

# NEW JERSEY NATIONAL GUARD



# FAMILY READINESS MOBILIZATION HANDBOOK

**Toll Free: 1-888-859-0352**

**[www.state.nj.us/military/familysupport](http://www.state.nj.us/military/familysupport)**



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## **Introduction**

CONGRATULATIONS!..... You are a participant in one of the Nation's ancient and sacred institutions, the National Guard. Since this Nation raised its first militia in 1636, it has placed its trust in the Guard members and the people that are his or her primary support, the Family.

The National Guard Family is unique and special. It has learned to share its loved one's with the rest of the country. They are the true patriots. The National Guard Family knows that through their sacrifice, they help maintain a strong and secure national defense for their state and country.

The purpose of this handbook is to make a sometimes-difficult life a little easier. It will inform you of the benefits that you are entitled to receive, and to be prepared in the event of mobilization. It is an important book, full of information that will answer questions you may have or will have in the future. It has been prepared to reduce the stress and strain on the family and the service member before, during, and after mobilization.

The New Jersey National Guard remains strong because of its soldiers and airmen. The Guard remains strong because of you, the Family!

## **Overview**

This handbook has been developed to assist you and your Family in preparing for either deployment, activation and extended temporary duty. You will find within these pages helpful suggestions, pertinent information and a summary of tasks, which are essential for your Family's welfare. As with any separation, *preparation is the key to success.*

It is hoped that you will use this booklet to prepare your Family and yourself. You will discover that there are many areas of concern that go unnoticed until it affects you and your Family. Please take time to fill in the necessary information so that the challenges and stresses related with your absence can be minimized.

This booklet is not meant to provide a solution to all your concerns, needs, or emergencies that may arise due to separation. However, it can provide helpful suggestions to assist you in solving personal concerns and answer your questions regarding what to do to help make your needs less hectic and frustrating experience.

Each Guard member is accountable to their commander and bears primary responsibility to have their personal affairs in order as an on-going aspect of military service. A Guard Member will be able to serve with confidence, during a time of mobilization or activation, if they know that they have fulfilled their responsibilities to their Family and prepared them, well in advance, for the demands of separation while they are away. The important matters of family finance; location of important papers; housing; medical care/insurance; emergency support; a Will; appropriate legal support (as needed); family member dependent ID cards; these items should all be in order long before the time of separation due to a military mobilization, state call up or annual training. *Military Family Readiness is Life Readiness*, and Guard Family members deserve the best of responsible care from their Guard Sponsor.

Your service members unit, Family Assistance Center, Family Readiness Group and Community agencies provide assistance during times of mobilization by means of easily accessible information and referral support.

## **Chapter 1: Preparing for Deployment**

1. **WHAT IS A DEPLOYMENT?** A deployment is military duty away from home. It may be as short as a drill weekend or as long as an unaccompanied overseas tour. The purpose for these deployments or separations is to keep our military forces trained and at the highest state of readiness to meet our global military commitments. Your service member may deploy at any time, although most separations are scheduled well in advance. The nature of the military makes it extremely important to have your Family affairs in order so that you will be able to take care of unexpected situations that may come up during a deployment or separation.

2. **THE FOUR BASIC STAGES OF SEPARATION** - Did you know that every one of us who faces separation goes through four basic stages? By becoming aware of these stages we will be able to cope better. We will not be mystified or afraid of these stages, but rather, will use them to better the relations and ourselves with our spouses and children.

a. **PROTEST:** Protest against your service member's departure usually comes a week or two before he is due to leave. They talk of feeling tense, selfish, unbelieving that he or she will actually leave, and guilty about not wanting their service member to go. There is also frustration with the increased hours your service member spends getting ready to leave, your awareness of how many household chores and family business must be handled before they go, and a bona fide physical, as well as mental, exhaustion for everyone.

b. **DESPAIR:** Is the tearful period, which may come even before your service member departs. Thought like, "How will I ever do this without him or her?" is common. There is also difficulty in sleeping due to general fear for one's safety; even the usual noises in the house seem threatening.

c. **DETACHMENT:** Is the level on which you live for most of the separation. It is a state of relative calm and confidence in handling day-to-day living. If a major crisis occurs, however, you may tend to revert to the stages of despair and protest.

d. **RETURN ADJUSTMENT:** Is accompanied by awareness of the noises in the house. Many family members experience an incredible emotional and physical frenzy, getting every inch of the house and themselves ready for the return of the service member. Your service member will arrive exhausted from the final days away, eager to be home. The first days of unwinding bring long conversations to attempt to catch up. Finally he or she spends lots of time sleeping.

3. **POWER OF ATTORNEY:** A Power of Attorney is a written legal document by which you, the grantor or donor, give someone else, called the "attorney-in-fact" or the "donee," the authority to act as your agent or attorney, either generally or for some more specific limited purpose.

a. The final step in pre-mobilization planning is to consider whether you will need to have someone to manage your affairs in your absence, and if so, then to execute (prepare and sign) the proper legal documents to authorize them to do so.

b. Types of "Power of Attorney":

(1) General Power of Attorney: Authorizes you to conduct all family business which

would otherwise require your service member's presence.

(2) Limited Power of Attorney: Authorizes you to conduct only the matter specified in the document which would otherwise require your service member's presence.

c. Precautions in authorizing your Power of Attorney:

(1) Never give your power of attorney to anyone who is not absolutely trustworthy, reliable capable, efficient and competent.

(2) A general power of attorney is seldom necessary. A special power of attorney for a specific purpose(s) is more likely to be accepted. Once a power of attorney is granted, it can be revoked at any time. The instrument should contain a self-executing revocation date (expiration date). If one gives a power of attorney, it should be effective for no more than the period necessary to accomplish the purpose. We recommend that it be generally for no more than one year. There is no military requirement for you to give someone your power of attorney before you mobilize. The need for one is entirely personal and should be tailored to meet your individual needs and desires.

(3) You can revoke a power of attorney at any time by sending a notice of revocation to the agent concerned. You should execute copies of the notice of revocation with all the formalities taken in executing the power. You should have the notice of revocation recorded where the power of attorney was recorded. In general, you should have a power of attorney revoked after it has served its purpose.

**4. Family Preparedness Checklist:** Although deployments and separations are never easy on the family, the hardships involved need not be increased by failure to plan ahead. A carefully prepared and executed pre-deployment check list can save you and your family from giant headaches in the future. It is very important for you, as a military family, to have in your possession certain documents. Military spouses are often required to take over family matters during the soldier's absence. Therefore, it is important that both of you sit down together to gather the information and documents named in this checklist. You are encouraged to keep originals or copies of all listed documents in a special container that you can find immediately. If you are using a safe deposit box, be sure you check with the bank to see what the regulations are for you to have access to it when your spouse is away. A "Family Preparedness Checklist" is contained as an Annex A to the document.

