

For Immediate Release

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Wounded Warriors Receive Segways

Two Missouri Soldiers Among Recipients Before Ball Game

ST. LOUIS, Mo. – Six Army soldiers including two Missouri residents who sustained severe injuries in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan will receive Segway personal transporters to improve their mobility at a special presentation at Busch Stadium July 1.

The St. Louis Cardinals invited Segs4Vets, a project of Disability Rights Advocates for Technology (DRAFT), a national organization based in St. Louis, to make the presentation on the ball field before the evening game against the San Francisco Giants. The presentation is scheduled to take place at 6:15 p.m.

The recipients are:

- Sgt. Brian Taylor, 23, of Fenton whose leg was amputated as a result of injuries sustained when his vehicle hit an IED in Baghdad during a combat patrol in 2006.
- Cpl. Christopher Stout, 29, a native of Branson who now lives in Kansas City, Mo. Cpl. Stout was injured when a 4,416 pound howitzer fell onto his leg crushing his ankle during combat in Afghanistan near the Pakistan border three years ago.
- Sgt. Noah Galloway, 27, of Alabaster, Alabama whose injuries in combat in Iraq resulted in the amputation of both his leg and arm. He is the father of two.
- Sgt. Robert Leonard, 25, of Fort Worth, Texas whose leg was amputated as a result of injuries sustained when an IED blast detonated beneath the driver's seat of his Bradley Fighting Vehicle while on patrol south of Baghdad in 2005. Sgt. Leonard plans to use his Segway to get to class when he begins studying for a degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Texas this August.
- Sgt. Justin Bond, 32, of Hanford, California, a member of the Army National Guard, lost a leg and sustained other serious injuries in the battle of Fallujah, Iraq in 2004. He walks with difficulty and suffers from chronic pain. He intends to use his Segway in his fledgling airport business and to accompany his wife when she jogs.
- Specialist Bryan Florence, 25, of Louisville, Ky., lost his right leg below the knee in an IED blast and sustained small arms fire in his leg and right hand in Baghdad in 2007. He plans to use his Segway to get around campus when he starts school later this year.

“I am particularly proud as a lifelong resident of Missouri to recognize the sacrifice and service of these brave young men,” said Jerry Kerr, president of DRAFT and a resident of St. Louis. “There is no way to fully compensate the sacrifices they have made for our country but it is our hope the Segway will improve their quality of life and independence.”

“We represent grateful Americans who passionately believe that when those serving our nation go into harm’s way and suffer serious injury and permanent disability, they must have every resource and tool available to them to fulfill their dreams and live the highest quality of life possible,” he said.

Five of the recipients are passionate Cardinal’s fans. The sixth, Sgt. Bond, is an equally passionate fan of the San Francisco Giants who will be playing tonight at Busch Stadium. All six will be trained in the use of their Segways at an all day training session at the Promenade ballroom at the Westin St. Louis at 811 Spruce Street, St. Louis on July 1.

Kerr, a former real estate developer and homebuilder, became a quadriplegic eleven years ago after a diving accident. He is a Segway user. DRAFT has given away more than 340 Segways in the past three years to young service members who sustained disabling injuries which limit their ability to walk.

Former St. Louis resident General Ralph “Ed” Eberhart USAF (Ret), former Commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, helped create the project to recognize the sacrifice of all of disabled veterans from all conflicts and honor the unique contributions of disabled American veterans to people with disabilities in the United States. General Eberhart is now President of the Armed Forces Benefit Association in Alexandria, Virginia.

Segways allow the recipients to perform everyday activities beyond the physical limitations of a wheelchair. The device not only frees them from wheelchairs but keeps them standing on their new prosthetic legs for longer periods of time, allows them to conserve their energy, and dramatically increases mobility and independence. Former recipients use Segways to travel between college classes, go to work, stay on active duty and accompany their families to shopping malls, amusement parks and other outings.

The Segway is not FDA approved as a medical device but it has found a growing and loyal following among individuals with physical disabilities caused by spinal cord injuries, MS and Parkinson’s disease. The Segway is not covered by military medical insurance. And the Segway Corporation has no involvement with this charity.

Segs4Vets, created in late 2005, is run entirely by volunteers as part of Disability Rights Advocates for Technology (DRAFT), a 501c3 created to represent people with disabilities who refuse to be defined by their disability and whose passionate enthusiasm for participation in life’s activities is supported by Universal Design and new and emerging technologies. The organization is a member of Military, Veterans & Patriotic Service Organizations of America and has been certified as one of the best charities in America by the Independent Charities Seal of Excellence, an honor accorded fewer than 2,000 of the more than one million public charities in the United States.

DRAFT is also the only organization to ever receive a blanket waiver from the U.S. military allowing a gift in excess to \$1,000 to severely injured active duty military force members serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. For more information please go to www.Segs4Vets.org or call Chris Black (see above contact information) or Jerry Kerr at (314) 603-4672 and Mike Kelly at (573) 999-3900.