



Counseling

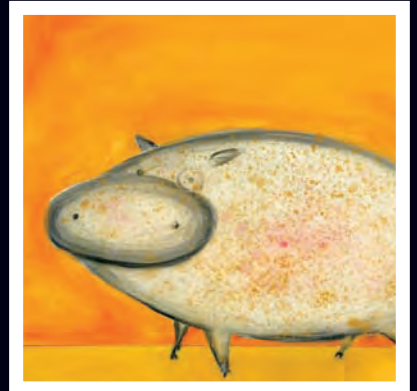


Spouse Career & Education



Parenting & Family

Report of the 2nd QUADRENNIAL QUALITY OF LIFE REVIEW



Financial



TroopTube



Deployment & Military Life



JANUARY 2009



Health & Fitness

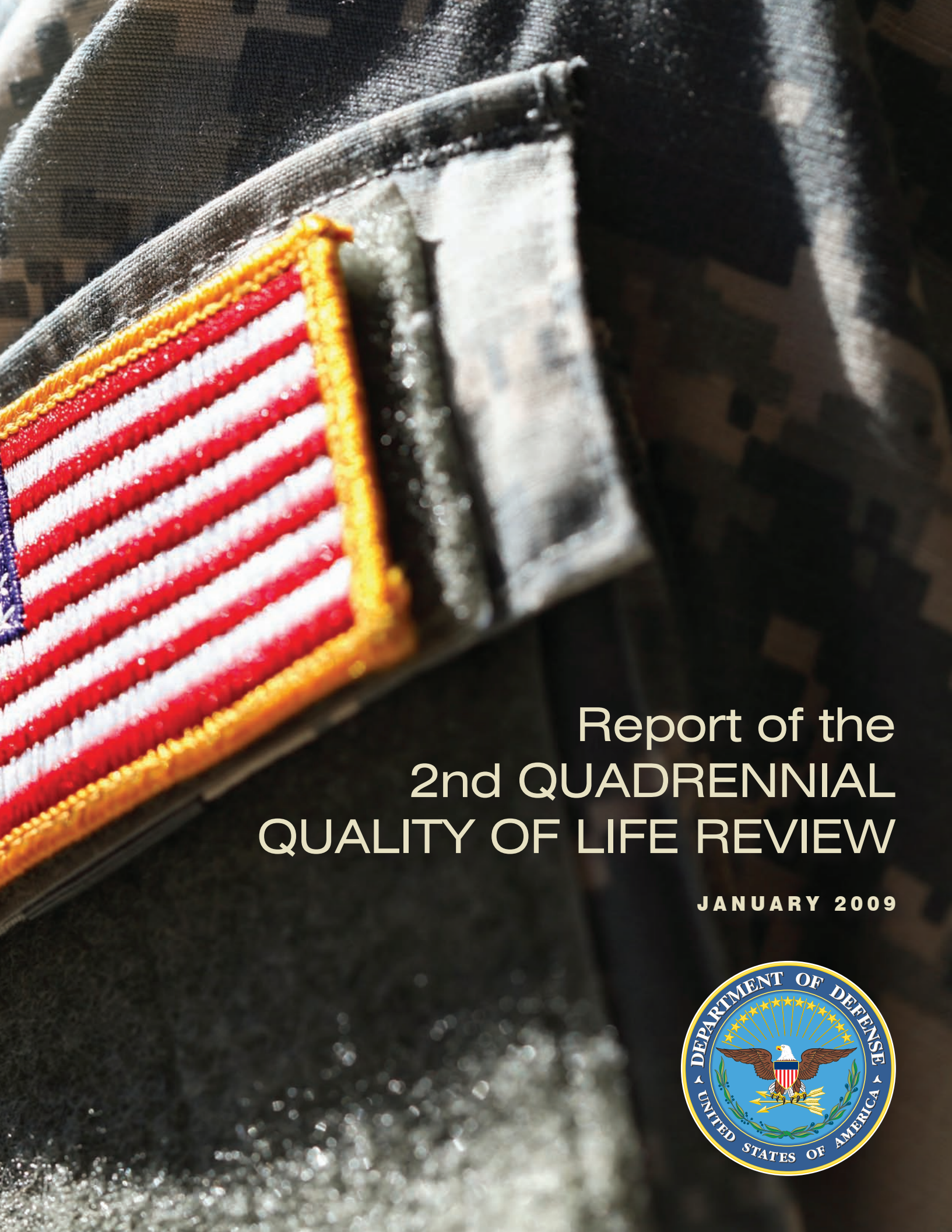


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“Our nation owes a great deal to what I call ‘the power behind the power’ – the families of all those who are serving. While our men and women in uniform may be called to pay the highest price, their families, and particularly their spouses, make a considerable sacrifice as well.”

— Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates,
as delivered on Military Spouses Day in Washington, D.C.,
Tuesday, May 06, 2008



A close-up photograph of a military uniform sleeve, likely a flight suit, featuring a prominent American flag patch. The patch is embroidered with red and white stripes and a blue field with white stars. The background is dark and out of focus, showing the texture of the uniform fabric.

Report of the 2nd QUADRENNIAL QUALITY OF LIFE REVIEW

JANUARY 2009







This report provides the results of the second Quadrennial Quality of Life Review as directed by Congress and Public Law 107-314. Since the first Review in 2004, unprecedented demands have been placed on the members of the All Volunteer Force and their families. The Department of Defense responded by filling gaps in quality of life programs and developing new responses to emerging needs. Primary among those responses was the opening of the Military OneSource Center, designed to provide Active Duty and Guard and Reserve Commanders the vehicles for surge support during deployments. The creation of the Center acknowledges the heightened importance of families, *who also serve*, particularly during times of war and heavy deployments.

What follows is an account of our efforts to honor our commitment to service members and their families - by providing them with the best possible quality of life support. The Report reflects the work of forward-thinking leaders who have responded to meet the increased demands on our service members. The needs of service members and their families will continue to evolve and the Department of Defense stands ready to improve the quality of life of our greatest resource. As Secretary Gates said, families are the "power behind the power" of our All Volunteer Force.

The Nation appreciates the sacrifices made by military members and their families.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Burke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jane B. Burke
Executive Director
Military OneSource Center
Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
(Military Community & Family Policy)

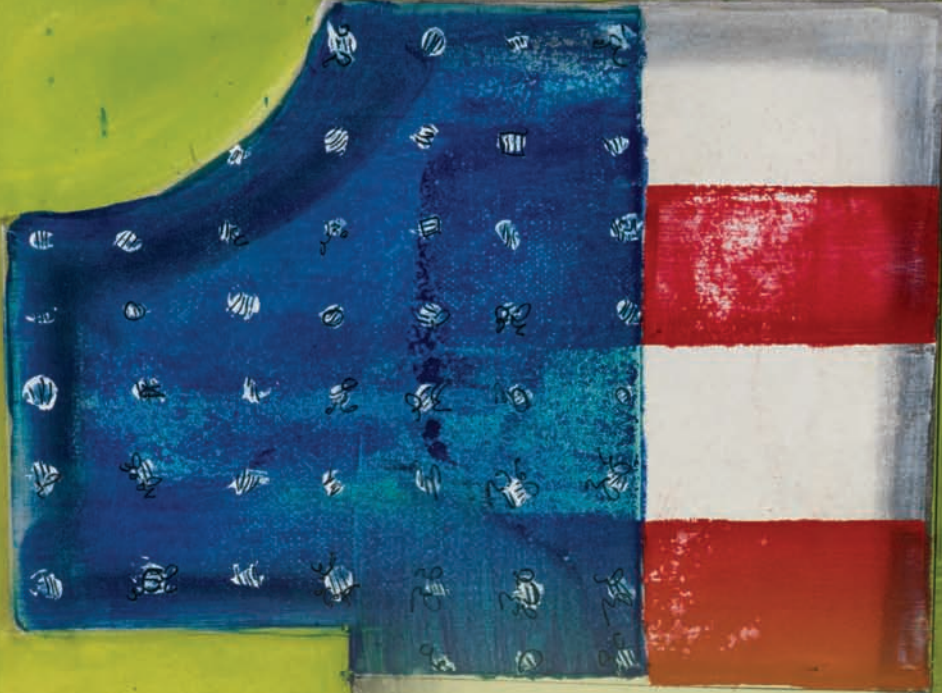
2nd QUADRENNIAL QUALITY OF LIFE REVIEW



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Executive Summary

OUR U.S. MILITARY FORCES ARE CURRENTLY COMPOSED OF MORE than 3.5 million people, including nearly 1.4 million active duty service members, 1.1 million reservists and over 800,000 DoD civilians. However, there is another important element to our armed forces — their family members who nurture and support them during these perilous times.

As a result, the Department has made family support a high priority in recognition of the crucial role that families play in supporting service members deployed worldwide.

As a demographic group, our service men and women are mostly young, mostly married, and better educated than the general population. While our traditional emphasis used to be on active duty service members and their families, the deployment schedules brought about in response to the Global War on Terror have greatly expanded our focus to also include the families of our reservists and national guardsmen.



In addition to being more widely dispersed, geographically, the families of our reservists are often totally new to the military lifestyle and to the support structure available to them. Thus, in addition to expanding our quality of life programs, we must also undertake an extensive education awareness effort.

This report focuses on 19 significant areas in which the Department has undertaken major initiatives to improve the quality of life of our service members and their families. Some, like our Morale, Welfare and Recreation and citizenship programs, focus primarily on the service member, while others, like our child care and military spouse education training programs, focus more on the spouse. Still others, such as our DODEA, Youth and Special Needs programs, focus on the children and youth of our military families. Pro-

This report will focus on 19 significant quality of life areas.

grams like the Joint Family Support Assistance, Family Advocacy, and Counseling programs, address the relationship stresses between husband and wife.

Health care and the commissary/military exchanges concentrate on day-to-day living, while voluntary education and financial stability are geared more toward the future well-being of our service members and their families. Other programs, like our casualty initiatives, are geared toward those times when the service member has made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Our newest addition to the Quality of Life portfolio is the Military OneSource Center. The Center was developed to respond to the growing need for critical quality of life services. Providing surge support for Commanders, the Military OneSource Center encompasses many of the

innovative outreach efforts in quality of life detailed in this report – including the Military OneSource 24/7 Call Center and Website.

An initiative central to our relationships with troops and their families is Communications. The Military OneSource Website *MilitaryOneSource.com* and the Military OneSource 24/7 Call Center are the backbone of how we get information and support to our military families when they need it, wherever in the world they happen to be.

Given the fact that the families of today's armed forces live in communities throughout the U.S., many of them a long way from the nearest military installation, we have been actively working with the various state governors to address service-unique problems that only our individual states can resolve.

To complement the initiatives the Department has undertaken, each of the military Services has also launched many quality of life programs specifically tailored to the unique needs of their individual service members and their families.

Finally, no program can possibly succeed without constant feedback from the "customer" – in our case, the service members and their families. Since our last quarterly report in 2004, the DoD and the individual services have been constantly engaged in surveying to find out what's working and what's not, as well as identifying additional problem areas that require our attention.

Our No. 1 resource at the Department of Defense is our people – the men and women, and the families who love and support them – who make up the finest military force in the world. Ensuring that they are able to enjoy the fruits of the American Dream while serving their country, will always remain one of our highest priorities.

Our No. 1 resource at the Department of Defense is our people.



What Is the Future of Warrior and Family Support?

A LONG WITH THE COMMON stresses of daily living, there are stresses unique to military service.

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) places new demands on every aspect of military life. From the anxieties of nation-building in hostile environments to the significant number and length of family separations, the stress currently affecting the military has not been of this magnitude since the inception of the All Volunteer Force.

The Department has made family support a priority and has redesigned and boosted family support in a number of ways in order to recognize the crucial role families play in supporting service members deployed worldwide.

While outstanding support is provided through installation family centers, family and spousal support groups, and family assistance centers, we know more needs to be done.

Looking to the future:

- We must reach out to the local community to augment support programs that meet the needs of service members and their families who live off the installation, as well as the needs of National Guard and Reserve families.
- We must provide high quality support programs that service members and their families can expect to always receive, regardless of their location.
- We must develop effective partnerships with federal, national, state, local, and private agencies that meet the needs of military members and their families, regardless of where they reside.
- We must focus our efforts toward building systems rather than silos. Our work is most effective if it is done in collaboration with support services in local communities.
- We must leverage technology to meet the communications needs of the “digital generation” so that military families maintain a sense of community, with access to help and assistance any time of the day or night.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

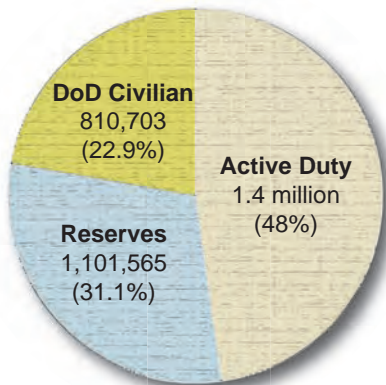


We must provide high quality support programs that service members and their families can expect to always receive, regardless of their location.

Who Are Military Troops and Families?

MORE THAN 3.5 MILLION people make up our U.S. military forces, including nearly 1.4 million active duty members, 1.1 million Reserves, and over 800,000 DoD civilian personnel.

It is also important to note that, in both the active duty and reserve forces, there are more family members than service members.



Source: DMDC Active Duty Master File (September 2006); DMDC Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (September 2006); DMDC Civilian Personnel File (September 2006)

Combined, there are 3.24 million active duty and family members, and 1.95 million reserve members and family members. There are over 500,000 active duty enlisted service members who are married with children.

Their average age is 31.8, their spouse's average age is 31.3, and they have an average of 2 children.

As of June 2008, there have been 1.8 million deployments!¹ The service member left behind a family member in over 1 million of those deployments.

A Young Military Force

Nearly half of the active duty force is under 26 years of age, while reserve members tend to be older; more than 40 percent are at least 36 years old. (See chart on page 12)

As a group, the enlisted force is younger than the officer corps. The average age of active duty enlisted personnel is 27, while the average age for officers is 34.

A Highly-Educated Force

The U.S. military force is also well-educated. Within the active duty force, most (93.7 percent) enlisted members have a high school

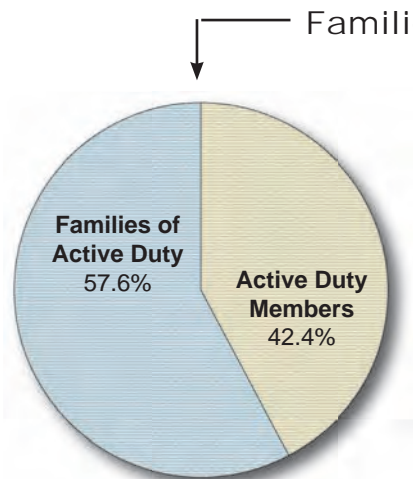


Photo courtesy of U. S. Army

¹ Ever Deployed Personnel by Service, Child Status and Number of Deployments as of June 30, 2008. Source: Contingency Tracking System Deployment File, DMDC

55 percent of all active duty personnel, and 49.8 percent of reserve personnel, are married.

WHO ARE MILITARY TROOPS?



Source: DMDC Military Family File (September 2006)



Source: DMDC Reserve Family File (September 2006)

diploma and/or some college experience, while 86 percent of officers have a bachelor's degree or higher. (See chart on page 14)

This compares favorably with the U.S. population as a whole, where 84.1 percent of the U.S. population age 25 and over have high school diplomas or the equivalent, while 27 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

Similarly, more than 86 percent of Reserve enlisted personnel have a high school diploma and/or some college, while 85.7 percent of Reserve component officers hold a bachelor's or higher degree.

A Mostly Married Force

The U.S. military is also a married force. Slightly more than half (55 percent) of all

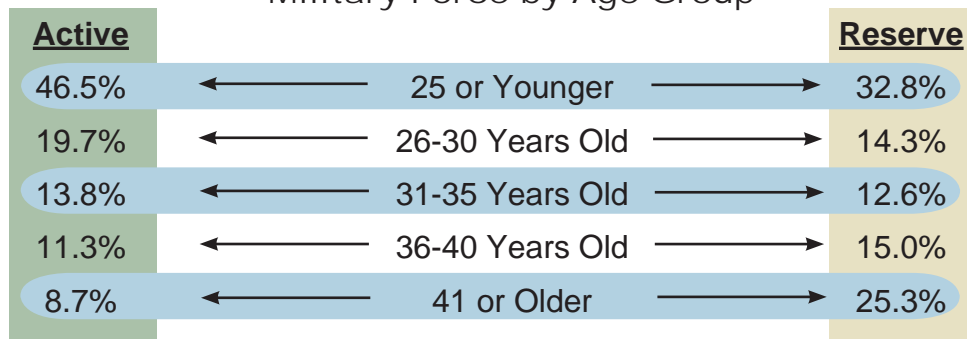
active duty personnel are married, while nearly half (49.8 percent) of reserve personnel are married. This compares to 50.4 percent of the U.S. population.

Over half of the active duty force (56.8 percent) has family responsibilities (spouse, child or other dependent) and 56.3 percent of Reservists have family responsibilities.

The spouses of our active duty service members are also fairly young. Half (52 percent) are 30 years of age or younger, and 71 percent



Military Force by Age Group



Source: DMDC Active Duty Master File (September 2006) DMDC Reserve Components Common Personnel Data System (September 2006)

are under 36 years of age. The vast majority (80 percent) have at least some college; and 21 percent hold a bachelor's degree. Eight percent hold advanced degrees.

A Mostly Dual-Income Family Force

While balancing family responsibilities with dual careers is a challenge for all American families, military service places additional challenges on spouses.

Almost 60 percent of the spouses of active duty personnel are either employed or seeking employment. (see chart on page 13) The spouses of junior enlisted members were the most likely to be unemployed.

The frequent (about every 18-36 months) relocations required of military personnel are a major obstacle preventing military spouses from establishing their careers.

Finding reliable and affordable child care is also frequently cited as an obstacle, and those with children age five and under are most likely to be out of the labor force.

Other obstacles frequently cited are acceptable salary, jobs relevant to career aspirations, and conflicts between work and parental or family responsibilities.

A Military Force With Children

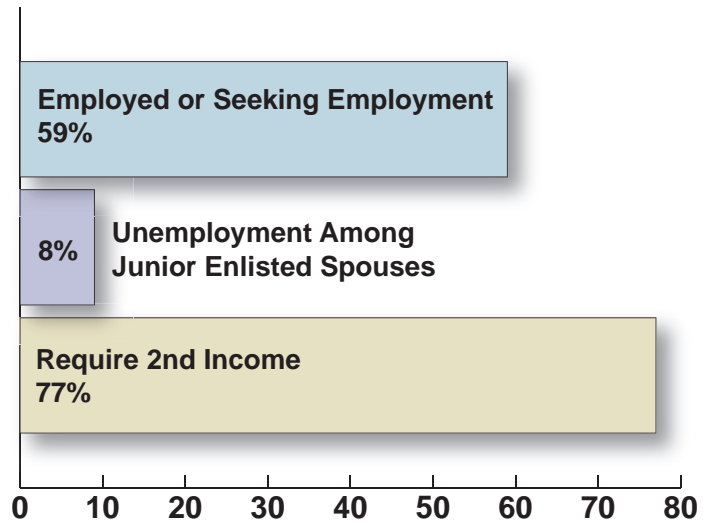
As one would expect with a young, married force, close to 43 percent of the active duty force have children, translating to more than 1.17 million dependent children between the ages of birth and 23 years. (see chart on page 13)

More than 40 percent of these children are less



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army

Dual-Income Families

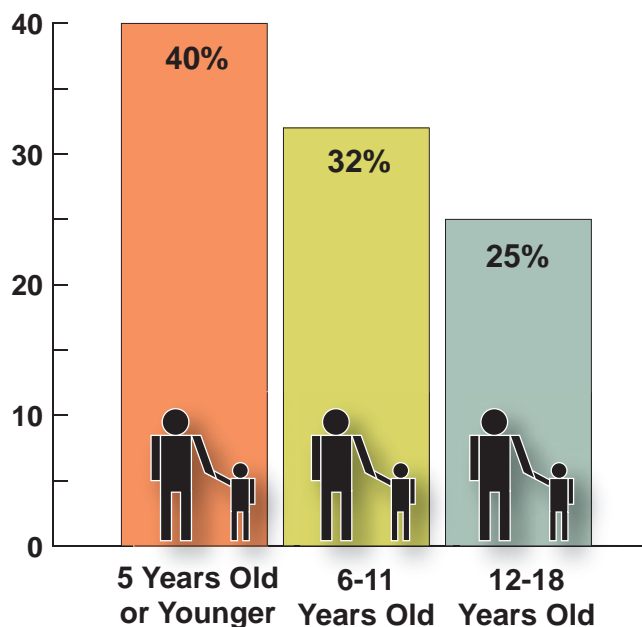


Source: DMDC 2006 Active Duty Spouse Survey

Families With Children

The demographic picture of the military as a whole shows the need for quality of life programs which support the needs of young families with children and two working parents.

1.2 million Active Duty Dependent Children



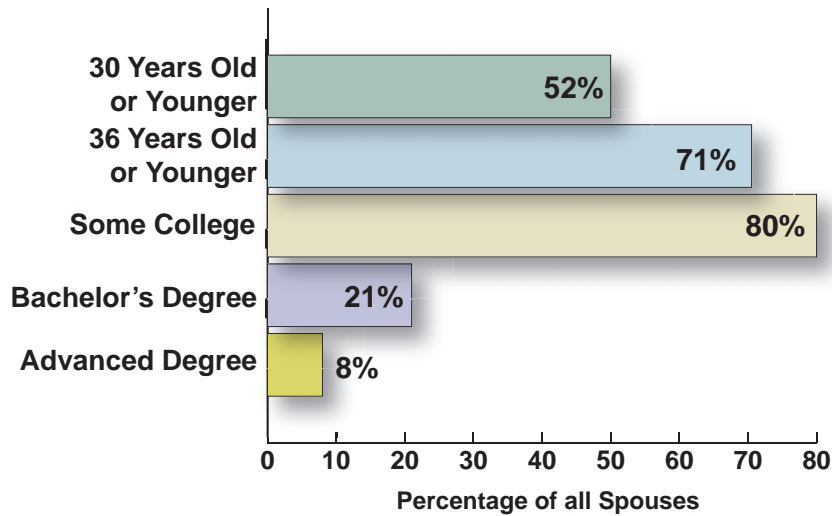
Source: DMDC Military Family File (September 2006)

WHO ARE MILITARY TROOPS?

“It is spouses who bear the burden each day and who keep families on track while loved ones are away.”

— Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates
Washington, D.C., Tuesday, May 06, 2008

Young and Well-Educated Spouses



Source: DMDC 2006 Active Duty Spouse Survey

than five years of age, while nearly 32 percent are between six and eleven. Almost 25 percent are 12-18 years of age.

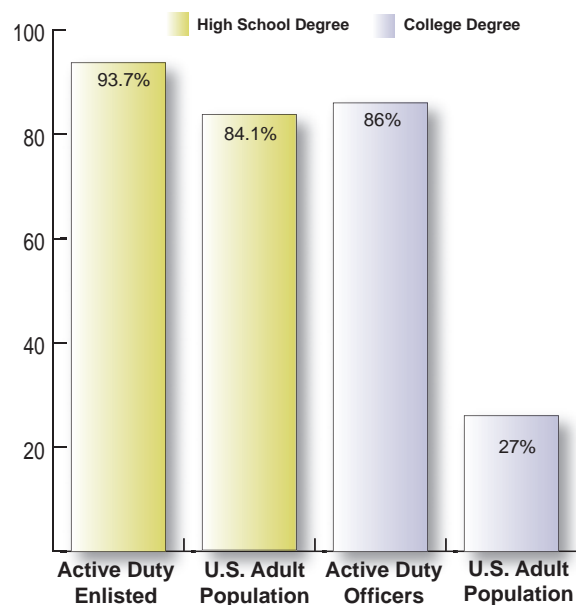
A Blend of Three Different Generations

The active duty force is composed of three very different generations, each with different priorities, possessing different strengths, and motivated by different incentives. (See chart on page 15)

As such, we need to account for all three in order to ensure we are successful at meeting the needs for each generation.

The Millennial Generation (1980-1997), which makes up approximately 47 percent of the active duty force, grew up with support and praise from everywhere. As a result, many young adults feel insecure if they are not regularly complimented.

Well-Educated Force



Source: DMDC Active Duty Master File (September 2006); United States Census (2006)

A Culture to Meet Changing Perspectives

Boomers

Idealistic
Champions of social causes; seek to change their world

Individualistic
Non-conformists; 63% aspire to be different than other people

Self-Completing
61% feel they need to know themselves better

Acquisitive
Often believe the more they give away or let get away, the less special they are

Media Consumption
Passive

8.7%
of all
Services



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

Generation X

Cynical
Shaped by divorce, recession, commercial hype, and morally suspicious social leaders

Independent/Pragmatic
Take it upon themselves to plan, analyze and make solid decisions - always hedging

Self-Reliant
57% have at one time started a self-run or home business

Diverse
Social choices reflect consumption pattern

Media Consumption
Selective

44.8%
of all
Services



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army

Millennials

Optimistic
Close relationships with parents and extended families

Interdependent
Many joining large institutions and government agencies in search of teamwork and risk protection

Service-Oriented
Social enterprise and nonprofit work a large employment focus

Balanced
#1 goal: life/work balance

Sense of Urgency
Want responsibility quickly

Media Consumption
Multi-source

46.5%
of all
Services



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Pressure to succeed has become more internally-focused, resulting in a shift towards meaningful achievements in life. For this generation, success means claiming ownership and being close to family and friends.

On the other hand, failure means not finding their passion, not being true to themselves, and compromising their integrity.

Status and authority will not impress them, bureaucracy and red tape will frustrate them, and a patronizing attitude will drive them crazy. They expect control over, and access to, everything.

The DoD constitutes a world where the control is directed and access is limited. Therein lies our challenge.



DoD Initiatives



Military OneSource Center

VISION

That families have a dynamic and responsive set of resources to improve their quality of life as they face the challenges of military life.

THE MILITARY ONESOURCE CENTER is a new component to meet the need for a joint outreach support system to military families for the active duty and the National Guard and Reserve — a need that has grown increasingly important with the long and repeated deployments associated with the Global War on

Terror. The Center is an expansion of the resources provided by the joint Military OneSource 24/7 Call Center and website tools.

By providing quality of life support for commanders, the Center will serve to ease both deployment-related and military lifestyle challenges faced by troops and their families.

Details about Center initiatives are included throughout this section, along with other DoD programs.

The final piece in this report, the Military OneSource Center Commanders' Resource for Quality of Life Surge Support, details the resources available on-demand for commanders.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class RJ Strachko

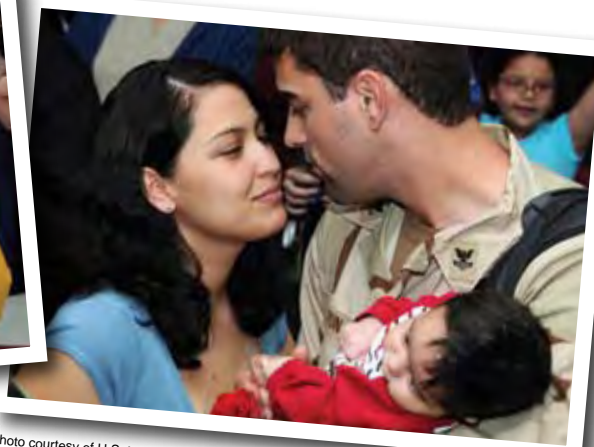


Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Michael R. Hinchcliff



Military OneSource Services

Commanders can call

1-888-256-9920

to request resources.

Initiatives for 2009

MILITARY ONESOURCE CALL CENTER AND WEBSITE

- 24/7/365 toll-free confidential telephonic support world-wide
- Website
 - Tip Sheets
 - Calculators
 - Plan My Move
 - Links to Military Services/Installations
- Tax Filing Services
 - Free online tax filing services
 - Free telephonic tax consultations

WOUNDED WARRIOR RESOURCE CENTER

- 24/7 call center for immediate assistance with issues concerning health care services or facilities and benefits for the wounded

FINANCIAL READINESS CHALLENGE ROADSHOW

- Installation workshops delivered on demand
 - Budgeting
 - Mortgage and foreclosure
 - Debt reduction
 - Saving and investing
 - Identity theft
 - Retirement planning

OUTREACH COUNSELING

- Confidential, short term, situational, problem solving
- Assistance in coping with deployments, family separations and reintegration

TROOPTUBE SOCIAL NETWORK

- Online military community building
- Families can share special moments with deployed father/mother
- All videos screened prior to posting

YMCA MEMBERSHIPS

- Paid memberships
- Title 10 deployed Guard and Reserve
- Respite child care

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

- Installations receive up-to-date, accurate information on services supporting military families

MILITARY SPOUSE CAREER ADVANCEMENT ACCOUNTS

- Jump start portable careers in health services, education, information technology, financial services, etc.
- Up to \$6000 per spouse
- On-line enrollment

JOINT FAMILY SUPPORT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- Mobile support teams to all 50 states and 4 territories
- Support to geographically isolated military families
 - Confidential Counseling
 - Child and Youth services
 - Financial education and counseling

ONLINE LIBRARY RESOURCES

- Free downloads of audio and e-books
- Free Playaways (electronic handheld books)
- Available 24/7/365 world-wide
- Entertainment, solace or education

BLOG WITH FAMILIES (OUR NEWEST INITIATIVE)

- Tool to build community
- Enable families to gain strength and learn from shared experiences

Military Spouse Education and Training Initiatives

VISION

To help military spouses pursue rewarding careers, as well as to remove barriers to their career advancement.

