

If You're Not in Love With a Soldier

If you're not in love with a Soldier, you can't know adventure. You don't know smelly gray PT uniforms that require daily washing. You can't understand green and brown camouflaged bags flooding your bedroom floor.

If you're not in love with a Soldier, you can't understand the meaning of the phrase "going to the field" and the weeks you spend away from each other.

If you're not in love with a Soldier, you can never imagine the hole in your

heart when that phone call comes. "Honey, I am leaving tomorrow to go overseas. I don't know how long I will be gone or exactly where I am going, but I want you to know I love you—always!"

If you're not in love with a Soldier, you don't know what it's like to say that final good-bye. You don't know what it really means to be glued to the television. You don't understand fear, and you can't possibly understand the sleepless nights of endless crying wondering if you will ever see the love of your life again.

If you're not in love with a Soldier, you can't know the immense joy, the uncontrollable smile, or the butterflies in your stomach when you see your Soldier march into the family waiting area upon redeployment. You can't understand the self-control it takes to stand on the other side of the room as some higher-up gives a seemingly endless welcome home speech while the Soldiers stand in formation. You don't know what it's like to have that second first kiss, or what it's like to experience puppy love all over.

If you're not in love with a Soldier, you can't truly understand how to make every moment count because you never know when that phone call may come again.

If you're not in love with a Soldier, you can never really understand how very delicate life is. ■

(Aviator, continued from page 16.)

of frontline evacuation only.

The fourth problem area is in the selection of personnel for the aviation program. In the early stages, it was necessary to use aviators from other services. These people did an outstanding job in organizing the program, but they also presented somewhat of a career management problem, in that they knew relatively little about our Corps.

The program now has sufficient senior personnel to stand on its own, and future aviators should come from outstanding young officers who prove themselves a credit to our Corps during their first two years of service. This will give us new blood for the program and allow the officers to grow from the bottom up in their dual career field. It will also improve the morale of aviators already in the program to know we are not taking in any more senior people who will bump them from the relatively few senior field grade positions we presently have authorized.

In summation, the MSC Aviator faces all the career management problems associated with his brother MSCs, as well as those associated with the Aviation Officer Career Program. If he is to become a well-rounded officer, he must have help from our assignment and career planning people to assure his progressive movement up these dual career ladders. ■

The DUSTOFF Medic

by CW2 David Alderson,
43rd Medical Company
(Air Ambulance)

The DUSTOFF Medic is a special man. Doing a job that few men can. Flying anywhere at any time. Any place in any climate.

In the job he has, the demand is great. But few can face the unknown fate. High in the air near heaven's breath. Then to the ground as a target for death.

Through enemy fire of every kind, Never losing his calm medic's mind. Concern for the wounded is his first thought.

Trying to heal what bullets have wrought.

To save human lives his only fight. Before his own life, comes another's plight. In an unarmed ship with his aid bag near. Past enemy tracer with no time for fear.

Then down to the ground and out of the ship.

Standing up proud with never a slip. Braving bullets as they pass him by. Waiting for the wounded 'mid roaring sounds.

Then from the ground departing fast. Working on wounded as air rushes past. Then to a hospital as he gives first aid. As fast as possible as life starts to fade.

He works as fast and best as he can. Using his knowledge on the wounded man. Giving him of his own heart and breath. Trying his best to stave off death.

Then to the hospital and approach and flare.

Rushing the man to emergency care. Then a doctor saying this man we can save. Because of your medic, the care that he gave.

A man dedicated to an uncommon ideal. He gives of himself, others to heal.



*What is the difference
between God and a
pilot?*

God doesn't think
he is a pilot.



DUSTOFF



Six DUSTOFF Hall of Fame members grace the wall with their commemorative plaques. (l.-r) Pat Brady, Doug Moore, Mike Novak, Ernie Sylvester, Jim Truscott, and Jerry Foust.



Famous DUSTOFFers L. Goodman Bradshaw, former president of the association, advises association president Ernie Sylvester of required behavior.



Former association president Eddo Taylor and incoming vice-president Doug Moore practice revelry.



Fred Castleberry, Vietnam veteran whose life was saved by a DUSTOFF crew, recounted the blessings of every day he has been given to live since he was wounded on his 21st birthday in Vietnam. He introduced our keynote speaker, the Honorable Stephen Reed.



