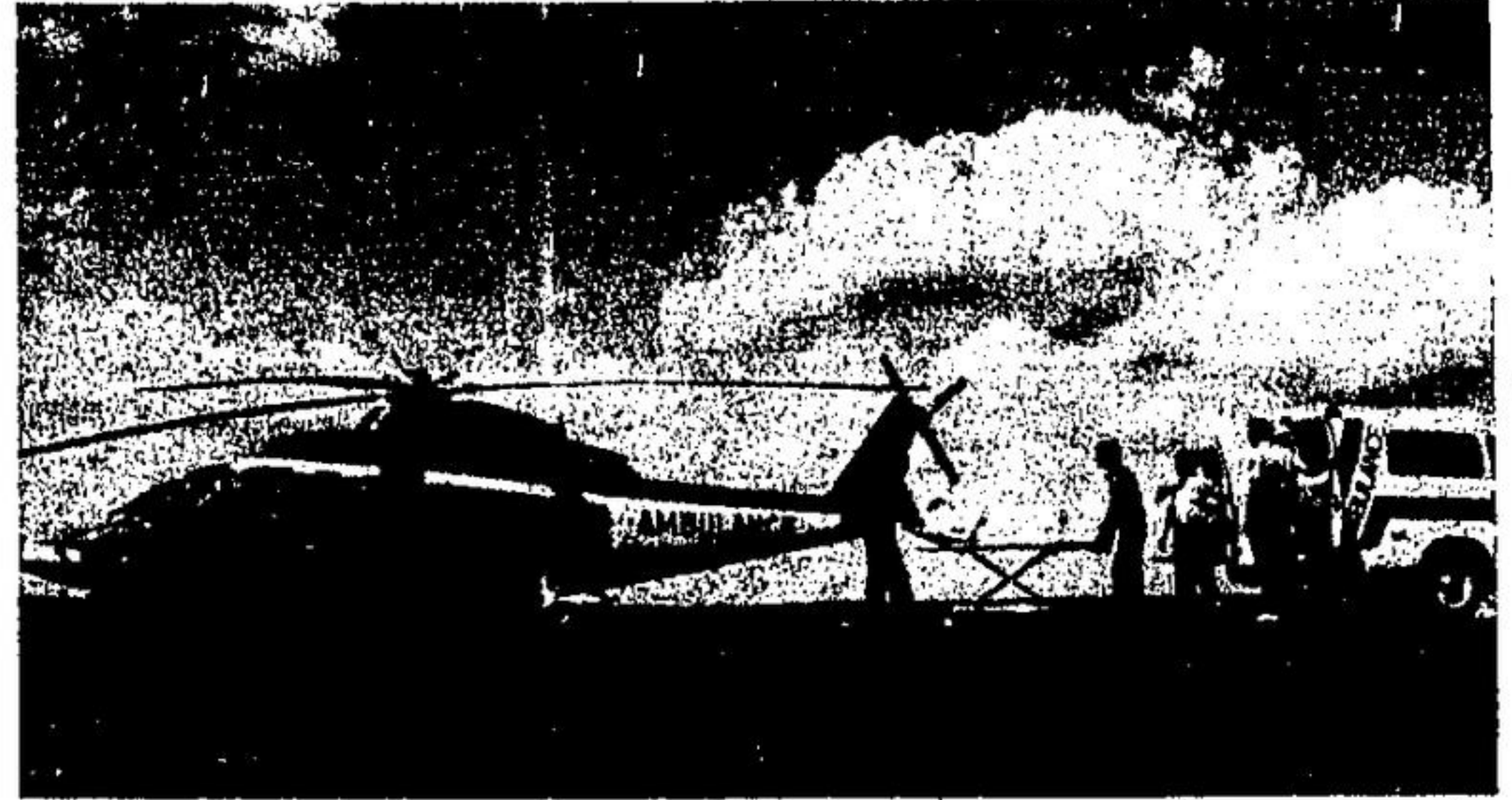




EMERGENCY FLIGHT - Bandage One, the first aircraft ambulance, has been in use since 1977. The helicopter is based at Buttonville Airport, north of Toronto, and serves all of southern Ontario, from Ottawa to Windsor. This Bell 212 craft carries a crew of four people - two paramedics and two pilots - and is capable of

transporting two patients. Patients may be brought to anyone of three hospitals, depending on the services they require. The Emergency Health System base hospital for Bandage One is Sunnybrook Medical Centre in Toronto. (Photo by the Ontario Ministry of Health)



GROUND TO AIR TRANSPORTATION - Bandage Three is based in Thunderbay and is one of five aircraft operated by the Emergency Health System. A smaller helicopter than the Southern Ontario-based Bandage One, Bandage Three can transport a critically ill patient to

Toronto in under 12 hours. This eliminates the two-day ground transportation that was used before the system was set up. A third helicopter is based in Sudbury. Timmins and Sioux Lookout have fixed-wing aircraft ambulances. (Photo by the Ontario Ministry of Health)

No happy landings when Bandage One arrives

By MARY-LIZ SHAW
Herald Staff

In the quiet of the night air, the thumping of rotar blades stirs a sleeping neighborhood. Bandage One is coming in for landing at Georgetown hospital's helicopter pad. There are no happy landings when the emergency service 'copter arrives. Only rushing paramedics, nurses, stretchers, oxygen equipment, intravenous bottles - and a patient in critical condition.

