**COVID-19**

Payton Watkins

Department of English, East Carolina University

ENGL 1100 Foundations of College Writing

Dr. Cheryl Dudasik-Wiggs

28 September 2020

**COVID-19**

When I first heard the news about the coronavirus, I was sitting in my high school government class in late February. Two weeks earlier, I was skiing in the Swiss Alps and shopping in Milan, which quickly became the European hotspot. I was completely skeptical that anything could happen where I lived, on a small, military base in England enclosed with only a couple thousand people. The virus became a joke, and it was not until a few weeks into complete lockdown that anyone realized how serious it actually was.

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom quickly shut everything down. The base I lived on was scared of the bad publicity we would get from the British if we did not follow suit, so our restrictions were much worse. For exactly three months, I did not leave the base. I woke up at eight in the morning every day, just in time for online school. I ate breakfast, went on a walk, finished my work, and went back to sleep. It felt like my life was the movie “Groundhog Day.”

Soon came the suicide attempts within my community, one successful. Mental health became a big issue, as many people already struggled with depression because of England’s darkness and the military lifestyle. I became concerned about my own mental health and I started meeting with a therapist once a week, virtually. Although everyone on based lived in the same small neighborhood, I felt so far away from reality and the senior year that I was supposed to be having.

After the first two months, talk of graduation became the focal point of my small community. My principal held virtual town hall meetings where she refused to let anyone speak and shut down any idea for a graduation. Everyone was emotional and tensions were high as students and parents tried their best to give us the ending to our senior year that we deserved. Unfortunately, we never got that closure.

The day I left England, three days after I picked my diploma off an empty gymnasium floor, I walked unto the plane without looking back. I did not get the chance to say my goodbyes to anyone, and I did not get closure for my last military assignment with my family and my last three years of high school. Although my experience with the coronavirus was more fortunate than many, it still took moments from me that I will never be able to experience, such as my senior year.