

## Military OneSource Podcast — Military Teen Life Unplugged

### Episode transcript

#### Intro voice-over:

Welcome to the Military OneSource podcast. Military OneSource is an official program of the Defense Department, with tools, information and resources to help families navigate all aspects of military life. For more information, visit [militaryonesource.mil](https://militaryonesource.mil).

#### Bruce Moody:

Welcome to the podcast. I'm Bruce Moody. So today, I am in Georgia. I'm at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay. Do I have it right? All right, good. I'm in the right place.

I'm at the teen center, the Kings Bay Teen Center. And your hashtag is KBTeens. And I know that because it's plastered everywhere in gigantic signs [laughter]. So, look it up. KBTeens.

Not surprisingly, I'm surrounded by a bunch of teens, and we're going to have a conversation because they said, "Hey, you have to meet these guys. They do podcasts."

And, I thought, "Wow, we're going to do a podcast about podcasting." So, why not? In the process of doing that, maybe we get an idea of what military teens are thinking about, and that would be pretty neat.

So, I'm going to take the microphone and wave it around the room, and we're going to introduce ourselves, first names only, and military affiliation. How's that? OK. All right, start with you.

**Leah:**

Hi, my name is Leah, and I'm military connected because I live in a military community.

**Bruce:**

OK. So your parents are not actually in the military, but you're here, and we are your neighbors.

**Leah:**

Yeah [laughter].

**Bruce:**

OK, good. And I know you're Olivia.

**Olivia:**

Hi, I'm Olivia, and my dad retired from the Navy.

**Liam:**

Hi, my name is Liam. My dad is in the Navy currently, and he's been in the Navy ever since I was born.

**Mia:**

Hi, my name is Mia, and my dad is active-duty Navy.

**Camille:**

Hi, my name's Camille, and both my parents are retired Air Force personnel.

**Bruce:**

Wonderful. Air Force. See, how about that? There's a lot of military installations in this area. By the way, those are awesome sneakers. Man, there's a lot of colors going on there. All right. This is a lot of fun.

OK, I'm going to try to stay on topic, but those are some awesome sneakers [laughter]. So, you are developing, doing some podcasting. Tell me a little bit about that. What does that look like?

**Mia:**

I'm Mia. And so there's a specific day of the week where we come in here, and whoever wants to be involved in that podcast for the week gets to come in, and we kind of all come in and talk about our days, and how things are going.

And then we also talk about things that are important to us that is going about around us, and about just things that are important topics to us that we feel very passionate about.

**Bruce:**

All right, so what do you feel passionate about? Oh, don't shake your head no. No, I know you've got something. So, what's important to you? What are the sort of things that you want to talk about?

**Camille:**

For me, the teen center is a very important place for all teens, because it teaches you ways on how to be yourself, and how to be kind to others.

Also, you learn a lot about life. You learn how to manage money, you learn how to write checks and you learn a lot about yourself, and the other people around you, and how to communicate with others.

**Bruce:**

OK, I'll let you off the hook. No, that's nice. That's nice [laughter]. So, is your time at the teen center talking with the folks who work here as much as your fellow teens? So, what is that like?

**Liam:**

Well, my name's Liam, and we all do things together, because we have cooking clubs, so we all cook together, and then we have stuff like that. And we intermingle with the workers, and the other teens, and it's like one big friend group. Everyone's all friends.

**Bruce:**

Nice. So, there's a whole lot going on here beyond the podcast. So, let me just ask you something, because I heard something about ziplining over crocodiles.

**Olivia:**

Alligators.

**Bruce:**

Alligators. Oh, I'm sorry. We have to get it right. We're in Florida, or Georgia, we have to make sure. Yeah, but the important thing is that you're ziplining over things that want to eat you, but I was told that parental forms were signed [laughter]. Did any of you do this? Did any of you do this?

**Olivia:**

I did that.

**Bruce:**

Tell us, what's it like?

**Olivia:**

Hi, this is Olivia. And it was definitely a little scary at first because you look down, and then you see a bunch of them looking, and eating.

And you're walking across something that's not that sturdy, and you're hoping for the best, but you have the chain up in front of you, so you're kind of holding onto that, not really working on the obstacle course, but it's fun.

**Bruce:**

OK, good. So, there's a lot of interesting things going on here at the teen center. So, who is the newest member of this particular teen center?

**Liam:**

I think I've been here. Well, Liam, I think I've been here since the beginning of school, or maybe a few weeks before then.

**Bruce:**

So, where were you before this, before you came to Kings Bay? Where were you?

**Liam:**

I was, well my dad was stationed in NAS, so we all lived at NAS JAX.

**Bruce:**

OK. Did you use the teen center there?

