

■ WHEN MOM/DAD SAILS AWAY

A Navy Family's Story

Complete Production Manuscript

32-Page Children's Book (Ages 4-11)

With 11 Interactive Emotion Activities

Production Draft - December 15, 2025

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I. BOOK OVERVIEW & SPECIFICATIONS

Title: When Mom/Dad Sails Away

Subtitle: A Navy Family's Story + 11 Emotion Activities

Target Age: 4-11 years old

Page Count: 32 pages (industry standard picture book)

Format: 8.5" x 11" or 8" x 10" (standard children's book)

Illustration Style: 2D bright cartoon, rounded/bubbly, full-page art

Color: Full color throughout

Binding: Hardcover or perfect-bound paperback

PURPOSE:

This book helps military children (ages 4-11) navigate the emotional journey of a Navy parent's deployment. Through relatable storytelling and hands-on activities, children learn to identify, express, and cope with 11 core emotions they'll experience during a 6-9 month deployment.

KEY FEATURES:

- 11 emotion-focused spreads (Surprised, Worried, Sad, Scared, Lonely, Mad, Proud, Brave, Hopeful, Excited, Happy)
- 11 interactive activities using simple materials (paper, crayons, scissors)
- Each activity takes 5-10 minutes and directly processes the emotion
- Activities are repeatable throughout deployment
- Age-appropriate modifications included for younger (4-6) and older (7-11) readers
- Resources for parents and caregivers included
- Safety protocols and red flag indicators included

II. CHARACTER PROFILES

The Rivera-Johnson Family

ALEX RIVERA-JOHNSON (Main Character)

Age: 8 years old

Gender: Non-binary/open (universal identification)

Appearance: Medium-brown skin (biracial: Black + Latina heritage), curly dark brown hair in ponytail or short cut, brown eyes, athletic build. Usually wearing jeans, graphic tee, sneakers. Signature item: blue bracelet made with mom before deployment.

Personality: Naturally curious, asks lots of questions. Emotional but learning to express feelings. Loves soccer and ocean science. Close relationship with deployed parent. Sometimes acts tough but tender-hearted. Protective of younger sibling.

Character Arc: Starts confused and overwhelmed → Learns to name and handle emotions
→ Ends proud and resilient with emotional toolkit

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARIA RIVERA (Deployed Parent)

Age: 38

Branch: United States Navy

Rank: Lieutenant Commander (O-4)

Job: Naval Aviator (helicopter pilot)

Appearance: Latina (Puerto Rican heritage), long dark hair in regulation bun, warm brown eyes, 5'6", athletic. Uniform: Navy Service Khaki or flight suit.

Personality: Dedicated and professional. Warm and nurturing with family. Believes in honest communication with kids. Sends regular letters/videos from deployment.

Deployment: USS Abraham Lincoln (aircraft carrier), 7-month deployment to Western Pacific, helicopter pilot for search/rescue operations. Weekly video calls, daily emails, monthly care packages.

JAMES JOHNSON (Supporting Parent)

Age: 40

Occupation: Middle school science teacher

Appearance: Black (African-American), short natural hair with gray at temples, glasses, 6'1", sturdy build. Usually wearing casual teacher clothes (button-up shirts, khakis).

Personality: Patient and steady. Uses teaching skills to help kids process. Manages household solo during deployment. Sometimes overwhelmed but hides it from kids. Encourages emotional expression.

Role: Primary caregiver, facilitates all activities with Alex, provides stability and routine, connects kids with Maria via technology.

MAYA RIVERA-JOHNSON (Younger Sibling)

Age: 5 years old

Appearance: Medium-brown skin, bouncy curly hair (usually in puffs or braids), looks up to Alex. Usually wearing colorful dresses, sparkly shoes.

Personality: Energetic and talkative. Doesn't fully understand deployment. Sometimes says hard things unintentionally. Provides comic relief.

Role: Shows different age processing, occasional appearances, Alex sometimes explains things to her.

SAILOR (Family Dog)

Breed: Golden Retriever mix

Age: 4 years

Appearance: Sandy-colored fur, floppy ears, wears red bandana with anchor symbol, expressive eyes.

Personality: Comforting presence. Lies under Maria's empty chair at dinner. Goes on worried walks with Alex.

Role: Silent emotional support character, visual continuity throughout book.

