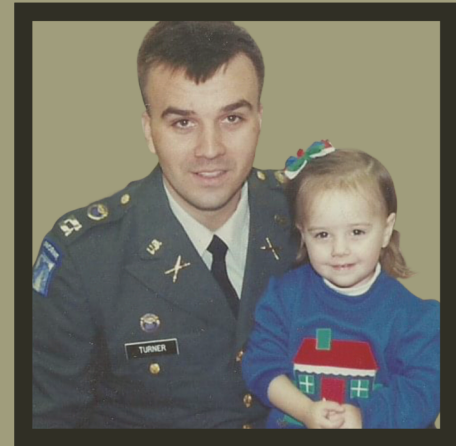
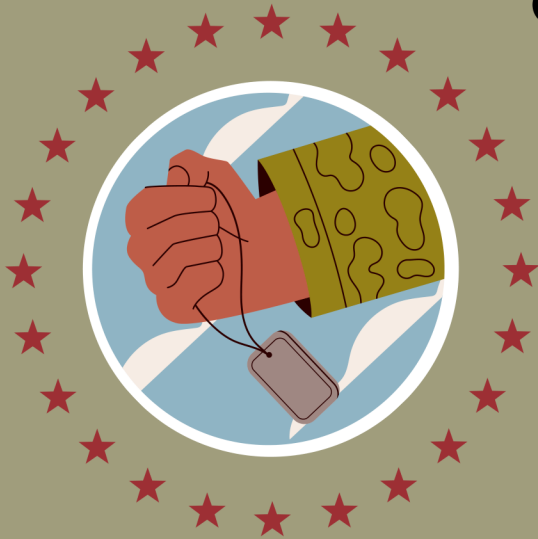


Silent Ranks



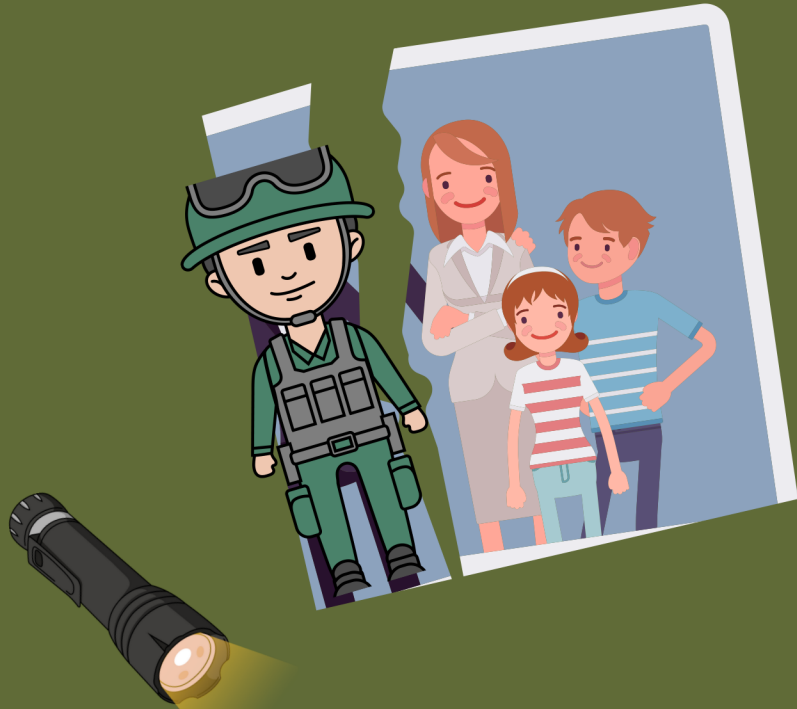
By: Alli Cly Turner

He gave me a set of dog tags,
and mine were just like his.



I remember wearing them so proud!

The recollection of those years is profoundly different,
through the lens of adult eyes.



Evoking deep compassion for the big feelings I juggled each day.

All those years of service, the time, congruent with my age.



