

National Guard Soldier & Family

FOUNDATIONS

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Great Outdoors

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Shelle
Michaels
of Soldiers'
Angels

A Note from

LTG & Mrs. Clyde A.
Vaughn, Director,
Army National
Guard

Basic Training
for the

Guard Family



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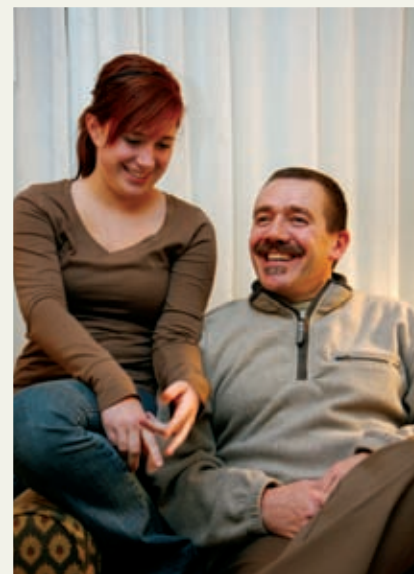


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When a new Soldier joins the Army National Guard, it's not just his or her life that changes. The choice alters the worlds of everyone around them. That's why *Foundations* interviewed military members and their loved ones who have experienced deployment, combining their insight into a helpful guide for all our Guard Families.





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“We make a life by what we give.”

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *National Guard Soldier & Family Foundations*. In these pages, you'll find information and insights designed to inform, encourage and strengthen you and your Family's spirit. This magazine is to be a resource to increase awareness of new and existing initiatives, services and support available to Army National Guard Soldiers and their Families.

In this and upcoming issues, we'll take on the topics, questions and concerns you face every day. Our feature, "Basic Training for the Guard Family," uses insights from fellow Soldiers and Families to help you tackle some of the bigger issues you experience in the Guard.

As a 19-year member of the National Guard and a Veteran of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, I understand the sacrifices of serving our great nation. I have more than 10 years of experience in the Guard's Family assistance arena, so I know it's not easy being a Citizen-Soldier, nor is this choice easy for our Families, but the one common factor we have is the resiliency in all of us. As Sir Winston Churchill stated: "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

Let's make this magazine a great resource for Guard Families. Talk to me, and tell me your story—you can share your insights and suggestions with me at Editor@GuardFoundations.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

Marcia Beene Dickerson
Managing Editor
(Marcia serves as a Staff Sgt. in the Tennessee National Guard.)



The Army's and National Guard's Top NCO of the Year, SSG Michael Noyce Merino spends quality time with his wife, Shelli, and his in-laws, David and Denise Manchaca.

PHOTO BY SFC CLINT WOOD

National Guard Soldier & Family
FOUNDATIONS

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

It is my pleasure to introduce the Army National Guard's newest publication, *National Guard Soldier & Family Foundations*.

As the oldest enduring American military institution, the Army National Guard has almost 400 years of experience in supporting Soldiers and Families. National Guard Soldiers do heroic work, and, in turn, they are supported by heroes: their Families. We are profoundly aware that a Soldier's life extends beyond the battlefield, and we are deeply indebted to you as a Family member for the sacrifices you render in support of our Guardsmen and women.

When your Soldier committed to serving this great Nation, the Army National Guard committed to serving you and your Soldier. One way we achieve this support is by creating programs designed to fit your needs. From financial matters to education, career options to recreation, we strive to continuously devise and improve Soldier and Family resources.

National Guard Soldier & Family Foundations is a conduit to the resources the Army National Guard team has developed for you. The articles and features in this publication will better inform you of the valuable tools and programs available to our Guard Families.

Thank you for your unwavering support, and welcome to *National Guard Soldier & Family Foundations*!



LTG Clyde A. Vaughn, Director, Army National Guard

Being a member of the Army National Guard Family is a great source of inspiration and pride for me. I am honored to be part of a historic organization that does so much to make our world a better place.

As the wife of a Soldier and the mother of a deployed Marine, I experience firsthand many of the same concerns and circumstances that you, as Guard Family members, must endure. I encourage you to embrace *National Guard Soldier & Family Foundations*. It serves as a voice for Army National Guard Family members, affording a comprehensive look at the programs and resources available to you, and also bringing you the stories of Guard Families who travel a patriotic path similar to your own.

At the very root of *National Guard Soldier & Family Foundations* is the desire to encourage the Families and friends who keep our Soldiers strong. For our Soldiers to be supported, we as Families must have a trusted resource to call our own.

The goal of *National Guard Soldier & Family Foundations* is to be that resource, and I am proud to be a part of its opening issue.



Mrs. Carolyn K. Vaughn



@ we've got mail

We want to hear from you!

Your answer to the question below
may appear in a
future issue of
Foundations.



How did you celebrate your return from deployment?

- Had a nice, quiet dinner with Family?
- Invited friends to a party at a favorite local restaurant?
- Spent your weekend watching every new movie at the theater?
- Took the kids out for a fun activity, like a sporting event or amusement park?
- Scored tickets to see your favorite band?



We'd love to know your idea of what it means to celebrate coming home. Email us at Editor@GuardFoundations.com. Photos would be great, too!

The 'Show Me' State Takes Care of Its Own

Intro by MARCIA BEENE DICKERSON
By WOC MELISSA IRELAND

One of the most enduring elements of being a member of the National Guard is the sense of Family. Each state has its own unique way of caring for its Soldiers and their Families. In this first issue, *National Guard Soldier & Family Foundations* talked with WOC Melissa Ireland, Missouri's State Family Program Director, to find out about the exceptional programs and services offered to National Guard Soldiers and their Families.



A Family's Reunion: SGT Shane Lightner, his wife, Heather, and their 8-month-old son, Sam, reunite. Lightner, a Kansas City native, is a member of the Missouri National Guard's 1/135th Aviation Battalion.

Family Assistance Center

The One-Stop Shop

Are you looking for a place to go when you have child-care issues, need financial assistance, want information on counseling services, or just need to get linked up with a Family readiness or support group in your area?

The Family Assistance Center is the place for you. The center offers resources and help to service members and their Families throughout the deployment cycle. Whether you are dealing with pre-deployment anxiety, financial hardship during deployment, or homecoming stress and readjustment issues, the Family Assistance Center is here to help.

Some of the agencies and resources we work with are: Military OneSource, Military Family Life Consultants, Operation Homefront, Operation Outreach, VFW Unmet Needs and the National VFW Headquarters.

Businesses, organizations and individuals may contact the Family Assistance Center if they wish to adopt a deployed Soldier or military Family. Soldiers and their

Families may contact the Family Assistance Center if they want to have their information shared with local businesses and organizations.

★ For more information, call the Family Assistance Center at (877) 236-4168 or (866) 269-7959

Joint Family Support Assistance Program

Providing Additional Resources for Missouri's Military

The Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) provides resources to military members and Families who are geographically isolated from an active-duty installation.

The JFSAP consists of a Military OneSource Specialist, a Military Family Life Consultant, and a Child and Youth Life Consultant. All three of these positions provide mobile support services to ensure that even the most remotely located units and Families have access to these valuable services.

The Military OneSource Specialist is a regional expert on resources available in the communities where Soldiers and

REGINA TURNER, UNIT PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE

Families live. They help increase awareness of existing Family assistance services and resources, increase availability of resources, and explore discounts for military Families.

The Military Family Life Consultant will provide short-term, non-medical, solution-focused counseling services to individuals, couples, Families and groups. The counseling services focus on parenting, relationship conflicts, stress, personal loss, deployments and reunions. The Military Family Life Counselor is available to consult with military commands, volunteers and Family support professionals.



The Child and Youth Consultant is a licensed mental health professional who provides information, coaching, training and education to Guard Families and Soldiers on issues concerning children and teens. They can refer you to activity-based programs on topics such as identifying feelings, problem-solving, conflict resolution, managing anger, self-esteem,

divorce, and coping with deployment and reunification.

** To receive additional information on the JFSAP program or to be placed in contact with a JFSAP professional, please contact the State Family Program Office at (800) 299-9603.*

Homefront Education and Resource Outreach (HERO)

The HERO Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program focuses on encouraging the continued well-being of Soldiers and their Families. It is also intended to ensure that services (education, training, outreach and personal support) are available during the entire deployment cycle.

These programs assist unit commanders, Guard members and Families affected by deployment and mobilization.

Jefferson City Family PX and Jefferson Barracks Food Pantry

Serving Military Families

The Jefferson Barracks Food Pantry and the Jefferson City Family PX are open and serving the Families of the National Guard. Over the years, numerous Families have turned to these pantries in times of need.

Both pantries provide non-perishable food items, toiletries, cleaning supplies, school supplies and, when available, toys and children's clothing.

For the Jefferson City Family PX, call Judy Minard at (573) 638-9500 ext. 7728, or Patty Lecomte at (573) 638-9500 ext. 9969.

Jefferson Barracks Food Pantry reopened in December 2007 in Building 78 on the lower level. With an outside entrance and loading dock, it offers easy access for everyone.

Hours open include the Saturday of drill weekend from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the 3rd Thursday of the month from 7 to 9 p.m., or by calling to set up a time with Nancy Amundson at (314) 378-5495 or Ann Shadowens at (314) 822-8292. Both pantries depend on private donations to keep the shelves stocked.

Strong Bonds Equals Strong Families

Strong Bonds is not a counseling session but an opportunity to learn positive ways to express yourself without conflict.

This program entails a wonderful expense-paid weekend of relaxation and positive connections. The Family Program and the State Chaplain's Office look forward to seeing even more couples enjoy these events.

Any couple wanting to make or continue a healthy relationship can benefit from Strong Bonds.

The next retreats are March 27-29, 2009, at Lake Ozarks, May 15-17 in Kansas City, and Aug. 14-16 in Branson.

** Be sure to check our Web site at MOGuard.com/Family readiness for more information.*

The Missouri Military Family Relief Fund

The Missouri Military Family Relief Fund (MMFRF) provides assistance to National Guard members and Families facing financial hardships. The MMFRF is a state fund administered by the adjutant general, and assists members and Families of the Missouri National Guard who are or have been deployed as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The MMFRF offers a grant for approved expenses up to \$3,000.

Since being signed into law on June 28, 2005, the MMFRF has approved \$272,500 in financial assistance for the men and women who stand up for our country when duty calls.

For more information on the Missouri Military Family Relief Fund, please visit: MMFRF.mo.gov.


Missouri's National Guard Youth Program

The Missouri National Guard Youth Program continues to support military youth across Missouri.

Round 2 of the Missouri National Guard Youth Camp was a great success. Children from across the state came to Jefferson Barracks for teamwork, friendship and fun.

In July, the Missouri National Guard hosted the National Guard Bureau's annual Youth Symposium, which brought more than 100 children from every state and territory to St. Louis.

This year has been a great experience for our office.

** If you are interested in joining the Missouri National Guard Youth Group, please visit us at our Web site: MOGuard.com/Familyreadiness. *

Attention Soldiers and Families!

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

Alaska

The Alaska Army National Guard held a Strong Bonds conference Jan. 24–25 in Anchorage. For more information on upcoming events, please visit StrongBonds.org or contact the Alaska Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (907) 428–6680.

Arkansas

The Arkansas Army National Guard recently held a series of Family Reintegration Training events to assist Family members with their Soldiers' homecomings and reintegration process. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Arkansas Army National Guard State Family Programs Office at (501) 212–4012.

Arizona

The Arizona Army National Guard held an Arizona Muster for Wounded Soldiers on Nov. 13, 2008, at Papago Park Military Reservation in Phoenix. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Arizona Army National Guard State Family Programs Office at (602) 267–2593.

California

Soldiers and their Families will find a wide array of programs available through the California Army National Guard, including child and youth programs, volunteer and FRG training, and marriage enrichment seminars. For more information, please contact the California Army National Guard State Family Programs Office at (916) 361–4955.

District of Columbia

The District of Columbia Army National Guard held a Yellow Ribbon event Jan. 10–11 at the Rocky Gap Resort, Cumberland. There was also an Operation Military Kids event Jan. 14 at the DC Armory. For information on upcoming events, contact the District of Columbia

Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (202) 685–9826.

