

Books for Military Children

Primary- Picture Books (2 – 8 years old)

Bunting, Eve. Illustrated by Kay Life ***My Red Balloon*** Boyds Mills Press. 2005 ISBN: 1590782631

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

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



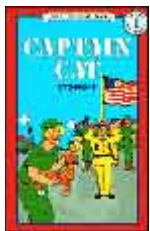
Duble, Kathleen Benner. Illustrator: Marks, Alan (2003) ***Pilot Mom***. Watertown, MA. Charlesbridge Publishing.

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.



Hoff, Syd. (1993). ***Captain Cat***. Harper Trophy.

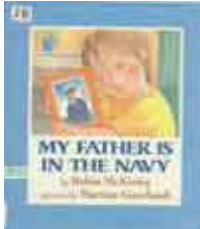
IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-06-444176-8 (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-606-06267-X (Turtleback Books Library Binding)

This is not a book about the experiences of military children but it is a rarity – a picture book depicting everyday life on an army base. It is a warm, gently humorous book about a stray cat who wanders onto an army base. The soldiers who feed and care for him treat him kindly. Some of the events are factually unlikely such as a General giving an order to march (rather than delegating it to a sergeant) and it appears to be depicting basic training rather than the ongoing life in the military (because of details such as the soldiers sleeping in multi-bedded dormitories). It could be a useful book because it depicts the everyday world of many military children who live on a base in a straightforward and positive way with an animal as a protagonist.

Recommended.



McKinley, Robin, (1992). Illustrator: Gourbault, Martine. ***My Father Is in the Navy***. New York, NY: Greenwillow Books.

OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-688-10639-0 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-688-10640-4 (Library Binding)

Sara's father is in the Navy and away on his ship. In this calm story Sara goes about her daily life with her mother. She knows that her father is coming home and that her mother is excited but she is worried because, "I didn't remember him". In the satisfying ending she finally sees her father and remembers him. This book was written about the childhood experiences of popular fantasy writer and Newbery winner Robin McKinley whose father was in the navy. Martine Gourbault's pastel colored pencil illustrations complement the text about Sara's secure life with her mother and her kitten.

Highly recommended.



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.

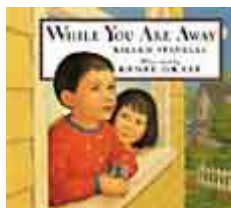


Ray, Deborah Kogan. (1990). *My Daddy Was a Soldier: A World War II Story*. Holiday House, New York, N.Y.
OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-8234-0795-0 (Hardcover)

Jeannie's father has gone away to fight in World War II and Jeannie is scared; "the war came into my house to take Daddy away." Everything changes for Jeannie. Her mother gets a job, there are blackouts and air raid sirens, food is rationed and they grow a Victory Garden. Time passes, helped by Jeannie's third grade scrap drive for metal and rubber but Christmas arrives without a letter and Jeannie cries. Finally when Jeannie is half way through fifth grade her father returns. The soft black and white drawings capture the reflective mood of the book.

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



Wetzel, Jo Anne Stewart, (1992). Illustrator: Root, Barry. ***The Christmas Box***. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Illustrated by Barry Root.

OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-679-81789-1 (Hardcover)

It is 1952 and Daddy has gone to Japan without his family to be a soldier. It is exciting for his two children to get his letters, imagine him living in a tent and even sending him Christmas cookies in October but as Christmas nears his absence is felt strongly. Then a box arrives from him with Japanese things in it, "But the best present was for all of us – a photo album filled with pictures of Daddy." This book captures the way loved ones are missed more on special occasions. The mention of a new school, October then Christmas show the passage of many months in way children can understand. Barry Root's illustrations capture a warm family life even with an absent father.

Recommended.



Yolen, Jane, (1991). Illustrator: Baker, Leslie. ***All Those Secrets of the World***. Boston, PA: Little Brown and Company. Illustrated by Leslie Baker.