Stitched together like those BDU's.



Camouflaged back then,

now in black & white
on this page.

I didn't receive actual awards
and recognition,

no tangible service
medals or ranks.



The
badges
were
invisible,



but they carried such
heavy weight.

The decorations stacked on my left shoulder,

are the symbols of acquired attributes.



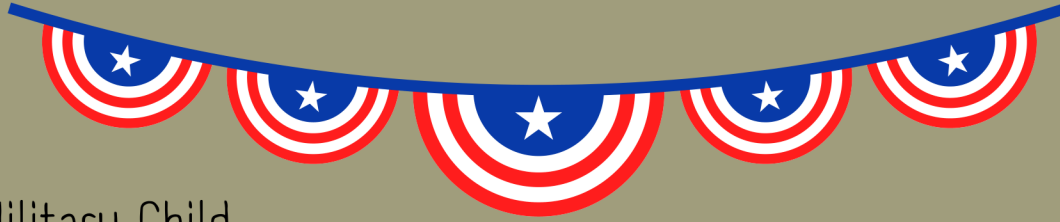
I never once got asked about them... civilian minds and hearts never knew.

Isolating,
confusing,
and very
difficult for
any child
to navigate
through.



Absence,
war,
and anxiety-
ever present
in my worldview.





I am a Military Child,
and these are some of my silent ranks.



A decoration
for
perseverance,
for being
steadfast in
times of
uncertainty.

& this one I was given for adaptability,
because in Military Culture-
you move wherever need be.



An award for sacrifice and
this one for courage-

I lost time with my parent,
but kept a hopeful face.

Holidays, Ball Games, Birthdays, and School Programs...

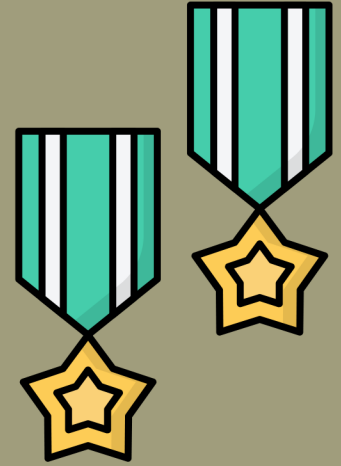
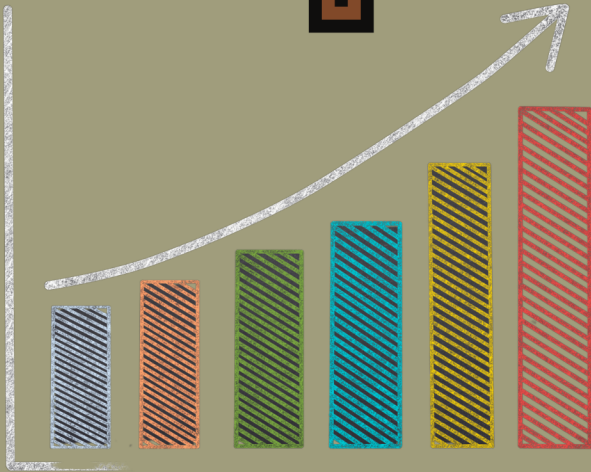


sweet memories,
you can't get back, or replace..

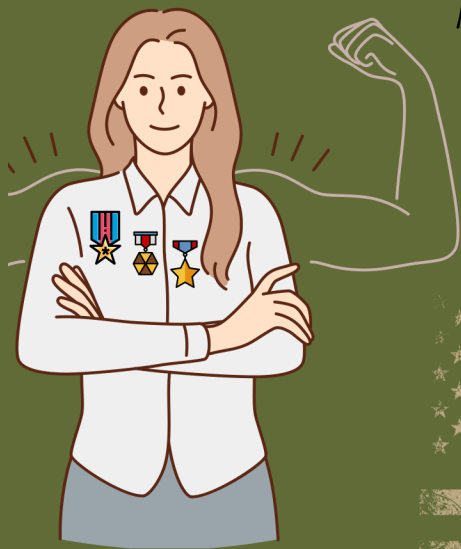
This achievement was for my faith,



because it grew
with each passing year.



