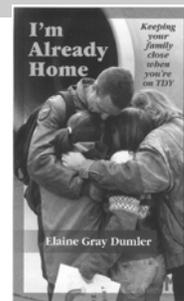


In Touch

Idea update for military families facing separations

Based on the book "I'm Already Home"

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Volume 1, Issue 3

April-May 2005



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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Cut this out 4



Message from Elaine Dumler

I just had the pleasure of speaking in Kansas, Ohio and Michigan - what wonderful people! At the breakout session in Kansas, a woman asked me if I had ever talked about the affect that deployments have on pets. I admitted that I hadn't ever given it much thought, primarily because I didn't have pets. Well - that started a great discussion! After that I decided I had to find out more and share it. So our guest writer this month is an animal behaviorist who was not the least bit surprised at hearing that the family dog was "moping" around the house. Her insights on pages one and three are a wonderful and helpful look into pet behavior and how to condition your pets ahead of time to the pending separation. Very insightful - enjoy!

Now I know that most of you have been in the audience at one of my speaking engagements, and I get a lot of emails asking me if I have some kind of information sheet that can be passed along that describes the presentation. Up until now I haven't had anything specifically designed for that purpose. I changed that. In response to the inquiries, I've put together a "one sheet" with a basic outline of my presentation for families and groups that it might benefit. It's included as page 5 in this newsletter and I hope it's what you had in mind. Soon I'll put it on my website, too. Feel free to make copies if you need to and pass it along to anyone who asks about hiring me to speak at their conferences. Thanks for asking...and sharing!

Separations: Their Affect on Pets by Dr. Suzanne Hetts - special guest writer

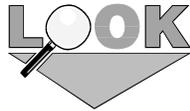
A soldier's deployment causes upheaval not only for human family members but for pets as well. Pets can be sensitive to any kind of change in routine, whether it be a move to a new residence, a new baby, a change in work schedule, addition of another family pet, or being boarded when the family goes on vacation.

Just as people do, pets vary in their ability to adjust to changes. Some seem to be barely affected, while others may show significant changes in behavior. If your pet's behavior has changed, keep in mind

it may not be in direct response to your spouse's absence. Your pet may also be reacting to the changes in your family's behavior and routine. By reading our body language, pets can tell if we are angry, sad or anxious. So your pet may think something is "wrong" based on your behavior, and display anxious, threatening, or fearful behaviors of his own.

It's much better to try to prevent a problem reaction to your soldier's absence than it is to try to resolve any resulting behavior problems after they occur.

(Continued on page 3)



The Gideon's will deliver and hand out **free**, pocket-size, **New Testament**, desert camouflaged Bibles for all your troops being deployed. Just contact your local Gideon chapter and they will do all the work! Try to give them at least 48 hours.

They even brought green camouflaged Bibles for the kids and blue ones for the spouses!



Visit

www.ImAlreadyHome.com

Where you can find:

Books:

- "My Daddy Fights for Freedom"
- "My Mommy Fights for Freedom"
- "Hold that Thought for Kids"
- "I'm Already Home"
- "Chicken Soup for the Nurse's Soul"

Other:

4" and 8" *Support our Troops* yellow ribbon magnets

An idea directly from you...Thanks for sharing, Brenda!

I had already read your book and saw the idea of "Flat Dave." I decided to try something a little different. I made a "Daddy Pillow." I bought some desert camo material, since that is what he'll be wearing for the next year or so. I had him lay down on the material and traced around him from the waist up with his arms outstretched. I cut him out, sewed him up and stuffed him with polyfil. We now had our Daddy Pillow. We can sit on the couch and wrap his arms around us, especially

when we need a hug. My daughter decided that daddy needed a face, so she drew one on him. After she drew the eyes and mouth, she drew two lines down his face from his eyes...with tears on the ends. She said "He needs tears because he will miss us SO much."



FRG Leader, Terry Muir (whose son is deployed) came up with some unique ideas for "themed" gifts to her son. She has graciously let me share them with you.