**5. Family Preparedness Finances:** Experience with previous deployments and separations indicate some spouses are financially unprepared for their spouse's departure. The following information can help assist spouses overcome many financial obstacles during deployments.

a. Check to bank: Open a joint checking account. Due to regulations everyone is to have direct deposit to a financial institution. This is the easiest, fastest and safest way to get to your money. If you desire, allotments can be made to various financial institutions for the purpose of paying bills. Contact your local unit for allotment forms. It is strongly recommended that all married service members have a joint checking account with their spouse for easy access to family funds. Single soldiers, should have a joint checking account with mom or dad or someone that is well trusted so that bills may be paid while the soldier is deployed.

b. Eliminate Credit Cards: Keep plastic money to a minimum. It gives you a false sense of

wealth where there really isn't any money.

c. Allotments: Service members single or married should provide their spouse or family members with a special power of attorney to obtain copies of Leave and Earnings Statements (LES) and enable them to deposit or cash checks. The special Power of Attorney can be obtained at the military legal assistance office. Spouses and family members should understand how to read the LES, if not contact your local FAC for assistance. Family members should be aware that under some circumstances BAS pay is terminated because soldiers receive their meals at no cost while deployed. Spouses and family members are encouraged to utilize the support of the Consumer Credit Counseling Service if financial assistance is needed.

d. Financial Aid Programs: Army Emergency Relief (AER) provides loans and grants under emergency conditions. Guard members must be on orders 30 days or more to receive assistance.

e. Keep a good credit rating by paying your bills on time. Remember to keep a record of personal finances to stay on top of your recurring bills.

f. Money Checklist

Yes	No	Checklist Items
		Do you and your spouse have a joint checking account?
		Will your bank accept a Power of Attorney?
		Do you know how deposits are made?
		Do you know the dates the "Direct Deposit" will be made to your account?
		Do you know how to balance your checkbook?
		Do you know how to read a bank statement?
		Do you know how to write checks?
		Do you know how to order more checks
		Are you aware of Service Charges imposed by your bank?
		Do you know what "Minimum Balance means?"

Note: If you answered "NO" to any of these questions, call the State Family Program Office and request the information you need. There are a variety of community resources that can be of help.

**6. Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA):** The SCRA law limits to 6% interest on credit obligations incurred prior to military service or activation, including credit card debt, for active duty service members. The SCRA unambiguously states that no interest above 6 percent can accrue for credit obligations (that were established prior to active duty or activation) while on active duty, nor can that excess interest become due once the service member leaves active duty – instead that portion above 6% is permanently forgiven. Furthermore, the monthly payment must be reduced by the amount of interest saved during the covered period. Note: This law only covers debt incurred prior to military service. All this takes is a simple letter and a copy of the mobilization orders. For more information and copies of a form letter contact any Family Assistance Center.

**7. Military Pay:** During the deployment there are different types of pay a service member will receive depending on whether he/she has dependents, deployment location, etc.

a. Basic Pay: The amount of basic pay is determined by the length of time in service, by rank, and by any promotions and increases received. All active duty personnel receive basic pay. While the service member is deployed or on AT they receive Basic Pay.

b. **Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS):** BAS is a non-taxable allowance for food. Officers receive this allowance regardless of rank. Enlisted members may receive this allowance based on the availability of government dining facilities. Normally, enlisted members who are living in government quarters are required to eat in dining facilities on their base or in the field, therefore are not entitled to BAS.

c. **Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH):** BAH is a non-taxable allowance for housing available to soldiers on active duty. The amount of BAH is determined by rank and whether or not there are family members. This allowance partially reimburses active duty military personnel for their housing expenses if they live in civilian communities.

d. **Variable Housing Allowance (VHA):** VHA supplements the BAH when the cost of housing in a certain area is higher than the BAH. Service members living on the economy receive VHA. The amount of VHA received depends upon housing costs in the area in which a military member lives. Guard members called to active duty for less than 140 days are not entitled to the Variable Housing Allowance.

e. **Family Separation Allowance (FSA):** A service member with dependents who serves an unaccompanied tour of duty may be entitled to a family separation allowance of \$250 per month.

f. **Hostile Fire and Imminent Danger Pay (HF/IDP):** A member of a uniformed service may be entitled to Hostile Fire and Imminent Danger pay at the rate of \$225 for any month in which he/she was entitled to basic pay and in which he/she was subject to hostile fire or on duty in a foreign area in which he was subject to the threat of physical harm or imminent danger on the basis of civil insurrection, civil war, terrorism, or wartime conditions.

**8. MyPay Website:** For soldiers mobilized on to Active Duty, the myPay website [www.mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx](http://www.mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx) is an automated system that puts the soldier in control of processing certain discretionary pay data items without using paper forms. You can also get your pay (LES) and tax statements using myPay. Soldier's LES is posted and able to be printed from the website. This is a secure website and in order to use myPay, you need your Social Security Number (SSN)/Alternate ID and myPay Personal Identification Number (PIN). The soldier also has the ability to establish a Restricted Access PIN. The Restricted Access PIN may be given to others (spouses, parents) along with your Social Security Number to view your pay or tax statements without allowing them to create any pay changes. You may establish a Restricted Access PIN by clicking on the Personal Setting Page, and selecting the Restricted Access PIN option. You may delete the Restricted Access PIN at any time.

**9. Leave and Earnings Statement (LES):** During a deployment you will receive two Leave and Earnings Statements each month (Mid-Month and End of Month). The LES will have a breakdown of all your Entitlements, Deductions, Allotments, Leave Status, Taxes, etc and a Remarks section with an explanation of any starts, stops, and changes to any pay items. Sometimes the LES can be confusing and hard to understand. If you need assistance, please contact the unit Rear Detachment Officer (RDO) or your local Family Assistance Center. For a line by line explanation of an Active Duty LES, go to: <http://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers.html>

**10. Health Insurance:** While a service member is deployed, their spouse and dependent children are entitled to health care through TRICARE or US Family Health Plan (USFHP). For an explanation and coverage information, contact your local Family Assistance Center. Don't

wait till your service member deploys, this is something you need to have in place prior to his/her departure.

**11. Dental Insurance:** While activated your service member receives their dental care through Military Treatment Facilities. Spouse and dependents have an option to enroll in a low cost TRICARE Dental Program (TDP). Your local Family Assistance Center can assist with an explanation of benefits, cost, and enrollment. Once again, this is something that needs to be in place prior to your service member's deployment.

**12. DEERS and ID Cards:** As a spouse or dependent, your "**KEY**" to health care, dental care, commissary access, other benefits and entitlements is enrollment in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Once you and the service member's dependents are enrolled, those over the age of 10 years are entitled to obtain their Military Dependents ID Card. It is imperative during the pre-deployment phase that your service member takes the necessary steps to have you and any dependent children enrolled in DEERS and then make arrangements to obtain your ID Cards at a RAPIDS Site. To find the closest RAPIDS Site to your home of record, go to [www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl) or contact your local Family Assistance Center.

**13. YRRP: Pre-Deployment Event:** Usually a month or two prior to your Service Member's departure a Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment event will be conducted. You're Service Member, you, and any interested family members will be invited to attend. During this event you will receive a series of briefings on benefits, entitlements, points of contact, and numerous other resources to assist you during the deployment. We strongly recommend family members attend as this will be the best opportunity to have all your questions and concerns addressed.

