

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

MILITARY LIFE DEMANDS: MARITAL QUALITY, DISTANT PARENTING,  
AND CHILD WELL-BEING AMONG DEPLOYED SERVICE MEMBERS

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By  
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Norman, Oklahoma  
2018

MILITARY LIFE DEMANDS: ON MARITAL QUALITY, DISTANT PARENTING,  
AND CHILD WELL-BEING AMONG DEPLOYED SERVICE MEMBERS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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To the women and men in uniform, civil servants, and government contractors, who unselfishly serve this country. More importantly, to their families and children, who serve and sacrificed much of themselves to support the uniformed family member and our military. To the military children in the home front, I am forever grateful for your sacrifices. To my beautiful, courageous, and resilient daughter, Caira – for the military moves you have endured, the changing schools you have experienced, and families and friends left behind, while learning, growing, and building new relationships along the way. You have shown that no matter how demanding life can be in the military, children are resilient and can adjust well to the demands of military life.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to first and foremost acknowledge and thank my committee chair, Dr. Trina Hope, for her never-ending encouragement, support, and patience. I would like to thank the members of my committee for their invaluable time and expertise they have devoted to this dissertation. Thanks to their sound feedback and profound insight, the creation of this dissertation was successful. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Rachel Lipari of Defense Manpower Data Center for providing me with data that made this research possible.

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## **Abstract**

Since the dawn of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), combat deployments have become longer and more frequent. The adjustments that go along with such deployments are a source of stress, not only for service members, but also for children and spouses. In spite of the need to better understand the effects of deployment on military children and families – and to provide suitable and appropriate support for them – rigorous research is limited. This study utilized data from the *2006 Active-Duty Spouse Survey (ADSS)*, a survey of 1,616 parents married to members of the U.S. Armed Forces with dependents 18 years of age or under. This research examined the effects of combat deployment on marital quality, the process of distant parenting, and child sociobehavioral outcomes. The results revealed that the ability to balance work and family life, and frequency of communication and its importance, were notable factors with how spouses perceived the quality of their marriages. In addition, frequency of communication as well as the importance of communication, as processes by which deployed uniformed family members parent from a distance, was significantly correlated with how at-home caregivers manage childcare-related issues. Furthermore, military socioeconomic status was found to be a significant predictor of not only child adjustment problems but also child well-being. Despite the marginal effects of combat deployment on child adjustment problems, the most significant finding of this study was the predictive power of at-home spouse well-being variables – work/life balance and overall stress on marital quality, childcare management and child sociobehavioral outcomes.

# Chapter 1

## 1.1 Introduction

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)<sup>1</sup> have resulted in the most repeated and extended types of deployments<sup>2</sup> in the United States (Cozza, Chun and Polo 2005; Institute of Medicine 2013). The challenges from such deployments and the adjustments that come along with them are a source of stress not only for uniformed family members, but also for their children and spouses (Baker 2008; Cozza et al. 2017). The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have propelled many military families to the breaking point. Marriage and family crises, such as infidelity, divorce, violence, alcoholism, financial difficulties, parental absence, children's misbehaviors, and mental illness have become more common as service members deploy repeatedly and for extended periods (Alvarez 2006; Baker 2008; Institute of Medicine 2013). As such, the demands of military life can strain the dynamics of family life.

Despite the heightened concern about the mental health of service members during and post- OIF and OEF deployments (Hall 2008; McNulty 2010), little is known about the effects of current deployments on marital satisfaction, distant parenting, and children's ability to cope with parental absence. In recent years, as the nature of military life has dramatically changed with the increase in remote tours<sup>3</sup> and higher

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<sup>1</sup> Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF [Operation Iraqi Freedom OIF]) commenced on October 2001 in response to the September 11 terrorists attack; longest sustained conflicts in U.S. history <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS21405.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Defense defines military "deployment" as the movement of armed forces and their logistical support infrastructure around the world; carrying out strategic, tactical, service training, or administrative military mission. (<https://www.defense.gov/>)

<sup>3</sup> Remote tours are defined as military activities outside the service member's home station. (<https://www.defense.gov/>)

operation tempo<sup>4</sup>, increasingly military families are confronted with the challenges of long- and short-term separations (Huebner and Mancini 2005; Millegan et al. 2013; Nicosia et al. 2017). Since 2001, approximately 1.97 million troops have served in OIF/OEF with an average length of 7.5 month-deployment cycle (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2017) and there were 1.92 million troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan by the end of the first quarter in 2009 (Institute of Medicine 2013), locations considered to be hostile zones (McNulty 2010; Spayd and Ricks 2004). These numbers mean that many military families are vulnerable to the unusual strains that are layered onto the pressures experienced by civilian families.

The effects of the current war on service members may impact their parental behavior, and their children's ability to manage separations (Baker 2008) and contribute greatly to a spouse's burden (Lester et al. 2016; Manguno-Mire et al. 2007), all of which can cause problems in maintaining stable family relationships. Earlier studies examined the effect of Operation Desert Storm deployments on children and families (Jensen, Martin, and Watanabe 1996; Jensen and Shaw 1996; Rosen, Teitelbaum, and Westhuis 1993) and explored the impact of reintegration and war-related mental illness on both service members and their families (Medway et al. 1995; Yeatman 1981). Major gaps remain, however, in our understanding of factors shaping military families, in particular the effects of OIF/OEF deployment locations on marital satisfaction, distant parenting, and children's ability to manage parental absence.

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<sup>4</sup> Tempo is defined as "the rate of motion or activity," operation tempo refers to the "rate of military actions or missions." (<https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/>)

## 1.2 Objective of the study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of current deployments on military families, by addressing issues of marriage, parenting, and children's well-being. This dissertation is divided into three major sections: (1) Marriage; (2) Parents; and (3) Children. Within these interrelated and overlapping sections are multiple subsections. In this study, I first examined the effects of deployment to hostile locations<sup>5</sup> on marital quality by looking at how active-duty spouses from all four branches of the United States Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) perceive their marital relationships. Next, I provided a conceptual model of distant parenting. I argue that military parents, like transnational mothers and nonresident/temporary absent fathers, combine childcare and guidance with the demands of their work. Lastly, I describe how deployment of a parent to Iraq or Afghanistan creates additional stress in children, which decreases their ability to cope with parental separations.

Although studies have begun to explore the effects of the current wars on service members, their children, and families (Chandra et al. 2009; Flake et al. 2009; Lara-Cinisomo et al. 2011), none has examined how military parents parent from a distance. One study found that veterans with higher levels of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms are more likely to report lower parenting fulfillment (Samper et al. 2004). Another study revealed that higher levels of numbing and avoidance symptoms adversely affect veterans' satisfaction with the parenting role (Berz et al. 2008). While these studies looked at parenting, they did not, however, address the process of distant

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<sup>5</sup> In this study, "hostile" and "combat" zones, locations, and deployments are used interchangeably – area designated as a war zone where imminent danger is present (<https://www.military.com/benefits/military-pay/special-pay/combat-zone-tax-exclusions.html>).

parenting. These studies can, therefore, only demonstrate how military parents have changed in their parenting after they have returned from their deployments.

This study is important, as it addresses issues of distant parenting. Unlike their civilian counterparts in intact families, military mothers and fathers must redefine their maternal and paternal roles and fulfill traditional caregiving through the care work of their husbands, wives, or other custodial caregivers. The stress that comes with changing family schedules, particularly when a service member's spouse becomes a pseudo-single parent, can be stressful not only to the active-duty member but also to the spouse or parent left behind. As such, it is important to assess the overall stress and mental health of the at-home parent, including how they perceive the deployed service member's ability to balance work priorities with home life.

The deployment of a service member to hostile locations represents a challenge for both the distant and at-home parent. For the deployed or distant parent, maintaining regular or frequent contacts with families back home, particularly with their children, is a challenge (Houston et al. 2013; Petty 2009; Wilson 2010). For instance, some deployed parents may have difficulties staying connected with their family because of the deployment location, where any contact would compromise their safety (Petty 2009). As a result, some children may become less engaged as time goes on with inconsistent and limited interaction or response from the deployed parent (Houston et al. 2013; Petty 2009). The custodial caregiver, therefore, plays an important role in ensuring that the distant or deployed parent stays connected with his or her children – an indirect process of parenting from a distance.



For the parent left behind, the increased family responsibilities and concern for their spouse's safety, can cause sadness, depression, and anxiety (Gewirtz et al. 2011; Green, Nurius, and Lester 2013; Johnson et al. 2007; Savych 2008). According to Chartrand and colleagues (2008), the mental health of the at-home parent is one of the key predictors of children's behavioral outcomes. For instance, custodial parents reporting higher levels of psychological stress are more likely to have children at increased risk for behavioral problems (Chandra et al. 2010; Flake et al. 2009). That is, the mental stress and emotional suffering that the at-home parent endures transfers to their parenting, which in turn affects their children. Therefore, it is imperative that the overall stress level of the parent left behind is taken into consideration.

Studies show that parent-child relationships influence children's future life chances (Parke 1996; Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004) and well-being (Cederbaum et al. 2014). The demands of military life place immense pressure on these parent-child relationships because of recurring physical separation. In other words, children whose parents are constantly leaving are put in a situation where both the parents and children not only have to prepare for separations but also must adjust to reunification. According to Jensen and colleagues (1996), the emotional stress that comes with deployment is associated with children's psychosocial outcomes. For instance, children whose parents are deployed are more likely to socially withdraw from their peers and exhibit higher levels of anxiety than those children whose parents are not deployed.

Some research suggests that when parents are deployed to a war zone, their children may be more likely to experience abuse than children whose parents are not deployed to a war zone (Gibbs et al. 2007; Rentz et al. 2007). Other evidence suggests

rates of child maltreatment and neglect increased during high tempo operations with periods of constant deployment (McCarroll et al. 2008; Taylor et al. 2016). Other studies find dramatic changes in the social well-being of children of deployed parents (Flake et al. 2009; Huebner and Mancini 2005). For example, older siblings increase their responsibilities and demonstrate a sense of maturity in caring for younger siblings, doing more household chores, and bonding more with younger siblings. Nevertheless, older children also perform worse in school and display feelings consistent with symptoms of depression (Huebner and Mancini 2005; Jensen et al. 1996). One study notes that parental deployment is linked to poor academic performance (Nicosia et al. 2017) and lower test scores (Lyle 2006), so while they are becoming more responsible (Knoblach et al. 2015), they are not doing as well in school. It could be that some children, particularly older siblings, are taking on an adult role, temporarily replacing the deployed parent, which in turn jeopardizes their performance at school.

As noted above, much of the research on the effects of deployment on children focused on deployment tempos, those with currently deployed parents, those whose parents have recently deployed and those who were not deployed (Chartrand et al. 2008; Huebner and Mancini 2005; Jensen et al. 1996; Knoblach et al. 2015; Nicosia et al. 2017). This study is important and differs from earlier research because it highlights the effects of deployment, specifically to hostile versus non-hostile locations on children's outcomes.

Several scholars have also ascertained that military workloads – including frequent relocations, recurring separations, and type of occupations, along with other typical military life demands – are related to family outcomes such as family well-

being, adjustments, and attitudes (Baker 2008; Karney and Crown 2007; McNulty 2010), which are in turn tied to marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Burrell et al. 2006; Karney and Trail 2016). The four active-duty branches of the U.S. Armed Forces have specific and varying military functions. Therefore, length and location of deployments may also differ. According to Powers (2011), Army as the main ground force typically deploys for 12 months and more often in combat zones. Navy, on the other hand, as defenders of the seas and with its unique relationship with the U.S. Marine Corps, typically deploys for 7 months (Powers 2011). The Navy and Marine Corps both specialize in seaborne operations (Powers 2011). Lastly, Air Force as the youngest service branch provide air support to ground and naval forces and the nation's air defense (Powers 2011). Air Force typical length of deployment is 4 months (Powers 2011).

As mentioned above, military life demands are related to family well-being and adjustments (Baker 2008; Karney and Crown 2007; McNulty 2010), which in turn are tied to marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Burrell et al. 2006; Karney and Trail 2016). One study found that during high deployment operations marital satisfaction among military couples significantly declined (Riviere et al. 2012), suggesting that constant and lengthy deployments may have further strained the relationships. As mentioned earlier, spouses carry all the household and child rearing responsibilities when their husbands or wives are deployed and stress endured from these added responsibilities transfers into their marriage.

Additionally, many civilian wives express a growing emotional detachment from their husbands after being separated for months and the frustrations about the

length of deployment spills over into their phone conversations (Henderson 2006; Meek et al. 2016). As a result, many of these spouses, both dependents and active-duty members, become dissatisfied with their marriage. The increase in Army divorce rates in 2005 during the peak of deployment operational tempos (Zoroya 2005) also ignited a spark to further examine the effects of deployments on military marriages. Several studies thereafter have described deployments as the most demanding and burdening aspect of military life (Allen et al. 2010/2011; Alvarez 2007; Baker 2008; Knoblach and Theiss 2011; Rosen and Durand 2000).

Despite the widespread research on the effects of deployment on marriage in general, assessment of hostile deployment location, specifically, remains limited. It is important to consider that locations such as Iraq and/or Afghanistan, categorized as hostile zones, may have an especially adverse effect on marital satisfaction. For instance, Henderson (2006) told the story of a young couple who, after the husband's unit redeployed to Iraq, expressed that they have grown distant. The increased risk for injury and death in a hostile zone, coupled with the limited ability to communicate with each other due to the location, can add stress to already strained marriages. One of the significant contributions of this study is that it considers the impact of deployment to hostile zones on military marriages.

### **1.3 Summary of the study**

Deriving from the studies mentioned above, and in an attempt to fill some of the gaps in the prior military literature, this study examined the effects of OIF/OEF deployments on spouses' perceptions of marital quality, distant parenting, and children's well-being. The data used in this study come from the 2006 Survey of

Active-Duty Spouses<sup>6</sup>; a sample of deployed service members in the four active-duty components of the United States Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force). These service members were deployed with the OIF/OEF mission when the data were collected, and the information was gathered from their spouses.

The data set provides rich familial background information that allows for comprehensive analyses of the effects of deployment location on marital quality, the effect of maternal and paternal absence on a child's social behavioral well-being, and the impact of deployment on childcare management, and communication. There are three distinct facets that make this research important and valuable to the existing literature on military families. First, it seeks to provide a better understanding of at-home spouses' perspectives on the quality of their marriages. Most of the literature on deployment and military marriages focuses on divorce trends and service members' mental health pre- and post-deployments (Karney, Loughran, and Polland 2012; McCone and O'Donnell 2006; Miller et al. 2011; Stanley et al. 2010). These studies overlooked the possibility that deployment to combat zones may be affecting the relational health of military couples. I address the shortcomings of these studies by using marital quality data information collected from civilian spouses of deployed military personnel.

Second, this research includes information about deployed fathers and mothers and civilian fathers and mothers. While previous studies posit that children face numerous psychological, social, and behavioral challenges before, during, and after

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<sup>6</sup> 2006 ADSS, the principal source of data for this analysis was the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), which was conducted on behalf of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personal and Readiness (OUSD[P&R]), 1600 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 400, Arlington, VA 22209-2593, <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil>

parental deployment, much of the prior research has focused on male service members with at-home wives (Baker 2008; Berz et al. 2008; Karney and Crown 2007; Samper et al. 2004). Lastly, the data in this analysis contain information from families from the four service branches. This offers a valuable contribution to military family research because it is not limited to one branch of service (e.g., Allen et al. 2010; Karney and Trail 2016; Mansfield et al. 2010; Pincus et al. 2009; Pittman, Kerpelman, and McFayden 2004). The inclusivity of the four active components in the U.S. Armed Forces provides a better understanding of the impact of deployment on military families across branches.

## Chapter 2: Marriage

### 2.1 An overview of military marriages: Trends in marriage and divorce

Many perceive marriage as one of the most important commitments two individuals devoted to each other can make, and an increase in divorce rates in the last second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has intrigued many researches, policymakers, and educators alike about the reasons for marital dissolution and dissatisfaction with marriage. The national divorce rate<sup>7</sup> peaked in 1980 at 22.8 and in 2016 was 16.7 (Hemez 2017). Thus, the divorce rate declined by 26 percent from its peak in 1980 to 2016 (Hemez 2017). An anomalous spike in the divorce rate between 2008-2010 in the civilian sector (Hemez 2017) mirrors the divorce rate in the military (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). A recent report shows that remarriage rate<sup>8</sup> in the U.S. has significantly declined in the last two decades (Wu 2017). The rise in single-parenthood and dual-earner households, the decline of divorce and remarriages, as well as the changing attitudes about marriage have all contributed to the changes in married life, both in civilian and military communities (Clever and D. Segal 2013; Hall 2008; Miller et al. 2011; D. Segal and M. Segal 1993; M. Segal 1986). Unlike civilian marriages, however, military marriages have additional risk factors that make intimate relationships vulnerable.

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<sup>7</sup> The divorce rate is represented as the number of divorces per 1,000 married women aged 15 years and older, according to the National Center for Family and Marriage Research.

<https://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/hemez-divorce-rate-2016-fp-17-24.html>

<sup>8</sup> The remarriage rate is represented as the number per 1,000 previously married individuals (divorced or widowed), according to the National Center for Family and Marriage Research.

<https://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/wu-age-variation-remarriage-rate-1990-2015-fp-17-21.html>

Due to the concerns that surround military families, in particular military marriages, it is important to look at the patterns and trends in military marriages. According to the 2015 profile of military demographics, out of the 1.3 million active-duty members, 54.3 percent of those serving were currently married (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). This is a slight increase from the 2003 profile when 52.9 percent of those serving were currently married (U.S. Department of Defense 2004), which was during the height of deployment tempos following the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts (U.S. Department of Defense 2004). Military demographic profiles also show that the higher the rank, the greater likelihood that the member is to be married, with 51.1 percent of active-duty enlisted personnel and 69.6 percent of active-duty officers married; and of those who are married, 83.8 percent are senior enlisted members and 96.1 percent are general officers (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). Of the total force, 45.3 percent of active-duty female service members are married and 56.0 percent are married male service members. From those who are married, 12.9 percent are female, and 87.1 percent are male (U.S. Department of Defense 2016).

Delineating the marriage rates by branch of service and time, reports show that the active Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force experienced a steady decrease in marriage rates from 1996 to 2002 (Karney and Crown 2007; U.S. Department of Defense 2004). This profile has changed slightly by the year 2015. According to the summary of military demographics, the four active components experienced fluctuating marital rates from 2000 to 2015. The report shows that marriage rates decreased from 53.1 percent in 2000 to 51.0 percent in 2010 and back up to 54.3 percent in 2015 (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). The most intriguing pattern in marriage rates is the



abrupt shifts in 2001 to 2010, with the onset of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan theaters in 2001, and inception of the drawdown around 2010. This captures a more nuanced image of military marriages in the last 15-20 years and reveals significant variability across the sociodemographic profile of the military community (as captured by rank).

The Navy and Marine Corps experienced rather stable marriage rates between 2000 to 2015. While the marital rate for the Navy increased from 48.4 percent in 2000 to 51.4 percent in 2015, and the marital rate for the Marine Corps increased from 43.4 percent in 2000 to 43.8 percent in 2015, there was a slight decrease for the Air Force from 62.0 percent in 2000 to 57.7 percent in 2015. The changes were more dramatic for the Army (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). The Army reported the most significant marital rate increase, from 53.3 percent in 2000 to 58.2 percent in 2015 (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). Overall, increasing military demands, driven by deployment tempo changes, increased mobilization of troops in 2001 to support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the ramping up forces in 2010 as we prepared for a drawdown, placed tremendous strain on one of the most valuable assets of the U.S. Armed Forces, its service members and their families.

As mentioned earlier, before 2001, marriage rates in the four active-duty components of the U.S. Armed Forces were at a steady decrease and from 2001 onward the trend has reversed (Hogan and Seifert 2010; Karney and Crown 2007), with a slight spike in the marital rate in 2010 (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). The sustained tempo of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan has certainly raised concerns of how these deployments are affecting the relational health of military marriages. While

the expected financial benefits of marriage, such as the family separation allowance<sup>9</sup>, may have provided financial incentives for many service members to get married and stay married (see Karney and Crown 2007), it does not, however, explain the relational health of those marriages.

As marriage rates increased since the initiation of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the pattern for marital dissolution also increased. Reports show that there was a steady increase in the divorce rate among the active Army, Navy, and Air Force between 2000 and 2005 which leveled off by 2010 (U.S. Department of Defense 2016), but that rate was similar to those observed in 1996, when high tempo and extended deployments were uncommon (Karney and Crown 2007; U.S. Department of Defense 2004). Marital dissolution rates in the Marines, on the other hand, experienced a steady and slight decrease from 2000 to 2005 compared to the other active branches, but also had increased significantly by the year 2010, and that level looked similar to those of the other active service branches (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). More recent data also show that across the four active-duty components, 5 percent of those serving in 2015 were currently divorced, which is a slight increase from the 2000 rate of 4.3 percent, keeping in mind that the 2015 profile is a 1 percent decrease from the anomalous spike in 2010 (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). Worth noting, however, is the trend in rates of divorce across the active services, revealing that on average, the Army had the highest divorce rate compared to the Navy, Marines, and the Air Force. This pattern endured from the 2000 to 2015 military demographic profiles.

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<sup>9</sup> Information retrieved from the DoD Financial Management Regulations, Volume 7A, Chapter 27: Family Separation Allowance (FSA), “the purpose of FSA is to pay a member for added housing expenses caused by enforced separation from dependents.”  
<http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/documents/fmr/archive/07aarch/07a27.pdf>

As with the changes of the overall military marriage and divorce rates across services, the same variability is also seen within genders and ranks. According to Karney and Crown (2007), rates of marital dissolution were significantly higher for female service members than for male service members, and this trend held true from 1996 to 2005 (see also U.S. Department of Defense 2004). In 2005, about 6.6 percent of married service women in the four active-duty branches ended their marriages, compared to 2.6 percent of married service men who dissolved their marriages (Karney and Crown 2007). Data also show that divorce rate trends continued to rise to a rate of 8 percent in 2011 for female service members, while male service members stabilized at a rate of 2.9 percent the same year (Bushatz 2013; S. Negrusa, B. Negrusa, and Hosek 2016, 2014). By 2013, however, the divorce rate for women in the service had fallen to 7.2 percent while active-duty men remained the same at 2.9 percent. Interestingly, the fluctuating divorce patterns between 2000 and 2015, and the anomalous spike in 2010-2011 parallels that of the marital rates in the four active-duty components. Like the marriage rates, the disparate divorce rates between female and male service members is similar to the level experienced among enlisted personnel and officers.

In terms of rank/paygrade, enlisted members in the active components are more likely to dissolve their marriages than officers. According to the 2015 military demographics report, the percentage of members across the four active service components who divorced in 2015 was higher than in 2000, for both enlisted personnel and officers (S. Negrusa et al. 2014, 2016; U.S. Department of Defense 2016). In 2000, roughly 2.9 percent of married enlisted members divorced, at the same time 1.4 percent of officers ended their marriages. By 2005, divorce rates had increased to 3.5 percent

for enlisted personnel and 1.9 percent for officers (Bushatz 2013; S. Negrusa et al. 2014; U.S. Department of Defense 2016). Similar to the total force profile in divorce rates across the active services, enlisted members also experienced a continuous increase to 4.1 percent in 2010, which is a significant rise from the 2.9 percent rate in 2000. The rate for officers, on the other hand, remained relatively stable and was 1.9 percent in 2010 (U.S. Department of Defense 2016).

Despite the overall decrease in marital dissolution rates, for both enlisted personnel and officers, enlisted members are still more likely to divorce than officers, with divorce rates at 3.4 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively, by the year 2015 (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). This pattern is consistent with what most scholars have ascertained about the link between divorce and socioeconomic status (Aughinbaugh, Robles, and Hugette 2013; Cherlin 1992). Data show that the probability of a marriage dissolving is higher for people with no more than a high school diploma than for those with a Bachelor's degree or higher (Aughinbaugh et al. 2013; S. Negrusa et al. 2014, 2016; Stevenson and Wolfers 2007). Respondents with a higher ranking deployed spouse also reported higher marital quality than their lower ranking counterparts and these couples were less likely to dissolve their marriages (Booth, Segal, and Bell 2007).

According to Booth and colleagues (2007), officers' paygrade and rank reflect a family's opportunity structure and available resources. The economic gains that often come with having higher education, is one of the predictors for staying married (Burgess, Propper, and Aassve 2003; Kennedy and Ruggles 2014). In other words, higher earning capacity decreases the probability of divorce. With the studies mentioned above, it is not surprising to see the disparate divorce rates between enlisted

personnel and officers, given that officers earn more and have higher educational attainment than most enlisted members. Socioeconomic indicators, such as education and income, and in this case, rank and paygrade, are some of the strongest predictors of marital dissolution (Burgess et al. 2003; Cherlin 1992; S. Negrusa et al. 2014, 2016) for military and civilian marriages alike. That is, the higher one's educational attainment and thus income, congruently the higher the rank and paygrade, and the greater the likelihood that the marriage will remain intact and the less likely it is to end in divorce (Burgess et al. 2003; Becker 1991; Cherlin 1992; S. Negrusa et al. 2014, 2016).

Marital and divorce patterns between military paygrade and rank remain evident when data are broken down by average age of married enlisted personnel and officers and were considered in the analysis. According to the 2015 demographic profile, the average age of married enlisted personnel is lowest for Marine Corps at 27.8 years, followed by Navy at 30.5 years, Air Force at 30.7 years, and Army at 30.8 years. As expected, the average age of married officers is higher than their enlisted counterpart at 35.7 years for Marine Corps, 36.1 years for Air Force, followed by Army at 37.1 years and Navy at 37.8 years (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). The probability of a marriage ending in divorce is greater when educational attainment, income, paygrade, and rank are lower, as are marriages that begin at younger ages. Certainly, age is factor, given that enlisted members are more likely to marry at a younger age than officers, partly explaining the higher divorce rate among enlisted personnel.

Despite the widespread assumption of the adverse effects of deployments on the relational health of military marriages, empirical evidence remains inconsistent and limited. For instance, as divorce rates increased, marital rates also increased and the

pattern by which divorce and marriage rates increase are inconsistent with deployment tempos (see Karney and Crown 2007; S. Negrusa et al. 2014). Some evidence suggests that deployment provides substantial marital benefits and that length of deployment does not lead to subsequent risk of marital dissolution (Karney and Crown 2010). On the contrary, Negrusa and colleagues (2014) found that as deployment length increased, so did the risk of divorce. These findings highlight the need to reassess how we interpret marital status as it relates to the effects of deployment on marriages. Couples choose to stay or leave their marriages for many reasons that are independent of the quality of their marriages. Deployment tempo alone may be a poor indicator of the effects deployment has on the relational health of military marriages.

## **2.2 Relational health of military marriages: Marital stability, satisfaction, and quality**

An overview of military marriages and the inconsistencies in the literature about the effects of deployment on the relational health of military marriages, in general, makes it clear that further assessment is warranted. To bridge the gap in the literature, it is important to assess the dyadic processes with which couples deal with deployments and how they relate to marital satisfaction and relationship quality. Earlier marital researchers found that couples who exchanged more positive behaviors reported that they were more satisfied with their marriages and perceived that they had stronger and more stable relationships than did distressed couples (i.e., Gottman 1979; Rausch 1974; Weiss, Hops, and Patterson 1973). Earlier studies also show that marital satisfaction is not only directly linked to couples' physical interaction (Gottman 1979; Rausch 1974; Weiss et al. 1973), but also to psychological and emotional relations (Gottman 1994).

More recent studies on marital research extend beyond dyadic interactions to external contextual influences (Finkel 2017; Gottman and Silver 2015; Schumm, Bell, and Gade 2000). This perspective looks specifically at the context in which marriages take place and develop, such as within the context of military-life demands. Most of the current research on military marriages and families typically relates to deployment and the fact that how couples deal with deployment directly relates to the relational quality of their marriages and marital satisfaction (McLeland, Sutton, and Schumm 2008; Rosen et al. 1995; Wood, Scarville, and Gavino 1995). Studies show that a couple's commitment level (McLeland et al. 2008; Schumm et al. 2000; Wood et al. 1995) and perceived stress levels (Padden, Connors, and Agazio 2011) are associated with the quality and stability of their marriage before, during, and after deployment. Therefore, looking at the stress levels of the at-home spouse during deployment may shed light on the quality and stability of their marriage.

According to Schumm and colleagues (2000), military couples' self-reported level of marital satisfaction during a six-month deployment predicted a moderate decline in marital satisfaction but no significant changes in marital quality over the long-term. Marital satisfaction differs from marital quality in that marital quality is described as the evaluation of one's marriage, such as "we have a good marriage" or "we have a stable marriage" (Norton 1983; Schumm et al. 2000), while marital satisfaction is described as the assessment of one's level of satisfaction with their marital relationship, such as "I am happy or satisfied with my marriage" (Schumm et al. 2000; see also Asbury and Martin 2011). Interestingly, vulnerable couples who reported unstable marital relations prior to deployment and thus were significantly low

on marital stability, also reported that the quality of their marital relations and level of satisfaction with their marriage were low.

Overall, marital quality and marital satisfaction during deployment largely depended on the level of marital stability before deployment. Keep in mind, however, that while the Schumm study addressed some of the questions regarding the effects of deployment on marital quality and marital satisfaction, it did not address the issues of combat deployments. The study was primarily about the effects of peacekeeping deployment on marital quality, satisfaction, and stability. Rosen and colleagues (1995) revealed that couples that had marital problems prior to deployment were more likely to distance themselves during and after deployment. Rosen (1995) described unresolved trust issues between the deployed service member and at-home spouse, soldier's resentment regarding the spouse's new friends, and the feeling of familial exclusion as some of the major factors for declining marital satisfaction before, during, and after deployment. In addition, Rosen (1995) found that couples with high marital satisfaction before deployment had greater likelihood of adjusting well to the separation (see also Karney and Crown 2007; Karney and Trail 2016). In summary, the Rosen (1995) study shows that marital stability has a primary effect on marital satisfaction and deployment has an exacerbating effect if the marriage was unstable prior to deployment.

Ethnographic research reveals that the effects of deployment on marital satisfaction were mitigated by the at-home spouse's employment, strong social support system, and participation in family support group activities (Wood et al. 1995). The study indicated that the degree to which spouses adjusted to the separation and reunion were primarily associated with marital satisfaction. How satisfied the women were with



their marriage depended, however, on the stability and bond of their social support network (i.e., families, friends, support groups, etc.) and labor-market participation.

The studies discussed above demonstrate that how a couple deals with deployment relates directly to marital stability, satisfaction, and at times relationship quality prior to deployment. The studies, however, have a few common shortcomings. First, the studies were mostly limited to the active Army component and thus limiting the assessment to only one branch. Therefore, without a comparison group, the studies could not indicate, for example, whether the effects of deployment on marital satisfaction are similar for the rest of the active-duty branches (i.e., Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps). Additionally, because the studies were mostly ethnographic in nature, their generalizability is limited, even for the Army component. Furthermore, the studies were limited to peacekeeping deployments and Operation Desert Storm/Shield theaters. While there are several marital statistics that include current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, studies that include Operations Iraqi/Enduring Freedom deployments remain sparse. More importantly, the studies mentioned above only demonstrated the effects of deployment on marital stability and satisfaction within low tempo and brief deployments. Without the inclusion of specific deployment locales (i.e., hostile and non-hostile zones) during Operation Iraqi/Enduring Freedom deployments, the studies could not demonstrate whether the extent of the effects are similar for couples experiencing high tempo and extended deployments.