**Liam:**

No sir. We never went to a teen center there. This is the first time we've ever been to a teen center.

**Bruce:**

So, how different is it to go from not using the teen center to using a teen center?

**Liam:**

Well, once you finish school you're always looking to go home. But this is more a place that, even if I didn't have a good day at school, I have someone to talk to, and I can have fun, and make it better instead of just sitting at home and doing nothing.

**Bruce:**

Yeah, I want to talk about that, because, and it's not just, it's not just teens, it is a lot of us are spending way huge amounts of time online.

So, what are your thoughts about that? Because you have the opportunity to come here, and to be with each other in real life, and you could probably meet on some social media app, but you're here in person.

How is that different for you? OK. You sort of look like you were going to talk, so I'm looking at you. You want to try?

**Camille:**

Sure. This is Camille. It's different for us, because we're never really on our phones while we're here, because we get to talk to each other. We have a chance to connect to each other.

While, on social media, there's anything on social media. You can be being put down. You're comparing yourself to whatever's out there. But if you're here, then you know all these people you love all these people, it's just one big family.

**Bruce:**

So what's the difference between talking to somebody in real life, and talking to them on social media?

**Leah:**

From talking to people in real life, you get to really connect with other people personally on a different level than online. You're just either just calling them, or texting them is not the same. You don't get that personal aspect of getting to know one another, and connecting with each other.

**Bruce:**

Yeah. So, did you want to, I'm looking at people like ... So, this is how I'm reading your reactions. I definitely have something to say, but don't put that microphone in my face [laughter].

**Mia:**

I'll elaborate on that. Me and Leah, we met here, and I mean we're friends on Snapchat, and we talk to each other over the phone, and on things like that.

But it's definitely when we're here, we definitely do a lot more of close bonding with talking to each other about things that are going on in our lives, or things that sometimes we just need to talk to each other about in person.

And being here at the teen center just makes that a whole lot easier for us to just kind of form that closer bond.

**Bruce:**

So, sort of, oh, are you joining the podcast? All right, great. Great. So, here's the deal. We have an additional member of the podcast crew here. So, you're going to give us your first name, and tell us your military affiliation. How's that?

**Joaquin:**

All right. My name is Joaquin, I'm military affiliated through my father.

**Bruce:**

What branch?

**Joaquin:**

Navy.

**Bruce:**

That was my guess, but all right. OK, so we're kind of talking about life at the teen center, and how that's maybe different from being online, or different from being home, just hanging out on your own. What does it mean to you to come to the teen center?

**Joaquin:**

For me it means spending time with people who will ... spending time with people who come from very different backgrounds and very different experiences, and learning how people react to different situations more, or less. And then bonding over shared experiences.

**Bruce:**

OK. So, we started talking about podcasts, but I don't know, we seem to have moved on a little bit [laughter]. Do you help at all with the podcast?

**Joaquin:**

From time to time when it happens, if I'm here I would often help. Yeah.

**Bruce:**

OK. We don't have to hang our hat entirely on the podcast thing. We can go in different directions. So, who has been here the longest?

**Olivia:**

Probably Leah.

**Leah:**

Yeah. OK. I'm Leah, and out of this group, I've been here the longest. I've been here for about four years, and it's the first teen center, youth center I've ever been to.

**Bruce:**

So, as the person, just to refresh everybody's, so you're not in the military, but you live in this county, and you have military all around you. It's incredible how many people are affiliated with the military. So, you see people coming and going. What is it like when you see military families coming and going the way we do?

**Leah:**

At first, when I moved here, I didn't think people would just move like crazy. And so being in the school system, all of my friends are mostly military, and one minute they're there, and a few months they're gone.

And that kind of affected me a little bit, because I'll make these bonds with people, and then they'll move. So, it's kind of hard living in a military town, but I'm grateful for the friends that I have made here.

**Bruce:**

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It is interesting, because you're not in the military, but you have sort of that same experience of having to restart friends all the time.

**Leah:**

Yeah, I would say I've changed my friends a lot due to friends moving, and so I like to have a stability, so it was kind of hard not having friends that I've grown up with throughout school, like some people have. Like, all my friends have moved, and it's kind of been hard, but I've gotten used to it the longer I've been here.

**Bruce:**

Is the moving around better than staying one place, or is it just different? Is there pros, and cons on both sides? How do you see it?

**Mia:**

This is Mia. Growing up, I've never really stayed in a state for longer than four years, and D.C. was our longest station, which was the four years.

And it's definitely very different talking to people who don't move around as much, because they don't really have that experience of your dad coming home one day, and it's like, "Hey, we just got orders, and now we're moving to somewhere else in a couple of weeks, or a couple of days."

