



**1ST CAVALRY
DIVISION
(AIRMOBILE)**



**1ST BATTALION
50THTH INFANTRY**



"A" COMPANY



**SPECIALIST
FOURTH CLASS**



INFANTRY

BERNARD PHILLIP MEINEN, JR.

4th Platoon, "A" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry

Specialist 4th Class, E4, US56497781, MOS 11B20

Home of Record: Chippewa Falls, WI

Date of Birth: May 13, 1948, Age at time of loss: 19, Single

1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam

Date of Battle: December 15, 1967, Died of Wounds: December 20, 1967

Start of Tour: September 1, 1967, Days in Country: 110

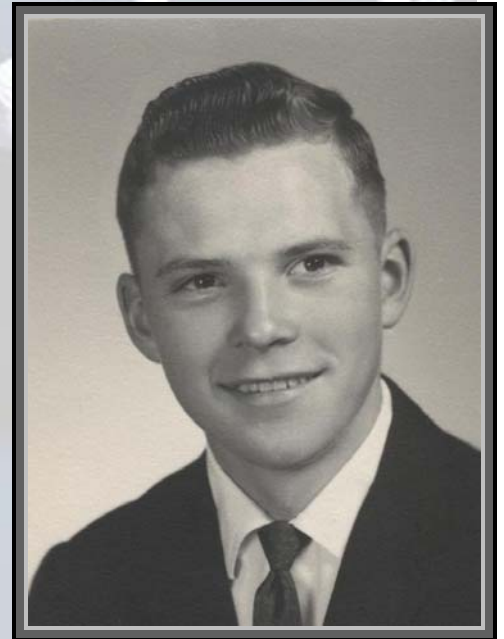
Casualty Type A2, MFW, Panel 32E - Row 031

Bernard Meinen was seriously wounded on December 15, 1967, during the Battle of Tam Quan which stretched from December 7 through Christmas of 1967, Fighting was centered near the village of My An (2) and near the Village of Truong Lam (1). He died of his wounds 5 days later on December 20th.

On the 15th, at 0818 hours, fighting was initiated by Company C, 1st Battalion (Airborne) 12th Infantry of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). They met with heavy resistance in the vicinity of map grid coordinates 918053 (Map located on page 2). These 12th Infantry Soldiers were joined by Meinen's Company A, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry at 1455 hours and advanced on the same enemy positions after intensive tactical air strikes and an artillery preparation were placed on these enemy positions to their north.

Action was described by 1st of the 12th Squad Leader Doug Warden in his book "Boy Sergeant", which is paraphrased below:

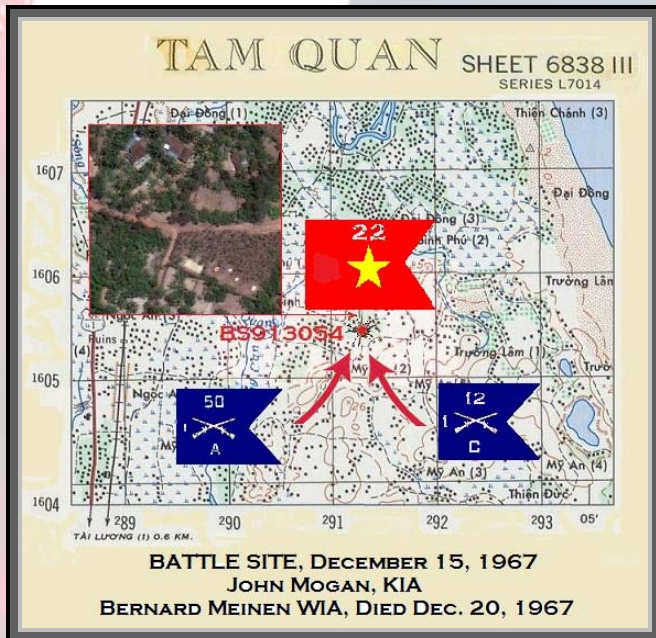
"We were assembled for an assault on the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) positions directly to our front. My squad was put on the right flank of the entire company's assault line. Several APCs (Armored Personnel Carriers) from the 1st Bn (M), 50th Infantry had joined us. We got on line and began our assault. We were all walking about 5 to 6 meters apart and firing at anything that even remotely looked like the enemy. The APCs were firing their .50 caliber and M60 machine guns. We heard a loud boom to our left and I saw both the man in the APC Tank Commander's hatch and the .50 caliber machine gunner disappear from view. Their APC had taken a direct frontal hit from a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG). 50th Infantry Specialist Bernard Meinen was seriously wounded & died 5 days later. Specialist Wayne Ryza from our platoon ran up to the APC and opened the rear hatch (door) to see if he could help any wounded escape from the badly damaged vehicle. Just as he got the door open, another RPG Round was fired through the hole created by the initial blast and struck Ryza in the chest, killing him instantly. I looked just in front of the smoking APC and saw the enemy soldier who had shot the RPG Rounds. he was in a trench reloading the launcher with a fresh rocket. I yelled to my squad's grenadier to place M-79 Grenade fire on the enemy position and shouted for all to hear that I was going to move out in front of our assault line to get a better shot at the enemy soldier before he could fire his RPG at another APC. I then crawled forward to flank the enemy soldier and hopefully get a good shot at him. I rose up just enough to see him as he finished rearming his launcher and was taking aim on a second APC. I raised my weapon and aimed at his head. My shot found it's mark and the enemy soldier breathed his last as he fell mortally wounded."



