

THE DUSTOFFER



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2003

DUSTOFF Hall of Fame Members Gather for Dedication Ceremony



Members of the DUSTOFF Association Hall of Fame: (L to R) MG Spurgeon Neel, COL Ernie Sylvester, SGT Steve Hook, COL Doug Moore (representing LTC Paul Bloomquist), CW4 Mike Novosel, COL John Temperilli, BG Jerry Foust, MG Pat Brady, Charles Kelly Jr. (representing MAJ Charles Kelly)



President's Message



Hello to all DUSTOFFers and family members. As I sit here writing this letter, the TV is giving me the latest on the War with Iraq. There is no more pressing matter than for all of us, as former and present DUSTOFFers, to pause periodically and remember those who are carrying on the traditions. Let's not forget that those in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan are not the only ones deployed in harm's way. We have many crews on call and pulling duty daily in many foreign lands and within CONUS. Our thoughts and prayers should be with them daily, along with those brave men and women who are prosecuting this war.

The 2003 DUSTOFF Reunion was a huge success. Our thanks to a few key folks who, as always, pull the load: Ken Crook, Dan Gower, Scott Putzier, Karen Hill, Jeff Mankoff and Greg Griffin; and, of course, the Executive Committee for all the planning and bringing back the hospitality suites. I look forward to working with the new members of the DUSTOFF leadership team: Ernie Sylvester (VP), Rob Howe (Sec) and Garry Atkins (Member at Large).

Though the official golf tourney got rained, out a few diehard duffers hit the links for a few holes of soggy golf. The Friday night buffet and the Saturday dinner were well received, if you judge it by all the food that was consumed. A special thanks goes to Bob Baird of "In the Shadow of the Blade" for his keynote presentation during the dinner.

The highlight of this year's Reunion was the presentation of the H-13 to the AMEDD Museum, the dedication of the Memorial Pavers and the induction of the 2003 Hall of Fame members. Congratulations to Jerome Foust, Ernie Sylvester and Paul Bloomquist for years of patriotic service and dedication to the traditions of DUSTOFF.

(President, continued on page 3.)

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Letters to *The DUSTOFFer*

Editor's note: An ancient original DUSTOFF medic was recently spotted acting out his old "tiptoe through the rice paddies" antics, as noted in this on-the-scene report from his lovely wife, Ellie:

Bill is feelin' kinda blue tonight, or should I say BLACK and blue! We were going out to dinner this afternoon with my parents, and he fell going into the restaurant. He sorta tripped over one of those small cement barriers they place in front of cars in a parking lot. As he was trying to recover from that fall, he gained altitude and tripped over the curb in front of it.

As I'm writing this, I find myself giggling, although it really wasn't funny at the time. After his second trip, he went airborne and landed directly in front of Chili's door in a contorted position, blocking traffic so no one could enter or depart the restaurant. Chili's gave him a free drink!

It was obvious he was hurt, as his posture resembled a twisted pretzel. Also, he was not moving and would not let anyone touch him.

End result: no dinner, a trip to the emergency room instead. He broke the ulna in his right arm (he is right-handed), so he is in a cast from his fingers up to his elbow. Also, he sprained his left wrist, so both arms are out of commission. His right knee was twisted, and there are possible torn ligaments. The knee is wrapped in a huge bandage. We assume his left leg is okay,

(President, continued from page 2.)

In closing, I would like to extend my personal thanks to Ken Crook for his exceptional leadership as the past president. Also, we all owe Dan Gower a great WHOOAH for his unselfish and tireless service to the association and "making things happen."

I look forward to this year and the many challenges of the nation and our association. Again, keep all our deployed forces in your thoughts and prayers.

DUSTOFF!
Art Hapner

but we really don't know yet, as he hasn't had any feeling in that leg since getting shot in Bau Bang, Vietnam. He says he didn't look this bad after Vietnam.

We will be heading to the V.A. tomorrow, again. Maybe we should just move in there, set up a tent or something. Needless to say, Bill will be taking plenty of pain pills in the next few days, and because both hands are out of commission, he won't be able to use the Internet unless I stick a pencil in his mouth, and he types one letter at a time.

I make light of all this, but it was scary at the time. I didn't know he could fly so high. What cat-like agility! Bill said, in lieu of cards, please send money to defer the cost of gas for our trips back and forth to the V.A.

Editor's note: This poignant e-mail note from the commander of the 101st's 50th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) was forwarded in late February 2003:

Friends and Relatives,

Very shortly our Eagle DUSTOFF team boards a plane, and I am signing off until I am able to reestablish commo on the other end. Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers. I have the honor and privilege of leading some of the finest soldiers this army and this country have to offer into what will undoubtedly be a "Rendezvous with Destiny." I think I speak for all our Eagle DUSTOFF family when I say we are saddened that our services might be required for the situation in the Middle East, but rest assured that we are ready and willing to go and accomplish our mission so we may all come home safely. Thanks again for all your support!

MAJ John Lamoreux, Eagle DUSTOFF 6

One of the Vietnam-era aviators evacuated by Major Chuck Kelly in 1964 has some obviously strong feelings about the current turmoil in our country:

Saturday, 8 March 2003

It has to be hard being at the top, especially when at the top is being President of the United States, as is now the case with President George W. Bush. He has to make the decision to take the offensive to keep America free, or sit back and watch some American city possibly become a smoking hole at the hands of terrorists.

He is not the only one who is lonely, and that person—the American fighting man or woman—is not at the top, but is right in the middle. The middle being at the front door of Iraq, facing the unknown, possibly chemical or biological weapons, or worse. That soldier, sailor, marine, or airman does not have a voice at the present, as do members of the United Nations, antiwar protestors, naïve Hollywood actors, et al. That soldier sits alone in a tent in Kuwait while a sand storm rages outside.

But that soldier is waiting, watching, and thinking. He or she knows that all of America is not behind him or her. How does he or she know this? Democratic Senator Ted Kennedy, a member of the "Party of the French," said that he and others like him are against America ridding the world of the murdering maniac, madman Saddam Hussein. They are appeasing the enemy!

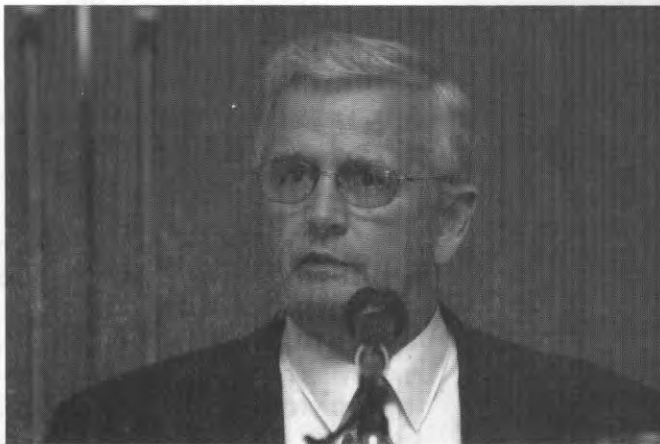
Take it from this Vietnam War veteran who has been there, done that; it is a sickening feeling. Knowing you are about to offer your life in the defense of freedom for the folks back home, while some of those folks spit on you and call you baby-killers, is a mind-heart-gut wrenching experience. This is what happened during the Vietnam War when America was not attacked directly. This time America has been attacked directly!

So, American citizen, whose side are you on? Remember, that soldier, sailor, marine, or airman is out there offering to give his or her life so you will not be a smoldering ember.

LT John Givhan (Ret.)

—DUSTOFFer—

Reunion 2003—A Look Back



Bob Baird, guest speaker, narrates the "In the Shadow of the Blade" presentation.



Longtime DUSTOFFer John Soehnlein, of Sikorsky, presents Rescue of the Year Award.



George Hildebrandt accepts Crewmember of the Year Award.



COL Pauline Lockard, Chief, Medical Evacuation Propensity Directorate, educates the multitudes at the reunion meeting.



Art Hapner, incoming president, presents plaque in appreciation to outgoing president Ken Crook.



Ken Crook and Art Hapner exchange gavels.

FLYING TALK

While most voice traffic in the air is relatively routine and involves, clearances, direction, and safety issues, the other kinds of conversations can certainly be quite different.

Tower: Delta 351, you have traffic at 10 o'clock, 6 miles.

Delta 351: Give us another hint. We have digital watches.

The pilot of a Cherokee 180 was told by the tower to hold short of the runway while a DC8 landed. The DC8 landed, rolled out, turned around, and taxied back past the Cherokee. Some quick-witted comedian in the DC8 crew got on the radio and said, "What a cute little plane! Did you make it all by yourself?"

The Cherokee pilot, not about to let the insult go by, came back with a real zinger: "I made it out of DC8 parts. Another landing like that and I'll have enough parts for another one."

There's a story about the military pilot calling for a priority landing because his single-engine jet fighter was running a "bit peaked." Air Traffic Control told the fighter he was number two behind a B52 that had one engine shut down. "Ah," the fighter pilot said, "The dreaded seven-engine approach."

A student became lost during a solo cross-country flight. While attempting to locate the aircraft on radar, ATC asked, "What was your last known location?"

Student: "When I was number one for takeoff."

Taxiing down the tarmac, the DC10 abruptly stopped, turned around, and returned to the gate. After an hour-long wait, it finally took off. A concerned passenger asked the flight attendant, "What was the problem?"

"The pilot was bothered by a noise he heard in the engine," explained the flight attendant, "and it took us a while to find a new pilot."

ATC: Flight 2341, for noise abatement, turn right 45 degrees.

Pilot: But, Center, we are at 35,000 feet. How much noise can we make up here?

ATC: Sir, have you ever heard the noises a 747 makes when it hits a 727?

Connie Walker Pens Eloquent Prayer

Chaplain Connie Walker, who wrote the official Airborne Prayer a number of years ago, has now penned a marvelous prayer for DUSTOFFers worldwide, first presented at the memorial service at the 2002 annual reunion.

Kind and Merciful Heavenly Father,

Thank you for "calling" and "sending" DUSTOFF teams on missions of mercy under the most hostile conditions, in a deeply Dedicated and Unhesitating Service to our Fighting Forces of all ages and ranks.

Lord, history has us standing on the shoulders of the faithful and courageous DUSTOFF crews who have gone before. Bless them forever. We follow your stalwart leadership steps, Lord, and may each of us hear afresh Your summons, "Follow Me."

Heroic cries captivate and ring in our ears, hearts, and prayers, like "When I have your wounded. . . ," and even today fly on missions of mercy to Lift for Life and Hope.

Heavenly Father, we trust in Your saving and sustaining Grace, now and forever.

In the Name of our Great God, Redeemer, and Holy Spirit, Amen!

2003 DUSTOFF Hall of Fame Inductees

Three DUSTOFFers were inducted into the Hall of Fame in a very beautiful, moving ceremony, made all the more wonderful by the bright Texas sun. A brief synopsis of the narratives accompanying the nominations of those honored follows.

