A Soldier’s Miracle

By Carol Toedte
(With input by the family)

Travis Bourret was a high school senior in 1994 in Jacksonville, Illinois. He was a gifted student academically and had a passion for soccer. He played varsity soccer for four years and felt privileged to be chosen captain, most valuable player and all conference. He was determined to join the Army for the discipline and for the educational opportunities it offered, as he wanted to be an architect or engineer. Little did he imagine how his life was going to change in a flash!

Travis went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for basic retraining and was an honor graduate in radar for his Advanced Individual Training (AIT). He was stationed in Germany until his unit was deployed to Bosnia in January of 1996.

While his unit was en route, the electric powered train stopped at a border crossing between Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Travis was sent out alone to be sure straps were secure on a five ton truck being transported on a flat bed. His parents, Terry and Gayle Bourret, report that the fact the soldiers were not to be off the train, much less off the train without a buddy and without a helmet, are moot points now. His accident was discussed at the Pentagon. Hopefully, incidents such as the preceding will never occur again.

Thanks to the great partisan effort of Lee Viorel, Harold Volkmer, Christopher Bond and John Ashcroft, an accident report was finally formulated. To condense hundreds of pages into a few paragraphs is a challenge to say the least, but I’ll make the effort here. While checking the security of the straps, a passing train may have caused the power arch that flashed 24,000 volts through Travis’ left shoulder and down his left leg. A burn mark where his feet had been was the only sign something had happened, as he was instantly propelled through the air. It is estimated he was shot 20 to 40 feet in flames before landing on snow covered rocks.

As help arrived, he was momentarily conscious but quickly went into cardiac arrest. It was reported that several individuals worked on his resuscitation, which was between 30 to 45 minutes. While Army personnel could be documented, it was reported that a civilian woman assisted. Travis’ parents are grateful that someone present knew that resuscitations for electrocutions are to be continued up to an hour, something they had never known. No information was available relative to who this civilian woman was. There was no name, no description or identity. She simply seemed to disappear. As far as his family is concerned, she was God’s angel, breathing life into a 19 year old’s shattered body.

Unbelievably, Travis had no broken bones, but absorbed most of the fall with his head. Later, his family found out that Travis’ resuscitation had been done with a collapsed lung, contributing to debilitating oxygen deprivation. After being stabilized in a Czech hospital, he was transported to Lanstool, Germany. This medivac effort by helicopter was through a severe snow storm at great risk not only to Travis but to his whole team.

Doctors at Lanstool made a real effort to keep the family informed regarding Travis’ condition and were able to avoid amputating his leg, a serious consideration. Due to a huge snow storm on the East Coast, no planes were flying in or out during those trying days.

(A Soldier’s Miracle, continued page 6)
Greetings! I hope this finds you well and enjoying a beautiful fall. We had another fabulous camp this summer and maybe the best yet. This is such a wonderful time of recreation and socialization for our campers. Many thanks go to Scott for his hard work in organizing the event. A big thanks also goes to the volunteers who gave of their time to assist campers and ensure that it was a great experience. If you contributed to the camp, know that your donation made a meaningful impact in the quality of life of our campers!

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri hosted the first Annual Conference on October 3 & 4 at Tan-Tar-A Lodge in Osage Beach. We had about 100 attendees and 20 exhibitors. We enjoyed a wonderful slate of presenters. Katie Dallum and her sister, Stephanie, shared her brain injury experience after a boxing match where she took over 140 blows to the head! Their personal account was honest and riveting. You may know that Katie’s story is believed to be the basis of the movie, “Million Dollar Baby” only with a different outcome. One of the attendees asked Katie what she thought of the ending. In her response, she stated that the movie character decided that she was done with life, but Katie decided that she had a story to tell and a life to live. I wish her real story had been depicted, because it is one of ongoing courage and hard work. We enjoyed viewing her artwork before and after the injury. Her art provides a fresh medium into her personal interpretation of the injury and recovery process. Thank you, Katie and Stephanie for sharing your story.

