



## MARINE CORPS MARATHON



*Runners from our Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund team*

October 29, 2006 was the 31<sup>st</sup> running of the Marine Corps Marathon. The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund fielded a team of 155 runners, three of whom had been injured in Iraq. The race started near the Arlington Cemetery and wound its way through Washington, DC, finishing at the Iwo Jima Memorial.

Spanky lost his left leg in Iraq in May of this year. He competed in the wheelchair division using a hand-crank cycle. This was his first time not only competing in a marathon, but also powering a hand-crank. He came in 11th out of 63 competitors.



*GySgt William "Spanky" Gibson, an IMSFF Team member*



IMSFF had a tent at the finish line for our runners with drinks, snacks and free massages. The massages were compliments of the National Massage Therapy Institute of Virginia.

We would like to thank all of our runners who used the Marathon as a fundraising tool for IMSFF. At last count, and with pledges still outstanding, The IMSFF Team has raised over \$125,000!

**Thank you IMSFF Marine Corps Marathon Team!**

### OUR MISSION

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund provides financial assistance to Marines injured in combat and in training, to other service members injured while in direct support of Marine units, and to their families, to help defray expenses incurred during hospitalization, rehabilitation, and recovery.

Our goal is to alleviate the financial burden placed on the family so that their focus can be on their loved one's recovery.

### Inside This Issue

A Note From Our Founder	2
Profile: HM2 Derek McGinnis	3
What's New	4
A Note from a father	5
Programs	5
Charity Partners	6
A Note from our Chairman	7
Wounded Warrior Center	7

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## A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

To all our supporters, volunteers, and families:

Greetings and best wishes from the Semper Fi Fund Team. I'm pleased to report that we are continuing our passionate quest of serving our wounded each and everyday. I just returned from a trip to BAMC (our burn and amputee center in San Antonio, TX). My hospital visits, and those of our team, constantly renew our determination and passion for service to our wounded heroes and their families. It is impossible to look into the eyes of a Marine or Corpsman who has been burned over 90% of his body and walk away untouched.



During our visit, we were blessed to meet a heroic mother of 5 Marines. Her middle son, a LCpl, is facing a difficult and long 2-3 years of scheduled surgeries and hospitalization at BAMC, with more surgeries for the rest of his life. A year ago, this LCpl could have been on the cover of GQ. Now, after an IED explosion which resulted in severe burns to most of his body, including his face and head, he is forever changed. We were privileged to witness this young LCpl's "Marine Spirit". The doctors and nurses talk of this spirit often at BAMC and at all of the military hospitals across the country. It was an honor to be in his and his family's presence.

We are eternally grateful for your support and thank you for helping to provide IMSFF with the \$6.9 million dollars that we have been able to use to assist these deserving service men and women in the past two and a half years. Our IMSFF Team will continue to move our mission forward. Please continue to join us in our effort of serving those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom and the freedom of generations to come. We can't continue to meet their needs without you. This is a long term commitment, but one, the IMSFF knows with all of our heart, to be noble and pure. Thank you ALL for being a part of this effort.

Wishing you peace and joy,

*Karen Guenther*

Founder and Executive Director  
Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund

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## Profile: HM2 Derek McGinnis *CORPSMAN, 3rd LAR*

Derek was injured in Fallujah in November of 2004, during Phantom Fury. He was a Corpsman attached to 3rd LAR out of Twenty-nine Palms, California. His ambulance was hit by a suicide driver (VBIED). The explosion caused him to have a Traumatic Brain Injury, shrapnel in his right eye, and the loss of his left leg above the knee.

Derek has spent the last two years in recovery and rehabilitation at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Walter Reed, Palo Alto Veterans Hospital. He is now finishing up at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC). He is still on an active duty status but has started his medical board and separation process. "The Semper Fi Fund helped my family when I was unconscious and helpless. I am very grateful to them," wrote Derek.

