F
SKORO -63
HALBOWER -59

ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATES
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY
COLORADO 80840

26 June 1967

Dear Former Member of the Academy Fencing Team: (see names attached to cy in folder under "F"

It should please you to learn that the Most Valuable Fencer Award, which formerly memorialized Col Morris F. Taber, has recently been changed to memorialize two former Academy fencers, Capt Harlow K. Halbower, Class of 1959, and 1Lt John P. Skoro Jr., Class of 1963, both of whom were killed in action in Vietnam. This award is presented each year during June Week and was won this year by Cadet John Swanson, a second classman, who received All American honors in sabre in 1967 for the second consecutive time. I thought that you might be interested in learning of the background of the two individuals for whom the award is named, both of whom were outstanding fencers and combat pilots.

Capt Harlow K. Halbower, Class of 1959, competed in foil and lettered four times. He was Western Intercollegiate Foil Champion three times and in 1959 was presented a special award by the AF Academy Athletic Association. After graduation he completed pilot training and later served as an instructor pilot at Laredo Air Force Base, Texas, where he was named as an outstanding Military Training officer. He was scheduled to be assigned to the Air Training Command Standardization Board when he was assigned to Southeast Asia. During his combat tour as an O-1F pilot which culminated with his death, he was awarded the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, eleven Air Medals, the Purple Heart, and a number of South Vietnamese medals for gallantry. He was so highly regarded by his fellow officers that a dining hall at Bien Hoa and a student squadron building at Laredo AFB have been named for him.

1Lt John P. Skoro Jr., Class of 1963, competed in sabre and lettered three times. In addition to being team captain in 1963 he was selected to the NCAA All American team and was named the winner of the NCAA Outstanding Fencer Award during the 1963 NCAA championships. Also he was presented a special award by the AF Academy Athletic Association. After graduation he completed pilot training and was later sent to Southeast Asia. He died when his F-100 was shot down on a combat mission in South

Vietnam. Lt Skoro was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, a number of Air Medals, the Purple Heart, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

It is considered highly appropriate that the Most Valuable Fencer Award be renamed to memorialize these two graduates. Both were outstanding competitors in fencing and carried their zeal into combat operations. Both clearly exhibited the best qualities to be found in a cadet and an officer. They served as a credit to the fencing team, the Academy, the Air Force, and the nation.

George H. Hines

GEORGE H. HINES
Capt, USAF
Executive Secretary