

Speaker Notes

Pre-Deployment and the Single Service Member

Page 1 – Title Slide

None

Page 2 - Agenda

None

Page 3 – Belonging to Multiple Networks

- Belonging is not exclusive. One can belong to many social networks simultaneously. Each group, however, will require different input from you, and different needs are met by belonging to each group. NOTE: Ask participants to talk about their social networks. Do they have others not listed here? Which do they find most supportive?
- Single service members may feel they primarily belong to the military, and their closest relationships are likely their battle buddies and those with whom they are deploying. However, you also have a home-side support network composed of a family system, a social network, a faith community, etc.
- During pre-deployment planning, make arrangements with extended family, friends, and neighbors who will constitute the home-side support network. List parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, neighbors, friends, a pastor, etc. Make them aware of your deployment through e-mail, a hometown paper, a newsletter, or some other form of communication. After deployment, this home-side support system will facilitate your reintegration with better informed and long-nurtured connections.

Page 4 – Creating a Pre-Deployment Plan

- In many ways, pre-deployment is harder and more important for the single service member because there is no spouse left behind to tie up loose ends. Keep a notepad to jot down unique things that only you will notice.

Page 5 – Creating a Pre-Deployment Plan (Continued)

- Pets: If all of the people you know are deploying, who will care for your nonhuman companions? Don't wait until the last week; it may be too late then to find anyone.
- Rented apartment or house: If you decide to keep it, arrange to turn off nonessential services and subscriptions. Show a caretaker the turn off valves for water and how to find the fuse box.
- Your vehicle: Budget for ongoing expenses and set up auto pay with your bank.
- Assuring security of important information: In an e-mail document, list all of your account numbers, passwords, credit card numbers and expiration dates, drivers' license number and expiration date, etc. Send this in an e-mail to yourself and store it online in a folder that you can access from the Internet if you need to report a lost or stolen card. Alternatively, give the numbers to people back home in case of an emergency. Then print off a hard copy and leave it with your critical document file or with a very trusted family member.

Page 6 – Staying Connected with Friends and Family

- Connecting with the people in the various support networks you belong to requires that you update your address book—not only with names, addresses, and so on, but also birth dates, anniversaries, and other important dates.
- Emphasize the importance of an e-mail list of all of your relations' and friends' e-mail addresses, phones numbers, addresses with birthdays, anniversaries, and any information you want to keep up with—even if it's something that happens only once a year. E-mail it to yourself with a descriptive subject line and store online in a folder. You can print a hard copy and take it with you, as well. Plan to send out just one e-mail or newsletter to lots of people (it saves time).
- Affirm with family and friends your wish to stay connected. Talk with the friends and family in your life that you want to stay connected with while you are away. Ask them how they are feeling about your deployment and tell them how it is going for you. Let them know how often you would like to hear from them and vice versa. Decide how that will work; for example, you might prefer e-mail. Instruct them, if necessary, on how to accomplish e-mail communication.

Page 7 – Educating Those Left Behind

- Fewer than 10% [1] of the American population have seen combat. For those you leave behind, most will not understand the nature of your job. It is up to you to inform them. The more they know, the easier it will be for them to deal with their anxiety. They will also not understand the unique culture of military life. Explain it to them.
- Set up reasonable expectations for them about the hours you will be working and how much you are really able to communicate with them. (Explain OPSEC restrictions.)
- Explain to them how the military has designed many programs to keep you safe and well-cared-for.
- Your home support people need to know your exact unit, company, battalion, brigade, the name of your 1st Sergeant, your company commander, the rear detachment commander, and the unit phone number, as well as how to get in touch with the Red Cross for emergencies at home.
- Even if they do not have a connection to a military installation where they live, explain to them about the FRGs and how to be in touch. This will connect them to you even if they do not hear directly from you. Their connection to the military can provide them with support as they support you. It would also help protect them from con men and from rumors that often flair up without reliable sources.

Page 8 – Safeguarding Your Legacy

- Even though there are billions on this planet, each of us is unique. Each of us provides the human race with a rare gift—our presence. You have had an impact on your support networks, and that impact needs safeguarding for your eventual return, or to console others in case of your loss.
- Assign people to care for important items: The keepsakes you leave behind may not seem important now, but someday they may be precious to you or to your family. Examples:
 - Give your baseball card collections to your little brother to keep safe until you return.
 - Let your mom hang onto your high school poetry.
- There are those you don't want to leave without letting them know how you feel. Set aside a time to have meaningful conversations with them.
- Thank those who have given you a hand along the way.

