

GUARDIAN EAST



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U.S. Army Reserve Doctors Save a Life in Greece



U.S. Army Maj. David Whaley, Col. Edward Perez-Conde, and Maj. Kirk Shimamoto pose outside their Task Force Medical headquarters, Dec. 15, 2015, which serves as the installation hospital at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, where they serve as part of the 345th Combat Support Hospital's medical staff with MNBG-E.

Story and photo by Lt. Col. Gilbert Buentello

Multinational Battle Group-East

Three U.S. Army Reserve doctors, attached to the 345th Combat Support Hospital out of Jacksonville, Florida, and deployed to Kosovo with Multinational Battle Group-East, were on a three-day pass when their military combat lifesaving skills and civilian medical careers came into play, Nov. 2, 2015, in Athens, Greece, when they encountered an immediate, life-threatening medical emergency.

U.S. Army Maj. David Whaley, a doctor of pharmacy from the 345th CSH, was in his hotel room for the night when they heard the loud crash outside.

"I rushed to the window just in time to see a sneaker fly up from the street below," he said. "My two companions and I immediately left the room to see if anyone needed help."

"Outside we saw people gathering around what looked to be a traffic accident," explained Whaley. "We were not prepared for what we were about to discover."

Whaley reached the accident scene first to discover that a motorcyclist had run into the side of a parked car, sending him flying off the bike. He had not been wearing a helmet, and as he lay bleeding on the street, it appeared that he was having trouble breathing. The victim attempted to stand on his own,

only to collapse back onto the street.

"There was blood everywhere," Whaley said. "Dr. Perez and I immediately began to evaluate the patient."

Col. Edward Perez-Conde, the brigade surgeon from the 308th Civil Affairs Brigade, out of Chicago, Illinois, and Maj. Kirk Shimamoto, a doctor of dental surgery from the 7234th Medical Support Unit out of Vallejo, California, immediately started to support for what they believed would be just a few minutes until local first-responders arrived.

"We started by clearing the motorcyclist's airway to give him the best opportunity to breathe," said Perez-Conde. "We had to use napkins, brought to us by on-lookers, to clear the blood from the patient's nose, mouth and ears, and then we immobilized his head in case he suffered a spinal injury."

Whaley cut off the cyclist's shirt and checked his chest for signs of further injury.

"The victim was pale and having trouble breathing," said Whaley. "We thought he may have broken ribs causing his lungs to collapse."

The doctors continued their assessment and discovered the victim also had a broken right arm and possibly two broken legs.

"He was bleeding from a large gash on the back of his head," Whaley said. "After inspecting the accident scene, it appeared the cyclist's head had crashed

through the car's side window before his body flipped over the vehicle."

Local police arrived on the scene in a matter of minutes, but were not equipped to relieve the doctors from their work. Without emergency medical technicians or an ambulance in sight, the minutes of field-expedient medical support turned into hours. The U.S. Army trio became very concerned for their patient's life, but continued to work to try and stop the bleeding.

"The cyclist's breathing became more labored although his airway was clear," said Perez-Conde. "At this point we discussed how to possibly treat a collapsed lung."

The doctors considered using a pocket-knife to pierce the victim's chest and insert half a ball-point pen between his ribs to allow either air or blood to escape through the opening.

"However, we didn't know how the police would react to a medical procedure using a pocket-knife, and we certainly didn't want to go to jail," said Whaley. "Fortunately for us, the victim's breathing began to improve and the color returned to his face."

Within a few minutes of his improvement, an ambulance finally arrived and the doctors assisted the EMTs with carefully placing the young man on a

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backboard and loading him into the vehicle. Two hours had passed since the Soldiers had arrived on the scene, and they were glad to be relieved and see the victim transported to a hospital.

“We are not sure of what happened to him [after that night] or how his injuries fared after receiving medical treatment,” said Perez-Conde. “In the moment, we were so focused on treating him and trying to save his life that we didn’t even notice if people were taking pictures or local media was around.”

The U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers may not have been immediately recognized for their efforts, but they do have the satisfaction of knowing they were able to sustain a young man’s life for nearly two hours after a motorcycle accident almost took it away.

The officers said their field medical tactical training, a course designed to teach the basics of tactical lifesaving skills under realistic conditions, served them well in this situation.

The 345th CSH medics and hospital staff teach Soldiers assigned to MNBG-E to perform emergency trauma care such as inserting airway adjuncts and applying tourniquets. The goal is to instill in the Soldier an ability to instinctively react to combat casualties without freezing up.

“We want to give service members the skills necessary to treat their buddies and save lives when something goes wrong, on or off duty,” said Perez-Conde. “This accident proved just that.”

In a foreign country and without the medical tools or equipment available in their facility, they had the knowledge and the training to respond to a non-military victim’s needs. At the completion of their pass, the trio then returned to their duties as a part of MNBG-E’s Task Force Medical, which serves as the hospital for Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo.

Join MNBG-E in celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day

By Master Sgt. Jenny Whichard

MNBG-E Equal Opportunity Advisor

The Department of Defense (DOD) celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day each year on the third Monday in January. After a long struggle, legislation was finally signed in 1983 with the first official federal holiday observance in January 1986. Dr. King was both the first African American and the first non-U.S. president to have an official legal holiday.

The theme “Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not A Day Off” remains the same each year and marks this holiday as a day of service. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is the only federal holiday observed as a national day of service, encouraging people to strengthen their communities and create solutions to social problems. It is part of the President’s national call to service initiative, United We Serve. The day represents an opportunity to start the year off right by making a positive impact in one’s community. What impact will you make in your community in 2016?

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



U.S. Army Col. Vernon Simpson, the MNBG-E Commander, presents German 1st Sgt. Greisinger the U.S. Army Marksmanship Badge, Dec. 21, 2015, at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, for qualifying on the M9 pistol and M16 rifle alongside U.S. partners. (Photo by Sgt. Gina Russell)



U.S. Army Soldiers race to complete a 4-mile ruck march on the early morning of Jan. 9, at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. The two-day competition included an evaluation on each competitor’s physical fitness, weapons knowledge, and ability to evaluate and evacuate a casualty. The competition’s NCOs and junior enlisted Soldiers represent the best of each U.S. Army unit serving as part of NATO’s Kosovo Force peace support mission in the region. (Photo by Sgt. Erick Yates)

The **2015 tax season** is upon us,

and the **MNBG-E Legal Center** offers free tax preparation and assistance to all U.S. service members and civilians entitled to legal assistance in Kosovo. The opening of Camp Bondsteel Tax Center is scheduled for January 25, 2016 and will be located at Camp Bondsteel JAG Office, Bldg 1330C Room 4N. Our JAG personnel will make tax assistance trips to CMLT and Film City every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month to provide tax preparation and assistance to the Soldiers at these locations. The Camp Bondsteel Tax center will take walk-ins and will make appointments.

To make an appointment, or for any information please call DSN 781-5087 or e-mail at: sasha.sokolovski2.fn@mail.mil



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