

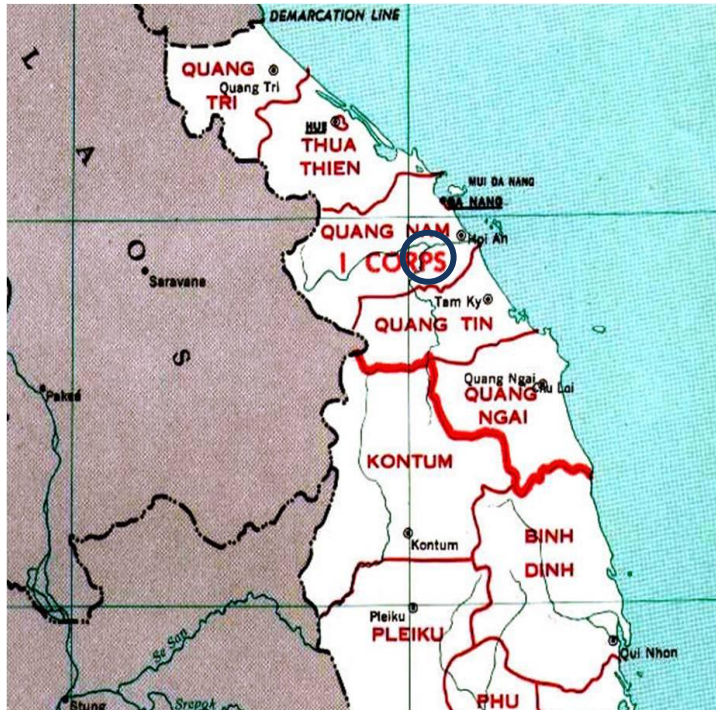
U.S. Army SGT Joseph Cloud Jr. *Died November 23, 1967*

Joseph Cloud Jr. was born and raised in Pleasanton. He was drafted in 1966 and began his tour in Vietnam December 12, 1966. Joseph began his tour in Tay Ninh with the Americal Division, 196th Light Infantry Brigade, F Troop 17th Cavalry. Later in the year they would move to Chu Lai and Tam Ky Vietnam.

The day or two that led up to Thanksgiving and the battle that took Joe's life, went something like this: all 3 of the platoons of F Troop were operating in the field away from base camp. In the fertile Que Son Valley, some 40 kilometers southwest of Da Nang. First platoon was separate from the second and third platoon's position. SGT Joe Cloud was a section leader, leading two M113 armored personnel carriers out of the 8 in the 3rd platoon. One of Joe's armored personnel carriers was 33 track (M113), which had a maintenance problem and needed some work that would take several hours to fix. So the decision was made that 3rd platoon would move out and leave 33 track and crew behind, under SGT Joe Cloud, with the 2nd platoon, while its repairs were being done. So the third platoon was operating without 33 track for a day or so. When the repairs were made, 33 moved out with 2nd platoon with the plan that it would meet up with the third platoon later in the day and 33 would rejoin the 3rd platoon. As the situation began to evolve on Thanksgiving Day, 1st and 2nd platoons (with 33) were the closest to a situation near Hill 63 (which sat in the center of the valley) and were ordered to join the 4th Battalion 31st Infantry in support. Units of the 3rd Regiment, 2nd North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Division were reported to be dug in near Hill 63. So second platoon, including Joe's M113 moved into the area with the



M113



infantry, and was hit hard by the enemy from many holes and hiding places. One of the first rounds fired was a 57 mm recoilless rifle that hit SGT Joe Cloud while he was moving the 33 track into position. Joe at the age of 22, with less than a month left on his tour in Vietnam, was killed and seven others were wounded. F Troop took the loss of SGT Cloud very hard, he was the 3rd platoon's first casualty since September 1967 and he was well liked and respected by all.