Student Deployment Journal

Written by
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Illustrated by
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About the Author

Elizabeth Moar is a former military nurse, Major (ret).

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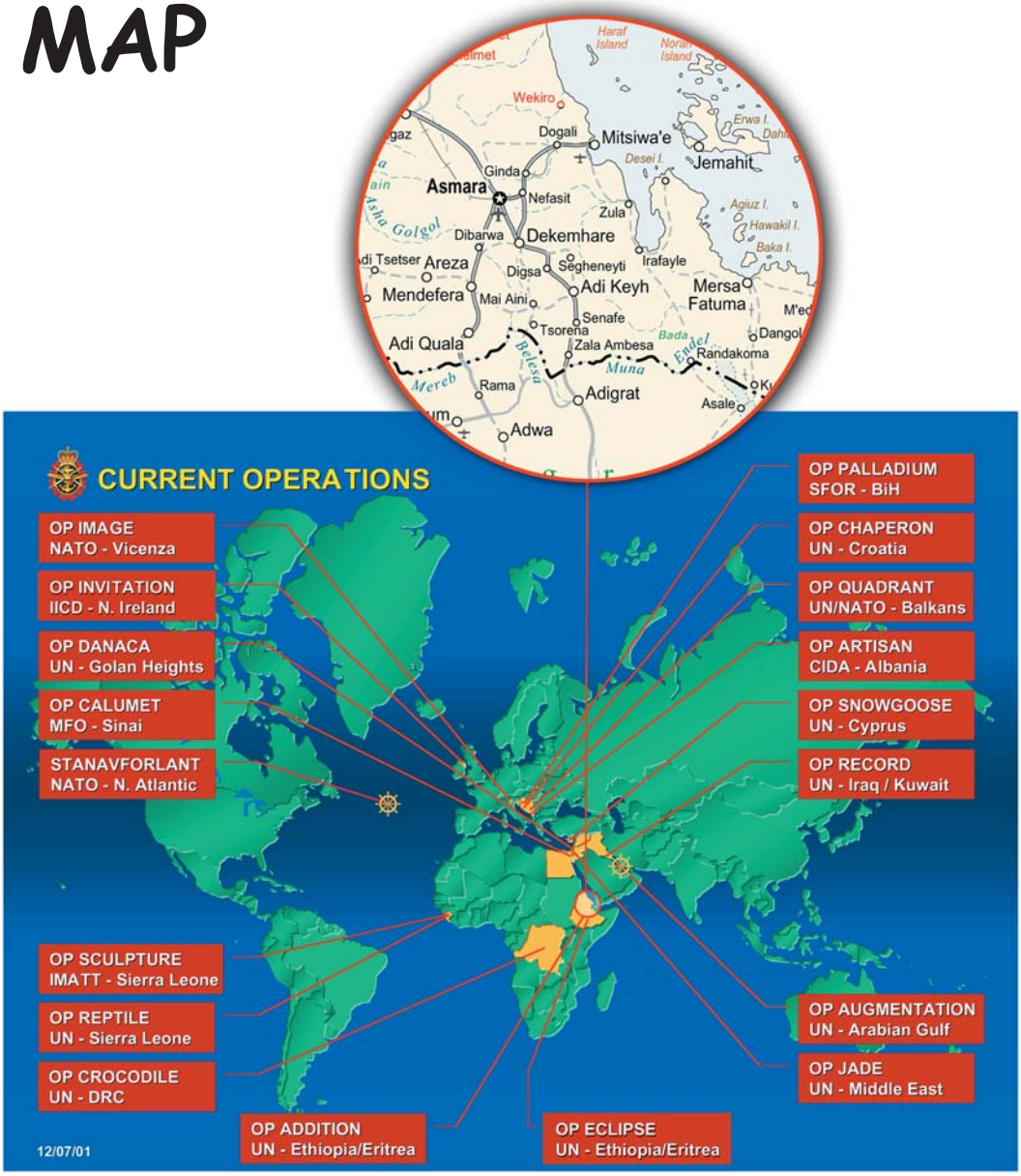
OPI: Coordinator, Mission Information Line

My Dad gave me this book because he's going to Africa for 6 months as a Peacekeeper. He said he'll keep a journal too so that when he comes home we'll have lots to share and talk about, things we might not remember if we don't write them down. Dad said a journal is private, and I don't have to show it to anyone, not even him or Mom, unless I want to . He told me that the time he's away might not seem so long if I get in the habit of writing in my journal almost every day. I asked him what to write and he said there's no rule that I can write anything, like what happened that day, or what I'm feeling or thinking about, or planning to do. Dad said people often write in their journals when they're upset or sad and about happy times too.

Which of your parents is going away? _____

Here's a picture of me and my Dad playing chess. There's a space for you to draw or put a picture of you with your parent.

PEACEKEEPING MISSION MAP



I've circled the place where my Dad is going.
Where is your parent going? _____
You could highlight the country where your parent will be.

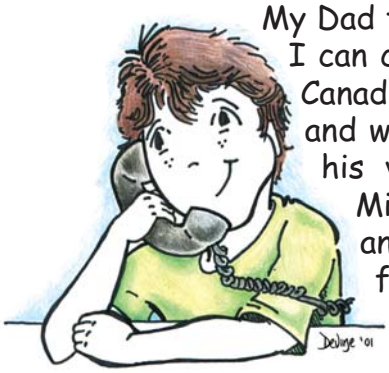
I hope to be able to use email to write to my Dad. But he said that it might take a long time to get their computers set up because he's in the first group of a new rotation. As soon as he can he'll send me an email. Do you have an email address for your parent?

