



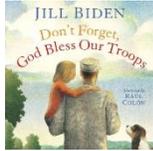
BOOKS FOR MILITARY CHILDREN



Contents

Primary Picture Books (Ages 2-7)	1
Middle Grades (Ages 8-12)	11
Teen Books (Ages 10-15)	17

Primary Picture Books (Ages 2-7)

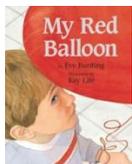


Biden, Jill. (2012) Illustrated by Raul Colon *Don't Forget, God Bless Our Troops* Simon & Schuster / Paula Wiseman Books

ISBN-10: 144245735X

ISBN-13: 978-1442457355

Natalie's father has to go away and Natalie is sad. Her mother tells her that "Soldiers have to do hard things sometimes." The year of her father's absence passes with milestones like Thanksgiving and Christmas. *Be brave Natalie* is written at the bottom of each page's text indicating Natalie's comforting words to herself as she misses her father every day. Natalie does manage to be brave and is even able to comfort her little brother when he is upset. Finally her father returns and "Natalie races to her father and hugs him around the legs". The soft tones of the illustrations complement the comforting story. Based on the story of Jill Biden's own grandchildren. Includes information for adults about the military community and how to reach out and help them.



Bunting, Eve. (2005) Illustrated by Kay Life *My Red Balloon* Boyds Mills Press.

ISBN: 1590782631

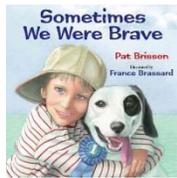
Bobby's father is coming home off his ship where he has been "Making sure our country stays safe". Bobby and his mother are so excited to be meeting him that they're all dressed up, right down to his new Spiderman underpants. But the best thing they have for his father is a red, heart shaped balloon with "Welcome Home" written on it. Bobby is worried that his father won't know him because he has been away so long, and Bobby has grown so much, so the balloon is his identification. Bobby carries the balloon carefully as they get ready, wait on the dock and as they watch the ship come in. But disaster looks inevitable when the balloon comes loose, until it floats up right among the sailors on the ship. A descriptive and reassuring story.



Brown, Margaret Wise. (2010) Illustrated by Steven Savage. *The Fathers are Coming Home*. Margaret K. McElderry.

ISBN: 978-0689833458

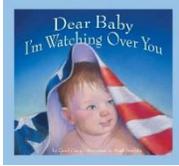
Margaret Wise Brown died in 1952, but this book came out in 2010. It is a warm story for the youngest listeners who want to hear about returning fathers. Most of the fathers who return are animals; from bugs to dogs, but it is tied together nicely for military children, especially connected to the Navy, by the ship illustrated on the first page and the sailor father at the end who "comes home from the sea. Home to his little boy."



Brisson, Pat. (2010) Illustrated by France Brassard *Sometimes We Were Brave* Boyds Mills Press.

ISBN: 978-1590785867

Jerome's mother is in the Navy and when she goes away to work on her big ship she tells him "Be brave, Jerome. I'll be back as soon as I can." Even though Jerome doesn't feel brave, his life still goes on with his father and his dog, Duffy. Sometimes they get surprises or treats, but sometimes they also have bad days or have accidents. When they have a pet show at his school Duffy the dog is so frightened that he hides behind Jerome's legs, but he manages to sit, walk and shake hands when he is asked. Jerome's teacher tells Jerome that, "Being brave means doing what you're supposed to do even though you're afraid." Illustrated with warm full-page paintings, *Sometimes We Were Brave* is an affirming book about getting through difficult times.



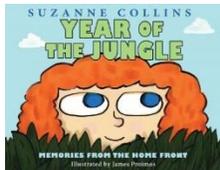
Casey, Carol. (2010) **Dear Baby I'm Watching Over You** Dear Baby Books. 2010

IN PRINT

ISBN: 978-0982097236

For my full review, see [Pied Piper Pics](#), the picture book review blog from the Williamsburg Regional Library.

An affecting story that ends in a promise that small military children can hold close, "I'm always, *always* watching over you."



Collins, Suzanne, (2013). *Year of the Jungle* Scholastic Press

IN PRINT

ISBN-10: 0545425166

ISBN-13: 978-0545425162

This autobiographical book by bestselling author of *The Hunger Games* came out on September 10, 2013. Suzy hears that her father "has to go to something called a war", leaving her confused. She also learns that he will be in a jungle. Suzy knows about jungles from cartoons so she pictures her father in a happy place among her favorite cartoon characters, but things change as she learns more about his situation. Parents and caregivers thinking of sharing this with very young military children should read it first themselves and decide if it is appropriate. It all comes out well in the end, but it does have some dark moments and pictures.