ISBN: 0-316-96895-1 (Soft cover- Out of Print)

ISBN: 0-316-96891-9 (First Edition Hardcover - Out of Print)

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-606-05113-9 (Turtleback Books Reprint)

Janie's father is going off on a big ship to World War II. Four-year-old Janie doesn't really know where her father is going but she is happy about the excitement of seeing the ship off and getting an ice-cream. Playing with her cousin later he shows her that things that are farther away look smaller, so her father's ship on the horizon looks tiny. When her father returns two years later he tells her she is bigger and she points out that it is because he is closer to her now. There are poignant details like the brother who was a baby in arms when his father left not knowing his father on his return. The butterfly kisses and hugs Janie gets as her father leaves and returns make the story circularly complete and very satisfying. This book is about popular children's writer Jane Yolen's own childhood. Leslie Baker's watercolor paintings capture the details of childhood in a tender but unsentimental way. This was a Reading Rainbow book.

Highly Recommended.

Middle Grades (8 – 12 years old)

Balgassi, Haemi. (1996). Illustrated by Chris K. Soentpiet. *Peacebound Trains*. Clarion Books. New York, NY.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-618-04030-7 (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-395-72093-1 (Hardcover)

Sumi's mother has joined the Army for a steady job and a chance to get an education. While Sumi's mother is gone for months at training Sumi stays with her Korean grandmother, Harmuny. When the arrival of a birthday parcel makes Sumi realize that her mother will really not be home for her birthday, Harmuny comforts her with a story. Most of the book is Harmuny's story of her escape from Seoul during the Korean War and the deprivations of war, including the loss of her husband. Chris Soentpiet's masterly illustrations capture details of America and Korea and express the range of deep emotions portrayed in the book. The gentleness of the illustrations and the way the book comes back to a hopeful present day prevents a harrowing story of loss and dislocation from becoming overwhelming for the young audience. I put this book in middle grade books even though it has full page illustrations on every page, as the length of the book (divided into chapters) and complexity of the ideas and the distressing events make it more suitable for an older audience.

This book is also available online, with a teacher's guide, through the Department of Defense Korean War Commemoration Website at [/http://korea50.army.mil/teachers/index.shtml](http://korea50.army.mil/teachers/index.shtml) (Link checked OK 2007-02-01)

Highly 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.



Giff, Patricia Reilly. (1997) *Lily's Crossing*. Delacorte Press.

IN PRINT

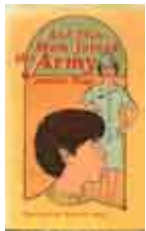
ISBN: 0-385-32142-2 (First Edition Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-7587-0287-6 (2002 Hardcover Reprint)

ISBN: 0-7862-2771-0 (Large Print Hardcover)

Lily's mother is dead and she and her father live with her Grandmother. When her father goes off to fight in World War II she and her Gram must spend the summer at Rockaway on the Atlantic coast by themselves, an idea Lily does not like. Rockaway is even worse than she thought when her friend Margaret moves to Michigan for her father to work in war industries and no one Lily's age is left. Someone her age arrives in the form of Albert, an orphaned Hungarian refugee, staying with some neighbors but Lily doesn't like him and thinks it quite likely that he is a spy. They rescue an abandoned kitten together and start to become friends. Lily likes to exaggerate and even tell lies but she is shocked when she realizes that her lies have put Albert in danger. Through the events of the summer Lily grows up and develops stronger relationships with her Grandmother and father. This book is the winner of numerous awards including a Newbery Honor award in 1998.

Recommended.



Hagy, Jeannie. (1976). *And Then Mom Joined the Army*. New York, NY: Abingdon Press.

OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-687-01379-8 (Hardcover)

This book is approaching thirty years old and it shows. It seems more dated than historical books about World War II or the Vietnam War. Scott's mother joins the WAC (Women's Army Corps), which does not exist anymore. ("Congress passed a law in September 1978 that disestablished the WAC as a separate Corps of the Army effective 20 October 1978." (Accessed OK on 2007-02-01:

http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/Museums/Showcase/Women/awm_Text.htm)

The message that Scott's mother is a better parent, despite being strict, compared to Julian's hippy parents is heavy handed. Despite these failings military children might be able to identify with some aspects of Scott's world. For example, Scott goes to a civilian school and is constantly worried that kids at school might see his mother in her

uniform, which reflects the fear children have of appearing different. Also it talks about getting in trouble living in base housing for leaving a tricycle on the sidewalk. This may sound unlikely to civilian children but is expected by military children.

Recommended with reservations

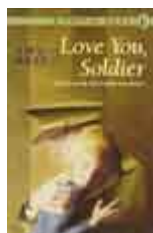


Hoobler, Thomas and Hoobler, Dorothy. (1991). *Aloha Means Come Back: The Story of a World War II Girl*. Silver Burdett Press.

