

# Corcoran<sup>®</sup> AND MATTERHORN<sup>®</sup> FOOTWEAR

New Desert Tan Styles  
Available Now!



**4407**  
Tanker



**4385**  
Combat  
w/Steel Toe



**4330**  
Marauder



**4500**  
Jump



**4525**  
Field



Vibram and the yellow octagonal label are registered trademarks of Vibram S.p.A. of Italy. Quilting Corporation, North Brookfield, MA, is the North American manufacturer of Vibram Soleing products under exclusive license.

Cambrelle is a registered trademark of Fibretec Corporation. DRYZ, Maxima & Data Management System, DRYZ Controller, Jurocent and the DRYZ logo are registered trademarks of H. Brown Shoe Technologies, Inc. ©2004 Brown Technologies

www.corcoranboot.com

www.matterhornboot.com



RICK KOZAK/STAFF

Sgt. 1st Class Juanita Wilson has new railings in the bathrooms and along stairways of her Baltimore-area home that help her navigate after she lost her left hand in an IED explosion in Iraq. Wilson uses a prosthetic hand.

# Fending for themselves

## Severely wounded soldiers find modified housing hard to come by

By Kelly Kennedy  
STAFF WRITER

Sgt. 1st Class Juanita Wilson lost her left hand and part of her arm when an improvised explosive device exploded near her convoy in Iraq in August 2004.

Rather than retire with full medical benefits, she re-enlisted in the Army Active Reserve.

But when she began to modify her home to accommodate her injuries, she found she had to pay for it. Veterans are eligible for \$10,000 to \$50,000 grants to install garage-door openers, lever doorknobs, wheelchair ramps and rocker switches, but Wilson's not a veteran.

"We're not entitled to veterans' benefits," she said, "and there's no money in place to help active-duty soldiers. The severely wounded — we're going to have to start making some noise here."

In June, Army officials changed policies to allow soldiers with amputations up to a year to decide whether they would like to continue a career in the Army.

But the Army only provides housing-modification assistance

to soldiers who live on post.

Ned Christensen, spokesman for the Army's Installation Management Agency, said soldiers can work through their housing offices to get help with modifying government housing. Those who live off post have to come up with their own funding.

"The government does not pay to modify a private home off post," Christensen said. "Some private organizations ... have done a lot of good work in helping with that."

Terry Jemison, spokesman for the Veterans Affairs Department, said soldiers are eligible for housing-modification grants only if they have already been rated at 100 percent disability through the medical evaluation board process. "It's basically for those who are awaiting discharge," Jemison said.

Veterans also have to meet a series of requirements to prove they are eligible for VA grants for the "severely disabled," such as missing both legs, blindness in both eyes or the loss of both arms.

"If I'd taken the discharge, I could have gotten full medical benefits and help with my hous-



COURTESY OF HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS

Staff Sgt. Daniel Metzdorf, who lost his leg in Iraq, shows off the new handrails installed in the garage of the home he owns in Fayetteville, N.C. A friend at Homes for our Troops sent a team to Metzdorf's home to take care of the modifications, which took a couple of hours.

ing," Wilson said. "But I wanted to continue to serve."

Her case is not isolated.

A rocket-propelled grenade left Staff Sgt. Josh Olson with one leg when he was stationed in Iraq in 2003. He decided to stay in the military as a member of the Army Marksmanship Team when the unit's commander sent a note to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, D.C., looking for soldiers with amputations.

While buying a house at his post,

See next page