

## WILLIE B. BRADFORD

1st Squad, 1st Platoon, "D" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
SP4, E4, RA54361528, MOS 11B40  
Home of Record: Blytheville, AR

Date of Birth: July 23, 1944, Age at time of loss: 23, Married  
4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam  
Start of Tour: February 13, 1968, Date of Casualty: March 9, 1968, Days in Country: 25  
Casualty Type A1, MFW, Panel 43E - Row 065



4TH INFANTRY  
DIVISION



1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION  
50<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY

"D" COMPANY



1<sup>ST</sup> PLATOON



SPECIALIST  
4<sup>TH</sup> CLASS



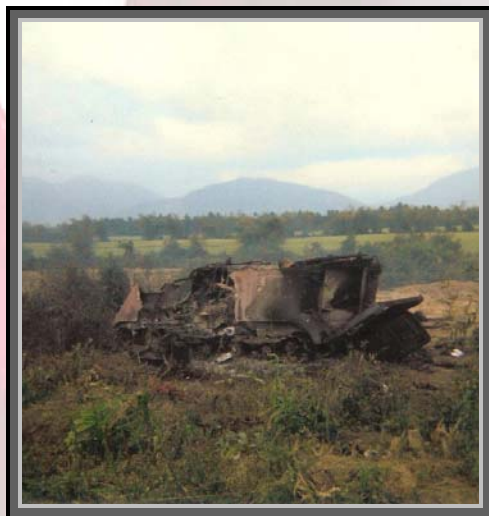
INFANTRYMAN

Willie B Bradford was killed in action during what has become known as the Battle of LZ Litts, during the pre-dawn hours of March 9th, 1968. Also killed in the battle were Edward Sternin, Joseph Perez and Melvin Leavell.

At approximately 3:15 AM, the 8th Battalion of the 22nd North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment, as part of it's mission to reinforce the 2nd VC Regiment, attacked "D" Company of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry, with a continuous B40 Rocket Barrage that was first reported as incoming Mortar fire. All 19 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) in the formation were hit by enemy fires with one being totally destroyed and four others severely damaged

The primary attack came from the West and Northwest, with other assaults from the south and north. Bradford was killed when an incoming mortar round exploded near the tent he had pitched behind his APC. Medic Robert Melendez remembers he had a massive throat wound and likely died immediately. He was in Jerry Couch's Squad and assigned to APC # 419 during the contact. Jerry remembers that Bradford had a "premonition" that he would die in battle & his vision proved correct on his 25th day in Vietnam.

Illumination Flares had been prudently prepared by Bob Gold before the battle & when fired, revealed hundreds of enemy troops attacking in various sized formations!

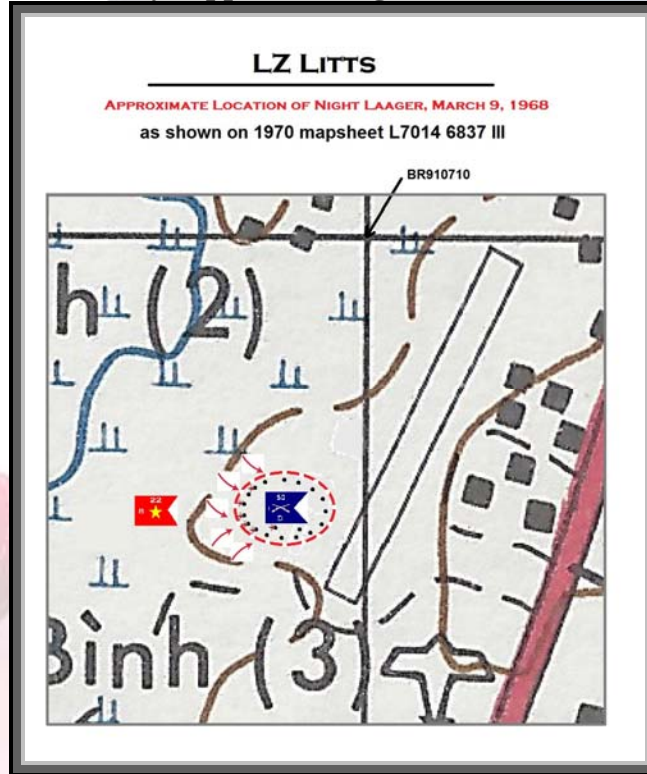


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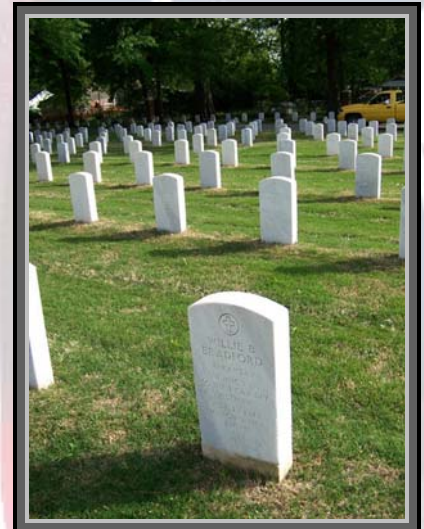
Fifty Caliber and M-60 Machine Guns as well as "close in" mortar fires, M-16 rifle and grenades rained a hot counter attack on the enemy and over 100 NVA bodies were counted after first light.

The Delta Company Commanding Officer, Captain Bruce Braun, was wounded in the initial volley & the main communications antennae were "knocked out" causing a temporary lapse in reporting the events to the Battalion TOC (Tactical Operations Center) at nearby LZ Uplift. During the battle, a brave Medivac Helicopter crew survived a crash caused by enemy fire and crawled into the friendly APC encirclement. Medivac of wounded was not effected until 0630 hours. Below is a portion of a mapsheet showing the site of the battle just west of the pictured LZ Runway, Approximate grid BR909707:

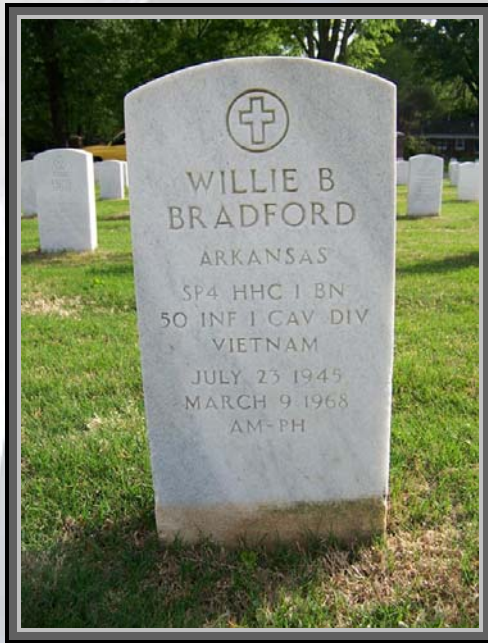


Several personal accounts of this battle are available in the 50th Infantry Association Archive Files.

Willie Bradford is buried at Memphis National Cemetery, 3568 Townes Avenue, Memphis, TN 38122, Section H, Site 5395.



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**WILLIE B. BRADFORD'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:**



**Combat Infantry Badge**



**Silver Star**

**Air Medal**

**Purple Heart w/OLC**

**National Defense**

**Vietnam Service**

**Vietnam Campaign**