

WISH FOR OUR HEROES ASSISTS ARMY FAMILY DURING WIFE'S MEDICAL TREATMENTS



WISH #23

April 5, 2010



Staff Sergeant Marlana Magill and Sergeant Robert Magill joined the U.S. Army after one of the most horrific events in U.S. history. On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked our great nation, and Marlana and Robert's lives changed forever. The married couple had recently given birth to Morgan Taylor Magill, who instantly became the joy of their lives. The new parents wanted to fight for their country, so she and any future children wouldn't have to, and as a result, both Marlana and Robert enlisted.

Major sacrifices had to be made in order for both parents to make it through basic training, while trying to raise a new baby girl. With family support, Marlana attended basic training in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and later trained in San Angelo, Texas through September 2002, graduating as a Military Intelligence SIGINT Analyst. During this time, Robert had basic training combined with AIT at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, graduating as a Combat Engineer with OSUT certification. Fortunately, both of their first duty assignments were at Fort Hood, Texas. Robert was assignment to the 91st Combat Engineer, 1st Cavalry Division and Marlana was assignment to the 303rd Military Intelligence Battalion, 504th Military Intelligence Brigade. Shortly after they arrived at Fort Hood, they were expecting again. In June of 2003, Rory Johnathan Magill was born, just after both Robert and Marlana's unit's received deployment orders to Iraq. So, in January of 2004, Robert and Marlana deployed, leaving behind a 3 year old daughter and 6 month old son.

Then it happened - on June 12, 2004, Robert was hit with two armored piercing RPG's. He and his Platoon Sergeant, SFC Bo Brister *, were transported to the Green Zone for emergency surgery, where Marlana's unit convoyed her to be with Robert. The following are excerpts from a letter Marlana sent *Wish For Our Heroes*, describing what followed:

" There they both lay, the love of my life and Bo. My heart sank every second that passed. I knew I had to be strong, strong for both of them and our families. I stayed with both of them from the Green Zone, to Balad, to Germany, and then to Walter Reed Medical Hospital. Robert died three times along the way. All I could do was pray...eventually Robert stabilized and was later released under my care to go back to Fort Hood, Texas. He had to start learning everything all over again - all normal activities of daily living that we take for granted. Our daughter did not know what to think; she stood by my side and helped the best a four year old could. Rory (our son) did not remember either one of us. To me, it was all heartbreaking. For Robert, he did not know us, or recognize us, just my voice sounded familiar in some way. Our family fought a long hard road through recovery that still continues today due to his injuries he sustained that day in June 2004."

* SFC Bo Brister was also medically retired from the Army due to injuries sustained on June 12, 2004. He currently works for BEI, where he trains soldiers on Bradley Armored Vehicles. Most recently, Brister was appointed to Phoenix-Wish For Our Heroes Board of Directors.

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Sergeant Robert Magill was medically retired in May 2007 from the Army due to injuries sustained in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and awarded 100% disabled through the VA. Robert was able to gain employment through a NISH company that only hires veterans that are 75% or more disabled. Now, the Magill faces a new challenge. Marlana's health has slowly deteriorated, due to back and hip problems, as well as PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Now, at the young age of 30, Marlana has been diagnosed with cervical cancer. In order to see if the cancer has spread, Marlana has to undergo surgery, at which time, she will also undergo a hysterectomy, followed by additional treatment at Brooke Army Medical Center.



THE WISH

Marlana's letter, previously mentioned, went on to say...

"Our current situation places us in a financial bind to maintain the cost of lodging for my family during surgery, loss of pay from Roberts job for days off, and transportation cost for travel to and from my appointments between Fort Hood and San Antonio, Texas. Prayers are lifted up every day that all the cancer will be removed with my upcoming surgery, but I still face the great possibility of having chemotherapy and radiation treatment. I am currently a Staff Sergeant assigned to the Warrior Transition Brigade at Fort Hood, pending a medical board in the near future. I continue to strive to be an honorable Soldier of the United States Army, the best wife to my husband, a loving mother to my children, and a full time college student working towards a master's degree."

Wish For Our Heroes assisted the Magill family during Marlana's surgery and treatments, by arranging hotel accommodations for Robert and their children near the hospital. Marlana's surgery is today (April 5), and we wish her all the best. We will be thinking of her and her family in this difficult situation, and hope that they overcome this circumstance, as they have so many in the past.