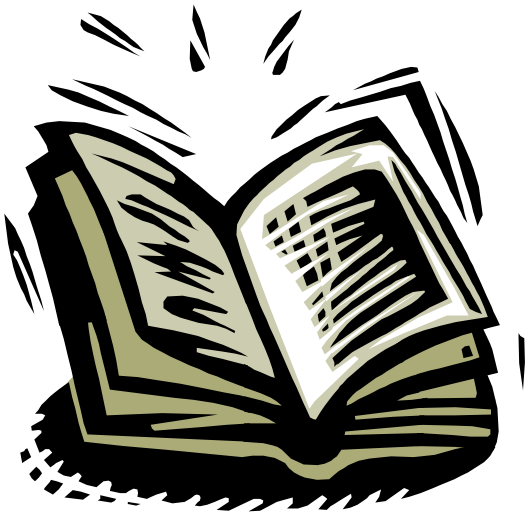
Travel Journal

A Discovery about Deployment



A Deployment Guide
for Children ages 8-10
Whose Families are in the National Guard
National Guard Bureau-Family Program Office

About This Book

This ideas and activities guide is written for young people with parents in the Army or Air National Guard. It can be exciting to have the military as a part of your life, but being separated from your parent because of their military duties can be difficult.

In this guide you will find ways you can create a journal to help you through this deployment. You will find ways deployment can affect kids your age. It includes ways to handle separation, ideas on ways to stay in touch with your parent during the separation, ways to cope while your parent is away, and how to prepare for their return.

This guide can help you learn about how to turn the frightening idea of deployment into an adventure of discovery.

Revised as of 19 February 03

Getting The Facts

Deployment is when one or both of your parents have military duties and have to leave their families. This can be either for a special training or when their unit is called to serve in a military crisis. Sometimes you know several weeks in advance and sometimes you find out just before he or she leaves.

Find Out All You Can

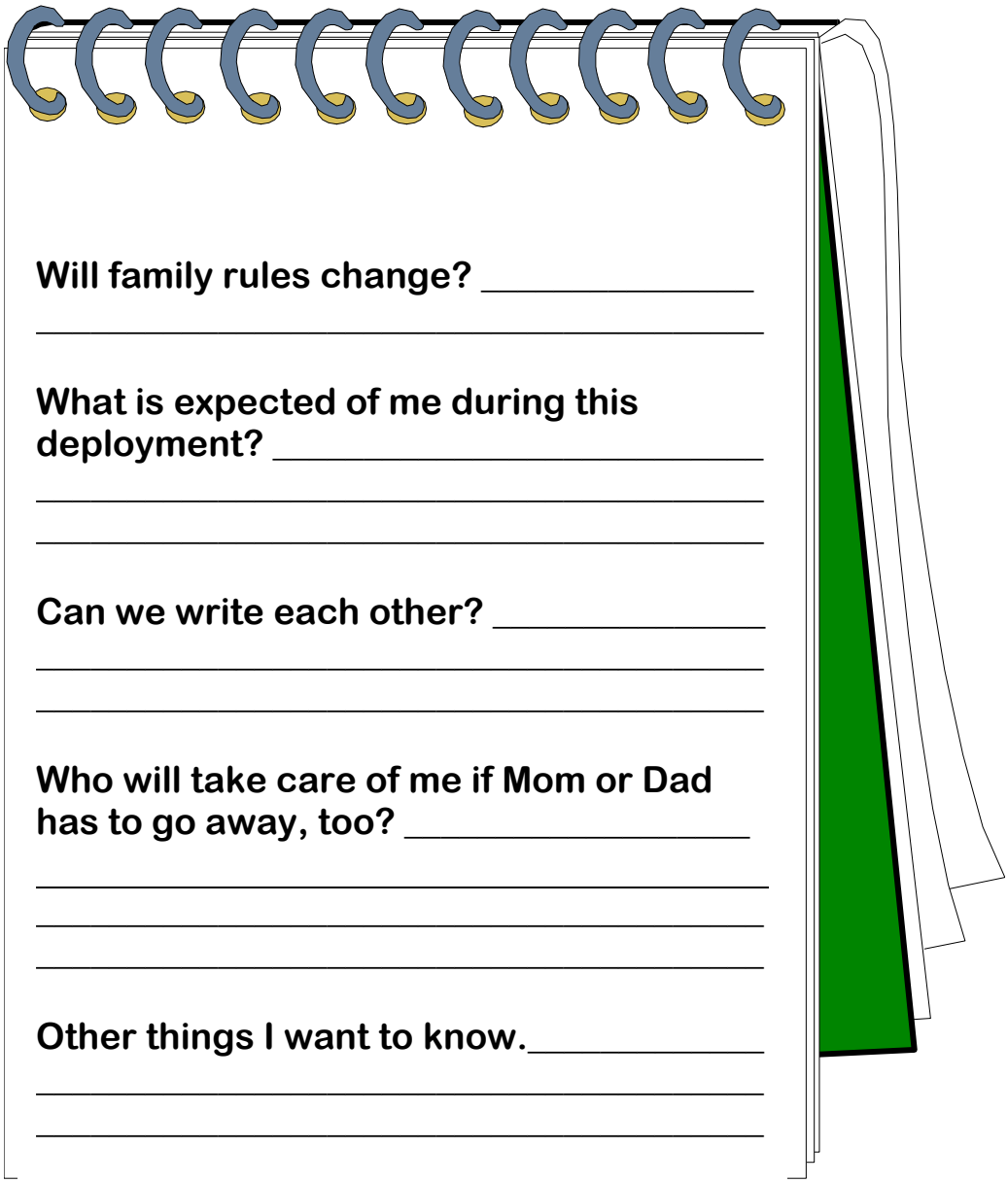
Ask your parents questions about this separation. Sometimes parents on military duty can't tell you much about where they are going or why. You'll still feel a lot better knowing as much as you can.

