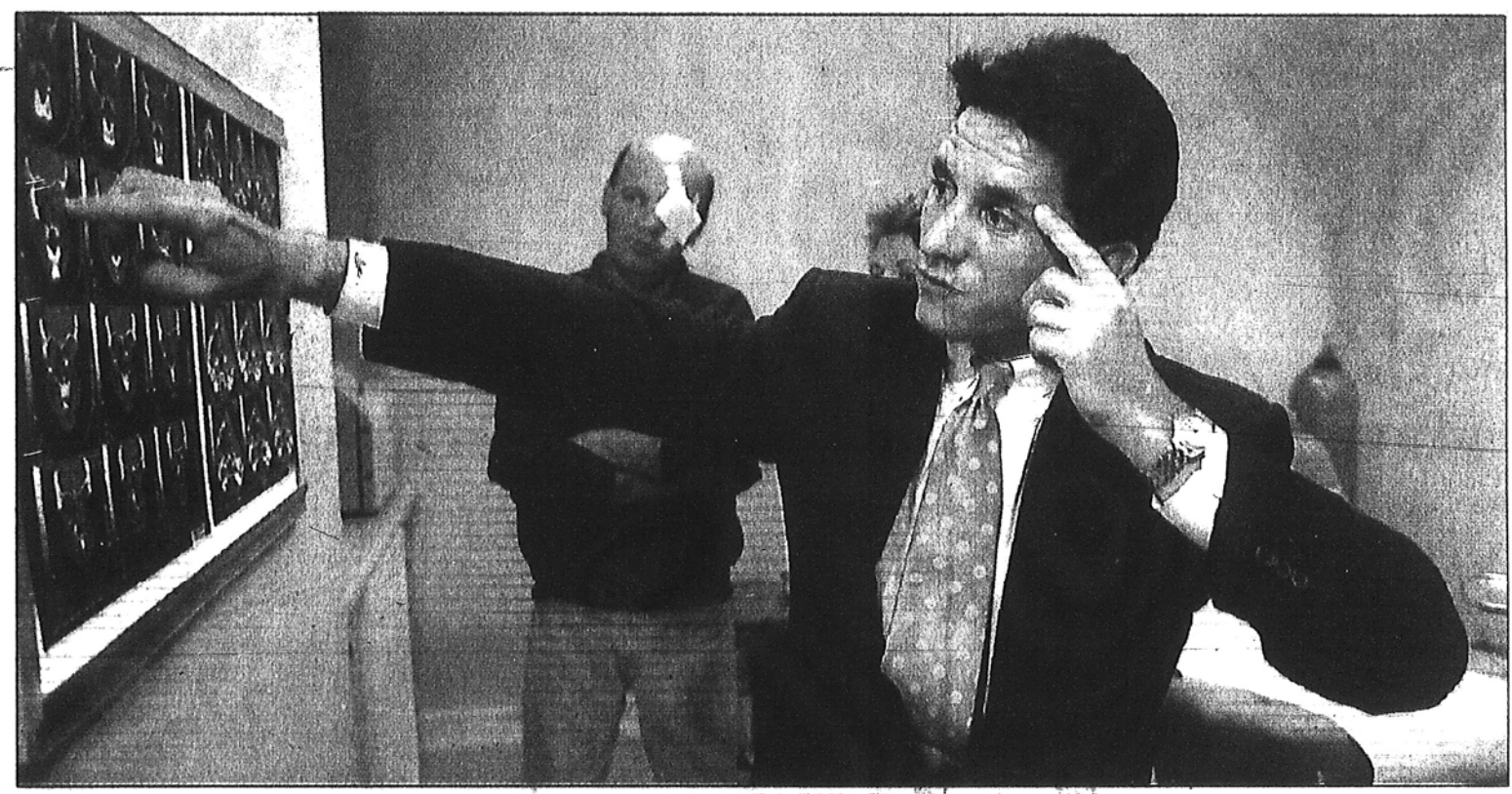


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Phoenix, Arizona



Victoria Buckner/The Arizona Republic

Plastic surgeon Daniel Shapiro uses results of a CAT scan to show Danijel Buljan what a sniper's bullet did to his eye and face and to explain what Shapiro can do for him.

Valley doctors aid Bosnia's wounded

International group transports 2 war victims for treatment

By David Cannella
The Arizona Republic

Danijel Buljan was working for peace in his homeland of Bosnia-Herzegovina when a sniper's bullet pierced his left eye, dropping him to the ground. He lay there for nearly 24 hours.

In a place where battling factions of Muslims, Serbs

and Croats have transformed the peaceful landscape into a war zone, Buljan was attempting to do what he could to ease the suffering.

Now, he pulls back a patch of white gauze to reveal the gaping hole where his eye had been. It's a terrible disfigurement that couldn't be treated adequately in his homeland, where there aren't enough doctors to keep

people alive, much less perform cosmetic surgery.

So Buljan was brought to the Valley earlier this month under a program sponsored by the International Organization for Migration, a humanitarian group based in Geneva.

He will receive free care from Scottsdale Memorial Hospital-North and from plastic surgeon Daniel Shapiro.

