

## Melissa Stockwell

Former US Army 1st Lieutenant, World Champion Triathlete, 2016 Paralympic Bronze Medalist

Melissa Stockwell was the first female American Soldier to lose a limb in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Her vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb on April 13, 2004, resulting in the loss of her left leg, above the knee. She was honored with a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star for her service.

Four years later she represented the USA again, this time as a member of the US Paralympic Swim Team where she was the first Iraq War veteran to qualify for the Paralympic Games. She would return to the Paralympic Games twice more, in 2016 and 2020, this time in triathlon. She has remained one of the world's most elite Paratriathletes, winning three World Championship titles and the 2016 Paralympic Bronze Medalist. She is both a World Record holding marathon runner and an Ironman.

Away from the field of play, in 2011 she co-founded the non-profit organization Dare2tri Paratriathlon club which serves youth and adults with physical disabilities along with injured service members. Dare2tri provides adaptive equipment, training, coaching, and support in triathlon.

In 2019, Melissa and her husband, Brian Tolsma, opened the doors to Tolsma Stockwell Prosthetics, providing state of the art, custom made orthotics and prosthetics to the amputee community, including some of the top adaptive athletes in the world.

Melissa is one of the most critically acclaimed inspirational speakers in the country, and the author of *The Power of Choice*.

Melissa is the proud mother of Dallas (2014) and Mille (2017) and lives with her family near the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, CO.