Lieutenant Colonel Paul A. Bloomquist, MSC

- Initial assignment after Helicopter Officer's Course in Korea flying the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).
- Awarded Air Medal for flying 55 rescue missions and 62 aerial drops of food and emergency supplies in 1958 during heavy snowstorms in Pennsylvania.
- Completed second tour in Korea, then joined the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) in early 1964.
- Distinguished himself as one of the Army's finest, most heroic and proficient pilots.
- Completed 21 months of duty with daily combat missions.
- Awarded four Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Purple Hearts, 26 Air Medals, and three Republic of Vietnam Crosses of Gallantry for heroism.
- Featured in July 1965 *Time Magazine* article on his heroism and leadership.
- Assumed command of 57th when Major Charles Kelly was killed.
- Selected by the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) as the Army Aviator of the Year, 1965.
- Recognized by the United States Chamber of Commerce as one of its Outstanding Young Americans, 1966.
- Became instructor at Academy of Health Sciences and received recognition of his abilities by Secretary of the Army Elvis Stahr.
- Served second tour in Vietnam with 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), adding 10 Air Medals.
- Completed Command and General Staff College and was selected to command the 45th Medical Battalion, 3rd Armored Division in Germany. Command characterized as exemplary in every respect.
- While serving with Office of the Surgeon, V Corps, Paul Bloomquist was killed by terrorist bombing by the Baader-Meinhof gang.
- United States Army Installation in Ziegenberg, Germany, home of the 68th Medical Group, named Camp Paul Bloomquist.

Colonel Ernest J. Sylvester, USA, Retired

- Entered the Army after graduating from the University of Southern Mississippi and being selected into the National Honor Society, Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities, and Mr. University of Southern Mississippi.
- Immediately sent to Vietnam, following Flight School, in early 1964 with assignment to the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance).
- Became the first aviator to fly over 1,000 hours within his one-year tour, evacuating some 2,248 patients in that first year.
- Received numerous decorations for heroism and aerial skills, including on one memorable occasion taking some 21 rounds in his aircraft but still saving the crew of a downed aircraft from death or capture.
- Transferred to the newly arrived 82nd Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) to provide training and orientation to the new crews in the Mekong River Delta.
- Returned to the United States to assist in preparing the 498th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) for service in Vietnam and was then sent to Korea to command the 377th Medical Company (Air Ambulance).
- Returned to Vietnam for his second overseas command, taking over the 54th and 68th Medical Detachments (Helicopter Ambulance), based in Chu Lai. Effectively reorganized the units into a single entity and provided much-needed training and experience in the command. Under his command, the units evacuated 10,163 patients, flying 4,200 missions. Reassigned because of his expertise as the S3 Officer of the 61st Medical Battalion, assuming control of 55 air ambulances and all ground medical assets in the I and II Corps Tactical Zones of the country. Was given command of three air ambulance detachments during the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's incursion into Laos in 1971, where his units received abnormally high combat losses but evacuated over 2,500 casualties in a very short period. Awarded the Vietnamese and U.S. Presidential Unit Citations and the Legion of Merit upon his departure from this tour.
- Returned to the United States for another command and then successful matriculation at the Health Care Administration Master's Degree Program.
- Completed Command and General Staff College and was assigned as Battalion Commander, 15th Medical Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.
- Completed assignments with the Army Inspector General and at Gorgas General Hospital in Panama to uniform praise for his excellence.

- Promoted to Colonel before his contemporaries and completed the Army War College before completing his service as Deputy Director, OCHAMPUS.
- Awarded two Legions of Merit, three Distinguished Flying Crosses, 48 Air Medals with 2 V devices, the Purple Heart, Bronze Star with V device, Vietnamese Air Force Honor Medal, two Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry, and numerous other awards.

Brigadier General Jerome Von Foust, USA, Retired

- Commanded military units at every level of the Army Medical Department (AMEDD), including serving with distinction as Chief of the Medical Service Corps.
- Became a second generation Army Aviator and immediately joined the 54th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) in time to deploy to Chu Lai, Republic of Vietnam, in 1967. Earned recognition as Aircraft Commander far sooner than his contemporaries. Served as pilot during the missions, which earned then-Major Pat Brady his Medal of Honor. Awarded a number of medals for heroism in combat with the 54th and, later that year, with the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance).
- Returned to Vietnam after a tour in Germany in 1971 to become commander of the 237th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), where he again proved to be an exceptional pilot and an outstanding commander.
- Returning to the United States, BG Foust served with the 507th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), the Academy of Health Sciences, U.S. Army, the Reserve Components, and with Headquarters, Department of the Army. He assumed command of the 326th Medical Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and then attended the Army War College.
- Being selected for command of the 44th Medical Brigade and attending Army Airborne School, he began one of the career highlight periods of his life.
- Following the brigade's two-month deployment to St. Croix on a disaster relief mission, the command then conducted the medical support effort for Operation Just Cause, the ouster of General Noriega from power in Panama.
- On 2 August 1990, the Iraqi Army invaded Kuwait, and Operation Desert Shield/Storm commenced. BG Foust arrived in Saudi Arabia on 20 August and immediately began forming an integrated health care system that grew to encompass over 6,800 medical personnel, manning two Medical Groups with 12 Evacuation/Combat Support Hospitals, two Surgical Hospitals, two Medical Logistics Battalions, and two Evacuation Battalions. He also flew combat evacuation missions for the first time in some 20 years after his departure from Vietnam. Although the Army's Surgeon General wished to replace him with a Medical Corps General Officer, the XVIII Airborne Corps Commanding General refused the offer, preferring BG Foust's excellence and experience in combat.
- Following this command, BG Foust was selected as DCSOPs, Health Services Command, and then as Commander, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Sam Houston.
- In October 1992, he was selected as Chief, Army Medical Service Corps, and later as Commander, Army Medical Department Center and School.
- BG Foust's awards and decorations include two Silver Stars, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, six Meritorious Service Medals, 37 Air Medals, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and other awards.



2003 DUSTOFF Hall of Fame inductees: (left to right) LTC Paul A. Bloomquist, COL Ernest J. Sylvester, BG Jerome Von Foust.

DUSTOFFer Dies in Plane Crash

by Bobby Anderson, published in The Oklahoman

Editors note: The following is an article that appeared in *The Oklahoman*, a Central Oklahoma newspaper of some vintage and renown. However, several major facts are incorrect, to say the least, regarding the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of Colonel (retired) Eldon Ideus, a great and true friend of us all for so many years and in so many places.

NORMAN—Investigators are trying to determine what caused a single-engine airplane to crash Tuesday near Lake Thunderbird, which killed the pilot.

Eldon Ideus, 61, was pronounced dead at the Norman Regional Hospital at 1:55 P.M. after his Cessna 152 crashed into a wooded area about 12:30 P.M.. He was the plane's only occupant. The plane crashed through the trees southeast of Norman, the Cleveland County sheriff's office said. It landed right side up but was heavily damaged.

Renee Ideus Clarifies Report of Eldon's Death

Editor's note: Renee Ideus, Eldon's widow, has indicated that some of the initial reporting and speculation was somewhat skewed; she provided the following in clearing up, in particular, the issue of cardiac arrest.

Eldon did not have a coronary. He was in "landing mode," making circles to photograph a problem near one of the pipelines. The flaps were down, and he was trying to get a "perfect picture" for the pipeline investigators. In Renee's words, he "... wasn't satisfied with an average picture." There was a black box on the aircraft, which indicated that something like a wind sheer got the plane into a 45-knot speed, and then it stalled—both the airplane and the engine. He crashed into the trees at wings level, landing mode—just like he'd been taught—and the plane came apart in the trees. He was pinned for a while. The rest is rescue and resuscitation that failed to get him out in time.

"He was going real low, about tree-top level," witness Jimmie Loudermilk said. "He circled like he was going back to the airstrip, and all of a sudden, he just went straight down."

Ideus had been employed by Texas Aerial Inspections as a pipeline patrolman for the past 2½ years, company owner Bill Howdle said. "He's one hell of a nice guy and an excellent pilot," Howdle said.

Company representatives were on their way late Tuesday from Fort Worth, Texas. Howdle said Ideus was a medical officer who served in Vietnam. Ideus routinely patrolled routes for the company, Howdle said.

Ideus lived in the Dallas area and was a former director of Emergency Medical Services Authority, said Paul O'Leary, a spokesman for the ambulance service.

"He was one of those guys who really put the company first, and he was a hard worker," O'Leary said.

Ideus retired as a colonel from the

Army Medical Service Corps, said his friend Reuben Pinkston of Oklahoma City. "He was a grand aviator and commander of many different types of aviation and medical units," Pinkston said.

Oklahoma Highway Patrol Lt. Chris West said troopers were notified at 12:36 P.M. of the crash, which occurred at Cedar Lane and Hensley Road near Lake Thunderbird. Norman Regional Hospital spokesman Grant Farrimond said Ideus was taken by ambulance and arrived about 1:35 P.M. in critical condition. He was later pronounced dead in the hospital's emergency room.

Bob Bledsoe, an assistant fire chief for the Norman Fire Department, said firefighters arrived at the scene with other rescue workers and discovered Ideus in full cardiac arrest. Bledsoe said rescue workers could not determine whether cardiac arrest might have caused Ideus to crash, or if it occurred as a result of the crash.

The Vietnam Vet

Penned by Del Jones on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Wall page

It's a unique club—
I see it everywhere.
I see man embracing man—
A tear that says "I care."
There's a special look in eyes
That words cannot explain—
I see joy for this life,
Sometimes the living pain.
There's a camaraderie
That's very rare these days—
They let it show without shame
In so many different ways.
I wasn't there, thank the Lord,
So I can't really know.
I can only sense and feel
Those things that I see show.
The patience, understanding—
Which only they can feel—
There is something very special
And something very real.

OREGON NATIONAL GUARD TRAVELS FROM SALEM TO KHOWST

by SGT Reba Critser, 28th Public Affairs Detachment

Editor's note: An article on the National Guard's Web site recognizes part of the Reserve Component contributions to world peace and humanitarian assistance.

Khowst, Afghanistan—The Oregon National Guard contributes to the war against terrorism by bringing the Salem-based 1042nd Medical Company (Air Ambulance) to Afghanistan.

In August, the 1042nd replaced Fort Bragg, N.C., and Fort Campbell, Kentucky, units in theater. Now, all medical evacuation assets in theater belong to the 1042nd.

"We wait for nine-line medevac requests," said 1LT West Fairchild, maintenance test pilot from Keizer, Oregon.

The unit boasts that its UH-60 helicopters are currently operating in Oregon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. The crews always remain at battle-ready.

"We have a 15-minute launch time," said Fairchild, a regional test pilot in his civilian career.

Patients in Bagram and Kandahar are taken to the base hospitals. For those wounded in Southeastern Afghanistan, Orgun-e is the destination.

