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## Commentary: Tips on surviving deployment

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Special contributor

How do you prepare yourself and your family for an extended separation? The book, "Surviving Deployment A Guide For Military Families," is a great starting point.

Deployment is a fact of military life. The number of reserve, guard, and active troops scheduled for deployment is at record levels. The question is no longer will I get called up but when.

"Surviving Deployment: A Guide For Military Families" begins with the definitions of deploy and deployment.

Author Karen Pavlicin presents a graph showing the three phases of deployment. The first phase is pre-deployment and preparation. Phase two is deployment separation and the last is post deployment and reunion.

All three phases contain several stages. In the first phase the spouse will encounter shock, denial and anger. Many thoughts run

through your mind.

The last stage is having the service member being reintegrated into the family.

The book will help the reader get through the beginning, middle and end of the deployment.

The other chapters cover communication between the family and the deployed service member.

One of the cardinal rules is, "do not write a letter or e-mail when you are upset or angry."

While today's technology—digital photos, video, e-mail, satellite phones—can help ease the separation, the spouse is still not home.

The book contains good information on financial plan-

ning and paperwork. When does the service member get paid and how much? How does the service member pay the mortgage if in Iraq? Does the spouse have a durable power of attorney?

Financial planning is essential for the household. The checklists in the book will help guide the reader through the planning process.

The chapter "Super Spouse" focuses on taking care of the spouse. Get some exercise, talk to friends, eat right, and keeping the mind healthy are some tips.

Health is very important. One of the suggestions is volunteering to help others. A spouse may discover that other families have it even rougher.

There were certain tasks that the spouse performed that now fall on the partner's shoulders. Do not despair, there are many helpful options available. Do not make the mistake of not asking for help.

While no book can answer all of the questions, this is well researched and written by a spouse whose husband was deployed.

Deployment means a tough time for all involved. The spouse worries about the service member, and the service member wishes he/she were home to help.

Other books worth reading include "Call to Duty," "E-mail to the Front" and "Married to the Military."

"Surviving Deployment A Guide For Military Families" is readable and useful, which may smooth some of the bumps in the road of a deployment.

The only line I would add to the book is, "It was the best of times and the worst of times."

God bless America.

