

DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT



MF
RC ESQUIMALT

SEA



PO2 Fiona Borland
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Cruzer

All of us are family

When you hear “family” you might think it means husband, wife and two kids. You may be single, married or common law. You may or may not have kids. No matter what **your** family looks like, we’re here for you.

We are **your** resource centre, and **you are family**.

Start exploring the many services that benefit everyone at esquimaltmfrc.com

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Table of Contents

Welcome!

How to use this handbook.....	iv
The Esquimalt MFC: who we are, how we can help & how to reach us.....	iv
A note about R2MR.....	vi
A note for 443 Squadron families.....	vi

Spouse/Partner* of a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Member 1

*This means you: girlfriends, boyfriends, wives, husbands, common-law spouses, and anyone who is in an established relationship with a CAF member

Preparing for deployment.....	1
Deployment.....	5
Homecoming and post-deployment	8

Supporting Children & Teens..... 11

Preparing for deployment.....	11
Deployment.....	16
Homecoming and post-deployment	20

Parent of a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Member 23

Preparing for deployment.....	23
Deployment.....	26
Homecoming and post-deployment.....	29

Additional Deployment Resources..... 32

Mail.....	32
Urgent messages	33
Serious Incidents.....	33
Member Assistance Program (MAP).....	36
Family Information Line (FIL).....	36
R2MR Tools.....	36
Dealing with the Media.....	36
Military 101.....	37
Complex Needs.....	38
FAQ's & Common Acronyms Defined	38

Welcome!

How to use this handbook

If you have a loved one deploying out of CFB Esquimalt, this handbook is for YOU.

Your handbook is divided into 5 chapters. The first chapter (Welcome!) and the last chapter (Additional Deployment Resources) contain important information that is applicable to anyone who is dealing with deployment. Chapters 2, 3 & 4 contain tips, resources, and information that are specific to particular groups within the CAF community. Within each chapter you will find resources grouped specifically for pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.

- **Chapter 2** is geared towards the **spouse/partner of a CAF member**
- **Chapter 3** is for anyone who is **supporting children and/or teens** through deployment
- **Chapter 4** is specifically for the **parents of a CAF member**

Web links for resources have been included wherever possible.

You can also call the MFRC's 24 hour line for details or to ask questions about any of the resources in this handbook: 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

*Please note: Some links may have changed since the creation of this handbook. Please visit the website for the most up-to-date information.
www.esquimaltmfrc.com*

The Esquimalt Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC)

Who we are

The Esquimalt MFRC is a non-profit organization which aims to support individual, family, and community needs by providing services and supports that address the uniqueness of military families. The MFRC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors which is composed of at least 51% civilian spouses of full-time serving Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members. The board, staff and volunteers at your MFRC are dedicated to your well-being and to helping you navigate through deployment and the many unique elements of the military lifestyle.

Programs and Services at your MFRC

The MFRC provides programs and services that fall into three categories:

Deployment

Deployment is any work-related separation. It could be a ship's deployment, a land based deployment, a course, or any reason that your CAF member has to be away for an extended period. This handbook describes many of the programs and services offered by your MFRC to support your family through deployment.

Relocation

Relocation is something that most military families will have to deal with at some point, sometimes repeatedly. The MFRC offers programs and services to help you and your family prepare for the transition and get settled in your new community.

Social and Mental Wellness

Your family's well-being has a significant impact on your CAF member's operational readiness. The MFRC offers programs and services to help you make your family's well-being a top priority.

How we can help

When your loved one deploys, having access to the many services offered by your MFRC can make a huge difference. A deployment, or a work-related separation, is a unique situation that requires some preparation and sustained effort by both the CAF member and the loved ones who remain at home. It is our hope that this handbook will provide you with answers to some of the questions you might be asking, and that you will use it as a starting point to discover all that your MFRC has to offer. We encourage you to use this handbook, the Esquimalt MFRC website, and your MFRC staff and volunteers as tools to help you throughout the deployment.

How to reach us

If you need assistance, want to remain connected, or are looking for information, please be in touch in one of the following ways:

- Call the Esquimalt MFRC 24 Hour Information Line at 250-363-2640 (toll free: 1-800-353-3329)
- Visit the Esquimalt MFRC website www.esquimaltmfrc.com
- Email the Esquimalt MFRC at emfrc@shaw.ca
- Come in anytime during regular office hours (call or visit the website for current hours of operation)

We look forward to connecting with you!

MFRC Locations

Signal Hill MFRC: 1505 Esquimalt Road, Esquimalt BC

CPAC MFRC: 2610 Rosebank Road, Colwood BC

A note about R2MR

The Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) is a training package created by the CAF to foster resilience and mental wellness in the CAF member. Components of the training package are completed at different times throughout the CAF member's career including specific training for the cycle of deployment.

The CAF recognizes that families are "the strength behind the uniform" and understands the sacrifices and contributions of military families to successful missions. For this reason, the R2MR program has an entire component created specifically for family members. The purpose of the family member training package is to provide you with guidance and skills to help alleviate some of the stress of the deployment experience on you and your family.

Throughout this handbook, you will see links to R2MR resources that might be especially helpful to you during the deployment cycle.

R2MR resources are available through the Esquimalt MFRC as well as online. Please visit the link below to access the entire family member training package or call the MFRC's 24 hour line for more information at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/index.page

A note for 443 Squadron families

If your loved one is part of a ship's air detachment, you are part of that ship's deployment family. We encourage you to take advantage of the resources outlined in this handbook and to connect with others who are dealing with the same deployment.

Visit the MFRC's website at www.esquimaltmfrc.com and click on "deployment" to access additional resources that might be helpful to you and your family.

Above all, remember that the MFRC is available to assist you 24/7 at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.



Spouse/Partner*

***this means YOU: girlfriends, boyfriends, wives, husbands, common-law spouses, and anyone who is in an established relationship with a CAF member.**

In this chapter you will find resources intended to support you through your deployment experience as the spouse/partner of a CAF member. If you are also supporting children and/or teens through deployment, please see chapter 3 of this handbook for specific resources and tips pertaining to their deployment experience.

Above all, remember that the MFRC is available to assist you 24/7 at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

Preparing for Deployment

If you are preparing for a deployment you might be feeling anxious, frustrated, confident, mad, confused, excited, scared, proud, or none of the above. You might feel like your emotions are swinging from one extreme to the other and your routine has been turned upside down. You might feel calm and collected and that your days are “business as usual.” Rest assured, however you are feeling it is OK and it is normal. There is no “right” way to feel during pre-deployment and no “right” way to deal with the pre-deployment phase.

There is a widely accepted model for the “cycle of deployment” and you will notice it is mentioned throughout this chapter. There are seven stages to the cycle, and you

can expect to experience the first two in the pre-deployment phase. "Anticipation of Loss" is the first stage and it looks very different for everyone. You and your partner are facing the reality of the deployment and you might feel torn between preparing for the separation and spending every waking moment together. Most will find themselves somewhere in between. The second stage is "Detachment and Withdrawal." At some point you may begin to feel an emotional detachment as your partner begins to focus on the mission and your focus turns to your own preparation. For some couples this happens before the ship departs and for some it happens in the first days or weeks of the separation. The process will be different for everyone but knowing the cycle and having a general idea of what to expect could help you cope.

Whatever pre-deployment looks like for you, it is generally agreed that spending some time preparing for deployment will pay off as you make your way through the rest of the deployment cycle. The tips and resources on the following pages are designed to help you with this preparation.

If you have any questions or feel like you need additional support as you prepare for deployment, your MFRC is just a phone call away! Remember: you are strong and resilient and you are not alone.

"Don't isolate yourself; you are part of the deployment. Try to become familiar with the MFRC before the deployment. Attend a coffee night or just drop by for information. Create your own support system and then lean on each other through the deployment."

- 443 Spouse

Pre-Deployment Checklist

- ☐ Be sure you know your member's mailing address while deployed and find out how and where to drop off mail and care packages (see page 32 of this handbook).
- ☐ Learn your member's rank, service number, and department on board the ship.
- ☐ Be sure you know how to reach your member in case of an emergency (see page 33 of this handbook).
- ☐ Pick up deployment resources from your local MFRC.
- ☐ Join your ship's Family Network. This is the best way to stay in the information loop.
- ☐ Find out if the ship is having a pre-deployment briefing.
- ☐ If possible, visit your partner's ship to see where he or she will be living and working during the separation.
- ☐ Check out the MFRC's series of instructional videos on dealing with deployment: www.esquimaltmfrc.com
- ☐ Download the MFRC Deployment App at www.esquimaltmfrc.com/app.

