



AC 64403

A guide for the families of mobilised members of the Territorial Army and the Regular Reserve



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Section One

Introduction

The contents of this guide are designed to provide general advice - it is important to ensure you have the most up to date information and in most cases this should be sought from your nominated Unit Welfare Officer.

This guide has been prepared to help you during the operational deployment of your soldier¹. A guide alone will never replace the vital part that your family and friends can play in supporting you through what may be a difficult and at times lonely affair. Remember that Army welfare support, in one form or another, can extend to everyone; spouse, civil partner, partner, mother, father, son or daughter, you all have someone to turn to and a list of useful phone numbers and websites is included in the guide. So read on and use what you feel you need.

This booklet focuses on spouses and civil partners. However soldier's partners and parents of single soldiers may also find it useful both as a reminder to put things in order prior to deployment and as a guide of where to turn to for support. Not all of the information here will be relevant to everybody - but keep it handy (perhaps by the phone) in case you need it later.

Start by writing your soldier's details on the inside front cover as you will need them nearly every time you make a phone call about them to someone in the Army.

Prior to your soldier's deployment you should be contacted by your nominated Unit Welfare Officer who should be your first point of contact for most matters. Put their phone number in the front of the book as well. If you do not know who they are check with your serving soldier who should provide you with the contact details. In any event you can also use the other numbers inside the front cover if you need to.

The Army does not want you to feel isolated whilst your loved one is away. Your friends and family will probably be your strongest support network, however, if you have any issues you feel unable to handle, or you just need to talk, please remember that there is always someone in the Army you can turn to for advice and support.

¹ Throughout the booklet the term serving soldier is used. This is a generic term to cover officers and other ranks, male or female of any Regiment or Corps.



Section Two

Preparing for deployment

As soon as you know that your soldier is going to be mobilised you should start making plans to help you and your family manage whilst they are away. Many areas of your life will be affected by their departure but the deployment will be a lot easier to bear if you and your family are well prepared. Some key issues you might want to think about are outlined in this section.

Sorting out the Finances

Your soldier being mobilised may affect your family's financial affairs. You need to be confident that everything is set up correctly and that you will be able to continue making any regular payments, such as mortgage or insurance policies. Army pay and allowances are covered in more detail later in this section. Once your soldier leaves, you may be responsible for all of the household finances, including sorting out any problems that may arise. The following tips may help to avoid any difficulties:

- Talk over your budget with your soldier prior to deployment. Many soldiers on operations find that they are able to save as there is little opportunity to spend money. Set a realistic amount for them to spend whilst away, and budget for their cheques to come out of the account.
- If you have separate bank accounts ensure that you both have access to whatever funds you may require and that funds are available in case of an emergency.
- It may be that the only means for your soldier to get cash in theatre is by cashing UK cheques. Make sure your soldier has plenty of cheques to last the deployment, don't forget these cheques can take a long time to come out of

your account.

- Consider making bill payments by direct debit or standing order from your bank account.
- Discuss where you might be able to save money whilst your soldier is away (eg cancelling the sports package from your satellite TV provider, gym membership, subscriptions etc). Be realistic about additional costs of entertaining children as a single parent.
- Consider asking your soldier to authorise you to deal with all the finances and insurances they may have in their sole name. Check what the companies concerned will need to make this arrangement, such as a letter of authorisation or Power of Attorney, which can be set up with a solicitor.
- Take time to think about reviewing regular savings. There are many tax-efficient options available and numerous ways of making the most of your money. Consult an Independent Financial Advisor to discuss options.
- Consult MoneyFacts for information on the best rates available www.moneyfacts.co.uk

Use the check list of key documents at the end of this section which you may need whilst your soldier is away.

Wills and Insurance

Those deploying should consider drawing up a will with a solicitor prior to arriving at the Reserves Training and Mobilisation Centre (RTMC). At the RTMC there is a briefing on wills and insurance which will cover the following:

- Every adult should have a will detailing their specific wishes in the event of their death, this is especially

important when embarking on a deployment. This can be done free of charge for soldiers who should complete an MOD Form 106. Consult a solicitor if you feel that your current arrangements are not adequate. This is particularly important if you own property or other valuable assets or have special wishes that you want noted formally. It is also worth discussing what your soldier might want you to do if they are seriously wounded or killed in action - if you are not married or in a civil partnership, your soldier might want to formalise these wishes in their will.

- If you are buying property you may suggest to the solicitor who is working on your behalf to produce a will at the same time.
- You and your soldier are encouraged to review your family's personal insurance needs. Whilst it remains MOD policy not to sponsor any commercial organisation, you and your soldier should consider joining the PAX or Service Life Insurance (SLI) schemes, which offer accident cover and a life cover option and can be taken out for the duration of the tour and especially designed to take account of the unique needs of Armed Forces service. Further details about PAX/SLI can be found in Section 3. Decisions with regard to the selection of insurance services or products are a personal responsibility and if appropriate you should seek advice from a qualified financial advisor. Remember some insurance companies may not cover death in service, so read the small print.
- All personnel should join the Army Dependants' Trust (ADT) for the duration of their mobilised service. Application forms are held at the RTMC and annual subscriptions are currently £5.00. ADT offers immediate financial support to families, following the death of an ADT member.

Legal matters

Power of Attorney

You and your soldier may wish to consider a Power of Attorney (Lasting Power of Attorney in England and Wales, Continuing Power of Attorney in Scotland and Enduring Power of Attorney in Northern Ireland) which is a legal document authorising you to act on behalf of your serving soldier in some circumstances. In England and Wales a form can be downloaded from www.publicguardian.co.uk, those with more complex affairs and those normally resident in Scotland or Northern Ireland should seek the advice of a solicitor. A Power of Attorney can be revoked on your soldier's return or left in place.

Parental Responsibility

Those unmarried fathers remaining behind who are either step-parents or partners with responsibility for children (if they haven't registered as the father on the birth certificate of the child) should consider getting parental responsibility which provides formal legal recognition of their status when dealing with authorities over child(ren) issues such as schooling and health matters; this is called:

In loco parentis:- the legal doctrine under which an individual assumes parental rights, duties and obligations without going through the formalities of Legal Adoption.

Housing

If renting a property and the tenancy is in the name of the deploying soldier, ensure that this will not cause any difficulties with the landlord prior to deployment. Those who own property registered only in the name of the deploying soldier may wish to seek legal advice to ensure that there will be no complications whilst the owner of the property is deployed.

Private Fostering

If during the deployment any children are to be left in the care of someone who is not a close relative for a period of over 28

days there are legal requirements to notify the local authorities to ensure the child receives the best possible care. The Army Welfare Service or your Local Authority Children Services department will be able to provide you with more advice.

Access to Military Establishments

Access to Military Establishments

Dependants of deployed soldiers may apply for an Unescorted Visitor Day Pass for their local station for the duration of deployment. Once authorised, passes are issued at the guardroom on arrival and returned there on leaving the station. Contact your UWO more information.

Army Pay, Allowances and Pensions

Loss of earnings and benefits

If your soldier is mobilised and their civilian pay is higher than their Service pay, they can normally claim the difference; this applies equally to those who are self employed. It is calculated and paid as a daily amount. They may also be able to claim for the cost of replacing certain benefits in kind that their employer suspends while they are mobilised, such as health insurance, educational fees for a dependent child or accommodation. There are limits to the amounts that can be claimed and exact figures can be obtained from your soldier's unit Human Resources (HR) admin staff. The regulations aim to ensure that individuals and their families do not suffer significant financial hardship during a deployment.

Financial assistance regulations

You or your soldier can buy a full copy of the Reserve Forces (Call-out and Recall) (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2005, from the Office of Public Sector Information (price £3.00) or view them at www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20050859.htm

Army Pay

Army pay is determined by rank, profession/branch or trade, length of service, qualifications held and performance. Your soldier will be able to find out their details from their unit HR admin staff and their monthly pay slip.

Army Allowances

Allowances exist to ensure that your soldier receives financial recompense for things that are not addressed in their pay, these may include:

- **Longer Separation Allowance (LSA)**
This allowance compensates personnel experiencing separation over and above that compensated for by the X-Factor. As a general principle, it is paid at increasing amounts in order to target those who experience the most separation throughout their service. It also provides some support for those who are voluntarily separated from their immediate family. Contact unit HR admin staff for more detail.
- **Local Overseas Allowance (LOA)**
LOA may be payable to those who deploy through for instance Germany or Cyprus but it will not be paid in an area or theatre where the Deployment Welfare Package (DWP) is authorised.
- **Operational Allowance (OA)**
OA is paid at a flat rate for each day that your soldier serves on authorised operations.

- **Concessionary Families Travel Warrants**
For deployment of over four months a travel warrant or motor mileage claim is available for the spouse of a soldier deployed for travel to visit parents, parents-in-law or Nominated Next of Kin/Emergency Contact. The numbers of travel warrants increases the longer the soldier is deployed. Travel warrants can also be reversed to allow

parents, family etc to visit you at your home especially if it is difficult for you to travel. Eligibility should be confirmed via your soldier's unit HR admin staff.

- **Council Tax relief for troops on operations**

Armed Forces personnel deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan who pay council tax for a property in the UK will benefit from a tax-free council tax relief payment, based on the number of days in theatre. Payment will be implemented from 1 April 2008 and will cover deployments from 1 October 2007. Your soldier should confirm details with their unit HR admin staff.

- **Post Operational Leave (POL)**

All personnel on a 6 month tour will be granted 20 working days POL. For those who do not complete 6 months, their POL is assessed as 1 day POL per 9 days deployed. Any Public Holidays that fall during POL are to be added to the overall entitlement.

- **Maternity, Paternity & Adoption Leave**

Mobilised personnel are granted the same maternity, paternity and adoption leave entitlements as Regular personnel.

- **Annual Leave Allowance**

Annually your soldier is eligible for 30 working days leave; this will be calculated pro rata based on time mobilised. On completion of the final calculation of eligibility, any leave (other than Public Holidays, POL, compassionate and R&R when deployed on operations) is normally deducted from the final total.

Company cars

If your soldier has to return a company car while they are mobilised, and that car was the only car available for use by their spouse, partner or dependants, then the soldier may be able to claim a flat-rate allowance per day as part of a 'Reserves Award', check with unit HR admin staff for detailed instructions.

Other expenses

The expenses your soldier may be eligible to claim are:

- costs for care of a dependant child.
- costs for care of a dependant relative.
- costs for care of a pet, excluding veterinary costs.
- extra insurance for leaving their own home empty.
- essential maintenance on their own home.

Self-employed Reservists

If your soldier is self-employed, they can claim as a Reservist for the difference between their Service pay and their earnings from their business.

Claim for expenses or loss of earnings and benefits

Your soldier can make a claim for financial support at any time after the start of their period of mobilised service and up to four weeks after the last day of service. However, the earlier they make a claim, the earlier it can be paid. To make a claim, they will have to supply the following information:

- full name, date of birth, Service number and rank.
- written evidence of their earnings - eg P60.
- a statement from their employer that confirms that their earnings or part of them are being suspended for the period of their call-up, and outlines which earnings, if any, they will continue to receive.
- written evidence of their Service pay in the 52 weeks preceding call-up.
- details of health, medical or life insurance, school fees, accommodation costs, company car, and any other relevant benefits that their employer provides for them or their dependants.
- a statement that any of the benefits above have been suspended for the period of call-up.
- employer's name, address, telephone number and a named contact.
- National Insurance number.
- staff, works or clock number.

