



THE DUSTOFFER NEWSLETTER

DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION

APRIL 1990

11th ANNUAL REUNION ATTENDEES

Gary Atkins
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Steve & Virginia Bailey
Tom Bailey
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Jim & Agnes Barnard
Fred Behrens
Dick & Eloise Bentley
William & Betsy Bernhard
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Hank Capozzi
Robert G. Carmichael
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Tom & Barbara Casey
Dale Chavers
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Dennis & Marty Kelly
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Bernard Krasowski
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Danny McFadden
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Glen & Jana Melton
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Butch Murphy
Richard Murphy
Spurgeon & Alice Neel
Gary Newman
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Jerry & Mary Nolan
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Dave Patterson
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Slim Pickens
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Vicki Westbrook
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John Wilson
Royce Worthington

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The 11th Annual Reunion is testimony to the growing interest and fellowship that continues throughout the association. Thanks to Glen Melton and a multitude of volunteers and folks who helped orchestrate one of the most successful reunions ever. The dates for our next reunion have already been set as well as the location. It promises to be the largest ever turnout! The Executive Council has selected "Great Americans" as the theme and this will be the theme for the association throughout the year. If you know a "Great American" be sure to bring them along and make plans for next year's reunion. Our guest speaker will guarantee standing room only and our location has guaranteed seating for only 600 people.

Many of the initiatives started by Glen Melton and suggested by the membership will be the focus of this year's slate of new officers. Jim Truscott, Bill Thresher, Rick Prouty, and the members-at-large are committed to the association goals.

We have included in this newsletter a copy of the DUSTOFF Association Constitution at the request of the membership. In reviewing the articles of the constitution and the association goals, we can well appreciate the contributions the association has made and will continue to make in furthering aeromedical evacuation initiatives.

The articles and notes included in this newsletter are representative of a cross section of the membership. We have included a self-addressed envelope to encourage the members to continue submitting items of interest, comments and ideas to be shared with our growing membership. Our thanks to the many who submitted these articles.

An application for membership to your association would be appreciated! My 2 years (and continuing) at the 36th MED DET (AA) here with Ft. Polk have been the best of my Army career.

As a medic, FLIGHT MEDICS are the Best! I want to keep in touch with the people I've had the pleasure of working with.

Thank You,

Todd T. Fauchier
SGT, USA

I received my DUSTOFF Membership Directory in the mail today. It is a fine piece of work. It represents a lot of thought and work on the part of all who were involved in putting it together. The size is just right.

I would like to make a couple of constructive comments. On the inside front cover is a comprehensive and well written concise history of our DUSTOFF Association. I commend the author for an excellent treatise.

In paragraph 5, line 4 states that "Throughout Vietnam all evacuation helicopters assumed the call sign 'DUSTOFF'." It is my memory that Aeromedical Evacuation platoon of the 1st CAV Division used the call sign

"MEDEVAC."

(In reference to a print that Luis Caranza did of Vietnam DUSTOFF units, Colonel Williams writes...)

As I looked at it I remembered all the places I had been and all the DUSTOFF crews, many of whom were just out of school. Many were seen going about their daily tasks as if heroism was the order of the day and just a routine matter. Those are the memories of an old soldier whose greatest pride is that he was able to serve with the officers, warrant officers and men who made DUSTOFF what it was then and is today.

Glen M. Williams
Col (RET) MSC

I will be sending you a check later on in the year so I can become a LIFETIME member. I've been flying for five years with MEDEVAC and should have joined a long time ago.

If you would please send me more information on the DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION, price list of patches, stickers, and other items along that line.

Thank you for your assistance.

Stuart F. Molver
FLIGHT MEDIC
343 MED DET (AA)

DUSTOFF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT Jerry Nolan

VICE-PRESIDENT Jim Truscott

SECRETARY Bill Thresher

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MEMBERS AT LARGE:

John D. Colvin

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Ray Salmon

John F. Sapanos

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Merle J. Snyder

We bought the weekend edition of "U.S.A. Today" on Sunday and noticed the "DUSTOFF Reunion" in the classified.

My husband, Bruce W. Stearns, served with the, 57th Med. Detachment, Helicopter Ambulances, as a crew chief, from Aug. '65 to Sept. '66.

Even if the reunion is over, could you forward any papers, names, etc. and inform him of any other reunions.

We hope it was a success!

Carol Stearns

I want to express to each one of you my sincerest and deepest appreciation for everything you did for me at the DUSTOFF Association Banquet — for making me an honorary life member of the DUSTOFF Association, the beautiful letter from the Surgeon General, and all the kind words said about me.

That night, seeing all of you, my good friends for so many years, and receiving all the recognition and honors, were far beyond what I expected. I was overwhelmed! You made my job rewarding through the years, and I hope, in some small measure, I was able to be of help to each one of you and your families. It was always a pleasure for me.

Edna Brassard

ADVERTISEMENT

Members are encouraged to forward advertisement information on publications they feel would serve to inform as wide a population as possible about the DUSTOFF Association. This one time advertisement must be placed in a publication with a circulation of 10,000 or more and not exceed \$25.00 for at least one week of advertisement.

DUSTOFF Membership/Information:

P. O. Box 8091
Wainwright Station
San Antonio, Texas 78208

LOOKING FOR...

Chauncey E. Dovell
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OPERATIONS OF THE 1ST HELICOPTER AMBULANCE COMPANY

by Charles Williams

The site of a helicopter ambulance detachment is unpretentious; it consists of a "parking lot" about 40 yards square, a mechanics' tent, and several squad tents for living quarters. That's about it!

A group of four such sites, plus the pilots, mechanics, and the bubble-nosed helicopters, make up a unique "lifesaver" organization in Korea—the 1st Helicopter Ambulance Company.

Organized in Korea in January, 1951, the company's mission has been to accomplish the front-line evacuation of critically wounded U. N. troops. And despite its being plagued by shortages of pilots and spare parts, the 1st Helicopter Ambulance Company's achievements in 30 months of operations are notable. Over 16,000 casualties have been carried by the unit, this figure including both front-line and "rearward" evacuation. In addition, four H-13's of the company's 50th detachment carried the first litter cases of repatriated prisoners during the recent historic operations. Following the armistice, such evacuation has continued.

