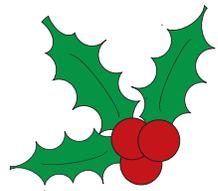




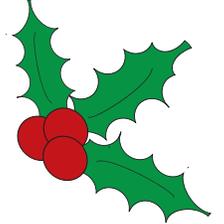
INJURED MARINE SEMPER FI FUND

DEC 2009

ISSUE 8



SEASON'S GREETINGS



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR WOUNDED,
OUR CRITICALLY ILL, AND THEIR FAMILIES!



**Transportation
Assistance**



**Housing
Assistance**



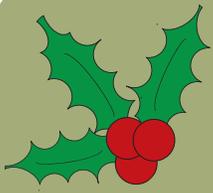
**Specialized
Equipment**



Family Support



Service Member Support



A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Dear IMSFF Friends and Family,

Wishing ALL a very happy Holiday Season! Please know that we are forever grateful for the outpouring of support that we have received from across the US and overseas.

The needs of our wounded and critically ill service members and their families continue to be great, and we continue to need your help. Words will never be enough to express our gratitude to each and every one of you for supporting IMSFF's vital mission. God Bless all of you for your patriotic hearts!! Wishing you and your family a healthy and peaceful holiday season!

With Deepest Gratitude,
Karen Guenther
Founder & Executive Director

SGT CHRISTOPHER FESMIRE, USMC

My name is Christopher M Fesmire, and I am a disabled Marine vet. Due to a mine explosion outside Al Qaim, Iraq in 2004, both of my legs were amputated above the knee. I live in the mountains of central Colorado with my wife, Willow; our two cats, and our German Shepherd. The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund (IMSFF) has been there for my family since I was injured - helping to take care of us body, mind, and spirit.

When I was first injured and still a patient at Walter Reed, the IMSFF provided grants to ease the difficulties of my wife, Willow, routinely travelling across the country and the time off work she took to spend time with me at the hospital. Needless to say, having my loving wife close by while I was recuperating greatly helped my mindset.

The IMSFF also helped, and has helped every injured Marine in the same situation, build a specially adapted house in partnership with the non-profit Homes for Our Troops. On another occasion when the traditional spring mattress my wife and I slept on was causing me to wake up at night in spasms of severe neuropathic pain through my legs, the Fund provided a memory foam bed that has greatly reduced my pain in general and I can now sleep through the night. As you can see, the IMSFF has helped take care of my body.

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund Sports Program is a wonderful boost to the spirit. I knew my life had changed when I lost my legs but I was going to try to not let it change me. Four months after being wounded I attended an adaptive ski clinic for wounded vets and this opened my eyes to the fact that with the aid of adaptive equipment I could lead an active, full, healthy life. The adaptive equipment is an equalizer that enables me, in certain environments, to be "normal." I do not feel so "disabled" when floating through powder snow up to my chest on my ski or cranking up a ridge line at ten thousand feet above sea level on my mountain bike. There is no greater provider of adaptive equipment to injured Marines than the IMSFF Sports Program. It makes a huge difference to my quality of life.

It is time for a little reality check. I am not trying to intimate that every day is rosy. There are good days and bad days, just like everyone else. It has not been easy. However, the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund has been there to try and make the good days outnumber the bad. Thank you to all of you who helped make the good days.



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COVER ME UPDATE: IMSFF Documentary on Combat Operational Stress

We are happy to report that over **40,000** copies of “Cover Me” have been distributed to our veterans and families. The video has reached the White House, overseas, and all across the US. Our video has touched lives across services, generations, and around the world. This is an ongoing project and we will continue to order more copies to reach far and wide, with an aggressive push to get this documentary into the hands that need it most. Please remember that “Cover Me” is also available on our website and can be viewed and shared at a moment’s notice:

<http://www.semperfifund.org/resources.html>

The target audience includes Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, Chaplains, Nurses, Doctors, combat mental health teams, and the family members and communities who support our military.

The responses below have been overwhelming and it is evident that the impact of this DVD is more than we had ever hoped for. Please help IMSFF get the word out about the importance of viewing “Cover Me”. Thank you for believing in this critical project!

“We’re trying to reduce the stigma associated with Combat Operational Stress or PTSD. Our belief is, if you’re affected by those things, that it is a wound. It may not be an obvious wound but it’s just as debilitating as a wound to an extremity or to the core of your body. And so we’re trying to help as much as we can to get those people back in battery and get them back into the fight.”

