

# IA Family

## HANDBOOK



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Supporting the Fleet, Fighter and Family



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# What is an IA, Anyway?

Experienced Navy families say continuous readiness and knowing about available resources are the keys to successful deployments. Sailors and their families must always be ready for deployment. This handbook provides basic information to help families better prepare.

In contrast to a Sailor deploying with a ship, squadron or unit, one who leaves their assigned command to deploy individually or with a small group is known as an individual augmentee (IA). According to IA Gram 4, an IA is any Sailor in receipt of individual deployment orders to include Individual Augmentee Manpower Management Assignments (IAMM), Overseas Contingency Operations Support Assignment (Enlisted), Global Support Assignment (Officer), Mobilized Reserve Personnel (RC MOB) not mobilized as a part of a commissioned unit and Health Services Augmentation Program Personnel (HSAP). Most are concentrated in the Central Command region, which includes Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Bahrain and the Horn of Africa. The rest are serving elsewhere in the world.

IA Sailors work in their skill sets to provide combat support and combat service support. IA Sailors are not replacing infantry or front-line combat soldiers.

IAMM Sailors may be assigned or may have volunteered for IA orders that come through their command. Sailors looking for OSA (Enlisted) and GSA (Officer) orders negotiate with their detailers for their IA orders. Reserve commands receive information about orders becoming available, and Sailors can be assigned or may volunteer for a set of mobilization orders.

Parent commands are the commands that Sailors leave for Temporary Additional Duty (TAD) or detach from for their IA deployment. Commands, ombudsmen and command IA coordinators retain the IA and family support responsibilities throughout the deployment cycle. Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center (ECRC) does not act as a “parent command” but does provide administrative support for GSA and Mobilized Reserve Sailors.

## IA Process

A Sailor should have at least 60 days to prepare for an IA assignment. Pre-deployment preparation information is available at [www.ia.navy.mil](http://www.ia.navy.mil).

Every Sailor must complete the following pre-deployment steps

- Complete expeditionary screening checklist(s) found at [www.ia.navy.mil](http://www.ia.navy.mil)
- Complete Navy Knowledge Online courses as directed in orders.
- Complete personal and family readiness to include wills, POAs, family-care plans, ID cards, etc.
- Update personal and family contact information with command IA coordinator and in the Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS) found at <https://www.navyfamily.navy.mil>

## IA Overview

The following information is provided to help explain the IA process:

1. A Sailor is notified that he or she has been selected to fill a billet.
2. The Sailor and the command IA coordinator (CIAC) review the orders and complete required preparation. The Sailor should ensure the command has current contact information. CIACs and Sailors can go to [www.ia.navy.mil](http://www.ia.navy.mil) and contact ECRC at [ecrc.hq.fct@navy.mil](mailto:ecrc.hq.fct@navy.mil) or (757) 462-4744 extension 119, to obtain additional information about their orders and mission. Questions about reporting to the Navy Mobilization and Processing Site (NMPS) can be addressed using the site-specific telephone numbers provided in their orders and at [www.ia.navy.mil](http://www.ia.navy.mil).
3. Sailors report to the NMPS designated in their orders. IA Sailors will remain there approximately a week to ensure all requirements are complete and that they qualify for IA orders. NMPS will also provide the Sailors with the required uniforms. Families cannot accompany Sailors to NMPS and are not allowed to be with them from this point forward.
4. Sailors travel to the Army training site designated in their orders for basic combat skills training. This training lasts approximately three weeks. Any uniform items or gear that was not issued at NMPS is issued at the training site.
5. Some Sailors may require additional mission-specific training. The location and length of the training is specified in their orders.
6. After completing training in the United States, some IAs will receive additional training in theater before reporting to their assigned mission location.
7. After completing their mission, and before returning home, most Sailors go through the Warrior Transition Program (WTP) in theater. Sailors spend approximately one week at the WTP to begin reintegration into life in a non-combat environment, attend briefs and turn in their issued gear. Sailors that do not transition through the WTP in theater return to the United States by the route directed in their orders and begin reintegration at that location.
8. All IAs will return through NMPS. IAMM and Mobilized Reservists will then return to their parent commands. OSA will return to their parent commands for 60 days and then to their gaining command. GSA will PCS to their gaining command. The command IA coordinator, in coordination with the Personnel Support Detachment (PSD), should ensure that all pay, leave, personnel records, evaluations, awards and advancement exam information are updated, correct and reflect the Sailor's honorable service.

