

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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I love November



I love October too because that's when my birthday is, but November is special. This time of year is the doorway to the holidays and it also seems that people are just a bit nicer. Every year I hope that the feelings of graciousness towards others can last all year long. It's a time for thankfulness and gratitude which is why I'm always glad that Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving both fall in November.

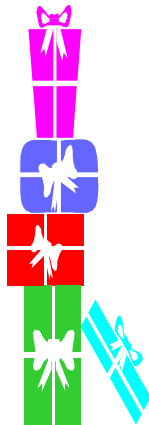
Yesterday I returned from a visit to New York City. The weather was clear and delightful (for one day) and I shared three of my favorite sites with my husband – The Statue of Liberty, Ground Zero, and the relief mural outside Fire Station #10 right next to Ground Zero. This year we were privileged to add a tour of the USS Intrepid. It was wonderful! So this month's newsletter will reflect my feelings of thankfulness (for my cousin who lovingly was our tour guide and for the life I have) and for all the Veterans who have made that life possible. Please enjoy this issue and know that I'm very grateful for the friends I have in you!

What's up at:
www.ImAlreadyHome.com

1. **Readiness Training** tab for program descriptions currently available.
2. **Blog link** directly to a blog where you can read and comment on ideas.
3. **Flat Daddy®** page to bring you photos and status of the program.
4. Access all archived issues of the **InTouch** newsletter.

Inside this issue:

Update from Elaine	1
Army Wife Talk Radio	1
Flat Daddy Donations	1
Slideshow Photos Needed for You Tube	2
Operation Love Reunited	2
Safe Travels <i>Car Safety Kit and Supplies</i>	3
Websites to Bookmark <i>Vets, Northpole, equine therapy</i>	3
Coming Soon! The Road Home	3
Veterans Day Poem	4
Book your Trainings	4
Mail for Heroes	4



As the holidays near, we always receive many requests for a donated Flat Daddy®. If you know of any friends, neighbors, businesses, church groups or other organizations that want to do something for military families, please consider referring them to www.OperationConnectAFamily.com. At this site, anyone can donate a Flat Daddy® or a copy of the book *I'm Already Home... Again* to a family that is separated from their loved one this holiday season.

Some, but not all, chapters of the American Red Cross are making Flat Daddies available under certain circumstances through their Service to the Armed Forces department. Call your local Red Cross chapter to see if they are one of the chapters involved.

ARMY WIFE TALK RADIO



Tune in to our favorite internet radio show on December 15, 2008 to hear my conversation with Tara Crooks and Star Henderson. We'll be talking about the new book, *The Road Home* and sharing great reunion and reintegration ideas in this popular call in show. To listen to this show live, tune in Monday, December 15, 2008 at 8 pm EST. Log in to ArmyWifeRadio.com or www.blogtalkradio.com/awtr and you'll be directed to the live broadcast. Please call in, I would love to talk to you personally!

If you can't listen on December 15th, don't worry. You can log into ArmyWifeTalkRadio.com and click on the listen now button anytime the week of December 15 to hear the archived version of my interview.



We Need Your Photos

by Jenn Shumate

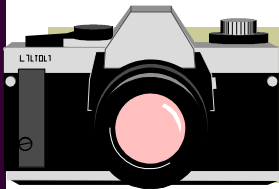
We're developing a new YouTube video...for you!

If you have been lucky enough to see Elaine speak in person you have probably witnessed the two awesome songs she uses with her slide show. *Whatever It Takes* and *Thank You* both written for the families by Jana Stanfield.

Normally, Elaine customizes her slide show with pictures from the unit or state she is presenting too. However, we would love to make one to use on ImAlreadyHome.com, YouTube (and other internet locations) that includes pictures of our friends and fans. The songs are so wonderful that we would really like to showcase them.

So many of you have been along for Elaine's journey that it wouldn't seem right not to include your images in this custom slide show. Both songs are truly touching and convey such heartfelt meaning for military families and friends.

If you have a homecoming picture, a Flat Daddy® picture or any other great photos of you and your service member that you would like to have considered for this project, please email them to assist@ImAlreadyHome.com. or to Elaine@ImAlreadyHome.com. Please send jpeg photos of about 1 MB or better as an attachment to the email, not embedded into the email. Remember if you send a photo, you are giving us permission to use it. We'll stay *InTouch* to let you know when the slide show up and ready.



Operation Love ReUnited

www.oplove.org

Operation Love ReUnited is a wonderful organization of photographers across the country who donate their service to deploying, deployed and returning service members. This group of volunteers, can help you capture those precious moments as they have captured the important moments for many military families free of charge!

If you are a military family in one of these phases of deployment contact www.oplove.org to find out how you can get a free photo session for your own family.

After the balloons and parties, you will cherish the photographs that were taken that day. Much like your wedding, or the birth of your children, the reunion ceremony will go by in a blur. If you have the chance to

have a personal photographer document these moments for you, it will be worth it. Take the time and energy to capture this special occasion.

Operation Love ReUnited is always looking for more photographers to meet the continuing photography needs of military families. If you are a photographer willing to donate your services, contact them at www.oplove.org to find out how to get involved.

If your family is not currently in a phase of deployment, you can still be photographed by these amazing photographers. Fees vary, so check out their site for local photographers who participate in Operation Love ReUnited.



