

A Parent's Guide to Surviving Deployment

Because you want
to know



The emotional roller coaster of your Marine's deployment is more than tough—it can seem almost impossible. You experience pride, fear, pride, anxiety, pride, worry and more pride. The uncertainty of what is to come brings emotions and feelings that none of us thought would be part of our lives. But we have them, and so do thousands of other parents.

The Parent's Guide to Surviving Deployment is a resource for any questions you may have about deployment. Of course if your FRO is always there to help if you need further assistance. The goal of the Family Readiness Officer is to provide you with information and tools so you can empower yourself to understand what will happen before, during and after your Marine's deployment.

When I'm having a rough day, especially during a deployment, my momma would agree a phone call to a friend and some home cooked food can fix anything. Here's both for easy reference:

You Family Readiness Officer:	Gisela Lemon
Work Number:	760-830-9363
Mobile Number	760-995-6623
Email Address:	gisela.lemon@usmc.mil
Website	www.3maw.usmc.mil/macg38/vmu3

Momma's Homemade Mac 'n Cheese

- 1 1/2 cups uncooked elbow macaroni**
- 2 tablespoons butter**
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- 1/4 cup milk**
- 1 cup half-and-half (you can substitute milk)**
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika (optional)**
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper**
- 2 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided**
- salt**

Preheat oven to 350°. Cook macaroni in boiling salted water according to package directions; drain well and set aside. Meanwhile, melt butter in a medium saucepan over low heat. Blend in flour, stirring constantly, until smooth and bubbly. Gradually stir in milk and half-and-half. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture boils and thickens, about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and add paprika, pepper, and 2 cups of the cheese; stir until cheese is melted and sauce is smooth. Combine sauce with the macaroni and add salt to taste. Place in a buttered 1 1/2-quart casserole dish. garnish top with remaining 1/2 cup of cheese and dot with additional butter. Bake 25 to 30 minutes. Serves 4 to 6.

Prepping yourself for your Marine's deployment

Deployment may seem overwhelming at times and there is a lot to learn, but by reading and learning, you'll be empowered with knowledge and thereby be better prepared to support your Marine during the deployment, and just as important, be better prepared take care of yourself.

Most often the number one question I get from parents is...



Should you attend the send-off?

In most instances, the Marine Corps does not have a planned send-off "gathering" for family members other than spouses prior to departure. If your Marine is asking you to attend the sendoff, I would suggest you make every effort to be there for the sendoff. However, be aware that many Marines, especially single Marines, choose not to invite their family to attend the sendoff. The reasons are varied, but include not knowing the exact date and/or time of departure, and primarily, being extraordinarily busy with preparations for deployment. Most family members that attend the sendoff are spouses and children that are stationed near the point of departure. If you have your heart and mind set on seeing your Marine prior to deployment and your Marine has agreed, by all means attend. However, if it's not feasible to attend the sendoff, consider a weekend visit with your Marine several weeks prior to the actual departure date.



Financial Matters

As the parent of a Marine, you may be asked by your Marine to take on the responsibility of your Marine's affairs and finances during the deployment. However, know that the USMC has systems in place for your Marine to make those arrangements using a variety of tools available to them. The choice for handling your single Marine's affairs are best left to your Marine. If you are asked to handle his/her affairs during deployment, follow your Marine's lead. He/she may provide you with the following documents to assist in handling his/her affairs:

- Special Power of Attorney, generally valid for one year from date of issue. If your Marine signed a power of attorney, you will receive the original. It is difficult to complete this document in country, therefore plan ahead.
- Copy of Deployment Orders
- Signature Authority for checking and savings accounts

Servicemembers Civil Relief Act

The very nature of military service often compromises the ability of service members to fulfill their financial obligations and to assert many of their legal rights. Congress and the state legislatures have long recognized the need for protective legislation. On 19 December 2003, President Bush signed into law the "Servicemembers Civil Relief Act" (SCRA). This law is a complete revision of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act (SSCRA).

The SCRA provides a number of significant protections to servicemembers. These include: termination of residential leases; automobile leases; evictions from leased housing; installment contracts; reducing interest to 6% on pre-service loans and obligations; staying of court proceedings; and enforcement of obligations, liabilities, taxes. For more information please see <http://usmilitary.about.com/od/sscra/l/blscramenu.htm>

In many instances, companies will ask for a copy of the military orders before allowing a military suspension on accounts and services. Your Marine should be able to provide this. NOTE: Car loans, home loans, credit card bills (new or existing), or any other personal loan or consumer credit contract are generally NOT eligible for Military Suspension during combat deployments. Contrary to popular belief, the SCRA does NOT suspend payments, but rather it may help reduce the interest rate during the deployment.

