



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Nashville District

**Nashville District
Deployment Preparation
Separation Assistance**

**Family Assistance
Handbook**

**For deploying team members
and their families**

June 2008

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INTRODUCTION

The Corps and its forward-deployed members play a unique and important role in our country's defense. Through overseas deployment our team members provide a tremendous service to this country, and such demonstrated dedication to the Corps of Engineers enhances our ability to step forward to meet our military's evolving needs. We deeply appreciate the support family members provide to our civilian volunteers during this time of increased national defense needs.

We understand the difficult tasks you face -- those of you deploying and those family members left behind. In response, each Corps element will assign a Deployee Support Coordinator (DSC) to serve as the primary source of deployment information and serve as the link between the deployed and the family members. The Deployee Support Coordinator will *always* be willing to help you.

Few other professions and careers present the challenges to family life that come with being a part of the national defense. Challenges such as separations, travel, and duty in remote locations under arduous conditions are part of the daily lives of military and civilian careerists. The readiness posture of the CELRN team is enhanced when soldiers and civilians prepare their families to meet diverse situations and to function independently in peace and war.

The Nashville District is committed to assisting family members by keeping them informed of key information and providing a support network during times of deployment. This handbook was assembled to assist deploying civilians and members, their families before, during, and after a deployment.

This handbook is intended to provide you with information to assist you in finding answers to your problems, situations, and questions. This handbook often refers to the primary person responsible for taking care of your affairs as your spouse. A lot of this information in this handbook is also valuable for parents and others who you designate to handle your affairs during your deployment. It is our hope that this information will allow you to feel capable and confident of your ability to take care of yourself and your family when you are away. It is important for you to understand how deployment will affect you and your family. The pace in deployed areas is very fast, and includes late hours and extended periods of time in the field

While you are away, always remember that what you are doing is important, difficult, and often dangerous work. What your family does to manage alone is no less so! We are very happy to have you and your family with us. Should you have to deploy, remember one thing... there will **ALWAYS** be someone ready to help you and your family. We hope this handbook is helpful, please keep it in a secure and convenient location so that your family, if needed, can use it as a reference.

NASHVILLE DISTRICT CONTACT LIST

FAMILY SUPPORT NUMBERS

Deployee Support Coordinator

Victoria Hooper
Office (615) 736-7965
Cell (615) 390-6202
Victoria.A.Hooper@usace.army.mil

Other District Contact Numbers:

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Name **Jerry Breznican**
Phone No. (615) 736-7931
Email: Jerry.Breznican@usace.army.mil

Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (Health/Life Insurance & Benefits)

Name **Rachel A. Owens**
Phone No. (615) 736-2165
Email: Rachel.A.Owens@us.army.mil

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Legal Assistance

Name **Fort Campbell, KY Legal Assistance (Be sure to tell them you are a Army Civilian with a tasker for a GWOT position.)**
Phone No. (270) 798-4432
Email :

Executive Office (615) 736-5626

Name **LTC. Bernard R. Lindstrom Commander**
Maj. Teresa L. Straus
Deputy Commander
Joanne Mann Executive Assistant
Secretary

Public Affairs Office (newsletters, news stories)

Name **Steve Foshee/Edward Evans**
Phone No. (615) 736-7165/7834
Email : Steven.c.Foshee@usace.army.mil
Edward.M.Evans@usace.army.mil

IMPORTANT FAMILY INFORMATION

Your deployed family member's Full Name and Rank/Grade:

Your deployed family member's Social Security Number: _____

Your deployed family member's Telephone Number: _____

Your Deployee Support Coordinator's name, telephone numbers, and email address:

Your deployed family member's Commander's Telephone Number: _____

Your Church/House of Worship Telephone Number:

Close Friends' Telephone Numbers:

Neighbors' Telephone Numbers:

Section I: Introduction/ Background Information

This Handbook is dedicated to those members and their families and friends who are separated due to deployments, extended TDYs, natural disasters. While separation can be a difficult experience for members and their families and friends, the Nashville District of the Army Corps of Engineers is dedicated to providing our people quality service to make it as painless as possible. The information and resources provided here can make the experience a positive one for you and your family.

Section I: Pre-Deployment/ General

Too often, family members deny the possibility of separation and pretend it is not going to happen. This denial can be emotionally harmful. Once separation occurs, they are likely to find themselves unprepared. It is much healthier for families to face issues directly and become better prepared to positively address the life-style changes brought about by separation. Adequate preparation for all family members is the key to minimizing the problems that will inevitably arise during a deployment separation. Sometimes families avoid talking about things that bother or worry them. They are afraid that talking about things will make matters worse. In reality, open discussion provides family members the opportunity to clarify potential misunderstandings, get a better idea of what is expected, work out solutions to identified problems, and to better prepare themselves for the coming separation.

Having a sense of control over events is a significant moderator of the stress associated with separation. We all desire some sense of control, even in the face of uncontrollable situations. Feeling no control over a situation can lead to characteristics of learned helplessness. The perception of even some control can be enough to lessen most negative responses and become a base for building positive coping behaviors. An individual's appraisal of upcoming events as being highly stressful or undesirable but manageable will significantly influence his/her coping level. That appraisal is related to the degree to which individuals feel that they have adequate knowledge, coping skills, social support, and some control over future events. Preparation for coming events, especially undesirable events, can greatly alter a person's attitude. Therefore, the importance of education and preparation cannot be overstated. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Single parents face the same reality. They may experience even greater stress and responsibility during preparation of the separation. No other parent remains at home and, therefore, separation takes on an increasingly stressful dimension.

There is a difference between being ready "to go," and ready "to part." Being ready "to go" means having your bag packed, all shots up to date, and other duty essential preparations completed. Being ready "to part" from your spouse and other family members means being aware of the personal and family issues related to separation, and being prepared to deal as constructively as possible with those issues.

Plan Ahead

This is one of the keys to a successful family separation. There are many things you can do before you leave. Planning ahead will prevent your spouse from feeling they have to handle it all alone and you from worrying about all the things left undone. The best place to start is at a *pre-deployment orientation*. Topics discussed are informative, ranging from what information needs to be shared to whom to contact if your paycheck is late.

The Pre-Deployment orientation will also provide you and your spouse invaluable information about services available through your Deployee Support Coordinator and other Army Corps services.

Then, read this handbook. Mark or highlight passages you find particularly interesting or helpful. Some parts you may want to re-read or post on the refrigerator just in case an emergency occurs and you don't have time to find the page you need.

Spend an evening with your spouse to discuss the deployment; how both of you feel, what you worry about, how to handle emergencies, or repair problems, and what you think needs to be done around the house to get things together.

Have a "*show and tell*" day. Even if it is the dead of winter, learn how to start and operate the lawn mower. Ask your spouse to show you how to check the oil in the car and where to add brake fluid and transmission fluid. Do you know how much air goes into the tires? How to change a flat tire? Learn these things **BEFORE** your spouse departs on deployment. *The Family Assistance Handbook* lists many of the items to go over.

When the departing spouse is the person who usually does the laundry, cooking, etc., be sure you are comfortable with the appliances within your home. Do a load of laundry. Learning how to sort clothes may save the family from having to wear strange colored underwear. If you are not familiar with shopping and cooking, plan a dinner; make your own shopping list, then prepare a meal for your spouse or family.

Use the various *checklists and tools* found in this booklet.

Finally, before departing, make sure the remaining spouse is the one with the keys and checkbook.

So much will depend on your advance preparation. The more you can learn and accomplish before the family separation, the more confident both of you will be when the parting time comes.

REMEMBER--- PLAN AHEAD!