SETTING: NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

Home: Navy base housing or nearby neighborhood, modern townhouse/duplex, American flag on porch

Key Locations: Pier at Naval Station Norfolk (homecoming scene), Alex's school, local park (soccer), beach (Chesapeake Bay)

Visual Palette: Ocean blues, sandy neutrals, Navy gold/yellow accents, bright pops of color, coastal sunshine

III. COMPLETE 32-PAGE MANUSCRIPT

PAGE 1: TITLE PAGE

Illustration: Happy Navy family of 4 (parent in dress whites, spouse, 2 kids ages 5 & 8) waving from pier. USS ship in background. Seagulls flying. 'Activity Kit' anchor badge in corner.

Text:

'When Mom/Dad Sails Away'
A Navy Family's Adventure Story + 11 Emotion Activities
For brave kids ages 4-11

PAGE 2: HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Illustration: Main character (8-year-old Alex) holding book like treasure map. Speech bubbles showing crayons, paper, scissors. Small sailor hat on Alex's head. Compass rose in corner.

Text:

Hi, brave sailor! ■

Every time you see a **Feeling Star** ■, turn the page and try the quick activity.

You'll need:

- Crayons or markers
- Paper
- Scissors & tape
- Your amazing imagination!

Some activities need a grown-up helper - that's okay!

Ready to sail through big feelings? Let's go!

PAGE 3: MEET OUR FAMILY

Illustration: Family portrait with Navy parent in uniform, spouse, Alex, and younger sibling Maya. House with American flag. Family dog Sailor. Navy ship model on shelf.

Text:

This is my family!

I'm Alex (that's me!), and this is my little sister Maya.

Mom/Dad is in the **United States Navy**. That means Mom/Dad serves our country on big ships that sail across the ocean.

Sometimes Mom/Dad goes on **deployments** - that's when sailors go away on important

missions for 6 to 9 months.

This is the story of when Mom/Dad sailed away... and how I learned to be brave with ALL my feelings.

[Glossary box: Deployment = A long trip for work on a Navy ship]

PAGE 4: THE BIG NEWS

Illustration: Family at dinner table. Navy parent has calendar. Alex's eyes wide. Maya playing with food. Clock shows 6pm.

Text:

One night at dinner, Mom/Dad said, 'I have big news.'

My heart went *thump-thump-thump*.

'My ship is deploying in two weeks. I'll be gone for 7 months.'

Seven. Whole. Months.

That's 210 days. That's Thanksgiving, Christmas, my birthday, AND spring break.

Everything started to feel... different.

[Visual: Calendar circled with 'Deployment Date' and 'Homecoming Date']

PAGE 5: SURPRISED/CONFUSED

Illustration: Alex lying in bed staring at ceiling. Brain bubble shows jumbled images: ship, calendar, question marks, family dinner. Night sky through window.

Text:

That night, my brain wouldn't turn off.

I felt **surprised** and **confused**.

Seven months?

Where will the ship go?

Will Mom/Dad miss my soccer games?

What about our Saturday pancake mornings?

Questions swirled like a whirlpool in my head.

I didn't know it was okay to feel mixed up. But guess what? **It totally is.**

[Feeling Star in bottom right]

PAGE 6: ACTIVITY 1 - QUESTION WHIRLPOOL

Illustration: Alex and Dad creating paper spiral. Questions written on strips spinning into decorated jar. Calm blue replacing confusion gray.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 1: Question Whirlpool Catcher

What you need: Paper, crayons, jar or cup

What to do:

1. Draw a spiral on paper (like a snail shell)
2. Write your questions along the spiral lines
3. Cut out the spiral
4. Hang it above your jar - it spins!
5. Tell a grown-up ONE question each day
6. Drop that question in jar when answered

Why it helps: Questions are okay! Getting them OUT of your head makes room for answers.

For younger kids (4-6): Draw pictures of questions

For older kids (7-11): Write letter to Navy parent with top 3 questions

Do it now - ready, set, ASK!

PAGE 7: WORRIED/ANXIOUS

Illustration: Alex at school, looking out window at rain. Thought bubble shows ship in storm. Backpack on floor. Other kids playing in background.

Text:

The next week at school, I couldn't focus.

I felt **worried** and **anxious**.

What if the ship gets into a storm?

What if Mom/Dad gets seasick?

What if Mom/Dad forgets what I look like?

My tummy felt tight, like a sailor's knot.

