

DIMO strengthening medical ties across the world



Turkish medical personnel practice their newly acquired skills by loading up a live animal during their last two days of the first Defense Institute for Medical Operations Aeromedical Evacuation and Critical Care Transportation Course given at the Gulhane Military Medical Academy in Ankara, Turkey. (All photos are courtesy photos.)

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The Defense Institute for Medical Operations recently sent out an eight-member team to head-up and teach the first aeromedical evacuation and critical care transport course given in Ankara, Turkey.

The eight-member team included: Lt. Col. (Dr.) Todd Carter (co-team chief), Maj. Richard Conte (co-team chief), Lt. Col. (Dr.) Ronald Pauldine (physician), Capt. Jerry McCartney (nurse), Maj. (Dr.) Darvin Chin (physician), Tech. Sgt. Scott Woodcox (respiratory therapist), Tech. Sgt. Timothy Carentz (respiratory therapist) and Master Sgt. Marcus Vigil (animal lab clinician).

“DIMO’s goal is to build a process which facilitates a professional development and exchange among countries, with the goal of creating a shared desire to promote and implement Global Health,” said

Lt. Gen. George Taylor, Air Force Surgeon General.

The five-day course is designed to provide the advanced training necessary to care for critically ill or injured patients in a rigorous environment of flight.

“This course is designed to accommodate 24 students at a time. The Turkish military requested two back-to-back courses so that they could have 45 military members trained,” said Maj. Conte. “DIMO reconfigured this course to ac-

commodate 45 students by adding two instructors and one extra day to the course. This initiative benefited both the Turkish military and DIMO by cutting the costs, instructors needed, and TDY days in half.”

The course was taught to 45 Turkish military personnel including physicians, nurses, and medical technicians. The course was given at the Gulhane Military Medical Academy in Ankara, Turkey.

“Turkish medical personnel already have the capabilities to transport patients in

Major (Dr.) Richard Conte provides training on the portable IV pumps used during medical evacuation, explaining how dosages of medications can be given. The DIMO course included Turkish physicians, nurses and medical technicians.



peace time environments, but due to real-world terrorist threats they needed training on how to evacuate patients in an austere environment, using aircraft of opportunity,” said Major Conte.

The course curriculum consists of didactics, tabletop exercises and hands-on equipment stations for the first four days. The course culminates on the last day with a simulated patient mission exercise. During this exercise the students are divided into teams and assigned a patient scenario using live animals as simulated patients. These animals are constantly monitored ensuring that they are treated humanely at all times.

The students receive their patients from a holding facility, a simulated Expeditionary Medical Support Center, Combat Support Hospital, or Mobile Aeromedical Staging Facility. There they prepare their patients for flight. Each team then loads their patient into a field ambulance that drives them out to the flight line to a waiting helicopter. The patients are loaded onto the helicopter where patient care scenarios are interjected. The actual flight is simulated. From the helicopter the team performs a four-man litter carry to a waiting C-160 aircraft.

“Once all the patients have been loaded onto the C-160, the doors and ramp are closed, the lights are dimmed, and the EPU’s are fired up creating the stressors of flight as close to real world as we can get.



Lt. Col. (Dr.) Todd Carter gives a briefing on how to use the transportable ventilators. Equipment orientation is a vital part of the training provided.

In this environment, the teams are given emergency scenarios to deal with. The exercise is terminated after the C-160’s simulated landing,” said Major Conte.

Some of the Turkish aircraft used during the course included the CN 235 (Turkish dedicated medical transport aircraft), HH-60 medical evacuation helicopter, and C-160 cargo aircraft.

“The Turkish people were real receptive

and thankful for us teaching them and I’m proud that I was able to be a part of it,” said Sergeant Woodcox, a respiratory therapist from the 59th Medical Wing.

“Team selection was based on the individual’s proven superior performance and area of expertise,” said Col. Kerrie Lindberg, director of DIMO.

The aeromedical evacuation and critical care transport course is only one of many courses offered by DIMO. Other courses include HIV/AIDS planning/policy development, trauma and critical care para rescue and health law and ethics to name a few.

“DIMO courses bring people of various countries together to help build a common base of understanding among dedicated healthcare professionals,” said General Taylor.

Shortly after the team left Turkey, 36 people were killed and many others injured when a train derailed near Ankara. Students of the recent course anxiously awaited the call to respond, but were not needed; however, they stood ready.



Tech. Sgt. Scott Woodcox helps demonstrate the proper way to lift a patient on a gurney.

