Major Robert W. Gandy

Born: Apr. 14, 1941, at Cabarrus County Hospital, Concord, N.C.

School studies: Mechanical & Aeronautical Engineering at N.C. State College. Also pursued studies in the A.F. ROTC program for my 4 years at N.C. State as it offered flight training in light aircraft.

Upon graduation from N.C. State, I was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant with the A.F. Reserves and sent to Craig AFB, Selma, AL, for pilot training for a year. (6 mos. in primary trainer, T-37, and 6 mos. in advanced trainer, T-33.)

Once pilot training was complete, I was assigned to Laughlin AFB, Del Rio, TX, to train other aspiring pilots.

However, I first had to go to Waco, TX, to learn how to recover and train other pilots how to recover from spins — a condition where an aircraft is out of control.

After 7 years of training others, I volunteered to be a tactical reconnaissance pilot with the RF-4B aircraft. That required learning all camera and weapon systems (front & rear cockpits). This aircraft required a pilot & a weapon systems operator.

Upon completion of AFRC training, I remained at Bergstrom AFB, Austin, TX, for a year of operational missions before being assigned 14 mos. to Udorn RTAF Base, supporting the Vietnam War effort.

For photo recon missions I was assigned to the 91st TRS. Otherwise, I was the duty officer supervising the tactical control center at wing headquarters.

On return to the U.S., I was assigned to Shaw AFB, Sumter, S.C. From there I volunteered for an opening at RAF Alconbury, Little Stukeley, England. From there, the family and I had several opportunities to tour Europe.

After 3 yrs., we were assigned to Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) as a traveling instructor. The non-resident program was a travel program with non-resident officers who did not get selected to attend ACSC.

After completion of this 5-yr. tour of duty, my commitment was to the Air Force was 20 yr. satisfied, and I was assigned retirement status.

We elected to remain in Montgomery, AL. I found a job as operations manager with a construction company that erected steel structures throughout the Southeast, USA.

Retired October 2023.