Military spouses are not unlike their civilian counterparts, in that they are major contributors to their family's financial well-being. Of the 650,000 spouses of active duty members stationed in the U.S., 66 percent are in the work force.

TWO MAJOR ISSUES FACE military families and spouses who must frequently relocate: managing the **education of their children** and trying to **sustain a career** while in the service of his/her country.

Our survey of active duty military spouses in 2006 not only confirmed that the vast majority (77 percent) of military spouses want to work, but also that they want a career — a portable career.



Photo courtesy of Defense Military Images

76 percent of military spouses who would like to further their education say the cost is the primary reason for not enrolling in school or training.

The top concern of those who have deployed multiple times since 9-11-01 was their spouse's job or education demands.

— DMDC Survey, April & December 2007

Military spouses can receive grants of up to \$6,000 over a two-year period for education, training and licenses or credentials costs.



The employment of military spouses has a profound effect on the financial well-being of military families. Our families tell us they need two incomes in order to make ends meet, and spouses tell us they want a career but are limited because of frequent relocations.

Research has shown that a military spouse's support for a career in the Armed Forces is a top factor in the re-enlistment decision of a service member. That fact alone makes this an important readiness issue for DoD.

Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts

In an effort to meet the educational needs of military spouses, the Department of Defense in 2007 made **Career Advancement Accounts (CAA)** available to military spouses at 18 installations as a pilot program.

These accounts enable spouses to pursue college or technical training, as well as credentials or licenses, to help advance them into high-demand occupations in health services,

QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Portable Careers for Spouses

The Department of Defense has identified the following as being portable careers that best match our military's mobile lifestyle:

- Education
- Health Care
- Financial Services Industry
- Information Technology
- Real Estate
- Non-degree Technical and Vocational Centers

Photo courtesy of Defense Military Images



education, information technology, financial services or trades (e.g., electrician, plumber).

Spouses will be able to obtain recertification or licensure training as they move from state to state.

Military spouses can receive grants of up to \$6,000 for education, training and licenses or credentials costs, over a two-year period. The grants cover the costs for tuition, fees, books, equipment, and credentialing and licensing fees.

In addition to careers in education, health care, information technology, construction trades and financial services, the demonstration project also includes specific in-demand

occupations within human resources, business and management, hospitality management and homeland security.

Since the program began in 2008, more than 4,600 military spouses have enrolled in career development programs.

Congressional authority to include spouses of active duty military members in a military-wide program was granted for ongoing implementation.

Helping military spouses pursue a meaningful career while supporting both their service member and their family will be a priority for years to come.

“Your career can travel with you, and will relieve the stress that comes with a move. You won’t have to worry about what your next job will be.”

— Tangeray Mayhorn, wife of Army Staff Sergeant Glenn Mayhorn, Fort Carson, Colo.

“I had a relatively good, solid career and then, when we moved, it took me nine months to find a job [in a new state]. I ended up settling for a job where I made \$6 an hour, where the year before I had made \$45,000.

“We didn’t have the money for me to go through all the licensures for the [new] state, so that’s when I decided that I would quit [the previous career] and go back to school to pursue nursing. So I started to do that.

“Then we got transferred to Florida. We moved here in December and in three months I sent out over 40 resumes. I couldn’t get a job, didn’t even get a call. I finally got a call from the gardening section in the BX [at our military installation] and I was so excited, but I didn’t get hired.

“So I finally threw my hands up and said, I’m just going to go to school full time. I’ll find a way to do it. I had planned to just grant or loan my whole way through school, and then the CAA came along.”

— CAA recipient, who is the spouse of an E-5



Health care, education, real estate, information technology and the financial services industry are among the portable careers that best match our military’s mobile lifestyle.

Photo courtesy of Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs



Amid a sea of books, Brandi Waruch, a student at the University of Mary Hardin Baylor and a recipient of a 1st Cavalry Division Association scholarship grant, works on a homework assignment at her house. Waruch is married to Colorado Springs, Colo. native Sgt. Ashley Waruch, a mechanic with the Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cav. Div.

Child Care Initiatives

VISION

That DoD families have access to affordable, high quality child development programs available that support the new deployment rigor of today's military strategy.

WE HAVE A ROBUST child care program in the Department of Defense, and our child development services continue to be a national model.

Our emphasis on quality is reflected in the Department's high achievement in national accreditation, and is unparalleled in the civilian sector. We maintain this high level of quality through a systematic approach to training, staffing and oversight which ensures that accreditation standards are met and sustained.

The DoD child development system serves the largest number of children on a daily basis of any employer in the United States. Child care is provided in 742 Child Development Centers and more than 7,000 Family Child Care homes at over 300 geographic locations worldwide.

Yet, we still have unmet demand for thousands of children, and the Department is moving forward to provide more access to child care.

In order to increase the availability of child care, the Department proposes to accelerate the Child Development Center construction program, as well as to increase public-private ventures with nationally recognized organizations. Our plan would result in an additional 58,000 child care spaces.

DoD's Child Development System
742 Child Development Centers
7,000 Family Child Care Homes
300 Locations Worldwide

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy, Photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Sara Bohannan.



Child Development Centers provide military families with local and affordable child care during normal working hours.

In support of the war effort, many DoD programs have extended hours of care, to include some nights and weekends, in order to support mission readiness schedules and to provide much needed respite care to families. Programs have also added drop-in services and care for mildly ill children.

In addition, the Services have addressed the child care needs of shift workers by providing 24/7 care at select locations.

The Services have also expanded child care spaces, as well as resource and referral

The Department proposes to accelerate the Child Development Center construction program, which will result in an additional 58,000 child care spaces.

Photo courtesy of Defense Military Imagery



Addressing the Needs of Pre-School Children

As many as 700,000 children under the age of five have a parent in the military. To help address the needs of our preschool children, DoD and others partnered with the Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization that produces Sesame Street, to develop an outreach program for military families with young children.

“Talk, Listen, Connect” offers significant resources for military families experiencing the effects of deployments, multiple deployments, or when a parent returns home changed due to a combat-related injury. The resources consist of a bilingual (English/Spanish) multimedia outreach kit starring the Muppets from Sesame Street, along with DVDs for children and adults; and print materials for children, parents and caregivers and facilitators.

An impact study found that families reported fewer negative behaviors exhibited by their children after using the kit.

Sesame Workshop will produce and distribute 500,000 kits at no cost to individual families and organizations serving the needs of military families. Special emphasis will be made to reach families of the Reserves and National Guard.

The kit materials will also be available online at www.sesameworkshop.org/tlc.



QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army

services, outside their military installations in order to ensure that child care is easily accessible to both Reserve Component

families and the geographically-dispersed families of active duty service members who do not live near a military installation.

Strong partnerships with local school systems provide additional support to youth whose parents or loved one has deployed. Programs designed to provide a safe place for youth during the summer months contribute to a comprehensive approach of providing support to our youth.

Each program shares the same common goal: the best care at an affordable cost.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

The Services have addressed the child care needs of shift workers by providing 24/7 care at select locations.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

Partnerships with local school systems provide additional support to youth whose parent or loved one has deployed.

Commissary and Military Exchange Systems Initiatives

VISION

To provide safe shopping environments that give back to the military community through savings to military personnel and their families.

THE DEFENSE COMMISSARY Agency (DeCA) operates a retail grocery system to enable service members, retired service members, and their dependents to purchase American groceries at reduced cost wherever U.S. military members and their families are stationed.

On average, shoppers save more than 30 percent on their purchases when compared to commercial prices, a savings worth about \$3,000 annually for a family of four. As a core military family support element, as well as a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness and enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families.

DeCA has recently enacted several initiatives designed to increase the quality of life for service members and their families.

Full commissary benefits for members of the Ready Reserve were authorized in 2004. Since that time, DeCA has introduced numerous initiatives designed to enable — and encourage — Guard and Reserve members to use their commissary benefit.

Through the new ***Bringing the Benefit to You*** campaign, the Defense Department reaches out to our Guard and Reserve members who have earned the commissary benefit, but who cannot easily travel to a local store to shop on a regular basis. This applies to about 54 percent of Reserve and National Guard

units that are located more than 20 miles away from a commissary in the states.

The ***Bringing the Benefit to You*** program includes on-site truckload, case-lot sales as a way of taking a bit of the commissary itself to our Guard and Reserve units. During 2007, DeCA held on-site sales at 21 Guard and Reserve locations. Thus far in 2008, on-site sales at 11 locations have served more than 5,000 customers.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Airman First Class Vince Ada of the 436th Communications Squadron does some last minute essential shopping.

QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



Photo courtesy of Visual Information Fort Detrick

Commissary customer Ivett Boards and daughter Valerie browse some of the thousands of new items at Fort Detrick's new commissary. The facility opened April 8, 2008. The new commissary is larger and offers a greater selection for patrons. The commissary serves the active, reserve and retired military community.

Another recent DeCA initiative is the **Scholarships for Military Children Program**, which awards at least one scholarship at every commissary location with qualified applicants. The scholarship program kicked off in 2001 and has awarded more than \$5.5 million in scholarships to 3,532 of the best and brightest children of military families.

Another new initiative involves promoting better health habits.

Commissaries are now boosting awareness of Military OneSource, which provides service members and their families with considerable health resources.

Exchanges

The three Armed Services Exchanges — the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES), the Navy Exchange Command (NEXCOM), and the Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) — provide quality merchandise and services to Active Duty,

Guard and Reserve members, military retirees, and their families at competitively low prices.

In addition, the Exchanges return earnings to the Services to improve quality of life, as well as providing a dividend to support **Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR)** programs. Roughly two-thirds of AAFES' earnings are paid to MWR programs.

Over the past 10 years, \$2.4 billion has been contributed by AAFES to military MWR programs to spend on quality of life improvements, including youth services, Armed Forces Recreation Centers, arts and crafts, aquatic centers and golf courses.

The Exchanges also provide unofficial telephone service at low international rates for both land- and sea-based deployed members. The Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) operates 73 call centers with 1,664 telephones in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait. The Navy



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jami James stocks up on groceries for her family at the commissary at Kadena Air Base, Japan, in preparation for Typhoon Man-Yi.

U.S. Army soldiers are issued free gift stocking and phone cards on Christmas Day at the Al Faw Palace, located at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq. The items were donated to the soldiers for holiday gifts while they are deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

“Phone cards through ‘Help Our Troops Call Home’ offer calls from Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait for as low as 19 cents a minute.”

— AAFES’ Senior Enlisted Advisor Chief Master Sgt. Bryan Eaton

Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) supports most ships in theater with telephone lines, depending on the size of the ship.

To help offset the expense of keeping the home front connected to the front lines, the American public has now donated 249,107 phone cards totaling nearly \$6 million through the **Help Our Troops Call Home** campaign.

Another AAFES communications effort, the Army & Air Force Ex-

change Service Radio Network, provides an easy way to deliver messages to local military communities. Thoughts of appreciation and gratitude, an announcement welcoming deployed troops home, information on upcoming base or post activities and much more can be communicated.

We will continue to ensure our service members and their families have affordable access to familiar American products and basic necessities.

exchanges

Exchanges operate in more than **30 countries, five U.S. territories, and throughout the United States.** The Exchanges operate retail stores, fast food restaurants, theaters, barber and beauty shops, telephone call centers, and provide goods and services in deployed areas and aboard ships.

exchanges

Youth Initiatives

VISION

To develop programs which engage youth and, at the same time, address the particular challenges of life in a military family.

WIDELY RECOGNIZED FOR providing dynamic, innovative and successful youth programs, the Department of Defense offers vital programs and services to more than 500,000 military-affiliated children and youth between the ages of six and 18, not only across the U.S., but around the globe.

The DoD has a long history of providing positive youth programs that focus on alternative activities for youth during their out-of-school hours. The Department believes that military youth also make tremendous sacrifices and deserve our best efforts to provide quality choices.

Today, DoD continues to be committed to military youth by providing quality programs on installations and in communities wherever they live.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

The DoD offers programs and services to more than 500,000 military-affiliated youth between the ages of six and 18.

The Department has developed partnerships with various youth-serving organizations, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, U.S. Department of Agriculture 4-H Programs, Armed Services YMCA, and National Military Family Association.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines

The DoD has a long history of providing programs that focus on alternative activities for youth during their out-of-school hours.

Operation: Military Kids is a DoD collaborative effort with America's communities to support the children and youth impacted by deployment. Officially launched in April 2005, *Operation: Military Kids* has touched 65,000 military youth and provided information to 7,200 community members across the United States.

Through a network of community partners, *Operation: Military Kids* provides youth program opportunities for school age, middle school and teenaged youth and connects them to support resources where they live.

Teams in 42 states include over 600 partner members from both national and local organizations who work together, and with DoD, to provide support to the military children in their state.

Families and youth can access information about *Operation: Military Kids* programs by linking to partner programs on the *Operation: Military Kids* website (www.operationmilitarykids.org), or by contacting their State 4-H Military Liaison.

Mission Youth Outreach is a Services-sponsored initiative between the DoD and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The program enables geographically-dispersed children of active and reserve component service members to attend a local Boys & Girls Club at no cost.

Boys & Girls Clubs provide a safe and positive place for youth to spend their out-of-school time. Youth and teens have access to all B&GCA programs and may participate in local and national events.

DoD developed the popular **Military Teens on the Move** (www.defenselink.mil/mtom) website, which continues to be a hit with military children and youth. The site received over 100,000 visitors during FY 2007.

The Military Teens on the Move website is currently being revised and updated with new and innovative topics and areas of interest, not only to the older youth but to elementary, middle and high school students. The anticipated launch for the new site is Spring 2009.

We will continue to foster partnerships with local and national youth organizations to ensure our military youth enjoy a high quality of life.



Operation: Military Kids has touched 65,000 military youth and provided information to 7,200 community members across the United States.

Photos courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Department of Defense Education Activity Initiatives

VISION

To ensure the children of military service members achieve educational excellence, no matter where they are assigned.

THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE Education Activity (DoDEA) has provided the children of military members with an exemplary education for over 60 years. It recently received expanded authority to create partnerships with local education agencies that educate military students, which will complement the work of the National Governors Association.

The ongoing relocation of thousands of military students through Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), global rebasing, and other force structure changes has created an urgent need, and obligation, to partner with military-connected communities in order to ensure the best possible educational opportunities for all students.

On October 1, 2007, DoDEA launched the *Educational Partnership Directorate* (EPD) to accomplish this goal.

To support excellence in education, EPD will develop partnerships with schools and districts that focus on educational best practices and provide online/alternative learning opportunities for students worldwide.

To support school transitions, EPD will facilitate agreements at the local, state, and federal levels designed to reduce the unique transition and deployment issues that military students face.



Photos courtesy of www.griparty.com

“I have children attending DoD schools and we love it because of its consistency, stability of curriculum and performance.”

— Former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry Scott, in testimony before the Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs on February 16, 2005

The DoD clearly recognizes that some of the key issues important to the quality of life of service members and families require a response from more than just an individual state.

For example, school transition issues that impact military children — such as differing enrollment, placement and graduation rules — require interstate cooperation. Consequently, the DoD has worked with the Council of State Governments to develop an interstate compact that will resolve many of these transition issues confronting military children. *(See page 47 for more on the interstate education compact)*

Ensuring that the children of military families receive the best possible education is one of the Department's most important quality of life goals.

DoD is working to develop an interstate compact that will resolve many of the transition issues confronting military children.



Photo courtesy of www.griparty.com

The Educational Partnership Directorate will develop partnerships with schools and districts that focus on educational best practices.



Photo courtesy of www.griparty.com

Counseling Initiatives

VISION

That service members, as well as their families, have access to confidential, non-medical, short-term, counseling services anywhere in the world.

TO ADDRESS THE INCREASED need for support to service members and their families, the Department of Defense has put into place two unique programs — *Military OneSource Counseling*, in 2004, and more recently, *Military & Family Life Consultants*, in 2007.

These programs provide non-medical, problem-solving, situational counseling designed to assist service members and their families in coping with normal reactions to the stressful situations of deployment, war, and reintegration.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



Military OneSource Counseling and *Military and Family Life Consultant* support are available at no cost, and are confidential unless a “duty-to-warn” situation occurs (i.e., child abuse/neglect, imminent safety of the counseling recipient or others, or illegal activities).



Military OneSource conducted 105,475 counseling sessions in FY 2008.

Traditionally, service members and their families have sought non-medical counseling from chaplains, family centers, and other installation support personnel.



Traditionally, service members and their families have sought non-medical counseling from chaplains, family centers, and other installation support personnel. However, the need to augment that support became increasingly apparent, as did the need to assist those who did not have access to installation support.

Military OneSource Counseling provides a worldwide capability for the total force to be connected with either face-to-face or telephonic counseling sessions that assist with concerns occurring across the military lifestyle. In FY 2008, there were 2.9 million total contacts, including telephone and e-mail contacts, counseling sessions and online visits. Of that number, 105,475 were counseling sessions.

Military & Family Life Consultants provide flexible service delivery to meet the ongoing and emerging needs of the total force

by providing installation-based rotational assignments of 30, 45, 60, or 90 days, as well as on-demand counseling support for the National Guard and Reserve component and their families. The program supports pre-deployment, deployment, and reintegration events. In FY 2008, more than 3 million individuals received support through this program.

Given the wide geographic dispersion of military members and their families, providing flexible, 24/7 access to counseling is an ongoing need. The counseling options allow those seeking support to choose the most viable option for receiving such support based on their unique situation.

We remain committed to providing options that allow people to receive private support, thereby reducing the possible negative stigma and fear of career consequences that may be associated with seeking assistance.

Joint Family Support Assistance Program

VISION

That all families, even those geographically isolated from a military installation, have access to quality family assistance programs.

SERVICE MEMBERS MUST balance the competing demands of military service with those of their families.

These days, the Guard and Reserves are experiencing significantly increased mobilization as a result of the Global War on Terrorism, and families that previously had limited exposure to military systems now must deal with the likelihood of longer, and often multiple, deployments of their service member.

The **Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP)** augments current family support programs in order to meet the needs of family members of Active Duty, Guard and Reserve members who are geographically-dispersed from a military installation.

Support services available include financial counseling and life coaching. Short-term, solution-focused counseling services are offered to individuals, couples, families, and groups for situations resulting from commonly occurring life circumstances such as relationship conflicts, personal loss, crisis, and deployments.

In addition, a **Military OneSource** specialist is located at each **Joint Family Support Assistance Program** facility. The specialist serves as a regional expert, identifying, cataloging and publishing the resources

available to Active Duty, Guard and Reserve members and their families.

Community capacity is enhanced through the efforts of the JFSAP staff, as they integrate the various family assistance programs and activities of the Department of Defense, other federal, state and local agencies, non-profit entities, and volunteers into a comprehensive, sustainable system of support for military families.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

JFSAP offers counseling services to individuals, couples, families, and groups for situations resulting from commonly-occurring life circumstances such as relationship conflicts, personal loss, crisis, and deployments.

A True Life JFSAP Client Profile

“A” is the wife of a soldier who served in Afghanistan. During her husband’s deployment, their home was damaged in a flood and, with three children and limited resources, “A” needed help. Through the New Hampshire National Guard Chaplain’s office, she was referred to the JFSAP program.

First, the JFSAP staff provided emergency assistance, including funding for a one-week hotel stay and clean-up/mold treatment. During this process, the JFSAP care coordinator established an important, trusting relationship with “A” and assured her that they would stay in touch.

Months later, when her husband returned, “A” let her care coordinator know that she needed help again: “A” and her husband were experiencing significant marital problems because of what appeared to be symptoms of PTSD. They were also experiencing financial problems because her husband’s emotional status rendered him unable to return to work immediately.



“A” and her husband agreed to meet with the care coordinator and, together, they established a plan. The JFSAP provided a host of supportive services to the family, including couple’s and family counseling; appropriate assessment and treatment for his PTSD; access to short-term respite child care so that “A” and her husband could reconnect; time-limited financial assistance to bridge the gap to self-sufficiency; and employment assistance (vocational counseling and job placement).

Today, thanks to the support of the New Hampshire JFSAP program, the husband is back to work, the marriage is stable, and the family is getting its finances in order.

Family Advocacy Program Initiatives

VISION

To provide education and support for families at risk for domestic violence and child abuse and neglect.

THE DEPARTMENT IS standardizing Family Advocacy Program practices across the four military services to support joint bases, regional collaboration among installations, and joint-Service personnel assignments. These policies include an overhaul of the case review process and guidelines for clinical intervention in domestic abuse.

The Department's Family Advocacy Program has multiple initiatives, each of which addresses a critical area of need.

The **New Parent Support Program (NPSP)** is an intensive, voluntary home visitation model, developed specifically for at-risk parents, in an effort to reduce risk and to strengthen protective factors.

Services are offered to expecting parents, as well as to parents with children three years of age or younger. The program accepts self-referrals, as well as those screened and referred by health care providers. Participation is

Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force



voluntary and the service is available to families who live either on or off the installation.

The results have been significant.

Since 2004, an estimated 26,400 families participated in NPSP services for at least six months. Of those, an estimated 21,600 (82 percent)

had no substantiated reports for child maltreatment within 12 months after NPSP services ended.

In 2007, reports of suspected child abuse fell 17 percent, and the substantiated incidents of child abuse fell 31 percent from FY 2004. The rate of substantiated incidents per 1,000 decreased 30 percent.

In FY 2007, reports of suspected spouse abuse fell 6.9 percent, and the substantiated incidents of spouse abuse fell 23 percent from

Support Program

- Promote resilience and healthy parenting skills in participating families
- Promote the involvement of both parents (when appropriate) in home visitation services
- Decrease the negative effects of intermittent single parenting due to deployment and other military operations by providing proactive outreach, positive education, and assistance to family support groups.
- Promote partnerships to create a full range of services to families living on and off the installation.

FY 2004. The rate of substantiated incidents per 1,000 children decreased 24 percent.

The ***Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) Prevention Initiative*** was launched in 2007. The initiative included the distribution of 600 *Shaken Baby Syndrome* prevention toolkits and 1,400 educational DVDs to military installations for use by service providers working with new parents.

The *Shaken Baby Syndrome* toolkits include a training curriculum designed specifically to reach out to military fathers of infants. All of the materials display the toll-free phone number for Military OneSource, where stressed military parents can talk to trained counselors 24/7.

The *Shaken Baby Syndrome* materials are also available online to service providers throughout the DoD.

In addition, the Department issued comprehensive policy guidance, that addresses ***domestic abuse*** involving DoD personnel.

The policy institutionalizes efforts to improve response to domestic abuse, to enhance victim safety and to hold abusers accountable.

In collaboration with the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, DoD launched a web-based domestic abuse training for military commanders.

Moreover, DoD continues to be a partner in the ***Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Initiative*** started by teens through the American Bar Association in 2004. The Department has supported a congressional resolution designating a Teen Dating Violence Awareness Week in February, and has distributed Teen Dating Violence Toolkits to DoD family advocacy programs, child development centers and secondary schools.

The Department is committed to providing education and support for families at risk for domestic violence and child abuse and neglect.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Marine Corps



USMC Corporal Jeff George quietly enjoys time with his wife Jennifer and son Jacob at the Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Ariz., after a deployment of almost 12 months.

Health Care Initiatives

VISION

That all service members and their families have access to quality health care.

THE MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM (MHS) currently serves 9.2 million people through numerous programs, while delivering health care services worldwide at 63 hospitals, 413 medical clinics and 413 dental clinics. This direct-care system is integrated with civilian contractors to provide all beneficiaries with the greatest compassion and care, the benefits of the best available science, and treatment and support that make them partners in their own healing.

The following are key new programs and initiatives for service members and their families.

Healthy, Fit and Protected Force

The DoD has produced the lowest disease non-battle injury rate in history, measuring its performance in immunizations, mental health referrals, individual medical readiness and suicide rates.

Physically and emotionally prepared forces have an overwhelming advantage in facing mission challenges.

Healthy and Resilient Individuals, Families and Communities

Since 2004, the TRICARE managed care has improved portability, claims processing and access to quality care. DoD streamlined its regional contracts, resulting in fewer administrative problems for beneficiaries.

The MHS also is playing a key role in decreasing the stigma of seeking mental health care. Combat stress control and mental health care are available in theater. In addition, mental health services are available for all Service members and their families before, during and after deployment.

The TRICARE Reserve Select benefit, first made available in 2005, is available worldwide to most Selected Reserve members (and families) when not on active duty orders, or covered under the Transitional Assistance Management Program.

Casualty Care

Many lives have been saved that would not have been had they been presented to a stateside trauma center. For example, in 2007, an insurgent stabbed Army SGT Dan Powers in the head. Through a handoff from an Army helicopter to an Air Force theater hospital at Balad Air Base, then a non-stop miracle flight from Balad to Andrews Air

Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force photo Michael Sullens



Air Force doctors from the 59th Surgical Specialties Squadron restore a patient's sight by performing an artificial cornea transplant at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

“The Army, Navy and Air Force moved the world to save one man’s life.”

— Army SGT Dan Powers,

after being rushed from Iraq to the

National Naval Medical Center for lifesaving surgery

Force Base, SGT Powers was safely rushed to the National Naval Medical Center for lifesaving surgery.

Other measures of success include post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) follow-up care rate; mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) engagement rate and amputee functional re-integration rate. Amazingly, 17 percent of Service members with a limb amputation remain on active duty.

TRICARE Pharmacy Program

To simplify the pharmacy benefit, DoD consolidated its retail and mail-order operations under the **TRICARE Pharmacy Program**, which will begin dispensing services in 2009.

The online **TRICARE Pharmacy Data Transaction Service** reduces dangerous drug-to-drug interactions, prevents overmedication and flags orders of one drug obtained from multiple sources. PDTS marked its 1 billionth transaction in June 2008.

Traumatic Brain Injury

With a new focus on Traumatic Brain Injury, the MHS launched the Defense Center of Excellence to maximize opportunities for warriors and families to thrive. A collaborative global network promoting resilience, recovery, and reintegration for psychological health and TBI, the center is to be fully functional by October 2009.

Center for the Intrepid

Built with the contributions of 600,000 Americans, much of the technology found in the new center cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Military Advanced Training Center

In September 2007, the Army opened the Military Advanced Training Center at Walter Reed to offer rehabilitating Service members the



Photo courtesy of Defense Imagery

Many lives have been saved that otherwise would not have been had they been presented to a stateside trauma center.

latest in cutting-edge equipment to help with their recovery and support the goal of returning service members to duty.

Base Realignment and Closure

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure law recommends the closure of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, which will be replaced by the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center located at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. The groundbreaking ceremony for the future 345-bed facility was held on July 3, 2008.

BRAC 2005 also recommended the consolidation of the Wilford Hall Medical Center and Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio into one medical region with two integrated campuses. These BRAC actions are scheduled to be completed by September 2011.

The Department feels so strongly about the importance of health care as a major quality of life factor that it is included as a core mission of the DoD.

Special Needs Initiatives

VISION

That DoD families with special medical or educational needs have access to reliable information about accessing services in their communities.

THE DOD HAS RESPONDED to the challenge of increasing information for military families about services in their communities that are available to individuals with special needs.

The *Military OneSource* website (www.militaryonesource.com) provides families with articles about different types of disabilities, information about the *Exceptional Family Member Program*, and information about advocacy and eldercare, as well as valuable resource guides.

Our efforts include the *DoD Special Needs Parent Tool Kit*, an online manual available on the *Military OneSource* website (www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil). The Tool Kit provides comprehensive information about services available to individuals with special needs, from birth through adulthood.

Additionally, the Tool Kit provides families with information on where these services are provided, eligibility criteria, and ways to access services.

We have also established a “train the trainers” program to help get the word out. *The Facilitator’s Guide for the DoD Special Needs Parent Tool Kit*, published in January 2008, gives service providers the tools to teach each of the modules contained in the *DoD Special Needs Parent Tool Kit*. It contains a brief for military leadership describing the challenges faced by military families with special needs, as well as details about military programs, such as the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) and other resources.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

A military child watches a Thunderbirds air show put on for the Make a Wish Foundation.

Also found on *Military OneSource* is a searchable directory of programs and services on **Military Installations** worldwide. Within the Military Installations section is **Plan My Move**, which helps families with special needs by providing special needs travel and arrival checklists.

HOMEFRONTConnections, launched in January 2008, is a virtual community specifically for the military special needs/EFMP population. Families can access the site via any of the web pages on Military OneSource.

The site provides military families with special needs with a place to connect and communicate with each other via discussion forums, private messaging or email. Families can also create their own blogs.

The Department is committed to ensuring that families with special needs are able to receive the help they need, wherever they are and whenever they need it.



Photo courtesy of ??????????

DoD's Exceptional Family Member Program provides resources and help to family members with special needs.

