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CNN PRESENTS

CNN PRESENTS: Wounded Warriors

Aired May 27, 2006 - 21:00 ET

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ANNOUNCER: CNN PRESENTS, winner of the International Documentary Association's distinguished award for best continuing series. ALEX QUADE, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): In the chaos of Iraq, they rely on bravery, loyalty, and yes, on luck. But what happens when luck turns to sacrifice?

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: If I knew I was going to lose my leg.

QUADE: The men and women. The medics. The pilots. The doctors and nurses who every day put others' lives ahead of their own.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: A Navy surgeon saved his life.

QUADE: It's a race to save the "Wounded Warriors."

The firefights, the car bombs, the improvised explosive devices or IEDs. The wounding of U.S. troops. It will begin their medical journey home. Amidst the chaos, the pain.

Only medics or Navy Corpsman take life saving action. The fight continues around them. This is the first level of treatment. They bandage the fallen, carry them out. If a battle's too hot for a medevac helicopter, it's into vehicles nearby then on to a fallback position out of the kill zone. This is triage, the next level of care.

Navy shock and trauma platoon members collect and clear the wounded. The goal: stabilize the patient and send back to battle, or on to the next level of treatment.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Urgent, urgent, urgent.

QUADE: Urgent means medical evacuation. If the patient can be delivered to a combat field hospital within one hour of being wounded, what's called the golden hour, odds are he'll survive.

In the middle of the Iraqi desert, there is no LZ, no landing zone. A purple smoke grenade guides this helicopter in. The clock is ticking. It's time for the Medicine Man. Medicine Man, that's the call sign for the U.S. Army medevac unit. Two pilots, a crew chief and a flight medic in each Black Hawk.

CWO2 HARLEY MAST, MEDEVAC PILOT, U.S. ARMY: Guys in the field who get injured during their battles, and their medics on the scene can only treat them to a certain extent. Our job is to grab them and pick them up and bring them to a hospital.

QUADE: They get the call on the radio.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Pick those guys up.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes, we can do that.

QUADE: Fire at the bird (ph). The clock is still ticking.

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We're flying at pretty high speed with impatience.

QUADE: Care begins in flight. They're brought to the CASH, combat support hospital, or to a forward surgical team and turned over to the surgeon. Medevac crews do the crews do this all day, all night.

HARVEY: I try to think of myself in their shoes. I'm injured. I'm hurting. I'm bleeding. My life is in danger, possibly. I know that the medic has tried his best and can only do so much. Then you hear the aircraft coming in and they will take you out of there. Treat them, so to speak, and bring them to the hospital and fix your= there.

QUADE: That's what happened to Lt. Col. Timothy Maxwell.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We got the call that there's a litter urgent (ph).

QUADE: A Marine injured, in and out of consciousness.

SGT. RICK GATES, FLIGHT MEDIC, U.S. ARMY: Picked him up. He had a mortar explode near him. He had shrapnel all through his left side. He had a fractured left leg and a possible fracture in his left arm. Had to be sure the bleeding still stopped and I had to manage his airway and monitor his vitals all the way back to the CASH.

QUADE: They made it within the golden hour to the next level of care.

HARVEY: That's a good feeling, though, when you can get a guy out; within 20 minutes he's in the hospital. It's just great.

QUADE: Next, the medevac team races to a shock and trauma platoon near the front lines of Fallujah. There we meet 19-year-old Lance Corporal Chris Allen, in Iraq one month.

LANCE CPL. CHRIS ALLEN, U.S. ARMY: I got hit by an RPG. Shot my leg, and the last thing I remember was just sitting on a corner providing security. I just heard a boom. Next thing you know, I just felt pain.

Before I wasn't scared of going out there until that happened. When I heard the explosion it went off by me before. But that was actually the closest one where I could feel the heat and everything actually hit me. I was pretty scared.

QUADE: The surgeons say Chris's wounds are treatable and decide to keep him here, so the helicopter takes off without him.

CAPT. BRUCE GILLINGHAM, SURGEON, U.S. NAVY: Any time you put a patient on a helicopter, they're at risk to fire from the ground. Anything we can treat here definitively, we will.

QUADE: The risk, the medevac helicopter being shot down, like this one.

CAPT. TRENT SHORT, MEDEVAC PILOT, U.S. ARMY: It has been fired at probably more times than we can count.

