



THE DUSTOFFER



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER 2002

DUSTOFF Night Rescue in Vietnam



... a subject of art, of fantasy and of unbelievable courage

President's Message

Greetings, fellow DUSTOFFers. This has been a fast-paced year both in our Association and in our Army. With the threat of war with Iraq looming on the horizon, our DUSTOFF units remain at the ready to serve our fighting forces with dedicated support. Please keep our deployed servicemen and women in your prayers for their safety and health.

Plans for the 2003 reunion are well underway. Your executive council has worked hard to get the best deals possible at the Marriott NW here in San Antonio so our reunion will be a comfortable and fun time of meeting with comrades and their spouses. This year's reunion will be packed with events, beginning with the golf tourney on Friday. The Hall of Fame wall and memorial pavers will be dedicated on Saturday at the AMEDD Museum. Please make time to attend all our events.

Congratulations to our three new Hall of Fame members, as well as our Crewmember of the Year, Sgt George Hildebrant, and the crew from the 57th Medical Company, our Rescue of the Year awardees.

It's truly an honor to serve as your president. With so much that's great and positive happening in our Association, it's hard to imagine how much better it could be. See you in San Antonio in February 2003.

DUSTOFF!

Ken Crook

DUSTOFF Association Executive Council

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DUSTOFF 2002 Rescue of the Year and Crewmember of the Year Awards

The DUSTOFF Association Executive Council, working with the unit commanders of active and reserve component air ambulance companies, recently made the announcement of the 2002 Awards for Crewmember of the Year and Rescue of the Year. Nominations were received in late September, with all members of the Executive Council having the opportunity to vote. The votes were validated at the 4 November 2002 Executive Council meeting with the naming of SGT George Hildebrandt of the 50th Medical Company (AA), Fort Campbell, Kentucky, as the 2002 Crewmember of the Year. The 57th Medical Co., Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was awarded the Rescue of the Year for a mission flown under fire in Afghanistan.

The DUSTOFF Association Executive Council extends a hearty "Whooh!" to those chosen to represent the DUSTOFF Association and DUSTOFF traditions for 2002. The awards will be presented at the Saturday banquet during the 2003 DUSTOFF Association Reunion, 21–23 February 2003 at the Marriott NW Hotel in San Antonio. Our corporate sponsors, Sikorsky Aircraft and Breeze Eastern, will participate in the presentation ceremony.

Crewmember of the Year

On 8 April 2002 at 0625Z, a nine-line MEDEVAC request for 5 patients with injuries sustained from a grenade blast was received by the 50th Medical Company. At 0640Z the aircraft departed Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Approximately 40 minutes after take-off, contact was established with call-sign Playboy 90, who advised of enemy activity. After landing, SGT George Hildebrandt departed the aircraft to evaluate the patients, while SGT Forwood provided aircraft security.

While on the ground, SGT Hildebrandt and SGT Forwood reported hearing small arms fire from the right side of the aircraft. Within five minutes, the three most critical patients

were loaded onboard, and the two least critical were loaded onto the escort aircraft.

After departure, SGT Hildebrandt further assessed the patients instructing the crewchief to begin rescue breathing for a patient who had severe injuries to his head, left arm, and left leg. A second patient had shrapnel wounds to his neck and lower legs. The third patient had shrapnel wounds to the posterior side of his body. The first patient was intubated prior to being loaded into the aircraft. He was still spitting up blood and became combative due to his head injuries.

While constantly evaluating all three patients' conditions, SGT Hildebrandt ensured that the most critical patient's blood pressure remained viable with added I.V.s, despite his veins collapsing. Throughout the flight, SGT Hildebrandt fought to keep his patients alive.

Arriving at the Forward Surgical Team, SGT Hildebrandt quickly gave them the patient status and vital conditions. All patients received surgery and will recover from the wounds. If not for the efforts of the entire crew led, by SGT Hildebrandt's expertise, the most critical patient would probably have died from his sustained injuries. SGT Hildebrandt's actions that day are but a part of the total soldier that he is. He reflects the DUSTOFF traditions in all he does.

Rescue of the Year

The crewmembers of the Rescue of the Year crew are Pilot in Command CPT Michael A. Stone, Co-Pilot CW2 Ezekial J. Coffman, Medic SGT Frank I. Caudill, Crew Chief SPC Jose Peru of the 57th Medical Company stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. At approximately 0910Z on 27 July 2002, DUSTOFF operations received a 9-Line MEDEVAC request for numerous casualties located in the vicinity of Ab Khail. Elements of U.S. Special Forces, 1/505th PIR, and Afghan militia fighters were conducting a search of the village of Ab Khail. The search was



DUSTOFF 2002 Crewmember of the Year, SGT George Hildebrandt, 50th Medical Company (AA), Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

intended to locate weapons in the village. The crews of DUSTOFF 36, Wings 11 (a Quick Reaction Force UH-60), and two escort AH-64s (Widowmaker 23 and 26) were launched at 0920Z for pickup.

Since the intelligence on the objective was minimal, the Widowmakers briefed that they would push forward 20 minutes out from the Landing Zone (LZ) to perform a reconnaissance and security sweep. Wing 11 and DUSTOFF 36 were still 12 miles out from the LZ when Widowmaker 26 first made contact with the ground unit Cobra 20 on secure FM. Upon contact, Cobra 20 notified Widowmaker 26 that the TACP was on the same frequency and needed the Apaches to make attack runs against the enemy compound where soldiers were still receiving fire.

Immediately, Widowmaker 26 coordinated with the TACP and his wingman to set up the axis of attack to ensure clearance of fires from friendly forces. At this time Wings 11 and DUSTOFF 36 had closed on the objective. DUSTOFF 36 led Wings 11 to the east, where they held one mile away behind a ridgeline for security.

Widowmaker 23 and 26 began making multiple runs against the compound, first employing 30mm cannon fire and then 2.75-inch rockets. This went on for about ten minutes. Finally, Cobra 20 cleared DUSTOFF 36 and Wings 11 to ingress for casualty retrieval.

(Continued.)

DUSTOFF 36 coordinated with Widowmaker 26, who informed them that the LZ was still "Cherry," which meant that it was still hot. The Apaches had reported receiving ground fire during their attack runs, but it was time to get the casualties to a higher level of care. DUSTOFF 36 sequenced their approach behind Widowmaker 23 as they made a rocket attack against the objective.

Wings 11 and DUSTOFF 36 landed on the LZ at 1028Z. The medic and the Special Forces doctor got off the DUSTOFF aircraft to assess and load the patients. At that time SPC Basham also left the Wings aircraft to escort the wounded PUC (person under confinement) onto Wings 11.

While DUSTOFF 36 was in the LZ, a pair of F-18s checked in with the TACP and proceeded to drop two Mark-82 bombs on the compound, now located only 400 meters away to the South. While the patients were be-

ing loaded, DUSTOFF 36 was in communication with Widowmaker 26, who informed them that they were receiving ground fire from their current location to the Northeast, and to make their departure to the North. The area from which they were receiving ground fire was the exact location Wings 11 and DUSTOFF 36 had been holding prior to their ingress for pickup.

Once the casualties were loaded onto DUSTOFF 36 and the PUC was secure on Wings 11, both aircraft made their departure to the North. For the return trip they flew without the Apache escort. The two Widowmaker aircraft remained to expend their remaining ordinance in support of the ground unit. On departure, two A-10s also checked in with TACP to provide their support to the continued suppression of the enemy in the compound.

From the time the flight arrived, until DUSTOFF 36 and Wings 11 departed, enemy troops were firing on U.S.

forces while CAS continued their suppression of the ground target. At 1130Z, DUSTOFF 36 and Wings 11 arrived at Bagram Airfield and transferred the patients to the waiting ambulances.

Congratulations also to the other great Americans nominated by the unit commanders for the DUSTOFF Crewmember of the Year Award. Those DUSTOFF Crewmembers are: SPC Brian Basham, 57th Medical Company, Fort Bragg, North Carolina; CPL Brandon Buttram, 507th Medical Company, Fort Hood, Texas; SSG Glen Johnston, 571st Medical Company, Fort Carson, Colorado; SGT Frayne Fowler, 1042nd Medical Company, Oregon ANG; and SGT Bruce Conger, 1085th Medical Company, South Dakota ANG.

Congratulations also to crews from the following units who were nominated: 45th Medical Co., Germany; 50th Medical Company, Fort Campbell, Kentucky; 159th Medical Co., Weisbaden, Germany; 236th Medical Co., Landstuhl, Germany; 507th Medical Co., Fort Hood, Texas; 571st Medical Co., Fort Carson, Colorado; 1042nd Medical Co., Oregon ANG, Stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; 1085th Medical Co, South Dakota ANG, U.S. Army Air Ambulance Detachment, Fort Drum.

God Bless America

Captain John Rasmussen, now a chaplain with the Multinational Division North in Bosnia, provided a very special perspective on a young soldier who'd obviously learned his lessons well.

It was raining cats and dogs, and I was late for physical training. Traffic was backed up at Fort Campbell and was moving way too slowly. I was probably going to be late, and I was growing more and more impatient.

The pace slowed almost to a standstill as I passed Memorial Grove, the site built to honor the soldiers who died in the Gander airplane crash, the worst redeployment accident in the history of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Because it was close to Memorial Day, a small American flag had been placed in the ground next to each soldier's memorial plaque.

My concern at the time, however, was getting past the bottleneck, getting out of the rain, and getting to PT on time. All of a sudden, infuriatingly, just as the traffic was getting started again, the car in front of me stopped.

A soldier, a private, of course, jumped out in the pouring rain and ran over toward the grove.

I couldn't believe it! This knucklehead was holding up everyone

for who knows what kind of prank. Horns were honking. I waited to see the butt-chewing that I wanted him to get for making me late.

He was getting soaked to the skin. His BDUs were plastered to his frame. I watched as he ran up to one of the memorial plaques, picked up the small American flag that had fallen to the ground in the wind and the rain and set it upright again.

Then, slowly, he came to attention, saluted, ran back to his car, and drove off.

I'll never forget that incident. That soldier, whose name I will never know, taught me more about duty, honor, and respect than a hundred books or a thousand lectures. That simple salute, that single act of honoring his fallen brother and his flag, encapsulated all the Army values in one gesture for me.

"I will never forget. I will keep the faith. I will finish the mission. I am an American soldier."

—DUSTOFFer—

—DUSTOFFer—



Remembering a Friend and Compatriot

ISG (Ret) Randy L. Ford cast a particularly eloquent light on the passing of SFC (Ret) John D. Cook.

On April 30, 2002, a funeral was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for retired Sergeant First Class John D. Cook.

John, a Vietnam War aviation veteran, passed away earlier in the month from natural causes. He had retired from active duty in the early 1990s. His last duty station was Fort Carson, assigned to the 571st Medical Detachment (HA), where he served as the maintenance NCOIC, platoon sergeant, and, ultimately, the detachment first sergeant.

I attended the services that morning. Upon my arrival, I found several old DUSTOFFers present to pay their respects to a fine man, father, NCO, and DUSTOFFer.

