



THE DUSTOFFER



DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2000

The Army Medical Department and DUSTOFF Mission



President's Message

Greetings, fellow DUSTOFFERS, friends and family, from your DUSTOFF Association. I hope this letter finds you all in good health and enjoying the best life has to offer. I am honored to serve as your president, and as I told some of our "grey beards," I won't mess it up.

From the feedback from you, our 21st DUSTOFF Reunion in San Antonio last February at the Holiday Inn Riverwalk was a rousing success. I'm sorry I had to leave unexpectedly after the Friday evening social, due to the death of my father. It was great to see old friends, including some who have been away from the fold for a while, such as Tom Scofield. We had good accommodations, good food, and good service at a fair

price in a great location with plenty of cold beer. What else could a DUSTOFFer want?

We are already firming up plans for the 22nd Reunion and returning by popular demand to the Holiday Inn Riverwalk on the 16th through the 18th of February 2001. One of the highlights planned for this year is hosting members of the first recorded medical evacuation by rotary wing aircraft, during WWII off the coast of Burma. I didn't know until I was preparing my Pop's eulogy that he had flown numerous MEDEVACs for members of Merrill's Marauders, single pilot in Birddogs and Beavers out of the Burmese jungle.

Our Association has a rich history of accomplishments and heroes, some of whom have never told their story or been publicly recognized. It is my intent at this year's reunion to propose a toast to all our heroes, past and future, who put their lives at risk to save the lives of our fellow soldiers. I challenge each of you to share your experiences with our younger members or submit your untold stories to our newsletter for publication. Some of you may not realize it, but you are the torch of the future DUSTOFF legacy.

Scott Burgess, your new secretary, has designed a marketing plan and brochure to explain our history and purpose to prospective new members. Mega thanks to Dan Gower for safeguarding our funds and developing new memorial and historical displays in the AMEDD Museum. Continuing appreciation to Jim Truscott and Huey Huether for their professional management of our newsletter and Web site. A special thanks to Sue Moore, our paid secretary, for her services above and beyond the call of duty for a pittance of a salary. Sue had to resign her duties as Tim PCS'd this spring. Thanks to all the other board members and volunteers who keep our Association one of which we're all proud to be members.

We now have "Sergeant Major DUSTOFF", Jeff Mankoff, as our vice president. I would love to see one of our great Warrant Officers volunteer to be nominated as one of our Association officers next year.

I look forward to seeing old friends at the 2001 Reunion on the Riverwalk. See you on the high ground!

DUSTOFF!
Greg Griffin



DUSTOFF Association

Past Presidents

Ed Bradshaw
Herb Coley
Donald Conkright
Daniel Gower
Roy Hancock
John Hosley
Byron Howlett
Joseph Madrano
Chuck Mateer
Glen Melton
Gerald Nolan
Roger Opio
Jim Ritchie
Robert Romines
Thomas Scofield
Merle Snyder
Ed Taylor
Jim Truscott
Charlie Webb
Johnny West

Founder

Tom "Igor" Johnson

Members at Large

Pauline Knapp
Loren Newingham
amedd.army.mil
Allen Rhodes
John Soehnlein

Newsletter Editor

Jim Truscott

Newsletter Layout & Design

Susan Gower

Printing

Ink, Spot, Ink Printing & Publishing

Reunion 2000 Scrapbook



DUSTOFFers enjoy Market Square.



Merle Snyder presents first DUSTOFF flag to CW4 Frye and 1042nd Medical Co. (AA) to fly in Bosnia.



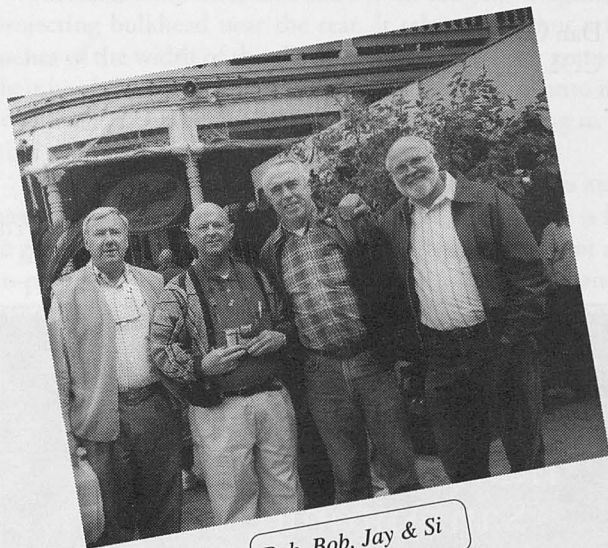
John Temperilli flashes that irresistible smile.



Jeff Mankoff and Mike Riley present Crewmember of the Year Award to SFC Marvin Broadwater.



Bob Romines and Merle Snyder present John Temperilli with memento honoring his service.



Bob, Bob, Jay & Si



John Soehnlein presents Rescue of the Year Award to Oregon National Guard's 1042nd Medical Co. (AA) Crew

Treasurer's Report

Status of Funds as of 1 June 2000

I am proud to report that the DUSTOFF Association is in a great financial status. We closed out our FY 1999-2000 on April 30, 2000. Last year our income came from several sources. Memorial and unassigned donations accounted for \$4,015.00; dues paid totaled \$7,350.50; sales of memorabilia grossed \$4,159.50; and our checking account and CD at Bank of America Military Banking provided \$764.82 in interest.

Our expenses were as follows: Newsletter \$3,412.52; Operating expenses \$1,106.23; Sales expenses \$2,902.56; Paid Secretary expenses \$2,400.00; and Sales Taxes were \$276.74. (We pay taxes on what we sell, but not on what we purchase, since we are tax-exempt)

DUSTOFF Association Executive Council

President: Greg Griffin
e-mail: president@dustoff.org;

Executive Assistant to President: Mike Toennis
e-mail:

Vice President: Jeff Mankoff
e-mail: vicepresident@dustoff.org;

Treasurer: Daniel W. Gower, USA (Ret.)
e-mail: treasurer@dustoff.org;

Secretary: Scott Burgess
e-mail: secretary@dustoff.org;

Administrative: vacant
(for all membership issues)
e-mail: paidsecretary@dustoff.org

Historian: Gary Cagle
e-mail: historian@dustoff.org

DUSTOFFer Editor: Jim Truscott
e-mail:

Web Site: LTC Ronald Huether, USA (Ret.)
<<http://www.dustoff.org>>
e-mail:

The reunion this year brought in \$19,848 and created expenses of \$17,439.58, or a net profit of \$2,408.42.

On the 15th of May we redeemed our CD at Bank of America Military Bank. That CD was originally purchased for \$10,000 and we received \$12,088.93 upon redemption. Those funds are now in our checking account. On the 26th of April we gave Pentagon Federal Credit Union a check for \$10,000 for a CD with that institution. The current CD with them is drawing interest at 6.7% annually and nets 7.01%.

Our current bank account balance is \$24,209.92.