## Family Support

Top Navy leaders have updated Navy instructions and have published “IA Grams” to provide guidance on IA Sailor and family support. The Navy provides the following to reach and support IA families:

- The Navy IA website, [www.ia.navy.mil](http://www.ia.navy.mil) provides official information for commands, Sailors and families. It is a one-stop shop for Navy families to link with information, events, training, updates and support throughout the IA deployment cycle.
- Social media links can be found at the bottom of the [www.ia.navy.mil](http://www.ia.navy.mil) home page to include an iPhone app, Facebook and Twitter.

Navy commands provide:

- Parent commands provide a command IA coordinator, ombudsman and FRGs. Ensure that you have command contact information prior to your Sailor’s departure. It is important to maintain two-way communication with the parent command representatives throughout the deployment.
- Fleet and Family Support Centers (FFSC) provide individual deployment support specialists (IDSS) for IA families who will provide monthly contacts. Please contact your nearest FFSC to ensure that your IDSS has your current contact information.
- Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center provides the 24-7 Family Hotline at (877) 364-4302. IA Family E-mail Help Desk is [ecrc.fs.fct@navy.mil](mailto:ecrc.fs.fct@navy.mil).
- The Navy Family and Assessment System (NFAAS) is found at <https://www.navyfamily.navy.mil>. Please log in and ensure that your family contact information is correct. This is the system that the Navy and the Fleet and Family Support Centers use to provide deployment support and disaster services. If you relocate during the deployment or evacuate for a disaster, please log in to NFAAS and update your contact information.

Outreach to families includes:

- The Family Connection Newsletter, an electronic newsletter published monthly by Commander Navy Installations Command. Go to [www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC\\_HQ\\_Site](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC_HQ_Site). Click on IA “learn more” to link to the newsletter.
- IA Discussion Groups to inform participants about the resources and support available to manage the challenges that often occur with IA deployments. Links and information can be found at [www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC\\_HQ\\_Site](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC_HQ_Site). Click on “What We DO” and then on “Fleet and Family Readiness.”
- Deployment, pre-deployment, homecoming and reintegration briefs. Links and information can be found at [www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC\\_HQ\\_Site](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC_HQ_Site). Click on “What We DO” and then on “Fleet and Family Readiness.”
- Operational Stress Control (OSC) is the Navy’s prevention and awareness initiative. FFSCs incorporate OSC concepts into programs offered to Navy families. We believe “Ready Family = Ready Sailor.” OSC helps the Sailor and family recognize some common signs of stress and provides tools to cope with stress. With these skills, families are prepared and Sailors are mission ready. Further information can be found at <https://wwwa.nko.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 is important to include who you would 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, you should have a current will and your loved ones should know its location. Your local Naval Legal Service Office will assist you in making a will at no cost.



## Power of Attorney

Powers of attorney can be useful when conducting personal business. They can also be dangerous documents, because 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 powers of attorney to file your taxes or for you to buy or sell a big-ticket item such as a vehicle or condo. A general power of attorney 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 with which you want to do business. Not all will accept a general power of attorney. Your local Naval Legal Service 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 affect the beneficiary of life insurance. To make changes, the Election and Certificate form (VA Form SGLV-8286) must be completed. For more information on Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, visit the Department of Veterans Affairs Group Life Insurance information page at [www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/default.htm](http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/default.htm).

## Emergency Data Form

The emergency data form is more commonly referred to as the Page 2 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 administration department at the command or through your local Personnel Support Detachment (PSD).

## Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)

DEERS is a worldwide, computerized database of uniformed services members (sponsors), their family members and others who are eligible for military benefits including TRICARE. DEERS registration is the key to establishing and maintaining TRICARE benefits eligibility. DEERS is DoD's family-member database and the primary way to keep track of a Sailor's entitlements. For further information go to <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/deerswebsite/home.do>.

## Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS)

The Navy Family Accountability and Assessment System (NFAAS) is a database used to document service and support provided to IA Sailors and their families. NFAAS also provides the means for assisting the family in the event of a natural disaster. Family information needs to be kept current in NFAAS. Ensure you or your Sailor updates NFAAS, and be sure to update contact information if you move during the deployment.

To update NFAAS:

- Log on to NFAAS at [www.navyfamily.navy.mil](http://www.navyfamily.navy.mil).
- Select the "NFAAS-Navy Family Member" tab.
- Use the sponsor's Social Security number and birth date for access.
- Update your family information under the "MY INFO" tab. Enter everyone you want contacted in the event of an emergency.
- A survey is available under the "ASSESSMENT" tab.

## Other Important Documents

If you don't already have one, it is a good idea to invest in a small, fireproof 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 don't 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 for each family member.
- Dental records for 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 mortgages).
- 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.
- Power of Attorney



# Finances

Discussing the family budget, banking, taxes and other important financial decisions may not seem exciting, especially just prior to a deployment. However, organizing your financial affairs and establishing a spending plan can ensure that financial issues will be minimized during deployment.

## Entitlements

Service members may be entitled to additional financial incentives during an IA assignment. Most IA assignment-related entitlements start at the mobilization processing site. Some of these include:

- Hostile Fire Pay/Imminent Danger Pay (where applicable).
- Combat Zone Tax Exclusion (where applicable).
- Savings Deposit Program (SDP). Allows service members deployed to combat zones to earn 10 percent interest on deposits earned in theater up to \$10,000.
- Tax-free pay for enlisted/warrant officers. Officers get tax-free pay up to allowable limit. Note: Social Security and Medicare are collected.
- Hardship Duty Pay.
- Incidental Expense. Per diem paid when lodging and meals are provided. This is in addition to full Basic Allowance for Subsistence. Monthly travel claims are required for payment.
- Family Separation Allowance.

## Pay Changes to Monitor

Service members may see some of their pay changed — reduced, increased or stopped entirely. Some of these include:

- Sea pay
  - Not eligible after 31<sup>st</sup> day of IA assignment. Sea pay will stop.
  - Sea counter stopped with the stop of sea pay.
  - Special detailing considered for credit of IA assignment.
- Meal deduction
  - No meal deduction for entire IA assignment.
- Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP)
  - Eligibility can continue up to the first 90 days of IA assignment.
  - If command transfers special duty assignment to another qualified command member, SDAP can be stopped the first day of IA assignment.



## Tax-free Savings Incentive

The tax-free savings advantage can be significant during an IA assignment. The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) is a retirement savings plan for civilians who are employed by the United States government and members of the uniformed services. TSP allows Sailors to contribute 100 percent of their pay and bonuses, tax-exempt, up to an IRS limit of \$45,000. This provides a great opportunity to prepare for retirement. For further information, go to <http://www.tsp.gov>.

## The Savings Deposit Program (SDP)

The Savings Deposit Program (SDP) is available to those serving in designated combat zones. Military members deployed in combat zones, qualified hazardous duty areas or certain contingency operations may be eligible to deposit all or part of their unallotted pay into a DoD savings account up to \$10,000 during a single deployment. Interest accrues at an annual rate of 10 percent and compounds quarterly. Interest accrued on earnings deposited in the SDP is taxable.

To be eligible for SDP, a service member must be receiving Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pay (HFP/IDP) and serving in a designated combat zone or in direct support of a combat zone for more than 30 consecutive days or for at least one day for each of three consecutive months. Service members may begin making deposits on their 31st consecutive day in the designated area. All deposits must be made in \$5 increments, and deposits may be discontinued at any time. The account will stop accruing interest 90 days after a member returns from the combat zone. To learn more about SDP, visit the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) at [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil).

## Spending Plan

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 good idea to do a plan together so you 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 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 re-enlistment 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 ongoing bills will be paid, and by whom.
- If in a relationship and using a joint checking account, you have discussed how you will manage the account.
- That you have overdraft protection for your checking accounts — just in case.
- You are prepared for recurring, but not monthly, expenses such as tuition payments, car and home insurance.
- The expectations for using credit during deployment are determined.