*Ask a lot of **'W'** questions.*

What is this deployment all about?
Why are you going?
When are you leaving?
Where are you going?
What is it like there**?**
Will you be safe?
Will you be gone long**?**

How Will Deployment Affect Me?

You may want to find out how this separation will change your daily life. Many families find family meetings a helpful way to get information. You might want to use the following questions to help you get a talk started with your parents.



Will family rules change? _____

_____

What is expected of me during this deployment? _____

_____

_____

Can we write each other? _____

_____

_____

Who will take care of me if Mom or Dad has to go away, too? _____

_____

_____

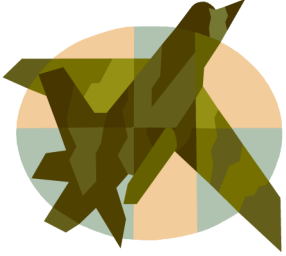
_____

Other things I want to know._____

_____

_____

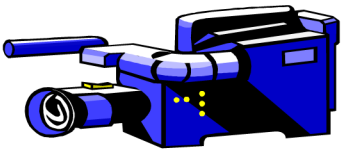
Getting It Together



What do you want to do for your parent before he or she leaves?

What do you want your parent to do for you before he or she leaves?

Spend as much time as possible with your parent before he or she leaves.



Take plenty of picture and videos of your parent.

Make a special package to send with your parent.

Some kids get together special items for their parents to take with them.
Here are some suggested items you may want to consider.

Pictures you have drawn
Photographs of you and your parent together
Chewing gum
Their favorite candy
Writing paper and pens
Self-addressed envelopes and stamps
Needle and thread and safety pins
Handkerchiefs
A special letter telling your parent how proud you are of them

Saying Goodbye

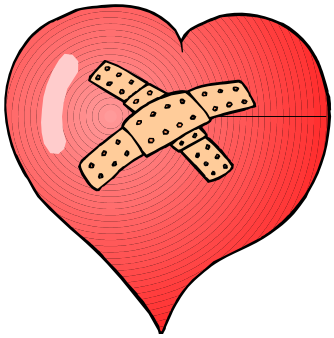
It is hard to say goodbye. It is one of the worst things about having parents in the military.

When you say goodbye you will have all kinds of mixed up feelings.

So, when you say "Goodbye," remember:

It's okay to cry.

Saying goodbye won't be easy.



Saying goodbye hurts.

It's okay to laugh and giggle.

Feelings

Deployment can cause you to have many different feelings.
You may get:

SCARED your deployed parent will get hurt, or

ANGRY that they have gone away.

At the same time you may feel…

EXCITED because this is a new experience,

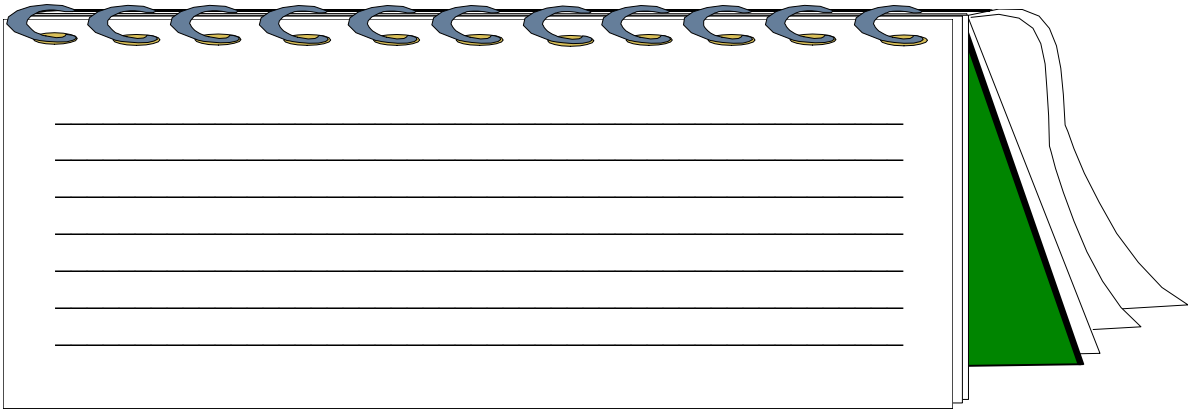
GREAT because there is one less person to "hassle" you,

THRILLED because, "I can do what I want."

