

NAVY



DEPLOYMENT

Table of Contents



Deployment Documents



Finances



Communication



Emotional Ups and Downs of Deployment



Children and Deployment



Emergency Preparedness



Helpful Organizations



Children and Homecoming

Introduction

Experienced deployers and their families say that preparation is essential for a successful deployment whether it is your first deployment or your fourteenth deployment. This handbook was created with input from experienced deployers and their families from all types of communities — air, surface, submarine, special ops, and expeditionary. Preparation checklists are available for every type of deployer — couples, singles, single parents, IA, Reservists, even children at www.ffsp.navy.mil. If you have questions about any of the information in this handbook, contact your local Fleet and Family Support Center. Their contact information is also available at www.ffsp.navy.mil.

Deployment Documents

The foundation of a successful deployment may seem to be built on paper! It's important to review, update, and organize a number of important documents before deployment. These documents include the following:

Wills

A will is a legal expression or declaration of an individual's wishes upon his or her death. For couples with children it's important to include who you'd want to care for your children should something happen to both you and your spouse. To ensure your estate is distributed the way you want, make sure you have a current will and your loved ones know its location. Your local Navy Legal Services Office will assist you in making a will at no cost.



Power of Attorney

Powers of Attorney can be very useful when conducting personal business. They can also be very dangerous documents as they allow someone to act in your behalf. You may need different types of Powers of Attorney for different tasks. For example, you may need a special Power of Attorney to file your taxes or for you to buy or sell a big ticket item such as a vehicle or condo. There is a document called a "General Power of Attorney" that can be used in a variety of situations. It is important to know in advance what type of Power of Attorney will be accepted by an institution you want to do business with. Not all will accept a General Power of Attorney. Your local Navy Legal Services Office can discuss options and draw up a Power of Attorney at no charge.

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)

Active duty service members are eligible to be insured under SGLI up to a maximum of \$400,000 in increments of \$50,000. Before deployment verify who is designated as beneficiary and make changes as necessary. A will does not impact the beneficiary of life insurance. To make changes Election Form (VA Form SGLV-8286) must be completed. For more information on Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance visit the Department of Veterans Group Life Insurance information page at www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/default.htm.

Emergency Data Form

The Emergency Data Form is more commonly referred to as the “Page Two” of a Sailor’s Service Record. It lists who should be contacted if a service member becomes ill, is injured, killed or missing. Any time your family moves or contact information changes this form should be updated through the admin at the command or through your local Personnel Support Detachment (PSD).

Other Important Documents

If you do not already have one it’s a good idea to invest in a small, fire proof safe or rent a safety deposit box to store your family’s important documents. Many of these documents are hard to replace. Even though you do not need them often, when you do need them they are critical. Do you know where each of the following documents are located?

- Birth Certificates.
- Marriage License.
- Divorce Decrees.
- Death Certificates.
- Medical Records of each Family Member.
- Dental Records of each Family Member.
- Veterinarian Records for each Pet.
- Adoption Papers.
- Citizenship/Naturalization Papers.
- Passports/Visas.
- Insurance Policies (Life, Health, Home, Vehicle, Flood).
- Real Estate Documents (Lease, Deed, First and Second Mortgage Documents).
- Car Title, Registration and Inspection.
- Most Recent Leave and Earnings Statement (LES).
- Social Security Number of each Family Member.
- Current Address and Phone Number of Immediate Family Members of both Spouses.



Finances

Setting up a spending plan is one of the smartest things you can do prior to a deployment or any time. A spending plan allows you to see where your money is going and to make adjustments as needed to meet your financial goals. If you have a spouse or partner, it is a idea good to do a plan together so both understand and agree to how finances will be handled during the deployment.

A spending plan, or budget, can be as simple as documenting income and expenses or something much more elaborate. When setting up or updating your spending plan prior to deployment look at possible changes to income:

- Will there be any additional income for family separation allowance, combat duty pay, sea pay, etc.?
- Is there a chance for a promotion during deployment?
- Will a reenlistment bonus be received during deployment?
- Will you lose income due to loss of a second job or your spouse not working or gain income because your spouse moves in with family during deployment?
- Will some pay be tax exempt?

Before deployment ensure:

- Pay distribution is set up appropriately. Are direct deposits, any allotments or automatic check drafts established?
- How will ongoing bills be paid, and by whom?
- If in a relationship, are you using joint or separate checking accounts? If joint, have you discussed how you will manage the account?
- Do you have overdraft protection for your checking accounts — just in case?
- Are you prepared for recurring, but not monthly expenses, such as tuition payments, car and home insurance?
- What are the expectations for using credit during deployment?

Financial challenges:

- Do you have money saved in case of financial emergency? A pre-authorization form with Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society can be signed before deployment if savings are minimal.
- Who is/are authorized users of the Defense Finance and Accounting System MyPay account?



Taxes:

- Will you be deployed during tax season? If you file jointly you'll need to get a Special Power of Attorney for filing taxes or depositing a refund.
- Do you need an extension of the filing deadline?
- Do you need to file state income tax returns?



Contact the Internal Revenue Service at www.irs.gov for more information.

Financial goals:

Many find deployments provide a good opportunity to save money. What are your financial goals? Are you saving for emergencies, a new car, a house, a vacation? Are you enrolled in the Thrift Savings Plan? If you have credit card balances are you working to pay them off?

Contact your local Command Financial Specialist, Fleet and Family Support Center, Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, credit union or Military OneSource if you would like help developing your spending plan to help you achieve your financial goals.

Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act

The Service Members' Civil Relief Act (SCRA) is a law that protects service members on active duty. Major provisions include:

- **Termination of Residential Leases.** Allows individuals to break a lease when they go onto active duty, if the lease was entered into before going onto active duty. Additionally, the act allows a service member to terminate a residential lease entered into while in the military, if the member receives permanent change of station (PCS) orders, or orders to deploy for a period of not less than 90 days.
- **Automobile Leases.** If a member enters into an automobile lease before going on active duty, the member may request termination of the lease when he/she goes onto active duty. However, for this to apply, the active duty must be for at least 180 continuous days. Military members making a permanent change of station (PCS) move, or who deploy for 180 days or longer may terminate such leases.
- **Evictions from Leased Housing.** Service members may seek protection from eviction under SCRA. The rented/leased property must be occupied by the service member or his/her dependents and the rent cannot exceed a certain amount that is adjusted each year. The service member or dependent who has received notice of an eviction must submit a request to the court for protection under the SCRA. If the court finds that the service member's military duties have materially affected his ability to pay his rent timely, the judge may order a stay, postponement, of the eviction proceeding for up to three months or make any other "just" order.

- **Installment Contracts.** The SCRA gives certain protections against repossessions for installment contracts. If the contract was entered into before going on active duty and at least one payment was made before that time, the creditor cannot repossess the property, while the member is on active duty, nor can they terminate the contract for breach, without a court order.
- **6% Interest Rate.** If a service member's military obligation has affected his/her ability to pay on financial obligations such as credit cards, loans, mortgages, etc., the service member can have his/her interest rate capped at 6% for the duration of the service member's military obligation. Qualifying debts are debts that were incurred by the service member, or the service member and his/her spouse, jointly, before coming on active duty. Debts entered into after going on active duty are not so protected.
- **Court Proceedings.** If a service member is a defendant in a civil court proceeding, the court may grant a 90-day delay in the proceedings. The provision applies to civil lawsuits, suits for paternity, child custody suits, and bankruptcy debtor/creditor meetings, and administrative proceedings.
- **Enforcement of Obligations, Liabilities, Taxes.** A service member or dependent may, at any time during his/her military service, or within 6 months thereafter, apply to a court for relief of any obligation or liability incurred by the service member or dependent prior to active duty or in respect to any tax or assessment whether falling during or prior to the service member's active military service. The court may grant stays of enforcement during which time no fine or penalty can accrue.



Additionally, the act prevents service members from a form of double taxation that can occur when they have a spouse who works and is taxed in a state other than the state in which they maintain their permanent legal residence. The law prevents states from using the income earned by a service member in determining the spouse's tax rate when they do not maintain their permanent legal residence in that state.

Communication

Operation Security, or OPSEC, is keeping potential adversaries from discovering sensitive Department of Defense information. As the name suggests, it protects US operations — planned, in progress and those completed. Success depends on secrecy and surprise, so the military can accomplish the mission more quickly and with less risk. Enemies want this information and they see Sailors and their families as potential information sources.

Types of sensitive information include:

- Unit mission or the number of personnel assigned.
- Locations and times of deployments.
- Unit morale or personnel problems.
- Security procedures.
- Troop movement.
- Military intentions, capabilities or operations.

Respect OPSEC. Do not:

- Talk about sensitive information in public settings such as the club, commissary, Navy Exchange or in the community.
- Talk about sensitive information over the telephone.
- Post pictures or information on Web sites.
- Include sensitive information in emails or attachments.
- Write about sensitive information in newsletters or blogs.
- Neglect to shred excess paper involving information on operations.
- Try to talk around classified information — it is extremely difficult to outsmart experienced intelligence analysts.

Email

Quick and easy, email is great for staying in touch. Discuss email expectations prior to deploying:

- Will email be readily available?
- If so, how often will you send emails?
- What address will you use?
- What is the availability for instant messaging?
- What impact will the time differences have on email response?



Email is not an ideal form of communication when you're angry or upset. If you really have a need to get your feelings off your chest, go ahead and write the email, but save it for 24 hours and reread before you send. It's usually best to communicate strong feelings over the phone when you cannot do it in person. Also, remember, emails are not confidential. They may be seen by others. Be careful what you write.

Letters

Letters, while taking longer to receive, are a more personal way to communicate. Many couples save their “love letters” from a deployment. Not many save emails. It’s a good idea to number letters as they do not always arrive in the order they are written.

Exchange your mailing address with everyone you would like to communicate with during deployment. Create a “mail kit” with cards, wonderful stationery, pens, sticker, stamps, etc. to make letter writing easy and enjoyable.

Letters do not have to be long. Do not worry about grammar or spelling. Write letters about your daily existence, your plans for the future, and your thoughts and feelings to help maintain your emotional connection and make it easier to reunite at homecoming.

Care Packages

Who does not like to receive a present in the mail? Care packages are presents from home, but that does not mean a deployed Sailor cannot send a package to loved ones back home! While most items Sailors need are provided to them, items that make their life more comfortable are not. Moms, grandmothers, church groups and friends often enjoy sending care packages to service members as they welcome the opportunity to show support.

The United States Postal Service (USPS) offers free packing materials to families of military members deployed overseas. Call (800) 610-8734 Press “1” (For English) Press “1” Again (For Operator) Ask for the “CAREKIT04”. They do not provide free postage.

A flat-rate box with a military discount for those mailing to APO and FPO addresses is also available. According to the USPS, regardless of how much they weigh, the boxes cost \$12.95 to mail for the general public, and \$10.95 if mailed to an APO or FPO address. The boxes themselves are free. More information is available at www.usps.com/supportingourtroops.



