

THE RIGORS OF RECOVERY

Photos by **BILL WECHTER** | bwechter@nctimes.com

Four or five times a week, Marine Lt. Cameron West and his father, Artis, rise early and travel from their home in Oceanside to the San Diego Naval Medical Center. There, the 25-year-old West is reclaiming his life, learning how to walk on an artificial leg to replace the one he lost when a bomb exploded while he was on patrol in Afghanistan.



Peter Harsch, director of prosthetics at San Diego Naval Medical Center, makes some adjustments to the prosthesis worn by Marine Lt. Cameron West. "The sooner you get rid of the wheelchair, the better," Harsch said.



Marine Lt. Cameron West takes some steps on his newly adjusted prosthesis with some coaching from Peter Harsch, left, director of prosthetics at San Diego Naval Medical Center.



Left, a prosthetic replaces the leg Marine Lt. Cameron West lost when a bomb exploded while he was on patrol in Afghanistan. Above, West shares a light moment with his dad, Artis, at the family's Oceanside home. "I'm lucky to have him," the younger West said of his father.



A physical therapist works on Marine Lt. Cameron West's injured hand and arm, trying to coax out dozens of pieces of shrapnel.



Above, Lance Cpl. Justin McLoud chats with Marine Lt. Cameron West at the San Diego Naval Medical Center. McLoud lost both legs and his left arm to a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. His wife, Amber, and their son, Desmond, 5 months, sit at left. A shrapnel wound can be seen on the back of West's head at right. Left, West, followed by his dad, walks out of the medical center on his adjusted prosthetic.