But it definitely does come with its pros and cons. One of the pros for me is the resilience, and the being able to make new friends very easily, because you have to get used to that moving to somewhere else, and you can't just be shy and not talk to people because you're afraid, "Oh, I'm going to move in a few years anyways." It allows you to feel like, "Hey, maybe I can make this friend." And it just gives you that.

**Bruce:**

Now the other part of life is deployment, so I'm going to go back to you again. So, you're not in a military family, but you see people around you. Can you tell when a family is dealing with a deployment? What does it look like to you?

**Leah:**

To me, some of my friends, they'll get new orders to go leave somewhere else, and I'll tell through my friends, some of them will just be really sad, and they'll start, some of my friends start distancing themselves, because they don't want to leave most of the time, but they have to.

It's their orders. So, to me, I just like to be there for them, and even though it affects me, I know it affects them more, because they have to be the new kid at the end of the day all the time.

And so, I just know it's hard for people to leave a place that either they've known, or they've gotten comfortable, and just having to pick up and leave to a new place. So, yeah, that's how I can usually tell.

**Bruce:**

Got it, got it. So, let's talk about deployments. This is a big part of military life. What does a deployment look like to you? OK, go ahead.

**Joaquin:**

This is Joaquin. I've, about a month ago, my dad got back. For me, deployment is one of the harder times, because we're not as flexible without my dad.

For example, usually when my dad's home we are able to do a lot more stuff. For example, I'm able to be here a lot more often, but when my dad's deployed, I am often here just one day, so that way my mom can have help ...

However, it's harder for me partly because I've only had two true deployments. Everything else hasn't really been a ... so, it's harder for me.

**Bruce:**

So, I did an interview this morning with some military moms, and we were talking about deployment. So, how many of you have submariners in your family?

All right. OK, for folks who don't know, if you are in a family, and your sailor is heading out in a submarine, you don't hear from that person. They leave, and they're on deployment.

They're not FaceTiming from the deck of a ship. They are not around at all. So, how does your family get ready for a deployment? What do you talk about, and what does it look like when a deployment is coming up?

**Liam:**

Well, this is Liam, and was my dad got shore duty orders by the time I was like maybe 3. So, I don't remember any of his deployments. I wasn't there for that.

**Bruce:**

OK.

**Mia:**

Yeah, Liam's my brother.

**Bruce:**

Oh, I didn't know that [laughter]. Oh, OK. All right, all right, got it.

**Mia:**

My dad, when we were younger was deployed very often. He'd be gone for a year, nine months, and we wouldn't hear or see from him for quite long periods of times. Sometimes we'd get a call if the sub resurfaced, or if they stopped somewhere so that where they had the ability to talk to us.



But I remember when we found out that he was going to be deployed, we tried to spend as much family time as we possibly could together, because there's always that fear of you don't know when the next time you're going to see them is, or sometimes they don't come back.

So, we just always had tried to spend a lot of family time together around those areas when it did, and sporting events, my dad always tried to make it to as many sporting events as he could when he was home, and had always, right before he left had always asked my mom to take videos of sporting events.

Then when he came home he could always watch those through.

**Bruce:**

Oh, really nice. When a deployment is over, what is that like? And here's why I asked the question. I think that a lot of people are under the impression that when the deployment is over, and the service member comes home, everything changes immediately.

And it's always awesome because the family ... you're already shaking your head no, so it's an important thing to talk about because knowing that there is a whole chapter to a deployment that includes what happens after a deployment is a really important thing to understand.

So, from a teen's point of view, what does that look like?

**Mia:**

So, when he did come home, there was always, it took a long time for everybody to adapt to him being back, because schedules change, the way things happen around the house change.

And then, for us, my dad came back with PTSD. And so that always was a struggle for things around the house to get done, or sleeping, or just even sometimes my parents just getting along.

There's a story, when I was younger, my dad came back from Afghanistan, and had such bad PTSD.

We had lived on base at the time, and there used to be not, we didn't live on base, we lived around the town around base, and there used to be a shooting range, and he would hear, he had heard bullets go off like gunshots go off.

And my mom had left him, and he'd only been home for a week, had left him at the house with me, and when the gunshots went off, he locked us and barricaded us in the house.

And stuff like that happens. So, it's always different trying to get your families to adapt back into what you thought life would be, and just to realize that it's never going to give back to what it was before.

**Bruce:**

What does it mean to have teens that you can gather around, and who maybe understand, maybe not the specific details, but kind of understand that military life can be pretty rough on everyone, the service member, the family.

What does that mean to be able to talk to people who get it? Your age, your experiences, to be able to say, “Yeah, I’m having a really awful day. It’s not going the way I wanted it to. And it just is good to be able to talk to you about it.” What does that mean to you?