~ General James T. Conway
34th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps

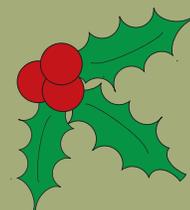
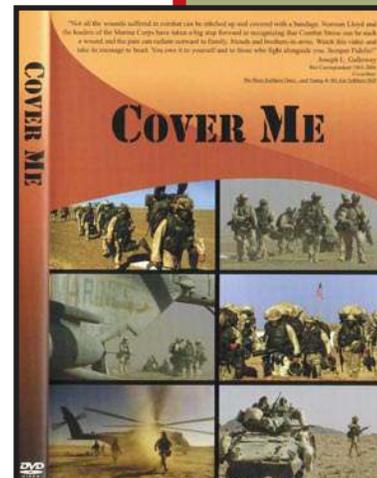
“This is one of the best videos I have seen to date underlining the importance of asking for help and reassuring Marines and Sailors that they will not be punished and their careers will not be adversely affected if they seek mental health resources for symptoms of PTSD. I applaud you for this wonderful resource and believe it will allow many who are reluctant to seek help to find the courage and motivation to do so.” ~ Mental Health Counselor

“We will be able to use this video to help many of the Marines/Sailors here. Thank you for all of your support and encouragement to those in the trenches. May God continue to bless you in all you do. Peace.” ~ From Group Chaplain/USN

“May I get a copy of this? My nephew served twice in Iraq, and took his life when he came home. He could not find anyone to take him seriously. It is a shame for things like this to happen to our men when they come home. He has friends who fought with him that are having the same problem and I would like to give this to them.” ~ Mr. B

“Thank you so much; the information in the video is on point. I want to sit down with my wife and let the video tell her the story. You see, I served two tours in Iraq as well as the Gulf, and our daughter and son-in-law served two tours as well and we can’t seem to tell it in the way your video does.” ~ MSgt V

“I am a Marine Veteran myself and so is my friend. He saw much more than I did in Iraq and I think this video would do him a lot of good to see. Thank you for making this video available to all who may need it! Semper Fi.” ~ Cpl N



MARINE CORPS MARATHON RUNNERS AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH!



We are still basking in the warmth of the overwhelming success of the MCM, and of all the emotions, joys and triumphs of the past weekend. We've come such a long way! In 2004, IMSFF had 4 runners who raised close to \$20,000 for IMSFF's mission. This year, we were the largest charity at the MCM with over 600 athletes hitting the streets, over 50 from our own Team Semper Fi. Whether in hand cycles or on foot -- these athletes helped to raise awareness of the sacrifices of our injured and critically ill Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, and their families. Our Community Athletes helped to raise a record breaking \$350,000 for IMSFF's mission!!



Our weekend started out with a tour and dinner at the historic 8th and I Marine Corps Barracks on Friday night, dinner donated by Maggiano's. 8th and I staff truly went above and beyond in making this a very special evening. Newly injured patients (50-60 including family members) arrived from Walter Reed and Bethesda to spend a memorable night with our Team Semper Fi, IMSFF folks, and senior Marine Corps Leadership. It was a night to remember for all in attendance. SAIC also brought an exciting surprise to the night with an unexpected donation of \$50,000. Bringing our grand total for the MCM weekend to \$400,000!!!



Saturday night found our Community Athletes & TSF together at a dinner hosted by HP. Our top three fund-raisers for the event were Major Bill Conner, USMC, at \$14,000, Holy Cross ROTC raising \$10,000 and Robert Biancavilla raising \$9,500. LtCol Rob Scott, USMC, also joined us, he is ending the MCM race with \$26,355 in donation over a series of events, bringing his total contributions since 2008 to over \$56,000. Donohue Corporation was also thanked for donating the lodging for TSF and family members for the MCM. As General Gray explained the significance of what these community athletes and TSF athlete-members had accomplished, there was not a dry eye in the house. The night ended with warm wishes and lots of encouraging hugs for those participating in the MCM the following day.

Sunday morning -- race day -- started at 0430, with everyone preparing for the start of the 34th annual MCM -- the "People's Marathon". Hand cycles were assembled in near total darkness; runners gathered at both starting lines (26.2mi and the 10K) and an estimated 250,000 onlookers claimed their viewpoints from along the racecourse. The anticipation was palpable. The laughter, excitement, and sheer thrill of being a part of something this extraordinary touched each and every one of our athletes, and all who were present.