The Military OneSource site provides military families with special needs with a place to connect and communicate with each other via discussion forums, private messaging or email. Families can also create their own blogs.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines

Military OneSource Initiatives

VISION

That military families maintain a sense of community, with access to help and assistance any time of the day or night.

TO WEATHER THE DEMANDS of military life, service members and their families need ready access to quality of life information, both locally and military-wide. In an increasingly technological and mobile world, this means information needs to be available 24/7, telephonically as well as online. Multiple strategies enable us keep in touch with, as well as respond to, the needs of military families.

The Military OneSource Center, along with the Military OneSource 24/7 Call center and website, provide the scaffolding for our outreach and support.

To foster community, we are building blog capability so that troops and families can support each other and have access to a virtual community.

A recent innovation, TroopTube, allows families to connect with one another through video vignettes, similar to YouTube.

Finally, research surveys (detailed in the research section of this report) allow service members and spouses to tell us what they need which gives us insight into how to build better programs.

Military OneSource Call Center and Interactive Web Site

Launched in 2002, **Military OneSource** provides support services 24/7 to active duty, Reserve and National Guard military members and their families worldwide. The program is one of the Department's resounding successes, proving especially useful in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Keeping in contact with deployed loved ones is absolutely essential to our military families.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Reserves

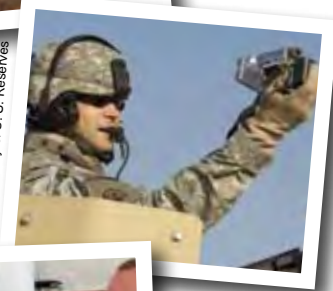


Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force



Military service members call home to their families on Mother's Day. Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



Military OneSource offers free, convenient access to confidential resource and referral support for service members and their families. When a service or family member calls or emails, a master's-level consultant provides assistance. The program is especially beneficial to those geographically separated from installation services, or to those who are unable to seek assistance during traditional working hours.

An interactive website (www.militaryonesource.com) offers locators for education, child care, and elder care; financial calculators; webinars; and relocation tools. It also provides online access to consultants, educational materials, articles,

CDs, booklets, and organizers on subjects ranging from finances to parenting to combat stress.

Services by phone (1-800-342-9647) include personalized consultations on specific issues such as education, special needs, and finances and customized research detailing community resources and appropriate military referrals.

Face-to-face counseling sessions focus on issues such as couples' concerns, work/life balance, grief and loss, adjustment to deployment, stress management and parenting.

Telephonic counseling sessions are available for short-term problems such as stress management, work/life balance and parenting.

Blogs with Families

This new facet of our communications strategy allows families to work together and be a resource for each other. Interactive communications facilitate the sharing of information among military families, as they share experiences and the wisdom learned from having "been there, done that."

Blogs also serve as a virtual two-way communication – allowing the Department to post information in real time while providing insight into what the military community is going through and thinking in the here and now.

Outreach Services

Service members and their families face different challenges across the deployment cycle: pre-, during-, and post-deployment reunion.

To reach out and address these distinct needs while providing trusted information about quality of life issues is a key part of our communication with the military community. The Military OneSource Center Source was created to serve as the umbrella organization for joint outreach efforts which can be mobilized at the local level around deployments.

By offering outreach services such as financial counseling, non-medical counseling and respite child care, the Center ensures that there are a range of resources in place to help families maintain their quality of life even while managing the demands of the deployment period.

TroopTube

TroopTube is the new online video service designed to help military families connect and keep in touch, even if they are thousands of miles apart. It is sponsored, powered and housed by Military OneSource.

The *TroopTube* service is designed to help troops network and build morale, fostering connections with family and friends, which can serve as a source of emotional support. It is built for easy use, so users can quickly upload videos. However, videos and comments are screened before posting by *TroopTube* administrators.

As a part of Military OneSource, *TroopTube* is void of commercial advertising, can be screened for security and appropriate content and is provided at no cost to service members or their families.

Post a video on
MilitaryOneSource.com



Surveys of Troops and Families

The Department of Defense collects input from thousands of service members each year in the form of surveys. These provide the basis for understanding what is taking place across all services, and help us target our efforts to what families across DoD need.

Just as importantly, we survey spouses once each year to get their perspective on how military life impacts those who serve from the home front – the spouses who must relocate and maintain a career, the children who endure the repeated absence of a parent, the parent who becomes a de facto single parent during deployments.

All of the surveys provide a window into how programs are used, and what more may be needed to build strong military communities that enjoy a good quality of life.

Further information on the surveys is included in the Research section of this report.

Liaison With States Initiatives

VISION

That state-level policies not disadvantage military families based on the mobile nature of military life.

MANY OF THE ISSUES that can influence the quality of life of service members and their families are tied to statutes and policies of state governments.

The key issues that reflect increased emphasis on caring for the Guard and Reserve members and families, recognition of the barriers active duty families experience as a result of the military lifestyle, the special needs of severely injured veterans, and personnel and readiness initiatives that can best be implemented by state governments.

Governors and state legislators have responded favorably to the needs of Service members and their families. For example, states are providing over twice as many benefits (1,150) to Guard and Reserve members, veterans, and families in 2008 than in 2004. Forty-nine states provide in-state tuition while military families are assigned to their states and 36 (up from 19 in 2004) continue to provide in-state rates to family members when the service member is reassigned.

Two issues have developed into multi-state approaches. The ***School Transition of Children of Military Families*** issue has evolved into an Interstate Education Compact. The ***Predatory Lending*** issue has developed into a working relationship with state governments to enforce a federal regulation written by the Department at the direction of Congress. (See page 59 for more details on predatory lending initiatives)



Governor Kathleen Sebelius made Kansas the first state to sign the Education Compact. Eleven states have currently enacted the Education Compact legislation into law.

“Quality education is a primary quality of life concern. In fact, education is so important that it directly impacts military recruitment, satisfaction with assignments, readiness and, ultimately, retention.”

— David S.C. Chu, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children

The **Education Compact** addresses common problems that affect military students as a result of frequent moves and deployments. The Compact was developed by the Council of State Governments in 2006-2007, with input and assistance from 18 diverse agencies and organizations representing school boards, teachers, parents, state legislators, Federal agencies, and state/local government.

States that pass legislation and sign the Compact agree to work together to adhere to policies that can facilitate the transfer of student records, course placement,



Forty-nine states provide in-state tuition while military families are assigned to their states and 36 (up from 19 in 2004) continue to provide in-state rates to family members even when the service member is reassigned.

Ten Key Quality of Life Issues

1. Care of the Guard and Reserve
2. Severely Injured Support
3. In-State Tuition
4. School Transition of Military Children
5. Spouse Employment
6. Unemployment Compensation
7. Predatory Lending (Revised Criteria)
8. Overseas Voter Assistance
9. Foreign Language Requirements
10. Accessible Support for Military Families

and graduation requirements, and overcome redundant or missed testing, entrance-age variations and other transition issues.

Currently 11 states have approved the Compact. Ten states were needed to make the Compact enforceable in the approving states.

Military families move about three times as often as do their civilian counterparts, and approximately 1.1 million children of military families attend schools other than those sponsored by the Department of Defense. Passage of this interstate compact will have a lasting, positive impact on our military families.

Citizenship Initiatives

VISION

To expedite citizenship applications for non-U.S. citizen members of the Armed Forces.

MORE THAN 39,000 SERVICE men and women have received U.S. citizenship since 9/11. The Department of Defense continues to work closely with the Department of Homeland Security's Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) to expedite citizenship applications for non-U.S. citizens who serve honorably as members of the Armed Forces.

Since USCIS established a special office at their Nebraska Processing Center to expedite military member citizenship applications, more than 55,000 military applications have been processed. The average time to process military personnel citizenship applications has been reduced from an average of 12 months to less than 140 days.

The Department works closely with the Citizenship and Immigration Service to conduct interviews and perform swearing-in ceremonies overseas and aboard ships. Nearly 5,300 military members have been naturalized at overseas ceremonies conducted since October 2004.



The Department of Defense also authorizes emergency leave for service members who need to complete citizenship processing. Non-U.S. citizen service members are given the necessary information to apply for citizenship each time they relocate, as well as prior to any deployments.

At DoD's request, USCIS established a toll-free **Military Help Line** that offers non-U.S. military members and their families direct access to immigration and citizenship services information.

"The United States of America has no greater strength than our newest citizens, who by their service and by their oath have joined forever our country and our effort and our values."

— Ambassador William Braucher Wood, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, at a naturalization ceremony on Memorial Day, May 28, 2007.

The Services provide information to non-U.S. citizen military members about the expedited citizenship program through Military Recruiters and at Military Entry Processing Stations.

Information about the program is disseminated to the media through press releases. Swearing-in ceremonies are publicized, and periodic messages are sent through

command, personnel, legal and public affairs channels. In addition, service personnel/legal websites contain information on application procedures.

The DoD will continue to closely monitor the expedited naturalization process because we firmly believe the naturalization of non-U.S. Citizens serving in the Armed Forces is vital to the Department's mission.

More than 39,000 service men and women have received U.S. citizenship since 9/11.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Department of Defense by Spc. Christopher M. Gayford

One-hundred eighty-six service members sit as brand new U.S. citizens during a naturalization ceremony held at Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Iraq on Nov. 4, 2008.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation Initiatives

VISION

To sustain morale and readiness of service members and their families during deployed operations.

SUSTAINING MORALE and readiness during deployed operations is the essence of Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs. Service members have access to a full spectrum of MWR activities specifically implemented for deployed forces.

Among the recreation and social opportunities offered are cardiovascular and weight equipment,

sports, recreation, reading materials and continuing education support, games, large screen televisions, DVD/CD players, up-to-date video games and game CDs, first-run movies, free Internet e-mail, and phone access.

MWR recreation kits are sized to fit the needs of the deployed unit, with larger locations (and ships) having full fitness centers, libraries, movie theaters, tactical field exchanges, and Internet cafes, to name just a few.

The **ability to stay in touch** is an important component of family well-being. Military spouses indicate that being able to communicate with their service member is a primary factor in being able to cope with deployments. Affordable phone rates ease the burden of deployment, and we've been aggressively working to reduce phone rates.



Photo courtesy of Defense Military Imagery

U.S. Air Force Capt. Stacy Calton, of 332nd Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, records himself reading a story for his kids to email home from Balad Air Base, Iraq. The story room is just one of the features that the base library offers to service members.

Ready? Set. Go! The family of any deployed Guard or Reserve member is eligible to join their local, participating YMCA for free, courtesy of Military OneSource.



Photo courtesy of Defense Military Imagery



A mixture of active duty, civilians, and retired military members stretching together after attending a spin class at Dragon Fitness Center, Aviano Air Base, Pordenone Province, Italy

MWR 2008 Initiatives

Integrate MWR into Joint Family Support Assistance Program

Pursue national partnerships and discounts for troops and families

Provide innovative support to the field through Armed Forces Entertainment and deployable programs: Recreation In-A-Box, Theater In-A-Box, Library In-A-Box, Mobile Canteens, and Free Internet Cafes

Partner with state and local community parks, recreation, and libraries

Provide online information on Installation MWR Programs via "Military OneSource" and Military OneSource websites

Champion and expand Joint Inter-Service MWR programs across the nation

Develop adaptive recreation programs for use in military and civilian communities



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

Participation in recreation, fitness, sports, and cultural arts programs are key to active living, which in turn leads to improved personal health and well-being and helps build strong families and healthy communities.

Service members have free access to the non-secure military Internet by using their military e-mail address, including aboard ships. They also have free Internet access at 610 **MWR Internet Cafes** in Iraq and 43 in Afghanistan. Internet cafes also offer Internet Protocol phone service.

At the same time, MWR programs on military installations continue to support the family members left behind. Computers and Internet service

Marines from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment attended a week of courses held at the base library at Camp Lejeune, N.C., where they learned basic maintenance, safety and vehicle operation of High-Mobility Multi Wheeled Vehicles. The course was designed to help prevent accidents in incidental drivers who are not specifically trained as motor vehicle operators in the Corps.

Photo courtesy of Official U. S. Marine Corps by Cpl. Athanasios L. Genos



at home station libraries and family and youth centers ensure that families can send and receive e-mails from their loved ones who are deployed.

In addition, **Armed Forces Entertainment**, in cooperation with the USO, provides much welcomed celebrity and professional entertainment to deployed forces.

We recognize that participation in recreation, fitness, sports, and cultural arts programs are key to active living, which in turn leads to improved personal health and well-being and helps build strong families and healthy communities. The DoD plans to explore ways to expand the military MWR benefit to those who do not have access to installation MWR programs.

This will include pursuing national partnerships to provide discounts for fitness and other recreation programs.

We are working with many non-profit organizations that provide recreation opportunities, including the National Recreation and Park Association, to partner with state and local community parks, recreation and library departments.

Our goal is to enlist their support in meeting the needs of our military personnel, particularly the National Guard and Reserve members.

Attending to the recreational needs of our service men and women during these stressful times is the driving force behind the Department's MWR efforts.

Casualty Initiatives

VISION

To ensure that families of the fallen receive all benefits and entitlements, as well as immediate, respectful services for a loved one who dies while serving as a member of the Armed Forces.

ASSISTANCE TO THE FAMILIES of the fallen is a top priority for the Department of Defense.

The DoD and the military services provide service members and their families with information and resources to prepare them in the event of the death of a loved one while in military service.

Decisions regarding benefits and entitlements have enormous impact on family members. Therefore, service members are required to periodically review their records and verify the accuracy of emergency contact and benefits-related information on file in their service records.

Required on-file information includes the identification of family members and other persons to be contacted in the event of an emergency, the identification of the person authorized to direct disposition of the member's remains if he/she becomes a fatality, and recipients of the death gratuity benefit and ***Servicemember's Group Life Insurance*** (SGLI) proceeds.

The service member's education regarding casualty benefits begins at the Military Entrance

Photo courtesy of U. S. Army



Warriors Walk is a memorial dedicated to the 414 soldiers and attached units of the 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Air field who made the ultimate sacrifice in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Decisions regarding benefits and entitlements have enormous impact on family members.

Processing Station or applicable officer training academy, when he/she enlists or accepts an appointment into the military service.

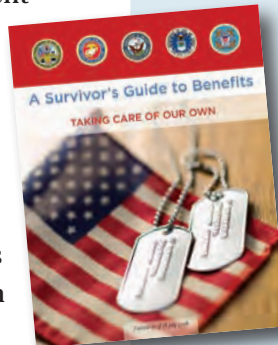
This education and instruction is continued at the individual's first permanent duty station and is reviewed and updated periodically in accordance with individual Service regulations.

A recent initiative increases the focus on ensuring that family members have current information on the various forms which service members complete that significantly impact benefits and entitlements.

Family Support Groups, Key Volunteer Organizations and other command or installation groups that primarily serve military spouses and family members will be the distribution and communication targets for these updates.

DoD believes that service and family members who are better informed on the ramifications of decisions impacting benefits and entitlements are better prepared to manage the casualty assistance process during a painful, stressful time.

In 2006, the Department published "A Survivor's Guide to Benefits, Taking Care of Our Own." This guide is on the Military OneSource website (www.militaryonesource.com) and details the federal benefits available to families of service members who die while on active duty. It includes a coordinated benefit information from the DoD, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Social Security Administration.



For Service casualty staff and military widows, or the primary next-of-kin, the Department created "The Days Ahead, Essential Papers for Families of Fallen Service Members,"

a tool designed to assist families in organizing the paper work that is necessary as a family applies for, and receives, federal benefits as a result of an active duty death.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

The Department places a heavy emphasis on ensuring that service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country receive a respectful service with all honors to which they are entitled.

Voluntary Education Initiatives

VISION

To enhance the personal educational development of our service members and thereby improve recruitment, job performance, readiness and retention.

THE DEPARTMENT'S OFF-DUTY, voluntary education program constitutes one of the largest continuing education programs in the world.

The program, established to provide educational opportunities and tuition support for active duty personnel, funds degrees chosen by the individual service member.

The opportunities provided by the Voluntary Education program motivate service members, increase their self-confidence and positively affect their quality of life. The programs also contribute to the priorities that the DoD has established for recruitment, job performance, readiness and retention.

Each year approximately 450,000 service members enroll in courses leading to high school completion, associate, bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees, along with certification and licensure.

Despite today's deployment challenges, the program goes where our service members go.

Currently there are over 350 Education Centers on military installations throughout the world, to include Iraq and Afghanistan.

Currently there are over 350 *Education Centers* on military installations throughout the world, to include Iraq and Afghanistan. In locations where there are no Education Centers, service members are continuing their learning through the Internet and hand-held delivery systems such as personal digital assistants (PDA) and iPods.

Emerging technology and some very innovative delivery systems allow service members to access courses, instructional programs, certificates and degrees virtually anytime and anywhere.



Photo courtesy of Defense Military Imagery

Photo courtesy of U. S. Marine Corps by Sgt. Stephen D'Alesio



Marines at Camp Blue Diamond in Ar Ramadi, Iraq study together in the new Commander's Library. The library, located in the Truck Company dispatch office, contains Marine Corps Institute books used by marines to learn and brush up on everything from basic infantry and leadership skills to writing essays and using proper grammar.

The Department has a uniform **Tuition Assistance** policy for all active duty members, to include activated Guard and Reserve. Each service member participating in off-duty, voluntary education has \$4,500 per year available, with a \$250 cap per semester hour.

In support of the President's **National Security Language Initiative** and **Defense Language Transformation**, the tuition assistance policy also allows service members to take strategically needed language courses unrelated to a degree.

There were more than 800,000 enrollments in off-duty, voluntary education programs and nearly 40,000 degrees or diplomas earned during FY 2007.

Providing our service men and women with the opportunity to improve their education is an important readiness and retention tool for the Department.

Photo courtesy of Defense Military Imagery



Each year approximately 450,000 service members enroll in courses leading to high school completion, associate, bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees, along with certification and licensure.

Financial Stability Initiatives

VISION

To empower our service members with the tools and information they need to develop individual strategies to address their financial challenges, meet their financial goals, and place them on the path to financial freedom.

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT recently created a dedicated office whose mission is to better address service members' financial readiness needs – the *Office of Personal Finance*.

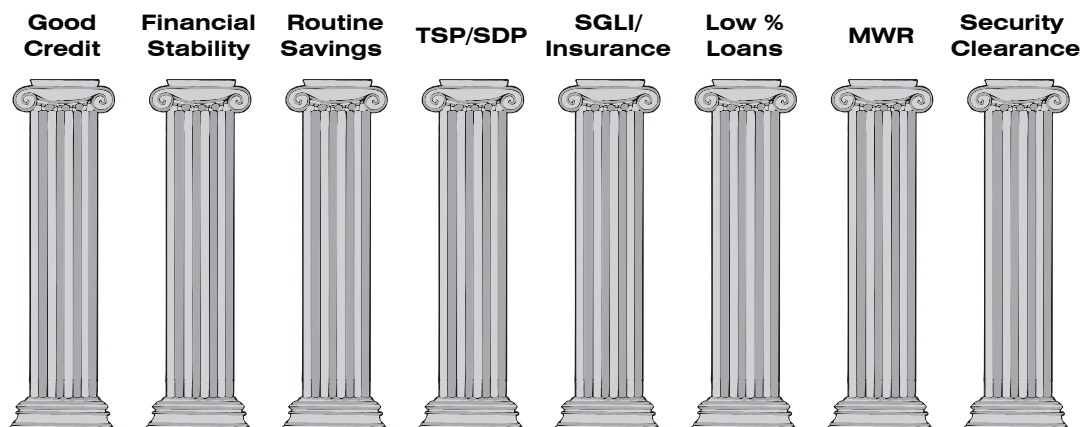
Financial readiness equates to mission readiness, and when the financial needs of the service member and his or her family are met, both the family's overall readiness and the mission itself will most certainly be supported.

DoD Financial Readiness Campaign

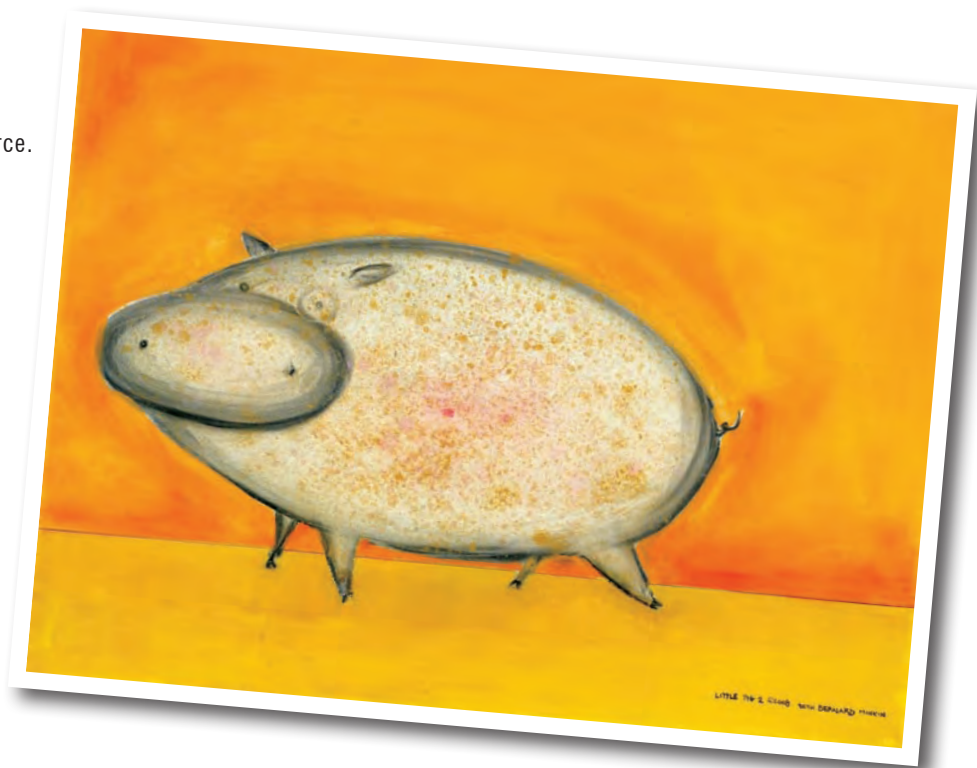
Started in 2003, the DoD Financial Readiness Campaign focuses on financial readiness education, programs, and resources to boost financial literacy. Eight *Pillars of Financial Readiness* represent the Campaign's platform:

- Maintaining Good Credit
- Achieving Financial Stability
- Establishing Routine Savings
- Participation in the Thrift Savings Plan and Savings Deposit Program
- Staying “opted-in” to Service member’s Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and carrying other appropriate insurance
- Utilizing low-cost alternative loan products and avoiding payday/predatory loans
- Taking advantage of low-cost Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs
- Preserving Security Clearances

PILLARS OF FINANCIAL READINESS



Financial Assistance
from Military OneSource.
Pennies count.
Your future.
Your money.
Your decisions.



The Campaign also has resulted in the forging of official partnerships with several key, financially-related non-profits, all of which offer programs and resources to help service members and families. Some of these official Financial Readiness Partners are the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA), the InCharge Institute, the Consumer Federation of America, the Better Business Bureau Military Line, and the North American Securities Administrators Association (NASAA).

Limitations on Predatory Lending

Overwhelming debt can arise for the over-use of credit and lack of planning for emergencies. Some service members have resorted to using high-cost, short-term loans to cover their obligations, further exacerbating any existing issues with debt.

To help address this issue, the Department wrote a Federal regulation designed to limit the availability of high-cost, short-term loans. The Department offers ongoing education on the use of credit and information about resources, such as the Military Aid Societies, banks and credit unions, which have lower-cost loans and counseling available.

Service members and their families have sacrificed much in support of their nation. Therefore, it is the department's duty to provide our troops with the decision-making tools they need to help them with the key financial and transition decision points to assist them in making career and economic security plans.

The new office of personal finance, in partnership with other federal and private agencies, will get us there.

Key Resources of the Financial Readiness Program

Financial Readiness Challenge “Roadshow” Events

The Department of Defense sponsors Financial Readiness Challenge “Roadshow” Events, which can be formally requested by commanders. These events feature presentations from recognized financial personalities and experts, educational workshops, information booths, and private face-to-face financial counseling, all tailored to the need, and all provided at no-cost.

After events, “leave behind” teams of financial counselors can remain to continue to provide face-to-face counseling as needed.

Workshops and clinics include, but are not limited to, such topics as:

- Take Five: *What I Wish I Had Known About Personal Finance*
- Better Than a Budget: *Develop a Spending Plan That Will Keep You On Track*
- The Perils of Plastic: *Avoid Drowning in Debt... Charge Wisely!*
- Dream Big - Plan Now! *Make Your Ideal Retirement a Reality*
- Pay Yourself First: *Why You Should Sign Up for the Thrift Savings Plan Today*
- Have You Fed Your Pig Today? *Simple Tips for Saving & Investing*
- Ready for Everything? *Insurance Essentials for the Service Member With or Without a Family*
- The Wheels You Want: *Successful Car-Buying Strategies*
- Home, Sweet Home: *Strategies for Home-Buying and Protecting Against Foreclosure*
- You’ve Earned It! *Making the Most of Your Military Benefits*
- Before You Take Off: *Financial Planning for Deployment*
- Don’t Lose It! *How to Protect Yourself Against Identity Theft*

Financial Counseling

DoD has established several avenues to provide service members and families, especially those who may be geographically isolated from a military installation, with opportunities for financial counseling. Service members can now call Military OneSource (1-800-342-9647) and be connected to a knowledgeable financial counselor telephonically, or an appointment can be made for face-to-face counseling with a financial counselor close to the caller’s location. Military OneSource is available 24/7 – 365 days a year, and all counseling is confidential and offered at no-cost to the individual.

DoD has also created a network of “Personal Financial Counselors,” available on-demand through the Military OneSource Center, to provide financial counseling in support of events such as Family Days, Deployment Readiness Workshops, drill weekends, etc.

Military OneSource

Military OneSource offers helpful financial resources both on-line and via the telephone. The official website, www.militaryonesource.com, features helpful financial articles, calculators, free CD’s and DVD’s, chat rooms and bulletin boards, and other resources for virtually any financial issue facing service members and their families, all offered at no-cost and all designed to assist service members with their specific financial needs.



Airmen watch a video at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on how to fill out financial paperwork associated with their upcoming permanent change of station.

financial

Transition Initiatives

VISION

To empower our service members with the tools and information they need to develop individual solutions to the challenges they may face as they return to civilian life.

THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT understands that the successful transitioning of service members from military to civilian life must be a priority. In response, the multi-component Transition Assistance Program (TAP) was created to meet the needs of transitioning service members and their families.

TurboTAP

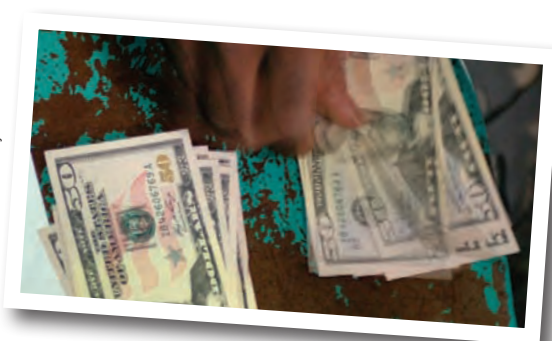
TurboTAP, available at militaryonesource.com, allows each service member to obtain a lifelong account and a tailored individual transition plan based on their transition needs. It can also connect them to information on military and veterans benefits, many of which have significant cash value. Examples of such programs include the Montgomery GI Bill, the Thrift Savings Plan and the Savings Deposit Program.

TurboTAP better meets the needs of National Guard, reserve and active-component service members and their families because the website gives them the tools to connect and access the information to meet their needs when they are ready — now or in the future.

TurboTAP augments Service efforts in providing relevant and useful information to service members and families which they can consult before, during, and after their transition.

TurboTAP allows each service member to obtain a lifelong account and a tailored individual transition plan based on their needs.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Army



Key Components of Transition Assistance Program

Tap is a multi-component program, consisting of coordinated efforts across the departments of defense, labor, and veterans affairs.

Mandatory Pre-Separation Counseling. Counseling introduces information about employment opportunities and how to go about finding a job.

