



STRIKE

Vietnam War Weekly History



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Brief History of the 501st, 502nd and 2nd Brigade

The 502nd, or "five-oh-deuce", was activated July 1, 1941 at Fort Benning, Georgia as the 502nd parachute infantry battalion, as an experimental unit formed to test the doctrine and tactics of parachute assaults. The 502nd entered combat in World War II on June 6, 1944, by jumping into Normandy, with allied forces landing on D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. Between 1945 and 1964. A major reorganization took place on 3 February 1964, when the 2nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne was activated at Fort Campbell, replacing the 1st Airborne Battle Group, 501st Infantry Regiment. The reorganization from the battle groups to brigades and battalions placed two battalions of the 502nd in different brigades of the 101st.



The 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry was in the 1st Brigade with 1-327th and 2-327th Infantry. Which deployed to Vietnam and arrived at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam on 29 July 1965, they were commanded by the most notable commander LTC Hank "The Gunfighter" Emerson.



The new 2nd Brigade's original organic battalions were the 1st and 2d Battalions, 501st Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry. December 1967 the 501st, 502nd and 2nd Brigade deployed by C-141 aircraft and arrived at Bien Hoa Airbase on 13 December 1967. Over the next five years, Soldiers of the "Ready to Go" Brigade participated in twelve campaigns, compiling of a distinguished combat record as well as an enviable reputation for success in the rehabilitation of a war-torn nation. The Brigade redeployed to Fort Campbell in April 1972.



During this week, in the span of 8 years since the 501st Infantry Regiment, 502nd Infantry Regiment and 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division deployed in support of the Vietnam War the following are from After Action Reports, Staff Duty Logs, and Personal Accounts.

- 06 – 08 November 1966 **Operation GERONIMO I:** On 06 November, the 2-502 IN BN and 2-327 IN BN were deployed by heliborne assault into and area South of Dong Tre and West of "HUB", to exploit intelligence of a suspected NVA Division Headquarters and the 95th NVA Regiment operating in the area. Throughout the operation, clandestine movements, maximum deception, and thorough searching of the assigned area were the tactics utilized to fool, find, fix and finish the enemy. On 6-8 November, several small contacts were made resulting in two VC KA, and one NVA KIA. Several company size base camps were discovered in the AO and two flare pistols, on U.S. shotgun, one junction box, one amplifier, and assorted SA ammo were captured. On the evening of the 8 November, a small section of the RECONDO platoon discovered an occupied company size base camp vicinity BQ934584. The RECONDO element withdrew in a clandestine manner and reported the discovery to Battalion Headquarters. To exploit this information, B/2-502 IN was instructed to orient in that direction along with the remainder of the RECONDO platoon. C/2-502 IN and A/2-502 IN were alerted for deployment to the area if needed. (HQ, 2-502 IN; After Action Report, Operation GERONIMO I; 10 December 1966)
- 06 – 08 November 1966 **Operation GERONIMO I:** 2-502 IN BN conducts airmobile assault and commences RECONDO CHECKERBOARD initially to the west from the LZ's to deceive the enemy and then to the east. The initial phase is clandestine to deceive the enemy. All units are issued five days rations. Plan to converge all forces. (HQ, 2-502 IN; After Action Report, Operation GERONIMO I; 10 December 1966)
- 06 – 07 November 1968 1-502 IN BN continued normal operations with negative contact. B/1-502 IN returned to LZ Sally. C/1-502 IN returned from Phu Vang and lifted to vicinity YD5815 for RIF operations.
- 06 November 1971 **Operation MONSOON DYNAMIC DEFENSE:** The Reconnaissance Platoon 2-502 IN observed and engaged with unknown results, one NVA walking along a trail on the ridgeline of Hill 500.
- 07 November 1968 **Operation NEVADA EAGLE:** Recon/2-502 IN was moved by log ship into FSB Anzio for resupply and then moved to YD899033 for local patrols and ambushes.
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- 08 November 1968 1-502 IN BN had an AO extension into the sands area referred to as "the street". B/1-502 IN and 4 platoons of PF's, conducted a CA, vicinity YD5840 and YD6040 and set up cordon with 1 platoon of tanks from which saturation patrols could be run. Naval river patrol boats were used as a blocking force, vicinity YD6041 and YD5942. The C&C, drew SA fire and returned fire on suspected enemy locations with negative results. B/1-502 IN hit a 105 BBT injuring 2. Patrol boats detained 5 VCS but they were later classified as IC and released.
- 09 November 1968 A/1-502 IN continued security of FSB T-Bone. B/1-502 IN continued cordon with PF's and tanks. They received SA fire, vicinity YD6039 with negative casualties. They returned fire with negative results. They had 1 KIA and 1 WIA from a 105mm BBT. C/1-502 IN conducted RIF operation, vicinity YD5717. D/1-502 IN conducted security of AN Lo Bridge.
- 10 November 1968 The Phu Loc cordon ended with 28 VC identified from more than 1,300 suspects detained during the eight day operations. The Screaming Eagles rice-denial program continued to deprive the enemy of needed food supplies. C/1-501 IN (Assigned to 2BDE) captured 40,000 pounds of harvested rice from four separate caches eight km east of Hue. "Geronimo" infantrymen brought the rice holding to more than 456 tons. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 1, Number 4); Winter 1968-1969)
- 10 November 1968 B/1-502 IN was the only unit to have contact, engaging 2 VC with SA, vicinity YD6140, resulting in 2 VC POW. B/1-502 IN tripped a 60mm BBT, resulting in 3 WIA. The 1-502, received a new "First Strike". LTC Davis replaced LTC Carter as the Battalion Commander. General Zais, General Trung, several other generals and numerous Division VIP's attended the ceremony at LZ Sally.
- 10 November 1968 **Operation NEVADA EAGLE:** B/2-502 (-) IN was returned from OPCON while Bravo Company 20 elements continued under OPCON 1-327 FSB Hickory; D/2-502 IN was released from OPCON and used one platoon to secure FSB Roy while two platoons conducted local patrols to the south and west of FSB Roy; and effective 220h, C/2-502 IN OPCON 1-327.



