



USSOCOM Family Readiness Group Return and Reunion Resources



The following information is provided to assist USSOCOM spouses and the immediate family members of single soldiers in understanding and solving various issues that you may face following a deployment. After a deployment, things may not go back to normal right away and everyone usually needs time to adjust. So that you are better prepared and know what to expect, we strongly encourage you to carefully explore the sites and information provided in this handout.

If you have further question and/or concerns, please feel free to contact the Family Readiness Group Coordinator at 813-826-FRGC (3742).

I. National / Department of Defense Resources:

Military OneSource

1. Register required at www.militaryonesource.com

2. "Deployment" section

a. After Deployment

A mental wellness resource for Service Members, Veterans, and Military Families. If you've deployed, or know someone who has, you know that spending time in a war zone means being changed in some way. Some of these changes are good. But some of these changes may be causing problems for you or for someone you know.

3. "Returning From Deployment"

a. Articles, such as

Getting the Help You Need to Recover Your Emotional Health

Returning Home as a New Father

b. Booklets & Recordings, such as

Coming Home

Guide for Helping Children and Youth Cope with Separation

These Boots: A spouse's guide to stepping up and standing tall during deployment

c. Paperback Books, such as

Courage After Fire: Coping Strategies for Troops Returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and Their Families

Life After Deployment: Military Families Share Reunion Stories and Advice

d. Quick Tips, such as

Quick Tips for Service Members Coming Home

Quick Tips for Spouses of Service Members Coming Home

e. Resource Guides, such as

Babies, Toddlers and Coping with Military Deployment

Resources for Military Spouses

f. Web Links, such as

4-H Military

America Supports You

g. Worksheets & Checklists, such as

Becoming a Couple Again Reintegration Fact Sheet for Military Couples
Getting to Know Your Children Again

4. Visit “Relationships”
 - a. Articles, such as
Couples
Family Relationships
5. Check out online resources, such as
Podcasts and Webinars
Discussion Boards

Videos

1. Coping Support Video
http://a836.g.akamai.net/7/836/12038/v001/doditc.download.akamai.com/12038/MHF/sesame/Coping_Support.wmv
2. Homecoming Video
http://a836.g.akamai.net/7/836/12038/v001/doditc.download.akamai.com/12038/MHF/sesame/Homecoming_Connections.wmv
3. Stay Connected Video
<http://a836.g.akamai.net/7/836/12038/v001/doditc.download.akamai.com/12038/MHF/sesame/TLCParentEnglish.wmv>
4. Talk Listen Connect for Kids
<http://a836.g.akamai.net/7/836/12038/v001/doditc.download.akamai.com/12038/MHF/sesame/TalkListenConnectEnglish.wmv>

Military Home Front

1. www.militaryhomefront.com
2. Homefront Parent Reunion Checklists
3. Questions and Answers about Reunion
4. Return and Reunion

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

1. www.ncptsd.org

After Deployment

1. Registration required at www.afterdeployment.org. You may register anonymously - name, email address, or any other personally-identifying information is not required.
2. Getting Help
3. Check How You’re Doing
4. Staying Healthy Where You Live
5. Stories from Home and Far Away
6. Links, Books, Blogs, and PODS.

American Academy of Pediatrics

1. <http://www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment/videos.html>
2. Military Youth Coping with Separation: When Family Members Deploy (online video)
3. Mr. Poe and Friends Discuss Reunion After Deployment (online video)
4. The Interactive Military Youth Stress Management Plan

American Red Cross

1. www.redcross.org
2. Deployment tips
<http://www.redcross.org/portal/site/en/menuitem.d8aaecf214c576bf971e4cfe43181aa0/?vgnextoid=b269af3fbac3b110VgnVCM10000089f0870aRCRD&vgnextfmt=default>
3. Services to Armed Forces 24 hrs a day
1-877-272-7337 (use if spouse is deployed and you reside on MacDill AFB or local area)
1-877-741-1444 (use if spouse is deployed and you have traveled outside of the local area)

II. Service-Specific Resources

- Air Force** www.afcrossroads.com
- Army** www.armyfrg.org
Deployment Guide <http://www.hooah4health.com/deployment/Familymatters/reunion.htm>
What To Expect
https://www.arfp.org/skins/ARFP/display.aspx?mode=user&ModuleId=8cde2e88-3052-448c-893d-d0b4b14b31c4&action=display_page&ObjectID=e2b7c16c-7397-4166-983f-8f468cb01e3d
- Marine Corps** www.usmc-mccs.org
- Navy** www.lifelines.navy.mil

