

Heartbreaking Journeys

Sources: "Spirit Intact, Soldier Reclaims His Life" by Lizette Alvarez, the NY Times, 7/4/10; Letter by Lisa Paterson, the NY Times, 7/11/10



988 U.S. service members have **lost limbs** in combat since the start of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Private First Class **Brendan Marrocco**, 22, of Staten Island, is one of them.

On Easter Sunday 2009 in Iraq, a roadside bomb exploded under his vehicle, and he became the first veteran of the two wars to **lose all four of his limbs**, and survive. He is now in rehabilitation at Walter Reed Hospital. His brother, Michael, 26, gave up a good-paying job to move in with him to look after him.

9/11 Widow Lisa Paterson wrote the following letter to express her anguish on learning about Brendan's horrific injuries.

A Letter From a 9/11 Widow

Lisa Paterson, Beach Haven, N.J., *the New York Times*, July 11, 2010

"Almost nine years ago, a reporter asked me **what I wanted to happen to those responsible for killing my husband, Steven, on 9/11**, and I replied that **I wanted peace and no further deaths or injuries**. Reading Specialist Brendan Marrocco's incredible and heartbreaking journey after losing all of his limbs to a roadside bomb stopped me in despair and reminded me of all that we continue to lose as the war goes on in Iraq.

Specialist Marrocco's new life of unimaginable struggle is a direct result of that response to go to war after 9/11. While those responsible for that decision go on to enjoy retirement, Specialist Marrocco has to wake every day and fight his own personal war.

Can his poignant story, and that of his heroic brother, Michael, at least be the example of what we are not winning after that Tuesday? **What will it take to finally end this war and further heartache?"**



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