- contact details, including their permanent address, telephone number, any fax number and email address, and if they are making an allowable expenses claim, they will need to provide evidence to support any estimated costs, such as previous receipts or other information that might support the claim.

These notes are to help you to understand the processes for claiming - your soldier will be given detailed instructions about how to make a claim when they receive their mobilisation pack. If you have any questions in the meantime, speak to your Unit Welfare Officer.

Local Currency

The currency used by your soldier on operations will depend on the local situation, they should be able to tell you more about this after their pre-deployment briefing.



Pensions

If your soldier is mobilised, they will be asked to opt for one of these pension arrangements:

- for the period of mobilised service to count towards the Reserve Forces Pension Scheme (RFPS) an occupational scheme paid for by the Ministry of Defence (MOD).
- to remain in any civilian occupational or personal pension scheme.
- or to join the State Second Pension (S2P).

If they choose to remain a member of a civilian occupational pension scheme, the MOD will pay the employer's pension contributions, provided they continue to pay the employee's element. They will need to provide the MOD with details of their civilian employment pension scheme.

Forces Railcard

Although not an allowance, your soldier, if likely to be mobilised for a period of at least 3 months, is entitled to purchase a Forces Railcard for themselves and their spouse/civil partner if they are in a legal relationship. Cards issued to mobilised personnel are to be surrendered prior to their last day of mobilised service; no refund of purchase cost is applicable. Costs are levied for the purchase of railcards for each eligible individual. Railcards are available from your soldier's unit HR admin staff.

Enquiries

All enquiries about Army pay, allowances and pensions matters should be made to your soldier's unit pay or welfare staff in the first instance. Where this is not practicable it is possible to contact the Joint Personnel Administration Enquiry Centre by email JPAC@SPVA.mod.uk phone 0800 0853600 or fax on 0141224 3586 **though data protection issues may affect the amount of personal information that can be provided.** Advice on civilian pensions should be sought from your soldier's unit HR admin staff or an independent financial advisor.

Why are you going away?

How can I tell you about the things I do?

Where are you going?



Prepare Children and Young People

Many parents worry about the negative impact of deployments on children. However, deployments offer many positive growth opportunities. Several psychological studies show that despite the distress during separation significant developmental gains are made by many children'. Some positive aspects of separation include:

- Fosters maturity:** Military children encounter more situations and have broader and more varied experiences than children from non-military families.
- Induces growth:** Military children learn more about the world and how to function within a community at an earlier age. Taking on additional responsibilities in a parent's absence provides a chance to develop new skills and develop hidden interests and abilities.
- Encourages independence:** Military children tend to be more resourceful and self-starters.

Prepares for separations. In a life-style filled with greetings and farewells from deployments and relocations, helps for future farewells and building new friendships.

Strengthens family bonds: Military families make emotional adjustments during a separation which often lead them to discover new sources of strength and support among themselves. A major function of family readiness is assuring that the family is aware of all support services available to them and how to access these services. It is imperative that the family realize that they are not alone and, chances are, whatever problem or situation they encounter has been addressed before.

- With this in mind:
- Be honest with them about where their soldier is going, but explain things in simple terms in an unemotional way if you can - if they see that you are worried or upset, they may feel the same way.



- Even young children talk to each other, and older children may pick up on stories in the media. Be aware of what they are seeing and hearing, and be ready to explain what is happening to allay any fears.
- Plan to keep the children's routine as normal as possible. Usually, when normal things continue to take place, children will feel that everything is actually normal. This is especially true of younger children.
- Consider telling the school that your child has a parent deployed away on overseas operations.
- Consider starting up some new activities or clubs for the children whilst their soldier is away. This will help whilst they are missing their soldier, and will also provide a break for you.
- Seek advice if you think that your child needs help to deal with their issues. Consider talking to a teacher, your health visitor or GP, or refer to the welfare agencies detailed in this guide.

Storybook Soldiers

Storybook Soldiers is a scheme which provides a link between parents who are away on operations and their children. Soldiers are recorded reading a bedtime story for their children to listen to. Music and sound effects are added and the finished disk is really special - a wonderful way for soldiers to be part of their children's life while they are deployed, not just at bedtime but on car journeys and at other times of the day. If you want to know how to make a Storybook CD for your child? Go to www.storybooksoldiers.co.uk, the contact telephone numbers for details for UK and Germany are on the website.

Hello from Home - This free Army booklet is produced for younger children to help them keep in touch with their parent while away. This book can be ordered for each family through your welfare support staff using reference AC 64444. Please ask if you would like a copy for your child or children.



Relationships

You may not have been separated from your soldier for long periods before, and this can be a worrying time, especially because this is an operational deployment. Increased fears and worrying may play a part in the run-up to departure, for both of you and your soldier. Try to make time to talk to each other. You will know what works best for both of you, but here are some tips to think about:

- You may be unhappy that your soldier is being mobilised, but don't take it out on them! They are only doing their duty.
- Your soldier's brain may 'arrive' in theatre before their body does. They will be thinking about their job and what they have to do when deployed, which may leave you feeling that they aren't thinking about you. This won't be true, so try to make allowances if their mind seems to be elsewhere.
- Consider going out together for a quiet meal or even just for a walk. This might help you both to focus on whatever issues need discussing, without distractions. It would be hard to sit facing each other over dinner and say nothing to each other!
- Don't let them leave with any unresolved problems, and try to make up if you've had an argument. This may be difficult, but if there are any unsettled issues after they depart, one or both of you will probably end up feeling guilty or resentful. Let's face it - neither of you need any emotional baggage during their time away!

The Car

If the car is not being used

- Your soldier should complete a SORN (Statutory Off Road Notification) declaration (available from the Post Office). This should mean that you do not have to pay Road Tax for the period of their deployment. You can also do this by phone, by contacting DVLA on 0870 240 0010.
- The car should be parked OFF the road.
- Change the car insurance to 'Laid Up' cover for the period that the car will not be driven. This often means paying full insurance for the duration but claiming back 50% of the premiums at the end of the laid up period. Do check that your soldier will be able to drive the car during R&R.
- Arrange for the engine to be turned over regularly.
- Keep an eye on the car.

If you are using the car

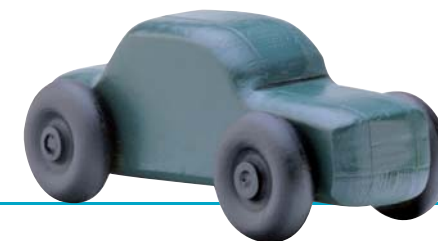
Make sure that:

- If your soldier is the 'Main Driver' on the insurance policy, check with your insurer to see if this needs to change whilst they are away on deployment outside the UK.
- The car is fit for driving before your soldier goes away eg water/coolant/spare blankets and torch in the boot in case of breakdowns.
- The car is serviced at the correct intervals and MOT'd on or before the due date.
- The car tax and insurance are renewed when they are due.
- Make sure you know where the spare key is.
- Consider joining a reputable breakdown, repair and recovery organisation for additional peace of mind.

Key Documents

Think about the documents you may need access to. The following check list may be of help:

- Will.
- Power of attorney.
- Birth Certificates.
- National Insurance Numbers.
- Passports.
- Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate.
- Insurance Policies including house, contents, life, health and critical illness.
- Car Insurance Policy and Certificate (and how to claim).
- Car Log Book.
- Car MOT Certificate.
- Bank Statements.
- Guarantees.
- TV Licence.
- European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) - if travelling within the European Community.
- Savings Accounts Books and the details of other investments including TESSA, PEPs, ISA shares and unit trusts.
- Don't forget, if you are going to need passwords for internet accounts or online banking you should discuss this with your soldier.



Dates to Note
(please remember these may change)

Event	Date
Pre-tour leave	
Departure day	
Rest and Recuperation (R&R) starts	
Rest and Recuperation (R&R) ends	
Home at last!	
Post Operational Leave starts	
Post Operational Leave ends	

Pre-Deployment Check List

Check	Tick (when complete)
Do you know who your nominated Unit Welfare Officer is and how to make contact with them?	
Have you got the correct contact details including postal address and BFPO number for your soldier written down in this booklet?	
Do you have a 'guest' account for ArmyNET?	

Check	Tick (when complete)
Are you content that finances (Standing Orders/Direct Debits set up) are arranged during the deployment?	
Are you authorised to deal with the bank, credit card agencies and other financial organisations?	
Have you checked up on any legal matters, spoken to a solicitor (if necessary), and do you know where the will is?	
Is the car prepared (serviced, MOT etc)? Do you know a trusted mechanic or garage?	
Have you noted down important dates for insurance renewals etc?	
Has your soldier checked and arranged life insurance/PAX etc?	
Do you know where all the key documents are should you need them?	
Do you know what to do in a home emergency for your: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water?• Gas?• Electricity?	
Do you know how and when to phone the Joint Casualty and compassionate Centre (JCCC)?	
Do you know who to contact in an emergency?	

Section Three
During Deployment

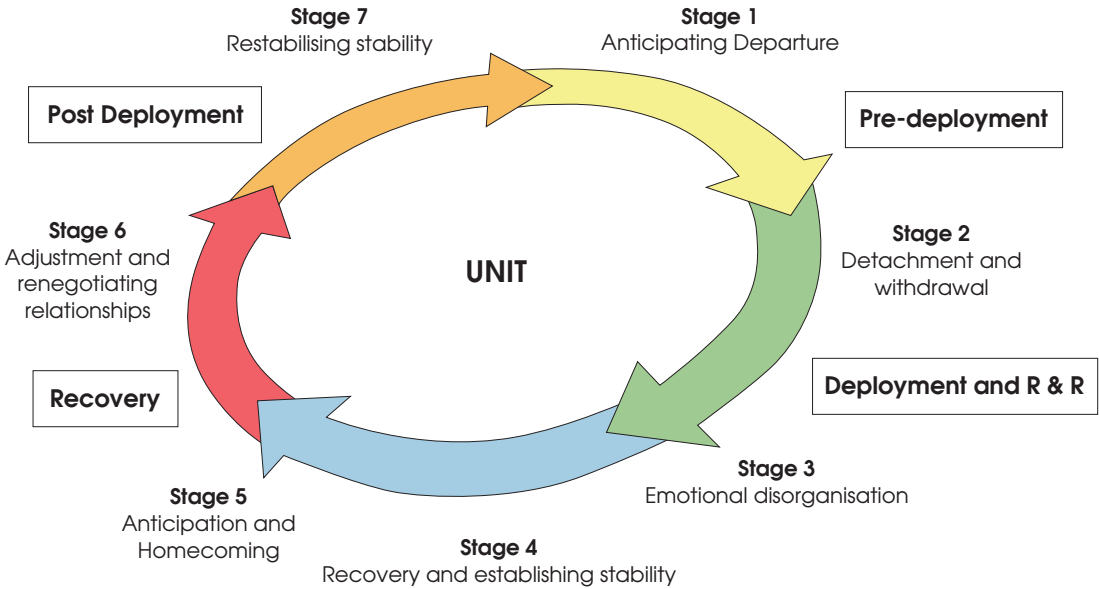
The Emotional Cycle of Deployment

Introduction

Keeping your emotions in balance can be a real challenge when your serving soldier is deployed. You may experience different emotions in clearly defined stages, starting when you first learn about the deployment and continuing until well after your serving soldier has returned.

