

A winter song in the black forest

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At the beginning of a new year, the editors decided to publish an article dedicated to the emergency rescue system in Romania. It is basically not only a brief recall of the history of the airborne medical system in Romania, but also an update on the assets and the performances of the medicalized helicopters. Twenty-eight years following the establishment of the SMURD in Romania, and fifteen years from the birth of the helicopter fleet in Romania, airborne crews experienced the leapfrog from debutants to experienced, consolidated medical teams.

I remember that as a lecturer at the first Pan European Emergency Medicine Conference in Budapest in 1992, I was in the process of arranging the meager slides I had to illustrate the teaching of Emergency medicine in ROMANIA and the means of transportation at the time. Besides me stood an Italian lady doctor taking pride in manipulating some 50 colored slides picturing among others, the Italian helicopter fleet. I asked her to lend me some in order to resuscitate my lecture, but she did not concur. I am sure she could not imagine it was a joke, a self-persiflation, and decided to completely ignore me. I had courage enough to step up and support the beginnings of what developed subsequently in the contemporary national emergency system. Ten years later, the Romanians benefitted from the first fleet composed of nine helicopters and two airplanes.

The article authored by Sebastian Tranca et al., hosted in this issue of the AMM, is dedicated to the description of the emergency air rescue system in our country. I will not go into details for the article is worth it to be read, but I cannot forget the helicopter's crew who crashed in Cojocna, near Cluj in 2003, in a mission that transformed a charismatic medical team in heroes. Helicopters used to perform salvage missions even before, and I remember a stunned child of six petrified in front of a cherry red helicopter parked besides the SMURD building in Tg.Mures. It was in 2000 that the pilot of the chopper invited the bewitched little boy to stay by his side in the fantastic shiny flying machine. Due to the boy's bewilderment and to the understanding of the pilot, this child is today in his final year of medical studies to graduate at the Faculty of Medicine in Tg.Mures. Sadly enough, the magnanimous pilot became a hero of the airborne fleet.

An image of an helicopter over a difficult to reach area reminded me how appropriate seem to be Nichita's Stanes-cu lyrics:

“And no one passes-
only the white suns revolve in quiet worship.
and the thought spreads in circles
ringing the trees
in twos
in fours.”

Winter song by Nichita Stanes-cu

The impressive work of the air fleet led to the transportation and thus the rescue of some of the victims of the catastrophic accident in Bucharest, at the Colectiv club. Burned victims who survived and we who followed the news are aware of the implication of the emergency teams involved.

And again I think Stanes-cu's lyrics may be most appropriate to tell these stories:

“Black snow was falling. The tree line
shone when I turned to see-
I had wondered long and silent,
Alone, trailing memory behind me.

And it seemed the stars, fixed as they were,
ground their teeth, a stiffened nexus,
an infernal machine, tolling
the halted hours of consciousness.”
Black Forrest by Nichita Stanes-cu

Thus I think it is about time to acknowledge the efforts made to build up a rescue system that is both efficient and affective.

This is why at the beginning of the New Year 2018, I wish you a better year, more realistically dedicated to those in need. I also would like to thank my colleagues of the editorial board who constantly struggled to improve the performances of the published authors and to attract valuable materials to be published.

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