## 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 My Pay 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](http://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 to develop a spending plan to help achieve your financial goals.

## Servicemembers Civil Relief Act

The Servicemembers 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 on active duty if the lease was entered into before going on 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 going on active duty. However, for this to apply, the active duty must be for at least 180 continuous days. Military members making a 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 SCRA. If the court finds that the service member's military duties have materially affected his ability to pay his rent, the judge may order a stay or postponement of the eviction proceeding for up to three months or make any other "just" order.
- **Installment contracts.** 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.
- **Six percent 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 the interest rate capped at 6 percent for the duration of the service member's military obligation. Qualifying debts are debts that were incurred by the service member, or jointly by the service member and their spouse, before coming on active duty. Debts entered into after going on active duty are not 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, bankruptcy debtor/creditor meetings, and administrative proceedings.
- **Enforcement of obligations, liabilities and taxes.** A service member or dependent may, at any time during military service, or within six 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, SCRA 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

Communication can be challenging during an IA deployment because your Sailor may not be near a telephone or a computer. And at times, mail service can take weeks. Don't let this deter you. Any Sailor will tell you there is not a better day brightener than hearing from loved ones back home.

No news is often good news. It means your Sailor is hard at work. Know that if your loved one is ever seriously injured or missing from duty, a uniformed Navy representative with ID will contact you in person to inform you. Beware of scams claiming your Sailor is injured and asking you for personal information about your Sailor over the phone or by e-mail.

## OPSEC

Operations security, or OPSEC, keeps potential adversaries from discovering sensitive Department of Defense information. As the name suggests, it protects U.S. 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. Don't:

- 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 websites.
- Include sensitive information in e-mails or attachments.
- Write about sensitive information in newsletters or blogs.
- Neglect to shred papers with information on operations.
- Try to talk around classified information. It is extremely difficult to outsmart experienced intelligence analysts.



## E-mail

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

- Will e-mail be readily available?
- If so, how often will you send e-mails?
- What address will you use?
- What is the availability of instant messaging?
- What affect will the time differences have on e-mail response?



E-mail 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 e-mail, but save it for 24 hours and reread before you send. It's usually best to communicate strong feelings over the phone when you can't do it in person. Also, remember that e-mails are not confidential and 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 e-mails. It's a good idea to number letters because they don't 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, interesting stationery, pens, stickers, stamps, etc. to make letter writing easy and enjoyable.

Letters don't have to be long. Don't 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 doesn't like to receive a present in the mail? Care packages are presents from home, but that doesn't 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 priority supplies). 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. Check for more information and prices at [www.usps.com/supportingourtroops](http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops).

# Care Packages

Running out of creative ideas for 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
- Inflatable beach toys
- Sunscreen
- Bathing suit
- Beach towel



## Night At The Movies Pack

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

## Second Childhood Pack

- Yo-yo
- 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 children’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
- 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

## 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 will miss your loved one. 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 don't 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 them and appreciate their sacrifices.



## Pictures, Video Recordings and Video Teleconferencing

While letters and e-mails 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 them 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 webcam, 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 doesn't 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 different. There is no such thing as a "right" or "wrong" feeling. If you find your feelings are hindering your daily activities, don't 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 numerous 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. **Have a positive attitude** — While you may not have control of many things in your life, you do have control of how you approach them and 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, or get in shape.
7. **Have fun** — Successful Navy families don’t 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. **Get 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. **Make friends** — Successful people initiate friendships and do not wait for someone to approach them. They reach out to others in need and, others reach out to them when needed.
10. **Are trusting** — 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. Don't 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. If your child is struggling, don't hesitate to contact your child's school counselor, the school liaison officer, the Fleet and Family Support Center, a chaplain or Military One-Source for assistance.

