

Life Unlimited™  
BY MAJA KAZAZIC





## MY PARENTS

Rare pictures that I was able to get from some relatives. Our house was robbed and burned and none of our own pictures survived.



Fishing on two legs!

This is the only picture I have where you can see both of my legs. We came here, to this river, every weekend and fished, grilled and played. Any kid would be lucky to have the childhood I had.



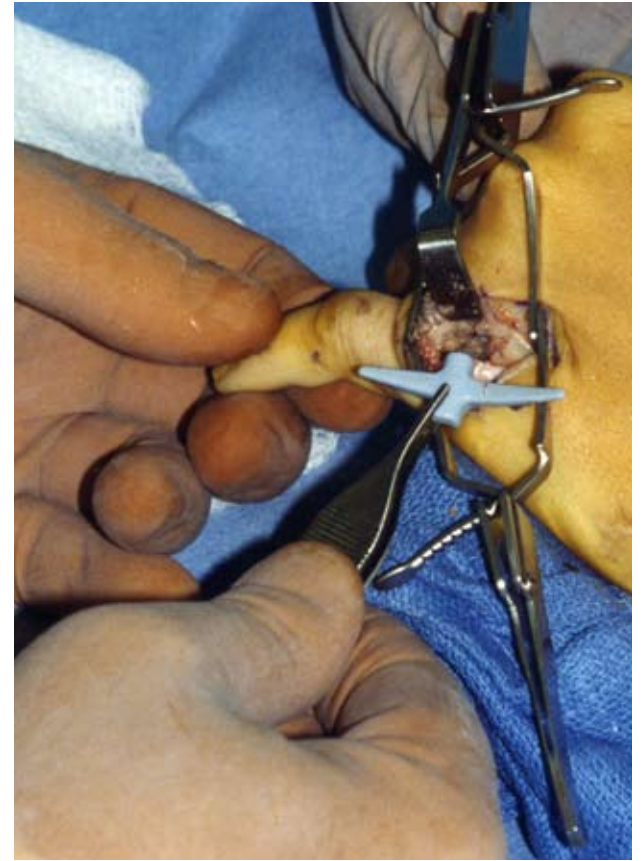
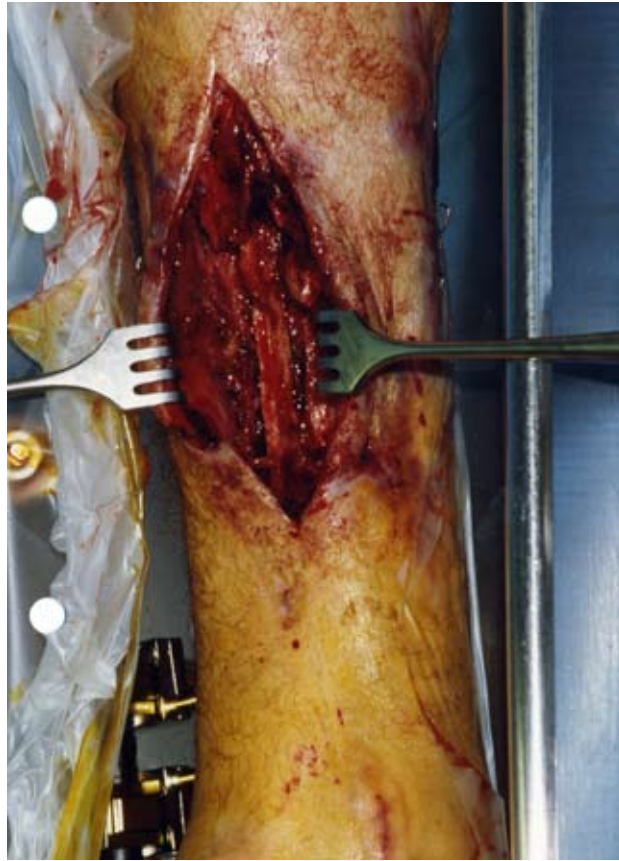
I never dreamt we would find ourselves in a desperate war zone.

These are some of the buildings in Mostar, BiH.

The middle picture shows canisters lined up in a window. We used those canisters to get water from the river, Neretva. The same river I once fished became infested with corpses, but it was the key to our survival...