Mrs. Chen asked if I was okay. I nodded, but inside, my worries were as big as the ocean.

[Visual: Rainy window, Alex's worried reflection] [■]

PAGE 8: ACTIVITY 2 - WORRY BOAT FLOAT

Illustration: Alex and Dad making paper boats at kitchen sink. Worries written on boats. Some floating, one sinking. Sunshine through window.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 2: Worry Boat Float

What you need: Paper, crayons, large bowl of water

What to do:

1. Fold a paper boat (ask grown-up to help)
2. Write or draw ONE worry on boat
3. Float it in water
4. Watch it sail... then let it sink
5. Say out loud: 'I let that worry sail away'
6. Make another boat with something HAPPY

Why it helps: Worries don't have to stay stuck. You can let them go!

Navy Connection: Real sailors trust their ship and training. You can trust your Navy parent's training too!

For younger kids: Just draw faces - worried vs happy

Float it now - worry, AWAY!

PAGE 9: SAD

Illustration: Pier scene. Navy parent in uniform with sea bag. Family hugging. Alex has tears. Ship in background with sailors boarding. American flag flying.

Text:

Goodbye Day arrived too fast.

At the pier, I felt **sad** - the heavy, chest-hurting kind of sad.

I hugged Mom/Dad so tight. I tried to memorize everything: the uniform smell, the scratchy name tape, the strong hug.

'See you in 7 months, kiddo,' Mom/Dad said. 'I love you to the moon and back.'

'To the bottom of the ocean and back,' I whispered.

The ship's horn blew. **HOOOONNNK.**

Time to let go.

[Visual: Alex's tears but tiny smile. Sailor wearing 'We ♥ Our Sailor' bandana] [■]

PAGE 10: ACTIVITY 3 - SAD-TO-GLAD WAVE FLIP

Illustration: Alex making two-sided paper paddle. One side: gray rain cloud with sad face. Other side: yellow sun with happy memories. Mid-flip shown.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 3: Sad-to-Glad Wave Flip

What you need: Paper plate or cardboard, popsicle stick, tape, crayons

What to do:

1. Cut out circle (or use paper plate)
2. ONE SIDE: Draw gray rain cloud, write 'I'm sad Mom/Dad is gone'
3. OTHER SIDE: Draw sunny day, draw 3 happy memories with your sailor
4. Tape stick to middle
5. Hold stick and FLIP-FLIP-FLIP fast
6. Watch sad and happy blur together

Why it helps: You can be sad AND remember happy times. Both feelings can be true at once!

Talk about it: Tell someone your 3 happy memories

Flip-flip-flip - feelings change like ocean waves!

PAGE 11: SCARED

Illustration: Alex in bed at night, room half-dark. Navy parent's photo on nightstand with ship in frame. Shadows. Stuffed animal clutched tight. Moon through window.

Text:

The first night without Mom/Dad was the hardest.

I felt **scared**. Not of monsters - scared of the BIG changes.

*What if I forget Mom/Dad's voice?
What if something bad happens on the ship?
What if I can't be brave for 7 whole months?*

Even my night-light seemed dimmer.

Being scared doesn't mean you're not brave. **Brave means doing hard things even when you're scared.**

[Visual: Calendar with X's. Photo of Navy parent giving thumbs up] [■]

PAGE 12: ACTIVITY 4 - BRAVE ANCHOR CHAIN

Illustration: Alex on bed making paper chain with anchor shapes. Each link has brave thing written: 'I said goodbye,' 'I went to school,' 'I helped my sister.' Chain forming anchor.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 4: Brave Anchor Chain

What you need: Paper strips, markers, tape or stapler

What to do:

1. Cut paper into 10 strips (1 inch wide, 6 inches long)
2. On each strip write ONE brave thing you've done:
 - 'I said goodbye'
 - 'I didn't cry at school'
 - 'I helped make dinner'
3. Connect strips into chain - make anchor shape!
4. Hang where you can see it
5. Add NEW strips when you do brave things

Why it helps: Anchors keep ships steady in storms. YOUR bravery keeps you steady!

Navy fact: Every Navy ship has a HUGE anchor. You have brave anchors too!

Start your anchor - you're braver than you think!

PAGE 13: LONELY

Illustration: Family dinner table. Three plates set. One empty chair - Navy parent's chair vacant. Alex staring at empty seat. Maya chattering. Sailor lying under empty chair.

