

# CAP's Tennessee Wing

## Silent partner in unusual rescue

By Kristi Carr

**N**o one was missing. There was no hurricane or flood. Yet thousands were seeking assistance, and the Tennessee Wing was there to help provide it. This “rescue” became a segment on CBS’ “Sixty Minutes,” but there was no mention of the role assumed by Civil Air Patrol, a true silent partner.

What was the nature of this disaster that drew thousands to Knoxville, Tenn., some driving as many as 200 miles to get there? They came for free routine medical care — an infected tooth, an overdue mammogram, a pair of eyeglasses. Most had jobs and families; what they did not have was adequate health insurance.

### Partners in service

These drop-in medical clinics are being offered around the country and around the globe by an all-volunteer charity, Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corps (RAM), founded by CAP Lt. Col. Stan Brock. RAM provides the medical personnel, equipment and supplies, but the organization looks to other volunteers to provide ground support. That’s where CAP comes in.

“We’re trained in disasters,” said Tennessee Wing Commander Col. Barry Melton, “but our eyes were opened to needs in everyday life when we assisted RAM.” His wing has supported RAM’s clinics in the



state, providing such services as controlling crowds, unloading and setting up gear and running errands.

“Basically, we help with everything other than medical,” explained Maj. Darrell Sexton, commander of Tennessee Wing’s Group 1, which garnered praise from RAM for its on-site effectiveness.

“These clinics get our CAP folks out in the community,” Melton added. “We’ll continue to support RAM’s expeditions here in Tennessee, and it would be nice if other CAP wings got involved across the country.”

### The RAM-CAP connection

“RAM’s involvement with CAP goes back many years,” acknowledged Brock, “when Maj. Gen. Rick Bowling (CAP national commander from 2001-2004) was a colonel and commander of the Tennessee Wing. Especially because of RAM’s airborne capabilities, he considered RAM an asset.” Both RAM and the Tennessee Wing recruited members from each other, which is how

Brock came to join CAP.

In the beginning, RAM's work was largely overseas, in South and Central America. But now 60 percent of RAM's clients are in the United States, where medical care is limited not because of location but because people simply cannot afford it. "We've cut back on overseas operations because we're overwhelmed by health care needs in America," said Brock.

## Past, present, future

British by birth, Brock has a colorful history, including a stint as Marlin Perkins' stand-in,

wrestling alligators and tangling with snakes in the early days of the long-running TV show "Wild

Kingdom." His impetus for RAM came in his youth, he says, when he worked as a *vaquero*, or cowboy, in South America on the world's largest ranch.

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Lt. Col. Stan Brock uses a C-47 that saw service in the Normandy invasion to help deliver both medical supplies and personnel for RAM, which stands for Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corps.

Above: Both supplies and medical personnel are airdropped into an "expedition" location, even in the U.S. It's more efficient for the medical volunteers, plus "it gives us practice so we'll be ready when an emergency hits," says Brock.

He and the other *vaqueros*, all Indian, were 26 days on foot from the nearest doctor.

"That's where I learned about places that had no health care," he said, "and no hope for getting it."

It wasn't until he came to the U.S., however, that Brock could finally implement his plans for providing medical services, parachuting in both supplies and medical personnel, to those who could not access them otherwise.

RAM's biggest challenges now are laws that prohibit a medical provider from delivering services in a state where the provider is not licensed. Brock is working to change that, testifying last April before the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee. In the meantime, Tennessee, with its

"Volunteer Healthcare Services Act," is the only state that allows medical personnel to provide emergency services in the state even if they are not licensed there. "All they have to do is show up, give us a copy of their licenses, roll up their sleeves and



Photos courtesy of Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corps

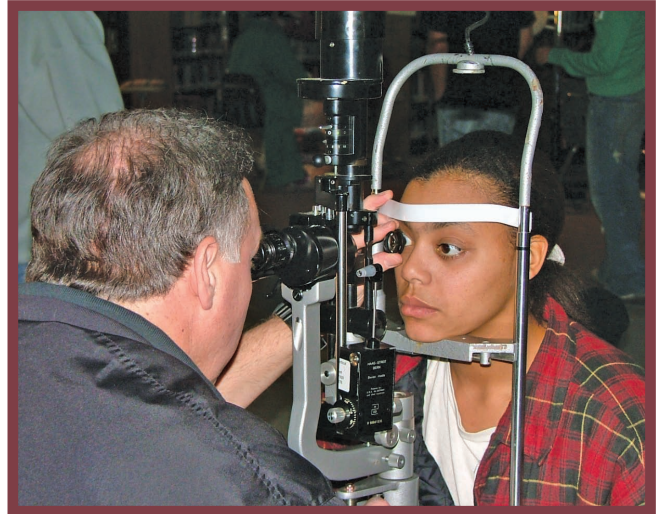
get busy,” said Brock.

Brock’s medical “expeditions” are continuing to be held in the U.S. within the parameters of existing law. As CBS reported, Brock was surprised at the number of people who came when he set up the first “expedition” in the U.S. “I don’t know if it’s because we’re getting better known or health care in this country is getting worse,” Brock told CBS’ Scott Pelley.

## On-the-ground support

As for CAP, Brock notes, “I wish we could work more closely; we have a lot to offer each other.” He sees RAM and CAP supporting one another in disaster situations. “I’ve always held out that, under certain circumstances, CAP might want to use RAM’s help,” he said. The two did interface during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

When it comes to RAM’s medical clinics, Brock is adamant. “We *need* CAP as our on-the-ground support system,” he said. ▲



Medical “expeditions” are typically held over a weekend and clients are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Medical volunteers from RAM, a nongovernmental organization, have seen thousands of the 47 million Americans who are underinsured or have no health insurance at all.



Former Civil Air Patrol cadet U.S. Air Force Maj. Nicole Malachowski speaks at a November 2008 Women’s Memorial event honoring Women Airforce Service Pilots.

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