

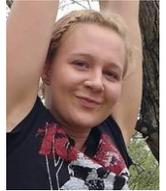
# Military Families Speak Out

October 2020

## Troops Home Now!

### Editorials from MFSO members:

Billie Winner-Davis  
Kingsville, Texas



### What it means to have loved ones in the Military

While many know me as the mother to Reality L. Winner, honorably discharged Air Force veteran and ex-NSA Contractor who is serving the longest ever prison sentence for releasing a classified document containing intelligence summary of the Russian attacks on our voting systems in 2016, few would recognize my family as a proud military family.

For my husband and myself, we will always have that feeling of overwhelming pride in our military children, my stepson Cole who is active duty Air Force, our daughter in law, Ariana, now a Chief Petty Officer in the Navy, and of course our veteran daughter, Reality. We are lucky, though, as they have been linguists and in the intelligence field, so we have not had to worry about deployment to war torn areas, and we know they are, for the most part, safe and protected.

When the youngest of our children, my daughter Reality Leigh Winner, announced that she was enlisting in the Air Force while still in high school, I felt a tremendous amount of pride. There were moments that I feared she was joining so as not to burden us with college tuition, however, when she revealed that she had been offered a full scholarship for an engineering program at Texas A&M University, I had no doubts left that military service was something she chose to do above all else.

Reality was also selected as a linguist and was trained in 3 Middle Eastern languages at the Presidio in Monterrey, CA. and served a 6-year term. During my daughter's service, she worked nights, worked at the NSA (both at Fort Meade and Fort Gordon), and never sought any promotions, even though she was encouraged to do so. When I asked her why, she stated she was doing the job she felt was important and what she joined to do.

After her honorable discharge, she was given a commendation medal and certificate of achievement. That was when we knew that she was responsible for identifying enemies in the field, through the analysis of her hours of intercepted communications and eavesdropping. She acquired a skill of quickly identifying areas, persons of interest and threats and was then assigned to join drone missions where she had to watch her gathered intelligence be acted upon. When I realized that a 23/24 year-old was tasked with such responsibilities and had to go about her life here in the US as though nothing were going on. I now recognize how very strong she was and that our brave soldiers fighting this never-ending war across the world are also so very young – too young to be tasked with the heavy responsibility of deciding life and death.

And so it seems that, as was true in the case of my daughter, the sacrifices made by our troops when they return are too often dismissed. One may argue that my daughter was wrong to release classified documents as a contractor for the NSA, but everyone that knows her agree that she did this for the same reason she served our country. She believed she was being loyal and protecting our country from an outside attack. Her dismal mistreatment after her having served her country so admirably, resulted in the government actually using her service to discredit her, stating that the skills she was taught in the Air Force would make her valuable to other enemy countries and the information she had access to may be in jeopardy if she were released. Due to this argument made by the government, Reality was denied bail and ultimately plead guilty to the one charge against her.

At this time, Reality Winner remains imprisoned in a Federal Prison serving a 63 month sentence. Her family and supporters have set up a website, containing court documents, articles, and a petition asking for clemency. Please take a moment to visit the website at [StandwithReality.org](http://StandwithReality.org), and please, sign the petition and show you care about our troops when they return.

## **In the News:**

**Senate Bill 785 Signed Into Law which provides Landmark Suicide Prevention Legislation** Key provisions of this law include the creation of a community grant program within the VA to enhance VA outreach at the local level to help identify isolated veterans and provide mental health services. [Link to article](#)

**Taliban to Suspend Assault After US Pledges to Halt Strikes** The Taliban pledge came after a meeting with U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Gen. Austin Miller, commander of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Helmand has been the scene of a blistering Taliban assault since last week, with rocket attacks from the Taliban and retaliatory airstrikes from U.S. and Afghan aircraft forcing more than 5,600 families to flee their homes. [Link to article](#)

**Iran-Backed Militias Offer Truce for US Pullout from Iraq** Iraqi militias backed by Iran have agreed to temporarily halt attacks targeting the American presence in Iraq, on the condition that U.S.-led coalition troops withdraw from the country in line with a parliamentary resolution, three militia officials said Sunday. [Link to article](#)

**Biden, on troop levels and the 9/11 legacy** Biden told Stars and Stripes that he supports a sustained U.S. military footprint of up to 1,500-2,000 on the ground in Afghanistan primarily for special operations against ISIS and other terror threats — so is Biden saying the Taliban is no longer a threat after fighting them for 20 years. [Link to article](#)

## **MFSO Fundraiser**

Please support MFSO and help continue the important work its members do every day. Join the Scattergories games with friends and other MFSO members or simply make a donation to [PayPal](#). Join the fun and camaraderie. [Link to flyer](#)

**Sign the petition to bring our deported veterans home** The time is now to tell the US Congress to correct the injustice of deporting our US Military veterans and separating our US citizen children from their parents. Sign the Petition tell your congressperson to earn your vote by CO- Sponsoring H.R. 8585 American Right 2 Family Act. [Link to petition](#)

## **From Jeff's desk**

Why does it look like the U.S. choses Endless War? There is no simple answer to this incredibly important question. The U.S. military has been at war or engaged in other combat in all but about 11 years of our history. Does the large number of U.S. military bases abroad provide a key to why we have been fighting almost without pause since 1776? These bases have expanded our boundaries, while keeping the country locked in a state of nearly continuous war that has largely served the economic and political interests and left millions dead, wounded and displaced. While other nations have spent their resources on their people, U.S. politicians have invested in a state dedicated above all to preparing and waging war. You only need to look at the size of our military to know we must change our priorities and start working to not only save ourselves, but the earth.

**Note:** The opinions reflected above and in future editorials are not a reflection of any official stance approved by the MFSO board, which meets monthly and posts official positions decided by the board on our website. Your responses and opinions are welcome. If you would like to send your own editorial on any MFSO related issue, please send to [mfsooc@earthlink.net](mailto:mfsooc@earthlink.net)

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**4,586 American Troops killed in Iraq; 2,451 American Troops killed in Afghanistan**