

# The Day my Husband Came Back

*Dora Sontag*

My husband was deployed to Iraq three months after the war started. It was about six years ago. He left right after I had our second child. It was the most difficult thing I had to deal with in my life, raising two children on my own while the love of my life was overseas. We kept in contact by writing letters to each other when we had time. Since the war had just started, it was hard to have any communication.

About a year after he was deployed, my husband was due to come back. I was going through lots of emotions. It was like riding on a roller coaster. One day I would be excited because he was

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coming back home, but then the next day I was stressed, thinking whatever I did when he came back wouldn't be good enough. As the days, passed my

anxiety grew. I couldn't wait to see him and hold him in my arms once again.

The wait was finally over after 366 days. It was my birthday. I received the phone call that my husband was in the United States. All spouses and relatives of other soldiers were asked to arrive at the Aircraft Hangar in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to wait for our soldiers who were being transported by buses from Lawton Airport. Knowing my soldier was almost home made me feel ecstatic. I drove to the Aircraft Hangar with signs and balloons on my vehicle. When I entered the hangar it was like going into a different world. I saw lots of other spouses, children, and family members holding flags, signs, balloons, and streamers. I realized that each of us was going through the same type of excitement waiting for our soldiers.

I will never forget hearing the words of an announcer saying, "Buses are en route and



will arrive in thirty minutes." Every five minutes we would get an announcement. Finally, they announced, "Soldiers are now entering through the gates of Fort Sill." My heart beat faster and faster; the palms of my hands began to sweat as each announcement meant my soldier was closer. Hearing the final announcement was unbelievable: "Our soldiers are finally home." I had tears rolling down my face from all the excitement.

At first, we could only see our soldiers line up in formation. It was so hard not to be able to run to him and hug him. The military had a Ceremony for all the soldiers, and then finally they were released to us. Seeing my husband from a distance, I ran as fast as I could, holding my daughter on my hip and holding my son's hand. We hugged and we kissed and I did not want to let go. It was an experience that will stay with me forever.



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*Dora Sontag was a student at the Adult Education Center in Fort Smith, AR, in 2009. After brushing up on her language and math skills, she has enrolled in college. Her husband has served in the military for 15 years, including a recent tour of duty in Afghanistan from 2007-2008.*