



# THE DUSTOFF<sup>ER</sup>



DUSTOFF Association Newsletter

Summer 1999

## DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza Dedicated



*Alice Neel, MG (R) Spurgeon Neel, MG Jim Peake, and COL (R) Dan Gower unveil the monument and plaque at the dedication ceremony of the DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza, Ft. Sam Houston, Texas.*

# President's Message

**G**REETINGS FROM THE President of your DUSTOFF Association. I'm honored to serve as your president this year and follow in the footsteps of such great and dedicated leaders. Being able to serve as a DUSTOFF crewmember early in my career had a profound and positive impact on my life and I'm proud to do what I can to serve an organization that supports perpetuating our legacy. My goal for this year is simple—do what we can to foster making our Association the kind of Association YOU want it to be. In that regard we would like to hear from you—our valued friends and members. Send us your ideas and suggestions. We promise to listen and consider. Our hard working Executive Board meets several times between reunions. We met recently and started discussing dates, location and program for the 2000 reunion. Looks as if there will be an Evacuation Conference in San Antonio next year. We are collaborating on dates and location with the MEDEVAC folks from Fort Rucker. I look forward to serving as your President, look forward to hearing from you and hope to see you at millennium reunion.

DUSTOFF!  
Merle Snyder

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# U.S. ARMY AIR AMBULANCE DETACHMENT WINS FORSCOM AWARD

*Submitted by MAJ Alain Pirrone*

This article by Cassie McNaughton appeared in the Tiefert Telegraph, serving the Fort Irwin community, on April 16, 1999.

The U.S. Army Air Ambulance Detachment recently received the Category E Forces Command Commander's Trophy for excellence in aircraft accident prevention for the third year in a row. The FORSCOM Commander's Trophy for excellence in aircraft accident prevention is a prestigious award that recognizes not only the professional qualities and competence of the aviators, but also the individual excellence of each soldier, according to a memorandum from Gen. Thomas A. Schwartz, FORSCOM commander. The trophy was presented to the unit by BG William G. Webster, Jr., Commanding General, National Training Center, April 6 on the Post Helipad. In the presentation Webster said, "Air Ambulance is the best MEDEVAC (medical evacuation) unit I've seen. We probably conduct more air MEDEVACs under more difficult environmental conditions than any unit in the Army."

Air Ambulance Detachment's Commander, Maj. Alain Pirrone, said he also felt this was not necessarily an easy award to win. "This is a really tough environment to get this award in, especially since every night mission is conducted wearing

night vision goggles," said Pirrone. In Fiscal Year 1997, Air Ambulance had a total of 1,444.6 flying hours and 1,639.2 in FY 1998 with six assigned aircraft. They had zero accidents and zero injuries during this time, according to Pirrone. He said this can be credited to the unit's aircraft accident prevention program that includes frequent safety briefings, situational  
(See FORSCOM Award, page 10.)



## 421st Medical Evacuation Battalion Wins Award

*by MAJ Jon Fristoe*

**T**HE 421ST MEDICAL Evacuation Battalion, Wiesbaden Army Airfield, Germany, has won the LTG Ellis D. Parker Aviation Unit in the Combat Service Support Category for the second year in succession. Furthermore, the 421st has won this award four out of the last six years (1993, 1995, 1997 and 1998).

The Parker Award is a Department of the Army-level award that recognizes excellence in leadership, training, maintenance, and safety during the preceding fiscal year. The competition is open to all active-duty and reserve-component aviation battalions. "The selection is unprecedented, as it is the 421st's second consecutive year to be selected for this prestigious aviation award," commented the 421st's commander, LTC Garry F. Atkins. "As commander, I'm very proud of these outstanding soldiers and their families. They have made many professional and personal sacrifices in the performance of their missions and asked for nothing in return. I'm extremely grateful that these great soldiers are receiving this recognition for their dedication and service."

The Parker Award reflects a battalion's accomplishments during the year and how its contributions contributed to the Army's overall mission. During 1998, the 421st provided continuous 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week ground and air evacuation coverage to all DOD soldiers and family members in Germany. It simultaneously participated in Combat Maneuver Training Center rotations and also deployed elements of every subordinate unit out of country. The battalion participated in twenty-three separate deployments to sixteen different countries. The 159th and 236th Air Ambulance Companies and 557th Ground Ambulance Company deployed to Hungary, Croatia and Bosnia to support Operations Joint Guard and Joint Forge.

The battalion participated in several Partnership for Peace operations, self-deploying Forward Support Medical Teams from the 45th, 236th and 159th Air Ambulance Companies to Norway, Lithuania, Poland, Tunisia and Egypt to provide aeromedical evacuation support. The 254th Combat Stress Detachment deployed to Kenya as part of the Crisis Response Team providing assistance after the American Embassy bombing, which killed over 250 persons. Other deployments were to the United Kingdom, Eire, France, Austria, Italy and Macedonia. Every mission was accomplished without incident or accident.

(See Parker Award, page 10.)

# The 20th Anniversary Reunion

by Herb Coley

**I**F STATISTICS ALONE are the measure, the 20th Anniversary Reunion was a rousing success! Even without the Army Medical Evacuation Conference to bolster attendance from our active-duty side, DUSTOFFers attended the reunion and its functions in near-record numbers. There were 264 members and guests registered for the reunion, with more than 200 at the Friday night buffet and 220 at the Saturday night banquet. The Chuck Mateer Golf Classic on Friday found sixty-three folks enjoying unseasonably warm February weather in San Antonio. On Saturday morning, twenty-two spouses trekked to the Grist Mill in beautiful downtown Gruene, Texas, for their annual luncheon. And on Sunday morning over 200 attended the memorial service and dedication of the DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza at Fort Sam Houston.



COL (R) Ben Knisely, MG (R) Spurgeon Neel, and Fred Grates reminisce at the Saturday night banquet.

Even though our numbers nearly "over-grossed" the hospitality suites and "over-torqued" the wait staff at the banquet, the Raddison did a great job supporting us. Having the reunion back on the River was certainly the right thing to do. The out-of-town DUSTOFFers enjoyed the ambiance of the Alamo City, while our resident members reacquainted themselves with the unique charm that is Puro San Antonio.