The 1st Helicopter Ambulance Company, however, is not the only evacuating unit. It has several "big brothers"—among them the Sixth and Thirteenth Transportation Helicopter Companies—which aid in a good portion of what is called the "rearward" evacuation, or evacuation from the forward hospitals to the Seoul area and Inchon.

Previous to June 1, 1953, the company worked under the operational control of an Eighth Army surgeon and was assigned to the Surgical Hospitals (Mobile Army), formerly designated MASH. Although the provisional company was provided for at the same time the detachments were activated in Korea in 1951, it was not officially formed until recently. On June 1, Capt. Earl L. Russell, Jr., a veteran of 13 years of flying, took over the reins and the loose-jointed, widely-separated detachments of the company came under one wing. Tactical, logistical, and administrative control became centered in company headquarters and the unit was assigned to the 30th Medical Group, located near the new Yongsan Project. Four detachments in operation now—the 49th, 50th, 52nd, and 37th—were to be supple-

mented by a badly-needed fifth segment just prior to the armistice.

A typical detachment, the 49th, is stationed with the 44th Surgical Hospital and, under the command of Capt. John W. Hammett, has carried more casualties than any other detachment.

A 49th pilot, Capt. William P. Brake, of San Antonio, Tex., is credited with the individual record of 900 patients air-ferried in one tour of duty. He thus surpassed the record of 824 set earlier by Capt. Joseph Bowler, of Schuylkill Haven, Pa.

Capt. Hammett's outfit consists of four pilots and 15 enlisted mechanics and clerks. Of four H-13's, three are kept operating while one is usually kept deadlined for checking and repair. Helicopters need twice the maintenance and care of that given a light aircraft like the L-10, according to Capt. Hammett.

At the height of the Korean fighting, the 49th had 175 active pickup points and another 125 inactive front-line landing spots. A pickup point might be a battalion aid station or a company aid station. These areas are selected by the company or battalion supported, but the pilot has the final say before the spot is selected and mapped. The front-line area covered by the 49th varied from 30 to 60 miles, depending on the location of fighting and availability of the sensitive H-13's. Pickup points were scattered throughout the area. During the actual hostilities, the rescue helicopters were open to small arms fire at about 15% of the sites, and 70% of the points were within range of artillery and mortar fire, according to Capt. Hammett.

The bitter fighting over "Outpost Harry" in June was among the heaviest single actions in which the 49th engaged. "We were going in and out as fast as we could unload. At the 44th (Surgical Hospital), aid men started unloading casualties as soon as the copter landed, and a mechanic was there to gas it up while the blades were still moving," states Hammett. "We were down and gone again in a minute flat."

Another detachment, the 50th, flying for the 43rd Surgical Hospital, went into high gear for three days on the heels of the Chinese offensive in the vicinity of Kumwha. The totals of casualties were

not released by the 50th and 49th, which aided in the major evacuation operation, and were in the air most of the time.

According to the ambulance pilots, American casualties riding on the outside litters of the helicopters take the swift, low journey through the valleys in stride. "But most ROK troops are getting their first trip by air, and they're naturally skeptical of this modern mode of transportation," says Hammett.

Since a major portion of the fighting was done at night, the pilots were usually on their way to a forward aid station shortly before dawn. Their round trip averaged 30 minutes—considerably less than the two to three hours required for an ambulance to make the trip.

Rain, high wires, and darkness have been the three worst enemies of the helicopters and their pilots. Rains will damage the blades and limit visibility. A heavy rain grounds the copters, but many missions have been flown through a light rain. High wires near pickup points have caused relatively few accidents but have proved a constant threat. Pilots often request that certain wires be rerouted—for safety's sake—and these requests are never turned down. There is too much at stake.

Occasionally the copters have been called upon to land on steep inclines in emergencies. There is evidently no limit to the faith the infantrymen place in the ability of the ships, and they have yet to be disappointed.

All in all, the rescue efforts of the 1st Helicopter Ambulance Company in Korea—not to mention those of similarly organized units—have met with gratifying success. According to Eighth Army officials, however, the company, throughout the war, was actually "pinch-hitting" for the ideal company as sent us in a proposed TO&E. The H-13's, basically a utility craft, were substituted for the rescue type H-25's, and combat arms officers piloted instead of Medical Service Corps pilots being trained specifically for the job.

Pilots of the helicopter ambulances are graduates of the Liaison Pilots Training School and Helicopter Pilot School at San Marcos, Tex., and of a five-week course in helicopter tactics at Fort Sill, Okla. Mechanics are also given an extensive course at a school in San Marcos. Theory, however, is no substitute for experience, and the lessons learned on the slopes of Korea are fast becoming a part of the schools' instruction.

(*American Helicopter Magazine*—Nov. '53)

HELICOPTER MEDICAL EVACUATION UNITS IN VIETNAM

Cecil B. Smyth, Jr.

The U. S. Army's aeromedical evacuation operation in Vietnam is referred to as MEDEVAC or DUSTOFF. Whatever the name, the heroic efforts of members of these units saved many a life during the 11 years, 1962 to 1973, they served in Vietnam. A MEDEVAC pilot, with his crew of three, would put his chopper down almost anywhere to try to save a life—a soldier, civilian, friend or enemy, and even canines of the Army's scout dog and tracker units. Weather, terrain and hostile fire were the combined enemies of the MEDEVAC Crew. Nevertheless, these units accomplished their mission of saving lives while suffering heavy casualties and loss of aircraft. Perhaps the job they did is best explained in this poem written by SP4 Harry Miller of the Air Ambulance Platoon, 326th Medical Battalion, 101st Airborne Division. DUSTOFF 98 was the call sign of the Platoon Commander.

DUSTOFF "98"

Gather 'round my children, it's getting late. I'll tell you the story of Dustoff "98".

"Eagle Dustoff" is our name, the work we do is not for fame.

A mission of mercy we're on this night Another GI fell in the fight.

