

Young Lives, Big Stories

My name is Savanna and I am 10 years old and even though I am only 10, I am able to say that I have been able to live on two continents and I have lived in two States and I have lifelong friends in all of these places. I can also say that my dad is a hero and I am very proud of him. Being a military child has been one of adventure, education, pride and emotion. All these experiences bottled up together, make me who I am. I could choose to focus on all the tough things that come along with being a military child such as moving every 2 to 3 years, having to make new friends every 2 to 3 years, having to get used to a new place and new surroundings and having to pack and unpack my room every 2 to 3 years but I chose to turn these things into positives. An example of this is that I always struggle to answer the question where are you from but I cannot imagine life outside of being a military child. Actually my mom and dad put a sign up at the entrance of our doorway that says, "Home is where the Army sends us" and that sign helps me to adjust every time we have to move.

I have had an adventurous 10 years because I have been able to live in countries I probably would have never been able to, had my dad not been in the military. I have been able to live in the Netherlands and Germany and I have been able to visit many other European countries. I have been to France to see the Eiffel tower, Greece to see the great beaches and Italy to ride on the Gondolas. Being a military child has provided opportunities many could only dream about and this is my reality and I am very appreciative for the experiences and will treasure them for the rest of my life.

Being a military child has been very educational as well. I have learned about many different cultures and have friends from many different backgrounds. I have learned how to speak two languages other than English. It helped me to realize that military kids no matter the language all experience the same feelings and have similar stories to share.

Being a military child, I also have a lot of pride; pride in my country the USA and pride in what my dad does. I have been able to learn about the Army and what my dad does and how the soldiers protect our country. When we go to the movies and we have to stand for the National Anthem I feel so much pride knowing my dad and many of the people in the room do this for a living.

There are also many emotions that go along with being a military child. You always fear that your parent could go to war and something could happen to them. One emotion I never expected to go through at the age of 10 was being close to a terror attack. My family and I were flying back to Brussels on the day of a terror attack at the airport. We lost my best friend's mom in that attack and that was very tough to go through. I still feel sad for my friend and would have never imagined this happening but being a military child makes me strong. I also get many emotions when we have to move: suppose I do not make new friends, suppose we cannot find a nice house, suppose I do not like my new teacher. My parents have taught me that these emotions are normal and they comfort me by saying we are in this together.

I am sure non-military children could not imagine life as a military child but strangely enough, I cannot imagine life as a non-military child. This is all I know and I hope my dad continues to be in the Army so I can continue this journey. I also have a four-year-old brother and I want him to also experience the life I have known for 10 years. Since I am the oldest, I will help him to adjust as he goes through all these stages as we continue to move, make new friends, learn new cultures and exist in this wonderful world of being a military child.

Savanna