



Service Men and Women Recall What They Missed Most While Being Away From Home

“Home” is one of those words that can have many different meanings. It can refer to one’s physical house, a person’s country or town, or it can even be a feeling or a state of mind. The concept of home is particularly important to the men and women serving our nation in the armed forces.

Whether they are deployed to Europe to maintain a base, to another state to assist disaster victims or to the front-lines in Iraq, the idea of home is not only important to these soldiers, it is integral to their daily lives, duties and happiness. In fact, the concept of home is so strong in them, that at the end of the day they often want nothing more than to hear a familiar voice.

Naturally, family is what all soldiers primarily miss about home when they are away. Marine Specialist Scott Garing from Evans City was stationed in Iraq until this past March. He explains, “It’s hard to walk around every day with twenty-some people who all

talk about their families and how much we miss them.”

Cranberry resident Major Dustin Eaton is a reservist in the Marines who was deployed to Iraq twice – during the initial assault on Baghdad and again this past year for security and training missions. He agrees that family is missed “first and foremost,” but he also yearned for the normalcy of “playing sports and attending sporting events with my son and playing games with and reading books to my daughters.”

Missing one’s family while being away from home and serving our nation has a very special meaning to enlisted Marine, Katy Kenny. Not long after the Emsworth resident completed Boot Camp this past September, Katy and her family were informed that her brother and fellow Marine, Patrick, was killed in action in Karmah, Iraq.



She remembers him fondly. “He was always there for me; protecting me even when he was so far away,” says Katy, who recalls that while completing Boot Camp at Parris Island, South Carolina, “I was looking forward to seeing my brother again.”

All soldiers especially miss hearing the voices of their family members and talking to them. “One of the most important things for the troops over there is getting to talk to their families,” says Scott, adding that hearing from family is the best way for soldiers to let their families know that they are all right. “You’ve never seen anybody so mad as when they didn’t get to talk to their family.”

Home can also be associated with different things by different people. It can specifically be represented by a particular memory, object or place. For instance, the word may remind you of the cookies your mother bakes at Christmas, Grandfather smoking his pipe on the front porch or a favorite corner pub where everyone knows your name.



QUALITY COUNTS WHEN DECORATING WITH SHUTTERS

Army National Guard Specialist Danielle Burton simply and eloquently defines home this way: "Home is where your family is. Home is comfortable. Home is just getting back to normal life."

Soldiers often miss very specific memories of home. Katy notes that her brother loved sitting on his family's balcony-porch with their father.

Scott says he missed Christmas the most, especially "waking up and going to my families' houses, seeing everybody and seeing how happy they are on a holiday like that."

And during her tour of duty in Iraq, Danielle missed seeing the green grass and trees of Butler. She recalls, "When we first came home [this past August], while we were demobilizing, they were cutting grass, and we all just stood there and smelled the fresh-cut aroma."

Food can remind one of home in many ways. Katy Kenny especially missed cooking with her mother. "No matter where you come from, everyone misses their home cooking," she states, adding that Patrick loved steaks and A1 Sauce.

Whether it's Danielle missing McDonald's fast food, Scott missing going to the Spaghetti Warehouse with his wife or Katy missing her family eating dinner together every night, food activates so many of our senses that it often creates a powerful memory and connection to places, persons or times in our lives.

When away from home, soldiers miss the simple things that we usually take for granted. Says Scott, "I missed just hanging out with my wife and relaxing and pretty much doing nothing."

Katy recalls that her brother used to reminisce about Fletch, his Dalmatian, Slim Jims and the Steelers. He also loved orange and yellow Starbursts. In fact, Katy would separate Patrick's favorite colors whenever they sent a care-package to him in Iraq, illustrating how the little things mean so much.

While they're overseas, every soldier misses the freedoms with which all Americans are blessed. Home to each of us is inseparable from freedom, because thanks to our soldiers' selfless efforts, our homes, our country and our lives are protected.

In this season that defines home, let us especially remember those heroes who do not return. Their homes are empty without them, but they will forever reside in our memories and in our hearts. ❖

Interior window shutters add enduring value to your home while complementing a full spectrum of decorating styles from traditional to contemporary. In addition to enhancing architectural detail at the window, shutters offer homeowners a number of significant advantages: shutters help insulate your home; control light, view and air flow at the window or door; and provide significant privacy.

According to Bob and Janine Klein, professional window treatment consultants and owners of Carpet Network, The Traveling Floor and Window Treatment Store, "Custom-crafted wood shutters act as fine furniture for windows, adding significant value to a home. With so many shutters on the market, knowing which to buy can be challenging." Klein offers some tips on what to look for when in the market for shutters.

Shutters come in wood, plastic, foam and various combinations. The time-honored material is 100% solid wood. Real, natural wood possesses aesthetic qualities that make it the natural choice. It's important to look for a custom shutter with a dovetail construction, which interlocks panel components for the strongest bond and ensures that they won't separate over time and create light gaps.

A high-quality wood finish is smooth, hard to the touch, and lustrous and rich to the eye. It will not chip, crack or peel over time. A product like Heritage hardwood shutters from Hunter Douglas delivers a multi-coat finish that is far superior to the industry standard.

Shutters should not only look good, but also be energy efficient and offer UV-ray protection. There are three ratings that indicate performance level:

- "R-Value" tells you how well the shutter resists heat loss.
- The "summer shading coefficient rating" shows the shutter's ability to reduce heat gain.
- "UV blockage rating" reveals how much of the sun's ultraviolet rays the shutter prevents from entering the home.

Quality shutter manufacturers will publish this type of efficiency information in product brochures. Heritage shutters score high points in all three ratings.

Concerning cost of shutters, says Klein, "As with fine furniture, which you expect to last a



long time, you get what you pay for." Klein advises dealing with professionals when ordering shutters because they provide custom attention from start to finish. Hunter Douglas allows only authorized dealers and installers to work with their shutters to ensure the best service. For more details on styles of window fashions or to schedule a free, no obligation, in-home presentation, visit our website at www.carpetnetwork.com/klein.

Bob and Janine Klein of Gibsonia own and operate the Carpet Network franchise serving the Pittsburgh area. They are trained window treatment specialists with combined experience of 40 years. Rely on their expertise to assist you in making well informed choices on window and floor covering fashions.

In addition to the most up-to-date window fashions, Carpet Network also offers 4,000 choices of brand name carpet, a complete selection of hardwood, ceramic tile, vinyl and laminate flooring for you to coordinate with your draperies, wallpaper, furniture and other accessories in their natural lighting and setting. Carpet Network's mobile showroom will save you time and money. The "shop at home" concept offers lower prices than traditional stores by eliminating high costs of doing business the traditional way such as retail rent and employee costs. Carpet Network is a national full-service franchise that guarantees workmanship and installation for the life of the product. Call us now and we'll be right over! 724-449-1100 or email to klein@carpetnetwork.com. For a limited time we are offering 6 Months Deferred Interest Financing. Call for details. ❖

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