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BHR ARG Provides Needed Care in Indonesia

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JAVA SEA- Sailors and Marines teamed up with Indonesian medical personnel Oct. 19-21, to offer needed medical and dental care to local residents in Baluran, Indonesia during Marine Exercise (MAREX) 2009.

Navy medical and dental teams from USS Rushmore (LSD 47) and USS Cleveland (LPD 7) were transported ashore via Landing Craft, Utility (LCU) boats and CH-46E Sea Knight helicopters as the two ships sailed off the coast of Indonesia.

“We were here to work with local doctors and nurses to provide medical care for the Indonesian people,” said San Diego native Lt. j.g. Gregory Halol, Rushmore’s site leader. “This part of the world is very important. We are here building positive relationships with the Indonesian people.”

Once at the assistance site, U.S. personnel teamed up with their local counterparts and began treating patients for common illnesses. Dental care ranged from routine teeth cleanings, teeth extractions and oral cancer screenings.

“It was a great experience working with the Indonesians,” said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (SW) Michelle Lingao. “I now have a greater appreciation for the luxuries that I have because these people have very little and were very thankful for what we did for them. It feels great to give something back.”

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In addition providing care, Sailors and Marines distributed two pallets of medical and hygiene supplies from Project Handclasp to local residents.

Project Handclasp is the Navy's worldwide outreach program, providing humanitarian, educational and goodwill materials donated by American business, non-governmental organizations and individuals to those in need around the world.

"Every member of the Medical and Dental department looks forward to performing a humanitarian mission," said Lt. Cmdr. Jamie Miller, Rushmore's medical officer.

"The opportunity to practice operational medicine in an austere environment is a task that the Navy has trained its corpsman to do and the reason that many of us chose the Navy to pursue our medical careers. It is our goal to render the best healthcare services possible to the Indonesian people."

Rushmore is part of the Bonhomme Richard Amphibious Ready Group currently transiting the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. The ARG reports to the Commander, Amphibious Force Seventh Fleet, Rear Adm. Richard Landolt, who is headquartered in Okinawa, Japan.

For more news on Bonhomme Richard ARG visit www.navy.mil and www.cpr7.navy.mil.