QUADE: Per Geneva Convention, medevacs must travel unarmed.

SHORT: Been around flying by an aircraft as it was shot down by a heat seeking missile. That was probably the most unnerving feeling I felt today.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Terrorists really don't care. They just shoot whatever's flying.

QUADE: Evasive maneuvers, all they can do. Translation: fancy flying.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We get small arms fire. You see it at night. During the daytime we don't see it, so for us we don't know if we're getting fired on half of the time.

QUADE: They fly as low as ten feet.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We try not to think about that and try to think about getting the patient out of there as fast as we can.

QUADE: Despite danger, Flight Medic Sergeant Melinda Gates (ph) must treat her patients.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's usually the crew that lets me know if we've been shot at. Or if there's burning vehicles or rockets or something. I really don't notice that. I'm more focused on the patients and getting them in the aircraft, getting them treated.

QUADE: We land near Karbala and follow Sergeant Gates (ph) to a forward surgical team. Two 19-year-old Marines, PFC Randy Nichols (ph) and Frank Robinson (ph) were patched up here after taking fire.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I was hit -- shot twice in the leg, and I caught some shrapnel in the arm.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I had ran out of ammo, so I turned around to get out and I got hit with a bullet in the shoulder.

QUADE: Randy and Frank are loaded onto litters to go to the next level of care.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: When I was laying on the side of the road and they were bandaging me up there, that's when I kind of got the reality check of everything. I was thinking, wow, I'm actually human again, and things do happen, and you can get hurt.

QUADE: Sergeant Gates (ph) monitors their vitals.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Our medical care has come so far in the past few years, and guys like that may have died from infection or something like that.

QUADE: The two privates are delivered to the CASH, combat support hospital, Baghdad. Sergeant Gates (ph) hands them over to the doctors. They've made it to the E.R.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Where'd you get shot?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: In the leg.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: In the leg?

QUADE: For now, medevac mission accomplished.

Coming up, life and death at the combat support hospital.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: He's in tough shape. He's in the fight of his life.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We continue with "The Wounded Warriors" on their medical journey.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

QUADE: Welcome to the CASH, combat support hospital, Baghdad, inside the Green Zone.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He came off the helicopter. He didn't have a heart rhythm at all. His pulse was -- he was shot in the head.

QUADE: Army Specialist Mark Spears (ph) takes over CPR from the flight medic.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We do chest compressions to circulate blood, hopefully restore that pulse.

QUADE: This is the E.R. Unlike the TV show, it's real. All too real for 23-year-old Spears.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We keep track of all the Americans who died on our shift while we worked. All the little dots are American soldiers who were killed here in Iraq.

QUADE: He also marks the attacks on his hospital.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I used to keep track of how many times we got bombed with lines, but we get bombed a lot more than we've got dots, and it would probably have been around, like 10 times if I kept track of that. The Green Zone is a pretty big target for the Iraqis. They like to shoot at us.

We've had a couple of mortar rounds hit the hospital, but as you can see it's pretty well fortified. It's always in the back of your mind, you know. Every time you go outside a mortar round could hit right by you. There's nothing you can do about it. We try to do our job the best we can, hope for the best.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: OK. Three hours, head injury, right hand.

QUADE: For doctors like Captain Suti Bowes (ph), the work here is raw, dirty, gut-wrenching.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Most of them are explosive sort of injuries like improvised explosive devices or car bombs or bombs in anything, basically -- soda cans, cars, dead animals, whatever.

Blood and guts, you're kind of trained for that as a doctor and you're ready for it. But what's different here there's another level of attachment to your patients, which are the soldiers. They're like all of us. They left the states. They're hoping to go back.

QUADE: And the wounded keep coming and coming.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We try to save everybody who comes in. So I mean, of course, it's frustrating when you lose people, but you get a little comfort in the fact that we save a lot more people than we lose.

QUADE: It never gets easier, just part of the job.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You bring in a patient, and they're hanging onto life. We're ready for it.

QUADE: One of these patients hanging on is a soldier in intensive care, far from home, far from family.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We're all they've got. Nobody goes home, never (ph). So as long as he's here, we're going to be here with him.