- For when you're feeling particularly silly:* Silly Putty
- For my Incredible Son:* A sticker book of the *Incredibles*
- Until you can get your 2nd tattoo:* Temporary tattoos you can lick off!
- For when you let your true colors shine:* Coloring book with GLITTER crayons
- To keep busy when you can't get to the computer or phone:* Handheld soccer game
- Come fly away with me?:* A small Styrofoam plane
- When you want to blow them away:* Bubbles and wand
- When you need target practice with no range around:* Squirt guns
- When you think you're losing it and need to get it back, this will show you:* A yoyo
- When you're wanting to "play" and can't go outside:* A nerf football
- When you need to stick to it:* A pack of gum
- When the stress gets to you, use this:* A stress ball with a smiley face on it.
- This is how I look missing you:* Big headed animal with sad black eyes



Yes! Totally Free! Read on...

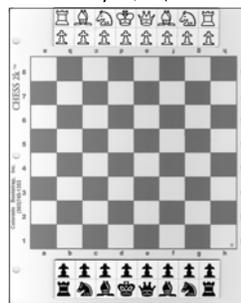
*Does your Serviceperson play chess?
Do they have "down time" while deployed?*

Frank Armbruster, who provided the puzzle on page 4, has made metal portable 8" X 11" chess boards (with magnetic pieces) that fit into a 3-ring binder and has DONATED 80 of them to be given away to deployed service personnel!

That's right...they're FREE.

Frank is donating the sets, and I'm donating priority postage to you.

There are 40 for those who get email newsletters, and 40 for those who get it by postal mail.



*Thanks,
Frank!*

Here's how to get your Chess set

1. Send an email to: Elaine@ImAlreadyHome.com with "chess set" in the subject line.
2. Tell me if you get the newsletter via email or postal mail
3. Provide your US mailing address and phone
4. Write a short "Thank You" note to Frank that I can pass along to him...he'll like that!

That's all there is to it!

Limited to 1 set per family and to the first 80 responses.

Separations: Their Affect on Pets by Dr. Suzanne Hetts - special guest writer

Start by being proactive, and try to anticipate what changes in routine your pet might experience once your spouse leaves.

For example, will your pet be left alone more often? If so, begin to accustom your pet to this now. Dogs are generally much more sensitive to being left by themselves than are cats. Begin to purposefully leave your dog alone for short time periods every day if possible — perhaps 15 minutes or less at a time. Daily practice with being left alone helps your dog learn how to tolerate being by herself, rather than this being a rare event that she doesn't have the skills to cope with. When you leave, give your dog a special food-filled toy, like those seen on our website

(<http://www.animalbehaviorassociates.com/pet-owner-products.htm#toys>).

This will help your dog think that being left alone is a "good thing", not an unpleasant one. Pick the toy up as soon as you return.

Is your spouse the only, or primary one who feeds or plays with your pet or takes your dog for a walk? If this is the case, begin to have other members gradually assume more and more of these responsibilities *before* your soldier leaves. If your pet is more attached to the spouse who will be leaving than to other family members, try to shift this attachment onto others. Someone other than the serviceperson should become the source of pleasant experiences, whether that be play, petting or feeding.

If your spouse is already deployed and your pet is already having problems, first try to make the pet's routine as similar as possible to what it was prior to your spouse's absence. Getting back to as normal as possible often helps not only pets, but you as well. Take time to do things with your pet

that she particularly enjoys, whether that's being brushed, taken for a walk, or played with. These activities may also help make you feel better.

Avoid giving your pet more attention when she is hiding or inactive. That only teaches your pet that those behaviors "work" to get your attention. Instead, encourage your pet to do things she likes to do, as mentioned previously.

If your pet stops eating or shows any other sign of illness such as loose stools or soiling in the house, a trip to the veterinarian is in order. Stress can sometimes cause physical illness, or your pet may have become ill coincidental to your spouse's departure, not because of it. If necessary, your veterinarian can even prescribe a course of short-term anti-anxiety medication to help your pet over the first few difficult weeks.