Section I: Deployment and the Single Corps Member

While the majority of the information in this guide deals with separation issues involving couples, deployments or extended TDY's can be just as demanding for the single Corps member. Not only will you experience all the emotions and relationship stresses discussed in this guide, you have the added burden of finding a reliable individual to handle your personal affairs during your absence. The importance of a will and power of attorney is just as critical for single members as it is for their married counterparts. Please take time to go through this guide. You will find it helpful.

Section I: A Spouse's Viewpoint

For many spouses, when the separation finally occurs, it is a reality check. Until now there was the possibility of a change in orders or some other event to prevent departure. But the separation is inevitable, and the spouse must cope.

When your spouse leaves or deploys, a piece of you goes too, but that's what you want...for part of you to be with your spouse. You find that you, too, keep your spouse present with you. You may sleep with their picture on your nightstand, or you may leave a pair of their shoes by the front door.

When your spouse leaves, you go through a whole series of different emotions. Several weeks before your spouse leaves you begin to "psych up" for the departure and you both get very busy thinking about details that need to be tended to before departure. You both may feel excited, intimidated, and maybe a little worried about how you will manage. About three to four weeks before your spouse leaves, you begin to put distance between the two of you, build a few walls, withdrawing from each other. You may become irritated with each other and you may even have a fight. This distancing reaches a peak about two to three days before your spouse leaves when you both think they should be gone so that you both can begin counting down to the reunion...which may seem an eternity away! This "distancing" is normal and allows you to permit this person who is so very important to you to go away...for a while.

When "THE DAY" arrives you may drive your spouse to the Airport and think that some way, something, somehow will keep him/her home. Whatever you say to each other may seem awkward and not quite right, and afterward, when you reflect on not seeing each other for a long time, you may wonder why you couldn't have been more romantic, or have given a "warmer" good-bye.

YOU ARE NORMAL!

For the first day or so after your spouse leaves, you may feel like a robot, just going through the motions, almost like you are in shock. You might just want to stay home. You may not want anyone around you. You may wonder if it was easy for your spouse to leave you; after all, your spouse seemed to be excited about going on assignment or deployment. You may feel overwhelmed by all the responsibilities you

are facing. Then you may get angry with your spouse, with the Corps of Engineers, your spouse's commander or duty station, perhaps even with the whole world! How could your spouse leave? You will get over that too, and find you can handle the separation. You'll probably find yourself within a few weeks beginning to settle into a routine. If you don't find some comfortable pattern or routine and continue to feel upset, call your Deployee Support Coordinator. They can give you information and or assistance to help you over this hurdle.

The new pattern of your life while your spouse is gone may find you a little more subdued, and certainly lonely. Sleep may come a little more easily than in the first few weeks of the separation, but probably not as easily as when your spouse is at home. Food may finally begin to taste less like sawdust. You may find from your spouse's letters that he/she is also lonely, and missing you.

IF YOU FIND A ROUTINE THAT WORKS WHILE YOUR SPOUSE IS GONE, STAY WITH IT! THAT REGULARITY, THAT RITUAL, IS VERY COMFORTING!

Six to eight weeks before your spouse comes home, you may begin planning for the homecoming. There are decorations to make, and special meals to plan, and nagging worries:

**WILL MY SPOUSE:
HAVE CHANGED?
STILL LOVE ME?
APPROVE OF THE CHANGES IN
ME?
HAVE THE SAME CLOSENESS WE
HAD BEFORE?**

As the time grows nearer, you will probably get more and more excited, may sleep less, and launch into a frenzy of house cleaning. In your mind you play over and over again various versions of the homecoming. You imagine...

You see the reunion in slow motion, over and over again, like in the movies; with sunlight and fields of flowers, and you two as the only people in the world.

In the last few days you will find yourself feeling many different emotions. Butterflies keep you awake at night. You should be happy that your spouse is returning, and you are, but you are also apprehensive. For the past months you have been the head of the house and you really haven't had to answer to anyone for where and when you go, or on what you spend money. You have had the bedroom all to yourself and you've taken care of the family's finances. Maybe you feel like your hard-earned independence is at stake. You are proud of surviving, and maybe even thriving, while your spouse has been gone. You've missed your spouse terribly, but you've learned you can manage quite well while he/she is away.

The Big Day arrives and you've probably not slept well at all and you've spent hours trying to look your best. You finally have that reunion. There may be raindrops instead of sunlight, and instead of fields of flowers, there are fields of people at the airport.

The hugs and kisses are every bit as good as you remember, and your spouse raves about how good you look and you tell your spouse they're a sight for sore eyes.

Your spouse tells you that they are proud of the way you kept the home fires burning, and it doesn't matter that you didn't save more money.

Understand that your spouse, too, is apprehensive about the homecoming and they also want everything to be very right. They may be a little unsure and may wonder if maybe you have learned to do without them too well...perhaps they're not needed, or wanted anymore. You KNOW your spouse is wanted AND needed, and you should tell them that again and again!!

When you are back together again, take some quiet time to sit together, holding hands and talking about what happened. You need to listen to each other and you both need to talk. You have a thousand questions to ask, as does your spouse. Both of you need reassurance that everything will be okay. Realize that you both have grown during your time apart and it is important for each of you to allow the other to have some space and time alone.

The time to reestablish old patterns or to establish new, better ones, takes several weeks, so don't expect to fall back into "how it was" overnight. Take time to enjoy the intense pleasure of reuniting as a couple.

Keep this in mind as you face a family separation:

- The leaving and returning are never easy, but it does not last forever.
- Rarely are the separation and the reunion exactly as you would have imagined. Both have their drawbacks, but both also have their rewards.
- The important thing is that you both survived the separation. Remember the time apart, what you learned, what you liked, and what you did not like, and apply these lessons to similar experiences you may face in the future. It will help to make you a stronger, better prepared husband and wife team.

Section II: Coping with Separation

Family separation periods can provide for a time of self-growth. Not many spouses have a built-in opportunity for a time to take a good look at themselves.

HOW IS YOUR ATTITUDE?

What is your attitude? It is the state of mind with which you approach a situation. Why is your attitude so important? Because it affects how you look, what you say, and what you do. It affects how you feel, both physically and mentally, and it largely affects how successful you are in achieving your purpose in life. What could be more important? Negative attitudes make life difficult for everyone. Positive attitudes help everyone get the most out of life.

While talent is important and knowledge is essential, the most important key to success is your state of mind!

When your spouse goes away, you have to make a choice. You can apply a positive attitude, and make the best of the time you are apart, or, you can apply a negative attitude, draw the drapes, withdraw, and complain until they come home. Given the two choices, the first one is healthier and much to your advantage.

Time passes quickly when you are busy. It also makes for better, longer, and more interesting letters to your spouse. Find something you enjoy doing, something that says YOU! Set goals for tomorrow, next week, and next month. The completion of a project will give you a sense of satisfaction. Have you thought about:

- Going back to school?
- Taking up a new hobby?
- Pursuing an aerobic or weight program?
- Seeking part-time or full-time employment
- Volunteering?

HANDLING STRESS

Take care of yourself. Don't try to fix family and friends.

Get involved in things that make you happy.

Avoid self-medication and abusing substances like drugs, alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, and food. Liquor and drugs reduce the perception of stress, but don't reduce stress.

Be flexible; accept that you can't control everything.

Plan for stress. Set realistic goals that leave time for breaks, and limit work. Take a stress reduction class.

Learn how to praise yourself and accept praise. Turn off the "constant censure" voice that always says, "you should."

Keep a sense of humor with you at all times.

Start thinking about what you really want out of life and begin to work towards those goals.

