

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS  
AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

**FEB 24 1999**

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: 98-01837

COUNSEL: NONE

HEARING DESIRED: NO

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APPLICANT REQUESTS THAT:

The Air Force Achievement Medal (AFAM) he was awarded for his actions on 20 October 1987, be upgraded to the Airman's Medal (AmnM).

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APPLICANT CONTENDS THAT:

His heroic actions on 20 October 1987 warrant award of the AmnM and are beyond specific achievement.

The applicant states that while driving home from duty on 20 October 1987, he witnessed an F-18 aircraft crash and voluntarily assisted the pilot to safety despite exploding munitions and burning fuel.

The applicant's complete submission is attached at Exhibit A.

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STATEMENT OF FACTS:

On 20 October 1987, while assigned to the 17<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Squadron, RAF Alconbury, England, as a staff sergeant, the applicant witnessed an F-18 aircraft crash while attempting to takeoff. The pilot ejected successfully; however, he landed dangerously close to the burning aircraft. The applicant rushed to assist the dazed pilot and after ascertaining that his injuries were minimal, led the pilot to safety and remained with him until the crash recovery team arrived.

On 9 November 1987, the applicant was awarded the AFAM based on outstanding achievement on 20 October 1987.

The AFAM is awarded for meritorious service or outstanding achievement that do not meet the requirements of the Air Force Commendation Medal.

The AmnM is awarded for heroism involving voluntary risk of life under conditions other than those of conflict with an armed enemy of the US. The saving of a life or the success of the voluntary

heroic act is not essential. **An** enlisted member who has been, awarded the AmnM for heroism may request a 10% increase in retired pay.

The applicant has a projected retirement date of 1 March 1999 for length of service.

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**AIR FORCE EVALUATION:**

The Recognition Programs Branch, AFPC/DPPRA, reviewed this application and states that the applicant has provided sufficient documentation to support his claim and they recommend approval of his request to upgrade the AFAM to an AmnM, with consideration for a 10% increase in retired pay.

AFPC/DPPRA states that by going to the aid of the dazed pilot, who apparently was not sufficiently oriented to remove himself from the vicinity of the burning aircraft and danger from the possible exploding ordnance, the applicant voluntarily risked his life to ensure the pilot was led to safety. The AFAM is considered entirely inappropriate for this sort of action and they believe the applicant meets the criteria for award of the AmnM.

Complete copies of the Air Force evaluations are attached at Exhibits C and D.

The SAF Personnel Council reviewed this application and states that the Air Force Awards and Decorations Board recommends the applicant obtain more information. Specifically, the Board noted a significant difference in the wording in the AFAM Certificate and the applicant's statement. Also, the applicant did not show any effort in locating anyone in his former chain of command for verification and support.

A complete copy of the Air Force evaluation is attached at Exhibit E.

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**APPLICANT'S REVIEW OF AIR FORCE EVALUATION:**

The applicant reviewed the Air Force evaluations and states that his statement is what happened on that day, and is the same statement that he gave the aircraft investigation team and his former commander. He has no other information that he can submit. He does not know the names of anyone in his former chain of command eleven years ago. He does know that the commander was a lieutenant colonel and has probably retired.

The applicant's complete response is attached at Exhibit G.

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THE BOARD CONCLUDES THAT:

1. The applicant has exhausted all remedies provided by existing law or regulations.
2. The application was not timely filed; however, it is in the interest of justice to excuse the failure to timely file.
3. Sufficient relevant evidence has been presented to demonstrate the existence of probable error or injustice. In this respect, we note that on 20 October 1987, the applicant witnessed an F-18 aircraft crash. Despite the vicinity of the burning aircraft and the danger of possible exploding ordnance, he voluntarily risked his life to ensure the pilot was led to safety. We believe the applicant's heroic actions meet the criteria for the award of the AmnM. In view of the applicant's extraordinary heroism, and since he has an approved retirement date of 1 March 1999, we also believe he should be entitled to a 10% increase in his retired pay based on extraordinary heroism entitlement. Therefore, we recommend his records be corrected to the extent indicated below.

THE BOARD RECOMMENDS THAT:

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to APPLICANT, be corrected to show that:

a. He was awarded the Airman's Medal, rather than the Air Force Achievement Medal, for extraordinary heroism on 20 October 1987.

b. On 16 March 1998, he requested extraordinary heroism entitlement, and his request was approved by competent authority.

The following members of the Board considered this application in Executive Session on 12 January 1999, under the provisions of AFI 36-2603:

Mr. Vaughn E. Schlunz, Panel Chair  
 Mr. Richard A. Peterson, Member  
 Mr. Frederick R. Beaman, III, Member

All members voted to correct the records, as recommended. The following documentary evidence was considered:

- Exhibit A. DD Form 149, dated 25 Mar 98, w/atchs.
- Exhibit B. Applicant's Master Personnel Records.
- Exhibit C. Letter, AFPC/DPPPRA, dated 5 Aug 98.
- Exhibit D. Letter, AFPC/DPPPRA, dated 9 Sep 98.
- Exhibit E. Letter, SAFPC, dated 28 Oct 98.

Exhibit F. Letter, AFBCMR, dated 9 Nov 98.

Exhibit G. Letter, Applicant, dated 17 Nov 98.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Vaughn F. Schilling".

VAUGHN F. SCHILLING

Panel Chair



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

FEB 24 1999

Office of the Assistant Secretary

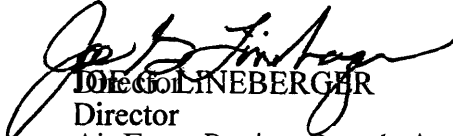
AFBCMR 98-01837

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF

Having received and considered the recommendation of the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records and under the authority of Section 1552, Title 10, United States Code (70A Stat 116), it is directed that:

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to [REDACTED] be corrected to show that:

- a. He was awarded the Airman's Medal, rather than the Air Force Achievement Medal, for extraordinary heroism on 20 October 1987.
- b. On 16 March 1998, he requested extraordinary heroism entitlement, and his request was approved by competent authority.

  
JOE COLINEBERGER  
Director  
Air Force Review Boards Agency