

## Bernard W. Basse '57

No. 21202 ■ 1 Jan 1935 – 25 Mar 2000 ■ Died in Hebron, KY  
Cremated. Ashes scattered in the local woods he loved in Kentucky



*Bernard William Basse* was born on 1 Jan 1935 in Wabash, IN, the only child of Iona and William Basse. He grew up in Wabash, excelling in school and sports. He played first-string high school football and was disappointed to learn that he did not make the Army team. His different careers were marked with friendships that carried him throughout his life. He was a Hoosier's Hoosier.

Bern, as he was known, took the easiest path as a cadet. Nothing seemed to bother him, and he was very supportive of others. Academics were important to him, but he didn't let them grind him down. He played on many of the company intramural teams and annually tried out for varsity basketball. Of course, company L-1 didn't place too many on that height-dominated Corps Squad team. The tactical department hardly knew Bern existed. He did occasionally receive a demerit, but he never walked the area. If he were ever singled out for anything, be it good or bad, he somehow avoided the notoriety and slipped into the trenches along with everyone else.

As we neared graduation, Bern started to consider his branch choices, and for a while he felt he should go into the Air Force. He was in the top 100 of the class, so that would not have been a problem, but at the

last minute he chose the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. After his basic officer course, he opted to take airborne and ranger training at Ft. Benning, GA. His ranger "buddy" was his roommate of four years, and they sailed through the tough training together.

His first, and only, duty assignment with the Corps of Engineers was with the 326th Combat Airborne Engineer Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division at Ft. Campbell, KY. That was his only military tour, since he resigned his commission in 1960 and began what was to be his lifelong dream, engineering products for General Electric Corporation. He was instrumental in the development of several new jet engines and was the co-inventor/co-patentee of an innovation that enhanced the overall safety of aircraft. He and a GE co-worker filed a patent application in October 1990 for "safety cables for fasteners" and received the patent #5,116,178 in May 1992.

Bern's 34 years with GE were the perfect union. He took great pleasure in his work, and they fully appreciated his many talents. He was promoted to the position of a senior supervisor of the GE cooperative effort with the French firm, SNECMA. Together they developed the CFM 56 engine that powers the Boeing 737 airliner and, under the military designation F-108, many KC-135 Strato-tankers. This engine also powers the Airbus A-320 and A-340 aircraft. Bern left an impressive legacy with the U.S. Air Force and with the French. He and his family thoroughly enjoyed their time in France, his ten years in Paris being some

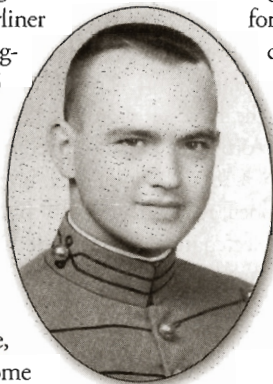
of his happiest. He became fluent in French and immersed himself in the culture.

While in France for GE, he was diagnosed with cancer and returned to the United States to a long-awaited retirement. He and his wife Joanne returned to the Cincinnati area and began the arduous chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Bern, however, continued to be his positive self. He applied his engineering skills to building and flying remote control model airplanes. Always the perfectionist, he would not give up until the plane and the flights were perfect. As a member of a local model flying club, The Flying Cardinals, he spent many evenings and weekends on the banks of the Ohio River with his friends, enjoying his model plane in the air overhead.

After a long and valiant fight, Bern finally succumbed to cancer on 25 Mar 2000. He left a loving wife Joanne, a son, Craig C. Basse of Nelsonville, OH, a daughter, Allison Tomusk of Bloomington, IN, and a granddaughter, Heili Tomusk. His mother, Iona Basse, passed away in 2001 at the age of 88.

Bern Basse will long be remembered for his sense of humor, infectious grin, unassuming modesty and genuine concern for others. Knowing how he eschewed personal praise, he might not have approved this article. He was a true character, in his own way, and we all miss his one of a kind, positive outlook on life. Well done, Bern. Be thou at peace.

—Bern's roommates:  
two at West Point  
and wife in Hebron, KY



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