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Family Connection is a publication of the Fleet and Family Support Program.

The Navy's Fleet and Family Support Program promotes the self-reliance and resiliency of Sailors and their families. We provide information that can help you meet the unique challenges of the military lifestyle.

If you have questions or comments, contact John Levinson at john.levinson.ctr@navy.mil.

Visit us online at:



Military Spouses Serve Too!

Military Spouse Appreciation Day honors the husbands, wives and loved ones of our service members for their contributions and sacrifices. Proud, strong, steadfast and resourceful; military spouses provide balance on the homefront.

Serving as both mom and dad while the other parent is deployed, caring for our wounded warriors and volunteering in communities are some of the countless roles assumed when called upon. Military spouses are appreciated! They bring calm to chaos and meet each challenge head on. Thank you for your commitment. Thank you for serving too.

Military Spouses Virtual Career Fair

Here is an opportunity to meet and interact with employers from your home or anywhere there is Internet access. In conjunction with First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's Joining Forces Initiative, Milicruit has partnered with employers to present the Military Spouses Virtual Career Fair on May 6, 2011. Registration is FREE to all military spouses and family members. Go to www.militaryspousecf.com to register.



"The spirit of service and selflessness that is seen in the military communities across our country represents what is best about America, and as a Nation, we owe our brave service members and their families more than gratitude – we owe them the support they have earned."

– First Lady Michelle Obama



Military Moving

We all know how it is with the military; moving becomes a common occurrence in your life and that of your family. When Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders are presented, families must move from one duty station to another. The best way to make a military move easier, is to be prepared. The move can become stressful when a family feels unorganized. There are many things you can do to lighten the load. If you establish a timeline of what needs to be done and when you need to do it, you can greatly improve the moving process.

The Fleet and Family Support Center's (FFSC) Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) can make your move a lot easier. RAP is designed to make the moving process run as effortlessly as possible. Plan on attending a Smooth Move Workshop hosted by the FFSC. The Smooth Move Workshop will address move-related topics such as who pays what, shipping your personal property and the sponsorship program. There will also be a financial counselor available to answer your questions.

You may wish to gain an even greater sense of organization by visiting "Preparing for Your Move" and downloading the [Relocation Checklist](#). This will help you to budget your time and ensure you are not rushing to complete the moving process.



The links below will also assist with relocation to your new command:

[Military Installations](#). Your official DoD source directory of worldwide installation and state-related military information, programs, and services. It provides easy access to fast facts, articles, website resource directories, photos, contact information, major units, weather and maps.

[Plan My Move](#). Moving does not have to be a frightening task! Plan My Move provides you with tools to successfully plan your next move.

Remember you can also call the Fleet and Family Support Center with your important moving questions!

TRICARE and your Move

TRICARE has made moving easier and more user-friendly. The "[Moving Made Easy](#)" option allows active-duty service members and their families to transfer their Prime enrollment option to a new region with a simple phone call before they move stateside or overseas. In most cases, using this option eliminates the need to submit a new enrollment form or visit a TRICARE Service Center.

The process is completely automated and hassle-free. You may still transfer through military base in-processing, online through Beneficiary Web Enrollment by downloading and completing an enrollment application to mail, or visiting a local TRICARE Service Center.

Avoiding Rental and Moving Scams Podcast

Learn to recognize common scams that target people who are looking for homes to rent or companies to transport their household goods.

[Listen or Download](#) | [Read Transcript](#)
(7:22 minutes)

For further information, go to <http://www.militaryonesource.com/MOS/OnlineCommunity/Podcasts/AvoidingRentalandMovingScamsPodcast.aspx#10>



Housing and Relocating

Moving can be stressful, and Housing Service Centers (HSCs) have resources to help you leave your current home and smoothly and easily find your new home.

Housing Service Center Referral Services

Housing Service Centers (HSCs) are located on every base and can assist you with your departure from your current duty station and arrival at your new one. HSCs provide a full suite of housing services:

- Help finding a rental, whether on- or off-base.
- Advice on selling your home and buying a new one.
- Temporary housing.
- Eligibility determinations and entitlements assistance (BAH/OHA/MIHA/TLA/TLE).
- A host of resident services such as landlord/tenant issue facilitation, home buying workshops, and loaner furnishings (at overseas locations).

