

The Handcart Boys

He's lying in the tree line, blood running down his arm.

Listening for the sound of the Handcart boys, to remove him from this harm.

He flew in on a modern jet that got shot down in this affray.

But he is no different than the wounded at Shiloh, trying to survive, till they safely take him away.

In the dark of the night she waits with so much pain to bear.

Injured in the crash of her aircraft and now this seemly endless nightmare.

Where is the chopper that will lift her from the smoke, the fire and the pain?

Where are the Handcart boys, hurry, her life is beginning to drain?

He was wounded when a round slammed onto the "cruiser's" deck.

Shards of metal are protruding from his arm, shoulder and the right side his neck.

The corpsman has stopped the bleeding; he's been prepared, to be extracted in the night.

The Handcart boys are racing his way, and will be there before first light.

Get in, get them out, and hurry back, inside the safety of our lines.

It has been this way since ancient wars, to the battles of modern times.

The two-wheel Handcart is the way the wounded were removed from battles in past wars.

Our modern Handcart has a rotor-blade and sliding doors.

Look at history, look at artwork, recent photos or at movies if you will.

When it came to removing the wounded and injured off of some war-torn desolate hill.

It was a Handcart carrying the broken and the dying with their screams of pain.
It was a Handcart transporting at Normandy in the cold June rain.

Every branch of the service has its modern version of the Handcart boys who respond to the call.

They go out for the wounded and dead, bring them back, get them all.

Sometimes the Handcart boys are brought back in a Handcart not of their own.

Sometimes they become the wounded & the dying, and for their efforts, they never come home.

There are also women who work these, latter-day Handcarts and their lives too, are on the line.

It is a dangerous mission, but just as their predecessors they to make that recovery in time.

They move out over the desert, into the night as the sand blows and swirls.

These Handcart operators are our Handcart girls.

I have a two-wheeled wooden handcart with an old worn flag sitting out on my front lawn.
It is not a protest, it's a reminder of our dead, who returned by Handcart, lying there upon.
In order to defend this Nation, we will continue to send the brave & young, our freedom they earn.

And we will always have a need for the Handcarts, for our wounded and dead, they must return.

-Major Van E. Harl, USAF Ret.