

# SHOOTING FROM THE HIP



By Kenda Lenseigne

Incomplete Quadriplegia. Just the sound of it made me shudder, even though, without the help of a quick internet search I didn't know exactly what that term meant. Imagine being informed by a Doctor after surviving a near fatal car crash that left you with a broken neck and a spinal cord injury that you may never walk again. If you can't walk again, you will likely also never ride again.

Melody Kerr and Troy, her husband of 25 years had an active lifestyle, raising registered AQHA horses. On weekends you'd find them team roping and enjoying all life has to offer on the ranch. One winter morning, on her last day of work before she and Troy would head to Las Vegas for a much needed vacation, Melody hit a patch of black ice on an overpass, losing control of her truck and ultimately flipping into a drainage ditch.

In an instant, Melody's cowboy hat had been replaced with a halo screwed into her skull, and her horse was swapped for a hospital bed. Two surgeries later and a Christmas spent in the ICU, Melody was moved to Craig Hospital in Denver to help determine if she would ever be able to walk again. Melody recalled, "This is when the hard work began. Long hours of learning to walk, feed and dress myself was a very dark time for me, and struggling to walk made the thought of riding my horse again seem impossible."

There's something deep in every cowboy or cowgirl that dismisses the word 'impossible' and instead awakens a sleeping bull - especially when the idea of never riding again enters the equation. On January 29, Melody was released from the hospital and scheduled for intense therapy to help regain her gross motor skills. On one of her visits, she asked her doctor if she might be able to ride her horse someday, to which he replied, "How about April 14th?"

Tempting Melody with hope and the goal of feeling the saddle underneath her again was a powerful carrot dangling at the end of a very long stick. It was this, coupled with her resolve and determination that proved to be a powerful tool in her journey to recovery.

Her therapists got to work making a simulated horse out of a therapy table while Troy, Melody's biggest supporter diligently worked with her gelding to ensure that he could be mounted from a block safely.

Melody said, "Finally that magical day of April 14<sup>th</sup> arrived, and I was surprised of how nervous and scared I was of something that came so natural to me before the accident. As I slowly stepped up onto the mounting block, which was a feat in itself, I took a deep breath and put my foot into the stirrup. With a helping hand from Troy I was sitting in the saddle! My emotions were overwhelming, all I could do was sit there and cry. After a few minutes I got myself together and with Troy leading Major, we walked slowly around the round pen".



After a year of regaining her strength and balance in the saddle, Melody found herself feeling mixed emotions, "I was so grateful that I was able to ride, but knowing as a team roper that I would never compete with Troy again was heartbreaking". That is until Troy excitedly came home from work one day announcing, "I think I found a sport that we can do with the horses and that you'll be able to do also!"

Troy heard about the CMSA Colorado State & Regional Championship that was taking place in Penrose, CO and the pair went to watch the next day.

After a few hours of watching mounted shooting, the Kerr's were like the rest of us, sucked into the vortex of the most exciting sport on the planet. It's no surprise how the rest of the story is going to turn out.

"I was immediately hooked and wanted to give it a try," Melody says. "Now that I could ride, my main concern was handling the guns with the handicap of my hands and arms. I have limited use of my fingers due to nerve damage and poor grip strength".

But where there's a cowgirl will there's a cowboy way. "The first time I held a gun I couldn't cock the hammer with my non-working thumb, but with Troy's out-of-the-box thinking he suggested that I try rolling the hammer along my hip, and sure enough it cocked back." Pulling the trigger was another challenge as Melody's index finger was weak. "Troy gave me a full sized cap gun that had a softer trigger pull. I dry fired that cap gun for weeks until my trigger finger became strong enough that I was finally able to fire my .45."

Needless to say, the Kerr's got busy turning their roping horses into shooting horses and are now active

CMSA competitors in Colorado. "I've become known as the gal that cocks her gun on her hip. I must say Cowboy Mounted Shooters are the nicest bunch of people I have ever competed with - everyone has been so supportive and encouraging."

Despite all of her roadblocks, speed bumps and hurdles, Melody shines when she smiles and says, "Even when I finish last, I feel like I've just won"!



**AMERICA'S FINEST BRASS - NOW FOR RIFLES**

**RIFLES**

STARLINE INTRODUCES .308 AND .300 BLACKOUT

When you and your rifle are ready for action, you're ready for America's Finest Brass. Starline is now producing .308 and .300 Blackout rifle brass, and will soon offer others from the .308 family, ultimately expanding into a full line of high quality rifle brass.

Visit [starlinebrass.com](http://starlinebrass.com) and sign up for an account to hear about the newest releases. When you're ready for action, you're ready for Starline.

**Starline**  
1976 - 2016  
STARLINE 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**ORDER FACTORY DIRECT**  
[starlinebrass.com](http://starlinebrass.com) | 1(800)280-6660

© 2016 Starline Brass

