

My Coast Guard Adventure



by
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Dedicated to
Michele Quiram,
Mother of Will and Ethan
and loving Coast Guard wife



Hello everyone, my name is Amy. I am six years old, that's me in the picture, holding on to my Mom's hand. I have a little brother named Andy and we have a dog, "Sinbad." Dad got Sinbad for us so we wouldn't be lonely when he has to go away with his job, and now Sinbad is just like a part of our family! You see, my parents are in the United States Coast Guard. My Dad is called a petty officer. My mom is in the reserves, which used to mean she could stay home more.

I guess my family is like most families.



We laugh together,



We play together,



And we pray together!



One of *my* favorite things to do is to ride my bicycle. Sometimes my parents let me ride *all* the way around our block! I pretend that my bike is a Coast Guard rescue helicopter. When I go to sleep at night, I dream of being a pilot, and flying high in the sky like a bird.



I guess the biggest difference in my family is the sadness I feel when my parents have to go far away to do their jobs.



That's when I like to ride to the big oak tree out past the base. I go there to let my imagination run wild and dream wonderful dreams. I play and sometimes I pray, or if I am sad, I even cry.



One Tuesday afternoon Mom called Andy and me home to dinner. We whistled for Sinbad and all three of us ran for the front door. Our family always has tacos on Tuesdays – tacos are Andy’s and my favorite food! Actually, when no one is looking, we even sneak Sinbad a bite or two. He loves Mom’s tacos, but he’s not allowed to eat from the table so we can’t do it very often!

As we raced toward the house, all of us trying to get there first, I caught a glimpse of our Mom and from the look on her face I knew something was up.

“What’s wrong?” I asked, rushing to get inside before Andy so I could beat him to the table.

“Come on inside and clean up, we’ll talk after dinner,” she smiled as we burst through the door at exactly the same time.

“I beat you!” Andy said with a grin, thinking he had won the *first taco* prize.

“Actually I think it was a tie,” Mom laughed, “I’m sure there are enough tacos for everyone, so go wash your hands!” and we were off. I was a little curious about what we would hear after dinner though.



After our tummies were more than happily full, we were all sitting around the table when Mom said, “Amy and Andy,

Daddy is going away to do a special job. It came up suddenly and there was nothing he could do.”

“But, I want to go fishing!” Andy said grabbing Dad’s arm as if that could keep him from going anywhere. We were all sad when Dad had to leave on his trips.

“Everything is going to be all right. God is going to take care of us,” Mom said as she grabbed Andy and me and gave us a big bear hug!

Although I was very sad, I knew that Mom was right. She held us tight and wiped our tears, and then sent us upstairs to get ready for bed.



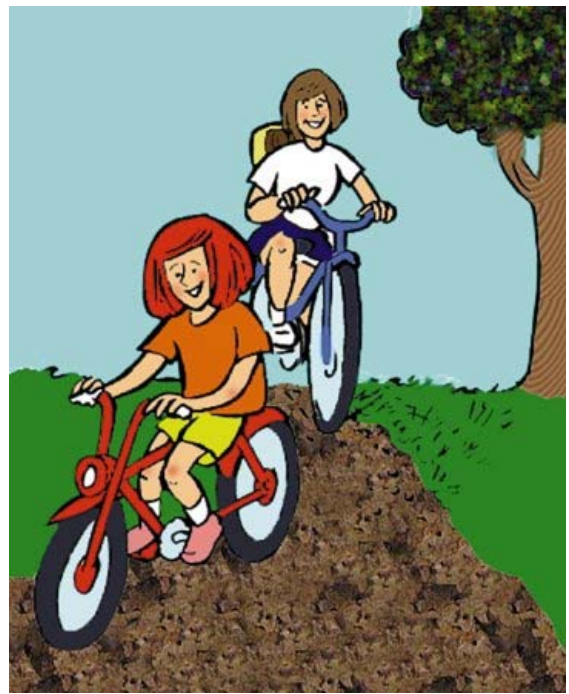
During the next few days, we did a lot of really fun things together.

We went on picnics,



Rides in the park,

I squealed as
I flew my imaginary
helicopter down the
big hills.



We went camping. Andy
and Dad caught lots of
fish in the lake.



And at home we played
our favorite board
games.





The day finally arrived for what Dad called, the “Pre-deployment Fair.” It wasn’t really for kids, it was for adults who were all going on big trips with the Coast Guard. Dad drove fast so we would get to the base on time.





