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## Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Families of Military Personnel

The Department of Veteran Affairs offer a guide entitled *Returning from the War Zone: A Guide for Families of Military Personnel*. The guide offers information to help you understand what to expect when your service member returns from a deployment in a combat zone and suggestions on how to adapt.

Reintegration is an adjustment for all involved. The guide aims to make this process as smooth as possible and covers:

- A description of the common reactions that occur following deployment to a war zone.
- How expectations about homecoming may not be the same for service members and family members.
- Ways to talk and listen to one another in order to re-establish trust, closeness and openness.
- Information about possible problems that may occur.
- How to offer and find assistance for your loved ones.
- What help is available and what it involves.

*Returning from the War Zone* is only available online at [www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/manuals/GuideforFamilies.pdf](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/manuals/GuideforFamilies.pdf).

## Baby's First Sea Bag

Babies are expensive. How can you provide for your little one without breaking the bank? Sign up for the *Budgeting for Baby Class* offered by most Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society offices on base. The program is designed to help new, or prospective, parents learn about the impact that a new baby can have on the financial situation of the family unit. You'll learn about average expenses for diapers, formula, food, clothing, equipment and ways to save. You'll also learn about common consumer pressures targeted to new parents, and entitlements available through both government and private sources.

A layette, also known as a *Junior Sea Bag*, is issued to any eligible recipient who has recently had a baby or whose child will be born within six months. It consists of a coordinated set of bedding and clothing, a baby book, and a handmade item (either sweater set, afghan or quilt), packed in a tote or duffel bag. Layettes are given to recipients after they attend class or complete an individual budget session with a Society caseworker.

To learn more go to [www.nmcrs.org](http://www.nmcrs.org)



## Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Military families move due to orders on a regular basis. The average military student will attend six to nine different school systems from kindergarten to 12th grade. While reassignments can often be a boon for career personnel, they often wreak havoc on the children of military families. Specific impacts on military children include:

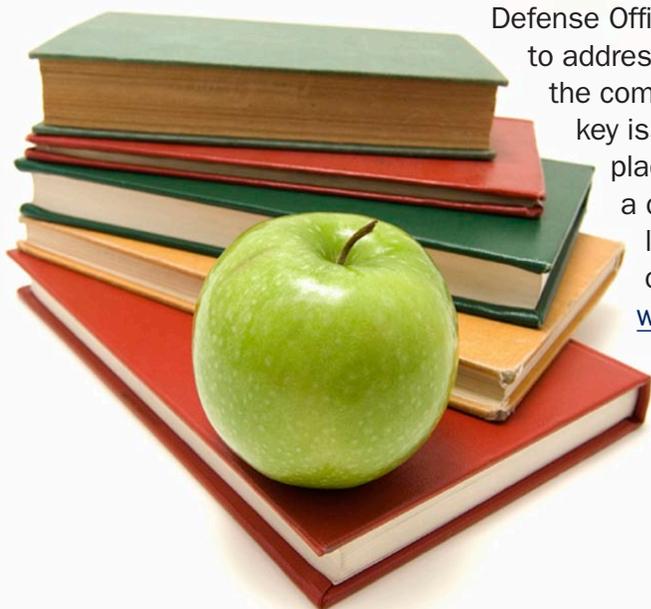
- Records transfer.
- Course sequencing.
- Graduation requirements.
- Exclusion from extra-curricular activities.
- Redundant or missed testing.
- Kindergarten and first grade entrance age variations.

For example:

- Your child may have just learned to add and subtract when they relocate to a school that is doing multiplication and division.
- Reading levels may differ from one school district to another.
- Your child may have to be retested before participating in the new school's gifted and talented program.
- Your older child may miss football or cheerleading tryouts.
- Your child may not have enough credits to graduate from their new school.

In addition, if your child is not outgoing he or she may be concerned about meeting new friends, who they will sit with at lunch and even how to find their new classrooms.

The Council of State Governments, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense Office of Personnel and Readiness drafted an interstate compact to address the educational transition needs of military families. While the compact is not exhaustive in its coverage, it does address the key issues encountered by military families: eligibility, enrollment, placement and graduation. In addition, the compact provides for a detailed governance structure at both the state and national levels with built-in enforcement and compliance mechanisms. A current listing of states adopting the compact can be found at: [www.csg.org/programs/ncic/EducatingMilitaryChildrenCompact.aspx](http://www.csg.org/programs/ncic/EducatingMilitaryChildrenCompact.aspx).