Find installation HSC contact information and more on [Navy OneStop](#).

Automated Housing Referral Network (AHRN)

Whether you are PCSing from thousands of miles away or are moving locally, [AHRN](#) is your trusted source for finding available housing fast. AHRN is a DoD-sponsored site dedicated to serve military-specific needs, such as home searches based on BAH rates, that target places that fit your needs and are within your budget. AHRN listings include:

- Off-Base Rentals.
- On-Base/Military Housing.
- Shared Rentals.
- Temporary Lodging.
- Military For Sale By Owner.

AHRN is available at all CONUS Navy bases. Visit [AHRN.com](#) to find your next home!



Get Connected!

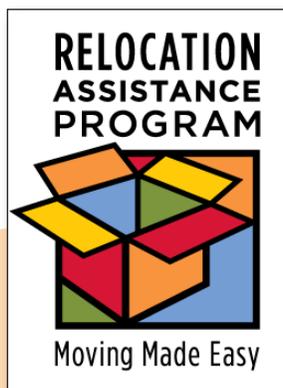
Family Readiness Groups

Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) is proud to announce the release of the long-awaited revised Family Readiness Groups (FRG) Instruction, along with the *FRG Handbook*!

FRGs serve as a wonderful resource by helping families adjust to the Navy lifestyle. They prepare members for deployment and homecoming, provide family support during deployments, help families adjust to challenges and support one another in times of personal, unit or area crisis. FRGs also welcome and mentor members who are new to the Navy.

The new instruction clarifies FRG member roles and responsibilities and provides commanders with guidance for interacting with FRGs. The *FRG Handbook* provides a solid foundation to newly forming FRGs, serves as a point of reference to those already in existence, and gives families information and ideas for establishing and maintaining successful groups.

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Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) Tip

Use your luggage. During your pack-out, fill suitcases and duffel bags with essential items like clothing, sheets and towels. Once you receive your household goods, you will quickly spot the suitcase holding the sheets and blankets for that first night's sleep!



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For more information about Family Readiness Groups contact your local Fleet and Family Support Center. The *Family Readiness Groups Handbook* is available for download at <http://www.ffsp.navy.mil/>.

Ombudsman Program

Many opportunities and services are available for service members and their families such as Operation Purple Camp and the Military Saves campaign. Your command ombudsman receives regular updates about programs and shares information through their newsletters and other correspondence to benefit families. Take advantage and become fully aware of all the resources available to you. Unsure of who is your command ombudsman? Ask your Sailor or go to www.ffsp.navy.mil and click "Contact your Ombudsman."

Provider Appreciation Day

Provider Appreciation Day is a special day to recognize child care providers, teachers and other educators of young children everywhere. Celebrated each year on the Friday before Mother's Day, it offers a unique opportunity to commend the unselfish dedication, commitment and compassion that child care providers demonstrate every day. Even the smallest gesture means so much. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Get together with other parents to create a surprise for the provider.
- Bring breakfast or lunch for your provider and for the kids.
- Buy something for your provider's play area.

For more information, visit www.providerappreciationday.org.



We Honor Veterans

We Honor Veterans, a program of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), invites hospices, state hospice organizations, Hospice-Veteran Partnerships and VA facilities to join a pioneering program focused on respectful inquiry, compassionate listening and grateful acknowledgment. By recognizing the unique needs of America's veterans and their families, community providers, in partnership with VA staff, will learn how to accompany and guide them through their life stories toward a more peaceful ending."

We Honor Veterans provides educational tools and resources in advancing these goals:

- Promote veteran-centric educational activities.
- Increase organizational capacity to serve veterans.
- Support development of strategic partnerships.
- Increase access and improve quality.

For more information, visit www.wehonorveterans.org



Caregiver Top 10 Tips

1. Ask for help – you can't do it all.
2. Take time for yourself – even caregivers need a vacation.
3. Take care of your health – the healthier you are the better caregiver you will be.
4. Express your feelings – sharing your experiences with others can help.
5. Talk with professionals.
6. Watch for signs of burnout - contact your Veterans'VA Social Worker or Doctor for assistance.
7. Take breaks – helps you refresh.
8. Avoid isolation.
9. Give yourself a treat – you deserve it.
10. Learn about your veteran's condition and how it can change over time.

For ideas and more information, visit <http://www.caregiver.va.gov/Tips.asp>.