My Dad told me that I could send letters to him, using this address:

A12 112 113 DJ SINCLAIR _____
OP ECLIPSE _____
PO BOX 5108 STN FORCES _____
BELLEVILLE ON K8N 5W6 BELLEVILLE ON K8N 5W6

I left room for you to write your parent's peacekeeping address. I filled in the bottom line because Dad said its the same for all Canadian Peacekeepers, no matter where they are serving. The top line is for the service number, initials, and last name. The second line is for the name of the Operation or mission. The third line is for the box number.

MISSION INFORMATION LINE



My Dad told me about a special telephone number that I can call as often as I want (it's free!), to listen to Canadian Peacekeepers telling about where they are and what they're doing. He said I might even hear his voice sometime on the line. It's called the Mission Information Line and you can call from anywhere in North America to hear messages from and about Peacekeepers and their families. The number is 1-800-866-4546.

I already called it once. There's a message that says press 1 for English, 2 for French, or 0 if you want to talk to someone or leave a message. I listened to messages from Camp Black Bear and Camp Maple Leaf in Bosnia, Golan Heights, and Ethiopia. Some of the messages are long and if you don't want to listen to the whole message you just press * and it will take you back to choose another one.

I also listened to one from the Chief of the Defence Staff that helped me realize how important my Dad's job is. When Dad first told us about having to go I was really sad, and mad at the army too. I still don't want my Dad to go, but I know his work there will help kids in Ethiopia and Eritrea who have lost one or even both parents in the war. Why don't you call and write about the messages you hear?

MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

I live out in the country in Ontario near a big military base called CFB Petawawa.

Where do you live? _____

Last Saturday my whole family went to the base for something called Pre-deployment Briefings. There were lots of games and snacks for the kids while the adults went to workshops to help them get ready for deployment – that means when the soldiers leave.

We went to a place called the Family Resource Centre. My little brother loved playing in their playroom, and I met a boy named Jordan whose Dad is going to the same place as my Dad. There will be lots of family activities while our Dads are away, so I hope to see him a few times. We watched a video called A Peacekeeper's Letter Home. Now I sort of understand the kind of work Dad will be doing while he's in Africa as a Peacekeeper.

Jordan said he wishes his Dad were a school teacher who never went away for months at a time. Sometimes I wish that too, but mostly I'm proud of my Dad being a soldier and being able to go and help other people.

I almost forgot the best part of the Pre-deployment stuff. I got to ride in a tank and talk on my Dad's radio, the kind where you say 'over and out ' when you're finished talking.

Which Military Family Resource Centre is closest to you? _____

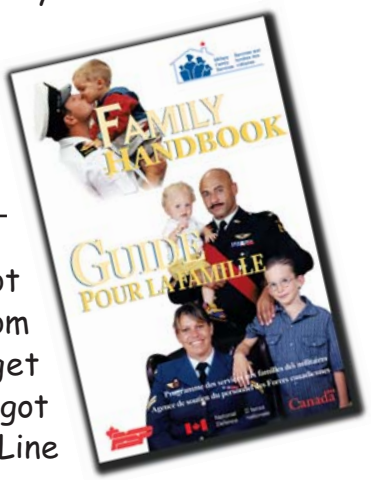
Do you know their phone number and website or email address?

_____

My Mom is going to be one of the 'Warm Line' callers because she said she wants to help other families during Dad's tour of duty. She said it will help the time go by faster. How does your Family Resource Centre contact families during the deployment?

We also met the soldiers who belong to the 'Rear Party'! Isn't that the weirdest name? It's the group that stays back when the rest are deployed. They have lots of stuff planned for the families for the next 6 months. And families without Internet access at home can go to the Rear Party to use their computers to send email.

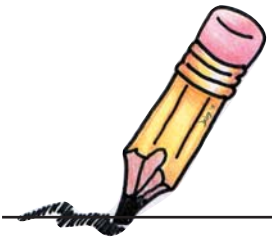
Dad said only the Army has a Rear Party; the Navy and Air Force also have people who help families but they have different names.



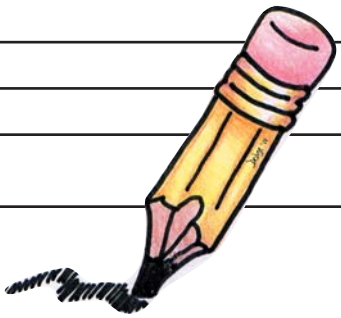
Which one will your family have?

_____

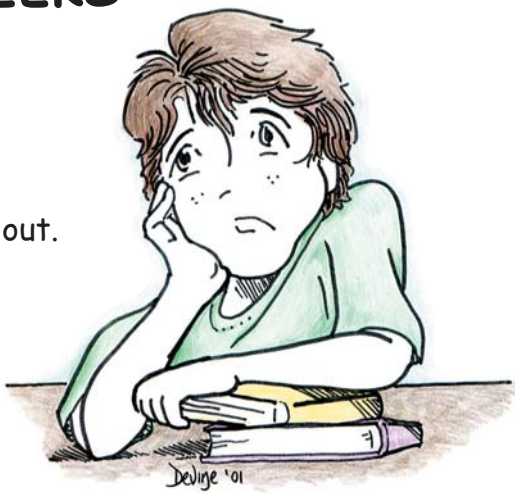
At the Family Resource Centre Mom and Dad got a booklet called Family Handbook, which Mom says will help them get organized and get everything done in time. If your family hasn't got one you can call the Mission Information Line (1-800-866-4546) and ask them to send one.



