

Friends Are Our Chosen Family

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Have you ever sat and wondered to yourself just what it is that compels most military families to hold themselves to a higher "social" standard? The social standard I'm talking about is the one where "meet thy neighbor" and "share a common bond" is just understood concepts.

If you're not in a military town or on a military installation this can be a "more than frustrating" experience. There is something about living in our world that just makes this common place to us, but to civilians it's not as common of an occurrence.

Take a look around you. How did you meet your best friend? Your neighbors? Chances are it was at a military function, on your post or installation, through a friend of a friend, or even from taking them cookies, or simply stopping in to say "hi, welcome to the neighborhood". The difference is that we as military families are almost *programmed* to do this.

In a non-military town (one not near an installation) you might not see flags flying daily or a parade on Memorial Day. You might not see children of every ethnic background playing as if they never even invented the concept of different. People don't have "coffee" or "hail and farewells" or "readiness meetings". Sure, we have our issues, but what an amazing thing to celebrate.

I was given a quote this week by my new friend Susan, "Friends are your chosen family". This is when I started to really think about the way that military families socialize differently.

It's true, friends *are* our chosen family. I can make a bet that most of your friends are your *military* friends. Mine are. I choose them, they choose me. Somehow in this odd and challenging lifestyle, we bond as if we were always together, like family.

They are different. They are chosen. They came from cookies, a simple hello, an FRG meeting, or maybe even by chance, but they are family all the same.