PATROLLING THE HOMEFRONT:
THE EMOTIONAL LABOR OF ARMY WIVES VOLUNTEERING IN FAMILY READINESS GROUPS

By

Jaime Nicole Noble Gassmann
B.A., Southern Methodist University, 2002
M.A., University of Kansas, 2004

Submitted to the graduate degree program in American Studies and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Chairperson: _____
Brian Donovan

Committee Members: _____
Norman R. Yetman

_____
Robert J. Antonio

_____
Joane Nagel

_____
Ben Chappell

Date Defended: 30 August 2010

The Dissertation Committee for Jaime Nicole Noble Gassmann certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

PATROLLING THE HOMEFRONT:
THE EMOTIONAL LABOR OF ARMY WIVES VOLUNTEERING IN FAMILY READINESS GROUPS

By

Jaime Nicole Noble Gassmann

Chairperson: _____
Brian Donovan

Committee Members: _____
Norman R. Yetman

_____
Robert J. Antonio

_____
Joane Nagel

_____
Ben Chappell

Date Approved: 30 August 2010

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the emotional labor of Army wives as they volunteer in Army-mandated family-member support groups in each unit called Family Readiness Groups (FRGs). Since its inception, the Army has relied unofficially on soldiers' wives' contributions to the success of their husbands' careers in a two-for-one career pattern—two workers for one paycheck. The Army made such expectations official when in 1988 it began to require volunteer labor to run each unit's FRG. The Army tasks FRGs with connecting members to resources and relaying official information to soldiers' family members. These support groups also serve a vital socializing function, though not all soldiers' spouses participate in the information-dispensing and community-building groups.

I conducted thirty-seven in-depth interviews and nine months of participant observation fieldwork among Army wives on and around a large Army post from 2006-2007, during a time when most soldiers were deploying to fight a war in either Iraq or Afghanistan every other year, leaving behind family members to manage the domestic effects of the Global War on Terrorism. This dissertation analyzes the participant-observation and interview data to show how and why the Army's emissaries, in particular FRG leaders, use emotional labor to impose traditional, institutional, "old Army" behaviors including satisfying expectations to work on behalf of one's soldier-spouse with a an Army-supporting attitude. Army wives who normally do the work of managing and displaying prescribed emotions in the private sphere for their own families do that same emotional labor publicly on the homefront

when they volunteer to lead FRGs in the tradition of "good" Army-wife behavior. Army wives who lead FRGs often volunteer their labor to satisfy unofficial yet prevailing expectations that they serve, particularly if they are commanders' wives, to contribute to the success of their husbands' careers, to build a social network for themselves and their peers, and to gain a modicum of power (real or perceived) over the process of adjusting their lives to an Army fighting two wars. FRG leaders' emotional labor also includes managing their members' (often unhappy) feelings about the flow of scarce but valuable information about Army life, diffusing or solving family-member problems before they burden soldiers, and patrolling behavior of other Army wives through mentorship and gossip in service of the Army's goals.

The Army's usage of volunteers' emotional labor grants the Army increased control over soldiers' families. Even though the Army *requires* emotional labor in FRGs to help improve family members' attitudes about Army life and thus keep soldiers in the Army, volunteer spouses' efforts are still devalued—both unpaid and derided—as women's work. The dissertation also finds that though the Army provides FRGs ostensibly to support family members, the emotional labor it prescribes for FRG leaders in handbooks and regulations, when combined with informal expectations, sometimes values supporting the Army over family members.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I extend my sincere gratitude to The Madison and Lila Self Graduate Fellowship at The University of Kansas for funding, to Brian, Norm, and Bob for always wishing me the best out of life, to my family, and most of all to the Army wives.

STATEMENT REGARDING RESEARCH SUBJECTS

This project began after gaining approval from the University of Kansas' Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL #16096). The research was neither Army-sanctioned nor conducted covertly. I was forthcoming, among those I encountered, about my intention to conduct research about my fellow Army wives and Family Readiness Groups.

Interviewees' and informants' names have been changed. I also changed some identifying details, borrowing at times from other informants to obscure the person in question yet maintain the sense of what I observed during my fieldwork. I omit the name of the Army post to further offer some plausible deniability to the Army wives in question. The goal of these changes is to attempt to protect subjects from backlash against their attitudes and behaviors collected under the promise of anonymity.

CONTENTS

PATROLLING THE HOMEFRONT:

THE EMOTIONAL LABOR OF ARMY WIVES VOLUNTEERING IN FAMILY READINESS GROUPS

PROLOGUE

An Army wife is bombarded with rhetoric indicating that her life will be hard, she will have to sacrifice, and she should be tough and bear the burden. Her husband says, as she helps him pack the green duffel bags that will accompany him to war, "I'm worried about you, but I know you'll be fine, right?"—to which there is only an affirmative answer. A letter from her husband's commander to her newborn daughter reads, "Thank you in advance for the sacrifices you will make." When sacrifice is so foregone as to be thanked in advance, protesting does not even seem to be an option. A presidential proclamation decreeing Military Spouse Appreciation Day commends her and her fellow Army wives as "pillars of strength in their families."[1] However, the sentence regarding sacrifice and stifled emotion in the face of Army-related adversity that sticks with me the most comes from less high-powered but no less authoritative figures. I frequently heard one Army wife admonish another, "Put your big-girl panties on and deal with it."[2]

---

[1] Barack Obama, Presidential Proclamation 8515, "Military Spouse Appreciation Day," *Federal Register* 49:2 (6 May 2010).

[2] Maria, interviewee 19, interview by author, confidential transcript. The full quote is, "Put your big girl panties on and deal with it. You're makin' a big ol' ass of yourself!" The phrase appears elsewhere, too, in my fieldnotes. All interviewees' and other observed Army wives' names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

"Put on your big-girl panties" is Army wife lingo for quit being childish, toughen up, and refashion yourself to be everything to everyone without complaining. Such instructional, emotion- and behavior-affecting imperative phrases teach spouses of soldiers that proper burden-bearing behavior is both feminine (panties) and mature (big-girl). Particularly since Army wives' husbands are often absent and the women have to "deal with it" on their own as both wife and husband, mother and father, the gender-specific opposite of "put on your big girl panties" (such as "man up" or "grow some balls") comes to mind when one hears the phrase in a military context.

Such a philosophy teaches an Army wife to compartmentalize unhappiness, encouraging her to focus on having an obedient "can-do will-do attitude" in service to the larger Army mission of waging two wars simultaneously.[3] The Army requires official support groups in each and every unit—Family Readiness Groups (FRGs)—to promote self-sufficiency and connect family members to resources. The Army's expressed hope is that increasing family well-being will boost soldier performance, encourage soldiers to stay in the Army, help reduce commanders' workloads, and ease the burden families place directly on the Army.

What is the Army's method for achieving these goals? It makes the support groups mandatory, but staffs them with volunteer spouses. Thus, a group's leader ministers to other Army wives and projects Army-supporting emotions, even though she often shares her group's members' frustrations and problems. It may not always be as crass as "put on your big girl panties," but Army wives, including and

[3] The author observed an award for volunteer service that contains this phrase.

especially FRG leaders, police each other, patrolling emotions in order to enforce group norms and expectations that persist from the "old" tradition-bound Army. Such behavior is normal in small groups, but what makes FRGs significant is that the volunteer group leaders have official institutional backing. So, when an FRG leader discourages whining or encourages a wife to toughen up, the institution of the Army speaks through her directly to the institution of the family.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I gathered participant-observation and interview data among wives of active-duty United States Army soldiers regarding their involvement in Family Readiness Groups (FRGs), the official support groups the Army offers in each unit. I use feminist and sociological theories to analyze the labor Army wives perform when they volunteer to lead these groups. By "labor" I refer to both physical labor, and most importantly for this study, "emotional labor," which sociologist Arlie Hochschild explains "requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others."[4] FRG leaders are expected to exhibit feelings and act in ways that promote the interests of the institution of the Army, such as when they police deviant outsider behavior, manage feelings about the scarcity of information and rank-privileged access to that information, or encourage self-sufficient (as opposed to Army-reliant) behavior.

I also identify reasons that soldiers' wives do this work: to contribute to their husbands' careers, because they are socialized to accept and perpetuate institutional values and group norms of participation, and because volunteer work in FRGs promises potential power and control over information. All of these rewards are exchanged for Army wives' emotional labor in the public marketplace of FRGs,

[4] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 7.

though the choice to volunteer or not is not wholly one's own.[5] The Army's requirement of labor falls on soldiers' spouses who fear consequences if they do not do its "women's work" of managing emotions.

I conducted this research from 2006-2007 during a time of war for the United States, the Global War on Terrorism, which was and still is being waged by an all-volunteer military force.[6] The Army faces recruitment and retention challenges within a population of volunteer soldiers and potential recruits who are significantly more likely to be married than their historical antecedents.[7] The Army has known empirically for decades that "spouse support was the most important predictor of a career commitment among married men in the service."[8] In response, the Army mobilized a variety of family support programs and worked to emphasize the importance of families (even capitalizing the word Families in all official documents). In the last three decades, the Army has pursued, in word and deed, a progressively more symbiotic relationship with the institution of the family and thus the three

[5] The term "Army wife" is a widely used term to denote the wife of an Army soldier. It is notable that the term completely elides the soldier and puts the woman in direct relation to the institution, as if she were married to the Army itself.

[6] The Global War on Terrorism includes a variety of military and security campaigns in response to the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. However, the conflict most affecting the population studied herein is Operation Iraqi Freedom, which began in early 2003.

[7] In 2007, 63.4 percent of soldiers were married. In 1971 the majority of soldiers, 54.3 percent, were married, as opposed to 34.4 percent in 1952. Before World War II, enlisted soldiers were discouraged from marriage ("Key Trend," [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences; Army Personnel Survey Office, 12 September 2007], http://www.army.mil/cfsc/docs/MaritalStatus91207.ppt [accessed 15 May 2010], 3). See chapter three for more detail.

[8] Dennis Orthner, "Family Contribution to Work Commitment," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 48 (1986): 574.

hundred thousand active-duty soldiers' wives.[9] However, an increasingly official relationship begets increasingly official (as opposed to informal) normative constraints on family members. The Army institutionalizes emotional labor in FRGs, where emotions expressed among the Army wives and their attitudes about Army life are normalized, patrolled, and regulated. As this dissertation will show, FRG leaders are expected—by the Army, by their husbands, by their peers, and/or by their members—to manage their own displays of emotion in line with Army-supporting and also status-quo-supporting norms to influence the emotions of others, regardless of their own personal feelings.

The Army's institutionalization of support reinforces traditional gender roles of mothering and caretaking—women's unwaged and often demeaned work—that have long been expected of Army wives, particularly of women whose husbands intend to make the Army a career.[10] Female spouses of soldiers, if they participate in

[9] In fiscal year 2005, 61.3 percent of soldiers were married; there were 81,656 active-duty Army officers and 406,923 active-duty enlisted soldiers on 30 September 2005. Thus, in 2005 there were almost exactly 300,000 active duty Army soldiers' spouses. Less than nine percent of those spouses were husbands. Data derived from "Key Trend," 3 and U.S. Department of Defense, *Selected Manpower Statistics Fiscal Year 2005* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2005), http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/M01/fy05/m01fy05.pdf (accessed 21 December 2007) as well as Betty D. Maxfield, *Army Profile FY08*, DSN 426-5128 (Washington, D.C.: Office of Army Demographics, 2005), http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/demographics/FY05%20Army%20Profile.pdf (accessed 26 November 2007). The population sampled in this dissertation was entirely active-duty Army soldiers' wives, excluding other branches of the military as well as National Guard and Reserve soldiers. See the next chapter for more detail on sample selection.

[10] Throughout the dissertation, I use three related words: institution, institutional, and institutionalization. Institutions generally refer to organizations or social units that "inevitably involve normative obligations"; institutional generally refers to Charles Moskos' term as he employs it in his institutional/occupational model (institutional meaning treating one's employment with the Army as a career governed by one's sense of duty as opposed to treating it like just another job or a means to an end as in the occupational model); and institutionalization "involves the processes by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rulelike status in social thought and action." These definitions rely primarily on John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Institutional Organizations:

formal support programs, often encounter pressure to conform to the model of "good" Army wife behavior. The Army militarizes some Army wives, particularly officers' wives who put forth an effort to conform to expectations. These women work a shift of unpaid emotional labor on behalf of their husbands' careers, all the while maintaining and perpetuating both the social order dictated by rank and the chain of command as well as emotions supporting and perpetuating the Army's mission. I explain these expectations using the rich feminist literature on two-for-one labor patterns, as well as the military sociology literature identifying the Army as a greedy institution—i.e., greedy for soldiers' spouses' free labor.

Primarily, however, I draw upon Hochschild's concept of emotional labor found in *The Managed Heart* to explain the type of work that FRG leaders do and to investigate how the spouses' interactions in FRGs enforce the support groups' norms and promote the Army's institutional goals. Particularly since the Army began hiring Family Readiness Support Assistants (FRSAs) for each battalion in 2007 to do a great deal of the physical and mental labor of organizing logistics that used to fall to FRG leaders,[11] the majority of the work that FRG leaders do is emotional labor—managing

---

Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, eds. Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 42. For Moskos' use, see Charles C. Moskos, "From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization," *Armed Forces & Society* 4 (1977): 41-50.

[11] FRSAs did not greatly affect the lives of interviewees and informants during data collection because at the time FRSAs only worked at the brigade level. The subsequent hiring of FRSAs at the battalion level signaled the increased importance the Army places on unit-specific family support through the FRG system. However, by paying a civilian worker (often a current or former soldier's spouse) to do the coordination and other logistical work, the Army's devaluation of the emotional labor of civilian volunteers (Army wives) is thrown into high relief.

feelings, both their own and their members', and thus managing behavior.[12] Army regulations governing FRGs state that leaders' efforts "can enhance family and Soldier camaraderie, provide stress relief, and reduce family loneliness during deployments."[13] When the volunteer leaders conduct meetings, make phone calls, write e-mails, socialize, gossip, or even change their body language, they encourage some behaviors and discourage others. For instance, their emotional labor might entail teaching what can and what cannot be a source of anger, indicating an appropriate level of formality or informality, or attempting to relieve the stress of separation from one's husband by creating a community where that stress is common and also made common. By controlling information and shaping feeling rules, FRG leaders capitalize on their position of power to gain status and approval for themselves and their husbands at the same time that the Army capitalizes on their free, institution-supporting emotional labor.

The emotional labor of Army wives during the last ten years matters because it is a crucial cog in the U.S. military's prolonged effort in the Global War on Terrorism set into motion in 2001 by Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and intensified by Operation Iraqi Freedom beginning in 2003.[14] Deployment cycles

---

[12] Hochschild argues that establishing feeling rules translates directly into behavioral results: "Since feeling is a form of pre-action, a script or a moral stance toward it is one of culture's most powerful tools for directing action. … Feeling rules are what guide emotion work by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges," *The Managed Heart*, 56.

[13] See section J-2, e, of appendix J in U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 21 July 2006), which is this document's appendix III.

[14] Sociologist Cynthia Enloe outlines ways that military spouses who are successfully socialized to promote institutional goals are central to the Army's war efforts. She argues that spouses

unprecedented in the United States' all-volunteer Army (since 1973) and the retention and recruitment of volunteer soldiers rely heavily on family well-being. The domestic cost of ten years of war is largely felt by military families, particularly wives. The Army's demanding pace and dangerous missions require every deployed soldier with a family to leave behind a de facto single parent and children, in this, a country that lionizes two-parent homes and heterosexual marriage. Without an understanding of how Army wives cope and continue to support, as a group, their husbands and the Army, Army policy and American foreign policy cannot have a fully informed view of the domestic effects of war.

The dissertation explains how and why women left behind to manage each other on the homefront conduct emotional labor in FRGs in a time of war when reliable information is scarce and quick to change and when emotions run high due to the stressful environment of back-to-back deployments. The remainder of the introduction analyzes Army wives' unpaid two-for-one emotional labor in FRGs. The second chapter describes the data collection process. Chapter three provides historical context and analysis to explain the Army's institutionalization of formal family support out of the tradition of informal support. Chapter four depicts the model of a "good" Army wife and offers illustrative case studies. Chapter five provides detailed description of the interactions among Army wives in FRGs to explain the process of

---

"can help win civilian support and sympathy for the military by making it seem a less brutal or insulated institution" (Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives* [Boston: South End Press, 1983], 48). Enloe also posits that military wives give emotional encouragement for the warrior ethos among their solder-spouses. Additionally, she argues that spouses produce and raise children who support the warrior ethos and have respect for the military—in effect, potential recruits.

performing and enforcing feeling rules. It shows how spouses who accept and conform to the two-for-one labor pattern of working for the Army establish that model as the norm and perpetuate it by their continued participation and emotional labor in FRGs. Chapter six critically assesses how the Army directs FRG leaders' labor. It explicates how FRG leaders' work serves the Army's goals, both expressed and implied. Chapter seven concludes with a discussion of FRG leaders' emotional labor as potentially self-beneficial on a personal level but also derided and exploited on the whole.

Hochschild's Concept of Emotional Labor

In *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild illuminates how the performance of emotion in commercial settings propagates institutionally defined attitudes.[15] The emotional laborer controls his or her own display of emotion and acts according to employer-prescribed norms. She posits that such public acting, "such as summoning up good feeling for a customer," affects behavior because "in managing feeling, we contribute to the creation of it."[16] The emotional laborer's acting, be it either "surface acting" where he or she fakes the emotion and is aware of faking it, or "deep acting" where the laborer modifies his or her own attitudes in order to best project the expected emotion and in that way influences the emotions and behaviors of

[15] Hochschild's case studies are of flight attendants and bill collectors as they interact face-to-face with customers.

[16] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 19, 18.

customers. When Army wives act as policing emotional laborers, the Army's influence underlies every interaction—as Hochschild says, "institutions manage how we feel."[17] The Army's values set the stage for what kinds of performances are acceptable.

Hochschild pulls from the tradition of Karl Marx and Erving Goffman, among other theorists. Marx's analysis of labor as a commodity that can alienate laborers, combined with Goffman's sociological focus on face-to-face interactions, inform Hochschild's theory of emotion.[18] She uses their scholarship and her own research to expand the idea of what labor is and who does it. Hochschild makes an agent-centered argument that interpersonal exchanges observed among emotional laborers matter in the grand analysis of labor relations. By opening up the discourse of labor to include emotional labor, she not only makes this stereotypically women's work visible, she also grants it its full importance among other kinds of labor.

Hochschild's identification of emotion display and management as a full-fledged type of labor allows her to analyze the "social engineering" of emotional labor. She shows how patriarchal institutions that demean women's work prescribe and control women's emotional labor, and she also details the possible alienation from the worker's own emotional core "that is *used* to do the work."[19] She draws a theoretical line between the institution that controls the workers, the individual

---

[17] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 49.

[18] Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977) and Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1967).

[19] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 8, 7.

workers' performance of the labor, and the psychic costs of that performance, all the while opening up possibilities for feminist analysis. The concept of emotional labor is particularly useful for my study because it legitimates FRG leaders' interaction with other members as work that not only matters, despite being "women's work" that includes caring for feelings and gossiping, but also because it explains the influence of the institution of the Army on those micro-level interactions through the volunteer emotional laborers.

This research is indebted to Hochschild's concept of emotional labor and its theoretical implications. I use her term, though, in a slightly expanded way. She differentiates between emotional labor and emotion work thusly:

> I use the term *emotional labor* to mean the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has *exchange value*. I use the synonymous terms *emotion work* or *emotion management* to refer to these same acts done in a private context where they have *use value*.[20]

For Hochschild, emotion work is domestic labor (traditionally unpaid) performed privately, while emotional labor is a component of paid employment.[21] However, I assume that FRG leaders perform emotional labor (not emotion work), even though they receive no monetary compensation. First, their labor is public, as opposed to the private emotion work they do at home. Second, their volunteer efforts often contribute to their husbands' careers, in effect providing the Army with two laborers in exchange for one soldier's paycheck in the two-for-one career pattern that will be

[20] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 7.

[21] Hochschild argues, "Just as gestures of emotion work can be exchanged in private, so they can be exchanged in the marketplace" (Arlie Russell Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure," *American Journal of Sociology*, 85, no. 3 [1979]: 572).

explicated later in the introduction. Additionally, the Army actually measures the millions of dollars worth of volunteer hours contributed to the Army each year with an elaborate online reporting system, so there is an assigned use value to unpaid emotional labor.[22]

Hochschild's 1983 concept of emotional labor spawned a flood of research in a variety of disciplines that continues today.[23] Researchers build upon her work to examine the psychological effects of relational work,[24] as well as commercial relations generally.[25] Particularly interesting scholarship focuses on the pay differentials for different types of labor, revealing the institutional devaluation of emotional labor. For instance, one study argues that emotional labor "remains marginalized and unrewarded. … The lack of acknowledgment renders such labor

[22] As of 2002, "volunteers saved the Department of the Army over $250 million a year" (Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* [College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 2002], 53).

[23] For a current review of Hochschild's importance in sociological circles, see Amy Wharton, "The Sociology of Emotional Labor," *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 147-65.

[24] Dieter Zapf, "Emotion Work and Psychological Well-Being: A Review of the Literature and Some Conceptual Considerations," *Human Resource Management Review* 12 (2002): 237-68; Alicia A. Grandey, Glenda M. Fisk, and Dirk D. Steiner, "Must 'Service with a Smile' Be Stressful?" *Journal of Applied Psychology* 90 (2005): 893-904; James M. Diefendorff and Erin M. Richard, "Antecedents and Consequences of Emotional Display Rule Perceptions," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88 (2003): 284-94; Sandi Mann, "'People-Work': Emotion Management, Stress, and Coping," *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 32 (2004): 205-21.

[25] Amy S. Wharton, "The Affective Consequences of Service Work: Managing Emotions on the Job," *Work and Occupations* 20 (1993): 205-32; Alicia A. Grandey, "Emotion Regulation in the Workplace: A New Way to Conceptualize Emotional Labor," *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 5 (2000): 59-100; Alicia A. Grandey, David N. Dickter, and Hock-Peng Sin, "The Customer is Not Always Right: Customer Verbal Aggression Toward Service Employees," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 25 (2004): 397-418.

invisible and contributes to depressed wages of those whose jobs require it."[26] Scholars also utilize Hochschild's work to study specific professions, particularly teaching, nursing, and also employment in totalizing institutions such as one study of cruise ships' activities' directors.[27] Another organizing principle in current research is burnout resulting from emotional labor and emotional dissonance, another of Hochschild's terms.[28] All of this scholarship shows that emotional labor appears in many contexts in the world of work. It also exists in jobs throughout the Army, but my dissertation focuses on FRGs because of their unique status as an official connection between the institutions of the Army and the family.

[26] Sharon H. Mastracci, Meredith A. Newman, and Mary E. Guy, "Appraising Emotion Work: Determining Whether Emotional Labor is Valued in Government Jobs," *The American Review of Public Administratio*n 36 (2006): 123. Also see Theresa M. Glomb, John Daniel Kammeyer-Mueller, and Maria Rotundo, "Emotional Labor Demands and Compensating Wage Differentials," *Journal of Applied Psycholo*gy 89 (2004): 700-14.

[27] Sarah J. Tracy and Karen Tracy, "Emotion Labor at 911: A Case Study and Theoretical Critique," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 26 (1998): 390-411; James S. Sass, "Emotional Labor as Cultural Performance: The Communication of Caregiving in a Nonprofit Nursing Home," *Western Journal of Communication* 64 (2000): 330-58; Sarah J. Tracy, "Becoming a Character for Commerce Emotion: Emotion Labor, Self-Subordination, and Discursive Construction of Identity in a Total Institution," *Management Communication Quarterly* 14 (2000): 90-128.

[28] Rebecca J. Erickson and Christian Ritter, "Emotional Labor, Burnout, and Inauthenticity: Does Gender Matter?" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 64 (2001): 146-63; Steffanie L. Wilk and Lisa M. Moynihan, "Display Rule "Regulators": The Relationship between Supervisors and Workers' Emotional Exhaustion," *Academy of Management Journal* 44 (2005): 1018-27; Gérard Näring, Mariette Briët, and André Brouwers, "Beyond Demand-Control: Emotional Labour and Symptoms of Burnout in Teachers," *Work & Stress* 20 (2006): 303-15; Qin Zhang and Weihong Zhu, "Exploring Emotion in Teaching: Emotional Labor, Burnout, and Satisfaction in Chinese Higher Education," *Communication Education* 57 (2008): 105-22.

Family Readiness Groups

The Army requires each company commander and each battalion commander to create and oversee an FRG staffed by volunteers.[29] Spousal participation in FRGs is optional, but membership is automatic. Army regulation defines FRGs: "An organization of family members, volunteers, and soldiers belonging to a unit, that together provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance, and a network of communications among the family members, the chain of command, and community resources."[30] Each unit needs family members to voluntarily participate in and lead FRGs to fulfill this Army-wide requirement: "The Army's family support system has relied heavily on volunteer participation within the community of Army spouses."[31] Spouses serve as the FRGs' leaders the overwhelming majority of the time. Although the spouse-led groups ostensibly support any and all family members as well as single soldiers and other interested people such as soldiers' girlfriends, FRGs' targeted participants are most often spouses (predominantly wives, as opposed to husbands) and their children.[32] For these reasons, I conducted thirty-seven in-depth interviews

[29] FRGs are mandated in U.S. Army Regulation 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 7 June 2007).

[30] U.S. Department of the Army Pamphlet 608-47, *A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 16 August 1993). The unit FRG functionality is part of the evaluation of the commander's performance, called an Officer Evaluation Report.

[31] Bradford Booth et al., *What We Know About Army Families* (Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates, 2007), 21.

[32] The Army does not collect any demographic data on FRG leaders (Mobilization/Deployment Specialist, interview by author, transcript, 28 September 2006). My assertion about their gender is based on participant-observation fieldwork.

and nine months of participant observation fieldwork among Army wives on and around a large Army post from 2006-2007.

FRGs' volunteer workers are family members who take on duties including dispensing official unit and post-wide information, connecting families with resources, organizing social activities, raising money for under-funded or unfunded activities, and serving as the Army's first point of contact for family members' concerns. The time commitment indicated for FRG leaders in *The FRG Leader's Handbook* is "six to eight hours a week, depending on deployment status and other scheduled activities."[33] FRG leaders coordinate and host at least one FRG meeting or social event per month in a functioning FRG (unless it is in transition between leaders), in addition to fundraising activities such as wrapping presents for tips in December, selling food items to soldiers as they stand in line for their final issue of gear before deployment, or selling items at on-post carnivals or bazaars, to name a few. Social events include holiday parties or activities, outings to the nearest city, and the ever-popular potluck. Meetings vary according to the leadership style of not only the FRG leader but also the commander.

I found one FRG meeting that I observed to be particularly representative of a meeting held when soldiers were home. Alice, a lean woman who had home schooled her children until they recently entered high school, volunteered her time to lead this particular company-level FRG. She had arranged for the March meeting to be held in the battalion's conference room. The commander, a captain, had made the meeting

[33] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 69.

mandatory for all soldiers, though a spouse could come in a soldier's stead. Surrounded by "Army of One" posters, families were packed shoulder-to-shoulder. Soldiers, some in civilian clothes and some who had not had time to go home to change out of ACU-patterned uniforms, corralled children as they either joked with their co-workers or stared out into space disinterestedly. Many single soldiers were looking at their watches. The Army wives sat with their respective families; few socialized before the meeting.

The commander, who was single, and his first sergeant's wife Alice, the FRG leader, sat at the front of the room behind a folding table containing stacks of photocopied "resources"—fliers for events and organizations around post that she had compiled. He called the room to order, and as he spoke about the looming deployment the room was still. After fifteen minutes, he turned the meeting over to Alice. She was prepared to give information to spouses about a new preschool playgroup, the upcoming deployment briefing and fair, and a deployed spouse discount card, among other things. She found herself flustered as she delivered such details to a crowd dominated by soldiers who appeared disinterested. Alice asked exasperatedly if anyone had ideas for a pre-deployment fundraiser; no one said a word. The room grew noisier as she continued. After repeating herself often and straying occasionally into cautionary anecdotal tales about what not to do during the deployment, Alice's meeting ended without any clear conclusion or farewell from her. Afterwards, the young lieutenants' wives and a sergeant's wife who served as a point of contact on the FRG phone tree all huddled at the front of the room with

Alice. They decided on a fundraising activity, divvied out the tasks necessary to accomplish the fundraiser among themselves, and socialized all for about ten minutes. By the time Alice concluded the impromptu four-person meeting, there were few families remaining to whom she could personally introduce herself to try to build the FRG community.

During the upcoming deployment, Alice's FRG meetings were less formal, smaller, and more targeted to spouses who wanted to attend and be a part of the FRG. She said perhaps six to ten wives and their children attended her monthly potluck meetings on Wednesday evenings. The children ran wild while she read lists of on-post activities, handed out fliers, and fielded questions. In contrast to the pre-deployment meeting, Alice's audience members, however distracted by children and food, all chose to attend and were interested in at least some of the information she distributed or were attending to enjoy the company of their peers. The face-to-face interaction of the meetings, according to Alice, even though it reached only a few people, was a nice change from the daily emails she sent out to the company-wide FRG distribution list with post-specific and other local information and also from the frequent phone calls she received from "crazy" spouses complaining about the deployment or needing some sort of help.[34]

In the strictest sense, the mission of FRGs is simply to connect members to resources and pass along official unit information, but there is also a social and a caretaking aspect to the work of the groups. Jenna, a resourceful, highly involved

[34] Alice, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

Army wife for a total of nine years (to two husbands), explained the use of FRGs in practice:

> It is for family. … To prepare especially the new wives, I think that's more important, and make them have a better understanding of the military. You get together and you do things so that that unit knit remains, and so that the family is not left behind without any information. Because so many [solider-]spouses go home … and don't tell their families what's going on. … It's more of an information resource. … If something is going on … the FRG can get that information and then call … as kind of a phone tree. … Also to help each other, there are so many wives that come into a post and don't know anybody and don't know anything.[35]

In her list of responsibilities, pig-tailed Jenna took the time between pulls on a cigarette to mention logistical tasks but also the job of creating social opportunities and of socializing spouses into military life. Furthermore, in addition to distributing information, as an FRG leader she was also expected to manage expectations about and reactions to that information.

When I spoke with her, Jenna expressed pride that her husband (pictures of him holding an American flag and wielding a rifle on the wall behind her) kept her well informed about his career, the unit's activities, and the dates he would be leaving and returning from training or deployment. The flow of information from soldier to wife is often not reliable, and many wives rely on their peers or their FRGs for such information, when it is available. Soldiers sometimes find out such dates with very little lead time (days or sometimes hours), some fail to report those dates to loved ones in a timely fashion, and in the Army dates change so often that most families

[35] Jenna, interviewee 30, interview by author, confidential transcript.

adopt an "I'll believe it when I see it" approach no matter the efficacy of their own soldier-to-spouse communication.

Broken promises that accompany changes in plans require a great deal of emotion management for Army wives. For instance, Darcy made a morning ritual with her young daughter of eating one piece of "daddy candy" from a mason jar, counting down for weeks to an empty jar and the return of the daddy in question. She disappointed the girl to tears when the soldier arrived home from month-long training at a different post two days late—two days of an empty jar that, rather than signaling a happy occasion, only served to further frustrate her daughter.[36] Melinda's private emotion work manages her child's hopes and fears as well as her own, not to mention the emotions of her parents-in-law, people who she loved but who she felt held her responsible for the Army's schedule changes and whose phone calls often re-aggravate her emotions. That emotion work among family members becomes emotional labor in the public sphere in her role as an FRG leader when she stands at the front of a conference room and breaks bad news to the members in her FRG. In both public and private she is expected to put aside her personal sadness, instead modeling cheerfulness in the face of adversity. If she could not "handle" such a performance as the FRG leader, the commander of the unit who oversees the FRG almost certainly would find someone to "give her a break"—someone who would perform properly.

[36] Melinda, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

Within a context of a scarcity of information (regulated by sometimes unreliable husbands), FRGs become the connection to the Army for some spouses desperate for the information that will lend predictability to their lives. Yet, because information is so valuable to the functionality of Army family lives, jealousy and resentment can arise whenever there is a hitch in the information distribution process such as a broken calling chain or when officers' spouses learn of crucial dates in a social context before FRGs distribute the information widely. Such problems require a great deal of emotional labor by volunteer FRG leaders, who often serve as the front line of defense for the Army against upset Army wives. According to Army regulations, FRG leaders "help families solve problems at the lowest level" when family members raise concerns or express anger.[37]

FRG leaders may field a phone call from a crying wife who has not heard from her husband in weeks and cannot pay bills until he calls so she can ask him the bank account's pin number, or they may deliver the bad news to the group that the two weeks set aside for vacation time before deployment has moved and been shortened because the Army changed the unit's mission in Iraq at the eleventh hour. FRG leaders conduct family maintenance as in the above phone call, connecting families to Army and community resources. Sometimes they even perform armchair psychiatry or personal favors outside their job description to try to prevent families with problems from collapsing emotionally, financially, or in any other way.

[37] J-2, a (4) in U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*, found in this document's appendix III.

In the commonplace case of a last-minute change in the soldiers' schedules, it would be expected that the FRG leader put aside her own disappointment or anger to "put on a happy face" and encourage the group's members to "be tough" because such disappointments are to be expected in Army life and to "put on your big girl panties" (a phrase not uncommon among Army wives) because everyone is in a similar situation. The emotional labor of Army wives in FRGs assists the Army in its mission of soldier readiness and retention, because their display of "appropriate emotion" affects others' emotions and behaviors: e.g., the leader who shrugs off the broken promise of no training on Memorial Day weekend with a smile tempers the reaction of the FRG's members to the same disappointment.

FRG volunteers, some with families to care for, some operating as single parents while their spouses are deployed or training in the field, and some with jobs, take on voluntary Family Readiness Group duties in support of the "Total Army Family" or the "unit family" in what amounts to an unpaid shift of labor.[38] Family members, including these volunteers, assume "the increased stress and burden of this war for our Army and our Nation," according to a letter e-mailed by the Army to soldiers and their dependent family members.[39] To bear up emotionally in the face of increased wartime demands from the Army, spouses of soldiers often cling to an

[38] For a description of the Total Army Family Program (TAFP), see U.S. Army Regulation 600-20, 47-9. For official linkage between FRGs and the TAFP, see Army Pamphlet 608-47, 1: "Basic FSG goals include supporting the military mission through provision of support, outreach, and information to family members. FSGs play an integral part in the Total Army Family Program." Mention of the unit family can be found in appendix J of U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*, which is this paper's appendix III.

[39] U.S. Department of the Army, "To Our Soldiers and Families," pdf via e-mail to author, 12 April 2008. For a copy of the letter, see appendix VII.

identity as a "good" Army wife—a wife who, no matter how detrimental to her mental health, marriage, or family life, faithfully supports the Army's policies and her husband's continued employment with the Army. The work of publicly articulating and promoting such feelings is the emotional labor of FRG leaders. They manage their own feelings and project them in interpersonal interactions in an effort to influence others' feelings in support of institutional goals of readiness and retention.

Institutionalized Emotional Labor in FRGs

Family Support Groups began informally in 1982, were mandated and formalized in Army regulations in 1988, and were renamed Family Readiness Groups in 2000. As Michelle, a commander's wife and UCLA graduate with a wry sense of humor about the obligations of her role as FRG leader, put it, "The FRG has become big enough for the Army to draw attention, and the Army wants to control it."[40] Over the squeals of her infant son, Michelle indicated that she felt she had volunteered to help others, only to be told what to do and how to act by the Department of the Army regulations governing FRGs.

As it provides support through FRGs, the Army exerts the power to enforce group norms over FRG participators. The power of such group norms exists within any small group and has traditionally existed in other Army wife groups, but it holds an additional potency in FRGs because they are official programs that put

[40] Michelle, interviewee 35, interview by author, confidential transcript.

participating civilian Army wives under the direct command of the Army.[41] In the model of a totalizing institution, the Army's institutionalization of support groups seeks to promote family members' integration into and acceptance of the ways of military life.[42] Because it has formalized and mandated a specific model of family support, the Army can craft the mission and purview of FRGs (as opposed to unofficial support groups, over which it had less control) to pursue its goal of increasing family well-being and thus soldier readiness and retention.

The Army, in creating support groups, produced an arena in which it can control the public expression of private feelings. The Army offers training programs, handbooks, and constant monitoring, including yearly audits, to channel the emotional labor of FRG volunteers. Such formalization of support in FRGs mobilizes traditional gender roles and conceptions of the Army's social and institutional structure that place heavy expectations of participation and tight definitions of proper behavior on wives who participate. Although expectations existed and continue to exist in informal groups such as unit coffee groups and spouses' clubs, the formal, official dimension of FRGs endows FRG-related expectations with a particular

---

[41] Particularly for Army families living on post, in practices specific to the military and other "company town" situations, the military "secures the wife's involvement by making the [military] an all-encompassing community" (Laurie Weinstein and Helen Mederer, "Blue Navy Blues: Submarine Officers and the Two-Person Career," in *Wives and Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*, eds. Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White [Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1997], 9). For more on the military as a company town, see James A. Martin and Dennis. K. Orthner, "The 'Company Town' in Transition: Rebuilding Military Communities," in *The Organization Family: Work and Family Linkages in the U.S. Military*, eds. G. L. Bowen and Dennis K. Orthner (New York: Praeger, 1989), 163-77.

[42] The Army is not a total institution for family members. However, the Army's tendencies toward that model, in the tradition of Goffman, lead me to use the word "totalizing." See Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

salience. As Hochschild states, "Feeling rules are no longer simply matters of personal discretion, negotiated with another person in private but are spelled out publicly."[43] The Army made soldiers' spouses' work public, and in the process set up a system in which the Army controls the rules of that work.

The Army instituted FRGs in an effort to encourage pro-institution spouse-to-spouse interaction, constrained by Army values, social traditions of cheerful sacrifice, and FRG rules and regulations. According to the chief of the U.S. Army Family Liaison Office, "Our changing Army and its missions point to the critical need for strong FRGs—effective FRGs—to help enhance soldier and family morale and success at home and at work. Effective FRGs can even help our soldiers accomplish military missions."[44] The Army "hires" unpaid emotional laborers to do the work of helping retain and maintain soldiers, making the performance of particular emotions a critical component of the workings of the institution of the Army.

When emotions are institutionalized, as in FRGs, women have the opportunity to turn them into resources.[45] Women can use resources that come from emotional work to assert themselves in response to what sociologist Cynthia Enloe describes as a loss of power "to two patriarchal authorities" in their lives, their husbands and the Army.[46] Women also use resources that come from emotional work to assert

---

[43] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 119.

[44] David White, quoted in Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 9.

[45] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 55.

[46] Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, 47.

themselves in "secondary" ways, according to Hochschild—for example, among other women to compensate for the loss of power to their husbands and the often-last-minute whims of the Army.[47] Enloe claims that because women are "fundamentally *marginal* to at least the publicly articulated meaning of the military," the women use such opportunities to impose their own authority within the only legitimate and public framework afforded them in the Army—in these volunteer groups that assist with family support.[48] Rank of soldier-spouses, beyond its own power relationships, inherently contains the power dynamics of class, education, seniority, and race, particularly concerning the officer/enlisted divide. Women in this competitive and hierarchical structure can employ the resource of feelings to supportive (or possibly divisive) ends. Hochschild argues that it is when women are "lacking other resources, [that] women make a resource out of feeling."[49] Women who craft multi-centric networks of support for themselves and their families, who access resources elsewhere in the community through employment or in some other way, may not need to engage as much with FRGs.

