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# **Sergeant Daniel E., USMC (Ret): “The Semper Fi Fund really helped me pull through”**

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*“The first time I found out about the  
Semper Fi Fund was actually in 2014,*

*when I finally decided I needed to get help mentally and physically,”* says 31-year-old Sgt Daniel E., who fulfilled a lifelong dream when he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2008. He deployed three times to Afghanistan—halfway around the globe from Everett, Washington, where he was born and raised.

*“I was starting to get rocky again,”* Daniel continued, referring to his struggles with PTSD. *“I have very bad insomnia. I got a referral for an Alpha-Stim machine.”*

An Alpha-Stim machine is a device that uses low-level electrical current to safely and effectively treat anxiety, depression and insomnia. The Semper Fi Fund works with service members suffering from PTSD to provide Alpha-Stim machines in appropriate situations.

*“I tried it, and I thought it was pretty interesting,” Daniel said, “but there was no way I could afford it. Then I was told about the Semper Fi Fund, and I got referred to a Case Manager. The Fund bought me the Alpha-Stim. That was huge. Finally, there was something that could help me without medication.”*

Daniel’s struggles with PTSD started during his first deployment, which began October 2009 and continued through May 2010. *“I was a vehicle gunner,”* he explains. *“The gunner in the turret has the best vision. It’s an important role. We encountered a lot of IEDs [improvised explosive devices].”*

Daniel’s second deployment, which began April 2011, ended abruptly on June 2 of that year when he took a bullet to his left shoulder. *“I fractured my scapula,”* he

explains. *“The round ricocheted off a wall and went through the back of my shoulder, punctured my scapula, and stuck in there. It’s still in my body—it’s actually potentially more dangerous to take it out.”*

After recovering from his wound and returning home to his wife (they had been married just five months earlier), Daniel began a program of physical therapy—and also began what he calls *“a whole new type of depression. Being home, knowing what the guys have gone through—I told my physical therapist that I needed to get back to Afghanistan.”*

In March 2013, Daniel returned to Afghanistan with the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, the same unit he served with on his first two deployments. His third deployment lasted through October of that year.

*“I don’t think I’ve been through the worst thing,” Daniel acknowledges, “but I’ve had some tough times, and the Semper Fi Fund really helped me pull through. I will always donate to the Fund because of what they’ve done for me, and I want them to be able to do it for other people. The program is just amazing.”*

In addition to the Alpha-Stim machine, the Semper Fi Fund has helped Daniel in a variety of ways,

including providing him with a guitar – *“five days after I made my request to the Fund, the guitar was on my doorstep; the music therapy classes have been huge in my recovery.”*



*“No matter how much you think there’s nothing that can help you, or how deep you*

*get into a hole, there's always someone there that wants to help you," he says.*

Assistance from the Fund has also included providing support so he can care for his wife, who is on dialysis three times a week. *"She's been on that since May of last year," Daniel explains. "She is currently on a kidney transplant list. She has medullary cystic kidney disease—when she was 10, she got a kidney from her dad. It lasted about 17 years before it started failing."*

Medically retired on February 27, 2015, Daniel recently began full-time classes at Cedarville University, majoring in Biblical studies. He notes that his Chaplain in the service had a big impact in his life, and he'd love to return to the service as a Marine Chaplain.

*“I’m not a religious person but I’m a Christian man,” Daniel says, “and my experience has helped me realize who I am and where I am in my faith.”*

*“My experience has also taught me that the biggest thing is just to appreciate the days that you have,” he continues. “I’ve been to the hospital twice with my wife, where she nearly died. Not to sound cliché, but it’s important to really appreciate the time you have here and not take it for granted.”*