QUADE: Squad leader Jason Moore is talking about his sergeant, Andy Brown, in a coma.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Heading out, you know, normal patrols, just out looking for the bad guys, trying to, you know,

keep it safe for the airborne, you know. Hidden IED. And it was a bad one, a bad one waiting for us, and it went off. It did a lot of damage to the vehicle. The vehicle doesn't even exist anymore. It looked like the vehicle had just been messed with, with a kid with a can opener.

But we got -- we got him out. Actually had to take another Humvee and rip the doors off with a chain, because they were blown inside the vehicle.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: All right. Make a hole, coming through.

QUADE: From the time of the blast it only took 15 minutes to get Andy to the CASH. Andy's nurse, Major Lisa Snyder (ph) is tending to his wounds while his buddies hover.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: They really literally saved his life when they first came in here, as far as giving the blood he needed. Because otherwise, he would have died.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Andy's doctor, Colonel Cindy Clagett (ph).

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: They can't really do anything else except worry, fret, pray, and give blood. And they're -- I mean, they're here, 24 hour a day vigil. They're sleeping in corners on the floor or not sleeping more often than not. They barely have time to eat. They know he's in a coma, but they lean down and talk to him. They touch him.

QUADE: They're Andy's band of brothers.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We donate blood or whatever. We do whatever we can possibly, you know, to support him.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He's like a brother to us. We know that he would do the same for us. We're going to do all we can to help him.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: He's in tough shape. He's in the fight of his life. He would be what I would call as critically ill as anybody could possibly get.

QUADE: Days later 22-year-old Sergeant Andy Brown died, but not alone.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Even when things started to look like they were just -- just not going to be able to turn around for him, his unit, still they kind of stood a vigil. Again, these were guys who in their regular job have to go out and be on patrol and get shot at and face the same injuries that this kid did. Even though he's here, half a world away from his family, he had a family with him.

QUADE: Coming up...

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Most of the time, you know, we're under attack.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We don't stop what we're doing just because (UNINTELLIGIBLE).

QUADE: ... we'll show you the fight to save lives in the most dangerous place on earth.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

QUADE: At the Air Force theater hospital, Balad Air Base, Marine Corporal Chris Fentmeyer (ph) is taken off the medevac. A mine took both his legs. He's rushed into E.R.

He's conscious. Although Chris made it through the golden hour...

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: X-ray, X-ray.

QUADE: ... this will be his second operation since wounded just five hours ago.

LT. COL. DON JENKINS, SURGEON, USAF: The Navy surgeons at that forward operating base saved his life. And believe it or not, he's quite fortunate to be here with us.

QUADE: In the O.R., alarm red, incoming. We're under attack by mortars or rockets. And this is the most frequently attacked base in Iraq. Despite that, surgeons continue working on Chris.

JENKINS: We've built up as best we can around those operating theaters with big concrete barriers and sandbags and that sort of thing. So it's still alarming. Those folks that aren't scrubbed in sterile gear do have the opportunity, if they can get to their gear safely, to put on their helmet and their flak vest. We don't stop what we're doing just because of this attack.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Chris, you're doing great, buddy. Chris, you're doing great.

QUADE: Chris is then taken to ICU, where we meet up again with Lieutenant Colonel Tim Maxwell. He's in critical condition, in and out of consciousness.

Alarm red again.

CAPT. DEBRA NICHOLS, ICU NURSE, USAF: It means that there's imminent danger. Most of the time, you know, we're under attack.

QUADE: Maxwell's nurse stays by his side.

NICHOLS: You can't leave them, because they're critical patients. So you have to stay at the bedside and go ahead and perform your duties just like, you know, if you were not in a code red. This is heavy and it's hot, and I -- and I can't wait to get out of it, because it hurts my back.

QUADE: Alarm red finally over. But their work here today has just begun.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Baghdad is bringing two -- two helicopters full.

QUADE: Full of casualties from two bombs exploding in Baghdad's Green Zone.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Just take a deep breath. You know what you've got to do. Manpower, roll them into the unit as the need be, critical or not critical. And then we'll go from there. Everybody ready?

QUADE: The medevacs arrive. Patient after patient. This is what's called a mass casualty. The medevacs bring more, and more. And they race to the E.R. Air Force medic Sergeant Jacqueline Horton (ph) tries to ease them.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: When they come in off the chopper especially, they're disoriented. We tell them over and over again that we're going to stay with you, that you're not alone. You're there with them. And ask them if they need more procaine (ph). We tell them exactly what we're doing to them so there's no surprises because of the fear, the magnitude of the fear that they're experiencing.

