

My brother went away to war to fight for four things: God, Honor, Duty, & Country  
For these four things he stood, and for these four things my brother died  
Because I loved him, I had to cry, but each tear was filled with pride  
My brother was caught in a crossfire, but he courageously stood his ground  
Until a bullet pierced his heart and brought his great body down  
And when he fell, he fell for me, but not for me alone  
He fell for everyone he loved and for every American home  
Hugh Williams Wellons was his brother's full name  
To you who read this for my brothers' sake

***Don't let him have died in vain***

***Love our country and realize what a privilege you have to live here***

***God's great country needs your help***

***Give all you can give***

***Where the light of freedom flickers, we must fight for the flames of light***

---

Hugh Wellon's sister wrote this poem. Though I had known Caroline for many years and we were born on the same day, month, year, and in the same hospital, I never talked to her about Vietnam. After I did, she shared with me about her brother.

## Hugh William Wellons

First Lieutenant

ADV TEAM 2, HQ, MACV ADVISORS, MACV

Army of the United States

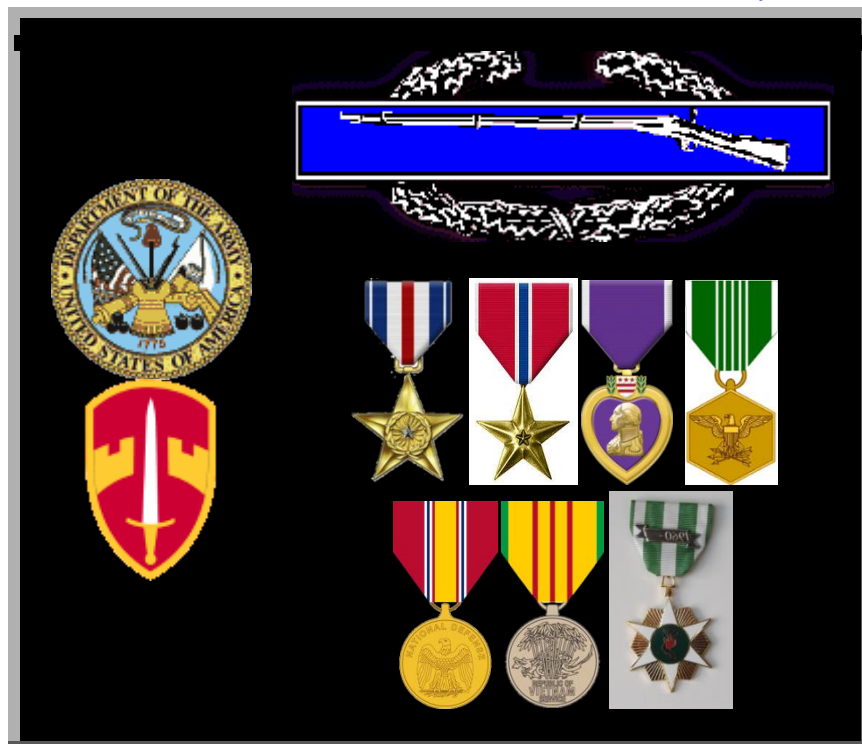
[Florence, South Carolina](#)

Born: September 12, Parkton, Robeson County, North Carolina, USA

Died: October 13, 1966 Binh Dinh, Vietnam

*Hugh died from small arms fire. His body was recovered.*

**[HUGH W WELLONS](#) is on the Wall at [Panel 11E, Line 73](#)**



Vietnam War US Casualties by State				
Alabama	Alaska	American Samoa	Arizona	Arkansas
1208	57	4	619	592
California	Canal Zone	Colorado	Connecticut	Delaware
5,575	2	623	612	122
District of Columbia	Florida	Foreign	Georgia	Guam
242	1,954	4	1,581	70
Hawaii	Idaho	Illinois	Indiana	Iowa
276	217	2,936	1,534	851
Kansas	Kentucky	Louisiana	Maine	Maryland
627	10,56	885	341	1,014
Massachusetts	Michigan	Minnesota	Mississippi	Missouri
1,331	2,657	1,077	636	1,418
Montana	Nebraska	Nevada	New Hampshire	New Jersey
1	395	149	226	1,487
New Mexico	New York	North Carolina	North Dakota	Ohio
395	4,119	1,613	199	3,094
Oklahoma	Oregon	Pennsylvania	Puerto Rico	Rhode Island
987	710	3,147	345	209
South Carolina	South Dakota	Tennessee	Texas	Utah
895	192	1,295	3,415	361
Vermont	Virgin Islands	Virginia	Washington	West Virginia
100	15	1,305	1,047	733
Wisconsin	Wyoming			
1,161	119	Total Records 58,220		