The highlight for many was the banquet and our tribute to Major General Spurgeon Neel. Ben Knisely and Fred Grates, two of his former aides, did a magnificent job sharing vignettes of their days with General Neel and honoring him for his many and significant contributions to the Army and specifically DUSTOFF. The video of General Neel's life allowed our members (many of whom had not even entered active duty before he retired) to get to know him better. We certainly thank Major General Jim Peake and his wife Janice for joining us, as well.

MG Peake's honoring Mrs. Neel as a Yellow Rose of Texas for her service made the banquet even more special. The tribute to the Neels would not have been possible without the help of Mrs. Barbara Hagen. Among other things, she spearheaded the video production, submitted Mrs. Neel's Yellow Rose of Texas nomination, and helped organize the dedication of the DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza.

In addition to honoring the Neels, we also recognized the great work of current DUSTOFF units and the soldiers serving in them. John Soehnlein of Sikorsky Aircraft presented the Rescue of the Year award to the 54th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) of Fort Lewis, Washington. Mike Riley of Breeze Eastern presented the Crewmember of the Year award



MG Jim Peake presents Mrs. Spurgeon Neel with a plaque signed by Texas Governor George Bush, naming her an official Yellow Rose of Texas.



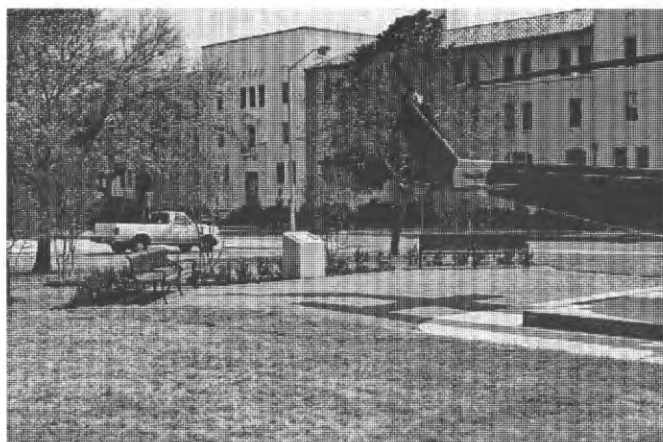
SSG Baldwin Fajardo, 50th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) of Fort Campbell, Kentucky, accepted the trophy for DUSTOFF Crewman of the year with a big "Mahalo" to all who helped him in his career.



to SSG Baldwin Fajardo, 50th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) of Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Our congratulations and appreciation go out again to the 54th and SSG Fajardo for their part in continuing the legend of DUSTOFF.

Before ending this report, there are a few more folks to recognize. Administratively, the reunion went off without a hitch because of all the behind-the-scenes hard work by Tim and Sue Moore. Thanks again! The golfers certainly appreciate what Greg Griffin and Jeff Mankoff did to put the Mateer Classic together. Thanks, guys! Dan Gower and Kent Nabarrete and his troops were lifesavers (or at least back savers) in setting up and tearing down the hospitality suites and schlepping all the booze. We appreciate the help! Our banquet tables were

once again decorated beautifully with handmade centerpieces, the crafts of Analou Eisner. Thanks to you, Analou! And last, but certainly not least, none of the tribute to the Neels or the dedication of the DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza would be possible without the dogged determination of Dan Gower. He conceived the idea, supervised its design and development, and managed the project to completion. (Lately, I've even seen him pulling weeds out of the beds of Asiatica Jasmine around the monuments.) Dan, our Association is grateful. You personify the dedicated service that is DUSTOFF.



*The reflection area of the DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza features a monument honoring those DUSTOFF crewmembers who gave their lives during the Vietnam War.*



*The DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza is dedicated to all DUSTOFF crewmembers, past, present, and future, in honor of MG (R) Spurgeon Neel.*

## Y2K Reunion

Make your plans now for DUSTOFF Reunion 2000 at the Holiday Inn on the Riverwalk. We have reserved a block of 75 rooms for \$91/night plus a 15% hotel tax. Reservations received after February 1, 2000, will be provided on a space-available basis only.

The AMEDD Evacuation Conference will take place the following week, so we should have some great representation from our worldwide DUSTOFF units.

**Mark these dates:  
February 18-20, 2000**

Make your reservations early!  
More information in the next newsletter.

# 159th DUSTOFF has First Reunion

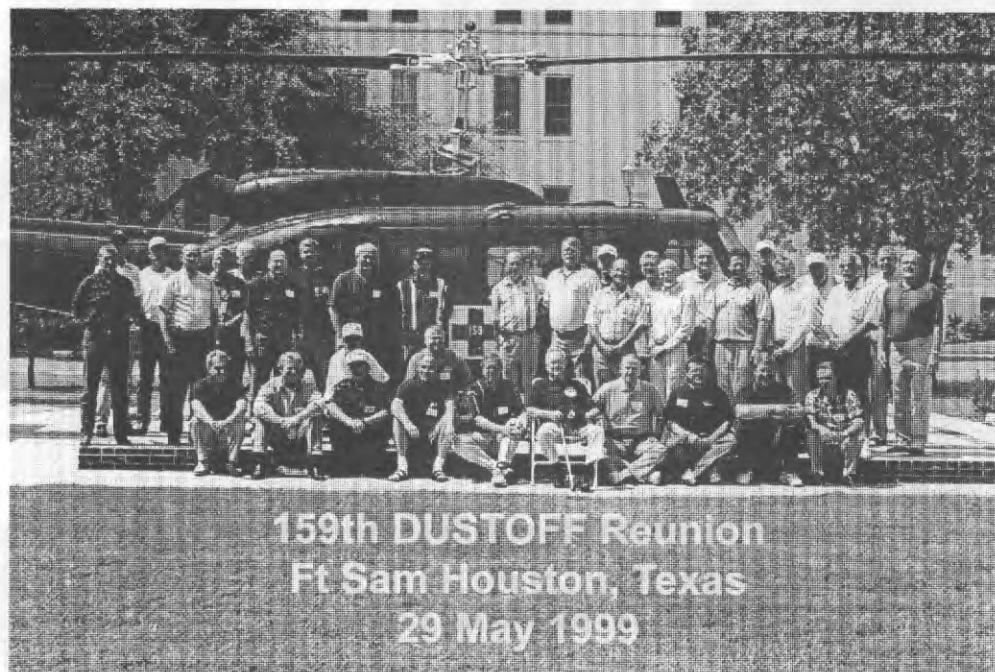
by Bruce Nelson

**A**FTER ALMOST THREE decades, the 159th Med Det (HA) came together once again for its first reunion, May 28–31, 1999, in San Antonio. Thirty-four members of the unit, including aviators, crew chiefs, medics and maintenance personnel, along with their families, spent three days reuniting and reminiscing with old friends at the Riverwalk Plaza Hotel.

Highlights of the event included the Saturday morning presentation at the AMEDD Museum of a framed Area of Operations map to MG (Ret.) Spurgeon Neel, Chairman Emeritus of the AMEDD Museum Foundation Board, and BG (Ret.) Lillian Dunlap, current Board Chairman. The presentation was made in memory of WO1 John Supple, 1LT Douglas MacNeil, and CW2 Robert Horst, who were killed in action during the unit's tenure in South Vietnam. The map hangs in the museum's DUSTOFF Gallery. From the museum, the group assembled at the DUSTOFF Memorial Park for a group photograph beside the helicopter.

On Saturday evening participants enjoyed a poolside hospitality hour followed by a buffet dinner in the hotel banquet room. MG and Mrs. Neel were special guests. Following the dinner, MG Neel spoke of the DUSTOFF tradition and the meaning of the medical evacuation mission during the Vietnam conflict. The evening concluded with presentation of the video "Combined Recollections," created by reunion organizer Randy Millican. The tape documented the entire period of the 159th's five-year service in Vietnam and was developed from slide and photographs submitted by unit members during the past year. Each attendee at the dinner received a copy of the videotape and a coffee mug commemorating the occasion.

The only negative note of the weekend was departure time for everyone on Sunday and Monday. It was tough to say goodbye again after only three days of reacquaintance. However, Randy Millican will continue to update the unit roster as new "finds" are made. Another 159th reunion is planned—when and where to be determined during the next year. Randy is to be thanked and congratulated for his dedication and hard work in making the first 159th reunion happen.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Members of the DUSTOFF Association:

On behalf of the US Army, I am pleased to accept your association's proffer to donate and place three monuments, two benches, three bronze plaques, trees and ornamental landscaping in the reflection area of the DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Your decision to provide these site improvements to the DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza, which is dedicated to Army helicopter pilots and crews who risked their lives in medical evacuation situations during times of war or hostilities, is commendable.

Please extend my sincere appreciation to all the members of your association for their generosity and patriotism in remembrance of these courageous soldiers.

Sincerely,  
Louis Caldera  
Secretary of the Army



# History 101

*by David Pendergrass*

Vietnam and Bosnia-Herzegovina. 1967–68 and 1998–99. UH-1's and UH-60's. Novice flyers and veteran pilots. A comparative lesson in contemporary history? Not for six pilots of the 126th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) of the California National Guard. This unit of eighty-one soldiers and ten UH-60 Blackhawks, headquartered in Sacramento, will be providing MEDEVAC support in the SFOR AOR as part of SFOR4 with the First Cavalry Division.

Thirty years after flying the hostile skies over Vietnam in observation helicopters and gunships, six pilots, all CW4's, Robert Nance, John Maloney, Ray Green, David Rosenthal, Clint Cain, and Mike Padilla, returned to an area of conflict of international concern, this time as MEDEVAC pilots.

Why would these veteran warriors choose to go in harm's way more than a quarter of a century after their last date with destiny? They don't have anything to prove. Among them they have over 28,000 hours of military flight time (plus several thousand hours accumulated flying civilian aircraft)—more total hours than some aviation battalions. During Vietnam, the six pilots accumulated 179 air medals, five Distinguished Flying Crosses, and three Purple Hearts in the course of flying over 6,000 combat hours. Not bad for a bunch of young, inexperienced flyers.

As Robert Nance, a fire fighter paramedic from Napa, pointed out, "I wanted to experience another adventure." All agreed with David Rosenthal's observation that each of them wanted to come. "Individually, we had the option not to go, but that is not the way we want to finish our careers," he declared.

Rosenthal, a nuclear physicist from Ridgecrest, carefully laid out his viewpoint on the importance of serving in Bosnia. "It is a moral issue, a character issue. Vietnam was a life-changing experience. To be part of something that makes a difference in the world is significant and of great value," he pointed out with emphasis.

Ray Green, technical services supervisor for Placer County, California, who lives in Auburn, joined the 126th in 1984. He wanted to join the National Guard unit because of his love of flying and because of the special services the 126th provides to the State of California. "After Vietnam I felt I had done my time in the Army and wanted out," he stated matter-of-factly. He added that the aviators had received threat briefings prior to deployment, indicating that there was a likelihood of AAA and missile fire in the skies over Bosnia. The old adage, "If it flies, it dies," did not deter them.

After being here for two weeks and receiving more accurate threat briefs, all agreed that although the potential was there, it would probably be more dangerous back in California. In the viewpoint of Mike Padilla, chief pilot for the Department of Forestry, State of California, and a resident of Elk Grove, "The threat is probably less here in Bosnia." The others agreed with Ray Green when he succinctly pointed out that fighting forest fires or rescuing hikers in the Sierra Nevadas offers more dangers than will likely be encountered in the southern European theater.

The entire unit is close—more so than the average active-duty unit. The majority of the six aviators have been together in this unit for close to twenty-five years. Doubtless, there are

only a handful of soldiers in all of MND(N) who have even been on active duty for that length of time. Nance, who served in the 162nd Helicopter Assault Company, First Aviation Brigade (1967–68), emphatically made the point that the entire unit is very close. "Professionally and personally there is a real bond between us. We socialize as a unit, and our families all know each other." John Maloney from Rancho Cordova and retired as a full-time active-duty member of the National Guard, echoed the same sentiment, saying that unlike an active duty unit, people don't move on after just a couple of years. "The aviators particularly have been together a long time," he added.