Take a mental health day every two or three months.

Avoid sulking. Let people know what you want.

Learn how to express both irritation and appreciation to others.

Pick out somebody you work with and tell them something about yourself that you haven't told anyone else.

WHEN THE BLUES GET BLUER

Loneliness.

Most people find the dinner hour and Sunday afternoon the times when they miss their spouses the most. Additionally, everybody has an occasional blue Monday.

If your blue days are increasing in frequency, pay attention to what is going on around and in you. Are you:

- Letting things go?
- Gaining weight?
- Yelling at the kids?
- Constantly watching TV?
- Sleeping in late?
- Withdrawing from people?
- Dropping out of organizations?
- Spending a lot of time with your thoughts?
- Drinking more than usual or drinking alone?

No one takes a giant leap into depression. It is more of a cumulative process. Your favorite words become "I can't."

Some use alcohol and drugs as a remedy. But that doesn't work. Drinking does nothing to answer life's problems. In fact, drinking just helps you to relax and forget--but the problems are still there.

The cure for depression is the same as the prevention. Take positive action. Behavior is changed by thoughts and feelings.

If you can, talk to a friend. If you are alone, and problems seem overwhelming, call the Deployee Support Coordinator, your Minister, or a Mental Health Clinic. They have people who can help.

When your spouse is away, you need to get the sense that you are moving up and forward. Frustration comes when spouses see others accomplishing things while they are immobile waiting for their spouse to return.

REMEMBER--- PLAN AHEAD!

Section II: Children Issues

Parents can help children understand and accept the separation and their feelings about it by planning ahead. Anticipate the problems and discuss them with the entire family.

PRE-FAMILY SEPARATION

The pre-family separation period is stressful for parents and children. Confronted with an extended absence of a parent, family members sense a loss of continuity and security. Children may not fully understand why one of their parents must leave. Very often young children may become confused and fearful that Mommy or Daddy will desert them.

Children are not very good at expressing fears and feelings in words. Anger and a desire for revenge, as well as guilt for feeling that way, are often demonstrated in the child's behavior. Change is puzzling to children. They want everything to remain the same. When changes occur, children usually have no other way to release anxieties, and may feel there is no where to go for help. At a time when the separated spouse's responsibility to the job becomes more demanding of his/her time and energy, the remaining spouse may feel overwhelmed as they prepare to solely support the children, household.

What can be done about relieving the stress of the pre-deployment family separation period? Think about the following ideas that have been helpful to others in similar situations:

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENT OR DEPLOYMENT BEFORE IT HAPPENS.

Communicate your thoughts and feelings about the separation. Be open and honest. Some parents worry that advance warning will only give the child more time to fret. However, children can sense when something is about to happen and worry more when they are left in the dark. Knowing about the assignment or deployment in advance helps in adjusting to the idea, and may alleviate fear.

BUILDING AN EMOTIONAL BOND

The departing parent needs to spend some *QUALITY* time with each child before they leave. Younger children (under 8) will be willing to accept a half hour of face-to-face communication. Don't be afraid to hug your child. A display of affection is powerful communication. Older children (8 and over) appreciate being consulted when deciding how long and where this "special" time together can occur.

Use this time to share pride in your work and the purpose for your deployment. Children of school age are beginning to understand that some events must happen for the good of everyone. It is a little easier to let go if Mom or Dad's job is seen as essential to the mission of the Country. Often when asked if something is bothering them, a child will say "no." But there are ways to get through. Make some casual

reference to your own worries or feelings about the impending assignment or deployment, something that enables parent and child to share similar feelings. It also helps a child to realize their parent is a real person who can cry as well as laugh, and it models an appropriate way to release feelings-talk about them.

VISIT YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Frequently children react to the assignment or deployment by misbehaving in class or performing poorly in their studies. A teacher who is aware of the situation is in a better position to be sensitive and encouraging.

CHILDREN NEED TO SEE THE PARENT'S WORKPLACE

Very young children need to see where Mom or Dad eats, sleeps, and spends some of his/her day when away from home. You can do this through pictures or videos. This provides the children with a concrete image of where the parent is when he/she can't be home.

PLAN FOR COMMUNICATING

Expect children to stay in touch with the departed spouse. A lively discussion needs to take place before departure. Encourage children to brainstorm the many ways communication can occur in addition to letter writing, such as cassette tape exchanges, photographs with their parents, encoded messages, "puzzle messages" (a written letter cut into puzzle parts that must be assembled in order to read), unusual papers for stationery, pictures drawn by preschoolers, email, webcams, and MP3 recordings.

HELP CHILDREN TO PLAN FOR THE DEPARTURE

While the spouse is packing his/her bags, allow your children to assist in some way. Suggest a "swap" of some token, something of the child's that can be packed in a bag in return for something that belongs to the departing spouse.

Discuss the household chores and let your children choose (as much as possible) the ones they would rather do. Parents need to agree with each other that the division of household chores is reasonable. The role of disciplinarian needs to be supported by the departing spouse.

BEING A LONG DISTANCE PARENT

Parenting while away from home is not easy. Some separated parents find it so emotionally difficult they withdraw and become significantly less involved in the lives of their children while they are apart. This, of course, is not good either for the parent or the children, not to mention the difficulty it causes the parent/caregiver who is at home alone. The most important aspect of parenting from a distance is making those small efforts to stay in touch. Doing something to say the parent is thinking

about and missing the child is what is most important. Here are some practical suggestions to help keep the absentee parent involved with their children:

Letters and cards from Mom or Dad are important. The length and contents are not nearly as important as the presence of something in the mail from the absent parent. When sending picture post cards, make little notes about the place or write that you stood right here "x" in the picture. Any small thing, which makes the card personal, will have tremendous meaning to children at home.

Cut out and send things from the local paper or magazines. This is a tangible way to help them feel connected and give them an idea of what life is like there.

For older children, a subscription to a favorite magazine is a gift that keeps on giving.

When using a tape or digital recorder, remember to be creative: sing "Happy Birthday," tell a story, read scripture, take it with you on your job or when visiting with other members of your unit. Make sure you describe the surroundings, the time of day, and what you are doing, etc.

Do not forget birthdays and special holidays that would be important to a child, particularly Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Halloween, or Valentine's Day.

Try to schedule phone calls when children are likely to be at home. Keep a mental list of things you want to talk about with each child, such as their friends, school, ball games, etc. Ask each child to send you something from the activities they are involved in at school, home, or outside activities like dance lessons, youth groups or scouts.

Send home newsletters or articles of the work begin done in your overseas area.

If your child has a pet, make sure to ask about it.

Send an age appropriate gift for each child. It should be something special just for them. Some interesting and creative gifts include a special notebook for school, a book for coloring or reading, or something unique from where you are stationed.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH SOME OF THE EXCELLENT CHILDREN'S BOOKS THAT DEAL IN A SENSITIVE MANNER WITH A VARIETY OF FAMILY-CHANGE SITUATIONS:

A Special Family Friend and a New Adventure by Hoffman and Sitrler

Will Dad Ever Move Back Home by Paula Hogan

All Kinds of Families by Norma Simon

If You Listen by Charlotte Zolotow

The Goodbye Painting by Linda Berman

Reading them with your child can help clarify facts and identify feelings.

TURN ON YOUR SENSORS AND TUNE IN TO YOUR CHILD'S WORRIES ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENT OR DEPLOYMENT

Just because a child doesn't tell you about their concerns doesn't mean that they are not troubled. Children don't usually recognize the cause, nor will they tell you they are concerned. The deployed spouse should communicate with each child individually. There is no substitute for a letter with your own name on the envelope. Send postcards, snapshots, and recordings of the sounds around you where you are deployed. Use unusual stamps, felt-tip pens, colored pencils, and different styles of alphabets and lettering.

