



# UNCLASSIFIED: The Military Kid Art Show



The first contemporary art exhibition exploring the American Military B.R.A.T., an invisible subculture.



## “Kids Serve, Too” Is Not Just a Slogan!

For over 200 years, military children have been called “brats” - an historic reference to British military children, based on the acronym, “British Regiment Attached Traveler.” There are 2 million children in active duty families and 15 million adult brats. They’re every age, race, religion, and socioeconomic class. They are the invisible Americans.

**UNCLASSIFIED: The Military Kid Art Show** is an ethnographic field study of these individuals, featuring original, never-before-seen art, photography, and video (from the 1950s to the present), along with historical artifacts and resources.

The exhibit covers a variety of subject matter - deployment, mobility, trauma, base life, reintegration, living overseas, as well as the immediate and long-term social and emotional impact of growing up in a military family.

**UNCLASSIFIED** was one of six nonprofits to win the 2012 Newman’s Own Awards for innovative programs that improve the quality of life for military families. Executive Director Donna Musil accepted the award at the Pentagon, on behalf of BWB and President Lora Beldon of the Military Kid Art Project, from General Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Tom Indoe of Newman’s Own, and Tobias Naegele, *Military Times* Editor in Chief. The American Overseas Schools Historical Society, Museum of the American Military Family, Sprint and Fisher House Foundations also made this show possible.

**UNCLASSIFIED** celebrates and honors the service and sacrifice of military children. It offers military “brats” of all ages a chance to share their stories and connect with their communities, in hopes of raising awareness of the Military Brat subculture and its lifelong impact on children.

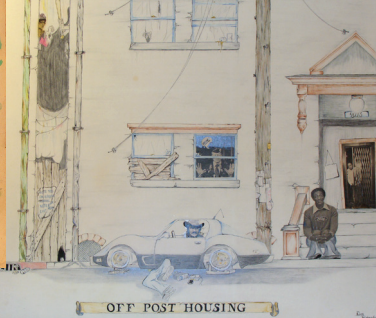
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## Gallery 1: Military Kids Connect & Reflect

Military children and teenagers stationed around the world from the 1950s to the present express their thoughts and feelings about “growing up military” in 29 pieces of original, never-before-seen art. Mediums run the gamut from crayons to pastels to mixed media. Gallery 1 also features an authentic military footlocker filled with historical “military brat” artifacts. “I’m a BRAT” buttons, flyers, lists of “best practices” and other materials with information about military brat organizations, films, books, and resources are available for visitors to take home. In addition, STEM/STEAM educational materials, lesson plans, and ideas for local programs to accompany the exhibit are available for use.

## Gallery 2: Military Kids Speak Out

## Gallery 3: A Family Heals

When a soldier comes home from war with PTSD, it affects the entire family. Recent studies indicate it may even cause secondary PTSD in spouses and children. In this special segment of **UNCLASSIFIED: The Military Kid Art Show**, father and daughter artists Tom and Lora Beldon explore this phenomenon through their art.

After reuniting, Tom and Lora discovered that they had both been making art to help heal the wounds of war. Lora made her conceptual series *Everywhere and Nowhere* with graphite drawings inside hand-built toothpick frames. Tom created a fantastical “world” of hanging sculptures and installation pieces deep in the forest.

Tom was a career Marine who served two year-long combat tours in Vietnam. Lora was three years old when he returned. After years of struggling, Tom and his wife finally divorced. Tom dropped Lora off at college and didn’t see her again for over 15 years.

Tom and Lora discuss their experiences and artwork in excerpts from Donna Musil’s new documentary **Our Own Private Battlefield**. They agreed to share their story in order to help other military families know that it’s never too late to start over again.



Bring **UNCLASSIFIED** to your town - [www.USAbrat.org!](http://www.USAbrat.org!)