<u>VAN CAMPEN, THOMAS CHARLES</u>	1965-06-24	OROVILLE	CA	PFC	19
<u>HERNANDEZ, RUDOLPH VILLALPANE</u>	1965-07-07	SAN ANTONIO	TX	PVT	20
<u>HOWARD, DAVID LAFATE</u>	1965-07-07	FOUNTAIN INN	SC	SSG	22
<u>JOHNSON, ALLEN ISAAC</u>	1965-07-07	CLOQUET	MN	PVT	18
<u>JOHNSON, MCARTHUR</u>	1965-07-07	WILMINGTON	NC	SGT	25
<u>MEEHAN, RAYMOND PATRICK</u>	1965-07-07	ROCKVILLE CENTRE	NY	PFC	23
<u>RAY, DURWARD FRANK</u>	1965-07-07	COLUMBUS	GA	SGT	21
<u>RICE, JOHNIE EDWARD JR</u>	1965-07-07	FREEBURN	KY	PFC	21
<u>SHAW, JOHN DILLINGER</u>	1965-07-07	SUMMIT	MS	PVT	22
<u>ZINN, RONALD LLOYD</u>	1965-07-07	ORLAND PARK	IL	CPT	26
<u>HATCHETT, KYLE HENRY</u>	1965-08-23	NEW YORK	NY	PFC	20
<u>ANDERSON, LEE E</u>	1965-09-19	PHOENIX	AZ	SGT	21
<u>EMBREY, GRADY KEITH</u>	1965-09-19	LA GRANGE	GA	PFC	19
<u>DUNCAN, RONNIE MARSHALL</u>	1965-10-10	WAKE FOREST	NC	PFC	23
<u>FLOYD, JAMES WALTER</u>	1965-10-10	WINSTON-SALEM	NC	PFC	19
<u>FRANKLIN, LAWRENCE ANDRE</u>	1965-10-10	WENATCHEE	WA	SGT	23
<u>HIMMELREICH, HARRY EDWARD</u>	1965-10-10	UNION BEACH	NJ	PFC	19
<u>NELSON, DUANE MICHAEL</u>	1965-10-10	SIOUX CITY	IA	PFC	22
<u>PRESIDENT, ERNEST</u>	1965-10-10	FORT PIERCE	FL	SP4	24
<u>REILLY, JAMES JOSEPH JR</u>	1965-10-10	WASHINGTON	PA	SFC	39
<u>RICK, EUGENE MERLYN</u>	1965-10-10	COON RAPIDS	MN	SFC	32
<u>ROBILLARD, WILFRED ROLAND</u>	1965-10-10	MANCHESTER	NH	PFC	18
<u>SCHUKAR, RONALD KEITH</u>	1965-10-10	VANDALIA	IL	PFC	21
<u>WILLIAMS, VAN</u>	1965-10-10	NEW YORK	NY	PFC	19
<u>LUIS, GEORGE GREGORIO</u>	1965-10-22	PAHOA	HI	SP4	20
<u>OLIVE, MILTON LEE III</u>	1965-10-22	CHICAGO	IL	PFC	18
<u>RODRIGUEZ, ROMIRO C</u>	1965-12-01	STOCKTON	CA	SP4	24
<u>FOGLE, LARY DALE</u>	1965-12-20	LAWRENCEBURG	IN	PFC	18
<u>AIKEY, TIMOTHY WAYNE</u>	1966-01-02	WARRENSVILLE	PA	SGT	19
<u>BAKER, WALLACE EDWIN</u>	1966-01-02	WINDHAM	OH	SSG	35
<u>BIXBY, JACK DENTON</u>	1966-01-02	GRACETON	MN	PFC	20
<u>LEAKE, JOHNNY H</u>	1966-01-02	WYOMING	NY	PFC	22

<u>LEVY, GERALD</u>	1966-01-02	MERIDEN	CT	SP5	20
<u>LEWIS, GARY FRANKLIN</u>	1966-01-02	ULEDI	PA	SP4	18
<u>MC INTIRE, WALTER EDWIN JR</u>	1966-01-02	ANN ARBOR	MI	PFC	22
<u>MERKLE, ELLIOTT LYNN</u>	1966-01-02	ST CLAIR	MO	PVT	18
<u>MORTON, JERRY WAYNE</u>	1966-01-02	DEWEYVILLE	TX	SGT	31
<u>TORRES-ACEVEDO, JUVENCIO</u>	1966-01-02	PONCE	PR	PFC	24
<u>HARPER, RICHARD EARL</u>	1966-01-12	BIRMINGHAM	AL	SP4	21
<u>BEAUCHAMP, JOHN HENRY JR</u>	1966-03-16	PRINCESS ANNE	MD	CPL	19
<u>BELL, CHARLES ARTHUR</u>	1966-03-16	PHILADELPHIA	PA	PFC	20
<u>GIPSON, ROBERT PAUL</u>	1966-03-16	ATHENS	GA	SP4	23
<u>KNUDSON, KENNETH MAX</u>	1966-03-16	SACO	MT	PFC	21
<u>SMITH, RICHARD FLOYD</u>	1966-03-16	ROCHESTER	NY	PFC	21
<u>ZIONTS, CHARLES A</u>	1966-03-16	CICERO	IL	SP4	20
<u>DEMPS, HENRY VAN</u>	1966-08-22	PLANT CITY	FL	PFC	22
<u>LEWIS, MICHAEL</u>	1966-08-22	INDIANAPOLIS	IN	PFC	22



Service Member

Pfc. THOMAS CHARLES VAN CAMPEN



Private First Class Thomas Charles Van Campen entered the U.S. Army from California and was a member of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade. On June 24, 1965, he was on a combat operation near Bien Hoa, South Vietnam, when he became separated from his unit and was shot and killed by a sniper in the vicinity of grid coordinates YT 075 215. His unit was forced to retreat and was not able to retrieve his body at the time. The unit eventually returned to the area but did not find PFC Van

Campen's body, and further attempts to recover his remains have been unsuccessful. Today,

Private First Class Van Campen is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. His name is also inscribed along with all his fallen comrades on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC.

