



1ST CAVALRY
DIVISION
(AIRMOBILE)



1ST BATTALION
50TH INFANTRY

THIRD PLATOON



"C" COMPANY



SERGEANT
FIRST CLASS



INFANTRYMAN

GEORGE STANLEY SALEMA

3rd Platoon, "C" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry
Staff Sergeant, E6, Posthumous Promotion to SFC, RA29030228, MOS 11B40

Home of Record: Kurtistown, HI,

Date of Birth: August 3, 1930, Age at time of loss: 37, Married
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam
Start of Tour: September 1, 1967,

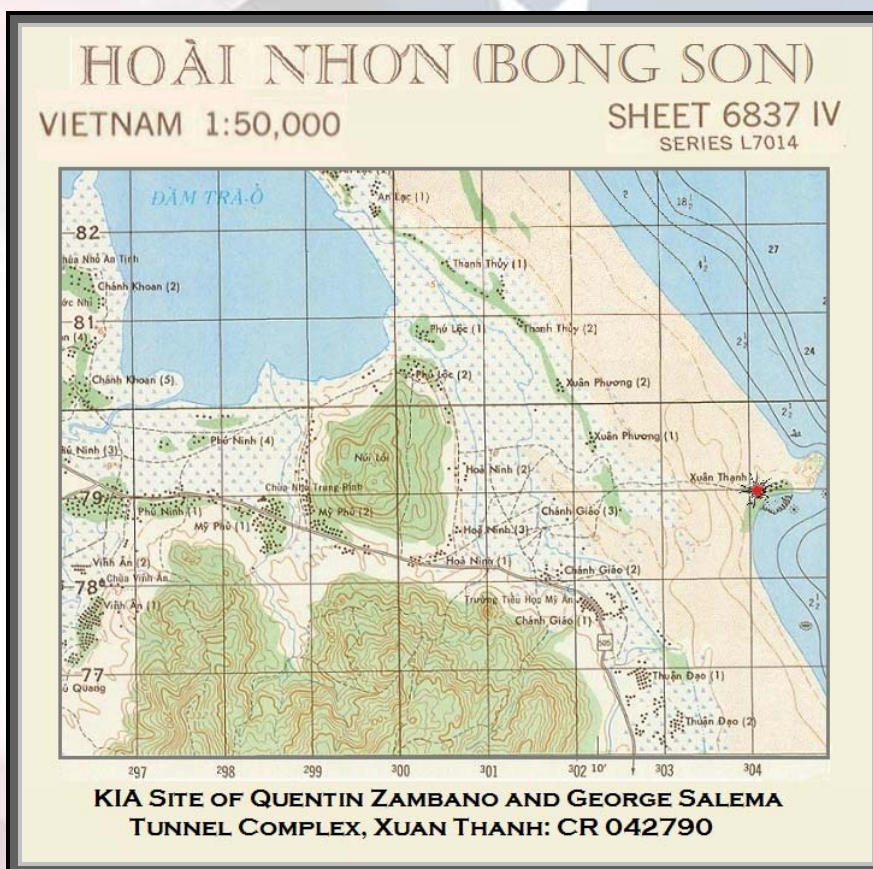
Incident Date: October 15, 1967, Died of Wounds: October 16, 1967, Days in Country: 45
Casualty Type A2, MFW, Panel 28E - Row 017

On October 15th, 1967, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry conducted a "Cordon and Search" operation of the village of Xuân Thanh.

An extensive tunnel complex was found. Early in the process of clearing these tunnels, an enemy soldier tossed a grenade that mortally wounded [2nd Lieutenant Zambano](#), an advisor from the 2nd of the 5th Cav., and seriously wounded Staff Sergeant Salema of the 50th Infantry's Charlie Company, 3rd Platoon.

Sergeant Salema, pictured at right as a young Airborne Private E2, was awarded the Silver Star for his actions that day. He succumbed to his wounds and died the following day.

A map of the location of the incident is shown below:



Continued...

Intelligence summaries from the G2 (Division level) of the 1st Cavalry Division revealed the following details:

"Republic of Vietnam National Police Field Force (NFFF) elements and C Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry, at Map Grid Coordinates CR042790 (See Map) Cordoned the village of Xuân Thanh and processed 238 Innocent Civilians, searched 135 houses, captured 1 North Vietnamese Army Soldier and 1 Viet Cong Soldier, processed 7 Civilian Detainees, killed three enemy and also captured one MAS 36 Rifle, 10 pounds of medical supplies and some documents which included a list of 5 wounded men, no date shown, a personal notebook which revealed they (Unidentified Unit) brought 10 wounded men into Xuan Phong (2) (1800 Meters to the West), but were turned away. Four died and the others were taken to Xuân Thanh where they received aid. Documents also included receipts for treatment of members of the 9th Battalion, 18th Regiment.

At approximately 11:15 AM, US Forces and National Police found several enemy in a tunnel complex. Three enemy (as previously stated) were pulled out along with the Medical supplies. Another enemy soldier from a nearby bunker engaged the US elements with grenades, resulting in two US men killed in action and seven US men wounded, two National Police Killed and five National Police wounded. US & NP elements engaged with small arms and M-79 (Grenade launcher) fire resulting in three enemy killed and one captured (wounded) as well as one Civilian Detainee wounded and one Innocent Civilian wounded. Also captured was one MAS 36 & four grenades.

The captured North Vietnamese Army soldier was from the 63rd Company, 18th Regiment and stated that his company had 50 men and that they had been located in the Tan Phung Caves (Map Grid Coordinate 0575) five days ago. He will lead US forces to the area on October 16th.

At 1340 hours in the same location, elements received sniper fire from a house at the West end of the hamlet. The area was checked and nothing was found. There were no casualties from the sniper fire.

A Subsequent Intelligence Summary (17 Oct 67) reveals: The same location (Xuân Thanh) was cordoned and searched again, processing 152 Innocent Civilians, searching 487 houses, picking up one Civilian Detainee, and found nine fresh graves. The graves were dug up revealing nine enemy KIA (Three previously reported as KIA on October 15th). Villagers stated that the bodies were left in enemy bunkers after the 15 October contact in the area and that they were buried later...including the three dead that were found by US forces. The Civilian Detainee identified the dead men. Results: 6 enemy killed not previously reported."

George Salema is buried at Lafayette Memorial Park, 2301 Ramsey Street, Fayetteville, Cumberland County, North Carolina, pictured below:



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GEORGE SALEMA'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS*:



Airborne Qualified



Combat Infantry Badge

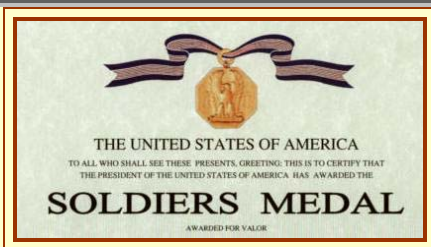


HQ, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 7369

14 DECEMBER 1967

FOR GALLANTRY IN ACTION WHILE ENGAGED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS INVOLVING CONFLICT WITH AN ARMED HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. SERGEANT FIRST CLASS SALEMA DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTION ON 15 OCTOBER 1967, WHILE SERVING AS A PLATOON SERGEANT WITH COMPANY C, 1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 50TH INFANTRY DURING A COMBAT MISSION IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. WHILE MAKING A SEARCH OF A VILLAGE, SERGEANT SALEMA OBSERVED A TUNNEL OPENING NEAR A GROUP OF HIS COMRADES, WHO WERE NOT AWARE OF THE IMPENDING DANGER. DISREGARDING HIS OWN SAFETY, SERGEANT SALEMA POSITIONED HIMSELF BETWEEN HIS MEN AND THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE. HE THEN WARNED HIS COMRADES OF THE SITUATION, ALLOWING THEM TO MOVE TO A COVERED POSITION. AT THIS TIME AN ENEMY SOLDIER EMERGED AND THREW A HAND GRENADE AT SERGEANT SALEMA, MORTALLY WOUNDING HIM. SERGEANT SALEMA'S 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.



HQ, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION

FOR VALOR WHILE ENGAGED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS NOT INVOLVING CONFLICT WITH AN ARMED HOSTILE FORCE, WHILE SERVING WITH COMPANY B, 2ND MEDIUM TANK BATTALION, 32ND ARMOR, AT AYERS KASERNE, GERMANY, ON JUNE 23RD, 1961. WHILE A GROUP OF MEN WERE WORKING IN THE MAINTENANCE AND TANK PARK, A ROUND EXPLODED IN ONE OF THE TANKS. A FIRE IN THE FIGHTING COMPARTMENT WAS THE IMMEDIATE RESULT AND THE EXPLOSION OF ADDITIONAL AMMUNITION WAS A CLEAR THREAT. IN THE FACE OF THIS DANGER, SERGEANT SALEMA THOUGHT OF THE SAFETY OF THE MEN AND SURROUNDING PROPERTY AND JUMPED UP ON THE TANK TURRET. AFTER CLOSING THE HATCH, HE MADE USE OF ALL AVAILABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT TO QUELL THE BLAZE. WHEN THE FIRE WAS UNDER CONTROL, HE ENTERED THE TANK TO RENDER IT COMPLETELY SAFE, EVEN THOUGH THE RISK OF AN EXPLOSION WAS STILL PRESENT. SERGEANT SALEMA'S COOL, EFFICIENT AND COURAGEOUS 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

Soldier's Medal

Purple Heart

National Defense

Vietnam Service

Vietnam Campaign

*SFC Salema had an extensive military career before being killed in action in Vietnam, having entered the Military in 1952. Thus, we stipulate that this list does not include all of SFC Salema's awards and decorations, but only those we can document.