Florida

The Florida Army National Guard held a Yellow Ribbon event Jan. 9–11 at the Rosen Shingle Creek Hotel in Orlando. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Florida National Guard State Family Programs office at (904) 823–0360.

Georgia

The Georgia Army National Guard held a Strong Bonds conference and a Yellow Ribbon event in January, in Fort Stewart. For information on upcoming events, please visit StrongBonds.org or contact the Georgia Army National Guard State Family Programs Office at (678) 569–5065.

Idaho

The Idaho Army National Guard is currently in the process of construction renovations at its statewide readiness centers. For more information, please contact the Idaho Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (208) 272–4361.

Illinois

The Illinois Army National Guard held a Yellow Ribbon event for the 108th Sustainment Brigade Jan. 10 in Chicago. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Illinois Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (217) 761–3413.

Iowa

"In these difficult and challenging times, the work our Family Programs office, Family Readiness Groups and volunteers do to assist our Iowa National Guard members and their Families is crucial. This reality of persistent conflict will affect life in the Iowa National Guard for the foreseeable future. There is no escaping this

fact. And the work you all do in the Family readiness arena will become even more important if we are to sustain this high tempo.

"Families are a very important part of our team, and we could not succeed without your invaluable support. If the Iowa Guard is to remain Mission-Focused and Warrior-ready, then we must do all we can to ensure our Families have the tools they need to remain strong.

"Our Families are, and will always be, our greatest treasure."

—MG Ron Dardis, Adjutant General, Iowa National Guard.

For more information on upcoming events please contact: Kevin Kruse at the Iowa Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (515) 252–4416.

Kentucky

The Kentucky Army National Guard Families of Company B, 201st Engineers, are collecting new or gently used coats and blankets for the children in Afghanistan. For more information, please contact the Kentucky Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (502) 607–1555.

"Kentucky recently celebrated the signing of a covenant affirming the gratitude of the citizens of this great state toward our Citizen-Soldiers and their Families. Family readiness was one of the top priorities in this document. These quiet heroes have given so much to our nation and I am proud to be adjutant general in a state that holds their sacrifice in such high regard."

—MG Edward W. Tonini, adjutant general for Kentucky

Louisiana

The Louisiana National Guard brought home seven awards, including several number-one ranking trophies, from the National Guard Bureau's Strength Training Conference held October 11, 2008, in Florida. For information on upcoming events, please contact

the Louisiana Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (318) 641–5428.

Maine

The Maine Army National Guard held a Yellow Ribbon Weekend for the 286th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Dec. 5–7, 2008, at the Samoset Resort, Rockport. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Maine Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (207) 626–4410.

Maryland

The Maryland Army National Guard Joint Force Headquarters introduces "Partners in Care," a referral program coordinating support for Soldiers and Family members through partnerships with local faith communities. Also, the Maryland Army National Guard held a Marriage Enrichment seminar Jan. 23 at the O'Callaghan Annapolis Hotel in Annapolis. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Maryland Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (410) 576–2992.

Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Army National Guard held an Operation Youth Deployment event in January for the children of the 772nd Military Police Company. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Massachusetts Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (508) 233–7222.

Minnesota

The Minnesota Army National Guard has a wide array of programs available to Family members and Soldiers, including single Soldiers, children and married couples. For more information, please contact the Minnesota Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (651) 268–8200.

Missouri

The Missouri Army National Guard will hold a Strong Bonds conference March 27–29 in Lake Ozarks, May 15–17 in Kansas City, and August 14–16 in Branson. To register, visit StrongBonds.org or contact the Missouri Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (573) 638–9827.

Montana

"Soldiers, Airmen and their Families are our most important resource in the Montana National Guard. We all must focus on understanding and meeting their needs to ensure the mission is successfully accomplished."

—BG John Walsh, Adjutant General for Montana

Marriage Enrichment weekends are funded and supported by the command of the Montana National Guard. These weekends are solely for married couples at various locations around the state. The weekends are designed to make "good marriages" better! This new fiscal year, the weekend begins Friday evening at 1900 and ends Sunday morning at 1100. The next Enrichment weekends will be held Feb. 13–15 at the Yogo Inn, Lewiston and March 27–29 in West Yellowstone.

For more information on upcoming events please contact: Dorrie Hagan at the Montana Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (406) 324–3239.

Nevada

The Nevada Army National Guard will begin working with the Military Child Education Coalition, a non-profit program, in February. For more information, please contact the Nevada Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (775) 887–7318.

New Jersey

The New Jersey Army National Guard recently learned that its Yellow Ribbon Program received funding for fiscal year 2009. For more information, please contact

the New Jersey Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (609) 562–0668.

New York

The New York Army National Guard held a Family, Youth and Volunteer Symposium Jan. 7–9 at the Holiday Inn Turf in Albany, as well as a Yellow Ribbon event Jan. 10 in Rochester and West Chester. For information on upcoming events, please contact the New York Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (518) 786–4525.

North Carolina

The North Carolina Army National Guard recently opened three new state-funded Family Assistance Centers in Greenville, Greensboro and Lenoir. For more information, please contact the North Carolina Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (919) 664–6324.

North Dakota

The North Dakota Army National Guard held a Volunteer Academy Jan. 23–25 in Fargo, as well as a Strong Bonds conference Jan. 30–31 in Bismarck. For information on upcoming events, please contact the North Dakota Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (701) 333–2058.

Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Army National Guard is conducting Family Reintegration Academies to assist Family members with their Soldiers' homecomings and reintegration process. For more information, please contact the Oklahoma Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (405) 228–5036.

South Dakota

The South Dakota Army National Guard introduces the Wellness Branch, a combination of services (State Family Program, Employer Support, Transition Assistance and Military Honors) for

Soldiers and Family members. For more information, please contact the South Dakota Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (605) 737–6728.

Tennessee

The Tennessee Army National Guard held a Strong Bonds conference on Jan. 30–Feb. 1, as well as a professional development program on Feb. 6–9, in Franklin. To register for Strong Bonds, visit StrongBonds.org or contact the Tennessee Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (877) 311–3264.

Utah

The Utah Army National Guard held its Sub for Santa effort in December 2008, assisting Families with holiday gifts and food. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Utah Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (801) 523–4533.

Vermont

The Vermont Army National Guard will soon be scheduling events for the Yellow Ribbon Program. For more information, please contact the Vermont Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (802) 338–3391.

Washington

The Washington Army National Guard held a Family Readiness Groups Leadership workshop November 15–16, 2008, at Camp Murray. For information on upcoming events, please contact the Washington Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (253) 512–7600.

Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Army National Guard is conducting statewide briefings for Families of the 32nd "Red Arrow" Brigade Combat Team. For more information, please contact the Wisconsin Army National Guard State Family Programs office at (608) 242–3480.

ARNG Warrior in Transition

By MAJ ANDREW BISHOP

The ARNG Warrior in Transition Section exists to support ARNG Warriors in Transition and the Army's Warrior Transition Units. The section is divided into two teams.

The first team does Recruiting and Replacement Ops for all ARNG cadre/staff positions at 21 Warrior Transition Units (WTU) and nine Community Based Warrior Transition Units (CBWTUs).

They are responsible for 650 positions between the two organizations. The process involves working with WTUs to identify replacement needs and match qualified candidates to those needs.

The section then processes their packets through the State for release and then to HRC-STL for orders. Opportunities exist for Soldiers from E-6 to O-5. Orders are one-year Title 10 Contingency Operations Active Duty for Operational Support (CO-ADOS).

Soldiers have the ability to request PCS orders and bring their Families to the duty location.

Soldiers interested should look at the following GKO links:

<https://gkportal.ngb.army.mil/sites/G1/SFSS/SSB/WTU/default.aspx>

<https://gkportal.ngb.army.mil/sites/G1/SFSS/SSB/CB-WTU/default.aspx>

The second team works WT Issues. They support ARNG WTs through assistance with the resolution of WT non-clinical issues. We respond to requests for assistance from WTUs, CBWTUs, States and even the Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2). The goal is to address WT issues quickly and accurately provide the best possible solution/response/resource to the Soldier and Family.

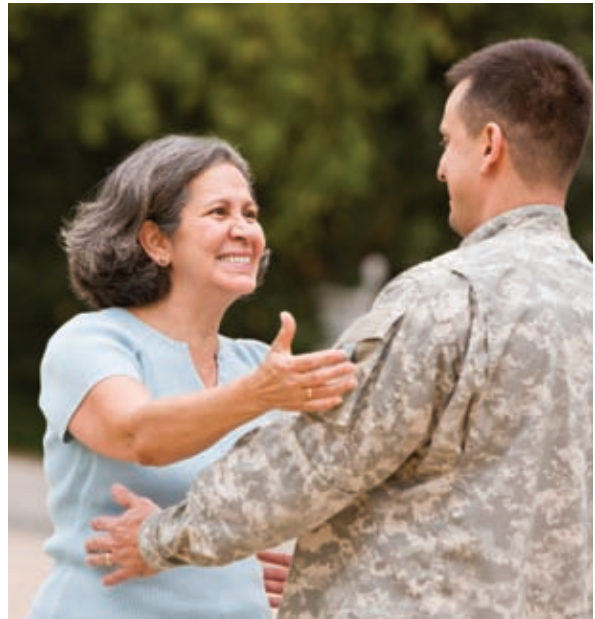
The section also conducts training with outside organizations (WTUS-1s, AW2, etc.) to equip them to better serve the ARNG Soldiers in their care.



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

finding your way back

By MARCIA BEENE DICKERSON



Returning from deployment can trigger a mixed bag of emotions. While you're elated at the thought of returning home to your family and friends, making the transition back to civilian life is a challenge. Going from an up-tempo mindset to a 9-to-5 existence takes work and patience.

Most of us experience the "Medical Assessment" prior to leaving the area of operation, but many of us don't realize that we've changed mentally and emotionally. It's only when we get home that the comprehension of what we've experienced sinks in.

One of the first emotions that bubbles to the surface is depression.

Regardless of what type of job or mission you've accomplished, a creeping feeling of loneliness will come soon after returning home.

Knowing this in advance is a big advantage. You may think, "That won't happen to me," but no matter how strong you are, this is the body's normal reaction to the lifestyle change you're experiencing.

It's okay to ask for help. In fact, it may save your life. Depression can be treated successfully. The American Psychological Association Web site says, "It is critical for people who suspect they are suffering from depression [to] seek care from a licensed mental health professional."

There are numerous approaches that can help, but one of the most successful is therapy. Military OneSource states that psychotherapy—or "talk therapy"—is a "form of treatment that can help a person solve life issues, [and] reduce feelings of anxiety and depression." Additionally, "About 80 percent of people suffering from depression make significant progress in psychotherapy."

Often, psychotherapy will be used in conjunction with medication. This combination has proven to be effective in combating depression.

Remember—It's normal to feel down after you've returned from deployment, but don't suffer needlessly. You can find your way back from depression. Getting there may require hard work, but while you're on that path, consider the words of Winston Churchill: "We shall draw from the heart of suffering itself the means of inspiration and survival." 🧠

Healing Yourself *Here are some suggestions:*

- ★ Engage in mild activity or exercise. ★ Set goals you can achieve.
- ★ Break large tasks into smaller ones. ★ Spend time with others.
- ★ Don't make any major life decisions. ★ Understand that getting better takes time. ★ Substitute negative thoughts with positive ones.

Defining Depression

Here is a list of depression symptoms from Military OneSource:

- Persistent sad, anxious or empty moods
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities
- Sleeping difficulties
- Eating too much or too little
- Fatigue or lack of energy
- Restlessness or irritability
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Persistent physical symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems or chronic pain

For more information, visit MilitaryOneSource.com, or NationalResourceDirectory.org.

your health at home

Answering your questions about the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment Info

Courtesy of NGB-SFSS

Now that you've returned from your deployment, we know one of the things on your mind: Reassessing your health and healthcare coverage. The Army National Guard Post-Deployment Reassessment Program coordinates medical screenings for Soldiers 90 to 180 days after returning from a combat deployment. The goal of the program is to identify an injury or illness that occurred during the deployment and provide access to free medical care. In fiscal year 2008, the ARNG screened more than 41,000 Soldiers.

Below are some questions Soldiers frequently have about the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment. *Note: The PDHRA is only for Soldiers currently serving.*

What is the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA)?