Until a forward surgical team arrives in southeastern Afghanistan, the forward support medical team from the 1042nd conducts medevac drills for future missions.

"We try to do demonstrations as often as possible," said Chief Warrant Officer Trent Wilms, pilot from Salem. "We are restricted because of the environment and hostile conditions."

When the pilots conduct demonstrations like hoist training in a combat zone, time is of the essence.

"When someone is hanging in the air for 20 minutes, he makes an easy target," said Wilms, a safety management consultant for Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration. "Hoist training is the last method we use for medevac, and it's only if we can't land."

The 1042nd is no stranger to rescues and medevacs. Those left in the rear rescued a crew after an avalanche hit them on Mount Hood, Oregon. Each helicopter has, at minimum, two pilots, one crew chief, and one medic.

"I love my job," said Chief Warrant Officer Ken Tinseth, pilot from Port-

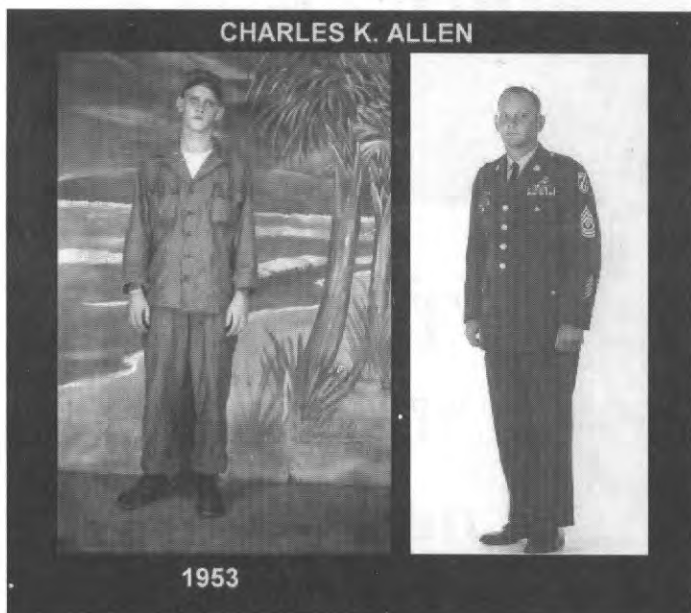
land. "We're helping soldiers who need to be helped. It's a good mission."

He said that, when they receive notification, the pilots and crew chief begin pre-checks on the ship. Then they receive a mission packet, which details the mission and the players. With approval for launch, the crew conducts its final checks on the helicopter before engine start, taking off only with an apache escort.

"If it is a mission, we're concerned about performing expeditiously and efficiently," Wilms said. "Our job is to be ready at a moment's notice and help someone. As a pilot, I don't have to deal with critical stuff like the medic does in back. I just get them there and back."

Wilms said it's hard to leave loved ones behind, but he's glad to support the war against terrorism by doing what he loves best, "flying a \$10-million helicopter."

—DUSTOFFER—



Original DUSTOFFer Charles Allen caught as a recruit in 1953 and later as a First Sergeant. SGT Allen was the Detachment Sergeant of the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) in 1964–65. (Picture art by Billy Hughes, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.)



Original DUSTOFFer LT Jay McGowan leaning on Ho-Jo's bar swigging a soft drink with fellow pilot LT Jim Truscott at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, 1965. Ho-Jo looks on in amusement.



A medical team from 1st Force Service Support Group, Health Services Battalion transfers a wounded Marine from an Army Blackhawk to an ambulance in Iraq on March 29, 2003, while in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Operation Iraqi Freedom is the multinational coalition effort to liberate the Iraqi people, eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and end the regime of Saddam Hussein. (Official U.S. Marine Corps photograph taken by LCpl Christopher H. Fitzgerald)

Corpsmen transport wounded from an Army Medivac Blackhawk helicopter to Charlie Surgical Support Co, Health Services Battalion (HSB) 1st FSSG forward HQ at Camp Viper, Iraq. Logistics Support Area Viper, 1st FSSG Forward Headquarters, Iraq. Operation Iraqi Freedom. 31 Mar. 03. (Official USMC photo by MSgt Edward D. Knierly)



DUSTOFF Action in Iraq



DUSTOFF loading on deck of USNS Comfort

DUSTOFF Crews Stay Busy in Afghanistan

by Kathleen Rhem, American Forces Press Service, published in the Fort Sam Houston News Leader, 21 November 2002.

U.S. medical evacuation aircraft crews stayed busy in Afghanistan proving how dangerous a place the war-torn country remains. In three instances, Afghan civilians with potentially life-threatening injuries were evacuated and treated by American medical assets, Department of Defense officials said. In a separate incident, a U.S. service member was evacuated for treatment of a broken wrist.

In the first of the three Afghan incidents, a man in the village of Qala-E-Nasra lost a foot in a mine explosion. He was evacuated to the U.S. Combat Support Hospital at Bagram Air Base, near Kabul, and is in stable condition after undergoing surgery, officials said.

An Afghan man in the village of Tarin Khawt, about 200 miles southwest of Kabul, sustained severe inju-

ries to his right hand, leg, and foot when a hand grenade exploded under unknown circumstances, according to military reports. Officials said the man would have lost his hand, had he not been flown to Kandahar Airfield, where an American forward surgical team treated him.

The third incident involved two children and one adult shot in the village of Deh Rawod, about 50 miles north of Kandahar on the afternoon of 16 November. A three-year-old was shot in the face, and a 17-year-old was shot in the right thigh. The father of the three year old was also shot in his right calf and forearm, but his injuries weren't reported to be as serious as those of the children.

American doctors operated on all three at Kandahar airfield, and all were

reported in stable condition.

Also on 16 November, an American soldier broke his wrist, reportedly by falling off a roof. He was taken to a forward operating base for air evacuation to Bagram and then was scheduled for travel to the U.S. Army Medical Center at Landstuhl, Germany, for further evaluation and treatment, officials said. They released no information on the soldier's location or activities at the time he was injured.

Unknown enemy forces targeted U.S. troops in Afghanistan twice over the weekend. No coalition personnel or facilities were hit in either incident, officials said.

—DUSTOFFer—



Left and below: On April 24, 2003, the 126th Medical Co. (AA), on DUSTOFF 30 HH-60 894, flew a mission to the Madr Valley, one of the most remote locations in Afghanistan, in the Hindu Kush Mountains North of Bamian (the Gangis Kahn Settlement that the Taliban destroyed, including the 5000 year old buddha). The mission was to transport a little girl with burns to her face and eye. The other child was a young boy about the same age with a skull fracture. The other two men were parents. The crew included MAJ Bruce Balzano and CW4 Jeff Crandall, pilots; SSG Kelly Hughes, crew chief; SSG Dan Jones, medical officer.

DUSTOFF Mission in Afghanistan



A Few Days in the Life of an Original DUSTOFFer

Editor's note: A few notes from the diary being kept in early 1965 by Jay McGowan, later a renowned civilian pilot and leader in the Greater New York Port Authority.

February 9, Tuesday—Had to abort a pickup when the VC fired on us from close range and then covered the Playboy fire teams while they worked the area. Tried to get in later to pick up ARVN wounded but VC too active. They finally found the bastards of Binh Gia infamy; now I hope they can last the night and do some damage. The Air Force is now giving good support. After Pleiku, any time an American is in trouble, they get support. It seems as if they have forgotten about "counterparts" and "will you do it?" It's about time. Oh, yes, the VC tried to lure us in on a medevac. Some of those bastards speak English.

February 10, Wednesday—A quiet day for me. Getting ready for inspection tomorrow and not much else. Mike Trader came in today, and I finally out-

rank somebody—not that it means a heck of a lot. VC got a BEQ in Qui Nhon tonight. Afraid the toll will be very high. Wonder if this will bring anything.

February 11, Thursday—Engine failure. Was flying with Truscott when it got suddenly very quiet, and I learned how to do an autorotation in a hurry. Everything turned out okay, as no one was hurt. The aircraft didn't fare so well, but it was in one piece. As soon as I made my calls, there were all sorts of planes looking for us. It sure was good to see Bloomquist and Walt come in for us. Needless to say, an exciting day. My knees finally stopped shaking tonight. 09.16 was the official time. A day to remember!

February 12, Friday—After yesterday, this was very quiet. Took my duty with Bloomquist last night, so took off this PM. Went up to see Jeff (Grider) off. Walt goes 26 March. They are sure

weeding us out. Pittman (Murray) came today and goes to Soc Trang soon. Had a few beers tonight to get rid of the bad dreams. The way everyone looks at me in the club, I can't forget yesterday. It is almost a look of awe. When I think about it, my comment is "You lucky bastard."

February 13, Saturday—A medevac this morning with Doug Moore. I was a bit hesitant, but he made me land it, and I now feel confident in the machine again. Rest of the day was for relaxation.

February 14, Sunday—Four months have passed. Even though it seems as if it doesn't, time does go by. Very quiet and peaceful day. Duty with Walt and not an evac. Spent day tidying up my corner and hanging pictures and cards. Maykuth (Brent) arrived today. A lot of new blood in the 57th and 82nd these days. Almost makes me an old timer.

—DUSTOFFer—

Flight Attendant Comments on Today's American Soldiers

Editor's note: In February 2003 an American Airlines flight attendant, working a flight on the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) being used to transport military personnel to Southwest Asia, had some loving and revealing comments about America's military of today.

I have just returned from doing a small part in our efforts against world conflict. Just got home early from Frankfurt after having picked up a plane load of troops in Alexandria, Louisiana, and taking them one leg of their trip onward. They had just gotten word 24 hours earlier that full alert was on, and they were getting ready to be transported.

We arrived in Alexandria on the military airfield in our Boeing 777, and the busses were waiting. The troops started to appear from the busses, and they were all dressed in their desert uniforms. They looked so clean! Everything was new, including the weapons. Every soldier had a big gun, and

some had knives hanging off their belts, too. They were young.

We were told that all weapons were unloaded and that all the ammo was in the belly. Upon arrival at their destination, they would be given ammo, and they were on full alert and active duty as of the moment of landing at their destination. They had camel packs on their backs, too, and we were told that each soldier had 2 liters of water in those. Each soldier was also given 3 K-ration packages to get them through the journey. (We fed and watered them with a good meal and lots of soft drinks, too.)

First class was filled with the rank and also some very young men and women. We figured it out fast. They had won a prize, and another right guess, they were all sharpshooters. Business class was filled with the best of the sharpshooters, too. Even though all got the same food and the same service, these soldiers were thrilled to be

in a big seat on an airliner, and they kidded each other about getting to sit in the better cabins.

Camaraderie filled the air in every cabin, and there was lots of intermingling as they explored who got what and how wonderful it was to be transported on an airliner with a crew and service. I never heard so many people say ma'am in my life. They treated us with respect and, boy, we treated them that way, too. We couldn't do enough for them. "No" was not in our vocabulary. If we had it, they got it. All the crew felt the same way.

