

Greetings from B dad

A little over a week left. We have been cruising along here in B dad. It is starting to get pretty warm here. Highs in the 80s to 90s and lows in the 70s. Time to go my friends.

We had another couple of Angel flights over these last few weeks. A “sticky bomb” was employed against an MRAP and blew a hole through the armor. The blast struck a young soldier right in the face. They brought him in but unfortunately there was not much we could do. We got a heart rhythm and blood pressure back in the trauma bay, and took him to the OR, but it was futile. We called it on the OR table. It was really sad. The members of his unit were all crying as we wheeled him up to the OR. Another young soldier came in recently as well with a GSW to the head. We got him back for a brief moment in the Trauma bay, but he also ultimately died.

I had a smattering of appendectomies over the last few weeks. I also took care of a contractor from South Africa that presented with a bad bowel obstruction. It was a pretty big operation and after surgery he went into acute alcohol withdrawal, which has made for quite a roller coaster ride. He is finally coming around though. I asked him how much he drinks, and he replied until the bottle is empty. I asked him what his poison was and he responded whatever is in the cupboard. He was really sick for several days after surgery in the ICU, but he eventually came around.

Another interesting case I have been involved in is an Iraqi police officer who sustained a 60% burn. He has been in the hospital for three weeks or so, and we have operated on him four or five times. He has been really sick over the last few weeks, but he also is starting to come around. During this time, we have not heard from his family at all, and no one knew where they were or how to reach them. They just showed up at the hospital today. They have been looking for him this whole time. They were so grateful to us. The patient’s wife began kissing Roy’s (the burn surgeon) feet, when the translator relayed the events of the last few weeks to her. The family was all crying and hugging Roy. It was pretty touching.

There is a current push to send the Iraqi trauma patients away from our CSH. The command here is trying to force them to employ their own health care system, because we are not going to be here forever. This has been a bit of a problem over the last few weeks. Over the last few years the Iraqi government VIPs have been treated here, and the Iraqi people know that they can get excellent care here. So we still get calls to take care of the cousin of the Aunt of the Minister of Transportation. I took care of one fellow who was the nephew of the Minister of Linguistics. They pull all the strings to try to get into our hospital. I was on call a few weeks ago and a little boy came in with his father. The boy was playing on the roof of their house and grabbed a power line. He sustained a terrible electrical burn to his arm, and the father took him to the Iraqi hospital. The surgeons treated him appropriately but ultimately the tissue in his arm became necrotic. They told the father that the boy needed an amputation. Dad did not like this so he left the hospital against medical advice and took his son to an outlying forward surgical team. Our policy has been “life, limb, or eyesight”, so the boy was brought in and the surgeon told the father that he needed an amputation. The father acquiesced and the boy

underwent an amputation. After surgery they evacuated the boy and his father to us, and at this point he did not have any threat to his life or limb. The life saving procedure had been performed, and the father was doing his best to get his son into the American system. I informed him that we were going to have to transport the boy to the Iraqi facility and the Dad got very upset with me. It was a tough call, but the boy was out of danger and did not need to stay in our facility for his recovery. Upon explaining this to the Dad, he got pretty fired up. We transferred him. Again just recently one of the Ministers of Something in the Iraqi government was in an IED blast and both his lower extremities were mangled. He was taken to Medical City, the Iraqi hospital in Baghdad, and again the surgeons there told him that he was going to need an amputation. He got all fired up and left coming to our hospital thinking that we could save his legs. He got bilateral above knee amputations here, and we will hopefully be sending him back to Medical City soon. The Iraqis really want us to stay here. They understandably want the best of both worlds, but it isn't going to happen. I have spent almost six months here and the vast majority of patients that I have taken care of here have been Iraqi.

My last surviving member from the 86th Combat Support Hospital (now we are the 10th Combat Support Hospital) left recently. Matt is a great guy and has taken great care of his patients here. I will definitely miss him. I am pretty jealous. He is going to be drinking several beers for me during the Final Four, Mint Juleps for the Kentucky Derby, and Scotch on the rocks for the Masters. He also said that he'd have a few Bloodies for me at Easter even though he doesn't really like them. His little boy learned to walk while he was over here, and I know that he is ready to get home and see his family.

I got my last haircut yesterday along with the string therapy. My buddy Roy took a video of the stringing and put it on facebook. It was pretty funny actually. The barber went through an entire ball of twine creating two eyebrows on my face. I was tearing up like a little 10yr old girl, but it was worth it.

I technically have two calls left in this dump, and hopefully there will not be much to write home about.

Will keep in touch

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