The PDHRA Program is a force health protection process designed to enhance the deployment-related continuum of care. For example:

- Targeted at three to six months after return from a contingency deployment
- Provides education, screening and a global health assessment
- Identifies and facilitates access to care for deployment-related physical health, mental health and readjustment concerns

Why is this program being offered now?

Health and adjustment concerns may not be noticed immediately after deployment.

- In the months following return from deployment, concerns may surface.
- Effective and adjustment counseling services are available, but Soldiers may have difficulty navigating the various systems of care.
 - The PDHRA is designed to identify emerging issues and facilitate access to services for a wide range of post-deployment concerns of Soldiers still serving in the National Guard.

What are the key elements to the PDHRA?

- The key elements of the PDHRA include:
- Outreach
 - Education and training
 - Screening and assessment—
 - Screening is conducted to identify current concerns

*** What is the similarity between this program and other medical readiness programs?** As with other medical readiness programs, the PDHRA is a commander's program; commanders are charged with ensuring that Soldiers are provided this opportunity and are encouraged to fully participate in the program.



- Clinical evaluation and referral treatment
- Follow-up

Why do we need a new program?

The PDHRA is designed to enhance and extend the deployment-related continuum of care. For example:

- Deployment health concerns are assessed immediately upon return from deployment through the Post-Deployment Health Assessment, which includes education, benefits briefings, a self-report questionnaire and an interview with a healthcare provider.
- Soldiers focused on going home may be reluctant to report their concerns.
- Readjustment issues may not emerge until Soldiers re-enter their work and family environment.
- Once the Soldier has time to reflect on their deployment and post-deployment experiences, the PDHRA offers them an opportunity to identify concerns, questions and issues they wish to discuss with a healthcare provider.

Is the PDHRA available for everyone, regardless of their component or service?

The PDHRA is offered to Active Component, National Guard and Reserve Soldiers after return from a contingency deployment.

Is the PDHRA a mandatory program?

The PDHRA is mandatory for all Soldiers who have returned from a contingency deployment since March 10, 2005. How much or how little information Soldiers disclose about their concerns, of course, cannot be mandated.

* How will the screening and assessment be accomplished?

Screening and assessment are accomplished using standardized questions for Soldier screening and standardized assessment procedures for healthcare providers.

How will treatment and follow-up be handled? Treatment is available through Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs resources. Resources include military treatment facilities, community-based support, preclinical counseling, primary care, specialty care and rehabilitative care.

Where can I go for more information on the U.S. Army's PDHRA Program? Soldiers, civilians and Family members can visit OSD. Mil/PDRHAinfo, or the Army National Guard PDHRA Web site, VirtualArmory.com/MobileDeploy/PDHRA. Soldiers and commanders can check their PDHRA status in AKO under "My Medical Readiness," or by clicking on the PDHRA Spotlight on their AKO homepage.

Who should complete the PDHRA?

While the initial focus of the program is Soldiers and Civilians who fall within the three-to-six-month time period, the program is available to all Soldiers and Civilians who have returned from deployment since Sept. 11, 2001. Soldiers and Civilians who have returned from deployment and are beyond the six-month period will be contacted by their unit or commander with details regarding their participation in the PDHRA.

Why is it important to complete the PDHRA?

The purpose of the PDHRA is to provide a full range of services to you and your Family. We recognize that deployment may have an impact on your health and well-being. Our commitment is to successfully safeguard your health and well-being, and avoid or minimize any negative impact deployment may have had on your health.

How do I complete the PDHRA?

The PDHRA includes Soldiers taking part in Battlemind II Training, which emphasizes safe and healthy personal relationships and teaches Soldiers to look out for each other's health. Soldiers must fill out the DD Form 2900, a questionnaire that asks about physical and behavioral health concerns, and speak one-on-one with a healthcare provider.

Why does the Army National Guard need this program?

We have learned over the past few years that deployment health concerns may not be noticed immediately after deployment, when you completed the Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHA). Furthermore, the Guard recognizes that Soldiers focused on going home may be reluctant to report their concerns at demobilization, since going home is their top priority. Finally, readjustment issues may not emerge until a Soldier re-enters their work and Family environment. After you have had time to reflect on your deployment and post-deployment experiences, you may be in a better position to identify concerns, questions and issues you wish to discuss with a healthcare provider. PDHRA offers you an opportunity to do so.

What can the PDHRA do for me?

The PDHRA empowers you to take control of your health. By identifying your health and readjustment concerns early, you can resolve problems that could, if left unattended, negatively affect your deployment status, career and life beyond deployment.

What can the PDHRA do for my Family?


When you complete the PDHRA, you can reassure your Family that any health concerns you have will receive professional care. Also, the PDHRA public

Web site, FHP.OSD.Mil/PDHRAinfo, offers additional resources under the heading "Resource Library."

How does the LOD process work during PDHRA?

The DA Form 2173s resulting from the PDHRA are unique. They are essentially a sick-call slip—good for one visit with a Primary Care Provider or a Primary Behavioral Health Provider for diagnosis. They require only a commander's or their designated representative's signature for the Soldier to receive treatment. If the Soldier desires referral to a VA facility, the signed DA 2173, a copy of the DD Form 2900 and a copy of the Soldier's DD Form 214 are required for an appointment. If the Soldier desires referral through the TRICARE network, a MMSO authorization must be obtained prior to scheduling a referral appointment. Regardless of where the Soldier seeks their referral appointment, if the provider determines that follow-on care is necessary and that the condition is potentially deployment-related, a new DA Form 2173 is required—following the standard LOD process.

What benefits do Soldiers have through the VA, and what is required to access a VA Medical Facility?

For Veterans who have served in recent combat operations, there is a five-year eligibility window beginning upon return from active duty for no-cost VA care for physical or mental ailments or injuries incurred as a result of their deployment. Soldiers who enroll in the VA Healthcare System (VA Form 10-10EZ) within this five-year period are eligible for continuing no-cost or low-cost care through the VA Healthcare System depending upon enrollment category. Vet Center services are available to Combat Veterans at any time at no cost. Veterans should present their DD Form 214 to the VA to determine specific eligibility requirements. 

getting to know us

A breakdown of Soldier/Family Support and Services Division (NGB-SFSS)

By MARCIA BEENE DICKERSON

The NGB-SFSS was established by LTG Clyde Vaughn, Director, Army National Guard (ARNG) as a way to better organize ARNG services for Soldiers and their Families. Each branch is designed to focus on ensuring Soldiers and Families receive education, referral and support.

SOLDIER SUPPORT

Responsible for supporting Soldiers' health and recovery.

- Warrior Transition Units
- Post-Deployment Health Reassessment
- Suicide Prevention
- Sexual Assault Prevention Response
- Personnel Blast/Containment Tracking System (PBCT)

For more information about the programs listed, contact LTC Ashleah Bechtel, (703) 601-7600.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Informs, plans, develops and executes programs that support Family Readiness and Community Outreach.

- Army Family Action Plan/Guard Family Action Plan
- Army Family Team Building
- Family Assistance Center
- Family Readiness Support Assistants
- Spouse Employment
- Retirement Services
- Strong Bonds

For more information about the programs listed, contact MAJ Andi Duskie, (703) 601-7844.

SURVIVOR SERVICES

Responsible for taking care and honoring those surviving Family members of our fallen heroes.

- Funeral Honors
- Casualty Notification
- Casualty Assistance
- Survivor Outreach Services

For more information about the programs listed, contact LTC James Smith, (703) 601-7845.

SOLDIER/FAMILY SERVICES

Focuses on ensuring Soldiers and Families receive the resources and services available throughout the deployment cycle.

- Yellow Ribbon
- Army One Source
- Child and Youth Services
- Army Community Service

For more information about the programs listed, contact MAJ Scott Savage, (703) 607-9740.

Where has all the logic gone?

- By ADRIENNE DICKEY -



...Somehow, in the thick of my husband's deployment, I lost the logic.

I had logic. You could say that I was a common sense kind of gal—I knew when to change the oil in the car; I knew the kids needed to be fed daily. But somehow, in the thick of my husband's deployment, I lost the logic.


I lost the fine art of what to do in case of fire—shocking, I know. You would think that a woman in her youth (I don't dare give my age away yet) would know how to react to a fire in the home: Stop, drop and roll. I learned those facts in my younger days. Get a fire extinguisher; go to the neighbor's house to call 911. I know all this. Yet, somehow during the midst of this long, 18-month deployment, I lost the logic.

We were getting ready to go to a friend's house for the 4th of July. A fun holiday in the past, this year the 4th meant more than ever with my husband, Don, deployed for the first time to Iraq. The boys, then 11, 9 and 7, were trying to get me out of the house to go buy fireworks before heading to Leavenworth. Then, I started to smell something funky lurking in the living room.

So I started sniffing around. My nose led me to the cable receiver on top of the TV. It had started to smoke. This was where the logic left me. I stood there and blew on the smoke. Yes, you read correctly—there she blows! Where was the logic? Why wasn't I grabbing the fire extinguisher? Why weren't we stopping, dropping and rolling in the front yard?


No, I was frozen there, staring at the smoke and blowing on it.

This was where one of my pride-and-joys came to the rescue: My 9-year-old came rushing to the TV with the fire extinguisher in hand and yelled at me to use it. The other pride-and-joys went running logically out the front door to the safety of the yard. Luckily, someone in the house still had the logic.

So, where has all the logic gone? I'm not sure, but I wish my husband would send some home in one of his care packages. How do I combat it? I make sure all the kids are well versed in fire safety. Who knows when I will need them to step up to the plate. Until the next level of reaching the combat patch, this is Adrienne saying, teach them well. 

Familyroom

Caring for the Homefront



Our children
deserve and
need a center
point that encourages
ideas beyond
living for today.

empower your child

Giving them the building blocks for life

By MARCIA BEENE DICKERSON

Today, our kids are surrounded with messages that say, “Live for the moment.” With so many forms of media available to them, it’s difficult for parents and guardians to get past the roar. And it’s even harder if there’s a single parent, a deployed parent or if the guardians are grandparents.

Our children deserve and need a center point that encourages ideas beyond living for today.

“Values” is a term that gets tossed around a lot. But what exactly are values? In this sense, they’re ideas and actions that help children make decisions.


Studies show that strong values have a positive influence on kids’ behavior. They’re making healthier, more positive choices.

The Search Institute is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge and resources to promote healthy children, youth and communities. Their research reveals “40 Developmental Assets” that help keep children and young adults from engaging in risky behavior.

The Search Institute’s studies also reveal that common themes arise in kids with strong values, such as:

- Academic success
- Aversion to risky behaviors
- Increased participation in the community
- Strength needed to make positive life choices

Sadly, studies also indicate that, “Across the United States—in big cities and small towns—most young people now exhibit fewer than half of the [Search Institute’s] 40 Developmental Assets.”

Let us help you help your children. Get to know the Search Institute’s “40 Developmental Assets” list. These are the qualities most likely to help kids have healthy, productive, caring and well-rounded lives. 

Developmental Assets

Here’s an excerpt from the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets. For the complete list, visit: Search-Institute.org.

Support

positive communication,
Family support and caring
school environments

Empowerment

service to others, feeling
safe and being a resource
in their community

Boundaries & Expectations

home, school and
neighborhood boundaries

Constructive Use of Time

creative activities, time at
home and youth programs

Commitment to Learning

reading for pleasure, caring
about their school and
a sense of motivation

Positive Values

caring, honesty and restraint

Social Competencies

resistance skills, decision-
making and cultural awareness

Positive Identity

self-esteem, a sense of
purpose and personal power

Courtesy of Search Institute: search-institute.org





strengthening the ties

8 Ways to Get Closer— and Stay Closer

Courtesy of Military OneSource and StrongBonds.org

You both have jobs to do, a household to run and maybe even children to raise. So the time you spend alone together is limited.

How can busy spouses, especially those dealing with a military lifestyle, build a sound, lasting relationship in such a high-speed, ever-changing world?

A loving relationship needs careful attention and constant nurturing. But it's easy to lose sight of that when you're racing through the day, trying to meet so many other demands.

