



National Disabled Veterans

Winter Sports Clinic

Skier Profile

Eric Browy – Seizing, not Sulking

Eric Browy lost his right leg below the knee when it was impaled by construction rebar during a fall, an injury that occurred while he was stationed in Iraq. Although the former Army sergeant from Huntersville, N.C., deals with that loss every day, when it comes to snowboarding he misses the big toe on his left foot far more.

“Believe it or not, my right leg gives me less trouble than not having the big toe on my left foot,” he said. “When you are turning, you push with your big toe to stay stabilized, so I’m having to learn a different way to stay up on the board.”

Browy is looking forward to his trip to Snowmass Village, Colorado for the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, an annual rehabilitation event for veterans with disabilities. He sees it as a chance to work on the sport he loved before his injury, and if any difficulties arise in re-learning to master the slopes, he plans to tackle them with the same philosophy that propelled him through nine months of rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center – *Don’t be Worthless*.

“When I got injured, I was depressed for maybe three days but I figured out there are a lot worse things that can happen to people,” Browy said. “I got in my head that I could get over it and get on with it, or I could be worthless. I mean I could sulk, but then I would miss this chance to get out on a mountain and enjoy life again.”

Before his injuries in Iraq, Browy was a scout for the Army, risking danger each day to be on point for his unit. Those who knew him when he entered the Army expected nothing less from the thrill-seeking 24-year-old.

“I loved to run, even when I was very little,” he said. “There’s nothing really I won’t try. I even went bungee jumping once. Of course, I won’t be doing that again.” It’s the only activity on Browy’s list of things he won’t try now that he has a disability, but that is only because he did not enjoy the experience the first time. Only four months after losing his leg and toe, Browy ran five miles. During his rehabilitation, he went white water rafting along the Grand Canyon, and he recently returned from a trip to Argentina to see the world’s largest waterfall. An avid snowboarder before his injury, he sees no reason why he can’t continue to be one now.

“VA [the Department of Veterans Affairs] is all right,” Browy laughed. “I was surprised to find out that VA has events like this and they are trying to reach out to guys like me. It is cool for those of us who still want to get out. Before this, every chance I had I would be out in the snow. An event like the Winter Sports Clinic is helping me get back to normal.”

While Browy’s drive has taken him to places and activities well beyond normal, he still looks forward to meeting other veterans who share his drive to get out and live, so he can pick up a few tips and regain his old form.

“I expect to see everyone at the Clinic trying their hardest,” Eric Browy said. “It would be nice to get some instruction since I am still trying to relearn snowboarding, but I’m sure I will want some time to get out there on my own, too. I guess I’ll just have to take it as it comes. I can handle that.”