



1ST
CAVALRY
DIVISION
(AIRMOBILE)



1ST BATTALION
50TH INFANTRY



"B" COMPANY



SPECIALIST
4TH CLASS



INFANTRY

WALKER SMITH, JR.

"B" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry
Specialist 4th Class, E4, US56581559, MOS 11B20

Home of Record: St Louis, MO

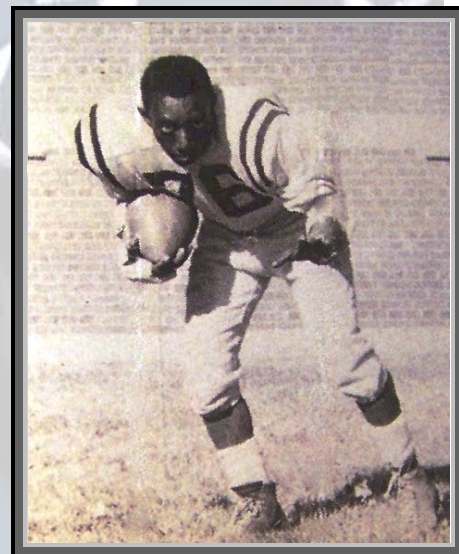
Date of Birth: March 9, 1947, Age at time of loss: 20, Single

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

Start of Tour: September 1, 1967, Date of Casualty: December 10, 1967, Days in Country: 100

Casualty Type A1, MFW, Panel 31E - Row 077

Specialist Walker Smith was killed as "B" Company came under heavy fire from the village of Truong Lam (2) on the 10th of December, 1967. Richard Guthrie, his Company Commander, describes his actions that day: "Specialist Walker Smith died as he tried to crawl forward to silence an enemy machine gun which had his squad pinned down. He was a quiet, shy, unassuming man who did his job and took care of his soldiers. He was perhaps the last one in the squad you'd expect to pull the pin on a grenade and crawl into the face of withering fire to get close enough to get the enemy". He was awarded the Silver Star for his actions that day.



Fourteen 50th Infantry men were killed in the Battle of Tam Quan, which was the major battle of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's "Operation Pershing" on the coastal Bong Son Plains in and around Binh Dinh Province. 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) units, including the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry, and the 40th ARVN Regiment engaged the NVA/VC including the 7th and 8th Battalions of the 22nd NVA Regiment, 3rd NVA Division in a running battle from the 6th through the 20th of December, 1967.

The engagement began on the 6th of December when a scout helicopter from "A" Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry observed an antenna and received small arms fire from a native village structure in the vicinity of the village of Dai Dong (2) near the city of Tam Quan, from which the ensuing battle took its name. Late in the afternoon, a Platoon of Infantryman (Blues) from Troop "A" were sent to investigate the antenna and became pinned down by intense enemy automatic and small arms fire. Reinforcements from "B" Troop, 1st of the 8th Cavalry and a "Ready Reaction" platoon of Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) from "A" Company, 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry were able to successfully remove the 9th Cavalry elements that had been pinned down.

The following morning, on December 7th, after prep artillery fire and CS Gas deployment, the "A" Company Ready Reaction force was called in to help the now engaged troops from "A" Troop, 1st of the 8th Cavalry in the same vicinity. LT Hinton's RTO was killed in this action. Dudley Arlentino of Coolidge, Arizona became the first 50th Infantry man killed in the battle.

At this time, other 50th Infantry elements became fully involved in the battles as the enemy forces were located and attacked by our "B" and "D" Companies. Actions on the 10th of December saw ten men killed from "B" Company at the village of Truong Lam (2) and three men killed from "D" Company at the village of My An (2).