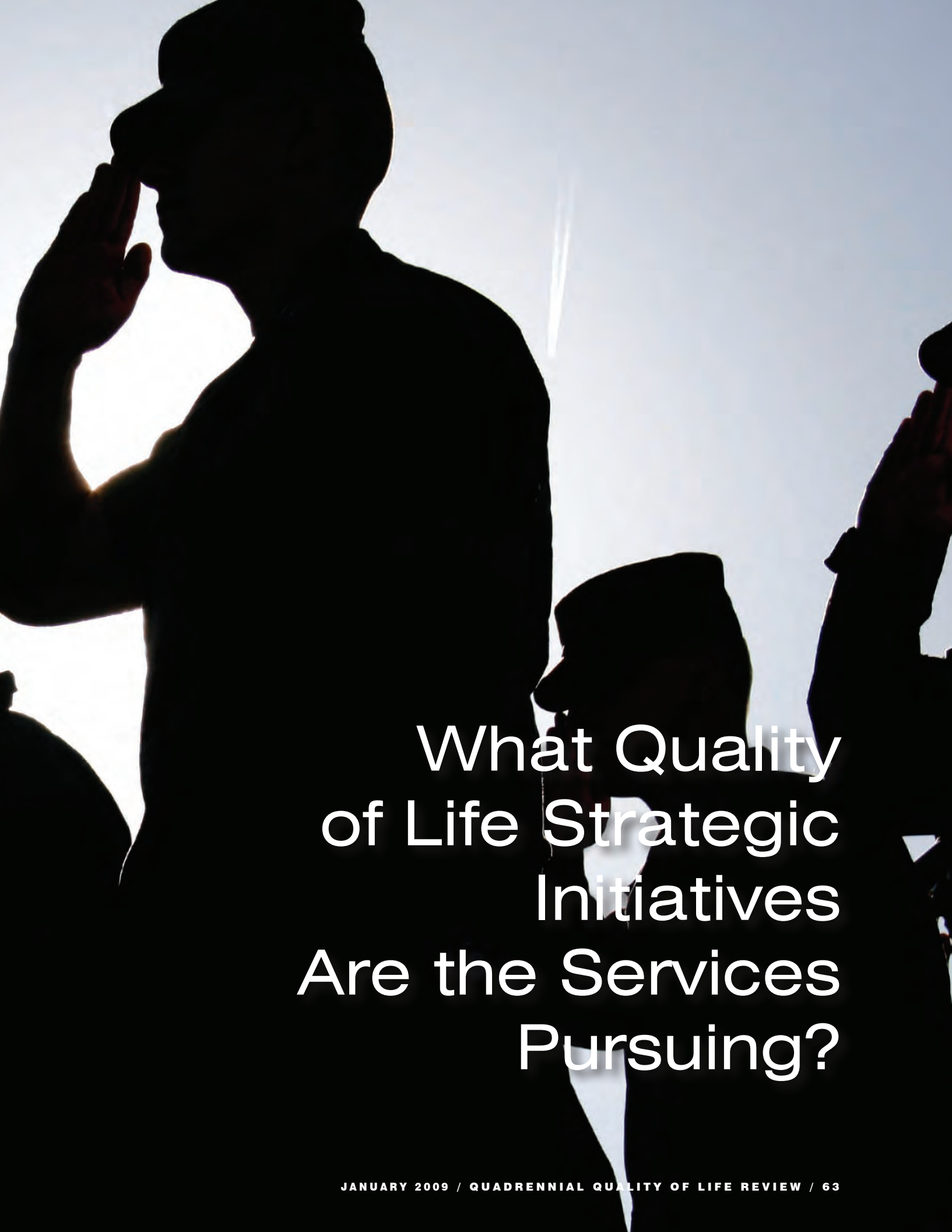
Department of Labor Employment Workshops. Service members and spouses receive information about labor market conditions, and the skills needed for a successful job search.

Veterans Affairs Benefits Briefings. These address education and training, healthcare, home loans, life insurance, vocational rehabilitation and employment, disability benefits, burial benefits, and dependents' and survivors' benefits.

Disabled Transition Assistance Program. This program, managed by Veterans Affairs, is for service members and veterans who have a service-connected disability, or an injury or illness that was aggravated by military service. The program addresses reemployment and independent living services.

transition



The image features a high-contrast, black and white silhouette of a crowd of people. The background is a bright, almost white light, which makes the dark shapes of the individuals stand out. In the foreground, a large silhouette of a person is shown in profile, facing right, with their right hand raised to their forehead in a gesture of contemplation or shielding their eyes. To the right, another person's silhouette is partially visible, also with their hand raised. In the background, several other silhouettes are scattered, some with hands raised, suggesting a public gathering or a moment of collective expression. The overall mood is one of thoughtful observation or shared experience.

What Quality of Life Strategic Initiatives Are the Services Pursuing?

Army Key Initiatives Supporting Troops and Families

MANY INITIATIVES HAVE BEEN put in place to ensure that soldiers and their families have the support they need to weather long separations and demanding deployments.

The Army has created flexible support systems to respond to needs as they develop, wherever they develop. Examples include the Mobile Assistance Teams and Virtual Family Readiness Groups, explained later in this section.

Support services can be accessed by families and soldiers at any time, from any location, through the Military OneSource. Financial readiness and spouse employment programs provide needed help to bolster the financial viability of the family.

Several programs exist to help military youth with military moves and parent deployments. Child care, both regular care and respite care, have been expanded to meet the needs of deployed soldiers.

Finally, the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Command initiatives have contributed significantly to improved quality of life, enhanced mental and physical fitness, and reduced stress for Active and Reserve soldiers and their Families, both at home station and when deployed.

Programs for Family Members

The **Army Family Action Plan (AFAP)** creates a link between the soldiers, retirees,

Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston was sworn in as the 13th Sergeant Major of the Army on January 15, 2004.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army

“Child care and youth programs are consistently rated by soldiers as important to their family’s quality of life, and heavily impact their decision to remain with the Army team.”

— Sergeant Major Preston’s statement to the House Committee on Appropriations’ Subcommittee on Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs, February 12, 2008.

Department of the Army Civilians, families and leaders.

Among the key legislative changes were the mandatory reinstatement of health benefits for Reservists post-mobilization, the expansion of VA education benefit use to 20 years for surviving spouses, and full Basic Allowance for Housing for Reserve Component soldiers on active duty for more than 30 days.

The Army Integrated Family Support Network links Army and community resources to ensure that soldiers and families know where to go to get support, in person, over the phone, or

by using the Internet. They receive the same level of support, regardless of location or component.

In early 2004, the **MyArmyLifeToo** web portal (www.myarmylifetoo.com) was launched to provide a premier source of information to the Army family. The site highlights family program services and is written in language familiar to family members, rather than in Army terms. Links are provided to key Army and DoD websites which feature benefits and family services.

Key components of the portal include the Volunteer Management Information System and the Virtual Family Readiness Group site.

The **Volunteer Management Information System** gives family members the ability to find volunteer opportunities. The **Virtual Family Readiness Group** links the deployed soldier, the family, the family readiness group leader, the unit commander, and the rear detachment to their own web system to facilitate communication and provide a sense of community.

“The readiness of our all-volunteer force depends on the health of the families. I can assure you that your Army leadership understands the important contribution each and every one of you makes.”

— Secretary of the Army Pete Geren

To date, there are more than 1,000 operational unit sites, with more than 81,000 registered users.

Soldier Family Assistance Centers provide critical support services at 32 Army installations to Warriors in Transition and DoD Civilians who have sustained injuries in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

Services are tailored to foster physical, spiritual and mental healing. **Virtual Soldier Family Assistance Centers** link the Warrior and his/her family, regardless of their geographic location, to a variety of services.

Army Spouse Employment Partnership

This program currently includes 31 partners from the private sector, the military, and the federal government.

The partners include Adecco, Affiliated Computer Services, Inc., Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Army Career and Alumni Program, Army Civilian Personnel Office, AT&T, BellSouth, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Bright Horizons, Computer Sciences



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army

The New Parent Support Program increased home visitor staffing levels at both U. S. and overseas installations.

Youth Programs

The Army has adopted a variety of programs aimed at the children of military service members.

Student2Student Program

Student2Student is a school-based, student-run sponsorship program for military-connected high school youth. *Student2Student* provides on-site orientation and activities during the critical first two weeks in a new school, and is designed to help transitioning students integrate quickly and smoothly into their new school community.

The initiative will expand to serve middle school youth with *Student2Student Junior*.

4-H/Army Youth Development Project

Army Child and Youth Services has maintained its partnership, initiated in 1994, with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and 14 land grant universities. The program provides garrisons and geographically-dispersed families with a wide variety of support, ranging from youth technology labs and helping deliver outreach services through *Operation: Military Kids* to individual 4-H Clubs on installations and professional development training of child and youth staff.

In 2006, the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project received the Secretary of Agriculture

(continued on the next page)

Photo courtesy of Defense Imagery



Corp., Concentra, Inc., CVS/pharmacy, Defense Commissary Agency, Dell, EURPAC Service, H&R Block, Home Depot, Humana Military Healthcare Services, Kelly Services, Lockheed Martin, Manpower Inc., RGIS, Sabre Holdings/Travelocity, Sears Holdings Corp., Social Security Administration, Sprint, Starbucks Coffee Co., Stratmar Retail Services, SunTrust Bank, TJ Maxx, Toys R Us, and United Services Automobile Association.

Corporations sign an agreement with the military pledging their best efforts to improve spouse employment opportunities. As of September 30, 2007, Army Spouse Employment partners have hired over 23,460 military spouses.

Army Spouse Employment Partnership Small Business Initiative

Because of Army transformation and joint basing, this program works with spouses within, or

close to, the installation, regardless of component and location.

To support joint basing, the employment readiness program managers extend their efforts to their counterparts in the Air Force, Marine and Navy. In 2006, more than 96,000 Army family members were referred to jobs.

The Army also participates in a number of DoD-wide programs.

The **Exceptional Family Member Program** works with military and civilian agencies to provide comprehensive and coordinated community support, housing, educational, medical and personnel services to families with special needs.

The **Exceptional Family Member Program Respite Care** provides temporary rest periods for family members responsible for regular care of persons with disabilities.

Honor Award for collaboration of Federal agencies, using public resources wisely and meeting critical challenges facing Americas' children as their parents are deployed.

Army School-Age Programs in Your Neighborhood

This program offers school-age care to off-post families living near a participating installation with quality, affordable before and after school care options. Families pay reduced fees, comparable to those charged on post. This initiative is a supplement to, not a substitute for, Army-operated, on-post, school-age care.

Army Teen Panel

Teen Panel members serve as the "voice of Army youth" and meet regularly with Army senior leaders. In 2004, Army Teen Panel membership was expanded to include Guard and Reserve representatives. Army Teen Panel members also participate in Army Family Action Plan Conferences to present and provide feedback on issues impacting military youth.

The Army Teen Panel will increase membership by adding a youth representative of a wounded warrior and of a fallen soldier.

Deployment Support for Garrisons

Army Child and Youth Programs have offered, on average, about 500,000 hours of deployment support child care each year.

Deployment support child care services included extended duty care beyond the normal duty day at no cost; extended hours of operation for special openings and events; on-site group care

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Qualifying families are eligible to receive up to 40 hours of EFMP respite care monthly for each certified exceptional family member. Future direction includes implementing a centralized network of respite care providers and special

needs camps/enrichment programs for persons with disabilities.

The **New Parent Support Program** increased home visitor staffing levels to approximately 130 Home Visitors at both U. S. and overseas Installations. The program targets first-time expectant parents, as well as parents with children under three years of age who have been assessed to be at risk for child maltreatment and/or domestic violence.

In conjunction with Cornell University, the Army finalized and dissemi-

DoD places a heavy emphasis on programs that assist transitioning service members and their families.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Army



for command/reunion hourly care; additional non-reimbursed meals; and transportation to facilitate access to child and youth programs.

Since the inception of child care deployment support in 2003, approximately 3 million hours of care have been provided to Army families.

Army Family Child Care Online

Army Family Child Care Online (www.armyfcc.com) provides a virtual tour of family child care homes for parents seeking home-based care for their children. This website allows family child care providers to showcase their homes and services and Army staff to monitor and fill child care vacancies.

The initiative will expand to encompass Army-sponsored off-post homes.

Operation: Military Child Care

Operation: Military Child Care is an Army-sponsored, community-based initiative that locates child care options and subsidizes child care fees of children of geographically-dispersed Active Component, National Guard, and Army Reserve families while the soldier parent(s) are deployed.

Operation: Military Kids

Operation: Military Kids (www.operationmilitarykids.org) is an Army-sponsored, community-based initiative that creates community support networks of youth serving organizations (e.g., 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs) for military youth “in their own backyards” when soldier parents are deployed.

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Photo courtesy of Defense Imagery

nated a *New Parent Support Program Manual* in FY 2006.

The following year, the Army initiated new Army Community Service New Parent Support Accreditation Standards to ensure standardization and consistency.

Military OneSource

Military OneSource supplements existing family programs by providing a 24/7 toll-free information and referral telephone line and Internet web-based service available to Active Duty, Guard, Reserve soldiers, deployed civilians, and their families worldwide.

If there is a need for face-to-face counseling, Military OneSource provides referrals to profes-

A soldier is greeted by his family after returning home from a deployment to Iraq.

Core program elements include *Youth to Youth "Hero Packs"*, *Mobile Technology Labs*, and *"Speak out for Military Kids"* ambassadors.

Youth Technology Labs

There are 197 Youth Technology Labs located in garrison school age and youth centers. These Labs are a deployment support initiative to increase youth communication with deployed parents. Labs are comprised of seven to 15 computer workstations with a printer, scanner, and digital video camera.

Mobile Tech Labs are a core component of the *Operation: Military Kids* program and are designed to be packaged and shipped to an area where Army families do not live near an installation.

The initiative will continue to expand and will focus on support of homework centers to assist children and youth with deployed parents.

Child and Youth Services Transition Mobile Team

The Army Child and Youth Services Transition Mobile Team initiative is designed to meet garrison child and youth staffing shortfalls created by deployment, Army Modular

(continued on the next page)

Photo courtesy of U. S. Army



sional civilian counselors for assistance in the U. S., Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam. In overseas locations, face-to-face counseling is provided via existing medical treatment facility services.

Military OneSource also supports local deployment and reunion events.



Military Family Life Consultant Program

The *Military Family Life Consultant* program augments existing military support services by providing non-medical, short-term problem-solving counseling services. It addresses military lifestyle challenges and helps soldiers and their families cope with normal reactions to stressful/adverse situations created by deployments and reintegration.

The goal is to prevent family distress by providing education and information on family dynamics, positive coping mechanisms, parent education, available support services, and the effects of stress.

The Military Family Life Consultants work within Army Community Service on an active duty installation to support units, rear detachment commanders, chaplains, soldiers and their families during pre-deployment and post-deployment.

Military Spouse Job Search

The Military Spouse Job Search website is a link to employment opportunities and a career and employment information center for military spouses.

The website (www.msjs.org) was launched with a Department of Labor web portal for

SERVICE QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVES - ARMY

Force, Global Defense Posture Realignment, Base Realignment and Closure, and contingencies such as natural disasters.

A centrally-managed cadre of qualified Army employees volunteer in advance to be assigned, on short notice, to installations lacking staff in order to meet existing child care and youth program demands.

The Transition Mobile Team assists in the opening of new facilities as the Army continues its robust acceleration of child and youth programs to meet increased demand.

Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood

This program offers an Army-affiliated, community-based child care option off post to families living within the catchment area of a participating installation. Families pay reduced fees, comparable to those charged on post. This initiative is a supplement to, not a substitute for, Army operated on post care.

The initiative will increase the number of available child care spaces. **END**

Photo courtesy of U. S. Army



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army

military spouses to search for jobs and post their resumes. It is also a portal for military-friendly corporations to track military spouses to fill their company's personal needs.

Programs for Service Members

Army Volunteer Corps

The **Installation Volunteer Program** offers training and resources to educate other volunteer leaders.

The **Volunteer Management Information System**, an online system to recruit volunteers and maintain volunteer personnel records enables volunteers to access their records or find volunteer opportunities throughout the world and simplifies reporting requirements for program managers.

Fitness Equipment in Support of OEF/OIF

Between FY 2004 and FY 2007, the Army funded fitness equipment at over 75 sites in support of OEF/OIF. Army Fitness Deployed Guides and exercise bands have been distributed to over 750,000 deployed soldiers since 2004.

The Morale Concerts Program funded more than 40 productions in 2008.

In FY 2007, ***Fitness Anywhere TRX Force Systems*** were distributed to select deployed Special Forces units to give them a capacity for a full body workout. In addition, fitness equipment has been distributed to more than 52 installations to assist in reducing the stresses of deployment for soldiers and their spouses.

Better Opportunities for Soldiers

The Army's ***Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS)*** program is designed to be the collective voice for single soldiers through the chain of command.

In FY 2007, the ***Better Opportunities for Soldiers Deployment Support Program*** was created to provide funding for equipment, programs and events in locations that support the single soldier in the various stages of deployment (Pre-During-Post).

High adrenaline activities (paintball, rock climbing, mountain biking, scuba diving, and whitewater rafting) that replace the adrenaline rush of combat are offered to single soldiers to help manage deployment stress.

Future plans include continuing a deployment support program, and providing GWOT funding for single wounded warriors to help them participate in recreation and leisure activities.

Wounded Warrior Sports Program

The ***Wounded Warrior Sports Program*** is a goal-oriented sports program for physically disabled soldiers who remain in the Army. GWOT funding will provide both travel and necessary apparel for those selected to compete and represent the Army at sport competitions for physically disabled athletes.

United States Army Entertainment Division

The ***United States Army Entertainment Division*** used GWOT funding to provide live en-

tertainment tours at over 150 locations to deployed soldiers and Joint Forces operations in FY 2004. The next year, community entertainment was expanded to deployed soldiers providing theatre programs at Iraq and Turkey. Soldier entertainers performed at 30 OIF/OEF locations.

In FY 2007, the ***Morale Concerts Program*** provided a series of major name commercial concerts in support of troop homecomings and other deployment related activities. In 2008, the program will fully fund more than 40 productions.



Drawing by Laura Curran, the 6th grade daughter of Army MSG Patrick G. & Hong Curran, while the family was stationed at Camp Humphreys, Korea.

SERVICE QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVES - ARMY

Future plans include taking the Army Soldier Show and USA Express to Iraq and Afghanistan, and continuing to provide commercial entertainment for installations of returning deployed soldiers.

Deployment Support

Recreation and Fitness Kits for deployed units in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Bosnia have been developed.

The Army has also deployed **Electronic Games Kits, Video Messenger Kits** and **Theater-In-A-Box Kits** for deployed (company sized) units, as well as 15 **Service-level Kits** (for battalion sized organizations).

U.S. Army Warrior Adventure Quest

The *U.S. Army Warrior Adventure Quest* is designed to provide adventure activity skill instruction for soldiers returning from deployment. Family members are also welcome to participate in the program.

The program was developed for soldiers who demonstrate a perception of self-invulnerability after returning from combat, and who engage in behaviors to amplify their elevated adrenaline level to levels they experienced in the combative environment.

Outdoor high adventure activities provide safer, structured outlets for attaining this adrenaline. The program introduces or enhances lifetime leisure skills while serving as a deterrent to destructive conduct.

The Warrior Adventure Quest program is currently targeted for 14 garrisons with high rates

The Warrior Adventure Quest program is currently targeted for 14 garrisons with high rates of deployment.

of deployment: Forts Benning, Bliss, Bragg, Campbell, Carson, Drum, Hood, Lewis, Polk, Richardson, Riley, Shafter, Stewart and Schweinfurt, Germany.

Adventure programs approved for implementation include: paintball, scuba diving, mountain biking, whitewater rafting, and rock climbing.

Future plans include expanding the program to serve additional garrisons with high rates of deployment and redeployment.

Expanded Access to Books and Other Library Material

Soldiers have relied on paperback books for relaxation, continuing education and morale since WWII.

The **General Library Information System** provides services for soldiers, civilians, families and the installation libraries that support them. With web access, the library system offers deployed soldiers the same services as those in their home base library.



Photo courtesy of Defense Imagery

Adventure programs approved for implementation include paintball, scuba diving, mountain biking, whitewater rafting, and rock climbing.

Kylee and Justin Copeland, children of Capt. Corbin Copeland, of the 173rd Brigade Support Battalion, present a personalized flag to Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Weatherspoon at the U.S. Army Garrison Bamberg Community Library.

Using the **General Library Information System** through the **My Library** channel on **Army Knowledge Online** (www.army.mil/ako), soldiers can search their library's catalog, borrow materials and research information from a variety of library reference databases.

The General Library Information System went live at Fort Campbell in August 2005 and, as of January 2008, 59 libraries have moved their information to the system. The long-term goal is to provide web-based information systems for all 100 Army MWR libraries.

Types of databases include full text journal, magazine and newspapers, e-books, audio books, practice tests for military and academic achievement, homework help and student resource centers.

These databases will be licensed for **MyArmyLifeToo** so that family members will have easy access.

Playaway Audio Books

Playaways are a newly-developed product, about the size of an iPod that weigh only two ounces and come pre-loaded with an entire audio book, ear buds, extra batteries and a lanyard. They are ready-to-go wherever soldiers go and require no additional computer or electronics products.

The Army sends **Playaways** to Iraq and Afghanistan every month.

Daily emails from soldiers relate how important **Playaways** are to them. Soldiers report that **Playaways** help them relax and provide an escape from the war when they are too tired to do anything else. Chaplains have conveyed that



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army by Terri Hofstette

The Army expanded the financial readiness section of www.myarmylifetoo.com to include financial management classes.

Playaways help their troops unwind enough to get some sleep. The audio books are wildly popular and a tremendous morale booster.

Camp Arifjan Library in Kuwait

The Army Library Program helped establish the Camp Arifjan Library in Kuwait by providing magazine subscriptions and an opening day collection of books and audio/visual materials.

The library continues to function and serve an extremely important role in Camp Arifjan. It also supports three branch libraries and library service at other camps throughout the country.



A quilt made from family photos is just one example of the activities available through the Armed Services YMCA's "Operation Kid Comfort" program.

Deployment Support Programs

When the Army redeployed soldiers from Fort Wainwright, Alaska, to Iraq, immediate efforts began to stand up the Family Assistance Center.

Issues such as winterizing vehicles, ensuring families had enough winter clothes, and coordinating with airlines and tour agencies to refund tickets for celebrations, vacations, and weddings were resolved.

In addition, the Army provided surge support staff and operational support to soldiers and families at Fort Drum, N.Y. The goal was to ensure that soldiers and families were taken care of during the sudden three-month extension of soldiers in Iraq.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army

Taking care of families of deployed soldiers is a critical responsibility for all Army leaders.

The **Hearts Apart Resource Guide Booklet** is distributed for use by families of Active, Reserve and Army National Guard service members, and is also available on the www.myarmylifetoo.com website, where it can be either printed out or downloaded.

Financial Readiness

Over the past three years, the Army has provided financial literacy training, consumer protection information and financial counseling to improve consumer protection for soldiers and families. In addition, the Army facilitated the development of a youth financial education program, which was piloted at six Army installations.

The Army expanded the **Financial Readiness** web section on www.myarmylifetoo.com to provide money management classes and games for youth, consumer awareness, credit reports, resolving consumer complaints, home buying, auto buying, and military benefits.

The Service also coordinated two General Accounting Office reviews (Soldier Bankruptcy and Impact of Deployment on the Financial Conditions of Military Families). In addition, the Army partnered with the National Military Family Association (NMFA) and In Charge to provide **MILITARY MONEY Magazine** to Army Community Services, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and National Guard and Reserve family centers.

The Army is firmly committed to improving the quality of life of its soldiers and their families, and stands ready to commit the necessary resources and time to remain responsive to the needs of the Army family.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army



Photo courtesy of U. S. Army, photographed by Karl Weiszel

Military leaders and family members celebrate the signing of the Army Family Covenant for the U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden at the Community Activity Center on Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

Navy Key Initiatives Supporting Troops and Families

THE NAVY RECOGNIZES a requirement for greater investments in family readiness programs, increasing focus on accessibility, timeliness and quality. The family readiness programs serve a critical need in direct mission support for the mobilization and deployment of military active duty and reservists being called to active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Family Readiness programs and services are centered at the highest levels of Navy leadership because these services support individual and family readiness, as well as adaptation to life in the Navy.

Services include child and youth programs; emergency preparedness; crisis intervention and response; personal/family wellness education; personal and family counseling; financial education and counseling; spouse employment; and deployment support.

Family readiness as a key element in emergency preparedness is a recurrent issue, as we have learned in hurricanes, wildfires and floods

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West assumed his current duties on December 12, 2008.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



impacting Navy communities in recent years. The programs have an aggressive marketing outreach to inform sailors and families of services available in alternate locations, such as training aboard ship, in Navy public-private venture housing areas, in civilian community centers, in schools, in Kuwait, and on other service bases with concentrations of Navy beneficiaries.

“Surge deployments, individual augmentation, and duty in places our Navy has never been, have resulted in a need for even more family support. The programs and initiatives we presently have in place to support our families must continue to evolve as the needs of our families change.”

— Statement of Former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (Surface Warfare/ Fleet Marine Force) Joe R. Campa, Jr. before the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, February 7, 2008.

Fleet and Family Support Program

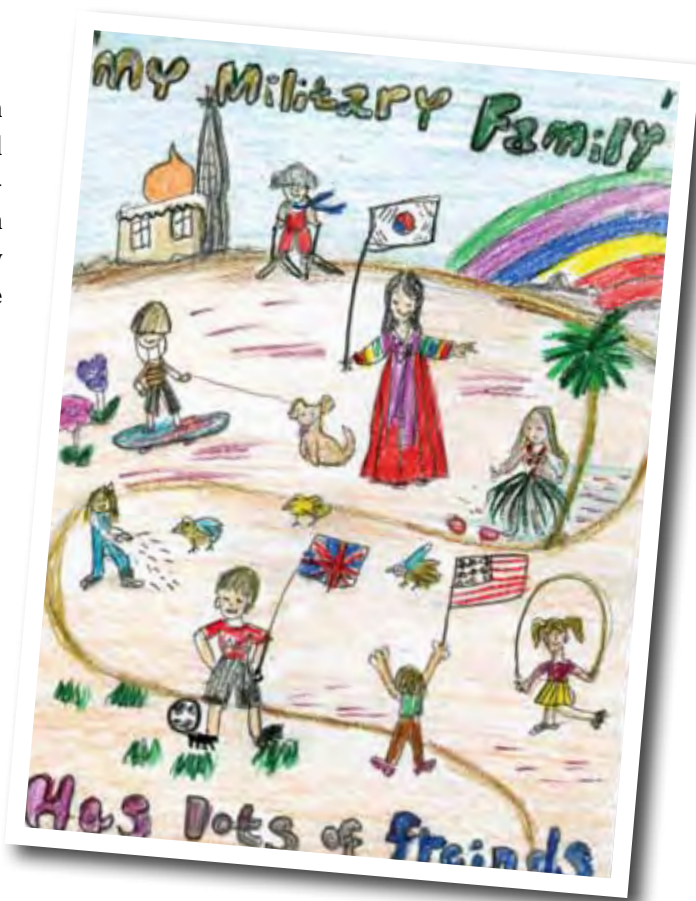
Fleet and Family Support Programs focus on providing increased prevention, education and counseling services to service members and families, with a priority on GWOT. Greater outreach to families is being accomplished at community centers, schools and in public-private venture housing areas, as well as increased partnerships within communities.

The Navy provides brief, solution-focused clinical counseling services and marital counseling to a greater number of family members, including children, and has hired more home visitors to provide home services to at-risk new or expectant parents.

To ensure that Fleet and Family Support Command meets customer needs, staffs have been placed directly within highly operational organizations (e.g. Seals, Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center, and Navy processing sites for Individual Augmentees).

Efforts to jointly provide military spouses with opportunities to pursue portable careers in high-demand, high-growth occupations are on-going.

The Commander, Navy Installations Command announced that the year 2008 is the Year of the Family and that there will be more initiatives to support Navy families.



Drawing by Cheyenne Kwiatkowski, the 2nd grade daughter of Mitchell and Eun Hui Kwiatkowski.

A communication plan is being developed to ensure the Navy family is aware of the services now offered as a result of additional staff. We will continue to challenge ourselves to adapt our services and deliver the best support our sailors and families.

Programs for Family Members

Individual Augmentee and Family Support

There are approximately 13,000 Sailors who are Individual Augmentees assigned to Army and Marine Corps units in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo, Africa, and other sites around the world. These individuals rotate every seven months to one year. Approximately, 40 percent are active duty and 60 percent are Reserves.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Apprentice Luciano Marano



This type of deployment is new for Navy families, who often feel alone and as though they are no longer part of either their command unit or of the rest of the Navy family.

A 2006 *Survey for Spouses of Navy Individual Augmentees* revealed that these families were least satisfied with pre-deployment/mobilization briefings for families; communication with commands, and awareness of information detailing where to get help.

The Navy has worked hard to ensure that mobilization/deployment timelines improve. Fleet and Family Support Programs has tailored standardized briefs and retooled deployment programs to be responsive to the unique needs of individual augmentee families.

To improve understanding of, and responsiveness to, Sailors, families and Navy leadership, Navy developed ***Individual Augmentee Sailor, Family, and Command Handbooks***. The Handbooks are continually updated on the web in order to provide information on individual augmentee deployment preparation, readiness, and reunion issues.

An ***IA Family Connection Newsletter*** is distributed each month to individual augmentee families. Additionally, individual augmentee Information Fairs and “Family and Friends” homecoming programs are offered.

The Navy committed to making telephone outreach contacts to all individual augmentee families to ensure they are aware of services available. To date, about half of family members contacted have asked for ongoing contact and support.

To better support individual augmentee families who do not live near a military installation with access to a computer, the Navy has initiated “virtual” *Individual Augmentee Family Discussion Groups*. Command Ombudsmen are also receiving training on the unique nature of individual augmentee deployment, and the resources available to individual augmentee families.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



Chaplains and family support staff are working and training together as never before. This partnership is resulting in new ideas in areas, such as Warrior Transition training for individual augmentees in Kuwait and complementary homecoming programs for families. Directly contacting families is an ongoing process.