The Honorable Stephen Reed, Mayor of Harrisburg, PA, delivered a stirring speech in support of DUSTOFF and awarding the Combat Medical Badge to our crewmembers.



MG (R) Pat Brady presents his coin to SPC Daniel Reed. Reed was recovering at BAMC from wounds he suffered in Operation Iraqi Freedom and was our guest at the reunion.

The DUSTOFFer

REUNION 2005



Christine Hawk (Goodrich Hoist Corp.) presents SPC Erik Burns, 507th Medical Company (AA), with the DUSTOFF Crewmember of the Year Award.



SPC Erik Burns, DUSTOFF Crewmember of the Year



Ernie Sylvester, Laura and Erik Burns, and Garry Atkins



Tom Nicollet (Sikorsky Helicopters) presents the DUSTOFF Rescue of the Year Award to CPT Jacqueline Moyer and SSG Albert Wright, 67th Medical Company (AA).



Outgoing president Ernie Sylvester passes the gavel to the incoming president Garry Atkins.



Tom Nicollet (Sikorsky Helicopters) with Rescue of the Year Award winners CPT Jacqueline Moyer and SSG Albert Wright.



Top of the Schoolhouse

by 1SG Jayme Johnson



In our last update USASAM had just completed the Flight Medic Course Critical Task Selection Board/Critical Task Selection Survey (CTSB/CTSS). The intent of the CTSB/CTSS was to ensure that current lesson plans taught in the resident Flight Medic Course are in line with skills required in the field.

A few changes have occurred in those lesson plans based on the board recommendations. The most significant addition is in the way we teach trauma management. Based on lessons learned from OEF/OIF, we now incorporate the training methodology of Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TC³) into the Flight Medic course.

Under the TC³ methodology, casualty management during combat missions can be divided into three distinct phases. First, "Care under Fire" refers to care rendered at the scene of the injury while both the medic and the casualty are under effective hostile fire. Second, "Tactical Field Care" is the

care rendered once the casualty and his unit are no longer under effective hostile fire, and third, "Combat Casualty Evacuation Care" is the care rendered while the casualty is being evacuated by an aircraft, ground vehicle, or boat for transportation to a higher echelon of care.

These concepts recognize a particularly important principle: performing the correct intervention at the correct time in the continuum of field care. A medically correct intervention performed at the wrong time in combat may lead to further injuries.

CPT David Broussard, the Flight Medic Course Director, has implemented this training in the Flight Medic Course through both classroom instruction and a situational training exercise that incorporates all three phases of TC³.

Further changes in the Flight Medic Course deal with class demographics. The last two courses have increased in joint attendance to the tune of 21 Navy Corpsman. This is in preparation for the Navy's upcoming mission of providing direct support MEDEVAC to those forces in support of OIF V.

The Medical Evacuation Doctrine Course (2C-F7) continues to play a vital role in the education of combat health support providers. The last Course graduated a total of 33 students, 14 were Navy personnel who will be responsible for the planning and execution of medical evacuation for OIF V.

In May 2005 the 2C-F7 instructors traveled to San Diego, California, to conduct training for additional Navy personnel tasked to provide the planning and execution of medical evacuation for OIF V. The June 2005 resident 2C-F7 Course incorporated new lesson plans dealing with the role of air ambulance companies in the new Brigade Aviation Element (BAE) (TC 1-400) and the General Support Aviation Battalions (GSAB) (FM 3-04.118).

The inaugural Joint Medical En Route Care Course (JMERCC) was held 28 March 2005. The focus of this new two-week course is to synchronize

health care providers from each of the services and educate them on the advanced care requirements of medically or surgically stabilized casualties during air transport within a joint environment. The class comprised both officer and enlisted personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and totaled 17 students. The JMERCC is scheduled again for October 2005. For more information about the courses offered at USASAM, you can visit our website at: <http://usasam.ameddd.army.mil>.

In closing I would like to recognize the academic excellence of the following soldiers, sailors, and airmen. The Distinguished Honor Graduate for Class 05-01 was SGT Mathew J. Marrott, and the two Honor Graduates were TSGT Daniel Normandin and SGT Jeffery Dixon. The Distinguished Honor Graduate for Class 05-02 was HM2 Mark Kirkland, and the Honor Graduate was HM2 Keith Koerber.

As my time as the First Sergeant for USASAM comes to a close I want to extend a heartfelt thanks to all the DUSTOFFer readers for your support over the past three years. Thank you for your service and continued support. DUSTOFF!

—DUSTOFFer—

How to Contribute Articles

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

Send typed, double-spaced hard copy to the address below, or e-mail your article to secretary@dustoff.org or jrt5@aol.com.

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

★ VOTE ★ VOTE ★

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From the Consultant

by LTC David McDonald

Uncertain, confused, angry, wary, betrayed and anxious, describe the current mind-set for a majority of Medical Service Corps Aviators when asked about the future of their profession. I profess that the future is not all that bleak and that we are poised to become a recognized, necessary profession within the joint community, expanding career opportunities for the aeromedical evacuation professional (67).

These are trying times. The Army is transforming to become more efficient, while simultaneously fighting a war, a daunting task at best. During this transformation process, the aeromedical evacuation (MEDEVAC) organizational structure was viewed by the Army Aviation Branch and the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) as disorganized and inefficient. This unfortunate misunderstanding brought about the decision to place MEDEVAC under the command and control of Army Aviation, thus placing all Army Aviation assets under one structure. However, since MEDEVAC is still part of the Joint Health Service Support (JHSS) system, providing a service across the entire Joint Coalition continuum and is still, by Title X, an Army Medical Department (AMEDD) responsibility, this new organizational structure has made the MEDEVAC mission more complex.

To mitigate this complexity and ensure an integrated joint patient evacuation system, new doctrine was developed that allows the AMEDD influence over the execution of MEDEVAC assets through the orders process. Specifically a Theater Patient Movement Center (TPMC) assigned to the Medical Deployment Support Commands (MDSC) and Intra-theater Patient Evacuation Center (IPMC) assigned to Medical Support Commands (MSC) have been conceptualized and incorporated into new AMEDD doctrine. This patient movement center concept was recently introduced to the 44th Medical Command (MEDCOM), which is currently in support of Opera-

tion Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Brigadier General Granger (Commander, 44 MEDCOM) readily approved the concept, and LTC Bob Mitchell (Commander, 36th Evacuation Battalion) is in the process of implementation. This will establish a medical evacuation construct that will ensure continued AMEDD influence over the execution of MEDEVAC assets, as well as ensure

The Army aeromedical evacuation officer is unique and provides an exclusive service that every joint service and coalition partner habitually requests.

continued synchronization between MEDEVAC and ground evacuation assets within the OIF theater of operations.

The introduction, acceptance, and implementation of the TPMC and the IPMC concept will promote Army MEDEVAC as an Army core competency that contributes to the interdependent joint force. This will open up new career opportunities within the COMCOM's, and the Joint Staff.

However Joint Staff and COCOM opportunities are but one pillar in which the aeromedical evacuation professional can serve. Under my new career model concept, I envision the aeromedical evacuation professional serving in branch qualifying aviation positions, as well as competing for General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB) commands as 67J's, along with habitual career assignments. Also, I envision the aeromedical evacuation professional serving in key AMEDD positions competing for battalion and brigade commands.

It is also my intent to lobby for a separate Joint funding line for MEDEVAC, so we can become modernized quicker and don't have to compete for Army Aviation funds. If this

occurs, more career opportunities become available for the aeromedical evacuation professional. This with the other initiatives will help me expand the Long Term Health Education and Training (LTHET) opportunities identifying aeromedical evacuation as a true profession, no longer requiring 67's to have a secondary Area of Concentration (AOC).

I have addressed this august group as aeromedical evacuation professionals rather than 67J's or MEDEVAC pilots, as you truly are professionals. The Army aeromedical evacuation officer is unique and provides an exclusive service that every joint service and coalition partner habitually requests. This makes the aeromedical evacuation profession truly an ARMY asset that contributes to the joint interdependent force. It is my intent, through the above initiatives, to ensure that the aeromedical evacuation professional regains the status and recognition that is long overdue.

-DUSTOFFER-



Flight Instructor Comments to Students:

If a bird had your flying ability, it would fly backward.

If your flying knowledge were written on a matchbox, there would be ample room left for the Old Testament and a few chapters from the New.

