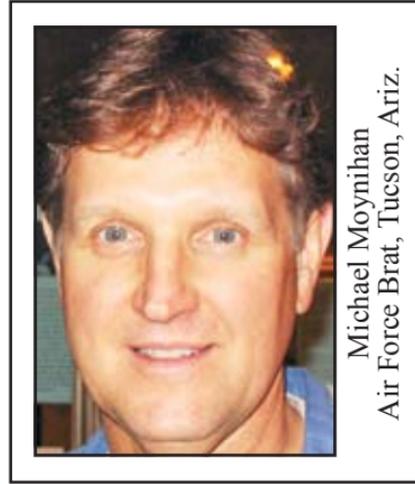
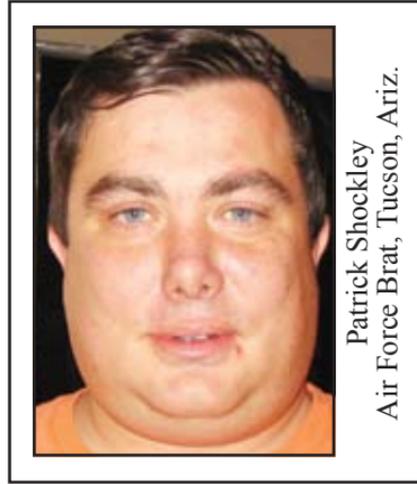
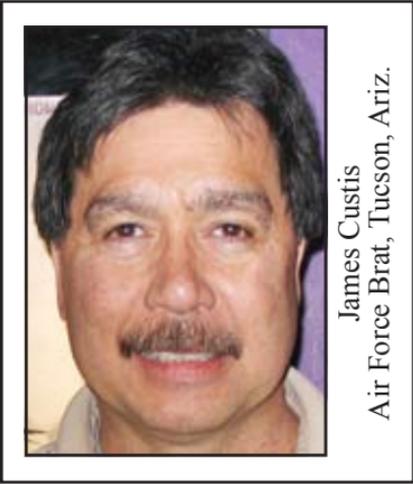


# The Fort Huachuca Scout®



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# Scout On The Street — What's special about being a military brat?



*"Traveling for free and learning other languages and cultures."*

*"All my experiences growing up in the U.S. and Japan."*

*"You get to travel and experience new things and learn to accommodate strangers more easily."*

*"Camaraderie and closeness. You have a common experience with others. Being a BRAT is your hometown."*

*"I really think being exposed to so many cultures and countries made me who I am. I feel like a true member of the human race. If every child spent one year abroad, the world would be a better place."*

# The Scout Time Out

## BRATS Our Journey Home

By Tanja Linton

Media Relations Officer and Air Force brat

Where are you from?" is a question most people can answer with one or two words. If your response is more complicated and requires a long explanation you probably share a common experience with an estimated five percent of Americans who grew up as military brats.

The sheer variety of appropriate answers to the question "Where are you from?" was the main topic of discussion for about 250 military brats who came out March 6 to see the first documentary about growing up military at the Loft Cinema in Tucson.

Tucson was selected as a site to screen the movie because of military installations in the area, a large population of adult military brats and retired military.

"Brats: Our Journey Home," written and directed by independent filmmaker and Army brat Donna Musil, is an award-winning documentary that looks at the highs and lows of growing up in a military family. It includes the input from military brats across the services as well as historians and a psychologist.

Some of the better-known brats who participated in the film include: Kris Kristofferson, who not only narrated, but donated original songs to the production, and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf who is both a military brat and the father of military brats. They and others discuss the profound affect growing up "brat" has had on their lives.

The film is a seven-year work of passion which features rare archival footage, home movies and private photographs from post-war Japan, Germany, and Vietnam.

"We brats have no true hometowns and our friends are scattered to the winds. As a result, we often go through adulthood feeling lost and alone," commented Musil. "This film is dedicated to those who have known that feeling."

The audience, made up mostly of Air Force and Army brats, but also a few Navy and Marine Corps brats, echoed that sentiment — often with laughter. Being a military brat is your hometown.

"This is the most normal I've ever felt," said one woman during a question-and-answer session with Musil after the screening.

## *First-ever documentary on military brats is shown in Tucson*

Throughout the audience, heads nodded in agreement. The discussion with Musil almost took on the air of a revival meeting as total strangers who thought they had an unusual childhood realized they had so much in common with each other.

The film also had an effect on a former Department of Defense Schools System teacher at the screening. "I wish I had seen this before I taught. I would have had an insight into their lives," said Ike Gaskin about the taught military kids he taught in France and Turkey.

The journey that led to making the film began in 1997 when Musil began searching the Internet, looking for some of her former classmates from her high school in Taegu, Korea. That search yielded some contacts and soon a get-together was planned.

When they met, the group spent the entire weekend talking non-stop about their shared experiences. "I realized there were others like me. I didn't have to explain myself," said Musil. When she returned home, Musil did some research and realized there was no film about military brats.

"Today, I have a film about a group of people whose only 'hometowns' are each other. My vision is that this film might be a spark in a global fire of self-awareness and belonging — that from the ashes of war might rise a nation of children committed to peace," said Musil. "If every child spent one year abroad the world would be a better place" she added.

Nobody really knows how many military brats exist. Neither DoD nor anyone else has kept a count of the number of children raised in the U.S. military. The DoD school system estimates it has educated 4 to 7 million military kids overseas since 1946. But that's only 20-30 percent of the total brat population, so the total is more likely at least 15 million.

The dictionary defines "brat" as a spoiled or impolite child, but to millions of Americans the word is used like a badge of honor and defines their unique upbringing.

"Brats: Our Journey Home" is on a nationwide tour with stops currently scheduled in Texas. The documentary will air on the Armed Force Radio and Television Service during April, Month of the Military Child. To view the trailer and learn more about the film, visit [www.bratsfilm.com](http://www.bratsfilm.com).

### Ways to get involved and learn more about military brat culture:

#### Find fellow brats on the Internet

The Internet has made tracking down old classmates easier than ever. You can register with the Military Brat Registry ([www.militarybrat.com](http://www.militarybrat.com)) or Overseas brats [www.oveasbrats.com](http://www.oveasbrats.com). Do a search for your school's alumni association.

#### Vietnam-Iraq Brats Mentor Program

Brats Without Borders is looking for Vietnam brats interested in participating in a mentoring program with Iraq brats (meaning American brats whose parent(s) fought in Vietnam or the current War in Iraq). If you're interested, visit [www.bratsfilm.com](http://www.bratsfilm.com) and click on "future projects."

#### Home Movies and Photographs

Brats Without Borders is also still searching for home movie footage and still photographs from military families to use in follow-up projects to BRATS: Our Journey Home. Visit [www.bratsfilm.com](http://www.bratsfilm.com) and click on "future projects" for more information.

#### The American Overseas Schools Historical Society

This organization is developing an archive and planning a museum dedicated to overseas schools in Wichita, Kan. Learn more about their efforts at <http://aoshs.wichita.edu/welcome.html>

#### Attend a local military brat conference

The "Every Brat Has a Story" Conference takes place at the Heard Museum in Phoenix March 31 and April 1. The event features a workshop by brat author Mary Edwards Wertsch, author of "Military Brats: Legacies of Childhood Inside the Fortress," a screening and discussion of "BRATS: Our Journey Home," and opportunities to share stories and connect with one another. Sign up through the brat store at [www.militarybrat.com](http://www.militarybrat.com).