

## My friends,

Freedom is never free. There's a price paid by every brave man and woman who puts their life on the line for our great country. These heroic Americans volunteer for a life of service and sacrifice, knowing they could be deployed at a moment's notice to a foreign land and a dangerous duty. When they answer the call, they rush towards the battle to defend our nation - to defend us all.



As we do each year, on Memorial Day we honored those heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom.

In an address to the Armed Forces, President Harry Truman said this:

*"Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices. Because of these sacrifices, the dawn of justice and freedom throughout the world slowly casts its gleam across the horizon."*

On Memorial Day, and every day, the Gary Sinise Foundation endeavors to do all we can for those who serve our country, and also for the families whose loved ones died in the line of duty. We are honored to give back to them for all they have sacrificed.

I am overwhelmed with gratitude that thanks to you, our wonderful supporters, over the course of Memorial Day weekend we were able to provide an uplifting

concert at Ft. Belvoir for our active duty service members. We also hosted several families of fallen military heroes on a trip to our nation's Capital, which culminated with a special visit to honor their fallen loved ones at Arlington National Cemetery. We wrapped our arms around them as we honored and remembered their heroes, reminding them that they are never alone. And I was truly grateful they could join me on the West Lawn of Capitol Hill as I co-hosted the PBS National Memorial Day Concert. I will cherish that memory always.

Thank you for being an important part of this mission of service and for trusting the Gary Sinise Foundation to help show your love and support for our nation's heroes.

Your Grateful American pal,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.



FROM THE DAUGHTER OF A FALLEN HERO, A GOLD STAR CHILD

## **What Does Memorial Day Mean to Me?**

To many, Memorial Day is simply a Federal Holiday, 24 hours set aside to honor and mourn those who died defending our nation's freedoms. To many others it is the first day of summer. A day to cook out or go to the lake and enjoy the freedom we sometimes take for granted in this country.

However, to me, Memorial Day is a moment that reflects the countless other moments of honor and mourning that make up my life as a Gold Star child.

My father, Major Troy Gilbert, was killed in action in Iraq on November 27th, 2006, when I was just nine months old. Serving as an F-16 pilot, he lost his life in the process of saving over 20 special operators that were on the ground that day.

He was described by the men on the ground as calm, peaceful and in control, despite the fact that the world around them was full of chaos and destruction.

His calm but authoritative voice gave them peace that he would not leave them. His faith grounded him and gave him an eternal perspective and purpose, which transcended beyond the current struggle.

Growing up I have made it my goal to honor my dad's sacrifice and carry on his legacy, while sharing the ultimate hope woven throughout my family's story. Although Memorial Day is set aside as a time to honor and mourn fallen heroes, this posture should continue into our everyday lives. For me, every day is Memorial Day.

I faced the reality of this last weekend when I graduated high school. I didn't have my dad there to see me walk across the stage. However, I took comfort knowing the way I have lived my life would make him proud. As I prepare to head to college in the fall, I reflect on my father's sacrifice and the legacy I hope to carry on. As recipients of the freedom protected by brave heroes like my dad, I urge you to reflect in the same way as you embark on your journey through life.

*- Annalise Kate Gilbert Ravella  
Daughter of Fallen Hero, Major Troy Gilbert*





HONORING OUR FALLEN HEROES & THEIR FAMILIES

## **Gary & Joe Mantegna Host the National Memorial Day Concert on PBS**

This past Sunday, Gary and GSF Ambassador Joe Mantegna co-hosted the annual National Memorial Day Concert on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. This special presentation pays tribute to our nation's fallen heroes, their families who still grieve their loss, and salutes the service of all who serve.

We were honored to host the children and surviving spouses of our fallen military heroes at the concert's rehearsal as part of an uplifting and healing 5-day event. It is our honor to care for them as we acknowledge and pay tribute to their hero's sacrifice in the defense of freedom. After the concert, "Uncle Gary" spent time with each family, wrapping his arms around them and ensuring they know their loved one will never be forgotten.

To all our families of fallen heroes, we are here for you. We will never forget your hero. And we love you.







WE'LL NEVER FORGET THEIR SACRIFICE

## A Special Visit to Their Hero

For many families of fallen military heroes, making the special trip to Arlington National Cemetery can be difficult. It was our privilege to bring the children and surviving spouses together for a visit to the final resting place of their loved ones.

Many of the children took the opportunity to update their hero on their lives and dreams. It was a beautiful moment of healing for these families to share their stories, tears, and hugs in the quiet serenity of Arlington.

For our nation, Memorial Day is a designated day of remembrance. But for these children and surviving spouses, every day is one of remembrance and loss. At the Gary Sinise Foundation, we remind these special families that we never forget them or their hero.

We know every day is Memorial Day.





WELCOMING HOME A WOUNDED HERO

## **“I Was Just a Regular Guy Who Had a Bad Day at Work”**

We recently welcomed severely wounded hero, U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua Geddis to his 100% mortgage-free, specially adapted home.

Joshua and his family are now living comfortably in a home designed specifically for his injuries.

When asked about their new home, Joshua's daughter Lilian was overwhelmed with gratitude. "Each person that helped build our house contributed a tiny little part to my dad's independence."

Thanks to the tireless support of grateful Americans like you, this new home will empower Joshua as he continues his recovery and allow him to participate more fully in family life.





UPLIFTING OUR DEFENDERS

## Celebrating the Invincible Spirit of America's Heroes

Gary & the Lt. Dan Band returned to Ft. Belvoir to provide much needed joy and entertainment to our active duty military members, veterans, their families, and wounded service members stationed there.

During every concert, Gary always takes a moment to share a message of appreciation, reminding our heroes that a grateful nation stands behind them. We're proud to show America's love—your love—for all of our heroes.

With good food, games, and rockin' music, these Invincible Spirit Festivals boost morale and celebrate our defenders and their families. Through your support, we ensure they know their sacrifices are appreciated and they will never be forgotten.



**Remind our heroes that we never forget them.**

**DONATE TODAY**