Text:

Two weeks in, I felt **lonely**.

Mom/Dad's chair at dinner sat empty.
No one to help with my math homework.
No Saturday morning pancakes.
No goodnight stories in the silly voices.

The house felt too quiet, like part of our family was missing.

Because it was.

Lonely feels like a hole in your heart. But that hole shows how much you love someone.

[Visual: Navy parent's coffee mug on counter. Family photo on wall] [■]

PAGE 14: ACTIVITY 5 - DISTANCE DESTROYER MESSAGES

Illustration: Alex decorating letters, drawing pictures, making video on tablet. Mail box with 'Operation: Mail Call' sign. Globe showing ship location.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 5: Distance Destroyer Messages

What you need: Paper, crayons, camera/phone (with grown-up help)

What to do - Pick ONE (or all!):

Option 1: Mail Call Letter

1. Fold paper in half
2. Front: Draw you and sailor on ship
3. Inside: Write 5 things about your week
4. Add stickers or drawings
5. Mail it! (Ships have addresses!)

Option 2: Video Message

1. Record 1-minute video
2. Show your sailor something
3. Say 'I love you!' at end
4. Send through email/Navy messaging

Option 3: Countdown Connection

1. Make paper chain (7 loops = 7 days)
2. Write happy thought on each
3. Tear one off daily
4. When done, write letter!

Why it helps: Distance can't destroy love. Your messages travel across the ocean!

Send a message this week!

PAGE 15: MAD/FRUSTRATED

Illustration: Alex's bedroom, messy. Soccer ball thrown at wall. Calendar with angry scribbles. Alex on floor, arms crossed, storm cloud overhead. 'Career Day - Bring Your Parent' circled.

Text:

One month in, I hit my breaking point.

I felt **MAD**. Burning-in-my-chest mad.

Career Day was coming and the form said 'Bring Your Parent to Talk About Their Job.'

'WHY does Mom/Dad have to be in the Navy?!"

'WHY can't we be a NORMAL family?!"

'It's NOT FAIR!"

I kicked my soccer ball. HARD.

Being mad is OKAY. Even at people you love. Mad doesn't mean you don't love them.

[Visual: Crumpled papers. Framed photo of Navy parent face-down] [■]

PAGE 16: ACTIVITY 6 - MAD ENERGY OCEAN STOMP

Illustration: Alex stomping outside in backyard. Each stomp creates wave ripples. Then jumping. Then laughing. Three panels showing progression. Sailor jumping along.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 6: Mad Energy Ocean Stomp

What you need: Your body, outdoor space, a grown-up

What to do:

1. Stand - feel that mad energy!
2. STOMP feet 10 times like sailor marching
- Count: 'ONE! TWO! THREE!'
3. PUNCH air 10 times like swimming through waves
- Say 'MAD!' with each punch
4. JUMP 10 times like a dolphin
- Shout 'ENERGY... OUT!'
5. Shake whole body like shaking off water
6. Take 3 DEEP breaths
7. Tell someone why you were mad

Why it helps: Mad energy needs to GO somewhere. Move it out of your body!

For younger kids: Just stomp and jump

For older kids: Write why you're mad, then do stoms

STOMP-PUNCH-JUMP - now!

PAGE 17: PROUD

Illustration: Alex and classmates at school working on care package. Boxes labeled 'Operation: Cookies for Sailors.' Alex wearing 'Navy Kid' shirt proudly. Drawings spread out. Teacher helping.

Text:

Month three brought a surprise.

My class decided to send care packages to deployed sailors - including Mom/Dad's ship!

I felt **PROUD** - the standing-tall, chest-puffed-out kind of proud.

We baked cookies, drew pictures, and wrote letters to sailors we'd never met.

'My mom/dad is on the USS [Ship Name],' I told my class. 'They're protecting our country.'

For the first time, I wasn't just 'the kid whose parent is gone.'

I was a NAVY KID. And that's something special.