## In-State Tuition for Military Members and their Families

For periods of enrollment that begin after July 1, 2009, members of the armed forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard) on active duty for a period of more than 30 days and his or her spouse, or his or her dependent children, are eligible to receive in-state tuition at public colleges and universities in the state where they reside or are permanently stationed. Once you or your service member are enrolled and paying in-state tuition, you continue to pay the in-state tuition rate as long as you remain continuously enrolled at the institution, even if your service member is reassigned outside the state. This change is included in section 135 of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (H. R. 4137) (HEOA) which was signed into law on August 14, 2008 and amends and extends the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA). This requirement applies to all public institutions that receive funds under a program authorized by the HEA.



The Department of Education has worked with the institutions of higher education and is confident they are aware of the changes in the law and are fully implementing the policy. However, as we all know, there is always the chance someone doesn't get the word. If this happens, you should contact the financial aid or registrar's office at the institution. You can also contact the Veterans Affairs office at the institution. Even though you are active duty, these offices will be able to assist you.

In the rare cases where these steps don't resolve the situation, contact the Department of Education's Ombudsman's office (toll-free at 877 557-2575) or via the Internet at [www.ombudsman.ed.gov](http://www.ombudsman.ed.gov).

## Ten Good Things about Deployment

Being separated from you loved one is not "good," but is there anything positive about Navy deployments? Here's a starter list. If you have others send your "good thing about deployment" [shauna.turner@navy.mil](mailto:shauna.turner@navy.mil), along with a picture of you and we'll add to the list in next month's newsletter.

A good thing about deployment is...

1. You can watch anything you want on TV.
2. Your kids expand their knowledge of geography and other cultures.
3. It makes you realize how much you love your service member.
4. You become more independent.
5. It offers an opportunity to learn new skills (even those you don't want to develop like fixing leaky toilets).
6. You grow closer to your children.
7. You get Family Separation Allowance.
8. You don't have to clean house.
9. You can have donuts for dinner.
10. You can fantasize about homecoming!





## Morale Welfare and Recreation

Do you want to take a trip with other adults, trim a few pounds, learn how to change your oil, play BINGO, golf or bowl, go camping, see a movie or go to a concert and enroll your kids in an afterschool program while your service member is deployed? Check out the wide variety of programs available through MWR at an installation near you or go to [www.mwr.navy.mil](http://www.mwr.navy.mil). Remember, if you live near another services' installation you can use their MRW facilities.

## Social Networking

By Panshella GM Cole — Family Employment Readiness Program Analyst

The economy has spurred a dramatic change in how recruiters find candidates and how applicants find jobs. A recent survey conducted by Jobvite, a recruitment solutions provider, released the results of its second annual survey. The survey shows employers are not just recruiting on professional online networks now, but they are also recruiting extensively on social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

Unlike most sites, where regular visitors spend at most minutes a week and look at a handful of pages, visitors to social networking sites often invest hours a day at the sites, view hundreds of pages, and disclose a tremendous amount of information about themselves and their friends.

*Some employers believe that recruiting in its current form is a dying art, says Jennifer Wojick, CEO of You Guru LLC, therefore as technology improves, so will the use of social networking as a recruitment tool.*

Based on the increasing popularity of these and other job search methods, Fleet and Family Support Program clients may want to add social working to their “tool kit” as they begin their job search. Here are some data points:

- 80 percent of companies are planning to use social networks to find or attract clients.
- Face book use grew from 36 percent in 2008 to 59 percent in 2009.
- 76 percent of companies surveyed plan to invest more in employee referrals.

For more information on this and other employment related topics, visit Fleet and Family Support Program on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Washington-DC/fleet-and-Family-Support-Program>.

## Free Summer Concert Tickets



Def Leppard and Raven Drum Foundation are giving away 100 free concert tickets to military service members and veterans for each show in the 2009 Def Leppard summer concert tour. Poison and Cheap Trick will also perform on the entire tour. Concerts run through September 12th with shows in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Nevada, Massachusetts and Washington. With a valid military ID service members are eligible for two tickets to one show on a first-come, first-served basis. Register at <http://raven-drumfoundation.org/news-events/free-dl-tickets-for-veterans.html> to be placed on the guest list. (Source: [www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=55075](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=55075))