The Army *officially depends* on spouses to run FRGs. FRGs offer Army wives a venue in which to support their families, turning emotional work that generally exists only in the private sphere into validated, legitimate, "real" work in the public sphere. Senior officer's wife Terry, relaxing in her Emory University sweatshirt after cleaning the house that morning, explained, "If you volunteer outside of your family,

[47] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 170.

[48] Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, 56.

[49] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 163.

you have somebody who says, 'Hey, thanks for doing that.' And nobody thanks me for doing the laundry or running the carpool. Internally you just don't think to do that; families don't do that for each other much."[50] The redheaded southerner said she dislikes volunteer recognition ceremonies, but she does enjoy being appreciated publicly because it contrasts starkly with the lack of appreciation expressed at home. FRG volunteer recruitment and recognition provides a place where Terry can hear that her care work is needed and valued. Wives who perform the emotional labor of supporting their soldiers and their peers in private—empathizing, organizing activities, bearing the demands of the Army without complaining—now have a public arena in which to perform that support and be acknowledged for it.

Army wives who volunteered in FRGs often expressed ambivalence about the public performance of emotional labor. Their volunteer work sometimes garnered appreciation. However, positive recognition was not always forthcoming, the rules about how to act were sometimes stifling, and performing emotional labor took a toll on their personal lives. The Army's institutionalization of emotion in FRGs, which relies on traditional gendered labor patterns, brings both benefits and drawbacks to Army wives.

[50] Terry, interviewee 23, interview by author, confidential transcript.

FRGs' Gendered Labor Pattern

Volunteering adds to Army wives' unpaid domestic and, if applicable, paid work. Employed women work one shift for an employer and also care for their families in what Hochschild and Machung term a "second shift."[51] Second shift work refers to unpaid, private-sphere, home-centered emotion work.[52] Army wives who volunteer in FRGs have yet another set of responsibilities. The Army activities of women who are stay-at-home-moms and/or housewives amount to an additional shift of labor (a *second* unpaid job). In their FRG roles, women who work outside of the home and then care for their families volunteer a *third* shift of labor for the Army. Hochschild uses the term third shift to refer to the time needed to reconcile the conflicts between the first shift and the emotional needs of family members in the second shift, between work outside of the home and work in the home.[53] I use the term third shift to indicate the institutionalized *homefront* work of spouses entailed by their soldier-spouse's Army career.

Homefront emotion work used to be unofficial, located primarily in officers' wives' coffee groups and waiting wives' clubs as well as informal communities such as neighborhoods. The Army formalized the third shift in 1988 with the creation of FRGs. When the Army promotes and indeed *requires* involvement in official

[51] Arlie Russell Hochschild and Anne Machung, *The Second Shift* (New York: Avon Books, 1989).

[52] Emotion work is Hochschild's term for the private work; emotional labor is the label she uses when the work is done in public (Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 7).

[53] Hochschild and Machung, *The Second Shift*.

volunteer work within the institution, as in FRGs, it formalizes the additional sphere of demands on spouses' time and resources. In the recent era (since 2001) of frequent deployments, even with an expanded operating budget to fund two wars, the Army acknowledges it relies heavily on wives' pro bono work to maintain the readiness and encourage the retention of its soldiers.[54] The FRG system enables the Army to officially harness and better control family support efforts.

Military sociologist Mady Segal's use of the theoretical concept "greedy institutions" identifies the intersection of demands from the family and the military—an intersection of the second and third shifts. She labels them both greedy institutions because "both make great demands of individuals in terms of commitments, loyalty, time, and energy."[55] Segal's work is in the tradition of Lewis Coser, who argues that greedy institutions "seek exclusive and undivided loyalty and they attempt to reduce the claims of competing roles and status positions on those they wish to encompass within their boundaries. Their demands on the person are omnivorous."[56] Two greedy institutions, the family and the Army, place extraordinary demands on wives' labor to sustain both. When one marries, one voluntarily commits to one's spouse and thus the

[54] For details on the U.S. military's Global War on Terrorism budget, David M. Walker, *Global War on Terrorism: Observations on Funding, Costs, and Future Commitments*, testimony to the Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives, 18 July 2006, United States Government Accountability Office GAO-06-885T, http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06885t.pdf (accessed 17 May 2010).

[55] Mady Wechsler Segal, "The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions," *Armed Forces & Society* 13, no. 1 (1986): 9.

[56] Lewis A. Coser, *Greedy Institutions: Patterns of Undivided Commitment* (New York: The Free Press, 1974). However omnivorous their demands, greedy institutions are distinct from Erving Goffman's concept of total institutions (Goffman, *Asylums*, 15-17).

family unit; however, a civilian spouse of a soldier has much less control over his or her relationship to the other greedy institution in Segal's formulation: the Army.

The Army's demand for volunteer labor in its official, mandatory support programs results in an increased workload for wives who volunteer a shift of unpaid labor in addition to their other work. Regardless of whether a spouse works unpaid at home or is employed, she is always made more "time poor" if she satisfies expectations that she serve the institution that employs her soldier-spouse.[57] When discussing her care for both her family and the FRG, senior officer's wife Terry said in her southern accent, "Two full-time jobs and I don't get paid for any of them!"[58] She candidly said she volunteered because her husband was a commanding officer. Terry spoke eloquently about the Army's unwelcome intrusion into her care work for her husband and her three school-aged children:

> Ninety-nine percent of the stuff that's on my calendar is either kid related or unit related. And it gets frustrating sometimes because I'm gone quite a bit to stuff, and very little of it is stuff I would choose to do with my time if he [my husband] weren't in command. … [It] takes away from whatever they think they need or the family needs, it has to come from somewhere. … It means you end up robbing family sometimes.[59]

Darla was another energetic, polished senior officer's wife in her late thirties, with a newly applied "1/2 MY HEART IS IN IRAQ" bumper sticker on her Acura SUV. For the sake of the quality of family life, she decided to not return to work as a social

---

[57] The term time-poor comes from Hochschild and Machung, *The Second Shift*, 29. Enloe discusses two-person careers among diplomats and their wives and among military men and their wives in Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2d ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 10-11, 73.

[58] Terry, interviewee 23, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[59] Ibid.

worker after her husband was stationed at his new post and took command. Cupping a double-throw-down latté for warmth and the promise of caffeine, Darla said that the social demands of being a battalion commander's wife, if coupled with work demands, would cause her two children "to bear the brunt" of the burden of having over-scheduled parents.[60] Captain's wife Krista, an energetic woman in her late twenties who started her own photography business, was a very active FRG leader. She won an award for her volunteer efforts, though in her interview Krista expressed great frustration with Army life and the burden of volunteering. She contended that the pace of Army life adversely affected her marriage and was so demanding she did not want to have children. Krista said, "We've been married five years and before he left we figured out we'll be together nine months, maybe a year if we put it all together. That's about it. [I said to my husband,] 'We can't have a kid, I don't even have time with you.'"[61] Krista's life is shaped by the heightened operational tempo of an Army deployed to two wars, her employment, and her FRG work.

Terry's, Darla's, and Krista's experiences of outside demands competing with the institution of the family for a woman's time and resources is well theorized in feminist literature. Women provide a disproportionate share of childcare generally, even in dual-income families like Darla's was before her husband took command. Darla identified the numerous social and official demands of her husband's work on

[60] Darla, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

[61] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

her as a full-time job in itself.[62] She has since given up her career to provide some stability to her children, who see their father very little even when he is not deployed because he often works later than their bedtime. Darla's husband does the gendered work of soldiering, and she does the expected, gendered work of homefront and child care, in addition to caring for the family members in her FRG.

The Army leverages the stereotype of women as caretakers to feed its own demands for unpaid emotional labor.[63] The Army promotes work for "The Total Army Family," which Enloe describes as "the military-as-family myth."[64] She claims that "the military has employed a variety of notions of 'the family' in order to control both the men and the women it needs to achieve its goals."[65] If the Army were to label the same concept The Total Army Community instead of the Total Army Family, the meaning would remain the same but it would lose the gender-stereotyping, emotion-invoking connotation of the Mother of the Nation or simply mother/caretaker that can be found in Family (but not Community). Enloe argues that the Army mobilizes rhetoric and symbols that make militarization, even of the family, seem normal and acceptable, thus allowing the Army to extract the labor of women without allowing them to "reap the rewards" of that labor.[66]

---

[62] Darla, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

[63] Hochschild argues, "The world turns to women for mothering, and this fact silently attaches itself to many a job description" (*The Managed Heart*, 170). Indeed, the job description for family support volunteers is not so silent; see chapter six.

[64] Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, 64.

[65] Ibid., 6.

[66] Ibid.

Under the umbrella term "Total Army Family," used in some official documents and the Army website's "Well-Being" information page, the Army bundles the health of its institution, the good of volunteers' own families, and also the success of the volunteers' husbands' careers.[67] The closeness and togetherness signaled by the rhetoric of the Army family is meant to obscure and even counter the strain of separation on families that comes from life "in" the Army.[68]

Ironically, the extra work involved in manning volunteer support roles adds to the strain on families—the support for spouses is done by spouses who may need support themselves. Instead of receiving support, the Army expects FRG leaders to perform emotional labor that suppresses their personal feelings. For instance, in the wake of a casualty in the unit, in between preparing a pan of lasagna for the bereaved family and coordinating an airport pickup of the dead soldier's parents, an FRG leader may field a phone call from a worried wife. The leader almost certainly shares the caller's worries about the increase in attacks by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) during the unit's patrols. That menace is aggravated for all family members, too, by a fear of the unknown created by spotty internet and phone communication between soldiers and their families. Yet the leader contains her grief, compartmentalizes her own anxiety, and attempts to allay the woman's fears.

---

[67] U.S. Army Regulation 600-20, 47-49; Army Pamphlet 608-47, 1; and U.S. Army, "Well-Being," http://www.army.mil/info/armylife/wellbeing (accessed 18 May 2010), which states: "The objective of Army Well-Being is to address the physical, material, mental and spiritual needs of each member of the Total Army Family so they have the opportunity to achieve each of these goals to the degree they desire, enhancing their preparedness to perform and support the Army's mission."

[68] According to Enloe, the Army creates "a chasm between the institution's rhetoric, which asserts that 'the military is a family' and the daily isolation the wives often experience" (Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000], 161).

The Army officially establishes its reliance on the two-for-one career pattern by mandating FRGs and requiring soldiers' spouses' emotional labor to run them. Hanna Papanek describes a two-for-one career pattern as a situation where both husband and wife work for one employee's paycheck, one officially and the other unofficially.[69] Feminist and military scholars Laurie Weinstein and Helen Mederer write: "The military depends on the services of a wife as an adjunct to her … husband, a supporter of his career ambitions, and in the double-duty roles she is required to perform when the demands of the husband's career prevent him from sharing home responsibilities" such as raising children and keeping house.[70] Two-for-one duties include volunteering and entertaining as well as sacrificing personal interests and activities.[71] The salience of the two-for-one career pattern among soldiers and their spouses (who are overwhelmingly men and women, respectively) relies on the persistence of traditional, patriarchal gender roles where men work for pay in the public sphere and women work unpaid for the success of their husbands' careers.

The Army requires that a family member become the volunteer leader of the FRG. Often commanders' wives become the units' FRG leaders—sometimes by default and sometimes by choice to help their spouses and their spouses' careers.

---

[69] The origin of the term is Hanna Papanek, "Men, Women, and Work: Reflections on the Two-Person Career," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 4 (1973): 852-72. It is applied specifically to military spouses by Doris Briley Durand, "The Role of the Army Wife as Perceived by Male Officers and Their Wives: Is It a Commitment to the 'Two-for-One' Career Pattern?" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1995).

[70] Weinstein and Mederer, "Blue Navy Blues," 7.

[71] Ibid., 8.

Other times commanders' wives want to become the FRG leader, either because they feel strongly about volunteering or because they feel it is expected of them by their peers, their soldier-spouses, their spouses' peers, their spouses' bosses, and/or the Army.

For instance, captain's wife Krista, the entrepreneur with strong emotions both for and against military life, explained that she became an FRG leader only because her husband took command of a company: "It's like an unwritten rule, unfortunately. … It was just a pressure from hearing previous people talk about it: 'Well, when your husband's the man, you need to run the FRG.' It's just expected that the officer's wife will run the FRG."[72] She stated that his job dictated her involvement—she said might not be involved at all, particularly in an FRG leadership role, if he were not the company's commander.

Krista asserted that she participated not to benefit herself, but rather to benefit her husband and his career. The experience of participation also brought her personal problems. Flopping back in her chair in exhaustion to prove her point, she lamented, "I'm getting number by the minute. It's just draining. I feel like I'm aging double."[73] Her discussion of this topic vacillated between appreciating the FRG as a support mechanism and deriding the work and its demands. This ambivalence was the closest any interviewee came to criticizing the FRG system; however, Krista generally targeted her anger at frequent deployments, not the FRG concept. Other spouses, if

[72] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[73] Ibid.

they criticized anything relating to FRGs, criticized the gossiping, invasive behavior of participating spouses; they did not attribute those behaviors to the conditions created by the Army's FRG program.

The two-for-one pattern is, of course, not unique to the military. Two-for-one work exists in other professions and institutions and has persisted in the form of clubs, neighborhoods, and additional unofficial associations throughout the history of the armed forces. Yet, corporate manifestations of the pattern differ greatly from the military case. Dennis Orthner, Gary Bowen, and Varga Beare, considering the armed services in a wider context of employers' influence on employees and their families, draw the following conclusion: "Compared to institutional settings, large-scale corporations, such as IBM, AT&T, and DuPont, typically have had a less encompassing impact on the personal lives of their workers and their family members."[74] The authors extend William Whyte's term the Organization Man to create the term Organization Families, which accounts for two-for-one demands on wives and thus families in professions such as the armed services.[75] According to Orthner, Bowen, and Beare, "Families became Organization Families as the work organization coopted their time and energy in support of its needs" and the career level of the employee (denoted in the military by rank) dictates "the degree to which spouse is absorbed into the work system."[76] Their 1990 study further parses the

[74] Dennis K. Orthner, Gary L. Bowen, and Varga G. Beare, "The Organization Family: A Question of Work and Family Boundaries, in *Corporations, Businesses, and Families*, eds. Roma S. Hanks and Marvin B. Sussman (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 1990), 24.

[75] William H. Whyte Jr., *The Organization Man* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956).

difference between the two-for-one pattern in civilian and military life when it discusses the ways in which the two realms must entice an Organization Family:

> 'Marketplace dynamics' have typically played a greater role in the recruitment and retention of workers in corporate settings than 'normative considerations' of service and duty, and the nature of compensation has been more in terms of salary and bonuses than in terms of benefits and support services.[77]

The military—more than its corporate counterparts—must encourage traditional attitudes about the "necessity" of spouses' emotional labor. The military created institutional-minded policies to foster Organizational Families to work in the two-for-one career pattern in service to the Army mission of increasing soldier readiness and retention.[78]

While not using the phrase "two-for-one career pattern," many Army wives in my interview sample were acutely aware of the Army's demands on spouses. As Krista, the entrepreneurial commanding officer's wife and FRG leader, phrased it, "I don't really live a life, I live his life."[79] She was resentful about the amount of time FRG leadership demanded of her, saying she could not imagine trying to raise children during her husband's time as a commander, which, in her mind, is necessarily contemporaneous with her time as an FRG leader. Krista's responses revealed her disgruntlement with Army life in general, and specifically with the Army policies and missions that created the soldiers' year-deployed/year-home cycle of the

---

[76] Orthner, Bowen, and Beare, "The Organization Family," 22, 24.

[77] Ibid., 24.

[78] Weinstein and Mederer apply the concept of the two-for-one labor pattern to the military context ("Blue Navy Blues," 7-18).

[79] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

Army at the time. Despite her unhappiness with the foreign policy of the Commander-in-Chief, the demands of the Army, and the role of FRG leader, she articulated a fierce loyalty to her husband, his career, and the members of her FRG. Even though she was often aggravated in her interview to the point of cursing the Army and deployments, she also teared up with pride for her husband's work oversees. During the interview, despite her sometimes negative opinions, I gathered that in her role as an FRG leader Krista was gung-ho for the Army, perpetuating and normalizing the idea of two-for-one support of husbands through FRG volunteerism.

Informal pressures to keep up appearances and assist one's soldier-spouse by volunteering have existed throughout the history of the Army. However, the practice of the two-for-one pattern in the Army context is unique because of the pressure added when the Army formalized and required the unpaid labor of volunteer family members to run its official support program. The Army capitalized on and reified the existing gendered pattern of unpaid labor by mandating FRGs with the goal of placating and/or pleasing families to bolster soldier retention. Army leaders hope that wives whose emotions are managed within the FRG will not agitate for their soldier-spouses to leave the Army, particularly in this time of war when the frantic deployment schedule's stress on families is well known.[80]

[80] See, for a review, Ronald B. Everson, "Quality of Life among Army Spouses: Parenting and Family Stress During Deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom," (Ph.D. diss., The Florida State University, 2005).

FRGs as Executors of Institutional Military Ideals

Army wives' continued participation in and leadership of FRGs, despite any frustrations they may have with the interactions within the groups, signals that the Army program perpetuates among these women the perception of the Army less as an occupation and more as a "life" or a "calling." Because Army wives—particularly commanders' spouses who express a strong sense of duty to lead their spouses' FRG—volunteer to maintain the viability of the FRG program and thus to promote the careerist values of traditional Army life, the model persists in which female spouses contribute labor to the success of their husbands' careers. The labor that they perform is emotional labor.

FRG leaders' two-for-one volunteer efforts do not always stem from a personal desire to serve. Some leaders volunteer even if they have little time to devote to the FRG, and some profess unhappiness about the difficulties of being a leader. These Army wives attribute their volunteer efforts to the rank, seniority, and/or career ambitions of their husbands and pressures from other Army wives to perform traditional rank-based roles. They have observed emotional labor in action, and the performances of "seasoned spouses" dictating group norms shape their attitudes and behavior. Commanding officers' wives constitute the majority of FRG leaders. Many of these women say they volunteer because they feel pressure to continue the tradition of the commanders' wives serving as FRG leaders.

Through what mechanism are these expectations imposed? Weinstein and Mederer investigate the role of rank and social pressures in the practice of exacting two-for-one labor: "A military wife's involvement in her husband's career becomes more critical as he advances in rank. … A lot of pressure to remain involved comes from the wives themselves."[81] Some intra-wife pressure to conform to the two-for-one pattern is overt—"uncooperative wives receive explicit comments about participation"—but some is implicit and "understood."[82] Pressure to conform comes through a variety of channels: social interaction including gossip in groups with other spouses as well as from books, training programs, soldiers, and extended family members such as parents who themselves were associated with the military.

The emotional labor of FRG leaders differs from officers' wives' roles in other groups because (1) FRGs are Army-sanctioned, creating a formal dimension in addition to what has long been informal, and (2) FRGs are not rank-restricted and thus the leadership can model pro-Army attitudes and behaviors for young, enlisted soldiers and their families who may, without such systemic enticement and encouragement, view the Army as "just a job." One quiet mother of four, Holly, who had had very little contact with FRGs or people who participated heavily in them, cared little for the Army. She saw her husband's employment with the Army not as a calling or even a career but instead as just a paycheck, similar to her low-wage job at

[81] Weinstein and Mederer, "Blue Navy Blues," 12.

[82] Ibid.

the on-post banquet center.[83] Other women who told of the development of their personal involvement in FRGs sometimes described themselves as distant from Army life at first, with increasingly positive attitudes and participation in FRGs corresponding to their husbands' continued employment with the Army and increased exposure to people involved in the groups. Often one person's emotional labor, such as an FRG leader's, brought these women into the fold.

The intent of the FRG system is to connect families to resources within the larger Army family. The Army targets these resources—Army Emergency Loans, childcare through Child and Youth Services, instructional classes such as Army Family Team Building, chaplain services, financial counseling, free and anonymous counseling sessions, etc.— to families experiencing financial, emotional, social, and other problems adjusting to Army life. That connection and commitment brings Army families closer to viewing the Army as an indispensable set of benefits, opportunities, and relationships and thus a career rather than just a job. For instance, pig-tailed FRG leader Jenna expressed concern that young members in her FRG neither knew enough about nor maximized the benefits of Army life. She invited the Army wives in her FRG to utilize an Army-offered Friday-night childcare program so they could take advantage of an on-post free concert. In this one moment among many, Jenna made

[83] I met Holly and another enlisted soldier's wife while they were at work. They were assigned to help the Officer's Spouses' Club members decorate, as they did every year, the banquet center for the winter holidays. During that decorating session and at other times when the post seemed to "run" on the efforts of volunteers, I wondered if the volunteers were taking away hours of work from paid staff members. Holly was forced to work just under forty hours per week so that her employer would not have to give her full-time benefits.

the FRG a central clearinghouse for solving problems in a variety of vital aspects of people's lives: communication, socializing, childcare, and entertainment.

FRG leaders and the unit commanders encourage members to depend on the group as their connection to resources and, by extension, to depend on the Army family which theoretically will always be there to help solve problems, even if one's own nuclear family cannot or will not. *The Army Wife Handbook* takes up the same mantra: "You can find your 'family away from home' in your unit coffee group or Family Support Group."[84] FRG membership is automatic, not elected or selected, just like membership in a traditional nuclear family. The FRG leader is the authority figure in that family group. The authority figure almost always performs emotional labor to set a "positive" example that promotes support for the Army and its policies regardless of the hardships imposed by that Total Army Family.

FRG leaders' efforts to increase spouses' dependence on the FRG sometimes comes from protective or even mothering motives: some Army wives face great personal challenges, and FRG leaders often said they want to help by connecting them with Army-sponsored resources. However, at an Army-wide level, the motives are protective in a different sense: the Army wants to protect its investment in soldiers, so it provides resources to families to promote soldier retention. The dependence that spouses develop on FRGs and Army resources, then, comes with both support and control, all couched in and legitimated by the language of family and implemented through FRG leaders' emotional labor. Dependence, too,

[84] Ann Crossley and Carol A. Keller, *The Army Wife Handbook: A Complete Social Guide*, 2d ed. (Sarasota, FL: ABI Press, 1996).

perpetuates the FRG system and creates pro-FRG, pro-Army attitudes and behaviors among inexperienced spouses who might not have such institutional views without some sort of incentive and socializing mechanism such as FRGs.

Not every soldiers' spouse feels she is part of the FRG family or the Total Army Family. Whether this is by choice or not, some women are outsiders to a group to which they are given automatic membership.[85] The official, standardized, inclusive nature of FRGs does not preclude each group's ability to create unofficial group norms, nor does it protect the group against the tendency to enforce those norms through methods such as gossip, policing, and ostracism. My dissertation analyzes the self-narratives of patrolling and policing "crazy" behaviors because in defining the "other," they define what FRGs and good Army wives should be, thus using emotional labor to create and perpetuate an institutional mindset within the groups. I also argue that pressures to conform and indications for performing appropriate labor, coupled with official Army encouragement for FRG leaders to defer to the Army's goals, jeopardize the support function of FRGs because leaders' efforts are sometimes focused on serving the Army, not advocating for their members.

[85] Howard Becker's *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: The Free Press, 1973) provides a theoretical analysis of the process by which outsiders are labeled. For Becker, some members of society are made to be deviant outsiders, not by the sole merit of their behaviors, but rather by the process of the creation and imposition of social norms by those who conform. Becker's monograph takes marijuana users and dance musicians for its case studies. In his work on deviance and labeling theory, Becker draws on the scholarly traditions of the Chicago School (he himself being a member of the second Chicago School) and, specifically, George Herbert Mead's *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). Mead's symbolic interactionist theories are grounded in the belief that the self does not preexist social relationships, but instead arises from and depends on human interdependence and is experienced only indirectly as a result of receiving communication/stimuli from others socially.

Map of the Dissertation

I use interviews and participant observation data to analyze the emotional labor of wives of active-duty United States Army soldiers in Family Readiness Groups (FRGs)—the formal support groups the Army offers soldiers and their family members. My subject position as a researcher and the wife of a soldier brought both value and difficulties to the project. I explicate the benefits and challenges of my ethnographic approach in the following chapter about the data collection process. The third chapter analyzes the historical factors—changes in policy, attitudes, and behaviors—that contributed to the implementation of the current FRG system. The fourth chapter explores the ideal of the "good" Army wife and performances of that ideal by FRG leaders. The fifth chapter analyzes the methods by which FRG members learn and enforce feeling rules. Chapter six investigates the Army's conflicting messages for FRG leaders and the leaders' practices and problems promoting Army-supporting emotions. It argues that, as they perform emotional labor while managing soldiers' family members' problems, FRG leaders sometimes must choose to serve one of their two masters, either the Army or the FRG members. The seventh chapter concludes by returning to the question of whether women gain power or lose autonomy when performing emotional labor on the homefront as they participate in the two-for-one career pattern and concludes.

CHAPTER 2: DATA COLLECTION

This chapter describes my two methods of data collection: nine months of participant observation fieldwork in the Army community recorded in fieldnotes and thirty-seven uncompensated, voluntary, semi-structured, approximately hour-long interviews with a non-random sample of Army wives whose active-duty husbands were stationed at a major Army post east of the Mississippi (large enough to house a full division of soldiers).[86] I also interviewed three women who serve in different paid positions on post whose jobs are associated with Family Readiness Groups. The qualitative data were analyzed using grounded theory.[87] The chapter provides an extensive reflexive discussion of my subject position and my changing perspective throughout the life of the project.

Fieldwork

Nine months of participant observation fieldwork, recorded in field notes, began in August, 2006, and continued through May, 2007. Most soldiers stationed at the large post at which I collected data serve in combat arms branches (infantry,

[86] Human subjects approval was granted for this project, including its use of oral consent rather than written consent, by the University of Kansas' Human Subjects Committee Lawrence Campus (HSCL #16096) on 27 July 2006. I omit the name of the post to help protect the anonymity of interviewees and informants.

[87] The dissertation's grounded theory is conducted in the tradition of Barney Glaser and Judith Holton, "Remodeling Grounded Theory," *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 5, no. 2 (2004): 1-22 and Barney Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions* (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1998).

armor, field artillery, and combat engineers), which was an important criterion for selection because combat arms soldiers are always male and I planned for my dataset to only includes wives. Limiting my population to spouses whose husbands were all active duty and who all worked at the same post helped control for division-specific differences and radical differences in deployment history.[88]

The Army post housed its full contingent of soldiers at the beginning of my fieldwork, but by the end it had deployed most battalions and even the division staff, which was the third deployment to Iraq for some soldiers. Most of the division's units I studied deployed in anticipation of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, deployed for another year starting in 2005 to Iraq, and deployed again to Iraq in 2007 with the "surge" of troops for an extended fifteen- (as opposed to twelve-) month deployment. Thus, while at this duty station, the soldiers alternated Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) deployments with approximately a year of "dwell time" in the United States. Those soldiers' time at home—every other year, essentially—were riddled with weeks or even months of training and field exercises during which they were away from their families. The rule of thumb is that a soldier will be away from home for one third of his or her dwell time—or, counting deployed time, for two-thirds of the soldier's life.

I spoke to one soldier in an airport shuttle van who was excited to be arriving home in time for his daughter's eighth birthday, particularly because it was the first birthday party of hers he would be able to attend. Another soldier who was preparing for his third deployment to Iraq and his first child surprised me by saying he was

[88] For more on the selection of Army wives but not also Army husbands, see the next chapter.

always glad to deploy because the pace of life was actually easier while at war, where he could do his job twelve to eighteen hours per day rather than trying to finish his work in time to get home to see his wife before she went to sleep. After his son arrived, there were surely weeks when he did not get home before storytime and lullabies, even when the soldier was not deployed. A spouse I met in a pharmacy waiting room could recite how many major holidays her husband's fifteen-month deployment was "costing" her marriage (two anniversaries, three birthdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas). As illustrated in these examples, units at this Army post had an intense operational tempo that took its toll on families living there in ways that I could not have explored if the research were conducted at posts where the soldiers are non-deployable abroad because they are in schools, are training other soldiers, or are at posts with staff only and not brigade combat teams.

I moved onto the post on 1 September 2006. I immediately involved myself in Army programs offered to spouses not only for participant-observation purposes, but also to meet a wide variety of Army wives who might serve as interviewees. I joined support groups, participated in training programs, socialized, and volunteered. I found out about Army programs in which I might get involved from a welcome packet, fliers, neighbors, the internet, and an interview with a worker at Army Community Service (ACS), which is an official Army organization on post staffed by paid workers that organizes a variety of Army programs and serves as the hub of volunteer efforts. Programs in which I participated include Army Family Team Building (AFTB) training, an Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) conference where the Army

addresses issues of concern to family members, FRG leader training, FRG point-of-contact training, FRG leader best-practices brainstorming and Q&A meetings, a division-level deployment seminar, and AFTB's Spouse Leadership Seminar that was tailored for captain's wives. I also attended Officers' Spouses' Club (OSC), Enlisted Spouses' Club (ESC), Waiting Wives' Club, and on-post neighborhood mayors' meetings. I met many of my interviewees through these programs and events. I found these situations provided a common purpose that inspired trust among potential interviewees; meeting people was more difficult in informal situations such as beauty salons or doctors' offices' waiting rooms where there was no common bond.

Some of the women I met connected me to other spouses and other ways to meet more spouses in a snowball sampling effect. Interviewees spanned the entire range of involvement, including those who lead FRGs, those who volunteer and/or participate a great deal, those with minimal or nominal participation, and those who do not participate. I targeted spouses of differently ranked husbands, from different family backgrounds, of different races, of different ages, with and without children, living on and off base, from different areas of the country, and those who have been associated with the military for different amounts of time as interview subjects to represent a wide range of experiences in the dataset. Of course, those who agree to be interviewed are always a self-selected group. Though I interviewed a few spouses who opt-out or have "fallen through the cracks" of the Army's support systems, I acknowledge that the majority of such spouses may be very resistant to participation of any kind, including appearing anywhere I might meet them and/or taking part in

research studies, and are therefore under-represented. However, since no one explicitly refused my request for an interview, if under-representation of low-participating spouses exists it reflects the researcher's failure to locate those spouses, not their reluctance to be research subjects.

In addition to observing and listening to other women's FRG experiences, I also participated in my husband's FRGs. (He changed jobs multiple times during data collection.) Most FRGs operate at the company level (see appendix II). When we first arrived, his company did not have an FRG. Soon thereafter it held a meeting that was mandatory for either each soldier or, alternatively, his wife. The fifteen-minute meeting was run by the company commander, but there was as yet no appointed FRG leader(s). I had previously been alerted to the fact that many, many companies do not have FRGs at all, but I was still surprised by the situation. From 1988 to the time of this writing, the Army's command policy has dictated that every company must have an FRG (which at a bare minimum includes an appointed volunteer FRG leader and a treasurer, who cannot be the same person).[89] That initial meeting, where the commander gathered contact information and attempted to solicit volunteers, was followed by a meeting more than two months later conducted by co-FRG leaders. When my husband switched to a different company, which had long-established co-leaders already in place, I maintained my stance of helpfulness but took no official volunteer position. I attended each meeting thereafter, but I did not volunteer for any leadership positions 1) because I did not want to create a conflict of interest with the

[89] Department of the Army Pamphlet 608-47, *A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups*, which was revised substantially 16 August 1993.

project, (2) to conserve my time and energy, and 3) because I was still very new to the Army and did not feel comfortable organizing and leading women who had much more experience and knowledge.

An FRG leader and treasurer also exist at the battalion level (higher than the company level—see appendix II), generally for oversight, for the distribution of information, and to coordinate battalion-wide functions among the company-level FRGs. The battalion-level FRG leader, also called an FRG adviser (a more apt name), was the battalion commander's wife, as is typical. She asked me to serve as the treasurer at the battalion level. I decided to accept, after full disclosure of my project and my decision to not interview anyone in the unit. Though I had initially decided to not become involved in any FRG activities until after the project's completion, I viewed this battalion-level position as a good way to show my willingness to become involved (to build personal relationships that I would rely on following the conclusion of the project) and yet to preclude pressure to accept any company-level positions. The position required only about two hours of work per month, but in return for that commitment I had access to an additional source of information because I attended the unit's steering committee meetings. Steering committee meetings occur monthly in most battalions; commanders, first sergeants, company-level FRG leaders, and the battalion-level FRG advisor and treasurer attend (see appendix II). FRG leaders receive all post-wide and battalion-level information at these meetings which they later pass down the information to their members. In addition to this basic information, I also gained insight into the FRG hierarchy first-hand. There are also

occasional brigade-level FRG steering-committee meetings, led by brigade commanders but often run by brigade commanders' spouses (wives); however, the information usually flows from the higher echelons down to battalion FRG advisors through monthly assemblies.

I also participated in a Unit Coffee Group, which is more traditional than an FRG and is decidedly separate because membership is limited by rank: officers' wives, first sergeants' wives, and sergeants majors' wives only. Coffees are much less formal in tone now than they were in the post-WWII era. When I asked how best to dress for the occasion, I was reassured that khaki pants or even jeans would be appropriate. Coffee service is not usually the focal point of the social gathering in today's Army. Monthly "coffees" range from potlucks to wine and cheese parties, and they generally consist of time to socialize, a quick game or icebreaker, and a brief business portion when the battalion-commander's wife distributes information about the unit and the post. When I was invited to become a coffee group member (there are often membership dues, just as there are for the Officers' Spouses' Club (OSC) and the Enlisted Spouses' Club (ESC)), I did not yet understand that membership in the unofficial support group excluded wives of some enlisted soldiers. By the end of my fieldwork, such exclusions became my new reality, so much so that when a new spouse would express bewilderment about the system of inclusion, exclusion, and unspoken customs, I found myself explaining and justifying them as an insider would.

Soliciting Interviewees

I did not select interviewees for this project randomly. By simply cold-calling women on a roster, I would have perhaps been rejected by hard-to-recruit interviewees with whom I was otherwise able to build trust with face-to-face interaction. By soliciting interviewees in more personal ways—by way of personal introduction and by meeting people in various organizations, classes, and events—I sacrificed quantity and reproducibility. However, I learned a great deal about how social networking happens among Army wives, and I gained the trust of my informants and interviewees.

I elected to interview neither my Army-wife friends nor the wives of my husband's coworkers. I chose not to interview within my husband's unit because I did not want to endanger or even affect my relationship with the wives or the soldiers with whom I would weather a deployment. I did, however, tell these women about my project so they would not feel snubbed if they heard I was doing interviews but had not asked them, and so that these spouses would not feel I was spying on them if they heard about my project from other sources. Additionally, during a Hail and Farewell (a combined welcome and goodbye) event in front of many high-ranking soldiers and their families, the battalion commander welcomed my husband to the unit with a speech that also introduced me and explained that I was writing my dissertation about FRGs. I found that women in the unit who knew me well, particularly those who are active in their respective FRGs, expressed interest in

brainstorming about their own FRG projects with me because I was genuinely interested in them and because I knew the Army regulations that govern FRGs well.

Not all interviews were solicited in person. In order to learn better how to access enlisted soldiers' spouses, I e-mailed each board member of the Enlisted Spouses' Club "cold" (without prior introduction), which resulted in some interviews as well as some fruitful introductions and invitations to ESC meetings. I contacted another interviewee through a post-specific social networking site. Five interviewees were contacted solely through (separate) referrals. Two interviewees brought along a fellow military wife, and another interviewee was accompanied by two women who were also soldiers' spouses. The multiple-interviewee interviews decreased the time I could concentrate on each interviewee; however, they provided comparisons among spouses with equally ranked husbands, and the women solicited information from each other that I would not have known to explore.

I conducted additional interviews with three government employees, each of whom worked in a different paid position on post in support of FRGs. I interviewed the Army Community Service volunteer coordinator, who collected all FRG volunteers' hours and coordinated many of the programs through which I met interviewees.[90] That interview served as an introduction for me to Army programs,

[90] The Army asks volunteers to log their hours of service. For a report, see U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, *Your Paid and Volunteer Work: Survey of Army Families V*, 2005, www.army.mil/cfsc/documents/research/safv/8.ppt (accessed 21 December 2007). The Army even offers classes to help volunteers learn how to register for a volunteer tracking system online. Volunteer hours "earn" a post a certain number of dollars of funding per year. The Army evaluates volunteers based on their contributions: "The number of hours, months, or years of service are important markers of an individual's merit" (*Volunteer Record Keeping: Maintaining and Tracking Volunteer Hours*,

but not as a great source of information about FRGs. I also interviewed the Mobilization/Deployment Specialist for the post, a woman who worked at ACS handling all pre-deployment briefings, FRG training, FRG assessment and oversight, and generally as a point of contact and often informal counselor for all things FRG. That interview provided me with a baseline—a picture of the Army's official conception of FRGs. A third interview was conducted with a Family Readiness Support Assistant (FRSA), which was at the time a thirty-hour per week paid position occupied by one person for each brigade. This woman was the only person I knew of who asked permission to participate; she asked her immediate boss, not the Army's Public Affairs Office.

I did not anticipate the overwhelmingly positive support with which wives received the project. No one who I asked in person for an interview turned me down, though a few women with whom I set up appointments did not keep the appointments or avoided my calls (from a long-distance cell phone number). I expected but did not encounter resistance to the very idea of a researcher, to the thought of being studied, or to the potential negative effects that disclosures during an interview may have on the interviewee, on her husband's career, or on the Army. Twice interviewees asked if I was going to publish my findings in a newspaper, and after I re-explained that it was an academic research project they were satisfied. I think that these women were more curious than cautious. Potential interviewees were more often than not free with their personal contact information; in-kind, I was as well.

---

http://www.knoxmwr.com/pdfs/AVCP_VOLUNTEE_%20RECORD_KEEPING_FORM%20_INFO%20PAPER_%202005.pdf [accessed 23 December 2007]).

One woman who I "cold" e-mailed investigated my legitimacy. She had a friend call me to ask me some questions. I explained the project in detail, stressing the anonymity of the interviews, my strategies for maintaining that anonymity, and my commitment to OPSEC (operations security, the Army's efforts to reduce the inadvertent flow of information that could be exploited by an enemy). I offered website addresses that would verify my status as a student, my own address on post to verify that I was indeed an Army wife, and the assurance that my committee members would also edit my dissertation to look for breaches in anonymity. The questioner seemed particularly concerned that my query had come near the 2006 mid-term elections. In a friendly way she tried to laugh off her investigative phone call by stating what, to her, was an obvious reason for caution among those associated with the military: "The liberal press would love to come in and twist things." This phone call was the only time that anyone mentioned the Army's Public Affairs Office and its caution against participating in interviews without consultation or an in-person representative from the office. The woman who called me said that she planned to recommend the interview to her friend, but neither contacted me again.

Only one other situation occurred in which I experienced distrust. While considering ways in which to make contact with women who do not participate in FRGs, I thought about online support groups. Not the seldom-used Army-sponsored Virtual Family Readiness Groups (VFRG, www.armyfrg.org), but informal, unofficial communities on the web that contain forums, listservs, and/or chat rooms. I found one particularly active site that served the community of the Army post

specifically, and I registered with the site and was accepted as a member. (I registered with but did not actively participate in three other such groups in Yahoo as well as on Hooah.com.) I posted on the newcomers' thread an in-depth explanation of my project that ended with a friendly and enthusiastic request for women to contact me if they were interested in participating in an interview. Within a few hours my post received six replies with intriguing comments such as: "this site is my FRG;" "i dont believe in FRG they have not been there when i needed them" [sic]; and "you might not want to hear most of the stories." One woman who was not disgruntled with her FRG posted that she would be willing to do an interview (her mother also "volunteered" her from within the site), and I capitalized on her willingness. Later in the day, a regular user of the website cautioned that no one should violate OPSEC or give out too much information. Then, a different poster removed her post from the thread after suspicion had been planted, and activity on the thread slowed. I posted another long entry in which I enumerated my credentials and my honorable intentions. I then received a private message through the site from an administrator cautioning me to not violate OPSEC but also wishing me good luck on my project, saying, "If anyone wants to contact you and talk that is awesome some have good things about the FRG's and some do not" [sic]. Then, within twenty-five hours of the initial post, a different administrator closed the thread permanently, stating, "This site isn't here for researchers." I apologized to the administrator by way of private message for unintentionally violating the spirit of the community. That night I received a phone call from a very active user of the site, who again welcomed me to the online

community, expressed her hope that I was not personally offended, and described at length her own negative experiences with malicious users of the website who had eventually tried to scam her.