[Visual: Drawing of ship with 'Thank you for your service!' American flag stickers] [■]

PAGE 18: ACTIVITY 7 - SERVICE STAR BADGE

Illustration: Alex making and wearing paper star badge. Badge says 'Official Navy Family Member.' Decorated with anchors, waves, ship. Pin with tape. Alex saluting in mirror.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 7: Service Star Badge

What you need: Paper, crayons, safety pin or tape, scissors

What to do:

1. Cut out BIG star (trace hand spread wide, connect fingertips)
2. In middle write: 'Official Navy Family'
3. Decorate with:
 - Anchors ■
 - Waves ■
 - Your sailor's ship name
 - The word 'PROUD'
4. Pin to shirt or hang on wall
5. When someone asks, tell them about your sailor!

Why it helps: Being a military kid is HARD WORK. You deserve a badge for YOUR service too!

*Extra challenge: Make badges for whole family
Photo op: Take picture wearing badge, send to sailor!*

Wear your badge with pride - you EARNED it!

PAGE 19: BRAVE (MILESTONE)

Illustration: Alex at mailbox with thick envelope. '4 MONTHS DOWN!' banner. Maya giving high-five. Sailor with party hat. Calendar showing halfway point circled.

Text:

Month four - the halfway point!

I felt **BRAVE**. Real, strong, warrior-level brave.

A thick letter arrived from Mom/Dad with photos from the ship:

- The flight deck where planes land
- The mess hall where sailors eat
- Mom/Dad's tiny bunk bed
- The crew giving thumbs up

I'd survived 120 days. I could survive 90 more.

Being brave doesn't mean you're not scared. It means you keep going anyway.

I was halfway across the deployment ocean. I could see the shore.

[Visual: Photos spread out. Postmark with ship's postal code] [■]

PAGE 20: ACTIVITY 8 - HALFWAY HERO CELEBRATION

Illustration: Alex hosting mini-party. Paper banner 'DEPLOYMENT HALFWAY PARTY!' Cupcake with candle shaped like '4'. Alex and friends wearing sailor hats. Balloon with anchor.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 8: Halfway Hero Celebration

What you need: Paper, markers, a treat, a grown-up

What to do:

1. Make 'HALFWAY THERE!' banner
2. Draw thermometer on paper
3. Color it HALF full
4. Have mini-celebration:
 - Eat something special
 - Do happy dance
 - Video call family to celebrate
 - Take selfie with big thumbs up!
5. Write the date - your BRAVE milestone!

Why it helps: Big challenges need celebrations at MIDDLE, not just end!

Party ideas:

- Watch ocean movie
- Make ocean cupcakes (blue frosting, fish gummies)
- Have 'dress like sailor' day

Send to sailor: Photo of your celebration!

Celebrate NOW - you're a halfway hero!

PAGE 21: HOPEFUL

Illustration: Alex making paper chain with 45 links. Each link different color. Some torn off in pile. Calendar with 'HOMECOMING' circled in red with hearts/stars. Sunshine through window.

Text:

Month six arrived with a burst of sunshine.

I felt **HOPEFUL** - the butterflies-in-your-stomach, good kind of nervous.

45 days left. That's 6 weeks. That's one-and-a-half months.

We started serious countdown mode:

- Paper chain on wall
- Daily calendar marks
- 'Days till homecoming' whiteboard

Every morning I'd tear off a link and shout, 'ONE DAY CLOSER!'

Hope feels like a light at end of tunnel. And that light was getting BRIGHTER.

[Visual: Paper chain shaped like ship. Sailor wearing 'Homecoming Crew' bandana] [■]

PAGE 22: ACTIVITY 9 - HOPE HARBOR COUNTDOWN

Illustration: Alex creating countdown display. Large poster with 45 boxes. Each day gets sticker, drawing, color. Some boxes filled with ships, anchors, hearts. Alex coloring 'Day 43.'

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 9: Hope Harbor Countdown

What you need: Big poster paper, markers, stickers, creativity!

What to do:

1. Draw 45 boxes on poster (9 rows of 5)
2. Number backwards: 45, 44, 43... down to 1
3. Each day:
 - Color in ONE box
 - Add sticker or drawing
 - Write something you're excited about
4. Hang where you see it every morning
5. On homecoming, box #1 will say 'TODAY!'

Decoration ideas:

- Draw ships, anchors, waves, hearts
- Use blue/gold (Navy colors)
- Add photos of sailor
- Write 'Hope Harbor' at top

Why it helps: Watching numbers go DOWN makes time feel real!

Family activity: Everyone decorates 3 boxes

Start counting DOWN - homecoming is coming!