Around the House

- ☐ Discuss what to do in case of an emergency repair. Create a list of emergency resources: plumber, electrician, mechanic, others?
- ☐ Learn how and where to shut off: water, gas, electrical
- ☐ Arrange for any seasonal upkeep (mowing the lawn, shovelling the driveway, etc.)
- ☐ Consider giving someone you trust a copy of your house keys, just in case.
- ☐ Know the location of important documents like appliance warranties.

Vehicles

- ☐ Check automobile insurance renewal dates.
- ☐ Discuss and plan for any upcoming required vehicle maintenance.

Legal

- ☐ Make a list of all important documents and their locations.
- ☐ Check that your partner has updated the following important documents: will, power of attorney, supplementary death benefit, life insurance, bank and investment power of attorney, next of kin form

Financial

- ☐ Create a deployment budget for both the member and the at-home partner.
- ☐ Discuss having an emergency financial fund.
- ☐ Be sure you have the ability to access and pay all bills, paper and online.
- ☐ Consider a joint bank account to alleviate accessibility issues.

Insurance

- ☐ Review insurance policies: **automobile, home, life, medical, dental**
- ☐ Print off and pre-sign Sun Life and Great West medical forms.
- ☐ Ensure you know how to file a claim.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Pre-Deployment Briefing

Depending on the length of the deployment, a pre-deployment briefing may be held by the unit. Typically guest speakers will include the Command Team, Fleet Mail Office, Base Clinic, MFRC, and AJAG. Pre-deployment briefings usually take place in the evening at the CPAC MFRC. This is an opportunity to: find out where the ship is going and why, ask your questions directly to the Command Team, register for MFRC services, and hear about upcoming deployment activities. Selected slides will be made available online following the briefing. Call 250-363-2640 to find out if your ship is holding a pre-deployment briefing.

Family Networks

When you are part of a Family Network, you get up-to-date, accurate information about deployments. In an emergency, the Command Team may turn to the MFRC to

distribute information to families through the Family Networks. Family Networks also provide information on social activities and give families the opportunity to connect with each other throughout a deployment. A separate Family Network exists for each of the larger ships, the MCDVs, the Submarines, and 443 MH Squadron. Visit the MFRC website to find out how to connect with your Family Network!

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/family-networks/

Staying in Touch (SIT) Services

SIT Services are available to you during extended deployments. A staff member from the MFRC will call or email you monthly to check in, keep you informed about the deployment, and see how you are coping with the separation. The SIT staff will not offer advice or counselling; their role is to offer information, a friendly voice and a listening ear. All conversations are confidential. Call the MFRC to find out if SIT Services are being offered for your deployment 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

Adult Deployment Workshops

The MFRC offers a wide variety of adult workshops that are designed to support you through the unique challenges of deployment. Learn about everything from dealing with transitions to making connections with other military spouses to dealing with deployment stress. These free workshops are scheduled in response to the needs of the community. Check out the Deployment Section of the MFRC website at www.esquimaltmfrc.com for information and workshop descriptions and then call to let the MFRC know which workshop(s) you would like to see offered for your deployment.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Deployment App

With the MFRC Deployment App, you can receive tips to guide you through all stages of your work-related separation, use checklists to keep track of your to-do lists, and see how far you've come with a customizable countdown clock. Downloads available for iOS and Android devices via the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/app

Slideshow: The Deployment Cycle

This slideshow contains practical tips for dealing with the deployment cycle: pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. Consider sitting down with your partner to have a look at this resource. The tips could help prepare you both for the upcoming separation.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/resources-services/

Video: The D Word

Whether you are a seasoned military spouse or you are about to experience your first deployment, this video could help you to put the deployment experience in perspective. It also provides some useful tips for dealing with the separation.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/deployment-videos/

Pre-Deployment Family Training (R2MR)

This self-paced, online family training is designed to help you understand the challenges you could face during deployment and give you some new tools and ways to approach each challenge. It will also help you recognize your own personal strengths and identify resources in your community that could support your well-being throughout the deployment.

Visit the website for more information and to access the training modules: www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/pre-deployment-family-trng.page. Or call the MFRC for information on R2MR training sessions.

Deployment

So you made it through the pre-deployment phase and are now dealing with the deployment. For some, this can come as a relief after the countdown and the build up to deployment. For others, the realities of deployment can hit hard and bring difficult challenges. You might be feeling a bit of both, or maybe neither. However you are feeling about the deployment phase, it is OK and it is normal.

You can expect to experience the next two stages of the deployment cycle during this phase: "Emotional Disorganization" and "Recovery and Stabilization." This is a formal way of saying that deployment can be hard but once you find your own routine and form some new habits, things tend to get a little easier. The tips and resources on the following pages are designed to help you find your balance. Remember, you are strong and resilient and every deployment has a finish line. You can do this!

Deployment Tips

- Be security conscious. Don't broadcast any information about the deployment.
- Be safe. Don't advertise that you are alone or have a military member away.
- Practice self-care. Exercise, eat healthy, get a massage, have "you" time.
- Try to be as positive as possible in your communication with your partner.
- Send letters and care packages. Number your correspondence as mail can sometimes take a few weeks or more to arrive on board the ship (see page 32 of this handbook for postal information).
- Keep a list of things you need to discuss by phone. When you get a call, you will save frustration by talking about the "need to know" items first in case your call gets disconnected.

- Become familiar with your ship's Family Network and MFRC activities.
- Get connected. Meet with friends, volunteer, remain involved in daily life, and refuse to become isolated.
- Set realistic goals for yourself for the deployment period.
- If you are struggling, call a friend, call the MFRC, or call the Members Assistance Program at 1-800-268-7708.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Away Cafés and Community Dinners

These evenings provide a social opportunity for you to connect and share with others who are dealing with deployment over a cup of coffee or a warm meal. MFRC Staff will be on hand to answer any questions you might have. Share your tips about dealing with the military lifestyle including deployments, or come and learn from those who have done it all before. These evenings are a great reminder that you are not alone.

Registration for Away Cafes and Community Dinners is required for all participants at least 7 days in advance of session dates. Free child care is available at time of registration. See the MFRC website for more information: www.esquimaltmfrc.com or call 250-363-2640.

Deployment Events and Activities

The MFRC offers seasonal events such as: Canada Day Celebrations; Thanksgiving Potluck; Valentine's Day Craft; Easter Egg Hunt; and many others! These events are a great way to get connected and have some fun with others who are dealing with deployment. Be sure to visit the "Upcoming Activities" page of the Esquimalt MFRC website or call 250-363-2640 for more information.

Sunday Information Sessions

Sunday Sessions are offered once a month during extended deployments if requested by the unit's Command Team. During a Sunday Session you will have the opportunity to hear from the Command Team on board the ship, hear from local command, meet other families who are dealing with the deployment, and participate in an educational workshop. Child minding is provided. To find out if Sunday Sessions are being offered for your deployment, call the MFRC 24 Hour Information line at 250-363-2640. Some deployments allow for a live virtual update. Check with your MFRC for details.

"I really looked forward to each Sunday Session. It was a great way to share my feelings about the deployment and compare notes with other spouses. I will miss the once a month get-togethers."

HMCS Regina Spouse

DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Dealing with Stress

Deployment can be stressful. This brochure from the Public Health Agency of Canada will help you answer the question "how can I most effectively deal with stress?" Find some great tips for enhancing your life by changing your approach to stress.

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/mi-mm/stress-eng.php

Stress Strategies

The Psychology Foundation of Canada offers an interactive online toolkit for preventing and managing stress.

www.psychologyfoundation.org

Tips for HLTA (R2MR)

Occasionally during an extended deployment there is an opportunity for the CAF member to travel home or for the member's next of kin to travel to the member for a mid-deployment reunion. The benefit is known as Home Leave Travel Assistance (HLTA) and while it can be a wonderful and welcome respite during a long deployment, it can also be disruptive to your progress through the deployment cycle. Visit the link below for some tips and strategies for managing the mid-deployment reunion and the subsequent second goodbye.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/home-leave-travel-assistance-family-tips.page

If you need help

If you feel like you need support at any time during the deployment, there are several resources available to you. Don't hesitate to reach out for help.

- **Call the MFRC: 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329**

Support and emergency services are available to you 24/7. Your MFRC can connect you to local resources and provide information specific to your deployment, when it is available.

- **Call the Member Assistance Program (MAP): 1-800-268-7708**

MAP is a 24/7 voluntary, confidential and bilingual service created to help CAF members and their families deal with any personal concern that is affecting their well-being and/or work performance.

