



# THE DUSTOFFER



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER 2001



*Photo from an article in the Gulf News, August 27, 2001, published in the United Arab Emirates.*

## DUSTOFF Macedonia

# President's Message

"Even when faced with the murderous madness of criminals, and in the presence of the silent agony of their victims, it is incumbent upon us to choose between escape and solidarity, shame and honor. The terrorists have chosen shame. We have chosen honor."—Elie Wiesel.

As I wrote this, there were tears in my eyes; everything has changed since 9/11/01. There is not much to say that hasn't already been said much more eloquently than I could.

This year's reunion will be different than any other. We have crews ready to go in harm's way; we have soldiers, sailors, and marines standing tall, defending democracy with honor and perseverance. I hope all of you join Gale and me at the reunion to share our stories, renew friendships and enjoy our company. I believe all of us have a renewed pride in what we accomplished as soldiers. Now is the time to show that pride with the American flag and solidarity. Take a moment to say a

prayer for our soldiers who are deployed and those who are sure to be deployed; they need our support. I look forward to seeing each and every one of you at the reunion. God bless, and God bless America.

DUSTOFF!  
Jeff Mankoff

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# Letters to *The DUSTOFFer*

*Billy Hughes, one of the original DUSTOFFers and a frequent contributor, sent a quick note to one of his fellow crewmembers, pilot Jay McGowan. "You can't go through deep sh\_\_ like we did without forming a bond that will last a lifetime. I believe we are proof of that."*

I have often talked about Vietnam with vets and non-vets. I have always told them this: we had the most rewarding job in country. We saved lives; we didn't take them. In my lifetime (I worked on the ambulance in my hometown), I think I may have saved about 10 lives. I'm sure of three of them. That is to say, if I hadn't been there, I think these people would have died. I couldn't have done it without you guys getting me there. Likewise, you guys couldn't have performed your wonderful job without us guys in the back. We were a *team* and will remain so for the rest of our lives.

Just think about how great it is that the tradition of DUSTOFF continues today.

Yes, Jay, we're old, but we are also full of memories of Tiny, Kelly, Paul and all those GI's we pulled out of the rice paddies of Vietnam. In our little e-mail group, just think how many thousands of lives we have had an impact on. How many people are out who don't know our names, but they will never forget the day they saw that helicopter with the Red Cross arrive.

I don't carry any emotional scars from Vietnam. All I do is think about you wonderful guys and the good things we accomplished during that short period of time ages ago. Who could ask for more?

*Bobby Mock, one of the early DUSTOFFers in Vietnam, reminisced about his first day in early 1964:*

I will never forget the day I graduated from flight school. It was just all too good to be true. Here I was a brand new second lieutenant in the U.S. Army and a helicopter pilot to boot. What could be better than this? It was at this point that I found out the price for the honor I had received in going to flight school. I was going to Vietnam. In fact, I was thrilled at the prospect, but a little scared thrown in to give me more emotion than I had ever had in my life.

I was given a thirty-day leave to get ready to go to Vietnam, and I needed every bit of it. My wife and I had purchased a mobile home at Ft. Sam Houston when I was selected to go to flight school. I was moved to Mineral Wells, Texas, and on to Fort Rucker for my final flight training. The home had to be moved on to Florida so my wife could stay with parents while I was gone. The thirty days passed too quickly, and it was time to leave for my tour in Vietnam.

It turned out that several other members of the flight school class I was in were all going to Vietnam at the same time and went on the same plane. Ernie Sylvester and I had been together since we entered the Army back at Fort Sam in early 1963. Now here we were again flying half way around the world to just what we did not know. We were young, eager, and a little apprehensive about just what lay before us.

Upon landing at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, we were met by LT Schexnayder and driven to the civilian side of the airport to our small headquarters at the 57<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment (HA), our new home. We were introduced to everyone, and Major Kelly introduced himself and told us to get in the jeep; we were going to the MACV Headquarters to process us in to country.

We went to the headquarters and were processed in and given our Geneva Convention cards making us non-combatants in Army talk, as we were medical personnel. Our last place to process into was the Army Aviation Department. As Ernie Sylvester was processed in, Major Kelly turned to me and asked me for my flight records. I opened my briefcase and looked for my flight records. I was having trouble locating them, and Major Kelly in his southern drawl said, "Okay, lieutenant, we don't have all day." I emptied my briefcase on the floor and spread out the papers so I could see them. There were no flight records. I can still see the look in Major Kelly's eyes, as in his gentle way, he turned to the flight operations officer and said, "Well, I guess he can fly; he has wings, but hell, anybody could buy a set of wings." My heart fell to the floor. Major Kelly said for me to go over to the phone to call the States and call home to see if I had left my records there. I did as he instructed, and in a few minutes was talking to my wife. She told me that my flight records were right where I had left them while packing for my trip. My flight records arrived within a week, and I was allowed to fly my first missions in Vietnam.

*Jessie Morris, DUSTOFF Hall of Fame charter member Charles Kelly's widow, dropped us a note:*

Thank you for your e-mail. It is so touching to know that, even after so many years, Charles is still remembered by so many. He was proud of his unit and would have been proud of the pilots who came after him. In one of his letters to me, he wrote "If only every commander would clean up his little corner of the Army." This is what he tried to do, and this is what DUSTOFF has continued to do. Charles has been honored in so many ways since his death, but the biggest honor has to be with comments made by his fellow DUSTOFF pilots. There are no words to express our admiration to you, the DUSTOFF Association, and all the pilots and crewmembers who served with him and who came after him. How pleased he would be!

Along with most Americans, I am praying for our country. I heard yesterday we lost two helicopter pilots.

(Continued . . .)

*Charles Kelly Jr., son of the famous DUSTOFFer of the same name, answered our question about a letter his father had left in his room to be sent to his wife in the event of his death:*

My mother did get this letter, and I have read it many, many times. He tells her not to cry over him but to carry on. This part is short; the part that follows describes his feelings for the bureaucracy of the Army. It is a long, rambling letter that we treasure; perhaps one day we will be able to share it with you.

*Doctor James W. Ralph, Colonel (Ret), Medical Corps, sent the following note to Major Kelly's widow, Jessie:*

I was your husband's flight surgeon during his entire Vietnam tour. He was a great man, and he put the whole DUSTOFF MedEvac concept on the map forever. I had the honor of flying with him on many missions of mercy. I had the unpleasant task of making the final identification and signing his death certificate. All of us who served with him will never forget what a great officer, pilot, and gentleman he was. He was a hero to all of us.

I would be honored to send you a copy of a report of one of his missions in which he saved the life of a young helicopter pilot whose leg had been shot apart.



*Dr. James W. Ralph, Master Flight Surgeon, a young captain in his jungle fatigues in Vietnam, 1964.*



*Dr. James W. Ralph, receiving an award near his retirement from the Army.*

## Reunion 2002 Plans Announced by DUSTOFF Executive Council

The 2002 Reunion of the DUSTOFF Association will take place at the Marriott Northwest Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, beginning 22 February 2002 and ending with the Hall of Fame Dedication and Memorial Service on 24 February 2002. The Marriott Northwest is the former Holiday Inn Northwest facility. The hotel has been completely renovated and is a quality venue for our reunion. The staff and management are some of the greatest in the business. Our prices this year are remarkably lower than last year's prices and match the per diem rates.

We will begin with the Chuck Mateer Golf tournament at the Fort Sam Houston Golf Course. Tee times begin at noon. On Friday evening the hotel has designed a great Mexican buffet for our enjoyment. Saturday morning will be a "professional meeting," with updates from some of our deployed units. Following the business meeting will be the election of officers. Our spouses will enjoy a time away from the membership and a luncheon on the Riverwalk. Transportation will be available if needed for them to get from the hotel to the Riverwalk Restaurant (the exact restaurant is still being worked out at this time). The DUSTOFF Crewmember of the Year Award and the DUSTOFF Rescue of the Year Award will be presented at Saturday's formal banquet. Our corporate sponsors will make those presentations on behalf of the Association. Sunday morning we'll gather at the AMEDD Museum on Fort Sam Houston to dedicate the Hall of Fame wall. Please allow extra time to clear the security guards at the gate to enter the installation. This dedication ceremony will be our memorial service for this year.

One significant change this year is the traditional hospitality suites. Significant legal and liability issues have surfaced over the last year for reunion planners who plan to serve "unlimited" alcohol to their guests. We are unable to afford the liability insurance and therefore have chosen to allow the hotel to run the hospitality suites. All drinks will be served by trained bartenders who are part of the hotel staff. The hotel bears the liability responsibility. Our cost is minimized due to the hotel's eagerness to have our business. All drinks will be \$2.50 (that is at least half-price from their normal fare and in some cases less than half price). Each attendee must purchase tickets from a cashier and then pay for their drinks with the tickets at the bar. This makes it easy for the bartender to concentrate on serving drinks rather than making change.

We trust you will understand the necessity for making the change this year. We simply cannot allow the Association to be at risk of a lawsuit similar to the \$50 million-dollar lawsuit brought against two reunion planners who served unlimited alcohol to members of their company and had the unfortunate experience of a drunken driver-related death.

Please register early and send your registration form and check in now. Those who live in San Antonio and plan on simply showing up and getting a "late registration" at the door, do so at the risk of not being served dinner. We must make our final tally counts known to the hotel 24 hours in advance. So REGISTER NOW.