When asked to compare and contrast the differences between flying in Vietnam and Bosnia, they all offered their opinions. Robert Nance quietly noted that half of his class at flight school did not come back from Vietnam. When each of the warrant officers arrived in Vietnam, he had on average some 200 hours of flight time. And the pilots who initially mentored them usually only had less than a year's flying experience. "Here in Bosnia, we are the veterans and have a wealth of experience to offer to the younger pilots," said Nance. Ray Green and the others seconded that observation. Their pride and professionalism in passing on their collective years of experience and knowledge to teach and protect the younger pilots in the unit are palpable.

All agreed that the Blackhawks they are flying now are superior to the Hueys of the Vietnam era. Two engines instead of one, superior engine performance for all parameters, able to withstand small caliber fire better, greater crashworthiness, and much greater payload capability (2500 feet-per-minute vertical climb with twelve fully armed soldiers aboard) give a big edge to the Blackhawk. As Clint Cain remarked, "In Vietnam we did a lot of flying by the seat of our pants." Rosenthal noted that with the old Huey if you lost your engine, you only had about four seconds to take decisive action to avert disaster. The Blackhawk simply offers more choices to the pilot.

One other difference was noted. In Vietnam there were no females (other than Army nurses), and the U.S. was there pretty much by themselves. Here in Bosnia their comrades in arms include females, as well as European and NATO allies from more than twenty countries. One warrant officer pointed out that recently he had spent time talking to an Italian soldier in the afternoon and played ping pong with a Russian in the evening.

It has now come full circle—the beginning and the end. Six aviators, who flew in the hell of the skies over Vietnam, have continued their love of flying in the National Guard for a quarter of a century and now are back in a hostile environment. They are not seeking glory or honors, but a chance to contribute their skills and experience and be a part of something bigger than themselves. Any soldier, sailor, airman, or marine in the SFOR AOR who needs to be MEDEVACed while the 126th is here, can relax. It is a rock-solid cinch that they will be in good hands.

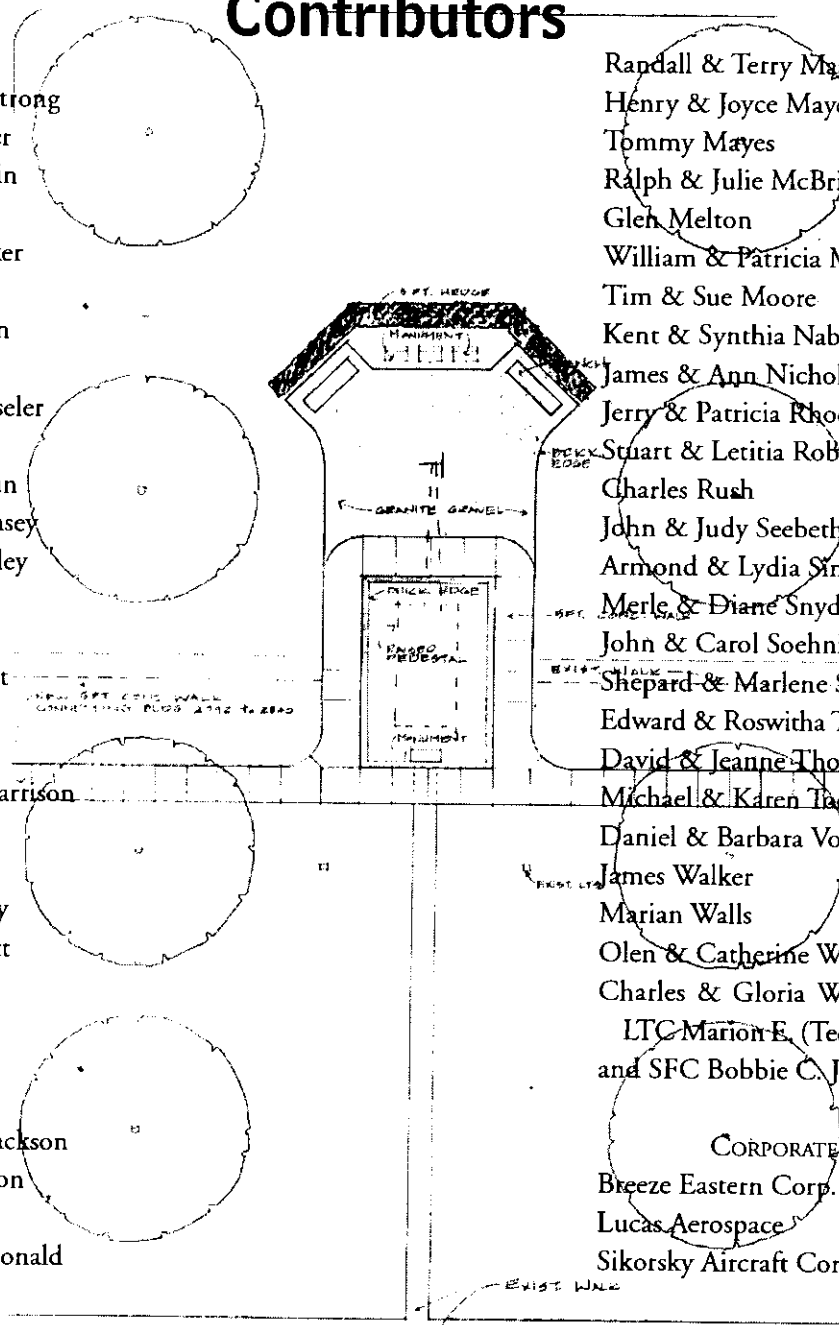
Warriors all, a confident, proud, and eminently capable link between Vietnam and Bosnia, these flyers represent the very best America has to offer. And that is saying quite a lot.

# Thanks to DUSTOFF Memorial Contributors

Tom Anglin  
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Floyd & Darlene Baker  
Brian & Sharia Baldwin  
Perry & Patricia Barth  
Quinn & Gladys Becker  
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Gail & Rebecca Bowen  
Edna Brassard  
John & Cathryn Buesseler  
Don & Norma Bush  
Gary & Judith Calhoun  
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Charles & Gloria Webb, in memory of  
LTC Marion E. (Ted) Avrett, USA, Ret.,  
and SFC Bobbie C. Jeffers

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## DUSTOFF on the World Wide Web

Interest in the DUSTOFF Association's Web site, [www.dustoff.org](http://www.dustoff.org), continues to grow and grow. The normal daily visit to our site is 26 folks, with an average of 720 visits a month. The single highest month was March 1999, with 1715 visits. Not surprising is the fact that 80% of the visitors are located in the United States. But did you know that 6% of the visits come from computers owned by the military? We also have people visit the Web site from all over the world. The top five countries, other than the U.S., are Germany, Australia, Norway, Canada, and Japan. Interested in more statistics about our Web site? Scroll down to the bottom of the home page and click on the blue world icon. If you have items you would like to be considered for inclusion on the DUSTOFF Association Web site, send them to [info@dustoff.org](mailto:info@dustoff.org).