Research on military marriages, as described above, has addressed myriad marital outcomes, most often focusing on marital dissolution, stability, satisfaction, and at times marital quality, just to name a few (Karney and Bradbury 1995; Karney and

Trail 2016; Lundquist and Xu 2014; Riviere, Merrill, and Clarke-Walper 2017; Riviere et al. 2012) While these relational well-being<sup>10</sup> terms offer a greater understanding of the complexity of military marriages, focusing on marital quality may address certain limitations inherent in these previous studies. As I noted earlier, marital dissolution is not the only indicator of relational health. Marital stability, on the one hand, implies that the relationship is enduring, even if the relationship is experiencing conflict or stress, which is misleading when it comes to the assessment of the relational health of military marriages (see Karney and Bradbury 1999; Karney and Crown 2007). Marital satisfaction, while a better indicator of marital outcomes, is bound to the contextual meaning of quality.

There is considerable research on civilian and military marriages that shows marital satisfaction is correlated with emotional and physical health (Karney and Bradbury 1997; Karney and Trail 2016; Kelly and Conley 1987; Kiecolt-Glaser and Newton 2001; McLeland et al. 2008; Riviere et al. 2017; Yucel 2017) and higher rates of productivity and lower rates of stress (Germeys and De Gieter 2017; Martin et al. 2000). Studies also show that marital satisfaction extends beyond the dyadic intimate relationship to children's well-being as well (Booth et al. 2008; Knopp et al. 2016). In other words, it is the quality of the relationship that correlates with life satisfaction, more so than any other marital outcome that has been examined. Thus, it is important to examine marital quality because it encompasses a broader context of the relational

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<sup>10</sup> Relational well-being is defined as “the relationships and connections we have and how we interact with others. Our relationships can offer support during difficult times. It involves building healthy, nurturing and supportive relationships as well as fostering a genuine connection with those around you – stability, satisfaction, quality, etc.” <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/wellness/social/#.VwwWH7n2aJI>

health of military marriages. This study includes comparable variables and self-reported marital quality data from the four active components of the U.S. Armed Forces.

It is also important to look at specific elements of military service, including the stresses of deployment locations (i.e., hostile and non-hostile zones). Some quantitative and qualitative studies have described the different stages of deployment (preparation, separation, and reintegration) as associated with the strains and demands on military couples (Padden et al. 2011; Rosen, Durand, and Martin 2000; Rosen et al. 1995; Wood et al. 1995). However, despite the thoroughness of these studies, evidence that these demands and stresses are directly linked to marital quality remains sparse.

### **2.3 The work-life balancing act: Family stress theory and effects of deployment on marriage**

Segal (1986) posits that the normative constraints of military life coupled with work demands such as physical separations (i.e., deployment) and frequent relocations may lead to various negative outcomes in marriage. These specific military stressors, as proponents of family stress theory suggest, are elements of the military that are particularly taxing to the relational health of military marriages. Family stress theory helps us understand the process by which families endure and survive specific stressors, thus affecting their level of functioning (see Hill 1949; McCubbin and McCubbin 1989). Several studies on stress and family have emerged from Hill's (1949) original work on family crisis theory.

According to family crisis theory, the interaction between stressors, family resources, and perception of such stressors will define how a family will respond to

stressful events or crises. In other words, if the family has the appropriate resources – whether they be financial, emotional strength, or social adeptness – to address such events or stressors, the family will either overcome the crises and thus become resilient and more cohesive or be overwhelmed by the stressful events and consequently grow apart and dissolve. McCubbin (1989) expounded on Hill’s crisis theory and posits that families that are unable to cope with life stressors, be they major or minor, will eventually experience the compounding effects of such stressors and thus further reduce the family’s ability to cope and function. From this perspective, any disruption from the normalcy of family life, particularly marriages, when compounded with military experience, will profoundly affect marital outcomes.

One of the most important facets of military culture is mission readiness (Baker 2008). It dictates that service members are committed to their military duties and when duty calls they must be ready to successfully undertake their mission. The unrelenting conflicts in the Iraq and Afghanistan theaters has resulted in extended and repeated deployments. The separation of service members from their families adds stress to an already demanding military life. As Alvarez (2007) reports, many active-duty spouses express that military deployments have a way of disrupting family life, creating more stress on the family, therefore leaving marriages vulnerable to dissolution. When couples are under stress, not only do they have to deal with daily life stressors and maintaining relationship cohesiveness, but their ability to communicate effectively suffers and their time for intimacy lessens (Story and Repetti 2006).

Concerns about the impact of military life demands on family outcomes, in particular married life, have been linked to two major issues. Based on family stress

theories, repeated separations have shown to be related to how at-home spouses perceive the quality of their marriage (Baker 2008; Hall 2008; Karney and Trail 2016; McCubbin 1989; Petty 2009). That is, the frequent separations of service members from their families disrupt family dynamics, specifically in terms of spouses' changing roles and responsibilities, household routines, and childcare (Baker 2008; Knopp et al. 2016; Hall 2008; Petty 2009). The perpetual adjustments spouses make in order to maintain the household while trying to keep their relationship intact burdens the relational quality of the marriage. Burrell and colleagues (2006) found that Army spouses who experienced periodic separations due to their husbands' deployment reported negative effects on marital satisfaction. Deployments may hinder spouses' efforts to maintain their relationships by minimizing opportunities for intimacy, challenging ways to communicate, and preventing effective ways to solve problems that arise in many marriages (i.e., financial difficulties, childcare issues, household chores, etc.). It is not a surprise then that these factors may lead to negative outcomes in marriages.

Secondly, research also shows that combat exposure is related to subsequent adverse marital outcomes (Gimbel and Booth 1994; Karney and Crown 2007; Riviere et al. 2012; Rosen et al. 1995). According to Gimbel and Booth (1994), exposure to combat deployment causes post-traumatic stress symptoms and anti-social behaviors that increase the likelihood for divorce, with anti-social behavior having a direct effect on the relational health of military marriages. While the Gimbel and Booth (1994) study focused on the marital relations of Vietnam War veterans and their spouses, there is much to explore about the relationship between deployments to combat or hostile

zones and marital health under the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. A related study has examined the marriages of former prisoners of war (POWs), a study worth noting because POW trauma shares symptoms common to those who have been exposed to combat (Cohan, Cole, and Davila 2005). The study shows that those who had been POWs had higher rates of marital dissolution and were more likely to be dissatisfied with their marriages compared to those who were not captured.

Several studies have also systematically described and identified the stresses within each stage of the deployment cycle as they relate to marital outcomes (Rosen et al. 2000; Rosen et al. 1995; Schumm et al. 2000). According to Schumm and colleagues (2000), nearly all soldiers in their study experienced diminished level of marital satisfaction while they were deployed, but the most dramatic effects were seen from couples who felt that the quality of their marriage was on the decline prior to deployment. The compounding effects of deployment exacerbated already strained relationships for many of these couples, causing some to further distance themselves during and after their spouses' return from deployment. Couples who felt a strong sense of commitment and were highly satisfied with their marriage before deployment, however, had a greater chance of adjusting well to the separation and staying together (Rosen et al. 1995). Married couples under stress, in general, tend to see their relationships more negatively (Karney, Story, and Bradbury 2005) and the quality of their marriages tend to suffer more (Burrell et al. 2006) than couples whose marriages are relatively free of stress.

While the demands of military life place many marriages at increased risk for declining relational quality and dissolution, there are also a host of variables that affect

military marriages separate from the stresses that come with military duty (Karney and Crown 2007, Pittman et al. 2004). Research on families suggests that variables such as age, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status have an effect on marital outcomes (Casper and Bianchi 2002) and the effects of these variables also extend to military families (Baker 2008; Karney and Crown 2007; Wiens and Boss 2006). For instance, service members who join the military right after high school, not only are more likely to marry younger and have children sooner than their civilian counterparts, but they are also least likely to be college educated (Pittman et al. 2004; Wiens and Boss 2006). These variables, as many family scholars have postulated, are correlated with increased risk for marital dissolution (Amato et al. 2008; Casper and Bianchi 2002). Additionally, these young families, in general, tend to be inexperienced in dealing with major life stressors, which can be challenging when such stressors are compounded with military-life demands, specifically deployments.

Although the military demands much from its members and their families, it is also important to note that many military families show resilience and strength (Strong and Weiss 2017); and many service members are able to effectively balance work and home life (Hammer et al. 2006; Wiens and Boss 2006). The ability to balance personal and work life effectively can serve as a protective factor that safeguards families from the stresses imposed by the military experience. According to Pittman and colleagues (1994), Army wives who felt that their husbands were able to balance military and home life, irrelevant of the number of hours they spent at work, were satisfied and content with their relationship. Spouses that expected and accepted the demands of the military on their husbands had a greater chance of adjusting well to military life and

were more likely to maintain their satisfaction with the marriage. Additionally, soldiers and at-home spouses who perceived more support from the commander and received more support from their home unit, respectively, were more likely to cope with the separation (Pittman 1994).

Reflecting on the studies mentioned above shows that military life has a profound effect on the relational health of military marriages. Based on family stress theories, evaluating the effects of combat deployment on the relational quality of military marriages will provide a greater understanding of the compounding effects of the military experience. Likewise, deployment to hostile zones may affect other marital outcomes besides divorce. Considering evaluations of marital quality, not just whether the marriage remains intact or not, may provide significant information in developing programs and policies that support military families. Additionally, most of the studies mentioned above are based on the marital climate in the United States Army. Therefore, it is important to include data from the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force in determining whether the effects of deployment locales are similar across the active components in the U.S. Armed Forces. Family stress theories suggest that deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan, locations considered as hostile zones, may create further stress on marriages and that couples might perceive the quality of their relationships as poor during and/or after deployment.



## Chapter 3: Parenthood

### 3.1 Military parenting

A major part of being in the military is the notion of “readiness<sup>11</sup>,” as it takes a family, a unit, and a community to defend a nation (Hall 2008). Mission readiness requires not only full devotion of service members but also the commitment of family members to military service. In other words, family readiness is an integral part of mission readiness. What this means to military families is that parents must adapt, adjust, and acclimate to the demands of military lifestyle. In addition, dramatic social changes in family life, such as the rise of women’s participation in the labor market, dual-income families, and single parenthood, goes beyond civilian life but also extends to military life (Baker 2008; Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie 2006; Hall 2008; Hattery 2001; Pew Research Center 2015). These societal trends have contributed to changes in family functioning, and consequently parenting, among those serving in the military.

Ongoing global conflicts in the last few decades have led to increased attention on the nation’s armed forces and consequently the well-being of military families (Baker 2008; Hall 2008). The growing concern for families, rather than for service members alone, has created a military culture that encompasses society-wide changes in the family, including the cultural shifts in the image of fatherhood and motherhood (Hall 2008; Martin and McClure 2000). Additionally, the growing number of parents in the military since the change to an all-volunteer force in the 1970s has contributed to the rising number of children experiencing recurring separations from their parents

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<sup>11</sup> According to the Office of the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, military “readiness” means the state of being fully prepared to execute military core functions and ability to perform assigned missions. (<http://prhome.defense.gov/Readiness/>)

(National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse 2007). Unlike most civilian occupations, military duties entail lengthy and extended parental separations, coupled with the risks of parental injury and death, which compounds the stresses endured by military children (Baker 2008; Hall 2008). An analysis of the process by which deployed fathers define, fulfill, and maintain their roles as fathers, not only necessitates a comprehension of the unique culture of the military, but also requires an understanding of the conceptualization of fatherhood.

Women, particularly mothers in the military, have always had it tough. Many of these women feel a sense of guilt when they leave their children behind, rather than a feeling of duty typically felt by most men (Hall 2008). For many military mothers, motherhood must be redefined to accommodate their demanding military duties (Alvarez 2009; Bowling and Sherman 2008; Goodman et al. 2009). To fully comprehend the sociocultural context of parenthood and the parenting experience in the military, it is important to understand the changing meanings of fatherhood and motherhood.

Guided by the broader sociology of family literature, the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, and the sociocultural structure of the military within which military families exist, I examined the impact of military service on parenting and discuss how military fathers and mothers parent from a distance. The proposed theoretical model suggests that the effects of distant parenting on child social behavioral outcomes may follow an indirect pathway involving frequency of communication between the deployed service member (distant parent) and the at-home spouse (custodial caregiver). Frequency of communication may not have a direct effect on the

at-home spouse's childcare/child schedule management, but regular contact, assuming positive interactions are taking place, indirectly affect distant parenting through the at-home spouse's reporting of fewer problems with finding child care and managing child schedules.

The following sections of this chapter are organized around two major concepts: fatherhood and motherhood. In the *Fatherhood* section, I first discuss the current meaning of "new fatherhood." Discussing the concept of "new fatherhood" allows for a better understanding of how military fathers try to efficaciously fulfill their dual roles as a committed service member and a dedicated father. I examine the conflicting demands of military service and home life based on the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism – with an emphasis on military fathers' attempts to fulfill the "good father" role. Finally, I discuss the paradoxical dilemmas of fathering away from home and examine the challenges experienced by deployed fathers, particularly childcare concerns, highlighting the importance of communication with the at-home caregivers as a method of fathering from a distance.

In the *Motherhood* section, I first discuss the notion of "intensive mothering" notably labeled by Hays (1996), as the cultural contradiction of motherhood. Discussing the notion of "intensive mothering" provides a helpful framework for studying the dilemmas faced by military mothers. Through the symbolic interactionist lens, I assessed the connection between the lives of transnational mothers and military mothers, with an emphasis on distant mothering. Both transnational and military mothers struggle to find balance between the competing demands of their work and family. Lastly, I discuss the struggles, in particular child-related concerns, confronted

by deployed mothers, stressing the importance of contacts with the at-home caregiver as the process through which deployed mothers are mothering from a distance.

### **3.2 Military fathers: New fatherhood, theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, and the meaning of fathering for service members**

While there has been an increase in the number of women in the military, the military remains significantly male-dominated; roughly 85 percent of the armed forces are men and about 44 percent are fathers (U.S. Department of Defense 2016). During the 1950s, fatherhood was a mere extension of the roles fathers played as the breadwinner and the economic supporter of the family (Day et al. 2005). In that time, father involvement was often based on the material and monetary contribution fathers provided to their families (Casper and Bianchi 2002; Day et al. 2005). A cultural shift in the conceptualization of fatherhood in the last few decades has enhanced and expanded the roles of fathers in the family (Cabrera et al. 2000). Fathers today are expected to be more directly involved in childrearing, including engaging in play and companionship activities (Yeung et al. 2001), as well as nurturing and caregiving activities (Cabrera et al. 2000; Pleck 2010). The focus has shifted from an almost exclusive focus on financial support to include physical and emotional support (Day et al. 2005), especially the nurturing aspects of father involvement.

The conceptualization of father involvement extends beyond visible material contribution and observable behavioral involvement (Lamb and Tamis-LeMonda 2004); it has come to entail the cognitive and affective aspects of care-giving (Willerton et al. 2011). The notion of new fatherhood involves father-child interactions that are positive and intensive in nature, engaging in activities that stimulate cognitive development and

arranging services that promote community connection, and thus social development (Maurer and Pleck 2006; Pleck 2010/2007). New fatherhood also requires that fathers be responsive to the emotional needs of their children, showing love and affection, expressing appreciation and adoration, and being involved in their children's social life (Pleck 2010; Walsh et al. 2014; Willerton et al. 2011). Like civilian fathers, military fathers stress the importance of being a good role model, emotionally bonded, and physically present for their children (Hall 2008; Walsh et al. 2014). However, the unique culture of military life makes fathering particularly challenging for many service members.

This research is guided by the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, which states that within the sociocultural context, social processes and experiences inform daily life and guide interactions between people (Blumer 1969). Through these social interactions people acquire meanings for specific roles and self-identities (Stryker and Burke 2000). Specifically, a father's perspectives and expectations inform his day-to-day interactions with his child, and he will interpret these father-child relations based on his experiences in such exchanges. For instance, social expectations prescribe that "good" fathers not only should financially provide for their families, but they should also be physically present in their children's lives. These social expectations are challenging for military fathers by "making *good* fathering a lose-lose proposition" (Novack 2011:1). While some civilian men have the option to spend more time at home with their families or to spend longer hours at work to progress at their careers, service members do not have the luxury of such options. Military fathers must redefine the notion of fatherhood to fulfill their fatherly roles while cultivating successful careers.

The symbolic interaction theory provides an insight into how military fathers define their roles and form their identities as they negotiate the context of their work and family. Through social interaction, people play specific roles based on their salient identities as dictated by social norms and expectations (DeGarmo 2010; Pasley, Petren, and Fish 2014; Stryker and Burke 2000; White and Klein 2008). Coalesced with societal definitions, personal narratives, and belief, fatherhood roles and identities are defined and formed through social interactions with children, family, and community. As military fathers interact with their families, friends, and other service members, their sense of identity and roles as fathers may be contested or supported. Service members construct aspects of their father role, develop their father identity within the family and military context, and enact behaviors that enhance and foster positive relationships with their children (Walsh et al. 2014; Wilson 2010).

Military fathers today express the desire to be active participants in their children's day-to-day activities (Walsh et al. 2014; Wilson 2010). However, with significant acceleration in typical deployment rotations due to high operational tempo, military fathers are compelled to balance the desire to be physically and socially engaged in their children's lives with the potential extra income earned from deployment (Lincoln, Swift, and Shorteno-Fraser 2008). With the potential income earned, military fathers can ensure that extra-curricular activities are supported and specific services are arranged for their children while they are deployed. In essence, service members take advantage of the extra income earned as a way to provide for their children when they are unable to be there for them physically. In short, military

fathers acquire meanings for their roles as a service member and a father through interactions with their family and within the context of the military.

Many fathers, regardless if they are serving in the military or are civilians, express the desire to spend quality time with their children, whether it is through playing as means of paternal engagement or providing basic care activities, such as feeding (Cabrera et al. 2000). Studies show father involvement has significantly increased and that the quality of such father-child interactions has improved as well (Hook and Wolfe 2011; McGill 2014; Pasley et al. 2014). Fathers who foster healthy relationships with their children are more likely to have well-adjusted and emotionally secure children (Pasley et al. 2014; White and Klein 2008; Lamb 2004; Yeung et al. 2001). Likewise, fathers who engage in more co-parenting practices not only alleviate the necessity of mothers taking on most of the caregiving duties, but also enhance a host of positive child and adolescent socio-behavioral outcomes (Marsiglio et al. 2000; Lamb 2000). In other words, direct father involvement has a profound influence on the well-being of the family, but fathers who repeatedly experience family disruptions due to military duties face a challenge of balancing their roles and identities as a devoted father and a committed service member.

### **3.3 Temporary-absent (deployed) fathers: Paradoxical dilemmas of fathering away from home and staying connected with at-home caregivers and children**

The effects of father absence on child development and family well-being are one of the areas that is most studied in military family literature (Baker 2008; Gewirtz and Youssef 2016; Hall 2008; National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse 2007; Pexton, Farrants, and Yule 2017; Walsh et al. 2014). The vital involvement of the U.S.

Armed Forces in the current global conflicts, with its seemingly never-ending need for service members deploying, make military children vulnerable to a host of psychosocial behavioral problems (Baker 2008; Lincoln, et al. 2008; Pexton et al. 2017).

Additionally, since the U.S. Armed Forces remains a male-dominated institution, paternal absences will continue to be common occurrences in the lives of military children. Studies show that residential status (i.e., marital and custody status) directly affect parental involvement because they provide access and time for socialization and activities with children (Cozza et al. 2005; Townsend 2002; Walsh et al. 2014).

However, when residential status is an issue, as is the case with non-residential fathers, father involvement and the desire to be a “good” father becomes complicated.

A study conducted by King and Sobolewski (2006) shows that among non-residential fathers, high levels of responsive fathering identity and quality father-child relationship are associated with fewer externalizing and internalizing behaviors among children. The study assessed non-residential father-child relationships with mother-child relationships and concluded that even if children have weak ties to mothers, those who have strong ties to non-residential fathers display fewer internalizing behaviors (King and Sobolewski 2006). Fathers’ availability for interaction, by being accessible to the child, whether direct or indirect interaction is taking place, is the most significant predictor of the child’s behavioral outcome (King 1994; King and Sobolewski 2006; Sobolewski and King 2005; Walsh et al. 2014). For military fathers, particularly deployed fathers, such interactions can be achieved directly through frequent communications with children and indirectly through spouses or partners, and members of the extended family – making sure that their children are being taken care of back



home. In other words, fathering roles, like mothering roles, are fulfilled by ensuring that their children are taken care of, financially or physically, by arranging resources to be available for their children.

According to Petty (2009) staying connected with families back home gives deployed fathers the perception that they are good parents. Across the spatial distance between their deployed location and home, deployed fathers can provide not only indirect assistance to the at-home spouse, but more importantly give advice and provide guidance to their children. Fathers' involvement in caregiving that is contingent upon their wives may be perceived by their wives and others as good fathering (Coltrane et al. 2004; Sobolewski and King 2005; Townsend 2002; Yeung et al. 2001). Although the father is physically absent, the frequent contacts they have with their families back home, in some ways substitute for the normative definition of the father roles. For many military fathers, to remain a part of the family while deployed requires frequent communication with the at-home parent. Recording the father's voice or a video of the father reading a book, while the at-home mother is turning the page when reading to the child, fosters emotional connection between the father and his child (Barr 2011; see also Houston et al. 2013). This activity is not possible, however, without the assistance of the custodial parent facilitating the activity and maintaining communication with the deployed father.

Child-related issues can have an immense influence on military readiness (Zellman et al. 2009), particularly if parents are having difficulty reporting to work and fulfilling military duties due to childcare issues. Constant communication between the deployed father and at-home spouse may ease any problems regarding childcare issues.

Specifically, deployed fathers can act as a conduit for resources and family support services that at-home spouses may not know about. For instance, there are programs that offer no-cost childcare support for stressed or busy parents such as “Give Parents A Break”, and extended childcare in family homes during the evening and weekend, to ease the work loads of at-home parents (Miller et al. 2010; see also Dion 2018). Deployed service members are typically informed of these free child-related services prior to, during, and post deployment. Oftentimes at-home spouses are not aware of the services accessible to them. Therefore, the communication the custodial parent has with the deployed member becomes the medium through which they can be informed of services available to them. Specific family situations, such as childcare concerns, particularly during periods of deployment, can create greater barriers to involved fathering. Frequent communication with the at-home spouse not only works as an extension of fathering from a distance, but also works as a medium for information and referral.

The relationship between mothers’ and fathers’ extended families also fosters deployed fathers’ further involvement. Particularly important is the quality of relationship the mother has with the deployed fathers’ parents, in that they can jointly encourage fathers’ motivation to be involved with their children (Petty 2009). According to Petty (2009), it takes great effort from mothers and extended kin to maintain connections with a deployed father; and that their efforts are of great importance to military children because they help children to be emotionally bonded with their temporarily-absent fathers. In other words, at-home parents and extended kin pull deployed fathers into involved parenting, whether direct or indirect interaction is

happening. This is consistent with previous work that suggest mothers help facilitate nonresident fathers' into parenting (i.e., Harris and Ryan 2004; Hawkins, Amato, and King 2006). Townsend (2002) posits that the emotional closeness married fathers have with their children depended on the presence and full-time parenting of their wives, also suggesting that mothers act as a conduit between fathers and their children. The parallels between deployed fathers' and nonresident fathers' parenting are quite apparent in many ways.

Parenting for both custodial and deployed parents is a significant issue to consider with regards to the effects of parental deployment on children. Recent studies indicate that stress from parenting is the most significant predictor of children's psychosocial functioning (Green et al. 2013; Houston et al. 2013; Meek et al. 2016; Ternus 2007). For instance, children whose mothers have an elevated level of stress since their fathers' deployment report spending less time with their at-home mother and report less satisfaction with the mother-child relationship (Green et al. 2013; Huebner and Mancini 2005; Huebner et al. 2009). Other military family literature also suggests that negative portrayal of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by the media and the declining societal support for the wars is also a significant source of stress for military families (Hall 2008; Ternus 2009). Thus, this depressing social environment may influence custodial mothers' parenting, which in turn affects how children deal with paternal absence. It is important to assess the well-being of the at-home spouse because of the crucial role they play as the conduit between the deployed member with their child.

Earlier studies of Vietnam combat veteran fathers reveal that children whose fathers served in Vietnam were at increased risk for internalized problems of anxiety, depression, and tension, and poorer father-child relations compared to children whose fathers did not serve in Vietnam (Dansby and Marinelli 1999). The fathers' combat experiences severely affected their family life, which in turn may have transferred into their parenting. It has been long documented that parents' mental state, which may be affected by traumatic experiences due to military combats, can negatively impact parenting skills (de Burgh et al. 2011; Downey and Coyne 1990; Flake et al. 2009; Powers, Hauser, and Kilner 1989), which in turn can adversely affect children's behavioral outcomes. Fathering away from home for service members entails a redefinition of their father roles and fatherhood identity. This means reliance on the assistance of spouses left behind or other custodial caregivers.

Another source of stress for military families is in adjusting to changes in responsibilities, particularly childrearing responsibilities that become the sole responsibility of the at-home parent, usually the mother (Houston et al. 2009; Ternus 2007; Huebner and Mancini 2005). Ternus (2009) suggests that communication among deployed service members and their families is an important aspect in helping children's, as well as at-home parents', adjustment to familial separation. This experience and "personal transformation is then reflected in how [at-home and deployed parents] fulfill their roles as parents" (Ternus 2009:204). In other words, military fathers' constant communication with the custodial mother may be perceived as a form of emotional and moral support, thus helping the at-home parent cope with the added responsibility of shouldering all the physical childrearing responsibilities.

Deployed fathers' frequent contact with the custodial parent may reduce the problems the spouse has with finding child care or managing child schedules. While frequency of communication between deployed fathers and at-home mothers may not have a direct effect on the at-home mothers' child care/child schedule management, I hypothesize that frequent communication indirectly affects distant parenting through at-home mothers' reporting fewer problems with finding child care and managing child schedules. As mentioned earlier, deployed spouses can act as a channel for locating and accessing family support services, resources that can help at-home mothers with childcare issues (Miller et al. 2010). Sometimes at-home spouses are not aware of the military family support services available to them and therefore the communication they have with their deployed spouse becomes the channel through which they can be informed of services available to them.

### **3.4 Military mothers: Intensive mothering within the military context**

Women make up a growing percentage of today's U.S. Armed Forces. Approximately 15 percent of the active-duty force are women<sup>12</sup>; and almost thirty-eight percent of women in the military are active-duty mothers, compared to forty-four percent for active-duty fathers (Schumer and Maloney 2007; U.S. Department of Defense 2016). Motherhood is a complex notion; its meaning varies from culture to culture, and from society to society. Nevertheless, common to most societies is the underlying belief that mothers have to take care of their children physically and emotionally. Motherhood is commonly "understood as practice that involves the

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<sup>12</sup> According to Schumer and Maloney (2007) approximately 6 percent of the active-duty members of the U.S. armed forces (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) are military mothers, 9 percent are women without children, 37 percent are military fathers, and 48 percent are men without children.

preservation, nurturance, and training of children for adult life” (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997:548). Ideologies about motherhood embody ideals of unselfish love, care, and devotion. Rooted in the societal context of the mother role are notions that mothers are supposed to be deeply engaged in their children’s lives (Hays 1996), that mothers’ work is embedded in the idea of femininity (Glenn 1994), that mothering is the ultimate role and identity of women, and that unpaid care work can only be done by mothers (Dill 1988/1994; Enos 2001). The definition of motherhood is so implicit and widespread that it appears to be “natural.”

According to Arendell (2000) “mothering and motherhood are viewed as dynamic social interactions and relationships, located in a societal context organized by gender” and prescribed by the dominant gender script of how mothers should be (p. 1193). The symbolic interactionist perspective helps us to understand how military mothers manage their identities. Specifically, a mother’s perspective and expectations dictate her interactions with her child and how she fulfills her parenting role in various ways, depending on the situation and her interpretation of such interactions.

Motherhood is a practice that involves immense responsibilities. Motherhood is not only an identity for most women, it is also the central component of “daily activities and life plans” (Ferraro and Moe 2003:13). There are distinct social expectations of motherhood, and when women deviate from what many prescribe as the traditional mother role it reinforces gender inequality, particularly for women who cannot be the “perfect” mother society thinks they should be. The dominant ideology about motherhood then perpetuates the notion that mothers are most to blame for any negative outcomes experienced by their children.

The attitudes that many military mothers show regarding motherhood are consistent with the prevailing American ideology of motherhood (Murray 2017), which Hays (1996) referred to as “intensive mothering.” Intensive mothering is an ideology that requires mothers to be selfless, self-sacrificing, and child-centered (Hays 1996). Although separation of a service member from their family is always difficult, for mothers, deployment becomes more of a personal sacrifice (Hall 2008; Murray 2017). For many women, motherhood is one of their most salient identities (Arendell 2000; Murray 2017; Rogers and White 1998) and is socially intertwined with notions of femininity (Chodorow 1999; Glenn 1994). Many military women with children value being mothers and express a great deal of guilt when they are physically separated from their children (Barnes et al. 2016; Musick 2009). Due to deployments, relocations, and temporary duty<sup>13</sup> (TDY) family separations – all of which have an immense influence on how military mothers fulfill their roles. Military mothers who perceive that they are unable to fulfill their roles as primary caregivers, in turn, feel a sense of maternal guilt (Tucker and Kelley 2009).

Prior research reveals that military women report greater levels of stress, anxiety (Kelley et al. 2001), and depression than do military men (Barnes et al. 2016; Kelley 1994; Kelley et al. 1994), psychological conditions that may be increased by motherhood. Tucker and Kelley (2009) claim that military obligations, such as deployments, are particularly stressful for many military mothers.

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<sup>13</sup> Temporary duty refers to a US military personnel’s or government employee’s travel assignment at a location other than the military personnel’s or employee’s permanent duty station. They are usually of relatively short duration and can be to any location, but they are all less than one year in duration.

Military mothers, like all mothers, are negatively labeled if they cannot satisfactorily meet the dominant idea of motherhood (Hays 1996). Mothers who diverge from the societal expectations of motherhood are often stigmatized as “bad” or “unfit” parents. Distant mothers, like deployed mothers who cannot physically care for their children, may be seen as terrible parents because they cannot fulfill the traditional roles of mother as nurturer (Phoenix, Woollett, and Lloyd 1991). The gendered construction of caring for children and social construction of motherhood presents an array of potential social problems. Fulfilling the mother role is complex and even more so when there is a spatial separation between mothers and their children.

### **3.5 Mothering from a distance: The parallel lives of transnational mothers and military moms and their children back home**

The phenomena of transnational motherhood, to a degree, extends to the experiences of military mothers, as distant mothering for both is about the redefinition of the individual’s personal meaning of motherhood to ease the emotional pain of the spatial separation from their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). The dominant ideology of families posits that mothers, fathers, and children must live in a single unit; that families are headed by a traditional breadwinner father and homemaker mother (McLanahan and Casper 1995); that members are appropriately socialized to their specific gender roles; and that families must independently sustain their unity without the help of the state and extended family (Casper and Bianchi 2002; Enos 2001; Thurer 1994). But in transnational families, at least one parent – now increasingly mothers – is producing income overseas, while other family members are carrying out the functions of reproduction and socialization back home (Dreby 2006/2007; Fresnoza-



Flot 2009) and this is similar to the situation in military families when mothers are away.

