



# THE DUSTOFFER NEWSLETTER



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 1993

**15th ANNUAL REUNION OF THE DUSTOFF ASSN.  
4, 5, 6, MARCH 1994  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

***RESTORE HOPE: STAYING ALOFT***



*SFC Rafael Lozano, a medic with the 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) attends to an engineer being flown to an Army hospital in Mogadishu, Somalia.*

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings DUSTOFFERS,

Thirteen plus years ago, when we founded this Association, I never dreamed that we would grow to a membership of 1,300 or that I would have the honor to be selected as its president. We should all be proud of the success the association has enjoyed and the many contributions we have made to the DUSTOFF and Army communities.

During the professional meeting at the last convention, you heard the financial statement read by the treasurer (see current financial statement). DUSTOFFERS, we are in need of some JP-8 (JP-4 if you're old like me). As you know, inflation and our expenditures have continued each year while, quite frankly, our revenues (dues included) have not kept up with the changing times. Since our constitution will not permit consideration of a dues increase until the next annual business session, we could surely use some financial assistance. So, if during an analytical evaluation of your financial situation you find some dollars just doing nothin', send them to the association. We could use the money and you or your business will be recognized in the next DUSTOFF publication.

The executive committee and I are rapidly planning, coordinating, and executing all of the issues that were presented during the convention. We will provide you with answers to each issue and a quality reunion next February.

I look forward to serving you and the Association.

Sincerely,



Ed Bradshaw  
President, DUSTOFF Association

## DUSTOFF APPLICATION

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NOTE: Members electing to renew membership annually will have their membership automatically converted to lifetime after 15 CONSECUTIVE years. Membership renewals are based on the Calendar Year and are due NO LATER THAN one January each year. Please make all checks payable to: DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION and mail to:

DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION  
Post Office Box 8091, Walnwright Station  
San Antonio, Texas 78208

# DUSTOFF UNITS - LINEAGE AND HONORS

Those with somewhat of a historical bent should enjoy a review in each issue of the lineage, honors, and a bit of the background of DUSTOFF units. These will be presented in no particular order or precedence and due credit is certainly due to the Association's Historian, Joe Kralich, and the U.S. Army Center for Military History. The vast majority of the information on DUSTOFF units, however, comes from a landmark publication, The DUSTOFF Report, compiled over the past several years by Captain Randy Anderson, then with the 498th Medical Company.

## 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance)

The 45th, now a UH60 unit stationed in Ansbach, Germany, made Army history in recent times by self-deploying a distance of 3,174 nautical miles with 21 enroute stops from the heart of Central Europe across the Alps and the Mediterranean to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield/Storm. The 45th was the longest deployed United States Army, Europe unit, amassing 3819 flight hours carrying 1403 patients, moving 7 tons of medical supplies, dispensing 670,000 gallons of JP4 fuel, and driving some 280,000 desert miles on its tactical ground vehicle fleet. As with many Army Medical Department units, however, its beginnings held no portent of the great achievements to follow. The 45th was first constituted in August 1943 as the 45th Veterinary Company and later activated for wartime service in Italy. Following World War II, it was inactivated, then redesignated as a Collecting Company and reactivated in 1951 at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. The company had a short life in the Midwest, being inactivated again in 1952. In 1960, the 45th Medical Company became an air ambulance unit stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The 45th arrived in Vietnam in 1967 where it left active service in April 1971. With the Medical Force 2000 reorganization, the 45th was again brought to life in Octo-

ber 1988 in Germany, The 45th's campaign participation credits and unit decorations are impressive and include:

### CAMPAIGNS

#### World War II – EAME

Rome - Arno  
Southern France  
Rhineland  
Central Europe

#### Vietnam

Counteroffensive, Phases III-VII  
Tet Counteroffensive  
Tet 69 Counteroffensive  
Summer-Fall 1969  
Winter-Spring 1970  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive

#### Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia  
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

#### Decorations

Meritorious Unit Commendation  
(Army), Vietnam 1968  
Meritorious Unit Commendation  
(Army), Vietnam 1969-70  
Meritorious Unit Commendation  
(Army), Vietnam 1970-71  
Meritorious Unit Commendation  
(Army), Southwest Asia

## 82d Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance)

The 82d was originally constituted in the Army of the United States in December 1943 as the 82d Malaria Control Unit and activated at Camp Ellis, Illinois. It was reorganized the next year as the 82d Malaria Composite Unit and again in 1945 as the 82d Malaria Control Detachment. Following an inactivation in 1946 in Korea, the 82d became a Shock Detachment in 1950 and was activated in 1951 at Letterman Army Hospital, California, only to be inactivated a second time in 1952. In 1954, the unit became the 82d Medical Detachment, a part of the Regular Army, and was activated in September 1954 at Brooke Army Medical Center,

Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The 82d, of course, had one of the longest and most storied of Vietnam DUSTOFF histories, entering the theater in 1964 and being among the last to depart country for its current home, Fort Riley, Kansas. The unit deployed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as a part of the 34th Medical Battalion, 44th Medical Brigade, supporting XVIII Airborne Corps units in both Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The 82d is scheduled to reorganize as the 82d Medical Company (Air Ambulance) as a part of Medical Force 2000 (MF2K) restructuring. Its campaign participation credits and unit decorations include:

#### World War II – AP

New Guinea  
Leyte

#### Vietnam

Advisory  
Defense  
Counteroffensives through Phase VII  
Tet Counteroffensive  
Tet 69 Counteroffensive  
Summer-Fall 1969  
Winter-Spring 1970  
Sanctuary Counteroffensive  
Consolidation I

