



**Essentials for Those  
Who Care for Military  
Children and Families**

**Perspective of United  
States Air Force  
Families**

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**DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

Speaker: Eric M. Flake

*The views expressed in this article are those of  
the author(s) and do not reflect the official  
policy of the Department of the Air Force, the  
Department of Defense or the U.S.  
Government.”*

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For the first time in history, the  
number of military dependents  
(spouses and children)  
outnumbers the military force.  
(Active Duty and Reserve)

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## Demographics of Military Families

- Over one-third (38%) of Active Duty members are married with children.
- Almost two-thirds (58%) of Active Duty members have family responsibilities.

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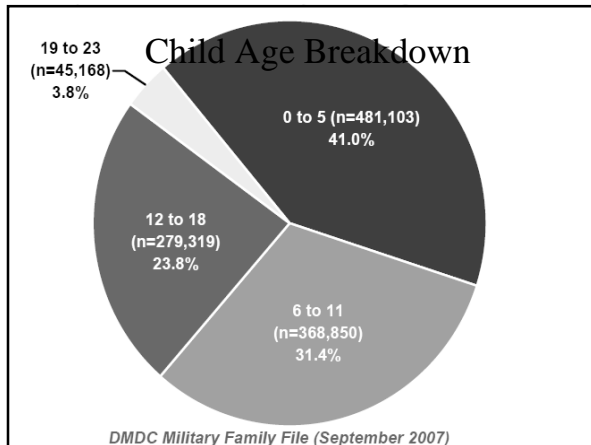
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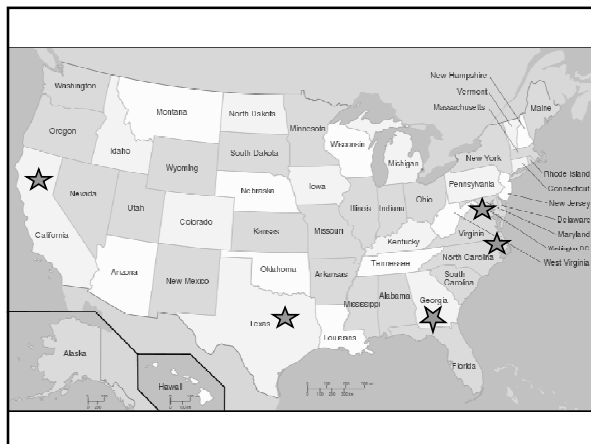
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## Deployment's Impact

- The Global War on Terror (2001) has resulted in ~ 1 million US parents to deploy.
- 2 million US children are directly impacted by these recent deployments.

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Deployments are a way of life in the military.



How do you make it a stepping stone and not a stumbling block?

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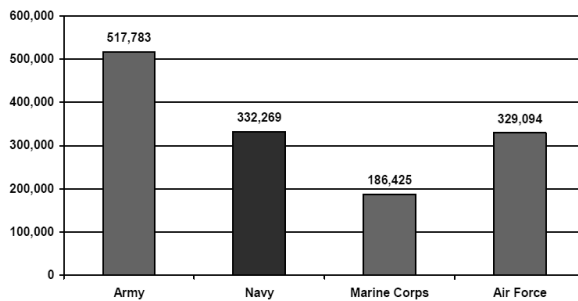
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## Active Duty Air Force



DMDC Active Duty Master File (September 2007)

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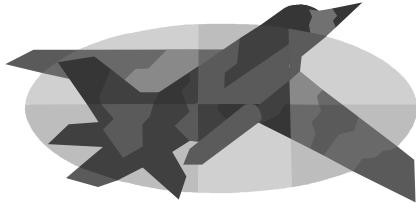
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# The First Mission of the Air Force is to Fly the Plane.