We received an additional \$2,300 from Sikorsky Aircraft for the completion of the MG Spurgeon Neel Memorial Plaza. Those funds have been set aside with the other memorial donations received last year, bringing our Memorial Fund set-aside to \$6,315.00. Al Rhodes, Jeff Mankoff, Mike Toennis, and Dan Gower comprise the Memorial Committee, working to determine the best use of those funds to honor our DUSTOFF heroes.

We are proud to have joined with Pentagon Federal Credit Union as our financial partner. Each member of the DUSTOFF Association is automatically in the PFCU's field of membership. This allows all enlisted members of the Association to be eligible for membership, regardless of rank. Under other circumstances, they would not be eligible for membership. Thanks to Sylvia Greene of PFCU for her help in making this partnership a reality.

The required IRS Form 990 for the DUSTOFF Association for FY 1998-99 was filed this April and we will soon be filing one for the immediate past Fiscal Year (1999-2000).

We look forward to another solid year in our Association. New memberships, sales of memorabilia and a "pay as you go" reunion will provide us another year of solid financial performance.

Dan Gower,
COL (R) Treasurer.



Reunion 2001
February 16-18
Holiday Inn Riverwalk
San Antonio, Texas
Make plans now to attend!

A Nurse's Story

by Roberta Rogers

Told from a very different, but nonetheless engaging, perspective is the commentary provided by Army nurse Theresa Morel Hudler, as told to Roberta S. Rogers.

Suddenly, in my head it is 1968, and I am back in Vietnam. A monsoon rain has just ended this late-January morning when the UH-1 Huey helicopter settles into the mud by the 12th Evacuation Hospital at Cu Chi ("KooChee"). The chopper is a slick, a troop carrier, not the medevac chopper we are used to. It is full of wounded men who a few minutes before were in battle. Their comrades have hastily loaded and flown them to us. Nurses, aides, medics run under the rush of blades to lift the wounded through the open sides of the helicopter. Triage is begun. There is the sickly smell of blood and mud, the shouts of medics, the moan of a man in pain, the down-winding whine of the chopper's engine.

I have just finished my 12-hour shift and should head for the hooch—the nurses' barracks—but as nurse in charge, I know I cannot leave my staff at a moment like this.

"Lt. Morel, come here, please! Tell us what to do with this one!" I slop through the mud to where a nurse is standing beside a low stretcher.

I crouch down beside the soldier and observe a massive head wound. This man will die if we cannot get him to a field hospital up north where they are better equipped to deal with head injuries. I motion to have an I.V. started and move my mouth down near the soldier's ear.

"Don't worry, sweetheart; we'll get you out of here. We'll get you someplace safe. Just hang on." Glancing up through the noise and confusion toward the slowly rotating helicopter blades, I see crew members heading back to the slick.

"Wait!" I yell. "Wait! We have to take this man on! We have to take him up north!"

I scramble to my feet and run toward the chopper, gesticulating wildly. The pilot glances at his crew; flying wounded is not their usual duty. After a pause, he looks back at me and nods.

Hands lift the litter and slide it in, lodging it against a projecting bulkhead near the rear. It takes up all but a few inches of the width of the chopper's floor. Two door gunners, their heads bulky in huge protective helmets, climb onto narrow benches behind the litter, facing outward, sliding in behind mounted M-60 machine guns.

It is not common for nurses to fly evacuation runs and I have never been in a helicopter before, but no one else is free to go. I scramble up onto the metal floor behind the pilot and co-pilot's seats. Someone has tossed me a flak jacket and a standard steel-pot helmet. I see the gunners and pilots hooking their helmet headsets into plugs in the roof: The crew will now be able to communicate with each other. I have no headset, no ear protectors. My helmet flops back and forth on my small head as I struggle to snap the drab flak jacket over my green fatigues and then reach up to check the patient's I.V., attached to a hook overhead.

The co-pilot shouts that voice communication will soon be impossible. He tells me to bang on his seat if I need something once we are airborne. He will swing his boom mike out

then so I can shout into it. Now the chopper engine begins to whine.

I am sitting with my back to the pilots' seats. The metal floor beneath me vibrates. The doors are open; it is as if the chopper has no sides, but nothing holds me in. Sweat trickles down my face and under my uniform where the flak jacket covers it. I am watching my patient closely as the engine winds up to full pitch. We lift up just above the trees, the nose drops a bit, and we move forward. We are flying.

The throbbing of the engine and rotors through the metal roof and the rush of wind past the open doors are deafening. The roar increases as we begin to move a hundred miles an hour up and just over jungle trees, down low over rice paddies and fields.

Suddenly the pilots behind me are shouting something about enemy troops below. The gunners simultaneously open up with their machine guns. The chopper begins to fly evasive maneuvers—banking steeply first to one side and then the other, still following the nape of the earth. The noise increases; the sounds do not blend; the noise is multidimensional, each sound adding to another.

Through the vibrations and throaty pounding of the guns and the whine of the engine, despite the rush of a 100-mile-an-hour wind, I force myself to concentrate on my patient.

I turn my thoughts inward to escape facing the incredible place I find myself. Hours earlier, I had begun my shift with my daily visit to the chapel area for a quick prayer for safety for myself, my staff and anyone who would be with us that day.

Now I am praying again, crying silently inside: "Oh dear God! Don't let him die here in all this! Let us get him to a safe place!"

Suddenly I notice that the I.V. has come loose from my patient's arm. He will die! I bang on the pilot's seat to get him to level off, but he cannot hear me. I must act now.

I scramble to my knees beside the litter. The stretcher is only five inches off the floor and, as I lean over to reach for the I.V. needle, my helmet slips forward. It will come off and hit him! I reach up with one hand, pull it off and fling it behind me. It rolls away.

Now I am bent over, fighting for balance, trying to hold the I.V. in with one hand, tearing tape with my teeth and the other hand, screaming silently over and over, "Oh dear God, don't let him die here!" The noise and vibrations possess my body.

The gunner on my left stops firing. He pivots sharply 90 degrees and moves his head down beside mine so his mouth is within an inch of my ear. Why is he here? Does he want to speak to me? For an instant I am aware of him poised there, then there is a pang-ping whine. The gunner slumps unconscious over me and my patient.

(Continued)

(A Nurse's Story, continued)

A bullet headed straight for my uncovered left temple has ricocheted off his helmet with enough force to knock him out, but I realize this only dimly at this moment. Afraid he will suffocate us, I shove his body to the left and he rolls onto the litter handles, inches from the open door. I don't know if he is tethered or secured in some way or not, so I grab him with my left hand, still holding the I.V. needle with my right. I am crying.

"Oh dear God, he'll fall out! Don't let him fall out! Help us dear God!" It is a little while—a minute? an hour? a lifetime?—before the other gunner looks around and realizes what has happened. He calls on his mike to the pilots and they break off the fight and head straight north, to the field hospital.

When we land, I unclench my hands from the gunner's fatigues and from the patient's I.V. Medics pull the gunner down and place him on a stretcher, then slide the patient's litter to the ground. I run first to my patient. The I.V. is in; he is stable, still alive. He is rushed away. I will never know if he survives.