**14. Car Maintenance Checklist:** The family car is an important part of family life. The sudden and unexpected loss of the use of your car can be a real burden, and in some cases could be tragic. During separation, not knowing how to cope with car problems is just one more aggravation while the spouse is away. Please take time to fill in and go over the information outlined in Annex B of this Handbook. Discuss what problems may happen to the car and become familiar with the periodic checks that are a part of routine maintenance.

## Chapter 2: During Deployment

**1. Family Assistance Centers (FAC):** There are several Family Assistance Centers established throughout New Jersey to support the soldiers and their families. They are your “LIFELINE” during deployment and are available 24/7/365. They will provide assistance with DEERS Enrollments, ID Cards, TRICARE, resources for legal, financial, crisis intervention, and community assets. Please contact the Family Assistance Center nearest your home for information and assistance. The following is a list of our New Jersey Family Assistance Centers and their contact information. Or call toll free 1-888-859-0352 and follow the prompts.

<b>FAC</b>	<b>Office Phone</b>	<b>Cell Phone</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>
Bordentown	(609) 324-7030	(609) 802-2241	<a href="mailto:michael.t.hughes.ctr@mail.mil">michael.t.hughes.ctr@mail.mil</a>
Lawrenceville	(609) 671-6681	(609) 802-6911	<a href="mailto:jane.e.hackbarth.ctr@mail.mil">jane.e.hackbarth.ctr@mail.mil</a>
Morristown	(973) 656-3592	(609) 802-6921	<a href="mailto:john.a.hales.ctr@mail.mil">john.a.hales.ctr@mail.mil</a>
Jersey City	(201) 915-3589	(201) 915-3589	<a href="mailto:bernard.sims@.ctr@mail.mil">bernard.sims@.ctr@mail.mil</a>
Toms River	(732) 341-9102 x13	(609) 341-6579	<a href="mailto:maria.d.morro.ctr@mail.mil">maria.d.morro.ctr@mail.mil</a>
Egg Harbor Township	(609) 761-6546	(609) 802-2241	<a href="mailto:michael.t.hughes.ctr@mail.mil">michael.t.hughes.ctr@mail.mil</a>
Woodbury	(856) 251-6893	(609) 802-6924	<a href="mailto:michele.daisey1.ctr@mail.mil">michele.daisey1.ctr@mail.mil</a>
Blackwood	(856) 481-9341	(609) 802-6924	<a href="mailto:michele.daisey1.ctr@mail.mil">michele.daisey1.ctr@mail.mil</a>

**2. Rear Detachment Commanders (RDO):** All deployed units designate a rear detachment to remain at the armories during the time of deployment. The Rear Detachment Officer (RDO) is the primary point of contact for families who have unit-related questions or who need assistance during separation. The individuals selected to serve as RDOs for your unit are:

<b>UNIT</b>	<b>RDO</b>	<b>Armory Phone</b>	<b>E-mail</b>

**3. The Family Readiness Group (FRG)** is a Commander’s program for Family members that is designed to help prepare them for times of separation from their sponsor, due to military service responsibilities. Family members, like you, volunteer to help one another gain strength and independence. FRG members train to be READY, listen to problems, answer questions, and refer individuals to the proper agencies for solutions to problems, and unusual situations. Family Readiness Groups care and share; especially during times of separation. Your FRG point of contact is:

<b>FRG</b>	<b>Point of Contact</b>	<b>POC Phone Number</b>	<b>E-mail</b>

**4. Joint Military and Family Assistance Center (JMFAC):** Contact the JMFAC located in Bordentown, NJ at (609) 324-7060 for the following areas of assistance.

NJ State Family Programs Director (SFPD)  
 Family Assistance Center Coordinator (FACC)  
 Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA)  
 Director of Psychological Health (DPH)  
 Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP)  
 Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC)  
 for both children and adults

Financial Assistance Advisor  
 Child and Youth Coordinators  
 Survivor Outreach Services (SOS)  
 Military Funeral Honors  
 TRICARE/USFHP  
 Senior Family Readiness Support  
 Assistant (SFRSA)

**5. Military One Source:** Difficulty dealing with deployments? Military One Source is the newest member of your military community support team. It is provided by the Department of Defense at no cost to Service members and their families. Military One Source can assist 24/7/365. Just call 1-800-342-9647 (En espanol, llame al: 1-877-888-0727) or go to website [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com) . Some of the areas of assistance include:

Parenting & Child Care	Elder Care	Adult/Child Special Needs
Everyday Issues	Relocation	Emotional Well-Being
Crisis Support	Addiction & Recovery	Work Concerns
Education	TRICARE	Legal Concerns
Health & Fitness	Financial Concerns	Life Issues

**6. American Red Cross (ARC):** The American Red Cross assists with reporting and communicating while your service member is away. ARC will assist with medical reports, birth notices, and emergency notification of your service member during separations, as well as verification of emergency leave. Counseling and referrals on personal and family problems is also offered. Emergency financial assistance is normally not available through the ARC.

**7. Army Emergency Relief (AER):** To receive aid from AER a soldier must be on Active Duty orders for 30 days or more. Army Emergency Relief provides loans and grants under emergency conditions and may assist with:

Initial Rent & Deposit	Utilities To Prevent Shut-Off
Rent To prevent Eviction	Health Expenses Authorized Thru TRICARE
Emergency Food Assistance	Fire and Other Disaster
Essential POV Repairs	Emergency travel expenses caused by crisis in the family

**8. National Guard Chaplain:** Your Guard Chaplain is a trained clergy professional. The Chaplain provides care and is trained to respond to family-life issues. Families can find insights and practical advice in sharing with a Chaplain any issues concerning personal and family needs (parenting, coping with stress, managing anger, and many others). To contact a Guard Chaplain call your local unit RDO or your nearest Family Assistance Center.

**9. Other agencies to turn to:** Many agencies can help you during pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. An important means to assistance that is often overlooked is your local church, minister, pastor, priest or rabbi. The clergy is very knowledgeable of community and military agencies that can help families through financial, health, marital, or emergency leave problems. Other agencies to turn to are listed in your phone book.

**10. Free Legal Counsel for Guard Families:** Members of the National Guard mobilized for federal duty, along with their families, can get free counsel at any active duty military installation with a legal assistance office. Some of the areas of assistance they can provide are:

Domestic Relations	Immigration/Naturalization	Consumer Affairs
Family law Matters	Adoptions & Name Changes	Landlord-Tenant Relations
Power of Attorney	Non-support	Taxes
Wills and Estates	Indebtedness	Civil Suits

**NOTE:** You must have a Power of Attorney if you are to conduct family business including

legal, financial or unit related activities. For further information and links to a legal assistance office nearby contact your local Family Assistance Center or visit:  
<http://www.military.com/ResourcesContent/0,13964,30904,00.html>.

