

NATO Family Support Centre



Family Handbook



COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Allied Force Command Heidelberg (FCHD) is at the spearhead of NATO's Response Force, being one of the Headquarters on permanent stand-by to be deployed in case of emerging crises anywhere within and outside NATO's borders.

Any operational deployment is demanding and NRF is certainly not an exception. Even if you are familiar with deployments, you can expect to experience some stress, worries or difficulties over the course of the deployment. By its very nature, deployment to an NRF mission can come very suddenly and at very short notice, which means that not only the deploying soldier but also the entire family must be on stand-by and be prepared at all times for what might come. This may pose a different type of strain on families than deployments that can be planned and prepared over a longer term.

If there is one lesson that I learned during my deployments, it is that no soldier can be 100% effective if he's not sure that his family's needs are being met at home.

The Family Support Centre NRF-Booklet was developed to help all of you during possible difficult moments. Within this booklet you will find advice on how to deal with the family separation that comes with deployment, as well as points of contact for a variety of support agencies, and a full menu of activities and assistance offered by our Family Support Centre. Do not hesitate to take advantage of the services that can be provided to you.

I would like to add that nothing is more important than human relationships, especially during an assignment within NATO. Most of us are not German, and despite the warm welcome we may find here, it is always a challenge to live abroad. A deployed spouse makes this challenge even more difficult. Mutual support and a strong community are essential, for if you are able to take advantage of a strong human network, the more demanding moments of deployment can even turn into a unique and everlasting experience.

Debbie and I would like to wish both the deployers and their families the best success, not only in your mission but also in these challenging times. We, and our Family Support Centre personnel, are always available to assist you in any way you need.

John W. Morgan III
Lieutenant General

NATO RESPONSE FORCE (NRF) “WHAT DOES NRF MEAN”

The NATO Response Force (NRF) is a highly ready and technologically advanced multinational force made up of land, air, maritime and special forces components that the Alliance can deploy quickly to wherever it is needed.

It is comprised of three parts: a command and control element from the NATO Command Structure; the Immediate Response Force, a joint force of about 13 000 high-readiness troops provided by Allies; and a Response Forces Pool, which can supplement the Immediate Response Force when necessary.

Purpose

The NRF has the overarching purpose of being able to provide a rapid military response to an emerging crisis, whether for collective defence purposes or for other crisis response operations.

The force gives NATO the means to respond swiftly to various types of crises anywhere in the world. It is also a driving engine of NATO's military transformation.

A rotational force

The NATO Response Force is based on a rotational system; nations commit land, air, naval or Special Forces units to the Immediate Response Force for a six-month period. Starting in 2012, the rotation periods will be extended from six to 12 months.

The NRF is also open to Partner countries, once approved by the North Atlantic Council. The flexibility offered by the Response Forces Pool, which permits nations to make contributions on their own terms, for durations of their choosing, is particularly relevant in this regard.

Participation in the Immediate Response Force is preceded by national preparation, followed by training with other participants in the multinational force. As units rotate through the NRF, the associated high standards, concepts and technologies are gradually spread throughout the Alliance, thereby fulfilling one of the key purposes the NRF – the further transformation of Allied forces.

Operational command of the NRF currently alternates among NATO's Joint Force Commands in Brunssum, Naples, and Lisbon.

Any mission, anywhere

The NATO Response Force provides a visible assurance of NATO's cohesion and commitment to deterrence and collective defence. Each rotation of the force has to prepare itself for a wide range of tasks – for example, contributing to the preservation of territorial integrity, making a demonstration of force, peace support operations, disaster relief,

protection of critical infrastructure, security operations and, as part of a larger force, conducting initial entry operations.

Elements of the NRF helped protect the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece, and were deployed to support the Afghan presidential elections in September 2004.

Our Headquarters will be a part of this force from 01 January 2012 until 31 December 2012. We are highly trained for our mission.

FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRE “WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU”

Dear spouses, partners and families,

Your partner is member of our Headquarters NRF team it could be possible that he or she will have to leave for quite a long time on very short notice and you will have to take over a lot of responsibility in the family. It will not always be easy, but never forget that you are not alone!

At the headquarters, we will do our best to give you an open ear and a helping hand. Therefore, just as during our last deployment to ISAF, we have decided to mount a Family Support Centre for the families of our multinational staff.

Who are we?

Our team consists in principle of four people. The Chief of the Family Support Centre (Cdt Eric De Vilder, Belgian Army) and three civilians: an Administrative Assistant Mrs. Claudia Pradel, a Staff Assistant (Privileges) Mrs. Eva-Maria Pach and a Senior Translator Mrs. Caroline Hemingway.

So what can we do for you? You will find a detailed description of our services in this handbook. Basically, we are open for any questions you might have, and we will do our best to help you solve any problems that may arise in connection with your spouse's deployment. As a practical example, let's assume you just received your annual utilities statement from your landlord and you have some concerns about it. Mrs. Pach will then be able to look into it from a legal point of view and give you some advice. Or you may want to find a doctor who speaks Polish. Mrs. Pradel will figure it out for you and make the necessary calls. Or let's assume you have to write a reply to a letter written in German. We will be happy to assist you with that. All the civilians in our Family Support Centre are German citizens and will be able to support you in dealing with German authorities.

How can you contact us?

We are located in Campbell Barracks, Building 7, room 129 and 31M (base plan can be found at the end of this booklet). To make sure we can give you our undivided attention, the best thing is to give us a call before you plan to visit us, so we can make an appointment. You can reach us by commercial phone as follows:

Cdt Eric De Vilder: 06221-398-5279 - mobile phone 0049-(0)170-5696491
Mrs. Claudia Pradel: 06221-398-5670 - mobile phone 0049 (0)151-52869610
Mrs. Eva-Maria Pach 06221-398-5379 –mobile phone 0049 (0)151-52869609
Mrs. Caroline Hemingway 06221-398-5702

Or by email as follows:

Cdt Eric De Vilder : eric.devilder@fchd.nato.int
Mrs. Claudia Pradel : claudia.pradel@fchd.nato.int
Mrs. Eva-Maria Pach : eva-maria.pach@fchd.nato.int
Mrs. Caroline Hemingway : caroline.hemingway@fchd.nato.int

Opening Hours

The team members of the Family Support Centre are available during regular office hours and can be reached during duty hours Monday – Thursday 08:00 – 17:00 and Fridays 08:00 – 15:00.

If you and your children would like to use the services and/or facilities of the FSC outside the above mentioned official opening hours or if you would like to meet with a FSC team member please feel free to contact the FSC Office for an appointment at your convenience.



Table of Contents

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE.....	1
NATO RAPID FORCE.....	3
FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRE "WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?".....	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	6
TELEPHONE NUMBERS	8
PLANNED FAMILY SUPPORT EVENTS.....	9
CHIEF FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRE.....	10
STAFF ASSISTANT SERVICE	11
LINGUISTIC SERVICE	12
PRIVILEGES SERVICE	13
GENERAL INFORMATION	14
FAMILY PREPAREDNESS.....	16
SUPPORT AGENCIES.....	21
CAR MAINTENANCE	23
WHAT TO DO BEFORE DEPARTING ON A TRIP	25
DEALING WITH THE MEDIA	26
SEPARATION / COPING WITH STRESS.....	27
LEGAL ISSUES	33
NATO SPOUSES CLUB.....	36
ADVICE FOR PARENTS.....	37
FINAL SUMMARY	52
TOP TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR STRESS RELIEF.....	53
THE TRUSTED FRIEND SCHEME	54
MAP OF CAMPBELL BARRACKS.....	55
PICTURES OF FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRE.....	57

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

FC HQ Heidelberg Family Support Centre

Cdt Eric De Vilder: 06221-3985279 – mobile phone 0049 (0)170-5696491

Mrs. Claudia Pradel: 06221-3985670 – mobile phone 0049 (0)151-52869610

Mrs. Eva-Maria Pach: 06221-3985379 – mobile phone 0049 (0)151-52869609

Mrs. Caroline Hemingway: 06221-3985702

FC HQ Heidelberg Public Affairs Officer

Public Affairs Officer (media) GSM-No.: 0049 (0)171 3322559 (will be available 24/7 for any question)

FC HQ Heidelberg Staff Duty Officer

00 49 (0) 171 9713326

HEADQUARTERS EVENTS

Major Events of our Headquarters 2012

07 March – 17 March	: Winter Warfare Training (split in two sessions)
24 May	: Force Command Heidelberg Spring Ball
14 June	: Belgian Benefit Concert
TBD July	: Force Command Heidelberg Sports Day
TBD September	: Force Command Heidelberg Family Fest

SCHEDULED EVENTS FSC 2012 :

FSC BRUNCH:

21 MARCH

25 APRIL

FSC DAY-TRIP FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY:

**02 September Ritterfest in Hirschhorn
(Hirschhorn Knights Festival)**

**ANY OTHER ADDITIONAL EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES WILL BE ANNOUNCED
SEPARATELY IN THE MONTHLY FAMILY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER**

Chief Family Support Centre



The chief of the Family Support Centre is Cdt Eric De Vilder. He is the overall coordinator of the FSC and responsible for the administration, planning, programming, supervision and coordination of recreation community and welfare programmed for the families and servicemen of the Headquarters.

STAFF ASSISTANT SERVICE



Mrs. Claudia Pradel is our Staff Assistant. She is responsible for the smooth administrative functioning of our Centre. She is responsible for the invitations and is helping / coordinating in the organization of events.

In principal she is your first point of contact and will direct you to the correct office and service member.

She is the heart and the soul of our Family Support Centre.

LINGUISTIC SERVICE



Mrs. Caroline Hemingway is our Senior Translator. She can provide professional translations and interpretation for you from and into English, French and German as well as linguistic assistance in Italian and Dutch. She is also able to organize support for other languages through the wider NATO Linguistic Services organization, if required.

You need to make a phone call in German? Write a letter to the telecommunication company? Have an insurance claim translated for your authorities at home? The FSC members are ready to assist you! Just make an appointment and you will be served.

