

**Your Best Body**  
Change Your Body & Your Life

10 Tips for Avoiding  
Post-Holiday Debt

**Taking the Reins**  
Grandparents Becoming Guardians

November/December 2010  
Volume 2 • Issue 4

National Guard Soldier & Family

# FOUNDATIONS

**10**  
**DELICIOUS  
HOLIDAY  
RECIPES**  
Family Favorites  
You Need to Try

A NOTE FROM  
Major General  
Stephen L. Danner,  
Adjutant General, Missouri  
National Guard

**Stay  
in Touch**  
FAMILY COMMUNICATION  
IS KEY TO HEALTHY  
HOMECOMING





# ATTN: ARMY KIDS\*

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science project

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National Guard Soldier & Family  
**FOUNDATIONS**

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## Stay in Touch

Family communication is key to healthy homecoming

“What a lot of people don't realize is that even though I was deployed, so was my Family.”

—SPC Kristofer James Gill





# COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER FITNESS

STRONG MINDS ★ STRONG BODIES

Physical

Emotional

Social

Spiritual

Family

# FAMILY



Being part of a family unit that is **safe, supportive** and **loving**, and provides the **resources** needed for all members to live in a healthy and secure environment.

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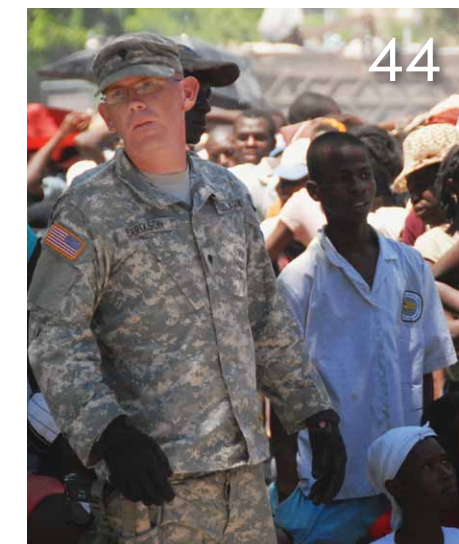
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## Happy Holidays

**M**erry Christmas and a happy new year! Not to sound like a cliché, but this is a special time of the year. It's a time for family, friends, gifts and of course, an abundance of savory home-cooked foods. But for many deployed Guard Families, this time of year is extremely challenging. Being away from their loved one at this special time of year tests their resolve and resiliency. Just know that your Guard Family is here to support you and that there are many resources available to assist your Family.

Now, since this is a Christmas issue, I thought it would be fun to include recipes from members of the Guard Family, as well as information on how to deal with holiday stress. For those who have difficulty sticking to a budget, you'll find useful advice on how to avoid post-holiday debt. And for those who tend to gain a few extra pounds during the holidays, Holly's article features a new workout program to help you quickly shed those holiday pounds.

This issue's feature is on Families staying connected during and post-deployment. Four Guard Families detail how communication allowed them to stay resilient in the face of long separations and difficult reunions. Those of you experiencing the reintegration process will find their sentiments familiar and their candor refreshing. These Families not only discuss their challenges but also explain how the National Guard was there to help them.

For *Foundations* to continue to be a great resource for Guard Families, I'll need your suggestions and comments. Please contact me at [Editor@GuardFoundations.com](mailto:Editor@GuardFoundations.com).

Sincerely,

**Fred D. McGhee II**  
*Editor*



The Gill Family used Guard resources to prepare for their deployment.

PHOTO BY JOHNNY BIVERA

## National Guard Soldier & Family FOUNDATIONS

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To serve and support Army National Guard Soldiers and their Families by providing information and resources to improve their quality of life. To provide opportunities for all Soldiers and Families to benefit from the services available to them through the National Guard by presenting timely and relevant knowledge.

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## Dear Soldiers, Airmen, Families and Friends of the National Guard,

**F**or many of us, the holiday season is a time to reflect on the past year and prepare for the one coming. Looking back on 2010, operations in Iraq have been scaled down drastically, while the operational tempo in Afghanistan has increased dramatically. The calendar might change in a few weeks, but our mission will remain the same.

We know that we will be successful in our mission, though, because of the unwavering support of our Families. They're with us through the good times and the bad, supporting us whether we are in Jalalabad, Afghanistan or Jefferson City, MO.

It's not always easy to be the spouse or child of a Service Member. How many individuals reading this letter now have a Soldier or Airman in harm's way? And how many more have spent an earlier holiday season with a Family member overseas?

In Missouri, as in all of our states and territories, Family support is an area we are constantly improving. Like other states, one of the key ways we do this is through our Resiliency Program. In Missouri, we're looking to take a holistic approach to our Guard members' health. Whether it is after a deployment or just maintaining day-to-day mental, physical and spiritual fitness, the Missouri Guard knows that we owe it to our supporters to ensure we are giving our members the tools they need to live successful lives in and out of the Guard.

Gov. Jay Nixon, our commander in chief, has instituted a program called "Show Me Heroes." This program encourages employers to hire Veterans. This innovative program is the first of its kind, led by Missouri National Guard members working for the Missouri Division of Workforce Development. The program has pledged from nearly 1,000 Missouri employers to hire Veterans. In these tough economic times, helping to secure a livelihood for our Citizen-Soldiers is a crucial part of supporting our Families. I only hope that our brothers and sisters in other states are as fortunate as we are to have such support.

I hope that each of you has a wonderful holiday season. Thank you for your sacrifices and support.

Major General Stephen L. Danner,  
Adjutant General, Missouri National Guard





# 10 Delicious Holiday Recipes

Try these favorite recipes from members of your National Guard Family

The holiday season is a time for Family, friends, merriment and, of course, delicious food. With that in mind, *Foundations* thought it would be fun to feature some favorite recipes from the National Guard Family. The recipes shown were handed down through several generations, making them more than just recipes, but expressions of love. Give one of them a try, I'm sure you and your Family will love it. And who knows, you may find a new Family favorite to add to your holiday celebrations.

ISTOCK

## Mam Mam's Cardamom Braid Bread

BY TESSA SMITH

- 2-3 cups white flour (can substitute wheat)
- 1 pkg. active yeast
- ¾ tsp. ground cardamom
- ¾ cup milk
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup butter
- ½ tsp. salt
- Instant coffee and 1 tbsp. sugar (for topping)

**1** In large mixing bowl combine one cup flour, yeast and ground cardamom. Heat milk, sugar, butter and salt until warm, stirring constantly to melt butter. Add to dry mixture. Add egg. Beat at low speed for a half-minute, scraping bowl. Beat three minutes at high speed.

**2** By hand, add enough flour to make a soft dough. Turn into floured surface and knead until smooth. Place in greased bowl; turn once. Cover and let rise until double in bulk (about 1 hour and 15 minutes). Punch down. Divide into thirds and make three balls. Cover and let rest for 10 minutes.

### Recipe for an Army Wife

Combine above ingredients. Add two tablespoons elbow grease. Let sit alone for one year. Marinate frequently with salty tears. Pour off excess fat and sprinkle ever so lightly with money. Knead dough until payday. Season with a lot of international spices. Bake for 20 years or longer, until done. Serve with pride!

- 1 ½ cups patience
- 1 lb. adaptability
- ¾ cup tolerance
- 1 tsp. courage
- A dash of adventure



**3** Roll each ball into ropes 18-20 inches long. Braid ropes and form a loaf or a circle on a greased cookie sheet. Connect ends to make a continuous braid or tuck end of braids under the loaf. Cover and let rise until double (about 40 minutes). Brush with milk and sprinkle with one tablespoon sugar. Bake at 375° for 20-25 minutes. Remove from cookie sheet and cool.

**4** For topping, mix two tablespoons instant coffee mix with enough water to make a paste, add sugar to taste (we like one teaspoon). With a pastry brush, lightly brush on the top of the loaf. Cut and serve with fresh whipped cream, jam or butter. Best when hot.

This dish was made for every family occasion by my mother, Patricia (Pat) Neros—affectionately called Mam Mam by the grandchildren.

For all of our Christmas events, Easter, holidays, Family reunions and "just because," my mom would make a fresh loaf of bread to share. We all loved the coffee topping as kids, because getting to have "coffee" made us feel much older.

As the bread cooked in the oven, we prepared the table with fresh jam and butter. We couldn't wait to get it out of the oven and eaten. The look on my mother's face was one all mothers know—pure bliss. The Family was happy, smiling and enjoying something she made.





## Russian or Spice Tea

BY PEGGY CARWILE

- ½ cup instant tea
- 2 cups Tang
- 2 ½ cups sugar
- 2 pkgs. (small) lemonade mix
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 tsp. cloves

Mix all ingredients. Store in an airtight container. To make tea, add two heaping teaspoons per cup of hot water. Stir until dissolved.



## Strawberry Spinach Salad

BY KIM DRAPER

- 1 cup olive oil
- ¾ cup sugar
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. white pepper
- 1 pint strawberries, sliced
- 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- ½ cup walnuts
- 1 bag spinach

Combine the first six ingredients in a large jar, cover tightly and shake. Combine spinach, strawberries, cheese and walnuts. Toss with dressing right before serving.

**HINT** Add blueberries if available. Also, substitute red leaf or romaine lettuce for part of the spinach.



ISTOCK



## Donna's Spinach Dip

BY DONNA CAMPBELL

- 2 16-oz. loaves King's Hawaiian sweet bread
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 pkg. ranch style dip mix
- 1 pkg. frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained
- 1 can sliced water chestnuts, drained and chopped

Carefully hollow out loaf, leaving 1-inch sides and bottoms. Cube remaining bread. Blend mayo, sour cream and dip mix together in a large bowl. Add spinach and water chestnuts; mix well. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled. Transfer to bread bowl and serve with bread cubes.

## My Momma's Corn Bread Stuffing

BY AMIE TUGWELL AND PEGGY CARWILE

- ¼ cup chopped onions
- 2 tsp. chopped green peppers
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 2 cups corn bread crumbs
- ⅛ cup chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ¼ - ½ cup chicken stock
- corn bread

Cook onion and green pepper in butter until tender but not brown. Place corn bread and corn bread crumbs in a bowl and pour buttered onion and green peppers over them. Add parsley and seasoning. Moisten with water and toss lightly until all ingredients are mixed. My mom put this inside the turkey to cook. Don't pack into turkey too tightly.



