



# PHAN RANG AIR BASE

## Photos

### AP Korea - AP Vietnam

by Clarence J. Schofield, LM 821 (Ret. TSgt)

Korea: 1955; Vietnam:

Dà Nàng AB, 6222nd ABS/AP, 1961-1962;

Pleiku AB, Det 1/38th TAC/AP, 1964;

Phan Rang AB, 1966-1967

*By Clarence J. Schofield, as told to Don Poss: I received a return phone call from Clarence J. Schofield, regarding an inquiry, after a cold phone call message made to him several days ago. Clarence retired as an E6 and also served in Korea as an AP in 1955.*

I had flown in to Buu Son airfield en route to Phan Rang Air Base, and the 366th APS. Buu Son was only a tiny airport near the brand new Phan Rang soon-to-be Air Base, and was awaiting transportation to the base. Phan Rang's runway was still under construction and not then open to air traffic, and therefore Buu Son was the closest dinky little airport we could fly in and out of and only a couple of miles away from the base.

That March 1966 day inside Buu Son's terminal there were about sixty or seventy civilians and military types arriving and 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 the distinct "PING" -- I instantly recognized that as a grenade's spoon or safety lever spring flying away—which meant *someone* had pulled the pin and tossed or dropped a grenade which rolled across the floor and stopped literally within a couple of feet from me – the only grenade magnet in the terminal.

It was an *O-S* moment, but I wasn't scared and knew there was really no choice but to grab it and run away from the terminal crowd. I had flown through Buu Song before and recalled there was an open-air sand bag bunker just outside an exit door, but also recalled I had never seen it without a lot of military guys racked out on the sandbags catching some Z's. *No choice*—I grabbed the live grenade and was running for the bunker, and miracle of miracles no one was lounging on the bags! Precious seconds had already passed when I reached the outside doorway and was only half through it when I lobbed the grenade over the wall of the bunker. It couldn't have fallen past the top layer of sandbags when it exploded – Violently!

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 was a *no time to think or get scared* moment -- 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 and a Bronze Star. Time went by when I was told I had received the Airman's Medal, but because they couldn't determine who actually threw the grenade it was apparently chalked off as an accident, and that's how the incident was written up. *Let's see: someone pulls the grenade's pin...someone holding the spoon in place let's go of the spoon...someone tosses the grenade in to the middle of a crowded closely packed small terminal room...and therefore that must have been an accident.* Maybe so -- no one died and for that I am thankful.

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 in 1991 or so they turned me down. Don Poss called 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.

**Clarence J. Schofield served as an Air Policeman in Korea, and also Vietnam.**

**Q. What year were you in Korea, and if so, were you an Air Policeman then?**

A. 1955 [End of fighting, July 1953]. Were you an AP then? Yes.

**Q. What year did you retire as an E6?**

A. 1 Nov. 1974.

**Q. What years were you in Vietnam?**

A. Đà Nẵng AB, 6222nd ABS/AP, 1961-1962; Pleiku AB, Det 1/38th TAC/AP, 1964; Phan Rang AB, 1966-1967.

**Q. What bases were you at in Vietnam?**

A. Pleiku, Đà Nẵng, and Phan Rang. I worked with "B" CO 1st/327 1st Brigade 101st and was all over Vietnam.

**Q. By the way, do you remember Bruce Pritchett?** He posted a story relating your incident based on the news article. There are several

photos of you in the story posted at <http://www.vspa.com/pr-bruce-pritchett-portrait-of-a-hero-1966.htm> since 2000.  
A. Yes, I know Pritchett but am unable to locate him now.

I Had a small formal ceremony where four citations were presented by a full bird colonel.



1. The Airman's Medal, awarded for Heroism, to A1C Clarence J. Schofield.

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.



2. Citation to AcCO The Award of The Airman's Medal to Clarence J. Schofield.



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 1978

AIR FORCE HERO AGAIN SAVES LIFE

Phan Rang (TAP) — 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 man's 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.

3. DOAF Press Release [Phan Rang AB]: Air Force Hero Again Saves Life.

## Quick Reaction...

# Airman Saves Friend's Life

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

By Maj Richard Hill

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," drawls 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 19, 1966  
Page 6