You're like a yo yo.

Don't Keep It Bottled Up!

What are some of the feelings you have about being separated from your parent?



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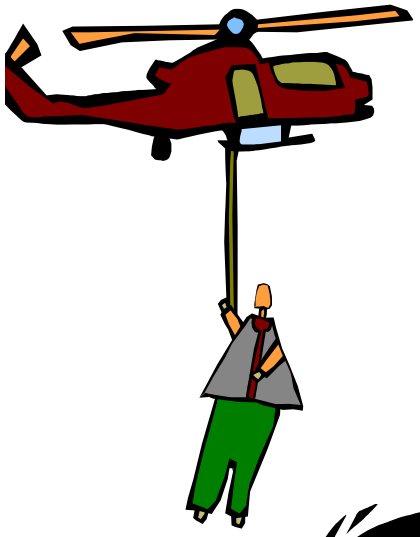
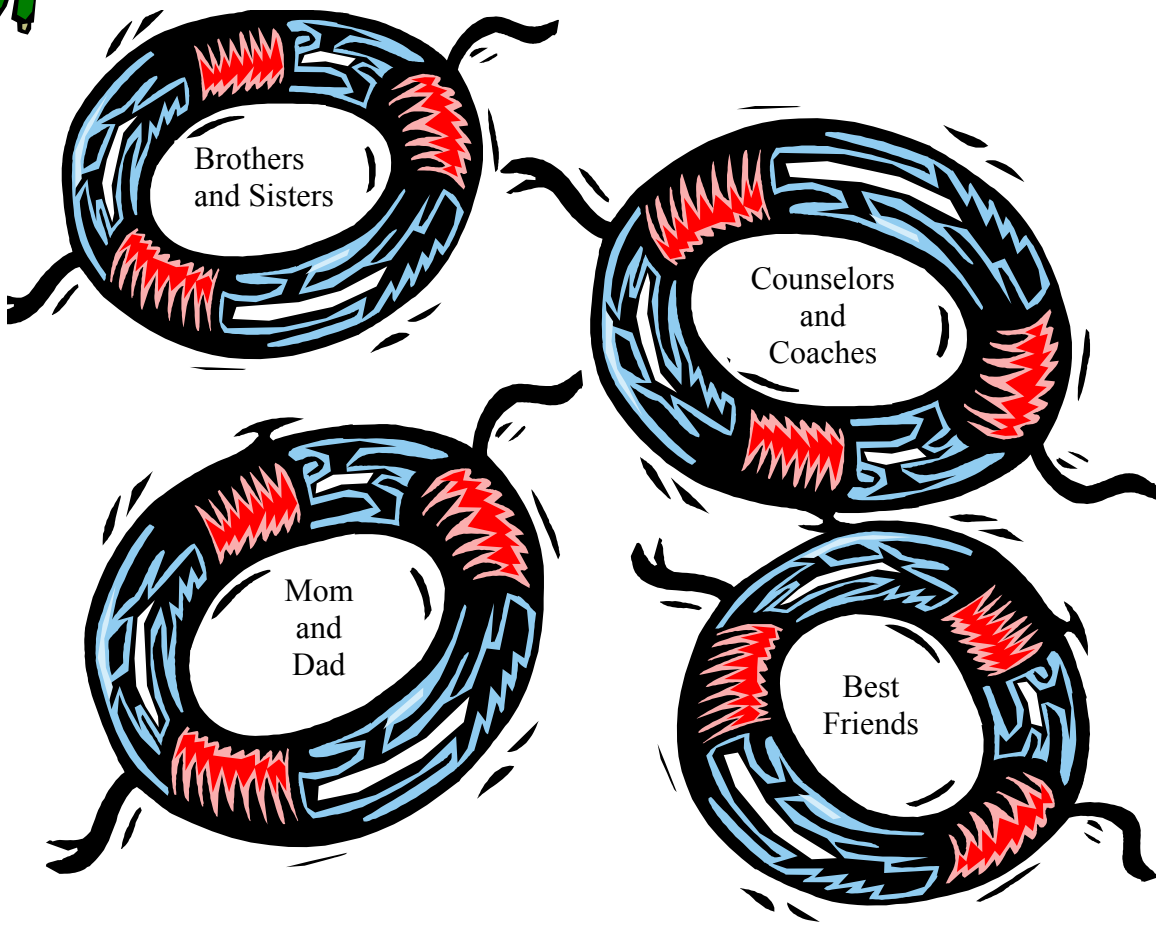


Deployments are hard. It really helps to talk with someone that you trust. You'll find out that you are normal and that these feelings are okay. You'll feel better about yourself.