# DUSTOFF 2001

## Crewmember of the Year

**T**HIS YEAR'S CREWMEMBER of the year is SGT Christine Roberts of the 50<sup>th</sup> Medical Company, stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. SGT Roberts is the mother of three children and an outstanding soldier and flight medic. She arrived at Fort Campbell in December 2000 from Korea, where she served as a Clinic NCOIC as a Corporal. Her first stop after her arrival at Fort Campbell was the 50<sup>th</sup> Medical Company, where she quickly showed herself to be a motivated, knowledgeable soldier who wanted to be a flight medic in the unit. Most of her time in the unit since her December arrival was spent in Readiness Level Progression and in the Individual Readiness Training and Mission Rehearsal Exercise in preparation for the May 2001 deployment to Kosovo. SGT Roberts demonstrated the true spirit of DUSTOFF while accomplishing a very dangerous mission in Kosovo.

The mission occurred on 25 June 01 when the unit received a nine-line request to pick up a U.S. soldier whose lower right leg was severed by a landmine. Two reconnaissance soldiers were patrolling along a suspected weapons infiltration route when one of them stepped on a landmine. The DUSTOFF crew was off the ground in minutes and soon arrived at the location. The patient was on a narrow path along a steep, heavily forested ravine. The vegetation was so thick that when the soldier popped smoke, only a hint of smoke could be seen filtering through the trees. The pilots positioned the aircraft over the patient and prepared for a hoist extraction. The ground element notified the crew that the patient was in a possible minefield. SGT Roberts bravely placed her own life in danger as she was lowered 250 feet, carrying close to 80 pounds of gear through the trees. She hit the ground within ten feet of the patient. She quickly probed her way to

the patient, assessed him and tightened a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. She reassured both soldiers and helped carry the wounded soldier to the Jungle Penetrator for extraction. Without regard to her personal safety, she sent both soldiers up the hoist prior to her extraction. SGT Cassini, the wounded soldier, lost the lower half of his leg; however, his life was saved due to the actions of SGT Roberts and her crew. Her efforts prevented further injury to the wounded soldier and avoided injury to the other.

Since SGT Roberts knew the terrain and saw the soldier's sensitive items lying in the minefield, she was asked to return to the site to recover the sensitive items. Two hours after the mission, SGT Roberts returned to the site with an Explosive Ordinance Disposal soldier to recover the soldier's weapon and other sensitive items lost in the minefield. She went back down into the minefield with the EOD soldier and pointed out where the sensitive items were. All the items were recovered rapidly as a result of her assistance.

A de-mining team later found fourteen various mines in the area and four anti-personnel mines within five meters of the accident site. She was submitted for the Soldier's Medal. LTG Peake, the Army Surgeon General, later used her story in his opening remarks to the House Armed Services Committee. SGT Robert's heroic performance of duty under extremely hazardous conditions eliminated the possibility of further harm to her fellow soldiers. Her courageous actions and selfless service represents the highest traditions of the DUSTOFF Spirit, and she is truly deserving of the DUSTOFF Crewmember of the year award. Congratulations SGT Roberts on a job well done. Whooh!

—DUSTOFFer—



*Christine Roberts, 50<sup>th</sup> Medical Company, DUSTOFF 2001 Crewmember of the Year.*

# DUSTOFF 2001

## Rescue of the Year

**T**HE RESCUE OF the Year Award this year will be shared jointly by the 236<sup>th</sup> Medical Company and the 50<sup>th</sup> Medical Company. Both high-risk missions missions performed with skill and courage. Several other nominations were also considered. Though not chosen, they also represent the courage, skill and willingness to go into harm's way to rescue and evacuate their fellow comrades in arms or injured or sick civilians.

The crewmembers of the 236<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (AA) Rescue of the Year crew were pilot-in-command, CW3 William Fisher; co-pilot, CW2 Daniel Adams/1LT Christopher Howard; medic, SGT Luis Rodriguez Jr.; and crew chief, SPC Andrew Beckler.

On the night of 13 April (Good Friday) 2001, the crew of DUSTOFF 01, from the 236<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance), was deployed to provide aeromedical evacuation support to NATO forces at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo.

Shortly after 2100 hours, DUSTOFF operations received a nine-line MEDEVAC request to rescue the crew of a British Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) that had been destroyed by an anti-tank mine while patrolling near the Macedonian border. The DUSTOFF crew, led by CW3 William Fisher, launched in under eight minutes, under NVG conditions and in a snow shower. The initial evacuation request indicated that there was a single casualty on the scene and that personnel on the ground had cleared the Landing Zone of ordinance.

Enroute to the site, CW3 Fisher took the aircraft controls while his co-pilot, CW2 Dan Adams, navigated and communicated with the British soldiers at the blast site. After circling the scene, the crew landed the aircraft approximately fifteen meters from the wrecked APC, which had been flipped into the air and onto its side by the enormous force of the explosion. Even before the crewmembers could exit the aircraft, the stench of fuel from the ruined vehicle became nearly overwhelming, and the extent of the damage to the vehicle was easily apparent. SGT Luis Rodriguez, the flight medic on board, disconnected from the intercom system, climbed out of the left gunner's window and began moving toward a soldier who was signaling him with a flashlight.

The British soldier informed SGT Rodriguez that there were actually two casualties, one ambulatory and one badly injured litter patient. While they discussed the situation, other British troops led the first patient to SGT Rodriguez. The victim had not been severely injured by the blast, but was suffering from acute post-traumatic stress. The soldier had been the APC track commander at the time of the explosion and had been thrown out of the vehicle by the blast. SGT Rodriguez led him to the waiting MEDEVAC aircraft, where the crew chief, SPC Andrew Beckler, helped him into the aft-facing seat between the crewmember stations. Knowing that the patient's seat faced directly toward the litter pan where the more severely injured victim would be situated, SGT Rodriguez instructed the soldier to close his eyes and keep his head down, so he would not see the injuries his friend had suffered.

SGT Rodriguez then moved back to the soldiers on the ground to move the litter patient. As he moved toward the place where the victim had come to rest after being ejected from the APC, he saw a British soldier moving on his hands and knees from the opposite direction, probing the ground for mines. SGT Rodriguez was then informed by one of the British troops that the area had not been cleared of mines. He immediately stopped in his tracks and, because he was disconnected from ICS, yelled for SPC Beckler to freeze, so loudly that the pilots heard him clearly over the engine noise. From where he stood, SGT Rodriguez coordinated for the mine victim to be moved. He then led the litter bearers toward the aircraft, carefully ensuring that they followed in his own footsteps to avoid detonating any undiscovered mines.

With the patient safely on board, SGT Rodriguez quickly assessed the patient's injuries. The soldier had suffered a near-amputation of his left leg, multiple severe blast injuries and a massive open abdominal wound. SGT Rodriguez and SPC Beckler then performed two-rescuer CPR for the duration of the flight, while the CW3 Fisher and CW2 Adams brought the aircraft back through the increasingly dense snow shower to the Combat Support Hospital at Camp Bondsteel. After delivering the patients and refueling, the crew returned to MEDEVAC parking, where they were debriefed by the Task Force chaplain, due to severity of the victim's injuries and the stress they had experienced during the mission.

Approximately 90 minutes after they had returned from the first mission, DUSTOFF 01's crew was launched again to the site of the APC explosion. A third British soldier had been wounded in the initial explosion; however, due to the rush of activity following the blast, his injuries were not immediately discovered. The same MEDEVAC crew launched again, this time with 1LT Christopher Howard serving as co-pilot. Inbound to the LZ, 1LT Howard confirmed the grid coordinates with British ground personnel, as the crewmembers helped clear the aircraft through the still-deteriorating weather. To ensure mine avoidance, CW3 Fisher used his skill and precise guidance from the crew to land the aircraft in exactly the same wheel marks they had created on the first mission. Once again, SGT Rodriguez took control of the scene and directed the approach of the British ground troops as they carried the third patient of the night. This soldier had been following the APC when the mine detonated and had received shrapnel wounds to the lower leg. When the victim had been loaded into the aircraft, the crew of DUSTOFF 01 delivered him safely to the CSH and returned safely once again to parking for the remainder of the night.

Each of the crewmembers involved in these missions acted in the true spirit of DUSTOFF. They placed the welfare of their comrades ahead of their own, even performing multiple flights to a known hostile LZ to evacuate wounded personnel. Their individual skill and exemplary crew coordination ensured that the mission was accomplished and each of the patients was delivered to medical care.

**T**HE CREW NOMINATED by their commander from the 50<sup>th</sup> Medical Company for their heroic minefield rescue are pilot-in-command, CW3 John Horron; co-pilot, WO1 Randal Cox; medic, SGT Christine Roberts (also chosen as the DUSTOFF Crewmember of the Year); and crew chief, SGT Michael Knox.

