



Family Deployment Supplement to the Connecticut Guardian

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They're home: Now what? *Adjusting to life after deployment*

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You sent them off to war 18 months ago and worried about them the whole time.

You also worried at first about how you would keep the kids in line, the household running smoothly, the vehicles on the road and the bills paid.

Somehow you surprised even yourself and kept all the balls you were juggling in the air. Oh, you may have dropped one every so often, but you picked it up and continued on.

Now, your loved one is home.

After the euphoric welcome home celebration, you begin discussing how things went while he, or she, was away. The bills are paid, the checkbook is balanced, the kids are a year older and have matured, taking on greater roles of responsibility, the cars are all still running and the house is still standing.

On the surface, everything is idyllic.

But then, on Tuesday night, your husband goes to take the garbage out because that's what he always did before he went overseas, and your son says, "Hey, that's my job," because that's what he's done for the past 18 months.

Or your wife pulls out the checkbook and wants to know why you've made all the entries in ink when she always did it in pencil.

Or your now battle weary son goes out drinking with his war buddies every night coming home very early the next morning, sleeps all day and rarely talks to you.

Don't panic, these are very real situations that happen all the time to families around the country after deployments. There is help available...you just have to ask.

Mrs. Kimberly Hoffman, the Connecticut National Guard Family Program Coordinator is familiar with all of these scenarios. After the 143rd Forward Support Battalion and members of the 102nd Infantry returned from a nine-month deployment in Bosnia, many

of these issues came up.

And while Bosnia did happen after 9/11, it was a peacekeeping mission, making it very different in many ways to the current deployments.

But any deployment still causes stress. Any reintegration still causes stress.

"We need to encourage our Soldiers and their families to not go so fast," said Hoffman. "They all need time. It is not going to be the same as it was when they left. Spouses and children have learned they can handle the everyday things life hands them as well as the occasional emergency, and they can survive that."

Hoffman said after the units returned from Bosnia, there were two main issues that affected many families: the re-establishing of parental control by the Soldier/parent, and the power struggle over household management.

Smaller, but equally important adjustments such as sleep patterns and the returning spouse wanting to drive all the time need to be considered.

"They haven't driven a civilian vehicle on a paved road in 18 months," said Hoffman. "They are going to want to drive every time they get in the vehicle. And they were halfway around the world, in a different time zone. It's going to take a period of



The homecoming from a deployment is a joyous occasion, but what signs should you watch for to know if your loved one or other family members are having trouble adjusting? (Photo by Pvt. Angela Gustavson, 65th PCH)

adjustment for your Soldier to get on the same sleep schedule as the rest of the family."

Because the deployments related to the Global War on Terror are very different than the Bosnia deployment, there will be other things families should be aware of.

"These Soldiers have seen and heard and experienced some things that we will never understand unless we were there with them," said Hoffman. "They are going to want to be with their buddies, with the people they shared those experiences with. They've become very close to their fellow Soldiers. They are going to turn to each other, maybe more than they turn to their families. It will

probably take about a year for them to fully decompress.

"It has to do with group dynamics. When you share experiences such as war, the group dynamics get greatly enhanced," said Hoffman. "A bond exists that we don't understand because we haven't experienced it."

Other common readjustment issues often involve the children of the Soldier.

"There was heartache on the part of the deploying parent, knowing that he or she was leaving his or her children behind," said Hoffman. "The Soldier may become clingy with their children, not wanting to let them

out of their sight, especially after seeing the harsh living conditions that the children in Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan have had to endure. They may become excessively protective."

Depending on the age of the children, there can be a whole gamut of reactions and adjustments that need to take place, with infants, toddlers and teenagers having to make the biggest adjustments.

"There are going to be dads holding their babies for the first time," said Hoffman. "We've had at least 17 babies born to deployed fathers. These babies and many of the toddlers are going to see the returning parent as a stranger, and that will be difficult for a parent who has waited for, and anticipated, the reunion for a long time.

"Teens will also have a period of adjustment to go through," said Hoffman. "They have an authority figure coming back into their lives that hasn't been there for 18 months. Someone they have not had to respond to on a day-to-day basis. The returning parent will also have to adjust to the increased amount of responsibility the teen child has taken on in his or her absence...something the teen may not want to give up, but the parent may want back."

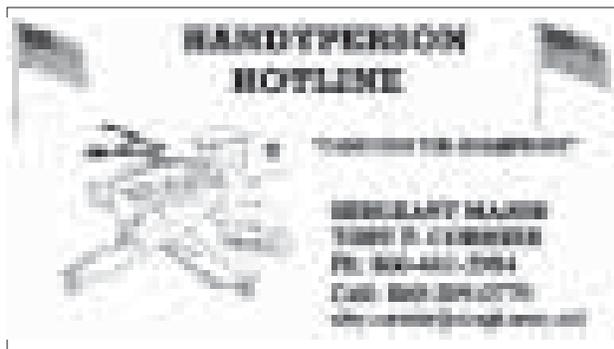
Hoffman recommends that families should start looking for potential readjustment problems at about the 90-day mark. If a Soldier or family is still experiencing problems, they should start to inquire about help. (See the sidebar on *Army One Source, P 53*) They can contact the Family Program at any time.