- **Call the Family Information Line (FIL): 1-800-866-4546**

Contact the Family Information Line 24/7 for any support you may need as a result of the unique nature of military life. FIL counsellors can provide your family with information, reassurance, support, and referral to the various services offered to CAF families.

COMMUNICATION DURING DEPLOYMENT

It isn't unusual for military members and their loved ones to spend a fair bit of time apart. Discussing expectations and plans for communicating during deployment – phone calls, emails, letter writing, and care packages – can make the difference between a deployment being difficult or manageable. Your expectations and your partner's might be very different and it is important and healthy to get them out in the open instead of making assumptions. It is also important to remember that while your partner may want to communicate with you fairly often, sometimes operational requirements (the ship's schedule, satellite availability, etc.) make that difficult or impossible. Try to be patient and make the most of the opportunities that come your way. See page 33 of this handbook for information on how to contact your member in case of an emergency. To send regular, non-urgent messages to your deployed loved one, your MFRC recommends:

- Sending a letter or parcel through the MFRC mailing program (see page 32 of this handbook for more information)
- Sending an email
 - Confirm your loved one's email address prior to deployment.
 - Note that emails cannot contain attachments, graphics, or specific information about the operation.
 - Note that occasionally units will not be able to send or receive emails due to satellite availability, the operational tempo, mission requirements, communication network stability, and duty requirements of the unit during deployment.

Homecoming & Post-Deployment

You can expect to go through the final three stages of the cycle of deployment during the homecoming and post-deployment phase. "Anticipation of Homecoming" is generally a happy and hectic time as you prepare yourself for your partner's return. One of the most important things you can do in this stage is to discuss your partner's expectations for homecoming day. If he or she is expecting a quiet reunion with just you and you throw a big welcome home party (or vice versa), you will both be disappointed. Discuss it in advance. Homecoming is not a time for surprises. The next stage following homecoming is called the "Renegotiation of Relationships." You have probably both changed a little during the deployment and you will have to do some work to get back to your new normal. All couples experience this stage and it will go on longer for some than it does for others. Be patient with each other and seek help if you need it. "Reintegration and Stabilization" is the final stage of the deployment cycle. Eventually your partner will settle in and you will both find your post-deployment balance as things in your household begin to stabilize. Try not to be discouraged if this takes a little longer than you would like. Remember, everyone goes through the deployment cycle at a different pace and in different ways. Now go ahead and give yourself a big pat on the back for making it this far – you deserve it!

Homecoming & Post-Deployment Tips

- Ignore any rumours; only listen to official information regarding your partner's return.
- Participate in reunion activities and workshops offered by the MFRC.
- Communicate with your partner about their expectations for homecoming day. Homecoming is not a time for surprises.
- Anticipate and understand that both you and your partner will have changed and grown during deployment.
- Watch the video "Re-establishing Your Relationship" on the MFRC website and talk to your partner about relationship expectations.
- Expect that it may take some time to re-establish intimacy.
- Reduce scheduling during the reunion period so that you will have time with your partner and individual time for each of you.
- Be patient with one another.
- Look for ways to maintain activities and social connections that were important to you during the deployment.
- If you are having difficulty reconnecting with your partner, there are resources at your MFRC to assist you.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Homecoming Info

Homecoming information is most often delivered via the ship's Family Network. If you haven't already, it is recommended that you join the ship's Family Network email list now in order to receive the most up-to-date information about homecoming.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/family-networks/

Some homecoming information will also be available through the Ship's Information Line (250-363-2121) 48 hours in advance of the ship's arrival.

Adult Workshops at the MFRC

Military families have identified reunion as one of their most challenging times to manage. Attempting to re-establish your close and intimate relationship with your partner can be particularly tricky. It could help you to have an understanding of what to expect during the reunion phase and what it might be like for your returning partner. Your MFRC offers two workshops that focus on these specific challenges: "Re-establishing Your Relationship" and "Return & Reintegration."

For more information or to register for a workshop, call 250-363-2640 or visit the MFRC website.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/deployment-activities-workshops/

"Don't forget that when they come home it'll be a whole new learning curve for you both. Take time to adjust and be understanding."

-443 Spouse

HOMECOMING & POST-DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Videos: Re-establishing Your Relationship & They're Back!

Re-establishing Your Relationship: This video aims to help you and your partner get your relationship back to a comfortable place that you see and feel as normal.

They're Back! This video helps illustrate the homecoming and post-deployment phase and provides some practical tips to make your reunion as smooth as possible.

Access the entire series of instructional videos on dealing with deployment through the Esquimalt MFRC website.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/deployment-videos/

Reintegration for Spouses/Partners (R2MR)

As much as homecoming and post-deployment can be a tricky time to navigate, it is also a time to celebrate! This resource from R2MR will help you reflect on your achievements during deployment as well as offer you some tips and strategies for a successful reunion with your partner.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/reuniting-partner-spouse.page

Post-Deployment Family Training (R2MR)

This self-paced, online training is designed to help you manage the homecoming and post-deployment phase. Ideally you would complete this training just before the return of your partner; however, you might find it useful even after your partner has returned home.

Visit the website for much more information and to access the training modules: www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/post-deployment-family-trng.page. Or call the MFRC for information on R2MR training sessions 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329. For more tips and resources, visit esquimaltmfrc.com.

If you need help

Many couples struggle with getting their relationship back on track during the post-deployment phase. It is entirely normal to feel a bit awkward around your partner after an extended separation or to have a tough time getting things "back to normal." If you would like some support during the post-deployment phase, please don't hesitate to contact the MFRC at: 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.



Supporting Children & Teens

In this chapter you will find resources intended to guide you in your support of children and/or teens throughout the deployment cycle.

Above all, remember that the MFRC is available to assist you 24/7 at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

Preparing for Deployment

You are likely to see a range of reactions and emotions in your child as your family goes through the pre-deployment stage. Children thrive on routine and structure and with a deployment looming they may be experiencing some uncertainty and even some anxiety or fear about what is to come. Every child will react differently to each stage of the deployment cycle. If your child has gone through a previous deployment, he or she may react differently to this deployment than to the previous one. Children are complex beings but they are also resilient and there is much that you can do to prepare your children for deployment and to support them through the deployment cycle.

Throughout this chapter you will find tips and resources to guide you as your family navigates pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.

Remember, if you have any questions at any time, the MFRC is just a phone call away!

Pre-Deployment Checklist

- ☐ Complete your Family Care Plan (more info below).
- ☐ Complete your Emergency Child Care Plan (more info below).
- ☐ Discuss a budget for the children's extracurricular activities during deployment (check out the MFRC/PSP Activity Guide for ideas!).
- ☐ Pick up deployment resources from your local MFRC.
- ☐ If you have a child under 6, pick up your free MFRC child care punch card.
- ☐ Inform the children's teachers/care givers about the upcoming deployment. Check out the resource "Caring for the Military Child" and consider recommending it to the children's caregivers.
esquimaltmfrc.com/parent-child/parenting/resources/
- ☐ Check the schedule of Children's Deployment Workshops offered by the MFRC and register your children to take part.
- ☐ Update emergency contacts at school, extracurricular activities and/or daycare.
- ☐ Be prepared for emergencies; make a list of emergency contacts and keep it in an accessible spot (Poison Control Centre, walk-in clinic, fire, police, hospital, next door neighbour, the MFRC, etc.)
- ☐ If applicable, get a signed and notarized letter from the member for any cross border travel with the children.
- ☐ Update the children's passport(s), if applicable.
- ☐ Pick up the MFRC's Parenting from Afar booklet for ideas to help keep you connected to the deployed parent.
- ☐ Check out the MFRC's series of instructional videos on dealing with deployment: esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/deployment-videos/
- ☐ Pick up your free Children's Deployment Workbooks for children aged 3-12.
- ☐ Make a plan for taking care of your own health and wellness during the deployment. When you are the sole caregiver, it is easy to become focused on the children and their well-being. Remember that in order to care for them you must also take care of yourself. See chapter two of this handbook for ideas.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Staying in Touch (SIT) Services

SIT Services are available to you during extended deployments. A staff member from the MFRC will call or email you monthly to check in, keep you informed about the deployment, and see how you and the children are coping with the separation. The SIT staff will not offer advice or counselling; their role is to offer information, a friendly voice and a listening ear. All conversations are confidential.