Care Packages

Running out of creative ideas to send in care packages? Try some of these “theme” pack ideas:

Call Home (or at least write) Pack

- Note paper and colorful pens
- Phone cards
- Address labels
- Address book
- Pre-addressed special occasion cards
- Love letters from your courting days

Beach Party Pack

- Flip-flops
- Sunglasses
- “Blow-Up” beach toys
- Sunscreen
- Bathing suit
- Beach towel



Night At The Movies Pack

- DVDs
- Popcorn
- Movie candy
- Nachos supplies
- Homemade poster

Second Childhood Pack

- Yoyo
- Old Maid cards/Go Fish cards
- Silly Putty
- Silly String
- Marbles
- Balloons
- “Kid Meal” toys



“Whine” & Cheese Pack

- Tape of you/kids whining
- Assortment of cheeses
- Assortment of sausages
- Assortment of crackers



Good Sport Pack

- Sports magazines
- Popcorn and peanuts
- Pennants
- Favorite team T-shirt or cap
- Video of a local game or your kid’s games
- Autograph from a favorite star

Our Morning Coffee Pack

- Favorite coffee blend
- All the goodies to add... creamer, sugar, flavors, etc
- A great mug
- “Tasty Cake” coffee cakes
- Biscotti
- A picture of you in PJs
- A picture of kids at breakfast table

Coming Home Pack

- Picture of your new outfit
- Your favorite perfume or cologne
- A map of how to get home from the airport
- A banner
- A picture of the welcome home decorations
- A menu

Bathroom Box

- Soft toilet paper
- Razor refills,
- Foot powder
- Bars of soap
- Washcloths
- Travel size shampoo
- Conditioner
- Toothbrush and Toothpaste
- Lotions
- Chapstick
- Mouthwash
- New towel



Good Morning Box

- Pop tarts
- Cereal bars
- Dehydrated fruits or fruit roll ups
- Applesauce mini-packs
- Single serving cereal boxes
- Oatmeal
- Cream of wheat
- Instant grits
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Coffee, teas, and hot cocoa packets
- Drink mix
- Sugar/sugarsubstitutepackets
- Powdered coffee creamer

Book Box

- Book light
- Book mark
- Coffee or tea
- Snacks



Go Fish (Put all in a tackle box)

- Fishing magazines
- Goldfish crackers
- Swedish fish
- Gummy worms
- "Go fish" playing cards
- Fisherman's hat
- Lip balm
- Sunscreen
- Plastic or model boat
- Can of chowder.

Hot Box

- Wasabi peas
- Tamales
- Hot sauces
- Buffalo corn chips
- Red hot candies
- Fireball candy
- Hot spiced tea
- Hot and spicy peanuts
- Hot and spicy jerky
- Cajun cashews
- Cajun flavored chips
- Salsa sunflower seeds
- Cans of chili
- Mexican restaurant sauce packets
- Spicy snack mix
- Nacho cheese with jalapenos.



Loads of Fun

- Laundry soap (tablets or powder)
- Fabric softener sheets
- Stain stick or spray pre-wash
- Powdered bleach
- Pop up hamper



Beach Box

- Sunscreen
- Beach towel
- Flip flops
- CD with sounds of waves or beach music
- Sea shell
- Beach chair
- Beach ball.



Medicine Cabinet

- Aspirin
- Band-aids
- Antibiotic ointment
- Cold medicine
- Seltzer tablets
- Foot powder
- Antacid tablets
- Book about natural health
- Stress reduction CD
- Nutrition magazine
- Multivitamins.

The Write Stuff

- Stationary
- Postcards
- Pens
- Pencils
- Stickers
- Envelopes (self addressed)
- Address book (filled out already, of course)
- Disposable camera with a note to send back once it is full or camera with extra camera cards.



Telephone Calls

Telephone calls can bring the greatest emotional highs as well as lows. It's wonderful to hear your loved one's voice and talk in the here and now, but sadness can briefly overwhelm you when you hang up and realize how much you miss them. Make the most of your telephone conversations:



- Keep a written list of things you want to talk about.
- Try to stay positive and upbeat. At least try to end each call on a positive note.
- Talk about your daily activities to make it easier to reconnect at homecoming.
- Suggest to older children that they keep a list of things to tell their parent when they call.
- If you share bad news make sure someone is available to provide emotional support to your loved one.
- Talk about plans for homecoming and future activities.
- Discuss problems and solutions, but do not spend the entire call talking about them.
- Keep in mind that it may be difficult to have a completely private phone call.
- Tell your loved one you love his/her and appreciate his/her sacrifices.

Pictures, Video Recordings and Video Teleconferencing

While letters and emails are nice, there is nothing better than seeing your loved ones. If your loved one has access to a DVD player make recordings of daily life and ask him/her to do the same for you. Realize that privacy is at a premium so be discreet when sending videos and pictures to Navy units.

Send pictures of yourself, family members, colleagues, your work environment, any new items you purchase or the new furniture arrangement. If you have children or are an expectant parent pictures are even more important as children grow and change quickly.

If you have the opportunity to do video teleconferencing or if you have a web cam it might be helpful to jot down a few items you'd like to talk about, have the children sing a song or do a funny skit. It's not so much what you say, but the fact that you cared enough to put effort into brightening your loved one's day that will be remembered.

Emotional Ups and Downs of Deployment

Sailors have been deploying and their loved ones have awaited their return over the centuries, but that does not mean deployments are easy. It's not just daily life that you must handle on your own, but the roller coaster of emotions with which you have to deal.

Much research has been done to understand the common feelings Sailors and their families experience when separated from each other due to a military assignment. You may experience similar feelings or your reactions may be very different. There is no such thing as a "right" or "wrong" feeling. If you find your feelings are hindering your daily activities do, do not hesitate to contact your Fleet and Family Support Center, a chaplain, medical or Military OneSource for assistance. Typical reactions include the following:

Anticipation of Loss



Anticipating loss occurs before deployment. It's a time of tension and confusing emotions. You may be angry and resentful of the hours required to get ready for departure. You may or may not talk about your fears and concerns. Service members feel guilty that they are leaving their families. Family members may feel abandoned. Arguments and bickering are common. Although irritating, it can be a way for you to distance emotionally in preparation for the separation.

