



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

## Merlin German

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT June 9, 2011



Merlin German

**Award:** Veterans' Hall of Fame

**Year:** 2011

Merlin German, a United States Marine Sergeant in Iraq, became a symbol of recovery throughout the world, soon known as the "Miracle Marine," during the 17 months he spent hospitalized following a blast in 2005. Sergeant German eventually regained the ability to walk, and set up a charity for child burn victims. Sadly, just over three years after the blast, he died following a minor skin graft surgery.

Sergeant German enlisted in the Marine Corps September 8, 2003 and received a meritorious promotion to Private First Class (PFC) out of boot camp. From there, he transferred to his first permanent duty station, 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 11<sup>th</sup> Marines, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division where he served as a Field Artillery Cannoneer. In September 2004, he deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In September 2004, Sergeant German's unit became part of Weapons Platoon for convoy security. They were in charge with safely transporting prisoners and cargo. Sergeant German and his unit participated in over 150 successful missions and he was applauded for his keen ability to spot improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

On February 21, 2005, Sergeant German's life changed when, on a mission, he spotted an IED with no time to alert the driver. The blast blew Sergeant German off the vehicle, and his fellow Marines helped extinguish the flames that had already burned 97% of his total body surface area. His life was cut short in 2008 after surgery to graft skin onto his lip.

Before passing away in 2008 from complications in a skin graft surgery Sergeant German founded the Merlin's Miracles charity organization, to help child burn victims. In his memory, the Wounded Warrior Regiment renamed its call-in help center at the Marine Corps Base in Quantico after Sergeant German on December 4, 2008.