

# Seymour R. "Sam" Bass

## F-105 History

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11-Feb-68

240

The seventeenth F-105 RTU Class 68FR graduated at McConnell AFB KS. The class started on 27 Aug 67 with 29 students, but 25 completed the course. Maj David J. Carroll dropped out for medical reasons. Lt Col George M. Wentch joined the class in the formation phase on 1 October 1967.

Maj Kenneth E. Lamberton became the fourth RTU student killed in the crash of F-105D 61-0143 on 14 Nov 67 during air-to-ground rocket training at the Smoky Hill Range.

The class deployed for conventional weapons delivery training to George AFB CA between 23 Jan - 8 Feb 68 with the 561 TFS. The squadron commander was Lt Col Harry D. Sultzer, Jr. Maj Richard Matthews was the top student and shared Top Gun with Maj Russ Youngblood.

This was the largest RTU conducted at McConnell to date and required two IPs on a 30-day TDY from Nellis AFB to aid the transition of the class. The students were:

Col David William Winn	Maj Robert E. Evans
Lt Col Guy J. "Jack" Sherrill	Maj Arthur E. Hood
Lt Col George M. Wentsch	Maj Clarence E. Langford
Lt Col Jack Modica, Jr.	Maj James R. Gibbons
Maj George C. Avila, Jr.	Maj Richard D. Matthews
Maj William W. Berkman	Maj Samuel L. Ray, Jr.
Maj Bill V. Brown	Maj Albert L. Villaret
Maj Seymour R. Bass	Capt Richard Kenneth Allee
Maj Russell A. Youngblood	Capt Darrell J. Ahrens
Maj Ralph D. Waddell, Jr.	Capt Robert C. Amos
Maj Raymond M. Viscarra	Capt Thomas O. Carlson
Maj Eugene E. Cirillo	Capt Jack D. Brooks
Maj David J. Carroll	Capt Donald D. "Dudley" Swofford
Capt James V. Barr	

The ranking class member, Col Winn, "... was born in Austin, Minn., in 1923. He graduated from Austin Central High in 1941 and attended Carroll College, Waukesha, Wis., until he enlisted as an aviation cadet in the U.S. Army Air Corps in February 1942. He was commissioned a second lieutenant and received his pilot wings in February 1943.

"During World War II, General Winn served with the Twelfth Air Force and flew combat missions in the B-26 and P-38 aircraft from Sardinia and Italy. He returned to the United States in November 1944 and flew Mustangs, Thunderbolts and P-80s as a gunnery instructor in the Air Training Command fighter-gunnery research squadron. General Winn separated from the Air Force in 1948 and returned to school at the University of Minnesota. He was a member of the Minnesota Air National Guard until he was recalled to active duty in February 1951.

"General Winn served with the 109th Fighter Squadron at Minneapolis until August 1952. He then was transferred to Germany where he became a squadron operations officer in the 86th Fighter Wing. In August 1955 he was assigned to the 94th Fighter Squadron at Selfridge Air Force Base, Mich. In 1958 General Winn resumed studies at the University of Minnesota under Project Bootstrap and graduated in August of that year with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism.

"His next assignment was to Headquarters Air Defense Command at Ent Air Force Base, Colo., where he served until July 1962 as a member of the Air Defense Command tactical evaluation unit and operational readiness inspection team as chief of the Operational Readiness Inspection Branch and flew F-102 and F-106 aircraft.

"From July 1962 to May 1964, he was an exchange officer with the Royal Air Force, flying Hawker Hunters and English Electric Lightnings. He completed this tour of duty as an operations staff officer at Fighter Command Headquarters.

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"He next was assigned to the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as military secretary of the United States section of the Canada-United States Military Cooperation Committee and of the Canada-United States Regional Planning Group, NATO, in Washington, D.C. From July 1966 to June 1967, General Winn attended the National War College and completed graduate studies in international affairs at The George Washington University.

