



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Europe Regional Medical Command Delivers World-Class Care via Polycom Video to U.S. Military Personnel in Europe and Their Families

Industry

- Federal Government
- Healthcare
- Military

Customer use

- Telemedicine
- Remote triage, evacuation and specialty consults
- Training and continuing medical education
- Support for field clinics during troop deployments and end-of-tour processing
- Administrative meetings

Polycom® RealPresence® solutions

- High-definition video rooms
- Video recording and streaming
- Universal video-enablement, virtualization management, and firewall traversal solutions for anywhere, anytime collaboration
- Desktop and mobile software

Benefits

- Virtual exam rooms deliver world-class primary and specialty care to remote patients
- Improves outcomes and accelerates consultative care by eliminating distance
- Extends medical expertise by virtually sending specialists to where they're needed most
- Video exams replace costly travel
- Streamlines administrative communications



The Europe Regional Medical Command (ERMC) is home to all U.S. Army healthcare services in Europe. Through 17 Army military treatment facilities in Germany, Italy, and Belgium—and by supporting other Army medical outposts throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East—the Medical Command provides primary and specialty care for approximately 85,000 military personnel and their families, in addition to staff in American diplomatic posts scattered across nearly half of the civilized globe.

The beating heart of ERMC is Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in southwestern Germany. Landstuhl is the largest American hospital outside of the United States and the only medical evacuation and referral center for Americans serving in “the sandbox”—the military’s term for desert combat theaters in the Middle East and Africa.

“We’re trying to preserve the experience of visiting the doctor in his office by letting patients see providers in what we’ve termed as virtual exam rooms using high-definition video,” says Arabe. “I want the technology to stay out of the way, and the Polycom infrastructure makes it possible.”

Arlan Arabe, ERMC’s Video Network Center

This vital care is delivered in part via a Polycom video collaboration network. ERMC relies on an array of Polycom video conferencing and collaboration solutions to provide remote consults in 24 medical specialties, pre-operative exams, and assessments of traumatic brain injuries.

ERMC personnel also conduct administrative meetings with colleagues across Europe over video while healthcare staff at Landstuhl, and throughout the region, rely heavily on interactive and recorded video for training. With its strategic use of video collaboration, the ERMC cuts transportation costs, saves time, and improves access to world-class care for hundreds of thousands of service personnel and their families.

High stakes and thousands of miles

Video collaboration is essential to the Europe Regional Medical Command because the stakes are so high and the distances are so great. “Video has allowed our specialists to engage in ongoing face-to-face planning with field clinicians throughout Europe to ensure patient transfers go smoothly,” says Arlan Arabe with the ERMC’s Video Network Center. “This capability helps us improve outcomes.”

For family members stationed overseas, the ability to access specialty care without having to travel hundreds or thousands of miles can mean a world of difference. In one case, cardiologists in the United States remotely examined a newborn’s electrocardiogram, concluding the infant could be treated in Landstuhl. “Before, we would put mother and child on the next plane out to the states,” says Arabe. “Now, we can eliminate the rush, the disruption, and the cost.”

Even in non-emergency cases, both the patient and the Army benefit from avoiding travel. “The reason telemedicine plays such a big part is the sheer distance soldiers have to travel,” explains Arabe, who notes some surgeries require a pre-op examination which once required a trip to Landstuhl. Traveling via military transport from Italy might take a week and generate daily expenses of more than \$2,100. “Enabling our providers with this technology, we now do many of those exams over video, which reduces the cost of care and keeps the patient

from having to carve a week out of their schedule just for an exam.” These efficiencies mean taxpayer dollars can be allocated for other urgent needs, such as additional resources or advanced diagnostic equipment.

For patients, the process of engaging in a remote consult seems like any other doctor appointment. “We’re trying to preserve the experience of visiting the doctor in his office by letting patients see providers in what we’ve termed as virtual exam rooms using high-definition video,” says Arabe. “I want the technology to stay out of the way, and the Polycom infrastructure makes it possible.”

The ERMC also helps out when units are deploying or returning home from a tour of duty. “There’s a surge in clinic workloads when units are transitioning in or out,” Arabe explains. “We help process troops remotely so local resources aren’t overwhelmed.”

Removing the barriers of time and distance

In addition to providing world-class care, ERMC leadership conducts its administrative meetings almost exclusively over video. “When you have 17 clinics in three countries,” says Arabe, “there’s no practical way to meet with everyone in person.”

The Polycom infrastructure is also crucial to training. “Budget cuts have transformed in-person training into video-based training,” says Arabe. “Medical expertise is centralized in Landstuhl, but providers aren’t. Training extends this knowledge to more locations.”

Medical care on the move

Because clinicians may be called into action at any time, Arabe’s staff makes it easy for any provider to securely engage in video collaboration. “If someone has a need and they have an iPad, we tell them to download the Polycom® RealPresence® Mobile app,” says Arabe. “It’s a better solution than taking a government laptop off-premises and having limited access and capabilities. And with Polycom’s firewall traversal solutions in place, we know we’re still protecting the military network.”

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Arlan Arabe, ERMC's Video Network Center

Arabe says his staff is happy to expose newcomers to the benefits of video collaboration. “It usually just takes an initial training session,” he says. “Once they learn what they can do over video, they’re hooked.”

About Polycom

Polycom is the global leader in open standards-based unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) solutions for voice and video collaboration, trusted by more than 415,000 customers around the world. Polycom solutions are powered by the Polycom® RealPresence® Platform, comprehensive software infrastructure and rich APIs that interoperate with the broadest set of communication, business, mobile and cloud applications and devices to deliver secure face-to-face video collaboration in any environment.

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