We all felt it was a great honor to be able to participate in getting these troops over there. Some of the flight crew had to step into the lavs and cry occasionally. I had a lump in my throat the entire flight. I was proud to be part of this, so proud!

(Flight, continued on page 13.)

HIGH HOVER YIELDS SMOKY MOUNTAIN SAVE

Editor's note: Sikorsky.com detailed a great story about a daring DUSTOFF rescue in November 2002.

It was an awful accident. A 52-year-old man hiking with his daughter on the Appalachian Trail in Tennessee fell down a hill on 1 November, impaling his ear with a stick.

After a chilly, painful overnight, an on-scene medic diagnosed hiker Jim Doll with a possible concussion and contacted Bob Whiteman, air rescue coordinator for the Smoky Mountain National Park Service. Tennessee civil authorities did not have a hoist-equipped aircraft available.

(Flight, continued from page 12.)

We stepped over guns, served cokes, listened to stories, served a meal, and then the soldiers took over. They got out in the aisles in their desert uniforms and passed out water and candy. They seemed to get a charge out of taking over from us. Maybe they had an ulterior motive, too, because those guys got every crumb of extra food that we had. They were young men, and they were hungry.

I could go on and on about some of the stories I heard, but I will just close by saying that, when we landed, we all had tears. A few of the guys passed out the door with, "Would you mind kissing me, Ma'am?" My response was, "You bet I'll kiss you." I put lots of lipstick on lots of cheeks, and the guys just grinned.

The pride in country and uniform is overwhelming in a situation like this. I remember my Dad, the three wars he fought in, the pride with which he wore his uniform, his patriotism, his absolute belief that the United States was worth giving your life for, and that he survived it all.

God, bless America. I am so grateful to have been able to do something, anything, for our boys and girls. Let's hope against all hope that every single one of them comes home to their families.

—DUSTOFFer—

Medevac was imperative, and it was time to call for an Army Black Hawk DUSTOFF from the 50th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. What followed on 2 November was a hoist rescue at 4,652 feet at a 150-foot out-of-ground-effect hover.

Warrant Officer Jeffrey Elliott, Pilot of DUSTOFF 32, the UH-60A medevac helicopter that saved hiker Doll's life, provided the details in his Sikorsky Winged-S Rescue Award narrative.

"We advised Mr. Whiteman that we had an aircraft and crew ready and available," he wrote. After working the necessary mission clearances, DUSTOFF 32 departed Campbell Army Airfield in Kentucky for the 177-nautical-mile flight to the Knoxville, Tennessee, area. DUSTOFF 32 reached Tyson McGee Airport, refueled, and picked up Whiteman, who had a handheld radio to contact the rescue team on the ground." They arrived at the rescue site after a short flight to the Smoky Mountains.

"The patient was not prepared for extraction by the ground rescue team when we arrived, so we performed a high recon of the rescue area and then found an open area several miles away where we could land to conserve our remaining fuel on board and maximize our on-station time," Elliott wrote.

Once advised by the Park Rangers via Whiteman's radio, DUSTOFF 32 moved over the site and lowered Staff Sergeant Christopher Miller, the Flight Medic, to the patient. Miller called on his PRC-90 survival radio to advise DUSTOFF 32 that the patient was secured to the litter and was ready for extraction.

"Once over the extraction site, Specialist Richard Rivera, the Crew Chief, calmly called Warrant Officer Troy Gordon, the Co-Pilot, into a tight hover hole and began the extraction," Elliott wrote. Then, some anxious moments.

"Everything was going to plan right up until the point the patient was approximately five to ten feet from the cabin door. Due to the rescue site be-

ing positioned directly on a ridgeline, the combination of rotor wash, mountain winds, and the fact that the tag line was nearly vertical because of only a five- to six-foot hole in the forest canopy, the litter began to oscillate out of control.

"Rivera remained calm despite repeated failed attempts to stop the oscillations. We finally recovered the patient by letting the cable down and climbing vertically to reduce the oscillations. At last, the patient was on board and secure."

After extracting Miller and his equipment with the jungle penetrator, the patient was flown directly to the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

"Even after almost 24 hours in a dazed state and under chilly conditions, the patient, Jim Doll, is expected to make a full recovery. The Park Rangers estimated it would have taken at least 13 hours to evacuate Jim by ground," Elliott wrote.

"The competence and teamwork of the DUSTOFF crew, when coupled with the mighty UH-60, was incredible and allowed this rescue to be completed to the highest standards while safety was paramount."

Elliott wrote that the Black Hawk acted "exactly as my pre-mission performance planning calculated it would; my gratitude goes to Sikorsky for producing the airframe second to none."

—DUSTOFFer—



VIETNAM RESCUE BECOMES REUNION

by Bill Osinski, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, April 15, 2003

Fort Sam Houston, Texas—After nearly 34 years, they got to hold their “baby” again. Kathleen Epps landed Monday on a parade ground on this Army base in a Huey helicopter, the same type of craft that brought her, in May 1969, to the Third Field Hospital in Saigon, Vietnam. Then, she was a wounded infant, the sole survivor of an enemy attack on her Vietnamese village. Now, she is the mother of three daughters, living in a small town in Northern California.

The two people on the parade ground guiding her Huey to a landing Monday had been there for her at the hospital as well. Donna Rowe, now a Marietta real estate broker, was the head triage nurse who made the decision—against standing military policy—to treat the wounded baby. Richard Hock, now a paramedic for Fulton County EMS, was a hospital medic. They saved her life, became her godparents and named her Kathleen. But once she left the hospital, they never saw her again—until Monday.

Rowe, a former captain, broke ranks with military protocol the moment the chopper blades stopped and rushed to embrace Epps. She retold the story of Epps’s rescue, then sang a few bars of the baby’s namesake ballad: I’ll take you home again, Kathleen, To where your heart will feel no pain, To where the fields are fresh and green. Hock presented Epps with his second-most highly treasured Vietnam memo-



Richard Hock, the medic; Kathleen Epps, the baby; Donna Rowe, the nurse, reunited 33 years after fateful meeting in Vietnam.

rial, his Combat Medical Badge. The act of helping to save the wounded baby was his No. 1, he said.

She began her search for her rescuers about 12 years ago. “This is all just surreal to me,” she said Monday. “It hasn’t quite sunk in on me yet. Here I am with my surrogate family. I wasn’t expecting to find these people in my lifetime. . . . I’m here today because a lot of people went out on a limb for me.”

Those people included the infantrymen who found the baby girl in her dead mother’s arms and called for the helicopter rescue; the helicopter pilot who broke the rules by taking the child to an American hospital; and Rowe and

the others at Third Field Hospital, who treated her despite a soldiers-first policy.

For Hock, rescuing Epps was the best moment of his nearly three years in Vietnam. “It does my heart good to know we did the right thing, and she made it,” he said.

The reunion was made possible in more than one way by the makers of “In the Shadow of the Blade,” a documentary about helicopter rescue missions in Vietnam. Last October, Rowe told the story of the baby’s rescue to the filmmakers, while they were shooting at Kennesaw State University. Her comments became part of a story in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* about the making of the film. A researcher who was helping Epps locate the hospital staffers found the article on a Web site, and then Epps contacted Cheryl Fries, the film’s creative director.

Though the film was in its final stages of editing, Fries decided to try to put together one more shoot. “We think this is the perfect happy ending for our movie,” said Fries.

Besides Rowe and Hock, the characters in the Baby Kathleen story who came to Fort Sam Houston on Monday included Ed Russell and Roy Entin, who had been chaplain’s assistants at Third Field Hospital; Epps’s adoptive parents, Marvin Cords and Sally Gibson; and Epps’s husband, Billy, and



Donna Rowe, former triage nurse, guides Huey 091 into Landing Zone.

their three daughters, Mary Ann, 8; Jo-Jo, 6; and Sean, 5.

They searched their emotional databanks for the right way to describe what the reunion meant to them. For Sally Gibson, the story has a strong spiritual element. "I always told Kathleen that she was very special, and that God had a plan for her life," Gibson said. "Why would she be the only survivor?"

After the reunion at the parade ground, the group went to the base auditorium to address a class of prospective Army nurses and medics, who may soon be called to duty in another war. Rowe had been trained at this same base, and she said the story of saving Baby Kathleen is highly relevant today. "Why did we do what we did?" she said. "Because our core American values of courage, compassion and commitment had been driven down into our souls. Because it was the right thing to do."

—DUSTOFFER—



Donna Rowe hugs Kathleen Epps, who was rescued as an infant in Vietnam.



Kathleen Cord-Epps gets a big ITSOTB hug from Bob Baird, while the ITSOTB crew looks on.



(L to R) Bob Romines, who flew this mission in honor of David Alderson; Donna Rowe, the former nurse; Roy Entin, the chaplain's assistant; Marvin Cord, Kathleen's father; Sally Gibson, Kathleen's mother; Ed Russel, the chaplain's assistant. Seated in the helicopter are Kathleen and her husband, Bill Epps.

AMEDD Salutes DUSTOFF Heroes

by Esther Garcia, Fort Sam Houston News-Leader

Editor's note: This sizeable story detailed a wonderful experience in the tradition of the DUSTOFF Association and the United States Army.

Saturday, February 22, 2003, was a big day and a beautiful day for the Army Medical Department Museum, as more than 250 DUSTOFF pilots, crew members, and their families gathered to witness the Army Medical Department Museum officially accept a Korean War-vintage H-13 "Sioux" helicopter, the 2003 DUSTOFF Hall of Fame induction ceremony, the unveiling of the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame Wall, and the dedication of DUSTOFF memorial pavers to those killed in action.

U.S. Army, retired, Brigadier General Charles Elia, Army Medical Department Museum Foundation, presented the official documents on behalf of Major General Floyd Baker, Chairman of the Board, AMEDD Museum Foundation, donating the H-13 helicopter to Brigadier General Richard Ursone, Assistant Surgeon General/Deputy Chief of Staff for Force Sustainment, U.S. Army Medical Command, and to Tom McMasters, Curator, AMEDD Museum.

"To you brave and courageous pilots of the DUSTOFF Association, members of the Army Medical De-

partment Foundation, I salute your many heroic contributions to saving the lives of our fighting forces. You truly fit the Army Medical Department motto: 'To Conserve the Fighting Strength,'" said Elia.

The H-13 was known as the "Angel of Mercy," flying wounded soldiers off Korean battlefields to the famous MASH units. The H-13 was placed next to the UH-1 "Huey" in the museum outdoor exhibit pergola. Both aircraft were acquired with the support of the AMEDD Museum Foundation.

This ceremony coincided with the DUSTOFF Association convention in San Antonio. The DUSTOFF Association is an organization for all officers and enlisted Army Medical Department personnel, aviation crewmembers, and others who were engaged, in any capacity, with the Army aeromedical evacuation programs in war or peace. The association derives its name, DUSTOFF, from the radio call sign given to the first aeromedical helicopter unit in Vietnam, the 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance).