Based on all information available, DPAA assessed the individual's case to be in the analytical category of [Active Pursuit](#).

**If you are a family member of this service member, DPAA can provide you with additional information and analysis of your case. Please contact your [casualty office representative](#).**



Pfc. THOMAS CHARLES VAN CAMPEN

- Unit  
CO B 2 BN 503 INF 173 ABN BDE Current Country of Loss VIETNAM
- Home of Record\* CA
- \*Home of record is the city and/or state where the service member joined the service. This may not be the same location as where the service member was

# Durward Frank Ray

Sergeant

B CO, 1ST BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE,  
US ARMY SPT CMD VIETNAM, MACV

Army of the United States

Columbus, Georgia

Length of service 3 years

His tour began on May 5, 1965

Casualty was on Jul 7, 1965

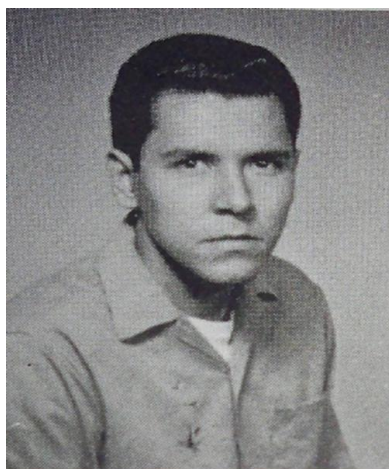
In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE

Body was recovered





## **Rudolph Villalpando Hernandez**

**Private**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE,  
US ARMY SPT CMD VIETNAM, MACV**

**Army of the United States**

**[San Antonio, Texas](#)**

**Length of service 0 years**

**Casualty was on Jul 7, 1965**

**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**

**Body was recovered**



# Raymond Patrick Meehan

**Private First Class**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT, 173 ABN BDE**

**Army of the United States**

**26 July 1941 - 07 July 1965**

**Rockville Centre, NY**

**Length of service 1 years**

**His tour began on May 5, 1965**

**Casualty was on Jul 7, 1965**

**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**

**Body was recovered**



# David Lafate Howard

Staff Sergeant

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE,  
US ARMY SPT CMD VIETNAM, MACV

Army of the United States

Fountain Inn, South Carolina

Length of service 4 years

His tour began on May 5, 1965

Casualty was on Jul 7, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE

Body was recovered



# Allen Isaac Johnson

Private

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE,  
US ARMY SPT CMD VIETNAM, MACV

Army of the United States

Saint Cloud MN

Length of service 0 years

His tour began on May 30, 1965

Casualty was on Jul 7, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE

Body was recovered



# Kyle Henry Hatchett

**Private First Class**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE,  
USARV**

**Army of the United States**

Length of service 0 years

His tour began on May 5, 1965

Casualty was on Aug 23, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

NON-HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

ACCIDENTAL SELF-DESTRUCTION

Body was recovered





## Duane Michael Nelson

Private First Class

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Sioux City, Iowa

Length of service 4 years

His tour began on Aug 7, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Body was recovered





# Harry Edward Himmelreich

Private First Class

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

[Union Beach, New Jersey](#)

Length of service 2 years

His tour began on May 4, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Body was recovered



# James Walter Floyd

Private First Class

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

[Winston-Salem, North Carolina](#)

Length of service 0 years

His tour began on Sep 22, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Body was recovered





## Lawrence Andre Franklin

Sergeant

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

[Wenatchee, Washington](#)

Length of service 4 years

His tour began on May 5, 1965

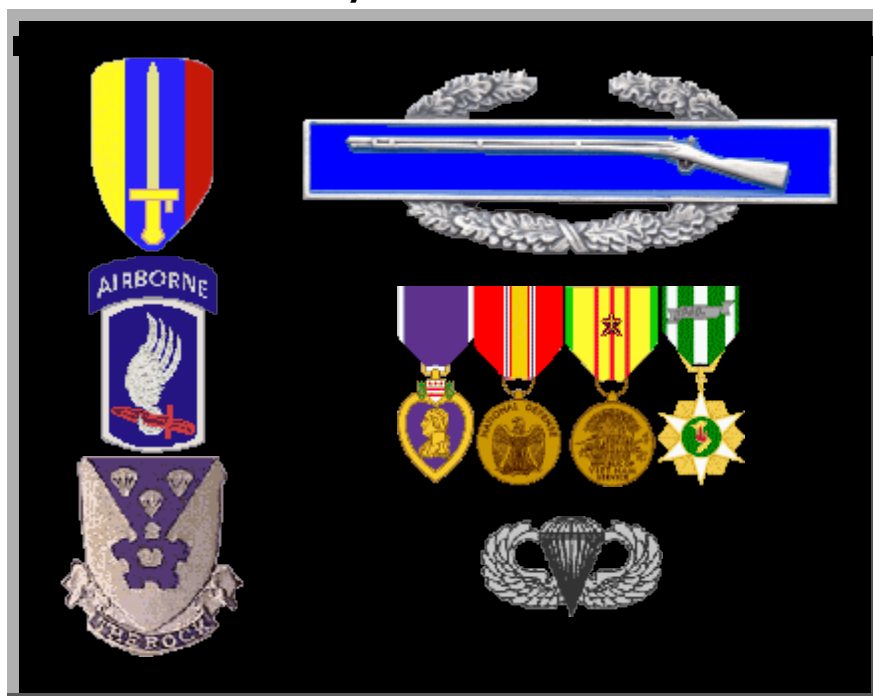
Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE

Body was recovered





## **Ronald Keith Schukar**

**Private First Class**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT, 173 ABN BDE**

**Army of the United States**

**02 August 1944 - 10 October 1965**

**Vandalia, Illinois**

**Length of service 1 years**

**His tour began on May 5, 1965**

**Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965**

**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICE**

**Body was recovered**





## **Ronald Keith Schukar**

**Private First Class**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT, 173 ABN BDE**

**Army of the United States**

**02 August 1944 - 10 October 1965**

**Vandalia, Illinois**

**Length of service 1 years**

**His tour began on May 5, 1965**

**Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965**

**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICE**

**Body was recovered**



# Van Williams

Private First Class

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

[New York, New York](#)

Length of service 1 years

His tour began on May 5, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Body was recovered



# James Joseph Reilly, Jr

Sergeant First Class

E TRP, 17TH CAVALRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Washington, Pennsylvania

Length of service 18 years

His tour began on Aug 9, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Body was recovered



# Ronnie Marshall Duncan

Private First Class

E TRP, 17TH CAVALRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

[Wake Forest, North Carolina](#)

Length of service 1 years

His tour began on May 5, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE

Body was recovered







## Ernest President

Specialist Four

HHC, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Fort Pierce, Florida

Length of service 1 years

His tour began on May 5, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 10, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE

Body was recovered



# Milton Lee Olive, III

Private First Class

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT, 173 ABN BDE

Army of the United States

07 November 1946 - 22 October 1965

Chicago, Illinois

Length of service 1 years

His tour began on Jun 5, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 22, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICE

Body was recovered







**Robert Paul Gipson**  
**Specialist Four**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**  
**Army of the United States**

**Athens, Georgia**

**August 06, 1942 to March 16, 1966**

**Length of service 2 years**

**His tour began on May 7, 1965**

**Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966**

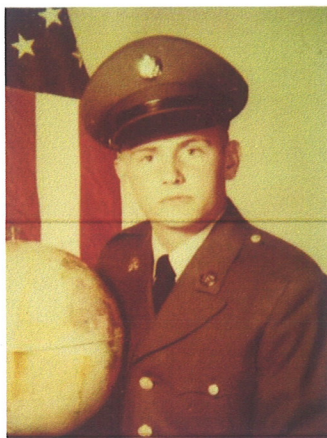
**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**MULTIPLE FRAGMENTATION WOUNDS**

**Body was recovered**





LARY D. FOGLE

## Lary Dale Fogle

**Private First Class  
B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT, 173 ABN BDE  
Army of the United States  
16 December 1947 - 20 December 1965  
Lawrenceburg, IN**

**Length of service 0 years  
His tour began on Jul 13, 1965  
Casualty was on Dec 20, 1965  
In , SOUTH VIETNAM  
HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY  
MULTIPLE FRAGMENTATION WOUNDS  
qq**







## Charles A. Zionts

**Specialist Four**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**

**Army of the United States**

**Cicero, Illinois**

**September 13, 1945 to March 16, 1966**

**Length of service 2 years**

**His tour began on Dec 21, 1965**

**Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966**

**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**

**Body was recovered**



**John Henry Beauchamp, Jr**  
**Corporal**  
**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**  
**Army of the United States**  
**Princess Anne, Maryland**  
**March 26, 1946 to March 16, 1966**  
**Length of service 1 years**  
**His tour began on May 5, 1965**  
**Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966**  
**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**  
**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**  
**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**  
**Body was recovered**





# Richard Earl Harper

Specialist Four

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Birmingham, Alabama

Length of service 3 years

His tour began on Jul 13, 1965

Casualty was on Jan 12, 1966

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

MULTIPLE FRAGMENTATION WOUNDS

Body was recovered





## George Gregorio Luis

Specialist Four

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Pahoa, Hawaii

Length of service 2 years

His tour began on May 5, 1965

Casualty was on Oct 22, 1965

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE

Body was recovered







## **Romiro C. Rodriguez**

**Specialist Four**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**

**Army of the United States**

**[Stockton, California](#)**

**Length of service 1 years**

**His tour began on May 4, 1965**

**Casualty was on Dec 1, 1965**

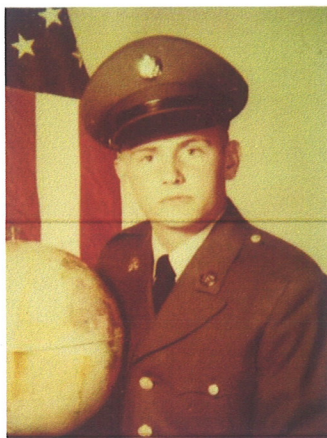
**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**

**Body was recovered**





LARY D. FOGLE

## Lary Dale Fogle

**Private First Class  
B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT, 173 ABN BDE  
Army of the United States  
16 December 1947 - 20 December 1965  
Lawrenceburg, IN**

**Length of service 0 years  
His tour began on Jul 13, 1965  
Casualty was on Dec 20, 1965  
In , SOUTH VIETNAM  
HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY  
MULTIPLE FRAGMENTATION WOUNDS  
qq**



Operation Silver City began on March 11, my 19th birthday. No one sang happy birthday, and I did not receive presents. We were walking through the jungle, so to speak, looking for the enemy.

This is the essence of my story. Here is a short version: I was supposed to be the point man that day. Beauchamp started arguing that he had more experience, which was true. I countered, "You only have 45 days left." Over my left shoulder, someone said in a commanding voice, "I outrun you; I am going first."