This page is for you to write or draw whatever you want.



D DAY MINUS 3 WEEKS



My Dad is leaving in 3 weeks. Mom and Dad are always so busy and moody. It seems they're always making me look after Taylor. I want to help but sometimes I feel so left out.

Mom says everything, including the van has to be checked and in tip-top shape before Dad leaves. They have lists and checklists everywhere.

Sometimes I feel sad and angry and lonely all at the same time. It helps to talk to Dani and Jordan because they at least understand. Dani is in my class, and her Mom has already left for Peacekeeping in a place called Coralici.

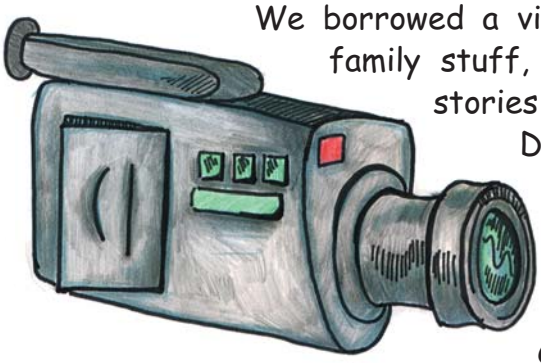
It's not fair – my Dad will be away on my birthday. Dad says he'll get me a really special birthday present from Africa.

He also helped me to set some goals for the time he will be away. Here are the first three:

1. Be responsible for my homework and school lunch.
2. Help Mom by looking after Taylor for at least 15 minutes every day.
3. Learn how to count to 10 and at least 10 expressions in an African language (Amharic, Tegrinyi, Arabic).

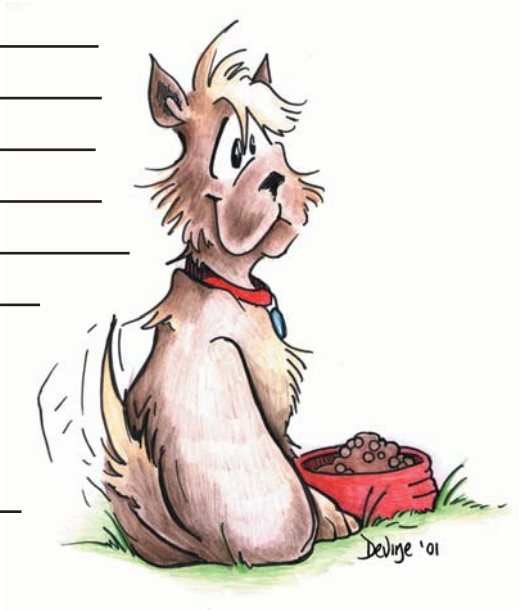
What are your goals for the time your parent is away?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
_____
_____
_____



We borrowed a video camera and filmed lots of family stuff, including Dad reading bedtime stories to Taylor so he won't forget Dad. Six months is a long time for a 2-year-old. We also filmed us all tobogganing, Sunday brunch, Mom and Dad dancing, Dad and I playing with our dog Copper, etc.

How are you feeling about D-Day? (That's what I call the day Dad leaves. D stands for Deployment). Is this the first time for you? Dani says her uncle has gone twice before. What are you and your family doing to get ready for D Day, and the next 6 months?



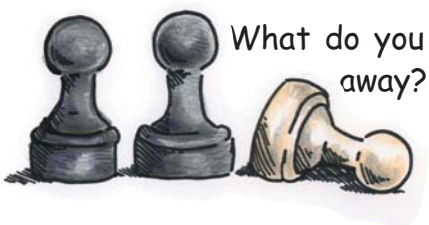
D DAY MINUS 1 WEEK

Sometimes I wish Dad were already gone so that this waiting would be over and the next minute I wish next week would never come.

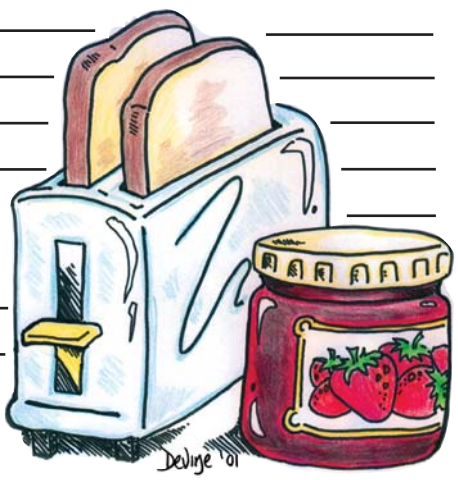
Mom and Dad are not easy to live with these days. But I guess I'm not either; my best friend says I'm no fun because I never want to do anything anymore. His Dad isn't leaving for 6 months so what would he know about how confused I'm feeling? I want to spend as much time as I can with Dad but of course so does Mom.