"They are going to be different when they come back," Hoffman said. "They may not see it, but we will in their attitude, outlook and body language."

Her best advice for families facing reunions is this:

"People expect they have to go back to the same routine," she said. "It's about finding what's going to work now."

Home Depot stores, through volunteer program "Project Home Front," are providing up to \$1,000 for home repairs to families whose military sponsors are deployed. There is an application process at their website:
www.projecthomefront.org.



Handyperson Hotline for families and volunteers

Calling all soldiers and airmen, retirees or spouses. This is your opportunity to stop being a spectator and start doing something to help the Connecticut Army and Air National Guard during these unprecedented times.

Volunteer to donate some of your time and expertise to the CTNG Family Program's Handyperson Center. If you are a tradesman or an all around handyperson or a laborer, the Handyperson Center is looking for you!

E-mail your name, phone number skill, status (active, retired, spouse) and hometown to Sgt. Maj. Toby Cormier at toby.cormier@ct.ngb.army.mil or call (860) 209-0770.

The Handyperson Hotline is designed to reduce the stressors on the families of deployed soldiers and airmen by having everyday household problems diagnosed and repaired or referred to competent businesses at no cost for labor.

The program is also designed to get seasonal chores such as window air conditioners installed/removed, pools

opened/closed, leaves removed, items brought to the dump and so on.

All of this can be performed by fellow Guardsmen, retirees or spouses of Guardsmen who are willing to donate their time and expertise to this program.

Here's how the program works:

A deployed family member calls the Handyperson Hotline with a clogged drain.

The Hotline manager contacts a plumber from the Handyperson Database who will contact the family member and attempt to walk the person through correcting the problem (if possible.)

If not corrected, the Hotline will dispatch a qualified person (fellow Guardsman) to the house to correct the problem.

It is designed to give the deployed family somewhere to turn to keep the home operating smoothly without having to pay to get things done around the house that were normally done by the deployed soldier or airman.

To volunteer or for more information, call (860) 209-0770 today.

Fire experts warn of turkey fryer dangers

TECH. SGT. CARL NORMAN
 AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio (AFP) — No one was injured when an out-of-control turkey fryer recently caused a base housing fire at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, but the blaze resulted in an estimated \$120,000 worth of damage.

Patrick Vega, assistant base fire chief at Hill, deemed the housing unit where the fire originated a total loss. He said the fire caused light to moderate smoke damage to the adjacent duplex unit.

Although no one was injured, the Hill fire prompted Mr. Vega and Air Force Materiel Command safety experts to emphasize the dangers turkey fryers pose.

Turkey fryers are devices, resembling a very large commercial coffee pot, that are filled with oil heated to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and above. People place turkeys in this hot oil to fry the birds.

"People just don't realize the hazards associated with turkey fryers," Mr. Vega said.

"More often than not, people fill the fryers too full and they overflow when the bird is placed inside.

"As a result, the overflowing oil hits the heating flames below and catches the device and items surrounding it on fire," he said. "This melts the hose feeding propane to it which allows raw propane to feed directly into the fire, causing it to spread extremely quickly. People can have a fire that is out of control before they know it."

Mr. Vega said people should try to avoid using these fryers because they are very dangerous. Besides putting in too much oil, Mr. Vega said the devices are simply too unstable.

"They're very easy to tip over," he said. "You don't want that, especially if you have children or pets running around."

Officials from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said since 1998, 75 incidents involving fires, flames or burns associated with turkey fryers have been reported.

John Drengenberg, Underwriters Laboratories consumer affairs manager, said he fears people using turkey fryers are sacrificing safety for good taste.

"Based on our test findings, the fryers used to produce those great-tasting birds are not worth the risks," Mr. Drengenberg said.

"And, as a result of these tests, UL has decided not to certify any turkey fryers with our trusted UL mark."

According to UL experts and Mr. Vega, here are more reasons why using a deep-fryer can be dangerous:

— Partially frozen turkeys placed into the fryer can cause a spillover effect. This may

result in an extensive fire.

— With no thermostat controls, the units also have the potential to overheat the oil to the point of combustion.

— The sides of the cooking pot, lid and pot handles get dangerously hot, posing severe burn hazards.

But for those people who want to use turkey fryers, UL officials and Mr. Vega offer some tips to lessen the danger:

— Always use turkey fryers outdoors a safe distance from buildings and any other material that can burn.

— Never use turkey fryers on wooden decks or in garages.

— Make sure the fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.