I did not know for many, many years who this was. It was Zoints. As he walked up the side of the trail, he turned a slight curve. A shot rang out, and he yelled back to us. The jungle at that moment erupted into what you could call July 4 on steroids. We all took cover. Beauchamp yelled back to Short for him to cover him; he was going to try and get Zoins. By the time Short said don't, Beauchamp was killed.

I was kneeling behind a tree, and I heard a bullet hit the tree behind me; as I turned around, I realized that had I been kneeling differently, I would have been dead. The guy that shot them and was shooting at me stepped out on the trail, and I killed him. I did not know him; I realized he was someone's son, brother, or father. I felt both guilt and justification.

Short yelled, "I will cover for you. Let's get back to our unit." It was an excruciating decision. One of the cardinal rules of war is never to leave anyone behind. There was no way we were going to get Zoints and Beauchamp at that time.

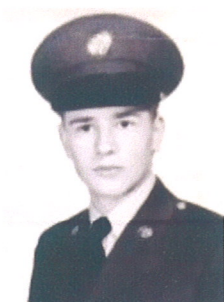
The next day, I do not remember much, and for over 50 years, I felt guilty. It took me over 50 years to find short and begin to talk about all of this. He had never shared any of it with anyone. As I was telling someone about the guilt, they suggested that I experience gratitude that they died so I could tell their stories.

These men died that day. There is more to this story in another chapter.



**John Henry Beauchamp, Jr**  
**Corporal**  
**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**  
**Army of the United States**  
**Princess Anne, Maryland**  
**March 26, 1946 to March 16, 1966**  
**Length of service 1 years**  
**His tour began on May 5, 1965**  
**Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966**  
**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**  
**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**  
**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**  
**Body was recovered**





## Charles A. Zionts

**Specialist Four**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**

**Army of the United States**

**Cicero, Illinois**

**September 13, 1945 to March 16, 1966**

**Length of service 2 years**

**His tour began on Dec 21, 1965**

**Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966**

**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**

**Body was recovered**





## WIFE LEARNS HER HUSBAND KILLED IN VIET

On Dec. 18, Mrs. Charles Zionts of 4904 Cermak rd., Cicero, gave birth to her son, Anthony Charles. But it also was the day her husband left the United States for Viet Nam.

She had hoped to celebrate her son's 3-month birthday yesterday. But her plans were shattered by the arrival of an officer from the 5th army. He told her that her husband, Charles, had been killed in Viet Nam. Later a telegram came. It said: "We regret . . . that Sp/C Charles A. Zions died in Viet Nam on the 16th of March as a result of gunshot wounds in the neck when hit by hostile small arms fire encountered while on combat operations."

The soldier was a 1962 graduate of Morton East High school. He was to have been discharged in January. Besides his widow and son, he is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Zions.

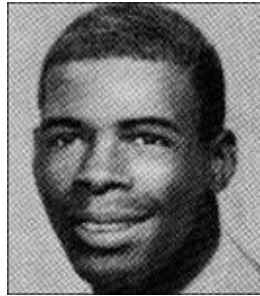


Zions

Clipped By:



TWS\_MemorialTeam  
Sun, Aug 26, 2018



**Charles Arthur Bell**

**Private First Class  
A CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INF RGT, 173 ABN BDE  
Army of the United States  
26 March 1945 - 16 March 1966  
Philadelphia, PA  
Length of service 0 years  
His tour began on Feb 23, 1966  
Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966  
In , SOUTH VIETNAM  
HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY  
MULTIPLE FRAGMENTATION WOUNDS  
Body was recovered**



★ Marion C Brown

Vietnam War Gold Star Veteran from Indiana



Sergeant Marion C Brown

Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana Brith Date 7 November 1938 KIA 3/16/66

173rd Airborne Brigade, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, A Company

Purple Heart Name inscribed at VVM Wall, Panel 06e, Line 14.

*He began his tour on 17 July 1965. Brown had the rank of Sergeant. His military occupation or specialty was Infantry Direct Fire Crewman. Attached to 173rd Airborne Brigade, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry, A Company.*

