

St. Joe ER doc back from war



Brannan Family (St. Joseph Medical Center Photo)

Dr. Scott Brannan, an emergency physician at St. Joseph Medical Center in Towson, is back on the job after spending half a year at a U.S. combat hospital in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

The commander in the U.S. Naval Reserves and his medical team treated wounded U.S. and coalition soldiers; members of the Afghan army and police; civilians and even some insurgents. Many of the patients suffered extreme injuries sustained in bomb blasts and often required the amputation of limbs.

St. Joe's website has the full story. Here's a snip of e-mail correspondence between Dr. Brannan and his St. Joseph emergency colleagues while he was still serving in Afghanistan:

We were probably the busiest of the three main military casualty hospitals in Afghanistan, and our survival rate was 98%, which is incredible considering the type of injuries we saw. Sadly though, a few of our patients would later die at Landstuhl or Walter Reed, so the true survival rate to hospital discharge is a bit lower than 98% and many of these soldiers will deal with significant morbidities for the rest of their lives. IED blast injuries can be truly devastating. More than a handful of significantly injured patients received 50+ units of blood products during their damage control surgeries. Unfortunately, traumatic extremity amputations from IED blasts were almost a routine occurrence. Despite the tragedy and deaths, our hospital helped a lot of injured soldiers and Afghans. I think it's incredible how a young soldier can be injured on the battlefield in the villages, fields, or mountains of Afghanistan, and in 30 minutes be medevaced to a trauma facility capable of providing first rate medical care that is equal to the care delivered in the U.S. It was truly an incredible experience, and the honor and privilege of my life to play a small role in helping those young soldiers.