



**TRANSCRIPT: INTERVIEW WITH  
LATIANNA WILSON  
23 NOVEMBER 2012**

QUESTION: Why did you join the military?

LATIANNA WILSON: I joined the military because my father was in the military, and my mother joined the military around 1977, I believe it was around the women's WAC. So it was just something I always wanted to do. And throughout high school I was in the JROTC program for four years, so I knew that was where I was going. And when 9/11 happened, I was ready to go, because I lived in New Jersey, and I actually got to see the twin towers as they fell because I stayed that close. And when I seen it, I said, now is a better time to go than any. So I left and I went.

QUESTION: A call to patriotism?

LATIANNA WILSON: Yes, I actually did because I had a scholarship to go to college, but I didn't want to go to college, I wanted to do something, I wanted to be like my mother or like my father, so once 9/11 happened, I knew that's where I wanted to be.

QUESTION: You actually saw the towers fall. Can you tell me about that?

LATIANNA WILSON: The way I seen it, I wasn't per se in front of the twin towers, but where I went to school in New Jersey, you could see the twin towers from the hill, and I could just see the smoke coming from the buildings as the first plane hit. I was in the library and I did see it on the news and then we went outside because we all were being dismissed because the town was in sheer chaos, you know, none of the phones worked, all the traffic lights stopped working, and we just stood outside and we just watched. And when I seen it, it was just like watching a movie. I didn't think that could happen in America at all.

QUESTION: Tell me about that. What were you feeling when you saw that?

LATIANNA WILSON: When I seen it I felt scared. I was in shock. I did not believe it was happening. I mean, New York City, you don't expect that to happen in New York. You expect that somewhere other than America, period. So, when I seen it, I went home, I talked to my mother, I told her I was going to go ahead and join the Army. She didn't want me to, because of what was going on, but I told her it was going to be okay, because the impression that I had was that females weren't going to have to be in combat, that I was going to go and be a nurse or something of that sort, a medic. So that was my very first impression. And that was why I went. But I got a shock when I went.

QUESTION: What was the attitude towards women in the military when you joined?

LATIANNA WILSON: When I first entered and I reached basic training, I went to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, the attitude was they tolerated us to a certain extent. As soon as we got off the buses and got our heavy duffel bags, I was expecting someone to help me with my bags, to carry them around, they said no Soldier, you're here now, there's no man, there's no woman. It's just you. Pick up and move. So, okay, I picked up, I moved, and I drove on. As my career progressed, it became even harder because everything was more catered to the men, there was no

distinguishment (sic) for male and female as far as with us having the children, with us females giving birth.

QUESTION: What types of service are women rendering in Iraq and Afghanistan now?

LATIANNA WILSON: Women that are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are doing every job that the males are doing except for infantry. We're not given the title of infantry, but we foot patrol, we kick down doors, we do QRF, [Quick Reaction Force]. We're part of that, we're a part of everything, we're doing guard tower, we're doing the female search team, we're sitting at the gates, we're searching people as they come through. You name it, we're there doing it. My weapon was a 249, you know, and that's a pretty heavy weapon. I thought I was going to get a little M16 and be happy, but no, my sergeant first class said here's your weapon Sergeant Wilson. And I took it and I drove on, I mean, we're there, we're doing everything. We're doing mortuary affairs.

QUESTION: What is a 249?

LATIANNA WILSON: It's a big automatic machine gun. I don't know how else to describe it to you, it's really heavy [LAUGHS] and it's really deadly. You have to wear a big strap, strap it to you. Wherever you go, that weapon goes. If I had an example I could just show you, but [LAUGHS] I don't have anything to show you. It's pretty heavy. It's a man's weapon, per se. What people would think.

QUESTION: What did your job with the Quick Reaction Force team entail?

LATIANNA WILSON: We would sit back and be on call at our forward operating base, which we call a FOB. You would sit back there and whenever a call came across the radio, it could be part of your base, or any other unit, brigade that needed help, and they were stuck, or being fired upon, and just needed help, it was our job to be in our gear within less than 15 minutes, get out there, go get our blue force tracker, which is like our navigation system, and get out there and help. Whether it was to suppress fire, or return fire, or just strap up their vehicle and tow them back to the nearest camp, which happened to be us, that was our job.

QUESTION: That sounds like a very dangerous job.

