

In Touch

Idea update for military families facing separations

Based on the books "I'm Already Home" and "I'm Already Home...Again"

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2nd edition - expanded version of "I'm Already Home" is done! It's called, "**I'm Already Home...Again**" and is available for purchase at generous discount pricing. New book includes:

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

Call toll free 1-866-780-0460
or visit
www.ImAlreadyHome.com
for details and excerpts.

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Message from Elaine

Many of you whom I've had the chance to meet know that I love quilts. I find quilting to be reflective and relaxing, and I also enjoy the history behind quilts, and collecting them. I think they're fascinating. A couple of weeks ago I attended a national quilt festival held here in Denver. Among the exhibits was a quilt competition with over 400 entries from all over the country. As I looked at every quilt, I read the synopsis of the quilt's "background" - **why** it was made. Often those stories were as interesting as the quilt itself. Most of them talked about what was going on in the life of the quilter as she...or he...decided to tell their story in fabric. One heartwarming piece showed 3 servicepersons holding onto each other walking out of a jungle...in Vietnam. It was made when her husband and two sons were serving. Another stunning work of art was made solely of 1" hexagons - 76,826 of them! The entire quilt was hand pieced and hand quilted. It took her over 3 years. Why such a painstaking journey? She had discovered that she was unable to have children and it was her way of battling her grief while she recovered emotionally.

Quilts are a statement of what is important to the quilter, a confirmation of something in their world, whether positive or negative, static or needing change. Every quilt is more than fabric - it is: a story waiting to be told, a map to freedom, a beautiful journal that keeps hearts from becoming too lonely or allows those same hearts to express sheer joy. They are the preservation of cultures and family histories. Quilts are the preservation of a quilter's voice.

I inherited a family quilt from the late 1800's. It's a crazy quilt design and on each piece of fabric is the embroidered signature of a family member or a citizen of McClure, Pennsylvania. This reinforced to me that these people are MY family history...my past. I tell you this because YOU are part of my future...my friendships and those I care about. I'm designing a quilt that uses circles woven together with a fabric photograph in each circle. Those photos are going to be of all the amazing men and women...you...who have shared your lives with me through the books and speaking engagements at Family Readiness Conferences. I have so many smiling faces that have been emailed to me and I will call the finished quilt..."**Circle of Friends.**" Thank you for sharing your lives with me and letting me call you friend.

News you can use...(or may already know)

Often I'm contacted by sources and asked to pass along information to you. Here are some of those postings.

1. Gift Certificates through AAFES

"Receiving confirmation that Americans back home are thinking of you while you're far from home is critical to good morale," AAFES Chief of Corporate Communication Army Lt. Col. Debra Pressley said. "Send a gift certificate to a soldier through aafes.org, or when you see a person in military uniform, shake their hand and say thank you for serving our country."

Gifts from the Homefront gift certificates may be redeemed at any AAFES exchange worldwide, including 52 BX/PX facilities throughout OEF/OIF. Troops use the certificates to purchase items ranging from personal-care items, sodas, candy and snacks, to DVDs, televisions or video games.

Those wishing to send a Gift from the Homefront can log on to aafes.org or call (877) 770-4438 to purchase gift certificates in \$5, \$10, \$20, \$25 or \$50 denominations. From there, the Gift from the Homefront may be distributed through a number of sources.

2. Finally...a great source to make Flat Daddies!

Most of you know about Flat Daddy either through the book or seeing him at the FRG conferences. I'm always asked about a good, less expensive source for having one made. Up to now I've been unable to provide an answer and it's been frustrating. Now I have a source! After I spoke for the Ft. Carson Support Our Spouses conference, one of the wives attending (Rachel) emailed me with the result of her search for someone to make one for her. She found this company and they will make a Flat Daddy for \$50...that's a great deal! I called them to confirm because I said that if I put it in the newsletter that they would get a lot of calls and I didn't want them to back away from the offer. The owner assured me that he's there to help! He will mail a Flat Daddy anywhere in the country. Be sure to tell him that you heard about it from the SOS conference for the discount. Here's the information:

Microcrafts Printing (ask for JC)
3626 N. Stone Ave.
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
(719) 630-0411
info@bigcolorgraphics.com

Rachel said you need to have your "subject" email a picture of him or herself in uniform, facing you and be sure they smile. Then you can email the image to JC at Microcrafts and he does the rest! Thanks, Rachel.