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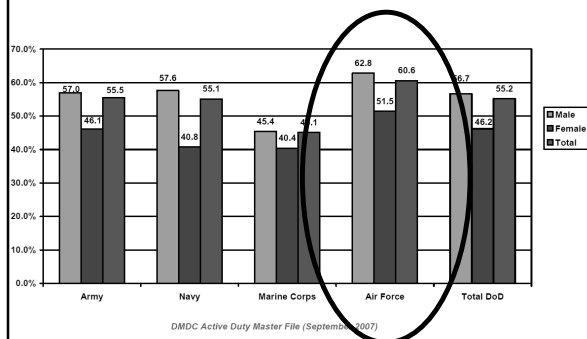
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## The AF is Older and More are Married




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## Two AF Special Groups of Interest

- Service Women
  - High percentage of officer and enlisted women in the AF than the other services = 20% vs < 15%.
- Dual Military Families = 13 %

Gender of Active Duty Member	Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Total DoD
Male	2.8%	3.2%	2.3%	8.5%	4.1%
Female	17.3%	18.8%	26.0%	30.3%	22.5%
Total	4.8%	5.4%	3.8%	12.8%	6.7%

DMDC Active Duty Master File (September 2007)

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## Military Family Separation

- Traditionally military families cope well with temporary separations.
- Family often relocate during a deployment.

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## Military Family Separation

- Wartime deployment adds new dimension to family separation stress.
- Families of activated Reservists and the National Guard may have different needs.

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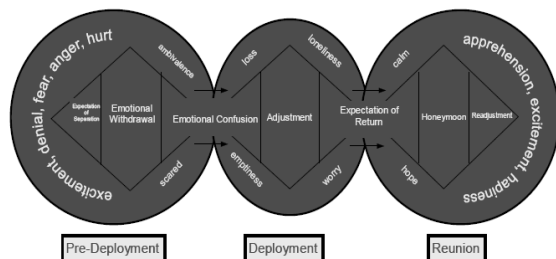
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## Emotional Stages of the Deployment Cycle



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## Historically who is more vulnerable to the effects of deployment?

- Boys and younger children



- Children affected by maternal depression.



- Young parents



- Lower socioeconomic status



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## Deployment and Family Stress

- 1 in 3 families with a deployed service member identify a school aged child at risk for psychosocial morbidity.
  - Frequency is twice national normative levels.
- High parenting stress levels are double established normative data during deployment.

Flake EM JDBP Aug 2009

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## Air Force Deployments

- Over 200,000 Airman deployed since 2001.
- 2% of those KIA or injured during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are Air Force Airmen.
- Deployments often are shorter in duration and redeployment not as frequent .

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## Resilient Air Force Families

- Air Force Wide Survey continues to reports high levels of cohesion and resilience in military families despite stressors.

*(Air Force Community Assessment , 2006)*

- 71% of Military Families with children plan to stay in the military until retirement.

*(Active Duty Spouse Survey, 2006)*

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## Air Force Family Research

- **Roberts KA – 2007** Self-efficacy, self-concept, and social competence as resources supporting resilience and psychological well-being in young adults reared within the military community:

- Results indicated **no significant differences** in psychological well-being between military and civilian reared individuals.

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## Air Force Family Research

- **Roper LL – 2007** Air force single parent mothers and maternal separation anxiety.

- Results indicated there was **no significant** difference in deploying and non-deploying Air Force single parent mothers for
  - Level of separation anxiety
  - Separation effects
  - Employment-related concerns

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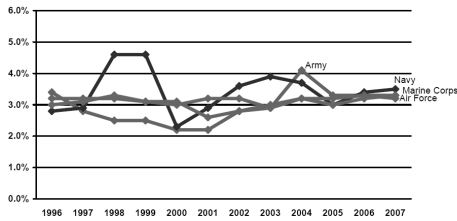
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## No Change in AF Divorce Rates

### 2.53. Estimated Percent of Divorces by Service Branch Trends: 1996-2007

This graph presents the estimated percent of married Active Duty who divorced during Fiscal Years 1996-2007.



Note: These figures include widowed cases. However, the number of people who were widowed last year is expected to be small and should not affect the percents.

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## Air Force Supports its Families

- Key Spouses
- Free or Low Cost in Home Child Care Programs
- Youth Outreach Programs
- Military School Liaison Officers
- Base Integrated Resource Team
- Military Family Life Consultants

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## Attention Health Care Providers

- Screen:
  - Ask about deployment related stress.
- Support
  - All families should be offered resources.
- Refer
  - Local and National supports are available.

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One Source for Support

- [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)

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Thank you for Supporting  
Military Families!



**Acknowledgments:**

Brave military children and spouses who support their  
service member during deployment

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