New Entries on the Flight Manifest

James Purcell	Greenfield	MA	M
Jack Leech	San Antonio	TX	L
Michael Pierce	Plano	TX	L
Warren Hoen	St. Augustine	FL	M
Jairo Gallego	Fort Hood	TX	L
Patrick Fay	Milpitas	CA	M
Mark Lee	Winston-Salem	NC	L
Kyle Joye	Bend	OR	M
Harry Miller	Westlake Village	CA	L
David Bohl	Pagosa Springs	CO	L
Ted Staggs	Little Rock	AR	M
William Hesidence	Millbrook	AL	L
James Brady	Beverly Hills	FL	L
Jon Belding	Portsmouth	VA	L
Charles Pennington Jr.	Florence	OR	L
Jeremy McKenzie	Pooler	GA	M
Charles Hazlehurst	Greenwood Village	CO	M
Gary Lowder	Albemarle	NC	M
Joseph Scott	Sanford	NC	L
Leland Schmucker	Scottdale	VA	M
Robert Huley	Falls Church	VA	M
Peter Piazza	Stillwater	MN	L
Howard Deith	Carrolton	TX	L
Robert Neitzel	Edgewater	FL	L
Robert Couture	Vail	AZ	M
Tom Nicoletti	Strafford	CT	L
Timothy Burke	San Antonio	TX	L
John Goette, Jr.	Fort Hood	TX	L
Derek Kubacki	Converse	TX	L
Mark Byrd	Dallas	TX	L
John Tragis	Fairbanks	AL	L
Gerald Posner	Miami Beach	FL	L
John Akian	Pinehurst	NC	L
Gregory Heiselman	Ventress	LA	L
David Brassfield	Oshkosh	NE	M
Joseph Blanford	Bardett	IL	M
Clair Hudspeth	Fayetteville	NC	L
Christopher Posey	Fort Rucker	AL	L
Wendy Wilcoxson	Erie	PA	L
Chuck Harvey	Bangor	ME	L
Tomas Orz	Lincoln	NE	L
Larry Douglas	College Park	GA	L
Clayton Chittim	Leawood	KS	M
James Wheeler	Auburn	GA	M
Mark Wheeler	St Paul	MN	M
Marie-Claire Glidden	Colorado Springs	CO	L
Scott Franklin	Lafayette	CO	L
Richard Riley	Enterprise	AL	M
Kristian Willis	APO	AE	L
Walter Kent	Savannah	GA	M
Jacqueline Moyer	Killeen	TX	L
Christopher Wyman	Casa Grande	AZ	L
Candi Belle	Alpharetta	GA	M

Membership Report

Honorary Life Members	13
Life Members	678
Members	214
Units	71
Corporations	2
New members since spring:	
Life	19
Annual	23

Closing out the Flight Plan

Randall Gordon Radigan, "Rotor Blades"
Radigan, born 24 August 1946, entered into rest on 31 December 1998.

Randy enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1966, completed flight school, and began his first tour of duty with the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) in Vietnam. He volunteered for further tours as a Medevac helicopter pilot over some 39 months in combat. He earned two Silver Stars, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, five Bronze Star Medals, numerous Air Medals, and the Purple Heart. He flew 1,597 air-rescue missions in Vietnam, rescuing 4,191 wounded soldiers.

Bobby Shelton, a member of the 237th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), Phu Bai, back in the late 1960s, passed away in early 2005 from a long battle with complications that arose from his service.

Bruce C. Zenk, 65, passed away at his home in Young America, Minnesota, on 17 May 2005 after a three-year battle with cancer.

In 1961, he graduated from South Dakota State University with a degree in Pharmacy and received a commission as an Infantry Second Lieutenant in the United States Army.

In January 1964, Bruce was assigned to the 119th Aviation Company in Vietnam. Completing his one-year tour in January 1965, Bruce had earned the Air Medal with Valor and 22 oak leaf clusters, had flown 747 hours of combat flight time, and helped to save hundreds of lives. In May 1968, he completed his military service at De Witt Army Hospital, where he served as a pharmacist.

Bruce is survived by Betty Zenk, his loving wife of 40 years; his daughter Debbie and husband SSG Michael Otte of Honolulu, Hawaii; his son CPT Patrick and wife Alexa Zenk of Wiesbaden, Germany; grandchildren Kayla and Noah; sister Paula Neiburg of Plymouth, Minnesota; and brother Rodney of Nemo, South Dakota.