Oh, we're flying fast and we're flying high,

to get the man out so he won't die.

The left is ready and so is the right

The pick-up zone is going to be tight.

On the radio now I hear the pilot say, To the man on the ground as they light

the way,

"We're your bird and Dustoff crew

That's inbound now with help for you.

We've no guns aboard but we'll take a chance

Behind our Red Cross we take our stance

Maybe we'll live and maybe we'll die but you know for sure we'll certainly try."

From EAGLE DUSTOFF, July-September 1970, a publication of the Air Ambulance Platoon, 326th Medical Battalion.

ORIGIN OF THE DUSTOFF CALL SIGN

The 57th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) was the first air ambulance unit in Vietnam. It arrived in April 1962 and remained for 11 years. The unit's first call sign was "Army" plus the tail number of the aircraft transmitted on any vacant radio frequency it could find. This was highly unsatisfactory and in 1963 the detachment commander visited the Naval Support Activity which controlled all call words in Vietnam. Reviewing the Signal Operations Instructions which listed all the unused call words he found Dustoff. This epitomized

the 57th's medical evacuation missions since the countryside was dry and dusty much of the year. Oftentimes helicopter pickups blew dust, dirt, blankets and shelter halves all over the men on the ground. By adopting Dustoff, the commander selected a name for aeromedical evacuation that is still used.

From DUSTOFF, Dorland & Nanny, CMH, U. S. Army.

An unknown Dustoff pilot coined this Dustoff motto. *Dedicated, Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces.*

(*Trading Post*—Jan. '87)

MEMORY OF KELLY, 'DUSTOFF' PIONEER, LIVES FOR MED UNIT

DOUGLAS E. MOORE

Time; the great healer, marches on almost imperceptibly until one day something happens that causes us to think back across the years and then we realize just how quickly they have slipped away. With the passage of time, names and faces are forgotten or are placed in the far reaches of our minds — sometimes to never be recalled again.

It's a shame that many of the men and women who performed great deeds and who are responsible for the things that we have today are forgotten so easily. I was reminded of how quickly we forget a few days ago while walking through the orderly room of the 54th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance) here and noticed an old magazine article and picture of Major Charles L. Kelly hanging on the wall.

Chuck was a former commander of the 54th and a living legend in his time, but when I asked one of the young pilots about him, it was evident that he knew little of this great man and his heroic career.

Chuck Kelly was a small man, no taller than five feet seven inches, with a tough, little guy personality that covered a heart of gold. He was one of the few men who won all four badges that really count — airborne wings, aviator's wings, combat infantryman's badge and the combat medical badge.

Enlisted at 16

In 1941, a few days before he reached his 16th birthday, Chuck joined the Army and served as an enlisted man with the 30th Infantry Division. Following WWII, he entered college and earned his master's degree before accepting an Army commission in 1951.

His first assignment as an officer was with the 11th Airborne Division, but Chuck became intrigued with the helicopters that were being introduced into the Korean Conflict and was convinced of their utility as a medical evacuation vehicle. He had seen too many of his comrades die and felt that the wounded could be lifted directly from the combat zone to sophisticated medical care. In 1954, he went to flight school and earned his aviator wings.

Although he was not one of the first guys in Vietnam, Chuck Kelly set the pace for all who followed. At the age of 39, he went to Vietnam in 1964 to command the only medical helicopter detachment in the country at that time.

The war was very different in those early days compared to that which most Ameri-

cans experienced in later years. For instance, there were only about 15,000 American soldiers stationed there as compared to the half million or so who were there in the 68-69 time frame.

Most Americans found themselves assigned to small Special Forces or Advisory Teams scattered the length and breadth of South Vietnam. The helicopter units were stretched beyond their capacity trying to support these teams. Chuck's unit, as an example, was headquartered in Saigon, but he kept part of his five helicopters in Pleiku and Quin Nhon. Later, as the complexion of the war changed, he closed out in the north and moved those assets to the delta at Soc Trang.

No 'yes man', Kelly!

Chuck Kelly was a testy little guy who was constantly at odds with someone in the old US Army Support Command, the forerunner of USARV. On occasion, there were strained moments between Kelly and Brig. Gen. Joe Stillwell, the Support Command commander. They were both no-nonsense, hard-charging, and sometimes headstrong individuals and later were to suffer untimely deaths not far apart. Over time, they developed a mutual respect for one another that gave Chuck almost free rein and as a result, Chuck could get away with things that the other guys couldn't.

One day following an argument with a member of the Support Command staff, Chuck angrily packed his bags and moved his headquarters from Saigon to Soc Trang so that he could operate with less interference. Chuck Kelly was obsessed with saving lives and felt that medevac helicopters offered the ideal tool. He wasn't without considerable opposition though. There were disclaimers who felt that the scarce helicopter resources shouldn't be allocated so that some were used solely for medical evacuation purposes. Instead, they argued that medevac was a mission that all aviation units shared; therefore, purely medical evacuation units were not needed. Chuck set out to disprove that argument and his actions caused many folks to regard him as a fanatic or perhaps "crazy."

Who's afraid of the dark?

In those early days of the Vietnam War, helicopter operations essentially came to a close at nightfall even though the Viet Cong used the cover of darkness to attack isolated villages and outposts.

About the only regular night air traffic were

the old Air Force C-47 "Gooneybirds" that made the rounds dropping flares for those who came under attack. Chuck changed all that for the medevac guys. Every night, he dispatched a crew to fly prescribed routes over the Vietnam Delta and had them call each of the Special Forces and Advisory Team camps as they passed by.

After a while, he told everyone that night was no longer a barrier and he proved it himself. Chuck was always willing, at any hour, to jump into a "B" model Huey and go roaring across the jungles or delta where navigational aids were nonexistent except for a pair of old reliables, the US Air Force radar sets at Saigon and Can Tho, known as Paris and Paddy Controls, respectively.

Chuck was even called a "madman" by some, but certainly he was no "madman" to the lonely Americans scattered across the countryside. Many a night an isolated American Advisor would hear a Huey clattering through the blackened skies and would tune up the medevac frequency and call for help or merely say hello to Chuck or one of his pilots.

