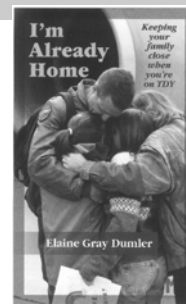


In Touch

Idea update for military families facing separations

Based on the book "I'm Already Home"

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Volume I, Issue I

December 2004



Contact Elaine to:

- Speak for your State Conferences.
- Participate in your Key Volunteer training.
- Tell you about sponsorship and donor programs.
- Ask about quantity book discounts.

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Why on earth did I receive this newsletter?

Right now you may be asking yourself that very question...and rightly so. You have this because you bought a copy of the book "*I'm Already Home—Keeping your family close while on TDY.*" I realize that you may have purchased it:

- For yourself and your family
- As a gift for a friend or co-worker
- To add to a library
- As a Family Readiness Center resource
- To distribute to families facing deployment

Due to popular request, I've

been asked to create this newsletter as an ongoing support resource to supplement the work started in the book. This is the first issue, so we'll be getting out some of the bugs in the mailing lists. So here's what I need you to do.

- If you'd like to continue to receive this in the format provided, then do nothing.
- If you received this in the mail, and you'd like it to come by email instead, email me at Elaine@ImAlreadyHome.com and give me the correct information.
- If you'd prefer to have this arrive in regular mail, email me and provide your mailing address.
- If you're not the correct person

who should have this newsletter because you purchased the book as a gift, please feel free to give it to someone else and tell them to sign up at the website with their own information.

- Finally, if you just don't want to receive even one more piece of mail, then email me: Elaine@ImAlreadyHome.com and "politely" ask to be removed and I'll take care of it immediately.

Please have patience as we refine our list over the next few months to accommodate everyone's needs.

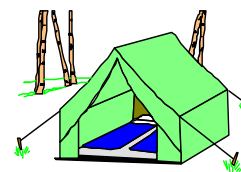
Starting New Traditions by Julie Murphy, Ph.D - special guest writer

During deployment, children, especially toddlers through primary school grades, need to maintain routines established before the parent deployed and keep family traditions alive. However, it is also important to start some new traditions that are fun and different.

"Camp In" is one such tradition. During the long, cold winter months, plan to "camp in" at least once a month on a Friday or Saturday night. To "camp in" rent several family movies and throw sleeping bags, futons or lots of blankets on the floor. Everyone, including the

parent, get into "jammies." Let each child be in charge of dinner on a rotating basis. Forget nutrition and everyone has to eat what has been chosen by the child in charge. For easy clean up, use paper plates and cups and plastic utensils. Have a garbage bag close by to throw all the used plates, etc. in. If you have a fireplace, light a fire or light several candles for light. Then everyone can fall asleep on the floor and even snuggle up in one or two sleeping bags while watching the movies.

For extra festivity or silliness, stock up on paper products during the after season sales



(Christmas, New Year's, Valentines Day) and use them at "camp in."

Julie Murphy, Ph.D., LPC, is a mental health counselor in private practice in Beaufort, SC. She is a retired elementary school counselor who worked for the military dependents schools at the Beaufort Marine Corps Air Station and Parris Island. She also presents workshops for school personnel and families about issues relating to deployment. She can be reached by phone at 843-522-8230 or by email at: juliemurphy1@earthlink.net

How True...

Want to know what Debi says about "I'm Already Home?"

"This book is the greatest thing ever...second only to an uninterrupted bubble bath!"

"Battle Buddy" - Your special friend in the unit who is *always* there for you - you cover each other whenever needed. You can even call each other at 2am!

The envelope please...

During her husband's deployment, Barb bought a huge array of the tiny notes with envelopes like you stick on a package. She wrote a special message on each one and hid them around the entire house in hundreds of different places. The kids wrote some too. Then he came home. He was finding these wonderful notes for months...and loving each one!

A Wonderful New Resource...

Beautiful book! Hardcover, 145 pgs all color and glossy 10X10
Only \$19.95!

