

Afganistan from the daughter of a veteran



Scarlett Campbell
Assistant Editor

I grew up as a military brat until the age of nine. My father served in the U.S. Air Force for 15 years. He joined straight out of high school right before a defining point in American history, 9/11. Over the course of his 15 years, my dad traveled to over 15 countries, has done several deployments in so many amazing places, and has a story to tell about every single one of them. He describes his time in the military as, "some of the best years of his life." They were some of the best years of my life too.

Our family was stationed on one of the biggest military bases in the country: Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, in Burlington County, New Jersey. It was so massive



Gwen Ramsey
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It's my 12th year in the Salida School District. 27 teachers have made an impact on my life and shaped me into who I am today. Over the years everyone has had a teacher that will hold a place in their lives until they grow old, whose words stick with them.

In middle school music class when I wanted to learn to drum, my dad would always tell me the story of his middle school music teacher. After hearing him bang on the kick and bash the cymbals as hard as he could, she declared he could never be good at the drums. She must have had some sort of impact on him, now that he recalls her words 40 years later.

Unlike my dad's ruthless band educationist, the community of teachers I've had in the Salida School District

that during our time there we never saw all of it. My childhood consisted of Easter egg hunts and visiting Santa in a gutted C-17 aircraft and yearly airshows with rooftop access where we were almost face to face with pilots that waved at us every time they passed by. He traveled a lot, so goodbyes were frequent. But thankfully, Skype existed, and my brother and I always got the best souvenirs, so it wasn't that bad. If I could go back and relive it all over again, I would do it in a heartbeat.

My father did several tours in Afghanistan, five to be exact, and although he joined the military to help people and save lives, those tours have left deep scars on his mental health, something he's struggled with for years - specifically severe PTSD. But after retiring, it only began to ravage his mind even more. Nightmares, anxiety, depression, anger and addiction. Throughout my early childhood, I've had a front row seat to the demise of my father. I watched a person that I love so dearly, a person I once idolized, turn into someone completely unrecognizable. If

I could, I would make it all go away. I would shield my dad from it all. I would convince him to get help sooner, instead of feeling the shame that many veterans feel by seeking help. But I can't.

One of the 13 American troops killed in Afghanistan during the Kabul Airport Attack - Nicole Gee - grew up in my hometown of Roseville, California. She graduated from the high school that my uncle teaches at. In fact, she was one of his students, and she was one of the students he knew well. The day he found out he called me, choked up and emotional. In my uncle's classroom, he has hundreds of photos of his students lining his walls. This last summer, while visiting, I went with my uncle to his classroom. I admired her picture without even knowing who she was. She walked the halls I used to dance in as a child, sat in the classroom I've studied every inch of. Now, the whole country knows her name. The news of her untimely passing hits home, not only because she was a student of my uncle's, but because that so easily could have been my dad. His

Teacher appreciation

have been nothing short of extraordinary. Every one of them has connected with me on a personal level and cared about my success. From sweet Ms. Kathy at the early childhood center to hilarious Mr. Tameler in the 3rd grade, hard-working Mrs. Bass in middle school, quick-witted Mr. Maxwell at SHS, and all of the wonderful people in between, each have led me to be who I am today.

My story wouldn't be complete without my favorite, Mrs. Gamache. When late last month, through teary eyes, she told us about her decision to resign, I was quite honestly devastated. Mrs. Gamache is not only my favorite teacher, but my friend, my support, and also a source of my happiness. I'll reminisce on the times we spent. When we would chat, when we would laugh, when I would complain and she would listen, when we made posters, went on scavenger hunts, and shared funny looks from across the room. Mrs. Gamache helped me learn that writing could be an outlet for me, the power of self-reflection, and that I was capable as a leader of the *Ten-*

derfoot Times. I admire Mrs. Gamache and her decision to do what was best for her personally. I hope that this will be one of the lessons I carry into my life as well. If something isn't working, then make the hard choice and make a change.

Being a teacher is a service that can't be thanked enough. Today more than ever, educators are expected to be more than a teacher. They must be a counselor, a disciplinarian, an entertainer, on top of molding a kid to be a positive member of society. Breaks are spent planning and evenings are filled with grading. Great teachers use their free time thinking about kids other than their own, putting our lives before theirs.

Everyone deserves to be content and feel valued, especially those who hold so much power and impact in shaping the lives of kids. The least I can do as a senior looking towards my future is to thank those who have led me to where I am. My teachers have held a fundamental role in shaping my interests and forming me into the best human I can possibly be.

last tour was in 2011, he spent 10 years there off and on trying to keep peace. And now, it seems as if it's all for not.

In speaking with other veterans, a lot of which are friends of ours, our government's handling of the situation is just as traumatizing as their time there. It's a slap in the face for all that they've worked for. It's all coming back to haunt them. For the older veterans within my family, it's Vietnam all over again. These men and women saw and did things no human should ever have to. All in the name of freedom for those who are oppressed, only to hand it back to their oppressors.

The second I saw what was happening in Afghanistan being broadcast on the news, my heart broke into 38 million pieces. My heart breaks for the Afghani people and the hundreds of Americans who were stranded. My heart bleeds for veterans who are now strug-

gling to understand what's happening. Understanding the why's and what if's, why all that they've fought for is now torn to shreds, a healing wound being ripped back open. I feel for the families of veterans, my father included. The Kabul Airport Attack happened on his 40th birthday, what a memory to have. I feel for the veterans' families who are still trying to fight the PTSD, relationships broken and families torn apart because of it, including my own. I by no means consider myself a Republican, nor a Democrat, but all I can say is that I hope our current, and past administrations can sleep at night with the atrocities, pain and suffering that they've caused to not only the families of those 13 Service Members killed on August 26, 2021 but to every veteran that has ever served in the greatest military in the world. All gave some, some gave all.

The distance between us



Makiah Parris
Sports Editor

Throughout life, I've always had that one person to run to. That one person who provided me love and understanding, and not only did I share my most favored memories, but my blood and last name as well. Although I'm glad Fellanie is able to go to the University of Hawaii at Manoa for college, she still was right there with me every single day for 16 years of my life. Most kids will say they don't get along with their siblings and that there's constant arguing and fighting. Oftentimes this is the case, although fortunately for me, my sister is my best friend, my go-to.

We've always clicked and connected in a special-sisterly way. For as long as I can remember I've always looked up to her. If she did a sport, I was eager to do the same one, or if she bought a pair of shoes I was up at the register with the same pair.

She taught me a lot. She showed me things like how to do my hair, put makeup on and even how to drive. She

also taught me a lot of what not to do. My parents always told me to "learn from her mistakes" and for the most part, I did. I didn't think a five year age difference was such a big gap until I watched her walk across stage at her high school graduation my 7th grade year. Understanding that people start their lives before others was hard for me to acknowledge. I knew she couldn't wait for me and that she had plans for her future that I had to accept. Unfortunately, those plans happened to be 3,275 miles away.

Seeing an empty room down the hallway was heartbreaking. She wasn't there for me to jump on her bed to wake up, she wasn't there to steal clothes from or put makeup on or have constant singing sessions with. I never thought I'd say I miss the yelling or hair pulling, but at times I do. I constantly find myself being reminded of the memories we made together, and I think about the time I'll be able to see her again since she's left. She always had the most adventurous soul, traveling nearly every weekend and luckily I was able to be in the front seat on every road trip, or handed an extra plane ticket. Although I'm not able to run to my sister whenever, I know she's living it up in Hawaii, doing the things she's always wanted, and living her best life.