However, there are many services your Marine may have used while stateside that may be eligible for a "Military Suspension". It would be best for your Marine to suspend these services prior to deployment. However, that may not be possible if the deployment was unexpected or happened so quickly that your Marine did not have time to suspend these services.

Some examples of services that may be eligible for Military Suspension include:

Cell Phone Service

All cell phone companies should offer a military suspension for cell phone service regardless of the contract. Keep in mind, the contract will still be in place, and the Marine will have to re-open the account when he/she returns stateside. Upon return, the contract picks up where it was suspended. For instance, if you Marine was in a 24-month contract, had used 6 months of service prior to deployment, the contract will have an additional 18 months that will be re-instated upon return. If the account is suspended for 8 months, the balance on the contract will still be 18 months rather than 10 months. In some instances, it may be more cost efficient to cancel or buy-out the contract if it's near expiration and the Marine does not want to keep the same cell phone number. Check with the cell phone provider for the most cost-effective solution for your Marine.

Vehicle Insurance

If your Marine's vehicle is permanently stored during deployment, and all base locations offer free permanent storage of one personal vehicle, you may be able to reduce the insurance on the vehicle. Consider carrying comprehensive coverage only which could add up to hundreds of dollars in savings. If your Marine has a lien against the vehicle (making monthly payments), you'll need to check with the lien holder or financial institution prior to reducing insurance coverage.

Lease for Primary Residence

If your Marine lived in a home or apartment with a lease contract, he/she should notify the landlord as soon as possible about the deployment. If your Marine signed the lease, unless you have a "Durable Power of Attorney", you may not be successful in cancelling the lease.

Utilities (Gas and Electric Service)

At the same time the landlord is notified, utility services should be suspended as well.

Phone Service

If your Marine is concerned about keeping the same telephone number when he/she returns, check with the telephone company about a "vacation rate" rather than disconnecting the service



The Pre-Deployment Checklist, Short Version

If you Marine decides to entrust you with his personal matters

Legal Stuff/ Squadron paperwork

- o Power of Attorney & Wills
- o Copies of deployment orders
- o RED (Record of Emergency Data) updated
- o CACO (Casualty Affairs Calls Officer) paperwork
- o Go over location of all important documents

Financial Stuff

- o How to access his/her LES online
- o Insurance (SGLI & separate policies) updated
- o Set up online banking, if available, with auto bill-pay
- o Make plans for the extra pay that will come in

Communication Plan

- o Discuss how often you'll email/ write letters/ try to call
- o Make expectations clear on both sides
- o Brainstorm other means of communication: home videos, care packages, video conferencing, etc.
- o Plan ahead for special occasions your Marine will miss (buy cards, wrap gifts, order flowers, etc.)

Car Stuff

- o Discuss plans for their vehicle
- o Plan for registration & insurance expirations
- o Discuss plans vehicle maintenance

Post on your fridge:

- o Support System Plans (a list of important phone numbers, including your Family Readiness Contact, close friends & family members, etc.)



Your Marine's Arrival "In Country"

When your Marine arrives "in country", most generally they'll hit the ground running and have a million things to do to get organized in the new location. It may be 2 weeks or more before you hear from your Marine. But, you may be lucky enough to get a phone call in the first few days as well.

Several locations will have communication centers available to the Marines, but most generally there are very long lines to use the phone. The communication centers may also include computers with internet, instant messaging, email and possibly web cams. Your Marine will have hot chow while in Kuwait and may even have access to a few limited-menu restaurants that serve all-American favorites such as fried chicken, hamburgers, and sub sandwiches.

Before being deployed, your Marine was most likely required to have a minimum amount of toiletries, supplies and clothing to bring in his/her C-bag. While in Kuwait, your Marine will likely have access to an AAFES, or military store, where items such as snacks, socks, toothpaste, boots, and uniforms and even calling cards may be purchased. Care packages will become more of a necessity after about a month of deployment.

During your Marine's deployment, support from home comes from healthy family members. Your mental health, safety and well-being is as important as your Marine's mental health, safety and well-being. Remember to take care of YOU during deployment.

Communication with your Marine

With the technology available today, both at home and in the field, your Marine has many more options for communicating with family and friends back home.