Detachment and Withdrawal

The day or two before deployment can be difficult. You stop sharing thoughts and feelings with others. This is a natural response as separation is imminent. Although physically together, you are separating emotionally. This can be especially difficult if it is seen as rejection rather than as a reaction to trying circumstances. Often non-deploying spouses think, "If you have to go, go." And Sailors think, "Let's get on with it!"

Emotional Disorganization

Once the deployment begins you may feel an initial sense of relief followed by guilt. You may feel disorganized, depressed, or restless. Old routines have been disrupted and new ones not yet established. Give yourself a few weeks, and you'll begin to feel more in control.

Recovery

At some point during the deployment, new routines are established. You feel more comfortable with the reorganization of roles and responsibilities. New sources of support and a new sense of independence and freedom are developed.



Ten Tips for Deployment Success

Focusing on the Navy mission, your relationships and yourself can be a real challenge. Successful Sailors and their families:

1. **Communicate** — Regular, honest, open communication with a variety of people is the norm for successful deployers and their families.
2. **Ask for help** — Successful deployers and their families are aware of the plethora of resources available to military families and do not hesitate to ask for help when they need it.
3. **Manage stress** — Stress is unavoidable. Successful Sailors and their families manage stress. They generally eat a balanced diet, exercise, avoid excessive alcohol and drugs and have some type of spirituality or belief system.
4. **Prepare** — Successful Navy families prepare for deployments. They ensure ID cards do not expire, update their page 2, SGLI, wills and POAs.
5. **Positive attitude** — While you may not have control of many things in your life, you do have control of how you approach them with your attitude. Successful Sailors and their families are optimistic that they can accomplish a deployment. While they allow themselves to worry or occasionally experience self-doubt, they usually give themselves positive internal self-talk and maintain a “can do” attitude.
6. **Set goals** — The future is bright for successful Navy personnel and their families. They have long term goals and they also set goals to accomplish during deployment – increase proficiency in their job, lose weight, read more, get in shape.
7. **Have fun** — Successful Navy families do not put life “on hold” during a deployment. They make time for fun and do things they enjoy. They also celebrate personal successes as well as successes of friends and family.
8. **Involved** — Successful Navy personnel and their families participate in family readiness groups, church groups, sports, volunteer events, attend classes and stay busy. They often focus on helping others as a way to deal with deployment loneliness.
9. **Friends** — Successful people initiate friendships and do not wait for someone to approach them. They reach out to others in need and, therefore; others reach out to them when needed.
10. **Trust** — Successful Sailors and their families rely on others to do the right thing. They are not naïve, but believe in others.



Children and Deployment

Tell your children about the upcoming deployment. Do not assume they are aware and understand that a parent is deploying. Reassure them that they will be cared for while mom or dad is away. Encourage them to ask any questions they might have.

Allow children to miss their parent and to feel sad about their absence. Encourage communication with your children and allow them to express any feelings they may have. Children are often confused, angry, worried and insecure. It is important for to maintain your child’s daily routine and be consistent in discipline.

Most Navy kids are resilient and will bounce back. If your child is struggling, do not hesitate to contact your child’s school counselor, the School Liaison Officer, the Fleet and Family Support Center, a chaplain or Military OneSource for assistance.

The following chart provides some tips on what to expect from your child:

Age	What to Expect	Ways to Help
 Infants & Toddlers	They may seem fussier, clingy, may eat less and have trouble sleeping.	Have your spouse/child’s caregiver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Record video/audio taped stories. ■ Post pictures of deployed parent. ■ Provide extra hugs and cuddles. ■ Maintain routine. ■ Take care of themselves to be better able to care for children.
Preschoolers	May feel their behavior caused their parent to leave. May become more fearful/irritable. May regress in potty training/thumb sucking/ etc. May have trouble sleeping.	Have your spouse/child’s caregiver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Record video/audio taped stories. ■ Create a waterproof photo album or picture book of deployed parent and child doing things together. ■ Provide extra hugs and cuddles. ■ Maintain routine. ■ Move your child back to their bed a few weeks before your expected return. Do not get too concerned if your child wants to sleep in mom and dad’s bed while you’re gone. It often provides a sense of security.
 School-age	May see a decline in school performance. More irritable or moody. May worry about deployed parent’s safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have a family discussion before deployment. ■ Involve teachers, church, neighbors. Enroll in Big Brother/Sister Program. ■ Communicate regularly. ■ Reassure about safety training/drills/equipment. ■ Play games via email and regular mail. Have your spouse/child’s caregiver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Schedule fun activities. ■ Help child compile care packages to send to deployed parent. ■ Limit viewing of TV news about the war. ■ Assist your child to send care packages, letters and cards to their parent and others serving.
Teens	May be ambivalent. May be moody/withdrawn. May test rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Communicate regularly. ■ Do not expect teen to take on your household responsibilities. ■ Ask spouse/caretaker to maintain rules, curfews and discipline as much as possible.

Deployment Activities for Kids

Paper Chain

- This chain is made with strips of construction paper, glued into cylinder shapes and linked together.
- Children tear off a “link” for each day (or one for each week) until Homecoming Day when the last “link” is left. This assists children in marking the passing of time.
- The paper chain can also be used as a journal. As each “link” is removed, the children can write something that happened that day (or week) and mail it to the deployed parent or shared upon their return.
- Or, each day/week, a link can be added to build a chain, including an activity done during that day/week, written on the link. When the Sailor returns, he/she can read what was accomplished during the deployment.