# New Names Added to Memorial Board

Recently, one of our members presented an inquiry to our Executive Council concerning the addition of crewmembers' names to our Memorial Boards. On 15 March 1969 a medical evacuation helicopter, its crew and three wounded soldiers were lost near the Korean DMZ. According to the 17 March 1969 *Stars and Stripes* report of the double-incident accident involving the medical evacuation helicopter and the firing on a work detail by North Korean forces:

The other deaths came when a U.S. Army helicopter evacuating the three wounded men crashed at 9:45 P.M. near the zone, killing all passengers—the three wounded and the five other crewmen.

The spokesman said investigations to determine the cause are continuing. Radio Pyongyang early Sunday was already boasting that it had shot down the copter, but the spokesman said, "The helicopter crashed shortly after takeoff from the location south of the DMZ's southern boundary. The firing incident involved a North Korean guardpost on the north side of the military demarcation line. There is nothing, on the basis of evidence and information we have now, to substantiate in any way the North Korean claim. The cause of the accident . . . awaits a full investigation."

Shortly after the crash a memorial service was held jointly between the 121st Evacuation Hospital, commanded by COL A. C. Buchanan, and the 377th Medical Company, commanded by Maj Ed Haswell, to honor the four members of the crew who were lost.

Those members' names will be added to the boards honoring our DUSTOFF Crewmembers who gave the last ounce of their being in service to our fighting forces, while in the conduct of a medical evacuation mission.

MAJ J. C. Rothwell, MSC, was born 5 May 1932 in Hope, Arkansas, and was survived by his wife, Frances, who was at the time an Army Nurse with the 121st Evacuation Hospital.

CPT Benjamin S. Park, MC, was born 12 January 1935 in Painsville, Ohio. He was survived by his wife, Sue Ellen, of Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

SSG Carrol C. Zanchi was born 15 September 1942 in Louisville, Kentucky. He was survived by his wife, Patricia, and four children of Faredale, Kentucky.

SP4 Edwin Lee Stoller was born 13 October 1948 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was survived by his wife, Cynthia Kay Stoller, of Milford, Indiana.

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## NIGHT FLIERS PRACTICE FOR MEDICAL MISSION IN BOSNIA

*by Gene Smith*

*Reprinted from The Topeka Capital-Journal, January 17, 1999*

*Submitted by Don Bush*

**B**LACK LIGHT, Black Hawks, a humanitarian mission. Next month, in Bosnia. Which explains why big "black" helicopters are whop-whop-whopping at low level up and down the Wakarusa River Valley between Forbes Field and Lawrence, over to Fort Riley and sundry other points in northeast Kansas.

It simply means aircrews of Forbes' Detachment 1 of the 24th Medical Company, Kansas Army National Guard, are practicing for a deployment next month to Bosnia.

"The Guard's been good to me," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Darrell W. Linenberger. "I figure this is my chance to pay them back a little."

Like most of the 18 to 20 volunteers for Bosnian duty, he is a part-timer.

Linenberger, a Kansas Highway Patrol trooper and pilot of

the patrol's helicopter, recalled that Guard officials helped him get waivers for his age (36, the upper age limit to join) and for vision (he wears glasses).

In fact, 40 is the average age for the medevac detachment.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Robert Good, a full-time Guard technician and instructor pilot, is a Vietnam veteran, one of two in the unit. Another pilot served in Korea perhaps 20 years ago. Capt. Antonio Kaplan, detachment commander, is an air traffic controller at the Kansas City air route control center in Olathe.

For the past four months, they have been learning to fly their big, specially equipped \$6 million Sikorsky Black Hawks, with night vision goggles clipped to their flight helmets. To remain mission qualified, they must fly 90 minutes in the night

(See Night Fliers, page 11.)

**(FORSCOM Award, continued from page 3.)**

training exercises and implementation of prudent safety control measures. "Before anyone takes off in a helicopter, they must go through a risk assessment program," Pirrone said. "We use a system of numbers and in the end the number we come up with tells us if it is a low, medium, high or extremely high risk mission. This risk level decides who approves the mission." In FY 1998 Air Ambulance supported ten brigade-size rotations, with 203 aeromedical evacuation missions in which 247 patients were transported to health care, according to Pirrone. One-third of those missions were conducted in NVGs. They also supported a field training exercise with a MEDEVAC crew for two weeks, in which they evacuated thirty-six patients. Additionally, they participated in three National Aero-

nautics and Space Administration training missions as members of the Space Shuttle Recovery Team. "We have one safety officer in the unit, but as far as I am concerned all forty-three soldiers are safety officers," Pirrone said.

**(Parker Award, continued from page 3.)**

During the year, units in the 421st won many accolades from American and foreign dignitaries. In October two 421st soldiers received Soldiers Medals for heroism while conducting aeromedical operations in Bosnia. A battalion officer won the Medical Service Corps Award of Excellence—the second year in a row for that prestigious honor to go to a 421st member, Atkins noted. The 421st and the other Parker Award winners—1st Battalion, 501st Aviation Regiment, Hanau, Germany, in the combat category; 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, in the combat support category; and 1st Battalion, 212th Aviation Regiment, Fort Rucker, Alabama, in the table of distribution and allowances category—received the award at the Aviation Leaders Training Conference at Fort Rucker in February.

