

GOMER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Aggressor Family,

We are publishing a second edition of this Quarter's Newsletter. Unfortunately, we discovered we had inadvertently misspelled the names of a few gentlemen mentioned in the articles. We felt it was important to honor these fine men with a total correction issue. If you hadn't noticed anything wrong, then disregard this notice and enjoy reading again. To those affected, we humbly apologize.

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year.

Aggressor Association Board of Directors

GREETINGS!

Welcome to our second Aggressor Nation"Newsletter and my second one as editor. I still see a vast number of Aggressors who have not joined our organization.

The ones that I have personally contacted did not know it existed! So I encourage you to scan our roster presented at the 40th and 45th reunions for contact info on people who haven't joined us, for the meger \$25, and contact them. That's what I have been doing. If you can't find who you want, contact me at wheelstoo@gmail.com.

I hope you will enjoy this presentation.

This one is going to focus on attempting to bring you inside of that first Pacific Aggressor Squadron, the 26th, as it evolved not just write about it. You deserve it. Some of this is from prior written material and some is from my phone conversations with guys on matters that took place 43 years ago. All is presented with the caveat "as best as I can recall." I've used quotes around prior written material and submitted emails. The remaining is from myself. Before I begin, I feel it necessary to address the evolution of The Aggressors. Originally conceived on the concept that Air Force fighter pilots did not know how to not only survive, but triumph in close-in "dog fighting." They were told that the skill of dog fighting was obsolete. The fighter of the future, the one they were flying, the F-4 Phantom, did not have a gun. Equipped with radar missiles, the F-4 could

kill at

15 miles in the enemy's face and kill afterburning enemy fighters inside of 2 miles with a heat-seeking missile fired from the rear hemisphere. With these weapons there would never again be a need for a gun. WRONG!!! A kill ratio of 14:1 (in favor of the US!) in Korea went to 2:10 in 'Nam. Yep, no more dog fighting and, once again, no need for a gun. RIGHT ... but those planners and designers weren't flying the jet!! So we, as fighter pilots, in the evolution of air combat, should take a peek at history.

Guys, I'm a '49 model. My Dad, USMC, fought on two islands in the Pacific in WWII. He had been home from "The War" for 4 years when I was born. I adored that Marine corporal. Myself and my fellow warriors of the 'Baby Boomers' took up the torch. But now we are older and the torch has been passed and it will continue to be so. At some time after you have taken it you will pass it on ... with honor. All Aggressors should know that all of these men and women are your legacy. Know that these jocks had superior air-to-air skills and chose not to exploit them in being superior amongst their peers, but to teach them - one pilot at a time. They did so as to pass on the knowledge so that the USAF would be the most feared air arm in the world. But it took more than jet jocks. It took GCI, the eyes on the coming of the distant and swirling engagements; Intel, what we need to know and teach; wrench benders to 'keep 'em flying;' and the Homefront where they all go for comfort and nourishment. Yes, more than a large number of our comrades are no longer with us. Our proud history, in those who've flown West and the 'Gray Beards' who remain, has taken our family of Blue to be what we are - the best that has ever been. I am in awe of you.

Wheels Wieland, Editor

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Welcome to our second Aggressor Association Newsletter. We are still working to build our membership and typically the best way is Aggressors talking to their buds and other Aggressors. Wheels Wieland is doing a superb job of researching and getting info for our newsletters to hopefully provide some enjoyable reading for all. So, we humbly ask for your support in spreading the word. Membership info is at gomersrule.com.

That said we are still in need of a Webmaster. If you have expertise in this area and would like to lend your talents to the Aggressor Association we could sure use your help.

The latest news is the 57th Adversary Tactics Group at Nellis AFB is hosting the inaugural Aggressor Conference, January 22 to 23, 2019. This conference will bring together all the assets from around the country that provide 'adversary support' to our combat forces. As you are aware the Aggressors not only replicate in the air but also through SAM systems, space assets and cyber warfare. It is a total Aggressor force that works to train our forces. Your legacy lives on and the value of the training is realized by the way the Aggressors have expanded into the 'total' force. Lots to be proud of, especially the early Aggressors, as they set the standard of excellence that others continued to follow.

