

James R. Bassett

F-105 History

14-Mar-67

6561

In the 4520 CCTW at Nellis AFB, NV, F-105 Class 67-D graduated 16 pilots from USAF Operational Training Course number 111506E. The pilots were TDY en route to their SEA assignments. The class had started with 17 students on 14 October 1966 and had been assigned to the 4523 CCTS. The student pilots, their previous bases and commands, and their SEA assignments (where known) were:

Maj H. C. Copeland - Davis-Monthan AFB AZ (TAC). Assigned to the 333 TFS.
Maj Ronald B. Montague - James Connally AFB TX (TAC).
Maj Dewey W. Waddell - USC (AU). Assigned to the 354 TFS.
Maj Robert M. Wall - Laredo AFB TX (ATC). To Wild Weasel Class 67-WW III-9 then to the 333 TFS.
Capt James R. Bassett - Perrin AFB TX (ADC). Assigned to the 34 TFS as Ryan's Raider pilot.
Capt Lawrence L. Friedman - Williams AFB AZ (ATC). To Wild Weasel Class 67-WW III-9 then to the 34 TFS as Ryan's Raider pilot.
Capt Earl E. Krug - McChord AFB WA (ADC). Assigned to the 13 TFS.
Capt Monte O. Lillard - Williams AFB AZ (ATC). To Wild Weasel Class 67-WW III-9 then to the 34 TFS as Ryan's Raider pilot.
Capt Michael K. McCuiston - Laughlin AFB TX (TX). Assigned to the 333 TFS.
Capt Morris L. McDaniel, Jr. - McGuire AFB NJ (ADC). Assigned to the 34 TFS as Ryan's Raider pilot.
Capt Thomas E. Norris - Moody AFB GA (ATC). Assigned to the 469 TFS.
Capt Ralph K. Smith, Jr. - Bergstrom AFB TX (SAC). Did not complete course. Received humanitarian assignment on 17 Oct 66 back to Bergstrom. (MD-43)
Capt Donald C. Windrath - McGuire AFB NJ (ADC). Assigned to the 13 TFS.
1Lt Louis F. Armbruster - Davis-Monthan AFB AZ (TAC).
1Lt Richard A. Frederick - Richards-Gebaur AFB MO (ADC). Assigned to the 469 TFS.
Capt George Hilliard III - Vance AFB OK (ATC). Assigned to the 333 TFS.
1Lt Bruce J. Lotzbire - Webb AFB TX (ATC). Assigned to the 357 TFS.

Five of the 16 graduates of this class were shot down in SEA. Four were POWs and one was KIA.

Maj Waddell was one of the pilots who became a POW. "Wayne Waddell was born in 1935 in Bremen, Georgia. He was commissioned through the Air Force ROTC Program at Georgia Tech on June 9, 1956, and went on active duty beginning June 3, 1957. Lt Waddell completed Undergraduate Pilot Training and was awarded his pilot wings at Laredo AFB, Texas, in September 1958, and then completed all-weather interceptor training in the F-86 Sabre at Moody AFB, Georgia. He remained as an instructor pilot at Moody AFB until December 1960, and then served as an instructor at Craig AFB, Alabama, from January 1961 to June 1965. Capt Waddell then received an Air Force Institute of Technology assignment to complete his Masters Degree at the University of Southern California from June 1965 to September 1966. ..." (<http://veterantributes.org/TributeDetail.php?recordID=887>)

Special Orders MD-40 and MD-43, Hq 4520 Combat Support Group, dated 18 Oct 1966 and 8 Nov 66 in History of USAF TFWC, 1 Sep - 31 Dec 66, Vol III, AFHRA Call # K417.0735.

22-May-67

3814

By 22 May 1967, eleven more Ryan's Raiders pilots had arrived at Korat from training at Yokota. These were the third set of crews for the Ryan's Raiders flying F-105Fs. The men, all pilots, were assigned to the 34 TFS.