Taylor doesn't even understand that Dad is going, but he must feel the tension because he's crankier than usual. I think we'll all be relieved when this part is over, even though it will be hard when Dad goes. I don't know if I want to say goodbye at home or at the base. If I go to the base it will mean I get to see Dad one more time, but I wouldn't want to cry in front of everyone, even though I know lots of people will be crying. Dani says there will be journalists and TV cameras. I definitely do not want anyone to see me crying on TV.

I know I'm going to miss my Dad so much. I think what I'll miss most is Saturday morning when Dad and Taylor and I cook breakfast together so that Mom can either go for a run, or sleep in if she had to get up in the night with Taylor. Also playing chess with Dad in the evening after my homework is done and Taylor is sleeping. And so much more.



What do you think you'll miss most while your parent is away?



WORD SEARCH

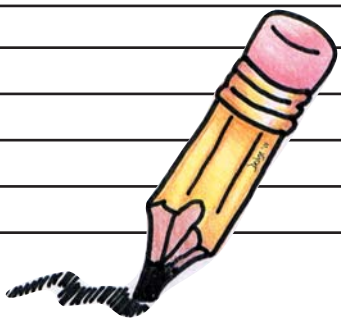
Try to find these hidden words. Most of them have a military or Peacekeeping connection. Six letters will remain after you have found all the words. Put these six letters together to form a word. Good luck!

AFRICA
AMEN
BLUE BERET
CANADA
CHOSE
CINEMA
COMPANY
CORALICI
DAILY
DEPLOYMENT
ERITREA
ETHIOPIA
FAMILY
FILE
GOLAN
HOPE

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

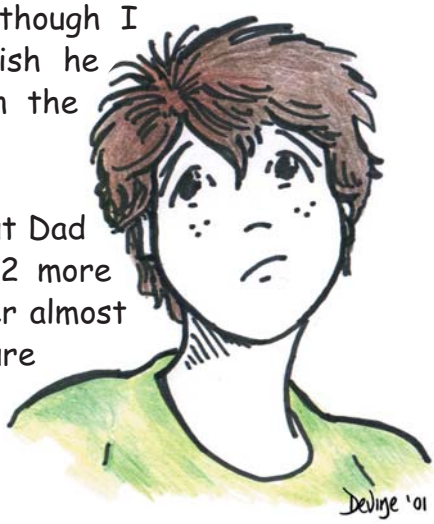
JAR
MAIN
MILITARY
MISSION
NICETY
PEACEKEEPING
RADAR
RAIN
ROTO
SARAJEVO
SEND
SINAI
STIR
UNITED NATIONS
YARN

You could try making your own word search in this space, or use it for drawing or writing.



D DAY PLUS 3 WEEKS

It's been 3 weeks since Dad left and I've only talked to him twice. He is in a different time zone, 6 hours ahead of us. And he's working long shifts, which means when he finishes work late in the evening it is early in the morning here and he doesn't want to wake us up. He knows that Mom is having a hard time getting enough sleep because Taylor keeps waking up crying for Dad. So she's always tired and cranky. And Taylor seems to have gone back to being a baby, which Mom says is normal for a 2-year-old when a parent goes away. Although I feel sorry for him I wish he would not cry so loudly in the middle of the night.

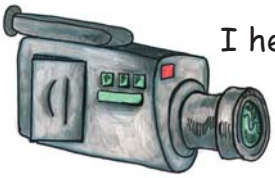


If only I could email Dad it would help. But Dad says he won't have access for at least 2 more weeks. Dani and her Mom email each other almost every day. That's great for her but it sure bugs me to hear her talking about it at school.

I hate seeing Dad's empty place at the table, and of course Taylor is a real pain at meal times. Mom says it won't be like this the whole time. I sure hope she's right. And Saturday mornings are really hard.

This morning when I first woke up I had forgotten about Dad being away, and felt so happy thinking about going skiing with him. Then of course I remembered and didn't feel like doing anything, even though Dani invited me to go with them. It's a good thing Mom talked me into going because we had a great time. Skiing conditions were perfect and Dani's grandparents are fun to be with and good skiers too. They brought great snacks for a picnic at the halfway camp. Her grandpa tells stories using a lot of different voices and he's really funny. It felt so good to laugh and have a good time.

Mom and Taylor spent the day with 2 of her friends. She said Taylor played well with their kids. I guess it was good for both of them because she didn't seem as tired and Taylor went to bed without a fuss. Mom was even laughing when she was describing Taylor and Talia dancing.

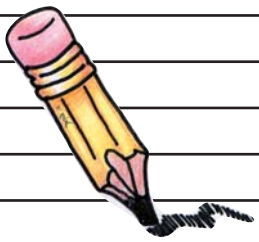


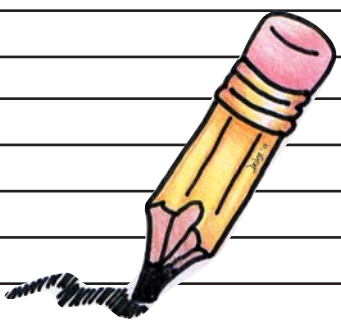
I helped Mom put up some more pictures of Dad and we decided to borrow the video camera again tomorrow. We'll videotape all day and send it to Dad. Mom will drop the package off at the Rear Party and they'll make sure Dad gets it.

I've decided to take a look at my goals tomorrow. Going skiing today helped me out of the slump I've been in since Dad left. Maybe the worst is over?