#### Southwest Asia

Defense of Saudi Arabia  
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait

#### Decorations

Presidential Unit Citation  
(Army), Vietnam, 5 December 1964  
Presidential Unit Citation  
(Army), Chuong Thien Province  
Valorous Unit Award,  
Chuong Thien Province  
Meritorious Unit Commendation,  
Vietnam 1965-69  
Meritorious Unit Commendation,  
Vietnam 1968  
Meritorious Unit Commendation,  
Vietnam 1969-70  
Meritorious Unit Commendation,  
Vietnam 1970-72  
Philippine Presidential Unit Citation,  
October 1944-July 1945

# THE LATEST ON THE UH60Q PROGRAM

Colonel Gerald C. Green, Project Manager for the Utility Helicopter, U.S. Army Aviation and Troop Command (ATCOM), St. Louis Missouri, a strong supporter of Army Medical Department Aviation, included this UH60Q review in a recent article in Army Aviation Magazine:

"One of the lessons learned from the Desert Shield/Desert Storm Operations is that the mission requirement for medical evacuation is changing. With the combat tactics utilized today, there are no battle lines which means the distances that must be traveled to return the injured back for medical care are greatly extended. In most cases it's the care received during the initial hour after being wounded that is critical."

## THE BLOOMQUIST PLAQUE

Some of you may know that a bronze plaque designating a small Army kaseme in Ziegenberg, Germany has been returned to the Army Medical Department Museum where it will be appropriately featured in the DUSTOFF section to be created with the latest additions to the building. The plaque reads:

**U.S. ARMY CAMP PAUL BLOOMQUIST**

*Named in Honor of*

**Lieutenant Colonel Paul A. Bloomquist  
Medical Service Corps, U.S. Army**

Aeromedical evacuation officer who gave his life for his country as a result of a terrorist bomb explosion at V Corps Headquarters, Frankfurt, West Germany, on 11 May 1972. LTC Bloomquist was selected U.S. Army Aviator of the Year, 1964-65 for the humanitarian activities as a "DUSTOFF" pilot in the Republic of Vietnam where he heroically evacuated over 300 casualties while dangerously exposed to adverse conditions under enemy fire.

Born in Orem, Utah

Dedicated 16 June 1980

Ziegenberg, West Germany

During the relatively brief period when Camp Bloomquist was occupied by U.S. Forces, it was home to the 68th Medical Group. The 68th departed in mid-1987 for Wiesbaden Air Base and the plaque and other memorabilia of Paul Bloomquist's life and career were recovered and sent to the museum.

The existing MEDEVAC system on the UH60s was not designed for this type of care and will not provide the MEDEVAC support that is needed in future combat and emergency medical situations.

The UH60Q represents significant improvements in patient care, air vehicle survivability, and mission capability over the existing system. Its tactical missions include medical evacuation of the wounded, movement of medical treatment teams, transport of medical equipment and supplies, and the rescue of downed aircrews.

Better patient care will be afforded by the addition of an alternative litter arrangement, a private cabin intercom system, treatment provisions in the cabin, an oxygen generating system, and an environmental control unit. The litter arrangement places up to three litters against both sides of the cabin with the medic sitting between them and three litters on the aft cabin wall. One litter pan on each side can serve as a seat for three ambulatory patients. When this configuration is used, the cabin can accommodate the crew chief, the medic, and up to nine patients, three more than the current system.

Treatment provisions in the cabin include a system that monitors the patient's heart rate, blood pressure, and EKG. It also includes ventilators, oxygen and suction ports, blood box and intravenous treatment provisions, and infusion pumps. Oxygen is obtained from an onboard oxygen generating system that eliminates the logistical problems associated with oxygen bottles. Air conditioning and heating is provided by an environmental control unit located within the cabin area.

The existing internal rescue hoist will be replaced by an external rescue hoist to alleviate the clutter in the cabin and provide for better personnel movement and access to the patients. A forest penetrator is included with the hoist as is a remote control that provides the hoist operator full control from his position. A dual mode infrared/white searchlight is added to assist in night-time hoist operations.

Avionics additions include the Enhanced Position Location Reporting System (EPLRS), the Global Positioning System (GPS), and the Tactical Air Navigation System (TACAN). EPLRS will

enable air ambulances to maintain battlefield situation awareness and data burst of patient status to hospitals. GPS is a proven navigation system that was installed on most of the UH60s operating in Desert Storm. TACAN provides distance measuring to improve peacetime patient evacuation flights and instrument approaches and is a must for off-shore operations with U.S. Navy ships.

Additional systems that are being considered include a Forward-Looking Infrared (FLIR) System, weather radar, and improved night vision heads-up display, and a digital map. In peacetime operations, the UH60Q will be able to communicate on civil hospital radios as they supplement the Emergency Medical Services during times of local or national emergencies.

This program is currently in the proof of principle phase with one UH60A modified to include all of the components identified above. This effort is underway at the Lexington Bluegrass Army Depot. Most of 1993 will be devoted to evaluation of the various subsystems and components and their placement within the cabin area. A final configuration will be approved early in 1994 and a formal integration effort and kit development will follow."

An article in a recent Army Times also noted:

"The first UH-60Q DUSTOFF Black Hawk helicopter entered the fleet of the Tennessee National Guard in March, significantly boosting the unit's medical evacuation capability.

The upgraded Black Hawk helicopter is the first of its kind. It represents a great leap forward for the Army in its efforts to improve medical evacuation capability in combat on the battlefield and in state relief missions, said Major General Jerry Wyatt, Tennessee Adjutant General.

