

## Stuck Throttle

The F-100 Super Sabre was the United States' Air Force's first fighter aircraft capable of supersonic speed in level flight. Designed by North American Aviation, the F-100 served the Air Force from 1954 to 1971. By the time Benjamin Robert Briggs departed Tucson, Arizona on a mission in June 1974, the Super Sabre had been relegated to Air National Guard units.

Briggs, of Greenville, attended Furman University and the Air Force Academy before enrolling at Clemson College. He earned his mechanical engineering degree as a member of the Class of 1961.

In June 1974, while assigned to the 162<sup>nd</sup> Tactical Fighter Training Group of the Arizona Air National Guard, Major Briggs was ordered to fly a passenger to New Orleans, Louisiana. Upon returning to his base at Tucson's International Airport, Briggs was cleared by air traffic control for an enroute descent and was observed at an altitude of 31,000 feet forty-six nautical miles east of the field. He followed vectors from Tucson Approach Control for a landing on runway 29-right. Approach Control transferred Briggs to the Tucson Tower for landing instructions and clearance. Briggs requested a straight-in approach to his landing runway rather than a time-consuming overhead entry into the airport's traffic pattern.

Up until this point, the flight seems to have been routine, but then Briggs reported a "stuck throttle," meaning that control of the F-100's turbojet engine was problematic. Apparently Briggs's aircraft's throttle was jammed at a low power setting because he reported that he might "land short." It is possible that Briggs was at this point either too low to eject or he was concerned about abandoning the aircraft in a populated area where there was increased danger to people on the ground. Briggs's F-100 crashed 5,430 feet from the approach end of the runway at 2012 hours Mountain Standard Time.

Major Briggs was buried at East Lawn Palms Cemetery in Tucson.