I dash to the other litter and bend over the man who took the bullet for me, grabbing his wrist, feeling for a pulse. They have removed his helmet; there is no sign of a wound. As I bend over him, the gunner's eyes open and focus on me.

"What is it? What do you want?" he asks. Does he think only a moment has gone by? I just look at him; I do not understand his questions.

This soldier whose helmeted head covered my bare one so perfectly in one bullet-splintered second in time, speaks again, struggling to rise up on his elbow: "You called me!"

In a few days the gunner, who will be back flying tomorrow, and I will meet to compare notes on what happened this January morning in 1968. The TET offensive will now be fully under way. He will offer me the bullet-scarred helmet as a souvenir, but I will insist that he keep it. Already I will not be sure that I will want anything to remind me of this day, or any, I spend in Vietnam. I will not remember the gunner's name. But over the years, even as I repress my Vietnam memories, I will always acknowledge that in the one moment I needed protection, a gunner heard a voice cry out "Help me!" so clearly over the cacophony of noises in a helicopter at war, that he stopped firing, turned, and bent down to see what I wanted. Yet with my teeth busy tearing tape, I had not spoken out loud to him or anyone. I had only cried out silently, to a God

who had heard and answered me "exceedingly abundantly beyond" anything I thought to ask.

Author's note: I had trouble believing it when a friend told me that the middle-aged grandmother with the sweet smile, who sat in front of me in church most Sundays, had been a nurse in Vietnam. I was even more incredulous when I found that Theresa Morel Hudler was one of the few women who have ever been in actual combat. With my writer's juices racing, I approached her and set up an interview.

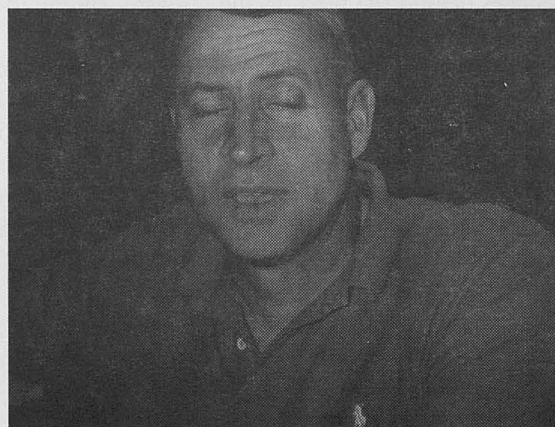
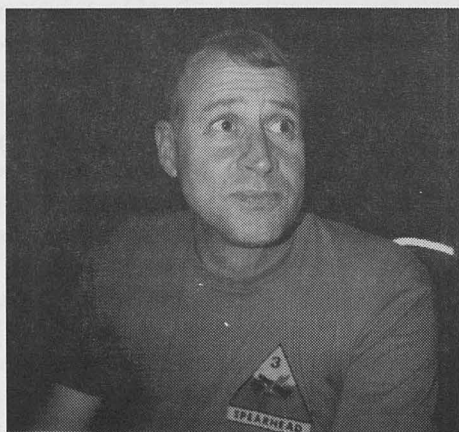
We met one morning over coffee at my dining room table, and she shared the basics of her story. Her facts were there, but something was missing. She hadn't opened up enough to give me the whole story. Then that evening my phone rang. It was Theresa. As she tried to relax in a warm tub, she realized a flashback was beginning. Throwing on her robe, she raced for the phone and dialed my number. "Quick, grab a recorder. I am only going to be able to do this once!"

I hit the record button on my phone answering machine and listened. Theresa took me with her as she relived Vietnam, 1968. After a half hour, both of us in tears, her voice trailed off at last. After a few moments, we prayed together for the peace of God to heal this painful memory. When I hung up and took the micro cassette out of the machine, I knew I held in my hand a special piece of American history, and a story of God's protective presence, even in war.

Because I have no military background, I did some research before I tried to write Theresa's story. As part of it, I located a UH-1 Huey helicopter at Ft. Meade, Maryland, and received permission to climb around on it. My husband Bill and our oldest son Tom came with me.

Tom played the wounded soldier and Bill took up Theresa's position, while a helpful National Guardsman sat and moved as the door gunner had. As I watched the men replay the motions of that January hour in Theresa's life, I noticed patched bullet holes in the metal of the old chopper; it too had been to war. Maybe it was the same one.

This story is a compilation of Theresa's flashback and my research. The first two decades after the war were difficult for Theresa, but she has dealt with her memories and moved on. She is now a neonatal nurse at a hospital in Southern Maryland. —Roberta Rogers



Famous DUSTOFFer, Edward Bradshaw appears alternately sheepish (as in caught) and almost restful in candid photos reminiscent of past garmisch MSC conferences.

JOHN J. MCGOWAN RECEIVES NEW JERSEY DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL

John J. McGowan was awarded the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal for his service in Vietnam as an Army Medical Helicopter Ambulance Pilot. This award was approved by Governor Christine Todd Whitman and was presented to him on November 17, 1999, at the National Guard Armory in Somerset, New Jersey. McGowan qualified for this honor based on the awards for heroism he received in Vietnam. He participated in numerous combat evacuations of critically wounded soldiers, both U.S. and Vietnamese. Many of these DUSTOFF missions were flown while under hostile fire. Some of Jay's awards were two Distinguished Flying Cross, the Bronze Star, two Air Medal with V device for valor, Distinguished Unit Citation, and Army Commendation Medal. McGowan is a native of Lawrenceville and an ROTC Distinguished

Graduate from the University of Vermont. He accepted a Regular Army commission in the Medical Service Corps. He served in Texas, Vietnam, Japan and Korea and attended Army Flight School in Alabama and Texas. He resigned his Commission after serving 7 years.

McGowan has been employed by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as a helicopter pilot for twenty-nine years. He is currently manager of the Helicopter Operations and the Downtown Manhattan Heliport, as well as Chief Pilot. His career with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has been varied and exciting. He is married to the former Patricia Merlone of Hamden, Connecticut, and they have lived in Middletown, New Jersey, for 29 years. They have four grown children.

CAJUN DUSTOFF WINS FORCES COMMAND COMMANDER'S TROPHY

The U.S. Army Air Ambulance Detachment (Cajun Dustoff), located at Fort Polk, Louisiana, has won the Forces Command Commander's Trophy (Category E) in Safety for fiscal year '99. On April 4, 2000, the award, which recognizes the superior unit within the category for its excellence in aircraft accident prevention and zero recorded accidents, was presented to the Detachment Commander, MAJ Gregory Malvin, by the Fort Polk Commanding General, Brigadier General Charles Swannack, Jr. Within the year, the six-ship detachment flew over 1,600 hours and evacuated over 230 patients to local treatment facilities within Western Louisiana. The USAAAD continues to fulfill the DUSTOFF legacy of selfless service and unhesitating devotion to our fighting forces, who work and train at the Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Polk.

Bobby's Wisdom

More deathless observations from Vietnam crew chief, Bobby McBride.

A billfold in your hip pocket can numb your leg and be a real pain in the ass.

Cover your buddy, so he can be around to cover you.

Letters from home are not always great.

