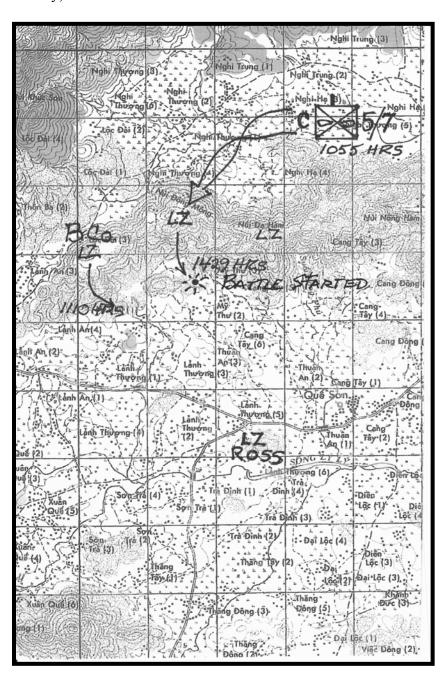
SILVER STAR MEDAL AWARDED TO PFC JAMES CASTALDI

On January 12, 1968, 1st Platoon of C Company made contact with a well-concealed, large NVA force in the Que Son Valley, which grew into a brutal battle and lasted all afternoon into the dark. Beating back the enemy force and retrieving this platoon eventually involved three platoons of C Company, and elements of B Company and A Company. At the end, three men were killed and many men were wounded. Bill Port was grievously wounded, captured by the enemy, and later died of his wounds as a POW. Bill Port received the Medal of Honor posthumously, nine others received the Silver Star (two posthumously) and a like number received the Bronze Star with V.



Lost in this epic battle was recognition of one of its most heroic soldiers, Pfc Jim Castaldi. He held his ground throughout the long and brutal fight, fighting the enemy with his M-60 machinegun until the ammo was gone, and kept fighting with a pistol.



Bill Port (L) and Jim Castaldi (R) in Que Son Valley

Trooper Dean Davison – "Castaldi and I were covering the north side. Jimmy was a brave young man, and after he ran out of M-60 ammunition, he stayed with me armed only with his S&W .38 pistol. His final act was shooting an NVA soldier in the chest who was throwing a satchel charge at us. Jimmy was blown into the brush, instantly killed in action."

Platoon Leader Tom Golden – "With disregard for his own safety, Castaldi moved to the flank closest to the enemy positions and helped repel the NVA assaults. Castaldi's heroic actions throughout the battle enabled the platoon to hold off enemy assaults and gave them incentive to hold their position until eventual withdrawal under darkness."

RTO Ronnie Casteel – "One of the four injured in our initial engagement was our machine gunner, Chuck Adams. Dean Davison asked James Castaldi to take over the MG. He did so without question. Dean positioned James to cover our far left.

James held this position for some five hours. When we pulled out, James held until he was the last man left."

More than a few of us are haunted by brave young soldiers who were killed in Vietnam, and whose heroic acts of courage went undocumented. For Tom Golden, platoon leader at the time of the battle, Jim Castaldi was such a man. After Golden reconnected a few years ago with Mike Davison, the C Company commander, Mike took the initiative to fully account for that battle in January 1968. Through Mike's efforts to submit a documented award recommendation forty-seven years later, with the critical testimony from several of Jim's platoon mates, the Department of the Army has approved the award of the Silver Star to James Castaldi.



The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, 9 July 1918 (amended by act of 25 July 1963), has awarded the SILVER STAR to

CORPORAL JAMES CASTALDI COMPANY C, 5TH BATTALION, 7TH CAVALRY REGIMENT

For Gallantry: during ground combat operations in the Republic of Vietnam (Quang Nam Province). Corporal Castadli distinguished himself in action and gave his life on 12 January 1968 as a M-60 machinegun gunner for 1st Platoon, Company C, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) when his platoon was engaged in prolonged close combat with a large North Vietnamese Army Force. When the enemy first threatened to over run his platoon, Corporal Castaldi immediately responded to a call from a fellow Soldier on the flank and moved up under intense fire to an exposed position where he could bring effective fire to bear on the enemy, thus stopping the repeated North Vietnamese Army assaults. He held this key position for many hours, when his M-60 ran out of ammo, he continued to hold position and engaged the enemy with his pistol until an explosive device thrown by enemy killed him. Corporal Castaldi's self-sacrifice, personal bravery, responsiveness and determined actions were instrumental to his platoon's survival. His actions reflect great credit upon himself, the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) and the United States Army.



DA FORM 7550, OCT 2005

Jim Castaldi was a draftee from Camden, New Jersey. He was 25 when he was killed in action, and is buried at Beverly National Cemetery in Jew Jersey. His name lives on forever, carved into The Wall on Row 38 of Panel 34.

Fast Flanker 3 9 February 2015