Work on transnational motherhood shows that the tasks of parenting become particularly challenging. Transnational mothers, like deployed mothers, must learn to cope with the pain of familial separations (Parrenas 2001a), the emotional difficulties (Fresnoza-Flot 2009), and the feelings of guilt (Erel 2002; Kang 2012) from being physically separated from their children. One study of migrant Turkish mothers in Germany shows that the pressures of “good mothering” consume the very core of their identity, so much that they internalize the image of “bad” migrant mother (Erel 2002).

Another study of Filipino female migrants in France reveals that extended family separations mean that they must bear the emotional pain of missing important events in their children’s lives (Fresnoza-Flot 2009). Other scholars stressed the negative impact of mother-child separation, both psychologically and socially, on the children left behind (Dreby 2009; Parrenas 2005; Pluss and Kwok-bun 2012; C. Suarez-Orozco and M. Suarez-Orozco 2001). For instance, children of transnational parents are more likely to be depressed and thus are at increased risk for drug and alcohol abuse. As Fresnoza-Flot (2009) points out, these transnational mothers blame their migration for the negative consequences on their children, a likely situation that can extend to challenges faced by deployed mothers.

Many mothers who are confronted with spatial distance from their children are forced to redefine their mother roles to accommodate their situation. For instance, immigrant mothers, who are unable to bring their children with them as they seek work in first world countries, must redefine motherhood by adopting the idea that someone

else will care for their children in their native land (Pluss and Kwok-bun 2012; Parrenas 2002/2005). According to Bryceson and Vourela (2002), relying on the support of extended families back home is an important aspect in maintaining emotional ties in transnational families.

The importance of kinship networks in these families means that, despite the geographical distance and extended separations, distant mothers are emotionally close to their children – providing emotional care and parental guidance from afar. In essence, extended kin are the conduits that link distant mothers to their children. In the words of Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997), distant mothering means more than being a parent to far-away children:

It means forsaking deeply felt beliefs that biological mothers should raise their own children and replacing that belief with new definitions of motherhood... [distant] mothering radically rearranges mother-child interactions and requires a concomitant radical reshaping of the meanings and definitions of appropriate mothering. [Distant] mothers distinguish their version of motherhood from estrangement, child abandonment, or disowning (p. 557).

For many military mothers, arranging care and finding suitable caretakers for their children means that they must rely on their husbands, extended kin, or paid care-providers (Chandra et al. 2010; Goodman et al. 2013; Ternus 2007/2009). Like transnational mothers, military mothers express the importance of kinship ties. Petty (2009) suggests that when at-home parents or custodial caregivers maintain ties with the deployed parent and vice versa, it fills the emotional gap between the deployed parent and their children.

The invisible bridge that connects deployed mothers with their children is achieved indirectly through the custodial caregiver (Petty 2009). That is, across the boundaries of their deployed location and home, they are providing emotional care and

parental guidance to their children. If fathers are present in their children's lives, it is important to assess their perception of their children's welfare to see if other factors, such as management of childcare and caring for children since mothers' deployment, may impact children's well-being. Together with emotional care and guidance from a distance, transnational mothers adopt several strategies to negotiate their absence from home.

One of the ways distant mothers cope with the spatial distance from their children is through remittances. For instance, Filipina<sup>14</sup> migrants in France express that being the family's primary breadwinner is a way they can fulfill their maternal obligations (Fresnoza-Flot 2009). In essence, being a good mother implies taking on the role of an economic provider, bestowing material needs for the family and children. Not only are remittances important in children's material reproduction (Hochschild 2000), they also play the role of symbolic ties with their distant mothers (Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Parrenas 2001a). Remittances sent by transnational mothers make it possible for their children to attend private schools or prestigious universities in their homeland (Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Pluss and Kwok-bun 2012), an important symbol of a transnational mother's presence in her children's lives.

Mothering through remittances is one of the strategies transnational mothers use to compensate for their absence. From this perspective, the deployment allowance<sup>15</sup> that military mothers receive when deployed can therefore be perceived as one of the

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<sup>14</sup> A Filipino woman or girl.

<sup>15</sup> Deployment allowance states "that the Secretary of the military department concerned shall pay a deployment allowance to a member of the armed forces under the Secretary's jurisdiction for each month during which the member is deployed..." Refer to *Title 37 Pay and Allowance of Uniformed Armed Services Chapter 7 Allowance* § 436; This may include Family Separation Allowance (FSA), Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay (HDIP), or Hardship Duty Pay (HDP) (<http://uscode.house.gov>)

ways mothers compensate for family separation. The additional income deployed mothers earn is also a way distant mothers combine caregiving with breadwinning. Like transnational mothers, military mothers may fulfill their maternal obligations indirectly through the extra pay they receive when deployed. With the extra pay, deployed parents can provide resources that can enhance their children's life chances, such as the ability to pay for extra-curricular activities. Studies show that parents who engage in a process that draws out children's talents and skills by putting them in extra-curricular activities, increases their children's life chances (Bennett, Lutz, and Jayaram 2012; Lareau 2003).

While additional income from deployment allowances somewhat compensates for maternal absence, it does not compensate for the emotional strain of mother-child separations. Distant mothers repress their emotional pains, endured from being separated from their children, through frequent contacts (Pluss and Kwok-bun 2012; Parrenas 2005). For transnational mothers, communication with their children back home plays an important role in maintaining intimacy and closeness.

According to Fresnoza-Flot (2009), frequent phone conversations give migrant mothers the perception that they are fit parents because across boundaries of their host country and homeland, they can give advice and guidance to their children. Writing letters to and receiving letters from children detailed with day-to-day events and important occasions, such as school-related topics, are crucial to good familial ties (Dreby 2006; Parrenas 2005). This belief gives transnational women a sense of preserving their motherhood identity. Another way transnational mothers parent from a distance is to ensure that their far-away children's needs are being met by having

regular contacts not only with their children, but with their children's custodial caregiver as well (Pluss and Kwok-bun 2012; Parrenas 2002, 2005).

While transnational mothers and military mothers have parallel parenting challenges, they are also different in many ways. Transnational mothers, because of the nature of their typical employment in care work, do not have to prepare their children for the potential danger of their job. Military mothers, on the other hand, must prepare their children for the potential injury and death that comes with their military obligations (Hall 2008; Huebner and Mancini 2005; Petty 2009). According to Ternus (2007), parent-child communication is an important aspect in preparing and advising adolescent children to cope with parental separation, particularly with regards to the potential dangers of their jobs. Therefore, it is important to assess the frequency of contacts deployed mothers have with their families to determine if frequent communication affects children's social behavioral outcomes.

Like transnational mothers who have to replace physical caregiving with a breadwinning description of motherhood (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 2000; Parrenas 2005; Parrenas 2002; Segura 1994), deployed mothers have to define motherhood to include breadwinning that requires long-term physical separations. Preparing a child for being taken care of by the custodial caregiver may be challenging for both the at-home father (if the father is present) and the deployed mother, particularly considering the uncertainty of the length of deployment. For these mothers, arranging childcare and maintaining contacts with the custodial caregiver, among other parental responsibilities, are very important. Studies show communication plays a critical role when a service member is physically absent (Carter and Renshaw 2015; Petty 2009). More

importantly, active communication and maintaining an emotional connection to those left at home not only preserves relationships but also improves morale for both the service member and those left behind.

An earlier study of military mothers during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm revealed that mothers who experience difficulties providing care for their children back home have various adjustment problems (Pierce, Vinokur, and Buck 1998; see also Pierce et al. 2006). The lack of support and help from the custodial caregiver or husband makes it challenging for those deployed mothers to arrange care for their children. Like transnational mothers, military mothers must maintain ties, by regular communication, with the at-home parent or custodial caregiver to ensure that their children's needs are being met. Parent-child communication is a key component in facilitating children's adjustments to parents' deployment (Blasko and Murphy 2016; Bowling and Sherman 2008; Ternus 2007/2009). Maintaining good communication on a daily basis with the deployed mother can effectively help the at-home parent work with their children during deployment (Carter and Renshaw 2015; Goodman et al. 2013; Hall 2008; Petty 2009). In other words, the frequency of contacts deployed mothers have with the at-home caregivers translates as a medium through which they can indirectly facilitate childcare-related issues.

Morris and Age (2009) found that among military families, where at least one parent was serving in the U.S. Armed Forces, perceived maternal support, compared to perceived paternal support, is associated with fewer conduct problems and less symptomatology<sup>16</sup> in both boys and girls. This study highlights the importance of

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<sup>16</sup> Symptomatology refers to the symptoms of complex illnesses or diseases.

maternal presence in children's lives. While there has been an increase in attention focused on military families in the past few years (Bowling and Sherman 2008; Cederbaum et al. 2014; Gewirtz et al. 2016; Huebner and Mancini 2005; Lester et al. 2016; Pierce et al. 2006), there is still a gap in the literature that looks at the effects of distant mothering, specifically, the level of communication with the custodial father or other caregiver, and management of child care and child schedules since mother's deployment. This illustrates a need for further research in the area of parenting within military families and can give voice to military parents, custodial caregivers, and children. In this study, I argue that deployed mothers' frequent contact with the at-home parent may reduce the problems the spouse has with finding childcare and managing child schedules. Frequent contacts, I hypothesize, indirectly influence distant parenting through at-home fathers' reporting fewer problems with finding childcare and managing child schedules.

## **Chapter 4: Military children**

### **4.1 Military children: The well-being of children in military families and Minkkinen's Structural Model of Child Well-Being**

Nearly 2 million children have one or both parents serving in the U.S. Armed Forces (Clever and D. Segal 2013; Gewirtz and Youssef 2016) and it is likely that more than half of these children will experience the deployment of one or both parents. The well-being of military children is important to examine. Well-being is a highly complex concept that incorporates both positive and negative aspects of life, has multiple factors and develops in a complex process. Child well-being embodies the whole child, as it encompasses the physical, psychological, emotional, material, social and cognitive development of the child (Camfield et al. 2009; Krueger et al. 2015; Pollard and Lee 2003). Child well-being can be measured through positive and negative life outcomes (Chandra et al. 2009; Chartrand et al. 2008; Knopp et al. 2016; Knoblach et al. 2015). These life outcomes can be affected by internal factors (i.e. culture, values and beliefs) and external factors (i.e. family relationships, support networks, and physical environment).

Research on child well-being suggests that positive child outcomes, such as independence, demonstrated trust in others, and closeness to friends and families, are related to positive familial relations (Knoblach et al. 2015). In contrast, poor familial connectedness may lead to negative life outcomes, such as low self-esteem, depression, and suicidal ideations (Chandra et al. 2009; Flake et al. 2009; Kelley et al. 2003). Assessing child well-being in military families requires that an added layer of military factors must be considered. The theoretical lens of Minkkinen's Structural Model of

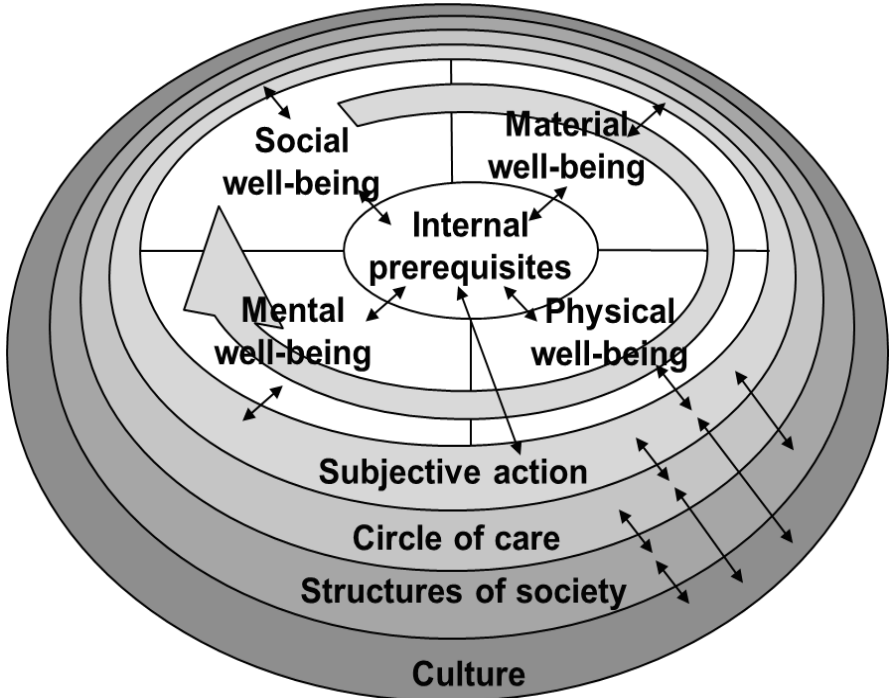


Child Well-Being (SMCW) allows us to analyze the role parental military service has on child well-being (see Figure 1).

Minkkinen's SMCW (2013) is derived largely from the fields of psychology and sociology. It is founded on the notion that a person is an actor that encompasses three interrelated domains – physical, mental, and social – and who lives and interacts in a material world through relations with other actors and institutions around the cultural environment. The SMCW model is based on the physical, mental, social, and material dimensions. The model utilizes concentric elements starting from the *internal conditions* of the child, interlaying with the four dimensions identified above, by interfacing with subjective actions, circle of care, structures of society, and lastly culture (Minkkinen 2013). These internal conditions are characteristics of the child that are both genetically and socially acquired. Subjective actions are those that a child engages in internally through the cognitive level and externally by exhibiting social behavior that either enhances or diminishes well-being (Minkkinen 2013). These *subjective actions* are influenced by aspects of the *circle of care* through familial relations and social support networks. Additionally, these subjective actions are influenced by the structures of society through the provision of care, residence and culture, that are beyond the child's control (Minkkinen 2013).

To apply Minkkinen's SMCW as a way to understand military child well-being, a layer of military factors must be considered within the structure of society. However, one of the major limitations of prior studies is that they tend to be branch-specific. For example, studies conducted by the U.S. Army will reflect culturally specific outcomes that differ from the other service branches. This lack of inclusivity makes it difficult to

assess the differences or similarities of the effect of parental deployment on child well-being in the U.S. military as a whole. This study aims to overcome these shortcomings and fill gaps in the literature.



**Figure 1: Minkkinen's Structural Model of Child Well-Being**

**4.2 Paternal absence and child well-being: Looking at the child’s life when the father is away**

A child’s reaction and adjustment to parental absence varies with the level of preparation and support for the deployment and the ability to maintain contact during the separation (Baker 2008; Hall 2008; Martin and McClure 2000). Studies have identified parental absence, particularly of fathers, as a major risk factor for both early sexual activity (Day 1992; Waldron et al.2015) and behavioral problems at school (Chandra et al. 2010; Lester et al. 2010). This suggests that parents’ physical presence

has an immense influence on children's well-being. Military families are unique in that while most deployed parents are physically absent from their families, their absences are temporary.

Research on the effects of father involvement shows that paternal absence, typically through divorce or permanent separation, adversely affects children's psychosocial outcomes (Coltrane et al. 2004; Jensen et al. 2005; Pleck 2010; Sarkadi et al. 2008). Military fathers, however, are gone from their children's lives only temporarily. It does not mean, however, that paternal absence does not affect military children's lives. As Martin and McClure (2000) posit, the conditions of military life, including long and repeated separations, frequent relocations, and at times unpredicted military assignments, remain the most significant stressors in military children's life. Another study reveals that children with a deployed parent, usually fathers, have a greater likelihood of maltreatment than children whose parents are not deployed (Gibbs et al. 2007). Therefore, these temporary paternal separations have significant influence on children's behavioral outcomes, and psychological and social development.

Earlier research on fatherhood was rooted on the premise of social learning theory. According to the perspective of social learning theory, fathers have greater influence on sons than daughters because of societal expectations for socializing same-gender children (Harris and Morgan 1991). Studies show that fathers of sons are more likely to be involved in their children's schoolwork and other activities than are fathers of daughters (Lamb, Pleck, and Levine 1987). Other research reveals that fathers spend more time in play and companionship activities with boys, specifically older boys, than with girls (Yeung et al. 2001).

According to Stevenson and Black (1988), father-absent boys are more likely to report a sense of being plagued with feelings of dependence and more likely to be aggressive than father-present boys (also see East, Jackson, and O'Brien 2006). Other research suggests that problematic behavior was more prevalent for boys than for girls when fathers are away (Ender 2000; Jensen and Shaw 1996). Father-absent girls, on the other hand, are more likely to stay in unrewarding relationships and are far more likely to have low-self-esteem than father-present girls (Griffin 1988). In general, father-absent children, according to Stevenson and Black (1988), are far more likely to be emotionally unstable and are more gender-stereotypical in their overt behavior, particularly boys. In other words, because boys lack the male role model in their lives, they have difficulty controlling their emotions, particularly aggression, because their fathers are not there to be the proper male role model.

According to Cederbaum and colleagues (2014), for military families, behavioral problems, depressive symptoms, and suicidal ideation are associated with fathers' deployment and are particularly salient for children who have experienced two or more parental deployments. Other studies also indicate that young boys of military fathers are more likely to have poorer peer relations and elevated depression than young girls (Dansby and Marinelli 1999). According to McLanahan and colleagues (2013) father absence lowers children's educational attainment and increases the likelihood of using drugs and alcohol, which in turn affects their socio-emotional skills in their adult life. However, there are some inconsistencies with such findings because, according to Coltrane et al. (2004), it is the quality of involvement, whether direct or indirect, that has a significant effect on child development, irrelevant of the child's gender.

Therefore, it is the quality, not the quantity of father involvement that has a significant effect on child welfare.

While earlier literature posits that compared to that of mothers', fathers' involvement provides minimal effects on children's psychosocial outcomes (King 1994), there is a growing body of literature that suggests positive effects of father involvement, by both nonresident and resident fathers, on children's psychosocial outcomes (Day et al. 2005; Marsiglio et al. 2000; Pleck and Masciadrelli 2004).

Military families, like their civilian counterparts, have been changing dramatically in the last few decades. Although military children are more likely to live in two-parent households than civilian children, there are increasing numbers of single-parent and blended families in the military today, due to an increase in non-marital childbearing and marital disruption (Baker 2008; Hall 2008; Ternus 2009). These changes are bringing additional challenges for military parents and children. It is therefore important to review the difficulties these families endure because it may, in some way, shed light on how families cope with, manage, and survive the challenges of military life-demands.

A review of literature regarding divorce and children's well-being is important and relevant because it will provide insight on how parents co-parent after a separation or divorce, and in the case of military families, how couples co-parent during temporary separations. In the past, most women got full custody of their children and fathers were less likely to have legal guardianship of their children. As a result, many father-child physical relationships were severed, which in turn also breaks the emotional bond between the father and child. Women still are more likely to have primary physical

custody (Cancian et al. 2014), however, with the recent change in the social policy regarding divorce and child well-being, many divorced couples now share custody of their children (Casper and Bianchi 2002; Cancian et al. 2014).

An increase in fathers' involvement can be partially attributed to the "growing share of fathers [having] joint legal custody or shared physical custody of their children" (Casper and Bianchi 2002:146). Amicable custody arrangements are more likely to occur between fathers and mothers who are civil with each other. Studies show that enhanced father-mother relationships are associated with increased father-contact with his child, which in turn leads to better child well-being (Carlson et al. 2008; Kamp-Dush, Kotila, and Schoppe-Sullivan 2011). In some ways, this reflects the experiences of deployed fathers who maintain a harmonious relationship with their spouses back home. Couples who have harmonious relationship are thus less likely to have familial conflicts, which is associated with the quality of parent-child relationships (Waller 2012).

With a well-established co-parenting practice, parents are in a better position to tackle the challenges of parenting (Cabrera et al. 2012; Waller 2012). Another study reveals that positive co-parenting among unmarried couples is a strong predictor of fathers' further involvement (Carlson et al. 2008). In other words, the couples' ability to work together in rearing their children facilitates fathers' further engagement with their children. Although the study is about unmarried couples, it is relevant when it comes to the notion of co-parenting, particularly for temporarily separated couples in the military. Military families are unique, such that familial- or parental-separations, while at times long in duration, are temporary.

According to Pleck and Masciadrelli (2004) one of the most important consequences of paternal engagement is that adolescents with involved co-resident and nonresident fathers are more likely to have positive developmental outcomes in terms of self-esteem, self-control, and social competence, given that the father is not authoritarian, violent, or overly controlling. Another study by Marcia Carlson reveals that while involvement of resident fathers has profound effects on adolescent behavior, such that “involvement by resident fathers has additional benefit by promoting family social capital,” nonresident fathers’ involvement also has positive effects on adolescent behavior (2006:151). That is, involvement of nonresident fathers is associated with lower levels of externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems and delinquency among adolescents (Carlson 2006). Keep in mind, however, that mother involvement still has significant and strong associations with adolescent behavioral outcomes (Carlson 2006; Morris and Age 2009).

Like most nonresident fathers who must compensate for the spatial distance between them and their children by maintaining a good relationship with their children’s mother (Ryan, Kalil and Ziol-Guest 2008), deployed fathers must also preserve their relationship with their spouses at home by preparing the family before deployment and keeping in contact while deployed (Barr 2011). Discussing with children the reasons and responsibilities for deployment may give the fathers and their children the perception that they are all part of this impending transition, like a family unit working in unison. Literature on military families also reveals that fathers who are physically involved with their children, such as playing and doing fun activities before leaving for deployment, help their children better manage the approaching family

separation (Barr 2011; Petty 2009; Hall 2008), which in turn may be beneficial to the children's well-being.

This study purports to tackle shortcomings from these past studies, since it includes comparable data from both deployed fathers and mothers, and civilian fathers and mothers. There appears to be no research that has looked at the effects of distant parenting on children's well-being using comparative samples from deployed fathers and mothers, and civilian fathers and mothers across all four branches of the military.

Communication is a significant factor in facilitating children's adjustments to parental separation due to deployment (Bowling and Sherman 2008; Ternus 2007; 2009). The results of past studies suggest that frequent communication of distant fathers with the custodial caregiver, with the assumptions that the context of their communication is a positive one, leads to children's positive social behavioral outcomes. In this study, I argue that deployed fathers' frequent contact with the at-home mother may ease children's negative experiences with a paternal deployment. While the constant communication of the at-home mother with the deployed father may not have a direct association with children's well-being, I hypothesize that frequent contacts indirectly influence distant parenting through the custodial mother's (i.e., through communication with the at-home mother) reporting that their children are doing well.

#### **4.3 Maternal absence and child well-being: Military children separated from their mothers**

For those children whose mothers are currently serving in OIF/OEF, life stressors stemming from mother's deployment may have a significant effect on their



lives. For instance, children may have been exposed to media coverage that highlighted the dangers in combat zones (Skipp 2006), which may influence how well children cope with maternal absence. A study of adolescents aged 12 to 18 years during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan found that graphic images depicted in the media caused increased anxiety among those adolescents (Huebner and Mancini 2005). The findings of other studies also suggest that adolescents' social and familial environment has an immense influence on their level of stress and coping abilities (Huebner and Mancini 2005; Jensen and Shaw 1995; Lester et al. 2010; Seiffge-Krenke 1995), suggesting that how the at-home parent deals with the deployment affects how adolescents cope with parental absence.

Literature on military families also suggests that parents, both at-home and deployed, who maintain and increase their expressions of love not only help their children cope with difficult situations but can improve their children's well-being (Hall 2008; Cozza et al. 2018; Sogomonyan and Cooper 2010). Healthy attachments develop when children's parents and other caregivers are caring, reliable, and present in their lives (Cozza et al. 2018). The emotional bond between parents and their children provides a foundation for the development of children's coping skills as they respond to changes in their lives (Cozza et al. 2018). According to Minkkinen's SMCW (2013), these coping skills children develop are the subjective actions influenced by their circle of care (i.e., parent-child relations). According to Wilson (2010), modern means of communication, such as Skype, MSN messenger, and Facebook can bridge the distance between deployed mothers and their families left behind. Important communication

skills, such as reflecting, listening, and questioning may aid in easing tension and relieving stress about parental absence (Cozza et al. 2018; Hall 2008).

Modern technology may mitigate children's negative experiences with parental deployment because across the borders of the deployed mothers' locality and home, deployed mothers can provide emotional care to their children. In this study, I argue that deployed mother's frequent contacts with the custodial father may alleviate the children's negative experiences with a maternal deployment. Constant communication of custodial fathers with the deployed mothers or vice versa may not have a direct relationship with children's well-being; rather, frequent contacts, as I hypothesize, indirectly influence distant parenting through custodial father's (i.e., through communication with the father) reporting that their children are doing well.

On another note, studies have identified mother absence as a major risk factor for both health and behavioral problems of children (Cozza et al. 2018; Musick 2009; Ternus 2007), suggesting that mothers have an immense influence on their children's well-being. Ternus (2007) found that the longer a mother is deployed the more likely her adolescent children are to engage in risk taking-behaviors such as physical fights, incidents involving weapons, cigarette smoking, alcohol use, illegal drug use, drops in school grades, and attempted suicide. Research also suggests that in military families, parental absence, notably father's absence due to deployment, is associated with increased manifestation of conduct problems for boys and increased exhibition of depressive symptoms for girls (Jensen et al. 1996; Kelley 1994; Lester et al. 2010; Rosen et al. 1993). In addition, research reveals that fathers play a differential role in children's psychosocial outcomes (McDowell, Parke, and Wang 2003); therefore, it is

important to examine the effects of both maternal and paternal separation on children's well-being.

Comparative research on the effect of military separations from mothers versus fathers on children is limited. This study purports to tackle some of the limitations from previous studies, since it addresses issues pertaining to the effects of maternal and paternal deployment on children's well-being. As mentioned earlier, many, perhaps most, women believe that one of their most salient identities is motherhood. Rooted in the prevailing notion of motherhood – *intensive mothering* – (Hays 1996), many military mothers who are separated from their children feel a greater sense of guilt (Musick 2009) than military fathers.

Like transnational mothers, many military mothers feel that it is arduous and sacrificial to leave their children behind (Hall 2008). This is not to say, however, that military fathers do not feel bad for leaving their children, but “they are usually assured that the children have their mothers to care for them” (Hall 2008:69). Previous studies mentioned above suggest that maternal separation adversely affects children more than paternal separation. It may be that the closer these deployed mothers come to internalizing the prevailing ideology of motherhood – *intensive mothering* – the more likely they feel the maternal guilt of being distant from their children. Nevertheless, studies also show that paternal absence affect children's well-being (King and Sobolewski 2006; Lamb 2000; Marsiglio et al. 2000; Maurer and Pleck 2006; McGill 2014; McLanahan et al. 2013). Considering the studies mentioned above, I argue that that deployed mothers' frequent contact with the at-home caregiver may ease children's negative experiences with a maternal deployment.

#### **4.4 The life of military children: Effects of deployment on child well-being**

More than half of military personnel have children and nearly 2 million children are affected by the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (Barnes et al. 2016; Knoblach et al. 2015; U.S. Department of Defense 2016). Not only are service members faced with the demanding obligations of the military, but the disruptions and stresses of military life also weigh heavily on the lives of many children. While military life can be stressful for families, notably familial separations due to deployment, there are some positive aspects of deployment. The culture of the military dictates strong emphasis on commitment to service and its members, which is the foundation of military social cohesion (Baker 2008; Barnes et al. 2016; Hosek, Kavanaugh, and Miller 2006; Quigley 2009). Strong bonds with fellow soldiers are even more pronounced when service members deploy, and this increased sense of camaraderie also extends to family life.

Baker (2008) posits that military families, on average, are closer and relatively more stable than their civilian counterparts. According to Petty (2009), military children are more likely to be exposed to acts of patriotism from family members than civilian children; this helps military children develop a sense of family pride, which in turn may help unite families. Petty (2009) describes that acts of patriotism within the home provides a supportive space where children can feel comfortable sharing their feelings about their parents' military duties. In other words, the acts of patriotism, along with the moral and emotional support that military children receive from their parents, may mitigate the strains that children experience during family separations.

Another positive aspect of deployment, as mentioned earlier, is the financial benefits (Baker 2008; Hall 2008; Hosek 2006). In terms of economics, the financial

situation of the family may also contribute to the already stressful life demands of the military, therefore, the extra income deployed service members earn may alleviate these added stressors. With the extra income earned, deployed parents can provide resources that can enhance their family's well-being, such as the ability to pay off bills, plan a vacation, or put extra funds into a college savings account or invest in a TSP<sup>17</sup> account. Keep in mind, however, that while deployments can be financially beneficial for the family, it does not, however, negate the fact that family disruptions still take a toll on the family, most notably, on the children left behind.

More importantly, a rank-oriented social system like the military creates further stress not only on the service member but also on families, specifically on children and adolescents (Hall 2008). Oftentimes, children's behavioral issues are exacerbated by the social pressure imposed upon them due to the uniformed-parent's military status. Paygrade/rank in a hierarchal-oriented social system, in some way, affects the way military children behave corresponding to their uniformed-parent's status. According to Hall (2008), the desire for upward mobility, while preserving their socioeconomic class and status, causes military parents to emphasize the importance of income/rank to their children. Therefore, military families of lower paygrade/rank may be vulnerable to the adverse effects of economic hardship (SES) on child well-being. The importance of communication between military parents and their children is emphasized when it comes to which military children, regarding status, it would be acceptable to associate with. In other words, children "should" associate with children whose parents have the same rank as their parents. Nevertheless, communication and its importance are not

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<sup>17</sup> TSP (Thrift Savings Plan) is a retirement savings plan for members of the uniformed services and civilians who are employed by the United States Government.

only applicable to the specific aspects of military life (i.e., paygrade/rank) but more importantly stressed during times of parental deployment.

A study by Rodriguez and Margolin (2015) reveal that higher levels of communication between the deployed parent and child left behind throughout deployment can mitigate the negative experience of parental absence. Another study revealed that children of active-duty members are adaptive and resilient in response to the threat of war (Ryan-Wenger 2001). This study compared children of active-duty, reservist, and civilian families' perceptions of war, fears about war, stages of symptoms of anxiety, coping strategies, and manifestation of emotional problems. The results suggest that military children appear to be adaptive to the demands of their parents' military obligations and thus relatively resilient to military life. While the study is encouraging, it is not, however, generalizable because of the small sample size of active-duty children and the lack of information about the parent's deployment status. With that in mind, it is difficult to assess the effects of deployment on children's social behavioral outcomes. This study aims to bridge this gap in research, as it will address issues regarding the impact of deployment on children's coping strategies and social behavioral outcomes.

When a parent is on temporary duty (TDY) assignment or deployed to an overseas location, children may feel a sense of loss. While not all military personnel deploy, or leave home on temporary assignments, many service members have the potential to be called on to deploy (Segal 1986). A major aspect of military duty is commitment, that is, regardless of the type of occupation held, every service member is obliged to follow orders and commit themselves to their jobs. Commitment to duty, one

that requires the time, dedication, power, and soul of every service member is the prevailing ideology in the military, which leads Segal (1986) to describe the military as a “greedy institution.” If a service member is called to deploy, they have no choice but to place their military duty first and their family second. The uncertainty that comes with military life, as mentioned earlier, is a challenge not only for service members, but also for children and families. It is therefore important to examine how children cope when a parent is deployed.

Studies show that the ability of children to cope with parental separation lies with the preparation (Petty 2009). Preparing children for deployments, such as talking to them about the separation being temporary, eases their anxiety about deployments (Baker 2008; Lester et al. 2010/2016; Petty 2009). Additionally, having emotionally supportive environments also helps children cope with parental absence (Hall 2008). Petty (2009) suggests that while not all children, particularly adolescents, may agree with what their parents do, listening to them and helping them resolve their emotional conflicts, and teaching them about patriotism, may ease children’s concerns about their parents’ deployment.