For a longer review I wrote for the Williamsburg Regional Library, see [Blogging for a Good Book](#)



Duble, Kathleen Benner. Illustrator: Marks, Alan (2003) *Pilot Mom*. Watertown, MA. Charlesbridge Publishing.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 1570915555

Jenny's mother is a tanker pilot in the Air Force and is about to leave for training for two weeks. Jenny is proud of her Mom, but also worried about the dangers she is in, so her mother has arranged to take Jenny and her friend K.C. to the air base to show them what Jenny's mother does. They start by helping Jenny's Mom fill up the pockets on her flight suit, and Jenny gets to add her lucky silver dollar. Then at the base they go inside a KC-135 and talk about how the refueling is done. At the end Jenny's father's arrival shows that the family unit will still be intact and strong despite Jenny's mother's absence. The watercolor and ink illustrations emphasize the sky and the majesty of flying but also capture the characters' range of emotions.

Recommended.



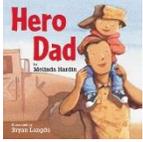
Ehrmantraut, Brenda, (2005). *Night Catch*. Bubble Gum Press. Jamestown. North Dakota.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0972983392

This warm book is written in the words of a soldier father talking to his son. The father is going away so as a connection he invents a game of pretending to send the star Polaris back and forth between him and his son. The concept of the time difference is introduced and both father and son are shown sleeping and awake; the father in the desert and the son in America. The endnote information about and diagram of the North Star add to the utility of the book. Military parents and children could use this book as a start for a "Night Catch" game of their own.

Recommended



Hardin, Melinda, (2010). Illustrated by Bryan Langdo. *Hero Dad*. Pinwheel Books: Marshall Cavendish

IN PRINT

ISBN-13: 978-0761457138

In this simply told story for younger children a small boy talks about his father, "My Dad is a superhero. he doesn't wear rocket-propelled boots - he wears Army boots." On other pages his super powers turn out to be related to his army life and gear. Active watercolor illustrations and simple text make this a great read-aloud for smaller military children.



Hardin, Melinda, (2013). Illustrated by Bryan Langdo. *Hero Mom*. Amazon Children's Publishing

IN PRINT

ISBN-13: 978-1477816455

This is the companion book to *Hero Dad* from 2010. Like *Hero Dad* it is a simple and short story with the children's mothers performing a variety of tasks in the military. "My mom doesn't have super-human speed, but she gets everything where it needs to go, just in time." Again active watercolor illustrations and simple text make this a great read-aloud for smaller military children, especially when used in tandem with *Hero Dad*.



Hopkinson, Deborah. (2013). *Knit Your Bit: A World War I Story*. Putnam's.

ISBN-10: 039925241X

ISBN-13: 978-0399252419

Mikey's Pop "has left to be a soldier" and Mikey wants to do something *big* to help. His mother and sister suggest knitting for the soldiers but Mikey doesn't want to do something so girlish until their teacher tells them about a Knitting Bee in Central Park. The boys in Mikey's class call themselves the Boys' Knitting Brigade and know that they will beat the Purl Girls. This book is based on true events during World War I including a knitting competition in Central Park in July of 1918. The endpapers include historical photographs of children knitting during World War I.

Recommended.



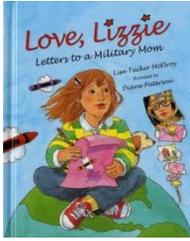
Maxwell, Shannon, (2010). *Our Daddy is Invincible!* 4th Division Press

ISBN-10: 1617510033

ISBN-13: 978-1617510038

Alexis and Eric think their father is Superman. He "sometimes goes on long trips for work" but nothing can hurt him, because he is invincible. Life changes when their father is injured, but he is still their daddy who greets them with hugs. The book shows several different families enjoying their time together despite the challenges of parents' various types of injuries.

Illustrated in a bright and active style by freelance artist Liza Biggers whose brother, Ethan, died of wounds he received in Iraq. Author Shannon Maxwell wrote this book after her husband was injured in Iraq and she co-founded the non-profit organization, [Hope for the Warriors](#).