11 November 1967 –
11 November 1968

Operation Wheeler/Wallowa

Locations: I Corps; Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces; Que Son Valley; Nui Hoac Ridge; Hiep Duc; FSB Center; LZs Baldy, Cacti and West.

Type/Objective: Search and Destroy operation to clear the enemy out of Quang Nam and Quang Tin Provinces, with special emphasis on the Que Son Valley

Units: USA – 1st Cavalry Division: 2d BDE (5-7th CAV), 3d BDE (1-7th CAV, 2-12th CAV), 23d Infantry Division (Americal); 196th Light Infantry Brigade (2-1st IN, 3-21st IN, 4-31st IN); 198th Light Infantry Brigade (1-6th IN, 1-46th IN, 1-1st CAV); 101st Airborne Division: 1st Brigade (1-327th ABN, 2-327th ABN, 2-502nd ABN, A/2-17th CAV); NVA/VC – 2d NVA Division (3rd and 31st NVA regiments)

Events: 3 January 1968 Units: form the 196th Light Infantry Brigade encounter Soldiers from the 2nd NVA Division near Hiep Duc (Quang Tin Province).

Losses: U.S. 18 KIA, 100 WIA

Events: 9 February 1968 the 1-14th IN and 1-35th Infantry (3d BDE/4th Infantry Division attached to the 23rd IN Division) meet the 21st NVA Regiment near Go Noi Islan, 12 miles south of DaNang. More than 230 of the enemy are KIA.

Comment: Wheeler/Wallowa is a combination of the 1st Cavalry's Wollowa (4 October – 11 November) and the 23d IN Division's Wheeler (11 September – 11 November)

Casualties: U.S. – 682 KIA, 3,995 WIA; NVA/VC – 10,008 KIA, 184 POWs.

11 November 1968

A/1-502 IN conducted security of T-Bone, local patrols and ambushes in the area. B/1-502 IN continued operation in "street" area. They had light contact with estimated 2 VC but there were negative casualties. C/1-502 IN RIF from vicinity YD5818, southeast to vicinity YD5717. D/1-502 IN conducted security of An Lo Bridge. Recon/1-502 IN RIF from LZ Sally to YD 6124.

11 November 1968

Operation NEVADA EAGLE: At 1945 A/2-502 IN "A30" vicinity YD911102 sprung ambush and killed one VC/NVA and captured 1 AK-47 and 1 RPG-2rd; B/2-502 IN also assumed responsibility of Bridge 3 with its 10 Platoon; "B20" stood by at FSB Anzio as a reaction force for 1-327 IN BN Cordon.