That's the only comforting thing that those parents back home have, is to think that somebody is over here talking to them.

QUADE: That comforting personal attention is evident at the next level of care, too.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Lower.

QUADE: The CASF, Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We're like a medical air terminal.

QUADE: For the wounded, this is the last stop in Iraq.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Prepare to lift. Lift. Prepare to lower. Lower. Make sure that he's even on the splinter.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We get them here. We get them medicated and get them comfortable.

QUADE: Here we meet a Gunnery Sergeant Mel Greer (ph), shot in the leg, ambushed in the dangerous city of Ramadi.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Basically from my ankle down, I can't feel my foot whatsoever.

QUADE: This is his platoon under fire.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We were out on vehicle patrol and stopped to do a vehicle checkpoint. And we had some insurgents come around the corner and open up with automatic weapons and small fires.

QUADE: And this is Mel's combat video.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Gunnery, he's hit in the right leg.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Automatic weapons fire is less than a tenth of a second between rounds. It hit my pistol and hit my leg, knocked me down and hell's fury just unleashed.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: There it goes, good shot.

QUADE: He's taken fire countless times.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Just that night prior, I'd only gotten about three hours of sleep in the last 30 hours. We had gone out for a security run, and the box car (ph) got hit by three IEDs and small arms fire, and less than 12 hours we were right back out and got hit again. So being aggressive.

QUADE: Mel and other patients must wait here for the next plane out of country. Tech Sergeant George Denby (ph), an emergency medic for 18 years, checks on them.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Need a blanket or anything?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm good.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: All right.

QUADE: He works closely with Master Sergeant Nancy Peck (ph), an emergency medic for 21 years. It's hard, even for these seasoned vets.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: They just pull at your heart strings, their sacrifice. They're humble. They don't want to go home. They want to go back to the fight, back to the unit. Some of these patients that we get here, they haven't bathed in days. They've eaten out of a box. They don't have pillows to sleep on.

QUADE: The medics try everything to keep them comfortable.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We have some patients with some pretty serious patients right next to them. You're right next to another patient. So now you have to not only worry about your problems, but you're worrying about the guy next to you. So we try to do everything we can to keep their minds off of that.

(MUSIC)

QUADE: The singing doesn't tempt PFC Matthew Solderg (ph). The 19-year-old Marine has trouble speaking after an IED exploded near him.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We're kind of used to that stuff after being here for awhile. You just kind of get over it and do your job.

QUADE: Then, alarm red, incoming.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Got your gear?

QUADE: In the middle of all this, more wounded arrive. Among them Lance Chris Allen, injured by a rocket-propelled grenade near Fallujah. Like all patients, Chris is checked for hidden explosives, then checked medically.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm doing pretty good, much better. I saw you guys the first time.

QUADE: But flashbacks are bothering him.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: They're all the time. Usually when I'm sleeping they come back.

QUADE: The touches of home here, courtesy of the medics, help Chris.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I love this one. This is going to be with me all the time now, so whenever I get down I can just think of it and realize what I'm fighting for. And a little picture that says thank you.

QUADE: Coming up, the race against time.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We have about 65 patients for seven people to take care of.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We have to keep them alive because we have the best doctors back home. But if we can't take them there, they can't do anything for them back home.

QUADE: A rare inside look of the plane that will take them out of Iraq.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

QUADE: While the patients are being prepped, flight medics are prepping the plane. They transform a C-141 from tactical to practical, from cargo craft to a flying hospital.

MAJ. MARK NAGEL, FLIGHT MEDIC, USAF: We have about 65 patients for seven people to take care of, so we'll be busy tonight. But the patients will be glad to get home.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: This isn't even our job yet.

NAGEL: It's part of our job.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's part of our job.

NAGEL: Healthcare providers, slash, construction workers.

QUADE: Back at the (INAUDIBLE) or air terminal, the patients like gunnery Sergeant Mel Grier (ph) are ready to go.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: My country will take care of me, no matter what.

QUADE: Past the tank barriers and onto the next level of care, the plane. The flight medics are now ready.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Hopefully I'll return to my Marines. My wife probably doesn't want me to do that.