After a while, other units began routinely to fly at night, especially the gunships. It became commonplace to hear a Razorback, Viking, Playboy, or Raider gunship pilot telling Paris or Paddy Control that they were going out to help someone in distress.

'Dustoff' was his callsign

Chuck was responsible for saving the "Dustoff" callsign that is associated with the medevac helicopter. Ordinarily, callsigns and frequencies were changed periodically, and for good military reasons. The callsign "Dustoff" was simply of those selected for the unit and when it came time to change, Chuck Kelly demanded that the callsign remain standard so that in the heart of battle American advisors wouldn't have to search through a codebook to find the correct callsign and frequency only to find that they didn't have the latest change.

Chuck won the battle and the callsign and frequency remained the same for the duration of the war. Although many of the older medevac pilots can recall times when the Viet Cong came up on the frequency and talked to us, there was never any serious trouble because it was not changed. Many medevac units use the same callsign today, some without having any knowledge of its origin.

As mentioned before, Chuck was always in a running battle with someone over rules that he considered to be out of step with reality. When a staffer in the Support Command placed a monthly flying hour limit on pilots that he felt was arbitrary and too low, Chuck dashed off to Saigon and came back with an exception to policy. He was not

going to let someone die because he couldn't fly.

Keep those crosses

He also became embroiled in a controversy over the painting of red crosses on the medevac ships. Not many active duty people can still remember when the Huey resources in Vietnam were scarce, but in the early days, most of the Hueys were either in the gunship units or in Chuck's medevac detachment.

Old H-21 "Flying Bananas" flown by Americans and H-34's flown by the Vietnamese Air Force were the primary troop lift ships. Because of this, a recommendation was made to Gen. Stillwell that Chuck be required to remove the red crosses from his aircraft and use some sort of portable red cross instead. Then when another unit needed additional Hueys, Chuck's aircraft would be transferred to them quickly. But was that the real reason? Or was it another attempt to do away with dedicated medevac helicopters? Whatever the reason, the battle was waged for a long time and wasn't settled until an incident occurred in the summer of 1964. It's reported that not long before Gen. Stillwell left Vietnam, he told Chuck, "Kelly, I will have your aircraft soon. The Surgeon General is a personal friend of mine."

Chuck allegedly responded, "He may be a friend of yours, General, but he ain't no damn fool!" A few days later at Gen. Stillwell's going away party, Chuck presented him with a plaque on which were mounted five miniature red crosses representing the number of helicopters in the medevac detachment.

"You always wanted my red crosses, General. Well, here they are!", Chuck wryly commented. A few days later, the argument was settled forever.

'Rescue is our job'

As the war in the delta heated up, Chuck's unit became more and more busy, and flying through a hail of lead to rescue the wounded became commonplace. When anyone would suggest that he was crazy to risk his life rescuing wounded South Vietnamese when their own pilots refused to do so, Chuck always dismissed the comments with, "That's our job. Anyone who needs help."

Even with his tough exterior, Chuck was a kind man and he could really get wound up when he had to go out and evacuate dead and dying women and children following one of the Viet Cong's ruthless attacks on a village. Chuck truly cared for the little people of Vietnam.

As his reputation grew, Chuck attracted the attention of Jim Lucas, the Pulitzer prize winning reporter, who spent a lot of time in Vietnam. Lucas' book, *Dateline Vietnam* is

an unforgettable collection of his dispatches over a two year period and many of the earlier dispatches talked about Chuck. Over time, they became close friends even though Chuck complained that he didn't write enough about his soldiers.

Lucas commented in his book, "The only time Kelly and I had words was when — after my third story — he complained that I wrote about him too much and not enough about his boys. I told him his boys wanted it that way. He shouted back that he was their commanding officer and he'd put a stop to that. I kept writing about Kelly and no one but the man himself ever complained."

Luck ran out

Who would have ever thought that Chuck wasn't immortal? After all, he had spent years at war and during this particular conflict, he had limped home several times with a bullet torn helicopter, yet remained unscathed. Chuck died one day, though — doing what he loved best.

An American Advisor called after a South Vietnamese unit had been chewed up badly. The unit was still in contact when Chuck arrived. As he had done hundreds of times before, he flew straight to the marker smoke and kicked the tail of the Huey around towards the enemy and used the bulk of the aircraft to protect the area where the wounded were located.

The snap-snap-snap of rifle fire began as Chuck hovered about the rice paddy. Finally, the American Advisor shouted over the radio, "Get out Dustoff! Get out!"

"Not until I have your wounded," Chuck replied.

Then it happened. A single round came through the rear of the aircraft, barely missed his seat frame and hit Chuck in the chest. Chuck Kelly slumped over the controls and despite the copilot's best efforts, the Huey rolled over in the rice paddy and flailed itself to pieces. All except Chuck and the Huey survived.

149th GI to die in 'Nam

So the living legend died on July 1, 1964, in that Godforsaken rice paddy, 13,000 miles from home. The news of his death spread quickly and even tough, old Gen. Stillwell wept when he was told. He was the 149th American to die in Vietnam. He left us a great legacy.

The reputation he had built, followed by his untimely death, closed any further discussion as to whether dedicated medevac helicopters were needed. No one dared to raise the issue again. He left us a call sign that endures and his words, "Not until I have your wounded," were the inspiration for all the medevac pilots and crewmen who followed.

Before that long war came to a close, more than million Americans, Aussies, New-Zealanders, Thais, South Koreans, Phillipinos, South Vietnamese soldiers were sped to sophisticated medical care by medevac helicopter. Many of the wounded would have died had it not been for this great man.

It's a shame then, that as time goes marching on, his memory becomes dimmer among the older guys and most of the newer pilots haven't even heard of him. I suppose we older guys have a responsibility to keep our unit histories alive so that the newcomers can share our pride and learn from the high standards set by those who have gone on before.

Jim Lucas, with heavy heart, wrote this news dispatch upon learning of Chuck's death, "The Viet Cong, as everybody in the Mekong Delta knew they would some day, finally got 'Crazy' Kelly this week. Major Charles Kelly was a professional soldier and a good one who never hurt anybody in his life. He only wanted to help them. The conviction that he should — and could — finally cost him his life.