★ Combat Infantryman Badge

★ Purple Heart

★ Marksmanship Badge

★ Parachutist Badge

★ National Defense Service Medal

★ Vietnam Campaign Medal

★ Vietnam Service Medal

★ Army Presidential Unit Citation

★ Vietnam Gallantry Cross





**Robert Paul Gipson**  
**Specialist Four**

**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**  
**Army of the United States**

**Athens, Georgia**

**August 06, 1942 to March 16, 1966**

**Length of service 2 years**

**His tour began on May 7, 1965**

**Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966**

**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**MULTIPLE FRAGMENTATION WOUNDS**

**Body was recovered**



**William Oscar Gossett**

**Vietnam War Gold Star Veteran from Arizona**



**William Oscar Gossett**

**Vietnam War Gold Star Veteran from Arizona**

Birth date 27-Aug 1946 KIA 3/16/66

Private First-Class Specialty Wireman

**Awards** ★ Purple Heart

★ Combat Infantryman Badge

★ Marksmanship Badge

★ Parachutist Badge

★ National Defense Service Medal

★ Vietnam Campaign Medal

★ Vietnam Service Medal

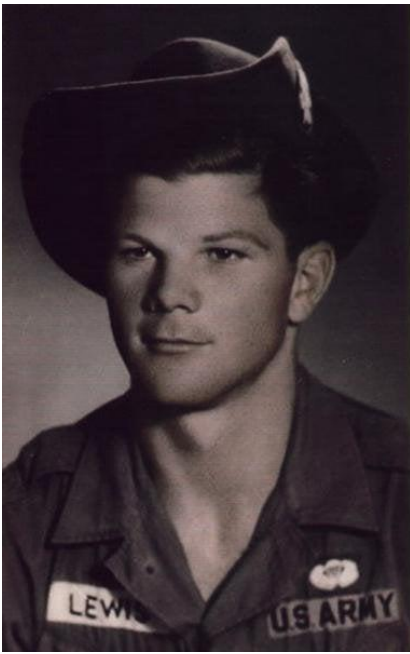
★ Army Presidential Unit Citation

★ Vietnam Gallantry Cross



**Kenneth Max Knudson**  
**Private First Class**  
**B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**  
**Army of the United States**  
[Saco](#), Phillips County Montana  
**November 04, 1944 to March 16, 1966**  
**Length of service 0 years**  
**His tour began on Feb. 23, 1966**  
**Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966**  
**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**  
**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**  
**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**  
**Body was recovered**





Kia 3/16/66

Jerry was born in December 1, 1941 in Chickasha Oklahoma to Gladys and Merle Lewis who later moved to Oklahoma City when Jerry was a small child. We lived in a working class neighborhood on the south side of Oklahoma City when we were growing up. This was a typical post world war two tract housing community where all the houses looked very much alike and were primarily financed through low interest G.I. Loans. This was the beginning of the baby boom generation.

Jerry was a relatively small kid with thick dark red hair who seemed to be sick a lot. When he was about 10 or 11 he was diagnosed as having Polio. Momma spent many a relentless hour working Jerry's muscles in warm water, massaging his legs both to try to relieve some pain, but also to reactivate his muscle tone, hopefully for him to walk again. Eventually he recovered, but was still somewhat sickly and small (5' 5") all through school, as a result he was picked on and bullied by other kids. At some point Jerry started hanging around with a group of boys that had a reputation for being pretty tough. By today's standards it would not really be considered much of a gang. Mostly a group of middleclass kids who had ducktail haircuts, low slung Levi's, and white tee shirt, you. know, (cigarettes stuffed in a rolled up sleeve), who occasionally skip school or maybe stole a hubcap or two. They were not really bad kids but they encouraged the "bad boy" reputation as a status symbol and at some level, security from other gangs. Jerry did not dress as they did, I'm not sure he even wanted to but I am sure Momma would not have let him even if he wanted to. For some reason they guys acted as Jerry's "protectors" all through high school. I remember one class he took in high school was photography, Momma and Daddy set him up a darkroom in one of our closets, the house smelled of chemicals for a long time. Then there was the time Jerry and a few of his friends was cruising along a rural road in his 56 Ford, he lost control of the car, it flipped, went off into a river, landing upside down, Jerry and/or one of the boys kicked the backed window out, that's how they were saved.

After graduating Capitol Hill Senior High in 1960, he went for a short time to OSU at Stillwater. It soon became evident Jerry was not ready for college life and he dropped out and joined the U.S. Army. His basic was at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. When he joined he was still a small, and somewhat fragile young man who didn't look much like a potential warrior. Little did we know the next time we saw him he would become a tall, muscular, and confident soldier. You cannot imagine the pride we had in seeing this immature, freckled faced, red headed kid transform into a "recruiting poster" quality soldier in his uniform when he came home on leave. Even though we were very impressed with Jerry at that time we did not realize the significance of him in being a part of the elite Airborne unit. In fact we didn't know he was assigned to the Long Range Reconnaissance until a friend of his who was stationed with him in Germany recently contacted us.

Jerry re-enlisted in Germany and received orders to go to Viet Nam. He used part of his re-enlistment bonus to buy a

brand new 1965 Corvair Monza. It was a dark green hard top with white leather interior. Momma kept the car until she passed away and now we have it in storage. Jerry was killed in action March 16, 1966, as a result of a head injury from a hand grenade. Since both parents have passed away I sometimes wonder what it would have been like to have know my brother as an adult, maybe with children, what would it have been like to have been an aunt? But I know he is in heaven with Momma and Daddy, he told my Grandma Young, just before he left for the last time, Grandma I'm OK, I know Jesus as my Lord.

I want you to know how thrilled I was to hear from you guys who knew Jerry. I can't tell you how much it has meant to me for you to have taken the time to share your memories of my brother. It is so important for me to know he has not been forgotten. One of my sons is his namesake. We visited the wall in Washington DC and saw his name carved in granite, but that is not the same as hearing from people who knew him even for a short time, they still remember.