These for each
deployment, as a
distinction of my
unwavering support.



A lapel earned for strength,
because it's one of my best
character traits.



This badge I accepted for being fearless, even though I didn't feel that way
back then.

This one, I received for patience-



For counting down the days until Dad came home again.



This rank I was given for knowing the cost of Freedom, and understanding that it was never really free.

It was paid in full by
Soldiers, their Families,
& Military Kids... like me.

Like the Flag of our Great Nation,

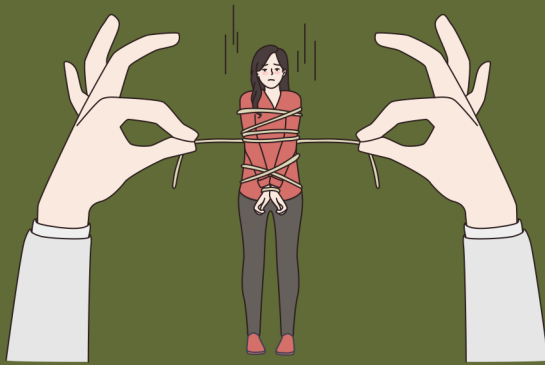


Standing
Tall,
against
harsh wind.

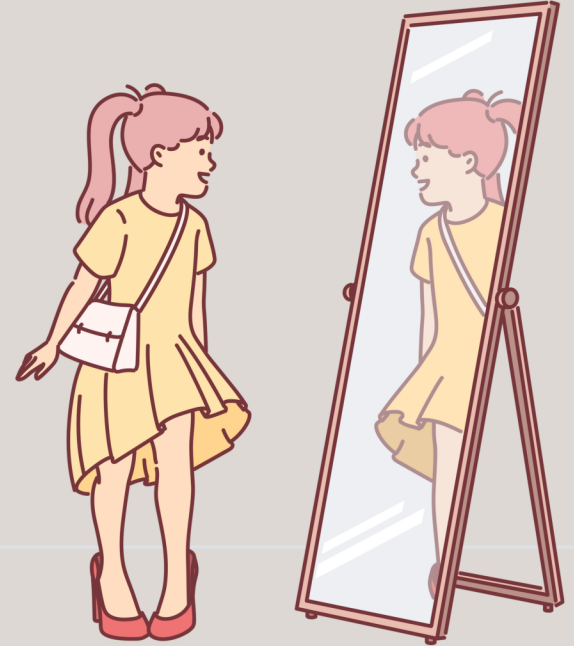
Feeling isolated amongst
peers,
that just never took the
time to try to
understand.



Proud, but tattered
by the
circumstances at
hand.



Maturing fast with extra worries,
replaying all the worst case scenarios in
my head.



Courage and selflessness,

were traits that I admired, and tried
my best to emulate.



This big medal here...

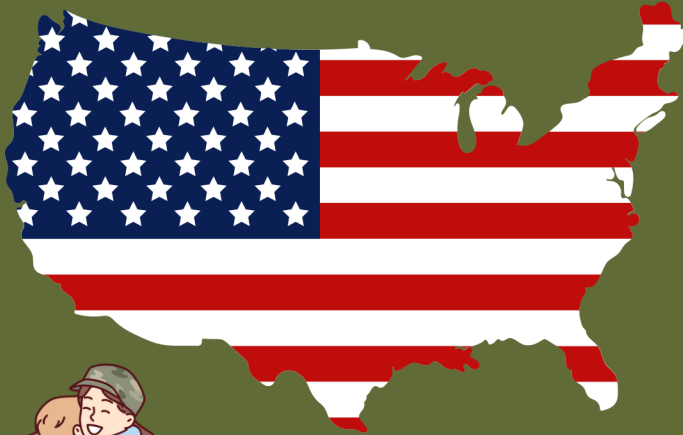


is the one I earned for being a soldier's daughter.