American Legion's Family Support Network (FSN)

Legionnaires at the post level are ready to provide immediate assistance to service members and their families whose lives have been directly affected by Operation Iraqi Freedom and America's war on terror. [The Family Support Network](#) can assist with needs such as groceries, car repair, DIY projects, advice and counsel, and perhaps, intercession with local businesses to extend payment terms. As the nation's largest veterans organization, the American Legion is "Still Serving America."

How the Family Support Network works:

- The request is received at the toll-free number: 1-800-504-4098.
- The name, address and telephone number of the caller, as well as the reason for the call, are collected.
- The call is referred to the department.
- The department refers the call to a local post.
- The local post contacts the family and provides the assistance, if resources are available, or refers the family to other local agencies.
- In case of financial need, the post provides the necessary funds or assists the family in applying for temporary financial assistance, if minor children are in the home.

Morale, Welfare and Recreation

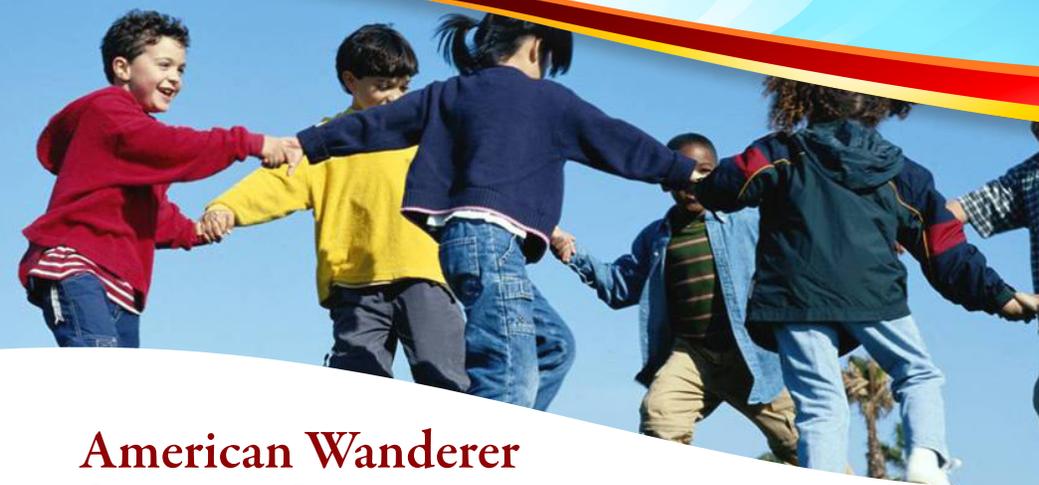
The Navy provides an array of local Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs both ashore and afloat. Service members and their families can take advantage of these and numerous other MWR benefits offered at Navy installations worldwide. For more information, go to <http://www.mwr.navy.mil>.



Fleet and Family Recreation activities include:

- Entertainment
- Crafts & Hobbies
- Auto Skills
- Tickets & Tours
- Outdoor Recreation
- Golf & Bowling
- Bingo
- Marinas
- Gaming
- Cabins & RV Parks
- Navy Flying Club and MORE!





American Wanderer Summer Camp

Not only will you reclaim your home for a few days, but your kids will meet new people, broaden social skills and gain independence with plenty of marshmallow roasts guaranteed. [American Wanderer Summer Camp](#) invites military youth from across the U.S. to explore our National Parks this summer!

American Wanderer Summer Camp currently has openings available for middle and high school aged youth (11-17 years old) from all branches of the military and Coast Guard during the following sessions:

- Session 1 (June 22-July 5)
- Session II (July 6-July 19)
- Session III (July 20-August 2)
- Session IV (August 3-16)

For more information and to register or inquire about available military discounts/scholarships, visit: <http://www.rvcampforkids.com/Scholarships.htm> or contact the American Wanderer Camp owners/directors, Lyn and Chris Kimberly at 203-557-3339 or email at Lyn@RVCampforKids.com.

Family Fun Fitness Festival

Bring your family and join the fun! The 2nd Annual Family Fun Fitness Festival promotes the benefits of a healthy lifestyle through fitness, nutrition and lots of fun. Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has partnered with the Base Exchange and MWR to host family-focused events at more than 100 commissaries worldwide.

