

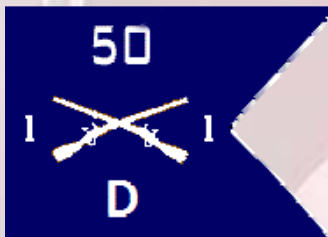


**4TH INFANTRY  
DIVISION**



**1ST BATTALION 50TH  
INFANTRY**

**"D" COMPANY**



**1ST PLATOON,  
2ND SQUAD**



**PRIVATE  
1ST CLASS**



**INFANTRYMAN**

## **JOSEPH ESPINO PEREZ**

**2nd Squad, 1st Platoon, "D" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
PFC, E3, US56830388, MOS 11B10  
Home of Record: San Francisco, CA**

**Date of Birth: December 25, 1946, Age at time of loss: 21, Married  
4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam  
Start of Tour: December 9, 1967, Date of Casualty: March 9, 1968, Days in Country: 91  
Casualty Type A1, ARM, Panel 43E - Row 068**

Joseph Perez was killed in action during what has become known as the Battle of LZ Litts, during the pre-dawn hours of March 9th, 1968.

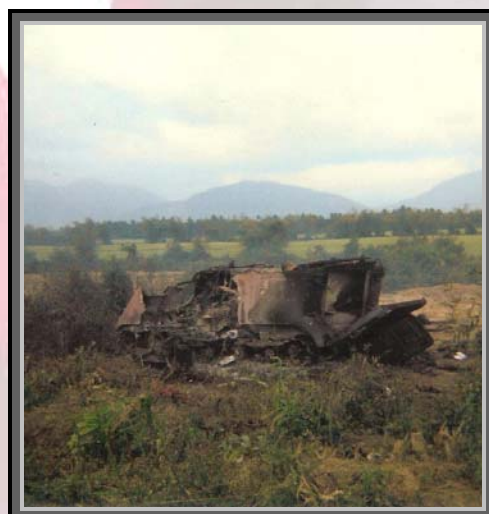
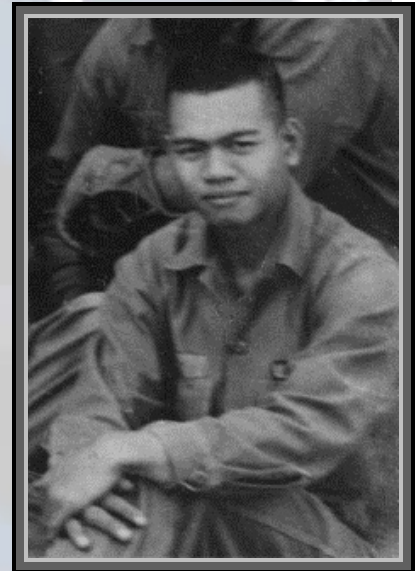
Read a first-hand account of his death by a man from Joe's Squad who witnessed his death:

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

Also killed in the battle were Edward Sternin, Melvin Leavell 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.



