

VIETNAM PHAN RANG AIR BASE

AIRMAN'S MEDAL

© 2013 by [Clarence J. Schofield](#) (E6, Ret)

South RKO/AP, 1955

Pleiku AB SVN/AP, 1961-1962

Đà Nẵng AB SVN/AP, 1964, 35th Combat Support Group/AP

Phan Rang AB SVN/SP, 1966-1967

Telling it like it was!

AIRMAN'S MEDAL

I remember Bruce Pritchett who posted a [story about the grenade incident](#)... but have been unable to locate him.

I served in Korea as an Air Policeman in 1955. I served in Vietnam at Pleiku AB, 1961-1962; Đà Nẵng AB, 1964; and Phan Rang AB in 1966-1967. While at Phan Rang AB, I worked with the U.S. Army, "B" CO, 1st/327, 1st Brigade 101st, and was all over Vietnam.

I had flown into Bong Son airfield en route to Phan Rang. Bong Son was a small airport near the brand new Phan Rang *soon-to-be* Air Base, and I was awaiting transportation to the base. Phan Rang's runway was still under construction and not then open to air traffic, and therefore Bong Son was the closest dinky airport we could fly in and out of, and only a couple of miles away from the base.

That February 1966 day inside Bong Son's terminal there were about sixty or seventy civilians and military arriving, departing, and just standing-setting around waiting for their airplane or a ride somewhere. I was just standing around in the crowd and had just set my bag down to light a cigarette, and heard what sounded like *that* "PING" when a grenade is thrown—I jerked around and saw one had rolled and stopped literally at my feet.

I saw the striker was in and I knew you can't outrun it. The only thing I was thinking is that I had to get rid of it. I knew there was a old French sandbag bunker about ten feet from the door; guys sometimes lay on the sandbags outside waiting for their rides. I grabbed the live grenade, squeezing the striker, knowing it wouldn't stop it from going off but I guess physiologically was hoping it would help, and ran for the bunker. I stepped through the doorway with only half my body outside and threw the grenade over the wall of the bunker. It couldn't have fallen more than passed the top layer of sandbags when it exploded. Thankfully no one was on the bags then. I didn't know where the grenade came from and no one ever to my knowledge found out the truth either. At that time, I was uncertain if we were under attack or what was happening. It just happened too fast, and my reaction was really the only way anyone, including me, was going to escape serious injury or worse.

Later, I was told I was put in for the Airman's Medal or the Bronze Star. Time went by and I was told I had received the Airman's Medal, because they couldn't determine who actually threw the grenade. It was chalked off as a faulty pin and that's how the incident was written up. Maybe so—but no one was hurt and I am thankful for that. I was presented the Airman's Medal in a small formal ceremony where four citations were presented by a full bird colonel.

Today, I'm fighting my own health issues battle with a number of agent orange related problems. I know who pulled the pin on that one, but when I applied to the VA they turned me down.

Don Poss phoned me and we talked about the Airman's Medal, and he told me the criteria for Agent Orange now includes a presumption on some of my ailments. Since 1991, no one has ever offered to help direct me with getting through the VA before—VSPA is the first to do so. I'm okay with a computer, but not great, and until Don's phone call I have to admit I never knew about VSPA. I've asked for a membership package and appreciated the Welcome Home.

I also served in Korea and retired as an E6.

AIR FORCE COMMENDATION MEDAL:

I also received the Air Force Commendation Medal for another event. After arriving at my next duty station at Bergstrom AFB, Austin Texas, in Feb 1967, I received the award for saving the life of a fellow Security Policeman at Phan Rang, Vietnam in May 1966. He had collapsed and stopped breathing and I administered CPR until the medics arrived.

There was no ceremony or formal presentation, it was just handed to me by my 1st Sergeant. Again, I was recommended for a bronze star (meritorious) but received the Air Force Commendation Medal. Attached are photos and write ups and I'll send more later because I need to get busy on my VA stuff.

[Click Photos for Full View](#)



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH AIR FORCE (PACAF)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96307

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 137A

AIR FORCE HERO AGAIN SAVES LIFE

Phan Rang (7AF) — HERO SAVES ANOTHER LIFE — Air Force A.1.C. Clarence M. Schofield, 29, of Riverdale, Ga., who recently snatched a live grenade from the floor of a crowded room has again saved a human life. The quick-thinking airman used artificial respiration and kept a stricken fellow air policeman breathing until medical help arrived. He was awarded the Airman's Medal for throwing the grenade out of the room and has been recommended for the Bronze Star for his most recent action. (AIR FORCE PHOTO).