QUADE: Litter patients like Mel first. Next ambulatories like PFC Matthew Solberg (ph). Matthew has a speech problem from a head injury. Then Lance Corporal Chris Allen (ph), hit by an RPG. Chris needs a little help boarding. Last on, critical patients from intensive care. Marine Corporal Chris Stedmyer (ph), a mine took both his legs. Chris is coming straight from surgery. Then Lieutenant Colonel Tim Maxwell who took shrapnel to the head from a mortar. Maxwell was in the ICU during alarm red.

TECH SGT. GEORGE DENBY, EMERGENCY MEDIC, USAF: You look at some of these injuries, they just punch you

right in the stomach. So you feel sorry, but you are happy that they are getting out of here. (INAUDIBLE) They are closer to seeing their families and going home.

QUADE: This is the last thing the wounded warriors will see in Iraq. The plane goes dark for tactical takeoff. This is light discipline, only low red light until we clear Iraqi airspace. For those who can, vest and helmet in case of incoming fire. This is hostile territory. The tactical takeoff spirals to avoid any ground fire, hurts Matthew's head. The flight medics go to work. Using chemical glow sticks or tiny lights, they squeeze between patients and litters. Cargo light shines briefly in back. Matthew uses it to climb into a litter to rest his head.

After clearing Iraqi airspace, lights on. Chris also tries to get comfortable. Heavy flak vests come off. Mel is restless. Medics are working on patients beside and above him, climbing up the stacks of litters around him. He worries they will step on his injured leg and foot. Accidentally they do. It's difficult work under difficult conditions.

VOICE OF CAPT. ASSY YACOUB, CRITICAL CARE DOCTOR, USAF: We have to keep them alive because we can have the best doctors back home, but if we can't take them there, keep them alive on the way, they can't do anything for them back home.

QUADE: About six hours later, touch down, Ramstein (ph) air base, Germany. The patients are off-loaded. Chris looks around at the rain, the cold. Matthew wakes up. And Mel is tucked in against the freezing temperatures. Next stop, (INAUDIBLE) regional medical center, the next level of care. They arrive at the biggest military hospital outside the U.S. Mel is headed straight to more surgery. Next Matthew and in socks, his boots still in Iraq, Chris. In the OR, Mel is prepped. The surgeon scrubs in. He exams Mel's leg wounds.

MAJOR TIM WOODS, SURGEON, USAF: (INAUDIBLE) So we are trying to minimize the risk of infection.

QUADE: They speed through all the levels of care from the battlefield helped.

WOODS: In our air vac (ph) system right now is (INAUDIBLE) We hear what happens on the news pretty much and within 24 to 48 hours, these guys are getting into our hospital and we're having to take care of them.

QUADE: A half-hour later --

WOODS: Open your eyes. Can you open your eyes. We're all done. We're all done. You did great.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Done. Are you having any pain right now? QUADE: Chris meanwhile is getting his wounds cleaned.

LT. ROB BIRON, NURSE, USAF: They already did an x-ray after they took it out to make sure all the shrapnel - sometimes shrapnel is left in people and actually it does more harm to go in to it to get it than it does to get it. And a lot of times it gets -- the body will push it out on its own.

QUADE: Mel rolls in.

BIRON: How is your pain doing?

QUADE: Even groggy, he's still a Marine.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you, sir. They took off the little splint that was down there today so I can actually play with my foot a little bit.

QUADE: But Mel still has no feeling in his foot. We'll see if doctors at the next level of care can do anything about that.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's amazing. I was hit on Saturday and each level of care that I've moved out to. I think it's Tuesday now, and I've already had a second surgery. I've already been taken care of, already been cleaned. I'm in Germany and getting ready to go home already. It's just amazing.

QUADE: When we return, coming home.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I still have no feeling below my knee. I cannot move my foot.

QUADE: Is it frustrating for you that you were at a desk and not preparing for battle? The reality of war (INAUDIBLE).

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

QUADE: Lt. Colonel Tim Maxwell took shrapnel to the head after a mortar attack. He was in the ICU during alarm red. One month later, Maxwell is at the VA hospital in Richmond, Virginia. He is doing physical and speech therapy.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I don't remember what. (INAUDIBLE) I think about 18 minutes, not very long. But they did a good job (INAUDIBLE) .

QUADE: His goal, to get back to racing triathlons.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I can do them (INAUDIBLE) do them as fast, but I can do them, sure.

