



1ST
FIELD FORCE
VIETNAM



1ST BATTALION
50TH INFANTRY



"D" COMPANY



STAFF SERGEANT



INFANTRY

FRED DENKINS, JR.

"D" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry
Staff Sergeant, E6, RA278363275, MOS 64C30
Home of Record: Cincinnati, OH

Date of Birth: June 7, 1936, Age at time of loss: 33, Married
I Field Force Vietnam, Binh Thuan Province, Republic of Vietnam
Start of Tour: January 20, 1970, Date of Casualty: May 3, 1970, Days in Country: 103
Casualty Type A1, Gun, small arms fire, Panel 11W - Row 090

Fred Denkins was killed in action when at 1:45 AM the Headquarters base camp for Task Force South, 1st Field Force, Vietnam, LZ Betty, was attacked by a force believed to be the 482B Liberation Front Battalion. The attack consisted of approximately 125 rounds of enemy 60mm and 82mm mortar fire, an unknown number of B40/B41 rocket rounds and "Sapper" probes in at least 4 separate locations of the base perimeter. At several locations, the perimeter was penetrated. One Bunker position was overrun and held for about 1/2 hour and 2 other bunkers were destroyed as well as numerous wheeled vehicles and several helicopter aircraft.

Reaction was hampered by base policy which called for weapons to be secured while forces were in camp, however, once weaponry was obtained, the enemy was counter-attacked and forced to retreat. A large force was spotted at a location Northwest of the perimeter and was fired upon by Artillery and Helicopter Gunships, resulting in 14 enemy killed. Sweeps of the perimeter at dawn revealed numerous blood trails and dozens of drag marks indicating a large number of wounded and dead were dragged away under the cover of darkness.

Also killed during the contact were 50th Infantry men SP4 Roger Craig, SP4 Bob Haney, SP6 Tom Smith and SP4 Ken Thomas. From the 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment was SP5 Perry LeClerc. Also killed was an unidentified US Government Civilian conducting classified business in Binh Thuan Province. 35 other U.S. soldiers were wounded.

Although the fact that the weaponry of most base camp units being locked has been "cause for question" for years, command considered the war was far from their home base and allowed the lack of casualties and major contacts for the first 4 months of 1970 to influence their judgment towards a more "stateside" frame of mind.

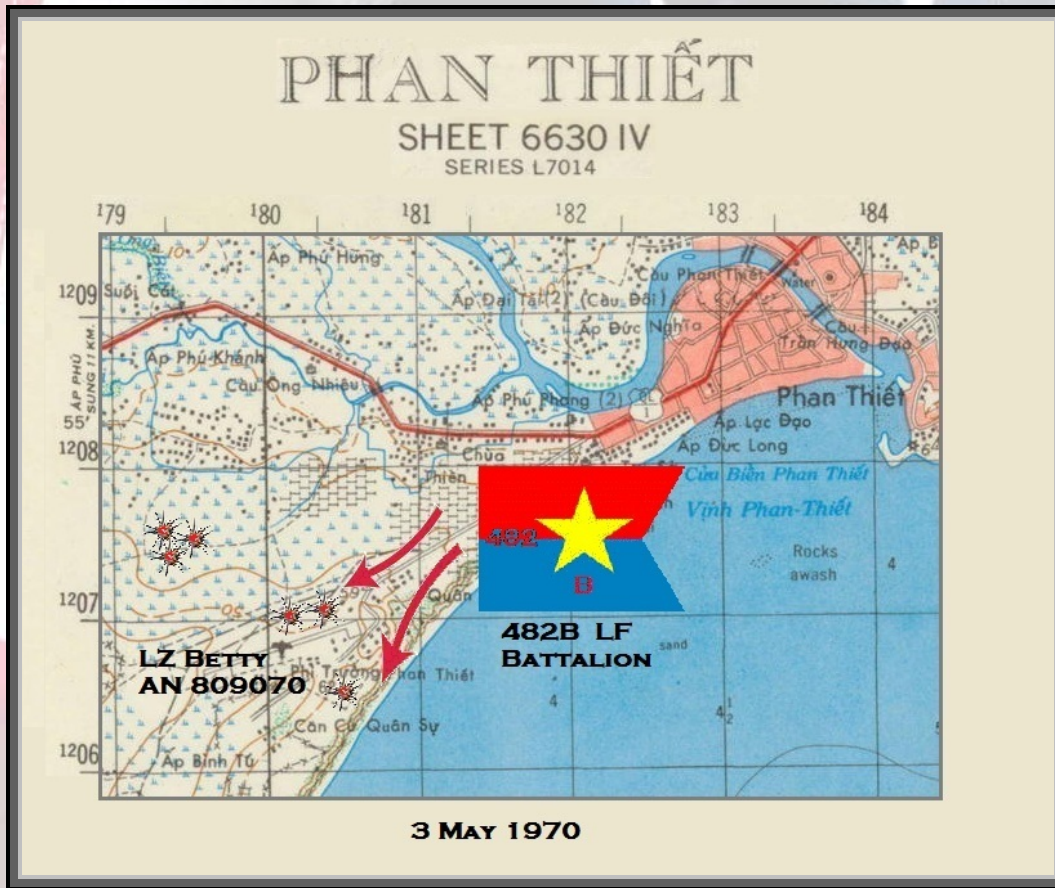
Enemy losses were 14 Killed (By Body Count) and 1 POW captured who confirmed that the 482B LF was responsible for the attack. 6 U.S. soldiers were killed, 7 U.S. Helicopters were destroyed and 6 more seriously damaged. Two 3/4 ton trucks, One 5 Ton Truck and One Jeep were destroyed as well as numerous buildings and structures being damaged, including the HQ of "D" Company, 50th Infantry and the Graves and Registration Quonset Hut.