LATIANNA WILSON: It can be and it's very scary. My first time out I was so scared. Everything just went silent. I could hear bullets hitting. At the time we were driving humvees. I could hear them hitting the doors, bouncing off and I'm so scared, I'm not moving. I don't know what to do and my battle buddy next to me slapped me and brought me back to life, and pulled me down and said, Sergeant Wilson, get it together. At that time that was a specialist, my lower enlisted, getting me together. It's really scary. Anyone that tells you that is not- - they're lying, because it is.

QUESTION: It's hard to imagine driving down the street and having somebody shooting at you.

LATIANNA WILSON: It's hard to imagine driving down the street and someone shooting at you, as well as people putting IEDs in the roads, or, if you've ever heard of the Jersey barriers, you know, the barrier walls. As we would set up the barriers, sometimes they would knock them down, blow them up, or use our barriers against us by placing the rockets on the barriers and detonating them with a cell phone or whatever device that they seen fit at the time.

QUESTION: And there's no frontline.

LATIANNA WILSON: No, there's no such thing as a frontline. Where you are told to go, you're going to go. Before you go out you always have a clip sync. I think a clip sync is what they call it, meeting. You get together and you go into a room and you get your orders. You're told by S2, which is the security, they tell you how hot that area is going to be at that time, what to expect, what's happened there in the past week and what is your mission. You're going into that clip sync to be told everything and you're going to be told what vehicle you're in, how many vehicles are going, what time you're leaving. After that clip sync, you're getting in that vehicle, and you're going. You're going wherever you're told and it's scary. But you got to get your job done. Because that's what we signed up to do, no one made us do it. We signed up for it.

QUESTION: You volunteered for this.

LATIANNA WILSON: Yes. I'd do it again if I could.

QUESTION: How do the locals react to seeing a woman in uniform?

LATIANNA WILSON: The local nationals, I've never had a negative reaction per se. They've always been friendly toward me and my comrades. But, they don't like when you're in charge. Like if you're put in charge of them for a certain detail of teaching them to fight, to cook, to shoot, to patrol. If a woman is the one in charge and giving the class, they don't want to listen. No. They don't.

QUESTION: How do local women react to another woman in uniform?

LATIANNA WILSON: One woman that I met, she was shocked. She was very apprehensive, but after getting to know her, she asked me a lot of questions, and told me that in Iraq she would never be allowed to do this assignment. I believe she wound up coming over and becoming one of our interpreters and got to wear a uniform, she wasn't a Soldier, but she was helping out our unit and our brigade.

QUESTION: What is a typical day for you?

LATIANNA WILSON: A typical day for me at my last deployment, I would get up in the morning, go check our board telling us our daily tasks, if I had a patrol or QRF, anything. Some missions you drive down the road and everything would be okay, and you'd be in your vehicle, you're not supposed to talk, but of course you're going to talk about your day, because you're scared, nothing would happen. Then another day you drive down and our first vehicle hit an IED and exploded. When you're in the convoy at first you don't know what's going on, all you know is that the vehicle's come to a halt and everyone has to get out and pull security. We got out, and at that time there was fire, we were fired upon, and people fired back, but I didn't have to at that time, I was pulling security because it wasn't in my direction. And we had to wait until the other vehicles came and ratchet strapped to basically tow the injured vehicle, because sometimes if your vehicle is badly damaged, you will leave your vehicle, but you would take out all of the sensitive material. At other times the vehicle is salvageable and you'll tow it back to the yard. So that's a typical day for us, you're used to mortar rounds, being fired at. It's typical.

QUESTION: Tell us about your experiences on that day in the guard tower.

LATIANNA WILSON: Okay. I was doing a routine guard duty, it was my day to be in the tower, and as I was up in the tower, my battle buddy was saying that he saw something in the

distance and he felt threatened. So he was calling back to the control point, the CP, and you have to let them know what is going on, what is it that you see, because you can't just fire without asking for permission first. So, we got the answer back that we could go ahead and fire upon what it was that we saw, which looked like a man that was crouched down hiding. And it was, so my battle buddy fired. As my battle buddy fired, the Iraqi, I'm assuming he was an Iraqi, he fired a mortar round back at us, and the mortar round almost took out the guard tower that I was in. When it flew by it scared me so much, that I fell out the tower, backward wearing all of my gear. And I sustained back injuries.

QUESTION: Then what happened?

LATIANNA WILSON: I was on the ground and we winded up having to call our medic station to come down in the humvee. They came, picked me up, and brought me back to the medic station. I was given a few drugs and a few tests, but my back was so severe that they had to fly me out to a bigger FOB where they have medical treatment and I was given X-rays and showed that I had herniated disc and things of that sort. They asked me did I want to leave, did I want to go home, but I didn't want to go, the deployment was almost over and I didn't want to leave my family. So I stayed.

