

Plan devised for arms protests

Navy, demonstrators work together to prevent other injuries

By Kristin Huckshorn
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Protesters and officials at the Concord Naval Weapons Station said Thursday they have come up with a way to prevent injuries at demonstrations like the one that ended with the maiming of Vietnam veteran S. Brian Willson.

Under the plan, Navy trains and trucks carrying munitions would be flanked by a human corridor of Marines. Protesters trying to block the vehicles — which they believe carry U.S. weapon shipments to Central America — would be removed by law enforcement officials before the vehicles began moving.

"We've worked out a way to make our point in the strongest way possible without anyone getting hurt," said Dave Hartsough, a member of the Nuremberg Actions Committee, which has been staging protests at the base since June.

Willson lost his legs Sept. 1 after he was hit by a train while sitting on the tracks during a protest.

On Thursday, Willson's wife, Holley Rauen, said her husband has taken his first steps during rehabilitation at John Muir Hospital in Walnut Creek.

She said that on each leg he has been fitted with a Plexiglas cast that runs from mid-thigh to where Willson's legs were amputated below the knee. Each cast has a metal pipe embedded in the end, and prosthetic feet are attached to the pipes.

Willson has scheduled a press conference for today; it will be his first public appearance since the incident.

Chuck Goodmacher, a friend of Willson, said he visited Willson on Wednesday night.

"He was in incredible spirits," Goodmacher said. "He's reading mail, reading articles. He's very pleased with the support that people have shown."

Protests at the site continued early Thursday morning. Two people were arrested when they tried attempted to block trucks but were later released from the Contra Costa County Jail.

Wire services contributed to this report.