Executive Council Explores Scholarship Fund



It has been a long time since the DUSTOFF Association had a scholarship fund designed to help aspiring DUSTOFFers and their children get more education. Recently, we were offered the opportunity to join ranks with the Army Aviation Association of the United States Army (Quad-A). Under this partnership, the DUSTOFF Association pays into their fund money destined to fund a perpetual annuity. This annuity is governed by laws that regulate these activities. The Quad-A is responsible for administering the financial stewardship of money they receive.

The Quad-A will match dollar-for-dollar our contributions to a maximum of \$10,000. The amount of money available for scholarships each year is 3.3% of the total amount in the annuity. This money is available each year forever. The scholarship for a \$20,000 annuity is \$700. Should we decide to make our goal a \$1,000 scholarship each year, we must raise additional money. That would take approximately \$28,500, or an additional \$8,500 over our base goal of \$10,000.

Under this arrangement the Quad-A would establish a DUSTOFF Scholarship. Dependent children, dependent spouses, and DUSTOFF crewmembers (officers and enlisted) could apply for the scholarship. The Quad-A Awards Board meets each year to consider the applicants' qualifications. Names and ranks are removed from the applications before the board sees the nominations, so the nominees compete on the basis of academic merit. The DUSTOFF Association has been invited to provide a member of our organization to sit on that board.

Furthermore, applicants for the DUSTOFF Scholarship become eligible for all the other 150+ Quad-A Scholarship awards. The Viet Nam Helicopter Pilots Association had more than 10 awarded in their first year of scholarships with the Quad-A.

There are two requirements for application. The applicants must be members of Quad-A (with one year in good standing) and the DUSTOFF Association (with one year in good standing), or they must be a dependent of a member of these two organizations (with the same one year in good standing requirement). For the purposes of applying for the scholarship only, this can be viewed as a membership application fee. Our membership fees in the DUSTOFF Association are minimal. Enlisted membership is \$7.50 per year for E-5 and below, and \$7.50 for E-6 and above, with a \$10 initial membership fee; Quad-A is slightly higher.

A motion was presented to the members present at the 2005 DUSTOFF Reunion to establish this scholarship fund. The motion was amended to require first putting the idea forward to all current members and to seek their feedback.

The Executive Council has met since the 2005 Reunion and offers this proposal for your vote. We propose to put up \$10,000 out of DUSTOFF funds to jump-start the scholarship program. That way our potential candidates can apply for the next round of awards (those who are already Quad-A and DUSTOFF members). Our proposed campaign is to seek 100 DUSTOFFers with \$100 each to repay the DUSTOFF funds. To that end, COL Ernie Sylvester, last year's president, has put up the first \$100.

Please vote yes or no for this program by using the ballot on page 27 or the online voting booth at <<http://dustoff.org>>.



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION 2005 HALL OF FAME NOMINEES



Our Hall of Fame wall stands in proud testimony to those DUSTOFFers who contributed to our legacy in notable fashion. It stands "on the shoulders" of 255 brave crewmembers who paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to our fighting forces. This edition of *The DUSTOFFer* includes the two nominees for this year's election of DUSTOFF Hall of Fame inductees. The Executive Council considered all the nominations submitted, and these two men clearly meet the criteria for nomination. You may vote for one or both of the nominees. You may also select "None," indicating that you do not believe that either meets the criteria for induction. To be elected, any nominee must receive at least enough votes to reach two-thirds of the total votes cast.

Please take part in this very important program of preserving our legacy. Every vote counts, as evidenced by last year's voting where nominees were either elected or not elected by the slimmest of margins.

(Nominees, continued on page 24.)

We are also accepting donations for the Hall of Fame Memorial Fund. All donations will be used solely for the memorial and not for other operating expenses.

This is YOUR Hall of Fame and embodies the vision of SSG Tom "Egor" Johnson to preserve the legacy of DUSTOFF for all future generations of DUSTOFF crewmembers.

Please be a part of the voting this year. You also may vote online. Follow the instructions on the ballot on page 27 in this *DUSTOFFer*.



William J. Hughes is one of those rare individuals who will never be forgotten by those with whom he served. He possessed nerves of steel, and his expertise as an aid man was unrivaled. His heroism and skilled medical care were an inspiration and led to the saving of countless lives during his nearly two years in Vietnam. He was precisely the kind of medic needed in a DUSTOFF unit and set the standard for those who followed.

