

# Military Family Voices™

## Examples of Specific Personal Impact

### **Example Narrative for Visualization: A Typical Arc of Use & Personal Impact of the Recordings [Direct Testimonials underscore these uses and affects every day]**

A Soldier, downrange, returns from yet another particularly brutal patrol and is very agitated and stressed out. This is his third deployment in five years, and the relentless separations from his family, his feeling that his kids are growing without him, his worry about losing his parents while he is away and the impending birth of another child are all weighing him down and distracting and increasingly fueling his feelings of isolation and detachment.

Even calling home can be stressful, if it does not go well and frustrating when it goes well because it ends too soon or it may not happen exactly when they need the comforting. He knows his family is frustrated too, and he cannot do anything about their stress.

Yet, this time he arrives to find a care package with a CD that is simply labeled "Us". He plays it and hears the clear voices of his family, his parents, his brother and sister and even his grandparents—all of them scattered throughout the rural parts of Colorado. He also hears the sounds of his unborn baby's heartbeat, the heartbeats of his wife and kids and even the baby's hiccups.

At first he is just amazed but then their voices trigger a calming feeling of pure, in the moment joy—memories he had forgotten, the real warmth and curious unexplainable sense that he has them now and will never lose them. He feels relevant again and no longer drifting.

All he tells his buddies is that it's the best thing he has ever received, and he plays it any time, when he wants to decompress. It does not make him miss home but rather feel at home with his connections and his self-confidence that he is doing the right thing. He finds out that it is Military Family Voices that made this all possible and arranges to call in and record his voice for his Family, which makes him feel, since they have his clear voice to listen to when they need it, like he is connecting with them and reaching back as part of their every day lives.

After that initial recording he received, he was personally responsible for more fellow Soldiers learning about MFV and asking their spouses and families to send them their voices. Once he returned home, he and his Family, now united, recorded all together, and now that he is retired, has survived the challenges and frustrations of re-assimilating into his community and finding employment, he says they will continue to come in and record even after the kids are all grown.

### **Living Example: Of Recording Use & Personal Impact**

#### **[Actual]**

A young Soldier had just married and deployed immediately for the first time to Afghanistan. Downrange, he was experiencing a lot of anxiety and stress. His wife had heard about MFV and decided to record her voice and the sounds of their cats, who she knew he missed a lot. We recorded the two cats and her voice for almost two hours. We also took many still photos of the session. He received the CD in a care package and really enjoyed it. It helped him relax and feel at ease. Incredibly, a month later, his wife died unexpectedly in her sleep. He was given two hours to pack his things to rush home, and his Commander told us that he made sure, of all the things that he had to bring home, that his CD of her voice was the first. We later put all the photos on a DVD so they could be viewed at the memorial services. At the memorial, he could not thank MFV enough for the gift of his wife's voice. He reflected more than once how lucky he was that she had recorded. His simplest statement to us says it all, "Thank you for doing the recordings. With her gone, it is special to always have her voice."

***MFV preserves voices; so, the individual has the reassurances of their Loved Ones' voices to help them to continually find comfort and to find better ways to cope with life's challenges. Nevertheless, when we lose anyone whose voice helped form us (anyone we love), having those recordings is a priceless gift and a powerful aid against the darkness that loss can bring.***