## Pumpkin Bread

BY THE PAGANO FAMILY

- 1 ¼ cups sugar
- 1 cup Libby's Easy Pumpkin Pie Mix
- ⅓ cup oil
- 3 eggs
- 2 ⅓ cups Bisquick mix

Make sure you are using the pumpkin pie mix with all the spices. Combine sugar, canned pumpkin pie mix, oil and eggs in a mixing bowl. Add Bisquick mix and beat for one minute. Pour into a 9 ¼ x 5 ¼ x 3-inch loaf pan greased only at the bottom. Bake at 350° for 50-60 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean. Cool and remove from loaf pan.





## Caramel Pecan Cheesecake

BY DONNA CAMPBELL

- 18 squares graham crackers, finely crushed
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ⅓ cup margarine, melted
- 1 cup pecan halves
- 2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup prepared caramel topping

Mix graham cracker crumbs, granulated sugar and margarine: press on bottom and sides of 9-inch pie plate. Finely chop and toast ½ cup pecans, sprinkle evenly on the bottom of the pie crust and set aside. Blend cream cheese, brown sugar and vanilla with mixer until creamy. Blend in eggs until smooth: pour into prepared crust. Place remaining pecan halves in circle around edge. Bake at 325° for 40–45 minutes. Cool on wire rack. Chill at least four hours. Carefully drizzle caramel topping over cheesecake before serving.



## Pumpkin Roll

BY KELLY MOONEY

- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 cup sugar
- ⅔ cup canned pumpkin
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- 1 tsp. ginger
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 cup powdered sugar (plus more for sprinkling on top)
- 2 3-oz. blocks cream cheese
- 4 tbsp. butter
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease and line with parchment paper (grease again and flour) a 15 x 10 x 1 inch bar pan. In a separate bowl combine all dry ingredients and mix to combine. Beat eggs for five minutes; add sugar, stir in pumpkin and lemon juice and fold in dry ingredients. Pour into prepared pan and bake 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, sprinkle a clean, dry towel with powdered sugar. When cake is done, turn over towel and sprinkle with a little more powdered sugar and roll starting at small end. Place in freezer until filling is done.

**FILLING:** Beat one cup powdered sugar, cream cheese, butter and vanilla until smooth. Unroll cake and spread filling all over cake. Roll and wrap with foil. You can freeze or refrigerate until ready to serve.



ISTOCK

## Eggnog Pound Cake

BY MONICA TUGWELL

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup butter or margarine, softened
- 2 tbsp. rum or 2 tsp. rum extract
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 5 egg yolks
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ¾ cup milk

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour loaf pan, 9 x 5 x 3 inches. Beat sugar, butter, rum, vanilla and egg yolks in large bowl with electric mixer on low speed 30 seconds, scraping bowl constantly. Beat on high speed five minutes, scraping bowl occasionally. Beat in flour, baking powder, salt and nutmeg alternately with milk on low speed. Pour into pan. Bake 50–60 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes; remove from pan. Cool completely on wire rack.

Can be stored covered at room temperature up to two days.



## Sugar Cookie

BY MONICA TUGWELL

- 1 ½ cups butter, softened
- 2 cups white sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt

In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar until smooth. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Stir in the flour, baking powder and salt. Cover, and chill dough for at least one hour (or overnight). Preheat oven to 400°. Roll out dough on floured surface ¼ to ½ inch thick. Cut into shapes with any cookie cutter. Place cookies 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 6 to 8 minutes.

What do you think of these recipes?  
Contact [editor@guardfoundations.com](mailto:editor@guardfoundations.com)





# Supporting Our Troops

Red Cross provides support to deployed Guard members and Families

By MEGAN PACELLA, STAFF WRITER, Photos courtesy of the RED CROSS

Deployments can place a tremendous strain on Guard members and their Families—especially around the holiday season. Luckily, the Red Cross sponsors a number of programs and offers various types of assistance to help Soldiers and their Families cope. Through a network of 2,000 locations in the United States, the Red Cross serves 1.4 million Active Duty military members, 800,000 National Guard Soldiers, 24 million Veterans and 3 million military Families each year.

“Our goal for most programs is to reach out to military populations who aren’t on a base and aren’t receiving the support services that bigger military areas will receive,” says Russelle Bradbury of the Red Cross chapter in Nashville, TN.

## Holiday Mail for Heroes

This time of year, Red Cross spreads holiday cheer to

Soldiers through the Holiday Mail for Heroes program. The program is an effort to connect the military to the public by encouraging civilians to write holiday letters to Guard Soldiers. Volunteers sort the mail and take it to local military installments and Veterans groups to hand out letters.

“We’re trying to engage the public in remembering the Soldiers who are fighting and those who have fought, as well as the Veterans and their Families,” Bradbury says. “Also, we want to remind them that it’s the holiday season and we need to reach out. It’s a really great way to get people involved.”

## Coping with Deployment

Red Cross provides the support Families of deployed Guard Soldiers need to manage their changing life situation.

The Get to Know Us Before You Need Us session is offered at Red Cross chapters nationwide. The session introduces Service Members and their Families to the services and assistance offered by Red Cross.

Coping with Deployment courses teach strategies for keeping Families resilient, as well as psychological training for those facing deployment.

Health and safety courses, such as first aid, CPR, water safety, babysitting training and more are available for Guard members and their Families.

“We also provide emergency communication to connect Families to their deployed Family member if the need arises,” Bradbury says. “If something happens to an immediate Family member here, and they need to get a Soldier home, Red Cross is the official liaison. The deployed Soldier’s Family could call a caseworker who would verify that there is a true emergency, and then pass that message through official channels to the military service base.”

In addition to assisting Families in coping with deployment, Red Cross also offers some financial

assistance to Guard Families who want to host a pre-mobilization or post-mobilization event for their Soldier. If approved, the financial assistance would cover snacks and beverages to help give a Guard Soldier a fun send-off or a warm welcome home.

In the event of a tragedy, the Casualty Travel Assistance Program provides travel assistance for two immediate Family members to attend a funeral or memorial service for a Soldier killed in Active Duty, or to travel to the bedside of a Soldier wounded in combat.

To contact the Red Cross for assistance, call your local chapter and provide as much information about your deployed Family member as possible, including their full name, military address, Social Security number, branch of service and information about their deployed base unit.

## Veteran Programs

Every day, American Soldiers are wounded physically and psychologically while fighting battles that protect our nation’s freedom. Red Cross volunteers in Veteran hospitals around the world provide medical treatment, comfort and support for the Veterans who have served our country. Volunteers transport patients to and from treatment sessions; bring magazines, books and other comfort items to patients; provide companionship and personal service; and work at hospital information desks, laboratories and offices to keep Veteran hospitals running.

Different Red Cross chapters also participate in local efforts to reach out to Veteran groups in their community.

“This year, we’re sponsoring an event that helps homeless Veterans by providing comfort kits,” Bradbury says. “The kits will contain travel-sized toiletries. We’ll also attend the event to talk to Veterans about volunteering with the Red Cross and other Red Cross programs.”

Many Red Cross chapters organize programs at Veteran hospitals by holding awards ceremonies and speaker honorariums to honor Veterans.

Whether you’re a Guard Soldier or a Family member of a Soldier, assistance from Red Cross is only a phone call away.

“We have a part-time military armed services coordinator, and part of her job is reaching out to Family Readiness Groups to find Families we have missed,” Bradbury says. “It’s important for Guard members and Families to know that they can turn to Red Cross for support and encouragement in their time of need. That’s what we’re here for.”



## WHEN SEEKING ASSISTANCE

It is helpful to have the following information about the Service Member ready to give to the caseworker:

- Full name
- Rank/rating
- Branch of service (Army, National Guard, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard)
- Social Security number or date of birth
- Military address
- Information about the deployed unit and home base unit (for deployed Service Members only)



For more information about how Red Cross can help you, call your local chapter or visit [RedCross.org](http://RedCross.org).



# Proud to Be FRG

## Family Readiness Groups provide support and information

By HEATHER OLIVER

Three years ago, I found out that my husband was being activated with the Georgia Army National Guard for a year deployment in Afghanistan. I'll never forget that day and my initial feelings of shock and disbelief. I had not come from a military background, and this was uncharted territory for me.

I remember attending my first Family Readiness Group (FRG) meeting with my husband's light infantry unit out of Winder, GA, Headquarters and Headquarters Company 1/121st. There were only about eight spouses in the room, and no one wanted to take on the Chair position. The Company Commander advised us that if we didn't fill that position, we would not have a charter. I decided to volunteer for two reasons: one, to show support for my husband and approach our first deployment as a partnership; and two, to leverage my background in corporate communications for the benefit of the Soldiers and their Families.

### Reaching Out

Leading up to the deployment and throughout the deployment, I met many people whom I would never have otherwise. I established important contacts with organizations like Military OneSource, Operation Homefront, Patriot's Call and Operation Sandbox. I became acquainted with several Family members of Soldiers in my husband's unit and even made some battle buddies of my own.

I had a wonderful co-chair who mentored me along the way, as she was a seasoned Veteran of deployments. I was even given the opportunity to accompany our Patriot's Call chapter to the Pentagon, where they received a grant from Newman's Own Foundation to assist our Families during the deployment.

Most recently, I was able to attend the Annual Volunteer Conference for the National Guard in New Orleans. This was a fantastic opportunity to meet volunteers from all over the country, listen to an inspiring keynote address by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, and hear a panel discussion led by Gen. Craig R. McKinley, Chief of the National Guard Bureau. The highest ranks of the Army and Air National Guard were in attendance, underscoring

their support, commitment and appreciation of the volunteers who have spent countless hours during multiple deployments.

The choice of venue was appropriate too. As a city that has weathered many natural disasters from Hurricane Katrina to the recent oil spill, New Orleans has proven time and time again that it has an insurmountable spirit, strength and resiliency. On my first day in New Orleans, I took a tour to learn more about the history of this incredible city and see the effects of Hurricane Katrina—specifically, the Ninth Ward—firsthand. Hearing the tour guide talk about the devastation and seeing the lingering aftereffects of the levee break gave me a deeper understanding of the storm's impact.

The pride of New Orleans' residents is what really struck me, however. As the tour guide recounted the many historic events that he has seen during his lifetime as a resident of New Orleans, and as I heard the oyster shuckers in the hotel restaurant bragging about their beloved New Orleans Saints winning the Super Bowl, it became clear to me that the spirit of this city's residents is very similar to the spirit of Army National Guard Families who endure multiple deployments and still show courage, determination, perseverance and pride.

### Breaking the Ice

From the moment I entered the ballroom for the opening session, I could feel the excitement and energy that seemed to radiate from the hundreds of volunteers in attendance. All of the delegates sat in groups and cheered for their home states as they were announced. Each delegate also brought state pins to exchange with old friends and new—a great icebreaker for networking.

