



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Pittsburgh District

*Deployment Preparation
Separation Assistance*

Family Assistance Handbook

*For Deploying Team Members
And Their Families*

July 2003

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INTRODUCTION

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

We understand the difficult tasks you face – those of you deploying, and those family members left behind. In response, the Pittsburgh District has designated Mr. Lonnie Krogstad (412-395-7106) as the Family Assistance Coordinator (FAC) to serve as the primary source of deployment information and serve as the link between the deployed and the family members. The FAC will always be prepared and willing to help you.

The Pittsburgh District is committed to assisting by keeping family members informed of key information and providing a support network during times of deployment. This handbook was assembled to assist deploying civilian team members, their families, during and after a deployment. Please take the time to go through it and then keep it in a convenient location so that you can refer to it as needed. We hope you find this handbook useful.

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

BEFORE DEPLOYMENT

Get Organized

- Complete the family readiness checklists found throughout this guide.
- Work out any differences that you may have with each other NOW. Time does not heal all wounds and absence does not necessarily make the heart grow fonder.
- Write important dates on a calendar. Include birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, vacation dates, vehicle safety inspection renewal dates, vehicle tag renewal dates, state and federal tax deadlines, auto insurance expiration dates, charge cards, insurance, mortgage, car, and mortgage payment due dates and amounts. Make a copy for each of you.
- Discuss how you plan to keep in contact during the deployment. You may consider pre-addressing envelopes and purchasing stamps ahead of time.
- Flowers or gifts can be ordered in advance to arrive on special dates, or make arrangements with a friend to deliver gifts on special occasions or holidays.
- Make certain that important documents and information are in order and accessible.
- If you have a full time job and children, make arrangements for primary and alternate childcare during your work hours. Make sure your child's caregiver has a current power of attorney to assure necessary medical care.

For The Children

Eliminating the actual shock of the deployment may reduce many of the anxieties which children experience upon a parent's absence. It is important to sit down and explain the deployment process to them.

- Talk with your child about the deployment, explaining the situation in terms your child will understand – why your job is important, why you are deploying, where you are going, how long you will be gone and who else is going.
- Sit down with the whole family and talk about feelings. Encourage everyone to express how he or she feels about the separation.
- Hold a family meeting to discuss the rules of the house. Make them House Rules, not Mom's or Dad's Rules.
- Encourage your children to talk about this and previous deployments – how they felt, what they did, how long the separation seemed, and adjusting to life after your return.
- Spend time individually with each child: play a game, go for a walk, or out for an ice cream cone – just the two of you.
- Take a picture of each child with each parent. Ask a friend to take a family photo.
- Record yourself reading books, telling stories, and talking to the children.

Important Family Information

Your Spouse's Full Name and Rank: _____

Your Spouse's Social Security Number: _____

Your Spouse's Telephone Number at TAC: _____

Your FAC's Name, Telephone Number(s) and E-mail Address:

Your Spouse's Commander's Name and Telephone Number:

Your Church/House of Worship's Telephone Number: _____

Close Friends' Names and Telephone Numbers:

Neighbors' Names and Telephone Numbers:

Legal/Administrative

Chief, Office of Counsel – 412-395-7490

The Office of Counsel advises you and your family about wills and powers of attorney, as well as providing notary public services. All assistance is free; however, some legal matters involve civilian court proceedings. Pittsburgh District attorneys may not represent you in court, but can refer you to civilian attorneys or to civilian legal service agencies that may be able to represent you.