Here's how YOU can help...from communities to co-workers

1. **At the Office** - In one office, a list of the names of deployed co-workers was posted on the bulletin board. Many people liked this because they said they had no other way of knowing and they wanted to be able to lend support to their families if needed.
2. **Neighbors** - In one neighborhood, the families threw a birthday party for the 8 yr old boy who was really missing his dad that day.
3. **Teacher** - Is there a child with a deployed parent in your elementary classroom? Have all the children write Holiday cards, make paper ornaments or write letters and send them all to the parent overseas. I guarantee they will brighten their day...and thrill the child!
4. **Neighbors** - Offer to baby-sit for youngsters (at your house) so the parent can go out alone and get Christmas shopping done. It's hard to shop, sneak in presents and wrap them with little ones around.
5. **Communities** - Hold a festival for all families with a community Christmas tree decorated with ornaments made by military families.

Recipe for a Military Wife

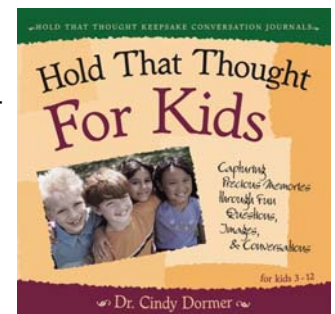
1 ½ c. patience 1 lb. courage
¾ c. tolerance A Dash of Adventure

With the above ingredients, add 2 tsp. elbow grease.
Let set 1 year. Marinate frequently with salty tears.
Pour off excess fat. Sprinkle ever so lightly with money.
"Knead" dough 'till payday. Season with international spices.

Serve With Pride.

Hold that Thought for Kids is a Keepsake Conversation Journal that will bring out the Art Linkletter in you! It's filled with questions, conversation games, and spaces for recording children's answers. It's an easy to use interview tool for anyone interested in the magical voices behind missing tooth smiles.

But memories are just part one! Did you know that family conversation is one of the best predictors of college freshman success? Did you know that parents and grandparents are children's most valued role models and playmates? Don't let another day pass by!



Available at www.ImAlreadyHome.com. Click on "Shopping Cart"

Where do we get such families? By Jackie Close, special guest writer

I was asked for a few suggestions on how families can cope with deployments, especially over the holidays. First, a few thoughts on the military family, and why I think they're so special.

Where do we get such wives?

Mom is now the head of the household and makes all the decisions for the family, without the luxury or ability to discuss things over with her husband. Some decisions are easy; carpool, soccer, dinner and who will spend the night where. Some decisions are not so easy. He didn't leave instructions. Do I fix or replace the car? How will I cope now that he's gone? How can I raise the kids by myself?

Where do we get such kids?

Military kids are the nicest, most compassionate kids I know. Maybe it's the constant moving, family upsets, and wonderful reunions that mold these kids. They can pick up the pieces and get back into the game without dropping a beat. They will also be the first kid to put an arm around someone else's shoulder. They know how to live. They excel at sports, academics, citizenship, and teamwork. They know how to get the ball rolling and get the job done.

Where do we get such families?

I am constantly amazed at what military families accomplish under less than perfect circumstances. They are usually the volunteers at school, church, work, and play. No matter how busy, they always lend a helping hand and end up doing most of the work. They never put themselves first, always thinking of someone else in need. They know they might not be here long due to the constant moves so they put their hand out first in friendship. They know the precious commodity called time. They are also the kids to step in to stop the school yard bully because they don't want to see someone get hurt. They are phenomenal kids and we're lucky to call them our own. Military families are the best and I'm proud and humbled to be associated with them.

Tips for Surviving the Holidays:

1. Think of one thing to be thankful for. It doesn't have to be earth shattering. Take a look around and see others not as lucky as you.

2. Volunteer some time during the holidays. Think nursing home where the elderly would love to have a family to share a few hours with.

3. Think homeless shelter and sponsor a toy drive for the kids who have nothing.

4. Think animal shelter, offer to donate time to clean out kennels or run errands.

5. Think blood. Encourage friends to donate. Find out when the next blood drive is happening and offer to help with the publicity.

6. Send an ornament, homemade by the kids, to your loved one so they may have a piece of family.

7. Spend time thinking about the important holiday traditions you hold dear and make the effort to continue with them even though your family is not all together. These give us a sense of commitment to the values we hold dear.