Phone Calls

Morale Calls, Call Centers, again these may have long lines. Often a calling card is necessary. Which type(s) of calling cards will your Marine need to call home?

AT&T Global Calling Card

AT&T Global calling cards can only be purchased through the military AAFES exchanges. The cost per minute is about 39 cents. These are regular land line phones at the AT&T call centers. These calling cards will work at most other overseas locations for all military personnel.

Segovia (SPAWAR) Calling Cards

Segovia or SPAWAR calling cards use VOIP or "Voice Over IP" line which is essentially a computer connection. These can only be purchased by setting up an account with SPAWAR online. You can setup the account for your Marine. The cost per minute is about 4 cents.

We recommend purchasing one of each type of calling card or Iraq, Afghanistan and/or Kuwait deployed Marines. Charge it with the minimum requirement until you are sure which type of card your Marine will be using. Send the access number, instructions, and the PIN number from each card to your Marine through regular U.S. mail, MotoMai, and/or via email (if your Marine has access to email). Your Marine can re-charge both types of phone cards or by keeping the information for each of the cards, you can recharge the card for your Marine.

Recharging Calling Cards

If your Marine has a rechargeable calling card, ask for the toll free service number, account number, and PIN to call and recharge the card for him/her. Most calling cards have this information on the back of the card.

If you're having a hard time finding the right phone card to send, but want to help your Marine with the costs, volunteer to buy more minutes to re-charge his/her calling card.

When you buy a 500 minute calling card in the United States, and use it overseas, the rates will be higher overseas calling internationally, so you won't get nearly as many minutes. Don't expect 500 minutes from the calling card when calling international. Also note that rates vary from card to card, brand to brand, carrier to carrier.

Free Calling Cards

Operation Uplink offers free calling cards to Marines deployed overseas. Visit them online and apply for a calling card at this address: www.operationuplink.org.



MotoMail.us

The quickest way to get communications overseas to combat zones.

MotoMail is a free way to communicate with your Marine via electronically delivered letters in as little as 24 hours! Setup an account at www.MotoMail.us. Enter your Marines information and mailing address from the drop-down list. Type out a letter using click send, and your letter is on its way and ready to print and be sent on the next postal truck to your Marine's camp. The letter is printed in a sealed format, much like you receive a PIN number through US Mail for your credit or debit card. No one else reads the content of the letter; it's between you and your Marine!

Love in a Box



Can you believe a ton of internet businesses hock pre-made care packages for your Marine? I guess McLovin' is better than no lovin', but chances are your Marine would much prefer something from home.

Learn about any guidelines for military mail. You'll find rules, restrictions, and other helpful mailing information at <http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops/maillingrestrictions.htm>

Get free mailing materials from the Postal Service. Call 1-800-610-8734 (Packing Supply) and



- Choose your language (1 is English, 2 is Spanish).
- Choose option 1 (it states it is for Express Mail service, Priority Mail or Global Express Guaranteed)
- When you reach a live agent, request CAREKIT04.
- Please allow 7-10 days for delivery.
- Note: These are free supplies, postage must be affixed.

Smaller, more frequent packages ship better and faster than one ginormous box. The flat rate Priority Mail boxes rock.

Take advantage of click n' ship labels from the USPS. Especially for the rockin' flat rate boxes, it's so easy to go online and print pre-paid labels and customs forms. Just leave a note in your mailbox asking your postman to swing by your door for a pick-up.
<https://sss-web.usps.com/cns/landing.do>

DO NOT use packing peanuts or other Mailboxes, Etc. kaka to stuff your box. If you need to fill extra space, use little packs of tissues, Ziploc bags filled with wipes, rolls of socks or even newspaper instead.

If you want to send home-baked stuff, the Nestle website has great suggestions, recipes and guidelines. Keep mailing times in mind!
<http://www.verybestbaking.com/promotions/programs/troops.aspx>

The most important part of a care package is the NOTE. So sayeth my Marine, because I often forget that part when I'm taping up the box.

ASK your Marine what (s)he needs, instead of sending random beef jerky. Although cute gag gifts may make them laugh, they have NO place to store ANYTHING in their quarters.

If you want to send kids' artwork, try a scanner or digital camera. Use the digital file to make smaller printouts, photos, notecards, or even magnets.

Don't be too specific on the customs forms. "Gift" is probably better than "Apple iPod Nano."

