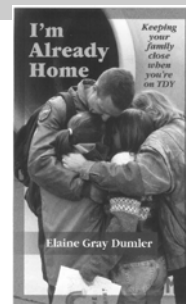


In Touch

Idea update for military families facing separations

Based on the book "I'm Already Home"

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www.ImAlreadyHome.com • Elaine@ImAlreadyHome.com



2nd edition - expanded version of "I'm Already Home" is almost ready! It's called, "**I'm Already Home...Again**" and will be available by the end of 2005...just in time for next year! New book includes:

- Reunion, Reintegration and Redeployment
- 100+ Additional Ideas
- Ideas for Communities and Schools
- Pets and deployments
- 100+ new web resources

Watch for it!

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Message from Elaine Dumler

Happy Fall! I recall that when I started learning about how to put together a newsletter, I'd always hear, "*Lot's of white space! Don't use too many words*". Well, guess what...you'll notice that I didn't follow that advice in this issue. You're probably looking at it thinking "*Wow, look at all that writing!*" Bear with me though. I have the privilege of bringing you some useful information that was passed along to me and also a remarkable article from our guest writer. When I read her poem, and spoke to others, I realized how vital her issue is to understanding the mindset of what our servicepersons go through every time they have to leave their families. I had to share both the poem and article with you in their entirety...no editing. So I hope you'll forgive me the design error of white space and understand why this issue is so "word heavy." Trust me, I'll try to add more graphics next time :)

Also, don't forget to get "soft holds" on my calendar for dates to speak at your state conferences. I'm working on NEW messages for you - particularly surrounding Reunion and Reintegration. Descriptions of these programs and how they will help your families will be available on www.ImAlreadyHome.com by the end of November 2005. Remember - I'll deliver all programs in the same fun and interactive style!

You Married a Warrior... by Mary Fichtner - special guest writer

I have learned to tell myself these words when I realize I am facing another separation from the man I love. It stirs up a million emotions, some that even conflict with each other. When I married this soldier I had no way of knowing how his frequent absences would affect me, after all I had never even known anyone in the military. I also would have never suspected what he would teach me about patriotism, honor, courage, and purpose. Being a military wife has "grown me up" through experiencing pride, pain, excitement, frustration, con-

stant change, and flexibility.

I had a difficult transition into the military lifestyle and in short order began to get my fists up about many of the things that came with being a soldier's wife. I discovered that it doesn't matter if you're the wife of a soldier, airman, sailor or marine; at some time we all experience the same feelings. Over the last 19 years I have learned to accept, and for the most part, quit fighting most of the challenges...but one remained that I wrestled with on an ongoing basis. I knew I married a warrior, but I didn't get married to be alone. The absences, the
(continued on page 2)

You Married a Warrior... (con't) by Mary Fichtner - special guest writer

time apart, the long and/or short deployments caused an ache in my heart and many questions in my mind....why me? Is this fair? Didn't he just get home? And worst of all, if he loves me how could he choose a career that takes him away all the time? Being in love with the soldier was the easy part; dealing with the loneliness was the challenge.

I attend countless kids activities as a single mom and have heard comments later about my "make believe husband". I have had several women tell me that they would never put up with the absences. I have spent several anniversaries and many other holidays without him. A month or more has gone by without me actually hearing his voice. Anger has sometimes consumed me about having to deal with too many decisions and problems without his help or input. I have had to ask for help from other people when I didn't want to or have just dealt with a catastrophe on my own because I felt I had drained others of their giving. I have fallen into bed with complete exhaustion after days of doing the job of two parents coupled with the burden of worry and fear penetrating my heart. They don't say the toughest job in the military is the military wife for nothing!!! Many days I chose self pity and many others I chose anger at my husband or at the military. I fought and struggled and battled with this issue over and over in my heart and mind.