Command Ball Cap, T-shirt, Jacket, etc.

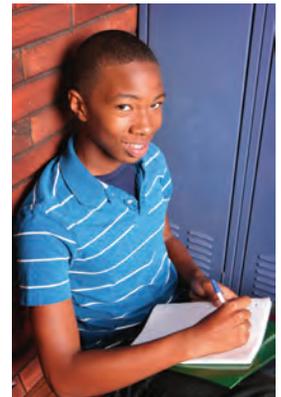
- These items can be given to children to wear while separated from the deployed parent.
- School-age children wear them as a sign of pride in the deployed parent and as a way to feel closer to that parent.

Deployment “Grab-Bag”

- Fill any type of bag with scraps of paper that have activities written on them, such as, go to the zoo, whisper all day, read a book, take a walk, etc.
- Draw an item from the bag and do the activity with your child.
- Send a picture of you and your child doing the activity to the deployed parent.

Deployment Journal

- This can be any type of notebook, scrapbook, diary, etc., used by the child or parent to write letters, thoughts, or to share feelings with one another.
- Adding memorabilia such as a baseball game ticket, ballet program, postcard, etc., along with journaling thoughts or feelings at the time, can make the event come alive. Remembering these events and special occasions help make the deployed parent feel more involved.
- This is especially useful if mail is going to be very slow or if there will be no mail (such as some submarine deployments).



Calendar Pages

- This can be a purchased calendar, one created on a computer, or hand drawn pages.
- Mark off the passing days of a deployment.
- Use the calendar as a journal to write in daily activities.
- Each page can be mailed or reviewed at the end of the deployment.

Holiday Post Card Mobile

- The deployed parent will send the child post cards to be colored.
- These can be from our holiday post card activity, cut out of a coloring book, or drawn by a parent.
- They can show a holiday theme or anything of special significance to the parent and child.
- When the child receives the picture, he/she colors it, gets help enclosing it in clear plastic (contact paper works great!), and punches a small hole in it.
- Thread a ribbon or string through the hole and attach it to pipe cleaners or popsicle sticks to make into the shape of a mobile to be hung in the child's room or somewhere the child will see it frequently.
- If the mail will be unreliable, the pictures can all be completed by the deploying parent and left with the parent/caregiver at home with the instructions of when to give each picture.

Decorated Pillowcase

- A pair of old pillowcases can be used for the project. The deploying parent will decorate one for each child and the child/children will decorate one for the deploying parent.
- The spouse can decorate the reverse side.
- Be sure to use permanent markers so the pillowcase can be washed.



Map

- This is used by the child during the deployment to “follow” his/her parent throughout the world.
- Give the child markers and stickers to keep track of the ship/unit.

Star Connection

- Parents and child can work together to decorate a construction paper star for each of them before the deployment.
- Spend time together looking at the stars in the night sky talking about being able to look at the same stars while they are separated.
- They can then hang their decorated star somewhere they will see it often to remind themselves of one another.

Flower Petals

- This helps children track time during a deployment.
- Parent spends time with their child decorating a Popsicle stick to look like a flower stem.
- Cut out “petals” from construction paper, which the parent takes with him/her on deployment.
- The parent writes a small message on a petal and sends it to the child.
- As the child receives the petals, he/she glues them to the stem. When the flower is completed it is time for homecoming.



These are just a sample of the many activities and ideas that are available to help make deployments and separation easier for children. Contact your local FFSC for additional ideas.

Emergency Preparedness

While dealing with an emergency is challenging when you are with family, it is even more of a challenge when you're alone.

Service Member Casualty

If a service member is killed, primary next of kin will be notified by a uniformed service member and typically, a chaplain. Notifications are made in person. Primary next of kin are those individuals identified by the service member on Emergency Data Form or "page 2" of a service member's personnel record. That is why it is so important to ensure the information on the page 2 is always current. If a family member is going out of the area for an extended time period during the deployment it is a good idea to alert the command ombudsman and provide temporary contact information.

Disaster Preparedness

It may seem like an oxymoron, but being prepared for possible emergencies can provide some peace of mind.

- Make sure you have insurance for your property. If you rent or live in military housing get renters' insurance.
- Have a designated person to contact out of state so that you and loved ones can each call that person and "check-in". This is especially important if communication is limited and you are physically separated.
- Have an emergency plan that includes evacuation routes and supplies.

When preparing for a possible emergency situation, it's best to think first about the basics of survival:

- Fresh water.
- Food.
- Clean air.
- Warmth.

Put together the following items and store in an easily accessible location:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days.
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food).
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit.
- Family documents such as insurance policies and bank account records in a water-proof container.
- Whistle to signal for help.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Prescription medications and glasses.
- Infant formula and diapers.
- Pet food.
- Cash.
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person.
- Change of clothing.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items.
- Paper products – cups, plates and plastic utensils.

For more information about emergency preparation go to

www.cnic.navy.mil/cnic_hq_site/OpPrepare/index.htm.



Helpful Organizations

Get to know the following organizations that provide helpful services and programs to military families.



American Red Cross

www.redcross.org

Primary service is emergency communications and verifications to enable commanding officers to make informed decisions about granting emergency leave. Additionally, it provides emergency financial assistance for families who are not near a Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society office.



Armed Services YMCA

www.asymca.org

The Armed Services YMCA offers programs for spouses of junior-enlisted. Programs vary by location, but typically include:

- Spouses Morning/Night/Day Out.
- Craft Groups.
- Holiday Dinners and Dances.
- Sign Language Classes.
- Parenting Workshops.



Chaplains

www.anchordesk.navy.mil/HTM/ChaplainRoster.htm

Chaplains play a vital role in helping their fellow sea-service personnel and family members during crucial moments in their lives. They are available 24/7 to provide spiritual guidance and help “sort through” a variety of issues or concerns.