TIPS FOR THE SPOUSE LEFT BEHIND

It is very possible you will admit feelings of sadness, self-doubt, fear, or loneliness to your spouse and children. Most parents will agree that these are acceptable risks, and the feelings revealed are much easier to deal with when they can be expressed within the comfort and security of the family.

Be honest about your feelings. Do not attempt to hide feelings-your own or the children's. Many times we try to spare our children from knowledge of our own concerns, self-doubts, and fears.

Give children a method of measuring the passage of time. Families use such techniques as a ceremonial crossing-off of each day on a calendar as it passes, or of tearing a link off a paper chain consisting of the number of days or weeks the departed spouse will be away.

Make sure the departed spouse stays well informed. Do not make the mistake of depriving your spouse of knowledge of what is happening at home, or the way things are being handled, out of fear of "distracting" or "worrying" him or her on the job. (*One parent was "spared" the knowledge that his or her son had to be hospitalized for emergency surgery.*)

Be responsible for all disciplining. Do not fall into the trap of using "Just wait until your Father or Mother gets home" as the ultimate threat. How can a child be expected to greet with joy and affection a parent that has been held over their head for months as the ultimate punisher?

Section II: Communication

Learn to be tactfully honest without being brutally frank. If you want to know what is going on with another person, listen to what that person is saying.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Communicating. It is an important part of keeping any marriage alive. But when you are separated for so long by so many miles, communication becomes a vital necessity. Just as you need air and water, you **NEED** to hear from your spouse, and they from you. You both have several communication options available to you during a family separation, several of which will be discussed in this chapter.

Now is the time to open the communication lines between you. Honestly discuss with each other your feelings about the assignment or deployment. What are your fears and expectations?

Have you both considered and discussed what kind of changes can be expected by the time the separation is over? The spouse at home will be more independent than either of you can imagine. Your financial situation may change by the separation's end. The spouse at home may begin or end a job. Personalities will definitely change, especially those of the children. By the time the deploying spouse returns, goals may have changed for either or both of you. Instead of wanting to learn to change a tire, for example, you may be ready to rebuild an engine.

LETTERS and E-MAIL

Letters and e-mail are your lifelines to sanity. (Wait till you have not received one in a week and see if you don't think so.) But it takes a special skill, one you can easily develop, to write a letter during a family separation. You must walk a fine line between "Everything's falling apart and I cannot handle it without you," and "Everything's falling apart but I do not need you anymore to fix it."

Some spouses send correspondence about how great everything is, and how angelic the children are. Come on! They know things do not run that smoothly even when they are home. The more "everything is great" letters they get, the more they worry. In time, they begin to believe that you do not need them around anymore. (That is one of the worst, most common fears the spouse will have while separated.)

Other spouses go entirely the other way--every little problem or irritation goes into an e-mail or letter. It is full of complaints about how they must come home immediately to change a flat tire or discipline a child for a minor infraction. This kind of writer can make a family separation a living nightmare for the deployed member.

Handle your letter and e-mail writing with the same tact and understanding you want your spouse to have for you. You want to know everything that goes on around them, good or bad. You want to know about their friends and how they spend their time at

home. You want to know they still love and need you. They want to hear those things from you also.

Remember that mail is irregular at best. Letters and packages seldom arrive two days in a row--sometimes as much as two to eight weeks pass between the time you place something in the mail and the time your family received it.

E-MAIL

Because of the prevalence of electronic mail, it's important to point out that conditions will likely be very different during deployments. You should recognize that email communications might be limited, unreliable or not available at all depending on the circumstances and geographic location of the deployment. When available, email offers virtually instantaneous communications and a means by which to share thoughts and photos immediately.

Email address: _____@_____

A LETTER WRITER'S GUIDE

Here are a few ways to enhance "talking" back and forth to each other by letter or e-mail:

Answer all questions. Write with your spouse's correspondence and picture in front of you, as though talking directly to them.

Ask advice when needed. Explain problems clearly. If your writing is vague and unresolved, your spouse will worry.

Express an appreciation for letters, recordings, etc., mentioning one or two points of special interest.

Tell of daily activities in amusing and interesting ways.

Remember, it is important to frequently express your affection for your partner.

Share your feelings as openly and freely as you can without indulging in self-pity. Let your spouse know you would like to share his/her feelings.

Above all, express yourself clearly and unequivocally so that your spouse will not have to say, "I wonder what was meant by that!" Neither husband nor wife should try to interpret what the other says, read between the lines, or discern the meanings. If you do not understand, ask questions--otherwise take things at "face value."

If you have children and they can write, have them enclose notes or pictures in your letters. Children can use separate envelopes. Send pictures of home, the Christmas tree, activities around the house, etc. Have your spouse write separately to the children rather than a joint letter.

Relay news of the neighborhood, friends, and relatives. Clip out newspaper articles that might be of interest to your spouse.

Write often. If that is hard, supplement with cards (funny or romantic). Cards can help to express your thoughts and feelings, often in a unique or humorous way.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

In order for the Red Cross to send a message to your spouse, they must have verified information. They do not send greetings, only emergency information, and they do not grant emergency leave. If the emergency situation does not occur in the local area, you will save some time by contacting the Red Cross chapter where it does. Ask the Red Cross there to make verification and to contact the service member. In most cases, Red Cross notification is necessary for emergency leave to be granted by the spouse's commander. **THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR RED CROSS MESSAGES.** Before you call, have the following information on hand: grade, full name, SSN, and complete duty address.

OVERSEAS CALLS

Nothing can substitute for your spouse's voice. That is why overseas calls are so popular. Agree before the separation or deployment starts how many times, and when, calls will be made. Budget money for the calls during the assignment or deployment so you are financially prepared when the bills start coming in. Also phone cards with pre-paid time are great. One way to keep your phone cost down is to be prepared for the call. Keep a list near the phone so you know what to talk about. However, be prepared for the unexpected tears, both yours and your spouse's.

VIDEO TELE-CONFERENCEING (VTCs)

VTCs may be available in the area of your deployment. When you arrive at your duty station, check for the capability. The Deployee Support Coordinator will be able to assist you with the District procedures and coordinating your family.

CARE PACKAGES

A "care package" is exactly what it sounds like-a little bit of home that says, "I love you; I'm thinking about you." With just a little planning, they can be a great link over the distances. Care packages are also a morale builder during remote assignments or deployments. Speculation and excitement run throughout an entire shop when just one package arrives. When you get your first "Thank You" letter, you will be eager to start your next package.

Be careful of what you send-the one rare commodity is privacy. What you send will undoubtedly be seen by a number of people. Packages going overseas are subject to customs inspection and may be opened by the host country inspectors. Do not expect a lot of romantic talk on any recorded messages your spouse may send home-most spouses would be too embarrassed for anyone else to hear what they most want to say.

MAILING TIPS

Check with USPS on mailing restrictions. You can get free Flat-Fee Boxes from the Post Office or from the Deployee Support Coordinator.

Do not use wrapping paper if you can help it, and string will foul up the postal machines. The post office recommends you use reinforced, nylon strapping tape.

You will not have to pay custom tariffs on packages mailed to an APO or FPO.

Put an extra address card **INSIDE** before you seal the package. If the box should be damaged, and neither address on the outside can be read, it will be opened by the post office. If they cannot find where it should go from the contents, the whole package goes to the dead-letter bin.

Be sure that if you are sending a package for a special occasion to mail it so it has plenty of time to arrive. Better to arrive a little early than to let them think you have forgotten them.

