

## COMBAT CAMERA WARRIOR

## WOUNDED IN AFGHANISTAN

**by Master Sgt. Keith Milks**

Lance Cpl. Shawn M. Statz, a combat photographer assigned to the 2nd Bn., 7th Marines, was wounded June 18 in a firefight with Taliban insurgents near the village of Musa Qal-eh, in Afghanistan's volatile Helmand Province.

When his platoon's Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle became stuck in a wadi during a security patrol, Statz and his fellow Marines were attempting to recover the vehicle when they came under intense small arms and rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire from Taliban fighters hidden in the hills and a nearby compound.

As the Marines returned fire, a RPG exploded near Statz, peppering him in the face and arm with shrapnel. He was evacuated to Bagram Army Air Field where his wounds were treated, and he was subsequently sent to Germany and then Bethesda National Naval Medical Center in Maryland for further treatment. Two other Marines were wounded in the explosion and are expected to make a full recovery.

Statz graduated from the Basic Still Photography Course at Defense Information School in May 2007 and was

assigned to the 1st Marine Division Combat Camera in Camp Pendleton, Calif.

He deployed to Afghanistan in April.

He and his wife of two years, Kristin, are expecting their first child in

August. Statz underwent surgery to repair the damaged tendons in his left arm, and after a period of convalescence in Missouri, he will return to Camp Pendleton where he intends to "... go through physical therapy, get back to duty and return to the fight."

**Jack Paxton, executive director of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association ([www.usmccca.org](http://www.usmccca.org)), announced today that Shawn will be receiving an honorary life membership, reflecting a recent policy initiative that honors Combat Camera and Public Affairs Marines who earn the Purple Heart Medal.**