11 November 1970

At 0307 a report from 2-501 IN BN reporting that 12 pax from C/2-501 IN was stranded on a sand bar vicinity YC867933 with water rising around them at 1 ½ feet per hours. There is 7ft of water around them at this time. Request urgent dust-off for Company. He tried to swim with a rope for his 11 people but failed. The unit loses and regains communication. BN Commander request urgent dust-off. Brigade Commander approved dust-off providing weather allows flying.

At 0450 C/2-501 reports pax missing in location of dust-off. Search underway. No assistance necessary at this time.

At 0915 reported some personnel evacuated. Missing CPL McKinley H. Harvell Jr.

At 1400 reported CPL McKinley H. Harvell Jr. body was found 200 meters down stream at YC867937 at 1345.

11 November 1971

Operation MONSOON DYNAMIC DEFENSE: The 2-502 IN BN Command and Control helicopter received small arms fire form and unknown size enemy force. (2-502 IN Unit History, 1971)

12 November 1968

Operation NEVADA EAGLE: At 2330 A/2-502 "A30" Ambush and killed 1 VC/NVA with an AK-50.

12 November 1968

Enemy contact increased in intensity. Division troopers killed 23 enemy, capturing eight prisoners and throwing up a cordon around the large enemy force six km southeast of Phu Bai. The 1-327 IN BN, 2-502 IN BN, and an ARVN unit coordinated a precise movement to block possible escape routes while patrol boats plied coastal waters to complete the enclosure. The startled enemy forces tried to strike out and were engaged by A/1-327 IN. Five enemy were killed, and the Viet Cong began retreating to the east. Paratroopers of C/1-501 IN, air-assaulted into their part to from a blocking force and immediately launched a sweep that netted sic kills and 15 prisoners. (Rendezvous with Destiny (Volume 1, Number 4); Winter 1968-1969)

12 November 1968

A/1-502 IN switched security missions with D/1-502 IN, A/1-502 IN lifted, via "hook" from An Lo to FSB T-Bone. D/1-502 IN lifted, via "hook", from T-Bone, to An Lo. B/1-502 IN engaged 2 VC from ambush with clamor and SA fire, with negative assessment. C/1-502 IN from ambushes, observed movement, threw hand grenades, with negative results.



During this week, in the span of 8 years since the 501st Infantry Regiment, 502nd Infantry Regiment and 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division deployed in support of the Vietnam War the following awards were awarded to the service members during combat operations.

2 x Distinguished Service Cross
9 x Silver Star Medal (1 x Posthumously)
3 x Bronze Star Medal (3 x Posthumously)
11 x Purple Heart Medal (11 x Posthumously)
1 x Died of Non-Hostile Injury or Illness

08 November 1966



PFC William L. Cyr (C/2-502 IN) earned the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from multiple metal fragmentation wounds received in hostile ground action at Phong Cau, 27km NW of Tuy Hoa in the Phu Yen Province, Republic of Vietnam.

09 November 1966



PFC George E. Bryant (B/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in their deaths from gunshot wound to the right side of the thorax received in hostile ground action at Phong Cau, 27km NW of Tuy Hoa in the Phu Yen Province, Republic of Vietnam.

09 November 1966



SGT David K. Deen (HHC/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from gunshot wounds to the right shoulder received in hostile ground action at Phong Cau, 27km NW of Tuy Hoa in the Phu Yen Province, Republic of Vietnam.

09 November 1966



PFC Robert J. Donovan (B/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from gunshot wounds to the neck received in hostile ground action at Phong Cau, 27km NW of Tuy Hoa in the Phu Yen Province, Republic of Vietnam.

09 November 1966



PFC Randle Kinney (B/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from gunshot wounds to the left shoulder and arm lodging in chest received in hostile ground action at Phong Cau, 27km NW of Tuy Hoa in the Phu Yen Province, Republic of Vietnam.

09 November 1968



SSG Fagalii L. Leatutufu (B/1-501 IN) earned the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death while on combat operation when hit by fragments from a hostile booby trap in the Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam.



09 November 1969



CPL John E. Gurovich (D/2-502 IN) died from Non-hostile causes as a ground casualty in the Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam.

09 November 1971



SGT Earl D. Barkley (E/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death while on combat operation when a booby trap detonated 7km W-SW of Camp Evans Airfield in the Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam.