ISBN: 0382241568

ISBN: 0382241487

"Laura and her mother join her Navy father in Hawaii in 1941, where suspicion against the Japanese American residents runs high in an atmosphere of expectation that the United States and Japan will go to war." (Information from <http://www.ISBNdb.com> Link checked OK 2007-02-01).



Hest, Amy. (1991). *Love You, Soldier*. Four Winds.

Also published as *Love You, Daddy* in a Troll Special Edition, 1991.

Also published by Candlewick Press and Illustrated by Sonja Lamut in 2000.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0027436357 (First Edition)

ISBN: 0-614-09598-0 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0763609439 (Candlewick Press illustrated version)

ISBN: 0-14-036174-X (Paperback. Puffin 1993)

ISBN: 0-606-02730-0 (Turtleback Library Binding)

Katie is only seven when her father goes away to fight in World War II. Modern military children will know from the second sentence the Katie's father is not going to a present-day war because his uniform is "olive green" and not camouflage. Despite its historic setting, this poignant short book (47 pages in the Troll edition) captures the sadness and fear of having a parent go away to war. This is one of the few books at this level where the military parent does not come back. The book is tragic but ultimately hopeful.

Recommended.



Lowry, Lois. (1980). **Autumn Street**. Houghton Mifflin.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-440-40344-8 (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-395-27812-0 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-606-02576-6 (Turtleback Books Library Binding)

While her father is away fighting in World War II Elizabeth and her family move in with her grandmother where there are conflicts and tensions she doesn't understand. The absence of her father at the war is only in the background, but this book indicates the tensions that can arise from having a family member away at a war.

Recommended.



Mead, Alice. (1999). **Soldier Mom**. Dell Yearling. Random House Children's Books. New York. NY. IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-440-22900-6 (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-374-37124-5 (Hardcover)

Jasmyn's mother is called up from the army reserves to go to the Middle East. This book is set in 1991-1992 and the first Persian Gulf War but many children with parents in the reserves who are currently being called to active duty to a U.S. base or being sent overseas will be able to identify with Jasmyn's shock and disbelief. Jasmyn is forced to curtail her beloved basketball to help look after her baby brother. It is never adequately explained why Jasmyn does not want to go to live with her air force father in Japan. Some details in this book are incorrect such as on page 35, "I know a little about that stuff from having an air force parent. Mom said that Dad's jet, the Tomcat, can fly eight miles high." The Tomcat is a Navy plane so Jasmyn's Air Force parent wouldn't be flying it. (My husband pointed out this discrepancy. I verified that the Grumman Tomcat has a U.S. Navy designation of F14 in *Jane's World Combat Aircraft*. (1988). Edited by Michael J.H. Taylor. Jane's Information Group. Alexandria, Virginia. This book has the emotional authenticity of a child forced to grow up too soon and take on adult responsibilities but it is possible a military child would notice the incorrect details and be distracted from the book's otherwise good qualities.

Recommended.



Paterson, Katherine. (1988). *Park's Quest*. Lodestar Books. E.P. Dutton. New York, NY.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-525-67258-3 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-606-02743-2 (Turtleback Library Binding)

ISBN: 0-14-034262-1 (Paperback)

Parkington Waddell Broughton the Fifth's (Park's) father died in the Vietnam War. His mother will say nothing at all about his father's side of the family and Park is determined to find out more about his father. What he learns about his father and his half sister does not fit in with his fantasies of his father and his chivalric deeds but Park learns about himself, his family and in the process grows up. This is a compelling and moving book.

Recommended.



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.



Townsend, Tom. (1987). *Trader Woolly and the Secret of the Lost Nazi Treasure*. Austin Tx: Eakin Press.

OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-89015-602-6 (Hardcover)

Trader (John) Wooly lives on a U.S. Army base near Munich in Germany in the 1980s. This exciting story is told from the perspective of another military child, Wes, although Trader Wooly is the main character. It is an old fashioned adventure story with treasure, arch villains and a kidnapping. The book briefly delves into the deeper issue of forgiveness and redemption when the boys meet an old German man and find the tank that he fought in during World War II and the remains of the soldiers that were killed by Americans. Trader Wooly is sad about a German friend who was killed by a unexploded World War II mine in the dangerous Panzerwold. Unfortunately that does not stop him going constantly into the Panzerwold with Wes and the old German man. Trader Wooly and Wes come out of the Panzerwold unscathed and with the treasure. It seems unfortunate to send children the message that entering in dangerous and forbidden places is acceptable.