This group was the last of the original pilot/pilot crews assigned to the Ryan's Raider program. Don Henry, one of the front seat pilots who had arrived from Kadena on 4 May 1967, recalled that these crews "... traveled by various modes of transport (military cargo to Korat or commercial to Bangkok etc.) and arrived on various days." (Don Henry, E-mail, 28 March 2005.)

The pilots were:

Maj Kenneth D. Oliver
Maj James B. Register

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Maj Harold D. Wilson
Maj James R. Bassett

Capt Tom T. Walker, graduated from McConnell's RTU Class 67ER on 6 January 1967.

Five other pilots graduated from F-105 RTU Class 67FR on 13 February 1967. They were:

Maj Francis "Frank" P. Walsh
Capt Konrad W. Trautman
Maj Robert D. Reese
Capt Douglas G. Glime
Capt Neil F. Blake

Don Henry recalled, "... during May and June, there were more backseaters than frontseaters and crew pairings were not always the way we flew each mission. (Don Henry, E-mail, 28 March 2005.)

Maj Oliver was teamed with Maj Walsh. "I was very fortunate to have Major Frank Walsh as my backseater. In addition to being a pilot he was a former SAC Navigator/Radar Specialist and we really made a good team. Frank and I flew about 52 missions over North Vietnam before we ever saw it in the daytime. We had about 65 missions when he was moved to the F-105D day mission. From there on, I flew with a number of different backseaters and 'graduated' to flying Wild Weasel support missions for the B-52 'Arc light' strikes in the southern part of North Vietnam." (Frank Oliver letter to Rick Versteeg, dated 9/11/98.)

The crews who arrived in April and May, "... flew a total of 98 missions in the high risk Route Packages 5 and 6A during the next 80 days. They are credited with the first night, low-level, single ship attacks on targets such as the Thai Nguyen steel mill, Kep airfield, Yen Bai railroad yard, and the Bac Kan trans-shipment point."

388 TFW history, Apr Dec 67, Vol II, 13 TFS history, 1 Apr - 31 July, microfilm NO584, frames 0044 - 0045 & "A Special Report on 'Ryan's Raiders', by Maj Albert L. Michael for Project Corona Harvest, Jan 1970, pg 6.

28-May-67

5139

The 34 TFS Ryan's Raider crew of Maj James R. Bassett and Capt Konrad W. Trautman flew a night North Scope mission in F-105F 63-8353 using call sign "Fume". They dropped six 750-pound bombs on target 1463, the Nui Caay Seeding Segment in RP 1, North Vietnam. "Good TA/CM calibration on second peak but TA/CM was unusable because video pedestal adjustment was out of calibration between ground map and terrain masking modes. Flew MEAs to target. Dropped TBC using center of 'S' return for freeze point. ... Good tanker rendezvous. Excellent boomer on tanker Red Anchor 50."

388 TFW TWX 281810Z May 67 to 7 AF in PACAF DO Read File for 27 - 29 May 67, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 00518474.

30-May-67

5145

The 34 TFS Ryan's Raider crew of Maj James R. Bassett and Capt Konrad W. Trautman flew a night North Scope mission in F-105F 63-8346 using call sign "Cambo". In radar BTIP mode, they dropped six 750-pound bombs on target 1501, the Quang Khe highway ferry. "... TBC appeared to release as programmed. Got good release (30K cursor). Saw flashes from bomb detonation but unable to determine CEA due to darkness. Exited over the water (Gulf of Tonkin), climbed to 18,000' and returned. ..."

388 TFW TWX 301855Z May 67 to 7 AF in PACAF DO Read File for 31 May - 1 Jun 67, AFHRA Call # K717.312, IRIS # 00518476.

01-Jun-67

4107

Lt Col James E. McNerney, Jr. replaced Lt Col Gerald F. "Jerry" Fitzgerald as commander of the 13 TFS. Lt Col Fitzgerald had just completed 100 missions over North Vietnam as well as 13 missions over Laos. On this same date, the Ryan's Raider crews in the 34 TFS transferred to the 13 TFS.

