



**23<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY  
(AMERICAL)  
DIVISION**



**198<sup>TH</sup>  
INFANTRY  
BRIGADE  
(LIGHT)**

**1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION**



**52<sup>ND</sup> INFANTRY**



**CORPORAL**



**INFANTRY**

## THOMAS WILLIAM OTTE

2nd Platoon, "C" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 52<sup>nd</sup> Infantry

Trained with "C" Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry Prior to Vietnam

Private First Class, E3, Posthumous Promotion to CPL, US56453728, MOS 11B10

Home of Record: Kaukauna, WI

Date of Birth: August 14, 1944, Age at time of loss: 23, Single

Americal Division, 198<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (Light), Quang Tin Province, Republic of Vietnam

Start of Tour: October 6, 1967, Date of Casualty: February 3, 1968, Days in Country: 120 Casualty

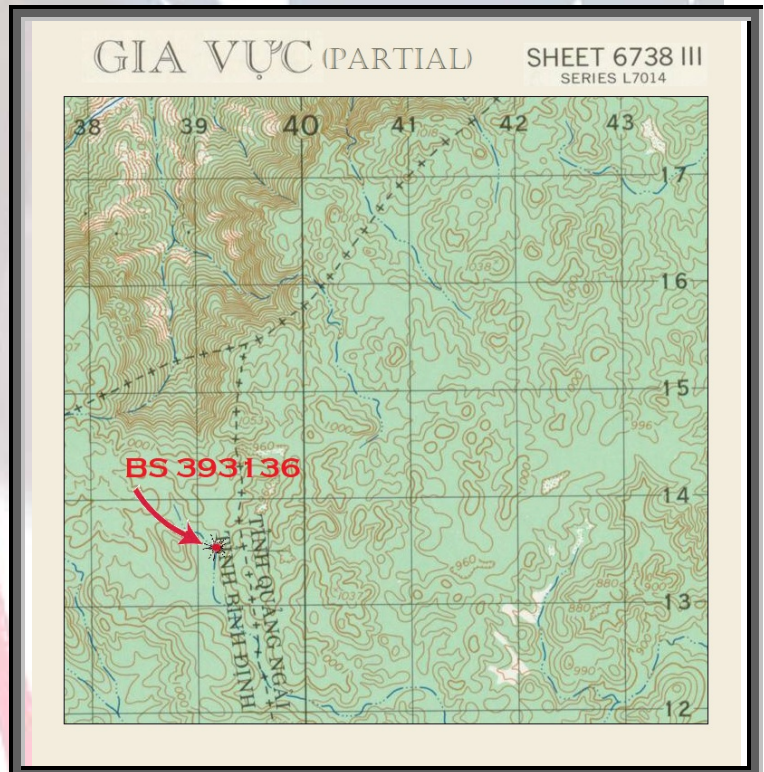
Type: Hostile, died outright, Ground Casualty, Misadventure, Panel 37E - Row 011

Tom Otte was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1966 and received his Basic Combat and Advanced Individual Training with Charlie Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry at Fort Hood Texas beginning in the Fall of 1966 until the Spring of 1967 when he was transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 52<sup>nd</sup> Infantry which was destined to join the newly formed 198<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade in Vietnam.

Just weeks after his transfer, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry also received notice that they would deploy to Vietnam...leaving Oakland, California via the USS General John Pope on September 1<sup>st</sup> of 1967. Tom's new unit followed and also departed from Oakland on the Pope's Sister ship, the USS General W. H. Gordon which departed on October 6, 1967, passing underneath the Golden Gate Bridge and sailing to Subic Bay, Philippines, a trip that took 19 days. 2 days later, they arrived at Da Nang Harbor in Vietnam where they transferred to LSTs for transport down the coast, arriving at Chu Lai in Southern I Corps Tactical Zone on October 26, 1967.

Now Private First Class Otte participated in two Campaigns in Vietnam: The Counteroffensive, Phase III and the Tet Counteroffensive.

During the overnight hours of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, Tom Otte's 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Company C, was temporarily under the Operational Control of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry and was set up in a U-shaped Ambush near a jungle trail just inside Binh Dinh Province...Ironically...just 35 miles north of his former training unit from Texas, the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry who was operating near Bong Son in Northern II Corps Tactical Zone.



Above (right) is a map of the location of the ambush where Tom Otte was killed in action.

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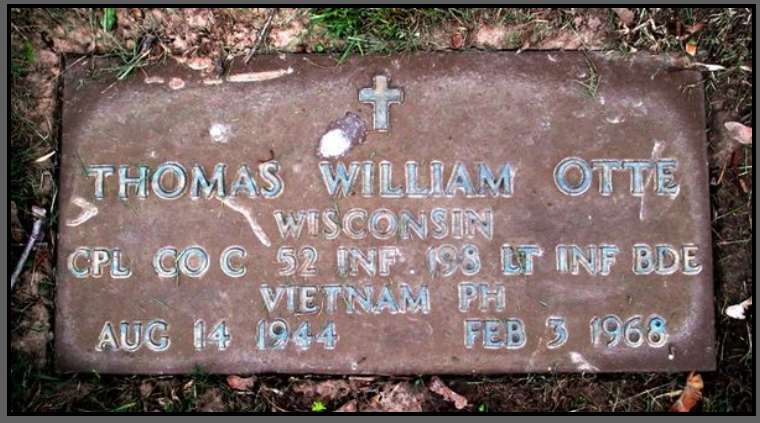
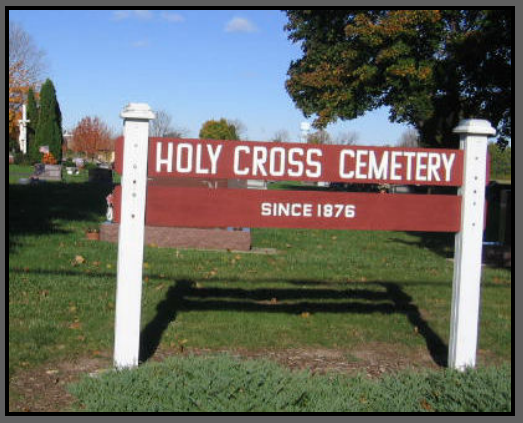


At approximately 5:35 AM, while the platoon was on “50% Alert (half the men awake and half sleeping)” a member of the ambush team woke up and shouted “Here they come” and started firing with his M16, wounding three men from his own squad. There were no enemy soldiers involved and 2 of the wounded, Tom Otte and Bob Dickson died of their wounds while the third man, PFC Eames, survived.

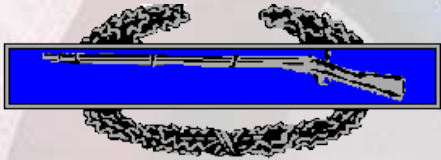
The incident occurred in the days following the Tet Offensive of January 30, 1968, and throughout Vietnam, “Mop-up” operations were seeing heavy contact in the jungles of South Vietnam as badly defeated VC forces attempted to melt into the jungle and regroup. Tensions were high and infantry units were on edge from days of heavy contact.

Tom Otte is fondly remembered by the men from Charlie Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry including Dick Vanderloop, also from Corporal Otte’s hometown of Kaukauna, WI.

Thomas William Otte is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery, Kaukauna, WI.



### THOMAS WILLIAM OTTE'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS



Combat Infantry Badge



Purple Heart

National Defense

Vietnam Gallantry

Vietnam Service

Vietnam Campaign