Twenty-four hours after he set up shop in the Delta, Kelly had become a legend. We called him 'Crazy', or sometimes it was 'Mad-man', but we said it with affection. Kelly did things the bravest of the others wouldn't think of trying. So did the handful of youngsters who flew with him and gave him their full devotion. Knowing how much they loved the 'Old Man', I'm glad I'm not in Soc Trang today."

Why?

Ironically, a few weeks before Chuck died, his 11-year-old daughter wrote the following poem and sent it to him. It — perhaps — says all there is to say.

*In Vietnam
A cold war rages
Soldiers fight
For very small wages
Men fight
Women cry
And day and night
More people die.
Why?
Why?
I don't know why
I never will know why
Men have to die
On the battlefield.*

I don't know why men have to die either. I also don't know why we have to forget so soon. After all, it's only been just over 16 years since Chuck Kelly died — on the battlefield.

REUNION NOTES

For some members, the 11th Annual Reunion began Friday morning with Major General Pat Brady speaking at the Academy of Health Sciences, Fort Sam Houston. Prior to his presentation, a television documentary produced by ABC, entitled "Heroes" was shown to a standing room only crowd. This documentary is one of a series being shown on national television about Medal of Honor recipients. Major General Brady, now Chief Public Affairs for the United States Army, was the focus of the documentary. The series relives the lives of Medal of Honor recipients. This particular segment focuses on the DUSTOFF story and is one of the most concise and thorough segments depicting the mission of the DUSTOFF flight crewmember and the dedication that the DUSTOFF crews had when it came time to rescue some 900,000 fellow soldiers during the Vietnam conflict.

- The annual Chuck Mateer golf classic on Friday afternoon was an overwhelming success thanks to the efforts of many folks, especially Walt Skeistaitis and Dennis Bradshaw.
- The Rock and Roll reunion on Friday evening could not have been a more overwhelming success. Close to 300 members and their guests were entertained by local San Antonio disc jockey J. J. Rodriguez. Prizes were awarded for outstanding costumes and dancing.
- Professional meeting highlights on Saturday morning included speakers from various industries, including John Soehnlein from Sikorsky Aircraft and Richard Murphy from LUCAS Aerospace. Colonel Jere Foust and Captain Gary Drabczuk presented an overview of medical support to Operation Just Cause, and the December 1989 invasion of Panama. The performance of the 214 Medical Detachment under the command of Captain Drabczuk during the invasion was testimony to the DUSTOFF spirit and dedication in supporting the Panama crisis.
- Thanks to Jana Melton, the wives luncheon at the Los Patios restaurant and tour for the wives of the United States Army Medical Museum, recently dedicated in July 24 1989 proved a worthwhile and

memorable occasion.

- Business meeting notes from Saturday afternoon included numerous issues, initiatives and suggestions from the membership. Mike Toennis scholarship program for the membership received the most support. This program will be a featured presentation in our next newsletter. Thanks to efforts of Nancy Mahoney from the museum staff, and a DUSTOFF member, the DUSTOFF museum exhibit will be enhanced considerably over the next year. The Association will be providing three new bronze plated plaques that will detail the story, history and listing of lives lost in serving as a DUSTOFF crewmember. Joe Miller, assigned to our DUSTOFF unit in Korea is assisting in this endeavor. Other interesting areas of discussion included membership drives, advertisement and suggestions for newsletter input.
- Saturday evening's banquet and our guest speaker John L. Cook, author of "DUSTOFF, The Vietnam Story" was an overwhelming program for the membership. John and his lovely wife Sara, promise that the second edition of this must book for every member's bookshelf, will soon be made available. Presentations were made to a host of volunteers and supporters of the association. These included Walt and Betty Skeistaitis, the 507th Medical Company, Dennis Bradshaw, outgoing officers of the association Howard McClellan, Don Berry and Glen Melton. John and Sara Cook were presented an honorary membership and Certificate of Appreciation for being our guests. Edna Brassard, who has served the U. S. Army medical aviation community for over 22 years, was recognized in a letter signed by the Surgeon General of the United States Army and a presentation from the DUSTOFF Association. Awards to the winners of the Chuck Mateer Golf Classic were announced and with Dave Jackson's team winning first place honors and his acceptance of first place monies, his team donated their winnings to the scholarship fund. Second and third place teams followed in awarding their winnings to the DUSTOFF scholarship fund. The hospitality suite opened for the remainder of the evening and stayed opened until the

early hours of Sunday morning.

- Sunday morning's memorial service by Chaplain Ruppert talked about the many dedicated flight crews who have contributed to the morale and combat effectiveness of soldiers. Chaplain Ruppert quoted Major General Neel, "I am convinced that DUSTOFF is the brightest light in dark shadows of Vietnam." The service concluded the weekend activities and closed yet another successful and memorable weekend.

OTHER NOTES...

- Congratulations to CW3 Vernon J. Mundt, 717th Medical Detachment, New Mexico Army National Guard on being awarded the U. S. Army's Broken Wing award given in recognition of aircraft crewmembers who demonstrate a high degree of professional skill while actually recovering an aircraft from an inflight failure or malfunction necessitating an emergency landing. CW3 Mundt's successful autorotation resulting from an engine failure qualified him for the coveted award.
- 24th Medical Company DUSTOFF crewmembers with the Nebraska Army National Guard were recognized for a heroic cold Friday night rescue of a stranded hunter near Camp Ashland. Congratulations to CW4 Decker, CW2 Shepherd, SGT Shuck, SGT Fannon and SFC Baker.
- 236th Medical Detachment, Augsburg, Germany is commended for the most members joining the Association of any unit in 1989.
- Did you know DUSTOFF comes in a can? Seems "Edmund Scientific Catalog for the Technical Hobbyist" sells an aerosol freon spray that cleans away carbon products from laboratory, electronic and photographic equipment. Don't ask, we are working on it.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Units or organizations that recruit 20 or more new members will receive a framed and numbered print of Luis Carranza's DUSTOFF "When I have your wounded" for display. This artwork stirred great interest among the membership when displayed at this year's reunion.