"In March 1968 he was assigned to the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing at Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, as assistant deputy commander, operations. ... " (USAF general officer bio at <http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/Biographies/Display/tabid/225/Article/105193/brigadier-general-david-w-winn.aspx>.)

*23 TFW History, Jul - Dec 67, USAF microfilm MO554, frames 1024, 1071, and 1138.*

### 02-Apr-68

4909

The four pilots from the 34 TFS in "Bass" flight bombed a target in RP-1. They took off at 1425 and returned after flying for 2 hours 50 minutes. Their line up was:

- #1 - Maj Eugene Paul Beresik (KIA, 31 May 68)
- #2 - Maj Seymour R. Bass (died in mid-air with flight lead, 14 May 68)
- #3 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0167
- #4 - Capt Ben J. Fuhrman

It was Maj Armstrong's 91st combat mission and the first mission after returning to Korat from his 4th R&R. "This was my first mission after the President's announcement of the 'bombing pause'. All of our flights and several flights from Takhli and F-4s were hitting a road segment up at the north end of Mu Gia Pass. The weather was clear but very hazy. We couldn't spot the FAC and when we did we couldn't see his white smoke rocket. Consequently, we stooed around for 15 minutes and finally desperately threw our bombs. The greatest danger in the area was a mid-air collision with another of our aircraft."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Locust 3" to attack a highway segment in RP-1. "100% road cut." It was his 57th combat mission.

*Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 34 - 35 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.*

### 04-Apr-68

4910

"Pistol" flight from the 34 TFS flew a non-counter mission into Laos. The flight took off at 0725 and returned after flying for 3 hours 10 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Maj Roger Dean Ingvalson (POW, 28 May 68)
- #2 - Maj Seymour R. Bass (died in mid-air with flight lead, 14 May 68)
- #3 - Col James L. Stewart, 388 TFW DO
- #4 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 61-0206

Maj Armstrong recorded in his logbook his second non-counter combat mission. "We were sent to an O-1 FAC down in southern Laos to cut a road. We made good passes although the visibility was less than 2 miles down low. We all hit real well and caused a dirt slide onto the road. Afterwards we swung up north and asked Cricket for clearance into Pack I. They would not clear us so we came home with a non-counter. Don't know if this has to do with LBJ's announced bombing pause."

Capt Craig M. White with Radar Bombardier/WSO Capt Jared P. Lowe, 44 TFS 388 TFW, flew F-105F 63-8276 as "Machete 01" to a target in RP-1. They logged 1+30 night flying hours.

*Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pg 35 & Craig White log book, pg 8, e-mail 21 Nov 17.*

### 13-Apr-68

4917

"Scuba" flight from the 34 TFS hit a road segment in RP-1 using Sky Spot radar. The flight took off at 1245 and

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returned after flying for 2 hours 15 minutes. The line up was:

- #1 - Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong flying F-105D 59-1760
- #2 - Maj Donald W. Hodge
- #3 - Lt Col Robert W. Smith, 34 TFS Commander
- #4 - Maj Seymour R. Bass (died in mid-air with flight lead, 14 May 68)

This was Maj Armstrong's 99th combat mission. "We were fragged in on a target in Pack I. It was a road segment on Rt 1A just south of Dong Hoi. The weather was completely undercast so they set us up for a radar drop on our target. We had so much fuel that we didn't even have to post-strike refuel on the way back. A real effortless mission."

Capt Craig M. White with Radar Bombardier/WSO Capt Jared P. Lowe, 44 TFS 388 TFW, flew F-105F 63-8278 as the single-ship "Cadillac" to a target in RP-1. They logged 1+35 total flying time with 35 minutes at night.

