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My Cousin

One thing I am thankful for this year is the recovery of my cousin's injuries. My cousin, Matthew, is enlisted in the United States Army. He is part of the 82nd Airborne Division, which specializes in parachute jumps. Matthew was injured twice this past year. I do not know a lot of the details about his injuries but I do know that he is OK now. Let's start at the beginning.

Matthew enlisted in the United States Army, something he wanted to do for ages. He was going to be in the military. Many members of our family are in the military so he was very proud to follow in their footsteps. The last time I saw Matthew was a week before he left for training. He was so excited that he would be part of the United States Army. We had a big family party at my aunt's house to celebrate his achievement. Everyone was very happy for him but we were all nervous too, being in the Army is a very dangerous job.

The first injury happened while doing a training jump for the 82nd Airborne. He had to jump out of a plane with a parachute. When he jumped out of the plane everything was going according to plan until the wind shifted. The wind shifted so strongly that he hit his leg so hard that it broke it. He had to land on the ground with a broken leg! It took a few months but Matthew recovered and was able to go back to train with his division.

The second time Matthew got hurt was even scarier than the first. During hand to hand combat training, Matthew was training with one of the soldiers in his squad who was a lot bigger than he was. The other soldier picked him up and flipped him over his back. When Matthew landed he knew something was wrong right away. He could not feel his legs. Matthew broke his neck and was paralyzed. Over the next few months he got a lot of medical care and had different surgeries. The doctors were able to fix the injury and after many physical therapy sessions Matthew was able to walk again. Once Matthew could fully walk, he resumed training and went back to active duty for the Army, but he was put on light duty and was cautious as ever. After some time he had a medical evaluation in the Army and they decided that he needed to discard him. Thankfully, he had missions, like he went to Afghanistan to save people in need. He is a hero and I am honored to call him my cousin.

Over the days, months, I can't get something off my mind. It is an apple stuck to a tree, but you can't pull the apple off of the tree. It is a strong companion that will always be with me. My cousin Matthew's injuries. I am so thankful that he was strong enough to heal from his painful, life threatening injuries.