



Luminous Base: Stories about Corpsmen and Helicopters, Courage and Sacrifice

Bruce Williams-Burden

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In war and in peace, in good weather and bad, the helicopter has proven itself over and over again. It has been used for medical evacuations, search and rescue missions, as well as for simple transportation. Among the thousands of personnel who have flown on helicopters, the U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsmen did so as aircrew members, as patients, or as passengers. Between 1962 and 2007 fifty-seven of these men lost their lives. These corpsmen were killed far from their homes in places like Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Iraq, over both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, as well as the mountains of the Pacific Northwest and the American Southwest. This book tells the individualized story of each man, some stories accompanied by comments from family or friends. In addition, there are stories about sixteen other corpsmen who did not perish and lived to provide their personal experiences. One of these stories is about a senior female enlisted corpsman who flew evacuations in Iraq and went on to serve in Afghanistan as well. This book will provide an in-depth look at the evolution of the Navy's medical evacuation system, the levels of care from the battlefield to back home and the type of care provided at each level; the various helicopters used over the years, from the famous UH-34D to the Osprey; and it will look at the training opportunities that are offered to today's Navy Corpsmen. This is the first book to be written that offers such a unique collection of tales about Navy Corpsmen associated with helicopters who have all demonstrated courage and selflessness, and in some cases made the ultimate sacrifice while serving their country.

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