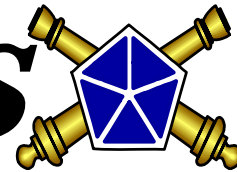




USAREUR  
**PREP TIMES**  
 FREEDOM'S EXPEDITIONARY FORCE  
 AN ARMY FORWARD  
 ANY MISSION, ANYWHERE!



ISSUE FOUR

UNIT MINISTRY TEAM

OEF/OIF

# RENEWING RESOURCES

## RUNNING ON EMPTY

Are there days when you are totally drained of energy? Every little thing that *can* go wrong *does*, and you just can't catch up. You feel like you are **running on empty**. These days most Army families experience hectic schedules, frequent moves, and constant change. Add to this the deployment of a family member and the stress is even greater.

What can families do to minimize the stress of an upcoming deployment? First of all, it is important to know what the weak spots and vulnerabilities are. In other words, where is the family going to need the greatest support? Every family is different. Some issues that are commonly problematic revolve around:

- Child care
- Transportation
- Familiarity with the military
- Connectivity with support
- Language barriers
- Managing finances
- Isolation due to distance
- Home upkeep & management
- Maintaining schedules with children
- Balancing work, social, family events

This is only a partial list. The point is that each time a family member deploys, someone has to pick up the slack or it will not get done. Here are some hints to surviving deployment.

1. Well before deployment, make a list of priorities.
2. Be willing to let less important things be set aside or postponed.
3. Know your limits and ask for help

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"Sure! She can handle it. Load her up!"

A picture is worth a thousand words. This is an actual photo taken at a Home Depot. The owner was confident that his compact car could handle the load. Sometimes lessons are learned the hard way.

Although our Army families are resilient, capable, and confident Soldiers need to recognize the load limits. With all the demands on families today, one person cannot do everything that two used to do. The load is TOO great. Everybody needs support. Strong and healthy families will plan carefully for the extra burdens and stresses of deployment. They will "stock up" for the future by renewing their resources. Anyone who has experienced a hurricane knows that is important. Some things to consider:

- Recharge your emotional batteries with quality time together
- Fortify family connections (phone, email, and letters) that may have weakened since living overseas
- Tie into Family Readiness Organizations
- Connect with chapel and other support groups

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NEXT ISSUE: **Savoring Time Together**

**PREP TIMES** is a series of eight newsletters designed to address issues, problems, and concerns facing Soldier families that are preparing for deployment.

This series of newsletters examines such things as: Loving Unconditionally, Decisiveness, Renewing Resources, Savoring Time Together, Harmony and Humility, Improving Communications, and Prioritizing Efforts. This issue addresses Renewing Resources.

## Running on Empty (continued)

4. List ALL your resources
5. Establish a support network with your family, friends, relatives
6. Switch roles in the family so that others become familiar with the deploying family member's jobs and responsibilities
7. Avoid adding new responsibilities (example: getting a new pet)

These are just a few things that families can do to prepare for impact of deployment.

ALSO...It is vital that all members of the family work together and take some time to "play" together. Young children are NOT adults in little bodies. They do not need adult anxieties, worries, and fears. They have enough of their own. Take the time to play, especially with young children. It renews them and you.

Equally important is that family members refill their own tanks during deployment. Perhaps before deployment, establish a regular exercise plan in order to keep physically healthy. Get a reading list or take on-line courses for mental fitness. For diversion, start a new hobby or project such as painting, photography, furniture refinishing, or crafts. Find one that is both inexpensive in time and money, yet challenging.

All these will help keep the family renewed. There are many things that will wear you down physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. If you can identify the most challenging ones, you can begin to plan ways to resource them.

Identify the anchors in your life. For many the anchors are their FAMILY, their FRIENDS, and their FAITH. Anchors are the strong instruments that keep a ship steady in a storm. Whatever your anchors are, make sure your lines are attached and strong.

## Some Thoughts for the Day...

**While we are focusing on fear, worry, or hate, it is not possible for us to be experiencing happiness, enthusiasm or love.**

- Bo Bennett

**"You can complain because roses have thorns, or you can rejoice because thorns have roses."**

- Ziggy



**It's hard to have a "good year" when you're so "tired"?**

## BASE CAMP

In his book entitled [A Road Less Traveled](#), M. Scott Peck writes,

"...I draw the analogy between marriage and the base camp for mountain climbing. If one wants to climb mountains one must have a good base camp, a place where there are shelters and provisions, where one may receive nurture and rest before one ventures forth again to seek another summit. Successful mountain climbers know that they must spend at least as much time, if not more, in tending to their base camp as they actually do in climbing mountains, for their survival is dependent upon their seeing to it that their base camp is sturdily constructed and well stocked."

A common marital problem is created when one or the other partner, once married, devotes all energy to "climbing mountains" and neglects the marriage "base camp". Then he/she expects it to be all intact and in perfect order upon return.

How are you stocking your base camp? Are you putting it off and heading up the mountain? Too often Soldiers and leaders minimize the importance of taking care of the supporters. Then they are surprised when things go wrong. Dr. Peck's analogy is valid. Begin early with the right stuff. Check with your chaplain and other agencies for resources to build up the base camp.

