

379th EXPEDITIONARY MEDICAL OPERATIONS FLIGHT

MISSION

LINEAGE

379th Expeditionary Medical Operations Flight

379th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron

STATIONS

ASSIGNMENTS

379th Expeditionary Medical Group

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

HMS OCEAN, Persian Gulf (AFNS) -- Over the course of five days, medical personnel from the 379th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron and the Royal navy worked together to test their capabilities during coalition exercise Azraq Serpent, Jan. 23–27, 2017.

In a joint effort between the U.S. Central Command components, the United Kingdom Maritime Component Command and Commander Task Force 50, the purpose of the exercise was to

demonstrate and evaluate the ability of joint medical assets to establish and integrate damage control surgery onboard coalition vessels.

To meet these ends, teams of medical specialists cooperated to complete several objectives throughout the exercise which took place onboard the HMS Ocean (L12), the Royal navy's flagship.

"The basic principle was to simulate and practice receiving patients in the middle of the ocean via helicopter or vessel," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Sirikanya Sastri, a 379th EMDOS general surgeon and team lead for the participating mobile field surgical team (MFST) and expeditionary critical care team (ECCT). "We needed to make sure that if we ever do have a real world situation like this, we would operate with a smooth process: receive patients, triage them, and treat them."

The exercise pitted the MFST-ECCT with a plethora of difficulties, including working onboard an unfamiliar coalition vessel, and operating with a coalition medical team they had never worked with.

"It was challenging working onboard a ship," Sastri said. "It is a huge vessel, and has several levels and stairwells. We had to learn to navigate patients to the ship's medical ward, all the while dealing with ladders and stairwells."

While onboard, the MFST-ECCT personnel integrated with Royal navy medical personnel, requiring the teams to collaborate and assess their combined capabilities.

"The first thing we needed to do was understand who had what skills," Sastri explained. "The Royal navy medical team had personnel with varying degrees of knowledge, from those just getting past initial training to very experienced. We needed to know who had what skillsets and knowledge so that we could integrate and use those personnel to their full potential."

Following familiarization, the teams went to work. Various casualty drills were completed involving an array of injuries and scenarios that would change at a moment's notice to keep the teams on their toes.

"In a real world situation, a patient's condition can change in seconds," Sastri said. "So our teams needed to be able to adapt at a second's notice."

Through the various situations the teams encountered, both the MFST-ECCT and Royal navy personnel were able to test their capabilities, look at where things went well, and find areas that they needed to improve.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Neva VanDerSchaegan, the medical operations director for U.S. Special Operations Command Central Forward Headquarters, said the objective was to integrate the U.S. Air Force's medical capabilities with the ships-based capabilities to determine future

operations for similar type of platforms.

By sharing skills, knowledge and personnel, the teams were able to learn together and build relationships, showing that the coalition partners will be ready should the need arise. 2017

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Sources

Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.