

# THE DUSTOFFER



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FALL/WINTER 2003

## “In the Shadow of the Blade” Honors Vietnam Veterans in World Premier at LBJ Library



*Photo courtesy of Sarah Beal Photography*

*Patrick and Cheryl Fries of Austin-based Arrowhead Films unveiled their documentary honoring Vietnam Veterans and the venerable Huey Helicopter at the LBJ Library on 8 November 2003. Over 800 veterans, spouses, surviving children, and dignitaries witnessed the emotion, the passion, the sorrow and the joy as captured in the stories told about how the Huey became “Our Mother” during the Vietnam War. Several DUSTOFFers were prominently featured in the soon to be released documentary.*



# President's Message



Hello to all DUSTOFFers and family members.

The 2004 DUSTOFF Reunion is just around the corner. As you all know, it will be the 25<sup>th</sup> DUSTOFF Reunion. The Executive Committee and a small group of overachieving volunteers, led by Jim Truscott, Rob Howe and Doug Moore, are pulling it all together. We tentatively have Peter Arnett and Horst Faas on tap to be the guest speakers. Jim has assured me there will be something for everybody: old, new, and sometimes blue DUSTOFFers. So mark your calendars and plan on being there.

Those who attended last year's Reunion will remember that the DUSTOFF Association is supporting an initiative to recognize the "medics in the back." This will be in the form of either awarding the Combat Medics Badge or having a new badge coined and awarded. Currently, a bill, sponsored by Senator Arlen Specter, R-PA, is before Congress

to direct the Department of Defense to institute the award. We hope it will pass, and we should know by the Reunion.

The editor of the DUSTOFFer told me to keep my comments short, so I will close with "Don't forget to vote for the Hall of Fame Nominees." Dan and Huey assured me there would be no "Hanging Chads."

See you at the Reunion!

DUSTOFF!

Art Hapner

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## Letters to *The DUSTOFFer*

Quick e-note from Bill Covington of Vietnam DUSTOFF vintage, now employed in aviation operations in Colombia, brings us up to date on South America.

You would be proud of me in that I really feel a responsibility to uphold some of our highest traditions and especially outside of our U.S. borders—something to do with fostering international relations. Actually, if I haven't told you before, our efforts and organization are a lot like RVN. Picture Bogota as Long Binh or Saigon and our 5 or 6 outlying organizational sites as firebases or Special Forces camps. I am currently the Operations Officer, with the main responsibility of supporting the outlying areas with rota-

tional personnel and supplies. I directly control 2-3 C27 police aircraft and contract ground transportation. Keeps me busy, but I still manage to play some golf and get out on the weekends. We get our mission aircraft shot up on a continual basis, get people wounded, but fortunately have had only one fatality since I've been here. Would like to think that some of my suggestions have reduced our crews' exposure. Didn't take me long to figure out that doing things the same way over and over, and being exposed to very modern weapons, would tend to get people hurt. One other comparison is that Bogota is like Vung Tau compared to, say, Lai Khe or Bong Son. Guess why this is kind of fun for me . . . at my age.

### Charles Allen, Eldon Ideus, Doug Moore and Ray Salmon to be Inducted into DUSTOFF Hall of Fame

The Executive Council of the DUSTOFF Association is pleased to announce the induction of four DUSTOFFers into its Hall of Fame. MSG (R) Charles Allen, COL (R) Eldon Ideus, COL (R) Doug Moore, and COL (R) Ray Salmon are to be enshrined on the Hall of Fame Wall at the Army Medical Department Museum on Saturday, 21 February 2004 at 2:00 P.M.

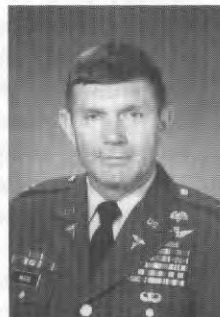
Plan on being there as we honor these four men, who exemplify all that is good and honorable in DUSTOFF. Their plaques will be produced again this year by the Southwell Corporation and paid for by the generous donations to our Memorial Fund by our members and corporate sponsors.



MSG (R) Charles Allen



COL (R) Eldon Ideus



COL (R) Doug Moore



COL (R) Ray Salmon

**NOTICE:** Due to the high OPTEMPO of our DUSTOFF units, both Active and Reserve, the Executive Council Awards Committee has been working with many unit commanders who missed the 30 September 2003 deadline to allow them to get their nominations prepared and submitted. Therefore, as of the date of printing this *DUSTOFFer*, no decision has been made on the Rescue of the Year or Crewmember of the Year Awards. Those awards will be announced through email to the units and then awarded as usual at the Saturday night banquet at the 25th Annual DUSTOFF Reunion.



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Spring 2003 Newsletter contained an article addressing Colonel Pauline Lockard with a variety of surnames, intended as humorous. As not everyone understood this context, I would ask that Colonel Lockard accept my apology, along with my intent not to include any such commentary in subsequent issues.

# DUSTOFF in Iraq Faces Biggest Challenge Since Vietnam

Editor's Note: The Arabic website, Al-Jazeera, reported a *Jordan Times* article on U.S. Army Aeromedical evacuation operations in Iraq this past July.

Baghdad—The largest ongoing U.S. medevac operation since the Vietnam War is in full swing in Iraq, as a company of Black Hawk helicopter pilots, crew chiefs, and medics race across Iraqi skies—and against time—to bring aid to friend and foe. Fighting wind-whipped perma-dust, rising attacks on U.S. forces and exhaustion, the 159<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance) struggles to transport the growing number of wounded on both sides of a simmering conflict three months after a lightning U.S.-led invasion ousted dictator Saddam Hussein.

The need for the emergency medical evacuation (medevac) services shows no sign of let-up as U.S. forces come under mounting attacks by suspected Saddam loyalists—many of whom are flown to U.S. field hospitals after sustaining injuries in gun battles with U.S. troops.

"We're by far the busiest I've ever experienced," says Captain James Hannam, the exhausted 30-year-old

operations officer who runs the 159<sup>th</sup>, which averages more than thirteen missions per day and has logged 2,200 flight hours in four months.

On July 4, U.S. Independence Day, the team flew a record nineteen missions.

"Some days we barely make it. This is the busiest U.S. medevac since Vietnam."

And perhaps the most dangerous.

While the olive-drab UH-60A Black Hawks are clearly marked with the Red Cross believed to be universally recognized, the pilots say many Iraqis appear unfamiliar with the markings.

At night the tracers float up, sometimes uncomfortably close to the Black Hawks, says Crew Chief, Specialist Jeffrey Willis, 31.

In compliance with the Geneva Convention, the air ships cannot be armed; only the personal firearms of crew members are allowed.

None of the fourteen medevac Black Hawks stationed at Baghdad International Airport, southwest of the city, has been hit by ground fire since the war, Willis points out, but the discomfort he shares with his flight unit is growing, along with the number of missions they are flying.

"It's getting worse and worse," says Willis.

Not only the helicopter teams are at risk. A U.S. Army medic was killed last month when assailants fired a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) on a military ambulance near Baghdad.

One of the company's seventeen pilots, Warrant Officer William O'Donnell, cites increased RPG attacks and other ambushes on occupying ground forces struggling to keep peace in Iraq.

"We've been busier this past month than before," O'Donnell says.

When an urgent call comes in, a medevac team is seen scrambling out of their cramped office and running through the "Nineline," the medevac checklist standard to all U.S. military units.

In most urgent situations, they can

be "wheels up" in five minutes, O'Donnell says.

"Sometimes we go for a fifteen-minute job and end up staying out ten hours answering calls on the fly," says Willis.

A recent flight to transfer injured soldiers to a high-tech field hospital in the desert 25 kilometers southwest of the airport highlighted the precarious nature of the work.

Touching down at the 28<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital in the desert, Willis is given another mission: Transport four treated Iraqi enemy prisoners of war (EPWs) back to Camp Cropper prison at the airport.

"We get EPWs on here all the time, and we never know how they'll react when they're aboard," Willis says, as he orders a reporter and photographer off the chopper to make room for the handcuffed prisoners.

About 50 percent of those medevaced are Iraqi prisoners or civilians. The flights often turn into humanitarian efforts, with teams flying injured or sick Iraqi children to U.S. hospitals for medical care.

The 159<sup>th</sup> boasts a 99 percent survival rate—just four of their 2,200 patients have died after transfer to the hospital.

But the weight of the work bears down on them daily, with calls from U.S. units under fire.

A somber-looking Chief Warrant Officer Jorge Correa stepped out of his Black Hawk early Tuesday to speak of his latest mission to evacuate a U.S. Marine who had lost half his foot to a mine south of Baghdad.

Still the crews say their chaotic stint in Baghdad has been the highlight of their careers.

"It's everyone's dream, to do such a job so soon out of flight school," said Chief Warrant Officer Travis Workman, who has already logged 260 flight hours in four months in Iraq. "I love this job!"

## ATTENTION: 498ers

The 498<sup>th</sup> Air Ambulance Company will be holding a reunion on 19 February 2004, the day before the start of the annual DUSTOFF Reunion. We are organizing a big day for all 498ers, so make plans to attend both reunions. For more details, call Al Flory in San Antonio at 210.599.9673 or e-mail [aflory@satx.rr.com](mailto:aflory@satx.rr.com). It will be easier to keep you informed of all of the details as they are finalized if we have your e-mail address. Hope to see you on 19 February!

# DUSTOFF Pilot Braves Bullets for Rescues

Editor's Note: *The Miami Herald*, in a featured article, authored by Van G. Sauter, dated 15 November 1965, had a foreword stating, "This is the story of a DUSTOFF pilot—one of the men who fly the helicopter ambulances through enemy fire to rescue the wounded in Vietnam."

Saigon—"The minute we got into the area, the machinegun fire started. The people on the ground radioed, "DUSTOFF, you're receiving fire. Get the hell out of here." We could see the American down there. They had a bandage around his neck, but he was still bleeding. So I said, "Let's put the damned thing down and give it a chance."

## A DUSTOFF Pilot

When the phone rang, 1LT Michael W. Trader put down his doughnut and walked over to a desk and picked up the receiver. The person on the other end seemed somewhat bored with the routine message.

"This is Captain Hunter. We need an emergency evacuation—one American and one CIDG. Scramble a DUSTOFF to Minh Thanh."

Trader, 24, of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, checked with his operations officer and then scanned a large wall map.

"Let's go," he said, gathering some maps, a helmet, a flak jacket, and an M16 automatic rifle. The helicopter bears three bright Red Crosses and has emerged as the best ambulance for this or any other war.

Trader was beginning his 426th ambulance run in Vietnam.

Within minutes, he was flying over the Viet Cong-infested Iron Triangle, a green jungle pocked by rows of deep brown craters from the B-52 bombing raids.

There also was a small pockmark on the vertical strip of metal in the center of the chopper's windshield.

