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from the
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- ☐ Hilyard St. Market

Brain injury survivor runs up support for goal

By Jocelyn Maddux
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

On Aug. 1, 1977, 20-year-old Paul Zosel injured his head and became a victim of Acquired Brain Injury after the machinery he was operating for his logging company in Corvallis hit a stump and overturned three times. When the machine finally came to a halt about 90 feet from the stump, Zosel was lying on the ground unconscious.

The doctors told his family the prognosis was not good. Zosel was in a coma, he could not breathe without being hooked up to a respirator and his kidneys were failing. His doctors wanted to take him off the respirator and let nature take its course.

Zosel's family insisted that he remain hooked up to the respirator and hoped for the best.

One month later, Zosel awoke from the coma to discover that not only would he have to use a wheelchair until he learned how to walk again, but his life and the lives of those around him would be changed forever.

"My rehabilitation was the most frustrating thing I've ever had to endure," he said. "When you have problems talking, walking and laughing, you lose your friends. Slowly you realize that you're always sitting by yourself."

Although he was able to walk again a year after the accident, his vision was still blurred.

"When I would walk into a room, people would look at me funny," he said. "My arms and legs wouldn't always do what I wanted them to."

To gain community support and positive reinforcement for other survivors of ABI, Zosel formed the Head Injury Rehabilitation Fund in 1986. To unload the anger and frustration he sometimes had with himself and with those around him, he started running.

Although he still suffers from a few symptoms of his injury, Zosel, now 36, continues to run. In fact, he's caught up with the "biggest road run in town."

On July 4, The Oregon Track Club will sponsor the 21st Annual Butte to Butte Run and Mayor's Walk in Eugene — a 10-kilometer run and 4.5 mile walk that goes from Spencer Butte Middle School to Skinner's Butte Park.

Zosel and Leslie Murphy, a member of the rehabilitation fund, are not only participating in the 4,000-member event this year, but are also working with its planners to raise support and funds for a community education program they hope to launch sometime this year.

The idea for the program began three years ago when Zosel said he

was looking for ways to raise awareness and to get the local community involved with survivors of ABI. At about that same time, former Butte to Butte Run Director Rich Saxton happened to be looking for ways to involve community groups like the rehabilitation fund with the race.

"We wanted to get community groups involved to give the event a broader base appeal," Saxton said. "It has turned out to be an experiment that benefits both groups."

Zosel explained that if it is launched, the program could help teachers, peers and families of teens with ABI get information, support and training to cope with the difficult task of social readjustment.

"The program provides a way for survivors to accept themselves and feel good about their day to day activities," he said.

Zosel said he expects to get at least 300 runners to support the rehabilitation fund this year. The money will be used to start the program, which also will help teachers learn skills to ease social interaction between teens with ABI and their classmates.

"I saw a lot of folks out there who didn't have the right resources," Zosel said. "When you climb the mountain, when you've stepped through the door, you know other people can do it too."

Murphy, 36, who got ABI after she was hit by a panel truck when she was 12 years old, said she got involved because she knew that if other survivors had the right kind of support, they could adjust better too.

She explained that for people with head injuries to be able to get the support they need, they and their community must have a positive attitude.

"It's hard when your peers start rejecting you just because they don't know or understand what you're going through," she said. "That's why I wear this button," she said, pointing to a small pink pin on her left lapel that reads, "Your silence will not protect you."

Through the program and other community efforts, Zosel is also trying to find a way to end the silence.

He explained that because not everyone with ABI acts the same way, it is hard for the public to comprehend the difficulties of a head injury survivor.

While one person may be able to lead a virtually uninterrupted life, another may face devastating changes, said rehabilitation therapist Jane Farrar.

"The process by which the brain can break down is varied," she said. "The damage is random." Characteristics of a person with a severe memory disorder or a paralyzed left arm may be completely different from someone who cannot speak or who is unable to follow simple directions, she explained.

Elite group of Fort Lewis soldiers remembers its battle

TACOMA (AP) — For an elite group of Fort Lewis soldiers, D-Day was baptism by fire.

About 225 members of the 2nd Ranger Battalion fought a little-known battle on a steep cliff above the Normandy beaches. It was their first major combat test.

Though the operation was costly to the unit, it likely enabled many other men to stay alive.

"It spared tens of thousands of lives," said Leonard G. Lomell, 74, who won a Distinguished Service Cross for his actions in France.

Lomell, who now lives in New Jersey, was a member of the battalion, which was moved to Fort Lewis in the 1970s.

Rangers are highly-trained elite soldiers sent on some of the most dangerous assignments.

During World War II, Lomell and his colleagues were ordered to scale a cliff miles from the main Normandy landing sight and destroy six 155mm howitzers, positioned to fire on ships in the channel and soldiers on the beaches.

The operation went awry quickly.

British landing craft were supposed to bring the soldiers ashore by 6:30 a.m., in advance of the main invasion force. But huge waves swamped one boat carrying more than 20 Rangers and caused a supply boat to sink,

drowning all but one aboard.

As the coastline came in sight, the lead boat veered three miles off course. The mistake cost 30 minutes, but there was still time to take out the guns before thousands of soldiers came under fire.

The Rangers used special rocket mounts to shoot grappling hooks and rope atop the 100-foot cliff. The best climbers, armed with large automatic rifles, went up first to clear the way for the others.

But the Germans were waiting, tossing boulders down at the Rangers as they climbed up, cutting rope and shooting several before they reached the top.

The Rangers who made it to the

top had another surprise waiting: The cannons they came to destroy were gone.

Allied planes that flew over the cliff before the landing apparently mistook the utility poles for cannons.

But the Rangers still wanted to find the guns. And by 8:30 a.m., Lomell and another Ranger found five of the six missing cannons. They were in an apple orchard 700 yards away, but still well within range of the channel and the beaches.

Rangers destroyed all five guns, but the cost was high.

Of the approximately 225 Rangers put ashore, only about 70 were able to fight the next day.

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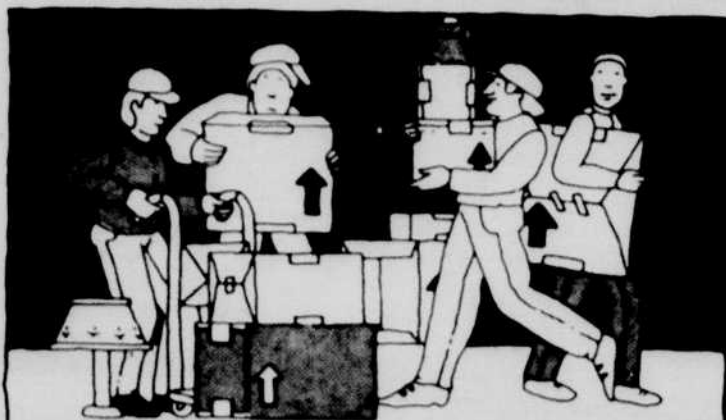
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