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[Family](#), [Mother](#)



JOHN C. JENSEN The Effects on the Family During Military Deployment

Families are important, everyone has one in some way or fashion. Frederick Buechner said, " You can kiss your family and friends good-bye and put miles between you, but at the same time you carry them with you in your heart, your mind, your stomach, because you do not just live in a world but a world lives in you". Military families, throughout their life, experience something that most other families will not even consider thinking about, and that is deployment; where one of the parents is gone for months at a time and sometimes even years. This is a very hard time for the children in the family as well as the spouse who is left home. According to Huebner (Mancini, Wilcox, Grass, Grass, 2007), 34% of children during a deployment have shown to have symptoms of depression. Such as loss of interest in regular activities, isolation, changes in sleeping and eating patterns, sadness and crying. When the parents are home, the family is strong, however when they are deployed no one can shy away from the fact that there are going to be effects without the entire family together. For example how does deployment effect everyday life; are there psychological effects, can it come depression, what does the remaining parent go through? Military life in general is hard on anyone. Add a family and it becomes even harder. The military is no longer the single man's duty. Studies have shown that having a family in the military provides several advantages. Relative to single soldiers married soldiers have fewer job-related problems, are more committed and are expecting to serve longer. They also have fewer attrition rates and proportionally fewer indiscipline and substance abuse discharges (Cadigan, 2000). So what we have here are families grounded in core military ethics

and morals. Some would think that families like this would breeze through a deployment, but that is not the case. A normal deployment lasts around four to six months. The individual is on foreign territory and sometimes in hostile situations. At home there are children who are growing up without a father or mother and sometimes neither. So what we see is that no matter how much you plan or talk about a deployment with a family, the fact still remains that they will be separated and no family can fully prepare for that. The spouse who is left home is also shown to have effects. According to a child who was interviewed, “ My mom acts different when my dad’s gone. It’s like she’s not her normal self. She’s kind of like stressed out and stuff and her stressing out affects me too (Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass, Grass, 2007). When a deployment happens, it is usually the mother that stays home. She takes on all the responsibilities her spouse did. Since she usually has help, these new duties typically stress the mother out which in turn can stress out the children as we saw before. When we cast aside all the problems families face while a parent is deployed, there is still a glaring issue. What happens when the parent returns? For example, a father has been deployed to Iraq for 13 months. When he returns his daughter is no longer 11 but 12. Even though they have communicated through letters, Skype, and by phone they are still having trouble getting back to the way things used to be. It is also not necessarily the family at home that is having problems it could be the returned parent. Being in a foreign territory for 13 months is a huge ordeal, the parent could possibly have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), however that is a whole other discussion. According to Huebner and colleagues (2007), a difficulty for the family that stayed

home is that the routines and responsibilities had changed. This adds more stress and only adds to the already hard situation at hand. Deployment is very hard especially on a family which is probably why the majority of the military is single. It is hard to find a spouse who can except the responsibility, stress, and life style that come with being in the military. However military families are better families for pushing through the hard times are looking forward to the bright future. References Cadigan, J. J. (2000). Family Status of Enlisted Personnel. 14-15. Retrieved from <http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/gpo1034/20006.pdf> Huebner, A. J., Mancini, J. A., Wilcox, R. M., Grass, S. R., & Grass, G. A. (2007). Parental Deployment and Youth in Military Families: Exploring Uncertainty and Ambiguous Loss. 116-119. Retrieved from https://spock.fcs.uga.edu/hdfs/fcrlweb/docs/pubs/3_Huebner_2007%20youth.pdf Chandra, A., Cinisomo, S. L., Jaycox, L. H., Tanielian, T., Burns, R. M., Ruder, T., & Han, B. (2009). Children on the Homefront: The Experience of Children From Military Families. 20-21. Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/125/1/16.full.pdf+html>