Another source of stress for military children is the anxiety and fear of losing their parent (Flake et al. 2009). Research reveals that Army children experience sadness, emotional problems, and other internalizing behavioral problems during parental deployment (Flake et al. 2009; Houston et al. 2009). Another study found that Marine children with a deployed parent were more likely to exhibit externalizing behavioral problems than their military peers whose parents were not deployed (Chartrand et al. 2008). One of the major limitations of prior studies, however, is that

they tend to be branch-specific. The lack of inclusivity of all branches makes it difficult to assess the differences or similarities of the effect of parental deployment on child well-being. This study aims to overcome the shortcomings of prior studies.

Since length of deployment, location of most deployments, and the functions of the four branches of the armed forces vary, arguably then the effects of their deployments on families will also likely vary (Meadows et al. 2016; Powers 2011).

One study shows that deployment longer than 180 days to Iraq/Afghanistan theaters increases the odds of service members developing PTSD compared to service members who deployed for shorter duration and did not deploy to Iraq/Afghanistan, with the largest effect for the Navy and the smallest effect for the Air Force (Shen et al. 2009). One study showed that children who experienced prolonged parental deployment may become overly dependent, insecure, anxious, and may experience enduring interpersonal problems (Paris et al. 2010). Family disruptions are never an easy transition for any child. For those children whose parents served or are currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan wars, family disruptions may have a significant impact in their lives.

A study of the psychosocial effects of deployment on active-duty Army children aged 5 to 12 years revealed that children experiencing parental separation due to deployment are at increased risk for psychosocial morbidity (Flake et al. 2009).

Psychosocial morbidity refers to the weakening of psychosocial functioning, that is, dysfunctions that are emotional, mental, or physical in nature – internalizing, externalizing, and attention behavior (Flake et al. 2009). The results also showed that parenting stress of the at-home parent is a significant predictor of child psychosocial



functioning (Flake et al. 2009; Huebner and Mancini 2005), suggesting that how the custodial parent, mostly the mother, cope with the family disruption affects children's psychosocial health. However, these findings suggest that children whose parents use military social support programs and are college educated are at lower risk of psychosocial morbidity. These findings are consistent with literature suggesting that parents' level of education influences childrearing practices that indirectly and directly influence a host of children's psychosocial outcomes (Baumrind 1989/1991; Jensen et al. 1996; Lareau 1989/2003).

A more recent assessment of the impact of parental deployment on children's social and emotional functioning from the perspectives of school staff showed that children from Army families are negatively affected by their parents' deployment (Chandra et al. 2010). In the study, Chandra and colleagues (2010) compared the academic and psychosocial issues faced by children of deployed active-duty Army and Army Reserve and National Guard parents. In summary, the study suggests that school staff perceived that while some students were adjusting well to their parents' deployment, other students were not doing well, particularly in the academic realm. The school staff felt that the children who were not dealing well with parental absence, and thus were having problems at school, were those children who may have increased their responsibilities at home and may have a custodial caregiver with poor mental health.

As mentioned earlier, while military children generally are adaptive and resilient to military life (Ryan-Wegner 2001; Rodriguez and Margolin 2015), perhaps due to an array of military social support programs and emotionally supportive familial

environments, military children are still vulnerable to the effects of parental deployment. An earlier study of the impact of deployment on children during Operation Desert Storm showed that children of all ages display a host of emotional and behavioral problems, such as increased anxiety and heightened sleep disturbances (Jensen et al. 1996). Jensen and colleagues (1996) compared children of deployed and non-deployed parents during Operation Desert Storm to determine the impact of military-induced separation on children's psychosocial outcomes. In summary, their results showed that children of deployed parents experienced increased self-reported symptoms of depression compared to children of non-deployed parents. Another study found that school-aged children with a parent deployed during Operation Desert Storm exhibited moderate increases in externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems (Kelley 1994). Military children who endure military-induced separations such as deployments often experience an increase in psychosocial behavioral problems.

There is also evidence that shows parental deployment to a war zone or hostile locations adversely affects children's emotional and social outcomes. For instance, Huebner and colleagues (2007) found that children ages 12 to 18 years whose parents were deployed to a war zone exhibited a range of emotional problems such as violent outbursts of emotions, acting out, feelings of helplessness, and depression. In the study, the researchers used focus groups to assess the perception of uncertainty and loss, resilience, and adjustments of children whose parents were deployed to a war zone. The findings also suggest that parental separation has a profound effect on the dynamics of the family and the child in particular.

The studies discussed above make important contributions to the field of military family research. More importantly, these studies show the varying impacts of parental deployment on children's psychosocial outcomes, including academic issues, emotional, psychological, and behavioral concerns. Research on the effects of deployment location on the psychosocial outcomes of children among the four active-duty branches of the armed forces is limited, however. For instance, most of the studies mentioned above have one common limitation: they are branch-specific. Therefore, it is difficult to assess whether the effects of combat deployment on children may vary for the Army than for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

Recent data show that as of 2017, the cumulative active-duty service members deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan is contributed mostly by the Army at 51 percent, Navy at 19 percent, Marine Corps at 15 percent, and the Air Force at 15 percent (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 2017). These data indicate that the total deployment time to Iraq and Afghanistan (OIF/OEF) has been done mostly by the Army. Thus, the duration and frequency of deployment in support of OIF/OEF vary by branch of service. This study purports to fill a gap in military family literature, since it examines the effects of the current parental deployment, Operation Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, on the social behavioral outcomes of children.

Most importantly, this study addresses how these challenges may be different for the Army than for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. Overall, the studies mentioned above suggest that service members deployed to combat/hostile zones create additional strains on children compared to service members deployed to non-combat/hostile zones; and the effect on children may be different for the Army than it is

for the Navy, Marine Corps, and the Air Force. Guided by the previous studies mentioned in earlier sections regarding family stress theory, as well as Minkkinen's structural model of child well-being, leads me to further explore the effects of child well-being, specifically to combat/non-hostile zones. Thus, family stressors, such as deployment of a parent to hostile location, may be part of this adverse childhood experience affecting child well-being.

Cozza and colleagues (2005) have noted several adverse effects of deployments, including injury and death of service members and post-traumatic mental stress and illnesses due to deployment. The likelihood of experiencing such stressors are much more common for service members exposed to combat or hostile zones. Research data shows that Army deployment durations to Iraq and Afghanistan are much longer than any other branches, which increases the likelihood of exposure to combat (Bonds, Baiocchi, McDonald 2010). Based on the literature and theories reviewed above, the aim is to bring the emphasis back to military children.

## Chapter 5: Research Questions and Hypotheses

Guided by the theories and literature discussed above, this study examines three domains of family life – marriage, parenting, and child well-being. Determining the effects of combat deployment on military families, this research examines how OIF/OEF deployments are associated with (1) how at-home spouses perceive the quality of their marriages, (2) how at-home caregivers manage childcare-related issues since parental absence, (3) communication between the deployed parent and the at-home caregiver, and (4) how combat deployment influences children’s social behavioral outcomes (well-being). In an effort to address the questions above, this research focuses on the following predictor variables: (1) combat versus non-combat deployment locations<sup>18</sup>, (2) branch of service in comparison to the Army, (3) frequency of communication as a process with which deployed uniformed family members parent from a distance, and (4) parental separation.

1. Does combat deployment and branch of service influence marital quality?

### *Hypothesis 1a*

Deployment, in general, inflicts stress on the family, however, deployment to Iraq/Afghanistan, a location categorized as a combat/hostile zone, may create an additional stress on military marriages. Based on family stress theory, I predict that deployment to a combat zone will have more of an adverse effect on marital quality than deployment to a non-combat zone.

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<sup>18</sup> As a reminder, in this study, “combat” and “hostile” zones, locations, and deployments are used interchangeably – area designated as a war zone where imminent danger is present. (<https://www.military.com/benefits/military-pay/special-pay/combat-zone-tax-exclusions.html>).

### *Hypothesis 1b*

As mentioned above, the Army is the largest and the oldest service branch in the U.S. Armed Forces, and the Army may be exposed the most to the adverse effects of combat deployment, this guided me to the conclusion that the Army is best suited as the referent category for branch of service. Based on family stress theory, I predict that marital quality will be lower for members in the Army than for those members of the Navy, Marine Corps, or Air Force.

2. Does frequency of communication between the deployed parent (distant parenting) and the at-home caregiver reduce/mitigate childcare-related issues? Does this effect vary by how much emphasis the at-home parent puts on communication with the deployed parent?

### *Hypothesis 2a*

Like non-resident fathers and transnational mothers, deployed fathers' and mothers' frequent communication with the at-home caregiver may reduce the problems the spouse has with finding and managing childcare-related issues. Constant communication between the at-home caregiver and the deployed parent may not have a direct relationship with the at-home caregiver's childcare management; rather, frequent communication, as I argue, may indirectly influence how deployed parents parent from a distance. Guided by Minkkinen's SMCW (2013) in terms of the influence of circle of care (i.e., parent-child relations), symbolic interactionism, and literature on transnational parenting, I predict, frequent communication between the deployed parent and the at-home caregiver may indirectly influence distant parenting through at-home

caregivers reporting of fewer problems with finding child care and managing child schedules.

### *Hypothesis 2b*

Furthermore, guided by the intensive mothering, father-absent, and transnational parenting literatures, the effect of frequent communication between the deployed parent and the at-home caregiver on childcare management is expected to vary by how important the at-home spouse rates communication with the deployed parent.

Therefore, I predict the effect of frequent communication on childcare management will be stronger for those who rate communication as important than for those who do not.

3. Does frequent communication between the deployed parent and at-home spouses predict better outcomes for children?

### *Hypothesis 3*

Prior research reveals that higher levels of communication between the deployed parent and families left behind can mitigate the stresses endured and negative effects of parental absence. Based on intensive mothering and transnational parenting literatures, and family stress and symbolic interaction theories, I predict that the more frequent contacts deployed parents have with at-home spouses, the more likely the custodial parent is to report that their children are doing well.

4. Does combat deployment and branch of service influence children's social behavioral outcomes?

### *Hypothesis 4a*

Parental absence imposes stress on children, in general, however, deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan may create an additional stress on children's well-being. Guided by

family stress theory, I predict that parental deployment to a combat zone will have more of an adverse effect on child adjustment than parental deployment to a non-combat zone.

*Hypothesis 4b*

The Army is the largest and one of the oldest armed forces in the U.S. military and thus have been conducting war longer than any of the other service branches. As such, the Army personnel may be the most exposed to the adverse effects of war and stresses of military life. Based on family stress theory, I predict that children's social behavioral outcomes may be poorer for children whose parents are in the Army than those for whose parents are in the Navy, Marine Corps, or Air Force.

5. Does the paygrade/rank of the deployed parent influence children's social behavioral outcomes (well-being)?

*Hypothesis 5a*

Guided by the literature on child well-being and Minkkinen's SMCW (2013), I predict military families whose paygrade/rank is lower will report higher levels of child adjustment problems than military families whose paygrade/rank is higher.

*Hypothesis 5b*

Guided by the literature on child well-being and Minkkinen's SMCW (2013), I predict military families whose paygrade/rank is higher will be more likely to report better child well-being outcomes than military families whose paygrade/rank is lower.



## Chapter 6: Sample and Measures

### 6.1 Overview of data and study population

The data for this project come from the *2006 Active-Duty Spouse Survey (ADSS)*, conducted on behalf of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSDP&R), by a team of Department of Defense (DoD) researchers in the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). The development of the 2006 ADSS stemmed from a line of research on active-duty spouses that commenced with the *1985 DoD Surveys of Officer and Enlisted Personnel and Military Spouses* followed by the Joint Service surveys of active-duty spouses in 1992 and 1999, respectively. These surveys were developed to examine the views and attitudes of the members of the military, as well as assess the needs and concerns of the military community (DMDC 2006). The 2006 ADSS used both Web and paper-and-pen approaches of administration to assess, specifically, the opinions and attitudes of active-duty spouses on a wide array of personal life-issues (See Appendix A: Letter of Communication or Request to Participate in the Survey).

The respondents represent the four active-duty branches (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force), not including the Reserve or National Guard components, who had (1) at least six months of active-duty service at the commencement of the survey administration period, and (2) were below flag rank<sup>19</sup> (DMDC 2006). As briefly mentioned above, the target population for the 2006 ADSS was spouses of active-duty service members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Specifically, to be identified as eligible,

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<sup>19</sup> Flag rank denotes that the service member has not been commissioned, promoted, or confirmed to a general officer— i.e., one-star general, two-star general, and so on.

the individual must have been married to an active-duty member or an active-duty member married to another active-duty member, at the time of the survey administration. The population included 32,054 active-duty spouses, but only 11,138 active-duty spouses returned usable surveys, which is a 32.7 percent adjusted weighted response rate (DMDC 2006). The methods for calculating response rates and completion rates were advocated by the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO)<sup>20</sup>.

The 2006 ADSS survey was divided into seventeen main subject areas, which are: background information, housing, permanent change of station (PCS) moves, your spouse's tempo<sup>21</sup>, your spouse's deployment(s), effect of deployment on children, preparedness, feelings about military life, marital history, children and legal dependents, childcare, schools for children, employment, financial well-being, health and well-being, programs and services, and communicating with you (about the survey). This research examines the survey items regarding the effects of combat deployment on marriage and children, relational quality of marriage during deployments, frequency of communication between service members and spouses during deployments - as a process of distant parenting - and effects of combat deployment on children (see Appendix B: Survey Instrument).

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<sup>20</sup> CASRO "formed a task force to recommend guidelines for standardizing the operational definitions of response rates" to minimize problems or misinterpretations in the survey results (ADSS codebook 2006:14).

<sup>21</sup> Tempo is defined as "the rate of motion or activity," operation tempo refers to the "rate of military actions or missions." (<https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/>)

## 6.2 Constructing the sample frame

According to the DMDC's March 2005, 2005 Active-Duty Master Edit File, the March 2005 Family Database, the March 2005 Active Duty Pay File, the March 2005 Basic Allowance Housing Population File, and the 2005 Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System file, there were 740,025 individuals eligible for the survey. From these files the survey research team was able to draw the sample for the 2006 ADSS.

The method used to draw the sample was a stratified random sampling approach. A DMDC Sample Planning Tool<sup>22</sup> was used to determine the sample size and distribution, as well as construct the stratification variables. Stratified random sampling involves the stratification of a population into smaller groups known as strata, which are based on the sample member's shared attributes. Sample members were categorized partly based on their gender, rank, and branch of service. For instance, all female, enlisted, Air Force personnel are put in one category and all male, officers, Army personnel are in another category. A random sample from each stratum was selected with equal probability. In general, however, individuals were not selected with equal probability since sampling rates varied across each stratum, which is usually the case in most stratified sampling procedures.

The sample population was categorized into six dimensions of stratification, which are: service (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force), gender, paygrade group, race/ethnic category, regions of deployment (US & US territories, Other, Unknown, Europe, Asia & Pacific Islands, All Regions), and family status/dual service

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<sup>22</sup> The “[tool] uses a formal mathematical procedure to determine the minimum cost (i.e., minimum size) allocation that meets precision requirements (e.g.,  $\pm 5$  percentage points) imposed on prevalence estimates for key reporting domains” (ADSS Codebook 2006:9).

spouse. The survey research team identified these stratification dimensions, based on the interest of policymakers. Within each stratum, a sample was randomly selected, and a small group of categories based on gender, rank, and branch of service were oversampled in relation to the proportion of the overall population to ensure better coverage of and obtain enough responses from the population. These steps are carefully executed to gain precision in the analysis of the survey data.

### **6.3 Survey administration and procedure**

The survey administration process began in November 2005 and officially closed in May 2007. The survey administration was processed twice; the original field survey was administered from November 2005 through February 2006 and was reopened in May 2006 through June 2007. The survey was reopened in May 2006 to capture and communicate with the 3,091 sample members that were misclassified as ineligible.

The eligible sample members were sent various forms of communication via postal and email notifications. For postal mailings, residential addresses of active-spouses were used as the primary address, followed by the active-duty member's residential address. If the residential addresses of both the active-duty spouse or active-duty member were not identified, the member's unit address was then used as a secondary postal mailing contact. In addition, eligible sample members who had a valid email address could also have received an email notification. Once the respondent had returned the survey, all postal and email mail-outs stopped.

Sample losses to the survey were determined under these conditions: self- or proxy-reported ineligibility; non-locatability; and refusal to participate or indication of

some other nonresponse (DMDC 2006). In addition, sample members who did not complete at least fifty percent of the applicable questions<sup>23</sup>, or who did not answer the marital status and the sponsor's<sup>24</sup> military status were identified as ineligible. At the culmination of the survey administration process, 11,138 respondents were determined to be eligible and locatable out of the original eligible size of 32,054. These respondents were identified as having usable surveys.

The Survey Control System (SCS)<sup>25</sup> was used to store the data information, monitor the survey collection process, and track and update data over the duration of the survey administration. While the SCS system included sample members' names and addresses, it did not have data information from the survey instrument that could compromise the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents. The survey was administered via both the web and paper-and-pencil questionnaires. The web-based survey was hosted on the private contractor's secure web site. This allowed the sample members to complete the survey online. At the initial log in, respondents were asked to type in their personal ticket number to gain access to the survey. A disclaimer notice regarding confidentiality and a page of frequently asked questions (FAQ's) were provided at the initial access to the survey. Sample members were given the option to return to previous page, move to the next page, delete responses on the page, save responses, and/or exit out of the survey, at any point during the completion of the

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<sup>23</sup> Applicable questions refer to questions that must be completed by all respondents (i.e., background history, etc.) and questions that could be skipped depending on the prior question (ADSS 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Sponsor refers to the actual active-duty member of the U.S. Armed Forces and not the sample member.

<sup>25</sup> "The SCS refers to the set of data files as well as the program or operating system, which maintains [sample members] files" (ADSS codebook 2006:17).

questionnaire. In addition, respondents were also allowed to return at another time to continue or change their responses.

All eligible respondents with a valid email address on file could have received an email notification, as well as an additional eight email reminders for the duration of the field period. For the eligible respondents who had not completed the Web-based survey, a pen-and-paper form survey was sent out, along with a reminder letter. (See Appendix C: Email Communication Timeline).

In terms of the pen-and-paper survey, each eligible sample member received at most four mail-outs: a notification letter and brochure explaining the survey, a reminder letter, a reminder letter with the pen-and-paper survey, and a third reminder letter. These mail-outs, explaining the survey program, also gave eligible respondents the option to either complete the survey online or via paper form. Prior to every mail-out, the SCS conducted an extensive examination of records to identify which records should be excluded (e.g., respondents self-reported as ineligible for the survey, members who had no valid residential addresses on record, or had already returned the survey, etc.). As soon as all the records had been properly identified, SCS then administered the mail-outs based on whether the mail-outs would include a brochure and/or a survey paper form (see Appendix D: Mailing Timeline and Return Results). An initial regression is conducted to determine the effects of deployment on marital quality with the entire sample (N=11,138). Regression analysis for variables (i.e., sociodemographic, contextual and independent variables that are not specific to deployed-spouse families) predicting marital quality for the entire sample is presented in Appendix E. Following the initial regression analysis, the study is limited to those

respondents whose spouses were currently deployed for 30 days or more during the OIF/OEF operations<sup>26</sup> and to those who had legal dependents (child or children) under 18 years of age currently living with them during the time of survey administration. The final size for this study is 1,616 (see Table 1).

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<sup>26</sup> Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF [Operation Iraqi Freedom OIF]) commenced on October 2001 in response to the September 11 terrorists attack; longest sustained conflicts in U.S. history <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RS21405.pdf>

**Table 1: Frequency Distribution for Sociodemographic Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	Frequency	Percent	Valid (n)
<b>Combat Deployment</b>			
deployed, but not to Iraq/Afghanistan	369	22.8	
deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan	1210	74.9	
			<b>1579</b>
<b>Spouse Gender</b>			
Female	1561	96.6	
Male	54	3.3	
			<b>1615</b>
<b>Spouse Race</b>			
non-whites	564	34.9	
non-Hispanic whites	1040	64.4	
			<b>1604</b>
<b>Paygrade</b>			
E1 to E4	523	32.4	
E5 to E9	640	39.6	
O1 to O3 (W1 to W5)	299	18.5	
O4 to O6	153	9.5	
			<b>1615</b>
<b>Spouse Education</b>			
High School diploma or equivalent (or 12 years or less/no diploma)	360	22.3	
Some college credit, but no degree	640	39.6	
Associate's degree (AA, AS, or equivalent)	202	12.5	
Bachelor's degree (BA, BS, AB, or equivalent)	293	18.1	
Graduate degree (Master's, doctoral, or professional degree)	114	7.1	
			<b>1609</b>
<b>Branch of Service</b>			
Army	650	40.2	
Navy	329	20.3	
Marine Corps	422	26.1	
Air Force	215	13.3	
			<b>1616</b>



## 6.4 Dependent variables

### *Marital Quality*

There are three main dependent variables in this study. The first is a marital quality scale. In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the following six-items deriving from Norton's Quality of Marriage Index. Specifically, the sample members were asked about the quality of their marriage using a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree."

- (1) We [My spouse and I] have a good relationship.
- (2) My relationship with my spouse is very stable.
- (3) My relationship with my spouse is strong.
- (4) My relationship with my spouse makes me happy.
- (5) I really feel like part of a team with my spouse.
- (6) I am committed to making my marriage a success.

I kept the coding of the variables as is so that higher scores indicate a more positive value on the particular variable of interest. Therefore, the responses ranged from 1 to 5, with 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree. In terms of missing cases, they are substituted with the mean for each item. After I addressed issues of missing cases through mean imputation, I conducted a factor analysis of the six items listed above. A principal component analysis indicated a single factor. I then examined the reliability of a marital quality scale. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .956, indicating a great degree of reliability. Summary scale statistics

indicate a mean of 26.415 and a standard deviation of 5.154. Descriptive statistics for each item for the sample are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Marital Quality Scale**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Variance</b>
SCALE	1576	40	6 - 30	26.415	5.154	26.568
We have a good relationship	1575	41	1 - 5	4.402	0.926	0.858
My relationship with my spouse is stable	1572	44	1 - 5	4.316	1.007	1.015
My relationship with my spouse is strong	1571	45	1 - 5	4.376	0.970	0.942
My relationship with my spouse makes me happy	1570	46	1 - 5	4.388	0.978	0.955
I feel like part of a team with my spouse	1572	44	1 - 5	4.260	1.079	1.165
I am committed to making my marriage a success	1573	43	1 - 5	4.743	0.634	0.402
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	1556					

Cronbach's Alpha = .956

### *Childcare Management*

The second main dependent variable is childcare management. I assessed how the custodial caregiver manages specific childcare-related issues as factors linking to parenting from a distance. Guided by the literature on transnational parenting, which reveals that frequent communication between distant parents and custodial caregivers reduces the problems custodial caregivers have with managing childcare, I argue that the custodial caregiver's perceptions of childcare management are relevant measures to better understand the influence of behaviors associated with parenting from a distance.

On the survey, respondents were asked to indicate how much various issues of childcare management were a problem for them during their spouse's most recent deployment, using a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from "Very large extent is a problem" to "Not a problem at all." The response scale ranged from 1 to 5, with 1=very large extent is a problem, 2=large extent is a problem, 3=moderate extent is a problem, 4=small extent is a problem, and 5=not a problem at all.

- (1) Managing childcare or child schedules.
- (2) Increased need for childcare.
- (3) Had to find childcare when it was not previously needed.

Recoding the variables was unnecessary because a higher score, in this situation, means that childcare management since deployment is not or is less of a problem – i.e., the scale is measuring successful childcare management. A principal components analysis was conducted to determine the dimensionality for the 3-items of childcare management scale. The analysis indicated a single factor. I then examined the reliability of my variables. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .901, indicating a high degree of

reliability. Summary scale statistics indicate a scale mean for the 3-item scale of 9.686, with a standard deviation of 4.117. Descriptive statistics for each item for the sample are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Childcare Management Scale**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Variance</b>
SCALE	1602	14	3 - 15	9.686	4.117	16.955
Managing child care and child schedules	1592	24	1 - 3	2.885	1.492	2.225
Increased need for child care	1590	26	1 - 3	3.356	1.575	2.484
Had to find child care when not previously needed	1587	29	1 - 3	3.521	1.575	2.479
<i>Valid N (listwise)</i>	1570					

Cronbach's Alpha = .901

### *Child Social Behavioral Outcomes*

The third main dependent variable is child social behavioral outcomes. The variable measuring children's social behavioral outcomes during a parental deployment consists of 11 items. On the survey, the respondents were asked to indicate if their children experienced any behavioral changes since their parent's most recent deployment, based on a four-point Likert scale. The responses ranged from "Don't know" to "Increased," with item values ranging from 1 to 4. One particular response that required careful assessment was the "no change" response. In the dataset and codebook, "no change" responses were assigned a midrange value, indicating that there were no perceived changes in their children's behavior, signifying that the children's behavior stayed the same since parental deployment. The "don't know" responses, on the other hand, seemed to have been given similar values by the respondents, indicating that they were not aware of any changes in their children's behavior since parental deployment. Thus, no perceived changes in their children's behavior. Therefore, the response scale ranged from 1 to 3, with 1=decreased, 2=no change/don't know, and 3=increased.

- (1) Problem behavior at school.
- (2) Problem behavior at home.
- (3) Fear and/or anxiety.
- (4) Distress over discussions of the war in the home, school, or media.
- (5) Anger about spouse's [the child's parent] military requirements.
- (6) Academic performance
- (7) Pride in having a military parent.

- (8) Sense of independence.
- (9) Being responsible.
- (10) Closeness to family members.
- (11) Closeness to friends.

After I recoded my variable items and addressed issues of missing cases through mean imputation, I conducted a factor analysis of the 11 items listed above. A principal component analysis indicated two factors. The first component with items: behavioral problems at school, behavioral problems at home, fear and/or anxiety variables, distress over discussions of the war in the home, school, or media, and lastly, anger about my spouse's [the child's parent] military requirements. The second component with items: academic performance, pride in having a military parent, sense of independence, being responsible, closeness to family members, and closeness to friends.

The behavioral problems at school, behavioral problems at home, fear and/or anxiety variables, as well as distress over discussions of the war in the home, school, or media, and anger about my spouse's [the child's parent] military requirements variables were coded such that higher scores indicate an increase in child adjustment problems. I labeled this combined scale the *Child Adjustment Problem Scale*.

The academic performance, pride in having a military parent, sense of independence, being responsible, closeness to family members, and closeness to friends' variables were also coded such that a higher value means an increase in the frequency of the variable of interest. I labeled these items as *Child Well-Being Scale*. Higher scores on the scale means that the children either experienced a positive behavioral change, which means, for instance, the child grew closer to family and



friends since the parent's deployment or did not change. Lower scores, on the other hand, will represent a negative behavioral change since the parent's deployment.

These behavioral responses are outcome measures that have been used repeatedly in the military family literature and have been shown to be useful (Applewhite and Mays 1996; Cozza et al. 2005; Jensen and Watanabe 1996; Jensen et al. 2005), as such these measures were utilized to test my hypotheses.

A principal components analysis was conducted to determine the dimensionality for the 5-items of *Child Adjustment Problem Scale*, and the analysis indicated a single factor. I then examined the reliability of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .690, indicating an acceptable degree of reliability. Reliability could not be improved by eliminating any of the 5 items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient values of less than .600 are considered poor, reliabilities that are more than .700 are satisfactory and those above .800 are regarded to be good values (Sekaran and Bougie 2016). Therefore, my instrument is in accordance with the acceptable range of .600 to .800 and above Cronbach's alpha coefficient values. The summary statistics indicate a scale mean of 11.562 and a standard deviation of 1.828. Descriptive statistics for *Child Adjustment Problem Scale* are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Child Adjustment Problem Scale**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Variance</b>
SCALE	1568	48	5 - 15	11.562	1.828	3.341
Problem behavior at school	1550	66	1 - 3	2.174	0.443	0.196
Fear and anxiety	1552	64	1 - 3	2.490	0.524	0.275
Problem behavior at home	1549	67	1 - 3	2.463	0.545	0.297
Distress over discussions of the war at home, school, media	1549	67	1 - 3	2.277	0.469	0.220
Anger about military parent's military requirements/duties	1548	68	1 - 3	2.295	0.481	0.231
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	1508					

Cronbach's Alpha = .690

As for the 6-items of the *Child Well-Being Scale*, the analysis indicated a single factor. I then examined the reliability of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .548, indicating a poor degree of reliability. Reliability could be improved by eliminating academic performance. I then examined the reliability of the remaining 5 variables. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale is .637, indicating a moderate degree of reliability. The mean for the 5-item scale is 11.240 and the standard deviation is 1.979. Descriptive statistics for the *Child Well-Being Scale* are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Child Well-Being Scale**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Variance</b>
SCALE	1569	47	5 - 15	11.240	1.979	3.916
Pride in having a military parent	1551	65	1 - 3	2.331	0.520	0.271
Independence	1556	60	1 - 3	2.143	0.635	0.403
Being responsible	1557	59	1 - 3	2.191	0.607	0.368
Closeness to family members	1560	56	1 - 3	2.453	0.606	0.367
Closeness to friends	1550	66	1 - 3	2.224	0.548	0.300
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	1521					

Cronbach's Alpha = .637

## 6.5 Independent variables

### *Frequency of Communication Index*

There are three main independent variables in the analyses. The first primary independent variable taps the characteristics of distant parenting, for instance, those that do not involve face-to-face interaction but rather connections through phone calls, letters, and emails. The frequency of communication scale consists of 7-items, each based on a six-point Likert scale. The respondents were asked to indicate how often the deployed member (distant parent) uses each of the following means to communicate with the at-home parent (active-duty spouse), during the most recent deployment. The responses ranged from “Daily” to “Never,” with item values ranging from 1 to 6.

- (1) Email/Internet
- (2) Commercial Phone
- (3) Defense Systems Network (DSN phone)
- (4) Military Exchange Phone
- (5) Postal/Telegram Services
- (6) Military Video Phone
- (7) Video Teleconference (VTC)

I recoded my variable items such that a higher score indicates more frequent contacts. Prior research suggests that frequent communications will be associated with higher levels of child well-being (Asuncion Fresnoza-Flot 2009; Parrenas 2005; Petty 2009). That is, deployed parents maintain their parenting responsibilities by communicating and perhaps advising across the boundaries of their deployed locations to their children’s home.

In terms of missing values, such as in the case that a respondent indicated “Daily” to an item for commercial telephone, but missing value for the item DSN (military) telephone, they will be replaced with the mean score of the combined sample for each item. I justify this procedure by assuming that those respondents who have missing values for one of the items for means of communication are, nevertheless, by some other means communicating with the deployed spouse (parent). After I recoded my variable items and addressed issues of missing cases, I examined the reliability of my variables and conducted a dimension reduction factor analysis. The correlation matrix indicated a KMO of .593, which is moderately acceptable. The Bartlett’s test of Sphericity is at .000 level, which is significant. A reliability test provided a Cronbach’s alpha of .420, indicating a low degree of reliability. Omitting any of the items could not improve the alpha. Therefore, I could not justify the creation of means of communication scale.

