



MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND VIETNAM

HOWARD SAMUEL PONTUCK

Training Team Leader

MACV, Advisory Team 56

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

First Lieutenant, O2, OF108909, MOS 1542

Home of Record: New York, NY

Date of Birth: February 10, 1943, Age at time of loss: 24, Single

MACV, Phong Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam

Start of Tour: September 8, 1967, Date of Casualty: March 8, 1968, Days in Country: 182

Casualty Type A1, OED, Panel 43E - Row 058

Howard Pontuck was a graduate of West Point...a member of the class of 1966...which gained distinction as having the most members killed in action than any other class involved with the Vietnam war.

He briefly commanded Company B of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 50th Infantry at Fort Hood, Texas before the battalion deployed to Vietnam. He was replaced in that capacity by then Captain Richard Guthrie.

Once in Vietnam, Lieutenant Pontuck was not one to be kept back in the rear area...as should have been his lot as Executive Officer. At every opportunity, he was in the field with the troops.

He distinguished himself in battle at the villages of An Lac and An Tinh in early January of 1968 and was awarded the Bronze Star for Valor.

Dick Guthrie wrote a short piece about Pontuck for the Association's "War Stories" section: http://ichiban1.org/html/news_pages/news_37.htm



Pictured above, Howard Pontuck is seated at the center, with Dick Guthrie "tipping" his helmet at his side...and surrounded by the Officers and Forward Observer of Company "B", sometime in late 1967.

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1ST BATTALION 50TH INFANTRY

"B" COMPANY



EXECUTIVE OFFICER



1ST LIEUTENANT



INFANTRYMAN



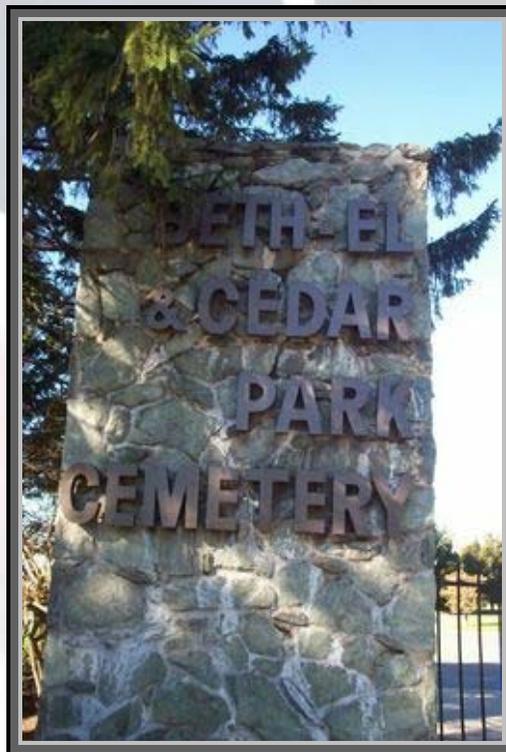
Howard Pontuck wanted to move to MACV...where he felt he could be of better use to the war effort. He finally got his wish and was transferred to an area near Can Tho in the Mekong Delta

Lieutenant Pontuck's former friend at MACV, Gary Wehrels, recalls a warm but short friendship and the tragic details of a death while working on a mine field clearing near the Can Tho River in the Delta region in March of 1968.

Read his account at:

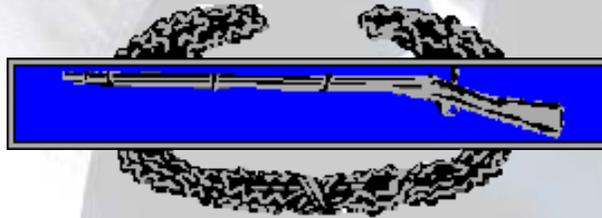
<http://www.ichiban1.org/pdf/Memorial/PontuckAccount.pdf>

Howard Pontuck is buried at [Beth El & Cedar Park Cemetery](#), Soldier Hill Road & Forest Avenue, Paramus, Bergen County, New Jersey. He is in the Beth El section, Block 8, Line 8, Grave 40. (Photos Below)



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HOWARD PONTUCK'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS*:



Combat Infantry Badge



THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE FOR VALOR

HQ 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE), GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 2076, 9 APRIL
1968

FOR HEROISM, NOT INVOLVING PARTICIPATION IN AERIAL FLIGHT, IN CONNECTION WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST A HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM: FIRST LIEUTENANT PONTUCK DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTIONS ON 2 JANUARY 1968, WHILE SERVING AS EXECUTIVE OFFICER WITH COMPANY B, 1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 50TH INFANTRY DURING A SEARCH AND CLEAR MISSION NEAR AN LAC, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. WHEN HIS UNIT BECAME HEAVILY ENGAGED WITH A LARGE ENEMY FORCE AND SUSTAINED SEVERAL CASUALTIES, LIEUTENANT PONTUCK EXPOSED HIMSELF TO THE ENEMY FIRE AS HE MOVED THROUGH AN OPEN AREA TO ASSIST HIS WOUNDED COMRADES. DISREGARDING HIS OWN SAFETY, HE THEN MOVED THE INJURED MEN TO COVERED POSITIONS. 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

* This compilation is, in all likelihood, incomplete. Awards shown are only those either documented or strongly "assumed" to have been awarded.