After the race, the medals, the sense of accomplishment of crossing that finish line, and tears & hugs abounded. Later, back at our TSF tent in Charity Village, hundreds of athletes, family members and volunteers gathered for a post-race party and massages provided by the Ultimate Sports Massage Team. It was difficult to say 'goodbye' to each other -- one reason



why our tent was the last to close down. The camaraderie, new connections, and friendships made, created an atmosphere of strength, inspiration, and deep bonding of those individuals who believe in the IMSFF cause.

MCPO JAMES “WILL” WILSON, USN

May 8 2003, is a day that will stay burned into my mind forever. Like most who have suffered an immediate traumatic injury I was completely unprepared for what happened that day. As the Ordnance Master Chief for Carrier Air Wing Seventeen based in Oceana Virginia, I had boarded the USS Enterprise (CVN 65) out of Naval Station Norfolk for the day to ensure ammunition had been pre-positioned for our detachment of HH-60 helicopters to fly channel guard as the mighty warship exited the channel out to the Chesapeake Bay and beyond to undergo sea trials after an extended period of overhaul and repair. Upon verification of ammunition and briefings with Weapons, Air and Deck Departments I looked out to sea and saw tell tale storm clouds quickly approaching the ship. With my work complete, I decided to disembark and make the 70-mile drive back home to Franklin, Virginia where my wife, two children and I lived in a grand old home built in 1892. I quickly discovered much to my chagrin, that this was not to go as planned. As I strode across the ship's hangar bay and approached the brow, a massive steel walkway connecting the ship to the pier, I could feel the wind and its increasing intensity.



As I was three quarters across the brow the winds tripled in intensity and the moored aircraft carrier acted as a sail and stretched the mooring lines to their full extent. As I looked down, I could see the brow roll back, disengage, and hang on one corner. It was then I was faced with a split second decision to jump to the platform on the pier or attempt to make it back the length of the brow to the ship. It was Mother Nature that made the decision for me that fateful day and with an onslaught of high winds the brow separated and fell some 30 feet to the concrete pier below. I found myself prone on the pier hearing “man down, man down on the pier” being piped over the ships intercom as I lay there with a broken neck and 2 broken legs.

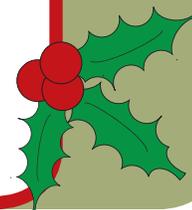
This was the beginning of the long road back to health. With the unwavering support of an incredibly strong family and a host of civilian and military physicians I have come near full circle.



After an unsuccessful attempt at limb salvage and the subsequent amputation of my right leg I found myself on crutches participating in the 2 Bridges Run, a 5K in Pensacola Florida. Later, after intense focused rehabilitation and with the support of family, friends and the Semper Fi Fund, I participated in and finished, the 2009 Florida Ironman Triathlon. It's been a long and intense journey back, and I certainly couldn't have made it alone, but if an old Navy Master Chief can make it then maybe you too can dig down deep, focus your eye on the horizon and take those first few steps into the rest of your life.

Thanks Semper Fi Fund....the positive work you do assisting recovering Marines and Sailors has made an incredible impact on my life as well as countless others, I could not have done it without you. Keep up the outstanding effort.

Respectfully yours,
Master Chief Petty Officer James “Will” Wilson



THANK YOU!



“Confused and dazed while our son was fighting for his life, you assured us we would not be alone”

I cannot thank you enough for your phone call yesterday. It came at a time when I was feeling low.

From the day we arrived in Bethesda 4 months ago, the Semper Fi Fund people have been here for us. Confused and dazed while our son was fighting for his life, you assured us we would not be alone. Not really knowing what the SFF was, and just trying to cope, we just nodded our heads.

Slowly, as Alex got better we moved to Palo Alto TBI rehab facility and met your wonderful volunteer at Palo Alto. He stopped by a couple times a week to motivate Alex and just say hi. Now at our third hospital, you have been nice enough to follow up and make sure I was OK. I didn't want to ask for more help, as the SFF has helped with lost wages, airfare for my daughter to come to Alex's bedside while he was so critical in Bethesda and his dad with hotels, etc. I really appreciate it.

Because of all the family support you assisted with, we have been able to constantly be there and have been blessed to watch Alex's amazing recovery. I know we are one of the lucky ones!

I have included some pictures for you to see Alex's progress, throughout these past months. He came in from Afghanistan with burns, multiple breaks to the jaw, a severely torn up arm, his leg amputated below the knee and TBI. Because of his brain injury, it was unknown when he would wake up and what potential he may have. I am so happy and ecstatic to report he is doing so well.