Do not forget to mark any packages that contain a recorded message, music, or VCR tape with the words "**MAGNETIC RECORDED TAPES INSIDE--DO NOT X-RAY**".

Section III: Reunion

A special booklet on this subject will be issued prior to your return date.

Section IV: Legal Information

The Army Legal Assistance Officers can advise you and your family about wills and powers of attorney, as well as provide notary public services. All assistance is free; however, some legal matters involve civilian court proceedings. See the District Contact list for contact name and phone number. Corps attorneys may not represent you in court, but can refer you to civilian attorneys or to civilian legal service agencies that may be able to represent you.

There may be times when legal matters have to be taken care of, including during a deployment. No one is legally authorized to act on your behalf without a power of attorney. It's important that a spouse, relative or other trusted friend be named to act on behalf of the deployed employee. The decisions an agent can and cannot make can be easily specified, and the power of attorney can be automatically revoked at any designated point.

Never sign a contract without completely reading and understanding it. Never accept verbal promises, which are not written into the contract. Be prudent and cautious in spending money and especially in using a power of attorney.

General Power of Attorney: Authorizes you to conduct all family business with would otherwise require your spouse's presence.

Limited Power of Attorney: Authorizes you to conduct only the matter specified in the document, which would otherwise require your spouse's presence.

Medical Power of Attorney: Authorizes a person other than yourself to authorize medical care for family members should you not be available (e.g. hospitalizations, etc.) This is excellent for anyone who regularly cares for your children.

The Importance of a Power of Attorney

The power of attorney is a legal instrument that deserves your serious consideration. In important personal matters, it may often be necessary for your spouse, a parent, or another competent person to act for you in your behalf, and a power of attorney becomes an essential document.

Most attorneys and legal assistance officers are in a position to furnish you with a general power of attorney, which covers most contingencies. This may very well satisfy your personal needs. Otherwise, you may prefer to have a more specific power of attorney drawn by your attorney or your legal assistance officer.

If a power of attorney is to be executed in connection with life insurance policies, it is not always feasible to employ a standard form. Insurance contracts contain multiple features and any power of attorney given in connection with them should be tailored to fit the specific contract. Check with your legal office for guidance.

One of the most important and least known powers of attorney is the one given to a baby sitter. If you have children and they become ill while you're away, doctors

cannot treat the child unless it is an emergency. In other words, all the doctors can do is keep your child alive until you can be located. A power of attorney gives the baby sitter legal right to seek medical assistance for your child. A copy of this power of attorney should also be kept with the child's medical records.

In any event, before you execute a power of attorney, be sure you understand exactly what you want your attorney-in-fact to do in your place. For example, you may want to limit the duration of the instrument to a period of time you expect to be in the military service or overseas.

It is important for you to periodically review your existing power of attorney(s). Your changing needs may necessitate the revision of an existing power of attorney, ensuring it accomplishes exactly what you need done and nothing else. Remember, it is a good habit to periodically review ALL of your legal instruments (power of attorney, will, etc.) A little time spent reviewing and revising may save you a great deal of trouble later.

The Importance of a Will

Should you die without a will, the state in which you live will distribute your estate according to state law and not according to your wishes. You will not have any say as to disposition of your assets. Therefore, regardless of the size, nature, or extent of your estate, you should have a skillfully prepared will which carries out your wishes and desires.

Your will, when properly and accurately drawn, allows you to distribute your estate in almost any manner you desire and permits you to nominate the person of your choice to carry out your mandates at a minimum of expense to the estate.

You can direct the period of time over which your estate will be distributed and all the terms and conditions for said distribution. You can appoint other fiduciaries such as guardians, trustees, and others to administer and tend to the needs of minor children in accordance with your wishes and desires and not those of creditors or distant relatives or some stranger to your loved ones.

No single form will exists that can be used in all parts of the United States. In addition, it is important to remember that the desires and needs of individuals can differ. See a lawyer of your own choice for the preparation of your Will and that of your spouse. If you need assistance, visit the legal office.

LEGAL/ADMINISTRATIVE

It is important to have certain documents and family records in your possession. Should an emergency arise, you may need some or all of these documents. Some of the documents listed below may be used often, even when an emergency does not exist. Put this handbook and these documents in a safe place so you and your spouse or someone outside of your household knows where they are. If the original documents are unavailable, consider obtaining certified copies. These documents should be located now, as you may not have time to find them later.

- Do you have immunization records for each member of the family?
- Are your family members' immunizations up-to-date?
- Do you have an up-to-date will and know where it is kept?
- Does your spouse have an up-to-date will, and do you know where it is kept?
- Do you have and know the location of your power of attorneys?
- Do you have and know the location of each family member's certified birth certificate?
- Do you have and know the location of your marriage certificate?
- Do you have copies and know the location of any adoption papers, guardianship papers, divorce decrees, or court orders awarding custody of children or child support?
- If applicable, do you have court orders declaring the biological parent, written admission of paternity, and related documents?
- Statements from licensed doctors or medical officers for dependent children over 21 years of age who are mentally or physically disabled.
- Names and locations of unmarried children older than 21, but younger than 23 years of age, who are enrolled in a full-time course of instruction.
- Death certificates of deceased immediate family members.
- Do you have a recent photograph (full-face, light background, about 2x2 inches) showing the person's entire head for each family member 10 years old or older?
- Do you have and know the social security numbers for each family member?
- Do you know the location of Leave and Earnings statements from the last three months?
- Do you have copies of federal and state tax records for the past six years?
- Where are the insurance policies kept (car, life, homeowner, personal property, etc.)?
- Where are your stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, savings and credit union passbooks, notes receivable, and other evidence of income-producing properties?
- Do you know where the deeds and other title documents relating to real estate are?

- Certificates of title and registration, warranties, and tax receipts for automobiles, boats, recreational vehicles, and other personal property.
- Citizenship records for any family member born outside of the United States.
- Business agreements including partnership documents, agency contracts, sales contracts, royalties, residual agreements, and employment contracts.
- Documents designating the sponsor or spouse as an executor or a trustee.
- Documents relating to bankruptcy proceedings.
- Military and other employment records.
- Do you have a current passport for family members? Do you know where it is kept?

Are all your important papers safeguarded?

MEDICAL

While civilian employees are deployed, they should have peace of mind that their families' health care coverage will continue. Counseling is available to the deploying civilian.

The deployed employee may wish to consider a living will, which would share his or her desires should the deployed become incapacitated, and which should become a part of the family medical records.

CHECKLIST

- Do you know the telephone number of our family physician?

- Do you know the telephone number of the health clinic? _____
- Do you know the location of the nearest emergency room?

- Does each family member have a current medical insurance card? _____
- Are immunizations for each family member up to date?

- Where are the medical and immunization records for each family member?

- Where are the dental records for each family member?

- Who has medical power of attorney?

- Are the pet's vaccinations up to date? _____
- Are the pets registered with the city? _____
- What is the telephone number of your veterinarian?

- Where is your veterinarian located?

- Are there any special medical needs for any of your family members?