Besides myself, there was former Sergeant Kevin Jackson, former SP4 Gabe Firpo, and retired Master Sergeant Les Kush.

We had all served with John in the 571st Med back in the 1980s. Even though we were all flight medics back in those days, we all still remembered John Cook and his dedication to aircraft safety and maintenance. We did appreciate his efforts and performance of duty.

We also remembered being with him at the numerous unit get-togethers. The 571st was an extension of family,

as all medical evacuation units are to this day. We always admired his Corvette, wishing we had one. Those were great days, with good MAST missions, good commanders, good pilots, and good crews.

After the funeral, we decided this was a time to be together, to remember John and the days past. Our gathering for a meal progressed to stories about John and those days long gone. Suddenly it didn't seem as though the 571st had been that long ago with all the memories flooding back. There were remembrances about missions, deployments, hairy hoists, and "There I was" stories.

We caught up with each other about the years we had been apart. Les is a success at business since his retirement from the Army, and his last duty had been as a Special Forces medic. I could still hear the cadence during PT runs at the 571st, "More PT and Les Kush." He was never one to go at a slow pace back then.

The amazing thing about the remaining three of us is that we had all found a place in law enforcement. Kevin was a police officer in Pueblo, Colorado, and Gabe is a detective with the El Paso Country Sheriff's Office in Colorado Springs. I had been a street cop for the town of Green Mountain

Falls, Colorado. Funny how that turned out; what would John Cook have said?

We drank toasts to John and continued, toasting DUSTOFF, good pilots, good crew chiefs, good medics, good missions, good aircraft. Of course, this many toasts, with toasting John interspersed, led to toasts for bad pilots, bad missions, damn bad first sergeants, damn bad brigade commanders, and there was even a "How in the Sam Hill did Patrick Sargent make light colonel?" toast.

At a point there was silence, for we had as one remembered what had brought us together. We sat looking at our beer. No one said a word until someone, I don't remember who, uttered, "To John," and we stood to leave.

We promised to keep in touch and not let the years pass without calling each other. We promised to get together again, and we have—thanks to Sergeant First Class John D. Cook. Thanks, John, for then and now.

—DUSTOFFer—

War Stories

The association's founder and patron "saint," SFC (Ret) Egor Johnson, was always the lovable, good-time guy we all know and love at the reunions. Following is real war story about his early days with DUSTOFF.

I had been in country and the 57th only about fifty days when, because of the threat of an attack on the BOQ, I was placed on guard duty there on the patio. It was a long night, and I had a large cyst on my shoulder that they said was caused by me coming directly from Alaska to Vietnam.

One of the guys in the unit, an inveterate scrounger, had a German MP40 machine pistol. I borrowed it for the night, with three clips. I cocked the gun into the safe position, back and up. During the night, it somehow moved from the Safe position to Fire.

At 2358 hours, I think I was falling asleep, but my finger hit the trigger. What a great weapon! It fired off 9 rounds, all of them going through the same hole in the netting around the patio. Well, since I was just outside the Officers' Club, everyone, with the exception of John Dean, hit the floor. I understand that John then walked down the bar and consumed the drinks that everyone had left. Needless to say, Major Campbell, who was in his room, was pissed. They came out, took my weapon, gave me a .45, and told me to KEEP THE CLIP OUT OF IT! So much for celebrating New Year's Eve 1965.

The Early Years

DUSTOFFer Bobby Mock writes about the day Kelly went down.

On July 1, 1964, I was the one to get the message from the CO of the 121st. It's strange now that these very short moments in our lives are still so clear. I was sitting in our little operations room in front of our hooch when he rushed in. His exact words were, "Kelly's down." Then he turned on his heels and ran out of the room. It was not until about a half hour later that the word came that Kelly had been killed.

I immediately got on the land line trying to get the operations shack at our headquarters to report the news. I even tried the radio. After about ten minutes of trying, I went through to the orderly room and found out that the whole group had gone to lunch. It took another ten minutes to get Bloomquist at the Officers' Club just to get the word out. He said they would launch and contact me by radio in the air. By the time he got me on the radio, the CO of the 121st had given the coordinates for the downed aircraft, and the rest is more or less history.

I was stuck at Soc Trang all day and was not able to get out to see the crash site. Si Simmons told me about it later and talked about what a traumatic effect it had for the guys there.

I can say with certainty that all our lives were changed forever on that day. As the men of the 121st began to come back from the day's missions, they came by our hooch and just looked in and said a word or two of condolences. I don't think a single man failed to shed a tear. It was a hard day then and is now a hard day to remember. We lost our innocence that day.

As these things go, the operation of the unit had to go on. Captain Patrick Brady moved into Kelly's bunk that night. My bunk was just a couple of feet from Kelly's and separated by a thin wall. I'm sure I could hear soft sobs coming from the wall, mixed with my own.

Major Kelly was a very quiet man with a specific mission that he tried each day to perform. The crew at Soc Trang was Major Kelly, Captain Richard Anderson, 1LT Jerry Shaw, 2LT

Ernie Sylvester, and me, 2LT Robert Mock. Major Kelly used to say he was holding school for his lieutenants.

Major Kelly flew every mission that came in to our dispatch. The only way we could fly with him was as a peter pilot. He carried a small bag about the size of a medic's kit. In it he had some C-rations, first aid supplies, and a .22 pistol with several boxes of shells. He used to joke about us carrying everything from Thompson submachine guns, shotguns, .357 pistols, .45 caliber Army pistols, and most anything we could get our hands on.

I can still see Captain Patrick Brady and his riot shotgun and ammo belt with shotgun shells in it. It was quite dashing, and I wished that I had one. He explained that he figured if he were shot down, he only wanted something light to carry and a weapon just to keep the bad guys' heads down. He never had to put this to use, but it stuck with me my entire career. In fact, I traded my Thompson submachine gun for a VC flag a week later.

Down at Soc Trang, Major Kelly was all business and very seldom went to the Officers' Club. I can still see him walking to the shower unit in a towel and thongs. He was not a big man and was rather balding. He had a habit of holding his hat and rubbing the few hairs from the back of his head to the front. I never saw Major Kelly angry, nor did I ever see him "ream a man out" in front of others.

He was a loner, in that he hardly ever said a word to any of us. He would come out in the morning and look at the operations board and read a short paragraph that Ernie Sylvester would write each day, called the "Good Word for the Day." Kelly liked the words and would read them out loud and say, "That's just what we need for today. Ernie, did you write that yourself?" Ernie would say no, he had a book he took the phrases from. "Well, keep it up. It's just what we need."

Major Kelly spent a great deal of time writing in his room. In fact, I think Si Simmons was given the task of getting just the right weight of paper for

this writing exercise. He would sit at his desk and hold the paper in his hands and sort of hit them on the table so that each page was just right. He might do this several times before he began to write. This procedure cannot be overemphasized, as it would sometimes last fifteen to twenty minutes without Major Kelly writing a single thing. Most of the time, he had a large coffee can that he would burn each sheet in. I would give almost anything to know what he had written.

I do know that he prepared a letter he left on his desk that was to be opened "In case of my death." I believe 1LT Jeff Grider got the mission of sorting out Kelly's personal effects as required by the Special Court Martial convening authority. Jeff later told me that he found the letter in Major Kelly's foot locker, lying right on top. I believe Captain Patrick Brady or Captain Paul Bloomquist got the letter, and I never heard any more about it.

Time waits for no man, and that night Captain Patrick Brady slept in Major Kelly's bed.

—DUSTOFFer—



MEDEVAC Contributions to SASO in the 21st Century

Then the Army's UH-60Q Program Manager, Gene Pfeiffer wrote the following article for Army Aviation, dated February 28, 2002.

Dedicated, helicopter-based medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) support of American and sometimes allied military forces and indigenous combatants has been required almost everywhere our forces have been deployed since World War II. Sometimes the mission involved direct support to U.S. Army, Marine, or foreign forces in combat operations. Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, and Operation Desert Storm are examples.

In recent years, stability and support operations (SASO) have taken on increasing prominence. Operation Provide Comfort in Turkey and Northern Iraq, Task Force Eagle in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Hurricane Mitch in Central America are but a few of those recent SASO missions in which MEDEVAC helicopters have participated. OH-13s, CH-34s, UH-1s, and UH-60as have all served as dedicated MEDEVAC aircraft. Each served its purpose well and reached the end of its useful service as aviation's state of the art advanced. With the UH-60Q mission equipment package (MEP), the U.S. Army finally has the ability to field a helicopter with true state-of-the-art medical capability.

The Mission

The mission of the MEDEVAC helicopter is to provide day, night, and adverse weather medical evacuation for casualties of all categories, across the full spectrum of conflict. Evacuation of casualties may be from the site of injury or between unit, division, corps, theater, and ship-based medical facilities for appropriate medical care.

The MEDEVAC aircraft may have to land in a "hot" landing zone, on a ship, or on the roof of a modern civilian hospital. The aircraft may also be called upon to provide support to any type of casualty or patient under virtually any conceivable condition.

Conditions and missions often change within days or even hours. In recent history, MEDEVAC units providing support at home station have been in combat within days. Others have made the transition directly from

war to SASO operations, and it's sometimes hard to tell the difference. The capabilities designed in the UH-60Q MEP allow it to perform all these missions without changing the configuration of the aircraft.

Capabilities and Features

The UH-60Q state-of-the-art medical interior is suitable for treatment of casualties of all categories. While the urgent combat casualty was the primary focus of the UH-60Q Operational Requirements Document, the MEP also supports the treatment and evacuation of less severe patients. The medical interior's lighting system is designed to provide either white or night-vision device compatible lighting for the full length of the patients on the litter system.

That litter system is designed to service six litter or seven ambulatory patients, or a mix of three and three, with up to three additional crew seats available in the cabin for additional ambulatory casualties. Due to the space available from floor to ceiling in the helicopter, the high-density loading of three litter patients on either side of the cabin is used if the patients are stable and the crew needs only limited access to the patients. With one or two patients per side, access to the casualties for the provision of care is excellent.

The MEDEVAC MEP provides oxygen through regulated outlets adjacent to the litter stations. Additionally, there are oxygen ports on the control panels, into which a portable oxygen regulator can be inserted for situations in which a higher oxygen flow is desired. Medical suction is also provided to all litter stations for the purpose of clearing the airways of seriously injured patients.

Organized storage is provided in the form of a cabinet for medical supplies and equipment. Outlets on the control panels provide 115v AC electrical power to support carry-on medical equipment. An environmental control system provides heating and cooling to help control shock in patients and provides a suitable work environment for

the crew.

An electrically-driven, externally mounted hoist lifts up to 600 pounds with 290 feet of cable for confined area and over water rescues. This is an essential capability in a MEDEVAC aircraft and allows the crew to reach casualties that would otherwise not get timely medical care. A Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) system provides an enhanced capability in night and adverse weather operations. FLIR is an extremely important capability, given that about 40 percent of MEDEVAC missions occur at night. The system helps make day, night, and adverse weather operations safer and increases the rate of success. The cockpit of the UH-60Q MEP-equipped helicopter demonstrates several enhancements over the basic UH-60A/L Black Hawk. The navigation and communications radios are integrated through an MIL STD 1553 bus, which is controlled through Central Display Units on the center console. This makes for a user-friendly avionics suite and saves a significant amount of weight and space that would otherwise be taken up with control heads for the radios. A Tactical Air Navigation (TACAN) system and a multiband radio provide interoperability with Navy hospital ships.

