



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



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



1<sup>ST</sup> PLATOON  
50  
1  
1  
B  
"B" COMPANY



CORPORAL



INFANTRY

## PAUL F. BRANYAN, JR.

1st Platoon, 2nd Squad, "B" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
Private First Class, E3, Posthumous Promotion to CPL, US52807870, MOS 11B20  
Home of Record: New Castle, DE

Date of Birth: January 3, 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, Gun, small arms fire, Panel 31E - Row 071

Corporal Paul Branyan was killed by a fatal head wound as "B" Company came under heavy fire from the village of Truong Lam (2) on the 10th of December, 1967. Fellow Second Squad member Walter Billups remembers: *"I was with Paul the day he died. He was the .50 Caliber Machine Gunner on Armored Personnel Carrier #212. After he was shot...he fell through the hatch and lay near me. I was on the left side M60 Machine gun...but there was nothing that could be done for him"*. Paul Branyan was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" (Valor) Device 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 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.

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

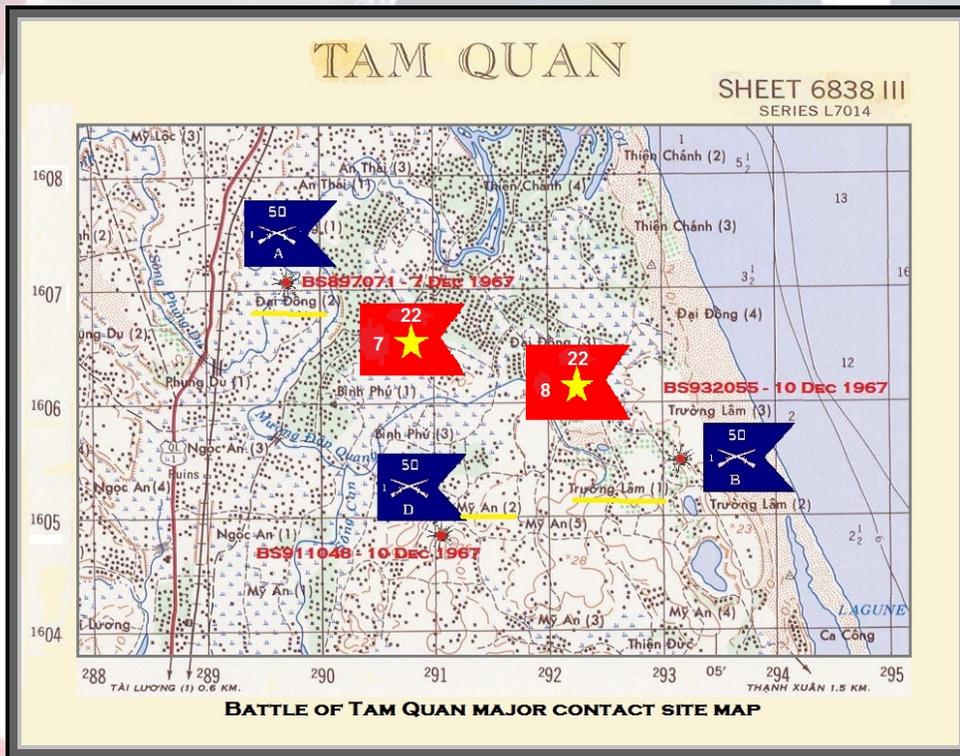
RTO was killed in this action. Dudley Arlentino of Coolidge, Arizona became the first 50th Infantry man killed in the battle.

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:



Below are several photos taken by Paul Branyan shortly before he was killed in action.

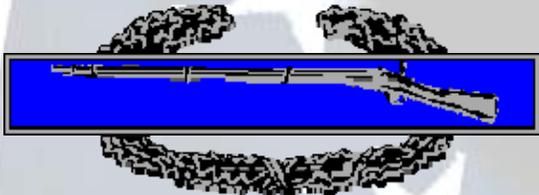


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Paul Branyan is buried at All Saints Cemetery (Pictured below), 6001 Kirkwood Highway, Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware. The Association of the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry wishes to thank Paul's Niece, Michele Hibbits for contributing the photos used in this memorial.



**PAUL BRANYAN'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS**



Combat Infantry Badge



Bronze Star

Air Medal

Purple Heart

National Defense

Vietnam Service

Vietnam Campaign



**THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL  
WITH "V" DEVICE FOR VALOR**

HQ 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE), GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 1604, 19 MARCH 1968

FOR HEROISM, NOT INVOLVING PARTICIPATION IN AERIAL FLIGHT, IN CONNECTION WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. PRIVATE FIRST CLASS BRANYAN DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTION ON 10 DECEMBER 1967, WHILE SERVING AS AN ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER COMMANDER 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 LARGE ENEMY FORCE, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS BRANYAN EXPOSED HIMSELF TO THE HOSTILE FIRE AS HE PROVIDED EFFECTIVE SUPPRESSIVE FIRE ON THE ENEMY EMPLACEMENTS. HIS ACTION ENABLED HIS COMRADES TO SAFELY REACH COVERED POSITIONS. PRIVATE FIRST CLASS BRANYAN'S DISPLAY OF PERSONAL BRAVERY AND DEVOTION TO DUTY WAS IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.