*Maj Armstrong's 100-mission combat log, pp 37 - 38 & Craig White log book, pg 8, e-mail 21 Nov 17.*

### 14-May-68

F-105D 610132 34 TFS 388 TFW Korat Operational loss. Mid-air collision with his flight lead in F-105D 60-0428. Crashed 93 NM NE of Korat RTAFB, Thailand. 15-35N 103-35E Maj Seymour R. Bass 34 TFS pilot died in mid-air crash. Call sign: "Hayfire 02". "On 14 May, an F-105D piloted by Maj Seymour R. Bass, 34 TFS, was involved in a mid-air collision with his flight lead, Capt. William A. Thomas Jr. [in F-105D 60-0428, "Hayfire 01"], also from the 34 TFS. At approximately 1605L, approximately 90 NM northeast of Korat RTAFB, Thomas was thrown violently against the left side of his cockpit, striking his helmet against the canopy. He immediately looked to the right for Bass and could not see him. Thomas then looked to the left and saw Bass below and to the left, crossing from left to right, and descending sharply. After the collision, Bass' aircraft proceeded north approximately eight miles before impacting in a dry rice paddy. The aircraft was in a virtual vertical, extremely high-speed dive when it contacted the ground. Bass evidently ejected only a short time before impact, as his body was found less than one-half mile from the crash site. The primary cause of this accident was found to be operator factor in that the pilot of Hayfire Two (Maj Bass) failed to control his aircraft to avoid collision with Hayfire Lead. Adverse weather also contributed to the accident. ... Hayfire two, either lost sight of Hayfire Lead or feared doing so. Rather than execute the standard Lost Wingman procedure, he initiated a blind rejoin or a high overtake closure maneuver. He was late in recognizing his closure rate and passed closely beneath and behind Lead's aircraft, probably encountering jet blast and wash. In an attempt to avoid an overshoot, he abruptly reversed his crossover attitude. This reversal combined with the effect of the lead's wash to produce a 'JC' maneuver resulted in collision."

Maj Bass' F-105D 61-0132 was assigned to the 34 TFS. Capt Thomas' F-105D 60-0428 to the 469 TFS.

#### History of Flight

"Hayfire, a flight of two F-105D aircraft, was scheduled for a combat tactical mission on the afternoon of 14 May 1968. Mission planning and flight briefings were standard and conducted in accordance with applicable briefing guides and checklists. Capt William A. Thomas 34th Tac Ftr Sqdn, in F-105D-10RE SN 600428. Major Seymour R. Bass, 34 Tac Ftr Sqdn, in F-105D-20RE SN610132, was Hayfire Two.

"Hayfire flight became airborne at 1405 hours local, 14 May 1968. Engine start, takeoff, prestrike refueling, and ingress to the target area were normal and without incident. Thunderstorms were encountered during the flight, including some in the prestrike refueling area. The flight penetrated three or four build-ups later described by Hayfire Lead as 'pretty bumpy'. Lead's aircraft evidenced incidental precipitation erosion damage to fiberglass leading edge areas. The fragged target area was clear, however, and both aircraft delivered their bombs on target. The flight then conducted road reconnaissance as briefed until reaching their prebriefed Bingo fuel state. No ground fire was observed and none was reported by the FAC. Aircraft were checked visually for damage during egress.

"Upon termination of road reconnaissance, it was necessary to divert approximately 100 miles south of the direct route to the poststrike refueling point in order to avoid thunderstorm activity. Rendezvous was accomplished in intermittent

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weather conditions but Bingo level had been set sufficiently high to preclude any fuel shortage. Each aircraft had 4000 - 5000 pounds of fuel remaining at rendezvous. While Hayfire One was on the tanker, weather was again encountered. Upon completion of refueling, Hayfire One remained in the pre-contact position until the tanker completed a turn which brought them again to visual flight conditions. At this time, Hayfire Lead found Hayfire two at 5 o'clock approximately 2,000 feet low. He had apparently become separated from the formation without making a radio call or executing standard Lost Wingman procedures. Hayfire Lead directed two to go A/B to expedite refueling. He complied and completed refueling in visual conditions without further incident. Both aircraft refueled to 8000 pounds and departed the tanker in visual conditions at 14,000 feet.