Applicability to SASO

Although the requirement for the UH-60Q initially focused on MEDEVAC support to the Army in major regional contingencies, the system is also ideally suited to SASO. Today, Army MEDEVAC units are involved in SASO operations in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In recent times, MEDEVAC operations have supported relief efforts in such areas as Northern Iraq, Somalia, Florida, and Haiti.

The fine line between war and peace in SASO requires a robust MEDEVAC capability, able to transition with little or no notice to differing threat environments, types of patients, and differing missions. The unit providing direct support to a division this week
(MEDEVAC, continued on page 8.)

HEROIC PILOTS AND CREWS-MEDEVAC

Greg Linscott, a member of the U.S. Army way back in the Vietnam War era, provided an eloquent thanks to an unknown crew he'd encountered in 1968.

Belated thanks to the pilots and crewmen who MEDEVAC-ed our dead and wounded out under withering enemy fire in late May 1968 in the Thien Phuoc Valley (Happy Valley), somewhere out west of Tam Ky.

My unit, D, 1/52, 198th Light Infantry Brigade was ambushed by an NVA unit in the early morning hours. Casualties piled up fast. Any approaching helicopter was pounded with enormous volumes of enemy fire, and all attempts to assist were driven away.

As the battle wore on, our situation became tenuous. Several fly-over ammo drops were successful, but we were desperate to get the wounded out so we could maneuver.

About four hours into the engagement, one gallant and heroic MEDEVAC came swooping in and per-

formed what you guys call a downwind, hard, side flare into a nose-down attitude, something or other (sorry, aeronautically illiterate). Anyway, just an awesome and very dangerous maneuver, in and of itself, not to mention the NVA were pouring it on.

If I could have taken a snapshot of this maneuver, the nose was straight down, and the main rotor blades were only inches above the ground. Damned hairy flying, but exactly the kind of boldness that was required under very desperate conditions. Probably the fastest landing and MEDEVAC action in Vietnam.

I think he came back several more times, again alone, no gunship support (very possibly none was available). Same reception from the NVA and same successful maneuver. Finally, we ex-

tracted ourselves, ammoless and whooped. The battle lasted about 8 hours. The pilot pushed his machine to its extreme limits under monstrous conditions. He risked his life, his crew, and his aircraft to help a bunch of ground pounders live to fight another day. If he had been off just the slightest in his control, that Huey would have been toast, and the LZ was tight.

I hope that crew made it out, and I hope they got a medal, although I think they are probably the type of men who would unselfishly diminish their courage and say nothing. The finest. It was an honor and a privilege to be on the same battlefield with them.

—DUSTOFFer—

The Hospitality Suite is Back at the 2003 DUSTOFF Reunion

- NO Cash •
- NO Tickets •

Just show your
DUSTOFF
Name Tag to enjoy
all the hospitality
suite has to offer!

— Good Times —
— Good Friends —
Good Margaritas!

(MEDIVAC, continued from page 7.)

may support the shore to ship mission, the corps support mission, or disaster relief next week. The MEP developed through the UH-60Q program meets all these missions and is the key to the MEDEVAC role in the Army's Transformation Plan.

Relation to the Transformation Plan

The equipment discussed above was initially integrated into the UH-60A Black Hawk helicopter as the UH-60Q Mission Design Series (MDS). The same MEP was later integrated into the UH-60L helicopter, as the HH-60L MDS. HH-60Ls are expected to be in production through Fiscal Year 2006, at which time the MEDEVAC MEP will go into production on the UH60M helicopter and be fielded as HH-60M MDS. The MEDEVAC fleet represents almost 20 percent of the Army's utility helicopter fleet. The MEDEVAC MEP provides a modern MEDEVAC capability in the Army's UH-60 fleet and is very much a part of the Army's Transformation Strategy.

The modernization of the MEDEVAC fleet as a part of the larger

UH-60 fleet ensures that soldiers will receive the best possible medical care into the twenty-first century. American soldiers are entitled to the best medical care that the nation can provide, and the UH-60Q will help provide that care.

—DUSTOFFer—



DUSTRIVIA Question: How does it happen that the association is in its 23rd year of existence, yet only 22 presidents of the association, including the current president, are listed on page 2 of *The DUSTOFFer*? Find the answer on page 18.

HOST NATION "SUPPORT" SOMETIMES NOT EFFECTIVE

Following the commencement of a DUSTOFF stand-by at Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia, in the wake of terrorist bombings targeted against Americans in that country, a number of not terribly effective relationships have developed between the U.S. crews and their hosts. Patrick Zenk, a DUSTOFF legacy whose father flew in the Mekong River Delta in the mid-1960s and who is himself now a DUSTOFF pilot, recounts recent activities in that region.

The Ministry of Defense and Aviation (MODA) finally agreed some time ago to allow one "orientation flight" for the DUSTOFF crews every five months. Of course, since our rotations are only four to five months long, it's a crap shoot whether the crew gets them or not. The unit that was there before us gave up even trying to schedule more than one or two flights a week, as they had to be approved by the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF), also at Prince Sultan Air Base (PSAB), and their colonel was an intelligence guy. Needless to say, they rarely flew.

The first day I set foot in the country, I found the reality of the situation when, having slept only about an hour in the previous 36 hours, I attended the monthly flight scheduling meeting between the DUSTOFF Detachment Commander (my predecessor) and the RSAF colonel. The guy I was replacing had submitted a schedule to provide my crews three flights each to familiarize us with the local area, a night vision goggle (NVG) flight, and a flight to train on dust landings. The Saudis nixed all but one flight.

I'm still not sure if it was lack of sleep or simply outrage, but I insisted that we would be flying these flights. With the exception of one flight-scheduling meeting, each of the others was a spitting contest between me and that SOB. On the one exceptional occasion, I simply walked in with the USAF Wing Commander (a brigadier general), told the Saudis that I would, from that moment, be flying a minimum of four flights a day, departing whenever I felt like it, and walked out with nothing but silence behind us.

From that moment until our departure over three months later, we flew every day, whenever, wherever, and however we wanted. I still turned in our monthly schedule, but it was simply blacked out.

We were required to carry a Saudi officer on the aircraft whenever we flew, which turned into more of a pain in the butt than anything else. As one might imagine, it was always a different Saudi Air Force officer, and ironically, they were all washouts from pilot training for one reason or another. From what I could gather by their reaction to our flying (as fast as we could, 20-60 feet off the sand during both day and night) and the way they prayed when we would pull a 60-degree bank or a "negative G," they all washed out because of motion sickness. Payback is a b—!

The 82nd Medical Detachment set a lot of records in our time there. I can say this now, as our aircraft are being pulled out and our replacements have arrived. My two crews flew the most of the three rotations, with over 300 hours in the three months following 9-11.

Our record in the "Saudi complaints" file was bested, however, by my replacement, Ricky Ortiz, who had three real-world evacuations to Riyadh. Each time, he had an urgent patient on the aircraft, and each time he ignored

the tower's instruction to "hold for clearance." Each time he told them that he had actual patients on board, followed by one version or another of "P— off!" Ricky never had much tact.

We learned quickly that "hold for clearance" meant "hold for the Saudis to decide if they felt like letting us go." Ricky also refused to land at the airport that the Saudis had designated to be our ambulance exchange point for a 20-minute drive to the MODA hospital downtown. Instead, he ignored the landing instructions and deviated directly to King Fahad National Guard Hospital, off-loaded the patient with the attending USAF doctor in charge, and took off to PSAB again before the Saudi authorities arrived.

Before leaving the country, he ended up visiting with a Saudi prince where he received a "stern lecture" about their flight regulations. Things haven't changed much for DUSTOFF in Saudi Arabia.

—DUSTOFFer—

DUSTOFF Memorial Paver Campaign

With a goal of raising just over \$10,000, DUSTOFFers have adopted 76 of the over 250 names on our memorial boards and raised just over \$3,200 (as of publication of *The DUSTOFFer*). The list of names was mailed to all Association members in the Hall of Fame ballot. The cost to adopt a paver is \$40. Undesignated donations are also welcome. Send your adoption selection and donation to the Association's mail box with your choice. Make your checks payable to DUSTOFF Association and write "Pavers" in the "For" block.

Top Ten Reasons Not to Trust Helicopters

Jerome Von Foust, Roz's husband, sent a note explaining many of his concerns about rotary wing aircraft. Please understand that this comes from a guy who flew night combat approaches into hot confined areas, lights off, flying sideways so he could look out of the pilot's door window.

- Anything that screws its way into the sky flies according to unnatural principles.
- You never want to sneak up behind an old, high-time helicopter pilot and clap your hands. He will instantly dive for cover and most likely whimper, then he'll get up and kick your butt.
- There are no old helicopters lying around airports like you see old airplanes. There is a reason for this. Come to think of it, there are not many old, high-time helicopter pilots hanging around airports either, so the issue is problematic.
- You can always tell a helicopter pilot in anything moving, a train, an airplane, a car, or a boat. They never smile, they are always listening to the machine, and they always hear something they think is not right. Helicopter pilots fly in a mode of intensity, actually more like "spring-loaded," while waiting for pieces of their ship to fall off.
- Flying a helicopter at any altitude over 500 feet is considered reckless and should be avoided. Flying a helicopter at any altitude or condition that precludes a landing in less than twenty seconds is considered outright foolhardy.
- Remember, in a helicopter you have about one second to lower the collective in an engine failure before it becomes unrecoverable. Once you've failed this maneuver, the machine flies about as well as a 20-case Coke machine. Even a perfectly executed autorotation only gives you a glide ratio slightly better than that of a brick. 180-degree autorotations are violent aerobatic maneuvers that should be avoided.
- When your wings are leading, lagging, flapping, precessing, and moving faster than your fuselage, there's something unnatural going on. Is this the way men were meant to fly?
- While hovering, if you start to sink a bit, you pull up the collective while twisting the throttle, pushing with your left foot (more torque) and move the stick to the left (more translating tendency) to hold your spot. If you now need to stop rising, you do the opposite in that order. Sometimes in the wind, you do this many times a second. Don't you think that's a strange way to fly?
- You never want to feel a sinking feeling in your gut (low "G" pushover) while flying a two-bladed, under slung, teetering rotor system. You are about to do a snap roll to the right and crash. For that matter, any remotely aerobatic maneuver should be avoided. Don't push your luck. It will run out soon enough anyway.
- If everything is working fine on your helicopter, consider yourself temporarily lucky. Something is about to break.

INTERESTING WEBSITE CONTAINING A VIETNAM WAR MASTER

RESOURCE GUIDE: <http://members.aol.com/veterans/warlib6v.htm>

A LETTER TO CHARLES KELLY'S WIDOW

A meaningful letter penned by a DUSTOFF supporter many years ago to the widow of Major Charles Kelly.