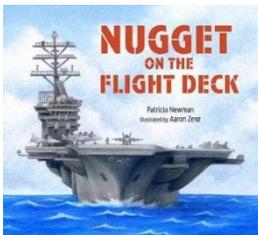


McElroy, Lisa Tucker *Love Lizzie: Letters to a Military Mom* Albert Whitman & Company
Morton Grove, IL

ISBN-10: 0807547778

ISBN-13: 978-0807547779

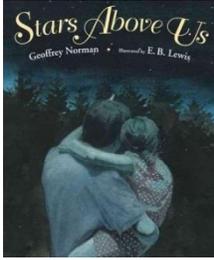
Love Lizzie: Letters to a Military Mom is exactly what the title promises - Lizzie's handwritten and illustrated letters to her mother fill up many of the half page spreads while other pages are filled with maps that Lizzie drew to send to her mother. They include her room, her neighborhood, the route of her soccer trip and more. And best of all are the letters and photos that Lizzie's mother sends back to her. The letters cover almost a year as they are dated from June to May and Lizzie asks wistfully, "How long does defending freedom take?" Includes advice for adults about helping children handle the separation of deployment.



Newman, Patricia. Illustrated by Aaron Zenz (2009) *Nugget on the Flight Deck*. Walker and Company

ISBN: 978-0802797353

Nugget is a boy going on a tour of an air craft carrier, and gets to fly in a naval plane. The emphasis is on facts rather than plot or character development, and some children prefer books this way. There are lots of military, and particularly, navy terms explained, such as, bird (an aircraft), rack, (a bunk bed), hatch (ship's doorway). Includes facts about air craft carriers such as the size and weight, the number of TVs on board and the different colored uniforms the deck crew wear.

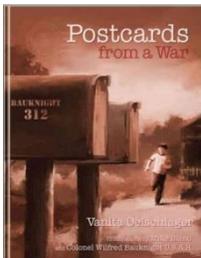


Norman, Geoffrey. Illustrated by E.B. Lewis (2009) *Stars Above Us* G.P. Putnam's Sons.

ISBN: 978-0399247248

Amanda is afraid of the dark, so her father takes her outside to see the beautiful things in the dark - fireflies and stars. When her father has to go away, he tells her that they can look at the same stars and think of each other. Amanda's father's military affiliation is vague except that he is shown wearing a uniform while he is away and at the airport when he returns, suggesting that he is perhaps in the National Guard or Reserves.

For a review by my colleague at the Williamsburg Regional Library, see [Blogging for a Good Book](#).



Oelschlager, Vanita (2009) *Postcards from a War* Vanita Books

ISBN: 978-0980016291 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 978-0981971407 (Paperback)

Matthew's mother is in the air force, and while she is deployed he goes to his grandfather's place after school. Matthew is worried about his mother so his grandfather tells Matthew about his own father being deployed during World War II and shows him the letters and postcards his father sent home. Together they make a "Love Daddy" and "Love, Mom" book with the emails from Matthew's mother and the letters from Matthew's great-grandfather. Based on the letters Vanita Oelschlager received from her own father in World War II, *Postcards from a War* connects generations and helps explain war in a way that children can understand.



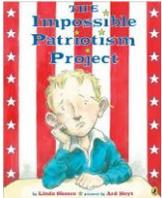
Pelton, Mindy L. Illustrator: Steele, Robert Gantt. (2004) *When Dad's at Sea*. Albert Whitman & Company (January 1, 2004)

IN PRNT

ISBN: 0807563390

Emily's Dad is a Navy Pilot and is away for months at a time. Emily and her parents make her a paper chain with as many links as days her father will be absent. Emily is so angry that she destroys it but her parents make another one. Time is shown passing with events such as Halloween and then Emily makes a friend who has a father on the same ship. The warm colors of the watercolor illustrations almost glow on some pages.

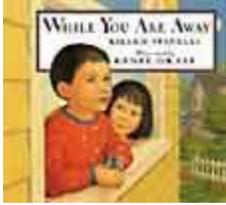
Recommended.



Skeers, Linda. Illustrated by Ard Hoyt *The Impossible Patriotism Project* Dial Books for Young Readers, 2007 ISBN: 978-0-8037-3138-7

Caleb's class is making patriotic projects for President's Day. Everyone in Caleb's class has a great idea and everyone is looking forward to displaying their work at the Parents' Night party. Caleb has two big problems; his father is away so he can't come to Parents' Night and he can't think of a single patriotic idea. But then Caleb realizes that his deployed father is patriotism because what patriotism means is "keeping everyone in the United States safe" and his project turns out to be the best of all.

Recommended.