"That's my trophy," said co-pilot 1LT Alex Ortolano. "The bullet came in through the window on my right side and hit there. Once I got by that bullet, I feel like I've got it made here."

In the distance, two F-100 jets were swooping over the jungle, dropping fragmentation and phosphorous bombs. The white smoke billowed high above the trees.

A patrol from the Minh Thanh Special Forces Camp, which is located by a sprawling rubber plantation, had run into a large Vietcong element in that area.

The patrol called in the planes, and a reaction force of Vietnamese soldiers would land in choppers immediately after the air strike to pursue the VC. Trader's DUSTOFF was to pick up a Special Forces officer and the CIDG (Civil Irregular Defense Guard) wounded in the initial contact.

The camp, a cluster of tin-roofed buildings surrounded by two moats and tangles of barbed wire, came into view as a jet completing a strafing run swept below the chopper. A burst of yellow smoke appeared in a clearing at the side of the camp, and Trader, keeping alert for the jets, began to settle toward the clearing.

When the chopper touched down, a Special Forces man carrying an automatic rifle ran out and said there were more than two wounded. He stood guard by the edge of the rubber trees while the crew chief and the medic from the chopper pulled out the stretchers stained by the blood of many men.

Two of the wounded were brought out on trucks, and two others were carried piggy-back style by their buddies. The American, who was tall with close-cropped red hair and freckles, walked. His left pants leg had been cut off, and a bloodstained bandage was wrapped around his thigh.

The two critically wounded Vietnamese had both been shot in the chest and were placed in the lowest stretchers. Two with leg wounds were crowded onto a single stretcher, which was attached near the ceiling of the chopper cabin.

Grimacing with pain, the American crawled into the chopper and pulled himself up on a seat next to the stretchers. As Trader lifted off, the American shook his head, more in frustration than pain.

"I've got a company out there," he said, "and that's where I should be. But the doc couldn't get this bullet out of my leg."

The medic checked the two men with chest wounds and talked through the intercom with the pilot. Trader then turned toward the chopper cabin and shouted at the American.

"We're going to take the two serious guys to the ARVN hospital."

The American, his jungle fatigues still soggy with sweat, nodded.

"Are you okay?"

"I'm okay. The doctor said the bullet was too deep to cut out back at the camp. Let's take them first."

He leaned down and looked at the Vietnamese on the lower stretcher. A bottle of clear liquid was attached to the cabin ceiling, and a thin plastic tube ran from the bottle to a needle in the man's arm. The American shook his head and frowned.

Within half an hour, the Vietnamese were unloaded, and Trader flew to a nearby airport and put down by an ambulance near a line of transport planes.

"Sure, this is a dangerous job," Trader said, "but you and I go on a medevac anyway. You might get killed, but I know I won't. You have to think that way."

The Americans in the field have nothing but praise for the DUSTOFF crews. The men in the Special Forces say the constant availability of a DUSTOFF is the strongest morale booster for the CIDGs.



# Closing Out the Flight Plan

## **LTC (Ret) Allen "Scott" Livingston**

LTC Allen "Scott" Livingston died 15 July 2003 at his home in Laramie, Wyoming, after a two-year battle with melanoma.

Scott attended the University of Wyoming, graduating with a degree in Sociology in 1969. He was commissioned in the Medical Service Corps upon graduation and attended Rotary Wing Flight School. He married Lynne Smith on 7 February 1970.

During his career as a medical evacuation pilot, his assignments included: Commander, 571<sup>st</sup> Medical Detachment, Fort Carson, Colorado; Executive Officer, 421<sup>st</sup> Medical Evacuation Battalion, Nellingen, Germany; and Commander, 128<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital, Ludwigsburg, Germany.

He had one tour of duty as a medical evacuation pilot in Vietnam and served as the Executive Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Medical Battalion in Korea. He was a graduate of the Command and General Staff College.

Upon retirement, he earned a second degree in Secondary Education/Social Studies and taught at the Cathedral Home for Children and later worked for the State of Wyoming.

## **MG (Dr.) Spurgeon Neel (Ret)**

Widely known as the "Father of Army Aviation Medicine," Major General (Ret) Spurgeon Neel first championed the use of helicopters to evacuate wounded soldiers from the battlefields in Korea. He expanded the concept in the Vietnam War, where thousands of soldiers' and civilians' lives were saved by rapid transport to medical care.

MG Neel died at age 83 on 6 June 2003 from complications of pneumonia. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Alice Neel.

A DUSTOFF medical evacuation legend, Neel pioneered the foundation of aerospace medicine during his lifetime. He also developed the MAST Program—Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic—in the early 1970s. He contributed to the design of the UH1 "Huey" helicopter, which revo-

lutionized aeromedical evacuation in Vietnam.

"MG Neel was a great American hero whose accomplishments during his lifetime were legendary," said retired Army Colonel Robert Romines.

MG Neel was the first Army Aviation Medical Officer, later serving as the Deputy Army Surgeon General and the first Commanding General, Health Services Command. He was a member and past president of the Aerospace Medical Association, founder and chairman emeritus of the Army Medical Museum Foundation, and was inducted into both the U.S. Army Aviation Hall of Fame and DUSTOFF Hall of Fame.

Most recently, he received the 2003 Louis H. Bauer Award at the 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting of the Aerospace Medical Association in recognition of a lifetime of outstanding contributions to the field of Aerospace Medicine.

## **LTC Raymond E. Blythe (USA-Ret)**

Ray Blythe was born in August 1946 in Washington, D.C., and earned a Bachelor's Degree from Texas A&M University in 1963, a Master's from the University of Michigan, and his EDD from Southern California.

Ray served in the U.S. Army from 1969 until his retirement in 1990. He married his wife, Sonia McGoan, in May 1983 in San Antonio. Following his retirement from the military, he was a college professor, teaching health care and business courses at Wayland Baptist University in Lubbock, Texas.

## **LT (Ret) Bob Cowgill**

They were known as the "Ivory Soap" pilots, and they were among the pioneers of helicopter medevac. Now the last has passed away.

Bob Cowgill, the last of five Army Air Force pilots who flew 70 soldiers to safety during the World War II Ivory Soap rescues in the Philippines, died 13 June 2003 at the age of 79 in Port Townsend, Washington.

Ivory Soap was the code name for a project during World War II that took

Liberty ships and outfitted them to conduct aviation repair in the Pacific Theater. Among the things they carried were Sikorsky helicopters.

During June 1945, the five aviators flew Sikorsky R-4 and R-6 helicopters into a combat zone in the Philippines to bring injured soldiers out for medical treatment, often under fire.

Many were the first cases flown with external litters welded in-theater to the side of the airframes. Details of the missions remained classified for decades.

Cowgill graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in aeronautical engineering and became an Army Aviator. After the war, he went with Hiller Helicopters, where he became the Chief Flight Test Engineer.

In 1968 he left aerospace engineering and became an authority on Pacific Northwest coastal Native American art and history. He developed a large collection of art, artifacts, and books and devoted the last thirty-five years of his life to carving pieces inspired by that culture. His art was the subject of a major retrospective exhibit this year.

He was modest about his unit's World War II achievements, which helped validate Igor Sikorsky's dream of how the helicopter would be used.

In April 2003, Cowgill finally received recognition of his role in medical evacuations in the Philippines, receiving an Air Medal. He was awarded the Sikorsky Winged-S Rescue Award in 2001 after his unit's exploits came to light.

"I know what we did, and I've always been proud of it. That's good enough for me," he told the *Port Townsend Leader* newspaper last year.

—DUSTOFFer—





# 571<sup>ST</sup> MEDICAL COMPANY (AIR AMBULANCE) CREW

DENVER—May 12, 2003—Chief Warrant Officer Hans N. Gukeisen joined the Army straight out of high school, but he put his plans to go to helicopter school on hold and served as an Army scout in the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Gukeisen, who later took his helicopter training, was one of three soldiers based at Fort Carson who died Friday in a Black Hawk helicopter crash in Iraq, military officials said over the weekend.

"A father couldn't be any more proud of the way his son turned out than how Hans turned out," said his

father, Terry Gukeisen, who is retired from the Naval Reserve.

Military officials identified the other soldiers as Chief Warrant Officer Brian K. Van Dusen, 39, of Columbus, Ohio, and Corporal Richard P. Carl, 26, of King Hill, Idaho.

Van Dusen, Carl, and Gukeisen, 31, of Lead South Dakota, were aboard a UH-60 Black Hawk air medical helicopter that crashed in the Tigris River during the rescue of an Iraqi child wounded in an explosion, military officials said.

The first helicopter, carrying the child, took off safely, but the second

one snagged a power line and flipped into the river, Terry Gukeisen and military officials said. A fourth soldier survived and swam to shore.

A memorial service for the soldiers was held in Iraq.

After the Gulf War, Hans Gukeisen took time off to take college courses, his father said. "He realized what he really wanted to do was fly helicopters, so he reenlisted and got his wish to go to helicopter school," Terry Gukeisen said.

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## Funeral for a Texas Soldier

Editor's Note: Contributed by Randy Maschek, some very emotional observations of Vicki Pierce, whose nephew was killed in action in Iraq.

The service itself was impressive, with wonderful flowers and sprays, a portrait of the fallen soldier, his uniform and boots, his awards and ribbons. There were lots of military brass and an eloquent (though inappropriately long-winded) Baptist preacher. There were easily a thousand people at the service, filling the church sanctuary, the fellowship hall, and spilling out into the parking lot.

However, the most incredible thing was what happened following the service on the way to the cemetery. We went to our cars and drove to the cemetery escorted by at least ten police cars with lights flashing and some other emergency vehicles, with Texas Rangers handling traffic.

Everyone on the road who was not in the procession, pulled over, got out

of their cars, and stood silently and respectfully. Some put their hand over their heart; some had small flags. Shop keepers came outside with their customers and did the same thing. Construction workers stopped their work, got off of their equipment, and put their hands over their hearts, too. There was no noise whatsoever except a few birds and the quiet hum of cars going slowly up the road.

When we turned off the highway, suddenly there were teenage boys along both sides of the street about every twenty feet or so, all holding large American flags on long flag poles, and again, with their hands on their hearts. We thought at first it was the Boy Scouts or a 4-H club or something, but it continued for two and a half miles. Hundreds of young people, standing silently on the side of the road with flags. At one point we passed an elementary school, and all the children were outside, shoulder to shoulder,

holding flags—kindergarteners, handicapped, teachers, staff—everyone. Some held signs of love and support. Then came teenaged girls and younger boys, all holding flags. Then adults. Then families, all standing silently on the side of the road. No one spoke, not even the very young children. The last few turns found people crowded together holding flags or with their hands on their hearts. Some were on horseback.

The military presence—at least two generals, a fist full of colonels, and representatives from every branch of the services, plus the color guard, and some who served with him—was very impressive and respectful. The love and pride of this community who had lost one of their own was the most amazing thing I've ever been privileged to witness.

