



4TH INFANTRY  
DIVISION



1ST BATTALION  
50TH INFANTRY



"C" COMPANY



SERGEANT



INFANTRYMAN

## CLARENCE S. "CHOPPER" HILLS

4th Platoon, "C" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
Sergeant, E5, US56908828, MOS 11C40

Home of Record: Gilbert, AZ

Date of Birth: October 20, 1946, Age at time of loss: 21, Married  
4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam

Start of Tour: September 1, 1967, Date of Casualty: March 2, 1968, Days in Country: 184  
Casualty Type A1, MFW, Panel 42E – Row 034



Clarence Hills was one of many from Company C, 2nd Battalion (M), 41st Inf., to be transferred to the 1st Bn (M), 50th Infantry as they filled their ranks in preparation for deployment to Vietnam in the summer of 1967.

At about 9:30 in the morning on March 2nd, 1968, the 2nd & Third platoons of Charlie Company were "Air Assaulted" to two locations near the Northwestern edge of the Nui Mieu Mountains. The 2nd Platoon had an uneventful insertion, but the 3rd Platoon immediately began receiving fire from an estimated Platoon of NVA soldiers in a hedgerow between them and the "Rock pile" area at the base of the Nui Mieu. It was later learned that the 3rd Platoon had landed practically on top of the Headquarters element of a North Vietnamese Army Battalion! In time, incoming fires increased. Early in the contact, Russell Haas was killed near Harry Wilson. Medic Erwin Sims was also killed when he braved intense enemy fire to try to administer aid to the fallen Haas. Also killed during the course of the contact was Todd Handy.



Clarence Hills was killed as the main element of Charlie Company joined the action with their Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs). Association President Emeritus, Ken Riley, relates that Hills was an APC Driver for the 4th Platoon. The photo of Hills above was taken literally minutes before he was killed. His APC took a B40 Rocket hit directly into the drivers compartment. Hills was killed immediately and did not suffer. Air strikes and Artillery were called in over the next 24 hours and the enemy withdrew back into the mountains, leaving behind 30 of their dead. A large amount of supplies including weapons, ammunitions and communication wire were captured along with 3 enemy soldiers.

It was believed that a high ranking NVA officer was killed in the contact. During a return trip to Vietnam in 2007, 3rd Platoon Leader Harry Wilson took the photos used to create this panoramic view of the location where Haas, Handy, Hills and Sims were killed in action (Shown below & corresponding with Map location indicated on the next page).

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Positions of some of the NVA elements of March 2nd, 1968 are shown below in photos taken in 2007.



Period Topographical maps of the location of The action on March 2nd, 1968, are shown below:

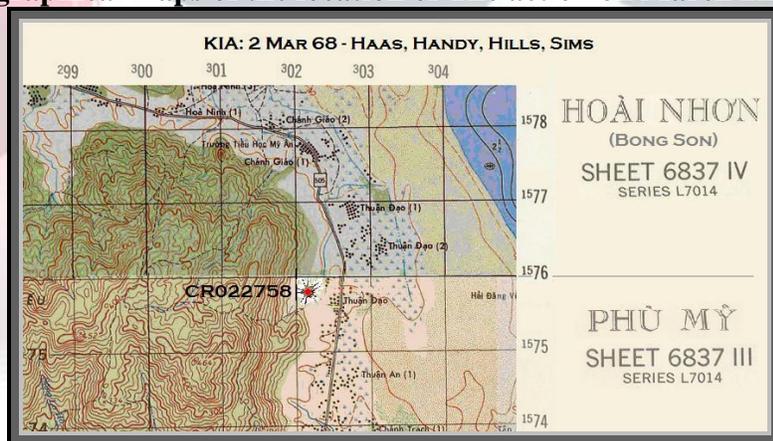
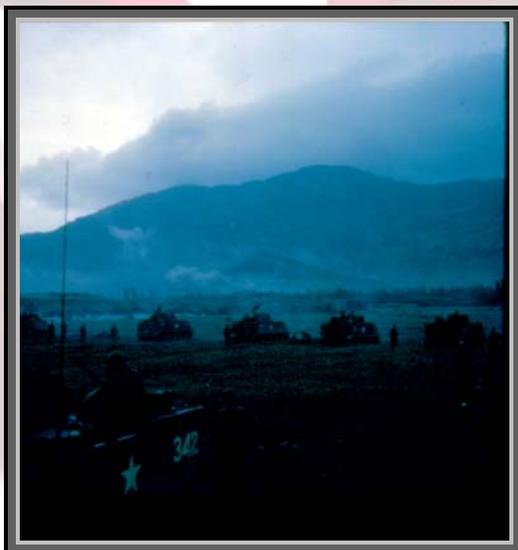


Photo below (Left) shows Charlie Company after pulling back to allow air strikes and artillery to pound the NVA positions (Smoke in background). Below (Right), Charlie Company is assembled on the beach the day of the battle near Thuan Dao.

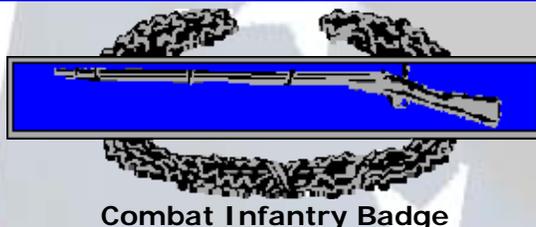


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Clarence Hills is buried at Mesa City Cemetery, Mesa, Maricopa County, Arizona, pictured below.



### AWARDS AND DECORATIONS OF CLARENCE HILLS:



Combat Infantry Badge



THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL  
WITH "V" DEVICE FOR VALOR

HQ, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 3203

13 MAY, 1968

FOR HEROISM, NOT INVOLVING PARTICIPATION IN AERIAL FLIGHT, IN CONNECTION WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. SERGEANT HILLS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTION ON 2 MARCH 1968, WHILE SERVING AS A TEAM LEADER AND VEHICLE COMMANDER WITH COMPANY C, 1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 50TH INFANTRY DURING A SEARCH AND CLEAR MISSION IN THE NUI MIEU MOUNTAIN COMPLEX, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. WHEN HIS UNIT BECAME HEAVILY ENGAGED WITH A LARGE ENEMY FORCE, SERGEANT HILLS, DISREGARDING HIS OWN SAFETY, MANEUVERED HIS VEHICLE THROUGH THE HOSTILE FIRE IN AN ATTEMPT TO ASSAULT THE ENEMY FORTIFICATIONS. AT THIS TIME SERGEANT HILLS' ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER WAS HIT BY AN ENEMY ROCKET AND SERGEANT HILLS WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED BY THE ENSUING EXPLOSION. HIS DISPLAY OF PERSONAL BRAVERY AND DEVOTION TO DUTY WAS 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

Air Medal

Purple Heart

National Defense

Vietnam Service

Vietnam Campaign