



National Disabled Veterans

Winter Sports Clinic

Skier Profile

Shane Parsons – Wants to Keep Doing More

In 2004, just two months after graduating from high school in Fostoria, Ohio, Shane Parsons joined the Army. “I wanted to do it ever since the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001,” he said. “American blood had been spilled and I wanted to do my part.”

Parsons, now 22, was later sent to Iraq where he served as an expert marksman. On September 30, 2006, he was returning from a mission driving a military humvee when he and his gunner were suddenly and critically injured by an explosively formed projectile (EFP). More dangerous than other improvised explosive devices, an EFP is a special type of shaped charge designed to effectively penetrate armor at a distance. After getting emergency care, Parsons was sent to Landstuhl, Germany and then to Walter Reed Army Medical Center for nearly six months. His injuries were severe. He had three cardiac arrests, underwent extensive surgery in Germany and was placed in a drug induced coma to allow safe transport back to the States.

Both of Parsons’ legs were amputated above the knee. He also had a significant traumatic brain injury, so his extensive rehabilitation included physical as well as cognitive therapy. In 2007, he was sent to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Minneapolis, which has a comprehensive polytrauma program for newly injured soldiers. Still on active duty, Parsons receives continuing care at the Center for the Intrepid, a state-of-the-art amputee rehabilitation center at Brooke Army Medical Center in Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. He also receives traumatic brain injury care and therapy there.

Just six months after his devastating injury, Parsons attended the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colorado. Active in sports before his injury, he wrestled and played football in high school but was not an avid skier. “It was absolutely awesome,” he says now about the experience. “I went downhill skiing in a bi-ski, and also tried cross country, rock climbing and sled hockey. This year, I want to ski with a mono-ski and also try snowmobiling.”

“It really turned Shane around,” said his mother, Cindy, who has participated in her son’s treatment every step of the way. “Before he went to the event last year, he was getting depressed from coping with so many things. This was such a positive experience for him – the volunteers and instructors were so wonderful and we are lucky to have this program available.” Her son agrees. “This helps us get into the mentality of saying, ‘hey, I can do this, and if I can do this, I can do other things, too.’ There are so many great people at the Clinic, nice weather, cute women, and fun things to do. There is such camaraderie among the soldiers and the veterans there. I met a lot of people last year and hope to meet even more this time.” In 2007, he was selected to receive the Alpine Novice Skiing Award, an accomplishment he remains very proud of.

Parsons’ goals are straightforward. “I want to get more strength back and be able to use my prostheses to walk again. That’s my primary goal right now. I also want to continue doing more each day. I want to get well enough to be able to live independently in my own house.” Laughing, he added, “without my Mom!” A year and a half since he nearly died on the streets of Baghdad, Shane Parsons still has some work to do to meet each of the goals he has set before him. Despite the daunting challenges he has faced though, he is well on the way to achieving them. Cute women, beware.



Miracles on a Mountainside!

