



Expired Term of Service

NIKKI BURCH SANTIBANEZ

VOICE


VIRGINIA TECH.
PUBLISHING


ABSTRACT

Poetry based on the life experiences of an active duty army spouse.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Nikki Burch Santibanez

UNK, US

nikkibills2@gmail.com

KEYWORDS:

Military spouse; active duty;
poetry

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Santibanez, N. B. (2023).
Expired Term of Service. *Journal
of Veterans Studies*, 9(2),
pp. 26–28. DOI: [https://doi.
org/10.21061/jvs.v9i2.386](https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v9i2.386)

As my husband gets ready to end his contract with the Army,
I often reflect on my experiences—both the good and the bad.

No more random deployment orders or field training,
No more *hurrying up and waiting* for some whispered rumor of when he may return home.

No more watching him stress out over his higher ranking higher-ups and what all needs to be done.
No more of his command holding me up during his emergency hospital stays.

No more on-post housing with painted-over mold, fire ant infestations, broken air conditioning, and overflowing toilets.

No more paid-for utilities and a paid-for four-bedroom house, with a nice backyard.

No more beloved neighbors leaving us and moving every few months.

No more strong ties and bonds with neighbors-turned family who all are just as isolated and alone as me.

No more watching him and his buddies try to outdrink each other.

No more waking up to find him and his friends sprawled out on my living room floor nearly on top of one another, knowing they cuddled in the field to keep warm from freezing winter temperatures.

No more watching him constantly checking up on his soldiers and even having to go to the barracks to talk a soldier out of hanging himself.

No more taking in his soldiers as family members to help them be a little less lonely while far away from their families.

No more doctors prescribing Motrin for every ache or ailment,
No more paid for prescriptions, emergencies, and health insurance.

No more missed birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries.
No more exciting reunions after a long time away that make us value each precious second we have together.

No more MPs (military police) arresting a soldier who had a domestic violence issue over a friend named Jodie.
No more neighbors instantly calling each other when the slightest abnormality occurs at anyone's house.

No more worrying sick that his Bradley (Army vehicle) will be next to suddenly blow up or roll down a hill.
No more constant fear about him becoming another unnoticed, lost soldier, decomposing in his jeep by the lake from last summer (may he rest in peace).

Thank you to all those who are or who have served.
I will forever appreciate and be grateful to have been a military spouse.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Thank you for reading my article. I am an active-duty Army spouse, and I am living at Fort Hood. I am a full-time student, part-time data analyst, a mother of two children, and a full-time military spouse advocate. My goals revolve around giving back to the military community and providing resources to military families.

I have always loved to write and create different forms of art for my entire life. Writing is one of my hobbies and also a way to express my feelings, thoughts, and experiences.

I have seen so many different events that are both my own and those of the military community around me. There are so many different feelings, experiences, and life events that those who are not military affiliated never get to experience or witness. It is as if we are separated and are in different worlds. Just as military spouses are separated and in a different world than their active-duty soldiers. I hope to be able to share my experiences to shed some light on what military members and their families go through because everyone needs to know what our country's dedicated service members sacrifice and have to go through to keep our country safe.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR AFFILIATIONS

Nikki Burch Santibanez
UNK, US

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Santibanez, N. B. (2023). Expired Term of Service. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 9(2), pp. 26–28. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v9i2.386>

Submitted: 15 August 2022 **Accepted:** 30 January 2023 **Published:** 14 March 2023

COPYRIGHT:

© 2023 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Journal of Veterans Studies is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by VT Publishing.