



1<sup>ST</sup>  
AIR CAVALRY  
DIVISION

## MELVIN DEWAYNE SODOWSKY

"D" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
Second Lieutenant, O1, O5336966, MOS 1542  
Home of Record: Fairview, OK

Date of Birth: April 20, 1946, Age at time of loss: 21, Single  
1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam  
Start of Tour: August 23, 1967, Date of Casualty: December 10, 1967, Days in Country: 109  
Casualty Type A1, Other causes, Panel 31E - Row 078



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

Lieutenant Melvin Sodowsky was the first 50th Infantry Battalion Officer killed in Vietnam when he was struck by a fatal head wound as "D" Company came under heavy fire from the village of My An (2) on the 10th of December, 1967. Medic Randy Smith remembers rushing to drag the stricken officer from his Armored Personnel Carrier...but he had died instantly of his wound.

Currently, no photo exists for this man.

If you can supply us with a photo, we would be grateful...and see that it gets distributed to the appropriate Internet memorial web pages.

Contact Jim Sheppard:  
[kiss-ac@juno.com](mailto:kiss-ac@juno.com)



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.



SECOND  
LIEUTENANT

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 it's 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.



INFANTRY

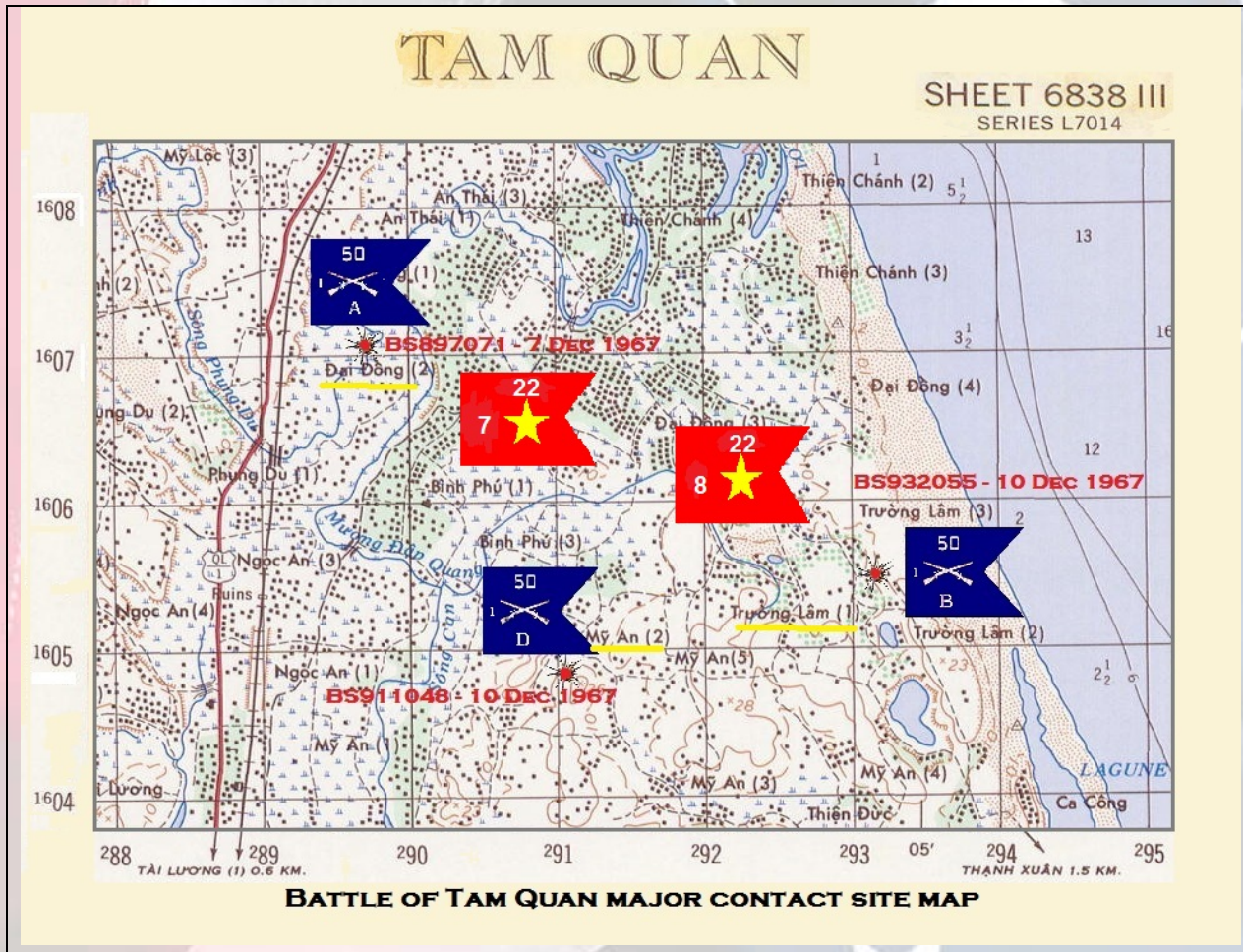
The following morning, on December 7th, after prep artillery fire and CS Gas deployment, the "A" Company Ready Reaction force was called in to help the now engaged troops from "A" Troop, 1st of the 8th Cavalry in the same vicinity. LT Hinton's RTO was killed in this action. Dudley Arlentino of Coolidge,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

continued...

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



## MELVIN SODOWSKY'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS



Combat Infantry Badge



Air Medal



Purple Heart



National Defense



Vietnam Service



Vietnam Campaign