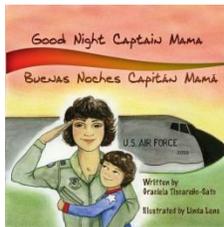
Spinelli, Eileen. Illustrator: Graef, Renee. (2004) *While You Are Away*. Hyperion

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0786809728

Three different children with parents in three different branches of the military (the Navy, Air Force and Army) talk about the things they miss doing with their parents and wonder if their parents are missing them. The flowing, melodious text reads like poetry. Slight inaccuracies include saying the Army Papa is driving a jeep when the illustration appears to show a Hum Vee (and a Hum Vee is a more likely vehicle in this situation). Also the three parents are shown being reunited with their children at the same place and it is unlikely that this would happen. The muted colors of the illustrations complement the warmth of the text.

Recommended



Tiscareño-Sato, Graciela *Good Night Captain Mama / Buenas Noches Capitán Mamá*, 2013 Gracefully Global Group ISBN: 978-0983476030



Tomp, Sarah Wones. Illustrated by Ann Barrow *Red, White, and Blue Good-bye* Walker, 2005 (April 30, 2005) ISBN: 0802789617

A little girl is sad because her father has to sail away on his ship for six months. She tries hiding in his sea bag so she can go with him, then hiding his boots so he can't go, but none of it works and he still works on his preparations to leave. To comfort her he shows her things that will connect them, and that also reflect the color of the American flag - red mailbox flag, white clouds and blue ocean.

Middle Grades (Ages 8-12)



Baskin, Nora Raleigh. (2011). *The Summer Before Boys*. Simon & Schuster Books For Young Readers.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 978-1416986737



Blom, Jen K.. (2011). *Possum Summer*. Simon & Holiday House, New York.

IN PRINT ISBN: 978 0823423316

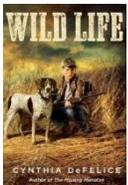


Carestio, Michael A. (2010). *Black Jack Jetty: A Boys Journey Through Grief*. Magination Press.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 978-1433807848

New. Unread. Recommended.



DeFelice, Cynthia C. (2011). *Wild Life*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 978-0374380014

New. Unread. Recommended.



Dowell, Frances O'Roark. (2008). *Shooting the Moon* Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 978-1416926900

Jamie Dexter lives on Fort Hood and refers to her father as "the Colonel". Her father says things like, "The Army way is the right way...It's about duty, it's about honor, it's about sacrifice" and Jamie fully agrees with him. When her brother goes to Vietnam and sends back films for Jamie to develop, her attitude towards the war is challenged. When her family is faced with tragedy she learns unexpected things about her father and is forced to re-examine her whole life.

Recommended.



Gantos, Jack. (2003). *Jack Adrift: Fourth Grade Without a Clue*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. New York, NY.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-374-39987-5

Jack's father rejoins the Navy after going bankrupt from being cheated in a business deal. Jack, his parents, brother and sister go to live at Cape Hatteras in a camouflage-painted trailer parked in a swamp. Jack's father expresses some dissatisfaction with the Navy, "The last time I was in the Navy I was a kid and it was a lot easier to take orders from the upper ranks. But I'm older now and my so-called superior officers are not looking so superior. They may outrank me but they can't outthink me" (page 55-56). Like Gantos's other books about Jack this book is laugh aloud funny at times. This book is unusual and useful because it depicts the family of an enlisted military member rather than an officer. (Note: the other books in Gantos's series about Jack depict the family after Jack's father has left the Navy so are not included here.)

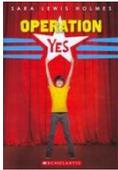
Recommended.



Fleming, David. (2013). *The Saturday Boy*. Viking.

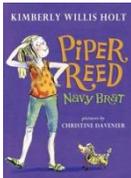
IN PRINT

ISBN: 978 0670785513



Holmes, Sara Lewis. (2009) *Operation Yes* Arthur A. Levine Books.

IN PRINT



Holt, Kimberly Willis. (2007 - 2011). *Piper Reed: Navy Brat. Series H*. Holt.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 978-0312625481

Meet Piper Reed, the Ramona Quimby of military children! Piper's father is in the Navy and life has ups and downs as she and her two sisters face moves, new schools, her father leaving on his ship and other events in military family life.



Hostetter, Joyce Moyer. (2009). *Comfort* Calkins Creek.