QUADE: Another iron man, Corporal Chris Stedmyer. A mine took both his legs. Surgeons operated on him at Balad (ph) air base. Then Chris was sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. During therapy, Chris shares for the first time what happened when his Humvee hit the mine. UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And as I was like up like this, my legs were just

dangling down like a rag doll. I knew from there that if I lived, I was going to lose my legs. That was probably the biggest fight was just to live because I could feel myself, the blood leaving my body through my legs. It was just draining out of me. So that's when I tried to hold on to somebody's hand. I knew I was going to die, but I just thought to myself, there's a lot of things I have to live for. And I couldn't die in that place.

QUADE: Chris plans to get out of the corps, get a Ph.D and teach English.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I got to keep myself (INAUDIBLE) in order to walk again because that's what I want more than anything else.

QUADE: The other Chris, Lance Corporal Chris Allen, was injured near Fallujah.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I got hit by an RPG.

QUADE: Chris made it back to Camp Pendleton, California as did Private First Class Matthew Solberg.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I don't really remember much.

QUADE: That was right after his head injury. Matthews's speech is now back to normal. And remember PFC Randy Nichols (ph) and Frank Robinson? They were shot in a firefight near Karbala. We never expected to be invited to Randy's wedding.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Randy, will you have Amanda to be your wedded wife?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I will.

QUADE: This, the day right before Randy reported back to Camp Lejeune (ph).

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You may kiss your bride.

QUADE: And finally, Gunnery Sergeant Mel Grier. Mel had leg surgery in Germany, then more surgery here at the naval hospital at Camp Pendleton. Mel's had 10 operations since coming home. He still has nerve damage in his foot.

CAPT. DAVID DAUGHERTY, SURGEON, USAF: There's nothing we can do. His nerve is intact. It's just not, it's not been transected. It is severely bruised by the injury from the AK-47.

QUADE: Afterwards...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I also feel guilty that I am not back in Iraq with my Marines that are out there. It's very hard trying to sit here and realizing I'm OK, but what about my Marines and what about the Marines, all the Marines in Iraq. It's tough.

QUADE: One year later, I catch up with Mel Grier as his Marines retrain for Iraq. He won't be going with them.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I still have no feeling below my knee. I cannot move my foot.

QUADE: He walks with a cane.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I sit in an office environment now. My legs get cramped and muscles get tired. It's just a long painful day.

QUADE: Mel's pushing the training of these Marines forward, even though he is now in the background. I know that you are happy that you are still in the Marine Corps and that you still have a role, but is it frustrating for you that you are at a desk and not preparing for battle?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's not so frustrating that I can't be a part of it. I'm just not doing what I want to do. It's tough. It's really hard just to be a part of it, but not go forward and do it all.

QUADE: So Mel gets counseling for post traumatic stress disorder.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm willing to retrain so I can stay in. I don't want to feel like a tissue that someone uses and throws away. And I look at my wife. I'm supposed to provide for her in our retirement and our future and now she is doing more for me than I'm doing for her.

QUADE: When we met you in the tent, to the going on the medevac, through this whole process, what is it that is important for people to be aware of?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: All of it, just like we're doing. We're showing them what really happens. It is just not, you are shot and then you're better the next day as Hollywood wants to make it happen. It takes years to recover. It can take a lifetime to recover for some people. It's a big process that goes with it, and you got to take care of yourself as well as others.

QUADE: Despite medical breakthroughs, not all warriors will make it home.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: In my heart and my mind, I realize everyone did everything they possibly could.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

QUADE: Lieutenant Colonel Tim Maxwell, little more than one year ago, traumatic brain injury. Maxwell today at Camp Lejeune.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: My wife was told in the hospital that I would probably never get up.

QUADE: He has come a long way since I saw him in Iraq after a mortar attack, even convincing the brass to let him open a barracks for wounded warriors where they can help each other heal. This place, these barracks, Maxwell Hall for the wounded warriors. Is this maybe the last level of care as these wounded warriors get home? It's something for them to move on?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It is. The transition from being in your unit, being wounded, put through hospitals and then phasing either back to their original unit or phasing back to the civilian world, this would be the last stop.

QUADE: Here they get counseling, eat, sleep and deal with change of life issues together.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Once we were injured, we all had something in common.

QUADE: Like Navy corpsman Joseph Roe (ph) or Doc, who was first on the scene to treat Maxwell after the mortar attack.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He had an injury and I saw his brain. I mean I was passing him up.