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Road Signs To When To Say, "Help"

You need to know when you are getting stressed out and what you can do about it. This means knowing when "too much" is going on. These are some of the "signs" that you are feeling stressed.

Picking Fights

Suddenly not doing well in school

Disobeying Parents, Teachers or Rules

Not Wanting to Eat

Nightmares or
Trouble Sleeping

Feeling Confused

Feel Like You Don't Want To Do Anything

Feel Like No One Cares About You

These feelings and behaviors are normal. On the next page are some things you can do to feel better when you are stressed out.

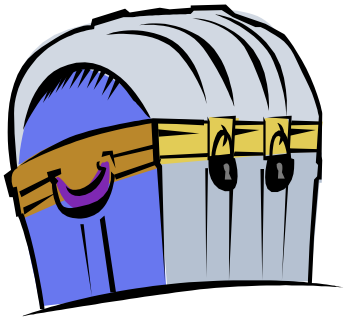
Pack Up Your Troubles

Connect with others

Be a volunteer
Fix, grow, or build something with a friend
Listen to music with a friend
Play video games with a friend
Invite your best friend to do something fun
Help Mom or Dad around the house

Get up and move

Go jogging
Take a hike
Go swimming
Go skateboarding
Ride a bike
Try bowling
Play tennis



Get Your Mind Going

Watch a funny movie
Share a joke book with a friend
Daydream
Draw or paint a picture
Go to a movie
Read a book
Play a board game

Be good to yourself. Remember to do something you enjoy. Find a way to pack your troubles away. **JUST DO IT!**

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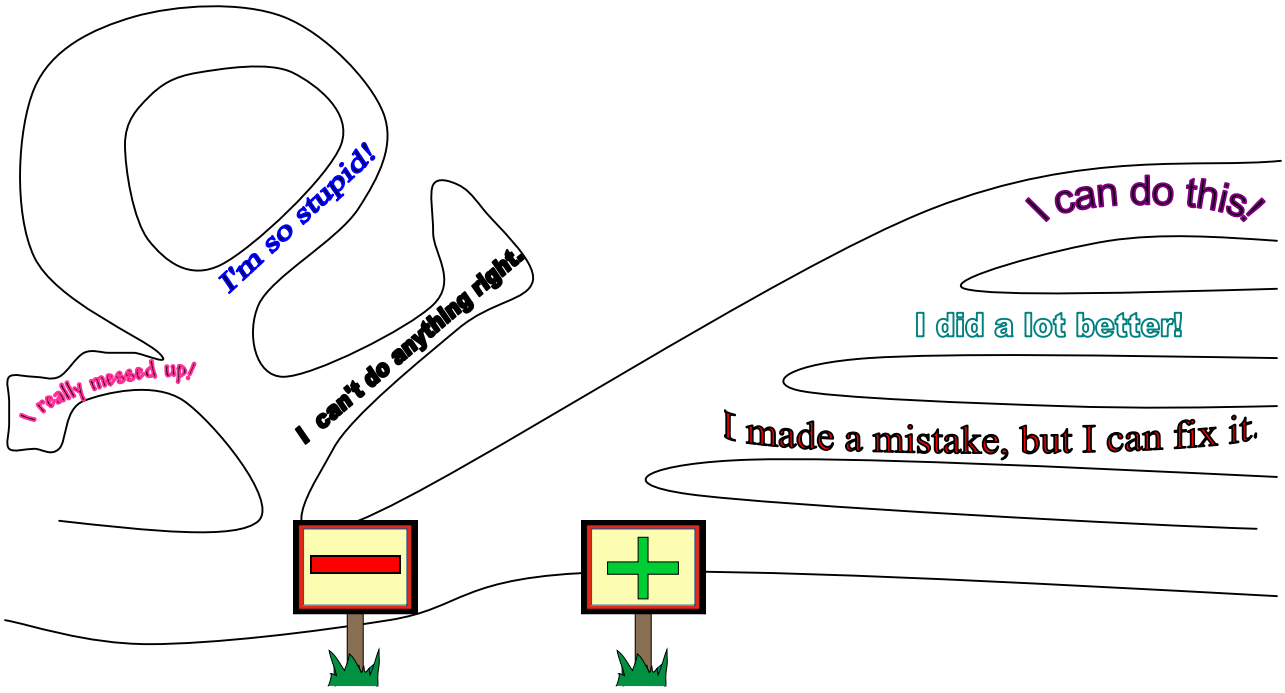
Talk and Think Positive

When everything seems awful to you, this is called **negative** self-talk. **Negative** self-talk just makes you feel more down. It is important to think of your troubles with **positive** statements.

