

BRADENTON HERALD

Treating Hussein was unexpected. Be ready for anything, Iraq vet tells Sarasota crowd

[By James A. Jones Jr.](#)

March 05, 2023 5:50 AM

Dr. Sudip Bose, 49, says his life has sometimes had a Forrest Gump-like flavor.

The fictional Gump, portrayed by Tom Hanks in the 1994 movie, seemed to have an unwitting knack for popping up in places where history was being made.

In the Gump universe, it was hip dancing with Elvis, “ping-pong diplomacy” between the U.S. and China and desegregation of the University of Alabama, among many other encounters.

For Bose, who visited the Bradenton-Sarasota area Friday as the keynote speaker for the Tidewell Foundation’s 14th annual Signature Luncheon, his Gump moment came when he treated Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

Bose was an Army battalion surgeon when the former Iraqi dictator was captured by U.S. soldiers.

It was something that Bose couldn’t have imagined doing during his 15-month tour of duty in Iraq.

Until then — and afterward — Bose’s tour of duty was filled with treating members of the American military who were wounded in action.

During the second battle of Fallujah, Bose provided medical care in the streets while being protected by snipers overhead.

His combat tour of duty in Iraq from 2004 to 2005, incidentally, was one of the longest of any physician since World War II.

It’s the valor of U.S. service members that Bose wants to continue to highlight in his post-military life through his nonprofit The Battle Continues.

“You don’t see their faces or hear their names,” Bose said of the war veterans, but he wants their sacrifices to be remembered.

As for Hussein, Bose’s job was to give him a checkup.

“That was pretty unexpected and happened on short notice. He was pretty cooperative. A lot of times we have to be ready for agitated patients,” Bose said.

“He had been hiding in a hole and had been on the run for several months,” Bose added.



Iraq War combat physician Dr. Sudip Bose shares some of his experiences as the doctor who examined Saddam Hussein after his capture.

A desire to give back

Bose’s military career, which saw him advance to the rank of major, came in response to the doors that he saw open for his parents when they moved to the United States from Kolkata, India, in 1965.

“I heard these amazing stories of the people who helped my parents in their new country,” Bose said of his desire to give back.

After medical school, he began a 12-year active-duty Army career.

“I knew I wanted to go into emergency medicine and I knew that the military had the best,” he said.

Friday, Bose brought his story of thankfulness, hope, and preparation to Tidewell Foundation’s 14th annual Signature Luncheon at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Sarasota.

Thriving through adversity

Bose wanted to share his thoughts on how to thrive and stay grounded in the face of overwhelming circumstances, drawing on the strength, courage and resilience that can be found inside everyone.

Just as the military trains during peacetime to prepare itself should war break out, the average citizen should also prepare to face unexpected events, including end of life, he said.

Everyone faces stress, whether it is on the battlefield, on the job, with finances or in an operating room.

“I am taking lessons from the battlefield and emergency room to handle stress better,” he said.

As an ER physician, Bose said he has to stay grounded and calm in the face of overwhelming circumstances to save lives. He believes anyone can learn to manage stress, anxiety and burnout.

It’s important to be prepared and more resilient before the next inevitable crisis arrives, he said.

Today, Bose is a physician, a medical correspondent for major news outlets and an entrepreneur. He serves as medical director for City Emergency Services in West Texas.

Double board-certified in emergency medicine and emergency medical service disaster medicine, he is often sought after for his expertise in preparing for and responding to public health and mass casualty incidents.

His message of preparation applies to leaders in times of crisis or to anyone struggling to return to normal.

Tidewell Honors Veterans

The luncheon also recognized the Tidewell Honors Veterans Program, which provides specialized care for veterans and their families and ensures their service and sacrifices are remembered and honored. In 2022, the program served 1,079 veterans.

“Our program is based in a simple premise: thank you and welcome home,” Stacy Groff, vice president for volunteer engagement, said in a news release.



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