

# Missing Mom



Alana threw her half-finished costume in a heap on the bed. She felt like screaming, but what she really wanted was her mother. *Mom would have had this silly thing finished by now, Alana thought to herself.*

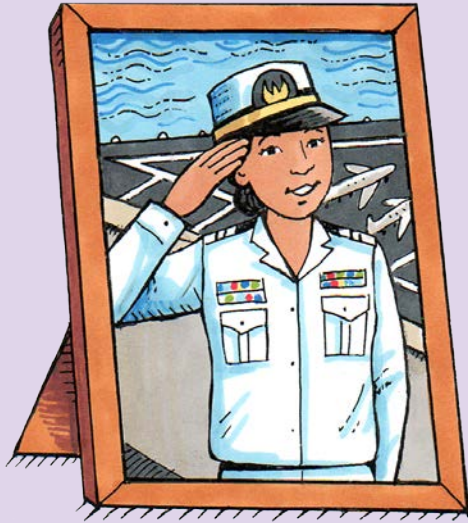
Alana's mom was far away on an aircraft carrier somewhere. Alana smiled as she looked at her favorite photo of her mom, saluting in her white dress uniform, standing on the carrier deck. She'd been gone for ninety-one days, and most of the time Alana didn't even know where she was! They always joked about this on the phone when Mom was able to call.

"I bet you're at the South Pole," Alana would say.

“Sure,” Mom would say, “and I’m head over heels in love with the penguins!”

She missed her mom so much! Dad tried hard to take her place, but he was busy with work. About the only person who could make Alana feel better was Grandma.

As if on cue, someone knocked on Alana’s door. “Alana, honey, may I come in and see how your costume



is coming along?” That was her grandma, always so polite.

“Be my guest, Grandma. Just look at this stupid mess,” moaned Alana, starting to cry.

Grandma knew immediately what was wrong. “You miss your mom, don’t you?” she said quietly, reaching to hug Alana.

“No one understands, not even you!” Alana blurted, pulling away. Grandma’s face crumpled as she turned to leave, and Alana felt terrible for what she said.

“Grandma, I didn’t mean that, and I’m really sorry. I know you miss her, too.”

Grandma nodded sadly. “You miss your mom, and I miss my daughter, but we’ll help each other through the rough patches, like a good friend. Now, how about I lend you a hand with that costume?”

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Women** play a significant role in the United States military. Almost 200,000 women are serving in a military branch for our country.