We are proud to announce that MGen Pete "Pink" Williams will represent the Aggressor Association at this conference. Pink will provide a brief history of the

Aggressors and then a blurb of "What makes a Professional Aggressor." As you have demonstrated through the years, the Aggressor has: Expertise and skill in the arena, the ability to teach appropriate lessons and humility in the presentation. Thanks Pink for representing us!

Another opportunity is a coffee table "Aggressor" book that is being published. Some great pictures of the mostly F-16 and F-15 era of the Aggressors. You can see a draft review at: https://www.dropbox.com/s/d0o7qbysv9yoqnx/64th%20AGRS_FinalDraft.pdf?dl=0

If interested, you can contact our website and we can provide an estimate to the squadron of how much interest there may be for the book.

We are always open to ideas to make your Aggressor Association better. Please contact any board member or myself if you have any questions.

As always, check 6 and be humble.

Mark "Dula" Dulaney
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PACAF Aggressor Attempts to Obtain T-38s

By David "Cajun" LeBlanc, Col,
USAF (ret)



All the initial cadre of the PACAF Aggressors had orders to report to Clark Air Base, Republic of Philippines in October 1975 to form the 26th Tactical Fighter Training Aggressor Squadron. Two of the cadre were already assigned there: Major Roger Wells, 13th Air Force XOO and Captain Don Larson, 90th TFS. Lt Col Ralph Riddell, 64

FWS/Ops Officer and Captain Tom Hood, 414th FWS Instructor Pilot were stationed at Nellis AFB. Captain Phil White was coming from 5th Air Force, XOO at Yokota Air Base, Japan and Captain Dave LeBlanc, 44th TFS/Flight CC, came from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. Roger Wells was the brain trust for the formation of the Aggressors and he picked the initial cadre which had a representative from all the PACAF units except those in The Republic of South Korea.

Lt Col Riddell, who was going to be the squadron commander, asked me to stay behind at Nellis to get checked out as an IP, SEFE and FCF pilot. So when I reported to Clark, Roger Wells cut orders for me to go up to Ping Tung South Air Base, Republic of China (Taiwan) to bring back one of the 22 T-38s which the Republic of China Air Force (RCAF) had parked out in the open on a taxiway. The RCAF had been given 24 T-38s to maintain pilot currency when the US took their 24 F-5s and gave them to the South Vietnam Air Force. Roger told me to pick any jet in which both engines started and had an operable radio.

After preflighting three T-38s, which flunked due to standing water in the cockpit, bird's nests in the exhaust and some other issues, I couldn't get the fourth jet to start. Finally, I got both engines started in the next jet and taxied with good radio communications with ground and tower control.

NOTE: There was one USAF pilot (stationed at Ping Tung Air Base) who met me at the T-39 I had flown up from Clark on and took me in his truck out to the T-38s. There were about 15 RCAF crew chiefs/maintenance guys there to help with the launch. On the last jet, the #1 engine wouldn't start. Apparently some of the crew chiefs were proficient on the T-38. When I couldn't get #1 to start, they grabbed the pitot boom, shook the aircraft back and forth, signaled me to start and the engine turned over and started. This knowledge came in handy for the rest of the time we flew T-38s in the Aggressors.

After takeoff, neither the gear nor the flaps would come up, which I confirmed with tower. I continued my climb-out and when I got to some altitude which I thought I could comfortably hold at 250 knots, I attempted to call Clark Command Post and got a reply back on the first attempt. I asked them if they could get an Aggressor pilot with a Dash 1 to contact me on a discrete frequency. After approximately 15 minutes later both Phil White and Tom Hood came up on freq. I told them my position and asked them to see if they could compute if I would have enough gas with my configuration to make it to Clark. They came back about 10 minutes later and said it should be no problem. I made it back to Clark without event and was met by the F-4 maintenance debrief crews. The T-38 maintenance crews had not PCS'd into Clark yet. I remember having about 45 write-ups. The next day I flew up to bring back a T-38. Again, I had similar issues finding a T-38 to pass the preflight and getting the engines started. I limped in to Clark with about the same number of write-ups. A few days later some of the 9-level T-38 maintenance guys arrived. Roger Wells told me they had over 400 write-ups on both of the T-38s. Neither one could pass the 'coin tap test' where they took a quarter and started scrapping the rust on the wing and they could scrape all the way through it. Both T-38s were 'Class 26d' as useless. The 26th and PACAF began a concerted effort to get Air Training Command to give us T-38s that were flyable.