The UH-60Q can carry up to nine patients, has an on-board oxygen-generating system, and wall-mounted litters with electrical lifts that raise, lower, and tilt litters during flight.

Four UH-60Qs are slated for the Tennessee Army National Guard's Medical Evacuation Combat Enhanced Capability aviation Team, or CECAT, Medical Aviation Detachment, in Chattanooga. The unit's mission is to provide rapid response to medical emergencies, including mass-casualty disasters."

## SOUNDS PRETTY DISTINGUISHED TO ME

The Association Historian, Joe Kralich, having recently departed the Texas shores for Las Vegas, Nevada, has unearthed the following names of DUSTOFF heroes who were awarded the nation's second highest award for valor in combat, the Distinguished Service Cross, for actions during the Vietnam War:

Name	Grade	Unit	Date of Action
<b>Commissioned Officers - Medical Service Corps</b>			
Patrick H. Grady	Major	54th Med Det	2-3 Oct 1976
Douglas E. Moore	Major	159th Med Det	1969
Charles L. Kelly	Major	57th Med Det	1 July 1964 (P)
Kenneth Ledford, Jr.	1LT	82d Med Det	15 Sep 1970*
<b>Warrant Officers - Aviation</b>			
Robert L. Horst	CWO	159th Med Det	7 April 1972 (P)
Stephen R. Purchase	WO1	159th Med Det	7 April 1972
Warren G. Jackson	WO1	1st Cavalry Div	28 June 1971
<b>Enlisted Crew Members</b>			
Guy L. Mears	SP4	254th Med Det	17 Oct 1970 (P)
Dennis M. Fujii	SP5	237th Med Det	18 Feb 1971
William W. Hook	SP5	82d Med Det	26 March 1967

(P) = Posthumous award

\* = Navy Cross

## TONY BURDO REMEMBERED

We don't always get the word in a timely fashion about the passing of DUSTOFFERS, especially with the many enlisted crew members who really make the whole show what it is. It's worthwhile, however, to commemorate our heroes, no matter how late we learn of their passing.

Anthony T. "Tony" Burdo, Jr. served as a Flight Medic with the 101st Airborne Division's "Eagle DUSTOFF" from January 1968 to May 1969. Among other honors, Tony was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, a rarity for enlisted crew members, for his rescue of a downed pilot under enemy fire. He was medically retired for wounds received in combat.

Tony lived in Lansing, Michigan, working for the U.S. Postal Service following his retirement from the military. He died on 14 June 1989 and is survived by his wife, Amalia ("Molly"), a son, Brent Anthony and his wife Shelli; his father, Anthony; his mother, Jeanne Kasacavage; and his in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Patricio Gonzalez.

## THERE I WAS...

Responding to our request for war stories and personal anecdotes in the July 1992 edition of the DUSTOFFER, famed rotary wing aviator Jay McGowan, AKA DUSTOFF 78 during his 1964-65 tour with the 57th Medical Detachment "Originals," provided an uncommonly well-written account of a memorable adventure:

"There I was, 'fat, dumb, and happy,' cruising at 3000 feet in beautiful sunlight over the Mekong Delta southwest of Saigon. The UH1B was just out of routine maintenance and had checked out fine on the ground. We had a new 1st Lieutenant, three days in country, and clerks who needed an 'exposure' for combat pay, so we decided on a multi-purpose flight.

Everyone piled in--new boy in the left seat and wide-eyed clerks in the back. We were enjoying the scenery, pointing out locations of past war stories, watched DUSTOFF 73 escort a

combat lift flight out into the Delta and I had just relaxed and 'lit up' while new boy flew and little when everything was suddenly very quiet.

Seeing all of the gauges unwinding toward zero, I resumed command of the flight and set up an autorotation. At this point I realized I was in deep "doo-doo." My experience with autos in the UH1 consisted of a couple of demos in the Brooke Army Medical Center UH1A and one that I tried and almost rolled it up in the mud. On relating this lack of skill to our Operations Officer, Captain Paul Bloomquist, he advised me to practice mentally and convince myself it would work.

I had done that, but now I had a better idea: New boy was just out of flightschool and very proficient in UH1 autorotations--Why not let him do it? When asked about that, he said "Hell, no. You're the aircraft commander and, besides, I've never done one from the

left seat!"

Okay!...Hang on and down we went! The landing was exciting! We found rotors stop quickly after impacting tail booms and broken chin bubbles scoop up lots of dirt. DUSTOFF 73, the same Captain Bloomquist, responded to the call for help from "Paris Control," Saigon Radar, and we were all shortly back in the operations office and even quicker into the club for the mandatory six hour 'unwind.'

Midway through all of this, new boy says, 'That was fun, we should try it again sometime.' I could only reply, 'Jim Truscott, you are one sick puppy!'





*Army Air Corps R-4B helicopter flying over the Philippines near Manila. The unit evacuated U.S. Infantry casualties on Luzon in June 1945.*

## MEDICAL ASPECTS OF OPERATION DESERT STORM

Major Randy Danielsen, USAF, published an article, titled as above, that again proved how misleading the written word can be when one's perspective is narrow and the focus is not explained. An excerpt of the article dealing with aeromedical evacuation read:

"Aeromedical evacuation associated with Desert Storm was ready and anticipated heavy casualties. In one of the happiest outcomes of the Gulf War, the total of Allied wounded was significantly lower than commanders feared. The aeromedical evacuation system is designed to provide military personnel with the best medical care while maximizing use of medical military facilities. By being able to rapidly and safely move patients in need of specialized care to centralized hospitals, often to hospitals in Europe, the military did not have to maintain as many extensive facilities with medical specialists."

