



1<sup>ST</sup>  
FIELD FORCE  
VIETNAM



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

"B" COMPANY



1<sup>ST</sup> PLATOON



PRIVATE 1<sup>ST</sup>  
CLASS



INFANTRYMAN

## ROBERT JOHN "BOBBY" GASKO, JR.

3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, "B" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Private First Class, E3, US153425128, MOS 11B20

Home of Record: Mays Landing, NJ

Date of Birth: September 16, 1949, Age at time of loss: 20, Married

I Field Force Vietnam, Binh Thuan Province, Republic of Vietnam

Start of Tour: November 17, 1969, Date of Casualty: January 20, 1970, Days in Country: 64

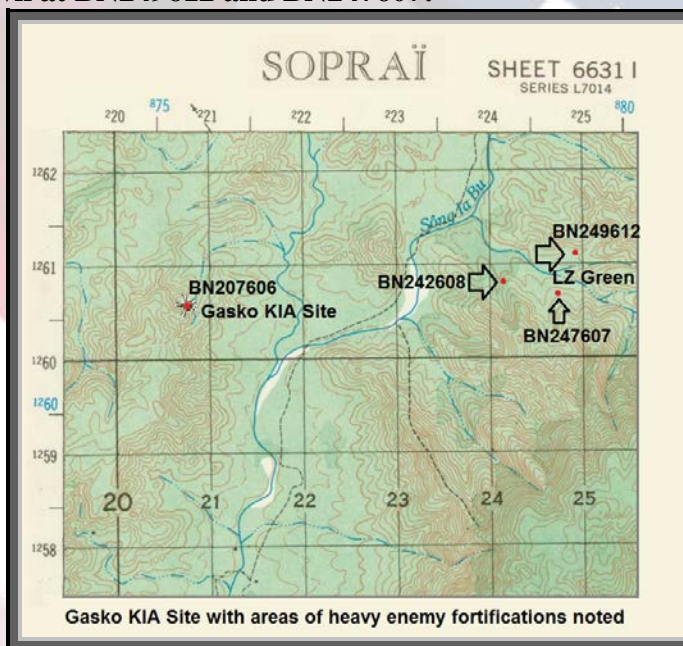
Casualty Type A1, Gun, small arms fire, Accidental Homicide, Panel 14W - Row 049

In early January of 1970, a complex of fortifications, some extensively improved with log and earthen construction, was found in the mountainous jungles some 70 kilometers Northeast of Phan Thiet. The 1st Platoon of "B" Company was sent into this area to aid elements of the 2nd of the 1st Cavalry. Tensions were high as the terrain was treacherous and the jungle growth extensive. The area was out of range of Artillery support as well.

As darkness fell, the platoon busied themselves preparing night positions. Bobby Gasko had been sent to set up defensive Claymore Mines and Trip flares outside the perimeter simultaneously with another man in front a Machine Gun Position. Gasko somehow got separated and re-entered the perimeter in front of another squad.

The gunner saw only a helmetless man coming out of the setting sun towards his position (His own men had already returned from their setup and all wore helmets) and called out a "challenge" thinking if this was a "friendly" he would acknowledge the call in some manner. When Gasko gave no response (Or the response was not heard), the gunner fired off a burst from his M60 Machine gun, killing Gasko. Bob Gasko was a 3rd Platoon member who had volunteered to go with a different Platoon for this mission, so the man involved in the accidental machine gun burst was likely unfamiliar with Gasko.

A map of the location, BN207606, is shown below, with the positions of the enemy fortifications shown at BN249612 and BN247607:



Gasko KIA Site with areas of heavy enemy fortifications noted

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A Bio for Gasko can be found on the New Jersey Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Website:

<http://www.njvvmf.org/ROBERTGASKO-vetmemorial1743>

A childhood friend of Bobby Gasko, Sports Illustrated columnist Jack McCallum wrote a feature article about Gasko in the October 22, 2007 issue of the well known sports magazine. A Copy of the article may be viewed at the page linked below:

<http://www.ichiban1.org/pdf/Memorial/GaskoSI.pdf>

Bob Gasko is buried at Union Cemetery, Mays Landing, Atlantic County, New Jersey (Pictured below):



50th Infantry Association Historian Jim Sheppard took the photos of Gasko's grave, having lived near this site for 30 years. Union Cemetery is a peaceful spot nestled in pine and cedar forests along a country road connecting Mays Landing and Ocean City in Southern New Jersey.

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## ROBERT JOHN GASKO, JR. AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:



Combat Infantry Badge



Purple Heart\*

National Defense

Vietnam Service

Vietnam Campaign

\*Award of the Purple Heart would not be authorized for a "friendly fire" incident. We "Assume" that he received the award for a previous wound, as his grave marker indicates "PH" for "Purple Heart".