



American Pain Foundation
A United Voice of Hope and Power over Pain

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Iraq War Veteran Amputee, Pain Advocate and New Author Releases
Exit Wounds: A Survival Guide to Pain Management for Returning Veterans and Their Families

Coincides with September's Designation as Pain Awareness Month

Baltimore, MD—(September 22, 2009)—The American Pain Foundation (APF) today announced the release of Iraq War Veteran and Pain Advocate Derek McGinnis' first book, *Exit Wounds: A Survival Guide to Pain Management for Returning Veterans and Their Families*. Written in collaboration with nationally renowned pain experts, the release date for *Exit Wounds* coincides with September's designation as Pain Awareness Month.

McGinnis, who sustained a traumatic brain injury, extensive shrapnel wounds, damage to his eye and amputation of his left leg above the knee from an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) while serving in the U.S. Navy in Iraq, said, "I wrote *Exit Wounds* because when I was struggling with horrific pain caused by my injuries, there was no guide, no map, no mentor to steer me through the minefield I was navigating. *Exit Wounds* contains the information my family and I desperately needed back in 2004."

Exit Wounds is both a guide to pain management for veterans and their family members, and also the inspiring story of how one man, with the support of his family and fellow veterans, fought to survive and even thrive despite his traumatic injuries and painful path to recovery. *Exit Wounds* and its companion website offer veterans and family members information about:

- Acute and chronic pain syndromes afflicting veterans
- Treatment options, including medications, procedures, complementary therapies and other interventions
- Strategies for self-advocating for optimal pain care
- Medical resources inside and outside the Veterans Administration (VA) system
- Caregiver needs, perspectives and resources

"With hundreds of thousands of military personnel expected to return from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan over the next few years, many of them will struggle with acute pain and face the possibility of a lifetime of chronic pain," said McGinnis. "They and their families deserve a resource to help them navigate through the barriers and obstacles that can prevent effective pain care."

McGinnis now serves as the Military/Veterans Initiative Amputee Outreach Advocate with APF and travels the country advocating for the pain management needs of veterans, military personnel and their caregivers. He has spoken to many influential groups and individuals within the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Veterans Service Organizations and Congress to bring military and veterans' pain issues to the forefront. McGinnis provides information, education, outreach, support and resources to those who are affected by pain.

"Derek McGinnis bravely served his country in combat and is now serving his fellow veterans who are battling a war on pain by being their voice and advocate," said Will Rowe Chief Executive Officer of the American Pain Foundation. "*Exit Wounds* is a valuable tool for members of the military, veterans and family members of any wounded service member."

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Exit Wounds will debut at the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom 2009 Conference and Exposition scheduled in Las Vegas on September 21-25 where McGinnis will be speaking.

To read an excerpt of *Exit Wounds* or to learn more on where you can obtain a copy of *Exit Wounds*, visit www.exitwoundsforveterans.org. The book is currently being distributed to veterans and service members for free through the Wounded Warrior Project and the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund. McGinnis is searching for partners to support the printing of the book so that it can be given for free to every service member, veteran, or family member who needs one. It is available to civilians through Amazon.

McGinnis, age 31, grew up in Fremont, California, and currently lives in Waterford, California, with his wife, Andrea, and their two young sons. In addition to his advocacy position with APF, McGinnis is currently pursuing a Masters Degree in Social Work. He enjoys competing in endurance races including, biathlons and triathlons and aspires to represent his country again one day as a member of the U.S. Paralympic team.

Available for Interview:

To schedule an interview with Derek McGinnis to discuss *Exit Wounds*, his struggle with pain and his advocacy work with APF, please contact Tina Register at 443-690-4707 or tregister@painfoundation.org.

About the American Pain Foundation:

Founded in 1997, the American Pain Foundation is an independent nonprofit 501(c)3 organization serving people with pain through information, advocacy, and support. Our mission is to improve the quality of life of people with pain by raising public awareness, providing practical information, promoting research, and advocating to remove barriers and to increase access to effective pain management.

About APF's Military/Veterans Initiative:

The American Pain Foundation's Military/Veterans Pain Initiative reaches out to active military and veterans who are in pain to provide educational information and support to improve pain care, decrease sense of isolation, and encourage pursuit of a better quality of life for them and their families.

About Pain Awareness Month:

In recognition of September's designation as Pain Awareness Month, the American Pain Foundation launched the first-ever "Conquering Pain Together" campaign in 2009. Key components of the program include a National Day of Action scheduled for September 26, 2009, and an online petition to improve access to appropriate and effective pain care for all, called "I COMMIT." APF encourages Americans nationwide to bring pain to the forefront and address the barriers that are preventing millions of Americans from receiving access to appropriate pain management by participating in activities planned in their own communities or utilizing the Conquering Pain Together toolkit to plan their own event. Learn more about this campaign by visiting www.conqueringpaintogether.org.

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