



Single Mom Promoted Atop Mountain by Her 3-Year-Old

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USAR TSG-Pacific

Being a Soldier and a single parent in today's Army requires a strong sense of duty, pride and perseverance. For some Soldiers, the uphill battle can be overwhelming, and for Army Sgt. 1st Class Deandra Roseanna Dotson, life has been anything but an easy path.

A 2002 graduate of Charles Herbert Flowers High School in Springdale, Maryland, Dotson has achieved many firsts in her life. She was born in Colon, Panama, to parents who met while serving in the US Army. In her book released in 2011, Dotson says, "Using the experience gained as an adopted child, who entered the foster care system at three and adopted at five, when I graduated high school at 17, I made the right choice going forward. Though I received a track scholarship to attend college, it only paid for my tuition. I had to seek a way to pay for my room and board. It was the motivating factor to join the Army Reserve."

Dotson determined at an early age that to get anything or anywhere in life, she had to go for it, wholeheartedly. "The military taught me independence. If you had to build something, you have to first build something for yourself. Whatever it is you want to do, you

have to earn and work for it."

Before her relocation to Hawaii, Dotson spent the last three years at Camp Parks, Calif., where she served as the senior human resources specialist for the Camp Parks NCO Academy. Dotson is now the NCOIC in charge of the Human Resources Directorate for the United States Army Reserve Theater Support Group in Fort Shafter Flats, Hawaii. Dotson oversees the retirements, awards, medical discharges, special duty pay and mobilization personnel actions for approximately 3,000 serving in the 9th Mission Support Command's civilian and military enterprise.

When asked why she picked Koko Head Crater as the location for her promotion ceremony, she said, "Koko Head Crater (with Pu'u Mai peak rising 1208 feet in Hawaii Kai, Oahu, Hawaii) was the most challenging thing to do since I first came here in 2011. Because I had to push myself to do it, I had to bring my daughter along. As I made it to the top, I wanted to make sure that she makes it with me."

Accompanied by her three-year old daughter, Veronica, who had hiked up the mountain unassisted, Dotson was promoted to her current rank.



Three year-old Veronica, daughter of Sgt. 1st Class Deandra R. Dotson, NCO in charge of the Human Resource Directorate, USAR Theater Support Group, 9th Mission Support Command, pins the Sergeant First Class rank on her mom's uniform, signifying the promotion to her current rank. Veronica was among numerous well wishers who climbed Koko Head Crater for the promotion ceremony. (Photo by Army Reserve Sgt. 1st Class John Lopez)

Col. Eddie Rosado, commander of USAR TSG, said, "Whenever a Soldier asks me to promote them, I am always honored. With Sergeant Dotson, as her journey as an NCO, who has been through some bumps, twists and turns in getting over hurdles, this is a great way to cap it off with her promotion here."

Rosado addressed Dotson, saying, "They did not promote you for what you did and how well you did it. They did because of your potential that you have ahead of you as a Sergeant First Class. ... I think that there are only great things ahead of you because of the type of NCO that you are."

Veronica, while reaching up on her tip-toes, tore the Staff Sergeant rank off her mother's uniform and immediately replaced it with the new Sergeant First Class rank. With claps and cheers from the on-looking Soldiers, Veronica pressed the rank firmly into her mom's chest, ensuring the rank will not come off. "Good Job," Rosado said, his face beaming with pride for his Soldier's progression.

"I want to use my rank to motivate other Soldiers to believe that if they stay determined and focused on their goals, that they can accomplish anything," Dotson said. "As they go through their journey as an NCO, there will be trials and tribulations, but always remember to use them as a stepping stool to achieve their overall mission." Turning to her daughter, she said, "Whatever it is you want to do, you have to earn and work for it."

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