IN PRINT

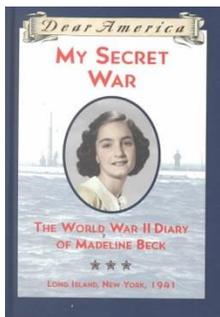
ISBN: 978-0312625481



Madison, Alan. (2008). *100 Days and 99 Nights*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

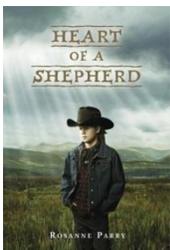
IN PRINT

ISBN: 0316113549



Osborne, Mary Pope. (2000). *My Secret War: the World War II Diary of Madeline Beck*. Houghton Mifflin.

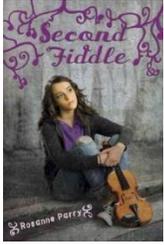
IN PRINT



Parry, Rosanne (2009) *Heart of a Shepherd* Random House Books for Young Readers

ISBN: 978-0375848025 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 978-0375848032 (Paperback 2010)

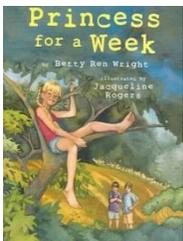


Parry, Rosanne (2011) *Second Fiddle* Random House Books for Young Readers
ISBN: 978-0375861963 (Hardcover)
ISBN: 978-0375861666 (Paperback 2012)



Sackett, Frances. (2013). *The Misadventures of the Magician's Dog*. Holiday House. New York, NY.
IN PRINT
ISBN: 978-0-8234-2869-4 (Hardcover).

This is an unusual book because it combines a story with a child of a military parent with the supernatural. Peter meets a talking dog who learned this unusual skill as an assistant to a magician. The dog knows magic and he is willing to teach it to Peter.



Wright, Betty Ren. (2006) *Princess for a Week*. Illustrated by Jacqueline Rogers. Holiday House
IN PRINT
ISBN-10: 0823419452



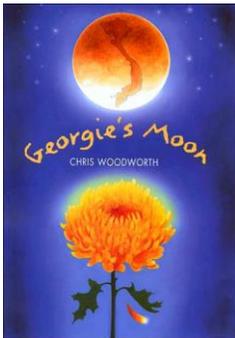
Testa, M. (2003). *Almost Forever*. Candlewick Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-7636-1996-5 (Hardcover).

This seemingly simple novel in blank verse captures the feelings of a six-year-old girl when father goes to be a doctor in the Vietnam War for a year. We learn about the fear the family feel of their father never returning. Important things to a child like changing where they live and changes in her mother's behavior are highlighted. It also captures well the idea that children do not necessarily understand what is happening to them and their families, and cannot change many things in their lives even if they do understand, they can only observe.

Highly recommended.

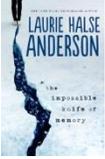


Woodworth, Chris. (2006) *Georgie's Moon*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

IN PRINT

ISBN-10: 0374333068

Teen Books (Ages 10-15)



Anderson, Laurie Halse.(2014) *The Impossible Knife of Memory*. Viking.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 978-0670012091



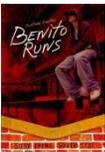
Donahue, John (2001). *Till Tomorrow*. New York, N.Y. Farrar Straus Giroux.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-374-37580-1 (Hardcover)

Twelve year old Terry arrives in France with his family to live on an army base. This book describes the feelings of a military child well, especially the constant moving and the tension between the base community and the local community. It was written based on the author's childhood, so despite being published recently, it is historical in that the U.S. military no longer has any presence in France. The background of the books includes conception of the Berlin wall and how the US military were on alert. This makes it a useful book for discussing history and how international tensions are not just a thing of the present. It is a sensitive look at loyalty and friendship and being true to friends who are not part of the in crowd.

Recommended



Fontes, Justine. (2011) *Benito Runs*. Darby Creek. A Division of Lerner Publishing.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 978 0761361657 (Paperback)

Benito's father is in the National Guard and is deployed to Iraq. Written in a high-interest style with a fourth-grade reading level for reluctant readers as part of the Surviving Southside series, Benito Runs is a quick read.



