



Picked up during his deployment in Germany

Reminds him of his grandfather

Think of it this way, at least he can't hurt himself if they're booted to the wall!

He still talks about being MVP...

He swears it brings us luck...

First big show with his high school band

Three Ways to Use Your Next PCS Move to De-Clutter

1

Plan a yard sale
Set the date and publicize it. If you know people are coming, you'll make sure to have items ready for sale. And keep prices low: The goal is to get rid of things, not rake in a profit.

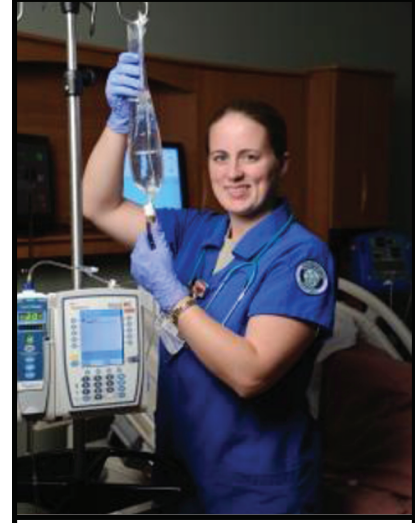
2

Get Your Kids Involved
If you have kids, have them go through their toys and clothing to pull anything they've outgrown. Offer them a few cents for each item they give up, then let them use what they've earned to buy a cool new thing for their new bedroom.

3

Reality Check
Go through your closet before your move. Which outfits do you really see yourself wearing at your new duty station? Donate the stuff that's definitely no longer "you" to charity. You'll be helping someone else while freeing up space in your new closet.

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Things That Drive Us CRAZY!

Every Year We Collect More and More Stuff!

By Lisa Smith Molinari

At some point in a marriage, a wife faces a dilemma: How does she incorporate her husband's deer head, bowling trophy, concert poster, stereo speakers, ugly bar lamp and/or autographed sporting equipment into an otherwise pretty cool looking home?

In 18 years of marriage to my sailor, I've learned that solving this particular domestic quandary involves compromise, diplomacy, tact... and sometimes trickery.

After each of our eight moves, the majority of the unpacking and home decorating has been left to me, The Wife. Now, I swear: I always make a sincere effort to find spots for his treasured items

(even the ridiculous ones). *But I also prioritize.*

INVASION OF THE REINDEER

After our most recent move, while unpacking a box labeled "master bedroom," I found something my husband had bought during our last tour of duty in Germany.

Keep in mind, he can't stand blood. He has never hunted. He fears my kitchen knives. And yet he bought himself a full-sized reindeer pelt one night at a German Christmas festival. Why? He doesn't know. Maybe it was the half-dozen mugs of mulled wine he'd chugged that night. But

he insists he must have had a perfectly good reason at the time.

I found this freaky dead-reindeer rug in the same box as our prissy floral bed sheets. How was it going to fit into our new bedroom's décor? Displaying it might have added some igloo-style charm (*with this thing on the floor, all we'd need is an ice machine and a dog sled to give our bedroom a real Tundra vibe*). But what if he took the Eskimo theme a bit too far—turning the thermostat below 50, sleeping in a Caribou parka, and offering to massage me with whale blubber oil?

I shuddered at the thought, then stuffed Rudolph under our bed.

A few days later, I found it spread out in the middle of our bedroom floor like a fresh kill. The dog took a few sniffs and backed away from the strange flattened beast in case it might suddenly attack.

A few more times, I hid the pelt from my husband in hopes that he wouldn't notice. He always did, and put the wild animal skin right back in the middle of our bedroom floor. I tried to reason with him. His response? "I like it." End of discussion.

SOMETIMES A REINDEER IS MORE THAN A REINDEER

There have been many battles worth fighting in our marriage. I knew this wasn't one of them. In my husband's travels with the Navy, he's brought home countless souvenirs. Some were special enough to become a permanent part of our home décor. Others had only a short time on display before being stashed in a cardboard box in the garage. The back of the garage.

There was the airplane propeller, the English cricket bat, the Yemeni sword, the German beer stein, the

Middle Eastern vase, the Norwegian whale bone, the Korean chess set, dozens of Navy plaques and framed certificates, and scores of African items – wildebeest horns, warthog tusks, bowls, woven baskets, tribal warrior figures, Masai clubs, fertility masks, bongos and carved wooden animals.

For husbands like mine, these items become more than just clunky, dust-gathering, tacky souvenirs. They represent athletic superiority, power, virility and youth. My husband may have no sober memory of its purchase, but that reindeer pelt is his manhood splayed out on our bedroom floor for the whole world to see.

No matter what this thing looks like, I wouldn't want to take away my sailor's manhood just because it doesn't match the bedspread.

And besides, *the reindeer pelt is a lot like my husband—it doesn't say much, it lays around a lot and it sheds.* ★

Read more of Lisa's essays at thematandpotatoesoflife.com