I learned from my day on the website and from the phone query that the decision to solicit interviews in person had protected me from encountering doubts about my legitimacy. Methods of introduction such as referrals or by shared participation at events earned me almost instant trust. That trust not only facilitated interviews, but I believe it also positively affected the quality of the interviews. I found interviewees to be more cooperative and forthcoming than I expected because I demonstrated that I had a personal stake in the Army wife community. I also believe that my decision to ingratiate myself with this community of women, while increasing my credibility, increased my sensitivity to the ways that I could positively connect to interviewees *during* interviews.

Considerations of Rank

I am married to an active-duty Army soldier. Thus, my sample population and my peer group were indistinguishable during this research. My life, carefully recorded and analyzed, served as my fieldwork. My closeness to the topic granted me privileged access and insight and also brought with it challenges inherent in the participant-observation process, such as maintaining critical distance as well as the difficult researcher-subject(s) power dynamic. Ethnographers grapple with all of these

factors as well as considerations of gender, race, and class in every project, but the issue of rank—unique to research in a military context—compounded and sometimes outweighed these distinctions.

I worked to create relationships with a broad range of spouses, broader than I would have chosen if I did not also play the role of researcher. The occasional uneasiness this caused me revealed not only the limits of my own comfort zone (which this project stretched tremendously, to my great personal benefit) but also revealed to me the social boundaries that rank, class, education, race, and age impose on both the researcher-subject relationship and all relationships in the military spouse community. Whenever I was hesitant to approach a potential interviewee, the reason almost always boiled down to our husbands' ranks. My goal of attempting to represent a wide range of voices pushed me past my own hesitancy. In this way, the dissertation has made me more acutely aware of how clearly the rank hierarchy exists even among spouses, and it simultaneously has helped me identify my own prejudices and insecurities.

Though I did eventually succeed in contacting a range of spouses, I found it difficult to find ways or places to socialize with enlisted soldiers' spouses. Logistical barriers, such as housing segregation by rank, the soldiers' fraternization restrictions (explicit and implicit), and the division between the Officers' Spouses' Club and the Enlisted Spouses' Club, but also a feeling of propriety, keep women who might otherwise have a great deal in common from finding each other across ranks. I observed that people within the Army community almost invariably lumped wives

into the social class status commensurate with their husband's rank, in spite of educational or financial factors that might place them in a different class status among civilians. For instance, Nell, who was a microbiology professor with a Ph.D. from Harvard said she was still "just" a specialists' wife to people they knew in the military when her husband was enlisted. Her primary identification in the eyes of other Army family members was her husband's work, not hers. During that time Nell's interest in volunteering made her the only enlisted soldier's wife who came to FRG planning meetings. However, when her husband became an officer her professional life no longer seemed incongruous with her social life, she was more likely to talk about her work with other spouses, and her interest in participating in FRG work was suddenly expected.

Once I did meet women, though, I believe my position as the young wife of a second lieutenant (the lowest-ranking officer) granted me a high level of access without setting me up as much of a threat. Almost all wives had more seniority and more knowledge than I; going through even one deployment made low-ranking enlisted soldiers' wives superior in Army-life experience. For those who had a similar amount of Army experience as I, my youth often helped me seem approachable. Many women who knew my husband's rank pointed out that I was in the best position to connect with women across the board; I was legitimately "in" the officers' wives groups but I was the least threatening of officers' wives to the enlisted soldiers' wives. Though that is inarguably true, I found rank to be a constant issue.

I anxiously approached high-ranking soldiers' wives, concerned that they would feel I was "spying" on them. Also, I did not want enlisted soldiers' wives to feel I was studying them as if I were better than they and wanted to know "how the other half lives." If I, as someone who has some measure of disdain for the strong influence that soldiers' rank has on their wives' social lives, had these anxieties, then I knew rank affected every interaction I had with interviewees. I was aware when I drove to a coffee shop or someone's house for an interview that the blue government-issued registration sticker on my car identified me as an officer's wife. In contrast to this general state of negotiating a social balance with women whose husbands' ranks differed from my husband's, I was at ease from the first moment of my first interview with a fellow lieutenant's wife.

To avoid contributing to a hierarchy beyond the researcher-subject relationship, I tried to stress commonality: "My husband will deploy at the same time"; "My husband's in that same branch"; "I live on post, too"; "This is our first duty station, too"; "I grew up near that post and know that area well." Often, if an interviewee did not volunteer her husband's rank right away, the rank would reveal itself through other stories so that I would not have to ask; asking would, in situations other than the interview, be somewhat crass, so I avoided it if possible during the interview to keep from creating tension unnecessarily. I described myself as an Army wife and not an officer's wife, and I did not volunteer my husband's rank unless asked. When I was asked, I would always answer matter-of-factly, but often with a self-deprecating qualifier such as, "He's a *brand-new* second lieutenant; this is our

very first PCS (permanent change of station).” I avoided giving clues to my husband's rank. Such clues might have included: “Back in college ...”; “He was at Fort Knox for the Officer Basic Course”; “We live on-post, too, by the golf course” (in a rank-segregated neighborhood for officers O1-O4); etc. I focused on listening rather than speaking before and during the interviews in order to keep the clues of my personal story from cuing a rank-influenced relationship with interviewees.

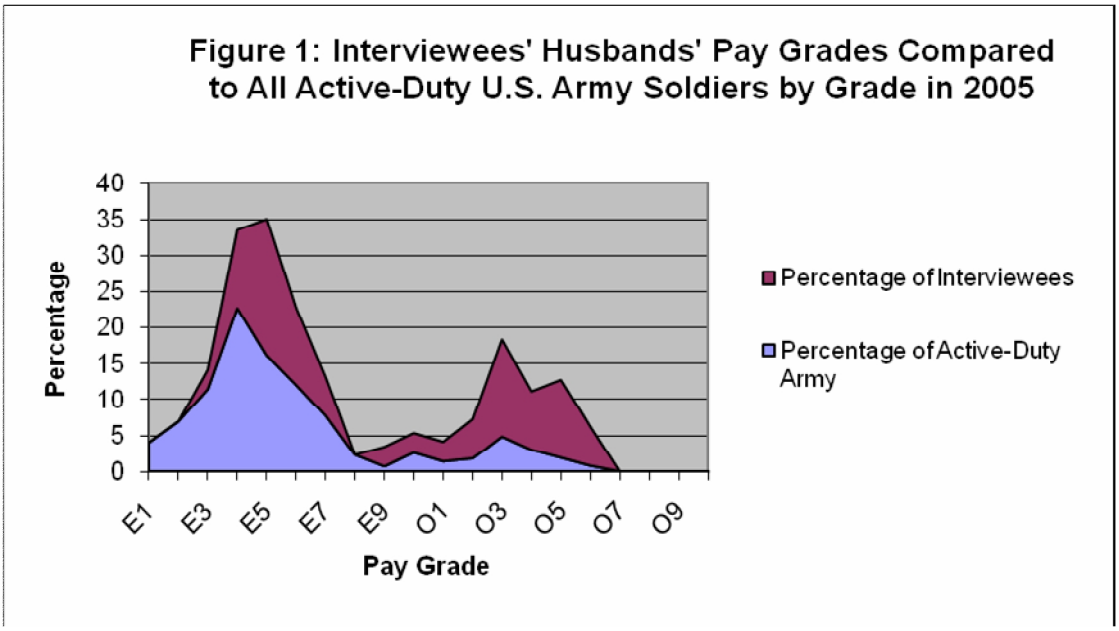
The Interviewees

The overwhelming support of interviewees led to thirty-seven interviews from October, 2006, through April, 2007. I conducted and recorded the interviews. This project studies only female spouses, leaving a comparative study with men for future investigations. Thirty-one interviewees were white. Of the rest, all but one were enlisted soldiers’ wives. Four of the interviewees had served in the military themselves in the past. Seventeen interviewees lived on post at the time of the interview. Seventeen of the women worked full-time, part-time, or at home, and five of the seventeen total officers’ wives worked.

As can be seen in figure 1, the interviewees’ husbands’ ranks (here converted to grade) align well with the distribution among all active-duty United States Army soldiers, as of 30 September 2005.[91] Over-sampling for wives of O3s (captains) and O5s (lieutenant colonels) is a result of the purposeful pursuit of FRG leaders and

[91] See appendix I for the order of Army rank and grade.

advisors, respectively traditional roles of the company and battalion commanders' wives. This led to an over-sampling of officers' wives; while only 20.0 percent of active-duty Army soldiers are officers, 48.6 percent of the spouses interviewed were

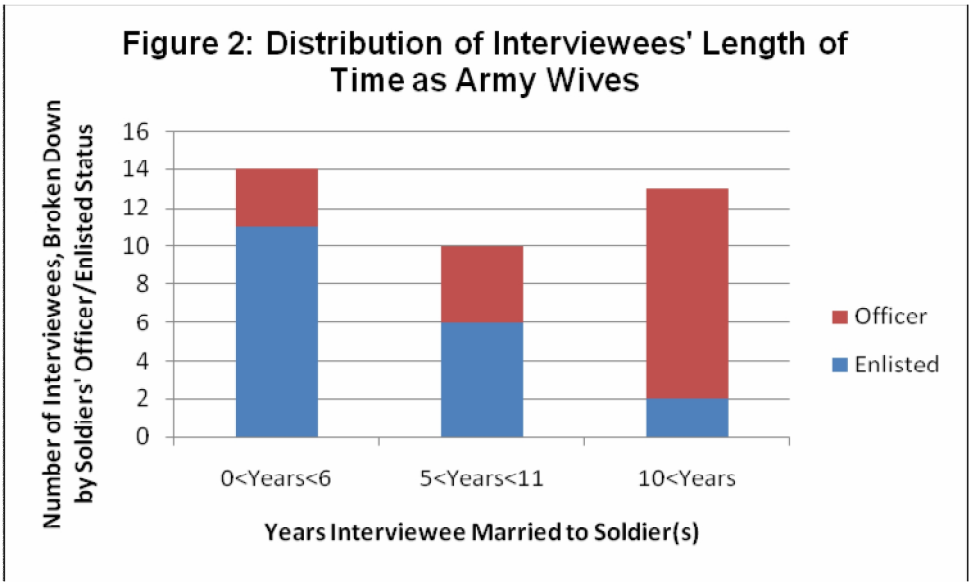


officers' wives.[92]

The rank of a soldier, however, does not always indicate the amount of time his wife has been married to him.[93] Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the interviewees' time "married to the military." Officers' wives interviewed were more likely to be ten-year (or more) veterans of Army life, and wives new to the military were more likely to be enlisted soldiers' wives.

[92] There were 81,656 active-duty Army officers and 406,923 active-duty enlisted soldiers on 30 September 2005, according to U.S. Department of Defense, *Selected Manpower Statistics Fiscal Year 2005*.

[93] Again, the soldiers' spouses in my sample were all women; the gender-specific language does not apply to all soldiers and their spouses since women also serve in the Army.



Some of the women I interviewed who had been Army wives for five years or less had spent their entire tenure with the Army at this one location. Women who spent time at multiple Army posts lend breadth and depth to the data, particularly if their husbands' deployment experiences included Afghanistan, Turkey, Bosnia, and the Sinai, in addition to duty stations in Germany and Korea. Eight of the interviewees' husbands were deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom at the time of the interview, and many more were facing imminent deployment dates.

By studying current Army wives, my research necessarily omits the wives of soldiers who had changed careers or retired from the Army and women who had divorced their soldier-husbands. The wives available for study in the Army community are married to soldiers who have chosen to remain in the Army, and those women have also made the choice to remain married to that soldier. Wives of higher-ranking soldiers who have served longer and plan to retire out of the Army contain a

high number of high-participating women; any sample of current Army wives is biased toward them. My sample further suffers from omission because I conducted my fieldwork on and around a base, and therefore wives who went home during deployments were less likely to be included.

Narrowing the Sample

This research focuses on female spouses of active-duty Army soldiers stationed at a single post. The sample population was narrowed in a variety of ways in an attempt to lessen the influence of exogenous variables on the qualitative data and capitalize on the researcher's access. The sample excludes spouses of Army National Guard or Reserve soldiers, who also have FRGs but for whom distance from an Army post and intermittent engagement with the Army's services and community limits participation and functionality. It also excludes spouses of members of other branches of the military, who have analogous support programs shaped by different institutional goals and philosophies.[94] Furthermore, it excludes male spouses of female soldiers.[95]

Army husbands very rarely serve as volunteer FRG leaders. During the data collection process, I never met a male FRG leader, nor did I ever hear of one

[94] As of 30 September 2005, there were 255,967 spouses of Army soldiers and 426,805 spouses of members of other branches of the military, according to U.S. Department of Defense, *Worldwide Manpower Distribution by Geographical Area September 30, 2005*, available from http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/Pubs.htm#M05 (accessed 22 October 2006), 26.

[95] There are 426,000 spouses of members of other branches of the military. Ibid.

secondhand. The research site limited the number of male spouses encountered.[96] Additionally, the number of civilian Army husbands is small. As of 2005, 11.9 percent of soldiers were female, and 44.7 percent of those soldiers were married (55.5 percent of male soldiers were married).[97] A relatively large number of Army husbands themselves are also employed by the military.[98] Of female soldiers, 38.0 percent are part of such a dual military couple, compared to only 5.0 percent of male soldiers.[99] Dual military couples are less likely to contain an FRG leader because the soldier-spouse relies less on the FRG for information about the Army and/or because

[96] The majority of units stationed at the site consists of soldiers in combat arms branches (such as infantry, armor, and field artillery) rather than combat support and combat service support branches. The Army does not allow women to serve in combat arms branches.

[97] Maxfield, *Army Profile FY08*.

[98] Very little scholarly attention has been paid to civilian husbands of soldiers; see Valerie A. Stander, "Civilian Husbands and Military Wives," in *Military Marriages in the 1990s*, eds. Valerie A. Stander, Peggy McClure, Timothy Gilroy, Jolene Chomko and Jennifer Long (Scranton, PA: Military Family Institute, 1998), 65-89 as well as Roni S. Johnson, "Civilian Husbands in the Military Family: Current Issues and Future Concerns," (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1998). There is also some scholarship on the affect of tied-migration on the husbands of military servicewomen; see Roger D. Little and John J. Hisnanick, "The Earnings of Tied-Migrant Military Husbands," *Armed Forces & Society* 33 (2007): 547-70; Thomas J. Cooke and Karen Speirs, "Migration and Employment among the Civilian Spouses of Military Personnel," *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2005): 343-55; Richard Thomas Cooney, "Moving with the Military: Race, Class, and Gender Differences in the Employment Consequences of Tied Migration," (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2003); Margaret C. Harrell, Nelson Lim, Laura Werber Castaneda, and Daniela Golinelli, *Working Around the Military: Challenges to Military Spouse Employment and Education* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2004); and Nelson Lim, Daniela Golinelli, and Michelle Cho, *Working Around the Military Revisited: Spouse Employment in the 2000 Census Data* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2007).

[99] Maxfield, *Army Profile FY08*. Dual-service couples have received some scholarly attention; see Hyder Lakhani and Paul A. Gade, "Career Decisions of Dual Military Career Couples: A Multidisciplinary Analysis of the U.S. Army," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 13, no. 1 (1992): 153-66 and Walter R. Schumm, Stephan R. Bollman, and Gary Resnick, "Gender Effects and Marital Satisfaction: A Brief Report From a Sample of Dual Military Couples From the 1992 Department of Defense Worldwide Survey of Members and Spouses," *Psychological Reports* 82, no. 1 (1998): 161-2. Research has also focused on dual-military families' parenting issues; see Walter R. Schumm and D. Bruce Bell, *Trends in Single Parenting and Dual Military Couples in the U.S. Army* (Alexandria, VA: Army Family Research Program, 1994) and Connie L. Reeves, "Dual-Service and Single Parents: What About the Kids?" *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military* 13 (1995): 25-68.

the soldier-spouses' rank may complicate his or her relationship to family members and the unit's soldiers.[100] All told, less than seven percent of female soldiers have husbands who are not also in the military.

The Interviews

The average interview length was fifty-one minutes of taped time, though the entire interview, including pleasantries, walking out the door, and parting conversations, averaged much more. If the woman's husband was deployed at the time of the interview, the interview's taped time averaged eighty-seven minutes, but if he was not deployed at the time of the interview it averaged thirty-eight minutes. Eight of the interviewees' husbands were deployed at the time of the interview. Three of the four women who either teared up or cried during the interviews had husbands who were deployed.

Interviews were conducted in fairly informal settings, which encouraged conversation and set the interviewees at ease. I conducted ten interviews at coffee shops, two at the Family Readiness Center on post, nineteen at interviewees' homes (or at co-interviewees' homes), two at interviewees' offices, and four at restaurants. Three times an interviewee brought along another (uninvited) Army wife to be interviewed as well. In the group interviews, the interviewee' expressed purpose of inviting her friend(s) (usually also neighbor(s)) was usually because more women

[100] Valerie, interviewee 6, interview by author, confidential transcript.

could brainstorm more ideas and "help" me more with my research. However much this was true, there was also an aura of censorship to some of the group interviews, as if having one's peers listening to the stories made the women more likely to be guarded in their language and more likely to laugh away criticisms they made of Army life.

The initial interviewee question was always a variation on the following: "Let's start with how you came to be associated with the Army and your experiences as an Army wife, particularly your FRG experiences." During the resulting narrative, interviewees covered many of my questions and the major themes that I hoped to address. Only rarely did topics come up that I had not anticipated in the original interview schedule, and the topics that I hoped to address did not feel forced if I asked about them outright—e.g., rank relations.[101] This indicates to me that the major themes identifiable by an academic outside of the world of military wives are similar to the themes that dominate the lived experiences of military wives, and that these women are generally aware of and articulate about large-scale power dynamics as they affect their personal lives.

Three main types of interviewees—engaged, less engaged, and disassociated—each required a different revised interview schedule. Engaged interviewees are very active in, experienced in, and/or talkative about Army life. Their engagement required very little intervention from me. As mentioned above, after a starter question and some minor follow-up questions, the interview was more

[101] The initial interview schedule appears in appendix V.

than half-way done. These women often discussed the state of FRGs abstractly or were experienced enough to have opinions about the changes in FRGs over time. I kept a reserve of questions to ask wives who have had long associations with the Army, including questions addressing the following as they have changed over time: commanders' attitudes toward FRGs, commanders' relationships with FRG leaders, the origin and purpose of FRGs/FSGs (Family Support Groups, the former official name of FRGs), FRG leadership roles taken increasingly by enlisted soldiers' spouses and less frequently by commanders' wives, the Army's attitude toward its volunteer force, and the involvement ratios of enlisted soldiers' spouses versus officers' spouses.

Some women were less engaged, perhaps only occasionally attending FRG meetings with no other involvement, or were not as talkative, as in the case of one woman who told me at the beginning of the interview that she was not one to volunteer information, so I would have to keep asking her questions. For these interviews I would ask the initial question, but then I would use the old interview schedule (appendix V) to ask follow-ups about their husbands, their prior experience with the military, their families, their definition of an FRG's purpose, good and bad FRG leaders, participants and non-participants, the role of rank in FRGs, deployments, reasons for the changes in their level of involvement, and their other sources of support.

I constantly adjusted each interview according to the interviewee's experiences; e.g., if an interviewee told me that she has never been through a deployment, then that entire line of questioning was cut out on the fly. Extreme cases

of this exist, as in the third type of interviewee: the disassociated non-participant. Luckily, the first "non-participant" interviewee told me about her lack of participation in advance. I crafted a new interview schedule before the meeting. I knew that the chance of awkward silences following her short answers was very high if I was not very prepared with questions specific to her situation presented in a logical order. Many questions proved moot after she confirmed that she universally did not participate in any Army-related activity. Some of the questions that I asked disassociated non-participants, in addition to demographic questions, probed the extent of their knowledge of FRGs, their attitudes toward FRGs and the Army, and the alternative sources of information and support they may be tapping into in lieu of FRGs.[102]

Across the three types of interviewees, other factors affected which questions I asked and the way in which I conducted the interviews. I incorporated any prior knowledge about the interviewee or her husband or her husband's unit or FRG to

[102] Questions included the following.
1) Tell me about your family—your children and your husband.
2) What unit/rank/branch of service is he? Has he deployed? Which brigade/when deploy?
3) Does he plan to stay in the Army?
4) How did you meet and how/when did he get in the Army?
5) Where are you from and how long have you been here?
6) Did anyone contact you when you first moved here?
7) Did you want to live on post? What are some reasons you like/don't like it?
8) Who are your friends and how did you meet them?
9) Are you involved in any activities?
10) Has anyone asked you to participate in anything? Has anyone pressured you?
11) What do you know about FRGs?
12) Does your husband's unit have an FRG? How did you find out about it? Do you know who the leader is or who anyone else in the group is? Why don't you go?
13) How do you get information now? How do you think you'll get info during the deployment?
14) Does your husband keep you informed? Does he encourage you to go to FRG meetings?
15) How do you feel about Army life? What if anything do you like about it/do you wish was different?

provide depth to the interview. The longer the interviewee had been associated with the Army, the more focus I placed on the changes that the interviewee had observed over time in the Army's family support efforts. The interviews went more smoothly as I became better versed in Army customs and jargon.

Reflexivity

There were disadvantages to being heavily involved in the community I studied. I discuss these difficulties in the interest of full disclosure and to reveal the incredible influence that the Army community and the institution of the Army wields over its members who participate in and help enact traditional patterns of Army life. The arguments made throughout the dissertation about participants and non-participants and about the intersection of the institutions of the family and the Army all can be traced to some degree in my personal experience of participating and withdrawing my participation. To that anecdotally illustrative end, and also by way of investigating my reflexive relationship to the research and my potential biases, I offer this brief autobiographical account of my ethnographic fieldwork.

I would not have known about the Army's Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) had my husband not joined the Army.[103] When I formulated the dissertation proposal, my husband was already an active-duty officer but had not yet reported to his first

[103] Niceties and euphemisms abound whether rank is present or, as here, conspicuously absent. To be precise, my husband "commissioned" rather than "joined," though I rarely make the distinction because it signals that my husband is an officer and initiates a hierarchical relationship with my listener/reader/interviewee.

duty station. I was still living in a college town far removed from the military environment. I formulated broad research questions, outlined sensitizing ideas, and researched theories that might prove useful for understanding my empirical findings. However, I was well aware that once I moved to an Army post and began to carry out fieldwork among my fellow Army wives, I would have to revise my project in light of my first-hand experiences. To my relief, the project's basic concept has remained trenchant, though my initial ideas of how data collection would proceed needed to be revamped. As I crafted the research design, I also knew that the process of becoming part of the community would be as revealing as the interviews I would conduct. For that reason, I conducted participant observation in addition to the interviews.

I was uniquely poised to investigate the interactions within Army spouse support groups because I was an academic newly come into the "Total Army Family." I had privileged "insider" access, vision that was as yet unaffected by intimacy with the system, and a vested interest in accurately representing the behavior and perceptions of these women—my peers—to understand the core issues in their lives. I was researching a topic as it unfolded for those around me, just as it was unfolding in my own life. My close connection to the subject matter invariably affected my data collection and analysis, but as so many ethnographers have proven, by keeping such dangers in mind the worst problems can be avoided or at least ameliorated enough that the benefits of access, bolstered by the rigor of academic study, outweigh the problems of involvement.

My position as a researcher in relationship to the Army wife community varied widely throughout the year-long investigation. My level of participation determined, inversely, my level of critique. During the research design I was not involved in the community. As I began to both experience and observe the community, the advantages of access and trust-building that my subject position yielded led to an overwhelmingly positive response from the community and a fruitful data collection process. I found my heavy involvement to be more of an obstacle to solid critical analysis than I anticipated. I felt as if I had "gone native" to some degree—living within the logic of Army wives without being willing or able to ask questions from "outside" about the accepted way of doing things. Good understanding of micro-level interaction kept me, for a time, from connecting the data to institutional-level processes.

Then, as I finished conducting interviews and then fieldwork and eventually moved off the post, thus decreasing my involvement dramatically, I was more easily able to address the challenge of finding critical distance. The problem of "going native," and then finding my way to a balance between empirical description and theoretically informed critique is a data point in and of itself; I had to "buy in" to an institutional mindset to a large degree to participate as much as I did and gain the trust of my informants and interviewees, but then I had to "opt out" to perform an academic analysis. What follows is an in-depth, reflexive description of my experience.

When I crafted the project proposal in the summer of 2006, I felt that my academic training would provide me with the subject position of an all-seeing panopticonic researcher, a critical and disassociated foreigner investigating a community that, if not for my unusual confluence of subject positions (officer's wife, academic), would be closed to in-depth study. That summer I was not yet immersed in Army life, and I felt I could be properly critical as the project unfolded. In month two, when I moved to the Army post, I began to be socialized into the community I was studying, thus losing some degree of critical distance, a process that was reversed with my departure from post months later.

I moved on to the Army post in an officer-only neighborhood in September, and for the rest of 2006 I involved myself heavily in many activities. Despite my enthusiastic participation, I attempted to impose a strict separation of my own experience as an Army wife—preparing for an upcoming deployment, enduring periods of time without my husband while he trained in the field, attending events within the unit—and the experiences among other wives that I recorded as data. In retrospect, I was accurately recording those experiences but not critiquing them well by asking analytical questions throughout the data collection process. As I fostered friendships with other participants, my willingness to critique the flaws of FRGs and the Army declined, and toward the end of data collection I found myself participating for its own sake rather than as a participant-observer. It is also laughable in retrospect that I at any point believed that I could significantly separate my life producing and experiencing an Army-wife culture from the same process occurring among my peers.

When I discussed my graduate work and my career and family ambitions with my peers, I found myself framing them in dismissive and self-deprecating ways. Whereas elsewhere I might describe myself as a Ph.D. candidate, on post I would say that I was a grad student or even just the nebulous, "I'm still in school." I used self-deprecating language because many women that I became close to had indefinitely postponed or replaced career and education goals with family-based goals. I wanted to avoid making them feel defensive about their decisions in the face of my own. Some spouses did not take the same care with my own feelings, particularly mothers who used their attainment of a model nuclear family structure to gain the offensive with childless me.

Because I did not hold an hourly or salaried job nor have any children, I was asked with some frequency, "What do you do all day?" It is difficult to disentangle the implications of this question, which include an insult to my intellectual work, a compliment to both paid and child-rearing work (military wives are significantly more likely to have young children than look-alike civilian wives[104]), and some degree of simple curiosity and/or jealousy of my supposedly unencumbered life. Another oft-asked question was, "How long have you been married?" The answer of three and a half years produced puzzled looks among many, puzzled looks that were articulated occasionally: "When are you going to start having kids?" One interviewee commented, tongue-in-cheek, "You're twenty-six; you're an odd ball. You should be

[104] "The 2000 census data suggest that wives in the military group are significantly more likely to have preschool children at home, which is also a factor associated with life cycles. On average, four to five out of ten military wives have at least one young child at home, compared with a mere 29 percent of their civilian counterparts," (Lim, Golinelli, and Cho, *Working Around the Military Revisited*, 22).

on your fourth kid by now."[105] Army families exist either within or in opposition to the conformist atmosphere that such questions demonstrate. Family support offered by the Army is based on a heteronormative, patriarchal model and best helps families who fit that mold, which are families performing traditional gender roles and division of labor.

My husband and I became involved in nearly all of the activities and organizations offered to us because fostering such networks helped me meet people for the project and could help his career. The personal and the professional, for both of us, comingled. Whether we were helping his career or my dissertation at any one moment held no importance. We were working for our family and for the Army simultaneously. As a result of our demonstrated commitment, we were offered additional opportunities to learn and participate in the Army community. We each noticed, independently from each other, that we were being groomed to be a "command team"—a term that describes a commanding officer and his wife. We appreciated and enjoyed the experience because the demands on our time were paid back in the form of trust, friendships, mentorship, contacts, and knowledge about the ways of the Army. We were particularly receptive to such active involvement in Army life because we had few extra-Army commitments competing for our allegiances—no children, no relatives in the area, no local social networks, and no outside employment.

[105] Nikki, interviewee 1, interview by author, confidential transcript.

My young age, our newness to the ways of the Army, and my husband's junior officer status were ideal for building trust with informants and interviewees. Other officers' wives were more than willing to talk to a young spouse who was new to the Army. They sometimes took a mother-hen approach to me. Enlisted soldiers' wives were not intimidated because nearly all of them had more experience with Army life than I did—a fact that I emphasized if my husband's rank became a topic of discussion (see chapter two for more). Also, they know that a new second lieutenant is new to his job and thus were not intimidated as they may have been if my husband were further along in his career.

It is difficult to hypothesize how the interviewee-interviewer relationship may have differed if my husband would have held a different rank. However, I do know that if he would not have been an officer then gaining access to current and former FRG leaders (the majority of whom are officers' wives) would have required much more effort and might not have met with as much success. I met a great many interviewees and informants who were FRG volunteers by socializing as an officer's wife and attending meetings I was "supposed to" attend (such as the Officers' Spouses' Club luncheons, as opposed to the Enlisted Spouses' Club meetings).

After about six months of fieldwork I began to perceive military life and the FRG subculture to be normal, and it took a vacation to the "civilian world" to bring the realization that I had gone native. My field notes became abbreviated because nothing seemed strange to me; I was living a deep understanding of the logic of Army wife culture. "Of course" that wife "pulled rank"; "of course" that soldier should be

ashamed his wife sent a critical letter straight to the commanding general; "of course" there were no lower-ranked enlisted soldiers or their wives at the barbeque; "of course" my social circle narrowed according to soldier rank. The policing of behavior among wives on post became clearest to me only when discussing the surveillance with friends outside the community, and only when I considered the liberating possibility of moving away for the summer.

At that time, I found I had reached a new level of trust in my relationships with my informants and the depth of information they shared with me. We stopped speaking according to the social script—"Everything at home and in the Army is great," "I can handle any hardship," "FRGs are a great resource that I am thankful for and for which I am excited to volunteer all of my spare time"—and the conversation began to turn to the underbelly of Army life. I started to be privy to the gossip: the sordid stories of dysfunctional FRGs, of wives who attacked FRG leaders physically and emotionally, of FRG leaders projecting strength and happiness who admit disillusionment and guardedness because of bad experiences in the past, and of former commanders who could control neither their soldiers nor their FRGs. I had learned how to be a good, participating Army wife who was always willing and able to volunteer for or at least attend events; now that my participation seemed secure, my peers could show their disgruntlement and gossip without fear that I would judge them.

The street-corner gossip I became privy to polices wives, enforces group norms, and shapes the community in the "right" way so that we participants feel

justified and self-righteous in our choices. The presence of gossip in FRGs polices wives in the same ways but with extra emphasis because of the official proximity to the institution of the Army. The newfound role of gossip in my life illustrated to me the absence of gossip in non-participants' lives.

One informant, Kiesha, left the area near the Army post to "go home" (shorthand for a previous home or one's parents' home) to her career and her family in another state. She was subjected to "guilt trips" by other wives, such as, "Go ahead and go back and leave us here all alone." Such guilting seeks to keep a potentially deviant group member in line. I sensed that many wives, including myself, put distance between Kiesha and themselves/ourselves because, despite her likability, she would not be a useful resource during the deployment. My impending departure for four months brought on similar strategies of distancing and guilting (to keep me in the community to support it and to validate it as the best system of support), but to a lesser degree because of my prior investment in the community and my promise to come back to participate later during the deployment.

During that Spring of 2007, while I struggled to organize and make sense of the data I had collected, I thought that talking to members of the Army wife community would trigger insights. However, not until I physically left the Army base (thereby all but stopping my involvement) after my husband deployed did the dissertation begin to take shape in my mind. That summer I began to speak about the community not just anecdotally, but also abstractly and critically, and most importantly to people who found the community *and my life within it* to be interesting

as an anthropologic subject of study. Furthermore, my husband had deployed to Iraq, and I immediately felt that the burden of participating to ease that transition (for him and me) from life together to life apart was gone. I had bought into the community to gather data and get support for myself, but that accustomed me to its ways. When I pulled out of the community I gained much-needed critical distance and time to reflect. Specifically, I began to question the rigidity of the expectations imposed on Army wives, where those expectations come from, and who benefits from their imposition.

Goffman sought the internal logic of the population he studied: "the social world of the hospital inmate as this world is subjectively experienced by him."[106] I had bought into the Army wife world wholeheartedly because, as he explains, each subculture is "meaningful, reasonable, and normal once you get close to it."[107] My extensive reflection on my own subject position is to explain why, when discussing some of the data I had collected, I depicted my subjects in the same terms with which they describe their own lives. As Goffman points out, "To describe a patient's situation faithfully is necessarily to present a partisan view."[108]

[106] Goffman, *Asylums*, ix.

[107] Ibid., x.

[108] Ibid.

Grounded Theory

I used grounded theory, in the tradition of Barney Glaser, to develop core concepts from the interview transcripts, my experiences and observations, and my field notes.[109] No hypotheses were posited during the proposal of the dissertation, only sensitizing ideas. The collection of data evolved throughout the process, as described earlier in this chapter. Glaser's inductive method of grounded theory allows the subjects' own voices and experiences to shape the research so that I could be sure of the dissertation's relevance and accuracy.[110]

[109] Glaser and Holton, "Remodeling Grounded Theory," and Glaser, *Doing Grounded Theory*.

[110] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3: A HISTORY OF FRGs

The history of Family Readiness Groups has been shaped by historical changes in the Army, the family, and the relationship of the two institutions in the public sphere. The impetus for the Army's explicit emphasis on family support initiatives and its creation of the FRG program resulted from a confluence of related historical factors: national family-related policy and the Army's changing manpower demands, both undergirded by expanding opportunities for women in American society as a result of social justice movements. This chapter describes the historical context of informal wives' groups, the expectations of behavior that arose from that context, as well as the rise of formal family support in the Army. It details the implementation of early Family Support Groups and their formalization into today's Family Readiness Groups. The Army institutionalized FRGs in the late 1980s "'to assist commanders in maintaining readiness of soldiers, families, and communities within the Army by promoting self-sufficiency, resiliency, and stability during peace and war.'" [111] By mandating FRGs, the Army created a public intersection of the institutions of the Army and the family. What was once only an unofficial system of support and control among soldiers' wives in unofficial groups such as clubs and on-post neighborhoods now carried an additional formal dimension.

[111] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 11.

The Army's Historic Disregard for Family Support

The Army currently conceives of families as official contributors to "the Soldier and Family Readiness System [that] relies heavily on the support of a professional volunteer cadre."[112] Institutional acknowledgment of the importance of wives and the professionalization of their volunteer work differs from the Army's past perspective.[113]

In 1902, the adjutant general of the Army argued against marriage, stating, "A young officer should have but one allegiance, and that should be to the service."[114] In this quote, he nearly equates marriage to a lack of dedication and even patriotism. From the birth of the country until the draft in World War II, the United States military employed single men almost exclusively, and married men were almost always officers.[115] Hence, there is a strong tradition of officers' wives clubs but not of enlisted soldiers' wives' clubs. The unofficial (non-Army-sponsored) support groups,

---

[112] U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*; see appendix III.

[113] The practice of women who are *not* wives (comfort women, Molly Pitcher-type frontline water carriers, Salvation Army sisters, Red Cross volunteers, etc.) taking care of soldiers stretches back through human history, though these women have a relatively marginal presence in military as well as women's history. Histories of this sort include Sandra Albano, "Military Recognition of Family Concerns: Revolutionary War to 1993," *Armed Forces & Society* 20, no.2 (1994): 283-302 and Betty Sowers Alt and Bonnie Domrose Stone, *Campfollowing: A History of the Military Wife* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991). Though research on these women pales in relation to the body of scholarship on the military, feminist scholars such as Enloe have done some of the work of unearthing their stories: Cynthia Enloe, "Foreword" in *Wives and Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*, eds. Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1997), ix-x; Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*; and Enloe, *Maneuvers*.

[114] Quote from Maj. Gen. Henry C. Corbin, "Adjutant General's Report on the Army," *New York Times*, 8 November 1902.

[115] Durand, "The Role of the Army Wife," 6-7.

because of their historical make-up, created and perpetuated the stereotype of an officer's wife as "an upper class white woman who commits her time to the military community in a volunteer capacity."[116] Multiple interviewees who came from Army families said that the commitment of officers' wives to Army life and its associated clubs and social functions was a value passed along to them from older generations.[117]

American military wives created unofficial support groups among themselves ever since Martha Washington's time as a campfollower.[118] Campfollowers were the wives and families of soldiers or unattached women who followed behind the army as it marched in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, serving as seamstresses, cooks, laundresses, and sometimes prostitutes, who were paid in food or other necessities, if at all. Martha Washington wintered with her husband Gen. George Washington during the Revolutionary War. At the winter outpost, she hosted events to keep up morale and did whatever chores necessary, which anticipated the roles of officer's wives who somewhat unofficially accompanied their husbands to frontier outposts through the end of the nineteenth century. At times other than when she was acting as a campfollower, Martha Washington set the standard and the stereotype for military wife behavior by hosting events such as formal white-glove teas, a standard that was passed down from officer's wife to officer's wife.

---

[116] Margaret C. Harrell, "Brass Rank and Gold Rings: Class, Race, Gender, and Kinship Within the Army Community," (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2000), 4.

[117] This will be detailed in the next chapter, particularly in the case of Robin.

[118] Alt and Stone, *Campfollowing*, 6-7.

Social clubs and groups (e.g., officers' wives' clubs, unit coffee groups) have endured from the early days of the United States Army, many but not all changing their names from "wives' clubs" to "spouses' clubs" in the 1980s with the entrance of more women into military service. Other informal support networks include neighborhoods, parent groups, and church groups.[119] Spouses began to form Waiting Wives Clubs in response to soldiers' deployments in World War II.[120] These clubs persist. The Waiting Wives Club I observed organized around a weekly arts and craft activity for mothers and their young children, though the clubs vary according to their organizers and are not standardized Army-wide—at some posts childcare is offered in order for moms to have "adult time." The conflation of soldiers' spouses with wives and of wives with mothers could not be more clear than in the Waiting Wives Club, an organization that includes only Army wives, not Army husbands, and which also in practice excludes many of those Army wives who do not have children.

Enloe argues that the U.S. Army relies upon soldiers' wives "to play a host of militarized roles: to boost morale, to provide comfort during and after wars, to reproduce the next generation of soldiers, to serve as symbols of a homeland worth risking one's life for, to replace men when the pool of suitable male recruits is low."[121] Her assessment is accurate today, though for a large part of its history, the Army publicly discouraged families while quietly relying upon them for these

[119] Spouses generally have multicentric support mechanisms. For an illustration of the "web of support for Army families," see Booth et al., *What We Know About Army Families: 2007 Update*, 103.

[120] Walter R. Schumm et al., *Family Support Group Leaders' Handbook* (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2000), 3.

[121] Enloe, *Maneuvers*, 44.

retention and recruitment efforts, among others. For example, campfollowers provided resources to understaffed soldiers, and officer's wives mentored and indoctrinated their younger peers. As time passed, the Army "attempted to socialize families into a modified version of the military mode, anticipating their role as a kind of special support system."[122] Even in early considerations of families as a crucial element of soldier readiness and retention in the 1980s, the Army's first inclination in response to this critical pool of womanpower was the cooptation and control of women's Army-related activities by establishing and regulating FRGs.

