

## A TRUE HERO

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SGT John S. Revilak II joined the US. Army in June of 2004. It had been his lifelong dream to serve our country. While he was stationed in Schweinfurt, Germany, he received orders to deploy to Bermel, Afghanistan.

SGT John S. Revilak II was assigned to Anvil Troop 1-91 CAV 105rd IN 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade Combat Team in Afghanistan in June 2007. While conducting route clearance in the Bermel Valley on the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2007, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was ambushed. The ambush was initiated by a pressure plate IED, disabling the first vehicle. Immediately following the IED, enemy forces opened up with a volley of RPG and small arms fire directed at the stationary covey. The vehicle caught fire, prompting everyone to exit the vehicle under heavy enemy fire. (A paragraph from SGT John S. Revilak II's Army Commendation Medal for Valor")

Because of the intensity of the IED explosion in October 11, 2007, John sustained a head injury medically named Traumatic Brain Injury. At the time of his deployment, John had no idea what was wrong with him; he couldn't leave his tent for two weeks. He was in constant pain, and seemed to be confused about many things. He had a hard time putting things together. John was in so much pain that he would take the only thing available to him at the time, Ibuprofen to help with the intense levels of pain in his head. Even though he had this all going on he did not want to leave his soldiers. So he decided to stay instead of receiving medical treatment. It was not until he returned from his deployment in August of 2008, that his unit demanded him to seek medical attention. In December 2008 he was reassigned to Fort Irwin, CA where he spent most of his time at San Diego Naval Hospital (Balboa) treating his TBI, including a surgery to fix some of his vertigo (balance) issues. His TBI also affected his memory and caused sleep apnea, non-stop migraines, speech issues and part of his internal face being damaged.

In February 2011 SGT Revilak was medically retired from the Army. He is now living in Stirling City, California with his wife Kyrie, daughters Trista 6 & Isabella 2.

The following are awards John received during his military career:

-2 Purple Hearts, for injuries in June/ October 2007, 1 Army commendation Medal for Valor, 3 Army Commendation Medals, 2 Army Achievement Medals ( 1 personally noted by LTC Michael Fenezel for going above and beyond the call of duty), 2 Army Good Conduct Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, and the Global War on Terrorism Badge.

Due to the extent of John's injuries he is no longer able to remember daily tasks. His wife cooks, cleans, runs the errands, pays the bills and takes him to all of his medical appointments. His wife also has to remind him of things including eating, showering, appointments, and schedules. He is in constant pain daily from migraines, back pain, and knee pain. He even blanks out at times and does not know where he's at or what

he is currently doing. There are days where he is so sick he cannot pick himself off of the floor or get out of bed. The pain is just too intense for him.

Those are the days where he seems to be most confused. When he has those bad days, his family has to make arrangements to be elsewhere, but still close enough to keep an eye on him.

He has an extreme sensitivity to noise in or around the home which can make him even sicker, to the point of throwing up all day. John also has a difficult time traveling when there are many elevation changes, and it seems that the higher up he is, the less intense the migraines become. With well over 280+ combat missions in Afghanistan and Airborne School, during his time of service his knees have also taken a lot of abuse. This makes it very hard for him to use stairs, or walk up hills, and sometimes requires some kind of assistance when doing these things.

We are currently in the process of trying to rebuild a house that we own. As we started to work on the house, more projects arise. We would change out a window and the entire wall needed to be replaced from inside to out from dry rot. We started to repair some water damage in the back of the house and found out that the entire back of the house was not livable and covered in mold and had severe water damage from the roof. At this point we notice the structure was unstable, because of this we are currently living in half of the home. We repair what we can, but the money has become tight with so much needed to be repaired. This has put a hold on major projects which are crucial to our safety and comfort.

John was an amazing Soldier and still is a great husband, father, and so much more to everyone he knows. He is the man who will come when you call him for help. He never expects anything in return for his labor, and when it comes to a mission, task or job he is our TRUE HERO!