



**1ST
FIELD FORCE
VIETNAM**



**1ST BATTALION
50TH INFANTRY**



"HQ" COMPANY



**SCOUTS
PLATOON**



**SPECIALIST
4TH CLASS**



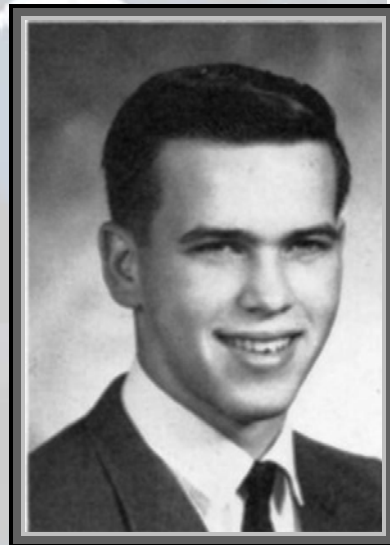
INFANTRYMAN

KENNETH BEN THOMAS

"HQ" Company, Scouts Platoon, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry
Specialist 4th Class, E4, US550801328, MOS 11B20
Home of Record: Ontario, CA

Date of Birth: March 12, 1949, Age at time of loss: 21, Single
I Field Force Vietnam, Binh Thuan Province, Republic of Vietnam
Start of Tour: July 22, 1969, Date of Casualty: May 3, 1970, Days in Country: 285
Casualty Type A1, Gun, small arms fire, Panel 11W - Row 093

Ken Thomas, Normally an Armored Personnel Carrier Driver in the Scouts Platoon, 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, SP6 Tom Smith and SSG Fred Denkins. 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.

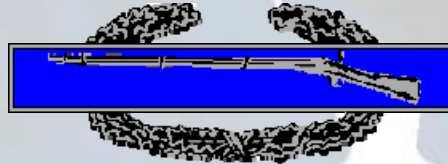
Enemy losses were 14 Killed (By Body Count) and 1 POW captured who confirmed that the 482B LF was responsible for the attack. 6 U.S. soldiers were killed, 7 U.S. Helicopters were destroyed and 6 more seriously damaged. Two 3/4 ton trucks, One 5 Ton Truck and One Jeep were destroyed as well as numerous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

Continued...

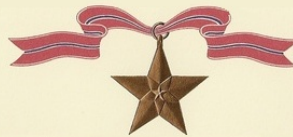
A map of the location (AN809070) is shown below, with the position of the Attacking Force Main Body at AN795075.



AWARDS AND DECORATIONS OF KENNETH THOMAS:



Combat Infantry Badge



THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL
WITH "V" DEVICE FOR VALOR

HEADQUARTERS I FIELD FORCE VIETNAM

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 637

30 MAY, 1970

FOR HEROISM IN CONNECTION WITH GROUND OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. SPECIALIST FOUR THOMAS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ON 3 MAY 1970, WHILE SERVING AT LANDING ZONE BETTY, ON THAT DATE, AT APPROXIMATELY 0200 HOURS, AN ENEMY FORCE OF UNKNOWN SIZE PENETRATED THE PERIMETER OF THE COMPOUND. AS THE FORCE ADVANCED ON DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AND NEARBY BUILDINGS, THEY BEGAN DELIVERING INTENSIVE AUTOMATIC WEAPON AND SMALL ARMS FIRE AS WELL AS ROCKET-PROPELLED GRENADES. JOINING A HASTILY ORGANIZED REACTION FORCE, HE WAS NEARING THE EMBATTLED PERIMETER WHEN THE VEHICLE IN WHICH HE RODE WAS STRUCK BY AN ENEMY ROCKET. DESPITE SERIOUS WOUNDS, HE DISMOUNTED THE DEVASTATED VEHICLE AND BEGAN DELIVERING EFFECTIVE SUPPRESSIVE FIRE WHICH WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN HALTING THE ENEMY ADVANCE. AS THE HOSTILE TROOPS BEGAN TO WITHDRAW, THEY HURLED A BARRAGE OF GRENADES WHICH MORTALLY WOUNDED SEVERAL OF THE REACTION FORCE, INCLUDING SPECIALIST THOMAS. SPECIALIST FOUR THOMAS' HEROIC ACTIONS WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.



Bronze Star



Purple Heart



National Defense



Vietnam Service



Vietnam Campaign