On 25 June 01 the DUSTOFF 72 crew was providing first-up MEDEVAC support at Camp Bondsreel, Kosovo. Two reconnaissance soldiers were patrolling in Southern Kosovo when one of the soldiers stepped on a landmine. At 1251, the crew received a nine-line MEDEVAC request to evacuate two soldiers, one whose lower right leg was severed as a result of a landmine and one who was uninjured but afraid to move. The crew was off the ground in minutes and arrived at the site at 1304. The soldiers were on a narrow path along a steep, heavily forested ravine. The vegetation was so thick that when the soldier popped smoke, only a hint of smoke could be seen filtering through the trees. The pilots positioned the aircraft over the patient and prepared for a hoist extraction, knowing that the patient was in a possible minefield. The crew maintained a precise hover at 250 feet, as close to the patient as possible to allow the hoist to clear the trees all the way to the ground. The medic bravely placed her own life in danger as she was lowered 250 feet, carrying close to 80 pounds of gear through the trees. She hit the ground within ten feet of the patient. She quickly probed her way to the patient, assessed him, tightened a tourniquet to stop the bleeding and reassured the other soldier. The crew maintained the hover while

the medic sent both soldiers up the hoist prior to her extraction. The crew rapidly moved the patient to the Combat Support Hospital. The wounded soldier lost the lower half of his leg; however, he still has his life due to the actions of the DUSTOFF 72 crew. The crew's exceptional aviation skill and bravery prevented further injury to the wounded soldier and avoided injury to the other.

Because the crew knew the location and the medic knew the ground around the accident site, the crew was asked to return to the site to recover the sensitive items lost in the mine field. Two hours after the mission, the crew returned to the site with an Explosive Ordinance Disposal soldier to recover the soldier's weapon and other sensitive items lost in the minefield. The medic went back down on the hoist into the minefield with the EOD soldier and pointed out where the sensitive items were. Some of the items were recovered while remaining on the Jungle Penetrator with the crew moving the aircraft to recover the items. All the items were recovered rapidly without further injury to others as a result of the crew's assistance.

A de-mining team later found fourteen various mines in the area and four anti-personnel mines within five meters of the accident site. The crew received impact ARCOMs for their actions, and the medic was submitted for the Soldier's Medal. The Surgeon General used the rescue story in his opening remarks to the House Armed Services Committee. The crew's heroic performance of duty under extremely hazardous conditions eliminated the possibility for further harm to their fel-



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low soldiers. Their courageous actions and selfless service represent the highest traditions of the DUSTOFF Spirit and are truly deserving of the Outstanding Rescue Award.

Both of our Rescue of the Year crews demonstrated the Spirit of DUSTOFF. A great big Whoooah! to them. Thanks once again to Sikorsky Aircraft for sponsoring this award.

—DUSTOFFer—

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## DUSTOFF Hall of Fame to Induct Three New Members

*Dan Gower, COL U.S. Army (R), Hall of Fame Chairman*

Three new members of DUSTOFF history will be inducted into the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame at the DUSTOFF Annual Reunion in February 2002. Steve Hooks, a flight medic; Wayne Simmons, a crew chief; and COL John Temperilli will be honored formally at the reunion banquet. Their plaques will be placed on the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame wall at the Army Medical Department Museum on Fort Sam Houston. They join our five inaugural members who were inducted last year.

Generous donations by the membership have funded the additional plaques, as well as the DUSTOFF logo and the dedication plaque. These will all be placed on the wall in the Memorial Gardens at the museum.

These eight members of our Hall of Fame are but the tip of the iceberg of our heroes. We now open the nominations for next year's nominees. The standards are published on our website with the nomination form and procedures. Please, take the time to research the background and accomplishments of the person you feel is worthy of induction into our Hall of Fame. Take some quality time to work up the required documentation, citation, and nomination narrative and send it to the DUSTOFF Association, P. O. Box 8091, San Antonio, TX 78208-0091.

Our legacy is rich with self-sacrifice, heroism and service to our fellow man. All DUSTOFF crewmembers are heroes in one way or another. Some rise above the rest and deserve special recognition. The Executive Council needs the eyes, ears and memories of our full membership to assist us in appropriately identifying and honoring those worthy of representing the DUSTOFF legacy by induction into our Hall of Fame.

—DUSTOFFer—

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## *Remembering Viet Nam: Photos by Billy Hughes*

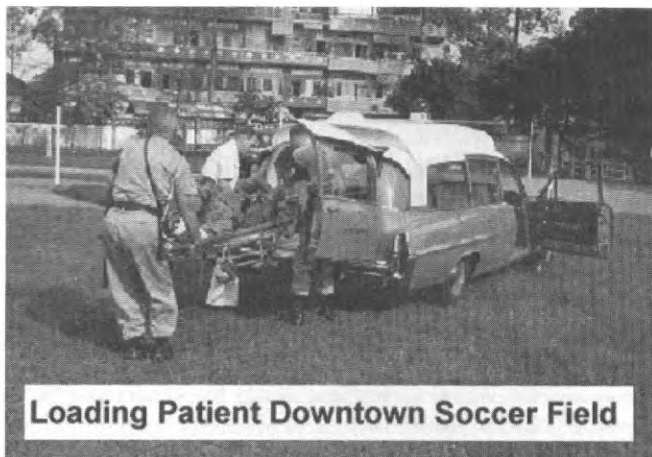


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**Downed Dustoff - Pilots Maj. Campbell & Capt. Truscott**



**Major Christie & Capt. Jackson - Saigon Taxi**



**Dust Off Over The Delta**



**Capt. John Dean - 57th Pad**

# The "X-Rating" in Soldier Pay

*This article by Randall Shoemaker, which appeared in the some years ago, deals with the eternal military pay issues.*

Government pay experts are beginning to talk about something military people know the most about—the "X Factor" in service life. The staffs of the Defense Manpower Commission and the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation have researched data suggesting that the principle of military pay comparability is inadequate because of this factor. Briefly, the X Factor means the hazards, hardship, discipline, disruptions and special obligations imposed by a military career.

The comparability rules, which are the basis for current pay scales and annual raises, are based on the idea there should be equal pay for equal work. But comparison of military jobs with those of civilians using similar abilities or special skills overlooks the different conditions of service, experts point out.

What the military service offers is not all hardship, the studies recognize. There are opportunities for challenging jobs, travel, education and many other benefits. Relatively few people are fired, and promotion chances generally are good. However, fringe benefits in the private sector are becoming more varied, generous and widespread, while those in the service have been declining, researchers contend.

The main disadvantages of service life, compared with the civilian, include:

- Risks of death or injury in training or combat
- No right to quit at will
- Subject to duty orders at any time, without regard to irregular or long working hours
- Frequent moves, often on short notice, normally without choice of location
- Family separations, disruptions, lack of stable ties to a home community, lack of school continuity for children
- Reduced opportunity to buy a home or other property investments in a community to build equity
- Loss of certain individual rights
- No vested retirement equity before completion of 20 years' service

These experts do not discard the comparability idea as an aid in weighing the proper compensation levels, but they suggest the consideration of the H Factor calls for "competitiveness." They say competitiveness means enough pay and benefits to induce people, despite the drawbacks, to choose the military as a career and to retain them over the long term. If only recruiting is considered, they say, the pay scales might be high enough to bring in hungry enlistees, but insufficient to retain them when they see outside opportunities available.

—DUSTOFFer—

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## 172<sup>nd</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance) Mission Aids Civil Authorities

*submitted by Andrew T. Liebeknecht, MAJ, AV, commander 172<sup>nd</sup> Med. Co.*

On 17 JUN 00, from approximately 1200 local time until 1300 local time, one UH-60A Blackhawk Helicopter provided aid to civilian authorities in North Little Rock, Arkansas. The crewmembers of the 172<sup>d</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance) consisted of standardization pilot, CW4 Randall "Bryan" Withers; pilot, CW2 Paul Weve; crew chief, SSG Rex Murray; and medic, SGT Richard Overturf. The crew was alerted to the mission and was afforded limited time for preparation, approximately one hour for planning. The crew was prepared to lift twenty-four civilians, by hoist, who had become trapped during the rapid rise in the Mulberry River caused by heavy rainfall in the northwestern area of the state. The civilians were trapped on the roofs of a pavilion and restroom facility along the Mulberry River in Franklin County, Arkansas.

Franklin County Sheriff Kenneth Ross assisted the crew in gathering information and aided with coordination during the situation. According to reports from the sheriff, the river had subsided slightly, and a small sandbar was now available for the aircraft to land on and load the civilians, rather than using the hoist.

According to CW4 Withers, the aircraft was partially on the sandbar, and one of the main landing gear was in the river. The crew kept the aircraft light on the main gear to avoid becoming mired in the mud and possibly causing a rollover. The aircraft made three trips to the high ground, approximately 100 yards away on the shoreline, carrying eight civilians on each trip. To complicate the mission further, there were power lines in close vicinity to the civilians; this made for difficult maneuvering, but with the professionalism of the crew and good aircrew coordination, problems were avoided.

A total of twenty-four civilians and one dog were recovered from the river site, ages varying from infant to forty years old. According to Sheriff Ross, "all the crew members were true heroes." Sheriff Ross further stated that it was "good to know he could call on the Guard for such a mission."

—DUSTOFFer—

# Heroes of the Vietnam Generation

*by James Webb, former Secretary of the Navy, novelist and retired Marine officer (edited)*

THE RAPIDLY DISAPPEARING cohort of Americans who endured the Great Depression and then fought World War II is receiving quite a send-off from the leading lights of the so-called '60s generation. Tom Brokaw has published two oral histories of "the greatest generation" that feature ordinary people doing their duty and suggest that such conduct was historically unique. Chris Matthews of "Hardball" is fond of writing columns praising the Navy service of his father, while castigating his own baby-boomer generation for its alleged softness and lack of struggle. William Bennett gave a startlingly condescending speech at the Naval Academy a few years ago, comparing the heroism of the "D-Day Generation" to the drugs-and-sex nihilism of the "Woodstock Generation." Steven Spielberg, promoting his film "Saving Private Ryan," was careful to justify his portrayals of soldiers in action based on the supposedly unique nature of World War II.