Combined with the World's Biggest Case Lot Sale, activities will include 5K walk/runs, mini-marathons, aerobic and fitness demos, health screenings provided by the local dietitians as well as exchange sidewalk sales; music and industry-sponsored nutritious food samples, prize giveaways and discount coupon offers. Due to last year's success, the festival's schedule has expanded; beginning mid-April and running through mid-June to accommodate more activities. Check your local store for specific dates and information. You can also visit the "Case Lot Sale" section of [DeCA](#).

Free Admission for Military Families

[Blue Star Museums](#) is back for a second year. The National Endowment for the Arts and more than 1,000 museums in all 50 states will offer free admission to active-duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day, May 30, 2011, through Labor Day, September 5, 2011.

The Anheuser Busch "[Here's to the Heroes](#)" program will provide members of the military and as many as three direct dependents with a free single-day complimentary admission to SeaWorld Orlando, San Diego or San Antonio; Busch Gardens Tampa Bay or Williamsburg; Sesame Place, Water Country USA, or Adventure Island. [Click here to register.](#)



IA Discussion Group Schedule

[View the Fleet-wide list of classes, support groups and events.](#)

Returning Warrior Workshops (RWW)

Returning Warrior Workshop Schedule & IA Family Events - www.ia.navy.mil/



Double Duty: Staying Connected With Your Kids When You Are a Deployed Dad

As a service member and a father, you have two very important jobs. How can you do both while deployed? It takes real effort to maintain a presence in your child's life while you are away. On this CD from [Military OneSource](#), fatherhood expert and former Marine, Armin Brott talks about ways to stay close with your child from before you deploy to after you return. Service members from all branches share their experiences.

You will learn:

- How your child might react during each phase of your deployment.
- How to make your departure easier on your family.
- Ways to reach out to your child while you are deployed.
- What your spouse can do to make your absence easier on your child.
- What to expect when you return.
- How to handle specific circumstances such as becoming a father while you are deployed, staying in touch with your child when you are divorced or single, how to keep up with your child's education, and what to do if you may be feeling combat stress

Joint Services Support (JSS)

JSS provides valuable information on benefits, entitlements, events, trainings and more. Making it easy to stay connected, anytime, anywhere with online access, mobile device applications and interactive voice response. Services are available to all military branches; featuring a community resource locator by state. Go to <http://www.jointservicesupport.org>.



Web-based Counseling Program Extended

The TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP) has been extended through March 2012. Through the program, TRICARE health-care beneficiaries use the Internet and a Web cam to speak "face-to-face" with mental-health counselors around the clock and from anywhere in the United States. People can log on from home to receive short-term, non-medical counseling for situations that may arise from life circumstances such as deployment stress, relationships, personal loss and parent-child communications. Download the [brochure](#) for more information.



QR Code: What is it?

You have probably seen a QR code on a poster, in a magazine or even on a T-shirt. QR is short for Quick Response and is also known as mobile tagging. It is a specific two-dimensional barcode that allows its contents to be decoded at high speed on your mobile device.

Using a camera phone equipped with a compatible QR reader application, you can have instant access to the information stored digitally within the code. QR codes make everything interactive from contact information to opening a Web page using your phone's browser. Free QR Code readers are available via your smart phone's App store.

With a QR Code, Family Readiness publications, websites and videos can be instantly accessible with a smart phone. This feature can be used to provide invaluable information to those that are geographically isolated.

The Family Connection Newsletter will pilot this initiative to appeal to all technology users and improve your access to resources. We are excited and welcome your feedback!

Scan QR Code for the latest edition.



Japan Earthquake/ Tsunami Support and Resources

The U.S. State Department currently lifted the voluntary departure order for Japan. For families returning to the United States, below are resources to assist:

- [Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System \(NFAAS\)](#)
- [MilitaryINSTALLATIONS](#)
- [TRICARE](#) or 1-877-451-8659
- [US Navy Judge Advocate](#)
- [Department of the Navy Human Resources](#)
- [Department of the Defense Education Activity](#)

For more information and resources available to help Navy families affected by the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan, [click here](#).

Did you Know?

To protect your privacy and personal identity information, your Social Security Number (SSN) is being replaced with a DoD ID Number on all ID Cards. For more information about SSN removal, visit www.dmdc.osd.mil/smartcard.