Family Financial Readiness

The financial fitness of sailors and their families is critical to mission readiness. In a 2007 Leadership survey, personal and family financial problems were one of the top five concerns.

The Navy's *Personal Financial Management Program* has received national level recognition and was honored as the 2006 Outstanding Education Program of the Year by the Association of Financial Counseling, Planning and Education. The Navy currently has the highest level of Thrift Savings Plan enrollment of the Services.

To ensure individual and family financial fitness, the Navy Fleet and Family Support Program has increased the number of Accredited Financial Counselors available to work one-on-one with sailors and family members to help them develop financial plans.

The Navy also provides educational programs specifically tailored to family members, as well as partnering with on-base financial institutions, consumer awareness experts and industry leaders to assist with financial fitness initiatives.

Child and Youth is providing financial education classes in the youth centers. Kelvin Boston, best-selling author and host of the PBS television series, "Moneywise with Kelvin Boston," toured Navy installations worldwide, and aircraft carriers to promote "**Moneywise in the Military**" techniques designed to motivate Sailors and their families to decrease debt and increase personal savings.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy, photographed by 3rd Class Matthew Jackson

Cryptologic Technician Technical 2nd Class Charles Myers, assigned to the frigate USS Vandegrift (FFG 48), hugs his daughter after returning home from a deployment.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Damien Horvath/Released



CORONADO, Calif. (Jan. 14, 2009) Fitness instructor Linda Walker leads Sailors, DoD civilian employees, Navy retirees and family members during the step aerobics workout portion at the Naval Air Station North Island gymnasium in Coronado, Calif.

A communication plan has been implemented to increase awareness of the program, and to encourage financial health among Navy families. The Navy is adopting a highly successful, multi-faceted financial program called Million Dollar Sailor.

The Navy will continue to heighten financial awareness by hosting Kelvin Boston at more sites both in the U. S. and overseas in FY 2008. In addition, increased promotion of services to address payday lending issues, identity theft, and other financial issues is continuous.

Family Ombudsmen Program

A strong Command Ombudsman Program helps ensure that families have information necessary to meet the challenges of the military lifestyle, and that commanders have a better understanding of their families' welfare and readiness. Navy ombudsmen serve as liaisons between the command and families.

The 2006 Navy Spouse Survey indicated that less than one-third of Navy spouses knew the

name of their ombudsman. In FY 2007, the Navy undertook a number of initiatives to strengthen, revitalize, and improve its ombudsman program. These initiatives included the establishment of an **Ombudsman Registry** to identify command ombudsmen and distribute timely information.

In the event of a natural or man-made disaster, the registry may also be used by higher authority to facilitate tracking and providing support to Navy families.

Ombudsmen complete monthly worksheets which help commanding

officers stay aware of the pulse of their command families, as well as to help determine what kind of training may be offered at ombudsman assemblies and advanced training.

The Navy is implementing a communications plan to raise awareness throughout the Navy of the importance of the ombudsmen program.

Family Housing Program

Family housing supports readiness by affording sailors and their families the opportunity for suitable, affordable, and safe housing.

By the end of FY 2007, over 95 percent of Navy family housing in the U.S. was privatized. The Navy achieved 100 percent of its goal of funding to eliminate substandard housing by FY 2007. Agreements are now in place, and the last inadequate home is planned to be eliminated by 2013.

The family housing program conducts an annual Resident Satisfaction Survey, which obtains feedback from residents regarding the quality of housing facilities and service they received during their stay in Navy housing. The FY 2007 overall satisfaction score for family housing was 77.9 percent.

Focus groups are being conducted to assess the quality of privatized housing and to determine if changes in Navy policies and procedures are warranted.

A **Housing Check-in Survey** was implemented in FY 2008 to determine what type of housing our military chose, if they were satisfied with the service provided, and whether or not their needs were addressed. The **Housing Assessment Program** was also implemented in 2008 to review the housing office staff, processes and services.

Personal and Family Preparedness

After Hurricane Katrina, the Navy placed a major emphasis on personal and family preparedness designed to mitigate the effect of any event. The Navy designated family assistance as an essential component of the “All Hazards Response Plan.”

The cornerstones of the process are **Operation Prepare** and the **Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System**. The Operation Prepare initiative, a complete campaign toolbox with the theme, “Be Informed, Have a Plan, Make a Kit,” has yielded enhanced personal and family readiness.

The assessment system allows commanders to make strategic decisions which facilitate a return to stability. During the recent Southern California wild fires, the assessment system was quickly activated and successfully served as the mechanism for managing the recovery efforts for families affected during this event.

A mobile team from Fleet and Family Support Programs around the Navy were prepared to fly to the site within 48 hours.

The Navy-wide emphasis on these systems has increased sailor and family awareness regarding preparation for a response to a man-made or natural disaster.

The Navy plans to add 4,000 more child care spaces.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



Child and Youth Programs

To assist parents and children with the challenges of frequent deployments, an additional 100,000 hours of respite child care and youth services are being provided for families of deployed service members. Navy individual augmentees and severely injured families are given priority placement into Navy child care programs.

Navy partnerships and contracts with the National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 4H, Armed Forces YMCA, and others are providing high quality, affordable child care and youth programs for active and reserve members throughout the U.S. who are not living on/around military installations.

Increased capability to support Navy family readiness in child and youth programs includes an expansion plan of 4,000 additional child care spaces utilizing various delivery systems (child development centers, child development homes, 24/7 center/home care).



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

Along with the entire DoD military child care program, Navy child development centers were ranked No. 1 in the country in 2007 for quality in oversight and standards by the National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

Operation Purple Summer Camps

In partnership with the National Military Family Association, the Navy continues to host numerous Operation Purple summer camps which bring together youth who are experiencing some stage of a deployment and the stress that goes along with it. Camps give youth the coping skills and support networks of peers to better handle life's ups and downs.

FitFactor

In an effort to combat youth obesity, the Navy implemented a nationwide youth fitness initiative called "FitFactor," as a means to increase

Frequent military deployments often require military parents to miss much of their children's development.

youth interest and awareness in the importance of healthy choices in life (www.navygetfit.com).

Other services are being tailored to better meet the needs of Navy families who have been disproportionately impacted by the Global War on Terror. For example, school liaison positions have been created to work with school districts and Navy families to ensure that the pressures facing military children are well understood by teachers and school officials.

Frequent military deployments often require military parents to miss much of their children's development. In an initiative to help parents and children with these gaps, Navy child and youth programs are implementing a new technology initiative by equipping programs with the latest in digital portfolio hardware/software.

This will enable caregivers to incorporate digital images/videos into their routine assessments of enrolled children. Parents will then be able to visually monitor the developmental progress of their children while deployed.

Programs for Service Members

Navy Fleet Readiness Programs

Many initiatives support Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR).

Fitness, recreation and leisure equipment and supplies are provided to the Navy personnel on the ground.

Support for ground forces began as deployment kits. The Phase I kit is designed for sites with no electricity and includes a variety of board games, card games, sports items, dart boards, footballs, Frisbees, horseshoes sets, ice chests, jump ropes, assorted puzzles, soccer balls, soft-ball equipment, a hand-held video games and volleyball sets.

Phase II kits include everything in the Phase I kit, plus popcorn machines, a karaoke system, a TV with built in VCR and games jack, PlayStation 2 with games, TV cart, ping pong table and supplies. Laptop computers may be included if connectivity is present. In addition, more than 10,000 gift boxes were distributed by the Holiday Gift Box program.

Cinema at Sea

Since 2004, the Navy has refit shipboard Cinema at Sea equipment packages, providing large screen setups for larger ships and plasma and LCD monitors for smaller decks and submarines. Portable movie program equipment packages, known as Theater in a Box, have been distributed to forward deployed shore units.

Sailors and their families assigned overseas are provided 30 to 35 first-run movies annually at their respective base theaters.

Library Multimedia Resource Centers

Navy personnel serving overseas benefit from refit shipboard Library Multimedia Resource Centers. More than 5,300 pieces of computer equipment, as well as over 260,000 paperback books and nearly 38,000 portable audio books (known as Playaways), have been distributed to personnel on shore and at sea. E-content is made available to sailors via the Navy Knowledge Online portal.

Entertainment Program

The Navy's entertainment program is offered through two components: a live entertainment matching grant program created principally for U. S. bases to increase the number and improve the quality of entertainment, and an overseas program that focuses on overseas activities and deployed ships.

The combined programs have facilitated more than 1,500 shows reaching more than 750,000



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

SERVICE QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVES - NAVY

Sailors and family members worldwide. Overseas entertainment tours (e.g., comedians, musicians, celebrities, sports stars, etc.) are brought to on-shore activities and at sea units throughout the world.

This support is often accomplished in conjunction with the efforts of the Armed Forces Entertainment program. Well-known artists and celebrities have continued to offer their time and services to entertain and otherwise show support for sailors, other military members and their families.

Commanders say this type of MWR support does more to enhance morale and lift spirits than almost any other leisure activity.

Liberty Centers

Liberty is an MWR program that positively impacts the quality of life of single and unaccompanied military personnel and contributes to fleet readiness. The activity is delivered through the work of 80 programs and 66 Liberty Centers.

Liberty provides high-energy recreation programs, quality entertainment experiences and development of personal leisure skills in an alcohol and tobacco-free environment.

Liberty centers are open 365 days a year and offer state-of-the-art recreational experiences. Activities include a variety of special events, classes, trips and outdoor adventure activities.

Over the past four years, Liberty Centers/programs have been continuously improved (e.g., installation of wireless Internet through partnership with the Navy Exchange, improvements to HD television technology and interactive video gaming such as Wii, Xbox 360 and Guitar Hero have created active video gaming zones).

Additionally, renovation projects are continuing (e.g., NAVSTA San Diego, NWS Charleston, NASJRB New Orleans and Whidbey Island). New centers are also being developed at installations including Anacostia, Dahlgren and Patuxent River.

Navy Quality of Life Support to Individual Augmentees at Army Installations

In 2007, the Navy focused on providing quality of life support to Navy individual augmentees at various Army training sites. Many of these sites pose significant challenges, which can be grouped into a few categories: habitability, Internet connectivity, transportation and recreation/fitness support.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Steven J. Weber

Aviation Ordnance Airman Keisha Whitley, sand boards down a sand dune as part of a Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) tour during a recent port visit to Jebel Ali.

To assist parents and children with the challenges of frequent deployments, an additional 100,000 hours of respite child care and youth services are being provided for families of deployed service members.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



The Navy has provided Internet connectivity/WiFi at various Army bases.

Additionally, 15 passenger vans, recreation deployment kits, various electronic game systems (e.g., Xbox 360, Wii, etc.), flat screen televisions, satellite TV service, fitness equipment and portable 8mm movie systems have been delivered to some Army training bases.

The type of support provided is typically available to Navy personnel aboard Navy ships and at almost every ashore location.

Bachelor Housing Program

The Bachelor housing program addresses three goals: implementing the Homeport Ashore program; eliminating permanent party inad-

equated spaces; and ensuring bachelor housing meets today's privacy standards.

To achieve these goals, we rely on the use of privatization authorities, military construction of required facilities (where privatization is not feasible), and community housing (for our single sailors E4 and above).

The Navy has achieved 99 percent of its goal of eliminating inadequate bachelor housing spaces by FY 2007.

The Navy has a programming goal for accomplishing "private sleeping room" by 2016. We are updating and improving our overall referral program to better serve unaccompanied sailors seeking suitable housing during their permanent change of station moves.

Air Force Key Initiatives Supporting Troops and Families

AIR FORCE FAMILY INITIATIVES are centered around children, recognizing the particular needs of families with children of different ages across the deployment cycle.

Programs for Family Members

Air Force Home Community Care

The Air Force Home Community Care program provides free in-home quality child care services to guard and reserve members during their scheduled drill weekends.

Home Community Care helps reduce the Airman's out-of-pocket expenses by providing quality child care services to Guard and Reserve members similar to those available to military members assigned to or living on a military installation.

Air Force Returning Home Care Program

For deploying parents, the Air Force Returning Home Care Program supports Airmen returning home from deployments lasting 30 or more days, as well as for airmen who routinely deploy on a short-term basis in support of contingency operations.

“We owe it to our warfighters and their families to make quality of life improvements for them whenever an opportunity presents itself. They deserve nothing less.”

— Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley, in remarks to Dover Air Force Base Airmen, February 11, 2008.

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley was appointed to his current position on June 30, 2006.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force



Airmen receive 16 hours of free child care upon their return to their home station and their family.

Air Force Family Child Care Subsidy Program

The Air Force Family Child Care Subsidy Program currently saves families an average of \$143 per week by allowing parents to use a family child care home while paying the same weekly fee they would be charged for child care in the on-base center-based programs.

This program is especially good for those parents who have children under the age of three, have special needs children, or work swings or midnight shifts. It also supports spouse career searches by providing up to 60 days of child care when a spouse is seeking employment.

Air Force Mission Youth Outreach

This program is a partnership between Air Force Services and Boys & Girls Clubs of America that provides one year of free membership for youth to attend any local Boys & Girls Club in their community.

This program provides support to youth in families of Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard and Active Duty military personnel who may not live near a military installation.

Air Force Stay Connected Deployment Kits

This program provides children and their parents with a way to maintain a connection and remember each other while they are separated during deployments.

More than 13,000 sets of Air Force Stay Connected Kits that included journals, recorder pens, pins, cameras, caps and backpacks were distributed to children and parents before deployment.

Drawing by Ben Ulrich, the 3rd grade son of Air Force Lt. Col. Marybeth and Mark Elrich, while the family was stationed at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa.



Air Force/4-H State Military Grants

Air Force Services partners with National 4-H Headquarters and Army Child and Youth Services to fund the establishment of 4-H clubs on military installations.

The grants also provide support for youth of National Guard and Reserve members who are geographically dispersed.

This program currently operates in 35 states and is open to any Active Duty, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve young family member whose parent is deploying.

Air Force Youth Camping Program

This program includes a variety of summer camp opportunities designed to appeal to the varied interests of the youth. The Air Force Services Youth Camping program includes residential camps, specialty camps and base specific camp programs. Over 5,000 Air Force youth participated in these camps last year.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

The New Parent Support Program is active at 70 of 79 Air Force installations worldwide.

Prevention/Outreach Program
The Outreach Program goals (also associated with deployment and reintegration) are to:
 Deter Predictable Problems
 Maintain, Enhance and Protect Existing States of Wellness
 Facilitate Desired Quality of Life Objectives
 Promote Respect for Duty...And Family

The Outreach Managers accomplish this through approaches that:
 Inform and Educate
 Foster Empowerment
 Forge Connections
 Build Community Capacity

Goals

There are 79 Family Advocacy Programs on Air Force bases worldwide, and between 7,000 and 10,000 family maltreatment cases are assessed annually. Outreach and prevention services touch an additional 20,000 to 50,000 Airmen and family members.

These programs include services such as early childhood development education, interactive playgroups, parenting education, communication skills training for couples and families, family violence prevention training for leaders, and consultation with leaders and service providers.

The *Prevention/Outreach Program* uses Outreach Managers, who are master’s-level social workers with a background in domestic and child maltreatment and community prevention.

The program’s focus is domestic/partner and child maltreatment prevention, and active duty, family, community and mission readiness.

The program is located at all active duty Air Force bases and is targeted at youth ages 6-18 years, with priority for enrollment to youth with deployed or deploying parents.

Activities in overnight camps are designed to help youth develop their self-esteem and resist negative pressures.

Family Advocacy Program

The *Family Advocacy Program* offers a comprehensive range of services intended to strengthen service members and their families pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. This is done through prevention and interventions targeting domestic abuse and neglect.

Family Advocacy

New Parent Support Program

This program provides assessment, education and ongoing support to families at risk for family violence throughout pregnancy and with children under the ages of three. The primary service is home visits by qualified bachelor’s- or master’s-prepared registered nurses, as well as by master’s-prepared social workers.

“If we do not take care of our people, then we are not taking care of our mission. This is where quality of work life intersects with quality of life.”

— Former Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne, at the Department of Defense Continuous Process Improvement Symposium on May 13, 2008.

A young Air Force family member checks out some military gear during a base Family Day activity.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force



Family advocacy nurses and social workers develop a specific Family Service Plan in collaboration with each family in order to capitalize on strengths, support functioning and reduce risk to all family members.

The *New Parent Support Program* is active at 70 of 79 Air Force installations worldwide. Ser-

VICES are provided in clients' homes both on and off the installations, at Family Ad-

vocacy Program offices and at Air Force and civilian community locations. New Parent Support Program services reach approximately 15,000 Air Force families

per year.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

The **Key Spouse program** is a partnership between Key Spouse volunteers in a unit, organizational leadership, and the Airman and Family Readiness Center.

The volunteers provide a framework for stability and support, especially for the families of deployed Airmen. Key Spouses inform, support and refer family members to the appropriate base agencies, as well as provide follow-up and encourage connectivity and communication.

Mission Youth Outreach is a partnership between Air Force Services and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America that provides a one-year free membership for youth to attend any of the 4,000 local Boys and Girls Clubs in their communities.

Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood is designed to meet the child care needs of members living in areas where on-base military child care is not available. Through this subsidy program, Air Force families pay reduced fees for child care in their neighborhoods.

SERVICE QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVES - AIR FORCE



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Deployment support includes timely attention to the spiritual, medical, financial, legal and child care needs of airmen.

Operation Military Child Care provides child care subsidies for all activated Air National Guard and Reserve members whose children are cared for in state-licensed, off-installation family child care homes.

Air Force Give Parents a Break Program

This program provides eligible parents with a few hours break each month from the stresses of parenting. “Give Parents a Break” provides child care at no-cost to parents who are subject to unique stresses due to the nature of military life — deployments, remote tours of duty, and extended working hours.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force



In the effort to help these families, Air Force Services partnered with the Air Force Aid Society to provide child care for parents referred by base agencies.

The program provides free child care for children and youth ages six weeks to 12 years.

Programs for Service Members

Deployment Support Process

This program provides continuous, integrated support to airmen as they deploy and return, along with aiding in the transition from the deployed environment to family life and the work center.

Established in August 2005, the Deployment Support Process includes pre-deployment education, redeployment education in theater within 30 days of return, 100 percent commander contact with all returning airmen, Post-Deployment Health Assessments (PDHA) within five days of return, redeployment education within seven days of return, and a Post-Deployment Health Reassessment within 90 to 180 days of return.

Deployment support also includes continuous timely attention to the needs (e.g., spiritual,



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

The Landing Gear program is based on the metaphor that, no matter how powerful an aircraft is in the air, properly functioning landing gear is necessary to safely launch and recover.

medical, mental health, financial, legal, child-care, administrative) of airmen.

The key support organizations are the Personnel Readiness Flight, the base chaplains, the Mental Health Clinic, the Military Treatment Facility, the Airmen and Family Readiness Center, the Family Member Programs Flight, the Financial Management Office, and the base Legal Office.

Landing Gear

The Landing Gear program is designed to

provide education and information on a pre- and post-deployment basis.

The program also facilitates identification of airmen suffering from traumatic stress symptoms and connects them with appropriate helping resources.

Landing Gear is based on the metaphor that, no matter how powerful an aircraft is in the air, properly functioning landing gear is necessary to safely launch and recover; effective risk recognition and help-seeking behavior are the functional equivalents of landing gear for airmen.

Marine Corps Key Initiatives Supporting Troops and Families

THE COMMANDANT'S PLANNING Guidance directed that the Marine Corps improve the quality of life for Marines and our families, to include ensuring our family programs have fully transitioned to a wartime footing.

The Marine Corps also is committed to improving the quality of life for single marines.

Rigorous assessments of current programs provided information that allowed us to embark on a revolutionary path to help marines fully achieve their personal and family readiness responsibilities.

The **Marine Corps' Family Readiness Program** improvement plan includes a \$30 million steady-state funding increase to support staffing, updated technology, enhanced support services, and modernized communication processes.

A **Continuum of Care** was also implemented, focusing on meeting medical, educational, respite care and financial assistance requirements of families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program.

In addition to the Family Readiness Program improvements, the Marine Corps executed

Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Carlton W. Kent was appointed to his current position on April 25, 2007.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines

Global War on Terror supplemental funding for **Warrior Family Support** to enhance Marine Corps quality of life and help transition and expand installation and deployed family readiness support capabilities.

Highlights include up to 40 hours of free respite care per month for each exceptional family member; implementation of a school liaison officer capability; and enhanced quality of life support at remote and isolated installations.

“We have to take care of our single marines by ensuring they have exactly what they need at the barracks. We’ve done great things for our families and will continue to do great things, but the single marines are the ones we really need to focus on.”

— Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Carlton W. Kent at a talk given at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., on May 25, 2007.

Programs for Family Members

Enhanced Child Care Support

The Marine Corps developed various child care initiatives to ensure that the youngest members of

the Marine Corps family receive appropriate support, specifically during times of deployment and extended family separations.

The Marine Corps offered expanded child/respite care capabilities through contract provisions for families in emergency situations. Under the extended child care program, care is available 24/7, as needed, in family child care homes with no cost to the parent.

Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood help military families locate, select and pay reduced fees for high-quality child care in civilian communities where they live.

At deploying bases, pre-deployment briefings are provided for children led by our **New Parent Support** staff. In addition, there are “Deployed Kids’ Group” meetings at Youth and Teen Centers for school-age children.

For children who have difficulty adjusting to deployments, the **Operation Hero Program**, in conjunction with the Armed Services Young Men’s Christian Association, targets children from six to 12 years old and provides after-school tutoring and mentoring assistance in a small group with certified teachers.



Drawing by Danielle Jenkins, the 6th grade daughter of USMC MSgt Timothy and Karen Jenkins, while stationed at Parris Island, S.C.

The Marine Corps also has developed initiatives that target care and support for children of activated reservists who are geographically separated.

Programs for Service Members

Support to Deployed Marines

With the current tempo, significant quality of life strategies have been established to ensure a continuum of support during all phases of the deployment cycle: pre-, during-, and post-deployment.

Support mechanisms have been extended to Marines and their families to help put their emotional, financial, and logistical houses in order prior to deployment.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines

SERVICE QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVES - MARINE CORPS



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines

Various child care initiatives ensure that the youngest members of the Marine Corps family receive appropriate support, specifically during times of deployment and extended family separations.

In the pre-deployment phase, support mechanisms have been extended to marines and their families to help put their emotional, financial, and logistical houses in order.

Available services include standardized deployment guide templates with the ability to tailor information for each deployable command/unit; resources to help with problem resolution; an overview of operational and personal security concerns; and information flow to and from the unit.

The Marine Corps continues to provide in-theater support based upon the duration, location, and intensity of the mission. An example would include the expanded role of marines responsible for supporting tactical field exchanges, which provide Marine Corps Exchange-type products such as health and comfort items, DVDs, magazines, and snack foods, recreation gear and implementation of recreation programs.

Additionally, the Marine Corps places a high priority on mobile **Warrior Express Service Teams** that travel to outlying marines at remote

sites in order to ensure that they have access to Exchange items.

To further boost morale and keep marines in contact with home, call centers, cyber cafes for access to email and the Internet, and mail services are available.

Additionally, the Marine Corps launched **MotoMail**, a mail alternative program whereby individuals can access an established website and deliver a letter to deployed Marines in 24 hours or less.

In the post-deployment phase, numerous support services are available through chaplains, medical treatment facilities, and Marine Corps Community Services. These services include counseling for relationship enrichment, drug or alcohol abuse, and domestic violence.

Leaders Guide for Managing Marines in Distress

To help Marine Corps leaders stay attuned to problems that can surface, the Marine Corps created a web-based tool, the “Leaders Guide for Managing Marines in Distress.”

The guide is a quick reference source to help leaders identify troubled marines, respond to their needs with time-sensitive and critical information, and help solve or refer to subject matter experts for approximately 40 behaviors or signs of distress.

Using the guide, our leaders can offer help on a Marine-to-Marine level — the point where greatest influence and ability to assist exists.

Single Marine Program

The Single Marine Program was established to provide a forum for Marines to identify quality of life ideas and issues, and recommend solutions. A constant quality of life issue of single marines is the quality of bachelor enlisted quarters.

The Marine Corps is committed to improving the quality of life for single marines, and has made significant investments to improve quality of Bachelor Enlisted Quarters and eliminate existing space deficiencies and inadequate barracks.

The initiative will ultimately provide \$1.84 billion between FY 2008-2011 for new construction to support pre-Grow the Force end-strength of 180,000 marines.

Combat/ Operational Stress Control

In recent years, the Marine Corps has significantly advanced its ability to prevent, recognize, and take care of adverse combat operational stress outcomes in marines, sailors, and family members.

By partnering with mental health and religious ministry experts, the Marine Corps developed effective and sound tools to aid commanders and staff noncommissioned officers in *Combat Operational Stress Control*.

Combat Operational Stress Control training and education has been made a priority not only for units preparing to deploy, but throughout deployment cycles, as well as in formal career schools for all marines. Training imbues a perspective that combat stress is as deserving of the same respect and care as any physical wound of war.

The Marine Corps is in the process of expanding its **Operational Stress Control and Readiness** program to embed mental health teams as organic assets in operational units. These teams help promote resiliency among marines, sailors, and families, and reduce the stigma associated with receiving early mental health treatment for stress injuries and illnesses.

Wounded Warrior Support

The support to wounded, ill, and injured marines and their families is a critical component of our warrior ethos to “take care of our own.”

The **Wounded Warrior Regiment** was established to achieve unity of command and effort, and to develop a comprehensive, integrated approach to Wounded Warrior care.

The mission of the regiment is to provide and facilitate assistance to wounded, ill, and injured marines and sailors, as well as their family members, throughout their phases of recovery.

This support includes non-medical assistance, benefit information, and transition support, as well as “one process” supporting active duty, reserve, and separated personnel, and “one stop shopping” for resources, referrals, and information.

Retired Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Ron Christmas, president of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, expresses his appreciation to members of the Wounded Warrior Regiment.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines



Reserve Key Initiatives Supporting Troops and Families

THE RESERVE COMPONENT IS a full partner in the Department of Defense's efforts to institutionalize family readiness, family support and other quality of life programs since Operation Desert Storm.

As previously outlined in earlier DoD initiatives, the ***Joint Family Support Assistance Program*** is a pilot program implemented in 15 states to implement an integrated support system that is responsive to the needs of families. The intent is to expand these services to all states and territories.

The Department and the Services operate over 600 Family Assistance Centers throughout the

world to provide family support. Approximately 300 ***National Guard Family Assistance Centers*** have been established to augment the family support system for geographically dispersed families.

The DoD has provided for expanded child care support services through a cooperative effort with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and through child care center at active duty installations.

In an effort to be more responsive to the needs of employers, the Department commissioned a study to look at the economic cost to



The Department commissioned a study to look at the economic cost to employers of mobilized national guard and reserve members.

Approximately 300 National Guard Family Assistance Centers have been established to augment the family support system for geographically dispersed families.

employers of mobilized National Guard and Reserve Component members.

The study will also assesses the varying costs and impacts to employers' operations when Guard and Reserve members are mobilized.

Providing support to the Severely Injured Service Member and to their families is a Deputy Secretary of Defense-mandated effort. Currently a task force is established with the aim to improve the care of severely injured service members and their families.

An operations center has been established to be the primary access for this population. This center provides counseling on benefits, pay, financial planning; and offers assistance with obtaining emergency cash resources.

Agencies within and outside DoD will be asked to provide current services and plans in place to accommodate this effort.

Getting the Word Out

The Department has taken positive action to get the word out about entitlements and benefits available to the Reserve community. Information can be found at www.defenselink.mil/ra/familyreadiness.html.

The "Guide to Reserve Family Member Benefits" is designed to inform family members about their military benefits and entitlements. These include (among other topics) medical and dental care, commissary and exchange privileges, military pay and allowances, and reemployment rights of the service member.

The families of Guard and Reserve service members are making huge sacrifices during the current deployment cycle.

Photo courtesy of Defense Military Imagery



FLY NAVY





Recent Quality of Life Research

Summary of Key Findings From DoD Research

RESearch enables us to offer proven programs which address real needs and promote the strengths of our military families. We know that early childhood is a critical time for healthy development, and that increasingly, families are faced with the demands of earning a living while raising children. Add to the mix multiple deployments, and a high quality, affordable child care program becomes critical for family stability as well as child development.

School-age children also face the challenges of military life, including school transitions when the family moves or the temporary absence of a parent due to deployment. Older children need high quality schools and programs which address their concerns around transitions. Finally, spouses must navigate periods as a single parent. Those who work must be able to find employment that they can make work across the span of their service member's military career. All of this takes place in the context of war time deployments, which demand that

families renegotiate marital relationships and household management.

The good news is that military service members and their families have undergone deployments in ways that show great resiliency and, overall, their marriages have remained intact at pre-deployment levels (*RAND, Karney, 2007*).

For the service members, commitment to the military life remains steady, and the highest levels of commitment are found among married military members with children.

Major DoD QOL Research Sources

- Active Duty Spouse Surveys
- Status of Forces Surveys
- Military Family Research Institute

Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines



The 2008 Active Duty Spouse Survey provides more information about the impact of repeat deployments on family quality of life and commitment to the military.

Service members gain a sense of accomplishment from deployments, which may help explain why frequent deployments have not decreased service member commitment (*RAND, Hosek, 2006*).