Derek is currently attached to DMRTI (Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute) Fort Sam Houston, TX. He instructs medical officers in combat medicine techniques prior to their deployment to Iraq, providing them with a personal and professional perspective. He also works as a liaison for Naval personnel at BAMC, helping new patients with acceptance of their injuries. During his off duty hours, Derek attended college and graduated this November with a BS in Business Health Care Administration. He will start work at the VA in San Antonio to gain experience for a future position, while awaiting his board results and orders. He is also joining our volunteer team at the VA hospital in Palo Alto. He will be working with Dr. Donald Barker, a retired Navy Corpsman.

In his "spare time," Derek has taken up running. He runs at least three miles, three times a week and alternates swimming a mile in between. He has competed in several 10K and 10 mile races including the Marine Corps Marathon 10K as a part of the IMSFF Team, raising over \$4,000 for the Fund. He said, "I have been training hard to do this run as a way to give back to the injured and wounded. When I train, I am motivated through the difficulty knowing that it is for a worthwhile cause. I am humbled knowing that some of the injured will never be able to run again. I am still able to run and believe I should use the talents I have left in a positive way"



Derek has a wife, Andrea, and a 20 month old son, Sean, with another on the way. Sean was born at Bethesda Naval Hospital a few months after Derek was injured. Derek said. "I was grateful to have been there for his birth at Bethesda Naval Hospital. We were all patients together there as a family and I would have missed his birth if I hadn't become injured. That led me to believe that blessings can come from tragedies."



## WHAT'S NEW

**Since the Fund's inception in May 2004, through October 2006, the Fund has provided more than \$6.9 million in assistance to injured Marines and Sailors.**

### **Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)**

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund is very excited to be a part of the Combined Federal Campaign for 2007. Please look for us under the heading **Military, Veterans, and Patriotic Service Organizations**. **Our CFC # is 2163.**

### **ibot Chairs**

IMSFF has purchased two ibot chairs for injured Marines. They allow an amputee or paralyzed individual to power across sand, gravel, grass and other uneven terrain, easily climb curbs up to 5" and steps, and rise to an "eye-level" position.

They have an "integrated combination of sensor and software components and multiple computers that work in conjunction with gyroscopes. This electronic balance system is custom-programmed to the user's center of gravity. Reach forward to shake hands, and the ibot chair moves with you. Lean back and it moves away as well."

A Corporal, who was paralyzed from the waist down while in Iraq, had a dream of being a chef. He could not get a chef's job because he could not work at the standard counter top height. The ibot chair holds him in an upright position and enables him to easily turn from side to side. He has finished culinary school and is now working in a restaurant in Louisiana.

### **Expanding Our Reach**

In August, IMSFF was excited to have our first caseworker assigned to the Regional Medical Center in Landstuhl, Germany. The Marines at Landstuhl have some unique needs as they remain on combat status during their stay there.

Landstuhl is the first hospital that provides care for injured Marines once they leave theater and before they are moved to a military hospital in the United States. Having a caseworker there, allows the Fund to assess the needs of some of the families at an earlier point, and also allows us to help those who are recovering in Germany, before they return to their unit.

### **Product Sales that Support IMSFF**

Cookbook

Command of the Grill: A Salute to Steak

[www.commandofthegrill.com](http://www.commandofthegrill.com)

Men's Cologne (in a desert camouflaged box)

Semper Fi

[www.usmc-cologne.com](http://www.usmc-cologne.com)

Christmas Stocking (in desert or woodland camouflaged fabric)

Camosock

[www.camosock.com](http://www.camosock.com)

## A Note from Mike Lowe, Father of LCpl Joseph Lowe

Our Son, LCpl Joseph Lowe, served in the Marine Corp 4 years with 4th Tanks Battalion Reserve Unit in Boise, Idaho. At 24 yrs old, he was deployed to Iraq on March 1, 2005. Joe was stationed in Hit with 1st Tanks out of 29 Palms, CA. He was severely injured in combat on May 8, 2005, near the Syrian border, during Operation Matar. Joe was the gunner on an M1-A1 tank, when the tank ran over a triple stack IED, which ruptured into the turret where the three crewmen were located. Joe's back was broken, and he suffers paralysis from the chest down. His loader's right leg had extensive injuries and was later amputated, and the tank commander received multiple fractures to both of his legs.

