

Coalition Provides Medical Outreach in Afghanistan

By Air Force Senior Airman Marc I. Lane
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HERAT, Afghanistan, Oct. 20, 2009 – Men, women and children from villages near here came to a cooperative medical engagement near Camp Zafar to receive medical care Oct. 6 through 8.



U.S. and Italian medical personnel apply lotion to an Afghan child's face during a cooperative medical engagement near Camp Stone, Afghanistan, Oct. 7, 2009. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Marc I. Lane
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Afghan soldiers and civilian medical personnel, with the assistance of Italian, Spanish and U.S. forces, treated more than 300 people every day of the event.

The Afghan army sent buses to multiple villages in the area to ensure villagers were able to reach the care site. People received treatment for basic coughs and colds, seasonal allergies, aches and pains, high blood pressure, parasites and various infections.

Col. Gulab Shirzad, medical commander for the Afghan army's 207th Corps, said he was glad to have the opportunity to use his skills to

help his fellow Afghans.

“It's a good way to help the people and show them that the [army] is here to help,” he said. “It also works to show that coalition forces here in Afghanistan are not here to take over. They are here to assist us, the people.”

An additional benefit for the community was the more than \$30,000 worth of medications, antibiotics and hygiene items purchased from the local economy and distributed to those in need.

“We enjoy having a chance to come out and meet and treat the people,” said Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Richard Ruck, flight surgeon for the 82nd Airborne Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team. “This is short-term care; unfortunately, we're not going to be able to give long-term medical follow up. For these issues, we can only identify and alleviate some of their symptoms. In cases of infections, we can provide a cure.”

Various specialists in pulmonology, dermatology, dentistry and pediatrics were available to provide care.

Italian medical personnel performed minor surgery on a man from Herat City who had a piece of foreign material lodged in the palm of his hand. They successfully removed the object, alleviating his pain.

“I’ve had pain in my hand for a long time,” the man said. “I could not afford surgery. I am very thankful for the aid.”

(Air Force Senior Airman Marc I. Lane serves with Public Affairs Mentor Team West.)

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Afghan National Army Col. Gulab Shirzad checks out a patient at a cooperative medical engagement near Camp Stone, Afghanistan, Oct. 8, 2009. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Marc I. Lane

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An Afghan man leads his son and father outside after they received medical care at a cooperative medical engagement near Camp Stone, Afghanistan, Oct. 8, 2009. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Marc I. Lane

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