**New Entries on the Flight Manifest**

COL Henry Berman—San Antonio, TX  
SGT Donald Brasier—Noble, OK  
CW4 Barry Brown—Salem, OR  
LTC Gary Cagle—Montgomery Village, MD  
CPT Michael Collins—Manhattan, KS  
Michael Craven—Asheboro, NO  
SPC Gerry Douma, Jr.—Coopersburg, PA  
Pete Edgette—Hampton, VA  
SSG Baldwin Fajardo—Clarksville, TN  
LT Todd Farrell—Watertown, NY  
1SG Russell Foti—Baton Rouge, LA  
Joe Gattuso (Lucas Aerospace)—Wellington, NV  
CPT Wiley Hall—Tustin, CA  
CW2 Charles Hogan—LaFayette, LA  
Willie Jackson—Shoreline, WA  
COL James Lombard—San Antonio, TX  
Joseph Martin, Jr.—Enterprise, AL  
LT Michael McFadden—Fort Campbell, KY  
John Merkle—San Antonio, TX  
MAJ Robert Mirchell—Alexandria, VA  
Mark Morris—San Antonio, TX  
SGT Innis Moy—Seattle, WA  
CW5 Max Owens—Arlington, VA  
MAJ Thomas Parker—Austin, TX  
SFC Robert Pearce, Jr.—Ishpeming, MI  
1LT AnnaJeanette Presnell—Eureka, MT  
CW2 Robert Robbins—Buckner, MO  
CPT Tim Rowland—San Antonio, TX  
CW4 Charles Schenck—Westampron, NJ  
SGT Michael Schuster—Vista, CA  
CW2 Thomas St. Hilaire—Monticello, MN  
COL (Chap) Jesse Thornton—Springfield, MO  
LTC Lee Washburn—San Antonio, TX  
Andrew Whyte—Norwalk, CT  
CPT Jason Wild—Clarksville, TN  
George Winans—Pinellas Park, FL  
LTC James Wortham—Framingham, MA  
LT Patrick Zenk—APO AE  
LT Charles Zimmerman—APO AE

**Closing Out the Flight Plan**

Mike Throughgood died of a massive heart attack in his home on April 10, 1999. His wife, Ginger, may be contacted at Rt. 2, Box 378A, Laurel, Delaware 19956.

COL Jerry Vaughn has died. He is survived by his wife, Zita, 6736 Cherrywood Trail, Montgomery, Alabama 36117

LTC (R) Steve Bailey died suddenly of a suspected heart attack on June 1, 1999, while in Corpus Christi, Texas, on business. He is survived by his wife, Virginia, and two sons.

CPT George Edmonson died of esophageal cancer on December 12, 1998, at his home in Washington. George served in the 15th Med Det in Europe in 1960. He was a crackerjack pilot and officer.

LTC (R) Marion E. (Ted) Avrett died on January 12, 1999. A longtime supporter of DUSTOFF, Ted's close personal friendship with MG (R) Sputgeon Neel spanned more than forty years.

SFC Bobbie C. Jeffers died on December 6, 1998. He was the ISG (Det. Sergeant) of the 54th at Chulabiy-the-Sea from the summer of 1969 to the summer of 1970. He also served in the 283rd when it was at Ft. Bliss. Bobbie was a great soldier who loved DUSTOFF and our association.

# From the Wiregrass

by COL Johnny L. West

Greetings y'all. Everything here at beautiful "Mother Rucker" is going full speed. Looks like we are having good results funding the UH60Q. As this letter is being written, the AMEDD FAA is being briefed to the VCSA. We don't expect any dramatic shifts in philosophy for the UH60Q. To all of you who have had an early hand in the planning, development, and now the eventual fielding of this great aircraft, I salute you, and so does the rest of the DUSTOFF community.

Most of you have heard by now that I will be leaving this position (Director, Medical Evacuation Proponency, Fort Rucker) this summer. Somehow the gods have smiled upon us and are sending us to Fort Hood, Texas. We will assume command of the "Largest and Most Powerful Medical Group" in the Army/World, the First Medical Group. I will be following another great DUSTOFFer, COL Mickey Meis. The good news does not stop. LTC Ron Wilson, currently the deputy at MEPD, will be leaving this summer, as well. Ron is moving locally on Fort Rucker. He will move over to USAARL and replace COL Randy Sexton (another great DUSTOFFer) as the Deputy Commander for Administration. We are keeping that aviator connection at USAARL.

The greatest news is: LTC David S. (Scott) Heintz is going to replace me as the director of MEPD and will bring with him MAJ Gino Montagno as deputy. Scott is coming from his year sabbatical at the Army War College. Gino is coming straight from Detachment command at Fort Drum, New York. These two will make a great team and once again, MEPD's future is in great hands.

MEPD will sponsor, host, plan and execute the Army Medical Evacuation Conference (AMEC) again this year. The tentative dates for the conference are 20-25 February 2000. We hope to tie either the beginning or end of the conference to the DUSTOFF reunion (like the olden days). We have already started detailed planning for the conference, but if you have any special topic or area of discussion you want to see discussed or approached, please forward it to the MEPD office immediately.

This has been a very fast-paced year for this office. A lot of great accomplishments have occurred, and I feel privileged to have had the chance to serve in this capacity. I have met and talked to many of you over this year. Thanks to each of you for all your help and support in this job. I will carry with me the title of Consultant for 67J's to Fort Hood. In the long run, I see that title coming back to the Director, Medical Evacuation Proponency. This job has to be one of the best kept secrets in the AMEDD, because who in their right mind would not want to come to LA and work directly in UCLA!

DUSTOFF-6

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(Night Fliers, *continued from page 9.*)

goggles every 45 days, but lately they have been doing more than that.

To prepare for whatever awaits them in northern Bosnia, they also must be completely at ease with the rest of the equipment in their specialized ambulance-equipped UH-60s: the elaborate global positioning system, or GPS, that allows them to fly from anywhere to anywhere else and not deviate a yard, and its slaved Doppler-shift radar that doubles as an inertial navigation system if all the positional satellites fail; the redundant aircraft systems that keep the big UH-60 airborne in a combat environment; the rotating, pivoting multiple litter table in the middle of the chopper; the jungle penetrator that swings out the open right door to lower a collapsible seat a hundred feet or more to the ground on a stout steel cable.

Preparing for flight takes some time.

We are going only from the south end of the Forbes ramp to S.E. Croco Road to Stull to the northern shore of Clinton Lake, along it to a point opposite the Lawrence generating plant to the Kansas River to a landing at Lawrence Municipal Airport, then back along the same route to practice a downed-pilot extraction south of the Forbes runway intersection.