Lt Col McNerney, along with his EWO Capt Fred A. Shannon, had reported in to the squadron in March 1967 after

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they both had completed Wild Weasel Class 67WWIII-8 at Nellis. Lt Col McInerney was the squadron's Wild Weasel Operations Officer. He continued transitioning the Wild Weasel crews into the Ryan's Raider operation and releasing the Ryan's Raider back-seat pilots into the strike force as F-105D pilots.

Most Ryan's Raider back seat pilots transferred as strike pilots to other 388 TFW squadrons. For example, Capt David L. Burney and Capt Aquilla F. Britt transferred from the 34 TFS to the 469 TFS. Maj Francis "Frank" P. Walsh a rear seat pilot transferred to the strike mission in the 13th.

However, pilots Maj James B. Register and Maj Kenneth D. Oliver remained with the Ryan's Raider Commando Nail mission when they transferred to the 13 TFS and flew together. The Ryan's Raider crews of Capt George A. Bogert, and Capt Donald S. Aunapu, Capt Tom T. Walker and Capt Neil F. Blake also transferred to the 13 TFS as did the crew of Maj James R. Bassett and Capt Konrad W. Trautman.

388 TFW history, Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO 583, frame 1494 & Jim McInerney, e-mail 1 Nov 2004 & Nancy Fitzgerald 5 Nov 85 letter to Bauke Jan Douma.

05-Oct-67

F-105D 581169 13 TFS 388 TFW Korat Hit by 85-mm AAA while en route to the Quang Kien RR causeway. Crashed 2.5 miles from Nga My in RP-6A, North Vietnam. 21-28N 106-00E Capt Konrad Wigand Trautman 13 TFS pilot ejected on his 60th mission. POW. Released 14 Mar 73. Call sign: "Detroit 01". Major Konrad W. Trautman from Oberlin, PA, flew as Detroit 01 leading a flight of four F-105s on a strike mission to the Quang Kien RR Causeway at location 21-25-47N and 106-17-57E in North Vietnam. Other members in the flight were Maj Donald S. Aunapu, Maj James R. Bassett and Maj Harold B. Wilson. The flight from the 13 TFS took off from Korat at 05:45 and Major Trautman was lost over the target at 07:30.

"The following is an extract from the statement of Major Harold D. Wilson, Detroit 4: '... We rolled in on the target as briefed in elements of two. Captain Trautman ... and the Number 2 aircraft attacked the causeway and 3 and 4 attacked AAA positions. Intense flak was encountered from five miles from roll in until about five miles on egress. After rolling with 3, I then established my own attack against a separate AAA site. At about 12,000 in the dive I heard Lead call 'Detroit's hit.' I came off the target to the right as briefed and began looking for the rest of the flight. Five aircraft were immediately ahead of me but none appeared to have been hit. As I closed to join with these aircraft, I observed a long trail of fire at 10 o'clock about 10 miles which appeared at first to be an SA-2 but on closer look was an F-105 aircraft. At this time I heard Detroit 3 call Lead saying that he had him in sight and was joining on him. Shortly after, I heard a beeper and heard Detroit 3 call, 'I have a beeper and good chute.' Detroit 3 then called downed position as 2128N/10600E. Detroit flight then rejoined and egressed the area. On egress we received a call from an unknown aircraft saying he had established contact with Captain Trautman and that he had said, 'I'm alright, but they're coming after me.' " ("PACAF Intelligence Index of USAF Personnel MIA/PW in Southeast Asia", pg 3-165).

He received a Silver Star for his final mission. "The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Silver Star to Captain Konrad Wigand Trautman ... for gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force while serving as Pilot of an F-105 Thunderchief of the 13th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Korat Royal Thai Air Base, Thailand, in action over North Vietnam, on 5 October 1967. On that date, Captain Trautman was the leader of a flight of four F-105 Thunderchiefs in an air attack against an intensely defended causeway. Although his aircraft was struck repeatedly by accurate and tracking flak, Captain Trautman courageously pressed the attack and devastated the target with his ordnance. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Captain Trautman has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force. General Orders: Headquarters, 7th Air Force, Special Order G-1988 (November 13, 1967) (<http://valor.militarytimes.com/recipient.php?recipientid=3544>)

"On 5 October, Captain Konrad Trautman ... was shot down over North Vietnam on his 60th mission. He is listed as MIA." (13 TFS history) He had accumulated 288.4 hours in the F-105. (F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.)

