

**Health Service profile**

**OP SLIPPER/OP ENDURING FREEDOM**  
**84 Wing Detachment, Ganci Air Base, Manas, Kyrgyzstan**



Above: French Mirage fighter undergoing air-to-air refuelling from an RAAF B707.  
 Left: USAF–Korean medical facility.



Royal Australian Air Force 33 Squadron deployed two B707 tankers to provide air-to-air refuelling support over Afghanistan as part of the International Coalition Against Terrorism during 2002. About 75 Australian Defence Force personnel per rotation were based at USAF Ganci Air Base, Manas Airport, outside Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan.

Health support for the deployed personnel was provided by a coalition medical service, comprising health staff from the US forces, South Korea, France, the European Participating Air Forces (EPAF – Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway) and Spain. The ADF contribution was one RAAF Medical Officer working with the USAF 376th Air Expeditionary Wing's Medical Operations Squadron.

The Americans and Koreans combined to provide Level 3 health support, while

the EPAF and French established separate Level 1 and Level 2 facilities, respectively. The combined American–Korean facility functioned efficiently, with the Americans providing:

- ◆ general outpatient and emergency care,
- ◆ aviation medicine support,
- ◆ psychology and mental health services,
- ◆ bio-environmental health,
- ◆ public health services,
- ◆ pathology services,
- ◆ medical logistical support,
- ◆ medical administration (including aeromedical evacuation coordination).

The Koreans enhanced the USAF clinical capability with:

- ◆ an emergency department,
- ◆ specialist services,
- ◆ one operating theatre,
- ◆ a low-dependency ward,
- ◆ a high-dependency unit,
- ◆ pathology services,
- ◆ radiology services,
- ◆ dental services
- ◆ acupuncture services.



development and mass casualty exercises. While exercising emergency plans is taxing under ideal conditions, coordinating eight nationalities — more than half of whom do not have English as a first language — is an “interesting” experience. Despite the language difficulties (Australian v American medical terminology included), all nations worked well together. This interoperability of health care personnel is indicative of the benefits that can be gained from forming alliances for coalition deployments.



Flight-Med (Aviation Medicine) Staff (L to R): Staff Sergeant Ken Beadle (USAF), Hospital Corpsman second class David Rivera (USMC), Staff Sergeant Eddie King (USAF), Lieutenant Commander Jeff Bittermann (USMC), Major Joe Simon (USAF), Colonel Ed Le Blanc (USAF), Lieutenant Andrew Williamson (USMC), Wing Commander Mike Seah (RAAF).

The health needs of the camp were relatively low, allowing time for continuing professional

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