



About the Military Culture

Understanding how the military operates, the mindset of the soldier and knowing some of the common issues that face service members, Veterans and their families can assist you in engaging and retaining military clients.

THE DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

When members of the armed forces deploy overseas to support military operations, there is a deployment cycle that they and their families go through.

(Phase 1) Pre-Deployment: This begins with the initial notification (may be a few weeks to several months) of an upcoming deployment. For service members, this period consists of extensive training to prepare for the upcoming mission. Common stressors for the Pre-Deployment phase include:

For the Service Member...	For families...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long hours of training/work in preparation for deployment • Conflict in priorities (ensuring his/her troops are ready is priority #1, not the family) • Getting affairs in order (will, power of attorney, financial matter, household tasks “fix it list” and more) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipation of the prolonged absence • Denial • Knowing that the service member is leaving soon, the stress of the frequent absence due to training/preparing for the deployment • Getting affairs in order (will, power of attorney, financial matter, household tasks “fix it list” and more)

*Connecting emotionally is very important in the Pre-Deployment phase. Unresolved family issues or insecurity about the relationship can have disastrous results while the service member is absent.

(Phase 2) Deployment: When the service member leaves, some intense adjustments occur. This is when the service member and the family begin to adapt to the new normal. This phase lasts until the service member returns home. Common stressors for the Deployment phase include:

For the Service Member...	For families...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety concerns for team members and self while in a hostile environment • Trauma (exposure to death, loss of friend, seeing wounded people) • Constant alertness, fear, anger and sometimes hatred towards the enemy • Family separation, loss of income, missing family events • Little to no privacy, perceived lack of support from the general public 	<p>Initial reactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelmed, sad, alone, numb • Children may have to take on roles above their developmental level • Financial worries <p>After a few months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families establish new routines and perhaps new roles as head of household • Develop new social systems • Confidence and independence

*Deployments can last up to 15 months. During this time the service member and family cope with separation.

(Phase 3) Re-Deployment (a.k.a. Demobilization): When the service member returns, the two separate worlds collide and can be a difficult transition. This phase lasts 1-3 months after returning from deployment. Common stressors for the Re-Deployment phase include:

For the Service Member...	For families...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to relate to civilians • Reconnecting with family (things are not like they were when I left) • Re-establishing role within the family (may feel like they are not needed anymore, may cause some friction since the spouse has changed) • May have difficulties with traumas experienced while on deployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement/apprehension • Honeymoon period • Reacting to a changed service member • Loss of independence • Negotiating new routines • Reintegrating into the family • Children may be apprehensive to the parent's return

(Phase 4) Post-Deployment. This phase begins 3-6 months after the deployment is over. Common stressors for the Post-Deployment phase include:

For the Service Member...	For families...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a new social network if assigned to a new post • May have difficulties with traumas experienced while on deployment • Returning to job may require some adjustments (learn new skills, re-establish worth in company, re-connect with coworkers) • Exiting service (becoming a civilian) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement/apprehension • Honeymoon period • Reacting to a changed service member • Loss of independence • Negotiating new routines • Reintegrating into the family • Moving to a new state/country (new school, friends, daycare, sitter and more)

*Some Service Members are reassigned to new duty stations soon after returning from deployment.

MILITARY JARGON

The following are some common terms and acronyms associated with our current deployments:

- **COMBAT OUTPOST:** A detachment of troops stationed at a distance from the main force.
- **FOB** (Forward Operating Base): This is a forward military position that supports tactical operations.
- **FOBBIT:** A term used to describe soldiers who do not go outside their Forward Operating Base, also a soldier who has not seen combat while on deployment.
- **GWOT** (Global War on Terrorism): The military campaign that started as a result of the 9/11 attacks on U.S. soil. This is not a term currently used by the military or current administration.
- **IED** (Improvised Explosive Device): A homemade bomb constructed and deployed in a nonconventional way.
- **ROGER/ROGER THAT:** I understand or message received.
- **RPG** (Rocket-Propelled Grenade): A shoulder-launched, high explosive projectile. Popular weapon used by combatants in current conflicts.
- **UPARMORED HMMWV** (HUM-VEE): Is the armored plated Hummers (jeeps) used by the military.

RANK INSIGNIA OF THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

Understanding the military rank structure can be beneficial when working with military clients. Here is a SAMHSA pdf with Officer and Enlisted rank insignia from all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces:

https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/military_white_paper_final.pdf

OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE

On October 15th, 2015 Operation INHERENT RESOLVE was officially designated as the name of U.S. military operations against ISIL in Iraq and Syria. The name applied retroactively to all U.S. military actions conducted against ISIL since airstrikes began on August 8th, 2015 in Iraq.

IRAQ INFORMATION

The following information may assist you in understanding the current operations in Iraq.

Timeline

- Operation Iraqi Freedom began March 20th, 2003.
- On September 1st, 2010 the President reduced the role of U.S. troops in Iraq and renamed the military operation to Operation New Dawn (OND). A side note: media and troops still use the term Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

Cultural Background

Approximately 97% of the Iraqi population is practicing Muslims. Muslims in Iraq are divided into two sects: Shia 60% and Sunni 40%. The Sunni are concentrated mostly in the central and northern parts of the country. Before the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Sunni population which Saddam Hussein belonged to was the controlling class.

AFGHANISTAN INFORMATION

The following information may assist you in understanding the current operations in Afghanistan.

Timeline

- Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) began on October 7th, 2001 in response to the 9/11 attacks on U.S. soil. It is a joint U.S., U.K. and Afghan operation in Afghanistan.
- The mission in Afghanistan changes on December 28th, 2014 and renamed Operation Freedom's Sentinel. Two core components include working with allies and partners on Resolute Support, and continuing counterterrorism operation against remnants of Al-Qaeda.

The Taliban: The Taliban assumed the role of government in 1996 when the Soviets withdrew. They followed an extreme interpretation of Islamic law (banned music, television, dancing and more) and violations were met with harsh penalties to include amputations and public executions.