

Achilles Freedom Team | PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN FINKE



THE VETERANS After losing his right foot and ankle in Iraq when his Humvee detonated a mine in June 2003, Army Captain David Rozelle seemed an unlikely candidate for the 2004 ING New York City Marathon. That was before he met Mary Bryant, coach of the Achilles Freedom Team. With Bryant's encouragement, Rozelle, now 33, finished the race in 6:46, a few months after learning to run with a prosthesis. Bryant, 44, vice president of the Achilles Track Club, a New York-based organization that helps people with disabilities participate in mainstream athletics, visits Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., twice a month to motivate dozens of injured veterans to get moving—whether on foot, prosthesis, or in a wheelchair. “When I first mention the marathon, they say, ‘But my leg’s been blown off,’” Bryant says. “I’m like, ‘That’s fine. How’s your upper-body strength?’” The veterans learn to adopt her way of thinking: The best way to defy their injuries is to show what they *can* do. —SARAH LORGE BUTLER

Achilles Freedom Team has 30 members training for the 2005 ING New York City Marathon. Among them are (center photo, left to right): Rozelle, National Guard Sgt. Tim Gustafson, Capt. Leslie Smith, and S. Sgt. Joe Bowser with Bryant (in pants).