

# Military Members and Families



## Deployment Tips

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## Tips for Military Spouses

1. Do something special to welcome your spouse home-help the children make a welcome banner, make your spouse's favorite dessert, etc., but be understanding and flexible if your spouse is too tired to notice.
2. Give your spouse time to adjust to being home. Don't tightly schedule activities for them. Don't expect them to take on all their old chores right away. Understand that your spouse may need time to adjust to a different time zone, a change in food, etc.
3. Plan on some family togetherness time. Suggest a picnic or a special family meal. Time together helps the returning spouse to get back into the rhythm of family life.
4. Be patient and tolerant with your spouse. He or she may not do things exactly as before. New experiences during deployment may bring changes to attitude and outlook.
5. Stick to your household budget. Don't spend money you don't have on celebrating your spouse's return. Show your care through your time and effort.
6. Don't be surprised if your spouse is a little hurt by how well you were able to run the household and manage the children without them. Let them know that your preference is to share family and household responsibilities with them no matter how well you did on your own.
7. Stay involved with your children's school activities and interests. Don't neglect the children's need for attention as you are becoming reacquainted with your spouse.
8. Stay involved in your own activities and interests, but be flexible about making time for your spouse.
9. Don't be surprised if children test the limits of the family rules when your spouse returns. It's normal for children to want to find out how things may have changed by acting up a bit. Consistent enforcement of family rules and even-handed discipline are key to dealing with acting out.

### Remember:

- Go slowly - don't try to make up for lost time
- Accept that your partner may be different
- Intimate relationships may be awkward at first
- Take time to get reacquainted
- Forget your fantasies
- Reassure your children
- Seek help for family members if needed

(Developed by David Gretsch, Mobilization & Development, Ft. Hood MWR)

## Deployment Checklist

### General

- ✓ Attend mobilization meetings and take notes
- ✓ Know the exact name of unit
- ✓ Know the names and ranks of chain of command
- ✓ Have a copy of your service member's orders
- ✓ Know service member's travel itinerary
- ✓ Know service member's full name, social security number, and complete military address
- ✓ Have emergency plans in place

### Your Finances

- ✓ Plan ahead
- ✓ Discuss what and when bills are due, where receipts are kept, etc.
- ✓ Have enough saved
- ✓ Create family budget

### Around the House

- ✓ Extra set of car keys
- ✓ List of repair persons to call
- ✓ Location of utility (water/electricity/gas) shut off valves
- ✓ Know your neighbors

### Family Matters

- ✓ Child care plan
- ✓ Elder care plan
- ✓ Emergency plan for pets

### Legal Affairs

- ✓ Have Will
- ✓ Have Power of Attorney
- ✓ Have Military I.D.

### Communications

- ✓ Pre-addressed, stamped post cards, pens
- ✓ Seek counseling if necessary

## Red Cross

- ✓ Know how to contact your local American Red Cross
  - ✓ Know name of local Red Cross
  - ✓ Know address of local Red Cross
  - ✓ Know telephone numbers
- Duty hours  
After-duty hours

There may come a time when you - or a family member - may require our services and we'll be there.

## Tips for Returning Military Members

1. Plan on spending some time with the entire family doing family things, but be flexible if teens have other plans.
2. Show interest and pleasure in how your family members have grown and mastered new skills in your absence and let them know you are proud of them. Comment on positive changes.
3. Expect it will take a little time to become reacquainted with your spouse. Be sure to tell them just how much you care about them.
4. Resist the temptation to criticize. Remember that your spouse has been doing his or her best to run the household single-handedly and care for the children while you were gone.
5. Take time to understand how your family may have changed during the separation. Go easy on child discipline-get to know what new rules your spouse may have set before you jump into enforcing the household rules.
6. Don't be surprised if some family members are a bit resentful of your deployment. Others often think of the deployment as more fun and exciting than staying at home-even if you know otherwise.
7. Infants and small children may be shy or even fearful around you at first. Be patient and give them time to become reacquainted.
8. Resist the temptation to go on a spending spree to celebrate your return. The extra money saved during deployment may be needed later for unexpected household expenses.
9. Most importantly, make time to talk with your loved ones. Your spouse and each child need individual time and attention from you. Remember, focus on the positives and avoid criticism.

*Communication will help to:*

- Reestablish intimate and sexual relations
- Bring you closer together
- Accept change

*Remember:*

- Go slowly - don't try to make up for lost time
- Spend quality time with each child
- Accept that your partner may be different
- Intimate relationships may be awkward at first
- Take time to get reacquainted
- Forget your fantasies

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## How to Use the American Red Cross During Family Emergencies When a National Guard or Reserve Member is Absent

No one ever said that families of the Reserve Component (Reserves and National Guard) or any other community-based military was going to be easy for you. Military life, in fact, often creates unforeseen hardships. The good news is that the American Red Cross helps community-based military members and their families cope with separation and other special needs related to service in the armed forces. You are entitled to the same valuable Red Cross emergency services as the families of full time active duty military personnel.

If your loved one is away from home because of military duty and you need to get in touch with him or her in the event of an emergency, then the American Red Cross can help. To assist us in quickly locating your them and sending an emergency message, please have ready the following information:

- Service Member's Full Name
- Rank/Rating
- Branch of Service
- Social Security Number
- Military Address
- Information about the deployed unit and the home base unit (for deployed service members only)

The Red Cross verifies this information and relays it to the appropriate command where it is up to the military whether the service member returns home. Remember, a service member can only come home in an emergency situation.

### **Be prepared**

Always have your local Red Cross chapter or station phone number readily available and share the above information with a trusted friend.

### **Stay in touch with loved ones**

Red Cross worldwide emergency communications network operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. They can help you send emergency messages regarding the death or serious illness of a family member, the birth of a child, or other family emergencies.

### **Get verification of emergency leave information**

Red Cross can provide your Reservist's or Guardsman's commander with fast, reliable information to help make decisions regarding emergency leave.

### **Secure emergency financial assistance**

The Red Cross collaborates with the military aid societies in providing financial assistance when an urgent personal or family crisis arises, that is, when your service member might need financial assistance for emergency travel, burial of a loved one, or urgent health and welfare needs such as food and shelter.