



Being raised in a brood of six can create a little competition between siblings. As an athlete at Seckman High School in Arnold, Missouri, this would give Todd Nicely his competitive drive. He played defensive end in football and ran track. But sports were not Todd's only passion; he loved war movies, new and old. He wanted so much to join the Marine Corps, to be a part of the camaraderie that exists between fellow Marines; and at 23 years old, he did, and he loved it. He had found his calling.

Todd was stationed at Camp Lejeune; and it is there that he met Crystal Sutton, a fellow Marine. Todd was smitten with Crystal and the two were married in 2009.

As a lance corporal, he served a tour in Iraq, and later, it was his tour as a corporal in Afghanistan that would render him a "Wounded Warrior".

After being stabilized, he was flown to the National Naval Medical Center, near Washington, D.C., where he spent several days in ICU. At 26 years old, Todd was told that he was the second American quadruple amputee to survive his injuries. He lost both his legs at the knee, his right arm above the elbow and left hand above the wrist. He also suffered a fractured jaw and collapsed lung. Despite the devastating news, Todd's first concern was his squad. He wanted to know that they were all ok, and he was assured that, in fact, they were.

It's the determination, competitive drive and the love of his wife and family that keeps this Marine persisting. Todd is currently undergoing extensive physical therapy at Walter Reed Hospital. Every day, he is learning to do more with his prosthetics; from using ChapStick, to fastening his seatbelt, to baking a birthday cake for his wife. Just three months post injury, he began walking. Last September we watched him kick a kickball. In December, he skied in Colorado and today he is working on his golf swing. "I do feel lucky," says Nicely. "I could be one of the casualties but instead I'm going to be a normal functioning human here."

Cpl. Nicely takes his pride in his duty as a squad leader. He diligently checks in on his men of Unit 2/2, Fox Company. Some have returned to their hometowns, some have begun a new tour; all are our heroes.