It's 3 a.m. Doug McLeod of the Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance Service arrives at the scene of a serious highway accident in town. Two victims have been thrown from their vehicle and are suffering from major injuries. Doug McLeod and the other ambulance attendants notify Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital while they transport the victims to Emergency. Doctors at the hospital assess the injuries and decide that one of the patients must be taken to Toronto. They stabilize the patient and phone the Emergency Health Service to ask for Bandage One, Southern Ontario's helicopter ambulance.

It sounds like a scene out of a television show. But, Ontario's EHS has been operating for 10 years transporting critically-ill patients from rural and urban areas to Toronto for the best possible medical treatment in a matter of hours.

"It's a great system," said Doug McLeod. "If someone is suffering from severe head injuries or an amputated limb, the sooner we can get that person to Toronto, the better chance that person has to survive."

It is difficult to gauge the success of the program in terms of lives lost or gained, since the ambulance handles only the most serious cases. "I would say eight out of ten people transported from accidents, die of their injuries," Mr. McLeod said. But, without quick transfer, patients may suffer from severe injuries over the long term. "In Toronto, they can do wonders," said Doug McLeod. "In some cases they may

Saving precious minutes

able to re-attach an amputated limb; we can't do that sort of surgery here in Georgetown."

"My impression is the service is quite favorable," said Ann Cillis, a nurse at GDMH in charge of Emergency and the Operating Room. "The two ambulance attendants who have come here are terrific."

The helicopter landing pad or "helipad" was built at Georgetown hospital in 1984. Since then, the air ambulance has been used an average of two or three times per month.

Most calls are relayed from doctor to doctor, although the helicopter will fly to the scene of an accident if necessary. "If we have an accident way out in the sticks, we'll call the hospital for a doctor and the paramedics will land right at the scene," said Doug McLeod.

Bandage One is based in Buttonville, north of Toronto, and handles all calls in Southern Ontario. It is the home to one of five aircraft operated by the Emergency Health Service. Two smaller helicopters are based in Sudbury and Thunder Bay and two fixed-wing airplanes, a Cessna 1 and a Beechcraft King Air Turbo Jet, are based in Timmins and Sioux Lookout.

The entire operation costs approximately \$10 million per year to maintain - \$2 million per aircraft. In 1986, Bandage One responded to 898 calls, which means the average cost of each over \$2,000 including maintenance and salaries. The paramedics in the ambulance take extensive emergency medical aid training. The three-phase training program involves 12 weeks of classroom instruction, followed by ambulance-hospital rotation and 30 weeks of on-the-job training.

"The training has been very in-depth, very intensive. It covers everything. It's been a real challenge," said paramedic Mario Posteraro.

This month, air ambulance paramedics are involved in the second phase of their training and a number of part-time attendants are working out of Buttonville, said Jerry Beattie.

Although many argue the helicopter's chief advantage is the time it saves, Georgetown District and Memorial Hospital's emergency chief Dr. R. Bourns noted that he is often faced with the dilemma of weighing the speed of ground ambulances to the air ambulance.

"We find we ask ourselves, what's the best way," said Dr. Bourns. "By the time the air ambulance gets here, and by the time they get the patient ready, we can sometimes get patients to Toronto faster by ground ambulance."

But Dr. Bourns said a single aircraft for all of Southern Ontario seems to provide adequate service. "To my knowledge, we have never phoned up and not been able to get it," he said.

For every patient transported by air ambulance, time is a critical factor. According to Buttonville pilot manager Jerry Beattie, 90 per cent of the patients he transfers are pregnant mothers or premature babies. Doug McLeod notes that even on a good day, with little traffic, it may take his ground ambulance up to 40 minutes to drive to the centre of Toronto. Once it arrives in Georgetown, a helicopter can make the trip in under 15 minutes, while giving the patient consistent care.

"If it's 5 p.m. on a weekday, I don't want to have to drive to Toronto," Mr. McLeod said. "We have enough problems trying to get people to pull over in Georgetown."

Pilot never knows beforehand about emergency flight plan

Jerry Beattie's story reads like an adventure novel.