After several back surgeries and 4 months of rehabilitation in Seattle, Joe was able to return to Boise, where he was medically retired from the Marine Corps in September, 2005. Joe now resides independently in a residence that had been previously built and adapted for wheelchair access by the previous owner, who was also a veteran.

During the 6 weeks of surgeries, recuperation, and rehab, our family pulled together. We were quick to be at Joe's side. Joe's younger brother, Jimmy, who was also a Marine serving in Iraq, was able to come be with Joe, my wife Lori and I. Our concerns became focused on Joe's needs, not on the financial challenges ahead. The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund stepped in at just the right time and offered to help. We were all able to travel to Seattle to be with Joe during one of the toughest times of his life. IMSFF helped with the expenses of travel, hotels, car rental, and many other unforeseen costs. Without the help, we wouldn't have been able to visit Joe or participate in his recovery.


Our family is forever grateful for the assistance of the IMSFF and thankful to those who have donated to the Fund. Their generosity and compassion have met the needs of many Marines and their families. We are also thankful to the Fisher House who also helped with flights using their Hero Miles program. Now that Joe is living independently, the IMSFF continues to stay in touch, ready to help him re-engage in life and activities. Having served in the Marine Corps myself, and having both sons serve as well, made me an extremely proud and patriotic man, I thought. Now having seen and felt the sacrifice personally, I am much more humbled and appreciative of the cost of freedom. This experience has brought new meaning to the phrase, "Semper Fi".

Thank you Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund!



## PROGRAMS

### CARE CALLS



In the early months of operation, IMSFF was not able to provide the level of assistance we can now, due to a lack of funding and a lack of volunteers. As we have grown in size and capability, we realized that we wanted to reach out to those whom we helped early on, to see how they were progressing and if they had any unmet needs that we could help with.

We established a team of volunteers to contact each of these early cases. Our team found that there are significant ongoing needs 2-3 years post injury. The families and service members have been extremely appreciative of the calls, and have expressed their thanks that "someone still cares".

### BEREAVEMENT PROJECT



The hardest thing that our caseworkers face is getting to know an injured Marine and his family, watching him fight to recover and having that Marine succumb to his injuries. When the unthinkable happens, the Fund provides follow-up calls and cards. We want the families to know that we have not forgotten their loss.

### CHRISTMAS PROJECT



For the third year, IMSFF will have its Christmas Project. During this Holiday Season, IMSFF will be providing each grant recipient who cannot go home, with a special Christmas Grant of \$500.

## CHARITY PARTNERS

### Helping Hands



LCpl Patrick Myers and friend

Helping Hands provides highly trained monkeys to assist quadriplegic and other people with severe spinal cord injuries or mobility-impairments with their daily activities. The capuchin monkeys are highly sociable, intelligent, and adaptable. They make a perfect companion and an extra set of hands for the disabled. These service monkeys become a cherished companion and helper for anyone with mobility issues; specifically for those paralyzed or for amputees. They bring the gifts of independence, companionship, dignity and hope. IMSFF helps identify injured Marines who might benefit from a monkey helper.

[www.helpinghandsmonkeys.org](http://www.helpinghandsmonkeys.org)

### TAPS

#### **(Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors)**

TAPS provides a wide variety of programs including, peer support, crisis intervention, and grief counseling for survivors who have lost a loved one in the line of military duty. IMSFF has partnered with TAPS to facilitate necessary resources and information to family and friends of our injured Marines, whom the Fund has helped, and who have died as a result of those injuries. The IMSFF Bereavement Committee works closely with TAPS.

[www.taps.org](http://www.taps.org)

## IMSFF VOLUNTEERS

### Case Advisors

Bill Bonney  
Helen Toolan

### Case Volunteers - EC

Barbara Akst  
Janine Canty  
Carrie Constantini  
Mary Beth Gass  
Lisa Holden  
Lisa Killeen  
Jamie Kirkley  
Jessica Koenig  
Trina Sams-Manning  
Mandy Moore  
Dee Richie  
Colleen Smith  
Jill Weidley

### OCONUS Volunteers

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Meme Shumaker  
Cindy Smith  
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### Admin Volunteers

