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POST TIMES
 FREEDOM EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
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ISSUE FIVE

UNIT MINISTRY TEAM

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STABILITY

POST TIMES is a series of eight newsletters designed to address issues, problems, and concerns facing soldier families that have returned from deployment. One of the most difficult issues facing military families today is what this issue examines...STABILITY. How can families be stable in such turbulent times?

ROCK SOLID



"How do we ensure STABILITY in our lives when everything seems to be in chaos? Is anything stable in families, in jobs, in community, in homes?"

"I sometimes wonder if I am the only one going nuts with all the changes all around."

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For information about POST TIMES & REUNION TIMES contact Chaplain Eric Erkkinen at eric.erkkinen@us.army.mil

SURVIVING CHANGE

The TV show, *Survivor*, depicts real people in struggle against the elements, each other, and ratings. The struggles the contestants face are challenges to their creativity, their savvy, and their popularity. Of course, everyone does survive but only ONE actually wins the prize money. How well these participants adjust to changes and situations determines their "survivability" and continuation on the series.

In our lives we face obstacles every day. Some are real tests of our adaptability. In the military, we have more than our share of changes occurring. Perhaps American author, Henry Miller was correct when he said, "Chaos is the score upon which reality is written."

Besides having to move frequently, we have "transformation", new technology, staff turnovers, job changes, and deployments to endure. It is a fact. Change is inevitable. What does a military family do to minimize the effects of all that change...to keep STABLE?

Here are some things to consider. Change is NOT a bad thing. In fact, it is necessary and natural. A child does not remain a child, but grows into adulthood. Seasons come with predictable changes in temperature and weather. Every human being grows, matures, and learns because of change, not stability. The trick is to anticipate, learn, and adapt. You see, there are many possible reactions to change. You can REJECT it. You can RESIST it. You can RESENT it. Or you can RELISH it.

REJECTING change is when you simply refuse to adapt. In most cases, those who reject change are left behind. They live in the past and have no intention of learning anything new. Rejecting change often results in a "lostness" that produces more stress than changing does.

RESISTING change is when you plan courses of action to stop it and put roadblocks in the
(continued, p. 2, Surviving Change)



“At your age, Tommy, a boy’s body goes through changes that are not always easy to understand.”

Used by permission

QUOTABLES

The Army today is like a relay race in which I am running as fast as I can, carrying the baton, and from the sidelines somebody hands me a new pair of socks and says, “Listen. Change your socks, don’t drop the baton, and don’t lose your place in the race.”

Know what’s weird. Day by day, nothing seems to change. But pretty soon... everything’s different.

- Calvin (of Calvin and Hobbes)

When written in Chinese, the word “crisis” is composed of two characters -- one represents danger, and the other represents opportunity.

Courage is being scared to death - but saddling up anyway. - John Wayne

(continued, p. 1) Surviving Change

path of change. An example may be parents who don’t allow their teen to take driver’s education because of the “dangers of teenage drivers” on the road.

RESENTING change is bitterly going along with change. It is evidenced by chronic complaining, longing for the past, and phrases like, “I wish we had never moved here,” or “Why didn’t you put in for Fort Paradise?”

RELISHING change is an attitude that embraces new challenges, learns from new experiences, and values enrichment. Unfortunately, attitudes cannot be prescribed, purchased, or passed on to someone.

Some things that may help keep things **STABLE** in times of change are:

- **ANTICIPATE** - Try to get as much information as you can early on and keep all family members up to date
- **STRATEGIZE** - Look at different options if this or that happens and discuss them with family
- **LISTEN** - Let others have a voice in decision-making since all are impacted by changes
- **KNOW LIMITS** - You and family members have limits and levels of tolerance when it comes to change. Be patient, especially with children and teens.
- **WATCH FOR DANGER SIGNS** - Some changes are gradual and some are sudden. Some are typical, some are dangerous. Know the difference and seek help if needed.
- **NO EXCUSES** - Too often, when change comes, we don’t address them because we are too tired, angry, frustrated, etc. Putting off decisions may not be the best thing.
- **SEEK GUIDANCE** - If the stress of change seems overwhelming, seek help.

As George Goble sat between Bob Hope and Dean Martin on the Tonight Show he turned to Johnny Carson and asked, “**Johnny**, did you ever feel like the world was a **tuxedo**, and you were a pair of **brown shoes**?” Sometimes we all feel that way.