



**Class Narrative Class 1-68 E1  
10 July 1967 – 15 December 1967  
U.S. Army Armor School OCS**



Sometime after breakfast on Monday, 10 July 1967 the three platoons of Company E1, representing Class 1-68, were standing in company formation in the quadrangle of E Company. In the quadrangle that morning were 109 volunteers soon to officially become Basic Officer Candidates. They were being observed by three Tac Officers and the Company Commander standing on the first floor veranda when a trumpet sounded "CHARGE". Out of nowhere appeared what seemed like a hoard of Senior Officer Candidates. It's been remembered that one senior candidate jumped from the second floor veranda and landed on the dumpster in the quadrangle. Others descended from any conceivable place they could find out of sight and the very warm welcome from Class 20-67, E2 was extended to Class 1-68. 1-68 soon learned what the first three words out of their mouths were to be, and also learned that it is possible to do facing movements inside a wall locker and many other OCS specific forms of character building.

Class 1-68, E1 was the fourth and last E1 Company. It was the 37<sup>th</sup> Armor branch specific class and 49<sup>th</sup> OCS class at Fort Knox during the Vietnam War. During the twenty-three course seven OC's were recycled into the class. One came from Class 28-67, F1; three from Class 30-67, D1; two from Class 31-67, C2. Unfortunately where the seventh OC came from is unknown. Of the seven only two graduated with 1-68. Six of the original 109 were recycled to other classes. Five would graduate OCS. One with Class 3-68, F2; three with Class 4-68, D2; and one with Class 5-68, B2. Of the 116 individuals listed on the class roster maintained at the company level, thirty would either quit or be relieved from the course. On Friday, 15 December 1967, 80 Senior Officer Candidates would raise their right hands and take the oath of office and become Second Lieutenants of Armor. The guest speaker at the graduation ceremony in Gaffey Hall was COL Peter T. Russell, Commanding Officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Training Brigade, USATCA. He emphasized the quality of training the new officers had received, and their future military career. In his closing remarks he directly addressed the graduates saying, "You are the elite. Know your job and be sure your subordinates know theirs. Set the example, insist on excellence." After COL Russell's address it was announced that the class average was 84.27 and that William H. Barnhorst was the winner of the Military Stakes Course earning 908 points out of the 1000 points possible. The Distinguished Honor Graduate was Richard M. Ward. The Honor Graduate was Thomas B. Ognibene and the Distinguished Military Graduates were William H. Barnhorst, Timothy S. Darrah, Gary G. Ellis, John N. McClure, III, Anthony R. Wagner and Clarence S. "Steve" Ivie, Jr. Mrs. William Y. Robbins, wife of E Company Commander CPT William Y. Robbins, and COL Peter T. Russell pinned on Dick Wards new Second Lieutenant's bars. After the ceremony refreshments were served for the graduates and their families and guests, and the E1 company officer cadre in the mess hall of E1 in Building 1306.

Twenty-three members of the class would attend Officers Rotary Wing Aviators Course. Three class members would be killed in action. Two were helicopter pilots and one was an Infantry Recon Platoon Leader. Joining those three at Fiddler's Green are thirteen who have died since their military service. Of the sixty-four living graduates sixty have been located. However at one time the class could report, "All located or accounted for." Class member 1LT Philip L. Spackman would be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his valorous action while serving as a platoon leader in E Troop, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Squadron, 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, Americal Division.

COL Malcolm Roberts, III, (ret.), LTC Hugh L. Mills, Jr., (ret.) and 1LT Philip L. Spackman have been inducted into the OCS Hall of Fame at Fort Benning, Georgia.

15 December 2018