

THE BALLAD OF DUSTOFF

Listen fellow soldier I've a story to tell
About a small unit that's doin' mighty well
They fly a Huey with big red lips
They call them DUSTOFF Med Evac Ships

Refrain:

Fly-in' crazy pat-terns thru shot and shell...
(fly-in' like hell thru shot and shell...)

They've got a big job - its help-in' you
If you caught a bullet or caught the flu
Look up high for the big red cross
They'll be there - they fly at any cost

Refrain

Chorus:

Were a man must fly in a war torn land,
To give a bud-dy a help-in' hand,
But we got-ta keep fly-in' - we can't sit still
If DUSTOFF don't get him - then Charlie will..

The troops went out on a search and kill,
Thrus steaa-in' jun-gle - a-against their will,
But they were as-sured - that up in they sky,
Was a med e-vac chop-per right close by

Refrain

Now DUSTOFF went in - and they brought him out,
And they saved his life - there ain't no doubt
This man'll get home - he's paid the price,
DUSTOFF picked him up out-ta the rice...

Refrain-Chorus

Our kind-a of fly-in' - ain't no fun,
DUSTOFF Choppers - ain't got no guns,
But now and then a medic will say,
A ma-chine gun would just get in the way..

Refrain

Wea-ther tries to stoo us and Charile too,
But all our crews are tried and true.
Any day or night, we'll always fly,
Just throw smoke - and we'll identify..

Refrain-Chorus

The green beret was at his best,
His medals shone upon his chest,
He cut his thumb on a C ration can,
An urget call and we evac'ed the man.

Refrain-Chorus

In the middle of the night we got a call,
A Green Beret in the jungle tail,
He jumps on the chop-per and starts to brag,
R&R orders and an AWOL bag.

Refrain-chorus

We got a little care-less - thought it was a breeze
Till Char-lie set Clay-mores in the trees,
Then on ap-proach - there was shrapnel like hell
A mine went off and it hit us in the tail...

Refrain

The medics we have are brave and true,
they face hails of bullets that run then thru,
Yet some desk soldier called an ADJ'
Won't award the guy a Combat Medic Badge.

Refrain

Chorus

The General called for our first team
Saigon answered who do you mean,
Scuse' me Saigon, I want the best,
The 254th has always led the rest...

Refrain

DUSTOFF went out on an urgent call
The clouds were low and the rain did fall,
The guns went along to give them a lick,
The unit wouldn't wait and he died on a slick.

Refrain

Chorus

All our pilots - just ordinary men
With a mission in mind and determined to win,
We find now and then they must give their life,
in an attempt to end this strife

Refrain

You don't hear our news on the radio,
So most folks will never know,
If their son comes home with a Purple Heart,
Stead of under a flag - we did our part.

Refrain

Chorus

The Ballad Of DUSTOFF was the idea of the CO of the 254th Med Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance), Major James B. Fisher. The tune selection, chorus, refrain and initial six verses were written by 254th unit guitarist, Cpt Herb Halstead, assisted by Cpt Joanne C Dinga, a nurse from the 93rd Evac Hosp.. The eight remaining verses were written by Major Fisher. This trio with the assistance from other unit officers polished and arranged the verses ..the tune is that of the EVERSALDES written by Harlan Howard and popularized by the Kingston Trio.
The intent of this song was to applaud the actions of a small brave group of non-combatants who are contributing greatly to the morale and lifesaving of our country's outstanding fighting forces. DUSTOFF was an original code name given the 57th Med Det (HA), the first to arrive in Vietnam. This code name has remained an unclassified, permanent callsign for all helicopter Med Evac units in Vietnam. This ballad is written from a few of the actual happenings of the 254th MED DET (HA), APO 96491, located at Long Binh, Vietnam during the first six months of its operation in the year 1966. (above dated 1966)