**Joaquin:**

This is Joaquin. This is actually the first kind of time I’ve actually had military kids around me, because I’ve only moved once in my life, and I was from Washington state to here.

And the most recent one, I had the entire teen center around me to help with. And whenever I had off days, a lot of the people would at least try to cheer me up, or help in some way. And it’s very comforting, and it’s a very pleasant atmosphere to be in, and I’m glad I’m a part of this.

**Bruce:**

I would like to hear from you talk to the people listening to this podcast, most of the people listening to your parents. So what are the sort of things that you think parents need to understand?

**Olivia:**

This is Olivia. Things have been moving really fast, and I think that what military parents should know is that it’s not just affecting them, it’s also affecting their children. And with all the moving, it’s hard on the children for moving, and making new friends, and not moving from one place.

It’s like, you are so used to one spot, and then you have to go to a new spot, and live there, and understand it, and then you get so comfortable at that one spot, and then you end up, you have to move again. It’s very hard.

**Joaquin:**

This is Joaquin, I would say along with what Olivia’s saying, another thing is if a teen is being protective about something, or they’re being defensive, it does not mean they’re hiding something.

More or less, it’s a built-in thing that I think a lot of teens have that it’s to be protective about personal questions, unless they’re ready for it. It’s not that they are trying to hide something, anything like that. Another thing is, if a teen wants to be left alone, leave them alone. Don’t try to engage contact [laughter].

**Bruce:**

I think you’ve tapped into something there [laughter]. All right, what does that mean? What does it mean when you need to just be on your own, and have some quiet time, and not have a million questions?

**Camille:**

This is Camille. I don't know about for everybody else, because we had a conversation about this a couple days ago. We have this thing called rose and thorn that we do every day.

And rose and thorn we talk about our day. Your rose is your happy part, and then your thorn is your not-so-good part. So while we were talking about our rose and thorn, we're talking about somebody being really happy, and then we start discussing if it was better to be happy or sad.

For me, when I sit alone, it gives me time to think, and I don't know about everybody else, but I really need a good cry once in a while. And a lot of people don't understand it, so sometimes I say it's better to be sad than happy because then you can really think about your emotions.

And when parents come in, they barge in, they're like, "Why are you crying, and why are you doing this? You should be doing this." It's really overwhelming when you don't have a moment to yourself.

**Mia:**

This is Mia. I think with what Joaquin was saying, the factor of sometimes just leaving us alone, it's sometimes just like parents, we need time to cool off, and think about what's going on so that we can really center ourselves, and think, "OK, I know this is bothering me, but let me just think through this so that I can get through it, and then I'll answer your questions instead of you just coming at me."

**Bruce:**

What do you think about that? When you see your friends who are being really quiet, do you tend to let them be quiet, or do you try to engage them? How do you handle a friend who's being super quiet?

**Leah:**

Usually, I'll just check up on them, see if they're OK. And sometimes I can just tell that they need some time to their self, and I'll just let them know that I'm here for them, and if they need to talk, I'm always going to be here, and I'll just let them have the time that they need.

**Liam:**

This is Liam. I actually have something on the opposite side. You also don't want to just let the teen be alone, and then do something they shouldn't do, you feel like ... and I guess they can be sad.

So, there's a point where there's got to be a change, and you can't just be sad forever, and you gotta figure out the good things in life, and not always look in the sad things.

**Bruce:**

Yeah, and I think you were kind of talking about that. I mean, sometimes a good cry is just working through something.

You really feel like you've been through it after a good cry, that's a good thing, but staying in it for an extended amount of time, that's maybe time we need to have people jump in like these adults on the other end of the room.

I did not know how this conversation was going to go, and I am just pleasantly surprised, and I'm really, really grateful for the time to spend with you.

Any final words to just the adults in the room? Be they parents, or teachers, anything about what they should know about being a teen today?

**Camille:**

Sending your kids to the teen center is the best thing to do [laughter].

**Bruce:**

All right. I think that's how we're going to cap it off [laughter]. All right. All right. OK, then I'm going to do my little readout, and you're all going to stare at me while I talk, OK? All right, here we go.

The Military OneSource Podcast is an official resource of the Defense Department, and we always like to hear from you. So, we have a link in the program notes, and you can always send us a question, a comment, an idea for a future episode, or maybe even invite me to your installation.

How about that? And be sure to subscribe to this podcast wherever you listen to your podcast, because we cover a wide range of topics to help military teens navigate military life. I'm Bruce Moody. Thank you for listening to the podcast today. Have a great day. Take care. Bye-bye.

**All:**

Bye!

**Unknown speaker:**

Good job, guys.