3. DVD to help with Combat Stress

To help ensure that America's troops who are suffering from combat stress get the help they need, TriWest

Healthcare Alliance, the DoD contractor administering the TRICARE program in the West Region, has produced a post-deployment support DVD featuring advice, information and encouragement from behavioral health experts. The DVD is called "Getting Home...All the way home." for information, go to <http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/060411/latu072.html?v=51> or visit www.triwest.com.

3. Sesame Street teaches coping skills

This July, Elmo and his red, fuzzy father will star in an effort to teach young military children and their caregivers how best to handle a parent's deployment in a program called "Talk, Listen, Connect: Helping Families Cope with Military Deployment." Sesame Workshop, the makers of Sesame Street, will launch the program as a DVD kit. Performed in English and Spanish, it will not air on television but will be distributed free to schools, childcare programs and family support centers, thanks to a gift from Wal-Mart stores and other sponsors. The kit covers all phases of deployment - from pre-deployment to homecoming -- and the unique challenges each phase poses. *(To get a copy, check with your school or daycare center. In the meantime, I'll try to investigate further if there is a contact person or website you can visit to learn more.)*

I need your help!

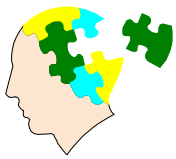
Have you and your spouse ever attended one of the **PREP Marriage Enrichment Seminars** offered? If so, please read on:

I'm doing some research for an FRG conference this summer, and I knew to come directly to those who would know...you. I'm trying to find out if any of you have participated in a PREP Marriage Enrichment Seminar, and what was the one main benefit to you and your marriage, and the one thing that you wish had either been done better, or covered (if omitted).

If you'd be so kind to spend a moment on this (thanks to you who already have) and let me know the above information about the seminars, it would be a big help! If you want to add anything else about the seminars you think I should know, feel free.

Email me at: **elaine.dumler@us.army.mil** or at **Elaine@ImAlreadyHome.com**

Thanks for helping me to be an even bigger help to our families.



This is similar to an idea in last quarter's newsletter, but with a different touch. Sarah took a picture she had of her and her husband to a photo shop and had it made into an 8 X 10 photo puzzle. She says... "I wrote a love note on the back of the puzzle. Then I separated the puzzle and put 2 or 3 pieces in each envelope. That made about 8-10 envelopes. He (took them with him) and could open one a day and slowly put the puzzle - and the love note on the back - together. He loved it." Thanks for sharing, Sarah.

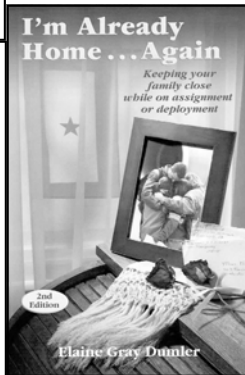
During the Civil War when fathers went off to war they would give their daughters a handkerchief. The daughter would make a doll out of it and keep it close to her. When the daughter married she would carry the handkerchief doll that she had made as a child with her down the aisle either in her flowers or tucked into her bridal dress.



The New, Updated, and Expanded 2nd edition of "I'm Already Home" is available for ordering!

I've kept your favorites, and added:

- **160+ NEW ideas**
- **100+ NEW resources**
- **New Chapters on:**
 - * Community support
 - * Church support
 - * Extended families
 - * Pets and deployments
- **Expanded Chapter on:**
 - * Reunion & Reintegration
- **More fun Stories!**



Order yours now at www.ImAlreadyHome.com or call Toll free 866-780-0460. Ask about quantity discounts!

"Challenge" Coins

One of our Kansas spouses has designed some wonderful new coins to share with your family to let them know they are in your heart. I have one of each and they are great! A sample:

front: **back:**



Sending you my hand to hold until You come home

To see other styles and to get some for yourself, visit:
<http://geocities.com/homefrontgifts@sbcglobal.net>

For your information...