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

| Age  | What to Expect  | Ways to Help   |
|--|---|--|
| Infants & Toddlers<br> | They may seem fussier, clingy, may eat less and have trouble sleeping.  | Have your spouse/child's caregiver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Record video/audio taped stories.</li> <li>■ Post pictures of deployed parent.</li> <li>■ Provide extra hugs and cuddles.</li> <li>■ Maintain routine.</li> <li>■ Take care of themselves to be better able to care for children.</li> </ul>  |
| Preschoolers   | May feel their behavior caused their parent to leave.<br>May become more fearful/irritable.<br>May regress in potty training/thumb sucking/etc.<br>May have trouble sleeping. | Have your spouse/child's caregiver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Record video/audio taped stories.</li> <li>■ Create a waterproof photo album or picture book of deployed parent and child doing things together.</li> <li>■ Provide extra hugs and cuddles.</li> <li>■ Maintain routine.</li> <li>■ Move your child back to their bed a few weeks before your expected return. Don't 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.</li> </ul> |
| School-age   | May see a decline in school performance.<br>More irritable or moody.<br>May worry about deployed parent's safety.   | Have your spouse/child's caregiver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Schedule fun activities.</li> <li>■ Help child compile care packages to send to deployed parent.</li> <li>■ Limit viewing of TV news about the war.</li> <li>■ Assist your child to send care packages, letters and cards to their parent and others serving.</li> </ul>  |
| Teens  | May be ambivalent.<br>May be moody/withdrawn.<br>May test rules.  | Have your spouse/child's caregiver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Communicate regularly.</li> <li>■ Don't expect teen to take on your household responsibilities.</li> <li>■ Ask spouse/caretaker to maintain rules, curfews and discipline as much as possible.</li> </ul>   |

# 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) to be mailed 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, they can read what was accomplished during the deployment.



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

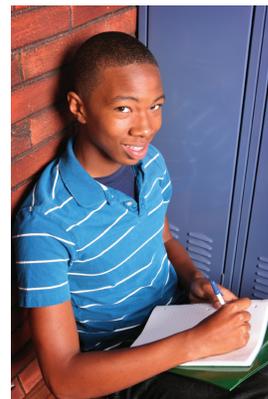
- These items can be given to children to wear while separated from the deployed parent.
- School-age children wear them as a sign of pride in the deployed parent and as a way to feel closer to that parent.

## 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 to the deployed parent a picture of you and your child doing the activity.

## 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 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.

## Post Card Mobile

- The deployed parent will send the child post cards to be colored.
- These can be 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

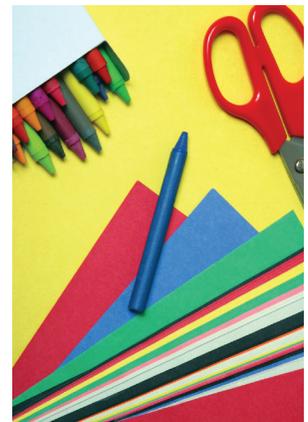
- This is used by the child during the deployment to follow their parent throughout the world.
- Give the child markers and stickers to keep track of the ship/unit.

## 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 and 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 them on deployment.
- The parent writes a small message on a petal and sends it to the child.
- As the child receives the petals, they glue 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

Dealing with an emergency is challenging, but IA families have the support of their CIAC, ombudsman, IDSS, parent command, Fleet and Family Support Center and ECRC 24-7 Family Hotline. Please do not hesitate to call and ask for help. Your support system is standing by.

## Service Member Casualty

If a service member is seriously injured or 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 stays 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, as well as update NFAAS with the 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.
- Warmth.
- Designated family meeting place.

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 waterproof 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](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/cnic_hq_site)
- [American Red Cross—www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- [Ready America—http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/military.html](http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/military.html)



# 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 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 or 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 and happy but 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 returning parent 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 parent to initially not make drastic changes to their children's routine, rules and responsibilities. For the first few days after their deployed parent's return, children will likely go to the parent who has remained at home with them for permission, questions and assistance.

If possible, plan a few days for 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 because young children may worry that their parent has left again. 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.



