

Features

Parkland students talk about family in the military

by Aaron Spikol

For most Parkland students, and most United States citizens, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq serve as little more than background chatter to their everyday lives. The military and those who serve in it can seem as remote as a foreign country and its citizens. With the all volunteer military reaching its 37th anniversary, more Americans than ever lack any sort of connection to the armed services. The truth remains however that there are millions of citizens across the country, and many students in Parkland, whose connection to the military could not be more personal. They are those who have parents, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, children and grandparents who have served or who are serving in the United States military. Since there is no way of distinguishing whether someone has a family member in the military or not unless they mention it, and because such discussions might not be common, *The Trumpet* wanted to highlight three students who do have family in the armed services and who were kind enough to be interviewed for this article.

Senior Stephanie Giannelli-Frey, whose grandfather was in the Navy until he was medically discharged, described how her grandfather's military service has affected her and her cousin's upbringing. She talked about how the military tradition was passed down through her mother. "You're raised differently," Giannelli said. "[When asked to do something] You don't say no. You learn the right way to do things."

Who Stephanie talked about most though were her cousins, Adam and Sean, whom she described as "very smart" and who are both now serving in the Coast Guard. "We're really close," Stephanie said of her relationship with her cousins. "Our families got together all the time, about once a month. They were like my older brothers." Stephanie described how their grandfather's love of the Navy inspired her older cousin, Adam,

25, to apply to Annapolis and the Coast Guard Academy. This in turn inspired his brother, Sean, 23, to go through the Coast Guard's Officer Candidate School after graduating from Dickinson College and studying in Germany for some time.

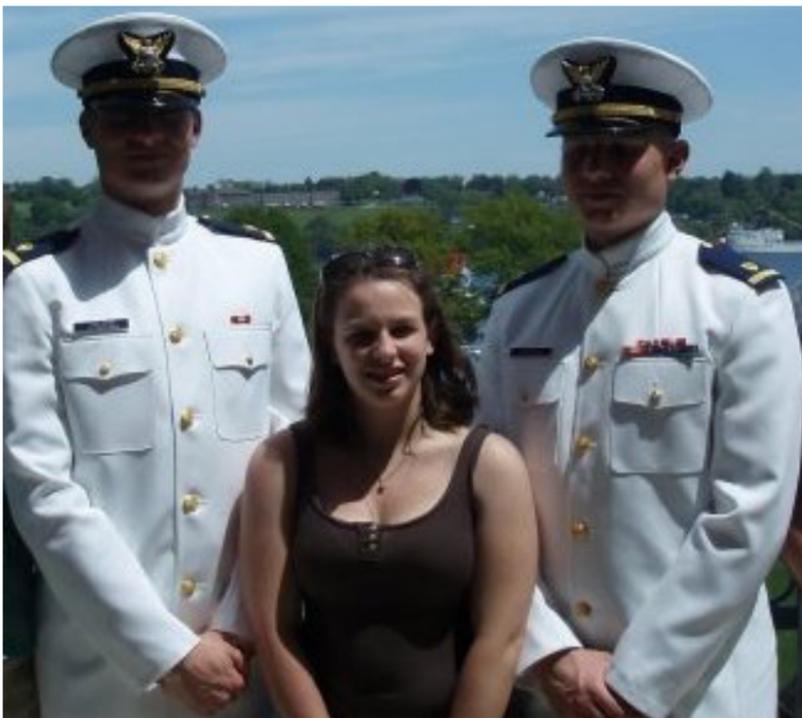


photo courtesy of Stephanie Giannelli-Frey

Stephanie Giannelli-Frey visits her cousins, Adam and Sean, who are serving in the Coast Guard.

"They're a little more serious," said Stephanie, "but not much." She said the biggest difference now was that she no longer got to see them as often. Adam is based in Virginia while Sean is in Seattle. "[Their service] has made my grandfather so happy," Stephanie said. "Now he wants me to go to Annapolis." Stephanie indicated that this would be unlikely.

Joshua O'Hanlon, a Parkland Junior who also comes from a military family, talked about his father's military service and how it has affected him and his family.

"He's a dedicated guy," said O'Hanlon, when describing his father. "He does something until it's done. He's easy to talk to. He can be strict,

but he's not scary or anything like that."

As for his family, he said his father's service has obviously had a big effect on them. "It's impacted us a lot. We have to make sacrifices. The army can take him away for the weekend and he can't come to

everything we want him to." As for Josh's feelings about the military, he was very clear. "I think it's great. The military can be strict and some people may say it sucks, but they're just doing their job."

