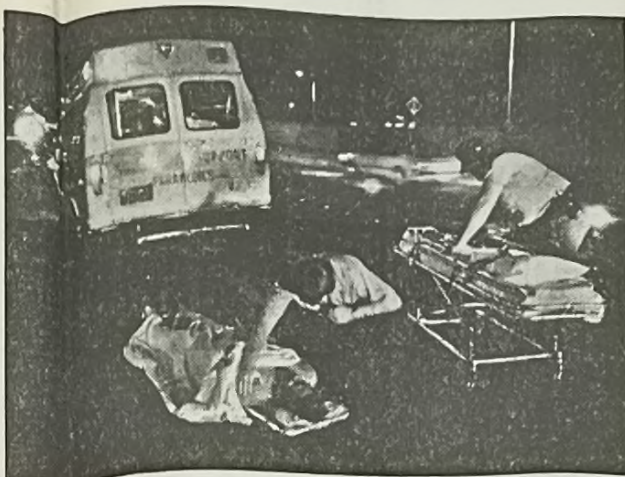


With bystander's help, paramedic Jenny Stiles stabilizes an overdose victim.

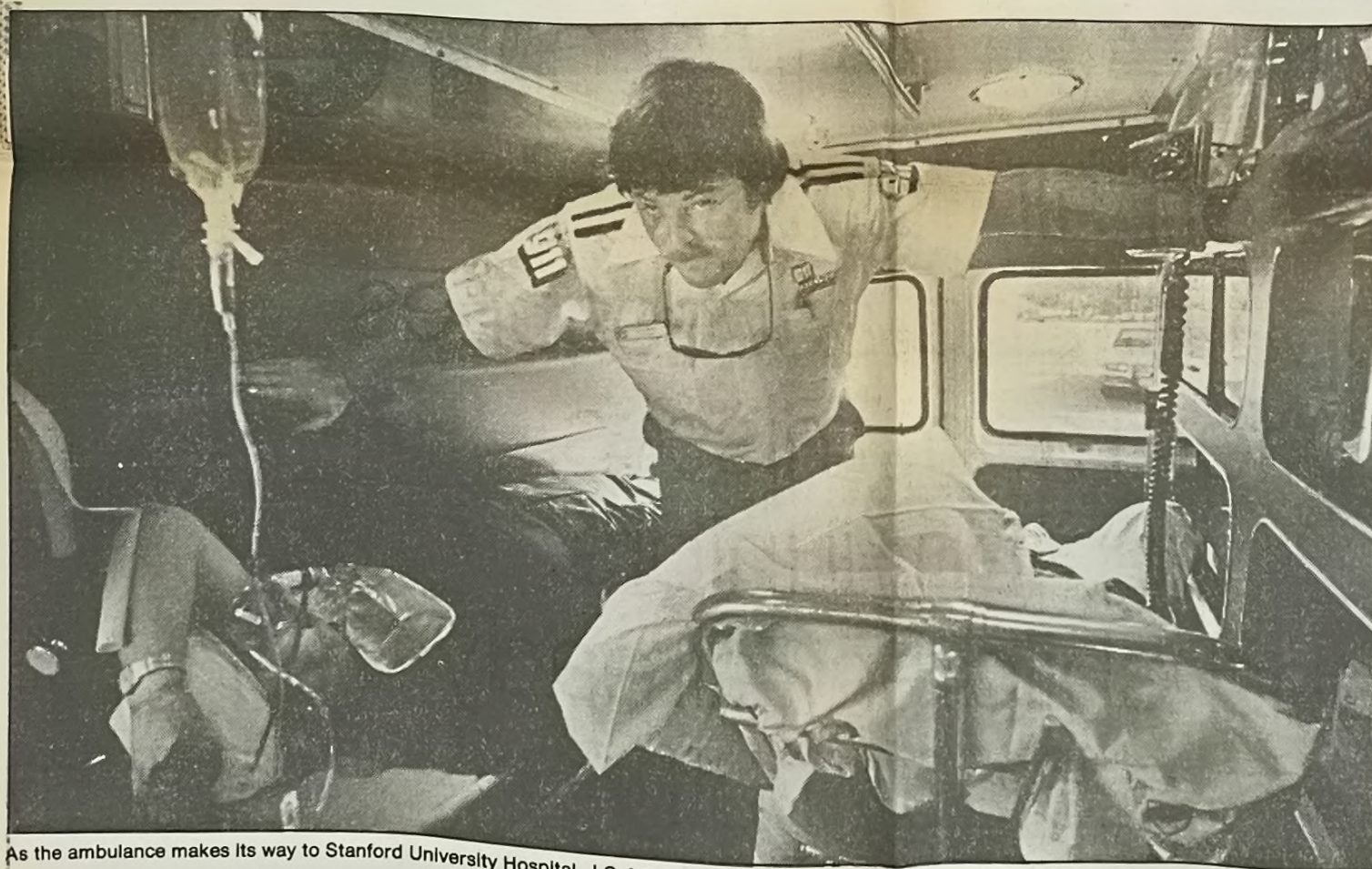


The Medic 33 team in East Palo Alto responds to victims of accidents, drug deals and violent crime. At the scene of an accident (left), J.C. Milrod and Jim Aboud prepare to transport the victim to Stanford University Hospital. Often (below), there are more victims than those taken to the hospital.



