

PHAN RANG AB

In Memory of...

KIA, A1C Joel Loftis, June 7, 1969

KIA, A1C Charles Orsua, July 15, 1969

35th Security Police Squadron

by: Stuart Becher

I noticed on the VSPA Purple Heart page a request for any information about the incidents which led up to Awards. I can add some details to the posthumous Purple Heart for A1C Joel Loftis, K-9. It was

my fortune to be on the scene at Loftis' death, and a month later for A1C Orsua's, the other K-9 handler who died while I was there. Here is what I remember about both deaths:

A1C Joel C. Loftis was sitting in front of his quarters reading his mail. As I recall he was sitting by one of the concrete power poles as I walked passed to the post office to pick up my mail. I had just entered the post office which was very close to the K-9 billets when a 107mm rocket impacted across the street killing Joel Loftis. It was the classic case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time as the daytime rocket attacks were usually random events meant to harass rather than do any significant damage. I seem to recall that several other 107s fell that day one impacting near the BX and another near the base theater.

A1C Charles David Orsua died when he lost control of the duce and a half he was driving as it rounded the corner by mortar pit (Cobra. ?) Normally the pit was left unmanned during the daytime, but we were manning it that day because of an earlier rocket attack. A light shower earlier in the day had made the road slick. As Orsua rounded the corner we could see he was going much too fast as the corner in question was quite abrupt. I remember the truck skidding and then rolling. A1C Orsua was thrown from the vehicle and killed instantly as the truck rolled over him. After contacting bluebeard (the

medics) we ran to the accident scene to render assistance, but there was nothing to be done. In my mind, I can still see the look on his face; one of surprise rather than pain.

Blue skies to both of you gentlemen where ever you are.

**Stuart Becher,
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