ROGER PIERCE LARRY POPE PHIL WHITE RALPH RIDDELL LAURIE TALBOT
 DON LARSON BODIE BODENHEIM EARL HENDERSON CHARLIE OSBORN PETE KIRCHNER JIM BURNS
 JOE GELINGER

HAVE MIG-WILL TRAVEL



26 TFTS AGGRESSORS DEC 76

CHUCK JOHNSTON MIKE SCOTT DAN FURRYK GERRY HUFF DAVE LEBLANC RANDY FITZHUGH DAVE MCGHEE HUGH GOMMEL TOM HOOD



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STORIES FROM THE BEGINNING Aggressor GCI at Clark

By Charlie "OZ" Osborne, GCI

Roger Wells and I were both assigned to 13th Air Force at



Clark in the early 70s. When he put out word that he was looking for pilots and controllers with combat experience for the PACAF Aggressors, I volunteered. I think Truck was at Clark then with ABCCC (which was being disbanded) and may have met Roger. I don't know how much influence Roger had in the selection of the other controllers, but most were experienced and right for the job. Pilots liked us but some other controllers did not and we often had to walk a very thin line to get the support we needed. The daily routine of 26th controllers was almost constant TDYs. Even when the squadron was not deployed, two controllers had to be at Wallace AS to support local flying. We often had over 180 days of TDY a year and were seldom at Clark. Long days were the norm as we had to be available from the first morning

briefing to the last evening debriefing.

Traveling to the various radar sites was often an ordeal. Wallace AS was 100 miles north of Clark on a road that was extremely dangerous by any standard. In Okinawa, the drive through the countryside to the Naha radar site was an adventure that few of us enjoyed. The radar sites in Korea were a short helicopter ride away from the main bases, but helicopter schedules were often a problem. I was in what I considered a helicopter crash going to one of these sites. The pilot said it was just a hard landing (in a rice paddy) after something called a chip light came on. I didn't much like riding in helicopters after that. Other 26th GCI charter members were Dave McGhee and Lauri Talbot.



The most important desired learning objective of the Aggressor School is to implant the number one Aggressor trait of 'being humble.' The PACAF Aggressors experienced this characteristic better than anyone because of PACAF's high-ranking (BS!) on the tax budget priorities provided them the unique experience of flying the T-38 years longer than any of the other Aggressor squadrons. Yep, they didn't rank very high at all, least of which was a bunch of Training Command non-combat jets. However, in order to 'be humble' you had to be good and that was evidenced by the fact that every single shot ever taken was in kill parameters. We just wish we had gun camera film to prove it. The 26th was officially formed in October 1965 with former 64th Aggressor Ralph Riddell as the commander and the incomparable Roger G Wells as the operations officer. Col Riddell led the first deployment. However, unlike the stateside Aggressors, the PACAF Aggressor's first trip was a direct result of Roger G's outstanding sales job on the 3rd TAC Fighter Wing's DO. Since typhoon Carol, the worst storm in the history of Philippines, was rapidly approaching, they needed to evacuate since no hangers were allocated to the new Aggressor T-38s. So to Taiwan they went. They spent three days of hardship being downtown (somebody had to do it) and the storm missed the Philippine Islands by 900 miles. Needless to say, there was no BFM talked on that first 'deployment.' The real first deployment was to come later.

Roger Wells was the 'heart and soul' of that initial cadre squadron and his standard of performance was tops. He demanded hard work and hard play! Right after "Welcome to the PACAF Aggressors," we usually heard, "Go get fitted for your party suit". Other words from "Iron Hand" were, "If we are gonna do this, we are gonna be THE BEST." One day Roger had admin pass out Daytimer Notebooks to all of us sitting in the main briefing room while he was speaking from the stage (the same stage I later stood on to brief Gen Lew Allen, the USAF Chief of Staff). He sternly told us, "I do not ever want to hear the words, "I forgot!"