Until World War II, married men were banned from military enlistment, soldiers' plans to marry were often subject to the approval of commanders (with those under eight years of service nearly guaranteed denial), and the Army actively discouraged marriage for enlisted men and junior officers.[123] These regulations, born of institutional attitudes about soldiers as well as a lack of resources to pay a family wage, changed because of war-fueled personnel demands. World War II eventually required the conscription of married men because of the large number of troops deployed and the high casualty rate. However, the increase in dependents (wives and children of soldiers) did not automatically prompt welcoming attitudes or policies from the Army. This unwelcoming sentiment is echoed in the persisting adage: "If the Army would have wanted you to have a wife, it would have issued you one."[124] Army

[122] Alt and Stone, *Campfollowing*, 115.

[123] See "Army Widens Rule that Bars Married," *New York Times*, 1 September 1939 and "Army Ruled on Married Men," *New York Times*, 7 February 1904.

policy reinforced anti-marriage attitudes. For example, families of soldiers fighting in Vietnam were evicted from their housing on Army installations for the duration of the deployment.[125]

Army Husbands

Army spouses have been equated with Army wives because of the historically female make-up of the Army spouse community, leaving no clearly defined role for Army husbands and no traditional expectations for their participation. The Army did not allow female soldiers until the advent of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in 1942, renamed the Women's Army Corps in 1943, so Army spouse roles were without exception female until World War II.[126] The number of female troops, even following the 1948 Congressional act allowing women to serve as permanent (both war and peacetime) soldiers, remained unrepresentatively low and thereby ensured the persistence of the stereotype of Army spouses as female homefront caretakers.[127]

---

[124] Krista, an interviewee who was an FRG leader at the time, echoed this sentiment: "I've always said that if the military wants a family for the soldiers then they should have issued them one. Because they don't leave room for families, and they don't think about them" (Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript).

[125] Some of the evicted women formed new communities; see Donna Moreau, *Waiting Wives: The Story of Schilling Manor, Home Front to the Vietnam War* (New York: Atria, 2005). There were some exceptions; see Ralph Blumenthal, "To 'Waiting Wives' of Officers the War is One More Job," *New York Times*, 4 October 1971, 48.

[126] The WAC was disbanded in 1978.

[127] The Women's Armed Services Integration Act.

Army husbands exist, but no traditional "Army husband role" exists. "Army husband" is a phrase in such infrequent use that one interviewee slipped and said "men who are wives" in reference to the husbands of women who serve; she did not even correct herself when she noticed.[128] Because no prescription for Army husbands was forged over time, expectations for Army husbands differ from those for their female counterparts in that there are simply no expectations of the male spouses. Enloe argues, "The military husband is not expected to play the same helping, nurturing, soothing role for the military as his female counterpart is. … He cannot be expected to provide unpaid or cheap labor to make the base a community."[129] Her statement is tongue-in-cheek, of course, in order to describe the actual situation of rigid, traditional gender roles rather than what might be a balanced sharing of the division of labor or even a gender-neutral role for spouses of soldiers.

The Army maintains policies that entrench traditional heteronormative roles. For example, women cannot hold positions that routinely see combat (serving, by regulation, only in non-combat-arms branches of the Army), and out gay men and women are banned. These gender prescriptions are rooted in the traditional heteronormative work pattern and division of labor, as well as a fear of the demasculinization of soldiering. Economic and cultural factors define those roles. Weinstein and Mederer argue, "Women's roles in contemporary state societies … [are] marked by a capitalist system and a gendered division of labor with men as the

[128] Lori, interviewee 33, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[129] Enloe, *Maneuvers*, 183.

primary wage earners and women as the primary reproducers."[130] When women become soldiers, the normative expectations for their husbands do not change: the expectation for men to work remains. A househusband or stay-at-home dad married to a female soldier would be viewed as particularly unusual in the Army, whereas a housewife or stay-at-home mom fits in the traditional framework and is catered to by Army-sanctioned programs and activities (e.g., Waiting Wives' Clubs, Officers' Spouses' Club luncheons) that are often scheduled during the workday. Military anthropologist Margaret Harrell argues, "The spouse role is gendered female, despite changes in who actually occupies this position."[131] Yet husbands of soldiers seem to count not as spouses, but instead as workers (and often soldiers) in their own right, whereas female spouses, even if they work, are primarily identified as Army wives whose identities are derivative from their husbands'. Enloe argues the point further, "A woman married to a soldier … is defined by society not only by her relationship to a particular man, but by her membership in a powerful state institution; she is seen not just as a particular soldier's wife, but as a military wife."[132] Being "married to the military" is a popular trope in Army wife self-help and trade books, but the idea of being inextricably linked to and in service to the military is more than a figure of speech because of the institutionalization of Family Readiness Groups.[133]

---

[130] Weinstein and Mederer, "Blue Navy Blues," 13.

[131] Harrell, "Brass Rank and Gold Rings," 3.

[132] Enloe, *Maneuvers*, 156.

FRG volunteers are overwhelmingly female spouses, and the Army requires volunteer labor to operate FRGs. The Army relies on the continued existence of traditional gender conventions that assume that some women will work for free in FRGs on behalf of the institution that employs their soldier-spouses. As social scientist and military family policy researcher Doris Durand argues, "The other-directed behavior of giving support to one's husband and his troops, commencing with Martha Washington, became formalized into the Army's expectations of behavior for a spouse. There was an 'Army wife' role."[134] Thus I analyze the FRG volunteer work and participation of Army wives with the understanding that the generally non-volunteering role of male spouses is left as a potential follow-on or comparative project.

Traditional Role Expectations

The stereotype of an Army wife is of an upper-crust officer's wife who does not work outside of the home, hosts formal events, conducts herself with aplomb, and is always gracious in accepting any extra duty or inconvenience the Army or its emissaries (both soldiers and soldiers' spouses) may ask of her. Harrell points out that the stereotype is rooted in expectations associated with the female gender and the

---

[133] Karen Houppert, *Home Fires Burning: Married to the Military—For Better or Worse* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005) and Meredith Leyva, *Married to the Military: A Survival Guide for Military Wives, Girlfriends, and Women in Uniform* (New York: Fireside, 2003).

[134] Durand, "The Role of the Army Wife," 7.

high socioeconomic class traditionally associated with officers' wives.[135] No matter the descriptive statistics of officers' wives, a certain caricature of them has developed. An Army wife such as Jill, profiled in the next chapter, may be well educated, have a high-powered career as a banker, and drive a convertible BMW, but she will still always be the one expected to bring a casserole to the potluck, volunteer her time to help make a total of forty dollars at the FRG bake sale, organize table decorations for the battalion formal ball, pack up and reorganize the house for each and every move, chaperone her kids' slumber parties, coordinate daycare and babysitters, and reapply for her job or a similar but lower-paying one each time her husband's job relocates the family. The fact that she is a career woman juggling family commitments does not make Jill unique in this day and age. However, the lack of parental involvement from her oft-deployed husband that gives new urgency to the need for consistency from her for her children, the multitude of Army-related social obligations, the danger of her husband's work and accompanying anxiety for her and her family, and the tied migration pattern of her job that will always play second fiddle to her husband's inflexible work environment and frequent moves all add Army-specific complexity and stress to her life.

Officers' spouses were once all female and generally from well-to-do families, and perhaps the only persona accepted from these women was of the perfectly refined hostess and housewife. Even during World War II, when many

[135] Margaret C. Harrell, "Gender- and Class-Based Role Expectations for Army Spouses," in *Anthropology and the United States Military: Coming of Age in the Twenty-first Century*, eds. Pamela R. Frese and Margaret C. Harrell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 69. For more on the stereotype, see Margaret C. Harrell, "Army Officers' Spouses: Have the White Gloves Been Mothballed?" *Armed Forces & Society* 28, no. 1 (2001): 55-75.

military wives entered the workforce, the stereotype of the happy homemaker waiting patiently for her husband while balancing the many demands of life, including the social world of the Army wife, persisted. A *New York Times* article from 1944 describes wives cheerfully bearing any and all indignities and inconveniences in order to spend just a small amount of time with their husbands:

> The focal point of the day and the bonanza that makes their whole odyssey seem not only worth while but eminently sensible to them is the time between 7 and 8 when the Joe or Jim they follow so tenaciously wends his way home from the post. For those few hours before he falls into bed they would, evidently, live in a ditch or a boxcar and follow along stolidly until the oceans stopped them.[136]

No matter their background, according to the article, these women are made the same (and are lumped into the same stereotype) by their shared experience of being married to soldiers: "Owing to the lives they have led in common … [they] have come to look, think and act pretty much alike."[137] During the Vietnam War, even though many women participated in social justice and feminist movements, the same stereotype of the waiting soldier's wife persisted. A *New York Times* article from 1971 also depicts soldiers' spouses as happily carrying on through adversity; they "describe themselves smilingly as a 'special breed' who can endure, even thrive on—as Mrs. Quinian did—21 changes of address in 18 years—[and] said they continue to take great pride in the military."[138] Each article from the two eras takes special pains to point out that the

---

[136] Elizabeth R. Valentine, "Odyssey of the Army Wife," *New York Times*, 5 March 1944, SM14.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ralph Blumenthal, "To 'Waiting Wives' of Officers the War is One More Job," *New York Times*, 4 October 1971, 48.

spouses prefer to avoid talking about war or politics, despite the bearing of those topics on their families' lives, focusing instead on household affairs. Even during the current conflicts encompassed by the Global War on Terrorism, the ever-poised, capable, and deferential housewife stereotype persists, as in a 2005 article in *The New York Times Magazine*: "When her husband is at home, the military wife is a Donna Reed mom, raising the children and deferring to Dad. When her husband is deployed she becomes Rosie the Riveter, fixing toilets, paying the bills and cutting plywood to protect her house against a hurricane."[139] In these popular accounts, each and every Army wife is assumed to capably negotiate the burdens of Army life without engaging with the world outside of her domestic domain.

However, the stereotype of the white-gloved Army wife entertaining at a formal coffee does not sum up military spouses' lives, just as the Lady of the House vacuuming in high heels and pearls does not represent the range of women's experiences in middle-class middle America. Both are anachronistic because the opportunity structure for women has expanded in the United States since that post-war era, affording women a more diverse range of roles and freeing up discursive space for an increased expression of diversity.[140] The range of Army wife types has followed suit, though the stereotype still serves as one end of a continuum of possible

[139] Alex Witchel, "Confessions of a Military Wife," *New York Times Magazine*, 6 November 2005, 62.

[140] The term *opportunity structure* is borrowed from Rose Laub Coser and Gerald Rokoff, "Women in the Occupational World: Social Disruption and Conflict," *Social Problems* 18 (1971): 542.

lived gender roles and possible levels of participation and buy-in to the Army community, not to mention as a normative ideal.[141]

In a snapshot of this continuum, the television drama *Army Wives* offers an ensemble cast of spouses from disparate backgrounds in families from different income brackets, but the women (and man) featured share a common dedication to their families and the Army, no matter the trials they endure. The moniker "Army Wives" is less precise than "Soldiers' Wives" or even "Army Soldiers' Wives"—in fact, if taken literally, it is incorrect. The turn of a phrase that linguistically marries the Army to these women belies the expectation on soldiers' spouses to be "married to the military." Among these women, traditional, gendered expectations persist in informing and circumscribing what being a "good" Army wife "looks like." Even the social missteps and personal problems among the Army wives in the show reinforce the importance of the expectation of irreproachable behavior.

"Good" Army wife behavior includes attending ceremonies and any and all other unit functions open to family members, organizing and graciously hosting social events in the home, volunteering in spouses' clubs whenever asked, generally exhibiting behavior beyond reproach, and supporting the Army as an institution and idea.[142] Pressure for Army wives to perform this role is commensurate with their husbands' rank and time-in-service. Senior officers' wives feel more pressure than junior officer's wives and non-commissioned officers' wives more than lower

[141] Albano, "Military Recognition of Family Concerns."

[142] Harrell, "Army Officers' Spouses," 55-75.

enlisted soldiers' wives. Mady Segal argues, "Wives of officers and senior noncommissioned officers are integrated into a military social network with clearly defined role obligations and benefits determined by their husbands' ranks and positions."[143] Harrell explains how those spousal obligations expand throughout a soldier's career: "As military members become more senior, their representation responsibilities increase and become both more extensive and more formalized."[144] The observations made during my fieldwork and detailed in latter chapters support these arguments.

Scholars have long identified the traditional, "good," volunteering Army wife as an exemplar of the two-for-one career pattern.[145] Many FRG volunteers see their work as a duty that carries significance beyond the group or the unit itself—as a contribution to both the Army and their husbands' careers. These institutional, careerist, duty-centered attitudes among volunteers solidify the increasingly official, formalized structure of the FRG and the two-for-one career pattern. Army wives who volunteer as FRG leaders perpetuate traditional gender roles and the "service ethic" of the careerist model of the Army.[146] FRGs depend upon at least some soldiers' spouses

[143] Mady Wechsler Segal, "The Nature of Work and Family Linkages: A Theoretical Perspective," in *The Organization Family: Work and Family Linkages in the U.S. Military*, eds. Gary L. Bowen and Dennis K. Orthner (New York: Praeger, 1989), 24.

[144] Harrell, "Army Officers' Spouses," 61.

[145] Durand, "The Role of the Army Wife," Weinstein and Mederer, "Blue Navy Blues," and Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*.

[146] Charles C. Moskos, "Institution Versus Occupation: Contrasting Models of Military Organization," (Washington, D.C.: Air Force Office of Scientific Research, 1981), 25.

to respond to the military as a career and even a "calling" that deserves and demands two-for-one labors, rather than simply one job among many.

In a post-Vietnam analysis, military sociologist Charles Moskos examined military spouses as a crucial variable in the social structure of the military. In 1977 he pointed out, "the burgeoning resistance of many military wives, at officer and noncom [noncommissioned officer, i.e., senior enlisted soldier] levels, to participating in customary social functions."[147] Such resistance, grounded in the historical context of the civil and women's rights movements as well as an increase in women's employment outside the home, indicated that the "spouse" variable was then more reflective of the occupational model ("removed from military community") than the institutional model ("integral part of military community").[148] Yet even during the height of the second wave of feminism, other sources indicated that no matter what spouses think of the customs of the "greedy" institution of the military, the pressure to obey and even perpetrate the customs of the "Old Army" continue. In a discussion of the military professional in 1975, political scientist Sam Sarkesian states,

> An officer's chances of rising in the military establishment are increased greatly by marriage, and even more so by marriage to an attractive, well-educated woman who has social graces and political acumen. These, of course, must go hand-in-hand with the wife's ability as a mother and a homemaker. Many an officer's career has been hindered by the indiscretions and social ineptitude of his wife or the delinquency of his children.[149]

---

[147] Moskos, "From Institution to Occupation," 45.

[148] Charles C. Moskos, "Institutional/Occupational Trends in Armed Forces: An Update," *Armed Forces & Society* 12 (1986): 378.

[149] Sam C. Sarkesian, *The Professional Army Officer in a Changing Society* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975), 61.

Here Sarkesian identifies the realities of the insulated and highly traditional gender roles practiced in military communities.

Moskos claims that changing social conditions for women were causing women to increasingly resist the two-for-one career pattern, though this ignores the possibility that their participation does not hinge on their desire or reluctance based on personal preference but rests wholly instead on the imposed group norms.[150] As Mady Segal argues, "Individual commitment and self-sacrifice is legitimated through the operation of normative values, which compel the individual to accept great demands on his time and energy."[151] This dissertation confirms that in many cases the same social norms that Sarkesian observed persist today as they did in the 1970s and earlier. Furthermore, the social norms are granted even more authority and importance since the implementation of official, mandatory FRGs.

Historic Changes Affecting Army Attitudes about Families

The women's rights movement's increasing political activity moved issues of gender equality into the public eye, contemporaneous with the civil rights movement's agitation for racial social justice. Additionally, women entered higher education and the workforce in increasing numbers, defying the traditional division of labor in American society. They challenged the very configuration of the traditional

[150] Moskos, "From Institution to Occupation," 45.

[151] Segal, "The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions," 12.

nuclear family by having fewer children, increasingly having children out of wedlock, and increasingly divorcing. Family studies scholar Steven Wisensale further explicates the evolving family structure, stating the "statistical profile of the U.S. family has changed drastically" since the early 1970s.[152] Durand outlines the changes since the 1960s that affected women and thus Army wives: "(1) the emergence of an egalitarian ideology precipitate by the Women's Movement of the 1960s, (2) the increase in labor force participation rates of women, (3) the rise in completed educational levels for women, and (4) a shifting fertility pattern."[153] All of these factors "strained both the family and the workplace, providing impetus for reevaluating army personnel and family policy," according to military historian Sandra Albano.[154] At that time, the Army slowly began to acknowledge the influence of domestic life on soldier readiness and retention. Thus, social forces outside the institution shaped Department of the Army attitudes and policies regarding family members.

In addition to expanding opportunities for women and changing family structures, the advent of the all-volunteer Army in 1973 (ending the male-only conscription of soldiers) increased the need for the Army to address issues of family satisfaction. The quality of soldiers post-Vietnam was below the Army's desired standards, public approval of the military was low, and recruitment was difficult; thus

---

[152] Steven K. Wisensale, "Toward the 21st Century: Family Change and Public Policy," *Family Relations* 41 (1992): 417.

[153] Durand, "The Role of the Army Wife," 10.

[154] Albano, "Military Recognition of Family Concerns," 283-302.

the retention of soldiers (even in a shrinking force) was important.[155] The majority of the soldiers the Army strove to retain had wives to consider because "since the mid-1970s the Army has become largely a married soldier's Army."[156] In 1971 the majority of soldiers, 54.3 percent, were married, as opposed to 34.4 percent in 1952.[157] Thus, the Army needed to reconsider its attitudes and policies regarding the Army family writ large.

When the Army suffered recruitment and retention problems in its newly all-volunteer and increasingly married force in the 1970s and 1980s, the family support system became a focus of Army culture and policy. The Army began to recognize the potential in formalizing and exploiting the traditional care work of Army wives to provide support to other spouses through volunteer, unpaid labor, thus alleviating the downsizing Army's burden of paying for such services. The 1980s ushered in an era of official involvement of Army wives in Army family policy and formalized support for soldiers' families.

---

[155] After Vietnam, in the mid-1970s, "The turbulence engendered by declining manpower requirements and adjustments in force structure, combined with what many in the Army perceived as a crisis in professionalism and morale, contributed to the loss of many seasoned noncommissioned officers (NCOs) and officers. The service's concomitant transition to an all-volunteer force heightened the concern of the Army leadership regarding the quality of the force" (Vincent H. Demma, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1989,* ed. Susan Carroll [Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1998], 3). Additionally, "In its early attempts to make the all-volunteer force work, the Army faced a serious problem in retaining qualified personnel because of the relatively low pay, prestige, and standard of living of a military career in the late 1970s" (William Joe Webb, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991,* ed. W. Scott Janes [Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1997], 45).

[156] Demma, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1989*, 171.

[157] "Key Trend," 3.

The 1980s

The Army emphasized "quality of life" programs in the 1980s to support families and thus achieve the end goal of bolstering soldier readiness and retention. The Army's utilitarian (as opposed to its secondary altruistic) goals are clear: "If we are to achieve an Army of excellence, taking care of the Army family is not just a nice thing to do—it is an organizational imperative."[158] The Army asserted that benefits "reinforce the soldier's determination to serve … and enhance combat effectiveness" and that family support programs "influenced retention, which affected the cost of recruiting and training" in the face of "stresses engendered by a military career — the risk of combat, frequent moves, separation from family — [that] often disrupt family life … [and which] can negatively affect morale and efficiency and ultimately unit readiness."[159] Recruitment and quality of life rested on all of these factors: "The success of the Army's Quality of Life initiatives bears directly on job satisfaction, esprit, and the Army's ability to attract and retain quality soldiers."[160]

---

[158] Lt. Gen. Robert M. Elton, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, quoted in Mary Ellen Condon-Rall, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1983*, ed. Cheryl Morai-Young (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 75.

[159] Respectively, Karl E. Cocke, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1985*, ed. Marilee S. Morgan (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1995), 19 and Demma, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1989*, 171.

[160] "Quality of Life benefits involve programs, facilities, and services that improve the living and working conditions of soldiers and their families. Quality of Life issues run the gamut from physical fitness programs to family support services, from recreation activities to the Army's commissary program, and from family housing to dining facility construction and modernization" (Mary L. Haynes, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1987,* ed. Cheryl Morai Young [Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1995], 15).

The satisfaction of the employees now included considerations of the satisfaction of the employees' families.

In a summary of the Army's family concerns in the 1980s, an official Army history reports:

> Within the past ten years, 'quality of life' and the welfare of the individual soldier and his family have become concerns of the Army leadership to a degree unprecedented in the Army's history. … the Army has worked hard to improve the quality of life — facilities, services, and programs — for its soldiers, civilians, retirees, and their spouses and children, operating on the philosophy that 'The Army enlists soldiers but retains families.' The Army has also remained alert to the wishes of Congress, which has shown a keen concern with these issues.[161]

This assessment documents the increasing attention to families, the reason for the increased attention (to increase soldier readiness and retention), and the way in which public policy changes affected that attention. One policy that increased attention on families was set into motion in 1981, when President Ronald Reagan instituted the Military Manpower Task Force, "whose goal would be to restore military people to first-class citizenship by awarding them better pay and new education benefits and, in general, by improving the quality of military life."[162] This goal, to some, admitted that "military people" were being treated like second-class citizens.

The Army's official actions addressing family support issues began in 1981, but the institutional mindset did not begin to change until after the 1983 publication of the White Paper on Army Families and the implementation of its resultant

---

[161] Webb et al., *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991*, 45.

[162] Cocke, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1985*, 107.

programs.[163] The White Paper on Army Families "states that a partnership exists between the Army and Army families to promote wellness and develop a sense of community. The White Paper provides for the development of the Army Family Action Plan [AFAP] to convert the philosophy into action."[164] The idea for AFAP, however, did not originate with the White Paper. The idea was initially conceived and executed by volunteer family members who had organized as early as 1980 to incite institutional change.

The first Army Family Symposium, organized by the Army Officers' Wives Club of the Greater Washington Area and the Association of the United States Army in 1980, resulted in the creation of the Family Action Committee, consisting of Army wives. AFAP conferences arose out of dependents' grassroots activism that organized the expression of their concerns to the Army, and, as a result of the increased attention and resources elicited by the White Paper, the Army responded.[165] The Army implemented many of the committee's recommendations in 1981, including labeling soldiers' spouses "family members" rather than "dependents" and asserting that spousal employment cannot affect the assessment of a soldier's performance.[166]

---

[163] Chief of Staff, Department of the Army. *White Paper 1983: The Army Family* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1983). The document entered the *Congressional Record* on 6 October 1983.

[164] Condon-Rall, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1983*, 75.

[165] AFAP consists of base-, regional-, and Department of the Army-level forums for brainstorming, developing, and sending ideas for improving well-being up the chain of command.

[166] "The Family Liaison Office was established within the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel to oversee all family issues. The Adjutant General's Office opened a Department of the Army Family Life Communications Line in the Pentagon on 8 September 1981. … [T]he Department of the Army Periodicals Review Committee approved a quarterly family newsletter to be printed by

The committee served as a blueprint for the White-Paper-mandated 1983 AFAP conference.[167] There, Army representatives and family member organization representatives crafted a Family Action Plan featuring "sixty-five issues of concern raised during former Army family symposia/conferences. Including additional research, information, evaluation, and criteria for future initiatives, the plan represented a road map to move the Army Family Program into the 1990s."[168] Annual Army Family Symposiums began in 1984, the Army's "Year of the Family." These conferences sparked a flurry of projects such as a new family safety program, improved housing for soldiers with families, improved facilities for childcare, resources for Army community service centers, and support for family members with disabilities.[169]

Consistent with the White Paper's recommendations, The Army Research Institute implemented a five-year Army Family Research Program, producing the first

---

TAGO and distributed to Army families worldwide. The Chief of Staff approved the basic concepts for a number of new job centers, career planning seminars, and a skill bank system. The Chief of Staff also directed the general use in Army publications of the terms *family member* or *spouse* in place *of dependent,* and he issued a policy statement supporting the right of family members to be employed without limiting a service member's assignment or position in the government. The policy statement read in part: 'The inability of a spouse personally to volunteer services or perform a role to complement the service-member's discharge of military duties normally is a private matter and should not be a factor in the individual's selection for a military position'" (Cocke, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1985*, 109-10).

[167] In 1983 the Army created the Family Action Coordination Team (FACT), staffed by Department of the Army employees, to establish AFAP.

[168] Condon-Rall, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1983*, 76.

[169] Cocke, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1985*, 19.

Survey of Army Families (SAF) in the 1998 fiscal year.[170] The Army brought additional scholarly attention from its own research agencies soon thereafter, including the Army Research Institute, to issues including the general state of Army families,[171] the effect of deployment on families,[172] and the impact of families on soldier readiness and retention.[173]

In the late 1980s, the majority of soldiers were married,[174] and keeping those soldiers and their families happy and in the Army became increasingly important. This was particularly true since, contemporaneously, in the late 1980s' Cold War era, soldier recruitment and retention suffered as the Army "felt the continuing pressures of a declining youth labor pool [and] an improving economy with attendant lower

---

[170] The SAF is now in its fifth iteration, and the sixth begins in 2010; see Dennis K. Orthner and Roderick Rose, *SAF V Survey Reports* (The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005), http://www.armymwr.org/home/show_file.asp?fileID=931 (accessed 15 June 2006).

[171] Mady Wechsler Segal and Jesse J. Harris, *What We Know About Army Families* (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1993), which has been updated in Booth et al., *What We Know About Army Families*.

[172] E. W. Van Vranken et al., *The Impact of Deployment/Separation on Army Families*, Report NP-84-6 (Washington, D.C.: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, 1984); Joel Teitelbaum, *Soldier Family Status and Deployability Before and During Operation Just Cause* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Military Psychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, 1990); and Florence R. Rosenberg, *Spouses of Reservists and National Guardsmen: A Survey of Effects of Desert Shield and Desert Storm* (Washington, D.C.: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, 1992).

[173] Rose M. Etheridge, *Family Factors Affecting Retention*, Research Report 1511 (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1989); Paul F. Hogan, *Family Annualized Cost of Leaving (ACOL): The Household as the Decision Unit in Military Retention*, Technical Report 890 (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, May 1990); and Stuart H. Rakoff and Julia H. Doherty, *Army Family Composition and Retention*, Research Report 1535 (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1989).

[174] "In FY 1989 nearly 75 percent of officers and 52 percent of enlisted members were married, and 60 percent of all married members had dependent children" (Demma, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1989*, 171).

unemployment."[175] Enloe discusses Army wives' influence on retention. She points out that "wives' dissatisfaction with military life can produce worrisome manpower shortages."[176] Indeed, Army research published in 1988 found an estimated "20-30 percent of soldiers who leave active duty do so because of family reasons."[177]

Enloe claims that in the 1980s the issues of family support were exacerbated for the American military because the United States, unlike most Western democratic nations, did not provide sufficient national social services. Most support must come from the employer if offered at all, according to Enloe; because of a "lack of a comprehensive welfare state … to draw on to solve those problems; the American military's officials have had to create their own solution"[178] The Army knew from its research that it would have to appease families to attract and keep soldiers. However, "'belt tightening' in the 1988 fiscal year mandated reductions to the strength of the Total Army and slowed the growth of personnel support programs," and thus the budget limited the number of solutions possible.[179]

On 2 September 1987, President Ronald Regan created Executive Order 12606, "The Family," "ensuring that the rights and autonomy of DoD families are

---

[175] Haynes, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1987*, 11-12.

[176] Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*, 72.

[177] William Joe Webb, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1988*, ed. Cheryl Morai-Young (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993), 28.

[178] Enloe, *Maneuvers*, 161.

[179] Webb, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1988*, 13.

considered in the formulation and implementation of DoD policies"[180] In direct response, the Secretary of Defense issued a policy statement that charged the armed services with the task of developing additional family support programs.[181]

The Army could not afford to provide all of the services its own research indicated were necessary for soldier retention to the increased number of family members during the late 1980s. Instead, it tapped Army wives' tradition of caregiving and forming volunteer organizations. Harrell discusses the Army's turn to volunteer labor in lieu of properly funded programs: "The Army depends upon its traditional sources of care and maintenance for Army families: the uncompensated labor of Army spouses."[182] As discussed earlier, emotional labor provided by spouses in the form of volunteering is tracked by the Army and assigned a dollar value each year—clear indications of its worth to the institution. The Army profited from the free performance of feminized duties of caretaking with no thought to paying for the labor, a formal practice consistent with a broader culture-wide pattern of devaluing women's caretaking work.

---

[180] U.S. Department of Defense Directive 1342.17, *Family Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 30 December 1988), 1. See appendix IV for the applicable text of the directive. The timing of this family-centered Executive Order highlights the stress the conservative Republican White House was under at a time when the President was being pressured to put forth policies on sex education and to explain what his administration was doing in response to the AIDS epidemic. An Executive Order focusing on strengthening families allowed Regan to emphasize his vision of values rather than his critical view of homosexual values (criticism such as when he said, in 1987, "When it comes to preventing AIDS, don't medicine and morality teach the same lessons?" (Gerald M. Boyd, Reagan Urges Abstinence for Young to Avoid AIDS, *The New York Times*, 2 April 1987).

[181] U.S. Department of Defense Directive 1342.17, *Family Policy*.

[182] Harrell, "Brass Rank and Gold Rings, 2.

Harrell argues that the demands for Army wives' volunteer work were entrenched in and heightened by "the military structure for advancement [that] still provides incentives for officers and their spouses to adhere to the traditional system of spouse volunteerism."[183] The traditional volunteer work of officers' wives persisted "regardless of the economic and societal trends that make these expectations evermore unappealing for officers' families."[184] The opportunities for women in the workforce continued to expand in the 1980s, yet the Army reinforced and capitalized on traditional, opportunity-limiting patterns of behavior for spouses to save itself the cost of providing the services.

Because the pressure on wives to serve the Army with volunteer labor was so great in the Cold War era, the Army implemented a 1988 Defense Department Directive that "affirmed the right of spouses to hold jobs and prohibited commanders from discouraging or impeding this right."[185] They instituted the directive because of "continued … complaints from Army wives critical of command pressures to conform to the traditional view of the Army wife whose aspirations were subordinate to the career of her husband."[186] Before the implementation of the directive, it was possible for a soldier, usually an officer, to be evaluated on his wife's activities and contributions or the lack thereof. The directive disallowed the evaluation of a soldier based on his marital status or based on his wife's decisions to work, volunteer, or

[183] Harrell, "Brass Rank and Gold Rings, 2.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Demma, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1989*, 173.

[186] Ibid.

socialize—or not.[187] The change was intended to protect spouses from experiencing pressure to help advance their soldier's careers. The change also had the effect of protecting soldiers, at least officially, from the potentially damaging effects of deviant—i.e., non-traditional or unruly—wives.

In the time since the 1980s, funding for family support has increased drastically, but the Army's demand for spouses' volunteer labor has not abated. In fact, the Army began to organize, formalize, and franchise it in the form of Family Support Groups.

From Family Support Groups to Family Readiness Groups

Since the 1980s, unofficial family support efforts have been formalized into Family Support Groups (FSGs), which are now Family Readiness Groups (FRGs). The wives of Special Forces soldiers, whose small units deployed often and suddenly, were known to create support groups among themselves. However, the groups truly began the march to increasingly official status when they were formed by the wives of Army Reserve soldiers. Family members first created informal, unit-supported FSGs in an organic response to family-member demand at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, when Reserve units deployed to the Sinai Peninsula for stabilization/peacekeeping operations with the Multinational Force and Observers

[187] U.S. Department of Defense Directive 1400.33, *Employment and Volunteer Work of Spouses of Military Personnel*, 13 June 1988, http://www.usa-federal-forms.com/usa-fedforms-dod-secnavinst/dod-secnavinst-5300-31-nonfillable.pdf (accessed 13 November 2007).

beginning in 1982.[188] The groups continued to develop in response to deployments to other operations.[189]

The first support groups emerged only in some of the units that had been deployed—i.e., only in response to wives' expressed need. They were informal, unit-specific, and unregulated, although supported, by the Army or at least accepted as a component of some units' family support systems.[190] In their initial manifestations, FRGs answered only to their creator-participants, and the groups had flexibility to grow, contract, or simply change focus in response to the evolving needs of their members. Volunteers organized support in response to families' needs only when the need was strong. News of the success of FSGs during deployments spread. As a result of the positive reactions, the Army has made FRGs mandatory in all units at all times, even when there is no demand from the family members or soldiers.

The first regulation to mandate FSGs was Department of the Army Pamphlet 608-47, *A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups*, initially published 8 January 1988, and substantially revised 16 August 1993. The regulation acknowledges its role in formalizing but not inventing family support: "FSGs are not new. They are, quite simply, a formalization of activities spouses have been involved

---

[188] See D. Bruce Bell et al., "The Family Support System for the MFO," in *Reserve Component Soldiers as Peacekeepers*, eds. Ruth H. Phelps and Beatrice J. Farr (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1996), 355-94 and David R. Segal and Mady Wechsler Segal, *Peacekeepers and Their Wives: American Participation in the Multinational Force and Observers* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993).

[189] Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, Operation Just Cause in Panama, Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Southwest Asia, Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, and Operation Joint Endeavour in Bosnia, among others.

[190] Durand, "The Role of the Army Wife," 10.

in since the beginning of military service."[191] Since women had already been doing many of the activities of FRGs unofficially, the formalization must have come with benefits to the Army outweighing the costs of instituting the groups Army-wide. The formalization allows for more control over the groups and their members, and it also gives the appearance that the Army and its individual units are taking care of families, when in fact it is still the family members providing for each other. For instance, the groups are not even funded by the Army; FRG members raise funds for their groups' activities themselves, though the maximum amount (five thousand dollars per calendar year—a somewhat arbitrary figure that keeps a cap on the coffers to prevent the FRGs from becoming "overly" fundraising-focused) and methods of fundraising are, of course, regulated.[192]

In 1991 the Army first codified much of the language and focus of Family Support Groups in the Center for Army Lessons Learned publication titled "The

---

[191] Department of the Army Pamphlet 608-47, *A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups*, 4.

[192] For the regulations, see appendix III, which contains U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*, appendix J, titled Army Family Readiness Group Operations. The pertinent section, J-7,e, reads: "Informal fund cap. FRGs are not established to raise funds, solicit donations, or manage large sums of money. They are not equipped to handle the complex tax ramifications and stringent accounting requirements that can result from excessive informal funds. FRG informal funds will therefore not exceed an annual gross receipt (income) cap of $5,000 per calendar year from all sources, including fundraising, gifts, and donations. Unit commanders may establish a lower annual income cap.

An FRG's informal fund's custodian must be a dedicated treasurer, not the FRG leader, who creates and abides by a commander-approved standard operating procedure (SOP). The Army regulation dictates approved uses and misuses of informal fund monies in section J-7, a: "(2) Examples of authorized use of informal funds include FRG newsletters that contain predominantly unofficial information and purely social activities, including, but not limited to, parties; social outings, volunteer recognition (not otherwise funded with APFs), and picnics. (3) Examples of unauthorized use of FRG informal funds include augmenting the unit's informal funds (the unit's cup and flower funds); purchasing items or services that are authorized be paid for with appropriated funds; purchasing traditional military gifts, such as Soldier farewell gifts that are not related to family readiness; and funding the unit ball."

Yellow Ribbon."[193] The Army expanded but did not much alter the definition in later regulations and handbooks.[194]

The formalization of spouses' volunteer roles is a departure from the Army's historic stance and also the decentralized nature of early FSGs in the 1980s when it was "difficult to find any Department of Defense (DoD) or Army policy/regulation which explicitly outlines the duties and responsibilities of wives."[195] The increasing formality and complexity of the regulations governing FRGs are illustrated by a dense 2006 document that dictates FRGs' volunteer labor, usage of resources, scope of roles and functions, and fundraising activities.[196]

Family Support Groups were renamed Family Readiness Groups on 1 June 2000. At its base, the name change signaled additional resources allocated to family readiness in support of the Army-wide mission of "maintaining readiness of soldiers, families, and communities within the Army by promoting self-sufficiency, resiliency,

---

[193] "The Yellow Ribbon," *Army Lessons from the Home Front*, Special Bulletin No. 91-2 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, June 1991).

[194] Guides include *The Battlebook III: A Guide for Spouses in Leadership Roles*, 3d ed. (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army, 2007) available from www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/battlebook3.html (accessed 10 September 2007) and Schumm et al., *Family Support Group Leaders' Handbook*, as well as Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, which was updated after data collection in Operation READY, *U.S. Army FRG Leader's Handbook* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2010).

[195] Durand, "*The Role of the Army Wife*," 10.

[196] U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*, appendix J. See appendix III for the full text. The following excerpt outlines the constraints: "FRGs are official DA programs established pursuant to AR 600-20. FRG mission activities and appropriated fund expenditures are subject to DOD 5500.7-R, DOD 7000.14-R, 31 USC 341, and all other applicable statutory and regulatory restraints on official activities, use of appropriated funds, and fundraising" (41).

and stability during peace and war."[197] The change from support to readiness also redefined the scope and nature of the relationship between the Army and families.

The renaming effort resulted from an Army War College Study that determined that "the present Family Support name may foster a dependency mentality among some family members and could encourage the use of the programs as a crutch instead of encouraging self-reliance." The Army, concerned that the relationship was too close (echoing derision of the "dependency mentality" also found in national policy matters such as the revamping of the welfare system), created distance between itself and families, calling for their "self-sufficiency, resiliency, and stability," and focused on providing information and resources instead of care and help for day-to-day problems.[198] It claimed the name change "will help eliminate the stigma of family programs as being too support-oriented."[199] The Army's language suggests an attempt to narrow the scope of its relationship to families, distancing itself to reduce the demands placed on it, to ease the burden on volunteers, and to eliminate some sources of tension in family-Army interactions. The next chapters reveal that some FRG members have internalized the newly defined and limited role of FRGs as conduits for information, though more traditional and expansive performances of FRG leadership persist.

---

[197] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 11.

[198] U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, *Family Readiness Groups*, CFSC-SF-A Information Paper (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, 1 June 2000).

[199] Ibid.

Although the Army has sought to set boundaries for its relationship with families, it certainly has not ignored families. The military is now in its longest war (since 2001) as an all-volunteer force (and in American history), and the Army emphasizes that the satisfaction of soldiers and their families matters much more in a volunteer force than when soldiers were conscripted. Family well-being and satisfaction can bolster or hinder the retention and mission readiness of soldiers, as the Secretary of the Army acknowledged in 2007: "The health of our all-volunteer force, our Soldier-volunteers, our Family-volunteers, depends on the health of the Family. The readiness of our all-volunteer force depends on the health of the Families."[200] Currently, the association of families' unpaid work for the Army and the functionality of the Army is explicit and unabashed.

The Army renewed its rhetorical focus on families because repeating deployments have strained the United States military. The Army Chief of Staff, as he signed a covenant with families, included families as part of the military's manpower force and claimed that they have been overlooked: "It was immediately clear to us that the Families were the most stretched, and as a result, the most stressed, part of the force. … We have not, until this point, treated Families as the readiness issue that they are."[201] To signify its commitment, the Army decreed that in official documents it will capitalize the word *Families* in recognition that "Army Families are a key component of our readiness" and to demonstrate "sincere appreciation and gratitude

[200] Elizabeth M. Lorge, "Army Leaders Sign Covenant with Families," 17 October 2007, http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/10/17/5641-army-leaders-sign-covenant-with-families/ (accessed 19 October 2007).

[201] Lorge, "Army Leaders Sign Covenant with Families."

for their many contributions."[202] Army families, along with receiving public, explicit acknowledgment of their importance as a factor in soldier readiness and retention, have been promoted from "families" to "Families," though not one of the family members to whom I told this knew of their promotion. In fact, most groaned at the thought of every single Department of the Army document being changed to reflect the new capitalization. More practical, concrete changes, such as increased funding accompanying The Army Family Covenant, solicited a more positive response from family members.