The madness of war can exact a heavy toll. Please have exact change.

Share everything, even the pound cake.

Decisions made by someone over your head will seldom be in your best interest.

The terms "Protective Armor" and "Helicopter" are mutually exclusive.

The further away you are from your friends, the less likely it is that they can help you when you really need them the most.

EARN THIS!

by Captain Stephen R. Ellison

Captain Stephen R. Ellison, an Army Ranger doctor, penned the following comments recently, based on his observations during his training at Brooke Army Medical Center.

I am a doctor specializing in Emergency Medicine in the Emergency Departments of the only two military level-one trauma centers. They are both in San Antonio, Texas, and they care for civilian and military personnel. San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world, living here because of the location of these two large military medical centers.

As a military doctor in training for my specialty, I work long hours, and the pay is less than glamorous. One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact, and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work. Most often it is a victim from a motor vehicle crash. Often it is a person of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population, it is often a nursing home patient. Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama prior to medical school, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brought in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers that cater to military retirees.

I had not stopped to think of what citizens of this age group represented. Then I saw "Saving Private Ryan." I was touched deeply, not so much by the carnage in the first thirty minutes, but by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by the scene of the elderly survivor at the graveside asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Department and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things they did for me and everyone else who has lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless.

Situation permitting, I now try to ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without the inquiry. I have been privileged to hear an amazing array of experiences recounted in the brief minutes allowed in an Emergency Department encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a medical capacity, many on their last admission to the hospital.

There was a frail, elderly woman who reassured my young enlisted medic trying to start an I.V. line in her arm. She remained calm and poised despite her illness and the multiple needle sticks into her fragile veins. She was what we call a "hard stick." As the medic made another attempt, I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said "Auschwitz." Many of later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering.

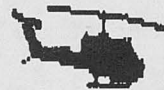
Another patient was a long-retired Colonel, who as a young Navy officer had parachuted from his burning plane over a

Pacific island held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, he had cut his head in a fall at home, where he lived alone. His CT scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of high-priority ambulance patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi to take him home, then realized his ambulance had brought him without his wallet. He asked if he could use the phone to make a long distance call to his daughter who lived seventy miles away. With great pride, we told him that he could not, as he'd done so much for his country, the least we could do was to get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. I regretted that my shift wouldn't end for several hours, so I couldn't drive him myself.

I was there the night SGM Roy Benavidez came through the Emergency Department for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him, but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later.

The gentleman who served with Merrill's Marauders, the survivor of the Bataan Death March, the survivor of Omaha Beach, the 101 year old World War I veteran, the former POW held in frozen North Korea, the former Special Forces medic now with inoperable liver cancer, the former Vietnam Corps Commander—I remember these citizens. I may still groan when yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women. I am angered at the cutbacks, implemented and proposed, that will continue to decay their meager retirement benefits. I see the President and Congress who would turn their backs on these individuals who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties won with such sacrifice.

It has become my personal endeavor to make the nurses and young enlisted medics aware of these amazing individuals when I encounter them in our Emergency Department. Their response to these distinguished citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in the next generation. My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation, and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must "earn this."



Rules of Combat

For those who have been there, the following observations are already most evident:

If the enemy is in range, so are you.

Incoming fire has the right of way.

Don't look conspicuous. It draws fire.

The easy way is always mine.

Try to look unimportant. They may be low on ammo.

Professionals are predictable; it's the amateurs who are dangerous.

The enemy invariably attacks on two occasions: (1) When you're ready for them. (2) When you're not ready for them.

Teamwork is essential; it gives the enemy someone else to shoot at.

If you can't remember, the claymore is pointed at you.

If your attack is going well, you have walked into an ambush.

Don't draw fire; it irritates those around you.

The only thing more accurate than incoming enemy fire is incoming friendly fire.

When the pin is pulled, Mr. Grenade is not our friend.

If it's stupid but it works, it isn't stupid.

When in doubt, empty the magazine.

Never share a fighting position with anyone braver than you.

Anything you do can get you shot, including doing nothing.

Make it too tough for the enemy to get in and you can't get out.

Mines are equal opportunity weapons.

A Purple Heart just proves that you were smart enough to think of a plan, stupid enough to try it, and lucky enough to survive.

Don't ever be the first, don't ever be the last, and don't ever, ever volunteer to do anything.

The quartermaster has two sizes, too large and too small.

Five-second fuses last only three seconds.

It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you've just bombed.



DUSTOFF IN KOSOVO

by MAJ Jon Fristoe, Commander, 236th Medical Co. (AA)

The quality of personnel we have in the 236th Medical Company and the AMEDD in general astounds me. I recall members of this unit, such as SFC Marvin Broadwater, who recently won DUSTOFF Crewmember of the Year, SFC Gosling and SSG Dicker, who were both Commandant's List, graduates of their respective courses, and SSG Diaz, who was Distinguished Honor Graduate at BNCOC. SGT Alldaffer recently won NCO of the Month honors for the aviation task force here in Kosovo. That speaks highly of his ability and his stature, as generally the medevac community is overwhelmed by the sheer volume of aviation folks. Where do these great soldiers come from and what compels them to do the great things they do? I have wondered about this, as we have recently seen other heroes from the 236th. SGT David Estrada recently distinguished himself as a true hero here in Kosovo for his actions in attempting to rescue a 5-year-old boy.

We had our first hoist mission here in Kosovo on Sunday, January 9, 2000. We got called at 1522 for a child who had been submerged under ice for approximately thirty minutes. We had an excellent response time, off in eight minutes, enroute time of seven minutes. The LZ was east of checkpoint Gulf, on the Serbian Border inside the five-kilometer buffer zone.

Once we got on-site, we were informed that the child had not yet been found. Locals were standing along the banks with sticks trying to break up the ice. A U.S. Engineer Company had a couple of soldiers there, some of whom had gone in the water to search for the boy. Apparently, the father had crossed the frozen river; the older brother followed, and then the 5-year-old boy attempted to cross. (This occurred only about twenty meters upstream from a bridge.) The father and brother apparently heard a splash, turned around and saw only a hole in the ice. No one could get to the actual hole, although we doubted if the child was anywhere near it at this point. The engineer soldiers there did a great job of keeping people back so our guys could get in there and assess. The crew was CW2 Christopher Frey, myself, SGT David Estrada, the medic, and SGT Glenn Fryer, the CE. We decided to hoist Estrada down to try and break up the ice and see if he could see anything through the ice. We hovered up and down stream searching, with no success.

After several minutes, SGT Estrada saw what he thought was a coat and signaled to be lowered in an attempt to reach it. He went completely under, completely submerged in the frozen river. It was quite apparent that he was freezing, but unfortunately what he saw was only a bag. We contacted DUSTOFF Operations to launch the second-up aircraft: our medic was freezing, and if anyone did find this child, SGT Estrada would probably not have been capable of assisting in reviving him. The second-up aircraft could not launch because of weather below minimums at Camp Bondsteel. DUSTOFF Operations contacted Camp Able Sentry in Macedonia and attempted to launch an aircraft from there, but they did not have weather either. After about forty minutes of station time,

we got information from the engineers that a dive team at Camp Monteith was awaiting pickup for transport to the site. We departed with SGT Estrada warming in the back of the aircraft.