Overseas Addresses

It is important to communicate with your Marine or Sailor prior to their departure. The address that your Marine gave you prior to departure should be used during the duration of the deployment. Most overseas mailing address for the Marine Corps include a UIC (Unit Identification Code). That code tells the military postal facility where your Marine is located during the deployment. If you are unsure how to address mail to your Marine, you can call the FRO (Family Readiness Officer) for your Marine's unit. This is where it's important to know what unit your Marine is with. Every deployed unit has an FRO, or Family Readiness Officer, assigned to remain at the base location the unit deployed from. The FRO will be able to assist you in verifying your deployed Marine's mailing address. It is imperative that you address your Marine's mail and packages correctly.

EXAMPLE

RANK, LAST, FIRST, INITIAL
Squadron Name & Company
UNIT Number
FPO AP #####-####

If you need ideas for care packages, try these items suggested by seasoned spouses:

- Reading material
- A CD of MP3s/ iTunes your Marine can put on their digital player
- Kool-aid mix or crystal light (esp. the individual packets for water bottles)
- Snacks that don't get melty and gross, like popcorn
- Dryer sheets to tuck into their lockers
- Bag balls, sneaker balls or other deodorizing products
- Personal products, like razors, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.
- Hand sanitizer gel (encourage your Marine to use it in the ship's gym!)
- Writing materials & pre-stamped envelopes
- Photos, photos, photos

www.MotoMail.com



- Address Book
- Letter Status Report
- Support the Troops – not to a specific Marine
- Chat Board – family members to communicate
- Customer Feedback about MotoMail service
- News & Media – Handouts, Posters & News
- Customer Care Inquiries
- –Suggestions, Problems, & Help via email or toll free number
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)
- Tell-A-Friend – Spread the news
- Photo Mail – photos inside of the MotoMail letter

Mail & Care Packages

Classes of Mail

FIRST CLASS (13 oz or less)

Averaging about 7-10 days for delivery

OEF 7-10 days to Camp Leatherneck + 7-10 days to FOBs

PRIORITY (Over 13 oz. up to 70 lbs.)

Recommended for packages.

Average about 7-10 days delivery.

OEF 7-10 days to Camp Leatherneck + 7-10 days to FOBs

LARGE FPO/APO FLAT RATE BOX (\$11.95 regardless of weight)

FLAT RATE BOX (\$10.35 regardless of weight)

FLAT RATE ENVELOPE (\$4.95 regardless of weight)

PARCEL POST (up to 70 lbs.)

Slowest/Cheapest way to send packages.

Average about 8-14 days delivery.

MOTO MAIL (Email to Hard-copy letter)

NON-POSTAL (USPS) carriers (i.e., FEDEX, UPS, DHL) are not handled by Military Postal Clerks.

Tips for Proper Packaging



Recommend **NYLON FILAMENT FIBER TAPE OR MAILING TAPE.**

Masking and scotch tape are **NOT AUTHORIZED.**

Place **LIQUID** items such as salsa, lotion and beverages in separate zip lock bags.

Always use the **SMALLEST** box possible.

Always use **DURABLE** boxes.

Use **BUBBLE WRAP/STYROFOAM POPCORN** when sending breakable items.

Package items **TIGHTLY** to avoid shifting.

Never send **BULKY** items in an envelope (i.e., Keys, Dog Tags, Rings, and Cassette Tapes).

Include the **RETURN** and **ADDRESSEES ADDRESS** inside the parcel.

Place the address on only one side of the article being mailed.

Use **INSURANCE** on packages that contain valuable items going to and from the U.S. and deployment site.

Customs Regulations

All mail weighing **OVER 16 OUNCES** must be presented to a post office for mailing.

All parcels being sent **FROM, TO or BETWEEN** an APO/FPO must bear a customs form.

To assist customs and prevent damage to your package, include **Lock Combination or Keys** when mailing sea-bags, or foot lockers.

Custom forms must be filled out in **DETAIL.**

Mailing Restrictions

OBSCENE MATERIAL (pictures, magazines, nude or semi-nude).

PORK and **PORK BY-PRODUCTS**.

LARGE QUANTITIES of material contrary to the **Islamic** belief. Quantities for personal use are permissible.

No Alcohol.

For **additional restriction**, contact your local military post office.

EXPRESS MAIL not authorized.

If accidentally accepted at post office, request refund for overpayment.

FREE Postal Mailing Supplies

www.usps.com 1-800-610-8734

Mailed to your home (ask for military package)

- 6 Priority Boxes
- 6 Mailing Labels
- 6 US Customs Forms
- 1 Roll of tape



Free Mail

FROM an overseas combat location **TO** the United States **ONLY**.