*EDITOR'S COMMENT: Although the Army deployed almost twice as many air ambulances to Southwest Asia as were present in Vietnam at the height of that conflict, the tremendous distances involved in lines of evacuation were of serious concern to commanders. Without a significant modernization of the Army's air ambulance fleet and full implementation of the UH60Q and High Capacity Air Ambulance (HCAA) programs, the ability to support the Army in armed conflict(s) in the future will continue to be a very tenuous operation.*

# THE 15th MED BATTALION LIVES ON...AND ON...

Although the Army, in its infinite wisdom, has now organized all but one of its divisional medical battalions out of existence, the 15th Medical Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, certainly has an existence of its own, if only in the lives of its alumni. John Konek, long-time resident of Navasota, Texas and chief correspondent for the 15th reports in his latest article in the *Saber*:

"Jerry Rhodes was a MEDEVAC pilot with the 15th Med from November 4, 1969 through January 5, 1970. Jerry was seriously wounded when his aircraft was downed near Tay Ninh by a B-40 while trying to MEDEVAC wounded from D Company, 1/5 Cavalry. Jerry received multiple frag wounds and, when his aircraft slammed into the ground, it fractured his spine. He was MEDEVACed back to CONUS. We will be doing a story on 'MEDEVAC 9,' Jerry's call sign, but--an interesting note--the last three numbers of Jerry's aircraft number add up to '13.' I'm not one to be superstitious, but then again..."

Reginald Davis, Naches, Washington, had arrived in Vietnam five weeks ahead of the rest of the division as he and one thousand other members of the advance party began to cut out the division area. During this time, the 15th Med was asking for volunteers as door-guns on their MEDEVAC helicop-

ters, so Reginald and his good friend Mel Allen volunteered. Reginald said he and Mel had to qualify with the M60, but what they did not tell them was that the life expectancy of a MEDEVAC door-gunner in combat was about seven seconds. They qualified with the M60 and now "...had a new job, a very exciting one..." It was guys like Reginald and Mel who made it possible for us to get our aircraft to the wounded during what at times seemed 'impossible odds.' Reginald and Mel talk with each other once a month on the phone and see each other every year. They have done so for the past 27 years."

John writes at some length about many others who have been proud members of the 1st Cavalry Division and the 15th Med, including: Jim Hall, Medical Aidman; Dennis Barberie, evacuated by the 15th Med in 1967; and John Allen, Medical Aidman. In addition, John sent information on the Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's Association reported intent to feature DUSTOFF in their next directory. They had requested any information and photos of DUSTOFF units and individuals be forwarded to:

Vietnam Helicopter Pilot's Association  
7 West Seventh Street, Suite 1990  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

## AWARD OF ARMY AVIATION AIR/SEA RESCUE AWARD TO 377th ONCE AGAIN

DUSTOFF Korea was recognized this past year, now twice in the past three years, earning the Lucas Aerospace Air/Sea Rescue Award. The intrepid crew of WO1 J. Tucker Rojas, WO1 Christopher F. Latin, SGT Anthony Robinson, and SPC Dwane Means, 377th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), were recognized for rescuing a badly injured soldier on the afternoon of 21 August 1992. At approximately 1515 hours, the crew of DUSTOFF 18

received a request for an urgent medical evacuation for a soldier who had fallen during a rappelling exercise near the Imjin River. Arriving at the scene at 1526 hours, the crew positioned the helicopter near the river and observed two small patrol boats moving towards a cliff as the ground personnel with the patient set off red smoke.

WO1 Latin determined that the only way to successfully extract the

*Continued on page 6 ... AWARD*

# WHEREVER THERE ARE SOLDIERS IN "HARM'S WAY"

After deploying from Wiesbaden, Germany, to Somalia in December 1992, the 159th Medical company (Air Ambulance) commanded by Major Pauline Bookbinder Knapp, remained in the East African country as some two-thirds of the aviation task force returned to Germany. A true indication of the critical role of aeromedical evacuation units in such a deployment is that the original aviation task force was composed of one-third UH-60 air ambulances and essentially that's all that's left in country with the redeployment of other V Corps assets. Major Knapp, a Desert Storm veteran, assumed command of the task force which continues to support aviation elements of the 10th Mountain Division (Light) and to provide aeromedical support to all U.S. forces. The following article, entitled "On Wings of Angels," was penned by

Captain Thomas McCann, Public Affairs Officer for the 10th Aviation Brigade:

"BELET UEN, SOMALIA - At this remote town on the edge of the Ogaden Desert less than 20 miles from Ethiopia, two U.S. Army UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters raise blinding clouds of dust as they touch down. Nearby on a temporary pad, two more Blackhawks stand ready. All are painted in the uniform dark green of U.S. Army helicopters, but with a difference--the right red crosses emblazoned on fuselages and fuel tanks.

Amid the rich diversity of units that make up the 10th Aviation Brigade's Task Force Falcon in Operation Restore Hope, the 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) stands out. Its helicopters don't carry deadly cannon or missiles, nor do they transport squads of grim-faced infantrymen. When they carry is the chance for ill and injured soldiers to survive amid the perils of serving in Somalia.

The company, commanded by Major Pauline Knapp, deployed to Somalia from its home station of Wiesbaden, Germany, where it normally serves as part of the 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion in the 7th Medical Command. Here it serves under the 62d Medical Group, Fort Lewis, Washington, while working closely with the other elements of 10th Aviation Brigade.

Its mission is to provide medical evacuation support to U.S. and coalition forces deployed on Operation Restore Hope. Its primary function is the swift emergency transport of casualties. It can also, if called upon, transport vitally needed medical supplies throughout the theater.