PRIVILEGES SERVICE



Mrs. Eva-Maria Pach is the Staff Assistant (Privileges). She is able to help you with matters such as:

- Rental contract / agreements and utility costs
- Radio and television registration and related issues
- Taxation and customs
- Privileges and related items
- Access to military installations in Heidelberg
- Telecommunications matters
- Environmental issues
- Issues concerning driving in Germany and car accidents
- And many others

Sample questions: “Do I need an emission sticker”? We will explain this to you in detail. “I want to sell my car, what do I need to do?” Mrs. Pach will be able to give you the correct answer.

Please also see specifics under “Legal Issues” on page 33.

GENERAL INFORMATION

How to Handle Emergencies

No one likes to think about emergency situations; however, something may occur that makes it necessary for you to request that your spouse return home.

DEFINITION: *CRITICAL ILLNESS OR INJURY*: The possibility of death or permanent disability may exist.

DEFINITION: *IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER*: Wife, husband, parent, child, grandparent (who raised your spouse in the place of parents), or guardian. The last two should be annotated in the deployed person's personnel file.)

WHAT IF A DEPLOYED SPOUSE HAS AN EMERGENCY?

If your spouse develops a serious problem while deployed, i.e., sickness, injury, etc., you will be contacted by YOUR NATION'S SENIOR NATIONAL OFFICER OR HIS/HER REPRESENTATIVE.

IF SOMEONE ELSE CALLS YOU TO REPORT AN INJURY TO YOUR SPOUSE, CALL YOUR SENIOR NATIONAL OFFICER IMMEDIATELY!!! IT MAY NOT BE TRUE!!!!

WHAT IF YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY?

FILL IN THE PERSONAL EMERGENCY NUMBERS SHEET ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Information on hospital numbers, emergency rooms, local medical treatment facilities and emergency transportation numbers should be kept next to the phone or where all family members can reach them. In addition, keep the information on the following page available at all times. Inform your older children and neighbors of where it is. Use it to alert YOUR NSE, should an emergency arise at home.

In an emergency, when you need to contact your deployed spouse, call the Staff Duty Officer (SDO). He will help you to contact your spouse by placing a call to ISAF through the SITCEN/SDO. If it is a serious family matter, you may call either the FSC, the SDO, your spouses' NSE or your Senior National Representative. However **you SHOULD call the NSE first, if at all possible**. YOU WILL NOT BE HUNG UP ON. YOU WILL BE ASSISTED. STAY CALM AND REMEMBER TO GIVE YOUR NAME, YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER, THE NAME OF YOUR SPOUSE AND THE NATURE OF THE ISSUE.

General information you should provide

Spouse's Military Identification No.:

For NATO civilians, NATO ID No.:.....

Spouse's Unit:

Officer in Charge of your NSE:

Name	Duty hours	After Duty

NSE Orderly Room or Office:

Family Support Centre Contact Person:

Chaplain (if you wish):

Spouse's Section:

ADAC:

Phone numbers for emergency roadside assistance can be found on the back of your ADAC membership card. Member and spouse are both issued ADAC cards.

Important Emergency Numbers:

Police	110
Ambulance	112
Fire	112
Staff Duty Officer Heidelberg	0049(0)1719713326
ADAC Emergency	0180 2222 222
ADAC Information	0180 5101 112
US Military Police	06221-678-2222 or 2333

FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

Family Deployment Checklist

Although extended field exercises or deployments are never easy on families, failure to plan for such contingencies will increase the hardships separation already brings. **Families must plan ahead.** A carefully prepared and executed pre-deployment checklist can save you and your family giant headaches in the future. It is critical that military families have certain documents readily available. Military spouses must often take over during the spouse's absence; therefore, it is important to gather the information and documents named in this checklist. Keep originals or copies of all listed documents in a special container in a location where you can find it immediately, and that is known to both of you. The list below is just an example. You need to personalize this list, and adapt it to your own situation or national requirements.

LOCATION OF CONTAINER: _____ YES/NO

Marriage Certificate:-----

Birth Certificates of all family members:

- Wife-----
- Husband-----
- Child-----
- Child-----
- Child-----

Wills and Will Certificates for all family members:.....

Divorce Papers:.....

Death Certificates:.....

Records of Immunization of all family members (include pets):.....

Citizenship/Naturalization papers:

Adoption papers:

Passports, Visas (remove when needed for travel):.....

Insurance policies

(Company, policy numbers, Amount of payment, Policy Holder):

Real Estate documents
(leases, mortgages and / or deeds)

Copies of installment contracts and loan papers:

Current list of immediate next of kin, to include phone number
and address; include same information for a personal lawyer
or trusted friend who may be contacted regarding personal or
business affairs:.....

Car Ownership Papers
(car registration/ownership; must not be stored in your car but rather
in your wallet or purse):

Last Earnings Statement:

Financial Information with correct amount, name, address,
account number and account information:

Current addresses and telephone numbers of all immediate
family members of both spouses (include father, mother):

National Support Element Telephone numbers?

ALCC Duty Officer and FSC Telephone numbers?

Problems with cars, household or appliances identified and resolved?

Power of Attorney (see legal section for specific information)?

A letter of instruction for special issues concerning estates,
pets or family members?

Copy of emergency data card?

List of all credit cards and account numbers?

List of all stocks and bonds?

Income Tax Returns for the last five years?

Installation Cards (Be sure they are up to date)

Privilege Cards: (Be sure they are up to date)

.....
ADD ANY OTHER CHECKLIST ITEMS YOU FEEL ARE IMPORTANT

House/Home Safety Precautions

Take a ten minute walk through your house. Carry this checklist and really look at your home. Look for fire and safety hazards. If you don't think you have any, this list may change your mind.

KITCHEN:

YES – NO
Checked Unchecked

Are curtains, dish towels, or paper items kept away from stove?

Are stove's exhaust hood and duct working, clean and grease free?

Do you have a fire extinguisher for grease and/or electrical fires?

Do you have a working smoke alarm in/near the kitchen?

Have you locked up items that need to be out of children's reach?

Have you installed latches and locks on cabinets?

Are poisonous cleansers, detergents and soaps stored properly and kept in their original containers?

Are knives and matches out of reach of curious hands?

Are alcoholic beverages stored up high?

LIVING ROOM, DINING ROOM, BEDROOMS

Are electrical wiring/circuits/outlets adequate to handle current load?

Is there sufficient space for air circulation around TV/stereo?

Are ashtrays available in homes occupied by smokers?

Are cigarettes, ashtrays, matches and lighters kept out of reach of children? (Include long fireplace matches on hearth or mantel)

Are purses, jewelry, buttons and small items where children can't touch them?

Have you placed your plants where children and pets can't reach them to ingest their leaves?

ATTIC CLOSETS, STORAGE ROOM

Are oily waxing rags kept in tight metal containers?

Do you use only nonflammable cleaning fluids?

Are there accumulations of paper and combustible materials in or

near heating sources?

Are all doors, windows and shutters operational, easy to lock, and easy to open fully?

FIRE WARNING SYSTEMS

Is there at least one smoke detector on each floor, in the kitchen and near each bedroom area?

Do you replace smoke alarm batteries twice a year with longlasting batteries?.....

HOME INTERIOR

Are walkways in rooms clear of furniture?

Have you removed or secured loose rugs?.....

Are your rooms adequately lit?.....

If an electrical cord runs along a wall, is it taped securely to the baseboard?

Have you attached nonskid straps to the stairs?.....

Do you use nonskid mats or strips in the shower or bathtub?

Do you have night lights inside your home that turn on automatically?

Do you avoid overloading electrical circuits?

Are electrical cords kept out from under rugs and furniture?

Have you replaced frayed cords?.....

Does each telephone have the fire department number attached to it?

BASEMENT/WORKSHOP

Are paint thinners, paints, and solvents kept locked up and stored in their original containers so they can be identified?.....

Are furnace, heaters, vents, and chimneys inspected and serviced regularly?

Are the correct fuses used to protect circuits and transformers?

Do you clean the dryer lint trap and vent after each use?.....

GARAGE/GROUNDS

Is gasoline for the mower stored in a safety can?

Do you regularly remove accumulations of trash and paper?

Do you use commercial starter fuels (not gasoline) for barbecue fires, and are barbecue mitts fireproof?

Are there dry leaves under porches or wooden stairs, in window wells or anywhere else close to the house?

Are windshield wiper fluid, rust removers, gasoline, antifreeze and other solvents kept in a locked cabinet?

SELF CHECK

Do you inspect electrical cords frequently? Are they in good condition?

Do you enforce a "no smoking in bed" rule?

Do you avoid using hair spray near open flames or while smoking?

Does everyone in the family know how to call the fire department, dial the operator or call the ambulance?

Does your family have a fire escape plan and have you drilled all family members in emergency action?

Do you make sure children aren't left unattended and have you instructed babysitters in family fire emergency procedures?

NOW IT'S TIME TO ADD UP YOUR ANSWERS. How many of the questions did you answer "NO" to? One or two? Your home is pretty fire safe. But remember, just one can cause a tragedy! If you had 5 or 6 "NO" answers, you're risking the safety of your family. If you have more than 6, you're asking for big trouble. Take action **now**.

HOME TOOLKITS

Flashlight and extra batteries, assorted nails, screws and tacks, masking tape, extra keys for house and car, wrench, hammer, screwdrivers, scissors/knife, pliers, light bulbs, etc. Any other items you feel are important:

SUPPORT AGENCIES

Home Security/Crime Prevention

Heidelberg and its surroundings are a pretty safe area. However, some areas are more problematic than others, and crime as well as fear of crime are potential problems that could influence how you live. The most important resource we have in reducing such concerns are neighbors working together to prevent crime. Working together makes it harder for crime to take place and reduces your risk of being victimized. If you are not in, ask your neighbor to check your home.