As you go through this “emotional cycle of deployment,” you may experience feelings ranging from fear, anger, and loneliness to joy, relief, and anticipation. Sometimes you may feel a combination of these emotions all at one time.

The section will help you know what to expect. It will also help you recognize signs that you may be having trouble coping during any stage of the cycle. Finally, it will help you understand where to find help if you need it. This knowledge and awareness will help you manage the emotions that families may experience during their loved one’s deployment.



Before the deployment

When you first learn about the deployment, you're likely to see-saw between pretending that the deployment isn't really going to happen (sometimes called "denial") and starting to think about what it will be like to live without your serving soldier for a long period of time. You may feel confused, stressed, resentful, or depressed. Many couples argue more than usual as they try to take care of all of their pre-deployment tasks.

As the time of departure comes closer, some family members begin to feel detached or withdrawn as their serving soldier invests more time and emotional commitment in the operational mission.

Common reactions to an impending deployment include feelings of hopelessness and impatience. Some couples may feel a decrease in emotional or physical closeness.

If you experience any of these emotions during the pre-deployment period, remember that it's important to:

Keep the lines of communication open. It's important to talk about your own feelings and to listen when your serving soldier shares his or her feelings. It's also helpful to discuss what you expect from each other during the deployment.

Create opportunities for lasting memories during the separation. It may not be easy to set aside the "darling-do" lists, the pre-deployment preparations, or your mixed feelings about getting too close before the separation. But building in some quality time together in a relaxed atmosphere will provide warm memories to sustain you during the deployment.

Get to know other military spouses who are going through the same experience. By participating in family briefs and organized activities within the unit you can find

comfort in sharing your experiences and begin building a network of support during the deployment.

During the deployment

Family members may go through an adjustment period in the first weeks after their serving soldier leaves.

You may have feelings of sadness, depression, disorientation, anxiety, loneliness, or anger, or combinations of those feelings. At times you may feel overwhelmed. Fortunately, this feeling of being on an emotional roller coaster often gives way to a growing sense of self confidence, independence, and freedom.

Here are some suggestions that have helped others cope during a serving soldier deployment:

Try to find things to look forward to. Take a class, volunteer, or start a project you've always wanted to do. Set some personal goals for yourself during the deployment period and make a point of be open to new experiences and friendships.

Reach out to others who are in the same situation. Remember that you aren't alone. Plan an event with other families who are coping with a deployment or find a support group through your military community.

Don't try to hide your feelings. It's normal to feel sad, lonely, or angry when you've been separated from your serving soldier. You don't have to hide these feelings - that may just make it harder to deal with them. Talk about how you feel with people whom you trust.

Do something special for yourself and your family. Rent a film or cook a meal that your serving soldier wouldn't necessarily enjoy. Plan fun outings with the children during free time. Make time to read a book you've wanted to read or visit with a friend.

Try to concentrate on the things you can control. It's normal to worry about your serving soldier's safety during a deployment or about when he or she will come home, but remember, these are things you can't control. Try to focus on things that you can control, like spending time with family and friends or signing up for a course or volunteer opportunity.

Ignore rumours. The military may not be able to give detailed information about the whereabouts and activities of specific units during a deployment. This makes for a climate where it's easy for rumours and gossip to get started. It may be difficult to ignore rumours or gossip, but you'll be much better off if you do. Rely on official sources of information when your serving soldier has been deployed.

Learn some stress management techniques that work for you. The stress of living without your serving soldier can take a toll on the way you feel and think. Try out some different ways to relieve stress, such as an exercise class, keeping a journal of your thoughts and feelings, or practicing relaxation or deep breathing.

Seek support from your faith community. Many people find comfort and solace in their faith communities during difficult times.

Take care of yourself. Get enough sleep and exercise, eat healthy meals, and be sure to carry a bottle of water with you. It can be easy to become dehydrated when you're preoccupied and under stress.

Homecoming and the post-deployment period

As the end of the deployment gets nearer, you may experience growing excitement and anticipation, as well as apprehension. You'll wonder how your serving soldier has changed, knowing that you have changed, too. You may have concerns about what your relationship will be like after you've been apart for so long.

The post-deployment period can last from a few weeks to several months. You may experience stress and frustration as you and your serving soldier renegotiate your relationships roles and responsibilities.

You may also feel confused and uncertain, as well as joyful, as you work with your serving soldier to reclaim your intimacy. The reintegration process may be more complicated if your serving soldier is having finding it difficultly readjusting after the deployment.

There are several things you can focus on to reduce stress. Here are a few suggestions:

Maintain a positive, nonjudgmental attitude. There may be uncomfortable moments as you and your service member get reacquainted and begin rebuilding your relationship. The right attitude will help to lower stress and frustration when getting back together doesn't seem to be going the way you expected.

Talk openly and honestly about your experiences during the deployment and how you've changed. It can help you re-establish a foundation of healthy communication and encourage your service member to trust you with his or her deployment experiences.

Try to be patient. It may be some time before you and your spouse feel relaxed and comfortable together. You may have to modify your expectations often during the post-deployment period, so it's important to keep in mind that time and patience are critical to the process of recovering from combat experience and in re-establishing an intimate relationship.

Make plans. Making plans together - whether it's for a weekend outing or something more elaborate - can help you focus on your life together and the future. Talking together about dreams and ideas can help you feel closer.

It can also help reduce anxiety about where your relationship is going.

Children. Don't overwhelm children with expectations of rosy reunions. They may worry about their role in the drama. If anything, play it down somewhat. Serving parents: Don't rush at your children and sweep them into your arms. If they haven't seen you for months they will easily be frightened. Be casual and let them come to you. Take your time.

Sources of Support

At any stage in the emotional cycle of deployment, families can feel overwhelmed and unsure about their ability to cope. It's critical to remember that asking for help isn't a sign of weakness - it's a sign that you care about yourself and your family.

Use the support available to find help in assessing your needs if you're still having trouble adjusting after a few months, seek professional help.

There are many organisations, Service and voluntary, offering advice, assistance and financial support to Servicemen and women, their spouses and their children. Your soldier's Unit Welfare Officer or your nominated local Army Unit Welfare Officer should be your first point of contact. If you don't know who this is ask your soldier or contact the RTMC Helpline. Other sources of support are listed at page 27.

Remember Reunion Is a Process ... Not An Event...

So ... Be Realistic, Go Slow, Share Your Expectations, Stick To Your Budget, Communicate and Be Open To Help.

Keeping in Touch during deployment

During deployment, communication is more important than ever. Find the method that works best for you and your loved ones.

Forces Aerogrammes

Otherwise known as 'Blueys', these are a way of sending letters and messages FREE to your soldier. It is a good idea to number or date your blueys, so that you will both know if any have gone astray. Please note that you should never put anything inside a bluey, or it will be treated as surface mail and take ages to arrive! Normal delivery time is 4-6 days. Ask in your local Post Office or unit for a supply of blueys for you and any children to use. Blueys can be obtained free from Post Offices and can be posted free of charge. Letters and packets up to 2Kg in weight can be sent at the Forces special rate. Rates are available on request at the Post Office or at www.bfpo.mod.uk

The postal addresses should be obtained from your soldier and it should include:

- Number, Rank, Name
- Platoon or Department (Company/Squadron or Battery)
- Unit
- Operation NAME
- BFPO Number

Letters

Letters are inexpensive, and they can be re-read during times of loneliness. Write letters as if you are talking to your loved one. Let him or her know about daily activities, share family news. Send local newspaper articles of interest. Number your letters because delivery can be irregular. Send photos or the children's artwork which can be easily carried and proudly displayed. Photographs of family members doing everyday chores and activities can lessen the miles between you. Most of all, write often!

Care Packages

These are like sending a little bit of home to your loved one. Use sturdy containers and be careful about sending perishable goods - mail can take longer than expected. Safeguard your privacy - packages are often opened in front of others. Don't send anything that would embarrass you or your loved one in front of others. Items such as alcohol, tobacco, toxic or flammable items and aerosols/pressurised containers should not be sent, and note that all packages are x-rayed as a safeguard. Remember to ensure the package does not exceed 2Kg, which is the maximum weight permitted. Visit www.bfpo.mod.uk for further information.

Enduring Families Free Mail Service (EFFMS)

This service now allows friends and family to send packages of up to 2kg to named service personnel on Operation HERRICK and TELIC for free. Visit www.bfpo.mod.uk for further information.

Phone Calls

Your soldier will normally get a welfare phone allowance of 30 mins per week during the operation. Additional top up cards can be brought in theatre or topped up by you by ringing the Paradigm contact centre on 01438 282121. (You will need a credit/debit card and your soldier's Paradigm and Service number). Please remember that it is unlikely that you will be able to phone your soldier directly whilst they are away on operations. Write down the key points you want to discuss and organise, wherever possible, a time for calls to be received by you, ensuring that the children are not outside playing, making the most of the time available.

Free Voice Messages

Using Land Line for free - Ring the Paradim Service Tel: 0800 0510737 Voice Mail. Type your soldiers Paradim number using the land-line key pad, leave your message. The voice mail service holds a number of messages in the system, these are then free for your soldier to pick up when they have time.

CDs/DVDs/Audio and Video cassettes

Children and loved ones want to see where the soldier is, what things look like "over there". The soldier wants to know that everyone is happy and healthy. CDs/DVDs/Audio and Video cassettes are a great way to share thoughts and feelings, and can be replayed over and over again.

E-mail

E-mail facilities may be available. Detachments may have an email facility for personnel away from home. Consider using ArmyNET which provides a safeguarded email facility.

BFBS Radio and TV

The Services Sound and Vision Corporation (SSVC) provide a radio and TV service in some operational theatres. Requests can be made and messages passed by going on www.ssvc.com and a short video showing the

services in Iraq and Afghanistan can be viewed at www.ssvc.co/bfbs/tv/dtt/index.htm

E-Blueys

E-bluey is a means of sending a letter, composed on a computer, to someone overseas. It is much quicker than sending a hand-written bluey, and is completely private, arriving in theatre in a sealed envelope. You will need a PC that connects to the internet and an email address. (If you do not have your own email address, you have the option to register for a free Yahoo email account during the set-up procedure.) You can register at www.bfpo.org.uk

How Does It Work?

The e-bluey combines speed and privacy because of the integrated mail printer in the overseas theatre. It prints,

folds and seals all e-blueys without anyone seeing the content. E-blueys sent from overseas to the UK or other BFPO addressees are downloaded and printed, then posted first class.

Worried About Internet Costs?

Letters can be composed off-line using MS Word or a similar word processing package, then copied and pasted into the system. Alternatively, you can download the Offline Composer from the E-bluey website, meaning that you only need to connect to the internet when you are ready to send your letter.

Don't Have a Computer with Internet Access?

