



1LT Michael D'Orlando **Class 508-68**

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918 (amended by act of July 25, 1963), takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to First Lieutenant (Air Defense Artillery) Michael D'Orlando, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Advisory Team 87, United States Army Advisory Group, U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. First Lieutenant D'Orlando distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 2 December 1969 while serving as assistant advisor to a battalion of Vietnamese troops during a reconnaissance operation in Long Khanh Province. One company of the battalion was moving toward an area of reported enemy movement when it sighted several North Vietnamese soldiers walking southeast on a jungle trail. After pursuing the hostile soldiers for several hundred meters, the company suddenly came under barrages of rocket, mortar and heavy machine gun fire from a well-concealed enemy force. Undaunted by the ferocity of the enemy ambush, Lieutenant D'Orlando moved about under the storm of enemy fire deploying his men into a defensive perimeter and directing return fire on the attackers. As the intensity of the fighting and the number of friendly casualties increased, Lieutenant D'Orlando radioed for helicopters to evacuate the wounded and helicopter gunships to deliver concentrated fire on the adversary. At that time, while coordinating the company's defenses, Lieutenant D'Orlando received a serious head wound when enemy machine gunners opened up on his command position. Although weakened by his wound, he took up a position completely exposed to hostile fire when the gunships arrived in order to direct their fire on the adversary. Later, while moving among his men under heavy enemy fire offering them encouragement and directing their return fire, Lieutenant D'Orlando was hit in the leg by an enemy round. Ignoring his wounds, Lieutenant D'Orlando remained at the center of the heaviest contact and placed suppressive fire on the advancing enemy while his men pulled back to more defensible positions. He then directed artillery and gunship fire on the enemy onrush. Despite the severity of his wounds, Lieutenant D'Orlando led his troops in repulsing repeated enemy thrusts against their positions and in finally forcing the enemy to retreat. First Lieutenant D'Orlando'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.

General Orders: Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 545 (February 26, 1970)