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

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

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

- Do you have immunization records for each member of the family?
- Are your family members' immunizations up-to-date?
- Do you have an up-to-date will and know where it is kept?
- Does your spouse have an up-to-date will, and do you know where it is kept?
- Do you have and know the location of your power of attorney?
 - **General Power of Attorney:** Authorizes you to conduct all family business which would otherwise require your spouse's presence.
 - **Limited Power of Attorney:** Authorizes you to conduct only the matter specified in the document, which would otherwise require your spouse's presence.
 - **Medical Power of Attorney:** Authorizes a person other than yourself to authorize medical care for family members if you are not available. This is excellent for anyone who regularly cares for your children.
- Do you have and know the location of each family member's certified birth certificate?
- Do you have and know the location of your marriage certificate?
- Do you have copies and know the location of any adoption papers, guardianship papers, divorce decrees, or court orders awarding custody of children or child support?
- For illegitimate children, do you have court orders declaring the biological parent, written admission of paternity, and related documents?
- Statements from licensed doctors or medical officers for dependent children over 21 years of age whom are mentally or physically disabled.
- Names and locations of unmarried children older than 21, but younger than 23 years of age who are enrolled in a full-time course of instruction.
- Death certificates of deceased immediate family members.
- Do you have a recent photograph (full-face, light background, about 2x2 inches) showing the person's entire head for each family member 10 years old or older)?
- Do you have and know the social security numbers for each family member?
- Do you know the location of Leave and Earnings statements from the last three months?
- Do you have copies of federal and state tax records for the past six years?
- Where are the insurance policies kept (car, life, homeowner, personal property, etc.)?
- Where are your stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit, savings and credit union passbooks, notes receivable, and other evidence of income-producing properties?
- Do you know where the deeds and other title documents relating to real estate are?
- Certificates of title and registration, warranties, and tax receipts for automobiles, boats, recreational vehicles, and other personal property.
- Citizenship records for any family member born outside of the United States.
- Business agreements including partnership documents, agency contracts, sales contracts, royalties, residual agreements, and employment contracts.
- Documents designating the sponsor or spouse as an executor or a trustee.
- Documents relating to bankruptcy proceedings.
- Military and other employment records.
- Are all your important papers safeguarded?

Finances

Chief, Resource Management Office – 412-395-7442

Financial Matters – You’ve probably already established checking, savings and credit card accounts. If not, do so well in advance of any potential deployments. Make sure that someone is designated to handle the deployed employee’s financial matters. If accounts are solely in the name of the deployed civilian, the spouse or other designated individual may have trouble resolving any problems that may arise. For instance, if a debit card is lost or stolen, a new card may not be issued without the signature of the deployed. Consider joint accounts with signatures being required by only one individual and those with power of attorney.

Thrift Savings Plan (*Chief, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center – 412-395-7482*) – The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings and investment plan for federal employees. It offers savings and tax benefits offered by 401K Plans. Employee contributions to the TSP and any investment income earned are tax-deferred from federal and most states taxes until withdrawn.

Army Benefits Center Services (*Chief, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center – 412-395-7482*) – The Army Benefits Center provides automated benefits support to employees through the Employee Benefit Information System (EBIS), the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), and trained counselors. Both systems are available 24 hours per day, seven days per week; benefits counselors are available Monday through Friday, during and after duty hours.

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

The IVRS is an automated self-service system that employees can access from a touchtone telephone. Unlike the web, the IVRS allows an employee to transfer to a benefits counselor for additional assistance. To access the IVRS, call the toll free number 1-877-ARMYCTR (1-877-276-9287). For hearing impaired access, call 1-877-ARMY-TDD (1-877-276-9833). The Army Benefits Center provides services for the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB), Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FGLI), and Federal Employee’s Compensation Act (FECA). Questions about these services can also be directed to your servicing CPAC at 412-395-7482.

Questions To Ask Yourself

- Do you and your spouse have a joint checking account?
- Do you use Direct Deposit?
- Will your bank accept your Power of Attorney? (Not all banks do.)
- Do you know how deposits are made?
- Do you know how to balance your checkbook?
- Do you know how to write checks?
- Do you know how to order more checks? Do you know what the service charges are?
- Will you have money immediately available to you on a continuing basis during your spouse’s deployment?

- If you are receiving an allotment, will it provide sufficient money to maintain your entire household?
- Do you know the account numbers, names and addresses of your banks?
- Do you know the types of accounts you have?
- Do you know the location of checking and savings books?
- Do you have a safe deposit box? Do you know where the key is kept? Do you know where the box is located?
- Are all of your credit cards accounted for? Are the numbers logged and in a safe place? Do you know how to notify the credit card company in case of loss or theft?
- Do you have Leave and Earnings statements from the last three months?
- Are you prepared to assume or have already assumed the control of all checking accounts, know the balance at all times, and never write a check unless you are certain of sufficient funds in the account?
- Do you know that your spouse must make any changes to allotments, including address changes?
- Do you have a copy of any installment contracts or loan papers?
- Do you know whom to contact if your allotment check doesn't arrive? (Contact your FAC.)
- If you rent or lease, do you have a copy of your lease agreement?
- Will your lease run out while your spouse is deployed?
- Do you know what bills must be paid and when they are due?

