



1st
FIELD FORCE
VIETNAM



1st BATTALION
50th INFANTRY



"B" COMPANY
1st PLATOON



SERGEANT



INFANTRYMAN

WILLIAM CARL WHITLATCH, JR.

1st Platoon, "B" Company, 1st Battalion (mechanized), 50th Infantry
Sergeant, E5, US232683821, MOS 11C40
Home of Record: Moundsville, WV

Date of Birth: December 20, 1943, Age at time of loss: 25, Married
I Field Force Vietnam, Binh Thuan Province, Republic of Vietnam
Start of Tour: April 7, 1969, Date of Casualty: December 12, 1969, Days in Country: 249
Casualty Type A1, Gun, small arms fire, Panel 15W – Row 051

SGT Bill Whitlatch (Photo at right) was killed while attacking the remnants of an enemy unit with which "B" Company had a major firefight on December 9th, in the Suoi Cho Don Valley, 40 kilometers northeast of Phan Thiet City. Intelligence reported that fight had been with a Company from the 482 NVA Battalion...which was decimated by the B Company attack, losing 27 Killed (By body count) including the decorated Company Commander who had been trained in China in 1965.

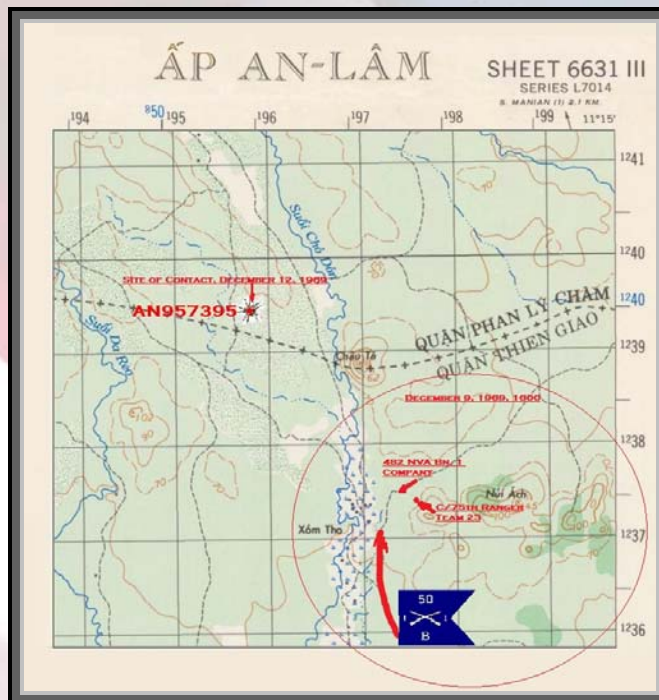


On the 12th, while still patrolling the area of the fight on the 9th, several enemy soldiers were spotted fleeing from the Platoon's Armored Personnel Carriers. While in hot pursuit, a round from one of the fleeing enemy soldiers went through Platoon Leader David Haag's leg and hit Whitlatch in the chest. Whitlatch later died of this wound.

Read an account of the action involved, written by former 1st Platoon Leader David E. Haag:

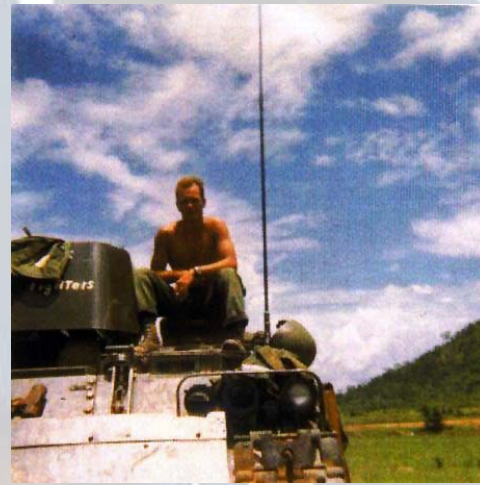
<http://www.ichiban1.org/pdf/Memorial/HaagAccount.pdf>

A map of the locations involved in the actions of December 9 & 12 is shown below:



Continued...

Below are several photos supplied by Linda Whitlatch, Bill's wife. They appear to be taken in Binh Dinh Province prior to the Battalion's move South to Binh Thuan Province. At the time of these photos, the 50th Infantry was "Attached" to the 173rd Airborne Brigade.



Bill Whitlatch is buried at Riverview Cemetery, State Route 2 Alt, Moundsville, Marshall County, West Virginia (Pictured below):



Continued...

WILLIAM WHITLATCH'S AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:



Combat Infantry Badge



HQ, 1ST FIELD FORCE VIETNAM

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 83

26 JANUARY 1970

SERGEANT WILLIAM WHITLATCH DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS ACTION WHILE ENGAGED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST AN ARMED HOSTILE FORCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FROM 7 DECEMBER 1969 TO 12 DECEMBER 1969. WHILE SERVING WITH COMPANY B, 1ST BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 50TH INFANTRY. ON 7 DECEMBER 1969, SERGEANT WHITLATCH AND HIS SQUAD HAD SET UP A NIGHT AMBUSH POSITION WHEN AN ENEMY FORCE OF UNDETERMINED SIZE WAS OBSERVED MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF COMPANY B'S NIGHT DEFENSIVE POSITION. SERGEANT WHITLATCH INITIATED AN AMBUSH, AND THE ENEMY RETURNED FIRE WITH AUTOMATIC WEAPONS AND B-40 ROCKETS. THROUGHOUT THE CONTACT, SERGEANT WHITLATCH MOVED FROM POSITION TO POSITION, DIRECTING HIS SQUAD'S FIRE, WHICH ENABLED THE SQUAD TO SUCCESSFULLY REPULSE THE ENEMY CHARGE. ON 9 DECEMBER 1969, SERGEANT WHITLATCH LED HIS SQUAD THROUGH A HAIL OF SMALL ARMS AND AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE TO LINK UP WITH A RANGER TEAM WHICH HAD BEEN SURROUNDED BY APPROXIMATELY FIFTY NORTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS. THIS ACTION LEFT TWENTY SEVEN ENEMY KILLED, WHILE NO FRIENDLY CASUALTIES WERE SUFFERED. ON 12 DECEMBER 1969, SERGEANT WHITLATCH WAS ACTING AS POINT MAN ON A COMPANY SEARCH AND CLEAR MISSION WHEN HE SPOTTED AN AMBUSH SET UP BY A NORTH VIETNAMESE RECONNAISSANCE TEAM. SHOUTING A WARNING TO HIS SQUAD, SERGEANT WHITLATCH CHARGED THE AMBUSH SITE, KILLING TWO ENEMY BEFORE BEING WOUNDED. IN THE ACTION THAT FOLLOWED, HE DIRECTED INTENSIVE FIRE AND LED HIS MEN IN PURSUIT OF THE ROUTED ENEMY UNTIL HE SUCCEMPTED TO HIS WOUNDS. SERGEANT WILLIAM WHITLATCH'S HEROIC ACTIONS WERE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE MILITARY SERVICE, AND REFLECT GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, HIS UNIT, AND THE UNITED STATES ARMY.



Silver
Star



Purple
Heart



National
Defense



Vietnam
Service



Vietnam
Campaign