He received the Air Force Cross for the period 10 May - 8 Oct 1968 while he was a POW. His award citation read: "The President of the United States of America, authorized by Section 8742, Title 10, United States Code, awards the

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Air Force Cross to Major Konrad W. Trautman for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam from 10 May 1969 to 8 October 1969. Under his leadership, an escape committee was formed which eventually precipitated an escape from a prison camp located on the edge of the city of Hanoi. Through the escapees were soon recaptured, it resulted in extreme embarrassment to the camp commander who lost his position along with others of his staff. Major Trautman was subjected to a cruel round of torture in which the interrogators attempted to get details of prisoner plans and organization. Major Trautman absorbed this torture and accepted blame for the escape in a gallant bid to protect the senior ranking American and other prisoners who were active in operations against the Vietnamese. He suffered excruciating tortures and beatings resulting in many serious wounds which placed him physically and mentally on the edge of death. Through his extraordinary heroism and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy, Major Trautman reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force." ("Recipients of the Air Force Medal of Honor and Air Force Cross", by Eric R. Caubarraux, pp 271 - 272.)

The POW escape was by John Dramesi, an F-105 pilot and Ed Atterberry an RF-4C pilot. They escaped on Saturday 10 May 1969 but both were recaptured the next day. Atterberry died from beatings on 18 May 1969. Dramesi and Atterberry (posthumously) also received the Air Force Cross for their escape attempt.

U.S. Navy CNA Loss/Damage Data Base & 13 TFS history, 1 Sep - 17 Oct 67, USAF microfilm NO584, frame 0059.

17-Nov-67

6985

"Bad weather over North Vietnam finally broke recently and pilots of the 388 TFW took advantage of clear skies to launch an attack on the Bac Mai airfield south of Hanoi.

"The Thunderchief pilots dodged MiGs, surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and heavy flak to strike the main base support area, including underground command post and personnel bunkers, a communications site, and flak sites around the airfield. All pilots reported good results.

"Maj Lawrence R. Klinestiver [34 TFS], 38, Albuquerque, N.M., led a flight of F-105s that went after the flak sites with bombs and air-to-ground missiles.

"We had MiGs hampering us all the way in, but a flight of F-4s was working with us and when the MiGs started to close in, we lit the afterburners, took the ole 'Chief down and separated from the attackers. We weren't bothered at all on the way in.'

"Well planned, well managed and almost perfectly executed,' said Maj James R. Bassett [44 TFS], 32, Dennison, Tex. He led his flight against the command post bunker and termed his roll-in and run-in on the target as, 'picture perfect; just like on the practice ranges back in the States. I also saw numerous bombs from the flights ahead striking the target.'

Pilots reported a number of SAMs launched at the strike force and Bassett also reported seeing two MiG-21s waiting to 'bounce' his flight as he approached the target.

"However, our timing was perfect and when we broke off and dove toward the target, they overshot, and we were in and out before they could get reorganized.'

"Maj James E. Daniel, Jr. [34 TFS Ops Officer], 37, Fort Worth, Tex., who led his flight against the communication site on the southeast end of the runway was the last flight in and reported extremely heavy flak of all calibers. He reported bombs going right through the roofs of a personnel area on hits from another flight.

"The last man in Daniel's flight, Capt Douglas A. Beyer [34 TFS], 33, Seguin, Tex., saw the comm site completely engulfed in smoke and debris as he pulled out and also observed some bombs causing a cut in the airfield runway.

"The 388th TFW's SAM suppression flight was led by Capt Robert E. Dorrrough, Jr. [44 TFS], 29, Dallas, and they reported damaging two fire control sites and one SAM site.