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Your Name: _____

Age: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____ Hair Color: _____ Eye Color: _____

Distinguishing Marks/Physical Characteristics:

Type: Blood _____

Organ Donor? _____ Yes _____ No Tissue Donor? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, location of donor authorization forms:

Any religious information or other considerations that would have a bearing on

medical treatment: _____

Any medical information or other considerations which would have a bearing on

medical treatment: _____

Adverse Drug Reactions: _____

Other Allergies: _____

Chronic or Recurring Illnesses: _____

Prescription Medications: _____

Disease:	Yes	No	Date	Most recent exam. Date m/y
Chicken Pox	_____	_____	_____	Physical Exam _____
Mumps	_____	_____	_____	Dental Exam _____
Red Measles(10 day)	_____	_____	_____	Eye Exam _____
Rubella	_____	_____	_____	Hearing Test _____
Rubella (3 day)	_____	_____	_____	T B. Test _____
German Measles	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Polio	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Rheumatic Fever	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Scarlet Fever	_____	_____	_____	Test _____

Immunizations: _____

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Spouses Name: _____

Age: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____ Hair Color: _____ Eye Color: _____

Distinguishing Marks/Physical Characteristics:

Type: Blood _____

Organ Donor? ____ Yes ____ No Tissue Donor? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, location of donor authorization forms:

Any religious information or other considerations that would have a bearing on medical treatment: _____

Any medical information or other considerations which would have a bearing on medical treatment: _____

Adverse Drug Reactions: _____

Other Allergies: _____

Chronic or Recurring Illnesses: _____

Prescription Medications: _____

Disease:	Yes	No	Date	Most recent exam. Date m/y
Chicken Pox	_____	_____	_____	Physical Exam _____
Mumps	_____	_____	_____	Dental Exam _____
Red Measles(10 day)	_____	_____	_____	Eye Exam _____
Rubella	_____	_____	_____	Hearing Test _____
Rubella (3 day)	_____	_____	_____	T B. Test _____
German Measles	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Polio	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Rheumatic Fever	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Scarlet Fever	_____	_____	_____	Test _____

Immunizations: _____

MEDICAL INFORMATION
(Copy form for each child then complete)

Child's Name: _____

Age: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____ Hair Color: _____ Eye Color: _____

Distinguishing Marks/Physical Characteristics:

Type: Blood _____

Organ Donor? _____ Yes _____ No Tissue Donor? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, location of donor authorization forms:

Any religious information or other considerations that would have a bearing on
medical treatment: _____

Any medical information or other considerations which would have a bearing on
medical treatment: _____

Adverse Drug Reactions: _____

Other Allergies: _____

Chronic or Recurring Illnesses: _____

Prescription Medications: _____

Disease:	Yes	No	Date	Most recent exam. Date m/y
Chicken Pox	_____	_____	_____	Physical Exam _____
Mumps	_____	_____	_____	Dental Exam _____
Red Measles(10 day)	_____	_____	_____	Eye Exam _____
Rubella	_____	_____	_____	Hearing Test _____
Rubella (3 day)	_____	_____	_____	T B. Test _____
German Measles	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Polio	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Rheumatic Fever	_____	_____	_____	Test _____
Scarlet Fever	_____	_____	_____	Test _____

Immunizations: _____

FINANCES

FINANCIAL MATTERS

You've probably already established checking, savings and credit card accounts. If not, do so well in advance of any potential deployments. Make sure that someone is designated to handle the deployed employee's financial matters.

If accounts are solely in the name of the deployed civilian, the spouse or other designated individual may have trouble resolving any problems that may arise. For instance, if a debit card is lost or stolen, a new card may not be issued without the signature of the deployee. Consider joint accounts which require signatures from only one individual. Also consider *powers of attorney*.

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees. It offers savings and tax benefits similar to those offered by 401K Plans. Employee contributions to the TSP and any investment income earned are tax-deferred from federal and most states taxes until withdrawn.

ARMY BENEFITS CENTER SERVICES

The Army Benefits Center provides automated benefits support to employees through the Employee Benefit Information System (EBIS), the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), and trained counselors. Both systems are available 24 hours per day, seven days per week; benefits counselors are available Monday through Friday, during and after duty hours.

The EBIS is a web application that allows the employee to access general and personal benefit information, and conduct electronic transactions using a computer. The system contains comprehensive information and personalized benefits statements. Access EBIS via the web at www.abc.army.mil

The IVRS is an automated self-service system that employees can access from a touch-tone telephone. Unlike the web, the IVRS allows an employee to transfer to a benefits counselor for additional assistance. To access the IVRS, call the toll free number 1-877-ARMYCTR (1-877-276-9287). For hearing impaired access, call 1-877-ARMY-TDD (1-877-276-9833).

The Army Benefits Center provides services for the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), and Federal Employee's Compensation Act (FECA). Questions about these services can also be directed to your servicing CPAC. For TransAtlantic Center (TAC) POC and phone numbers see contact list.

FINANCES

Questions to consider:

- Do you and your spouse have a joint checking account?
- Do you have DIRECT deposit? If not do you have an acceptable Power of Attorney so you can receive the deposit checks in your spouse's absence?
- Will your bank accept your Power of Attorney? (Not all banks do.)
- Do you know how deposits are made?
- Do you know how to balance your checkbook?
- Do you know how to order more checks? Do you know what the service charges are?
- Will you have money immediately available to you on a continuing basis during your spouse's deployment?
- If you are receiving an allotment, will it provide sufficient money to maintain your entire household?
- Do you know the account numbers, names, and addresses of your banks?
- Do you know the types of accounts you have?
- Do you know the location of checking and savings books?
- Do you have a safe deposit box? Do you know where the key is kept? Do you know where the box is located?
- Are all of your credit cards accounted for? Are the numbers logged and in a safe place? Do you know how to notify the credit card company in case of loss or theft?
- Do you have Leave and Earnings statements from the last three months?
- Are you prepared to assume the control of all checking accounts, know the balance at all times, and never write a check unless you are certain of sufficient funds in the account?
- Do you know that your spouse must make any changes to allotments, including address changes?
- Do you have a copy of any installment contracts or loan papers?
- Do you know whom to contact if your allotment/check doesn't arrive? (Contact your Deployee Support Coordinator or TAC – numbers on contact list)
- If you rent or lease, do you have a copy of your lease agreement? Will your lease run out while your spouse is deployed?
- Do you know what bills must be paid and when they are due?

MONTHLY EXPENDITURES

If you normally pay all the bills, it is suggested that you consolidate all pertinent information in a calendar or use the charts that follow to note all payments that need to be made on a monthly and quarterly basis.

Mortgagor/Landlord: _____

Payment address: _____

Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____

Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Water and Sewage: _____

Payment address: _____

Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____

Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Electricity: _____

Payment address: _____

Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____

Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Natural Gas: _____

Payment address: _____

Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____

Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Cable: _____

Payment address: _____

Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____

Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Telephone: _____

Payment address: _____

Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____

Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Cellular Phone/Page: _____

Payment address: _____

Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____

Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____

Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Student Loans: _____

Payment address: _____
Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____
Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____
Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Automobile Tags: _____

Payment address: _____
Account Number: _____ Phone Number: _____
Amount: _____ Due Date: _____ Coupon _____
Bill comes in mail _____ Paid by direct deposit or auto payment _____

Insurance: _____

Agent address: _____

Are all policies in one bill _____ separately billed _____

Vehicle _____ Due: _____

Vehicle _____ Due: _____

Vehicle _____ Due: _____

Vehicle _____ Due: _____

If another company covers any vehicle, list here _____

Note: information on other types of insurance follows in other sections of this handbook.

Generally suggested percentage of income for monthly expenditures:

HOUSING / UTILITIES 30%	FOOD 15%
CLOTHING/UPKEEP 10%	INSURANCE /
SAVINGS 10%	
CREDIT PURCHASES / CAR PAYMENT 20%	MISC. 05%
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE / TAGS 10%	

REMEMBER--- PLAN AHEAD!

