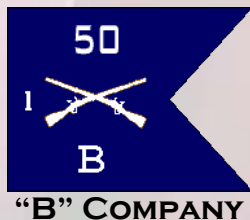




1<sup>ST</sup>  
AIR CAVALRY  
DIVISION



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



"B" COMPANY



PRIVATE  
FIRST CLASS



INFANTRY

## JAMES JOHN MURPHY

"B" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Private First Class, E3, US52986015, MOS 11B10

Home of Record: Scranton, PA

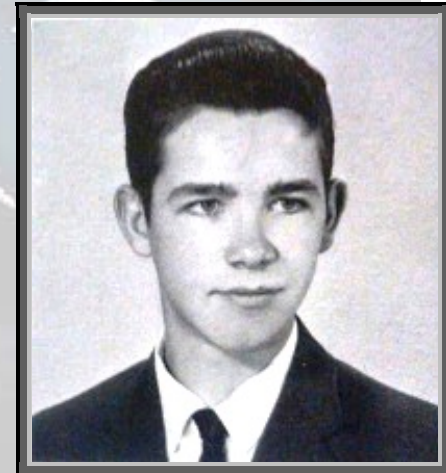
Date of Birth: July 16, 1947, Age at time of loss: 20, Single

1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam

Start of Tour: September 22, 1967, Incident: Oct. 31, 1967, Died of wounds: Nov. 5, 1967

Days in Country: 44, Casualty Type A1, MFW, Panel 29E - Row 025

James Murphy was severely wounded on October 31, 1967, when he tripped a booby trapped Claymore Mine on what became known as "Booby Trap Hill". He died several days later in the hospital in Qui Nhon. Read an account about Murphy written by his former Company Commander, Dick Guthrie:



### COMPANY B's OWN TUNNEL RAT

By: Richard Guthrie

*Every unit seems to have at least one man who -- no matter how dark things might seem -- is able to coax a chuckle and find the light side of any situation with a well-timed, irreverent wisecrack. Such a man is a highly valued commodity. James John Murphy was ours. That short, wiry, two-fisted Irishman had joined Company B only after our arrival in country. So he had missed the bonding the rest of us had gotten from the intensive training at Fort Hood, and he had missed the shipboard togetherness as well. Nonetheless, the newcomer established himself in no time as the one most adept at diffusing tensions and dispelling the loneliness and fears we all felt.*

*But not only was he our jester, he was also the first to volunteer for the dangerous missions that nobody wanted to take on. In the loud and self-deprecating boasting we all loved, he'd refer to himself as "Company B's own Tunnel Rat".*

*On that overcast November afternoon we had been operating uneventfully in the southern part of the Cay Giep Mountains, and it was time to set up our night defensive position. Responding to my arm signal, the platoon leaders fanned the armored personnel carriers in a circle below the scrub-dotted crest of the low round foothill I had selected from a half-dozen just like it. Fine long-range observation and fields of fire compensated for the lack of vegetation I'd have preferred to have concealing our vehicles and men. We'd be digging dismounted fighting positions at any rate, despite the hardness of the packed, brittle clay soil. With no need for instructions from me, the platoon leaders had troops dismount to clear suspicious areas and check for booby traps.*

*The deafening roar in our midst silenced the routine chatter, and for a stunned split-second the low rumble of twenty diesel engines at idle was all you could hear. Toby, bag in tow, already had clambered through the door in the rear ramp of my command track, and I was completing the cryptic radio appeal for an immediate helicopter MEDEVAC when the first urgent cries rang out for "Medic".*

*Toby worked feverishly over Murphy's shredded, comatose form, breaking off only in time to step clear as the helicopter lurched airborne and sprinted, low-level, to the south. They got our Murphy to the operating table in Qui Nhon no more than 45 minutes after he had tugged on the unseen nylon monofilament fishing line with his boot activating the device. He never regained consciousness. He struggled the best he could for several days before drowning on his own fluids. His lungs had been perforated by literally hundreds of steel pellets. These had been hurled so efficiently by the exploding of the M-26 Fragmentation Grenade (Made in USA) that the doctors had given him little hope.*

*He was one of Company B's first soldiers killed by enemy action. None of us would ever be the same again. "Ach, Johnny, we hardly knew ye."*

Richard Guthrie

Commanding Officer, 1967,

"B" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry

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Continued...



I was in the 67th EVAC hospital in Qin Nhon when Murphy was brought in. He was on the bottom floor all the way to the back of the ward and I went to see him. He had many shrapnel wounds and had tubes in his throat and could not speak and was doing poorly but was aware that I was there. I talked to him for a while and not wanting to wear him out I left with the promise to come back the next day. I returned the following morning and as I walked past the nurses station they smiled and nodded. I talked to Murphy and he seemed greatly improved. He gave indications through eye movements and small nods that he was aware of what I was saying. Again, not wanting to be too taxing on his strength I left with the promise to return the next day. When I entered the ward the next day I noticed that as I walked by the nurses station they didn't look at me and smile and nod as they had the day before. They were looking down and I assumed that they were just too busy. As I turned the corner into the room at the back of the ward I immediately saw that Murphy's bed had been made up and he was gone. I looked back at the nurses station and saw that they were all watching me but as soon as I looked back they all looked down and busied themselves with something. I walked back past the nurses and nothing was said, nothing needed to be said. I wondered how many times they had been through this same ordeal and I thought, GOD bless you Murphy, and GOD bless these nurses.

A map showing the location of the incident is below (Left). On a return visit to Vietnam in 1998, Dick Guthrie took the photo below (Right) of what was once "Booby Trap Hill":



Murphy is buried at Abington Hill Cemetery, Morgan Highway (Route 307) South Abington Township, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania, Pictured below:



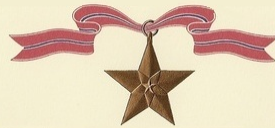
Read an article published in Scranton in 2015 about James Murphy:

<http://www.ichiban1.org/pdf/MurphyArticle.pdf>

## JAMES MURPHY'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS



Combat Infantry Badge



THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL  
FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

HQ 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 7795

31 DEC 1967

FOR DISTINGUISHING HIMSELF BY OUTSTANDING MERITORIOUS SERVICE IN CONNECTION WITH GROUND OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM DURING THE PERIOD 22 SEPTEMBER 1967 TO 5 NOVEMBER 1967. THROUGH HIS UNTIRING EFFORTS AND PROFESSIONAL ABILITY, HE CONSISTENTLY OBTAINED OUTSTANDING RESULTS. HE WAS QUICK TO GRASP THE IMPLICATIONS OF NEW PROBLEMS WITH WHICH HE WAS FACED AS A RESULT OF THE EVER-CHANGING SITUATIONS INHERENT IN THE COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATION AND TO FIND WAYS AND MEANS TO SOLVE THOSE PROBLEMS. THE ENERGETIC APPLICATION OF THIS EXTENSIVE KNOWLEDGE HAS MATERIALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFORTS OF THE UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM TO ASSIST THAT COUNTRY IN RIDDING ITSELF OF THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO ITS FREEDOM. HIS INITIATIVE, ZEAL, SOUND JUDGMENT AND DEVOTION TO DUTY HAVE BEEN IN THE HIGHEST TRADITION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT ON HIM AND ON THE MILITARY SERVICE.



Bronze  
Star



Purple  
Heart



National  
Defense



Vietnam  
Service



Vietnam  
Campaign