Which roadway will you choose?



Be Positive About Yourself!

You have what it takes to handle being separated from your parent and other daily challenges.

Don't forget to take time every day to feel good about your successes.

Staying In Touch While Your Parent Is Away

Letters are a good way to stay in touch. They are cheap and can be reread. Remember that they will take a week or more to reach your parent. Here are some ideas to guide you.

- Use the correct mailing address. If you do not use the correct address, your mail will probably be delayed and may not arrive at all. Your parent can give this address to you.
- Number your letters so that if more than one letter arrives at the same time, your parent will know which one to read first.
- Tell news of the neighborhood, friends and relatives. Clip out newspaper articles your parent might enjoy reading.
- When you write, put your parent's picture in front of you so you can feel like you are talking together.
- Write often or send cards.
- Answer all questions.
- Remember, it is important to write "I love you."

Mailing Address

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Keeping In Touch

The good thing about deployment is the fun ways you can stay in touch with each other. If writing letters is too much like schoolwork for you, here are some other creative ideas. You'll be entertaining your parent, and also giving yourself something fun to do.

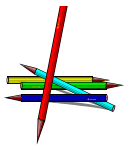
Family Newspaper

Keep your deployed parent up to date on local and family news by being the family reporter. You can make up a newspaper or tape interviews and stories by family members.

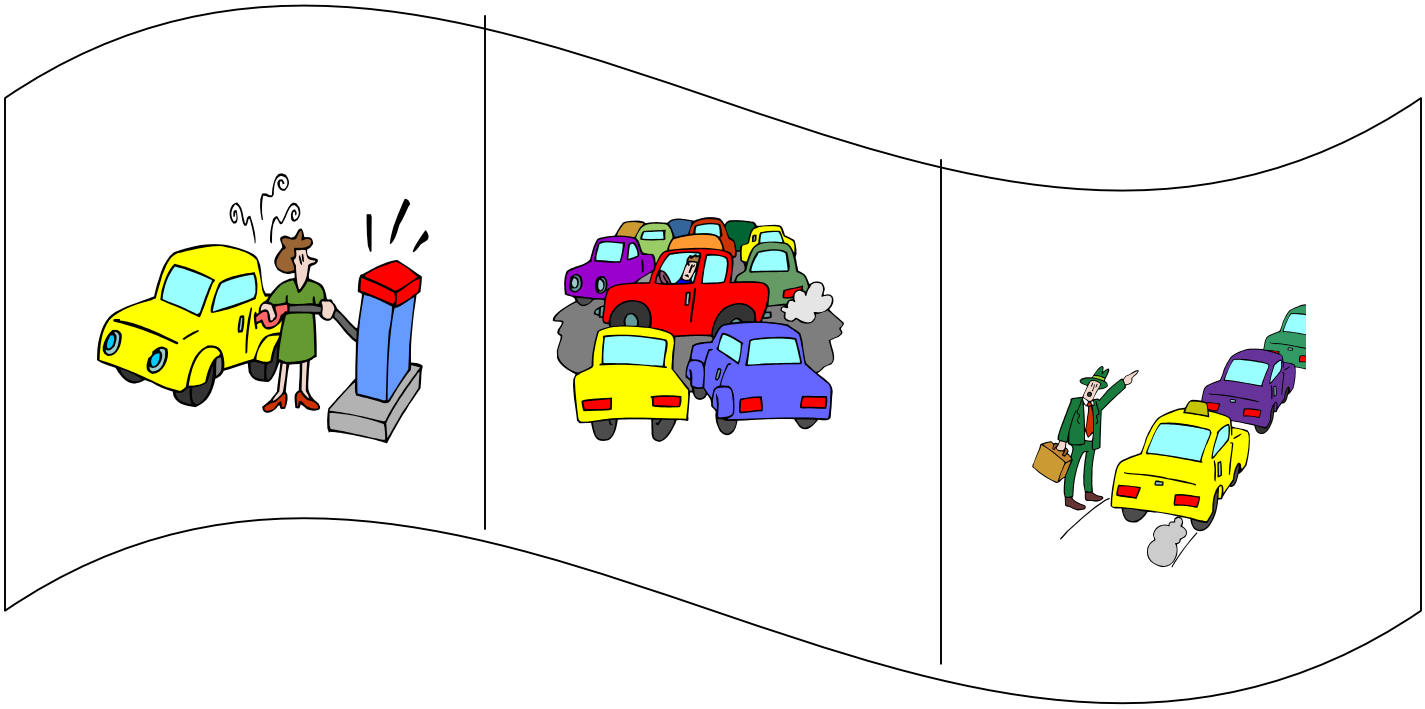
- Interview family members and family friends.
- Write short articles about events happening at home.
- Write about local news, like about your soccer game.
- Tell ordinary things like shopping for school clothes.
- Include family pictures.
- Write some funny stories.
- Create your own comic strip.