While it may be the case that communication has varying influences based on whether communication was interactive in nature, for instance, via telephone calls (military provided or personal) or if a televideo image was available (military provided or personal), I was not able to tease that out with my factor analyses. Instead I focus on the more general question of frequency of communication between the deployed and at-home spouse by creating a single count variable that reflects frequency of communication between the at-home spouse and deployed member and treated each method of communication as an individual variable. I labeled this the *Frequency of Communication Index*<sup>27</sup>. This index sums the responses to the seven individual items

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<sup>27</sup> Index of Frequency of Communication analyses were performed with each modes of communication as its own variable, but the results did not show significance.

and produces a possible range of 7 (respondents who answered “never” to all the questions) to 42 (respondents who answered “daily” to every question). Summary statistics indicate a mean score of 15.463 and a standard deviation of 4.404. Descriptive statistics for frequency of communication index are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Frequency of Communication Index**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Variance</b>
INDEX	1616	7 -42	15.463	4.404	19.403
Email	1616	1 -6	4.395	1.558	2.429
Phone	1616	1 -6	2.794	1.699	2.887
Defense System Network (DSN)	1616	1 -6	2.629	1.648	2.719
Military Exchange Phone	1616	1 -6	1.690	1.363	1.869
Postal Services	1616	1 -6	1.837	1.186	1.407
Military Televideo	1616	1 -6	1.006	0.427	0.182
Video Teleconference	1616	1 -6	1.112	0.627	0.393
<i>Valid N (listwise)</i>	1616				

KMO = .593; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = .000 significance level

Note: Missing values were replaced with Series Mean.



### *Deployment Location*

My second main independent variable is deployment location. On the survey, the sample members were asked to indicate if their spouse (active-duty member/parent) was, or is currently, deployed to the following locations since September 11, 2001.

- (1) In one of the 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory or possession
- (2) Iraq
- (3) Afghanistan
- (4) Other North Africa, Near East or South Asia country (i.e. Bahrain, Diego Garcia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia)
- (5) Europe (i.e. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, Serbia, United Kingdom)
- (6) Former Soviet Union (i.e. Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)
- (7) East Asia and Pacific (i.e. Australia, Japan, Korea)
- (8) Sub-Saharan Africa (i.e. Kenya, Liberia, South Africa)
- (9) Western Hemisphere (i.e. Cuba, Honduras, Peru)
- (10) Other

In the data, the variable *deployment status*, that is, the deployment location of the sample member's spouse, was collapsed to a two-item category, "member deploy status Iraq/Afghanistan" and "member not deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan." This survey item was considered a confidential variable by the research survey team 2006 ADSS.

Therefore, collapsing the survey item, according to the 2006 ADSS, from a ten-category to a two-category item was necessary to protect the anonymity of the respondents and non-respondents. For the purpose of this research, I created a dummy variable for deployment location, where one equals "Deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan" and zero

equals “Deployed, but not to Iraq or Afghanistan,” I labeled this variable as *Combat Deployment*. Descriptive statistics for deployment location are presented in Table 7.

#### *Member’s Paygrade/Rank*

The third primary independent variable is paygrade/rank. Members’ paygrade or rank is a reliable proxy for educational attainment because a two-year college education is required to become a warrant officer and a four-year college degree is a requirement for commissioned officers. Enlisted members, on the other hand, only require a high school education or equivalent. In addition, paygrade or rank also denotes the level of income for military members, which captures the individual’s socioeconomic status.

All services with the exception of the Air Force utilize the warrant officer corps. Warrant officers are commissioned officers, but typically serve in a more technical and specialized role within their units. Warrant officers are higher ranking than senior enlisted personnel (E5-E9), but lower ranking than junior officers (O1-O3). A useful and a more comprehensive strategy in dealing with the interpretation of rank in this research is to create an ordinal variable that captures all the ranks. Due to the low numbers of warrant officers and specific requirements to become a warrant officer, I combined the warrant officer grade (W1-W5) with the junior officers (O1-O3). Not only are warrant officers commissioned officers, but they are also college educated (2-year college) with specialized-technical training. With that said, I recoded “E1-E4” responses to equal to one, “E5-E9” responses to equal to two, “W1-W5” and “O1-O3” responses to equal to three, and “O4-O6” responses to equal to four.

The use of members' paygrade or rank in the analyses implies that educational level may have some influence on individual's parenting style (Coltrane et al. 2004). About 32.4 percent were E1-E4, 39.6 percent were E5-E9, 18.5 percent were a combined sample of O1-O3 and W1-W5, and lastly 9.5 percent were O4-O6, indicating that the bulk of the respondents' spouses belonged in the ranks or paygrade E5s through E9s. I labeled this variable *Paygrade*. Descriptive statistics for paygrade are presented in Table 7 (see also Table 1 for frequency distribution).

## **6.6 Sociodemographic variables**

### *Respondent's Gender*

I created a dummy variable for spouse's gender in which females were coded as zero and males coded as one. I labeled this variable as *Spouse Gender (Male)*. The variable gender has a mean of .033 and a standard deviation of .180, indicating a significantly lower number of male respondents than female respondents in the sample. About 3.3 percent of the respondents are male (deployed mothers) and about 96.6 percent are female respondents (deployed fathers). This is expected since active-duty spouses are more likely to be wives. Thus, I expected to have a larger number of deployed fathers than deployed mothers. Descriptive statistics for respondent's gender are presented in Table 7 (see also Table 1 for frequency distribution).

### *Respondent's Race and Ethnicity*

In terms of the race and ethnicity variable, respondents were asked to mark one or more races to indicate what they considered themselves to be (i.e. White; Black or African American; American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian e.g., Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

e.g., Samoan, Guamanian or Chomorro) and in a separate question, respondents were asked, if it applies, to indicate Spanish/Hispanic/Latino ethnic identity. Unfortunately, however, the race and ethnicity variables were considered confidential variables and therefore recoded by the research team as a dichotomous variable labeled: “Non-Hispanic white” and “Total minority.” In accordance with the “1997 Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity,” the race and ethnic categories were combined and broken down into a dichotomous variable to protect the anonymity of the respondents (DMDC 2006:30).

DMDC categorized respondents as “White” if they identified themselves as non-Hispanic whites only. The remaining respondents were aggregated together as “Total Minority,” if they identified themselves as anything besides non-Hispanic whites, including those indicating biracial/multi-racial. I created a dummy variable, such that “Total minority” responses equal zero and relabeled as “non-whites,” and “non-Hispanic whites” responses were recoded to equal one. While the dichotomous measure of race/ethnic variables provides an acceptable control for the influence of race/ethnicity, it does not, however, allow me to draw conclusions about specific minority groups. This limits my ability to ascertain race differentials on distant parenting approaches. I labeled this variable as *Spouse Race (non-Hispanic white)*.

Given the nature of the data, the race and ethnic variable denotes the spouses’ race and ethnicity and not the deployed parents. There was no information on the race of the deployed spouse because the dataset is about active-duty spouses. This limits the assessment of racial differentials on distant parenting strategies. The variable *Spouse Race* has a mean of .648 and a standard deviation of .477, indicating a larger number of

non-Hispanic white respondents than non-white respondents in the sample. About 34.9 percent of the respondents were non-whites and 64.4 percent of the respondents were non-Hispanic whites. Descriptive statistics for spouse race are presented in Table 7 (see also Table 1 for frequency distribution).

### *Respondent's Education*

In the survey respondents were asked to indicate the highest degree or level of education they have completed, with values ranging from 1 to 7 (i.e., 12 years or less with no diploma, high school graduate or equivalent, some college credit but less than a year, 1 or more years of college but no degree, Associate's degree or equivalent, Bachelor's degree or equivalent, and Master's, doctoral, or professional school degree). The variable education is considered an ordinal variable, assigned from lowest (12 years or less with no diploma) to highest (Master's, doctoral, or professional school degree) levels of educational experience/attainment.

I recoded the variables such that "12 years or less (no diploma)" and "high school graduate (high school diploma, GED, or equivalent)" responses equal to one, "Some college some college credit but less than a year" and "1 or more years of college but no degree" responses equal to two, "Associate's degree or equivalent (AA, AS)" responses equal to three, "Bachelor's degree or equivalent (BA, AB, BS)" responses equal to four, and lastly "Master's, doctoral, or professional school degree (MA, MS, Meng, MBA, MSW, PhD, MD, JD, DVM) responses equal to five. I labeled this variable as *Spouse Education*<sup>28</sup>. The variable *Spouse Education* has a mean 2.479 and a standard deviation 1.220. The majority of the respondents have some college credit but

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<sup>28</sup> Educational level of the military spouse was not available in the data, hence, the use of paygrade/rank as a proxy for education and SES.

no official degree attained. The use of spouse education in the analyses suggests that educational level may have some influence on a person's child rearing practices (Coltrane et al. 2004). Descriptive statistics for spouse education are presented in Table 7 (see also Table 1 for frequency distribution).

### *Branch of Service*

Military service branch was also used to examine the differing effects of deployment on marital quality, distant parenting, and children's social behavioral outcomes across all four active-duty branches<sup>29</sup>. The four active-duty branches of the military have different functions and thus length, and at times location of deployments may also differ. The Army is the main ground force of the United States with its main function as the protector and defender by way of ground troops, armor, artillery, tactical nuclear weapons, just to name a few (Powers 2011). Army's typical length of deployment is about 12 months and more often in combat zones (Powers 2007). This is not to say, however, that Army personnel do not deploy to non-combat zones.

The Navy and Marines, on the other hand, function as the defenders and protectors of the seas. The Navy's primary mission is to "maintain the freedom of the seas" (Powers 2011:2). In addition, the Navy not only assists to facilitate Air Force air power, but they are also mainly responsible for transporting Marines in conflict-combat zones (Power 2011). The Navy and Marines typical deployment is about 7 months. Lastly is the Air Force, the youngest out of all the active-duty branches, whose primary function is to defend and protect the United States and its interest by way of air and space operation (Powers 2011). Air Force typical length of deployment is 4 months.

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<sup>29</sup> There are no measures of deployment length or average length by location, in general. Therefore, branch of service is utilized, in part, as a proxy for deployment length.

Keep in mind, that within each branch, deployment lengths also vary by the type of jobs.

The branch of service is a categorical variable, used to assess the effects of combat deployment on marital quality, parenting, and child well-being, among the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force respondents. Dummy variables were created for each branch of service, with Army serving as the reference group. In the data, 40.2 percent of the respondents belonged in the Army, 20.3 percent were in the Navy, 26.1 percent were Marine Corps, and 13.3 percent were Air Force. Descriptive statistics for branch of service are presented in Table 7 (see also Table 1 for frequency distribution).

**Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Sociodemographic Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Combat Deployment	1579	37	0 - 1	0.766	0.423	0.179
Spouse Gender (Male)	1615	1	0 - 1	0.033	0.180	0.032
Spouse Race (non-Hispanic white)	1604	12	0 - 1	0.648	0.477	0.228
Paygrade	1615	1	1 - 4	2.050	0.941	0.866
Spouse Education	1609	7	1 - 5	2.479	1.220	1.487
Army	1616	0	0 - 1	0.402	0.491	0.241
Navy	1616	0	0 - 1	0.204	0.403	0.162
Marine Corps	1616	0	0 - 1	0.261	0.439	0.193
Air Force	1616	0	0 - 1	0.133	0.340	0.115
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	1561					

*Note:* 0=Deployed, but not to Iraq/Afghanistan, 1=Deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan. 0=Female, 1=Male. 0=non-whites, 1=non-Hispanic whites.



## 6.7 Contextual control variables

There were additional control variables besides the respondent's sociodemographic characteristics that were used in this study, and which are particularly relevant to the study of military families. These contextual control variables are important familial factors that reflect aspects of quality of life and the importance of communication. Four items were selected to represent the different contextual respondents' characteristics. The items were: overall stress, work/life balance, importance of communication with the deployed spouse, and importance of communication with the deployed parent. Although these items can be easily associated with individuals in the civilian sector, they represent the unique characteristics that also pertain to military members. For instance, balancing work and family life while a spouse is in a combat zone may have vastly different implications to one's overall stress level, compared to individuals in the civilian sector. As such, these variables are essential predictors of the outcomes of interest and need to be controlled for. These items are presented in Table 8.

### *Level of Stress*

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate the current level of stress in their personal life using a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from "Much less than usual" to "Much more than usual." Variables were recoded so that higher scores indicate higher levels of stress. The response ranged from 1 to 5 with 1=much less than usual, 2=less than usual, 3=about the same as usual, 4=more than usual and 5=much more than usual. The variable level of stress has a mean of 3.785 and a standard deviation of .928. Based on the mean, respondents indicated that their stress level was

“about the same usual” to “more than usual” during the time of survey administration. Since the overall level of stress in one’s personal life might affect marital quality and distant parenting, it is important that the level of stress variable was included in the analyses as a control variable. I labeled this variable *Overall Stress*. Descriptive statistics for level of stress are presented in Table 8.

#### *Work/Life Balance*

In the survey, respondents (at-home spouses) were asked to evaluate their satisfaction with their spouses’ (uniformed family member) ability to balance work priorities with personal life using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Very dissatisfied” to “Very satisfied.” Item responses were kept as is, so that higher scores indicated a more positive value on the item of interest, with values ranging from 1 to 5. The responses are: 1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=neither, 4=satisfied, and 5=very satisfied. The variable work/life balance has a mean of 3.277 and a standard deviation of 1.187. Based on the mean, respondents indicated that they were “neither” satisfied nor dissatisfied with their spouse’s ability to balance work and family life during the time of survey administration. The ability to balance personal and work life effectively can serve as a protective factor that safeguards families from the stresses imposed by military experience. I labeled this variable *Work/Life Balance*. Descriptive statistics for work/life balance are presented in Table 8.

#### *Importance of Communication with the Deployed Spouse*

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate the importance of communicating with their deployed spouse about their ability to cope with deployments, using a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from “Not important” to “Very important.”

The values for the variable were kept as is so that higher values indicated a more positive value on the item of interest. The responses ranged from 1 to 5, with 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=moderately important, 4=important, and 5=very important. The variable importance of communication with the deployed spouse has a mean 4.888 and a standard deviation of .443. Based on the mean, respondents indicated that communication with the deployed spouse was “very important” in their ability to cope with deployments. The rationale for the inclusion of this variable is that communication plays an important role when a service member is physically absent. Active communication is essential in sustaining successful relationships. More importantly, frequent communication, with the assumption that the context is a positive one, also improves morale for both the service member and those left behind. I labeled this variable *Importance of Communication with the Deployed Spouse (S)*. Descriptive statistics for communication with the deployed spouse are presented in Table 8.

#### *Importance of Communication with the Deployed Parent*

In the survey, respondents were asked to rate the importance of communicating with the deployed parent about children’s ability to cope with deployments, using a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from “Not important” to “Very important.” The values for the variable were kept as is so that higher values indicated a more positive value on the item of interest, with values ranging from 1 to 5. The responses are: 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=moderately important, 4=important, and 5=very important. This variable captures the communication between the at-home parent and deployed uniformed family member. The variable importance of communication with the deployed parent has a mean 4.693 and a standard deviation

of .767. Based on the mean, respondents indicated that communication with the deployed parent was “very important” in their children’s ability to cope with deployments. I labeled this variable *Importance of Communication with the Deployed Parent (P)*. Descriptive statistics for communication with the deployed parent are presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Contextual Variables**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Importance of Communication (P)	1570	46	1 - 5	4.693	0.767	0.588
Importance of Communication (S)	1609	7	1 - 5	4.888	0.443	0.196
Work/Life Balance	1606	10	1 - 5	3.277	1.187	1.410
Overall Stress	1497	119	1 - 5	3.785	0.928	0.861
<i>Valid N (listwise)</i>	1456					

*Note:* Importance of Communication (P) refers to the deployed parent. Importance of Communication (S) refers to the deployed spouse.

## Chapter 7: Results and Analyses

### 7.1 Marital Quality (Hypothesis 1)

I conducted ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses to predict marital quality (see Table 9). Model 1 indicated that combat deployment was not a significant predictor of marital quality. The regression coefficients for combat deployment were not significant in Model 1 or any of the subsequent models, in contrast to Hypothesis 1a, which predicted that deployment to hostile locations would be associated with lower relational quality of military marriages.

In Model 2, the variable frequency of communication index was added to the regression. The coefficients for the frequency of communication index (FCI) were positively correlated with marital quality scale, models 2 to 4 ( $\beta=.129, .125, .120$ , respectively). In other words, more frequent communication with the deployed family member predicted higher scores on the marital quality scale. The variable importance of communication with the deployed spouse was also added to Model 2. The coefficient for importance of communication with the deployed spouse was correlated with marital quality scale. Respondents who indicated that communication with the deployed family member was important, scored higher on the marital quality scale, models 2 to 4 ( $\beta=.307, .221, .221$ , respectively).

Model 3 included spouse gender, spouse race, paygrade, and spouse education to the regression. The analysis indicated that male respondents (with deployed female service members) scored lower on the marital quality scale than female respondents, models 3 to 5 ( $\beta=-.070, -.069, -.045$ , respectively). The variable spouse race and paygrade was statistically significant through Models 3 to 5. The coefficients for

spouse race were positive ( $\beta=.050$ ,  $.048$ ,  $.082$ , respectively), indicating that non-Hispanic white respondents scored higher on marital quality scale. Paygrade was statistically significant at  $.000$  level in Model 3 ( $\beta=.126$ ) and remained so in subsequent models, ( $\beta=.123$ ,  $\beta=.081$ , respectively). The coefficients for paygrade are positive, indicating that as paygrade (rank) increased, so did scores on the marital quality scale.

Models 4 and 5 in Table 9 show that the coefficient for Navy is negative, indicating that compared to Army respondents, Navy respondents score lower on the marital quality scale ( $\beta=-.057$   $\beta=-.056$ ), in contrast to Hypothesis 1b, which predicted that Army respondents would score lower on the marital quality scale than Navy, Marine Corps, or Air Force respondents. Air Force respondents scored lower on marital quality scale ( $\beta=-.053$ ) than Army respondents but was only statistically significant in Model 5 when contextual variables were added to the model.

In Model 5, work/life balance, overall stress, and an interaction variable (Frequency of communication index \* Importance of communication with the deployed spouse) were added to the regression model. Respondents who reported greater satisfaction with how the uniform family member balances work/life priorities scored higher on the marital quality scale ( $\beta=.368$ ). Respondents who reported higher level of stress scored lower on marital quality scale ( $\beta=-.046$ ). When work/life balance and overall stress are added to the model, frequency of communication and importance of communication are no longer significant predictors of marital quality, suggesting that the effects of the communication variables work through the context variables.

Due to the significance of both the frequency and the importance of communication in prior models, I assessed whether the effects of frequency of

communication on marital quality is stronger for those who think communication with the deployed spouse was important. After running the regression analysis, the result indicated that the coefficient for the interaction variable (Frequency of communication index \* Importance of communication with the deployed spouse) was not significant.



**Table 9: Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Marital Quality for Deployed-Spouse Families**

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.
Combat Deployment	.384 (.315)	.032	.223	.398 (.304)	.033	.191	.257 (.303)	.022	.396	-.039 (.342)	-.003	.908	.095 (.316)	.008	.764
Frequency of Communication Index (FCI)	.156 (.031)	.129	.000***	.151 (.031)	.125	.000***	.146 (.031)	.125	.000***	.146 (.031)	.120	.000***	-.497 (.364)	-.410	.172
Importance of Communication (S)	2.666 (.307)	.307	.000***	2.658 (.304)	.221	.000***	2.653 (.305)	.221	.000***	2.653 (.305)	.221	.000***	1.048 (1.068)	.087	.327
Spouse Gender (Male)				-2.080 (.751)	-.070	.006**	-2.057 (.754)	-.069	.006**	-2.057 (.754)	-.069	.006**	-1.329 (.696)	-.045	.047*
Spouse Race (non-Hispanic white)				.533 (.275)	.050	.043*	.516 (.276)	.048	.049*	.516 (.276)	.048	.049*	.883 (.257)	.082	.001**
Paygrade				.671 (.155)	.126	.000***	.653 (.156)	.123	.000***	.653 (.156)	.123	.000***	.432 (.145)	.081	.003**
Spouse Education				-.134 (.119)	-.032	.261	-.127 (.119)	-.031	.288	-.127 (.119)	-.031	.288	-.010 (.110)	-.002	.928
Navy							-.728 (.391)	-.057	.048*	-.728 (.391)	-.057	.048*	-.719 (.360)	-.056	.036*
Marine Corps							.052 (.319)	.005	.870	.052 (.319)	.005	.870	-.300 (.295)	-.026	.308
Air Force							-.194 (.422)	-.013	.646	-.194 (.422)	-.013	.646	-.786 (.391)	-.053	.045*
Work/Life Balance													1.565 (.105)	.368	.000***
Overall Stress													-.253 (.134)	-.046	.049*
FCI * Importance of Comm (S)													.115 (.074)	.498	.119
<b>Constant</b>	<b>26.241</b>			<b>10.776</b>			<b>9.652</b>			<b>10.17</b>			<b>15.033</b>		
<b>R-Square</b>	<b>.001</b>			<b>.072</b>			<b>.095</b>			<b>.097</b>			<b>.235</b>		

*Note:* Valid (n=1435). Standard errors are reported in parentheses. 1=Deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan, 0=Not Deployed, but not to Iraq/Afghanistan. Frequency of Communication Index (FCI). Importance of Communication (S) with the deployed spouse. Referent category for Branch of Service is Army. Significance level at p < .050\*, p < .010\*\*, p < .000\*\*\*.

## 7.2 Childcare Management (Hypothesis 2)

OLS regression analyses of childcare management on combat deployment, frequency of communication index, importance of communication with the deployed parent and spouse, sociodemographic variables, branch of service, contextual variables and an interaction term variable are presented in Table 10. Recall that a high score on this scale indicates that the at-home parent reports that they are successfully managing childcare. Model 1 shows that the effect of combat deployment on childcare management was not statistically significant throughout all models. Model 2 includes frequency of communication index, importance of communication with the deployed parent and spouse on childcare management. The regression coefficient for frequency of communication index was statistically significant for both Models 2 and 3 ( $\beta=.035$ ). The positive coefficient indicates that more frequent communication with the deployed parent predicts more positive experiences with finding childcare and managing child schedules. This finding partially supports Hypothesis 2a. Conversely, the coefficient for importance of communication with the deployed parent was inversely correlated with childcare management scale. Respondents who scored higher on the importance of communication with the deployed parent scored lower on the childcare management scale, Models 2 through 4 ( $\beta=-.068, -.069, -.070$ ). Worth noting, the coefficient in Model 5 ( $\beta=-.140$ ) while not statistically significant at .050 level was at .065 level.

Model 3 in Table 10 adds spouse gender, spouse race, paygrade and spouse education. Spouse gender, paygrade and spouse education were significant predictors of childcare management and remained statistically significant throughout all models. The coefficient ( $\beta=-.075$ ) for spouse gender was statistically significant, indicating that

at-home husbands with a deployed wife (distant mother) scored lower on the childcare management scale than at-home wives with a deployed husband (distant father) – suggesting that fathers struggle more with managing childcare-related issues. This variable remained statistically significant through Models 4 and 5 ( $\beta=-.080, -.064$ ) at .010 significance level. The regression coefficients for paygrade in Models 3 through 5 were statistically significant ( $\beta=.115, .110, .068$ , respectively), indicating the respondents whose paygrade were higher had fewer problems with managing childcare-related issues. The regression coefficients for spouse education were also statistically significant throughout all models ( $\beta=-.160, -.161, -.132$ , respectively), but inversely correlated with childcare management.

Model 4 adds the branch of service to the regression but was not statistically significant in any of the models. Model 5 includes work/life balance, overall stress and an interaction term variable (Frequency of communication index \* Importance of communication with the deployed parent). Work/life balance was positively correlated with childcare management, indicating that respondents who reported greater satisfaction with how the uniform family member balances work/life priorities had fewer problems with managing childcare-related issues ( $\beta=.241$ ). Respondents who reported higher level of stress scored lower on childcare management scale ( $\beta=-.214$ ).

Frequency of communication (Models 2 and 3) and importance of communication with the deployed member (Models 2, 3 and 4) were significant for childcare management, in partial support of Hypothesis 2. That is, frequency of communication between the deployed parent and at-home caregiver and the importance

of its communication with the deployed parent, to some extent mitigate childcare-related issues.

Model 5 adds the interaction term (Frequency of communication index \* Importance of communication with the deployed parent). The regression analysis indicated that the interaction term was not significant, in contrast to Hypothesis 2b, which predicted that the effect of frequency of communication between the deployed parent and the at-home caregiver would differ by how important the at-home parent rated communication with the deployed parent.

**Table 10: Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Childcare Management for Deployed-Spouse Families**

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.
Combat Deployment	.279 (.256)	.029	.275	.279 (.255)	.029	.275	.189 (.254)	.020	.458	.118 (.287)	.012	.680	.269 (.269)	.028	.318
Frequency of Communication Index (FCI)	.035 (.026)	.035	.049*	.035 (.026)	.035	.048*	.035 (.026)	.035	.048*	.028 (.026)	.028	.054	-.157 (.123)	-.160	.183
Importance of Communication (P)	-.360 (.143)	-.068	.012**	-.360 (.143)	-.069	.010**	-.367 (.142)	-.069	.010**	-.373 (.142)	-.070	.009**	-.739 (.415)	-.140	.065
Importance of Communication (S)	-.264 (.266)	-.027	.321	-.264 (.266)	-.033	.244	-.320 (.263)	-.033	.244	-.361 (.264)	-.037	.171	-.200 (.248)	-.020	.420
Spouse Gender (Male)				-1.826 (.642)	-.075	.004**	-1.938 (.644)	-.075	.004**	-1.938 (.644)	-.080	.003**	-1.546 (.603)	-.064	.010**
Spouse Race (non-Hispanic white)				-.035 (.232)	-.004	.879	-.035 (.232)	-.004	.879	-.077 (.233)	-.009	.739	.334 (.219)	.039	.129
Paygrade				.492 (.131)	.115	.000***	.474 (.131)	.115	.000***	.474 (.131)	.110	.000***	.291 (.123)	.068	.018*
Spouse Education				-.533 (.100)	-.160	.000***	-.533 (.100)	-.160	.000***	-.539 (.100)	-.161	.000***	-.441 (.094)	-.132	.000***
Navy							-.403 (.328)	-.039	.220	-.403 (.328)	-.039	.220	-.404 (.307)	-.039	.189
Marine Corps							.066 (.269)	.007	.805	.066 (.269)	.007	.805	-.132 (.252)	-.014	.601
Air Force							.569 (.355)	.355	.109	.569 (.355)	.355	.109	.118 (.334)	.010	.725
Work/Life Balance							.830 (.090)	.241	.000***	.830 (.090)	.241	.000***	.830 (.090)	.241	.000***
Overall Stress							-.950 (.114)	-.214	.000***	-.950 (.114)	-.214	.000***	-.950 (.114)	-.214	.000***
FCI * Imp of Comm (P)							.029 (.026)	.167	.264	.029 (.026)	.167	.264	.029 (.026)	.167	.264
<b>Constant</b>		<b>9.517</b>			<b>11.954</b>			<b>12.718</b>			<b>13.173</b>			<b>15.547</b>	
<b>R-Square</b>		<b>.001</b>			<b>.008</b>			<b>.034</b>			<b>.038</b>			<b>.161</b>	

*Note:* Valid (n=1406). Standard errors are reported in parentheses. 1=Deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan, 0=Not Deployed, but not to Iraq/Afghanistan. Frequency of Communication Index (FCI). Importance of Communication (P) with the deployed parent and (S) spouse. Referent category for Branch of Service is Army. Significance level at p < .050\*, p < .010\*\*, p < .000\*\*\*.

### **7.3 Children's Social Behavioral Outcomes (Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5)**

I conducted ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to analyze children's social behavioral outcomes (see Table 11 and 12). OLS regression analyses of children's adjustment problems on combat deployment, frequency of communication, importance of communication with the deployed spouse and parent, including sociodemographic variables, branch of service, contextual control variables and interaction variables are presented on Table 11. In Model 1 the regression coefficient ( $\beta=.088$ ) for combat deployment was statistically significant at .010 level and remained so through Model 4 ( $\beta=.087$ ,  $\beta=.076$ ,  $\beta=.062$ ). This finding indicated that deployment to a combat zone predicts child adjustment problems, partially supporting Hypothesis 4a. As was the case with other independent variables in Tables 9 and 10, the effects of combat deployment on child adjustment problems appear to work through the work/life balance and overall stress variables.

In Model 2, frequency of communication index, importance of communication with the deployed parent and spouse were added to the regression model. The regression coefficient for frequency of communication index was inversely correlated and statistically significant. Respondents who communicated more frequently with the deployed uniform family member scored lower on child adjustment problem scale. Model 2 in Table 11 also showed that the importance of communication with the deployed parent ( $\beta=.210$ ,  $.213$ ,  $.213$ ) and spouse ( $\beta=.055$ ,  $.053$ ,  $.058$ ) on child adjustment problems was statistically significant through Models 2 to 4, however, loses significance in Model 5 when the contextual variables were added.

Model 3 includes spouse gender, spouse race, paygrade and spouse education to the regression. The effect of paygrade on child adjustment problems did not support Hypothesis 5a, which would have predicted that families whose paygrade or rank was lower will report higher levels of child adjustment problems during parental deployment. The regression coefficient for spouse race was statistically significant at .000 level and remained significant through subsequent models ( $\beta=.113$ ,  $.118$ ,  $.090$ , respectively). This variable indicated that non-Hispanic white respondents reported more child adjustment problems since parental deployment than non-white respondents.

Model 4 adds branch of service to the regression model. The analyses showed that the coefficient for Marines ( $\beta=-.063$ ) was statistically significant at .050 level and remained significant in Model 5 ( $\beta=-.052$ ) at 0.50 level. This finding is in contrast to Hypothesis 4b, which predicted that children's social behavioral outcomes would be poorer for children whose parents are in the Army than for those whose parents are in the other service branches<sup>30</sup>. Lastly, contextual variables were added to the regression in Model 5, Table 11. The analyses showed that the coefficient for overall stress ( $\beta=.176$ ) was statistically significant at .000 level, indicating that respondents who scored high on overall stress, reported that their children were having adjustment problems. Conversely, when work/life balance variable was included, the coefficient ( $\beta=-.064$ ) indicated inverse correlations with child adjustment problems. The coefficient ( $\beta=.268$ ) for the interaction variable (Frequency of communication index \*

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<sup>30</sup> Regression analysis of child adjustment problems on branch of service was not statistically significant for the Navy and the Air Force.

Importance of communication with the deployed parent) was not statistically significant (.068), however, worth noting because of its proximity to the 95% confidence interval.



