

## Setting Personal Fitness Goals Aids Marines' Recovery

By: April Peterson

USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment

Captain Jon Disbro joined the Marine Corps in May 1992 at the age of 20. He wanted to join the Marine Corps because it was known as the best military organization in the world. He knew that the training would be tough; however, he knew that he never wanted to be a part of any other branch of service.

He was assigned as a Light Armored Vehicle Mechanic. Later, he was selected to the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program, received a bachelor's degree, and then became a Combat Engineer Officer in 2001.

Captain Disbro believed that "To be a Marine is to share the heritage and the reputation that the Marine Corps has earned over the years. Marines are courageous, disciplined, and strong and are willing to put everything on the line to protect their country." As Marines have done before him, Captain Disbro proved his commitment to his country. On 25 November 2004, Captain Disbro was injured during his second tour to Iraq.



Captain Disbro deployed as an engineer attached to 1st Battalion 2nd Marines. His mission was to protect a power plant in Iskandariyah, south of Baghdad. A mortar round landed on his position and pieces of shrapnel went through his right ankle. He was sent to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and back home to National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland where after six months and numerous surgeries, he decided that his foot was too damaged to save. After several months, he chose to receive a right transtibial, or lower leg amputation.

During the first few months of treatment, Captain Disbro doubted whether he could remain on active duty. It wasn't until he met two Marines who were successfully using their prostheses and were remaining on active duty status that he realized he was going to be alright.

Prior to injury, Captain Disbro was active - he played sports for fun. After his amputation, it took some time before he realized he would not only continue to play sports but would thrive in sports he never tried. It helped Captain Disbro that he always had a goal to aim for. His first mission was to regain the ability to run. Once he achieved that goal he progressed to mountain biking and more recently cross-fit and racquetball.

Captain Disbro is not impressed by his abilities, he simply thinks that "physical fitness is good for all, injured or not".

Captain Disbro continues to progress by setting personal fitness goals. His objective is to compete in an event every few months so that he has something to look forward to.

Recently, Captain Disbro was selected to participate in the Department of Defense Warrior Games in the most intense category of the event - the Ultimate Warrior. He will compete in the: 100m dash, 1500m run, 50m swim, shot put, and marksmanship trials. In addition to training for the Warrior Games, Captain Disbro also competes in various community events including the Devil Dog Duathlon at Camp Pendleton, California and in 2008 and 2009 he ran the Big Sur Marathon.

Captain Disbro wants newly injured Marines to remember that they are lucky to be alive. He said, "Try to make the most of what you have now and you will regain some of those abilities you want to get back. You might have to learn how to do things differently than before, but remember you are not alone in the process."

Like the two Marines he met at the hospital, he appreciates the need to motivate the Marines around him. He said, "I try to challenge other Marines, when I get the chance, on the Physical Fitness Test and Command Fitness Test. We get better when we push each other."

Captain Jon Disbro is currently serving as Data Systems Officer, Marine Corps Tactical Systems Support Activity (MCTSSA), Camp Pendleton, CA. He has been married 16 years to his wife Jennafer and has two children. To follow Captain Disbro's progress at the Warrior Games visit the Wounded Warrior Regiment website at [www.woundedwarriorregiment.org](http://www.woundedwarriorregiment.org).