Recent Developments: The Army Family Covenant

Recently, the Army allocated extensive funding to implement programs that aim to improve family well-being in what has been termed The Army Family Covenant.[203] In 2007, the Army allocated one hundred million dollars for family support programs, and it allocated five billion dollars over the following five years to

[202] "Uppercasing 'Families' Highlights Support," 24 April 2007, http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/04/24/2831-uppercasing-families-highlights-support/ (accessed 7 October 2007).

[203] According to a flier found on post, the mission of The Army Family Covenant reads: "We recognize the commitment and increasing sacrifices that our families are making every day. We recognize the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their families. We are committed to providing our families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive. We are committed to building a partnership with Army families that enhance their strength and resilience. We are committed to improving family readiness by:

Standardizing and funding existing family programs and services
Increasing accessibility and quality of health care
Improving Soldier and family housing
Ensuring excellence in school, youth services and child care
Expanding education and employment opportunities for family members."

improve the quality of life of Army families.[204] The Army used some of that allocation to hire 1,029 Family Readiness Support Assistants (FRSAs), paid civilian workers at the battalion level who provide logistical and administrative help to each unit's volunteer FRG leaders and commanders.[205] The hirings resulted from the successes of sixteen pilot FRSAs at Fort Bragg, who were hired in response to issues raised by families at AFAP conferences. They also were initiated because families, responding to the multiple deployments of their soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan, aired their concerns in forums with top-ranking military commanders.[206] The battalion-level workers supplement the four-hundred existing FRSAs at the brigade level who, since 2005, have worked with brigade commanders and FRG advisors, but who have been temporary, often part-time, workers.[207] The Army Family Covenant

---

[204] Jason Shepherd, "Army Chief of Staff, Wife Talk Family Readiness in Hawaii," Army News Release, 6 August 2007, http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/08/06/4298-army-chief-of-staff-wife-talk-family-readiness-in-hawaii/ (accessed 20 September 2007).

[205] A cost-benefit analysis in 1994 determined that hiring such assistants would not be worthwhile; see Brian F. Waters, "Family Support Groups: Making the Most of a Combat Multiplier," (Master's Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1994). However, in 2003 posts were calling for paid assistants; see Linda Heifferon, "Statement Before the Personnel Subcommittee Committee on Armored Services, United States Senate, First Session, 108th Congress, on Families and Children," 2 June 2003, http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2003/June/Heifferon.pdf (accessed 10 November 2007).

[206] Bill Bradner, "Army Extends Family Readiness Support Assistants to Battalions," Army News Service, 20 July 2007, http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/07/20/3868-army-extends-family-readiness-support-assistants-to-battalions/ (accessed 20 September 2007); "We Hear You Loud and Clear," U.S. Army News Release, 13 July 2007, http://www.army.mil/-newsreleases/2007/07/13/4045-army-leadership-to-families-we-hear-you-loud-and-clear/ (accessed 20 September 2007); Jason Shepherd, "Army Chief of Staff, Wife Talk Family Readiness in Hawaii," Army News Release, 6 August 2007, http://www.army.mil/-news/2007/08/06/4298-army-chief-of-staff-wife-talk-family-readiness-in-hawaii/ (accessed 20 September 2007).

[207] Bradner, "Army Extends Family Readiness Support Assistants to Battalions." The new system will pay, train, and manage all FRSAs centrally to work with the battalion FRG advisor, the commander, the soldier serving as the Family Readiness Liaison, and the company-level FRG leaders, all of whom make up the battalion's FRG steering committee. See appendix II.

also funded FRSA Handbooks to standardize the position, as well as other FRG resource materials. Even more funds were provided for childcare during FRG meetings.

The extra funding from The Army Family Covenant has benefited families in a variety of ways. FRGs benefited, but the endeavor also started the Army National Guard Yellow Ribbon Program and the Army Reserve Family Program, as well as bolstered funding for Army Community Service, Military Family Life Consultants, Army National Guard Family Assistance Centers, and the New Parent Support program. This funding and the support arrived after this dissertation's data collection had been completed and after years of twelve-months-at-war/twelve-months-at-home deployment cycles had already taken an enormous toll on FRG volunteers.

In 2006 and 2007, interviewees who volunteered in FRGs expressed great frustration with the logistical complications of collecting contact information from units' soldiers' spouses. In addition to FRG leaders' efforts to create group cohesion, collecting and maintaining rosters drained their time and energy. Some married soldiers enter the unit but commanders fail to inform the FRG leaders, soldiers' spouses' cell phones are shut off for delinquent bills, or soldiers change duty stations, marry or divorce without the roster being updated, just to name a few factors contributing to broken calling chains. After the period of data collection for the dissertation, some of the logistical burden on FRG leaders was eased when FRSAs were hired in each battalion and brigade. FRSAs take care of the collection and maintenance of data about families. They also organize other logistical matters such

as reserving meeting rooms, arranging for child care during meetings, and procuring food, decorations, play equipment, etc., all at the bequest of the FRG leaders.

The work that FRSA leaders now do eliminates many of the paperwork and procurement tasks that so burdened FRG leaders. What FRG leaders are left with, then, beyond basic organization of events and directing the FRSAs, is building and managing a community with emotional labor. Furthermore, the assistance of FRSAs does nothing to affect the perceived imperative for career-minded soldiers' spouses to volunteer, nor does it alleviate any of the interpersonal conflicts within FRGs that volunteer leaders often handle. The remainder of the dissertation investigates the mechanism of that emotional labor and reveals the costs and benefits of institutionalizing feeling rules in FRGs to both volunteer laborers and other family members.

Conclusion

Though shaped by social changes and the resultant policy directives, the concessions the Army has made throughout its history to family support, including creating FRGs, were generated by its own goals of increasing soldier readiness and retention. In an all-volunteer Army, because "spouse satisfaction with the military is also affected by the perceived degree of interference of the military job with family

needs," the Army must attend to spouses' needs or at least manage expectations.[208] In pursuit of its goals, the Army emphasizes both its quality of life programs, on the one hand, and the self-reliance of families and FRGs on the other.[209] In July 2007, the Army Chief of Staff asserted that initiatives such as The Army Family Covenant are crucial and must be ongoing: "We will continue to look for more ways to help - we owe this to our Families, and these steps are just a 'down payment.' There is simply no longer any question that in an all-volunteer force, Family readiness equates to readiness of the force itself."[210] Families, too, are their own all-volunteer force, though, of course, they are also all-unpaid for their labors. FRGs provide the Army the official opportunity to capitalize on free labor to obtain institutional goals.

Regardless of the levels of participation and morale in FRGs, and regardless of the purposes for the Army's official involvement in family support, the existence of FRGs provides the appearance that the Army serves the needs of families and helps the Army control families' emotions and thus their behaviors. By creating an official, policy-directed model of what support supposedly looks like, the Army admits that emotional labor among family members is necessary and that soldiers' employment in the Army does indeed strain and place demands on families.

---

[208] Chris Bourg and Mady Wechsler Segal, "The Impact of Family Supportive Policies and Practices on Organizational Commitment to the Army," *Armed Forces & Society* 2, no. 4 (1998): 636.

[209] Demma, *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1989*, 171.

[210] "We Hear You Loud and Clear," U.S. Army News Release, 13 July 2007, http://www.army.mil/-newsreleases/2007/07/13/4045-army-leadership-to-families-we-hear-you-loud-and-clear/ (accessed 20 September 2007).

CHAPTER 4: A "GOOD" ARMY WIFE

Jill

Jill has been an Army wife since the beginning of formal Army support for spouses.[211] She believes wholeheartedly in the concept of family support, and her emotional labor reflects her ideological commitment to the Family Readiness Group system. The forty-something mother of two works full-time as a mortgage banker, contributing volunteer efforts that she believes befit her role as an officer's wife that add hours to her nine-to-five workload. During her twenty-two years as an Army wife she has been mentored and herself become a mentor to other FRG leaders, reproducing pro-Army values. However, in a thoughtful and somewhat guarded way, as she appraised me, the interviewer, before she spoke, Jill expressed some reservations about the pressures that she felt to participate and the disadvantages that accompany her outlay of emotional labor when she volunteers. This chapter explicates an archetypal "good" Army wife who volunteers her labor in the two-for-one career pattern and shows what it looks like for a soldier's spouse to conform to the expectations.

Jill belonged to one of the very first Army-organized family support groups. Her husband's first duty station was at Fort Ord, California. His unit planned to

[211] All interviewee quotes in this section unless otherwise noted are by Jill, interviewee 34, interview by author, confidential transcript.

deploy to the Sinai in support of the Multinational Force and Observers in 1986.[212] She recalled: "There was a team of people from Washington who came down, and I remember sitting in this big room and they were talking about how the families were going to be taken care of while the soldiers were deployed to the Sinai. … So I don't know if it was a new concept, but it's something that I've always known." She was not aware that her first experience more than two decades ago was an FRG prototype. Since Jill has always known official Army support, such familiarity instills in her a sense of duty not only to serve but also to continue the tradition of serving the Total Army Family.

When her husband, who is an officer, relocated into a ranger battalion, Jill's experience continued to be positive: "I always remember support being there, too, just because, I guess, it was a unit that was so used to deploying that there were already systems in place to handle families and issues that you would have." Here she expressed a basic faith in the system and equated deployment frequency to the need for family support. Later in her husband's career, he was with non-deployable units without family support.[213] Jill said when he was again with a deployable unit organized support did not start until a deployment began to loom, as was the case for all early support groups.

---

[212] See Segal and Segal, *Peacekeepers*, and Bell et al., "The Family Support System."

[213] Small units that provide a specialty service, units consisting of soldiers separated geographically, or units that attach and detach themselves to support others sometimes have less continuity in their FRGs and/or less a sense of themselves as a permanent cohort that requires investment in auxiliary human resources such as families.

As a commanding officer's wife, Jill attempted to perpetuate her positive experiences and assist her husband in his family support efforts by volunteering as the FRG leader. He was the Army's employee, but she also worked for his employer when she volunteered—a typical two-for-one pattern among officer's wives. When her husband took company command in 1990 and his unit prepared to deploy to Panama, she reported, "The first thing that *we* did was organize the Family Support Group" (emphasis added).

Jill's remark demonstrates how much she includes herself in this Army mission of providing family support as her husband's partner, performing the two-for-one career pattern. The use of "we" was common among the Army wives' descriptions of their husbands' work. For instance, it is unremarkable in the Army wife community for women to include themselves when they say things such as, "We've done four deployments," "This is our third duty station," "We're in the ranger battalion," or "Our twenty years [of service before retirement] is up in 2012." The Army is such an all-encompassing force in Army wives' lives—serving as a major role identifier ("I am an Army wife"), a source of pay and benefits for their families, their social network, and the dictating factor in where they live, for how long, and whether they will be together or apart as a family—that they connect themselves to it in speech and thought just as if they are participating in their husbands' employment, too.

Interviewees such as Jill revealed the tensions inherent in the two-for-one pattern most often when discussing "command teams": an officer in a command

leadership position and his wife. In such cases, the soldier is in charge of the Chain of Command, and his wife leads the Chain of Concern; each is often referred to in FRG Steering Committee meetings as "the other side of the house."[214] The house metaphor reinforces the importance of the public homefront performance of care work for the Total Army Family.

Jill said the pairing of a commander and his wife imbues the spouse/leader with responsibility and purpose. If the FRG leader is not the commander's wife, then the relationship is more difficult, according to Jill: "Quite frankly, if your husband isn't in command it's hard to take [the leadership position] seriously, but it's a lot of work for doing that type of thing when you're not personally involved in it." Jill took the perspective that as the commander's wife she was "personally involved" in the unit, and other spouses were "not," even though they arguably have the same stake in the unit's success and the same status as each other (they are each a soldier's wife).

The functionality of FRGs is a component of a commanding soldier's evaluations, so a wife/FRG leader who volunteers her emotional labor can have a direct, positive influence on her husband's career. Jill's emotional labor managing her public persona and the FRG members' attitudes and behaviors was more "serious" in her eyes because her labor reflected on her husband, as well. If another spouse were to be the FRG leader, she believed she might not take the emotional labor as seriously and consequently might damage the commander's image or negatively affect his evaluation.

---

[214] See appendix II for a model of the Chain of Concern and the attendees of battalion Steering Committee meetings.

If spouses in an FRG are a source of problems for their soldier-husbands, then they become a problem for commanders. For example, a soldier's family life impinges on his readiness to work when he comes to the commander and says, "My wife spent all our money and now I need help applying for an Army Emergency Loan," "I'm deployed on a training exercise and my wife needs to be bailed out of jail," "I need to take time off from work to appear in court," or "I got home from deployment to find an empty house—my wife moved out and didn't tell me and I have no bed to sleep on."[215] Army regulations require the FRG leader to report "on the state of the unit family" to the commander, too.[216] However, often in practice FRG leaders are expected to handle the problems before they spread to affect the soldiers' performance or the commander's workload. If family crises travel up the chain of command to the commander's superiors and up the chain of concern to other wives, as a result the soldier and even the "responsible" FRG leader can become known as inept.

For instance, if hypothetical Army wife Janet tells her FRG leader that their family car has been repossessed, then the FRG leader's and the commander's reaction to this problem may result in counseling for her husband James (for being irresponsible with money) and close monitoring of his finances.[217] Sergeants and

[215] Reconstructed quotes from fieldnotes by author, confidential.

[216] See section J-1, b, of appendix J in U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*, which can be found in this document's appendix III.

[217] This chain of reporting sometimes intimidates FRG members and soldiers into silence. According to Elizabeth, "There are plenty of things that the ladies just go over our heads about and go

commanding officers often strongly recommend a soldier divert a portion of his paychecks to civilian companies to settle delinquent accounts and/or to set up a regular allocation to a "grocery money" or savings account to protect the soldier's family from his spending habits. However, if none of these measures works and the situation with the family escalates, for instance if James's financial situation causes him to become depressed and as a result he earns a ticket for drunk driving, such a serious infraction attracts attention from the battalion level. Then, when the back story surfaces, the chains of command and concern will question how the problems were handled initially. The FRG leader's role in such situations is less to be a caretaker or family member advocate, working to help Janet and James, and more to be a buffer that keeps Army-related problems from burdening the Army. The leader's ability to do so can reflect well on her husband and/or the commander, though inability or unwillingness reflects badly, drawing unwelcome attention. Jill wanted to take control of the chain-of-concern aspects of her husband's job as commander rather than leaving the performance of that labor to another woman.

Jill led FRGs both when her husband was the commander and also when another soldier was in command. She explained the two relationships thus: "If you're not married to the commander … it is tough. It's hard to ask a green-suiter [a soldier] for something." Even though FRGs are mandated in each unit, the hierarchy of labor is so strongly entrenched (important Army work versus unimportant family matters) that FRG leaders often feel too unimportant to ask for, let alone demand, sufficient

---

straight to the command about because they 'don't want the FRG to know'" (fieldnotes by author, confidential).

resources from the chain of command. I observed more than one commander take over an FRG meeting from the leader to apologize for the inconvenience of the meetings and the triviality of their content, in effect undermining the leader and belittling her efforts.

Conversely, Jill said that the commanding officer was more likely to respect her and her needs because she is his wife: "It is a different dynamic because when I need something from my husband, he either gets it or listens to me complain." For instance, if she needed office supplies to make flyers, it was easy to ask her husband for the paper, use of printers, and staple gun to hang them. However, if the commander were another soldier, not her husband, who perhaps gave her the impression he was too busy to be bothered with little things or who in some other way seemed intimidating to her, she might not have even asked for the supplies. Her husband was both a more approachable commander and a more sympathetic ear than another soldier would have been, according to Jill. She had to do less emotional work through the FRG with her husband because she managed their interactions at home all the time; another soldier in command would require more public emotional work to establish a relationship.

Jill's comments illustrate how the two-for-one career pattern meshes with the command-team expectations within the Army for commanding officers and their wives when the wives become FRG leaders. She explicitly discussed the power that she wielded as an extension of her husband's command, particularly when she wanted

information or action while he was deployed. She was a representative of sorts, in her words, "of my husband's position."

Jill also exercised additional power in the FRG as she performed the emotional labor of guiding the emotions and actions of her members. Her display of emotion and enforcement of feeling rules that manage emotional changes affected the attitudes and behaviors of her members, not in the least because members' negative responses to her certainly would be reported to her husband.[218] For instance, if she were advising a new mother to register her child with on-post childcare in case of emergency during deployment, and the woman were surly to Jill, then Jill might alert her husband to the possibility of problems with that spouse and soldier, negatively affecting future commander-soldier interactions. Furthermore, if during this interaction Jill suspected the parents were not taking proper care of their child, she would certainly report it to her husband who would ask another soldier to investigate. As an FRG leader, Jill is the Army's frontline in anticipating, tempering, and handling soldiers' family problems.

The Army's family support system in its early years did not set boundaries on the extent of the support services provided by its volunteer leaders. The demands on Jill as an FRG leader extended to her personal finances in addition to her emotional labor and logistical expertise. At times she took it upon herself as both the FRG leader and the commanding officer's wife to provide for the entire unit: "I remember it was all on my dime. I went out and thought, 'What can I buy to hand out as

[218] For more on feeling rules, see Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 56.

Christmas presents for all these families?'" She identified a large difference between her initial interpretation of her role and the current, more limited role as it has been redefined by the Army in regulations when it renamed Family Support Groups as FRGs (see chapter three). Jill gave two examples of women wanting support from her that overstepped what she now considers a proper boundary between leader and family member. One wife came to Jill's workplace and asked her to convince her commander husband to break the rules for the woman's husband's physical fitness testing, which Jill refused. Another wife needed a vaporizer for her newborn, and Jill bought her one. Jill framed her new understanding of proper relationships within the Army's formulation:

> [The Army] changed to Family Readiness Groups, and [now] it's a resource, not a rescue, so if you need a vaporizer, I'm not going to rescue you and get that for you, I'm going to tell you they have one at Wal-Mart, that kind of thing. You give them the resources and that's what it's all about—giving them the information. … We found that we can support you but we can't do everything for you. We were trying to do everything for you rather than enabling people to take care of themselves.

She said she has been working in her current position as an FRG advisor to pass on both her own personal and the Army-wide lessons learned about the difference between "rescue" and "support" to other FRG leaders.

The Army limited the scope of FRG support when it changed the name Family Support Groups to Family Readiness Groups to signal its desire for increased self-sufficiency among family members. The redefined boundaries on what members should and should not expect from FRG leaders lessened the workload for some people like Jill. However, some FRG leaders I observed continued in the old model of

catering to FRG members' every need, even those needs that fall outside the scope of the revamped FRG system. I saw FRG leaders give cash for emergency situations, chauffer members and/or their children around, and pay out-of-pocket for a variety of FRG purposes. Sometimes they did so with the understanding that such actions were beyond, and even contrary to, the role of FRG leaders today. These women sometimes complained and acted put-upon, but they said things like, "But that's what she needed, and she had no one else. What was I supposed to do?" Some, however, took such demands in stride as a natural extension of the other caretaking labors expected of FRG leaders.

Jill believes that she achieved the expectations for an officer's wife incompletely because of her career. She said, "There's a lot of things that I would like to do as an officer's wife, but I can't do that because I work. … I'm a minority [laugh], especially at this rank." Spouses who are employed outside the home consider themselves unusual. For these women, such as Abby, a young, mild-mannered but goal-oriented sergeant's wife, work-related responsibilities prevent a high level of involvement in Army-related activities. Abby said that she was miserable when she first encountered Army life. When asked why her attitude toward the Army improved, she pointed to her increased level of involvement but acknowledged that such involvement requires availability: "It's just getting involved and knowing how to do that. And having *time* to do that, because now I'm not working full time."[219] Less work equals more involvement for Abby.

[219] Abby, interviewee 27, interview by author, confidential transcript.

Many spouses such as Abby described working and volunteering as activities exclusive of one another. For instance, forty-something volunteer Army Family Team Building instructor Anne said at one point in her life her job "restricted her" from volunteering, and then when her husband was the commander she gave up her paid temporary government service job to become the FRG co-leader.[220] Another Army wife, perky Robin, who was fresh out of college, claimed her participation was high because of the depressed job market in the surrounding area: "It's hard to get a job … which is why I volunteer so much."[221] As in Robin's case, the difficulty of finding paid work in the face of spouses' tied migration may contribute to the persistence of the traditional expectation for (officers') wives to volunteer.[222]

Jill's job kept her from participating in the Officers' Spouses' Club (OSC) and unit coffees. Sometimes such events are held during the workday—OSC luncheons are during a workday, but in contrast Enlisted Spouses' Club meetings were held in the evenings. However, even if events were held after work or on weekends, employed spouses often choose to spend their limited home time with their families.

Jill did not participate in other clubs, but she said she has had the time and resources to both work and participate in FRGs. She stated, "FRG is a way for me to be a part of the Army. … This was a thing that I could do." The official nature of

[220] Anne, interviewee 0, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[221] Robin, interviewee 5, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[222] For more on tied migration, see Little and Hisnanick, "The Earnings of Tied-Migrant Military Husbands," Cooke and Speirs, "Migration and Employment," Cooney, "Moving with the Military," Harrell et al., *Working Around the Military*, and Lim, Golinelli, and Cho, *Working Around the Military Revisited*.

FRG work gave her a single yet legitimate organization in which to volunteer, so she could fulfill what she saw as her duty as an officer's wife without also needing to participate in the many unofficial volunteer opportunities.

Jill described her volunteer work in two complementary ways: sometimes in a purely altruistic light, and sometimes as a woman working on behalf of the Army in support of her husband. She asserted: "I have a real passion for wanting people to get information, for wanting people to feel the same connection that I have to the Army." Jill's expressed desire to propagate pro-Army attitudes aligns with what Hochschild calls "deep acting." Jill internalized the emotions that she performs in her emotional labors as an FRG leader as her own. If she displayed gung-ho emotions but felt that she were faking a public persona, like Krista, the entrepreneur and FRG-leading commander's wife who expressed ambivalence about Army life, then Hochschild would label that "surface acting." Jill's deep acting makes her more susceptible to burnout because she takes on the emotional labor as her own personal mission, tying its ups and downs to her own self-worth.

Jill also felt an affiliation with the Army's expectations for an Army wife, particularly for a commander's wife: "What I see my role is, is that if there is

something I can do to alleviate my husband's stress, then that's what I'm going to do." During the interview she circled back to the topic of why she helps families:

> It's for a very selfish reason, and that is that, you know the whole idea about taking care of families so that the soldier can perform their job and not have to worry about his job back home. Well, for a selfish reason, I don't want that soldier that's standing next to my husband in battle to be worrying about his wife back home when he should be worried about what's in front of him and maybe endangering my husband. So that's very selfish.

Jill's reiteration of the word selfish demonstrates how she has divorced the claims on her time, labor, and money that exist because of the Army's demand for FRG labor from the Army itself. She is not pretending to be on-board with participating in the two-for-one career pattern; she is not "surface acting." Her comments illuminate that she seems to have largely internalized the two-for-one career pattern to the extent that she attributed the impetus to participate—despite her busy schedule as a mother, a wife, and a full-time businesswoman—to her own selfishness and not the Army's greediness.

Normative Constraints Prevail, Despite Variation

Jill's case is just one among many, but the factors that affect her relationship to the Army and FRGs are common across most Army wives' lives. Spouses' approaches to and perceptions of FRGs are partially shaped by demographic differences, including soldier rank and time-in-service, past FRG experiences, and deployment cycles (whether the soldier is deployed, home, or in transition). There is a great deal of unevenness across FRG activities, styles, participation, and

effectiveness. Some FRGs thrive, though some are vexed and tension-filled. Moreover, despite the Army's efforts to institutionalize and standardize the groups, some go completely dormant for periods of time.

Even the definition of who an FRG leader is has expanded somewhat. It is increasingly normal for an NCO's wife to lead a group, or even a lower-ranking enlisted soldier's wife if she is eager and deemed capable, and particularly if no one else is willing. I observed some steering committee meetings where some spouses were commanders' wives and some were not. These meetings' tone was generally more formal and businesslike, rather than familiar and social as when each company commander's wife served as her respective FRG's leader. At meetings where the attendees were all husband-and-wife command teams, there was a sense of camaraderie among the couples, fostered, too, by Army-related social activities for officers and their wives and relatively similar ages and life experiences. The closeness of the group reinforced the members' perception that the traditional model was optimal and the spouses' participation was natural and necessary.

It remains the rule that commanders' (officers') wives are expected to volunteer unless there is an extenuating factor; for example, the commander is not married, the spouse lives away far away from the base, the spouse is in a high-risk pregnancy, the spouse works full time and does not want to lead the FRG, or there is already a high-functioning FRG in place run by extant wives when a new officer takes command. According to *The Army Wife Handbook*, "Even though Army wives whose husbands are selected for command no longer feel that they *must* accept the

leadership role of the unit spouses, the majority choose to accept it."[223] It is non-traditional behavior is for a commanding officer's wife to decline leadership of the unit's spouses in unit coffee groups and in FRGs.

The commander's wife (if he is married) is expected to take on such roles. At the ceremony in which a commander takes control of his company, his spouse receives a bouquet of flowers welcoming her to the unit just as the spouse of the outgoing commander receives a bouquet in thanks for her service and sacrifice. After one such change-of-command ceremony, amid hand-shakes, punch, and cake, the battalion commander's wife sidled up to the new commander's wife, Bonnie, both in a show of camaraderie but also to talk FRG business. Young, pregnant Bonnie, from rural Minnesota, had agreed to lead the company-level FRG in previous discussions, but the chumminess of their body language in that crowning moment indicated that the new commander's wife had graduated to insider status at the moment her husband took command of his soldiers. In her broad northern accent, Bonnie described the first time she entered the building where her husband worked after he took command and she took "command," as it were, of the company's FRG. She said she felt she had a role to fill, that she was no longer Bonnie, but now the commander's wife, and her actions were no longer just her own but now representative of them both.[224]

[223] Crossley and Keller, *The Army Wife Handbook*, 290.

[224] Bonnie, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

However, even if she takes her first right of refusal and the job falls to another spouse, the commander's wife's responsibilities are not yet complete, according to *The Army Wife Handbook*:

> Commanders' wives who do *not* plan to take on the role of leading lady are still encouraged to take the leadership training offered by the Army for spouses of commanders, then to ask an appropriate and willing spouse in the unit (usually the executive officer's wife) to take over the leader's position, and pass along to her the leadership information gained from the Army training.[225]

Here, it is clear that the burden of delegating, even for uninterested commanding officers' wives, still falls to those wives despite the fact that FRGs are a command-sponsored (i.e., a solider-led) program. This expectation in the *Handbook* also makes explicit that soldier rank, not spousal interest or ability, is the primary factor in choosing leadership—the executive officer is the second-highest ranking officer in a company. The Army-offered training theoretically opens spousal leadership up to any and all wives, regardless of social station, husband's rank, or previous experience because the training should make any spouse a capable FRG leader (assuming she can take time off work, if need be, to attend). However, *The Army Wife Handbook*, relying on traditional rank-based patterns of volunteer labor, suggests that commanders' wives who turn down an FRG leadership role take that training pro forma and "pass along" the knowledge.

Not all wives conform to the stereotype and fulfill these expectations for leadership. Durand argues, "What [does] seem to have changed are the wives' ability and-or willingness to meet the organizational expectations for the role of military

[225] Crossley and Keller, *The Army Wife Handbook*, 290.

wife."[226] Army wives, with the exception of commanders' wives, increasingly feel free to perform their Army wife role in a wider variety of ways than traditionally prescribed. Brenda described a moment when she was new to the Army as a young officer's wife when she observed that "the commander's wife didn't play the Army wife game, she worked full time as a nurse."[227] However, for every story I heard about a commander's wife who opted out, I heard many more about those who participated in traditionally expected ways. Brenda, a forty-two-year-old stay-at-home mom with Paula-Deen looks, who certainly did "play the Army wife game," assumed the FRG leadership job turned down by the nurse. Though there is a range of Army wife behaviors, from conforming to a variety of types of deviance, the dominant thread in my data is the two-for-one pattern that persists among careerist-minded FRG leaders and commanders' wives such as Brenda.

The Army continues to exploit the traditional role and continues to receive volunteer labor by way of the FRG system, and these FRG leaders perform emotional labor to socialize FRG members into institutional attitudes and behaviors. The Army does not need *all* wives to perform according to traditional expectations, just enough women to satisfy its demands for volunteer labor and to pass on institutional values. Furthermore, the oddity of non-traditional choices of Army wives, because they require justification for their deviation from the norm, further serve to reinforce the status quo.

---

[226] Durand, "The Role of the Senior Military Wife—Then and Now," in *The Military Family: A Practice Guide for Human Service Providers*, eds. James A. Martin, Leora N. Rosen, and Linette R. Sparacino (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000), 84.

[227] Brenda, interviewee 2, interview by author, confidential transcript.

Conforming: Commanders' Wives' Two-for-One Labor

Despite variations in demographics and past experiences, and despite any personal ambivalence toward FRGs and their members' demands, FRG leaders "toe the party line" and propagate institutional Army values by championing the FRG system. FRG leaders such as Jill often embody the traditional, conforming, institutional attitudes and behaviors that are solicited, encouraged, and propagated in the FRG system. Their soldier-spouses often view the Army as a career and a calling, and aspects of that mindset saturate the wives' view of service to Army families, including their own. Their behavior exemplifies Becker's term "conformer," which he depicts in contrast to deviant outsiders.[228] He points out that conformers follow "the normal development of people in our society … [which] can be seen as a series of progressively increasing commitment to conventional norms and institutions."[229] Conformers have the power to employ emotional labor to attempt to socialize group members into a similar commitment to group norms.

The Army's mandated Family Readiness Groups require a commitment of both effort and ideology from volunteers. Conformers embody the Army-desired attributes of an FRG volunteer. Conformers enact group norms, and the group judges them to be performing correctly if they do not deviate from expectations. With the exception of one woman, all senior officers' wives interviewed were conformers.

---

[228] Becker, *Outsiders*, 27.

[229] Ibid.

Other conformers in FRGs often include Army wives who are new to Army life and eager to learn about and enact group norms. Another group is women who look to the FRG as their primary social network and who conform to its norms in order to fit in and make friends. However, the most obvious group of conformers is FRG leaders, particularly if they are acting with their husbands' career advancement (and thus the goals of the Army) in mind.

Robin, a perky young junior officer's wife whose red Dodge Charger was adorned with "Army Wife," yellow ribbon, "I Love My Soldier," and college alumni bumper stickers, epitomized a conformer. She became an FRG leader without having any prior experiences with FRGs. Part of her willingness to volunteer stemmed from her personal background. Robin is from a military family, and she cited her mother's example as her model of how to act as a military wife. Robin also received some instruction from a senior military wife at her husband's first assignment, a school where he learned the duties and skills of a young officer. There, Robin said the wives were given a crash course in Army programs but also told about some of the less desirable aspects of being an Army wife, such as loneliness.

Robin felt the impetus to volunteer right away in the FRG because her husband, a second lieutenant, was in a leadership position as a platoon leader and the other officers were either unmarried or had wives who worked outside the home. Her description of her volunteer work with the FRG centers around her husband, not herself or the FRG members: "I stepped up to the plate. I am happy that I got the

position. I always told my husband that I wanted to help wherever I can."[230] Robin said she found wives who wanted nothing to do with the Army "sad."[231] Her assessment does not allow for the possibility that competing interests such as work or family may dwarf some spouses' ability and desire to participate.

Lanie, a reserved captain's wife with a spotless house that looked professionally decorated, claimed the pressure did not come from her husband. Instead, she pointed to observed precedent among other wives: "I guess I kind of feel like it's the commander's wife's place. I don't really feel like it's commitment to my husband because my husband wouldn't expect anything from me. He doesn't care if I do or I don't. I guess it's just tradition. I've seen others wives do that, and I just think if you don't have an excuse of why not, then why not?"[232] Lanie planned to take over as FRG leader when her husband took command, despite admitting she did not know what an FRG does and did not know who the current FRG leader was whom she would be disposing. She did not seem concerned about the change that was soon to come in her life and was unaware of the extent of the time commitment she faced. Commanding officers' (COs') wives may volunteer despite a lack of knowledge about the demands of FRG leadership. A sergeant's wife, Katie, while keeping her three young children bouncing around in her orbit out of trouble, said: "The CO's wife, she was a newlywed and had never been around the military but was trying to lead everybody because that's the position that the Army gave her. It was almost

[230] Robin, interviewee 5, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Lanie, interviewee 22, interview by author, confidential transcript.

expected that the commander's wife take charge."[233] Trying simultaneously to parent, talk, and eat a burger and fries, she observed the decline of a high-functioning FRG when a new commander's wife usurped an experienced NCO's wife.[234] In cases such as the one Katie described, an Army wife "helping" her husband-commander can hurt the functionality and sense of community in an FRG.

Other interviewees echoed Robin's sentiment that they volunteered to help their husbands' careers. Captain's wife Lori agreed: "You're pressured to make sure that your husband doesn't look bad."[235] Michelle, also a commanding officer's wife, new mother, and FRG leader, took on the volunteer leadership role explicitly to help her husband's career. The Californian said, "The biggest deciding factor [for taking the FRG leader job when my husband took command] was no one can do a better job of handling my husband's FRG than me. ... I know how successful I want him to be. I really want to be able to have input."[236] Like Jill, she had a stake in her husband's job security and promotions, which benefit their family, and she wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to positively shape his career outcomes.

Michelle went on to articulate the implied threat to her husband's career if she did not participate or did so badly. She said, "If they don't like that opinion about you, they might not promote your husband, they might write a bad OER [Officer

[233] Katie, interviewee 31, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[234] Ibid.

[235] Lori, interviewee 33, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[236] Michelle, interviewee 35, interview by author, confidential transcript.

Evaluation Report]."[237] Notably, before 1988 soldiers' OERs had a place for the evaluation of wives' activities, but they do not any longer.[238] Any sanctions against a soldier based on the spouse's behavior are not officially allowed, though clearly the perception that wives' participation levels have an unofficial effect persist. Every time a "good" command team is lauded, those listening learn by omission that a "bad" command team consists of a spouse who does not volunteer her emotional labor.

Soldiers are not officially evaluated based on their wives' activities or inactivity; commanders, though, are evaluated in part on the functionality of their FRGs.[239] Thus, traditional career-helping expectations remain for commanders' wives, and the institutionalization of volunteer work in FRGs bolsters those expectations. Diane, a no-nonsense woman and former soldier with short bleached hair, took it to be a simple statement of fact: "It's supposed to be a commander's wife."[240] Or, as Katie phrased it, the mantle of FRG leadership came down from the Army like a decree from upon high: "That's the position that the Army gave her."[241] Other interviewees, such as quiet, baby-cradling Camille, were more careful to differentiate between pressure and requirements: "They're not required to do FRG,

---

[237] Michelle, interviewee 35, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[238] See chapter three.

[239] For the regulation mandating evaluations, see section 4.6 of appendix IV: DoD Directive Implementing the Reagan Administration's Family Policy.

[240] Diane, interviewee 10, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[241] Katie, interviewee 31, interview by author, confidential transcript.

but they're put into that position."[242] Camille's assessment that there is no rule but there is a sense that a commander's wife is cornered into serving ("put into that position"), explains how a savvy FRG leader such as Katie says something like "the Army gave her" the job, when she knows that to be untrue in fact if not in spirit.

Because women feel pressure to participate, some do so out of a sense of duty rather than a personal commitment to serve other spouses. According to Camille, in her slow voice with a slight smile and shrug, "Some of them may not want to do that or have other things to do and don't have time but feel they don't have a choice."[243] Senior officer's wife Brenda, the Paula Deen look-alike, reported observing many such leaders: "The spouse was expected to be the leader. They kept saying, 'You don't have to be,' but everybody felt that kind of pressure. I remember out of however many companies we had in that battalion [probably four or five], there were two or three who were highly reluctant leaders."[244] Senior officer's wife and flaming redhead Terry asserted in her southern twang that the external pressure is augmented by a personal sense of responsibility—what Moskos calls "a service ethic": "Those of us that are married to commanders sort of feel that responsibility and just end up in those situations. I think we feel less empowered to say no whether it's something we want to do or not. It's just kind of expected both internally and externally."[245] She has

[242] Camille, interviewee 11, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Brenda, interviewee 2, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[245] Moskos, "Institution Versus Occupation: Contrasting Models of Military Organization," 25; Terry, interviewee 23, interview by author, confidential transcript.

internalized the expectations of the Army community and the institution of the Army, and, despite her lack of enthusiasm, Terry responded "appropriately" by becoming a conforming, "proper" commander's wife.

One interviewee, Maria, disagreed that a wife's volunteer work affected her husband's career in today's Army, even though when she was a young officer's wife she led the FRG when and only when her husband took command.[246] Her co-interviewee Barb pointed out that they both felt differently earlier in their husbands' careers: "When we were younger, you know, and just kind of lieutenants' wives you think that you matter so much, like everything you do reflects on your husband. But twelve years into it, whatever I do, it's not going to reflect on my husband."[247] Both soccer moms, who were training together to run the Army ten-mile race the next month, argued that it affected a soldier's career in the past more so than in the present. Senior officer's wife Gwen, who had stepped down from her role as FRG advisor, commented that the increasing prevalence of women working full-time careers had made work outside the home a valid reason for spouses to be excused from expectations to volunteer: "Everybody knows that life has changed and there are a lot of working spouses now."[248] Terry offered similar remarks, "Occasionally you have a command spouse who has an outside career. Then I think they tend to feel like

[246] Maria, interviewee 19, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[247] Barb, interviewee 18, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[248] Gwen, interviewee 36, interview by author, confidential transcript.

it's okay, they're more okay with allowing somebody else to step into that role."[249] Embedded in this formulation, though, is the assumption that the role of the FRG leader is the commander's wife's to take or turn down.

Conformers, even the women who say that times have changed or that they have grown to not care about what other people think, are socialized to expect and enact demands for their volunteer labor, particularly when they are commanders' wives. Mady Segal argues, "While [the Army] exerts some specific normative pressures directly on family members, most pressures affecting families are exerted indirectly through claims made on the service members."[250] However, indirect pressure is not the whole story. Contrary to Segal's argument, commanders' wives feel direct pressure to be FRG leaders, performing according to expectations from other wives, and they also receive expectations directly from Army classes and many handbooks on how to be an Army wife, as will be illustrated in the next chapter.

Surface and Deep Acting

An FRG leader sets the tone of the group by projecting prescribing emotions and defines its norms as its most powerful member. The leader is generally one who supports the agenda of the group, the unit, and the Army, or else she may be asked to leave her post by the commander or the commander's wife. Her emotional labor must

[249] Terry, interviewee 23, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[250] Segal, "The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions," 13.

champion the unit and Army policies and the FRG system, no matter how unsavory she may find some of these aspects of Army life.

Despite a conforming public face, some FRG leaders do not agree wholeheartedly with the emotions they project to their FRGs' members. Secretly, or in strict confidence with her husband or close friends, an FRG leader may express emotions that do not align with her conformist behavior. In her public display of emotion, she is doing what Hochschild calls "surface acting": "In surface acting we deceive others about what we really feel, but we do not deceive ourselves."[251] Surface acting consists of faking the performed emotion, "of pretending to feel what we do not."[252] Hochschild says, "In surface acting, the expression on my face or the posture of my body feels 'put on.' It is not part of me."[253] Rather, one's expressions reflect a part of the institution's values that the actor does not necessarily share. Among the women who in anonymous interviews expressed some disillusionment with the expected emotional labor in FRGs, their public face was one of a conforming, cheerful Army wife delighted to volunteer.