Currently, no photo exists for this man.

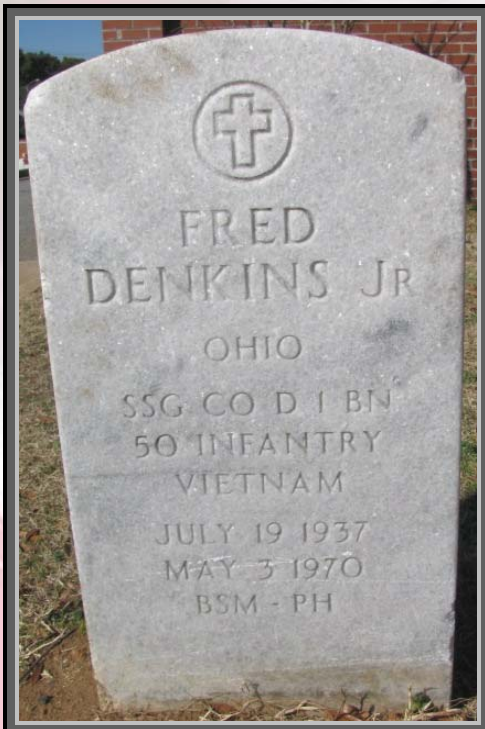
If you can supply us with a photo, we would be grateful...and see that it gets distributed to the appropriate Internet memorial web pages.

Contact Jim Sheppard:
kiss-ac@juno.com

A map of the location (AN809070) is shown below, with the position of the Attacking Force Main Body at AN795075.



Fred Denkins is buried at Fort Benning Post Cemetery, Ft. Benning & Custer Roads, Fort Benning, Muscogee County, Georgia.



Continued...

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS OF FRED DENKINS:



THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL
WITH "V" DEVICE FOR VALOR

HEADQUARTERS I FIELD FORCE VIETNAM

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 636

30 MAY, 1970

FOR HEROISM IN CONNECTION WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM: STAFF SERGEANT DENKINS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ON 3 MAY 1970, WHILE SERVING AT LANDING ZONE BETTY. ON THAT DATE, AT APPROXIMATELY 0200 HOURS, AN ENEMY FORCE OF UNKNOWN SIZE PENETRATED THE COMPOUND'S PERIMETER, AND SUCCESSFULLY OVERRAN ONE OF THE BUNKERS. AS THEY ADVANCED INTO THE COMPOUND, THE ENEMY DELIVERED DEVASTATING ROCKET, GRENADE AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND SMALL ARMS FIRE ON NEARBY BUILDINGS AND THE OUTNUMBERED DEFENSE FORCE. REALIZING THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION, STAFF SERGEANT DENKINS QUICKLY ORGANIZED A REACTION FORCE, LOADING THEM INTO A VEHICLE, AND SPED TOWARDS THE BESIEGED PERIMETER. AS THE VEHICLE APPROACHED THE CONTACT AREA, THE ENEMY BEGAN DIRECTING HEAVY SMALL ARMS FIRE ON IT'S OCCUPANTS. WITHOUT REGARD FOR HIS OWN SAFETY, STAFF SERGEANT DENKINS REMAINED INSIDE THE TRUCK PROVIDING COVER FOR HIS MEN UNTIL THEY WERE SAFELY DISMOUNTED. AS HE ATTEMPTED TO REACH COVER HIMSELF, A ROCKET STRUCK THE VEHICLE, CRITICALLY WOUNDING SERGEANT DENKINS. DESPITE HIS SERIOUS WOUNDS, HE CRAWLED ACROSS THE ROAD IN SEARCH OF MEDICAL AID FOR THE WOUNDED, BUT SUCCEMPTED TO HIS INJURIES BEFORE HE REACHED HELP. STAFF SERGEANT DENKINS' HEROIC ACTIONS WEREIN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.



Bronze
Star
(Valor)



Purple
Heart



National
Defense



Vietnam
Service



Vietnam
Campaign