Rich Midkiff, CS-18: USAF Career

I never set out to be a professional in education and training, and to live life in the southeast, but that's the way it has turned out. Been fine!

Went to pilot training in south Georgia and learned to say "y'all". In an unexpected situation, USAF needed a large number of IP's in late '68. So when I couldn't get the assignments I most wanted, I chose ATC and got T-38's back at Moody. All total, spent 4.5 years there and met my wife Cheryl in St. Petersburg, FL (she picked me up on the beach). Moody was an action-packed base; we had more departures/landings than O'Hare in Chicago the years I was there (O'Hare was the busiest major airport in USA at the time). It was also great training for SEA and I headed there in June '72.

I flew A-37's out of Bien Hoa, and as far as I know we were the last operational 'fighter' group in country. Busy, I flew about 135 missions in a few months before being moved to Ubon AB, Thailand where I was the assistant base ops weenie. The A-37 was a great aircraft for close-air in that environment, and I learned a lot in Thailand as well. Cheryl came over for a month; we had a good Christmas and New Year break, including Bangkok and Pattaya Beach.

I requested and got T-38 UPT/PIT at Randolph in San Antonio; again, an IP shortage created a busy flying schedule. After two years I moved to the Curriculum Development group for all UPT. We created complete curriculum materials for the flight line and classroom. I was fortunate to be part of the feasibility study for computer-based-training (CBT) in UPT; the finance plan called for half the classroom hours to be taught at the computer lab as part of implementing the new flight simulators. We visited Navy training operations in California and had 'big time' training companies give sales presentations on what their education software could do. As a result, I learned how to create _effective_ online training in 1977. Cheryl and I had our first daughter, Erin, and daughter Megan came along three years later. I was also able to be an assistant agent for Presidential Flight Support for two years during that time. There were about 25 of us around the USA who were 'part-time' help to the permanent party group who worked in Special Air Missions at the Pentagon. I did about 10 trips for Air Force One, all state side -- part for Ford and part for Carter.

In the late 70's, ATC merged with Air University to be the Air Education and Training Command. As part of that, UPT classroom instructor training moved to Maxwell AFB from Randolph. I was the first ATC IP assigned to Montgomery, AL at the USAF Academic Instructor School. I set up that 3-week curriculum, with their help, and we taught all the UPT classes and also filled in for the regular 5-week ROTC instructors' training and led the medical/physician's curriculum. Our family of four had a good little house in the foothills of the Appalachians in Wetumpka, AL. During that time I got an MS in Counseling and Human Development from Troy University.

In 1982, I went back to flying full time as a T-37 IP in Del Rio, TX (that piece of land 2 miles from Mexico and 150 miles from the USA). I had chosen Del Rio as it was the first ATC base to implement the CBT program I had done the 'feasibility work' for six years earlier. I was the Test Manager who worked problems with the two flying squadrons, the academic squadron, ATC/DO-Operations and the ATC/DO-IT group who were the hardware/software specialists. If you get a choice, don't do a major computer implementation in a complex system. **(Kidding.)** When I left in 1985, the T-37s CBT was up and running and the T-38s were getting their feet wet. (I visited Columbus AFB in Mississippi in about 2007 and that original UPT-CBT system from 1983 had just been replaced a few years earlier.)

My final assignment was to Maxwell again, '85 to '89. Most of that was as Deputy Director of Curriculum at SOS. That was a good crew of young officers on the faculty, and a smart and lively group of students, too. One big step there was another computer implementation. We worked out the issues to have computer terminals in each of 64 classrooms -- connections to Library research and also MS Office and internet searches; I also got input to the initial design features of the 'war

games' which had always been part of the SOS curriculum but were now being automated. The plan had a chance of being very good, but I did not see the implementation of that feature.

I retired in June, 1989 -- 22 years of service with 18 of it being in Education and Training.