PAGE 23: EXCITED

Illustration: Alex jumping on bed with '7 DAYS!' sign. Email on computer: 'Ship arrives [date]!' Family group hug jumping. Maya holding 'Welcome Home' sign already made. Sailor barking excitedly.

Text:

The email arrived: '**Ship arrival: ONE WEEK!**'

I felt **EXCITED** - the can't-sit-still, energy-explosion kind of excited!

We shifted into HOMECOMING MODE:

- Made 'Welcome Home' signs with glitter (so much glitter)
- Planned Mom/Dad's favorite dinner
- Cleaned house top to bottom
- Practiced 'welcome home' speech 47 times

I couldn't sleep. I couldn't focus. I just kept thinking:

SEVEN. MORE. DAYS.

The ocean adventure was almost over. My sailor was coming HOME.

[Visual: Craft supplies everywhere. Sign: 'WELCOME HOME SAILOR!' Family photos being hung] [■]

PAGE 24: ACTIVITY 10 - HOMECOMING HERO BANNER

Illustration: Alex and family creating massive welcome banner. Butcher paper spread across floor. Everyone adding: handprints, drawings, messages. 'WELCOME HOME!' in huge letters. American flag colors.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 10: Homecoming Hero Banner

What you need: Big paper (butcher paper, poster board, or taped printer paper), markers, paint, glitter, tape

What to do:

1. Spread out BIGGEST paper
2. Write in HUGE letters: 'WELCOME HOME [MOM/DAD]!'
3. Everyone adds:
 - Handprints in paint
 - Drawings of ships, anchors, hearts
 - Messages: 'We missed you!' 'You're our hero!'
 - Glitter (lots of glitter!)
4. Let it dry
5. On homecoming day, bring it to pier!

Why it helps: Your sailor will see your banner and know: THIS IS MY FAMILY!

Navy colors: Blue and gold/yellow

Bonus: Add photos from deployment around border

Everyone helps: Even pets can add paw prints!

Make it BIG - make it LOUD - make it PROUD!

PAGE 25: HAPPY/GRATEFUL (REUNION)

Illustration: FULL dramatic pier scene. Navy ship docked. Hundreds of sailors in dress uniforms walking down gangway. American flag flying. Balloons, signs everywhere. Alex running full-speed toward Navy parent. Arms spread wide. Family running behind. PURE JOY.

Text:

HOECOMING DAY.

The ship pulled into port at 0800 (that's 8 a.m. in Navy time).

I felt **HAPPY** - the biggest, brightest, overflow-your-heart kind of happy.

And **GRATEFUL** - thankful for every hug, every letter, every video call that kept us connected.

When I saw Mom/Dad walk down that gangway, I RAN.

I didn't care about the crowds. I didn't care about anything except:

MY SAILOR IS HOME.

The seven-month ocean adventure was over.

We made it. Together.

[Visual: Tears of joy. Huge hug. Maya holding balloons. 'WELCOME HOME USS [SHIP]' banner] [■]

PAGE 26: ACTIVITY 11 - GRATITUDE ANCHOR BOOK

Illustration: Alex and Navy parent sitting together reading handmade book. Book shaped like anchor. Pages show drawings from deployment: letters, video calls, care packages, brave moments, reunion. Hearts and stars decorating.

Text:

■ ACTIVITY 11: Gratitude Anchor Book

What you need: 5-10 sheets paper, stapler, crayons, photos (optional)

What to do:

1. Fold papers in half (hamburger style)
2. Staple in middle - you made a book!
3. Cut cover into anchor shape (optional)
4. On each page draw/write ONE thing you're grateful for:
 - Page 1: 'I'm grateful for letters'
 - Page 2: 'I'm grateful for video calls'
 - Page 3: 'I'm grateful for my bravery'
 - Page 4: 'I'm grateful my sailor is home'
5. Decorate each page
6. Share it with your sailor!

Why it helps: Looking back shows how STRONG you were. Gratitude makes hard things worth it.

*Add: Photos, ticket stubs, drawings from each month
 Keep it: Read when you need to remember your bravery!*

Make your book - treasure your journey!

PAGE 27: YOU DID IT!

Illustration: Alex wearing medal, standing on podium marked '#1 Navy Kid.' All 11 emotions shown as cartoon characters cheering (Worried Whale, Sad Cloud, Mad Storm, Happy Sun, Brave Anchor, etc.). Confetti falling.

