

# Have computers replaced letters?

Technology changes communication with those serving country

By **COURTNEY SERVAES**  
Herald Staff Writer

Richie Hines gets worried when he doesn't hear from his nephew.

Hines is used to being able to talk to him every week while he's deployed.

The Internet makes communication easier for Hines and his nephew, David Green. But it also makes him worry.

"There have been a few times we were worried because we hadn't heard from him, and he will call and say the Internet went out for a few days because of electrical surges or bad phone signals," Hines said of his nephew, who has been deployed in Afghanistan for about a year and a half.

Thanks to the Internet, Hines and his family are able to communicate with Green regularly — something that hasn't always been possible.



"[Service members] have access to the Internet and phones, where it was never conceived before."

— Sherry Wright,  
veterans events  
organizer

Photo by Elliot J. Sutherland/  
The Ottawa Herald

Richie Hines, Ottawa, uses Facebook, a social-networking site, to check up on his nephew, David Green, who is stationed in Afghanistan. "With (Facebook), at least we know he is OK for now," Hines said. Hines uses Facebook daily to check in on Green and even uses the site's chat function to talk with him through instant messages.

## Easier communication

Sherry Wright still has letters from family members who were deployed in World War II.

Those family members are no longer here, but Wright keeps them, treasures them to this day.

"If I had to choose which is more special, it would have to be the handwritten letters because you have them and it is a keepsake," Wright said of the difference between e-mail and letter communication.

Wright has done both. She's written letters to family members when the

Internet wasn't readily available, and she's recently started communicating with relatives who were deployed using the Internet.

"Letters were the only way of communicating for me until 2000 when my grandsons were deployed," Wright said. "They have access to the Internet and phones, where it was never conceived before."

## A personal touch

The Internet isn't just helpful with written communication.

See **COMMUNICATION**, Page 8

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