# Helpful Organizations

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



## American Red Cross

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or toll free hot line at (877) 272-7337

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. The following information must be provided when calling: Sailor's full name, rank/rate, Social Security number, date of birth, APO and, if possible, DSN phone number, nature of the emergency, name of the person affected, how to verify (doctor or funeral home and telephone contact numbers). When the case number is received from the American Red Cross, families can call ECRC at (877) 364-4302. ECRC will notify the action officer for the Sailor's mission.



## Armed Services YMCA

[www.asymca.org](http://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

<http://www.anchordesk.navy.mil/htm/ChaplainRosterShips.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 with 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 10 CREDO SFDs located in fleet concentration areas.

## Command Family Readiness Group

A Family Readiness Group (FRG) is sponsored by a command. The group coordinates fun and informational activities for family members. In addition to spouses, some groups may also include parents, children, and fiancés as determined by the commanding officer.

Some installations have created IA family support groups where you can meet other family members experiencing similar assignments. Getting involved with a Family Readiness Group is a great way to get to know other families, to learn more about the Navy and to support your Sailor. To learn about your command's Family Readiness Group, contact your command ombudsman. You may also contact the ombudsman coordinator at your FFSC for further information.



## **Command Ombudsmen** [www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC\\_HQ\\_Site](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC_HQ_Site)

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. The parent command or CIAC, or the local Fleet and Family Support Center, can provide you with contact information for your ombudsman.



## **Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS)** [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil)

DFAS ensures that service members are paid. MyPay is a useful feature of the DFAS website, 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.



## **Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center (ECRC)** [www.ecrc.navy.mil](http://www.ecrc.navy.mil)

- ECRC IA Family Helpdesk: [ecrc.hq.fct@navy.mil](mailto:ecrc.hq.fct@navy.mil)
- Family assistance, information and resource referrals
- ECRC 24-hour toll-free Family Careline: (877) 364-4302



## **Fleet and Family Support Center** [www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC\\_HQ\\_Site](http://www.cnic.navy.mil/CNIC_HQ_Site)

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

- Family Connection Newsletter.
- 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.
- 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.
- FFSCs offer IA discussion groups. Sometimes a specific topic is covered, such as helping children deal with deployment, but generally they are open discussions where spouses and family members can ask questions and connect with other family members of deployed service members.

Many other programs and services are provided by FFSC, including:

- Clinical Counseling.
- Family Employment Readiness Program (FERP).
- New Parent Support Home Visitation Program (NPSHVP).
- 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**

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/451513r.pdf>

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 won’t 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.

Further information on air transportation eligibility including category information, phone numbers and sample letters for the command is available on the website.

## **Individual Augmentee U.S. Fleet Forces (USFF)**

<http://www.ia.navy.mil>

Identifies resources and provides support to the IA Sailor, family and command throughout the IA continuum.

## Joint Family Support Assistance Program

<http://militaryhomefront.dod.mil>

Joint Family Support 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.
- Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) representative.
- Transition Assistance Program (TAP) consultant.
- Financial educators.
- USDA (Operation Military Kids) representative.



## Joint Services Support

[www.jointservicesupport.org](http://www.jointservicesupport.org)

Extensive information on resources and programs for geographically-dispersed Guard or Reserve families. Links are provided to sister services support programs as well as local events and activities for families with a deployed family member.



## Military OneSource

[www.militaryonesource.com](http://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. Military OneSource is a “virtual extension of existing installation service.” Besides helping with referrals, Military OneSource also maintains a library of more than 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 Military OneSource, 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.

## Navy Family Accountability and Assessment (NFAAS)

[www.navyfamily.navy.mil](http://www.navyfamily.navy.mil)

NFAAS allows Navy personnel to manage the recovery process for families affected by a widespread catastrophic event. It is also helpful in providing commands with information to support IA family members while their sponsors are deployed overseas. It is important that Navy families log in to NFAAS and verify that their contact information is up to date. If you relocate during deployment or have to evacuate during a disaster, once you have arrived at your new location, please log in and update NFAAS so your CIAC, ombudsman and IDSS can maintain contact with you and provide deployment and/or disaster support services as needed.