QUESTION: So you thought of your fellow Soldiers as your family?

LATIANNA WILSON: Oh, yeah. I did. Because, you eat together, you go to bed together, you shower together, you fire together, you train together. How much closer can you get. Nine times out of ten, you see them honestly more than you see your biological family. So yes, that is my family.

QUESTION: How did your family react to you being injured?

LATIANNA WILSON: They were very helpful, remorseful. They wanted me to sit down, to rest and recuperate. I had an outstanding commander and first sergeant. They weren't riding my back about going to the medical station because a lot of times Soldiers have a notion of, I can't be sick, I can't go and get help, I'm just going to drive on because they're afraid of how their fellow battle buddies perceive them. But I was encouraged by my chain of command to take the time and get better because if I don't get better then I put my battle buddies in danger by them having to carry me.

QUESTION: You had a very difficult assignment in your second deployment. Tell me about that.

LATIANNA WILSON: I was a mortuary affairs assistant. This job was given to me by a guy named Master Sergeant Thomas. He asked one day who would like to volunteer to help out the mortuary affairs team. I volunteered because my first deployment was the QRF, so I had something to do. My second deployment I was in the command post, doing paperwork, making sure the company was up on our training. I was tired of seeing all of the rest of my battle buddies humping and working so hard and I'm just in this air-conditioned building. So I said, I volunteer, I'll do it. So he winded up training me and showing me exactly what the protocol is. The job being a mortuary affairs assistant was you had to sanitize vehicles that had been wrecked in explosions, a firefight. When you sanitize it, you're sanitizing it for body parts, you're sanitizing it for equipment, anything the enemy can take and use upon us, but the hardest part was sanitizing it, pulling out body parts, because I had never done anything like that in my life.

QUESTION: Tell me about the day you sanitized the mine resistant vehicle.

LATIANNA WILSON: Yes, we had gotten a call about this particular vehicle, the acronym in the military would be a MRAP. This vehicle was supposed to be the topnotch vehicle that could withstand explosions. This particular day we got a call to meet at the gate and pick up an MRAP. We didn't know what happened to it, so we towed it back to our warehouse where we worked. Our sergeant major, she was a female, outstanding Sergeant Major Vaughn stood outside and she briefed us and told us that there were five Soldiers in this vehicle, the vehicle had rolled over an Improvised Explosive Device, and once it rolled over that device they were carrying ammunition inside of the vehicle, so the vehicle caught fire, and once the vehicle caught fire the rounds started going off in the vehicle. She told our crew, if you don't think you can handle it, then you can step out, you can step aside and the others can handle it, come on inside. Our first sergeant was there with her, and my first sergeant automatically looked at me, I was the only female NCO at the time on that team. My first sergeant looked at me and said, Sergeant Wilson you're not going in here. Just go ahead and pack up your things and go to the CP. I started packing up my things and walking away and then I thought to myself, no, this isn't right. I realized it was because I was the woman I was being sent away. So I went back and I spoke to my female sergeant major and I explained how I felt to her. I said, sergeant major, these are my lower enlisted, these are my Soldiers, for my Soldiers to see the first sergeant pull me aside because I'm the female and tell me go ahead and pack up, it's not right. I said, I'm embarrassed and it's not fair. I want to go back in that room. So my sergeant major said okay, she called me Skittles [LAUGHS], she said okay Skittles, roll up your sleeves, we're going to go in here together. That's a hard task. This is somebody's son, somebody's family member. But what kept me going and doing it was that I knew I was contributing my part. You know, that at least I was able to send them home, that they were able to go home to their families. That's a difficult job to do over and over because it puts stress on you, you have nightmares, but in the end it's worth it to do.

QUESTION: Some say Soldiers don't fight for their country, they fight for their battle buddies. What are your thoughts on that?

LATIANNA WILSON: I did it because these Soldiers, they didn't have to sign that dotted line to come in the military. They chose to. And they came in and they bust their butts. They did whatever job was thrown at them. That's the difference between being a civilian and military personnel. When you're told you have to do something, you turn around and you execute. You do it. No question. And I watch these Soldiers go with sleepless nights, being cold, no one knows everything that goes on over there. They're there fighting with you and for you and they'll give you their last. What made me also do it was that I know from my first deployment, I went home, there were so many Soldiers that didn't get off that plane and go home. They made the ultimate sacrifice being there and dying for their country. And sometimes, they died because they were trying to save their battle buddies. There's many times that there could have been an IED and that one Soldier might've been the one to see it, and jump on it so that the rest of his crew didn't get blown up. There were so many incidents they would return fire and just jump into the middle of the fight, and they didn't have to, they could have ran the other way. But they didn't.