The **National Homeland Defense Foundation** established the Military Family Assistance Project in March of 2005 that supports families of Colorado military members deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq. Because the global war on terrorism has created a demanding operational tempo the needs of certain military families may be unmet. This is where NHDF comes in. In cooperation with the military family support infrastructure of the Active, Guard and Reserve components, NHDF is committed to meeting these needs. The MFAP can help with emergency financial assistance for deployed soldiers/families who are in critical financial distress due to unforeseen hardships or lengthy deployments, or who have medical needs or expenses beyond their resources. Our motto is "Speed to Need". Our military families deserve no less. Recently, in January of 2006, the MFAP sponsored a Supporting our Spouses (SOS) retreat. This retreat was offered to the FRG volunteer leaders of deployed units. These spouses serve in a volunteer position and provide a valuable service in extending the workforce of the overstretched military family support structure. The retreat was an overall great success and close to 150 spouses attended. The spouses received training, attended seminars on staying connected during deployments, were given opportunities to network with other FRG leaders and were even treated to some pampering!

Watch a 3 minute DVD (after May 26) about the SOS retreat on my website:
www.ImAlreadyHome.com and contact Judy Lyle, VP of NHDF at (719) 577-7417 or JLyle@NHDF.org



Bookmark these Websites

The Coalition of Salute America's Heroes is an Emergency Aid Fund that has helped wounded heroes and their families with various needs. For updates on how they have helped, please visit:

www.SaluteHeroes.org



I was recently reminded of a great resource for families facing many different financial challenges caused by a deployment. For four years, USA Cares has been assisting military families with quality of life issues. They are here also to deal with issues of immediate need...like food on the table...that require a quick turnaround. My source told me that this organization was a huge help in keeping their family afloat during the beginning of their first deployment as some unexpected financial challenges arose. USA Cares also accepts donations, so please visit them if you need assistance or are in a position to make a donation:

www.usacares.us/



Career decisions are made easier with:

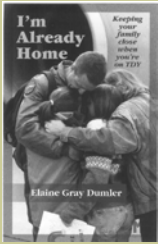
www.acinet.org/acinet/

America's Career InfoNet is a resource for making informed career decisions to support a demand-driven workforce system.

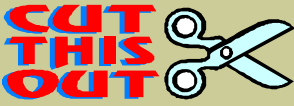
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Remedies In Your Home
Stop Hiccups!
Grab a couple of pieces of ice wrapped in a towel and briefly put it on the side of your neck. Evidently, the ice interrupts the reflex that causes the hiccup reaction.

Lawn Mower Tip:
Keep the grass from sticking to the underside of the mower by spraying it with WD-40 or cooking spray! It keeps the debris from sticking.

Bee stings and bug bites:
To take the pain away within a minute go to your kitchen and get the meat tenderizer. Mix a paste with water and put it on the bite. It works because the tenderizer is *protein-based*.

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

Weekends are filling fast in 2006! Get Elaine booked for your State Readiness Conference, training, or briefing. For those of you who asked: I've been invited to present at the National Guard Family Programs Convention in Philadelphia in July! If you see me, please say Hi! Call 1-866-780-0460 toll free or visit www.ImAlreadyHome.com

Interesting fact from a VA contact: Did you know that whoever stands guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier never wears rank? This is to show their respect for the Hero who is in the Grave. The guards never want to out rank the soldier who is there and there is no way of knowing if he is a private or a general. Hmmm...makes sense.

Just for FUN! Word search - "Memorial Day"

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!

D E D R V M I I R T A M C T U	AIRMAN	MEDAL
P O L W E N E S A I L O R D T	AMERICAN	MEMORIAL
L Y R A T E M E C F L E I F I	BATTLE	MEMORY
A D E S E R T S T O R M A E S	CEMETARY	MILITARY
N I A I R M A N R E R M E E T	COLORGUARD	PLANE
E N I R A M I G U E I I I M R	DESERTSTORM	REMEMBER
L T R A N M U L M L I R O T O	FAMILIES	SAILOR
B E R Q S A R E I E O D C R P	FLAG	SOLDIERS
M L A I R O M E M T E V L O P	FREEDOM	SUPPORT
U T W D B B S E S E A H Y O U	HONOR	THANKS
H T D R E U L A R T D R I P S	HUMBLE	WOUNDED
B A L R L P T F L I O A Y S A	IRAQ	
M B R O N O H E L M C U L R T	MARINE	
E W O U N D E D E T H A N K S		
L D W N R G E M G A L F N U U		

Solution is at www.ImAlreadyHome.com under "newsletter" tab