Most local libraries have internet computers that can be used either free or at minimal cost. You could also seek assistance from your local HIVE which provides free internet access.

ArmyNET

ArmyNET is a secure website that every soldier can register to use, they can also give up to five families a guest account which allows access to useful information and news about deployment from a unit's ArmyNET welfare webpage.

Your soldier will need to register first, before any other member of the family can be given a guest login. Ask your soldier to register before they depart and to organise a guest account for you as well.

If you soldier hasn't been able to register you, family members can apply to register themselves by using the guest log-in facility on the home page at www.armynet.mod.uk. Registering this way means you must know the ArmyNET username of your sponsor in order to complete your request to sign-up as a guest. The details you enter are sent to your sponsor, who must then approve your request.

Your sponsor will be held responsible for you whilst you are using the ArmyNET system.

Mobile Phones

It may be better not to rely on mobiles for keeping in touch because their use can be restricted because of security in certain areas. In addition, it may be difficult to get a signal and connections can not be guaranteed. Any calls and texts are likely to be expensive. If you do use a mobile, remember they are not secure so be careful what you discuss. If you experience any unusual, anonymous or nuisance phone calls always call the UWO or the police. Remember this may be the work of a foreign intelligence agency.

Deployment Welfare Package

The Deployment Welfare Package (DWP) provides soldiers on eligible operations with a few 'home comforts', such as TV, video, leisure and fitness equipment and retail facilities. On a six-month tour, it normally provides for soldiers to have:

- Access to telephones for private use.
- Welfare telephone allowance of 30 minutes per week.
- Blueys.
- E-blueys.
- Sky TV.
- DVD and videos.
- BFBS TV & SSVC Radio.
- Rest and Recuperation (R&R).
- Post Operational Deployment Leave (20 days for a 6 month tour)
- Concessionary Travel For Families (Two trips per 6 month tour).
- Internet facilities.
- Newspapers.

Security

The responsibility for personal safety starts with yourself, remember the simple rules below to maximise your safety.

When out alone

- Where possible don't walk alone after dark.
- Always be alert to your surroundings.
- Avoid short-cuts and dark deserted areas.
- Walk near the kerb away from bushes and buildings.
- Walk facing the traffic.
- Do not hitch hike.
- Carry a torch after dark.
- To avoid delay keep your keys in your hand.

When at home alone

- Secure all windows and doors.
- Fit and use a door chain and viewer.
- Ask all callers to show their ID, and make sure you examine it carefully.
- If you are at all suspicious then call the local police or the Royal Military Police, it does not matter if it turns out to be a false alarm.

Shopping

- Don't put your wallet/handbag down where it can be easily stolen.
- Don't leave your wallet/purse on top of your shopping bag or pram.
- Avoid unlit or deserted car parks or areas.
- Don't carry excessive amounts of money in your wallet/handbag or purse.
- Do not carry your credit cards and cheque book in the same place.
- Remember; first protect yourself then your belongings.

Travelling by car

If you have car trouble, find a phone and call for help. Don't accept help from passing motorists, if they want to

help get them to go to a phone for you and call for help. Whilst waiting with your car don't sit inside, it attracts attention to your plight. Sit next to your car away from the flow of traffic, if practical. If not sit in the passenger seat.

- Where possible always travel on main or well-lit roads.
- Check the interior of your car before entering especially the back seat. Keep valuables out of sight.
- Park in well lit areas.
- If followed home do not get out of the car, make sure the doors are locked, sound the horn and flash your lights to attract attention.

Telephones and the Internet

A telephone is not only a source of comfort but an important element of security. If you receive anonymous or nuisance phone calls always call the police or your Unit Welfare Officer. If they persist, the police can take action. As a precaution do not discuss Army movement plans or dates on internet forums/chat rooms or on your mobile phone.

Rumours and 'Bad Press'

There will be no shortage of rumours and sensational media coverage of incidents both at home and about what is happening where your soldier is. This is a common cause of upset and can lead to distress. Do find out the truth by speaking to your Unit Welfare Officer - he or she is in daily contact with the unit and will be able to establish if your fears are real or not.

Health (including mental health)

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is always important and can assist as part of your overall coping strategy during any deployment. There is a wealth of information available on the NHS Direct Live Well website covering topics such as Alcohol, Fitness, Good food, Losing weight, Pregnancy, Sexual health and Stopping smoking. If you're worried

about any aspect of your, or any of your childrens' health, seek advice from your GP. You may also find it helpful to know that mental health problems are equally common in men and women, but the types of problems differ. Women are one-and-a-half times more likely to be affected by anxiety and depression, while men suffer more from substance abuse (according to the NHS, one in eight men is dependent on alcohol) and anti-social personality disorders. If you're worried about your mental health, or if someone in your life is affected, there is no stigma attached to seeking support and there are plenty of ways to get help including the mental health section of the NHS Direct Live Well website, speaking to your GP or one of the mental health charities such as Sane or the Mental Health Foundation (links are to external sites). For more web based information go to: www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Pages/Livewellhub.aspx. If you think your serving soldier has a mental health problem there is more information on this topic in the Homecoming section 5.

Pregnancy

Under normal circumstances the birth of a child is not regarded as a reason for your soldier to return home from operations. Instead they should attempt to book R&R around the expected due date.

In view of this, you may be as well to consider a second choice of birth partner, just in case, such as a good friend or relative. Some tips are ...

- Keep a note of all your emergency contact numbers handy.
- Have a plan in place for all eventualities, such as a friend to look after other children at short notice or at ungodly hours of the night.
- Even if you drive, you may find it useful to put other transport arrangements in place, just in case.

Keep a bag of essential items packed - not only for yourself but for your other children, too. This will avoid having to pack pyjamas and toothbrushes in the middle of the night between labour pains or with broken waters!

Unmarried parents should be aware that unless the father is actually present at the time of registering the baby's birth his name will not be inserted on the birth certificate. If a soldier is away on deployment this can be added at a later date when he returns. Alternatively the father to complete an Oath Declaration available from www.gro.gov.uk and this can be attested (signed off by a qualified person (normally Major or above) in the deployment area of operations. You can also seek advice from the Registrar Office.

Debt

If you have difficulties with debt seek help. Don't be embarrassed or ashamed to disclose all your debts and financial difficulties because ignoring the problem and not replying to correspondence will only make things worse. Your problems will not go away without specific remedial action.

Use free specialist advice (avoid commercial debt management companies that you see advertised in the media). HIVE offer signposting advice and the Consumer Credit Counselling Service Debt Helpline 0800 138 1111 also has a useful website www.cccs.co.uk

- Alternatively contact Citizens Advice Bureau.



Going away

- If you decide to go away for a length of time - **make sure you tell the Army where you are going.** It is important that the Army has reliable information on how to contact the Emergency Contact (EC) quickly in case of an emergency. Sometimes having a mobile phone number is **NOT** enough so it is important that the Army (normally your nominated Unit Welfare Officer) knows where you are in case of an emergency involving your soldier.
- Contact the RTMC Helpline (0800 0285533) to inform them of any changes to your Emergency Contact details or if the soldier doesn't know who to nominate.

Separation Survival Guide

The Golden Rule - Boredom is your worst enemy!

Keeping busy doing whatever makes you feel fulfilled is especially important during your soldier's deployment.

Take time out for yourself

Life as a temporarily single parent can be stressful, so it's important to try to unwind. Having an indulgent bubble bath with candles, and a pamper session when the children are asleep can work wonders.

Have a night out

Getting away from the children for a night out painting the town red is great, unless you suffer from hangovers the following morning. Babysitting can be a problem, so it may be worth asking your family or friends for extra support during this time.

Make a list of jobs for your soldier to do when they get back ...

... and then tackle them yourself! All those DIY jobs, and sorting out that problem with the car, and the other tasks

that your soldier may normally do aren't that hard once you put your mind to it. If in doubt, employ a professional!

Don't feel that they have got it easy

Many of us would love to swap jobs with our spouses for a day or two, just to see them failing to cope with the children, the school runs, the washing, cooking and cleaning! However, life for those on operations is not a mixture of sunbathing and chilling out - far from it.

Grumble to your friends, not your soldier!

Telling your soldier how cheesed off you are might remove the weight of the world from your shoulders, but it'll have the opposite effect on them. It'll probably leave them feeling frustrated that they can't be there to help.

Make the most of your 30 minutes talk time

It's pointless to spend time arguing about daft things, as it just makes you dread the next call instead of looking forward to it. Focus on the really important things, and count to ten if you feel like blowing your top!

If you're STILL angry with your soldier ...

... write them a letter! This may sound really silly, but write a 'humdinger' of a letter and tell them exactly what you think of the situation - no holds barred. Once you've got it all down on paper, you'll feel as if you've got it all off your chest, and feel much better for doing so. Now, the hard bit - don't post it, destroy it!

Use the absence constructively

Now could be the time to stop putting off those things that you meant to achieve ages ago, and still haven't managed. If you can't drive yet, why not book your first lesson right now? Alternatively, why not book a computer course - local colleges have hundreds of courses to choose from and most of them are quite cheap! If you've got dreams of a high-flying career once the children are older, why not start studying towards it now from home?

If the children get bored, they'll drive you bonkers!

Think of new activities for the children to try, or a new hobby or club to join. Your local library can provide information on what is available locally, or you could always try making up a rota of household chores, or making cards or a family newsletter to send off to your soldier.

Plan something to look forward to

Booking a holiday, or planning some family days out for after the tour helps you to focus on the great time you're going to have when your soldier gets back. **BUT** be aware that leave and return dates may change.

Get some help if you're on a downer

If that fed-up feeling just won't go away, speak to your GP or Health Visitor for some advice. There are loads of support agencies, such as the Army Welfare Services or the Confidential Support Line that you can talk to, all are completely confidential.

Rest and Recuperation (R&R)

All soldiers deploying for six months will normally be entitled to 14 nights R&R inclusive of travelling time. Depending on the situation this may be taken either in theatre or back in the home base. Soldiers will be asked for their preferred dates for R&R, and these will be accommodated where possible, subject to availability of seats on flights and other operational factors.

If you are collecting your soldier from Brize Norton there is a guide about this called: Accompanying Passenger Travelling Through RAF Brize Norton Leaflet, available from:

http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafbrizenorton/rafcms/mediafiles/88410ADD_5056_A318_A8E96B8C8191146C.pdf

Remember that your soldier is away on operations where uncertainty and change are normal - R&R dates are subject to change at short notice. Be prepared for dates to change and stay flexible. That way you will not be too disappointed.

Having to rapidly readjust to home life only to have to say goodbye again a few days later can be stressful. Here are some tips to consider:

Family:

- Remember that the 14 nights R&R includes travel time - expect your soldier to be home for about 12 days.
- Try to chill out, relax, and just enjoy some quiet time as a family.
- If you book a holiday you must have adequate travel insurance in the event of the soldiers R&R dates change at short notice.
- Don't make plans to do a whistle-stop tour of all the relations - the soldier may just want to do nothing.
- Keep R&R plans flexible - just do what you feel like whilst your soldier is home.

Soldiers:

- Don't overdo things, or try and cram too many activities into the available time.
- Try to respect the routine that your family have in place - don't try to take control of the house!
- The best gift that you could bring home is to spend quality time with your family and friends.
- **Remember:** When you return to theatre, even after only 2 weeks, you may need to re-acclimatise to the local climate.



