



Monthly newsletter of the Portsmouth Area Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America, serving Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Smithfield and Franklin, Virginia, since 1983. Dinner meetings are held the Second Thursday of each month except July and August.

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## Month of the Military Child (MOMC)



Great-grandfather with his third generation military child, Sven, enjoying espresso and gelato while visiting Giarre in Sicily.

This is a special report from your PACMOAA photojournalist embedded with a military family unit in Sigonella, Italy. It is a fortunate assignment as I have three great-grandchildren in the unit. Timing was also fortuitous as April is the Month of the Military Child, thus this special report. It would not have been possible without the assistance of a *Salute* proof reader, who accompanied me on this assignment. She is a recently retired New Parent Support Home Visiting Nurse. Not many people know that young military families often qualify for WIC and some even qualify for food stamps. Usually being away from their homes and families, they need all the support they can get. This is one of the reasons the New Parent Support Program was initiated in 1991 to support young military families with home visits, education and helping them access resources.

This report is primarily internet information,

highly edited for brevity, with links for those who would like to learn more.

### What is MOMC?

From the US ARMY MWR

From deployments to frequent moves, military children face unique challenges that most youth their age do not experience. In an effort to recognize and applaud the courage of military children, the Department of Defense in 1986 deemed April as Month of the Military Child.

The Month of the Military Child observance is an opportunity to thank children for their support to their military Family and recognize the importance of their role in strengthening the military Family. MOMC gives leaders a chance to reaffirm their commitment to the Total Army Strong initiative which ensures excellence in schools, childcare and youth services and a strong supportive environment and quality of life programming in which children can thrive.

### What is the Army doing?

This year's theme, Their Lives, Their Stories, captures the Army's story through the eyes of military children. Throughout the month of April, U.S. Army organizations worldwide will provide a variety of fun and exciting events to officially recognize our military children.

Special events for MOMC 2015 include the Young Lives, BIG Stories contest, where military children share their experiences and win prizes, and Operation Megaphone, a world-wide lock-in for military teens on April 24-25, 2015.

MOMC activities differ across all Army garrisons, however, the goal remains the same: to

celebrate the resilient children and their role in the military Family.

**What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?**

The needs of our Soldiers and their Families will evolve in the future. The Army is committed to refining childcare and youth programs and services to meet these changing needs. Effective programming and services for our children will result in long-term Soldier and Family readiness and resiliency.

from [Army One Source](#)

“Department of Defense website for official Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP) program information, policy and guidance designed to help troops and their families, leaders, and service providers.”

Guide for Helping Children and Youth Cope with Separation (PDF) Created for parents, relatives, teachers, service members, and community members. Includes the effects of separation on children and youth ages 7–18..... April is Month of the Military Child! This special celebration is a legacy of former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger – established to underscore the important role children play in the Armed Forces community. Army Garrisons, State Youth Program Coordinators, Army Reserve CYS Services Coordinators, and Operation: Military Kids (OMK) State Teams plan numerous events ranging from picnics and parades to recreational fairs and fun festivals – all to recognize and applaud Families and their children for the daily sacrifices for they make in supporting America’s Army.

NOW CLICK THIS! A [SPECIAL MESSAGE](#) from the First Lady and Dr. Jill Biden talking about the important role military children play in the armed forces community!



YOUNG MILITARY FAMILY GREET'S NEWEST ADDITION, FJOLA.



### The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (resources)

<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/public-awareness/month-military-child>

April is the Month of the Military Child. This awareness month was established to underscore the important role children play in the Armed Forces community. There are approximately 2 million military children, ranging in ages from newborn to 18 years old; 1.3 million military children are school-aged. Care of military children sustains our fighting force, and strengthens the health, security, and safety of our nation's families and communities. The Network offers special thanks to all the NCTSN sites that provide care and support for our military children and families.....

#### Military Children and Families

Helping Military Children Grieve: Tip Sheet for Educators (2014). Fact sheet offers information on how children dealing with trauma and grief responses may feel and how you can help them. Helping Military Children with Traumatic Grief Tips for Parents (2014). This resource offers information on how children dealing with trauma and grief responses may feel and how you can help them.

**Military Children and Families:** Programs and Projects Programs and projects in support of military children and families that work with the NCTSN to conduct research on, develop resources for, and provide assistance to military families.

Military and Veteran Families and Children. The NCTSN Military and Veteran Families Program proudly announces the recently updated Military and Veteran Families and Children webpage. On this website, you can access products and resources as well as archived NCTSN Learning Center webinars and the Military Families Knowledge Bank.

**Traumatic Grief in Military Children:** Culturally competent materials for educating families, medical professionals, and school personnel about how to better serve military children who are experiencing traumatic grief; additional resources for families, educa-

tors, and service providers.

