

Graduate Diversity Statement

My dad joined the army at the end of Sino-Vietnamese War. So did my mom, who was a military doctor. None of them were sent to the battlefield. I was born and grew up in the residential area of a military base.

The impact of the war, however, did not let me off. Since kindergarten, I have remembered some uncles bragging about war experiences in gatherings. It was always the climax of praise and profanity. But I was also aware that not all war heroes were welcomed. One of my playmates' father was paralyzed due to the war. Their family lived in a small bungalow far from the area other military families resided, and my friend was often mocked by other kids for her disabled father. I was therefore extremely apprehensive when my father participated in military drills, and felt a strong aversion towards wars. Glorious purposes of a community didn't by itself guarantee its members a decent life; only cares and sympathy for individuals did; and the community I lived in seemed didn't have much compassion for its own members.

In the age of thirteen, I moved with my father to another military base in a big city. My mother didn't migrate with us; she had to stuck to her own post. My father was barely at home because of his work, and I took care of myself since then. While my classmates came home with cooked meals on tables, I had to ride my bicycle to supermarkets and prepare a dinner before doing homework. In parent meetings, I wrote down instructions only to remind myself. Being invited to birthday parties was bittersweet for me; I enjoyed the company by friends, but witnessing them being cared for reminded me how lonely I am. My parents also loved me, I understood. They just wanted to equipped me with the independence and bravery to build my own life in an early age.

Growing up in an environment where absolute obedience and unconditional sacrifice were prioritized, none of those values were shared by me. Although born in a lovely family, I tasted the hardship of independence when my peers were well-protected. My growing experience taught me to observe by my own eyes and heart, and fight for my pursuit as gallant as a warrior, even if alone. I will practice those lessons in my whole life.

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