

WE WANT YOU FOR THE BASEBALL ARMY



People ask me what I do in winter when there's no baseball. I'll tell you what I do. I stare out the window and wait for spring - Hall of Famer Rogers Hornsby

It's been a long winter hasn't it? Too long.

We're heading into May, and we should be chasing down fly balls in the field, painting the outside corners with knee-high fastballs and laughing with our teammates and coaches in the dugout. When we hear the sound of a lawn mower and smell the scent of freshly cut grass, we think about the diamond and how much we want to be there right now.

We miss the crack of the bat and the pop of the ball hitting the catcher's mitt. We miss the cheers from the bleachers when we race down the line and beat out a throw from third. We miss digging our cleats into the dirt in the batter's box and that sweet-spot feeling when our swing connects perfectly.

There is comfort in the easy routine of early-spring practices on dew-covered fields and mid-summer games and that 'where else would you rather be' feeling when we're at the ballpark on a Saturday morning. The skies are blue and the sun shines bright as we step to the plate, and where else *would* we rather be?

But right now, it feels like we'll never be there again. It's tough being separated from something that you love so much. It's sad, and it's okay to feel sad.

A guy named Jimmy Dugan once said, 'There's no crying in baseball. No crying!'

To him we say, 'Pipe down Jimmy. There is crying in baseball and right now it's perfectly okay to let loose with a few tears.'

But while we wait for the clouds to pass, let's also feel hopeful. Each day that passes is another day closer to baseball's return, and it *will* return. We *will* be back on the diamond with our friends, and all of the sights and sounds that we love so much will be that much sweeter because we were away for so long.

Believe that, because it's true. But until then, we've got things we need to do.

Have you ever heard of Ted Williams?

He's a Hall of Fame player, considered one of the very best hitters of all time. You might not know much about him because he played a long time ago, but the 'Splendid Splinter' was a 19 time all star, two-time American League MVP and Boston Red Sox legend. He was also the last man to hit over .400 in a major league season. He hit .406 in 1941, 79 years ago.

Ted was in his rookie campaign in 1939 when World War II started, and he missed three full seasons (1943-1945) when he went overseas to become an ace fighter pilot. He missed parts of two more seasons (1952 and 1953) flying planes in the Korean War. Ted felt a duty to help, so he went, sacrificing prime years of an epic career because his country needed him.

The fight we face right now is not one with tanks, guns and grenades, but it's no less important, and our family and friends and country need us.

Whether we wear pinstripes or no stripes, Blue Jays blue or Cardinals red, we are all enlisted in the baseball army. We are thousands strong around the world, and we have the opportunity, in this moment in time, to make a difference.

Right now you can be the encourager, bringing a positive attitude to everything you do, lifting the spirits of those around you with kind words and selfless acts.

Right now you can be the worker who takes out the garbage or does the dishes without being asked.

Whether you're four or 104 years old, you can be a leader. Whether you play baseball, softball or fastpitch you can take all of the lessons you've learned on the diamond – teamwork, accountability, responsibility and respect – and set an example for the world to follow.

Will we sit on the bench while others step to the plate to fight this battle? Absolutely not. We will put on our rally caps and we will get in the game. If every player, parent and coach joins the struggle, if the entire baseball army is mobilized and steps into the fray, then we will make a difference.

Will you accept the challenge?

When you do, we want to hear about it. Whatever you do over the coming days, weeks and months, tell us by joining and then posting in the Baseball Army Facebook group, tweeting to @UFVBaseballArmy or giving us an Instagram shoutout to @the-baseballarmy.

What you do now is more important than any hit, pitch or catch you'll ever make in a baseball game.

Tell us what you're doing. Tell us who you're helping. Tell us about baseball, what you love and what you miss about our great game. We want to hear all of your stories, and when we're back on the field again someday soon, we want to recognize you as a 'Baseball Hero.'

You are a hero to all of us. Believe it. Live it.

WHAT NOW? CHECK THE NEXT PAGE.



Our goal with the Baseball Army project is to create a place where baseball players from every corner of the planet can connect, and talk about how the global baseball family can come together to make a difference in a tough time.

We envision a place where anyone connected with the sport in any area of the world can identify areas of need in their community and collaborate on solutions, and we envision a place where we can post pictures and stories of good works and recognize success.

We envision a place where a baseball player from British Columbia can share his or her love of the sport with a player from Quebec, Florida, Cuba or Australia and find strength in a common bond.

Enlist in the Baseball Army by visiting our Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheBaseballArmyHQ>. Follow @thebaseballarmy on Instagram and find @UFVbaseballarmy on Twitter with the hashtag #thebaseballarmy.

This is a not-for-profit initiative by the UFV Cascades baseball club and there is zero cost to you and your family.