- Clean up your messes and eliminate embarrassing material that will be out of your control for as long as you are away.
- Ask for well wishes and/or blessings from your elders and/or ministers. They are the stand-ins for the American people who have asked you to fight on their behalf. You will be stronger because of their blessing, and you will heal faster knowing they share in the responsibility for what you will do.

Page 9 – Emotional Preparation

- As a service member, you understand the importance of emotional discipline. Most in the civilian population are not required to develop the level of emotional discipline you need.
- Family and friends may experience your emotional preparation as abandonment or perhaps rejection. This is an understandable response on their part. You can help by letting them know what you are doing and why, and by developing the flexibility to turn your emotional dial to different stations.
- Pre-deployment requires a change in focus. You prepare to leave in many physical and practical ways, but you also prepare to leave emotionally. Many of you may notice:
 - A withdrawal of tender feelings and attachments
 - Feeling more reserved and preoccupied as the deployment draws near.
- These changes can sometimes cause concern in relationships that are important to you. Please be assured that this is normal and not an indication that the relationship is in trouble.
- It's important to watch for signals that what you are experiencing is beyond the normal distancing that precedes departure. It may be a sign you need to seek more help. (Take cues from spouse battle mind: create a "discuss warning signs" list.)

Page 10 – Finding Mentors

- NCO's: This is trite but true; NCOs are the backbone of the Army. They have been down-range and know what to expect. Since fear of the unknown can be a disabling fear, your NCOs are there to quell those fears by letting you know what to expect.
- In a more general way, your training has demanded that you get to know yourself better. This self-examination will bring up the complexity of the human condition for you to consider. Other mentors may be necessary for you to become more comfortable with yourself.
- Mentors can be people who have deployed and returned, including NCO's, as well as family members and friends who are combat veterans.
- Military One Source has many specific and detailed articles on deployment topics. On base, you also have access to the excellent professionals at ACS who can guide you.

Page 11 – Independence vs. Isolation

- Combat gives you access to a new support network, an exclusive club of those who have stepped forward to defend freedom and family. What distinguishes you is the purpose for which you fight—not for glory or power or enjoyment, but to safeguard others so they might never see or experience what you will. You carry a burden the American population at large will never share or understand. They will certainly appreciate it, but they will not be able to relate to your experiences. This situation, if allowed to build inside you, can create a sense of isolation.
- By contrast, those who use their unique experiences to grow more fully into what they could become will develop:
 - A strong sense of independence
 - A firm core of strength

- An unshakable feeling of self-worth
- A humble knowledge that they are at their best when they are valuable members of a team.
- You know these people by their contrasts:
 - Cold-blooded bravery vs. hotheaded bravado
 - Compassion vs. brutality
 - “What more can I do” attitude vs. “let somebody else do it”
 - Knows their limits vs. biting off more than they can chew

Page 12 – Attending to Details

- Deployment is one journey in your life. For it to be successful, and for you to develop personal habits of self-responsibility, keep notes and checklists so that everything that needs to be done before you deploy is accomplished. When you know that nothing was left unsaid, undone, or unaccounted for, you can more completely concentrate on the difficult job ahead, because you have no regrets.

Page 13 – Making Sound Decisions

- Good decisions are a function of planning, brainstorming, feedback loops to fine-tune details, and execution.
- Good decisions are not hasty, spur-of-the-moment affairs.
- It is normal to experience brief moments of panic prior to deployment. These show up as ‘what-if’ questions that drive some to answer them with questionable decisions and bull-headed determination. Avoid this trap by using a rational process (described above).
- Impulsive decision-making about life changing issues under the pressure of deployment is not a good idea. Make it an orderly process. Slow it down.
- Others may be pressuring you because they feel pressured by the upcoming separation. Slow them down by making lists of the pros and cons of any big changes.
- Seek expert consultation and gather as much information and as many differing views as possible.

Page 14 – Summary

None

Page 15 – Questions

None

Page 16 – Resources

None

Page 17 – Thank You

None