



**173<sup>RD</sup> AIRBORNE  
BRIGADE**



**1<sup>ST</sup> BATTALION  
50<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY**



**"B" COMPANY**



**SERGEANT**



**INFANTRYMAN**

## **ROBERT LEE OWENS**

"B" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Mechanized), 50<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
SP4, E4, Posthumous Promotion to SGT, RA14833478, MOS 11B20

Home of Record: Beaufort, SC

Date of Birth: August 26, 1945, Age at time of loss: 22, Married  
173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate), Binh Dinh Province, Republic of Vietnam  
Start of Tour: February 28, 1968, Date of Casualty: **May 10, 1968 (May be 11<sup>th</sup>)**,  
Days in Country: 72, Casualty Type A1, MFW, Panel 58E - Row 012

Robert Owens was killed in action during the Battle of Trung Hoi (2) on May 11, 1968. Also killed that day were James Rylee and Calvin Gooch.

Although all reporting agencies have Owens as having been a casualty on May 10th, we have evidence to the contrary...and are in the process of proving he actually died at the Battle of Trung Hoi (2).

In the days following the major battle at An Bao on May 5th and 6th, the enemy struck again as there was a Camp Strike Force contact in the central 506 Valley, West of LZ Uplift. It was assumed that whatever force was involved would likely exit the valley to the south.

On May 11th, "B" and "C" Companies began Search and Clear operations in the area of the villages at Trung Hoi near highway 506. A huge trench and tunnel complex was found and before much time had passed, both Companies were attacked from all sides. It is estimated that 2 Battalions of enemy soldiers attacked that day but the results were a lopsided American victory.

Tanks from "B" Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor joined in the fight as the enemy rained heavy small arms, automatic weapons, mortars and rocket fire on the surrounded men. The combined firepower of the 50th Infantry Armored Personnel Carriers and the accompanying M48 Tanks of the 69th Armor allowed the American units to withdrawal to the Southeast as Air Strikes and Artillery were brought in.

At one point, FAC and Aerial observers spotted a group of 30 to 60 enemy soldiers maneuvering in an open rice paddy area. Reactions to the sightings by air power brought heavy casualties to the enemy forces.

It was estimated that over 200 enemy soldiers were killed in the battle but under cover of darkness the night after the battle, the enemy policed most of the bodies from the area. In the morning, the enemy had withdrawn, leaving behind 61 bodies.



View the official report of the Battle: [After Action Report - Battle at Trung Hoi \(2\)](#)

Continued...



Robert Owens is buried at Beaufort National Cemetery, 1601 Boundary Street, Beaufort, SC 29902, Section 49, Site 10. His Wife, Beatrice, passed away in 1982 and is buried with him (picture below).



**AWARDS AND DECORATIONS OF ROBERT OWENS:**



Combat Infantry Badge

