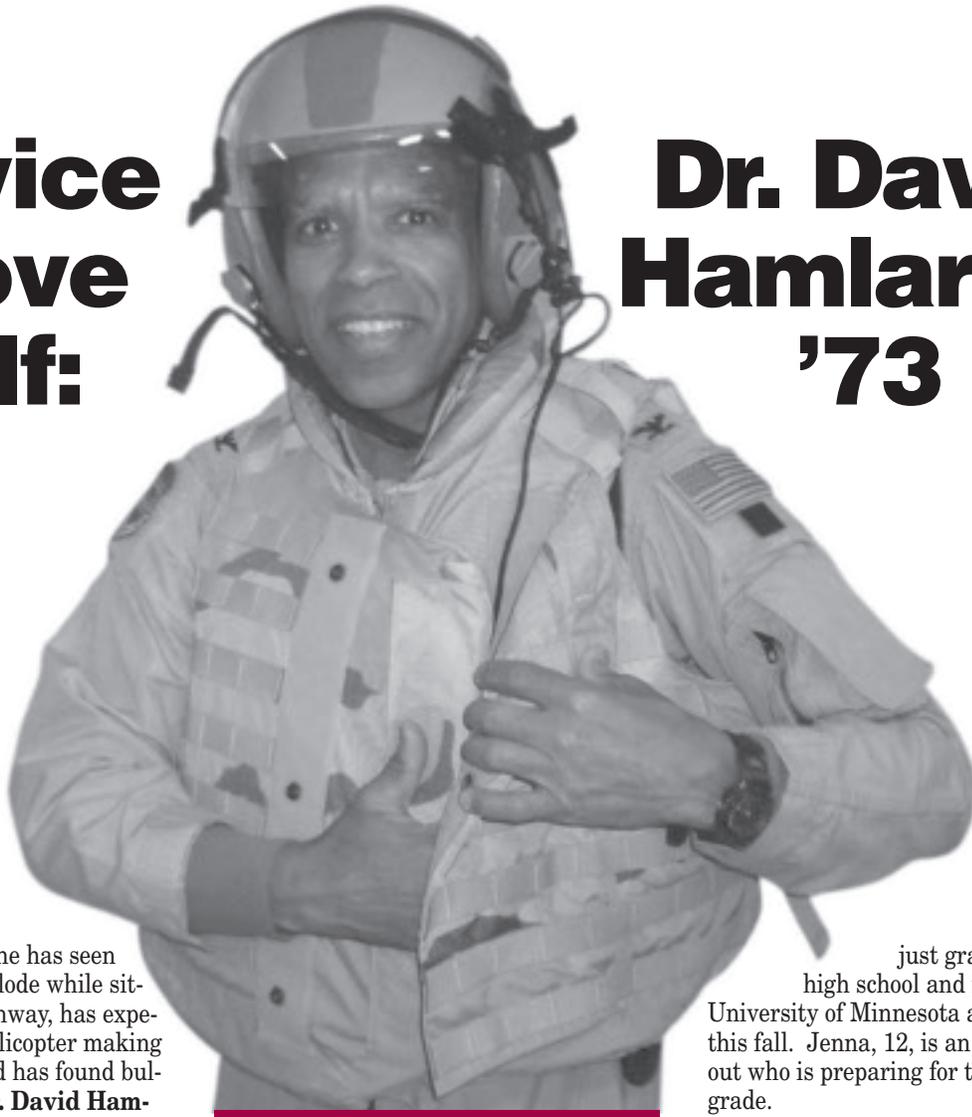


Service Above Self:

Dr. David Hamlar Jr. '73



Even though he has seen mortars explode while sitting on a runway, has experienced a helicopter making an engine-less landing, and has found bullet holes in his aircraft, **Dr. David Hamlar Jr. '73** still feels he is never in a situation that he does not control.

"If I go on a helicopter, I know I'm going from Point A to Point B and I know there is a certain amount of danger," he said, "but everybody on there knows that. I am nowhere near the danger that our soldiers and Marines face. Those are the ones who are putting their lives at risk."

In the past five years, Dr. Hamlar has completed four military tours to the Middle East. In 2002, he was a flight surgeon for a C130 unit in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In 2003-04, he served as Air Force Hospital Commander in Qatar and Iraq. Then, in 2004-05, he was stationed back in Qatar as a head and neck surgeon.

His latest mission, from which he just recently returned, had the Commander of the 133 Air Wing Medical Group splitting his time between Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I served as a surgeon, flight doctor, critical transport doctor, base physician and consultant... essentially I was multi-

Dr. Hamlar prepares for a Medevac flight in Al Asad, Iraq.

tasking," Dr. Hamlar said about his recent deployment. "I spent much of my time in Balad, where the primary Air Force Theater Hospital is located, Al Asad – where we completed construction of a new Army Combat Support Hospital in lieu of the 'Surge' – and Bagram, Afghanistan, where my C130 group was located."

Now that he is stateside once again, Dr. Hamlar has returned to his life as chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery at Regions Hospital in St. Paul, Minn., and as an assistant professor and associate member of the graduate faculty at the University of Minnesota.

More importantly, however, he has resumed his proud place as husband and father. He and his wife June have two children, Devin and Jenna. Devin, 19,

just graduated from high school and is entering the University of Minnesota as a freshman this fall. Jenna, 12, is an athletic standout who is preparing for the seventh grade.