General Family Awareness

- Stress the importance of security and the seriousness of any threat to the whole family.
- Cultivate mutual concern for security so that all family members are involved with the security effort.
- Establish basic family security procedures.

General Security Procedures

- Make it a habit to keep all outside doors and garages closed and locked.
- Keep all accessible windows and doors closed and locked.
- Keep house keys separate from car keys, and make sure everyone's key is accounted for.
- Never open doors to unscheduled repairmen and strangers.
- Check identification of all repair and delivery men if you do not know them.

HELPFUL TIPS

- Don't discuss your spouse's absence in public. If your spouse is deployed, don't advertise it. This alerts everyone that your spouse will be away for an extended period of time.
- Always lock house and car doors, even if you are going out for just a few minutes. Keep front and rear doors, garage, cellar, patio, storage areas locked. Periodically check them.
- Use the "buddy system." Don't go places alone, especially at night, except to areas where you feel completely safe.
- If you are leaving your house for vacation or for extended periods of time, ask a neighbor to collect any mail, flyers, and newspapers so they won't pile up outside your door or in your mailbox. Stop deliveries until you return.
- While on holiday, ask a trusted neighbor to turn on the light to the front door and then turn it off in the morning. The use of timers on lights within the house will also give an appearance that someone is living in the house while you are gone.

In case of a Motor Vehicle Accident

Even though you may drive safely and defensively, accidents do happen. If one happens to you, DON'T PANIC. Tend to injuries first. For your own protection and for legal reasons, call the "Polizei" regardless of how minor the accident. All insurance companies furnish a "what to do" form. This form and pertinent information on your insurance coverage should be kept in your glove compartment. Know where your insurance papers are and contact your representative as soon as possible.

If you have an accident on post, don't leave the scene. **Immediately report** it to the US MPs. If you have an accident off post, call the "Polizei". Always make sure your car is locked. Keep an extra set of car keys in a safe place at home.

If you are involved in an accident, you should immediately write down the license number of any cars involved or any witnesses' cars.

NEVER discuss the responsibilities or the details of the accident with anyone.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

- German Police*110
- German Fire Dept*.....112
- Heidelberg US Military Police*06221-678-2222/2333
- ADAC Germany*0180 2 22 22 22
- ADAC Germany from mobile phone*.....22 22 22
- ADAC Info service*0180 5 10 11 12

CAR MAINTENANCE

Your personal vehicle is an important adjunct of family life. The sudden and unexpected loss of car use can be a real burden and can, in some cases, have serious consequences. Whether your spouse is on deployment or not, not knowing how to cope with car problems is a generally preventable aggravation. Please take time to fill in and go over the following information. Discuss what the car's condition is, and become familiar with the periodic checks that are a part of routine operation.

FAMILY DRIVER'S LICENSE INFORMATION:

Name _____ License # _____

CAR DATA/SERVICING INFORMATION: for each car)

Make _____ Model _____ Year _____

Vehicle ID # _____

Location: _____

Car Title: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Owner's Warranty: _____

Car Registration: Yes / No _____ Date due _____

License Plate # _____

Inspection Sticker Expiration Date: _____

Car Insurance: Yes / No _____ Date due _____

Policy Number: _____

KEEP RECORDS FOR EACH VEHICLE

Spare keys: Yes / No _____ Location: _____

Gasoline type: Regular Unleaded Premium Diesel

Battery Type/make/brand _____ Warranty ? _____

Location in car _____

Tires: Make/Brand: _____ Size: _____

Pressure: _____ Warranty ? _____

Oil Brand / Weight ? _____ (e.g. 5W30)

Where to purchase: _____

Maintenance schedule: _____

Service Garage Name/Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Date and type of most recent service: _____

Are there any upcoming appointments? _____

Oil and filter change/lubrication: _____

Next scheduled date? _____

Tune Up? Yes / No

Last done: _____ Next scheduled date: _____

Approximate mileage: _____

Where: _____ Remarks: _____

Tire balancing, rotation, front end alignment: _____

Winter tires need changing? (Schedule an appointment, don't wait until it is too late)

Approx. Mileage: _____

Other related car information _____

(COMPLETE THIS FORM FOR EACH VEHICLE)

WHAT TO DO BEFORE DEPARTING ON A TRIP

Keys. Leave a house key with one of your trusted neighbors to check on your house daily. You can return the favor when he/she goes on a trip.

Newspapers/Mail. Discontinue newspaper service and have your mail kept at the post office. If you are only going to be gone for a few days and do not want to stop newspaper/mail delivery, have your neighbor pick them up daily.

Lights. Ask your neighbor to turn on a light in a different room every day. This gives the appearance of an occupied home and is a major deterrent to criminals. Installing an automatic system that turns lights on and off at the same time every day is not recommended; burglars are not easily fooled by such a system. Remember, leaving an outside entrance light on all night, each night, is like extending an invitation to a burglar. If a burglar has been casing the area, he will most likely suspect the house is unoccupied.

Lawns. Make arrangements to have someone mow your lawn regularly. Tall grass and no apparent activity around a house are good clues a house is empty.

Water Heater. If you're planning to be away for several days, have the water heater turned off either at the tank or with the circuit breaker. This will save power. Be sure to turn it back on as soon as you return. It usually takes a couple of hours before you have hot water again.

Notify your NSE /SNR representative and FSC prior to your **departure**. If something happens to your deployed spouse while you are away, we need to be able to contact you.

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

Helpful hints for family members

General:

The deployment of military formations into a combat / hostile theatre will always create media interest. The main focus of the media will be the soldiers who deploy, but there are occasions where journalists are going to search for other news sources.

Past experience shows that family members could be the aforementioned "other news source".

Guiding principles:

Generally, everyone is free to tell his/her personal view to a media representative. However, with your relative deployed, always bear in mind that any information you give to third parties could have a negative impact on the mission he / she is serving.

Always be aware that journalists are professionals who won't address you without a specific aim.

On the other side:

Issues might be urgent for the journalists, but not necessarily for you. Do allow yourself to prepare properly.

How Public Affairs will be able to support you:

The Public Affairs Office offers you assistance, should you be approached by a journalist. We recommend that you do not answer questions without prior preparation.

If contacted by a media representative / journalist, or if you decide to give them an interview, you are kindly asked to inform the Public Affairs Office.

GSM-No.: +49 (0) 171 3322559 (will be available 24/7 for any question)

The Public Affairs Office will then inform both the Family Support Centre (or, after duty hours, our NATO Duty Officer Heidelberg) as well as the respective Senior National Representative (SNR) of your country. We will get in touch with you to provide professional assistance and preparation.

SEPARATION / COPING WITH STRESS

Ideas to help you cope with separation.

Use what you have! Do what you feel comfortable with, and take a look at the suggestions below. There might be something there that will help you!!

Deployment isn't the happiest of occasions – when a unit deploys, spouses and parents go with it. Long separations are hard for every member of the family – especially for those left at home. However, as NATO Families, we learn to cope.

Experience has shown that a deployment or extended field exercises are easier if families prepare for them and know the tricks of getting along during a separation.

Family Support Centres provide excellent support for families during deployment. Activities, communication and general morale building efforts are especially important during separation. The FSC can provide a helping hand, a sympathetic ear and friendship that sustains members throughout a difficult period.

In the following several pages, we offer coping skills and some specific suggestions. In general, the key elements for coping with deployment separation can be summarized as follows:

COMMUNICATE your thoughts and feelings before, during and after deployment.

PLAN AHEAD if possible, and stay prepared to make separation and reunion go as smoothly as possible.

SEEK HELP if you need it. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness; it shows you are concerned about your family and are willing to take action to solve any problems.

- Spend time explaining, at the child's level, why you are going, where, and with whom (e.g. with Mary's Dad) and for how long you will be gone.
- Arrange family time, such as an afternoon ride, and talk about feelings. Let each member express how they feel. In Family Support Centers, children can gather to share feelings.
- Mom/Dad should spend individual time with each child. Play a game, go for a walk, do something as long as it is just the TWO of you.
- Take a picture of each child with you on deployment.
- For younger children, record bedtime stories for the care provider to use. Check ahead on family calendar and send a message of encouragement before a big game or special event.
- Sit down as a family and discuss house rules before a deployment. The children are more likely to remember the rules as "family" or "house" rules rather than "Mom's" or "Dad's" rules. Maintain the same rules for the children; they need the stability of unbroken routine.

During Deployment

- Display pictures of Mom/Dad at child's eye level. Let each child have the picture you took of him/her with Mom/Dad in his/her room.
- Routine is important. Keep the same rules and schedules.
- Encourage letter writing to Mom/Dad and enclose school drawings.
- Play Mom's/Dad's pretaped messages and stories.
- Deployed parent: Write separate letters to each child and mail in individual envelopes.
- Record cassettes or videos. Record bath times, dinner times, etc., and have the kids talk to their parent.
- Buy or plan presents in advance for special days. Make arrangements with a close friend to deliver gifts on those special days.
- Acquire a world map; your children can follow Dad/Mom around the world. You can also obtain brochures from a travel agency.
- Meals and bed times are important times for small children with parents away. It may be a good time to talk about what they are going to say to Dad/Mom on the next tape or in their next letter.
- Keep in touch with teachers. Work together to evaluate, avert and redirect unusual behavior.
- As homecoming draws near, make banners and signs to welcome parent home. Start discussing what will be the same and what will be different when parent returns.
- Deployment of a parent can be difficult for children. Often they are too young to understand why he/she has gone, and they feel deserted. Parents left behind should stress continuity of discipline. If a parent relaxes discipline while the spouse is gone, the children will soon learn to resent his/her return.

Preparing Children for Reunion

The returning parent may not be immediately prepared to accept the changes the other parent had to make during the partner's absence. He/she may feel superfluous, when he/she sees how well the family has coped without him/her. The children may think Mom/Dad will punish them because of wrongdoing while he/she was away, and worry about how long he/she will stay this time.