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"Other pilots taking part in the mission against Bac Mai included: Capt Robert M. Elliot, 38, Newberry Springs, Calif., Major Spence H. Armstrong, 33, Columbia, Tenn., Capt Robert M. Crane, 29, Duarte, Calif., Maj Donald W. Hodge, 38, Panama City, Fla., Capt Raymond W. Vissotzky, 38, Stoughton, Mass. [all from the 34 TFS], Maj Stanley H. Horn, 41, Madison, Wisc., Maj James D. Murray, Jr., 34, Bayonne, N.J., Capt Hal P. Henning, 27, Contoocook, N.H. [all three from the 469 TFS] and Lt Col Robert A. "Red" Evans [44 TFS commander], 45, Rangeley, Maine."

Also today, Capt Craig M. White flew his 6th combat mission with the 44 TFS, 388 TFW. He flew F-105D 62-4221 as "Vegas 04" to Bac Mai. He logged 2 hrs 35 minutes flying time and was awarded his first Distinguished Flying Cross for Extraordinary Achievement. Many years later, he wrote about preparing for this mission for the F-105 Thunderchief Facebook group. "November 17, 1967 .. It's still dark outside but you've been up for over 2 hours. You're the new guy, the rookie, you have five fairly easy RP1 and RP5 missions under your belt, but have yet to see 'Downtown'. You've sat through the early morning mission briefing and the flight briefing, the target today is Bac Mai Airfield, on the outskirts of Hanoi, the weather is good, and it's a GO. You and all the strike force have just eaten breakfast a KABOOM, Roscoe rode back to Fort Apache with my flight, and now we're suiting up in the locker room. My locker is #16, and I proceed to stow my personal effects in the locker and like everyone else, check out my emergency and survival equipment. There is some mild kidding and bullshitting going on, I think mostly to relieve the stress. How do I feel? Nervous, excited, heart pounding inside, but not sweating and a calm appearance on the outside. I have heard hundreds of tales for the past months about the defenses around Hanoi I will soon see in person. My biggest fear is that I might show cowardice in battle and let my fellow pilots down, and bring shame to my family and me. Soon, we are all suited up with G suits, survival vests, parachutes, personal weapons, individual good luck charms, helmets, masks, mission data, and as we walk out of Ft. Apache, all we meet wish us luck and Godspeed, and we enter the still dark morning and climb aboard the bread truck for transport to our assigned Thud ... was so long ago, yet like yesterday."

Hq 7th Air Force News release 11-67-515, pp 1 - 3 & Craig White log book, pg 1 and copy of Facebook page, e-mail 21 Nov 17.

26-Nov-67

4844

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong from the 34 TFS flew his 27th mission into North Vietnam. He was "Goose 1" that took off at 0710. His mission lasted 2 hours. The flight lineup was:

#1 - Maj Armstrong flying F-105D 60-0505

#2 - Maj James R. Bassett, 44 TFS

"I was one of the two airborne spares for today's strike. Since they didn't go to the primary target because of bad weather up in Pack VI, the two airborne spares took off as a flight of two for a strike in Laos or Pack I. We were given a Combat Sky Spot over the clouds just southwest of Mu Gia Pass. We then flew across Pack I to the coast for a weather check and counter."

Lt Col Rufus Dye, Jr., 34 TFS, flew as "Simmer 4" attacking a road segment in southern Laos. "100%. Road cut and slides." He then flew armed recce in RP-1. "No significant sighting." It was his 17th combat mission.

Maj Sam Armstrong's 100 mission combat log, pg 12 & Rufus Dye Mission History log.

23-Dec-67

24-Dec-67

1301

"President Lyndon B. Johnson visited (the 388 TFW at) Korat RTAFB the evening of 23-24 December. The Commander-in-Chief spent the night at the base and made a pre-dawn address to base personnel. He presented medals to six pilots from Thailand-based wings. More than 5,000 personnel gathered for the speech at the base flightline. The President arrived from funeral services (on 21 December) for Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt [who had drowned in the ocean], on the first leg of an around-the-world tour."

