

# Iraq Vet's New Enemy: Chronic Pain

(NAPSA)—Iraq war veteran and helicopter pilot Captain Darisse Smith suddenly felt like she was being stabbed in the hip with a butcher knife, a searing pain that went down her leg and never stopped. She had logged more than 600 hours in the Army's challenging Kiowa helicopter and she had come to Iraq to combat an external/military enemy. But now she faced an internal enemy that was wounding her around the clock. The leg pain became so intense and constant that the once vibrant triathlon competitor was given a maximum dose of powerful pain drugs and relegated to a sedentary life.

Military doctors diagnosed the pain as a consequence of the cockpit pounding she took in her helicopter, and said she'd "have to learn to live with it." But Darisse wasn't used to taking no for an answer. She tried acupuncture, endless injections and combinations of drugs, none of which made the pain go away. The pain forced her to separate from the military and leave a job she loved. After three years of endless torment, she finally came across an answer. A civilian pain specialist suggested she try a small rechargeable spinal cord stimulator from Boston Scientific.



**Darisse Smith got back the life she refused to give up. While she trains for the triathlon, she's already planning her next snowboarding destinations. Join her in the search to turn your tears of pain into the joy of triumph.**

She found out that she could "test-drive" it for a week externally, without having it implanted, to see if it made the pain go away. What a difference the spinal cord stimulator made. That weekend Darisse ran, biked and walked with her dogs, pain-free for the first time in years. She had the small stimulator implanted with a surgical procedure and can

control the intensity of the implant's signal with a remote control. She is now training for a triathlon, has white-water canoed down one of the nation's most challenging rivers and taken an active vacation to Puerto Rico.

Chronic pain such as Darisse's may be the military's next big battlefield. With thousands of troops returning from the war on terror with pain that won't go away, technology—not narcotics—may be the answer. Pain specialists are bracing for an influx of new veterans as patients. And the problem of chronic pain is by no means relegated to our servicemen and -women. A USA Today/ABC News/Stanford University Medical Center poll indicates that 19 percent of American adults—almost one in five—say they suffer from chronic pain.

Captain Darisse Smith's answer to those in chronic pain is "Never give up! You are your own best pain advocate. Keep searching until you find a doctor who gets it." Spinal cord stimulation could be the answer you are looking for.

For more information, visit [www.controlyourpain.com](http://www.controlyourpain.com). You can also join a community of other pain sufferers online at [www.raceagainstpain.com](http://www.raceagainstpain.com) to find out what is working for others.