Postcards, Letters and Recorded Communications (whether sound or video) with the character of personal correspondence.

Must have a **FROM** and a **TO** address.

"FREE" written in the top right corner.



The Internet

Email, instant messaging, webcams, personal blogs, chat rooms

Internet and access to email and other online communication varies widely, even from camp to camp in the same country. If your Marine has access to the Internet, they'll let you know.

Services such as Yahoo! Messenger, MSN Instant Messenger, AOL IM and Skype may be available to your Marine depending on which location s/he is. We suggest asking your Marine which service they use, setting up an account, and letting your Marine know your user name. For additional information about IM services, please visit each website for those services.

As in all online communications, please observe personal safety measures and Operations Security (OpSEC) standards when using online communities such as message boards and chat rooms.

When you say when or where they are going... They may not get there.

What is OPSEC?

OPSEC or Operational Security is keeping potential adversaries from discovering critical Department Of Defense information. As the name suggests, it protects US operations - planned, in progress and those completed. Success depends on secrecy and surprise, so the military can accomplish the mission more quickly and with less risk. Enemies of freedom want this information, and they are not just after the military member to get it. They want you, the family member.

Examples of Critical Information

The following examples may help you in defining parameters for your communications. It is important to remember that there are many more examples than those listed below:

1. Do not post exact deployment dates or redeployment dates
2. Do not reveal camp locations, including nearby cities. After the deployment is officially announced by Military officials, you may discuss locations that have been released, normally on the Country level.
3. Do not discuss convoy routes ("They travelled through Takrit on our way to X")
4. Detailed information on the mission, capabilities or morale of a unit
5. Specific names or actual nicknames
6. Personnel transactions that occur in large numbers (Example: pay information, powers of attorney, wills, etc)
7. Details concerning security procedures, response times, tactics
8. Don't discuss equipment or lack thereof, to include training equipment
9. Don't speculate about future operations
10. If posting pictures, don't post anything that could be misconstrued or used for propaganda purposes. A good rule of thumb is to look at your picture without your caption or explanation and consider if it could be re-captioned to reflect poorly on coalition forces. For example, your image might show your Marine rescuing a child from a blast site, but could be re-captioned to insinuate that the child being captured or harmed. (it's happened!)
11. Avoid the use of count-up or count-down tickers for the same reason as rule #1
12. Be very careful if posting pictures of your loved one. Avoid images that show significant landmarks near their base of operations, and black out last names and unit affiliations
13. Do not, ever, post information about casualties (coalition or enemy).
14. Do not pass on rumors ("I heard they're coming home early", etc)

If you have any questions, contact your FRO.



American Red Cross

P.O. Box 6043
Building 1551, Village Center
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278
plmsarc001.fct@usmc.mil
760-830-6685 or 877-272-7337

The Red Cross is a 24-hour, 365-day world wide emergency communications network.

Red Cross messages include notices of birth, death in the family, or serious illness.

The Red Cross **NEVER** recommends or requests leave but will convey the family or physician's request to the responsible authority. **Only the Command has authority to grant leave for emergencies with-in the immediate family.**

Who is immediate family?

Spouse, children, parents, loco parentis (verifiable by SRB), and siblings.

A Red Cross message is for informational purposes and does not guarantee an approval for emergency leave.

How to start a message:

Call 877-272-7337

Service Member's Full Name

Rank

Social Security Number

Unit Address

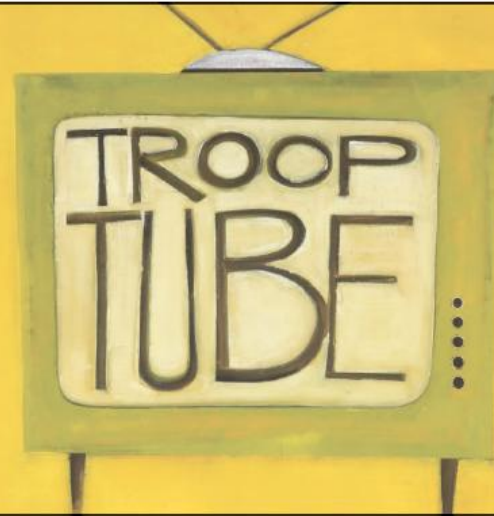
Name of person involved in the event (birth, death, illness)

POC that can provide verification (doctor, hospital, funeral home)

TUBE BE, OR NOT TO BE.