Recommended with reservations.



Townsend, Tom. (1988). *Trader Wooly and The Terrorist*. Austin Tx: Eakin Press.

OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-89015-670-0 (Permabound)

A sequel to *Trader Wooly and the Secret of the Lost Nazi Treasure*.



Townsend, Tom. (1991). *Trader Wooly and the Ghost in the Colonel's Jeep*. Austin Tx: Eakin Press.

OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-89015-807-X (Hardcover)

The third book in the series about Trader Wooly.



Tripp, Valerie. (1986). Illustrator: C.F. Payne. ***Meet Molly: An American Girl***. Book One. The American Girls Collection. Pleasant Company.

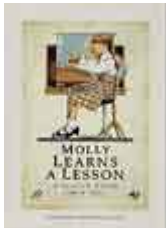
IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-937295-06-X (Hardcover)

Molly's father is a doctor in the U.S. Army stationed in England during World War II. Molly is concerned with the sort of issues that loom large in the life of a child in a stable home – having to eat turnips and what to wear for Halloween. She and her brother play tricks on each other in an escalating way until their mother gives them a pointed lecture about needing to get on with each other. This is the first in a series of five books about Molly. The series is suitable for a young reader who likes the familiarity and safety of a series.

Recommended.

The other four books in this series are listed below:



Tripp, Valerie. (1986). Illustrator: C.F. Payne. ***Molly Learns a Lesson: A School Story***. Book Two. The American Girls Collection. Pleasant Company.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-937295-84-1 (Hardcover)



Tripp, Valerie. (1986). ***Molly's Surprise: A Christmas Story***. Book Three. The American Girls Collection. Pleasant Company.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-937295-84-1 (Hardcover)



Tripp, Valerie. (1987). Illustrator: by Nick Backes. ***Happy Birthday Molly: A Springtime Story***. Book Four. The American Girls Collection. Pleasant Company.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-937295-90-6 (Hardcover)



Tripp, Valerie. (1988). Illustrator: Nick Backes. ***Molly Saves the Day: A Summer Story***. Book Five. The American Girls Collection. Pleasant Company.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-937295-93-0 (Hardcover)

Teen Books (10 – 15 years old)

Marino, Jan ***Searching For Atticus*** Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. 1997 ISBN: 0689800665

Mazer, Harry ***Heroes Don't Run: A Novel of the Pacific War*** Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing. 2005
ISBN: 0689855346

Smith, Cynthia Leitich ***Rain Is Not My Indian Name*** HarperCollins. 2001 ISBN: 0688173977



Alphin, Elaine. *The Proving Ground*. (1992). Henry Holt and Company. New York. NY.

OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-8050-2140-X (Hardcover)

Kevin's father is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army and he has been assigned to a new base, a Proving Ground where weapons are tested. The family experience conflict on the base and in the town where Kevin goes to school. The conflict draws up to an exciting and dramatic climax when Kevin discovers that the Proving Ground and the town are in danger from an unstable youth who thinks his family's problems stem from the government acquisition of their land in World War II. This book portrays well the problems of a military child who must move house frequently and the conflicts that can arise between a base and the surrounding community. It also talks about the difficulties faced by a military child who needs to behave well or it will be reflected on his or her parent's career. This book portrays the everyday events of life for a contemporary military child rather than the drama of having a parent go to war.

Recommended.



Cooney, Caroline B. (1992). *Operation: Homefront*. Laurel-Leaf Books, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group Inc. New York, N.Y.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-440-22689-9 (Paperback - Laurel Leaf).

ISBN: 0-553-29685-X (Paperback - Bantam Starfire Reprint)

Popular teen writer Caroline B. Cooney wrote this fast-paced book soon after the 1991 Gulf War. Like many Caroline B. Cooney books it can be slapstick funny while delving into deeper issues. Mother Rosalys is a part time kindergarten teacher who joined the reserves to pay for her schooling. Her three children thought her weekend warrior life was a joke until she was called up. "It's military thought Laura. Before, they were Weekend Warriors and knew it. Now it's real, and they know it. I don't want it to be real" (page 39). After Rosalys leaves, the family compulsively watch the news and their family starts to crumble as the house and the four-year-old brother are barely looked after. By the end of the book they pull themselves together and gain a new perspective on Rosalys and themselves. An important underlying theme of this book is that the mother has a life apart from her children, even if this is a shock to the children. The cover of the paperback edition shows a woman reading a letter containing a photo of a small child. It looks like an accurate U.S. military uniform but it is not desert pattern. It is hard to know if it meant to be depicting Rosalys before she left the

United States or it is inaccurate which will be a distraction to military children.