Through the Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO) Spiritual Fitness Division (SFD) free weekend retreats and workshops for families, couples, and individuals are available. There are ten CREDO SFDs located in fleet concentration areas.



Command Ombudsmen

www.ffsp.navy.mil

Ombudsmen are volunteers, appointed by a commanding officer, to serve as an information link between command leadership and Navy families. They are not professional counselors, but they are trained to listen to questions or problems and to refer to professionals who can help.

Most Ombudsmen publish a newsletter. Some also have a Careline which is a recorded message that is regularly updated with news about the command, Family Readiness Group activities, and local military and community information.



Defense Finance Accounting Service (DFAS)

www.dod.mil/dfas

DFAS ensures that service members are paid. MyPay is a useful feature of the DFAS Web site, allowing service members (and their families if they have a pin number) to get real-time information about their pay accounts, start and stop allotments, sign up for the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), change their withholding and much more.



Fleet and Family Support Center

www.ffsp.navy.mil

Fleet and Family Support Centers provide a number of programs and services for deploying families:

- Family Connection Newsletter.
- In-person and virtual deployment preparation briefs are available at all FFSCs. Briefs are a facilitated discussion that cover practical and emotional preparation for deployment, resources for assistance if needed and allow time to address questions and concerns of participants.
- In-person and virtual homecoming briefs are offered at all FFSCs. Briefs are a facilitated discussion and cover possible reactions at homecoming and suggestions for ways to successfully reintegrate.
- In-person and virtual discussions are available at all FFSCs. Sometimes a specific topic is covered such as helping children deal with deployment, but generally they are open discussions where spouses and other family members can ask questions and connect with other family members of deployed service members.

Many other programs and services are provided by FFSC. Programs include:

- Clinical Counseling.
- Family Employment Readiness Program (FERP).
- New Parent Support (NPS).
- Personal Financial Management (PFM).
- Relocation Assistance Program (RAP).
- Information & Referral (I&R).
- Volunteer Assistance Program.
- Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP).
- Family Advocacy Program (FAP).
- Sexual Assault Victim Intervention (SAVI).

Free Space “A” Flights for Families of Deployed

Spouses and children of personnel deployed 120 days or longer can use military transport in CONUS, to/from CONUS, and within/between theater, provided they have a verification letter from the military member’s commander. Family members, regardless of where they are based, may travel unaccompanied for unlimited times during the deployment when seats are available. Children under the age of 18 need an eligible parent or legal guardian to travel with them.

The travel option is also available to Guard and Reserve families, as well as Navy families whose military sponsor is assigned to a deployed ship with PCS orders. While many may use the privilege to visit parents and grandparents, the guidelines do not restrict travel to home of record or family-based visits. That makes the policy more equitable and useful, since many people's extended families may not live in their home of record. In addition, some families may find help and encouragement in a visit to friends at a previous base, or through a low-cost vacation getaway.

Space A, which is based on availability, often involves waiting to gain space on a flight (and the government will not cover meals, lodging or other costs associated with that). Even so, families — especially those with children — could find this to be a real boost to their travel budget. A family of four based on the West Coast who wants to travel to the East Coast to stay with grandparents for a few weeks could potentially save up to a few thousand dollars in airline tickets. Of course, there's no guarantee with Space "A" flights, but for those who can take the time, the opportunity for free flights can be not only a morale-booster, but also a money-saver.

Joint Family Support Assistance Program

<http://militaryhomefront.dod.mil>

Joint Family Assistance Program was established to support military families who do not live near a military installation. Most JFSAP teams are located at the state's National Guard headquarters. They are staffed with a:

- Child & Youth Consultant.
- Military and Family Life Consultant.
- Military OneSource (MOS) Consultant.
- American Red Cross representative.
- USDA (Operation Military Kids) representative.



Military OneSource

www.militaryonesource.com

Military OneSource is a 24/7, real-time information and referral service, funded by the Department of Defense. All services are provided at no cost and are available to Active Duty, Guard and Reserve personnel and their immediate family members, regardless of activation status. MOS is a "virtual extension of existing installation service." Besides helping with referrals, MOS also maintains a library of over 3,000 educational materials such as CDs, DVDs, and booklets on a wide range of topics. They also offer interpretation and translation services in more than 140 languages. Through MOS, you can access up to six in-person or telephone non-medical counseling sessions per issue with a licensed counselor. They also offer financial counseling at no charge.

N@vy Knowledge Online

<https://www.nko.navy.mil>

Navy Knowledge Online is an official Navy Web site that offers a wealth of information about deployments and Navy life. There is an online spouse forum for discussions as well as moderated forums so you can get accurate answers to questions you may have.

To log onto NKO you must have an ID card which registers you in DEERS and allows you access to NKO. If you do not have an ID card, go to the NKO Web site and register as a guest user.



Navy Legal Services

www.jag.navy.mil

Free attorney assistance is available at local Navy Legal Service Offices (NLSO) for service members and family members with military ID cards. Services available may include adoption advice, domestic relations, immigration and naturalization, Service Members Civil Relief Act, Powers of Attorney, Wills and notary service. Navy Legal Services is also the clearinghouse for personal property claims for damages that result from a PCS move.



Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS)

www.nmcrs.org

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) is a volunteer based not for profit private 501(c)(3) organization sponsored by the Department of the Navy. No financial assistance is received from the Department of the Navy to conduct the Society's programs. The Society provides interest-free loans or grants to help with emergency needs such as:

- Food, rent, mortgage and utilities.
- Essential vehicle repairs.
- Emergency transportation.
- Funeral expenses.
- Patients share of medical/dental bills.
- Disaster relief assistance.
- Child care expenses.
- Pay problems or delays.
- Unforeseen family emergencies.