William Nathaniel Thompson

Private First Class

HHC, 1ST BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

[Mebane, North Carolina](#)

October 11, 1943 to March 16, 1966

[WILLIAM N THOMPSON](#) is on the Wall at [Panel 6E, Line 16](#)

See the [full profile](#) or [name rubbing](#) for William Thompson



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## Charlie C. Walker

Private First Class

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Ashburn, Georgia

July 22, 1943 to March 16, 1966

Length of service 0 years

His tour began on Sep 10, 1965

Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966

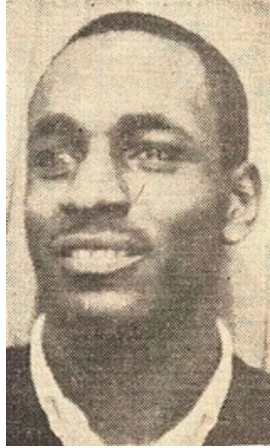
In , SOUTH VIETNAM

Hostile, died of wounds, GROUND CASUALTY

GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE

Body was recovered





**Private First Class**  
**C CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV**  
**Army of the United States**

**Rochester, New York**

**December 09, 1944 to March 16, 1966**

**Length of service 0 years**

**His tour began on Sep 6, 1965**

**Casualty was on Mar 16, 1966**

**In , SOUTH VIETNAM**

**HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY**

**GUN, SMALL ARMS FIRE**

**Body was recovered**





## SILVER CITY 9-22 March 1966 Long Khanh Province

### Ken Grimes' Recollections:

"B" Company had been on a search and destroy operation for several days, when on the 15th of March we enter a large clearing joining up with the rest of the battalion, 2d Battalion (Airborne) 503d Infantry. I latter found out that the clearing was LZ ZULU ZULU.



2/503 arrive LZ Zulu-Zulu on 15 Mar 66.

Photo by Wayne Hoitt



We dug in for the night, Robert Shave was my assistant gunner, I was one of M-60 Machine Gunners of Weapons Squad, 3d Platoon, "B" Company, 2nd/503d, 173rd Airborne Brigade(Separate. We were both exhausted so we dug a swallow fox hole about four inches deep . Mistake!!!

The next morning 16th March 1966, my gun crew ( Shave and I) were attached to a squad which was sent on a screening patrol around the front of B Company.

I remember some of the others that made up the patrol. They were Charles Zions, Point Man, follow by John Henry Beauchamp, Wayne Short, Robert Toporek, Robert Shave and myself. there were others behind me but I don't remember their names.

We had not gotten very far out on the patrol when I heard a helicopter coming in to our left front.

All hell broke loose, a machine to our front open fire killing Zions. His best friend Beauchamp went to help him and was killed also. By this time we were receiving intense machine gun, small arms fire, grenades, and mortar rounds on our position. We begin to fight our way back to the battalion perimeter.



**The Chopper I herd coming in while on patrol in front "B" Company Downed 3/16/1966**



**Tony Geishauser and Joe McHenry surviving Huey pilots**

We made it, but had to leave Zions and Beauchamp bodies.

Shave and I made it back to our four inches fox hole, where we spent next 4 or 5 hours beating back wave after wave of VC. Sometime in the afternoon a mortar or artillery hit close to our fox hole. I was hit on the left side of my head, Shave said that half my ear was gone, I was bleeding really bad. Shave put the large bandaged from my ammo belt suspenders around my head. Later I learn from Wayne Short that the concussion from the round had knot him down and that he had looked over at me and saw a lot of blood coming from the side of my face. I was medic/vac out to a aid station.

When I got there I went into the aid tent, and was examine. When they removed the bandage the Medic found only a small hole in my ear lobe. I was given a tetanus shot and the choice of going back to base camp or returning to my unit at LZ Zulu Zulu.

I choose the latter.



When I got back to Zulu Zulu the fight was over. Shave had broken the bi-pod on one our M-60 barrels. We were resupplied with a replacement and more ammo than we could carry.

The night of the 16th was a loud one, at any hint of noise, half the battalion open up with ever thing we had.

The next day Wayne Short led a patrol to recover the bodies of John Henry Beauchamp and Charles A. Zions. I don't think I was on this patrol. I am pretty sure I would have remembered if I had been.

When we met in Chicago for the 50th year commemoration ceremony (11/22/2015) for our squad member Medal of Honor reciprocate, Milton Olive, Wayne told me, that the bodies were badly mutilated.

Needless to say we were resupplied with more ammo and about three days rations. We had to hump all this extra weight for several days until the Operation Silver City was over and we caught Huey's back to Camp Zinn.

**Observation:** (Taken from 2/503d VIETNAM Newsletter / Mar-Apr. 2016 – Issue 6)

Some years following the war it was reported the objective of the enemy was to overrun the LZ and destroy all troopers there. They had been monitoring our search and destroy patterns for days, and knew we were prone to sending out company-sized patrols after being settled the previous night. Their plan called for allowing these patrols to pass through their lines before attacking the remaining troops at the landing zone, and, once successful, their attention would be turned to the isolated patrolling companies. The signal to commence the attack on the LZ was to have been one of their heavy machine guns opening-up on the troopers left to defend Zulu-Zulu. Whether luck or fate, their plan was side-tracked. A resupply helicopter had been dispatched to Zulu-Zulu carrying hot eggs for breakfast. The 2/503d commander, LTC Walsh, kept the battalion's perimeter in place, delaying the company sized search and destroy missions, and instead sent out squad-sized clearing patrols. As the helicopter approached Zulu-Zulu it is believed by many that an enemy machine gunner may have mistook the whoop whoop sound of the chopper blades for that of the machine gun signal to open the attack, or just couldn't resist such an easy target, and began firing, shooting the chopper out of the sky as it was attempting to land. Others believe when an early a.m. patrol from "B" Co. was ambushed ([this is the patrol I mention earlier](#)), this alerted the enemy machine gunner and he opened-up on the chopper. Battalion radio logs have the patrol leaving the LZ at 0710 Hrs and the chopper being destroyed and the attack on the LZ commencing at 0725 Hrs. with no mention of the patrol. Both actions could well have occurred simultaneously. Regardless of how the battle began, once this initial firing started, the battalion was attacked from all sides. It is not unreasonable to believe the 2/503d could have been at substantial risk of being totally destroyed had our perimeter not been kept in place for the simple delivery of a hot breakfast.



Honoring our fallen at Camp Zinn ( in front Milton Olive Chapel) Operation Silver City Photo by Tom Goodwin  
U.S. KIA: 19 U.S. WIA: 200+ (2d Bat only)



## PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY)



*By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States I have today awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Army) for extraordinary heroism to:*

### **THE 2D BATTALION (AIRBORNE), 503D INFANTRY, 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE (SEPARATE) AND ATTACHED UNITS:**

**2nd Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, Company A, Company B, Company C, HHC Company  
2nd Team, 3rd Radio Relay Unit; 2nd Platoon, 173rd Engineer Company  
Scout Dog Teams, 3rd Scout Dog Company, III Corps; Vietnamese Interpreters; Forward Air Controllers  
Artillery Liaison Officers and Forward Observers from Battery A, 3rd Battalion (Airborne) 319th Artillery.**

*The 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate) with attachments, is cited for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force near Phuoc Vinh, Republic of Vietnam, on 16 March 1966. The battalion was participating as part of a large force on a search and destroy mission sweeping a portion of war zone "D" during operation "Silver City", and had been in contact with small groups of Viet Cong during four days of operations in the dense jungle area. On the morning of 16 March the battalion was deployed in a defensive perimeter in preparation for resuming operations. At approximately 0700 hours a patrol from Company "B" had begun to move from its positions to initiate action against the enemy. At the same time, a resupply helicopter was descending into the landing zone located within the battalion perimeter. Suddenly the helicopter came under heavy automatic weapons fire from the enemy and was destroyed, and the jungle erupted in gunfire all around the defensive perimeter. The leading elements of the patrol were caught in this initial concentration of murderous fire. The Viet Cong forces, supported by a tremendous volume of automatic weapons, mortar and artillery fire, attacked all around the perimeter. The enemy exerted considerable force at a point between Company "A" and Company "C" in an effort to effect a breakthrough at this location. Personnel of the two companies, including the wounded, steadfastly remained in their positions, responded at close quarters with fire that was both deadly and accurate, and succeeded in breaking up the determined enemy attack. Maintaining continuous contact around the perimeter, the Viet Cong launched another strong attack to breach the defense. This effort was focused on the center and left flank of Company "B". Time and time again the Viet Cong charged the positions, but the*

*indefatigable and determined paratroopers of Company "B" exacted heavy casualties and beat back the enemy attackers. Regrouping and concentrating their forces, the Viet Cong made a final assault on the flank of Company "C". This time the desperate Viet Cong ran forward in waves under the protective umbrella of a heavy volume of their supporting fires. Again, however, the gallant and resolute paratroopers repulsed the enemy, inflicting severe losses, completely disrupting his efforts to destroy the battalion, and forcing the Viet Cong to withdraw. Documentary evidence indicates that the attacking force consisted of the entire Viet Cong 271st Main Force Regiment, reinforced by two artillery battalions. A total of 303 Viet Cong dead were confirmed by body count. An estimated additional 150 were killed and numerous Viet Cong were wounded during the battle. The courageous and exemplary actions of the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry, in decisively defeating a determined, numerically superior, and well trained and equipped enemy force reflect great credit on the members of the unit and are in keeping with the finest traditions of the United States Army.*

**Lyndon B. Johnson  
President  
4 August 1967**



1967



# Henry Van Demps

Private First Class

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

[Plant City, Florida](#)

Length of service 0 years

His tour began on Apr 18, 1966

Casualty was on Aug 22, 1966

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

NON-HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

OTHER ACCIDENT

Body was recovered





# Richard Earl Harper

Specialist Four

B CO, 2ND BN, 503RD INFANTRY, 173RD ABN BDE, USARV

Army of the United States

Birmingham, Alabama

Length of service 3 years

His tour began on Jul 13, 1965

Casualty was on Jan 12, 1966

In , SOUTH VIETNAM

HOSTILE, GROUND CASUALTY

MULTIPLE FRAGMENTATION WOUNDS

Body was recovered





## TWO MILLION CIVILIANS ON BOTH SIDES DIED

- Some 1.1 million North Vietnamese and Viet Cong fighters died.
- Between 200,000 and 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers died in the war.
- 2,709,918 Americans served in Vietnam, which is 9.7% of their generation.
- 7,484 women (6,250 or 83.5% were nurses) served in Vietnam.
- 8 nurses died -- 1 was KIA.
- The first man to die in Vietnam was James Davis, in 1958. He was with the 509th Radio Research Station.
- Davis Station in Saigon was named for him.
- 61% of the men killed were 21 or younger.
- 11,465 of those killed were younger than 20 years old.
- Five men killed in Vietnam were only 16 years old.
- The oldest man killed was 62 years old.
- Highest state death rate: West Virginia - 84.1%
- 303,704 wounded, 153,329 hospitalized, and 150,375 injured requiring no hospital care.
- 75,000 were severely disabled; 23,214 were 100% disabled.
- 5,283 lost limbs; 1,081 sustained multiple amputations.
- 82% of veterans who saw heavy combat strongly believe the war was lost because of lack of political will.
- Nearly 75% of the public agrees it was a failure of political will, not of arms.