8. Send out cards to the people you really care about and tell them why they are special. Who says we have to send cards to everyone on our list anyway. Wouldn't it be better to tell someone we love them rather than waste postage just to send a card?

9. Have everyone wear red pajamas on Christmas, you look silly, but I bet it will become a tradition.

10. Most of all carry on. Be proud of your service member's commitment to his country. The separation will be tolerable, you will carry on, and most of all, you'll be stronger because of it.

Have a wonderful and safe holiday season. Give your kids a hug and be proud of who you are.

Jackie has been married to a Marine for 21 years and has been through 8 deployments. Her husband is currently in Iraq and will be home in the spring. They have a 12 year old daughter, Jenny who misses her dad terribly, but is very proud of what he does. They believe in what our country stands for and are willing to do what's necessary to make this world a better place.



I loved your book! I think it should be given to all military families as part of a "Deployment Survival Kit."

- Charity Buer, military spouse

An accomplished presenter, her message is one of hope. After hearing her, National Guard Leadership invited her back.

- Linda Engelman
ND State Lead Volunteer

Thanks for making our stay overseas that much more bearable!

- CPT "Diggs" Brown, USSF

Where in the world did you get this insight from? You're doing a great thing with this book.

- OS1 Timothy Mallock, USN

Without your inspiration, our soldiers' families would not have enjoyed your book. Bobcat was honored to support this endeavor.

- Chris Yurkovich
Bobcat Company

Call Elaine for...

- Speaking engagements
- Sponsorship information
- Quantity book sales

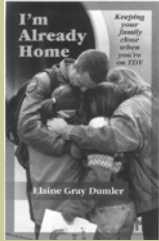
Toll free:
866-780-0460

Keeping your family close while on TDY

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"I'M ALREADY HOME"

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Phone: toll free 866-956-0316
Colorado 303-430-0592
Elaine@ImAlreadyHome.com



We're on the web:
www.ImAlreadyHome.com



Traveling with the kids for Christmas? Read on...

Following an overnight flight to meet her husband, a mom with eight noisy and shoving children arrived at the airport in England. "Do you have any weapons or illegal drugs in your possession?" the customs agent asked the weary woman.

"Sir," she said while separating two of the children, "If I had either of those items, I would have used them by now!"



Focus of issue #2 in February:
Coming Home...Post-deployment and Beyond!

Just for FUN!

Word search - "Time for Family"

Find each word on the word list in the diagram. They can be forward, backward or diagonal. The first one is done for you. Have fun!

S	X	J	U	A	G	C	J	D	I	Q	R	R	J	R
N	R	E	A	D	I	N	E	S	S	T	H	C	E	M
O	M	E	C	L	E	D	I	R	P	O	I	E	U	I
I	S	I	V	A	P	R	P	M	T	P	T	S	O	L
T	T	S	S	O	N	V	C	C	O	N	I	R	H	I
I	N	A	F	T	L	D	H	N	U	C	N	L	J	T
D	E	L	V	K	L	O	L	L	Y	A	E	P	D	A
A	S	U	U	A	C	E	O	E	M	Y	R	M	S	R
R	E	T	V	O	Y	V	T	E	S	S	Y	L	O	Y
T	R	E	L	M	G	S	N	O	O	L	L	A	B	H
X	P	A	W	M	L	T	W	P	E	R	Y	M	L	C
S	T	S	S	E	N	R	E	H	T	E	G	O	T	D
E	C	H	I	L	D	R	E	N	R	H	U	M	A	I
Y	Z	D	G	T	J	B	R	C	U	Q	O	D	X	C
V	Y	A	W	J	M	X	I	Y	X	M	E	D	M	D

- BALLOONS
- CANDLES
- CHILDREN
- DAD
- HOMECOMING
- HOTCHOCOLATE
- LOVE
- MILITARY
- MISTLETOE
- MOM
- MUSIC
- ORNAMENT
- PRESENTS
- PRIDE
- READINESS
- SALUTE
- TOGETHERNESS
- TRADITIONS
- VOLUNTEER

US Postal Service **gives** military families and friends **free** shipping supplies For parcels, packages, etc. Check out the details at:

http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Nov2004/n11232004_2004112312.html