

## **GROUP CAPTAIN SHAMSUL ALAM, BIR UTTAM**

Group Captain Shamsul Alam, Bir Uttam was born in 1947 in Patuakhali district. After completion of his education in Dhaka, he joined PAF Academy, Risalpur in 1964 and was commissioned in GD (P) branch on 02 July 1967. He deserted from West Pakistan on 03 June 1971 and came to Dhaka with a view to joining the Liberation War. He was arrested by the Pakistani just after arrival at Dhaka airport. They rightly realized that the then Flight Lieutenant Shamsul Alam would join the Liberation War leaving Pakistan Air Force. Being unable to obtain the desired confession from Flight Lieutenant Shamsul Alam in the jail, the Pakistani torturers tried to bring him under the jurisdiction of Court Martial but it was not successful. He was later released from jail on a general amnesty. He went home to meet his parents. After contacting the freedom fighters through news correspondent, he left the country for India on 13 September 1971. On the next day, members of the Pakistan Air Intelligence came to find him out and interrogated his parents while he was out of their reach.

Flight Lieutenant Shamsul Alam reached Agartala on 15 September 1971 and left for Kolkata after two days. He was warmly welcomed at Bangladesh Forces Headquarters. At that time there was a particular need for pilots. Flight Lieutenant Shamsul Alam was the right person for the Air Force considering his experience on transport aircraft in PAF. He reached Dimapur on 24 September 1971 and met the members of 'Kilo Flight'. Initially he started flying with DC-3 and subsequently flew Otter aircraft. The Otter aircraft was equipped with machine guns, rockets and bombs. Then he started training on different targets with the Otter.

On 03 December 1971, he along with his co-pilot got 1st opportunity to prove his skill against Pakistani occupation forces. He flew from Kailashahar at 11pm and entered into Bangladesh to strike on oil depots near Chattogram airport. The main fuel depot near Chattogram port was the target of his attack. He continued very low flying correctly despite having no adequate navigation system. He continued air strike until the extreme hit though the place was protected by anti-aircraft gun. He returned to the base after a terrible flight with extreme craftmanship avoiding enemy gunfire.

He was awarded with the gallantry award 'Bir Uttam' by the Govt of Bangladesh. Group Captain Shamsul Alam, Bir Uttam was also awarded with 'Independence Award-2017' for his outstanding contribution in our great Liberation War.