

## **Be Strong, You are a Marine, and You Can Do This**

by April Peterson

Wounded Warrior Regiment

On any given day between November and March you can find Travis Greene barreling down a slope on one of the many ski mountains in Idaho. Travis has always been an athlete and even ran track for a short time at Boise State University. After 9/11, Travis decided that he wanted a change, he wanted to do something more. He started investigating military service and researched the various branches, but only the Marine Corps appealed to him. He was motivated by the recruiter's talk of discipline and integrity. In December of 2002 at the age of 21 he joined the Marine Corps and was assigned as a 0311 infantry rifleman.



Travis deployed to Iraq in the summer of 2008 with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines- it was his third deployment.

On December 7th he was on a convoy headed to an observation post in Ramadi. He was positioned as the vehicle commander in the rear of the mobile unit. An Improvised Explosive Device (IED) exploded at the front of the convoy. Travis rushed to the aid of the injured Marines.

Travis and three other Marines were pulling a victim from one of the vehicles when another IED exploded. Travis suffered injuries that required amputations above both knees.

Travis was evacuated from the site and sent to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland where he spent two months in the Intensive Care Unit and two months in inpatient status. His stays were longer at Walter Reed Medical Center and Naval Medical Center San Diego where he was fit for a prosthetic and sent through rounds of therapy.

Travis experienced several setbacks, the worst of which was muscle atrophy. Sitting-up was impossible because every part of his body felt heavy. He had to use his arms for everything and they were exhausted. The intensity of his pain became extremely frustrating because his body could not do what it once had. He sank into a depression where nothing interested him and he did not want to do anything.

Travis was unaware of adaptive sports until a group of wounded warriors went on a ski trip to Breckenridge, Colorado. There, Travis saw a woman skiing the most advanced slopes on a mono-ski. His perception of what he could accomplish

completely changed. He was motivated by not only the adaptive equipment, but the other service members that were around him. He was finally ready to open his eyes to the possibilities for his new life.

His motivation came back slowly - in baby steps. The first time he learned to open a door, his first grocery trip alone, the first time he played wheelchair basketball all helped him regain confidence. Travis said that "being able to do stuff helped me gain confidence which ultimately led to my independence."

Travis is no longer hindered by his disability but rather sees his injuries as an opportunity to try sports that he had not tried even before his injuries. His sports of choice are wheelchair basketball and skiing; however, he continues to try new things including golf, dodgeball, and sled hockey.

Travis's athletic ability has led to his involvement in the Department of Defense's Warrior Games. He was selected as one of the 50 representatives from the Marine Corps to participate in various sports including: wheelchair basketball, cycling, volleyball, and shooting. His ability to excel in sports has contributed to his recovery. He said, "The ability to do something well again helped me gain confidence- confidence is the key".

Travis wants all Wounded Warriors to know that they can do anything they want to do. His message for Wounded Warriors is, "Don't look at your disability as an obstacle, start small, move beyond your fear, remember how the Marine Corps trained you and slowly you will gain the confidence to do things you never thought possible. Ultimately it is up to each Warrior to take the first step to find the strength to rediscover who they are. Be strong, you are a Marine, and you can do this."

Travis Greene was medically retired from the Marine Corps in August 2007. He now resides in Boise, Idaho with his wife of 8 months, Jill. He is finishing his degree at Boise State and has started a non-profit organization called Idaho Warriors Sports and Recreation ([www.idahowarriorsports.org](http://www.idahowarriorsports.org)) dedicated to helping Idaho's disabled veterans enjoy adaptive sports.