—DUSTOFFER—

# 68<sup>th</sup> Rescues Two Men From Alaska River Plunge

Editor's Note: A note from Major Lawrence Hallstrom, Commander of the 68<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance) in Fort Wainwright, Alaska, told of an NBC Today Show live feed that was sent from their hangar worldwide on 12 June 2003, following the rescue of a father and son in the Alaska wilderness.

Fairbanks, Alaska—A father and son on an arctic rafting expedition survived a plunge under river ice and five days without food or supplies, rescuers said.

Blake Stanfield of Seward and his father, Neil of Oklahoma City, were found "starving and tired and exhausted" before being flown out of the wilderness early Wednesday by an Army helicopter, said 1LT Wesley Madden, an Army pilot.

The pair lost their supplies Friday when they and their raft were sucked under a large patch of ice near the Arctic Circle, about 65 miles northeast of the town of Bettles, Madden said.

They said they were trapped under about 30 feet of water on the North Fork of the Koyukuk River before surfacing in a break in the ice. The break lasted long enough for them to grab a breath before being swept underneath a longer section of ice, said Chief Warrant Officer Keith Northcutt, another Army pilot.

"The only thing that saved them was a little pocket where they could hold their heads up and breathe," Northcutt said. They were eventually swept into ice-free water, but most of their supplies were lost.

The son set his father up in a one-man tent and hiked out to get help, Northcutt said. Four days later, a bush pilot spotted the younger Stanfield and returned with another bush pilot. One of the pilots, Berni Hicker, said they dropped a radio and found out what had happened. The other pilot, Dirk Nikisch, then flew around and looked for the elder Stanfield.

"It took a while to find him, but we did," Hicker said. Nikisch also supplied the coordinates that enabled the Army helicopter to retrieve the Stanfields.

After being found to have no serious medical problems, the Stanfields were flown to Bettles, about 180 miles northwest of Fairbanks.

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## CREWS GET AWARDS FOR FIRST HH-60L COMBAT SAR TASKS

Sikorsky Aircraft has issued its first combat rescue awards to crewmen aboard the U.S. Army's new HH-60L medevac helicopter in Afghanistan.

Sikorsky Winged-S Rescue Awards were given to soldiers in the 126<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance) based at Bagram.

"The company has completed forty-eight missions so far, with the HH-60L completing a large portion of them," SFC Gary Volkman of the California National Guard's 126<sup>th</sup> wrote in May 2003. A number of missions also involved Afghan civilians in need of medical help.

"They are holding up quite well, and we are getting used to the nice additions, such as the Onboard Oxygen Generating System and Environmental Control System. We also love the speed of the hoist," he said.

On 24 April, an HH-60L launched to save a soldier shot twice in the hip by the enemy. The 126<sup>th</sup> Medical Company responded to the emergency, moving the soldier from the field to a forward surgical team. The quick response

greatly increased the wounded soldier's chances for survival.

The next day, a U.S. infantry element came under enemy fire at a forward operating base. The 126<sup>th</sup> dashed to the emergency, moving four injured soldiers from the field to forward surgical help.

To provide the best medical care possible, four aircraft were launched to support this mission. The four aircraft included two HH-60Ls, one UH-60L, and one UH-60A.

Two HH-60Ls now in Afghanistan are the latest variants of the line of Black Hawks, designed specifically for medical evacuation. Because of the many paramedic-friendly features the distinguished bubble-windowed helicopter possesses, it was decided Bagram would be its first deployment location.

While the previous model of the Black Hawk the 126<sup>th</sup> was using, the UH-60L, allowed crewmembers to carry all the needed equipment onboard, the HH-60L has many features that make it easier for the para-

medics, Volkman said.

The stationary medical interior also includes provisions for medical electronics, a six-litter patient configuration, room for a medic and another essential individual. Other features include the latest infrared and navigational capabilities, a storm scope, and a 290-foot hoist, which travels 350 feet/minute for quick reaction time.





# THIS IS DUSTOFF . . . THIS IS WHAT WE DO

*Jason Bierman, Corporal, US Army, 159<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (AA), Baghdad, Iraq—September 2003*

Editor's Note: If you've never encountered these kinds of challenges and adventures, you're not paying attention, DUSTOFFer!

DUSTOFF is the slow chug of the engine run up and the roar of two to fly.  
DUSTOFF is brown-out landings and sand in your eyes.  
DUSTOFF is the smell of hot blood and trying to stop it.  
DUSTOFF is hot spots from your helmet, ripped flight gloves, sweat-soaked flight suits, and dried bloodstains.  
DUSTOFF is changing NVG batteries, twice in a shift.  
DUSTOFF is steep approaches into tiny areas.  
DUSTOFF is pumped-up ground crews, relieved that you are there.  
DUSTOFF is hot refueling, twice before you shut down.  
DUSTOFF is nosed-over helicopters in 30-minute limits.  
DUSTOFF is telling the pilots, "Sir, you gotta get me there, now!"  
DUSTOFF is a trauma team waiting on the helipad.  
DUSTOFF is empty oxygen bottles and a torn-through aid bag.  
DUSTOFF is no days off.  
DUSTOFF is "Request present position departure for urgent 9-line."  
DUSTOFF is running to the aircraft.  
DUSTOFF is "All traffic hold your positions," so we can come through.  
DUSTOFF is soldiers going home who otherwise would not have.  
DUSTOFF is all four crewmembers communicating a confined landing.  
DUSTOFF is around-the-clock maintenance.  
DUSTOFF is a plate of food left for an urgent mission.  
DUSTOFF is giving someone a chance for tomorrow.  
DUSTOFF is not about medals, money, or fame.  
DUSTOFF is about outsmarting death.  
DUSTOFF is not pretty; it is not for the timid.  
DUSTOFF is a thumbs-up from the patient.  
DUSTOFF is the 3 a.m. mission half asleep.  
DUSTOFF is flying with a cup of coffee.  
DUSTOFF is a neon sign: "ALWAYS OPEN."  
DUSTOFF is being on the scene before the patient arrives.  
DUSTOFF is being told, "That soldier is gonna make it."  
DUSTOFF is taking off at sunset and not landing until sunrise.  
DUSTOFF is buzzing the palace and tower fly-bys.  
DUSTOFF is losing a patient—and saddling back up for the next one.  
DUSTOFF is drinking hot water and having hunger pains.  
DUSTOFF is a spades game that is never finished.  
DUSTOFF is six go-arounds before safely landing.  
DUSTOFF is doing your best, even when you don't feel like it.  
DUSTOFF is a five-minute response time.  
DUSTOFF is three aircraft—all on urgent missions.  
DUSTOFF is always being ready.  
DUSTOFF is never saying no.  
DUSTOFF is 82 patients in 24 hours.  
DUSTOFF is 4,000 patients in six months.

Thank you for flying *TRAUMA-JUNKIE AIR*, we hope you enjoyed your flight.

# Open-Door Flying in Helicopter Can't Turn Down the Heat

Editor's Note: A bit of desert perspective provided in an article written by Michael Gilbert, in the *News Tribune*, Tacoma, Washington.

Arifjan, Kuwait—Even when it's 117 degrees outside, you'd think flying in a helicopter at 140 mph with the doors open, there'd be at least a bit of a cool breeze.

Not even.

There is a breeze. If you're sitting in the right spot, the wind whooshing through the open side door flaps your cheeks and ears like a flag on a pole. But it's definitely not cool. Blast furnace is more like it. Closing the doors would get rid of the blast, but then there'd be too much furnace.

Did we mention the chiropractor's dream seats? The flight from Mosul, Irtaq, to Kuwait by a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter was a ride to endure as much as to remember. Mosul to Balad, Balad to Baghdad, Baghdad to Talil. Talil across the Kuwait border to Udari, Udari to Arifjan. Five stops, 601 miles. We left at 9 A.M., arrived just before 5 P.M.

A party of eight from the 62<sup>nd</sup> Medical Brigade headquarters made the trek to attend today's change-of-command ceremony at the 502<sup>nd</sup> Area Support Medical Company, of the Fort Lewis brigade's subordinate units. The company has been stationed here since September 2002.

Chief Warrant Officers Doug Gemmell and Shane Davis, flight medic SSG Randy Scott, and crew chief SP4 Kurt Edusada, all from the 54<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance), did the flying. Lest we complain too much, the aerial tour of the country was breathtaking—from the green steppes in the north, over the abundant Tigris River farmlands in central Iraq, to the miles and miles of sandy badlands and scrub desert to the south.

For safety's sake, the route stayed mostly clear of cities, though it passed over one of Saddam Hussein's shattered

*(Open Door continued on page 11)*

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## Congressional Action on the U.S. Army's Policy on the Award of the Combat Medic Badge

Editor's Note: As many of you may know, a major effort has been initiated to direct the U.S. Army to recognize the eligibility of DUSTOFF crewmembers for the award of the Combat Medic Badge. Led superbly by CWO (Ret) John Travers, with additional congressional testimony by CWO (Ret) Mike Novosel and Fred Castleberry, Senator Arlen Specter of the Senate Committee for Veteran's Affairs articulated the insertion of Senate Bill 1487 requiring that award. An excerpt of those proceedings follows:

Senator Specter: "I am honored that Mr. Novosel and others have brought the story of DUSTOFF to my attention. It is my sincere hope that the Army will recognize DUSTOFF pilots and crew with an appropriate badge that acknowledges the combat service of these brave individuals. When the War Department created the Combat Medical Badge (CMB) in World War II, as a companion to the Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB), it did so to recognize that "medical aidmen . . . shared the same hazards and hardships of ground combat on a daily basis with the infantry soldier." DUSTOFF pilots and crew equally shared the hazards and hardships of ground combat with the infantry soldier. The fact that they were not directly assigned or attached to a particular infantry unit—a fact that, under current Army policy, makes them eligible to receive a CIB or CMB—should not bar special recognition of their service, service that one author has characterized as "the brightest achievement of the U.S. Army in Vietnam."

On the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial are etched the names of over 400 medics, pilots, and crew who gave their lives so that others might live. The forward-thinking, enthusiasm, and dedication of DUSTOFF crews in Vietnam are attributes seen in today's DUSTOFF crews. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, which would recognize that nature of the service these individuals have performed, and continue to perform on DUSTOFF crews.

### Senate Bill 1487

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

### Section 1. AWARD OF COMBAT MEDICAL BADGE (CMB) OR OTHER COMBAT BADGE FOR ARMY HELICOPTER MEDICAL EVACUATION (MEDEVAC) PILOTS AND CREWS.

(a) Requirement to Elect and Award Combat Badge. The Secretary of the Army shall, at the election of the Secretary

(1) award the Combat Medical Badge (CMB) to each member of a helicopter evacuation ambulance crew; or

(2)(A) establish a badge of appropriate design, to be known as the Combat Medevac Badge, and award that badge to each member of a helicopter medical evacuation ambulance crew who meets such requirements for eligibility for the award of that badge as the Secretary shall prescribe.