Former southern belle Terry married her soldier-husband just after they both graduated from college; he is now a lieutenant colonel. She participates in nearly every possible activity, though she was less enthusiastic than some of her peers in her social set (among other senior officer's wives), more often taking a small role whenever asked than volunteering to plan an entire event. Terry said in confidence

[251] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 33.

[252] Ibid.

[253] Ibid., 36.

that she was unhappy that ninety-nine percent of her time was spent either taking care of her own family or being the commander's wife. She emphasized, "I wouldn't chose to spend my time that way if I wasn't the commander's wife."[254] Smoothing her bright red hair, she leaned in at her dining room table toward me and added that she is not alone in this sentiment: "If you were to get an honest answer from commanders' wives—from captains' wives who are FRG leaders or advisors … [they] would be happy to turn it over to anyone who was willing."[255] However, these women cannot ask who might be willing to take over in their stead, because any move toward "abandoning their post" would be seen as both personal weakness and disdain for the FRG. A crack in their public display of emotion would damage their credibility and make them seem unreliable.

Thirty-something Maria talked about being a gung-ho leader, and she provided emotional labor in FRGs for the sake of their husband's career ambitions. However, in the privacy of the interview the Texan in a tracksuit, on her way to or from a long-distance run around post, also expressed unhappiness about the role of FRGs, the time commitment they require, the strain the work puts on families, and the Army itself. I observed many other wives who echoed these sentiments only in the safety of a group of friends—never, for instance, at FRG Steering Committee Meetings or Officers' Spouses' Club luncheons. Maria articulated the conflict between the Army family and her own family: "That's what I've learned [after

[254] Terry, interviewee 23, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[255] Ibid.

leading] two FRGs, you know running around and finally the second time I said, uh, this isn't right, you know. My family is suffering so that I can take care of other people's families. I just don't think that's right."[256] The compounding demands from both institutions, the Army and the family, led to the embitterment of many FRG leaders, particularly those such as Maria, an officer's wife who took on the volunteer role when expected because of her husband's position as a commander. However, these women maintained their pro-Army public displays of emotion.

I observed that few FRG leaders "broke ranks" to allow the feigning of their surface acting be revealed. Their behavior, as in most small group settings, is managed by group norms enforced by peers. As Becker argues, deviant attitudes can be controlled; conforming individuals are "able to check that [deviant] impulse by thinking of the manifold consequences acting on it would produce … [because they have] staked too much on continuing to be normal."[257] FRG leaders, no matter their private feelings, indeed have a great deal staked on continued normalcy. As a result of the investment of time and effort they have made into keeping up appearances and contributing volunteer work on behalf of their husbands' careers, they are too committed to an institutional mindset to risk violating group norms publicly.

However unhappy these spouses are in private, they continue to act as conformers in public because there are known or at least perceived consequences for

[256] Maria, interviewee 19, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[257] Becker, *Outsiders*, 27. Becker explains that "rules tend to be applied more to some persons than others" (*Outsiders*, 12). He argues that conformers must perpetually maintain their status because once they become a deviant they will be viewed as a criminal thenceforth: "To be labeled a criminal one need only commit a single criminal offence" (Becker, *Outsiders*, 33).

deviant actions. I put out a call for interviewees in an online community, and I quickly received a few enthusiastic, chatty responses that were quite negative about FRGs (see chapter two for more). One woman, known as Benni, then posted a message that made everyone else cease talking on the thread. She said, "No offense Jaime, ladies remember the recent issue. … We really don't know who we are talking to. What you say could come back to haunt you and hurt your husbands and the Army in general."[258] Benni reminded the other users of the potential consequences if they continued to complain about FRGs, in effect threatening them so that they would either keep up their public face or just not talk at all.

Michelle, a commander's wife and mother of a screeching infant, described how she felt all public interactions were fraught with danger. In a frustrated voice, she said,

> It was just, "Be careful because your husband's career could be on the line if you get in trouble with the commander." I thought, "Wait a minute. I'm volunteering here trying to help support my husband, what do I do, where do I draw the line? Spell it out for me so I know what I should and shouldn't be doing because the last thing I want to do is jeopardize his career."[259]

Her concern for her husband's career dictates her every action, and in support of that institutional thinking she searches for the opinion of, as Becker puts it, "those sufficiently powerful to make their imputations of deviance stick."[260] She was a conformer who, despite any unhappiness about her volunteer work and its affect on her own life, was so committed to working on behalf of her husband's career in a

---

[258] Quote from fieldnotes by author, copied from the web on 6 November 2006.

[259] Michelle, interviewee 35, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[260] Becker, *Outsiders*, 186.

two-for-one career pattern she was frantically searching for conforming rule makers in order to follow their lead and perpetuate their ideas of proper group norms. Michelle sought out group norms so she could perform the proper role in public, and she was willing to perform whatever was prescribed, even if it did not match her own feelings.

In contrast, Jenna, pig-tails bouncing, worked hard to engineer her personal emotions so that they matched the emotions and emotional labors that she was encouraged to exhibit. She was a conformer of a different order: rather than surface acting, her emotional labor was mostly deep acting with very little if any emotional dissonance between her personal and public emotions. In addition to surface acting, Hochschild's analysis also discusses this other type of acting, deep acting, where the actor aligns his or her personal feelings with the prescribed emotional display. She posits, "In deep acting we make feigning easy by making it unnecessary."[261] The emotional labor of the mentorship of other FRG leaders, peers, and soldiers instructs the volunteer how she is to feel, and some women take that to heart. Once a wife joins the ranks of volunteers and is socialized to the habitus of emotion laborers, she increasingly enforces the informal rules and expectations on herself and others and is decreasingly able to imagine a different relationship with "The Total Army Family." For instance, Jenna conformed to expectations, her personal feelings reflected institutional values, and she passed on those values by deep acting. Her conforming

[261] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 33.

display of emotional labor matched her own values because she worked to become the epitome of a highly sought-after FRG leader and "good" Army wife.

Jenna the Conforming Emotional Laborer[262]

The conforming FRG leaders discussed in this chapter are mostly officers' wives, though FRGs can engender institutional attitudes and behaviors among any spouse, regardless of rank. The intense volunteer commitment, however, often appeals only to women who take it on in part to support their husbands' military careers. Two-for-one career pattern behavior is exemplified by Jenna, who has been married for a total of nine years to two different enlisted soldiers. Frequent permanent changes of station, divorces, and the care of her four children each affected her involvement in FRGs in the past. Currently, she is a very active FRG leader who takes great personal pride in her ability to help soldiers, soldiers' spouses, and particularly her husband and his career as a staff sergeant with her volunteer efforts. She takes on the role of FRG leader enthusiastically, and she fervently performs the emotional labor required of her.

Jenna alluded to personal crises and confrontations among her FRG members that she indicated were too complex and too confidential for her to relay to me, despite our long, very personal interview. I sat by while she took a phone call from a soldier in her husband's unit who had some questions about custody threats his

[262] All quotes in this section are taken from Jenna, interviewee 30, interview by author, confidential transcript.

separated wife was making and whether or not the problem fell under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (the Army's laws). While chain-smoking and pacing the room in her mobile home, Jenna directed him to post's JAG (law) office and told him to get his divorce papers in quickly to get more leverage. She sounded like she had fielded such issues before, and she was visibly satisfied to have been of help at the end of the conversation. Jenna was truly fielding issues at the lowest level—before they were reported to the soldiers' chain of command. She came across throughout the interview as resourceful, experienced, and passionate, as well as a champion of Army-provided resources—a good example of a conformer.

Jenna, like some other FRG volunteers, framed her involvement in altruistic terms. She became choked up with emotion and cried as she explained:

> It gives me the opportunity to do something for somebody as a selfless act; it's not required. And I think it makes me feel better knowing that I can help somebody and not expect anything in return. I don't see; why get paid for something that you're already benefiting from? Because I benefit from it knowing that at that end of the day I've got a wife who's gonna be okay tomorrow. Getting paid for it, it would be a job, it would be a requirement. And the feeling that I get inside from being able to do it voluntarily means more than a paycheck would.

Such altruism, however, framed as a personal, private reward for the volunteer efforts, is almost always accompanied by public acclaim or at least the chance to perform care work publicly. Jenna's altruistic rhetoric was belied by her emphasis elsewhere in the interview on the rewards that she and her husband's career reaped from her involvement. Jenna enjoyed the fact that others depend on her. Her husband's career perhaps benefited because goodwill and an aura of competence generated by Jenna spilled over onto him—or perhaps not, but the fact remains that

both Jenna and her husband believed this to be true and acted accordingly. Jenna identified three different "publics" that depended on and thereby legitimated her emotional labor: the wives in the FRG, the soldiers in the unit, and her husband.

Jenna reaped rewards, both personal and public, from performing emotional labor. The first was a pay-it-forward personal reward, giving help to others as she was given help in her youth:

> I remember being that young wife; I didn't have a clue what I was doing—and I was lost. I don't want to see another wife in that position—stressed out, baby at home, husband always gone, needs medical, needs to get groceries, you know, trying to work a budget, and throw their hands in the air and say, "I quit."

She explicitly referred to herself as a mentor. One of her mentoring duties, according to Jenna, was keeping wives busy so they would not be tempted to cheat on their deployed husbands—in her eyes, a sort of moral public service:

> All too many times you hear of the wives that were out at the bar while their husbands were gone, out [on the town], talking to soldiers. I try to get a hold of them before that happens and teach them that there are so many better things to do with your time. There's nothing better than hanging out with the girls, having a martini at the house, watching movies, the kids are right there, shopping, making trips. … I try to show them that there is a better way of life that they're not going to be questioning the integrity of their marriage later. I think it also gives the husband a sense of trust; Iraq is a long way away. But knowing that his wife is doing things that are respectful of her, of her relationship, and encouraging her to have a good time and have fun in a proper way, not putting herself out there and falling into being 21 or 18. I try to set the example. The only way you can reach others is, not do as I say, it's what I do.

Though FRGs often plan group activities, the philosophy behind Jenna's mentoring activities went well beyond the official scope of FRGs (the dissemination of information and connecting members to resources). She had a strong sense of what

the group norms are for Army wives (including fidelity to one's husband and selfless sacrifice), and she committed a great deal of her life to teaching those norms in her FRG work.

Jenna depicted herself as an indispensable and integral part of the unit who receives public acclaim and personal trust from soldiers. She said she communicates easily and often with the commander, leading to a reciprocal relationship: "I'm on a first-name basis with the commander. I sit and B.S. with the commander just as much as they [soldiers in the unit] do. I've been welcomed in, and that makes him feel good that I know what's going on; I'm never left in the dark. The unit needs something, I'm there; he needs something, I'm there." In Jenna's estimation, she also helped the first sergeant run the unit by taking on personnel and family concerns that might otherwise fall to him:

> He's reaching out to somebody [Jenna, the FRG leader] who has the strength and ability to maintain his company. And if I can handle it on a personal level before it comes to the company, he would prefer it to be handled on that level, for me to take them. So if it can be handled in a way that doesn't take away from his training, then that's a win-win situation for him.

Jenna believes her responsibility as an FRG leader extends beyond families and even individual soldiers to the unit and its commanding officer—to "maintain his company." She understands her responsibility to the unit not as a burden but as a compliment to her "strength and ability."

The third public Jenna helps as an FRG volunteering Army wife is her husband. Her connection to the leadership of his unit gives her extra information and a better chance of leveraging her emotional labor to engineer a desired outcome for

herself and her husband: “The more involved I am with his company and with the FRG, the better results I have, the easier it is, the quicker things get done.” To obtain such an advantage, she contributes what she estimated to be fifty percent of her time to the FRG. Furthermore, in deference to her husband’s focus on his career, his aversion to fraternization, and his strict standards of personal decorum, she changed her social set by not going out to clubs anymore, her recreational habits by turning down invitations to barbeques at lower-ranking enlisted soldiers’ houses, and her hours waiting tables so she could do more FRG work. Jenna’s husband took the Army’s rules, found in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, against fraternization with lower-ranked soldiers very seriously. Often these rules against socializing are ignored, so his insistence on maintaining them put him at an emphatic distance from some of his fellow soldiers—this at a time when his wife was trying to build community among the wives of those same soldiers. Jenna’s efforts to respect her husband’s wishes about socialization were an attempt to help facilitate her soldier-spouse’s career advancement. He rewarded her by depending on her, just as the first sergeant and the FRG members did.

Jenna said that she is more than a helper or even a volunteer; she works for the Army in a two-for-one career pattern. Jenna asserted, “I enjoy being a military wife. I couldn’t ask for a better job.” Her words are reminiscent of a bumper sticker that reads, “Army Wife: Toughest Job in the Army!” Jenna’s emotional labor takes a commitment of time, resources, and emotional effort. She sacrifices all of these things

and more to be a "good" Army wife because her goals and the institutional goals are the same.

Conclusion

Decorum is expected of Army wives, and soldier rank and/or FRG leadership raises the expectations for spouses to perform according to the customs of a "good" Army wife. All of these factors contribute to the shaping of what Mady Segal terms "normative constraints" for Army wives.[263] The spouses' choice to abide by or reject these constraints, she argues, "can affect the service-member's career advancement."[264] In a process of self-selection, soldier-wife teams with high emphasis on commitment to the Army and career success, such as Jenna and her husband, stay in the Army longer and thus have more time and opportunities to be role models. Conforming spouses in leadership roles perform emotional labor that affects the emotions and behaviors of other spouses in pro-institution ways, often modeling behavior such as "stay in your lane"—a common phrase in the Army community meaning, "do what is expected of you and do not rock the boat."

[263] Segal, "The Nature of Work," 24.

[264] Ibid.

CHAPTER 5: "STAY IN YOUR LANE": EMOTIONAL LABOR IN ACTION

As can be seen in the case of Jenna the conformer, an enlisted soldier's wife and Family Readiness Group leader discussed at length in the last chapter who holds and disseminates Army-supporting values, my data reveal that FRGs' group norms consist of institutional values not as a matter of current formal policy but as a matter of informal rule. Institutional-minded FRG volunteers who have a strong stake in projecting a conformist persona and creating a conformist climate in their groups enforce Army-supporting values when they display and manage emotions socializing their peers to the norms of being a "good" Army wife. Their methods, investigated in this chapter, include mentorship, gossip, advice, ostracism, and other policing and labeling mechanisms whereby Army wives patrol each other's behavior.

Through these channels, Army wives are told to "stay in your lane," meaning do your work to help, but do not challenge or put demands on the system in any way. As Jenna said, "It's about acceptance—you have to accept [that] being an Army wife is also a part of being in the Army."[265] By this she meant that Army wives must accept that Army-supporting attitudes must become their own, and they must accept that they have a strictly defined role (a "lane"). Because FRG leaders wield the Army-sanctioned political power to create and enforce group norms with their emotional labor, the conformist agenda of staying in one's lane prevails and is perpetuated by FRGs.

[265] Jenna, interviewee 30, interview by author, confidential transcript.

Managing Problems with the Leader-to-Member Flow of Information

Conflict arose among Army wives when they perceived that perhaps they are not all in the same boat, that some family members were privy to precious information earlier than others. Brenda, sporting perfectly coiffed Paula-Deen hair, sat with excellent posture in the parlor of her two-story home in the stately senior officers' neighborhood. While explaining how she justified the exclusive membership rules of coffee groups (officers' wives and the most senior NCOs' wives whose husbands are ranked E7 and up), she stressed that coffees were meetings for mentorship, not, as FRG meetings are, for information distribution.[266] A large part of senior officers' wives' emotional labor was putting forth the official take on FRG leadership ("It's about putting out information, not about babysitting; it's open to anyone, not just officer's wives"), and they continued that emotional labor in the interviews, exhibiting behavior consistent with conforming expectations (in their "lane") befitting their husbands' ranks.. They spent a great deal of effort focusing on what *should*, rather than telling me what really *does*, happen among the actual FRG leaders and in the groups. They were more likely to tell me stories about conformers than about maelstroms of gossip. Such information management from these conforming spouses indicated that they knew I would be hearing many stories of gossip and rumors and they wished to promote an institutional-supporting image of FRGs as full of helpful, resourceful leaders shepherding happy members. Brenda's

[266] Brenda, interviewee 2, interview by author, confidential transcript. This explanation does not address why, in her estimation, some spouses need mentorship and other do not.

insistence that FRGs were *the* conduit of information was belied by her own example of the rank-based breakdown in information distribution.

Information is distributed at coffees after an icebreaking activity and refreshments, but usually before the raffle prizes. Brenda was a battalion-level FRG leader, i.e., the battalion commanders' wife who heads the coffee group and advises the company-level FRG leaders. She once released information about upcoming deployment dates to the coffee group before she released it to the FRG leaders. In this way she privileged some coffee group members (officers' wives) who did not volunteer, yet she excluded and alienated FRG leader J.C., who was not allowed to attend coffees because she was a lower-ranking enlisted soldier's wife. Brenda thus undermined the official flow of information, which is the basic purpose of FRGs. Brenda had to call extra meetings of the battalion–level FRG steering committee to apologize and begin to rebuild trust. The collision of the informal support world and the formal support world invalidated company-level FRG leader J.C.'s sense of worth: Why was she working so hard to build a support network through which to distribute logistical information and to link her members with resources if her "superior" was going to undermine that work through informal channels? Though the rosters are often similar, the informal distribution of information in coffee groups has caused friction.

Beyond coffee group/FRG conflict, which is at base a problem with rank-privileged information, the interviewees perceived both benefits and drawbacks to the traditional reliance on a commanding officer's wife (a captain's wife) taking the role

of company-level FRG leader. Benefits include the informal flow of information and delegation of duties that happens between the commander and his wife. The informal flow of information often happens for other officers' wives, as well, be it from their husbands or from each other socially or in coffee groups. According to the entrepreneurial commander's wife, Krista, "Officer's wives are sometimes privy to more information or able to get it a little bit easier than an enlisted spouse. It's horrible, but it's true."[267] For this reason, perky young officer's wife Robin said it is more difficult to lead an FRG as an enlisted soldier's spouse: "I know that I have talked to some FRG leaders who are enlisted spouses and how difficult it is for them to get information, to be in contact with the commander and see eye to eye. It seems like there is an imaginary boundary between the two and it's sad."[268] Brenda argued that the job of an FRG leader is not only more difficult for enlisted spouses but less successful: "I think it's wonderful that we have FRG leaders who are doing it because they want to. And I think that's fabulous. However, you lose a lot of the communication when you're not doing a husband-and-wife team."[269] According to these accounts, if Army wives do not stay in their lanes and perform the role "assigned" to them informally by their husbands' rank, then things do not go as smoothly.

Differences in soldier-husbands' ranks sometimes led to conflict among the wives. This was a common source of Army wives' unhappiness with FRGs. Strained

[267] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[268] Robin, interviewee 5, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[269] Brenda, interviewee 2, interview by author, confidential transcript.

rank relations often arose between an officer's-wife FRG leader and her FRG's members, the overwhelming majority of whom are married to enlisted soldiers. Because rank was supposed to be a non-issue in an FRG, when it did become an issue it had a particularly strong power to alienate.

Rank-related conflict ranges from the mundane, if one wife becomes offended by the leader taking on the rank of her husband by saying, "when we were lieutenants," to the dramatic when "rumor mills"[270] lead to hurt feelings or potential violence. Kendra, who worked part-time in the on-post Family Resource Center coordinating volunteers, described a time in her FRG where the leader, an officer's wife, disobeyed the unwritten rules and leaked information that she was privy to only because of her association with officers.[271] Sitting at her desk surrounded by family pictures, Kendra would not detail the initial incident in a half-hearted attempt at maintaining propriety by not gossiping with me about the much-gossiped-about event. However, I gathered that a soldier was being counseled or perhaps punished by his commanding officer for an egregious offense, perhaps violating the Uniform Code of Military Justice by cheating on his wife or abusing someone in his family. The commanding officer's wife knew of the incident because of her personal relationship with her husband, though the information should be secret. She gossiped either in the coffee group or socially about

[270] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[271] Kendra, interviewee 32, interview by author, confidential transcript.

the affair or abuse. Then the FRG leader who heard that information spread it. According to Kendra, this led to a situation that caused the FRG leader to fear for her life:

> The FRG leader had done some stuff that she didn't need to do and put herself in a position that was not her lane, her job. … Like, you know something, you don't go talking about it to everybody else. Gossip. It's all about the gossip. And she said some stuff that she didn't need to say, and one of the other ladies was a warrant officer's spouse. She found out about it, got very upset. This woman went crazy, the FRG leader. She was hiding in her bedroom with a gun because she thought that the warrant officer's wife was going to hurt her. … Everything broke down.[272]

The conflict, caused by an Army wife not staying in "her lane," but instead causing trouble by gossiping, led to a deep and lasting chasm between enlisted soldiers' and officers' wives in the FRG. The officers' wives knew information that they should not, but warrant officers' wives and enlisted soldiers' wives could never have that level of access.

The jealousy about this information discrepancy, aggravated by standard class divisions between the higher-paid "haves" (officers and their wives) and "have-nots," created two warring camps. According to enlisted soldier's wife Kendra, she thought she got along with the officers' spouses in her FRG, but the rank-related problem

[272] Kendra, interviewee 32, interview by author, confidential transcript.

reported above resulted in the enlisted/officer divide being manifested strongly among the wives. She became emotional, nearly crying as she described the situation:

> Now all of a sudden it's, "We're officer's spouses and you're not allowed to do this and this and this." … I'm sure that other people have experienced things like that where all of a sudden everything seems to be going great, then all of a sudden you realize that it was two different worlds, it was two different social worlds. All of a sudden you don't know where you belong. And I think that if enlisted spouses feel like that then they're not going to want to participate with if they see a bunch of officer's spouses running it.[273]

Because of the contentious situation, some wives who had been active in the FRG ceased their participation. Even Kendra, who championed FRG volunteer work in her job, stopped participating in her own FRG's events.

Katie, corralling children in the on-post shopping mall's food court, remarked that low-participating spouses' choices are frustrating because of the potential for such women to become a problem for the FRG leader if they are misinformed or if there is a crisis: "That's only going to hurt them in the long-run if there's an emergency or something going on. … Eventually a situation comes up and they throw a fit—'I never knew who my FRG leader was, I never knew that.' Then it comes back to look bad on the FRG leader even though they have been sending e-mails."[274] She said she was exasperated with trying to combat this behavior: "We can call and leave messages, but we can't make them answer the phone. We can't make them call

[273] Kendra, interviewee 32, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[274] Katie, interviewee 31, interview by author, confidential transcript.

back."[275] The leaders are responsible for being inclusive and distributing information to all FRG members, but low-participating spouses are not responsive to those efforts.

As Katie described, some FRG members opt out of the groups. Former FRG advisor Gwen gave her perspective on such behavior: "It's always the women who refuse to participate in the FRG who are the first ones calling us all the time because they haven't heard from their husbands. If they just gave us their contact info, they would know there's a communication blackout because of the death of a solider or because the unit is moving from one area to another."[276] FRG leaders such as Gwen find it frustrating to be asked to distribute information to all family members, only to be stymied not by logistical barriers but instead by the FRG members themselves. Some spouses take the more formal step of signing a "do-not-contact" (DNC) form. They purposefully relinquish their automatic membership privileges. Their non-participation is a wholesale rejection of the group norms and a discounting of the volunteer workers and participants. Soldiers, too, can add to the leaders' frustration by placing wives on do not call lists, sometimes without the wife's knowledge or permission. In these cases, FRG leaders are not allowed to give the wife on the DNC list any information, even if asked. The flow of information is stopped, even if neither the demand nor the supply lessens.[277]

---

[275] Lanie, interviewee 22, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[276] Gwen, interviewee 36, interview by author, confidential transcript

[277] For in-depth description of this phenomenon, see appendix VIII.

Mentorship

Jenna understood mentorship to be part of her role as an FRG leader. In-between cigarettes, she described her "commitment" to working for both her husband and the Army (and by extension the United States), as well as her efforts to pass along this perspective:

> I try to tell all the girls that I come in contact with, especially the young ones – you made a commitment to your husband, your husband made a commitment to the Army, no matter what. Not only does he have a job with the Army, he has a job with you. It takes a lot to give the Army 100 percent and to give you 110. You have to be willing to give it the same. Lord knows that cold dinners, driving to the motor pool, bringing them dinners when they work late, that's your commitment to your husband but that's also your commitment to his career. No matter what his job may be, his obligation is to do it 100 percent. As an American, you have to support that. If it wasn't for our soldiers, for all we know, there could be a war in our country.[278]

The job of Army wife, for Jenna, conflates wifely duty with patriotic duty and also her domestic work with the soldier's work in a manifestation of the two-for-one career pattern. Jane, the former soldier who was run out of her FRG on a proverbial rail, agreed that the FRGs' and the Army wives' job is "to take care of the homestead and keep them [the soldiers] from worrying so they could do their job." [279] An Army wife's job, according to these women, is to help her husband do his job. Jenna's emotional labor included working to mentor other spouses in support of their husbands as well as the Army, modeling for them and encouraging emotions and actions befitting a "good" American and Army wife.

---

[278] Jenna, interviewee 30, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[279] Jane, interviewee 24, interview by author, confidential transcript.

Perky young officer's wife Robin described her experience being mentored as a positive one, but along with encouragement she received instruction about the boundaries of FRG propriety. As a company-level FRG leader, Robin fell in the chain of concern under the battalion commander's spouse who was also the FRG advisor (the lieutenant colonel's wife who oversees the company-level FRG leaders and their groups, coordinating them as well as battalion-level events and funds). This woman encouraged familiarity by insisting the lower-ranking soldiers' spouses call her by her first name. She invited a feeling of social belonging and professional interaction. According to an enthusiastic Robin, "She has allowed me to become a part of the group and be able to talk to her. If I see her at Wal-Mart, I can talk to her. If I see her anywhere I am able to talk to her and ask her questions. She has helped me, given me great advice on several occasions. She has told me, and everybody in our FRG that if we ever needed anything …"[280] However, the example Robin offered of the FRG advisor's approachability is a time when Robin went to her for advice on an FRG

[280] Robin, interviewee 5, interview by author, confidential transcript.

member's financial problems, but the advisor informed Robin that though she welcomed questions, she did not want to be asked *all* questions:

> I had the first instance in our FRG with a lady who their checking account was negative one-hundred dollars. Payday was probably about five days away, but that's a big issue to a person. … I did call her [the FRG advisor] and talk to her but I asked her if she ever wanted to be called on these issues about anything. She goes, "If it's major/significant," unless it's that, then no. Other than that she doesn't want to be notified.[281]

The advisor mentored Robin insofar as she passed on the understanding that soldier and FRG member problems are to be handled at the company level by the commander and FRG leader without passing the problems up the chains of command and concern. FRGs impart institutional measures to control soldier and family-member problems and promote welfare and morale at the unit level with minimal use of Army resources, so FRG problems that spread beyond the company level are often discouraged. Institutionalizing support by mandating FRGs allows the Army to control certain aspects of soldiers' family members, called "dependents" for good reason. When everyone is socialized to "stay in their lane," as Robin was in this example, the Army receives unpaid labor and fewer demands from families on soldiers and its own bureaucratic system.

In FRGs, the Army has crafted an official system that solicits volunteers—Army wives—to be socializing agents who have a high stake in appearing to support the system. As they help themselves and their husbands' careers, they help others

[281] Robin, interviewee 5, interview by author, confidential transcript.

who learn from that example of emotional labor and often imitate it. Krista explained the socializing function of support:

> These women in these groups, these coffee groups, FRG groups, they're really your medium into the military until you're ready to do it on your own. … [My husband] relied on this group initiating me … linking me with the military world. And it did. That's part of the purpose—to be that connection. … It's an essential part of the military.[282]

She was "initiated" into a system that perpetuates itself; she went on to become an FRG leader and initiate other wives through her emotional labor. This socialization process is particularly potent in the hands of conformers who have the goal of providing support who have an official outlet in which to operate and who often also have the additional goal of promoting their husbands' careers with their FRG participation.

One form of instruction is mentorship by "senior" spouses, i.e., women who have been associated with the military for a long time and/or whose husbands have a high rank. For instance, former punk-rock girl Angie told me about the "welcome" phone call she received from the battalion commander's spouse Janeva when the junior captain's wife, freshly graduated from college, first arrived on post.[283] Senior spouse Janeva provided Angie with leadership, mentorship, and connections to other spouses whom she thought would be a good introduction Army life. Janeva gave the newcomer the contact information of an Army wife in the unit whose husband's rank was the same as Angie's. Well-meaning Janeva, according to Angie, said this wife

[282] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[283] Janeva and Angie, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

was “cool,” very active, and an excellent “resource.” Janeva was connecting Angie with peer mentors—other emotional laborers.

Janeva married her husband when she was young, and despite plans to work as a teacher, she became pregnant with the first of their four children as soon as she joined her new husband at his duty station in Alaska. She has not worked outside the home since, and it is clear she jumped into the Army wife (and Army mom) role wholeheartedly in order to fashion a support community for herself in Alaska where she knew no one and nothing about Army life. Since then, she has not created networks outside the Army or her own family from which to gain identity.

Janeva took the role of mentorship seriously, acting in ways befitting a “good” Army wife to bring Angie up in the ways of the subculture. When we spoke just days after her arrival, Angie said that during the “welcome” phone call Janeva offered help as she settled in on post. Angie, sporting a black-and-pink skull on her skirt and tall designer black boots said Janeva told her she could call upon her for a range of things from directions to someone to sit and talk with if she were lonely. Janeva pointed out that she was available because she did not work and her children were in school. According to Angie, Janeva was careful to set an informal tone when she called to welcome her to the post and the unit, and Janeva stressed the words “fun” and “young” in that conversation to signal to Angie that the monthly unit coffee group would not be a formal tea service requiring white gloves.

During a social visit a month after her arrival, Angie told me about another phone conversation she had with Janeva. This time, Angie initiated contact. She

called to ask the commanding officer's wife (and thus the "ranking" or senior wife), to ask if her new friend, who was a sergeant's wife in the same unit and thus whose enlisted husband ranks lower than and works under officers, would also be invited to the upcoming unit coffee. Angie reported that Janeva, with a slightly higher-than-normal nervous pitch to her voice, explained who was generally invited (officer's wives and senior NCOs' wives ranked E7 and above) and encouraged Angie to voice her opinions about that traditional practice. Angie told Janeva she did not want to try to change the social convention her first month on post, and in an effort to keep their relationship from becoming adversarial, Angie assured her that she was not going to challenge the accepted way of doing things. Angie said Janeva had described coffees as "one of the old traditions," a place where the "mentoring process" occurs. Janeva went on to say the coffees are a place where officers' wives "let their hair down and don't necessarily mind their Ps and Qs" because they are "more amongst our peers in that setting." The implication of her statement is that, because of the fraternization rules for soldiers (which do not officially apply to wives but nonetheless limit inter-rank relationships in practice) spouses of higher-ranking soldiers have to behave with more decorum in front of lower-ranking soldiers' spouses. For Janeva, keeping up appearances serves two purposes. First, proper behavior is instructive for lower-ranking soldiers' spouses (this is the way one *should* act). Second, she did not want to show a chink in the armor of soldiers in leadership positions—rather, she wanted to present a united soldier-and-spouse front of competency and respectability.

In contrast to the gated community of informal support in coffee groups, when Angie asked about FRG participation during the "welcome" call, Janeva said, "the more the merrier," though the amount of time she spent talking about FRGs as opposed to coffees indicated that coffees would be a more important social activity for Angie, a junior officer's wife. If Angie were a young enlisted soldier's wife she would not have received a phone call from a senior officer's wife, and if such a wife were to be mentored it would necessarily be in the FRG since she would not be invited to coffees.

At the end of the phone call regarding coffee invitees, obviously nervous that Angie might leave the conversation with a negative impression of strict rank-based divisions among wives, Angie said Janeva twice encouraged her to "foster that friendship" with the sergeant's wife. Janeva's anxious insistence indicated to Angie that Janeva's encouraging words espoused the official rules (I can fraternize with anyone I want; I am a wife not a soldier), which in this case were out of line with the more practical yet unofficial advice (this sort of friendship is unusual and discouraged) that Janeva did not say outright yet managed to convey Angie in other ways. Janeva's insistence that the friendship was acceptable signaled to Angie that it was unusual for an officer's wife and a sergeant's wife to be friends and such a friendship perhaps would not be embraced under the leadership of a different spouse.

Like Angie, as a new Army wife I was careful to observe how others comported themselves so that I could follow suit. Mimicking was my idea, but I was also admonished by my husband to "play it cool" and not strike out in this social

world with my own style but rather to act unexceptionally. For a detailed description of the balancing act I maintained as a scholar, a participant-observer, and a new Army wife learning the ropes for myself, see chapter two.

Books

From the moment I became engaged to my husband, he and a few of his Army ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps, the during-college program that trains future officers) peers discussed the importance of my purchase of *The Army Wife Handbook: A Complete Social Guide* (a complement to their bookshelves' *Army Officer's Guide*), which includes instructional chapters for spouses such as "The Art of Communication" and "Social Graces."[284] The 395-page book details the history of such guides and remains cognizant that formal expectations to fulfill traditional Army wife roles have become more lenient throughout the last half of a century. However, though a wider range of behaviors are "allowed," they are circumscribed by traditional roles: "Our lives are much more relaxed, the mores of society are constantly changing and evolving, but we as military wives face many social and official occasions that are structured by long traditions."[285] Though I never attended a white glove tea party (one was held a month before I arrived to the post), I was more

[284] Crossley and Keller, *The Army Wife Handbook* and Keith E. Bonn, *Army Officer's Guide*, 49th ed. (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002).

[285] Alma Powell, "Forward," in Crossley and Keller, *The Army Wife Handbook*, referring to Nancy Shea, *The Army Wife*, 3d revised ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1954).

conscious of and worried about dress and decorum at Army functions than I ever was at any other non-Army formal social functions.

Tradition and propriety remain linked; "non-traditional" behavior is never labeled improper per se, but it is treated as a problem that requires inventive solutions by participating spouses and handbooks. Non-traditional behavior includes working outside the home. Crossley and Keller's *The Army Wife Handbook* offers contingencies for a woman working either a second or a third shift of volunteer labor for the Army and in support of her husband's career. For working Army wives the book suggests ways to add work to wifely duties but does not suggest that one or the other ever takes exclusive priority: "For functions such as a unit bake sale, it isn't necessary for you to attend in order to support the unit. You can bake a delicious goody and drop it off on your way to work, or send it with your husband or a neighbor. If comp-time is an option available to you at work, consider using that time for wives' activities."[286] In 1991 Levy, Faulkner, and Steffensmeier pronounced "the traditional military wife stereotype … outdated" based on the fact that seventy percent of Army wives surveyed in 1982 said they were gainfully employed (in their words, a "nontraditional activity," as opposed to the traditional activity of volunteering).[287] However, if women are pressured or even simply advised to add traditional behaviors to their second-shift labors, then the traditional military wife stereotype is still in operation. Certainly, I observed "traditional" behavior often and

[286] Crossley and Keller, *The Army Wife Handbook*, 310.

[287] Diane E. Levy, Fary I. Faulkner, and Renee Steffensmeier, "Military Wives: Ambiguity in a Traditional Role," *Psychological Reports* 68 (1991): 1307, 1308.

consciously exhibited it myself, too, in an effort to ingratiate myself to the Army wife community to gain a social support network for myself and to increase the visibility of my husband's career.

Your Soldier, Your Army, written by a senior spouse (Vicky Cody, whose husband Richard A. Cody retired as a four-star general and the Army's vice chief of staff in 2008), was used extensively in a class for the wives of battalion commanders-in-training (lieutenant colonels) at Fort Leavenworth. The Army wives invited to attend the class were in training to be FRG advisors, i.e., the leaders of battalion FRGs and overseers of company-level FRGs.[288] According to a senior officer's wife who had participated in the class and who lauded the book, Cody's manual was meant to be handed out to "their" family members in the battalion—i.e., the wives of the soldiers serving under the battalion commander.[289] The book's first line sets a very institutional, "old-Army" tone for the manual: "I am an Army wife and a mother." Here Cody signals that the Army is not simply her husband's and her sons' employer but that she identifies strongly with the Army.[290] She demonstrates pro-Army emotions on the pages of her book in an effort to influence other family members' emotions and behaviors.

Your Soldier, Your Army offers logistical information mixed with inspirational anecdotes and encouragement to family members to foster support for the Army and

---

[288] Vicki Cody, *Your Soldier, Your Army* (Arlington, VA: The Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army, 2005).

[289] Lonna, interviewee 3, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[290] Cody, *Your Soldier, Your Army*, v.

their soldiers' roles in the Army's missions. Cody encourages her readers to "focus on the positive rather than the negative. … The good far outweighs the bad."[291] She instructs wives to accept the vagaries of Army life using herself as an example: "As for the upheavals and separations the Army often put our family through, I learned early on that it does no good to dig in my heels and resist."[292] Cody's experience is offered as the model of how family members should comport themselves and what they should believe.

Cody builds up the Army as a trustworthy organization, even going so far as to align faith in the Army and its representatives with spiritual faith: "With so much out of your control you have to absolutely give it up to a higher being. The other key element you need is faith and trust in the Army in general and, more specifically, the leadership in your Soldier's unit. You have to trust the chain of command."[293] Her rhetoric grants the Army an almost God-like status. Cody says that by participating in Army programs and attending functions, family members will gradually "get it"—

[291] Cody, *Your Soldier, Your Army*, 4.

[292] Ibid.

[293] Ibid., 28.

that is, understand and accept the Army and their role as family members of soldiers.[294] Cody expounds:

> I learned what 'duty, honor, country' really means. I learned that being a Soldier comes from the heart. It's a calling that one either feels or doesn't. It's not part-time or temporary, or just when it's convenient. … It is 24 hours a day/ seven days a week / 52 weeks a year. It's what happens from the day he puts on the uniform until the day he retires. It's a way of life. Once I, my parents, my in-laws and everyone around us understood this simple truth, we all 'got it' and began to truly love Army life.[295]

Her advice prepares her readers to be married to the military—to be Army wives.

Other sources for women to learn about proper military spouse roles can be found in trade books on the shelves of the post exchange—the military-only department store on post known as the post exchange (PX)—and bookstores nationwide. This niche has increased dramatically in the past ten years, particularly since deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan began to increase the operational tempo of many units and thus the stress on soldiers and their families. Military spouse trade books can be divided into two general categories: inspirational books and handbooks. The inspirational books often have a religious perspective. Some tell the stories of specific spouses who faced and overcame hardship.[296] Handbooks include guides for

---

[294] Cody, *Your Soldier, Your Army*, 40.

[295] Ibid., 41.

[296] For religious-themed books see Jack Canfield, et al., *Chicken Soup for the Military Wife's Soul: Stories to Touch the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit* (Deerfield Beach, FL: HCI, 2005); Paulette K. Johnson, *Wings of Our Own* (Reston, VA: Wingspan Publications, 2001); Janel Lange, *The Treasure of Staying Connected for Military Couples* (Kingsport, TN: Serviam, 2003); Brenda Pace and Carol McGlothlin, *Medals Above My Heart: The Rewards Of Being A Military Wife* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004); and Marshele C. Waddell, *Hope for the Home Front: God's Timeless Encouragement for Today's Military Wife* (Monumenet, CO: One Hope Ministry, 2003). For case studies, see Patti A. Correa, *From A Pebble To A Rock* (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2004); Jessica Redmond, *A Year of Absence: Six Women's Stories of Courage, Hope and Love* (St. Paul, MN:

hip-yet-harried spouses (almost always with children) on the go, but also more traditional guides (i.e., more matter-of-fact and less in the "girlfriend-to-girlfriend" style) and even *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Life as a Military Spouse*.[297] Some concentrate on problems juggling work and family, some on deployments, and some on marriage.[298] The topics covered in these guides for military spouses usually include protocol, moving, benefits, financial management, children, deployment, careers, stress, and life after the military. No trade book I found is critical of the Army and its demands or effects on family members; if a book identifies "challenges," its focus is on how to overcome them through personal sacrifice and effort, not through systemic change.

