

Quotes from military family members interviewed for *Life After Deployment*

Lana Schmidtke (wife): "As the deployment wore on, we got used to our new life without him and, although I looked forward to the day he would again walk back into our lives, I also dreaded that day as it grew closer. I wanted my best friend and husband back in my life but I also wondered what having him home would mean."

Elizabeth Snow (wife): "I thought I was going to pee my pants I had been waiting so long. But I had the best view and didn't want to give up my spot. I could see him coming in the crowd. The uniforms all look the same, you know. The haircuts, too. Jarheads. These fighting men, brave men, good looking men coming home to us. They walked tall and proud, scanning the crowd, those grins coming across their faces as they recognized their loved ones. And then our eyes met. And I laughed. I cried. I waved. I wrapped my arms around his neck. He held me close at the waist. The world was loud around us. But all I could hear was his whisper in my ear. 'It's so good to be home. I missed you so much it hurt. I love you, babe. I love you.'"

Ken Haugen (soldier): "I felt like a guest in my own house."

Heather Greene Hinckley (wife talking about her husband's return from Iraq): "It was like heaven for about two to three weeks, and then it was like the largest black cloud known to man came floating over our heads. I hated him and wanted him to leave again. He was angry with me because he didn't have the same role as when he left. Thank God we have the relationship that we do and we were able to weave together, work together, and talk together to get through."

Keith Browne (Marine): "I was living with dirt in my face all the time. I received and gave orders. It was 24x7 on guard. And now I'm supposed to mow the lawn and talk about what I want for dinner? Honestly, I spend a lot of time in the bathroom. Clean, hot water and privacy are my way of getting back into the home life!"

Katie Laude (wife): "Our middle son, Sam, would not even look at his dad when he got off the plane. When he eventually warmed up to him, we had the problem that Sam literally would not let Tom out of his sight for months."

Julie LaBelle (mom): "My son was the peanut I raised. With my whole heart, my life's goal was to protect and nurture him. Even the concept of having his own rifle rattled me. One of my challenges has been to treat him as the man he is now and to let go! A tall order for a mom under any circumstances."

Nancy Mulcahey (mom talking about her two sons' deployments): "We all got very close. We realized we had said we loved each other more than ever. Now when the boys see us or when they are leaving to go home there is always a kiss and hug. On the phone now we always say 'Love you. Bye.' It has made us realize the fragileness of life."