Captain Dale Goldsberry, unit Operations Officer, explained that the company is normally divided into an area support section and three forward support sections. Its main force currently flies out of the old Soviet-built airfield at Baledogle, about 65 miles west of the Somali capital, Mogadishu, supporting operations by U.S. forces around Baledogle, Mogadishu, and Marka, and Australian forces in Baidoa.

Its forward detachments operate

out of Belet Uen with Canadian forces; from Bardera with U.S. Marine units; and is Kismay with Belgian forces and other 10th Mountain Division elements. Each of these detachments operates with two helicopters and rotates crews about every two weeks.

Goldsberry said the company, since arriving in Somalia on 30 December 1992, has flown over 290 missions out of Baledogle alone. Its UH-60s, each of which can carry six litter patients, normally fly with a crew of four: Pilot-in command, pilot, crew chief, and flight medic. It maintains two 'hot crews' on call at all times. During the day they can launch within 15-20 minutes. At night, they can launch within 30-40 minutes. A standby crew is also ready if needed.

Although the company's primary mission is to support military operations, it could also support ongoing humanitarian relief operations if assigned to do so. Its current policy is to transport any Somali injured as a direct result of U.S. or coalition action.

"We could, for example," Goldsberry said, "be tasked to go to the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu to pick up a specialized medical team and transport them to a site." They have not done this type of task yet, he added, because their current mission has not yet expanded.

Captain James Hall, unit Flight Surgeon, provided a breakdown of missions flown out of Baledogle to date. Since initiating operations, he said, they have averaged two to three missions each day. Most of these are ordinary injury or illness cases. One mission on 22 January, he said, involved a soldier struck in the face by venom from a spitting cobra.

Three others involved Somali nationals. On 11 January, they transported a Somali child with a suspected shrapnel wound to the abdomen. On 15 January, they transported three Somalis wounded in a bandit ambush west of the village of Yaaq Bari Uen: One with a broken leg, another with a gunshot

## AWARD

(Continued from page 5)

seriously injured soldier was the use of the high performance rescue hoist on board the DUSTOFF aircraft. While the pilots held the aircraft at the steady out of ground effect hover above the patient, SPC Means lowered SGT Robinson to the site on the hoist's jungle penetrator. After spending 15 minutes on the ground providing emergency care, the medic radioed that he was ready for the patient to be extracted. The crew chief then verbally guided the aircraft over the patient, bringing the main rotor blades to within one rotor disc of the cliff.

After the patient was aboard, SPC Means again lowered the penetrator to retrieve the flight medic. Once aboard, SGT Robinson resumed medical care.

During the 15 minute flight to the 121st Evacuation Hospital, WO1 Latin passed vital patient information to the emergency room. As WO1 Rojas landed at Yongsan, an emergency crew was standing by to continue the outstanding medical treatment.

Continued on page 7...  
IN "HARM'S WAY"

## IN "HARM'S WAY"

(Continued from page 6)

wound in the abdomen, and a third with his right foot amputated.

On 18 January they transported six injured Somalis whose truck had overturned the Baledogle fate after flowing a tire. Another Somali died in this accident.

Hall explained that the company transports on a priority system. Routine cases normally go by ground ambulance. It usually handles priority cases, in which a patient must get to hospital care with four hours to prevent deterioration of his condition; and urgent cases, where a patient must get to critical medical or surgical care within two hours.

On 27 January, a flight to Belet Uen to change out a forward detachment provided the opportunity to observe conditions at one of the company's outposts. At Belet Uen, two 159th UH-60s support a battle group built around the Canadian Airborne Regiment. The desert environment here, surrounded by hills with only a scattering of green, is in sharp contrast with the dusty red plains of Baledogle or the grasslands around Kismayu.

WO1 Michael Hackworth, one of the pilots flying to Belet Uen, had also operated out of Kismayu. He recalled seeing hippopotamuses in the Jubba River and giraffes and baboons in the savanna, or grassland, around the city, just below the equator about 220 miles south of Baledogle.

"It's Africa like you expect to see it," he said. He added that he expected to fly out of Belet Uen for at least two weeks.

"If the Canadians get their MEDEVAC birds in we'll remain three weeks and close out operations," he said. The Canadians expect to receive their own medical evacuation helicopters around 15 February.

Captain Keith Johnson, the OIC of the detachment returning to Baledogle, said that his team had a quiet time. They only had to fly out of the Belet Uen area once, to deliver a blood sample. The Canadian battle group has a complete, well-staffed hospital on site, greatly easing the detachment's mission load.

The team spent much of its time, he said, getting used to working with the

Canadians, who have many different operating customs and practices. He added that they did use the standard five-paragraph operations order for briefings, and provided the opportunity to dine, Canadian style. The soldiers ate Canadian field rations, their contents marked in both English and French, and enjoyed the fruits of the regiments field bakery, post exchange and officer's field mess.

The team also had to guard against thievery. Their cantonment area, unlike those at Baledogle that are removed from populated areas, stood amid refugee camps of thatched wood and mud huts along the main road east of Belet Uen. Somalis roamed the road, Johnson said, and often tried to break through the barbed wire to steal items such as sunglasses and portable radios.

Today, as he led the new team into the hospital compound where they had their tents, they observed four Somali men under guard at the main gate, bound and blindfolded. Canadian paratroopers had caught the Somalis attempting to steal gasoline from the compound.