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Susan Margolin  
Lacey Pacheco  
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Kimberly McConnell  
Mary Medina  
Sheila Redfern  
James & Sheryl Reid  
Sharon Rees  
Kathy Reist

### Case Volunteers - VA

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Alex Cabrera  
Roseanne Campbell  
Annette Conway  
Steve Danyluk  
John Duda  
Jackie Gombar  
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Mary Lou Hicks  
John & Jeanne Jackson  
Marijke Landon  
Sherry Leek  
Carolyn McMonagle  
Samantha Moore  
Debbie Paxton  
Teresa Thomas  
Major Marcus Williams

### Bereavement Committee

Chaplain Ellis, USN (Ret)  
Karen Guenther  
Kimberly McConnell  
Father Chris Merris, USN  
Pastor Mike Openshaw  
Debbie Paxton, NP

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Angie McCrary - WC Events Coordinator  
Dawn Olson - Miscellaneous  
Jacquie Rachal - EC Events Coordinator  
Lisa Stehle - WC Events Manager  
Joanna Wroblewski - Miscellaneous

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Amy Clark - IHO/IMO  
Beth Lewis - Email Manager  
Sue Morris - IHO/IMO  
Kathy Newbold - Special Projects  
Jerry Reed - Corporate Liaison  
Lisa Stehle - Community Relations  
Linda Wagner - IHO/IMO

## A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

### “Semper Fidelis”

“Always Faithful”, the motto of our beloved Corps, captures the essence of our commitment and dedication as members of the Marine family, to our Corps and to our country. A little more than two and a half years ago, the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund was established, providing yet another expression of this fidelity, namely support to those whose service has resulted in grievous injury.

As Chairman of the Board of the IMSFF, I have been privileged to work with a highly motivated group of people in a supremely honorable endeavor. Karen Guenther, Founder and Executive Director, leads a team of motivated staff and volunteers, who span the globe to provide support to the injured and their families. Individually and collectively, this team is organized to expedite requests and to deliver assistance where and when it is needed. They are the embodiment of faithful service.

The young men and women helped by the Fund are among the finest this country has ever produced. They selflessly answered the call to serve. Through the Fund, we answer their call for help. To them, we will remain ‘always faithful.’ On behalf of everyone at IMSFF, I offer our sincere thanks for your continued support, without which we could not accomplish this mission.

General Al Gray, USMC (Ret)  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

## WOUNDED WARRIOR CENTER

August 10, 2006 was an exciting day for injured Marines at Camp Pendleton, CA and for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund. The Wounded Warrior Center, near the Camp Pendleton Hospital, officially opened. This center provides a transitional home for recovering injured Marines and Sailors and office space for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund.

More than 200 people attended the opening of a center that has room for as many as 26 Marines and Sailors recovering from injuries sustained in Iraq and Afghanistan. The purpose of the center is to allow the injured to heal and rehabilitate in a supportive environment, with others who have suffered combat injuries and who are facing the same recovery challenges. Only self sufficient Marines, who are well enough to leave the hospital but not ready to return to their unit, will be assigned to the Center.

The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund pledged \$100,000 to make this center a reality. In her remarks, Karen Guenther, Founder and Executive Director of the Fund, reflected back to 2003, when the first Medevac flights arrived at Camp Pendleton. She and a group of spouses formed a Welcome Home team that met each and every injured hero returning to the area, no matter what time of day or night. To see those efforts evolve into, not only a non-profit organization that makes a significant difference in peoples’ lives, but also to see the opening of this Center with a home for the Fund, is a dream come true.

At the opening, LtGen John F. Sattler, former Commanding General of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force said, “The compassion, the drive and the love to bring closure” was the driving force behind setting up this Center. He felt that the Center was all about - “Returning Freedom to Those Who Fought For Ours.”

The opening of this Wounded Warrior Center was made possible by our generous donors who support the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund.



*Gen Alfred Gray, USMC (Ret), IMSFF Chairman of the Board, Karen Guenther, IMSFF Founder & Executive Director, Injured Marine cut ribbon to open WWC*

**Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund**  
Wounded Warrior Center  
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760-725-3680



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We Thank You for Your Support

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**Or**

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