

377th Always Ready for Emergencies

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Soldiers from the 377th Medical Company, 18th Medical Command, spend a week at a time here on Camp Walker. They are on call 24 hours a day for that week. The soldiers respond to and train for medical emergencies.

There are 10 UH-60 Blackhawk Crews from the 377th that rotate in from Camp Humphreys. The crew lives in a barracks right on the airfield. "Each crew member carries a cell phone, the only time we leave the compound is to chow and flights. Even during a training flight we are ready for a mission," said Spc. Rick P. Draper, Crew Chief of "Blackhawk 918."

The crew of "918" is on duty till Aug. 29. On Aug. 23, they went on a training flight from Camp Walker to Kambo, a small hamlet on the coast of South Korea. "Training missions are important. We go out and practice aircrew coordination. To maintain our proficiency in our job skills, we have to continuously train. These skills are easily degraded if we are not up there flying," said CW2 Edward C. Simmons, pilot of "Blackhawk 918."

During the preflight the pilot in command, Capt. Walter S. Cummings, goes over weather conditions, flight plans and call signs with the crew. The crew has a close bond, because they live and work in such tight surroundings. The captain mentions that it is the Crew Chief's birthday and the crew gives him some good-natured ribbing.

"What we do, on a training mission, is pick a spot in our area of operations and fly out, going over different scenarios as a crew. These guys are the best and training keeps them the best," said Cummings. "In an emergency we can be in the air in 10 minutes or less. We cover a lot of ground so we have to be ready all the time."

"The 377th provides services to United States Forces Korea and also to the host nation so we never know where or what we will be called up for. Whatever it is we are ready to assist," said Sgt. Karl E. Swartz, Flight Medic of "918."

Participants of "UFL 2001" can rest assured the best medical help is only a helicopter flight away.