Call the MFRC to find out if SIT Services are being offered for your deployment at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

Pre-Deployment Briefing

Depending on the length of the deployment, a pre-deployment briefing may be held by the unit. Typically guest speakers will include the Command Team, Fleet Mail Office, Base Clinic, MFRC, and AJAG. Pre-deployment briefings usually take place in the evening at the CPAC MFRC. This is an opportunity to find out where the ship is going and why, ask your questions directly to the Command Team, register yourself and the children for MFRC services, and hear about upcoming deployment activities for adults and children. Childcare is available (register in advance). Call 250-363-2640 to find out if your ship is holding a pre-deployment briefing. Selected slides will be made available online following the briefing.

PRE-DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Family Care Plan

Administered by the unit, the Family Care Plan makes sure you have a plan in place to care for your family in the event of an emergency call-out, planned deployment or unforeseen situation. This plan takes the whole family into account and must be completed by every CAF member. Visit the link below to download the Family Care Plan template and view the e-learning tool.

esquimaltmfrc.com/wellness/resources/

Emergency Child Care Plan

In addition to having the Family Care Plan in place it is important for you to develop your Emergency Child Care Plan. This is a personal, detailed back up plan for each of the children in your care in case of emergency. Prepare a plan for each child in your family, keep a copy for yourself, and give a copy to a friend or relative who can care for your child in an emergency. If you would like some help completing your Emergency Child Care Plan, call the MFRC at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

esquimaltmfrc.com/wellness/resources/

Slideshow: The Deployment Cycle

Looking for some tips for dealing with a deployment? This short slideshow covers a few things to think about before you and your children go through the deployment cycle.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/resources-services/

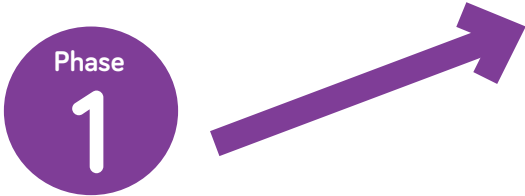
Video: The D Word

This video helps illustrate the deployment experience and provides practical tips for dealing with the separation. The video is geared towards the entire family with a short segment at the end that focuses specifically on children and teens.

Access the entire series of instructional videos on dealing with deployment through the Esquimalt MFRC's website.

Parenting Cycle of Deployment

When you deploy, it is completely natural for you to experience a wide range of emotions. Understanding the Parenting Cycle of Deployment will help you to understand the feelings that you and your family may experience before, during and after a deployment.



PREPARING FOR DEPLOYMENT

Anticipation of Loss

Reactions might include:

Child:

Young children have difficulty understanding time; older children need time to adapt. May ask questions such as, “Do you really have to go?”

Deployed Parent:

Busy with preparation plans, wanting to spend time with family, feeling excitement about the mission, starting to disengage.

At-Home Parent:

Concerned about practical matters, has feelings of sadness or irritability, also needs to support partner and children.

Detachment & Withdrawal

Reactions might include:

Child:

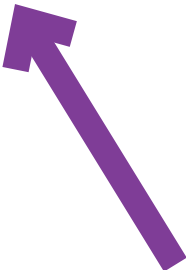
May sense stress and act out, have more tantrums, show regressive behaviours.

Deployed Parent:

Might minimize their importance with young children.

At-Home Parent:

Young children might cling to the parent at home, worried that they will also leave. May withdraw from deployed parent or feel numb.



DURING DEPLOYMENT

Phase

2

Disorientation

Reactions might include:

Child:

Young children might not understand that the parent will be gone for a long time. Older children may experience mixed emotions of anger and relief from the tension of Phase 1.

Deployed Parent:

Parenting stress can affect the ability to work; possible disruption in attachment due to difficulties in communication; may compartmentalize home/work to cope.

At-Home Parent:

Disorientation or feeling overwhelmed as he or she sets up new family routines as a single parent.

Anticipation of Homecoming

Reactions might include:

Child:

May take cues from at-home parent; reactions differ depending on the child's age.

Deployed Parent:

Feelings of excitement and anxiety, wondering whether they will be accepted or needed by their families or whether their children will remember them.

At-Home Parent:

Feelings of joy and excitement in anticipation of being reunited. Apprehensive about how their CAF member will feel about any changes they made during their absence.

Equilibrium

Reactions might include:

Child:

Finds a "new normal" in daily routines and communication with deployed parent.

Deployed Parent:

Settles into a deployment routine. May communicate via telephone, email or video chat and participate in parenting decisions.

At-Home Parent:

Begins to feel more comfortable with the reorganization of roles and responsibilities.

Children/Teens

AFTER DEPLOYMENT

Phase

3

Homecoming & Reintegration

Reactions might include:

Child:

May react emotionally, have behavioural issues, experience separation anxiety or feel concerned that the parent will leave again.

Deployed Parent:

May be tired, may have difficulty adjusting to the change in environment.

At-Home Parent:

Need to renegotiate parenting roles, possible loss/gain of independence. Adjustment of returning parent is related to the ability of the parent at home to manage stress.

Stabilization

Reactions might include:

Child:

Adapts to a new "normal" and enjoys the support of a stable household again.

Deployed and At-Home Parent:

Feeling more relaxed and comfortable with each other, new realities, acceptance that everyone is changed by the time apart; future-oriented, establishing equilibrium, new parenting routines together.

Pre-Deployment Family Training (R2MR)

This self-paced, online family training is designed to help you understand the challenges that you and your children could face during deployment and give you some new tools and ways to approach each challenge. It will also help you recognize your own personal strengths and identify resources in your community that could support your family's well-being throughout the deployment.

Visit the website for much more information and to access the training modules: www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/pre-deployment-family-trng.page Or call the MFRC for information on R2MR training sessions at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

Deployment

Now that you're into the deployment stage, you may be noticing some different behaviour in your children. Every child is different and every child will have a different deployment experience. The following excerpt from the Parenting from Afar booklet provides a snapshot of what your children might be experiencing:

Preschool children are gaining independence but still need parents when feeling insecure. They worry about being left behind or separated from their parents. Preschoolers may think their behaviour caused their parent to leave.

School-age children have a world outside of the family. Their lives focus on school and peers. They usually are concerned about how a deployment will affect the everyday routines of their lives (e.g., who will drive to soccer practice).

Even more than school-age children, preteens focus on school, activities, and peers. They are concerned about their parents' safety and how having only one parent at home will affect their lives.

Teenagers are most concerned with working out their own identity and fitting in with their peers. A deployment may affect them less because of their peer group affiliation.

For more information, including signs of stress during deployment and tips for building your child's resiliency skills, pick up a copy of the Parenting from Afar booklet from your MFRC and explore the rest of the tips and resources in this section.

Deployment Tips

- Establish daily routines and stick with them to help children feel safe.
- Share responsibility. Have the children choose what chores they are responsible for and develop a schedule.

- Post a world map somewhere in the house where the children can access it. Use stickers and markers to track the ship's movements.
- Have the children participate in creating care packages for their deployed parent.
- Have a clock set to the time zone of the deployed parent's ship. Allow children to take turns changing the clock as the ship moves through time zones.
- Sign the children up for the MFRC's Children's Deployment Workshops and/or pick up the Deployment Children's Workbooks from your local MFRC.
- Check in with the children at regular intervals to discuss how they are coping with the deployment.
- Stay busy. Find a hobby or weekly activity for everyone, including you.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Deployment Events and Activities

The MFRC offers seasonal events such as: Canada Day Celebrations; Thanksgiving Potluck; Valentine's Day Craft; Easter Egg Hunt; and many others! These events are a great way for both you and your children to get connected and have some fun with other families who are dealing with deployment. Be sure to visit the "Upcoming Activities" page of the Esquimalt MFRC website.

Sunday Information Sessions

Sunday Sessions are offered once a month during extended deployments if requested by the unit's Command Team. During a Sunday Session you will have the opportunity to hear from the Command Team on board the ship, hear from local Command, meet other families who are dealing with the deployment, and participate in an educational workshop. Child minding is provided (register in advance). To find out if Sunday Sessions are being offered for your deployment, call the MFRC 24 Hour Information line at 250-363-2640. Certain deployments allow for a live virtual update. Check your MFRC for details.

Children's Deployment Workshops at the MFRC

Children's Deployment Workshops help children adjust to a parent being away on deployment. Workshops offer an opportunity for children to interact with other children who are going through the same experience. These workshops will help validate your child's feelings about deployment.

There are programs for Preschool (age 3-5yrs), School Age (age 5-8yrs) and Preteen (age 9-12yrs). For more information or to find out when the next set of workshops will be offered, call 250-363-2640 or check the website www.esquimaltmfrc.com.

DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Deployment Respite Child Care Program

If the children in your care are between the ages of 6 months and 5 years, you could

qualify for free deployment respite child care. The MFRC offers free respite child care to families dealing with a deployment of 21 consecutive days or more. Care is available for one continuous 3 hour session per week up to a maximum of 4 sessions per month. Call 250-363-2640 for more information or come in to the MFRC to pick up your childcare punch card. Call up to 8 days in advance for a reservation.