Not long after we saw him help carry Maxwell's stretcher to the next level of care, a roadside bomb turned Doc into a patient, too.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: All the frag and everything had hit my right side.

QUADE: Injured, he now works here with Maxwell. You are the guy that helped save his life in Iraq and now the two of you are trying to help other wounded warriors with this barracks.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I think this could possibly be the final level, that once they go through that all the stress...

QUADE: And all the recovery...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And all the recovery and all the work they do for themselves in the echelons of care, now they can come here and relax and heal.

QUADE: Healing takes time. Maxwell still goes to speech therapy to help find the right words. A year after being injured, it's difficult for his family, too. So his wife started a support group for spouses like herself.

UNIDENTIFIED FE MALE: We can talk about those issues. We've had to adapt to Tim's disability. The largest thing trying to get through is the uncertainty.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I would say that the families and the wives, particular mine and most of the others, they had it worse than I did, no question.

QUADE: Their children have witnessed dad's progress and recent seizures.

UNIDENTIFIED CHILD: It was kind of scary, because we didn't know what would happen. What if something bad happens? What if he dies? What if he dies in the night? It was just scary. QUADE: And they have advice for other kids whose moms or dads come home hurt.

UNIDENTIFIED CHILD: I would say he's gotten injured. I know how it feels. My dad did, too, but he's going to get better.

UNIDENTIFIED CHILD: That's your dad and you should be proud of him because he risked his life to go out there and you should be proud of that.

QUADE: And they are proud of what he is doing now, opening the first wounded warriors barracks in America.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: These kids go home, there's nobody around to talk to. Your family doesn't understand. Your friends from back home don't understand. We do. No matter if you are Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines. Once you've been hurt and you are a wounded warrior, you understand.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Did this happen to me on purpose? I'm not a very religious guy, but maybe I got wounded so I would do this for a living. I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We all know what it feels like to be wounded, what it feels like to come home and this is our home.

QUADE: Not all we met in Iraq made it home alive.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: They always made it very clear to us that he was very, very critical.

QUADE: We met Sergeant Andy Brown at the combat support hospital in Baghdad. Despite the efforts of his surgeons and his unit standing by and giving blood, Andy lost the fight. His parents, Bill and Laurence (ph) Brown --

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We were really crushed that we couldn't be there with him. The men took turns and they stayed with him the whole time and he was never alone, and that meant a great deal to us.

QUADE: Since they couldn't be there, we shared our video of their son's last hours.

STAFF SGT. JASON MOORE, ANDY'S SQUAD LEADER: We're all we've got and nobody goes ever. So as long as he's here, we're going to be here with him.

COL. CINDY CLAGETT, ANDY'S DOCTWOR: Even though he is here half a world away from his family, he had family with him in that he was incredibly cared for by virtually everybody that was around.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I know he was well taken care of.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It was good to see it. In my heart and my mind I realize everyone did everything they possibly could. UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I'm hoping that people don't forget our men in uniform and our women in uniform and all of the people who are there with them, fighting with them and helping support them. It's not just the soldiers. It's the doctors, the nurses, the Red Cross.

QUADE: It's often the medics, the air crews, an entire military operation, trying to get each patient to the next level of care, trying to get each wounded warrior home.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CAROL LIN, CNN CORRESPONDENT: I'm Carol Lin with a look at what's happening in the news and it's trouble at the top. It's been one week since the FBI seized materials from a congressman's office. Now President Bush has ordered those documents sealed. Sources say the head of the FBI, the attorney general and the deputy attorney general were ready to quit if they were forced to return those seized items.

Well, it's just before 8:00 a.m. in Indonesia, but it's anything but a peaceful Sunday morning there. The country is mourning the more than 3,000 people killed in a major earthquake. Rescuers are still searching for any victims trapped in the rubble.

A sentimental journey for Pope Benedict XVI. He's in Poland paying homage to the late Pope John Paul II and he told the crowd there he hopes Pope John Paul will be made a saint in the near future.

Now coming up on "Larry King Live," defending Ken Lay. Just this week, he was convicted in the corporate trial of the century. But now, he could spend the rest of his life beyond bars. I'm Carol Lin in Atlanta. Paul Newman talks about his high octane new project on "CNN Saturday Night," right after "Larry King Live."

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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