- Ease tensions by keeping communications open. Share plans for reunion with the family. Talk to the children about reasonable expectations.
- Include teenagers in preparations for predeployment, deployment, and postdeployment. One parent made his teens feel needed and secure by discussing with them areas in which they could help while parent was away. Give them a major portion of preparing a family reunion "happening."
- Prepare children to realize that everyone changes, and no one will be exactly the same as you remembered them.
- Old problems do not disappear and new ones may crop up. Don't expect to resolve any of them right away give yourself and your spouse and children time to adjust.
- Spend time as a family without outsiders. Postpone visits to relatives and dinners with friends for a few days. Make it a family reunion Mom and Dad can vacation alone later.

- Be patient and remember that readjustment to each other can take up to eight weeks or longer. Large or rapid changes in activities and roles can be a stiff shock for the entire family.
- Mom or Dad take it easy on discipline: allow the family to continue the schedules and work programs they have been using without interfering right away. Support positive changes AND TALK TO EVERYONE!

In Summary...

CREATE REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS for everyone in the family. Don't expect things to go smoothly right away.

TAKE TIME TO ADJUST to Mom or Dad being back and part of the family again. This readjustment is a slow process; be patient and don't expect miracles overnight.

COMMUNICATE YOUR FEELINGS to one another. Keep those channels open and let everyone have special time with Dad/ Mom to talk about their feelings and activities.

Helpful hints to cope with your spouse's deployment

- Take care of yourself! Exercise, eat right and get restful sleep. If you're feeling well, you can cope with just about anything.
- Set goals for yourself. Begin a selfdevelopment program, learn a new hobby, start aerobics.
- Prepare for emergencies. In case of emergency, we tend to forget many important things. It's important to have telephone numbers of friends or your NSE and / or FSC representative ready for your children to call in case of an emergency, along with police, fire department, hospital, etc.
- Don't forget YOUR feelings. Before leaving, both parents should sit down with the family and discuss what's happening. Talk about what will happen when Mom/Dad is gone and what will be different when they return. It's okay to admit you don't want the parent to go.
- Find a "buddy" someone in your FSC who is also temporarily alone.
- Don't stay at home thinking, "IF ONLY HE/SHE WERE HERE!" We all get down in the dumps sometimes, but what do you do about it? One parent said after the kids were in bed, she listened to music she and her spouse liked.
- Becoming aware of and staying in touch with your feelings can give you an inside track as to how your children feel. If it's been two weeks since the last letter and you're feeling a bit blue or irritable, your children may be crawling the walls or withdrawing for the same reason. Talk about how you feel. It won't change the fact that there is no mail, but it may give you the extra patience you need. Everyone will feel better knowing that it's okay to feel lonely, isolated, sad, or frustrated.
- Start a "countdown calendar" as reunion approaches. This helps everyone including you, as you begin to prepare mentally and emotionally for the parent's return.

What to expect when your spouse returns

All family members must realize that people change. We notice these changes more after a prolonged period of absence.

- Expect some anger and insecurity along with love and happiness. These feelings need to be expressed.
- Expect your spouse to be different. If he/she is not, fine. If they have changed, you're prepared.
- Expect your spouse to find you changed. He/she will find you more independent and may not like it.
- Expect your spouse to be a little hurt that you have managed so well without him/her. They will need reassurance.
- Expect your spouse to want to be babied by you.
- Expect that it will take about six to eight weeks to adjust to each other again. If you're not getting along well by the end of six weeks, counseling might help.
- Expect your spouse to have trouble sleeping for a while. He/she is accustomed to a different lifestyle and time zone; it may take them a week or two to adjust.
- Don't grill your spouse about personal problems if they arise. Give him/her time to readjust. Swallow your curiosity.
- If you need help, ask for it. There are resources available through the Family Support Centre, medical channels or national military channels.

The four basic stages of separation

Everyone who faces separation goes through four basic stages. By knowing what these stages are, we will be able to cope better. The departure/return cycle includes: Protest Against Loss or Departure, Despair, Detachment, and Return Adjustment.

- **PROTEST** against your spouse's departure usually comes a week or two before he/she is due to leave. Spouses talk of feeling tense, selfish, unbelieving that he/she will actually leave, and guilty about not wanting their spouse to go. You might also experience frustration with the increased hours your spouse spends getting ready to deploy, heightened awareness of the household chores and the family business that must be dealt with, and a bona fide physical, as well as mental, exhaustion.
- **DESPAIR** is the tearful period that may come even before your spouse departs. Thoughts such as, "How will I ever live through this without him/her?" are common. There may also be difficulty in sleeping due to general fear for one's safety; even the usual noises in the house may seem threatening.
- **DETACHMENT** is the level on which you live for most of the separation. It is a state of relative calm and confidence in handling daytoday living. If a major crisis occurs, however, you may tend to revert to the states of despair and protest.
- **RETURN ADJUSTMENT** is accompanied by awareness of the noises in the house. Many spouses experience an incredible emotional and physical frenzy getting every inch of the house and themselves ready for his/her arrival. Your spouse arrives exhausted from the final days away, eager to be home. The first days of unwinding bring long conversations to attempt to catch up. Finally, he/she will spend lots of time sleeping.

Coping with Stress

Being a military family involves pride in serving one's country and provides many rich and new experiences. However, pressures and frustrations often result from:

- Lengthy deployments
- Frequent relocations
- Career changes at retirement
- Single parenting during soldier's absence
- Separation from friends and family
- Family finances
- Constant adjustment to varying duty schedules

Children may try to take advantage of potential new freedoms. A stable home life is important for their psychological adjustment. Consistent rules, a consistent household schedule and special time set aside for families are important to minimizing the stress of a parent's absence.

If you want to talk to someone and don't know how to find someone, then call you NSE or FSC, and we will put you in touch with a chaplain, social worker, psychologist etc.

Stress Management Tips

- GET UP EARLIER to allow yourself more time before starting the day's work.
- PRIORITIZE what is really critical and pace yourself accordingly.
- BEFORE you start the work day, PAUSE to see what kind of day it is.
- BE REALISTIC and kind to yourself when making your "to do" list.
- TAKE LUNCH OR OTHER BREAKS away from your work area, avoid eating quickly, and do not talk about work.
- Spend your LEISURE time with enthusiastic, upbeat friends. Since many of your friends will be in the same position as you, you should also be enthusiastic and upbeat for them.
- During the day, REST quietly for five minutes or take a brief walk.
- Say "NO" when you need to stop a project.
- ASK for help when you need it, whether it's time away from the children, a counseling session, or a real vacation.
- FOCUS on immediate or shortterm goals that are attainable.
- COLLECT APPRECIATION that is due. Hear praise and thank-yous.
- TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF when you are "down and out:" play your favorite song, see a movie, give up on the housework for the evening, etc.
- ANALYZE YOUR MOODS, energy, and time. Are you down at certain times of the day, week or month? Plan and prepare.
- USE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES: meditation, music, religion, nature, or whatever suits you to reenergize yourself.
- PAY ATTENTION to your diet, sleep, exercise, and general health.
- VOLUNTEER! Helping others is good medicine for soul and spirit to fill your empty days.
- SET A GOAL. Start that project you've been putting off. Begin a selfimprovement program. Go back to school. Do something for yourself.
- INITIATE social activities. Don't wait for the phone to ring. Plan an outing or a special dinner, then call several friends to join you. Call the FSC if you feel like you need to talk.

- TRAVEL. New scenery and a change of pace, if only for a day or two, do wonders for the spirit. Plan to take a friend and making a day of it.
- GO TO WORK. A full or part-time job can provide extra income as well as opportunities for interaction.
- TAKE A BREAK. Take time away from your children. Single parenting wears you down, so go to dinner or see a movie with friends once a week. Become an active member of your Family Support Centre!
- LAUGH. Don't lose your sense of humor. Look for roses and take time to enjoy them.
- JOIN a support group. Whether it be through the FSC, your church, or work, the support of friends makes the going easier.
- Take up a new HOBBY or return to an old one.
- DON'T FEEL GUILTY about going out with friends and leaving your children with a sitter. That's the cheapest form of a sanity check available.
- KEEP A JOURNAL of your thoughts and activities while your spouse is away to help "catch up" when they return. Include snapshots of you and the children taken while he/she was away.

LEGAL ISSUES

1. Introduction

The following information is just an overview of some important legal issues in connection with your deployment. Since this handbook is supplementary to the national deployment handbooks, and since every NATO member state has its own legal system, you should always check with your national Legal Adviser and, if deemed necessary, with an attorney at law before taking a decision.

2. Last Will (Testament)

Prior to deployment, you should produce a last will ensuring that your property goes to the people you designate. Please be aware that otherwise the persons next to you may not be the beneficiaries in case of your death.

Additionally, you can assign a trustworthy person to take care of your children.

Your last will should be notarized. A will without notarization may be acceptable depending on the applicable national law system, but the notarized form is safest. Your mental capacity will be presumed. The will is stored at the notary's office and thus safe from misuse.

Before notarization, you should discuss the will's content with an attorney - otherwise you risk pitfalls.

Additional requirements may vary, depending on the jurisdiction, but in general, your will should contain the following elements:

- You must clearly identify yourself as the maker of the will, using the words "last will and testament" on the face of the document.
- You should explicitly revoke all previously made wills and date the new one.
- Name a trustworthy person as executor of your will, endowed with the power to pay debts, taxes, and administration expenses (probate, etc.).

3. Living Will (Patientenverfügung)

The deployment is associated with certain health risks. Besides the last will, you should therefore consider a notarized living will.

Such a living will may be accompanied by a specific type of power of attorney called "health care proxy".

A living will usually covers specific directives as to the course of treatment that is to be taken by caregivers, or, in particular, in some cases forbidding treatment and sometimes also the provision of nutrition and liquids, should you be unable to give informed consent

due to incapacity. A power of attorney for health care appoints an individual (a proxy) to direct health care decisions, should you be unable to do so.

4. Power of Attorney (Vollmacht)

a) General Power of Attorney (*General Vollmacht*)

If you have a trustworthy person (e. g. your spouse), you should consider to give him/her general power of attorney. This means the person will act as your agent and is authorised to carry out certain acts in your name, with a binding effect on you.