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11th ANNUAL REUNION



SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS



"When I Have Your Wounded"

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9
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Air Ambulance Plt, 15th Medical Bn.

1st Cav SSI, red cross, white wings and black inscriptions. In Vietnam from Sep 65 to Jun 72.



45th MCAH (Var)

OD shield, black border and charges except red cross.



57th Med Det (HA)

White disc, black border, red cross, OD chopper, black blade. Inscriptions red except DUSTOFF white. HE. In VN from Apr 62 to Mar 73. Lai Khe.



50th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance)

White disc, maroon border, red cross, dark green chopper, white inscriptions. In VN from Dec 67 to 1 Jul 1968. Phu Hiep. Supported the 101st Abn Div until the Air Ambulance Platoon was added to the 326th Medical Bn.



54th Med Det (HA)

White disc, all HE. Red cross and 54, yellow wings, black border, inscriptions and detail of wings and 54. In VN from Aug 67 to 30 Nov 71. Chu Lai.



57th Med Det (HA) (Variation)

Differs, THE ORIGINAL DUSTOFF is in place of DUSTOFF.



45th Medical Company (Helicopter Ambulance)

Light blue shield, white border and wing red cross. Inscriptions white. In VN from Jun 67 to Apr 71. Long Binh.



54th Med Det (HA) (Variation)

Border and charges are machine sewn.



57th Med Det (AH) (Variation)

Differs, OD dis and tab, black borders and inscriptions. Chopper is light green.



247th Med Det (HA)

White disc. tab and scroll. Red cross, blue A, gold fird, white head, black detail. Black map, insignia borders and inscriptions. UT ALL II VIVANT — That We May Save All Lives. In VN from Dec 67 to Geb 73. Dong Tam. Vung Tau and Phan Rang.



254th Med Det (HA)

Dark blue shield, gray wings, red cross on white background. 254 white, other inscriptions dark blue on yellow backgrounds. HE.



254th Med Det (HA)

Gray shield, all charges HE. Dark blue chief, red cross, white stars, bird, chopper, brown hands.



254th Med Det (HA)

Light blue shield and tab. Caduceus and halo gold. White scroll, black borders. MEDEVAC red, ANGELS OF MERCY yellow.



283rd Med Det (HA)

Black tab, red cross and white 283 and DUSTOFF.



283rd Med Det (HA)

Dark blue shield, white border, wings and inscriptions, red cross. In VN from Sep 65 to 23 Apr 72. Ton Son Nhut, Long Binh and Pleiku.



283rd Med Det (HA) (Variation)

Differs, has a white outer shield with red M.B.



498th Med Co (AA)

Black and white shield, yellow border and bend. White wing, black outlines, red crosses, black borders and 498TH on a yellow scroll. DUSTOFF is brown on a white scroll. In VN from Aug 65 to Aug 71. Qui Nhon.



498th Med Co (AA) (Variation)

OD shield, black borders, wing and inscriptions. Red crosses. Lower scroll purple.



68th Med Det (HA)

White shield, maroon tab, black border. Red cross and 68, gray wings, black outlines. DUSTOFF white. In VN from 28 Nov 68 to 29 Apr. 72. Tuy Hoa, Phu Heip and Chu Lai.



159th Med Det (HA) (Variation)

Blue octagon and arms, red cross, black border, wings, CIB, outlines of arm and cross and inscriptions.



237th Med Det (HA)

Green shield, red cross. Border, inscriptions and chopper yellow. Black skid, blade and tail rotor.



82nd Med Det (HA)

White disc, black border, brown Kangaroo and red cross. DUSTOFF and 82nd MED DET (HA) black. In Vietnam from Oct 64 to 28 Nov 71. Soc Trang and Binh Tuy. Besides being a pocket patch, it was painted on the rear of crew members flight helmets.

82nd Med Det (HA) (Variation)

Differs, the Kangaroo is multicolored, yellow, brown with black detail. The cross is quilted.



236th Med Det (HA)

White shield, black border, red cross, silver wings and blue inscriptions. In VN from 28 Nov 68 to Feb 72. Da Nang.



237th Med Det (HA) Tab

Maroon, white border and inscription.



159th Med Det (HA)

White disc, black border, red cross and three setting ducks. 159th and DUSTOFF light blue. MED DET HEL AMB black. In VN from Oct 67 to 30 Nov 72. Cu Chi.



236th Med Det (HA) (Variation)

Differs, the shield is blue, black border, wings white.



237th Med Det (HA)

Dark blue shield, black border, wings and chopper. Crosses and DUSTOFF red. In VN from 28 Nov 68 to Feb 73. Camp Evans and Phu Bai.



571st Med Det (HA)

White shield, red tab, scroll and cross, all with black borders. Wings are white, black outlines, 571 and inscriptions. In VN from Nov 67 to Feb 73. Nha Trang.



571st Med Det (HA) (Variation)

Maroon rectangle, gold eagle, shield, streamer, 571, and arrows. Palm leaf is white, red cross. Inscriptions black.



571st Med Det (HA) (Var)

OD shield, tab and scroll, black borders and charges, red cross.



587th Med Det (HA), US Army Med Cmd, Japan

Light blue shield, red border, green chopper, yellow doghouse, white dog with green cap. red scarf. Chopper has black and white detail. Red crosses, yellow SPEEDBALL AT YOUR SERVICE and 587TH MED DET HELICOPTER AMBULANCE. In VN from May 67 to May 68.



Air Ambulance Platoon, 326th Med Bn

Finally, due to the grace of God and the US postal system, our unit patches arrived. And it was about time. What we got was 170 brightly colored patches for wear on the right shirt pocket.

They're circular, with a red cross against a white background, bounded by a maroon ring, and on the face of the cross is a green, MEDEVAC helicopter. The words Air Amb Plt. are on top of the patch and 326th Med Bn is on the bottom. EAGLE DUSTOFF, March 1969.