How long has your parent been gone? Are you able to use email? What about phone calls? What's the most difficult day or time of day for you? What are you doing to get through it?

I'll leave the next 2 pages for you.





CROSSWORD PUZZLE

There are 52 words, most of them related to military life and peacekeeping, for you to find and fit into the crossword puzzle on the next page. Many of the words you will already have seen in this Journal. You could ask for help from an adult if you really get stumped. To check your answers you could call the Mission Information Line (1-800-866-4546) and ask them to send or email you the list of correct words.

ACROSS

1. gives protection
7. opposite of plus
9. before deployment

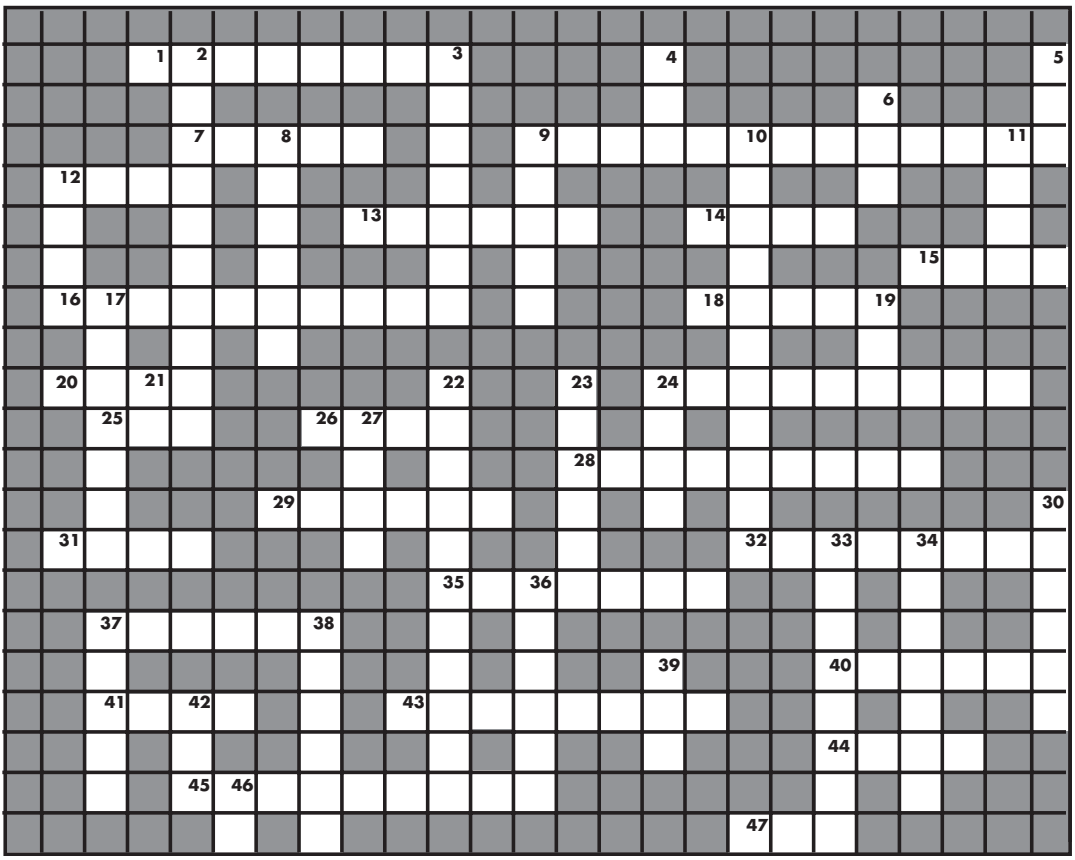
12. expect, desire
13. person in the navy
14. armoured vehicle
15. work, service
16. sailor on a submarine
18. military word for holiday
20. mark, symbol, gesture

24. list of things to do
25. mist
26. city in Bosnia
28. part of military unit that stays behind during deployment
29. to spread out
31. abbrev. for ammunition
32. turn, replace
35. military task

DOWN

2. return home
3. person in the army
4. abbrev. for Department of National Defence
5. narrow bed
6. sailor's Yes
8. lawyer
9. highly pleased
10. person who keeps the peace
11. following, nearest
12. abbrev for Her Majesty's Canadian Ship
17. military outfit, clothing
19. snake-like fish
21. opposite of stop

22. facts, data
23. pressure
24. family group, tribe
27. stare with mouth open
30. chess piece shaped like horse's head

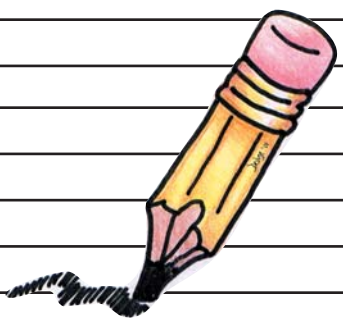


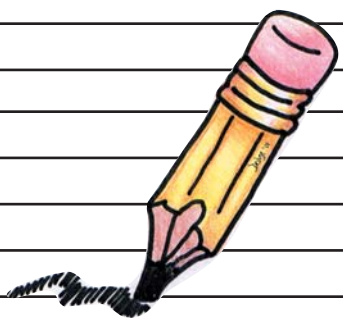
ACROSS

37. list of taxes or duties
40. roof of straw
41. a group working together
43. relating to soldiers
44. friend
45. stimulating task, problem
47. abbrev. for Mission Information Line