QUESTION: And now women are doing those things too.

LATIANNA WILSON: They are. I worked at Walter Reed Army Hospital, which specializes in the Wounded Warrior Program. After flying to Walter Reed, I was injured, as I told you, over time I wanted to return back to the military because it's my passion. So I worked extra hard in physical therapy. Finally, I went to the post sergeant major and I said, sergeant major, I want to be a squad leader, I want to help assist with the Wounded Warriors, either transitioning to civilian life, or staying in the military. At the time I was the only female squad leader. There was a female platoon sergeant, but besides her there was me, and then there was about 30 other cadre which all consisted of males. When I went to my sergeant major, and I told them I wanted to be a squad leader, my sergeant major looked at me and he said, okay Sergeant Wilson, I want you to make sure you study your non-commissioned officer's guide. Study every question in there, and then I want you to come back and I'm going to ask you a few questions. Then at the same time, my father was still in the military, my sergeant major said, I'm going to call your father and I'm going to see what he thinks about it. I walked out his office and I went back so excited, I'm telling all my battle buddies I'm going to be a squad leader, I'm going to be a squad leader. Then I thought about it and I said wait a minute. That's not fair. Why does he have to call my father and why do I have to study this study guide? Goes back to is it because I'm a female again? The majority of the guys that were squad leaders, they all came from infantry. They were either infantry or scouts. That's how you're picked to become a cadre at the Wounded Warrior Brigade. I finally did get picked; I guess I passed my test. I seen a lot of Wounded Warriors coming through, missing legs, arms, and it wasn't just men. Yes, I seen a lot of women come through Walter Reed, which it didn't shock me because I already knew us women were over there being injured. But when you're a squad leader you see them arrive, you watch the transition, and you see them get better. When some arrive they don't want to talk, they don't want to be bothered, but you have to make them or motivate them to go to physical therapy, mental health, whatever it takes. I had one female Soldier, she was a captain, and when she first came in, she was grumpy, she was upset, she didn't know why she had to be there, she just wanted to go home. I talked to her, and I said, look, from what I see in all these pictures and talking to your mother, you used to be a very adventurous woman. She loved rock climbing, canoeing, you name it, she was adventurous. I told her, you have to find that passion again. I said, you can't be lazy, just find your passion, and she was like, I'm nothing. I don't have my legs, I'm in this wheelchair, who's going to love me, what am I going to be? I can't be in the military anymore. I told her, yes you can be in the military. As long as you can pass all the physical requirements, you can remain in the military missing your limbs, it's possible. To make a long story short, she winded up competing in the military Paralympics in Colorado Springs and she received a silver medal and she was returned back to active duty. So, watching her, you know, that was pretty outstanding to see her come in and not want to do anything and then go on to compete in the Paralympics.

QUESTION: It must be debilitating to work with people who are suffering from terrible injuries on a daily basis. What kind of toll does that take on you?

LATIANNA WILSON: You take it home with you. It takes a heavy toll. To watch and see your Soldier every day not want to get out the bed, they're angry, they're taking all of their frustration out on their parents or their loved ones because they're just so aggravated that they can't do the things they can do or they're in pain. You go home and you worry about the Soldiers. Many nights I would sit up and just talk to my Soldiers on the phone. If you're not okay, give me a call. I don't care what time it is. If you need me to just come back to the base, come to your

house, I'm there. I've gotten many phone calls where I had to leave my house at two o'clock in the morning and just go sit with my Soldiers and let them vent or cry, or, just tell me what's wrong, even their parents. And I had to keep going to therapy myself because you start taking their problems home with you.

QUESTION: What sort of challenges do you still face due to the injuries you suffered?

LATIANNA WILSON: I go to a social worker. I see my therapist for my PTSD, I have anxiety and depression at times. I also go to my chiropractor, physical therapist, pain management, all for my back injuries. I have the issues of pain and the mental health, but I don't let it keep me down. I keep going.

QUESTION: Women are making the ultimate sacrifice now as well. What does that say about the role of women in today's military?