Children's Deployment Workbooks and Parent Guide

Are you having trouble finding a children's deployment workshop date or time that works for you? Do you live too far away from the MFRC to participate in the onsite Children's Workshops? What about doing your own Children's Deployment Workshops at home? The MFRC has developed Children's Deployment Workbooks for children 3 to 12 years of age and an easy to use Parent Guide for the parent at home which also includes tips and activities for the deployed parent. Stop by any MFRC location to pick up your copy today! Copies are also available to deployed members on board the ship and electronically upon request. Deployment staff members are available to assist you throughout the deployment with email support. Please call 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329 for more information or visit esquimaltmfrc.com.

Raising Your Military Child

Is your child struggling at school during deployment? Is your teen confused about house rules when a parent is deployed? Are you experiencing difficulty with your child or teen during deployment? This interactive presentation covers many deployment and relocation issues that may exist for your child - no matter their age.

esquimaltmfrc.com/parent-child/parenting/resources/

Caring for the Military Child

This online training tool is designed to help educators and child care providers learn about the unique challenges of the military lifestyle. Consider sharing the link below with your child's daycare provider, teacher, babysitter, or anyone else who cares for your child.

esquimaltmfrc.com/parent-child/parenting/resources/

Parenting from Afar

This booklet is designed to help maintain the connection between the parent/care-giver at home and the parent who is away so that you can continue to raise your child together. The term "parenting" is used to include anyone who acts in a parenting role for the child while one parent is away. In the case of a single parent, it could be a grandparent; for a dual-service couple, it could be a trusted friend; and, for some, it could be an ex-partner in another part of the country. All of you share love and concern for your child. The Parenting from Afar booklet is available for pick up at the MFRC and is also available to the CAF member on board the ship.

Supporting Young Children During Deployment (R2MR)

This R2MR resource describes some common reactions to deployment in young children and some strategies for supporting young children through deployment.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/support-young-children-during-deployment.page

Reaching IN...Reaching OUT

This website offers comprehensive resources to help you build resiliency in yourself and your children under the age of 8. The tools will help you help your child bounce back from life's challenges, build caring relationships, practice self-control, and gain confidence and a positive outlook.

www.reachinginreachingout.com

Straight Talk About Teens

Adolescence is a time when children want more independence and can begin to question or challenge authority, some more so than others. Throw in the added stress of deployment, and supporting teens through the deployment cycle can be a real challenge. This comprehensive booklet takes a candid look at "what makes teens tick," "what matters to teens," "communicating with teenagers," and "fair and effective discipline with teenagers."

psychologyfoundation.org/Public/Resources/Parenting_for_Life_Download_Booklets/Public/Resources/Parenting_for_Life_Download_Booklets/Parents_Download_Resources.aspx

Supporting Teens During Deployment (R2MR)

Deployment causes strong emotions for everyone in the family. It can be especially hard on teens, but your support can go a long way toward helping your teen deal with the difficulties of deployment. In fact, the deployment period can be a time of personal growth, as your teen takes on added responsibilities and makes emotional adjustments. Follow the link below to find tips for supporting your teen through the deployment cycle.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/support-teenagers-during-deployment.page

If you need help

If you feel like you or the children/teens in your care need some extra support at any time during the deployment, there are several resources available to you. Don't hesitate to reach out for help.

- **Call the MFRC: 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329**

Support and emergency services are available to you 24/7/365. Your MFRC can connect you to local resources and provide information specific to your deployment, when it is available. They can also help you implement a plan for child care during an emergency.

- **Call the Member Assistance Program (MAP): 1-800-268-7708**

MAP is a voluntary, confidential and bilingual service created to help CAF members and their families deal with any concern that is affecting their personal well-being and/or work performance.

- **Call the Family Information Line (FIL): 1-800-866-4546**

Contact the Family Information Line for any support you may need as a result of the unique nature of military life. FIL counsellors can help your family obtain information, and provide reassurance, support and referral to the various services offered to CAF families.

COMMUNICATION DURING DEPLOYMENT

Several different methods of communication are available for families and military members during deployment. The MFRC can assist you in staying connected – even when you are far apart! See page 33 of this handbook for information on how to contact your member in case of an emergency. Here are suggestions for sending regular, non-urgent messages:

- Send a letter or parcel through the MFRC mailing program. Involve the children in writing letters or preparing care packages for their deployed parent. Consider sending school work that the children are particularly proud of or having them draw a picture or create a scrapbook for their deployed parent. Create meaningful connections for both the child and the deployed parent through the mail! (see page 32 of this handbook for more information)
- Send an email as a family or if the children are old enough set them up with their own email account to keep in touch with the deployed parent. A few important notes about emailing your CAF member:
 - Confirm your member's email address prior to deployment.
 - Note that emails cannot contain attachments, graphics, or specific information about the operation.
 - Note that occasionally units will not be able to send or receive emails due to satellite availability, the operational tempo, mission requirements, communication network stability, and duty requirements of the unit during deployment.

Homecoming & Post-Deployment

As homecoming approaches, you may be feeling both excited and a little worried about the reunion. The children are feeling the same way. After an extended separation, it is quite normal to feel a bit conflicted about the return of your CAF member.

While everyone is happy and excited at the prospect of having the deployed parent home again, their return will bring changes to the routine that you and the children have established during their absence. Remember that change is stressful for both children and adults. Talk openly with the children about the adjustments that will have to be made but remember to emphasize the positives. Homecoming is a wonderful time, especially if the family is prepared and everyone has realistic expectations. Spend some time preparing the children for the reunion and then give yourself a big pat on the back – the finish line is in sight!

Homecoming & Post Deployment Tips

- Include the children in homecoming preparations.
- Communicate with the deployed parent about their expectations for homecoming day. Homecoming is not a time for surprises.
- Ignore any rumours; only listen to official information regarding the ship's return.
- With their deployed parent returning, roles, routines, and responsibilities will likely change for the children. Have this discussion so they are prepared.
- Attempt to maintain some daily routines so the children have a sense of structure.
- Expect that everyone in the family will have a different reaction to the reunion and remember that homecoming rarely goes "according to plan." Be flexible.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Homecoming Info

Homecoming information is most often delivered via the ship's Family Network. If you haven't already, it is recommended that you join the ship's Family Network email list now in order to receive the most up-to-date information about homecoming.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/family-networks/

Some homecoming information will also be available through the Ship's Information Line (250-363-2121) 48 hours in advance of the ship's arrival.



HOMECOMING & POST-DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Video: They're Back!

This video helps illustrate the return and reunion process and provides some practical tips to make your reunion as smooth as possible. The video focuses on the whole family with a specific focus on children and teens in the final five minutes.

Access the entire series of instructional videos on dealing with deployment through the Esquimalt MFRC's website.

Supporting Children through the Homecoming Transition (R2MR)

Reunion can be an emotional time for all members of the family. Follow this link to a handy tip sheet for supporting children, from infants to adolescents, through the homecoming and post-deployment transition.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/assisting-children-during-transition.page

Post-Deployment Family Training (R2MR)

This self-paced, online training is designed to help you manage the homecoming and post-deployment phase. Ideally you would complete this training just before the ship's return; however, you might find it useful even after the deployed parent has returned home.

Visit the website for much more information and to access the training modules: www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/post-deployment-family-trng.page. Or call the MFRC for information on R2MR training sessions 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329. For more tips and resources, visit esquimaltmfrc.com.

If you need help

Homecoming and post-deployment can be a difficult time for families to manage. Children are often unpredictable in their reactions to the return of the deployed parent and the subsequent changes in the family's routine.

If you would like some support during the post-deployment phase, please don't hesitate to contact the MFRC at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.



Parent of a CAF Member

In this chapter you will find resources intended to support you through your deployment experience as the parent of a CAF member.

Above all, remember that the MFRC is available to assist you 24/7 at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

Preparing for Deployment

As the parent of a CAF member who is preparing to deploy, you are probably experiencing some conflicting emotions. You may feel worried, fearful, sad, proud, excited, angry, envious, or anxious. There is no “right” way to feel during pre-deployment and no “right” way to deal with the pre-deployment phase. Whatever you are feeling, there are several resources in this handbook to help you cope throughout the deployment cycle.

Even though your son or daughter is an adult, it is normal to be concerned for his or her safety. It can be helpful to learn what you can about the deployment and about your son or daughter’s role on board the ship. Staying within the boundaries of your existing parent/child relationship, try to be as informed as possible throughout the deployment. Remember that your son or daughter is highly trained and well equipped to contribute to the ship’s mission.