Mazer, Harry. (2002). *A Boy at War: A Novel of Pearl Harbor*. Simon and Schuster.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-68-984160-4 (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-43-935207-X (2003 Paperback Reprint)

When fourteen year old Adam moves to Hawaii with his mother, small sister and Navy father, he goes to a civilian school for the first time in his life. He makes friends with a boy of Japanese ancestry, Davi, and his father strongly disapproves. Adam sneaks off to go fishing with his new friend and they climb under a fence to fish on Pearl Harbor. In a dramatic and scary sequence they are present at (and injured by) the bombing of Pearl Harbor and Adam sees his father's ship, the USS Arizona sink. In the confusion Adam is assumed to be in the Navy and helps rescuers. When he gets home everything is still confused and scary. He goes to find Davi and finds that Davi's father has been taken away by the FBI. Despite knowing his own father was killed by the Japanese bombers Adam feels it is wrong to lock up Davi's mild mannered father. When Adam's father is officially declared missing in action Adam, his mother and sister leave Hawaii. An author's note explains the historical background of World War II.

Recommended.



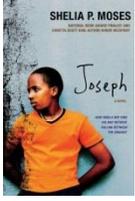
Mazer, Harry. (2004). *A Boy No More*. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0689855338

ISBN: 0439702240 (Scholastic Paperback)

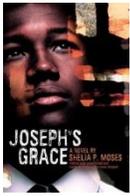
A sequel to Harry Mazer's *A Boy at War*.



Moses, Shelia (2008) *Joseph* Margaret K. McElderry Books.

ISBN: 978-1416917526

Joseph's father is deployed to Iraq and his mother, a drug addict, cannot cope. In fact Joseph, a boy mature beyond his years, ends up looking after her. A gritty, uncompromising look at the degradations of drug addiction and how the military family lifestyle can make life unbearably difficult for families already near the edge.



Moses, Shelia (2011) *Joseph's Grace* Margaret K. McElderry Books.

ISBN: 978-1416939429



Novgorodoff, Danica and Benjamin Percy (2009) *Refresh, Refresh: A Graphic Novel* First Second

ISBN: 978-1596435223

Josh's father and Cody's father are Marine Reservists who are deployed to Iraq. They live in a small, unnamed Oregon town where a lot of the men have gone to war. For many of the families the men's absence is a financial as well as practical burden. Refresh Refresh does a good job of portraying the complex feelings military service creates in the families left behind. The artwork reflects the dark subject matter, with severe lines and somber, drab colors, mostly in army green and grey. Try Refresh Refresh for a stark and uncompromising look at military family life, especially for reservists. Refresh Refresh is a violent and often disturbing graphic novel suitable for adults and older teens.

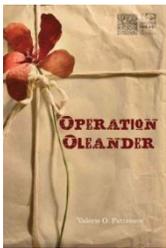


Parry, Rosanne (2011) *Second Fiddle* Random House Books for Young Readers

ISBN: 978-0375861963 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 978-0375861666 (Paperback 2012)

Jody and her two friends Giselle and Vivian live on an American Army base in Berlin in 1990, shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall. They are brought together by their love of music and they travel by train each week to music lessons in East Germany with Herr Muller. The book does a wonderful job of capturing the feel of military life.

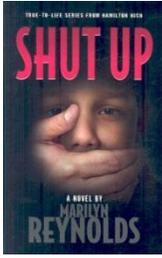


Patterson, Valerie O. (2013) *Operation Oleander* Clarion Books

ISBN-10: 0547244371

ISBN-13: 978-0547244372

Jess's Dad is in Afghanistan and she lives with her mother and toddler sister at invented army base, Fort Spencer, in Florida. She and her friends Meriwether and Sam have set up an unofficial charity to raise money in Florida to donate supplies to a girls' orphanage in Kabul, Afghanistan. A detail this book captures, that books set in earlier eras miss, is the immediacy of electronic communication. Jess says, "His email is there. I check the date and time of his note. As of this morning, Dad was still alive in Afghanistan." It includes details about the expectations for extra responsibilities when a parent is away, such as Jess's father teaching her specifically how to add gas to the lawn mower and turn off the water main before he goes away.



Reynolds, Marilyn (2009). *Shut Up* Morning Glory Press.

ISBN: 9781932538939

"In her need to support her two young boys, Maria Barajas, a single mother, joins the National Guard to supplement her meager income as a sales clerk. years later, in less peaceful times, she is sent to Iraq, leaving her boys behind in the care of her sister." From Book Jacket



Rottman, S.L. (2009) *Out of the Blue* Peachtree Publishers, Atlanta.

ISBN: 9781561454990

"Stu and his mother are heading to Minot, ND where she will assume command of the Air Force base." From Book Jacket



Schaffner, M. A. (2002). *War Boys*. Welcome Rain Publishers.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 1-56649-244-0 (Hardcover)