By the time we departed Monteith with the dive team on board, we were under goggles. We got back to the site and shut down. I was senior guy on-site, but the Engineer Company Commander had the site secure. He had pulled vehicles up to the water for lighting and had comms established with his Battalion TOC, giving us a phone link to our operations. The Engineer Company did an absolutely fantastic job. We orchestrated search patterns across the river. The divers went under the ice, and back and forth across the water. The visibility was poor: polluted water, dark. We searched downstream to the bridge where there was no ice, just running water. We continued the search downstream to a stagnant area where the river made a ninety-degree turn to the left. We had sent folks downstream during the day and had hovered over the water for about two kilometers downstream and had seen nothing. This had taken us to within approximately two kilometers of the Serbian border. There was lots of garbage in the water, but we could not find the child.

At about 1900, I concluded that, even though the water was freezing, it would now become a search mission and not a rescue mission. I knew there was virtually no chance of rescuing this child if we could find him. We were also concerned about the weather; if our sister ships couldn't get out of Bondsteel, we were concerned about getting in. We could see Camp Bondsteel through goggles, so tower cleared us in and we landed at 1947.

Of course, any crew acts as a team, and SGT Estrada certainly could not have done what he did without the other members of that crew. CW2 Chris Frey was the Pilot-in-Command and in his usual meticulous manner performed every action by the book, professionally. His concern for his crew and his passion for the job were revealed to me that day. The first time on scene, CW2 Frey left the aircraft to assist SGT Estrada on the riverbank. On arrival, he found SGT Estrada removing his flight vest and preparing to jump into the river to attempt to locate the boy. CW2 Frey refused to allow SGT Estrada to do so, instead telling him that a safer approach would be to utilize the hoist, where we would have control of him from the air. His confidence in his crew and his execution of this mission speak volumes about the true professional he is.

Those of us in MEDEVAC who fly these aircraft and perform these missions know how much is involved in hoist operations, and that day was no different. SGT Frey's responsiveness in establishing an environment safe for hoist operations was impressive. He expertly guided SGT Estrada the fifty or so feet off the river and through the trees. When SGT Estrada signaled to be lowered into the water, there was no hesitation by SGT Frey. He simply pressed the button and informed the pilots, knowing that his teammate was counting on him to

keep him safe. It is impossible to articulate how cold it must have been under the aircraft in that water. SGT Estrada's flight suit was almost like cardboard because it was frozen and rigid. He had ice in his hair, his lips were blue, and yet he persevered. SGT Frey never wavered, just went about his business like it was a training flight, talking to the pilot: "move right," "move forward," "SGT Estrada is in the water," clearing the aircraft: textbook all the way, calm as can be. CW2 Frey and I did not even notice as we departed Camp Bondsteel on this mission that SGT Frey had grabbed the night vision goggles from flight operations. They would play an important role in our mission later that night.

I had the good fortune to be on duty that day with this crew, something commanders don't always get to do. I saw these professionals in action. Even as we hovered there with the rotor disc four to five feet over the tops of the trees that guarded each side of the riverbank, with the ice beneath us and SGT Estrada hanging precariously under the aircraft, I could not help but think about the incredible people I have working for me. I remember thinking, "Yes, this is what I want to be doing." It was almost like time had frozen like the river below.

After some time, we had to pull our freezing teammate back into the aircraft. SGT Frey hoisted SGT Estrada back into the aircraft and we were able to warm him, preventing another casualty by not allowing him to become hypothermic. SGT Frey's actions in rewarming SGT Estrada further indicated his heroism for foresight in knowing exactly what to do with a casualty at high risk of becoming hypothermic. The training these guys receive became instinctive, and that is what training and leadership are all about.

These missions don't always work out, as this one didn't. Although we searched that river aggressively, we were unable to locate the submerged child; his body was found four days later. If you do this business long enough, you realize it and accept it. The glory usually goes to the folks who are involved in the ones that work out. But the guys in this story are all heroes in my book; they are truly those who make DUSTOFF legendary. Even more so than I considered before, I assure you that the DUSTOFF legacy is alive and well in KOSOVO.



MAJ Jon Fristoe, CW2 Christopher Frey, SGT David Estrada, and SGT Glenn Fryer

Grandpa DUSTOFF

by Robert Fulton

COL Chet Duncan, USA (Ret), AKA DUSTOFF 509 and 555 on occasion, forwarded the following poetic offering, with an appropriate foreword: I have a son-in-law, MAJ Lawrence V. Fulton, who is currently attending classes at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. As part of the celebration for Veteran's Day, his oldest son Robert was asked by his sixth-grade teacher to write an article about a veteran. His mother tried to convince him that his dad was a veteran. But he insisted only his grandfather was a veteran. He decided to write a poem about me. He received an excellent grade for his submission. I thought it might be appropriate for reprinting in The DUSTOFFer, since it speaks of so many DUSTOFF pilots of the world.

When you're wounded and you need care,
Hope that you see a MEDEVAC helicopter in the air.

That's my Grandpa in the air.
If he sees you, never fear;
You've got a MEDEVAC pilot here.

He will land in the most dangerous places.
My Grandpa was shot down to the ground,
but he made it out safe and sound.

He was attacked by malaria
and he was very sick.
And he himself had to be
MEDEVACed home in a quick.

He was able to survive
and go back to war again.
He may have even rescued some of your kin.

He received the distinguished flying cross
for his valor in the Vietnam War.
But he doesn't talk about it anymore.

I'm proud of my Grandpa for what he did.
I am so lucky to be his grandkid.

Robert Fulton,
November 1999

Closing Out the Flight Plan

Roger Hula passed away in January 2000.

Ronald G. Gorday passed away on September 8, 1999. He loved his country, and being a DUSTOFF pilot was important to him. Ronald is survived by his wife, May.

Mayo Ellingson passed away on April 3, 2000. His favorite unit was the 1st Cav—1964. He is survived by his wife, Sally.



REUNION 2000 THANK YOUS

Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation—John Soehnlein
Breeze Eastern Corporation—Mike Riley
Lucas Aerospace—Ron Zavitz
Pentagon Federal Credit Union for two \$50 U.S. Savings Bonds, which were raffled and promptly donated to the Association.

