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Phil Marshall

Dear Editor:

I find it very hard to believe that a bunch of "swashbukling" DUSTOFF'ers can't contribute to a little ol' newsletter. What's the matter with these people?

So the Dustoff Association needs some input, eh? Well how about a good ol' war story? Here goes... Once upon a time,...oops! That's a fairy tale, let me try again. Now this is no s---! There I was, Peter Pilot with the 237th Med Det, Quang Tri and Camp Evans, Viet Nam, October 1969. On this particular mission, Cw2 George Zuvela was A.C., Medis was SP4 Taylor and crew chief was SP4 Adams (Tex). We didn't call him Tex just because he was from Texas, either. He would have made any football coach proud.

Now not all war stories are humorous, but I know everyone has at least one, though...after all, war is hell, but we tend to remember the good times and forget the bad. Nature's way of protecting us, I suppose. It was an urgent, insecure mission; the call was for three wounded Viet Nameese. On the way out, George briefed the crew in the back. As we approached the LZ, the standard call for smoke was made and we identified color. This was one of the few times we called for smoke in this area and only saw one smoke!

Long final coming up...drop down on the deck for a low level approach. Zuvela's comment to Taylor and Tex was something to the effect of "Let's get these guys on board and get outta there!" A 100 knot low level approach down wind, 3 feet off the ground---down on the pitch, back on the cyclic and kick in some pedal to put it in a 90 degree bank; next ~~the~~ thing you know, we're on the ground, upwind.

God ole boy Tex, all 6' 3" of him, took ~~the~~ George literally--- standing on the skid as all good crew members did (they never stood on the ground) he grabbed the first patient by the front of his shirt and actually threw the poor guy completely through the cargo compartment and OUT THE OTHER SIDE! R Taylor did a "double take" as the first guy went flying by, only to see the second patient sailing towards him. Quick reflexes and a stiff arm from Taylor were the only things that kept the second guy from following the first. Taylor brought the second patient to a halt before he uncontrollably ~~he~~ exited the aircraft and helped the first soul back on board while Tex was still grabbing patients and "Helping" them on board. Tex still wasn't done by the time the third, fourth and fifth guys stacked up behind #2. (To this day I don't know if those last ~~three~~ were wounded or they just got to close to "Super Chief" and he grabbed them anyway!) In a matter of seconds, we got the "Clear left" and "Clear right" we always listened for on an urgent pickup.

The whole episode couldn't have taken more than 5 seconds, but it's five ~~seconds~~ that I'll never forget. The rest of the flight was uneventful, but the scene of Taylor stiff arming flying patients with one hand ~~and~~ while helping the first one back in will always be one cherish. We got the job done, perhaps with a little too much enthusiasm, but we were successful. For that matter, I think all Dustoff was successful--they just don't come any better than us!!

Phil