Recommended.



Cormier, Robert. (1979). ***After the First Death***. Random House. New York. NY.

IN PRINT - This book has been reissued in at least five editions.

ISBN: 0-4402-0835-1 (Paperback re-issue of 1991)

ISBN: 0-8446-7215-7 (Hardcover re-issue of 2002)

ISBN: 0-606-04855-3 (Turtleback Library Binding of 1991)

Ben Marchand's father joined the army late in life and is a General when the story opens. When a bus full of children is taken hostage by terrorists Ben is asked by his father to take messages between the government and the terrorists. His father tells Ben this is because he is young and non-threatening, but by the end of the book the reader learns that Ben was chosen by his father because his father and the secret government agency he works for have been conducting psychological experiments on Ben his whole life and his father knows exactly how Ben will act under stressful circumstances. When Ben learns that his father sent him to the terrorists because he knew Ben would fail, Ben loses his sense of self and contemplates suicide. The story is told from three different perspectives, (Ben, a terrorist and a teen hostage) but starts and ends with Ben who becomes a victim of the high jacking even though he is miles away when it starts. Robert Cormier, as usual, writes a chilling tale that shows some people are capable of acting in horrible ways to other people. This book is a compelling and suspenseful read. Ben's father's job is described in such a shadowy way that it is difficult to determine if it is plausible. This is one of the few books of this type that invites older teens to think critically about the jobs their parents do and the government their parents work for. The U.S. military and the U.S. government are portrayed as bad guys but it is also suggested that they had no choice but to act as they did.

Highly Recommended.



Boyd, Candy Dawson. ***Charlie Pippin***. (1987). Puffin Books. New York. NY.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-14-032587-5 (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-606-03752-7 (Turtleback Library Binding)

Charlie Pippin always seems to be in conflict with her father. She knows he is a veteran of the Vietnam War and when her mother hints that during the war he lost his dreams and became the angry person that Charlie knows, Charlie embarks on a school project to learn more about the Vietnam War and hopefully something about her father's past. Strong characters like her grandmother aid or abet Charlie. Charlie is a sympathetic character and this book is an enjoyable read. This book has a strong and sometimes simplistic peace message, but the children who read should be old enough to form their own opinions about what their parents do.

Recommended.



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.



Franklin, Kristine L.(1999). *Dove Song*. Candlewick Press. Cambridge, MA

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-7636-0409-7 (Hardcover)

Bobbie Lynn is eleven when her father leaves for the Vietnam War and their mother insists on moving to be closer to where he leaves from, Washington State. Bobbie Lynn has to start another school and is even starting to make a friend with the strange Wendy when her father is listed as missing-in-action. Bobbie Lynn's mother becomes so depressed that Bobbie Lynn and her older brother have to feed her, but they are scared what will happen if they reveal their problems to the authorities. The severity of Bobbie Lynn's mother's problems and the effect on her family make this a wrenching

book, but it paints an ultimately heart warming picture of the power it shows of community and friendship. Like Richard Bradford's *Red Sky at Morning* this book shows the possible disintegration of a family with a parent who cannot cope without the absent military member.

This book won the Minnesota Book Awards in 2000.

Recommended.



Griffin, Adele. ***Rainy Season***. (1998). Hyperion. New York, NY.

PRINT

ISBN: 0-7868-1241-9 (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-606-13726-2 (Turtleback Library Binding)

Eleven-year-old Lane lives in the Panama Canal Zone with her army family. A mysterious trauma is hinted at that makes Lane constantly fearful for the safety of her family members. Her brother is unstable and seemingly always on the verge of violence. Many details of army life are woven into a compelling narrative of a family that seems happy to outsiders but is being torn apart by a tragedy that no one will acknowledge. The army is portrayed as a necessary evil in Lane's life, "I am glued to that name. It is stuck to my house, my ID, my passport, all my forms for school. Lt. Col. Beck's dependent; that's how the army catalogs Charlie and Mom and me" (page 139). It is a vivid portrait of a family not able to deal with tragedy.