— Never leave the fryer unattended. Most units do not have thermostat controls. If people do not watch the fryer carefully, the oil will continue to heat until it catches fire.

— Never let children or pets near the fryer when in use. Even after use, never allow children or pets near the turkey fryer. The oil inside the cooking pot can remain dangerously hot for hours after use.

— To avoid oil spillover, do not overfill the fryer.

— Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when touching pot or lid handles. If possible, wear safety goggles to protect eyes from oil splatter.

— Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades. Oil and water do not mix, and water causes oil to spill over, causing a fire or even an explosion hazard.

— Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire. If the fire is manageable, use an all-purpose fire extinguisher. If the fire increases, immediately call 9-1-1 for help.

— The National Turkey Federation recommends refrigerator thawing and to allow about 24 hours for every 5 pounds of bird thawed in the refrigerator.

Besides never leaving turkey fryers unattended, Mr. Vega recommends turning off the device's heating regulator and the propane tank flow valve when shutting down.

He emphasized that people can never be too careful.

"When oil starts smoking, it's very close to igniting and when that happens the rest is history," he said.

Charles Pyron of Air Force Materiel Command's safety office recommends filling the pot halfway with water and putting the turkey in that.

Once the bird is taken out, people can see how much oil they will need to safely cook. He also recommended using the proper tools to keep from getting burned or accidentally starting a fire.

(Courtesy of AFMC News Service)

Family Assistance Center locations

Family Assistance Centers are set-up in the following armories around the state:

Bristol Armory
61 Center Street, Bristol, CT 06010
(860) 582-1206 Toll Free 866-347-2283
1st Lt. Lynda Hedenberg & Mrs. Michelle McCarty

Waterbury Armory
64 Field Street, Waterbury, CT 06702
(203) 574-2406 Toll Free 866-347-2291
Sgt. Jonathon Duffy & Spec. Tamara Jex

Manchester Armory & AVCRAD
330 Main Street, Manchester, CT 06040
(860) 646-0780 Toll Free 866-347-2286 Capt. Lauri Tinelle

Windsor Locks, AASF
Bradley International ARPT-BLDG 85-152, Route 75, Windsor Locks, CT 06096
(860) 627-7942 Toll Free 866-347-2292
Sgt. Michael Bertoli

103rd FW, Bradley ANG Base
Bldg 8, East Granby, CT 06026
(860) 292-2730 Mrs. Donna Rivera

Newington SASC
555 Willard Avenue, Building 2W, Newington, CT 06111
(860) 878-6723 (860) 878-6724 Toll Free 800-858-2677
Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Spec. Jessica McKenna and Mrs. Marina Sedor

Branford Armory
87 Montowese Street, Branford, CT 06405
(203) 481-3874 Toll Free 866-347-3351 Sgt. 1st Class Cheryl Gilbert

Norwich Armory
38 Stott Avenue, Norwich, CT 06360
(860) 823-1342 Ext. 12 Toll Free 866-347-3357
Mrs. Andrea Lathrop

103rd Air Control Squadron
206 Boston Post Road, Orange, CT 06477
(203) 795-2983 Charlie and Jane Solomon

118th Medical Company
Location to be announced
Sgt. Geanabelle Burmudez (860) 883-6936
Sgt. Elizabeth Crouthamel (860) 883-6935

Volunteers are needed in each facility.
Those wishing to help out can contact Mrs. Kim Hoffman, Family Program Manager
at 1-800-858-2677.

Any family member or loved one of a deployed soldier who has questions about
benefits or deployment issues may also get answers to their question at the following
email address: kim.hoffman@ct.ngb.army.mil

Race Your Favorite Soldier!

ADRIEN OLMSTEAD
PROUD WIFE OF SGT. DIRK OLMSTEAD
141st MEDICAL CO.

You will need: 2 Popsicle sticks, markers, 2 plastic cups, some plastic wrap, water, and a bathtub! DON'T FORGET AN ADULT TO SUPERVISE!

How to play: With your markers, color a picture of yourself on one Popsicle stick and a picture of your favorite soldier on the other stick. Put the sticks to the side.

Now fill each plastic cup 1/2 way with water. Cover each cup with plastic wrap, making a tight cover. Poke each cup with your Popsicle sticks standing out of the tops of the cups. Freeze both cups. Wait one day for the water in the cups to freeze. The next day take each cup and hold it under warm water for 20 seconds. (HAVE AN ADULT SUPERVISE USING THE WARM WATER!) Pull the Popsicle sticks carefully until the ice form comes out of the cups. Put both these ice popsicles into the end of the bathtub and let go! Have races to see which Popsicle person wins first!

The next time you write to your favorite soldier, tell him/her who won the race and challenge him/her to another race at another time! Have Fun!

Kids' Creative Corner

**A MONTHLY FEATURE OF
FUN AND EDUCATIONAL
ACTIVITIES**