Overall, 66 percent of spouses reported that their service member's career plan is to stay in the military until retirement. Those with children plan to stay (71 percent) at a higher rate than service members without children (52 percent) (*Active Duty Spouse Survey, 2006*).

Commitment remains constant and, yet, stress levels have increased since 2003 among service members (*Defense Manpower Data Center Status of Forces Surveys, 2003, 2005, 2007*).

Multiple deploying service members reported higher levels of acute stress, noting that there was more stress on their families and not enough time between deployments (*Mental Health Advisory Team III, 2006*).

While overall military families seem to be coping with the demands of the war, there is variation in how families absorb the stress of a member leaving, re-entering, and leaving again.

In a study of Reservists, researchers found that there are three patterns of return and reintegration; linear (families consistently do well), curvilinear (a substantial dip in well-being and a recovery) and bounce (well-being is generally high, but varies during reunion) (*Military Family Research Institute, 2006*).

Ongoing, systemic service member and family research and evaluation are critical in times of change. As the deployments continue, research can help guide us in best serving those who sacrifice for our country and their families.

Along with social science research on families and quality of life issues, three major sources of



Photo courtesy of U.S. Air Force

While overall military families seem to be coping with the demands of the war, there is variation in how families absorb the stress of a member leaving, re-entering, and leaving again.

data have helped DoD understand the needs of families in the past four years. The sources are outlined below, followed by a discussion of the most relevant findings for Quality of Life issues.

Active Duty Spouse Surveys (2006 & 2008)

The most recent **Active Duty Spouse Surveys** (*ADSS 2006 & ADSS 2008*) covered a wide range of quality of life issues, including financial well-being, effects of deployments on children, spouse employment and education, and feelings about military life. They are the first DoD-wide surveys of spouses since 1999.

As the deployments continue, research can help guide us in best serving those who sacrifice for our country and their families.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM DOD RESEARCH

The surveys include spouses from all services, and provide the richest source of data we have to date about how families are faring across all the services.

Going forward, we will continue to survey active duty spouses every other year.

Status of Forces Surveys (SOFS, 2003-2008)

Three **Status of Forces Surveys (SOFS)** a year poll Active-Duty service members on their overall satisfaction with the military, retention intentions, perceived readiness, stress, tempo and permanent change of station moves. (Two surveys of the Reserve component are also conducted each year).

Conducted by the **Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)**, these surveys allow us to track trends and changes in the quality of life of service members and their families. A rotating set of questions cover quality of life issues, including financial well-being, impact of deployments on children, use of services and

25 percent of junior enlisted spouses reported marital problems during their spouses' most recent deployment.

programs like Military OneSource and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) and, finally, family support for a military career.

Military Family Research Institute (MFRI)

In May 2000, the Department of Defense funded the **Military Family Research Institute (MFRI)** at Purdue University to conduct basic research on quality of life in military families, with particular emphasis on implications for job satisfaction, performance, and retention.

MFRI developed reports, tools and resources that target the issues facing military families of all types. Many of their reports can be downloaded from the MFRI website (www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri/index.html).

The **Commitment Index**, which tracks service member commitment over time, was developed by MFRI researchers and is included in every Active-Duty SOFS survey. The MFRI continues to support research and programs for military families with private foundation money.

Impact of Deployments on Families

For family members, deployments have created new challenges. Candid responses to surveys have helped us to develop programs for families to cope with the stresses of military life.

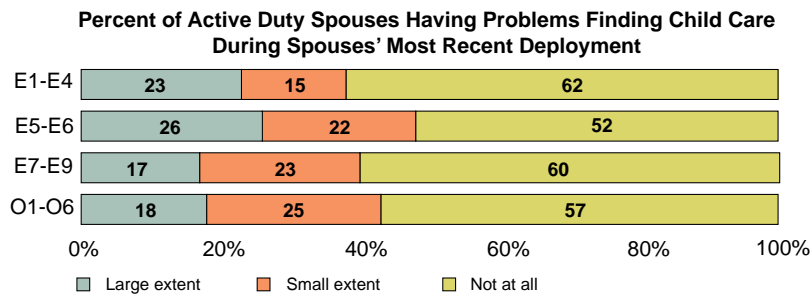
When spouses were asked to rate their current overall level of stress in their personal life, nearly half (46 percent) said they were under more stress than usual (*ADSS, 2008*). This compares to 42 percent of service members (*DMDC SOFS, April 2008*).

Those with children plan to stay at a higher rate (71 percent) than service members without children (52 percent).



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Extent of Problem Caused By Increased Need for Child Care During Most Recent Deployment, by Paygrade



ADSS 2006 Q47o Margins of error range from ±2% to ±3%

Isolation is a concern for spouses while their service member is deployed. This is especially true for junior enlisted spouses, 79 percent of whom identified loneliness as a problem during their service member’s most recent deployment (ADSS, 2008).

One in five (21 percent) of junior enlisted spouses reported serious **marital problems** during their spouses’ most recent deployment.

Feelings of anxiety or depression were a large, or very large, problem for 36 percent of the spouses while their service member was deployed. This number jumped to 50 percent for junior enlisted spouses.

More than one in four (28 percent) report that they had difficulty readjusting to their service member’s return after the most recent deployment. For spouses who have experienced multiple deployments, 44 percent report that coping has become more difficult with subsequent deployments (ADSS, 2008).

Being a “single” parent during deployment created problems for well over half (62 percent) of those with children, and for 25 percent, those problems were very extensive (ADSS, 2008).

Children experience the demands of deployment and respond in different ways to the temporary loss of a parent. Problem behaviors

in response to deployment were reported by 57 percent of spouses, while 60 percent of spouses reported an increase in fear and/or anxiety in their children (ADSS, 2008).

Some children, however, do very well under the stress of parental deployment, and research holds some clues as to why. While many older children reported behavior changes, including changes in school performance as well as behaviors associated with depression, those who felt supported by others seemed to have an enhanced resiliency (MFRI, Huebner and Mancini, 2006).

A lot is required of military children, and many are able to develop new skills due to the deployment of their parent.

Thirty-five percent of spouses perceived their children to be more responsible after the most recent deployment. Nearly a third (31 percent) were perceived by the parent who remained at home to have gained independence (ADSS, 2008).

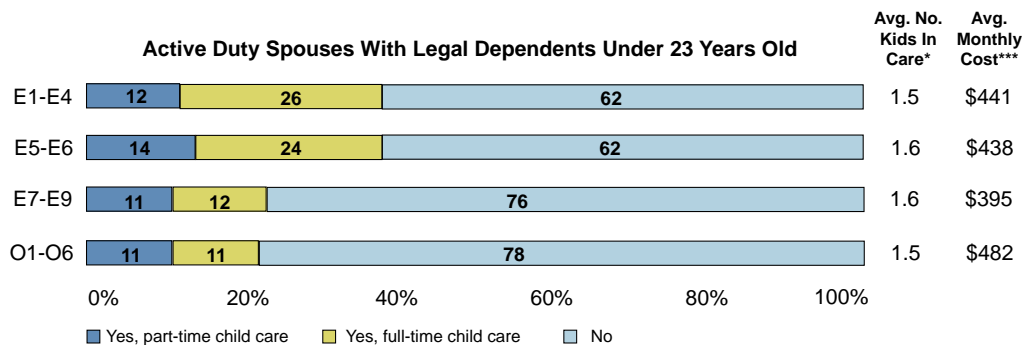
Survey research was supported by focus groups with older children.

Adolescents who had experienced the deployment of a parent exhibited numerous adaptive responses, including taking on more responsibility at home and attempting to protect the parent remaining at home from negative emotions and stress (MFRI, Huebner and Mancini, 2006).

Slightly over half of spouses felt that their children have coped very well or well.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM DOD RESEARCH

Percentage of Spouses Using Child Care, Average Number of Children in Care, Average Monthly Cost of Care, by Paygrade



ADSS 2006 Q86, Q87 & Q90 Margins of error range from *±3% to ±4%, ** ±.1 to ±.3, ***±\$24 to ±\$34

When surveyed, spouses reported increased closeness to family members by children in nearly half (47 percent) of all families. A third (34 percent) of children responded to deployment with increased pride in having a military parent (ADSS, 2008).

The ability to maintain a stable household routine, geographic stability and communication with the deployed parent were very important for the children's ability to cope with deployments.

Slightly over half (53 percent) of spouses felt that their children have coped very well or well.

However, nearly a quarter (23 percent) feel that their children coped poorly or very poorly with the deployment (ADSS, 2008).

Communications

During deployments, the key coping mechanism for spouses was the ability to communicate with the deployed service member (ADSS, 2006 & 2008).

Focus groups held with service members found that effective, accessible, inexpensive communication home while on deployment helps to decrease the stress of family separations (RAND, Hosek, 2006).

For their children, service members identified the two most important mechanisms as **communication with deployed parent**, and the parent/guardian's **ability to maintain a stable routine** during the deployment (DMDC SOFS, 2007).

When a family member is deployed, researchers have identified communication needs as follows: frequent

Overall, 66 percent of spouses reported that their service member's career plan is to stay in the military until retirement.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

The majority of military spouses are employed, and most feel that they need a second income to achieve the standard of living they want.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

assurance that deployed member is well, ability to communicate on a consistent basis, ability to exchange types of information most effective for their particular family unit, the ability to have a verbal exchange, and accurate information about deployment issues (*Center for the Digital Future, University of Southern California, 2007*).

Focus groups found that **social networking sites** like Facebook and MySpace were being used by almost a third of focus group participants (*Center for Digital Future, USC, 2007*). The researchers suggest leveraging techniques associated with social networking sites create online individual unit communities to re-establish a traditional sense of family and unit cohesiveness.

Child Care

Active duty spouses who had children or legal dependents under the age of 23 were asked if they used child care services full- or part-time.

Thirty-one percent indicated they used child care services (*ADSS, 2006*). Employed spouses in all pay grades were more likely to use child care than those not in the labor force.

On average, spouses whose youngest child was five years of age and under spent more on child care. Spouses of junior and midgrade enlisted members were more likely (both 38 percent) to have at least one child in child care, and were also most likely to agree that child care was important to maintaining work/life balance.

Spouses who routinely used child care missed an average of six days of work in the past year because of a lack of child care. Most spouses, particularly those whose youngest child was five and under, agreed that child care was important to maintaining a balance between work and family life.

During deployment, managing child care schedules was a problem for 65 percent of those with

Key Findings of Commitment Study

1. Commitment to the military among service members, a precursor to the decision of whether to stay or leave the military, can be reliably measured for individuals and tracked in aggregate.
2. Commitment in military members can be described in terms of three components: affective commitment ("I want to stay"), normative commitment ("I ought to stay") and continuance commitment ("I need to stay").
3. Affective commitment is the strongest predictor of a service members intention to stay in the military.
4. Continuance commitment can be further broken down into commitment based on lack of alternatives and commitment based on investments.
5. Each dimension independently predicts intentions to leave although the components of affective commitment are the strongest predictors.
6. Key events in the military experience predict changes in levels of commitment.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM DOD RESEARCH



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

Spouses who routinely used child care missed an average of six days of work in the past year because of a lack of child care.

children (*ADSS, 2008*). Nearly half (47 percent) had additional costs of child care during the deployment (*ADSS, 2008*).

Similarly, nearly half (49 percent) of those with children reported that finding child care when it was not previously needed was a problem during deployment (*ADSS, 2008*).

Financial Stress

Thirty-seven percent of junior enlisted service members (E1-E4) have a regular savings plan. Moreover, over half (56 percent) of enlisted members (E1-E4) have \$500 or more in an emergency savings plan.

While trends over the past few years have shown that service members are able to save and fewer are having financial problems, 37 percent of E1-E4s still indicate that they have financial problems (*DMDC SOFS, April 2008*).

Financial hardship negatively impacts spouse support for a military career by leading to high

levels of stress for the spouse. High stress levels lead to lower satisfaction with the military, which, in turn, leads to low support for the military career (*DMDC briefing, May 2007, Mapes and Krueger*).

Spouse Employment and Education

While 66 percent of spouses are currently employed, a full 77 percent report that they want or need to work. The majority (70 percent) of spouses feel it is important to work for basic expenses, but the most important reason cited for working is the desire to save for the future (*ADSS, 2008*).

The military lifestyle, with frequent moves and deployments, presents challenges for spouses in maintaining employment. In 2005, RAND found that military wives, on average, are employed at lower rates and earn less than civilian wives (*RAND, Harrell, 2005*).

Only one in five (21 percent) spouses have fulfilled their educational goals. Although 22 percent are currently in school, another 50 percent would like to be. For those spouses who want to be in school, three out of four (76 percent) report that the cost of education keeps them from being able to do so (*ADSS, 2008*).

Moving is a way of life in the military. Seventy-five percent of the spouses report having moved for their service member's job, called Permanent Change of Station (PCS) in the military. A third of those (34 percent) have moved three or more times (*ADSS, 2008*).

After their most recent PCS move, 60 percent of spouses tried to find employment at their new location. Of those, two-thirds found work and 11 percent stopped looking (*ADSS, 2006*).

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM DOD RESEARCH

When asked what would have helped them find work after their most recent PCS move, these spouses indicated job information (65 percent), training opportunities (54 percent), easier transfer of certifications (31 percent), and financial help with transferring certifications (27 percent) (*ADSS, 2006*).

Deployments have an impact on spouse career and education plans. Nineteen percent of spouses who had been employed lost their job during their spouse's most recent deployment. This number was higher for spouses of E1-E4s (27 percent).

Over half (55 percent) reported that their service member's deployment had an effect on their job. During their service members most recent deployment, 31 percent of spouses reported a reduction in earnings due to the deployment.

Good Schools for Children

Deployments are one challenge for military families; frequent moves are another.

Roughly two-thirds (66 percent) of spouses reported that they have experienced a PCS move since their child started school. Of those who have experienced a PCS move, the largest number reported problems with the student **adjusting to a new school** (43 percent), with the second largest number reporting that **differences in the curriculum** were a problem (42 percent) (*ADSS, 2006*).

Research has consistently demonstrated the strength of the DoDEA schools. The trend of high academic performance of students enrolled in DoDEA schools continues. Writing scores for DoDEA students reveal a pattern of above average scores, particularly for Black and Hispanic students. Though the achievement gap persists between White and Black students and between White and Hispanic students, the gap is significantly smaller than the national average (*Vanderbilt University, Smrekar, 2007*).

Research has shown that the mission of these schools reaches far beyond academics. The

Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force by Margo Wright



Lareign Murphy, 6, loves to read and admits she likes Dr. Seuss stories the best. With high participation levels, young readers helped the youth center at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla., earn new books.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM DOD RESEARCH



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

During deployment, managing child care schedules was a problem for 65 percent of those with children.

teachers, counselors and administrators embrace a model that locates these schools in the center of military family life, while addressing the stresses and separations associated with war in Afghanistan and Iraq (*Vanderbilt University, Smrekar, 2007*).

Commitment Among Military Members and Spouses (2004)

Attrition is a significant problem among enlisted members and officers. Members' and spouses' sense of commitment to the military are important influences on decisions to leave the armed forces.

During this period, the **Office of Military Family and Community Policy** worked with the **Military Family Research Institute** at Purdue University to develop and validate measures of member and spousal commitment, as well as to conduct research on the factors that affect the development and change in commitment.

The scales developed are now included in the DMDC Status of Forces Survey.

The intention to leave the military is best predicted by factors related to personal happiness and sense of identity, as opposed to monetary factors and job alternatives. Key events of military experience can be identified that reliably predict changes in commitment.

Thus, the management of key events can help increase commitment and reduce attrition.

Commitment must be demonstrated to predict actual attrition, not just turnover intentions. Further research about the effects of key events on changes in commitment, and how policies and practices influence the experience of and ability to cope with those events, will better inform attrition reduction policy.

As we go forward, we will carry out further evaluation of the innovative programs that have been stood up to address the immediate needs of families. We will build on our understanding of how deployments impact the development of children and families. And finally, we will continue to use research to initiate programs that address the needs and promote the strengths of our military families.

Summary of Key Findings From Army Surveys

RESearch suggests that most Army families are adapting and doing well, despite the fact that many are experiencing challenges balancing work and family as a result of the demands of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Global War on Terrorism.

From our research on Army families, we have initiated programs designed to help families better manage the demands of military life.

Spouses need **accurate and timely information** about unit duty schedules, mission, and family assistance, especially during periods of deployment separation.

Formal and informal networks of spouses need to be built for support, as well as to combat the loneliness and isolation spouses experience when their service member is deployed.

Child care support needs to continue to include care for working families and respite care during deployment/ separation periods. To support marriages, the military needs to promote opportunities for married couples to spend time together and strengthen their relationships.

Beliefs about the Army as a good place for younger children are linked to retention, as those who feel the Army is a good place for children are more likely to say they support their spouse staying in the military.

Moreover, the **impact of deployments on children** has been cause for concern. During war deployments some children may suffer emotional and behavioral problems, with the adjustment to a one-parent family being harder on younger children.



Beliefs about the Army as a good place for younger children are linked to retention.

Reunion presents its own challenges.

While half of spouses rated their reunion adjustment as easy, support for families from unit leaders and support programs during deployment and reunion was rated as weak to poor. Only one in four spouses received help for the reunion experiences of their children.

Successful adjustment is closely related to the **quality of the marriage** before and after the reunion. The most difficult adjustments came from changes in soldiers' moods, restoring co-parenting, and learning to communicate again.

Support from the military establishment is critical during times of need, as Army spouses increase their use of Army support services during deployments.

With regard to quality of life in their communities, soldiers and families value morale,

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM ARMY SURVEYS

welfare, and recreation (MWR) programs and facilities. They use them frequently and consider them important to morale, retention, and readiness.

Programs and services designed to meet the needs of soldiers and families in the areas of MWR are among the most frequently used facilities on Army installations.

One of the benefits of having recreational facilities on post is the opportunity for Army family members to meet others with whom they share common interests and characteristics (e.g., fellow spouses), and with whom they can develop support networks.

The majority of soldiers and spouses who use **Army Child** and **Youth Services** believe these programs positively affect key Army organizational outcomes such as readiness, career intent and morale.

Finally, research on Army families shows that **command emphasis on families** is critical, as unit leaders have a major impact on family adjustment to military life. Unit leaders can positively in-

A complete summary of significant findings from research conducted between January 2004 and October 2007 can be found in ***What We Know About Army Families: 2007 Update***, including the *Survey of Army Families V*. Areas addressed in the report include: deployments, separations, and reunions; issues confronting Reserve component soldiers and families; well-being within Army families; children; informal and formal support for families; and a 21st century model of Army family support.

fluence family adjustment to Army life by demonstrating to soldiers and families that they care about their well-being, as well as by fostering supportive communities.

2004/2005 Survey of Army Families V

This Army-wide survey of civilian spouses of active duty soldiers focuses on key areas of quality of life and well-being for Army families.

Three sub-samples, each with its own tailored survey, were selected based on the soldier spouse's rank and deployment status since September 11, 2001: whether or not the soldier spouse is currently deployed, has deployed and returned, or has not deployed.

Seventy percent of all spouses think their family has adjusted well to the demands of being an Army family. Over half (57 percent) are satisfied with the Army as a way of life, with those who have never been deployed being the most likely to be satisfied.

The majority (82 percent) of spouses are satisfied with their marriage, and have dependent children living with them (79 percent).

Deployed soldiers are more likely (43 percent) to have children two years of age and younger, and are least likely to have adolescent children.

Compared to 2001, there has been a decrease in spouses reporting they can arrange child care well (66 percent in 2001 vs. 58 percent in 2004/5) while the soldier is deployed.

Less than one-third of spouses are satisfied with the support Army unit leaders provide to deployed families.

Compared with 1991/1992 (71 percent), spouses in 2004/2005 are less likely (63 percent) to support their soldier remaining in the Army. Support is lower among spouses



Research on Army families shows that command emphasis on families is critical.

Many kids in USAG Schinnen's skiing/snowboarding classes received free tuition through Covenant funding last year, and many more stand to benefit this year, as operations tempos increase and more families become eligible.

Photo courtesy of Sarah J. Schmidt, USAG Schinnen Public Affairs



of those currently deployed (55 percent) and spouses of those who have deployed and returned (56 percent).

Adjustment of Army Children to Deployment Separations

Spouses of active duty soldiers reported that about half of Army children cope well with deployments.

According to the 2004/2005 SAF V Survey Report, over one-third (37 percent) of children seriously worry about what could happen to their deployed parent.

Depression and school problems occur in about one in five children. Adjustments to being in a temporary one-parent family are difficult for younger children and parents.

Beliefs about the Army as a good place for younger children are linked to retention.

Of the spouses who think that the Army is good for younger children, 86 per-

cent want their soldier to stay in the Army. Among parents who think the Army is not good for these children, 51 percent want their soldier to stay in.

The use of Army child and youth programs helps children adjust to deployments. About half of the spouses are satisfied with child and youth programs.

Army programs designed to prepare children for reunion are widely used (78 percent) but have small effects on deployment coping. Parent resilience is the best predictor of children's coping with deployment.

The strength of the parent's marriage contributed significantly to children's coping, perhaps as a reflection of the stability and communication in the family of the child.

Family Readiness Group Involvement and Adjustments among Army Spouses

Spouses of active duty soldiers were surveyed about their experiences with Family Readiness Groups (FRG).

According to the 2004/2005 SAF V Survey Report, two-thirds of Army spouses (68 percent) indicate that their unit has an active Family

Deployed soldiers are more likely to have children two years of age and younger, and are least likely to have adolescent children.

Readiness Group. Among spouses with active FRGs, about half participate. The research found that involvement is highest among on-post, not-employed, officer spouses.

Competing demands on spouse time and the desire to keep military and personal lives separate were the main reasons spouses did not participate.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM ARMY SURVEYS

There are a number of advantages for those who belong to family readiness groups. Among spouses with active Family Readiness Groups, 40 percent say their family has received FRG help, and half consider their FRG to have been very helpful in their recent deployment experience.

Spouse personal and family adjustments are significantly higher among spouses involved in FRGs. Those who participate are more likely to believe that that unit and Army leaders support families.

Active Family Readiness Group participants are also more likely to believe that families are helping to make the installation a better place and that it is easy to make connections in the community.

Finally, support for retention is higher among FRG participants.

Social Support and Adjustment among Army Civilian Spouses

According to the 2004/2005 SAF V Survey Report, the majority (65 percent) of Army spouses **rate their marriages as highly satisfactory**. Spouses of officers report higher marital satisfaction (74 percent) than do enlisted spouses (63 percent).

African-American spouses report significantly lower rates of marital satisfaction compared to White and Hispanic spouses. One in four spouses (24 percent) report significant marital problems after deployment.

Half of the spouses report communication difficulties. Not surprisingly, the length of the soldier's deployment has a significant negative impact on marital problems.

Just over half (56 percent) of Army spouses have a close friend nearby on whom they can depend during difficult times. Four in 10 (42 percent) spouses see their installation community as supportive and helpful.

Officer spouses are the only group who overwhelmingly consider their community to be supportive.

The single most important community contributor to spouse adjustment to "the demands of being an Army family" is the belief that the Army community is a good place for children, especially younger children.

Half (50 percent) of parents **see the Army community as a good place to raise younger children**. Spouses of field grade officers are the most likely to consider the Army a good place for rearing younger (71 percent) and older (49 percent) children.

Junior enlisted spouses are the most worried about the Army as a place to raise their children (42 percent for younger children and 32 percent for older children). White parents are less likely to have a positive perception of the Army as a good place for children than are Black or Hispanic parents.



Photo courtesy of Defense Imagery, photographer Benny J. Moritz

U.S. Army 491st Transportation Detachment Staff Sgt. Washington poses for a picture with family members at Fort Eustis, Va., following a seven-month deployment to the port of Shuaiba, Kuwait.

Top MWR Activities

1. Fitness Center/Gymnasium
2. Library
3. Child Development Center
4. Youth Center
5. Swimming Pool
6. Athletic Fields
7. ITR/Commercial Travel

Photo courtesy of Defense Imagery, photographer A1C Nathian Doza



Parents living on post feel more positive about the environment for children. Those living more than 10 miles from post have the least positive perceptions.

Deployment and Separation Adjustment among Army Civilian Spouses

Over one-half (55 percent) of Army families who have recently experienced deployment were separated for a year or more.

According to the 2004/2005 SAF V Survey Report, about half (53 percent) **rated their reunion adjustment as easy.**

Successful adjustment is closely related to the quality of the marriage before and after reunion. The most difficult adjustments came from changes in soldiers' moods, restoring co-parenting, and learning to communicate again.

Perceptions of Army support also are helpful in promoting reunion adjustments, especially when this is enabled by the soldier keeping the spouse informed, when the spouse is satisfied that the Army respects spouses, and when Army agencies are considered to be comfortable places to go.

Support for families from unit leaders and support programs during deployment and reunion were rated as weak to poor. Only one in four (25 percent) spouses received help for the reunion experiences of their children.

The researchers assert that significant gains in reunion adjustment can be fostered, but more attention must be given to strengthening family, unit and service systems support if these gains are to be realized.

Army Support Programs and Civilian Spouse Deployment Adjustments

Army spouses increase their use of Army support services during deployments.

According to the 2004/2005 SAF V Survey Report, health care is the most widely used service during deployment (79 percent), followed by recreation (42 percent), Child Development Services (CDS) (29 percent), Army Community Service (ACS) (23 percent) and Chaplains and Family Assistance Center (17 percent).

Over one-half (55 percent) of Army families who have recently experienced deployment were separated for a year or more.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM ARMY SURVEYS

One in three spouses (34 percent) indicated they **increased their use of recreation services during deployment** and 62 percent said they are satisfied with the services they received. Four in 10 (41 percent) who used Child Development Services increased their use during the deployment, and over half (52 percent) of the spouses were satisfied with the services they and their children received.

Army Community Services programs were used by 23 percent of spouses during the deployment. Over two-thirds (68 percent) of spouses found these services helpful, the highest rating of satisfaction for deployment related services in the survey.

Army support programs are used by those who are having significant difficulties, as well as by those who are managing well. Support program use is highest among those with more months of deployment, those living on post, and those not employed.

Most (60 percent) spouses feel comfortable accessing Army services, but the majority of spouses do not believe the civilian staffs of family support services are respectful of their circumstances and needs. This is especially true for those services that primarily serve soldiers.

Qualitative Follow-Up to the 2004/2005 SAF V

Spouses believed that providing accurate, up-to-date information about their soldier's unit and deployment was the Family Readiness Group's central purpose. According to the 2004/2005 SAF V Survey Report, spouses were split on the issue of whether their FRG fulfilled this function effectively.



Photo courtesy of Molly Hayden, U. S. Army Garrison-Hawaii Public Affairs

Moms and babies at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, line up for baby massage, a program offered through Army Community Service that offers a chance for parents to bond with their child while also stimulating growth and neurological development in the baby.

The main factors affecting Family Readiness Group attendance include quality leadership and infor-

mation provided, the dynamics within the group (e.g., open and inclusive vs. hierarchical or "rank-driven"), the fact that some soldiers discourage their spouses' participation, and negative experiences that spouses may have had with a Family Readiness Group in the past. The level of support derived from FRGs varies widely from unit to unit and post to post, depending on factors such those described above.

Strategies to ensure that spouses experience a more predictable, consistent level of Family Readiness Group support include adding more paid support to take the burden off of volunteers (e.g., hiring Family Readiness Group Assistants at the battalion level) and making commanders "accountable" for the FRG.

Concerns about inadequate resources (e.g., staff, facilities) dominated discussions with spouses. Deployments result in a greater need for child care, but slots for hourly care and for daycare are not always available for spouses.

Spouses' evaluation of the care and concern for families demonstrated by Army leadership was mixed.

A random sample of 4,500 comments was selected for the analysis, evenly divided between spouses of deployed, deployed and returned, and the non-deployed soldiers.

Many expressed praise for the leadership of their soldier's unit. Some thought the expectations some spouses have in terms of information and support from command are unrealistic in a wartime environment, and felt it is important that spouses become self-reliant.

Spouses who were critical often described interactions with Army administrative personnel who they believed were insensitive, inflexible, and unsupportive.

Some thought that because many unit leaders (e.g., company commanders) are young and unmarried, they do not have an understanding of what families need, nor of the positive role families can play in the readiness and retention of soldiers.

Spouses recommended that additional training be provided to future unit leaders on how to effectively support Army families.

(NOTE: See related SAF V findings and in-depth studies and SAF IV analysis in Army Leadership Support for Families and Adjustment of Army Non-military Spouses, by Dennis K. Orthner, Ph.D., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, June, 2002 for the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center)

Thematic Analysis of Comments From the 2004/2005 SAF V

A random sample of 4,500 comments was selected for the analysis, including 1,500 responses from each of the three groups of spouses surveyed: spouses of deployed, deployed and returned, and the non-deployed soldiers.

The three most frequently commented on issues were: dissatisfaction with the Army, reasons for not attending Family Readiness Groups and deployment issues.

Many spouses reported problems with medical and dental care, low quality housing, and perceived lack of respect by the Army for the military family.

Not being contacted or notified were cited as reasons for not attending FRG meetings. Spouses discussed being challenged by the frequency and the length of the deployments, which has resulted in marital stress for the couples and stress for the children.