Safford, Alabama
July 24, 1964

Dear Mrs. Kelly,

On April 12, 1964, at 4:00 PM I was severely wounded in the right leg by Communist ground fire near a place called Ca Mau, Vietnam, deep in the Mekong River Delta. I was a member of the 120th Aviation Company, a helicopter pilot, and was hit while in aerial flight.

Being some 210 miles southwest of Saigon, I had to be medically evacuated to the Navy Hospital in Saigon. Your husband, Major Charles Kelly, administered morphine to me, applied a tourniquet to my leg, and flew me to Can Tho and then on to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, where I underwent four hours of surgery. His timely effort, along with a few others, saved my life.

Five days later, my right leg was amputated at Clark Air Force Base. I am still grateful to God that I am one of the more fortunate.

I did not know of Major Kelly's death until last night when I happened to see an article in *Time* magazine. To say I was shocked is an understatement. The 57th Air Medical Helicopter and the 120th Aviation company worked together often.

Mrs. Kelly, we were a special breed. That is about all I can say.

Sincerely,
John B. Givhan
1st Lt. USA (Ret)

DUSTOFF Hall of Fame Update

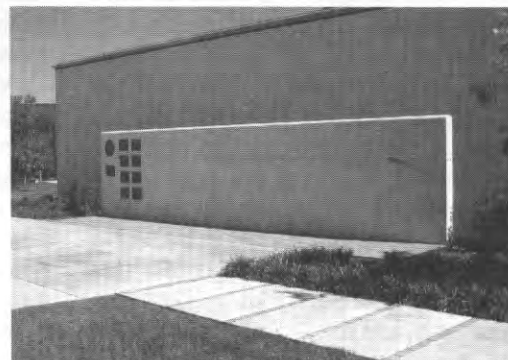
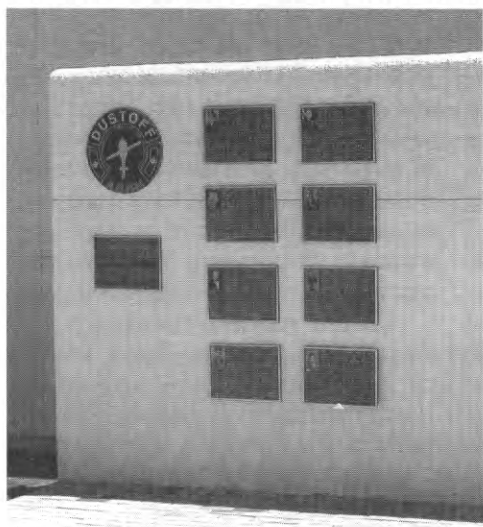
It is with a great deal of excitement and eager anticipation that the DUSTOFF Executive Council announces the 2002 inductees for the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame. The members of the DUSTOFF Association this year elected BG Jerome Foust, COL Ernie Sylvester and LTC Paul Bloomquist. These great Americans will be officially inducted into the Hall of Fame during the Annual Reunion on February 22, 2003.

The induction ceremony will be held at the Hall of Fame wall at the Army Medical Department Museum on Fort Sam Houston, Texas. The events will be held in conjunction with the opening of a very special exhibit inside the museum of the H-13 Helicopter used so extensively in Korea. A large gathering of DUSTOFFers and supporters of the AMEDD Museum is expected to be in attendance.

The plaques commemorating the contributions of our eight current members of the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame have been permanently mounted on the wall outside the AMEDD Museum in the Memorial Gardens. Our wall is set off from the rest of the gardens and is footed by the memorial pavers that honor those gallant DUSTOFFers who gave their last

ounce of devotion in the conduct of our mission. The pavers are currently in production but will all be installed by the reunion. In the pictures below, the pavers form an apron in front of the wall, symbolizing how our Hall of Fame members as well as ALL DUSTOFFers stand on their shoulders carrying forth the proud traditions of DUSTOFF!

Plan on attending the Hall of Fame dedication and induction ceremonies 22 February 2003 at the Army Medical Department Museum, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, beginning at 1400.



Who is a Vietnam Veteran?

Responding to a college student who'd posted the above question on the Internet, Dan Mouer wrote back:

Vietnam veterans are men and women. We are dead or alive, whole or maimed, sane or haunted. We grew from our experiences, or we were destroyed by them, or we struggle to find some place in between. We lived through hell or we had a pleasant, if scary, adventure. We were Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Red Cross, and civilians of all sorts. Some of us enlisted to fight for God and Country, and some were drafted. Some were gung-ho, and some went kicking and screaming.

Like veterans of all wars, we lived a tad bit—or a great bit—closer to death than most people like to think about. If Vietnam vets differ from others, perhaps it is primarily in the fact that many of us never saw the enemy or recognized him or her. We heard gunfire and mortar fire, but we rarely looked into enemy eyes. Those who did, like folks who encounter close combat anywhere and anytime, are often haunted for life by those eyes, those sounds, those electric fears that ran between ourselves, our enemies, and the likelihood of death for one of us. Or we get hard, calloused, tough. All in a day's work. Life's a bitch and then you die. But most of us remember and get twitchy, worried, sad.

We are crazies dressed in cammo, wide-eyed, wary, homeless, and drunk. We are Brooks Brothers suit wearers, doing deals downtown. We are housewives, grandmothers, and church deacons. We are college professors engaged in the rational pursuit of the truth about the history or politics or culture of the Vietnam experience. And we are sleepless. Often sleepless.

We pushed paper; we pushed shovels. We drove jeeps, operated bulldozers, built bridges; we toted machine guns through dense brush, deep paddy, and thorn scrub. We lived on buffalo milk, fish heads, and rice. Or C-rations. Or steaks and Budweiser. We did our time in the high mountains drenched by endless monsoon rains, or on the dry plains, or on muddy rivers, or at the most beautiful beaches in the world.

We wore berets, bandanas, flop hats, and steel pots. Flak jackets, canvas, rash, and rot. We ate choleraquine

and got malaria anyway. We got shots constantly by have diseases nobody can diagnose. We spent nights out on cots or shivering in foxholes filled waist-high with water, or lying still on cold, wet ground. Our eyes imagining Charlie behind every bamboo blade. Or we slept in hotel beds in Saigon, or barracks in Thailand, or in cramped ship's berths at sea.

We feared we would die, or we feared we would kill. We simply feared, and often we still do. We hate the war or believe it was the best thing that ever happened to us. We blame Uncle Sam or Uncle Ho and their minions and secretaries and apologists for every wart or cough or tic of an eye. We wonder if Agent Orange got us.

Mostly—and this I believe with all of my heart—mostly, we wish we had not been so alone. Some of us went there with units; but many, probably most of us, were civilians one day, jerked up out of “the world,” shaved, barked at, insulted, humiliated, degoized, and taught to kill, to fix radios, to drive trucks.

We went, put in our time, and were equally ungraciously plucked out of the morass and placed back in the real world. But now we smoked dope, shot skag, or drank heavily. Our wives or husbands seemed distant and strange. Our friends wanted to know if we shot anybody. And life went on, had been going on, as if we hadn't been there, as if Vietnam was only a topic of political conversation or college protest or news copy, not a matter of life and death for tens of thousands.

Vietnam vets are people just like you. We served our country, proudly or reluctantly and ambivalently. What makes us different—what makes us Vietnam vets—is something we understand, but we are afraid nobody else will. But we appreciate your asking.

Vietnam veterans are white, black, beige, and shades of gray; but in comparison with our numbers in the “real world,” we were more likely black. Our ancestors came from Africa, from Europe, and China. Or they crossed the Bering Sea Land Bridge in the last Ice Age and formed the nations of the American Indians, built pyramids in

Mexico, or farmed acres of corn on the banks of Chesapeake Bay. We had names like Rodriguez and Stein and Smith and Kowalski. We were Americans, Australians, Canadians, and Koreans; most Vietnamese veterans are Vietnamese.

We were farmers, students, mechanics, steelworkers, nurses, and priests when the call came that changed us all forever. We had dreams and plans, and they all had to change or wait. We were daughters and sons, lovers and poets, beatniks and philosophers, convicts and lawyers. We were rich and poor, but mostly poor. We were educated or not, mostly not. We grew up in slums, in shacks, in duplexes, and bungalows and houseboats and hooches and ranches. We were cowards and heroes. Sometimes we were cowards one moment and heroes the next.

Many of us have never seen Vietnam. We waited at home for those we loved. And for some of us, our worst fears were realized. For others, our loved ones came back but would never be the same.

We came home and marched in protest marches, sucked in tear gas, and shrieked our anger and horror for all to hear. Or we sat alone in small rooms, in VA hospital wards, in places where only the crazy ever go. We are Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, and Confucians and Buddhists and Atheists—though as usually is the case, even the Atheists among us sometimes prayed to get out of there alive.

We are hungry and we are sated, full of life or clinging to death. We are injured, and we are curers, despairing and hopeful, loved or lost. We got too old too quickly, but some of us have never grown up. We want desperately to go back, to heal wounds and revisit the sites of our horror. Or we never want to see that place again, to bury it, its memories, its meaning. We want to forget, and we wish we could remember.

Despite our differences, we have so much in common. There are few of us who don't know how to cry, though we often do it alone when nobody will ask what's wrong. We're afraid we might have to answer.

—DUSTOFFer—

Bobby's Wisdom

Bobby Mc Bride, former Vietnam crew chief, shares more of his hard-won words with us.

- ✓ While a Super Bomb could be considered one of the four essential building blocks of life, powdered eggs cannot.
- ✓ C-4 can make a dull day fun.
- ✓ Of course, you can drink out of a human skull! duct tape over the eye sockets will keep it from leaking.
- ✓ Cocoa powder is neither.
- ✓ There is no such thing as a fair fight—only ones where you win or lose.
- ✓ If you win the battle, you are entitled to the spoils. If you lose, you don't care.
- ✓ Nobody cares what you did yesterday or what you are going to do tomorrow. What is important is what you are doing *now* to solve our problem.
- ✓ If you have extra, share quickly.
- ✓ It's OK to take stuff off the body of a buddy, 'cause you know he would have wanted you to have it anyway.
- ✓ Always make sure someone has a P-38.
- ✓ A sucking chest wound may be God's way of telling you it's time to go home.
- ✓ Prayer may not help, but it can't hurt.
- ✓ Flying is better than walking. Walking is better than running. Running is better than crawling. All of these, however, are better than extraction by a Med-Evac, even if it is technically a form of flying.
- ✓ If everyone does not come home, none of the rest of us can ever fully come home either.
- ✓ Do not fear the enemy, for your enemy can only take your life. It is far better that you fear the media, for they steal your HONOR.
- ✓ A grunt is the true reason for the existence of the helicopter. Every helicopter flying in Vietnam had one real purpose: to help the grunt. It is unfortunate that many helicopters never had the opportunity to fulfill their one true mission in life, simply because someone forgot this fact.
- ✓ "You have the right to remain silent" is always excellent advice.

A Tear Falls

Walter Harris, an "original DUSTOFFer," uses his eloquent skills in the pulpit to vividly describe his feelings and cares during a mission that gripped one and all.

