

**MARK ALBERT BABSON JR****Class 37A-67**

**MARK ALBERT BABSON JR**  
is honored on Panel 17W, Row 79 of  
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

**Full Name:** MARK ALBERT BABSON JR  
**Wall Name:** MARK A BABSON JR  
**Date of Birth:** 3/17/1946  
**Date of Casualty:** 10/14/1969  
**Date of Death:** 10/14/1969  
**Home of Record:** MURFREESBORO  
**County of Record:** RUTHERFORD COUNTY  
**State:** TN  
**Branch of Service:** ARMY  
**Rank:** CAPT  
**Casualty Country:** SOUTH VIETNAM  
**Casualty Province:** TUYEN DUC



CPT Babson was a fixed-wing aviator and served with the 225th Aviation Company, 1st Aviation Brigade. He was piloting a twin-engine OV-1C Mohawk that crashed during a mission near Tuyen Duc. He and his observer were both killed in the incident. They were listed as MIA for nearly eleven months until the wreckage of the aircraft was found on September 12, 1970.

**Some of the best are lost**

Babson was a fun loving guy in my platoon from March 67 until October 2, 1967. I was in OCS class 37A-67 with him and until today did not know that he didn't make it home. A tear of sorrow came to my eye when I found this site and his name. I always liked to think that we all made it home and had families and long lives. I'll always remember the price Babs paid for making our country free so that others could enjoy it's freedoms.

Posted by: Kevin J. Jorgenson  
Relationship: We served together  
April 10, 2007

Mark is buried at Stone River National Battlefield.

## togetherness in training

I was a classmate of Mark at OCS Ft. Sill, OK. Class 37-67 3 Oct 1967, Do not forget those who gave the best they had for their country, for they were the best we had.

Posted by: Wayne A. Backes

Relationship: classmate in OCS

July 29, 1999

### **From the History of the 225 th Aviation Company**

#### **ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT HISTORY OF THE 225th AVIATION COMPANY (SURVEILLANCE AIRPLANE) 223D COMBAT SUPPORT AVIATION BATTALION 1st AVIATION BRIGADE**

**1 January 1969 - 31 December 1969 and excerpt from 1970**

**27 - 30 May 1969:** More of the same. Ben Het is really catching "Billy Hell". We are still supporting the other missions within II Corps, but our hearts are with the guys in Ben Het. 2LT Duck Williams received heavy anti-aircraft fire today but, once again, evasive action on his part prevented him from sustaining any damages. Our G-2 at IFFV feels that a major ground attack could come at anytime and has put us at maximum effort to try and locate any sizeable enemy ground force before they can make ready.

Another new pilot today. 1LT Mark A. Babson is fresh from school and ready to go.

#### **AUGUST 1969:**

The month of August, 1969, was in full swing with the departure from Phu Hiep by Phantomhawk 12 piloted by LT Mark Babson. His departure time - 0123 hours, 1 August 1969. All in all, the Phantomhawks would attempt 3,185 visual, photo, SLAR, and infrared targets.

**6 October 1969:** Again today weather was not on our side and made it impossible to even get in the area. We'll try again tomorrow.

1LT Mark "Short Round" Babson Jr. is no longer a Lieutenant, he received his Captain's bars today. Congratulations to you Captain Babson.

**10 October 1969:** The rains continued to come down all night last night and it doesn't look like its "fixing" to let up any day now. It looks so bad that 1SG Boone approached MAJ Peterson about a ten man detail to start working on the "Arc".

In spite of the rain and low visibility, by 0830, eight Phantomhawks have departed Phu Hiep to go on SLAR, infrared, photo, and search and rescue missions. After completing his mission, Phantomhawk 21, with CPT Mark "Short Round" Babson at the controls, had to land at Nha Trang due to weather at Phu Hiep. The weather continued to deteriorate and G-2 Air called to cancel missions for the remainder of the day.