The 159th has a rich history and level of experience for this mission. In 1961, then known as the 15th Medical Detachment, it deployed into Somalia on a humanitarian support mission. (Editor's Note: In fact, the 159th more or less replaced the 15th in Europe, but the units do not share a single lineage.) It also served in Vietnam, where the current 10th Aviation Brigade Command Sergeant Major, CSM Hal Coulter, served at its NCOIC early in his career.

Most of its 127 soldiers currently deployed are veterans of Operation Desert Storm with other aviation or medical units. The company itself self-deployed from Germany to Turkey in April 1991 for Operation Provide Comfort, where it supported operations to alleviate conditions among the Kurdish population of northern Iraq until October 1991.

The 159th Medical Company's selfless and humane service has brought continued life and health to both soldiers and civilians during Operation Restore Hope. It has truly lived up to its motto -- "The Wings of Life."

## HUGHES REMEMBERS THE EARLY DAYS OF THE DUSTOFF LEGEND

Private Sharron Stewart, writing for the Fort Sam Houston News Leader, penned this story in March after interviewing famous Original DUSTOFFER Billy Hughes, in San Antonio for the 14th Annual Reunion:

"Many believe that the 1960 was a turbulent decade for America. It was the decade of civil rights, of political assassinations and of change, violent and peaceful. The 1960s also brought about America's intensified involvement in Vietnam. War, not in the least bit romantic or glorious to the mature soul, can unfortunately display some of mankind's better qualities: Nobility, courage, and self-sacrifice.

This is the picture retired teacher Bill Hughes, himself the first wounded air evacuation medic in the Vietnam War, paints of Major Charles L. Kelly and Specialist 5 Wayne 'Tiny' Simmons at a DUSTOFF Reunion.

DUSTOFF, which has come to stand for "Dedicated Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces," recently had its 14th annual reunion. It is comprised of active duty and retired enlisted soldiers and officers who are or have been part of a medical evacuation crew.

Kelly was the first officer to die while piloting an aeromedical mission and Simmons was the first enlisted soldier killed. They were both part of the 57th Medical Detachment.

Hughes remembers Simmons fondly. "We called him Tiny because he was about six-foot two and weighed over two hundred pounds," Hughes said.

Simmons' plane was on a landing zone that the Viet Cong were shooting at when he saw a captain fall to the ground. Without telling anyone he unplugged his speaking device that the crew wore to the noise the helicopters made and frantically dashed to the fallen soldier, Hughes said.

The rest of the crew didn't notice Simmons' disappearance until they were in the air because he was accounted for before the takeoff, Hughes said.

*Continued on page 8...*  
**HUGHES REMEMBERS**



"ORIGINALS" indeed. 1964 photo of Jerry Shaw, Walt Harris and Jeff Grider at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon, Vietnam.

## HUGHES REMEMBERS

(Continued from page 7)

Hughes said they immediately tried to go back down, but that the Viet Cong had taken over the landing area.

Simons' body was found the next day beside the body of the captain he tried to rescue, Hughes said.

Simmons was presented with 13 posthumous medals, Hughes said. He received the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with 'V' for Valor, the Purple Heart with one Oak Leaf Cluster because he had been wounded in the hand earlier and the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters. (Editors Note: Several foreign awards were also presented on that occasion.)

An article in the newspaper said it was the highest number of medals to be awarded to one soldier in a single day, according to the best of the Army's recollection.

Hughes said because of the danger of the job, the crew was recommended daily for awards, but that didn't really excite them...they were mainly interested in doing their jobs.

Simmons, who, according to a DUSTOFF Memorial Plaque, was from Springfield, Massachusetts, died on 1 April 1965.

Hughes, who attended his first DUSTOFF reunion two years ago, said he actually got to meet "Tiny's" mother at a DUSTOFF reunion.

# OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT : ALMOST LOST IN THE STORM

DUSTOFFERS from the 159th Medical Company of the 421st Evacuation Battalion performed superbly in extremely difficult, always demanding and often dangerous, circumstances during Operation Provide Comfort, the United States' humanitarian mission to assist the Kurds in Northern Iraq/Southeastern Turkey in the wake of the Gulf War. The following article was printed in Incirlik Air Base's Tip of the Sword about one of those missions flown during the March-October 1991 deployment:

"Battling thunderstorm conditions, four crewmen from a medical evacuation helicopter assigned to Operation Provide Comfort pulled off a daring river rescue of two Turkish civilians Saturday.

The unidentified civilians were plucked from a narrow sand island in the middle of a steadily rising river of rushing water, according to U.S. Army Major Terry Carroll, task force surgeon for the Combined Task Force.

The rescue occurred late Saturday morning after an initial alert from the Turkish police. Carroll launched an alert medical evacuation helicopter, but the crew was forced to turn back due to lightning and heavy winds from nearby thunderstorms.

A second helicopter was launched at mid-morning carrying Carroll, two Turkish linguists, Air Force Captain Ali Frohlich, an F16 pilot from Ramstein AB, Germany, and Michael Austrian, a U.S. State Department liaison officer assigned to the CTF.

"The weather was just barely good enough to launch," said U.S. Army Sergeant Ronald Lodgson, the medic assigned to the Army's 159th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) from Darmstadt, Germany.

Within 10 minutes, the helicopter

had reached the designated coordinates, about 35 kilometers northwest of Incirlik. But Lodgson said they found nothing there.

They continued searching for over an hour through heavy rain, flying just below black clouds over the different river branches. The crew spotted a number of civilians standing on a bridge and set the helicopter down nearby to ask if they knew where the stranded Turks were located.

"At that point," Carroll said, "having a translator proved to be invaluable."

Frohlich and Austrian quickly got directions to the scene from one man who, ironically, notified the Turkish police earlier that morning.