Elva Resa Publishing, 2005); Sara Dawalt, *365 Deployment Days: A Wife's Survival Story* (Austin, TX, Bridgeway Books 2007); and Janelle Howe Mock, *Portraits of the Toughest Job in the Army: Voices and Faces of Modern Army Wives* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2007).

[297] Lisa McGrath, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Life as a Military Spouse* (New York: Penguin, 2008). For more "hip" books see Mollie Gross, *Confessions of a Military Wife* (New York: Savas Beatie, 2009); Lydia Sloan Cline, *Today's Military Wife: Meeting the Challenges of Service Life,* 5th ed. (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003); Jacey Eckhart, *Homefront Club: The Hardheaded Woman's Guide to Raising a Military Family* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005); Kathie Hightower and Holly Scherer, *Help! I'm a Military Spouse--I Want a Life Too!: How to Craft a Life for YOU as You Move with the Military* (Tacoma, WA: BookSurge Publishing, 2005); Houppert, *Home Fires Burning*; Leyva, *Married to the Military*; Hilary Martin, *Solo-Ops: A Survival Guide for Military Wives* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2003); and Sarah Smiley, *Going Overboard: The Misadventures of a Military Wife* (New York: New American Library, 2005). For more traditional guides, see Tanya Biank, *Under the Sabers: The Unwritten Code of Army Wives* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006); Crossley and Keller, *The Army Wife Handbook*; Elaine Gray Dumler, *I'm Already Home* (Westminster, CO: Frankly Speaking, 2003); Ellie Kay, *Heroes at Home: Help and Hope for America's Military Families* (Minneapolis, MN: Violetany House Publishers, 2002); Kathleen O'Beirne, *Pass It On: Living and Leaving the Military Life* (West Mystic, CT: Lifescape Enterprises, 1995); Nancy Shea, *The Army Wife*; Bonnie Domrose Stone and Betty Sowers Alt, *Uncle Sam's Brides: The World of Military Wives* (New York: Walker and Company, 1990); Carol Vandesteeg, *When Duty Calls: A Guide to Equip Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve Personnel and their Loved Ones for Military Separations* (Enumclaw, WA: Winepress, 2001).

[298] Respectively, Janet I. Farley, *Jobs and the Military Spouse: Married, Mobile, and Motivated for Employment*, 2d ed. (Manassas Park, VA: Impact Publications, 1997); Karen M. Pavlicin, *Surviving Deployment: A Guide for Military Families* (Saint Paul, MN: Elva Resa Publishing, 2003); and Gene Thomas Gomulka, *Marriage and Military Life* (Groton, CT: PlainTec, 2004).

During my fieldwork I observed some women passing around Army wife how-to books. One, titled *Under the Sabers: The Unwritten Code of Army Wives*, served as the inspiration for a multi-season television series called Army Wives on the Lifetime channel for which some wives hosted viewing parties with their peers. The show was the source of much discussion among Army wives, and many read the book upon which the show is based. The book's author, Tanya Biank, serves as a consultant for the show. Both the Officers' Wives' Club and the Enlisted Wives' Club endorsed a handbook when each hosted a presentation by military wife and author Shellie Vandevoorde during their meetings for her to speak about and promote her book *Separated by Duty, United in Love: A Guide to Long-Distance Relationships for Military Couples*.[299]

The Army wife guide is not a new concept. Nancy Shea's *The Army Wife*, originally published in 1941, was in 1954 "considered by many as the definitive guide to life in the Army."[300] Shea's book includes chapters such as "Army Esprit de Corps," "Army Engagements," "The Military Wedding," "Customs of the Services for the Army Bride," "Life on an Army Post," "The Business of Operating an Army Household," "Entertaining in the Army," and "Returning Social Obligations." In it, a

[299] Shellie Vandevoorde, *Separated by Duty, United in Love: A Guide to Long-Distance Relationships for Military Couples* (New York: Citadel, 2006).

[300] Powell, "Forward."

"proper" Army wife is expected to always put on a happy face, no matter what circumstances her husband's career and the Army impose on her life:

> The average Army woman of thirty years' service at the side of her husband has lived an ever changing role. … She prefers the luxury of an electric range, but she can manage about as well (with a few epithets) with green wood and a smoking G.I. stove or a campfire. She is equally at home in a general's set of quarters or a Quonset hut. Even in the Quonset she manages a feminine touch by making up a comfortable bed, and ten to one she will have thought to include a mosquito net, and will hang up a mirror and not forget to set the alarm clock.[301]

Shea emphasizes the importance of Army wives' uncomplaining resourcefulness as a "significant factor" yet "silent member" of the husband-and-wife team.[302]

Shea explicitly discusses the two-for-one career pattern decades before the actual term became common in academia: "The government really gets the full-time service of two people for the pay of one. The wife is definitely expected to pull her weight in the boat and in every way to uphold the fine traditions of the Army."[303] Additionally, Shea posits that "an Army wife is almost as much in the service of the government as her husband."[304] She depicts bad Army wife behavior as the failure that happens when wives do not execute proper behavior to the fullest: "A well-qualified wife is a great boon to her husband, and although there have been some disasters when wives were not up to what was expected of them, in many cases wives

---

[301] Shea, *The Army Wife*, xv. A Quonset hut is a prefabricated steel building sometimes used for housing in the 1940s and 1950s.

[302] Ibid., vii.

[303] Ibid., xvi.

[304] Ibid., xv.

have greatly enhanced the value of their husbands to the government."[305] She leaves no room for women to opt-out of a career as an Army wife—there is enthusiastic, capable performance that helps husband and country, or else there is "disaster." Though she leaves the details of disaster to one's imagination, Shea's book implies that the disintegration of the family, both nuclear and Army, is imminent if emotional labor is not performed well and constantly. The message is that women are the silent lynchpin of institutional success—both of the family and the Army.

Formal Training

Like many other highly involved Army wives, I took on-post Army Family Team Building classes, which are a series of three multi-day seminars that teach social etiquette, available Army resources, volunteer opportunities, and strategies to improve communication and interpersonal skills. I also attended a training class for FRG leaders, one for FRG treasurers, and another for FRG point-of-contact volunteers. Other classes, such as FRG leader brainstorming sessions or "next level" FRG leader classes on volunteer recruitment and retention, are organized at some posts. When soldiers attend a school for captains to learn how to take command of a company, the Army routinely offers spouses a leadership bootcamp in anticipation of the "opportunity" to lead an FRG when one's husband is a commander. Senior officers' wives take similar classes at Fort Leavenworth during the time when their

[305] Shea, *The Army Wife*, xv-xvi.

husbands train to take battalion commander positions, which instruct the spouses how best to be battalion commanders' wives and FRG advisors. The trainers for these sessions are vetted in the Army's volunteer system or are civilian workers hired to coordinate volunteer efforts; they represent the Army, imbue trainees with institutional values, and encourage practices that further the Army's goals.

Training is codified in a curriculum that is passed out in three-inch three-ring binders, but the instruction that is of the most vital interest to participants happens in the question-and-answer portion of the classes. I observed in the FRG leader brainstorming class that for every minute spent answering a question about a logistical matter such as fund-raising regulations, five more were spent asking how to handle problematic relationships with personalities in the FRG or with a commander. One woman came wanting to know if it is against regulations to sell hot dogs at the town's fall festival, but almost everyone in the room was in attendance to share "horror" stories about spouses who have broken either protocol or informal rules. In an AFTB class called "Management Skills: Group Dynamics," the topics of instruction included setting group norms at the first meeting, practicing active listening, challenging the idea rather than the person, eliminating personal attacks, and limiting personal stories. However, during the next unit, "Adapting to Change," that last lesson was ignored as the attendees dished personal stories from their FRGs, "sharing" their experiences in what felt like a gossip session. The women appeared to enjoy these stories more than any other part of the training session, laughing and chatting in animated side-conversations. Similarly, at the FRG leader brainstorming

sessions, the attendees were leaning in to listen, nodding vehemently, barely able to wait their turn to talk, and willing to stay late to socialize and continue the conversation. They appeared to find the experience to be cathartic. For once, they were among others who know what it is to do similar taxing emotional labor.

Army regulation encourages FRG leaders to organize one-time training events "relevant to FRG family needs" at their meetings.[306] Often before a deployment, for instance, leaders will invite civilian employees of the Army to teach a class during an FRG meeting on topics such as financial management, stress management, crisis planning, or available Army resources. The insinuation is that young spouses cannot handle life's challenges alone while their husbands are deployed and need Army-sanctioned instruction. I attended one FRG meeting that dedicated a full hour and a half to explaining how to plan for the contingency that an Army wife is hurt or killed and her children survive, though the father is deployed. The information was valuable, though most of the time was spent telling horror stories about children going into foster care when their mothers went into the emergency room. The message of such training sessions is often akin to, "Don't you be the one who calls us with these problems. Don't you let your life become a mess that we have to clean up, because we told you so." This method of training incorporates both distributing information and telling cautionary tales.

[306] J-1, f, of U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*, found in this document's appendix III.

Snubbing[307]

I learned what to do from mentorship, but I learned what *not* to do by observing the censorship of errant Army wives such as Rachel, Jane, and Allison.[308] Though gossip is a powerful tool with which to enforce group norms, I found snubbing to be particularly memorable because it usually happens in person, face-to-face, rather than behind the transgressor's back or after the fact. When snubbed, the transgressor receives instantaneous judgment, and the lesson is taught publicly for the "benefit" of everyone nearby.

While attending a battalion-level FRG meeting that fell on the night of a presidential address, Rachel sported comfortable fair-trade cotton clothes that indicated she supported progressive causes, in contrast to the Coach handbags of two of her compatriots. She and her husband clumped at the back of the room with other officers and their wives. When Rachel expressed a left-wing political opinion that her soldier-husband thought might be incendiary, he dismissed her remark—and thus denigrated her and her opinion—by saying, "Don't mind her, she works at a non-profit!" He then laughed conspiratorially with his fellow soldiers. Rachel was slightly

[307] Snubbing implies an interpersonal slight, but it does not necessarily mean that the one who is snubbed is shunned totally; e.g., Rachel can participate in the group even after she has been taught a lesson by being snubbed. This usage is a slight departure from Goffman, who groups such "aggressive interchanges" as "bitchiness": "Points made by allusion to social class status are sometimes called snubs; those made by allusions to moral respectability are sometimes called digs; in either case one deals with a capacity at what is sometimes called 'bitchiness'" (Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, 25). However, I do not use the term bitchiness because it places focus on the aggressor, when this discussion primarily focuses on the censoring effect on the one who is snubbed.

[308] The examples in this section are taken from fieldnotes as well as Jane, interviewee 24, and Allison, interviewee 37, interview by author, confidential transcripts.

chagrined and observably annoyed at the time, though relatively unscathed by this event in future social interactions I observed. However, her husband's subtle snub was part of a censoring pattern found throughout the Army community that influences publicly articulated political speech.

Often liberal or progressive views are kept private or stifled in public, among both soldiers and their spouses, for fear of disagreeing with "more senior" soldiers and spouses in what soldiers and wives widely accept to be a majority conservative environment. The subject of political bumper stickers and yard signs were sticking points in multiple marriages (including Rachel's) during the 2008 election season. In each case I observed or heard about, conflict arose not primarily because a soldier disagreed with his spouse, but because he did not want publicly displayed political views to affect his career negatively. Even in the privacy of my own home, I considered taking down a picture of myself holding a sign at an election caucus when my husband hosted a social function for soldiers in his unit.

Each on-post neighborhood selects a spouse as a mayor who hears concerns from residents and acts as an advocate for the neighborhood at monthly meetings attended by a housing employee and the division command sergeant major (CSM), the highest ranking NCO on post. During a meeting of the Army wife delegates, former soldier Jane raised "too many" concerns and was "too demanding" of the soldier in charge of addressing the problems. Those value judgments were clear from the actions of the other delegates, who snubbed her. They sighed, rolled their eyes, sat back in their chairs in frustration, and looked around the room impatiently when dark-

haired Jane followed up on old grievances. They gave each other not-so-subtle knowing looks across the table as if to say, "Here she goes again—why doesn't she just shut up!" Jane's peers deliberately ignored her before and after the meeting, punishing her actions that were more critical of the Army and its treatment of families than they thought proper. They also interrupted or belittled the new issues she introduced. To me, as a newcomer, the issues she raised such as inadequate neighborhood patrols by military police or a dangerous intersection near a school bus stop seemed legitimate and appropriate for the forum, but I observed that others did not agree. Questioning the effectiveness of the Army was akin in their minds to questioning the value of the Army and showing a disloyalty to that institution.

The other women worked hard to mollify the mood of the meetings each time Jane raised a concern by stepping in after her and trying to soften her language or dismiss her comments with their own anecdotal evidence. These women, who seemed to be cheerful parrots of each other's opinions, were particularly concerned to "keep up appearances" with the division command sergeant major who ran the meetings, making any family problems seem less problematic than they may be so as to not inconvenience or distress this busy and important man. If Jane said that soldiers were misusing a grade school parking lot, then the other neighborhood mayors would make excuses for why soldiers were parking there or say it was not such a big problem, e.g., "We know you've got plenty of other things on your plate." I got the impression there was no issue Jane might weigh in on to which her fellow neighborhood mayors would not take a contrary opinion, snubbing her in the process.

I observed a race-based division in the room. Jane's experience growing up on a reservation, a ghettoized ethnic minority accustomed to a culture in which one has rights to social services that historically have been fought for, perhaps informed her relationship to the Army and its services. The other women were all white. Their personal experience of social services was not an underlying motivation in such a meeting; rather, they appeared to be primarily concerned with the social networks of neighborhoods and the chance to interact with such a high-level Army official as the division CSM. Jane's demanding behavior threatened to put the neighborhood mayors out of the good graces of the division CSM, threatening their only link to any real power on the Army post. Thus, they distanced themselves from her. Jane's no-excuses approach to Army life also led to her being ostracized from her FRG, as will be seen later in the chapter, and as can also be seen here in the snubbing of Allison.

Sitting in her three-bedroom on-post duplex, cramped by four cats and the detritus from as many teenage girls, Allison's status as troublemaker seemed unlikely. She handed me a home-printed business card with her FRG's website address and her contact information, told me her life story, and then, after I asked specifically, proceeded to tell the story of how she "overstepped" the accepted boundaries of an Army wife, an officer's wife, and an FRG leader. Prior to the interview, in multiple social contexts (events to which Allison was pointedly not invited), other Army wives stressed that I should understand Allison's behavior as a lesson in what not to do. They conveyed to me with conspiratorial horrified looks and gasps that the right thing to do was to follow their example and snub her, even shun her.

Allison stepped into the FRG leadership position in a newly formed company with enthusiasm. She took every FRG leader and Army wife class available on post; I observed that she asked more questions than any other wife in the room about protocol and also about the best way to communicate problems the unit wives expressed to the unit commander in order to elicit change. She was oblivious to any eye-rolling in the room when she raised her hand to ask yet another question. Her eagerness to learn and become a better leader indicated that she would be a conscientious family-member advocate. Her personal initiative as an FRG leader was encouraged in her unit, though when she demonstrated that she was not an Army agent but rather more focused on advocacy, Army leaders reacted negatively.

The commander of Allison's husband's unit assured soldiers and families they would be home on weekends. He broke that promise repeatedly, which flew in the face of the division commander's statement, "I've declared this to be the 'family first' division."[309] Allison's efforts to tell the company commander how disgruntled family members were in response to the broken promise went unheeded. In this situation, a "good" Army wife leading an FRG would have continued to smooth things over with other Army wives and accepted that Army life is hard and Army leaders cannot always keep their promises. FRG leaders often serve as a shield for the unit leadership, fielding personnel problems and placating upset family members so that the soldiers can focus on training and disregard or at least minimize family well-being maintenance work.

[309] Quote from fieldnotes by author, 28 November 2006.

Allison responded to the broken promise as an advocate for her FRG's family members, not as an appeaser, which was deemed "bad" Army wife behavior. Allison, with her husband's backing, jumped the chain of command and the chain of concern, sending a letter to every high-ranking soldier on post expressing her FRG members' unhappiness over the broken promises and lack of family time. She did not "stay in her lane." In the eyes of civilians, the ambitious pursuit of justice on behalf of the women whom she was *asked* to support and lead may be commendable. Within the Army context, however, respect for the chain of command is stressed above all other responsibilities and at all other costs. For soldiers, the higher rank of those above them in the chain of command stands for general wisdom, responsibility for outcomes, and knowledge about the current situation. Disobeying the chain of command comes with strict penalties. For spouses, the chain of command (and the corresponding chain of concern among soldiers' wives) poses a similarly rigorous hierarchy. Allison ignored the rules of the institutional infrastructure as well as the norm of docile behavior. In the eyes of the high-ranking soldiers and their "good" wives, Allison changed from being an Army family-support solution as an FRG leader into an Army family-support problem.

Allison's husband received flack from his superiors for her actions, which implies that the system assumes that he controls her actions and attitudes. His commander organized a special meeting of high-ranking soldiers in the unit who chastised him. Higher-ranking officers spoke sternly to him but said little to his spouse because the soldiers could exert more direct control over him than they could

a volunteer family member. Allison reported that the unit commander asked her husband, "'Have you not counseled your wife on the correct protocol?'" She said, "In a roundabout way it was like, 'Can you not keep your wife on a leash?'" Allison did not stay in her unofficially prescribed lane of helping and sometimes pacifying families so that families place fewer demands on the Army. Her behavior violated the traditional roles of FRG leaders, but it also violated the chin-up supportiveness and rank-bound decorum associated with officers' wives: "The battalion commander told him [my husband] that the behavior was something of a private's wife, but not a LT's [lieutenant's] wife." By breaking the rules, Allison revealed the unofficial role of rank in prescribed spouse roles.

I asked Allison what the reaction was among her officer-wife peers in the unit coffee group. She responded: "I got blackballed. … After that letter for about a month and a half I heard nothing from nobody." Army wives were surprised and aghast about Allison's actions. At an informal Army wife gathering of neighbors, a copy of Allison's letter was passed around for each Army wife to exclaim about disapprovingly, in turn. Allison tried to effect positive change for her FRG's members (a change that every Army wife on post would have welcomed), but, because she questioned the sagacity of the Army and did not suffer quietly like the other wives, they snubbed her.

Gossip

Soldiers, fellow wives, and FRG leaders also taught me what not to do as an Army wife by telling me cautionary tales of wives who transgressed. Two women called their FRG leader to bail them out of jail, and their poor taste in placing that burden on the FRG leader was derided among soldiers, spouses, and the battalion's FRG leaders even more than the criminal behavior. The gossipers who told this and other stories often left out the names of the offending wives, which engendered further gossip while spouses and soldiers tried to determine who the anonymous offenders were. I talked to four women in the same unit before I could determine the size of an eight-person rogue group of FRG members who took it upon themselves to shun the official FRG and distribute their own information. Other women in that unit gossiped about the disrespect and arrogance of these rogue members. However, they were careful to not put too fine a point on the story, avoiding details and names in order to avoid being accused of spreading rumors, when in fact that is what they were doing. One informant told me she would wait until she trusted me to tell me the whole story, a withholding of information that itself indicated the significance of the transgression of the rogue group and the dangerousness of the narrative, even in cautionary-tale form.

Other transgressions were discussed and joked about for the benefit of all who might hear and learn from them. Soldiers joked about women deemed bad wives and mothers because they stocked their freezers with frozen pizzas. If such behavior were

acceptable, there would be no joke; the laughter signals that the story is about ineptitude. Similarly, I heard stories told with a wary laugh about a wife who ordered delivery food for dinner so often the cashier knew her voice, greeted her by name, knew her standard order, and did not have to ask her address. Another wife was famous for being heard yelling in her yard at her kids or dogs from blocks away. Army wives who drank to excess at social functions were also gossiped about long after the event. Similar to instances of snubbing, the goal of such jibes and gossip was as much to instruct the wives within earshot that such behavior was inappropriate as it was to ridicule the absent spouses.

Many times I heard stories about women who dressed inappropriately at Army balls—formal events held at banquet halls where the soldiers wear their "dress blue" uniforms and bring a date. I observed the judgments passed from wife to wife, in hushed but excited tones: "There are always fashion train wrecks, and Sara and I try to find the worst ones to laugh about."[310] Many women, particularly young soldier's wives who were not far out of high school, wore prom or prom-like dresses to the balls. Some of those strappy, short, and sometimes sheer or sequined outfits, though they may have been sexy two years earlier at a school dance, were deemed by the rules of decorum at a military ball to be inappropriately revealing, both of leg and cleavage. These scantily-clad young women were displaying a class aesthetic that clashed with the group norms set by a historic tradition of formal-length dresses

[310] Quote from fieldnotes by author, confidential.

among officer's wives that no longer exists but still informs the informal dress code.[311]

I learned over and over again not to dress "trashy" at a formal event, from gossip at and after the ball, and also in Army Family Team Building classes where appropriate dress for balls earned its own half-hour of instruction.[312] Among soldiers and their wives, however, the lesson was not just about maintaining decorum and projecting a certain social class. I also heard an Army wife link inappropriate dress to potential promiscuity (an old trope, indeed): "Why would you wear something like that?!? I mean, she's married and at an Army ball, who is she getting naked for?"[313] Certainly, such gossip, even though it is implied and not about any particular infidelity, affected my choice of dress at the soldiers' welcome-home ball.

I observed that thwarting the threat of infidelity motivated a variety of rumors and other behavior-policing actions by Army wives. Neighbors gossiped about a woman who left her house late at night, speculating that she was sneaking around on her husband while he was deployed. Another woman's suspected infidelity, based on "twenty phone calls from the same guy every day," spread from the soldiers to the wives in a whirlwind of gossip, and it was made clear that "she is trouble" and it was

---

[311] Operation READY's *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* also discusses "attire," though it suggests a dress code for FRG-related events, not unit-sponsored military balls: "Volunteers should dress in a manner appropriate to the work being performed and the situation involved. For example, if meeting with a representative of a post agency, professional attire may be best. Of course, if it is an outdoor FRG event, cutoffs, tee-shirts, and tennis shoes are fine" (57).

[312] The instructor promoted trading dresses and consignment shops because she said she was saddened by how much was spent by low-income families on formalwear. In the hair salon I overheard women talking about spending hundreds of dollars on dresses as they spent another two to three hundred on waxing, false eyelashes, and coloring, cutting, and styling their hair.

[313] Quote from fieldnotes by author, confidential.

best for even the women to avoid her. I saw women turn away from the table at which she sat when they recognized her, creating physical distance from her as if infidelity were catching. These sources and practices of gossip and snubbing are perhaps not Army-specific, but the close-knit nature of the Army community fosters gossip, and though perhaps normal it remains a powerful tool of emotional labor used to shape behavior.

I also observed spouses who did not even know Lori avoid her at an FRG meeting because she was dressed loudly, in a neon-colored blouse considered revealing for her age, with a big home-bleached, hair-sprayed coif and gaudy make-up. She had not modified her appearance in response to the group norms, but instead signaled her obliviousness to others' performance of display rules by continuing to dress "trashy." She was an officers' wife, and therefore labeled as firmly middle-class, though her disobeyance of group norms demoted her to a lower-class status among her peers. Lori was avoided because, if she looked trashy, then who knows what else she was doing "wrong"—again, the specter of infidelity haunts gossip sessions in-between the lines of chitchat about banalities such as fashion.

Many times wives and soldiers asked me if I were going home to live with family during my husband's fifteen-month deployment to Iraq. They expressed their relief when I said I was not, often launching into stories about wives who "didn't know anything" and had no support because they lived away from the post. As the photographer and FRG leader Krista put it, "You could run home and not be strong,

or you could stay here and learn about the kind of relationships you can get."[314] More menacing, I was told women who left the area risked not being found for a KIA notification—when a soldier's next of kin is told in person by a team of soldiers that the soldier has been killed in action. From such warnings I got the message loud and clear that leaving would be a betrayal of the community of women who stayed on post and, furthermore, that it would be dangerous. Kiesha, who left the Army wife community during a deployment, going "home" to extended family and a former job, left the social network in two ways. First, her departure was an implicit condemnation of those who stay behind, saying that she has better things to do than be with other Army wives. Second, Kiesha left the watchful and/or helpful eye of her friends and neighbors. The women in her social network could no longer keep tabs on her comings and goings, with the dual purpose of both helping her (a conscious reason) and keeping her in line with acceptable behavior (a reason less conscious but no less present). Because she went home to Chicago to start her career again, gossip and mentorship could not be used to control her actions.

"Crazies": Policing Group Norms

Spouses, motivated by self- and/or husband-centered goals, serve as Army operatives when they value, enact, and enforce two-for-one activities through small-group policing. Such policing happens among Army wives in informal groups such as

[314] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

clubs and neighborhoods, but it carries extra weight when associated with an official Army program such as FRGs. Becker points out, "with the establishment of organizations of rule enforcers, the crusade becomes institutionalized."[315] FRGs have the backing of the Army, an institution built on hierarchical authority and insistent on obedience—traits that permeate even these groups of family members.

As FRG volunteer leaders create group norms, they simultaneously undergo a process whereby they label behaviors outside those norms as deviant. They are, using Becker's formulation, "sufficiently powerful to make their imputations of deviance stick."[316] FRG leaders reward some behaviors with praise and offerings of camaraderie, but they punish other behaviors by deriding them or treating the deviant badly. Becker describes how techniques of punishment and reward can be made easier if a group emphasizes its norms subtly and constantly:

> Control would be difficult to maintain if enforcement were always needed, so that more subtle mechanisms performing the same function arise. Among these is the control of behavior achieved by affecting the conceptions persons have of the to-be-controlled activity, and of the possibility or feasibility of engaging in it. These conceptions arise in social situations in which they are communicated by persons regarded as reputable and validated in experience.[317]

Transgressions can be policed in these more subtle ways, such as the mentorship outlined earlier, or even, as Hochschild points out, "a wink or ironic tone of voice may change the spirit of a rule reminder."[318] There are also more aggressive,

---

[315] Becker, *Outsiders*, 155.

[316] Ibid., 186.

[317] Ibid., 60.

potentially hurtful ways of policing attitudes and behaviors such as joking about unacceptable behavior and gossiping about transgressive wives.

When FRG leaders hold meetings, a common strategy for instruction is to tell a cautionary tale of bad or incorrect spouse behavior. In this way, the FRG leader defines what is deviant and discourages similar behavior. The narratives are often relayed in a joking manner, sometimes accompanied by eye rolling or disgusted looks on the faces of the FRG leaders. The implication is that the listener is supposed to agree that such behavior is reprehensible and consider his or herself to be a member of the group who would never do anything so stupid (i.e., deviant). A conspiratorial laugh is akin to signing an imaginary contract with the FRG leader that says, "I want to be the kind of FRG member who never does anything that would be an anecdote told to the group as a cautionary tale, but rather the kind of FRG member who conforms enough to be part of the in-crowd who gets the 'in' jokes." When an FRG leader hears the laughter signaling that the group agrees that the cautionary tale represents unacceptable, laughable behavior, the group norms become even further entrenched and any deviation is perceived to be even more extreme.

Throughout data collection, I noted a pervasive piece of jargon mobilized for the emotional labor of defining feeling and display rules: "crazy." The term is short-hand for identifying bad, dangerous, or unruly Army wife behavior, warning the listener what not to do. FRG leaders frequently talk about the antics of "crazies" when socializing with their peers, but they also employ the label during FRG

---

[318] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 58.

meetings to instruct members how to behave by defining what is deviant. Some FRG leaders' meetings are riddled with judgments of what is "crazy" behavior and thus, alternatively, unproblematic behavior. For instance, a pre-deployment information session began, "I want you all to be prepared; that's why I asked this speaker to come in, because there were just too many crazy wives last deployment, calling me to get them out of jail, to get them groceries at the commissary because their ID card expired, to vent about how their husband wasn't getting any free time to call, all kinds of crazy stuff."[319] Some of the problems listed fall just beyond the scope of the FRG leaders' job description; FRG leaders connect distressed family members to resources, such as emergency loans, but they do not buy them groceries. However, since the Army sets them up as the first line of defense against family-member problems, FRG leaders often field such issues.

I observed that most leaders resent extra requests for help beyond what they consider to be normal demands. The leaders hope to use the "don't be a crazy" warnings, combined with the provision of information, to eliminate spouses' problems and thus alleviate some of their FRG wordload. In other words, a little emotional labor providing guidance about what is appropriate up front will both guide the members so they can hope to escape judgment and ease the FRG leader's work later.

Volunteering as a unit's FRG leader demands a large amount of an Army wife's resources, including time for activities, effort to lead the participants,

[319] Quote from fieldnotes by author, confidential.

emotional strength to support herself, her family, and the participants who depend on her, creativity to motivate participation, and discipline to maintain boundaries regarding what an FRG (and its leader) provides. As Krista, the entrepreneur and strong-opinioned FRG leader, commented, FRGs are "a lot more than anyone can tell you or prepare you for. You put in nasty hours and get phone calls in the middle of the night sometimes. These people just depend on you."[320] Krista indicated that she had not anticipated the intense, constant emotional labor that accompanies her volunteer position, in addition to her duties as a social and logistical coordinator.

Some Army wives use the word "crazy" to write off a high-need person without accounting for her personal circumstances. "High-need" spouses sap the majority of resources that FRG leaders are willing and able to give.[321] Mother-of-two Nikki explained, nodding knowingly as she wrote off such spouses' demands for support, "Nothing could ever be good enough for them. In the military you would not believe how many people are like that."[322] Other interviewees, such as FRG leader Katie, assumed I agreed with their eye-rolling assessment of such wives. She observed, "They expect the FRG to be the babysitter, the taxi driver, their gossip source, everything they need."[323] Gwen, the senior officer's wife who stepped down as an FRG advisor, threw her hands up in the air in exasperation, saying, "They

[320] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[321] The term is Gwen's (interviewee 36, interview by author, confidential transcript).

[322] Nikki, interviewee 1, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[323] Katie, interviewee 31, interview by author, confidential transcript. Note Katie's inadvertent but interesting identification of gossip as a *need*.

believe that the FRG and the rear-d [rear detachment—soldiers who do not deploy with the unit] is supposed to help mow their lawn and watch their children."[324] The FRG participants described by these FRG leaders are often the subject of policing actions because they ask for more from the FRG than leaders are willing to give.

When pressed, some interviewees attributed "crazy" behavior to loneliness and a lack of independence. FRG leader Katerina, while preparing to host a unit coffee and cooing to her newborn baby, told the story of a certain wife who calls her every day: "Some days, I'll be honest, I dodge her phone call because I just can't talk for an hour of that time. She doesn't know many people so she needs that. If something was to happen to her, I'm her guardian for her kids because she didn't know anybody else in the area."[325] Isolation results in a lack of resources. Both loneliness and a lack of resources are problems sated through dependence on a willing FRG leader. However, many FRG leaders are not willing supporters of what they view to be overly needy group members. In these cases, the FRG member "may be labeled as deviant not because [s]he has actually broken a rule, but because [s]he has shown disrespect to the enforcer of the rule."[326] Leaders judge an FRG member who demands a great deal of time and energy to be disrespectful of the leader's personal resources. Sometimes the labeling in these situations, as with the examples of "bad" fashion above, has a class and rank dimension because an officer's wife who

[324] Gwen, interviewee 36, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[325] Katerina, quote from fieldnotes by author, confidential.

[326] Becker, *Outsiders*, 155.

is an FRG leader may be imposing a middle-class definition of propriety and decorum on an FRG member who may be living at or below the poverty line.

Nikki, who set herself up as a knowing wife who has seen it all, attributed "crazy" behavior to a basic lack of personal independence, and thus an over-reliance on FRGs during deployments that tends toward abuse of the system. She stereotyped "a dependent-type person" within the Army-wife subculture: "When you are dependent on your husband, and you need your husband, and the husband leaves, you need a temporary replacement for the husband. That's when you've got a woman who's strung out on drugs or spending all of her husband's money and not feeding her kids."[327] Dependence, as well as the loneliness "cure" of turning to the Army family illustrates that the FRG serves, for some wives, as a surrogate family. Despite increased opportunities for women and changing gender roles in American society, Gwen points out, "That's still happening today that a spouse isn't self-reliant. Their husband still carries their ID card for them. … Some of these spouses that come from small towns in the middle of nowhere, they're used to the husband being the head of the family and controlling everything."[328] Gwen stated that in her opinion women who depend very heavily on their husbands when their husbands are home exhibit high-need behavior in the FRG during deployments. Army wives who fall into this category sometimes include foreign-born and/or non-English speaking women.

[327] Nikki, interviewee 1, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[328] Gwen, interviewee 36, interview by author, confidential transcript.

Again, needing support is not deviant; rather, it is the reason for FRGs. However, dependent women are sometimes falsely accused of deviance.[329]

The label "crazies" lumps together many characteristics perceived to be violations of FRGs' norms. The rhetorical umbrella equates an annoying frequency of phone calls—"I had a woman call me every morning and try to talk for an hour about FRG stuff just because she was lonely. Of course nobody has time for that; I've got kids"—with malicious rumor-mongering: "We know there is a rogue FRG group meeting, but please know the information they are spreading about infidelities is an awful lie, and the information we put out is official and in support of you and your soldier." Or it equates simple over-enthusiasm—"I've got a crazy who puts up pictures of her soldier in uniform all over MySpace"[330]—with criminal behavior: "I know nobody here is going to neglect their kids, but there's always some case where social services is called to investigate some crazy wife who can't take care of things while her husband is gone and refuses to participate in the FRG and so doesn't know about any resources on post or in the area." Crazies of two different orders, certainly, but all are crazies offered as examples not to be imitated.

The word crazy itself intentionally is more cavalier than other, more serious and/or negative labels that might apply such as complainer, troublemaker, menace, agitator, or needy person. An FRG leader can dish about "crazies" in her FRG and

[329] See appendix VI for analysis of Becker's concept of falsely accused deviance.

[330] Such postings are a violation of operational security, the idea being that if a soldier is captured his or her captors can find personal information through the internet and use that to torture the soldier successfully—a rule not widely known or enforced except among some family members with more time associated with the Army.

laugh about them with her sympathetic peers. An FRG leader may trade stories in the front lawn of on-post housing, letting off steam after an hour on the phone with a wife who during the deployment "went crazy" thinking her husband should be able to call her on the phone daily, thinking that her finances were in order when they were not, thinking the FRG leader could solve her fight with another member who is spreading lies, or other "crazy" thinking. However, if on that lawn the FRG leader would call certain members "bad" or a "menace" to the health of the group, then she would truly be complaining and thus would not be exhibiting pro-institutional attitudes. The word "crazy" alleviates some of the seriousness of the accusations and complaints of FRG leaders but still allows cautionary stories to be told and allows them to complain about burdensome members.

During a gossip fest of "crazies" stories on the sideline of a playground, I asked a group of senior soldiers' spouses what I should do in the event a "crazy" wife calls me with a dramatic situation looking for help. The "ranking" wife said, laughing but very emphatically, "Don't call me, I don't want the crazy," and other wives agreed, nodding vigorously. They suggested I tell the spouse to call the soldier who is the rear detachment (non-deployed) commander for the unit. There was no mention of the role of the FRG as a way to connect spouses to resources that may address the "crazy" problems.

"Crazy" wives are not always transgressors, they are sometimes simply wives with problems. FRG leaders connect families with resources in order to help alleviate the demands of families on the unit and the Army, but Army wives who tax that

system are sometimes censored with this pejorative label. Wives with no problems, who place no demands on FRG leaders, are not "crazy." The emotional labor of defining acceptable behavior by telling cautionary tales and labeling crazies is also in the business of corralling FRG members' emotions and actions in such a way that they place not only fewer demands on the Army but also fewer demands on FRG leaders.

"Sociability Cuts Both Ways"

Many families want support from an institution that places demands on them and on its employees—demands that extend well beyond a forty-hour work week and may involve frequent moves, longs hours, hazardous work environments, and long and frequent training exercises and deployments. When asked how implications for family life differ for soldiers and for men in other lines of work, seasoned spouse Jill listed the above constraints on Army families that differentiate them from other families and create a need for formal Army-sanctioned support. She added, bluntly and with a tight smile, "I think what's different is that our husbands get shot at and die."[331] Many other spouses echoed her sentiments. However, family members do receive some noteworthy benefits of support, as indicated in chapter six.

Intuitively, it is tempting to assume that support has normative value—that it is good. However, it is not that simple. Strong support is sometimes good, but the

[331] Jill, interviewee 34, interview by author, confidential transcript.

"strength of weak ties" argument claims that distant, small amounts of connection are sometimes better for developing community and civil society.[332] Furthermore, some support has negative effects. Alejandro Portes criticizes the overwhelming tendency for scholars and practitioners to ignore the potential negative outcomes of association in favor of "celebratory" assessments.[333]

Small groups that provide intimacy and the benefits that come with it also police their members. One example of policing is the imposition of expectations—through mentorship or even criticism—on spouses, particularly commanders' wives, to volunteer. Additionally, the prominent role of gossip as a mechanism of emotional labor, as seen in the preceding section, can provide a common set of allowable and disallowed display rules but can also be cutting to certain individuals. A story about a "crazy" wife who had to bailed out of jail during the previous deployment teaches boundaries and allows wives to perhaps share a laugh, but an Army wife in the group who has had her own trouble with the law may be so shamed she eschews future contact with the FRG.

A close-knit community that provides support and information also controls that population. Portes argues that in small-group settings, "social capital can have other, less desirable consequences" and is not an "unmixed blessing."[334] Another example is more logistical than ideological: FRGs often blur the line between

---

[332] Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360-80.

[333] Alejandro Portes, "Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Society," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 18.

[334] Ibid., 15.

invasiveness and support, collecting background, contact, and travel information but also calling regularly to check on a spouse's well-being, all for seemingly justifiable reasons, but all outside the scope of most other groups related simply by spouses' employer, such as universities' faculty wives' clubs. I heard of one FRG leader who demanded that each member become her MySpace friend so that the leader could monitor them, patrolling their postings for propriety. FRG leaders ask that every vacation, every trip to see family, and every overnight in the neighboring city, be reported so that in case one's husband is killed in action the notification team can find the spouse. Again, the reasoning is sound, but every e-mail full of travel dates and addresses can feel to the family member as if the FRG leader is monitoring and judging her—"Boy, she travels a lot. Why is she staying overnight in the city so much? Is she cheating on her husband?" These judgments are not expressed and perhaps not even made, but the institutionalized omniscient surveillance leads spouses to feel and sometimes act as if their every action is being gossiped about and judged.

Another of the "less desirable consequences" is that the cohesion of conformers into a tight group necessitates defining the group in opposition to deviant outsiders. As Portes points out, "the same strong ties that bring benefits to members of a group commonly enable it to bar others from access," either on the books or de facto because of perceived barriers.[335] Feelings of exclusion more than likely increase along with the strengthening of the core community of FRG participants—in other

[335] Portes, "Social Capital," 15.

words, "sociability cuts both ways."[336] The tendency for close-knit groups to define insiders and outsiders is not inherently bad. However, in an inclusive group such as an FRG, where membership is automatic, exclusive tendencies create tensions because unofficial exclusions usually happen by the use of aggressively policing emotional labor rather than simply banning someone. However, in the case where a conformer loses her status as a "good" Army wife, sometimes FRG leaders are asked to step down by commanders, as was the case with Jane.

Jane: An Ex-FRG Leader[337]

I interviewed one woman who was ostracized from her FRG, first unofficially and then officially, because she did not fit the mold of what an FRG member "should be." Earlier I described Jane's role in a non-FRG group where she was viewed by her peers as a woman who raised "too many" concerns and was "too demanding" of the soldier in charge of addressing the problems. Jane did not *try* to violate group norms; she was an unintentional deviant.[338] She pushed the system to make it work as she saw fit, but because she did not "go with the flow" she was labeled a "crazy" Army wife. A further transgression, though no fault of her own, was that Jane was in the Army herself at the time and so did not "properly" perform gender roles or play the

[336] Portes, "Social Capital," 18.