Dr. Chuck Callahan is a respected professional and writer in the field of rehabilitation psychology. His presentation on outcomes after TBI provided up to date information on the changes that can follow TBI, as well as provocative information about what therapies do and do not work. He also challenged professionals to do a better and consistent job of charting objective outcomes as a way to direct their work and using the most effective approaches.

Jon Rupright, D.O., is well known in Missouri for his expertise in treatment and management of TBI. He is the chief physiatrist at Rusk Rehabilitation Center and past recipient of the BIA-MO Lifetime Achievement Award. His talk on pharmacological approaches to treatment of the cognitive and emotional changes post TBI was insightful and very well received.

Also, Brick Johnstone, Ph.D., ABPP, University of Missouri, presented data from the needs assessment conducted in 2004 which was directed by Laura Schopp, Ph.D. and funded by MHIAC. The document outlines the needs of Missouri citizens with TBI and certainly is a roadmap for policy and program direction in the future. Janet Williams, Ph.D., owner of Community Works, provided important information on the changes in Missouri Medicaid and Medicare as relates to the lives of TBI survivors and avenues for accessing resources.

At the conference, we enjoyed networking with colleagues around the state and region, visiting with old friends and making new friends. We appreciate that attendees included staff from state agencies that provide services to individuals with TBI including the Dept. of Health and Vocational Rehabilitation. Attendees included survivors and their families/caregivers, psychologists, physicians, PTs, OTs, SLP’s, in-home caregivers and counselors. Many thanks go out to those of you who attended the conference. Your involvement is so critical to advancing the cause of prevention and treatment of TBI.

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri put the conference together in less than five months. We are already in the planning stages of a bigger event next year with a larger slate of speakers and events. Please plan now to attend and join us for learning, networking and fun.

Finally, this is my last message as President. My term ends in December. I have truly enjoyed my time as President, because of the people I was privileged to meet and work with. The Brain Injury Association of Missouri is a strong organization based on a great and worthy vision. Such a vision draws people of character, energy and drive. How can one not feel compelled to work as hard?

Thank you so much. I hope I added something to the story of the Brain Injury Association of Missouri. You are in my heart.

President’s Message

Fall Memories

Please send your tax deductible contribution to the above address.
Help For Veterans With TBI

The Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) is a multi-site medical care, clinical research and education center, which is funded through the Department of Defense. Their mission is to serve active duty military, their dependents and veterans with traumatic brain injury through state-of-the-art medical care, innovative clinical research initiatives, and educational programs. The DVBIC’s homepage is at http://www.dvbic.org

Military OneSource is a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, toll-free information and referral telephone service available worldwide to active duty, Reserve, and National Guard military members and their families, and deployed civilians and their families. You can call (800) 342-9647 and speak live with consultants with Masters degrees in various fields such as education, social work, early childhood development, psychology and counseling. The website can be found at http://www.militaryonesource.com/ (user ID: military; password: onesource).

Military Onesource assistance includes:

♦ Parenting and Child Care
♦ Education
♦ Relocation
♦ Financial and Legal Concerns
♦ Everyday Issues
♦ Emotional Well-being
♦ Health and Fitness
♦ Addiction and Recovery
♦ Adult or Child Special Needs
♦ Military Life (pre -post deployment, reunion, etc.)
♦ Work Concerns
♦ Crisis Support
♦ Elder Care
♦ TRICARE “warm transfers”
♦ Life-Issues Library and Pre-Paid Materials

The Military Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Center is a new initiative for service members and veterans severely injured in Iraq and Afghanistan to help them and their families through difficult times. If a severely injured veteran has hit a roadblock with finances, education, job assistance, counseling or child care, they should call the center at (888) 774-1361 or go online at http://www.military.com/support.

Concussions checked with new portable device

For sports’ sidelines, battlefields, emergency rooms

A player just took a hard knock to the head and is lying on the field. A coach rushes to his side, but the player sits up and seems fine.

He knows who the president is and how many fingers the coach is holding up. But is he ready to get back in the game?