An irony is at work here. Lest we forget, the World War II generation now being lionized also brought us the Vietnam War, a conflict that today's most conspicuous voices by and large opposed, and in which few of them served. The best and brightest of the Vietnam age group once made headlines by castigating their parents for bringing about the war in which they would not fight, which has become the war they refuse to remember. Pundits back then invented a term for this animus: the "generation gap." Long, plaintive articles and even books were written examining its manifestations. Campus leaders, who claimed precocious wisdom through the magical process of reading a few controversial books, urged fellow baby boomers not to trust anyone over thirty. Their elders, who had survived the Depression and fought the largest war in history, were looked down upon as shallow, materialistic and out of touch.

Those of us who grew up on the other side of the picket line from that era's counterculture can't help but feel a little leery of this sudden gush of appreciation for our elders from the leading lights of the old counterculture. Then and now, the national conversation has proceeded from the dubious assumption that those who came of age during Vietnam are a unified generation in the same sense as their parents were, and thus capable of being spoken for through these fickle elites.

In truth, the "Vietnam generation" is a misnomer. Those who came of age during that war are permanently divided by different reactions to a whole range of counterculture agendas, and nothing divides them more deeply than the personal ramifications of the war itself. The sizable portion of the Vietnam age group who declined to support the counterculture agenda, and especially the men and women who opted to serve in the military during the Vietnam War, are quite different from their peers who for decades have claimed to speak for them. In fact, they are much like the World War II generation itself. For them, Woodstock was a side show, college protestors were spoiled brats who would have benefited from having to work a few jobs in order to pay their tuition, and Vietnam represented not an intellectual exercise in draft avoidance or protest marches but a battlefield that was just as brutal as those their fathers faced in world War II and Korea.

Few who served during Vietnam ever complained of a generation gap. The men who fought World War II were their heroes and role models. They honored their father's service by emulating it and largely agreed with their father's wisdom in attempting to stop Communism's reach in Southeast Asia.

The most accurate poll of their attitudes (Harris, 1980) showed that 91 percent were glad they'd served their country, 74 percent enjoyed their time in the service, and 89 percent agreed with the statement that "our troops were asked to fight in a war that our political leaders in Washington would not let them win." And most importantly, the castigation they received upon returning home was not from the World War II generation, but from the very elites in their age group who supposedly spoke for them.

Nine million men served in the military during the Vietnam War, three million of whom went to the Vietnam theater. Contrary to popular mythology, two-thirds of these were volunteers, and 73 percent of those who died were volunteers. While some attention has been paid recently to the plight of our prisoners of war, most of whom were pilots, there has been little recognition of how brutal the war was for those who fought it on the ground. Dropped into the enemy's terrain 12,000 miles away from home, America's citizen-soldiers performed with a tenacity and quality that may never be truly understood. Those who believe the war was fought incompetently on a tactical level should consider Hanoi's recent admission that 1.4 million of its soldiers died on the battlefield, compared to 58,000 total U.S. dead. Those who believe it was a "dirty little war" where the bombs did all the work might contemplate that it was the most costly war the U.S. Marine Corps has ever fought—five times as many dead as World War I, three times as many dead as Korea, and more total killed and wounded than in all of World War II.

Significantly, these sacrifices were being made at a time the United States was deeply divided over our effort in Vietnam. The baby-boom generation had cracked apart along class lines as America's young men were making difficult, life-or-death decisions about serving. The better academic institutions became focal points for vitriolic protest against the war, with few of their graduates going into the military. Harvard College, which had lost 691 alumni in World War II, lost a total of 12 men in Vietnam from the classes of 1962 through 1972 combined. Those classes at Princeton lost six, at MIT two. The media turned ever more hostile. Frequently, the reward for a young man's having gone through the trauma of combat was to be greeted by his peers with studied indifference or outright hostility.

What is a hero? My heroes are the young men who faced the issues of war and possible death, and then weighed those concerns against obligations to their country. Citizen-soldiers who interrupted their personal and professional lives at their

most formative stage, in the timeless phrase of the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, "not for fame or reward, not for place or rank, but in simple obedience to duty, as they understood it." Who suffered loneliness, disease, and wounds with an often-contagious élan? And deserved a far better place in history than that now offered them by the so-called spokesmen of our so-called generation. Such valor (as exhibited by our men in Vietnam) epitomizes the conduct of Americans at war from the first days of our existence. That the former elites can canonize this sort of conduct in our fathers' generation while ignoring it in our own, is more than a simple oversight. It is a conscious, continuing travesty.

Former Secretary of the Navy James Webb was awarded the Navy Cross, Silver Star, and Bronze Star medals for heroism as a Marine in Vietnam. His novels include *The Emperor's General* and *Fields of Fire*.

—DUSTOFFer—

## Reunion 2002 Register Early! Register Now!

### Web Searchers for DUSTOFF use Unusual Words

The DUSTOFF Association's Web site <<http://www.dustoff.org>> continues to be found by about 1,500 folks per month. You can find the Association's Web site on just about any major search.

The number-one most searched phrase is DUSTOFF Association, followed by DUSTOFF helicopter. We all understand those search words. And we probably can understand such search words as [dustoffcom](http://dustoffcom), [www.dustoff](http://www.dustoff), and [httpdustofforg](http://dustofforg).

But a number of folks found our site by typing in some strange search words.

Who would have ever thought someone would search for <<http://minditnetmindcomgo1150125553412924>> or <[likehttpwwwfbgnetdustoffsearchkiasearchhtm](http://likehttpwwwfbgnetdustoffsearchkiasearchhtm)>? We've had people search for: ass, Snyder (they're not the same are they?), lonestar, perscom, and pinky.

But the strangest ones have been the folks who searched for: diaryairfman, barneys, slammer, and movieman.

## BOBBY'S WISDOM

by Bobby McBride, former Vietnam crew chief

- If you are wearing body armor, they will probably miss that part.
- It hurts less to die with a uniform on than to die on a hospital bed.
- Happiness is a belt-fed weapon.
- If something hasn't broken on your helicopter, it's about to.
- Eat when you can. Sleep when you can. Sh\_\_ when you can.  
The next opportunity may not come around for a long time, if ever.
- Combar pay is a flawed concept.
- Having all your body parts intact and functioning at the end of the day beats the alternative.
- Air superiority is *not* a luxury.



### You Might Be a Soldier (or Related to One) If . . .

- . . . you announce, "At Ease!" when your kids are too noisy
- . . . you do not own any blue ball point pens.
- . . . your leave always occurs during the last week in September.
- . . . you keep a case of field rations at your quarters and in your car trunk in case of emergencies.
- . . . you call your home "quarters."
- . . . when talking on the phone, you end the conversation with "out here."
- . . . you refer to your spouse as "Household 6" or "CINC House."
- . . . you've seen the movie "Patton" enough times to be able to recite the opening speech from memory.
- . . . Cable News Network is your favorite television program.
- . . . you call Post Locator instead of Information to find your friends.
- . . . your kids could speak three languages by the age of eight.
- . . . the only suit you own is your dress uniform.
- . . . you carry your pager to the shower.
- . . . your vehicle is registered on post, in three countries, and in two different states.
- . . . you have convinced your wife that all ten of your guns are necessary for home defense.

# DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION

## Income and Expenses — Actual

### Annual Closeout Report

May 1, 2001, through November 28, 2001

#### INCOME

Dues	\$1,515.00
Interest Income	663.40
Memorial Fund	3,165.00
Sales — Memorabilia/e-mail	902.20
Reunion Income	500.00

**Total Income** \$6,745.60

Interest Income Includes \$574.09 in the PFCU CD and MMs

#### EXPENSE

Newsletter Publishing	\$1,567.29
Operating Expenses	1,085.84
Sales Expense — Memorabilia	2,085.36
Sales Taxes	0.00
Reunion Expenses	0.00
Memorial Expenses	0.00

**Total Expense** \$4,738.49

**NET INCOME (LOSS)** \$2,007.11

Our balances in the bank/credit union are as follows:

Bank of America, Military Bank Checking Account	\$12,679.45
Pentagon Federal Credit Union CD	\$10,949.55
Pentagon Federal Money Market Savings	\$10,510.35

The total money set aside in the checking account for memorials is \$6,655.00, which is just about enough to finish the establishment of the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame Wall at the Museum, including the DUSTOFF logo, dedication plaque and the three inductees' plaques for this year (plus the installation and labor).