A collection of video clips about military kid life and the profound impact it has on one’s adult life. How it feels to move twelve times before you graduate from high school... watch one or both parents go to war... grow up in a paradox that is idealistic and authoritarian, privileged and painful, supportive and stifling - all at the same time - then struggle to “fit in” to civilian America when you leave that environment. Gallery 2 features excerpts from:

- » **BRATS: OUR JOURNEY HOME**  
The award-winning documentary film about the Military Brat Subculture, narrated by Kris Kristofferson, with General Norman Schwarzkopf, author Mary Edwards Wertsch, and brats of all ages and branches of service. Seen on CNN’s “This Week at War” and NPR’s “All Things Considered.” Winner, Best Documentary, Best First Time Director, G.I. Film Festival’s Founders Choice Award.
- » **OUR OWN PRIVATE BATTLEFIELD**  
A documentary work-in-progress about a father and daughter healing the wounds of war through their art.
- » **Military Kid Interviews**  
From the Military Kid Art Project, B.R.A.T.s Workshops, and BRATS Clubs around the country.



# Military Kid Art Project™ Classes

Exhibit hosts can also offer customized art classes, camps, and school curriculums (including STEM/STEAM) for local children in conjunction with **UNCLASSIFIED**. It's all about fun, making connections, and expressing oneself - while raising awareness of the Military Kid Subculture at the same time!

We don't teach kids how to draw. Kids already know how to draw. We recognize and value every child's unique creative voice. Using historical art references, we encourage children to share their views and experiences through their art.



All **Military Kid Art Project** classes are led by real working artists with education degrees or a long history of teaching in a classroom setting. Each was "raised military" or rigorously trained in the Military Brat Subculture by other adult military brats. They are recognized, respected, and regularly exhibited artists in their respective communities.

For more information, see our [Facebook Page](#) at [www.facebook.com/pages/Military-Kid-Art-Project/351635871517079](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Military-Kid-Art-Project/351635871517079). Also take a look at our [Summer Camp Video](#) - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ukifooouz070&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ukifooouz070&feature=youtu.be).

## “BRATS 1.0” Educate-the-Educator Workshops™



Another option exhibit hosts can provide are official **Brats Without Borders “BRATS 1.0” Educate-the-Educator Workshops™**. Created in 2009, these are the only workshops in the country developed and presented by adult military “brats.” As a result, our workshops are honest, thorough, compassionate, and inclusive. We examine all of it - mobility, deployment, reintegration, PTSD, death and injury, even the racial alienation some military children feel as they move in and out of different cultural environments - from the children's point-of-view!

For every gift of “growing up military,” there is an equal and opposite challenge. **BRATS 1.0** discusses these anomalies in a way no other training session does - because we know the Military Kid Subculture is not the same as the Military Subculture. Our classes are about the *children*, not the institution. If you're a parent or professional who works with military kids, this class ([featured at Yellow Ribbon programs](#) around the country) is a must. We also offer workshops for military teens getting ready to transition out of the military or home from an overseas assignment.

## Keynote Speeches & On-Site Art Installation



Father/daughter artists Tom and Lora Beldon, and BWB Founder/military child advocate/filmmaker Donna Musil, are available to give keynote speeches and host panel discussions about their art, growing up military in war-deployed families, and the long-term socio/emotional impact it has on a child's life.

Folk artist Tom Beldon (a Navy brat, retired Marine Corps officer, and Vietnam combat veteran) is also available to build hanging sculptures and installation pieces at the host's venue site with local materials.



## BRATS Clubs™

A **Brats Without Borders BRATS Club™** is a safe place for children of active duty, reserve, and former military and military-connected personnel to gather, grow, and support each other through social, leadership, and community service activities. Our mission is to have fun and help individuals who have “grown up military” reach their full potential, socially and emotionally, in their homes, schools, and communities. The clubs are a joint effort between BWB and the school or organization hosting the club. BWB provides the initial direction, materials, resources, and ideas, and the newly chartered BRATS Club™ takes it from there! (Adult BRATS Clubs™ are also forming.)

Marine Corps brat and English teacher **Christy Plant McAnally**, formed the first BRATS Club™ at **Landstown Middle School** in Virginia in 2010. Today, it's one of the school's most popular clubs!