*(Badge continued on page 11)*

*(Open Door continued from page 10)*

palaces near Baghdad. The riders also saw hundreds of ammunition bunkers, miles of 8-foot antitank trenches now being reclaimed by the blowing sands, and great herds of camels.

And it definitely wasn't any cooler on the ground.

That smoking wreck of an Iraqi jetliner that got so much air time when U.S. Forces smashed into what was then Saddam International Airport is still lying there trashed on the flight line. The tail section and the wing tips are the only parts left, and they've been claimed by spray-painting visitors: "Big Windy," "Nate Dogg," "Zonk," "Sleach," and "Slade," all left their mark. The rest is gutted, incinerated by a U.S. strike of some kind. The 62<sup>nd</sup> party playing soldier-tourist during a refueling stop at the airport figured maybe it was a getaway jet on standby for regime bigwigs.

"Whatever it was, they decided they didn't want it going any place," said CPT Seth Cunneen.

SP4 Jeffrey Griffin of Tulsa, Oklahoma, was pointing out the highlights of the Arifjan Base to some new arrivals waiting for a ride off the flight line. He noted the burger and pizza joints, the PX, and the alterations shop where you can get your name stitched in Arabic onto the back of your boonie hat.

Hold up. Back to the burger joint. Or, more to the point, the cold-soda-with-ice joint.

"Haven't had ice for a month," I explained.

"You want some ice water?" Griffin asked.

Before I could answer, the Oklahoma National Guardsman was off to his tent near the flight line, and back in a moment with a 1.5 liter bottle of water and another one cut in half and full of gleaming, golf ball-sized ice cubes.

Dude.

Had to drink up in a hurry, though. When it's 117 degrees, the cubes don't last long.

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*(Badge continued from page 10)*

(b) Award for Service before Date of Enactment. In the case of persons who qualified for treatment as a member of a helicopter medical evacuation ambulance crew by reason of service during the period beginning on June 25, 1950, and ending on the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall award a badge under subsection (a) to each such person with respect to whom an application for the award of such badge is made to the Secretary after such date in such manner as the Secretary may require.

(c) Member of Helicopter Medical Evacuation Ambulance Crew Defined. In this section, the term "member of a helicopter medical evacuation ambulance crew" means any person who, while a member of the Army served in combat on or after June 25, 1950, as a pilot or crew member of a helicopter medical evacuation ambulance.

## Randy Anderson's Historical Perspective

Anyone who has visited the Office of the Surgeon General's Health Care Operations or has served as the Aviation Officer to the Surgeon General in the past thirty years may remember some DUSTOFF specific items hanging on the walls. When the Operations Directorate moved to its new location a couple of years ago, there was no longer room to hang these three pictures in the office. Historians will be happy to know that these items were recently added to the permanent collection of the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Museum at Fort Sam Houston.

The first item transferred was a framed collection of thirteen original DUSTOFF patches from units serving in Vietnam. The other two were large DUSTOFF photographs personally inscribed in 1969 by Lieutenant General Leonard D. Heaton, Surgeon General of the Army, and Brigadier General William A. Hamrick, Chief of the Medical Service Corps. The inscriptions on the photos provide a great reminder of the sentiments felt by our senior leaders toward members of DUSTOFF serving in the war:

To all DUSTOFF Crews: Your dedication in saving lives is an aspiration to the entire Army Medical Department. You shall always have our heartfelt gratitude and lasting respect. Your deeds are more than worthy of the words of the late Sir Winston Churchill, "Never have so many owed so much to so few."

July 1969 — Leonard D. Heaton, Lieutenant General, Surgeon General of the Army

To the DUSTOFF crews: Your contributions to the saving of lives on the field of battle are truly significant. Your service to mankind is commendable. The words of one of your fellow comrades, "When I have your wounded," are the lasting spirit of the members of your crews. You have the eternal gratitude and best wishes of the members of the Medical Department and the patients you serve.

31 July 1969 — William A. Hamrick, Brigadier General, Medical Service Corps

# War Story Corner

## Schexnayder's Monkey

by Billy Hughes, 57<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), 1964-65

When I arrived in country, I was as wet behind the ears as anyone could be. I didn't know that much about this man's Army, but I noticed something was wrong when I reported to the 57<sup>th</sup>. I didn't know that much, for instance, about insignia. However, after going through medical training at Ft. Sam, I did know what the MSC insignia looked like. After reporting, I noticed that all the officers wore the MSC caduceus. That is, all but one. His name was LT Garfield Schexnayder. The officers called him Chuck. Of course, I referred to him as Sir.

Chuck, was the type of individual who seemed to enjoy life. He was always joking around and had an air of confidence that would be hard to match, let alone exceed. I will give him this: he was one hell of a pilot. On his collar was the insignia of an Infantry Officer. I recall him telling the other officers that this is how we do this and how we do that in the infantry. His assignment at the 57<sup>th</sup> was Maintenance Officer. I don't know how Chuck got misplaced, but all in all I think he enjoyed being with the 57<sup>th</sup>.

Those of you who thought you knew me really didn't. I was sent to Nam to perform duty as a medic; in short, to patch up the sick and wounded and, on occasion, actually to save a life. I took this part of my duty very seriously. As for the rest of it . . . well let's just say it took SSgt Allen the better part of a year to figure out why I was never in the area when he had one of his shit details. Whenever one of them came up, Hughes was downtown on an errand for one or more of the officers. When SSgt. Allen left, he told Sp/4 Eaton, "You know, everyone thinks Hughes is so dumb. Hell, he's one of smartest persons I have ever met. I've never seen anyone get out of work the way he does."

This brings us up to LT Schexnayder and his monkey. Chuck went into Saigon one night and really tied one on. The next morning when he arrived at the Operations Shack, he looked like death warmed over. I be-

lieve he made a statement to the effect of never drinking again for the rest of his life. Anyway, he seemed very anxious to talk to Sp5 Wall. Those of you who knew Wall know that he could find anything, and he was pretty handy with tools.

I watched, out of curiosity, as LT Schexnayder drew a diagram of something for Wall. Within two days old Clarence (Wall) had constructed a beautiful cage. Now, the area between the Maintenance and Supply Shacks out back was vacant. This is where Clarence constructed this beautiful cage. It was approximately four to five feet wide, about eight feet in length and about six feet tall. It was a work of art. Still don't know where Clarence got the materials. But, like I said, he could come up with just about anything you wanted.

Before the construction was over, everyone knew what the cage was for. It seems on that infamous night of drinking LT Schexnayder bought a monkey. I thought the little thing was cute, but that was about to change.

Just before Clarence finished the cage, LT Schexnayder called me over to his desk. His exact words to me were, "Hughes, it is going to be your responsibility to take care of the monkey. That will include feeding him and cleaning his cage." I thought about it for a moment and then I told him that I didn't recall anything in my job description about taking care of primates. He grabbed my sleeve and at the same time grabbed his collar showing me his LT bars. Of course, as a PVT E-2, I had nothing on my sleeve, so his point was understood.

For the next few days I performed my duties (Monkey Keeper) as instructed. Each day I hated that monkey more than the day before. It kept me up at night, trying to figure out how I could get out of that damned assignment. Then it came to me. From that day on when we arrived at the flight line for morning roll call, I would walk through the Orderly Shack through an open area where there was a table with

a coffeepot and a water cooler. It was simple. Just before opening the back door, I would get a cup of ice cold water and when I went through the door, I would let the monkey have it.

It took the monkey only a day or two to realize that when he saw me, he was going to get a bath. After a few days of this, the monkey wouldn't let me get within eyesight of him. Of course I went to LT Schexnayder and told him that I loved the monkey, but the monkey wouldn't let me near him.

I recall LT Schexnayder's words exactly; he said, "Hughes, you're not getting out of it that easily." I suggested that we go out back so he could see for himself. When we went out, I let LT Schexnayder go first. This way, I would be coming through the door by myself. When I opened the door and the monkey saw me, he literally went "ape." LT Schexnayder couldn't figure it out. He said something to the effect that the monkey was so friendly and calm normally. I suggested perhaps it was my after shave or something.

About three or four days after I was relieved of my monkey duties, Captain Bloomquist told me to grab my gear because there was a maintenance flight. (Major Kelly said that all flights would go up with a full crew, even maintenance flights.)

I went out to the flight line to prep the ship and in a short while LT Schexnayder and the other pilot pulled up in the jeep. I was surprised to see that we had an additional passenger. On Schexnayder's shoulder was the monkey with a collar and a short leash. LT Schexnayder cranked up the ship and we took off.

He was taking the ship through its paces, and everything was checking out all right. Then he suddenly took the ship from about 500 feet to about 6,000 feet and leveled off. We were flying that course for a few minutes and everything was fine. All of a sudden we hit an air pocket and dropped down to about 1,000 feet in a matter of a few

*(Monkey continued on page 13)*

# Thu Dau Mot

by Doug Moore, 57<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance)

Walt Harris and I did something incredibly stupid one night and got away with it. Walt left the Army shortly thereafter to become an Episcopal Minister and later retired as an Air Force Chaplain, so I'm sure we had someone looking over our shoulders.

*(Monkey continued from page 12)*

microseconds. (In twenty months of flying I never got used to air pockets. Every time it happened I thought my stomach was going to come out of my mouth.)

When I regained my composure, I turned around to look at the pilots. Actually, I turned around because I heard a lot of commotion up front. It sounded like a lot of cussing to me. When I saw what had happened, I damned near died. The monkey was hanging from the roof of the ship. Not only was he screaming, he was emptying his bowels and throwing up all over Schexnayder. I swear, they must have heard me laughing all the way back at Ton Son Nhut.

Needless to say, the flight was cut short. When we landed back at the pad, Schexnayder bolted out of the ship and immediately got in my face.

He said, "Hughes, you think that that was funny?" I couldn't resist it. My reply was, "Well no sir, but I do think that it was poetic justice." Of course, he didn't see the humor of it at all. As he went storming back to the jeep, he shouted out, "Hughes, clean the f——g ship!"

To be truthful, I didn't mind cleaning the ship. As a matter of fact, I laughed the entire time while removing monkey feces and vomit.

Next day, we reported to the flight line, and as I walked through the back door, I noticed that the monkey was gone. I never had the nerve to ask LT Schexnayder what happened to him. I'd like to think he set him free.

I loved that monkey.

—DUSTOFFER—

In the early days of Vietnam, pilots in the 57<sup>th</sup> Medical Detachment often had to fly long distances to complete their missions and relied on outdated maps and dead reckoning to find their way. That was okay, except when the weather turned sour. Since we felt duty bound to give it a try when someone was hurt, we began looking for outside assistance.

I think it was Pat Brady who came up with the idea that led to several of us visiting the Air Force Radar Center at Tan Son Nhut Airbase in Saigon to see whether they could help. We found the controllers to be very agreeable, and they began by placing a large tactical map on a wall in their operations shack.