Dan Gower  
COL USA (Ret.)  
Treasurer





# DUSTOFF Europe Dominates Humanitas 2001

by Major Scott Avery

GIVEN THE EVER-CHANGING face of battle, it is always difficult to train as we fight. As tactics, weapons and alliances have changed, one thing has remained constant: military victory is always intertwined with human suffering and injury. For this reason, medical caregivers must be prepared to care for anyone, anywhere and anytime. For a select few soldiers of the 421<sup>st</sup> Medical Evacuation Battalion, the annual International Humanitas Competition provides an environment where medics are trained and then tested on their ability to save lives, both on the battlefield and in peacekeeping scenarios. During the 2001 Humanitas competition, SSG Keith Shultz, SSG Clayton Coleman, and SPC Shane St. Lawrence of the 45<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance) demonstrated that they are the best-trained combat medics in the European Theater. These soldiers' stellar performance earned the 45<sup>th</sup> the international trophy for the second straight year, an unprecedented accomplishment. SGT Randall, SPC Winkel, and PFC McClelland of the 557<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Ground Ambulance) placed third for a second consecutive year.

This rigorous competition consisted of a training phase and a competition phase. During the training phase, medical personnel covered a gamut of topics ranging from CPR to GPS usage. On the day of the competition, three-soldier teams from throughout Europe maneuvered across a twenty-kilometer course and negotiated graded scenarios. Events ranging from a forty-two-meter rappel to a multiple-patient land-mine scenario demanded endurance, precise medical skills and acute problem solving. An additional challenge was that the soldiers did not share a common language with either the cadre or the other competitors. For some events, the additional chal-

lenge of maneuvering through obscuring smoke and wrecked vehicles increased the intensity of the patients' screams and simulated injuries.

Realism was the order of the day, and details such as broken glass from a windshield injury were present to ensure that soldiers were enveloped in the authenticity of the scenario. Furthermore, the wide range of treatment scenarios exposed the soldiers to situations they might encounter in such dissimilar places as a high-intensity conflict or a peacetime multiple-vehicle collision. For example, during one event, medics had to use a handheld GPS and cellular phone to guide civilian ambulance drivers to an accident. Moments later, the same medic was expected to negotiate a minefield to bandage a severed limb. SPC St. Lawrence described the training as much more physically challenging than the U.S. Army's Expert Field Medical Badge and said that the scenarios encountered set a standard by which soldiers' day-to-day training should be measured.

While the impact of the combat medic is not spoken of in strategic terms or with the glowing rhetoric associated with smart bombs and cruise missiles, for those who are treated by a combat medic, no soldier is more important. As long as there are military battles to fight, there will be soldier medics who are ready to care for their fallen comrades. The Humanitas 2001 victory leaves no doubt that those who receive care from the soldiers of the 45<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance) or the 557<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Ground Ambulance) will live to fight another day.

—DUSTOFFer—



# Sound Flying Advice

- ✈ Keep the airplane in such an attitude that the air pressure is directly in the pilot's face.
- ✈ When a flight is proceeding incredibly well, something was forgotten.
- ✈ The only time an aircraft has too much fuel on board is when it's on fire.
- ✈ Flexible is much too rigid; in aviation you have to be fluid.
- ✈ If you can't afford to do something right, then be darn sure you can afford to do it wrong.
- ✈ Just remember, if you crash because of weather, your funeral will be held on a sunny day.
- ✈ Either take up parachute jumping or stay out of single motored airplanes at night.
- ✈ Never fly the "A" model of anything.
- ✈ Never fly anything that doesn't have the paint worn off its rudder pedals.
- ✈ Keep thy airspeed up, lest the earth come from below and smite thee.
- ✈ When a prang seems inevitable, endeavor to strike the softest, cheapest object in the vicinity, as slowly and gently as possible.
- ✈ Instrument flying is when your mind gets a grip on the fact that there is vision beyond sight.
- ✈ Always keep an "out" in your hip pocket.
- ✈ The Cub is the safest plane in the world; it can just barely kill you.
- ✈ A pilot who doesn't have any fear probably isn't flying his plane to its maximum.
- ✈ If you're faced with a forced landing, fly the thing as far into the crash as possible.
- ✈ It has occurred to me that if I did not handle the crash correctly, there would be no survivors.
- ✈ If an airplane is still in one piece, don't cheat on it. Ride the bastard down.
- ✈ Though I fly through the Valley of Death, I shall fear no evil, for I am at 80,000 feet and climbing.
- ✈ You've never been lost until you've been lost at Mach 3.
- ✈ The emergencies you train for almost never happen. It's the one you can't train for that kills you.
- ✈ If you want to grow old as a pilot, you've got to know when to push it and when to back off.
- ✈ Never fly in the same cockpit as someone braver than you.
- ✈ There is no reason to fly through a thunderstorm in peacetime.
- ✈ An airplane may disappoint any pilot, but it'll never surprise a good one.
- ✈ To most people, the sky is the limit. To those who love aviation, the sky is home.

LIFE IS SIMPLE: EAT, SLEEP, FLY!

—DUSTOFFer—

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## Memorial Day Thoughts

*by MAJ Michael Davis O'Donnell, 1 January 1970, Dak To, Vietnam*

If you are able, save for them a place inside of you and save one backward glance when you are leaving for the places they can no longer go to. Be not ashamed to say you loved them, though you may or may not have always. Take what they have left and what they have taught you with their dying and keep it with your own. An in that time when men decide to feel safe to call the war insane, take one moment to embrace those gentle heroes you left behind.

# Aviator's Benediction

*Given by Pete Peterson, former POW and now U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, at a Daedalian luncheon*

O Lord, we have long known that prayer should include confession. Therefore, on behalf of the aviators and their guests gathered here this afternoon, I confess their sins; Lord, they're just not in step with today's society. They are unreasonable in clinging to old-fashioned ideas like patriotism, duty, honor and country. They hold radical ideas believing that they are their brother's keepers and responsible for the aviators flying on their wing. They have been seen stranding when the colors pass, singing the National Anthem at ball games, and drinking toasts to fallen comrades. Not only that, they have been observed standing tall, taking charge, and wearing their hair unfashionably short.

They have taken Teddy R's and JFK's words too seriously and are overly concerned with what they can do for their service and country instead of what it can do for them. They take the Pledge of Allegiance to heart and believe that their oath is to be honored. And . . . they know well what the definition of "is" is.

Forgive them, Lord, for being stubborn men and women who hold these values as genuine. They are aware of the price for honor and with total command of their spirit, they have been willing to pay the price. After all, what more can you expect? They're aviators!

Oh, Lord, our God, bless these men and women, continue to raise up in this nation strong leaders and deliver us from "me first" managers and "don't ask me" leaders.

Be our honored guest today, oh Lord, and join us in laughter, good food, good drink, and telling of tall tales and legends that may occasionally exceed the truth. We bow our heads to those aviators who were lost in places to protect our freedom and our ability to praise you. Watch over and keep safe all those who wear this nation's uniform with special attention to their families and loved ones everywhere.

We thank You for Your grace during this gathering and all the days and nights in the future. God bless you, God bless this nation, and God bless the President of the United States of America.

—DUSTOFFer—

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## Flight Medic's Flashbacks and Reflections

*by James McDonald, CSM, Ret., a former flight platoon sergeant*

Seems it was just a few months ago, but everything seems hazy, a blur of lights, change of personnel, the roommate who drank beer in the shower. The loss of aircraft, the exchange of friendship, the respect for the first-up crews, the wounded, anger at the unseen enemy, the heroes, and the frightened. Cannibalization to keep aircraft flyable and respect for the pitifully raped Hangar Queen. Downed birds, radio chatter, nervous laughter, loss of Sam, the soda man, morrars at the movie, hot refueling, beer for a dime, Montagnard and rotor chain bracelets, nightly doses of insecticide blended with a morning choleraquine-primaquine pill.

Booze to forget, scrip was monopoly money, revetments to spring from, boots on the bar, wide-eyed newbies, a screaming monkey, rotors slashing bamboo, bean cans for rounds to ride on, green tracers, bulletproof cushions, chicken plates, short-timers counting, silent prayers, safety straps, reaching out, pride, wings that were earned, separation of close friends, medals that were not earned, JP4 in a Coke can, clean machine guns, smells that you got used to, unauthorized personal weapons, over the berm, dog rides to POL, the silent thank you.

Blood on the ship's floor, CA missions logged, dailies pulled, supplies restocked, scout dog on a rigid litter. A defective jungle penetrator, laughing and crying, just wanting out. Cold night sweats, bad dreams, fear of the last mission. Fire support bases to visit, borrowing aircraft, bartering for replacements, false sense of security, Hotel Three, hundred-mile-an-hour tape, sand in everything, CMBs and CIBs, unlucky POW missions, a Y cord to share the knowledge, hooch by the flight line, flight ops chatter, red carpet, and Fat Albert, other call signs, strength in unity. Rebellion at the EM Club, Proud Mary songs, inspections, killer omelets. Beautiful South China Sea, time to leave, time to forget somebody else's war, unloading the stress of Vietnam and of being suspended over it like a bullseye.

Proud of the job, friends that forgot to remember and some said it was a mission, some said it was a live training test, some just dismissed it as a bad dream, most said nothing. Flight wings, everyone paid the price, some more than others. Some paid with their youth, if not their life.

Right or wrong, it was our fifteen minutes of fame and, by God, did we fly!

—DUSTOFFer—

# Vietnam: The Helicopter War

*Excerpts of a review by Lou Madrona, UPI, on a History Channel feature*

For several years after their return to the United States, the sound of a passing chopper would evoke strong feelings in Vietnam veterans. The notion of "flashbacks" has been oversold and feeds into the prejudice that the veteran is a disoriented whacko. But in those postcognitive moments, time and space dissolved and a wave of heightened alertness swept by.