NEW ENTRIES ON THE FLIGHT MANIFEST

Paul Anderson	Ft. Wainwright, AK
Stephen Barry	Natick, MA
Warren Blake	Amesbury, MA
James Bolton	Enterprise, AL
Tommy Bowling, Jr.	Ft. Polk, LA
Dennis Bradshaw	San Antonio, TX
Fay Brannon	Montgomery, TX
Marvin Broadwater	Travis AFB, CA
Scott Brown	Manhattan, KS
Scott Burgess	Ft. Sam Houston, TX
Timothy Burke	APO AE
Ty Chamberlain	Duvall, WA
Christopher Colacicco	Ft. Bragg, NC
Curtis Dierdorff	Fairfax, VA
Jacob Dlugosz	Olean, NY
Gerald Fridman	Newton, MA
John Friscia	New Harmony, UT
Richard Gray	Lincoln, NE
Lee Harrington	San Antonio, TX
Malcolm Hartman	San Antonio, TX
Spencer Hasch	Killeen, TX
John Heinz	San Diego, CA
Kenneth Hughes	Superior, MT
André Jacelon	Colorado Springs, CO
Ronald Jones	West Jordan, UT
Thomas Kelly	Montgomery, TX
Ralph Kirby	Etowah, NC
Joseph Jurantz, Jr.	Sheboygan, WI
Scot Laubach	Brick, NJ
Darrell Lease	Roebbling, NJ
Thomas Mallory	APO AP
David Maywhort	Tacoma, WA
Clif McCready	Chester, VA
Matthew Miller	Baltimore, MD
Ramdass Monshi	APO AO
Gary Munoz	Tulsa, OK
Edward Riegel	Lamar, MO
Reuben Rieke, Jr.	Lincoln, NE
Mike Riley	St. Louis, MO
Scott Rollston	Martinez, GA
Randal Schwallie	Nashville, TN
Gerald Sterns	Granite City, IL
James Stoner	Beaverton, OR
Donald Troy	Austin, TX
Steven Vaughn	Tucson, AZ
William Welborn	Salem, OR
Anthony Wolf	Clarksville, TN
Russell Wright	Las Vegas, NV

DUSTOFF on the World Wide Web

The DUSTOFF Association Web site (www.dustoff.org) continues to serve the world with information about air ambulance units and crews. Since the beginning of this year, the DUSTOFF Association Web site has had an average of 1300 visits a month, up significantly from just under a thousand per month last year. The Guest Book and the DUSTOFF Association Message Board are two popular destinations. Through these two locations long-lost air ambulance crewmembers are reunited and information disseminated.

A new feature at the Web site is the availability of permanent DUSTOFF e-mail addresses. You may obtain a DUSTOFF e-mail address that will never have to be changed. As you move, just notify the Webmeister of your new local e-mail address and all e-mail will be automatically forwarded from your DUSTOFF e-mail address. Just think, you'll never have to change e-mail addresses, even if you move or change Internet Service Providers. Just give out your DUSTOFF e-mail address to friends and relatives, and all e-mail will be automatically forwarded to wherever you move to. Visit www.dustoff.org/e-mail/dustoffemails.asp for more information and sign up online.

Characteristics of the Capable Pilot

by Dr. A. M. Slager, with commentary by Billy Hughes

A very scientific article, authored by Dr. A. M. Slager of the Schreiner Aviation Group's Medical Department, addressed the above subject. When these observations were published, they were linked with critical experiential comments by famous DUSTOFF medic Billy Hughes, who used his close-up experiences with many notable DUSTOFF pilots to produce the following article. Hughes's comments are in italics.

Pilots are athletically built; they are good sportsmen, take pleasure in being actively engaged and move smoothly.

This person has never seen some of you guys dance.

Their state of mind is either normal or somewhat getting to the pole of buoyancy, often flushed with joy. This is often a notably incomplete use of intelligence.

You guys were anything but normal persons. A normal person would not be with DUSTOFF. As for the intelligence part, I would suspect that this person caught some of you at the Victoria Bar in Saigon.

Guidance counselors and teachers often communicated to their parents that they were not working to their full potential.

This couldn't be more wrong. I've seen you guys, on many occasions, drink to well beyond your potential.

Their self-confidence is always above average. They have enormous capability to "tune out and daydream."

Not true. I never recall any of you guys being tuned out or daydreaming during an assault. I have seen you somewhat detached in Saigon, but never during a fire fight, flight time or on payday.

Vanity is never present.

No comment.

In many cases their masculinity is not overly developed. An oral fixation is often available.

Don't understand this one. If it's in reference to how you guys went through a case of C rations out in the field, then I agree. As for the masculinity—that's an insult. We had the most masculine pilots in all of Vietnam. Just look at that photo of the group of DUSTOFF pilots around the Huey with Major Campbell. Si and Truscott were a little on the thin side, and Bob Mock was a little . . . short . . . but you guys were the epitome of the masculine male. And if anyone didn't agree with this, we could always get the guys from the 145th Aviation Battalion to take care of them, or better yet, the nurses over at the 3rd MASH. Come to think of it, you guys did chew a lot of gum.

Their spouses anticipate conversations with non-pilots and members of the non-flying public to center on aviation-related topics.

This really requires no comment. Here it is thirty-five years later and what do all of you guys talk about constantly? I might add that the conversations are not one-sided; there is medic involved.

Their favorite television programs are of the educational and informative type.

Yeah, like the History Channel, especially the ones that deal with helicopters and the Vietnam War.

They are prone to "surf" with remote controls, even when watching their favorite programs, and loathe commercials. Though this is true with most adult males, the tendency in pilots is astounding, owing much to their learned ability to "scan," as though they were cross-checking their instruments while bringing their aircraft in for a landing.

This could have something to do with attention span. And you guys were always playing with your instruments.

They compartmentalize everything. Information, structure, cleanliness, and border on the irrational.

Okay, it's obvious that this guy never walked into the officer's villa (or "officer's hooch," as McGoo called it). Get me his address, and I'll send some photos.

It is difficult for them to live in an average environment. Some of them even have toilets in their yards. Hobbies include those who live life on the edge. Motorcycles, downhill skiing, scuba diving, and powerful automobiles eventually give way to golf, luxury cars, and the retention of one of their favorite pastimes holing over into their retirement.

Who can argue with this? Milo has a Harley; John Dean loves to ski. Can any of you afford a luxury car? Of course, McGoo has a mode of transportation that requires rotor blades, and Milo has a lot of thrust on his DC-10. Perhaps he is making reference not to what you are driving, but to what you wish you were flying.

They like their music loud. Tapping their fingers or feet is as natural as breathing.

I would call this a case of bad nerves. You guys did this a lot back in the orderly room waiting for the next call to come in so you could go out and get shot at again and again.



From the Wiregrass

by LTC Scott Heintz

Greetings from the Wiregrass! I would like to begin by thanking all the presenters, attendees, conference and Holiday Inn Riverwalk staff for making our first AMEC of the millennium a success. Quite a bit of valuable information was provided this year, by the official presenters and during numerous informal mentoring sessions that took place during and after duty hours. We appreciate your AAR comments and will do our best to incorporate your suggestions into the next conference. Remember, the presentations are available on the MEPD web page at: www.cs.amedd.army.mil/meDEVAC.

Early in the year, the Chief of Staff of the Army directed that all UH-1s and AH-1s would be out of the Army by 2004. We've been busy working with DCSOPS, DAMO-FDV, FORSCOM, OTSG and the ARNG to develop a strategy to meet the Chief's guidance while continuing to provide mission support for those locations affected. DAMO-FDV has contracted the Navigator Group to study the situation and provide recommendations. One particular option may be outsourcing or contracting the mission to a civilian air ambulance firm. Navigator's sources sought survey synopsis (SSSS) was published in the Commerce Business Daily in May with a requested response deadline of no later than 14 June 00. We'll keep you posted on status of this action.