Care Packages

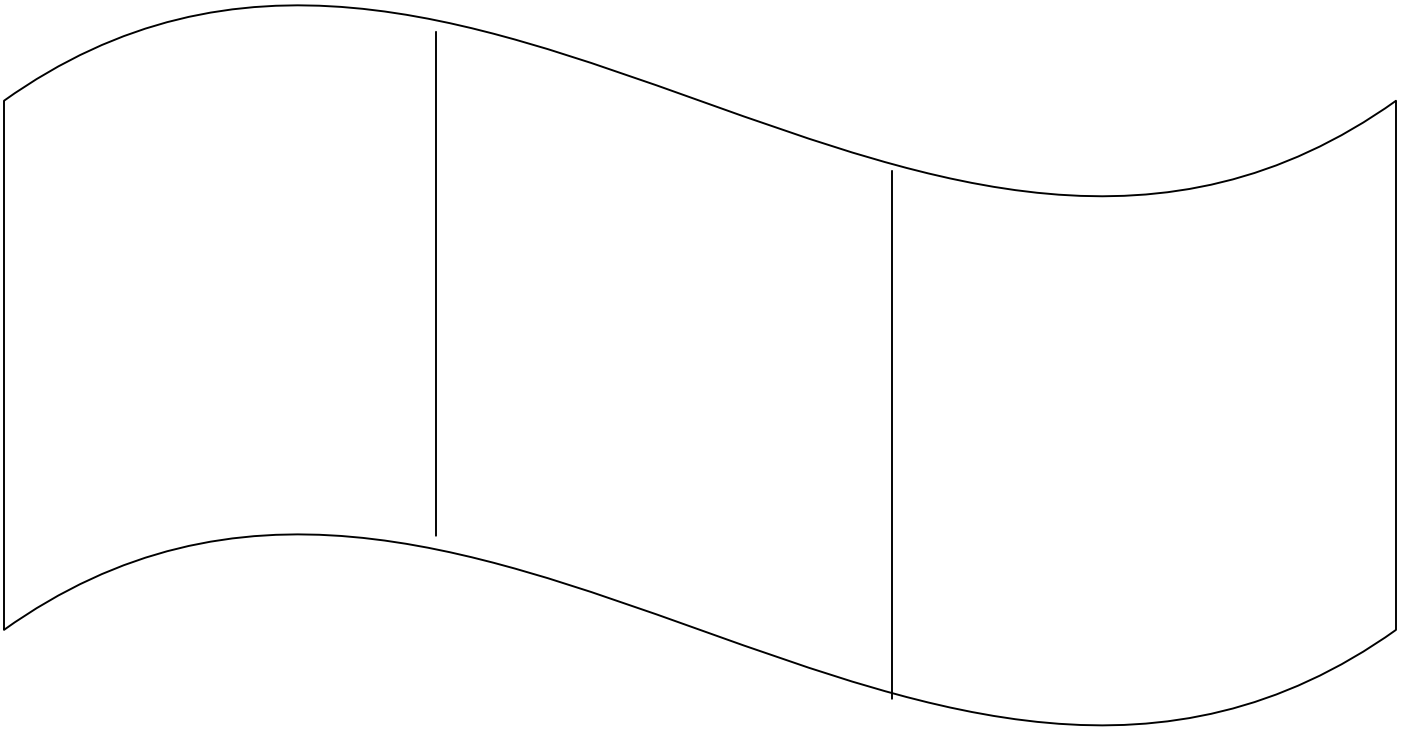
Care packages are always welcome. You can have your deployed parent give you suggestions before they leave. You can also include other surprises they would enjoy.



Try creating a cartoon strip



Send one for your parent to create



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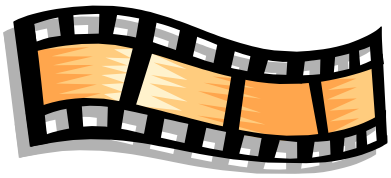
A Movie Review

Movie Title: _____
Actors: _____
Plot: _____
_____
_____

Rating: (circle one) excellent good fair skip

Recommendation: (check one)

- □ See as soon as you can!
- □ Go if there is nothing else to do.
- □ Don't bother!
- □ This movie shouldn't have been made!



