

Karl Wendell Richter

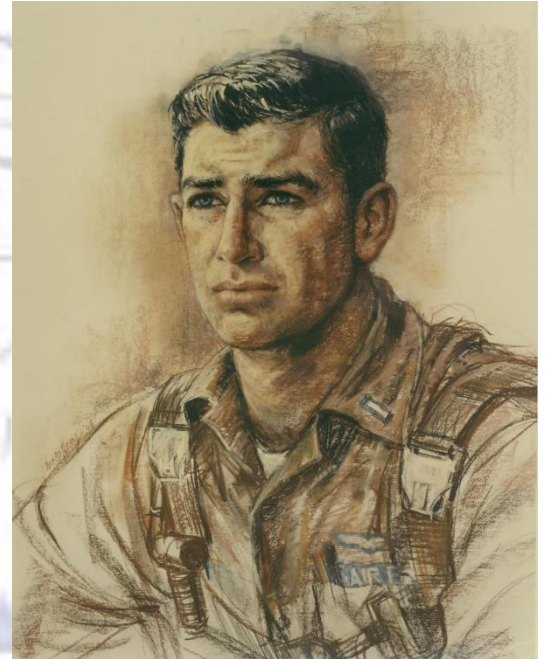
Born: 4 October 1942 – 28 July 1967

(aged 24)

Richter received 53 weeks of Undergraduate Pilot Training at Craig Air Force Base, Alabama, then completed Survival Training at Stead AFB, Nevada followed by the 26-week Combat Crew Replacement Training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, for qualification in the F-105D Thunderchief.

At the age of 23, as a pilot during the Vietnam War, he was the youngest pilot in that conflict to shoot down a MiG in air-to-air combat.

Flying with a new pilot, 1st Lieutenant Richter spotted a bridge and instructed the trainee to stay above and watch as he rolled his F-105 toward the target. Suddenly, enemy anti-aircraft artillery opened up hitting the plane and forcing him to eject. His parachute disappeared into the fog bank and cloud cover. A nearby rescue helicopter picked up his beeper signal and homed in to get the downed pilot. Severely injured during his descent, most likely from swinging into the side of a sandstone cliff, Richter died en route to a hospital.



At the time of his death, Lt Richter had flown more missions over North Vietnam than any other airman. 198 officially credited.

A statue of his likeness stands at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, with the inscription:

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Here am I. Send me.”

VVM Wall, Panel 24e, Line 13.