	Account Number	Phone Number	Due Date
Mortgage/Rent			
Water - Sewage			
Electrical			
Natural Gas			
Cable - Satellite			
Phone			
Cellular Phone			
Student Loan			
Car License Plate			
Car License Plate			
Car State Safety Inspection			
Car State Safety Inspection			
Car Insurance			
Car Insurance			
Homeowner's Insurance			
Renter's Insurance			
Other Accounts			

Bank Accounts

Checking:

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

Savings:

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

Certificates of Deposit

In Whose Name	Serial #	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Maturity Date

Stocks

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

Bonds (Specify Type)

In Whose Name	Serial #	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Maturity Date

Credit Cards

Credit Card	Account Number	Expiration Date	Company Name/Address	Telephone Number

Debt Information

Outstanding Debts:

Company Owed	Phone	Total Amount	Payment	Due Date

Debts Owed To Family:

Person Owed	Phone	Total Amount	Payment	Due Date

Household Finances

Living Expenses:

Person Owed	Phone	Total Amount	Payment	Due Date

Insurance

Chief, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center – 412-395-7482

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

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

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

During open seasons, civilian employees may select to change health plans if they are already insured under an HMO arrangement and one or more family members are moving out of the HMO serviced area during the period of deployment.

Employees are encouraged to continue medical coverage for their families.

Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) – Under the FEGLI coverage, death benefits are payable regardless of the cause of death. There are several different options under FEGLI and family members should be aware of employee and/or family coverage. Civilians who are deployed with the military to combat support roles during times of crises are not in actual combat and are entitled to accidental death and dismemberment benefits under FEGLI.

Similarly, civilians carrying sidearms for personal protection are not in actual combat.

Family members should be aware of entitlements.

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

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

In the event of the death of a deployee, the Family Assistance Coordinator will work closely with CPAC regarding all entitlements under the federal retirement system, health, life insurance and

Housing Concerns

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

- Do I know the location and use of the electrical circuit and main breaker boxes?
- Do I know the location of the main water control valves and how to turn them off?
- Do I know the location of each toilet’s water control valve and how to turn it off?
- Do I know the location of each sink’s water control valve and how to turn it off?
- Do I know the location of the washing machine’s valve and how to turn it off?
- Do I know the location of the dishwasher’s valve and how to turn it off?
- Do I know the location of the gas control valve and how to turn it off?
- Name and telephone number of an electrician: _____
- Name and telephone number of a plumber: _____
- Name and telephone number of the landlord: _____
- Do I have an extra set of house keys?
- Do the doors and windows have good locks?
- Do all of the smoke alarms have new batteries?
- Are there enough alarms installed?
- Am I capable of doing the yard maintenance? If not, have I made arrangements?
- Do I have a current household inventory, including serial numbers?
- Do I have current renters or homeowner’s personal property insurance?
- Have I checked for current maintenance problems? Have I resolved them?
- Are curtains, dishtowels, paper and other items kept away from the stove?
- Is the stove’s exhaust hood and ductwork clean and free of grease?
- Do I have properly rated extinguishers close at hand and suitable for grease and electrical fires?
- Is the fireplace screen closed?
- Is the fireplace damper closed?
- Is there sufficient space for air circulation around the TV or stereo?
- Are matches and lighters kept out of reach and the access of children?
- Are any weapons in the home? Are they secured and inaccessible to children?
- Are all combustible materials kept away from the furnace, water heater and other heat sources?
- Are the furnace, heaters, vents and chimney inspected and serviced regularly?
- Are fuses of the proper size for the circuits they protect?
- Is the dryer lint trap and vent clean? Do I know how to clean them?
- Is the gasoline for the mower stowed in a safety container away from the house?
- Are all dry leaves under wooden stairs, in windowsills or anywhere else close to the house removed?
- Do you have an intruder plan and fire escape plan, and have you practiced it with all family members?
- Have you practiced fire emergency procedures?

- Are circuits adequate for heating appliances, such as irons or toasters?
- Is the electrical wiring in your home adequate to handle the load?
- Are there plenty of wall electrical outlets, so "octopus" connections are not necessary?
- Are all oily rags kept in tight metal containers to prevent combustion?
- Always read the product label and follow their safety precautions very carefully!
- Do you avoid the accumulation of paper and combustible materials?
- Are paint thinners, paints, solvents, and other chemicals kept in their original containers for identification purposes?
- Do you inspect electrical cords on your appliances?
- Do you use extension cords only for temporary convenience, never as permanent wiring?
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never use hair spray or other combustibles near open flames or while smoking.
- Does every member of your family know how to dial 911?