Safe Travels –Don’t be caught in the cold this winter

Traveling in the winter can be treacherous and dangerous. Before you head out, be sure your car is stocked with a complete car safety kit.

A complete safety kit should include:

- Extra blanket
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Extra gloves, socks, hat
- Ice scraper
- Bottled water
- Pocket knife
- Canned food, can opener– and other snacks to hold you over if you get stranded
- Jumper cables
- Brightly colored scarf to attract attention in an emergency
- First aid kit (bandages, cloth tape, antibiotic ointment, antiseptic wipes, pain reliever tablets, instant cold compress, non-latex gloves, scissors, roll bandages, sterile gauze pads, oral thermometer, tweezers, and a first aid instruction booklet)

Before you leave, be sure to make sure all of these important car parts are tuned and ready to go:

- Heater
- Brakes
- Lights- head, tail and inside dome
- Antifreeze and oil levels
- Battery
- Thermostat
- Windshield wipers and fluid
- Ignition system
- Defroster

A complete toolkit should include:

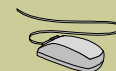
Screwdrivers, pliers, set of socket wrenches, electrical wire tape, small fire extinguisher and jumper cables. For added security, consider purchasing a self contained battery charger. For around \$100 you can purchase this device that allows you to give yourself a “jump” without another vehicle present.



Bookmark These Websites

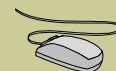
If you are interested in a social network community open to all veterans, including active duty, and retired try MyVet-Work.com. Also, open to family members, friends and other supporters. Join to provide support for each other and build a social network with other vets and military families.

www.myvetnetwork.com



Christmas will be here before you know it! Get a jumpstart on the festivities by visiting this site. There are great ideas and activities for parents and children alike. Visit them to write a letter to Santa, create a personalized book available in a PDF downloadable format, and find great recipes for yummy holiday treats.

www.northpole.com



Horses Helping Soldiers

This Maryland farm is committed to providing equine therapy.

www.greengatefarm.org

Preorder *The Road Home - Smoothing the Transition Back From Deployment*

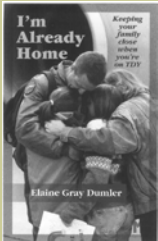
The third book in the I’m Already Home series, *The Road Home-Smoothing The Transition Back From Deployment*. is in the works. Upon release, *The Road Home* will retail at an affordable \$14.95 however, a loyal customer discount price of \$12.95 is being offered if we receive your preorder before January 1, 2009.

Books will be shipped upon release in February-March 2009. For more information on receiving 2008 pricing or for bulk discounts, contact us at assist@ImAlreadyHome.com or call toll free 866-780-0460.

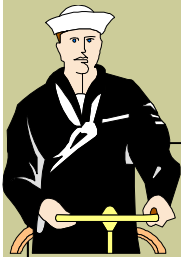
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If WWI had really been "the war to end all wars" November 11 might still be called "Armistice Day." However, Congress recognized that other vets also made a contribution to peace. So in 1954 President Eisenhower signed a bill declaring November 11, Veterans Day.

Beginning in 1968, Veterans Day was celebrated on the Fourth Monday in October. It was soon apparent that November 11 had historical significance and so in 1978 Congress returned the observance of Veteran's Day to its rightful place, November 11.

"This nation shall remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave."

Elmer Davis

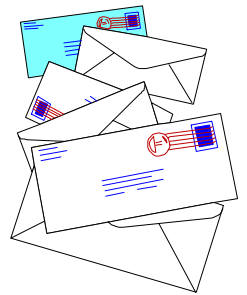
"The military recruits...the family retains."



...to reserve Elaine to present and train at your State Readiness Conference, training, or briefing.
Call 1-866-780-0460 toll free or visit
www.ImAlreadyHome.com

Review descriptions of trainings and programs at the website under the **Readiness Trainings** tab on the home page. You can also view media clips and request to review videos from past programs for all branches of the service.

When addressing your holiday cards this year, consider mailing one to the "Holiday Mail for Heroes" program sponsored by the Red Cross. The program is designed to reach as many service members as possible, but for security reasons all material will be reviewed by Red Cross volunteers. To expedite the process for them please do not include your home address, email address, any religious material, glitter, confetti, photos, money, gift cards, or care packages. Post mark deadline in December 10, 2008.



Holiday Mail for Heroes
P.O. Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456



Be Thankful

In November, most people squeeze in one day to be thankful, Thanksgiving Day. This month take time to be thankful all month long. And don't forget to thank all the veterans you know, those whose service and commitment have changed the lives of every American. Someone sent this quote as a reminder of how much the work of veterans impact our daily lives.

"IT IS THE VETERAN, Not the Reporter Who Has Given Us Freedom Of The Press.

IT IS THE VETERAN, Not the Clergyman, Who Has Given Us the Freedom Of Religion.

IT IS THE VETERAN, Not the Poet, Who Has Given Us Freedom of Speech.

IT IS THE VETERAN, Not the Campus Organizer, Who Has Given Us Freedom to Demonstrate.

IT IS THE VETERAN, Who follows our Flag into Battle, Who Defends Our Flag, Who Salutes Our Flag and Whose Coffin is Draped With our FLAG.

IT IS THE VETERAN, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE VETERAN, AND IT WILL ALWAYS BE THE VETERAN "