Since many institutions require an original signature by the principal, the agent should hold several original powers of attorney. However, the agent should always retain one as a template for copies.

In general, a power of attorney is limited in duration.

b) Specific Powers of Attorney (*Spezialvollmacht*)

Please check whether certain institutions require a specific power of attorney using a special form – e. g. sealed by a notary public. In particular, this can be the case for bank transactions. If so, the general power of attorney has to be supplemented by specific ones limited to certain purposes.

c) Information to Third Parties

Certain third parties – e. g. your landlord – should be informed of the agency and of the agent's address and phone number. Insofar, the agent will act as a contact person. With regard to a rented home, for example, the agent should also have a set of keys.

5. Child custody (Elterliche Sorge)

If you have children, check whether there is an adult person with the authorization to act on behalf of the children, e. g. with regard to medical treatment, without prior consent by you.

Under most legal systems, this authorization can be delegated to other adults by power of attorney.

Under German law, for instance, unmarried parents can declare that they wish to share child custody – which otherwise would rest solely with the mother. It could therefore be wise to declare shared custody, if the mother is deployed and the father stays with the child.

6. Conflict Management

Prior to deployment, check whether there are conflicts with third persons that could potentially lead to a full-fledged lawsuit against you while deployed.

The court may then require you to submit written pleadings within a certain timeframe. Facts submitted and/or evidence offered after expiry of a time limit set forth by the court may be dismissed. Such a delay can be caused if you are not represented properly in court. In principle, ignorance of receipt is not an admissible excuse.

Therefore, you need a specific power of attorney presentable to the court by your lawyer. Especially if a lawsuit is imminent, you should issue a signed (blank) power of attorney for your lawyer containing certain information before leaving.

7. Life Insurance (*Lebensversicherung*)

Some nations require their military personnel to have a life insurance policy when deploying to an area of conflict.

Even if there is no such requirement, a life insurance policy covering death should always exist. Before entering into the contract, it should be clear that death during deployment (place, circumstances and cause of death) is covered and not exempt from insurance cover.

Take care that all important documents – insurance policies, bank documents, etc. – are stored in a safe place known to you and your family.

8. Crime Prevention

Please ensure that your absence does not facilitate offenses against your property.

Some handbooks recommend the vehicle registration certificate to be left in the car. Please don't do that, otherwise you risk loss of insurance protection if the car is stolen. While driving, you should have your driver's license and the car registration with you.

The German emergency phone number is **112**.

In case of loss or theft of your bank/credit card, please call the issuing bank immediately in order to have the card blocked. For most German banks, the central number is **116 116** (calls from Germany are free of charge). If calling from another country, however, dial **0049** first. In addition, each bank offers its own individual emergency numbers. Ask your bank for more details. The German police usually also have these numbers. You can ask them when you report the theft / loss to your local police station.

NATO SPOUSES CLUB

The NATO Spouses club is open to spouses of all ranks. The intention of activities is to help members to meet new people from other NATO nations, and to explore Heidelberg and its surroundings. Activities include guided city and museum tours, shopping trips and visits to exhibitions.

Nations organize functions on a rotational basis. The annual membership fee is 20 Euros. The membership year runs from September through June. Events are funded on a pay-as-you-go basis. You don't have to be a member to attend one of our events. However, if you are not a member, you will pay a slightly higher attendance fee.

The NATO Spouses Club will work in close coordination with the Family Support Centre to organize additional activities for family members during the ISAF deployment. We are very pleased about this cooperation, and will inform you about the updated agenda for 2011 as soon as possible.

If you want to get in touch with the Heidelberg NATO Spouses Club directly, send a message to the President: Mrs. Hedwig Huybrechts-Van Geldorp.

Email: reeboklaan9@hotmail.com

Mobile phone: 0049 (0) 162-9657315

Home: 0049 (0) 6321-1876013



Hedwig Huybrechts-Van Geldorp



We sincerely hope you will join us, and that together we can help make your stay in Heidelberg truly enjoyable.

Christmas Fun at the NATO Spouses Club

ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Excerpts from the handbook “**We’ll Get Through This!**” provided by the German Catholic Military Chaplainry (KMBA) at the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt.

Author: Johanna Mödl

The content has been abridged and partially adapted to meet NATO needs.

Contents

Introduction

Infants and Toddlers

Kindergarden/Pre-School Children

School Children

Teenagers

General Advice for All Ages

Introduction

These are exceptional circumstances, and your children may show unusual behavior.

Each child has a different personality, and each child reacts differently to stress situations such as an impending separation: some are very calm; others may be upset or restless. The family situation at the time of the separation also plays an important role. For example, the birth of a sibling may cause a similar reaction in toddlers as the upcoming deployment of a parent. If both events happen to coincide, the situation may escalate. However, not all changes in behavior are necessarily the result of a job-related separation. You should take your children's fears of loss seriously at any age. Always make sure you get the whole picture.

What kinds of reactions are possible?

Some children do not change at all and seem to master the situation well.

Moreover, some parents may notice a positive development in their children while the deployed parent is away. Especially school children may profit from this experience in taking on more responsibility, or realizing that the family can only function well if everybody works together. Some children grow more affectionate of their parents, especially of the absent parent. This may even help to create a lasting improvement of a formerly tense relationship between parent and child, including after the parent's return.

Nevertheless, there are some children who suffer from job-related separations. They need your support.

The following pages list the most frequent changes in behavior observed by parents in their children as a result of a job-related absence of one parent.

This brochure is not meant to scare you. Rather, it is intended to enable you to be attentive and sensitive to your child's needs, by informing you in advance on potential difficulties that may be caused by such situations. This knowledge will help you to detect any early signs of mental distress in your child, thus enabling you to respond and help accordingly. If you feel that the situation is beyond your coping skills and those of your child, and you want to avoid lasting negative consequences, please do not hesitate to seek professional advice from a child service center, a specialist in adolescent psychology, or a family therapist. Contact the Family Support Centre to help you locate such support, if needed.

Who is affected the most?

Most accounts by families tend to suggest that children in specific age groups are most frequently and seriously affected by a job-related separation:

The first group includes **infants and toddlers**, whose primary bonding period is interrupted by the separation. As a consequence, some children develop a more difficult relationship with the absent parent than their siblings. Moreover, research suggests that **school age and teenage boys** seem to be particularly affected by the absence of the father, as they lack a direct, male identification figure and the paternal role model. As the mother cannot take on this role, the ensuing vacuum may prompt a change in the son's behavior.

Chronically ill children sometimes suffer a major relapse as a result of a separation. For example, children with ADS or ADHS seem to suffer especially from changes in family life, and the non-deployed parent is often faced with a very difficult period.

In general, children tend to show a stronger reaction to the separation, if the deployed parent played an important role in the upbringing before his/her absence. If the non-deployed parent was used to sharing the responsibility of child care with his/her partner, he/she will first have to adapt to taking over the entire job – which is often not easy. In contrast, compensating for the absence of the deployed parent seems to be easier if the non-deployed parent already served as the primary attachment figure in the past and bore the brunt of the upbringing even before the separation. Watch out! In such cases, there is a risk that the deployed parent may lose in significance by his/her absence and become practically irrelevant to the children.

Siblings play an important role, as they provide stability to each other, developing a “micro-community” marked by mutual solidarity. This may help to take pressure away from the non-deployed parent. However, difficulties may arise if one child was preferred by the deployed parent. The former “favorite” will then become an “outsider” during the parent’s absence, and may therefore suffer even more from the separation.

In general terms, the quality of the parents’ relationship will play an important role in determining how well the children are able to cope with a temporary separation. Instable couples often get caught up in their own problems and therefore may have difficulty in recognizing and addressing the fears and concerns of their children. Moreover, children of instable couples tend to be more afraid that the parents may split up, as the departure of the deployed parent appears as a signal in this direction. As a result, the temporary, job-related separation takes on a different meaning for them, causing an enormous fear of loss. Therefore, try to avoid arguing in front of your children.

What can we do as parents?

Parents can help their children not only during the separation, but also by taking a proactive approach prior to and after the absence:

- **Before:** Make preparations to enable your children to cope with the upcoming “exceptional circumstances”. The pressure on families is usually high at this time, since the exact date of deployment may not yet be known, but the separation already looms on the horizon.
- **During the separation:** it is important that the deployed parent keeps regular contact with the family. The non-deployed parent should try to manage the routine at home, without completely taking over the role of the deployed parent.
- Make the **return** a source of happiness for everyone. See below for some useful recommendations for this period of time.

We wish you good luck with this challenging time, which we are sure you will be able to master well together!

The Catholic Military Chaplainry in Berlin, and the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt’s Central Institute for Research on Marriage and Family in Society have conducted a closely coordinated, detailed research program on the issue of long-distance relationships since 2001. In addition to the challenges that long-distance relationships cause to couples, a job-related separation places special demands on couples in their role as *parents*.

Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers will have an acute feeling that something is off. Before and during the separation, and even after the return of the deployed parent, small children may show discomfort. As they are not yet able to voice their feelings verbally, it is very important to observe their behavior. Children at this age are in a phase where they learn basic trust, laying the foundations for relationships that will last a lifetime. Therefore, it is vital to take the necessary steps to foster their trust.

Parents will often observe that infants and toddlers...

- Cling much more to the mother than before
- Cling much more to the most trusted parent than before
- No longer sleep through the night
- Often cry in their sleep
- Are in a bad mood and show increasing restlessness

Some possible additional observations in infants and toddlers:

- They may become more sensitive and cry more frequently for no apparent reason
- They may increasingly wet themselves during the day and at night
- They may talk less, and articulate themselves less clearly than before
- They may want to be the center of attention at all times
- They may get sick more often
- They may initially be shy of the deployed parent after his/her return, and
- May be unwilling to let him go away again at a later stage.

What can we do as parents before the deployment?