Early on as we were starting to fly with each other on training missions, he explained, "TAC trained you and I figure you will each need about 14 additional flights here in the squadron before you are ready to *go on the*

road.” And we got those training missions - no cutting corners! Our GCI controllers flew with us a lot too. Their 'eyes' saved us many times, both in the air and on the scope!

Editor's NOTE: The flight proficiency and ability was not what he strove to improve. He wanted to improve the briefing of and debriefing of each and every mission. That was to include everything from 1v1 to 2v2. All done with and in front of your peers. Nellis did not have this in the training syllabus; although, on a scaled-down requirement, this heritage continued when I arrived in Oct '77. I was required to fly two checkride flights as a 2v1 against the OPs Officer, Francis "Tree" Story and CC Harry "Hagar" McKee (MiG killer). Then I had to present my 'road' briefings to the squadron. All this had to be successful before I could go on the road.

Major Wells always emphasized “BE HUMBLE” in the briefing, flight and debriefing. He taught us to be an appropriate adversary for the pilot(s) we were training and to challenge that pilot without humiliating him. Always start with something positive, even if it is just, “You guys sounded great on the radio at initial check-in.”

We were a fortunate team-trained by and with some of the very best. "Iron Hand" Wells was the Nellis Weapons School Air-to-Air Flight CC before he started forming the 26th. We were to deploy as a three-pilot flight with one of four available detachment commanders (Detcos Ralph, Roger, Bud or Earl) and one or two GCI controllers. Tom Hood's A flight would deploy first and Wells would be the Detco. During the preparation for our first deployments, we were all kept busy polishing our briefings on the various topics we would present to our host squadron. That preparation included briefings on the 26th squadron stage in front of the squadron leadership and anyone not flying. Every pilot had at least one subject he was considered an expert in and Roger Wells demanded near perfection in those practice presentations. "Iron Hand" Wells also took the flight briefings and debriefings to a new level and that was a major part of those approximately 14 missions he felt we all needed before a 'road show.' He told us, "when you can draw out each engagement with four different colors of chalk (yep, we used chalk boards) for the four aircraft in a 2v2, then you are ready to debrief the flight.”

The initial leadership was Ralph Riddell, 26 CC; Roger Wells, 26 DO; Gerry Huff, 26 ADO; Earl Henderson, 13 AF; Bud Hall, 3 TFW; Frank Burns, 26 GCI; Terry Buettner, 26 Intel; Tom Hood, A Flt CC; Phil White, B Flt CC; Hugh Gommell, C Flt CC; and Dave LeBlanc, D Flt CC. We flew eight AT-38s. Our mission was only a dream to most fighter pilots and we lived that dream everyday. Living and partying in the PI was the best!

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
 HEADQUARTERS 3D COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP (PACAF)
 APO SAN FRANCISCO 96274

SPECIAL ORDER
 TA-236

27 January 1976

The following individuals will proceed from Clark AB Phil to Tainan AB Taiwan, Taipei AS Taiwan, Kadena AB Japan, Yokota AB Japan, Osan AB Korea, Kunsan AB Korea, Hickam AFB Hawaii, performing 2 round trips per month during the period 27 Jan 1976 to 30 June 1976 both dates inclusive, on TDY to conduct and support dissimilar aircraft training. Upon completion of each mission will return to this station. Travel by military air directed when available. Government facilities directed to be used when available. Claim for reimbursement will be submitted within five working days upon completion of travel. BAS Rate (Airmen Only) \$2.53. * Deployment Commander. ** Deployment Safety Officer. *** Designated Official Courier. RC/CC 313050 EEIC 40727 40927
 Authority: AFR 36-20, PACAF Programmed Action Directive 75-8.