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NOTE: This item has been cleared for release by MACV.

Quick Reaction...

Airman Saves Friend's Life

By Maj. Richard Hill

PHAN RANG — Ever since his arrival in Vietnam fate seems to dog the footsteps of A1C Clarence M. Schofield and push him into tight corners now and then. Each time this happens, Schofield comes out a hero.

"I don't know how I get caught in these situations," admits the quiet-spoken air policeman who won the Airman's Medal recently and is now being considered for the Bronze Star. Schofield confesses he has no desire for a taste of glory.

Not long ago at Buu Son airport on the perimeter of the big new air base here, he snatched a live grenade from the floor of the waiting room and with quick presence of mind threw it in a nearby bunker where it exploded harmlessly. His prompt action undoubtedly saved the lives of the 50-60 people gathered there.

For this bit of bravery, Schofield was awarded the Airman's Medal "for heroism involving voluntary risk of life." His comment when queried on his impulsive act, "Well, it just seemed the only thing to do at the time. Now it's happened to him again.

This time the quick-thinking airman pumped life into a fellow member of the 366th Air Police

Squadron when his buddy collapsed from salt depletion and began hyperventilating (over-breathing). He immediately jumped into action, applied artificial respiration and kept the stricken man breathing evenly until medical help arrived.

"Schofield really moved fast," says A2C Loren Kendall of Marion, Ohio as he tells of the night A2C Rodney L. LeBree, Orlando, Fla., nearly died in their tent. "He just took one look at LeBree perspiring heavily, lying on his bunk gasping for breath in big gulping sobs, and sent me running for an ambulance."

Schofield remembers how LeBree first turned deep red then pale, started to choke violently and finally stopped breathing altogether. He quickly turned the sick man over on his stomach.

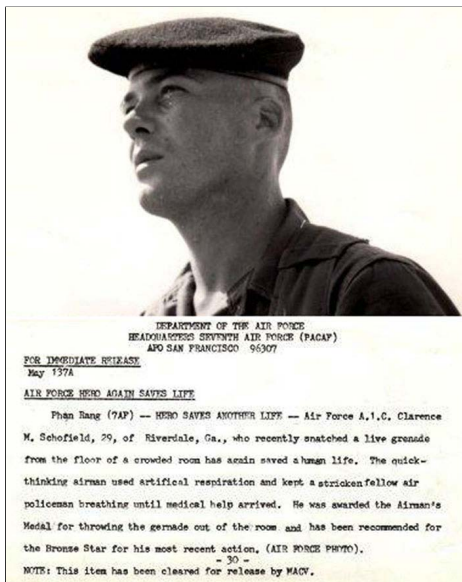
"I said to myself 'You'd better get busy, boy, or this guy's going to punch out right now.'" Schofield got down to the serious business of administering artificial respiration. "I had to keep it up for some time," draws the 29 year old Riverdale, Ga., airman, "he had a knack of stopping his breathing every time I quit."

When hospital authorities ap-

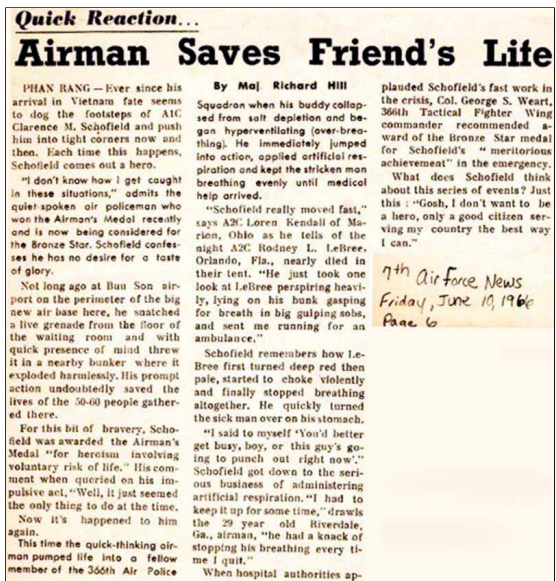
plauded Schofield's fast work in the crisis, Col. George S. Weart, 366th Tactical Fighter Wing commander recommended award of the Bronze Star medal for Schofield's "meritorious achievement" in the emergency.