We showed them the places we went to on a regular basis, and as time permitted, we flew over those sites at high enough altitude until they could "see" us on radar. When we were directly over one of the sites, they would record its azimuth and distance, and before long, they had a fairly good file from which to give us radar vectors when we needed them.

Since Dust Off pilots were the only ones who routinely flew at night or in bad weather, the controllers (Call Sign: Paris Control) got to know us well. It was comforting to hear familiar voices giving us headings and distance.

They also learned to anticipate how long we ought to be on the ground, especially for the night pickups. If we were on the ground longer than usual, we'd hear them calling, "Dust Off, this is Paris Control, are you off yet?"

Our radios weren't powerful enough to reach them at times, especially when we were belly deep in a rice paddy or down in a hole in the jungle. You could hear the concern rising in their voices until we were airborne and returned their call.

One night in late 1964, Walt Harris and I stressed our newly developed system to its breaking point. About 10:00 in the evening, dense fog began forming, and Viet Cong sappers used its cover to infiltrate the Headquarters Compound of the Vietnamese 5<sup>th</sup> Infan-

try Division at Thu Dau Mot, a fairly large town about 20 miles north of Saigon. Once inside, they placed satchel charges at strategic locations, and then retreated to pre-determined positions outside the compound. Upon signal, they began firing into the compound. As sleepy Americans and Vietnamese poured out of the buildings to man their defensive positions, the satchel charges were detonated. As I recall, two Americans and several Vietnamese were wounded.

When their call for help came, Walt and I ran to our aircraft. We were concerned because it had been drizzling rain for a couple of hours, and the fog was right on the ground in places. While I cranked, Walt called the tower to get the latest weather. The tower said they were showing 500-foot ceilings and three-quarters of a mile visibility. We suspected it was less than that, so Walt asked if anyone else had been out recently. The tower told us a C-47 landed at Bien Hoa about an hour earlier, and its pilot reported heavy fog over the Saigon area with tops at about 3500 feet. That was all the information he had.

I took off to the north and ran into a bank of fog before crossing the main runway. I told the tower we had gone IFR (Instrument Flight Rules), so he switched us over to Paris Control. When Paris answered, I asked for permission to continue climbing to see whether we could break out on top. If we couldn't, I told him we would be requesting a GCA (Ground Controlled Approach) back into Tan Son Nhut. The controller told us Bien Hoa Airbase was still reporting 1500-foot ceilings and 3 miles visibility, so he gave me a heading toward Bien Hoa and told me to continue climbing.

At about 3500 feet, we broke out into a brilliant, moonlit night. The visibility was unlimited horizontally and above us, but underneath us was a solid layer of clouds. From that altitude, we could see a hole in the clouds over Bien

*(Thu Dau Mot continued on page 14)*

*(Thu Dau Mot continued from page 13)*

Hoa and could see the airfield lights sparkling in the distance. In all other directions it was dark and ominous.

Since we were already on top, I asked Paris to vector us over Thu Dau Mot to see whether we could find a hole in the clouds there too. The controller gave me a new heading, and we began bumping into clouds again. He told me to climb as necessary to remain clear. Somewhere around 4500 feet, we were on top again. A few moments later, the controller told us Thu Dau Mot was 10 miles at our 12 o'clock position, so Walt switched over to the ground frequency and made the first call.

The fellow who answered said he was a former Signal Corps pilot and would remain on the radio to assist us. Walt asked him about the casualties and the weather at his location. Both reports were dismal. He said several of the casualties were badly hurt and the weather was awful. He said the fog was so bad that he couldn't see the tops of the trees where he was standing.

A couple of minutes later, Paris told us we were over Thu Dau Mot, but we couldn't see anything below us except solid clouds. Walt asked the ground element what kind of signal they were using and was told a large fire had been built. They were hoping its heat would cause the fog to lift over their immediate area.

Walt and I both felt comfortable flying on instruments, and neither of us wanted to declare failure yet. We began discussing a hare-brained scheme. We knew the Saigon River ran generally north and south and was located about a quarter mile to the west of Thu Dau Mot. As the river passed the southern boundary of the village, it made a ninety-degree turn to the east for a short distance and then turned south again toward Saigon. We knew the helipad was on the north bank of the river just after it made its turn to the east, and we knew Paris Control had a good fix on its location. With that in mind, we asked the controller to vector us about ten miles to the north and about a quarter mile to the west of Thu Dau Mot, hoping that would put us over the track of the river.

From that point, we intended to begin letting down through the clouds and

hoped we could descend low enough until we could see lights from the village or reflections off the river. If we could find the river, we planned to follow it to where it turned east and knew we could find the helipad from there.

When I explained our plan to the controller, he was initially very hesitant to help. He said his radar wasn't accurate at that distance and was concerned about losing us in "ground clutter" or interference as we neared the ground. I told him we could let down to 1000 feet and still be clear of all obstacles in the area, so he finally agreed to work with us.

We began our descent with the controller giving us headings to try to keep us over where he thought the river might be. At the same time, Walt and I had to decide how low we could safely go. We knew the elevation of the helipad was 42 feet MSL (Mean Sea Level), so we added 300 feet to allow for several small hills and large jungle trees in the area and surmised we could let down to 500 feet without hitting anything.

As we started down, the crew chief and medic slid their doors open and began looking straight down for lights or reflections off the river. When we reached 1000 feet, we were still socked in. I asked Walt if he was willing to go down to 600 feet and he agreed. When we got there, we still couldn't see anything, so we decided to go a little lower. As we neared 500 feet, the medic spoke up, "I thought I saw water directly below us, but then I lost it."

We were still in the clouds when we reached 500 feet, so I suggested we ease down another 50 feet and if we didn't break out, we ought to call it quits and go home. Walt agreed, so I began another slow descent. We descended a few more feet before hearing our crew chief shout, "Sir, there's a fire to our left rear!"

I looked back through the open cargo door and saw a huge fire at what seemed to be the same altitude as us. I made a quick turn to keep from losing sight of the fire and switched on the landing light and searchlight while turning. Just as I got our nose lined up on the fire, the landing light and searchlight became fully extended and illuminated the area directly in front of us. Walt and I were shocked to find our-

selves looking right into the top of an enormous jungle tree. I quickly pulled in power to climb over it, but it was too late. We smacked through the top of the tree, and as we popped out the other side, we came to a hover over a huge bonfire that must have been 150 feet straight below us.

The former pilot began yelling over his radio, "Dust Off, you're right over us! I see you! You're right over us! Come straight down and you'll be okay, but watch out for the radio antennae to your right!" With the crew chief and medic hanging out of their doors to clear us, we hovered straight down and finally reached the ground.

As our eyes grew accustomed to the dim lights all around us, Walt and I became totally confused. We weren't on the helipad where we had been expecting to land! Instead, we were on the ground inside the Headquarters Compound with buildings, radio antennae, military vehicles, and trees all around us. With Paris Control's help, I believe we had been following the river fairly well and were getting close to the helipad when we turned toward the fire. That left turn put us over the highest ground in the Thu Dau Mot area and nearly caused us to crash.

The former pilot ran to my side of the helicopter and jerked the door open while excitedly telling me he hadn't seen us until we were directly over him. I hope it didn't show at the time, but I was really hacked off with him because he hadn't told us he was bringing us into the Headquarters Compound.

When I finally got an opportunity to talk, I asked why he hadn't used the helipad. He paused for a second or two and then told me it had been captured shortly after the attack began, and the Viet Cong had a .51 caliber machine gun sitting off to one side waiting for us. He admitted he didn't tell us he was bringing us into the Headquarters Compound because he was afraid we might not attempt a landing there.

Walt and I began surveying the tall trees surrounding us and were concerned whether we had enough power to take all the casualties. We knew we couldn't come back, so we decided to take them all. I asked Walt to monitor the gauges and pulled in all the power I could. For a moment, I wasn't sure we would clear the trees because the



fuselage began shaking, and the EGT (Exhaust Gas Temperature) was right at the red line. Finally, we cleared the trees and leveled off to gain airspeed. We went into the clouds almost immediately, but it felt good that time because we knew the "bad guys" were manning a heavy machine gun less than a quarter mile away.

As we neared Saigon, we asked Paris Control for permission to cross Tan Son Nhut at midfield so we could follow the main streets toward downtown Saigon where the U.S. Navy Hospital was located. There was no other aerial traffic, so Paris switched us over to the tower's frequency and our request was approved.

At about 500 feet, we broke out of the clouds and began to see the dim lights of Saigon in front of us. As we reached the edge of the city, we began seeing tanks and trucks at all the major intersections, and troops seemed to be moving everywhere. I asked the tower operator what was going on, and he calmly replied, "Oh, there's another coup going on. It started about a half-hour ago."

We continued descending to about 150 feet, but still had to dodge around large patches of fog to maintain visual contact with the streets below. It soon dawned on us that if we continued following the same streets, we might get

our butts shot off as we passed by the Presidential Palace, especially while a coup attempt was underway. Walt gave me a quick heading change toward Cholon, and we came in from that direction.

Two Navy ambulances were waiting at the National Police soccer field. We asked the drivers if they would take all the patients to the Navy hospital, and they agreed. After a quick flight back to Tan Son Nhut, we inspected our aircraft to see what kind of damage had been done by our quick trip through the tree. The only visible signs were a few minor paint scratches behind the right chin bubble and a small limb hanging from the right skid step.

Several months later I returned from Vietnam to attend the Officer's Advanced Course. My wife and I had to attend a Commandant's Reception shortly after the course began. We were standing in a long line in the old Student Officer's Club waiting to greet the Commandant when I happened to glance across the crowded dining room and saw several people sitting at a table against the far wall. I wasn't certain, but they seemed to be looking at us. All were dressed in civilian attire, and didn't appear to be part of the official reception going on in the adjoining room, so I began wondering why they were pointing our way.

A few moments later I saw a couple arise from that table and begin making their way toward us. Neither of them looked familiar, so I was surprised when the man asked, "Are you Doug Moore?" When I said yes, he turned to his wife and said, "Honey, this is the guy who saved my life!" That fellow was Captain Pete Bishop, a fellow MSC officer who had been serving as a Medical Advisor to the 5<sup>th</sup> Vietnamese Division when the attack on Thu Dau Mot occurred. Pete had been critically wounded that night and told me he was praying we could get in to pick him up, but said he didn't believe anyone could land in that kind of weather.

Pete made a complete recovery and went on to serve a full career before retiring as a colonel in San Antonio. I believe he and Walt would agree with me when I say, "Someone was looking over our shoulders that night."

—DUSTOFFER—



### **AAA Award Winner—Outstanding Aviation Unit (ARNG) of the Year 1042<sup>nd</sup> Medical Company (Air Ambulance)—Salem, OR**

During the award period, the air ambulances of the 1042<sup>nd</sup> Medical Company provided a valuable service to the people of Oregon. When called upon to support soldiers in Southwest Asia, the 1042<sup>nd</sup> was just as quick to provide professional and quality aeromedical evacuation services.