DOWN

33. having to do with tactics
34. disease called lockjaw
36. figure of speech using like or as
37. sum, all
38. household
39. abbrev for Family Resource Centre
42. abbrev for armoured personnel carrier
46. Hello

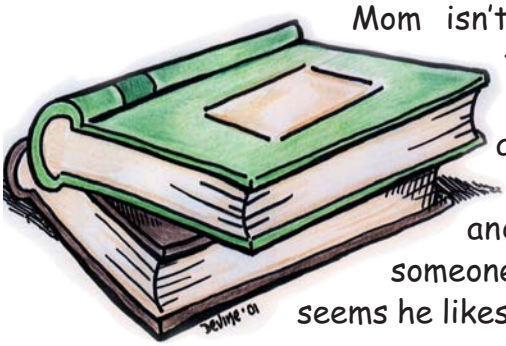




STEADY AS SHE GOES

We seem to have settled into a routine at home, and generally things are going better. There's even a plus for me. My Mom has increased my allowance because I've been doing my extra chores without complaining. Dad says he's very proud of me for helping with Taylor. I look after him for 1/2 hour every day while Mom gets supper ready, and for 1 whole hour on Saturday morning so Mom can go for a long run.

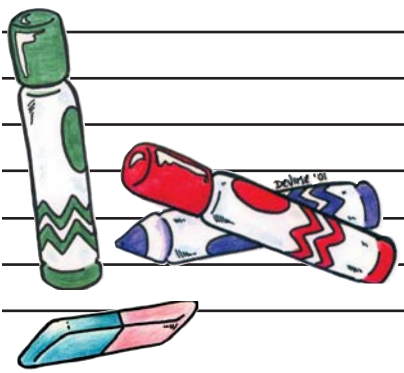
My other responsibilities are to take out the garbage and recycling, shovel the walk and driveway after it snows, and take the dog for a walk twice a day. It means getting up a little earlier but Copper is so happy to see me coming down the stairs with his leash that I don't mind.



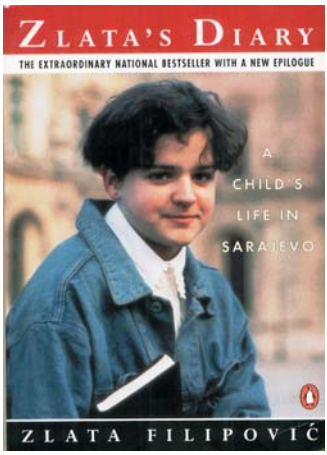
Mom isn't so tired now that Taylor sleeps through the night again in his own bed. She takes him regularly to a playgroup at the Family Resource Centre. Mom can make some of her telephone calls and visit with other parents while someone else looks after Taylor and it seems he likes playing with the other kids.

Mom is working on a committee that is collecting books and money for the children in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

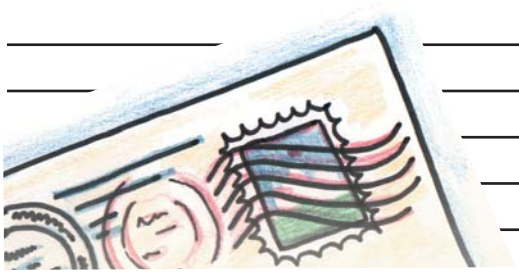
My class decided to collect school supplies to send as well. It was my idea and my teacher asked me to present it to the class. So far we have 2 shoeboxes full of stuff like pencils, erasers, markers, notebooks, etc. We are going to keep adding until the end of the month. The Deployment Coordinator at the Family Resource Centre has agreed to help in sending the school supplies over to my Dad's unit and they will distribute them to the children through the Red Cross I think.



At home we made another video for Dad and I write to him every week, usually on Sunday. I wish we could email, but Dad says I just have to accept that not every place in the world has the technology required, especially after years of conflict.



Dani's mother sent her a book called Zlata's Diary, written by a girl living in Sarajevo while the war was destroying the city around her. I read parts of her book; it must have been really hard for her. I can't even imagine living in winter without heat, electricity or water. But somehow Zlata's family and her neighbors managed for almost 2 years. When I read about the hardships that kids face during war, I think I understand my Dad's work better and how he and the other soldier's are trying to help people.



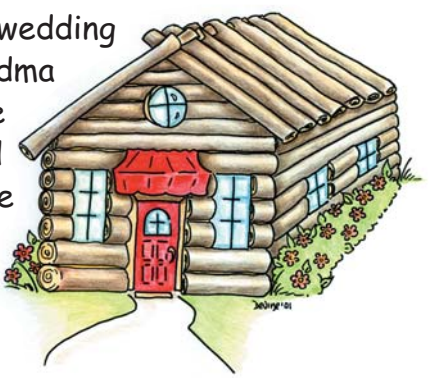
HOME ON LEAVE

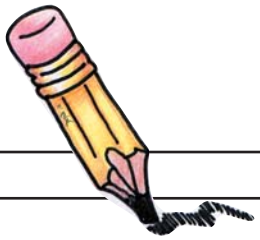
My Dad will be coming home soon for his 2 weeks leave. I can hardly wait. Even though he won't get here until 3 days after my birthday, we're going to wait and have the birthday party after he gets home. He said he's bringing me something very cool from Ethiopia. I wonder what it is.