Air Ambulance Platoon, 326th Medical Bn

In February 1970, the 61st Medical Battalion was redesignated the 61st Medical Evacuation Battalion and was relocated to Qui Nhon with the mission of controlling all nondivisional ambulances in the northern half of the RVN. The 61st had six helicopter ambulance detachments. To the right is a pocket patch of the Dustoff detachments featuring the 61st Medical Battalion DI with VIETNAM and DUSTOFF added.

The 61st Med Evac Bn proved successful and on 1 May 1970 the 58th Medical Battalion became the 58th Medical Evacuation Battalion with Headquarters at Long Binh. Its mission was to provide coverage for southern MR-2 and MR's 3 and 4. On 10 June 1971 both units were disbanded as standdowns had reduced U.S. forces in Vietnam to the point where medical evacuation battalions were no longer needed.



CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

NAME

This Association shall be known as the "DUSTOFF Association." It is a fraternal Organization for all officer and enlisted Army Medical Department personnel, aviation crew members and others who are or have been engaged in or have actively supported in any capacity the Army aeromedical evacuation programs in war or peace.

ARTICLE II

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the DUSTOFF Association are to advance the knowledge of aeromedical evacuation techniques and to enhance future endeavors whether they be military or civilian. These objectives will be accomplished through annual meetings, active coordination with mutual associations and consideration by the membership of essential matters pertaining to the enhancement of aeromedical concepts during war and peace. The DUSTOFF Association is dedicated to the fulfillment of the following purposes:

- Improve aeromedical evacuation techniques by providing a forum for discussion of common ideas and problems, whether military or civilian related.
- Contribute to the improvement of health care in the Army through policy evaluation and the development of appropriate recommendations.
- Represent the DUSTOFF Association in national professional organizations, Federal Government offices and to the public as an organization dedicated to the improvement of emergency medical treatment.
- Promote public awareness of the role of the helicopter in its vital lifesaving mission.
- Provide an opportunity for continuing education of its members.
- Improve the effectiveness, cohesiveness, esprit de corps and traditions of valor of the Army Aeromedical Evacuation Crewmembers.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERS

Section I. Membership is open to all officers and enlisted Army Medical Department personnel, aviation

crewmembers and others who are or have been engaged in or have actively supported in any capacity Army aeromedical evacuation programs in war or peace.

Section II. Members shall be classified as Charter Life, Charter, Life, Primary, Corporate, Associate and Honorary. To be recognized as an active member in any of these classifications, the member must be in good standing and current in his dues.

Section III. Membership classifications are as follows:

a. Charter Life and Charter memberships are reserved for individuals who formed the DUSTOFF Association and joined prior to 1 March 1981.

b. Life membership may be conferred upon an individual who pays \$100 or who has paid annual dues for 15 consecutive years. Corporate Life membership may be conferred upon a company who pays \$1,000 or who has paid dues for 15 consecutive years.

c. Primary membership will be available to all personnel who are or have been commissioned officers, warrant officers or enlisted (either Active or Reserve Component) supporting aeromedical efforts in any capacity in war or peace.

d. Corporate membership is open to any company which supports the objectives of the DUSTOFF Association. As a Corporate Member, a company may select up to three employees or other individuals (referred to as designees) to become Association members. Corporate designees will receive the same benefits from the Association as do other members in good standing. Corporate Member companies will notify the Association annually who their designee(s) will be for the calendar year.

e. Associate membership is open to any individual or group of individuals who actively support the objectives of the DUSTOFF Association.

f. Honorary membership is open to distinguished persons, such as the Surgeon General of the Army, aviation pioneers, guest speakers and AMEDD Corps Chiefs. Honorary memberships must be voted upon by the Executive Council.

Section IV. All active members, with the exception of Corporate, Associate and Honorary members, are entitled to vote and to hold office within the DUSTOFF Association.

ARTICLE IV

ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSOCIATION

Section I. The officers of the DUSTOFF Association shall be as follows:

a. President, Vice-President (who shall be President-elect and shall succeed the President) Secretary, Treasurer, and five Members-at-large.

b. Executive Director who will be appointed by the Executive Council.

c. All Past Presidents of the DUSTOFF Association.

Section II. The Executive Council shall consist of:

a. The President of the Association, who shall act as chairman.

b. Vice-President.

c. All past Presidents.

d. Five (5) Members-at-Large.

e. Executive Director.

f. Secretary and Treasurer.

Section III. Responsibility and Authority of the Executive Council:

a. The Executive Council shall be the governing body of the DUSTOFF Association. It shall be responsible for the management of the affairs of the Association, including funds, programs and regulations. It shall have authority to approve budgets, authorize expenditures, seek and accept contributions and approve annual meeting sites and program arrangements.

b. The Executive Council may delegate authority and functions to the Executive Director or specific members of the Association.

c. The President, Vice-President and Executive Director will have the authority to appoint assistants to facilitate the functions of their offices.

d. The Executive Council shall perform such other duties as are prescribed by the Constitution and Bylaws.

Section IV. Committees. The following committees shall be selected annually by the President and ratified by the Executive Council:

a. Nominating Committee which is responsible for presenting its selections for Vice-President and as many Members-at-Large as required at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting of the Association.

b. Arrangements Committee which is responsible for planning the annual meeting of the Association. Their proposal shall be presented to the Executive Council at least six (6) months prior to the annual meeting. This Committee may create subcommittees as required.

c. Other pro-tem committees may be appointed

by the Executive Council as required.

ARTICLE V

Fifteen percent (15%) of the eligible voting membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at annual meetings of the Association.

ARTICLE VI

The DUSTOFF Association will operate on a calendar year basis.

ARTICLE VII

The Constitution and Bylaws may be amended by the following procedures:

- a. Approval of the proposed amendment by the Executive Council.
- b. Adoption of the amendment at an annual meeting of the Association by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at the business session.

ARTICLE VIII

Should the need arise or a desire exist, local chapters may be initiated upon approval of the Executive Council. Chapters may have such officers, organizations and meetings as they may determine, not in conflict with the Constitution and Bylaws of the DUSTOFF Association. Each chapter will be required to provide the Executive Council with the names of its officers and activities on an annual basis.

