MIEMSS "Firsts"

1987

o A new communications system using a law enforcement radio channel established direct contact from SYSCOM to every MSP med-evac helicopter around the state. (This radio channel is the basis of the flight-following and centralized helicopter dispatch systems developed later.)

1988

o A statewide Hospice/EMS Protocol was developed to aid in the appropriate palliative care of hospice patients who access the EMS system.

1989

o Transition to the new larger 365N-1 Dauphin 2 med-evac helicopters began early this year when the first new helicopter was dedicated on May 18.

o R Adams Cowley, MD, resigned to become the first Director of the National Study Center for Trauma and EMS; James P.G. Flynn, MD, was appointed as acting director of MIEMSS.

o MIEMSS was invited to participate in a humanitarian effort, "Telemedicine Spacebridge," which was organized with U.S. and Soviet cooperation to give medical consultation for survivors of the Armenian earthquake. Communications were transmitted via satellite by NASA. Other US medical centers involved were the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, LDS Hospital in Utah, and the University of Texas Medical School at Houston.

o Over a period of a few years, MIEMSS is developing an expert computerized system for the US Navy to determine the severity of injury or illness of a sailor in a ship traveling under orders of

radio silence. Based on comparisons with MIEMSS patients, a Navy pharmacist's mate will ascertain the treatment needed and give the ship's captain the information. This will enable the captain to make an informed decision about whether to break radio silence to ask for outside help.

o The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) funded the first year of a 3-year study to determine the medical consequences of car crashes. It is hoped that the data learned will lead to USDOT regulations for improved safety features in the manufacture of motor vehicles.

1990

o An electronic flight-following system shows the location of every MSP med-evac helicopter during every 30 seconds of flight; coordinates are recorded and available for search & rescue personnel if needed. This is the first system tracking EMS med-evac and law enforcement helicopters.

o Using the flight-following system, centralized dispatch of helicopters has begun in Region III and Region V. The MSP duty officer at SYSCOM chooses the helicopter closest to the patient, regardless of where it is based, to provide the quickest response. The system is being expanded around the state.

o All nine of the new helicopters were in service by the end of 1990.