

AMENDED COMMEMORATIVE ACCOUNT OF MARTHA GASKELL
REGARDING MARION TURNER (DOD 18.1.13)

Marion (also known as Maz) was my first-born child. She was born to me and her dad, John, on 25/11/1972 at Colchester military hospital. Marion taught me a lot about how to be a parent but also how to be a mum. It was a happy time for our small family, Marion was a happy baby she was always smiling, but at times was a very sickly baby. When I look back over my three other children's milestones, I realised that Marion did a lot of her first milestones quite early, she walked early, and potty trained early.

Marion's dad was in the army and luckily got to spend time with her in the first few months of her life, when Marion was 5 months he was deployed on a tour of Northern Ireland and not long after arriving there I got the dreaded knock on the door and told that he had been injured by a bomb blast. I was then supported by army personnel who flew with me to be at his bedside in Northern Ireland but sadly not long after while at his bedside he died. As a young widow at the age of 17 and no family members to support me, this was a very difficult period and changed my life forever. It was just me and Marion for a while, looking back I wonder how I did it, but I did. it was difficult bringing a baby up on my own as well as trying to grieve and it's not till years later and maturity I realised how difficult this was for both of us.

Within 90 days of my husband's death, we had to move and start a new life away from the army and all I knew. I don't recall how I did it but we had to move from our married quarters to a civilian house on our own and start the next chapter in our lives.

Two years later I met a new partner and had a daughter and called her Melanie, both Maz and Mel were very close. I used to love to dress them the in the same clothes and I would always get asked if they were twins. They loved playing grown-ups in their dolls house, and being mummies to their dolls, taking them in their prams for walks in the garden. Both Marion and Melanie went to Kingsfords primary school in Colchester.

As a young child Marion was happy and enjoyed going to the park, especially feeding the birds at Castle Park; she also enjoyed swimming. My older sister had a son and on occasions, we would take the children to Walton or Clacton for the day out.

My mother also used to spend a lot of time in Walton in a caravan and several of her grandkids would get to spend time with her at the seaside going on amusements, swimming in the sea and as they got older playing pool.

Marion took an interest in Majorettes, so I got her enrolled in the classes and she joined a Majorette team which involved taking part in many of the routines. I remember on one occasion she was in a parade marching through Colchester town centre in her uniform which was a white skirt and blue top. I was so proud of her.

In 1979, I gave birth to my third child, a boy, who I called Michael. Marion would have been seven when he was born, and she loved her little brother. They had a lovely sibling

relationship. Marion was a very caring, loving little girl and she took to being a mummy to her little brother like she was with her dolls but now she had a real-life baby to play with.

We enjoyed going out as a family to different places and trips to the zoo, and amusement parks, Marion loved being a big sister and we spent a lot of time doing family fun stuff.

While living in Colchester we lived in walking distance for Marion to attend school with her friends. When Marion started Charles Lucas Comprehensive she made lots of friends, one in particular who stayed in contact for many years after they both became mums themselves. Over the years I heard from her childhood friend who tells me the stories about Marion and how they used to compete with each other over different things like their hairstyles, boys, and things in general. The one thing Marion's friend said stood out and what they laughed about was how Marion still sucked her thumb, something I knew Marion did well into adulthood when she was a mum herself. She talked about how sporty Maz was how she won cross country sports and was always ahead of everyone. They had a lot of fun and memories as kids.

While attending Charles Lucas, Marion showed an interest in netball and played Goal defence she loved the game and played for county. She enjoyed lots of various sports.

Marion's younger sister, Gemma, is also very sporty, she took part in cross country and also loves netball and played for the county. Gemma spent a lot of time with Marion growing up.

In 1983, I met and married a soldier. On the day of our wedding, Marion would have only been 11/12 and took it upon herself to ask her stepdad if she could call him "dad." This meant so much to her as she never really knew her dad as he had been killed at a very early age and she was too young to know who he was and I think she missed that role of a dad in her life.

We moved away from the area we lived at the time when she was able to walk to her school. Getting married to a soldier enabled us to live in army accommodation in Colchester which meant moving away from her friends, but she was able to get a bus from our new home to allow her to stay at the same school and keep in touch with those friends. As a child of a military family, I knew how difficult changing schools would be on her. I moved all over the world with my father and it did not help me academically. In 1986 my ex-husband's regiment was posted to Fallingbommel in Germany, Marion would have been 14 and it would also have been a difficult time for her moving schools at that age. Not long after arriving in Fallingbommel, I found out that I was pregnant and gave birth to Gemma who was going to be my last child.