Try these tips to help you cultivate quality and endurance in your marriage, so that it will go the distance:

Date each other. Spend time alone together to reignite the intimacy and romance in your relationship. It will help you remember what brought you together in the first place. It's important to “make” time to be alone together because you are unlikely, especially with the unique demands of a military lifestyle, just to “find” it. Once a week or once a month, schedule the kind of date you had when you were single or before you began your Family. Agree to not discuss the children, the in-laws or finances. Dress up and go out to dinner, see a movie or spend a quality evening at home with the phone turned off.

Share household chores. Research shows that women spend more time on household chores than men do. Working women can feel as if they have two jobs—the one they go to and the one they come home to each day. The result is often a mountain of resentment. Running the household together takes work on

the part of both partners. Men may need to play a bigger role, and women may need to stop criticizing their partners for doing chores “the wrong way.” (After all, there may be more than one way to scrub the sink or do the laundry). Try rotating chores to minimize boredom and drudgery. For example, suggest, “I’ll cook, if you’ll clean up tonight.”



Taking a break. A couple relaxes during a recent Tennessee National Guard Strong Bonds seminar.

Create rituals. They’re the cement that helps hold a relationship together. The rituals you create together become familiar shared pleasures you can look forward to when you’re dealing with challenges at work or in the other parts of your lives. Rituals take many forms: a goodbye kiss before work, breakfast in bed with a crossword puzzle on weekends or an annual holiday shopping trip together. Develop your own rituals for daily life and holidays. Then practice them. They will enrich your lives by providing stability—acts of beauty, joy and tenderness you know you’ll have whenever you’re together.

Make a habit of talking frequently. Just a quick phone call from work to touch base can help remind you of the priority of your relationship and give you both a sense of continuity. Some people use a phone call during the day as a way to settle

Family business, so that when they get home they are freer to simply enjoy each other’s company. If deployed, be creative. As phone calls can be costly or simply not an option, use email or write notes of love and support in advance. Make sure notes are sealed in separate envelopes to be opened on specified dates. This small gesture can play a major role in assuring your spouse that he or she is loved and appreciated.

Be flexible. No matter how well you and your spouse talk about your differences, you won’t agree on everything. And that’s normal. In fact, your differences are probably part of what attracted you to each other in the first place. Recognize that not all differences of opinion have to be resolved. Sometimes you just need to agree to disagree—and be willing to listen to your spouse’s point of view.

Don’t say hurtful things when you fight. It’s hard to show restraint in the heat of an argument, but it’s important that you both try. Fights are part of a relationship, and they can actually be productive. But when fights include words designed to hurt, they can poison a relationship. Think about what you say in an argument. Even when you’re angry, avoid using words that you know will hurt your partner.

Adjust your expectations. Accept yourself and your spouse as you are now. It’s natural to want the honeymoon phase to last forever, but it doesn’t. Over time, both you and your spouse will change, and the relationship itself will change as your lives become more complicated—for instance, after you start a Family or experience your first extended separation due to deployment. You may find that you’ve lost some of the spontaneity you once enjoyed, or perhaps your emotional needs have shifted because work takes more of your energy. If you accept that relationships evolve, you won’t be disappointed when the hon-

Want Strong Bonds? Take a Strong Bonds seminar!

Sometimes, a couples getaway is just the thing you and your spouse need. Strong Bonds is a unit-based, chaplain-led program that helps Soldiers and their Families build strong relationships.

Part workshop, part weekend retreat, this seminar series is designed to bring military couples and Families closer—and it works!


Workshops take place around the nation, and are soon expected to be available in all 54 states and territories.

Benefits of the program:

- Creates a strong support group for Soldiers and Families.
- Connects Soldiers and Families to each other, the unit, and important resources such as chaplains.
- Helps Soldiers and Family members develop skills that enable them to build resilient relationships and healthy Families.
- Recognizes and corrects any issues before relationships are in crisis mode.
- Ensures that Guard children grow up in healthy Families.
- Enables Soldiers to stay focused on the mission, improving readiness and retention.

For more information about this fun, creative program, visit StrongBonds.org.

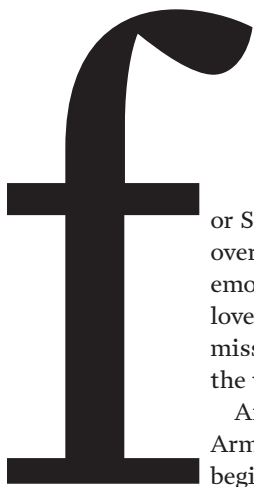
eymoon phase ends and another stage in your real life as a couple begins.

If you’re feeling stuck, don’t give up. Consider getting professional help. If none of your usual strategies are working, it may be time for a new approach. Therapists and counselors are trained to help you develop new perceptions about yourself and the way you relate to others. They can get two people back on track and communicating in a healthy, effective way. Family Support Centers have fully qualified, credentialed counselors on staff to help you and your spouse, and all services are free. Or, if you would prefer, call Military OneSource, available 24 hours a day, to speak with a consultant who will recommend a qualified counselor in your community. Call (800) 342-9647 or visit MilitaryOneSource.com. 

back to work

Making the Transition After Deployment

By CAMILLE BRELAND



For Soldiers, coming home from an overseas deployment brings a mix of emotions—excitement to see your loved ones, relief to have completed the mission and anxiety about returning to the workplace.

After the homecoming celebration, Army National Guard members must begin to make the transition back into

their lives—as working citizens and Soldiers. Returning to a job isn't easy or the same for every person. Nonetheless, all Soldiers should begin thinking about this process as soon as they learn of their deployment.

Sherri Hrovatin, a relationship manager for Military OneSource, shares her five tips for making the transition back into the workplace easier:

1. Talk with your manager and human resources representative as soon as you are notified of your mobilization.

You will want to take advantage of your human resources (HR) representative's expertise with company practices as well as applicable state and federal law. Your HR representative will also discuss the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations to advise you of the need to protect your confidentiality of health information.

2. Keep in touch with your co-workers and employer during your deployment.

These may be people you have worked with for years or maybe just days. They care, are concerned and are proud of you for defending their freedom.

3. Have open communication about your return to work.

Your employer will expect you back as soon as they hear your tour has ended. However, you may be entitled to time off. Let them know your intentions.

4. Be aware that things have changed.

The economy has changed, and so may have your co-workers, your work environment and you. The more flexible and patient you allow yourself to be, the easier the transition will be for you and your employer.

5. Watch for signs that you're having difficulty readjusting to the change.


These can include trouble sleeping or eating, difficulty concentrating, persistent fatigue or frequent absences. Don't assume everything is okay. Remember to reach out for help if you need it. Many employers offer confidential help through an employee assistance program or employee resource program.

Military OneSource can also help you adjust to the changes. While these tips are helpful for many Soldiers, some may still have challenges readjusting to their civilian life.

"If you feel overwhelmed by the return or are unable to function at work or home, seek professional help from a mental health specialist," Hrovatin told *Foundations*. "Talking with others about your experiences and what you're feeling can help. It's not a sign of weakness." 🗣️

have questions?

Contact a Military OneSource representative 24/7 at (800) 342-9647 or visit [MilitaryOneSource.com](https://www.MilitaryOneSource.com).

A man in a white t-shirt and blue pants is working on the interior of a vehicle, possibly a van or truck. He is holding a red pipe or hose and looking towards the camera. The interior is cluttered with various tools and equipment, including a yellow-handled tool, a white bucket, and a red strap. The background shows the wooden interior panels of the vehicle.

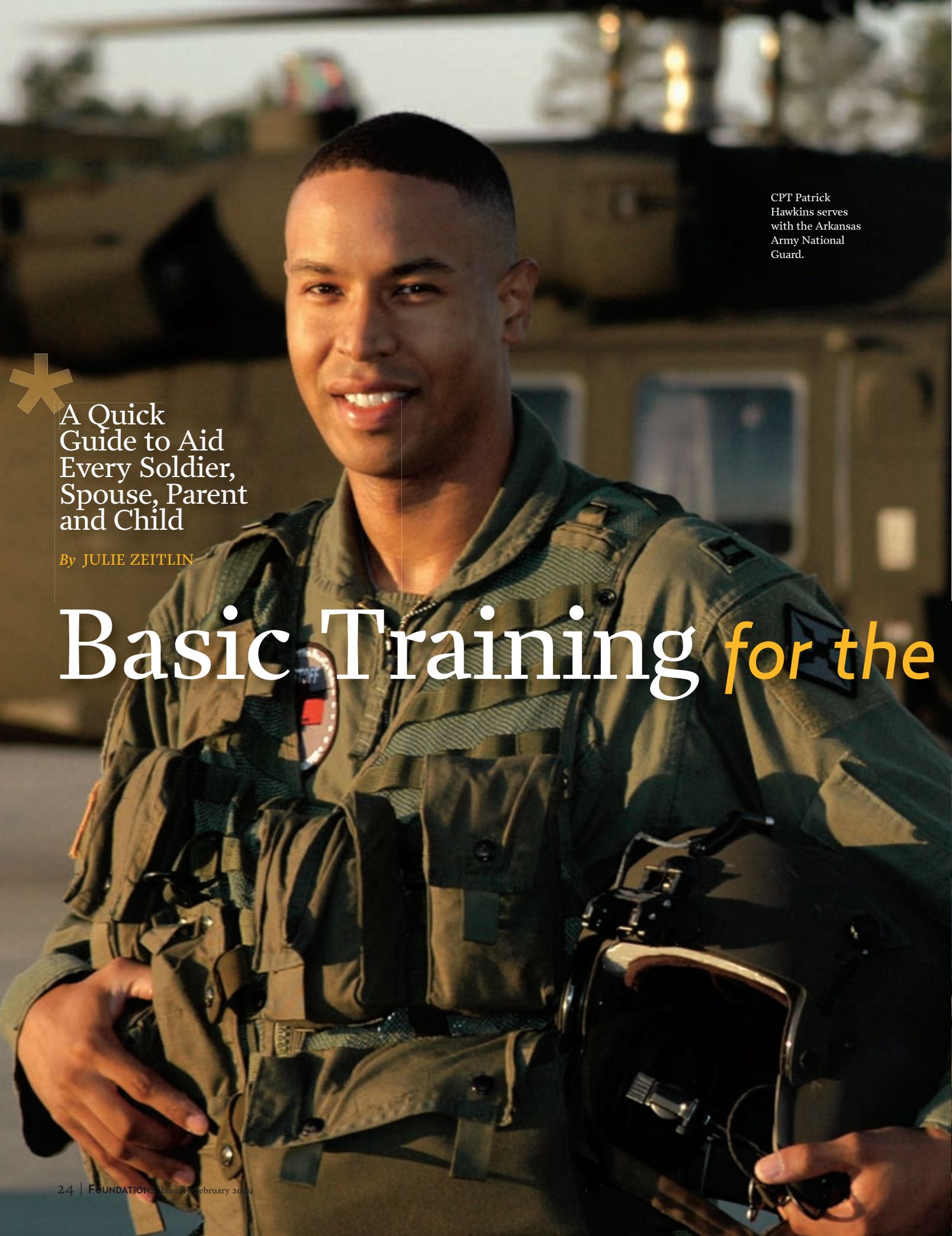
Right man for the job Cadet Jason Carter, 24, from Clarksville, TN, works for the Tennessee Concrete Association. Carter's unit, the 212th, will be deployed to the Dominican Republic, where his duties will include constructing schools.

Know your rights

Army National Guard Soldiers are protected by the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act (USERRA), which applies to all employers regardless of their size, and protects those in the reserve forces of the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, National Guard and the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

Your rights include the following: If you are a permanent employee, you must be reinstated to a comparable position (e.g., similar seniority, pay and status); if you can no longer perform the job, your employer must use reasonable efforts to help you upgrade or update your skills.

>>For more info, check out the Employer Support for Guard and Reserves Web site, Esgr.org. To locate an ESGR Program Support Specialist in your state, click on "contacts," and then choose your state.



CPT Patrick
Hawkins serves
with the Arkansas
Army National
Guard.

*
A Quick
Guide to Aid
Every Soldier,
Spouse, Parent
and Child

By JULIE ZEITLIN

Basic Training *for the*



Guard Family

Emma Murray relaxes with her father, SSIC Thomas George Murray of the Minnesota National Guard.

