

Jan 18, 2018 · 3 min read

One story closes, another begins

My family has a history in the military.

My biological dad retired from the Army. My step-father retired from the Army. My brother served in the Navy. One sister served in the National Guard, and my oldest sister retired from the Marines. I was the only sibling who did not go into military service.

Why? I don't really know to be honest. Maybe it was the public showers...

In any case, we all went in different paths in life. I think we all turned out OK for the most part. I am definitely the baby still when it comes to life experiences.

This article, however, is about my brother-in-law, who just retired last week from the Marines as a 1st Sergeant. I wouldn't even begin to tell you about his military history as I don't understand much about the military (despite having grown up around a military base for most of my life).



Clayton joined our family oh, around 20 years ago maybe? I'm horrible at keeping track of time. He and my sister Maria met while both serving in the Marines, although I can't even remember where they were stationed when

that happened. I didn't pay much attention to anything. I was a stupid teenager back then, 18 years old.

I used to be young and stupid... I'm just not young anymore.

Anyway, 23 years of military service is nothing to scoff at. I may not have served in the military, but I respect those that do. My step-dad retired at 30 years. My sister retired after over 25 years. When family get together, conversations usually result in discussing stories about life in the military. I can't relate or add to the conversations, so I sit quietly and listen.... (or yell at my kids to stop being so loud or running around).

The retirement ceremony was nice. A lot of his friends and colleagues attended. Some of his colleagues stood up and gave speeches and tribute to Clayton's character, drive, and dedication during his service.





He and my sister have a son. My sister has 2 children from a previous marriage, and Clayton took to them like a father. Their child together, Clayton Pettus Jr (CJ) has grown into a young man, about to enter the Marines himself this summer (hence one story closing and another beginning). I have no doubt he will succeed. He has Clayton as a father to push and drive him to excel in everything he did growing up, from academics to sports. Not to say my big sister didn't have anything to do with it, but this story is just about him. 😊 Hopefully we can raise our kids half as well.

I can't attest to his military life, but I can say that when it came to family, Clayton was always there to help out in anyway he could. I remember on my way to my mom's house to visit (they were up for the weekend), in the pouring rain, I blew a tire. He was by my side changing it within minutes. He and my brother even took me to get my first tattoo. We don't talk much. it's probably more because of me. I can't relate to military life, or his hobbies in his personal life. I didn't have anyone to take me camping, hiking, or fishing growing up. I may appear to be anti-social, but I just don't have anything to relate to, so I stick to basic conversation.

He gave a rather touching speech himself, thanking family for our support through the years, as well as those in the service who helped shape him along his military journey.





Retirement isn't the end. I don't think it will slow him down at all.

I am proud of him and all he has done, both in his military and family life.

We all are.