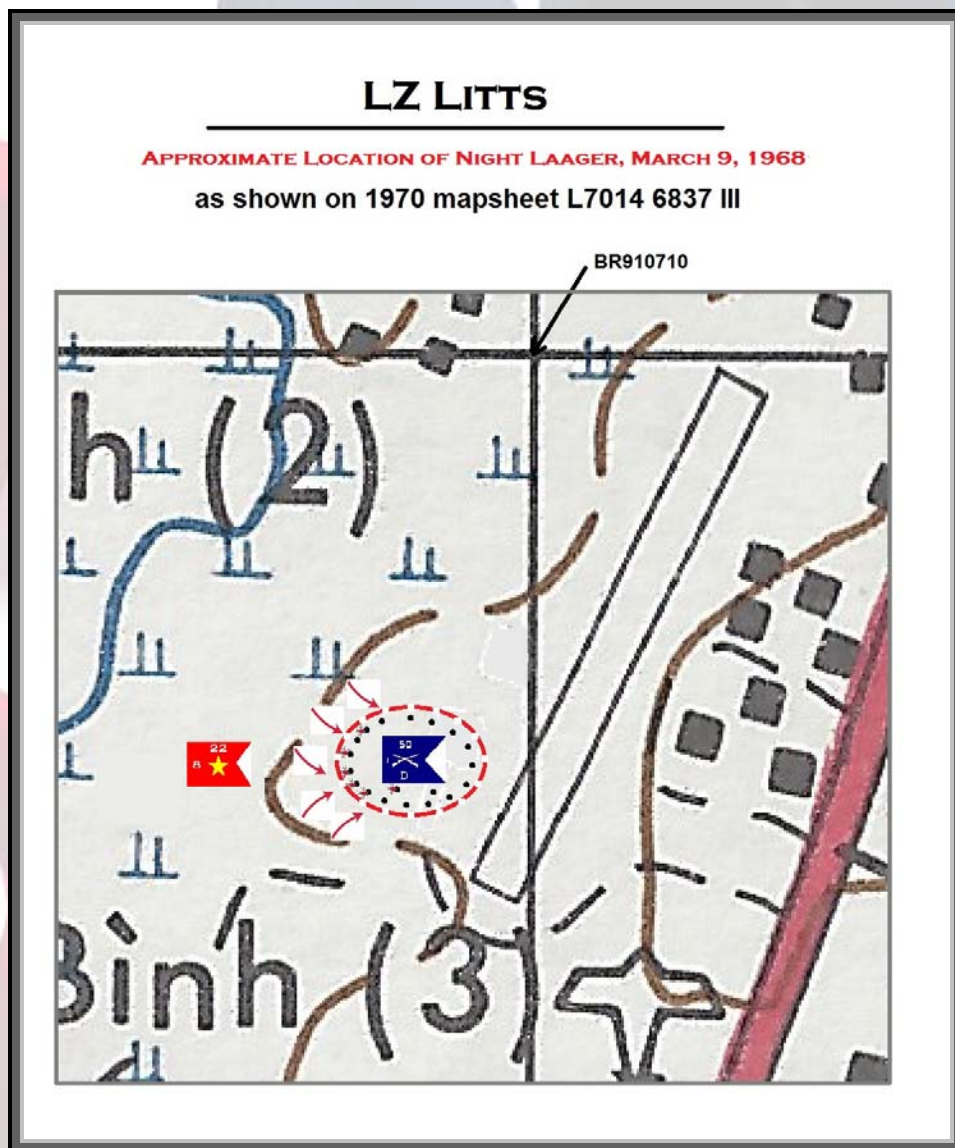
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Illumination Flares had been prudently prepared by Bob Gold before the battle & when fired, revealed hundreds of enemy troops attacking in various sized formations! Fifty Caliber and M-60 Machine Guns as well as "close in" mortar fires, M-16 rifle 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 a mapsheet showing the site of the battle just west of the pictured LZ Runway, Approximate grid BR909707:



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## JOSEPH E PEREZ'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:



Combat Infantry Badge



HQ, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 2918

8 MAY 1968

FOR GALLANTRY IN ACTION WHILE ENGAGED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS INVOLVING CONFLICT WITH AN ARMED HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. PRIVATE FIRST CLASS PEREZ 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 A MEDICAL EVACUATION HELICOPTER CRASHED NEAR HIS UNIT'S PERIMETER, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS PEREZ, DISREGARDING HIS OWN SAFETY, LEFT HIS COVERED POSITION AND MOVED THROUGH THE HOSTILE FIRE TO ASSIST THE INJURED CREW MEMBERS. HE THEN CARRIED THE INJURED SOLDIERS TO SAFETY. LATER IN THE BATTLE, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS PEREZ WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED BY THE HEAVY ENEMY FIRE. HIS GALLANT ACTION WAS IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE, AND REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.\*



Silver\*  
Star

Purple  
Heart

National  
Defense

Vietnam  
Service

Vietnam  
Campaign

\*Please note that the wording on the Silver Star Citation for Joseph Perez does not accurately describe the action preceding his death. These citations were often drawn up with "generic" battle descriptions by clerks who often were given no actual battle accounts. Several eye witnesses have confirmed that Joe was in the driver's seat of his APC when the attack began and was in the path of a direct hit by an enemy rocket that ignited a blaze which completely consumed the entire APC. There were no discernable human remains...leading to the somewhat false report that "his body was never found". Several men have said they watched in horror as the battle ensued and the burning APC left no hope of retrieving Joe from the flames. One man who was inside the APC with Joe saw him struck by the rocket and described the death as "Instant"...as the initial volleys of the battle were exchanged. That man had severe wounds to his head and knee and could barely extract himself from the APC as the flames spread rapidly.