There are two things I shall never forget as long as I live. They are the stench of old blood and the pungent sick odor of burned flesh. I will never forget my experiences in Vietnam. There are many who would like to forget that Vietnam ever happened. There are so many who know well the "odors" of war, especially the families and loved ones who suffered no less. We must remember. To remember is to grow and learn and live freely. There are so many who are stuck in the past who hope this true story will enable the beginning of remembrance.

As I looked around the room, it was filled with so many young faces. So many things went through my mind. I've never had an enemy in my life; the Viet Cong, the V.C., the enemy. This is all a big game. I know that! At least I thought I knew.

For only the second or third time in my life, I had that gnawing gut feeling of my aloneness. God, that hurt. Harriet and I never really talked about the possibility of my going to Vietnam after flight school. It never occurred to us, or we were afraid to face it. The day it came, it was a shocker! When I handed those orders to Harriet, we just sat there, and no words were exchanged. She was now pregnant, and I didn't know what to say; neither did she. The silence said it all.

"Lieutenant, lieutenant, did you hear what I said?"

"No, sir... uh... uh, yes, sir, yes, sir!"

"Someone from the 57th will be here to pick you up. They just lost a pilot today, Brian Conway. He took a .30 caliber in the leg. He's Medical Service; you know him?"

"Nope," I replied.

"Well, you're his replacement."

I thought to myself, welcome to Vietnam.

My stomach was filled with butterflies as we entered the compound and pulled to a stop in front of a screen wire and plywood building with a large

sign above the door that read: 57th Med. Det. (Helicopter Ambulance) DUSTOFF.

The next person I met was a short, stocky lieutenant with his ball cap placed well back on his head. Jerry "Grumpy" Shaw never had his cap on straight. It was always cocked to the right or canted to the left or well back above his forehead. Even when he tried to put it on straight, it ended up crooked. I guess it was his way to make some personal protest.

I learned to truly respect and love Grumpy, although I never told him that. We spent some hairy times together, as all of us did. I carry all of those guys in my heart to this day. Grumpy got his name, I believe not because of his short, often grunting answers, but more so because he looked like Grumpy of the Seven Dwarfs. He loved the image.

There was one hellish day I'll never forget with Grumpy Shaw. On returning from a pickup, Dick Anderson and Ernie Sylvester took eight rounds in their aircraft, with one round puncturing the hydraulic lines and three rounds in the engine. Fortunately, they made a quick landing at a nearby airstrip. Grumpy and I scrambled to their aid. Grump and I were supporting an air assault with the 114th Aviation Company. After finding out they were okay and that another DUSTOFF aircraft was in the area, we were diverted with the following:

"DUSTOFF, DUSTOFF, this is Raider 16, Over."

"Roger, Raider, this is DUSTOFF, go ahead."

"DUSTOFF, I'm about ten miles southwest of My Tho. I've got one of my gunships upside down in a rice paddy. I'm drawing heavy fire! I need help, DUSTOFF! I've got another ship inbound; we'll cover you. Tell me when you've got us in sight."

Grumpy looked at me, and I looked at him. Without words, we shared a lot of thoughts and emotions. He keyed the mike button, "We're on the way,

Raider. Raider, I have you, and we are at your six o'clock, about a mile, you got us in sight?"

"Roger! Damnit, Bill, come to the other side, I'm drawing heavy fire again! DUSTOFF, Charlie is at my eleven o'clock on the west side of the canal. You have my downed ship in sight? It's about two clicks in the paddy on the east side of the canal. Got it in sight?"

Grumpy responded, "We've got it, Raider."

"DUSTOFF, I recommend that you come down on the deck from the southeast; tell us when you're ready."

The next few minutes were like an eternity. I said to the crew chief, "Bender, I don't see any movement down there; you and Knuckles better get the body bags out."

I received a double click on the intercom that indicated he understood and acknowledged my request.

"DUSTOFF, are you ready?"

"Yes, sir, 16."

"OK, we're starting our daisy chain now." A daisy chain is where two gunships fly in a circle so that when one ship turns away from the target, another is turning into the target to provide a continuous chain of fire. It is awesome.

With both of us on the controls, we put it on the deck.

"Force trim on."

On approach, both pilots are on the controls and the force trim is activated in case someone gets hit. A sudden jerk of the controls or a split second without control could be fatal.

We locked out shoulder harnesses and put it on the deck. When you're flung on the deck, you have a different perspective than when you are high up looking down. You don't see things until you're on top of them.

"Let's flare it, Grumpy; there it is right in front of us. We don't want to fly over the canal, okay?"

God, the sound was terrifying! The ship shook. It sounded like cannon fire! The ship shook again and the tail boom

jerked to the left as if it had been hit by a sledge hammer. Two mortar rounds slammed water up over the boom and right door just as Knuckles was about to make his leap into the paddy. We laughed about it later, but it sure wasn't funny at the time.

"You takin' fire, DUSTOFF?"

"A couple of mortar rounds were too close for comfort. I can't tell if I'm taking small arms fire now; all I know is it's noisy as hell down here!"

"That's us, DUSTOFF; we'll keep them off you."

"Everything look OK, Grumpy?"

"Everything's in the green."

As we hovered and sweated and sweated and hovered, Knuckles, who is about five feet tall with his boots on, and Bender waded and practically swam through the flooded rice paddy to remove the crew. We hid behind the mortally wounded ship that was completely inverted with its tail raised to the sky. It looked like a monument or a piece of modern sculpture. I couldn't help but see it as one of those tall needlelike gravestones in a cemetery.

Two were still strapped in, submerged in the water. I don't know whether they were killed on impact or drowned. Knuckles said the pilot's jaw was broken as best as he could tell. I never found out; I didn't want to know. The copilot was alive but in bad shape. The crewmember behind him was in relatively good condition, considering. All I know is that there were two body bags, and the third died on the operating table, I was told later. I couldn't tell who they were, afraid to ask, but we did anyway.

"Raider, we're airborne. Thanks for the cover. Raider, who were the pilots, over?"

"Wright and Ragsdale, over. Can you give us a status report?"

"Just a minute, Raider. We have two body bags, one pilot, Ragsdale is still alive, barely. The crew chief is doing okay, over."

"Thank you, DUSTOFF. (I could hear the keyed mike button, which had been depressed, but no words came across the air) Out."

"Grumpy, will you take us home?"

"Sure, Walt."

He saw my soul, I suspect, as we looked into each other's eyes. I turned away, gazing out the window. The rice

paddies looked so beautiful and peaceful. Paige Wright and Rags were classmates of mine in flight school. Paige and his wife, Donna, and their little son, Jay, lived next door to us in Mineral Wells. I learned later that Rags was Grump's next door neighbor at advanced training.

Paige and Donna and their son spent a lot of time together with Harriet and me and became good friends. Harriet love little Jay, and I suspect as I did, fantasized about us having our own. I made a vow to write Donna and let her know that it was I who had picked up Paige. I never kept that vow. Guilt abounds; if anyone understands, I hope she does.

At that point, all I could think about was our little Collie pup that Charlie Clark and the guys gave us as a wedding gift in flight school. We appropriately named him Rotorblade.

Harriet and I still laugh about the time Rotorblade almost ended up in Paige's trash can next to the driveway. We had just bought a new Chevy Monza. It was a really great little car with four on the floor and a back seat that folded down to make a storage area. We put the back seat down so Rotorblade had a place to sit. He liked to catch the wind in the open window and occasionally would stick his head between us and give us a lick.

One day, we were coming home and in a hurry. Harriet whipped the car into the driveway making the turn too fast. Behind me, I saw a flash of brown and white zip out the window. Rotorblade had slipped across the very slick storage area and out the window, almost into Paige and Donna's trash can. Harriet was so upset, she cried. After finding all was well, we laughed and laughed.

Rotorblade was a gentle, happy soul. He loved to romp and play with the kids coming by his house after school. Every time the ice cream man came, there he was getting his licks from the kids. I guess he was our first child. Because he loved the children so much, one day he shot across the road. Before the ice cream man could do anything about it, he heard a thump and Rotorblade lay motionless. The poor guy was in agony; and the whole neighborhood mourned our happy-go-lucky friend.

As I picked up his soft, limp body, I wanted to scream! Harriet could not bear to go with me to find a proper burial place. I remember the tears streaming down my face as I lay him on the back storage area of our little car for the last time. I buried him next to an old cemetery outside Mineral Wells, Texas. It hurt so much! Rotorblade gave us a lot. As painful as it was, he left Harriet and me a great gift. He was our first tragedy and bond of strength of many to come in the years ahead.

As I gazed out of the chopper window, I wondered, who will share this tragedy and pain with Donna? I felt a tear; it settled into my chin strap and over the edge and fell into my lap. Thirteen thousand miles away, and I am unable to share this moment. There were a lot of moments like that. I wondered what Jerry was thinking.

The crew was working like hell to save Ragsdale. Paige was dead, and later Rags would be gone also. I was grieving Rotorblade or at least I thought I was. One of the problems we all shared was the well of many intentional tears that never had the opportunity to fall. I hope some have fallen since. I'm sure they have.

When we dropped off the wounded and later the bags, we were asked if we knew them well enough to identify them. God forgive me, I just couldn't do it, and I told them no. At the time, I had no way of knowing that somehow God had brought Grumpy Shaw and me together as total strangers, thousands of miles from home to bring our next door neighbors and friends "home" for the last time.

Over the years, like many others, I thought about the ones we left behind. I know there are many stories like the one I've shared. I am eternally grateful for those who have filled my life with the courage to remember, and I give thanks for each and every "Grumpy" Shaw out there whose cap was eternally crooked. Most of all, I hope this sharing may be able to soothe the well of many intentional tears that never had the opportunity to fall.

—DUSTOFFer—

Ann-Margret and Her Gentlemen

Forwarded by a Vietnam veteran's wife, this portrays an important lady in our DUSTOFF history. Ann-Margret was a former high school flame of Doug McNeil, a 159th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) pilot killed in action in 1970.

Richard, my husband, never really talked a lot about his time in Vietnam, other than he had been shot by a sniper. However, he had a rather grainy, 8"x10" black and white photo he had taken at a USO show of Ann-Margret with Bob Hope in the background that was one of his treasures.

A few years ago, Ann-Margret was doing a book signing at a local book store. Richard wanted to see if she would sign the treasured photo, so he arrived at the bookstore at 12 o'clock for the 7:30 signing. When I got there after work, the line went all the way around the bookstore, circled the parking lot, and disappeared behind a parking garage.

Before her appearance, bookstore employees announced that she would sign only her book, and no memorabilia would be permitted. Richard was disappointed, but wanted to show her the photo and let her know how much those shows meant to lonely GI's so far from home.

Ann-Margret came out looking as beautiful as ever. As he was second in line, it was soon Richard's turn. He presented the book for her signature and then took out the photo with many shouts from employees that she would not sign it. Richard said, "I understand. I just wanted her to see it."

She took one look at the photo, and tears welled up in her eyes. She said, "This is one of my gentlemen from Vietnam, and I most certainly will sign his photo. I know what these men did for their country, and I always have time for 'my gentlemen.'"