10 November 1966



SP4 Otis E. Jackson (B/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from gunshot wounds to the head received in hostile ground action at Phong Cau, 27km NW of Tuy Hoa in the Phu Yen Province, Republic of Vietnam.

10 November 1967



CPL Arthur L. Hawkins Jr. (B/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death from gunshot wound received when he was hit by hostile automatic weapons fire while on combat operation 11km NW of Tien Phuoc in the Quang Tin Province, Republic of Vietnam.

10 November 1969



PFC Rudy L. Baldon (C/1-501 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death while on combat operation when mistaken for a hostile force and fired upon by friendly forces in the Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam.

11 November 1968



SGT David A. Knox (C/2-502 IN) earned the Purple Heart Medal (Posthumously) for military merit and for wounds received which resulted in his death while on combat operation when hit by hostile small arms fire in the Thua Thien Province, Republic of Vietnam. SGT Knox was admitted to a military medical facility and later expired.

11 November 1970



CPL McKinley H. Harvell Jr. (C/2-501 IN) earned the Bronze Star Medal (Posthumously). CPL Harvell drowned when he left patrol to aid comrade vicinity FSB Brick when they were trapped by rising water, Song Ta Trach River 9km north of Ruong Ruong in the province Thua Thien, Republic of Vietnam.



STRIKE HISTORY (Citation's and Awards):

06 - 09 November 1966

1LT David S. Bodgett (C/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal (1-OLC) for distinguishing himself against an armed hostile enemy on 6 November 1966 to 9 November 1966, near Tuy Hoa, Republic of Vietnam. When the Third Platoon of his company was brought under fire, Lieutenant Blodgett was given the mission of taking his platoon to reinforce the engaged platoon. Lieutenant Blodgett was aggressively pursuing the withdrawing enemy when his platoon was suddenly brought under a heavy volume of enemy fire from several enemy positions. Lieutenant Blodgett personally led the maneuver element in an attempt to outflank the enemy position, thus exposing himself to intense enemy fire on numerous occasions while directing fire. Lieutenant Blodgett continued to lead his platoon and aggressively pursued the enemy by maintaining close contact with the delaying forces. As darkness moved in, Lieutenant Blodgett placed his platoon into an ambush position until the following morning. When daylight hours arrived, Lieutenant Blodgett moved his platoon down a jungle trail approximately three hundred meters when they were again brought under intense enemy fire. When the platoon maneuvered in an attempt to outflank the enemy positions, one of the men stepped on a mine and was seriously wounded. With total disregard for his own safety, Lieutenant Blodgett dashed across the minefield to his wounded comrade and personally began to administer the needed medical aid until a medic could arrive. Lieutenant Blodgett then conducted a personal search of the minefield and located several more mines which he destroyed. As Lieutenant Blodgett began to reorganize his platoon, he received word from his company commander to move to a new position. Realizing that his platoon was exhausted, Lieutenant Blodgett set a positive example by personally taking the point man position and leading his men to the new position. His unflinching courage and dauntless leadership ability brings great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 140; 10 February 1967)

09 November 1966



SGT Kenneth E. Murphy (HHC/2-502 IN) was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Sergeant Murphy distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 9 November 1966 while serving as a squad leader with a Recondo platoon on a search and destroy mission near Tuy Hoa. The unit had covered several thousand meters of terrain with negative results, until the point man finally came upon, and killed, a North Vietnamese soldier. When sporadic hostile fire was received from the left flank, Sergeant Murphy immediately led his squad in an assault on the insurgent positions. Suddenly, the entire hillside was raked by a devastating barrage, as North Vietnamese positions opened fire all around him. Seeing several soldiers fall wounded, Sergeant Murphy fearlessly ran through a hail of bullets to try and help them. Unable to reach his comrades on the first two attempts, he moved forward a third time, but was wounded in the head. Dazed, but undaunted, Sergeant Murphy succeeded in carrying one stricken soldier fifty meters to safety. When another man was hit, he again disregarded the extreme dangers to race back across the bullet-swept area. As sergeant Murphy returned with the man, he was again wounded by insurgent fire, but continued on until reaching friendly lines. Unmindful of his painful wounds, he then organized his men and led them in a fierce assault on the entrenched enemy. Dizzy from loss of blood and able to use only one arm, Sergeant Murphy gallantly crashed forward through dense foliage and personally killed three hostile soldiers with his rifle. His unimpeachable valor and boundless determination enabled his men to break out of the trap and overwhelm the insurgent force. Sergeant Murphy's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, USARV; General Orders Number 1376; 27 March 1967)

