

Young lives, BIG stories contest

Melanie

I sit at my dining room table looking out at the morning fog in Hawaii. For now, everything is silent. The birds are not making a ruckus and there is no traffic going by. That is, until the Reveille bugle rings through the silence, raising the flag as it calls. Soldiers will stand abrupt when it sounds, moving their eyes toward the flag and saluting. It is still too early for me to be outside but I still listen and watch. It has been this way for as long as I can remember. I have always been a military child.

Being a military child, I have had to deal with struggles and pressures from an early age but I have also had great cultural experiences and joy. The moving around, the deployments, the pressure of making sure not to lose my military ID. It has all shaped me to be who I am today. Being in the military is rough though, even when I am not the actual one in the military. Like my dad I am serving every day through thick and thin. That is what it means to be a military child. We must always serve no matter what it may be and we have to be resilient through it.

When you look up the definition of resiliency online it says that it is “the capacity to recover quickly from difficulty”. Whenever I think of resiliency and its definition, I automatically think of the little springs on doors that I would play with as a child. Pulling it back before releasing it and watching it vibrate back and forth before stopping. Military children and our struggles with deployments are like those springs. We are pulled back until the near breaking point with upcoming deployments and the struggle of preparing ourselves. The vibration of the spring when it is let go are the moments during and after the deployments. The ups and downs of not being able to see our parent and then when we are finally able to see them again, it is a struggle adjusting to them being around. Then comes the stillness. That small moment when we are used to our parent being around again and everything is ok. Then we just wait for the little kid to pull us back again with another deployment.

Unlike deployments, moving around has always been fun and exciting instead of full of grief for me. I am homeschooled, so there has never been a struggle of changing schools and leaving my friends behind, though I have had several friends. Each movement is just an upcoming adventure waiting for me to experience. Our last duty

station was in Germany and from living there I had the best experiences of my life. Skiing the Alps, eating the amazing food, fulfilling my dream of going to Paris, and just everything in general. After Germany we moved halfway across the world to Hawaii and if that is not an amazing opportunity then I do not know what is. I have already done and seen so many things and experienced so many different cultures in 16 years than most people see and do in a lifetime. From moving around so much I think that military children like me have a special appreciation and love for cultural diversity and we have a global knowledge that you will not find often in civilian children.

I lay on the living room chair listening to the quietness of our house and the bustle of late-night traffic outside. The Retreat bugle call has already played and the soldiers have already saluted towards the flag while it was being lowered. In the morning, the Reveille bugle will play again and it will be another day for the military. It has been this way for as long as I can remember. I have always been a military child and proud of it.