

The AOFAS Visitation Program at Walter Reed

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The American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society (AOFAS) has a long history of care of the injured lower extremity in both the civilian and military population. In July 2006, the AOFAS proposed that the military orthopaedic surgeons at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and the AOFAS establish a visitation program with



Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

their facility for the exchange of ideas, for communication among specialists, and to better appreciate the sacrifices of our soldiers: “We, the members of AOFAS,



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would benefit with a renewed appreciation for what our soldiers do to help support our country and our freedom. We would also benefit from becoming acquainted with the military orthopaedic surgeons who dedicate themselves to the soldiers’ rehabilitation.”

On April 13, 2007, the AOFAS initiated a visitation program at Walter Reed. The meeting was attended by 18 AOFAS members and representatives from the military. The program included a morning report on the trauma cases admitted the week before, followed by case presentations involving difficult



Prosthetic foot and ankle.

foot and ankle reconstruction problems. The attendees were fortunate to hear the personal experiences of LTC Scott Shawen’s humanitarian efforts on behalf of the U.S. Military in Afghanistan.

During the patient presentations, the attendees were able to review the history, clinical photographs, and radiographs of these critically injured patients. The cases were presented with the injured soldiers and their relatives present. This was a unique experience for those who attended and made a particularly strong impression because we saw these young men not only as patients with devastating injuries but also as survivors in a battle for our freedom and security.

In this Middle East conflict, more than 80% of the injuries involve the lower extremity and 90% of the injured soldiers will survive. This

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combination provides a unique experience for the military lower extremity orthopaedic surgeon and a significant rehabilitation challenge for the armed services.

Regardless of the politics of the war, our men and women in uniform will need our support as orthopaedic surgeons and citizens of this country. We believe that these soldiers will receive the most contemporary and compassionate care available from our dedicated and talented military colleagues. The horrific nature of the injuries these heroes endure and their sacrifice to our country in their service and rehabilitation often go beyond description. The AOFAS salutes them and their dedicated orthopaedic caregivers. ■

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