

## "A Tribute To Military Spouses"

Over the years I have talked a lot about military spouses, how special they are and the price they pay for freedom too.

The funny thing about it, is most military spouses don't consider themselves different from other spouses. They do what they have to do, bound together not by blood or merely friendship, but with a shared spirit whose origin is in the very essence of what love truly is.

Is there truly a difference? You have to decide for yourself.

Other spouses get married and look forward to building equity in a home and putting down family roots. Military spouses get married and know they'll live in base housing or rent, and their roots must be short so they can be transplanted frequently.

Other spouses decorate a home with flair and personality that will last a lifetime. Military spouses decorate a home with flare tempered with the knowledge that no two base houses have the same size windows or same size rooms. Curtains have to be flexible and multiple sets are a plus. Furniture must fit like puzzle pieces. Other spouses have immaculate living rooms and are seldom used. Military spouses have immaculate living room/dining room combos. The coffee table got a scratch or two moving from Germany, but it still looks pretty good.

Other spouses say good-bye to their spouse for a business trip and know they won't see them for a week. They are lonely, but can survive. Military spouses say good-bye to their deploying spouse and know that they won't see them for a month, or for a remote, a year. They are lonely, but they will survive.

Other spouses, when a washer hose blows off, call Maytag and then write a check out for getting the hose reconnected. Military spouses will cut the water off and fix it themselves. Other spouses get used to saying hello to friends they see all the time. Military spouses get used to saying good-bye to friends made the last two years.

Other spouses worry about whether their child will be class president next year. Military spouses worry about whether their child will be accepted in yet another new school next year and whether that school will be the worst in the

city...again.

Other spouses can count on spouse participation in special events, birthdays, anniversaries, concerts, football games, graduation, and even the birth of a child. Military spouses only count on each other; because they realize that the Flag has to come first if freedom is to survive. It has to be that way.

Other spouses put up yellow ribbons when the troops are imperiled across the globe and take them down when the troops come home. Military spouses wear yellow ribbons around their hearts and they never go away.

Other spouses worry about being late for Mom's Thanksgiving dinner. Military spouses worry about getting back from Japan in time for Dad's funeral.

And other spouses are touched by the television program showing an elderly lady putting a card down in the front of a long, black wall that has names on it. The card simply says, "Happy Birthday, Sweetheart. You would have been sixty today." A military spouse is the lady with the card. The wall is the Vietnam Memorial.

I would never say military spouses are better or worse than other spouses are. But I will say there is a difference. And I will say that our country asks more of military spouses than asked of other spouses. And I will say without hesitation that military spouses pay just as high a price for freedom as do their active duty husbands or wives. Perhaps the price they pay is even higher.

Dying in service to our Country isn't near as hard as loving someone who has died in service to our Country, and having to live without them. God Bless our military spouses for all they freely give...And God Bless America.

By Colonel Steven Arrington