09 November 1966



COL Frank L. Dietrich (HHC/2-502 IN) was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Colonel Dietrich distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions during the period 9 to 11 November 1966 while commanding the 2d Battalion, 502d Infantry on a search and destroys operation near Tuy Hoa. On the morning of 9 November, he was informed that contact had been made with an entrenched North Vietnamese Army battalion. Quickly assessing the situation from a command and control helicopter, Colonel Dietrich brilliantly maneuvered his troops, and by nightfall the hostile force was surrounded. As the battle raged on into the next morning, he boldly joined his men on the ground. Unmindful of the extreme danger, he moved throughout the battlefield to assist his subordinate commanders and comfort the wounded. On 11 November Colonel Dietrich dauntlessly climbed to the top of a tree with a radio to direct the conflict. Remaining exposed in this perilous position for two hours, he courageously deployed the ground elements and supervised the broadcast of surrender appeals. As the battle progressed, he completely disregarded his safety by running across 100 meters of bullet-swept terrain, and led a successful assault on a stubborn North Vietnamese position. Then, accompanied only by his radio operator, Colonel Dietrich moved through 800 meters of dense jungle to another engaged platoon. Moving to the front, he again braved the intense insurgent fire to encourage his men forward. His unimpeachable valor and aggressive leadership under fierce hostile fire contributed immeasurably to the defeat of a determined hostile force. Lieutenant Colonel Dietrich's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, USARV; General Orders Number 496; 01 February 1967)

09 November 1966

1LT Alden J. Holborn (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against an enemy force in Vietnam. 1LT Holborn's platoon was given the mission of reinforcing a squad from the reconnaissance platoon which had become engaged with a numerically superior force. Upon reaching the enemy position, Lieutenant Holborn immediately had his platoon lay down a base of fire for the beleaguered squad. Lieutenant Holborn attempted to maneuver his platoon into position so as to make a flanking assault but encountered a heavy volume of enemy fire that inflicted four casualties. Determining that his position had become precarious, he personally supervised the evacuation of the wounded and the relocation of his platoon to a better position. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, Lieutenant Holborn personally moved forward under enemy fire and carried a wounded comrade to a safe position. After supporting artillery fire had been called in on the enemy positions, Lieutenant Holborn's platoon attempted another assault on the enemy and



successfully overran their positions. Lieutenant Holborn's outstanding display of leadership and gallantry in action is in keeping with the highest military traditions and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 45; 13 January 1967)

09 November 1966

1LT John A. Marshok Jr. (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against an enemy force in Vietnam. First Lieutenant Marshok's platoon was on a mission to reinforce a beleaguered sister platoon which had been twice repelled from an enemy position. Upon reaching his destination, Lieutenant Marshok immediately moved the casualties to a centralized location in preparation for medical evacuation. After making a reconnaissance of the area, Lieutenant Marshok discovered that the enemy positions were well fortified with heavy machine guns and mortars. In an attempt to overrun the enemy positions, Lieutenant Marshok led his platoon in a flanking assault while the Second Platoon laid down a base of fire but the platoon was driven back by a tremendous volume of fire. Immediately Lieutenant Marshok reorganized both platoons and directed artillery fire on enemy positions to within one hundred meters of his own position. When the Artillery barrage was lifted Lieutenant Marshok personally led the two platoons in a successful assault on the enemy positions and secured the area so that the casualties could be safely evacuated. Lieutenant Marshok's outstanding display of gallantry in action and his devotion to duty are in keeping within the highest military traditions and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 63; 20 January 1967)