Bill was born on December 21, 1942, in Florence, New Jersey, and grew up near a fire station where he developed an affinity for its rescue squad. As a teenager, he took American Red Cross basic and advanced first aid courses and served three years as a volunteer with the rescue squad.

When he enlisted, the Army gained a tough kid who would prove his worth as a member of DUSTOFF. On March 21, 1964, Bill was interviewed by the legendary commander of the 57th Medical Detachment in Vietnam. Major Charles Kelly saw that he had graduated second highest in training at Fort Sam Houston and offered him an opportunity to go to a clinic or hospital. In his blunt fashion, Major Kelly said, "You're going to see some pretty horrible stuff in a unit like this!"

Not to be outdone, Bill shot back, "Sir, I figure the bodies here couldn't be any more messed up than they were along Route 130 in Jersey!" Bill's sharp retort made him part of a unit that was rapidly changing the way medical evacuation was done in a combat theater.

During the next few days, Bill's other attributes began to surface. He was a gifted artist and painted most of the unit's signs. The same talents led him to design the charts used in unit operations and the now famous "Doctor DUSTOFF" insignia. With his personality and natural gift of gab, he quickly became a key source of supplies. When hard-to-get items were needed, Major Kelly would tell Bill to take the jeep, and he would drive all over Saigon scrounging materials from Army, Navy, and Air Force contacts he had made.

The skills learned as a volunteer rescue crewman put Bill ahead of his contemporaries, and all the pilots felt comfortable having him aboard. He took incredibly good care of patients and always jumped from the aircraft to get the wounded organized and loaded. Bill was at his best in a "hot" landing zone.

On October 26, 1964, an Air Force fighter was shot down in heavy jungle, forcing Bill and his co-pilot to walk to the downed aircraft. Despite enemy fire, they reached the crash site only to find both pilots dead, the aircraft burning, and the area covered with unexploded ordinance. Without regard for their own safety, they recovered the pilots, and Bill was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with "V" for valor, a high award at that early stage of the war.

One of his more heroic acts occurred in February 1965 when the Viet Cong tried to destroy the predominantly Catholic village of Binh Gia. A massive air assault was launched, and four helicopters were shot down. A regimental-sized enemy force then attacked and began torching heavy grass covering the landing zone. When Bill's helicopter arrived, it had to land a long distance away from an inverted UH-1.

Bill ran through enemy fire to the downed aircraft and began pulling crewmembers out. After loading the first group, he returned to extract the dead pilot, who was trapped in the wreckage. The helicopter was burning, but Bill climbed into the cockpit and began cutting him out. At that point, enemy forces directed automatic weapons fire his way, and numerous rounds struck the aircraft and followed him as he carried the dead pilot to his own aircraft. Three more airlifts were conducted into the area, and Bill repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire while rescuing eighteen more wounded. In one of those iniquities of war, his award recommendation was lost, but has been resurrected by friends and supported by Senator Nelson of Florida, who nominated him for a Silver Star.

On March 1, 1965, Bill was driving into Saigon to pick up some paperwork. As he neared the American Embassy, a massive car bomb blew the front off the building. Without hesitation, Bill sped to the embassy and began triaging dozens of patients lying in the street and in the blown apart building. He separated the dead and those needing immediate care and used their clothing to make tourniquets and dressings. As others began to arrive, he had the presence of mind to use his own fatigue jacket to cover the face of a dead embassy worker, so she would not be photographed by the gathering media. Bill was honored by the Ambassador for his actions, which were depicted in a book titled, *The Chronicles of the Vietnam*.

War. He left the embassy after all patients had been evacuated, but did not return to his unit. Instead, he drove to the U.S. Naval Hospital, where many of the wounded had been taken, to volunteer his services there.

When his tour ended, Bill extended to remain with DUSTOFF and tried to extend a second time, but fate intervened after 20 months of combat. On November 12, 1965, Bill's helicopter was struck several times near Bau Bang. While the pilot was trying to gain altitude, an explosion ripped the rifle from Bill's hands, and a bullet tore through his knee and upper thigh. Bill's femoral artery was ruptured, and he nearly bled to death before reaching care. Bill Hughes was the first DUSTOFF medic to be severely wounded and evacuated from Vietnam.

Bill spent the next eight months at Valley Forge Army Hospital, but his wounds were too serious for him to return to duty, so he was released to the Veterans Administration. Fortunately, he entered a vocational rehabilitation program sponsored by the VA and turned his talents as an artist into a Bachelor of Fine Arts and then a Master's Degree.