The author of the documentary, "The Personal Experience: Helicopter Warfare in Vietnam," Richard Jellerson, served two tours in Vietnam as an Army helicopter pilot. "I wanted to capture on film what it really felt like for those of us who were over there as teenagers involved in the daily maelstrom of war," Jellerson said. Despite the images on the screen, the film does not convey—perhaps could never convey—the startling youth of these pilots. Marine corps helicopter pilots in Vietnam tended to be a few years older, but getting into a chopper with an Army warrant officer pilot (some of whom still had acne) was like being flown around by your paper boy. Yet these youths were given awesome responsibilities under conditions of utmost danger and did not falter.

The film's most striking feature is that the fifteen or so pilots interviewed, who had lived disparate lives for more than thirty years, all said pretty much the same things. One clear theme was the respect most U.S. fighting men had for Viet Cong guerrillas and North Vietnamese Army soldiers. This might surprise most Americans, and it discredits the charge that the United States fought a racist war in Indochina. The veteran's contempt is not for the brave and tenacious enemy but for their countrymen who would speak such calumny of their own soldiers.

The enemy's fighting prowess notwithstanding, the Communist soldiers could be incredibly vicious. U.S. Representative Leonard Boswell, D-Iowa, told of flying out on "a terrible, rainy night" to medevac two little girls shot by Viet Cong raiders who thought the girls' village was hiding rice from them. As Boswell pitched his aircraft forward on takeoff, their blood ran between his feet.

On the practical side, Army pilots found that Vietnam's dense humidity made their heavily loaded airships perform sluggishly in combat. "There's no such thing as an armored helicopter," Tom Lasser said, indenting a chopper's thin aluminum skin with his finger. "You could push a pencil through here."

One helicopter was lost for every eight missions flown, and 4,339 Army crewmen were killed during the war. Despite the whirlybird's vulnerabilities, it was a flying platform for some of the deadliest and most accurate weapons of the era. The mini-guns of the Cobra helicopter, introduced late in 1967, could deliver fire within four feet of an American on the ground, said Ezell Ware.

Barry Tronstad recalled the "incredible decisions" he and his comrades had to make instantly about who to shoot or not shoot. Gary Lucas expressed the "horror" and "terror" he experienced at having killed someone. "Was he married? Did he have a family?" he wondered.

"I didn't like the fact that killing became like drinking water," said Ware, now a brigadier general. Yet Ware professed to believe that men like war. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that men like things that fully engage their attention. "War brings out the best and the worst in people," the general said.

Jellerson told UPI that one of the hardest things the pilots had to do was kill elephants. The two designated "targets of opportunity," to be destroyed whenever encountered, were elephants and sampans moving at night. He explained that it was against the rules for boats to move at night, and therefore, sampans were assumed to be hostile, and elephants were considered to be "enemy vehicles."

Ware is among the many Vietnam veterans who believe the war could have been won if politicians had issued clear and sensible mission orders. "My great disappointment with Vietnam is that we didn't win it," he said, "and I think we could have. We didn't lose in the field. We lost Vietnam in Washington, D.C."

The adage of Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz, 1780–1837, is that war is a continuation of politics by other means. However, the politics of the Vietnam War were never clear. Ware described how objectives were taken and then abandoned, only to be retaken later at the cost of more American lives.

Lucas believes that if the United States' overwhelming military resources had been applied intelligently, the war would have been over in two years at the most. Boswell likened the American experience to a boxer fighting with one arm tied behind his back.

Several pilots expressed remorse for the United States having sold out the South Vietnamese. "They paid the price for having supported us," Lucas said.

These flyers gave full credit to the infantry. They were the true heroes, Ware said, and the pilots gave them the highest priority—"orders or not." "To me, supporting the infantry was the only reason I was there," said George Miller. "They were the guys we would do anything for."

Tronstad said the idea of the lavishly supported American infantryman is a myth. "These guys were spread all over Vietnam in small groups," he said.

The most poignant part of the film dealt with an unprecedented historical phenomenon: the rejection of the returning veteran by his own people.

Boswell, who spent the time between his two Vietnam tours in a small Midwestern town, could count on the fingers of one hand the number of people who asked him where he had been. "That was hard," he said. In an interview in his Capitol Hill office, the congressman told UPI that over the years he tried to discipline himself to put resentments behind him. He didn't come to terms with his true feelings until years later, he said, when the town of Bedford, Iowa, held a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

Tronstad was greeted with a North Vietnamese Army flag

hanging in the window of a college classroom. He was asked to leave when he took it down. He recalled that his non-veteran contemporaries "totally ignored that part of your life."

"They didn't appreciate what we had done," Ware said. "We had become the enemy to our own people."

—DUSTOFFer—

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## **DUSTOFF Reunion — February 22–24, 2002**

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## **The Father of Air Rescue**

*by Paul Logan, staff writer, the Albuquerque Journal.*

Brigadier General Dick Kight, known as the "Father of Air Rescue," made a decision in the early days of the Korean War that helped save the lives of many fliers and soldiers. Kight, an Air Force colonel who commanded air rescue in 1950, made helicopters the main tool for evacuating downed airmen in enemy territory and the wounded from the front lines to a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. Such rescues are etched forever in the minds of television viewers of "M\*A\*S\*H." In the show's opening scene, a chopper carrying wounded troops swings over a hill and lands.

The retired general was an Albuquerque resident the past 34 years. He died June 17, 2001, of complications from emphysema. Kight was 87. His career also included:

- Approving an idea of one of his officers to form the "PJs," an elite parachute jumping group with the medical and survival skills to rescue downed pilots.
- Flying supplies to troops in the China-Burma-India Theater, including an unusual bombing run.
- Taking former presidential candidate Wendell Willkie on an around-the-world trip to fighting fronts during the war.
- Flying Vice President Henry Wallace to Russia and China. His assignment brought the pilot face to face with Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, whom Kight called "the most evil human being" he had ever seen.
- Kight was commander of the Air Rescue Service from about 1946 to 1952. He wrote the rescuer's creed and coined the motto "That Others May Live."

"They lived by that," said his son, Tom Kight of Albuquerque, referring to the military personnel who worked for Kight in locations worldwide.

Longtime friend Rich McVay, of Albuquerque, was a helicopter pilot in the Korean War. He said Kight fought for his men at the Pentagon, always trying to get them the best equipment. "He was unpretentious," McVay said. "He treated second lieutenants the same way he treated colonels."

One of Kight's ancestors was a ship's captain who brought goods to trade from England to America in 1694. Another forefather was a Union soldier in the Civil War. So it was only natural that Kight, son of a Texas rancher, loved adventure. When he was 5, he could identify an aircraft flying over Claude, Texas, near Amarillo, by the sound of its engine, his son said.

Kight became a flying cadet in 1936 with the Army Air Corps in San Antonio. He ranked with the top aerobatic pilots because he was spending more time flying upside-down than right-side up.

During World War II, he rose from first lieutenant to colonel in about four years. He flew a number of missions on a converted bomber, going over the Himalayas for what was known as "Hump Operations" to resupply troops in Asia. On one occasion, Kight responded when the Army required some air support along the Burma Trail. His crew armed the bombs on their aircraft by hand when they reached the target and tossed them out a side door of the aircraft onto Japanese infantry.

Kight earned the Distinguished Flying Cross twice for heroism and also received the Air Medal.



# 421<sup>st</sup> Medics Share Their Army with German Counterparts

by LT Brian Balcerak and SFC Steve Seitz

Wiesbaden Army Airfield—4 September 2001—A group of V Corps medics joined with their German counterparts recently to share American and German military, medical, and cultural practices.

American medical specialists from the Corps' 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, 557<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Ground Ambulance), 421<sup>st</sup> Medical Battalion (Evacuation), traveled from their home base here to spend two days training with their German peers at a kaserne in Montabaur, Near Koblenz, Germany.

Sharing the two armies' medical practices was the focus of the first day of the joint exercise. The German unit's medical officer kicked off the training with a briefing on the capabilities and the components of the German reserve hospital. According to 30<sup>th</sup> Medical Brigade experts, the German facility operates in a similar manner to an American combat support hospital. Next, the "Bulldogs" of the 557<sup>th</sup>—U.S. Army, Europe's only ground ambulance company—staged a static display of four of their M997 ambulances and demonstrated its medical equipment.

The training then marched on—literally—with both units hiking two miles to a round-robin exercise in German medical techniques. The round robin included demonstrations using a gas-soaked steel mannequin to show how to save a patient who is on fire, of extricating victims from a vehicle and a minefield, and of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

The first day's training ended on a cultural high note, with the German hosts treating their American peers to a program that included a traditional Black Forest dinner and exchanges of gifts by both units.

Day two featured a look at Germany's military past and present. The first stop was the Wehrtechnische Studien Sammlung (German Defense Study Collection) in Koblenz, a presentation of German small arms, automatic weapons, aircraft, naval equipment, uniforms, and personal military equipment ranging from the early twentieth century to today. The exercise ended on another high note, a visit to Koblenz' mammoth nineteenth-century Ehrenbreitstein fortress, perched high above the panoramic Deutsches Eck at the junction of the Rhein and Mosel Rivers.

