

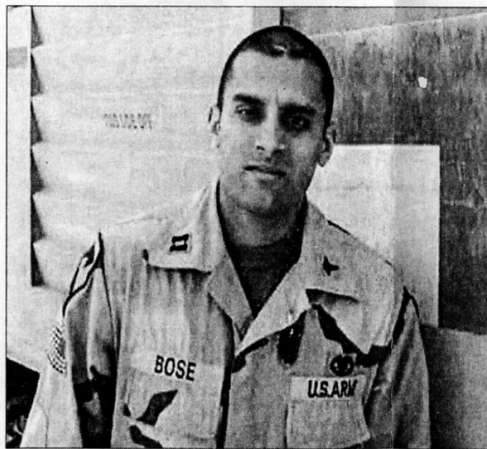
## Ace Surgeon Sudip Bose Provides Emergency Care in Iraq

By a Staff Reporter

Sudip Bose, a lanky 30-year-old son of Indian immigrants from Kolkata, did not expect to find himself in Iraq. Bose, who is perhaps the only board-certified physician in emergency medicine for 135,000 Americans and an unknown number of Iraqis, grew up in Illinois and went to Northwestern Medical School.

In 1996, after his first year of medical school, he took a look at his tuition bill and joined the Army, accepting a deal where the military would pay for a year of education for every year of service.

"It was a tough decision but you have to pay back the debt somehow, and I could have ended up with about \$200,000 of debt. My parents were struggling with it," he told Philip Robertson, who wrote a long profile of him for Web magazine *Salon*. "There were a couple of choices; I could work 23 hours a day and pay it off or pay it off at the age of 50. You don't know what's going to happen so you



Sudip Bose, a surgeon with the U.S. Army in Khadimiya, Iraq

don't know if it's a good decision or a bad decision. If you lose an arm or a leg it's a bad decision."

In six years, he will be nearly debt-free, having paid it back in an honorable way by serving the

country.

In Iraq, Bose is "now treating a steady stream of Americans and Iraqis for an enormous range of injuries, many of them horrifying," *Salon* reported.

Bose, who is respected for his intelligence — he scored highest in the country when he took the board examinations — works long hours when the workload goes up, performing emergency surgery on the critically wounded. Because the patient load can spike so quickly, he spends his time between a forward base in Khadimiya and the combat support hospital, shuttling back and forth.

"But there still isn't enough of him to go around," writes *Salon*. "To his colleagues, who have enormous respect for him, he is a star."

Bose often treats wounded fighters who came into the emergency room spitting and glaring at the doctors. "You could tell they didn't want to be there."

"It was the harshest comment he made about people who were working hard to kill and maim his friends," *Salon* reports.

However, being a soldier isn't what Bose is cut out for, apparently.

"He's really smart, but he's so dumb about the Army," platoon

commander Chris Melendrez told *Salon*. He said everyone is supposed to qualify on at least one weapons system. "I think he went out with the M16 and finally qualified after seven attempts. They might have said, 'OK, he passed.'"

Bose finds it incredibly funny. "Yeah, you know, if I have to start fighting, we're going to be in a lot of trouble," he told *Salon*.

When asked what upset him the most about practicing medicine in a war zone, Bose said: "Pronouncing people dead is the most disturbing because they came here just like I did, waved goodbye to someone, expected to be back and then they don't come back."

"The blood and guts is OK, I can deal with that, but there is a level of attachment with a patient that is not there in the States. It hits closer to home here. My patients are people in this unit, the people I ate breakfast with that morning and now they're injured. That has happened. But you just detach and do your job, just detach and do your job."