Perhaps the best example of the 1042<sup>nd</sup>'s service to its home state occurred in May when the unit rescued a number of injured mountain climbers from the lip of a crevasse on Mt. Hood, Oregon. When an Air Force Reserve HH-60 "Pave Hawk" crashed on the side of the mountain while aiding in the rescue, 1042<sup>nd</sup> aircraft lifted out several of their injured Air Force compatriots.

However, the 1042<sup>nd</sup>'s excellent mission performance was not limited to its home state. In September and October, some 111 unit members and 12 Black Hawks deployed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Desert Spring—six aircraft, crews, and support personnel to Afghanistan as part of the former operation, and the rest to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in support of the latter. Both groups have been performing vital, real-world missions since then.

## Colonel William Thresher Retires after Thirty Years of Service

In a moving ceremony held appropriately in DUSTOFF Plaza at Fort Sam Houston, another old warhorse heads for life after the military.

Army Surgeon General LTG James Peake hosted Bill Thresher's retirement from the Army on 24 April 2003, presenting him with the Distinguished Service Medal for exceptional meritorious service in positions of great responsibility, including his last assignment as Executive Officer to The Surgeon General.

LTG Peake also presented Glenda Thresher with a bouquet of yellow roses and the award of the Outstanding Civilian Service Medal for her exceptional leadership, support to soldiers, and volunteer service during her husband's thirty-year career.

## How to Contribute Articles to *The DUSTOFFer*

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

Send typed, double-spaced hard copy to the address below, or e-mail your article to [secretary@dustoff.org](mailto:secretary@dustoff.org) or [jtrus5@aol.com](mailto:jtrus5@aol.com).

Please send your submissions to:  
*The DUSTOFFer*  
P. O. Box 8091  
San Antonio, TX 78208

## Pilot-Maintenance Officer Interaction

Many pilots will remember filling out the logbooks with comments on items requiring some attention from the support maintenance activity. Here are several written interactions worthy of note from various aviation elements. P = Problem logged by pilot; S = Solution and action taken by maintenance personnel.

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.  
S: Almost replace left inside main tire.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.  
S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.  
S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.  
S: Dead bugs on back order.

P: Autopilot in altitude hold mode produces a 200-feet-per-minute descent.  
S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.  
S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.  
S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.  
S: That's what they're there for.

P: IFF inoperative.  
S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.  
S: Suspect you're right.

P: Aircraft handles funny.  
S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Mouse in cockpit.  
S: Cat installed.



# Congress Recognizes Soldier's Mettle

by Beth Ipsen, staff writer, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, September 15, 2003

Alaska has a habit of forging heroes out of men and women.

Army Staff Sgt. Ken Greenleaf is one man who has been tested numerous times while flying missions as a medic at Fort Wainwright's 68<sup>th</sup> Medical Company Air Ambulance.

But it wasn't until the U.S. Congress awarded him the Soldier's Medal, the highest peacetime award given to a member of the armed forces, that he was officially dubbed a hero.

"We reserve the Soldier's Medal for real heroes," Maj. Gen. John Brown, U.S. Army Alaska commander, said before presenting Greenleaf with the medal in front of about 3,000 Fort Wainwright soldiers September 2. "When one of our brothers or sisters demonstrates this kind of courage in the face of severe danger, risking life and limb, their own lives, it's very fitting we honor them."

Greenleaf was given the medal for braving daunting weather and terrain to rescue an injured snowmachiner on a mountain ridge near the Gulkana Glacier December 7, 2002.

While Greenleaf is thankful for the medal, he believes it's the pilots who flew the aircraft through whiteout conditions and landed them safely on a mountain that day who deserve the award.

"What Capt. (Dawn) Groh and CW2 (James) Neal did that day was phenomenal," Greenleaf said.

It was a mission where anything could have easily gone wrong and the trip could have turned deadly, not only for the snowmachiner, but also for the crew of four in the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

"Granted, we do a lot of missions that are extremely challenging from the pilot's aspect, because in Alaska getting there is half the battle—it's three-quarters the battle," he said. "That was not your average mission."

Pilots had to deal with snow, low fuel and temperatures of 30 degrees below zero, while trying to find a landing zone on a mountainside near the injured snowmachiner.

Friends of the injured man formed a triangle with the sleds to outline a place to land. When Greenleaf and the crew chief, Staff Sgt. Brad Posey, jumped out of the aircraft to talk to the snowmachiners, they landed in snow up to their waists.

After they were told the injured man was on a ridge farther up the mountain, Greenleaf and Posey jumped on the back of two sleds.

Before long both snowmachines flipped. Greenleaf got on another sled and once again tried to make his way up the slope. He went about 100 feet on the back of the sled when it flipped, leaving Greenleaf to forge the treacherous slope on foot alone.

After a two-hour struggle through the snow, Greenleaf reached the injured man. The man was suffering from a back injury and was hypothermic. His sled was in little pieces scattered down the side of the mountain.

Greenleaf estimated the man had been there for five to six hours. Once Greenleaf finished lowering the injured man down, the trip back to Fairbanks was easy.

"There are only certain things you can do to treat a back injury," he said. However, the journey to get to the man made the mission the most physically demanding one Greenleaf has faced in his six years with the 68<sup>th</sup>.

The unit is usually busiest around hunting season and even has a helicopter and crew posted at the yearly Tesoro Arctic Man Ski and Sno-Go Classic.

Because Alaska is so vast and holds a variety of perils, Greenleaf and the other six medics who belong to the 68<sup>th</sup> are about the highest skilled found in the Army, he said, both in their respective emergency medical field and survival skills.

In his estimated 40 missions in Alaska, Greenleaf has dangled hundreds of feet below the helicopter at the end of the hoist, retrieved stranded hunters and hikers, and witnessed the birth of a premature baby at a pump station August 8, then helped perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation to save the infant girl's life.

"If I had a dollar for every German I've picked up north of the Yukon River. . . . They're great people, and they're a lot of fun when you get them back here and listen to their stories, but they were still lost," he said.

Greenleaf has also had some bizarre cases. "We're glad he's leaving," joked Sgt. Michael Tredway, another medic at the 68<sup>th</sup>. "He gets all the cool missions."

Two years ago Greenleaf quartered up a moose to rescue an elderly man who was trapped underneath the animal after shooting it.

"His wife was chewing his butt, saying 'Every year you work something out where somebody else cuts up your moose for you,'" Greenleaf remembers.

The job is not without its perils for the medics. Greenleaf injured his leg running on a gravel bar while the helicopter crew was rescuing two men and a dog stranded by the rising Beaver Creek September 2.

"We got out there and they had so little of the sandbar left when we landed, the tail wheel was in the water," Greenleaf said.

When one of the rescued men thanked him for rescuing his life, "He was a loss for words," Greenleaf said. "Tears were welling up in his eyes."

"I think when people come here, they want a bigger piece of a great adventure. Then post-adventure, they're like, 'Oh my god, what have I done?'" he said. "It's not my place to question them; it's just my place to bring them home."

There were some missions Greenleaf didn't enjoy. He was the medic on a helicopter that flew two children injured in a car crash near Nenana July 2, 2002.

The children's father was inebriated when he drove a car almost head-first into a truck, killing himself and one of his three children.

Greenleaf thought a second son was going to die. The boy had a closed-head injury and was having seizures. Fortunately, the boy, his mother and his sis-

*(Mettle, continued on page 18)*

(*Mettle, continued from page 17*)

ter survived the crash.

"You can ask any medic; it's the pediatric cases that are the toughest," Greenleaf said.

After six years flying Alaska's skies in search of wayward souls and saving lives, Greenleaf and his family will leave October 7 for Liverpool, New York, where he'll begin a three-year tour as a liaison between Army reserve and active-duty troops.

He'll miss Alaska and the 68<sup>th</sup>, but is reassured he's leaving his job in the capable hands of six medics he's personally had a hand in training.

The thirteen-year Army veteran also plans on returning to Alaska, hopefully as the first sergeant of the 68<sup>th</sup> with the intention of eventually retiring in state.

"I truly believe Alaska is not a place to live, it's a way to live," Greenleaf said. "It's a mentality that I'll have to put aside for three years."



## Freedom Is Not Free

He stood at ease.

I looked at him in uniform  
So young, so tall, so proud  
With hair cut square and eyes alert.

I thought, how many men like him  
Had fallen through the years?  
How many died on foreign soil?  
How many mother's tears?

How many pilot's planes shot down?  
How many died at sea?  
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?  
No, Freedom is not free.

I heard the sound of Taps one night,  
When everything was still.  
I listened to the bugler play  
And felt a sudden chill.

I wondered just how many times  
That Taps had meant "Amen"  
When a flag had draped a coffin  
Of a brother or a friend.

I thought of all the children,  
Of the mothers and the wives,  
Of fathers, sons, and husbands  
With interrupted lives.

I thought about a graveyard  
At the bottom of the sea,  
Of unmarked graves in Arlington,  
No, Freedom isn't free.

## Military Truths

- Sometimes I think war is God's way of teaching us geography. —Paul Rodriguez
- A slipping lever could let your M203 grenade launcher fire when you least expect it. That would make you quite unpopular in what's left of your unit. —Army's *Preventive Maintenance Magazine*
- Aim towards to enemy. —Instruction on U.S. rocket launcher.
- Cluster bombing from B-52s is very, very accurate. The bombs are guaranteed always to hit the ground. —U.S. Air Force
- It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed. —U.S. Air Force Manual
- Whoever said "the pen is mightier than the sword" obviously never encountered automatic weapons. —General Douglas MacArthur
- You, you, and you—panic. The rest of you, come with me. —Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant
- Don't ever be the first; don't ever be the last, and don't ever volunteer to do anything. —U.S. Navy Swabbie
- No combat-ready unit has ever passed inspection. —Joe Gay
- Bravery is being the only one who knows you're afraid. —David Hackworth
- Any ship can be a minesweeper . . . once. —Anonymous
- Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do. —Marine Corps recruit.

# FLYING FACTS

Editor's Note: Foreworded by an old friend, the former Air Force Chief of Public Affairs, BG (Ret) Mike McRaney, these words of wisdom are always valid, not the usual Air Force way.

- ✈ When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane, you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash.
- ✈ Never trade luck for skill.
- ✈ The three most common expressions (or famous last words) in aviation are, "Why is it doing that?," "Where are we?" and "Ohhh, Shit!"
- ✈ Airspeed, altitude, or brains: two are always needed to complete the flight successfully.
- ✈ A smooth landing is mostly luck; two in a row is all luck; three in a row is prevarication.
- ✈ I remember when sex was safe and flying was dangerous.
- ✈ Mankind has a perfect record in aviation; we never left one up there.
- ✈ If the wings are traveling faster than the fuselage, it's probably a helicopter—and therefore, unsafe.
- ✈ Flashlights are tubular metal containers kept in a flight bag for the purpose of storing dead batteries.
- ✈ Flying the airplane is more important than radioing your plight to a person on the ground incapable of understanding it or doing anything about it.
- ✈ Just remember, when you crash because of weather, your funeral will be held on a sunny day.

