

Bloom Where You're Planted.....

I read somewhere that the official military brat flower was the dandelion. Why a dandelion I asked? The plant puts down roots almost anywhere. It is almost impossible to get rid off. An unpretentious plant, yet good looking (except for the habit of being where you least expect it.) It's a survivor in a broad range of climates.

Experts say that military children are well-rounded, culturally aware and tolerant, and extremely resilient. But, that doesn't happen by accident. Behind every military child are military parents working hard to enhance the lifestyle that is handed to our military brats—even before they can appreciate it.

I used to worry a lot about our daughter being a “military brat.” What about her changing schools, making new friends, and ever finding some place to call “home”? Would she be a well adjusted adult? What if something happens to her Daddy? How will I be able to raise this family alone? What about roots, were we intentionally not giving her any roots? I could go on and on but military spouses know what worries I am talking about.

I started to think about my life before the military and my life now, and related it to my daughter's. There are so many things she'll never know she “could have not had.” For instance, growing up my family couldn't afford a lot of the things that the military allows my husband and me to give to our daughter. Not necessary toys and candy or vacations, things like dental insurance, and health insurance. Sure, navigation of the system is a pain in the butt, but she has health insurance. She never has to worry her Daddy will lose his job, or there won't be food on the table, or a roof over her head.

Then I think about what makes me who I am today. I think the best thing I ever did was get out of the town I grew up in to go and see something different. I was able to do that because of the military. Those friends are still there and I love them to pieces. I can honestly say that because of the military I have so many friends all over the world now. My daughter will probably live completely opposite finding friends everywhere and longing for a place to stay put. Fortunately for her it's a lot cheaper and easier to stay put than it would be to try to travel all cool places we'll have gotten to visit in her lifetime.

So when I really started to think about it, I saw the military more as a benefit to her than a disservice we were doing for her. I mean what kids do you know who don't know black from white and all play as one big family, have such pride in community, and get to relocate all over the world? Sure, I worry about deployment and separation but kids are resilient and she is learning how families and friends can stay connected and love each other despite their locations. Just like that dandelion military children really do live the motto “bloom where you are planted.”