More than 750,000 mild traumatic brain injuries (MTBI) occur in the United States each year. When a player or soldier with even a mild concussion is sent back to the field, another blow to the head can lead to additional life long problems or even second impact syndrome, which has a mortality rate of up to 50 percent. But the injury is difficult to diagnose, even with a quiet room and a several-hour-long test.

Michelle LaPlaca, an assistant professor in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering at George Tech and Emory University, and David Wright, assistant director of Emory University’s Emergency Medicine Research Center, have developed a new device to detect brain injuries right on the sidelines of a football game, on a battlefield or in the emergency room.

Called DETECT (Display Enhanced Testing for Concussions and MTBI system), the device is a fast, easy to administer and sensitive system for assessing problems associated with concussions. The DETECT device is an integrated system that includes software applications, a portable computer and an LCD display in the headgear.

While a typical MTBI test requires a quiet room and 1-2 hours of testing, DETECT performs neuropsychological tests in an immersive environment in about 7 minutes, regardless of surrounding noise and movement. So, a football player or soldier who just took a hard hit to the head can take the test and either be safely cleared to get back on the field or sent to receive medical attention.

While the device has already been tested in the lab and in a hospital emergency room, the Georgia Tech football program recognizes the need for improved concussion assessment and plans to test this new technology.

DETECT is expected to be commercially available in the next three to five years.

Reprinted with permission from Craig Persel, Inside View Newsletter, Centre for Neuro Skills, Traumatic Brain Injury Programs.

How Often Do Blasts Result In Brain Injuries?

Between July and November 2003, the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center at Walter Reed Army Medical Center screened 155 patients who had returned from Iraq and were deemed as being at risk for brain injury.

Ninety-six of the 155 screened or 62 percent were identified as having sustained a brain injury. Of the 88 blast cases included in the total number screened, 54 or 61 percent were identified as having sustained a brain injury.

Used with permission from William J. Dougherty, M.Ed., Military One Source Consultant.

DVBIC Website www.dvbic.org
“A New Beginning”

Brain Injury Association Holds First Annual Conference

For 19 years, the Missouri Head Injury Advisory Council sponsored a statewide conference on brain injury. Due to unforeseen changes, the council was no longer able to host this event. Realizing that this conference was vital to the overall landscape of the traumatic brain injury program in Missouri, the Board of Directors for the Brain Injury Association voted to undertake this responsibility.

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri’s “A New Beginning” first Annual Conference was held on October 3 - 4, 2005, at Tan-Tar-A Resort in Osage Beach, Missouri. Nationally recognized speakers covered topics of brain injury basics, psycho-pharmacological issues, outcome measurement in brain injury and tremendous personal struggles to triumph. The conference attracted about 100 participants.

The speakers included: Charles D. Callahan, Ph.D., MBA, ABPP, Administrator of Neuromuscular, Orthopedic, and Emergency Services at Memorial Medical Center in Springfield, IL, who spoke about “Outcomes Measurement in Brain Injury.” Dr. Jon Rupright D.O., FAOCMCRM, Clinical Associate Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the University of Missouri School of Medicine and Medical Director of Brain Injury Rehabilitation Programs at Rusk Rehabilitation Center and University of Missouri Healthcare, said, "Psychopharmacology - When and Why." Janet Williams, Ph.D., who started Community Works, an agency that provides support to 134 people with brain injuries and other disabilities living in their own home in the Kansas City area, spoke about “Identifying TBI/The Status of Resources State, Federal and Private” along with Dr. Brick Johnstone, Professor and Chair of the Department of Health Psychology at UMC.

Katie Dallam, a former psychologist and head-injury survivor from Missouri, received a life-threatening brain injury while boxing. Her story, recently featured on the television program, “Dateline” and the front page of the New York Times, was likely the genesis for the Academy Award winning movie “Million Dollar Baby.” Katie’s topic was “Before and After: Surviving the Aftermath of Traumatic Brain Injury.”

