

## Todd Smith, MD



Palm Desert native and Eisenhower Medical Center anesthesiologist Todd Smith, MD says life looks a "whole lot simpler" after returning from a six-month stint on the front lines in Iraq from January to June 2006. As a member of the United States Air Force, Dr. Smith served at Balad Air Base, one of the largest airbases in Iraq, just 68 kilometers north of Baghdad.

According to Dr. Smith, the Balad Air Base handled all major traumas. *"All the big stuff got sent there,"* explains Dr. Smith. *"It was actually the most actively attacked base."* Dr. Smith says that while they saw both American and Iraqi patients, the carnage of wartime surgery wasn't the most difficult aspect of his service. *"It's a war zone—so, you don't know what is going to happen next, or when the next attack is going to happen,"* shares Dr. Smith. *"Mentally it is tough. You are away from home, in a hostile environment, and that goes on 24 hours a day. When you come back to the United States, things are a lot simpler. The daily stresses of life don't seem so difficult. You have an entirely different perspective."*

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[PHOTO dir="assets/news/story/Spring2009Pg28-2.JPG" align="Center" caption="TOP: Dr. Smith arrives in Iraq. ABOVE: Dr. Smith (right) in surgery at Balad Air Base, Iraq." width="585"]