



The Old Ironsides Report



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Army veterinarian removes tumor from bear in zoo



Sadir, a 32-year-old brown bear at the Baghdad Zoo, recently benefited from surgery by a U.S. Army veterinarian.

Photo by Sgt. Christopher Stanis, 1AD PAO

By Spc. Chad Wilkerson
372nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A tranquilizer gun is a rare type of weapon to see in central Baghdad. Although most U.S. Army servicemembers in Iraq carry assault rifles or machine guns, the veterinarians' "weapon" of choice at Baghdad Zoo is a syringe dart filled with anesthetic.

This tranquilizer is not meant to cause damage, however, but rather as an aid in repairing damage caused by various medical problems.

Soldiers from the 352nd Civil Affairs Command, an Army Reserve unit from Riverdale, Md., part of Task Force 1st Armored Division, alongside soldiers from Coalition Joint Task Force-7's 72nd Medical Detachment, have taken steps to bring about major overhauls at the Baghdad Zoo, and have begun to bring the zoo up to a functional, modern standard.

Sadir, a 32-year-old female brown bear at the zoo, has already benefited greatly from the presence of U.S. Army veterinarians when she was anesthetized to surgically remove a cancerous tumor on her abdomen.

The tumor was becoming infected and abscessed, so we anesthetized her with a dart gun, made some incisions and removed it," said Col. Mark Gants, CJTF-7 veterinarian. "There were a few blood vessels in there that we had to tie off to get the bleeding stopped, then we closed it all up."

Gants was head surgeon on the project, and was assisted by Spc. Erin McLoughlin, veterinary technician from the 72nd Medical Detachment, and Lt. Col. Jose Lozada, veterinarian with the 352nd Civil Affairs Command.

"Obviously, when you have a malignant tumor, it is not good. You need to get it out of there," McLoughlin said. "A cancerous tumor is dangerous, and you want to prevent it from spreading."

As the procedure took place, McLoughlin acted as Gants' "second set of eyes and hands," she said. She was able to help him finish the surgical procedure more quickly and efficiently.

With limited lighting, operating on site in Sadir's enclosure at the zoo, the team prepared the bear for surgery. After anesthesia was administered, McLoughlin and one of the zoo's Iraqi staff members shaved the fur from the area surrounding the tumor.

Gants made incisions around the tumor, and began removing it as a whole, but the challenge came after the mass was removed. The blood vessels that were cut when the tumor was extracted were filling the wound with blood, and it took some time to get the bleeding stopped. On top of that, Lozada said, the tranquilizer began wearing off.

The team had to move quickly to suture the incision, clean up and get out of the cage. With Gants sewing from one end, and McLoughlin from the other, the team safely accomplished their mission, and was out of the enclosure before the bear was fully conscious.

The zoo, Gants said, had limited equipment, so scalpels, clamps and other supplies required for surgery had to be borrowed from the 28th Combat Support Hospital.

The surgery was deemed a success by the team, and Sadir will be closely monitored during her recovery, Lozada said.

The main motivation for U.S. Army involvement at the zoo, said Lozada, is the training of the staff and veterinarians who will be responsible for the animals and facilities there after the U.S. soldiers are gone.

"The veterinarians in Iraq are victims of professional isolation," said Lozada. "Animal care here is important because it preserves an invaluable resource. Vets have been neglected just like much of the nation of Iraq, and we have to help rebuild them too."

Veterinary books, journals and magazines, essential to the continuing practice of the zoo staff, have been unavailable in the past, said Lozada. Allowing zoo staff members to be involved in surgical procedures and see vaccination processes will help bring them up to speed, he said.

The future of the Baghdad Zoo is looking bright, said Lozada, and despite being older than many of the soldiers in Baghdad, Sadir is on her way to a full recovery."

Oddly Enough

McDonald's annoyed by dictionary word 'McJob'

CHICAGO (Reuters) - Dictionary publisher Merriam-Webster has hit a McSore Spot with McDonald's Corp. over the inclusion of the word "McJob" in its latest Collegiate Dictionary.