The helicopter was quickly airborne and, within five minutes, set down on the river bank opposite the two trapped civilians.

The two had apparently been trying to drive a truck out of the way of the rising river, when they found themselves trapped on a rapidly-shrinking sandbar over 100 meters from the shore.

Carroll described their situation as "...very tense. The sky was dark, there was thunder and lightning everywhere and you could see a number of vehicles that were just being carried down the river by the swift current."

Frohlich said he yelled at the pair to get off the truck and to run to the helicopter when he signalled. As the crew made their way to the Turks, they quickly evaluated their options.

"With the river rising as fast as it was, there wasn't enough of the sand bank to set down on," said Crew Chief Sergeant Donald Porter.

Lodgson added, "We couldn't do a water landing because the wind and the current would have carried us away."

*Continued on page 9...*  
**OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT**

## OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT

(Continued from page 8)

Chief Warrant Officer Robert Young, pilot, and Captain Amilcar Calero, co-pilot, both assigned to the 159th, maneuvered the helicopter to a hovering position near the sand bar about four feet off the ground, 'throwing water and mud all over the place,' Frohlich said.

The signal was given and the pair leaped for the chopper as, 'Sergeant Lodgson and I dropped some cargo straps and pulled them on board,' Porter said.

Lodgson said the two civilians looked mighty scared as they were buckled in for what was probably their first-ever helicopter ride, but added, 'They knew the helicopter means safety.'

The chopper sat down again on the bank and Lodgson said he gave the Turks a quick medical examination.

'Other than being scared to death, they were OK,' he said.

Frohlich considered it an 'awesome' experience.

'Those guys are now happy campers,' he said. 'They were crying, calling us 'abi' (Turkish for brother) and hugging us. To find the needle in the haystack,' he said, 'the one guy who knew exactly where they were, was just amazing.'

From the beginning, the main objective of Operation Provide Comfort has been to save lives. The Combined Task Force's ability to once again accomplish that mission was dramatically demonstrated Saturday in the middle of a flooded river in south-central Turkey.

### FINANCES

Available Funds	\$ 2,750.00
Scholarship	500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,250.00</b>

## DESERT DUSTOFF SETS THE STANDARD

The MEDCOM Examiner, published in November 1990, featured the following article under the title, "Desert DUSTOFF logs over 1,000 hours":

"The sign hanging over the entrance to the operations tent of the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) read: 'Desert DUSTOFF...Any, Anywhere, Anytime.'

While many of the soldiers in Saudi Arabia are, for the most part, simply waiting, the soldiers of the 45th Med Co are kept busy around the clock.

Since arriving in the Middle East from Germany the latter part of August, the DUSTOFF (Dedicated, Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces) unit, with its Blackhawk helicopters, has flown more than 1,000 hours in transporting more than 300 patients.

'We have a real world mission every day,' said 1st SGT Geoff Mankoff. 'We have had as many missions in two months as many MEDEVAC units in the states do in four or five months. We've been the standard bearer for MEDEVAC units in the theater.'

The 45th, headquartered near Stuttgart, is augmented with soldiers from other units stationed in Germany, including the 159th Med Co in Darmstadt and the 236th Med Co in Landstuhl. They are all units of the 421st Medical Battalion (Evacuation).

'I anticipated a lot of problems in incorporating the other units but everyone has pulled together,' Mankoff said.

During Operation Desert Shield, the bulk of the company lives on an air base, while others live in outlying areas.

These soldiers live in white, bedouin-style tents donated by the Saudis. The heat has dropped some since August, but the blowing sand finds its way into everything and is a constant source of irritation, but morale appears to be high in the unit.

'I think the nature of the mission and the 24-hour a day response contingency keeps them sharp and gives them a purpose for being here,' said Major Richard Ellenberger, the company commander. 'They know they are helping their fellow soldiers.' Ellenberger added

that, while the 45th has been far and away the workhorse MEDEVAC unit in the theater, be expecting other DUSTOFF units to begin to come on line soon and share the work load.

'Our job is pretty much the same here as it was in Germany,' said SPC Shane Corica, a crew chief. 'The only difference here is the possibility of bullets flying. If it happens, it happens. You still have to do your job.'

In late August, the 45th flew their helicopters to Saudi Arabia, 3,500 miles from Germany, which is thought to be the longest unit self-deployment of UH-60 Blackhawks in U.S. Army history. Meanwhile, another contingent of soldiers from the unit flew to Saudi Arabia on a C141 to begin to set up. The unit flew its first mission within two days of arriving.

The 45th brought along four mountain bikes from Germany and the soldiers have become a familiar sign at the air base, riding out to the helicopters and along the flight line.

The company has flown a variety of missions, from night rescues in the desert to transporting comedian Steve Martin, who was overcome by heat exhaustion during his trip to visit the troops.

'Whether it's Steve Martin or a PVT 1, I feel just as responsible and take just as much pride in accomplishing the mission and getting them back safely,' said WO1 Jack Newman, one of the pilots who flew Martin.

Sometimes the DUSTOFF unit takes patients out to one of the two Navy hospital ships in the Gulf, other times to one of the many field hospitals.

'As far as patient injuries, we've had a little bit of everything,' said SGT William Jordan, a medic. 'Everything from a gunshot wound to people falling off vehicles.'

No matter what the mission, the men and women of the 45th Med Co, temporarily nicknamed 'Desert DUSTOFF,' are accomplishing it.

'I've never worked with a better bunch of people across the board,' Mankoff said. 'In spite of the odds and the uncertainty, they have this attitude of 'We can do it.'"