His double vision is a problem and he has some cognitive thinking issues, but he is up and walking and working so hard in all his therapies to get back to his brother Marines. He is a very proud Marine, and his training has made him the young man he is. I am so proud of him too.



Sincerely,
Mother to LCpl Devil Dog

I am forever in debt to your organization and if there is anything I can ever do to help please let me know. You got me out of a space between a rock and a hard place. I am able to hold my head high once again and don't have the burden of back payments on rent and am able to get my little one the things she needs. Once again, thank you so much and please let me know if I can ever help out.

Forever Grateful,

SSGT, USMC

Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart Recipient

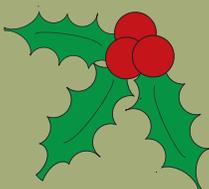


IMSFF MEDIA AND INFORMATION TOOLBOX

Help support our mission by spreading the word about IMSFF

There are many ways that you can help support IMSFF and sometimes it's as easy as sending an e-mail to your friends, family and coworkers! We've created the "Informational Toolbox" on our web site, and within it you can find electronic versions of informational documents that you can download and e-mail to people. You can also print these documents and mail them or post them around your community.

Visit www.SemperFiFund.org/toolbox.html Today!



A WORD FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



America's men and women in our Armed Forces are serving in foreign lands all around the world, including fighting in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. When they are injured, they deserve the best care available. Many have physical wounds that require long-term care. Not all wounds suffered in combat can be stitched up and covered with a bandage, and others have mental wounds as well.

Unfortunately, we are experiencing a significant increase in our injured Marines and Sailors resulting from Afghanistan's intensive fighting. To be able to provide the same level of critical assistance for our Afghanistan veterans and their families as we did those wounded during the intensive fighting in Iraq, we are seeking additional resources from the American public.

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, created in 2004 by a small band of military spouses, has provided over \$34 million in grants to thousands of wounded and critically ill Marines, Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and their families. Those funds provided vital resources and hope to those coping with traumatic situations, and were made possible only through the generosity of American citizens.

Our donations are down 34% due to last year's economic downturn, necessitating an increased appeal campaign today. The Fund has consistently maintained remarkably low levels of overhead costs, averaging 8% since inception. We thrive on the strength of our volunteers who serve from coast-to-coast in the United States, as well as Hawaii, Europe and Japan.

We continue to be honored to "serve those who preserve our freedom." We hope that you will choose to do so as well. Our goal is simple. No warriors or their families must ever believe they are alone while on the long road to recovery. God Bless -

Semper Fidelis,
General Al Gray, Marine
29th Commandant of the Marine Corps
Chairman, IMSFF Board of Directors

CPL YURIY ZMYSLY, USMC

We would like to thank the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund for their generous donation to my husband and I. When my husband Cpl Yuriy Zmysly served in Afghanistan and Iraq, he came home without any injuries, thankfully. Five months after his last deployment he went in for an appendectomy, there was a medical complication and Yuriy went without oxygen for an undetermined amount of time, which caused an anoxic brain injury. He was in a coma for two and a half months, when doctors said he would not wake up, he started to emerge slowly.

Yuriy has been fighting for almost four years to get back what he has lost due to this brain injury. He is in a wheelchair, cannot see very well, and cannot speak. In order for him to recover, he has to attend physical, speech, and occupational therapies and go to doctors appointments regularly. Thanks to the Semper Fi Fund we now have a reliable, safe and comfortable way to get him to where he needs to go.

The moment our brand new Rollx handicap accessible van pulled into our driveway a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. Yuriy can get into the van by a ramp and comes out of the floor, he is secured by straps that hook onto his wheelchair. We absolutely love this van and could not have gotten this vehicle without the Semper Fi Fund's help. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

~ Aimee and Yuriy Zmysly



*Serving Those Who
Preserve Our Freedom*



Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund

825 College Blvd., Suite 102
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**Combined Federal Campaign
#11459**

Issue 8, Dec 2009

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR INJURED MARINES AND SAILORS
BY HOSTING A FUNDRAISER OR GENEROUSLY DONATING TODAY!**

CONTACT US:

General Information and Correspondence:

Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund
715 Broadway Street
Quantico, VA 22134
703.640.0181

Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund
Wounded Warrior Center
PO Box 555193
Camp Pendleton, CA 92055-5193
760.725.3680

Or: info@semperfifund.org

Please send Check Donations to:

Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund
825 College Blvd., Suite 102
PMB 609
Oceanside, CA 92057

Donations may also be made online:

www.SemperFiFund.org

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