The honor that instilled all
of these 'ranks'.



We rarely talk about our struggles as
Military-Connected Youth,



because those things are so trivial in comparison
to the job they were enlisted to do.

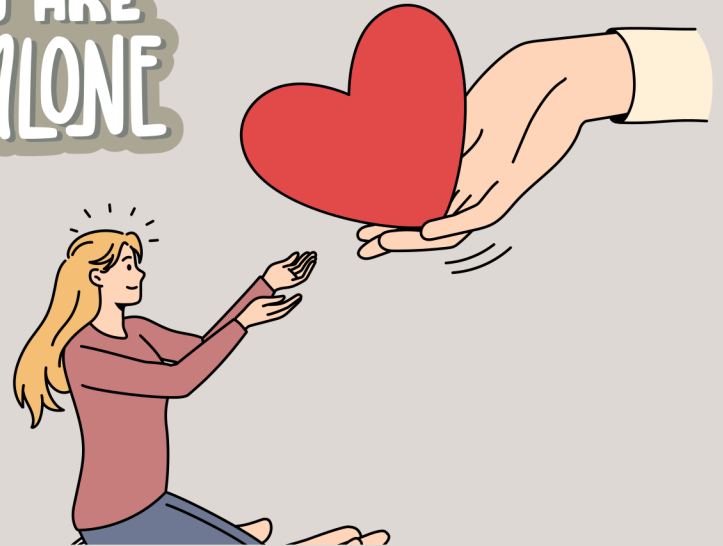
But now, I
think it's safe
to say,



“It would have been
comforting to have
had more
understanding &
extra support along
the way.”



YOU ARE
NOT ALONE



So, when you
commend a
Service Member,

PLEASE thank
their children,
too.

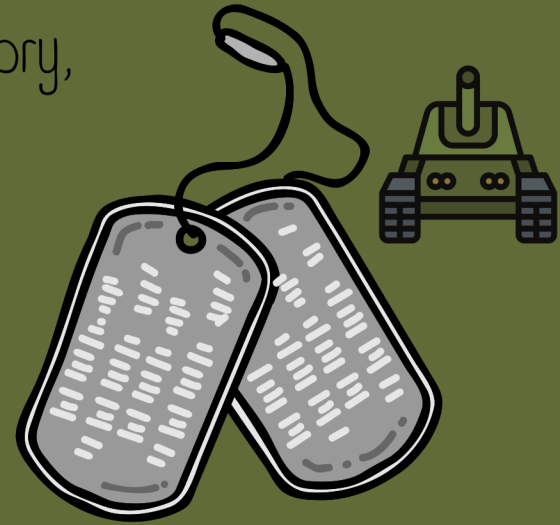


Our Flag is often at
half mast, in
remembrance of the
time that was stripped
from our youth.





We aren't the heroes in this story,
we didn't wear
our Country's uniform,
shoot artillery,
or even have to lace up
combat boots;



but silently-

wearing my
matching dog tags,



“I SERVED TOO.”



No, I never talked about the
invisible medals on my
imaginary dress blues.

I never knew how many I acquired—



but now, I do.

Silent Ranks

Military Children are a Powerful Force, and oftentimes “The Why” behind a soldier’s answer to the call of duty.

Being Military-connected, I have attended many military events, and Veteran’s Day Programs in Support of my Dad’s service.

I now get to attend Purple Star Award Programs dedicated to the young people who walk the same path I walked and celebrate their strengths. I urge you to give voice to the character, experience, and contribution that Military kids have exhibited by overcoming unique challenges, adapting to constant change, and navigating intense uncertainty. It is crucial that we recognize, thank, and support their benevolence.

*If you’d like more information or to order additional books
contact aturner@lifeskills.com.*