"... A new and as yet unoccupied dormitory helped to house the presidential entourage of about three hundred, including some seventy-five reporters. George Christian, the President's press secretary, told reporters that for security reasons they could not file stories until after the president left early in the morning. But the Thai press broke the story,

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and reporters spent all night using telephones and typewriters at wing headquarters." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 113).

President Johnson arrived at Korat at 10:10 PM Friday 23 December. That night, he met in the Officers Club with General Momyer, 7 AF Commander, and pilots who briefed him on their missions. F-105 pilots speaking were Capt Dennis W. Jarvi from the 469 TFS who described the recent raid (on 14 December 1967) in which he participated against the Paul Doumer highway and railroad bridge. Maj Michael S. Muskat, "... a veteran of 25 combat missions briefed the President on the anti-aircraft and ... SAM suppression missions flown by his squadron, the 44 TFS." Capt John H. Schaub also from the 469 TFS briefed on the role of the mission commander "... including the over-all planning and execution of a combat strike ... " Capt Schaub had "... flown 83 combat missions and served as mission commander on several occasions."

"When asked by General Momyer for an opinion of the value of the bombing and its affect on the abilities of the North Vietnamese to sustain their aggression in the South, ... " Capt Irving E. LeVine from the 34 TFS, who had flown 82 combat missions, outlined "... the tremendous destructive power being unleashed on key communist targets by Air Force strikes"

Many years later, when shown this description of this event, Irv LeVine commented, "B.S. I never said anything like this." (Irv LeVine letter, received 16 Apr 10.)

President Johnson also greeted Capt Douglas A. Beyer, 34 TFS, from Seguin, Texas, who had flown 60 combat missions and had attended Southwest Texas State college, the same school from which the President had graduated in 1930. Capt Byer had graduated from the school in 1957.

Maj Spence M. "Sam" Armstrong from the 34 TFS attended the President's talk at the Officer's Club and documented his observations in his memoirs. "President Johnson visited us just before Christmas. We had only 12 hours warning. Since Col. Burdett had been shot down in November, the Air Force had sent in a senior colonel from Okinawa, Col. Neil Graham. He was all excited about the visit and worked hard to see that we presented a good image to LBJ. The most obvious thing was to remove some embarrassing things from the club. Some artisans in the Philippines made a good living from carving large aircrew wings from mahogany. They changed the middle part of the wings to designate pilot, navigator, etc. But some time earlier, a pilot from Korat had ordered a set of wings with an Edsel grill in the center and it was proudly displayed in the bar where the pilots recognized this as an indictment of Secretary of Defense McNamara. This had to be removed for the time being but I'm not sure LBJ would have understood the significance.

"He gave a speech to all of the pilots at the club that night and a speech to all Korat folks plus Camp Friendship the next morning at 5:00 a.m. before he departed. I don't remember what he had to say except that he didn't understand what we were going through and he looked awfully tired!

"LBJ had heard about Roscoe, our canine mascot. ... Somebody had briefed LBJ about Roscoe because he asked for him that night at the club. Just then Roscoe strolled up for dinner as he always did. LBJ squatted down on his haunches and called for him to come. Roscoe walked right by and into the dining room without acknowledging the President of the United States there on his haunches! We all thought that it was hilarious but couldn't laugh out loud. Our base leadership was already in a tizzy because of the visit and it would have been too much to have done so." (Lt Gen Sam Armstrong, chapter in unpublished manuscript titled, "Southeast Asia October 1967 - May 1968", pp 23 - 24.)

The President was "...quartered in a series of trailers -- his trailer was number one. The trailer had two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. The President's large double bed filled one of the small bedrooms."

Early the next morning, "the President was up and dressed by 5:00 a.m. -- in khaki shirt and pants and battle jacket. Walt Rostow and Wm Bundy came in the trailer briefly and the President greeted them and then suggested they leave and find a way to get him into Karachi without the press finding out prior to arrival."

"In the dark of the early morn..." the President, with Gen Momyer, traveled by car to a flightline hanger where, on a stage, he presented awards to eight pilots.