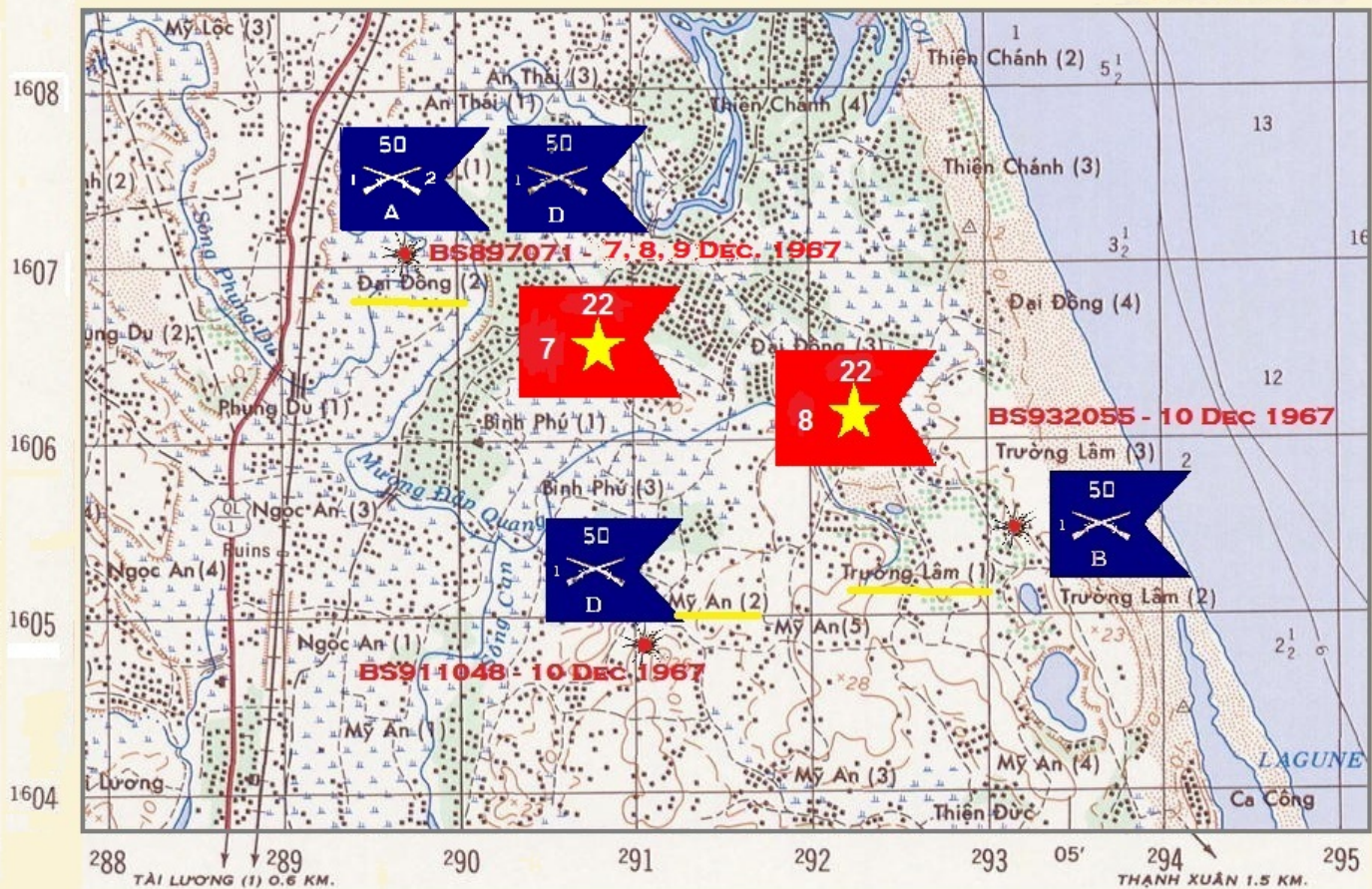
Most sources list the enemy (VC/NVA) dead for the battle at 650 and friendly forces lost a total of 58 men.

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A map of the location of the three key engagements of the Battle of Tam Quan is shown below:

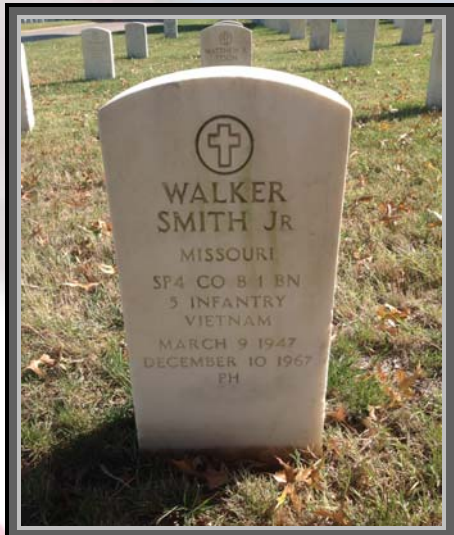
TAM QUAN

SHEET 6838 III
SERIES L7014



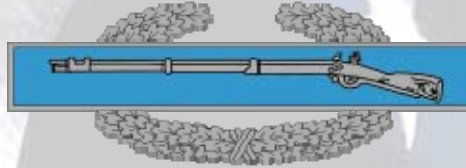
BATTLE OF TAM QUAN MAJOR CONTACT SITE MAP

Walker Smith is buried at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery,
2900 Sheridan Road, St. Louis, MO 63125, Plot: Section E Site 52



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WALKER SMITH'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS



Combat Infantry Badge



HQ, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 1593

18 MARCH 1968

FOR GALLANTRY IN ACTION WHILE ENGAGED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS INVOLVING CONFLICT WITH AN ARMED HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. SPECIALIST FOUR SMITH DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTION ON 10 DECEMBER 1967, WHILE SERVING AS A SQUAD LEADER WITH COMPANY B, 1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 50TH INFANTRY DURING A SEARCH AND DESTROY MISSION NEAR BONG SON, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. WHEN HIS UNIT BECAME HEAVILY ENGAGED WITH A WITH ENEMY FORCE, SPECIALIST SMITH EXPOSED HIMSELF TO THE ENEMY FIRE AS HE ASSAULTED THE HOSTILE FORTIFICATIONS. AS HE THREW A HAND GRENADE INTO AN ENEMY BUNKER, SPECIALIST SMITH WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED BY A NEW SURGE OF 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