

Jet Fuel

Category: Nursing

written by Ian Sprouse | March 25, 2026

Not many people can say they are comforted by the smell of jet fuel. But I can.

I was working as a new medical scribe in the emergency department when a crew of flight nurses rushed in with a trauma patient. As they passed by me, in uniforms I recognized, the scent of jet fuel whisked me back to some of my most cherished childhood memories.

When I was growing up, my dad was a flight nurse. My mom sometimes brought us kids to the base during his 24-hour shifts so we could eat lunch with him. If we were lucky, and maybe when others weren't, while we were there he'd get a call to fly out to rescue someone in need.

I remember the way the fumes burned in the air, the whirring crescendo as the helicopter blades whipped around, and the spiraling trails of wind and leaves. I would watch my dad and his crew run toward their aircraft and stand in awe as it lifted off.

Now I stand in the same trauma center where he once stood, watching a different crew in similar jumpsuits rush past me, and detecting that familiar smell lingering in the air.

And for a moment, I am that kid again, watching my dad fly toward someone who needs saving.

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