



**4TH INFANTRY
DIVISION**



**1ST BATTALION
50TH INFANTRY**

"D" COMPANY



**1ST PLATOON,
2ND SQUAD**



**PRIVATE
1ST CLASS**



INFANTRYMAN

MELVIN RANDOLPH "CURLY" LEAVELL

**2nd Squad, 1st Platoon, "D" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry
PFC, E3, US53452975, MOS 11B10**

Home of Record: Atlanta, GA

**Date of Birth: January 30, 1942, Age at time of loss: 26, Married
4th Infantry Division, Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam**

**Start of Tour: December 17, 1967, Date of Casualty: March 9, 1968, Days in Country: 83
Casualty Type A1, MFW, Panel 43E - Row 068**

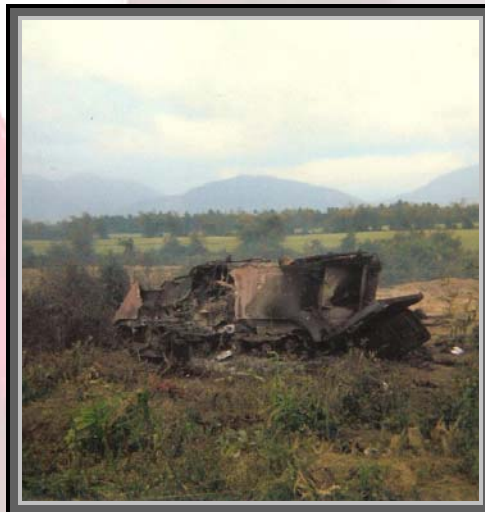
Melvin Leavell, who liked being called "Curly", was killed in action during what has become known as the Battle of LZ Litts, during the pre-dawn hours of March 9th, 1968. Also killed in the battle were Edward Sternin, Joseph Perez and Willie Bradford.



At approximately 3:15 AM, the 8th Battalion of the 22nd North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment, as part of its 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!

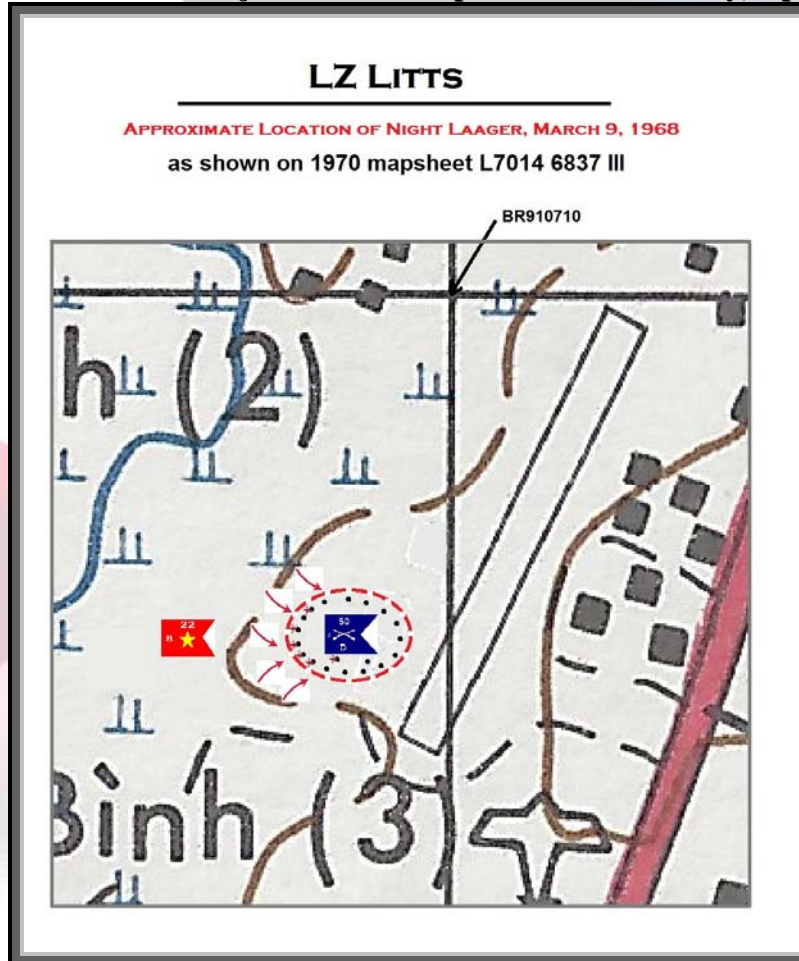


Continued...

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 the 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.

Melvin Leavell is buried at New Salem Baptist Church Cemetery, 836 New Salem Road, Kennesaw, Cobb County, Georgia 30152. Association Historian Jim Sheppard visited the location to obtain a close-up photo of Leavell taken from the photo appliqué on his grave stone. The Church Building Superintendent, Bill Gaddy, served in Bong Son with the 173rd Airborne from 1969 to 1970. Melvin Leavell's headstone is pictured on the right.



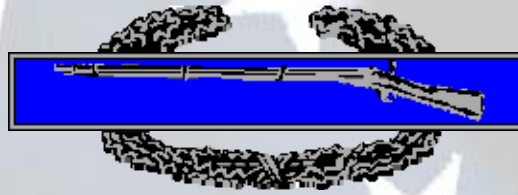
Continued...

"All Wars" memorial located at the cemetery where Melvin Leavell is buried:

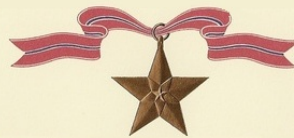


A member of the Leavell family has died in every major war since the Civil War!

MELVIN R LEAVELL'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:



Combat Infantry Badge



THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL
WITH "V" DEVICE FOR VALOR

HQ, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 3056

10 MAY, 1968

FOR HEROISM, NOT INVOLVING PARTICIPATION IN AERIAL FLIGHT, IN CONNECTION WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. SPECIALIST FOUR LEAVELL DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTION ON 9 MARCH 1968, WHILE SERVING WITH COMPANY D, 1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 50TH INFANTRY DURING A COMBAT MISSION IN BINH DINH PROVINCE, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. WHEN HIS UNIT CAME UNDER AN ENEMY MORTAR AND GROUND ATTACK, AND HIS ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER WAS HIT BY A ROCKET ROUND, SPECIALIST LEAVELL IMMEDIATELY BEGAN MOVING HIS INJURED COMRADES TO SAFETY. AT THIS TIME HIS VEHICLE WAS HIT BY ANOTHER ROCKET ROUND AND SPECIALIST LEAVELL WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED. HIS DISPLAY OF PERSONAL BRAVERY AND DEVOTION TO DUTY WAS IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.



Bronze
Star



Purple
Heart



National
Defense



Vietnam
Service



Vietnam
Campaign