TDN: 5763400 306 7445 313050 02 40727 40827 40927 9667200

CIC: 4 4 674 0230 667200 *CV*

		Level Of Access Granted
*LT COL	RIDDELL, RALPH A.	26TFTS/CC, PACAF TS
*MAJ	WELLS, ROGER G.	26TFTS/DO, PACAF TS
MAJ	BURNS, JAMES E.S.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
*MAJ	HENDERSON, EARL J.	13AF/DOOV, PACAF TS
*MAJ	HALL, ARTHUR W. III	3TFW/DOT, PACAF TS
CAPT	FREY, KENNETH	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
***CAPT	HOOD, RALPH T.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
***CAPT	LARSON, DONALD D.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
***CAPT	WHITE, PHILLIP W.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
***CAPT	PIERCE, ROGER G. JR.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
CAPT	HUFF, GERALD	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
**CAPT	LEBLANC, RALPH D.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
**CAPT	O'NEAL, MICHAEL	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
CAPT	GOMMELL, HUGH E. JR.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
**CAPT	KIRCHNER, PETER A.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
**CAPT	CARR, RONALD A.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
CAPT	OSBORN, CHARLES R.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
CAPT	BUETTNER, TERRY W.	3TFW/INTEL, PACAF TS
1ST LT	BODENHEIM, EDWIN H.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
1ST LT	SCOTT, MICHAEL R.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
1ST LT	HARRIS, JOHN G.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
1ST LT	GELINGER, JOSEPH J.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
1ST LT	FUTRYK, DANIEL	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
1ST LT	FITZHUGH, NORMAN	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
1ST LT	BARBEE, PHILLIP W.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS
1ST LT	JACKSON, JESSIE R.	26TFTS/OP, PACAF TS

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Editors reflection: Now, let's take a look at the 'real' first deployment to Osan, Korea. Just imagine what these point-of-the sword F-4 jocks might have been saying, "Osan O'Club, Friday night prior to the first Gomer deployment on Monday. Conversation could have been something like this, "Did you hear that they're sending some T-38s up from Clark to teach us how to dog fight? They call themselves the Aggressors. Yeah, you got to be shitting me! T-38s? What can they teach us? How to fly a GCA or maybe even a TACAN approach? We got the baddest sons of bitches in the world in these F-4s ... should be big fun but just a waste of time." Then the fun begins. Monday, when the briefing starts and the smiles continued - until the second engagements and the T-38s are at 6 with a second guns kill and *they*, the F-4s, started at the six of the T-38 both times. And so it went. Every one of the engagements with the

Aggressor T-38s all day long. Although as the Aggressors became known and were respected, the gunning of the student wasn't necessary to get that respect which was needed in order to teach and, therefore, wasn't done. However, it was necessary in this case. But to the astonishment of the F-4 crews, in the debriefing there was no gloating, no boasting, nothing of the sort. They, the Aggressors, were just humble fighter pilots (albeit the most highly skilled air-to-air fighter pilots in the world). So with chalk in hand, drawing each engagement as played back from their cockpit tape recorders which they talked into as they fought, the Aggressors humbly debriefed. With each relevant part of each engagement saying, "here is how you could have beaten me. So, Let's try it again tomorrow. But right now let's go to the bar for some beers. I'd better take advantage of it today 'cause tomorrow, after we fly, I'm afraid I'll have too many 20mm holes in my belly to hold any beer!"

Roger G picked the guys for that first off-base deployment feeling confident they had met his standards. However, he had a graduation exercise in store for the second deployment. Who could have guessed it would be this? Because there were two operational F-4 squadrons at Clark, Roger had a local 'deployment' plan to get each flight and Detco ready, as well as all the support, maintenance and GCI personnel. Once he felt we were ready, Roger didn't send us to Korea or Okinawa, he sent us as a flight to one of those Clark-based operational F-4 squadrons. As C flight commander, I remember well when we 'deployed' down the ramp to the 3rd TFS with our four T-38s, our Detco, Bud Hall, and all the maintenance troops and equipment. Roger told me, "I do not want to see you here in the squadron. You are deployed and either you or Bud can call daily with the flying recap and the next day's plan. And your maintenance will be done with what you have in your deployment bins." Amazingly, we did better than the F-4s that sometimes didn't get the aircraft they needed to complete even a 2v2. Two weeks later, C flight went 'on the road' to Kunsan for our first off-base deployment. The 35th TFS pilots enthusiastically welcomed us for two weeks of flying hard and playing hard and we learned the true meaning of 'Have MIG - Will Travel.'