Supporting other Families during difficult times

You may find that a friend, neighbour, colleague or family member has experienced bereavement or has a soldier with a serious or minor injury. How you handle this will depend on your personal relationship with those most affected. You may find the following advice useful in such circumstances:

- Shock affects reason, thinking and memory; you can help by making allowances for this.
- Silence is fine, they may not want to speak; you can just be there for them.
- Allow them to talk and really listen.
- It is difficult but if you are able to, try not to avoid anyone who finds themselves in this situation.

Always remember, those affected normally get lots of support immediately after a traumatic event, but that sometimes they can feel at their most lonely and in need of compassion and support in the months and years that follow.

Who you can turn to for help?

Unit Welfare Office (UWO)

Your soldier's UWO or your nominated local Army UWO officer should be your first point of contact. If you don't know who this is ask your soldier or contact the RTMC helpline or the Army Welfare Service for advice.

There are many organisations, service and voluntary, offering advice, assistance and financial support to Service personnel their spouses and their children.

Army Welfare Service (AWS)

The AWS provides professional and confidential welfare support for Army personnel and their families wherever they are located. For welfare enquiries contact:

The Army Welfare Information Service, HQ LAND,
Louisburg Block, Erskine Barracks, Wilton, Salisbury,
SP2 0AG Tel: 01722 436569 Fax: 01722 436307
Email: awis@hqland.army.mod.uk
www.army.mod.uk/soldierwelfare/supportagencies/aws/index.htm

ArmyNET

The British Army's own internet portal.
www.armynet.mod.uk

British Forces Post Office (BFPO)

Provides a postal and courier service for the Armed Forces worldwide.
www.bfpo.org.uk

Confidential Support Line (CSL)

The CSL is a free-phone help-line run for soldiers and their families. It offers totally confidential, non judgmental, guidance to the Army community, from anywhere in the world. The line operates 7 days a week from 1030 to 2230 hrs (local UK time). Any vulnerable soldier or family member phoning (writing or emailing) the trained civilian support staff of the CSL receives guidance as to what their options are, the soldier/family member must then make their own decision as to how to progress the issues raised. The CSL may be contacted on: From UK: 0800 731 4880
Rest of the World: +44 (0) 1980 630854 and the support staff will phone you back.
www.ssafa.org.uk

Crime Reduction Unit

The Royal Military Police have a crime reduction website. From here you will be able to access a wealth of information regarding crime reduction and personal security matters.
www.army.mod.uk/rmp/index.htm

Debt Advice

If you have difficulties with debt, admitting that you are struggling and seeking help is an important first step towards resolving your debt problems. Don't be embarrassed or ashamed to disclose all your debts and financial difficulties because ignoring the problem and not replying to correspondence will only make things worse. Your problems will not go away without specific remedial action. Use free specialist advice (avoid commercial debt management companies that you see advertised in the media). Local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the CAB and Royal British Legion (RBL) have a partnership to provide money and benefit advice to Service personnel and their dependants.

www.citizensadvice.co.uk
www.britishlegion.org.uk

HIVE offer signposting advice, AFF have DVD available and the Consumer Credit Counseling Service Debt Helpline (0800) 138 1111 also has a useful website.
www.cccs.co.uk

Defence Medical Welfare Services

If your soldier is admitted to the Royal College of Defence Medicine at Selly Oak Birmingham or a Military of Defence Hospital Unit, either you or your soldier may be supported by the Defence Medical Welfare Services, contact details should be sought through your welfare officer or the Army Welfare Service.

HIVE

HIVE provides information support to the Service community. This means providing a wide range of information on posting, education, housing, employment and training, health care facilities, welfare support and the local area. They also deliver a confidential signposting service which means that you can be put in touch with professional organisations, both military and civilian, best placed to provide help and advice. HIVE information

centres can give you practical assistance in sending e-blueys and provide internet access.
Tel: 01722 436498
www.hive.mod.uk

Pastoral Care

The Royal Army Chaplains' Department provides spiritual leadership, moral guidance and pastoral support to soldiers and their families irrespective of their religion or belief. To contact your local chaplain or padre contact your Unit Welfare Officer or ask at a HIVE.

Royal Air Force

RAFCOM can provide RAF personnel, veterans and family members with access to FREE email accounts, forums and chat rooms, which you can use to discuss issues, ask questions, post photographs and newsletters or create polls.
www.RAFCOM.co.uk

Royal Navy

RN COM provides NPFS & RN personnel, veterans and family members access to Breaking News, Community Events, Members' Area, Advice/Help Desk and NPFS & RM Welfare.
www.RNCOM.mod.uk

Schools deployment resources

Service Children's Education(SCE) which provides Service schools overseas has produced a Schools Deployment Resource Pack for use by schools in the UK. The pack draws SCE experience from their schools overseas and is aimed at UK schools which support Service communities and those that work with service families in the UK. The pack is available at www.sceschools.com/deployment

Resources include:

- Contents Guidance for users.
- Guidance for parents and carers - A parents and carers booklet.

- Presentations:
 - Part 1 - Guidance for schools.
 - Part 2 - School presentation for Unit Welfare.
 - Part 3 - Parents presentation to accompany booklet.
 - Part 4 - Homecoming presentation.
 - Part 5 - Working towards a multi-disciplinary approach.

Parents and carers with children or young people in Early Years settings, UK schools (state and independent) should review the contents of the website, read the guidance for parents and carers booklet and consider letting their child's teacher know about the website so that it's contents can be made more widely available.



Supporting Britain's Reservists and Employers

(SaBRE) is a national campaign - not an organisation.

It provides Reservists and their employers with support in a number of areas including general advice to employers and Reservists. Information on everything from a Reservist's training obligations to an employer's legal rights and responsibilities, and the benefits of employing Reservists. It also has contacts for employers and Reservists at a regional level who can help with specific enquiries. If you are not sure about anything ask your Unit Employer Support Officer (called a Regimental Operations Support Officer in some cases) or alternatively contact SaBRE:

Tel: 0800 389 5459

www.sabre.mod.uk

Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA)

This is the single point of contact within the Ministry of Defence for providing information and advice on personnel administration pay, allowances, pensions and compensation for serving personnel, veterans and their families. The term 'veteran' is used to mean all those who have served in the UK Armed Forces and includes their widow(er)s and dependants. There is no minimum length of service required and there is no requirement to have been on active service in order to be considered a veteran. Callers to the Helpline can receive advice on a wide range of subjects such as welfare issues, war pensions, Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, service records, medals and military graves.

Free Helpline: 0800 169 2277

Textphone: 0800 169 3458

Tel: (Overseas) +44 1253 866043

Email: veterans.help@spva.qsi.gov.uk

www.veterans-uk.info

Other sources of help

Army Benevolent Fund (ABF)

The ABF is the Army's leading charity and helps fund many other charities and organisations that operate either directly or indirectly in support of soldiers, former soldiers and their families. It works in partnership or close co-operation with Corps and Regimental Associations to which it is normally best to direct enquires in the first instance. It has provided support to such organisations as the AFF, RELATE, SSAFA-FH and makes individual grants to both serving and ex-Army personnel.

Tel: 0207 591 2000

Army Dependants' Trust

Mobilized members of the TA and Regular Reserve when deployed are eligible, the aim of the Trust is to provide support to the dependants or next of kin of a deceased member in the immediate period following their loss. The Army Dependants' Trust is not an insurance scheme but rather a charity which provides discretionary cash grants. Membership is by annual subscription, and will run from the day of joining until the last day of paid service in the Army.

Tel: 01980 615734/615736

Mil: 94344 5734/573.

Army Families Federation (AFF)

The AFF exists to make life better for Army families, by raising issues that are causing concern, with the chain of command.

Tel: 01980 615525

www.aff.org.uk

Army Widows Association (AWA)

The aim is to offer comfort, support and friendship to the widows and widowers of Service personnel and then

resolve some of the difficulties they may face after the death of their spouse.

www.armywidows.org.uk

Combat Stress

The Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society specialises in the welfare of ex-Servicemen and women who suffer from psychiatric disabilities arising from military service. It has 3 short stay treatment centres and a residential home.

Tel: 01372 841600

www.combatstress.org.uk

Cruse

Cruse Bereavement Care exists to promote the well-being of bereaved people and to enable anyone bereaved by death to understand their grief and cope with their loss. The organisation provides support and offers information, advice, education and training services.

Day by Day Helpline: 0844 477 9400

There is a information link on the website Help for bereaved military families.

www.crusebereavement.org.uk

Connexions

This organisation supports teenagers 13-19 yrs, and can help your teen to deal with all sorts of problems. Counselling can also be arranged through Connexions if necessary.

Tel: 0808 001 3219

www.connexions-direct.com

Your General Practitioner or Health Visitor

Both your local general practitioner and health visitor can provide support and advice, particularly concerning younger children's well-being. Contact detail through your GP or local telephone directory.

Homestart

Homestart is a national voluntary organisation that offers support, friendship and practical help to young families under stress in their own homes. Contact details can be found in local telephone directories.

Tel: 0800 068 6368
www.homestart.org.uk

National Association of Widows

The National Association of Widows is run by the widowed for the widowed - men and women. They offer support, friendship and understanding to those who have lost their partners through bereavement.
www.nawidows.org.uk

PAX

PAX has been the major provider of Personal Accident Insurance to HM Regular Armed Forces since 1989 and almost 58,000 members are currently protected by the Plan - that's around one in four of all regular Service personnel. The same cover and levels of benefit of PAX are available to members of HM Reserve Forces and their families under the RPAX plan. For further information and details of the monthly premiums, please contact them as follows. RPAX customer service contact details:

Tel: 020 8662 8102 (from the UK)
Tel: +44 20 8662 8102 (from overseas)

Email: paxinsurance@ars.aon.co.uk
www.paxinsurance.aon.co.uk/paxinsurance/PersonalAccident/index.htm

Relate

Relate offers counselling for relationship problems, either face-to-face or on the phone. Relate also offers Relateen, which is counselling for children aged 10-16.

Tel: 0845 1304016
www.relate.org.uk

In Northern Ireland contact Staffcare who provide secure and confidential relationship counselling for individuals and couples.

Tel: 028 9226 6008
Bereavement: www.nawidows.org.uk

Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is the UK's leading charity safeguarding the welfare, interests and memory of those who have served in the Armed Forces and their dependants. It provides financial, social and emotional support to millions and its benevolence spans all age groups from the oldest to the very young.

Tel: 08457 725 725
www.britishlegion.org.uk

Royal College of Psychiatrists

Provide a website for information about Mental Health, with information for parents, carers and anyone who works with young people. It has information including PTSD and traumatic stress in children.
www.ecpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfo

Samaritans

The Samaritans provide confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair including those which could lead to suicide.

Tel: 08457 909090
www.samaritans.org

Service Life Insurance

Sterling Life, in close association with MOD, has launched a new life insurance scheme aimed exclusively at Service personnel - Service Life Insurance (SLI). SLI guarantees affordable cover against risks of war and terrorism, throughout your years of Service and seamlessly beyond, up to age 65. It is available now to all Service personnel (both Regulars and Reserves). Cover is available irrespective of your likelihood of operational deployment. There are few specified exclusions and no extra costs for high-risk trades. Premiums are comparable to those offered to civilians. Those wishing to find out more about the scheme or who want to apply for life insurance should contact Sterling Life.