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## Ten Commandments of Flying Safety

by Si Simmons, one of the original DUSTOFFers in the Mekong Delta

1. Turn from thy appointed way hurriedly when instructed by the controller, lest ye find thyself making merry with thy fellow birdman's appendage, for the controller's sight encompasses that which thine eyes cannot see, yea, even unto thy wildest dreams.
2. When the controller sayeth unto thee with the voice of urgency, "HOLD!" holdest thou with the greatest expediency and without argument, lest this be the final opportunity for thee to hold.
3. Should the voice from the air that is the controller's clear thee for takeoff, go thus like the wind, for perchance there is a machine of flight on a short final that planneth to use every surface upon which thou sittest, yea, even unto seconds.
4. Should conditions surrounding thee be that know as IFR, ask him not for VFR takeoff, for should he allow it, he will find himself in sore trouble with that agency known as the FAA, and the law of the land adjureth harsh penalties upon these happenings.
5. Speak unto him with a voice of honey. Treat him as a brother, lest he become excited, confused, loseth his wits, and give thee a right turn out when a left turn benefiteth the occasion, for lo, a controller loveth a calm, courteous pilot above all things.
6. While in his area, keep the controller informed well in advance of thy every intention, and believeth not that he readeth thy mind, for in spite of popular opinion, he is human even as thee and me.
7. When thou hearest the words from the little black box sayeth, "Unable to approve on account of traffic," beseecheth thou not from thou loftiest position to change his decision, for lo, had not the traffic been there, the words would have not been uttered; for he hath the eye of an eagle and sees all without restriction.
8. When the clearance is of the VFR type, stay ye from the proximity of thy brothers who are holding, for lo, the poor controller has sorely tried to explain to his IFR charges the presence of strange birds.
9. Asketh for instructions in a voice that is calm and clear so the controller will understand thy wants; confuse him not lest he clear thee for final on "36," while clearing one of thy brothers for takeoff on "18."
10. Watch thou closely for all four-wheeled earthbound vehicles. They are numerous and unpredictable, yea, even as a whirlwind. Treat them with fear and respect while taxiing, lest they charge upon thee with the speed of a lion and the fury of a tornado, for their drivers may be uninstructed in the ways of the birdman.

# Top of the Schoolhouse

by 1SG Dave Litteral

Much has happened since the last edition of *The DUSTOFFer*. The tragic events of September 11, 2001, have touched our entire nation. The images of the World Trade Center and Pentagon, as the unthinkable happened before our eyes, will forever be etched in our minds. Despite the incredible loss and horror, America has experienced a resurgence of unity and pride that is far greater than anyone might have expected under such circumstances.

As members of the Emergency Medical Services community, DUSTOFFers are no strangers to injury and dying. Yet the new era that has begun serves to remind us that we must be even more vigilant in our mission. From the aviators to the crew chiefs, the flight medics to the fuel handlers, we must always stand ready.

First let me say that our Web site has changed addresses. Our new URL is <<http://usasam.amedd.army.mil>>. Check it out; the Flight Medic page has an alumni page with a list of all graduates since Class 001-84. Our computer guru, Rob Nand has done a great job. You can also find a MEDEVAC Proponency link on our site. We welcome your input as we continue our quest to be the DOD Center of Excellence for Rotary Wing Aviation Medicine, Education, and Doctrine.

Over the summer I had the opportunity to travel to Fort Detrick, Maryland. The Army Telemedicine Research Center (TATRC) hosted a conference on the implementation of telemedicine in air ambulances. Officially called Maintenance, Health, Data, Archirecrure (MHDA), the program proposes to equip the aircraft, crewmembers, and patients with monitors. Once data is transmitted, personnel far from the front will be able to track aircraft components, crewmember health, and patient condition. In fact, the distant hospital will be able to view the patient and direct the flight medic in performing necessary procedures. The technology is still in development but holds great promise for future employment in the air ambulance business. The United States Air Force has already tested its version, called "Care in the Air."

Last month Fort Rucker and the Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization (DES) hosted an enlisted Flight Instructor/Standardization Instructor Conference. The goal was to teach unit trainers from aviation units around the world all the aspects of developing nonrated crewmembers. USASAM personnel conducted an entire day of the three-day seminar training aviation soldiers of all MOSs in the aeromedical factors involved in flying. For many of the aviation branch personnel, it was their first exposure to the academics of such topics as hypoxia, stress and fatigue, and Boyle's Law, just to name a few. SFC Craig Williams, SFC David Williams, SFC Raymond Smith, SFC Ian Gosling, and SSG David Lambert were singled out as having done a superb job educating the FI/SI audience. They all received coins from the DES and Academy of Health Sciences.

If you have had the chance to take a look at the Web site, you might have noticed that USASAM has a project aircraft. We are currently converting an SH60B Seahawk cabin into the likeness of the cabin of a UH60A MEDEVAC Blackhawk. The project is ongoing, and we hope to be able to use it as a Flight Medic XXI simulator by spring.

We are looking forward to meeting with as many of the MEDEVAC first sergeants as are able to make it to the Army MEDEVAC Conference in February. The goal of the AMEC is to give you new tools for your leadership toolbox that you can take back to your unit and be even more successful. You can find the brochure on our Web site, link to MEDEVAC Proponency.

If you are going to be in the Fort Rucker vicinity, stop by, or send me an e-mail if there is anything USASAM can do for you or your unit. Please e-mail me at <[David.Litteral@se.amedd.army.mil](mailto:David.Litteral@se.amedd.army.mil)>.

—DUSTOFFer—

**DUSTOFF Reunion — February 22–24, 2002**  
**— Marriott Northwest Hotel • San Antonio • Texas —**  
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# From the Wiregrass

by COL Scott Heintz and LTC Gino Montagno

Greetings from the Wiregrass:

Just a few lines to introduce myself and give you a quick update from Mother Rucker. I became the new Director of MEDEVAC Proponency in July. COL Scott (SB6) Heintz headed farther south to Tampa, Florida, to become the Deputy Surgeon at SOCOM. COL Heintz mentioned to me that in light of recent heightened security measures, this information is close hold and sensitive and above all should not be released to the general public or any bill collection agencies. COL Heintz still carries the title of Aviation or Aeromedical Evacuation Consultant to the Surgeon General and will retain the title until the new O-6 arrives (which could be for a very long time).

Just prior to his departure, Col Heintz introduced you to the Aviation Transformation Initiative (ATI). Current Aviation force structure has become too expensive to maintain, and Army leadership has determined that restructuring is necessary to optimize the cost. ATI will affect Army Aviation in 2002 and MEDEVAC units in 2003. Exact details of the ATI and how and when it will affect our MEDEVAC fleet are still unknown. We will do our best to keep you informed as more information becomes available.

I'm pleased to report that MEDEVAC Proponency will host next year's Army Medical Evacuation Conference (AMEC). The dates for the conference are 24 February thru 1 March 2002. The Marriott N.W. was chosen as the new location. The Marriott N.W. is located near the I-10/410 Loop where the old Holiday Inn N.W. used to be. The hotel underwent a \$2 million facelift, and the hotel staff looks forward to

satisfying all your conference needs. This will be a working conference to examine the medical evacuation requirements associated with the Army Transformation, with an emphasis on Home Land Defense. Planning for the conference is almost complete, and the agenda is filling up fast. If any of you have any special topics or areas of concern that need to be addressed, please forward the information to MEPD or give us a call at (334) 255-1170.

The aviation transformation initiative continues. The Chief of Staff of the Army signed a letter in September approving the concept. Decisions on exactly how it will be implemented and when aircraft moves will occur are still being made. Tied to this decision is the divestiture and an Army-mandated look at MEDEVAC requirements at every FORSCOM and TRADOC installation in CONUS. LTC Randy Anderson is still lead on this critical issue and as information becomes available we'll pass it on to you.

## DUSTOFF Kudos

Congratulations are in order for the following Dustoffers. LTCs Garry Atkins and Fred Garguilo have been selected for the Army War College. The O6 board results were released in November, and 67Js led the way. Congratulations to: Garry Atkins, Thomas Bailey, Fred Garguilo, Charles Kellar, and Pauline Knapp. Best of luck to all of you. Just out of curiosity, which one of you has decided to make Mother Rucker your future home?

That's all for now. Stop by if you're ever in town. Until next time, "Keep it in the Green" and be safe—DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

## Why Helicopters are Better Than Women

- A helicopter will kill you quickly . . . a woman takes her time.
- Helicopters can go inverted any time, any place.
- Helicopters can be turned on by the flick of a switch and turned off in the same way.
- A helicopter's thrust-to-weight ratio is higher.
- A helicopter does not get mad if you do a "touch and go" as many times as you wish.
- A helicopter does not object to a preflight inspection.
- Helicopters come with operating manuals.
- Helicopters have strict weight and balance limits.
- Helicopters don't come with in-laws.
- Helicopters don't whine unless something is really wrong.
- Helicopters don't care how many other helicopters you've flown . . . in fact, helicopters *like* it that you've flown many other helicopters and prefer that those other flights were frequent and recent.
- Helicopters don't care how they smell or how you smell.
- Helicopters don't require perfume, furs, expensive clothes or jewelry to run well.
- When flying, you and your helicopter both arrive at the same time.
- Helicopters don't mind if you look at other helicopters or if you buy helicopter magazines.
- Helicopters like it when you use tie-downs on them.

