



**Class Narrative Class 22-66 F1  
28 April 1966 – 4 October 1966  
U.S. Army Armor School OCS**



Class 22-66 started OCS on Thursday 28 April 1966 as the eleventh OCS class at Fort Knox since the Korean War. They were the third Armor branch specific class and the first Company F1 class. However early in the days of their training they were called “F Troop” by the other ten classes. Being compared with the satirical television sitcom about a U.S. Cavalry unit of the same name and Native American Indians in the Wild West during the 1860’s, the class turned the moniker into a morale booster. An esprit that was instilled in other Company F classes and evidenced by their distinctive red and white cavalry guidon and “The Rock” in front of their barracks. The hot summer months at Fort Knox eventually gave way to cooler temperatures of Fall and graduation on 4 October 1966.

Luckily the Armor School Research Library had copies of the class rosters for both Phase I and Phase II. The Phase I roster lists 122 names with an addition of nine individuals from Class 14-66 and 18-66 for a total of 131 OC’s assigned to the class for the first phase of the training program. Twenty-seven of the 131 would either quit the program or be relieved. Four were recycled/turned-back to Class 25-66, D2 and just one of the four would graduate with that class. Phase II started with 100 Intermediate OC’s and seven OC’s from Class 18-66 would join the class for a total of 107 for the last ten weeks of training. During Phase II six would be recycled/turned-back to Class 25-66, D2 and graduate. Eight individuals would be relieved from the program and Class 22-66 would graduate and commission 93 Second Lieutenants.

Robert H. Howard was the winner of Military Stakes. Unfortunately it is unknown how many points he earned out of a possible 1000. The Distinguished Honor Graduate was Earl F. Moore, Jr. The Honor Graduate was Robert H. Howard and the Distinguished Military Graduates were Richard J. Ochocki, Hans U. Ploog, Ralph E. Mullens, Jerome O. Ronningen, John W. Boczar, Douglas F. Ricks, and Arthur A. Burks. Officer Candidate Brigade Commander LTC Bernard E. McKeever, Jr. presided at the graduation ceremony and introduced COL Jack L. Balthis as the guest speaker. COL Balthis was the U.S. Army Armor Center G-3. Speaking to the graduates he emphasized the use of NCOs in the exercise of leadership. He added, “Know your job, set and demand high standards, and have compassion for your men.” The class response was given by 2LT James M. Cooke, Jr. After the ceremony the graduates, their families and friends, and company officer cadre met in the F1 Mess Hall and Day Room where refreshments were served.

The following seven graduates were retained as Tac Officers: Roger T. Courtney for Classes 11-67 and 27-67, G1; Robert H. Howard for Class 12-67, F1; George E. Meacham for Classes 8-67 and 24-67, B2; Ralph E. Mullens for Classes 17-67 and 31-67, C2; Joe L. Riggins for Classes 7-67 and 23-67, C1, and Class 5-68, B2; Michael W. Thorpe for Classes 13-67 and 29-67, G2; Gary D. Williams for Classes 20-67 and 2-68, E2. Assigned as Tac Officers at Engineer OCS at Fort Belvoir were John W. Boczar, Richard J. Ochocki, Hans U. Ploog and Thomas E. Ragland. Twenty-two graduates would attend the Rotary Wing Aviators Course. Seven members of the class would be killed in action or die from wounds received during their tour in Vietnam. Eighteen others have joined them at Fiddler’s Green. Thanks to the unrelenting efforts of class member Ralph Mullens sixty-two members of the class have been located. Only six have not been accounted for. In the August 5, 1966 edition of Inside The Turret there was a news article written by class member Intermediate Candidate Isaac W. Duggan, Jr. under the title “Candidate Corner”. In the article Duggan mentions that the class had entered the second phase of the OC program, that LTC McKeever was the new OC Brigade commander, and that the “F Troop Rock” received a bronze plaque. In part it read, “I am the symbol of strength, enthusiasm, and endurance. Live by me and you will, with vigorous determination, endure the hardships, the physical and mental strain of becoming officers.”

4 October 2018