Three DUSTOFF pilots, Brigadier General Jerome Foust, Colonel Ernest Sylvester, and Lieutenant Colonel Paul Bloomquist (posthumously) were inducted into the

association's Hall of Fame located in the museum. The Hall of Fame wall honors those persons who have made an outstanding contribution to DUSTOFF aviation.

As a DUSTOFF pilot, Foust completed many lifesaving evacuation missions under heavy enemy fire during the Vietnam War. Sylvester was the first aviator in the Vietnam War to fly over 1,000 hours in combat assault and direct combat support missions. Bloomquist, who spent nearly 35 months in Vietnam, continued flying for nearly 13 hours, even though he was wounded himself, and rescued many casualties under heavy enemy fire. Colonel Doug Moore, a friend of Bloomquist's, spoke on behalf of Bloomquist's family, who could not attend the ceremony.

Following remarks by the inductees, the Hall of Fame wall was unveiled. Chaplain (Colonel) Conrad Walker, USA, Ret., and a Vietnam War veteran, provided the dedication and benediction sermon to dedicate the DUSTOFF memorial brick pavers, which bear the name, unit, and date of death of the crewmembers killed in action. The 250 brick pavers were placed at the foot of the Hall of Fame wall. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Fort Sam Houston Honors Platoon rendered a rifle sa-

(AMEDD, continued on page 17.)



BG Rich Ursone accepts the OH13 medical evacuation helicopter for the AMEDD Museum in ceremonies during the 2002 DUSTOFF Reunion.



Famous DUSTOFFer Mike Novosel at the AMEDD Museum ceremony with also-famous DUSTOFFer Pat Brady covering his six.

Aviators Commemorate First Military Flight

Editor's note: The history of Fort Sam Houston, replete with notable events since its founding in 1876, is even more important to military aviators.

A wreath-laying ceremony commemorating the 93rd anniversary of the first military flight by 1st Lieutenant Benjamin Foulois, 93 years ago on the ground of Fort Sam Houston, was held on 28 February 2003 at the post flagpole. Master of ceremonies was Jim Weaver, Flight Captain of the Stinson's Flight of the Order of Daedalians, sponsors of the ceremony. Weaver welcomed distinguished guests, friends, and members of the order of Daedalians and the Dibrell Chapter of the Army Aviation Association of America, co-sponsors of the ceremony.

Major General Wayne Marty, Adjutant General of Texas and a Master Army Aviator, was the keynote speaker. As the Adjutant General, Marty is responsible for leading over 18,000 soldiers, airmen, and civilians of the Texas Military Forces, which include the Texas Army and Air National Guard, and the State Guard.

"This coming December we will celebrate 100 years of flight with the anniversary of the Wright brothers flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. But today we celebrate the beginning of U.S. military flight. On this occasion we commemorate the flight dem-

onstration by Benjamin Foulois, flying Army Signal Corps 'Aeroplane Number 1' on March 2, 1910," said Marty.

Marty provided a historical backdrop on the Army's early experiences with military flight and livened up his talk with humor. He continued with the events that led Foulois to Fort Sam Houston.

Foulois met the Wright brothers in 1909 and became interested in their aircraft. While Foulois was a certified dirigible pilot and had ridden in a Wright flyer as a passenger in Maryland with Orville Wright, he had never flown an airplane solo.

With only a few hours of flying lessons, Foulois, the only pilot the Army had, was tasked by the Army Chief Signal Officer to transport Number 1, unassembled, to Fort Sam Houston, taking plenty of spare parts and three mechanics, who knew nothing about aviation, and a budget of \$150.

Within three weeks, Foulois assembled the aircraft and taught himself to fly, with the help of the Wright brothers, corresponding with them through the mail.

On March 2, 1910, Foulois made his first solo flight, circling the field at Fort Sam Houston, and made aviation history. The flight lasted seven minutes and attained a speed of 50 miles an hour and an altitude of 100 feet. On that day he made his first solo, first landing, and his first crash landing.

Uninjured, Foulois continued to make practice flights, some 60 in all. In time, he had made many mechanical improvements to the aircraft, which were eventually incorporated in future aircraft. Ultimately, old Number 1, having been wrecked and repaired too many times to count, was retired and donated to the Smithsonian Museum.

"Today we not only honor Foulois and what he did here, but we also honor the person who did it, his lifetime, and his accomplishments, his vision, and his passions. I am honored to be part of the Army and Army Aviation to which Foulois also belonged. I am honored to be here. God bless you, God bless the United States," concluded Marty.

Following Marty's remarks, the invocation was presented by Chaplain (Major) Reverend Jack Beebe and the laying of the commemorative wreath at the "Birth of Military Aviation" marker by Marty and Weaver. Weaver again thanked everyone for attending the ceremony and coming out to honor a true military hero and, by association, all the men and women who wear the uniform and are defending our nation around the globe.

—DUSTOFFER—

(AMEDD, continued from page 16.)

lute, followed by the playing of taps by the 323rd Army Band.

Among the distinguished guests attending the ceremony were LTG Frank Ledford, USA, Ret.; MG Spurgeon Neel, USA, Ret.; MG Floyd Baker, USA, Ret.; Medal of Honor Recipient MG Patrick Brady, USA, Ret.; Medal of Honor Recipient CW4 Mike Novosel, USA, Ret.; State Representative Jose Menendez; and City Council Member Carroll Schubert.

Fort Sam Houston is the birthplace of military aviation. As early as 1918, tests were conducted on MacArthur Parade Field near Building 142 to evaluate evacuating patients using a JN-4 aircraft. In the 1920s, Fort Sam

Houston soldiers and the Army Air Corps tested the use of parachutes to drop personnel and equipment at the old Brooks Field. In 1939-42, the 2nd Infantry Division conducted experiments landing C-47 aircraft towing gliders on MacArthur Field.

—DUSTOFFER—



Eulogy for a Veteran

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there; I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there; I did not die.

Arctic DUSTOFF

Editor's note: Not all DUSTOFF operations are conducted in Europe, Korea, and Southwest Asia, as would be indicated in much of the media. The 68th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) is doing a superb job in the Far North.

Nestled in the interior of Alaska, the soldiers of the 68th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) provide lifesaving MEDEVAC and Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic (MAST) support to soldiers and civilians alike in the greater Fairbanks, Alaska, area. The 68th is located at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, and provides this support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year.

If you have not been to Alaska, the region certainly defies overstatement. Alaska's terrain often contains more bear and moose than people. Its landscape is not paved with roads as in the lower 48 states, and mountains and valleys that comprise over 10% of the world's glaciers stretch out across the landscape reaching to the stars. The



Northern Lights flash spectacularly on cold winter nights when the temperatures in the winter are not uncommon to be -40 degrees Fahrenheit.

The summer sunlight shines for periods of 24 hours, creating a flying environment where night vision goggles cannot be used. The crewmembers from the 68th Medical Company (AA), who fly across the ominous terrain, are faced with a series of complex judgments every time they fly. These can include rescues from the side of a mountain in the Alaskan Range, where weather condition change in seconds, to roadside crashes,

where the landing strip is a logging road built to facilitate the Great Alaskan Pipeline.

In November 2002 the soldiers of the 68th Medical Company (AA) participated in an exercise titled "Arctic Heat." This exercise involved over 2000 soldiers from United States Army Alaska (USARAK) and facilitated the 172nd Separate Infantry Brigade's train up for its spring JRTC rotation at Fort Polk. It was the largest exercise in Alaska in over three years. The 68th Medical Company (AA) provided real world and exercise driven patient evacuation to the soldiers of the Brigade. The 68th Medical Company (AA) stands ready to provide Dedicated Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces—DUSTOFF.

—DUSTOFFer—

NVA General Comes Clean Thirty Years Later

Editor's note: *The Wall Street Journal* recently published this article that would be of more than passing interest to veterans of the Vietnam era.

Former Colonel Bui Tin, who served on the general staff of the North Vietnamese Army and received the unconditional surrender of South Vietnam on April 30, 1975, confirmed the American Tet 1968 victory:

"Our losses were staggering and a complete surprise." Giap later told me that Tet had been a military defeat, though we had gained the planned political advantages when Johnson agreed to negotiate and did not run for reelection.

The second and third waves in May and September were, in retrospect, mistakes. Our forces in the South were nearly wiped out by all the fighting in 1968. It took us until 1971 to reestablish our presence, but we had to use North Vietnamese troops as local guerrillas. If the American forces had not

begun to withdraw under Nixon in 1969, they could have punished us severely. We suffered badly in 1969 and 1970 as it was.

If Johnson had granted Westmoreland's requests to enter Laos and block the Ho Chi Minh trail, Hanoi could not have won the war. It was the only way we could bring sufficient military power to bear on the fighting in the South.

Building and maintaining the trail was a huge effort involving tens of thousands of soldiers, drivers, repair teams, medical stations, and communications units. Our operations were never really compromised by attacks on the trail. At times, accurate B-52 strikes would cause real damage, but we put so much in at the top of the trail that enough men and weapons to prolong the war always came out at the bottom.

If all the bombing had been concentrated at one time, it would have hurt our efforts. But the bombing was

expanded in slow stages under Johnson, and it didn't worry us. We had plenty of time to prepare alternative routes and facilities. We always had stockpiles of rice ready to feed the people for months if a harvest was damaged. The Soviets bought rice from Thailand for us.

Support for the war from our rear was completely secure, while the American rear was vulnerable. Every day our leadership would listen to world news over the radio at 9 A.M. to follow the growth of the antiwar movement. Visits to Hanoi by Jane Fonda and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark and ministers gave us confidence that we should hold on in the face of battlefield reverses. We were elated when Jane Fonda, wearing a red Vietnamese dress, said at a press conference that she was ashamed of American actions in the war and would

(General, continued on page 19.)

Emergency Response—the Famous 507th

by Scott Huddleston, staff writer, San Antonio Express-News

Editor's note: Scott Huddleston noted the wonder years of the 507th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), long a resident of the Alamo City, lauding in 20 years of service to South Texas.

For more than 20 years, most emergency air ambulance services in the San Antonio area were provided free by the Army as a part of military training for combat.

But the Persian Gulf War, military transfers and development of civilian air-ambulance services put an end to the local program called MAST—Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic.

The 507th Medical Company was formed in 1970 as a test unit for the MAST Program, created through an agreement among the departments of Defense; Transportation; and Health, Education, and Welfare. The agreement was the first to allow military units to transport civilian patients during what emergency medical experts call the “golden hour,” which can mean the difference between life and death.

In its first mission on July 17, 1970, the unit flew a man hit by a truck about 75 miles from Dilley to Baptist Memo-

rial Hospital. Although the company's core mission was providing medical evacuation during war, it spent about 90 percent of its time running civilian missions under the MAST Program.

