

# Melissa Stockwell

American War Hero & Paralympic Medalist



**TEDxVail**



Retired U.S. Army 1st. Lieutenant

**1st female American soldier to lose a limb in active duty in Iraq**

Purple Heart and Bronze Star recipient

2022 Marathon World Recorder Holder (Boston)

2020 Team USA Paralympic Opening Ceremony Flag Bearer

2016 Paralympic Bronze Medalist – Triathlon

3-Time World Champion, 3-Time Paralympian, IRONMAN

"Melissa's story inspires and drives home an important message fitting for any audience: success is driven by focusing on what you do have as opposed to what you don't. What Melissa has already accomplished in her life is remarkable and it is clear her best is yet to come."

The Chicago Bears

"Melissa Stockwell tells an American story that is all about inspiration and not at all about self-pity. I have seen her bring a whole roomful of legislators to tears with her straight talk and sincere patriotism."

Nancy Livingston  
Director of Community  
Relations and Outreach,  
Century College



www.MelissaStockwell.com

At first glance, Melissa Stockwell may appear to be the quintessential Mid-western All-American mom, but she is far more. She is an American war hero who has triumphed over personal tragedy to achieve greatness, World Champion status, and she has dedicated her life to chasing remarkable accomplishments while giving back to others, particularly those who face challenges similar to her own.

Melissa graduated from the University of Colorado and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. She deployed to Baghdad, Iraq where a blast from a roadside bomb struck her Humvee, causing the loss of her left leg above the knee. After enduring numerous infections and surgeries, Melissa was medically retired from the Army. She is the first female soldier to ever lose a limb in active combat and has been awarded both The Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

Following her accident, sports become the road to recovery for Melissa. In 2008, she became the first Iraqi War Veteran to qualify for the Beijing Paralympics where she was honored by her fellow Team USA athletes to be the flag bearer in the Closing Ceremony. After Beijing, Melissa turned to the sport of Paratriathlon and is now a three-time World Champion.

On September 11, 2016, at the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Melissa raced in honor of her fellow soldiers and their families who had given the ultimate sacrifice serving and protecting America. After a grueling race, the day ended on the podium, as the newly crowned Paralympic Bronze Medalist.



Six weeks before the 2021 Paralympics, Melissa broke her back in a training accident, derailing her hopes of winning a gold medal. Nevertheless, despite the pain, she managed to compete at the Paralympic Games, finishing 5<sup>th</sup>. She is currently training for one more shot at a Paralympic Gold Medal at the Paris Games in 2024.



Melissa has shared her remarkable story, and the inspiring insights she has uncovered along the way, to standing ovations across the country for Fortune 500s, military bases, professional organizations, charities, government events and countless schools.

## [watch Melissa speak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWInSH4KUfY)

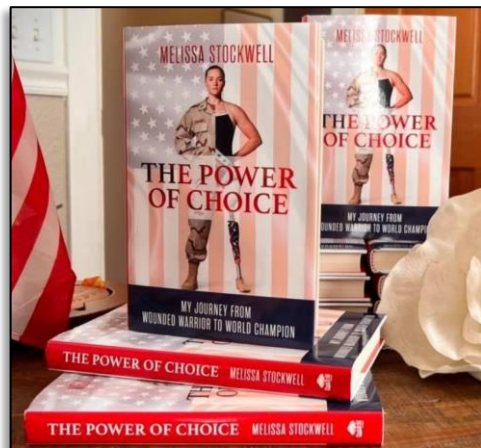
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWInSH4KUfY>

### What Melissa Speaks About

If you ask Melissa Stockwell to describe herself one of the first things you'll hear is, "I am a Patriot, a lover of the red, the white and the blue." She had an American flag stitched to the inside of her wedding dress.

Melissa proudly wore the uniform of the United States Army, where she very nearly gave her life for her country. Today, she proudly wears the uniform of Team USA as a World Champion athlete and Paralympic medalist.

Melissa shares her inspiring story, from the battlefields of Bagdad to the podium on the beach of Rio de Janeiro, in an emotionally powerful presentation that leaves audiences forever changed to see ability not disability, to maximize what you do have and forget about what you don't and to apply, as she describes, "...the amazing power of choice."



"Thank you again for being our keynote speaker. The sharing of your experience gave all present a new heightened sense of our mission. You truly delivered a 'gold-medal' message that a can-do, must-do direction is what it takes to succeed. You were amazing! Thank you."

Anna Dodelin  
SRA International, Inc.





"Melissa, you forced us to take stock of how we view our own lives with your TEDxVail Talk, "Choose Your Story." We laughed when you flipped your leg completely around to show off your sweet new dance move. You stand on one leg with more courage and grace than many of us do on two. You moved hundreds to tears in the audience. Thanks, Melissa, for your powerful idea! You entice us all to choose life stories worth repeating."

Kat Haber  
TEDx Vail - 2016

"We knew Melissa's story would be inspirational. What blew us away was the power with which she told her story -- with a perfect mix of humility, humor, and the most positive spirit I've ever had the opportunity to witness. If you're looking for someone who can relate while providing perspective, challenge and inspire while being humble, and leave a lasting message around resilience and a winning attitude, you should reach out to Melissa immediately! She touched every member of our organization both professionally and personally, and left us wanting to be better in every aspect of our lives."

Megan Bailey,  
Senior Marketing Manager  
Roche Diagnostics

"We were so happy to have Melissa speak at our Sales and Marketing Offsite. There was not a dry eye in the audience and she left us all feeling inspired, motivated and incredibly proud to have her on our team."

Peter McGuinness  
Chief Marketing Officer  
Chobani

I can't say enough about how great Melissa's keynote was! She was amazing. So much inspiration. People are still talking about it! All the best to you and your team. It was wonderful working with her!

Suzi Klimek  
Executive Director of Corporate Marketing  
Surestep

The guests at our Kids Rank: Ribbons of Character Benefit were completely engaged and inspired by our honoree Melissa Stockwell. Her story of determination and perseverance all with an optimistic attitude were exactly why she was chosen for our annual award. Beyond her incredible combat story, it is her continuing life's journey and her ability to make a human connection with people which made her time with us an unforgettable experience. Thanks,

Kelcey Liverpool  
Founder  
Kids Rank





Some of Melissa's previous engagements include:

