MILITARY SOLAR SYSTEM

By | A Royal Marine Wife

I recently described my husband as "a Moon orbiting the family planet, not really having much of an influence". The more I thought about it, the worse I felt about giving him this moniker. Royal Marines are used to being given nicknames, but I'm not sure this is one he'd appreciate.

I was chatting to a colleague about my husband's upcoming draft, one in which he will be moving away unaccompanied, and how there were rumblings of this draft possibly changing last minute. She asked if that would change our family's plans; how would I feel about it? "Oh no" I replied, **"We just carry on regardless, me and the kids, and wherever he goes for work doesn't have any effect on us at all."** I could see she looked slightly alarmed at this, so I went on to explain that I see him as a sort of Moon: we know he's always there, we sometimes get to see him, but I never feel as though his physical positioning in relation to us really mattered all that much.

The more I thought about it, the clearer it became that this was a view I had conjured up to try and protect me and our children, a coping mechanism to help deal with the separation we face. We have developed our own routines and ways of doing things - kids clubs, mealtimes, cleaning days, fun activities, they all carry on regardless of whether Dad is at home or not. **We are a solitary planet, self-governing and reliant on no one**.

But, in reality, my husband's job is probably the one factor that has the biggest impact on our family life. **It is because of his role as a Royal Marine that I have developed these strategies; I have become hyper-independent to carry on the impression that I'm capable, I'm strong and can cope on my own without any help from friends or family who are miles away**. I want my husband to know that I can manage the home and all that entails, so that it's one less thing weighing on his already full-to-capacity mind. Don't you worry about us, we've got this. Just you concentrate on getting the job done…and done well.

At the risk of sounding like Sir Patrick Moore (or Prof. Brian Cox, for the younger reader), I've realised that the Moon has much greater significance on the Earth than one might think. It impacts time, tides and light. It is essential for migration and navigation in many animals – not just members of the Royal Navy. The daily rhythms we live by are all governed by its eternal, reliable cycles. **So maybe my husband truly is our Moon, I just have to look at it in a different way**. Sometimes we feel his influence more, sometimes less. Sometimes the odd bit of space rock will be thrown our way out of nowhere (last minute deployments, don't we all know it!). But he is always there, reliable, steadfast, a beautiful constant we couldn't be without.



NEVER WANING

By | A Royal Marine Husband

When my wife recently described me as "a Moon orbiting the family planet," I'll admit, I did laugh at first...but then it stung. As I read her piece and thought about the metaphor: distant, faintly glowing, sometimes seen but rarely felt, it struck far deeper than an article should.

She wrote about how our family has adapted to my absences, how she's become hyper-independent, managing all aspects of daily life like a planet spinning on its own axis, unaffected by my gravitational pull. It was a sobering read, strong, honest, and painfully accurate in parts. I want to offer a different perspective. Because while that solitary planet may not feel my presence altering the day-to-day tides, this moon feels every millimetre of the distance.

I don't see myself as orbiting distantly, out of reach. In fact, I see myself as connected or tethered not by gravity, but by love, duty, and an everlasting pull to be part of the centre. A constant pull. My job takes me away, yes. Often without warning, and for longer than any of us would like. But being apart doesn't mean I'm not deeply connected to the life she has built at home, our life. Every football match rundown, every picture of a Lego masterpiece, every video tour around the garden. All re-watched and re-read to bring joy to my day, it's all part of staying anchored to the family unit where I belong.

We both make sacrifices. Hers are visible, daily and relentless. Solo parenting means being the one everyone relies on. Mine are quieter and often unseen. I'd describe them as the forgotten sacrifices. Birthdays, family days out, milestones, times of genuine need...missed, gone forever and unrecoverable. Sure, this is a life we chose, but it doesn't make the separation any easier. But here's the thing, absence really does make the heart grow fonder. Time apart and hardship makes you more sensitive to the simple moments. A family kick about on the grass or a meal in front of a classic film. All these things help close the wounds of the most recent deployment and guard against the next one.

She's right about one thing. **She is strong. Stronger than she realises**. Her independence doesn't replace me, it complements the family unit and sets fantastic examples for our children. And though I'm not always physically there, I am invested in every step our family takes.

Yes, I am the Moon, but I like to think I'm the kind that helps govern tides, one that doesn't just glow faintly in the background. I influence things in quieter ways, in the stories we share, or the advice I offer from afar. I'm not just a satellite. I'm a partner, even if our orbits don't always align.

She said we're a solitary planet, but I see a system. One where the distance between us doesn't weaken our connection. One where each of us has a role, the steady Sun of home, giving light, warmth, making things grow. The Moon of quiet pull, tethered by love, resilience, and underpinned by sacrifice that keeps our family whole no matter how far apart we are. **Never Waning**.

