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March/April 2010
Volume 2 • Issue 1

National Guard Soldier & Family

FOUNDATIONS

A note from

Colonel Marianne E.
Watson, Deputy Chief
of Staff, Personnel,
Army National Guard

The Journey Back

Three Guard
Couples Offer
Advice for Achieving
Post-Deployment
Happiness



ATTN: ARMY KIDS*

You've Got... math homework

english

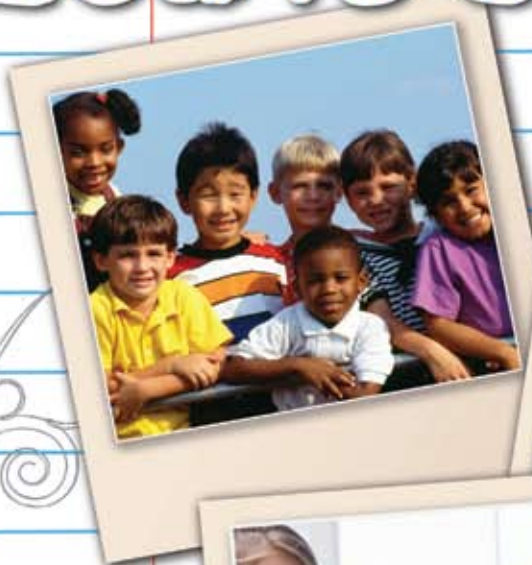
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*For children of: Active, Wounded, Reserve Component, National Guard and Army civilians (including Survivors).



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—CPT REBECCA TRYGSTAD

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WE ALL SERVE



Jim Ainsworth of Nevada ESGR and Mike Williams, Operations Vice President of Nevada based REMSA, with employees and U.S. Army National Guardsmen Specialist Tyler Teese, Sergeant Steve Park, Sergeant Kevin Basta, Sergeant Nich Hammond, and Specialist Mike Roen.

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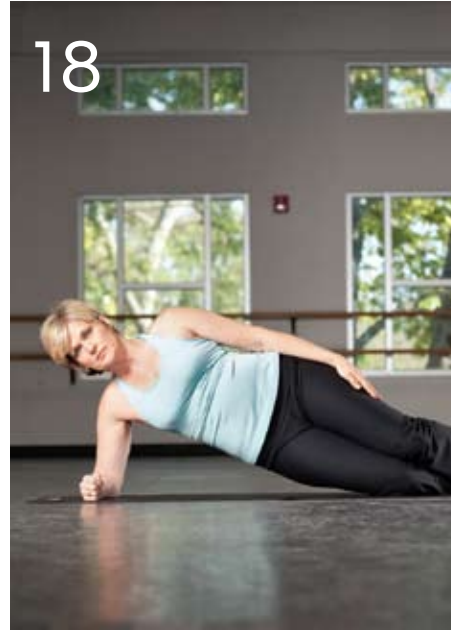
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"It's truly a miracle, and one of the best experiences of my life," said Hennen. "And it never would have happened but for the heart and tenacity of Grant [Wilz] and Shayne [Beckert] and so many generous souls in North Dakota."

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editor's letter

I'm inspired by your sacrifice.

One of the joys of my position as deputy editor of *Foundations* is reading the many letters and emails I receive from Guard Families. I make it a priority to read each message every morning. I use your insightful critiques to shape *Foundations*, tailoring its content to better serve you.

You repeatedly asked me to include stories written by Guard spouses. I am more than happy to comply. In this issue you'll find an article by a Guard wife, Michelle Reitemeyer. She offers a firsthand account of the challenges of being a Guard spouse and how the many resources the Guard provides helped her to not only become successful, but happy as well. I encourage you to read her story.

Inside you'll also find tales of triumph and forgiveness. From a camp for disabled Veterans and advice on forgiveness to articles on smart investing tips and burning 300 calories.

The feature provides three couples' advice on how to achieve happiness after deployment. Through them we learn that love and communication can overcome any obstacle.

As always, your suggestions and comments are important to me. Please contact me at Editor@GuardFoundations.com. With your help, *Foundations* will continue to be a great source for Guard Soldiers and Families.

Sincerely,

Fred D. McGhee II
Deputy Editor



CPT Jayme and CPT Rebecca Trygstad of the South Dakota Army National Guard offer advice on achieving happiness after deployment.

PHOTO BY GREG LATZA

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.

Publisher

Mitch Powers

Editor-in-Chief

Keith Kawasaki

Design Director

Andrew Nixon

Deputy Editor

Fred D. McGhee II

Contributing Editors

Jamie Roberts, Megan Pacella and Bill Hudgins

Senior Copy Editor

Julie Zeitlin

Contributing Writers

MAJ Andra M. Duskie, SSG Amy Wieser-Willson, SPC Thomas J. Keeler, Martin Binks, Ph.D., Lisa Fasold, Beth Garland, Rachel Gladstone, Michelle Reitemeyer, June Walbert, Julie Zeitlin, Sarah Jordan

Art Director

Kerri Davis

Designers

Lynne Boyer, Ben Stewart and Patrick Burns

Editorial Inquiry and Submissions:

Editor@GuardFoundations.com

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Dear Soldiers, Families and Friends of the Army National Guard,

I am honored to contribute to *Foundations* magazine. As the Army National Guard G1, I am proud to be associated with this wonderful resource for Soldiers and Families.

The recent snowfall in our nation's capital has brought out the inner child in so many of us. It is a perfect pretext as we move toward spring and the Month of the Military Child. The Department of Defense's designation of a Month of the Military Child underscores the important role military children play in our Armed Forces community. It's a time to celebrate our most precious patriots for the daily sacrifices they make while their fathers, mothers, grandparents, siblings, aunts or uncles serve this great country.

I encourage you to utilize *Foundations* magazine as a resource to help children navigate situations unique to their unique military life: deployments, new schools and, unfortunately, at times of loss and grief. *Foundations* magazine is filled with great information to support our military children and keep them resilient and strong.

Thank you all for your support and service! It's because of you; the Army National Guard is *always ready and always there!*



Marianne E. Watson
Colonel, United States Army
Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel
Army National Guard

we've *got* mail

How I Stay Connected with Family and Friends During Deployment

We asked. You answered.



I've found that staying in contact with my Family back home, especially my immediate Family, helps me deal with the everyday stress of deployment.

Calling my wife on Skype allows me to just get rid of everything negative that builds up. I don't even have to tell her what's going on. I just need to know that the world didn't stop when I left. It lets me know that I still have a place in it, and that there are people who want me to be in it again. When you don't have to worry about home, you can do your mission.

I know that I don't call home enough. I know it makes my Family feel better when I do.

I work in the personnel section of a brigade headquarters. Mail is definitely a morale booster. I think the people who never get any mail could fix it by writing to their Families back home, who would then be likely to write back. It would make everyone involved happier, and happy Soldiers are better at their jobs.

PVT Nicklaus Bendure

HHC 16th Engineer Brigade

Ohio Army National Guard



For me, staying in contact with my Family at home is almost a daily ritual. It gives me a chance to see my wife and 5-year-old son.

When I call home on Skype, my son will sit and talk to me and show me things

that he has made. It helps me to feel like I am not missing as much of his life as I am. Being able to communicate with my Family back home has helped them a lot. It makes them less stressed over the fact that I am sitting in a war zone. I have noticed when they have had a chance to communicate with me, I don't get frantic, worried emails wondering if I am okay.

When I communicate with everyone at home, it puts me at ease. It gives me a chance to focus on the mission, and to get home as soon as I can.

SPC Brian Johnson

1434th Engineer Company

Ohio Army National Guard



Many thoughts go through my mind. Are the bills paid? Is the heat on? Are my children happy? These are just a few questions that come to me on a daily basis. I also like to think that all of my friends and Family are doing well. How do I really know for sure that they are all healthy? I talk to them—whether it's through Skype, email or a morale call. It allows for me to be able to sleep peacefully at night, and it carries me through the next day.

It is very important for me to have the peace of mind I get from talking to my friends and Family. It allows me to focus on the mission at hand. I'm free from distractions because I know affairs back home are being taken care of. I have been able to coordinate with many of my Family members through the holidays to spend

time with my daughters. The ease with which I am able to contact anyone back home is amazing, and I will use the services available as much as possible. I only hope that everyone else is doing the same.

SSG Joshua Singer

HHC 16th Engineer Brigade

Ohio Army National Guard



Being away from friends and Family for over a year is a difficult thing for anyone to deal with. Keeping in touch with those back home is important, so I can stay connected with my old life as I transition into my daily missions overseas.

Staying in touch with Family is not only important to me, but it also means a lot for my Family members to hear from me. Coordinating the time to call on holidays, minutes before their big meal, makes them feel as if I were still able to be there.

I may not get to write and talk with everyone as often as I'd like, but those moments that I do get to talk with them are precious.

The positive news from home helps me keep a positive attitude. Without those small pick-me-ups, it would be more difficult to maintain a positive outlook.

SSG April Mota

FSC 101st Engineer Battalion

New Hampshire Army National Guard



Corresponding with Family is crucial. Communicating with Family has become easier now in these later times in our country; whether it be email, snail mail, phone calls or, thanks to BlackBerry, texting. The ability to hear voices of loved ones instantly increases the morale of a Soldier. Seemingly insignificant news from their hometowns can also calm stress. And sometimes, even the sound of a child's voice is tranquil enough to make the reality of a combat environment fade away for a moment or two.

Family is the backbone of each individual in the military. Being able to talk to someone who truly knows your personality can give you peace of mind. Although time differences can cause some issues, I make sure that one night a week I call my mother. It may seem to be more for her than me, but sometimes that soothing voice can put me in a 15-minute oasis.

SPC Kyle Kelley

1192nd Engineer Company

Ohio Army National Guard

Sometimes we forget that the world is still changing, that our children are growing, that our spouses are working hard to keep things together and that our loved ones miss us. Bills still need to be paid, dentist appointments to attend, and—let's not forget—who is going to shovel the three feet of snow off the driveway?

I try to call home every day. I feel this helps me stay connected and involved with my teenage children's ever-changing lives.

I am lucky my husband is also in the Army National Guard, and this is not our first deployment. We have great communication. If we can't physically speak, we email.

Before any mission outside the Green Zone, I call home and let my Family know I love them. This puts my mind at ease so I can concentrate on my job.

Sometimes when I miss my Family, I call home to just hear their voices. This reminds me of why I am here and how much I love them. If it wasn't for the wonderful support that comes from my Family, I would never be able to be 100 percent mission-ready.

SGT Tracy Knowles

101st Engineer Battalion

Ohio Army National Guard

What's your favorite Family activity? We want to hear from you!

Email your answer to Editor@GuardFoundations.com, and it could appear in the next issue of *Foundations*.



The Minnesota National Guard Builds Upon the Past

Guard Soldiers improve haven for wounded Veterans

By SPC THOMAS J. KEELER,
MINNESOTA NATIONAL GUARD
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For years, Kevin Lelle had heard about the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp by word of mouth, and he had even driven past its location on Big Marine Lake in rural Washington County, MN, a few times. “But I never got around to checking it out,” he said.

Lelle, a retired 20-year Veteran of the Air Force, figured the camp served injured Veterans only. But last fall, when he needed a location for a Family picnic, his wife suggested that he look into it.

Lelle found the park clean and quiet. The staff welcomed him and showed him some cabins. The price was reasonable, so Lelle took it.

SGT DAJON SCHAEFER



Left: PVT James of the 851st Vertical Engineer Company (right) delivers lumber during the construction of two Veterans' homes near Hugo, MN, June 24, 2009. The 851st Vertical Engineer Company is busy constructing new buildings and completing other various tasks during their two-week annual training.

Below: Soldiers line up for chow during the construction.



One of the cabins where his Family would stay was constructed by a Minnesota National Guard unit earlier in the summer. The 851st Vertical Engineer Company, based at Camp Ripley, MN, had just finished an interesting new mission: Using the unit's annual training period to work at the camp.

The mission for the 851st was to build two new 1,600-square-foot cabins at the camp, which would expand the number of cabins to 14 in addition to many RV sites and tent areas.

But Tom Ferris, general manager of the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp, said the 851st didn't stop with the cabins. The unit took on task after task: installing 450 feet of privacy fence, planting 50 trees to provide windbreaks, making the showers wheelchair-accessible, pouring 17 concrete slabs for dumpsters, laying coaxial cable for future television access, repainting just about everything and much more.

"They just would not stop," Ferris said.

Ferris estimates that anywhere from 8,000 to 10,000 Veterans, spouses and children pass through the rest camp in a summer. Many already call the camp "paradise," such as Jim Connolly, a wounded Vietnam Veteran and former VFW post commander who spends his summers here. The 851st has helped to make the camp better for Veterans like him.

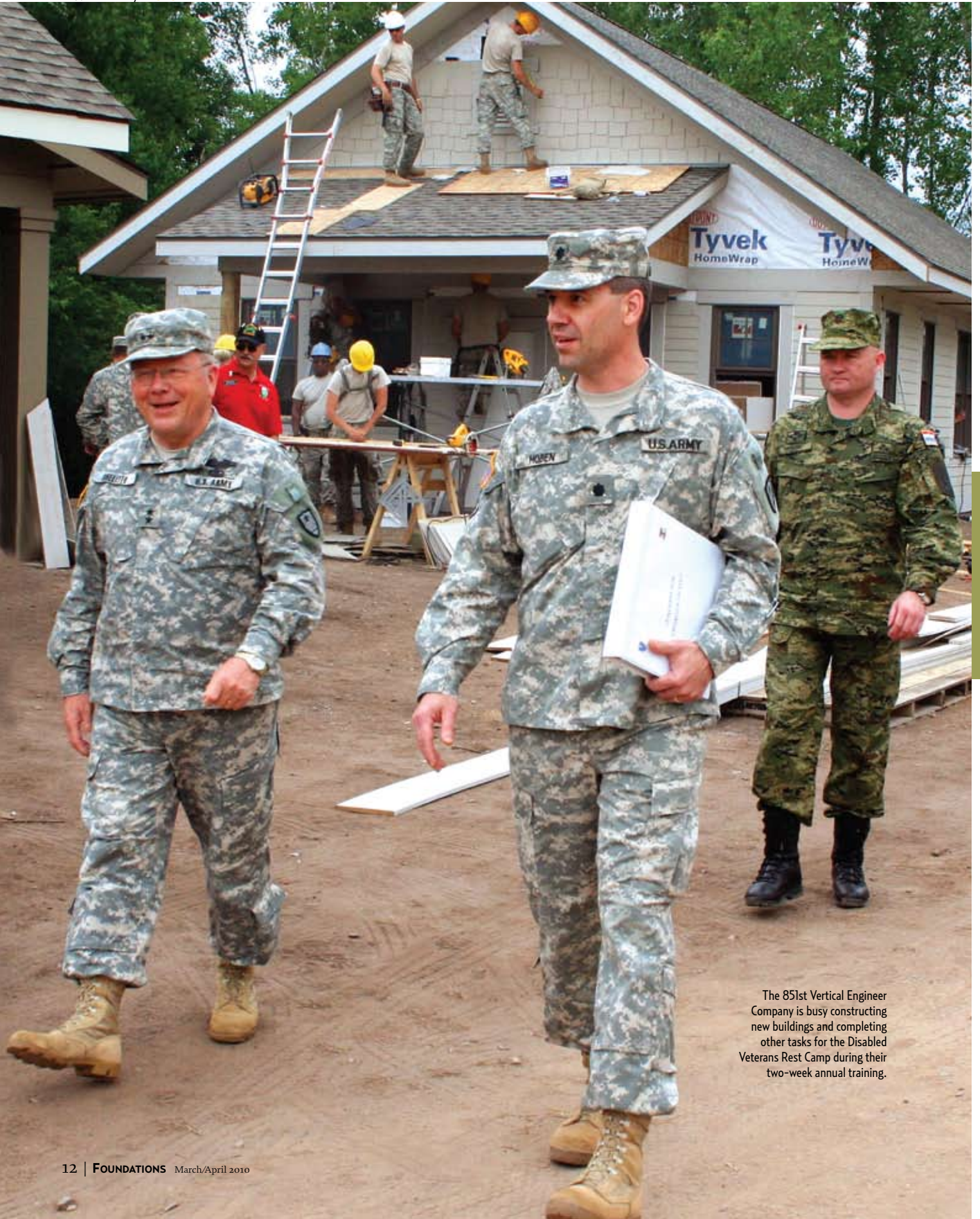
Ferris would like to see the unit return next year.

"I've never seen such courteous Guard members in my life," he said, adding that the 851st got along well with the Veterans at the camp. The unit "had the deepest respect, and they showed it to all the Veterans out here," said Ferris.



Members of the 851st Vertical Engineer Company and other visitors inspect new buildings at the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp, June 24, 2009.

SGT DAJON SCHAFER



The 851st Vertical Engineer Company is busy constructing new buildings and completing other tasks for the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp during their two-week annual training.

SGT DAJON SCHAEFER



PFC Carl Swanson, a carpenter with the 851st Vertical Engineer Company, checks the interior of a new home for the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp in Washington County, MN, June 18, 2009.

“This is a great project, and I’m really learning a lot,” said SPC Joshua Peterson during the construction. Peterson is an interior electrician with the 851st and a fairly new Soldier. He found the experience at the camp extremely useful.

“I think it’s really rewarding that we’re helping out Veterans [who] put their time in,” he said.

In operation since 1926

Located in May Township in Washington County, near Hugo, the camp was established for Veterans in 1926, when the concern of the day was “shell shock” and the casualty rates from war were much higher. The camp has served the Veteran community continuously for more than 80 years.

“This is real life. This is something usable; it’s something tangible; it’s something people can come back to for years to come.”

—SGT Jeremy L. Frank, lead noncommissioned officer for the 851st Vertical Engineer Company

The engineers

Morale within the unit was sky-high, said 1SG Jeremy L. Frank, the lead noncommissioned officer for the 851st during the project. More than 100 of the company’s Soldiers were onsite during the construction and improvements.

Everyone kept busy and performed tasks they enjoyed, Frank said.

The 851st was coming off a year-long mobilization, having returned home from Baghdad the summer before. While deployed, the unit constructed more than 220,000 square feet of building, installed 288,000 feet of wire and built three combat outposts for Coalition and Iraqi forces.

In addition to improving the quality of life at the camp, Frank said the unique training environment gave the recently deployed Service Members and the other Soldiers a chance to come together. It also provided a good, practical cross-training opportunity.

“We have 12 block-layers today that we did not have [before], because the guys took the time to teach them,” said Frank during the project.

It was a new idea to use an annual training period on such a project, according to Ferris, based on what the Guard members were telling him.

The idea was conceived, he said, when a few camp managers met with MAJ Shaun Riffe of the 84th Troop Command, who wanted to reserve an area for a few of his Soldiers.

Minnesota units generally spend their annual training period at the Camp Ripley Training Center in the central part of the state. But with the support of Minnesota’s Joint Force Headquarters behind the project, the National Guard Bureau signed off on it.

Everyone associated with the project—including the older Vets who visit regularly—is thrilled with the result and anticipates similar efforts in the future.

Frank said it was the best training environment he has seen in his 17 years in the Army.

“This is real life,” he said. “This is something usable; it’s something tangible; it’s something people can come back to for years to come.”

Be Heard Now!

Army Family Action Plan lets Families voice concerns

By CPT TRENIA COLEMAN AND RALPH W. CWIEKA,
SOLDIER AND FAMILY SUPPORT DIVISION, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

Is there an issue or problem in your state or unit you think leadership is unaware of that could be fixed or changed? Are you passionate about certain topics to the extent that you're involved and see issues others may not? Do you have a problem that could be solved but don't know where to go or whom to ask for help?

Don't think you're powerless! The Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) lets you tell the Guard about your concerns and what you think should be done about them.

The AFAP is an Army-wide program that seeks to improve the quality of life for military Families. Through AFAP, all members of the Army, including Active, National Guard and Reserve Soldiers, Family members, retirees, surviving spouses, Department of the Army Civilians and military technicians have a forum to voice their concerns to the Army's leadership and make recommendations for change. The Army is the only branch of the Department of Defense that has such a program.

In the late 1970s, Army spouses, passionate about their Families and communities, organized a forum to discuss their concerns, developed resolutions and volunteered their efforts toward seeking solutions.

AFAP was formally adopted at the first Department of the Army planning conference in July 1983, and the first AFAP was published in 1984.

In its 26-year history, AFAP has had a major influence on 112 legislative changes, 159 revisions to policy and 178 improvements to programs and services. Some examples of the benefits Soldiers and their Families receive today as a result of past AFAP efforts include:

- * Thrift Savings Plan was authorized and implemented for military members
- * Department of Defense Reserve Component Family Member ID cards were established
- * Family Support Groups were institutionalized
- * The transfer of GI Bill benefits to dependents was approved

- * Family Readiness Support Assistants were established
- * Implementation of the 55 percent Survivor Benefit Plan benefit for post-62 annuitants
- * Adoption of TRICARE for Life
- * Development of the TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan (TRDP)
- * Increased Service Members' Group Life Insurance benefits—from \$50,000 to \$200,000 to \$400,000

Many of the improvements resulting from past AFAP initiatives have, in fact, been adopted across the Department of Defense, thus benefitting all branches of the military service.

"So," you might ask, "if AFAP presents such a great opportunity for my voice to be heard on both local and national issues, where do I begin?"

Issue submission process

Each Major Command in the Army, including the Army National Guard, collects issues submitted by their constituents. Select delegates are invited to participate in the process of prioritizing issues for submission to the next higher level.

The Soldier and Family Support Division, Army National Guard, will participate in this process for the first time in four years, and we need your issues. The Army National Guard AFAP conference is scheduled to be held in the first week of May 2010. Submit issues through your Family Readiness Group or Family Assistance Center to your State Family Program Office without delay. The top issues from the May conference will be submitted to the National Guard Bureau for consideration. After review by Guard leadership, select issues will be forwarded to the Department of the Army AFAP Conference in January 2011.

AFAP issues contain three sections—a title, scope and recommendations. Someone who reads your issue should understand what the problem is, why it's a problem, and what you believe is necessary to fix the problem.



With the Army Family Action Plan, Families can voice concerns and make recommendations to Guard leadership.

Many improvements resulting from AFAP initiatives have been adopted by the Department of Defense.

Title: The issue title is a summary of the issue, not a sentence or discussion. Example: “Tuition Assistance for Overseas Spouses,” not “Overseas Spouses Have Limited Access to Scholarships.”

Scope: The scope is a clear and concise paragraph about the issue. The scope identifies one problem, not several. It is three sentences long. The first sentence states the problem; the middle sentence provides facts or additional information; and the last sentence states why the issue is important.

Recommendation: Recommendations convey what you want to happen—the end product that will resolve this issue. Recommendations always start with a strong action verb (e.g., provide, conduct, develop, build or fund). Avoid using weak verbs (e.g., consider, seek or ensure).

Each recommendation must relate to the problem identified in the scope. If a recommendation addresses a

different topic, then submit another issue paper. Issues are limited to one or two recommendations. For example, a recommendation should read, “Develop a tuition assistance program for overseas spouses,” not, “Spouses should get financial aid in areas where they have limited scholarships or employment.”

When you submit an issue, include your name and a phone number or email address. This will give us a way to contact you for more information or to let you know what happened with your issue.

In the future, each of the 54 states and territories will have a designated AFAP point of contact to which your issues will be submitted. A Web portal for issue submission is also being developed.

Why not consider participating in the AFAP process by submitting an AFAP issue now? You may discover how your ideas and suggestions can be a tremendous help to you and other Families just like yours.

Be a part of the AFAP process! 



Organically grown plants can produce their own toxins for protection from harmful elements.

“Organic” in a Nutshell

What does it mean and why should you care?

By JULIE ZEITLIN, STAFF WRITER
Data courtesy of MayoClinic.com and WebMD.com

These days, you can barely enter a grocery store or restaurant without hearing the term “organic.” But what does it mean? Is it better for you? Is it safer? Experts don’t have all the answers yet. The research process is still hot—and the results, hotly debated. Still, we have enough data to help the health-conscious make informed—and healthy—choices.

What does organic mean?

The term refers to the way food is grown. Organic crops are produced without conventional pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, bioengineering or ionizing radiation.

Organic animal farming means the animals are fed an entirely organic diet and are completely free of growth hormones and antibiotics. Organic farm animals must have access to the outdoors.

To bear the label “USDA Organic,” food must contain at least 95 percent organic ingredients and have had a government-approved expert inspect the farm of origin to ensure adherence to USDA Organic requirements.

Which is better for you: organic or conventional?

Research is underway, but the answer is unknown. Some studies indicate that organic produce has higher nutrient levels. However, many experts think the difference is not significant enough to affect our health.



Buying Tips

This much goes undisputed: Produce is most nutritious when it's fresh. So, don't just eat your fruits and veggies—eat them as soon after you buy them as possible.

Which is safer: organic or conventional food?

Again—experts are not sure. They debate the topic, and both sides offer compelling arguments.


Organic food contains far fewer pesticides than conventional fare, so your risk of ingesting these chemicals is lower. However, the amount of pesticides in conventional food is well below the level deemed dangerous by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Still, the long-term effects of consuming supposedly “safe” levels of pesticides are unknown.

Conventional-food advocates point out that organically grown plants are more vulnerable to harmful elements, such as nearby poisonous weeds, and they may produce their own toxins for protection. They're also more prone to bacterial contamination. Both of these substances can be harmful.

Whichever type of food you choose, wash all produce before eating it.

Cultivate good habits

In some circles, organic is all the rage. In others, the debate rages on. The most important thing, experts agree, is that we eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and grains—no matter how they're grown. 

* **Buy fruits and vegetables in season to ensure the highest quality.** Also, try to buy your produce the day it's delivered to market to ensure that you're buying the freshest food possible.

* **Read food labels carefully.** Just because a product says it's organic or contains organic ingredients doesn't necessarily mean it's a healthier alternative.

* **Don't confuse natural foods with organic foods.** Only those products with the “USDA Organic” label have met USDA standards.

* **Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly with running water to reduce the amount of dirt and bacteria.** If appropriate, use a small scrub brush — for example, before eating apples, potatoes, cucumbers or other produce in which you eat the outer skin.

* **If you're concerned about pesticides, peel your fruits and vegetables and trim outer leaves of leafy vegetables in addition to washing them thoroughly.** Keep in mind that peeling your fruits and vegetables may also reduce the amount of nutrients and fiber.

Source: MayoClinic.com

Burn 300 Calories in 30 Minutes

Three steps to total fitness at home

By SARAH JORDAN, STAFF WRITER

Getting in shape at home can be a challenge. Understanding the fundamentals of a well-rounded fitness program can make a difference. When designing a fitness circuit, your goal should be to incorporate strength, stamina, flexibility and balance training into your workout. Use the following three steps for a solid program:

1. Increase your heart rate for a sustained period of time.

This is called cardiovascular output or “cardio.” To achieve the proper amount, the American Heart Association recommends exercising for a combined total of 30 minutes or longer on most days. Exercise may consist of gardening, housework or moderate to brisk walking.

The suggested general guideline is to stay within 50 to 85 percent of your maximum heart rate. Your maximum heart rate is approximately 220 minus your age.

For example: A healthy 35-year-old woman’s maximum heart rate would be 185 beats per minute, making her target heart rate zone 93 to 157 beats per minute.

It’s important to start slowly and work your way into more intense exercise. Your heart will handle the stress of exercise more efficiently as you become conditioned to exercise.

The program is designed to allow you to work at your own pace.

2. Include muscle-strengthening activities.

This type of training is commonly referred to as strength training, resistance training or weight lifting.

Sometimes thought to be only for men desiring to build muscle, this exercise is actually a vital component of a balanced program for all people.


muscular coordination, more muscle mass and higher bone density in men and women of all ages.”

Resistance training can be accomplished with weights, resistance bands or your own body weight.

3. Add postures for increased flexibility and balance.

Flexibility and balance training helps improve the body’s ability to move and react. Flexibility helps keep your spine in proper alignment, potentially reducing the pain associated with overly tight muscle groups.

Balance training can help minimize the risk of injury when exposed to uneven terrain or obstacles. It incorporates elements of instability into simple tasks. Balancing on one foot or reaching for an object on the ground with one hand while balancing on the opposite foot are examples of this type of training.

The following are sample exercises from each category of training and can be used in your at-home fitness circuit. 

Warning: Always seek the advice and guidance of a qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have prior to commencing a fitness program. This article should not be relied on or substituted for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The exercises presented are for suggestion only. Participate at your own risk. Stop if you feel faint or short of breath.

THE FOUR KEY COMPONENTS OF A PHYSICAL FITNESS PLAN:

STRENGTH,
STAMINA,
FLEXIBILITY,
BALANCE.

.....

Resistance training can help with daily activities such as heavy lifting or moving a piece of furniture. According to the American Heart Association, “the health benefits of resistance training include increased strength and

1. Cardio

Warm-Up Phase

- * Climb the stairs in your house
- * Walk or jog in place

2. Resistance Training



<< Superwoman/Superman

Lie face down on the ground with arms straight overhead, palms inward and feet 12 inches apart. Contract your back muscles and slowly arch your lower back, raising your arms, chest and legs off the ground, holding for a few seconds at the highest point. Return to the start position and repeat.

Exhale through your mouth as you arch, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body.



<< Side Plank with Bent Knees

Balance your body on your left forearm and left thigh, right leg on top of your left, right arm straight and placed on your right hip. Bend your legs 90 degrees at the knees and make your left hand into a fist.

Align your head with your spine. Tighten your abdominal muscles and raise your hips until your back and thighs are straight. Hold this position for 10-15 seconds. Continue until your goal is reached. Switch positions and repeat.

Exhale through your mouth as you raise your hips, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body.

2. Resistance Training (cont.)



<< Modified Push-Ups

Balance your body on your hands and knees with your back and thighs forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, knees bent 90 degrees, knees together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart and first fingers aligned with your torso, arms straight. While keeping your abdominal muscles tight, lower your body by bending both elbows until the upper parts of your arms become parallel to the ground. Return to the start position and repeat.

Exhale through your mouth as you push up, and inhale through your nose as you lower your body.

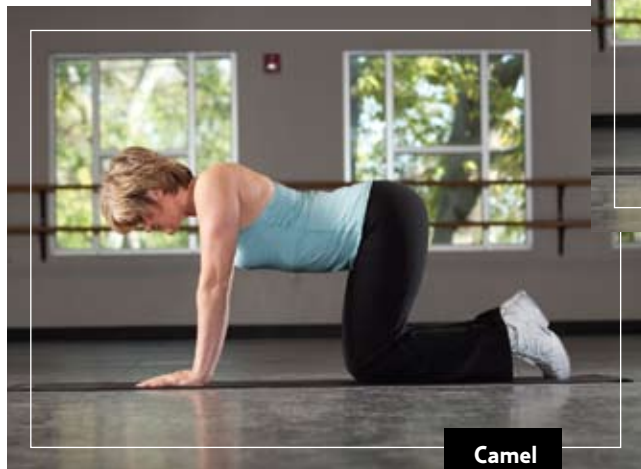
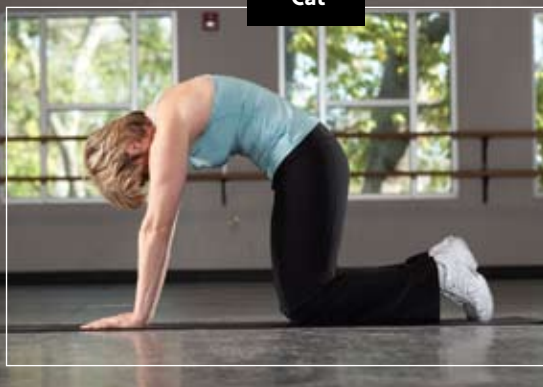
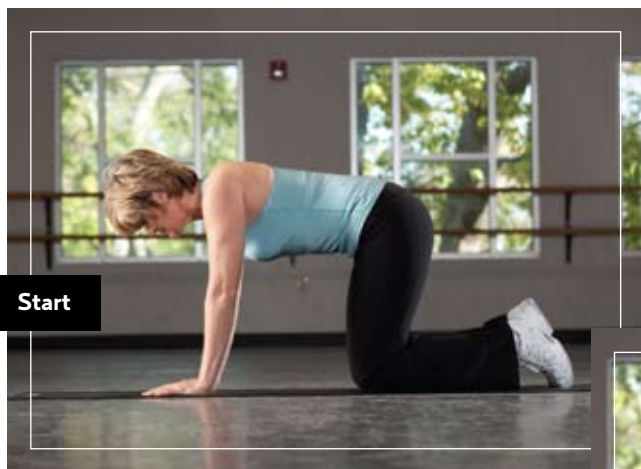
3. Flexibility and Balance Training



<< Quadruped Extensions ("Bird Dog")

Balance your body on your hands and knees with your back forming a straight line. Maintain a neutral spine, knees together or up to 12 inches apart, hands shoulder-width apart, arms straight. Contract the abdominal muscles, lift and extend the left arm and the right leg simultaneously until level with the back. Pause for a few seconds and slowly return to the start position. Repeat with the opposite arm and leg, pausing for a few seconds while extended. Continue switching until goal is reached. Performing the actions on both sides once is one repetition.

3. Flexibility and Balance Training (cont.)



Foundations Sample fitness program:

- Walking in place x 5 minutes
- Quadruped Extensions ("Bird Dog") x 10 on each side
- Superwoman/ Superman x 10–15 repetitions
- Side Plank with Bent Knees x 10–15 repetitions
- Modified Push-Ups x 12–15 repetitions
- Walking in place or stair climbing x 5–10 minutes
- Cat-Camel x 5–8 sets

Note: Complete three sets of the entire program before stretching.

⬆ Cat-Camel

Kneel on a soft, flat surface, positioning your knees and feet hip-width apart, feet flexed. Place your hands on the mat, under your shoulders, shoulder-width apart, hands facing forward. Position your body so that your knees are directly under your hips and hands are directly under your shoulders. Tighten your abdominal muscles to position your spine in a neutral position. Note: Do not sag or arch while in the start position.

Cat: Tighten your abdominal muscles, pushing your spine upward toward the ceiling, and hold this position for 10–15 seconds. Allow your head to fall toward your chest, maintaining alignment with the spine.

Camel: Slowly relax your core muscles. Let your stomach fall toward the floor, making an arch in your back, and allow your shoulder blades to fall inward. Hold this position for 10–15 seconds before returning to your start position. Continue until your goal is reached.

Exhale through your mouth as you push your spine upward (cat), and inhale through your nose as you let your stomach fall (camel).

Exhale through your mouth as you extend, and inhale through your nose as you return to the start position.

 For more information about exercise and health, visit AmericanHeart.org.

takecare

Caring and support from loved ones will ease the transition for PFC Quinn Ryan of the 1st-230th Air Cavalry.





Find the Strength to Forgive

Forgiveness provides a path to healthy adjustment

By MARTIN BINKS, PH.D., ARMY NATIONAL GUARD DECADE OF HEALTH CONSULTANT

Reintegrating into civilian life after deployment isn't easy, but approaching it with passion and caring helps Soldiers and their loved ones through the process.

One emotion that may arise during this time is guilt—on the part of both parties. Families may feel remorse for things said—or not said—during stressful times. Soldiers may feel a sense of responsibility for harm caused to a comrade overseas.

People involved in a tragedy may develop “survivor’s guilt.” It often emerges as a nagging sense that if the surviving person had acted differently, they might have prevented harm. They may blame themselves for things that were out of their control.

However, guilt can also come from less tragic circumstances. Examples include missing the birth of a child, losing a job or a house and losing out on quality time with loved ones.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one key to healthy adjustment.

The first rule of forgiveness is letting go of blame. When bad things happen, we may use the experience to create a sense of structure or understand how to avoid a similar circumstance in the future. Unfortunately, blame is often overly harsh or incorrectly assigned, and hinders the healing it's designed to promote.

Human beings make mistakes. Blame serves no useful purpose. Forgiveness requires acceptance that—whatever the cause—assigning blame will not change what happened. To move on, we must find a way to forgive.

Forgiveness is more than just not being angry. It involves a range of skills that can benefit your personal relationships and your community in general. It allows you to get on with your life, benefits those you care about and allows you to leave the anger and guilt behind.

The concept of forgiveness is as old as the roots of spirituality and religion themselves.

Ancient teachings coupled with an understanding of human psychology offer effective forgiveness strategies:

- * **Practice emotion and stress management.** Get back into a normal routine, talk about feelings, accept that irrational “blaming” isn’t helpful and set aside time to relax and play.
- * **Develop effective communication and conflict management strategies.** Use non-judgmental and non-confrontational language. Stick to “I” statements or statements about your personal feelings as opposed to “you” statements. For example, “I’m hurt when you talk to me like that,” rather than, “You made me feel like an idiot.” This often helps keep situations manageable.
- * **Develop self-awareness.** Know what leads to feelings of hurt and anger in various situations. Sometimes “old baggage” surfaces during stressful times. Try to recognize when emotions are out of proportion.
- * **Develop empathy in the face of conflict with others.** Put yourself in their shoes and remember everyone comes to situations from their own (often equally valid) perspective. Pause and ask yourself, “Why is this person reacting the way they are?” You might be surprised by what you learn about yourself and them.
- * **Always practice good self-care.** Eat well, exercise, get enough sleep and leave time for fun.

Forgiveness reduces anger and blame by turning off your inner critic, and helps you embrace good feelings and good health—the path to resilience and a good life. 🧠

 For information and resources on resiliency, visit DecadeOfHealth.com/spahooah and the **MIND ROOM**.

About the Author *Dr. Martin Binks is a licensed psychologist and clinical director and CEO of Binks Behavioral Health PLLC, which provides consultation and services in behavioral health, obesity and general health and wellness.*

"As a spouse, you have to teach yourself to be independent ... and it's very hard for a Soldier to understand that when he comes back."

—REBECCA TRYGSTAD





GREG LATZA

BACK TO the JOURNEY

Three Guard couples offer advice for achieving post-deployment happiness

By RACHEL GLADSTONE, STAFF WRITER

Reconnecting with loved ones after a long deployment can be as challenging as it is rewarding, both for the Soldier who is returning and for the Family who welcomes the Soldier home. Not only does it take courage and resilience to embrace the many inevitable changes, it also takes some preparation on everyone's part to make the transition work.

When *Foundations* spoke with the Trygstads, the Jarvises, and the Russells recently, we found that each Family had a unique way of dealing with the challenges that come with this territory. It was not only their commitment to each other that ultimately got them through, but also their belief that putting Family first is job one.



TWO SOLDIERS, ONE FAMILY

CPT Jayme and CPT Rebecca Trygstad,
South Dakota National Guard

CPT Jayme Trygstad and CPT Rebecca Trygstad met in Officer Candidate School and have two children: Skylar, 4, and Liberty, 1½.

Jayme served in Afghanistan for a year while Rebecca served at home. This gave Rebecca a different perspective on deployment and reintegration from many other spouses.

“As a Soldier myself, I understood that he wasn’t going to be able to get on the Internet or call home all the time,” Rebecca said. “But when we did have connectivity, the Webcam allowed him to not miss too much back here.”

Communicating about his time away was another tough thing for this military couple. “Because she’s a Soldier, it was hard for me not to tell her everything. But she’s also my wife and the mother of our children, so there were certain items I had to keep quiet about. It took me a little longer to open up to her [when I returned] because of that,” Jayme added.

Ch-ch-changes

For Jayme, the biggest challenge about returning was the emotional quotient. “I’m not a very emotional guy, so



actually, coming home scared me more than going over,” he said. “Everybody talks about how much changes, and you don’t really know how to prepare yourself for that.”

“I think the hardest thing for a Soldier to deal with is to come back and see how much [the spouse] has changed,” Rebecca affirmed. “As a spouse, you have to teach yourself to be independent—that your kids

come first and those types of things. And it’s very hard for a Soldier to understand that when he comes back.”

To help them communicate, the couple sought counseling through Military OneSource (MilitaryOneSource.com).

“We just thought [it would help with] the whole reintegration thing,” Jayme said.

“You can’t be scared to ask for help,” Rebecca added. “And another thing—you’ve got to know that things aren’t going to go back to normal right away. It’s going to take some time for the Soldier to get used to the way things have changed in the Family and for you to get used to how the Soldier has changed. He’s got to get comfortable and get back into the swing of life before he’ll open up to you. You have to be patient—give him time.”



FAMILY READINESS

SGT Kevin and Lindsay Jarvis, Vermont National Guard

Lindsay Jarvis works for the National Guard's Family Readiness Program, which gives her a unique perspective on reintegrating after a deployment. When her husband of four years, SGT Kevin Jarvis, deployed to Iraq, Lindsay was pregnant with their first child. They made plans so Kevin could connect with the baby while he was gone.

"Before I deployed, we bought a video camera and I recorded myself on DVD reading I don't know how many stories," Kevin said. "While I was gone, Lindsay put them in the DVD player, and our daughter could hear my voice reading stories."

Communication is key

"Communicating while I was gone was key to our reconnecting when I got back," Kevin said.

"Absolutely," Lindsay agreed. "I think a few weeks before [the unit] came home, [the spouses] had a briefing about what to expect, and we still thought, 'Oh, it'll be fine. They're


CAROLYN BATES

Kids count

Keeping the kids in the loop was important to the whole Family.

"When Jayme was gone, he could see the kids over the Web camera and that helped [them stay connected]," Rebecca explained.

The couple offered a few other powerful tips, including the importance of relying on Family and friends during deployment. "My parents, my sister and my aunt were lifesavers when Jayme was deployed," Rebecca recalled.

And last but not least, she added, "Take advantage of the time you have together when your spouse comes back. Maybe take those trips you've always wanted to go on. Make the best of every day. Because there are a lot of people out there who don't get to welcome their spouses home." 





not going to come back different.' And yet, things change when they get home."

Lindsay went on to share about reintegration and how it affected their Family. "There are a lot of different factors that play into that, and I think that having had communication was really helpful. Even if it was just a quick call for Kevin to say, 'I'm just letting you know I love you and I'm OK.' That was a good thing, especially for reintegration. Even just to send a few pictures. Any way you can communicate makes it easier to reconnect."

The hardest part

Both Lindsay and Kevin expounded on the challenges they faced upon his return and how they overcame them.

"You almost have to relearn each other's routines, each other's behaviors and each other's emotions—that's a challenge," Lindsay confided. "It's a work in progress. Any marriage may have its issues; you throw in deployment, and it becomes even more of a challenge."

"The hardest part [for me] about coming home was learning that you're not around Soldiers any more and realizing that the decisions you're making are not life or death," Kevin added. "You need to decompress a little

bit and realize that your [spouse] is not a fellow Soldier. [It's easier when] you have a lot of two-way communication."

"It's a work in progress. Any marriage may have its issues, and you throw in deployment and it becomes even more of a challenge."

—LINDSAY JARVIS



Strong bonds


With the help of Family Readiness Groups and other military spouses, Lindsay was able to quell her stress when it came to Kevin's deployment and reintegration.

"You can walk into the room [at a Family Readiness Program meeting], and everyone there knows exactly what you're going through," she said.

The couple also participated in a Strong Bonds retreat, where they could get away with other military couples and just learn. They also sought counseling when Kevin returned.

"We wanted to see if what we were going through [with all the aspects of his deployment] was 'normal.'"

"We're a pretty good team, and it was very beneficial," Lindsay continued. She added, "We're a military Family, and that is certainly something to be proud of."

"It's a heavy sacrifice to make," she added, "but at the same time, there's a lot of honor in it. So I tell him I'm proud of him, and when he comes back, I welcome him with open arms." 



THE WAY THEY WERE

**SSG Jason and Jessica Russell,
Arkansas National Guard**

SSG Jason Russell and his wife, Jessica, have been married for three years and have two daughters: Isabella, 2, and Trinity, 9 months.

The fact that Jessica was pregnant with their first child when Jason deployed presented some challenges upon his return. Not only was he meeting his daughter for the first time, but they had also just moved.

“We bought a new house while I was gone, so that was all new to me,” Jason told us. “But we just kind of went back to the way things were when I got home. The military prepares you for that.”

He and Jessica explained how their involvement with Military OneSource programs helped them with Jason’s reintegration.

“You’ll have a day where you go to briefings and all kinds of stuff to bring your Family together,” Jason explained.

“At 60 days, they put you up in a nice hotel for a weekend retreat. There, [they address] anything you need to talk about, like finances, jobs, emotional stuff, anything like that.”

“It was really great,” added Jessica. “The retreat made me feel a part of things.”

Patience is a virtue

It takes time to make the transition from being overseas to coming home.

“Be patient with the person who’s coming home,” Jessica said. “It’s different for them over there than it is here. It’s a huge wake-up call when they come back. It just takes a little while to get back in the groove.”

This can be challenging, especially when it comes to communicating with your spouse, post-deployment.

“When he got home, our baby had just turned 1, and I wasn’t used to asking him what he thought of stuff because I took care of everything when he was gone,” Jessica recalled.

Jason concurred. “Overseas, you have a routine and have [your fellow Soldiers] around every day. When you come home, you have to leave that and get back with your Family,” Jason said.

Talk the talk

For Jason and Jessica, a successful post-deployment hinged on one thing: good old-fashioned communication.

“Talk,” Jason said. “Make sure you always communicate. Tell [your spouse] everything you’re feeling. Don’t try to distance yourself and keep things secret, and don’t be afraid to seek help if you need it, either. When you get back, try to spend as much time with your Family as you can.”

Jessica summed it up by adding, “Just communicate and stay patient, and try not to get mad at each other.” 🗣️

Smart Investing for the Guard Family

Strategic tips to keep you financially strong

By JUNE WALBERT, USAA CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER

Do you know you need to invest for your future, but don't know how to go about it? Don't feel like the Lone Ranger. Many Americans feel exactly the same way—especially considering the recent stock market meltdown. It can be a little complicated, but with these 10 tips you'll be armed and ready to do battle.

Invest early and often.

Some of the best advice is to start investing with your first paycheck. Too late for that? Start now then. The earlier you begin investing, the less you'll ultimately have to save because of the power of tax-deferred compounding.

A pretty smart guy named Albert Einstein said, "The most powerful force on earth is compounding interest." For example, if at 21 years old you have the foresight to fully fund a Roth IRA at \$417 per month and glean an average 8 percent return, you'll have more than \$1.3 million at age 60. If you wait 10 years—and invest just \$50,000 less—you'll end up with almost \$573,000. Still a nice nest egg, but I'd rather have a million bucks in retirement, wouldn't you?

Diversify, diversify and diversify some more.

We've all heard the old adage: "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." It's an important element in investing. You should avoid betting that one stock will outpace everything else. A better idea is to have some large, small and international stock exposure, plus some bonds and cash.

However, diversifying does not guarantee a profit or prevent a loss.

It's good to be cheap.

Rather than relying on our stock-picking skills—or the lack thereof—it's wise for most of us to look to mutual funds to help meet our investment needs. Mutual funds provide a way to pool your money with other investors while hiring a professional money manager to make stock and bond selections for you.

A key point is that you may want to avoid paying sales charges. Big fees are not in vogue any more. If you feel more comfortable paying for advice from a pro, that's okay, too. But remember, every dollar you pay a stockbroker for advice and to make trades is a dollar that's not working for you. And that adds up over a 30- to 40-year investment timeline.

Internal expenses are another fee to consider. This pays for the money manager and various overhead expenses, such as rent, utilities, computers, etc. The average fee is 1.25 percent. If you pay more than this, you may not get your money's worth.

Get professional help.

Strategic investing is not a skill most of us come by naturally. It makes a lot of sense to ask a pro for some help. Several reputable firms offer free financial advice and no-load mutual funds (no sales charge). And that's a great combo.

Seek balance (annually).

Second to the proper mix of investments, annual rebalancing is critical to the potential long-term success of your portfolio.

A simple example: Let's say your risk profile calls for a half-stock and half-bond mix. Let's also assume that

your stocks did very well and, due to their growth, became 65 percent of your portfolio while your bonds dropped to 35 percent. Suddenly, you're taking more risk than is comfortable for you. To rebalance, you'd sell that "extra" 15 percent of stock (thereby selling high) and invest that money in the bonds, which lagged in performance (buying low).

It may feel counterintuitive to sell something that is doing well, but this is how you can permanently capture gains (money you've made) without over-thinking it or buying and selling based on emotion.

Calculate and set a date.

Investing is a long-term proposition. It's appropriate to invest in stocks or stock mutual funds if your time horizon is seven years or longer (and, of course, if they are suitable to your risk tolerance). In other words, if you're investing for retirement and you have 20 years to go, it's fine to be aggressive. If on the other hand, you're saving and investing for a kid's education and it's three years away, I'd steer clear of stocks and consider short-term bond funds instead. That way, you potentially minimize the risk of losing money before your goal comes around while you maximize the return.

Put it on autopilot.

Sitting down to write that investment check every month can be a chore. You may not get to it. At times you might feel that you can't afford to invest. Consider putting your investments on automatic pilot. It's easy—and you don't even miss the dough after a while.

Shortchange Uncle Sam.

Most employers offer some sort of retirement plan. The National Guard has the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Your civilian employer may have a 401(k) or 403(b).

The smartest way to save on taxes today is to save for your future. While the TSP does not offer a matching contribution, many civilian employers do. That simply means if you contribute a certain percentage of your salary to the retirement account, they'll contribute that much or a portion of that amount, too, which is a very nice way for you to multiply your savings. I always say, "Never leave free money on the table!"


It's a marathon, not a sprint.

It's important to remember that you're in this for the long haul. Accordingly, you should not be upset, nervous or anxious about short-term volatility. Continuing automatic investment during volatile market times could mean you're

purchasing high-quality investments at lower prices. It can be a winning strategy if done consistently.

But build a slush fund first.

We've heard a lot in the last two years about the importance of the rainy day fund (it's raining!), but in reality most Americans don't have enough cash stashed. Guard members who depend primarily on income from a civilian job should have six to nine months of living expense monies set aside in a separate account. I know that sounds like a small fortune, but it can mean the difference between keeping your home and moving to the street.

And a bonus tip comes from one of my readers: Don't try to make 10 percent on investments when you are still paying 18 percent to service debt. Paying off debt yields a higher return. 



JUNE WALBERT is a **CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™** practitioner with USAA Financial Planning Services. June helps Families get financially fit by sharing practical financial guidance on topics such as tackling credit card debt, saving for college, planning

for retirement, leaving a legacy and other long-term goals.

June's passion for making smart financial decisions has created demand for her as a speaker at conferences and conventions around the world. Her advice has been featured in national media including CNN, FOX Business News, CNBC, *U.S. News & World Report*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Kiplinger's Magazine*, *SmartMoney.com*, *MSNBC.com*, *Forbes.com* and *Kiplingers.com*. She writes a weekly advice column, "Ask June," on *military.com* and can be heard on *Navy Homefront Talk* and *ArmyWifeTalkRadio.com*.

In addition to her CFP® designation and membership in the Financial Planning Association, June holds Series 7 and 63 securities registrations, and the Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) designation. She earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Central Oklahoma. June has 19 years of military service, and serves as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.

This material is for informational purposes and is not investment advice, an indicator of future performance, a solicitation, an offer to buy or sell or a recommendation for any security. It should not be used as a primary basis for making investment decisions. Consider your own financial circumstances and goals carefully before investing.

support

TSG Chris Gibson (left) of 1st Battalion, 134th Field Artillery Regiment and John Koch of the American Apex Corporation watch a CH-47 Chinook helicopter take off in Camp Grayling, MI, Aug. 24, 2009, as a part of the Employer Boss Lift. The event took 20 Ohio National Guard and Army Reserve friendly employers, nominated by Soldiers and Airmen, to Camp Grayling to observe and participate in training.



The Outstanding Employer Award

By MAJ ANDRA M. DUSKIE, DIRECTOR, MILITARY OUTREACH,
EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is celebrating 15 years of recognizing outstanding employers of Guard Soldiers and Reservists.

The Freedom Award is the U.S. government's highest recognition for employers who provide outstanding support to their employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve, and their Families. It's the highest in a series of employer recognition awards given by the Department of Defense, which annually honors up to 15 employers with the award.

The open nomination season for the 2010 Freedom Award began Nov. 2, 2009, and ran through Jan. 18, 2010.

Small, medium or large

All employers, both large and small, are encouraged to support their employees' commitment to military service.

An employer may choose to continue healthcare benefits for Soldiers' Families while the Soldier is deployed. An act of kindness such as offering to cut the lawn for a deployed member's spouse is another way the employer can show support. And while all employer support is exemplary, employers who go above and beyond the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) to assist their employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve deserve special recognition.

One such company receiving the Freedom Award in 2009 was AeroDyn Wind Tunnel, a small business based in Mooresville, NC, consisting of fewer than 100 employees.

AeroDyn Wind Tunnel employee and North Carolina Army National Guard Soldier SGT Michael Scaglione nominated his employer, stating, "The employees of AeroDyn have become my Family. All pay and benefits,

To nominate your employer for the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, visit FreedomAward.mil. Service Members or Family members are eligible to nominate their employers.

including raises, are continued whether I am in training or deployed.”


The company specializes in wind tunnel testing for automotive racing. Five of AeroDyn Wind Tunnel’s 21 employees have served or are serving in the military. Employer support of the military is a company policy, detailed in the “Commitment to Guardsmen, Reservists and Their Families” section of AeroDyn’s employee handbook.

The company offers outstanding support to its activated National Guard and Reserve employees and their Families by providing differential pay during deployment and continuing employee and enrolled Family members’ medical and life insurance benefits during Active Duty. The company also provides ongoing support and contact via video, phone calls and emails between the deployed employee and their Family.

Prior to Scaglione’s deployment, AeroDyn Wind Tunnel closed its 24-hour business for an entire night so that all employees and their spouses could attend a boat cruise to bid him farewell.

When notified of the award, Scaglione was home on mid-tour leave. The company assisted him in extending his leave and paid

for his travel and lodging in Washington, DC, to be a part of the celebration. AeroDyn Wind Tunnel actively recruits Guard Soldiers and Reservists because of their values, education, training, leadership skills and teamwork.

The 2010 Freedom Award recipients will be announced early next summer and honored at a black-tie gala ceremony at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center in Washington, DC, on September 23, 2010. Recipients of the 2009 Freedom Award met with President Barack Obama. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Dr. Jill Biden, Deputy Secretary of Defense William J. Lynn III and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Dennis McCarthy presented the awards at a ceremony attended by members of Congress and senior government and military officials. 

For more information, visit the [ESGR Web site at Esgr.mil](http://ESGR.mil) or call Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve at (800) 336-4590.



Members of the Atlanta Falcons organization receive the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve certificate from the adjutant general of the Georgia National Guard, MG William T. Nesbitt, in September 2009.

support

Due to their busy lifestyles of school, work and extracurricular activities, it's difficult to get the family together. In the front row are Nour, Omar, Fatima, Assra'a and Zahraa (April), and in the back are Ahmed, Thair and Zuheer.



above&beyond

No Mountain High Enough

North Dakota National Guard
leads Iraqi Family to new life

By SSG AMY WIESER-WILLSON, NORTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

An Iraqi man is brutally murdered in front of his son by insurgents. His pregnant widow is forced to flee the country with their seven children. The youngest, a car bomb victim, has shrapnel imbedded in her eye. She clings tightly to her mother.

SHELLE MICHAELS

“He’d just smile and say that his actions were nothing compared to what we were doing.”

—MSG SHAYNE BECKERT

This may sound like a scene from a Hollywood blockbuster, but it’s not. This is Iraq, where everyday life often brings more action, drama and heartache than any movie. But, just like the movies, real life can bring happy endings. Or, for Fatima and her seven children, a happy beginning—a new “birth day”—thanks to Soldiers and Families connected with the North Dakota National Guard.

Chance encounter on the road

The story began in July 2004, when North Dakota Guard Soldiers on patrol first met Fatima’s husband, Majid, whose old white truck was broken down along main supply route Tampa in Iraq. The 141st Battalion’s Company B, third platoon, stopped to search the truck. As Trailblazers, they were responsible for locating and clearing roadside bombs.

What seemed like another routine stop for the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion’s Trailblazers would become anything but.

“The patrol found a weapon in his truck, so the patrol leader peppered him with questions,” explained MAJ Grant Wilz, platoon leader. “It turned out he had been employed by the 2nd Infantry Division working out of FOB Brassfield Mora during Operation Iraqi Freedom-I. He had papers documenting such from their S-2 [intelligence].”

Majid told the platoon that he was a friend, having secretly assisted Americans since they entered Iraq. He shared his story with the Soldiers. He had been stripped of his home and all of his Family’s belongings during Saddam Hussein’s reign. Majid served multiple prison terms for disobeying the regime’s edicts and for marrying Fatima, a Shia. Majid, like most Iraqis, was Sunni.

The Guard’s chance encounter with Majid would impact many lives in the months and years that followed. “Mr.

M”—Majid’s security code name—would share information on terrorist activity and provide intelligence on the locations of weapons caches, roadside bombs and insurgent safe houses. His information ultimately saved the lives of

hundreds of Coalition Forces as well as Iraqi civilians. He also led Iraqi Army raids on insurgent safe houses in the Samarra region.

Majid, a gregarious man, always greeted the Soldiers with bear hugs, while Fatima insisted on sharing what food they had. The Soldiers reciprocated the kindness, bringing new soccer balls for their children. The platoon’s medic, SPC April Rohrer, treated the pregnant Fatima. MAJ Wilz and his platoon sergeant, MSG Shayne Beckert, consistently urged Majid to be careful and avoid risks. They told him to think of his Family.

“He’d just smile and say that his actions were nothing compared to what we were doing,” Beckert said. “The only thing he ever asked of us was that we take care of his Family if anything happened to him.”

North Dakota meets Majid

Wilz and Beckert would first broach the subject of helping the Family in a Dec. 29, 2004, radio interview with Scott Hennen. The Fargo-based talk-show host was guest hosting a nationally broadcast show that day, and a North Dakota public affairs team led by MSG Rob Keller arranged the call from Iraq.

“I’ll never forget first hearing the story of Mr. M,” Hennen said. “They told me of his heroic efforts to help them locate [improvised explosive devices]. It was a very different story than the national media was telling.”

Despite the Soldiers’ efforts to protect his identity and their numerous warnings to be careful, insurgents eventually learned of Majid’s allegiance to Coalition Forces.



When Fatima arrived in North Dakota, she commented that even though her children had lost Family in Iraq, they would find Family here—and they have.

support

Kelly H. Johnson, left, and SGT Christopher F. King, both of the 188th Engineer Company, North Dakota Army National Guard and Air National Guard, volunteered to “adopt” two Iraqi Families who relocated to Fargo, ND.



On Jan. 16, 2005, while driving with his oldest son, Omar, he was attacked by insurgents in a drive-by shooting. Wounded, Majid pushed Omar to the floor of the truck. The insurgents pulled Majid from his truck and executed him. Covered in his father’s blood on the truck floor, Omar survived by pretending to be dead.

Soon after, the insurgents learned Omar was still alive. Knowing he could potentially identify them, they put a \$50,000 bounty on his head. Omar had not only witnessed his father’s brutal murder, but had also accompanied him on fact-finding missions for U.S. Soldiers. The insurgents were determined to eliminate all potential threats.

When Wilz and Beckert reached Fatima the next day, she was grieving and afraid.

“We go America?” she asked.

“Yes,” they replied instinctively. They had no idea when or how, but they knew they would make it happen.

They immediately contacted Congressman Earl Pomeroy, a 16-year veteran of the House of Representatives and longtime supporter of Service Members. Wilz and Beckert requested his help in securing asylum for the Family. They also informed Hennen, the Fargo broadcaster, who recalls the very moment when he learned the news of Majid’s death.

“I remember the feeling like it was yesterday. My heart sank,” he said. “Grant’s email also told of the danger Majid’s Family was in, and I instantly started thinking, ‘We have to get this Family out of harm’s way.’ It’s the least we could do for this great man who gave his life helping our brave North Dakota [Guard Soldiers].”

Slipping out of Iraq

Soon thereafter, a high-level, top-secret plan came into being and continued with as much speed as the system would allow. By April 2005, just three months after Majid was killed, the Family had secured the necessary passports and documentation, and the required paperwork was submitted to the Department of Defense.



Habitat for Humanity partnered with Guard volunteers to construct a home for Fatima and her seven children.

But even the best-laid plans have hiccups. The day after the paperwork was submitted, Fatima gave birth—earlier than expected—and her new baby girl would need a passport, certificate of nationality and Iraqi identification card in order to leave the country.

The Family stayed hidden in Iraq, moving discreetly from one safe house to another until Fatima could venture out for the necessary documents at the end of the month. But as she stood in line with her 2-year-old daughter, Asrah, a bomb exploded nearby, sending shrapnel into the little girl’s right eye.

Enough was enough. Congressman Pomeroy contacted senior officials within the Department of Defense and Department of State, requesting an emergency exemption. More time to get the infant’s documents would mean the possibility of more tragedy.

Pomeroy’s efforts culminated with military members providing an emergency pickup for the Family at the Baghdad train terminal and escorting them into the Green Zone, where the Family could remain secure until leaving for the U.S. That also allowed Asrah to be cared for by military medical personnel within the Green Zone.

In the meantime, Pomeroy headed there himself, flying to Iraq on May 4, 2005, to expedite the process in person.



Fatima embraces MAJ Grant Wilz after accepting the keys to her new home. North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven looks on.

Back in North Dakota

While Pomeroy and Lutheran Social Services focused on securing the Family's Significant Public Benefit Parole status, an army of volunteers took to the streets to raise funds to help the Family settle safely in North Dakota. Asylum status could take up to two years, during which Fatima would be unable to work. And the Family had to guarantee at least two months' living expenses before they could enter the United States.

Led by the 141st Engineer Battalion's Company B, 3rd Platoon, the Fargo-Moorhead community rallied to raise over \$100,000 in cash—more than enough money to easily sustain the Family through their lengthy asylum process.

"It's truly a miracle, and one of the best experiences of my life," said Hennen. "And it never would have happened but for the heart and tenacity of Grant [Wilz] and Shayne [Beckert] and so many generous souls in North Dakota."

Coming home

Everybody's efforts culminated May 20, 2005, during an emotional night at the Jet Center in Fargo. Wilz and Beckert flew to New York to meet up with the plane carrying Fatima and her children. They landed together in Fargo, and the children—despite a 14-hour flight—were enthusiastic about their new home.

"Hi guys," said 13-year-old Zuheir as he deplaned, as if no time had passed since seeing his friends from the 141st. His voice gave no indication of the hell his Family had been through.

Fatima's brother, Ali, and his Family also met the plane in New York. The two had not seen each other since 1990, when Ali was imprisoned. Ali had been a member of the Iraqi army and refused to invade Kuwait. He still bears scars from his torture. He managed to escape to a U.S. military detention camp in Saudi Arabia and, in 1996, was released

*"It's truly a miracle,
and one of the best
experiences of my life."*

— SCOTT HENNEN,
FARGO-BASED TALK-SHOW HOST

and given U.S. residency. He repaid the kindness by working for the military to advise on Iraqi customs. Ali chose to move from Washington state to North Dakota to help his sister and her Family.

Here to stay

Much has happened since that night. With persistent diligence from Pomeroy's office, the Family was granted asylum in June 2007. With help from Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, the children quickly started school and the entire Family learned English. Fatima began working at a local hotel and later moved on to a wire harness assembly business.

The children are excelling in school, and the boys have transferred the skills they learned with a donated soccer ball on the sands in Iraq to the soccer fields in North Dakota, regularly bringing home trophies. Zuheir aims to play for the University of North Dakota someday. Omar, now 17, has his license to drive.

In a final promise to provide a safe home for Majid's Family, Wilz, Beckert, Congressman Pomeroy and a slew of National Guard volunteers collaborated with Habitat for Humanity. Together, they built a twin home to be shared by Fatima and her children on one side, and Ali and his Family on the other.

On March 29, 2008, Soldiers from the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion's Company B, along with North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven, Pomeroy, Hennen and many well-wishers, gathered at the twin homes. They prayed for the home and its occupants. Then, Fatima accepted the keys to her house, cupping them in the palms of both hands.

Gov. Hoeven commended the Family and the long, arduous, selfless journey that brought them to North Dakota. He also recognized the Soldiers who cared enough to not leave the mission behind when they left Iraq. They took it the extra distance, spending countless hours to ensure the Family's safety. 🇺🇸

support

If you're interested in the LIFE, Inc. program, contact your State Youth Coordinator or Nadine Moore, National Guard Child & Youth Programs, at (703) 607-9817 or Nadine.m.moore@us.army.mil.



Small and In Charge

New program helps kids plan their future

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

The National Guard is proud to announce the launch of a new youth program, LIFE, Inc.: The Ultimate Career Guide for Young People. The program was created by *The New York Times*' No. 1 best-selling author and financial literacy expert Neale S. Godfrey.

Inspiring youth to dream of great careers and providing the tools to achieve those dreams, the program plans to serve a minimum of 30,000 children of National Guard parents.

The Deloitte Foundation will donate the program's materials.

"Deloitte's research suggests that young people start thinking about careers as early as middle school; however, their exposure to [the] options is limited to what is shown on TV or what their parents do," says Shaun Budnik, president, Deloitte Foundation, and partner, Deloitte LLP. "Through our support of the LIFE, Inc. program, we are working to help students understand the wide variety of career choices available to them."

Nadine Moore, National Guard Bureau management and program analyst, said, "The National Guard, through our State Youth Coordinators and State Family Program Directors, is committed to supplying our Families with educational programs.

"LIFE, Inc. excites our youth about their future. We're pleased that the Deloitte Foundation has agreed to donate copies of the materials and that ... Godfrey is going to assist us in rolling it out in a fun and engaging way."


Cool tools

The materials consist of a student book, a teacher's guide with seven easy-to-teach lessons and activities, a student journal for each student to record their individual findings, an interactive Web site—NealesLifeInc.com—and instructor training.

LIFE, Inc. helps participants envision their future in an inspirational way. One of the program's best tools is its "Virtual Role Models"—real people who serve as mentors for the students, reflecting on their life's journey and providing useful insights about their own career paths.

Students will also learn how to acquire interviewing and financial literacy skills.

"No one is born a doctor, a military person or a president," commented Godfrey. "It all starts with a dream, hard work and people around you who help you with your journey."

LIFE, Inc. hopes to motivate the next generation to get out of bed every morning and be excited about seizing the workday. It aims to connect the dots for today's youth—to help them understand the relevance of the subjects they're learning and be encouraged to stay in school. 

The New Mexico National Guard Family Program creates a healthy partnership with Guard Families.



One-Stop Shop

New Mexico Family programs offer round-the-clock help for Guard members and Families

By SUSAN PICCO,
NEW MEXICO NATIONAL
GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The mission of the New Mexico National Guard Family Program is to help create and facilitate a partnership between National Guard Families and the New Mexico National Guard. This partnership is created through education, outreach services and disseminating resource information and training.

“We focus our efforts on being a joint state,” said Therese Sanchez, State Family Program Director. “We don’t see Families as component-specific—we simply want to serve the Service Members and their Families.”

A critical aspect of the Family Program is the Southwest Assistance Team (SWAT), which is comprised of Family Assistance Centers (FACs) that can be found throughout the state. FACs are the first stop for most Families who need help or for those who would like to volunteer their time and talents. Shaped by MG Kenny C. Montoya, the adjutant general of

COURTESY OF THE NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Family Members, You Can Help and Support Soldiers with Depression or Suicidal Thoughts

HELP A SOLDIER KNOW HE OR SHE IS OKAY AND NOT ALONE.

Signs that a Soldier may need to seek psychological help:

- Is Talking about Dying—any mention of dying, disappearing, jumping, shooting oneself, or other self-harm
- Has a Recent Loss and Is Not Coping Well—through death, divorce, separation, relationship, job, money, status, self-confidence, self-esteem, religious faith, interest in friends, hobbies, or activities previously enjoyed
- Has a Change in Personality—sad, withdrawn, irritable, overanxious, hyperactivity, tired, indecisive, agitation, or apathetic
- Has a Change in Sleep Pattern—insomnia, restlessness, early waking, oversleeping, or nightmares
- Has a Change in Eating Pattern—loss of appetite or weight, or overeating
- Has Diminished Sexual Interest—impotence or menstrual abnormalities (often missed periods)
- Has a Fear of Losing Control—thoughts of going crazy or harming self or others
- Has Hopelessness—believing things will never get better or nothing will ever change
- Shows Other Behaviors—suicidal impulses, statements or plans; making out wills or giving away favorite things; previous suicide attempts or substance abuse; arranging for care of pets or property; extravagant spending

IT TAKES COURAGE FOR A WARRIOR TO ADMIT HE OR SHE NEEDS HELP.

Evaluating Suicide Risk¹—How to assess the potential risk:

Plan—Does the person have one?

Lethality—Is it lethal? Can he or she die?

Availability—Does the person have a means to carry it out?

Illness—Does he or she have a mental or physical illness, or history of either?

Depression—Has there been chronic or specific incident(s)?

Previous Attempts—How many? How recent?

Alone—Is the person alone? Does he or she have a support system? Is he or she alone right now?

Loss—Has the person suffered a loss? Death? Job? Relationship? Self-esteem?

Substance Abuse (or use) - Has the person used drugs, alcohol, or medicine? Is the use current, chronic?

Footnote 1: PLAID PALS is a copyright of San Francisco Suicide Prevention (SFSP), 415-781-0500. www.sfscuicide.org/html/plaid.html.

Army National Guard
Soldier and Family
Support Division

HELPFUL NUMBERS

Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-TALK (8225)

The Defense Center of
Excellence Help Line
1-866-966-1020

Military One Source
1-800-342-9647
Overseas 1-800-342-6477
Collect Call 1-484-530-5908

Emergency
911



STEPS FOR LEADERS, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND FRIENDS OF WARRIORS

DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK, "Do you sometimes feel so bad that you think of suicide?"

Just about everyone has considered harming themselves or suicide, however fleetingly, at one time or another. There is no danger of "giving someone the idea." In fact, it can be a great relief if you bring the question of suicide into the open and discuss it freely without showing shock or disapproval. Raising the question reinforces that you are taking the person seriously and are genuinely concerned about responding to the potential of his or her distress.

If the answer is "YES, I do think of harming myself or suicide," take the answer seriously and follow through with these questions:

"Have you thought about how you would do it?"

"Do you have the means?"

"Have you decided when you would harm yourself?"

"Have you ever tried suicide before?"

"If so, what happened then?"

If the person has a definite plan, the means are available, the method is lethal, and the time of the suicide is set, the risk of suicide is very high. You must ACT IMMEDIATELY, and your responses will be geared to the urgency of the situation as you see it. Therefore, it is vital not to underestimate the danger by not asking for details and following through.

Remember: Always ask "How?" and "When?" before "Why?" These questions tell you the first signs of serious risk. The degree of suicide risk can then be determined further by applying the criteria outlined in *Evaluating Suicide Risk (PLAID PALS)*.

Do not leave the Soldier without MAKING A CONTRACT:

If you determine that the risk of suicide is high (in other words, a strong possibility exists that the person will commit suicide in soon), escort the person to a behavioral health professional. Or if they are unwilling to seek care, try to make a verbal agreement with the person to contact you before he or she follows through with suicidal ideations or thoughts of disappearing.

Call a Crisis Line for Other Ways to Help the Individual

SUICIDE PREVENTION, 1-800-TALK (8225)

MILITARY ONE SOURCE, 1-800-342-9647

Overseas, 1-800-342-6477

Collect Call, 1-484-530-5908

DEFENSE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE HELP LINE, 1-866-966-1020

Local Resources to Have Written Down

WHO IS YOUR **COMPANY SUICIDE INTERVENTION OFFICER** AND THE PHONE NUMBER? _____

WHO IS YOUR **SERVICING CHAPLAIN** AND THE PHONE NUMBER? _____

WHO IS YOUR **DIRECTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH** AND THE PHONE NUMBER? _____

**Soldier Health and Welfare Branch
ARNG Soldier and Family Support Division
111 South George Mason Drive
Arlington, Virginia 22204
703-607-9795**



National Guard youth coordinators hold several camps for Guard Kids across New Mexico.

“We simply want to serve the Service Members and their Families.”

—Therese Sanchez, State Family Program Director

* * *

youth camps throughout the state. She maintains an active “Youth Club” that provides students ages 8 to 18 with leadership activities, and offers several workshops during the year to help motivate and educate youth in topics like safety, etiquette and deployment issues.

The team is a “one-stop shop” and provides 24/7 access for military members and their families who may be suffering the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, suicide prevention, sexual assault and violence issues. Mental health services are offered by local, state and federal licensed providers and counselors.

“Family Programs began some best practices this year, and they continue to be developed,” Sanchez said.

The Wellness Road Show deals with reintegration and reunion, stress and mental fitness. Another aspect of this program addresses specific issues for Families of deployed Service Members like holiday stress, parenting skills and working with communication and separation issues.

Although our services are not limited to the time of deployment, we do offer an ongoing and proactive outreach for Families during and after deployments. The SWAT is actively involved in all Welcome Home Ceremonies, as well as each unit’s mandatory Reintegration Workshop, conducted post-deployment. The New Mexico National Guard Family Program gives Service Members and Families an overview of all resources available to ensure successful transitions throughout all aspects of military life. **f**

New Mexico, the SWAT is open to all Service Members regardless of branch, component or status. Currently, there are five FAC offices in the state, with the main office housed on Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, NM.

FAC staff members coordinate unit briefs, especially during the deployment cycle, including military health care, chaplain services, financial management and substance abuse prevention. They make referrals to mental health specialists like the Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC) and the Director of Psychological Health (DPH).

“New Mexico’s MFLC and DPH work closely together to generate new ideas to enhance mental fitness programs and services for Service Members and Families,” Sanchez said.

The Family Program also recruits Veterans Administration patient advocates, transition assistance advisors and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) personnel to help National Guard members and their Families understand the move to and from Active Duty status. The ESGR brief makes clear the cooperation needed between civilian employers, the military and Service Members.

A major part of the Family Program is the youth component. The youth coordinator facilitates several



Youth clubs provide a great way for Guard kids to learn and have fun.

Attention, Soldiers and Families!

*Below is information regarding programs and services available in your state.
Please check each issue for updates.*



Alaska

www.guardfamily.org
(907) 428-6680

- March 26** Friday Film Night, Anchorage
- March 26** Friday Film Night, Bethel
- April 6-7** Sex Signals, Elmendorf
- April 10** Free Defense Course, Elmendorf
- April 21** Leadership Summit on Sexual Assault, Elmendorf
- April 30** Friday Film Night, Anchorage
- April 30** Friday Film Night, Juneau
- April 30** Friday Film Night, Bethel
- April 30** Friday Film Night, Wasilla

Arizona

www.guardfamily.org
(602) 267-2550

- March 27-28** Family Readiness Planning Conference, Phoenix
- April 10** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (363rd EOD), Phoenix
- April 12-16** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (1404th TC), Phoenix
- April 12-16** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (1-221st CAV), Phoenix
- April 17** Operation Military Kids Camp, Oracle
- April 24** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (3666th Maintenance), Phoenix
- April 24** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (160th Finance Dept.), Phoenix
- May 1** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (1404th TC), Flagstaff
- May 2** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (363rd EOD), Phoenix
- May 2** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (1-221st CAV), Phoenix

Arizona Operation Military Kids in partnership with the Arizona National Guard Family Programs/JFSAP is working together to coordinate and host an April Month of the Military Child youth-focused Family day event at the Triangle YMCA Camp in Oracle, Arizona. This all-day event is scheduled for Saturday, April 17, 2010, and will be open to all military Families (all branches of service).

California

www.guardfamily.org
(916) 316-4957

- March 20-21** Family Readiness Group Training, Petaluma
- March 20-21** Strong Bonds for Single Soldiers Workshop, Rancho Cordova
- April 9** Family Training Day, San Diego
- April 10-11** Adjutant General's Family Symposium, San Diego

Colorado

www.guardfamily.org
(720) 250-1190

- March 25** Life Skills Group Meeting, Greeley
- April 7** Life Skills Group Meeting, Colorado Springs
- April 8** Life Skills Group Meeting, Pueblo
- April 15** Life Skills Group Meeting, Denver
- April 22** Life Skills Group Meeting, Greeley
- May 12** Life Skills Group Meeting, Colorado Springs

Delaware

www.guardfamily.org
(302) 326-7010

- March 21** 4-H/Operation Military Kids Camp, Dover
- March 27** Children's Easter Egg Hunt, Wilmington
- April 10** 4-H/Operation Military Kids Camp, Wilmington
- April 14-16** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Retreat), Lancaster
- April 16-17** 4-H/Operation Military Kids Babysitter's Training Workshop, New Castle
- April 18** 4-H/Operation Military Kids Camp, Dover
- April 24** All Ranks Military Ball, Dover

Operation Military Kids will be taking 48 individuals to Washington, DC, on April 10 to celebrate the Cherry Blossom Festival. Note, this trip is full. You will receive a confirmation if you are one of the first 48 to register.

April 16 & 17, 2010, Operation Military Kids will hold the New Castle County Babysitter's Training Class. This FREE class teaches youth ages 12 and up how to watch their younger siblings or other youth, as well as gives them CPR/FIRST AID CERTIFICATION! Email rhondam@udel.edu to find out more information and register your military youth today!

Florida

www.floridaguard.army.mil, click on "Programs," then "Family Programs"
(904) 823-0360

- March 20** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event (3/20th Special Forces), Orlando
- March 26-27** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (107th MPAD), St. Augustine
- April 30-May 2** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (3-265th), St. Petersburg
- April 30-May 2** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (3-265th), Tampa
- April 30-May 2** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (3-265th), Sarasota
- May 16** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event (164th AD), Tampa

Illinois

www.guardfamily.org
(217) 761-3569

- April 23-24** State Family Conference and the National Guard Association of Illinois (NGAI) Conference, Peoria

This conference is designed to give additional training to our Family Readiness Groups (FRGs). The theme is "Leadership for All Occasions."

THE GOAL OF THE FOUR-HOUR SESSION: The core idea is this: In the four-hour sessions, teach them "Leadership for All Situations," meaning the four primary leadership styles and the four primary follower levels of readiness. Teaches them how to quickly recognize and understand where the followers are at any given moment in time, and on any given assignment. Teaches them how to lead appropriately at each of the four follower readiness levels so that the volunteers experience a higher level of accomplishment on each task. As a result, the volunteers' assignments won't be a mismatch with their abilities (eliminating frustration, reducing non-productive stress and reducing resignations). They will experience an internal feeling of "truly contributing" to the cause, and they will conclude the assignment with a genuine overall feeling of satisfaction that will keep them coming back. We will have group exercises to keep them engaged and entertained.

THE GOAL OF THE TWO-HOUR SESSION: The core idea for the two-hour session will build upon their current level of skill regardless of their prior level of exposure to the concepts in the four-hour session. This session might be described as "Turning Ideas into Actions." Using primarily the "basic" concepts from the four-hour session as context, I can teach the "new skill sets" of planning, implementing, measuring and feedback to take their skills in completing assignments to the next level, while at the same time substantially improving their success rate on assignments.

Massachusetts

<http://states.ng.mil/sites/ma/pages/default.aspx>
(508) 233-7222

- April 10** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event, Cape Cod
- April 23-25** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Retreat), Cape Cod

- April 23-25** Multi-Component Volunteer Workshop, Southbridge
- May 14-16** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Retreat), Cape Cod

Michigan

www.michigan.gov/dmva, click on "Michigan National Guard"
(517) 481-8361

- March 19-21** Yellow Ribbon 45-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event, Battle Creek
- April 9-11** State Family Programs Conference, Traverse City
- April 23-25** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event, Lansing
- April 23-25** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Retreat), Frankenmuth
- April 30-May 2** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event, Lansing
- May 14-16** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Retreat), Mackinac Island

Minnesota

www.guardfamily.org
(651) 268-8200

- March 23-25** State Family Support Conference, St. Paul
- March 31** Yellow Ribbon Breakfast Event, Albert Lea
- April 10-11** Yellow Ribbon 60-Day Post-Deployment Event (34th MP), St. Paul
- April 22** ESGR Chinook Boss-lift, St. Cloud
- May 1** Family Readiness Academy (114th/204th), St. Paul
- May 22** Old Glory Run, Cold Spring

Mississippi

www.guardfamily.org
(601) 313-6379

- March 27-28** Yellow Ribbon 30-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event, Biloxi
- April 25-26** Yellow Ribbon 60-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event, Gulfport
- May 15-16** Yellow Ribbon 30-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event, Jackson
- May 22-23** Yellow Ribbon 30-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event, Columbus

Missouri

www.moguard.com/familyreadiness
(573) 638-9827

Missouri State Family Program provides Joint Family Team Building, where both Army and Air come together to train, as well as explores ways to work hand in hand to prepare the Family Readiness Groups/Key Volunteers as a whole to make sure our Missouri National Guard Families are taken care of.

New Hampshire

www.guardfamily.org
(603) 225-1340

Pre-Deployment Workshops will be conducted. This event is a two-day structured event for Service Members and their Families and is held approximately 180 days out from the estimated deployment date. The program includes off-site training at a resort for the weekend, a briefing on the Deployment Cycle Process, Communication Package training (AKO, Guard Family and VOIP to and from theater), financial planning and the Four Lenses deployment training program, which helps improve communication skills and interpersonal relationships, and helps with stress management associated with military life and deployments.

Reintegration Phase I event will be held. This is a two-day structured event for Service Members and their Families and is held 30 days after the unit re-deploys back to the state. The program includes off-site training at a resort for the weekend with services that provide marriage, single Service Member and parenting workshops (Strong Bonds), as well as presenting Battlemind Training II to Service Members and their Families.

New Jersey

www.guardfamily.org
(609) 530-6942

- March 13-14** Yellow Ribbon 30-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event, Atlantic City
- April 9-11** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Marriage Enrichment), Princeton
- April 14-16** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Marriage Enrichment), Princeton

North Carolina

www.guardfamily.org
(919) 664-6054

- March 19-20** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event (1-130th ARB & 638), Raleigh
- April 30-May 1** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event (621 EN), Raleigh

North Dakota

www.guardfamily.org
(701) 333-2058

- March 19-21** Adjutant General's Symposium for Families, Bismarck
- March 26** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event, Bismarck
- April 16-18** Volunteer Academy, Bismarck
- April 23-25** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event, Fargo
- May 14-16** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Freedom Salute, Grand Forks

The No. 1 priority for North Dakota's Adjutant General, David Sprynzynatyk, is ensuring our military Families are being taken care of. This proves evident with the wholehearted endorsement MG Sprynzynatyk has placed on the upcoming Adjutant General's Symposium for Families this March. The symposium will offer the opportunity to build relationships with other volunteers, expand your knowledge on how to support military Families and Service Members, and learn how to become more involved. It will also be quite entertaining. Attendees can be assured they will have a fun and relaxing weekend being themselves in the company of other Family members, Service Members and Senior Leadership, who justly place Families at the military forefront.

Oklahoma

http://www.ok.ngb.army.mil/famprog
(405) 228-5843

- March 26-27** 53rd Annual Conference and Military Ball, Oklahoma City
- April 9** ESGR Patriot Boss Breakfast, Oklahoma City
- April 10** Yellow Ribbon 60-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (MPAD/ETT), Norman
- April 24** Family Readiness Group Leadership Training, Oklahoma City

Oregon

www.guardfamily.org
(503) 584-3886

- April 3** Yellow Ribbon 30-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (C/7-158 AVN), Salem
- April 16-18** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (PREP & PICK), Redmond
- April 30-May 2** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (PREP & PICK), Hood River
- May 1** Yellow Ribbon 60-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (C/7-158 AVN), Salem

Rhode Island

www.guardfamily.org
(401) 275-4109

Rhode Island's SOS program (Survivor Outreach Services) is moving forward. This program, in its infancy, is harnessing and connecting Families of the Fallen and those dealing with grief and loss. Our first-ever Family Grief Camp is scheduled for June 25-27. It will be held at the University of Rhode Island campus and is funded and sponsored by Operation Military Kids. We are reaching out to those military members and their Families who are coping with grief and loss in some form or another. The activities will be Family focused and will include arts and crafts, field games, meals together and some generalized share time. The cost is free other than a \$10 registration fee per family at sign-up. For more information, contact Amy Rachiele at amy.rachiele@us.army.mil or at (401) 345-5818.

Financial concerns, high unemployment, inability to meet Family needs, less opportunity for Family activities and events; life constantly changes. Our

country is currently in a state of difficulty. Our Family Programs team is working diligently to combat the difficulties by meeting the needs of our military Families. The ways in which our team meets these goals is by addressing issues, concerns and benefits that affect Service Members and their Families. We are a resource to the community. Our team is currently working on Living in the New Normal, Family Readiness Group Leadership training and Youth Programs. Youth Programs address the issues that concern kids and the experiences before, during and following a deployment. The Military Child and Family Coalition is bringing together community leadership to increase their understanding about the effects of deployment on kids. The Youth Programs help the children realize they are not alone, that there are other military children going through the same experience as they are.

South Dakota

www.guardfamily.org
(605) 737-6728

April 10-11 Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event (196th MEB), Sioux Falls

Tennessee

www.guardfamily.org
(615) 313-0757

April 10 Yellow Ribbon 60-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (267th MP CO), Dickson

Texas

www.guardfamily.org
(512) 782-1034

- March 12-14** Strong Bonds Family Wellness Workshop, Grapevine
- March 20-21** Family Readiness Group Training, San Antonio
- March 26-28** Strong Bonds Single Soldier Workshop, San Antonio
- April 16-18** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Marriage Enrichment), Lubbock
- April 23-25** Strong Bonds for Couples Workshop (Marriage Enrichment), League City
- April 24-25** Family Readiness Group Training, El Paso

Texas is excited about many new things this year. We have added a new member to our Joint Force Support Assistant Program to include a Personal Finance Consultant, who will be planning Financial Planning workshops and webinars. Our Strong Bonds program is now offering Single Soldier and Family Wellness Seminars as well as Marriage Enrichment Seminars. Participant response to the new seminars has been overwhelmingly positive with the request for more! The Youth Program has planned on offering several camps and trainings for youth this year as well as focusing more on local community events such as One World Theater, Family Forums and Starbase Camps. Keep an eye out for events coming your way!

Utah

www.guardfamily.org
(801) 432-4407

April 10 Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event, Salt Lake City

Children ages 6-17 will be actively engaged in exchanging thoughts and ideas about their parent's upcoming deployment. The program's main focus is to help the youth understand their feelings concerning their parent being away from home. Though the focus is to give the youth tools to cope with deployment, we still have lots of fun. We encourage parents to discuss the program with their children prior to dropping them off.

Washington

www.guardfamily.org
(253) 512-7600

- March 26-28** Joint Youth Council Meeting, Spokane
- April 3** West Council Youth Event, Tacoma
- April 19** State Youth Symposium, Cle-Elum
- May 15** Youth Basic Training & Camp, Spokane

West Virginia

www.guardfamily.org
(304) 561-6833

- March 19** Yellow Ribbon Child Youth Celebration, Charleston
- March 20** Yellow Ribbon During Deployment Event (151st MPBN), Charleston
- March 27** Yellow Ribbon Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (Living in the New Normal), Beckley
- April 10** Yellow Ribbon Youth Celebration Bash, Charleston
- April 17** Yellow Ribbon Youth Celebration Bash, Fairmont
- April 17** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event, Morgantown
- April 23** Yellow Ribbon Month of the Military Child Celebration, Kingwood
- May 1** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event (1201st FSC Maintenance), Morgantown
- May 8** Yellow Ribbon Pre-Deployment Event (C Battery 201st FA), Lewisburg
- May 14-16** Yellow Ribbon 30-Day Post-Deployment Reintegration Event (150th AR), Charleston
- May 15** Yellow Ribbon Youth Celebration Bash, Charleston



Don't see your state here?
Let us know what events or programs are benefiting your Soldiers.
Email Editor@GuardFoundations.com.

A Wife's Tale



Tips for surviving the stress of deployment from a Guard spouse

By MICHELLE REITEMEYER

Recently, I've been having fantasies about having a live-in housekeeper. Or maybe a full-time personal chef. Or a chauffeur. What I really need is a husband—my husband, home from his deployment. Then he can do whatever he used to do—I can't remember what that was, but I do recall always complaining that it wasn't enough—and I can go back to doing just the cooking and the cleaning and the driving kids all over the place.

I wonder, if my husband “never did anything” around the house, why do I often feel so overwhelmed since he's been gone?

Obviously, he did do *some* things, and those things are now my job, too.

This is a tough life. Whether a spouse is deployed or “only” gone for AT or a drill weekend, when their responsibilities become your responsibilities, the additional stress can wear you down.

How can military spouses find the strength to deal with these extra stresses and stay positive under all that pressure? Here are some ideas I've utilized over the years:

Accept It: Whether he was in when you met him or joined later, the U.S. government owns a piece of him, and you can't change that. Fighting him or being resentful that he had drill and missed your anniversary—again—won't make the situation better.

Own It: I love my country, but I have no desire to sleep in a tent, use baby wipes for a bath, eat MREs or drop and give someone 20. Instead of serving my country by wearing a uniform, I serve by making it easier for my husband to do his job. He sacrifices by leaving behind the comforts of home, and I sacrifice by enduring daily life without his help.


Make Friends: The best sort of friend for a military spouse is another military spouse with a great attitude.

Since many Guard Families are spread out, this may be a challenge. Civilian friends and Family who support your spouse's military career are a good substitute.

You can also find supportive military spouses through online communities.

Group Hugs: If you live close to a post, they may have Hearts Apart, a support group for anyone with a deployed loved one. After weeks of holding it all in, it's good to have an understanding group of people to listen to you and share your frustration, joy, fear and anger.

Get Help: Sometimes the best way to be strong is to get some help. This might mean hiring someone to cut the lawn for the summer or clean the house once a month. Other times, we, or our children, may need a professional, confidential counselor. Military OneSource (MilitaryOneSource.com) can help you find free counseling. It also has resources for childcare.

Finally, I like to avoid things that cause stress, like the news and negative people. Instead, I fill my weeks with things that boost my spirits, like exercise, prayer, chocolate and a few more days crossed off that countdown calendar. 



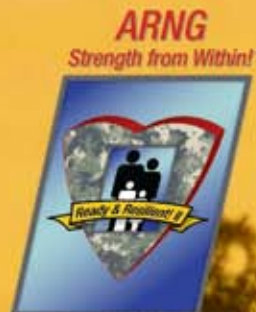
The Army National Guard offers myriad resources for Family assistance. For more information about Hearts Apart and other support groups, contact your local Family Readiness Center. To find the number, call your state's Army National Guard Public Affairs Office.

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not only in the National Guard, but in life."*

Outgoing Command Sgt. Maj. of the Army National Guard, John Gipe



www.decadeofhealth.com

THERE WHEN YOU NEED US

The Soldier Family Support and Services (SFSS) Division

is a diverse division focused on the care of Soldiers and their Families. Some of the programs we handle are: Child and Youth Services, Spouse Employment and the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program. We have several other programs that are equally as important, and we continue to expand our role in Soldier and Family care issues and Deployment Cycle Support.



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If you need information about these programs or have comments about *Foundations* magazine, please send them to ngb-sfss@ng.army.mil.