Typically staffed with 120–130 personnel and equipped with seven UH-1 Huey helicopters, the company performed water rescues, hospital transfers, and emergency transports from wrecks, shootings, and other trauma incidents within a radius of up to 200 miles from its base at Fort Sam Houston.

The MAST Program worked so well it was expanded to other sites across the country in 1973.

But by the time San Antonio's MAST service marked its twentieth anniversary in July 1990, there were signs the service could be jeopardized. The Baptist Health System planned to start a helicopter service that some feared could threaten MAST, since Department of Defense rules prevented the 507th from competing with air services sponsored by civilian hospitals.

Also, the area of MAST coverage had been reduced to within a 100-mile radius. And there was talk that the 507th could be moved to Fort Hood, home of the Army's III Corps, its parent command, in central Texas.

In September 1990, MAST service in the San Antonio area was halted so the 507th could focus on training in support of military operations following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. A few weeks later, the service was resumed, but within a 50-mile radius. By December, the MAST unit was grounded

again to prepare for its 24 December deployment to the Middle East.

A 20-person unit attached to the California National Guard was sent to provide the local MAST service while the 507th was overseas during the Persian Gulf War. Meanwhile, in San Antonio, the Baptist system had started its helicopter service in early 1991, primarily to carry critically ill heart patients.

When the 507th returned in May 1991 from the Persian Gulf, the California guard unit was ordered to return that spring to a firefighting mission on the West Coast.

By 1993, the Baptist Health System was reporting losses from its service after its workload increased from 438 flights in 1991 to about 1,000 in 1993. The next year, it created a contractual partnership with Bexar County's taxpayer-supported University Health System to continue the service, using a \$5.5 million Bell 412-SP helicopter with a faster transport speed—about 150 mph—than the Hueys.

The 507th had only 62 flights in 1993, including its 5,000th civilian mission. By then it had moved most of its operations to Fort Hood, leaving three helicopters at Fort Sam Houston, mostly to serve Camp Bullis and Brooke Army Medical Center.

Since then, the 507th has moved all of its remaining aircraft and personnel to Fort Hood. Fort Sam Houston now contracts with private air ambulance providers to serve Bullis and its post hospital.

—DUSTOFFer—

(General, continued from page 18.)

struggle along with us “... those people who represented the conscience of America ... part of its war-making capability, and we were turning that power in our favor.”

Bui Tin went on to serve as the editor of the *People's Daily*, the official newspaper of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Disillusioned with the reality of Vietnamese communism, Bui Tin now lives in Paris.

—DUSTOFFer—



Nominate Your Hero for the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame

DUSTOFFers, don't let our legacy go untold. The Hall of Fame honors those who exhibited our ethics and standards in their actions and their contributions to DUSTOFF. Do your homework. Find out about that man or woman who made a difference in your career by his or her inspiration. Research your hero and nominate them. Deadline is July 1. Details are on the dustoff.org homepage. Click on the Hall of Fame tab at the left of the opening page for information. It's OUR Hall of Fame; let's make it complete.

Top of the Schoolhouse

by 1SG Jayme Johnson



Greetings! It has been a busy six months for USASAM. On behalf of the soldiers and family members of USASAM,

I would like to welcome LTC John Campbell and his wife Tish to the USASAM family. Unfortunately, that means we must say farewell to COL James McGhee and his wife Debbie. I personally want to thank him for his support and guidance over the last nine months.

The Change of Dean Responsibility was conducted on 19 March 2003. COL McGhee assumed command of the United States Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory (USAARL) on 28 March 2003. LTC Campbell deployed just four days after becoming the Dean with the 101st Airborne Division. He is now living the life of a PROFIS headed for the fight. Our prayers are with LTC Campbell and his family.

Some of you may remember from the last article that I advertised the Medical Evacuation Doctrine Course (2C-F7), which is taught here at USASAM. I am convinced that this is one of the most important schools for medical NCOs. I implemented a "right-seat ride" program to further develop the officers and NCOs from USASAM at the Joint Readiness Training Center. The officers and NCOs report to the JRTC on D-4 and ride along with the Forward Support MEDEVAC Team Observer Controllers for seven to ten days. The soldiers get to see an entire operation, from initial prep through execution to the AAR.

This drives home how important it is to ensure that the combat health support plan mirrors the ground tactical plan. In the end, these soldiers understand not only the didactic side of combat health support planning, they understand the operational side as well. This ensures our instructors at the 2C-F7 course know what right looks like, not to mention gaining an eye-opening experience at the JRTC.

USASAM participated in the Interservice/Industry Training Simulation and Education Conference (I/ITSEC) at the request of PEO STRICOM and DEI in Orlando, Florida, the first week of December. CPT Schultz, SFC Rosales, SFC Diggs, SSG Landry and SSG Lambert ran medical scenarios using the HH-60L Medical Suite Trainer (MST). The I/ITSEC is held each year and is a place where companies showcase training simulators they have built for the armed forces.

DEI built the HH-60L MST through a contract granted by congress with the help of Congressman Boyer. The conference was an opportunity for USASAM to show the rest of the Army how USASAM has integrated simulators into the training of tomorrow's flight medics. The Army Vice Chief of Staff, GEN Keane, took time to pose for the photo below with the cadre and present them with a coin of excellence.

The Flight Medic Course and Flight Medic XXI continue to progress and increase the level of clinical training. We recently received SimMan mannequins (human patient simulators) and now incorporate them into the flight medic student training. The flight medic students are astounded by the realism that these mannequins provide.

We continue to use the UH-60A aircraft simulator during the course and expect to have the new HH-60L (Medical Suite Trainer—MST) at the school for the upcoming class 03-03. This aircraft will round out the most advanced MEDEVAC airframes used in today's air ambulance companies.

The last key component to the Flight Medic XXI initiative is the STAT Care computerized patient treatment program. The students of generation "X" from the last course picked up the program quickly and utilized it to hone their medical skills in a low-stress environment without the actual outcome of a fatality due to the inexperience of the medic. They are able to restart choice multiple patient scenarios and allow those skills taught in the course to be embedded as second nature. This training is crucial for the flight medic to feel confident in their medical skills and be able to apply them on the battlefield.

We have replaced the PALS class with a more trauma-based treatment of a pediatric patient with the Pediatric Emergency Prehospital Program (PEPP). Class 03-03 will be the first class to experience this training and provide for MEDEVAC commanders a flight medic with the medical skills to treat a pediatric patient, a reality in

(Schoolhouse, continued on page 21.)



GEN Keane, VCSA, presents coins of excellence to (L-R) SSG Lambert, SSG Landry, SFC Diggs, 1SG Johnson, CPT Schultz and SFC Rosales at the I/ITSEC.

From the Wiregrass

by LTC Van Joy

Greetings from UCLA. As everyone is fully aware, we are engaged in a fight against terrorism, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Noble Eagle, as well as many other operations throughout the world. As service members, civilians, and others find themselves in need of help, our DUSTOFF soldiers are there. These outstanding soldiers are writing another

distinguished long chapter in our history books on medical evacuation.

We here in MEPD are continuing to support these fine Americans in any and all ways we are called upon to do so. We are continuing to ensure they get the equipment needed today as well as in the future to ensure our continued success well past our lifetime.

We ask that each and every one supports these fine heroes who are con-

tinuing the long tradition that so many have paved before them. If you are close to "Mother Rucker" stop in, and the new director has said lunch is on her!

Until next time: FLY SAFE and SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

Consultant's Corner

by COL Scott Heintz, MEDEVAC Consultant

(Schoolhouse, continued from page 20.)

today's conflicts, peacekeeping, and MAST missions.

The future for the Flight Medic Course looks promising and will provide MEDEVAC units and patients with a more highly skilled healthcare provider. We continue to look for new and better ways to advance the skills of the flight medic.

The United States Army School of Aviation Medicine's 650K hypobaric chamber refurbishment commenced January 2003. The refurbishment will upgrade the chamber using the latest scientific gains and make the chamber safer and more user-friendly. This was truly a team effort, lead by Hill A.F.B. contractors, local contractors, hospital engineers, and the officers and NCOs from USASAM. The completion of this refurbishment will continue USASAM's goal of leading the way in Aerospace Medicine for the U.S. Army.

In closing I would like to acknowledge the Distinguished Honor graduate and the Honor Graduates of the last two Flight Medic Courses. Class 03-01 had a tie for the Distinguished Honor Graduate: SGT David A. Blanco and SGT Debbie Van Der Bijl (NL). Class 03-02 Distinguished Honor Graduate was SGT Declan H. Hickey, and Honor Graduate was SGT Freija Stewart.

Thank you for your service and continued support. DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

With our nation at war, everyone is actively engaged both on the battlefield and in support roles. As such, I'll be brief. The MEDEVAC "staff team," comprised of those individuals with their eyes on the target within their respective areas, at DA (MAJ Fristoe), FORSCOM (MAJ Malvin), MEPD (COL Lockard in Washington and LTC Joy, MAJ Colacicco and Ms. O'Saile at Ft. Rucker), and Major Smart the PM for the MEDEVAC airframe, continue to give 110% in their efforts to facilitate success for our folks forward. One significant change in our structure is the establishment of the Director, MEPD position in D.C. COL Lockard is making great inroads within the Pentagon, ensuring that MEDEVAC is well represented in all aspects of materiel procurement, funding and doctrine.

The 2004 Air Ambulance Command selections have been made. I can assure you that these individuals will continue to uphold the outstanding performance that we've come to expect from the leaders who preceded them. Slating is almost complete, and the individuals will be notified which command they will take. The 2004 commanders are: MAJs Alexander, Almquist, Bailey, Barnes, Bonilla, Colacicco, Howard, Howe, Kneeland, Lehning, Price, Rose, Rude and Zarzabal. CPT Mallory will take command of the Honduras MEDEVAC Detachment. Congratulations to these fine officers.

MAJ Fristoe has done some great work developing a 67J Web page that can be accessed through the AMEDD Web page. It's still a work in progress, and he has asked anyone with ideas/input for content to contact him. I'm working with PERSCOM to firm up secondary AOCs for the 67Js. If you have yet to declare a secondary, contact me or MAJ Alexander at PERSCOM [Cara.Alexander@hoffman.army.mil]. My e-mail is heintzs@socom.mil.

As I watch the images of Operation Iraqi Freedom, I can't help but reflect on the genesis of our MEDEVAC roots that were established by the heroic DUSTOFF crewmembers who performed so honorably in Vietnam. Certainly they and their courageous actions formed the heart and soul and spirit that inspire every MEDEVAC soldier involved in today's conflict.

God bless every one of those who played a part in the development of our legacy. God bless as well those young heroes in harm's way today, for it is their selfless acts of courage that will sustain all that personifies Dedicated, Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces. I'd ask that you keep them in your thoughts and prayers, and upon their return, seek them out and let them know how proud you are of them. They represent the finest our nation has to offer.