**Table 11: Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Child Adjustment for Deployed-Spouse Families**

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.
Combat Deployment	.366 (.110)	.088	.001**	.360 (.108)	.087	.001**	.315 (.107)	.076	.003**	.255 (.121)	.062	.035*	.204 (.118)	.049	.085
Frequency of Communication Index (FCI)				-.175 (.079)	-.059	.025*	-.174 (.079)	-.058	.024*	-.186 (.077)	-.061	.021*	-.292 (.183)	-.116	.093
Importance of Communication (P)				.480 (.060)	.210	.000***	.487 (.060)	.213	.000***	.485 (.060)	.213	.000***	.159 (.183)	.070	.386
Importance of Communication (S)				.230 (.112)	.055	.040*	.225 (.111)	.053	.042*	.245 (.111)	.058	.027*	.196 (.109)	.046	.072
Spouse Gender (Male)				-.097 (.266)	-.009	.716	-.097 (.266)	-.009	.716	-.072 (.267)	-.007	.787	-.139 (.262)	-.014	.594
Spouse Race (non-Hispanic white)				.422 (.098)	.113	.000***	.422 (.098)	.113	.000***	.444 (.098)	.118	.000***	.339 (.097)	.090	.000***
Paygrade				.204 (.055)	.110	.000***	.212 (.055)	.110	.000***	.212 (.055)	.115	.000***	.255 (.054)	.138	.000***
Spouse Education				-.011 (.042)	-.008	.796	-.011 (.042)	-.008	.796	.005 (.042)	-.003	.908	-.020 (.042)	-.020	.484
Navy							-.155 (.138)	-.035	.260	-.155 (.138)	-.035	.260	-.169 (.135)	-.038	.211
Marine Corps							-.250 (.113)	-.063	.028*	-.250 (.113)	-.063	.028*	-.222 (.111)	-.056	.046*
Air Force							.336 (.150)	-.065	.025*	.336 (.150)	-.065	.025*	-.265 (.147)	-.052	.072
Work/Life Balance										-.095 (.040)			-.095 (.040)	-.064	.016*
Overall Stress										.338 (.051)			.338 (.051)	.176	.000***
FCI * Imp of Comm (P)										.020 (.012)			.020 (.012)	.268	.068
<b>Constant</b>		<b>11.349</b>			<b>8.053</b>			<b>7.426</b>			<b>7.483</b>			<b>8.194</b>	
<b>R-Square</b>		<b>.008</b>			<b>.059</b>			<b>.087</b>			<b>.092</b>			<b>.132</b>	

*Note:* Valid (n=1398). Standard errors are reported in parentheses. 1=Deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan, 0=Not Deployed, but not to Iraq/Afghanistan. Frequency of Communication Index (FCI). Importance of Communication (P) with the deployed parent and (S) spouse. Referent category for Branch of Service is Army. Significance level at p < .050\*, p < .010\*\*, p < .000\*\*\*.

Lastly, I conducted ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses to predict child well-being. Model 1, Table 12 indicated that combat deployment was not a significant predictor of child well-being. The regression coefficients for combat deployment were not statistically significant in any of the subsequent models. Regression analyses in Model 2 adds frequency of communication index, importance of communication with the deployed parent and deployed spouse. Frequency of communication index was not a significant predictor of child well-being. The regression coefficients for frequency of communication index were not statistically significant in any of the subsequent models, in contrast to Hypothesis 3, which predicted that frequent communication between the deployed parent and at-home spouse would result in better outcomes for children. Importance of communication with the deployed parent was statistically at .010 level in Models 2, 3 and 4 but loses significance in Model 5.

Model 3 adds spouse gender, spouse race, paygrade and spouse education in the regression model. The regression coefficient for spouse race was statistically significant at .050 level and remained significant through Model 4 only ( $\beta = -.051, -.054$ , respectively). This variable indicated that non-Hispanic white respondents reported fewer child positive child well-being outcomes since parental deployment than non-white respondents. Regression analysis in Model 3, Table 12 indicated the effect of paygrade on child well-being was positive and statistically significant at .000 level and through subsequent models. Spouse gender and spouse education, however, were not statistically significant throughout all models.

Model 4 included branches of service to the regression model and the analyses showed that the variables were not statistically significant in predicting child well-

being. In Model 5, contextual factors and interaction variable were added. The estimated effects of paygrade remained significant, which supports Hypothesis 5b. The findings thus indicated that military families whose paygrade or rank is higher reported better child well-being outcomes.

Finally, in Model 5, Table 12, work/life balance, overall stress and variables interaction variable (Frequency of communication index \* Importance of communication with the deployed parent) were added to the model. The regression analyses indicated that respondents who reported higher levels of stress scored lower on child well-being scale ( $\beta = -.087$ ). On the other hand, respondents who indicated greater satisfaction with how the uniformed family member balances work duties and personal life reported that their children were doing well ( $\beta = .123$ ). However, the coefficient for the interaction between frequency of communication and importance of communication with the deployed parent was not statistically significant.

**Table 12: Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Child Well-Being for Deployed-Spouse Families**

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.
Combat Deployment	.147 (.123)	.032	.233	.141 (.123)	.031	.250	.153 (.138)	.033	.212	.056 (.138)	.012	.684	.085 (.137)	.018	.535
Frequency of Communication Index (FCI)	.015 (.013)	.032	.236	.010 (.013)	.022	.414	.009 (.013)	.022	.414	.009 (.013)	.019	.473	-.065 (.063)	-.138	.304
Importance of Communication (P)	.192 (.069)	.076	.005**	.179 (.068)	.071	.009**	.180 (.068)	.071	.009**	.180 (.068)	.071	.008**	-.006 (.211)	-.027	.978
Importance of Communication (S)	-.004 (.128)	-.001	.997	-.005 (.127)	.001	.970	-.002 (.127)	.001	.970	-.002 (.127)	.000	.988	.034 (.126)	.007	.789
Spouse Gender (Male)				-.027 (.305)	-.002	.930	-.010 (.306)	-.002	.930	-.010 (.306)	-.001	.974	.095 (.303)	.008	.753
Spouse Race (non-Hispanic white)				-.214 (.112)	-.051	.050*	-.266 (.112)	-.051	.050*	-.266 (.112)	-.054	.044*	-.136 (.112)	-.033	.233
Paygrade				.318 (.063)	.155	.000***	.307 (.063)	.149	.000***	.307 (.063)	.149	.000***	.266 (.063)	.129	.000***
Spouse Education				-.051 (.048)	-.032	.290	-.050 (.048)	-.032	.290	-.050 (.048)	-.030	.303	-.028 (.048)	-.018	.533
Navy							-.186 (.158)	.038	.239	-.186 (.158)	.038	.239	-.189 (.156)	-.038	.227
Marine Corps							.155 (.130)	.035	.234	.155 (.130)	.035	.234	.108 (.129)	.025	.401
Air Force							-.013 (.172)	-.002	.938	-.013 (.172)	-.002	.938	.125 (.170)	-.022	.465
Work/Life Balance							.203 (.046)	.123	.000***	.203 (.046)	.123	.000***	.203 (.046)	.123	.000***
Overall Stress							-.186 (.058)	-.087	.001**	-.186 (.058)	-.087	.001**	-.186 (.058)	-.087	.001**
FCI * Imp of Comm (P)							.013 (.013)	.159	.317	.013 (.013)	.159	.317	.013 (.013)	.159	.317
<b>Constant</b>		<b>11.166</b>			<b>10.058</b>			<b>9.746</b>			<b>9.891</b>			<b>10.773</b>	
<b>R-Square</b>		<b>.001</b>			<b>.008</b>			<b>.028</b>			<b>.031</b>			<b>.058</b>	

*Note:* Valid (n=1398). Standard errors are reported in parentheses. 1=Deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan, 0=Not Deployed, but not to Iraq/Afghanistan. Frequency of Communication Index (FCI). Importance of Communication (P) with the deployed parent and (S) spouse. Referent category for Branch of Service is Army. Significance level at p < .050\*, p < .010\*\*, p < .000\*\*\*.

## Chapter 8: Summary and Conclusion

### 8.1 Summary discussion of the results

Although increased attention has begun to focus on the effects of combat deployment on service members, presenting various conceptualizations of this process can help bridge the gap in the literature and inform future research efforts. This study examined some of the ways through which combat deployment might be correlated to marital quality, distant parenting, and child social behavioral outcomes.

#### *Marital Quality and Deployment*

Family stress theory posits that families either deteriorate or thrive under circumstantial stressors or transitional events (McCubbin 1993). There is also strong evidence that service members deployed to combat zones were more likely to have marital problems than service members who were not deployed to combat locations (IOM 2008). In general, deployment inflicts stress on the family. Therefore, I expected that deployment to a combat or hostile zone (i.e. Iraq/Afghanistan) would create further stress, not only on family life, but also on the relational quality of military marriages. However, I did not find a significant correlation between combat deployment and marital quality. Instead, only five factors were consistently related to marital quality – spouse gender, spouse race, member’s paygrade or rank, branch of service (Navy and Air Force)<sup>31</sup>, contextual, and communication variables.

At-home husbands with a deployed wife were more likely to score lower on marital quality scale when race, paygrade, education, branch of service, work/life

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<sup>31</sup> Navy was statistically significant in Models 4 and 5 at .050 level, but Air Force was only statistically significant in Model 5 at .050 level. See Table 9.

balance, overall stress, and frequency of communication interacting with importance of communication with the deployed spouse were controlled. This result is partially consistent with previous studies, which found that civilian female spouses feel an increased sense of loneliness, marital instability, relationship insecurity, and lack of commitment to their partner when the uniformed member is deployed (Allen et al. 2011; Knobloch and Theiss 2011; Lara-Cinisomo et al. 2011; Sahlstein et al. 2009). Although the results do not show it, the concerns of civilian male spouses maybe similar. Due to the lack of studies of female service members with civilian husbands, it is difficult to confirm if such similarities exist. This variable in the study partially captured the gender differences in perception of quality of marriages between at-home wives with a deployed husband and at-home husbands with a deployed wife.

An important factor that was consistently related to marital quality across all models was paygrade/rank. Respondents with a higher ranking deployed spouse reported better marital quality than their lower ranking counterparts. Paygrade/rank is quite a multifaceted variable because it not only taps families' socioeconomic status, but it also reflects opportunity structure and accessibility to available resources (Booth et al. 2007; Burgess et al. 2003; Huebner et al. 2009). The findings regarding paygrade or rank were consistent with previous research. For instance, Booth and colleagues (2007), on the basis of a review of the effects of military life on families, concluded that the spouses of officers were more likely to be Family Readiness Group (FRG)<sup>32</sup> leaders

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<sup>32</sup> “The Family Readiness Group (FRG) is an officially command-sponsored organization of Family members, volunteers, and Soldiers belonging to a unit, that together provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance, and a network of communications among the Family members, the chain of command, and community resources.”  
[https://www.drum.army.mil/families/Pages/FamilyReadinessGroupDefined\\_lv2.aspx](https://www.drum.army.mil/families/Pages/FamilyReadinessGroupDefined_lv2.aspx)

and hold FRG positions than enlisted spouses and that exposure to such resources benefits family life. Additionally, these spouses feel more supported by various military readiness and support programs than those with enlisted spouses.

Another significant finding was the effect of branch of service on marital quality. Navy spouses reported lower marital quality than Army spouses. This finding was surprising, given that Army deployments during OIF/OEF operations are typically longer than that of the Navy. Lengthy family separations impose stressful challenges on the relational quality of military marriages (Booth et al. 2007). When work/life balance and overall stress variables were added to the analysis, the coefficient for Air Force also became statistically significant. Like Navy spouses, Air Force spouses were more likely to report lower marital quality than Army spouses.

The findings regarding work and personal life balance issues are also consistent with previous research. According to Booth and colleagues (2007), one of the many issues that military spouses identify as a significant demand of military life on their marriage is the ability to balance work duties and family priorities. Respondents who scored higher on the marital quality scale were more likely to express satisfaction with their deployed spouse's ability to balance work and family life.

As far as communication, respondents who scored higher on the marital quality scale were those who expressed that communication is important, as well as those who communicated more often. According to this finding, it seems that those who reported that they have a good, stable, strong, happy, and/or committed relationship were those who perceived that their deployed spouse was able to effectively balance work obligations and family life priorities, and frequently communicated. It is possible that

while couples are happy in their relationship, the effects of deployment, while not statistically significant in this study, will disrupt the normal balance of family life. For instance, happier couples are more likely to share household chores and childcare duties, therefore, when the other partner is absent this could disrupt the normalcy of their marital functioning. Conversely, couples in an unhappy marriage may find personal relief when their spouse is deployed even when the at-home spouse has to perform additional household chores and childcare duties.

#### *Aspects of Distant Parenting*

The proposed theoretical process of distant parenting (related to Hypothesis 2) suggests that aspects of parenting from afar may follow an indirect pathway involving frequency of communication between the deployed service member and the at-home caregiver. Before controls for branch of service were introduced into the model predicting childcare management, frequency of contacts with the deployed service member was positively correlated with the custodial caregiver's management of childcare-related issues. The result from the Models 2 and 3 are consistent with previous studies, which found that writing letters to and receiving letters from the at-home caregivers about children's daily routines and important events, are crucial to good familial ties (Dreby 2006; Military.com 2018; Parrenas 2005). Parenting is challenging in itself, all the more so when having to parent from a distance. Therefore, maintaining a good connection with the at-home caregiver may provide a sense of parental fulfillment for the distant parent. Knowing that any childcare-related issues are under control can be reassuring for a parent that is physically absent. In addition, frequent receipt of care packages and recorded letters from at-home caregivers is a



process through which deployed service members parent from a distance (Military.com 2018).

The analyses did not support Hypothesis 2b, which predicted that the effect of frequent communication will be stronger for those who rate communication as important. Frequency of communication may not have a direct effect on the at-home caregiver's management of childcare-related issues, but rather the regular contacts may indirectly affect distant parenting. It is possible that the focus on frequency of contact rather than the context of communications, changed the predicted direction of the results. For instance, perhaps it is not just how often communication occurs, but how productive, helpful, constructive, and beneficial the context of the communication is to the relational health of the family, and thus childcare management. Additionally, investigation may be warranted in studying how the interaction between communication context and frequency may reveal the dynamic processes of distance parenting. Discovering how the two variables interact could help alleviate possible limitations within this study.

The findings regarding the effects of gender and paygrade on childcare management were in the expected direction and had some of the strongest correlations with regards to childcare-related issues. At-home husbands with a deployed wife reported more issues with child schedules or childcare-related concerns than at-home wives with deployed husbands. This could be a result of the fact that the majority of the respondents were at-home wives with a deployed husband. The military emphasizes family readiness and thus provides tools to prepare children and at-home parents, typically wives, for the demands of military life (Huebner et al. 2009). Interestingly,

the effects of education on childcare management was inversely correlated. This supports literature that reveals the adverse effects of maternal employment on child outcomes due to higher educational attainment (Fertig et al. 2009; Nazarov and Rendall 2011). Perhaps, those who have a higher education rely upon the services of non-parental caregivers due to the demands of their employment. The contextual variable that was correlated with childcare management was the importance of communication with the deployed parent. At-home spouses who reported that communication with the deployed parent was important reported more problems with managing childcare-related issues. It is possible that at-home caregivers who felt the need for increased communication with the deployed parent were those who were not aware of, and/or did not take advantage of available resources. According to Booth and colleagues (2007), families who take advantage of military and community support resources and programs, successfully adapt and thrive in the military.

#### *Distant Parenting and Child Sociobehavioral Outcomes*

Child well-being embodies the whole child, which encompasses the physical, social, psychological, emotional, and cognitive development of the child (Chandra et al. 2009; Chartrand et al. 2008; James 2009). The findings in this study indicate that combat deployment was associated with child adjustment problems. Children whose parents are deployed to a combat/hostile zone were more likely to experience behavioral problems at school and home, and to express fear and anxiety with parental deployment. Additionally, children were also more likely to feel distressed over discussions of the war at home, school, and in the media, and to express anger about their parent's military duties. This is consistent with previous studies that suggest increased anxiety and

ability to function well in school due to parental absence (Chandra et al. 2009; Chandra et al. 2010).

In addition, respondents with higher ranking spouses, and those who experienced higher levels of stress, as well as those who indicated that they were not satisfied with the service member's ability to balance work priorities and family life, reported more child adjustment problems. Those children with a higher parental paygrade might have more adjustment problems due to the fact that they have more to lose during parental absence. This is consistent with literature on the impact of divorce on white middle-class children, who fare less favorably than those of a lower SES (see Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2000; McLanahan 2001). Additionally, those who rated that communication with the deployed parent was important also scored higher on child adjustment problems. This finding is consistent with the family stress theory literature, which suggests that elements of the military, such as combat deployments, are particularly taxing to the relational health of military families (see Hill 1949). Family stress theory helps us understand the process by which families endure and survive specific stressors thus affecting their level of functioning (see McCubbin and McCubbin 1989).

I expected that Army would have predicted child adjustment problems. However, I found that Marine Corps families was a predictor of negative child sociobehavioral outcomes compared to Army families. While the effect of race was not a specific focus of this study, it is worth mentioning that non-Hispanic white respondents reported more child adjustment problems than non-white respondents.

### *Effects of Deployment on Child Well-Being*

Family stress theory suggests that disruption from the normalcy of family life (McCubbin 1989; Hill 1949), particularly when compounded with military factors, can negatively influence child well-being (Minkkinen 2013). While combat deployment did not predict changes in children's positive behavioral outcomes (i.e., child well-being), other noteworthy factors did. Higher-ranking families reported that children experienced increased academic performance, independence, and were more responsible than children from lower-ranking families.

Additionally, these children may have a sense of pride in having a military parent and feel closer to friends and families than children from lower-ranking families. Those respondents who indicated that communication with the deployed parent was important, including those who expressed satisfaction with the way the deployed parent balanced work and family priorities, also reported better child well-being outcomes. Importantly, respondents who indicated higher stress levels reported poorer child outcomes. These findings are consistent with prior research indicating that parental deployment combined with at-home caregiver's overall stress level can affect behavioral outcomes and psychosocial functioning of military children (Chandra et al. 2008; Chandra et al. 2010; Cozza et al. 2005; Flake et al. 2009; Houston et al. 2009). While paygrade/rank and work/life balance are strong predictors of a child's sociobehavioral outcomes, paygrade alone is not the only primary independent variable that predicted both measures of children's outcomes (see Table 11 and 12). It is possible that a child can simultaneously exhibit both negative and positive, externalizing and internalizing behavioral changes when a parent is absent.

Additionally, child well-being is a multi-faceted concept that is difficult to measure by just using one's socioeconomic status alone. For example, children from higher ranking families can experience maladjustment during parental separations and also exude resilience at the same time. It is possible that higher ranking parents are more aware of the possible changes in their children's behavior due to the added opportunities and accessibility to resources made available to them because of their ability to afford quality services (i.e. support centers/networks, private schools, non-government subsidized child-care). Finally, this finding also highlights that socioeconomic status (i.e., paygrade) is not a single factor but rather is characterized by a wide array of social and psychological factors, as a part of being in the military (i.e., frequent relocations, parental deployment, etc.) that can positively and/or negatively affect a child's behavior (see Table 11 and 12).

A child's adjustment to parental absence varies with the level of preparation and support for the deployment and the ability to maintain contact during the separation (Baker 2008; Hall 2008). Those who find that communication with the absent parent was significant goes hand-in-hand with Minkkinen's (2013) notion about circle of care. While this study did not examine beyond the immediate family, it is important to note that provision of care expands beyond the confines of the immediate family or uniformed family member's respective unit, but from the larger social systems as well. Minkkinen's SMCW (2013) described the importance of the larger social systems in the structure of child well-being and stressed that circle of care not only has immediate effects on the well-being of the child at the present, but also in the child's future life course. The larger social systems or circle of care represent extended family,

school, and communities beyond the military context. In this view, one can argue that those who find that communication with the absent parent was important, in some way, are maintaining the circle of care.

According to Flake and colleagues (2009), the community environment in which the military child is immersed in significantly affects his or her psychosocial functioning. Community support, beyond or within the military context, may help mitigate some of the stresses endured from having a parent deployed, especially to a combat/hostile zone. The ability to recognize and provide proper support and assistance will not only alleviate the stresses endured due to separation, but also provide early warning signs of the onset of negative child well-being outcomes.

#### *Discussion*

The results of this study point to the importance of further evaluation regarding overall well-being of the at-home caregiver, combat-deployed member, and military children. These findings help to shed light on a subject that has long been a focus of leaders and policymakers within the Department of Defense (DoD). Arguably, the most important asset of any standing military is its personnel force, inclusive of their families. The findings presented could allow for the development of proactive steps in addressing the unique stressors to military families and how they are related to the overall health of the military personnel force.

This study predicted that combat deployment would have adverse effects upon the relational health of military marriages and child well-being. Although combat deployments were found not to be correlated to marital quality, child adjustment problems were correlated with combat deployment. It is possible that the limited

sample size may not fully capture the actual climate within each military service branch, regarding combat deployments and marital quality. To help mitigate this limitation, future studies should conduct retroactive assessments of how past combat deployments, i.e., the Korean, Vietnam and Gulf Wars, affected the marital and child related issues outlined in this study. By conducting comparative analyses between the experiences of past and current military families, future studies will generate a framework containing common themes that have remained prevalent to all military families.

Additionally, this study addressed the frequency of communication between the at-home caregiver and the deployed parent and how it influenced the management of childcare-related issues and child well-being. Furthermore, frequency of communication between family members and combat deployment influenced child social behavioral outcomes. The analysis showed that frequent contact between the at-home caregiver and the deployed parent were related. However, the context of that dyadic interaction may provide a more accurate representation of how military families parent from a distance.

The two most significant factors within this study are the effects of work/life balance and overall stress. All of the substantive independent variables (i.e., marital quality, childcare management, child well-being and child adjustment problems) are mediated by these contextual variables. According to Chartrand and colleagues (2008) the most significant predictor affecting child social behavioral outcomes is the overall well-being of the at-home parent. For instance, how the at-home spouse/parent assesses the combat-deployed member's ability to balance work priorities with family life affects the relational quality of the marriage, childcare management, and child well-being.

Previous studies suggest that custodial parents reporting higher levels of stress are more likely to have children at increased risk for adjustment problems (Chandra et al. 2010, Flake et al. 2009). In other words, the stress that the at-home caregiver endures, transfers to their parenting, affecting their children's well-being. This suggests that the military needs to take a more holistic approach to helping families, specifically at-home spouses, with pre-, during, and post-combat deployments. This study also shows the need for a revitalization of current programs and policies in a way that provide at-home spouses/parents the ease of accessibility to much-needed resources. For example, giving the at-home spouses/parents the autonomy to seek help that is most beneficial to the uniqueness of their family needs during the challenging times of combat deployments.

Understanding the climate of how our military families respond to the demands of military life will provide valuable knowledge when implementing programs and policies affecting military family health. This study revealed that the stability of the military family is dependent upon the overall well-being of the at-home spouse/parent as measured by their reported level of stress.

## **8.2 Limitations and Strengths**

While this study provided greater insight into the effects of deployment and other factors (i.e., overall stress and work/life balance) on marital quality, distant parenting, and child well-being, it is not without its limitations. The data collected were reported by at-home spouses at a single point in time. Although some parts of the findings were consistent with and supported by previous studies (i.e., the role of communication between the absent parent and at-home caregiver and influences on



management of childcare-related issues, effects of deployment on child well-being), longitudinal studies with multiple informants will strengthen the knowledge base. Given that at-home spouses were the ones who reported on the relational health of the marriage and children's experience since parental deployment, it is possible that their own experience made the responses biased. For example, Flake and colleagues (2009) reported that at-home parents who experienced higher levels of stress were more likely to report child psychosocial dysfunctions. It is also important to note that parental reporting may differ greatly from child reporting. Chandra and colleagues (2010) found that there were discrepancies between non-deployed parental narratives and child narratives on the impact of deployment.

In addition, while the survey asked about how often the at-home spouse communicated with the deployed parent, it did not inquire about the context of the conversation, whether it was positive or negative. This context between the deployed service member and their family needs to be developed to include measurements that address issues regarding distant parenting and child outcomes. Specifically, the importance of information sharing and what information the at-home spouse is receiving from the deployed parent regarding family support services and resources. According to Dion (2018), the military provides programs that offer no-cost childcare support for stressed and busy parents, including extended childcare in family homes during the evening and weekend. Such information is crucial for at-home parents or caregivers in need of childcare assistance.

Preparing children for parental deployment is an important factor in helping children deal with separations. Studies show that the ability of children to cope with

parental deployment depends on preparation (Petty 2009). Although pre-deployment briefings are offered to military families (Hall 2008), the data did not provide information about whether such services were utilized pre-, during, and/or post-deployment. Future studies should include questions that ascertain, if and how, the parents tried to prepare their children for the deployment, and if the at-home spouse had used any of the services offered by the military. Gathering such data will also help determine whether these military family support services are effective in preparing children to successfully cope with parental separations.

Furthermore, the low response rate may limit the generalizability of the findings. It is likely that those who responded to the survey did so because they are invested in mitigating the factors that encompass the demanding culture of military life. Therefore, this study likely reflected the potentially biased opinions of those who participated in the survey. Another limitation is the lack of focus on age-specific child outcomes. The children addressed in the survey ranged from infancy to 18 years of age. With this wide range of ages, it is plausible that the at-home spouse's experiences with their children will vary greatly depending on the age of their children. For example, the indicators of the well-being of a toddler will most likely be different than that of a teenager. Additionally, personal interviews with children themselves are challenging to obtain; as such, it is difficult to assess the age at which children are most vulnerable to the stress of parental deployment. Research indicates that school-aged children of deployed uniform family members were more likely to have poorer overall school adjustment, lower school engagement, and lower academic performance, than when their parents were not deployed (Engel et al. 2010). Examinations of contextual child-parent

interaction, addressing both the deployed parent and at-home caregiver, would also be a factor necessary to elucidate the effects of deployment on distant parenting and child well-being.

Lastly, one particularly important limitation of the study is the lack of emphasis on the duration of deployment. Although military children and families tend to adjust relatively well to shorter separations, deployments greater than six months create demonstrable strain on children and families (Chandra et al. 2010; Engel et al. 2010; Flake et al. 2009). Child outcomes can vary greatly by the length of parental separation and the extent to which children adjust to deployments. Furthermore, children may be affected by the circumstances surrounding parental separations at different points of the deployment process. In addition, the varying effects of deployment on marital quality may be influenced by the duration of time since the departure of the uniformed family member. Spouses may respond differently regarding the relational quality of their marriages at 30 days into the deployment as opposed to six months. Therefore, the inclusion of data that captures these potential disparities may reveal explanatory factors that may help at-home spouses adjust well to familial separation and cope with possible deployment stressors.

While the study presented a few limitations, it also has many strengths that extend across the various facets of military family life. One of the most notable strengths of the study is the assessment of distant parenting. Guided by transnational parenting literature, this study offers further insight into the complexities of parenting from a distance. These are preliminary findings that need to be replicated and expanded to include the informational perspectives of the deployed parent, however. Another

strength of the study includes a diverse population sample distributed across the four branches of the United States Armed Forces. Each branch of service has its own unique culture and specific needs. Since duration of deployment varies among service branches<sup>33</sup>, it is possible that this nuance may have different effects on family life. It is imperative that future studies include contextual data from each of the service branches. This will allow for a comparative analysis of the multitude of differences and similarities between each service branch.

Another significant contribution of this study is the ease of accessibility to a population of interest that spans the globe. The DoD and its partner agencies regularly conduct sociological climate assessments of the military in general (IOM 2013). This information is not only open to the public for civic awareness, but they are primarily used by military leadership, policy makers, and public and private institutions to create informational metrics evaluating the well-being of the military. As such, the accessibility and availability of data means that the study can be easily replicated. Lastly, several of the measures utilized in this study derived from well-validated instruments and items, such as the Norton Marital Quality Index and child well-being outcome items. However, it is important to note that the results reported here are only preliminary. In addition, the use of structural equation modeling (SEM) to test a complex group of relationships between variables (measured variables and latent constructs) instead of scales might better capture the direct and indirect effects of independent variables. By replicating and expanding this study to include well-

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<sup>33</sup> As noted earlier, mean length of deployments in months by Branch of Service, as of 2010: Army 9.66, Navy 6.00, Air Force 4.89, and Marine Corps 7.21 (Institute of Medicine, 2013)

established measurements, further assessments will reinforce the construct validity with respect to the research.

### **8.3 Implications of the study**

Beyond the value added in contributing to the body of knowledge related to relational quality of military marriages and child well-being, this study is most relevant to the highest leaders of the Department of Defense (DoD). Mitigating the effects of combat deployments and sustaining a viable military force are some of the most common issues that face our military leaders. While this study did not find a significant correlation between combat deployments and marital quality, raising awareness of its possible relationship will be beneficial to the future endeavors of policy development. Particular attention needs to be given to sustaining healthy marital relations within all the service branches and promoting familial resiliency.

This study revealed the critical role that communication plays in the relational health of the marriage, as well as for child well-being, across all service branches. Technology affords service members with a multitude of means to retain high levels of communication between the deployed member and their family. For example, the use of “care packages” remains one of the most significant ways deployed members mitigate stress through the receipt of goods from home. However, current fiscal constraints have limited the ability to send these packages to deployed members (DoD Base Realignment and Closure 2016; Sexton 2011). Revamping the current system to allow for ease of communication, by these means, will provide the greatest impact on the social well-being for not only the deployed member, but also that of the at-home caregiver and children.

Combat deployments may impose unique stressors upon the at-home caregiver when managing childcare-related issues. One of the primary foci of this study pertained to the effects that combat deployment has on child well-being. As such, proactive development of policies and programs that help identify early signs of negative child social behaviors should be targeted at not only the at-home caregiver, but also non-family member caregivers (i.e. educators, social workers and childcare providers).

Worth noting, this study did not find significant differences between the effects of maternal absence versus paternal absence on child sociobehavioral outcomes. Nevertheless, attention needs to be given to the fact that an increase in women serving in the armed forces may result in more at-home fathers. With that in mind, it is important to create resiliency programs that are not gender-specific and are inclusive of both deployed mothers and fathers. By considering and mitigating the aforementioned issues, DoD leadership may achieve their overarching goal of maintaining a viable and healthy military force.

This study carries important implications that warrant further exploration on the various effects that combat deployments impose upon service members and their families. The relational health of military marriages, the processes in which service members parent from a distance, and the age-specific child well-being outcomes are factors that should be studied across all service branches. The findings presented in this study expand upon research regarding marital and familial well-being and are aimed at addressing the gaps in current literature. If replicated, the results may provide significant information for leadership, military family support consultants, primary care

providers, mental health professionals and educators in both military and civilian communities.

Although extensive research on deployments, marriage, and child well-being has been published, including research extending across various military eras, the measurements and processes were seldom the same, possibly biasing the conclusions about the similarities and differences among the service branches. Additionally, the culture of each service branch has changed over time. With new types of conflicts, such as unconventional warfare<sup>34</sup> and cyber warfare<sup>35</sup>, deployments have varied in length of time and nature of combat throughout United States history. As mentioned earlier, longitudinal research that incorporates qualitative methods and consideration that includes multiple informants, would likely be an effective addition to such efforts.

More generally, literature on the theoretical framework of distant parenting is scant. The lack of an explicit theory presented a challenge when evaluating theoretical models and developing a framework for distant parenting. Utilizing Minkkinen's Structural Model of Child Well-Being (SMCW), as well as the existing literature on transnational parenting, and accounting for factors specific to military families, a general model of familial and child well-being can be constructed. However, this model is not all-inclusive and should be expounded upon. The aim of this study is to help fill the gaps in current literature in relation to distant parenting.

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<sup>34</sup> Unconventional warfare denotes state actors engaging in conflict with non-state actors (see link <https://jsou.libguides.com/unconventionalwarfare>)

<sup>35</sup> Cyber warfare involves the actions by a nation-state or international organization to attack and attempt to damage another nation's computers or information networks (see link <https://www.rand.org/topics/cyber-warfare.html>)

The frequency of deployment intervals may also present adverse effects on overall familial and child well-being. It is difficult enough coping with the many stressors that deployment brings, however, if the service member is deployed at a significant rate interval (high frequency), these stressors will only be exacerbated. There are many factors that go into deciding how often a service member deploys, and the DoD tries to keep these intervals spread across a wide range (see <https://www.defense.gov/>; IOM 2013). However, the deployment interval will vary based upon the specific skillset individuals bring to their service branch. For example, aircrew, in the United States Air Force, deploy at a rate from four to six months, due to the required training that is needed annually that can only be accomplished stateside (see <https://www.defense.gov/>; IOM 2013), as opposed to the United States Navy aircrew, who can accomplish their training aboard the deployed vessel (see <https://www.defense.gov/>; IOM 2013). How the at-home caregiver and military child cope with these factors could vary based upon their resiliency and mindset about the frequency of deployment.