One useful strategy in preparing for the deployment is to have open communication with your son or daughter. If you have questions about the deployment, ask. Try to understand that your son or daughter may be feeling excited about the deployment

and the opportunity to put what they have learned into practice. Attempt to see deployment as an opportunity for both of you to grow and develop new strengths.

Above all, remember that the best thing you can do is offer your encouragement and support and give your son or daughter the peace of mind that you are taking care of yourself while he or she is deployed. The tips and resources on the following pages are intended to help you do just that.

Remember: if you have any questions or feel like you need additional support as you prepare for your son or daughter's deployment, your MFRC is just a phone call away!

Pre-Deployment Checklist

- ☐ Discuss your son or daughter's preferences for staying in touch during deployment.
- ☐ Make sure you know your son or daughter's complete mailing address during deployment and find out how and where to drop off mail and care packages (see page 32 of this handbook).
- ☐ Know your son or daughter's rank, trade, service number and department on board the ship.
- ☐ If possible, arrange for a visit to the ship.
- ☐ Register your contact information with your local MFRC.
- ☐ Pick up deployment resources from your local MFRC.
- ☐ Find out if the ship is having a pre-deployment briefing. If you live at a distance, find out if you can have the information mailed to you.
- ☐ Join your ship's Family Network. This is the best way to stay informed.
- ☐ Register for Staying in Touch Services with the MFRC.
- ☐ Check out the MFRC's series of instructional videos on dealing with deployment: esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/deployment-videos/.
- ☐ Download the MFRC Deployment App at www.esquimaltmfrc.com/app.

If you are at a distance

If you don't live in the Victoria area, it might feel like a bit of a challenge to stay "in the loop" when it comes to your son or daughter's deployment. However, there are lots of ways to get connected and stay informed from a distance! Here are some suggestions:

- Get in touch with the Esquimalt MFRC. You can ask for deployment information to be sent by mail and there may be opportunities to participate in workshops and briefings online. Call to find out what is being offered for your deployment. Toll free 1-800-353-3329.
- Sign up for Staying in Touch (SIT) Services (more info on the next page).
- Join your Family Network. Even if you are unable to attend Family Network events, you will still receive information about the deployment via email and you will have opportunities to network with other families from your son or daughter's unit via Facebook (more info on the next page).

- Get to know your local MFRC. There are MFRCs all across Canada and even in the USA and Europe. Visit www.cafconnection.ca to find your nearest MFRC. Don't hesitate to reach out for information and support. As the parent of a CAF member, you are always welcome at the MFRC.
- Become familiar with the resources in this handbook. Many are available online and web links have been included throughout for your convenience. If you prefer you can call the MFRC and ask about receiving deployment resources in the mail.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Pre-Deployment Briefing

Depending on the length of the deployment, a pre-deployment briefing may be held by the unit. This is an opportunity for CAF members and their families to find out where the ship is going and why, ask questions directly to the Command team, register for MFRC programs and services and hear about upcoming deployment activities. Depending on where you reside, you may not have the opportunity to attend these events so make sure you ask your son or daughter to send you any relevant information. You can also contact the MFRC at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329 to ask them to send you a pre-deployment information package. Selected slides will be made available online following the briefing.

Family Networks

When you are part of a Family Network, you get up-to-date, accurate information about deployments. In an emergency, the Command Team turns to the MFRC to distribute information to families through the Family Networks. Family Networks also provide information on social activities and give families the opportunity to connect with each other throughout a deployment. A separate Family Network exists for each of the larger ships, the MCDVs, the Submarines, 443 MH Squadron and Terra Firma Deployed. Visit the MFRC website to find out how to connect with your Family Network.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/family-networks/

Staying in Touch (SIT) Services

SIT Services are available to you during extended deployments, whether you live locally or at a distance. A staff member from the MFRC will call or email you monthly, to check in, keep you informed about the deployment, and see how you are coping with the separation. The SIT staff will not offer advice or counselling; their role is to offer information, a friendly voice and a listening ear. All conversations are confidential.

Call the MFRC to find out if SIT Services are being offered for your deployment 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

“The websites, Facebook pages, and staying in touch calls are what we used, and they were unbelievably helpful. Without those we would have been so lost. As parents whose son was on board, and with us living at a distance, it was reassuring to have these features.”

HMCS Regina Parent

PRE-DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Deployment App

With the MFRC Deployment App, you can receive tips to guide you through all stages of your work-related separation, use checklists to keep track of your to-do lists, and see how far you've come with a customizable countdown clock. Downloads available for iOS and Android devices via the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/app

Pre-Deployment Family Training (R2MR)

This self-paced, online family training is designed to help you understand the challenges you could face during deployment and give you some new tools and ways to approach each challenge. It will also help you recognize your own personal strengths and identify resources in your community that could support your well-being throughout the deployment.

Visit the website for more information and to access the training modules: www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/pre-deployment-family-trng.page

Or call the MFRC for information on R2MR training sessions at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

Deployment

Once the ship has sailed and the deployment has begun, it is important to re-establish your daily routines. Keeping a sense of “normalcy” will help you to adjust to your son or daughter's absence and to better cope with the challenges of deployment. Even if you already live at a distance from your son or daughter, keeping yourself busy during deployment will help the time to pass. Find out what is happening at your local MFRC and take part in activities that will help you get to know other CAF families. It is up to you to build your support system and then to lean on those supports during deployment.

As the parent of a deployed CAF member, you are always welcome at the MFRC and you have access to a wide variety of resources. Take the time to get to know

your MFRC and to explore the resources it has to offer.

Deployment Tips

- Be security conscious. Don't broadcast any information about the deployment.
- Send letters and care packages. Number your correspondence as mail can sometimes take a few weeks or more to arrive on board the ship (see page 32 of this handbook for postal information).
- Take part in workshops offered through the MFRC. If you are at a distance, find out if there are online workshops offered during your son or daughter's deployment.
- Find and join social media groups dedicated to your son or daughter's ship. Does the ship have a Facebook group? Does the Captain have a Twitter account? Etc.
- Don't believe everything you hear. Do your best to ignore rumours and media reports and check out the facts with your MFRC.

If you are at a distance

Dealing with a deployment can be challenging, and even more so if you are isolated. Help yourself through the deployment by getting connected and staying informed. Make a point to: be in touch with the Esquimalt MFRC for resources and support, make a connection with your local MFRC, join your Family Network, sign up for Staying in Touch (SIT) services, and visit the website for more ideas at www.esquimaltmfrc.com.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Sunday Information Sessions

Sunday Sessions are offered once a month during extended deployments if requested by the unit's Command Team. During a Sunday Session you will have the opportunity to hear from the Command Team on board the ship, hear from local Command, meet other families who are dealing with the deployment, and participate in an educational workshop. To find out if Sunday Sessions are being offered for your son or daughter's deployment, call the MFRC 24 Hour Information line at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329. Certain deployments allow for a live virtual update. Check with your MFRC for details.

Away Cafés and Community Dinners

These evenings provide a social opportunity for you to connect and share with others who are dealing with deployment over a cup of coffee or a warm meal. MFRC Staff will be on hand to answer any questions you might have. Share your tips about dealing with the military lifestyle including deployments, or come and learn from those who have done it all before. These evenings are a great reminder that you are not alone.

Registration for Away Cafes and Community Dinners is required for all participants at least 7 days in advance of session dates. See the MFRC website for more informa-

tion: www.esquimaltmfrc.com or call 250-363-2640. Free child care is available at the time of registration.

Deployment Events and Activities

The MFRC offers seasonal events such as: Canada Day Celebrations; Thanksgiving Potluck; Valentine's Day Craft; Easter Egg Hunt; and many others! These events are a great way to get connected and have some fun with others who are dealing with deployment. Be sure to visit the "Upcoming Activities" page of the Esquimalt MFRC website or call 250-363-2640 for more information.

DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Dealing with Stress

Deployment can be stressful. This brochure from the Public Health Agency of Canada will help you answer the question "how can I most effectively deal with stress?" Find some great tips for enhancing your life by changing your approach to stress.

www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/mi-mm/stress-eng.php

Stress Strategies

The Psychology Foundation of Canada offers an interactive online toolkit for preventing and managing stress.

www.psychologyfoundation.org

Tips for HLTA (R2MR)

Occasionally during an extended deployment there is an opportunity for the CAF member to take a mid-deployment leave. The benefit is known as Home Leave Travel Assistance (HLTA) and it allows for the member to travel home or for the member's primary next of kin to travel to the member for a mid-deployment reunion. Some members, particularly single members, will use their leave to see the sites in the part of the world in which they are deployed. If your son or daughter does decide to visit with you during HLTA, it can be a welcome respite during a long deployment but it can also be disruptive to the deployment cycle. Visit the link below for some tips and strategies for managing the mid-deployment reunion and the subsequent second goodbye.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/home-leave-travel-assistance-family-tips.page

COMMUNICATION DURING DEPLOYMENT

It is important to discuss your expectations for communication with your son or daughter. Your expectations might be very different from theirs and it is important to get it all out in the open instead of making assumptions that could lead to disap-

pointment. It is also important to remember that while your son or daughter may want to communicate with you fairly often, sometimes operational requirements (the ship's schedule, satellite availability, etc.) make that difficult or impossible. Try to be patient and make the most of the opportunities that come your way.

See page 33 of this handbook for information on how to contact your member in case of an emergency. To send regular, non-urgent messages to your son or daughter during deployment, your MFRC recommends:

- Sending a letter or parcel through the MFRC mailing program (see page 32 of this handbook for postal information)
- Sending an email
 - Please confirm your loved one's email address prior to deployment.
 - Note that emails cannot contain attachments or graphics.
 - Refrain from discussing specific operational details.
 - Note that occasionally units will not be able to send or receive emails due to satellite availability, the operational tempo, mission requirements, communication network stability, and duty requirements of the unit during deployment.

Homecoming & Post-Deployment

Congratulations, you are nearing the end of the deployment and homecoming is in sight! As the parent of a returning CAF member, you might be both excited and a little anxious about the homecoming. Try to have realistic expectations for homecoming day. Ask your son or daughter about his or her preferences and plans for homecoming day, and then do your best to accept their wishes. Homecoming is not a time for surprises.

For any family experiencing the end of a deployment, there is a period of adjustment that can be awkward, exciting, wonderful, difficult, and everything in between. Your son or daughter may have mixed emotions about coming home. During deployment a ship's company forms tight bonds and your son or daughter has likely become accustomed to living life within a certain routine. Be patient during the transition period and give your son or daughter as much space as he or she needs. Trust that eventually things will stabilize and you will work together to find a new normal.

Above all, give yourself a pat on the back and allow yourself to feel excited about this phase of the deployment – you have earned it! Read on for some tips and resources to help make it a successful reunion for both of you.

Homecoming & Post-Deployment Tips

- Ignore any rumours; only listen to official information regarding your son or daughter's return. If you have questions, contact the MFRC.
- Communicate with your son or daughter about their expectations for homecoming

day. Homecoming is not a time for surprises.

- Be patient. Let your son or daughter know that you are interested in hearing about their deployment experience when they are ready to talk.
- Contact your local MFRC if you think your son or daughter is having trouble re-integrating into everyday life.

If you are at a distance

If you live out of the area, you may not have the opportunity to meet your son or daughter in person on homecoming day. Re-connecting from a distance presents some challenges but it is possible to show your support from wherever you are in the world. Keep the lines of communication open. Let your son or daughter know that you are interested in their deployment experience and ready to listen when they feel ready to share. If you are able to travel to Victoria for homecoming, be sure to make your son or daughter aware of your plans. Homecoming is not a time for surprises.

Explore the homecoming and post-deployment resources on the following pages for more tips. Remember, if you would like additional support during the homecoming period, your MFRC is just a phone call away.

GETTING CONNECTED & STAYING INFORMED

Homecoming Info

Homecoming information is most often delivered via the unit's Family Network. If you haven't already, it is recommended that you join the unit's Family Network email list now in order to receive the most up-to-date information about homecoming. Visit the website or call 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/family-networks/

Some homecoming information will also be available through the Ship's Information Line (250-363-2121) 48 hours in advance of the ship's arrival.

Adult Workshops at the MFRC

Military families have identified reunion as one of their most challenging times to manage. The MFRC offers a workshop called "Return & Reintegration" where you will discover useful techniques and tips to help your son or daughter have a successful homecoming and post-deployment experience. For more information or to register for a workshop, call 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329 or visit the MFRC website.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/deployment-activities-workshops/

HOMECOMING & POST-DEPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Videos: Singles Homeward Bound & They're Back!

Singles Homeward Bound: This video will give you some insight into your son or daughter's homecoming experience. See the reunion from their perspective through this video that is written for the single member, and learn some tips and strategies for supporting your son or daughter upon their return.

They're Back! This video helps illustrate the homecoming process and provides some practical tips to make your reunion as smooth as possible.

Access the entire series of instructional videos on dealing with deployment through the Esquimalt MFRC's website.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/deployment-videos/

Reintegration for Parents (R2MR)

This R2MR resource contains lots of great information about the homecoming process of a CAF member and is geared specifically towards the member's parents, extended family members and friends.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/reuniting-with-family-friends.page

Post-Deployment Family Training (R2MR)

This self-paced, online training is designed to help you manage the homecoming and post-deployment phase. Ideally you would complete this training just before the ship's return; however, you might find it useful even after your reunion with your son or daughter.

Visit the website for much more information and to access the training modules: www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/post-deployment-family-trng.page. Or call the MFRC for information on R2MR training sessions 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329. For more tips and resources, check out the MFRC website at esquimaltmfrc.com.

Additional Deployment Resources

Mail

One of the best parts of an extended deployment is sending mail to your deployed loved one. The CAF provides a free mail service for those who wish to send a letter or a care package to a loved one who is deployed outside of Canada. Parcels can be sent postage free by dropping them off to either MFRC location or the Base Mail Office (if you are outside of Greater Victoria, check with your local MFRC). Mail is sent to deployed personnel from CFB Esquimalt according to a pre-set mailing schedule.

Depending on the ship's schedule, customs, and other variables, it can sometimes take a few weeks or more for your loved one to receive your letter or package. If you are sending something for a special occasion, be sure to plan ahead and send it with lots of time to spare.

The correct mailing address for a ship, whether it is in Victoria or deployed, always remains the same:

Member's Rank/Last Name/First Initial
HMCS (Ship's Name), Mess #
PO BOX 17000 STN FORCES
Victoria BC V9A 7N2

Don't forget your name and address on the outside of the package and be sure to include your phone number in case the mail office has questions about your package. You must also include a clear list of contents on the outside of the package. Please note a customs declaration form is now required for all care packages.

Maximum dimensions for a parcel are as follows: length = 100cm, width = 40cm and height = 40cm. Maximum weight for a parcel is 20kg.

Visit the Esquimalt MFRC website for a list of prohibited items and other important details around mailing guidelines and restrictions.

esquimaltmfrc.com/deployment/postal-information/

You can also call the Fleet Mail Office at 250-363-2176 with any questions.

Urgent Messages

The MFRC 24 hour line can help if you need to send an urgent message to your deployed loved one. All information is treated in a confidential manner.

If you are dealing with a family emergency and you feel the need for a chaplain's support, MFRC staff will assist you in that process. Call 250-363-2640 or toll free 1-800-353-3329.

Be prepared to provide the following information about your deployed member:

- Rank, last and first name
- Unit
- Department (if known)
- Service number (if known)
- Rank and name of their direct supervisor on the ship (if known)

Don't hesitate to contact the MFRC for assistance.

Serious Incidents

In the event of a serious incident during deployment, information will be distributed to the ship's Family Network contact list as it is made available by the ship's Command Team. For this reason, it is vitally important to make sure that you are registered with your ship's Family Network. Call the MFRC to register at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

Responding to Stressful Events: Taking Care of Ourselves, Our Families, and Our Communities

This brochure from the Public Health Agency of Canada has some excellent tips for fostering resiliency and taking care of ourselves and each other in times of stress.

www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/reports-publications/responding-stressful-events/taking-care-ourselves-families-communities.html

Responding to Stressful Events: Helping Children & Teens Cope

These brochures from the Public Health Agency of Canada will help you recognize and understand some common reactions of children and teens during times of high stress. In addition, they offer some excellent tips for helping children and teens cope with stressful situations.