A book review

Book title: _____
Main character: _____
_____
Plot: _____
_____

Recommendation: (check one)

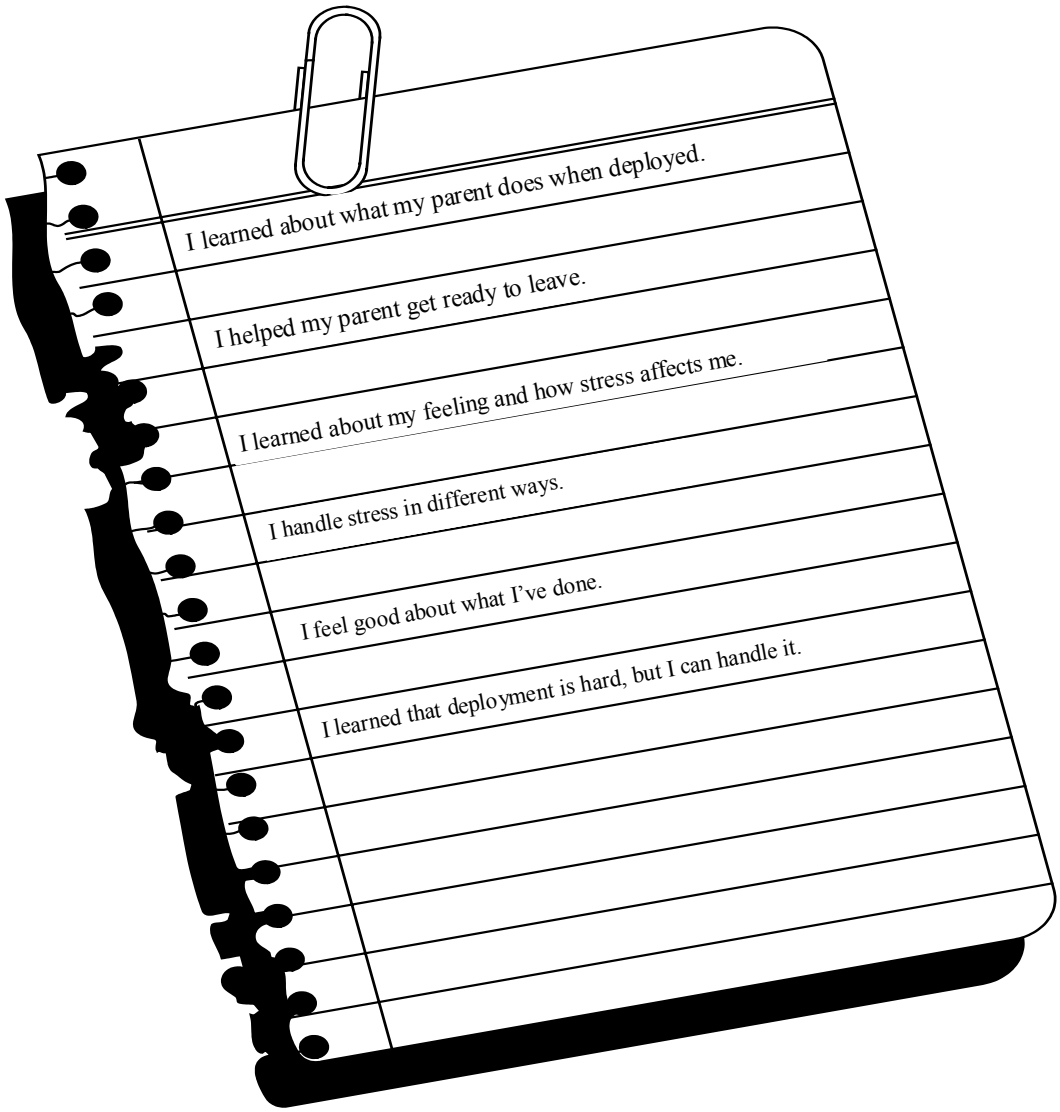
- □ What a waste of a tree!
- □ Read as soon as possible!
- □ No rush to read.
- □ Read if you want.

_____

Closing the Journal

When deployment ends, take time to think about all you have accomplished during this time. Go back through your journal and find out what you have learned and how you have changed. You will discover that you have met some challenges, mastered some difficulties, and done a good job.

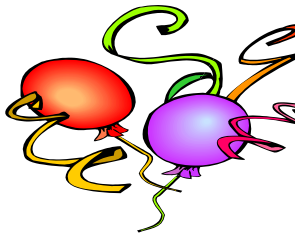
What I've Learned During This Deployment



In your journal, write down some of the things you have learned during this deployment.

Now Arriving -

IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE

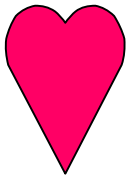


It's nice to have some special things prepared to celebrate your parent's return.

You can make a banner

You can create coupons for your parent to use.