Working Effectively with Military Families: 10 Key Concepts All Providers Should Know. ...This brief tip sheet outlines the top ten things to keep in mind when working with military families and, for each key concept, includes links to additional information.

#### Military and Veteran Families Learning Community

In 2008 the NCTSN launched the Military Families Learning Community Master Speaker Series and Podcasts as a course in the NCTSN Learning Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma. The podcast series, "Essentials for Those Who Care for Military Children and Families," features 20-minute presentations by top military experts discussing army, navy, air force, and marine corps



Sven presenting his mameluke. Though not inscribed with O'Bannon, the spirit lies in his head and his Heart.

cultures; mental health services available for active duty, veteran, National Guard and Reserve personnel; the impact of deployment on military children and families; becoming a TRICARE provider; [Military One Source](#); and building community capacity to serve military families. The Speaker Series offers longer webinars on additional topics. All Learning Center presentations are free.

#### Featured Resources in Celebration of the Month of the Military Child

Courage to Care to Talk... About War Injuries. A campaign to foster communication around

the injuries of war that debuted during April 2011's Month of the Military Child. Provides military treatment sites with free resources in English and Spanish including brochures, posters, tabletops, and a dedicated website. Developed by the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress and its Child and Family Program, the campaign connects families to providers in hospitals who can answer their questions, talk with them about their children, refer them to appropriate resources, and address other concerns related to their loved one's injury.

### **Military Kids Connect (MKC)**

The MKC website uses innovative ways to help military youth cope with the unique strains of military life. In addition to disruptions from parents deploying to assignments away from home, military children are affected by moving frequently, changing schools and making new friends. They also have to live with readjustment issues when a parent returns from deployments. These issues may include posttraumatic stress and physical disabilities. Features include: Military culture videos and lesson plans for teachers, school counselors, and educators to better understand the differences between military and civilian youth.

Graphic novels and mini-documentaries by military kids sharing their experiences.

New modules for children and parents on handling grief, loss, and physical injury.

MilitaryKidsConnect.org was created by the Defense Department's National Center for Telehealth and Technology, known as T2.

[Your embedded journalist would like to insert some additional items at this point. I have always been a proponent of those who also serve: the spouses and children. Being a military child, as are my children, I only began to really understand those feelings and difficulties I and my children experienced after preparing this special edition. Take a look at my old video [Dad at Work](#), then view a new video [Children of the Deployed](#) from University of Southern California that was filmed, edited and produced by the Command Media Corporation. Be

sure to read the credits at the end. A quick look at a Sigonella [school bus](#).]

### **Operation Purple Camps®**

A free week-long summer camp program offering military kids a place to have fun and make friends, reminding them that they are our nation's youngest heroes. The goal is to "empower military children and their families to develop and maintain healthy and connected relationships." Created by the National Military Family Association in 2004, the camps are joint (or "purple")—open to children and families of all active duty, National Guard, and Reserve service members of all branches. Now serving 45,000 military children and teens, the program also includes four-day family retreats in National Parks, and family camps for "active duty or medically retired service members who were wounded or experienced emotional trauma or illness related to their service in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom." Camp locations, dates, and contact information will be available when registration opens on March.

### **When Families Grieve**

Sesame Workshop program developed to help children heal after the death of a parent. Includes two outreach kits (one for military families and one for the general public), available in English and Spanish. The program is part of the workshop's award-winning Talk, Listen, Connect initiative, which provides resources and emotional support to military families with young children coping with the challenging transitions in their lives including deployments and combat-related injury.

### **National Center for Children in Poverty**

Trauma Faced by Children of Military Families... What Every Policymaker Should Know; presents the multiple stressors that children of active duty military personnel, National Guard, and Reservists often experience during their parents' multiple deployments. Includes 2010 statistics on the 1.76 million children and youth in military families. Topics are: Impact

of Deployments on Children's Mental Health including mental health, trauma, and related problems; Role of Employment Status on Child Outcomes; Resilience and Importance of Support Systems; Inadequacy of Military and Civilian Mental Health Systems for Addressing the Problems Faced by Children and Families of Military Personnel; and Effective Public Policies Can Improve Mental Health Outcomes for Children of Military Families.



### EVERYONE IS ALL IN

This drink container handed out to children visiting the Navy Federal Credit Union demonstrates the all in PURPLE UP attitude at Sigonella. Remember April 15 is PURPLE UP DAY.

### National Military Family Association

An organization that is comprised of and works on behalf of military to "empower husbands, wives and children to understand and access their benefits."