Helping Children Cope: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/reports-publications/responding-stressful-events/helping-children-cope.html

Helping Teens Cope: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/reports-publications/responding-stressful-events/helping-teens-cope.html

MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM MODEL

HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm & steady • Normal fluctuations in mood • Fit, fed, rested • In control physically, mentally, emotionally • Performing well • Behaving ethically and morally • Sense of humour • Engaging in relaxation and recreation • Socially active • Confident in self & others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily agitated, angered, frustrated or tired • Difficulty focusing • Decreased interest in activities • Nervous • Impatient • Unusual sadness • Difficulty sleeping • Vigilance • Problems with daily functioning (home, work, school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent anxiety or sadness • Feeling hopeless • Angry reactions • Noticeable fatigue • Poor concentration • Inability to enjoy activities • Excessive distrust & resentment • Sleep disturbances • Hyper vigilance • Persistent physical symptoms (aches and pains) • Severe deterioration in daily functioning (home, work, school) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive anxiety, fatigue or sadness • Regular panic attacks • Angry outbursts • Severe memory lapses • Cannot concentrate • Cannot perform daily routine • Significant sleep disturbances • Loss of control • Avoiding or withdrawing • Significant change in behavior • Indications of suicidal thoughts, intentions • Symptoms get worse over time instead of getting better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain healthy lifestyle • Focus on task at hand, small steps • Controlled breathing • Nurture a support system • Join a deployment support group • Plan time for rest & fun • Recognize limits, take breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for help when necessary • Set limits and boundaries • Balance demands and priorities • Identify unhealthy coping • Apply problem solving skills • Keep lines of communication open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to someone, ask for help • Tune into own signs of distress • Make self care a priority • Accept that you cannot do it all • Get help sooner, not later • Maintain social contact, don't withdraw 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow doctor's recommendations • Accept offers of help from friends • Learn and try new ways to cope • Be honest with yourself about how you are doing • Focus on regaining health • Don't give up on yourself

THE “BIG 4” COPING STRATEGIES

GOAL SETTING	VISUALIZATION	SELF-TALK	AROUSAL CONTROL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific: your behavior• Measurable: see progress• Attainable: challenging & realistic• Relevant: want it or need it• Time-bound: set finish line <p>Break it down into small manageable pieces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be calm and relaxed• Use all senses• See positive mental images• Keep it simple• Use movement• Rehearse it first to improve performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Become aware of self-talk• Stop the negative messages• Replace with positive messages• Practice thought stopping• "I can do this."• "I will focus on what I can do."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deep Breathing: Rule of 4• Inhale to count of 4• Hold for count of 4• Exhale for count of 4• Repeat 4 times a minute• Practice for 4 minutes• Breathe into the diaphragm

If you are concerned about signs of stress in yourself or in a family member get it checked out. Resources include:

Family & Friends Local Military Family Resource Centre www.caconnection.ca Employers & Colleagues Family Information Line 1-800-866-4546 Minister/Spiritual Advisor Canadian Forces Chaplains	Family Physician Canadian Forces Member's Assistance Program 1-800-268-7708 Provincial Hospitals Psycho-social Services on local base Community Mental Health Resources OSISS Family Peer Support Coordinator www.osiss.ca
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Member Assistance Program (MAP) 1-800-268-7708

MAP is a voluntary, confidential and bilingual service offered by the CAF to members and their families. Any individual wishing to talk to a professional counsellor or to make an appointment can simply call the Member Assistance Program 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

For more information, visit the MAP website by following the link below or call 1-800-268-7708: www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-support-services-map/member-assistance-program.page

Family Information Line (FIL) 1-800-866-4546

The military lifestyle has its benefits and its challenges. The FIL can offer you the support you need to face any challenge that is a result of the unique nature of the military lifestyle. The FIL offers confidential, personal and bilingual assistance. FIL counsellors can help your family obtain information and provide reassurance, support and referral to the various services offered to CAF families.

FIL counsellors provide supportive counselling seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. When you call the FIL, you will be connected to friendly, experienced professionals who are well-versed on CAF communities and services. FIL counsellors can also connect you with helpful national and local resources, including your local MFRC.

For more information, visit www.cafconnection.ca or call 1-800-866-4546.

Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) Tools

These tools from R2MR can help you recognize mental health concerns in yourself or your CAF member and apply coping strategies to deal with deployment stress. Visit the following link for much more information about how to use these tools. If you need immediate assistance, call the MFRC 24 hour line: 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329.

www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-health-services-r2mr-family/index.page

Dealing with the Media

During an extended deployment some of you may be approached by the media or by the MFRC on behalf of a media outlet looking for an interview. You are free to talk to the media at any time; however, you are not obligated to, nor should you allow yourself to feel pressured. If you do choose to grant an interview, there are some things you should know that will make it easier for you to be well prepared.

Guidance

The MFRC has a Communications and Marketing Coordinator who is available to

provide guidance prior to and during your interview. Call the MFRC at 250-363-2640 or toll free 1-800-353-3329 for more info.

Training

Media awareness training is available through the MFRC. For more information or to register for this training, call the MFRC at 250-363-2640 or toll free 1-800-353-3329.

Gather background

Ask the reporter what exactly is the story about and what will be the angle? You might also consider asking the reporter if they have any previous military experience. It will help you tailor your language to their level of knowledge. It also helps to know what kind of media outlet the reporter works for.

What are the expectations?

You have a right to know how long the interview will take. Will they be recording you? Recording can help to ensure that your quotes are accurate. You can also ask to limit the scope of an interview. For instance, you can say that you are not prepared to speak on a particular subject.

Develop messages

This is the most important thing you can do! Be clear about the message that you want to get across before the end of the interview. If you start to feel uncomfortable at any point, focusing on your pre-determined message will help you get back on track. You've probably heard many famous people use this technique: "I can't tell you anything about that; however, I can tell you..."

General advice

- Be polite and keep your temper.
- Be certain of the question.
- If you don't know an answer, say so. Offer to find out.
- If you can't answer a question, say why.
- Be truthful.
- Emphasize positive points.
- Avoid speculation.

Military 101

If you are new to the military lifestyle, there is a good chance that you have some questions. The Military 101 workshop can be a great way to have your questions answered, meet other members of the military community, and learn about some of the rewards and challenges of being a CAF family. The workshop is led by an experienced facilitator and you will hear from a panel of military partners who will share their stories. Walk away with confidence in your new military environment, knowing

that others are walking the same path with you and that there are supports available along the way.

Visit the MFRC website to see upcoming dates for Military 101. Call 250-363-2640 for more information or to register.

“Military 101 was very helpful! It allowed me to wrap my mind around a few things. It helped me understand the navy lifestyle.”

Military Spouse

Complex Needs

The Family Navigator Coordinator at the Esquimalt MFRC offers one-to-one support for Canadian Armed Forces families with a family member with extra needs. This person can work with you to:

- develop a support plan for persons with complex needs
- create a plan for upcoming deployments
- find services for caregivers caring for an elderly family member
- prepare when a family is posting in or out of Greater Victoria
- navigate the education, mental health, or health care system and local resources during a relocation or new diagnosis

Need assistance? Give the MFRC a call at 250-363-2640.

Some Common Acronyms Defined

- AJAG:** Assistant Judge Advocate General – provides the CAF community with advice on legal matters such as wills and power of attorney
- CPAC:** Colwood Pacific Activity Centre – one of the Esquimalt MFRC’s two locations
- HLTA:** Home Leave Travel Assistance – a benefit that can allow the military member to reunite with their primary next of kin midway through an extended deployment
- IR:** Imposed Restriction – when a CAF member is posted to a new geographic location and it is determined that a move will not be in the best interests of the family
- MFRC:** Military Family Resource Centre – available to assist CAF families with deployment, relocation, and social and mental wellness
- OPSEC:** Operational Security – you can play a role in keeping your CAF member safe by protecting any information you know about the deployment
- SIT Services:** Staying in Touch Services – offered by email or phone call to a CAF member’s immediate family periodically during an extended deployment
- VTC:** Video Teleconference – a video link-up service that is sometimes available during extended deployments

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where can I get an update on the ship's location?

A: Call the "Ship's Movements Information Line" 250-363-2121 (24H recording)

Q: I need to get in touch with my deployed CAF member, and it's an emergency. Help!

A: Call the MFRC at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329. They can help!

Q: I'm having a difficult time with this deployment. Is there anyone I can talk to?

A: Yes! You have a few options. Call the MFRC at 250-363-2640 or 1-800-353-3329. You will be put in touch with MFRC social workers or base chaplains. You could also call the Member's Assistance Program at 1-800-268-7708 or the Family Information Line at 1-800-866-4546. All three options are confidential and free.

Q: My children and I would like to stay busy during the deployment. How can I find out about the many programs and activities available to CAF families?

A: Visit the MFRC website www.esquimaltmfrc.com and download the CFB Esquimalt Activity Guide or pick up your copy at either MFRC location.

If you have any questions that are not answered here, please call the MFRC 24 hour line at 250-363-2640 or toll free 1-800-353-3329. Your Information and Referral team is available 24/7.



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