**11. Leave During Deployment:** Due to the shorter length of deployments, R&R leave during deployment is not authorized. In August 2011, the Secretary of the Army announced that on January 01, 2012, the Army would begin transitioning to a 9-month deployment cycle for General Purpose Forces (Division and below) supporting named operations outside the continental United States. This initiative will improve the quality of life of Soldiers and Families by decreasing the time Soldiers are separated from their Families. Soldiers who are deployed to the combat zone on 365 day or greater Temporary Change of Station (TCS) deployment orders with a minimum of 270 days boots on ground (BOG) still remain eligible for the R&R benefit.

The following website provides information of interest to R&R leave participants, such as: leave policies, frequently asked questions, links to various resources and organizations involved with the R&R Leave Program, recreational activities, and R&R news articles.

[www.armyg1.army.mil/WellBeing/RRLeave/index.HTM](http://www.armyg1.army.mil/WellBeing/RRLeave/index.HTM)

Questions regarding eligibility rules and the application of leave policies should be addressed to your chain of command within theater.

**12. Morale Calls:** Families please remind your soldiers that while they are deployed they have access to a free “Morale Call” number when placing calls with a calling card. All they need to do is have their calling card handy, dial 888-859-0352, select option 1 “Morale Call”, and simply follow the prompts. The charge to the unit member will be from the point in New Jersey where the call is received to the number the unit member is dialing.

**13. Phone calls from Theater:** Families are reminded that there are many different phone plans, cards, and cell phone companies offering all kinds of plans that appear to offer reasonable rates for overseas calls. Families should research these offers in detail prior to locking into a plan. Bottom line, most phone calls are going to be expensive and the families need to be aware of this before receiving their first phone bill which could be in the hundreds of dollars. It has not been uncommon during past deployments for families to receive monthly phone bills totaling 8 or 9 hundred dollars. Don't be caught off guard, plan your calls, have a list prepared of what you need to talk about, know what you want to say, and try to be brief.

**14. Military Mail Information:** Military mail moves within the United States via the United States Postal Service (USPS) transportation network to one of the major USPS mail processing facilities on either the east coast or west coast. If the mail is First-class, Priority or Express Mail it will move from the major airport gateway in the United States (usually JFK in New York for our New Jersey soldiers) to an overseas airport gateway on commercial US owned aircraft to overseas locations. From the overseas airport gateways, mail is then moved by various methods to the designated post offices for delivery to the individual. Mail going to personnel through Military Postal Service is subject to the host country customs requirements and parcels and packets require customs forms. Check with your local post office for specific forms to use. Most USPS special services, such as certified mail, registered mail, insured mail, certificate of mailing, return receipt, restricted delivery and return receipt for merchandise are available in the military postal service. Collect on delivery (COD) and delivery confirmation services are not available

(EMMS). Our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan are stationed in a “Free Mail” area and are authorized Free Mail for personal correspondence being sent from the service member overseas back to the U.S. Family members sending mail to service members in a free mail zone must pay for postage.

Address Tips:

Print or type clearly

Use a pen or permanent marker

Be sure the address is legible from an arm’s length away

Do not use commas or periods anywhere in the address

Do not use country name in the address (i.e., Iraq, Afghanistan)

**15. Packing and Shipping Supplies:** Shipping packages to your soldier can be expensive depending on the method you choose. Below are a couple of options:

a. First Class Mail: Might take a few extra days to arrive, however probably the most cost effective. Just use any cardboard box new or used (if used, make sure old labels/addresses are blacked out. Use First Class mail at your local post office.

b. The USPS has created a "Mili-kit" which contains boxes, tape, labels and appropriate forms. A little more expensive to mail, however all supplies are provided. The Package Supply Center can be reached via phone at **1-800-610-8734** (Say: "order supplies" when prompted). **Note:** These are free *supplies*; postage must be affixed.

c. You can find guidelines for packing, addressing, and shipping items to U.S. troops at [www.usps.com/ship/apo.htm](http://www.usps.com/ship/apo.htm).

**16. Dealing With The Media -- A Guide For Family Members:** Some time during your soldier’s mobilization and deployment, reporters may want to talk to you and other members of your family. Here are some tips to help you make the experience of being interviewed a success.

a. **IT’S UP TO YOU!** When a reporter asks to talk to you or your children, the choice to agree or refuse is completely up to you. If you’d like to talk about being a military spouse, the hardships of separation, the Family Support Program, etc., you’re free to do so. If you think being interviewed would be too stressful for you or your children, just say so. You are under no obligation to talk to reporters, ever. But if you’re comfortable with the idea your viewpoint can help present a more complete picture of today’s military.

b. **KEEP SECURITY IN MIND.** It’s fine to talk generally about mobilization and deployment and what your spouse does. Avoid details such as the exact number of soldiers in the unit, what type of weapons they carry and their exact destination. If you aren’t sure whether or not to answer a question, don’t. Call the Public Affairs Office at (609) 530-6939 for guidance at any time. A good reporter won’t mind waiting a few minutes for an answer.

c. **AVOID RUMORS AND SPECULATION.** They won’t add anything to your viewpoint and will subtract from your credibility.

d. **WHAT ABOUT COMPLAINTS?** Everyone has at least one or two—but if you want to complain about your spouse’s unit or mission, be sure to tell the reporter you’re speaking only for yourself.

e. **WHAT ABOUT “OFF THE RECORD”** Talking to a reporter “off the record” is almost always a bad idea. It’s too easy to lose track of what you said when, and find something that you didn’t mean to make public in the media. The best general rule is if you wouldn’t want to see it in the media, don’t say it.

f. **WE’D LIKE TO KNOW.** If you do talk to a reporter, and can take a minute to let us know, we’d appreciate it. We look for news stories about our units and families, both for our historical files and to forward to others in the organization. If you have any questions, need information or just want to tell us about your experience, call the New Jersey National Guard Public Affairs Office at (609) 530-6939.

**17. OPSEC and Social Networking:** Social Media has become a huge part of our everyday lives. Social Media can help people and Army Organizations share information and also help Soldiers, Family Members and Army Civilians stay in touch. When using Facebook or any other social media site do not post personally identifiable information or any information that can harm Army operations. GEOTAGGING is the process of adding geographical identification to photos, videos, websites and SMS message. It is the equivalent of adding a 10 digit grid coordinates to everything you post on the internet. Geotags are automatically imbedded in pictures taken with your smartphone. Many people are unaware. Once you post the picture you have taken with the geotag imbedded, an advisory can use the location to locate you. You must go into your phones camera settings to DISABLE the location setting.

**18. Family Members Eligible to Receive Pass Through Airport Security:** The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has issued guidelines which allow family members to obtain an "escort pass" which will allow them to escort a military passenger to a departing gate or to meet a military passenger at an arriving gate. All individuals requesting an escort pass should obtain it at the applicable airline ticket counter.