With that, she pulled Richard across the table and planted a big kiss on him. She then made quite a "to do" about the bravery of the young men she'd met over the years; how much she admired them. There weren't too many dry eyes among those close enough to hear.

She then posed for pictures and acted as if he were the only one there.

Later, at dinner, Richard was very quiet. When I asked him if he'd like to talk about it, my big, strong husband broke down in tears.

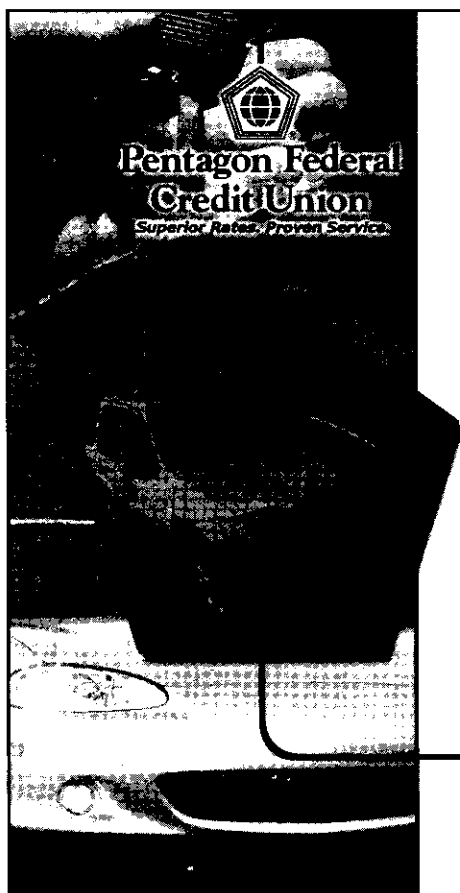
"That's the first time anyone ever thanked me for my time in the Army," he said.

Richard, like many others, came home to people who spit on him and shouted ugly things at him. That night was a turning point for him. He walked a little straighter, and for the first time in years, was proud to be a vet.

I'll never forget Ann-Margret for her graciousness and how much that small act of kindness meant to my husband. I now make a point to say thank you to every person I come across who served in our armed forces. Freedom does not come cheap, and I am grateful for all those who have served their country.

God bless our U.S. Armed Forces!

—DUSTOFFer—



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You're In The Army Now

Review of a number of the basic tenets of military life, and the continuance of that life may sometimes be in order.

- ★ A Purple Heart proves three things:
 1. You were smart enough to think of a plan.
 2. You were stupid enough to use it.
 3. You were lucky enough to survive the experience.
- ★ Five-second fuses last only three seconds.
- ★ Anything you do can get you shot, including doing nothing.
- ★ Claymores are labeled "This side toward enemy" for a reason.
- ★ Don't draw fire. It irritates those around you.
- ★ Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last, and don't ever, ever volunteer to do anything.
- ★ Don't look conspicuous; it draws fire.
- ★ If the enemy is in range, so are you.
- ★ If it's stupid but it works, it isn't stupid.
- ★ If the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is no longer our friend.
- ★ If you can't remember, the claymore is pointed at you.
- ★ If your attack is going well, you have walked into an ambush.
- ★ Incoming fire has the right of way.
- ★ It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over an area you've just bombed.
- ★ Make it too tough for the enemy to get in, and you can't get out.
- ★ Mines are equal opportunity weapons.
- ★ Never share a foxhole or cockpit with anyone braver than you.
- ★ Professionals are predictable; it's the amateurs who are dangerous.
- ★ Teamwork is essential; it gives the enemy someone else to shoot at.
- ★ The easy way is always mined.

Military Spouses

The Goodfellow Monitor, from Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo, Texas, composed a very moving tribute to the military spouse, a seriously unsung hero in our military society.

I've talked to a lot of military spouses; how special they are and the price they pay for freedom too. The funny thing about it is, most military spouses don't consider themselves different from other spouses. They do what they have to do, bound together not by blood or merely friendship, but with a shared spirit whose origin is in the very essence of what love truly is.

Is there truly a difference? I think there is. You have to decide for yourself.

Other spouses get married and look forward to building equity in a home and putting down family roots. Military spouses get married and know they'll live in post housing or rent, and their roots must be short so they can be transplanted frequently.

Other spouses decorate a home with flair and personality that will last a lifetime. Military spouses decorate a home with flare tempered with the knowledge that no two post houses have the same size windows or same size rooms. Curtains have to be flexible, and multiple sets are a plus. Furniture must fit like puzzle pieces.

Other spouses have living rooms that are immaculate and seldom used. Military spouses have immaculate living/dining room combos. The coffee table got a scratch or two moving from Germany, but it still looks pretty good.

Other spouses say good-bye to their spouse for a business trip and know they won't see them for a week. They are lonely, but can survive. Military spouses say good-bye to their deploying spouse and know they won't see them for months, or for a remote tour, for at least a year. They are lonely, but will survive.

Other spouses, when a washer hose blows off, call Maytag and then write a check for getting the hose reconnected. Military spouses will cut the water off and fix it themselves.

Other spouses get used to saying hello to friends they see all the time. Military spouses get used to saying good-bye to friends they made in the last two years.

Other spouses worry about whether their child will be class president next year. Military spouses worry about whether their child will be accepted in yet another school next year and whether that school will be the worst in the city again.

Other spouses can count on spouse participation in special events, birthdays, anniversaries, concerts, football games, graduation, and even the birth of a child. Military spouses only count on each other because they realize that the flag has to come first if freedom is to survive. It has to be that way.

Other spouses put up yellow ribbons when the troops are imperiled across the globe and take them down when the troops come home. Military spouses wear yellow ribbons around their hearts, and they never go away.

Other spouses worry about being late for Mom's Thanksgiving dinner. Military spouses worry about getting back from Korea in time for Dad's funeral.

And other spouses are touched by the television program showing an elderly lady putting a card down in front of a long, black wall that has names on it. The card simply says "Happy Birthday, Sweetheart. You would have been sixty today." A military spouse is the lady with the card. And the wall is the Vietnam Memorial.

I would never say military spouses are better or worse than other spouses, but I will say there is a difference. Our country asks more of military spouses than is asked of other spouses. I will say, without hesitation, that military spouses pay just as high a price for freedom as do their husbands or wives. Perhaps the price they pay is even higher. Dying in the service of your country isn't nearly as hard as loving someone who has died in service to their country and having to live without them.

—DUSTOFFer—

ANSWER TO THE DUSTTRIVIA

QUESTION: Because his excellent management and diligence were recognized by the Association, Bob Romines served two consecutive terms. (Actually, when the vice president resigned due to work problems, Jerry Foust rail-roaded Bob for a second term.)



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Colonel (Doctor) James Ralph (USA, Ret), asked for his opinion on PTSD and its incidence among Vietnam veterans, responded with a learned and experienced commentary on the phenomenon.

Please bear in mind that I'm not a shrink, but I do have a few ideas on the matter. PTSD is a real problem, more real for some people than others. Military veterans are not the only ones with PTSD; any traumatic event can cause it.

In some circles, PTSD has reached the point of becoming chic. There are those who insist, "My PTSD was worse than your PTSD, therefore, I am in some way better than you." There are those who use PTSD as an excuse for the failures they probably would have encountered anyway.

We DUSTOFFers saw more blood and gore than many who were stationed in Vietnam, yet most of us were able to get on with our lives. I'm sure that is largely due to the fact that we believed strongly in what we were doing. There are certainly those who spent their tours in downtown Saigon, much of it at the To Do Bar, and still couldn't cope with the "real world" once they got home.

PTSD is a bona fide psychiatric condition, and I don't think any less of those Vietnam veterans who have a real case of PTSD. I personally believe one of the main reasons the PTSD rate became so much higher in Vietnam vets than WW II vets is that we were never recognized favorably by the American public or even our own government. WW II vets were welcomed home as heroes; after all, they had

made the world safe for democracy! They had the parades, the GI Bill, generous GI housing loans, preference in the civilian job markets. But not the Vietnam vet; we were the hated "baby killers," or whatever the anti-military groups (including most of the draft-dodging press) wanted to call us.

Hanoi Jane was the heroine of the media, but the average Vietnam veteran had to try to hide his identity upon returning home from a war that no one took the time to explain to the American public. My Dad, a professional journalist, was outraged at the way the national press reported (or fantasized) what was happening in Vietnam. Read the papers back then, and you will believe that the Tet Offensive was a great Viet Cong victory, greater perhaps than V-J Day in the minds of many ding-a-lings at the time.

PTSD has been described as "a disorder in which an overwhelming traumatic event is experienced again, causing intense fear, helplessness, horror, and avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma." Those with true PTSD go through various levels of this, depending on the original traumatic situation and how their own psyches are able to deal with it. There are no easy answers. There are those who use PTSD as an excuse for the failures they would have encountered in any case.

As for myself, I've been lucky in that I have dealt with my own Vietnam

"nightmares" fairly well, or I have been able to keep them suppressed, although it probably played a role in my own very messy post-Vietnam divorce. I'll admit that I used some animosity in dealing with some real jerks in Vietnam who eventually caused me to resign my RA commission. I directed most of my own hostile feelings at them, so I've not had to relive some of the terrible things I had to deal with.

I've had only two real "flashbacks" that I recognized as such. One was when I was the team doc for a high school football game and a Huey flew over the field, which was surrounded by tall trees. For a moment, I was back in a Vietnamese soccer field, and we were in the middle of a hostile fire situation. The other time had a much worse effect on me. When I was with the 101st Airborne in 1964-65 after my first Vietnam tour, I had the sad duty to go with the Chaplain and an administrative officer to tell the next of kin that their loved one was KIA, the worst job I ever had in the Army. Anyway, much later when I saw *Saving Private Ryan*, the scene where the military vehicle pulls up to the mother's house to notify her that all but one of her sons had been killed in action, I almost lost it. I cried in the theater, as quietly as I could, so others wouldn't notice. It's still there.

—DUSTOFFer—

Top of the Schoolhouse

by 1SG Jayme Johnson

On behalf of the USASAM family, we would like to thank 1SG (P) David Litteral and his wife Charlene for their hard work and dedication to this organization. 1SG (P) Litteral has made training the number-one priority here at the schoolhouse, and I only hope I can continue to keep it on the right glide path. We wish his family the best as they move on to the Sergeants' Major Academy.

As I am the new kid on the block, let me introduce myself to the *DUSTOFFer* readers. 1SG (P) Litteral and I had our Change of Responsibility on 17 July 2002. My last assignment was at the Joint Readiness Training Center, where I was an Observer Controller for the Forward Support Medevac Team for the past two years. I do not want to list my bio, but rather keep the *DUSTOFF* community informed on how USASAM is trying to produce better trained evacuation pilots, flight medics and flight surgeons.

