pilot throttled back.

"I have particular ties with O'B and [EWO] Bob Petitt because of their knowledge and aggressiveness. Between the two of them and what they imparted to me I'm convinced they kept me and my pilot alive on more than one occasion." (Denny Haney, e-mail to Weasel Net commenting on the death of Ed Cleveland, 28 Feb 10)

Denny also recalled other Wild Weasel events at Korat. "John Fraser [John K. Fraser, EWO WW # 389], ... was TDY to the 17th WWS from the 66th FWS at Nellis at the time, and flying as a Bear in F-105Gs - complete with raincoat, wheel cap, and paperback book to read to the combat area and back when he went out to the jet. John had just arrived at Korat and was sitting at the Korat O'Club bar the afternoon when we came in off the C-130 for our deployment (his wheel cap, of course, sitting on the bar). We who were in the initial F-4C WW deployment were certainly glad to see him, as John was part of the 67th before he went PCS to the 66th at Nellis. Drinking an Olympia beer (my near- to-hometown brew in Washington State) while 16,000 miles from the brewery was a special treat. ... It is important that all know the bond the 17th WWS, the 561st TFS TDY guys, and our 67th TDY guys had during part of Linebacker I and all of Linebacker II. We got our first orientation missions with the 17th guys, shared the same hootch area with the 561st guys, and when we did all that, we three became as one. It was great." (Denny Haney, e-mail 26 Apr 2010.)

388 TFW history, July - Sep 72, Vol 1, pgs 15 - 18 & 388 TFW history, July - Sep 72, Vol 2, 17 WWS history, pg 13.