The Black Hawk will cruise at 184 mph down low on this 15-degree night; perhaps even slightly faster in the dense January air. The whole trip Good and Linenberger are planning could be flown in 40 minutes, including two landings and a short hover.

But that would be at a higher, safer altitude, less useful for training. We will fly at 200 feet and 100 mph, kicking up clouds of snow particles and frozen dust. The trip takes 1.2 hours from liftoff to shutdown.

It is 7:20 P.M., before the big, dark green machine lifts and lumbers off up the taxiway, 10 feet in the air.

Linenberger and Good are using goggles fixed onto their heavy kevlar helmets and plugged into the flight instrumentation of the aircraft itself, so they have a real-time display of speed, heading and altitude in one lens.

Sgts. Bob Stegner and Michael Jackson, the crew members who perform the actual "rescues" and keep a constant external check on the equipment, have the same kind of goggles in the back of the aircraft, minus the head-up displays.

Passengers—"straphangers" in military chopper parlance—make do with a stripped-down, hand-held version of the same thing. These weigh maybe a pound and a quarter, are a little bigger than a pair of opera glasses and operate from a single small flashlight battery. The Guard says they cost \$7,000 apiece.

Without them, and without the flexible infrared searchlight in the Black Hawk's belly, this mission would be impossible, for it is as dark as the inside of a cow's stomach outside. There is an overcast at about 1,700 feet. There will be no moon until 4 A.M., and then it will be only 11 percent. In other words, forget it.

(See Night Fliers, *page 13.*)

# Financial Statement

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Council, DUSTOFF Association

30 May 1999

SUBJECT: Financial Status—Year-end Closeout—Fiscal Year 1998–99

SUBMITTED BY: COL Daniel Gower, Jr., USA (Ret.)

1. The following are the closeout figures for the DUSTOFF Association at the end of the Fiscal Year on 30 April 1998.

<b>BEGINNING BALANCE (1 May 1998)</b>	<b>\$14,368.49</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	
Reunion	\$14,445.00
Dues	\$ 4,455.00
Interest (checking account)	\$ 306.38
Sales from Dustoff Store	\$ 4,035.81
Other income unassigned	\$ 193.64
Memorial Donations	\$10,073.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$33,508.83</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Admin Secretary (Sue Moore)	\$ 1,800.00
Reunion 1999	\$13,651.79
Newsletter (2 issues)	\$ 2,904.41
Operating Expenses	\$ 425.24
Expense for Memorial	\$14,318.00
Sales Expenses for Dustoff Store	\$ 3,987.31
Sales Taxes	\$ 207.15
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$37,203.90</b>
<b>INCOME LESS EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ (3,695.07)</b>
<b>CHECKBOOK BALANCE</b>	<b>\$10,673.42</b>
<b>CD BALANCE</b>	<b>\$11,597.22</b>
This includes the interest paid 5/13/99	\$ 541.45

2. Not reflected in the above figures are the donations pledged by Sikorsky Aircraft in the amount of \$2,000.00 for the memorial and \$500 for the professional meeting at the reunion. As of the close of the fiscal year, these donations have not been received.
3. The memorial is paid for, and no outstanding debts are associated with the MG Spurgeon Neel DUSTOFF Memorial Plaza.
4. The inventory in the DUSTOFF Store is approximately \$3,500 worth of merchandise in the form of golf shirts, t-shirts, reunion t-shirts, coins, decals, directories, prints, koozies and pocketknives.
5. Available for audit and/or inspection are the monthly statements from the NationsBank/Bank of America Military Banking Checking Account.



(Night Fliers, *continued from page 11.*)

The green glow of the goggles transforms the world into a bright and wondrous place. Monochromatic, true, but totally detailed and with depth perception enough to fly at 90 knots just above the trees with perfect safety. Take the lenses from your eyes and the world fades to black. Instantly. Completely.

Night vision devices came into wide use in the Vietnam War, but those were subject to flare; washing to total white-out when struck by a flashlight or the blast of gunfire. Not these. True, lights are haloed in pale circles, but detail remains. The goggles are unaffected. Nor are they ever painful to use.

There is another difference. Early goggles had only one lens. These offer true binocular vision. With a little ambient light from stars and a quarter moon or more, a Black Hawk crew owns the night. Tonight, though, it takes the pink beam of the infrared searchlight.

We make our checkpoints on time and on distance. We settle gently down on Lawrence's Runway 01, pause briefly, leap skyward again and retrace our path.

Ghostly trees and an overturned jeep at the south end of Forbes provide a marker for the rescue practice, with Stegner seated comfortably on the helicopter floor, legs dangling in the void.

"You're drifting," he reports, using the searchlight to pinpoint a marker. "Come forward 30 feet. Twenty. Ten. Hold it there."

He and Jackson ready the hoist. Stegner pauses, checks. "You're drifting sideways. Go right 10. Steady. Penetrator going out."

Suddenly Jackson shouts. "Bring it back! Bring it back!" The fingers of his Nomex glove were caught in the mechanism—a quick way to lose a few.

The arm pivots back inside. Jackson cuddles his hand. Stegner swings the arm back into position. "Penetrator going down. Ten feet. No, make that five. On the ground," he says.

"Give him time to get on the seat," Good murmurs in the right front seat.

"Okay, coming up," Stegner reports.

They do it again. Then, satisfied, we slide shut the big side door and hover-raxi back to the helicopter hangar in the Army Guard enclave. Gently, the 50-foot chopper settles to the concrete. Twin turbines whine down, the 53-foot titanium-sheathed rotor blades ease to a slow stop.

(See Night Fliers, *page 14.*)

## The DUSTOFF Store

Item	Price	Size	Quantity	Total
Ball cap — Maroon	\$10		_____	\$ _____
Ball cap — White	\$10		_____	\$ _____
Golf shirt — Maroon (sm, med, lg, xl, xxl)	\$20	_____	_____	\$ _____
20th Anniversary Reunion T-shirt	\$10	_____	_____	\$ _____
T-shirt — Maroon (sm, med, lg, xl)	\$13	_____	_____	\$ _____
To mail shirts and caps, add \$5 per order				\$ _____
DUSTOFF Directory	\$3		_____	\$ _____
DUSTOFF Coin	\$5		_____	\$ _____
Koozie	\$2		_____	\$ _____
Pocketknife	\$4		_____	\$ _____
To mail coins, koozies, knives and directories, add \$3 per order				\$ _____
TOTAL ORDER				\$ _____

Send check or money order, payable to DUSTOFF Association, to:

DUSTOFF Association

P. O. Box 8091

San Antonio, TX 78208

(Please allow 4–6 weeks for delivery.)