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri wishes to thank the following sponsors of our fall conference: Gold Sponsors: The Brain Injury Association of Missouri, Inc; Silver Sponsors: The Rehabilitation Institute of Kansas City; Bronze Sponsors: Bridges of Missouri, Inc.

First Columbia “Octoque” Fundraiser Hailed Great Success

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri held its first “Octoque” BBQ Smokeout Fundraiser on Saturday, October 22nd, in Columbia, Missouri. We are happy to report that through the tremendous efforts of our “Octoque” committee, chaired by Aimee Olmstead, the event raised nearly $4,000 for the organization.

A very special thank you to our sponsors: Tiger Security, Culligan Water, NBG Southern Pit Barbeque Catering and Custom Meats, The St. Louis Rams, The Kansas City Chiefs, Rusk Rehabilitation Center, Neuro-Mart 2005 and D-Sports.

We would also like to thank our contestants: Sauce Baron.com Team Unimed, MOFO’S Best Brethren BBQ Team, PETA and Smokin Till The Sun Comes Up.

In addition, many thanks to all of our judges and Susan Daly, who kept score for the judges. We also could not have put on this event without the tireless efforts of the following volunteers: Sheila Rider, Lisa Scott, J.A. Arnold and Jamey Johnson.

This event was a tremendous success because of your efforts! Your involvement helps us with our mission to reduce the incidence of brain injury; to promote acceptance, independence, productivity of persons with brain injury; and to support their families.
Kennelwood Holds Santa Comes to the Pets Annual Fundraiser

Has your pet been naughty or nice this year? Santa will want to know at the 24th annual “Santa Comes to the Pets” photo event at Kennelwood Village.

Each year hundreds of families bring their pets to Kennelwood and have their picture taken with Santa. It’s a wonderful tradition that’s fun for the whole family. And all of the proceeds collected go directly to the Brain Injury Association of Missouri.

Over the years, Kennelwood has raised tens of thousands of dollars to assist those whose lives are forever changed by a brain injury. Professional photo packages begin at $25, and you can make an appointment by calling any Kennelwood location.

So bring your pet and help raise money for the BIA of MO! We hope to see you there.

◆ Saturday, November 19th
Kennelwood Ballwin location, (314) 822-3500.
◆ Saturday, December 3rd
Kennelwood Page & Lindbergh location, (314) 429-2100.
◆ Sunday, December 4th
Kennelwood South County location, (314) 849-8118.
◆ Saturday, December 10th
Kennelwood St. Peters location, (636) 970-4411.
◆ Sunday, December 11th
Kennelwood Chesterfield location, (636) 537-3221.

Webster University Student Volunteers Paint BIA Office

Have you noticed a change in the BIA office? Well, 13 Webster University men’s and women’s swim team members and their coach, Myrna Homm, descended upon the office in St. Louis on October 12th and proceeded to paint the conference room and halls in brighter, more cheerful colors.

The Webster University Works Worldwide Program matches up students with projects throughout the area, and the Brain Injury Association was fortunate enough to be chosen for one of those projects. Many thanks go out to Ms. Homm and her swim team members for spending their day beautifying the offices. It is a very welcome change indeed. BIA hopes to have the other rooms painted as well some time soon with volunteer help.

Also special appreciation to goes to Anna Stabenow, BIA summer intern, who spearheaded this much needed project!

Name Our New Turtle Mascot

Win Free BIA T-Shirt

Help us promote helmet safety by purchasing and wearing our new Brain Injury Association of Missouri T-shirt.

The T-shirts are 50 percent white cotton with green, yellow and black accents.

They come in sizes small, medium, large, Xlg and XX. The shirts are $10 each, plus shipping and handling.

Help Us Find Recipes
Volunteers to Compile BIA Cookbook

Help us find recipes for simple meals which can be used by individuals with limited mobility.

The recipes will then be compiled into a cookbook by Theresa Cathers and Amy Clark.