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Receiving Silver Stars were:

Capt William Griger, 30, Goldsboro, N.C. - 355 TFW
Capt Donald F. Miles - 432 TRW

Receiving Distinguished Flying Crosses were:

Maj. Myron L. Savage, 35, Ste. Genevieve, Mo -355 TFW
Maj Wintford L. Bazzell, 42, Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. - 388 TFW
Maj James R. Bassett, 32, Ithica, N.Y. (44 TFS) - 388 TFW
Maj. Lloyd W. Boothby, 36, Washington, D.C. - 8 TFW
1Lt John C. Putnam - 355 TFW
1Lt George H. McKinney, Jr., 24, Bessemer, Ala. - 8 TFW

(The President's Daily Diary: Dec 23, 1967, pg 1 LBJ Library and Museum, on line at <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/diary/1967/671223-01.asp>)

After presenting the awards, President Johnson spoke to a crowd gathered in the pre-dawn darkness near the reveted F-105 parking stalls. "In the history of air power, no such difficult set of tasks has ever been assigned as those assigned to you Guerrilla combat provides no easy targets and that is why aggressors here - as elsewhere - have been tempted to choose guerrilla tactics as the means of their aggression. Yet here, for the first time, air power is actually depriving the aggressor of his advantage. ... Air power is denying access to cheap success or to ultimate victory. ... And no man can come here for even a short period and shake your hand or look you in the eye, and have the slightest bit of doubt for a moment that America is going to hold firm and America is going to stay faithful throughout the course - until an honorable peace is secured. ... God keep you, every one of you - and we shall always be deeply in your debt. Thank you and good morning."

The President departed Korat at 5:41 a.m.

President Johnson went from Korat to Cam Ranh AB in South Vietnam where he arrived at 0841. " ... The Korat speech marked the apex of good feeling between President Johnson and the military. Since the Stennis hearings in August, he had approved some long-sought targets and shown Secretary of Defense McNamara the door." ("To Hanoi and Back", pg 114).

388 TFW history Apr - Dec 67, USAF microfilm NO 583 frame 1685 & Sawadee Flyer, Friday Dec 29, 1967 in NO583, frames 1968 - 1973

02-Jan-68

6718

Two F-105 pilots from the 388 TFW formed "Plymouth" flight that took off at 14:50 for a 15:50 TOT. There was no inflight refueling. The lineup was:

#1 - Maj James R. Bassett from the 44 TFS
#2 - Capt Jacob C. Shuler from the 34 TFS flying F-105D 62-4242 on his 40th combat mission.

"This mission was originally scheduled to be a four ship formation, call sign Rambler, with Bob Crane as lead and Hugh Davis as two. The Mission Data Card indicates that it was changed to a two-ship formation, call sign Plymouth ..."

The flight's primary target was in RP-1. Its secondary target was in southern Laos (SL), while its tertiary target was in northern Laos (BR).

Under 7th Air Force Special Order G-1017, dated 3 April 68, Capt Shuler was awarded an Air Medal (1st - 3rd OLC) for the period 28 Oct 67 to 2 Jan 68.

Jake Shuler mission card and e-mail 11 Jan 2011.

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13-Jan-68

2343

Capt Bill Harris, 469 TFS, 388 TFW, flew F-105F 62-4439 on his 8th combat mission from Korat RTAFB, Thailand. It was a Sky Spot mission to RP-3, North Vietnam. He flew through broken clouds and saw heavy black smoke from his bombs. Sortie length was 2 hours 40 minutes.

Maj James R. Bassett from the 44 TFS flew his 100th mission today.

Bill Harris, letter 19 March 2001 & Bob Dorrough's diary.

02-Aug-78

8055

Lt Col James R. Bassett flew the F-105 for the last time. Since his first flight on 1 November 1966, he had accumulated 380.2 hours in the Thunderchief.

F-105 Pilot Flying Hour report dated 18 Nov 85 provided by the USAF Safety Center to Bauke Jan Douma.