Good for 20 Hugs



Helping Hand

Good for Getting My Help With Anything You Choose

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Cut out and put
over a doorknob

Do Not Disturb

GOOD FOR USE ONE TIME EACH DAY FOR UP TO 20 MINUTES

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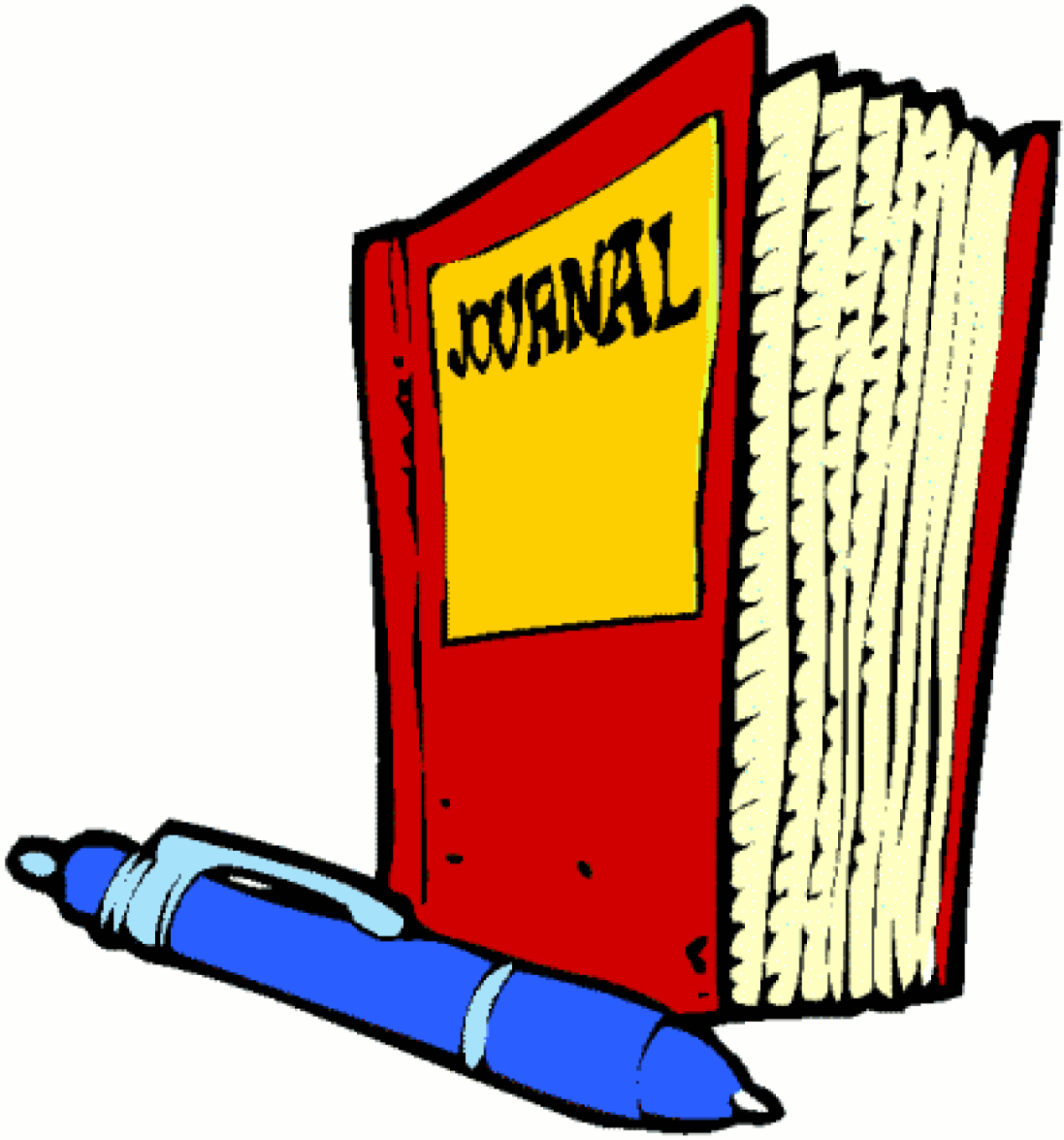
Home Sweet Home- Together Again!

Like deployment, you can learn about a Reunion happening several weeks in advance and sometimes it happens suddenly. Here are some things to help you know more about what to expect. You'll probably recognize some of the same things you went through during the deployment.

- You need time to readjust to each other. Everyone has changed. It takes time to get used to each other again.
- Reunions can be stressful but you have learned how to tell if you are stressed and what you can do.
- You might experience strong feelings. These feelings can be positive, negative or mixed up. You may feel happy to see your parent or worried about how they have changed. You may feel uneasy, and that can be upsetting. It's normal to feel this way and, in time, it will pass.
- Reunions can bring misunderstandings. It may take you awhile to feel comfortable with your returning parent again.
- You will have to share your parent with others. Remember that each family member wants time with the parent or parents who have been away.
- Your deployed parent will need time alone. Be prepared to give your parents "time out."

TOGETHER AGAIN



Journal Ends

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