

Jeffrey E. Mittman
Master Sergeant (Ret), United States Army

In 21 years of service including four tours of combat, Jeff Mittman claims he only had one bad day.

In 1990 he deployed to the Middle East as part of Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Following 9/11, he was a platoon sergeant with the 101st Airborne's "Rakkasans!" His unit was one of the first into Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. While there, his platoon conducted more than 100 combat missions - without losing a single soldier. Returning to Fort Campbell he was quickly redeployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Again, his platoon conducted hundreds of combat missions without a friendly casualty. In 2005, he was sent back to Iraq as an advisor to the forces of the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior.

ONE BAD DAY: On the morning of 7 July, 2005, MSG Mittman's team came under attack. He was severely injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). Near death, his wounds included severe head and facial trauma, as well as, numerous other injuries. He awoke a month later in a military hospital with his wife by his side. He quickly realized his family needed a husband and a father, not a memory. At that moment he made a conscious decision to survive – to recover. Together the Mittman family began the arduous process of acclimating to their "new normal." It involved learning to deal with his blindness and enduring more than 40 operations to rebuild his face and body.

Despite everything he's been through, Jeff counts his blessings and will tell anyone who asks that he is "the luckiest man in the world." He is a requested speaker across the United States giving lectures and sharing the lessons he has learned from his experiences. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (3rd Award); the Purple Heart Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal; the Army Commendation Medal (8th Award); the Army Achievement Medal (7th Award); the Combat Infantryman's Badge (2d Award); the Expert Infantryman's Badge; the Pathfinder Badge; the Parachutist Badge; the Drill Sergeant Identification Badge; and the Air Assault Badge along with various other awards and decorations.

Since his retirement MSG Mittman has worked in both the public and private sectors. His nationally recognized awards include: the 2013 Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and Department of Defense (DoD) Disabled Employee of the Year Award; the American Foundation for the Blind's 2011 Gallagher Award for mentoring and serving as role model for blind / visually impaired individuals; the 2010 Osborne "Oz" Day Award presented by the federal government for increasing public awareness of the federal AbilityOne Program; and the Lighthouse International's 2007 Henry A. Grunwald Award honoring outstanding public service. He is also a 2015 inductee of the Indiana Military Veterans Hall of Fame and has received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS).

MSG Mittman currently serves the community as a board member of Bosma Enterprises (<http://www.bosma.org>).

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Resource Management from Troy University, a Master of Arts in Executive Development from Ball State University, and a Master of Business Administration also from Ball State. He lives with his wife, Christy and their two children in New Palestine, Indiana and currently works for DFAS in Indianapolis.