The latest edition of the dictionary defines "McJob" as "a low paying job that requires little skill and provides little opportunity for advancement." In an open letter sent to the media on Friday, Jim Cantalupo, chairman and chief executive of the world's largest fast-food chain, took issue with the inclusion of the word and definition.

The definition "is not only an inaccurate description of restaurant employment, it's also a slap in the face to the 12 million men and women who work hard every day in America's 900,000 restaurants," Cantalupo said.

Safety Tip

When running on BIAP or any FOB

Wear reflective vest or belt

Hydrate

Recon route for hazards

Do not wear headphones

Vehicles will maintain 10 mph when passing troops

Chaplain's thought for the day

A likeable guy

Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

—Luke 2:52

A local newspaper reported the death of a semi-pro baseball pitcher. His name was Elmer "Lefty" Nyenhouse. He was a likable guy. The article said that he had been active in his church and a respected member of his community until his death at 88.

"Lefty" pitched against some top-notch, semi-pro teams. Knowing that Elmer was a devout Christian, some of his opponents tried to rattle him in tense situations (like when the bases were loaded with no outs).

They would drop to their knees by their dugout and shout, "Better get on your knees and pray, Elmer!"

"Lefty" took it in stride. But those who heckled him actually respected him.

Today, as always, some will heckle you for what you believe. But make sure it's not because you are unpleasant, critical, and hard to get along with.

May you increase in favor with God and men.

This Day in History

Nov. 12, 1948

Japanese war criminals sentenced

From HistoryChannel.com

On this day in history, Nov. 12, 1948 Japanese war criminals were sentenced.

An international war crimes tribunal in Tokyo passed death sentences on seven Japanese military and government officials, including General Hideki Tojo, who served as premier of Japan from 1941 to 1944.

Eight days before, the trial ended after 30 months with all 25 Japanese defendants being found guilty of breaching the laws and customs of war. In addition to the death sentences imposed on Tojo and others principals, such as Iwane Matsui, who organized the Rape of Nanking, and Heitaro Kimura, who brutalized Allied prisoners of war, 16 others were sentenced to life imprisonment. The remaining two of the 25 defendants were sentenced to lesser terms in prison.

Unlike the Nuremberg trial of German war criminals, where there were four chief prosecutors representing Great Britain, France, the United States, and the USSR, the Tokyo trial featured only one chief prosecutor--American Joseph B. Keenan, a former assistant to the U.S. attorney general. However, other nations, especially China, contributed to the proceedings, and Australian judge William Flood Webb presided. In addition to the central Tokyo trial, various tribunals sitting outside Japan judged some 5,000 Japanese guilty of war crimes, of whom more than 900 were executed.

Nov. 12, 1990

Akihito enthroned as emperor of Japan

On this day in history, Nov. 12, 1990, Crown Prince Akihito, the 125th Japanese monarch along an imperial line dating back to 660 B.C., was enthroned as emperor of Japan two years after the death of his father.

Akihito, the only son of the late Emperor Hirohito, was the first Japanese monarch to reign solely as an official figurehead.

His father, Hirohito, began his reign in 1926 as theoretically absolute, though his powers were sharply limited in practice. After the Japanese defeat in World War II, Hirohito was formally stripped of his powers by the United States and forced to renounce his supposed divinity. With the signing by Japan of the amended constitution of 1946, the emperor became the official figurehead of Japan.

Akihito caused controversy in 1959, when as heir to the Japanese throne he broke a 1,500-year-old tradition and married a commoner, Shoda Michiko, the daughter of a wealthy businessman.

Upon becoming emperor, Akihito, an amateur marine biologist and accomplished cellist, commenced a new Japanese era, known as Heisei, or "Achieving Peace." The imperial couple have three children: Crown Prince Naruhito, born in 1960; Prince Akishino, born in 1965; and Princess Nori, born in 1969.