Separation reactions in pets are often self-limiting. Within a few weeks or a month, you will likely find your pet is back to his old self. It's well known that pets are good for our physical and mental health. As you help your pet adjust to your soldier's absence, you may find you take comfort in your pet's trusting presence and unconditional love.

Dr. Suzanne Hetts is a certified applied animal behaviorist, and with her husband Dr. Dan Estep co-owns Animal Behavior Associates, an animal behavior consulting firm in Denver, CO. Drs. Hetts and Estep are internationally recognized experts in animal behavior, and the authors of several books, videos and CD's. For more information about your pet's behavior, sign up for their free e-zine at www.AnimalBehaviorAssociates.com

A company that has been of tremendous help to me in the storing of my books is:

NAVIS Pack and Ship.

They can safely pack and ship any valuable or household item from one location to another and handle it with care. If you have need for these services, please call 303-734-9517 and ask for Marc. (tell him Elaine sent you!)



A new Military Spouse Career Center commissioned by the Department of Defense Office of Military Community & Family Policy launched on April 4, 2005 at www.Military.com/spouse.

The new resource connects America's 1 million military spouses with education options, scholarships, training programs, career planning tips and employment opportunities.

The Center also includes links to the personal support services offered to military families at Military OneSource 24/7 at 1-800-342-9647

"It was a blessing to have heard you! I wish we had this when my husband was deployed."

- Mary Hazlett



"Your book helps my heart sleep better at night!"

- RR, FRC volunteer

Call Elaine for...

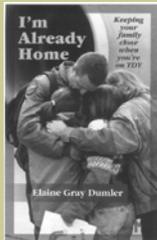
- Speaking engagements
- Sponsorship information
- Quantity book sales

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



The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is accepting nominations for the *NMFA Family Award*. This program recognizes 15 military families that exemplify the best of the military family lifestyle.

Military service is not just a job, it's a way of life, with opportunities for adventure, learning and challenges. The NMFA awards those families who have made the most of the adventure and conquered the challenges.

Nominations are accepted from March 23, 2005 through May 31, 2005. This is a wonderful chance to recognize a family you know!

For more information, eligibility, requirements and to submit a nomination, visit their website:
<http://www.nmfa.org/>

In Touch - Your ongoing support resource newsletter

"The military recruits soldiers...the family retains them"

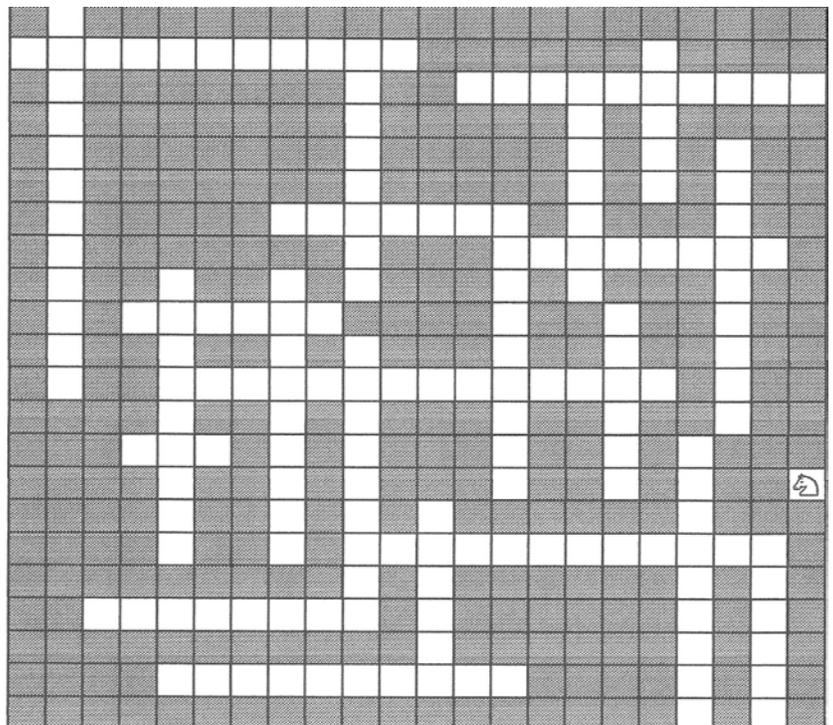
Weekends are filling fast! Get Elaine booked for your State Volunteer Conference or training. Call 1-866-780-0460 toll free

