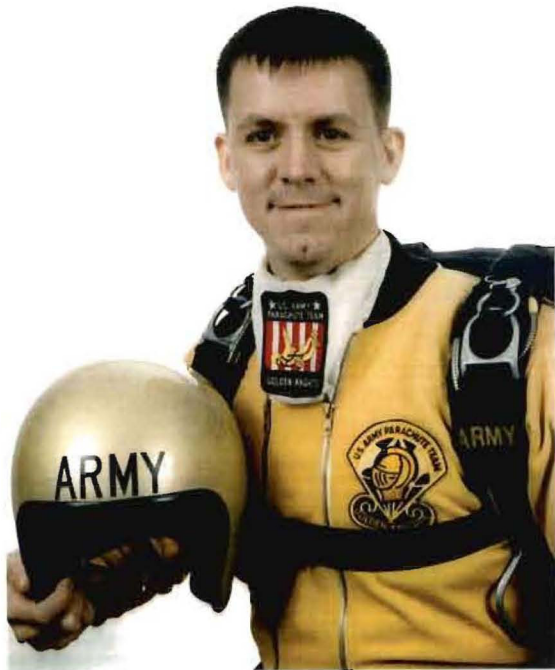


THE YUMA DAILY SUN

50 CENTS ■ YUMA, ARIZONA

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2000



Yuma jury awards former Golden Knight \$2.8 million

By JOEL DAVIS
Staff Writer

A Yuma jury on Friday returned a \$2.8 million verdict against a Phoenix-based physician who treated a Golden Knight after a March 1996 parachuting accident.

The physician was employed by a business that provided contracted emergency room services at Yuma Regional Medical Center at the time.

The jury rendered a verdict in favor of Jeff Dennis and his wife Tori against Dr. Barton Butterbaugh of Phoenix and his employer, Spectrum Emergency Care, Inc., said Mike Rollins, a Tucson attorney.

Dennis, 36, developed muscle and nerve problems from the injury that led to the eventual amputation of his right leg below the knee, according to the lawsuit. A 17-year veteran of the armed services, he was

medically discharged from the Army in November.

In his lawsuit, Dennis claimed that Butterbaugh, who treated him at YRMC after the accident, failed to perform a critical test for pressure in his leg as a result of the injury and failed to call in an orthopedic surgeon to examine him, Rollins said.

The accident occurred March 5, 1996. Dennis was at Yuma Proving Ground training with the Golden Knights. After the team exited the aircraft, the winds picked up and blew them off course. Wind currents caused Dennis' parachute to collapse and he fell the last 30 feet to the ground, Rollins said.

Dennis currently lives in Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

YRMC was not a defendant in the lawsuit. Spectrum Emergency Care, Inc. provided emergency physicians services from May 1993 to April 1997 at YRMC. The company could not be reached for comment on the verdict.