FINANCES

BANK ACCOUNTS

CHECKING ACCOUNTS

Bank or Institution Address	Account Number	Name(s) on Account

SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

Bank or Institution Address	Account Number	Name(s) on Account

**FINANCES
CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT**

In Whose Name	Serial #	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Maturity Date

STOCKS

In Whose Name	Stock Value	Purchase Date	# Of Shares	Price per Share

BONDS - SPECIFY TYPE

In Whose Name	Serial #	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Maturity Date

DEBT INFORMATION

OUTSTANDING DEBTS

Company Owed	Phone	Total Amount	Payment	Due Date

DEBTS OWED TO THE FAMILY

Person Owed	Telephone	Total Amount	Payment	Due Date

HOUSEHOLD FINANCES

LIVING EXPENSES

Expense	Amount Budgeted	Actually Spent
Groceries		
Dining Out		
Pet Expenses		
Clothing		
Clothing Up-Keep		
Haircuts		
Gasoline		
Recreation/Entertainment		
Allowances		
School Lunch		

Payee	Account #	Phone #	Due Date	Amount Due
Mortgage/Rent				
Electric/Water				
Gas				
Telephone				
Cell Phone/Pager				
Cable				
Auto Insurance				
Student Loan				
Credit Card				
Car Payment				

INSURANCE

REVIEW NEEDS

Deploying civilians and their family members should review their insurance needs and determine the adequacy of existing policies for life, automobile, health, flood, fire, homeowners/renters, and personal articles.

BENEFICIARY DESIGNATION

It is extremely important for the deploying civilian to contact the CPAC (Civilian Personnel Advisory Center) to file and/or review and update designation of beneficiaries forms, as appropriate.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS (FEHB)

FEHB helps protect employees and family members from the expenses of illness and accident. Employees must register for FEHB during regularly designated open seasons and cannot initiate coverage at other times. FEHB plans consist of Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), Point of Service, Preferred Provider, and Fee-for-Service coverage. Family members need to be well informed regarding their FEHB coverage and limitations.

During open seasons, civilian employees may elect to change health plans if they are already insured under an HMO arrangement and one or more family members are moving out of the HMO serviced area during the period of deployment. Employees are encouraged to continue medical coverage for their families.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEES GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (FEGLI)

Under the FEGLI coverage, death benefits are payable regardless of the cause of death. There are several different options under FEGLI and family members should be aware of employee and/or family coverage. Civilians who are deployed with the military to combat support roles during times of crises are not *in actual combat* and are entitled to accidental death and dismemberment benefits under FEGLI. Similarly, civilians carrying side arms for personal protection are not *in actual combat*. Family members should be aware of entitlements.

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE'S COMPENSATION ACT (FECA)

Civilian employees who sustain injury or death while deployed may receive benefits provided by FECA. Civilian employees who sustain a traumatic injury during the performance of duty must notify the onsite supervisor as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days from the date of the injury. If the employee is incapacitated, someone acting on his or her behalf may inform the supervisor.

Civilian employees who require treatment for disease or injury sustained during the deployment will be provided care at no cost to the employee under the DoD Military Health Services system. The care provided would be equivalent to that received by active duty military personnel.

HOUSING CONCERNS

CHECKLIST

- Do you know the location and use of the electrical circuit and main breaker boxes?
- Do you know the location of the main water control valves and how to turn them off?
- Do you know the locations of all sink, toilet ,dishwasher, and washing machine water control valves and how to turn them off?
- Do you know the location of the gas control valve and how to turn it off?
- Name and telephone number of an electrician:

- Name and telephone number of a plumber:

- Name and telephone number of the landlord:

- Do you have an extra set of house keys?
- Do all of the smoke alarms have new batteries? Are there enough alarms installed?
- Do you have a current household inventory, including serial numbers?
- Do you have current renters or homeowners personal property insurance?
- Have you checked for current maintenance problems? Have you resolved them?
- Is the stove's exhaust hood and ductwork clean and free of grease?
- Do you have properly rated extinguishers close at hand suitable for grease and electrical fires?
- Is the fireplace damper closed?
- Are any weapons in the home? Are they secured and inaccessible to children?
- Are all combustible materials kept away from the furnace, water heater, and other heat sources?
- Are the furnace, heaters, vents, and chimney inspected and serviced regularly?
- Is the gasoline for the mower stowed in a safety container away from the house?
- Do you have an intruder plan and fire escape plan, and have you practiced them with all family members?
- Have you practiced fire emergency procedures?
- Does every member of your family know how to dial 911?

IMPORTANT: Never leave your children unattended, and make sure you instruct sitters on safety and fire procedures in your house.

SECURITY

In anticipation of deployment, civilian employees should consider taking steps to protect their families and properties with a reliable, professionally-monitored home security system. Homes that are protected by these security systems are three times less likely to be the target of burglary. Installing a monitored home security system qualifies most consumers for a discount on their homeowner's insurance premiums.

TRANSPORTATION

Aside from ensuring that car payments will be made during a deployment, arrangements should be made for insurance coverage. Consideration should also be given to a roadside emergency assistance program.

CHECKLIST

- Do you have a current driver's license? Expiration:

- Do you have an extra set of car keys? They are located:

- Do you know when the car is due for maintenance?

- Do you know where to take the car for maintenance?

- Do you know how to attend to minor car maintenance?
- Do you know what to do if the car breaks down?
- Is the registration for the car kept in the car?
- Is a proof of insurance kept in the car at all times?
- Do you have the title for the car? Are the car tags current?
- If the tags need to be renewed while your spouse is away, do you have the proper paper work to get new tags?
- What is the name and address of the company holding the lien?

If you do not drive or have a valid driver's license, are you familiar with local public transportation?

DURING A DEPLOYMENT

- Know at least three of your neighbors. You may need their help during an emergency. They can also be a wonderful source of day-to-day support.
- Set goals for yourself, and then pursue them!
- Stay busy during the separation: church, school, sports, volunteering and FRIENDS.
- Take up a new hobby, or return to the one you gave up for lack of time.
- Travel! New scenery and a change of pace, even if only a day trip, does wonders for the spirit. Plan on taking a friend! Don't wait for the phone to ring, take the lead!
- Stick to your budget.
- Get up earlier to allow yourself more time before starting the day.
- Prioritize what is critical and then pace yourself according to your own understanding of the way and time you function best. Be realistic and kind to yourself.
- If you are under great stress, plan with your limitations in mind. (It will help avoid feelings of guilt, etc.)
- Find another spouse in similar circumstances; time passes much faster with a friend.
- Do not try to please everyone. Learn to say "no."
- Exercise regularly. Eat healthy. Get plenty of sleep. It is okay to go to bed early!
- Admit when you have made a mistake. It is easier than covering up or feeling guilty.
- Treat yourself like you treat your closest friend. Give yourself permission to be less than perfect, or to take a break.
- Always have something to look forward to.
- Anticipate stress and prepare for it.
- Simplify.
- Avoid power struggles.
- Provide consistent limitations and feedback to children (and some adults).
- Be honest about how you are feeling.
- Learn about your acceptable/comfortable stress level. Some stress is normal and necessary. (It gets you out of bed in the morning.)