One day my five friends and I were in front of my apartment building when a bomb exploded. All five friends were killed instantly and I was badly injured. The teddy bear in the middle picture was my only pain medicine; I bit on it as they cut away my infected flesh to keep infection from spreading. But, I was lucky to be alive and fortunate to have been evacuated for medical treatment.



Evacuation was only the first step. I had some difficult challenges and hard times ahead of me: frequent surgeries to patch up of both of my legs, my left arm and a constant struggle to beat raging bone infection.



As they say: **“What doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger!”**

While I never forgot that my parents and my family were still stuck in the war zone, I enjoyed small things in life – like the first time I washed my hair by myself, or ... pizza...



As I got better, I was fitted with my first prosthetic. What a treat that was! Finally, months of struggle I was able to take my first step (right picture)! Who knew people can actually forget to walk?





15 Years Later

I went back to Mostar.  
It was amazing!



I visited all of my hangout places...



And saw many of my friends and relatives that still live there.



I also went to the makeshift "hospital" and walked through the basement where I once laid on the floor on a stretcher; hoping to move from the hallway to a room. (Because that move signaled that I had a chance of survival and I was worthy of a room.)

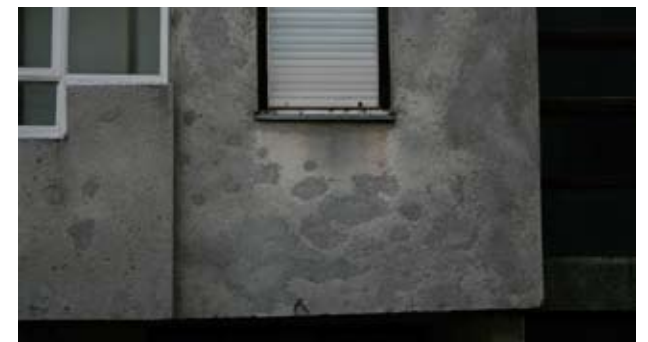
Picture in the middle is with a very good friend whose pregnant wife (22 years old at that time) and his daughter (3 years old) were killed by the same bomb that injured me.

Friend that ran to get help when I was injured is pictured on the right with his son. He literally had to run through the constant bombing to get my father and a vehicle to help me.



The place that changed  
my life. Forever.

This is where and how I was sitting when the bomb landed. In red you can see area that wasn't effected by shrapnel. If I were sitting few inches back or forward I too would have been killed.



These images are damage that was done by the bomb that killed 5 of my friends and injured me. Damage was patched but never painted. Red circle is the place where bomb landed, green circle is my room window.

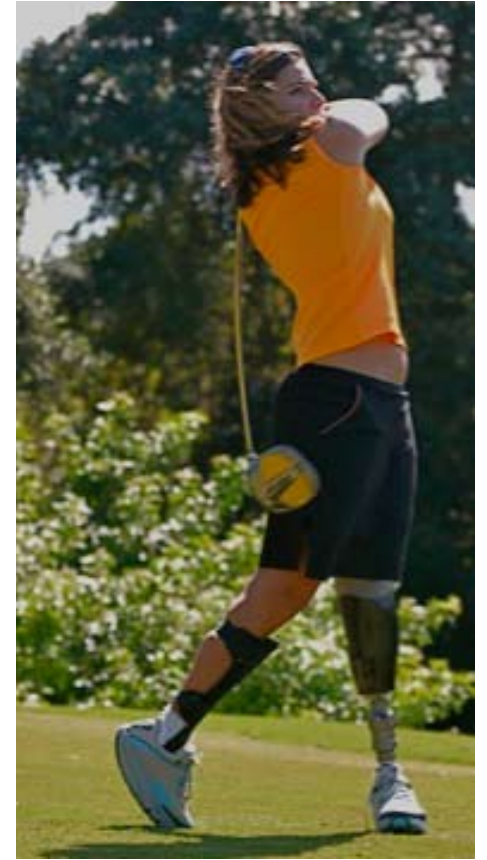


At the end - it was all well worth it. My injury and eventual evacuation enabled me to bring majority of my family to the States and allowed for next generations to live their lives with opportunity and hope, in peace.



I wasn't killed.  
So I got stronger.

At the finish line of my first 5K run!



I now have a full and active life.  
Besides playing sports, I started my own company,  
Vela Business Solutions.  
I spend every free moment with my family.

Life Unlimited™ by Maja Kazazic  
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