



CORTLAND ELLIS DENNISON

Mortar Platoon, "C" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry
Private First Class, E3, Posthumous Promotion to CPL, US51945449, MOS 11C10
Home of Record: Cave City, KY

Date of Birth: November 18, 1947, Age at time of loss: 20, Single
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate), Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam
Start of Tour: March 12, 1968, Date of Casualty: May 5, 1968, Days in Country: 54
Casualty Type A1, MFW, Panel 55E - Row 009

"Ellis" Dennison was in the Mortar Platoon of Charlie Company during the Battle of An Boa in Binh Dinh Province (May 5-7 1968).



At noon, on May 5, 1/50th "A" Company forces were attacked and outnumbered 10 to 1 by a regiment of the North Vietnamese Army. "A" Company forces were overrun and took heavy casualties when Charlie Company was called in to reinforce the besieged Alpha Company. Upon arrival, the enemy, who had fallen silent to allow the "C" Company troops to enter the ambush zone, opened fire with an intense and sustained barrage of small arms, automatic weapons and B40 Rocket fire from three sides. Former Charlie Company man Bill Bontemps remembers: "Ellis and I were on the same mortar track as we entered the contact area on May 5th...dropping mortar rounds close-in on the surrounding enemy positions. Sometime after the "A" Company KIAs had been collected, Ellis moved to a different Armored Personnel Carrier where his arm was nearly completely torn off by fragmentation from an RPG round. His platoon Sergeant held him all the way back to the Aid Station at LZ Uplift & cried when there was nothing he could do to save him. Ellis passed out and never regained consciousness.

Fierce fighting ensued on both 1/50th Companies and additional reinforcements from "B" Company, 1/50th Infantry and "B" Company, 1/69th Armor were called in to battle the huge enemy force.

Condensed description of the Battle of An Bao:

<http://www.ichiban1.org/pdf/Memorial/AnBaoCondensed.pdf>

A map of the location of the Battle of An Bao in Binh Dinh Province is shown below:



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Below are photos of Ellis and members of the Mortar Platoon taken by Bill Bontemps.



Below are photos of Ellis and members of the Mortar Platoon taken by Ed Alvey.



Cortland Ellis Dennison is buried at Cave City Cemetery, Old Bardstown & Cemetery Roads, Cave City, Barron County, Kentucky....pictured below (Left) and Headstone (Right)



Continued...

CORTLAND ELLIS DENNISON'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:



Combat Infantry Badge



HQ 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 145?

26 MAY 1968

FOR DISTINGUISHING HIMSELF BY OUTSTANDING MERITORIOUS SERVICE IN CONNECTION WITH GROUND OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM DURING THE PERIOD FROM MARCH 1968 TO MAY 1968. THROUGH HIS UNTIRING EFFORTS AND PROFESSIONAL ABILITY, HE CONSISTENTLY OBTAINED OUTSTANDING RESULTS. HE WAS QUICK TO GRASP THE IMPLICATIONS OF NEW PROBLEMS WITH WHICH HE WAS FACED AS A RESULT OF THE EVER-CHANGING SITUATIONS INHERENT IN THE COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATION AND TO FIND WAYS AND MEANS TO SOLVE THOSE PROBLEMS. THE ENERGETIC APPLICATION OF THIS EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE HAS MATERIALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFORTS OF THE UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM TO ASSIST THAT COUNTRY IN RIDDING ITSELF OF THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO ITS FREEDOM. HIS INITIATIVE, ZEAL, SOUND JUDGMENT AND DEVOTION TO DUTY HAVE BEEN IN THE HIGHEST TRADITION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT ON HIM AND ON THE MILITARY SERVICE.



Bronze Star*

Purple Heart

National Defense

Vietnam Service

Vietnam Campaign

* The award of the Bronze Star for Ellis Dennison is "Unconfirmed". Although copies of the General Orders for most of the others killed in action during the Battle of An Bao are in the National archives, quite a few orders were missing. Since it was practically "SOP" to issue at least a Bronze Star to a man Killed in Action, we "assume" Dennison would have received this award.