When a new Soldier joins the Army National Guard, it's not just his or her life that changes. The choice alters the worlds of everyone around them—spouses, children, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and friends. Many times, Families aren't sure what to expect. But those who've been through it do. That's why *Foundations* interviewed military members and their loved ones who have experienced deployment, and combined their insight into a helpful guide, a source of inspiration for all our Guard Families.

husbands, wives and significant others

PANEL

Courtney Meek, wife of SSG Hank Meek, Tennessee
SPC Larissa Taylor, wife of SSG Steven Taylor, Indiana
CPL Roberto DiGiovine, husband of SPC Holly DiGiovine,
South Carolina
Shelli Merino, wife of SSG Michael Noyce Merino, Montana
SSG Adam Dorey and SGT Liesl Marelli, Colorado

quick tips

THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE MORE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND. + BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM.

Of all military Family members, spouses may be the most affected by military life. From child care to finances, career to romance, being married to a Soldier brings with it a mixture of pride and stress.

On Enlistment

I have seen couples struggling with the decisions that come along with pursuing a military career. Don't assume enlisting is a bad idea if you know nothing about it. Take some time to see what being in the Guard could do for you, your spouse and your Family.—*Larissa*

Share the experience; don't fight it.—*Roberto*

The best advice I can offer is to be supportive of your spouse's decision. Ask questions and be involved. This isn't a small decision in the slightest. Sit with your spouse and the recruiter, and make sure the decision made is a sound one, and make sure both of you fully understand the commitment.—*Adam*

On Deployment

I know in the back of my mind there is always a chance he could be called to go. But, I couldn't argue with his passion if that happened. It would be extremely difficult for me. However, I have a very close Family and church home to rely on. I know that with consistent and deep prayer, we will both make it through.—*Courtney*

While I was deployed, my wife, Holly, started feeling like she wanted to be there with me. Rather than complaining about me being gone, she decided to join the Guard. I guess she wants to make a difference in the world; we are both idealists.

She acted as liaison between me and the rest of the world. Holly organized an exhibit of my photography. And, she raised money for the Family Readiness Group. She was great! She was part of the deployment.—*Roberto*

The hardest part about this lifestyle is the possibility of deployment—or him volunteering to go. The Guard wife side of me says, 'Please don't go.' But I know it's his job, and the military is our way of life.—*Larissa*

While he was deployed, I was involved in the Family Readiness Group (FRG). The FRG had resources to help spouses in situations we might face. It was reassuring to have someone to go to for help. I also made myself available to support other spouses any way I could. I dealt with my worries and the fact that I missed him by staying busy with college, and keeping my Family, church and community close around me.—*Shelli*

SSG Michael
Noyce-Merino
and wife, Shelli.



I dealt with my worries and the fact that I missed him by staying busy with college, and KEEPING MY FAMILY, CHURCH AND COMMUNITY CLOSE AROUND ME.

—Shelli Merino, wife of SSG Michael Noyce Merino

As a newly married couple, the time my husband spent away was tough. As a dual-military couple (meaning he and I are both Guard Soldiers), I thought it would be easier. I understand when he says, “I won’t be able to call home for a while,” and “I’m going on a mission sometime this week.”

Having said that, it’s tough no matter what! As a spouse and as a fellow Soldier, I had to do my best to keep stress out of the picture when we spoke. The few times we got to chat, I had to focus on the positive and let him know how much I love him, how much he means to me and how proud I was of him serving.

Holidays are always the hardest times, but find comfort in your Family and friends. Find someone to talk to who may be able to relate. The Guard has a wonderful Family Readiness program where you get connected to other Families within the deployed unit. Spend time writing letters, sending care packages and writing emails. You’ll be surprised how much happiness it may bring you.

I focused on sending some really odd items to my husband and his fellow Soldiers. I’d shop around for sales on 500-count Egyptian cotton pillow cases—doesn’t everyone deserve luxury even in combat?! I would also send personal items like small gourmet (nonperishable) foods, their own silverware, luxury towels, etc. I figured, even if they used the items only once, it might just make that moment even more enjoyable!

Before my husband left, I made a list of things I should do. My list included photography, writing letters, working out, hanging out with friends, cooking new meals, donating time to charity, finishing home improvement items, etc. It was important for me to have a list that could remind me

of what I liked doing on days that were tougher than usual. That list sure helped me get through some lonely times.

Lean on one another for support. In the military, you find that your Family grows and grows because your fellow Soldiers become your extended Family.—Liesl

On Service

I support my husband all the way. It gets tough at times being married to a recruiter because he works a lot of hours. But, it has become a routine. In the end, it’s well worth it.—Larissa



SPC Larissa Taylor and husband, SSG Steven Taylor, catch a game.

SSG Hank Meek and wife, Courtney.



There are going to be times when unexpected tasks, drill or classes may arise, and the Soldier is called away.

Seeing him in his uniform makes his job come to life and seem more real to me. It's a hard feeling to describe.

A spouse needs to be ready to send their husband or wife away for weeks at a time and be understanding and patient, with the Soldier and with the Guard.—*Courtney*

quick tips

STAY BUSY.

+

MAINTAIN SUPPORT.

+

SEEK COUNSELING BEFORE YOU NEED IT.

Liesl's choice to serve means so much to me. Every time she walks through the door, and I give her a hug, I'm hugging my hero. Too often, "normal" life isn't put into perspective. While friends and Family gripe about the gas prices or that their 401(k)s are in the toilet, I have to chuckle. At any given time, she or I, or both of us may be called up to do a mission. She is my hero because of that. She is as well trained as any other branch of military out there, and if called upon, she will do her job to the best of her ability to help out whoever needs it, and when her mission is complete, she will come home again ... to "normal" life. It takes a special kind of person to be able to make that life change, and Liesl is a special kind of wife.—*Adam*

On Relationships

Work heavily on your communication skills and be patient with one another. Take life one day at a time and appreciate one another daily.—*Courtney*

Since I returned from deployment, we've had no problems. We have so many things to do together. There was no adjustment needed. The first thing we did was a 10-day trip to Northern California, Washington and Oregon. It was so great. For us, there are never bad days as long as we are together. God blessing ...—*Roby*

Our relationship is unique in the fact that we are both in the Guard. We joined around the same time from two different states and ended up going to basic training together, where we met. By the time we were dating, we both understood what it meant to serve and our job functions.—*Adam*



SGT Liesl Marelli cherishes time with fellow Guard Soldier and husband SSG Adam Dorey.

I would advise couples to go to pre-marriage counseling with a counselor who has dealt with military couples. [This counselor] would be able to tell them what to expect from a military marriage. I would also advise [couples] to take time to do things together to strengthen their relationship. And to be able to be independent when their spouse is away. Learn how to use Family and friends as a support system.—*Shelli*

Every time she WALKS THROUGH THE DOOR, and I give her a hug, I'm hugging my hero.

—*SSG Adam Dorey, husband of SGT Liesl Marelli*

m & d moms and dads

PANEL

Celia Davis, mother of CPT Patrick Hawkins, Arkansas

Linda and Joe Maynard, mother and father of SPC Marcia Maynard, Tennessee

Doris Purdy and Dr. John T. Marelli, mother and father of SGT Liesl Marelli, Colorado

It's a parent's nature to be protective of their children. To worry. To want the best for them.

Yet, when that child decides to enlist, most parents discover there's little they can do to stop them. Eventually, most say they're glad they didn't stand in the way of their child's service.

On Support

Prior to my daughter's enlistment, I knew nothing about the National Guard. It's been almost 20 years now, and I've learned so much about our amazing Citizen-Soldiers.

I was impressed with the training and maturity Basic Combat Training (BCT) instilled. My daughter returned from BCT as a disciplined and professional Soldier. —*Linda*

I'm happy because he seems to be happy. The Guard seems to be good for him. I'm not 100 percent happy with it, but it's not my life. It's his.

Give your child all the love and support that you can. It's not going to be easy, but if this is your child's

dream—the call in their life—then as a parent, you can't stand in the way of that. Just let destiny take its course and be supportive the best you can. —*Celia*

We all love our children unconditionally, and our hope is that the moral fiber that we instill in our children becomes apparent by their decisions. Liesl's decision to serve, especially during a time of war, was one of her first defining connections with humanity. This is a decision that I am proud to support. Liesl was protected by us all of her life; and now she protects us. Is this a twist of fate or a rite of passage? My advice to parents is that they support their children's decision and constantly make them aware of how much they love them and how proud they are of their commitment to protecting the privileges and freedoms that we enjoy. When I grow up, I want to be like Liesl. —*John*

On Deployment

I pray every day about it. I don't pray that he doesn't go any more; I just pray that God can take him there and bring him back safe—mind and body. —*Celia*



CPT Patrick Hawkins' mother, Cecilia Davis, and brother, Jonathan, encourage military Families to love and support their Soldiers.

Give your child ALL THE LOVE AND SUPPORT that you can.

—*Celia Davis, mother of CPT Patrick Hawkins*

I never thought I'd see her deploy. But she made the decision to go, and I supported that. I had to put the idea of my "child" away and see her as an adult. We were full of fear, pride, joy, anticipation and patriotism. —*Joe*

Offering my love and support and encouraging [my daughter] to find ways to manage stress, transition, and to seek wise counsel are a few of the ways I have tried to manage my concern for her. —*Doris*

On Service

After 9/11, I remember Liesl coming to my office. We were standing on the back deck and talking about that horrific tragedy and insult to our country.

Liesl said that she wanted to do something. She was considering the Peace Corps. Then I suggested that she consider joining the National Guard.

I was a Soldier for the National Guard from 1966 through 1972. It was a monumental experience for me. Although I can't admit that I enjoyed the discipline of that experience, I was certainly shaped for the better by it.

I feel honored that I had an opportunity to serve my country, and when Liesl finally decided on her destiny to join the Guard, I was swollen with pride.

I could have easily been deployed to Vietnam. Instead, I was trained as a sniper to combat hostiles in the urban environment of Newark, NJ. This, of course, was the result of the effects of the Newark Riots of 1967.

So, I understand Liesl's commitment. I know that she can be called anywhere at any time, and knowing Liesl, she will always serve honorably, effectively and with a deep sense of commitment to completing any task assigned. —*John*

By the time your child is old enough to commit to the military, they will be considered an adult. Whether you are delighted, neutral or devastated with their decision, be supportive of them. —*Doris*

quick tips

IT'S OKAY TO WORRY. IT'S CRITICAL TO SHOW SUPPORT.

+

ACCEPT YOUR CHILD AS AN ADULT.



Linda and Joe Maynard are the proud parents of Tennessee National Guard member SPC Marcia Maynard.

b&s brothers and sisters

PANEL

Jonathan Davis, brother of CPT Patrick Hawkins, Arkansas
Lee Diamond, sister of SPC Marcia Maynard, Tennessee
Guy Borda, brother of SGT Jean-Paul Borda, California

Having your brother or sister enlist in the Army National Guard results in mixed emotions. Sure, you're going to worry a little. But most of the time, you'll feel proud of and inspired by them, and you'll learn a world of things from their newfound self-discipline and leadership.

quick tips On Support

If it's something he'd like to do, then he should go after it. It's his career—his choice.—Jonathan

CONSIDER YOUR SIBLINGS' FEARS. Help them stand strong.

TRY TO BE PATIENT. YOUR SIBLING HAS COMMITMENTS IN SERVICE.

Despite their wish to stay home, they must answer the call of our nation.

BE PREPARED FOR THE GOOD AND THE BAD EMOTIONS.

Just be super-supportive and positive. It can be scary, especially for someone newly enlisted, it can be very hard, so just to know that your Family loves you and supports you is very important. (And [during deployment] keep the goodies coming in the mail. They love that!!)—Lee

On Service

Sometimes it gets in the way of get-togethers and plans that we make, but I am proud to have a Family member serve.—Lee



SGT Jean-Paul Borda and Family.