LATIANNA WILSON: It says that we're willing to go above and beyond our call of duty, just as a man is. We're there, there's no difference, and, we're making the ultimate sacrifice in my opinion when you're leaving your child. You're leaving your husband or whomever to go overseas and sometimes your children don't understand why you're doing it. So I believe our women are truly strong, I mean, to be able to leave and do that and they're making the ultimate sacrifice.

QUESTION:

Throughout history, women have had to fight for the right to fight. What does that say about their determination?

LATIANNA WILSON: To me, it means that women are just as strong, strong-minded, and physically strong. I've seen a lot of women over there that want to actually be in the infantry, and in my personal opinion, they are capable of being in the infantry. They can do everything an infantryman can do and better.

QUESTION: What would you like people who are watching this film to know about the women that you served with?

LATIANNA WILSON: The women that I've served with were the most outstanding women, from my sergeant major, down to the private first class. They were willing to do anything to help out their fellow man. They were medics, they were mechanics, whether they were getting our vehicles ready, the women I served with were just tremendous, strong and taught me a lot. And if I could do it again, I would. The women I served with, we still keep in touch to this day.

QUESTION: When that rocket was fired at your guard tower, what happened to it?

LATIANNA WILSON: It hit the ground and it detonated. It went past our guard tower, and it went to the ground, when you hear it coming, it's like [WHISTLES] Boom! And you just feel the FOB shake. It didn't detonate where I was, it went by and winded up dropping and detonating and taking out a sleeping quarters. There was a Soldier in there, but luckily that Soldier did survive, it just collapsed onto him and he was later pulled out of the rubble. He was injured, but he survived.

QUESTION: Were you aware that was happening?

LATIANNA WILSON: At that point it happened so fast that I didn't realized it was happening. But in my other situation where I was fired upon, that's when I was cognizant, saying oh my god, this is really happening. You start thinking in your head, okay, my son's never going to see me again, my mom's not going to see me, you know, what am I going to do, what are they going to do when I'm not here, what is this going to feel like. You start to think those things, yeah.

QUESTION: Does that ever go away?

LATIANNA WILSON: No, when I returned home it was hard and it still is hard for me. At times when I hear too loud of a noise it startles me and it makes me angry, because I'm scared is why I'm angry. I don't like going in crowded places. You have the nightmares, and your doctors give you medicine to suppress the nightmares, but eventually you're tired of taking that medicine and you don't want to take it anymore, so, you deal with the nightmares one step at a time. And you have to explain it to your partner, your husband, your wife, whomever, you have to explain it to so they understand why you're shaking at night, or why you can't sleep.

QUESTION: What didn't we talk about?

LATIANNA WILSON: I would like to make the public known of the Wounded Warrior Project, or the Warrior Transition Brigade. If you ever have a chance to support this project, even going in the grocery stores, you see some products have the Wounded Warrior label, support those projects because those projects go towards helping injured Soldiers to be given a house, or make renovations to their house, you know, make it wheelchair accessible, or their vehicles, you have to modify their vehicles. That project goes towards the Wounded Warriors and they can really use it. Whether it's a Soldier that was injured and now they have to leave the service, that project can help towards a down payment on they're rent, their house. Any expenses, that project also funds Soldiers' families for the Soldiers that have fallen. Their families need help later on. So I'm a big advocate for the Wounded Warrior Project, and brigade.

QUESTION: If someone has received a terrible injury, are they compensated for this?

LATIANNA WILSON: Once you go through the Wounded Warrior Brigade, things are a lot different than during the Vietnam era. The VA and the military are taking bigger steps toward compensating Soldiers, making sure they receive it monetarily or in medical care. Once a Soldier comes into the Wounded Warrior Brigade, their injuries are evaluated over time and they try to help the Soldier heal. As the Soldier is going through the transition, you meet your VA representative, and your representative will help you to get your packet together for your compensation. You get a certain percentage and a lot of Soldiers wind up medically retiring, such as myself. You keep your ID card and you receive your retirement pay. Then from there you have the AW2 Program [Army Wounded Warrior Program]. They work with you for life. So, if you need assistance on anything, medical, monetary, a job, anything you need, the AW2 Program is there for you as well. They make sure that you're able to get by some type a way; you're not just put out into the world on your own. As it should be.

QUESTION: Tell me about your sexual assault in Iraq.

