



MARK BURLESON, VETERAN AMBASSADOR, THE BOOT CAMPAIGN

REAL leadership lives and lasts only when we inspire and encourage others on their own personal and professional ride. Full-Throttle Leaders make us take notice. They change opinions, inspire actions, redirect thoughts and alter outcomes.

That's the mission of the Full-Throttle Leadership Team, an alliance of entrepreneurs, combat veterans, foundation executives and a Gold Star Mother dedicated to transforming your leadership efforts into a "Force Multiplier for the Greater Good." Their experiences in business, on the battlefield and at home will inspire you to run "wide open" alongside the people who saddle-up every day to do the work you do; whatever it may be.



Staff Sergeant Marcus Burleson, USMC, knows what it's like to serve his country, sacrifice, and face overwhelming change and challenge. He served in the Marines for more than a decade before he was deployed to Afghanistan where explosions were a part of his daily life.

A Team Leader and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician with the 2nd Platoon, Mark's life was shattered in 2011 while working on dismantling an IED. It exploded in his hands with devastating impact and the injuries he sustained were extensive: it cost him his hands, seared his face, broke his neck, cracked his jaw and blinded his left eye.

Those injuries required numerous surgeries and two years of recovery at Walter Reed Hospital before he would regain the ability to stand, walk and speak. Despite living with chronic pain, Mark continues to serve fellow veterans; helping to provide support for those recovering from their own life-changing injuries and mentoring fellow wounded combat veterans. A national veterans advocate and Hero Ambassador at [The Boot Campaign](#), Mark' is dedicated to keeping issues concerning veterans and their families at the forefront of the national discussion.

A recipient of many military citations and awards, including the Purple Heart, (2) Navy Unit Citations, a Combat Action Ribbon and a Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Mark's message to all is powerful: *"Embrace today; take on the challenges of tomorrow."* *"It doesn't matter that I've got limitations. It doesn't matter that some of the things I cherished about my previous life aren't there for me anymore. I've still got things to cherish about today and tomorrow."*

A West Texas kid who grew up hunting and became a skilled shooter in the Marine Corps, Burleson hadn't held a rifle since the 2011 blast that changed his life. In 2016 he shouldered a custom-made M40A3 designed by C&H Precision Weapons to be shot by a man with no hands. The moment was another impressive step on Mark Burleson's journey to the kind of life he wants for himself and all veterans – limitation and difficulties be damned.