Having a brother or sister in the military isn't always easy, but it can be rewarding. Be strong about it; there's a positive side to it.—Jonathan

How do I feel about my brother's service? This is an easy answer for me ... the feeling is overwhelming pride. I'm honored by my brother's dedication and his decision to stand up for his beliefs and his country. I didn't know he had it in him, this desire to serve. He was always a stand-up guy and my best friend, so it makes complete sense when I think about it. But, the initial feeling was shock when he first signed up. He was 28, a husband, a father and a working man. He didn't seem to fit the bill, in my mind, of someone who wanted to follow this path. So, I wasn't prepared because I knew the danger he was getting into. We were heading into a war, and I was pretty sure he was heading overseas to be a part of it.

I saw him on the day he graduated boot camp, and there I was sitting in the bleachers, seeing him in camo ... the respect I had for my brother set in. I cheered for him as hard as I could.—Guy

On Deployment

I thought about my brother every single day while he was overseas. It was natural for me ... the news, the radio, a flag, seeing someone in uniform, my brother's children, his wife, my mom, a yellow ribbon, almost anything would trigger my memory of him, and I'd start to worry.

Seeing him in camo ... I CHEERED FOR HIM as hard as I could.

—Guy Borda, brother of SGT Jean-Paul Borda

It's weird, you're also faced with guilt ... at least I was. I found myself thinking about what I would say at his eulogy, how would I pay tribute to my brother and what would I say to others about him. In my mind, I was preparing that speech. It was painful thinking about it, and I felt guilty for even considering it. In the back of your mind, you're unfortunately dealing with the worst possible scenario ... what if he doesn't come home.

You have to come to terms with the whole reality of it. It's war, and you can't escape from the possibility that they might pay the ultimate sacrifice. I guess my advice is to be prepared for the good and the bad emotions, and know that you've got to deal with them. Really, most days were good. Communication is key. Being able to talk to him on the phone, via email, a blog, a text or a letter all help tremendously.—Guy

d & s daughters and sons

PANEL

Cassy Gaddis, 16, daughter of CW5 Jim Gaddis, Illinois
Hailley Wood, 6, daughter of SFC Clint Wood, Kentucky
Emma Murray, 15, daughter of SSG Thomas George Murray, Minnesota

If you have a parent serving in the Guard, you're in a very special situation. Because your parent is not only taking care of you, but also your community, your state—and the entire country, it's something to be very proud of.

We hope these words below give you courage and strength. You're not alone.

On Service

I know what they go through, and their sacrifice for us is just jaw-dropping. We sit here while they're training and fighting to help us. I think that self-sacrifice is the definition of a Soldier. —Cassy



SFC Clint Wood and daughter Hailley.

On Deployment

I think a lot of people tend to focus on the negativity and sadness. And there is a negative side. But I always think in the tough times, there's a silver lining to everything. You just have to focus on the good. —Cassy

[I was] kind of sad because I missed [my dad]. I really felt like I wanted to Webcam by myself, but I didn't know what to do. —Hailley



Cassy (left) and her sister Alyssa (right) Gaddis proudly support their father CW5 Jim Gaddis of Illinois. The girls recently recorded a song to honor military Families. It is available for purchase at ThePriceofPeace.org. Proceeds benefit Family Readiness Groups.

When [my dad] was in Iraq, I was always scared an ambush was going to happen. I knew he was in a safer area, but you never know. When he was there and I was here, I just didn't know how safe it really was. I know my stepmom was always a little nervous when he went on convoys, and I would get a little anxious.

But, even though it's hard not having [your Soldier] here all the time, they are doing something good for us and our country. I can't say it's easy waiting for them to come home, but it makes seeing them when they get back that much better. —Emma

quick tips

ASK.
 There are no stupid questions. Ask your mom and dad about what it means to be a Guard Soldier—and what that means for you.

STAY IN TOUCH.
 Ask your parent to show you how to use email, Webcams and more. Also, ask them to leave a tip sheet in their absence.

DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO STAY POSITIVE.
 Your parents are doing everything they can to be strong for you. They need your support just as much as you need theirs.

Military Speak

By MARCIA BEENE DICKERSON

MILITARY ACRONYMS ARE REALLY A LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN. WHEN YOUR SPOUSE OR LOVED ONE BEGINS "TALKING" IN SHORT BURSTS, HERE'S A QUICK GUIDE FOR TRANSLATION:

- ACU:** Army Combat Uniform
- BCT:** Basic Combat Training
- CO:** Commanding Officer
- DOD (Dod):** Department of Defense
- FAC:** Family Assistance Center
- KP:** Kitchen Patrol
- LES:** Leave and Earnings Statement (pay stub)
- MOS:** Military Occupational Specialty
- NCO:** Noncommissioned Officer
- PT:** Physical Training
- TDY:** Temporary Duty

SUPPORT FOR GUARD FAMILY MEMBERS IS JUST A CLICK OR A CALL AWAY. TRY THESE WEB SITES FOR HELPFUL INFO.

- OurMilitaryKids.org
- AOS.MyArmyLifeToo.com
- MilitaryOneSource.com
- NMFA.org
- SoldiersAngels.org
- SpouseBuzz.com
- AmericaSupportsYou.mil

S soldiers

PANEL

- SSG Hank Meek, Tennessee
- SSG Michael Noyce Merino, Montana
- CPL Roberto DiGiovine, South Carolina
- SFC Clint Wood, Kentucky
- SGT Jean-Paul Borda, California

As a Soldier, you're an expert at multi-tasking. While you're busy training your body, mind and spirit, you're learning to balance this with Family responsibilities.

And, there's no magic key to help with this, unfortunately—just a lot of day-to-day perseverance, effort and love.

quick tips

On Deployment

Honestly, it sucked, but we were able to stay in touch. I talked to her almost daily via Internet or Adji-Phone.

My advice, make things clear. A Guard Soldier is a U.S. Warrior and being deployed is part of the deal. Communication is everything. —Roberto

Get a laptop. Start a blog. Keep in touch with Family and friends as often as you can to let them know you're okay. —Jean-Paul

On Relationships

Trust is a large factor in a marriage, especially in the Guard. A Soldier needs to be able to trust their spouse in all aspects when they're gone either for training or on a deployment.

Find a spouse who's dedicated to supporting you in your service and who is prepared emotionally to handle a deployment. Also, make sure both of you share the same vision in life, similar hopes and dreams. —Hank

Service involves both the Soldier and the spouse. When the Soldier is on duty or deployed, the spouse becomes the head of the household and takes on all the responsibilities of the home.

Separation [is the biggest challenge]. [My wife] Shelli, handles it well, but she has not become used to it and does not want me to be gone anymore.

Ensure both you and your spouse understand how to manage the finances. And make the most of the time you have together. —Michael

The experience in the Guard can be a key element in making the couple stronger, if there is the right attitude.

I was so happy when [my wife] joined the Guard, too! Of course, I was a little worried, but she has the right to experience the same things I went through. It's about respect and understanding. She has come a long way since

we started this journey together. As a civilian, she didn't have to go to Basic Training, and possibly war, but as a Soldier, she can share the experience with me. So it was, and still is, a win-win situation. Also, we are planning to get deployed together next time, so we will watch each other's back. —Roberto

On Service

I joined to do something that I wasn't able to accomplish when I was in the Marines—be a photojournalist. And, I missed serving my country, too.

I'd advise today's recruits to always strive to do everything to your best ability. Watch and learn leadership traits from your superiors. Strive to become a noncommissioned officer as soon as possible. —Clint

War Veterans have a SENSE OF AWARENESS ABOUT THE WORLD that civilians don't have. Use this knowledge in a proactive and positive way.

—CPL Roberto DiGiovine

I joined because of 9/11. Service, to me, means standing up and doing whatever you can for this great country. I've always had the support of my Family, which made it a lot easier to join. Service goes on at the homefront and the frontlines. —Jean-Paul

On Coming Home

Be flexible and stay positive. War Veterans have a sense of awareness about the world that civilians don't have. Use this knowledge in a proactive and positive way. Help the world become a better place. Coming home can be somewhat weird, but it is a temporary feeling. Americans are great people, and they will help you. —Roberto

On Parenting

My Family always comes first. I share with my 6-year-old daughter some of my experiences in Iraq and Bosnia, but not all of them. When I was deployed to Bosnia and Iraq, I told her that Uncle Sam needed me to protect our country. She said she wanted to talk to Uncle Sam about that one time. She knows that being a Veteran is a special honor. —Clint

During my deployment, my wife kept our two young boys informed about where I was and what I was doing. To this day, any time they see an Army Strong commercial or see a Soldier in uniform, they shout: "Daddy! Look at the Soldier!" Trying to explain to a toddler what service means is a bit difficult, so I explain it in kid's terms: We're getting the bad guys. —Jean-Paul

COMMUNICATE.

Do what you can to stay in touch as often as possible.

TRUST EACH OTHER. Trust is critical to a successful marriage.

SHARE FINANCIAL INFO.

Make sure you and your spouse both understand how to manage your household finances.

FIND A MENTOR. Learn everything you can from your superiors.

running 101

The benefits of
lacing up your
running shoes

By JAMIE ROBERTS

Thinking about running for exercise but intimidated by the athletic bodies you see jogging on the sidewalk? Starting a running program doesn't have to be daunting, and you certainly don't have to be in marathon-level shape to start running for good health. You just need to lace up some good running shoes and make smart choices before, during and after your run.



“Although you should always consult your doctor before starting any exercise program, running is a great program that anyone can begin with little preparation,” says Andrew Bullington, a fellowship-trained sports medicine orthopedic surgeon. The full benefits of running are only realized with a long-term commitment, but some of the following advantages are apparent right away, Dr. Bullington says.

Running promotes better overall health.

Running lowers blood pressure, helps the arteries maintain their elasticity, improves blood and oxygen flow through the body, and strengthens the heart, thus lowering the risk of heart attack and stroke. Running also keeps cholesterol down and your immune system strong.

Helps manage weight. Running is one of the best cardiovascular exercises for burning calories and fat. Many first-time runners are amazed at the weight they can drop after sticking with a healthy running program.

Prevents bone and muscle loss. Not only does a weight-bearing exercise like running build better bone health and help fight off injury and osteoporosis, but it can even slow down the aging process.


Provides psychological benefits, such as an improved mood and relief from depression. Running releases endorphins that cause a sense of euphoria, or what’s called a “runner’s high.” Even if you don’t experience a runner’s high, running can make you feel more confident and boost your energy level.

Alleviates stress. Runners often experience less tension because of the endorphin release and muscle fatigue. Plus, running allows you to focus on physical obstacles you can overcome—like making it through that next mile or crossing a race’s finish line—rather than mental obstacles that are less controllable. 🧠



“Starting off, take it at a comfortable pace; then, after a week, pick [it] up. Do not cheat yourself of a workout. The biggest thing is listening to your body.”

—SGT Jill Stevens, Miss Utah 2007

 **run smart** Follow these tips to start off strong:

Before a run:

- * Buy some great shoes. Stick with major brands, which you can buy at a discount store or a running specialty store. Even though shoes from a running store might cost a little more, these stores have experts on staff who can measure your stride and advise you on the perfect shoes for your feet.
- * Check out some Web sites for running schedules that will help you plan your pace, especially if you’ve never run before. Google “Couch to 5K” to start.
- * Drink a lot of water.
- * Walk a little to warm up your muscles.

During a run:

- * Take it slow and find a sustainable and not-too-aggressive pace. It’s okay to rest and walk occasionally when you’re first starting out.
- * Take deep breaths.
- * Don’t push yourself too hard—injuries can derail the best-laid plans.

After a run:

- * Drink a lot of water.
- * Stretch to get rid of built-up lactic acid, which causes your muscles to ache.
- * Walk for a few minutes after your run in order to cool down gradually.

For whatever reason you choose to start running—to improve your health or mood, to lose weight, to meet people or for a charitable cause—you’re sure to experience many more physical and emotional benefits than you imagined when you first tried out those running shoes.

testing their limits

Soldiers Experience Adventure

By CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

The Army launched a new program in September 2008 that is unlike anything ever established before. The pilot program, titled the Warrior Adventure Quest (WAQ), is aimed at helping Soldiers make life's transition between deployments.

Army statistics show that by October 2007, 186 Soldiers had lost their lives in accidents less than a year after returning from deployment. An overwhelming percentage of those deaths were between the ranks of E-1 and E-5, and involved alcohol and breaking the speed limit. Made possible by funding from the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command, WAQ's goal is to drastically reduce this number over the next year.

