

# After losing his legs in Afghanistan, Brian Mast is still fighting for his country. And now he's about to fight for Israel.

**In September, 2010, Staff Sergeant Brian Mast, a bomb technician in Special Operations Command serving in Afghanistan, lost both of his legs and part of one hand in an explosion. The highly decorated veteran - Mast has been awarded numerous medals for Valor, Merit and Sacrifice, was suddenly, after 12 years in the U.S. military, unable to continue in active service.**

Yet Mast insists that being wounded was a turning point in his life rather than an ending. "Since being injured, life has been an absolutely positive journey," he explains. From the moment I woke up in Walter Reed hospital I've witnessed the great lengths that people will go to help wounded veterans.

From hand-made quilt covers to "Warriors to Wall Street" that offers career advice in the financial industry. Mast discovered an endless array of volunteer initiatives channeling their talents to aid others. He was overcome with gratitude. It made me want to give my own back," he recalls. After discharge, Mast - who has been married to his wife Brianna for eight years, and has two young boys (and a baby girl on the way) - took a job in Miami as an explosives specialist for the Department of Homeland Security. His work includes counterterrorism, and helping train police and other law enforcement agencies in bomb disposal strategies.

But Mast wanted to do more. He used his GI Bill that gives scholarships to former combat veterans to enroll as a long distance student in Harvard, majoring in Economics. He completes the bulk of his coursework during the school year online and mainly travels to Boston for coursework in the summer. This helps him avoid Boston's harsh winter weather. "Prosthetics and snow and ice just don't mix that well."

Mast was in Boston working on his degree in the summer of 2014, as Israel suffered through thousands of rockets and mortars launched into its civilian centers from Hamas controlled Gaza where an extensive network of terror tunnels were discovered.