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

Transportation

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

- Do you have a current driver's license? Expiration: _____
- Do you have an extra set of car keys? They are located: _____
- Do you know when the car is due for maintenance?
- Do you know where to take the car for maintenance?
- Do you know how to attend to minor car maintenance?
- Do you know what to do if the car breaks down?
- Is the registration for the car kept in the car?
- Is a proof of insurance kept in the car at all times?
- Do you have the title for the car?
- Are the car tags current?
- If the tags need to be renewed while your spouse is away, do you have the proper paper work to get new tags?
- When will the safety inspection expire?
- What is the name and address of the company holding the lien?
- Are you insured to drive the car(s)?
- If you do not drive or have a valid driver's license, are you familiar with local public transportation?

Medical Preparation

Chief, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center – 412-395-7482

While civilian employees are deployed, they should have peace of mind that their families' health care coverage will continue. Counseling is available to the deploying civilian and his or her family members through the District's Employee Assistance Program.

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

- Do I know the telephone number of our family physician? _____
- Do I know the location of the nearest emergency room? _____

- Are immunizations for each family member up to date? _____
- Where are the medical records for each family member? _____
- Where are the dental records for each family member? _____
- Who has medical power of attorney? _____
- Are the pet's vaccinations up to date? _____
- Are the pets registered with the city? _____
- What is the telephone number of your veterinarian? _____
- Where is your veterinarian located? _____

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

DURING A DEPLOYMENT

For The Spouse

- Let at least three of your trusted neighbors know that your spouse is deployed. You may need their help during an emergency and they can also be a wonderful source of daily support.
- Set goals for yourself, and then pursue them.
- Stay busy during the separation: church, school, sports, volunteering and being with friends.
- Take up a new hobby, or return to the one you may have given up for lack of time.
- Travel. New scenery and a change of pace, even if only for a day, do wonders for the spirit. Take a friend along. Don't wait for the phone to ring; take the lead.
- Create a budget; then stick to it.
- Get up earlier to allow yourself more time before starting the day.
- Set priorities, select the best time to complete tasks, and pace yourself. Be realistic and kind to yourself.
- If you are under great stress, plan with your limitations in mind.
- Talk to other spouses of deployed personnel. Time passes much faster with a friend.
- Set up a childcare co-op with the other spouses. This will let you have a few hours to yourself.
- Do not try to please everyone. Learn to say "no."
- Exercise regularly. Get plenty of sleep. It is okay to go to bed early.
- Admit when you have made a mistake, correct what you can, and move on. It is easier than covering up or feeling guilty.
- Treat yourself like you treat your closest friend. Give yourself permission to be less than perfect, or to take a break.
- Plan yourself special treats each week. Always have something to look forward to. Use your brain; keep learning – take a class, work on a puzzle, try something new.
- Anticipate stress and prepare for it.
- Simplify.
- Avoid power struggles.
- Provide consistent discipline and feedback to your children.
- Be honest.
- Learn about your acceptable/comfortable stress level. Some stress is normal and necessary. (It gets you out of bed in the morning.)

For The Children

- Put a family picture on a piece of furniture or the wall at your child's eye level. Let each child select pictures to keep in a special place – nightstand, desk, etc.
- Establish morning and bedtime routines. Routines can work to your advantage.
- Let children plan special family events and outings especially on weekends and holidays during the deployment (picnics, walks, eating out, build a bird feeder, etc.).
- Play the recorded books and stories.
- Talk about the deployment, about how you feel. Ask the children to express their feelings.

- Make a list of parent chores that a child can do. Each week let the child pick a chore to do. It will be a special contribution to maintain the house and will help develop a sense of personal responsibility.
- Let teachers know about the deployment. Work together to evaluate, avoid or redirect changes in behavior.

Safety Precautions

These tips are good to follow whether your spouse is deployed or at home. Sudden changes in your behavior patterns may advertise your spouse's absence.