# MEDEVAC MEADOW – LOUIS R. ROCCO

The June 1975 issue of U.S. Army Aviation Digest, featured this letter from Captain Steve Modica, MSC, relating a day to remember in the Republic of Vietnam:

"I owe my life to Louis Rocco and to those others who participated in the rescue of my downed crew. Had it not been for the heroics of Sergeant First Class, now Warrant Officer, Louis Rocco, the rescue of MEDEVAC 2 and crew would not have been undertaken.

At 100 hours on 24 May 1970, MEDEVAC Delta received an urgent medical evacuation request from the Asleep Dumps 52 Charlie element of the 9th Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) Airborne Brigade operating northeast of Katum five miles inside Cambodia.

MEDEVAC 2 answered the request and headed for the pickup zone with two accompanying AH-1 Huey Cobra gunships, MEDEVAC 2 was taken under fire on approach and shot down trying to take off. The UH-1H crashed and burst into flames on impact. Because of the heroic actions of SGT Rocco (a volunteer medic aboard the aircraft), the crewmen survived and made it to the safety of the friendly ARVN perimeter. Although surrounded, they were not without help.

One of the Blue Max gunship pilots, LT George Alexander, relayed coordinates and critical information. His call and the previous Mayday resulted in some 15 to 20 aircraft converging on the scene. Three were MEDEVAC ships, hoping for a chance to rescue their comrades.

The first attempt to extract the wounded was by MEDEVAC 1, LT Henry Tuell, who was forced away from the pickup site by concentrated enemy fire. Although Lt Tuell had heavy AH-1 Cobra gunship protection, his ship received innumerable hits and he was wounded in the hand by an enemy bullet. The rescue attempt was aborted and the pilot nursed the battered ship and wounded aircraft commander to Quan Loi.

The second extraction attempt was executed two hours later by MEDEVAC 12, LT John Read. LT Read tried to get into the landing zone (LZ) using a low

level, high speed entry with rocket preps by the gunships but had to break off his attempt when the enemy bullets disabled his engine and punctured his fuel cells. The ship was unflyable but LT Read was able to safely land the aircraft in a nearby clearing. He was rescued immediately.

At about 1800 hours on 24 May, after six hours on the ground, we notified MEDEVAC 6 and Sureshot 6 (the medical battalion commander) that the friendlies, in our estimation and in the estimation of the ARVN advisors on the ground, might not be able to hold out through the night because of the lack of ammunition, food, and water. The unit had not been resupplied for two days. We advised Sureshot 6 that an armored tank company from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment was two miles to the north and requested coordination with the task force commander in using them in a rescue attempt. After communicating with the task force commander, Sureshot 6 advised us that the tanks could not be released. However, a battery of 155 mm howitzer and a battery of 8-inch guns were assigned to begin a barrage encircling the friendlies.

Following a full one-hour barrage, MEDEVAC 21, CWO Raymond Zepp, accompanied by four heavily armed Cobras, attempted the third rescue try. The mercy helicopter was welcomed by heavy small arms fire--the four Cobras returned rockets and mini-gun fire into the tree line, MEDEVAC 21 also had to abort his attempt at rescue due to combat damage to his radios and an electrical fire. He made a successful precautionary landing and was rescued immediately. Nightfall approached rapidly and stalled further rescue operations until dawn.

During the night, the friendlies were heavily attacked three times, necessitating the calling of artillery fires extremely close to the friendly perimeter. The artillery barrages and close, well-coordinated gunship cover protected the ill-supplied, surrounded friendlies throughout the night, accounting for three very large secondary explosions and 41 confirmed en-

emy dead.

Commencing at 0930 on 24 May, four successive airstrikes were called in to help weaken enemy resistance. The airstrikes ended at about 1100 hours. The 155 mm battery and the 8-inch battery then began to lay in a barrage of white phosphorous (WP) in order to lay a heavy smoke screen for the forthcoming attempt to rescue the crew of MEDEVAC 2 and his patients. Additional WP was pumped into the area by four Cobra gunships immediately prior to the rescue attempt.

At 1145 hours three UH-1 MEDEVAC helicopters sneaked into the LZ and prepared to evacuate Rocco and the other wounded soldiers. Upon lift-off, they were engaged by concentrated automatic small arms fire. Ships one and two--flown by MEDEVAC 6, CPT Mike Hagerty, and MEDEVAC 12, LT John Read--safely departed the hot LZ. However, ship number three, flown by MEDEVAC 25, CWO William Sallenger, was hit. It settled to the ground and began to burn. The six Cobra gunships on station began making low level mini-gun fire, the gunship's company commander, in a "B" model gunship, dropped into the LZ and rescued those who had been aboard MEDEVAC 25.

The next day, nine Silver Stars were impact awarded for the individual heroics displayed through the 24 hours rescue attempts of the crew of MEDEVAC 2. Also, on that day, the friendlies of XU-5606 were extracted and later that evening the grid square XU-5606, later to be named MEDEVAC Meadow, was obliterated by a B-52 airstrike.

NOTE: Louis Rocco was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions that day and earned the undying gratitude of all DUSTOFFers for his bravery and dedication. The article's postscript reads: 'CPT Modica received injuries in an attempt to rescue wounded ARVN soldiers which caused his retirement from the active Army. CPT Modica lives in River Ridge, LA and in the hearts and minds of thousands of readers who owe their lives, or their loved ones' lives, to America's fighting men who are willing to sacrifice...that others may live' "

# NEW ENTRIES ON THE FLIGHT MANIFEST

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David K. Herbert  
Garry Atkins  
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Mike Thoroughgood  
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