Additionally, the overall number of deployments that the service member has accomplished may affect the at-home caregiver and military child. It is possible that members who have deployed numerous times are able to cope with these stressors more effectively than those who are on their first deployment. These factors transcend to the at-home caregiver and the military child as well. Great measures are taken by each service branch to prepare military families for separation<sup>36</sup>. However, if these

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<sup>36</sup> Programs intended to enhance morale and quality of life for service members and their families. See <http://www.afpc.af.mil/Benefits-and-Entitlements/Airman-and-Family-Readiness/>



separations occur at a rate and number that exceeds the tolerance of the military family, negative well-being outcomes may become more prevalent.

The mental health of the at-home caregiver may also have significant implications for child well-being. Jensen and Shaw (1996) indicated that the effects of parental absence are mediated by several factors. These factors include the state of familial relations pre-deployment, what the family perceives the meaning of parental absence signifies, and how the at-home caregiver copes with the service members' absence. It is likely that the mental state of the at-home caregiver can manifest negative behaviors that transfer to the military child. For example, the at-home caregiver may not be coping well with the deployment because it imposes upon them the role of being a pseudo-single parent. It is plausible that the emotional stress endured by the custodial caregiver affects the way he or she parents, thus affecting the well-being of the child. This supports the findings within this study regarding the ability of the deployed member to manage work-related matters and personal life, including the overall stress of the at-home caregiver. Further study into the mental health of the at-home caregiver, and warning signs of negative well-being outcomes, could lead to the early identification of at-risk individuals. Developing best practice processes that mental health professionals, military family consultants, and the service members' leadership can use, will not only help to mitigate the negative well-being outcomes, but also provide the much-needed support for military families pre- and post-deployment.

Another implication of this study is the assessment of changing family forms. Family structure carries its own issues that warrant further research. The prospect of same-sex marriages has only recently been addressed. At the time this study's data

were collected, the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy regarding homosexuality had been recently lifted (Schaub 2010). While society in the private sector is on the forefront of the same-sex marriage movement, the DoD struggles to keep up with its policy changes. Same-sex couples that are married can now share the same benefits that heterosexual couples are entitled to (Military.com 2016). Considering the multitude of changes to the military family structure, familial and child well-being in non-traditional family forms may be affected differently. Bearing in mind potential cultural resistance within the military to same-sex marriages, this issue likely carries a multitude of implications. Current programs and policies only account for a traditional family structure, with most literature written for a deployed father and at-home caregiver mother. New policies and programs better suited for today’s military society and that of future ones must be considered.

#### **8.4 Conclusion**

OIF/OEF operations have been categorized as having the most frequent and extended military deployments (Cozza et al. 2005). This study highlighted the fact that the adjustments that go along with such deployments are a source of stress, not only for service members, but also for children and spouses. Research on the well-being of military families paints a picture of how much we still need to learn about their lives. The findings indicate that combat deployment was not correlated to marital quality. Instead, the ability to balance work and family life, frequency of communication and its importance were notable predictors of how spouses perceived the quality of their marriages. Further assessment is warranted to examine other contextual factors that are specific to the relational health of military marriages.

Frequency of communication as well as the importance of communication with the absent parent, as a process by which deployed uniformed family members parent from a distance, was related to how at-home caregivers manage childcare-related issues. Further exploration to assess the complexity of this distant parenting theoretical framework is needed. Additionally, the context of communication between the deployed service member and their family needs to be expanded. Supplemental research should include factors that measure how much of the conversation is problem-focused versus conversations that promote high morale and facilitate optimism. Conveying the relevant construct in a manner that facilitates a harmonious dialogue between researchers and leaders, policy makers, and helping professionals will be beneficial in developing programs that will enhance the lives of military families.

Lastly, across the four service branches, findings indicate that combat deployment was associated with children's adjustment problems, in support of most research (also see Chartrand et al. 2008; Flake et al. 2009). This study reinforces the potential risks deployments could impose on the well-being of children and families. Assessment of specific family variables and military factors are worthwhile endeavors in an effort to not only fill the gaps in the literature, but to also identify and address potential risk factors affecting military families. This study, while in a preliminary stage, remains relevant and critical to current research because it accentuates the need for policy makers and helping professionals to do what they can to help minimize these effects. This in turn, may assist in the identification of high-risk families, particularly children during the deployment cycle, by helping to facilitate appropriate and timely interventions, making life easier for military families. Most importantly, the findings in

this study may lead to the development of programs and policies that provide much-needed support to the women and men in uniform, as well as to their families and children.

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# Appendix A: Letter of Communication or Request to Participate in the Survey



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

November 7, 2005

\*\*\*\*\*5-DIGIT SCH 22554

MRS TERRY A SAMPLE 02000007  
201 MAIN STREET  
ANYTOWN VA 22554-9416

|||||

Dear Mrs. Sample:

The military demands a lot of you as a spouse. With increased deployments, the demands have gotten even tougher. We want to hear how you are making it work (and where you could use some help). We are asking you to share your experiences.

Please take some time and complete the *Survey of Active-Duty Spouses*. The survey will be accessible at the Web site below around November 21, 2005. This survey is your chance to have your experiences included in creating policies and programs for the entire military community. This survey was last done six years ago, so we need fresh voices as times have changed dramatically.

You can complete the survey on any computer with Internet access, at home or elsewhere. I assure you that your responses will be kept confidential. No information about you as an individual will be released.

We know your life is very busy, but please take the time today to provide us with an e-mail address for notifications about the survey by going to our Web site:

<https://dodsurvey.osd.mil>

At the Web site, you will be asked to enter your **Ticket Number: YXXXXXXX**

If your address on this letter is incorrect, please let us know at the Web site above. If you cannot access the Web site or you have questions pertaining to the survey, there are three other ways to contact us: by calling our Survey Processing Center at 1-800-881-5307, e-mailing [ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil](mailto:ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil), or sending a facsimile to 1-763-268-3011.

Thank you for taking the time to help us increase our understanding of military family issues. For more information on this survey program, please see the enclosed brochure.

Sincerely,

David S. C. Chu  
Under Secretary of Defense  
(Personnel and Readiness)

09 Enclosure:  
As stated

02000007









PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

January 19, 2006

\*\*\*\*\*5-DIGIT SCH 22554  
MRS TERRY A SAMPLE 02000010  
201 MAIN STREET  
ANYTOWN VA 22554-9416



Dear Mrs. Sample:

Recently, you were asked to participate in the *2006 Survey of Active-Duty Spouses*. At the time this letter was prepared, your completed questionnaire had not been received. Because your views and opinions are important, I urge you to take this final opportunity to complete the survey.

The survey findings will be reviewed by senior Defense officials and used to help improve family policies and programs. We have sent the survey to a scientifically selected sample of people so the survey findings will accurately represent the opinions and attitudes of all military spouses. However, the success of this method is dependent on you, and others like you, who are willing to complete the questionnaire.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your time and cooperation. If you have not already done so, please take time to complete the questionnaire previously mailed to you and return it in the postage-paid envelope or complete the survey via the Web. To access the Web version of the survey, go to <https://dodsurvey.osd.mil/>. Once at the Web site, enter your **Ticket Number: YXXXXXXX**

It is not necessary to complete the survey in one sitting. The Web site has been set up to allow you to start and stop as necessary. If you cannot access the Internet or if you have any questions pertaining to the survey, please call our Survey Processing Center at 1-800-881-5307, email [ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil](mailto:ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil), or send a fax to 1-763-268-3011. For your views to be included in the survey results, your survey must be received within the next week.

Thank you for your time and assistance in this very important effort.

Sincerely,

David S. C. Chu  
Under Secretary of Defense  
(Personnel and Readiness)

09

02000010



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

May 1, 2006

\*\*\*\*\* 5-DIGIT 22554  
MRS TERRY A SAMPLE 02000011  
201 MAIN STREET  
ANYTOWN VA 22554-9416



Dear Mrs. Sample:

The military places a lot of demands on you as a spouse. With increased deployments, the demands have gotten even tougher. We want to hear how you are making it work (and where you could use some help). We are asking you to share your experiences.

We know your life is very busy, but please take the time to complete the *2006 Survey of Active-Duty Spouses*. This survey is your chance to have your experiences included in creating policies and programs for the entire military community. This survey was last done six years ago, so we need fresh voices as times have dramatically changed. I assure you that your responses will be kept confidential. No information about you as an individual will be released.

You can fill out the enclosed paper survey and return it in the return envelope provided. Or you can complete the survey on any computer with Internet access, at home or elsewhere. To complete the survey on the Web:

- Go to our Web site: <https://dodsurvey.osd.mil>
- At the Web site, you will be asked to enter your **Ticket Number**.
- Your ticket number is YXXXXXXX

Please take the time today to complete the survey. It should only take about 30 minutes of your time. Please provide frank responses to the survey questions. I assure you that your responses will be kept confidential. Only group statistics will be reported. To conduct the survey, administrators must know your identity in order to provide you with the survey materials; however, this information will be used only in administering the survey. No information about an individual will be released.

If you cannot access the Internet or if you have any questions pertaining to the survey, please call our Survey Processing Center at 1-800-881-5307, contact us via email at [ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil](mailto:ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil), or send a fax to 1-763-268-3002.

Thank you for taking the time to help us increase our understanding of military family issues. For more information on this survey program, please see the enclosed brochure.

Sincerely,

David S. C. Chu  
Under Secretary of Defense  
(Personnel and Readiness)

Enclosures:  
As stated

09

02000011



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

May 15, 2006

\*\*\*\*\*5-DIGIT 22554  
MRS TERRY A SAMPLE 02000012  
201 MAIN STREET  
ANYTOWN VA 22554-9416



Dear Mrs. Sample:

Recently, you were asked to participate in the *2006 Survey of Active-Duty Spouses*. At the time this letter was prepared, your completed questionnaire had not been received. Because your views and opinions are important, I urge you to take this final opportunity to complete the survey.

The survey findings will be reviewed by senior Defense officials and used to help improve family policies and programs. We have sent the survey to a scientifically selected sample of people so the survey findings will accurately represent the opinions and attitudes of all military spouses. However, the success of this method is dependent on you, and others like you, who are willing to complete the questionnaire.

If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your time and cooperation. If you have not already done so, please take time to complete the questionnaire previously mailed to you and return it in the postage-paid envelope or complete the survey via the Web. To access the Web version of the survey, go to <https://dodsurvey.osd.mil>

Once at the Web site, you will need to enter this **Ticket Number: YXXXXXXX**

It is not necessary to complete the survey in one sitting. The Web site has been set up to allow you to start and stop as necessary. If you cannot access the Internet or if you have any questions pertaining to the survey, please call our Survey Processing Center at 1-800-881-5307, email [ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil](mailto:ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil), or send a fax to 1-763-268-3002.

For your views to be included in the survey results, your survey must be received within the next week.

Thank you for your time and assistance in this very important effort.

Sincerely,

David S. C. Chu  
Under Secretary of Defense  
(Personnel and Readiness)

09



02000012

# Appendix B: 2006 Active-Duty Spouse Survey Instrument

**DMDC**

DD-P&R(AR)2145  
Exp. 5/31/08  
DMDC Survey No. 05-0031b

## 2006 Survey of Active-Duty Spouses



DEFENSE MANPOWER DATA CENTER  
ATTN: SURVEY PROCESSING CENTER  
DATA RECOGNITION CORPORATION  
P.O. BOX 5720  
HOPKINS, MN 55343

## COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS

- This is not a test, so take your time.
- Select answers you believe are most appropriate.
- Use a blue or black pen.
- Please PRINT where applicable.
- Place an "X" in the appropriate box or boxes.

RIGHT



WRONG



- To change an answer, completely black out the wrong answer and put an "X" in the correct box as shown below.

CORRECT ANSWER



INCORRECT ANSWER



- Do not make any marks outside of the response and write-in boxes.

## PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT & INFORMED CONSENT INFORMATION

In accordance with the Privacy Act, this notice informs you of the purpose of the survey and how the findings will be used. It also provides information about the Privacy Act and about informed consent. Please read it carefully.

**AUTHORITY:** 10 United States Code, Sections 136, 1782, and 2358.

**PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:** Information collected in this survey will be used to research attitudes and perceptions of military life. This information will assist in the formulation and improvement of policies and programs that benefit military families. Reports will be provided to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, each Military Department, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Findings will be used in reports and testimony provided to Congress. Some findings may be published by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) or in professional journals, or presented at conferences, symposia, and scientific meetings. In no case will the data be reported or used for identifiable individuals.

**ROUTINE USES:** None.

**DISCLOSURE:** Providing information on this survey is voluntary. Most people take 30 minutes to complete the survey. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled if you choose not to respond. However, maximum participation is encouraged so that data will be complete and representative. Your survey responses will be treated as confidential. Identifying information will be used only by government and contractor staff engaged in, and for purposes of, the survey research. For example, the research oversight office of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) and representatives of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command are eligible to review research records as a part of their responsibility to protect human subjects in research. This survey is being conducted for research purposes. If you answer any items and indicate distress or being upset, etc., you will not be contacted for follow-up purposes.

**SURVEY ELIGIBILITY AND POTENTIAL BENEFITS:** DMDC uses well-established, scientific procedures to select a sample that represents the Defense community. This sampling procedure sets up clusters of people based on combinations of demographic characteristics (e.g., location, gender). You were selected at random from one of these clusters of people. This is your chance to be heard on issues that directly affect you. While there is no benefit just for you for your individual participation, your answers on a survey make a difference. For example, results from previous surveys have played an important role in deliberations on pay rate adjustments, cost of living and housing allowances, and morale and retention programs.

**STATEMENT OF RISK:** The data collection procedures are not expected to involve any risk or discomfort to you. The only risk to you is accidental or unintentional disclosure of the data you provide. However, the government and its contractors have a number of policies and procedures to ensure that survey data are safe and protected. For example, no identifying information (name, address, Social Security Number) is ever stored in the same file as answers to survey

questions. Answers to survey questions may be shared with organizations doing research on military spouses but only after minimizing detailed demographic data (for example, paygrade and detailed location information) that could possibly be used to identify an individual. A confidentiality analysis is performed to reduce the risk of there being a combination of demographic variables that can single out an individual. To further minimize this risk, some variables are randomly set to missing. Government and contractor staff members have been trained to protect client identity and are subject to civil penalties for violating your confidentiality.

If you experience any problem with the survey, please e-mail ADSSurvey@osd.pentagon.mil or leave a message any time, toll-free, at 1-800-881-5307. If you have concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ms. Caroline Miner, Human Subjects Protections Specialist, Deployment Health Support Division, 5113 Leesburg Pike, Skyline 4, Suite 403, Falls Church, VA 22041, humansubjects@deploymenthealth.osd.mil, (703) 575-2677, Fax (703) 824-4216.

Returning this survey indicates your agreement to participate in this research.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. What is your marital status?

- Married
- Separated
- Divorced ⇒ Please return your survey in the envelope provided.
- Widowed ⇒ Please return your survey in the envelope provided.

### 2. Is your spouse currently serving on active duty (not as a member of the National Guard or Reserve)?

- Yes
- No ⇒ Please return your survey in the envelope provided.

### 3. What is the highest degree or level of school that you have completed? *Mark the one answer that describes the highest grade or degree that you have completed.*

- 12 years or less of school (no diploma)
- High school graduate---high school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college credit, but less than 1 year
- 1 or more years of college, no degree
- Associate's degree (e.g., AA, AS)
- Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, AB, BS)
- Master's, doctoral, or professional school degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEng, MBA, MSW, PhD, MD, JD, DVM)

### 4. Are you currently enrolled in school? *Mark one.*

- Yes ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 6
- No, and I do not want to be in school ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 6
- No, but I would like to be in school

**5. What prevents you from attending school? Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.**

	Yes	No
a. Hours/location are not convenient .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. I move too often .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Transportation problems .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Family responsibilities .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Conflicts with work schedule .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Costs of education .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Other .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**6. Please indicate whether the following are goals for you. Mark one answer in each row.**

	Not applicable	No, this is not a goal for me	Yes, this is a goal I plan to pursue	Yes, this is a goal I am currently working on
a. Furthering my education/training .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Having a child/more children .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Raising healthy, happy, well-rounded child(ren) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Getting a better job .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Being physically fit/healthy .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Developing a career .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Getting involved in volunteer/community work .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Having a good relationship with my spouse .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Other .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**7. Are you Spanish/Hispanic/Latino?**

- No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

**8. What is your race? Mark one or more races to indicate what you consider yourself to be.**

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian (e.g., Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese)
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (e.g., Samoan, Guamanian or Chamorro)

**9. What age were you on your last birthday?**

Years

**10. Are you a citizen of the United States? Mark one.**

- Yes, born in the United States
- Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas
- Yes, born abroad of American parent or parents
- Yes, a U.S. citizen by naturalization
- No, not a citizen of the United States

**11. Is English a second language for you?**

- Yes
- No

**12. Have you ever served in a regular active-duty Service or in the National Guard/Reserve?**

- Yes
- No

**13. Were your parent(s)/guardian(s) in a regular active-duty Service and/or National Guard/Reserve? Mark one.**

- Yes, while I was growing up
- Yes, but only before I was born
- No

**14. What other types of experiences have you had with the military? Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.**

	Yes	No
a. My brother(s) and/or sister(s) serves/served in the military .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. My or my spouse's child(ren) serves/served in the military .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. My close, personal friend serves/served in the military .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. You worked/are working as a civilian for the Defense Department or military Services .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**HOUSING**

**15. Did you and your spouse have a choice in where to live at your current location?**

- Yes
- No

**16. Which of the following best describes where you live?**

- Military housing, on base
- Military housing, off base
- Civilian housing that I rent
- Civilian housing that I own

**17. What is the total amount you and your spouse paid last MONTH for rent or mortgage?**

Does not apply  
 \$   ,   . 0 0

18. How satisfied are you with the following characteristics of your current residence and community? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Very dissatisfied			
	Dissatisfied			
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied			
	Satisfied			
	Very satisfied			

- a. Cost of residence . . . . .
- b. Quality and condition of residence. . . . .
- c. Amount of livable space in residence. . . . .
- d. Privacy . . . . .
- e. Quality of the neighborhood. . . . .
- f. Safety of the area. . . . .
- g. Level of restrictions (e.g., lawn care, limitations on alterations). . . . .
- h. Level of community spirit/inclusion . . . . .
- i. My housing, in general. . . . .

19. Suppose that the quality of on-base housing was the same as the type of off-base housing you could afford with your family's housing allowance. Which would you have preferred?

- Military housing, on base
- Military housing, off base
- Civilian housing

20. Do you want to own a home?

- Yes ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 21
- No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 22
- Does not apply; I own a home ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 22

21. What prevents you from owning a home? *Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.*

- |  |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
|  | No  |  |
|  | Yes |  |
- a. We lack money for a down payment. . . . .
  - b. We do not know how to get a loan . . . . .
  - c. My family moves too often . . . . .
  - d. Other. . . . .

**PERMANENT CHANGE OF STATION (PCS) MOVES**

22. During your spouse's active-duty career, how many times have you moved to a new location as a result of your spouse being PCSed? *To indicate 9 or more times, enter "9".*

- Never ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 29
- Times

23. Were any of these PCS moves not command-sponsored?

- Yes
- No

24. How many times have you PCSed overseas? *To indicate none, enter "0". To indicate 9 or more times, enter "9".*

Times

25. How many months has it been since your last PCS? *To indicate less than 1 month, enter "0". To indicate more than 99 months, enter "99".*

Months

26. How long did it take you to find employment after your most recent PCS move? *To indicate less than one month, enter "0". To indicate more than 99 months, enter "99".*

- Does not apply; I have/am not seeking work
- Does not apply; I am still looking for work

Months

27. At your previous location, what were your total gross (before-tax) earnings in an average MONTH? *Exclude your spouse's earnings.*

- Does not apply; I was not employed

*You can enter an amount here:*

\$  ,  .00

*Or, if you prefer, you can enter a range here.*

*Your average MONTHLY*

*income was at least:* but no more than:

\$  ,  .00 \$  ,  .00

28. Would the following have helped you obtain employment after your most recent PCS move? *Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.*

- |  |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
|  | No  |  |
|  | Yes |  |
- a. Easier state-to-state transfer of certification (e.g., teaching, nursing, etc.) . . . . .
  - b. Financial help with transferring certifications. . . . .
  - c. Information about job openings . . . . .
  - d. Training opportunities . . . . .
  - e. Other. . . . .

**YOUR SPOUSE'S TEMPO**

*In this survey, the definition of "military duties" includes deployments, TADs/TDYS, training, military education, time at sea, and field exercises/alerts.*

29. In the past 12 months, how many separate times was your spouse away from his/her permanent duty station for at least one night because of military duties?

- My spouse has not been away overnight because of military duties ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 31

Times

30. In the past 12 months, how many nights has your spouse been away from his/her permanent duty station because of military duties? Add up all nights away from his/her permanent duty station.

Nights

31. In the past 12 months, how often have each of the following occurred? Mark one answer in each row.

	Very seldom or never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very often or always
a. My spouse worked beyond his/her normal duty hours .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. We had to cancel important personal/family plans because of my spouse's work schedule .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I had to take time off work to take care of household responsibilities because my spouse could not .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. My spouse had to work on a day I expected him/her to have off .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I had to attend a family outing/event without my spouse (e.g., reunion, graduation, sporting event, recital) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. My spouse's job made him/her too tired to do the things at home that needed attention .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I experienced a major life event without the presence of my spouse (e.g., move, birth of a child, major illness, death in the family) .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

32. How important is each of the following in balancing work and family life? Mark one answer in each row.

	Not important	Somewhat important	Moderately important	Important	Very important
a. Living on base .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Living off base .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Child care .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Financial well-being .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Predictability in deployment .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Predictability in non-deployed work load .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Family/marriage counseling/retreats .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Unit readiness/support groups .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

33. Overall, how satisfied are you with your spouse's ability to balance work priorities with his/her personal life?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

**YOUR SPOUSE'S DEPLOYMENTS**

34. During your marriage, has your spouse ever been deployed (i.e., away from his/her permanent duty station)?

- Yes
- No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 55

35. Is your spouse currently on a deployment of 30 days or more?

- Yes
- No

36. Did your spouse's deployment(s) influence any major life decisions (e.g. plans to be married, change jobs, buy a house, have a baby)?

- No
- Yes (please specify)

Please print.

37. Since September 11, 2001, what is the total number of days your spouse has been away from his/her permanent duty station?

Days

38. Were any of your spouse's deployments since September 11, 2001 longer than you expected?

- Yes
- No

39. Since September 11, 2001, has your spouse been deployed to the following locations? Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.

	Yes	No
a. In one of the 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory or possession .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Iraq .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Afghanistan .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Other North Africa, Near East or South Asia country (e.g., Bahrain, Diego Garcia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Europe (e.g., Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, Serbia, United Kingdom) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Former Soviet Union (e.g., Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. East Asia and Pacific (e.g., Australia, Japan, Korea) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Kenya, Liberia, South Africa) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Western Hemisphere (e.g., Cuba, Honduras, Peru) .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j. Other .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



◆ 40. During your spouse's most recent deployment, how often did he/she use each of the following means to communicate with you? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Never			
	Less than once a month			
	Less than once a week			
	One or two times a week			
	Three or four times a week			
	Daily			

- a. E-mail/Internet .....
- b. Commercial telephone .....
- c. DSN (military) telephone .....
- d. Military exchange provided telephone .....
- e. Postal/telegram services .....
- f. Military video phone .....
- g. VTC (video teleconference).....

41. During your spouse's most recent deployment, to what extent were each of the following a problem for you? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Not at all			
	Small extent			
	Moderate extent			
	Large extent			
	Very large extent			

- a. My job or education demands .....
- b. Managing expenses and bills .....
- c. Household repairs, yard work, or car maintenance .....
- d. Loss of income from my spouse's part-time job .....
- e. Safety of my family in our community .....
- f. Feelings of anxiety or depression .....
- g. Serious health problems in the family .....
- h. Serious emotional problems in the family .....
- i. Difficulties in communications with spouse .....
- j. Major financial hardship or bankruptcy .....
- k. Birth or adoption of a child .....
- l. Marital problems .....
- m. Loneliness .....
- n. Managing child care/child schedules .....
- o. Increased need for child care .....
- p. Had to find child care when it was not previously needed .....
- q. Difficulty sleeping .....

42. During your spouse's most recent deployment, did you lose money or have any additional expenses because of the following items? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Not applicable		
	No		
	Yes		

- a. Loss of my job .....
- b. Loss of my spouse's part-time job .....
- c. Reduction in my earnings since I was unable to work as much .....

42. Continued.

	Not applicable		
	No		
	Yes		

- d. Increased phone bills due to more calls to family/friends and/or deployed spouse .....
- e. Elder care .....
- f. Child care .....
- g. Household repairs, yard work, or car maintenance .....
- h. Other .....

43. During your spouse's most recent deployment, did you work more hours than usual, less hours than usual, or the same number of hours?

- Does not apply; I did not have a job during my spouse's most recent deployment
- More hours than usual
- Less hours than usual
- The same number of hours

44. Did your spouse receive extra pay during his/her most recent deployment?

- Yes
- No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 46
- Don't know ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 46

45. How did your family use the extra pay your spouse received during his/her deployment? *Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.*

	No		
	Yes		

- a. Added to savings .....
- b. Child care .....
- c. Car maintenance .....
- d. Bought a car .....
- e. Bought furniture/appliances .....
- f. Temporary reunions with my spouse (R&R time) .....
- g. Phone bills .....
- h. Gave to relatives .....
- i. Other .....

46. How important are each of the following to you in being able to cope with deployment(s)? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Not important			
	Somewhat important			
	Moderately important			
	Important			
	Very important			

- a. My ability to communicate with my spouse .....
- b. Pre-deployment information .....
- c. Reunion planning information or classes .....
- d. Knowing the expected length of the deployment .....
- e. Contact with someone in my spouse's unit .....
- f. Having no changes in the length of deployment .....

46. Continued.

Not important
Somewhat important
Moderately important
Important
Very important

- g. Temporary reunions with my spouse (R&R time) . . . . .
- h. Level of support my family receives from the military community . . . . .
- i. Level of support my family receives from our civilian community . . . . .
- j. Deployment pay . . . . .
- k. Family Readiness/Support Group . . . . .
- l. Understanding why the deployment is important/necessary. . . . .
- m. Locally available counseling/support services . . . . .
- n. Telephonic counseling/support services (e.g., Military OneSource) . . . . .

47. Has your spouse returned home from a deployment since September 11, 2001?

- Yes
- No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 51

48. After returning home from his/her most recent deployment, to what extent did your spouse seem to . . . Mark one answer in each row.

Not at all
Small extent
Moderate extent
Large extent
Very large extent

- a. Be more emotionally distant (e.g., unable to talk, less affectionate, less interested in social life)? . . . . .
- b. Appreciate life more? . . . . .
- c. Get angry faster? . . . . .
- d. Appreciate family and friends more? . . . . .
- e. Drink more alcohol? . . . . .
- f. Have more confidence? . . . . .
- g. Take more risks with his/her safety? . . . . .
- h. Be different in another way? . . . . .

49. Did your spouse receive support services (e.g., support groups, counseling) after returning home from his/her most recent deployment?

- Yes, and it helped him/her
- Yes, but it did not help him/her
- No, and he/she did not want support services
- No, but he/she wanted support services
- Don't know

50. Which of the following describes your readjustment to having your spouse back at home after his/her most recent deployment?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult

EFFECT OF DEPLOYMENTS ON CHILDREN

The following questions ask about children's responses to deployments. Please respond for all children in your household.

51. During your spouse's most recent deployment, did you have any children ages 18 or under living with you either part-time or full-time?

- Yes
- No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 55

52. In response to your spouse's most recent deployment, did your children experience any of the following behavior changes? Mark one answer in each row. Where your children's behavior did not change, please mark "No change".

Don't know
Decreased
No change
Increased

- a. Academic performance . . . . .
- b. Problem behavior at school . . . . .
- c. Problem behavior at home . . . . .
- d. Pride in having a military parent . . . . .
- e. Fear/anxiety . . . . .
- f. Independence . . . . .
- g. Being responsible . . . . .
- h. Closeness to family members . . . . .
- i. Closeness to friends . . . . .
- j. Distress over discussions of the war in the home, school, or media . . . . .
- k. Anger about my spouse's military requirements . . . . .
- l. Other behavior(s) . . . . .

53. How important are the following in your children's ability to cope with deployments? Mark one answer in each row.

Not important
Somewhat important
Moderately important
Important
Very important

- a. Communication with the deployed parent . . . . .
- b. My support for the deployment. . . . .
- c. My ability to maintain a stable household routine. . . . .
- d. Caregiver/teacher reaction to deployment . . . . .
- e. The way family members deal with the deployment . . . . .
- f. Geographic stability during deployment (e.g., no relocations, changes in schools). . . . .
- g. Limited exposure to media coverage of the war . . . . .
- h. Other. . . . .

◆ 54. How well have your children coped with your spouse's deployment? *Mark one.*

- Responses vary among children
- Very well
- Well
- Neither poorly nor well
- Poorly
- Very poorly

**PREPAREDNESS**

55. If your spouse were deployed, would you have each of the following? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Yes, and I have access to it	Yes, but I don't know where it is or don't have access to it	Don't know	No
a. A safe deposit box or secure location containing our family's important papers (e.g., birth certificates, insurance policies) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. A Power of Attorney for me to act on behalf of my spouse . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. A Power of Attorney for someone else to act on behalf of my spouse. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. An up-to-date Will for my spouse . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. An up-to-date Will for me . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. A Living Will for my spouse . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. A Living Will for me . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

56. Have you and/or your spouse taken the following steps to prepare for deployments? *Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.*

	Yes	No
a. Ensured I have money for rent, food, and living expenses (e.g., set up an allotment, joint account) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Developed a plan for financial emergencies . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Got or increased life insurance for your spouse . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**FEELINGS ABOUT MILITARY LIFE**

57. Overall, how satisfied are you with the military way of life?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

58. Do you think your spouse should stay on or leave active duty?

- I strongly favor staying
- I somewhat favor staying
- I have no opinion one way or the other
- I somewhat favor leaving
- I strongly favor leaving

59. In your opinion, how do the following groups or individuals view whether your spouse stays on active duty? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Very unfavorably	Somewhat unfavorably	Neither favorably nor unfavorably	Somewhat favorably	Very favorably	Does not apply
a. Your children . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Your relatives . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Your spouse's relatives. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

60. At the present time, which statement best describes your spouse's military career plans?

- To stay in the military until retirement
- To stay in the military beyond his/her present obligation, but not necessarily to retirement
- To stay in the military and complete his/her present obligation
- To leave the military before completing his/her present obligation
- Undecided

61. How has your support for your spouse's decision about staying in the military changed in the past year?

- Greatly increased
- Somewhat increased
- Somewhat decreased
- Greatly decreased
- Has not changed

62. To what extent do you feel that you have a choice in whether your spouse stays on active duty?

- Very large extent
- Large extent
- Moderate extent
- Small extent
- Not at all

63. In the past 12 months, has your spouse spent more or less time away from home because of military duties, than you would expect for an average 12 month period?

