



LIFE-FLIGHT EXERCISE

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At left, a force protection soldier, bitten by a poisonous snake (scenario), was rushed to the on-site aid station, where he receives a thorough examination and is medically evacuated by a host nation Life-Flight helicopter to a medical facility. Here, Cpl. Castanon, a medic assigned to the 1st Squadron, 10th Armored Cavalry Regiment (1-10 CAV) applies a sterile dressing to the bite area.

SOUTHWEST ASIA (December 2013) – Soldiers assume risk every day, rather in garrison or forward-deployed environments they must assume a vigilant watch to ensure risk levels are kept at their absolute lowest.

The soldiers of 12th Missile Defense Detachment (MDD) and 1st Squadron, 10th Armored Cavalry Regiment (1-10 CAV), 4th Infantry Division, currently deployed at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia executed a Life-Flight Exercise this week to enforce risk mitigation.

The exercise was conducted to evaluate the on-site medical and force protection personnel's ability to react and identify the procedures necessary to perform a medical evacuation, commonly known as MEDEVAC.

The scenario: While on patrol, a force protection soldier was bitten by a poisonous snake. The bite is reported and the evaluation begins.

The soldiers being evaluated immediately sprang into action, the "injured" soldier was rushed to the on-site aid station and the diagnosis process began. He was given a thorough examination and the bite wound was inspected. A decision was made to MEDEVAC the soldier to a facility that could properly treat him and increase his chances of survival.

Once the need for the MEDAVAC was decided the noncommissioned officer-in-charge (NCOIC) made a phone call to the host-nation hospital and within minutes the Life-Flight helicopter was in the air and en-route.

"This is my first time working with a foreign nation and the MEDEVAC procedures that follow. No issues, it went perfect," said 1st Lt. Christopher Walker, the 12th MDD operations officer.

Once the helicopter landed the wounded soldier was transported by the on-ground crew to the paramedics standing by with Life Flight.

"We are looking for a target time of 30 minutes. From receipt of the call to on-ground, it was just under 30 minutes," said Sgt. Brian Yapple, the 31st ADA Brigade senior medic.

This exercise focused on medical evacuation tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), it also focused on working with host nation civilian medical personnel.

"Working with our host nation, is a really great experience, we work with a conglomerate of pilots and paramedics from different walks of life and experiences, so finding a way to meet in the middle to make this Life-Flight exercise work is a great accomplishment," said Walker.

When asked about the effort and coordination that went into this event Yapple said, "It required patience and perseverance to pull this off, but the end state is pretty staggering."

"The exercise went quite well, I was very impressed by the coordination and the reaction by the security force (SECOFR) unit, building trust and building the understanding that we take our jobs seriously out here is very crucial," Yapple continued.

The Life-Flight Exercise is a quarterly effort that tests the coordination and ability of the U.S. military, local MEDEVAC, and host nation medical assets to work cohesively and seamlessly.

"We don't always get a live helicopter for this exercise; we have a one-hour window to work with so, this worked out perfectly," said Walker.

“The exercise went quite well, I was very impressed by the coordination and the actions by the SECOFR unit,” said Yapple. “Building trust and building the understanding that we take our jobs seriously out here is very crucial.”

The Soldiers of 12th MDD and 1-10 CAV look forward to continuing their relationship with host nation assets and future exercises.



In an undisclosed area in Southwest Asia, a Life-Flight helicopter lands on-site for a mock critical medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) of a soldier bitten by a poisonous snake (scenario). During the Life-Flight Exercise, soldiers assigned to 1-10 CAV stand-by to load their patient into the Life-Flight helicopter that will transport him to a facility that can attend to his wounds and provide the best chances for recovery/survival.



Above left, 1-10 CAV soldiers manning the (undisclosed) on-site aid station secure the patient on the litter and ready him for transport via the Life-Flight helicopter. At right, the soldiers load the patient to the Life-Flight helicopter for evacuation.