Tel: 020 8334 1557
www.servicelifeinsurance.co.uk

Services Insurance & Investment Advisory Panel (SIIAP)

This is an advisory panel of regulated insurance and independent investment advisers. They all specialise in offering services to members of HM Forces and regulated by the appropriate authority in the United Kingdom, therefore offering full compensation rights to clients whether serving overseas or in the UK. By purchasing an insurance or financial product from SIIAP member, customers have the peace of mind that they are dealing with a competent organisation who has made all the necessary arrangements to look after their interests - whether they are based in the UK or anywhere else in the world. For more information on a wide range of companies and products designed with Service personnel and their families in mind check out their website.
www.siiap.org

Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association - Forces Help (SSAFA-FH)

SSAFA-FH is the national charity helping serving and ex-Service men, women and their families in need. It is committed to helping people in need, suffering or in distress, regardless of age or condition. SSAFA FH is committed to helping anyone who has served just one paid day in any of our three Armed Forces, including the Reserves and those who did National Service - and their dependants, including their husbands or wives, children, widows and widowers. It provides financial assistance and debt advice but also offers practical as well as financial support. For many it is a friendly face in a new community, a shoulder to cry on when times are hard, a listening service for those in need.

Tel: 020 7403 8783
Email: info@ssafa.org.uk
www.ssafa.org.uk

SSAFA-FH have set up two support groups for bereaved families and the families of seriously injured soldiers. Anyone seeking more information or wishing to join either the support group should contact SSAFA Forces Help.

Tel: 020 740 38783
Email: info@ssafa.org.uk
www.ssafa.org.uk

Victim Support

Victim Support is the independent charity which helps people cope with the effects of crime. They provide free and confidential support and information to help you deal with your experience. As the laws and systems affecting victims and witnesses differ across the UK and Ireland, there are separate Victim Support links on the website.
www.victimsupport.org.uk



Section Four Emergencies

The most important thing to remember is that if something serious happens to your soldier on deployment the Army will normally tell you in person and as soon as possible. If you have a concern, get in touch with your nominated Unit Welfare Officer. This section covers two types of emergency procedures, for which tried and tested systems are in place. The first has information on what happens if a soldier is injured during the deployment, including how the member of the family (called an Emergency Contact - the person they wish to be notified in the event of them becoming a listed casualty or of their involvement in an incident of public interest) are kept informed and supported. The second covers what you need to do if you require your soldier to be sent home because of a serious family emergency or illness.

Casualty Procedures

Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre

The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) is responsible for authorising Compassionate Leave Travel from overseas for Service personnel, their dependants based overseas, and mobilised Reservists and Territorial Army. The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre is located at SPVA, RAF Innsworth, Gloucester, GL3 1HW. It is manned 24 hours a day 365 days per year. Telephone the JCCC on (0044) 01452 519951.

The JCCC is primarily responsible for monitoring and actioning certain procedures for Army personnel if they become notifiable casualties (see 'frequently asked questions' (page28)), both in the UK and overseas, and

also for their dependants overseas. These roles ensure that the nominated Emergency Contact is notified appropriately and as quickly as possible should an individual become a notifiable casualty. Notification is carried out by a Casualty Notification Officer (CNO).

Dangerously Ill - Forwarding of Relatives (DILFOR)

The JCCC will authorise and in case of travel overseas make arrangements for DILFOR travel. This normally allows two people to be moved at public expense to visit a serviceperson at their bedside if they are listed as Very Seriously Ill (VSI), Seriously Ill (SI), Incapacitating Illness/ Injury (II) or Unlisted (UL) and the medical authorities have recommended such a visit.

Compassionate Leave and Travel

If there is a requirement for a soldier serving overseas to return to the UK for compassionate reasons, for example if a close relative becomes very seriously ill (normally life threatening) or dies, then it is the role of the JCCC to understand the circumstances and make a recommendation as to whether compassionate travel should be granted.

When a soldier is on operational duties overseas, any requests for them to be allowed home on compassionate grounds MUST go through the JCCC rather than the Unit Welfare Office.

Should circumstances arise which make it necessary for your soldier to be returned to the UK from overseas on compassionate grounds you should telephone the JCCC

on 01452 519951. This telephone number is manned 24 hours a day every day of the year. To avoid delays, contact should be made with the JCCC first, contacting your soldier may lead to delay because they or their unit will then have to contact the JCCC in order for the appropriate investigations to be carried out. When you telephone the JCCC you will be asked to provide the following information of the serving soldier:

- Number, Rank and Name.
- Unit and address of Serviceperson.
- Name and telephone number of doctor or hospital (if applicable) who are treating the subject of the compassionate request.
- The details of the person very seriously ill (normally life threatening) or who has died. Note that compassionate travel may be authorised for the following:
 - Parents including step parents, spouse or partner (including former relationships, if their condition affects the welfare of any children from that relationship).
 - Children including stepchildren of current marriage or 'entitled' partnership, children outside marriage providing they are the child of the serving person (not children by another relationship) and where the serving person provides permanent financial support and/or the permanence of the relationship can be supported by the CO of a unit.
 - Siblings.
 - Legal guardians or grandparents who have acted in loco parentis, which means the legal responsibility of a person to act in place of a parent and assume parental rights and duties for a minor, and where this can be shown to have been in effect for a significant period of time. For all other relatives a message only will be passed to the unit.

Compassionate leave may also be granted in the following circumstances:

- When the spouse or 'entitled' partner or child of a

serving person is very seriously ill or has died. In the case of death, every endeavour will be made to enable the serving person to arrive in time for the funeral.

- When a serving person's presence is the only means of preventing the break up of his or her immediate family. Under these circumstances, a great deal of care will be taken and specialist assistance in assessing the need will be sought. For example, there may well be cases where the break up of the family is inevitable, has been an issue for some considerable time, or where the return of the individual to the family home will not contribute to the resolution of the problem.
- Where the care of young dependant children can only be provided satisfactorily by the serving person's presence.
- When the death of an 'In Scope' relative is imminent. In these cases, every endeavour is to be made to enable the serving person (and his family if appropriate) to arrive before the death.
- When an 'In Scope' relative is very seriously ill, provided that the serving person will be of practical help and that there is no other appropriate relative who is available to help.

Frequently asked questions

Will the JCCC be sympathetic?

It will consider each case very carefully and investigates and verify each one. Only after that will they make the necessary recommendation for travel and subsequently inform the Service person's unit overseas.

What is a Notifiable Casualty?

The JCCC has a system that categorises casualties depending on the nature of their illness or injury, and uses the word 'notifiable' to ensure that the casualty's EC is notified as quickly and accurately and possible. The categories used are defined as:

• Unlisted (UL)

Unlisted is applied to an individual whose illness or injury requires hospitalisation but whose condition does not fall into the categories below. The responsibility for notifying EC of personnel within this category rests with the individual and his unit, not the JCCC, and in most cases a telephone call will suffice.

• Missing

Missing is a general category of which there are several variations eg Detained Against Will. It does not, however, include illegal absence.

• Incapacitating Illness/Injury (III)

Incapacitating Illness/Injury applies to an individual whose illness or injury requires hospitalisation but does not fall into the categories below. It indicates that the illness or injury has rendered them either physically or mentally unable to communicate with friends or relatives.

• Seriously Ill (SI)

The category of Seriously Ill is applied to an individual whose illness or injury is of such severity that there is cause for immediate concern but there is no imminent danger to life.

• Very Seriously Ill (VSI)

The category of Very Seriously Ill is applied to an individual whose illness or injury is of such severity that life is imminently endangered.

• Death

Death has to be verified by a Medical Officer/Doctor and again the JCCC has both a monitoring and action role. In matters of death the JCCC has the additional role of ensuring appropriate advice and assistance is given to the family, particularly regarding the funeral but also that they are provided with the appropriate advice and aftercare.

What Do You Mean By 'Emergency Contact (EC)'?

- Service personnel are required to give details of the person they wish to be notified in the event of them becoming a listed casualty or of their involvement in an incident of public interest.
- It should be stressed that the person nominated is not necessarily the legal next-of-kin and that being nominated as an EC does not give the person any legal rights.
- Initial notification of the casualty incident is made to the person recorded as the notifiable EC (as above) on the Service person's EC record but all other matters, including funeral arrangements may be the subject of a will or the wishes of the legal next-of-kin.

What is an Additional EC?

An additional EC is someone the Service person nominates to be notified in addition to or instead of the EC. An additional nominee should only be notified of a casualty instead of the EC when:

- The Service person considers direct notification to the EC could have serious consequences and arranges for the additional nominee to bear the responsibility. This may happen, for example, when the nominated EC is elderly or infirm and bad news could contribute to a deterioration of their physical or mental state.
- The nominated EC is a minor.

What is a Casualty Notification Officer?

- When a Service person becomes a notifiable casualty, the JCCC appoints a Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) to notify, **in person**, the EC and/or the additional EC. This does not apply, however, when the soldier is listed as III (a telephone call may suffice) or sometimes even Seriously Injured (SI).
- Where the EC lives near the Service person's permanent unit, notification will normally be undertaken by an officer from the unit. There may be times when this is not

possible and in those circumstances a request is usually made to the Divisional or Brigade Headquarters nearest to where the EC and/or additional EC reside to appoint a CNO.

- It may be that there are no Army Units within a reasonable distance of the EC, in which case a request may be made to the nearest Royal Navy, Royal Air Force or Royal Marines establishment to appoint a CNO.
- In some circumstances the civilian police may undertake notification.

What is a Visiting Officer?

- The Army is fully aware of the anxiety and confusion that a family suffers in such distressing times and therefore a Visiting Officer (VO) will continue to be available after the CNO has left. The VO will be there to advise the EC and next of kin on matters such as funeral arrangements, financial affairs, and any other areas of concern.

Can I Visit a Casualty Overseas?

- The Army has a scheme known as DILFOR (Dangerously Ill - Forwarding of Relatives) which allows a visit to the bedside of a casualty. DILFOR is only authorised on the direct recommendation of the medical authority concerned and once they are satisfied that certain criteria have been met.
- It must be stressed that the DILFOR scheme is intended solely for the benefit of the patient and there is no automatic entitlement for next-of-kin to visit the patient at public expense.
- The DILFOR scheme normally allows two people to be moved at public expense (i.e. paid for by the Army) to visit a service person at their bedside if they are listed as Very Seriously Ill (VSI), Seriously Ill (SI), Incapacitating Illness/ Injury (III) or Unlisted (UL) and the medical authorities have recommended such a visit. The JCCC is responsible for making all the travel arrangements and liaises very closely with the Casualty Notification or Visiting Officer and the soldier spouse/civil partners unit.

What Arrangements are made for Repatriations?

- In the unfortunate cases where Army personnel die overseas the JCCC becomes responsible for overseeing the return of the body from overseas (repatriation).

What Arrangements are made for Funerals?

