

# Young Lives, BIG Stories Contest

by Kristen P

When I consider what it means to be a military child, one word jumps to mind: resilience. Over the past eighteen years as an Army child, I have learned to be resilient through many circumstances. Saying goodbye to my dad when he is sent off across the world; uprooting and transplanting to a new duty station every few years; doing schoolwork in empty houses, hotel rooms, vehicles, a cramped travel trailer – these are just a few of the unique challenges I have faced as a military child. While it would be easy to buckle under the weight of all of that physical and emotional stress, adopting a resilient mindset makes it possible to instead mature and grow stronger through adversity.

For my family, this resilience has translated to close relationships with each other. Moving season, in spite of its definite difficulties, is the optimal opportunity for us to enjoy more family time and maintain our special bond. One of my favorite memories is the time the six of us piled into the truck and drove nearly four thousand miles from Oklahoma to our next duty station, Fort Wainwright, in the center of Alaska. Though that road trip stemmed from a challenging event— moving from my favorite duty station to the icy, unfamiliar “Last Frontier”— we resiliently turned that time into a life-shaping experience.

In addition to bringing me closer to my family, being a military child has taught me the beauty of change. For example, moving and leaving the familiarity of a home, church, and city can be immensely

stressful. However, I have come to appreciate that chance to start fresh, meet new people, explore another location, experience new activities, and enjoy the sense of adventure that always accompanies a move. Change is an integral part of military life; so although change can be daunting, I try to approach it with the right attitude and value its benefits.

Having resilience and being able to efficiently adapt to change are excellent life skills to have; but what is the source of these abilities? For me, these values and everything else about being a military child ties back to God. After all, the very reason my dad joined the Army, and thus why I am a military child, is that he desires to uphold and defend the freedoms that God granted the United States. The resilience I employ to thrive while living the military life comes from God. I trust in Him to provide for and protect me and my family, to comfort me in times of fear or loneliness, and to be my Rock in this chaotic and uncertain world. God's love sustains me through all of life's struggles, including those that accompany my role as a military child. When God laid out His plans for me, He knew I would love the adventures, challenges, and opportunities the Army life affords; and I am incredibly thankful that He made me a military child.