FOR THE CHILDREN DURING DEPLOYMENT:

- Display pictures of Dad/Mom at your child's eye level. Let each child have a picture of himself/herself with Dad/Mom, in his/her room.
- Routine can work to your advantage. (But avoid a "rut")
- Make opportunities for special outings, especially on weekends and holidays when Dad/Mom would usually be home. (Picnics, walks, eating out, build a bird feeder, etc.)
- Play Dad/Mom's taped stories.
- Have each child choose a chore that Dad/Mom usually does. It will be a special contribution to maintain the house and will develop responsibility
- Keep in touch with teachers. Work together to evaluate, avoid or redirect behaviors resulting from Dad/Mom's absence.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:

Consider the following tips whether your spouse is home or not:

- > Sudden change the way you conduct your home and yourself may advertise your spouse's absence.
 - Be selective in telling people that your spouse is deployed.
 - Do not discuss your spouse's absence in public, even with friends, because someone with ill intent may overhear you.
 - When someone calls on the telephone and asks for your spouse, NEVER tell the caller that your spouse is not home. Tell the caller that your spouse can't come to the telephone and offer to take a message.
 - Keep emergency phone numbers and your address by all the phones in your home.
 - Always lock your doors and windows, draw your shades at night, and leave a few lights on.
 - Leave lights on outside and inside whenever possible
 - Install a deadbolt lock before the deployment. It is the most difficult to pick. Make sure your door has a peephole and a safety chain. (A safety chain is NOT adequate protection in the event someone tries to force a door open.)
 - Never open your door even a crack for anyone uninvited or unexpected. Use a peephole. If the unexpected visitor claims it is an emergency, make the phone call for them.
 - Change the locks on the doors if you are not sure who has other keys to your house (previous tenants and their friends, or neighbors with extra keys).
 - Discontinue paper delivery if you will be away. Ask the Post Office to hold your mail until you return.

- Do not leave a child alone in a car or home. It is illegal in most states, although the minimum age may vary, and it is a safety and security issue.
- Instruct children, family, and babysitters not to give out information about who is home, who is out, or for how long.
- Do not hide keys outside. They are too easily found.
- Most burglars and intruders enter homes through **OPEN** doors or windows or doors and windows that are easily jimmed.
- Always keep your doors locked whether or not you are at home. Always lock your car while driving and when your car is unoccupied.
- If you notice strangers loitering in your neighborhood, notify the police; include a time, place, and a description.
- To discourage burglars, engrave your name on televisions, stereos, cameras and other items of value. Check with your local police for more information and current recommendations about engraving.
- If you suspect your home has been broken into, **DO NOT** go in. Call the police from a neighbor's home.
- Do not go places alone, especially at night. Use the buddy system.
- If you travel, consider owning a cellular phone.
- When approaching a stop, look all around, and leave enough room to be able to pull around the car in front of you in an emergency.
- If someone hits your car from the rear, do not get out of the car if you are in an isolated or unsafe place. Instead, if the car is drivable, go to a well-lit populated area. If you have a cellular phone, use it to call the police.
- While walking, keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings -- it is your best defense.
- Change your routes to stay out of unsafe areas.
- If you think you are being followed while walking, cross to the other side of the street and change your route to a well-lit, populated area, if you are driving, go to the police station.
- When walking, stay well away from bushes, parked cars, and alleyways.
- When you go anywhere, ask yourself what would you do if you were attacked in this situation? Be prepared.
- Be aware of people identifying themselves as members of the Corps of Engineers. Ask to see identification. Know what an official United States DOD/Uniform Services ID card looks like. If unsure, call your Deployee Support Coordinator.

EMERGENCIES

DURING A DEPLOYMENT

Your spouse's commander is authorized to grant emergency leave under certain circumstances. Emergency leave can be granted only when your spouse's presence will significantly contribute to assisting with the emergency or when a death has occurred. Please keep in mind that each team member is valuable to the unit and performs a vital and important job. A denial to grant leave does not mean that the request was not carefully considered. It may be difficult, but necessary, to refuse leaves in certain situations.

EMERGENCIES REQUIRING YOUR SPOUSE'S PRESENCE:

While your spouse is deployed, emergencies which the Army could deem necessary to allow them to return home, are as follows:

The death, critical illness or injury to a member of the immediate family (i.e., spouse, child, brother, sister, parent or guardian who raised the deploying spouse in place of his/her parents).

While illnesses such as the flu, injuries such as a broken arm, or the birth of a baby are not minor events, they are not considered as emergencies. These types of situations and others like them are where your friends, neighbors, relatives, DSC, chaplains, and community assistance agencies can help you!

If your spouse is deployed and you have an emergency that requires getting in touch with him/her, follow these directions for the fastest results:

1. NOTIFY THE RED CROSS for emergency reporting and verification services such as death or serious illness in the immediate family. The Red Cross will then contact Armed Forces Emergency Service Centers

**Nashville (615) 250-4300
Outside Nashville Area 1-888-737-4306
(You will be directed to your local area Red Cross Office)**

EMERGENCIES REQUIRING YOUR SPOUSE'S PRESENCE

The Red Cross will need:

Spouse's full name: _____

SS#: _____ - _____ - _____

Branch of service: (Army, DA Civilian)_____

Unit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, _____

Rank/Grade: _____

The Red Cross will ask for the name of the person having the emergency:

The Red Cross will ask for the nature of the emergency:

The Red Cross may ask for the name and location of the hospital:

The Red Cross may ask for the name of the attending doctor:

2. CONTACT YOUR DEPLOYEE SUPPORT COORDINATOR WITH THE SAME INFORMATION.

Deployee Support Coordinator: Victoria Hooper

Office number: (615) 736-7965

Home number: (615) 790-7689

Cell Phone: (615) 390-6202

Email: Victoria.A.Hooper@usace.army.mil

IF AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER HAS AN EMERGENCY

If an immediate family member living in another part of the country has an emergency and your spouse's presence is needed, the Red Cross from that area can verify the emergency and call the Armed Forces Emergency Services Center

IF YOUR DEPLOYED SPOUSE HAS AN EMERGENCY

If your spouse develops a serious problem such as an illness or injury, the military chain of command, the Red Cross, or a military chaplain will contact you.

REMEMBER--- PLAN AHEAD!

WEB SITES

- **Army Family Liaison Office:**
 - <http://www.aflo.org/home.asp>
- **USCENTCOM's Family Assistance Site:**
 - <http://www.centcom.mil/familysupport/familysupport.htm>
- **US Army Community Service:**
 - http://www.armycommunityservice.org/vacs_deployment/home.asp
- **Army Benefits Center:** <http://www.abc.army.mil>
- **Military Call Home Tips:**
 - <http://ftp.fcc.gov/cgb/military/militarycallhome.html>
- **Long Distance Couples:** <http://www.longdistancecouples.com/>
- **American Red Cross:** <http://www.redcross.org/>
- **Blue Mountain Red Cross:** <http://www.bluemountainredcross.org/>
- **Dads at a Distance:** <http://www.daads.com/>
- **Moms Over Miles:** <http://www.momsovermiles.com/>
- **National Military Family Association, Inc.:** <http://www.nmfa.org/>
- **Family Readiness Programs Toolkit:**
 - <http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/toc.htm>
- **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Web pages**
 - **Nashville District:** <http://www.lrn.usace.army.mil>
 - **Headquarters:** <http://www.usace.army.mil/index.html>
 - **Transatlantic Programs Center:**
 - <http://www.tac.usace.army.mil/extranet/>
 - **Gulf Region Division:**
 - <http://www.grd.usace.army.mil/index.html>
 - **Afghanistan Engineer District**
 - **Virtual family information site:**
 - <http://www.aed.usace.army.mil/familyinfo.html>

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS
Place a copy by each telephone in your home.

In Case of An EMERGENCY

Ambulance _____ Minister _____
Legal Assistance _____ Nurse Advice Line _____
Crisis Hotline _____ Poison Control _____
Drugs/Alcohol _____ Police/City _____
Emergency Room _____ Police/Military _____
Family Advocacy _____ Red Cross _____
Fire Department _____ Clinic _____
School _____ Hospital _____
Our address: _____

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