What does Schofield think about this series of events? Just this: "Gosh, I don't want to be a hero, only a good citizen serving my country the best way I can."

*7th Air Force News
Friday, June 10, 1966
Page 6*



1. USAF 7th AF HQ: Press Release. Clarence Schofield. 1966.



2. USAF News Article: AFPM, Clarence Schofield. 1966.

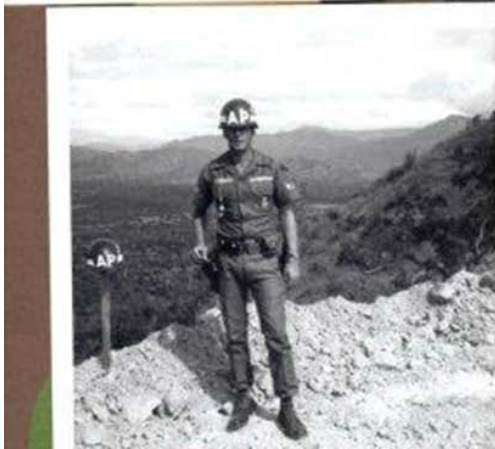


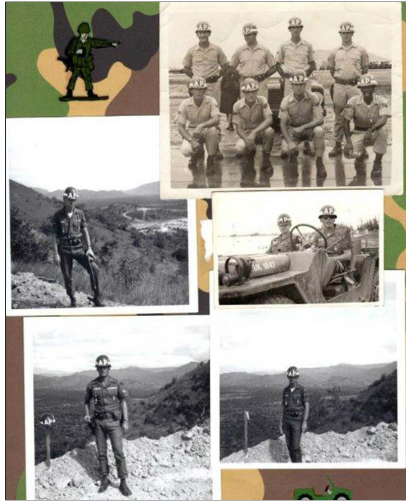


3. Air Police Photos-1: Clarence Schofield. 1966.



4. Air Police Photos-2: Clarence Schofield. 1966.

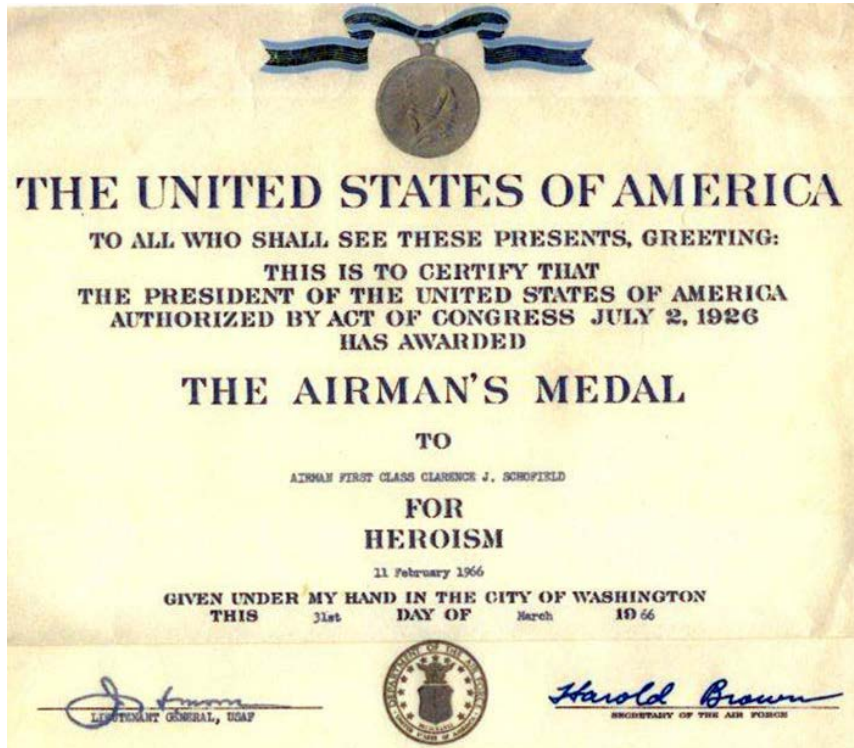




5. Air Police Photos-3: Clarence Schofield. 1966.

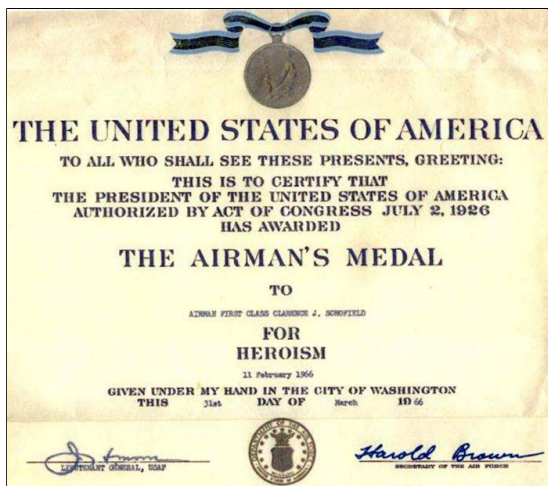


6. Air Police Photos-4: Clarence Schofield. 1966.



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE AIRMAN'S MEDAL
TO
CLARENCE J. SCHOFIELD

Airman First Class Clarence J. Schofield distinguished himself by heroism involving voluntary risk of life at Phan Rang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam on 11 February 1966. On that date, Airman Schofield was handed a live hand grenade with a defective striking mechanism and safety pin removed. With complete disregard for his own safety, Airman Schofield, despite the danger of the grenades imminent detonation, unhesitatingly held the defective striker in place and ordered the immediate evacuation of the area. Airman Schofield succeeded in evacuating approximately 60 military and civilian personnel and then allowed the grenade to detonate in a secure area. The exemplary courage and heroism displayed by Airman Schofield reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



7. Airman's Medal Awarded: Clarence Schofield. 1966.

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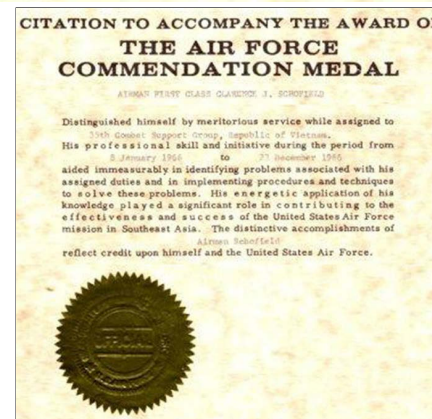
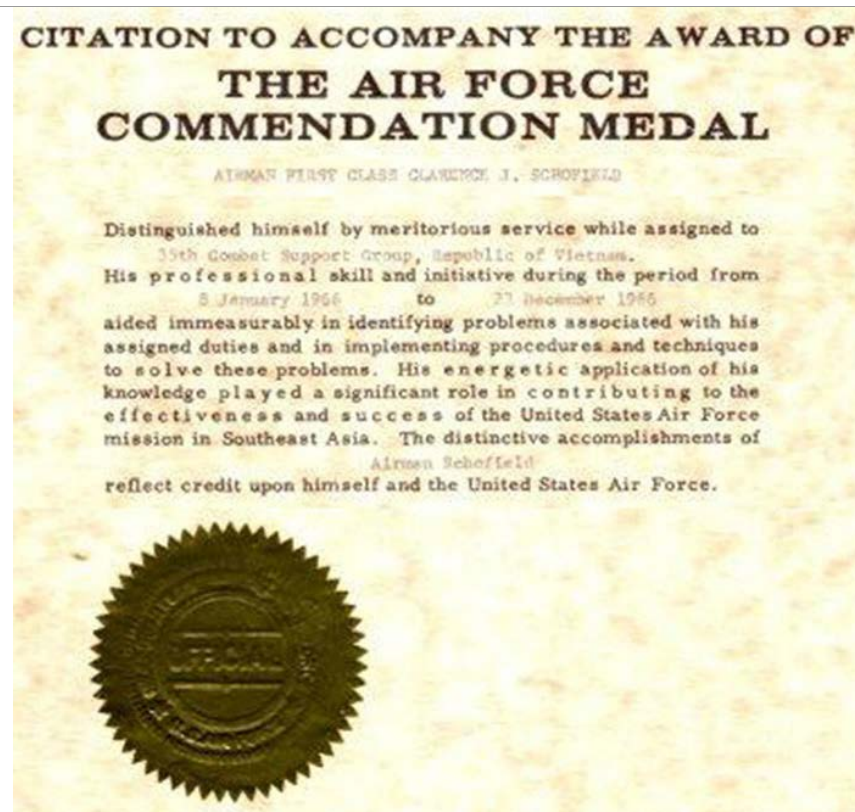
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8. Airman's Medal Citation: Clarence Schofield. 1966.