The dominant themes from spouses of deployed and deployed and returned soldiers were: why some spouses stayed or returned early during the deployment, financial prob-

Photo courtesy of Defense Imagery



Successful adjustment is closely related to the quality of the marriage before and after the reunion.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM ARMY SURVEYS

Soldiers and spouses agreed that providing Army Child and Youth Services and MWR programs and Services “generates the feeling that the Army cares about its people.”

lems, and reasons for moving away during the deployment, communication with their soldier, and comments on the rear detachments.

Spouses of non-deployed soldiers commented on their last move, current location, how they obtained information on Army programs, and issues from being in a non-traditional assignment, such as recruiting.

Although most comments were negative, they help refine and improve policies, programs and services.

On a positive note, some spouses expressed their pride in being associated with the military and pride in their soldier. Some expressed appreciation for Army services and programs, such as Family Readiness Groups, and the Rear Detachment Command.

Many spouses appreciated having the opportunity to complete the Survey of Army Families. They thought it was an important venue for giving them the chance to provide their thoughts on their spouse serving in the Army and living as a military family.

Ethnicity and Military Spouse Coping

This exploratory study indicated there were three common predictors linked to spouses coping.

Not surprisingly, they were: 1) the higher the number of problems experienced, the lower the spouse’s daily functioning; 2) the more the spouse kept him/herself informed about the Army, the better the daily coping; and 3) the

greater the demands the Army places on the families, the lower their daily coping score.

While similarities in coping exist between ethnic groups, there are also important ethnic differences in coping relevant to family policy and practice.

For African-American spouses, their belief in a secure and stable career in the military, along with their belief that their soldier’s Army career, contributes to society make it easier for them to cope.

For Hispanic spouses, predictors of positive coping tended to be associated more with family and close friend supports.

For Caucasians, the predictors tended to reflect opportunities to advance their personal goals, the soldier’s career goals, and being informed about the Army.

These differences warrant further study based on a larger sample of spouses. (NOTE: See David J. Westhuis, Richard Fafara, and Philip Ouellette, “Does Ethnicity Affect the Coping of Military Spouses,” *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 32, No. 4, July 2006, pages 584-603.)

2005 Leisure Needs Survey

In 2005, the Army conducted a **Leisure Needs Survey** involving 50,651 participants, including 17,598 active duty soldiers, 13,393 civilians, 7,275 spouses, and 12,385 retirees.

Soldiers and spouses agreed that providing Army Child and Youth Services and MWR Programs and Services “generates the feeling that the Army cares about its people.”

83 percent of soldiers and 81 percent of spouses believe elimination of recreation programs would decrease their Army quality of life.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM ARMY SURVEYS

For all participants, the top three sources of information on MWR programs and services are the local post newspaper; flyers; and bulletin boards on post. The majority of soldiers (83 percent) and spouses (81 percent) stated that the elimination of recreation programs would decrease their Army quality of life.

For all survey patron groups, the top seven MWR activities/programs for the Army to provide regardless of their use are: fitness center/gymnasium; library; child development Center; youth center; swimming pool; athletic fields; and ITR/commercial travel.

Morale, Welfare & Recreation (MWR) Programs and Readiness Links

According to the *Sample Survey of Military Personnel*, published in July 2006, the use of MWR programs and services has a positive impact on both soldier and spouse desire to stay in Army, as well as on unit teamwork/esprit de corps, career issues, and satisfaction with quality of Army life.

Increased use of MWR programs proved to strengthen their emotional attachment to the Army, which is important to a soldier's desire to stay in the Army.

Increased use of MWR programs proved to strengthen their emotional attachment to the Army, which is important to a soldier's desire to stay in the Army.

Photo courtesy of Defense Imagery, photographer MC1 Laurie L. Wood



Runners set their watches before start of the third annual Army/Navy 10k challenge in Norfolk, Virginia.

Summary of Key Findings From Navy Surveys

THE FIRST QUADRENNIAL Quality of Life Review indicated high levels of satisfaction with Navy quality of life among both sailors and their spouses, according to the eight surveys conducted between 2001 and 2004 and summarized in the report.

The results of the current analysis, based on 12 surveys and quick polls conducted by the Navy Personnel Research, Studies, and Technology Department between 2004 and 2007, continue to reflect this trend. Compared to the past, Navy sailors are more satisfied with shipboard quality of life, their pay, compensation and standard of living.

Spouse perceptions mirror those of active duty members. Navy spouses have positive perceptions of their marital relationships, financial security, satisfaction with Navy life, ability to cope with deployments and support for service members staying in the Navy.

Surveys and polls of specific groups and topics also found widespread satisfaction. About three-quarters of active duty sailors are satisfied with **Navy MWR facilities** and services and over 40 percent say they are a benefit they consider when deciding to stay in the Navy.

Over half say that **Navy Fleet and Family Support Center** programs improved the quality of life of their families. More than three of four users of **Transition Assistance, Personal Financial Management, and New Parents Support**

programs are satisfied with them. Over half were satisfied with the customer service received in **Personnel Support Detachments**.

Two-thirds are satisfied with the **Exceptional Family Member Program** and say that it makes a positive contribution to their family's quality of life. About half of enlisted, and 40 percent of officers, agree that Navy programs and services are as good as or better than those provided by other military services.

While the portrait of Navy quality of life provided by these surveys and polls was positive, there is still room for improvement.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Patrick Gearhiser



Susan Groseclose, a deployment specialist with the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC), watches as two children decorate cards to send to their deployed parents.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM NAVY SURVEYS

The most satisfying family support services were the commissary, exchange, and medical care.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



Many enlisted sailors remain dissatisfied with shipboard quality of life and many sailors are dissatisfied with their **ability to access the Internet** for educational or recreational purposes while on ship. Less than half are satisfied with parking on Navy bases.

Only half of all enlisted spouses are satisfied with the Navy's support for their families, while less than half of all spouses say they received good support and communication from the Navy during service member deployments.

Only one in four spouses of individual augmentees (IAs) reported receiving good support from the Navy before, during, or after IA duty.

Fewer than one-third of spouses knew the name of their ombudsman. While most had heard of **Sexual Assault Victim Intervention Program** and have attended training, there is still about 10 percent or more who have not heard of the program or had training on it.

Finally, concerns about the individual augmentee process and IA duty, were noted on a number of surveys and polls.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Harry J. Rucker III



Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Felicia Ceasor, assigned to the "Mad Foxes" of Patrol Squadron (VP-5), participates in a tricycle race during the "Over the Hump" party, marking the midway point of the unit's deployment in support of Maritime Security Operations.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM NAVY SURVEYS

Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Mario Rodriguez greets his wife and newborn daughter during a homecoming celebration for guided-missile destroyer USS Milius (DDG 69).

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy, photographed by 2nd Class Stephanie Tigner



The following is a brief description of each of the 12 surveys and polls conducted by NPRST during the past three years follows.

2005 Navy MWR Customer Survey

Both officers and enlisted personnel rated the following programs as most important: fitness center (94 percent), information, travel and tickets (90 percent), gym (90 percent), swimming pools (88 percent), recreation centers (83 percent), sports fields (83 percent), outdoor recreation areas (82 percent), shipboard recreation programs (82 percent), special events (81 percent), and library media resource centers (81 percent).

Nearly 75 percent of officers and enlisted indicated that they are satisfied with Navy MWR facilities and services, and over 90 percent of officers and 84 percent of enlisted said that they would continue to use MWR.

Overall, satisfaction with MWR was slightly lower than the satisfaction rating for the sailors surveyed in 2003. Eighty percent of officers and

68 percent of enlisted indicated that MWR facilities and services have an impact on their QOL.

Seventy percent of officers and 61 percent of enlisted indicated that the MWR improves the Quality of Life for their families.

2005 Navy Fleet and Family Support Customer (FFSC) Survey

In a random sample of active duty Navy enlisted and officers, service members rated the following programs as most important: transition assistance (66 percent), relocation assistance (63 percent), information and referral (61 percent), personal financial management (57 percent), spouse employment assistance (57 percent), deployment support (57 percent), and life skills education (53 percent).

Satisfaction with FFSC programs among users was highest for **Transition Assistance**, **Personal Financial Management**, and **New Parents Support**. Over half of service

Seventy percent of officers and 61 percent of enlisted indicated that the MWR improves the QOL for their families.

members indicated that Fleet and Family Support Center facilities and services impact their quality of life, as well as improve the quality of life for their families.

This was the first random-sample Navy-wide survey to assess issues related to Fleet and Family Support Centers. Results will serve as a baseline against which the results of future surveys can be compared.

2006 Navy Quality of Life Survey

Results were generally positive especially compared to the results of the previous Navy quality of life surveys conducted in 1999 and 2002.

The percentage of enlisted members satisfied with shipboard life increased from 24 percent in 1999 to 44 percent in 2006, while officer satisfaction increased from 45 percent to 66 percent.

In 1999, only one-third of enlisted members were satisfied with their standard of living and income, but that number increased to over half (56 percent) in 2006. Sailors were more satisfied in 2006 with specific aspects of their finances, including the amount of money available for essentials, extras, and savings.

While the majority of enlisted (52 percent) and officers (64 percent) indicated they were well-prepared if they had to deploy in support of GWOT, fewer indicated that their families were well-prepared.

Many aboard ship were dissatisfied with their ability to access the Internet in order to take online courses, send personal e-mails, and “surf the net” for relaxation. Overall attitudes toward the Navy,

and views of the future, were generally lower on the 2006 QOL Survey than they were in the 2005 Navy-wide Personnel Survey.

For more detailed results see: Wilcove, G. L., Schultz, R. A., & Patrissi, G. A. (2007, July). 2006 Navy Quality of Life Survey (NPRST-AB-07-6), Millington, TN: Navy Personnel Research Studies and Technology.

2006 Navy Spouse Survey

Navy spouses are very satisfied with their marital relationships, generally financially secure, satisfied with Navy life, cope well with deployments, and support their service members staying in the Navy.

However, the survey found areas for improvement, including the need for greater Navy support for the family and increased communication with the family from the Navy and local commands.

In terms of specific findings, about half of all spouses are employed and most work in their career field. Roughly three-fourths found their current job within three months of job hunting.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



Most spouses are prepared for deployment, and use email frequently to communicate with their service member during deployment.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM NAVY SURVEYS

The primary source of child care for enlisted spouses is off-base community child care centers (29 percent); for officer spouses it is off-base school-age care (33 percent).

Most spouses are prepared for deployment, and use email frequently to communicate with their service member during deployment. About half were part of commands with at least one function or activity for spouses while the service member was deployed.

Only a quarter of enlisted spouses, and less than half of officer spouses, reported good quality support from the Navy and good communication with their commands during service member's deployment. Compared to the *2002 Spouse QOL Survey*, more spouses indicated their financial condition was "very comfortable and secure."

The top three programs and services related to retention were health care, housing allowances, and retirement benefits. Most (86 percent of enlisted spouses and 93 percent of officer spouses) service member spouses reported their marital relationships were happy or very happy.

About three-fifths of enlisted spouses, and three fourths of officer spouses, are satisfied with military life, but slightly fewer (half of enlisted spouses and two-thirds of officer spouses) are satisfied with Navy support for family.

Over one-third of enlisted spouses, and one-half of officer spouses, report that their families are well supported by their commands, but less indicated that their commands communicate well with families.

Finally, about two-thirds favor the member staying in the Navy, while approximately 20 percent favor the member joining the Navy Reserve, if eligible.

2006 Survey for Spouses of Navy Individual Augmentees (IAs)

Navy Active Component spouse — along with Reserve Component spouses whose service member was currently serving IA Duty, recently served IA Duty, or were medical Augmentees — were surveyed in 2006.

Cycling was only one of the many sporting events held during the 2007 Annual Sports Day at the Fleet Anti-Submarine base at Point Loma, Calif. The event was sponsored by the base's Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) department.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Shannon K. Cassidy



The daughter of Ens. Brian Bracy, a newly-commissioned limited duty officer (LDO) assigned to Naval Station Pearl Harbor, places a shoulder board on his uniform during his commissioning ceremony.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy, photographed by 2nd Class Michael A. Lantron



The results indicate that spouses of individual augmentees were most satisfied with information on location of service member, time to readjust after return, and time before leaving. They were least satisfied with pre-mobilization/deployment briefing for family, information about individual augmentee command Family Readiness/Family Support Groups, and where to get help and information.

Over three-quarters were able to communicate with their service member at least once a week via email; similar results were found on the **2006 Navy-wide Spouse Survey**. Fewer than one-fifth of spouses reported financial problems because of service member's individual augmentee duty.

The most satisfying family support services were the commissary, exchange, and medical care. Least satisfying were child care availability/affordability and programs for youth/children.

Only a fourth of spouses reported good or very good support from Navy before, during, or after individual augmentee duty.

About one-fifth of spouses were unaware of support services available before, during, or after. About 40 percent were less committed to their service member staying in the Navy as a result of their experiences during individual augmentee duty.

Comments provided by spouses indicated that the top challenges they faced were stress, worry, or depression; children's coping; and single parent-

Comments provided by spouses indicated that the top challenges they faced were stress, worry, or depression; children's coping; and single parenting.

ing. Solutions offered included greater command involvement; more information/communication on available services, support groups and/or ombudsman for individual augmentee families; and more notification time for finalized orders to allow families to prepare for IA duty.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM NAVY SURVEYS

PROGRAM QUICK POLLS

2004 and 2005 Sexual Assault Victim's Intervention (SAVI) Program Quick Polls

Compared to the 2004 baseline results, the overall results of the 2005 poll were positive, and a number of upward trends were found on comparisons between the results found in 2004 and 2005.

In 2005, larger percentages of all groups were aware of the sexual assault victim's intervention program and reported attending SAVI GMT compared with the 2004 poll, and two-thirds or more reported that this training increased their knowledge. Other results indicate good news, as well as areas to watch.

On the good news side, there is increased awareness of sexual assault victim's intervention programs and services throughout the Navy. Gains were also found for the percentage reporting both sexual assault training attendance and SAVI training attendance in the last year.

All groups reported that the training increased their knowledge of sexual assault and sexual assault victim's intervention programs and services. Over 90 percent believe that sexual assault is a criminal act and know what actions are considered sexual assault. More than 80 percent indicate that if they were sexually assaulted, they would report it to Navy authorities.

For areas to watch, about three-quarters or more report that sexual assault is not tolerated at their command, indicate they would feel free to report it at their command, and believe that actions are being taken in the Navy to prevent sexual assault. While these are positive rates, there is room for improvement.

In 2005, a larger percentage report that sexual assault is occurring at their command. While the actual incident rates need to be closely monitored, the current poll results may indicate an increased awareness of sexual assault across the Navy, rather than an increase in actual assault. Although a larger percentage in 2005 reported attending sexual assault/sexual assault victim's intervention training, further increases can be attained.

The top three programs and services related to retention were health care, housing allowances, and retirement benefits.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy



Assessment of the Pay and Personnel System, Spouse Employment Assistance and Personal Financial Management Programs Quick Poll

The key finding of the poll was that there was a greater awareness of the **Personal Financial Management** (PFM) program in 2005 than on the 2003 PFM Quick Poll. Enlisted (67 percent) were more aware of the PFM program than officers (45 percent). Ten percent reported using the PFM program in the past year.

The top three personal financial management programs were **Budgeting**, **Thrift Savings Plan Counseling**, and **Savings & Investment**. A lack of awareness was the main reason for not using the personal financial management program, although one-quarter of enlisted service members, and 30 percent of officers, report using the PSD in the past year.

Sailors' ratings of spouse employment indicated that spouses either were employed in the civilian sector, or not employed, by choice. Less than 10 percent of enlisted and officer spouses were currently looking for a job. Two-thirds of respondents report that their spouses found jobs in three months or less.

Approximately 25 percent of respondents indicated that their spouses were aware of the spouse employment assistance program, although service members also indicated that few spouses have used the program (6 percent).

Respondents believe that the spouse employment assistance program was designed to maintain job information resources, provide resume and application assistance, or to network with local employers. One in five enlisted

Enlisted were more aware of the **Personal Financial Management** program than officers.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy, photographed by Paula M. Ludwick



A daughter waits for her father to return from a four-month deployment aboard amphibious assault ship USS Peleliu (LHA 5).

members believes the spouse employment assistance program is a job placement agency.

The results of this poll led to an expanded section on spouse employment issues that was included on the 2006 Navy Spouse Survey. Also, results from this poll have resulted in greater training in the PFM program, especially at boot camp, and in revisions in SEAP-related programs and policies.

Navy Personal & Family Readiness Leadership Assessment Quick Poll

The Navy Personal & Family Readiness (PFR) Leadership Assessment Quick Poll in 2006 was completed by active and reserve command-

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM NAVY SURVEYS

Close to 75 percent indicated that personal and family readiness issues impacted command readiness to a slight extent or greater.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy

ers and officers-in-charge, senior enlisted and ombudsmen in 2006. This was the first Navy-wide assessment of personal and family readiness issues.

The top five personal and family readiness concerns for active and reserve component leaders were **personal/family and job-related stress, family and sailor issues related to deployments, personal/family financial problems,** and **physical fitness.** Inadequate services were the key reason for dissatisfaction across the PFR areas.

Close to 75 percent indicated that personal and family readiness issues impacted command readiness to a slight extent or greater. While most leaders reported that sailors at their commands had low to medium levels of personal and work stress (range from 7 percent to 39 percent), almost all

(90 percent on average) indicated that they were well prepared to carry out their wartime mission.

Nearly half of active component leaders, and one-quarter of reserve component leaders, reported that their commands had received one or more letters of indebtedness in the past year.

Although few indicated decreased mission readiness due to predatory lending, leaders indicated that both sailor and chain of command time was spent dealing with predatory lending issues.

Command actions resulting from sailor predatory loan experiences were mainly to refer sailors to the CFS, Fleet and Family Support Center, or **Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society.** The analysis of open-ended comments found that issues related to the individual augmentee process were of concern for both Active and Reserve respondents.

● ● ● ● ● ●
Close to half report that Navy provides satisfactory facilities for living spaces.

Pensacola QOL/MWR Quick Poll

Respondents to this poll, taken in 2006, were active duty Navy personnel at Naval Air Technical Training Command and Naval Aviation Schools Command in Pensacola, Fla.

Overall results were generally positive in terms of MWR satisfaction, quality of MWR, and the impact of MWR on outcomes such as physical fitness, readiness and retention. However, the results were lower than those found on the **2005 Navy-wide MWR Customer Survey**. This may reflect lingering effects of hurricane damage in the Pensacola region.

Findings for command morale, job satisfaction, and satisfaction with Navy life were as positive, or more positive, than the Navy-wide results. By age-group, junior sailors (age 17-24) were generally more positive about MWR facilities, services, quality, and programs than were those aged 25 and over.

During 2004 and 2005, the U.S. Gulf Coast region was hit with two large hurricanes, which

caused considerable damage on Naval bases. This poll was conducted to address Navy leadership concerns about the quality of life satisfaction with MWR among Navy personnel, especially junior personnel, after the hurricanes.

Navy Exceptional Family Member Quick Poll (2007)

This survey included a census of all active component Navy personnel program participants who were located overseas, as well as a random sample of active-component Navy personnel program participants who were located in the U.S.

While overall survey results were positive, there were some areas for improvement. The survey found that about 65 percent of respondents are satisfied with the overall quality of the program. Approximately one-quarter feel that participation in the exceptional family member program negatively impacts their career.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Byung K. Cho



Lt. Cmdr. Jeannie Groeneveld shows her son a quilt made from family photos given to her by the Armed Services YMCA's "Operation Kid Comfort" program.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM NAVY SURVEYS



Photo courtesy of U. S. Navy, photographed by Seaman Tyler J. Wilson

Interior Communications Electrician Chief Petty Officer Joseph Stevenson hugs his daughters goodbye before he deploys aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Mason (DDG 87).

Nearly two-thirds of enlisted (63 percent) and officers (65 percent) report that sailors enrolled in the exceptional family member program receive equal consideration for promotion. Smaller percentages of enlisted (47 percent) and officers (49 percent) believe that sailors enrolled in the EFMP receive equal consideration for accompanied assignments.

The majority (63 percent) said that the exceptional family member program makes a positive contribution to their family's quality of life, and two-thirds reported that the EFMP has properly matched the needs of the exceptional family member to available services.

Navy Shore Installation Quick Poll

Results of the 2007 Navy Shore Installation Quick Poll indicated that the top three important base/grounds factors for enlisted were parking (92 percent), safety (91 percent), and overall base appearance (88 percent). For officers, it was parking (94 percent), the condition of base buildings (89 percent), and safety (89 percent).

Around half report that Navy base/grounds facilities positively impact morale and their ability to do the job. Close to half report that the Navy provides satisfactory facilities for living spaces, and roughly 60 percent agree that condition of Navy bases reflects well on the Navy.

The top three important service areas for enlisted members were the Navy Exchange (94 percent) and a three-way tie between fitness center/gym, commissary, and MWR (90 percent). For officers, it was the Navy Exchange (94 percent), fitness center/gym (92 percent) and commissary (91 percent).

About 70 percent enlisted, and 65 percent of officers, reported being satisfied with these factors. About 60 percent of officers and enlisted report that Navy services have a positive impact on morale and one-third report a positive impact on retention.

Nearly half of enlisted and 40 percent of officers agree that Navy services are as good as, or better than, that provided by other military services.

Summary of Key Findings From Air Force Surveys

THE AIR FORCE COMMUNITY Assessment is an Air Force-wide survey that has been conducted approximately every two years since 1991. It is designed to measure community assets, needs, and results.

The *Air Force Community Assessment Survey* measures wellness, coping and functioning in Air Force populations and communities based on respondent reports.

The 2006 Community Assessment measured five key factors: *personal adjustment, family adjustment, personal and family adaptation, community well-being, and risk behaviors.*

A random sample of active duty members, spouses of active duty members, reservists, civilians, and reserve spouses completed the survey. In total, 326,841 individuals participated in the 2006 Community Assessment.

The demographics of the survey respondents were corrected statistically for variations in rank and gender via weighting.

The results may be viewed as a testament to the adaptability and dedication of military members, spouses and families. The strongest three areas are *relationship satisfaction, personal coping, and family coping.*

It appears that military members, their partners and children tend to rise to the occasion during this stressful time.

Military spouses reported in similar fashion, closely matching the percentages of their service member spouses, and suggesting significant cohesion and resilience in military relationships and families, even in the face of unprecedented stressors.

Support from neighbors and community unity were missing for most members of the Air Force community, suggesting a potential



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Military children tend to rise to the occasion during stressful times.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM AIR FORCE SURVEYS

“We have a great quality of life in the Air Force and that’s why we’ve been able to recruit such good Airmen coming in. Dormitories, unaccompanied and accompanied housing, child care centers, fitness centers, dining facilities, all this. We keep our standards very high.”

— Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley,
Aviano Air Base, Italy, May 13, 2007

weakness in the ability of families to manage the demands of deployments. Since 2003, reports of social support have declined.

Spouse ability to cope with deployment also declined since 2003. Only about half of the military members felt their spouse could weather their absence without substantial hardship, and spouse perceptions of their own ability to cope were in line with service members.

Family coping slightly increased since 2003, showing that despite the challenges of combat operations, Air Force members and their spouses continued to perceive their families as adaptive, cohesive and strong.

Spouse support for the military career has increased from 2003 to 2006, suggesting that despite strains on military relationships, especially around deployment, military spouses are still perceived by their partners as supporting their choice of a military career.

The dramatic increase in community safety from 2003-2006 may stem from the fact that the 2003 Community Assessment occurred within 18 months of 9/11 and coincided closely with the launch of OEF/OIF. These were times of extreme apprehension in terms of perceived national and community safety, and may have negatively impacted a respondent’s sense of safety in the short term.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Despite the challenges of combat operations, Air Force members and their spouses continued to perceive their families as adaptive, cohesive and strong.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM AIR FORCE SURVEYS

In terms of alcohol and drug misuse, suicidal behaviors, and family maltreatment, 38 percent of Air Force members reported any (one or more) threshold-level problem(s). Furthermore, only about one in eight had communicated about the problem to anyone else in the Air Force.

This supports the need for primary prevention at the community level, which is ongoing in these areas across the Air Force. It also suggests that these risk behaviors may be more typical than aberrant, as almost four in 10 active duty Air Force members are dealing with a threshold-level problem in one or more of these areas.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force



The 2008 Community Assessment data collection is scheduled for the spring of 2008, and data will be comparable across three surveys (2003/2006/2008).



Photo courtesy of U. S. Air Force

Spouse support for the military career has increased from 2003 to 2006.

Summary of Key Findings From Marine Corps Surveys

TEN SURVEYS WERE CONDUCTED during the past few years to assess the perceptions of quality of life of Marines and their families.

Seven of the surveys measured satisfaction with specific programs, such as child development centers, clubs, fitness, temporary lodging facilities, golf, libraries, and the Marine Corps Exchange.

The other three surveys were more comprehensive, focusing on multiple attributes: awareness, effectiveness, quality, value, and satisfaction.

The programs included under this comprehensive format were **Marine Corps Family Team Building, Education Centers, Marine Corps Membership Clubs,** and the **Exceptional Family Member Program.**

SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Marine Corps Exchange Customer Satisfaction Survey (2007)

The top three reasons identified for shopping at the Marine Corps Exchange were convenience, savings, and commissary shopping.

Areas of high satisfaction include merchandise selection, pricing, associates, and one stop shopping. The area in need of attention is problem resolution. Customers are still looking for easier ways



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines by Lance Cpl. Jimmy Serena Jr.

to report problems and better resolution. We are addressing these concerns.

Marine Corps Community Services Library Customer Satisfaction Survey (2005)

Library customers are extremely satisfied and loyal, and are very likely to continue using library services when the need arises. High marks were given to library staff for stellar quality customer service.

The top three reasons identified for shopping at the Marine Corps Exchange were convenience, savings, and commissary shopping.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM MARINE CORPS SURVEYS

Lance Cpl. Charles L. Shamwell, an intelligence specialist with Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron 167, helps first grader Avery Loney read a book during a tutoring program held at DeLalio Elementary School. The program was hosted by the Station's Single Marine Program.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines

Internet access, recreational/leisure reading and a place to pursue educational activities are the main reasons to visit the library. Library customers want more variety of library programs that cater to different segments of users, especially children.

Customers are most satisfied with reference materials and magazines, periodicals and journals, and were least satisfied with the digital collection.

Improvements most meaningful to library customers include better access to the new releases, and a wider ranging selection of titles, especially in the digital area and for adult books.

Marine Corps Community Services Temporary Lodging Facilities Customer Satisfaction Survey (2005)

Temporary Lodging Facilities are characterized as “essential” for military personnel and serve a variety of needs, most importantly as a transitional home at a good value.

Customer service, from the front desk to housekeeping and maintenance, is considered outstanding. Room for improvement included updating the condition of rooms, ensuring that room mechanicals are in working order, and that the rooms are cleaned.

Those surveyed also identified a need to maximize the amount of space provided, especially for those staying longer and for larger families.

Marine Corps Community Services Golf Course Customer Satisfaction Survey (2005)

Customers are satisfied with their golf course experience. Customer service, from the club staff to the golf staff, is considered excellent.

The activities and promotions that are offered are viewed positively. In fact, users recommended an increase in the amount and variety of activities, such as tournaments and fund raising events, to help solidify the local golf community.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys
<u>Child Development Centers</u>
<u>Fitness Clubs</u>
<u>Temporary Lodging Facilities</u>
<u>Golf</u>
<u>Libraries</u>
<u>Marine Corps Exchange</u>

Marine Corps Community Services Child Development Customer Satisfaction Survey (2004)

Staff quality and the quality of care are highly regarded across the majority of child development centers. The convenience of location, quality of care for their children, and the safety of

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM MARINE CORPS SURVEYS

being on base are key reasons why participants choose the program.

Single parent customers are more satisfied than dual active duty customers, especially with child care fees and hours of operation. Full-time customers rate child care fees significantly lower than do part-timers.

To increase satisfaction, participants are looking for improvements in the new child enrollment process, the provision of good nutrition, hours of operation, fees and discounts.

The ***Child Development Center Customer Satisfaction Survey*** will be broadened to encompass children, youth and teen programs. The survey was administered again in February 2008.

Marine Corps Community Services Clubs Customer Satisfaction Survey (2004)

While clubs are viewed as an important military service, the importance of membership is

minimized. In fact, the benefits of club membership are given a relatively low rating.

To increase satisfaction, customers are looking for improvements in the following areas: food, beverage and catering prices, weekday and weekend hours of operation, the appeal and frequency of entertainment, promotions and special event, and food selection.

Marine Corps Family Team Building should be expanded to support a Marine's extended family (spouse, child, parents).

Marine Corps Community Services Fitness Customer Satisfaction Survey (2004)

The strength of the fitness centers is that they provide a safe, motivating and welcoming place to focus on health and fitness and military readiness.

Convenience of location, the lack of fees, and the comfortable environment are key reasons why customers use the facilities.

To increase satisfaction, customers are looking for improvements in equipment and physical facilities, as well as the variety and schedule of program availability.

FUNCTIONALITY ASSESSMENTS

The functionality assessment process is a highly standardized methodology that was developed by the Department of the Navy and then modified by the Marine Corps to address specific application needs.