# DUSTOFF in Poland

*by Bill Roche, V Corps Public Affairs Office*

Oleszno, Poland—1 October, 2001—A group of soldiers and civilians participating in V Corps' combined US-Polish Exercise Victory Strike II proved the value of training when they helped save the life of a Polish citizen injured in a car accident on 30 September. Major John Kopp of the US Army Contracting Command, Europe, was driving with his Polish translator on Highway 175 northwest of the town of Kalisz Pomorski that afternoon when he came upon a gruesome scene. A small orange car was wrapped around a tree by the side of the road. Two young males had been thrown from the car. One was unconscious and bleeding from a head or neck wound; the other was conscious but having difficulty breathing. A third victim was pinned inside the vehicle.

Kopp said that, to his surprise, several people were standing around at the scene, but no one was aiding the victims. He grabbed his cellular phone, he said, and things began to happen. As he phoned the 212<sup>th</sup> Military Police desk sergeant at Oleszno, traffic began backing up at the scene. One of those stuck in traffic was U.S. Army, Europe, contractor employee Jay Ellenberger, who joined Kopp to aid the victims.

Polish emergency rescue units arrived at the scene. They prepared to move the unconscious victim and cut the trapped man from the car. The trapped victim was taken to a local hospital to be treated for a fractured leg.

Meanwhile, the MPs relayed a call to an air ambulance team of the 236<sup>th</sup> Medical Company from Landstuhl, Germany, waiting at nearby Ziemsko Airfield. Scrambling from their readied Blackhawk air ambulance, the team was airborne in minutes, said chief Warrant Officer 2 Daniel Adams, the team's pilot-in-command. Kopp marked a landing zone for the chopper in a roadside field and gave directions to the airfield on his cell phone.

The team put down in a cloud of dust and raced to the accident scene. When they appeared, said Flight Medics Staff Sergeant Douglas Schwab and SPC Jimmy Rasche, everyone, including the Polish medical team, "just kinda backed off."

As the 236<sup>th</sup> medics took over, they found that the unconscious victim had no pulse, Rasche said, and he began to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The patients were rushed onto the chopper just 12 minutes after it sat down, Adams said. Twelve minutes later it arrived at the Polish 107<sup>th</sup> Army Hospital at Walcz, about an hour's drive from the accident scene. During the flight, Schwab said, the aircrew took turns continuing the CPR on the unconscious victim.

At the hospital, both patients were whisked inside, he said, as he and Rasche continued performing CPR. In concert with the hospital staff, they soon had the patient's heart beating in a stable rhythm. The two medics were pleasantly stunned.

"It's not often you get a CPR casualty to come back," Schwab said. "Especially doing it for that long," Rasche added.

The patient survived and was moved to a hospital in Drawsko Pomorski the following morning for further treatment. The third victim remained in Walcz for treatment of pelvis injuries.

Schwab said the incident is what medics work for. "You expect the worst and hope for the best," he said.

"If they had tried to ground evacuate the guy, he would've died," Rasche said.

Everyone involved in the incident agreed that speed was only half of the equation. Teamwork and training were the rest. "The mission . . . was excellent," said pilot 1LT Casey Howard, "because everyone did exactly what they were supposed to do."

"It's sad to think of it as a training event when people are really getting hurt," he added, "but these kinds of incidents provide satisfaction and good training."

Kopp said the same. "All I can say is we followed our training," the major said, "and did what comes as reflex. It was great. I was very impressed."

—DUSTOFFer—

## Closing Out the Flight Plan

By Howlett notified *The DUSTOFFer* that Bill Killo, filed his final flight plan. Bill joined the 1st Hcpt Amb Co (Prov) in Korea in late 1954 or early 1955 straight out of flight school.

Melba Ruth Brigman Campbell, one of the great first ladies of Army Medical Department Aviation and wife of Colonel (Ret) Bill Campbell, MSC aviator and an original DUSTOFFer in the 57<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment (HA) in 1965, passed away on 28 July 2001. Melba was a beloved lady and mentor for so many of us and our families. In addition to Bill, Melba is survived by three daughters and eight grandchildren.



## New Entries on the Flight Manifest

(Since July 2001)

SGT Michael Gillespie (Flt Medic Honor Grad)	Westover, WV	M
WO1 Clint Brisedine (2CF7 Honor Grad)	Enterprise, AL	M
CPT Robert Peneguy	Mobile, AL	LM
Mr. William York Booth	Santa Monica, CA	LM
1LT Joseph Seibert	APO AE	M
CW4 Stanley Buck	Colorado Springs, CO	M
2LT James Ruediger	Killeen, TX	LM
Mr Gerard Taylor	Foresr City, IA	LM
CPL William Zarychta	Mullica Hill, NJ	LM
Mr. Dan Halliday	Manteca	LM
SGT Christine Penska	Oakton, VA	LM
SGT John Gilder	Saginaw, TX	M
SSG Sean Sharp	APO AP	LM
SGT Edward Berg	Cedarville, CA	LM
SFC Michael Curtis	Hinton, WV	LM
SGT Patrick Casha	Salem, OR	LM
SGT Charlie Hachett	APO AP	M
1LT Annejeanette Presnell	Eureka, MT	LM
CPT James Hannam	APO AE	LM
CPT Christopher Gruber	Lakewood, WA	LM
SPC Christopher McDonald	Mounds, OK	M
SGT Thomas Easter (Flt Medic Honor Grad)	Auburn, LA	M
SGT Steven Milovich (2CF7 Honor Grad)	Reno, NV	M
CW2 Eric Spear (2CF7 Honor Grad)	Augusta, ME	M
Mr. Ken Keppel	Neville Island, PA	M
CPT Roberr McCreary	Atlanta, GA	M
SFC Herb Pardee	Sultan, WA	LM
SSG Landon Estes	Roy, WA	LM
SPC Rick Pauley	Benicia, CA	M
CPT Tanya Siller	San Antonio, TX	LM
MSG Earl Foss	Loudon, NH	LM
SGT Joey Foss	Fort Bragg, NC	M

## DUSTOFF Association Membership Report

Honorary Life Members	14
Life Members	795
Current Annual Members	168
Units	70
Corporations	6
Inactive	640
Other	3
Totals	1,681

## New Members This Year

New Life Members	23
New Members	29



## 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 [secretary@dustoff.org](mailto:secretary@dustoff.org) or [jtrus5@aol.com](mailto:jtrus5@aol.com).

Please send your contributions to:

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



# 23rd Annual DUSTOFF Association Reunion

## February 22-24, 2002 — Registration Form

Member's name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

Military address \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite DUSTOFF Unit/Year \_\_\_\_\_

DUES:		TOTALS
New Member Dues	\$15 + \$10 initial fee (E5 & below—\$7.50)	\$ _____
Annual Dues	\$15 (E9 & below—\$7.50)	\$ _____
Past Dues (Catch up)	\$15 per year owed as back dues	\$ _____
Life Member Dues	\$100 (one-time payment) (Enlisted—\$50)	\$ _____

### REUNION REGISTRATION:

Member/Spouse	\$15/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
Non-member/Guest	\$20/person	_____ persons	\$ _____

### HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

Call Marriott N.W. at 800-228-9290 or local (210) 377-3900 to reserve your room at \$89.00/night.

Please mention you are with the DUSTOFF Association.

### CHUCK MATEER GOLF CLASSIC:

Ft. Sam Houston Club Member	\$20/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
Non-member Military	\$32/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
Non-member Civilian	\$37/person	_____ persons	\$ _____

### FRIDAY NIGHT:

Mexican Buffet	\$25/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
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### SPOUSES' LUNCHEON:

TBA	\$20/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
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### SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET:

London Broil	\$25/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
Chicken	\$25/person	_____ persons	\$ _____

**PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.** Registration deadline is February 1, 2002. Please send registration form and check to:  
DUSTOFF Association, P. O. Box 8091, Wainwright Station, San Antonio, TX 78208.

### DUSTOFF STORE:

See page 25. Store orders will ready for pick-up at the registration desk on February 22, 2002.

# The DUSTOFF Store

Item	Price	Size	Quantity	Total
Ball cap — Maroon	\$10		_____	\$_____
Ball cap — White	\$10		_____	\$_____
Ball cap — Tan	\$10		_____	\$_____
Golf shirt — Maroon (sm, med, lg, xl, xxl)	\$20	_____	_____	\$_____
To mail shirts and caps, add \$5 per order (not necessary if attending reunion).				\$_____
DUSTOFF Decal	\$1		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Koozie	\$2		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Coffee Mug	\$8		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Pocketknife	\$4		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Coin	\$5		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Tie Tac/Lapel Pin	\$5		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF or Medevac Print	\$10		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Flag/Giudon				
One-sided	\$40		_____	\$_____
Two-sided	\$60		_____	\$_____
To mail coins, koozies, knives, posters, decals and directories, add \$3 per order (not necessary if attending reunion).				\$_____
TOTAL ORDER				\$_____

Send check or money order, payable to DUSTOFF Assn., to:

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San Antonio, TX 78208

(Please allow 4–6 weeks for delivery of mail orders.  
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\$10.00 Initial fee  
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\$25.00 Total
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Enlisted  
E-5 & below  
E-6 & above  
\$ 7.50 Annual fee  
No Initial fee  
\$10.00 Initial fee
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Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_  
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