- Wear your wedding ring to prevent confusion and criticism. Recognize that as a mature adult, you are capable of conversations and friendships with men and women.
- Be selective in telling people that your spouse is deployed.
- Do not discuss your spouse's absence in public, even with friends, because someone with ill intent may overhear you.
- When someone calls on the telephone and asks for your spouse, NEVER tell the caller that your spouse is not home. Tell the caller that your spouse can't come to the telephone and offer to take a message.
- Keep emergency phone numbers and your address by all the phones in your home.
- Always lock your doors and windows, draw your shades at night and leave a few lights on.
- Leave lights on outside and inside whenever possible.
- Install a deadbolt lock before the deployment. It is the most difficult to pick. Make sure your door has a peephole and a safety chain. (A safety chain is NOT adequate protection in the event someone tries to force a door open.)
- Never open your door even a crack for anyone uninvited or unexpected. Use a peephole. If the unexpected visitor claims it is an emergency, make the phone call for them.
- Do not allow sales, repair, or delivery people, or other strangers into your home when you are alone. If you are expecting a service call, have another person with you and call the company when the employee arrives.
- Use caution. Remember, neighbors and acquaintances do not come with credentials, and may not always be who they say they are.
- Change the locks on the doors if you are not sure who has other keys to your house (previous tenants and their friends, or neighbors with extra keys).
- Discontinue paper delivery if you will be away. Ask the Post Office to hold your mail until you return.
- Do not leave a child alone in a car or home. It is illegal in most states, although the minimum age may vary, and it is a safety and security issue.
- Instruct children, family and babysitters not to give out information about who is home, who is out, or for how long.
- Do not hide keys outside. They are too easily found.
- Most burglars and intruders enter homes through OPEN doors or windows or doors and windows that are easily jimmied.
- Always keep your doors locked whether or not you are at home. Always lock your car while driving and when your car is unoccupied.

- If you notice strangers loitering in your neighborhood, notify the police; include a time, place, and a description.
- To discourage burglars, engrave your name on televisions, stereos, cameras and other items of value. Check with your local police for more information and current recommendations about engraving.
- If you suspect your home has been broken into, DO NOT go in. Call the police from a neighbor's home.
- Do not go places alone, especially at night. Use the buddy system.
- Do not bring in your mail, newspaper, or gather clothing in from your line after dark.
- When going to your car, have your keys in your hand.
- Look under the car as you approach it; look inside the car before unlocking the doors.
- Once inside the car, lock all of the doors.
- If your car breaks down, put up the hood, turn on the emergency flashers and stay in the car with the windows up and the doors locked. If someone stops to help, give them a phone number to call.
- If you travel, consider owning a cellular phone.
- When approaching a stop, look all around, and leave enough room to be able to pull around the car in front of you in an emergency.
- If someone hits your car from the rear, do not get out of the car if you are in an isolated or unsafe place. Instead, if the car is drivable, go to a well-lit populated area. If you have a cellular phone, use it to call the police.
- While walking, keep your head up and be aware of your surroundings – it is your best defense.
- Do not shop at night.
- Change your routes to stay out of unsafe areas.
- If you think you are being followed while walking, cross to the other side of the street and change your route to a well-lit populated area, or if you are driving, go to the police station.
- When walking, stay well away from bushes, parked cars, and alleyways.
- When you go anywhere, ask yourself, what would I do if I were attacked in this situation? Be prepared.
- Be aware of people identifying themselves as members of the Corps of Engineers. Ask to see identification.

Communications

Chief, Information Management Office – 412-395-7412

Mailing Address For Your Deployed Spouse – You should have this before the deployment or be able to obtain the address from your FAC shortly thereafter.

Letter Writing – Maintaining your lines of communication is particularly important during the stress and strain of deployment. Here are some ideas that may make it easier to keep in touch.

- Keep your spouse's letter and picture in front of you and write as though you were having a two-way conversation. Answer all of his/her questions.
- Let your spouse know how much you appreciate hearing from him/her. In each communication, mention one or two things that made you feel especially close.
- Remember that the need to express affection does not diminish with the miles. "I love you," means just as much, and perhaps even more, when it is written during a deployment as when spoken in person.
- Share your feelings as openly as you can without indulging in self-pity. Let your spouse know you should both share feelings in letters.
- Above all, express yourself clearly. This will keep your spouse from wondering, "What did that mean?" On the other hand, don't try to read between the lines or interpret a puzzling remark. If you don't understand, ask questions in your next letter.
- It is a good idea to number or date letters to eliminate confusion.
- Make sure your children have an opportunity to write letters and send pictures or artwork. Remind your deployed spouse to write each child individually, especially around birthdays and other significant holidays. Children love to receive their own mail.

Tape Recording – If letter writing is difficult, consider purchasing a pair of tape recorders so that you and your spouse can send tapes. It's a great opportunity for every member of the family to be involved. Tape recording equipment is available through the Information Management Office.

Telephone Calls – Telephone calls, when possible, are a quick way to communicate, but remember long distance and overseas calls can be very expensive. Remember the difference in time zones as well. Recognize that commercial phone availability may be limited depending on the circumstances and geographic location of the deployment. Telephone communication is available through the Information Management Office.