A functionality assessment is a three-phased process that reviews the current "as-is" of program operations, a benchmarking analysis containing industry standards and best practices, and a "to-be" development session involving the program subject matter expert team that conducts a gap and comparative analysis of the as-is and benchmark information.

Current family readiness programs need to modernize in order to support the increased demands of multiple, sustained deployments.



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines

Scorecards are developed to track implementation of recommendations, and progress is briefed to the Marine Corps Community Services leadership. The following identifies recommendations based upon the conduct of Functionality Assessments.

Marine Corps
Community Services
Marine Corps Family
Team Building
Functionality
Assessment (2007)

The functionality assessment team concluded that current **Family Readiness Programs** need to modernize in order to support the increased demands of multiple, sustained deployments and meet the commandant's wartime footing mandate. **Marine Corps Family Team Building** should be expanded to support a Marine's extended family (spouse, child, parents).

The Marine Corps Family Team Building Survey identified negative perceptions of the Key Volunteer Network and showed family readiness communication methods required updated technology.

Appropriated fund family readiness budget should be established based on a per capita of \$10 per Marine per year for each unit or command.

A readiness assessment tool should be implemented to identify command family readiness risks.

Volunteer recruitment, motivation, and appreciation programs are not consistently supported or of sufficient quality; child care needs of volunteers and program participants are not supported in all cases; and volunteer reimbursement process is cumbersome and precludes timely payment.

Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines, photographer Sgt. Joseph A. Lee



Amanda Quinn (left) and her daughter Madilyn, speak with Elisabeth Spence (right) and her daughter Providence, while waiting to talk to their husbands over video teleconference at the Army Community Service center at Schofield Barracks.

Marine Corps Community Services
Exceptional Family Member
Functionality Assessment (2007)

The functionality assessment team identified that the **Exceptional Family Member Program** was focused on the wrong outcome — impacting program efficacy. The previous outcome was a “properly assigned Marine.”

To establish a continuum of care for exceptional family members, recommendations included simplification of the enrollment process, informed assignment of Marines, and information technology enhancements to include implementation of a **case management** system.

A staffing model was designed to ensure case management capability and qualified personnel to make informed enrollment and assignment decisions.

Additionally, a **school liaison officer** capability was recommended to focus on school

In the next 10 years, only **one-third** of Marines will reside on base.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM MARINE CORPS SURVEYS

An analysis of respondent background information found that 22 percent of families have more than one exceptional family member in their care.

needs of all school-age children at the installation, including exceptional family members.

Marine Corps Community Services Fitness Functionality Assessment (2006)

The Marine Corps Community Services Semper Fit program has been recognized by patrons as an important non-pay quality of life benefit.

In developing the “to-be,” the review group recognized the importance of maintaining its high quality level while growing the program to meet the current and future needs of a combat focused force.

Recommendations included examining future operational readiness equipment requirements, and research on future trends of functional exercise in a combat setting.

Marine Corps Community Services Clubs Functionality Assessment (2006)

To increase social opportunities for the military community, installation and headquarters personnel representing a cross-section of food and hospitality, clubs, and MCCS identified a key area for improvement as hosting additional special event offerings and family-friendly functions.

Marine Corps Community Services Golf Program Functionality Assessment (2006)

Personnel representing a cross-section of golf, business operations directors, and Marine Corps Community Services found it is essential to create a non-threatening golf learning environment to



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines, by Lance Cpl. Ronald Stauffer

Maj. Nick Nuzzo and his 2-year-old daughter Lolana color a Zebra mask together at the Honolulu Zoo during Military Appreciation Day.

meet the changing demographics of potential customers.

As such they recommended focusing on the needs of E1-E5s, establishing golf 101 for new players, recognizing work-life challenges of customers to cultivate families, juniors, and women.

Marine Corps Community Equipment Rental Functionality Assessment (2005)

Personnel representing a cross-section of Semper Fit, recreation and business operations drafted a broader mission statement for this program to “support and encourage healthy lifestyles by providing outdoor recreation opportunities through equipment and programming.”

The group identified a number of policy areas where clarification and consistency in application were needed. The need for developing, capturing, and utilizing appropriate accurate data was determined to be essential in implementing any recommendations.

Marine Corps Community Services Library Functionality Assessment (2004)

Installation and Headquarters personnel representing a cross-section of library subject matter experts found that the targeted population for library services has shifted its needs and desires away from the traditional facility-based program to more online research capabilities with remote access.

It is projected that in the next 10 years, only one-third of Marines will reside on base, thus spending only working hours on stations and, consequently, relying on virtual resources.

Recommendations to improve on-site service delivery included adjusting the hours, developing an outreach marketing plan, offering special



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines

Taking care of our families is a mission critical goal for the DoD.

events, expanding instructional services and exploring the use of wireless Internet. Recommendations for the virtual resources included 24/7 access to resources, the expansion of online databases, the inter-library loan program, and electronic services.

Recommendations to minimize the administrative burden placed on librarians included the development of a centralized list of resources that would support the recreational, educational, and professional military development needs of the users. A core list would free the librarian to provide more direct customer assistance.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENTS

Marine Corps Family Team Building Survey (2007)

Spouses and active duty members were generally satisfied with the range of programs, including the **Key Volunteer Network**, the **Lifestyle Insights, Networking,**

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM MARINE CORPS SURVEYS



Photo courtesy of U. S. Marines by Pfc. Mary A. Staes

Deanna Reed, a participant in the Mommy & Me playgroup, dances with her eight month-old daughter Elizabeth. The group is designed to support military spouses and create friendships for children and their parents.

Knowledge and Skills, and the Spouses' Learning Series.

Results of the survey led to program improvements to transition **Family Readiness Programs**.

Exceptional Family Member Program (2007)

An analysis of respondent background information found that 22 percent of families have more than one exceptional family member in their care.

Most of the respondents indicated that their command was generally supportive of their enrollment in the **Exceptional Family Member Program** (EFMP).

In general, respondents reported that enrollment in the EFMP did not hurt their ability to receive assignments necessary for career advancement, hurt their opportunity for promo-

tion, or hurt their opportunity to reenlist in the Marine Corps. Overall, respondents were favorable in their assessment of the EFMP at their current duty station, as well as with their total experience in the program.

In terms of providing care for their exceptional family member, only 6 percent of respondents reported that they needed care assistance for their exceptional family member.

Just under half of respondents use national or private support agencies to support their exceptional family member's special needs.

For those who do require additional support services, the most frequently reported services were medical (29 percent) and educational (25 percent).

The Value of Membership Clubs to Active Duty Marines (2006)

Overall, members were generally satisfied with their membership club, except in regard to club events, where users say they would like to see more theme nights and events.

Half of the Marine respondents agreed that the Clubs are currently a valuable military community service, while 32 percent were neutral and 18 percent disagreed.

A majority of the additional comments provided addressed the traditional role and value of the membership clubs in providing an environment that encouraged the development of camaraderie and esprit d' corps.

Marine Corps Community Services Education Center Program Assessment (2005)

The vast majority (93 percent) of **Education Center** program and service users were either satisfied or very satisfied.

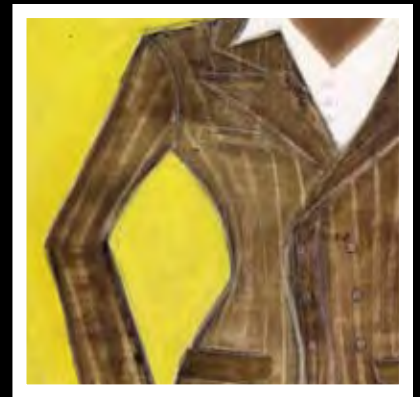
Users consistently reported that the program or service effectively addressed their educational needs and the majority reported acquiring the intended knowledge and skills of the program or service.



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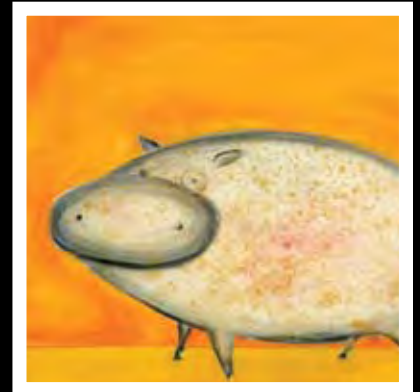


Spouse Career & Education



Parenting & Family

MILITARY ONESOURCE CENTER



Financial



TroopTube

Commanders' Resource For Quality of Life Surge Support



Deployment & Military Life



Health & Fitness



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Online Library

MILITARY ONESOURCE CENTER OVERVIEW

Resources For Commanders

“On-Demand Quality of Life Support for Commanders”

MILITARY ONESOURCE CENTER VISION

The Military OneSource Center manages joint outreach efforts and provides vehicles for surge support during deployment for the Services and for the National Guard and Reserve to step up services and support to military families as required. The Center emerged as an outgrowth of the successful implementation of the joint Military OneSource 24/7 Call center and website tools. It acknowledges the heightened importance of family support and communication, which was brought to the forefront during Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Resources Available for Installations or Units

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Online Library Resources	153

1.888.256.9920

CONTACT INFORMATION

Hotline Phone Number for Commanders

1.888.256.9920

Military OneSource Call Center and Online Personal Assistance

Why should you use Military OneSource Call Center and Online Assistance?

(i.e., How can Military OneSource Call Center and Online Assistance help you in your daily interactions with Service members and their families?)

- If you have a message for all of your troops and families, Military OneSource Call Center will tell each caller from your Command your message.
- You can have messages for your Command posted online during man-made and natural disasters to facilitate communication.
- You can request personalized webinars so you can communicate with troops and families off installation and during non-traditional work hours
- You may refer troops and families for assistance to Military OneSource Call Center and Online Assistance as a single trusted resource
 - Translation Capability - All services provided by Military OneSource Call Center can be simultaneously translated into over 160 different languages. Documents, such as transcripts, marriage licenses, birth certificates and lease/rental agreements, can also be translated.
 - Military OneSource Online Assistance is available in both English and Spanish with a single click.

Facts about Military OneSource Call Center and Online Assistance:

The top five reasons individuals call Military OneSource Call Center:

- couple relationships
- stress
- emergency financial resources
- deployment
- family relationships (children)

The top five reasons individuals access Online Assistance:

- balancing work and life
- coping with deployment
- preparing for deployment
- managing stress
- coping with grief and loss



Military OneSource Call Center and Online Personal Assistance CONTINUED

What is Military OneSource Call Center and Online Assistance?

- Confidential support for Active Duty, Reserve and Guard members and their immediate families anytime and anywhere worldwide
- 24/7 assistance and referral service via toll free telephone [1-800-342-9647](tel:1-800-342-9647)
- Internet access www.MilitaryOneSource.com

Phones are answered live by trained master's level consultants and consultation is available for issues such as:

- parenting and childcare
- elder care
- deployment, return and reunion
- health and wellness
- education
- crisis support
- finances
- relocation
- special needs

Service members and their families can request up to six face-to-face counseling sessions within a 30-minute driving range from their home. If an individual prefers, or a remote location dictates, telephonic or web-based counseling sessions are available.

Military OneSource Online Assistance includes:

- interactive tools
- locators
- educational materials in a variety of formats for ordering or downloading
- discussion boards
- recordings
- links to military and community resources
- webinars
- electronic newsletters

Wounded Warrior Resource Call Center

What is the Wounded Warrior Resource Call Center (WWRCC)?

In 2008, Congress directed its establishment to provide wounded, ill or injured Service members, as well as their immediate families and their primary caregivers, with a single point of contact to report:

- deficiencies in covered military facilities
- problems obtaining health care services
- receiving benefits information
- any other difficulties encountered

The WWRCC opened September 8, 2008. Service members, veterans, family members and/or caregivers can call the Military OneSource toll-free number [1-800-342-9647](tel:1-800-342-9647) which is answered 24/7 by a consultant.

The Wounded Warrior Resource Call Center will:

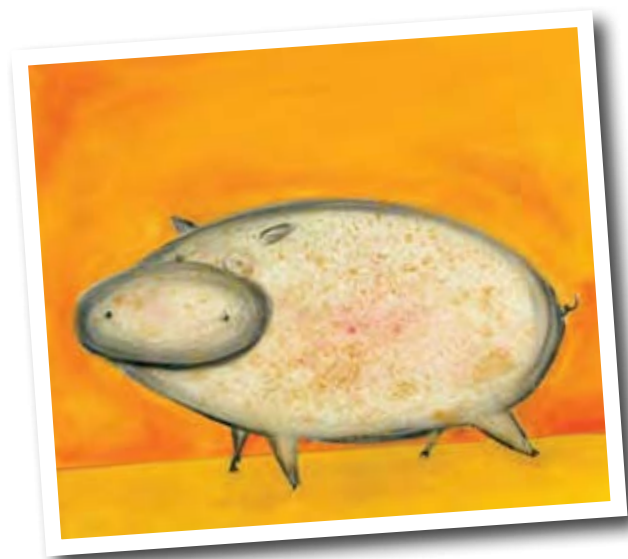
- Provide private immediate assistance
- Determine what resource will best address the situation or concern
- Have consultants to collaborate with Service Wounded Warrior program POCs to assure resolution of issues
- Maintain a resource library of unique and specialized resources for the wounded, ill and injured

How can the Wounded Warrior Resource Call Center benefit Service members and their families?

- Serves as an additional resource for Service members, family members or caregivers who have attempted to resolve issues/concerns without satisfaction
- Coordinates with Service branches, various non profit organizations, and federal agencies to resolve issues quickly and efficiently



Financial Readiness Challenge Roadshows



What is a Financial Readiness Challenge?

In response to today's economic challenges, DoD is sponsoring Financial Readiness Challenge events - tools available to installation commanders **upon request** to assist in providing financial education, workshops, and counseling opportunities to their troops and families.

Facts about Financial Readiness Challenge Events:

- Workshops can cover budgeting, saving and investing, debt reduction, identity theft, mortgage/foreclosure, car buying, and retirement planning
- No cost to installation commanders
- Audience size is variable and has ranged from 100 to 250.
Target audience: troops, spouses, youth
- Tailored to specific financial needs of the installation, e.g., credit card usage, mortgages

- Augment, not replace, the existing efforts by the installation commander to provide financial resources to troops and families
- Feature well-known financial experts as keynote speakers, tailored workshops, educational presentations, and one-on-one financial counseling
- Can include federal, state, local, and non-profit financial partner resources
- Financial counselors can remain after the event to provide counseling
- National Guard/Reserve members near installation encouraged to attend

Why should you use Financial Readiness Challenge events?

- Events support mission readiness by ensuring personal financial readiness
- Can support pre-, post-, during deployment cycle events
- Financially strong troops and families encourage retention
- Helps troops and families achieve life aspirations and goals

How can Financial Challenge Events benefit Service members & families?

- Ensuring financial readiness will reduce stress on families, relationships
- Financial literacy helps troops & families realize their financial goals
- Sound financial practices protect security clearances & prevent ID theft

Surge Counseling Upon Request

What is the purpose of counseling?

Short term, situational, problem-solving counseling services help Service members and their families cope with the normal reactions to the stressful/adverse situations created by deployments, reintegration and the military lifestyle

- For example, Ft. Riley Commander requested 30 minute sessions for each returning troop
- Counseling is available to spouses adjusting to deployment, particularly extended deployments, e.g., loneliness, family adjustment, grief

Facts about counseling

- Counseling may be provided to single Service members, couples, families or units
- Military OneSource offers counseling
 - face-to-face
 - telephonically at 1-800-342-9647
 - online at www.MilitaryOneSource.com
- The Military Family Life Consultant program provides
 - rotational counseling support for installations
 - on-demand support for the Guard and Reserve Components
 - outreach support for the Joint Family Support Assistance Program teams
- Counseling is also available at “Storefronts” provided at off-base community counseling locations
- Child Behavioral Family Life Consultants are available to work with children and youth facing the stress of multiple deployments, as well as their parents, faculty or staff of children and youth programs

How can counseling benefit Service members and their families?

Counseling helps facilitate the development of skills to cope with the military lifestyle (deployment stress, reintegration, relocation adjustment, separation, coping skills, homesickness, loss and grief) and may enhance life skills (anger management, conflict resolution, parenting, parent/child communication, relationship issues, and marriage enrichment).



Why should you use counseling?

- You may request counseling support for reintegration, deployment or other events

TroopTube Social Network



What is TroopTube?

TroopTube is the new online social networking capability to build community and a sense of belonging for Service members and for their families. TroopTube is designed to help them network and build morale, fostering connections with family and friends, which can serve as a source of emotional support. TroopTube was modeled after the successful YouTube that contains too much bandwidth for military computer use. TroopTube is a military unique website void of commercial advertising on MilitaryOneSource.com.

Facts about TroopTube:

TroopTube was soft launched at the Association of the US Army annual convention in Washington, DC on 6 October 2008. Among the videos available are messages from:

- President Barack H. Obama
- Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense

- Admiral Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- General David Petraeus, Commander, U.S. Central Command
- Sergeant Major of the Army, Kenneth O. Preston
- Marines of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit

Why should you use TroopTube?

- TroopTube is an ideal resource for military units, family readiness groups, and individual Service members and families.
- TroopTube provides a wholesome environment for users and is provided at no cost to them as a part of Military OneSource.
- TroopTube provides commanders with a medium to send messages to troops and families, e.g. holidays or deployments.

How can TroopTube benefit Service members and their families?

- Whether at homestation or deployed, TroopTube allows Service members and families the opportunity to share life's special moments or messages with words of encouragement.
- TroopTube is safe for users since the site is monitored for appropriate content and to ensure operational security is not compromised. TroopTube will not post videos that are believed to compromise security, nor will TroopTube post videos featuring graphic violence and obscenity. TroopTube reserves the right to decline a posting if it contains sensitive material or materials that fall outside of the screening criteria.

Military OneSource Tax Filing Services

What is the Tax Filing Service?

Military OneSource will be providing tax filing services for the 2008 tax season **beginning January 19, 2009**. Services will include free online tax filing services (both state and federal), and free telephonic tax consultations.

Facts about the Tax Filing Service:

To get access to the free tax filing services, go to the Military OneSource website on January 19, 2009. Enter the tax filing services via the link provided to our customized version of the tax filing site. Please do not register prior to January 19 by accessing a tax filing service website directly – doing so will result in a fee being charged for the use of the product.

Who is eligible?

- US Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Active Duty, Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status). (NOTE: United States Coast Guard personnel, spouses and dependent children are not eligible for this service. USCG should contact their local [VITA/Legal Office](#).)
- Spouses and dependent children of the Services noted above, and who are authorized in DEERS

- A family member who is taking care of the affairs of a Service member (in one of the Services noted above) when the Service member is deployed
- A Severely Injured Service member of one of the Services noted above, or a designated family member of a Severely Injured member who is incapable of handling his or her own affairs

Why should you use the Tax Filing Service?

- No cost to Service members – qualified tax consultants available
- Safe and secure online filing process uses industry-recognized security safeguards
- State income tax can be filed at no cost



YMCA Membership



What is the YMCA Initiative?

Provides fitness memberships and recreation programs for families of Title 10 deployed Guard and Reserve and geographically isolated personnel who are not connected to a military structure or support system. Some memberships have been provided at a few installations as a test model.

Facts about the YMCA Initiative:

Who is eligible? Title 10 Only

- Families of deployed National Guard and Reserve personnel (Army/Navy/Air Force/Marine Corps). Deployment must be for a minimum of 6 months.
- Active Duty personnel and their families at Independent Duty Stations
- Active Duty families assigned to newly established Joint Bases (Pilot program, limited memberships authorized at Joint Base locations)

- Relocated spouse and family members of deployed Active Duty personnel

In addition:

- Respite Child Care – Children up to age 12 of deployed Guard and Reserve personnel along with children of Independent Duty Personnel will be authorized free respite child care up to 16 hours per month, per child in participating YMCAs in those states preapproved by DoD with a comparable rating system.

Why should you use the YMCA Initiative?

- Supports families while spouse is deployed
- Encourages healthy lifestyle and sense of community
- YMCA core values/programs mirror military MWR programs

How can the YMCA Initiative benefit Service members and their families?

- Over 2000 participating locations in the US and Puerto Rico make the benefit readily available to many families
- Provides fitness, sports, recreation, social, health and wellness and family programs. Lets families have fun together
- Helps reduce stress and feeling of isolation in a family oriented environment

Regional Workshops Upon Request

What are Regional Joint Services Family Assistance Workshops?

Military OneSource staff conduct worldwide workshops to familiarize family support personnel with programs and resources available to them and to the families they serve. Participants are provided with hands-on experience for tools, resources and services available from Military OneSource to include:

- Child care locators
- Tax filing services
- TroopTube – online video network
- Spouse career advancement accounts
- Online financial calculators
- MilitaryINSTALLATIONS – online directory
- YMCA free memberships
- TumbleBooks – eBooks for kids
- Online libraries – playaway books
- Online health coaching
- Discussion boards
- PlanMyMove – online moving tool

Facts about Regional Workshops

Workshops are open to all Active Duty, Guard and Reserve family support program personnel. Participants may include installation family support staff from all Services' family centers and command and unit level readiness personnel. Education, child and youth, family health and religious ministry staff also should attend. Other military helping organizations, such as the American Red Cross, are also welcome to attend.

The 2009 workshop schedule and locations are:

- January
Anchorage & Fairbanks, Alaska
- February
Bellevue, Washington
- March
Norfolk, Virginia
- April
San Antonio, Texas
- May
Washington, DC
- June
Charleston, North Carolina

Registration, location specific information and workshop materials are available at: www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/service/conference.



Regional Workshops Upon Request CONTINUED

Why should you use the Regional Workshops?

You can request Regional Workshops for your installations – knowledge and services delivered to your staff to include:

- On-site counseling support
- On-site financial challenge events
- Military OneSource materials for installation outreach activities
- Development of communication plans for outreach to leaders, providers and to Service members and their families. The success of this year's workshops demonstrates the need for training and dissemination activities.

How can Regional Workshops benefit Service members and their families?

- Family Support staff can obtain the most up to date, accurate information
 - New online tools and applications
 - Services available through Military OneSource
 - Access to a global network of colleagues
- Increased reliable outreach to Service members and their families

DoD-DoL Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts



What is DoD-DoL Military Spouse Career Advancement Account Demonstration program?

The Department of Defense and the Department of Labor entered into a partnership to jointly fund the Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (CAA) Demonstration program. It addresses the education and credentialing challenges of our military spouses, focusing on portable career fields and high growth occupations.

Facts about CAA:

- Implemented at 18 installations in eight states since November 2007
 - California: San Diego Metro (Navy), Camp Pendleton (Marine Corps)
 - Colorado: Peterson AFB (Air Force), Fort Carson (Army) (includes spouses assigned to Shriever AFB (Air Force), and the U.S. Air Force Academy)
 - Florida: NAS Jacksonville (Navy) (includes NS Mayport, Blount Island Command Marines and Camp Blanding Army), Eglin AFB, Hurlburt Field (Air Force)
 - Georgia: Fort Benning (Army)
 - Hawaii: Schofield (Army), Hickam (Air Force), Pearl Harbor (Navy), Kaneohe Bay (Marine Corps)
 - Maine: Brunswick (Navy)
 - North Carolina: Fort Bragg (Army), Pope AFB (Air Force)
 - Washington: McChord AFB (Air Force), Fort Lewis (Army), Naval Base Kitsap (Navy)
- The accounts have a total maximum life of two years (24 calendar months from the training start date) for a total amount of up to \$6,000 per spouse.

- Military OneSource can assist the military spouse in finding a career path and institution that will provide the right training/education program, as well as additional financial assistance possibilities.

What is the purpose of the CAA?

- To help families sustain a more constant level of income during moves
- To assist spouses to develop careers – not just take jobs
- To support families in attaining their aspirations and goals that may be interrupted as a result of the mobile military lifestyle
- To tap the valuable work force potential for high-demand/high-growth industries in Finance, Technology, Health Care, Education, and Trade
- To support the President's initiatives in prioritizing spouse employment in the federal government by preparing the spouse with accredited education and training

DoD to expand CAA Program.

In 2009, all spouses of active duty military members will be eligible for these scholarships through Military OneSource, subject to availability of funds. Application is through Military OneSource, 1-800-342-9647. Military Spouses are encouraged to call Military OneSource and submit their applications.

Joint Family Support Assistance Program

What is the Joint Family Support Assistance Program?

The Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) was mandated by Congress in FY 2007 to better support National Guard and Reserve families. This program provides high quality, mobile support teams and assistance in 50 states and four territories.

- It augments existing family programs to provide a continuum of support and services during pre-deployment, deployment, post-deployment, reunion and reintegration
- Services are delivered in local communities through collaborative partnerships with the National Guard Bureau, federal, state, and local resources
- JFSAP also supports military members and their families who are geographically separated from installation support

Facts about JFSAP:

JFSAP teams were dispatched to 15 pilot states in November 2007, and to all states and territories in September 2008, to provide:

- Information and referrals to community services and support (MyState on Military OneSource)
- Non-medical counseling and education to individuals, families and groups
- Child and youth services, including assistance locating child care where possible
- Financial education and counseling
- On-demand support for events such as pre-deployment meetings and reunion ceremonies
- Community capacity building to support families' access to local resources such as Red Cross, churches and veterans' associations



The Results:

- JFSAP teams have provided outreach to 363,808 service members and their families at more than 7,699 events sponsored by commanders in all military components, states and territories.

Why should you use JFSAP?

The program is flexible and has the surge capability to meet commanders' needs during call-up, deployments and reunions.

- The JFSAP delivers services in local communities where members and families live, through collaborative partnerships with the Military Services, and federal, state, and local entities.
- It is a support service multiplier by broadening the network of resources beyond those that exist on installations.

How can JFSAP benefit Service members and their families?

In addition to providing direct support to members and families, JFSAP's mission is to integrate the myriad of existing resources into a community support network for military families. JFSAP can encourage Service members and families living across America to feel a sense of belonging and be able to access assistance and support at any time. Outreach teams inform National Guard and Reserve members of the opportunities available for face to face support.

Online Library Resources

Why does DoD need an Online Library?

Our mobile military members often don't have the resources of a brick and mortar library on hand to provide entertainment, learning or solace. The Online Library can provide those resources while the members are in transit or deployed.

What is the Online Library?

- Library resources in print, electronic and downloadable format available online, 24/7, at MilitaryOneSource.com
- Provides recreation, lifelong learning, reference and career resources for all ages and interests
- Resources available anywhere in the world where there is access to the internet

Facts about the Online Library:

- One stop shopping for all library needs
- Vast array of resources and databases for use by military personnel and their families 24/7, worldwide
- Widespread increase in online library services as economy worsens
- All resources including audio and ebooks are free
- Large inventory of Playaways (small electronic handheld books) and paperbacks available to order free

Why should you use the Online Library?

- Supports continuing education for military personnel
- Fosters career development and effective use of leisure time
- Support families with a myriad of resources for help with spouse education, exceptional family member support, home repair and much more
- Provides educational and recreational opportunities that otherwise may be cost prohibitive for military members in tough economic times



Online Library Resources CONTINUED

Auto Repair Reference Center (ARRC)

ARRC provides information on more than 31,660 vehicles from 1945 to the present with over 205,000 drawings, step-by-step photographs, 130,000 enhanced wiring diagrams, specifications, maintenance schedules, labor time guide, labor estimator and quick tips.

Career Library

Career Library™ offers a comprehensive information resource for career and college research.

DoD MWR Libraries Educational/ Life Long Learning Resource

Practice the ASVAB, SAT, ACT, GRE and CLEP. Search through nearly 4,200 two- and four-year accredited schools and find your perfect fit. Get help with your Resume and plan your future career.

Home Improvement Reference Center

Offers 26 major reference works in full text with more than 10,000 images and full-text magazines (e.g. This Old House) for home improvement assistance.

MyILibrary

As a unique offering to the military community, the Department of Defense is making available over 400 e-books including Encyclopedia Britannica, 95 books covering legal issues, 24 foreign language guides, and 169 “For Dummies” books.

NetLibrary –

Audio Books & E-books Collection

Over 2650 Full-text electronic versions of published books such as “ASVAB Core Review”, computer books, resume books and 213 Cliffs Notes.

PlayAway Books/Paperback Books

PlayAways are self contained audio book with ear buds and battery, weighing only 2 ounces, sent to military members free, allowing portability for listening to a book on the go, anywhere. In addition, pick from a large selection of fiction and non-fiction titles from the paperback book inventory.

Safari Books Online

Safari is an e-reference library where you can search across thousands of books from cover to cover or flip directly to the section you need in seconds.

Small Engine Repair Reference Center

This comprehensive resource contains 410 full text reference books with original photos and illustrations for all small engine repair assistance.

Tumblebook Library/Readables/

Talking Books

Ebooks/audio books for kids ages 4 through high school. Read, listen, play games.

“At the heart of that volunteer force is a contract between the United States of America and the men and women who serve in our military: a contract that is simultaneously legal, social, and indeed sacred. That when young Americans step forward of their own free will to serve, they do so with the expectation that they and their families will be properly taken care of ...”

— Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates,
Washington, D.C., October 20, 2008



Military OneSource Center

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(MILITARY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY POLICY)

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