## N@vy Knowledge Online

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

Navy Knowledge Online is an official Navy website 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 in to 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 website and register as a guest user. [Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com) is a free service offered to military families and can be accessed through NKO. They provide 24-7 tutoring for children and resume reviews for military spouses



## Navy Legal Services

[www.jag.navy.mil](http://www.jag.navy.mil)

Free attorney assistance is available at local Naval 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, Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, powers of attorney, wills and notary service. NLSO 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](http://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 more than \$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 Morale, Welfare and Recreation

<http://www.mwr.navy.mil>

The Navy Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Division provides a varied program of recreation, social and community support activities on U.S. Navy facilities worldwide. Programs provide active-duty, Reserve and retired Navy personnel and their families with sports, physical fitness activities, entertainment and dining.



## Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC)

Navy Operational Support Centers are located in all 50 states and two 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. To locate a NOSC, contact the Family Support Program administrator at the Reserve Component Command region in which the family lives.

- RCC Southeast Jacksonville (904) 542-2486 x 116
- RCC Mid-west Great Lakes (847) 688-4916
- RCC Northwest Everett (425) 304-4820
- RCC Southwest San Diego (619) 532-4274
- RCC Mid -Atlantic Norfolk (757) 444-7295 x2007



## Naval Services FamilyLine

[www.lifelines.navy.mil/Familyline](http://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 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](http://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 website [www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org).



## Operation: Military Kids

[www.operationmilitarykids.org](http://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, the deployment cycle and 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](http://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 <http://www.militaryfamily.org/our-programs/operation-purple>. 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.

## Operation Stress Control (OSC)

<https://wwwa.nko.navy.mil/portal/home/>

OSC is designed to help Sailors and families recognize the signs of chronic stress and offer actions to improve psychological health. Further information and 24-hour hot lines are available at:

- PDHealth.mil at <http://www.pdhealth.mil>. Information on post-deployment health care.
- Defense center of Excellence at <http://www.dcoe.health.mil>. Information and programs on psychological health and traumatic brain injury.

## Personnel Support Detachment

<http://www.dfas.mil/navy2/personnelsupportdetachments.html>

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 (PSD). To locate yours, contact the above website. Family members may need a general or specific power of attorney to receive some services from PSD. Your CIAC is your advocate when working with PSD.

## Returning Warrior Workshops

Sailors who have recently returned from a mobilization or deployment as an IA are invited to attend a Returning Warrior Workshop (RWW) with the guest of their choice.

The goal of the workshops is to give loved ones a chance to reconnect. The guest may include a spouse, significant other or family member. The definition of family member has been expanded to include: girlfriend, boyfriend, parent, brother or sister. The Sailor will attend the RWW on ADT or DTS travel orders.

The events are held at a four-star hotel away from military bases and everyday distractions. Civilian business attire is required. All lodging, meals, conference fees and miscellaneous expenses are covered at the RWW and include: dinner Friday night, three meals on Saturday, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. Travel by personal vehicle is encouraged and mileage will be paid at the current government rate. Ideally, attendees should be within 350 miles of the workshop.

For more information on RWWs, please log in to [www.ia.navy.mil](http://www.ia.navy.mil) for the latest schedule and point of contact information. Your IDSS and CIAC can also provide you with additional information about RWWs.



## **TRICARE** [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://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 website.



*Until Every One Comes Home.®*

## **United Service Organization** [www.uso.org](http://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.

# A Deployment Readiness Assessment

Do a quick self-assessment to determine your deployment readiness:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have your Sailor's phone number, mailing and e-mail addresses?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have your Sailor's Noble Eagle number?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have contact information for your command IA coordinator?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have the contact information for your ombudsman?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have copies of your Sailor's orders?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is your contact information current in DEERS, NFAAS, at your Sailor's command and with the command ombudsman?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a will and a power of attorney?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have you attended a deployment readiness briefing offered by the FFSC?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have access to myPay, bank accounts, allotments and safe deposit boxes?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Will your ID card be current throughout the deployment?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did your Sailor update his/her emergency data form (Page Two)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did your Sailor update beneficiary information on their Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance policy?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a "communication plan?"

We value your feedback. [Click here](#) to take a short survey on FFSC Deployment/IA services.