

# Be strong, stand tall and always move forward

Denise Goodwin

*The Patron Greatness Lectures are a series of early evening talks by inspirational individuals.*

*The talks are an opportunity for friends of Patron to hear from those who have overcome adversity, devoted themselves to making a difference to the lives of others, or achieved truly exceptional feats.*

*In February, we welcomed Mark Ormrod who addressed an audience of Patron colleagues, friends and partners.*

We take a lot of things in life for granted. How often do we stop to think about what it means to be able to do even the simplest things, like walking, getting out of bed or brushing our teeth?

But what happens when the ability to perform these everyday tasks is cruelly snatched away? Let's rewind almost a decade. It's the early hours of Christmas Eve 2007 and Royal Marines Commando Mark Ormrod was out on a routine foot patrol in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. About to take his position, he triggered an Improvised Explosive Device. His legs were both instantly severed and he was airlifted to an emergency field hospital. During the journey, medics thought he was dead and were focused on other casualties. But, suddenly, his eyelids started to flutter and one of the team, who happened to notice this, realised he was still alive. A desperate, ground-breaking but dangerous procedure was performed mid-air which ultimately saved his life.

Mark woke up three days later in Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham: both legs had been amputated above the knee and his right arm amputated above the elbow. He was the UK's first triple amputee to survive the Afghanistan conflict.

In hospital, the doctors told him that he should prepare himself for the rest of his life in a wheelchair. Returning home, Mark found that his wheelchair was too wide for the door frames, so he was forced to spend much of each day in the hallway.

Mark refused to accept the situation; his determination led him to the US in 2009 where he met Cameron Clapp – a young American who tragically lost both his legs and right arm having been struck by a train. Cameron's resilience and positivity - combined with sophisticated prosthetic technology - allowed him to walk independently on two prosthetic legs just five months after his accident.

In June 2009, Mark's changed life forever. Through Cameron, Mark found the Hanger Clinic in Oklahoma City, a premier provider of prosthetics solutions. Having acquired new prosthetics at the clinic, he then went through a three-week bootcamp, with the goal of mastering his new limbs and regaining his independence. At the end of those three weeks, Mark left the wheelchair behind forever.

It would have been easy for him to cash in his disability pension and whittle away the days, forever regretting the decision to join the Marines or his time spent in Afghanistan, but he didn't. Moreover, Mark maintains that the skills and qualities that he learnt in the military have helped him to get him to where he is today.

Today, Mark leads a mobile life, driving around in an unadapted vehicle, running marathons and cycling the coast, raising thousands for the Royal Marine's Charity, as well as looking after his three

children, two of whom arrived after his injuries. Mark is a beacon of energy and positivity, as well as a real family man.

At Patron, our fundamental belief is that those who have put themselves in harm's way in service for our country deserve to receive the treatment that will achieve the best quality of life for them and, unfortunately, often this is just not available without charitable funding. The British government, the NHS and the military did not provide any information or advice on the advanced prosthetics that enable Mark to walk: it was his refusal to accept never walking again, and his tireless research that have given him the quality of life he has today. The cost of the vast majority of Mark's prosthetics, and those worn by two others with similar injuries, has been paid for by the Royal Marines Charity. All three will need new extremely expensive prosthetics every five years. Thus, at Patron, we are so proud to have been able to help him raise money for his prosthetics through our long-standing partnership with the Royal Marines Charity.

Mark's story and his passion to drive ahead with his life demonstrate mental strength, perseverance and commitment, truly embodying the Patron Charitable Initiatives motto of 'reach out - push forward - aim high'.

*The Patron Greatness Lectures will run throughout 2017 and are not part of a fundraising exercise; instead, they are intended to motivate, educate, inspire and enrich for the Patron team, our friends and partners.*

*Each evening consists of an early evening talk followed by a Q&A session and an opportunity for informal conversation over drinks and light refreshments. For more information about The Greatness Lectures, e-mail me on: [denise@patroncapital.com](mailto:denise@patroncapital.com).*