—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](http://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.

## ARTICLE 28— GENEVA CONVENTIONS

Editor's Note: A quick and historical but current contribution from Jeff Grider, a Vietnam DUSTOFFer responding to a question as to how medical personnel are allowed to be armed.

The following is quoted from Article 28, Geneva Conventions:

3. Medical aircraft shall not carry any armament except small arms and ammunition taken from the wounded, sick, and shipwrecked on board and not yet handed to the proper service, and light individual weapons as may be necessary to enable the medical personnel on board to defend themselves and the wounded, sick, and shipwrecked in their charge.

# Top of the Schoolhouse

by ISG Jayme Johnson



On a recent return TDY trip, I was waiting to catch my connecting flight in Atlanta when I noticed a few soldiers enjoy-

ing some spirits at the nearest tavern.

I began to have a conversation with the soldiers and discovered they were returning from Iraq and that they were part of the 82D Airborne Division. These soldiers were all platoon sergeants in rifle companies fresh from the fight. In the brief period I spent with these soldiers, I was very inquisitive on how USASAM could better prepare the flight medics we are training to better help those soldiers getting wounded each day.

One Platoon Sergeant relayed the story of his platoon medic, fresh out of Advanced Individual Training (AIT), who had only arrived at his unit at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, two weeks prior to the unit's deployment. The feedback was that the young medic was very proficient at performing the basic lifesaving skills, and the bravery shown by all the medics he had come in contact with was exceptional.

If you have ever been a line medic, you understand the level of trust the grunts must have in their "doc." This is a trust that is not easily earned by the medic. His praise for the medical field did not end there; he told me when one of his soldiers got wounded, "the DUSTOFF guys were always there to get 'em." That someone really cared about him and his soldiers had a profound effect on him.

I wanted to share this with *The DUSTOFFer* readers. You should know the Soldier Medics of today are carrying on in your footsteps, providing Dedicated Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces.

The United States Army School of Aviation Medicine (USASAM) had a few soldiers deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the Dean, LTC John Campbell; CPT Kris Kratz and MAJ Teresa Duquette. LTC Campbell was attached to the 1/101<sup>st</sup>

Attack Battalion as the Battalion Flight Surgeon, serving over 450 soldiers and acting as the Senior Aeromedical Advisor for the entire 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Brigade. He traveled the entire length of Iraq, finally settling 70 miles south of Mosul.

CPT Kratz was assigned to CFLCC HQ, C3 AVN (Coalition Forces Land Component Command HQ) as the SERE Psychologist (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape) designated to work with any returned American POWs.

CPT Kratz was deployed for 2 months and participated in the repatriation of all eight American POWs. As one of the SERE psychologists, it was his job to ensure the psychological stability of the returnees throughout the repatriation process (theater to CONUS) and to ensure the returnees were returned to their nation, unit, and family with honor.

MAJ Duquette, the only Critical Care Nurse assigned to USASAM, was with the 21<sup>st</sup> Combat Support Hospital near Balad, Iraq. She was the Head Nurse for the Intensive Care Unit from March until her return this past week.

Every year USASAM coordinates and runs the Operational Aeromedical Problems Course (OAP), and this year is the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual OAP, which will be dedicated in memoriam to MG (RET) Spurgeon H. Neel, Jr. The dates are 17-20 February 2004 at the Moody Gardens Conference Center in Galveston, Texas. Anyone interested in attending can contact CPT William (Bill) Gordon at (334) 255-7448 / DSN 558-7448 or visit the USASAM website at <<http://usasam.amedd.army.mil>>.

The Medical Evacuation Doctrine Course (2C-F7) just conducted a task selection board to upgrade the course instruction, to coincide with the ever-changing way units are doing things, and to stay with the evolving new doctrine. I would like to thank the following soldiers for their participation and insight: LTC Bryant Harp, CDR 36<sup>th</sup> Medical Evacuation Battalion; MAJ William Goforth, Aeromedical Evacuation/Medical Operations Officer;

MAJ Greg Gentry, 498<sup>th</sup> Med Co (AA); MAJ Drennon, 507<sup>th</sup> Med Co (AA); 1SG Edward Oswald, AMEDDC&S; and MSG Mitcheal DeLvalle, G3 SGM 44<sup>th</sup> MEDCOM.

Along with the new course material for the 2C-F7, we have also come full circle with the upgrades that were still under way the last time I spoke with you. The chamber refurbishment is complete, and this past flight medic course was the first to use the HH-60L Medical Suite Trainer (MST) during the STX, and the first continual operations exercise conducted for the flight medics.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the Distinguished Honor Graduate and the Honor Graduate of the last two Flight Medic Courses. The Distinguished Honor Graduate for Class 03-03 was a Navy Corpsman HM2 William Galegor. The Distinguished Honor Graduate for Class 03-04 was SGT Robert Nixon and the Honor Graduate was SGT Ryan Dehrone.

—DUSTOFFer—



# ARMY OFFICER WINS TUSKEGEE AIRMAN AWARD

Editor's Note: In an *Army News Service* article, dated 21 August 2003, Natalie Granger brings us up to date on the commander of DUSTOFF Europe, Pat Sargent.

Washington—For the first time, an Army officer was selected for the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. General Benjamin O. Davis Military Award.

LTC Patrick D. Sargent, 421<sup>st</sup> Medical Evacuation Battalion (Air Ambulance), 1<sup>st</sup> Medical Brigade, received the award at the annual TAI National

Convention in Denver, Colorado, August 5–10, 2003.

This award is given to a field grade officer who has exhibited outstanding performance in both professional and community service, according to TAI.

"The competition for this award was really tough, and in some cases the voting was separated by fractions of a point," said LTC Derek Green, Chief of Training, 201<sup>st</sup> VIP Airlift Squadron.

Founded in 1972, TAI states its primary mission is motivating young

Americans to achieve its goal of aviation awareness through education, non-discriminatory practices, dissemination of accurate historical facts, and increasing aviation career pursuits.

"In the tradition of the excellence of the Tuskegee Airmen, they want to recognize excellence in every field of military endeavor for all our military members, regardless of specialty, race, or gender," said Green.

## Goodrich Hoist and Winch to Sponsor DUSTOFF Hall of Fame

The DUSTOFF Association is pleased to announce that Goodrich Hoist Division has signed on to be a corporate sponsor of the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame. They will provide funding for one Hall of Fame plaque this year. Many thanks to Paul Dain, David Markley and Roy Zavitz for making this happen. Goodrich also sponsors the Air-Sea Rescue Award through Quad-A.



Photo by Sarah Beal

*Texas Association of Vietnam Veterans lay boots at the Firebase Ceremony to remember their fallen comrades. The memorial service was held Saturday, November 8th at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin, TX just prior to the premier of "In the Shadow of the Blade", the documentary produced by Arrowhead Films. Pat and Cheryl Fries have done a great job capturing the story of the Huey Helicopter and its role in the lives of Vietnam Veterans. Photo by Sarah Beal.*

# From the Proponency

by COL Pauline Lockard

**G**reetings from the National Capital Region and the Wiregrass. The Proponency continues to work closely with our units out in the field on all the issues that affect them, and we continue to be fully engaged with Aviation Transformation.

As you are all aware, the senior leadership of the Army has undergone a major change. With this change comes a change in how we will look at Transformation. Whatever the Army will look like will have a big impact on how we shape the AMEDD to support the future force.

The Proponency continues to partner with MAJ Jon Fristoe, the Aviation Staff Officer for the Office of the Surgeon General, and MAJ Pete Smart, UH60Q/HH60L/M Program Manager, to ensure the Medevac requirements are clearly stated and supported. This is a major challenge when there are several competing demands for those valuable airframes. As an AMEDD team, we are all working toward getting our air ambulance companies resourced to their full requirements to

support the missions being placed on our folks.

Speaking of missions, I applaud our crews all over the world doing what we do best—saving lives. The performance and focus of our dedicated crews supporting the troops is overwhelming. I would like to ask our commanders in the field to help us capture all the good you all are doing out there.

We are developing a database that will allow us to track total missions flown in theater. It will allow us to go back to any point in time and capture those hard-earned hours you all have flown. I hope to have a demonstration of this capability when we hold the next Army Medical Evacuation Conference/Course.

The AMEC will be held 22–27 February 2004 at the Marriott Northwest Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The theme for the conference is “Evacuation—Evolving for Today’s Challenges.” Leaders and soldiers from ground and air evacuation units are invited to attend. For more information contact MSG Vallejo or SFC

Charpentier at Medical Evacuation Proponency Directorate at DSN 558-1166 or commercial (334) 255-1166.

Finally, I would like to mention the great work our team at MEPD is doing with the Hoist Training Program. Once again, through the hard work and coordination with MAJ Smart and other agencies, the Internal Rescue Hoist Maintenance Course is now available through ATRRS and is currently being taught at Monmouth, Oregon. The school code is 1011, and the course number is 964-HOIST. This course is open to all 91W and all 15 series (previously 67 series) personnel. The primary focus of this course is Operator- and Intermediate-level maintenance for the internal hoist. For more information you can contact your unit schools/training NCO.

Be Safe—and pray for all our fellow Dustoffers to return home safely.  
DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

## Air and Space Museum Invites Aviation Vets to Opening

The National Air and Space Museum will highlight the contributions of military aviation during opening ceremonies of the new Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center December 9. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General Richard B. Myers, will give the keynote speech at that event.

The Salute to Military Aviation Veterans is part of the extravaganza opening the annex of the Smithsonian Institution’s most popular museum. It is open to all military aviation veterans and their guests. There is room for 4000 people at the ceremony. There is a limit of four tickets per aviation veteran, and the tickets are \$15 apiece. Museum officials said the veterans will get a first look at the new facility and receive a copy of “America’s Hanger,” a souvenir book detailing the aviation treasures at the annex.

The annex will open to the general public December 15. The opening is part of the Centennial of Flight celebrations. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wright Brothers’ first flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, is December 17.

Located at Dulles International Airport in Virginia, the center will house more than 200 famous aircraft. These include the B-29 Superfortress “Enola Gay,” which dropped the first atomic bomb; a Marine F4U Corsair; the SR-71 Blackbird; the B-17 Fortress; a UH-1H Huey helicopter, and many other historically significant and meticulously restored aircraft.

Aviation veterans can get ticket information online at <[www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)> or call toll-free (866) 814.4441.

# Changes in the Military

Editor's Note: A satirical, but often so very true, comparison of the rules of engagement in the military from one era to quite another.

