

MAJOR TODD BUCHHEIM

U.S. Army Major Todd Buchheim spent his most recent deployment to Camp Bucca, Iraq serving as a Combat Operations Officer, supporting a hospital engaged in detainee healthcare.

In the role of Operations Office, Buchheim was responsible for running all the non-medical hospital operations, he said, a task which turned out to be something of a challenge.

When Buchheim arrived at Camp Bucca in May of 2008 there were more than 18,000 detainees at Camp Bucca, he said. And with so many detainees, there were a wide range of medical issues that the hospital staff needed to treat.

While there wasn't a lot of trauma related healthcare to provide, the hospital treated a whole range of other health issues, from standard ailments to helping treat Iraqis who had previously lost limbs in the war between Iran and Iraq, he said.

"Our hospital had radiology, a physical therapist, prosthetics, an eye doctor, a six bed emergency room, a four bed Intensive Care Unit, and a 34 bed intermediate care ward...Anything that a person can do in the states, we did there," he said.

"It was a good strategic mission," Buchheim said of the assignment. "I felt good about that aspect."

The mission, in part, was based around the idea that by working with and providing medical treatment for detainees the U.S. Military can demonstrate that they are in Iraq to help, he said. Part of the detainee program at Camp Bucca also included teaching job skills to the detainees as well.

"So by treating detainees they can go back into the field and spread word, basically," he said.

Over the course of the deployment the number of detainees at Camp Bucca dropped from 18,000 to just 4,000, he said.

The best part of the deployment, he said, was "learning how to interact with other people, learning another culture, and preventing losses in the future as opposed to having to treat them."

Buchheim earned a Bronze Star for his service in the deployment.



U.S. Army Major Todd Buchheim earned a Bronze star while serving in Iraq during a 2008 -2009 deployment.