Focus of issue #4 in April:
Patriotic celebrations! - Get involved with the 4th of July

Just for FUN! Special Puzzle by Frank Armbruster

These are some items frequently requested by U.S Forces overseas to be sent in care packages. To solve the puzzle fit the words into the diagram. If there are two or more words used together, they will be entered into the diagram without the spaces, so **boot laces** will be entered as **bootlaces**. (solution next month)

TRIVIAL PURSUIT
DIRT FROM HOME
ZIP LOCK BAGS
PEANUT BUTTER
FIELD CHAIR
SUNGLASSES
BOOT LACES
BABY WIPES
CONVERTER
DEODORANT
BATTERIES
CHAPSTICK
EYE DROPS
GOLD BOND
VITAMINS
KOOL AID
GOGGLES
LOTION
CAMERA
SPICES
RAZORS
BIBLE
WATCH
FAN

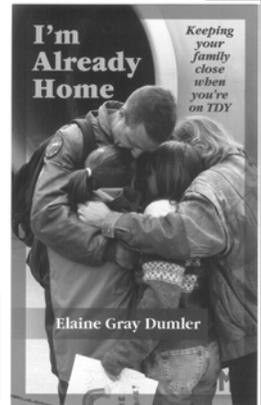




Many military families use ideas from **Elaine Dumler's** book, *I'm Already Home - Keeping your family close while on TDY*

- Over 100 connection strategies to lessen the impact of being apart from those we love.
- Thousands distributed to military families since Sept. 2003.
- "Thank you for writing a book to help our military men and women and their families stay connected with each other during deployment". - **First Lady Laura Bush**

Now you can experience Elaine's new presentation based on the book!



I'M ALREADY HOME - *Helping you be of service to your families*

According to Maj Gen Haugen, much of the ability to recruit and retain civilian soldiers, and keep their families solid, will rest with the success of Family Readiness Programs. Since that's the "job" of many of the conference participants, the presentation will give numerous ideas and resources to rely on and use. Besides, it's a fun way to say "Thanks" to all your volunteers and families.

The Program: "I'm Already Home: Helping you be of service to your families" Keynote

Using the book as background, the presentation features **5** entertaining stories, at least **11** examples of connections ideas, and **4** suggestions for how you can serve and support your family, and those under your care. It's illustrated with **46** beautiful photographs. Idea examples include:

- "Flat Daddy" - as featured on TV and in Oct. 2004 Ladies Home Journal
- The exchange of HANDS
- "Lick it and stick it" hearts for spouses
- How to hear 10 seconds of your loved one's voice at *any* time

The presentation also shows how family support groups can use 1 person's idea to help solve the same problem for many - you're not alone. The talk is fun to listen to and stirs the emotions.

Elaine has inspired audiences at:

- State and National Leadership Conferences - **Keynote or Breakout**
- Spouse Sessions or Luncheons
- State Volunteer Trainings and Pre-deployment briefings
- Family Readiness Conferences and Regional Trainings

Why Elaine Dumler?

- She brings more than 12 years experience as a corporate speaker and trainer.
- She shares interesting stories and real world examples.
- She has experience speaking to spouses of deployed soldiers.
- As a professional, she has experience working with planners and hotels.

For speaking information: www.ElaineDumler.com

For book information: www.ImAlreadyHome.com

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Call 866-780-0460 or email for a detailed proposal for YOUR conference!