

MAJOR ALEXANDER C. FURLA
USAF



Aeromedical Evacuation

Major Alexander C. Furla served in the U.S. Air Force on active duty from 1985-1996, and later reserves from 1996-2006 as an Aeromedical Evacuation Operations Officer. Alex was intimately involved in all the processes to deliver the wounded from the battlefields to the hospitals. Aeromedical evacuation squadrons are also involved in humanitarian and disaster relief missions world-wide. Alex once joked with us, “that this lowly Captain controlled all these resources.”

The Aeromedical Evacuation planes are fully functional flying intensive care units (ICU). Many of the planes can carry a maximum of 36 litter and 54 ambulatory patients. Its four engines can push the aircraft’s 500,000-plus-pound weight to a cruising speed of 515 mph at over 40,000 feet.

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There are a total of 31 aeromedical evacuation squadrons (AES) in the USAF today. Twenty-seven are attached to the Air National Guard or USAF Reserve. All

aeromedical evacuation functions for military personnel are controlled by the USAF Air Mobility Command (AMC). This command controls the USAF’s almost 1,100 cargo and aerial refueling aircraft.



The office of the AMC’s command surgeon establishes treatment protocols, determines equipment, and sets all procedures and standards that relate to aeromedical evacuation. The control center is like a dispatch center for all cargo and refueling aircraft and is staffed 24/7.

Lifesaving Missions

During the Vietnam War it took an average of 45 days to return patients to the U.S., and only 75% of wounded soldiers survived. Today specialized teams can transport patients from the point of injury to the U.S. in three days with a 98% survival rate.

Alex was active during the Panama (Just Cause), Persian Gulf (Desert Shield/Storm), and Somalia (Restore Hope) campaigns.

Major Alex Furla was awarded thirteen (13) military service decorations, ribbons, and numerous letters of commendation. He also served with the first team to standup the HQ AMC Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC) Aeromedical Evacuation from April 1992 to 1996 and with the 375th Aeromedical Airlift Wing, 57th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, 7276th Air Base Group, and 90th Strategic Missile Wing. Major commands included the Strategic Air Command (SAC), U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE),



Alex Furla's unit mission description reads, "Single manager for air mobility". The unit implements Presidential directives and executes taskings from US Government agencies for movement of national resources in response to wartime needs, contingencies, exercises, and humanitarian relief efforts. Global in scope-airlift, air refueling, rescue, special operations, aeromedical evacuations, operational support, and Presidential airlift. Alex's commanding officer declassified promotion recommendation read: "Superior AE expert; effectively coordinated and tracked aeromedical airlift for over 8,000 patients and casualties, during several contingencies."

Operations:

Just Cause, Panama

Persian Gulf, Desert Shield, Desert Storm

Restore Hope, Somalia (depicted in Black Hawk Down)

From Brig General John B. Sams, USAF, Tanker Airlift Control Center Scott AFB, IL:

- Alex expertly coordinated the urgent airlift of battle injured soldiers from Somalia to Germany; 27 lives saved.
- Analytical; development of detailed AE delay program set foundation for system improvements worldwide.
- Alex was an impressive manager of resources; singled out by Health Service Management Inspection Team (HSMI) for his efforts which brought a substandard medical supply section to an overall “Excellent” rating within six months.
- Alex is a systematic thinker; optimum utilization of available airframes for short notice patient taskings significantly contributed to maximizing peacetime airlift support during a 6-month period of substantial C-141 shortages.
- Alex was a superb, highly skilled staff officer and key member of air mobility planning/execution