

UCLAMEDICINE

ISSUE VIEWING

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Friends

Ride-along



While in Al Asad, Iraq, on May 5, 2007, U.S. Marine Cpl. Tony Porta was in a Humvee that hit a roadside IED , killing two Marines instantly and severely wounding him. His prognosis was devastating: third-, fourth-and fifth-degree burns over 35 percent of his body, with several disfiguring injuries. As a patient at UCLA, Tony mentioned his lifelong love of fast cars to a member of the [Operation Mend](#) team. When racecar driver Anders Hainer got wind of it, he offered to drive Tony along Pacific Coast Highway in his shiny black Ferrari 430 Spider.

Anders and his wife, Julie, are generous donors to Operation Mend, UCLA Health System's unique partnership with Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas and the V.A.- Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System to help treat U.S. military personnel injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2009, Julie and Anders have provided unrestricted support to the program as well as to research in skin and bone regeneration, since severe blasts can render wounded survivors' own skin and bone unavailable for reconstruction. "That day was one of the most important in my life," Anders says of his ride with Tony. "Tony was such a powerhouse of will and strength in the face of unimaginable adversity."