Living in Germany was so different for us; we went camping, we went to safari parks, boating lakes, outdoor swimming, BBQs and so much more. It was a different way of living in a different country something we were all new to. We were based in Germany for 6 years. Marion attended Gloucester High School in Hohne, it was an hour's bus

journey to school, she did enjoy school, and she came away with her GCSE exams successfully. She made friends as most of the friend's parents were in the same regiment as our family.

After leaving high school Marion got a few little jobs, she would go out socializing with friends and went on to meet a boyfriend who was a soldier, she was happy and they would spend lots of their time together, as a big sister would take Gemma out with them.

Marion got a job at the army cookhouse where her boyfriend was a chef and spent a lot of time together inside and outside of work and got engaged while we (myself and her stepdad) were on leave in the UK which was a big surprise to us but she seemed very happy. They spent a lot of time together, they would just enjoy time going to safari parks, and just enjoying life together.

With all Marion's siblings, she was very motherly towards them all, it was something I saw in her from a young age while growing up and was also in her nature to be kind and very caring. She was meant to be a mum.

As a young woman, Marion would spend a lot of her time socialising with me and her stepdad as after leaving school she lost friends and was mostly friends with my friends. I think this is the bubble we lived in as an army family everyone knew each other. Her partner was in a different regiment to us and would be away a lot, so when he was away her time was spent with us.

My husband and her boyfriend were deployed for a minimum of 6 months to Iraq this was a war zone so was very worrying for us both as we didn't know what was happening over there, we just had each other and the other army families to support us. On their return from Iraq, I don't recall how long it was, but Marion and her boyfriend got married. This was in the army garrison church in Fallingbostal. It was a lovely day and a lovely wedding. Marion would have been 19 when she got married.

Not long after they married, my husband's regiment were posted back to the UK leaving Marion on her own. (Well it felt like I was leaving her.) We arrived in Germany when she was 14 and we were leaving her there as a wife, to start her new life as a married woman.

Within a year of us leaving Marion got pregnant and had her first child. I recognised when talking with Maz on the phone, which we did daily, that she was struggling but was not sure what was wrong, I felt I needed to fly over to be with her and the baby which I did.

Marion was diagnosed with PND and was struggling so I stayed in Germany supporting her and the baby. She was an amazing mum, and I always used to tell her she was the best mum, a better mum than I was, and used to remind her how good she was as she doubted herself. I spent a lot of time with Marion and her son, and she seemed to get

back on her feet so I returned to the UK. I made several more visits to Germany to visit Marion and the children.

Three years later Marion and her family had moved back to the UK and she gave birth to twin boys, again she was diagnosed with PND. Being an army wife, a majority of the time you are a single parent, as your husband spends a lot of his time either on exercise, tours of duty, or deployed to war zones. As the mother and wife, you are left to cope a lot of the time on your own.

As a wife of a soldier married for 22 years, Marion and the children had to move to many different parts of the country as well as abroad when her husband had too. Some of the places she moved to were Tidworth, Yorkshire, Catterick, Colchester, Northern Ireland and Germany several times.

As Marion got older, she found it difficult to make friends as she didn't find it easy. Her family were her world. She did everything for her children. From an early age she was very creative, and this showed with her children, she would always cut all here children's hair, make them costumes for fancy dress, loved playing quiz games with them, she loved baking and also won a prize for cake decorating.

Five years after the twins were born Marion gave birth to her long-awaited daughter, Shanice, the baby girl she was desperate to have. She also knew this was going to be her last pregnancy.

Marion was so loving, caring, devoted and loyal to her family and friends, her children were her world and what she lived for. Marion had a lovely relationship with her family: you knew Marion loved you as she showed it so much even if she was not happy with you at times. I can honestly say she was the kindest person you could ever wish to meet, and would do anything for anyone.

Marion got posted to Northern Ireland with her husband, a place she didn't really want to go to as it carried memories of her dad's death. Especially as she was stationed at Palace Barracks, where there is a memorial garden for soldiers killed in action. It was there that Marion had arranged with the military to have a service for her dad, and she lay a stone in his memory. While in NI, Marion's husband went to Afghanistan. She was struggling and she phoned and asked if I would come over. I flew to be with her when she was in Ireland as again, she was on her own. Marion worked for the local authority, and her job was a lollypop lady she seemed in her element talking to the kids every day.