09 November 1966

SFC Richard F. Clemons (HHC/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against an enemy force in Vietnam. SFC Clemons' unit was given the mission of blocking the escape of a known North Vietnamese Army battalion, while other elements of the battalion moved in to encircle the enemy area. While moving into position, Sergeant Clemons' unit made contact with a North Vietnamese Army "Trail Watcher". Realizing that the enemy had been alerted to the fact that American forces were in the area, Sergeant Clemons quickly maneuvered his men forward to find the main enemy body before it could escape. After moving a short distance, Sergeant Clemons' section suddenly came under intense enemy fire from sixteen well fortified enemy positions. With complete disregard for his own safety, Sergeant Clemons quickly reorganized his section and led it in an assault on the enemy positions. Sergeant Clemons moved from flank to flank directing the attack and also the redistribution of ammunition. On one occasion, Sergeant Clemons personally moved into an exposed area and carried a wounded man to safety and rendered the needed medical aid. Several times during the battle, the enemy fire became so intense that small elements of Sergeant Clemons' section became pinned down. Sergeant Clemons immediately moved to the men and led them to safer positions, then personally assaulted a machine gun position, knocking it out with a hand grenade, killing one enemy soldier and wounding another. After the machine gun position had been destroyed, Sergeant Clemons continued to maneuver his section in a successful assault. Sergeant Clemons' outstanding display of leadership and his gallantry in action are in the highest military tradition and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 162; 13 February 1967)

09 November 66



1LT Ronald G. Odom (HHC/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against an enemy force in Vietnam. First Lieutenant Odom, Platoon Leader of the elite Reconnaissance Platoon, was moving with his unit on a search and destroy mission. Suddenly, enemy forces in a nearby tree line opened up with a devastating volume of fire. Lieutenant Odom, realizing that he had entered the killing zone of a Viet Cong ambush, quickly and calmly issued instructions. While his men gallantly fought off the initial attack of the Viet Cong, Lieutenant Odom shielded the body of a wounded grenadier of his platoon with its own body. After placing the wounded man in a relatively safe position, Lieutenant Odom organized his forces and assaulted the entrenched enemy. When the flank of his assault became pinned down by enemy machine gun fire, Lieutenant Odom personally crept forward under heavy fire and destroyed the gun emplacement with two hand grenades. With complete disregard for his own safety, Lieutenant Odom continued to lead his men up and over the enemy positions. His daring example and personal intrepidity resulted in the routing of a superior enemy force from its prepared defense. His extraordinary heroism in close combat with an armed enemy is in keeping with the highest standards and traditions of the American fighting man and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 73; 20 January 1967)

09-11 November 1966



CPT Stephen Silvasy Jr. (C/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against an enemy force in Vietnam. Captain Silvasy, on 9 November 1966, had placed his lead platoon into a blocking position to block any possible escape route of an encircled North Vietnamese Army element. Captain Silvasy decided to make a reconnaissance of potential positions so that the following platoons could be placed into position immediately upon arrival. Captain Silvasy, along with a small reconnaissance element, had just started to move across an open area when they were suddenly brought under an intense volume of enemy small arms fire. Captain Silvasy calmly continued to make his reconnaissance while under the heavy enemy fire, and as a result, the remaining platoons were able to move directly into position and effectively seal the last remaining gap in the encirclement. As the battle progressed the following day, Captain Silvasy was constantly in the forefront of the heaviest action. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, Captain Silvasy constantly exposed himself to enemy fire while giving his men encouragement and inspiring them as they swept through the battle area. Throughout the battle, Captain Silvasy, even though he accompanied the forward element, maintained complete control of his four platoons on line, keeping them in contact and leaving no gaps for the enemy to slip through. On the third day of battle the company command post was situated on a mountain top. To gain better observation and maintain control, Captain Silvasy remained in the tree for several hours exposed to enemy fire. Captain Silvasy's outstanding display of leadership and gallantry in action are within the highest military tradition and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 138; 8 February 1967)

09 November 1966

SSG Walter J. Roberson (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in action against an enemy force in Vietnam. Staff Sergeant Roberson's platoon was given the mission to reinforce a platoon which had become pinned down by a numerically superior enemy force. As the platoon moved on lined Sergeant Roberson's squad assumed the right flank position. As the platoon maneuvered up the hill it was suddenly brought under fire by an enemy element on the right flank and immediately received three casualties. With complete disregard for his own safety, Sergeant Roberson moved forward under intense enemy fire and personally brought the three wounded men to safety. As the platoon aidman started to move forward he also was wounded. Sergeant Roberson without hesitation, moved forward again and brought