"Hayfire flight departed the tanker approximately 130 NM NE of Korat and reentered clouds during a climb to 17,000 feet en route to the initial approach fix. Hayfire Lead was flying instruments, with two on his right wing. Although very light turbulence was encountered, light conditions were good. Hayfire Lead stated that he could see Two, one or two ship lengths out and back, with his helmet visor lowered during his frequent checks on Two's position.

"The flight was under control of Lion GCI at this time for standard GCI/GCA recovery. Hayfire Lead had attempted, without success, to contact Apache, Korat Command Post, to report mission results, and had returned to Lion frequency. His return was acknowledged by both Lion and Hayfire Two.

"At approximately 1605 local, approximately 90 NM on the 068 degree radial of Korat TACAN, Hayfire Lead was thrown violently against the left side of his cockpit, striking his helmet against the canopy. He immediately looked to the right for Hayfire Two and could not see him. Hayfire Lead then looked to the left and saw Hayfire Two below and to the left crossing from left to right, and descending sharply relative to his, Hayfire One's, aircraft. He estimates Hayfire Two was about 100 feet away when he lost him in the clouds. The absolute attitude of Hayfire Lead at this time is not known, as he was having control difficulties. His first recognizable attitude was a 120 degree left bank, nose down. Hayfire Lead recovered control at approximately the same time he reached visual conditions at 1,200 feet. Full right rudder and full right aileron trim was necessary to maintain straight and level flight.

"Capt Thomas attempted radio contact with Hayfire Two, and also asked Lion to attempt contact. Lion had negative results from both voice and radar interrogations. A tanker aircraft some 30 miles behind Hayfire Flight reported hearing a beeper to Lion. Capt Thomas also initiated SAR efforts on Guard Channel and requested Lion to scramble a rescue helicopter from Korat RTAFB through their land line to Korat approach control. He then performed a controllability check, and determined that control was satisfactory down to 215 KCAS and accomplished a straight in landing at Korat RTAFB at 1641 local.

"Subsequent to the collision, Hayfire Two's aircraft proceeded north approximately eight miles before impacting in a dry rice paddy. The aircraft was in a virtually vertical extremely high speed dive when it contacted the ground.

"Major Bass had evidently ejected only shortly before impact, as his body was found less than 1/2 mile from the crash site. Its exact relative location could not be determined because he had been moved by Thai Nationals prior to the arrival of the investigating team." (AF Form 711 USAF Accident/ Incident Report 68-5-14-1, undated, signed by Col Felix A. Blanchard, Board President.)

The rescue report provided other details. "The 34th Tac Ftr Sq from Korat, Thailand alerted Det 2 that Hayfire 2 had bailed out approx 85 mi NW of Ubon + 97 mi NE Korat. Det 2 scrambled JG 71, an HH-53 from Ubon Air Base. Crown 2, an HC-130 was also dispatched for orbit position to bailout site. JG located the downed pilot and a PJ was deployed to recover the deceased pilot and returned him to Korat Air Base. 2 sorties flown for 2.2 hrs."

The helicopter pilot was Maj K. V. Allison and his copilot was Capt W. R. Humphreys. The flight engineer was Sgt G. R. Xoles, and the PJs were Sgt Larry E. Palmer and Sgt D. C. Jomson. (Hand-written Open/Closing Rescue Mission Report 2-3-41 14 May 68, and 3 ARRGP OL-2 TWX 141400Z May 68, AFHRA Call # K318.2411-5, IRIS #1017071.)

Maj Gene Cirillo knew Maj Bass from their F-105 RTU class at McConnell. "Sam was relatively speaking, 'one of

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those who should not have been there.' He was in his forties at the time and had been flying C-47's when they tapped him for F-105's. He was an extremely likable guy and we went thru RTU together. Sam went to Korat and I went to Takhli."

