



**9TH INFANTRY  
DIVISION**



**50TH INFANTRY**



**"E" COMPANY**



**PRIVATE  
FIRST CLASS**



**INFANTRYMAN**

## **THOMAS WAYNE HODGE**

**"E" Company (Long Range Patrol), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 9th Infantry Division  
Private First Class, E3, RA16994672, MOS 11B10**

**Home of Record: Springfield, IL**

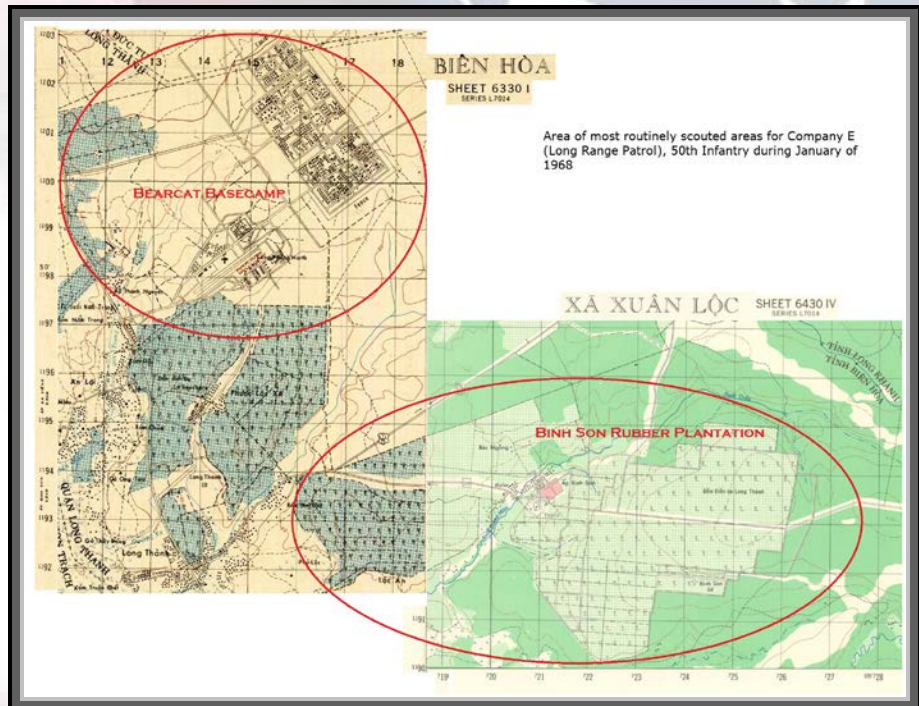
**Date of Birth: September 5, 1949, Age at time of loss: 18, Single  
9th Infantry Division, Bien Hoa Province, Republic of Vietnam**

**Start of Tour: December 7, 1967, Date of Casualty: January 24, 1968, Days in Country: 48  
Casualty Type A3, Ground Casualty, Hostile - Died while missing, Panel 35E - Row 022**

PFC Thomas Hodge belonged to the elite Company E, 50th Infantry Long Range Patrol unit of the 9th Infantry Division, operating in the massive delta region of South Vietnam.

In Shelby Stanton's book "Rangers at War" we learned that in the beginning days of the unit's inception, volunteer members were periodically sent to the MACV Recondo school at Nha Trang in Khanh Hoa Province. The final patrols of the MACV Recondo school were routinely sent into hostile areas to give students realistic battlefield experience.

The Company E LRPs were operating out of the Bearcat base camp (See map) and during the period just prior to the Tet Offensive of 1968, patrols were concentrated in Bien Hoa province...well south of the Recondo school AO. They were routinely scouting the Binh Son Rubber plantation and provided area reconnaissance coverage to monitor movements of the 5th Viet Cong Division.



Written by Clancy Matsuda, Former Commanding Officer of E/50, LRP, and as contributed by Former E/50 LRP member Hilan Jones in the book "Bonding of Warriors":

Continued...