Financial assistance is provided on a need basis. All loans are interest free and normally repaid by allotment. In some instances, if repayment would cause a hardship, assistance may be provided as a grant.

Loans are made to the service member. During deployments, in the absence of the service member, an eligible family member may seek assistance with a valid power of attorney or a NMCRS pre authorization form can be placed on file at the NMCRS Office prior to deployment. If neither is available, the service member will be contacted to provide authorization and to agree to repayment terms.

Layettes are "Baby's First Seabag." They contain over \$100 worth of baby items, which are provided to all Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel or family members who are expecting or have had a new baby when they participate in the *Budget for Baby* class or an individual budgeting session. For those families living in remote locations, a layette can be provided upon your request from a NMCRS Office. Each layette contains a handmade blanket or sweater set, crib sheets, onesies, hooded towel, bibs, socks, receiving blanket, and burp cloths.



Navy Operational Support Center

<http://navyreserve.navy.mil>

Navy Operational Support Centers are located in all 50 states and 2 territories. Families who do not live near a military installation but near a Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) can receive support from the NOSC. The NOSC can assist families with resources in the local area and also provide support to the families for ID cards and DEERS enrollment.



Naval Services FamilyLine

www.lifelines.navy.mil/Familyline

Naval Services FamilyLine is an all volunteer, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering sea service families to meet the challenges of the military lifestyle. They coordinate the Compass Program which is a program for new military spouses that covers a variety of topics including deployment preparation, finances, and military customs and traditions. They also offer a range of free publications as well as information and referral assistance.



Operation Military Child Care

www.childcareaware.org

Operation Military Child Care is a Department of Defense initiative to support child care needs of military parents who are activated or deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Active duty families who are unable to access care on military installations are eligible during the deployment period and for 60 days after the return of the military parent.

This initiative helps eligible military families locate and subsidize affordable child care in local communities. Military families who are using licensed/legally operating community-based child care programs and providers pay reduced fees.

Child care costs often increase when your Sailor is deployed. This subsidy program can be used by spouses who are employed or looking for work, going to school or have special medical needs. For more information contact the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies at 800-424-2246 or visit their Web site www.naccrra.org.



Operation: Military Kids

www.operationmilitarykids.org

Operation: Military Kids is a collaborative effort with America's communities to support children and youth of National Guard, Reserve and active duty families. State 4-H Military Liaisons in 34 states in partnership with the National Guard, Reserve, the Military Child Education Coalition, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, The American Legion, schools and other community organizations are supporting youth before, during, and after the deployment of a parent or loved one.

Some of the programs include:

- Workshops for community professionals who work with youth to offer an insight into military culture and the deployment cycle. In addition, they suggest ways to understand the needs of and provide support to military kids and their families through community resources.
- Hero Packs are backpacks filled by non-military youth with mementos and items designed to help connect kids with their deployed parent.

- Speak Out for Military Kids is a youth–led, adult supported project that generates community awareness about issues faced by youth of military families. Through simulations, interviews, and research, participants begin to understand what military families go through during deployment. As the youth form speakers bureaus they develop presentations, public service announcements, videos, and other materials and actively seek opportunities to share their experiences with others in the community (e.g. school assemblies, youth club meetings, city council meetings, fairs, and teacher in-service programs).
- Mobile Technology Labs are used to facilitate connections between deployed service members and the children left behind.



Operation Purple Camp

www.operationpurple.org

Operation Purple Camp Program was created in 2004 to help military children struggling with having a parent deployed. Any military child can apply. If all spaces are not filled with campers who meet the deployment criteria, the remaining camp slots are filled with any military child from any service branch, the National Guard, Reserve, PHS and NOAA. “Deployment” is defined loosely as it is recognized that TDY and travel can often take service members away from family for significant periods of time.

Registration for the free summer camps begins in late spring for all Operation Purple camp locations. Details on how to register and the necessary forms to apply for camp are available at www.operationpurple.org. Click on the applicable state for camp registration, application, and contact information. In 2008, 100 weeks of camp in 62 locations, in 37 states and territories were available.



Personnel Support Detachment

www.pasd.navy.mil

The Navy’s Personnel Support Activity (PSA) is the agency that provides administrative, personnel, pay and transportation support including:

- Defense Eligibility Enrollment System (DEERS).
- Family and service member ID cards.
- Transportation services.
- Travel claim processing.
- Transition processing.

Each installation has a local Personnel Support Detachment, to locate yours contact the above Web site.



TRICARE www.tricare.osd.mil

TRICARE is the health care program for Sailors and their families. Reservists and National Guardsmen are also eligible for TRICARE coverage when they are on active duty, pre and post mobilization.

The four most common TRICARE programs are:

- TRICARE Prime.
- TRICARE Extra.
- TRICARE Standard (formerly called CHAMPUS).
- TRICARE Reserve Select.

TRICARE provides a dental benefit, a pharmacy program and TRICARE for Life for most Medicare-eligible uniformed service retirees. There is also a Program for Persons with Disabilities (PFPWD) that can help with some of the costs associated with specialized medical equipment and services. In addition, mental health services are available.

Each TRICARE program has its own eligibility and enrollment requirements. Individuals must be registered in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) to be eligible for any TRICARE benefits. Enrollment for TRICARE coverage is subject to location, eligibility category, and the specific program requirements. Costs and enrollment fees also differ by program.

Health benefits advisors are available at local TRICARE Service Centers (TSC) or military treatment facilities (MTF) to help with questions regarding health care services or go to the above Web site.