Marion did not have much time for herself bringing up 4 children, but when she did have time she liked keeping fit and she would go through different stages of either running or joining a gym. She needed something for herself.

Wherever Marion was in the world with the army, we would always visit each other, more so me as she had 4 children, and it was easier for me to travel on my own.

Both Marion and myself were married to soldiers and lived in different parts of the country, so there was times when she wasn't able to get to family celebrations, but she was able to make her youngest sisters 18th birthday and my 50th which I have such fond memories of. Marion and I would spend a lot of our time socialising with my friends when she visited me with the children.

Further information about Marion's mental health problems

The first time I had an insight into Marion's mental health affecting her is when she gave birth to her first son. Many times, over the years while they lived in Germany, there wasn't a day when I didn't receive a call from her, I knew and could hear she wasn't mentally well. I was so worried so would go over and spend time with her and the children. It was difficult for me to keep a check on how she was doing as we lived in different parts of the country, and she was trying to get on with her life with four children.

Maz moved to Northern Ireland and not long after arriving her husband was sent to Afghanistan, so again she was on her own and I feel very vulnerable and in a strange place. I received a call from the army welfare with concerns that Marion's mental health had escalated and she had been admitted to a hospital in Ireland, so I flew straight over and arrived at the hospital to see my daughter looking so ill. I was concerned they were going to discharge her, I begged them to admit her as I was worried, that she would be discharged.

Finally, she was admitted to a mental health hospital for a few months where she was sectioned several times. I didn't want to leave her as I was not happy with how she was. This was very frightening for me as her mum, as she just wanted to die and I couldn't help her or stop her from feeling that way.

Before moving to Colchester, Marion was living in Ripon, she had a psychiatrist and was under a mental health team. She was working at the time and wanted to stay in Ripon as she felt her mental health had stabilized and it helped that she was working. Her husband put in for a posting to Colchester as it was the end of his army career.

My last Christmas card I received from my daughter was in 2012.

18 days into 2013, she was gone. I still find this difficult to believe that my beautiful daughter died the way she did. It is something to this day I find very hard to accept.

Over the years, I knew Marion's mental health was affecting her life. There were times she was functioning, and she was employed. It is when they were posted back to Colchester that I noticed Marion's mental health worsened, and she didn't seem to have many periods of stability. I dreaded the phone ringing. She was admitted many times to mental health facilities in Essex. It caused me to be very worried about my daughter. I feel very strongly, with my involvement into Marion's care, that she did not get the care she needed.

My beloved daughter Marion died by hanging at her home on 18.1.2013 whilst under the care of Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. I was working for the military at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at the time. I had just finished my shift and gone home. I got a knock on the door; at the time I thought it was my colleague coming home from work. I went to answer the door and just walked away from the police who were stood at the door. I didn't think they were there for me but also felt like I didn't want to hear what they were going to tell me having had a lot of involvement with the police because of Marion's mental health.

All I remember is on entering my home they told me my daughter was dead, to this day I don't recall the conversations they had with me. I was distraught and couldn't believe what I was hearing I was in profound disbelief and shock.

I travelled to Colchester the night I was told Marion had died. The following day I met with the police family liaison officer and another police officer. I was with my daughter, Gemma, and a colleague from the army. The female police officer was very abrupt with me and said if I was going to be defensive with her, she would end our meeting. The reason she was abrupt was because I had said I wanted to come down and identify my daughter. She was not willing to wait for me to get there. The police officer said that it had to be done straight away, which I later found out was incorrect. Marion was separated from her husband and I did not want my grandson to have to identify his mum as I knew that would be a memory that would stay with him forever.

In the meeting, my younger daughter had said to the police officer, "My sister has just died and your speaking to my mum like this!" After a bit, things calmed down. The police officer went on to say that when they were called to the property, and broke into Marion's house, her house was really clean. She said Marion was a very clean person. The police officer showed me physically the position Marion was in when they found her. I was so shocked and this has never left me. I gave Marion a teddy while she was in hospital to hug, and when I now sit it on my bed, its head falls to one side and all I see is the position Marion was in when they found her.

