

Making History

The story of the first Mercy Flights member

Earl Warren is the first subscriber to the Mercy Flights membership program. He recalls working at West Coast Airlines as a radio operator in 1949. "My office was at the foot of the old civilian control tower," Earl said. "Whenever I had 20 minutes, I'd go up into the tower to chat."

That's where he became friends with Mercy Flights founder George Milligan, a Medford air traffic controller. "A young man was lost to polio," Earl remembers. "An ambulance was transporting him up to Portland to put him in the iron lung, but he didn't make it."

Before the polio vaccine was developed in 1955, this was the only option for victims who had their respiratory system paralyzed by the disease. The iron lung was like a big airtight tank with bellows that would

squeeze the chest to expand and contract the rib cage. In the 1940s, the closest iron lung was in Portland.

"George decided to buy a surplus military plane and turn it into an air ambulance," Earl said. "He told me about it and said he would charge \$2 for a family membership. I put \$2 on the counter and told him to sign me up." Through fundraising efforts by schoolchildren, scouts, and other community members, George Milligan raised enough money to purchase the first Mercy Flights airplane, a twin engine Cessna



Back in 1949, Mercy Flights' first member, Earl Warren, bought a family membership for just \$2.

known as the Bamboo Bomber. Earl flew in the right seat with George helping to transport people for a few years.

A membership program

First Member Continued Inside

Q A

Answers About Mercy Flights

Q How does my membership support the community?

A Mercy Flights provides emergency medical care to anyone who needs it when they dial 911. As a non-profit organization, we need community support. Mercy Flights is not funded by county tax dollars. We rely on income from transports and our membership program to support our staff, training, and equipment costs. Your membership saves you money if you require emergency transportation. Your membership also supports all of our life-saving efforts.

Q What equipment and supplies are inside Mercy Flights' ambulances?

A Our ambulances are state-of-the-art mobile emergency rooms. Medical equipment and supplies include intubation equipment, portable oxygen units, defibrillator and 12-lead ECG, splints, spine immobilization devices, suctioning units, stretchers, childbirth supplies, angiocaths, and a wide array of emergency medication.



MERCY FLIGHTS

3650 Biddle Rd. #14
Medford, OR 97504

541-779-1019
1-800-903-9000

www.mercyflights.com

Holiday 2003

Mercy Flights' Volunteer Power

A Big Thanks to Our Volunteers in the Butte Falls Area

For many years, a volunteer ambulance crew served the Butte Falls area. Members of the community trained in emergency medicine and staffed the local crew to transport patients to the hospital. However, due to rising costs in the 1990s, the volunteer staff was no longer able to afford funding the ambulance and medical supplies.

"In 1996, Mercy Flights began to partner with the crew," said Gary Heigel, Mercy Flights Field Supervisor. "We provide the vehicle and area volunteers are the staff. They're the first responders to an emergency and have all received training as either basic or intermediate Emergency Medical Technicians."

Mercy Flights EMT-I Carrie Driskell has worked with the Butte Falls crew for more than 20 years. "What's really great is the huge hearts the volunteers have," she says. "They drop everything they're doing to help a community member or a visitor to the area." Most of the volunteers also work a job full time.



Fast Facts

Winter Recreation Safety Tips

- 1 If weather warnings suggest a severe wind chill or extremely low temperatures, consider avoiding outdoor activities until the weather improves.
- 2 Watch for frostbite warning signs: skin that turns gray, white, or yellow, numbness, or skin that feels waxy. Seek medical attention immediately if you have these symptoms.
- 3 Keep your hands, face, and head covered. Stay dry — wet garments pull heat away from your body.

...making a
big difference
for the residents of
the Butte Falls area!



They are committed to serving their community's emergency needs 24/7 including responding to calls in the middle of the night and on weekends. Thank you to this dedicated crew for unselfishly giving of your time and skills to serve your neighbors. Your caring service is making a big difference for the residents of Butte Falls and Prospect! ■

First Member Continued From Front Page

was established in 1949 to provide people an opportunity to contribute to Mercy Flights, while insuring they would be covered in the event they needed air transportation. "My membership card has a #2 on it," Earl says. "Ron Gandee got the number one because he did some free printing for

George to help get the program started."

When Earl Warren had a heart attack 25 years ago, he used his Mercy Flights membership. He used it again three years ago when he fell and hit his head. "It's a wonderful organization," Earl said. "I'm glad to be a part of it." ■

Racing

to save a life

After a pleasant day of hiking with his pregnant wife and 3-year-old daughter, off-duty Mercy Flights paramedic Jim Repsher was not expecting to treat an emergency trauma. But, driving down Greensprings Highway, he witnessed a man wreck his bicycle and tumble into the ditch. Jim pulled over and ran to the man. Craig Hollinsworth, 56, lay unconscious from a severe head injury.

“His helmet was in four pieces,” Jim said. “I knew it was serious and immediately called dispatch on my cellular phone to get the helicopter out there. I covered him with a blanket to keep him warm.”

Luckily, Craig had crashed near Taylor Creek Road—one of the only two places along the Greensprings where a helicopter can land. The Mercy Flights crew picked him up and flew him to Rogue Valley Medical Center (RVMC). He was at the hospital within about 20 minutes. With a severe concussion, a skull fracture, and many lacerations, Jim received 120 stitches on his head.

“If Jim hadn’t been right there, I might have bled to death,” Craig said. “That guy was at the right place at the right time. And the medical crew was ‘Johnny on the Spot.’”

Craig said he had road rash from head to toe. He also broke his left elbow and right wrist. He doesn’t remember the wreck, but he has the four broken shards of his bike helmet to remind him of his crash.

“I remember them putting me on the backboard and I can recall bits and pieces of the helicopter ride,” Craig said. “I’ve been going to physical therapy for my elbow and just had reconstructive surgery on my wrist.”

Hollinsworth owns Yellow Cab of Southern Oregon with his wife, Barb. He had taken up cycling six months prior to the accident. He was training to join his brother on a trip next summer across Washington State. He



Jim Repsher and Craig Hollinsworth stand with the repaired Specialized road bike.

believes he was zipping down the hill at about 25 mph—5 mph above his normal peak when he reached a bend in the highway at Taylor Creek Road, 13 miles from Ashland.

“I expect to bike again,” Craig says. “My wife is going to buy me the most expensive helmet out there.” Craig expects to join his brother on that Washington state trip next summer.

Thanks to quick thinking by Jim Repsher, the speedy response of the Mercy Flights emergency air crew, and the skilled healthcare professionals at RVMC, Craig will be able to enjoy riding his bike again soon. ■



a gift from the heart

Show them you care with a gift membership.

Looking for a special gift this holiday season? Give the gift that saves lives. Call Mercy Flights today to purchase a gift membership for your family, friends, or neighbors. Emergency transportation and care is expensive. Even with insurance, many plans leave you with a large balance.

A Mercy Flights membership fills the gap left by inadequate or non-existent insurance coverage. You can protect your loved ones from the additional expenses of ambulance transportation. A Mercy Flights membership can save them hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars if they ever need emergency transportation.

For just \$70, you can cover an entire annual family membership for Mercy Flights' ground, airplane, and helicopter. Call us to find out more: (800) 903-9000 or (541) 779-1019.

MERCY 1231

Happy Holidays! from all of us at Mercy Flights!



Non-Profit Air and Ground Ambulance Services
www.mercyflights.com • (800) 903-9000
3650 Biddle Road #14 • Medford, Oregon 97504

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 137
Medford, OR
97501