

## AIRMAN'S MEDAL!

Phù Cát AB, 1969

by **Dick Brown**  
**37th APS, Phù Cát**  
**1968-1969**

*The following is the story of how member Dick Brown won the Airman's Medal*

During early 1969, I was sitting in my office as the Superintendent of Police at Phù Cát AB. A TSgt Edward S. Harmon from EOD came in and requested someone come with him to our anti personnel minefield to take a compass reading in order to find the first cluster of three mines so he could start taking them out. I knew nothing about the operation and I told him that I had bleachers put up at that location and sold tickets to watch him get his ass blown off.

Ed was a good friend of mine and he laughed at my joke. I told him that I would go with him and take the compass reading, which I did. Ed found the first cluster of three mines and started digging them out. He would hand them to me just on the other side of the barbed wire and I would unscrew the small detonator and put both items in an ammo box filled with saw dust. Ed had removed two clusters and was working on the third when he stepped to his left'there was an explosion knocking him down and me backward. Ed stated screaming, 'I can't see, I can't see!' He was also thrashing around and I thought he would roll onto more mines so I immediately ran along the barbed wire to the entrance and immediately ran into the minefield to Ed. I picked him up and assisted him out of the minefield and immediately radioed for an ambulance. When the ambulance arrived, they put Harmon on a stretcher, placed him into the ambulance, and I got in with Ed. As the ambulance started to drive away, it was on a bumpy dirt road and Ed's leg was bouncing around causing him to scream out from the pain. I knelt beside him, picked up his left leg to cushion the ride, and as I did could see his entire foot had been blown away. I also noticed a large tear in his pants just below his crotch. I put his leg down and tore open his pants to see if there was any further damage I had not seen. I could see a very large opening in the inner thigh area, but there was little or no blood. I again lifted his leg to cushion the ride.

Ed was still blinded from the explosion, and said to me, 'Is it still there?' I told him that I had seen it, and it was still there. He kept this line of questioning up for several minutes, when I asked him why he was so worried about it. Ed said that he was going on R&R to Hawaii next week and his wife was going to meet him there and he planned on using it. Even with the great amount of pain he was in, he still had a sense of humor.

Ed was Air Evac'd to a large Army Hospital and one of my Captains and myself drove down to see him before he was flown back to the States. Ed told us that they would be able to save the heel bone and make things much easier for them to replace his foot.

I had not heard from Ed since that day in 1969. After a couple of years, I tried many times to somehow locate Ed, but I had forgotten his first name and could only remember 'Harmon', from either Washington or Oregon. I tried all those years without success, but during October 1995, I was looking through the Reunion's section when I saw that the Retired AF EOD Master Blasters were having a reunion on November 11, 1995 in Florida. There was a phone number for information, so I called and when someone answered, I explained that I had saved an EOD man's life at Phù Cát AB, and all I could remember was 'Harmon' and either Washington or Oregon. The individual said he knew who I meant and gave me his phone number in Princeville, Oregon, and said the name was Edward S. Harmon. Well, I immediately called the number and got an answering machine and I repeated who I was, and that I was looking for an EOD person I carried out of a minefield at Phù Cát AB, and said, 'Are you that man?' A few minutes later, Ed returned my call and confirmed that he was in fact that person. We talked about old times and his injury and how he was getting along. He told me that he was still in the explosive business and was doing great.

We intend to get together soon and Ed said that he has pictures of the incident and would send me copies when he finds them.

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