As always, fly safe and take care of one another. DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

From the Proponency

by COL Pauline Lockard

Greetings from the National Capital Region and traffic around the beltway. As was mentioned in COL Scott Heintz's column, I am now the new Director for Medical Evacuation Proponency, Directorate. I am located at the Office of the Surgeon General but with seamless communications with the office at Fort Rucker and with close ties with MAJ Jon Fristoe, the Aviation Staff Officer for the Office of the Surgeon General.

Filling this position here in the National Capital Region has offered some additional opportunities to work closely with the personnel on the Army Staff and various other agencies and Congressional personnel in this region. On that note, there continues to be a lot of work being done to firm up the future

of the utility helicopter programs. MAJ Pete Smart, UH60Q/HH60L/M Program Manager; MAJ Fristoe, OTSG Aviation Staff Officer; and I are keeping our collective fingers on the pulse and eyes on the budget line to ensure that medevac aircraft continue to be incorporated in the utility fleet funding/fielding program.

We will also maintain focus on MEDEVAC integration into the development of the Army Transformation. MEPD is an integral part of both the AMEDD and Aviation Transformation Plans. We are working side by side with the Combat Developers at both the AMEDD Center and School and the United States Army Aviation Center to determine what the future of medical evacuation, both ground and air, will

look like. We already know that we have some tremendous challenges ahead of us in how we will meet the demands of distance on the asymmetrical, noncontiguous battlefield of the future.

And last for now, as I write this and see our units go off to fight another war, I think of all our men and woman providing the services that have been provided over the years with total dedication and professionalism—out there saving lives. My prayers are with you all. Be safe!

DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

Old-Timer "War Story" from 1960s Japan

Editor's note: Doug Moore, reminiscing with Jeff Grider about their tour in Japan, all but overloaded, with one detachment flying patients fresh from Vietnam to five different Army hospitals in Japan, tells about the fun weather on the island.

Jeff, I remember the day well. Dave Dryden looked like a dog crapping peach seeds because the weather was right down on the ground at Zama, and you had five-stars on board. We could barely see the runway, and the Med Command staff was demanding to know where you were. We were fumbling for answers.

I believe that mission was the reason Gail Bowen developed a home-made IFR approach to Zama using the old Sagami beacon. Remember the hand drawing we posted on the flight operations board?

Not long after that, I got a mission about ten o'clock one night to run 24 boxes of blood over to Tachikawa because they needed some on a stat basis

to put on a plane that was going to the States. The weather was not bad, and I thought it would be a short flight. I believe Tom Roberts was the crew chief, and I know Majewski was the medic. Majewski sat up front with me because he wanted to go to flight school.

Just after we lifted off from the 409th Medical Laboratory, I ran into a solid wall of fog at about 200 feet. The only choice was to climb out high enough to get over the high tension wires and head for Tachikawa. I called Tachi Tower and requested a GCA because McGowan and I had gotten into a similar fix a few days earlier. The tower told me their glide slope radar was inop, but the ASR could put me on the centerline, and they did a perfect job getting us down.

I asked the tower to check the weather back at Zama, and they said it was still VFR. So I asked to take off and skirt around the edge of Yokota and stay as far west as we could, hoping

we could beat the fog bank that was moving toward the west.

As soon as we cleared that ridgeline south of Tachi, we went IFR again. I can still remember the drawing Bowen put together. If my memory is correct, you had to fly 142 degrees off the Sagami beacon for about 14 miles. I let down to about 400 feet and tried to fight that blooming ADF needle. You remember how hard it is to stay on track going away from an ADF station.

I think Majewski and Roberts were beginning to wonder about me when, all of a sudden, Majewski blurted out, "There's the tower!" Bowen's approach brought us about three-fourths of the way down the runway near our operations shack. Like you, I bottomed the pitch and got on the ground like I knew what I was doing.

—DUSTOFFer—

Jessie Morris, Widow of Charles Kelly, Dies

Editor's note: A lady who has been very important in the history of DUSTOFF passed away on 24 March 2003. The newspaper notice is followed by excerpts of a note written to members of the DUSTOFF Association by her son, Charles Kelly Jr.

Mrs. Jessie Morris, age 73, passed away Monday afternoon, March 24, 2003, at Doctor's Hospital. A native of Girard, Georgia, she grew up in Sylvania and had been a resident of the Augusta area since 1964. She had been the owner and operator of Barter Books on Peach Orchard Road for the past 20+ years, until 1999. She was a former member of the First Baptist Church of Sylvania, Georgia, and for the past number of years had enjoyed the television ministry of Dr. Timothy Owings of the First Baptist church of Augusta and Bill Graham Evangelistic Crusades. She was active in the DUSTOFF Association; an organization conceived after the death of her first husband, U.S. Army Major Charles L. Kelly, a Medevac pilot who perished serving his coun-

try during the Vietnam Conflict. Her husbands, Major Kelly and Mr. Travis Morris, who passed away in 1990, preceded her in death.

She is survived by her son, Charles Kelly Jr. and his wife, Brenda, from Martinez, Georgia; her daughters, Carol Kelly Dorn and her husband Mike, of Evans, Georgia; Barbara Kelly Howerton and her husband, Bruce, of Dahlonge, Georgia; two sisters, Barbara Boozer, of Sylvania, Georgia, and Carol Norman, of Augusta, Georgia; 11 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren; a niece and a nephew.

If desired, memorial contributions may be made to the DUSTOFF Association, P.O. Box 8091, San Antonio, Texas 78208.

Charles Kelly Jr.'s comments:

"I cannot express to you, the faithful members of the DUSTOFF Association, what it has meant to my mother over the years to know that the memory of her husband and his

actions have lived far past him. Her pain at the loss of her husband in 1964 was gradually replaced by a pride that grew as she realized more fully the extent of his contribution to the mission of mercy. She often spoke of those who served with my father with pride and love in her voice.

"Thank you for continuing the tradition, for taking up where he left off, for continuing that thread of excellence and sacrifice in peacetime, in war, in battle, or in the simple recording of events and telling of tales. My mother shared in the work that my father did, just as any wife of any soldier does. Her sacrifice to her country was as great as his, and her pain lasted much longer. Her work is now done on this earth; her journey is now complete. She is whole and well and with her loved ones who have gone before."

—DUSTOFFer—

New Medevac Helicopters Deploy to Afghanistan

Editor's note: Colonel Pauline Bookbinder Rodriguez Knapp Lockard, promoted on April Fool's Day 2003, forwarded this article on the newest aeromedical evacuation airframe, nine of which are now in the Army's inventory.

Last month, a California National Guard soldier flew an HH-60L helicopter right off a stateside factory's lot on the first leg of its journey to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. The two-month-old helicopter, one of just two HH-60Ls now in Afghanistan, is the latest edition to the line of Black Hawks and is designed specifically for medical evacuation. There are only twelve other helicopters like it.

Sergeant First Class Gary Volkman of the California National Guard's 126th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), now deployed to Afghanistan, flew with the HH-60L from the factory. He said his unit is

lucky to have two of these rare Black Hawks. One was only built in November 2002 and the other in January 2003. "These are the first two to be deployed," said Volkman, who is the acting first sergeant of a 24-hour standby all-paramedic team of 20.

Due to the many paramedic-friendly features the distinguished bubble-nosed helicopter possesses, it was decided Bagram would be its first deployment location.

While the previous model of the Black Hawk the 126th was using, the UH-60L, allowed crew members to carry all the needed equipment aboard, the HH-60L has many features that make it easier for the paramedics, Volkman said.

The stationary medical interior includes an onboard oxygen-generating system, provisions for medical electronics, a six-litter patient configuration, room for a medic and an-

other essential individual.

Other features include the latest infrared and navigational capabilities, a storm scope, and a 290-foot hoist, which travels 350 feet per minute for quick reaction time. The hoist may be needed for various types of rescue, Volkman said.

"We can lower a medic down into a mine field to pick up an injured person, and it is a lot faster than the old internal hoist."

These new helicopters are not cheap. "They cost roughly fourteen million dollars each," said Volkman.

While being in Afghanistan only a couple of weeks, the new medevac helicopter has already seen a few rescues, dealing with land mine accidents and incidents of children playing with explosive ordnance.

—DUSTOFFer—



Treasurer's Report

May 01, 2002, through April 30, 2003



INCOME

Donations	\$ 481.00
Dues	4,325.00
Interest Income	715.39
Memorial Fund	1,980.00
Other Income Unassigned	0.00
Paver Fund	10,152.00
Reunion 2003	18,065.00
Sales—Memorabilia/Email	4,255.00
<hr/> Total Income	<hr/> \$39,973.39

Interest Income includes interest earned at Pentagon Federal Credit Union and the Bank of America Military Bank checking account.

EXPENSE

Memorial Expenses	\$4,566.38
Newsletter Publishing	5,072.54
Operating Expenses	1,895.18
Paver Fund Purchase	10,461.50
Reunion Expenses 2002	18,873.21
Sales Expense Memorabilia	6,392.93
Sales Taxes	210.84
<hr/> Total Expense	<hr/> \$47,472.58

NET INCOME (LOSS) \$(7,499.19)

Balances at the bank/credit union are as follows as of the last statement received:

Bank of America, Military Bank Checking (\$3754.10 is unencumbered, and the remainder is set aside for the HOF)	\$5,283.20
Pentagon Federal Credit Union CD	\$11,565.85
Pentagon Federal Credit Union Money Market	\$ 8,857.61
 Retail Value of Store Items on Hand	 \$16,039.00

Total money set aside in the checking account for memorials is \$1,552.92. The paver campaign has just about covered all of our expenses. We are just \$309.50 short of completely paying that off with donations designated for the Paver Project. In order to close out the FY with that project also closed, The Memorials Fund was decremented by the \$181.50. Donations in memory of Eldon Ideus and Jessie Morris account for the bulk of the donations.

WAR STORY CORNER

Editor's note: The famed and sometimes infamous founder of the DUSTOFF Association, Egor Johnson, shared some wartime perspective in an Internet message to some old DUSTOFFers. Following is a brief response by Billy Hughes.

It is now the eighth of July, and over the past seven days, I have been thinking a lot about DUSTOFF and the experiences that have had such an effect on my life. I know I sometimes go on a lot about DUSTOFF and our traditions, but they are such an important part of my life and have affected almost everything I have accomplished over my life. I would like to share with you the birth of this drive in me, and in that way, you may see why our traditions are so important to me.

I was newly assigned to the 57th, and my job was to perform maintenance on the ships. On a day some five days after Billy Hughes was wounded and evacuated out of Vietnam, two of us were assigned to complete a periodic on 065. We had just gotten the tech inspection done and were awaiting a test flight. We were waiting by the ship for the pilot to come out, and I was saying I hoped, before long, I would get a ship of my own.

I looked over toward the Operations Shack and saw Captain Ed Taylor and Captain Jim Truscott walking out to the aircraft. I had not been in the unit long enough to know these two pilots, but in the hooch I had heard all the stories about them. To say I was in awe of them would be an understatement, for they were near the end of their tour of duty.