Please send your recipes to either Theresa Cathers at 2102 N. 36th St., St. Joseph, MO 64506, or Amy Clark at 7309 Berkridge Dr., Hazelwood, MO 63038.
A Soldier’s Miracle, (continued from page 1)

Because of the urgency of his burns, Travis was flown directly to the Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) burn unit at Fort Sam Huston in San Antonio, Texas. That was where his family was finally able to be with him only hours after his arrival. With the burns, the swelling and his coma state, he was barely recognizable even by his family. The prognosis was so poor that the neurologist who met with the family told them at best, Travis would be in a “persistent vegetative state”. Strengthened by much prayer support, they told him that they were Christians and believed God could come in where doctors leave off. Meanwhile, they were happy to take one day at a time. Considering the extent of his burns which covered over 33 percent of his body, they also believed that the coma was, in a sense, a blessing in disguise.

Gradually, Travis pulled out of the deep coma state and began to show some responsiveness. He had four burn surgeries at BAMC, but still had a cuffed tracheotomy and gastrostomy feeding tube when he was flown with Gayle, his mother, to the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans Hospital in Columbia, Missouri on February 20, 1996.

At that point, Travis was responsive to simple commands such as, ‘raise your right arm’. He remained in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit for three weeks and had one additional burn surgery on his foot.

One thing the family stresses is the need to constantly give someone in a coma familiar auditory input. Since visits in the burn ward were for a limited time, several times a day; the family had tapes of friends and family and selected CDs of tranquil music and familiar Christian music for almost constant input when they were not able to be with him.

The following months involved much rehabilitation, and Travis was able to go home to Hannibal, Missouri five months and one day after the horrific accident. Once home, the major portion of Travis’ rehabilitation, P.T., O.T., and Speech-Language Therapy was continued by his family. His parents warn: DO NOT STOP WORKING ON YOUR LOVED ONE’S PHYSICAL FITNESS AND MENTAL STIMULATION. IF THIS IS NOT DONE, PROGRESS WILL PROBABLY END AND REGRESSION WILL OCCUR! While Travis has progressed far beyond expectations, his short term memory is severely limited. He often needs cuing to keep on target, but he is able to care for his personal needs by using check lists. He does not always remember new happenings, but HE LEARNS WHAT HAS HAPPENED BY REPETITION, A JOURNAL AND/OR PICTURES.

Psychologists confirm in their research and conferences, that Travis’ ability to learn new information shows how the human brain works to compensate for limitations.

Travis especially enjoys movies, hand held games, computer activities, family vacations and a multitude of activities with his sisters, niece, and nephews. A major event in which he has responsibilities is his part in a monthly worship service in a large rest home. The residents always look forward to Travis’ presence and thank him for the blessing that he is to them. He has had other brain injured individuals approach him to share their common challenges. With his smile and his spirit, he has blessed the lives of individuals he has met in therapy situations, through volunteer work, his church, and countless strangers. He would eagerly tell you God kept him here for a purpose, and He isn’t finished with him yet!

Thank You Goes Out to Retiring BIA Volunteers

BIA would like to extend a very special thank you to a couple of long-time Brain Injury Association friends and volunteers. Ruth Estes will be moving to Texas later this year, and Maureen Magrath has recently made a career change.

Both Ruth and Maureen have been integral volunteers for the Association at the local and state level, chairing committees and serving on the board of directors. Thanks to both of them for their commitment, and BIA wishes them the very best in their new endeavors.

Governor’s Council on Disability Announces 2005/2006 Missouri Poster and Journalism Contests

The state of Missouri Governor’s Council on Disability wishes to announce its Fourteenth Annual Inclusion Awards for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities-2006. This year the theme for both contests is “Inclusion Leads to Opportunity.” Students should research and write a paper or design a poster around this theme.

The purpose of the contest is to promote a greater awareness of people with disabilities among Missouri’s youth. Both contests are open to students in grades 7 through 12.