None of it ever changed until the day I chose to look inside the heart of my husband and find out what made him click, how he thought and felt and what made him want to be a warrior. He had told me many times with his words and actions but I chose not to hear because my own pain was making me deaf and blind. As I began to put down my walls of hurt and listen without trying to add my own feelings I started to see something I had never seen or understood before. I began to sense the struggle that went on inside of him on a regular basis. I started to catch a glimpse of the things that tore at him and how he felt. I would tell what I thought he was feeling and he would confirm or deny. I have always written poetry to express some of the most difficult things in my life and one night while trying to sleep words started coming to me to explain who this man was that I had married. As I wrote them down they seemed to write themselves on the paper. In the middle of the night I finished the words and laid the paper where I knew he would see it first

thing in the morning. He brought the paper to me with a look on his face that I had never seen before. I knew that I had made a huge step in coming to terms with who he is. I wish I could say I am completely at peace with letting him go now but that is not the case. I have however chosen pride of him over anger about who he is. I have chosen to release him to do what he feels so called to do over doubt about his love for me. And I have chosen acceptance of the struggle we each have inside of us. I have learned to use tools at my disposal such as the book "I'm Already Home" to help me make the time more bearable. I have learned to remind myself that while others do not have to live with the challenges I do, they never get to experience the raw elation of feeling togetherness after a long separation with the love of your life. My prayer is that the following poem, titled *The Soldier's Hearts*, inspires you on your journey to understand the service person in your life a little bit better, because after all....you married a warrior.

A Soldier has to have two hearts
to meet the call his life imparts.
One for his home so far away
the other for what some dismay.
His one heart loves so tenderly
a wife and kids who set him free
to do for his country what he should,
but they would change it if they could.
The other heart, it cannot break,
for precious freedom is at stake.
The mission runs this heart alone
and this it feels down to the bone.
His two hearts fight inside his chest.
Each one thinks it's doing best.
But war is all they ever know
although they never let it show.
For the man they live inside
is torn in two by his own pride.
To serve his country brave and tall
yet keep his family through it all.
One heart sacrifices all
the other must answer duty's call.
But in the end each heart will win
both love of family and countrymen.

Written for you by Mary Fichtner, the forever loyal wife of a Special Forces Soldier.

(Editors note: Please know that in the above poem, "airman", "sailor", "soldier" or "marine" are interchangeable. It was not my place to make any changes to Mary's work.)

Great, low cost Connection Ideas from Rebecca Cox:



1. My daughter has to take the bus because with 2 kids I can't be at two schools at once. I made a card with her bus info, my phone number, etc. on one side and on the flip side put a picture of her with her daddy. I laminated it (with a luggage tag size piece of laminate from Kinkos), put a key ring on it and it's clipped into her backpack so anytime she misses her dad she can peek in there and see the two of them together. Cost: \$1.29

2. Going off your Flat Daddy idea we kind of did the reverse, on a smaller scale. I laminated wallet size photos of the kids for my husband to take with him, and now he's sending pictures of himself by icebergs (he's in Greenland), holding up the pictures of Kelsi and David, so they feel like they are there with him. My son asks him now *"Where have we gone together daddy?"* and my husband can tell them where he's toted them along to. Cost: \$1.99 total for both pics getting laminated

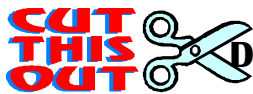
3. Finally, we each took an 8.5X11 piece of paper and scrap booked two pictures of our choice on them. My son decorated his with Star Wars stickers, my daughter did hers "scrap-book" style and it's so cute, and I wrote a special note to my husband telling him how much I love and respect him and how much I'll miss him but that I know we'll all be fine. By laminating them they can't get ruined, so even Army folks going to the desert could do this and just keep the flat laminated pieces in the bottom of their trunks, so they'd be there to look at any time. Cost: \$1.99 ea. sheet (so that times 3 for us)



Military Appreciation Monday at Golden Corral Restaurants!