- Much more than expected
- More than expected
- Neither more nor less than expected
- Less than expected
- Much less than expected

64. What impact has your spouse's time away (or lack thereof) from his/her permanent duty station in the past 12 months had on your support for your spouse's military career?

- Greatly increased my support
- Increased my support
- Neither increased nor decreased my support
- Decreased my support
- Greatly decreased my support

65. If your spouse's future assignments require long or frequent separations/deployments, how likely is it that you will support your spouse staying in the military (assuming that he/she can stay)?

- Very likely                       Unlikely  
 Likely                                 Very unlikely  
 Neither likely nor unlikely

66. How likely is it that your spouse will be deployed in the next 12 months?

- Does not apply; my spouse is currently deployed  
 Very likely  
 Likely  
 Neither likely nor unlikely  
 Unlikely  
 Very unlikely

67. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. My spouse continues to serve in the military because leaving would require considerable sacrifice .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. The lack of civilian opportunities for my spouse makes me think we should stay in the military. ....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. It would be too costly for us if my spouse left the military. ....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Being a military spouse fulfills most of the important needs I look for in my life ..	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Being a military spouse is ideal for me ..	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Being a military spouse is consistent with my personal goals .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. If we left the military today, I would feel like we had let my country down .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. I feel no obligation for my spouse to remain in the military .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. I am proud to tell others that I am married to a service member .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j. Generally, on a day-to-day basis, I am proud to be a military spouse .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
k. I feel a strong obligation to support my spouse's commitment to a military career ..	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
l. I am committed to staying in the military because my spouse is .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
m. I enjoy being a military spouse .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
n. Generally, on a day-to-day basis, I am happy with my life as a military spouse ..	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
o. The military community is a good place for bringing up children under 11 years old .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
p. The military community is a good place for bringing up children between 11 and 19 years old .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**MARITAL HISTORY**

68. Was your spouse serving in a regular active-duty Service or in the National Guard/Reserve when you married?

- Yes                                 No

69. How many years have you been married?

Less than one year  
  Years

70. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your relationship with your spouse? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. We have a good relationship .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. My relationship with my spouse is very stable .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. My relationship with my spouse is strong .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. My relationship with my spouse makes me happy .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. I really feel like part of a team with my spouse .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. I am committed to making my marriage a success .....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

71. All things considered, how would you rate the current level of happiness in your relationship with your spouse?

- Very happy  
 Happy  
 Neither happy nor unhappy  
 Unhappy  
 Very unhappy

72. Compared to 12 months ago, how often do you and your spouse have problems in your personal relationship?

- Much more often  
 More often  
 About the same  
 Less often  
 Much less often

**CHILDREN AND LEGAL DEPENDENTS**

73. Are you currently living as a stepfamily (that is, with children from your and/or your spouse's previous relationship or marriage)?

- Yes                                 No

For the next questions, the definition of "child, children, or other legal dependents" includes anyone in your family, **except your spouse**, who has, or is eligible to have, a Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (also called a military ID card) or is eligible for military health care benefits, and is enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).

74. Do you have a child, children, or other legal dependents based on the definition above?  
 Yes  No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 89

75. How many of your children or other dependents, in each age group, live . . . *Print the number of dependents you have in each age group. To indicate none, enter "0". To indicate nine or more, enter "9".*

	Less than 1 year old	1 year under 2	2-5 years old	6-13 years old	14-19 years old	19-22 years old	23-64 years old	65 years old or older
a. With you on a regular basis? . . .	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
b. Outside your home on a regular basis?	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

76. Do you have unmarried children under 23 years old, who are legally dependent on you and your spouse for over half of their support?  
 Yes  No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 89

**CHILD CARE**

77. Do you use child care so you, or your spouse, can work?  
 Yes, part-time child care  
 Yes, full-time child care  
 No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 84

78. How many of your children routinely use child care arrangements? *To indicate nine or more, enter "9".*  
 Child(ren)

79. During the work day, what is your primary source of child care?  
 On-base child care center  
 On-base in-home care  
 Off-base child care center  
 Off-base in-home care  
 On-base school-age care  
 Off-base school-age care  
 Relative/friend  
 Nanny/au pair

80. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your primary child care? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
a. Availability of spaces . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Quality of care . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Cost . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

81. In an average MONTH, how much do you spend on child care arrangements for all of your children? *If you don't spend anything for child care arrangements, enter "0".*  
 \$  ,    . 00

82. In the past 12 months, how many full or partial days of work have you and/or your spouse missed because of lack of child care? *For example, if you missed one full day and one partial day, enter "2".*  
   Days

83. To what extent do you feel that child care issues will impact whether your spouse stays on active duty?  
 Very large extent  Small extent  
 Large extent  Not at all  
 Moderate extent

**SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN**

84. Do you have any children in primary or secondary school (e.g., grades kindergarten through high school)?  
 Yes  No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 89

For the following questions, Department of Defense (DoD)-run schools include DDESS at stateside locations or DODDS at overseas locations.

85. How many children did you have attending each of the following types of schools last year? *To indicate none, enter "0". To indicate nine or more, enter "9".*

a. DoD-run school . . . . .	<input type="text"/>
b. Public school off base . . . . .	<input type="text"/>
c. Public school on base . . . . .	<input type="text"/>
d. Home school . . . . .	<input type="text"/>
e. Private school . . . . .	<input type="text"/>
f. Charter school . . . . .	<input type="text"/>
g. Other . . . . .	<input type="text"/>

86. How satisfied are you with each type of school attended by your children? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Does not apply	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
a. DoD-run school . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Public school off base. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Public school on base. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Home school . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Private school . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Charter school . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Other . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

87. Since your children started school, have they experienced a PCS move?

Yes       No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 89

88. Were any of the following a problem for your children in their last PCS move since they started school? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Not a problem	Slight problem	Somewhat a problem	Serious problem	Very serious problem
a. Difficulty transferring school records . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Lack of special education, gifted education, ESL, or other services at new school . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Missed mandated entrance or exit exams . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Difficulty with correct classroom placement . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Exclusion from extracurricular activities. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Unable to continue kindergarten or 1st grade due to age restriction . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Difficulties adjusting to new school . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Graduation requirements could not be met due to junior or senior year transfer. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Differences in the curriculum (e.g., repetition or gaps in subjects/books covered) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**EMPLOYMENT**

89. Are you currently serving in the military? *Mark one.*

Yes, on active duty (not as a member of the National Guard/Reserve) ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 109

Yes, as a member of the National Guard/Reserve in a full-time active-duty program (AGR/FTS/AR) ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 109

Yes, as a traditional National Guard/Reserve member (e.g., drilling unit, IMA, IRR)

No

90. Are you aware of the Military Spouse Career Center Web site?

Yes, and I have used it       No

Yes, but I have not used it

91. Last week, did you do any work for pay or profit? *Mark "Yes" even if you worked only one hour, or helped without pay in a family business or farm for 15 hours or more.*

Yes ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 96       No

92. Last week, were you temporarily absent from a job or business?

Yes, on vacation, temporary illness, labor dispute, etc. ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 96

No

93. Have you been looking for work during the last 4 weeks?

Yes ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 95       No

94. Why have you not been looking for work in the last 4 weeks? *Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.*

	Yes	No
a. I do not want to work . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. My spouse does not want me to work . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. I could not find any work . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. I am preparing for a PCS/move . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. I am recovering from recent PCS/move . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. I am not working while my children are young. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. I lack the necessary schooling, training, skills, or experience . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. I cannot find work flexible enough to accommodate my spouse's schedule . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. I have child care problems (e.g., too costly, lack of availability) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. I want to be available to transport my children to after-school activities (e.g., sports practice, tutoring) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. I am attending school or other training . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. There are no opportunities for work in my line of work at my current location . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. Employers appear biased against military spouses . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. I am not physically prepared to work (e.g., pregnant, sick, disabled) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. I have transportation problems. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Other. . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

95. Last week, could you have started a job if offered one, or returned to work if recalled?

Yes, could have gone to work ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 100

No, because of temporary illness ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 100

No, because of other reasons (in school, etc.) ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 100

96. On average, how many hours a week do you spend working for pay or for a family business or farm?

Hours

If you work 35 hours or more per week, GO TO QUESTION 98.

97. Which of the following are reasons why you are working less than 35 hours a week? Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.

	Yes	No
a. Do not want to work 35 hours or more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Need flexibility while spouse is deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Could only find part-time work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Seasonal work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Child care responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Other family/personal obligations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Health/medical limitations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Need schooling/training/certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. In school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

98. How well do your qualifications match the work you do in your current primary job?

- I am greatly overqualified for the work
- I am somewhat overqualified for the work
- My qualifications are appropriate for the work
- I am somewhat underqualified for the work
- I am greatly underqualified for the work

99. How many months have you worked at your current job? To indicate less than 1 month, enter "0". To indicate more than 99 months, enter "99".

Months

100. How satisfied are you with your employment and career opportunities . . . Mark one answer in each row.

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
a. In my current location/community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. While my spouse is serving on active duty?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. In general?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

101. When did you leave your last job? Please specify month and year of departure.

Does not apply; I have never left a job ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 103

102. Why did you leave your last job?

103. Have you ever worked for pay, or helped without pay in a family business or farm for 15 hours or more?

Yes  No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 110

The following questions ask about your occupation. If you are working, answer for your current job. If you are not currently working, answer for your most recent job.

104. What was/is your principal employment? By principal employment, we mean your primary job. Please mark ONE answer.

- An employee of a PRIVATE/PUBLIC company, business or individual, working for wages, salary or commission
- An employee of a PRIVATE NOT-FOR-PROFIT, tax-exempt, or charitable organization
- A FEDERAL government employee
- A STATE government employee
- A LOCAL government employee (e.g., county, city, town)
- Self-employed in OWN business, professional practice, or farm
- Working WITHOUT PAY in family business or farm

105. What kind of business or industry was/is your principal employment? Describe the activity at the location where you worked the most hours. For example: hospital, newspaper publishing, mail order house, auto repair shop, bank. Do not provide the name of the company.

106. What kind of work were/are you doing on your principal employment—that is, what was/is your occupation? For example: registered nurse, personnel manager, supervisor of order department, auto mechanic, accountant.

107. What were/are your most important activities or duties at your principal employment? For example: patient care, directing hiring policies, supervising order clerks, repairing automobiles, reconciling financial records.

108. During the past 12 months, in how many weeks did you work, even for a few hours? *Include paid vacations and sick leave as work.*

Does not apply; I have not worked in the past 12 months

Weeks

109. Do you and your spouse typically arrange your work schedules to work different shifts from each other (e.g., one person works nights, the other days)?

Yes  No

110. Regardless of your current employment status, do you want to work and/or need to work?

Yes  No → GO TO QUESTION 112

111. Regardless of your current employment status, how important are each of the following reasons for why you work, need to work, or would want to work? *Mark one answer in each row.*

Not important
Somewhat important
Moderately important
Important
Very important

a. Need money for basic expenses . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Desire for career . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Want extra money to use now . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Want to save money for the future . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Other . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**FINANCIAL WELL-BEING**

112. Please indicate whether the following are financial goals for you and your spouse. *Mark one answer in each row.*

Not applicable
No, this is not a goal for us
Yes, this is a goal we plan to pursue
Yes, this is a goal we are currently working on

a. Saving for retirement . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Saving for my education . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Saving for child(ren)'s education . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Saving for a vacation . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Saving for a safety net/emergency fund . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Paying off education-related loans (e.g., Stafford loan, PLUS loan) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Being free of credit card debt (e.g., no carry over from month to month) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Being free of debt, except for mortgage . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Buying a home . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Purchasing furniture/appliances . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. Buying a car . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

113. What are your total household gross (before-tax) earnings in an average MONTH? *Include all income for you and/or your spouse.*

*You can enter an amount here:*

\$   ,    .00

*Or, if you prefer, you can enter a range here.*

*Our average MONTHLY household income is at least:*   ,    .00 *but no more than:*   ,    .00

114. What are your total gross (before-tax) earnings in an average MONTH? *Exclude your spouse's earnings.*

*You can enter an amount here:*

\$   ,    .00

*Or, if you prefer, you can enter a range here.*

*Your average MONTHLY income is at least:*   ,    .00 *but no more than:*   ,    .00

115. What is your greatest expense after rent/mortgage? *Mark one.*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child care	<input type="checkbox"/> Food
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Car payments	<input type="checkbox"/> Gasoline
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Debt payments	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

116. What is your second greatest expense after rent/mortgage? *Mark one.*

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child care	<input type="checkbox"/> Food
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Car payments	<input type="checkbox"/> Gasoline
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Debt payments	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

117. In the past 12 months, did any of the following happen to you and your spouse? *Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.*

	No
	Yes

a. Bounced two or more checks . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Failed to make a monthly/minimum payment on a credit card . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Fell behind in paying rent or mortgage . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Were pressured to pay bills by stores, creditors, or bill collectors . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Had telephone, cable, or Internet shut off . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Had water, heat, or electricity shut off . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Had a car, household appliance, or furniture repossessed . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. Failed to make a car payment . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Obtained a payday loan . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Filed for personal bankruptcy . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



◆ 118. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing the saving habits of you and your spouse?

- Don't save—usually spend more than income
- Don't save—usually spend about as much as income
- Save whatever is left over at the end of the month—no regular plan
- Save income of one family member, spend the other
- Spend regular income, save other income
- Save regularly by putting money aside each month

119. Think about your financial situation during the past 12 months. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Mark one answer in each row.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

- a. My spouse's military income has allowed us to achieve a good standard of living. . . .
- b. We need a second income to achieve the standard of living we want . . . . .
- c. We have enough money to regularly buy the things we want, not just the things we need . . . . .
- d. My spouse receives military pay and benefits comparable to or better than civilians who have similar knowledge, skills, and responsibilities. . . . .
- e. My spouse is fairly compensated, considering all the pay, incentives, and benefits we receive . . . . .

120. Which of the following best describes the financial condition of you and your spouse?

- Very comfortable and secure
- Able to make ends meet without much difficulty
- Occasionally have some difficulty making ends meet
- Tough to make ends meet but keeping our heads above water
- In over our heads

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

121. In the past month, how often have you . . . Mark one answer in each row.

Very often
Fairly often
Sometimes
Almost never
Never

- a. Felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? . . . . .
- b. Felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? . . . . .
- c. Felt that things were going your way? . . . . .
- d. Felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? . . . . .

122. At your current location, how likely is it that a friend, neighbor, or relative (besides your spouse) would . . . Mark one answer in each row.

Does not apply
Very unlikely
Unlikely
Neither likely nor unlikely
Likely
Very likely

- a. Listen to you if you needed to talk? . . .
- b. Help with your daily chores if you were sick? . . . . .
- c. Take care of your child(ren) in an emergency? . . . . .
- d. Lend you tools or equipment if you needed them? . . . . .
- e. Take care of your child(ren) if you needed a break? . . . . .
- f. Help you with physically demanding chores? . . . . .
- g. Look after your belongings (house, pets, etc.) when you travel? . . . . .
- h. Loan you \$25 or more? . . . . .
- i. Give you a ride if you need it? . . . . .
- j. Tell you about community resources? . . . . .
- k. Help you think about how to deal with a personal problem? . . . . .

123. Overall, how would you rate the current level of stress in your personal life?

- Much less than usual
- Less than usual
- About the same as usual
- More than usual
- Much more than usual

**PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

124. Suppose that the quality and cost of on-base programs and services were the same as those for off-base programs and services. Which would you prefer? Mark one answer in each row.

Programs and services off base
No preference
Programs and services on base

- a. Fitness centers. . . . .
- b. Chaplain services. . . . .
- c. Child care services . . . . .
- d. Youth programs . . . . .
- e. Financial counseling . . . . .
- f. Family advocacy programs. . . . .
- g. Employment services for you . . . . .
- h. Family/personal counseling services . . . . .
- i. Commissary/grocery store . . . . .
- j. Exchange/department store . . . . .
- k. Legal assistance . . . . .
- l. Recreation programs, services, or facilities . . . . .
- m. Nutrition/weight loss programs. . . . .

125. Are military family programs culturally and ethnically sensitive to the needs of your family?

- Yes  No

126. What program would be most helpful in meeting the unique cultural and ethnic needs of you and your family? *Mark one.*

- More programs and information in Spanish
- English as a Second Language classes
- More programs that incorporate cultural traditions
- Other

127. How are you and your family most likely to learn about support programs and services? *Mark one.*

- Word of mouth
- Newspapers/local media ads
- Internet/Web sites
- Military family support groups
- Unit commander
- On-base family assistance centers
- Other

128. Of the following, what is the best way for your family to get support programs and services? *Mark one.*

- 1-800 toll free numbers
- Internet/Web sites
- E-mail
- Military family support groups
- Unit commander
- On-base family assistance centers
- Other

129. In the past 12 months, have you used Military OneSource in the following ways to obtain information or services? *Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.*

- |   | Yes                                 | No                                  |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. Accessed Military OneSource via the Internet . . .                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b. E-mailed Military OneSource . . . . .  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Talked on the telephone with a Military OneSource consultant . . . . .       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Used Military OneSource to arrange face-to-face counseling session . . . . . | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

130. If you have not used Military OneSource (1-800-342-9647) in the past 12 months, what is the primary reason? *Mark one.*

- Does not apply; I have used Military OneSource in the past 12 months
- Not familiar with Military OneSource
- Did not need the services offered
- Concerned about confidentiality
- Thought I could get help elsewhere
- Military OneSource was hard to use
- Other

131. In the past 12 months, have you, your child(ren), or your other legal dependent(s) received health care at a Military Medical Treatment Facility, or received health care that was paid or coordinated through TRICARE?

- Yes  No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 133

132. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the military-provided health care you received? *Mark one answer in each row.*

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
a. Availability of medical care . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. Quality of medical care . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c. Out-of-pocket cost for care . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. Skill of physicians and other medical providers . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e. Availability of specialists . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f. Ability to get appointments . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g. Waiting time in the clinic . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h. Administrative requirements (e.g., claims, paperwork, approvals) . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Convenience of location . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j. Ability to find parking . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
k. Overall quality of care . . . . .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

133. Overall, how satisfied are you with the military health care benefits available to you, your child(ren), or your other legal dependent(s) (i.e., benefits associated with the use of Military Medical Treatment Facilities and TRICARE)?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

134. In the past 12 months, have you, your child(ren), or your other legal dependent(s) received dental care at a Military Dental Treatment Facility or through the TRICARE Dental Plan?

- Yes  No ⇒ GO TO QUESTION 136

◆ 135. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the military-provided dental care you received? *Mark one answer in each row.*

Very dissatisfied				
Dissatisfied				
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied				
Satisfied				
Very satisfied				

- a. Availability of dental care . . . . .
- b. Quality of dental care . . . . .
- c. Out-of-pocket cost for care. . . . .
- d. Skill of dentists and other dental providers . . . . .
- e. Availability of specialists. . . . .
- f. Ability to get appointments. . . . .
- g. Waiting time in the clinic. . . . .
- h. Administrative requirements (e.g., claims, paperwork, approvals) . . . . .
- i. Convenience of location . . . . .
- j. Ability to find parking . . . . .
- k. Overall quality of care . . . . .

136. Overall, how satisfied are you with the military dental care benefits available to you, your child(ren), or your other legal dependent(s) through the TRICARE Dental Plan or the Military Dental Treatment Facility?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

**COMMUNICATING WITH YOU**

137. In the future, would you prefer to answer a survey on the Web or a paper survey that is mailed to you?

- I prefer answering Web-based surveys
- I prefer filling out a paper survey
- I have no preference

138. Were any of the following reasons for not completing the survey on the Web? *Mark "Yes" or "No" for each item.*

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
|  | No  |
|  | Yes |
- a. I had a problem with the ticket number (e.g., lost the ticket number, ticket number was invalid, etc.) . . . . .
  - b. I have limited time to use the computer and prefer to use it for other things. . . . .
  - c. The survey Web page would not load . . . . .
  - d. The survey did not appear to be relevant to me. . . . .
  - e. I don't feel comfortable using computers. . . . .
  - f. My computer is too slow. . . . .
  - g. I was concerned someone in my spouse's chain-of-command would see the answers. . . . .
  - h. I dislike computer surveys . . . . .
  - i. Other (please specify) . . . . .

*Please print.*

**COMMENTS**

139. How can the military provide better support for you and your family?

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## Appendix C: Email Communication Timeline

**Table 8.**  
*E-mail Communication Timeline*

<b>Communication Type</b>	<b>E-mail Drop Date</b>	<b>Number Sent</b>	<b>Number Bounced</b>
Notification	11/21/05	5996	5
Reminder 1	11/28/05	5989	995
Reminder 2	12/6/05	3752	21
Reminder 3	12/14/05	3319	14
Reminder 4	12/22/05	3048	17
Reminder 5	12/28/05	2897	18
Reminder 6	1/11/06	2695	48
Reminder 7	1/19/06	2382	27
Reminder 8	1/27/06	2225	0
May Notification	5/1/06	174	12
May Reminder 1	5/5/06	165	0
May Reminder 2	5/11/06	107	0
May Reminder 3	5/17/06	103	0
May Reminder 4	5/23/06	90	0

### ***Processing Returned Surveys***

Once a respondent completes the survey, data are stored in an indexed file on the Web (data) server. Web and paper survey returns are merged into one dataset. Paper survey returns require additional work to input the data (explained below). Prior to providing each dataset to DMDC, the operations contractor copied the indexed file to their internal network using FTP protocol. The data are then converted to a sequential format, and the validate program reads and loads the data to the dataset.

All paper returned surveys were logged in and opened by the operations contractor upon receipt. If the envelope contained the survey booklet and other materials (e.g., extra comments, photographs, non-relevant items), the operations contractor separated it from the survey. Bundles of this type of correspondence (white mail) were sent to DMDC by regular surface mail or FedEx ground after all surveys were received. If the white mail appeared to be urgent, the operations contractor contacted DMDC to determine how it should be handled.

Survey booklets were batched for image scanning and assigned a batch number. The booklets were separated by pages, stacked in page/booklet, and forwarded for scanning. As the surveys were scanned, the batch number and a serial number (unique to each survey) were printed on each page of the survey.

The surveys were machine-edited for light marks, multiple marks, and alignment. Damaged forms were repaired, if possible, and scanned with non-damaged forms. If it was not possible to scan the documents, they were batched separately and key-entered.

## Appendix D: Survey Materials and Distribution

### ***Survey Materials and Their Distribution***

Each eligible sample member received at most four original mailings: a notification letter and brochure explaining the survey program, a reminder letter, a reminder letter with a paper survey and a third reminder letter. The notification and reminder letter mailings contained a letter, except for the second reminder which contained a letter, paper survey and business reply envelope. All letters included information about using the Web as an option to complete the survey.

In addition, e-mail was used to communicate with sample members. Not every sample member had an e-mail address. However, those sample members for whom we had an e-mail address received an e-mail announcement and up to eight e-mail reminders. Samples of the letters and e-mail communications are provided in C.

### ***General Mailing Procedures***

Prior to every mailing, the SCS searched the records in the MASTER file to identify which records should be excluded (e.g., sample members self-reported as ineligible for survey participation, sample members who had already returned survey forms, and members with no valid addresses available). For re-mails (sent between mailings), the SCS identified only those records that had been updated since the prior mailing. More specifically, the SCS identified records that had resulted in PNDs or had been manually flagged for re-mailing (e.g., in response to a sample member calling the operations contractor stating she or he had received a reminder/thank you letter but had not received a survey, etc.).

Once all records for a particular mailing or re-mailing were identified, the SCS processed the records based on whether the mailing would include a brochure and/or a survey form. If the mailing group was large enough to lead to a cost savings from sorting, the records were run through Group 1 postal software to sort the records according to first-class presort postal regulations. After this procedure, a unique Mail Identification Code (MIC) was assigned to each record. The MIC was assigned either from the survey litho code list if a survey form was sent or independently if only a letter was sent.

### ***Ticket Numbers for Web Survey Access***

Prior to the first mailing, a list of ticket numbers<sup>7</sup> for Web survey access was randomly generated. One secure ticket number was assigned to each sample member and remained linked to that member for the duration of the project. That is, while a member's MIC or lithocode changed with each mailing as described previously, the member's ticket number did not change. The member's unique ticket number was printed (along with the survey URL) in each letter and e-mail sent to that individual. A member could not access the Web survey without using his or her ticket number.

### ***Description of Letters***

Letters were printed with the record's unique MIC listed in the address field and on the lower right corner of the letter. If the mailing included only letters (no brochures or survey forms), the letters were folded and machine inserted into window envelopes and sent by first

class mail. Mailings that included a brochure or a survey followed the same procedure through the letter printing process. The MIC on the cover letter was used to pair the letter with the correct enclosure. During the matching process, ten percent of the mailing was visually checked, comparing numbers printed on the letter with the brochure or survey number for quality control. Any mismatched pairs initiated further investigation of the matching process. This procedure ensured that each brochure or survey was sent to the person designated to receive it. Depending on the sample size, the letters and matched enclosures were machine or hand inserted into envelopes, metered if necessary, and sent by first class mail.

The status of each mailing was tracked throughout the data collection so that address correction information could be incorporated into all relevant mailings. When a mail piece came back PND, the next mail piece was sent to a new address (if one could be obtained during the mailing period). For all mail pieces that came back PND, re-mails were completed if a newer/updated address could be found.

DMDC provided the operations contractor with the text, letterhead and signature for the cover letters. The letters explained why the survey was being conducted, how the survey information would be used, and why participation was important. See C for copies of the letters. The letters were approved and printed on letterhead from the office of the Under Secretary of Defense and signed by the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), David S.C. Chu. The letterhead and signature were printed in blue, and the text and recipient information of all letters were printed in black. In addition to including a name and address (which was also used as the mailing information for the window envelopes), each letter included a personalized salutation. The salutation addressed each sample member by his/her gender. For example, a letter to an Active Duty spouse would have included the salutation, "Dear Mrs. Smith."

#### ***Mailouts***

Table 6 lists the mailing dates and return results for each of the mailouts and re-mailings. For the main notification mailing, sample members were sent a letter and brochure notified sample members that they were selected for this survey and encouraged their participation. The notification letter was mailed to 31,565 sample members on November 7, 2005.

The first reminder letter was sent to 30,326 sample members on December 1, 2005. The letter, thanked sample members for completing the survey if they had done so, and reminded them to complete the survey if they had not. The second reminder letter was sent to 27,871 sample members on December 14, 2005. The letter again thanked sample members for completing the survey if they had done so and reminded them to complete the survey if they had not.

The third reminder mailing provided sample members the option to complete a paper survey. For this mailing, a letter, paper survey and a folded business reply envelope were provided. The survey packet was mailed to 26,669 sample members on January 5, 2006. The fourth postal reminder letter was sent to 22,949 sample members on January 31, 2006. The letter thanked sample members for completing the survey if they had done so and reminded them to complete the survey if they had not.

The field was re-opened on May 1, 2006, as stated earlier. The second notification packet was sent to sample members initially flagged as ineligible and offered sample members the option to complete the survey on paper or on a secure Web site. For this mailing, a letter, paper survey, brochure and business reply envelope were provided. This packet was mailed to 3,091 sample members on May 1, 2006.

A reminder letter was sent to 3,028 sample members on May 15, 2006. The letter thanked sample members for completing the survey if they had done so and reminded them to complete the survey if they had not.

E-mail was used to communicate with sample members. E-mail addresses were purchased from an outside vendor. The outside vendor maintains a customer database of e-mail addresses that has been lawfully collected and compiled from consumers pursuant to a notice that advised them that their personal data was being collected. Table 7 below shows the percent of sample members by Service for whom at least one valid e-mail.

**Table 7.**  
*Email Address Availability by Service*

	<b>ARMY</b>	<b>NAVY</b>	<b>MARINE CORPS</b>	<b>AIR FORCE</b>	<b>Total</b>
Valid address available	1,329	1,365	1,313	966	5,030
No valid address available	7,827	8,050	8,300	6,874	31,051

Sample members with e-mail addresses received at most an e-mail notification and eight reminders. Table 8 lists the e-mail dates and e-mail addresses bounced. E-mail addresses "bounced" identifies the address was invalid at the time DMDC attempted contact. This is analogous to a postal PND. E-mail address "sent" is not the same as e-mail received. It is analogous to the non-PND return experienced during a mailed survey. It is not known if the mail was delivered to the intended individual, only that it was not returned.

***Processing Returned Surveys***

Once a respondent completes the survey, data are stored in an indexed file on the Web (data) server. Web and paper survey returns are merged into one dataset. Paper survey returns require additional work to input the data (explained below). Prior to providing each dataset to DMDC, the operations contractor copied the indexed file to their internal network using FTP protocol. The data are then converted to a sequential format, and the validate program reads and loads the data to the dataset.

All paper returned surveys were logged in and opened by the operations contractor upon receipt. If the envelope contained the survey booklet and other materials (e.g., extra comments, photographs, non-relevant items), the operations contractor separated it from the survey. Bundles of this type of correspondence (white mail) were sent to DMDC by regular surface mail or FedEx ground after all surveys were received. If the white mail appeared to be urgent, the

operations contractor contacted DMDC to determine how it should be handled. Survey booklets were batched for image scanning and assigned a batch number. The booklets were separated by pages, stacked in page/booklet, and forwarded for scanning. As the surveys were scanned, the batch number and a serial number (unique to each survey) were printed on each page of the survey.

The surveys were machine-edited for light marks, multiple marks, and alignment. Damaged forms were repaired, if possible, and scanned with non-damaged forms. If it was not possible to scan the documents, they were batched separately and key-entered. Regardless of the mode of survey submission, the operations contractor processed all survey information according to DMDC approved administration plans and coding schemes.



## Appendix E: Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Marital Quality for the Entire Sample

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			Model 5		
	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.	B	$\beta$	Sig.
Deployment Status	-0.02 (.124)	-.002	.874	-.019 (.123)	-.002	.878	.203 (.123)	.018	.100	.241 (.126)	.021	.050*	.891 (.118)	.079	.000***
Child Dependent				-.642 (.116)	.061	.000***	-.824 (.117)	-.078	.000***	-.826 (.118)	.078	.000***	-.639 (.107)	-0.06	.000***
Spouse Gender (Male)							-.683 (.236)	-.031	.004**	-.734 (.238)	-.034	.002**	-.518 (.217)	-.024	.017*
Spouse Race (non-Hispanic white)							.790 (.119)	.073	.000***	.745 (.119)	.069	.000***	1.065 (.109)	.098	.000***
Paygrade							.631 (.064)	.126	.000***	.623 (.064)	.124	.000***	.255 (.059)	.051	.000***
Spouse Education							.000 (.049)	.000	.994	-.003 (.049)	-.001	.944	.113 (.044)	.029	.011*
Navy										-.056 (.153)	-.005	.713	-.243 (.139)	-.022	.081
Marine Corps										.197 (.151)	.018	.193	-.058 (.138)	-.005	.672
Air Force										-.583 (.167)	-.047	.000***	.077 (.153)	.006	.615
Work/Life Balance													1.481 (.045)	.347	.000***
Overall Stress													-.797 (.056)	-.154	.000***
<b>Constant</b>															<b>22.88</b>
<b>R-Square</b>															<b>.197</b>

*Note:* Valid (n=8,337). Standard errors are reported in parentheses. 1=Deployed, 0=Not deployed. 1=Couples with children, 0=Couples without children. Referent category for Branch of Service is Army. Significance level at p < .050\*, p < .010\*\*, p < .000\*\*\*.