

SOLDIER ON



SANS LIMITES

Biography

Jody Mitic

When he stepped on a land mine and suffered devastating injuries in 2007, Master Corporal Jody Mitic had already been a fulltime soldier in the Canadian Forces for 10 years, and a veteran of the conflict in Kosovo and two tours in Afghanistan. Today, he's fighting for a new cause – to help his fellow combat veterans return to living as active and rewarding a life as they possibly can.

Jody was born in Kitchener, Ontario, in January of 1977, the son of father Hemi Mitic and mother Joanne Fisher. The family settled in Brampton, Ontario, after living briefly in Winnipeg. Jody attended Turner/Fenton High School in Brampton, where he played baseball, soccer and acted in the school's improv comedy troupe.

It was 1994 when Jody joined the Lorne Scots militia unit and 1997 when he transferred to the regular forces, becoming a member of the Royal Canadian Regiment. When he returned from his 1999 deployment to the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, he qualified as a sniper. He was deployed again, this time to Kabul in Afghanistan, in 2003. On his return, he continued to gather training and credentials, eventually qualifying as a Master Sniper in 2006 before deploying again to Afghanistan, this time as a team leader. On September 3 of that year, his team took part in the first offensive action by the Canadian Forces since the Korean War.

Much of Jody's recovery was done at the St. John's Rehab Hospital in Toronto. Within 14 months of his injury, he helped return the institution's support, running a 5km charity run to raise funds for the hospital.

Jody is still in uniform. He was the first injured soldier to be posted into Soldier On in 2009 and is now a Soldier On ambassador and volunteer fund-raiser. He also plans to pursue a long list of personal dreams – most of them involving some measure of adrenaline. He rides motorcycles and hopes to race them; he learned to snowboard again and earned his scuba diving ticket. Bungee jumping and parachuting are on his list. He ran a half-marathon in September of 2009 and is currently eyeing sledge hockey in the hope of competing for the national team.

With his partner (Sgt.) Allannah Gilmore (the medic who commanded the battlefield ambulance that evacuated him from the front) and young daughter Aylah, Jody lives in Ottawa. "The best thing that ever happened to me was born on September 17 of 2008," he says. "Aylah 'Peanut' Mitic is our little miracle and she makes waking up and putting on two prosthetic legs a treat every morning when I get to see her smile. I would not trade anything I have now for my legs back."

Jody also speaks passionately of his work. "Soldier On is more than a sports program. It is a way for us to get together as a group and support each other and our families in a unique way. I truly believe that I would not be as well adjusted as I am to what happened if not for the support I receive from the Soldier On family. No single soldier, sailor or air person that has ever participated hasn't walked away a better person for having been able to interact with and enjoy each other's company and experiences. We all grow together and the swelling of pride I feel every time another brother or sister is helped can be overwhelming at times. And being able to do this event (Targa) will be a true honour."