**19. Emergencies:**

a. What if I have an emergency at home? Many times distressing situations occur and you feel it is necessary to request that your service member return home. The military defines an emergency as follows: An EMERGENCY is the DEATH, CRITICAL ILLNESS OR INJURY to an IMMEDIATE family member. CRITICALLY ILL or INJURED means the possibility of death or permanent disability. IMMEDIATE family is defined as wife/husband, parents children, grandparents (who raised you or your spouse in the place of parents), or guardian (who raised you or your spouse in place of parents). The birth of a child, a broken leg, or the flu is not themselves considered emergencies. However, the commander may determine that it is best that the service member returns home in certain situations. Your FRG, friends, relatives, Chaplain, civilian clergy and civilian community agencies can often help to turn “emergencies” around. The FAC Staff are available to walk you through the process.

b. What if my sponsor has an emergency? If your service member develops a serious problem such as an illness or injury, you will be contacted by the unit. If your soldier’s immediate Family has an emergency and his or her presence is necessary, the Red Cross from that area will need to generate a Red Cross message detailing the emergency. Contact your local Red Cross for more details.

c. Be prepared for emergencies:

(1) Keep a list of emergency phone numbers near your phone, posted on the refrigerator, or in a place where EVERY member of the family knows the location. It is best to place emergency information on 3 x 5 index cards. Place them by all phones, on the refrigerator, and keep one in your purse or wallet. The data card should include the following: Soldier's rank, name, pay grade, Social Security, Unit of assignment, Unit attached to for deployment, Unit Phone, Commanders name and phone number, military Point of Contact and phone number, State Family Program Director phone number 609-324-7060.

(2) Have a local friend or relative occasionally visit or call in case you become suddenly ill and are unable to let anyone know. It is a good idea to give the friend or neighbor a copy of the emergency data card.

(3) Be sure your service member's unit has your CORRECT address and phone number on the phone tree plus a friend or relatives contact information. If you do not have a phone, list a neighbor's number who will contact you.

(4) Refer to you Family Readiness Group's Chain of Concern for assistance and or information.

## **20. Contacting the American Red Cross in the event of an emergency:**

a. Call **1-877-272-7337 or any local Red Cross office.**

b. They will ask you for the following information. Be prepared to answer all questions.

- (1) Service Members Rank and Pay Grade
- (2) Service Members Name
- (3) Social Security Number
- (4) Service Branch
- (5) Military Unit's Name and Address
- (6) Zip Code/APO/FOP
- (7) Phone number where they can contact you.
- (8) Nature of the Red Cross Message
- (9) Person Making Request
- (10) Verification Information: Patient/Deceased Name
- (11) Relationship to Service Member
- (12) Hospital/Attending Physician/Contact/Phone
- (13) Diagnosis/Prognosis/Recommendation
- (14) Funeral Home Name/Phone
- (15) Coroner/Phone

c. Before hanging up, be sure to obtain a CASE NUMBER from the Red Cross, and write it here\_\_\_\_\_. In the event you need to call them back, you can reference this CASE NUMBER.

**21. Family Communications:** When a Guard member deploys, Family members go with them in a sense. For most families a deployment isn't the happiest of occasions. Long separations are hard on every member of the Family, especially those who are left at home. But as Guard Families, they learn to cope. Experience has shown that a deployment is much easier on our Families if they prepare for it and know the tricks of getting along during a separation. By

following some of the suggestions provided in Annex C of this Handbook, the deployment may not be as difficult for your Family as it might otherwise be.

**22. Child and Youth Programs:** Our Child and Youth Program is available to all families to provide support and resources Youth need to deal with separation from a parent, child care issues, school and life skills. We provide children and youth ages 5-18 with various opportunities to develop their physical, social, emotional and cognitive abilities and to experience achievement, leadership, friendship, and recognition. Some of our activities include:

a. Education Outreach: Reaching out to school officials, educators, and counselors through e-mailing, in-service presentations, briefings, and state-wide training opportunities

b. Youth Camps: Annual week-long summer Youth Camp for ages 9 and up

c. Youth Newsletter: Published monthly providing information, announcements, available programs and resources available to Military Kids throughout the State.

**23. Facebook:** To keep up to date with current activities, events, benefits, entitlements, special offers, please come and visit our Facebook pages at:

NJ State Family Programs

New Jersey Military Family Assistance Centers

New Jersey National Guard Child and Youth Programs

**24. YRRP: During-Deployment Event:** About midway through the deployment, family members will be invited to a Yellow Ribbon During-Deployment Event. This is sort of a health and welfare check focused on a family's challenges and stressors associated with the deployment. It also provides families the opportunity to interact and also have any issues they may be having with TRICARE, ID Cards, pay, benefits, etc addressed.

**25. Family Relationships:** Relationships between spouses, children and other family members can become very stressful during deployment as separation as long separations are very new to the family. Annex D of this handbook provides some suggestions to assist these relationships.

**26. Coping with Stress:** Deployments can put unwanted stress upon all Family members. To better understand how to cope with stress please review Annex E of this handbook.

**27. Stress Management Tips:** Everybody will cope with the stress of deployment and separation in many different ways. Annex F of this handbook has a good list of tips to help you. Take a look at them and try to apply as many as possible in your daily routine.

**28. Children and Dealing with Separation:** For a better understanding of how children perceive their parent's deployment, please review Annex G of this handbook for explanations and some great recommendations.

## **Chapter 3: Homecomings**

### **HOMECOMINGS**

#### **WHAT SPOUSES AT HOME SHOULD REMEMBER**

1. Remember that your spouse has been subjected to a daily regimentation and routine. Schedules and preplanned events may not be a good idea upon return. Leave some room for spontaneity.
2. Your spouse may have trouble sleeping for a while due to a routine change in field life, the presence of other people in a barracks or from a time zone change.
3. Don't be defensive about the way you've handled the children. Discuss any criticisms calmly.
4. It could take time to re-establish sexual intimacy.
5. Your spouse may want to celebrate his or her return with a spending spree. If you can't afford it, hold tight to the purse strings. The urge to spend will pass.
6. Don't grill your spouse about real or imagined affairs. Don't go through his or her belongings looking for clues. Swallow your curiosity.
7. Your spouse may be surprised or hurt that you've coped so well alone. Reassure them that they are needed, without giving up your independence. Expect them to be different. Think how much you have changed. So have they. Don't worry things will get back to normal after a short time.

#### **WHAT RETURNING SPOUSES SHOULD REMEMBER**

1. Don't disturb a family setup that has been working well without you. Ease back into the system gradually. Enjoy being an honored guest for a while.
2. Take it easy on the children, especially where discipline is concerned. It's best for children to have a constant routine, so let the house rules stand.
3. Don't try to alter the financial affairs. Chances are your spouse has been handling them fine.
4. Your spouse may be a little envious of your travels, so go easy on the descriptions of your location.
5. If your sexual relationship is awkward between you at first, talk it over. Don't grill your spouse about infidelity. Whatever you've imagined while you were gone, it serves no purpose to bring it up.