The 39-year-old helicopter pilot is the Manager of Bandage One's Air Ambulance service based at Buttonville Airport, between Toronto and Markham.

He has been with the service since 1978, having flown with Toronto Helicopters before that. He became a helicopter pilot because he was bored, he said.

"I was working in an office and I found I didn't want to do that for the rest of my life," he said. "I took a ride in a helicopter one day and my mind was made up."

Now, he works 12-hour shifts for four days, flying anywhere from Ottawa to Windsor, or as far north as Haliburton.

"When we come to work, we never know whether we're going to be in Haliburton or anywhere," he said. "That's the nice part of the job - not knowing where you'll be from day to day."

Although his destinations may be unpredictable, the procedure used by a four-man team of pilots and paramedics is always the same.

If a call comes for Bandage One, two paramedics and two pilots board the helicopter, which is set to take one patient. The aircraft is in constant radio contact with doctors at Sunnybrook Medical Centre and with the ground ambulance at the scene. Once Bandage One lands, the paramedics will probably spend about a half hour at the scene, stabilizing the patient. The ambulance is equipped with monitors, I.V., and a defibrillator for heart patients.

Although Mr. Beattie and his crew of eight pilots have training in First Aid and Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation he has very little to do with patients, he said.

"A curtain separates the paramedics from the pilots," he said. "They do the job they're trained for and we do our job."

Since December of 1986, air ambulance pilots have been flying a BK117 advanced helicopter, which Mr. Beattie describes as "smoother, quieter and faster" than a Bell 212 aircraft, formerly the helicopter used for Bandage One.

"From the public's point of view,

the BK117 is more neighborly - it makes a lot less noise," he said.

It takes the crew about 11 minutes to fly from Georgetown to Toronto centre, flying at a cruise-speed of approximately 140 miles per hour, said Mr. Beattie.

Nine pilots, each working an average of 14 out of 28 days per month, diffuse the demands of flying air ambulance units, and prevent pilot "burn-out."

"Toronto's system is much better than the States," Mr. Beattie said. "They are trying to do the same thing as we are, but we have nine pilots, they may have only two or three."

Mr. Beattie noted that from a safety standpoint, the air ambulance system has improved in the nine years he has been flying for it. "And the hospitals are more aware of us now, so they are using us a lot more."

The Georgetown Volunteer Ambulance Service will invite Bandage One and other special ambulance transfer units to Georgetown to celebrate its 30th Anniversary in September. All units will be on public display.

FIRE BEAT

Motor problems

Firefighters investigated an unknown odor at lot 16, concession 7 Sunday at 7:58 a.m. The cause of the odor appeared to be a burned-out motor in a refrigerator, firefighters said.

Hay fire

A hay fire brought firefighters to a Limehouse farm Monday afternoon.

Carl Sinclair, who lives on the Fifth Line was loading straw when some of the bales caught fire. Firefighters responded to the call at 2:41 p.m.

Damage estimates are unknown.

Man revived

A male experiencing problems breathing and chest pains at Smallwood Acres, Acton, was revived by firefighters with oxygen until the Georgetown Ambulance arrived. Firefighters responded to the resuscitator call Sunday at 9:55 a.m.

False alarm

The alarm at Miracle Food Mart in Georgetown went off during a power failure Friday at 8:30 p.m. Fire officials said the failure was caused by a severe thunderstorm.

Whispers

By Doreen Palmer

"I am human enough to want everyone to like me, but smart enough to know that not everyone will." - Truman

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A Tasty Recipe

MARBLE CHEESECAKE

Crust:
1 cup graham wafer crumbs
1/4 cup cocoa
2 tbs. sugar
1/4 cup melted butter

Combine graham crumbs, cocoa and sugar; blend in butter. Press onto bottom of 9" x 10" springform pan. Chill while making filling.

Filling:
1 1/2 lb. cream cheese
1 cup sugar
3 eggs
2 tsp. vanilla
4 squares semi sweet chocolate

Beat cream cheese until smooth. Gradually beat in sugar. Beat in eggs, one at a time, at low speed, add vanilla. Pour half of cheese mixture (2 cups) into another bowl, add melted chocolate and blend well. Pour 1 cup white cheese mixture on top of prepared crust; spread smoothly. Drizzle 1 cup chocolate mixture on top; spread gently. Top with remaining white mixture; spread very gently. Drizzle remaining chocolate mixture on top as evenly as possible. Using a small spatula or knife, gently stir batter to make a marbled design. Bake in 300 degree oven for 1 hour. Turn oven off and leave cake inside for 1 hour longer. Cool in pan at room temperature. Loosen sides and remove. **Gaze:** In small saucepan, melt 4 squares semi sweet chocolate and 1/4 cup butter; blend well. Spread over top and sides of cheesecake. Chill 24 hours before serving. (16 servings)

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