

Danny Lynn Stephens

Private First Class
D CO, 1ST BN, 501ST INFANTRY, 101 ABN DIV
Army of the United States
18 May 1949 - 31 March 1968
Logansport, Louisiana
Panel 47E Line 027



[The database page for Danny Lynn Stephens:](http://www.virtualwall.org/ds/StephensDL01b.htm)

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04 Oct 2006

REMEMBERED

**by his brother,
Jimmy Stephens**
foxstephens@bellsouth.net

Mr. and Mrs. Melvin J. Stephens Jr. of Route One, Logansport have been informed by Major General Kenneth G. Wickham that their son, Danny, has been awarded posthumously the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

The Government of the Republic of Vietnam has awarded posthumously the Military Merit Medal and the Gallantry Cross with Palm.

Prior to death, Danny had been awarded the National Sharpshooter Badge with rifle bar.

Arrangements are being made to present these awards to Mr. and Mrs. Stephens in the near future.

American Legion Remembers Local Hero of War

The year was 1967 and there was a terrible war raging in the jungles of South Vietnam. Eighteen year old Danny Stephens had graduated from Stanley High School in Logansport, LA in May. Knowing he would be drafted by the U.S. Army, he decided to volunteer for an early date. Like all loving parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Stephens had apprehensions about their son going into service. The family discussed his choice and Danny decided to go ahead with his plans. In June of that year, he entered the army and went to Fort Polk, LA for basic and advanced infantry training. After that training he volunteered to attend the parachute school at Ft. Benning, GA. From there he took a leave and made plans for a tour of duty with the 501st Infantry of the famed 101st Airborne Division. Only the best were assigned to this heroic division.

Meanwhile 13,000 miles away, the war in Vietnam dragged on. General William C. Westmoreland, one of the great generals to ever wear the uniform, was trying to fight a ground and air war

plus handle the political restraints imposed on him.

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, a veteran of several wars, told President Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, "Never get bogged down in a land war in Asia. You can't win it and the public won't support it." President Kennedy listened but Johnson didn't. After the death of President Kennedy, Johnson said in his re-election campaign, "he would not expand the war by either bombing the North Vietnamese or committing a good many American boys to fighting a war that I think ought to be fought by the boys of Asia." The military knew better, however, compounding this confusion, the South Vietnamese Army was in shambles, corruption was rampant, and the number of desertions were staggering. It seemed that "the light at the end of the tunnel" was not to be.

There was no way Danny could have perceived all this confusion when he arrived in Vietnam in December 1967. He was assigned as a machine gunner, one of the toughest of jobs in a unit. Enemy troops knew to try to knock them out first because of the withering fire power they poured into an attack. It took a brave man with guts to tackle this assignment. Danny had both.

Sixty miles away from Danny's location, Buddy Hodge, his first cousin, was patrolling with scout dogs, a job he had been trained for at Ft. Benning, GA. His unit was a part of the famed 1st Infantry Division. Buddy managed to get in the general area where Danny's unit was operating but Danny was on patrol and the two never got to see each other.

Around the DMZ, fighting continued at rapid pace. Danny's outfit was constantly engaged. On March 31, 1968, President Lyndon Johnson announced he would not seek another term in office. Tragically that same day Danny was mortally wounded and gave his life on the field of battle. His body was returned home and he was buried in Bethel Cemetery in Logansport, LA.

The U.S. Army provided full military honors. His country bestowed upon him the Combat Infantry badge, the Purple Heart and a Bronze Star for Valor among other awards and

decorations. It can truly be said; Danny Lynn Stephens in life and in death personified the very best of what it means to be an American.

**Written by
Lt Col Donald Dean David, U.S. Army (Retired)
Logansport, LA**

A Note from The Virtual Wall

On 31 March 1968, in the aftermath of the Tet Offensive, the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry was conducting sweeps to the west of Hue City. They lost two men that day, SGT Ezekiel Paige, B Company, of Siler City, NC, and PFC Danny L. Stephens, D Company, of Logansport, Louisiana.

**The point-of-contact for this memorial is
his brother,
Jimmy Stephens
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