For more information about the 2005-2006 Missouri Poster and Journalism Contests, please go to the Web site www.gcd.oa.mo.gov

Brain Injury Association of America Announces Brain Injury Business Practice College

The Brain Injury Association of America has announced that its Brain Injury Business Practice College will be held December 12-14, 2005, at the Menger Hotel, San Antonio, TX. For more information about mastering the business side of brain injury rehabilitation, please go to the Web site www.biausa.org/Pages/bibpc.html
Banner Year For 18th Annual St. Louis Chapter Golf Fundraiser

Picture 118 golfers, beautiful weather, great food, exciting auction items, and you have a snapshot of the 18th Annual Charity Golf Tournament for the Brain Injury Association of Missouri, St. Louis Chapter held at Crystal Springs Quarry Golf Club in Maryland Heights, on Sunday, August 21st.

We are excited to report that through the tremendous efforts of our golf committee chaired by Sue Orton; and Diamond Sponsors: Dobbs Tires & Auto Centers; Kennelwood Village/Invisible Fence Company, Inc.; and Merrill Lynch; we were able to raise $66,000 to benefit the St. Louis Chapter.

We would like to thank our Platinum Sponsors: Signature Health Services, Inc. / Select Orthopedics, Inc. BIOMET; Hon. Ann Callis & James Holloran; Cedar Creek Conference Center; Gold Sponsors: Michael Noble, D.M.D., Oral Facial Surgery Institute; Lewis, Rice & Fingersh, L.C.; Silver Sponsors: Anheuser-Busch, Inc.; Continental Fabricators; Diane and Bob Trame; Mengwasser Martin Lall & Clark P.C.; Bronze Sponsors: Rehab Care Group; Michael Kilker, CBS, LLC; Deborah John & Associates, Inc.; Lyn & Joe Castellano; Katy & Steve Crider; Judy & Vince Shaw; St. John’s Mercy Rehabilitation Center; First Service Bank; Plancorp., Inc.; Midwest Automation, Inc.; and Adrian N. Baker.

In addition, we would like to thank Reuther Chrysler Jeep for sponsoring a hole in one prize; Bob & Jane Brase for sponsoring a closest to the hole men’s prize; Veninga’s Jewelry for sponsoring a closest to the hole women’s prize; and All Mail and B & J Printing.

A final thank you goes out to Brain Injury Association of Missouri executive director Scott Gee; tournament director Mike Fromuth; Norwood golf pro Jo Dee Duncan; dinner emcee Bob Trame; course coordinator Diane Trame; development coordinator Joan Vatterott; auction coordinator Ann Lieb Frawley; volunteer coordinator Gloria Burns; photographer Jim Braibish and all of our wonderful volunteers; honorary chairpersons; auction donors; sponsors; advertisers; participants and the Crystal Springs Quarry Golf Club.

91 Participants Attend August Wilderness Retreat Camp

The 20th annual Donald Danforth Jr. Wilderness Retreat Camp held in August at the beautiful Wonderland Camp in Rocky Mount, Missouri was yet another success as 91 campers attended to take advantage of fun, fun, fun as well as many educational opportunities. This year several new activities were added to include a Pig Roast and Luau.

As always, the pictures tell the story for this week of adventure.
Your dues include membership in the Brain Injury Association of Missouri which entitles you to a copy of its national and state newsletters. There have been many gains toward awareness of brain injury and the development of brain injury rehabilitation in Missouri. Your dues are essential for us to continue positively affecting the lives of many people.

This is your organization. We look forward to your continued support!

Yes, I want to be a member of the Brain Injury Association of Missouri, Inc.

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY**

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<th>Entry*</th>
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Your brain injury connection is: [ ] Survivor [ ] Family [ ] Caregiver [ ] Other

Make **checks payable** to BIA-MO and mail to: 10270 #100, St. Louis, MO 63132 **OR** use your **credit card**.

[ ] VISA [ ] MasterCard Expiration Date:_______ Account Number:___________ Signature: ____________________

Name: _______________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________________ State: ________ Zip + 4 _________________

Phone Work: (     ) ____________________ Phone Home: (     ) ____________________ E-Mail Address: ____________________

Membership in the Brain Injury Association of Missouri is open to everyone!

*Survivors/family members with limited resources.