9. Air Force Commendation Medal Awarded: Clarence Schofield. 1966.



10. Air Force Commendation Medal Citation: Clarence Schofield. 1966.

MACHINE PROCESSED					
1. NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE INITIAL) CLARENCE J. SCHOFIELD		2. AFSC A10000000	3. GRADE A1C	4. DATE OF GRADE 1 Jun 66	
5. ORGANIZATION, COMMAND AND LOCATION 33rd Air Police Squadron Phan Rang Air Base, RVN (MACAF)		6. RESERVE WARRANT OR COMMISSION AND AFSC None		7. REASON FOR REPORT Change of party offi	
8. PERIOD OF SUPERVISION 171		9. PERIOD OF REPORT FROM: 30 Nov 65		THRU: 16 Oct 66	
10. DUTIES			11. UND POSITION OCCUPIED		
DAFIC 77150	CAFIC 77150	CAFSC 77150	NO. OF PERSONNEL SUPERVISED 0	AUTHORIZED GRADE A1C	AUTHORIZED AFSC 77150

Current Duty: Air Policeman. Maintains law and order in accordance with current regulation and directives; protects personnel and property; investigates minor incidents, accidents, disturbances and thefts; directs traffic and enforces personnel circulation control systems; maintains liaison with local police officials and military police authority; and any other duties as directed by his supervisors.

11. COMMENTS OF REPORTING OFFICIAL (Be factual and specific. Add any comments which increase the objectivity of the rating.)
NOTES AND SPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS: Airman Schofield's outstanding professionalism in the performance of his duties, has consistently placed him above his contemporaries. His intelligence, alertness and military bearing has resulted in his constant utilization as honor guard for such distinguished VIPs as the United States Secretary of Agriculture, CINCPAC, and commander MACAF. Airman Schofield, already the recipient of the Airman's Medal for heroism, reacted to a call for help on 8 May 66, when a fellow air policeman fell ill, in his quarters and stopped breathing. Airman Schofield's timely application of artificial respiration is related with the saving of that airman's life. For this act, Airman Schofield was recommended for the United States Air Force Commendation Medal. **STRENGTHS:** His devotion to duty, sense of responsibility and conduct, both on and off duty are among Airman Schofield's many attributes. **OTHER COMMENTS:** Airman Schofield's use of tact and diplomacy, whether dealing with United States or Vietnamese personnel, has served to further American-Vietnamese relations. Airman Schofield repeatedly proves his noncommissioned officer potential and is a definite asset to his unit, Pacific Air Force and the United States Air Force.

12. REPORTING OFFICIAL	DUTY TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
NAME, GRADE, AND ORGANIZATION MR. A. SCHLIFRIL, SSgt 33rd Air Police Squadron	MOOIC/Team Patrol Section	<i>[Signature]</i>	19 Oct 1966

C. REVIEW BY INDORSING OFFICIAL: Airman Schofield's performance of all duty assignments has been outstanding. He is industrious, thorough, accurate and extremely conscientious. His courteous and thoroughly professional abilities have contributed strongly to the effectiveness of the 33rd Air Police Squadron.

12. REPORTING OFFICIAL	DUTY TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
NAME, GRADE, AND ORGANIZATION MR. D. FAYLVED, MSgt 33rd Air Police Squadron	Air Police Superintendent	<i>[Signature]</i>	19 October 1966

REVIEW BY OFFICER IN CHARGE: I CONCUR WITH REPORTING OFFICIAL I CONCUR WITH INDORSING OFFICIAL
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12. REPORTING OFFICIAL	DUTY TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
NAME, GRADE, AND ORGANIZATION MR. D. LEPISTO, 1st Lt 33rd Air Police Squadron	Law Enforcement Officer	<i>[Signature]</i>	26 Oct 1966

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11. APR for: Clarence Schofield. 1966.

We Take Care of Our Own

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