Lt Col Jack Sherrill was the commander of the 44 TFS at Korat. "I was on the flight line when the crash parade went out to greet Hayfire 1's landing in 24. The entire outer panel of his left wing, about 6 feet, was folded up about 45 degrees, held only by the upper skin and remarkably, some intact hydraulic lines. Heaven only knows what his final approach airspeed was. As the aircraft slowed, the panel, still holding its jamming pod, fell back down to normal. Thomas did a great job of recovering the airplane.

"Going back to Sam, he was indeed one who should not have been there. He had finished UPT in about '54 or '55, and assigned to an F-84F outfit. Evidently he was involved in a minor accident or incident about some unlocked gear failure and charged with pilot error. At that time, due to a surplus of pilots, that was 'sawadee kop'. He went to AFIT, got an MS in EE from MIT, and was assigned to Hanscom. Got his flying time in C-47s and later, a lot of time in the EC-121 out of Otis. Am not sure, but I suspect he volunteered to get into Thuds when the time came around. He felt that he was not at fault for the F-84F finding and wanted to prove he was a fighter pilot. He wasn't.

"Four of us, Sam, George Wensch, Bill Brown, and myself, batched in the McConnell BOQ thru RTU. Knowing the return rate of Thud drivers, 3 out of 4, we always raised a macabre toast at supper to "whichever of you SOB's isn't coming back." Sam was not particularly enthusiastic in the toast. While 3 of us would proceed to the bar, Sam went back to the books. On at least one occasion, when we later worked our way down the hall, Sam would ask us to come in and go over in detail, everything that lead had to do to go to Smoky Hill; check in, radio calls, airspeed,.... The works. There was no way he would admit it and back out, and we had some sort of ill advised honor or respect that kept us from discouraging him or reporting his deficiencies. ..."

"It wasn't too hard to figure out what happened. Sam got separated in some thick Cu, returned in the clear, got chewed on a bit. Got separated again, attempted blind rejoin, too much closing rate, tried to duck under and join on left wing. Contacted left ECM pod with windshield. We were able to deduce this from the fact that Sam's plane had two bright red MiG stars which showed up on Thomas' pod." The stars were for the two MiGs shot down by 1Lt David B. Waldrop (44 TFS, 388 TFW) on 23 Aug 1967.

"Injuries, and the remainder of the seat, recovered from a junkyard in Roi Et, made it pretty clear that he ejected with the windscreen bow about even with the stick.

"Sometimes there's more to stories than the accident report reveals. Incidentally, I've heard somewhere that there were no 'accidents' during this time in Korat. I know there was a complete formal report submitted to Wing CC on this. I prepared and signed it and Doc Blanchard signed it as Board President." (Jack Sherrill, e-mail, 18 Oct 2004.)

Maj Bass was born 20 April 1928. He entered the service from Springfield, New Jersey. His name appears on the Vietnam War Memorial Wall panel 60E line 8.

*388 TFW History, Apr - Jun 68, USAF microfilm NO584, frames 0773 - 0776 and 1444 - 1447 & Eugene Cirillo, e-mail, 26 Feb 00.*

### 30-Aug-68

490

F-105D 60-0428, assigned to the 469 TFS, 388 TFW, Korat RTAFB, Thailand, became the first F-105 in the Air Force inventory to reach 3,000 flying hours and 500 combat sorties. The F-105 design life was 4,000 flying hours. The aircraft was named "Tiger" and its assigned pilot was Lt Col Mike Monts. Its crew chief was SSgt Clarence T. Cross. During its combat career at Korat, the plane's aft section was damaged in a wind storm on 22 April 1968, it survived a mid-air collision on 14 May 1968 that killed Maj Seymour R. Bass flying in F-105D 61-0132, and it received combat damage on 12 August 1968. The plane was shot down over RP-1 on 19 September 1968 and its pilot killed.

*"Wrecking Crew", pg 102 by J. C. Scutts & 388 TFW History, Jul - Sep 68, USAF microfilm NO585 & Sawadee Flyer 7 Sep 1968, pg 1.*