Recommended.



Lambert, Janet. The ***Tippy Parrish Series***.

This series started publication in 1948 and is being reissued by several companies including Cascade Publishing (<http://imagecascade.com/>) and Amereon Ltd. (information about the company can be found here:

<http://members.cox.net/kenholt/printing.html> or Amereon, 800 Wickham Ave, Mattituck, NY 11952-1602. Joanna Paulsen (President), Phone: (631) 298-5100 (From InfoUSA). Tippy Parrish is sixteen when this series starts and she is at least in her twenties by the end of series. She is a military child who dates military men and finally marries one. I cannot comment on the quality of the series as I have not read the books since I discovered them late in my search process. They may suit a teen girl who likes romances or conservative families who want their children to read books with old fashioned values. (Information taken from imagecascade.com and amazon.com.)

The series consists of:

Miss Tippy originally published 1948.

ISBN: 1930009186 (Paperback. Research Evaluation & Statistics, December 2000)

Little Miss Atlas originally published 1949.

ISBN: 0848801296 (Hardcover. Amereon Ltd, Reprint edition June 1986)

ISBN: 1930009194 (Paperback. Research Evaluation & Statistics, December 2000)

Miss America originally published 1951.

ISBN: 1930009208 (Paperback. Research Evaluation & Statistics, December 2000)

Don't Cry Little Girl originally published 1952.

ISBN: 1930009216 (Research Evaluation & Statistics, December 2000)

Rainbow After Rain originally published 1953.

ISBN: 1930009224 (Paperback. Research Evaluation & Statistics, December 2000)

Welcome Home, Mrs. Jordan originally published 1953.

ISBN: 1930009240 (Paperback, Research Evaluation & Statistics, December 2000)

A Song in Their Hearts originally published 1956.

ISBN: 1930009240 (Paperback, Research Evaluation & Statistics, December 2000)

Here's Marny originally published 1969.

ISBN: 1930009259 (Paperback, Research Evaluation & Statistics, December 2000)

These further series by Janet Lambert are also being reissued by Cascade Publishing:

Lambert, Janet. **The Penny Parrish Series.**

There are also 6 books about Penny Parrish who is Tippy Parrish's big sister.

This series includes: Star Spangled Summer, Dreams of Glory, Glory Be!, Up Goes the Curtain, Practically Perfect, and The Reluctant Heart. (Information taken from imagecascade.com and amazon.com.)

Lambert, Janet. **The Jordon Family Series**

The Jordans are a military family of nine children from combined families. They have no mother alive so the eldest daughter Jennifer must care for the family when her father is away.

This series includes: Just Jennifer, Friday's Child, Confusion by Cupid, A Dream for Susan, Love Taps Gently, Myself & I, The Stars Hang High, Wedding Bells, and A Bright Tomorrow. (Information taken from imagecascade.com and amazon.com.)

Lambert, Janet. **The Candy Kane Series**

Another military family with two daughters is the focus of this series.

This series includes: Candy Kane, Whoa Matilda, One for the Money, and A Song in Their Hearts. (Information taken from imagecascade.com and amazon.com.)



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*. Adam has moved from Hawaii to California and everything has changed. They are short of money and Adam's mother gets a job and then seems to start enjoying her new independence. Even Adam's little sister is changing as she was thought to be too young to be told that her father is dead, but she reveals that she already knows (but still doesn't fully understand). Adam becomes interested in a girl and also gets a job as there is a labor shortage due to World War II. Adam gets a letter from his Hawaiian Japanese friend, Davi, asking him to deliver a letter relatives who have been put in a detention camp in California. Adam's mother thinks that helping Davi is disloyalty to his father who was killed by the Japanese but Adam knows that the war is not Davi's fault. He defies his mother to find Davi's relatives and accidentally finds Davi in a detention camp. His relationship becomes so cold, that

Adam considers going to live with his grandfather in New York state, but decides his place is with his mother and sister. These two books capture the lack of easy answers in a war – Adam knew the Japanese were guilty of killing his father but also knew that Davi and his immediate family were innocent and treated unfairly.

Recommended



McCaffrey, Anne. (1971). *The Mark of Merlin*. Wildside Press.