"I am glad to be here," the 45-year-old father of five

— See VALLEY, page A-4

2 killed after plane crashes on takeoff

Witnesses say craft failed to gain altitude

By Kelly Pearce
The Arizona Republic

A New River couple was killed Sunday afternoon when their single-engine plane crashed after takeoff from a flight school near Lake

top of a saguaro cactus and landed upside-down without exploding.

Phil Blume, 60, the manager of a nearby recreational-vehicle park, identified the victims as friends and former church associates. Hoyt Phelps



Valley doctors treating 2 wounded in B

— VALLEY, from page A1

said through a translator during a recent interview in Shapiro's Scottsdale office.

Buljan added that he hasn't seen his family since the attack. His wife thought he had been killed until he managed a telephone call to her from a clinic in Sarajevo, Bosnia's capital.

"It's a dirty war," he said. "After peace for so long, people are killing each other. It's crazy."

Buljan, a Catholic, had been working as a translator between the Muslims and Croats when he was hit June 15. He and four Croats had just delivered medical supplies to a local clinic and were waiting for French peacekeeping representatives.

When the gunfire erupted, the Croats fled, leaving Buljan bloodied and near death until he was found nearly 24 hours later by a Muslim patrol. He was taken to a clinic near Sarajevo, but doctors could not save his eye.

They were lucky to save his life as

he slipped in and out of a coma for a week.

Vows to return to help

Although he was nursed back to health, having battled infection and the loss of blood, his face and his life will never be the same.

He's not bitter about his injury, and he pledges he'll be back, working toward peace again one day.

Shapiro, a young and energetic surgeon who graduated from the University of Arizona College of Medicine and who trained in plastic surgery at Cornell University in New York, said he's happy to donate his time and expertise to repair the injury.

"It's a pretty dramatic wound," he said. "He's lucky to be alive, I'd say."

The first of two expected operations will take place after the first of the year, Shapiro said. It will involve taking bone, likely from Buljan's ribs, and building a new cheekbone and eye socket. A false eye will be implanted, and his nose will be straightened. He also needs a set of upper dentures.

"They'll make me handsome again," Buljan jokes.

The first operation, expected to take eight to 10 hours, will be for the major reconstruction. A second procedure two to three weeks later will be for touch-up work.

"We should be able to restore the appearance of his face and eye," Shapiro said. "That's what you want to do here, create the illusion of an eye."

A second war victim will be coming to Scottsdale Memorial Hospital-Osborn for neurosurgery after the first of the year, said Sandra Peterson, director of physician-practice services for the two hospitals.

Rasim Bucaj, a 43-year-old man who suffered a spinal injury July 6, is expected to arrive later this month.

She said the International Organization for Migration sent several medical profiles of war victims in need of special care.

"I tried to match up cases with the expertise some of our doctors have,"

Peterson said.

He'll be treated by Dr. James Maxwell of Scottsdale, but the extent of his injury is unclear.

'It's been very hard'

Clarissa Azkoul, operations manager for the organization's office in Washington, D.C., said 180 war victims from former Yugoslavian regions have been treated in the United States since the program began shortly after war broke out.

"We've been able to return those from Croatia, but because the war in Bosnia is still going on, they haven't been able to return," she said. "It could be a few more months until things have stabilized enough for them to return."

Although Buljan has been enjoying

Factions battle in Bosnia as holiday truce is broken

Muslims, Croats, Serbs seek land gains before talks resume

The Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — Muslim-led government forces and rival Croatian militias battled Sunday for territory in central Bosnia-Herzegovina, while Serbs shelled Muslim areas in the east, according to radio reports.

Sarajevo remained without electricity after a key power-supply line was knocked out in fighting last week. A cold rain added to the chill in the heatless city.

Croatian radio reported fierce fighting between government troops and Croats near Kiseljak, west of Sarajevo. It also reported infantry and artillery battles in central Bosnia around Busovaca, Vitez and Novi Travnik.



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Although Buljan has been enjoying

his stay in the Valley — he's living with Andy and Marina Radman of Mesa — he hopes to return home as soon as he can.

"It's my first Christmas away from my wife and children," he said.

"It's been very hard. I telephone and write."

After being treated in the Muslim clinic, Buljan was taken to a hospital in Sarajevo and then into the organization's program, which took him on U.S. military planes to Frankfurt, Germany, and then to Andrews Air Force Base, Md. From there, he came to Phoenix.

Marina Radman, who learned to speak Croatian from her parents, volunteered to play host during his stay and to translate for him.

Buljan is filled with wonder when-

ever he enters a grocery store or restaurant.

"You have so much here," he said. "It's very nice, very good, and very rich."

He enjoys steak dinners the most, he said. Wearing blue jeans and a pullover shirt, he said America is a wonderful place.

A silver cross on a chain around his neck is all he has from his home. He thinks about his family each day, however. And he hopes to return soon.

"I have to go back and work for peace," he said. "I don't know. It's so complicated. I'd like to get my children out of that hell."

"The fighting just keeps going on, and I don't know when it will ever end."

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