Athlete Marc Ward

Name:
Marc Ward

Hometown:
Alamo, Calif.

Rank:
Second Lieutenant

AFSC:
61A (Operations Research Analyst)

Unit:
Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, Detachment 4, Petersen AFB, Colo.

Injury Type:
Partially avulsed nerves from spinal cord

Date of Injury:
May 3, 2003

Goals:
Earn my master's degree in Operations Research.

Second Lt. Marc Ward is a 2008 Air Force Academy graduate and a space-force-enhancement test analyst stationed at Peterson AFB, Colo.

Second Lt. Marc Ward's career as an Air Force officer almost never came to pass after a sports injury during a rugby match put him out of commission for about two years. During Ward's freshman year at the Air Force Academy in 2003, he put a crushing hit on a University of California, Berkeley player during the college rugby semi-finals, but it was him who fell unconscious after the collision. Ward's memory of the first four days after the incident was non-existent, and doctors at Stanford University Medical Center couldn't initially pinpoint the extent of his injuries.

After numerous tests, doctors concluded Ward tore two nerves between the C-6 and C-6 vertebrae. It took him nine months to move his right arm, and more than a year before he had any range of movement at all. By June 0f 2005, Ward recovered enough from his injuries to return to the academy. After his return, Ward signed on as an assistant coach on the rugby team and attempted to play again his junior year. While multiple concussions hampered his ability to play his senior year, Ward was still named the Team Captain for his final season at the academy.

In 2008, Ward graduated from the AFA and is now a space-force-enhancement test analyst for the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center, Detachment 4, at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo.