

AMERICA'S PROTECTORS

Mission Accomplished, Shriners Doctor Returns From Iraq

(NAPSA)—Prayers for his safe return have been answered; the yellow ribbons marking his absence have been untied; and, after four months of serving his country in Iraq, Craig Ono, M.D., is back at work at Shriners Hospitals for Children, Honolulu.

The pediatric orthopaedic surgeon returned home to a Shriners-style hero's welcome. On May 10, hospital staff and patients presented Ono with their own version of a "Medal of Honor" in recognition of his selfless efforts on behalf of our country.

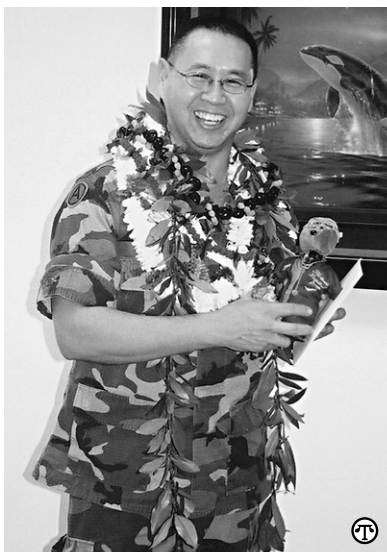
"The Honolulu hospital ohana (family) is very proud of Dr. Ono," said Tom Schneider, hospital administrator. "He is our hero and we are very grateful for his safe return from active duty in Iraq."

Ono was sent to Iraq in December of 2003 to replace the team orthopaedic surgeon of the 945th Forward Surgical Team, an Army Reserve unit based at Fort Snelling, Minn.

A forward surgical team has three general surgeons, one orthopaedic surgeon, an emergency room, an operating room and intensive care unit personnel, and is responsible for initial assessment and management of casualties.

Ono's team was stationed at Al Asad, an abandoned Iraqi air base located in a desert area between Baghdad and the border with Syria and Jordan. "The team has 20 soldiers and we are designed to provide immediate treatment to trauma patients," said Ono. "The soldiers in the unit are top notch and continue to be dedicated despite being in Iraq for close to a year."

One of many things Ono missed while away from home was the color green. "Everything up there was brown: our clothes, the buildings. There were not a lot of trees, either."



Dr. Craig Ono of the Honolulu Shriners Hospital is home after serving in Iraq.

Ono, his wife Claire and their three daughters are glad to be reunited. For Ono, being away from family, friends and the Honolulu Shriners Hospital was one of the worst things about Iraq.

"They all seemed to have held up well. My family is supportive of what I do and that makes all of the difference in the world," Ono said.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607 or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child that Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.