

HOW to HELP

MILITARY FAMILIES AS A FAMILY, FRIEND, OR NEIGHBOR

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Did you know?

- As of 2008, there were 56,885 active duty, Reservists and National Guard who reside in Kentucky
- Reservists and National Guards are more frequently experiencing circumstances similar to active duty military families and are under similar strains.
- Support from family members, friends, neighbors, and other community members is vitally important to military families throughout the deployment cycle

INTRODUCTION

Kentucky's military personnel are embedded in many communities across the state. During times of crisis, war and natural disasters, these men and women leave their homes to serve our country and support the assigned mission leaving behind families and jobs. These deployments can last from a few weeks to a year or more.

A deployment means separation from family. Throughout the deployment, military families often turn to friends, family or neighbors when in need. The help needed depends upon each individual family. These needs are presented by a variety of family structures: a single military member taking care of elderly parents; a married military member with four children; or, a single military member with young children. Support can be offered in many forms. Families may need a listening ear, a supportive voicemail message or an extra hand to help clear snow after a storm.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Before deployment:

- Let the soon-to-be deployed service member and family know how and when you could assist them during the deployment.
- Make a concrete offer for a specific type of support such as offering to watch the children once a month or changing the oil on the family's vehicles. These small gestures allow the family to potentially head off a crisis situation through pre-planning.

During deployment:

- Assistance with routine household tasks is always appreciated. Families with young children or elderly parents often find tasks such as mowing, raking leaves or snow removal difficult to arrange or complete in a way that does not put children's safety at risk.
- Send a care package or letter to the deployed military member.
- Offer to be an extra set of hands for the children on an outing such as a trip to the zoo or a visit to a nearby park.
- Be sensitive when discussing personal views on war or the military. Service members deploy regardless of the political landscape.
- Remember, deployments can be long. The family will need your support six months into the deployment just as much as when the military member first deploys.

Post-deployment:

- Do not push the service member to discuss what he or she did or what happened during their deployment. Engage in this discussion only when the military member is ready.
- Let the military member and family know you appreciate the service and sacrifice they have made.
- Allow the family time to be alone. Competing for attention can be counterproductive and stressful.
- Keep in mind, large events with many people could be stressful to the returning service member. Make sure they are comfortable with any celebration plans. Be understanding if they need to leave soon after arrival. The transition back to the civilian world takes time.



DEMOGRAPHICS (2008)

	KY Military Personnel	Army	Navy/Marine	Air Force
Active Duty	41,288	40,679	316	293
Reserve /National Guard	15,597	12,402	1,621	1,574

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Additional Resources

The commitment and support of friends, family and neighbors during deployment is valued and necessary. Building a positive support system allows the military family to know who they can turn to for help should the need arise. Sometimes, this knowledge is enough to help ease the stress the family may experience by creating a sense of empowerment. Positive support systems also help the military member and family reconnect and adjust following separation.

If you do not have a military member in your neighborhood or family, you can still support military families. Volunteer with an organization that provides support for military families (American Red Cross, USO, etc.) or connect with Veteran Service Organizations within your community. Being a part of these organizations with others from across the state and country can help to ease the effects of the sacrifices these service members and their families make every day.

For More Information

- The Military Family Network, www.emilitary.org
- The American Red Cross, www.redcross.org
- America Supports You, www.ourmilitary.mil
- USO, www.uso.org
- National Military Family Association, www.nmfa.org
- Operation Homefront, www.operationhomefront.net

For more information in Kentucky

- The Official Homepage of Fort Knox, KY - <http://www.knox.army.mil>
- Fort Knox Family and Morale Welfare and Recreation, www.knoxmwr.com
- The Official Homepage of Fort Campbell, KY, www.campbell.army.mil
- Lexington VA Med Center, www.lexington.va.gov
- Kentucky Operation: Military Kids, <http://www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/statePOCHome.aspx?state=Kentucky>
- Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, <http://www.dma.ky.gov/default.htm>
- Kentucky National Guard, <http://www.kentuckyguard.com/index.html>
- University of Kentucky Veterans Resource Center, www.uky.edu/veterans



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Important Phone Numbers

- VA Benefits or Claims Information: 1-800-827-1000
- Veterans Life Insurance (Connects to Regional Numbers): 1-800-669-8477
- VA Debt Management Center: 1-800-827-0648
- Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD): 1-800-829-4833
- CHAMPVA: 1-800-733-8387
- Headstones and Markers 1-800-697-6947



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Judy van de Venne, PhD., C.F.L.E.
Extension Specialist for Family and Consumer Sciences

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