TroopTube for Youth

TroopTube is an online video site designed to help military families connect and keep in touch while miles apart. The site is designed for easy use, so military families can quickly upload videos and share the simple joys of each day with each other on MilitaryOneSource.com/trooptube. This website is intended for sharing and distribution of user generated video content operated by Military OneSource.



A new Youth component has been added to TroopTube. Youth development professionals and youth are invited to post their videos. These videos can be youth generated or generated by professionals working with youth. Youth are encouraged to upload videos to share their activities with deployed parents or family members. Professionals are encouraged to use this site to upload videos about new programs, summer camps, and activities in youth programs serving military families. TroopTube video production could also be included as a project within youth programs. Previously recorded videos are acceptable, as long as they are still current.



Serving Active Duty, Guard, Reserve and Their Families.

UPLOADING VIDEOS:

- 1) Create an account at MilitaryOneSource.com/trooptube.
- 2) Once logged in, look for the youth category and you may begin uploading videos. Click on the **"UPLOAD"** button.
- 3) Fill in the requested information and click on the **"SELECT VIDEO"** button. This will open a dialogue box prompting you to select the video file on your computer. TroopTube accepts almost all types of files under 20mb.
- 4) Once your video is selected click the **"SUBMIT"** button and wait till the upload is complete.
- 5) Once your file has been uploaded successfully it will go live within **24-48 hours**. Videos will be reviewed based on guidelines for national security and appropriate content. Your profile lists all the videos you've uploaded.

1-800-342-9647 | MilitaryOneSource.com



Homecomings!!

You've waited so long for this! It is natural to be anxious and impatient but please remember the FRO really does have the most up-to-date return information. Often the Mass Communication Tool is used to distribute return times and dates.

What is the Mass Communication Tool?

- MCT is a web-based tool that will allow VMU-3 to communicate official command information to a large number of contacts simultaneously.
- These messages are electronic and they will come in the form of emails, pre-recorded voice messages or text messages.
- Avoids the delays and inaccuracies caused by using a volunteer phone tree.

What are official command communications?

- Information on family briefs such as Pre-Deployment or Return and Reunion briefs
- Return of unit notices including dates, times and locations
- Family day information
- Requests for volunteers

MCT will NOT be used for

- Sales at the Exchange
- Movie theater and bowling information
- Special base event flyers

NO CLASSIFIED OR CASUALTY WILL BE PASSED VIA THIS TOOL

Who will be notified through the MCT?

- Every Marine has the option to add up to four individual contacts.
- Distribution of official command communications to spouses is automatic.
- All other contacts must have written authorization from the squadron member.
- Contacts must be at least 18 years of age.

Is the MCT secure?

- The data collected will be stored securely within the Mass Communication Tool in accordance with Marine Corps regulations.
- The information will not be shared with any outside sources and only used for notifications associated to your Command. In addition, return time and date information can be PIN protected. The default PIN is the last 4 of the squadron member's SSN.

WELCOME HOME!

Plan to wait ... and wait, and wait some more. Families are advised to arrive well before the unit, so that nobody misses the moment. Thankfully, MCCS and other volunteer groups usually have snacks & a jump house to keep the kids occupied.

Don't geek out, but wear comfortable shoes & bring some sunscreen. If you're waiting outside during the day, you'll be standing a long time in the SoCal sun. Crispy is so not very pretty.

Yes, they all look alike in their uniforms. Usually, the families wait behind a rope that dramatically drops and a surge of screaming people press toward the people in tan. Sometimes it takes a while to find your Marine, so don't freak out if you don't find each other right away.

Bring along a friend, if you can, to take pictures of "The Moment." One homecoming, one of the gals whose hubby came home early with the advance party snapped all kinds of reunion moment photos. The pictures of families' kisses and tears were priceless.

Expect to wait, and wait and wait some more after The Reunion. Typically, it's about two hours from the time the Marines arrive until they can actually leave with their families (longer if it's a big homecoming.) Weapons have to be returned, blood has to be drawn, paperwork has to be completed, sometimes some speeches have to be made ... just be patient, and know your Marine is just as ready as you are to get home.

Reunion is part of the deployment cycle and is filled with joy and stress. Often Marines still have some duties that have to be taken care of before they are able to go on leave. Please be patient during this time. The following tips can help you have the best possible reunion.



- Be prepared to make some adjustments.
- Take time to listen if your loved one wants to talk.
- Go easy on partying.
- Avoid scheduling too many things.
- Go slowly in making adjustments.
- You and your Marine may need time for yourself.
- Remind your Marine he or she is still needed in the family.



Notes: