



**1ST
FIELD FORCE
VIETNAM**



**1ST BATTALION
50TH INFANTRY**



"D" COMPANY



**SPECIALIST 6TH
CLASS**

THOMAS TIMOTHY SMITH

**"D" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry
Specialist 6th Class, E6, RA416544478, MOS 94B30
Home of Record: Demopolis, AL**

**Date of Birth: June 2, 1942, Age at time of loss: 27, Married
I Field Force Vietnam, Binh Thuan Province, Republic of Vietnam
Start of Tour: September 2, 1969, Date of Casualty: May 3, 1970, Days in Country: 243
Casualty Type A2, MFW, Panel 11W - Row 093**

Tom Smith was killed in action when at 1:45 AM the Headquarters base camp for Task Force South, 1st Field Force, Vietnam, LZ Betty, was attacked by a force believed to be the 482B Liberation Front Battalion. The attack consisted of approximately 125 rounds of enemy 60mm and 82mm mortar fire, an unknown number of B40/B41 rocket rounds and "Sapper" probes in at least 4 separate locations of the base perimeter. At several locations, the perimeter was penetrated. One Bunker position was overrun and held for about 1/2 hour and 2 other bunkers were destroyed as well as numerous wheeled vehicles and several helicopter aircraft.



Reaction was hampered by base policy which called for weapons to be secured while forces were in camp, however, once weaponry was obtained, the enemy was counter-attacked and forced to retreat. A large force was spotted at a location Northwest of the perimeter and was fired upon by Artillery and Helicopter Gunships, resulting in 14 enemy killed. Sweeps of the perimeter at dawn revealed numerous blood trails and dozens of drag marks indicating a large number of wounded and dead were dragged away under the cover of darkness.

Also killed during the contact were 50th Infantry men SP4 Roger Craig, SP4 Bob Haney, SSG Fred Denkins and SP4 Ken Thomas. From the 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment was SP5 Perry LeClerc. Also killed was an unidentified US Government Civilian conducting classified business in Binh Thuan Province. 35 other U.S. soldiers were wounded.

Although the fact that the weaponry of most base camp units being locked has been "cause for question" for years, command considered the war was far from their home base and allowed the lack of casualties and major contacts for the first 4 months of 1970 to influence their judgment towards a more "stateside" frame of mind.

Enemy losses were 14 Killed (By Body Count) and 1 POW captured who confirmed that the 482B LF was responsible for the attack. 6 U.S. soldiers were killed, 7 U.S. Helicopters were destroyed and 6 more seriously damaged. Two 3/4 ton trucks, One 5 Ton Truck and One Jeep were destroyed as well as numerous buildings and structures being damaged, including the HQ of "D" Company, 50th Infantry and the Graves and Registration Quonset Hut.

Continued...

A map of the location (AN809070) is shown below, with the position of the Attacking Force Main Body at AN795075.



Photo of 3/4-ton truck damaged during the battle of LZ Betty. The Photo was provided by Joe Conti, "D" Company, who was with Smith when he was KIA. Conti also provided the photo of smith used in this memorial.



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Tom Smith is buried at Green Acres Cemetery, 1485 Schatulga Road, Columbus, Muscogee County, Georgia 31907



AWARDS AND DECORATIONS OF THOMAS SMITH:



THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL
WITH "V" DEVICE FOR VALOR

HQ, I FIELD FORCE VIETNAM)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 623

27 MAY, 1970

FOR HEROISM IN CONNECTION WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST AN ARMED HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. SPECIALIST SIX SMITH DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ON 3 MAY 1970, WHILE SERVING AS A MEMBER OF A COMPANY REACTIONARY FORCE AT LANDING ZONE BETTY. AT 0130 HOURS ON THAT DATE, AN ENEMY FORCE OF UNKNOWN SIZE PENETRATED THE PERIMETER DEFENSE AND ASSAULTED THE COMPOUND WITH A HEAVY BARRAGE OF ROCKETS, GRENADES, SMALL ARMS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE. AT THE OUTSET OF THE ACTION, SPECIALIST SMITH HELPED LEAD AND ORGANIZE A REACTION FORCE TO DRIVE THE INTRUDERS FROM THE AREA. WITHIN MOMENTS, HE HAD GROUPED HIS FORCE TOGETHER AND DEPLOYED THEM BY TRUCK TO THE CONTACT AREA. UPON THEIR ARRIVAL AT THE SCENE OF HEAVIEST CONTACT, SPECIALIST SMITH WAS DIRECTING THE MOVEMENT OF HIS TROOPS TO ASSIGNED POSITIONS WHEN HIS VEHICLE WAS STRUCK BY AN ENEMY ROCKET. THE CONCUSSION OF THE EXPLODING ROUND HURLED HIM TO THE GROUND, CRITICALLY WOUNDED. DESPITE HIS INTENSE PAIN AND INABILITY TO MOVE, HE CONTINUED TO DIRECT THE OPERATION IN HIS SECTOR UNTIL HE WAS EVACUATED TO A MEDICAL FACILITY AT CAM RANH BAY, WHERE HE SUCCEDED. SPECIALIST SIX SMITH'S HEROIC ACTIONS WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.



Bronze
Star
(Valor)



Purple
Heart



National
Defense



Vietnam
Service



Vietnam
Campaign