**YOUR SPOUSE MAY APPEAR TO BE DIFFERENT.  
HE OR SHE IS A MORE CONFIDENT AND INDEPENDENT PERSON.  
THE FACT THAT HE OR SHE CAN COPE WITHOUT YOU  
DOESN'T MEAN THEY WANT TO.  
EXPECT THAT IT WILL TAKE ABOUT SIX WEEKS  
TO ADJUST TO EACH OTHER AGAIN.  
IF YOU'RE NOT GETTING ALONG WELL BY THE END OF SIX WEEKS,  
COUNSELING MIGHT HELP.**

## **Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment 30-Day Event**

1. Approximately 30 days following return from deployment, the service member and his family will be invited to a Post-Deployment 30-Day Yellow Ribbon Event.
2. This event is usually conducted over a 2-3 day period at a centrally located hotel. There is no cost to the service member or their family. Overnight accommodations are provided for those living more than 50 miles from the hotel. Accommodations and meals are included and child care will also be provided.
3. Family members are strongly recommended to attend as this event is focused on reconnecting service members with their Families, employers, and communities, as well as providing information and access to resources that will facilitate a successful reintegration.
4. Some of the activities and briefings usually presented at the 30-Day YRRP Event are:
  - a. Single service member workshop
  - b. Reconnecting with children workshop
  - c. Mental health and post traumatic stress
  - d. Job fair and career coaching
  - e. TRICARE benefits
  - f. Education Benefits
  - g. Financial planning and counseling
  - h. Legal information
  - i. VA benefits and resources
  - j. Veterans counseling centers/VSO briefing
  - k. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) briefing
  - l. Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) briefing
  - m. On-hand Chaplains

## Annex A: Family Preparedness Checklist

The following is a list of the items that should be in your storage container.

OUR STORAGE CONTAINER IS LOCATED: \_\_\_\_\_

	<u>Document or Action</u>
	Marriage Certificate
	Birth Certificate (All family Members)
	Shot Records
	Citizenship Papers, if any
	Adoption Papers , if any
	Life Insurance Policies
	Military ID Cards for all Family members 10 years old or older
	Wills (Both spouses)
	Copy of SGLI & updated DD 93
	Social Security Cards and numbers of all Family members
	Titles to all autos, trucks, snowmobiles, trailers, boats, etc.
	Joint checking/savings accounts set up. List of account numbers
	List of all Credit Card Companies, account numbers, & phone numbers of companies
	List of Stocks & Bonds (Broker contact info)
	All doors & windows have good locks
	Extra keys (house, car, mailbox, etc.)
	Court Orders relating to divorce, child support or child custody, if applicable
	Last LES (Leave & Earning Statement
	Inventory of all household goods
	Passport, Visas, if any
	Power of Attorney
	Real Estate documents. Copies relating to rent or land ownership
	Mobilization, Deployment, Annual Training Orders (10-copies)
	Family/Business budget arranged
	Death Certificates for deceased Family members
	Current address/phone listing of all immediate Family members of both spouses
	Problem areas with car, house, appliances identified and resolved
	Documents relating to lease, mortgage, deed, or promissory note
	DD Form 214 & other documents related to Military Service records
	Updated list of important/emergency phone numbers

## Annex B: Car Maintenance Checklist

### FAMILY DRIVER LICENSE INFORMATION

Name	Lic.#	State	Exp. Date
1.	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____

### AUTO DATA/SERVICING INFORMATION (Do one for each vehicle)

1. Make \_\_\_\_\_ Model \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle ID \_\_\_\_\_
2. Warranty: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_
3. Car Title: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_
4. Car Registration: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
5. License Plate Number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_\_
6. Auto Insurance: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_
7. Spare Keys: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_
8. Gasoline Type: Unleaded \_\_\_\_\_ Leaded \_\_\_\_\_ Premium \_\_\_\_\_
9. Battery Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Make/Brand \_\_\_\_\_ Warranty: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
10. Tires Make/Brand \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ Pressure \_\_\_\_\_ Warranty Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
11. Oil Brand \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_
12. Spark Plug Brand \_\_\_\_\_ Type/Size \_\_\_\_\_

### MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE:

1. Major servicing to be done at \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number of Maintenance Shop \_\_\_\_\_
2. Oil filter change/lubricant \_\_\_\_\_ Next Scheduled Date \_\_\_\_\_
3. Tune up, Next Scheduled date \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. Mileage \_\_\_\_\_  
Where \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks/Instructions \_\_\_\_\_
4. Tire balancing, rotation, front end alignment, Next Scheduled date \_\_\_\_\_  
Approx. Mileage \_\_\_\_\_ Where \_\_\_\_\_



## Annex C: Family Communication

### FAMILY COMMUNICATION

**FAMILY TALKS:** Families can add a special request in their evening grace or bedtime prayers: ‘Please bless Daddy (Mommy, brother, sister, son or daughter) while they’re far away from us, and all the other Daddies (or mommies, brothers, sisters, sons or daughters)’. This can tie the child to their family member, and all others in similar situations. It is also helpful, especially for older children to sit down as a family and discuss the rules of the house before a deployment. Children are more likely to remember the rules as ‘Family’ or ‘House’ rules rather than ‘Mom’s’ or ‘Dad’s’ rules.

**LETTER WRITING:** Some people number their letters to eliminate confusion and others send lots of funny cards. Letters are a great moral booster. Being away from home is hard and letters and cards seem to ease the stress of being away. Answer all questions. Write with a picture of your loved one in front of you or the children. This is a way to make your letters more personable and it gives a chance for the kids to remember what mom or dad looks like. Let your loved one know how much you appreciate the letters, tapes, pictures, etc. Mention one or two things in each communication, which made you, feel especially close. Remember the need to verbally express affection does not diminish with the miles. ‘I love you’ means just as much when it is written during separation as it does when it is said in person. Share your feelings as openly as you can without indulging in self-pity. Let them know you’d like to share their feelings. Above all, express yourself clearly so they won’t have to say, ‘I wonder what was meant by that!’ On the other hand, don’t try to read between the lines or interpret a puzzling remark. If you don’t understand, ask questions in your next letter.

**TAPE RECORDINGS AND VIDEO RECORDINGS:** If letter writing is difficult for you, consider buying a pair of small tape recorders so that talking letters can be shared. Children can also send messages this way. Record bed times, dinner times, birthdays, holidays etc., and have the whole family involved. You might even have neighbors and friends participate. Record their favorite TV shows movies or sporting events. Their entire unit will enjoy viewing anything from home. The service member can record some of the children’s favorite stories before they depart. This is a great way to keep mom or dad real in the child’s mind. Later on they can listen or read along with the tapes. In many cases, just hearing their voice will calm a child down.

**COMPUTERS (E-mail):** It is very likely that you will be able to communicate via electronic mail either from your home computer or a computer in your service members unit. Check with your unit before departure for all the details.

**TELEPHONE CALLS:** It is a quick way to communicate and in this day and age with cell phones it is an easy process. However, remember overseas calls are very expensive and your loved one may not always have access to a telephone. A good thing to remember also is the time change. Most overseas countries are in a different time zone.

## **Annex D: Family Relationships**

### **FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

**HUSBAND AND WIFE:** Flowers and gifts can be ordered in advance to arrive on special days. Or make arrangements with a close friend to deliver gifts for the holidays and special days. Couples should sit down together and check off the dates on your calendar that payments (include amounts) are due for rent, insurance, taxes, car registration and other bills.