LATIANNA WILSON: When I was in Iraq, shortly after my battle buddy had passed away, I was so stressed out that I was asked if I would like to go to another camp. So I volunteered to go to a camp called War Eagle. At that camp they needed help with cooks, they were short on cooks and setting up a dining facility. My actual MOS, my job when I came in the military, was

to be a cook. I said okay, sure, I'll go down there. When I came down to this FOB, we set up everything from the ground up, no help from the local nationals, we had to set up everything and cook chow from scratch out of tents. Next to our tent, we had local nationals that we were training so they would know how to feed and set up a camp. After time went by of setting up this camp, eventually I had a shift to run the dining facility. One night when I was closing up the dining facility, the camp that was attached to ours, the local nationals were outside having tea. We were always taught that if the Iraqis offer you tea or chai, you take it, don't be rude, just take it, so I didn't want to offend the two gentlemen standing outside having tea, so I took the cup of tea and I drank it. As I drank it, I began to feel inebriated or I just started feeling like I was drugged and weird. As I began to walk away to try and get away the one Iraqi gentleman clothes lined me by my neck, and hit me against the conexes. I hit my head and we were fighting and then I fell to the ground. When I fell to the ground I kind of blacked out. I could hear them speaking in their language, one gentleman is standing off to the side, and he's yelling, and the other gentleman, he's on top of me, and I realized I don't have any pants on. I had my PT uniform on, but I was missing my bottoms, everything was off, and this gentleman was sexually assaulting me. At the time I believe that the guy that was with him was saying get off of her, leave her alone, someone's coming. When I came to I remember hitting him and fighting him, and I guess he got scared and he got up. As he got up to get ready to go next to his partner, I grabbed my pants and I ran to my room to my battle buddy and she seen me, and I was so drugged and I said to her, I think I was just sexually assaulted, but I'm going to go to bed now. My battle buddy, she said, no you're not going to go to bed, we're going to take you to see the commander. I was taken up to see the commander and from there the commander sent out a group of Soldiers that went through the camp trying to find these gentlemen. When they went into the cafeteria some other gentlemen said they left the FOB, so a group of our Soldiers went off the FOB, and retrieved them and brought them back. The colonel of the Iraqi regiment came back on the FOB as well and he apologized to me with the translator, telling me that he doesn't condone this and that they're going to be punished, or put in jail. As far as I knew, they wind up going to jail. After that, I just went through such a really severe depression that I was flown out to Landstuhl Hospital in Germany and from there, I ended up at Walter Reed.

QUESTION: You don't hear those kinds of stories.

LATIANNA WILSON: No, that's what I was going to say, you don't. I'm not sure why, I did wind up receiving a letter from the White House apologizing to me about what happened and if they could do anything to help me in my transition. I believe that's how I ended up at Walter Reed, was because someone up there was concerned. But from there it didn't transition to the news, it wasn't something I wanted, because I didn't want the Army to look bad, I don't know how the news would've spun the story, but you don't hear about it, it's like it doesn't exist. Since I never heard about it happening, I never expected that to happen to me while I went over there. But, I would like for people to know that that is something that is happening over there.

QUESTION: Your higher ups took it seriously.

LATIANNA: They acted on it immediately. As soon as I came in to their headquarters, they sent out the search party and they went and they got these guys and they performed a sexual assault kit and made sure that whatever could be recovered, you know. I was given medicine to make sure that I was okay. I was sent to the mental health advisory and they kept a pretty good eye on me because I had just gotten so depressed from everything. From doing the mortuary

affairs, losing my friend, and then getting raped, it was just the lowest time in my life. I wasn't telling my mother. I wasn't telling anyone in my family because I didn't want them to worry about me back home. They have to worry about you everyday so why call home with bad news? But I was in a real bad depression to where I even felt like I didn't want to live anymore.

QUESTION: How aware are the Soldiers over there of this stuff?

LATIANNA: Our Soldiers are very aware. We have so many suicide prevention classes that we have to take and your superiors talk to you. Even your battle buddies are told to keep an eye on you, but you can get told the signs of suicide or what to do, what not to do, but if you're depressed or you're suicidal, you're going to be that way. There are some telltale signs they tell you to look out for, but then there are other times where you don't know if that person is going to do something. At my point, like I told you, I didn't want to live anymore. So I tried to commit suicide. I didn't tell anyone. I didn't tell my battle buddy. The doctor gave me my medicine for the depression, I made the decision I was going to go in my room, take all my medicine and I did, I cut my wrists and I laid down and my battle buddy found me. When she found me she went and got my commander and my first sergeant and they called the ambulance, but the ambulance was taking too long that the two of them they just carried me to the medical station. I really don't remember much; I believe I almost died that night. When I woke up, I woke up in Germany.