**14 October 1969:** Once again that dark cloud of tragedy hangs low over the 225th. At round 1800 hours Operations receives word that Phantomhawk 14 missed a position report to coastal center at 1735 hours. Phantomhawk 14, with CPT Mark Babson at the controls and SP4 James T. Savage as T.O., departed Phu Hiep at 1540 hours for an infrared mission in the Da Lat area. By 1930 hours ramp checks had been made at Nha Trang, Phan Rang, and Cam Rhan Bay, all with negative results. By 1940 hours CPT Doug Davis, the Operations Officer, was forced to declare CPT Babson and SP4 Savage as missing in action. CPT Steve Hammons and PFC David J. Bossert in Phantomhawk 12 were diverted from a SLAR mission into the Phantomhawk 14 area of operations in hope of receiving a beeper signal or some sign from their fallen comrades. All through the night a Phantomhawk is on station. Well above the clouds and rain and turbulence it flies in the dark sky as it cuts its way through giant halls of silent air, its crew waiting, hoping.....listening.

**15 October 1969:** By 0710 hours all the preparations, briefings, coordination, and last minute checks had been made and 13 Phantomhawks were on their way to the search area, each with two men on board, all secretly hoping that they would be the ones who spot the missing crew. At first light, CPT Dugan Lawrence took off in an effort to duplicate CPT Babson's last mission. He was to fly each identical target until completing the mission, then reverse course and fly them again backwards. His mission was fruitless and discouraging. The efforts of the others who searched all day were about the same.

For seven days, from daylight to dark the Phantomhawks searched for their missing members, each day with fading hope. There were some suspicious sightings and several reports of distress radio signals, of the type transmitted by emergency survival radios. Each was checked out thoroughly, but none produced what we were looking for. After seven days with no trace or sign of either the crew or the aircraft, the Phantomhawks must turn their efforts to supporting the troops throughout II Corps, but in each one of our hearts remains a very secret and very strong hope, that someday soon our comrades will come marching out of the jungle.

**October 1969**, a rather stormy month for the 225th Aviation Company. Twice this month the Phantomhawks were taxed by fate with the highest price that can be paid. We salute our comrades: CPT Mark Babson; PFC Kenneth Cunningham; 1LT Paul Grafee; SP4 James Savage. You will always remain in our hearts.....so push away your feelings, do your job this year; if nothing else, so your son does not come here.

**7 September 1970:** A letter is received from Mr. Bill Noland (recent Phantomhawk departee). Bill informs us that Mark Babson's mother (CPT Babson has been MIA since 14 October 1969) saw Mark on a North Vietnam POW film. Speculation as to the fate of our comrade is running rampant in the company.

**12 September 1970:** On 14 October 1969 CPT Mark Babson and SP4 James Savage climber into Phantomhawk 14 for an Infrared mission in the Dalat area. At 1540 hours Phantomhawk 14 was cleared for takeoff by Phu Hiep tower. The power levers went forward, 14 accelerated to take off speed, rotated, and became airborne. The gear handle was placed UP, 3000 psi hydraulic pressure broke the down locks and folded the gear up into the wheel wells where they slammed into the up locks for the last time. 14 requested "Right turn out and departure to the southwest" and Phantomhawk 14 was seen for the last time. At 1800 hours a call was received by operations the Phantomhawk 14 was overdue on a radio report. At 1940 after thorough radio and ramp checks all over II Corps 14 is declared missing. For seven days Phantomhawk aircraft look for 14 to no avail, no trace. It is as if 14 disappeared from the face of the earth. To this day all our pilots flying in the area of Dalat look for the wreckage of 14. Then chance, hand of fate, coincidence or whatever took charge just five days after receipt of the previously mentioned letter. **Phantomhawk 14 is found on the side of a ridge about 25 miles west of Nha Trang, BP 5846. Both men are still in the cockpit. So after almost 11 months the worrying and uncertainty are over and the end of a long story is written.**