4. AF NEWS article, 17 June 1966: Airman Saves Friend's Life.

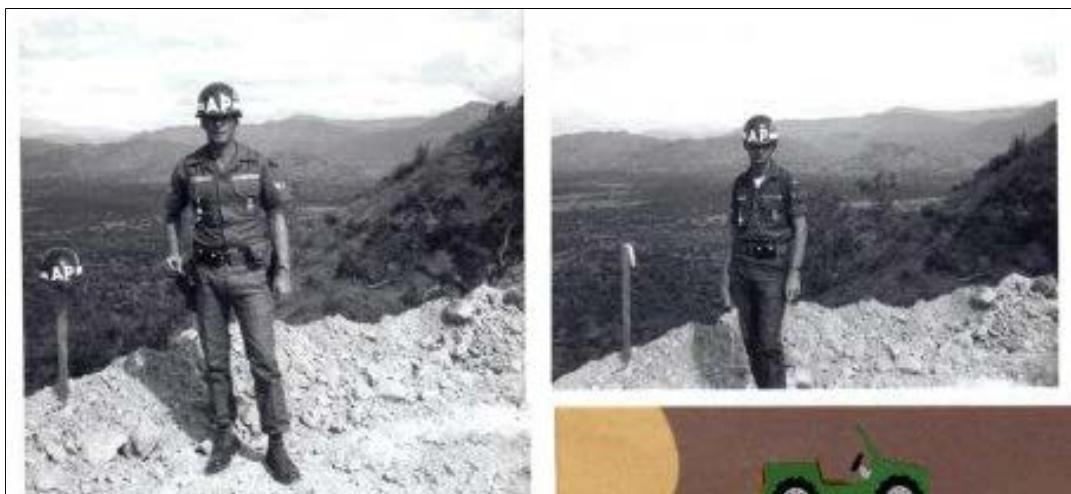
## MY VIETNAM PHOTOS



5. Photo by Clarence J. Schofield. 1966-1967.



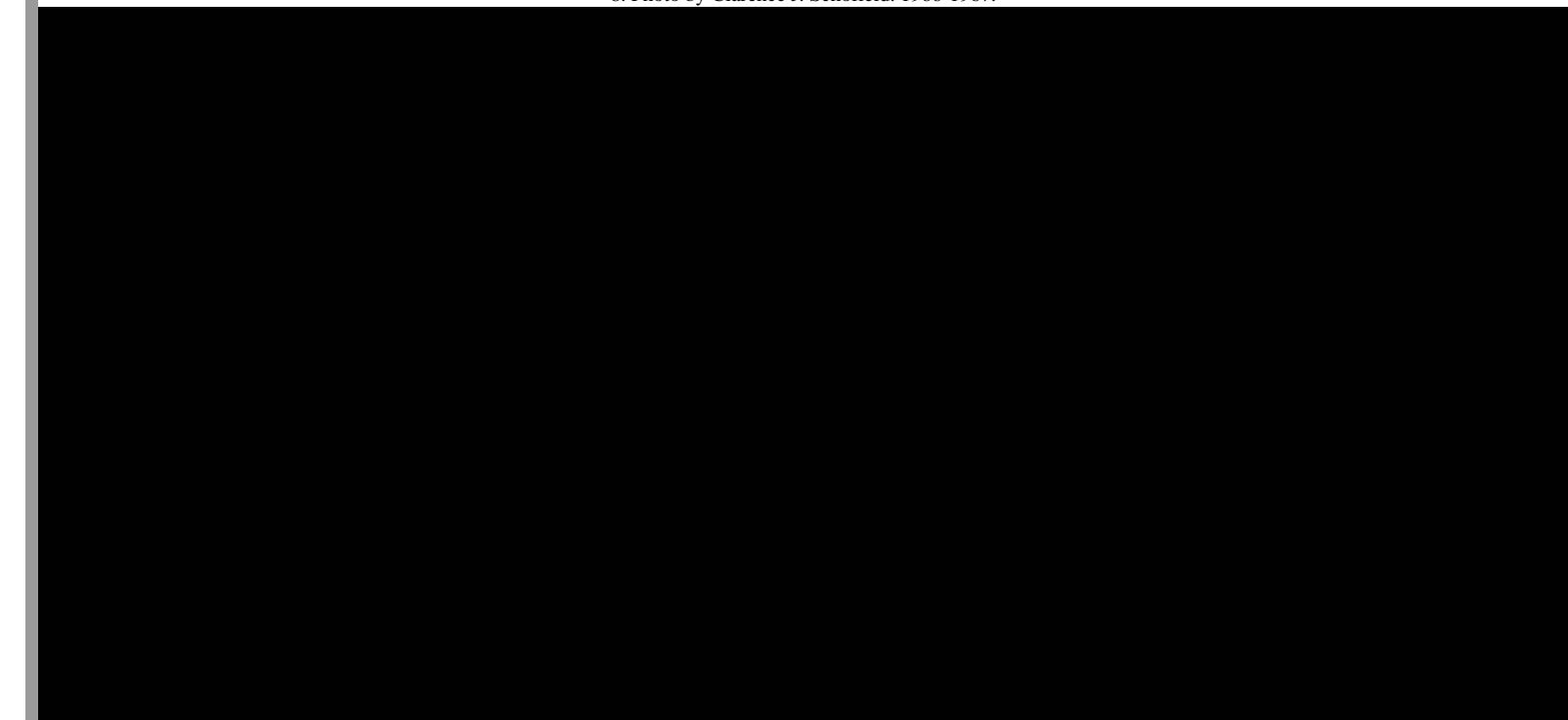
6. Photo by Clarence J. Schofield. 1966-1967.



7. Photo by Clarence J. Schofield. 1966-1967.



8. Photo by Clarence J. Schofield. 1966-1967.





9. Photo by Clarence J. Schofield. 1966-1967.

10. Photo by Clarence J. Schofield. 1966-1967.



## DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE AIR FORCE COMMENDATION MEDAL  
HAS BEEN AWARDED TO

AIRMAN FIRST CLASS CLARENCE J. SCHOFIELD

FOR

MERITORIOUS SERVICE

8 January 1966 to 23 December 1966

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON  
THIS 14th DAY OF January 1967

*William W. Moorer*  
WILLIAM W. MOORER, Lieutenant General, USAF  
Commander, Seventh Air Force



*Harold Brown*  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

11. DOAF: Award of The Air Force Commendation Medal to A1C Clarence J. Schofield. 14 Jan 1967.

# CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE AIR FORCE COMMENDATION MEDAL

AIRMAN FLIGHT CLASSE CLARENCE J. SCHOFIELD

Distinguished himself by meritorious service while assigned to  
35th Combat Support Group, Republic of Vietnam.  
His professional skill and initiative during the period from  
5 January 1966 to 27 December 1966  
aided immeasurably in identifying problems associated with his  
assigned duties and in implementing procedures and techniques  
to solve these problems. His energetic application of his  
knowledge played a significant role in contributing to the  
effectiveness and success of the United States Air Force  
mission in Southeast Asia. The distinctive accomplishments of  
Alman Schofield  
reflect credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



12. DOAF: Citation to AcCO the Award of The Air Force Commendation Medal to A1C Clarence J. Schofield.

*We Take Care of Our Own*

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