- The Army takes great care to ensure that funeral arrangements are made with as little distress to the family as possible and with sensitivity to the wishes of the next-of-kin, and of course to any wish the soldier may have made in a will.
- Where there is confusion between the legal next-of-kin and the person the soldier has nominated as EC for casualty reporting purposes the Visiting Officer(VO) will help clarify matters for the family.
- The soldier’s unit or the VO will explain to the family what options are open to them and what entitlements they have.
- You should take the time to discuss with your soldier any special arrangements they may want. Whilst this is a difficult subject to tackle before deployment it will relieve pressure should the need arise.

Overseas compassionate leave/travel Card

All soldiers deploying should have been given this card for their family members. If you have not received such a card, this is a copy for your information:

JPA P001 (Sep 07)

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE TRAVEL FROM OVERSEAS
(For Service Personnel, their Dependants based abroad, Territorial Army and Mobilised Reservists)

If circumstances should arise whilst your relative is overseas (including N Ireland) either on a posting, at sea, or on deployment, that make it necessary for you to apply for his/her return on compassionate grounds (such as a death in the family, serious illness or serious family crisis) you should telephone:

The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC)
+44 (0) 1452 519951

This number is continually manned 24 hours a day, including weekends and Bank Holidays

Please write Service Person's Number, Rank and Name above

When you call you will be asked for the following information: **Service Number, Rank, Name, Home Unit and current location of the Service person**, together with **full details of the relative concerned, their location and name of Doctor, Hospital and/or any other organisation involved in the case**. Please be aware that any information will be verified with the appropriate organisations before Compassionate Travel may be authorised.

You must contact the JCCC as soon as possible as your relative's parent unit cannot authorise Compassionate Travel from overseas.

For further information on Welfare and Community Support services available to Service families, visit the following websites:

RNcom.mod.uk www.army.mod/servingsoldier rafcom.co.uk



Section Five

Homecoming

The readjustment to 'normality' after your soldier has been away from home for a long period of time can be difficult. The returning soldier can upset routines that may be in place, or a partner may feel undermined at giving up control of things they have managed perfectly well during the deployment. Homecomings from overseas can be especially difficult, as soldiers may bring home unpleasant memories, or feel that their family has 'had it easy' and wouldn't understand what they have experienced.

Just as you got yourself ready for your soldier's departure, you must also prepare yourself for their return. Knowing what to expect, and having some plans for how you will deal with issues that may occur will help to minimise any stresses and strains of readjustment.

Usually, it can take a few weeks for things to get back to normal, and the key here is communication. Talking through any negative feelings and giving yourselves time to reacquaint should ease any problems, but every couple will find their own way and get there in the end.

Things to consider

Homecoming Build-Up

The majority of deployed soldiers and members of their family will experience a feeling of anticipation as the deployment draws to an end. This may take the form of eagerness to get home, or a dread of a return that potentially could be filled with problems, or a mixture of both. Few get much sleep the night before homecoming and children may be more moody and irritable than

usual. This could cause the whole family to be keyed-up and exhausted before you all reunite.

Adjustment

After the completion of an operational tour, it is not unusual to experience a 'homecoming let-down' or 'post tour blues'. This is because in your mind you create a fantasy of how it will be, and reality is seldom the same as fantasy. So don't set your expectations too high and keep a sense of proportion to your plans. Be receptive to each others needs, as they will probably differ.

Compromise

Your soldier may want to stay at home and do nothing initially. Alternatively, you may want your partner to do all of those little jobs around the house that need doing, but they may not see the urgency. You will need to compromise with each other, and use a bit of 'give and take' to avoid arguments and hurt feelings. Don't force issues and be patient and tolerant with each other.

Unresolved Problems

If there were unresolved relationship or family issues before deployment, or that arose during R&R, they are likely to still be there when your soldier returns. It is not a good idea to tackle these issues straight away, but to let a period of adjustment take its course. If you are worried about an issue it will no doubt be on your soldier's mind too. Carefully choose a time to talk, and don't force the issue as soon as they walk in the door. This again will only cause confrontation and defensiveness, and could make matters worse.

Promises and Feelings

If anyone has made promises over the phone or by email or letter during the tour, especially to children, then that person to whom the promises were made will expect it to happen. The returning soldier may be surprised or even put out that you have managed so well without them being around. They may even feel jealous that you and your children may have become closer and have done things that they have missed out on. Alternatively, the children may look to their returning parent for attention or decision making which, after six months of absence, may make you feel as though you no longer matter. All of these feelings and actions are normal behaviour and you should not take them personally. Again the key is give and take and things should settle down fairly quickly.

Problem Solving

Perhaps one or the other partner could have been concerned about a relationship issue, or run up a large amount of debt during the tour. Worrying, trying to cover up a problem or being defensive is not going to help! The key is to sort things out - discussing the ways to resolve matters is far more useful than shouting and finger-pointing!

Some tips to help you to solve problems are:

- Pick the right moment and bring up the issue calmly.
- Be honest.
- Don't blame each other.
- Realise that things sometimes happen simply because of the stress of separation.
- Work out a solution **together** that you both agree on.
- Try not to involve the children, and discuss matters out of earshot.
- Seek help from a professional agency if needed.
- Talk over steps that you can take to avoid a repeat of the problem.
- Discourage family visits for the first two weeks - your soldier may have a lot of pent-up frustration to get rid of.

Avoiding Road Traffic Accidents

After an operational deployment, some soldiers may take time to readjust to making judgements about taking acceptable risks in a non-operational environment, particularly when driving. This has seen a reported increase in road traffic accidents involving soldiers post-deployment. If you or your soldier need more information either, for general road safety matters, check out the website at www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk, or for specific advice, contact your Unit Welfare Officer or the Army Welfare Service. They in turn may seek guidance from unit transport staff or their regional Master Driver.

Children and Reunion

Introduction

Change is at least as stressful for children as it is for adults. The soldier's return is a major change for the children in the household. They have grown in every way physically, emotionally and socially during the deployment. Children have very little life experience and are not equipped to deal with stress, so their behaviour may change when a parent comes home and regress to more immature behaviour. They may become unruly and misbehave more often, or they might even withdraw inside themselves as a reaction to the changes within the household. The re-adjustment period may take around four to six weeks for the entire family. You can greatly enhance your family's reunion by developing realistic expectations of how your child will respond, based upon their age.

Infants up to 12 Months

An infant has not yet developed much of an ability to remember people or events, so do not be surprised when your baby does not recognise it's returning parent. Small babies will cry when picked up by this 'stranger', which may be upsetting at first. However, the child will respond to what is going on around them, and if the other parent

is happy for this 'strange person' to be around then so will your baby. Speeding up the baby's acceptance of this new person can be encouraged by taking part in activities together, such as bathing, feeding and changing. Be patient and let your baby set the pace of the reunion.

Toddlers (Age 1 to 3)

A typical response from a toddler may be to run and hide from the newly returned parent, or to cling to mum and cry. Sometimes, toddlers can regress to younger stages of behaviour or bedwetting. This may be more relevant if the returning parent has issues that they have brought back from their tour. This 'new' person may look intimidating to a small child, so talk at eye level, and offer to play or do an activity. Don't force the pace, as this could make the child uncomfortable. It could help to show pictures of the returning parent a few weeks before they return and mention them more often in conversation. It is at this age that 'out of sight out of mind' rings true, which is just normal for this age-group.

Pre-School Age (3 to 5)

Children of this age tend to think that the world revolves around them. Keeping that in mind, it is not surprising that your child may think they somehow made their parent go away because of something they did, or that their parent does not love them. If this is the case with your child, they may feel guilty or abandoned. As a result, your child may express intense anger as a way of keeping a returning parent at a distance, thereby protecting themselves from further disappointment. Your child is likely to do some form of limit-testing to see if the rules applied during the parent's absence still apply now they are back.

School Age (5 to 12)

Children of this age group are likely to give parents a very warm welcome as long as the relationship was strong before the parent left. This age will most likely run to

their returning parent as soon as they see them, try and manipulate all their attention and talk their socks off! They will probably be genuinely excited about the homecoming. If the relationship was not so strong, or strained in some way, the child may dread or even fear the return of a parent. This could be because of worry that they may be punished for any misbehaviour that was highlighted during the period of absence. The best advice for this is to take a friendly interest in what your child is doing or has done, and focus on giving praise for any accomplishments and efforts.

Adolescents (13 to 18)

If you have a teenager in your family then you will be fully aware of mood swings, which manifest themselves in a roller-coaster of emotions. They may be excited about their parent's return, but they could be concerned that they may be unfavourably judged or criticised. They might try to hide their real emotions to try and look 'cool', so you should be aware of this and try to take time to talk to your teenager. Try to discuss what is happening in their lives, and how they feel.

Tips for Parents of Returning Soldiers

Your son or daughter may need time to adjust to their life at home and they may not easily settle. They may miss their friends and after a few days wish to leave home and join up with them. Do not take this personally or as rejection. They have been closely bonded together for many months and may wish to revisit their friends to catch up.

Give your soldier the opportunity to talk about their experiences, let them know that you are willing to listen in a non-judgmental way. Do not push; let them know that you are willing to listen. If you have had your own combat or non-military intense experiences you may discover that this is a good opportunity to deepen connections with your offspring by discussing the issues with them.

If you are concerned about an aspect of your son or daughters behaviour since their return, they may need additional help. More detail can be found in the next section.

Tips on dealing with stress and post traumatic stress disorder in adults

These are names for what was historically known as ‘battle fatigue’ or ‘shell shock’, and can affect anyone who has experienced something traumatic or disturbing. Soldiers may be affected by some degree of stress after an operation. There is no way to know who will be affected, and it is not necessarily those that had the most distressing experiences that may experience any of the following symptoms:

- Flashbacks and nightmares.
- Depression, confusion or inability to make simple decisions.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Irritability and a quick temper.
- Anger at life in general.
- Hyper-alertness, anxiety or panic attacks.
- Feeling of isolation or being ‘the only one feeling like this’.
- Using excess alcohol or drugs to ‘forget’ it.
- Feeling suicidal.

If you recognise any of these in yourself or your returning soldier, medical advice should be sought as soon as possible.

Any condition won’t usually go away without treatment, so early medical intervention is vital. If you notice a change in your soldier, seek support – you can always discuss it with confidence with a doctor, your Unit Welfare Officer or a member of the Army Welfare Service. For you or your family your GP should be the first port of call for help with family stress and anxiety problems during or after the deployment.

Finally please keep this information at the back of your mind, symptoms can sometimes take years or even decades to appear. The key point is that, once medically diagnosed, the condition is treatable.

The Reserves Mental Health Programme

This is a tri-Service programme designed to enable Reservists (RNR, RMR, TA, RAuxAF and Regular Reserves) who have mobilised and deployed, to access a mental health programme if required. In partnership with the NHS, it aims to assess and where appropriate, provide outpatient care. Reservists demobilised from an operational theatre since 01 Jan 03 are eligible for this service. Users or their GP can access the system, and concerned relatives or friends can obtain advice by telephoning freephone 0800 0326258. There are additional resources available to help current Reservists who may or may not be referred to the programme. These include the Royal British Legion www.britishlegion.org.uk and Combat Stress www.combatstress.org.uk

Tips on dealing with traumatic stress in children and young people

If your soldier becomes a casualty and is injured, traumatic stress can affect all the members of the family. Children, like adults, sometimes experience traumatic stress reaction, which affects the way the child thinks, feels and behaves; children can be as severely affected as adults. If you recognise stress, you will be better able to help your child to recover, and also to know when to seek professional help.

