



1<sup>ST</sup> CAVALRY  
DIVISION  
(AIRMOBILE)



1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION  
50<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY

1<sup>ST</sup> PLATOON



"A" COMPANY



PRIVATE



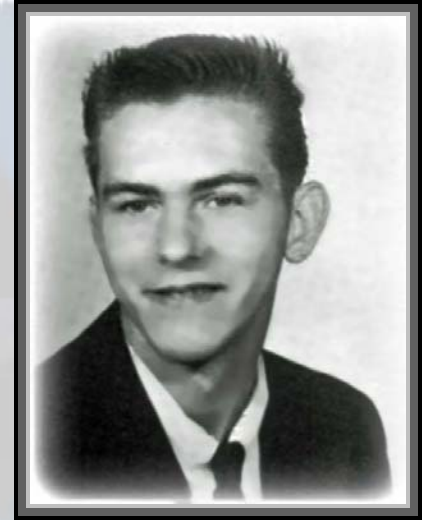
INFANTRYMAN

## THOMAS DEWEY PIPKIN, JR.

1st Platoon, "A" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
Private, E2, US56580407, MOS 11B10  
Home of Record: Farmington, Missouri

Date of Birth: November 21, 1946, Age at time of loss: 20, Married  
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam  
Start of Tour: September 1, 1967, Date of Casualty: October 10, 1967, Days in Country: 40  
Casualty Type A1, Gun, small arms fire, Panel 27E - Row 09

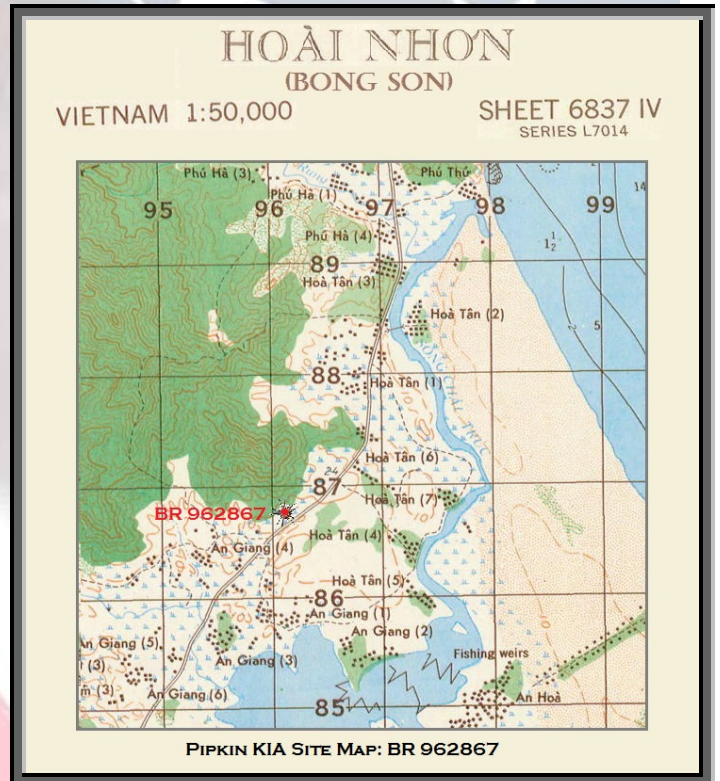
On the night of October 10th, 1967, a squad sized ambush patrol was placed about 100 meters west of "A" Company's night laager location in the vicinity of the villages of Hoa Tan near Lake Dam Tra-O in coastal Binh Dinh Province. The patrol was led by Staff Sergeant Jack Harwell, a combat veteran of the United States occupation of the Dominican Republic. The patrol left at dusk and was in position shortly thereafter. They formed an "L-Shaped ambush at a bend in the trail. Harwell later reported that an enemy patrol came complete through the ambush site. It was not explained why the ambush was not "sprung"...but the enemy noticed the U.S. Positions and gathered for an attack after exiting the "kill zone". 1st Cavalry Division records show that at 2347 hours, the enemy initiated the attack with Hand Grenades only...and the patrol called for illumination rounds to be fired over the area. As soon as the illumination lit up the area...the enemy were fully exposed and Pipkin opened up with his M60 Machine gun as intense small arms and automatic weapons fire were exchanged. There was a short lull as the initial illumination rounds burnt out...then a few more enemy grenades were tossed in before more illumination was sent up. One of these grenades exploded on Pipkin's Back...killing him instantly and wounding Specialist Curtis Steffen and Specialist Roy Wiegand who later developed pneumonia and died in the hospital on January 6, 1968. Thomas Pipkin became the 1st man from the Battalion killed in Vietnam.



The patrol rejoined the main body of "A" Company for the rest of the night. In the morning, 3 enemy bodies were found as well as numerous blood trails...which were followed with no additional bodies being found.

Specialists Curtis Steffen and Ronnie Copeland were awarded Bronze Stars for Valor in the action that night. A map of the

area of the incident is shown on the right.

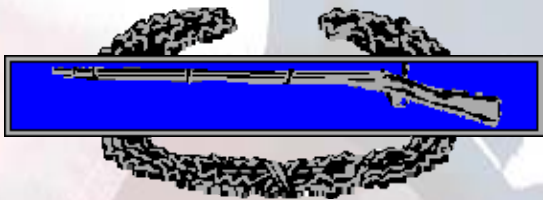


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Tom Pipkin is buried at Saint Francois Memorial Park, 6776 VO-Tech Road, Bonne Terre, St. Francois County, Missouri.



**THOMAS PIPKIN'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:**



Combat Infantry Badge



Purple Heart

National Defense

Vietnam Service

Vietnam Campaign