(I was forwarded this information and I verified it at www.goldencorral.net)
To show our support for the U.S. Military, every Golden Corral restaurant across the country will be offering a **FREE Dinner Buffet** with choice of beverage to any former or active member of the U.S. Military (including National Guard and Reservists) when he or she visits the restaurant on **Monday night November 14, 2005 from 5:00pm. - 9:00pm.** If you are a member of the U.S. Military, just identify yourself to the cashier. (Find details and locations at www.goldencorral.net)

"You've done your part. Now let us do ours." - Golden Corral



Deadlines Established for Holiday Mail

Want that special gift to make it back home in time for the holidays? Stars and Stripes reports that military mail officials in Central Command have announced mailing deadlines for deployed soldiers to get their packages sent to their home bases in the United States, Europe and elsewhere.

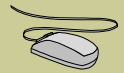
The first deadlines - for anything sent by parcel post - will be Nov. 12 for all military mail addresses, officials said. The last deadline - for express mail service - is Dec. 19 for military mail addresses. For first-class and priority mail, all packages should be sent by Dec. 10, except for military mail addresses that have a ZIP code between 09300 and 09399. Parcels to those addresses need to be sent by Dec. 5, officials said. Anything sent space-available mail must be mailed by Nov. 26 except for ZIP codes between 09300 and 09399. The space-available deadlines for those addresses are Nov. 12. For more information on mailing restrictions, package sizes and rates, check with local postal operations representatives.



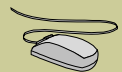
Bookmark these Websites

Military Spouse JobSearch is designed to enhance the employment opportunities for spouses of US Military members with employers committed to hiring military spouses and to connect employers with a talented, global, diverse workforce.

<http://www.militaryspousejobsearch.org/msjs/app>



I believe in mentorships. To find out more about how you can participate, learn about guidelines or organize your own mentorships, go to <http://www.armygl.army.mil/hr/mrc.asp> and find a series of links under the heading "Quick Links".

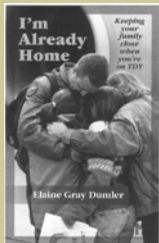


Spouses to Teachers is a Department of Defense pilot project designed to assist spouses of active duty and reserve military members to become public school teachers. A reimbursable stipend up to \$600 is available to these spouses for teacher certification examinations only. For more information on the Spouses to Teachers program, and to see if your state participates, go to <http://www.spousetoteachers.com>

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Just in case you were wondering...

Top 10 Scariest Movies
from film critic
Stephen Wagner:

1. The Exorcist
2. The Haunting (1963 version)
3. Jacob's Ladder
4. Poltergeist
5. The Sixth Sense
6. Rosemary's Baby
7. The Omen
8. The Innocents
9. Psycho
10. The Shining

In Touch - Your ongoing support resource newsletter

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

Weekends are filling fast in 2006! Get Elaine booked for your State Readiness Conference, training, or briefing. **NEW:** Fun and informative sessions on **Deployment** or **Reunion**. Stories and Connection ideas. Call 1-866-780-0460 toll free

Just for FUN! This time we bring you fun stuff to read!

Some REAL Headlines that have appeared in newspapers

...courtesy of Scott Friedman

1. Hospitals are Sued by Seven Foot Doctors
2. Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers
3. Miners Refuse to Work After Death
4. Red Tape Holds up New Bridges
5. Man Struck by Lightning Faces Battery Charge
6. *and my favorite...* Toilet Stolen - Police Have Nothing to Go On



This Month's List of Fun Facts (and useless information)

...courtesy of Ann DeLeeuw, Realtor

- The human brain uses the same amount of energy as a 10-watt light bulb.
- Children grow faster in the springtime.
- Leonardo da Vinci invented the scissors and he could write with one hand while drawing with the other.
- People speak at a rate of about 120 words a minute.
- More people are killed annually by donkeys than are killed in airplane crashes.
- An Ostrich's eye is larger than it's brain.
- Babies are born without knee caps. They don't appear until they reach 2-6 years old.