ARTICLE IX

Section I. There shall be an annual meeting of the Association. It shall be conducted at a place and time as determined by the Executive Council.

Section II. The holding of office or other positions of influence and trust shall be limited to eligible members as defined in this Constitution.

Section III. Executive Council and committee recommendations, nominations or decisions can be made by telephonic polling but must have a majority consensus.

BYLAWS

CHAPTER 1 MEMBERS

1. Charter Life, Charter, Life, Primary, Corporate and Associate memberships shall be approved by the Executive Council.
2. Honorary Membership shall be conferred by the Executive Council for a period of one year during which annual dues will not be assessed. After one year, the Honorary member may apply for Life, Primary or Associate Membership.

3. All categories of membership will include the spouse as a member with no additional dues charged.

CHAPTER 2 EXPULSION FROM MEMBERSHIP

1. Members of any classification may be expelled for cause or conduct which the Executive Council deems contrary to the best interest of the Association.
2. Charter, Primary, Corporate and Associate members may be suspended for nonpayment of annual dues and shall be dropped from the active membership roster.

CHAPTER 3 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Members-at-Large shall be elected by a majority vote of those members present and voting at the annual business meeting.
2. The Vice-President of the Association shall be the President-elect and shall succeed to the Presidency at the close of the next annual meeting of the Association.
3. Members-at-Large are elected for a two-year term. One Member-at-Large shall come from the retired military community.

CHAPTER 4 ANNUAL AND SPECIAL MEETINGS

1. There shall be an annual meeting of the Association as determined by the Executive Council. The Council shall announce the date and place selected not later than six (6) months prior to the annual meeting.
2. Special meetings of the Association may be called by the Executive Council after thirty (30) days advance notice to the membership. The notice shall state the reason for calling the special meeting.
3. In the event of a national emergency, the Executive Council shall have the authority to cancel or postpone annual meetings.

CHAPTER 5 DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The President shall preside at meetings of the Association and the Executive Council.
2. In the absence of the President or because of his inability to act, his duties will succeed, in order, to the Vice-President, Executive Director, or to another member of the Executive Council selected by it. Such successors will act for the President and sign appropriate official documents.
3. Following their installation at the close of the annual meeting, the elected officers of the Association shall serve for the term of office in which they are elected. The duties of the officers shall be those which are customarily ordained for such office and

such other functions as may be prescribed by the President and these Bylaws.

4. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be responsible for all membership and fiscal matters of the Association.

CHAPTER 6 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. The Executive Council shall exercise supervision over the affairs of the Association and shall report to the membership at the annual meeting. The Council will meet periodically upon the call of the President.
2. A majority of the Executive Council shall constitute a quorum. Members of the Executive Council may vote in person, by mail or telephone.
3. Attendance of persons other than Council members at Council meetings shall be with the concurrence of the presiding officer.

CHAPTER 7 DUES

1. Dues for Individual Life Membership are \$100. Members electing to renew their memberships annually will have their memberships automatically converted to Life Memberships after 15 consecutive years of membership.
2. Initial Charter, Primary and Associate Memberships, plus first year's dues, are \$20. Yearly renewal is \$10. Membership renewals are based on the calendar year and are due NLT 1 January.
3. Corporate Life Membership is \$1,000. Corporate members electing to renew their memberships annually will have their membership automatically converted to Life Memberships after 15 consecutive years of membership.
4. Initial Corporate Membership, plus first year's dues, is \$120. Yearly renewal is \$100. Corporate renewals are based on the calendar year and are due NLT 1 January.

CHAPTER 8 DISSOLUTION OR TERMINATION OF THE ASSOCIATION

In the event the membership votes to dissolve or terminate the Association for whatever reason, voting will be in accordance with Articles V and VIII of the Constitution. Should the decision be reached to dissolve the Association, all assets on hand or on deposit, as well as all accounts receivable, will be given to an organization which qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). In any event, no money or asset of any kind will be distributed to any officer or other member of the Association.

WELCOME TO THE DUSTOFF FAMILY

Alvarez, John G. & Jennifer

Babin, Will & Kathy

Babine, Stephan M.

Brockington, Robert F. & Melanie P.

Buergel, Richard K. & Angela

Carranza, Luis P. & Diana (L)

Cowles, Charles H.

Crosby, John E. & Danette

D'Elia, Paul & Carmela

Daniels, Tod

Eaton, Robert A.

Fajardo, Amado & Helen G.

Garey, E. F. & Kathy (L)

Hicks, Donald E. & Diane

Hammond, George E.

Ingham, Robert R. & Colleen

Johnson, Dan K.

Keller, Lewis W. & Mary Louise

Klina, Jim & Betty

Lamont, Henri G. & Isabelle

Lester, Michael B.

Madore, Robert E. & Kathy

Mahoney, Nancy T. & James V.

Malvin, Gregory A. & Carmin

Markham, Tommy R. & Roseanna

McCarthy, Daniel E. & Rebecca

McCartney, Bruce A. & Du Thi

Mercer, Gary E. & Edie

Miller, Joseph F. & Sunny

Mishon, Peter C.

Modjeski, Howard (Mo) & Jane

Molver, Stuart F.

O'Neill, Michael & Paula

Pfeiffer, Eugene H. & Cecile (L)

Piezon, Scott R. & Sherry L.

Price, Gilbert R. & Deborah

Proe, John D. & Betty Jane (L)

Reeder, Stan & Angela

Ross, Thomas L. & Lynne

Sanchez, Jim & Carol

Sharp, Larry K. & Susan J.

Shaw, Jerry & Barbara E.

Smathers, Donald A. & Beverly Renée

Smutz, Russell P. & Suki

St. John, Jack

Stark, Alexander L. & Kathleen M.

Talbot, David & Silvia

Taylor, Dewey C.

Vadelnieks, George I.

Van Keuren, William D.

Vazquez, Jorge L.

Voss, Daniel R. & Jan

Westbrook, Lee & Nancy

Whitehead, Tom & Janice

Wood, Rusling IV & Caryl

(L) Lifetime membership

DUSTOFF ASSOCIATION

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