



Expeditionary rescue helps save Afghan boy

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2/11/2008 - **BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan (AFP)** -- Air Force helicopters were airborne within three minutes of receiving a call to pick up a 5-year-old local national boy who had been struck by a vehicle near Jalalabad Airfield, Afghanistan, Feb. 2.

Members of the 210th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron received the request to medevac the young boy who was said to be in stable condition with a broken left knee and possible skull fracture.

"This is a testament to our aircraft maintainers," said Capt. Matt Calabro, a 210th ERQS helicopter pilot. "They do a fantastic job having our aircraft ready which allowed us to make the fast alert response."

With a visibility of two to three miles, the aircraft took off. However, once enroute, the weather became marginal, but within helicopter standards. Fortunately, the squadron's home station is Kulis Air National Guard Base, Alaska, and they're used to flying in inclement weather, Captain Calabro said.

After nearly an hour flight, the team arrived and immediately assessed the patient's status and prepared him for the return trip, only to realize his diagnosis was worse than briefed.

"He had two fractured legs, fluid seeping from the ears and nose indicating skull trauma, multiple signs of bodily trauma, a scalp laceration that had been stitched, and he was on a ventilator," said Tech. Sgt. Brandon Stuemke, a 210th ERQS pararescue. "The little guy was in pretty bad shape and needed a CAT scan, which is why he was being medevac to Bagram (AB). We don't know who got him to Jalalabad, but the Army medical team did a great job stabilizing him."

The patient's father was rushed to the site to be with his son and escort him on the helicopter back to Bagram Air Base's Craig Joint Theater Hospital.

As the helicopters departed about 40 minutes later, Sergeant Stuemke and Staff Sgt. Leovan Clanan, another pararescue on the crew, continued to administer medical care and worked to keep the patient sedated and alive.

"We kept his airway suctioned and monitored his blood pressure, pulse and ventilation," said Sergeant Stuemke. "We constantly relayed his vitals to our flight doctor in the squadron who provided treatment options during the return flight."

When it was all said and done, the patient had bilateral temporal fracture, left femur fracture, right lower leg avulsion and a fractured pelvis, Sergeant Stuemke said. The patient also underwent abdominal surgery to remove his lacerated spleen.

From the first call to the patient's delivery at Bagram AB, the mission took a little over two hours.

"I'm proud of the accomplishments of the combat search and rescue crew," said Lt. Col. Timothy O'Brien, the 210 ERQS commander. "I know this child would not have survived if not for the efforts of the medical personnel at Jalalabad Airfield, our pararescue and aircrew, and the hospital personnel at Bagram (AB)."

Sergeant Steumke visits the patient daily to see how he's progressing. "He's on track, but only time will tell. It would be pretty incredible if he makes a full recovery, I know we're pulling for him."

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