

On a Military Brat blog was the question, “Are all Military Brats existentialists?” The dictionary (no, Google wasn’t around yet) gave me the definition that Existentialism is the philosophical belief we are each responsible for creating purpose or meaning in our own lives. Military children, end up doing that, whether they realize it or not. My father was in the Air Force, so I grew up traveling with him, my Grandfather was Army, and my Grand Mother’s brother, my Uncle Carl was in the Navy –their pictures on the table. My parents will be married 68 years in December! (I was corrected on that when I emailed my dad my speech)

As I started on this “Journey” up the chairs, I always knew that the dandelion as the flower of the Military Child had to be part of my pin.

The Knight on the K, Bishop as part of the D in the word Kind – we are the American Legion Family and this way my Commander, Larry Bishop is also part of my pin forever, as well as my year. Keith Barnes, our SAL Commander is from Bergen County, the “Big Bee” – that was a happy accident but like so much that you can stress about, always remember to take a deep breath, that it really does all work out okay. And the purple around the edge symbolizes the Military Child.

I was born in Germany, moved to Greece, Malaysia, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, The Philippines, and... then NJ in January of 1987. With that move, I ended up graduating from the same high school in 1988 that my father graduated from in 1954! I always said I would never give anything for the things I got to see and experience, but it’s a different way of life. With the focus on mental health within the American Legion Family, I’m waiting to hear back from an organization who deals specifically with the mental health issues of Military children.

That’s the other part of my pin, the dandelion poof – a seed to grow wherever you go, which also goes back to creating your own purpose or meaning in your life. We are all here for The American Legion Family, to “Bee Kind” and Be the One as bees and helping our fellow members grow, and those seeds are the simple and sometimes grand acts of kindness that we perform every day while carrying out our mission.

The Past Department Presidents, Department Officers, County Presidents, and members – we are all bees (there is no rank among us). As your President, it’s just a title and it means nothing without every one of you. The “pollen” we are spreading is the kindness through the donations, the help, and the many projects we do every day, no matter how big or small that make a difference in so many Veterans and peoples lives.

Thank you to everyone who has helped me get to this point, the Past Department Presidents, whose knowledge is invaluable, all of the Legion Family members who have become such a great part of my life, my Union County President Dori and Margaret who have helped keep me sane as we got ready for this day, and most of all Randy who puts up with me (yep, mentioned him by name so I don’t have to buy him a diamond – or what would the men’s equivalent of that be? Haha)

We are the American Legion Family, Mission Driven, be kind, and Be The one!