



We Wait, We Hope, We Pray Until Our Son Comes Home Again

By Genevieve Laucher

Imagine not knowing where your child is, what they are doing, or even whether they are still alive. This seems unfathomable to most parents, but for George and Stacey Hall, it was their reality for years.

Their son Ryan Hall grew up in Saratoga, went to Saratoga High, and was a first string player on the varsity football team. He was offered multiple scholarships, and was in his second year at Menlo College when he told George and Stacey that he was joining the army as an airborne ranger for Special Forces. At first, Stacey was shocked and even tried to talk him out of it, but she and George ended up supporting Ryan and learning a lot.

However, it was not easy. Rangers are not allowed to tell anyone where they are going or what they are doing, even after the fact. Ryan was deployed to Iraq once and Afghanistan four times. His last tour was when Obama took out Bin Laden. Stacey and George know that rangers supported this operation, but Ryan can never say whether he was involved.

One of the most difficult things for Stacey and George was seeing the death tolls on the news and never knowing whether Ryan was still alive. Luckily, he is, and is now married with a five-month-old daughter, but he lost several close friends.

When Ryan returned, he suffered from both PTSD and physical injuries, and it was difficult to reintegrate into society. It was astonishing for George and Stacey to see how little veterans' needs are met, and they realized that reintegration is a huge gap that needs to be addressed. California is unfortunately one of the least veteran-supported states in the country, and the VA needs to change this and provide more support.

Now, Stacey gives speeches to different organizations to spread awareness of children in our area that serve in the military. Many parents never think this is a choice their children will make, but if they have the drive and determination to defend the country in dangerous times, they should be thanked and supported. Stacey also wants to give back to those still serving. George is the Vice President of the Veterans Memorial and Support Foundation of Los Gatos. Even before Ryan was in the army, George saw how terribly his friends who served in the Vietnam War were treated, and he wanted to do something to change this perspective.

The Halls also want to help people realize that supporting veterans is not the same as supporting a war. Regardless of people's positions on war, men and women are sacrificing their lives to protect our rights, and they deserve to be recognized.