TO LIVE AND DIE:

On call with Medic 33



As the ambulance makes its way to Stanford University Hospital, J.C. Milrod oversees the condition of two shooting victims.

No runs are routine for East Palo Alto paramedics

Treating people suffering from drug overdoses, beatings, stabbings and shootings is part of the job of paramedics, says J.C. Milrod of Mobile Life Support based in San Mateo.

"I like to be kept busy," says Milrod, adding that "the job never gets boring in East Palo Alto," his last area of paramedic coverage.

Paramedics, he said, are trained to initiate advanced medical procedures to help keep the patients alive while they are transported, many times with siren and lights, to the hospital.

"They (paramedics) do much of what doctors and nurses do," he said.

Milrod said compassion and his interest in people help him handle tough situations that are commonplace for a paramedic.

"Many people (paramedics) get burned out ..." he said.

He recalled one incident where he encountered a young couple who frantically handed him their 4-month-old daughter, whose face was cold and gray.

"The young parents begged us to save their daughter, their eyes pleading for the impossible," he said.

"Not wanting to realize the truth myself, I grabbed the child and began resuscitation while my partner drove us code three (lights and siren) to the hospital."

The child was pronounced dead on arrival by the emergency room doctor.

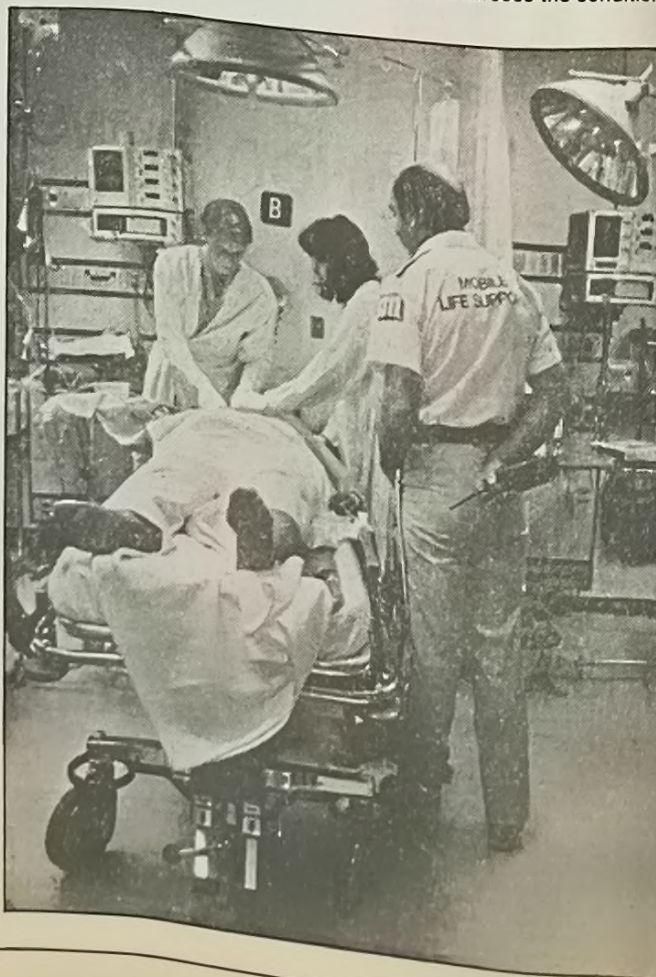
"I wanted to cry," Milrod said.

And he was fighting back tears when he and his partner received a another call from the dispatcher requesting them to go to the scene of a car accident.

But there also was the time he assisted in the premature birth of a baby boy, who barely survived. A year later the mother came to his headquarters with a plate of cookies and her infant son to say thank you.

"These are the events that keep you going," he said. "It's the times when you have made a difference, when you really mattered."

The emergency room at Stanford University Hospital is the final destination for most calls. Paramedic Steve Carlton (right) waits for word from emergency room doctors attending a shooting victim brought in by Medic 33. Paperwork closes the file on one call, while clearing the way for the next (far right). J.C. Milrod and Medic 33 have run as many as 14 calls in a 24-hour shift.



Photographed by
Sam Forencich