10 Things Military Teens Want You to Know (2008). Tips developed from a four-year project that surveyed military children about their experiences while attending Operation Purple® camps, a national summer camp program for children of service members. Designed to help the people who are in the lives of military teens in managing the stressors and affirming the positive aspects of military life; explains some points shared by the campers; includes resources to incorporate into readers' own activities, programs, and day-to-day interactions with the military teens in their life.

**Finding Common Ground:** A Toolkit for Communities Supporting Military Families (2011) Offers "easily-achievable action items and useful resources to guide anyone who wants to support military families, but doesn't know where to start."

### Our Military Kids

Provides substantial support through grants to the children of National Guard and Military Reserve personnel currently deployed overseas and to the children of Wounded Warriors in all branches.

### Zero to Three

Honoring Our Babies & Toddlers: Supporting Young Children Affected by a Military Parent's Deployment, Injury or Death: A Guide For Caring Professionals (2009) (PDF) A three-part guide: (1) Working With Military Families in a Wartime Environment; (2) Situations That Families and Their Babies and Toddlers May Be Experiencing; and (3) Creating Respectful, Responsive Relationships With Families / Supporting Babies and Toddlers, which explores five key relationship-building strategies.

### WHAT MINNESOTA IS DOING "beyond the yellow ribbon.org"

#### Recognizing Military-Connected Youth

There are several programs in place to give our nation's "Hidden Heroes" the recognition they deserve. These annual programs are for military-connected youth of all ages and provides them an opportunity to be appreciated for their service. These programs all lead up to April, which is annually recognized as the Month of the Military Child .... The MOMC recognizes military children and youth for the sacrifices they make so their parents can serve our Nation. In addition, it reinforces to military children and youth that they play an integral role in supporting their Service member.

#### Ways We Recognize Youth During MOMC:

##### Enter Senator Franken's Poetry Contest

Encourage your child to write a poem about being a military child! Enter the Poetry Contest. Senator Franken is hosting his 4th Annual Poetry contest in April. ...

##### Receive a Letter From Governor Dayton

Sign up for a letter from Governor Dayton! Youth Programs partnered with MDVA, Amer-



## STATE of MINNESOTA

# Proclamation

- WHEREAS: Thousands of brave Minnesotans have demonstrated courage and a commitment to freedom by serving in the Armed Forces of the United States of America in active duty posts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world; and
- WHEREAS: More than 40 percent of military personnel have children who are left behind during deployments; and
- WHEREAS: More than 23,000 children in Minnesota have at least one parent currently serving in active military duty; and
- WHEREAS: It is fitting that we recognize and honor their sacrifices, celebrate their spirit, and let our men and women in uniform know that while they are taking care of us, we are taking care of their children; and
- WHEREAS: When parents serve in the military, their children serve too. By recognizing the Month of the Military Child, we pay tribute to military children for their commitment, sacrifice, and their unconditional support for our troops.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARK DAYTON, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim the month of April 2014, as:

## MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

in the state of Minnesota.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the state of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this 20<sup>th</sup> day of March.

  
GOVERNOR





SECRETARY OF STATE

ican Legion, and the Governor's office to create a site for parents to sign their child up to receive a **personalized letter from the Governor** thanking those youth for their sacrifice. Go to [www.MinnesotaVeteran.org](http://www.MinnesotaVeteran.org) to request a letter. Letters may be requested from April 1-30, 2015.

### Purple Up! Day

Wear purple on April 15th! Purple Up is another way the community and schools can show support during April. Communities and schools are encouraged to wear purple on April 15 to show their support. Take a picture in purple and have it posted on our FaceBook page in celebration of Month of the Military Child. Tag it using #MilKids.

### Bring the Proclamation to School

Have your child take a copy of the Governor's Proclamation to school to share in class. Governor Dayton and staff are committed to recognizing Military connected youth and drafted a proclamation for Month of the Military Child. (Virginia has a similar proclamation)

In closing I would like to reassure you that our military children are resilient, resourceful and strong despite (or because of) the extra challenges they face. I submit that they represent many of our strongest future leaders. To make my case, we have to look no further than Suffolk, VA as I present to you again Caleb Parsons. Cadet Colonel Caleb Parsons first appeared in our 2014 issue of *The Salute express*. Go to **page two** of this [link](#) and watch the PACMOAA home movie video. I now present Caleb in a more professional presentation by [WTKR](#) aired on 15 April 2015. Please tolerate the 15 second advertisement, as trying to by-pass it can cause the target video to change.

Remember these kids, the next time you are requested by MOAA to respond to proposed legislation. It is not always about us. Any actions that deprive the Active Duty, Guard and Reserve military, deprive these children.

## THAT'S A WRAP FROM SICILY



Family mini-van with room for all three & cargo space below.



The oldest son prefers to run and not ride standing room only



Four generations of military women.



Kids mesmerized by Armed Forces Network cartoons