

# realLIFEstories<sup>®</sup>

Learn How Smart Insurance Planning Helped a  
Soldier's Family Keep Future Goals on Track

*No. 2 in a Series*



Plus: Information to Help  
You Figure Out How Much Life  
Insurance You Need

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Richelle Hecker with children  
(l-r) Allie, Torie, Will and Lillie

# Serving Country and Family



Major William F. Hecker (inset), Richelle Hecker (sitting) with financial advisor Samantha Hilliard

Army Major William F. Hecker's long-range plan was to become a college English professor, but first he was committed to following in the footsteps of his family and serving his country. A West Point graduate, he was an officer in the 3-16th Field Artillery Battalion, and in late 2005 he was deployed to Iraq. Just six weeks into his tour of duty there, he was killed by a roadside bomb. Bill was just 37, and left behind his wife, Richelle, and four young children.

Nothing could have prepared Richelle emotionally for her loss, but she knew Bill had taken steps to ensure the family

would be okay financially. The Army provides soldiers with a \$100,000 death benefit, and Bill had bought additional life insurance offered by the military. But he knew even that wouldn't be enough to cover his family's needs. So he purchased additional coverage on his own. His individual policy even included an option to increase his coverage every three years regardless of his health status, a valuable feature for someone with a hazardous occupation. "He did all the right things," says Samantha Hilliard, Hecker's financial advisor.

Richelle and her children, now ages 3 to 11, recently resettled in Colorado Springs, Colo. With the insurance benefits safely invested, Richelle's living expenses should be covered long after her Army survivor benefits have run out. That leaves her free to remain a stay-at-home mom as long as she wishes.

Though Bill's service to his country put him in harm's way, that wasn't the only reason the Hecker's bought life insurance. "Obviously, he had a dangerous job,

but there's always a chance that any of us won't make it," says Richelle. "It's just the right thing to do."

## ? How Much Life Insurance Do You Need?

**The average adult American has roughly \$170,000** in life insurance coverage, or about four times his or her gross annual income.<sup>1</sup> Seems like a lot until you consider that you're going to be dead a lot longer than four years.

If you were to die tomorrow, how many years would you want your family to be provided for financially? Would debts need to be retired? Would you want to set aside some money for your spouse's retirement or your children's education? How much would be needed to pay for your funeral and other final expenses? These are the questions you need to ask to help determine how much coverage you need.

<sup>1</sup> LIMRA International, Trends in Life Insurance Ownership, 2005

### Calculate Your Needs

For an estimate of how much life insurance you would need to safeguard your family's financial future, use LIFE's online calculator at:

[www.lifehappens.org/lifecalculator](http://www.lifehappens.org/lifecalculator)