Company A Radio Telephone Operator (RTO) Gary Quint witnessed the preceding events in which Meinen's APC was struck as well as Ryza being mortally wounded. Quint believes platoon leader Lieutenant Robert White may have also been wounded in this event. Further confirmation came from Company A man Chuck Spotts who later found an AP Wire Photo featuring the wounded Lieutenant. On his copy, Spotts had written that LT White's APC was the fourth APC to his right when hit. LT White was the 4th Platoon Leader (Mortars)

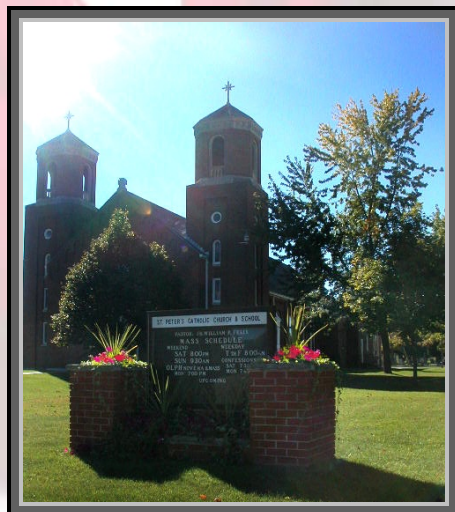
Ryza's body was recovered by 12th Infantry man Specialist Tom Corey, who was seriously wounded and left paralyzed after wounds received on January 31st, 1968. In 2005, Tom Corey was to become the President of the Vietnam Veteran's of America.

A map of the location is shown below:



HIT BY SHRAPNEL — The face of Lt. Robert D. White of Livonia, Mich., is streaked with blood from shrapnel wounds after a North Vietnamese recoilless rifle round struck the armored personnel carrier in which he was riding. His 1st Air Cavalry Division company was assaulting the dug-in enemy near Bong Son, about 350 miles northeast of Saigon. (AP Wirephoto)

Bernard Phillip Meinen, Jr. is buried at St. Peter's Cemetery, 11358 County Highway Q, Tilden, Chippewa County, Wisconsin, pictured below (Left). Meinen photo taken after Basic and AIT with 50th Infantry (Below (Right))



BERNARD MEINEN'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:



Combat Infantry Badge



THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE FOR VALOR

HQ 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE) GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 1409, 10 MARCH 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 MEINEN DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTION ON 16* DECEMBER 1967, WHILE SERVING AS A MACHINE GUNNER WITH COMPANY A, 1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 50TH INFANTRY DURING A COMBAT MISSION IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. WHEN HIS UNIT CAME UNDER INTENSE HOSTILE FIRE, SPECIALIST MEINEN REPEATEDLY EXPOSED HIMSELF TO ENEMY FIRE AS HE PROVIDED COVERING FIRE FOR THE EVACUATION OF THE WOUNDED MEN. AT THIS TIME SPECIALIST MEINEN WAS WOUNDED, BUT HIS COURAGEOUS ACTION INFLICTED SEVERAL CASUALTIES ON THE ENEMY FORCE AND CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF HIS UNIT'S MISSION. 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
(Valor)



Air Medal



Purple Heart



National Defense



Vietnam Service



Vietnam Campaign

*Information previously provided had stated that Meinen was initially wounded on December 16th. Doug Warden's book prompted further investigation which revealed the error...corrected in this updated memorial page. Meinen's award of the Bronze Star listed the action of his death as being December 16th, in error. We have other official documentation which reveals December 15th as the date of the action in which he was seriously wounded. The Association of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry would also like to thank Bernard Meinen's childhood friend Michael Murphy and Cathy Greenseth, Director of Public Relations for the Chippewa Area Catholic Schools for providing the photo of Bernard Meinen used in this memorial. If you would like to contact Michael Murphy, please coordinate through Historian Jim Sheppard.