Dad is coming home just at the right time to help me finish up my science project for the science fair. I know he'll have some good ideas for the display.

I'm allowed to miss 2 days of school while Dad's here so that we can go on a family ski trip. My Auntie is coming with us and she 'll look after Taylor while Mom and Dad and I ski. We're going to stay in a cabin with a fireplace, and a hot tub outside. It's going to be great.

Mom and Dad will also be celebrating their wedding anniversary early while Dad is home. Grandma and Grandpa are coming to stay for the weekend so that Mom and Dad can spend some time together by themselves. I hope Taylor isn't too cranky for them. Dad will have already been home for 10 days by then and Taylor loves playing with Grandpa so he should be OK.





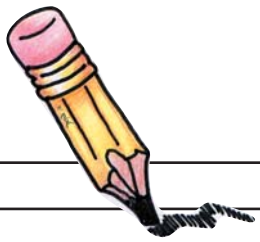
I'll leave this page for you.

HOME STRETCH

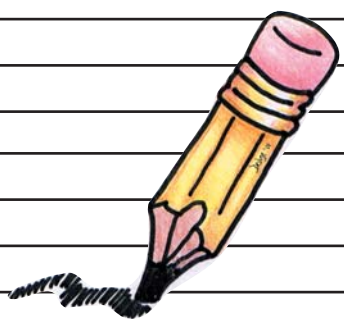
It was great having Dad home but the time went by so fast. And now we're all feeling sad again. Taylor is so strange; at first he cried and acted like he didn't even know Dad. He just kept looking at Dad and hanging on to Mom for the first day or so. Then he finally seemed to remember and then he wouldn't let Dad out of his sight. I feel sorry for Taylor because he's too little to understand what's going on. But at least by the time Grandma and Grandpa came he was all right.

Our ski trip turned out OK even though the weather wasn't great. It was good to sit in front of the fire together and talk and read. Dad told us about the camp where they live and described a typical day as a Peacekeeper. He said that the school supplies and books were really needed and appreciated because many of the children had nothing. We take our homes and schools for granted and can't imagine the lives of children without either.

I didn't get to spend as much time with Dad as I had hoped. He was really tired and of course Mom and Taylor also wanted his attention. Well, at least now his tour is more than half over and he says email is just days away. I guess I had almost given up on it and was getting used to writing him pen and paper letters. One good thing about them is that I can include lots of drawings. Dad told me he sticks them up all around his bed so he sees them as soon as he wakes up.

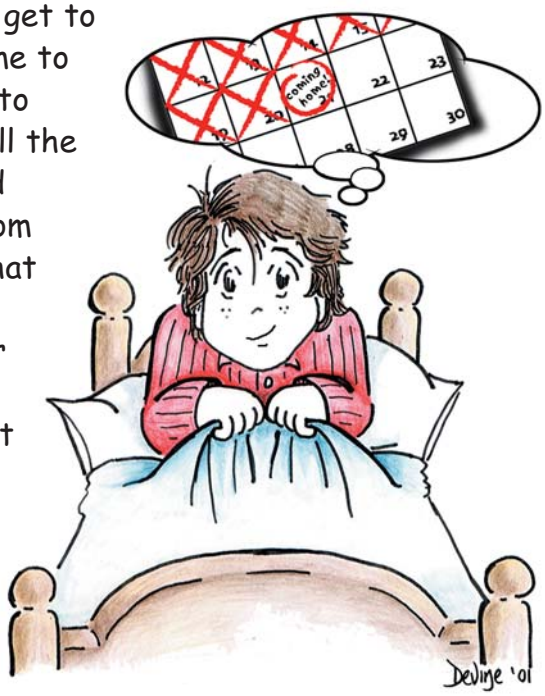


What was it like for you when your parent came home for



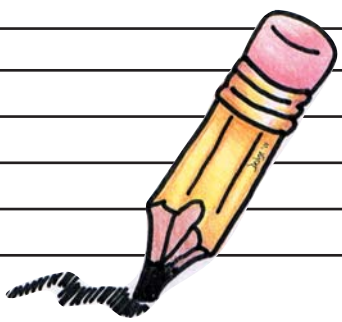
H MINUS 3 WEEKS

I'm so excited that I can hardly get to sleep at night. Dad is coming home to stay in only 3 weeks. When I go to bed I can't help thinking about all the things I want to do with Dad and everything I want to tell him. Mom says that I have to remember that Dad may take some time to readjust to living at home rather than in camp with a bunch of other soldiers. She says he might seem to have changed in some ways. I'm not sure what she means but I guess they talk about more serious things than Dad and me.



Jordan says his Dad told him he'd be back in 1 week. He's so lucky. But my Dad has to stay until the new unit has taken over, which means he will be in the last group to leave.

Dani's Mom is home from Coralici and they've already had an argument. Dani says she's actually relieved that they had a fight because now life is back to normal.

