

MEDEVAC, A SERIOUS BUSINESS !

JOINT MEDICAL MODULES

The Dutch Airbase at Woensdrecht, also called EHWO by its ICAO code, organised from 21 March till 01 April 2011 a medevac exercise with international participation. Some 200 men and women from different European countries tried to work together in a setting with casualties. This exercise is one of an annual series and is named Joint Medical Modules (JMM) because of the joint character.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENT

The objectives are specified into missions within international coalition. Especially to train medical skills in a realistic environment the scenario's were chosen to simulate situations in current ongoing combined operations. Besides units of the hosting Dutch air force, army and navy, the other participants were from Germany, Belgium, Spain, Norway, Hungary, France, U.S. and Sweden. The first days the participants learned from each other in didactics and also time was taken to know each others cultural background. In the second week the focus was on working as one team in three days of live exercises. The scenario's consisted of working under hostile attack of the base, a vehicle accident with both military as civilian casualties, a fire, a natural disaster and a gas attack, providing the participants with a wide variety of mock injuries to diagnose and treat.

OPINION OF PARTICIPANT

The opportunity to practice with medical personnel from other nations is considered very valuable since there is only little possibility to train specifically the medical part in this kind of settings. According U.S. Air Force, Major Ray Vincent of the 86th MDG Medical Readiness Flight Commander who believes although there were in JMM fewer participants like similar MEDCEUR exercises that the benefits are the same. Being familiar with each other's procedures can mean the difference between life and death. Although the Dutch military and base provided logistics like a fire brigade other equipments were supplied by the participants such as some of the tents for medical aid.

An Expeditionary Medical Support Tent (EMEDS) plays a key role on location and acts as small medical hospital where about 2000 people can be taken care off for some 30 days. The basic package provides primary care, nursing care, Laboratory services, X-ray and surgical capability. Other modules can be added when the situation asks for more specific needs. This can rely on local circumstances or needs of the local population. Some 38 people of the 86th MDG were involved to set up and run the EMEDS.

FLYING UNITS INVOLVED

Others supplied flying units and the Spanish Air Force played an important role while bringing in casualties with a CASA C295M of 353 Escuadron, Ejército del Aire. The airplane was specially utilised to transport patients lying on stretchers and accompanied by medical attendants. The casualties complete with infuse lines were delivered to special military ambulance vehicles and brought to the medical units where the medical hospital started to function as a unit of readiness. Other casualties were transported to the location by a Dutch 300 Squadron AS532U2 Cougar. The exercise which was led by Dutch Rob Meyering could not be else than satisfying the people involved.

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