

ESSAY PAGE

Due to the United States Army and my father's commitment and service to this country, I have been fortunate enough to have lived in a multitude of unique places and hold many experiences and memories that others only dream of obtaining.

Being born on a military base in Berlin enabled me to lead a life surrounded everyday by two cultures. I associated with Germans and belonged to the group of elite military members and dependents who were stationed there. I consider these men, women, and children to be "elite" because of their commitment and servitude in a foreign country. I grew up knowing two languages and experiencing more historical moments (i.e. the fall of the Berlin Wall) than most people will ever experience.

Moving to Fort Drum, New York became a new development for me. I had to switch from innocent play with friends in Germany to watching our soldiers get deployed to Bosnia and other unknown places. I went from a school full of children from different nationalities to a school that was the epitome of "rural life", with a military flair. I watched my mom do her best to put on a brave face while my dad missed our birthdays, new dogs, school and community awards, and most importantly us growing up. All-in-all, I experienced feelings, emotions, and actions that only a true military brat would understand- full of compassion, understanding, patriotism, and most importantly honor for our parents and families.

Upon arriving in Colorado, I was a full-fledged military dependent. I thus had to learn how to incorporate this into my encounters and endeavors with people who could not distinguish the army from the navy; who missed their parents after a business trip lasting two nights; and who had been in the same school with the same peers all of their lives. This was by far the most challenging experience for me. Luckily, due to the times of making new friends on military bases and facing every challenge as a fortunate opportunity (just as the soldiers do), I was able to excel during my time in Colorado, in Germany once again, and back to Colorado.

Currently my dad is stationed in Singapore. It is hard to articulate to people who are not associated with the military that he is gone for two years, not deployed, but serving his country. I can bond with military brats and other dependents who understand that although I do not see or talk to him every day, we have a close relationship and honor and respect for each other.

I can truly say that in such a small amount of years, I have led a life that is insurmountable to those that are not as privileged to associate with the military on a daily basis. Of all my dad has done for me, I am most thankful for his selfless commitment to the military, ensuring that I live a life worth envying and serving a country worth every minute of defending.