Even before the upcoming separation, the parents should consider options to facilitate this difficult time for their children. Since children of this age do not primarily perceive communication through language for, sensory perceptions, gestures, and emotions are key.

What is the best way to act?

You should...

- Spend as much time as possible with your child, while avoiding complete fixation on the mother
- Let your child feel your physical presence – cuddle a lot
- Act as normally as possible in everyday life
- Stay calm and relaxed, and make sure your child feels it.

What preparations could we make?

You could...

- Involve additional parenting figures, such as Grandma and Grandpa
- Prepare things that symbolize a connection with the deployed parent to make him/her “attainable” even during his/her absence, such as:
 - Record a story for the child, spoken by the deployed parent
 - Prepare a video tape with footage of the deployed parent
 - Have a photograph of the deployed parent printed on a soft cuddly pillow
 - As the deployed parent, you might want to carry a scarf or “security blanket” with you for a while so it takes on your smell and serves as a memory of you while you’re away.

What can we do as parents during the deployment?

It is very important that the family sticks together while the deployed parent is away, and copes with the situation as a team. The child should feel that it can still rely on the deployed

parent, and that he/she continues to be a part of the family. Rituals involving the deployed parent may help to facilitate this: regular phone calls, so the child can hear his/her voice are important. In general, the absence of a baby's parent is difficult, as the possibilities for communication are limited. In any case, the non-deployed parent should stick to the daily routine in a reliable and consistent manner.

At home, you should...

- Spend a lot of time with your child
- Develop "rituals" that involve the deployed parent, such as talking about him/her in the evenings.
- Have the children take Mom's/Dad's "security blanket" or stuffed animal to bed with them
- If possible, set a fixed time for phone calls
- Regularly visit other parenting figures, such as Grandma and Grandpa, with a special focus on a presence of the gender of the deployed parent
- Try to spend weekends with families in a similar situation, to make this "time of longing" as enjoyable as possible
- Get in touch with mothers/fathers who are in a similar situation, and who have children of the same age (e.g. through a nursery or toddlers' group or the FSC)
- Watch and/or listen to the prepared items listed above together
- Stick to your daily routine, even if it would be easy to revert to a "single" lifestyle, especially if you have just one small child

From your deployed location, you should...

- Make regular, frequent, short phone calls, so that the child hears your voice over the phone and remembers it
- Always remember that your child will continue to develop at home: do not be surprised to see it having "jumped" several stages after your return. The non-deployed parent should regularly update you on developments.

What can we do as parents to prepare the return?

For very small children, the return of the deployed parent can be difficult. A six-month old infant may "forget" the parent, because its memory does not last that long yet. Therefore, a gentle approach to your child, and respecting his/her needs, is key.

As the non-deployed parent, you should...

- Lovingly prepare the return and let your child help with the preparations, if and as much as its age allows
- Celebrate the return of the deployed parent with your child.

As a parent returning from deployment, you should...

- Gently approach the infant or toddler
- Sit down on the floor with the child to meet it "at eye level"
- Play together on the floor, or look at a book together
- Do not pick the child up in your arms immediately, even if you want to, except if the child comes to you spontaneously
- When hugging frightened and "shy" children for the first time, do it together with the parent who stayed at home
- Be patient and stay calm if the child is scared of you and turns away from you. Do not take it personally – behavior like this is typical of this age!
- Take as much time as possible to play with your child to rebuild trust. The child is too small to understand the situation and needs time to adapt.

Kindergarten Age

Children at Kindergarten age (three to six years old) are usually able to articulate themselves quite well. If they feel that “something’s up”, they will fire endless questions at you: what is going on, why is Mom/Dad going away, and when is he/she coming back? At this age, it is very important to answer questions patiently and in a manner understandable to the child. Children at Kindergarten age are often going through a phase of rebellion (also known as “the frightful fours”). They may take offence or feel hurt by the absence of the deployed parent, and will let him/her know after his/her return. Their behavior is an expression of helplessness and rage at the unwanted situation.

Children at Kindergarten age will often...

- Cling a lot more to their mother, often literally
- No longer sleep through the night
- Refuse to go to Kindergarten
- Ask for the deployed parent all the time
- Be in a bad mood and show more restlessness than before
- Regress into infant behavior (e.g. by adopting baby talk, asking for diapers or drinking from a feeding bottle)
- Fight more with their older siblings
- Try to “mother” younger siblings
- Have nightmares and refuse to be alone

Some possible additional observations in children at Kindergarten age:

- They may become more sensitive and cry more frequently for no apparent reason
- They may wet themselves again at night
- They may lose their appetite and eat less
- They may become more aggressive socially, trying to be the center of attention in Kindergartens, and show very lively behavior
- They may get sick more often
- They may initially ignore the deployed parent after his/her return and act offended because he/she “left them alone”, which they instinctively perceive as “shattering trust”
- At a later stage, they may become very attached to the returned parent and may be unwilling to let him/her go again
- They may show a general fear of loss by refusing to go anywhere without their parents, in order not to be “left alone again”.

What can we do as parents before the deployment?

Children will sense a certain tension in the family some time before the departure, jeopardizing their “perfect world”. As a reaction, they may ask a myriad of questions or show anxiety. At this stage, it is important to convince your children that the family will be as reliable as before, and that the upcoming changes are not their “fault”.

What is the best way to act?

You should...

- Spend a lot of time with your child
- Let your child feel your physical presence and cuddle a lot
- Tell them in as much detail as possible what Mom/Dad will do while he/she is gone. If possible, show them pictures or drawings of the place where Mom/Dad is going.
- Take your child’s questions seriously and answer them patiently

- Inform the Kindergarten of the upcoming departure and let those in charge know that your child may show unusual behavior as a result. Ask for patience and support!
- Stay calm and relaxed, and make sure your child feels it.

What preparations could we make?

You could...

- Prepare things that symbolize a connection with the deployed parent to make him/her "attainable" even during his/her absence, such as:
 - Sitting down with your child to select your favorite stories, and then record them on tape
 - Prepare a video tape with footage of the parent who will deploy
 - Have a photograph of the deployed parent printed on a soft cuddly pillow
 - If you're the parent who will deploy, you might want to carry a scarf or "security blanket" with you for a while so it takes on your smell and serves as a memory of you while you're away
 - Pin family photographs of the deployed parent on a board in a place where everyone can see them
 - If you are the deployed parent, prepare little surprises for special occasions in advance
 - Have your child draw a picture for you and take it with you on deployment
 - Exchange a "lucky charm" with your child: take a small stuffed animal that belongs to your child with you on deployment. Let your child know that this means he or she is "always with you". In return, give another stuffed animal to you child to remind her or him of Mom/Dad, especially at night before falling asleep, and as a sign that you are "there" and thinking of your child.
 - If possible, keep these stuffed animals for any future deployment!

What can we do as parents during the deployment?

At home, you should...

- Spend a lot of time with your child.
- Invite friends of the same age as your child.
- Talk about Mom/Dad, if it helps your child, and look at and listen to the things you prepared together before. Be careful! Children react very differently to this: for some, frequent reminders of the deployed parent may be a cause of pain rather than a help. If your child reacts like this, do not exacerbate the problem by talking too much about Mom/Dad.
- Write letters to Mom/Dad together with your child, or make drawings for him/her
- Stick to your normal daily routine
- Continue sending your child to Kindergarten regularly

From your deployed location, you should...

- Call regularly and at fixed times, if possible, and talk directly to your child.
- Don't just ask the child how he/she is – talk about other things, too. While children at this age like phone calls, they are often very silent on the phone, and simply nod their heads instead of talking.
- Always emphasize how much you are looking forward to coming home
- Send personal letters or emails with pictures to your child
- Send home photographs showing how and where Mom/Dad lives right now.

What can we do as parents to prepare the return?

As the non-deployed parent, you should...

- Let the child know how happy you are that Mom/Dad is coming home.
- Prepare the arrival of the deployed parent together with your child

- Show understanding if the child tries to be the centre of attention.

As the returning parent, you should...

- Approach the child carefully and show understanding if it is sulking and hurt, taking offence at your absence and letting you feel it. Do not force any closeness – it will come back, slowly but gradually!
- Bring small presents
- Don't hug the child right away, but wait until he/she comes to you to cuddle.
- Show interest in everything that has been prepared for you and patiently admire each and every one of the many surprises your child may have for you.
- Play with the child and look at pictures.
- Read your favorite stories together.
- Take a lot of time to listen.
- Tell small anecdotes about your experiences abroad to slowly bridge the time of separation.

School children

Parents of children in primary school (about six to eleven years old) often do not notice any major changes in their children during the deployment. This could be partially due to the fact that children at this age spend a lot of time away from the house anyway. Therefore, the changes are more visible at school: a sudden drop in performance could be a typical example. Especially at this age, children are under a lot of pressure to perform, and many families put a high priority on school performance. It may therefore be difficult to pinpoint the separation as the reason for any specific behavior. Moreover, children at this age want to demonstrate more independence and are more reluctant to accept help. They will not show emotional distress as openly as younger children.

Frequent observations in school children...

- Their performance at school may be affected
- They tend to overreact or show hyperactivity
- They refuse criticism, reacting with tears or aggression
- They may have nightmares and refuse to be alone

Some possible additional observations in school children...

- They have trouble falling asleep, especially in the early phases of separation
- They want to take over the role of the absent parent
- They show special care and a sense of responsibility for the non-deployed parent
- They "idealize" the deployed parent after his/her return and demand all his/her attention
- They see the one parent as competition in their attempts to obtain the other's attention
- They may reject the deployed parent after his/her return, since they took over his/her "role" and no longer accept him/her (a risk especially with boys and deployed fathers, if there are no siblings, or much younger siblings)
- They may reject the deployed parent after his/her return and act offended or reproachful, because he/she left the family alone.

What can we do as parents before the deployment?

Children at this age are easily overstrained emotionally. Since school plays such an important role, it is easy to neglect cognitive development, and some parents tend to overlook that their children still are very vulnerable. The impending separation may cause anxiety and worrying, even if the child does not speak about such feelings.