On January 24, 1968, near Binh Son, a Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol that included Team Leader Greg Foreman, observers Thomas Wayne Hodge, Edward Chaffin, George House, and Gary Hollenbeck, were moving cautiously along a trail. Indication of heavy and recent use was visible as they came to a crossroads.

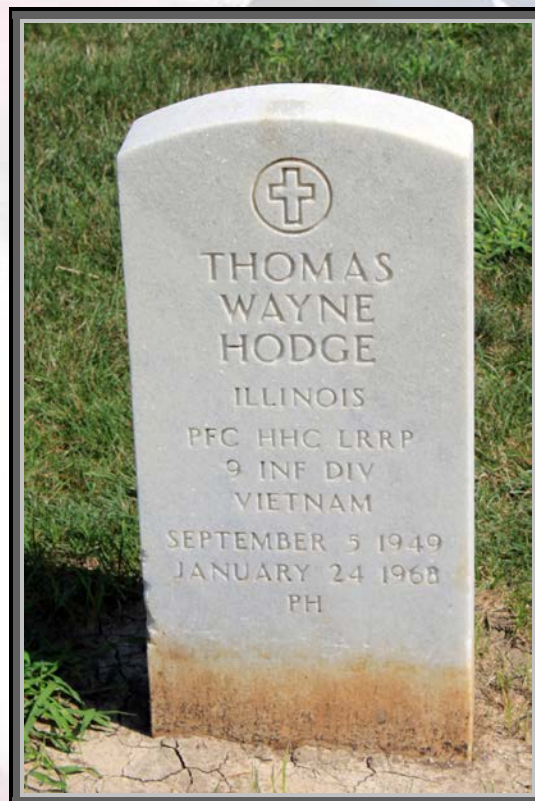
Foreman and House moved out to investigate the crossing, the other three stayed put to provide security. Chaffin saw four Viet Cong coming up behind Foreman and House preparing to fire on them. Acting quickly and decisively he, Hodge, and Hollenbeck took them under fire. There was an intense fire fight and Hodge was fatally wounded.

The VC were lucky this day as Hollenbeck and Chaffin's weapons jammed. Both men applied immediate action, clearing their weapons, as Foreman retrieved the mortally wounded Hodge. They continued to pour heavy fire on the pursuing enemy, breaking contact using the standard reaction drill. The team began their escape and evasion as the VC regrouped and started to pursue the LRRPs. With the enemy in pursuit it became necessary to leave Hodge. Members of the team covered his body with leaves and twigs, and then booby trapped it. The patrol continued their Escape & Evasion tactics, arriving safely at the pick up zone where the team was extracted and returned to Bearcat. There they were met by a LRRP reaction force that returned to the scene and retrieved Hodge's body.

Thomas Hodge was posthumously awarded the Silver Star\*\* in recognition of his action that was instrumental in allowing the team inflict heavy casualties on the enemy and make it safely to the pick up zone. Chaffin and Hollenbeck would later be awarded the Bronze Star with "V" device (For Valor) for their actions.

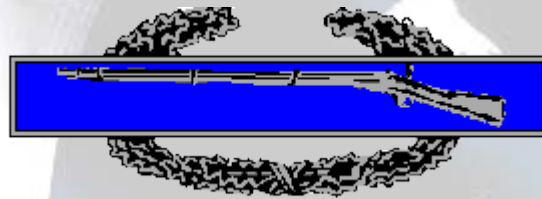
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Tom Hodge is buried at Camp Butler National Cemetery, R.R. #1, Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois.



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## AWARDS AND DECORATIONS OF THOMAS HODGE:



Combat Infantry Badge



Silver  
Star\*\*

Purple  
Heart

National  
Defense

Vietnam  
Service

Vietnam  
Campaign

**\*\*Although the award of the Silver Star is mentioned in the book “Bonding Of Warriors”, there is currently no official documentation of such an award. All the usual sources for such an award do not list Hodge.**