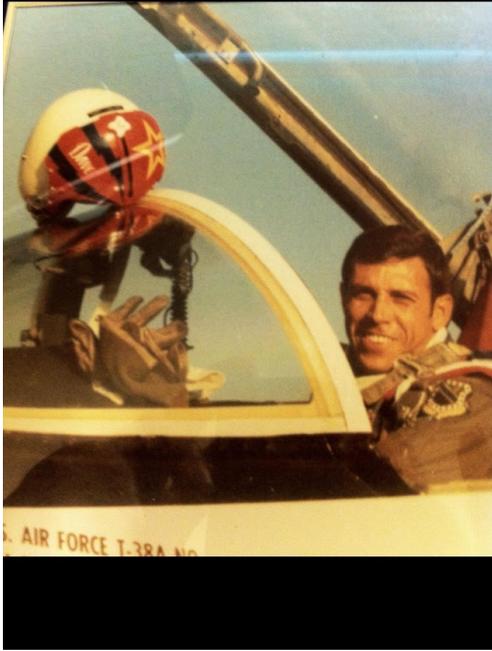
Roger G Wells knew what it would take for a pilot to be a successful Aggressor and he knew how to teach and, although it was with love, by today's standards it would be known as 'tough love.'

Although I added some glib to the story, the thanks goes to the author, Hugh "Hugo" Gommell, Col, USAF (ret). Yep, the photo below is Hugo and his car. Fighter pilots don't change (thank God!)



T-38 over rice paddies in the Philippines. GCI in the trunk.

Check out the writing on the jet, "Air Force T-38A." This is our history. Yep, this, and all the rest of the Taiwanese T-38s were trashed.

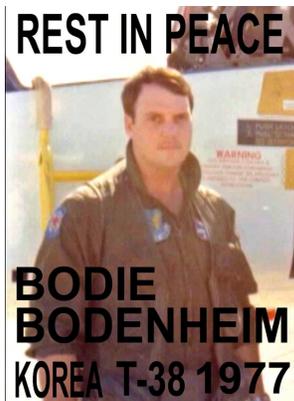


But Cajun was ordered by Roger G to go get 'em after Roger's nightmare flight from Taiwan in the first trashed T-38. He knew the job sucked; i.e., dangerous. But this man did as ordered.

" I think Roger Wells took this picture. It was for my third FCF flight after I had a single-engine and double-engine flame-out on the first two." - David "Cajun" LeBlanc

David "Cajun" LeBlanc

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO HAVE FLOWN WEST



These two fighter pilots were killed flying the T-38. The T-38, built by Northrop, was an ok simulator for the MiG-21, but never built to be a fighter. The stress on these jets in a fighter performance daily duty was more than it could tolerate. They came apart. Landing gear doors separated and went tumbling to the tail and disabled the stab and rudder. Oh shit!! Tom Hood lived with a Baht chain severing his throat. Ron Carr was not so lucky. Bodie Bodenheim, the same. Both of these young, fantastically gifted fighter pilots, teaching how to kill the enemy were not lost due to lack of their pilot proficiency but to mechanical failure of the jet. In Oct '77 I was one of three F-5E qualified pilots. It wasn't until my second tour was I permitted(?) to check out in the T-38 of which two were kept. Even then, ROE for them was 5 g max and 450 knots. Try fighting Phantoms and Eagles with those restrictions. Didn't happen. We flew them to our utmost ability, trusting our wrench benders to keep us alive.

THANK YOU

Thank you for reading and your time. The following newsletters will be filled with your inputs.

If you believe in your association with this, all of us, humble group of warriors, please keep your membership current and continue to do as you always have.

**Be Humble and Check 6!
Steve/Wheels**



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First of the F-5Es delivered to the 26th in late '77. My F-5E jet.



"Me, Wheels, on the right handing off my F-5 to Mike "Ramrod" Elrod at TDY to

Kadena, AB. All of this possible due to the dreams and determination of Roger G. Wells and his support group.

Gomers | USAF Aggressor Association | gomersrule@gmail.com

STAY CONNECTED

