I once my active duty was up, and I've been looking forward to it.

Sports medicine is a natural for Scheel, a self-described sports junkie. "When I was growing up," he says, "ESPN was always on at our house. And I always played sports." Becoming a doctor always seemed to be in the cards for Scheel. "In school, I was always interested in the sciences, and in interacting with people. Those interests were instrumental in my choosing a career in medicine, since that gives me the opportunity to have both."

Scheel found practicing medicine on the battlefield to be an interesting, though intense, experience. His patients included members of the U.S. military, as well as those from other coalition forces, including Australian, British and Iraqi, and a significant number of Iraqi civilians.

"We worked in a large, permanent military medical facility that was built on the site of the former Saddam Hussein International Airport – now Baghdad International Airport," he recalls. "I was the only orthopedic surgeon there. I'm glad I did it. Although it was a very rewarding experience, it's also one I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. We saw injuries that were really dramatic; things you wouldn't see in even most intensive care hospitals. For example, trauma care for injuries resulting from gunshots, falls from helicopters – things like that."

While there, he treated a number of soldiers engaged in elite special operations. "Members of the Navy SEALs and Special Forces would sometimes get injured while performing overnight maneuvers, so they'd be brought to the unit in the middle of the night. We'd treat them, and they'd want to get back out there and complete their missions."

With his military duty behind him, Scheel remembers a much different environment than the one that's presented to the public. "We treated lots of Iraqi citizens, and the majority of them were positive," he says. "During his reign, the majority of citizens lived in absolute poverty. We're helping them change things for the better."

Happy to be back home, Scheel looks forward to a day-to-day experience that will be pleasantly challenging and much more tame than his time in Baghdad. That includes spending as much nonwork time as possible with his wife Kelly, also a North Hills native, and their four-year-old son, Noah.

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