Outside the auditorium, each state had a booth with information about their respective Family Readiness Groups. I picked up a lot of great ideas and enjoyed seeing the photos from volunteers and Families who share a common bond.

The most valuable aspects of the conference for me, however, were the incredible networking and information-sharing opportunities throughout the three-day event. I attended informative presentations by the National Military Family Association, Operation Military Kids, the Military

Education Coalition, and the JAG and the PR director for the National Guard Bureau. I learned about how we as volunteers can help educate our legislators and community about what the Guard is doing, inform our teachers about the challenges faced by military kids during deployments, and engage our teenagers as "backpack journalists" to express their feelings about being part of a military Family.

I also learned about how military parents can connect with their kids while on deployment by reading stories to them on video, and how parents of children up to age 3 can nurture a connection with the Soldier parent while they are away.

### Plan of Action

Most importantly, I learned that we as military Family members have a voice and can make a difference.

Did you know that there is an Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) program that enables you to voice your concerns to Army leadership and make recommendations for change? Issues can pertain to benefits, medical/dental entitlements, education, Yellow Ribbon, and Family support and finances.

AFAP is an Army-wide program to improve Army quality of life. It was started by Army spouses in the 1980s, and since then, more than 667 issues have entered the DA AFAP, resulting in 117 legislative and 162 policy changes, and 178 program improvements. In fact, the Army is the only military service that has institutionalized a customer-centric process to elevate quality of life issues.

Among their accomplishments are increasing Service

"We as military Family members have a voice and can make a difference."

Members' Group Life Insurance from \$50,000 to \$200,000 to \$400,000; authorizing and implementing the Thrift Savings Plan; establishing the Department of Defense Reserve Component Family Member ID card and institutionalizing the Family Support Group—now known as the Family Readiness Group; transferring GI Bill benefits to dependents; and implementing TRICARE for Life.


### Play a Role


And, that's just the tip of the iceberg. It's exciting to know that there are so many resources available to military Families and that the Family Readiness Group can be a conduit to inform us about them. I'm proud to have been part of the FRG and feel privileged to have had the



Heather Oliver is a former FRG co-chair for the Georgia Army National Guard's 48th Brigade, HHC, 1/121st Light Infantry Unit. Her husband, SGT William "Carey" Oliver, recently returned from a year's deployment in Afghanistan. She has a 5-year-old son, Will, who just started kindergarten, and a 10-month-old son, David.

opportunity to learn so much.

I'm proud to be a military spouse and look forward to continuing as a volunteer in the years to come. I would encourage all new military spouses to get involved with their local FRGs. Your investment in learning more about the military, resources that are in place to support our Families, and how you can tap into your own hidden talents for the benefit of others will pay dividends for the rest of your life. 

 For more information on how you can get involved with your local Family Readiness Group, contact your State Family Programs office.

COURTESY OF HEATHER OLIVER



# Change Your Body and Your Life

Part three of a comprehensive  
plan to look your best

By 2LT HOLLY DI GIOVINE, SOUTH CAROLINA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

I run. Do you? Four simple words. One Affirmation. One Challenge. It's difficult for most people to make simple, positive statements that reflect how they view themselves. This would make us vulnerable and open to judgment. If I think I am pretty/smart/funny/fit, it leaves me open for others to disagree. It's safer to simply think of myself as average or less than adequate, and others might boost my self-esteem, instead.

These are the kinds of attitudes I've battled over the last three years as head coach for iRUN Greenville, a beginning-level running group in upstate South Carolina. I coach athletes of all levels, and it's very difficult to make a lasting impression on individuals who can't imagine themselves as fit, healthy or athletic—or as runners.

Running can be an overwhelming endeavor—and that's also what makes it extremely fulfilling. We can master our jobs, relationships or households, but mastering our physical abilities combines the mental and physical challenges of daily training. This involves overcoming excuses and discomfort, and working toward a goal.

As a trainer and coach, my job is to package a beginning running program in a way that's mentally and physically manageable, and flexible enough to fit into any schedule or skill level. The result is an empowered, healthier, happier version of yourself. One that feels comfortable with the words "I run."



SCT ROBERTO DI GIOVINE

2LT Holly Di Giovine of the South Carolina Army National Guard earned her bachelor's in Nutrition and Fitness from the University of Missouri and her fitness certification from the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM). 2LT Di Giovine works as a personal trainer and as a fit camp leader. You can contact 2LT Di Giovine with your fitness questions at [Holly@HollyPT.com](mailto:Holly@HollyPT.com).



# Running Myths Busted

**1 Running is bad for you.** Any exercise applied without logic and progression is potentially damaging to the body. The common mistake is that people expect too much too soon, and don't listen to their body's warning signs. For the average person, if they lay a proper foundation of strength, flexibility and weekly training, and build over time, they'll find themselves able to run pain-free for years to come. Unfortunately for many, that is a pretty big "if."

**2 No pain, no gain.** While it's important to stretch your comfort zone, during the initial four to six weeks of consistent training (three to five days per week), your goal is to simply elevate your heart rate and breathing to the point where it's slightly difficult to talk. Work any harder than that and your effort will be counterproductive. This level of intensity is also appropriate for light workout days and when getting back into running after a break of a week or more.

**3 Walking is for sissies.** If you are starting from a zero-base, I recommend three 30-minute walk sessions the first week. Build over the next four weeks to three to five walking sessions lasting from 30-60 minutes each. Laying down this consistent base will make the transition to running much smoother. Once you begin to incorporate running intervals, continue to embrace walking for warm-up and cool-down segments, recovery intervals and cross-training on opposite days if no other means is available. I have been running for 18 years, with countless 5Ks and triathlons, six half-marathons, four half-iron distance triathlons and one marathon under my belt, and I continue to embrace walking as a nice alternative to running. And I'm no sissy.

**4 If I start running, I will lose weight right away.** Sadly, this is untrue. You burn about 100 calories when you cover a mile, and that will take the average person anywhere from 8 to 15 minutes to accomplish. It doesn't take much more than a split second to eat 100 calories. In order to lose weight once you adopt a new exercise program, you must make a commitment to focus on caloric intake and timing, food choices, hydration and consistency. Running does, however, make you feel more energetic and can motivate you to make healthier food choices, especially in the realm of pre- and post-run nutrition.

## Getting Started

**1** Pull out a calendar and mark off your initial conditioning phase to last four weeks. Place a star on three days you are 100 percent committed to incorporating your workouts, and pick two alternate days.

**2** Determine whether you will train in the morning or evening. In general, those who train in the morning tend to stick with the program longer than those who train after work.

Training sessions in **weeks one and two** will consist of **30 minutes of walking** followed by **stretching** on a minimum of **three days**.

**Challenge yourself** to increase weekly training time from **90 minutes in the first week** to **150 minutes in the fourth week**.

The minimum cardiovascular training recommendation for most healthy adults is a mere **30 minutes on most days of the week**—you'll achieve this baseline by the end of week four.

## Phase Two

Incorporate running on three days, with at least one day in between where you rest, walk or cross-train using a bike, elliptical trainer, rowing or swimming.

Rotate through the following workouts for the first two weeks, always starting and finishing with five to 10 minutes of walking:

### MONDAY

Run 30 seconds, walk 90 seconds, for a total of 15 minutes.

### WEDNESDAY

Run 45 steps/leg "fast," walk 90 to 120 seconds, for a total of 10 rounds.

### SATURDAY

"Out and Back" – From a specific Start Point (SP), walk or run "out" for 15 to 20 minutes. Return to the SP along the same route in less time than it took you to go out. This is called a negative split and gives feedback if you take off too fast or if you are able to finish strongly.

Running drills are incorporated to make your legs stronger, more dynamic and more equipped to adapt to the

impact of running. Incorporate these basic drills during the end of all your runs in weeks three and four of phase two: High Knees, Seat Kicks, Walking Lunges and Skips. Start with one set of 15/leg and build up to three sets of 20/leg. Your running workouts will be similar to the first two weeks with the following adjustments:

### MONDAY

Run 60 seconds, walk two minutes in week three. Repeat intervals for a total of 20 minutes. Reduce walk interval to one minute in week four.

### WEDNESDAY

Run 45 steps/leg from a fixed Start Point and note how far you go. Recover on return to SP and then attempt to go further during the next set. Repeat for 10 sets total.

### SATURDAY

Perform the "Out and Back" workout for 20 to 30 minutes on the way "out," returning on same route. Incorporate 10 minutes of warm-up on the way out, followed by some easy intervals. See how much you can challenge yourself on the way back in.

Do you have a suggestion for Holly's next workout? Contact us at [Editor@GuardFoundations.com](mailto:Editor@GuardFoundations.com)



ISTOCK  
SGT ROBERTO DI GIOVINE

**"Running gives you more energy and can motivate you to make healthier food choices."**



**PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH GETTING FIT:**  
Valerie Clark

When I met Valerie in May 2009, she hid behind dark sunglasses, was pretty quiet and consistently ran 14-plus-minute miles. Now, I get texts from her saying things like, “I ran my fastest 5K ever this morning at 32 minutes.”

She’s lost weight and her bike shorts are baggy. Now, she’s recruiting those around her.

“It has been a year since I got involved with iRUN and Fit Camp,” she said. “In that year, I have learned tons of things about myself. I can run stronger, faster and farther.”

Valerie’s continued success stems from her ability to set goals and take the necessary steps to be successful. She asks questions, analyzes accomplishments and failures, and acts accordingly.

“It’s so neat, challenging myself each week and actually being able to see results,” she said.

She also learned to trust her coaches. “I started in November, afraid to put my face in the water. From there I went to participating in two triathlons and swimming the entire distance without fear.”



Lori (left) and Val (right) during a training run.

The camaraderie, teamwork and balanced training program has transformed Valerie into a budding athlete with no limitations. It has not been easy, and daily efforts to stick with healthy nutrition choices can become monotonous.

“As the switch has been flipped in my head, I realized that diet and exercise really work when trying to lose weight. As always, I’m a work in progress.”

**BALANCE AND TRUST:**  
Lori Levasseur

Lori smoked a pack of cigarettes a day for 10 years. But in 2007 at age 33, she quit and decided to take better care of herself. That’s when she started to run.

In 2009, the solitude of running caught up with Lori and she sought out running buddies and speed. Her new friends turned her on to the sport of triathlon and she was hooked. What started as a quest to take care of herself

was accompanied by a debilitating pain in her lower legs that went untreated despite doctors’ efforts.

“After that, I wasn’t running at all, and that’s the point where I learned everything I know today about running.”

Through triathlon, Lori incorporated swimming and biking into her formerly one-dimensional training plan and found herself setting a new personal best at each race she entered, dropping three minutes off her 5K time in just two months. She rounded out her training

efforts with yoga, daily stretching, running drills and strength training.

“On the days that my legs hurt, I listened, and if that meant I didn’t run, then I didn’t run.”

Being a smart athlete and learning from experience keeps Lori motivated.

“If I fail to follow these lessons, then I would feel that I’m failing to respect my body—and for me, that’s why my journey in running began.”

Lori successfully competed in four sprint triathlons in 2010.

# Winterize Your Training

**Invest in a pair of technical running tights or pants.** They will keep you warmer and drier, and they’ll last forever as long as you don’t dry them.

**Dress in layers.** A good rule to follow is, if you aren’t a little cold when you begin your workout, then you are wearing too many clothes. You’ll warm up quickly, then begin to sweat and end up colder. In temperatures down to the high 30s, most runners do well in tights, a base-layer technical T-shirt (not cotton), and perhaps a vest or light long-sleeved top. In addition, gloves or a hat will provide a lot of warmth without making you overheat.

**Stay hydrated.** Continue to drink two to three liters of water a day, year-round. This will increase your blood volume and help you to stay warm, along with all the other benefits of being hydrated.

**Drop intensity.** As it gets colder, drop your intensity a notch until your body adapts to taking in the cold air.

**Change with the seasons.** Whether heading into colder or warmer temperatures, it is helpful to simply stick with your outdoor training routine to avoid a shock to your system. Commit to a minimum of three days at 20 minutes of outdoor training year-round.

**Be seen.** If you are training in the morning or evening, be sure to wear reflective clothing or a flashing light so motorists are able to see you.



# The Right Shoe

Everyone has their own unique foot structure and way of moving. Finding the running shoe that works best for you is important to help you remain injury-free and maximize performance.

The best way to find the right shoe for you is to visit a local running store and get fitted by an expert. They should look at how you stand and how you run, and then recommend several pairs of shoes for you to try. Then you should run in them to see how they feel. Don’t wear your workout clothes to the shoe fitting. A properly fitting shoe does not need to be broken in. Keep the following things in mind:

- >> Running shoes are typically a half-size to a full size larger than your everyday shoes.
- >> You cannot purchase your running shoes based on appearance. Think of it as a blind taste-test. Go with what feels best and you’ll end up falling in love, rather than hating a cool-looking pair of shoes because they gave you blisters (or worse).
- >> A good pair of running shoes is a worthwhile investment. Once you buy them, only wear them when running—not to the gym, not on your bike, not mowing your lawn.
- >> In general, if you have a flat foot you’ll need a stability shoe that will prevent your foot from rolling too far to the inside. Those with high arches need a more flexible or cushioned shoe. If your foot is neutral, you have a lot of options. Avoid shoes that provide too much structure or support.
- >> Shoes aren’t magic. Even when you find the perfect shoe, you must still work to improve flexibility and strength in order to get the most out of your running.



- >> Be consistent and follow a smart progression from week to week.
- >> Listen to your body, and rest when you’re tired or feeling injured.
- >> Visit a qualified running store and invest in a good pair of running shoes.
- >> Stretch nightly.
- >> Stand up straight. Focus on posture while running and pull belly button toward spine to engage core muscles.
- >> Drink two to three liters of water throughout the day to ward off cramps and make it easier to breathe while running.
- >> Focus on breathing—your exhalation should always be slightly longer than your inhalation in order to make room for your body to pick up more oxygen. Practice when you are not exercising and just when you begin so you are more in control once the workout becomes more challenging.

- >> Sign up for a local 5K so you have a goal to keep you motivated. This time of year, look for a Jingle Jog or New Year’s event to focus your efforts. This will keep you on track during the crazy holiday season.
- >> Find a running buddy to meet you in the morning or afternoon and hold you accountable. Sign up for the 5K together to keep it social.

Set small goals, focus on daily and weekly successes, and keep your eye on the big picture. Challenge yourself and those around you. Repeat positive affirmations. *I run. Do you?*



# Keep Your Sanity

Simple advice for beating holiday stress

Courtesy MILITARY ONESOURCE

The winter holidays can be stressful for anyone, but when your loved one is deployed, they can be especially difficult. But, they can also be a time to strengthen your emotional commitment.

## Plan ahead for the holidays

If possible, sit down with your deployed Service Member before your separation to talk about how you will mark the holidays. If you are already apart, discuss your plans through letters, email or telephone calls.

Get an early start with gifts and cards. Depending on where your loved one is stationed, it can take a week or more for a package to arrive from the U.S. Give yourself plenty of time to make or purchase and send your gift.

Record a holiday message. Borrow a video camera or tape recorder, and record yourself and other Family members wishing the Service Member a happy holiday season. Do this far enough in advance so your loved one receives it in time for the holiday. Include a "Do not open until ..." note on the package.

Be flexible with phone calls. Calls are unpredictable, so it's best not to count on a phone call from your Service Member on the holiday itself. You might want to aim for a call during the week of the holiday instead.

## Surround yourself with people

Look for opportunities to be with Family and friends. Get together with others who are in your situation. Being with others who are going through the same thing helps prevent loneliness.

Help organize a holiday party or potluck for Families in your loved one's command. This will help keep your mind off your loneliness, and you will be comforted to be with others who are going through the same thing.

Visit friends or Family on the holiday. If you live far away and funds are tight, ask those who would normally give you a gift to chip in for an airline ticket instead. If you prefer to stay home, invite Family or friends to spend the holiday with you.

Volunteer for a good cause. Collect coats for the needy; help stock shelves at a food pantry; serve a meal at a homeless shelter. Helping others less fortunate than you will keep you busy and will remind you of all you have.

## Reduce holiday stress

It's easy to get caught up in all you have to do during this time of year, especially if you have always shared the work with your deployed Soldier. You don't have to do everything. It's more important to take time out to enjoy the season.

Find ways to have fun. Drive or walk to see the holiday decorations with Family or friends. Make time for activities that make you feel good. Go sledding, ice skating or skiing. Go on a nature walk or start a new project.

Prioritize. Make a list of all the things you need to do and decide which ones are the most important. Do those first. Then, if you have time, start on the others.


Ask for help. Many people in your life will want to help you during this time, but may not know what you need. Let people know exactly how they can support you.

## Be realistic about what to expect

As the Family member of a deployed Soldier, it's important to be flexible, especially during the holidays. Here are some ideas:

Accept that this holiday season will be different. Don't fall into the trap of expecting everything to be perfect, especially around the holidays.

Do something you wouldn't ordinarily do. Celebrate the holidays in a memorable way. I stay home, go to the movies, spend time with friends or relatives, or visit a museum.

Keep holiday decorations up until your loved one returns. Some Families celebrate the holidays twice: once on the actual dates, and again when the Soldier returns. 





**TIPS** for PREVENTING HOLIDAY STRESS AND DEPRESSION

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

**Acknowledge your feelings.** If you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief.

**Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. Volunteering is a good way to lift your spirits.

**Set aside differences.** Try to accept Family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all your expectations.

**Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity.

**Don't abandon healthy habits.** Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Have a healthy snack before parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, and get plenty of sleep and physical activity.

**Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling sad or anxious. If these feelings persist, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Source: The Mayo Clinic

**RESOURCES**

**Your military support services**

Each service branch sponsors information and programs for Soldiers and Families. Call or visit any installation Army Community Service Center, Marine Corps Community Services, Fleet and Family Support Center, or Airman and Family Readiness Center, regardless of your branch affiliation.

If you aren't near an installation, National Guard Family Assistance Centers are available in every state. The Local Community Resource Finder on the National Guard Family Program at [GuardFamily.org](http://GuardFamily.org) will identify your closest center.

**Military OneSource**

This free 24-hour service is available to all Active Duty, Guard and Reserve members (regardless of activation status) and their Families. Consultants provide information and make referrals on a wide range of issues, including those related to holiday stress. Free in-person, phone and online counseling sessions are also available. Call (800) 342-9647 or go to [MilitaryOneSource.com](http://MilitaryOneSource.com) to learn more.

**HELPFUL TECHNIQUES TO COMBAT STRESS**

**Autogenic relaxation.**

"Autogenic" means something that comes from within you. In this relaxation technique, you use both visual imagery and body awareness to reduce stress. You repeat words or suggestions in your mind to help you relax and reduce muscle tension. You may imagine a peaceful place and then focus on controlled, relaxing breathing, slowing your heart rate, or feeling different physical sensations, such as relaxing each arm or leg one by one.

**Progressive muscle relaxation.**

In this relaxation technique, you focus on slowly tensing and then relaxing each muscle group. This helps you focus on the difference between muscle tension and relaxation. You become more aware of physical sensations. One method is to start by tensing and relaxing the muscles in your toes and progressively working your way up to your neck and head. Tense your muscles for at least five seconds and then relax for 30 seconds, and repeat.

**Visualization.**

In this relaxation technique, you form mental images to take a visual journey to a peaceful, calming place or situation. During visualization, try to use as many senses as you can, including smell, sight, sound and touch. If you imagine relaxing at the ocean, for instance, think about such things as the smell of salt water, the sound of crashing waves and the warmth of the sun on your body. You may want to close your eyes, sit in a quiet spot and loosen any tight clothing.

**Other common relaxation techniques include:**

- Yoga
- Tai chi
- Listening to music
- Exercise
- Meditation
- Hypnosis
- Massage

Source: The Mayo Clinic

ISTOCK

**Families Matter**

Families are key in suicide prevention

By JUDITH H. HARRIS, CHES, MSN, HEALTH INFORMATION CONTRIBUTOR

The holiday season is a particularly hard time for deployed Soldiers and Families. Separation, increased expenses, feeling down when everyone else is in a festive mood, and extra Family and social obligations can put serious strain on resilience and diminish coping abilities.

It's a critical time to keep a vigilant watch for signs of distress or depression in returning Soldiers, and to emphasize Family cohesion. The stress of nine years of conflict has touched

many lives. As a result, behavioral health and mental well-being are receiving more attention than they have in a long time. In the Army, suicide rates among Soldiers are at an all-time high, and suicide prevention is viewed as a team effort. Families as well as buddies, leaders and behavioral health professionals are a part of this support network.

While military suicide rates are currently higher than the national average, according to new data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), suicide rates are also high in the civilian community as well. Everyone can be a behavioral health advocate and suicide preventer. The military stands ready to assist you.



Family members know their Soldier very well, making them crucial witnesses to changes in psychological health and behavior. Becoming familiar with the military's many suicide prevention resources, and with the signs and symptoms associated with suicide, can prepare loved ones to take action. Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) can assist by conducting awareness campaigns and workshops.

Take care of your own behavioral health, and get involved with a Family Readiness Group.

**RESOURCES**

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255) - [SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](http://SuicidePreventionLifeline.org)
- Military OneSource: (800) 342-9647 - [MilitaryOneSource.com](http://MilitaryOneSource.com)
- Military Pathways: (877) 877-3647 - [MilitaryMentalHealth.org](http://MilitaryMentalHealth.org)

- Real Warriors Campaign: (866) 966-1020 - [RealWarriors.net](http://RealWarriors.net)
- DCoE Outreach Center for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Information and Resources: (866) 966-1020 - [dcoe.health.mil](http://dcoe.health.mil)

**FAMILY MEMBERS CAN BE PREVENTERS**

Know the warning signs of suicidal behavior.

Be alert for behavior changes that indicate psychological distress.

Keep all channels of communication open, and use direct, reassuring statements.

Encourage them to talk to you about feelings and concerns about seeking help.

If there is hesitation about seeking behavioral health counseling via the chain of command, discuss the confidential, 24/7 telephone help hotlines and free counseling services that are available on the Internet.

If you know a Soldier's trusted buddy or unit chaplain, alert them about your concerns.

Take care of your own behavioral health, and get involved with a Family Readiness Group.





Kimberly Barrow and her  
6-year-old son, Jason.

# Stay in Touch

Family communication is key  
to healthy homecoming

By RACHEL GLADSTONE, STAFF WRITER

When *Foundations* spoke with Kimberly Barrow, SPC Kristofer James Gill, SPC Lisa Prochnow and Melissa Funk in September, we found that although each of their stories is unique, the one thing they had in common was the time they spent communicating with their Families before, during and after deployment. Ultimately, it was the reason they remained so close, even though they were separated by thousands of miles.



## Reconnecting with loved ones after a long deployment can be as challenging as it is rewarding, for both the Soldiers who are returning and the Families that welcome them home.

### BEEN THERE, DONE THAT

#### Kimberly Barrow

Family Assistance Center Specialist Kimberly Barrow, from Jonesboro, AR, is no stranger to deployment. As a matter of fact, her husband, SGT Shane Barrow of the 875th Engineer Battalion, is on his third tour of duty.

Kim and her 6-year-old son, Jason, find that communication has been the key to keeping the Family together—although at times, this is a difficult mission.

“Shane uses a cell phone with a SIM card for which he can purchase minutes, and we email and IM each other,” she said. “But a lot of times the Internet is down, and sometimes the reception is spotty. Shane sends me cards and I keep every one. And I send him care packages all the time.”

But in spite of the communication the Barrows enjoy, Kimberly has her work cut out for her. Not only is she a working single parent who handles all the household chores alone, but, in addition, she helps her son cope with his dad’s absence.

“This is Jason’s second deployment,” she explained. “Having to do everything on your own is tough, but I think the hardest thing is comforting him. He expresses his feelings a little bit, but I have to encourage it.

“We have a book that I read to him every night called *I’m Here for You Now*. It has pages where we put

pictures of Shane and him, and it talks about Daddy being deployed. It talks about how Daddy’s playing games with his friends, just like Jason plays with his friends at school, and it shows pictures of Soldiers playing basketball. It talks about things that Daddy eats—stuff like that. That definitely gives Jason some comfort.”

Kimberly also has other tools at her disposal. “We bought a clear-glass cookie jar, and when Shane deployed, we filled it with at least 365 Hershey’s Kisses. I made a sign that says ‘Kisses from Daddy’ and taped it to the jar. Every night Jason gets a kiss from Daddy. Not only is it comforting for Jason, but he can see the jar getting empty. And I say, ‘You know what that means, don’t you? Daddy’s coming home soon!’”

#### Hardworking Woman

Barrow’s job is a boon for her, because it helps her understand the complexities of reintegration.

“Communication is essential. When the Soldier comes home, he probably doesn’t want to tell you everything he saw, and that’s fine. When Shane came home last time, I told him that if he needed to talk to me about what he’d been through, even if he thought it would scare me or hurt me, I was there,” she said.

“Just letting him know that I’m willing to listen, but won’t pressure

him to talk, helps him a great deal. Unfortunately, putting pressure on returning Soldiers is really common. Families tend to throw big [homecoming parties], and most Soldiers don’t want that. They don’t want to be the center of attention or around a lot of people. Mostly, they just want to sit in a recliner, drink a cold drink, watch ESPN and zone out for a bit.”

Kimberly finds that helping Families cope with the stresses of deployment is the aspect of her job she enjoys most. “I use Military



Kimberly Barrow and her son, Jason, are experiencing their second deployment.

OneSource quite a bit in my job. I do RSP briefings, and they have a great folder/binder program that I use to help me get Families introduced to what military life is like.

“They also have awesome materials to help children cope with a parent being deployed. It’s a wonderful resource, and—best of all—it’s free,” she said. “This job is a blessing for me. I go home feeling rewarded, because I’m able to help so many military Families. It gives me peace of mind knowing that a Soldier has one less thing to worry about.”

To help clarify the situation, the Gills used every tool available, such as materials from Military OneSource.

“We ordered a lot of resources like reading materials, DVDs and CDs that talked about deployment—how their lives would be different and how it would affect them,” Gill explained.

The Family also exchanged letters before he deployed. “I wrote my wife and each of my kids a letter before I left and hid them in the house,” Gill said. “Once I got down the road, I

“What a lot of people don’t realize is that even though I was deployed, so was my Family.”

—SPC Kristofer James Gill

### NEW HUSBAND, NEW DAD

#### SPC Kristofer James Gill

SPC Kristofer James Gill, who works as the Family Program Assistant for the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore, MD, was practically a newlywed when he deployed to Afghanistan in 2008. At that time, he was a member of the 464th out of Michigan. Not only had he recently married his wife, Alisia, he’d also become the stepfather of two children, Connor, then 14, and Raquel, who was 8.

“My wife and children were brand new to the military, so trying to explain to [the kids] about my deployment was a little tough,” he shared. “They thought I’d be going for a few months and coming right back. When they realized I’d be gone a year, it hit them pretty hard.”

called and told them to look in this spot and get their letters. The kids gave me cards to take with me, and my wife gave me a letter as well.”

While deployed, the Gills took advantage of Guard programs, which helped the children adjust to the deployment.

“We used Operation Military Kids for my daughter and son so they could get together with other military Families,” Gill said. “They went to the zoo and did things like that. It helped them cope because they were able to talk about [the deployment] and, at the same time, have fun with other military Families.

“Giving the kids that opportunity enabled them to handle their feelings, because they got to discuss them with other kids who were having a similar experience.”

### Talk the Talk

While he was deployed, Gill used every resource available in order to stay in touch.

“Any time I had a chance to call home, if the kids were around, I’d talk to them. And if they didn’t get a chance to talk to me, Alisia would let them know everything was OK—that I was doing fine and I loved and missed them. We were occasionally able to [talk via Skype] as well,” he said, referring to the free Internet communication program used by many military Families.

But long lines and slow dial-up service often made conversations between the Gills short and not as intimate as they would have liked.

“What we found was that we were talking at each other instead of communicating, because we didn’t get very much time to speak,” recalled Gill. “We’d write letters and the communication was better there, but when you’re on the phone and the Internet, and you’ve got a work schedule to adhere to, sometimes you don’t have much time. So when we had the chance [to talk], we were giving bullet points about what happened during the day or the week and that was it. Talking about our feelings or thoughts never came up. That was hard for both of us.”

However, all that changed as soon as Gill got home.

“After I got back, we sat down and talked about that, and just the fact that we understood what was going on improved things,” he said. “Then we built on that. I’d say all in all, [our communication] was 10 times better than when I left. You get comfortable with [the relationship] and where you’re at, and then when you don’t have it for a year, you realize, ‘OK. I should’ve been doing this.’ And you’re more apt to open up.”

As it turns out, communication wasn’t only important to their





The Gills used materials from Military OneSource to prepare for their deployment.

marriage—it was also key to Gill’s reintegration.

“It was difficult making the transition, coming home,” he shared. “I had a difficult time driving on the roads because I was constantly scanning for anything that was out of place, like IEDs, and I was having bad dreams because of some of the things I experienced.

“I finally sought counseling for PTSD because I realized I was becoming agitated,” he continued. “My wife noticed it before I did. At first I kind of denied it, but then I got to thinking about it and I said, ‘I think you’re onto something.’”

#### Safe and Sound

Now that Gill is home, safe and sound, he’s able to reflect on just how lucky he is.

“Once I got back, I was trying to balance the different tempos between wartime and peacetime, and

made me appreciate my Family on a deeper level. It really put things in perspective.

“What a lot of people don’t realize is that even though I was deployed, so was my Family. We weren’t all in Afghanistan, but they went through their own issues and their own deployment back home. They had to deal with everything that I normally would have, had I been here. Not being able to read my daughter a bedtime story or play basketball with my son, not being able to sleep next to my wife every night, made me so grateful for those things when I returned home.”

In the end, Gill had this to say about his experiences: “Reintegration isn’t harder than deployment. It’s knowing what to expect, or the goal you’re trying to work for, when you get back. Because, let’s face it, you’re different. Any time you have a different life experience, you change

and talking about issues, they’ll be able to connect on the same level or a better level than before they left.”

#### STEPPING UP SPC Lisa Prochnow

SPC Lisa Prochnow of the 101st Engineer Battalion out of Wellesley, MA, returned from Iraq in May.

Presently working for the Family Readiness Program as a support assistant, Prochnow is the mother of four girls—Kaitlin (10), Gabriella (9), Miya (6) and Adelynn (3). Her husband, Andrew, is an optical technician and a Veteran, and she credits regular communication with keeping their Family together while she was deployed.

“He was a bit overwhelmed taking care of everything while I was gone, but he did a great job,” she said. “We communicated through the Internet, Yahoo! Messenger and Skype, and I bought a little cell phone over there. I called him in the morning and at night and because of the time difference, I would reserve the weekends to talk to the girls,” she shared. “They sent me care packages and photos, and in one package, the girls sent me their winter gloves. I don’t know why; I guess they just wanted me to see them.

“We also used Facebook to communicate,” she continued. “People would post pictures of my kids doing activities, and I was able to see everybody’s status. Not just my kids and my husband, but other Family members too. It kept me in the loop.”

Prochnow’s job with the Family Readiness Center gave her a leg up when it came to using the Guard programs available to deploying Soldiers and their Families.

“My job is great because we have all kinds of Family assets here,” she pointed out. “I was able to get my

“Give the Soldier time to reintegrate. It’s important not to rush things.”

—SPC Lisa Prochnow

I saw how our Family interacted and how much we’d missed each other. I was able to sit back and say, ‘That was then. I need to move past that experience and try to get back on the same page I was on before I left—if not a better page.’

“Once I realized that,” he went on, “we started doing more Family-oriented things. We went to movies and did other things that people should take the time to do, but often don’t. I think [being away]

a little bit. Learning how to mediate those changes is the hardest thing about reintegration, because during deployment you just have to deal with the task at hand and you don’t worry about anything else. With reintegration, you have to find a balance and try to make it right—not only for your Family, but for yourself.

“Be open, honest and accepting of the Soldier that’s coming home,” he urged. “Because as long as everyone is open and direct with one another,





SPC Lisa Prochnow used Facebook to communicate with her Family while she was deployed.

girls involved with Our Military Kids before I deployed, so they could get scholarships for after-school activities, and my husband continued that while I was gone," she said.

"My job also helped get my girls into counseling, which I knew to do ahead of time," she continued. "I made sure the schools were aware that I was deploying and that really helped. My husband and I also took advantage of the Military OneSource Strong Bonds Retreat, where we worked on communication. We want to do a retreat in the next couple of months, now that I'm back."

### A Juggling Act

Although she dearly missed her Family when she was deployed,

Prochnow found reintegration challenging in ways she hadn't expected.

"Just juggling the day-to-day activities was hard at first—like getting the girls ready and out the door," she told us. "Feeding them their meals was a big issue, because when you're deployed, your meals are served at a certain time, and you just go and eat. I'd gotten used to that. Shopping was overwhelming at first. Just being back was overwhelming. It took me about a month to get used to it again."

Prochnow had some practical advice for other Families facing reintegration, which was more complicated than she had imagined it would be. "It was different than

I thought it was going to be. We get briefed before we come home and they cover what to expect: how Family members have changed, how you've changed, what to watch out for when you get home. But you think none of that will happen to you. Then you realize that everybody goes through the reintegration process, whether you think it'll happen to you or not," she said.

"Give the Soldier time to reintegrate," she suggested. "My husband stepped back and let me get back into my routine slowly. It's important not to rush things. Communication is huge. We do sit-down dinners every night, and that's a great time for me to reconnect with my Family."

The brightest spot in Prochnow's reintegration is the renewed appreciation she has for her Family.

"I definitely don't take the little things for granted anymore," she emphasized. "I used to grumble about taking my girls to their [activities], but now I'm thoroughly enjoying it. It almost feels like a rebirth, and I think it's something I'll hold on to for a while."

### IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

#### Melissa Funk

Melissa Funk, vice president of the Family Readiness Group (FRG) in Fairfield, PA, has two Soldiers in her Family. Her husband, SSG Steven Funk, of the 56th Striker Brigade, has been home from Iraq for a year, and her daughter, PFC Erin Kelley, 20, is currently in college. Her other daughter, Meghan Nieves, was married to a Soldier. Melissa's son Steven Jr. is 16.

### Making Contact

Funk's position in the FRG inspired her to take broad steps on behalf of

the Families in her charge—and she's glad she did.

"One of the first things we did was to get set up with the school districts. We contacted all the schools that had kids from our unit in attendance, and they were invited to a meeting at our armory," she told us. "Our child and youth coordinator came in to speak, and informed the teachers that there were National Guard children in the schools, and that those kids weren't like normal Army kids, because they didn't [live on a base], where there's a support system. She told them the school system needed to be more aware."

"That really helped, because the school was on board from the beginning. We actually had seven children in our school district who were affected by the same deployment, and the school was there for them. They had a counselor to talk to."

"We also set up a program with our local 4H chapter," she continued, "and when we had FRG meetings, the kids would go into 4H and hang out with each other."

**"Reintegration is harder than deployment because you get used to doing everything yourself."**

—Melissa Funk

In addition, Funk used other Guard programs to enable the children of deployed Soldiers to cope with their parents' absence.

"Operation Military Kids has a lot of wonderful programs, including the purple camps. Those are camps for children of deployed or deploying Soldiers," she explained. "Our son went there before his dad deployed. He got to meet other kids who'd already gone through a deployment, and that actually helped him. He said it was one of the best things he got to do because it gave him an awareness of what to expect."

### Communication Wins the Day

Although deployment was challenging for the Funks,

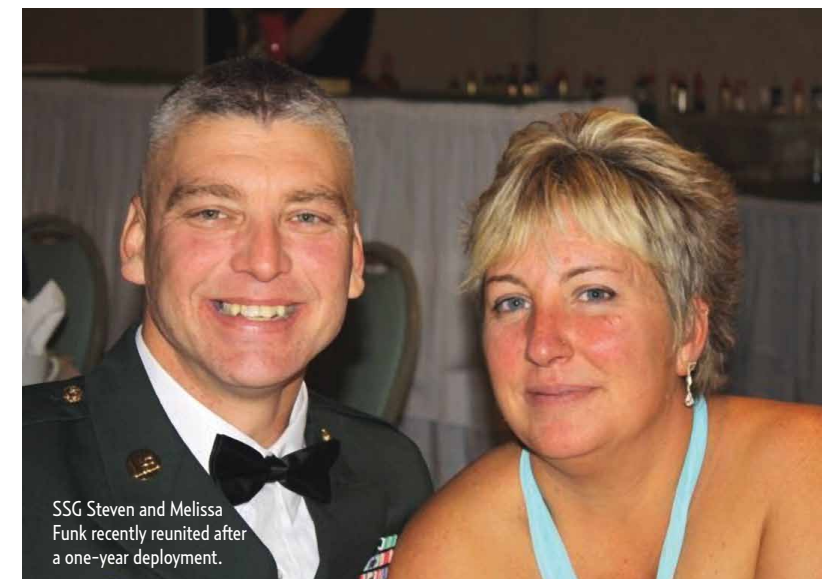
reintegration was equally challenging.

"Reintegration is harder than deployment because you get used to doing everything yourself," said Funk. "And it was hard for my husband when he came home, because the kids were used to answering to me. I'd been the primary caregiver while he was away. He'd say something to them and they'd say, 'That's not what Mom said. That's not the way we did it while you were gone.' And he'd say, 'Well, I'm home now. Listen to me.'"

In the end, good communication won the day, and Funk counts this as the number-one tool in her arsenal.

"We're very open in our household, and if the kids had questions they knew they could come to me," she said. "Eventually, everything worked out."

Her philosophy, which got her through her husband's deployment, is simple, and one that she hopes other Families of deploying Soldiers will take to heart. "The most wonderful thing a Family can do for a deployed Soldier is to support them ... with love, care packages, understanding and time, especially during reintegration," she shared. "Our Soldiers may have chosen a career we don't necessarily agree with or understand, but we chose our Soldiers, for better or for worse. I support both of my Soldiers 100 percent." 🐾



SSG Steven and Melissa Funk recently reunited after a one-year deployment.

COURTESY OF SPC LISA PROCHNOW

COURTESY OF MELISSA FUNK



## 10 Ways to Avoid Post-Holiday Debt

By JUNE WALBERT,  
USAA CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER

Every year, like clockwork, the holidays appear on your schedule. And, right along with them, the bills.

According to the National Retail Federation, depending on the national economy, as well as our own bank account, we shell out somewhere between \$675 and \$1,000 every year.

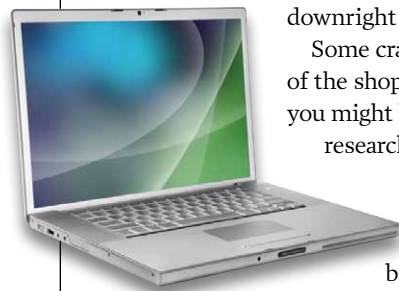
We all have different financial circumstances, but there is one undeniable, all-encompassing truth: it's possible to have a grand party and not be left with a holiday debt hangover in the New Year.

Read on for a step-by-step guide to avoid debt and still have a wonderful time.

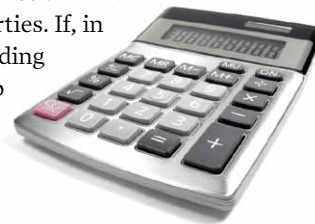
**1 Consider buying online.** Saving time, money and gasoline sounds pretty enticing, doesn't it? That's precisely what you can do by shopping online. You can compare prices, read reviews, participate in auctions, possibly save on sales tax and maybe get free shipping. It can be a downright enjoyable experience.

Some crave the glitter and lights of the shopping mall. In that case, you might benefit most from online research—checking out price and quality on the Internet.

Why not ensure you're getting the best possible bang for your buck?



**2 Count your shekels.** To avoid being a bigger spender than you intend to, analyze your finances and make a firm decision on a dollar figure you're willing and able to commit. Before making a single trip to the mall, your itemized budget should include gifts, dinner parties, white elephants, decorations, party wear and, since this is all about being smart, taxis to parties. If, in the past, you didn't set a spending limit, make that your first step in the right direction. This is not what your emergency reserve is for.



**3 Avoid saying "just charge it!"** Don't join the hordes of people who simply whip out their credit cards (or sign up for department store cards!), buy mindlessly and worry about it later. That's not a spending plan.

Allow me to give you an example. Let's say you charge \$1,000 on your card, your interest rate is the August national average of 14.35 percent, and you make minimum payments of approximately \$20 per month. A year later, when the holidays roll around again, you'll still owe over \$890! Setting aside cash throughout the year for holiday gifts is a smarter, less stressful option. If it's too late for this year, start building next year's fund.



**4 Start early.** I know it's annoying for many to see holiday decorations up before Halloween, but for some, shopping is such a dreadful proposition they postpone it until the 11th hour. If that describes you, try starting earlier. This will help you avoid Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Starting early can also allow you the freedom to spend your holidays visiting friends, baking goodies, playing games with the kids or whatever you want to do ... not to mention spreading the pain in your wallet over a much more manageable time frame.

**5 A sale is not a reason to buy.** At this point your list is in hand, you've decided how much you're going to allow yourself to spend, and then wham! You see the larger-than-life "sale" sign. You rush right over, right? No ... unless, of course, the sale includes something you haven't yet purchased and therefore it is still on your list. The idea is to take advantage of the sale, don't let it turn the tables on you.



**6 Make a list.** It works for Santa Claus, right? So, it can work for you, too. Sketch out your gift list and—wait for it—check it twice. If your list is longer than your arm, whittle it down to include only those you feel most compelled to make happy, acknowledge or thank with a gift.

**7 And stick to it.** This is not a "fly by the seat of your pants" moment. As you cruise the shops, a particular item may call out someone's name. If they're not on your predetermined list, just walk on by, nose up, and act as if you didn't even hear it talking to you.



**8 When done, be done.** Sometimes it may seem like your feet have a mind of their own—like when there's a clearance or liquidation sale banner, or a 75-percent-off sign. I know this from personal experience. My best advice is: If your shopping is wrapped up, avoid the temptation and head for the parking lot. Impulse buying can cost you big.

**9 Institute the holiday lottery.** It seems that coming up with cool gift ideas at a reasonable price gets tougher every year. I know it does for me. Narrow the field by drawing names in the Family or in your big group of friends.

Actually, your budget could benefit if you ask your kids to do the same. Focusing your money and creative energy on one person instead of everybody can be far more gratifying, may be cheaper and can help minimize the stress that often accompanies the holidays.

A key to success with the lottery approach is coming up with strict spending guidelines, as feelings can be hurt if you spend too much or too little. One objection folks have to name drawings is that they're kind of clunky. How do you draw names from a hat when you're spread out across the country? There are now free, handy, online tools, such as NameDrawing.com, that you can use for your lottery.



**10 Go creative.** Cupcakes, pesto, flavored butters, cookies, banana nut bread ... the list of yummy handmade gifts is endless. In fact, new careers have even been launched this way. Read: "Man, that's the best blue cheese butter I've ever tasted!" If your friends and Family would prefer to steer clear of the extra calories, offer your services, such as babysitting, car washing, mixing a music CD or preparing a quarterly gourmet meal. Scratch-off lotto tickets can be fun, as can the gift of your favorite novel, movie or DVD. Here's one of my favorites: Consider the gift of a framed photo from a previous get-together, like last year's holiday. Or—you didn't hear it here—but think about recycling some of the gifts that you couldn't use from last year! 📌



Do you have a financial question for June? Visit June's website, AskJune.military.com.



# The True Power of Resilience

The National Guard provides resources to help Families cope

By CPT EDWIN AYCOCK, NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

Deployments take a toll on Soldiers, Families and the entire National Guard. Even Soldiers who have never deployed suffer effects similar to those who have.

Becoming resilient can help. Resilience generally means the capacity to cope with stress and the ability to return to a stable condition after a disruption.

Resilience is an adaptive system that uses exposure to stress to provide resistance to future negative events. The National Guard is heavily involved in producing and distributing products and programs to assist Soldiers, Families and civilians in bouncing back from traumatic experiences.

## The Hendersons' Success

The story of the Henderson Family illustrates one way we face stressors other than from serving overseas.

Lydia Henderson was born in September 1998 to SFC Janell Henderson of the Michigan Army National Guard, and Frank Henderson. Lydia was born with a condition called Amniotic Band Syndrome (ABS). The condition caused Lydia to have shortened, webbed fingers, and the need for an amputation below one of her knees. She underwent multiple orthopedic and plastic surgeries in Illinois, Kentucky, Wisconsin and Michigan during the first four years of her life. In spite of these challenges, Lydia was resilient.

That resilience taught her Family to do the same.

Lydia's determination to crawl as an infant overrode the difficulty of being in surgical casts. It would also help her and her Family overcome setbacks.

Today, she's an athlete. She has participated in a soccer league and assisted her mother in coaching young children. The Michigan State University Cheer Squad granted her the Spirit Award for her resiliency in the face of adversity.

Lydia's love for life has led to a focus on agricultural activities and animals. She enjoys assisting on the Family farm, including helping care for the goats the Hendersons raise. She helps stack hay and straw, and assists with feedings. She's also an accomplished equestrian and calls her pony, "Bud," an extension of her own legs.

## Peer to Peer

Michigan, California and Nebraska have developed a new program called Peer to Peer, which teaches Soldiers to recognize and respond to those in crisis. It re-emphasizes the battle buddy concept and teaches its importance not just abroad, but at home as well. Training for the program takes many forms, from suicide intervention to broader crisis intervention.

Other resilience programs include Master Resilience Training (MRT) and the Global Assessment Tool (GAT).

MRT is taught at Fort Jackson, SC, and at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. MRT teaches Soldiers mental and physical skills that enhance performance under pressure.

The GAT is a survey-based instrument used to assess emotional, spiritual, social and Family fitness. When complete, Soldiers and Family members receive an immediate estimate of their fitness in each of these four dimensions. GAT can be taken online using a CAC or AKO.

Two books that can also help develop coping skills are *Relentless Hope: Surviving the Storm of Depression*, by Gary E. Nelson; and *No One Saw My Pain: Why Teens Kill Themselves*, by Lili Frank Garfinkel and Andrew E. Slaby.

The Military & Family Life Consultant (MFLC) Program offers short-term, nonmedical counseling on military installations, at drill weekends and wherever else military Families come together for support. MFLCs provide support for relationships, crisis intervention, stress management, grief, occupational hazards and other challenges military Families face.

The goal of the MFLC is to help empower individuals to work through their issues, increase Family harmony and promote confidence in handling the stress of military life. The program is free, and the services are confidential. Consultants typically make contact during pre- and post-deployment training events, but may approach Soldiers and Family members in other places as well.

With more than 250 MFLCs, there's one near you. Contact your Family Support Coordinator for its location. 📍



The National Guard has established many programs to help Families cope with the stresses of military life.

FRED MCGHEE

## DO YOU NEED HELP?

If you or your loved ones are struggling to cope, you don't have to do so alone. Here are several resources:

**Military OneSource:**  
MilitaryOneSource.com,  
(800) 342-9647

**Global Assessment Tool (GAT) for Soldiers:** SFT.army.mil/; GAT for Family members: SFT.army.mil/sftfamily

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**  
SuicidePreventionLifeline.org,  
(800) 273-TALK

**Army Well-Being:**  
Army.mil/armylife/wellbeing

**Army G-1 Suicide Prevention website:**  
Armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/default.asp

**Army Suicide Prevention Guidance:**  
http://fhp.osd.mil/pdhrainfo/media/  
Suicide\_Prevention\_Training\_Tip\_Cards.pdf

**American Red Cross (ARC) for Psychological First Aid:**  
RedCross.org/services/disaster

**Army National Guard Post Deployment Health Reassessments website:** VirtualArmory.com/mobiledeploy/PDHRA

**Army Post Deployment Health Reassessments website:**  
http://fhp.osd.mil/pdhrainfo

**Wounded Soldier and Family Hotline:**  
(800) 984-8523

**Military and Family Life Consultant (MFLC) program:**  
(800) 646-5613, or visit the MFLC section of the MHN website:  
MHNGS.com/app/home.content



above&beyond

# Taking the Reins

## When grandparents become legal guardians

By RACHEL GLADSTONE, STAFF WRITER

One minute, Debbie Nichols and her husband, Alan, were empty nesters, working and living in Placentia, CA. The next, their daughter, MSG Erin Caldwell, was deploying to Afghanistan and leaving her daughters, Ivie, 10, and Bailey, 6, in their grandparents' care.

During 2008 there were 250,000 military children that went to live with a guardian or grandparent while their parent was deployed.



It was early December of 2007 when Debbie got the call that changed her life. “My daughter said, ‘I’m coming home for Christmas,’” Nichols explained. “Then she said, ‘Mom, I’m deploying in 30 days, and we need to make some plans.’ And that’s when it hit me. I told my husband, ‘Oh my God, she’s really going away.’”

A career Soldier in the Air Force and divorced mother of two, Caldwell had never deployed before. But, because she was aware that it could easily happen, she’d asked her parents to become her daughters’ legal guardians. They’d taken care of the girls while she was away at trainings, but somehow, Debbie and Alan had never thought about what would happen if their daughter actually deployed.

“I thought, ‘How am I going to balance my job? How are the kids going to adjust to school? How am I going to change my house around?’” Nichols revealed.

She began to search for answers. Unfortunately, she came up empty-handed.

“I couldn’t find any information whatsoever at that time,” she said.

The Nicholoses drove to

Arizona to get the girls. “I told them to pack as many toys and clothes as they wanted,” Nichols shared. “It’s so different when it’s your grandchildren and not your children [that you’re raising],” she continued. “Your grandchildren are supposed to be these little prizes you have fun with. Now I had to change my role. I told the girls we’d have to do things differently than we would have if they’d just been visiting. We’d have to be more like their parents. They understood, but it was a very difficult and emotional change for me.”

“It’s a transition for the children as well,” she went on. “The first 30 days were the most stressful. You’re trying so hard to balance everything and be there for everybody ... your grandchildren, and your child that’s deployed.”

### The Write Stuff

Realizing she had a lot to cope with, Nichols began to keep a journal. Before she knew it, she had the makings of a book.

“I started the whole process in order to document my feelings. My husband said, ‘I think you

need to share your story. I believe there are other families out there like us, who don’t know what to do [in this situation].’”

That’s how Nichols’s book, *Deployed Grandparents Being Parents*, was born.

Nichols began to compile a list of helpful hints she’d discovered. These included making a calendar for the girls so they could count down the days to their mother’s return. Another was helping them decorate their new bedrooms, so they’d feel more at home. The process was helpful, but it added to the heavy workload she was already carrying.

“My working schedule had to be adjusted,” she said, pointing out that she works from home. “I walked my granddaughters to school every day, and then I’d come home and work. In the afternoon, I’d bring the girls home and get them started on their homework. As soon as my husband came home from work, he would finish up with the homework, and I’d go back to my work. Then I’d make dinner. Then, after I got the girls to bed, I’d finish my work for the day.”

### Feelings

In addition, there were a lot of emotions to deal with—not only for Nichols, but for her granddaughters as well.

“They felt scared in the beginning,” she said. “When they said, ‘Grandma, I’m sad; I miss my mom,’ or ‘I’m scared for Mom,’ I would tell them, ‘You know what? She’s my little girl, and Grandma’s scared, too.’”

“It was important to be emotionally honest. You want to be strong, but at the same time you have to be straight with them, because they can sense it if you’re not. I told them we’d be strong together and strong for their mom, just like she was being strong for us.”

One of the most difficult things about Caldwell’s deployment was keeping in touch. “My daughter was in Bagram, and we didn’t have very good communication,” Nichols explained. “We were lucky if she got to call us every other week. She also had no Internet service for the first three months.”

Then Nichols had a brilliant idea. “I told the girls, ‘OK, since you can’t share what’s going on with your new school and your friends, each week we’re going to

mail off a package to your mom with all your school work. You guys can write her letters about everything you’re doing.’ I realized it was the only way we could communicate [with her].

“My granddaughters looked forward to going to the post office every week to mail that box. We also included pictures and videos, which we transferred to DVD so my daughter could see them. It was really good for the girls.”

### Getting the Word Out

The girls have gotten in on the act and are now working on a book of their own, so we asked them to share a few of their thoughts with us.

“[My mom’s deployment] was kind of scary, but exciting at the same time, because I always wanted to live with my grandparents,” Ivie said. “I really missed my mom because I was so used to talking to her every day, and all of a sudden we were just cut off. I felt proud of her, but at the same time, I didn’t want her to leave.”

Bailey concurred. “I was excited to go live with my grandparents, but I was a little scared. My grandma was there for me, though, and she acted like my mom,

so I felt like I was at home.”

Nichols feels that her book is a sort of call to arms, and she’s hopeful it will help other people who are in her position. “When I first wrote the book I didn’t even know why I was writing it,” she said. “I can’t explain it, but there’s something driving me to help others get through this process.”

In conclusion, Nichols said this about being a parent to her grandchildren due to a deployment: “It was the biggest challenge of our lives—but the most rewarding time of our lives.”



You can find information about Debbie Nichols’s book at [GrandparentsBeingParents.com](http://GrandparentsBeingParents.com). There, you will also find her blog, as well as a list of helpful tips she has compiled.

COURTESY OF DEBBIE NICHOLS





# Don't Despair, Repair!

Oregon Soldier's  
do-it-yourself program  
for Guard Families

By KIM L. LIPPERT, OREGON MILITARY DEPARTMENT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SPC Curtis Gatlin, of Aurora, OR, was disappointed when he learned he couldn't deploy to Iraq with the 41st Brigade Combat Team last year because of an injury. Yet, it didn't take long for him to find a way to make an impact here at home.

"When I was little, my dad always used the phrase, 'Give of yourself,' and I've always remembered that," Gatlin said.

As a 40-year-old father of two, Gatlin said he could sympathize with the difficulties children and spouses encounter when a loved one leaves home for an overseas deployment. The lawn needs to be mowed, pipes can break and general projects around the house can pile up. That's

where Gatlin—an employee of the Home Depot store in Tigard—decided he could make a difference.

### Help Yourself

Gatlin's program for spouses of deployed Soldiers teaches them home repair skills and addresses a variety of "fix-it" questions. His employer would offer the classes for free.

"We walk them through [the process] and empower spouses, and teach them how easy this stuff is to do," Gatlin said.

Gatlin worked with people on everything from installing shower heads to fixing electrical problems. "I try to give

them basic knowledge that they can take with them and do at home on their own," he said.

Jay Mello, a Home Depot store manager, said Gatlin's example follows Home Depot's corporate values.

"Being prior military myself," Mello said, "I can say it really gives us a chance to bond with and support fellow Service Members on a level of understanding and camaraderie."

For things people couldn't do on their own, Gatlin enlisted the help of Veterans organizations, which would link subject matter experts and spouses in order to complete home repairs beyond the scope of Home Depot's staff.

"We coordinate with them to go out to people's houses and help them out," said Gatlin.

### Kids, Too

Gatlin also started fix-it clinics for kids at the Tigard Home Depot store and the Elks Lodge in Portland. Each interaction became a small deposit in

the lives of Soldiers overseas, he said.


"The last thing someone across the wire wants to deal with is an email from home about something breaking down," Gatlin said.

"My store manager, district manager and CEO backed me up 100 percent," he added.

These programs and events help us to give back to those who have given up so much for ... this great country of ours," Mello said.

Now that the 41st Brigade Combat Team has returned from their deployment, Gatlin is focused on helping fellow Soldiers find jobs. He's developed a pilot program designed to help place qualified Veterans in jobs at Home Depot.

"Last week we hired our first person," he said. "It's great to know we can make a difference."


Mello said that Home Depot ranks fifth in the nation in the number of Veterans the company employs. "These employees bring a wealth of experience to our stores," Mello said. 




Guard spouses of deployed Soldiers learn valuable home repair skills from SPC Curtis Gatlin.

ISTOCK; OPPOSITE PAGE, PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## Making a Difference

 **The Home Depot** offers a year-round, 10 percent discount, up to a \$500 maximum, to all Active Duty military personnel, Reservists, retired or disabled Veterans and their immediate Families. Home Depot offers this discount to thank them for their outstanding service to this nation and to help make their homes more comfortable and safe. Customers requesting the discount should present a valid military ID. This discount is not available for Home Depot's online shoppers or in addition to existing discounts or promotions.

 **Lowe's** has expanded its support of the military by offering an all day, every day 10 percent discount to all military personnel who are Active, Reserve, retired or disabled Veterans and their Family members, with a valid, government-issued military ID card. All other military Veterans will receive the discount on Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Veterans Day weekends. The discount is available on in-stock and special order purchases up to \$5,000. Excluded from the discount are sales via Lowes.com, previous sales, and purchases of services or gift cards.





Indiana National Guard SPC Brandon Earixson, 384th Military Police Company from Bloomington, IN, ensures an orderly queue in front of the medical readiness site in Gonaives, Haiti.

“What continues to impress me is how these ... individual Soldiers step up to that challenge ... ”

—LTC Deedra Thombleson, 81st Troop Command executive officer

from the lack of the most basic healthcare.

“There are a lot of infections,” said Litz. “We treated minor lacerations and infections, and offered education on basic nutrition, public health, safe water handling and sanitation.”

Litz and Warren said that the experience goes beyond providing their Soldiers with an opportunity to serve their fellow man. The experience of operating in a disaster zone can be invaluable experience to prepare the Indiana National Guard to respond in future crises, according to LTC Deedra Thombleson, 81st Troop Command executive officer.

“Many of these Soldiers have deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as to the Katrina disaster,” said Thombleson. “The Indiana National Guard has [experience]—a lot of it.”

Thombleson said that the number of training exercises and the scope of the exercises also add to the quality of the

typical Soldier in the National Guard today. She felt that the state’s adjutant general, MG R. Martin Umbarger, was instrumental in setting the Indiana Guard up for success.

**Stepping it up**

“MG Umbarger has made sure we have the opportunity and resources to train like the National Guard has never trained before, and

that has created a force that is more prepared to respond than ever before,” said Thombleson.

The emphasis on training has made for a significantly higher operations tempo for Indiana National Guard Soldiers, but has also led to a state force that has been able to respond to the needs of the state and country, according to Thombleson.

“MG Umbarger is very aware of the sacrifices, all the hard work of the Indiana National Guard,” said Thombleson. “But I don’t think he could do it any other way. He feels he owes it to the citizens of Indiana, to the Families and, most importantly, to the Soldiers.

“What continues to impress me is how ... these individual Soldiers step up to that challenge, just like these Soldiers who have just returned from Haiti,” she concluded. 📍

# Indiana Grit

Hoosiers bring expertise and heart to Haiti

By SSG LES NEWPORT, INDIANA NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Eight months after an earthquake devastated an already fragile Caribbean nation, approximately 200 Soldiers of the Indiana National Guard returned from Haiti in September to report that devastation still reigns, and recovery remains the priority.

Military police, engineers and medical units of 81st Troop Command volunteered for two extra weeks of Annual Training, to be counted among the thousands of responders still working to stabilize the western edge of Hispaniola, the island Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic, 750 miles to the southeast of the Florida coast.

“They want to help,” said 1SG Christopher Warren, the

381st Military Police Company’s top enlisted Soldier.

The unit provided security for forward operating bases where civil and military responders have based operations in support of recovery efforts.

**Helping hands**

“The situation is worse than anything I saw in Iraq,” said Warren, and added that the people of Haiti are very kind and appreciative, often thanking the Soldiers and offering gifts.

COL Mark Litz of the Indiana Medical Detachment led efforts to provide medical support to first responders, as well as provide humanitarian aid to Haitians suffering

PHOTOS BY SPC ANTONIO ARCHER



Indiana National Guard CPL Raymond Brightwell, 384th Military Police Company from Bloomington, IN, counts the number of people being let into a medical readiness site where they will receive free treatment for their ailments in Gonaives, Haiti.



# My Kid and Deployment



## Tips for surviving the stress of deployment from a Guard spouse

By MICHELLE REITEMEYER

**M**y husband left for his MOB station a few days after our little boy turned 3. Seemingly overnight, the tyke went from sweetest kid on the planet to the biggest failure in Gets Along Nicely with Others.

If there was a group of children playing and somebody started crying, my first words became, “Billy, what did you do?” He threw tantrums; he bit his grandfather; he trashed his bedroom if I put him in a time-out.


I was beside myself. Not only was my little guy suddenly a monster, but now everybody was giving me that look: that down-the-nose, disapproving glare that clearly says his behavior was all my fault. I was a bad parent.

I could handle that look from strangers. After all, they didn’t know his biggest hero had abandoned him, replaced by a voice on the phone. But it wasn’t just strangers. Friends, relatives, people who knew us and loved us and who only a few months earlier might have voted me in for Mother of the Year now pursed their lips and shook their heads.

Although my son’s tantrums were not acceptable, they were certainly not abnormal. Kids of all ages feel the stress of a deployment. And children, like adults, all handle stress in different ways depending on personality and age. Tantrums, whining, crying, anxiety, depression, inability to concentrate, poor school work, regression, lack of appetite, and difficulty sleeping are all typical behaviors that I’ve witnessed through two deployments with my six children.

This suffering of the children is, perhaps, the ugliest side to the homefront during a deployment. What’s a parent to do? My greatest comfort has always been found in other parents going through the same thing. During that first deployment, I met a woman with a boy about the same age as mine, behaving just like mine. I only saw her that one time at a Hearts Apart meeting, but it was enough for me to know that I wasn’t alone.

During my husband’s deployment last year, my Billy, then 9 years old, was again having the hardest time coping of all my children. This time I took him to a professional counselor (free, private and local counseling is available through Military OneSource). I won’t say that these sessions “cured” him, but I think they helped me a bit. I really needed reassurance and encouragement through those difficult days.

If your child is having a hard time dealing with a parent’s deployment, don’t hesitate to seek help—for you and for your child. And, don’t hold back if you have a chance to share your struggles with someone. Your experience may be just what another parent needs to hear. 





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