Pairing adrenaline-pumping activities with a controlled environment, WAQ officials hope to assist the Soldiers with the major adjustment between a deployment and the more casual lifestyle of a civilian.

Encompassing Soldiers in the Army, Army National Guard and Army Reserve, the program will provide Soldiers with adventures in whitewater rafting, mountain biking, skydiving, paintball, rock climbing, skiing and other exciting, safe sports.

"We are trying to provide activities that basically are a mitigation to dangerous behaviors, or—as we like to use the term—aberrant behaviors," said John O'Sullivan, program manager for Outdoor Recreation for WAQ. "The main goal is to provide alternatives, but it is just as important to help with the group cohesion."

Battlemind

Coupled with these high-speed adventures, Soldiers engage in Battlemind training. This technique is designed to build their inner strength so that they can face fears and adversity, and make better life decisions.

"Battlemind is an Army program that is basically geared toward prevention and intervention of stressors that could ultimately lead to PTSD," O'Sullivan said.

"The Battlemind AAR [after-action report] is one tool that they teach in the overall program,"

O'Sullivan added. "It focuses on what to do in the event of a traumatic incident of a unit. It entails a series of steps and ... actions [that] help the Soldier."

Battlemind includes:


- * Self-confidence training, which develops and hones the Soldier's ability to take calculated risks and handle challenges
- * Mental toughness training, teaching the Soldier how to overcome obstacles and setbacks in life, enabling them to maintain a positive attitude when the going gets rough


The men of C Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), Virginia National Guard became the first Soldiers to participate in WAQ when they embarked on a whitewater rafting excursion on the Youghiogheny River in Ohio, PA.

Army brass hopes to cycle 80,000 Army Soldiers, including the Guard, through the program over the next 12 months. The goal for that period is for every BCT to complete a WAQ within 90 days of their return from a combat deployment.

It's in the Army's interest to keep their Soldiers alive and happy. They know that the average cost of \$86 to send a Soldier on an adventure outweighs the cost of losing a Soldier due to an accident.

"Communication is one of the key aspects in trying to relieve some of the onset of PTSD and not keeping it bottled up inside," O'Sullivan explained. "What we are doing is using the WAQ as an introduction to Battlemind."

"We are definitely not trying to encourage therapeutic situations here, but we are trying to open the door to clear communication and make Soldiers comfortable talking about their experiences," he added. 

 For more information on Battlemind Training, go to www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/battlemind/index.html.



Hold On: Virginia National Guard Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team, travel down the Youghiogheny River in Pennsylvania, Sept. 13.

support

Resources for Guard Families

childcare coming right up

By CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

Deployments strain your Families in many ways. Being absent from one's Family for a year or more can stress marriages, employer support, friendships and especially the household budget. Often, spouses have to make employment changes, whether that means getting a job or changing their hours, to supplement a loss of income. Some may be in school or want to go back to school. The absence of the deployed parent may also create gaps in their current child care plans, which may mean the Family needs to look for child care solutions outside the home. All of these situations result in additional child care costs.

RICH REID/GETTY IMAGES

Thanks to a partnership between National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) and the Department of Defense (DoD), you can now get help finding quality child care and money to help pay for it.

A (Not So) New Program on the Block

Enter Operation: Military Child Care (OMCC), a program designed to help Families of deploying Soldiers solve the problems of child care without spending an arm and a leg. Made possible by the Army, Guard Families with Soldiers mobilized or deployed in support of the Global War on Terror are eligible for financial assistance to help them pay for quality child care in their local communities. While the program has been available to Families of deployed Soldiers since early 2005, many Guard Families are still unaware that this valuable resource exists.

The DoD recognized the need to assist Guard and Reserve members who are deployed and who are not near a military installation. They partnered with NACCRRA to assist the military services in finding spaces outside the military community. Geographically separated Families just did not have access to the same level of support as those Families who lived on-post, even though their Soldiers were fighting side-by-side.

“The purpose of OMCC is to make the fees Families pay for care in the community commensurate with what they would pay if they could obtain care on an installation,” said Nadine Moore, Army OneSource Coordinator, ARNG Soldier/Family Support & Services.

Qualified and Capable

NACCRRA, often referred to as “The Nation’s Leading Voice for Childcare,” participates with more than 800 local and state child care agencies with the goal of increasing the availability of quality care across the U.S. The DoD’s child-care programs on military installations have received strong accolades and successfully accommodate more than 200,000 children. The problem is that many Guard Soldiers, and other reserve component service members, do not live near an installation. So the DoD and NACCRRA teamed up to make OMCC available.

“To be eligible for Operation: Military Child Care, the provider has to meet state licensure requirements,” Moore told *Foundations*. “The requirements [for licensure] vary among the 54 states and territories. In order to find out if your provider meets the requirements, or to find an eligible provider, go to the NACCRRA Web site, and type in your ZIP code at the Child Care Aware search tool. There you’ll find a list of Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in your area that can give you a list of eligible providers.”

OMCC’s Goal for You

Activated Guard Soldiers are eligible to participate during the period of their deployment and for 60 days after their return from active duty. The idea is to ease this financial

burden from deployment through the Soldiers’ transition back into their civilian life.

If the spouse or legal guardian is working or attending school full- or part-time, the program will provide them either full- or part-time child care fee assistance. Fee assistance is also available for 60 days while the spouse or guardian is looking for work or applying to school.

“Their spouse has to work full- or part-time, and if they are looking for work or applying to school, there is a 60-day period where they can qualify for fee assistance,” Moore added. “If they haven’t started work or school by the end of that 60-day period, then the fee assistance is suspended. The amount of the fee assistance depends on a few things, including how many children require care, and how much the child care provider in question charges.” Again, the purpose of the program is to make what a Family would pay for care in their community equal to what they are paying on an installation.

Ensuring Well-Being

The definitive aspect of the program is that parents have access to quality child care off of an installation. Because the child care center or provider must meet state licensure requirements, the military departments and parents can be assured that the children are receiving quality care in a safe environment.

“I think this program is a great opportunity for our Soldiers and Families,” Moore said. “For deployed Soldiers, this is one less thing they have to worry about. I think it’s a big step in the right direction.”

>> For more on NACCRRA and the programs it administers for the military services, go to NACCRRA.org/militaryprograms.

According to NACCRRA:

More than 11 million children under age 5 in the U.S. are in some type of weekly child care arrangement. On average, children under age 5 whose mothers work spend 36 hours per week in child care.

4.2 million children between 5 and 14 with working mothers are home alone after school.

There are 118,947 child care centers in the U.S.

97% of caregivers in child care centers are women.

There are 847 local and state Child Care Resource and Referral Centers in the U.S.

Benefits of OMCC:

You may be eligible to receive at least \$100 a month in child care fee assistance.

OMCC is for activated (federal or state missions) or deployed National Guard Soldiers.

Activated or deployed Soldiers are eligible during the period of their deployment and for 60 days after returning from active duty.



you & the yellow ribbon program

The who, what, when, where & why

By MARCIA BEENE DICKERSON

As a member of the National Guard, one of the most enduring symbols to me is the Yellow Ribbon. When I returned from deployment, the emblem was everywhere—doors, mailboxes, houses and, of course, tied around trees.

In my heart, it represents hope and love. It's in this spirit of caring about Soldiers and their Families that the Army National Guard created the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

Pre-Deployment Support

Although the program has “Reintegration” in its title, it actually encompasses all phases of the deployment cycle for Soldiers and their Families. The directive states: “Support begins when the Soldier is notified and includes his or her Family.” This initiative is aimed to prepare all to be proactive and resilient while experiencing the stresses of deployment.

Some of the programs for pre-deployment include: Family care plans and Family counseling, single Guard member concerns, Veterans Affairs benefits, TRICARE,

A Guard member's
*Family is one of the
most important
components* of a
successful deployment.

personal financial management and counseling, child custody issues, legal readiness, civilian employer information to include Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), marriage enrichment, youth programs and community outreach.

According to Dr. David S. C. Chu, the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, events for the pre-deployment phase will focus on Family challenges, “associated with separation, especially for those members serving in a combat zone and their Families.”

Resources for Soldiers and their Families will come from various personnel and organizations such as Transition Assistance Advisors (TAAs), State Family Program Directors, Veterans’ Service Organizations (VSOs) such as Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion, the American Red Cross, 4-H, and other public and private associations as deemed appropriate.

Some events and activities include:

- Review of legal documents
- Spouse and Family member employment and support
- Combat and operational stress prevention training for the Family
- Understanding the needs of wounded, ill and injured Warriors

Post-Deployment Support

The program’s plan is to focus not only on Soldiers when they return from deployment, but on their Families as well. For example, demobilizing Warriors will be enrolled in a comprehensive agenda that will provide custom services such as re-establishing communication with Family members, employers and their communities. This will help Guard members transition from full-time Soldiers to Citizen-Soldiers.

Some of the programs offered are:

- Family Counseling
- Financial Education
- Military OneSource Support
- Recreation and Fitness
- Library Materials
- Member and Family Preparedness


The proactive nature of the plan sets benchmarks at 30, 60 and 90 days. At each of these important milestones, information and referrals will be offered to the Soldiers and their Family members.

Other offerings include career counseling and job fairs, married and single Soldier seminars, classes on reconnecting with children, as well as briefings on education programs, TRICARE and VA benefits. Medical screenings will also be conducted during these meetings.

Families Matter

One of the most important components of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is Families. Soldiers’ Families are expected and welcomed at each event. The directive from Secretary of Defense Dr. Robert M. Gates states that Family members are defined as: “Spouses, children, parents, grandparents, siblings and/or significant others.”

As it has been proved, a Guard member’s Family is one of the most important parts to a successful deployment, so Families are to be included in every step of the process—pre-deployment, deployment, sustainment, redeployment and reintegration.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is the spirit of the symbol I came home to. It takes me, my Family and all that’s important to me and ties everything together. Just as the National Guard takes care of our communities and answers the call of our nation, so, too, does it take care of its own. 



Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program Services

Here is a sample of the activities recommended for:

30 days post-deployment:

- Marriage Workshop
- Single Guard Member Workshop
- Career Coaching & Job Fair

60 days post-deployment:

- Anger Management
- Substance Abuse Prevention
- TRICARE Briefing

90 days post-deployment:

- Post Deployment Health Assessment
- VA Benefits Briefing
- Financial Planning & Counseling



***For more information regarding these benchmarks, please call or visit your state’s Joint Forces Headquarters.**



money matters

Easy ways to **manage your money**—even in a recession

By MEGAN PACELLA

Between the downfall of financial powerhouses like AIG and Lehman Brothers, a steady decline in the stock market and the sub-prime mortgage lending crisis, Americans are stressing about money. Afraid you'll fall prey to the nationwide financial crisis? Follow these simple steps to minimize your debt, boost your savings and make your bank account recession-proof.


Cut costs. Before you worry about managing your debt, start thinking of ways you can save money. Even if it seems like you can't possibly spread your paycheck any further, you can always find more ways to cut back. By turning a critical eye to every line item on your budget, you will stockpile some serious cash. See the sidebar below for easy ways to cut your expenses today—you'll be surprised at the results.


Start saving. Reducing expenses means nothing if you're not saving up for a rainy day. Once you've figured out how to cut costs, make sure you're putting some of that extra cash into a savings account. At the beginning of the month, set a goal for how much you want to save by the end of the month. That way you'll be more likely to work extra hours or cut back on extras in order to meet your goal.

Beware of credit cards. If you've been paying only the minimum balance on your credit cards, you run the risk of falling into seri-

ous debt—and ruining your credit rating. If you have a revolving credit card, each time you make a minimum payment the card's interest rate can increase, burying you further in debt. If you can't pay your bill in full, pay as much as you can—and stop using that card until your debt is paid off.

Adjust your mortgage. Interest rates often drop when the economy is heading into a recession, making it a good time to refinance your mortgage. If you're in a high-rate mortgage, refinancing will not only save you money on your monthly payments—over time, it will also save you thousands of dollars in interest.

Following these tips won't necessarily cure your financial problems, but they can help reduce stress. When it comes to managing your money, the most important rule is to spend less than you make—rainy days won't seem so bad when you have a handle on your finances. 

 For more information about securing your finances, visit SaveandInvest.org/Military.

Cost Cutters

SIMPLE WAYS TO SAVE MONEY TODAY

- * **Reduce** utility bills by adjusting the thermostat a few degrees (or buying a programmable thermostat), switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs (they last longer), shutting off lights when you leave a room, turning off the TV if no one is watching it and powering off your computer at night.
- * **Avoid** the temptation to eat out by letting each member of your Family plan their favorite meal for dinner one night a week.
- * **Sign Up** for a membership to a video store or a mail-order video service such as Netflix instead of hitting the movie theaters every weekend. If you must see a new film, go to a less expensive matinee.
- * **Cut** your cable bill by figuring out which channels your Family actually watches, or bite the bullet and go down to the basic plan—or cut out cable altogether.
- * **Save** on your gas bill by carpooling a couple days a week, combining several errands into one trip, going to the grocery store once a week, convincing the kids to take the school bus and vacationing close to home.
- * **Slash** your grocery bill by resisting the urge to splurge on name-brand items—generics are often just as good.

BOOK REVIEW

Finding My Way

A Teen's Guide to Living With a Parent Who Has Experienced Trauma

By Michelle D. Sherman, Ph.D. & DeAnne M. Sherman


It takes a tough kid to be a teenager today. Numerous temptations and obstacles stand in their way, from drugs and alcohol to bullying and poverty. Imagine facing these while also dealing with a parent who suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Support is found, however, in *Finding My Way: A Teen's Guide to Living with a Parent Who Has Experienced Trauma*. According to the authors, "More than half of all people experience a traumatic event during their lifetime."

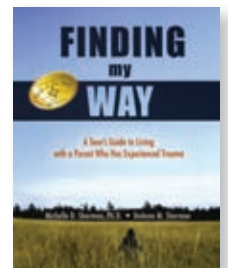
PTSD is common among Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans. Dr. Michelle D. Sherman and her mother, DeAnne Sherman, a teacher with more than 40 years of experience, talk about this complex issue in ways that teens can understand.

Featuring writings from teens whose lives have been affected by PTSD, the book provides clear and informative facts about the disorder, while explaining the "how and why" of it.

Using checklists, drawings and answers to frequently asked questions, the Shermans encourage teens to "make it their own" by using the book as a journal to record their feelings—a practice that's been found to help those struggling with various emotional problems.

Finding My Way is an excellent book for an exceptional audience that has too often been overlooked. 

Reviewed by
Marcia Beene Dickerson





hit the books

Go to School on Uncle Sam

By BILL HUDGINS

While most everyone has heard of the educational benefits available under the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB), service members can also find other federal and state educational perks that can help them (and their spouses) afford higher education. Even better, many of these are direct benefits or grants, not loans that have to be repaid.

The Post 9/11 GI Bill

The Post 9/11 GI Bill is a new education benefit program for individuals who served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. Its benefits are payable only for training pursued on or after August 1, 2009. Based on your length of active duty service, you are entitled to a percentage of the following:

- Cost of tuition and fees at a public institution of higher education.
- Monthly housing allowance equal to the basic allowance for housing payable to a military E-5 with dependents, in the same ZIP code as your school (paid to you).
- Yearly books and supplies stipend of up to \$1,000 per year (paid to you).
- A one-time payment of \$500 to certain individuals relocating from highly rural areas.

Visit GIBILL.va.gov for details.

Tuition Assistance

Thanks to the Armed Forces Tuition Assistance (TA) benefit program, each branch of the military may pay up to 100 percent of off-duty tuition expenses for its members. This is not a loan—TA is a benefit available to you as a member of the Army National Guard.

The Army National Guard Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) benefits are intended for traditional part-time drilling Soldiers, members on ADSW/ADT or mobilized commissioned officers. These benefits may be applied to high school, community and four-year college, vocational/technical certification and licensing and graduate tuition and authorized fees, up to \$4,500 total benefit per Soldier, per fiscal year.

ARNG Federal Tuition Assistance may be used with the Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserve (SR) or MGIB-Active Duty (AD) under certain conditions.

More information on benefits, limits and eligibility requirements, as well

as an application, may be found at 1-800-Go-Guard.com.

Stretching the Benefits

While Pell Grants can be used, the TA will always be applied first. Also, you may be able to extend your benefits by getting college credit for previous academic work or for training in your civilian job or as a Soldier. Free testing, certification and licensing is available through Military OneSource. More than 150 tests are available free to ARNG Soldiers, including CLEP (College Level Examination Program), DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Tests) and ECE (Excelsior College Examinations), all of which can translate into college credit.

ARNG spouses are also eligible for free CLEP and DSST exams, and they may take them and other tests at ARNG/DANTES Test Centers. Visit the Military OneSource Web site at MilitaryOneSource.com.

Some state colleges and universities offer free tuition to service members. Check with your state National Guard office to find those in your area.

Teaching Programs

Soldiers or spouses who are considering a career in education should check into two programs for future teachers. Troops to Teachers (TTT) provides stipends up to \$5,000 and bonus incentives up to \$10,000 for agreeing to teach in a “high need” district. For eligibility, visit Dantes.doded.mil. The Spouses to Teachers Program is a nationwide program (Spouseto-Teachers.com). It provides funding and support services to enable spouses to obtain teacher licenses.

Technical/Professional Certifications

If you want or need certification in a



Federal Student Aid

Besides military benefits, the federal government offers a number of financial student aid programs in the form of loans and grants (which do not have to be repaid). The money is paid through the schools themselves to cover tuition, books, fees and possibly living expenses for a Soldier or spouse.

The financial aid application process starts after you or your spouse has enrolled in college. Fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form online; using the FAFSA Pre-Application Worksheet at fafsa.ed.gov/worksheet.htm makes it much easier. You will need tax forms from previous years, including W-2s, bank statements and investment statements to complete the form.

Once you have submitted it, the school will notify you which types of loans and grants you qualify for and the total amounts. Choose the loans and grants you want, and the school will finish the loan process.

particular field, the ARNG Certification program reimburses test fees for more than 30 national certification exams such as food services, fitness, electronics and auto repair, as well as more than 200 other exams from 40 different agencies. Contact your education office, MilitaryOneSource.com or visit the following links for more information: ArmyEducation.Army.mil

mil or Cool.Army.mil (Credentialing Opportunities On Line, or COOL).


Student Loan Repayment Program

Guard Soldiers who have an existing student loan obligation when they enlist or re-enlist can apply for as much as \$20,000 in repayment help in return for a six- or eight-year enlistment as a member of a unit. Also, current Army National Guard members who extend their enlistment contract to a minimum period of six years are also eligible, provided they meet certain requirements. Visit 1-800-Go-Guard.com for more info.

Distance Learning

The popularity and variety of distance learning grows daily, and it may be especially useful to Guard Soldiers who want to continue studying while on duty or to pursue programs not available at home. Catalogs with hundreds of non-traditional schools and programs are available on the DANTES Web site (Dantes.doded.mil). These include nationally accredited distance learning programs and independent study programs.

Assistance for Active-Duty Guard Soldiers

The Army Continuing Education System Tuition Assistance (ACES TA) Program provides financial assistance to active duty Soldiers, including Title 10/32 Soldiers in AGR status. It pays up to \$4,500 in tuition and fees per fiscal year; some length of service requirements apply. Soldiers may receive ACES TA and the MGIB-AD at the same time through the MGIB “Top Up” program, which will pay whatever ACES TA does not pay, up to the full-time MGIB-AD rate. 

above and beyond

Shelle Michaels has the
heart of a volunteer

- By CAMILLE BRELAND -

It's a rare occasion that a full-time student, mother of three and university instructor has time for much of, well, anything else. But those titles just skim the surface of what patriot and hero Shelle Michaels takes on daily as a champion for the Army National Guard and the rest of our Armed Forces.

Shelle wasn't an Army brat; her parents weren't in the Guard. But she still managed to acquire an unfailing respect for our service men and women seen most often in those who grew up around it. For as long as she can remember, Shelle has admired—no, been in awe of—individuals who dedicate their lives to the protection and well-being of our great nation and its citizens.

But she truly opened her heart to volunteering and serving our nation's heroes after the tragic Columbine school shootings in 1999. At the time, Shelle was living in Aurora, CO, while her husband was stationed at Buckley Air Force Base, where she led the base's spouse group. After the shooting, her group began connecting with and supporting



the Columbine community and victims' Families.

"Seeing a large area of the [Denver region] really be placed on the defensive ... I realized that at any given moment, that could be any of us in need of a helping hand," Shelle said. "At that point, I knew that involvement from the community in a vast capacity was crucial for healing and moving forward from the tragedies of that day. That forever changed my heart to volunteer."

After she moved back to her home state of North Dakota, Shelle knew she wanted to continue her military support but wasn't sure how. So, she turned to the information superhighway for help.

"I googled 'Soldier support,' and the first hit that I got was Soldiers' Angels," Shelle recalled.

She signed up to "Adopt a Soldier" that day in 2004, and four years later, she is now the organization's communications director.

Soldiers' Angels was founded in 2003 by Patti Patton-Bader, a mother whose two sons have served in Iraq. It is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to "providing aid and



*May no Soldier go unloved,
May no Soldier walk alone,
May no Soldier be forgotten,
Until they all come home.*

—Soldiers' Angels

"Volunteering brings feelings of fulfillment and the **knowledge that I have made a difference in someone's life.**"

—Shelle Michaels

comfort to the men and women of the United States Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and their Families." These volunteers do everything from sending care packages overseas, to visiting injured warriors in hospitals, to writing letters to military Families and fostering pets while their owners are deployed.

"We are serious and passionate as an organization in ensuring that the needs of our nation's heroes are met," Shelle noted.

It's her passion that drives Shelle as a volunteer and leader, something not uncommon for Soldiers' Angels, its founder said.

"I've noticed with Soldiers' Angels, the volunteers have so much passion, and what I decided to do in the beginning was to give them a way to exercise their passion in the way that they like," Patti told *Foundations*.

For Shelle, that avenue has been communications, a subject she has studied at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. She's now earning a master's degree in public relations and teaching classes. In fact, it was in one of her classes where she got the idea for a Soldiers' Angels program—Ladies of Liberty.

The program originated in 2006, when Shelle's Women's Studies class decided to adopt female Soldiers from the North Dakota Army National Guard's 188th Air Defense Artillery (ADA) as they deployed to Afghanistan. They began by sending letters of encouragement and thanks, but the project quickly turned into more as Shelle and her students formed unique bonds and friendships with these Soldiers.




Want to get involved? Find out how you can help by visiting SoldiersAngels.org. Read the Ladies of Liberty blog at SoldiersAngelsLadiesofLiberty.com.

"Working with the Soldiers of the North Dakota Army National Guard was really special for me," Shelle remarked. "My best friend was deployed with that unit, and now I have many dear friends stemming from that support."

The program now sends care packages geared for females with items like lotion, conditioner, nail polish and mascara to help these women feel rejuvenated.

For her support, Soldiers from these units honored Shelle with their Freedom Salute's Outstanding Center of Influence Award and Distinguished Center of Influence Award.

Shelle says she'll continue to volunteer and work with Soldiers' Angels as long as she's able.

"I am the only person who can use the skills I was blessed with, and it is my path to discover where my skills best fit to make a difference in someone's life," she confessed. "I would hope that when the day comes that I am laid to rest, people can smile and say, 'Shelle never missed an opportunity to create ways to make a difference in other lives.'" 



All Smiles: Shelle Michaels delivers pre-deployment support to LT Amber Monette, Commander of North Dakota's 1/188th Air Defense Artillery deploying in 2009. Standing behind Monette is SGT Vanessa Mozinski of the original Ladies of Liberty.



Can you find 10 things wrong with this winter scene? (no peeking.)

Answers: 1. Snowman with three eyes 2. Flamingo 3. Boy on a swim float 4. Girl on roller skates 5. Flowers around the ice skating pond 6. Girl with one glove on 7. Boy with shorts on 8. Boy on surfboard 9. A blooming orange tree 10. Erupting volcano

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is a diverse division focused on the care of Soldiers and their Families. Some of the programs we handle are: Funeral Honors, Casualty Notification, Suicide Prevention 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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