IN PRINT (In many versions)

ISBN: 1-58-715493-5 (Paperback)

ISBN: 1-59-224013-5 (Hardcover)

James Carlyle Murdock is a girl despite her name. She is twenty in the book, which is a little old for this list, but Carla's father has been in the Army for years and she has grown up on army posts. This book is also a romance and a murder mystery and I thought it is worthwhile to include a variety of genres. Carla's father has been killed near the end of World War II and he has put her under the guardianship of someone she doesn't know, Major Laird. She will soon be twenty-one and not in need of a guardian but she has been ill and she is sent to recuperate with Major Laird. When she turns up the Major is furious and wants to send her away, because he thought a boy would be coming, but she is stuck at his house in a blizzard. Major Laird reveals that her father was murdered by an American and the house starts to have sinister visitors despite the storm. In the satisfying conclusion the mystery is cleared up and the antagonism between the Major and Carla develops into something warmer.

Recommended.



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

IN PRINT

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

Fourteen year old Charles Baker arrives with his family at the U.S. Navy Station at Subic Bay in the Philippines during the Vietnam War. At first Charles is terrified of the jungle but his father insists that he joins the Boy Scouts and Charles starts to go on jungle walks and camps. Charles loves to read and makes friends with some of the nerdy boys. He slowly gains acceptance with some of the more popular boys due to his growing jungle skills and integrity, but that doesn't seem to matter when the irresponsible actions of a Boy Scout leader end in tragedy. Most of the boys Charles know want

to follow their fathers' footsteps into the Navy and all of them assume that they will end up fighting in the Vietnam War in a few years. In the (probably accurate) speech of the teenage boys this book contains a lot of swear words.

Recommended.



Talbert, Marc. (1992). **The Purple Heart**. Willa Perlman Books, An Imprint of Harper Collins.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-06-020429-X (Hardcover - First Edition)

ISBN: 0-06-020428-1 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-595-09771-5 (Paperback - 2000 Reprint)

ISBN: 0-380-71985-1 (Paperback)

Luke's father returns wounded from Vietnam and nothing is as Luke anticipated. The glorified view of war that Luke had at the beginning of the book slowly changes as he realizes what war does to people. Luke's father was a builder before he joined the army and the book mentions that Luke has the same best friend since first grade so his experience may not be typical of active duty military children. Nonetheless, this book is well written and raises some important issues about war and what it may be like to have a parent who is irrevocably changed by it.

Recommended.

Young Adult/Adult Books (14 – adult)



Bausch, Richard. (1993). **Rebel Powers**. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, Ma.

OUT OF PRINT

ISBN: 0-395-59508-8 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-679-75253-6

Thomas grew up in a Air Force family until he was seventeen and his father was sent to jail for stealing a typewriter. Thomas is looking back at his life and writing this from the perspective of a divorced man in his forties and sometimes the commentary of the older man is distracting. Only the first approximately fifth of the book deals directly with

Thomas's life as a military child but much of the rest of the story stems directly from his father's misdeed and the harsh punishment the Air Force gave him. Unlike the parents in many of these books Thomas's father was enlisted and money problems are a big issue. He was trying to take the typewriter to pay off debts, but the book does portray him as a spendthrift with a car he could not afford.

Recommended.



Bennett, James Gordon. (1990). *My Father's Geisha* Delacorte Press. New York, NY.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-385-30097-2 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-671-74000-8 (Paperback - 1991 Reprint)

This episodic novel starts when Teddy is eleven and lives in California on an Army base. It ends when he is in his thirties. Teddy's dysfunctional family life is the focus of the novel but Army life is woven inextricably into it, such as when major conflict arises when his mother's refuses to fly and join her husband at overseas postings. By the end of the novel we learn that Teddy's father had been having a long-term affair with a Vietnamese woman that started when he was overseas with the Army. From the first page of the novel there is no mistaking that this novel has a military setting. These military children are comfortable using jargon and acronyms that would baffle most people. For example, "another Article Fifteen for you," my sister whispers" (page 1). (An Article Fifteen is a military punishment).

Recommended with reservations.



Berg, Elizabeth. (1993). *Durable Goods*. Random House Trade Paperbacks. New York, N.Y.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 081296814X. (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-679-42208-0 (Hardcover)

Katie is twelve. Her mother is dead and her Army father is distant and sometimes abusive, especially to her 18-year-old sister. This is an examination of Katie's family and her relationship with her friends but it is also an unflinching and often unflattering look at life for a military child. "I do not believe the army is a good idea for people with regular human hearts." (page 63). Life on a military base is portrayed in detail, "Every morning when I wake up I hear a drill sergeant yelling pieces of songs to the straight lines of men marching, marching, all stepping onto their left foot at the same time,

all dressed exactly alike, all staring straight ahead and yelling back to him" (page 5). It is a poetically written book that will resonate with many readers for a long time.

