

Balad medics aid villagers

BALAD, Iraq — Millions of people live without proper medical care most of their lives, and American soldiers and airmen in Iraq are trying to change that one person and one village at a time.

“The 5-year-old with cyanotic heart disease broke my heart,” said Maj.

by Staff Sgt. A.C. Eggman

(Dr.) **Brian Crownover** after returning from a recent Army medical civil action program visit. “I saw so many diseases that were unchecked in Iraq that would’ve been immediately treated in the United States.”

An Air Force team recently joined an Army team of 25 physicians and

assistants from the 11th Aviation Brigade to treat nearly 100 patients at the village of Al Jadeed, about eight miles south of Balad.

“When we got to the village and started setting up and seeing all the patients, we forgot all about our fear. We just wanted to do as much as we

could,” said Master Sgt. **Melodia Woolford**, a medical technician deployed from Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., as part of the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Squadron’s Detachment 1.

Dr. Crownover, also deployed from Offutt, treated 25 Iraqis ranging from 6 months to 75 years old. He treated everything from severe heart disease to asthma, and said many people had illnesses that had gone unchecked.

Many Iraqis have a clinic in their village. But most are charged a fee for service, and patients receive substandard care, he said. A lot of the Iraqis are issued medicines that aren’t appropriate for their ailments. What care they do receive is often not consistent, and many people can’t afford to pay.

“The Iraqis need a lot of help,” Sergeant Woolford said. “It is a gratifying feeling to be able to help; it helps narrow the gap between the American military and the local nationals and sends a positive image that we are here to help and not to take over their country.”

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Maj. (Dr.) Brian Crownover provides a hands-on lesson on how to properly brush teeth during a medical civil action program visit to Albu Assad, Iraq. Air Force physicians and technicians joined an Army medical team to provide care for local residents in January. Dr. Crownover deployed to Detachment 1 of the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Squadron.