HALBOWER, Harlow K.
Class of 1959

Captain Halbower was killed on 2 January 1966 as an O-1F pilot when his plane was hit by intensive hostile ground fire and burst into flames, spiraling downwards out of control and crashing. He was on a forward air controller mission, conducting an air strike about 15 miles west of Saignon, the Republic of Vietnam. No parachute was seen. He had flown about 300 combat missions at that time as a FAC and had flown well over 300 combat hours. He was a member of the 505th Tactical Control Group at the time. His military decorations included the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross, eleven Air Medals, the Purple Heart, and number of South Vietnamese medals. At the Academy, the Most Valuable Fencer award was memorialized for him. As a cadet, he lettered in fencing four years, was the Western Intercollegiate Foil Champion three times, and earned a special award from the AFA Athletic Association in 1959. A dining hall in Bien Hoa and the 3641st Student Squadron building at Laredo AFB (on 9 June 1966) were also named after him. He had been named an outstanding military training officer while stationed at Laredo AFB.

Halbower excelled even in high school. He lettered in football, basketball, and tennis and was on the conference champion football team in 1952. He was a member of NHS, the associate editor of his high school paper, participated in 1953 Sunflower Boys' State, and was involved in many musical groups. He was both a vocal soloist and baritone horn soloist and received five highly superior ratings at the State Music Festival. As a cadet, he made the Superintendent's Merit List his first year and the Dean's List. He went on to attend the Academic Instructors and Allied Officers School in 1962 and SOS in 1964. His name is on the USAFA War Memorial for his sacrifice for and dedication to this country.

Narrative compiled by Heather Beer, Association of Graduates intern, Summer 2005.