

14 September 2014

To whom it may concern.

My name is Stephanie Tandberg. I am SSG Robert Bales Sister-in-law as he is married to my sister. I am writing to you today because I would like to ask for your mercy on SSG Robert Bales behalf. I can't speak to the incident that led us to today, but I can speak to the man I have come to know as a Friend, Husband, Father, Brother, Son, and Uncle. I have stood by him since the day I met him, as a soldier, as a brother-in-law, as a beloved Uncle to my children, and as a friend. My support of the Man has not wavered. I stood by him prior to the court martial, through the court martial, and I stand by him now. Since I have never been in the military, I cannot begin to truly understand what deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan can do to a person, let alone 4 total.

I first knew of Bob way back in 2004. He met my youngest sister shortly before his first deployment to Iraq. They had a short but whirlwind romance and then he was gone. It turns out he lost her number when his roommate accidentally washed his pants. Needless to say, she had remembered some information he told her about his unit. This was enough for her to get a hand written letter off to him. Since she did not have his direct unit mailing address, it took a few months for her to hear from him. She did finally hear from him and was overjoyed. They continued a letter friendship for the duration of his deployment. Once back at JBLM they met up and their romance soared. They were married a few months later. I was honored to be a witness at their marriage. Bob & Kari's first child was born during Bob's second deployment to Iraq. I was asked to stand in, in his place at her birth. Again, such an honor for me. Bob made it home on leave just a day or so after her birth, but only got to spend 2 weeks with his wife and newborn before heading back Iraq. He spent every possible moment with his new FAMILY. He is a great father. Encouraging his children, playing with them, reading with them, supporting them. But he hasn't really had a chance to get to know them. He has been away/deployed more than he has been around.

Soldiers sacrifice not only for their country but also their family. Again, I do not know what happened that terrible night that has brought us to this place, but the Man I first met and have known is not that same person. He worried terribly for his family when he was away. A mother's love is always good, but a father's love is just as important for balance. My sister has MS. Her carrying the extra load while Bob was on deployment was always an added stress, but with MS, it can bring on episodes of the disease. She always found a way to get through, but now is raising their children alone, I worry for her and the kids. She is strong and she has a strong family, but nothing replaces a Father.

Bob is my kids favorite uncle. One day at a family get together, my son saw Bob kneeling down near the edge of the pool talking to my sister, my son Devon saw this and for some unknown reason decided to push Bob into the water. To this day this story remains a fun memory for my children and Bob.

These are just a couple of the many stories/life experiences we have with Bob. There are many more.

As you consider clemency, please take into account the man as a whole, and do not sum up the man based on one terrible night. That man is not Bob! Bobs life has been a positive influence on me, my husband and especially our children. He has shown himself to be a wonderful father, and to me, a good friend. Even with all that has happened, I stand by the man, and will continue to gladly stand by him. I believe that Bob will continue to be a positive influence on the people he is around, and sincerely hope to have him continue to be a positive influence more involved in my life, and the life of his wife and children, not always separated by bars. Please consider clemency carefully.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Respectfully,

*Stephanie Tandberg*

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