Bill then shared his love of art and photography by teaching young people. At one time, he was one of two people in the United States who mastered the "Daguerreotype" photo process used in the mid-1800s and had a one man exhibit at the Baltimore Museum of Art. He is essentially wheelchair-bound now, but that has not stopped him from supporting DUSTOFF. He created a beautiful photo album depicting the early days of the 57th and 82nd Medical Detachments and calls others to join the DUSTOFF Association. More recently, he has been designing shirts for our reunions.

The DUSTOFF tradition would not be possible without dedicated men like Bill Hughes, who carried over 800 patients by litter or on his back, often under heavy enemy fire. For his actions, he was awarded:

Bronze Star Medal with "V" for Valor and Oak Leaf Cluster

Army Commendation Medal with "V" for Valor

Air Medal with 17 Oak Leaf Clusters (6 for Valor)

Purple Heart

Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry

Presidential Unit Citation

Aircraft Crewmember Badge

Army Meritorious Commendation

New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal



Colonel Merle J. Snyder is a unique DUSTOFF pilot. Starting as an enlisted man, he served as a Chief Warrant Officer and then was commissioned. He commanded at every level, attended major Army schools, and served with distinction in senior staff positions.

Merle was born September 11, 1943, in Marshalltown, Iowa, and joined the Army in 1966. A drill sergeant recognized his enormous talents and recommended the Warrant Officer Flight Training Program, where he was honor graduate of his flight class.

Assigned to the 45th Medical Company in Vietnam, Merle quickly drew the attention of its commander, LTC Arlie Price. Older than his peers, he demonstrated exemplary flying skills and potential. He was appointed aircraft commander early and given duties beyond his grade.

Merle's extraordinary courage makes him one of our best-known pilots. He simply did not acknowledge fear and completed many dramatic rescues under heavy enemy fire.

One example occurred on May 11, 1969, when a light observation helicopter belonging to a "Hunter-Killer" team was shot down. When he arrived, he could see the aircraft turned on its side in a tiny clearing in the jungle.

Merle tried to contact the gunship team flying overhead, but could not communicate with them, so he started in. Observing this action and knowing the landing zone was not secure, the gunship team leader called to his wingman, "The DUSTOFF ship is landing! That crazy SOB is landing! Put some fire around him!"

Without regard for his own safety, Merle landed, as hostile fire raked the clearing and struck his aircraft repeatedly. Despite the best efforts of the gunship pilots, they could not suppress the enemy as Merle's crew worked to free a trapped crewman. Later, the gunship team leader reported Merle's efforts to be the most courageous he had ever seen and recommended him for a Silver Star.

Because of his performance and worth to the military, CW2 Merle Snyder was commissioned First Lieutenant in the Medical Service Corps. He was then selected to command the 50th Medical Company. Many years later, one of his junior pilots reflected that he had made the Army his career because of the leadership he observed. Colonel Mickey Meis wrote:

"Merle Snyder was the best at everything he did as a leader, mentor, soldier, or pilot. He never sought rewards or accolades, but willingly passed them to others. Taking care of troops was foremost in his mind. He lived the values of selfless service and loyalty long before they were officially penned by the Army."

(Snyder, continued on page 26.)

(Snyder, continued from page 25.)

In 1981, Merle was picked for an extremely challenging mission. As a newly promoted major, he went on a one-man mission to negotiate a medical support agreement with the Israeli Defense Ministry for a peacekeeping force being deployed to the Sinai as a buffer between Arab and Israeli forces. For this politically sensitive effort, he was awarded the Legion of Merit.

Merle was then assigned to the Office of the Surgeon General (OTSG), where he was responsible for developing highly classified medical support plans for Special Operations Forces. During the invasion of Panama, the Casualty Reporting System operated by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) broke down, and the intense media focus began causing embarrassing problems for the Army. The Surgeon General was tasked to help, and Merle responded with a small team that worked around the clock tracking aircraft coming out of Panama and maintaining constant dialogue with military hospitals along the way. In short order, they had things under control, and the DCSPER, LTG Robert Elton, credited Merle's team with saving the day.