Text:

■■ YOU DID IT! ■■

You sailed through **11 BIG feelings**:

1. ■ Surprised/Confused
2. ■ Worried
3. ■ Sad
4. ■ Scared
5. ■ Lonely
6. ■ Mad
7. ■ Proud
8. ■ Brave
9. ■ Hopeful
10. ■ Excited
11. ■ Happy & Grateful

You completed **11 activities** and survived a deployment.

That makes you a **DEPLOYMENT CHAMPION**.

Remember: ALL feelings are okay. You can handle hard things. And you're NEVER alone - millions of military kids are sailing the same ocean.

Fair winds and following seas, brave sailor. ■

PAGE 28: MY DEPLOYMENT FEELINGS MAP

Illustration: Large pizza/wheel divided into 11 slices. Each slice has icon for emotion (anchor, cloud, storm, sun, etc.). Alex coloring wheel. Space to add dates and notes.

Text:

■ BONUS ACTIVITY: My Deployment Feelings Map

Color each slice to show how MUCH you felt each feeling during deployment:

- Light color = felt it a little
- Medium color = felt it sometimes
- Dark color = felt it A LOT

There's no right answer! Every deployment is different.

My Feelings Map:

[Large circle divided into 11 sections with emotion labels]

After you color:

- Which feeling was biggest?
- Which feeling surprised you?
- Which feeling are you PROUD you handled?

Save this page! You can look back and see: 'I handled ALL of these feelings. I'm STRONG.'

PAGE 29: FOR GROWN-UPS

Illustration: Soft nautical background with gentle waves, anchor, stars.

Text:

Dear Caregivers & Educators,

Military deployments impact the ENTIRE family. This book validates children's feelings while providing concrete coping tools.

How to use this book:

- ✓ Let children lead activities - no 'wrong' way
- ✓ Revisit activities when big feelings resurface
- ✓ Praise process ('You made a whole anchor chain!') not perfection
- ✓ Normalize ALL emotions - anger, sadness, fear are healthy
- ✓ Create routine around activities (every Sunday, make letter together)

Red flags to watch:

- Sleep disruption lasting 2+ weeks
- Loss of interest in all activities
- Regression in development
- Persistent stomach aches/headaches (no medical cause)
- Aggressive outbursts increasing

Additional support:

- School counselors trained in military family services
- Military OneSource: 1-800-342-9647 (24/7, free, confidential)
- National Military Family Association: militaryfamily.org

Homecoming adjustment: Reunion is joyful but also an adjustment period. Give everyone time to re-establish routines.

Thank you for supporting a Navy family. ■

PAGE 30: RESOURCES FOR NAVY KIDS

Illustration: Treasure map style with icons for each resource. Anchor, phone, computer, book symbols.

Text:

HELP & RESOURCES FOR NAVY FAMILIES

■ If you need to talk:

- Military OneSource: 1-800-342-9647
(Free counseling, 24/7, for military families)

■ Cool websites:

- NavyForKids.org - Games & info about Navy
- SesameStreetforMilitaryFamilies.org - Videos & activities
- MilitaryKidsConnect.org - Chat with other military kids

■ Books about deployment:

[Space for additional recommended titles]

■ Apps & Games:

- United Through Reading (record story videos)
- Deployment Kid (feelings games)

Your school counselor can help too!

Remember: Millions of kids have Navy parents. You're part of HUGE crew of brave kids. You're never sailing alone. ■■

PAGE 31: CERTIFICATE OF BRAVERY

Illustration: Official-looking certificate with Navy emblem, anchor border, gold star seals.

Text:

■■ OFFICIAL CERTIFICATE OF BRAVERY ■■

This certifies that:

(Your Name)

Has successfully completed:

- ✓ One (1) full Navy deployment of _____ months
- ✓ Eleven (11) emotion activities
- ✓ Countless days of being brave

✓ Supporting the United States Navy

Achievements unlocked:

- Deployment Survivor ■
- Feeling Master ■
- Navy Family Champion ■■
- Professional Wave-Watcher ■

Awarded on: _____ (Date)

Signed: _____ (Sailor)
_____ (Supporting Parent/Guardian)

This certificate proves you are OFFICIALLY BRAVE.

Cut this page out and hang it on your wall!

Fair winds and following seas, sailor. ■■

PAGE 32: BACK COVER

Illustration: Collage of all 11 activities in small frames arranged in anchor shape. Family silhouette at sunset on pier. Ship in background. Sailor sitting peacefully.