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

E-mail address: _____ @ _____

Video Telephone Thru District Video Teleconference System (VTC) – The District has the capability to provide VTC capability to deployed spouses. The communication technology provides a real time opportunity to conduct face to face contact with the deployed spouse. Limitations of the technology will depend on the capability of the deployed location.

"Care Packages" – The District will provide mailing services from family members to the deployed spouse. Packages can be delivered to the District mail room for dispatch. Proper addresses and necessary custom forms are required

Emergencies

Deputy Commander – 412-395-7102

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

Emergencies Requiring Your Spouse’s Presence – The Army considers the following situations emergencies during which a Commander could deem it necessary to allow your spouse to return home: the death, critical illness or injury to an immediate family member (i.e., spouse, child, brother, sister, parent or guardian who raised them in place of their parents).

While illnesses like the flu, injuries such as a broken arm, or the birth of a baby are major events, they are not considered emergencies. In these and similar situations, your friends, neighbors, relatives, family assistance coordinator, pastors, and community agencies can help you. If you have an emergency that requires contacting your spouse, follow these directions for the fastest results:

1. Notify the AMERICAN RED CROSS for emergency reporting and verification services such as, death or serious illness in the immediate family. Contact the Armed Forces Emergency Center, 1-877-272-7337, 24 hours a day.

The Red Cross will need:

Spouse’s Full Name: _____

Social Security Number: _____ - _____ - _____

Branch of Service: _____

Unit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Transatlantic Programs Center

Rank/Grade: _____

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

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

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

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

2. Contact your FAC with the same information.

FAC: Mr. Lonnie Krogstad

Office Number: 412-395-7106

Home Number: _____

If An Immediate Family Member Has An Emergency – If an immediate family member living in another part of the country has an emergency and your spouse’s presence is needed, the Red Cross from that area can verify the emergency and call the Armed Forces Emergency Services Center 1- 877- 272- 7337.

If Your Deployed Spouse Has An Emergency – If your spouse develops a serious problem such as an illness or injury, the military chain of command, the Red Cross, or a military chaplain will contact you.

Sources For Assistance

Your FAC: Mr. Lonnie Krogstad

Your Family Support Group Contact: _____

Web Sites:

- Army Family Liaison Office - <http://www.aflo.org/home.asp>
- USCENTCOM’s Family Assistance - <http://www.centcom.mil/familysupport/familysupport.htm>
- US Army Community Service - http://www.armycommunityservice.org/vacs_deployment/home.asp
- Army Benefits Center Services - <http://www.abc.army.mil>
- Military Call Home Tips - <http://ftp.fcc.gov/cgb/military/militarycallhome.html>
- Long Distance Couples - <http://www.longdistancecouples.com>
- American Red Cross - <http://www.redcross.org>
- Dads at a Distance - <http://www.daads.com>
- Moms Over Miles - <http://www.momsovermiles.com>
- National Military Family Association, Inc. - <http://www.nmfa.org>
- Family Readiness Programs Toolkit - <http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/toc.htm>

HOMEcomings

Preparing For Your Spouse's Return

- Remember that your spouse has been subjected to an intense work environment and may want to relax. Busy schedules and preplanned events may not be a good idea at first. Leave some room for spontaneity.
- Your spouse may have trouble sleeping for a while due to the change from deployment life, the presence of other people in living quarters, or time zone changes.
- Do not be defensive about the way you have handled the children. Discuss any criticisms calmly.
- It may take time to reestablish sexual intimacy.
- Remember that people change based on their experiences. You will both change, and these changes may be more noticeable after a long separation.
- All members of the family will have to readjust on their own schedule.

Reuniting The Family

- Make it a family reunion; Mom and Dad can vacation alone later.
- Spend time alone with each child to reestablish the relationship.
- Spend as much time as a family as possible – without outsiders. Postpone visits with relatives and friends for a few days.

What Returning Spouses Can Do

- Don't disturb a family routine that has been working well without you. Ease back into the system gradually. Enjoy being an "honored guest" for a while.
- Take it easy on the children, especially where discipline is concerned. It may be best for children to have a consistent routine, so let the current rules stand.
- We may be a little envious of your travels, so go easy on the descriptions of the seven-course Asian banquets or German festivals, etc. Remember your spouse also worked hard maintaining the family and home in your absence.
- If your sexual relationship between you and your spouse is awkward at first, talk about it.
- Your spouse may have become a more confident and independent person. You have both changed during the deployment. The changes do not mean your spouse wants to be in control of everything. It may take time to adjust. Be patient and talk about the changes.

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Place a copy by each telephone in your home.

In Case of EMERGENCY:

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