- K 1945 NCOs in the military had typewriters on their desks and used them for daily reports, and the work got done.  
2000 Everyone has an Internet access computer, and they wonder why no work is getting done.
- K 1945 We painted girls on airplanes to remind us of home.  
2000 They put the real thing in the cockpit.
- K 1945 Your girlfriend was at home praying you would return alive.  
2000 She is in the same trench praying your condom worked.
- K 1945 If you got drunk off duty, your buddies would take you back to the barracks to sleep it off.  
2000 If you get drunk, they slap you in rehab and ruin your career.
- K 1945 You were taught to take aim at the enemy and shoot him.  
2000 You spray 500 bullets into the brush, don't hit anything, and retreat because you're out of ammo.
- K 1945 Canteens were made of steel, and you could heat coffee or hot chocolate in the cups.  
2000 Canteens are made of plastic; you can't heat anything in them, and the water always tastes like plastic.
- K 1945 Officers were professional soldiers first, and they commanded respect.  
2000 Officers are politicians first, and they beg not to be given a wedgie.
- K 1945 They collected enemy intelligence and analyzed it.  
2000 They collect your pee and analyze it.
- K 1945 If you didn't act right, the Sergeant Major put you in jail until you straightened up.  
2000 If you don't act right, they start a paper trail that follows you forever.
- K 1945 Medals were awarded to heroes who saved lives at the risk of their own.  
2000 Medals are awarded to people who work at headquarters.
- K 1945 You slept in the barracks like a soldier.  
2000 You sleep in a dormitory like a college kid.
- K 1945 You ate in a mess hall, which was free, and you could have all the food you wanted. (Take what you want; eat what you take.)  
2000 You eat in a dining facility, every slice of bread or pad of butter costs, and you better not take too much.
- K 1945 We defeated powerful countries like Germany and Japan.  
2000 We come up short against Somalia and Yugoslavia.
- K 1945 If you wanted to relax, you went to the club, played pool, smoked, and drank beer.  
2000 You go to the community center and play pool.
- K 1945 If you wanted beer and conversation, you went to the NCO or Officers' Club.  
2000 The beer cost you \$2.75, membership is forced, and someone is watching how much you drink.
- K 1945 The Exchange had bargains for soldiers who didn't make much money.  
2000 You can get better and cheaper merchandise at Wal-Mart.
- K 1945 We could recognize the enemy by their Nazi helmets.  
2000 We are wearing the Nazi helmets.
- K 1945 We called the enemy names like "Krauts" and "Japs" because we didn't like them.  
2000 We call the enemy the "opposing force" or "aggressor" because we don't want to offend them.
- K 1945 Victory was declared when the enemy was defeated and all his things were broken.  
2000 Victory is declared when the enemy says he's sorry.
- K 1945 A commander would put his butt on the line to protect his soldiers.  
2000 A commander will put his soldiers on the line to protect his butt.
- K 1945 Wars were planned and run by generals with lots of important victories.  
2000 Wars are planned by politicians with lots of equivocating.
- K 1945 We were fighting for freedom, and the country was committed to winning.  
2000 We don't know what we're fighting for, and the government is committed to social programs (used to be called "socialism").
- K 1945 All you could think about was getting out and becoming a civilian again.  
2000 All you can think about is getting out and becoming a civilian again.

## REGISTER EARLY for the Reunion!

Help your DUSTOFF Association plan more efficiently for our 25th Annual DUSTOFF Reunion by registering early. Complete registration information is on pages 26 and 27.

## Membership Report

Honorary Life Members	14
Life Members	892
Members	820
Units	70
Corporations	8
Inactive	657
Other	2
Total	1,804



## Treasurer's Report

As of 1 November 2003



### INCOME

Dues	2,520.00
Interest Income	222.87
Memorial Fund	1,870.00
Other Income Unassigned	0.00
Sales—Memorabilia/Email	1,536.51
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$6,149.38</b>

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

### EXPENSES

Memorial Expenses	\$ 378.10
Newsletter & Ballot Publishing	4,797.94
Operating Expenses	799.51
Sales Expense Memorabilia	163.85
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$6,139.40</b>

**NET INCOME (LOSS)** **\$(9.98)**

Balances at the bank/credit union are as follows:

Bank of America, Military Bank Checking	\$ 6,568.72
Pentagon Federal Credit Union CD	\$ 8,915.74
Pentagon Federal Credit Union Money Market	\$10,075.17
<b>Retail Value of Store Items on Hand</b>	<b>\$13,297.00</b>

## New Entries on the Flight Manifest

Jennifer Krausch	San Antonio, TX	M
Randy Stelk	Warren, OH	M
Philip Strubing	Memphis, TN	LM
Charles Gwinn	Phoenix, AZ	M
Charles Francis	Bryan, OH	M
Josephine Creel	APO, AP	L
Francene Duncan	Mont Alto, PA	LM
James Sherman	Northborough, MA	M
Howard Guthre	Santa Rosa Beach, FL	LM
Andrew Lovy	Olympia Fields, IL	LM
James Wilson	Hartsville, SC	M
David Henschel	Honolulu, HI	LM
Bret Potter	San Antonio, TX	LM
Carlos Correa Ruiz	San Antonio, TX	LM
Greg Schwartz	Hampton, VA	M
Geoffrey Robinson	Baltimore, MD	LM
Michael Pouncey	San Antonio, TX	LM
Norman Yassany	Seaside, CA	M
Norman Shannahan	Zephyr Hills, FL	LM
Bernie Goldenzweig	Hendersonville, TN	LM
Peter Schuster	Warwick, RI	M
Michael Avers	Elmore, OH	M
Bobby Deiss	Conroe, TX	M
Bill Burke	Spokane, WA	M
Fred Weigel	Fort Rucker, AL	LM
Eddie Basham	San Antonio, TX	M
Charlotte Hildebrand	Fort Irwin, CA	M
Gordon Mayes	Fort Irwin, CA	LM
George Lehner	Mableton, GA	M
Mark Schilling	Norton, OH	LM
Bill Simmons	APO, AP	LM
David Jacob	Lafayette, LA	LM
Craig Skeffington	Raleigh, NC	LM
Larry Kimmith	Dallas, TX	M
Milan Puente	Fort Campbell, KY	M
Ronald Sharp	Temple, TX	M
Mike Kelly	San Antonio, TX	LM
James Keates	Anchorage, AL	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](http://www.dustoff.org). If you'd like to have your reunion photos included, send them to [photo@dustoff.org](mailto:photo@dustoff.org). Please label who the folks are in the photo and what year reunion they are from.

# Helicopter Talk

Editor's Note: From a guy who flew the inimitable Bell UH-1 in Vietnam, some ruminations, explanations, and imponderables.

K Q. Why did they call it "collective pitch?"

A. I never collected any. Usually, I ran out about the same time as altitude and airspeed.

K Q. Why didn't Ma Bell add more left pedal and aft cyclic?

A. I always had lots more right pedal and forward cyclic. It seems like they could have reduced those and added to the ones we needed.

K Q. Why do they put the only radio (KY-28) that had to be received if you went down, in the most inaccessible part of the aircraft?

A. ?

K Q. Why do the pilots have armored seats, but the Crew Chief and Medic don't?

A. The manufacturer was a pilot.

K Q. Why did situations that called for all the torque the engine could produce also require full use of anti-torque pedals, followed by that damned flashing red light? Seems contradictory.

K Q. Why did they call them Hammerhead stalls?

A. Maybe only a Hammerhead would try one in a helicopter.

K Q. Why did I always get an aircraft with a major 1-to-1 when I had a hangover? For you non-rotor heads, a 1-to-1 is a vertical vibration that pounds you into the seat and quakes through your body one time for every revolution of the main rotor—usually a rate of approximately 294-324 revolutions per minute (RPM), and the faster you fly, the harder it pounds. After awhile, it begins to hurt—even if you don't have a hangover.

K Q. Why doesn't Ma Bell make the skin out of duct tape so it would match the patches?

K Q. Why did they make a main rotor system that could cut down small Sequoia trees and a tail rotor system that self-destructs if it encounters anything bigger than a bumblebee?

K Q. Why are they called landing skids? Were they intended for landing or skidding?

K Q. Why does the amount of time spent in a landing zone increase exponentially with the amount of fire being received?

K Q. Why didn't Beer 33 taste any better cold than hot?

K Q. Why does the smoke from the s\*\*t barrel always blow toward my hooch?

K Q. Why is the PX always out of everything on my day off?

K Q. Why does a Bell helicopter have unusual noises that can only be heard at night or while in the clouds?

—DUSTOFFer—





# 2004 DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION REUNION

## Schedule of Events

February 20–22, 2004



### Friday, 20 February 2004

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

### Saturday, 21 February 2004

- 0900–1000 — Professional Meeting
- 1000–1100 — Business Meeting
- 1100–1300 — Spouses' Luncheon—Los Patios
- 1400–1600 — Hall of Fame Induction—AMEDD Museum, Fort Sam Houston
- 1500–1800 — Hospitality Suites open (Sorry, still pay-as-you-go)
- 1800–1900 — Cash bar at Banquet
- 1900–2200 — Banquet: Welcome
  - Invocation
  - Dinner
  - Introduction of Distinguished Guests
  - Program: Keynote Speaker
  - Crewmember of the Year Presentation
  - Rescue of the Year Presentation
  - Hall of Fame Introduction
  - Special Presentations
- 2200–0200 — Hospitality Suites open (You guessed it: pay-as-you-go)

### Sunday, 22 February 2004

- 0800–0900 — DUSTOFF Memorial Service





## 25th Annual DUSTOFF Association Reunion February 20-22, 2004



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

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

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

Please list your combat-related deployments by theater/year/unit \_\_\_\_\_

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

### Reunion Registration:

Member/Spouse	\$20/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
Non-member/Spouse	\$25/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
Single-day Registration for Guest of Registrant	\$15/person	_____ persons	\$ _____

### Hotel Reservations:

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

Please mention you are with the DUSTOFF Association.

**You can register online** at <[www.marriott.com/satnw](http://www.marriott.com/satnw)> by clicking on "Check Rates and Availability." At the next page, enter the correct dates and the Group Code "dusdusa," then click on "Check Rates and Availability" again. These rates apply for two days before the reunion through 22 February. If you desire to stay longer at that rate, call Dan Gower, 210-379-3985, and he'll make it happen.

### Chuck Mateer Golf Classic:

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

### Friday Night:

Mexican Buffet	\$30/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
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### Spouses' Luncheon:

Los Patios	\$20/person	_____ persons	\$ _____
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### Saturday Night Banquet:

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

**PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.** Registration deadline is February 1, 2004. Please send registration form and check to:  
DUSTOFF Association  
P. O. Box 8091  
Wainwright Station  
San Antonio, TX 78208.

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



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☐ Vacant ☐ Illegible  
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☐ Box Closed - No Order  
☐ Returned For Better Address  
☐ Postage Due

MSC Network  
P.O. BOX 39514  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78218

[Redacted address line]  
[Redacted address line]  
[Redacted address line]

### 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](mailto: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