What is the best way to act?

You should...

- Inform your child honestly about the upcoming separation
- Emphasize that the separation is job-related
- Inform your child about the country of deployment and explain what you will do there, without causing anxiety to the child
- Take the “childish” questions seriously and answer them patiently
- Don't be afraid to show your own fears and worries
- Be encouraging and voice your conviction that the family will get through this together
- As the deploying parent, ask the child to support the non-deploying parent at home, but avoid putting pressure on the child.

What preparations could we make?

You could...

- Create a private email address for your child.
- Inform the school about the upcoming deployment and ask for support and understanding in case there are any problems with the child
- As the deploying parent, sit down with your child and think about ways to stay “close” to each other. We suggest that even at this age, you still
 - Give each other a stuffed animal
 - Write a diary for each other: the deployed parent for the child, and the child for the deployed parent
 - Write letters to each other at regular intervals

What can we do as parents during the separation?

It is important that the non-deploying parent acts as a “safe haven”, mastering the daily routine together with the children. The deployed parent should avoid asking questions about school performance only, and show an interest in the child's feelings and moods, too.

At home, you should...

- Do your best to stick to the daily routine, and avoid introducing “special rights” during the absence (such as increasing TV time or going to bed later).
- Create shared rituals for the duration of the absence: for example, you could choose a fixed time during the day to talk about the deployed parent, so that he/she is not “forgotten” or becomes superfluous (e.g. “Every day around 17:00 at afternoon coffee, the whole family will think of each other”)
- Keep emphasizing that it is only a temporary phase that is necessary for job-related reasons.
- Do not let anyone “fill the void” left by the deployed parent: e.g. do not let the child sleep in the parents' bed, as this would only make it more difficult for the deployed parent to be re-accepted after his/her return
- Especially on weekends, spend a lot of time with other affected families and friends of the children, to make this time of longing easier for them
- Especially during vacations, spend a lot of time with the children, as they will miss the deployed parent even more. given the lack of distraction through school.

From your deployed location, you should...

- Contact each child individually, instead of just talking about the children with the non-deployed parent (make sure to write, too, don't just talk on the phone!).
- Encourage your children and keep reprimands to a minimum
- Avoid talking only about grades and school
- Listen to your child!
- Show the child that he/she has a place in your life, although you are far away. Try to explain this to the child by describing situations in which you think of him or her.
- Talk about your life far away from home, so that the child can share your experiences, but avoid scaring them.

What can we do as parents after the return?**As the non-deployed parent, you should...**

- Prepare the other parent's return together with the child
- Make sure there is no "competition" among the children, if several siblings are waiting for the deployed parent
- Do not emphasize how well everything went without the deployed parent, but look forward to his return together.

As the returning parent, you should...

- Avoid trying to immediately take your old place in the family
- Give the child time to get used to you again
- Talk about your experiences, if you can
- Listen attentively to the things your child tells you
- If possible, do different, individual activities with each child (e.g. visit a soccer game or a concert, depending on your children's interests)
- Make sure to praise the child for supporting the non-deployed parent, and keep your criticism to a minimum, even if you are not fully content.

Teenagers

We tend to overburden teenagers without realizing it. Puberty is a stage of development that can be exhausting for both parents and children – and a temporary absence of one parent at this age may cause striking changes in behavior.

While the situation helps some teenagers to mature and take on more responsibility, others may be overwhelmed, resulting in violent clashes with the non-deployed parent at home, or with the deployed parent after his/her return. Such teenagers may tend to "grow out of" home earlier to go their own ways.

Frequent observations in teenagers at puberty...

- They may develop a closer relationship with the non-deployed parent again
- They may try to replace the deployed parent and take over his/her role
- They may refuse to accept the non-deployed parent as a "single parent", and question family rules they previously respected (e.g. curfews for coming home in the evening)
- They may withdraw and become more quiet, avoiding conversation and spending most of their time in their room
- They may intensify contacts with friends, while simultaneously losing interest in the family (to a stronger extent than this is usually the case during puberty)
- Their performance at school may be affected

- They may hide their pain and distress, pretending to be unaffected (Watch out! Appearances can be deceptive!)

Some possible additional observations in teenagers...

- They may be even more touchy about criticism than usually
- They may develop an eating disorder (If this is the case, make sure to seek professional help!)
- They may show aggressive behavior towards siblings and the non-deployed parent
- They may try to hang out with particularly “cool” friends
- They may show a tendency towards aggressive and violent behavior

What can we do as parents before the separation?

Puberty is a very vulnerable phase. The most important thing for the parents to remember at every stage of the separation is that they are no longer confronted with a child, but with a fledgling personality who wants to be taken seriously as an equal partner in conversation – even if the teenager actually does not display that kind of maturity.

What is the best way to act?

You should...

- Take the teenager seriously as a conversation partner and explain that the separation is strictly job-related and temporary
- Strengthen the teenager’s self-confidence by taking him or her seriously and letting them know that you trust them to master the separation well
- Voice your own fears and worries and thus try to “meet” the teenager at the emotional level through conversation
- As the deploying parent, take some time for shared activities before you leave (tailored to the teenager’s interests).
- As the deploying parent, do not create too much pressure concerning the school performance of your son or daughter, and do not voice any threats. Rather, appeal to their sense of responsibility and motivate them through trust.

What exactly can we do?

You could...

- Include the teenager’s closest friends in the conversation, if they are ready and willing to do so.
- Inform the school about the upcoming separation, provided the teenager agrees to this.

What can we do as parents during the separation?

At home, you should...

- Make sure to be firm and stick to your principles, as you risk losing your accepted role as an authority otherwise
- Never use the deployed parent’s return as a threat, but create other incentives to achieve a positive influence (sentences such as “Mom/Dad will be proud of you, when he/she returns...” are much more effective!)
- Carefully avoid turning your teenage child into a “replacement” for your partner by approaching him/her with problems that are beyond the abilities of teenagers to cope with
- Build a strong, friendly relationship with the aim to master the situation together
- Always keep a dialogue with the teenager
- Don’t be afraid to voice your own fears and worries, provided you do not overburden the teenager with them

- Accept the teenager's personality, including by not forcing them to talk when they don't want to. However, be wary if a previously extroverted teenager suddenly turns silent, withdraws or refuses any contact.
- Take friends of the teenager with you on activities.



From your deployed location, you should...

- Try to keep regular and reliable contact with your daughter/son, including via email and letters. Remember that phone conversations cannot replace written contact. A letter is something special.
- Have individual phone conversations with your son and/or daughter, and remember that school performance should not be the main topic of the conversation.
- Do not exert pressure if you are unhappy about a specific behavior. Appealing to the teenager's sense of responsibility is more effective.
- Never use your return as a threat
- Develop a relaxed attitude and remember that your child goes through puberty, detaching him- or herself from the family, and this means your influence is waning.

What can we do as parents after the return?**As the non-deployed parent, you should...**

- Show your happiness about the deployed parent's return
- Revert to raising the children together with the returning parent again
- Avoid complaining about the teenager(s) towards the returning parent

As the returning parent, you should...

- Be prepared to encounter a certain amount of distance and rejection
- Show restraint and accept initial changes
- Avoid claiming your "old role" right away, if roles have changed during your absence. It will take some time to restore old habits and relationships.
- Pick up previously shared activities again to ease your way back in through conversation with the teenager(s)
- Show content about the way the separation was mastered together
- Avoid showing disappointment and criticism about things that have been neglected. Try to focus on praise instead.
- Bring some small presents, even at this age.
- Accept the teenager's friends as his or her most important interlocutors.

General advice for all ages**For Deploying Parents**

- Leave a small present for your child's birthday or name day as a sign of your attachment.
- Get a small calendar and enter the most important dates into it for the time of your absence
- Leave everything in order for the non-deploying parent at home, e.g. no unfinished works
- Stick to the promises you made to your children before you leave, avoid leaving "unfinished business"
- Try to come up with an appropriate means to contact each child and prepare accordingly (e.g. by opening a separate email account for each child)
- Do not write letters "to all", but write to each child individually
- Bring symbolic presents for each child (e.g. stones, dried plants or other "everyday" things)
- Presents can be turned into a ritual to create a positive image for the child, and setting a sign of happiness ("The best thing about the separation was that Mom/Dad came back with presents")
- Avoid having exaggerated expectations when you come home. Be aware that your children have developed, just like you, and are no longer the same. Maybe you will have to overcome a certain distance.

For Non-Deploying Parents

- Create a network of social contacts even before the separation to enable you to count on friends and family and have reliable "points of contact" when your partner is gone
- Cultivate external contacts and take good care of your appearance – if you feel good, you will have a positive influence on your children, enabling them to feel good, too!
- Make use of the programs offered by your military community (National Support Elements and Family Support Centre).

- If problems with the children become overwhelming, do not be afraid to seek professional help. Your NSE and FSC can help you find the right contacts.
- Do not act as a “single parent” at home, but always be aware that the deployed parent will retake his/her place after he/she returns – therefore, keep that place “vacant”.
- Let your child know that he/she can be proud of Mom/Dad, who is doing his/her duty, even though he/she would rather be at home with the family
- Prepare the return together with the children as a very happy and special event
- “Open” the family for the returning parent, so that the children look forward to him/her.

For both parents

- Inform your child of the upcoming separation in an appropriate form depending on the child’s age
- Discussions and differences of opinion are unavoidable before the departure, but avoid fighting in front of your children!
- Develop “rituals” for the departure and return, e.g.
 - Every time Mom/Dad goes away, he/she takes my “lucky charm” with him/her
 - The nice thing about Mom/Dad going away is that he/she brings presents when he/she comes home.
- Strengthen the “togetherness” feeling by talking a lot to each other and emphasizing that you will get through the time of separation together
- Make sure to take your children’s fears seriously, and do not hesitate to seek professional help in times of difficulty.