It was in fifth grade, back in the summer of 1965, that Dr. Hamlar had his first encounter with Columbus Academy. His father, David Sr., enrolled him into CA's summer program in preparation for the upcoming school year.

"When I was in fourth grade, my dad saw that I wasn't bringing home any homework at all, so he said I was going to go to this school on Nelson Road, which was just right up the street," Dr. Hamlar recalled. "I had no idea what I was getting in to. I was just thrown into an entirely new arena, but actually I did pretty well. I was pretty well accepted and people didn't talk about me too much."

Dr. Hamlar quickly established himself as a rising star in athletics. By the time he was a senior, he found himself as a captain of the varsity football, basketball and baseball teams for the Vikings.

"Sports was my life at Academy," he said. "It was something that eased the transition, even back in fifth grade with

the intramural stuff we played. I loved playing sports and just grew up doing it.”

Not surprisingly, some of Dr. Hamlar’s fondest memories from Columbus Academy involve his former coaches, especially **Phil Hess, John Exline** and **Jim Stahl**.

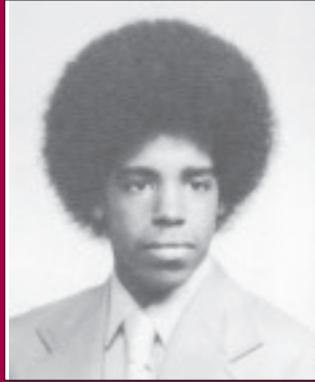
“Coach Stahl was like my second dad,” said Dr. Hamlar, who helped lead Academy to the 1972 Mid-Buckeye League football title. “I saw him probably more than my dad during those years. I remember spending quite a bit of time with Coach Stahl and his family. His son Chris was like a little brother to me.”

Stahl coached both the basketball and baseball teams in those days. What those squads may have lacked in talent, according to Dr. Hamlar, they made up for in humor.

“I had always played shortstop or third base,” he said, “but my sophomore year, Coach Stahl pulled me aside and said, ‘Davey, you’re going to play catcher now.’ He put me in front of the gym wall’s padding, stood at the foul line and hit baseballs at me as hard as he could. Now I don’t think I’ve ever seen that in any training booklet. It was pretty remarkable.”

After graduating from Academy, Dr. Hamlar earned his bachelor’s degree from Tufts University in 1977 and his degree in dentistry from Howard University in 1981. While working in Chillicothe, he earned a grant to set up a dental clinic serving the area’s indigent population.

Although the clinic became very successful, Dr. Hamlar wanted to be able to do more for patients, so he earned a medical degree from Ohio State University in 1988 while operating a private dentistry practice in Columbus. The following year, while a resident in preliminary surgery at



*Then and now:
Davey Hamlar in
1973, left, and Dr.
David Hamlar in
2007, right.*



Mt. Carmel Medical Center, he somehow found time to join the Ohio National Guard.

In 1994, Dr. Hamlar accepted a fellowship in facial plastics and reconstructive surgery at the University of Minnesota. And when he joined the school’s faculty the very next year, he transferred to the Minnesota Air National Guard, where he has risen to the rank of colonel.

In addition to his military service, Dr. Hamlar has volunteered for Air National Guard humanitarian missions to Guatemala (1998), Ecuador (2001), Belize (2003), Egypt (2003), China (2004) and Vietnam (2005).

And although he has received numerous honors – such as the 2007 Minneapolis Rotary Club Service Above Self Award, the 2007 State of Minnesota Distinguished Service Award, 2006 American Academy of Facial Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery Citizen of the Year and the 2005 Minneapolis Rotary Citizen of the Year – for his efforts, Dr. Hamlar considers his work to be the only award he needs.

“Be it one of my patients at the University of Minnesota, a child whose cleft I repaired on a humanitarian mission or helping a wounded soldier, my greatest reward is seeing their successful outcomes,” he said. “That is why I became a physician.”

Dr. Hamlar has not visited Columbus Academy for a number of years, but he receives frequent updates from his younger sister **Deidre Hamlar**, who became the school’s director of diversity in 2005.

“Deidre keeps me informed of her work and her progress,” he said. “She also tells me who has come to visit the school and, since I am up in age, whose kids of my friends are now attending the school.”

As for his classmates, Dr. Hamlar hopes the Class of ’73 will either stay connected or reconnect with the school and with each other. He encourages all Academy alumni to do so as well.

“Even though it may appear that we’re apathetic – we may not have the numbers as far as people contributing back to Academy or actually visiting the campus – I think all of those guys, deep down in their hearts, remember what Academy meant to them,” he said. “And they should reflect on that and maybe give the Academy a call or get back together with one another.”

Due to his recent deployment, Dr. Hamlar will most likely not be selected for another military mission until 2008 or 2009. His wife would like him to retire from the Air National Guard before that date arrives. His high rank could probably get him a nice office job in Washington, D.C., anyway, if he wanted.

That’s just not the way this Academy grad is wired, though.

“There are not enough doctors in the service right now,” said Dr. Hamlar. “I could hide if I wanted to, but if something happens that they need me to go, I’ll go.”



Dr. Hamlar treats a patient during a 2004 humanitarian mission in Linyi, China.