As I remember it, when they arrived at the ship, Captain Truscott asked for the log book and began to go over the inspection, while Captain Taylor began the preflight. We were packing up our tools and getting ready to go back to the maintenance shop when Captain Truscott said, "Didn't you work on this ship?" I told him yes and he said, "Get a helmet; you're going with us."

Hell, I had only flown on old CH21s in Alaska and knew nothing about what to do on a DUSTOFF ship. By that time, Captain Taylor had joined us, and when he heard what I said, he said, "No

problem. One of you will be the crew chief and one will be the medic." (I ended up being the medic.)

It was then they told us that no test flight would be performed without a full crew on board. They began telling us what to do, because both of us were newly assigned. Shortly thereafter, we took off. We had just begun the test flight when a call for an urgent DUSTOFF mission was called in. As I remember, Captain Truscott immediately said that we were only five minutes away and we would take the mission. Now, we did not have any weapons on the ship, not even .45s, and I asked from the back what we were to do.

While Captain Taylor flew the ship, Captain Truscott began my education on how to fly as a crewmember of a DUSTOFF crew. Coming across the intercom, he gave us a class that stressed the fact that the man on the ground was wounded and we were the closest, so it was our duty to get him out. We went into the LZ, and thank God, it was quiet until we began to depart. I remember hearing firing then. But I was so new, I didn't know if it was at us or it was the guys on the ground.

To say that it was the worst performance I ever did as a DUSTOFF crewmember would be an understatement. I was all thumbs, but we got the guy out. As I remember, all I was able to do was to apply direct pressure on the wound. We got him to the 17th Field Hospital and then completed the test flight.

Upon arriving back at the helipad, I expected they would leave, we would tie down the ship, and that would be the end of it. Little did I know these two legends of DUSTOFF. After we tied down the ship, the two pilots first told us what we did right and then what we did wrong. Then, knowing we were new, they began to teach me about the DUSTOFF tradition. They told me the why and how and, more than anything, gave me the driving desire to be a part of this special mission and group of men. Hearing the tradition from two

men who, until that morning, were just legendary names from stories, and then having them take over an hour to talk to a young 19-year-old mechanic, did something to me.

For the rest of my tours in DUSTOFF, I gauged everything I did against the standard they taught me on that day. They built a fire inside me to be the best crew chief I possibly could be, to have a ship that pilots always knew was ready and, no matter what, WE WOULD GO IN AND GET THE WOUNDED!

Billy's response: Very well put. We all have similar feelings about our family atmosphere. The bond that is formed under combat conditions has been and always will be the absolute strongest. As I look back on my 20 months, I can say that all the individuals I had the pleasure to serve with were not only the best, they were also the most dedicated soldiers in Viet Nam.

—DUSTOFFer—

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

Closing Out the Flight Plan

LTC (Ret.) Barry Edward Fitzgerald, MSC Aviator, passed away on 15 December 2002. Memorial services and internment were conducted at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

Barry was a great guy and, in his subsequent civilian endeavors, a compassionate and gracious employer. In the company that he and his partner founded, he hired many who needed a job, had little skills, but a lot of desire, and he tutored them until they were able to command a better position and corresponding salary. Many can say they went from rags to riches (not great, but much better than they had hoped for) thanks to Barry.

Barry was a holder of the Distinguished Flying Cross and, following a distinguished flying career, a graduate of Louisiana State University with a Master's Degree in Business Administration and subsequent tours as a comptroller, culminating at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio in 1982. He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Marion, and three children, Kevin, Keith, and Kelly.

* * * * *

BG (Ret.) David E. Thomas, 90, a retired physician who participated in three wars and was attending physician to two presidents, died on October 23, 2002.

Thomas joined the Medical Corps in 1939 and two years later became the first regular Army medical officer to get his jump wings. As surgeon of the 508th Parachute Infantry Airborne Division, Thomas jumped with the Red Devils into Normandy on June 6, 1944. On the fourth day Thomas was captured by the Germans but escaped and found his way back to American troops by the ninth day after the invasion.

During the Korean War, Thomas was chief of surgery at three hospitals in Japan. In Vietnam he was commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command.

Internment with full military honors was at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery. Thomas is survived by a son, Normand E. "Gus" Thomas, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Membership Report

Honorary Life Members	14
Life Members	859
Members	157
Units	70
Corporations	8
Inactive	655
Other	2
Total	1767

New Entries on the Flight Manifest

Jefferey Valentine	Fayetteville, NC	LM
Roger Smith	San Antonio, TX	LM
James Kepley	Alcoa, TN	LM
Frank Toth	Augusta, NJ	LM
Jose Acevedo	AP0, AE	LM
Bruce Zenk	Burnsville, MN	M
William Freeny	Lighthouse Point, Fl	LM
Melvin Litwhiler	Wilmington, DE	LM
William Adlen	Bristol, CT	M
John Alvarez	Fort Rucker, AL	LM
Walter Cummings	Daleville, AL	LM
Larry Newsom	Wichita, KS	LM
Brian Conway	Centerville, MA	M
Samuel Morris	San Antonio, TX	LM
Delmus Williams	Fayetteville, NC	LM
Dwayne McJunkins	Enterprise, AL	LM
Anthony Wolf	AP0, AP	LM
Luther Gooden	College Park, GA	M
Stephen Kamens	San Fernando, CA	M
Jeffery Frey	Boynton Beach, Fl	LM
Gyorgy Jaszai	Easley, SC	M
John Lavery	Cheyenne, WY	LM
Abdel Guzman	San Antonio, TX	LM
John Thomas	Fort Rucker, AL	M
George Hildebrandt	Fort Campbell, KY	LM
Rob Hunter	Daleville, AL	LM
John McNally	Universal City, TX	M
Robert Kneeland	San Antonio, TX	M
Ed Seagroves Jr.	Willow Springs, NC	M
Mike McLane	Mannford, OK	LM
Allen Barnes	Paxton, IL	M
Willim Jepsen	Norfolk, VA	LM
William Dame IV	Glendale, AZ	LM
James Kepley	Alcoa, Tn	LM
Richard Anderson	Audubon, FL	LM
Richard Claywell	League City, TX	LM
Richard Bryndra	San Antonio, TX	M
Hallstom, Larry	Fort Wainwright, AK	LM

What's New at www.dustoff.org

We're continuing the tradition! The old guys will remember a photo album that used to be kept of reunion photos from the previous reunion. It used to be the first thing we'd look at in the hospitality room. At the urging of Sterlene Hapner (and your help), we're bringing the tradition back with our Reunion Scrapbook on the DUSTOFF Association Web site at www.dustoff.org. If you'd like to have your reunion photos included, send them to photo@dustoff.org. Please label who the folks are in the photo and what year reunion they are from.

The Vietnam Project

Texas Tech University

The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University

... Collects all documents and memorabilia related to the Wars in Southeast Asia and the collective experiences of those affected by the wars;

... Preserves this archival material in a state-of-the-art facility located on the campus of Texas Tech University;

... Encourages the dissemination of information from the archive to all who are interested in learning more about this critical time in United States and world history;

... Promotes the study and understanding of the Wars in Southeast Asia and the nations and history of Southeast Asia.

The Oral History Project

... Preserves the recollections, perceptions, and perspectives of individuals who participated in the events surrounding the Wars in Southeast Asia through recorded interviews.

To facilitate the collection of recorded interviews, The Vietnam Archive has a full-time Oral Historian who conducts interviews with veterans and others whose lives paralleled the Wars in Southeast Asia. Interviews are recorded using digital equipment and are conducted in person, over the phone, or over the Internet, depending on the individual needs of the participant.

The Oral History Project helps create a more complete record of the American experience in Southeast Asia by adding recorded personal recollections to the documents, photographs, slides, maps, periodicals, books and other materials collected by the archive. The recollections, perspectives and perceptions of men and women who served in Southeast Asia, or were active on the home front, are an invaluable resource for present and future students and scholars.

The Guide to the Holdings of The Vietnam Archive contains a list of the interviews and other material and is available, free of charge, to any individual interested in learning more about the Archive's holdings. More detailed information on many of the interviews and collections, including transcripts of interviews, finding aids, and inventories for most of the collections can be found online at our Web site.

The mission of the Vietnam Archive is to collect any material related to the Wars in Southeast Asia. The

first collection received by the archive, a package of letters from a Navy corpsman to his family while serving in Vietnam, symbolizes the commitment of the Vietnam Project—to preserve the record of individual involvement and provide greater understanding of individual experiences. The Vietnam Archive strives to preserve all perspectives of the wars by maintaining balance in our collection activities. Our collection policy includes records of military veterans, civilians who were active in theater and on the home front, veterans' organizations and contemporary scholars of the period, as well as other individuals and organizations who share experiences from the Wars in Southeast Asia.

If you would like to participate in the Oral History Project, send the following information to the address below:

- Name
- Address
- Phone
- E-mail
- Branch/Agency of Service during the wars
- Dates involved in the wars Job description/ training received
- Units/Agencies/Organizations of Assignment during the wars in Southeast Asia. (Please include dates, places, and positions held.)
- Major programs, events, activities, operations, and engagements in which you participated during the Wars in Southeast Asia.

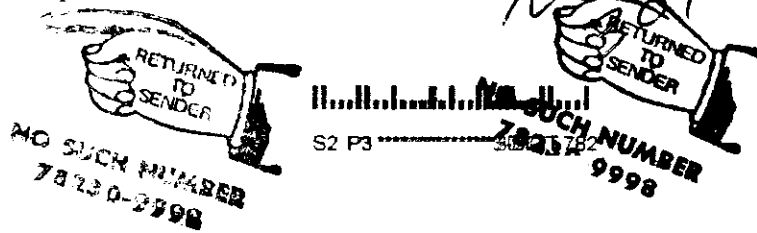
Texas Tech University
Special Collections Library, Room 108
Lubbock, TX 79409-1045
Telephone: (806) 742-9010
Facsimile: (806) 742-0496
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Web site: www.lib.ttu.edu/vietnam



DUSTOFF Association
P. O. Box 8091
San Antonio, TX 78208-0091

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DUSTOFF Association Membership Application/Change of Address

- ☐ I want to join the Association as a Member
Officers and Civilians
\$10.00 Initial fee
\$15.00 Annual fee
\$25.00 Total
- ☐ I want to join the Association as a Member
Enlisted
E-5 & below
E-6 & above
\$ 7.50 Annual fee
No Initial fee
\$10.00 Initial fee
- ☐ I want to join the Association as a Life Member
Officers and Civilians
E-9 and below
\$100.00 One-time fee
\$50.00 One-time fee
- ☐ Check here if change of address, or e-mail change to secretary@dustoff.org

Rank _____ Last name _____ First name _____ M.I. _____
Mailing address _____
E-mail _____ Spouse's name _____
Home phone _____ Work phone _____

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

DUSTOFF Association
P. O. Box 8091,
Wainwright Station
San Antonio, TX 78208