



**173RD AIRBORNE
BRIGADE**



**1ST BATTALION 50TH
INFANTRY**

1ST PLATOON



"A" COMPANY



SERGEANT



INFANTRYMAN

THOMAS FRANKLIN HERKINS

1st Platoon, "A" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry
Specialist 4th Class, E4, Posthumous Promotion to SGT, US51800950, MOS 11B20
Home of Record: Brookville, OH
Date of Birth: June 26, 1947, Age at time of loss: 21, Single
I Field Force Vietnam, Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam
Start of Tour: May 6, 1968, Date of Casualty: August 24, 1968, Days in Country: 110
Casualty Type A1, Gun, small arms fire, Panel 47W - Row 003

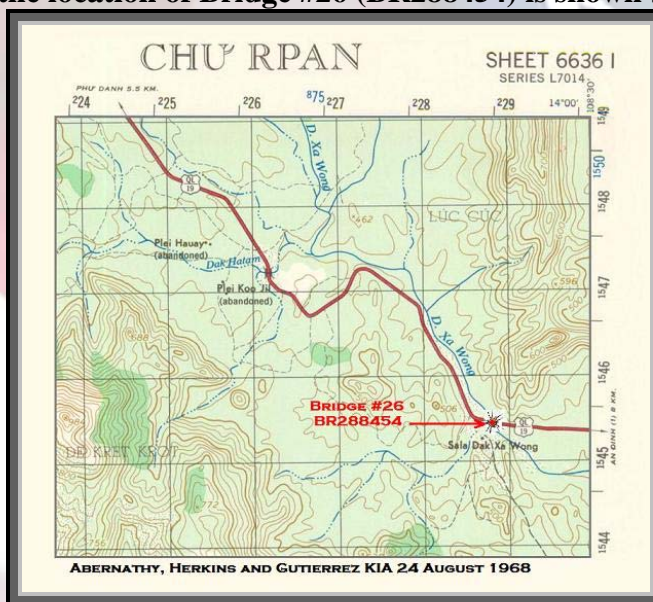
At 0245 hours on 24 August, 1968, Bridge number 26, located at map grid coordinates BR288454 (See map below) came under a heavy ground attack from the South by an estimated reinforced enemy platoon. Small Arms, Automatic Weapons, Grenade Launchers and B40 Rockets were used in the attack.

The initial volley of rocket fire hit the command bunker, killing Platoon Leader 1LT Daniel Abernathy and PFC Al Gutierrez and Sergeant Thomas Herkins.

Artillery was called into the area at 0253 hours. The enemy had overrun the western end of the bridge within 5 minutes of the initial attack and rocket volley. Fighting, included hand to hand combat, took place between elements of the Scout Platoon and the enemy Company on the bridge. The remaining element of the Scout Platoon fell back, carrying the wounded to Bridge number 25 for medical evacuation.

A counter attack by the Scout Platoon retook bridge 26, which was secured at 0330 hours.

The attack resulted in the three 50th Infantry men being killed and 6 others wounded out of a total of 11 men who manned the bridge 26 positions that night. 10 unexploded satchel charges were found on the bridge. Although no enemy bodies were found, large pools of blood and heavy blood trails were found on and near the bridge. A map of the location of Bridge #26 (BR288454) is shown below,



Continued...

Tom Herkins is buried at Dayton Memorial Park Cemetery, 8135 North Dixie Drive, Dayton, Montgomery County, Ohio 45414, pictured on the right:



Read an article published In Tom's hometown newspaper 40 years after his death: <http://www.ichiban1.org/pdf/Memorial/HerkinsArticle2.pdf>

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS OF TOM HERKINS



Combat Infantry Badge



HQ 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 2241

4 SEPTEMBER 1968

FOR HEROISM IN CONNECTION WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE. SPECIALIST HERKINS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ON 24 AUGUST, 1968, IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. ON THIS DAY, AT 0245 HOURS, A REINFORCED ENEMY PLATOON MOVED UNDER COVER OF THE WINDY AND MOONLESS NIGHT TO ATTACK SPECIALIST HERKINS' POSITION WITH HEAVY SMALL ARMS AND ROCKET FIRE. SPECIALIST HERKINS REACTED INSTANTLY TO THE ATTACK BY PLACING EFFECTIVE FIRE ON THE ENEMY. WITHIN TEN MINUTES, SPECIALIST HERKINS NOTED THAT THERE WERE STILL TWO WOUNDED SOLDIERS LYING IN THE PATH OF THE ENEMY ATTACK. UNHESITATINGLY, HE RAN BACK INTO THE ENEMY ATTACK IN AN ATTEMPT TO SAVE HIS WOUNDED COMRADES. WHILE ATTEMPTING TO RESCUE HIS FELLOWS, SPECIALIST HERKINS HAD TO FIGHT HAND TO HAND WITH THE ENEMY. HOWEVER, BEFORE HE COULD REACH THE WOUNDED, HE WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED. SPECIALIST HERKINS' PERSONAL BRAVERY, CONCERN FOR HIS FELLOW TROOPERS AND COMPLETE DEVOTION TO DUTY WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT ON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.



Bronze Star

Purple Heart

National Defense

Vietnam Service

Vietnam Campaign