



NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD

# NEWS RELEASE

Public Affairs Office - 2433 NW 24th St. - Lincoln, Nebraska 68524-1801  
Phone: 402-309-8397/8390

**NEBRASKA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
AVIATION CREW HONORED FOR  
HEROIC 2019 FLOOD RESCUES**

**Released by  
Maj. Scott Ingalsbe**

**July 2, 2020**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**LINCOLN, Neb.**—Four Nebraska Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk crew members with Company G, 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion were honored at a ceremony in Lincoln today with the DUSTOFF 2019 Rescue of the Year award for their heroic rescues during Nebraska’s historic floods in 2019.

The DUSTOFF Rescue of the Year award was instituted in 1995 as a part of efforts to recognize the current generation of DUSTOFF Warriors. The first two awards presented were the DUSTOFF Crewmember of the Year and the Rescue of the Year. While the majority of awards for the rescue of the year have been made to missions flown in combat there are instances of peace-time missions receiving the award.

This year’s award-winning crew included:

- Chief Warrant Officer 3 Josh Schaaf, Pilot in Command
- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nathan Dooley, Pilot
- Staff Sgt. Lawrence Lind, Medic
- Sgt. Aaron Winberg, Crew Chief

The crew also received the state’s first four Nebraska National Guard Commendation Medals with “V” device for Valor, after Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts signed an executive order on June 29, 2020, establishing the new award for distinguishing specific acts of bravery.

On the evening of March 14, 2019, these Soldiers successfully conducted multiple search and rescue missions, including that of seven first responders near Arlington, Nebraska. The crew pulled the seven firefighters from the floodwaters near the Elkhorn River after two of their boats capsized during a rescue attempt. The firefighters were then transported to the hospital where they were treated for hypothermia and released.

“I’m very proud of what we were able to accomplish,” said Maj. Gen. Daryl Bohac, Nebraska adjutant general. “To be here to help our neighbors; to help the folks that we live and work with every day in this state is a humbling thing, but one in which we at the same time take great pride in being able to be part of the team from all across the state that helped everyone that they could to survive.”

The DUSTOFF Executive Council votes on award submissions. Each member of the council is a veteran of DUSTOFF. Most have served in combat flying in Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq and all over the world.



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“This year, the complexity, risk and the absolute professionalism of this crew set them above the rest,” said Col. (Ret.) Daniel Gower, executive director of the DUSTOFF Association. He said the crew was doing what DUSTOFF crews have done since the Korean War: not leaving to go home until, “We have your wounded.”

The Rescue of the Year award was set to be presented at the 41st DUSTOFF Reunion at the Annual Awards Banquet on April 4, 2020, in Columbus, Georgia, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Nebraska National Guard Commendation Medal with “V” device may be awarded to any member of the Nebraska National Guard whose service is distinguished by specific acts of bravery, or a closely related series of heroic acts involving personal hazard or danger. The voluntary risk of life must have resulted in an accomplishment so exceptional and outstanding as to clearly set the individual’s service apart from the duties of routine service.

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Note: See photos and captions below. Also, find more photos from this event here:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nenationalguard/albums/72157714945425841>



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Caption: (From Left) Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nathan Dooley, pilot; Sgt. Aaron Winberg, crew chief; Chief Warrant Officer 3 Josh Schaaf, pilot-in-command; and Staff Sgt. Lawrence Lind, combat medic; pose with the DUSTOFF Rescue of the Year 2019 award for a photo in front of the Nebraska Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter they flew on the evening of March 14, 2019, when they rescued seven first responders from floodwaters near the Elkhorn River. (Nebraska National Guard photo by Sgt. Lisa Crawford)



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Caption: (From Left) Staff Sgt. Lawrence Lind, combat medic; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nathan Dooley, pilot; Chief Warrant Officer 3 Josh Schaaf, pilot-in-command; and Sgt. Aaron Winberg, crew chief, pose for a photo in front of a Nebraska Army National Guard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter like the one they flew on the evening of March 14, 2019, when they rescued seven first responders from floodwaters near the Elkhorn River. (Photo by Tammy Real-McKeighan, News Editor, Fremont Tribune – shared with permission)