The job eventually took Josh's father to Iraq last year, where he was deployed to

an area north of Baghdad as commander of a Stryker battalion for one year. "We worried a lot," said Josh, "but we knew he'd be safe. He's a good boss." O'Hanlon said he and his family were able to communicate with his father through Skype and instant messaging. "He came back for Christmas. He was cold and really tired. He said the people [Iraqis] there were supportive, that it was a kind of 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours' relationship."

O'Hanlon said that his family had a tradition of military service for at least three generations and that it had been "natural" for his father to join the Army National Guard. Despite this, he said

his father had made it clear to Josh and his sister that he did not expect them to join the military. O'Hanlon said that he was undecided as to whether he would join the military. His father, Mark O'Hanlon, is a Lieutenant Colonel based at Fort Indiantown Gap.

While some families have a tradition of military service, others have just recently become connected to the military, like that of freshman Chase McNeil, whose brother, Cameron McNeil, joined the Marine Corps last year. "He had thought about college," said McNeil "but when his friend [Dawson Yeakel] joined the Marines that influenced him a lot. Our mom was hesitant," he said, but ultimately his family approved of his brother's decision. He said that the physical aspect had appealed to his brother.

"It's a lot quieter at the dinner table now," said McNeil, "which is good...but not so good. We would have some funny discussions." Chase, who is the third of four children, said that he missed having his older brother at home. He said they used to play hockey and that when his brother recently came home for two weeks, Cameron made a point of spending a lot of time with him. Chase also got the opportunity to go with his brother to physical training. "It was hard—there was a lot of running, a lot of climbing," Chase said he had thought about the Marines himself but was not sure if he could do it. Talking with his brother about the Marines, he said that the Marine corps "had been a lot like what he had expected. It's everything he wanted and he's interested in it. He'll be there for four years." He described how his family used Skype and instant messaging to keep up with his brother, who is stationed in North Carolina. It is possible that his brother will be deploying to Iraq for a year.

When asked how his family's perception of the military had changed, McNeil spoke very precisely. "We had always been thankful before for what the military does," he said, "but now that Cameron's in the Marines...it means a lot more."

Snooki can no longer deem herself a *guidette* of New Jersey

by Cain Azar

It has been confirmed. Snooki Polizzi has no Italian background whatsoever. Being a roommate on the infamous MTV hit show, *Jersey Shore*, her friend and house mate, "JWOWW," dropped the bomb not too long ago. In an interview, "JWOWW" admits that she is not Italian either, just Spanish and Irish. Both claim that the title "Guidette" poses no relationship to Italian Americans. The two believe that the term relates to how they act as people, not just where they are from.

"It's actually kind of weird. There's a really big Italian flag on their garage door and they even made fun of a few girls for not being Italian. Snooki prances around in an Italia jacket for crying out loud!" said junior Maddy Gerhard.

Snooki is actually Chilean. She was adopted into an Italian family, where she gets the look and idea behind her "Guidette" appearance. Throughout the show's run, *Jersey Shore* received tons of negative publicity and criticism for placing Italian Americans in a bad light. UNICO, an Italian American organization, even went far enough to state that Snooki was not just an embarrassment to Italians, but to the human race as a whole. Little did they know, Snooki was claiming no Italian background.

"What?!" asked junior Steph Keubler upon hearing the news. "Chilean? Didn't that place get hit by an earthquake? I don't understand how that's even possible. I love Snooki! It doesn't change my viewpoint on the show, I still will be watching the next season."

The news aroused attention in a large number of people. Despite the recent uncovering of Snooki and "JWOWW's" background, they also let slip that Ronnie, a fellow cast member, is not fully Italian.

"I guess next season won't be so focused around Italian juice heads and all the other Italian flare. It's just odd that the show's premise wasn't even accurate, but pretty funny anyway," junior David Miller said.

There is no argument against the fact that *Jersey Shore* dominated its ten o'clock time slot on Thursday nights. Having made records for MTV, *Jersey Shore* is to return this summer.

"I'm really looking forward to the next season! I hope that it's just as entertaining as the first. I watched every night and plan on doing the same for this season!" said junior Zarha Khaku.



photo by Maddy Gerhard

Snooki signs autographs at a car dealership in Easton.

Along with the new location, maybe the show will take a different route and not revolve around an Italian stereotype. The Chilean is out of the bag.