United Service Organization www.uso.org

The USO's mission is to support service members and their families. There are 130 centers worldwide whose programs and services include:

- Emergency Assistance — USO centers offer housing and financial information, along with support for military members and their families, especially during emergencies. Programs set up by USO centers help provide military families with resources and assistance.
- Support Groups — With troops deployed all over the world, USO centers have established local support groups where family members of deployed service members can gather to provide support and encouragement for one another.
- New Spouse Orientation -Moving to a new area is often a difficult transition. Many USO centers offer orientation programs, which help acclimate new residents to the culture and community.

Hints for Happy Homecoming

Reuniting after a long deployment is fun, exciting and one of the best things about Navy life. Enjoy homecoming and be prepared to renegotiate your relationship as you reconnect.

Cooperation

Each of you has been making daily decisions for yourself. Now you'll have to relearn cooperation. What television show are you going to watch? What do you want for dinner? What time are you going to get up in the morning?



Responsibilities

Homecoming provides a great opportunity to re-evaluate and reassign family chores. Who manages the money, mows the grass, does laundry and walks the dog are the types of daily chores that must be done. Discover which family member enjoys doing a particular chore and fairly divvy up the unpleasant jobs.

Friendships

You both may have made some very good friends during the deployment. You may miss the camaraderie and daily connection.

New Stresses

Physical, social, and psychological consequences of combat deployment may present challenges. The birth of a child, a serious illness in the family, a possible surge deployment, PCS move or other significant change can be stressful. If you need assistance in dealing with stress contact your local Fleet and Family Support Center, a chaplain, Military OneSource, a psychologist, or psychiatrist through your local medical department.



Communication

Learning to cooperate can be challenging because your communication skills may be rusty. Service members may have to soften their communication style as they are used to giving and receiving orders without much discussion.



You're not used to reading your partners non-verbal skills. "What did he mean by that sigh?" "Did she roll her eyes when I said that?" Watch for those non-verbal signals and calmly ask if you're not sure what is being "said."

Those at home may have to help their service member "catch up" with missed experiences. Sailors may have to "clean up" their language and social skills. You may have to adjust to different access to privacy than was experienced during deployment.

Tips from Experienced Navy Couples

- Be careful not to get caught in the "Who Had It Worse" game.
- Plan time together as a couple.
- Share your feelings. It's natural to have mixed emotions at this time — excitement and happiness together with nervousness and insecurity.
- Be realistic. The perfect reunion fantasy is just that — a fantasy.
- Expect to be more tired than you think. With all the excitement and preparations, fatigue is a common homecoming reaction for everyone.
- Intimacy involves emotional, as well as physical closeness. Talk about each other's expectations for reconnecting physically.
- Communicating openly and honestly with your partner about your feelings, expectations, needs and worries is a sure way to help make this homecoming the best it can be!
- If homecoming day is also a duty day, plan to make the best of it. Have dinner together!



Children and Homecoming

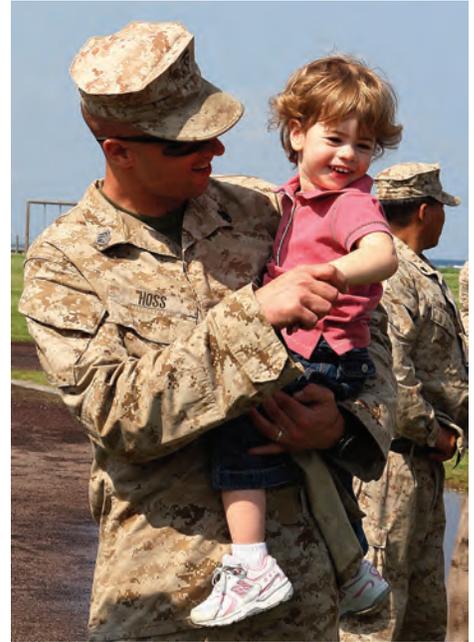
Reunion is a time of excitement, joy and readjustment. Younger children take their cues about homecoming from you, their caretaker. Older children may have similar feelings as you do. They will be excited, joyous and may feel anxious if they believe they did not live up to their deployed parent's expectations.

Often the parent who has been at home is reluctant to share the responsibility of parenting. It is important for children to see both parents in the caretaking role. It also allows the parent returning to experience the innocence, intimacy and joy that caring for their children can provide.

Just as parents need time to reestablish relationships, so do children. It's best for the returning parents to initially not make drastic changes to their children's routine, rules and responsibilities. Children will likely go to the parent who has remained at home with them for the first few days upon their deployed parent's return for permission, questions and assistance.

If possible, plan a few days and have a family vacation at home. Do fun activities as a family. Limit house cleaning and chores to the essentials. Talk, play, listen and enjoy being a family again.

Duty nights can be challenging after an extended deployment as young children may worry that their parent has again left. Older children are usually delighted that their family is reunited even though they may, at times, resent the discipline enforced by having two parents at home.



Are You Ready for Deployment?

1. Do you have a current ID card? This ensures registration in DEERS which is the Navy data base to ensure medical, dental, commissary, etc. benefits. Go to Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) to update.

2. Are you registered in NFAAS, a data base used by Navy helping organiza-



tions to provide information and support during disasters and during IA deployments? Register and update at

<https://www.navyfamily.navy.mil>.

3. Do you know to contact the American Red Cross and/or your Command Ombudsman in case of emergency? www.redcross.org.

4. Is your property, including car and home, appropriately insured and do you have a maintenance plan?

5. Is contact information current on your “Emergency Data” (Page 2) Form?

6. Is beneficiary contact information current on your “Service Members’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI)” policy?

7. Do you have a will?

8. Do you need a general or specific Power of Attorney during deployment?



9. Have you discussed bill paying, credit card use, updating your spending plan?



10. Do you have a communication plan for email, telephone calls, packages and letters?