Deployment Link - Force Health Protection & Readiness

1. www.deploymentlink.osd.mil
2. Service-specific resources <http://deploymentlink.osd.mil/deploymentTips.jsp>

III. MacDill AFB Resources

- Airman and Family Readiness Center
Bldg 265, 2306 Florida Keys Ave, MacDill AFB
813-828-0133
- Family Resource Center – Brandon
710 Oakfield St, Suite 153, Brandon
813-655-9281

IV. USSOCOM Resources

- Care Coalition
Bldg 153, USSOCOM Compound, MacDill AFB
813-826-3099
- Chaplain
Bldg 501, USSOCOM Compound, MacDill AFB
813-826-5080
- Family Readiness Group Coordinator
Bldg 153, USSOCOM Compound, MacDill AFB
813-826-3742
- Headquarters Commandant
Bldg 153, USSOCOM Compound, MacDill AFB
813-826-3722

Medical Clinic

Bldg 711, 6th Medical Group, 8415 Bayshore Blvd, MacDill AFB
813-827-9870

USSOCOM Military Family Life Consultant

813-826-6037 (during duty hours)

813-470-0421 (after duty hours)

V. Things to Think About

The Emotional Phases of Deployment

1. During deployments, many feel that the hardest thing to deal with is being separated from the family. Likewise, this is probably the most difficult aspect for the spouse and family!

Deployments can produce a variety of feelings but most couples experience a predictable cycle of emotions. Different feelings and reactions may occur in each cycle. Listed below are some of the more common emotions.

2. **Pre-Deployment Phase** (6-8 weeks prior to deployment): Feelings in this stage may include fear, anger, denial, resentment, excitement, and guilt. Common thoughts include "What will I do without him/her?" "I can't believe he/she is actually leaving me!" "How in the world will I cope with the kids?" Reactions during this phase may vary between "honeymoon" like behavior to severe arguments.

3. **Deployment Phase** (during the deployment): Feelings in this stage may include relief, anxiety, enthusiasm, pride, and sense of abandonment. Thoughts associated with these feelings include "Now I can get on with my life!" "He left me...he actually left me!" "What if something happens that I can't handle?" and "I'm handling things so much better than I thought I would!". Reactions during this phase may include a change in schedule (eating and sleeping habits), intense busyness, establishing routine, and being independent.

4. **Reunion Phase** (1-6 weeks prior to reunion): Feelings in this stage may include anxiety, excitement, guilt, fear, and elation. Thoughts associated with this phase may include "Oh no, I didn't accomplish everything I needed to!" "Hey, I'm managing just fine without him/her!" "I can't wait to see him/her!" or "I wonder if he/she still loves me". All of these feelings and thoughts are normal. Reactions during this phase may include home improvement (cleaning, decorating, etc.) and increased focus on personal appearance (new hairstyle, shopping for a new outfit or lingerie, etc.).

5. **Post-Deployment Phase** (1-6 weeks post reunion): Feelings in this stage may include euphoria, resentment, and role confusion. Although this is an exciting and happy time for most couples, it is often the most difficult period they face. The service member may feel displaced and no longer needed in the day-to-day functioning of the family. The spouse may feel resentful when the service member attempts to take charge of an activity (finances, discipline, parenting). While they are reestablishing intimacy, they are also renegotiating their relationship and redefining roles.

6. Each of you will react to separation differently. Intensity of feelings varies, and normal ups and downs will occur regularly during separation. If you are having problems coping with the separation or feel overwhelmed, there are both civilian and military resources than can be of assistance to you.

Marital and Family Adjustment Following Deployment

(Provided by National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – Pacific Island Division 2006)

1. Combat Stress

- Normal reaction to abnormal level of stress
- Signs of problematic combat stress reaction – sleep difficulties, isolation, anxiety, substance abuse, anger

2. Role of the spouse

- Support your service member in “coming home” and readjusting
- Support yourself in staying emotionally well
- Support your children in readjusting

3. APA Task Force on Resilience, 2002

- Helpful Hints

Maintain a normal schedule

Create balance

Pay attention to good self-care

Do not numb-out with excesses – eating, shopping, alcohol

Minimize exposure to traumatic stimuli –TV news, violent movies

Engage in leisure activities

Know your own red flags

Accept that change is inevitable

Nurture a positive self-view

Don't blow things out of proportion

Use past coping success/strengths

Recharge your batteries – spend quiet time daily

Don't make big decisions under stress