What are the signs of traumatic stress?

Individual children react in different ways to traumatic events. How they react may also depend on their age. Immediately after the traumatic event, children may find it hard to sleep and have bad dreams and nightmares. If you recognise traumatic stress behaviour, you will be better able

to help your child recover, and also know when to seek professional help.

What are the signs of traumatic stress?

Individual children react in different ways to traumatic events. How they react may also depend on their age. Sometimes the effects may not appear for days or weeks.. Children may however:

- become fearful, clingy and anxious about being separated for their parents;
- start bedwetting and thumb-sucking again;
- become preoccupied with thoughts about the event;
- be unable to concentrate;
- be irritable and disobedient;
- complain of physical symptoms such as headaches and stomach-aches

All these are normal reactions to an extremely frightening situation. With support from the people close to them, children begin to get over the shock.

Longer-lasting effects

Sometimes a child has feelings of depression and anxiety that go on for several weeks and may get worse. These reactions can interfere considerably with a child’s daily living. They may be unable to enjoy playing or find it difficult to concentrate on their school work. If they go on for a long period of time, it is likely that the child may need some help to feel better.

Sometimes, children find it easier to talk to adults rather than their parent. Professional help may be needed to get them back to normal more quickly, and to prevent or reduce the harmful effects of prolonged stress reactions **ask for help.**

Where can I get help?

If you are concerned about your child, consult your general practitioner, who will be able to offer you help and

support. If problems continue, the doctor may suggest extra help from the local child and adolescent mental health service.

A useful website is The Royal College of Psychiatrists: www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfo/

The above section adapted with permission from Traumatic stress in children, part of Mental Health and Growing Up (produced by the Royal College of Psychiatrists).

Returning to civilian employment

Return to civilian work

In most circumstances, your soldier has the right to be reinstated in the same type of job they were doing before they were mobilised, on terms and conditions that are no less favourable.

- If this is not reasonable and practicable, they should be re-employed in the most favourable job and on the most favourable terms and conditions which are reasonable and practicable in their case.
- As long as their application is in force, their previous civilian employer must re-employ them as soon as they are reasonably able to do so from the date they said they would be ready for work.

However, in order to ensure that they go back to their old job it is vital that they follow the correct process of applying to be reinstated.

How to apply for reinstatement

It is likely that your soldier will have a period of leave to take after their demobilisation. If they want to return to work during this period of leave they must first obtain permission from the Commanding Officer of their Unit or the Demobilisation Centre. They cannot, however, be

forced to return to work before their leave finishes. As soon as they are demobilised they should write informally to their employer to let them know that they can return to work. If they agree a date with their employer for returning to work and are happy with the terms, then they need take no further action.

If, by the end of mobilised service, your soldier has not been offered a job which they are happy with, they must formally write to the former employer stating when (in the next 21 days) they are available to return to work. They must write to the employer no later than the third Monday after their last day of whole-time service. If, after this, they agree a date with their employer for returning to work and are happy with the terms, then they need take no further action.

If, after writing formally to their employer, they are offered a job which they are not happy with; or are told by their former employer that they will not re-employ them; or they hear nothing for three weeks after they wrote, they should apply to a reinstatement committee to secure re-employment with their former employer. See JSP 532 ‘Guidance for Reservists returning to civilian employment following a period of mobilised service’ for a detailed description of the process and templates of the letters they will need to send.

Who can provide support?

The chain of command is responsible for providing help and support if your soldier intends to return to their old job. This help and support is typically provided by a Unit Employer Support Officer (UESO) who acts on behalf of the Commanding Officer in these matters. It is their job to help if there are any problems securing re-employment with a former employer. If you don't know who your UESO is, contact your nominated Unit Welfare Officer.

Key points to remember

- Make sure a copy is kept of everything sent to an employer and everything they send your soldier (keep notes of telephone conversations, etc).
- Make sure that the former employer has received the letters which are sent, (send them for instance) by recorded delivery.
- The soldier must write formally to the employer no later than the third Monday after the last day of whole-time service including leave if they have not already been given their job back.
- If your soldier is not sure about anything ask your Unit Employer Support Officer (UESO) or alternatively contact the SaBRE helpline on 0800 389 5459.

Compensation

Reservists or former Reservists can apply for compensation if they have an illness or injury and service in the Reserve Forces is the only or main cause. The scheme under which you can claim depends on whether the period of service was before or after 6 April 2005. The schemes are administered by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency www.veterans-uk.info. For more information about the pension options and compensation schemes, download a PDF of Reserve Forces Pension and Compensation Benefits (838kb), visit www.mod.uk/issues/pensions or contact the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) helpline.

Tel: 0800 169 2277
Email: veterans.help@spva.qsi.uk

Section Six
Explaining the Army

Army Structure

The Army carries out tasks given to it by the democratically elected Government. Its main job is to help defend the interests of the UK, which consists of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This may involve service overseas as part of a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Force or any other multi-national deployment. Soldiers may also be deployed on United Nations (UN) operations and used to help in other emergencies. The list below shows how a regiment fits into the Army and how the Army is controlled by Government.

- The Queen.
- The Government.
- Parliament.
- Ministry of Defence (MOD).
 - Secretary of State for Defence.
 - Ministers.
- Army Board.
- Chief of the General Staff.
- Army Commands.
- Divisions (about 20,000 people).
- Brigades (about 5000 people).
- Regiments/Battalions (about 700 people).
- Companies/Squadrons/Batteries (about 120 people).
- Platoons/Troops (about 30 people).

Since 1949 the UK has belonged to NATO. NATO aims to provide a common defence for its members in both Europe and further afield. The Army has garrisons in Germany. British troops also serve in Brunei, Cyprus, Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands. In addition soldiers

are deployed on operations world-wide, for instance to the Balkans and the Middle East.

Commissioned Ranks

Gen	General
Lt Gen	Lieutenant General
Maj Gen	Major General
Brig	Brigadier
Col	Colonel
Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel
Maj	Major
Capt	Captain
Lt	Lieutenant
2 Lt	2nd Lieutenant

Non-Commissioned Ranks

WO1	Warrant Officer Class 1
WO2	Warrant Officer Class 2
CSgt/SSgt	Colour Sergeant/Staff Sergeant
Sgt	Sergeant
Cpl	Corporal
LCpl	Lance Corporal
Pte	Private



Abbreviations and Army ‘Lingo’

2IC	2nd In Command	PAX	Forces Life and Personal Injury Insurance
AOR	Area of Responsibility	PI	Platoon
AFF	Army Families Federation	POL	Post Operational Leave
AWIS	Army Welfare Information Service	PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
AWS	Army Welfare Service	PTSR	Post Traumatic Stress Reaction
Bde	Brigade	QM	Quartermaster
BFPO	British Forces Post Office	R&R	Rest & Recuperation
BFBS	British Forces Broadcasting Service	RAO	Regimental Administration Office(r)
Bn	Battalion	Regt	Regiment
CNO	Casualty Notification Officer	RMO	Regimental Medical Officer
CO	Commanding Officer	ROSO	Regimental Operations Support Officer
CoC	Chain of Command	RQMS	Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (WO2)
Coy	Company	RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major (WO1)
CQMS	Company Quartermaster Sergeant	SITREP	Situation Report
CSM	Company Sergeant Major (a WO2)	SLI	Service Life Insurance
DBE	Department of Border Enforcement	SORN	Statutory Off Road Notification
Div	Division	SSR	Security Sector Reform
DILFOR	Dangerously Ill Forwarding of Relatives	SSVC	Services Sound & Vision Corporation
DWP	Deployment Welfare Package	SSAFA-FH	Soldiers, Sailors & Airmen’s Families Association - Forces Help
EFI	Expeditionary Forces Institute (Shop)		
EC	Emergency Contact	TAOR	Tactical Area of Responsibility
FFR	Fixed Forces Rate (of exchange)	Theatre	Area of Operation
HIVE	Forces Information Centre	UESO	Unit Employer Support Officer
JCCC	Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre	UWO	Unit Welfare Office(r)
LSA	Longer Separation Allowance	VO	Visiting Officer
MND	Multi National Division		
MOD	Ministry of Defence		
MT	Military Transport		
MTO	Military Transport Officer		
NAAFI	Navy, Army and Air Force Institute		
NOK	Next of Kin		
OC	Officer Commanding		
Ops	Operations		

Finally

If you have any suggestions for inclusion or amendments to this guide please send them to:

SO3 PS4(A)
DPS(A)
Bldg 398
Trenchard Lines
Upavon
Pewsey
Wiltshire
SN10 4DH

Tel Mil: 94344 Ext 5957
Tel Civil: 01980 61 5957
Email: LF-DPSA-PS4A-D2@mod.uk

Notes:

Useful Telephone Numbers

Your nominated Unit Welfare Officer or Regimental Operations Support Officer - your first point of contact for routine enquiries	
Army Welfare Information Service - confidential advice on any welfare problem from the Army's Welfare Service	01722 436569
Your nearest HIVE - help, information and signposting to professional support agencies	www.hive.mod.uk or phone +44 (0) 1722 436498
Confidential Support Line - personal support from a confidential telephone support worker	0800 731 4880 (UK) +44 (0) 1980 630854
Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre - Emergency casualty and compassionate support (in the case of death, injury or illness of the soldier or their immediate family)	+44 (0) 1452 519951
Reserves Training and Mobilisation Centre (RTMC) Helpline - freephone facility giving 24hr contact details for the RTMC Unit Welfare Officer if required	0800 0285533

Write down your soldier's contact details here, you may need them later

Full name

Rank Regimental number

Unit name

Unit contact telephone number

Unit address prior to deployment

.....

Unit address during deployment

.....

ArmyNET login

www.armynet.mod.uk



www.army.mod.uk/soldierwelfare

**IN CASE OF
EMERGENCY**



These are the most useful welfare telephone numbers you need to know (please tear page, punch cards out and keep for reference)

Army Welfare Information Service

Confidential information and direction on any welfare problem from the Army's Welfare Service **+44 (0) 1722 436569** - 9am - 5pm UK local time work days

Confidential Support Line

Personal, confidential and independent support and advice from SSAFA

In UK: **0800 731 4880** From Germany: **0800 182 7395**

From Cyprus: **800 91065** From Rest of the World: **+44 (0) 1980 630854**

From Operational Theatres via Paradigm - *201

1030am - 1030pm UK local time everyday

Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre

Emergency casualty and compassionate support (death or injury/soldier or family)

+44 (0) 1452 519951 - 24 hours everyday

HIVE

Help, information and signposting to professional support agencies **www.hive.co.uk**

+44 (0) 1722 436498 - 9am - 5pm UK local time work days

In case of Emergency

My emergency contact is in the Armed Forces and may be deployed overseas.

In case of emergency a member of Armed Forces welfare staff can be contacted on either of the following numbers, 24 hours a day for more information:

Unit Welfare Office

Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (injury or death)

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