**YOUNGER CHILDREN:** Make a snapshot picture book of the departing parent doing everyday things with the kids like giving a bath, reading, taking a walk, playing ball, etc. Show the parent in uniform and where they work if possible. It is also a good idea to put pictures of the departing parent on the refrigerator, in the child's room, on the bathroom mirror and all around the house. Small children have a tendency to forget very quickly. Pictures will help remind the child that there is another parent.

Have the parent send postcards or letters to each child with brief, easy sentences about his or her daily events. Children love receiving their own mail. Buy or plan presents for birthdays and holidays in advance and attach special messages. Kids love getting gifts through the mail from other countries.

Acquire a world map or a globe and you and your children can follow Dad or Mom around the world. This gives the children more security in knowing about where he or she is. You can also learn some geography by visiting a travel agency for brochures.

Mealtimes and bedtimes are a good time to talk about what they are going to say on the next tape or letter. They can send drawings and schoolwork they are proud of.

Send schedules of ball games, activities, or special events so they can ask how the game or class play went.

The 'I want my Daddy' problem: One mom gave her child a picture of Daddy in plastic so she could carry it with her everywhere. The child then felt that her dad was with her all the time.

**OLDER CHILDREN:** Include teenagers as much as possible in preparations for pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. One mom made her teens feel needed and secure by discussing with them areas in which they could help while dad was away.

## **Annex E: Coping With Stress**

### **COPING WITH STRESS**

**STRESS IN THE GUARD FAMILY:** Being a Guard Family can afford pride in serving one's country as well as provide many rich and new experiences. Guard Families also can experience problems that are unique to their lifestyle. Pressures and frustrations often result from:

- Adjustments to absence during Drills and Annual Training
- Lengthy deployments or separations
- Single parenting during absence
- Separation from friends and family
- A strained family budget
- Adjustment to varying duty schedules
- Career changes at retirement

Nearly every Guard Family has difficulty coping with problems from time to time. Pressures can become so great that many areas of life can be affected. For example, father's or mother's absence may have the remaining parent emotionally and physically drained in their role of single parent, while the children are having a like adjustment problem expressed through disciplinary problems while a parent is gone. The match of an overworked and drained parent with unruly children trying to test new limits can easily escalate into a frightful and destructive lifestyle. This can be a strong signal that help outside the family may be needed.

The Military Family can help themselves through these stressors unique to their lifestyle. When a parent is away from home for an extended period, it is important to maintain caring and discipline for the children as if they were home. Children may try to take advantage of possible new freedoms with mother or father gone, and a continuing stable home life is important for their psychological adjustment. Consistent rules, a consistent daily household schedule and quality time with the children are important parts of minimizing the stress of the parent who remains at home.

Mother or father and children need to keep social activities alive while the parent is gone. Providing regular outlets for contact with other people fulfills basic needs for comfort and stability. The guard spouse may feel overworked with additional worries while the service member is away, but time set aside for visiting friends or relatives, going out to enjoy a movie or dinner, or becoming involved in local activities, may help immensely. Your Family Readiness Group can be of great assistance in alleviating the stress of a separation or deployment.

**EMOTIONS:** We all get down in the dumps sometimes but what do you do about it? One woman said that after the kids were in bed she put on some music that she and her husband liked, and just listened. Soon the tears would come and she felt so much better. It beats yelling at the kids. There are times to cry with your children and times to cry alone. It lets your emotions out instead of keeping them bottled up inside which doesn't really help anyone.

Becoming aware of and in touch with your feelings can give you an inside track as to how your children feel. If it's been two weeks since the last mail and you're feeling a bit blue or irritable, your children may be climbing the walls or withdrawing for these same reasons. Talk about how you feel. It won't change the fact of no mail but it may give you all extra patience and everyone will feel better knowing that it's OK to feel lonely, isolated, sad, and frustrated.

**EMERGENCY:** Tape your name and address on the telephone. In case of an emergency we tend to forget many important things. It's also important to have the numbers of a friend, unit, or FRG representative for your children to call in case something should happen, along with police, fire, and hospital, etc.

**FRIENDS:** Whether it is through your FRG, church, or neighbors, the support of friends makes the going easier. One thing to avoid is a gossip session because it only breaks down communication and doesn't really help anyone.

**NEIGHBORS:** Neighbors can be helpful to families when a parent is away. Good neighbors will check in occasionally to see that all is well. And if things aren't going well, they'll usually make themselves available to help out if they can.

**COUNTDOWN:** How to count time for kids that can't count or read; all you need are a belt, buttons, and glue. Glue on the amount of day (buttons) and have the child take one off each day. When they take the last button off, tomorrow they will come home.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.  
IF YOU ARE FEELING GOOD YOU CAN COPE WITH  
JUST ABOUT ANY SITUATION ALOT BETTER.**



## **Annex F: Stress management Tips**

### **STRESS MANAGEMENT HINTS**

- Get up earlier to allow more time before starting the day's work
- Prioritize what is really critical and pace yourself accordingly
- Be realistic and kind to yourself when making your "to do" list
- Spend your leisure time with enthusiastic, upbeat friends. Since many of your friends will be in the same position, you should be enthusiastic and upbeat for them
- Make a list of your hyper habits; share it with a close friend to check accuracy and completeness, contract with yourself to change on item or two
- Take a little time before you enter your work place, pause and notice what kind of day it is.
- During the day, rest quietly for five minutes or take a brief walk
- Say NO when you need to.
- Ask for help when you need it, whether it's time away from the children, a counseling session, or a real vacation.
- Write yourself a note and place it where you will read it, schedule treats for yourself on your calendar.
- Focus on immediate or short-term goals that are attainable
- Collect appreciation that is due. Hear praise and thank you when offered to you
- Take care of yourself when you are down and out, play your favorite song, see a movie, give up housework for the day, etc.
- Analyze your moods, energy, and time. Are you down at certain times of the day, week or month? Plan and prepare
- Use relaxation, meditation, music, religion, nature, or whatever to re-energize yourself
- Pay attention to your diet, sleep and general health
- Exercise. If you don't have the time, ask yourself if you have the time to be sick, depressed, or sluggish
- Be good to yourself and do something a little bit selfish. Take a long bath, cook a special dish you wouldn't normally make or hire a babysitter and go out for the night with friends.
- Give yourself credit for things you have done well
- Learn how to relax, and don't turn to alcohol or other drugs for stress reduction
- Try to stay positive, it's easy to see the negative side of mobilization. But seeing the positive side has many more rewards. Think of separation as a chance to grow
- Stay busy, Time passes much more quickly when you're busy. Try to see separation as a time to learn something new. Maybe you could take some college courses or start a new hobby
- Try to spend time each week doing something out of the normal routine. Go to a museum or library on a local tour. Avoid sitting home feeling sorry for yourself.

**BE GOOD TO YOURSELF... YOU DESERVE IT!!!**

## **Annex G: Children and Dealing with Separation**

### **CHILDREN AND DEALING WITH SEPARATION**

Some people say children are relatively unaffected by their parent's absence, but studies indicate that is not a true statement. Children experience the same psychological pattern as the caretaker or parent, due to their own feeling of loss and their own awareness, conscious and unconscious, of the parent's overall emotional situation. They are, generally, upset when the parent is, and calm when the parent is. Children often test the parent left behind to find out if he or she will bend more than both parents are at home. This will be more apparent when the service member first leaves and again when they return.