The UH60Q program continues to progress successfully as a result of a lot of diligence and hard work on the part of LTC Gene Pfeiffer, the assistant PM for UH60 at AMCOM. Barring any major problems, the 507th at Ft. Hood should see the first active component UH60Qs before the end of the year. The West Virginia National Guard will be the next unit to receive the modernized MEDEVAC platform in late '01 or early '02.

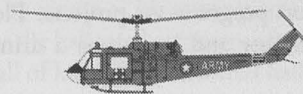
LTC Jim Mundy, the new manager at PERSCOM for the 91CMF has taken numerous initiatives to ensure that our flight medics are assigned to MEDEVAC units. He will actively track 91BF assignments to make sure these folks get to where they're supposed to be, but we need your help. Commanders, CSMs and 1SGs, I'd ask that you work with your personnel folks and the replacement centers to identify and appropriately assign the inbound flight medics to your units. I need the flight medics to identify themselves as such when signing in to a new location. If you are being assigned to other than a MEDEVAC unit, call the CSM or 1SG at that MEDEVAC unit and ask for assistance.

The folks at USAARL are making great strides in obtaining fleet-wide (blanket) AWRs for our on-board medical equipment. They have completed all testing on the Physio Control LifePak 10-59 defibrillator and expect approval very soon. The next two items approved should be the IVAC 2863 (re-named the ALARIS MS III) infusion pump and the BC13303 pulse-oximeter. Status of AWRs for these items and the remaining medical equipment will be provided on the MEPD web page.

Key to the success of the 2000 AMEC was the monumental effort put forth by MSG Newingham, MEPD's NCOIC. Unfortunately, we had to say good-bye to MSG Newingham

shortly after the AMEC. He is currently serving as the 1SG of B Company, 168th Area Support Medical Battalion in Korea. MSG Newingham's contributions to the entire MEDEVAC community were numerous, and he will be missed. We wish him all the best in his new position. Picking up and not missing a beat in terms of initiative, professionalism and enthusiasm is our new NCOIC, SFC Marroquin. He brings a great deal of MEDEVAC experience to the office and will continue to serve the field in a responsive manner. Congratulations go out to my deputy, MAJ "Gino" Montagno, who was selected for promotion to LTC on the recent selection board.

That's all for now. I'd ask that all of you look at the MEPD Web page and provide me feedback with regards to how I can make it a more effective tool for you. Should you be visiting "Mother-Rucker," please stop by and see us. As always, lunch at "Larry's" will be on me. FLY SAFE & DUSTOFF!



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 paidsecretary@dustoff.org.

Please send your contributions to:

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

ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

Various meetings relating to the health, welfare, and future of the association are summarized as follows:

Business Meeting February 19, 2000

• Association membership includes:

Honorary life members	14
Life members	693
Annual dues members	229
Units	69
Corporate members	2
TOTAL MEMBERS	1007

• Attendance at Reunion 2000 was the largest ever.

• John Soehnlein, on behalf of Sikorsky Aircraft, contributed \$2,300 to cover the Memorial Plaza deficit.
(Editor's note: This is one of the many times John or Igor has helped us out on programs or projects. Please take time to thank John and Igor and buy them a drink at the next reunion.)

• Membership prices have been reduced as follows:

Annual membership—E5 and below
no initial fee \$ 7.50

Annual membership—E6 and above
\$10 initial fee \$ 7.50

Life membership—E9 and below \$50.00

Annual membership—civilians and officers
\$10 initial fee \$15.00

Lifetime membership \$100.00

Lifetime membership—initial rotary wing
graduates \$50.00

• Association banking moved to Pentagon Federal Credit Union, which provides higher interest rates.

• J. B. Hill Memorial Fund has reached \$1,215. Karen Hill will assist in determining use of those funds.

• DUSTOFF.org addresses available at \$10/annum through Web site.

(Association Business, continued on page 18)

Announcing a New Membership Benefit with Immediate Financial Rewards!

Now, all members of the DUSTOFF Association are eligible to join.



**Pentagon Federal
Credit Union**

Distinguished Members. Proven Service.

Here are just a few of the benefits of membership.

Fixed-Rate Home Equity Loans
8.74% APR up to 60 months, **9.24% APR**
61-180 months. **No closing costs.**

New Car Loans 8.29% APR to 60 months.

Used Car Loans 8.8% APR to 60 months.

PenCheck Access with free non-PenTeller
ATM transactions and free checks.

PenCheck Plus checking account with
dividend earnings.

PenCheck Net with unlimited, free
ClickPay online bill payment service.

Money Market & IRA Certificates Rate Sale! **Federally Insured**

Only \$1,000 minimum needed to earn these nationally high yields!

7.75% Annual Percentage Yield 3-Year Term	7.50% Annual Percentage Yield 2-Year Term
Yields subject to change. Other terms available.	

Money Market Savings Accounts **No monthly service fees!**

6.01%^{APY}
with only a \$2,500 minimum balance

Join today!

Visit our branch at:

The Colonnade III
9953 IH - 10 West
San Antonio

Call toll free
1-800-616-6600
Or apply online at
www.PenFed.org
Please mention Code 80D



Your accounts are federally insured by the National Credit Union Administration, an agency of the U.S. government, up to \$100,000. You must be a member of Pentagon Federal to receive services. All members of the DUSTOFF Association and your families are eligible. All accounts are subject to approval. Rates and yields are subject to change without notice. Certificate rates change every Thursday morning, EST. Call 1-800-290-7328 and press 3, or check www.PenFed.org for current yields. Certificates: penalty for early withdrawal. Money Market Savings Account (MMSA) is a variable-rate account and is subject to change monthly. Current MMSA balances up to \$749.99 earn 1.51% APY; \$750-\$2,499.99 earn 2.23% APY. Fees may reduce earnings on your account. New car loan Example: \$10,000 loan at 8.29% APR; 60 monthly payments of approx. \$205 each. Home equity loans are available in most states (maximum 80% Fair Market Value in Texas). Home Equity Loan rate depends on length, Fair Market Value (FMV), and owner occupancy. Cost of appraisal, if required, will be at the member's expense. Pentagon Federal does business in accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Law and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. PenCheck Access gives eight non-PenTeller ATM transactions per statement cycle with no Pentagon Federal fee and free standard checks. Other terms and conditions apply—call number above for more details.

Vietnam Medic Receives Medal of Honor—Three Decades Late

by Brooke Ruivivar

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Feb. 9, 2000)—Alfred Rascon was a hero to the soldiers in his platoon after his courageous actions in March 1966, in the Long Khanh Province in Vietnam.

In a ceremony at the White House on February 8, President Bill Clinton presented Rascon with a Medal of Honor that was decades in the making. He commended both Rascon and the soldiers who nominated him for two separate battles. For Rascon, the honor came for his actions in Vietnam. For his platoon mates, the praise came for their persistent fight to attain a Medal of Honor for Rascon.

Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera echoed Clinton's thanks to Rascon's former platoon mates at the ceremony to formally induct Rascon into the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon.

"Without the efforts of his former comrades at arms, who were so persistent in the halls of Congress and the White House and here, in insisting that Alfred Rascon's heroic deeds be recognized, there would be no Medal of Honor ceremony today," Caldera said. "A special thanks goes to them . . . and to Congressman Lane Evans, who sponsored the legislation authorizing the Pentagon to waive the time period for these awards from years past, so we may recognize deeds like Alfred Rascon's."

Those deeds occurred on March 16, 1966, when Rascon was a 20-year-old specialist assigned as a medic to the Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st of the 503rd Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate), according to his award citation. His platoon drew intense enemy fire, and Rascon risked his life to save other soldiers. He repeatedly put himself in the line of fire to protect wounded platoon mates, sheltering them from grenade blasts, shrapnel and machine gun fire.

Although he was wounded himself, he managed to crawl across the field and retrieve extra ammunition for a machine-gunner, which his citation said helped his platoon win the battle.

When the enemy fire subsided, he would not give up his duty as medic, directing the evacuation of critically wounded soldiers treating their wounds. Finally, assured that the soldiers were receiving the help they needed, he allowed his own wounds to be treated.

"On that distant day, in that faraway place, this man gave everything he had, utterly and selflessly, to protect his platoon mates and the nation he was still not yet a citizen of," Clinton said. "Later, [Rascon] said with characteristic modesty, 'I did it because I had to, and that's all there is to it.'"

Rascon, born in Chihuahua, Mexico, has lived in the United States for most of his life. He said he felt compelled to volunteer to join the Army to give back to the country that had given his family so much, although he did not officially become a citizen until 1967, after his first tour of duty in Vietnam.

"You have taught us once again that being American has nothing to do with place of birth, racial or ethnic origins; it come straight from your heart," Clinton said.

Rascon's desire to serve his country can be traced back to his childhood, Clinton said. "He grew up near three military bases and fell in love with the Armed Forces. At the advanced age of seven, wanting to do his part to defend America, he built a homemade parachute and jumped off the roof of his house," Clinton said. "Unfortunately, in his own words, the chute had a 'total malfunction,' and he broke his wrist. But as usual, he was undeterred. He graduated from high school and enlisted in the United States Army. Appropriately, he became a medic for a platoon of paratroopers."

After Clinton presented him with the Medal of Honor, Rascon's name and picture were unveiled in the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes during a ceremony led by Secretary Caldera.

"Mr. Rascon, by virtue of his stirring acts of heroism and courage, now joins the hallowed company of other heroes listed here on the roll call of honor in this sacred hall," Caldera said.

Rascon had little to say about the honor.

"Above all, I want all of you to be very much aware that the Medal of Honor for me is not mine. It ends up being that of those individuals who were with me that day in Vietnam," Rascon said. "I am not a hero; I am just a person doing his duty as he would have any other day."



President Bill Clinton congratulates Medal of Honor recipient Alfred Rascon after presenting the award at the White House, February 8, 2000. Rascon received the Medal of Honor for his actions as a medic in Vietnam. (Photo by Amy Hagerstrom.)

Historical Note

Our historian forwards the following information:

We are in contact with Fred M. Duncan of the 1944-45 Aircraft Repair Unit known as "Ivory Soap." His e-mail is duncanfm@msn.com. He is the historian for 5,000 WWII veterans who were part of a U.S. Army Air Corps Floating Aircraft Repair Ship in the Pacific during 1944-45.

While he didn't fly helicopters during WWII, he has discovered one of the first Sikorsky R-4B helicopter pilots who did. This pilot, Bob Cowgill, was involved in the first large-scale helicopter rescues during WWII. His helicopter was not a medical craft; it was part of a floating aircraft depot repair ship project known as "IVORY SOAP," used to fly airplane parts shore-to-ship for repair. When one of the Army field commanders heard there were helicopters on a ship in Manila Bay, he called for their help. The 112th Cav. and 28th Div. sent two helicopters, obviating the need for dangerous and tiring hand-carry evacuations that often consumed as much as twenty-four hours. The two aircraft evacuated a total of sixty-two documented wounded soldiers between June 16 and 18, 1945, airlifting them out of the Philippine jungles, one by one, under Japanese ground fire. As many as seventy wounded may have been rescued, making this the largest known medical evacuation mission of WWII.

Below is a watercolor drawn from memory by William Garbo, Sr., one of those soldiers rescued. The pilot of his rescue helicopter may have been Bob Cowgill. We are exploring the possibility of reuniting these two WWII veterans at the 2001 DUSTOFF reunion.

To learn more about the ships used as aircraft repair units in Operation Ivory Soap, visit www.af.mil/news/airman/0398/ship.htm.



(Association Business, continued from page 16)

Executive Council Meeting April 15, 2000

- Total of 1,601 members, including inactive
- discussions concerning upgrade and additions to Memorial Plaza with donations from J. B. Hill Memorial Fund. Al Rhodes working the project.

- Reunion 2001 Planning
Holiday Inn Riverwalk seems to be the best site; reservations have been made. Golf tournament to commence at 12 noon on Friday. Saturday night program options stress DUSTOFF heroes. Analou is in charge of centerpieces. Association is working on a replacement for Sue Moore, as the paid secretary who has kept us afloat for several years. Working on honoring the graduates of the initial entry rotary wing and combat medic course graduates with DUSTOFF coins and certificates.

The DUSTOFF Store

Item	Price	Size	Quantity	Total
Ball cap — Maroon	\$10		_____	\$_____
Ball cap — White	\$10		_____	\$_____
Ball cap — Tan	\$10		_____	\$_____
Golf shirt — Maroon (sm, med, lg, xl, xxl)	\$20	_____	_____	\$_____
T-shirt — Maroon (sm, med, xxl)	\$13	_____	_____	\$_____
To mail shirts and caps, add \$5 per order				\$_____
DUSTOFF Decal	\$1		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Koozie	\$2		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Directory	\$3		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Pocketknife	\$4		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Coin	\$5		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF 20th Reunion Poster	\$1 (marked down)		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Tie Tac/Lapel Pin	\$5		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF or Medevac Print	\$10		_____	\$_____
DUSTOFF Flag/Giudon				
One-sided	\$40		_____	\$_____
Two-sided	\$60		_____	\$_____
To mail coins, koozies, knives, posters, decals and directories, add \$3 per order				\$_____
TOTAL ORDER				\$_____

Send check or money order, payable to DUSTOFF Assn., to:

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

(Please allow 4–6 weeks for delivery.)

*Visit DUSTOFF on-line
at
<<http://www.dustoff.org>>*

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

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 3017
SAN ANTONIO, TX

Address correction requested
Forwarding and return postage guaranteed

S4 P4 *****AUTO**MIXED ADC 760
RONALD MARSHALL



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
Officers and Civilians
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
\$100.00 One-time fee
- ☐ I want to join the Association as a Life Member
E-9 and below
\$50.00 One-time fee
- ☐ Check here if change of address or e-mail paidsecretary@dustoff.org

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

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

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