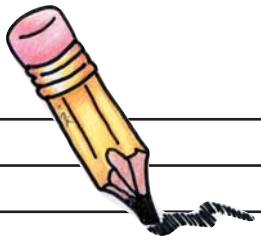


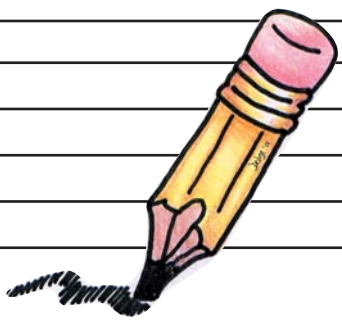
Dad and I are emailing regularly now. He said he really appreciates how responsible I've become and how much I've tried to help with Taylor. I didn't tell him how disappointed I was that he wasn't here for the Base Carnival. I know it's not his fault. Mom said she also knows it wasn't his fault when the van wouldn't start but she sure wished he had been around to deal with it. Fortunately one of her friends was home and able to help. It turned out to be something easily fixed and didn't cost too much.

Mom goes for a run regularly now when I get home from school, which means that I have to watch Taylor. But I don't mind because he loves playing with me and our dog in the backyard.

Mom has a lot of phone calls to make for the Warm Line. She explained to me that some families have had to deal with very difficult situations, like having a new baby, or someone getting really sick or having a serious accident. Mom said the people at the Family Resource Centre and the Base Chaplain really helped those families. Only 3 more weeks to go.

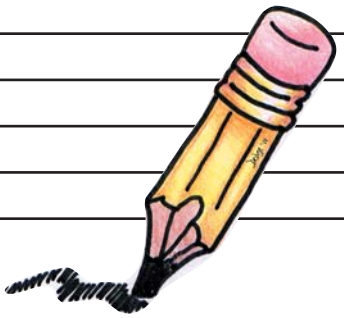
I sure hope we don't have anything really serious like that before Dad gets home. I'm glad my grandparents are healthy, and hope they stay that way.

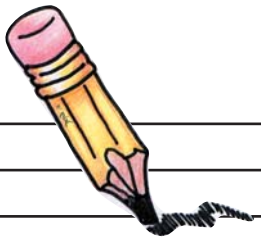


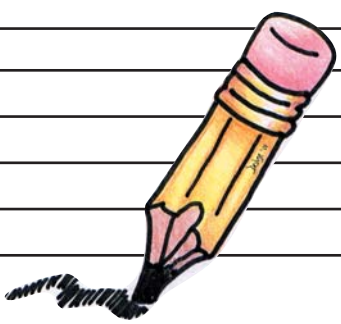


How much longer is it for you before your parent comes home?

What kinds of challenges has your family had to deal with while your parent has been away?







HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN

Dad's home and its great to shoot baskets with him and see him in his usual place at the table. We all seem to have changed a little although Taylor is the most obvious. He seems to have gone backwards again, crying a lot, clinging to Mom and Dad, waking up at night again. I know his screaming is really getting to Dad because I can see him sort of clench his teeth.

Sometimes Dad just stares off into space as if he's in another world. A few times Dad wasn't up for breakfast; Mom said he had trouble sleeping and was up for most of the night. I thought he would have adjusted to the time difference by now so I guess something else is bothering him.

One thing really gets on his nerves and that's food being wasted. He lectures on and on about how much we waste and how much the children in Ethiopia would appreciate having even a quarter of what we have to eat. Dad keeps telling me how lucky we are, and how we should think about the children in so many other parts of the world who have so little. He says we have a responsibility to use what we have wisely and to share more generously. Dani tells me her mother is the same. And I guess after reading that book, Zlata's Diary, I can understand what they are talking about.

At school we've started a new project for the 3R Club (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). I suggested to Dad that we have our own 3R project at home. Together we came up with lots of ideas. Already we have a composter in the back yard, and Dad said he would help me get a vermicomposter going if I would promise to look after it. At first Mom wasn't too enthusiastic about the worms; but we assured her they wouldn't escape and finally she agreed. We have cloth bags for all our shopping and try to put everything for our lunches in reusable containers. Dani, Jordan and I have a bit of a competition going as to which family has the most 3R practices.

What changes have you noticed in your parent since coming home from peacekeeping? How has your family adjusted to the changes?

THINKING IT OVER

Now that my Dad's Peacekeeping tour is over, I've been thinking about what it has been like. I decided to pick out the best and worst aspects. Fortunately my best list is longer than my worst. I know my Dad may have to do another Peacekeeping tour someday, or go away on a course for a long time. I think the next time may be easier if I can remember and concentrate on the positive aspects.

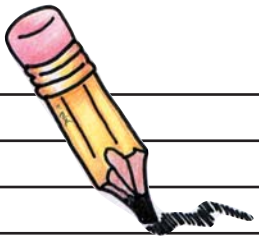
Best:

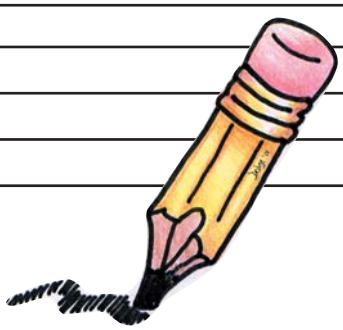
1. Mom and Dad both understand that I'm not a little kid anymore and trust me a lot more.
2. My little brother Taylor really likes being with me now.
3. I learned a lot about Ethiopia and Eritrea.
4. I bought myself a new bike with the money I saved from my extra allowance.
5. I don't take my Dad for granted anymore.
6. Mom and Dad seem to appreciate each other more.

Worst:

1. I missed being with my Dad.
2. I didn't have as much free time because of the extra chores.
3. Taylor's crying and screaming.
4. Mom was tired and stressed out.

What about you? What were the best and worst parts of your experience with a parent away on peacekeeping?





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