Some parents overcompensate for the absence of the other and become permissive and or overprotective with the children. Rules once ironclad are now changed. Some decisions are harder to make alone. This creates a different environment for the children. They become caught between two worlds, juggling their behavior according to whether or not the other parent is home.

Both parents must be consistent in their discipline of the children.

When the service member returns, children behave in a variety of ways, happy hugs and kisses, squeal of welcome, but also feelings of hurt, anger, resentment and hostility. Child psychologists say ALL children have both positive and negative feelings toward the returning parent. That's okay, as long as the feelings are dealt with honestly.

Children need stability. Put yourself in the place of your children and think about how they might feel if one parent was constantly coming and going, here two weeks, gone for eight months, home two days, wouldn't your security be shaken a little? Imagine what it does to the children.

Children express their feelings in different ways, and their outward behavior is not always a good reflection of what's going on emotionally. Some children cover up their feelings, others are more open. Insecurity, loss of status, and change in routine all add up to complex emotions, hurt and anger which are usually directed at the returning parent. They also feel love, pride, need and security, which cause ambivalence. They just can't understand what's happening.

A few things that parents can do to ease some of the emotions are as follows:

**MAKING SURE CHILDREN KNOW THEY ARE LOVED:** Often, young children see themselves as the cause of separation. They may feel their parent is going away because they have been bad, or because their parent doesn't love them anymore. Make sure your children know this isn't the case.

**BEING TRUTHFUL:** Many children can sense when they are being lied to. Often what they imagine is worse than reality, and they may worry unnecessarily. It helps to talk openly and honestly about separation.

**SHARING CONCERNS:** Children often have a hard time talking about their feelings. Let children know it's OK to talk about feelings (even negative feelings) by sharing your own feelings.

**DISCIPLINE CONSISTENTLY:** Don't let separation mean a free rein. But don't threaten your child with 'wait until your father or mother get home!' It's hard to look forward to the return of someone expected to punish you.

**LET YOUR CHILDREN HELP AROUND THE HOUSE:** Ask children which chores they would like to do. Let children know they are making a valuable contribution

**MAINTAIN ROUTINES:** Regular mealtimes and bedtimes can help children feel more secure. Try to keep the same family rules and routines that were used before the separation.

**HELP CHILDREN MARK THE PASSING OF TIME:** Many families find it helpful to mark the days off a calendar in a daily ritual. Try to find some visual way to let children count the days until their parent comes home.



## Annex H: Useful Contact Numbers and Websites

American Legion		<a href="http://www.think-legion.org">www.think-legion.org</a>
American Red Cross	877-272-7337	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>
Military One Source	800-342-9647	<a href="http://www.militaryonesource.com">www.militaryonesource.com</a>
Army One Source	800-464-8107	<a href="http://www.armyonesource.com">www.armyonesource.com</a>
CENTCOM R&R Leave Program		<a href="http://www.armyg1.army.mil/WellBeing/RRLeave/index.HTM">www.armyg1.army.mil/WellBeing/RRLeave/index.HTM</a>
Child Care Aware of America		<a href="http://www.naccrra.org/military-families/army/what-programs-are-available">www.naccrra.org/military-families/army/what-programs-are-available</a>
DEERS/ID Card Centers (RAPIDS Sites)		<a href="http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsi">www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsi</a>
Deployment		<a href="http://www.military.com/deployment">www.military.com/deployment</a>
Kids Deploy Too!		<a href="http://www.militarykidsconnect.org">www.militarykidsconnect.org</a>
How to read an "LES"		<a href="http://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers.html">www.dfas.mil/militarymembers.html</a>
Legal Services (JAG)		<a href="http://www.jagcnet.army.mil/legal">www.jagcnet.army.mil/legal</a>
Military Discounts		<a href="http://www.benefits.military.com/misc/DC/DealAllCategories.jsp">www.benefits.military.com/misc/DC/DealAllCategories.jsp</a>
Morale, Welfare, Recreation (MWR)		<a href="http://www.armymwr.com">www.armymwr.com</a>
My Army Benefits		<a href="http://www.militarybenefits.com/military_retired.html">www.militarybenefits.com/military_retired.html</a>
My Pay		<a href="http://www.dod.mil/dfas">www.dod.mil/dfas</a>
NGB Family Programs		<a href="http://www.jointservicessupport.org">www.jointservicessupport.org</a>
NJ Dept Military & Veterans Affairs		<a href="http://www.state.nj.us/military">www.state.nj.us/military</a>
NJ National Guard Family Programs	609-324-7060	<a href="http://www.state.nj.us/military/familysupport/home.html">www.state.nj.us/military/familysupport/home.html</a>
NJ Employer Support of the Guard & Reserve	609-562-5550	<a href="http://www.njesgr.org/index.html">www.njesgr.org/index.html</a>
NJ Statewide number for resources	2-1-1	<a href="http://www.nj211.org">www.nj211.org</a>
NJ Veterans Affairs	888-865-8387	<a href="http://www.state.nj.us/military/veterans/index.html">www.state.nj.us/military/veterans/index.html</a>
Operation Military Child Care		<a href="http://www.childcareaware.org">www.childcareaware.org</a>
Our Military Kids		<a href="http://www.ourmilitarykids.org">www.ourmilitarykids.org</a>
Parenting		<a href="http://www.militaryparenting.org">www.militaryparenting.org</a>
Passports		<a href="http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/">www.travel.state.gov/passport/</a>
Salvation Army		<a href="http://www.newjerseysalvationarmy.org">www.newjerseysalvationarmy.org</a>
Servicemembers Civil relief Act (SCRA)		<a href="http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/mobil/pdf/scra.pdf">www.defenselink.mil/ra/mobil/pdf/scra.pdf</a>
Sitters, childcare, nannies, eldercare, Elder care companions, dog walkers, housekeepers and tutors		<a href="http://www.sittercity.com/dod">www.sittercity.com/dod</a>
TRICARE	877-874-2273	<a href="http://www.tricare.osd.mil">www.tricare.osd.mil</a>
TRICARE Health E-mail Service		<a href="http://www.samhouston.army.mil/thems/them.asp">www.samhouston.army.mil/thems/them.asp</a>
TRICARE Dental Program (TDP)	888-622-8371	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil/Costs/DentalCosts/TDP.aspx?sc_database=web">www.tricare.mil/Costs/DentalCosts/TDP.aspx?sc_database=web</a>
TRICARE Pharmacy Program	877-363-1303	<a href="http://www.tricare.mil/Pharmacy/FillPrescriptions.aspx?sc_database=web">www.tricare.mil/Pharmacy/FillPrescriptions.aspx?sc_database=web</a>
US Family Health Plan (USFHP)	800-241-4848	<a href="http://www.usfhp.net">www.usfhp.net</a>
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)		<a href="http://www.vfw.org">www.vfw.org</a>