Something near and dear to my heart is the Medical Evacuation Course (2C-F7), offered here at USASAM. As an observer controller for the past two years, it became apparent to me that our junior leaders (that includes officers and NCOs) are deficient in their doctrinal knowledge of how to employ combat health support in support of a maneuver brigade or task force. Having said that, let me extend an invitation to all those medical company commanders out there, both air and ground, to send your soldiers to us. We will train them on the most recent doctrinal changes, TTPs, and joint operations. A more detailed course description can be found on our Web site: <http://usasam.amedd.army.mil>.

In September we graduated Flight Medic Course 02-04 with eighteen soldiers; one of our graduates was a lieutenant in the South African Medical Department. The FMC Honor Graduate was SPC Eric Lee. I have asked CPT Kathleen Schultz, the Flight Medic Course OIC, to expound on how USASAM is putting the "medic" back into flight medic.

Our vision is to ensure we are using the state-of-the-art/realistic equipment to train these medics, so they can provide the full spectrum of care—not only to soldiers, but all types of civilians we now find our medics encountering in operations other than war (OOTW). This vision will provide unit commanders with more highly skilled flight medics and crewmembers on their aircraft. Flight medics will be capable of providing Advanced BTLS, ACLS, and PALS/Pediatric BTLS on the ground and sustain care while in-flight until that patient can be handed off to a higher echelon of care.

To complete this vision we have developed Flight Medic XXI. This is a comprehensive instructional program developed at the U.S. Army School of Aviation Medicine (USASAM). The flight medic's mission is to treat, stabilize, and provide in-flight medical care to the critically injured or ill, while being transported aboard air ambulances during peacetime and combat operations. USASAM has combined a UH-60A simulator, Medical Suite Trainer (MST-HH-60L), advanced mannequins, hoist tower, Virtual EMS, and advanced PocketPC graders to build an integrated training system that is effective, cost efficient, and exportable. The system has three core components: 1) a high-fidelity simulation of the combat environment, 2) an efficient PDA / PC-based grading system that integrates teaching material, instructional QA and graders, and 3) a database of real-world scenarios, including materials required, training goals, equipment settings to ensure standardization.

Another way that USASAM is staying in touch with training in units is through the Directorate of Evaluation and Standardization (DES). USASAM has two cadre members who evaluate for DES for Air Ambulance companies, and also attack and lift units. Currently USASAM is the only AMEDDC&S asset that sends evaluators out to units in the field. Just recently SSG (P) Mumm attended two weeks of training over

the new HH-60L in Parkersburg, West Virginia. Her observation was that this aircraft will be an excellent platform for aeromedical evacuation, as well as search and rescue operations. SSG (P) Mumm will incorporate the training she received into USASAM's training of the flight surgeons and flight medics on our Medical Suite Trainer (MST-HH-60L), due to be on station at the schoolhouse in January 2003.

Flight Surgeon Course 02-03 graduated fifty-one students, a large class in regard to the cadre we have. The Distinguished Honor Graduate was MAJ John A Smyrski III. On behalf of the dean and the entire cadre here, we wish them the best as they venture out into the world of aviation medicine.

The Flight Physiology Branch, which is responsible for conducting training on aerospace medicine and altitude physiology, is scheduled to have the hypobaric chamber refurbished in January 2003. The chamber here at USASAM is the only one operated by the army and was long overdue an upgrade. There will be a six-week period when we will not be able to provide hypobaric training to students. However, they will be able to receive their training at Moody AFB in Georgia.

An organization is only as good as the people in it, and USASAM is no exception. A testament to this is the selection of four of the Cadre Staff Sergeants being selected for Sergeant First Class. On behalf of the Dean and myself, congratulations to SSG (P) Mumm, SSG (P) Schwab, SSG (P) Sharp, and SFC Thompson.

I hope this has somehow kept the *DUSTOFFer* reader informed of the continuing effort we make at USASAM to train today's soldiers. Thank you for your service and continued support. *DUSTOFF!*

—*DUSTOFFer*—

From the Wiregrass

by LTC Van Joy

Greetings from UCLA.

In case you missed the last newsletter, there is a new pilot sitting at the controls. Gino had a great flight plan that he executed flawlessly and has now landing at Ft. Sam Houston, where he is continuing his great service to the AMEDD. As the new pilot, I don't want to spend time talking about where I've been or what I've done, but instead talk about some of the things on the horizon.

We all know there has been a lack of operational hoist training and maintenance classes in the past. Well, there is some great news. First, we were able to get the MAC chart changed to reflect 91W as an authorized maintainer for the hoist. Second, we sent three personnel (1 from MEPD and 2 from USASAM) to the factory for the "train the trainer" training, and they returned with a POI and all the knowledge to teach our medics hoist maintenance. Third, USASAM has signed up to de-

velop and teach this course, so bottom line: in FY03 formal training will be available to our medics or anyone else needing hoist maintenance training. We are continuing with the hoist rebuild program, and it won't be long before we start fielding the new R-4. This hoist is basically the same, but has much better user features. MSG Vallejo is still the AMEDD's hoist NCOIC, so if you have any question about hoist turn-in procedures, maintenance or just want to talk about problems, concerns, or even any good points, he can be reached at DSN 558-2917/1166 or commercial (334) 255-2917/1166.

In my short time here, I could quickly see that one person couldn't be everywhere. So with the help of COL Heintz and the willingness of USAARL to be team players, a new deputy is inbound, MAJ Chris Colacicco, who should be reporting here the end of November. We served together at Ft. Bragg, and Chris will be

a welcomed addition. Knowing Chris the way I do, I'm sure it won't take him long to be up to speed here and helping with the fight. We are still battling with the TDA, but with luck we may soon have an APA assigned to help develop flight training doctrine and a POI for the flight medic that complements the 91W program and reflects better the unique requirements of the 91WF.

Things are looking up here in UCLA. It had been 11 years since I was last here at "Mother Rucker," and things have changed somewhat. If you haven't been here in awhile, you will be surprised when you drive on post. If you are planning a trip near the area, please stop by. There's always time for a fellow DUSTOFFer.

Until next time—fly safe!
DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

Consultant's Corner

by COL Scott Heintz

Greetings! The aviation transformation execution plan was briefed to the Army leadership on 1 October. We expect direction before the end of the month but nothing dramatically different than what has previously been provided. LTC Phil Pemberton is point man (and doing a HOOAH job!). There are issues associated with the ATI decision that the MEDEVAC community has to work out. These issues include the creation of new MTOEs for DUSTOFF Europe and a new TDA for FLATIRON that will enable them to execute their directed missions.

MEDEVAC units continue to play a vital role in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Crews from the 50th, the 57th and the Oregon ARNG have performed heroically. The Afghanistan area of operation is extreme in both the environmental and tactical challenges it presents. Rest assured that the young studs and studettes from these units are giving their all to uphold the honor of the DUSTOFF reputation. You'll hear more about their sto-

ries. We will convene an OEF AAR/IPR at the end of the month to discuss the issues surrounding MEDEVAC support (and the other medical BOSs). As I collect the respective units' AARs I find it ironic that many of the issues detailed are the same ones presented during ODS and, no doubt Vietnam. Comments regarding things like delays associated with launch approval; underpowered aircraft and medical equipment are critical and will be worked through the Evacuation Integrated Concept Team.

We are working with MEDCOM and FORSCOM to provide a MEDEVAC observer/controller staff at the National Training Center (NTC). I've talked with NTC, and they've identified the requirement. FORSCOM has committed to providing the enlisted staff required, and we're working with MEDCOM/FORSCOM & PERSCOM to come up with the 67J billet.

Kudos to LTCs Dave MacDonald, Monty Nanton and Don West for their selection for attendance to Senior Ser-

vice College next year—67Js lead the way! I'd also like to recognize the most recent CGSC selectees: MAJ Larry Hallstrom, MAJ Mike Breslin, MAJ Eric Rude, Maj Andy Rizzio, MAJ Mike Price and MAJ Pete Lehning. Three 67Js selected for SSC and 6 for CGSC—impressive showing!

The following outstanding aviators have been selected for air ambulance company command in 2003: MAJs Armstrong, Kerkenbush, McCarthy, McDowell, Rose and Spero. Your challenge will be to continue to meet the high standards set by your predecessors.

My hat goes off (watch out for the glare!) to all those in the MEDEVAC family who continue to make things happen, day in and day out, in a multitude of ways. Much depends on your continued dedication to the professional execution of your respective missions. As always, take care of one another and fly safe!

—DUSTOFFer—

DUSTOFFers,

We have another mission on the way. Fortunately, it doesn't involve rescuing a comrade. Instead, we need your help to support a most worthy cause—that of preserving our DUSTOFF heritage.

The AMEDD Museum Foundation has announced plans to significantly expand its display area by constructing a new exhibition space to be called the "MEDEVAC Aircraft Pergola." The pergola—a colonnade having the form of an arbor—will house a newly refurbished OH-13, complete with litter pods; a UH-1B, which the museum currently owns; and efforts are underway to obtain a Sikorsky R-6, a UH-19 and a Blackhawk. The cost is \$200,000.

The OH-13 exhibit inside the current museum will be opened during our next DUSTOFF Reunion. It will be mounted on a pedestal to give it an "in-flight" appearance.

The pergola will be a magnificent structure in which to display our beloved aircraft that made history in the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm. They will serve as a reminder that DUSTOFF pilots and crewmen are on duty wherever American forces are deployed, continuing to save lives and make history. In addition to a beautiful setting, the pergola will offer protection from the elements for our aircraft, so they will remain in sterling condition. It will be an ideal viewing area where our aircraft can be admired and appreciated by our children, grandchildren, and other visitors for DUSTOFF generations to come.

You can answer the call with a donation to the AMEDD Museum Foundation. Any amount you can afford will be tremendously appreciated. With a contribution of \$1,000, your name will be engraved on a brass wall plaque. For every additional \$1,000 contribution, a star will be added alongside your name. If \$1,000 is too much for one year, you may consider teaming up with a fellow DUSTOFFer. You can each contribute \$500 in one of your names this year. Then next year, each can contribute \$500 again in the other's name. If unable to meet the \$1,000 donation at this time, you can still help by becoming an "Annual Sustaining Foundation Contributor," with a yearly contribution of \$100 to the AMEDD Museum.

Please help through your contribution and by having your name engraved on the wall next to the MEDEVAC helicopters that have saved the lives of so many of our country's soldiers. A form for your contribution is on the facing page.

Sincerely,

Your fellow DUSTOFFers and The AMEDD Museum Foundation

SUPPORT YOUR HISTORY—SUPPORT THE AMEDD MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Almost a quarter-century ago, in April 1978, the Army Medical Department Museum Foundation was incorporated under the state of Texas as a nonprofit foundation. The sole purpose of the foundation was to raise the necessary funds to construct an Army Medical Department Museum to preserve a significant part of our great nation's health care history. As funds were raised over the years, the museum was constructed in three phases. The first phase was completed in 1989, the third phase in 2001. After each phase of the museum was completed, it was gifted to the Army by the Army Medical Department Museum Foundation. A plaque at the entrance of the museum proudly states:

**THIS MUSEUM IS CONSTRUCTED SOLELY BY PRIVATE
CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE SUPPORT OF CARING VOLUNTEERS.**

Many, many dedicated members of the AMEDD family provided wonderful continuing financial support throughout the years. You know if you are among them, either with your name on the soon-to-be-completed permanent donor plaques or in the Museum Memory Books.