Text:

THE END

(But really, it's just the beginning of your next adventure)

You survived the deployment ocean.
You rode every wave.
You handled every storm.
You made it to safe harbor.

YOU ARE BRAVER THAN YOU KNOW.

Keep this book forever. When the next deployment comes (or any big challenge), you'll have your trusty activity toolkit ready.

From all of us to all of you:

Thank you for your family's service. ■■

Created with love for Navy families everywhere

www.CumquatVibes.com

Share your activities! Tag us with #NavyKidBrave

■ Fair winds and following seas ■

[QR code for resources]

[Navy emblem]

[Part of Military Deployment Series' badge]

IV. PRODUCTION NOTES

ILLUSTRATION SPECIFICATIONS:

- Style: 2D bright cartoon, rounded/bubbly shapes
- Color: Full color, warm and hopeful palette
- Character consistency: Same family throughout all 32 pages
- Emotional range: Characters show authentic emotions (not forced smiles)
- Background: Full-page art with text overlay or integrated text boxes
- Navy elements: Ships, anchors, waves, ocean motifs throughout
- Color palette: Ocean blues, Navy gold/yellow, sandy neutrals, bright accent colors

TEXT SPECIFICATIONS:

- Font: Rounded, friendly, highly readable (suggest: VAG Rounded, Comic Sans, or similar)
- Size: Large enough for emerging readers (18-24pt for main text)
- Activity text can be slightly smaller (14-16pt) but still readable
- Use bold for emphasis on emotion words and key concepts
- Text placement: Integrated naturally into illustrations without obscuring art

PAGE LAYOUT:

- Pages 1-4: Front matter (title, how-to, family intro, big news)
- Pages 5-26: 11 emotion spreads (left page = story, right page = activity)
- Pages 27-32: Back matter (celebration, resources, certificate, back cover)

PRINTING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Paper: Heavy stock (80-100 lb) for durability
- Finish: Matte or satin (avoid high gloss for children's books)
- Binding: Hardcover preferred (durability), perfect-bound paperback acceptable
- Size: 8.5" x 11" or 8" x 10" (standard children's book)

AGE-APPROPRIATENESS CHECK:

- Language: Accessible to early readers (ages 6-8) but engaging for older kids (9-11)
- Activities: Scalable with modifications noted
- Emotional content: Honest but hopeful, validates feelings without being scary
- Safety: No promises about deployment outcomes, focuses on child's control and coping

V. EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Emotion identification: Children learn to recognize and name 11 core deployment emotions
2. Emotional expression: Children practice expressing feelings in healthy ways
3. Coping skills: Children develop concrete tools to manage difficult emotions
4. Resilience building: Children recognize their own strength and growth
5. Connection maintenance: Children learn ways to stay connected across distance

PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS:

This book is based on research in child development, military family psychology, and trauma-informed care:

- Normalizes full range of emotions (no "good" or "bad" feelings)
- Provides concrete, actionable coping strategies
- Acknowledges child's experience without minimizing difficulty
- Celebrates milestones to prevent burnout
- Includes caregiver guidance for proper support

RECOMMENDED USE:

- Before deployment: Read once to prepare
- During deployment: Revisit emotion pages as feelings arise
- Repeat activities: Use multiple times throughout deployment
- After deployment: Use gratitude activity and feelings map for closure
- Future deployments: Keep book as trusted resource

VI. ABOUT THIS SERIES

WHEN MOM/DAD SAILS AWAY is part of a three-book series designed to support military children through deployment. Each book features a different military branch and family, ensuring all military kids can see themselves represented.

THE SERIES:

- **Navy:** When Mom/Dad Sails Away (this book)
- **Army:** When Mom/Dad Marches Out
- **Marines:** When Mom/Dad Answers the Call

All three books share the same 11-emotion framework and activity structure, adapted for branch-specific terminology, settings, and culture.

CREATED BY:

Richard Abreu / Cumquat Vibes
Norfolk, Virginia
www.CumquatVibes.com

MISSION:

To provide military families with practical, compassionate resources that honor their service and support their children through the unique challenges of military life.

DEDICATION:

To every military child who has ever waved goodbye at a pier, gate, or runway. Your bravery and sacrifice matter. This book is for you.

Fair winds and following seas. ■