Fear of Missing out/FOMO or the Joy of Missing out/JOMO

FOMO is an acronym for the expression “fear of missing out,” which is when you fear you might “miss out” on an important party, event, happening, or opportunity to meet someone or do something. When you were in the military, did you experience any “fear of missing out” (FOMO) on what others around you in your former civilian life at home might be doing or experiencing, perhaps daily or special rites of passage or opportunities? From the opposite direction, did you experience JOMO or the “joy of missing out” when you were in the military? Were you glad you missed out on some elements of being home, whether obligations, expectations, events or certain kinds of relationships?

Let the Artifact or Object Speak

Write about one artifact or object that you currently possess that you most strongly associate with your military service. Describe the artifact and how you interacted with it in the military and how you interact now that you have left the military. If you are still active duty or a reservist, you can stick with the first part of this writing prompt. If you want an extra challenge, write this piece from the point of view of the object or artifact—let it speak and tell the story of its relationship with you.

Earliest Memory of the Military

Think back to your very first understanding or consciousness of the military. Perhaps you remember learning something in school, seeing war movies on TV as a child, playing with GI-Joe toys, overhearing family conversations about the military, or being told a story or shown pictures about the military. Write down everything you can remember about that moment. Try to dig deep to recall everything you saw, heard, thought, and felt in as much concrete detail as possible. What year was it? Who else was in the room with you? What was going on in the immediate, cultural, or historical background? If you can’t isolate one specific earliest memory, try writing down three or more early memories of the military.