Recommended.



Berg, Elizabeth. (1998). **Joy School**. Ballantine Books. New York. N.Y.

IN PRINT

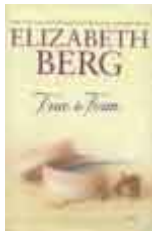
ISBN: 0345423097 (Paperback)

ISBN: 0-606-17137-1 (Turtleback Books Library Binding)

ISBN: 1-56895-488-3 (Large Print)

A sequel to *Durable Goods*. Katie now lives in Missouri and falls in love with an older man. Katie's father mellows with his new wife. The Army does not feature so emphatically in these sequels to *Durable Goods*, but it is still a background.

Recommended.



Berg, Elizabeth. (2002). **True to Form**. Random House. New York, N.Y.

IN PRINT

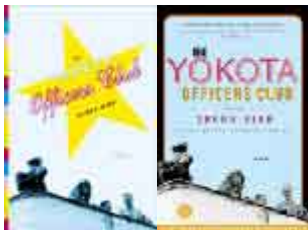
ISBN: 0-7434-1134-X (Hardcover).

ISBN: 0-7434-1135-8 (Softcover)

ISBN: 0-7434-5312-3 (Large Print)

The third book in the sequence about Katie that was started in *Durable Goods*. It is now 1961 and Katie is thirteen. Her father sets up unpleasant summer jobs for her and a visit to her friend Cherylanne in Texas goes badly.

Recommended.



Bird, Sarah. (2001). **The Yokota Officer's Club**. New York. N.Y. Ballantine Books.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-345-45277-1 (Ballantine Reader's Circle Edition).

ISBN: 0-375-41214-X (Hardcover)

This riveting read would suit teenagers who are strong readers. The story opens when Bernie is 18 and is returning to her family from her first year at college. Descriptions of her present day in Guam are mixed with flashbacks to her childhood. The flashbacks describe events in her childhood that lead up to a surprising climax that explains the disintegration of the happy family she once knew. The book is set in the author's own childhood so some of the details about the military family experience are out of date. "Wives of majors who wish to make colonel wear heels and hose in public" (page 20). But some emotional details never change, for example as Bernie arrives on an Air Force base in Okinawa that she has never seen before, "I recognize in the distance, the comfortingly familiar bulk of the commissary, the BX, the endless stretches of runway sweeping out to the sea" (page 44).

Highly Recommended.



Bradford, Richard. (1968). *Red Sky at Morning*. Harper Collins.

IN PRINT

ISBN: 0-06-093210-4 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-06-093190-6 (Paperback)

First published in 1968, this book was reprinted in 1999. Josh is seventeen and lives a privileged life in Mobile, Alabama where his father owns a shipyard. Near the end of World War II, in 1944, his father volunteers for the Navy, although he doesn't have to as he is exempted as someone running a vital industry. When he leaves with the Navy Josh's father arranges for Josh and his mother go to a village in the New Mexico mountains where he feels they will be safer. Josh settles in to the new life, making friends, growing up and finding beauty in the new landscape. However, his mother, removed from her known life, friends and family falls slowly apart. Josh's father is not present in much of the book but his absence looms over everyone. This book captures the dislocation and even disintegration that can occur in some military families when the military member is absent for an extended period.

Recommended.



Conroy, Pat. (1976). *The Great Santini*. Houghton Mifflin Company. New York, N.Y.

IN PRINT

This book has been reprinted in many versions.

ISBN: 0-553-26892-9 (1987 Bantam Paperback Edition)

ISBN: 0-553-38155-5 (2002 Reprint)

ISBN: 0-937036-00-5 (Hardcover)

ISBN: 0-606-03795-0 (Turtleback Library Edition)

Ben is being raised in a Marine family in the 1950s. His father is authoritarian, compulsively competitive and sometimes abusive. The military figures large in the family's life as Bull Meecham rules the family and the Marines rule Bull Meecham. It is a well-written and satisfying book. This book was made into a movie of the same name in 1979 and has been reprinted many times.

Recommended.