

11 May 1972

A-37B 69-6345 8 SOS, 377 ABW, USAF, Bien Hoa
1Lt Michael Joseph Blassie (KIA)

The USAF lost three aircraft in the defence of An Loc on 11 May when the NVA made an all-out attempt to capture the city. Maj James Connally and his wingman, 1Lt Blassie, were dropping napalm about two miles northwest of the defended perimeter when Blassie's Dragonfly was hit by 23mm ground fire. The leader and an FAC pilot saw 1Lt Blassie's aircraft stream fuel from the wings as it slowly rolled inverted, crashed and exploded in the jungle but they did not see any sign of an ejection or a parachute. The aircraft crashed close to enemy positions and it was not until 31 October that friendly forces could reach the area to investigate the crash site. A graduate of the Air Force Academy, Michael Blassie had arrived at Bien Hoa in January 1972 and was on his 132nd combat mission when he was shot down.