Time – Time – Time

Talk – Talk – Talk

Love – Mutual Trust – Setting an Example

FINAL SUMMARY

Conclusion: Some food for thought as a reminder and final summary

- a. Secret desires rarely come true
- b. In a Distance Relations- be this a deployment abroad or a weekend relationship – it is impossible to simply continue from where you finished before your partner left. For all partners and children it is natural to move on; therefore you have to bear in mind: It is never just a simple reunion or return, it is always a new beginning with one another!
- c. I can never change my partner, I can only change myself. However, when I change myself or my behavior, our relationship – maybe – changes, too.
- d. Try something new: it is worth to try something new with the old partner, instead of slipping into “old” behavioral patterns with a new partner.
- e. When we believe we have no time at all, is the best moment to take some time ourselves.
- f. Unless I am clear about where I want to take our partnership, I will often get to where I did want to go at any rate.
- g. Reserve at least as much value to the partnership (even with children) as you reserve for your job or your most important hobby. Sometimes, the relationship has to be “rescued from the children”. And always remember: When the parents are well, in most cases children are well, too.
- h. No matter how far the distance may be, you are never a single parent. Even across the distance you can show your children that you’re bringing them up together.
- i. My partner cannot and does not have to make “make me happy”. I myself am responsible for creating the preconditions for us to be “satisfied” with one another.
- j. **“Never begin to stop, never stop beginning.”**

Source: Gelingende Fern-Beziehung from Dr. Peter Wendl – Center for Marriage and Family Studies (ZFG) Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt.

Dr. Peter Wendl, accr./licen. Theologist, Singles-, Couples- and Families Therapist, is a scientific project leader for “Mobility and Partnership”

Web Sites

www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil

www.sesamestreetfamilyconnections.org/grownups/deployments

www.zerotothree.org

www.militarysource.com

Translation: Mr. Reudenbach

TOP TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR STRESS RELIEF

-  Reduce number of daily tasks – focus on what is important
-  Stay organized
-  Make time for yourself – daily
-  Journaling – record your thoughts, feelings, events, etc.
-  Eat well – reduce caffeine and sugar intake
-  Exercise regularly
-  Sleep – routinely and adequately
-  Spend time with people who make you laugh and bring joy
-  Create a support network for yourself
-  Keep busy doing things you love to do

Source: Canadian Forces Deployment Handbook

THE TRUSTED FRIEND SCHEME

What is it?

The trusted friend scheme is an initiative based on trust and friendship in the local community. It involves nominating individuals who are willing to support you when you need help due to unexpected circumstances – for example if you have an urgent appointment that leaves you without childcare, transport and/or access to your living quarters on short notice.

How does it work?

Families and partners/spouses or deployed personnel are encouraged to ask friend(s) if they would be willing to assist them should such a need arise. The form enclosed to this chapter indicates your willingness to assign the nominated person(s) as a trusted friend concerning transport or access to your living quarters, help with childcare etc. This scheme does not impose an obligation on you or the nominated person, but merely serves as an indication who should be contacted, if other avenues of immediate support are unavailable.

It is important that you ask your “trusted friend(s)” if they are willing to be nominated and that you inform your children and/or the school that they may be collected from school etc. by your trusted friend. Once completed, the forms should be passed to the FSC who will, on your behalf, distribute them as follows:

Copy one	held by FSC
Copy two	to the nominated person(s)
Copy three	retained by the individual
Copy four	to the school (if applicable).

Once you have made your nominations, please make sure to keep the form updated, given that people may get posted elsewhere or may no longer be available for other reasons.

TRUSTED FRIEND SCHEME: NOMINATION

Your name:

Your address and phone No.:

Names of children (if applicable)	School	Age:
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-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----

I nominate the following person(s) to act as my trusted friend(s), and I authorize them to assist me as shown below:

TRUSTED FRIEND ONE	TRUSTED FRIEND TWO
Name	Name
Street	Street
Town	Town
Postal code	Postal code
Home Phone No	Home Phone No
Office Phone No	Office Phone No
Mobile Phone No	Mobile Phone No

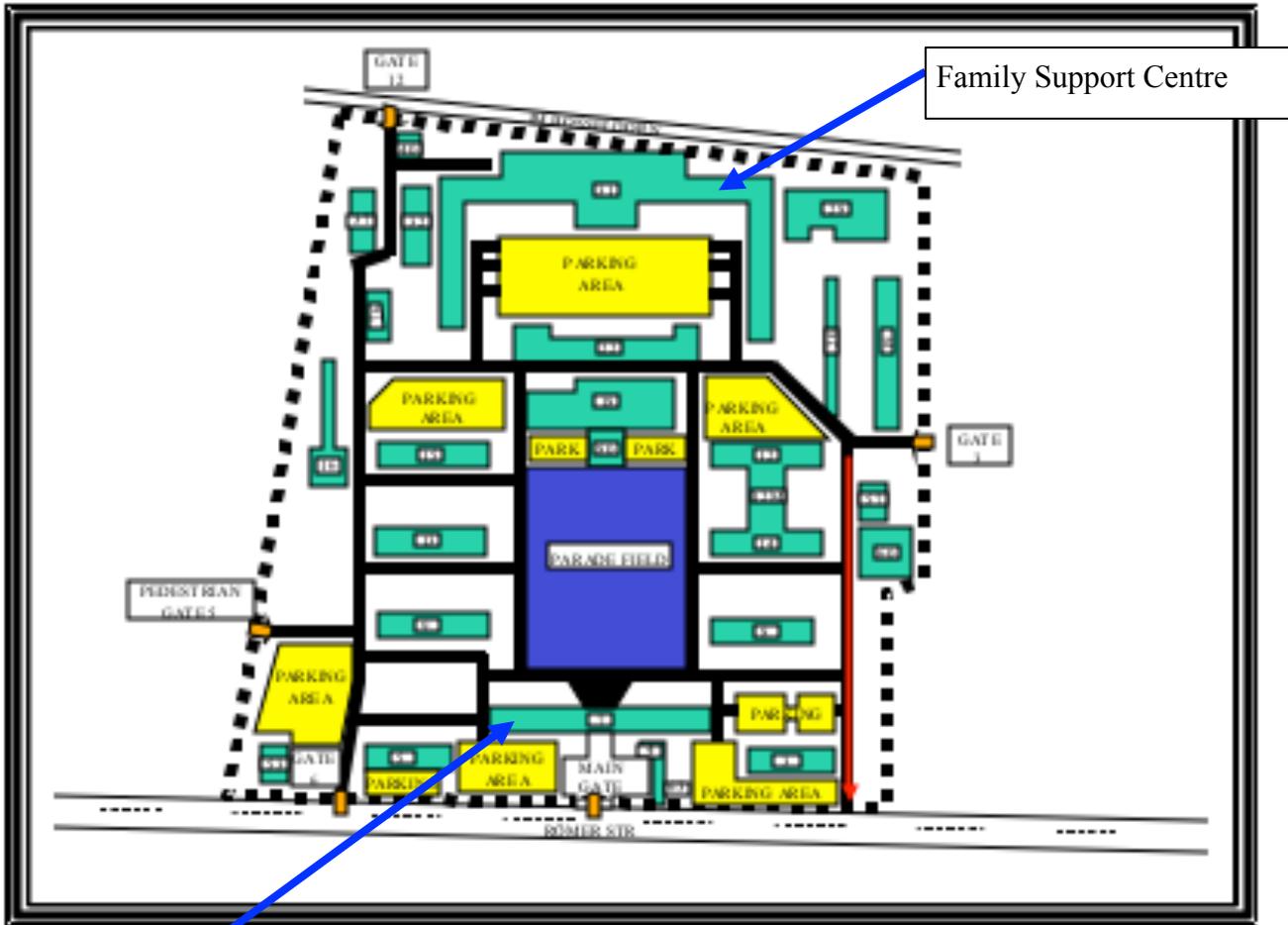
The following limitations apply (delete as applicable):

TRUSTED FRIEND ONE	TRUSTED FRIEND TWO
Have access to my home	Have access to my home
Have access to my mailbox	Have access to my mailbox
Collect children from school	Collect children from school
Look after children on a short-term basis	Look after children on a short-term basis
Other	Other

Signed

Date

MAP CAMPBELL BARRACKS



Family Support Centre

Family Support Centre

Pictures of activities of the Family Support Centre

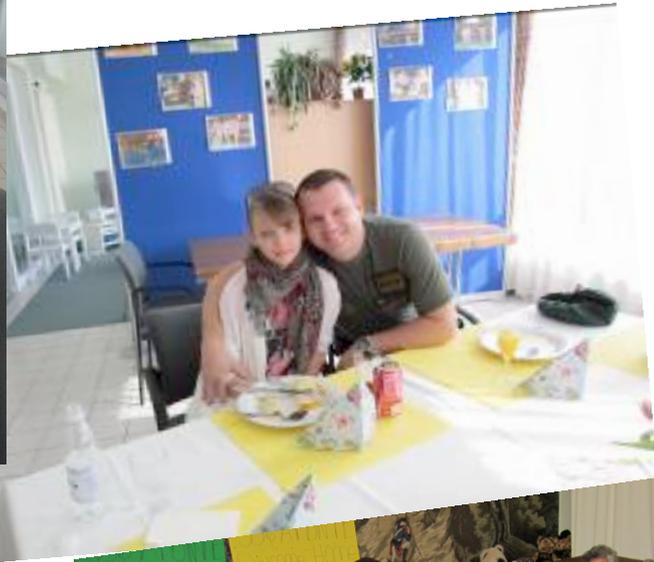
FAMILY FEST 2011



Christmas Fun at the Family Support Centre



Fellowship times at the Family Support Centre



FSC SHOPPING EVENT

Outlet Center Metzingen



FSC Trip to Felsenmeer, Bensheim



FC HQ SPORTSDAY



FSC Trip to Bundesgartenschau in Koblenz



NATO Family Support Centre * Headquarters Allied
Force Command Postfach 10 26 20 * 69016 Heidelberg
Tel: 06221-398-5670