It was not until the next day they allowed me to see my daughter in the mortuary. I was so scared. There was a police officer on the door; he did not speak to me. When I went in, Marion had a long cloak on her. She just looked asleep like when I saw her in hospital in Ireland, so I needed to cuddle her, and when I did the cloak came down a bit and all I could see were the ligatures that had been left on her. I don't know why I wasn't warned about this. Even now, seeing those items remind me of the way she died, which I do regularly as they are everyday items; it takes me to that horrible memory. Why did they not tell me or warn me? Why? I do not want to have these images in my head anymore.

Impact

In 2012, I was at Staffordshire University doing a degree, but with Marion's mental health getting worse, I had to end my course as I was not coping very well and needed to wait till her health improved. I knew how proud Marion was of me that I was going to be professional graduate as a counsellor.

In 2014, at Marion's graveside, I told her that I would do it for her as she had said how proud she was of me and that I could do it. I enrolled at Essex University that year. It was the most difficult thing I have ever done, especially after losing my beautiful daughter. My current counselling business is in her name and I have a photo of Marion in my practice room, looking at me when I see my clients about their welfare.

I moved to Colchester after Marion's death as I just felt I needed to be near her grave. After 5 years in Colchester, I moved back up north to be near my other children and grandchildren. Leaving Marion was the most difficult thing I ever had to do. On returning to Staffordshire, I started years of counselling and this is still ongoing.

I was initially not able to say or hear the way in which Marion took her life. I could not hear anyone else use a particular word relating to how she took her life. If the word was said, I would panic, it made me shake and feel sick.

I was diagnosed with PTSD and, only after 8 years of therapy and breath work, was I able to say how she died – although it still feels uncomfortable in my body. I have spent a lot of time being angry. I feel frustrated, angry and very hurt that I was never listened to as her mother. I was told to stop making contact. All I wanted was my daughter to get the help I knew she needed and never got. Breath work and therapy is helping me, and this is ongoing to this day.

When I was first diagnosed with PTSD, I couldn't speak about Maz's death without crying and still find it hard. I find it very difficult if I see a police car and get anxious when I get unexpected knocks on the door, especially if it's police. I still can't watch TV programmes if there is anything to do with suicide on as it triggers lots of emotions.

My daughter's death has completely changed me as a person and I will never be the same.

When I moved to Colchester after Marion's death, I was finding a lot more about the failings into her care by the Essex Partnership University NHS foundation Trust.

I spent from 2013 to 2018 trying to get answers as to why my daughter was failed by Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. I went to the papers. I had meetings, with many many professionals. I raised complaints that I was told would be investigated, but was never told of the outcome or if they were ever investigated. I was told by one professional, "Things will happen internally but you won't see or hear of it." Finally, they told me that they had brought someone in to talk with me that was not from Essex Partnership. I still did not find anything out. It was just a cover up all the way through.

My own mental health was being affected and I ended up on medication. I had to make the decision to move back up north as I felt I was never going to get the answers I needed.

Marion was a beautiful person inside and out. All she wanted was to be with her children and be happy and well.

There's a chapel in the cemetery where she is buried and, after a death, they put a photo of the person that has died on the wall. Not long after Marion died, my sister died and the chapel staff told one of their volunteers to put the photo of my sister next to her niece (Marion). When the volunteer did, she recognised Marion. I later found out both the volunteer and Marion had been inpatients at the same time in The Lakes and became friends. The volunteer and her mum have been good friends with me since Marion died and they now clean Marion's grave for me.

I have a letter from another patient detailing their experiences and I hope the Inquiry will consider this at a later phase of evidence.

Marion's sister Gemma has written a small piece that she wishes me to read out on her behalf:

*My sister Marion was a very maternal, kind loving person who even loved looking after me when she was a teenager and taking me out for days. She had the biggest smile and loudest laugh and she loved to laugh even through her struggles I always felt so loved by Marion. She had her struggles but that didn't take away what a great mum she was and what a caring person she was. I love her very much and I always will.
Love her little sister Gemma xxx*

I would like to read out the last Christmas card that I received from my daughter. In it, she said:

*Dear mum,
Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year,
I love you with all my heart and never intentionally mean to let you down or seem like I don't appreciate all your help and support, because I do. It's just hard at times.
Next year is a new year and I'm going to try my hardest to fight off whatever comes my way, hopefully, 2013 will be a better year.
I love you and miss you and I couldn't be more prouder of you.
Lots of love from Marion xx*