

Public Affairs

Joint Task Force-Bravo

Soto Cano Air Base

Comayagua, Honduras

To Whom It May Concern:

I am team leader of a medical mission brigade that has been sending experienced medical professionals to remote areas of Honduras for years. The Alabama Honduras Medical Educational Network (AHMEN) has been working in the village of Las Marias on the Río Plátano in Gracias a Dios for about eight years. We provide medical care, install water filtration systems, and school support to the people of this village and the surrounding area.

I would like to call your attention to a praiseworthy event that occurred in April of this year. The Honduran military personnel and the Americans of Joint Task Force Bravo should be credited with a life-saving humanitarian mission. On April 24, 2017 a small child was brought to our clinic in Las Marias. This child was about 18 months old but was less than half its expected weight. The child was severely ill. He was malnourished, dehydrated and septic. Survival of this child was questionable even with the skilled care we could provide in Las Marias. This child needed rapid transfer to a qualified hospital and the care of a pediatrician. The nearest facility meeting the child's needs was in La Ceiba, fully 18 hours away. One of our Honduran doctors, Dra. Rosa Tercero, spoke with the troops in Las Marias and was put in contact with their commander in Puerto Lempira. Through further communication with command at JTF-B at Soto Cano, arrangements were completed for an American helicopter to evacuate the Honduran child to San Pedro Sula.

At the same time, one of our American physicians, Dr. Nath (Tom) Camp, the founder of AHMEN, also became dangerously ill. He was rapidly becoming jaundiced without fever or pain, an ominous sign. At his age of 75 years, we knew he needed specialized care. Our plan

was to take him to La Ceiba, the nearest city with sufficient runway length for medical evacuation back to Alabama. We made arrangements to take him downriver and then to La Ceiba the next morning. As his condition deteriorated we contacted JTF-B and secured permission for the evacuation of Dr. Camp along with the Honduran child. By satellite phone we were able to contact a Honduran doctor in San Pedro Sula. We knew her well and arranged for admission and treatment of both patients in San Pedro Sula. An American helicopter landed in Las Marias late that evening. Both patients were evacuated safely to San Pedro Sula where they received appropriate care.

This was the first time a situation anything like this has arisen for our organization. The cooperation between the Honduran and American military went far beyond what any of us could have expected. Care was professional and compassionate for both the small indigenous child and our elderly American physician. The extra effort and flexibility it took to accommodate Dr. Tom Camp assured our entire team that both our patients were in safe and competent hands.

On the behalf of our medical mission team, and the entire AHMEN organization, thank you for a job well done. We are all proud of the Honduran military and our American sons and daughters at Soto Cano and JTF-B. It is impossible to individually express my thanks to every person who played a role in the events of that day. Below are listed the names I was able to discover. I apologize for any omissions, but please know that in our hearts we are very grateful for everyone that played a part.

COL Brian Hughes JTF-B CDR

LTC Richard Tucker 1-228th CDR

CPT Russell Scott, C-CO 1-228th CDR

Medical Liaison officers:

Dr. Guillermo Saenz

Dr. Miguel Coello

Aircrew of the helicopter HH-60 (Black Hawk):

CPT Justin Martini

SGT Jacob Shumway

CW3 Emilio Natalio

SPC Charles Messer

The doctor on board was COL Douglas Lougee (MEDEL CDR)

MEDEL OPS:

CPT Jonathan Dukes

CPT Zachary Schmook

Sincerely,

Bruce McFadden, PA

Team Leader, April 2017 La Moskitia Medical Mission

Alabama Honduras Medical Educational Network (AHMEN)

Board of Directors

BCMCF@ME.COM

205-790-0600