In 1986, Merle was selected to command the 421st Medical Company in Germany and convert it into one of the Army's first evacuation battalions. This was during a period of scarce resources and high operational demands. He reorganized the unit into three air ambulance companies possessing 15 aircraft each and received other units to round out the battalion.

After highly successful commands, Merle completed the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, served as Aviation Consultant, and was assigned as OTSG Chief of Plans and Operations. While there, a decision was made to repulse Iraqi forces from Kuwait, and he was placed in charge of medical preparation for the war effort. Wasting no time, he began dispatching subject matter experts within OTSG to FORSCOM and elsewhere to resolve enormous equipment and personnel shortages faced by the AMEDD.

LTG Frank Ledford, the Army Surgeon General at the time, reflected on his efforts:

"I first worked with Merle Snyder in 7th MEDCOM following his highly successful aviation command. He was absolutely great to work with—always cheerful, ready to go the extra mile, and obviously a master at this job. That really paid off several years later when I was Surgeon General and he was Operations Deputy, and we were faced with Desert Shield, which culminated in Desert Storm. I give Merle a huge amount of the credit due the staff that put 13,500 Army medical beds in 44 hospitals in the theater. This was the fastest mobilization in our military history, and in the thick of it was Merle, orchestrating some sense out of a bewildering jumble of active and reserve component units, PROFIS, and IMA personnel. He managed an unwieldy system, created derivative units, and made sense out of potential chaos. Every time I went to operations, Merle was there, 24/7, taking care of his people and our mission, and somehow remaining his cheerful self."

Merle was then selected to command the Army Garrison at Fort Detrick, where he developed an innovative management process that was adopted by the Army Management College as the standard for other installations. While under his command, Ft. Detrick was selected as an "Army Community of Excellence."

Returning to OTSG, Merle was selected for a position reserved for the top tier of Medical Service Corps officers, that of Executive Officer for the Army Surgeon General. In that role, he had to coordinate a massive reengineering of OTSG and reduce its manning from more than 400 to less than 200. The many cultures within the AMEDD Corps made that a nearly impossible task, but through his careful planning and coordination with the senior leadership, he successfully executed the Surgeon General's mandate. Merle's efforts radically changed the AMEDD and set the stage for the "one-staff" concept that now exists between the OTSG and Medical Command (MEDCOM). It was only natural for him to then become MEDCOM Chief of Staff, where he served with distinction until retiring in 1997.

Merle is an example of what hard work and determination can do. Starting as an enlisted man, he went on to reach the pinnacle as an aviator. He became an Instructor Pilot, Instrument Examiner, and Master Aviator, while earning Bachelor's and Master's Degrees. He was selected as a Distinguished Member of the AMEDD Regiment and served as President of the DUSTOFF Association.

In Vietnam, he flew 1,387 missions and evacuated more than 3,000 patients. His many awards and decorations include:

Silver Star
Distinguished Service Medal
Legion of Merit w/5 OLC
Distinguished Flying Cross
Meritorious Service Medal
Army Commendation Medal w/OLC
Army Achievement Medal w/OLC
Air Medal w/26 OLC



**DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
AND
HALL OF FAME BALLOT**



Please vote YES or NO on establishing a **scholarship program** in partnership with Quad-A using \$10,000 of DUSTOFF Association funds and raising the same amount to repay our funds.

Yes No



This ballot is for the 2006 election for **DUSTOFF Hall of Fame Induction**. Those elected will be inducted into the DUSTOFF Hall of Fame at the 2006 Annual DUSTOFF Reunion in San Antonio, Texas, 10-12 February 2006.

You may vote for ONE, TWO, or NONE nominees.

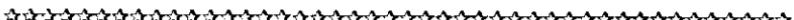
Nominees must capture two-thirds of the votes cast to be elected. Please participate in this endeavor. It's your hall of fame and our legacy.

William J. Hughes Merle J. Snyder None

You may vote online (instructions below), or mail this ballot and any donation you wish to make to:

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

Your ballot must be received at the post office box or online on or before October 31, 2005, to be counted.



INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTING ONLINE

- Log on to <http://dustoff.org>.
- Click **HALL OF FAME**
- Click **2005 NOMINEES** to read narratives of the nominees
- When ready to vote, click **VOTING BOOTH**
- To log in, use the following:
Username: dustoff
Password: hof2005
- Fill in all blanks, including your member number. The member number is above your name on the mailing label of this *DUSTOFFer*.