Visit DUSTOFF on-line at  
<http://www.dustoff.org>

# A Mission at Black Horse

by MSgt Richard T. Dean, USAFR

On September 5, 1969, we were pulling third-up (hospital to hospital transfer). I was the crewchief on this UH-1H DUSTOFF helicopter. At approximately 1715 we were alerted to fly needed blood to Black Horse. After unloading the blood at Black Horse, Dustoff-40 (Mr. Vermillion) informed me and Sp-5 Deming, my medic, that we had another mission and that we would also be carrying some urgent supplies out to the LZ, which was B-25 location. Mr. Vermillion also informed us that they had had contact and that there would be five to six wounded and two KIAs.

After loading the urgent supplies, we took off and headed to B-25 location. Upon reaching the LZ, we began to orbit the area waiting for Dustoff-10 to complete his extraction. After Dustoff-10 had cleared the LZ, he contacted Dustoff-40 and informed him that it would be a difficult LZ to get into. After Dustoff-10 had departed the area, Dustoff-40 contacted B-25 to check on their situation on the ground and see if they were having any contact at the time. While Dustoff-40 was talking to B-25, WO-1 Nice (the pilot) came up on guard twice and tried to raise the gunships and the C&C (command and control ship), but was unable to reach them. While WO-1 Nice was doing this, Dustoff-40 was informed by B-25 that they had received sniper fire from the northwest, southwest and northeast twenty minutes earlier. He assured us that contact was broken and the area was secure.

At this time WO-1 Nice told Mr. Vermillion he was unable to reach the gunships or the C&C ship, so Mr. Vermillion decided to attempt the pickup without the gunship cover. Dustoff-40 called B-25 and asked him to pop smoke. We identified yellow smoke and began the approach to the LZ. Just before short final B-25 told us not to land; they had detected movement in the trees. So we pulled out and began an orbit over the LZ. A few minutes later B-25 informed Dustoff-40 that the movement had stopped and the LZ was secure.

At this time I knew we were about to go back in, so SP-5 Deming and I checked over our cargo and equipment and got ready. Dustoff-40 had B-25 pop smoke again, and we started in. After touchdown in the LZ, SP-5 Deming and I started unloading the supplies. The ground personnel began to bring out the wounded and load them onto the aircraft. From my viewpoint I could see that with this many wounded, it was going to take a while to load them. So to speed things up SP-5 Deming and I waded through knee-deep mud to help these guys bring the wounded to the aircraft. In doing this we both became unplugged from our Com. cords and were unable to hear any communication from Dustoff-40 or WO-1 Nice. After making several trips through the mud, I looked over to SP-5 Deming to see if he was through loading the wounded on his side. We had been on the ground for about a minute or so, and as I was climbing in the aircraft, I could see Dustoff-40 making a sign for us to plug in. We were almost finished loading the aircraft, and B-25 contacted Dustoff-40 and told him to depart the area immediately; heavy rustling and movement had been detected to the southwest. I informed Dustoff-40 we were loading the last of the KIAs, and he told us that B-25 wanted us to get out before something happened. I called "ready rear" to Dustoff-40,

and he told B-25 we were lifting off. We did a hover check and found that at a three-foot hover our aircraft was operating at almost its maximum output. SP-5 Deming and I were clearing the tail rotor and rotor blades as we began our vertical ascent. Just as we were clearing the top of the trees and were starting to move forward, we could hear the rounds hitting the aircraft. Not knowing for sure where the fire was coming from, all we could do was grit our teeth and hope no one got hit on the way out. After we had cleared the LZ and the hits had

(See Black Horse, page 16.)

## How to Contribute Articles to *The DUSTOFFer*

*The DUSTOFFer* would like to publish your article. If you have a recollection of a particular DUSTOFF or MAST mission, please share it with our members. If your unit has been involved in an outstanding rescue mission or worthwhile program, please submit your essay about it to *The DUSTOFFer*. Send photographs with your article or attach them electronically to your e-mail.

Send typed, double-spaced hard copy to the address below or e-mail your article to Dustoff 23@aol.com.

Please send your contributions to:

*The DUSTOFFer*  
P. O. Box 8091  
San Antonio, TX 78208

(Night Fliers, continued from page 13.)

At the end of this month, the detachment will fly four UH-60s to Beaumont, Texas, while the Nebraska portion of the company will ferry six more to the same destination. The choppers will be crated, loaded aboard ship—and early next month, sent to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Six Nebraska crews—a total of 12 line pilots—will serve with the Kansans in the former Yugoslavia, flying from Task Force Eagle headquarters at Tuzla in northern Bosnia. The unit will relieve the California National Guard's 126th Medical Company and probably will be operational by the end of February.

The deployment is the first to Bosnia for Kansas Army Guard aircrews, though a number of other Guard troops served there in the winter and spring of 1995–96.

# The DUSTOFF Legacy

Dedicated, Unhesitating Service to Our Fighting Forces

by Elena Mastroianni

On distant battlefields,  
In hellish jungles, plains,  
Deserts, and atop  
Jagged mountains  
Wounded soldiers lie  
In unfriendly terrain.  
DUSTOFF crews,  
Born of necessity,  
Fly to their aid.  
Eyes often burning  
From too little sleep,  
Too many hours  
Cramped in cockpit.

Battlefield smoke  
Blurs the landing zone.  
Machine guns spit their  
Deadly bullets.  
Rockers, grenades, mortars,  
And automatic weapons,  
Above the cacophony  
Sounds of the helicopter  
Give hope to the injured,  
Inspiring the able  
To hold off the enemy.

Pilots and crew set fear aside,  
Land the aircraft  
Load the wounded.  
Back to the hospital,  
Offload the injured,  
Refuel the chopper,  
And fly back to Hell.

Forever grateful  
Are hardy survivors  
To that band of brothers  
Who fly to the end;  
Rescue their buddies,  
And bring them safe home  
To family and friends.

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