On 31 January 2001, a new program, the "Annual Sustaining Foundation Contributor" Program (ASFC), was established to replace the Permanent Donor Recognition Wall Plaque Program and to achieve future new goals in support of the museum. Every DUSTOFF member is encouraged to be an "Annual Sustaining Foundation Contributor" of the Army Medical Department Museum Foundation with an annual gift of \$100 or more to the foundation.

A gift of \$1,000 or more for the MEDEVAC Aircraft Pergola would even be greater. The pergola will be a highlight of DUSTOFF history. Such a gift will also make you an "Annual Sustaining Foundation Contributor" for the year of your gift and place your name on a wall plaque listing pergola donors in the future pergola. For every additional \$1,000 that you contribute toward the pergola, a star will be placed behind your name. It is hoped that every member of DUSTOFF will use the form below to send your 2002 gift to the Army Medical Department Museum Foundation.

000 00000 000000 0000

As a DUSTOFF member, I support the Army Medical Department Museum Foundation.

/Rank _____ Corps _____ Ret _____

Address _____ (Street)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

My Email Address _____

Enclosed is my gift of \$100 or more to become an Annual Sustaining Foundation Contributor (ASFC).

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Enclosed is my gift of \$1,000 or more toward the MEDEVAC Aircraft Pergola, which will also make me an Annual Sustaining Foundation Contributor (ASFC)

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Make checks payable to: AMEDD Museum Foundation, Inc. Contributions are tax deductible—IRS Code 501 (c) (3). Return completed form to AMEDD Museum Foundation, Inc., P. O. Box 8294, San Antonio, Texas 78208.

Thank You

ATTENTION: All 498th A. A. Co. Aviators who served in Vietnam

Tentative plans for a 498th reunion are being made for 23 February 2003 at Marriott NW Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, the last day of the DUSTOFF Reunion. We plan to have a hospitality room and an evening buffet or dinner on Sunday night.

Cost is estimated at \$40.00 per person. Wives or others are invited. This is not a money-making event, just an opportunity to meet old friends who served proudly in the same unit.

Send checks, made out to 498th (do NOT send to or include in your DUSTOFF registration), and your intentions to:

Ralph H. McBride
2333 Rock Creek Drive
Kerrville, Texas 78028-6546
Ph: (830) 896-1965
e-mail: macb@beecreek.net

We invite you to check this Web-site:
498airamb@citymac.com
Even if you can't attend, let us hear from you!

New Entries on the Flight Manifest (Since June 2002)

| | | |
|---|------------------------|----|
| Adrene Adams | Huntington, MA | LM |
| Gene Bess | St. Robert, MO | LM |
| Dave Bugg | East Wenatchee, WA | LM |
| Patrick Caesar | Washington, DC | LM |
| Lawrence Chamberlain | Santa Ana, CA | LM |
| Bradley Childress (2FC7 Dis. Honor Grad.) | Beebe, AR | M |
| Joseph Davis (2CF7 Dist. Honor Grad.) | Ft. Rucker, AL | M |
| John Englemann | APO, AE | LM |
| Luther Gooden | College Park, GA | M |
| Matthew Harmon | Columbus, MS | M |
| Gregory Hieschman | Ventress, LA | M |
| Daniel Hiatt | South Burlington, VT | M |
| Tom Hollowell | Destin, FL | LM |
| James Jacobs | Vancouver, WA | M |
| Tracey James | San Antonio, TX | M |
| Thomas Lingle (2CF7 Dist. Honor Grad.) | Salem, OR | M |
| Marshall Mell | Spokane, WA | M |
| Billy Mitchell | Columbia, TN | LM |
| Peter Mulford | Marion, SC | LM |
| Cullen Neville | Scarborough, Australia | LM |
| James Oliver | Park City, KS | LM |
| Jimmy Patterson | Ashland, AL | M |
| Dave Richardson | Cherry Valley, CA | LM |
| Luis Rodriguez | APO, AE | LM |
| Mike Thornton | Ft. Walton Beach, FL | M |
| Alan West | Ft. Campbell, KY | LM |
| Daniel Willard | APO, AE | M |

Closing Out the Flight Plan

Louis Richard Rocco, 63, recipient of a Medal of Honor for heroism in Vietnam, died on 31 October 2002 of lung cancer blamed on exposure to Agent Orange.

"Louis Richard Rocco was the epitome of a true American, a soldier, a person who cared about our youth, our veterans, our homeless, our country," retired Army Sergeant Major Benito Guerrero said.

Rocco was one of 15 Army medics who received the nation's highest award for valor in the Vietnam War. Then a sergeant first class and on his second tour in Vietnam, Rocco volunteered on 24 May 1970 to accompany a medevac team on a mission to evacuate wounded South Vietnamese soldiers.

Hit by intense enemy fire, the helicopter crash-landed north-east of Katum, South Vietnam. Though he sustained a fractured wrist and hip, back injuries and burns, Rocco pulled three survivors from the burning wreckage. He tended to their wounds before he collapsed and lapsed into unconsciousness. The crew was rescued two days later.

Rocco received the Medal of Honor from President Ford in 1974. He is a member of the Aviation Hall of Fame and a member of the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame.

LTC Dick Whitehouse, MSC, a veteran of three wars (WWII, Korea, Vietnam) died on November 8, 2002 at the age of 81. Dick flew P-38s in WWII and Hueys in Vietnam. He was in the first helicopter flight class of 100% MSC students in the early 50's. He retired in 1966 and was still working as a pharmacist in Dothan, AL this year.

Brigadier General James B. "Buck" Stapleton, MC, died on November 8, 2002, at the age of 97. General Stapleton served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, and retired after 34 years service in 1965. An unusually large percentage of his 34 years service was spent in Command assignments. He was a great supporter of our air ambulance programs. General Stapleton had lived in Dothan, AL since 1972.



COMBAT, the Literary Expression of Battlefield Touchstones

A new reader's magazine, titled COMBAT, the Literary Expression of Battlefield Touchstones, will publish its premiere issue in January 2003, and subsequent quarterly issues will be released on its Web site: <http://www.combatmagazine.ws/>.

This electronic periodical (e-mag) is dedicated to superlative writing expressive of wartime insights and experiences for entertaining a general audience. The premiere issue will serve as an exemplar of the tenor of forthcoming issues on this sensitive and complex subject.

The mission of COMBAT magazine is to impart the historical reality and to disclose the psychosocial effects of warfare to the general reader. Each quarterly issue of this heterogeneous publication will contain original essay, story, and poetry compositions entailing basic battlefield and homefront themes on the ordeal of spiritual sanctification wrought by the crucible of war. Motifs will express how combat can forever alter ordinary lives, inform their extraordinary outlook, and render authentic voices on the exigencies of human conflict.

Readers are also welcome to visit the ancillary and supporting material sharing the COMBAT e-mag Web site. Authors and artists may submit relevant work to the staff by e-mail: majordomo@combatmagazine.ws.



What's New at www.dustoff.org

The DUSTOFF Association Web site (www.dustoff.org) is in the process of collecting war stories from air ambulance missions. In an attempt to document some of the missions conducted in Army air ambulances, the Web site has established a database for individuals to record their war stories. We're trying to keep these data as factual as possible, since they may be used for possible research in the future. In this light, contributors are asked not to start the stories with, "There I was, walking across a carpet of bullets so thick. . . ."

If you have a story you'd like to contribute to the database, visit the DUSTOFF Association Web site and click on the War Story button.

COL James L. Beson Retiring

The retirement of COL James L. Beson, following 28 years and 11 months of distinguished active duty military service and 9 years of reserve service, is announced effective 31 December 2002.

COL Beson is the last known DUSTOFF MSC to leave active duty. He was born in Claremore, Oklahoma, on July 28, 1946. He graduated from Oklahoma Military Academy with an Associate of Science in 1966, and Oklahoma University in 1968 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Microbiology. COL Beson was commissioned as a Distinguished Military Graduate in the Armor Branch in 1968. He received his Regular Army commission in the Medical Service Corps. Upon completion of AMEDD Officers' Basic; he completed his U.S. Army Primary Helicopter training at Fort Walters, Texas, and graduated from the U.S. Army Advanced Helicopter Course at Hunter-Stewart Army Airfield, Georgia. He returned to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, for Essential Medical Training for AMEDD Aviators in September 1969. After completion of this course, he deployed to South Vietnam as a Platoon Leader with the 159th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), where he flew over 1,073 combat hours in support of the 25th Infantry, 1st Infantry, 9th Infantry, and 1st Cavalry Division.

When he retired few years ago, Col Johnny Walker was the last MSC aviator on active duty. COL Beson is retiring as a Medical Corps officer.

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 or jtrus5@aol.com.

Please send your contributions to:

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

2003 DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION REUNION

Schedule of Events February 21–23, 2003

Friday, 21 February 2003

- 1200–1900 — Registration
- 1100–1200 — Registration for Chuck Mateer Golf Classic (Fort Sam Houston Golf Course)
- 1200–1800 — Chuck Mateer Golf Classic (Fort Sam Houston Golf Course)
- 1400–1800 — Hospitality Suites open
- 1800–1900 — Cash bar at Buffet
- 1900–2200 — Mexican Buffet
- 2200–0200 — Hospitality Suites open

Saturday, 22 February, 2003

- 0900–1000 — Professional Meeting
- 1000–1100 — Business Meeting
- 1100–1300 — Spouses' Luncheon (location to be determined)
- 1400–1600 — Hall of Fame Dedication, Hall of Fame Induction and H-13 Dedication
(AMEDD Museum, Fort Sam Houston)
- 1500–1800 — Hospitality Suites open
- 1800–1900 — Cash bar at Banquet
- 1900–2200 — Banquet:
 - Welcome
 - Invocation
 - Dinner
 - Introduction of Distinguished Guests
 - Program: Keynote Speaker
 - Crewmember of the Year Presentation
 - Rescue of the Year Presentations
 - Hall of Fame Introduction
 - Special Presentations
- 2200–0200 — Hospitality Suites open

Sunday, 23 February 2003

- 0800–0900 — DUSTOFF Memorial Service

24th Annual DUSTOFF Association Reunion

February 21-23, 2003

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 | \$25/person | _____ persons | \$ _____ |
| Non-member/Spouse | \$30/person | _____ persons | \$ _____ |
| Single-day Registration for Guest of Registrant | \$15/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 | \$30/person | _____ persons | \$ _____ |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|----------|

Spouses' Luncheon:

| | | | |
|-----|-------------|---------------|----------|
| TBA | \$20/person | _____ persons | \$ _____ |
|-----|-------------|---------------|----------|

Saturday Night Banquet:

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|----------|
| London Broil | \$30/person | _____ persons | \$ _____ |
| Chicken | \$30/person | _____ persons | \$ _____ |

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY. Registration deadline is February 1, 2003. Please send registration form and check to:
DUSTOFF Association, P. O. Box 8091, Wainwright Station, San Antonio, TX 78208.

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