

By Trevor Greene

On March 4, 2006, I was attending a meeting with village elders in the remote village of Shinkay, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. As usual, I had removed my helmet as a sign of respect. A centuries-old tribal custom, *pashtunwali*, dictated that as a guest of the village, I would be protected. As I began to speak to the elders about their basic needs, a young Taliban insurgent crept up behind me and swung an axe deep into my skull. The attack was the signal for an ambush. Through the hail of bullets, medic Shaun Marshall reached my side and was astounded to find me still breathing. After fighting off the attack, my platoon gathered around me and implored me to hang on to life. Fate kept me alive and the love of my then-fiancé Debbie and daughter Grace kept me going. Eight hospitals later, fate and my two favourite girls are still by my side on my long road to recovery. Conventional medical wisdom holds that little recovery is possible two years after a severe traumatic brain injury. It's been four and a half years since the axe fell and my resolve to walk is unshakeable. That resolve has been bolstered by an outpouring of heartfelt support by Canadians from all walks of life.

In July 2010, surrounded by close friends and family, I stood by my wife's side at our dream wedding. This was possible because in late 2008, after the original "Peace Warrior" documentary aired, I was contacted by a renowned orthopedic surgeon. Despite a previous prognosis that I would never walk again because of my badly contracted feet, Dr. Norgrove Penny operated on them and has made it possible for me to stand and work towards my goal of walking. Without that surgery, my dream to walk again would have been stillborn. Coincidentally, Dr. Ryan D'Arcy, a neuroscientist, also saw the documentary and made contact. In May 2010, I became the subject of a study to track the reorganization of my brain, after the axe severed all my motor functions. The results from three functional MRI's to date show that different parts of my brain are taking over functions for the grey matter lost in the Afghanistan desert.

Debbie and I are working on a book about our epic journey, which is due for publication by HarperCollins in early 2012.