his wounded comrade to safety. For a second time the platoon attacked the enemy positions, only to be beaten back by extremely intense enemy fire. As the advance was halted, Sergeant Roberson moved from man to man giving them encouragement and checking to see that none of them had been wounded. As Sergeant Roberson moved towards the right flank he observed that one man's weapon had jammed and at almost the same time another man had been wounded. Realizing that the right flank was in jeopardy, Sergeant Roberson charged the enemy position and laid down suppressive fire into the enemy position, enabling another squad to shift to the right flank. Sergeant Roberson personally placed the new squad into position even though he was exposed to intense enemy fire. When the order was given to move off the hill so that supporting artillery fire could be called in, Sergeant Roberson personally saw to it that not only his squad but the entire platoon had moved from the hill before he himself withdrew. When the platoon reorganized for another assault, Sergeant Roberson personally led his men in the assault and succeeded in over-running the enemy position. Sergeant Roberson's outstanding display of leadership and gallantry in action is in keeping with the highest military traditions and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 155; 11 February 1967)

10 November 1967



PFC Arthur L. Hawkins Jr. (B/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) for distinguishing himself by gallantry in action while engaged in military operation against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam on 10 November 1967, while serving with Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. While on a reconnaissance patrol near Chu Lai, Private Hawkins' squad came under an intense volume of automatic weapons fire from well entrenched enemy positions. With the initial bursts of fire, Private Hawkins, with complete disregard for his personal safety, rushed forward to the point element of his squad and began firing into the enemy positions. Realizing that rifle fire alone could not kill or rout the enemy from their positions, he courageously charged forward, hurling grenades. After grenading several enemy positions, he was mortally wounded by enemy fire. His heroic actions inspired his comrades to assault the enemy positions and rout them from the battle area, resulting in three enemy soldiers killed and the capture of two enemy automatic weapons. Private Hawkins' extraordinary heroism in close combat was in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Order Number 971; 22 December 1967)

11 November 1966

CPT James M. McFadden (A/2-502 IN) was awarded the Silver Star Medal (2-OLC) for actions while his company was in blocking position as the remainder of the battalion drove a North Vietnamese Army battalion toward the position. As the elements of the enemy made contact with the company, a savage battle ensued which lasted through the following day. Throughout the fighting, Captain McFadden moved among his men encouraging them and pointing out targets. On several occasions he came under heavy fire while assisting in the care and evacuation of the wounded. When two of his platoons came under heavy caliber machine gun fire and the immediate situation became serious, Captain McFadden, with complete disregard for his personal safety, led a squad forward under murderous fire and destroyed the machine gun emplacement with grenades. On many occasions throughout the battle, Captain McFadden rushed to the points of closest and most savage fighting directing, encouraging, and fighting alongside of his men. Captain McFadden's courage and superb leadership were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army. (HQ, IFFV; General Orders Number 64; 21 January 1967)



ACRONYMS

AD: Americal Division
AO: Area of Operations
ARA: Aerial Rocket Artillery
ARCOM: Army Commendation Medal
ARVN: Army of the Republic of Viet Nam (also known as the South Vietnamese Army (SVA))
BDE: Brigade
BN: Battalion
BSM: Bronze Star Medal
BBT: Booby Traps
CA: Combat Assault
CANOPY: Heavily Wooded Terrain
CO: Company
CP: Command Post
DSC: Distinguished Service Cross
DZ: Drop Zone
FSB: Fire Support Base
HQ: Headquarters
IED: Improvised Explosive Device
IFFV: I Field Force Vietnam
IN: Infantry
KBA: Killed by Air or Artillery
KHA: Killed by Hostile Action
KIA: Killed in Action
KNHA: Killed by Non-Hostile Action
LZ: Helicopter Landing Zone
MI: Military Intelligence
MOH: Medal of Honor
MP: Military Police
NDP: Night Defensive Position
NVA: North Vietnamese Army
OBJ: Objective
OP: Observation Post
PAVN: People Army of Vietnam
POW: Prisoner of War
PF: Popular Forces
PZ: Helicopter Pick-up Zone
Recon Platoon: Reconnaissance Platoon
RIF: Reconnaissance in Force
ROK: Republic of Korea
SA: Situational Awareness
SIGINT: Signal Intelligence
SSM: Silver Star Medal
STRIKE Force: 2d Battalion, 502d Infantry
SVA: South Vietnamese Army
TF: Task Force
TOC: Tactical Operations Center
USAV: United States Army Vietnam
WIA: Wounded in Action
WHA: Wounded by Hostile Action
WNHA: Wounded by Non-Hostile Action
"V": Valor
VC: Viet Cong