We were a little late, and everyone was already sitting down when we arrived. There were different people talking about all the things to do before your parent leaves on the “cutter,” that’s what they call my Dad’s ship. I saw my friend, Mike, across the room. He’s six years old just like me! I like to ride bikes with him in the summer when school is out. Mike wants to be a Coastie like his Dad.





There were so many different speakers. First, we heard from the Commanding Officer, and then there was someone from the Red Cross. There was a social worker who told us about writing to Dad when he's gone. I really like sending letters, and it's so much fun getting mail back!





After the social worker was finished, a doctor and lawyer spoke. I looked over at my friend, Mike, and he was sound asleep on his Dad's shoulder. The last person to speak was the Chaplain who got up and read a passage from the Bible. "The Lord watches over you, the Lord is your shade and your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night." (Psalms 121:5 NIV). As he read, a calm feeling came over me and I remembered what Mom had told Andy and me at the dinner table. "Everything is going to be all right. God is going to take care of us."





I was watching the trees pass, as we drove home, thinking about all the things I had heard that day at the big Coast Guard Fair.

“Amy, why are you so quiet in the back seat?” Mom asked.

“You know when the Chaplain spoke about God taking care of us?” I answered.

“Yes.”

“Well, does God really think someone like me is important enough to, you know, watch over?” It made me feel so good to think that God was *really* watching over *me*!

“You better believe God does. God is concerned about *every* little detail in your life, and that includes the way you feel.” Mom always knew just the right thing to say.



“Dad?” I said, feeling much better about everything.

“What’s that Amy?” said Dad.

“God is *really* going to take care of us, isn’t he?” I said, believing it more now than ever before!

“Yes, Amy, God is definitely going take care of us, no matter what!” Then when he spotted the sign for Burger Heaven, he said, “Hey, let’s stop off for ice cream!”



“Yeah!” we all cheered. Burger Heaven had the best chocolate and vanilla ice cream twist cones in the whole wide world! We loved to go there on special occasions.



A week passed and finally, the big day had arrived. Suddenly I couldn't find my dog Sinbad.

I looked everywhere I could think of, under the bed, outside, and in the garage.

"Sinbad!" I whistled and called.

"Sinbad!" I hollered inside and outside.

"Sinbad!" He was nowhere to be found!

"Mom, Sinbad is gone!" I cried, unable to hold back my tears.

"Honey, I don't know where he is," she said trying to comfort me, "but we have to take Daddy to the cutter before it leaves on deployment!" She took my hand and helped me get into the car.

"Sweetie, God will take care of Sinbad," she assured me as we got ready to leave.



I was still worried. With Dad already going on a big trip, we couldn't lose Sinbad too.

We all heard the cutter's whistle blow.



And to all of our surprise, so did Sinbad!



He came running towards us as fast as he could run!



We all shouted at the same time, “Sinbad!” He got there just as Dad was about to get on the boat.



Dad hugged Andy and me so tight and kissed us all goodbye.



With tears in his eyes, Dad said he would miss us very much and would write to us every day. “I love you,” I whispered to him, as I hugged his neck.

The months seem like hours and the hours seem like minutes. I knew Dad would be home very soon. And I know he loves me, Andy, Mom and Sinbad a lot.



I love my Daddy so much and I still dream about being in the Coast Guard someday just like him, but whatever I do, I know that he will always love me and that he is very proud of Andy and me.

And if you or your friends have parents who are in the Coast Guard, you should know that even though sometimes they have to go far away because of their jobs, they always love you and think about you. So if your Mom or Dad is away, send them a letter and let them know how much you love *them* too!

Well, so long, and if you see a Coast Guard cutter on TV ... it could be my Daddy ... or ME!

FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS



The End of the Book

The Beginning of Your Adventure



Parental Discussion Section

Each day the Dads and Moms in their Coast Guard jobs might:

- Go out on Coast Guard boats or helicopters to look for 100 lost people.
- Rescue and save 10 of these people by quickly finding them.
- Help 200 people who are in trouble in the water.
- Catch boats with bad people smuggling drugs.
- Find lots of bad drugs on those boats.
- Fix things like buoys to help other boaters find their way in the water.
- Check boats for life jackets and other emergency equipment.
- Teach people how to safely use their boats.
- Inspect large ships entering our seaports.
- Look for illegal people entering our country.
- Investigate boating accidents.
- Watch how fishing boats are catching their fish.
- And when it's very cold, they might take some big ships called icebreakers through tons and tons of ice.