[337] Unless otherwise noted, all quotes in this section are from Jane, interviewee 24, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[338] See appendix VI for a typology of deviance.

politics of husband-determined rank. In her words, "That set people off because I didn't have my husband's rank to pull, I had my own." Her mere status as a soldier gave her authority that other FRG members could not access independent of their husbands, which Jane thought made them jealous.

Jane was publicly embarrassed by some slanderous rumors spread about her in her FRG. Though she was unclear about what precipitated the attacks, an indignant Jane claimed that some of the youngest FRG members went on a "vendetta" against her and spread a grab-bag of rumors about her, claiming she was a swinger who seduces soldiers, a bad mother, and a vandal. People whispered about her at FRG meetings. Anonymous calls were made to her commander and her off-post workplace (she was a National Guard soldier and so had additional non-Army employment). The gossip made her interpersonal relationships very contentious. She recalled: "Most of your FRGs turn into a huge gossip session. You get one that doesn't like you and it goes on from there. They can spread lies. I lost my job because of it. I lost most of the volunteer programs because of it, almost divorced my husband because of it." The accusations within the FRG created a situation that was not only contentious, it became litigious: "In the last FRG I filed nine slander suits, … two gag orders, and one peace bond. Those three ladies, they as much as mention my name in public and will be paying five hundred dollars to the courts." Jane displayed unusual willingness to retaliate against aggressive rumormongers. She set strict, no-nonsense boundaries regarding "drama." Jane said, "I have no sympathy. We didn't want to be mean but we had zero time for bullshit. I will exclude drama from my life. I don't need it. I

have eliminated people from my life because of drama." The drama she refers to is the process of gossiping about her alleged improprieties and snubbing her.

The commander of her husband's unit asked Jane to cease her participation in the FRG; she had become known as a "bad" Army wife and was no longer fit, if only in image, to serve an emotional laborer for the Army. As a result, she changed from being very involved with unit-related volunteer work to maintaining a strict separation between her husband's work and their home life. She expressed her new outlook thus:

> If they don't feel that I should be involved in that unit then I don't think that the unit should be involved in my life. My husband, he goes to work and comes home. My job to me as a military wife is not to let the two mix. I keep our home a home. I don't call his work and tell him what happened. If it does not affect me or my children, I don't care. If it does not affect our finances, I don't care. He likes that too. If I'm working, I don't want him involved in my job so I don't get involved with his.

Jane's bitterness is specifically directed at the FRG; she continues to volunteer in other ways in the Army community but eschews FRG events.

Fellow wives and the commander perceived Jane as a deviant, as someone who was hard to get along with because she was willing to publicly confront gossipers, and thus as someone who violated group norms. After the group's members began to police her, she was swept up in a maelstrom of bickering, malicious behavior, and, finally, legal action. As Becker points out, "labeling places the actor in circumstances which make it harder for him to continue the normal routines of everyday life and thus provoke him to 'abnormal' actions.'"[339] Once a

[339] Becker, *Outsiders*, 179.

person is determined to be a deviant, such as Jane, the label may turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy and a self-perpetuating situation. Because of this tendency, those who are deviant are sometimes policed out of the FRG and those who conform must be careful to always maintain the image of a conformer.

Conclusion

How do Army wives learn about the responsibilities that informally yet certainly accompany their husbands' positions? Army wives learn the stereotype and traditional expectations of proper behavior through handbooks, classes, mentorship, gossip, snubbing, cautionary tales about "crazies," or simply as they are handed down from wife-to-wife and reinforced or corrected by soldier-husbands.

According to Enloe, the Army, too, "is prone to send out messages about what the ideal spouse should be."[340] Hochschild argues that the employer dictates the rules for displaying appropriate emotional labor. She posits, simply, that "institutions manage how we feel."[341] Weinstein and Mederer also attribute a great deal of power

[340] Enloe, *Maneuvers*., 162.

[341] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 49.

to the military and its agents in crafting an Army wife role (here, specifically the officer's wife role):

> The military wife has a very carefully constructed public role. She must volunteer on base, attend military functions with her husband, and cater military functions at her home. Her presence (or absence) is carefully noted by her husband's superiors and their wives. She must put the needs of her officer husband, and thereby the needs of the military, above her own needs. By carefully shaping gender roles and the expectations for wives' service, the military has been able to control wives' public roles.[342]

The next chapter illustrates how, in both theory and practice, the Army dictates the role of the Army wife, by both instructing FRG leaders and relying on FRG leaders to bear the burden of managing soldiers' families and their emotions.

[342] Weinstein and Mederer, "Blue Navy Blues," 14.

CHAPTER 6: FRG LEADERS' EMOTIONAL LABOR: FOR THE ARMY OR FAMILY MEMBERS?

This chapter reveals Family Readiness Group leaders' emotional labor as they attempt the balancing act of supporting their members as well as achieving success in their role as the Army's unpaid family-member managers—two goals that sometimes align and sometimes clash. By supplying FRGs, the Army acknowledges that soldiers' spouses need support. However, a close reading of the guidance for volunteer FRG leaders indicates that the Army wants FRG leaders to take care of soldiers' spouses in such a way that the Army bears little of the burden. Such homefront work serves two masters. Unpaid FRG leaders sometimes must choose to serve the needs of members (as Allison did when she jumped the chain of command to advocate for her FRG's members' quality of family life, detailed in the previous chapter) or be a good worker and represent the interests of the Army.

The Army FRG Leader's Handbook makes explicit the rules of FRG leadership. The 2002 version of *The Army FRG Leader's Handbook* was distributed in FRG leader training classes and referred to often by trainers.[343] It calls itself "a comprehensive, reliable, and in-depth reference for FRG leaders."[344] I received multiple copies in training classes as I conducted my fieldwork from 2007-2008, including a "pocket-sized" version of the 152-page document (shrunk, not

[343] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*. READY stands for Resources for Educating about Deployment and You.

[344] Ibid., 2. .

condensed). The manual, sponsored by the Department of the Army's Community and Family Support Center and based on input from professional deployment specialists, provides guidance on a variety of issues ranging from major initiatives, such as how to raise funds or how to manage volunteers, to smaller-scale issues, such as how to handle a crisis phone call, design a newsletter, or conduct one's first meeting.

The rules of FRG leadership are also implied—as in the call for FRG leaders to be the front line of defense for the Army against family problems and also in the pressure leaders feel to perform appropriate emotional labor. Often, FRG leaders fill this gap between theory and practice, between fulfilling their job description and doing what is truly asked of them. They perform a seemingly impossible feat of accomplishing what the Army prescribes, following its sometimes contradictory rules and learning about the prescribed limits of their volunteer work, and also accomplishing what the Army and its emissaries *want* them to do—doing emotional labor to take care of family-member problems before they become a problem for the Army. The phrase "take care of" rings true for both roles: FRG leaders care for their members and/or they take care of (eliminate or at least alleviate) the Army's family-member-related problems.

I critique these oft-conflicting demands on FRG leaders by first highlighting the complex rules of engagement for FRG leaders as seen in *The Army FRG Leader's Handbook*. I argue the Army encourages volunteer leaders to work for the Army mission rather than act as an advocate for family members' needs. I illustrate, using

the *Handbook*, how the Army demands emotional labor but devalues, both rhetorically and in its funding rules, such women's work. I go on to argue that FRG leaders constantly struggle to balance the official indication for FRGs' limited scope and the unofficial demands from spouses and the Army that surpass that scope. I use ethnographic fieldnotes to demonstrate FRG leaders' fight on the homefront to contain family problems, often specifically to help commanders and contribute to the Army's mission and sometimes to the exclusion of actually addressing family members' needs. Additionally, I illustrate how the task of managing family members' emotions about scarce and often-changing information dominates FRG leaders' emotional labors as they balance the sometimes contradictory tasks of working for the Army and supporting family members.

The Army's Mixed Messages for Performing Family-member Support

The Army's conflicting messages about what is important work and what is necessary, yet less appreciated and thus lesser emotional labor can be seen in its directive for funding FRG activities. FRG leaders can use appropriated funds—Army-supplied monies from the defense budget—for FRG efforts such as meetings, newsletters, and maintaining call rosters. The Army regulation separates "mission-critical" activities from social activities such as holding a holiday party for which the FRG leader may buy food and decorations and rent a meeting space and a Santa suit.

Social activities that "build soldier and family cohesion and morale"[345] must be paid for using money the FRG members raise themselves according to strict Army guidelines[346] through bake sales, auctioning off a pie to be thrown at the commander, raffles, or selling unit-branded items such as Christmas ornaments, blankets, or car magnets, to name a few fundraisers. Social events hold second-class status; in *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* the Army demands that FRG leaders offer them, but the Army will not pay for them.

The same paragraph of the Army regulation that prohibits appropriated funds for social activities also asserts, "FRG social activities can enhance family and Soldier camaraderie, provide stress relief, and reduce family loneliness during deployments."[347] The Army encourages emotional labor, particularly because it enhances soldier readiness and retention. However, the Army's focus on warfighting, as well as its patriarchal values, preclude it from giving volunteer family support the same status as paid work or even giving emotional labor the same funding as more tangible work. Rather, emotional labor that serves family members must be funded by women's piecemeal, volunteer efforts.

The Army's demand for, yet devaluation of, emotional labor sends conflicting messages about the appropriate level of FRG leaders' involvement in family support. I observed high-ranking Army soldiers try to manage the scope of FRG leaders'

---

[345] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 8.

[346] See appendix J in U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*, which is this document's appendix III.

[347] Ibid., J-2, e.

activities. At a division-wide deployment seminar held in an on-post banquet room, attended mostly by commanders and FRG advisors, the division's chief of staff warned against "FRG mission creep." He explained that FRGs are more focused on fundraising and performing casualty assistance tasks (addressing the immediate needs of family members whose soldier was killed in action) "than they need to be."[348] Casualty assistance is not the purview of FRGs—it is handled through other channels. Regarding fundraising, the division's chief of staff cautioned that managing family members' problems may be a secondary goal for FRG leaders who spend most of their efforts coordinating bake sales and wrapping presents for tip money in front of the post exchange shops. The tight rein on fundraising and thus on the social activities that can be funded is in glaring contrast to the call for FRG leaders to accomplish the Army-dictated goals listed previously such as "build soldier and family cohesion and morale" and "help families become more self-sufficient."[349]

Additionally, in the same meeting the division's commanding general stressed that FRGs should look to division-wide precedent for things like baby gifts and memorials, in order to do "expectation management"[350]—for instance, if one fallen soldier's family is given a bouquet from the FRG but another family is not, then that raises questions of fairness. His emphasis on managing FRG members' expectations dictates leaders' emotional labor: scale back expectations for, as well as the performance of, family-member support.

---

[348] Quote from fieldnotes by author, 28 November 2006.

[349] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 8.

[350] Quote from fieldnotes by author, 28 November 2006.

The division's chief of staff added, "This is not a compassion competition. ... It's not about one-upmanship. … You have to be careful what standard you're setting."[351] Both soldiers expressed concern that FRG leaders were performing care work at a level that could not be sustained through hectic deployments, particularly with the 2007 Operation Iraqi Freedom troop surge looming on the division's near horizon. However, the Army leaders' motives for directing FRG leaders to manage expectations and scale back support were not entirely altruistic. The Army's volunteer labor pool is so valued by Army leaders that they concerned themselves directly with preventing burnout. An overextended leader may cease to effectively contain family problems. The commanders, even as they focused on saving FRG leaders from themselves, focused also on retaining the free labor of FRG leaders and thus continuing to keep family members and their problems at bay.

The Army sends mixed messages: do the sort of family support activities that may need money, but do not focus on raising money. As described above, self-raised monies go toward "FRG social activities [that] can enhance family and Soldier camaraderie, provide stress relief, and reduce family loneliness during deployments."[352] However, the Army also pulls back the reins on fundraising: "FRGs are not established to raise funds, solicit donations, or manage large sums of money."[353] The Army directs FRG leaders to not do so much family care work that they burn out, and to not focus on raising money even though it may "build soldier

[351] Quote from fieldnotes by author, 28 November 2006.

[352] U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*, J-2, e.

[353] Ibid.

and family cohesion and morale."[354] The message, in sum, is that family support is important but that it should be done in such a way that it does not burden the Army by sapping its resources or burning out its workers.

Family-member Support beyond Prescribed Limits

As illustrated above, language stressing what an FRG should *not* be (e.g., fundraising-focused) illuminates what it often is, despite directions to the contrary. *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* defines FRGs in the negative: **"**The FRG is not: a babysitting service, a taxi service, a financial institution, a professional counseling agency, or another military organization."[355] The *Handbook* adds, "remember, too, that gossiping is taboo."[356] Nikki, an occasional FRG point of contact class instructor, discussed the function of an FRG: "to disseminate info, not to make friends, that's a pleasant byproduct, not to find a babysitter."[357] I observed many Army wives such as Nikki disavow an FRG's role as a fundraising machine, a rumor mill, a babysitter, etc. However, the interviewees often described specific instances when such things happened in their own FRGs.

According to official indications, FRG leaders should act primarily as information conduits, passing down official information and connecting families with

[354] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 8.

[355] Ibid., 8.

[356] Ibid., 57.

[357] Nikki, interviewee 1, interview by author, confidential transcript.

the resources they need.[358] However, in addition, according to *The Army FRG Leader's Handbook*, if the FRG "leadership does not plan fun activities [then the] FRG is doomed."[359] Furthermore, the Army requires a great deal of involvement, telling FRG leaders to "plan and do more things together" with their members, though in the same list of "key tasks" the *Handbook* warns against FRG leaders doing too much.[360] It orders them to "avoid burnout."[361] In the section of the *Handbook* on burnout, FRG leaders are told: "Whatever you do, keep in mind that you are there to serve others."[362] With counter-indications such as these, FRG leaders are left to choose for themselves if they limit their work to protect themselves from burnout or if they throw themselves into family support efforts to accomplish the *Handbook*'s list of goals.

With the conflicting instruction provided FRG leaders, it is not a surprise that FRGs vary widely from one unit to another, even acting like unofficial, traditional support groups at times rather than official FRGs bound by rules and regulations. Long-standing expectations and behaviors persist from a history of Army wife support (formally in coffee groups, waiting wives' clubs, and Officers' and Enlisted Spouses' Clubs, and informally among neighbors and church-goers) that continues today, in parallel to Army-mandated Family Readiness Groups. FRGs, in theory, are

---

[358] Mobilization/Deployment Specialist, interview by author, transcript, 28 September 2006.

[359] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 22.

[360] Ibid., 144.

[361] Ibid.

[362] Ibid., 147.

more business-like in the services and official information they provide family members. In practice, however, their volunteer leaders often perform the counseling and caretaking duties that might be expected of one's friend or next-door neighbor.

Some Army wives seek a level of support that sometimes existed and sometimes still exists in "old-Army" spouse communities. In response, some FRG leaders give that level of support, but the formalization of FRGs, particularly after Army changed the program from Family Support Groups to Family Readiness Groups to emphasize resources instead of care, has eliminated those responsibilities from the FRG leader role.[363] One senior soldier's spouse, Gwen, who had stepped down as the FRG advisor, described the disconnect between informal spousal support, which she sees as romanticized, and the current, more utilitarian, prescribed relationship:

> The FRGs, people thought, were supposed to be more like the coffee groups of old where people did meet your needs, where they would come and welcome you and help you unpack and cook you dinner if you were sick or in the hospital, they would watch your children for you. That's how the old system worked. I think it was a good system because it was spouses helping spouses. But when the FRG became formalized it became regulated too. They're not there to fix your car or drive you around. It's a resource basically, there to tell you what resources are available in the community to help you.[364]

I observed it to be common for FRG members to understand the role of FRG leaders differently than the official description of the role. The resulting conflicts with "high-need" or "crazy" members, as discussed in the preceding chapter, can lead to FRG leader burnout.

---

[363] See chapter three for more on the change in mission that accompanied the name change from FSGs to FRGs.

[364] Gwen, interviewee 36, interview by author, confidential transcript.

The assistance many spouses demand from representatives of the Army—the FRGs' volunteer leaders and soldiers who liaise with the FRG—oversteps the bounds of FRGs' current mandates. Susan, a major's wife, described in her brash voice and typically frank way some of the issues that confront FRGs leaders beyond their assigned tasks: "Giving information about what the husbands are doing at work to the people is not the problem. … It's all the people who are having affairs or not taking care of their children. It's all the health issues and all that kind of stuff that gets in the way."[365] FRG leaders often make a personal choice about how strictly they perform FRG-only tasks or whether they widen their role to include support that involves more hands-on engagement with participants and their problems. FRG leader Brie was hands-on with the Army wives in her FRG, going beyond FRGs' limited scope; she said, "We don't really keep to the 'standards,' [though] there's actually this whole protocol for FRGs that a lot of people are strict about."[366] That "personal" choice, however, is always informed by the Army's guidance as well as traditional expectations from her peers, requiring her to perform a balancing act to serve both institutional goals and her FRG's members.

[365] Susan, interviewee 20, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[366] Brie, interviewee 8, interview by author, confidential transcript.

The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*: Shaping Army-Supporting Workers*

The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook's official indication for performing and managing emotions matters because it defines the purview of emotional labor. It offers an instance when, as Hochschild argues, "social exchange is forced into narrow channels"[367] by the managing institution. The prescription for who an FRG leader should be and how she should perform her leadership role serves the Army's goals of managing family problems at the FRG-level.

The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook lists "important" goals for FRGs. It describes the FRG leaders' work thus:

- build soldier and family cohesion and morale;
- prepare soldiers and families for separation during deployments and, later, for the stresses of reunion;
- reduce soldier and family stress;
- reduce the commander's and other leaders' workloads;
- help soldiers focus on their mission during deployments;
- help families become more self-sufficient;
- provide an avenue for sharing timely, accurate information; and
- promote better use of post and community resources.[368]

FRG leaders' required performances for soldiers, families, and commanders are complex. The Army asks its volunteer workforce to reduce its paid employees' workloads and contain family issues so that soldiers can perform more effectively. The personal and interpersonal skills required to achieve any one of these goals are

[367] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 119.

[368] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 8.

daunting; for instance, there are entire professions devoted to preparing for and reducing stress, and increasing self sufficiency in others is no small task either. FRG leaders are neither life coaches nor psychologists, though they are asked to perform the roles of both.

The overly general and thus vague language of this job description obscures the intense emotional labor required of FRG leaders. "Help families become more self-sufficient" does not begin to encompass the work of managing FRG members' expectations and reactions to the rapidly changing and potentially overwhelming demands of Army life, particularly during the longest war in American history.[369] It certainly does not speak to some family members' expectations of hands-on support and the Army's unarticulated expectation that FRG leaders provide that hands-on support as well as socialization that prevents or at least contains family problems.

The work of FRG leaders, according to the Army, requires a multitude of skills promoted in *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, here figure 3.[370] FRG leaders must be able to serve as managers, logisticians, technicians, problem solvers, public speakers, writers, and morale boosters. These many requirements are illustrated with a pink toolbox, signaling the feminine touch required to accomplish FRG work and the gendered status of emotional labor. Work in the Army is a man's job (women occupy marginal roles in the military since they cannot serve in the central warfighting combat arms branches such as infantry), and though it

[369] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 8. Operation Enduring Freedom, the Afghan war, began in October 2001, following three coordinated airplane attacks in the United States on 11 September. The next-longest war is the conflict in Vietnam.

[370] Ibid., 26.

also requires hard work and even tools, emotional labor is a woman's lesser, unpaid work.

Figure 3: What Do FRG Leaders Need?[371]

The entire graphic neglects to focus on family care or altruism. Rather, in the majority, its jumbled phrases indicate that an FRG leader's focus should be on logistics (organizing, public speaking, accounting, computer literacy). In addition, figure 3 asserts that volunteer FRG leaders need "Team Spirit." This language amplifies the pink toolbox's message that FRG leaders do women's work such as, in this case, work similar to leading cheers. Also, the phrase "Team Spirit" belies the necessity for FRG leaders to be dedicated to the team: the institution of the Army.

[371] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 26.

The Army demeans emotional labor by aligning it with cheerleading even as it demands the valuable emotional labor for itself.

Figure 4: The FRG Leader's Handbook's Ideal Character Traits[372]

Cheerleading, public speaking, and accounting, among the other skills in figure 3, are best performed, according to the handbook, by leaders who have particular traits. It states, "FRG leaders who possess characteristics shown in the graphic … will most likely have effective FRGs."[373] The triangle illustration shown in figure 4 creates a hierarchy that values some traits over others.

[372] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 21.

[373] Ibid.

FRG leaders, according to *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook,* should be polite, goal-oriented, flexible team players who delegate responsibilities—the first-to-be-read traits listed in the upper half of the Army-green triangle. These attributes promote a somewhat deferential personality, thus valuing a person, in particular a woman, who perhaps defers to the Army's goals first and foremost rather than the goals of supporting individual family members. The traits focus on how an FRG leader works for the Army, rather than how she interacts with members. Less-important traits, located in the bottom half of the triangle, include personality traits that foster good interpersonal communication and build rapport between leaders and members. For instance, a fair, honest, responsible woman who is a good role model with a sense of humor and a positive attitude will endear herself to members, but such characteristics do not speak to her work as an emissary of the Army. Hence these traits are relegated to lower-tier status—they are listed last. Additionally, on the lower tier, the Army's mixed message for FRG leaders again surfaces. The volunteers must be calm, yet they must also be assertive and enthusiastic. They must adapt their emotions and even their personality traits to perform the various emotional labors demanded of them by the Army.

The FRG Leadership Checklist (figure 5) calls for FRG leaders to accomplish a variety of emotional labor tasks, though it also demands that these tasks be done with deference.[374] For example, it requires FRG leaders to ask if the following are true of themselves: "I frequently confer with the commander," "I frequently confer

[374] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 33.

with all chairpersons," "I share important decisions," "I seek input," "I try not to dominate meetings." The answer should be yes.[375] The many tasks that must be done, according to the checklist, should be accomplished by conferring and deferring. When the Army promotes deference (telling FRG leaders to ask themselves, "Will I set aside self-interest and give genuine, selfless service to them [members]?"[376]), yet demands that FRG leaders accomplish a variety of complicated tasks with little funding or supervision, it attempts to create for itself an ideal worker who will "quietly keep things humming along, and keep the FRG effective."[377] If FRG leaders strive to be "good" Army wives who serve the Army in part to help their husbands' careers, then they take the importance of the Army's message to heart. They learn that deference to institutional goals must guide their support work. The checklist does not encourage them to learn about or care for members' needs. Rather, the Army's needs are paramount.

[375] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 33.

[376] Ibid., 135.

[377] Ibid., 147.

Figure 5: FRG Leadership Checklist[378]

1. I know and support the commander's readiness goals.	Yes	No
2. I embrace those goals and convey them to other volunteers.	Yes	No
3. I frequently confer with the commander about FRG plans and activities.	Yes	No
4. I frequently confer with all chairpersons about FRG plans and activities.	Yes	No
5. I set the example by welcoming diversity among our FRG members.	Yes	No
6. I actively seek inclusion of all members in FRG meetings and activities.	Yes	No
7. I readily make some decisions on my own when appropriate.	Yes	No
8. I share important decisions with the committee leaders and the commander.	Yes	No
9. I seek input on group activities and concerns from the membership.	Yes	No
10. I have a positive attitude of friendliness, kindness, and service.	Yes	No
11. I am an assertive but humble and kind leader.	Yes	No
12. I treat everyone with respect and regard; I never criticize but I mentor.	Yes	No
13. I try not to dominate meetings and strive to get others involved.	Yes	No
14. I try to keep meetings focused, fun, and reasonably brief.	Yes	No
15. I frequently and publicly thank people for their help.	Yes	No
16. I attend all steering committee meetings or ensure that an alternate does.	Yes	No
17. I seek to resolve conflict peaceably and promote harmony among the FRG members.	Yes	No
18. I listen actively and seek to understand the other person's viewpoint.	Yes	No
19. I follow up with chairpersons to make sure critical tasks are done on time.	Yes	No
20. I am careful not to micromanage.	Yes	No
21. I am able to recruit capable members to help with committee work.	Yes	No
22. I work well through others to get tasks done.	Yes	No
23. I plan well and get help with planning, preparing meeting agendas, and seeing that activities are organized and done well.	Yes	No
24. I try to balance the importance of task versus relationships.	Yes	No
25. I have completed family readiness training and promote it among the FRG members.	Yes	No

In the checklist, numbers one and two hold particular interest: "I know and support the commander's readiness goals" and "I embrace those goals and convey

[378] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 33.

them to other volunteers."[379] In a section of the handbook discussing the checklist and the key tasks that can be inferred from it, the first bullet point is "Support the mission."[380] All of the other work—setting an example, mentoring, including, sharing, resolving conflict, recruiting, etc.—is done in service to knowing, supporting, and embracing the commander's (and the Army's) readiness goals and conveying them. That is, when a leader decides the balance between tasks and relationships (number twenty-four in the checklist), that balance is always informed by institutional values. Additionally, when a leader seeks to promote harmony, that, too, is in service to the Army's goals because a more harmonious group is more receptive to the institution's message. If supporting the Army mission at times precludes supporting family members, leaders learn they should sacrifice their FRGs' members.

The endgame for the Army in promoting goals, skills, and leadership traits, as well as an attitude of deference, among its volunteers is to shape better laborers for its own benefit. The handbook stresses that "involvement in FRG activities can foster more positive attitudes among Army families and provide a better understanding of military life, the unit, and its mission."[381] Leaders' positive attitudes bolster the Army's manpower goals of readiness, retention, and possibly recruitment.

---

[379] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 33.

[380] Ibid., 144.

[381] Ibid., 10.

The Army's First Line of Homefront Defense[382]

My job is to keep everyone informed. I also do a lot of unseen and not talked about things to raise the morale of the spouses.

Elizabeth[383]

Tonya left the computer on with the volume turned all the way up in order to hear the Yahoo! Chat alert even while sleeping during the year her husband Roberto, a sergeant, was deployed to patrol the dirt roads of Ramadi, Iraq. She shook her head sadly, hoop earrings swaying amid her hair's dark curly waves, as she told me that her two-year-old son quit learning to say new words after her husband left, and that she hoped he will resume this piece of his development upon Roberto's return. She wanted to have another child, but this and other plans for the future such as returning to work as a veterinary technician were on permanent hold. She wondered if or when the Army lifestyle would let her set those parts of her life in motion again. Tonya felt she was not being a good friend to her neighbor who had a miscarriage, but she was in what she described as an "deployment emotional hibernation" and could not seem to summon the sympathy she felt was appropriate.

Despite all of these complications from the deployment, however, Tonya was a relatively easy FRG member for her leader Elizabeth, the commander's wife, to serve. Tonya answered the phone when called but never called with questions or concerns. Neither her financial situation nor her marriage was rocky. She solved her

[382] Tonya, Sandra, and Elizabeth are composite characters created to protect the anonymity of particular interviewees and informants.

[383] E-mail to author, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

own problems and did not publicly find fault with the Army or the deployment, assuming that, as it says in *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, "The lifestyle of the Army spouse has always been inherently difficult."[384] She wondered aloud, "Who am I to complain when I know my husband gets back in December, but my grandmother waited for *her* husband's return from World War II for years without any idea of when he would get back."

Tonya's FRG leader Elizabeth spent most of her FRG "leadership" efforts corralling the problems and rumors of her group's members were were not as self-contained as Tonya. Once, when we spoke over chips and salsa at a Mexican restaurant near post, Elizabeth told me her husband had not called or e-mailed in eleven days, a period during which they celebrated their fifth anniversary apart. The twenty-eight-year-old brunette was finding it hard to forget that she missed her husband so badly, fight a cold, and also tame the newest tempest in the FRG. Elizabeth said she recently sent an e-mail to the entire FRG membership. In it, she clarified that an e-mail sent from the brigade announcing a "Fallen Angel" (killed-in-action soldier) referred to a casualty that was not in their battalion. The word Ramadi (the location of their husbands' unit) in the e-mail had sparked panic in two of her wives (that she knew about), and she felt she needed to clarify the situation before they broke down or spread their panic to the entire group.

Elizabeth told me that she also planned to call a spouse in the FRG who had recently volunteered to be the point of contact (POC, a volunteer FRG worker who

[384] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 54.

makes about one-fourth of the calls to spouses on the FRG phone tree). While calling to inform FRG members that there would be three to four days of radio silence from husbands while the next-of-kin of the "Fallen Angel" was notified, the POC had listened for a half hour to Sandra. An anxious woman with a quiet, high-pitched voice, Sandra described her fear that her spouse was cheating on her in Iraq with a female soldier in a support battalion. Elizabeth wanted to reinforce to the POC that the conversation must be kept in strict confidence. Elizabeth did not want the POC's "information call" to turn into a "gossip and rumor call."[385] "This is how rumors get started," she said. Elizabeth worried Sandra would begin telling other wives her suspicions, which would have spread the allegations through soldier-husbands to reach the soldiers in question.

Elizabeth was working to keep Sandra's insecurity under wraps, regardless of the veracity of the allegations. She was trying to handle the situation on her own, even though the allegations of fraternization and infidelity, both Uniform Code of Military Justice violations for Sandra's husband if true, were issues that should be reported to the unit leadership. Elizabeth said she did not want her husband, the commander of the company, who seemed to be working around-the-clock anyway, to have to write up the soldiers for UCMJ violations. It would be one more thing on his plate and would result in at least two soldiers not doing their jobs while they attended to the matter, which, she pointed out, makes every soldier less safe.

[385] *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* identifies six types of calls: information calls, problem calls, social calls, gossip and rumor calls, chronic calls, and crisis calls. See Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 97-9.

Based on what she told me, Elizabeth would keep all of these factors in the back of her head as she spoke calmly yet authoritatively to the POC. Elizabeth exemplified *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*'s statement that "FRG volunteers should solve problems at the lowest level."[386] Additionally, because she considered the effects on her husband, she was cognizant that "for commanders, the unit FRG helps to lighten their workload."[387] She worked for the Army, though she received no paycheck. The Army acknowledges, "Effective FRGs can even help our soldiers accomplish military missions."[388] The main mission in Elizabeth's mind was not to help Sandra address her anguish about her husband's possible infidelity down-range. It was to avoid bothering her husband with family matters that may or may not be true. She hoped he would focus instead on not getting blown up and on "catching bad guys."

Elizabeth's plan to call Sandra entailed not saying much at all of substance. Rather, she wanted to encourage discretion and project tranquility, hoping to calm Sandra and thus a possible maelstrom of delicate FRG-to-soldier e-mails, in which she would have to serve as a sort of mediator to parse fact from fiction in the rumors spreading among wives to whomever might investigate the illegal infidelity. Intuitively, she knew Hochschild's axiom: "In processing people, the product is a

---

[386] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 56. The *Handbook* reiterates this imperative throughout.

[387] Ibid., 10.

[388] David White, quoted in Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 9.

state of mind."[389] Sandra's state of mind was fragile, and Elizabeth saw it as her job to manage Sandra's emotions.

Managing Emotions

Even though FRG leaders experience personal emotions when they receive bad news or encounter a problem, all of their publics (the Army, husbands, soldiers, commanders, FRG members, peer FRG leaders) expect them to maintain a cheerful, encouraging emotional front. Later that fall, the problems with Sandra had blown over after Sandra's husband allayed his wife's fears in a series of phone calls, but there was more bad news for Elizabeth to distribute. The soldiers were due back December 15, one year after they had left. However, that changed, and then the unit was slated to return in the first week of January. The change meant not only that everyone had to change their plans for reuniting and taking post-deployment leave, but also that the soldiers would miss a second Christmas in a row with their families. Elizabeth spoke nostalgically about the early pseudo-Christmas she and her husband celebrated at home in Eastern Kentucky. The commanding general of the division had encouraged the commanders and FRG leaders at a seminar to "make memories so next year you can close your eyes and remember those good times."[390] Now those purposefully made memories would have to last two holiday seasons.

---

[389] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 6.

[390] Quote from fieldnotes by author, 28 November 2006.

Elizabeth called a FRG meeting, and she remained matter of fact as she delivered the news. She did not open the meeting up to the members, hoping to disallow fruitless questions such as, “But what am I supposed to do now?” Her avoidance meant that her members’ questions that Elizabeth may have forgotten to address such as, “When will my husband, who will trail the main body of soldiers, return?” did not get answered. Elizabeth was heartbroken about the news herself, telling me that she was shaking with anger and frustration upon hearing the news. In order to keep from allowing herself or others to complain about the disappointment, she kept a tight rein on the meeting. Hochschild argues that while doing emotional labor, "Sometimes we try to stir up a feeling we wish we had, and at other times we try to block or weaken a feeling we wish we did not have.”[391] Elizabeth did both, summoning steely reserve and blocking her tears. She said there would be time to cry and have a glass of wine later, in private.

Managing Information Scarcity

For an Army wife separated from her husband for more than half of their marriage, information about when he will leave and return is precious. The couple plans their life together around those dates. They count down the days until they see each other. Even tentative dates give some structure to an otherwise nebulous five-year plan for their lives.

[391] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 43.

Yet the Army changes those dates and thus the lives of Army families often, and frequently with just days' or even hours' notice. *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* admonishes Army wives to "be flexible. ... Everyone has to be able to adapt to change with understanding and calmness."[392] A herd of preened women in new summer dresses, waiting on the sunny parade field with their out-of-town parents-in-law for busses to come from the airfield bearing soldiers home from war may *understand* that the soldiers who touched down on American soil must turn around and go back across the Atlantic Ocean to fight a few more months.[393] The wives will be "flexible" because there is no alternative. However, they will almost certainly not be calm or happy or without complaint. In such cases, the deployment extension is bad enough for Army wives; not knowing and thus not being able to prepare mentally and logistically is the truly demoralizing factor.

A common phrase I heard among Army wives, usually accompanied by a shrug and a sardonic smile, is, "Well, that's Army life." FRG leaders announce things like unexpected training extensions without attributing any blame to the Army. For instance, commanders may tell soldiers and the FRG members that the unit's soldiers will sleep in their own beds on Saturday night. When the field problem runs long, however, and a two-day exercise turns into a three-day exercise, the FRG leader is careful to avoid finding fault, focusing instead on the day the soldiers will return and perhaps making a small, lighthearted joke to her members, "At least we'll be able to

[392] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 56.

[393] Though this case is an extreme example of changed deployment and redeployment dates and did not happen to soldiers stationed at the post at which I collected data, such an event has occurred during the Global War on Terror, to a National Guard unit.

enjoy the beautiful weather on Sunday!" In such public formulations, the Army never does anything wrong; problems are always situational and fleeting. Hochschild identifies such rhetorical sleight-of-hand as a trusted device of emotional laborers working as flight attendants: "By linguistically avoiding any attribution of blame, the idea of a right to be angry at the [airplane] passenger is smuggled out of discourse. Linguistically speaking, the passenger never *does* anything wrong, so he can't be blamed or made the object of anger."[394] To dismiss the Army's changing plans, miscommunications, or even misinformation as simply the vagaries of Army life, FRG leaders even use softly sarcastic remarks such as, "Never a dull moment in our wonderful lives!" Leaders' comments suggest that bad news must be compartmentalized, not dwelt upon, and that spouses must be tough and put a happy face on situations, even if the smiles they conjure are forced, wry ones.

Family Readiness Group leaders do the work of trying to manage the emotions of family members in the face of such "normal" changes of plan. Indeed, the emotional labor is often about normalizing situations. An FRG leader stressed in an e-mail, "I know you are just as anxious as I to have our hubbies back home."[395] She created commonality by making the hardship of separation common. If the problem is a common problem, such as absent husbands or an unexpected date change, then complaining demonstrates poor form. I observed Lori, for instance, complain about her husband's absence at a table of other Army wives. They barely

[394] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 112.

[395] E-mail to author, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

looked at her while she talked to no one in particular about her worries regarding his safety, her own elevated stress level, and her frustration with back-to-back deployments. They shared her emotions, but, because of that, they were hard pressed to summon sympathy for her and found her public complaints to be tacky. FRG leaders work to create an esprit de corps in the group so that women feel they are all in the same (albeit leaky) boat together; while in the same boat, complaining and criticism are kept to a minimum.

Conclusion

The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook provides conflicting guidance, little emphasis on family-member support, and demeaning gendered instruction for how to serve the Army's goals. It also provides solace for FRG leaders. The handbook ends with a poem meant to inspire perseverance and an upbeat

outlook in the face of demanding work. Adorned with stars in a rainbow of colors, the poem reads:

> Devote yourself to loving others,
> devote yourself to your community around you,
> and devote yourself to creating something that
> gives you purpose and meaning.
>
> Do the kinds of things that come from the heart.
> When you do, you won't be dissatisfied, you
> won't be envious, you won't be longing for
> someone else's things.
>
> On the contrary, you'll be overwhelmed with
> what comes back.[396]

When members call with heartbreaking family problems, or when one's own emotions, compounded by a litany of Army-prescribed tasks, threaten to overrun one's cheerful public persona, the handbook reminds FRG leaders to continue to give of themselves. "Devote yourself ... devote yourself," it implores twice, for emphasis. After over one hundred pages of do and don't lists, checklists, vague yet daunting graphics, and specific instruction on how to help the Army accomplish its mission, the volunteer laborer is meant to take inspiration in the reminder to have faith that her efforts will repay her someday, somehow. In the poem, her "heart" is what is valued; i.e., her emotional labor. It reminds her to put away her own emotions (dissatisfaction, envy, longing) and focus on "others." One poem such as this could not in and of itself change FRG leaders such as Elizabeth. However, a constant barrage of similar indications from *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, Army regulations, soldiers, her husband, her peers, and her FRG's

[396] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 148.

members, as detailed throughout the dissertation, do have the cumulative effect of shaping her into an Army-supporting worker.

CHAPTER 7: POWER

By formalizing and institutionalizing emotional labor in creating and (in this, the post-September 11th Global War on Terrorism era of back-to-back deployments) emphasizing FRGs, the Army has put a space into play where spouses can attempt to wrest some measure of control and authority back from the totalizing institution. FRGs give women a chance to be the official bearers and recipients of official information, sometimes circumnavigating traditional, patriarchal channels such as the family and the institution of the Army. FRG work gives women who are used to being referred to as "dependents" a legitimacy in the eyes of the institution and its employees—they are an important part of the war effort. Institutionalized support work also allows them the opportunity to influence their husbands' careers and also to experience the pleasures of power over others, either when “supporting” or “patrolling” members. The FRG publicizes and rewards their emotional labors, taking private sphere work and making it homefront work.

However, accompanying Army wives' chances for some power is an intertwined powerlessness. FRGs create pressures, expectations, and burdens, exposing soldiers’ spouses to increased Army control over their lives. Particularly in the case of volunteer FRG leaders, the Army dictates emotional performances, which can be personally draining. As Hochschild points out, “There is a cost to emotion work: it affects the degree to which we listen to feeling and sometimes our very

capacity to feel."[397] The third sphere of institutionalized emotional labor saps volunteers' resources: their mental energy and emotional availability, not to mention their time that might otherwise go to their families or employers—or themselves. The Army asks for their unpaid labor so aggressively that even it is concerned about burnout. Furthermore, though the Army needs soldiers' spouses to be militarized workers who support other families, it treats social activities as secondary in its funding regulations, thus indicating its lack of respect for the "women's work" of emotional labor.

After considering the two sides of the issue, the question presents itself: does emotional labor in FRGs grant women legitimacy or does it further gender and ghettoize care work? The data indicate that individuals both garner benefits and experience drawbacks. However, at the group level of analysis, the FRG system enforces traditional gender roles and thus reproduces gender inequality.

Taking Control by Taking Over

Even though FRG leaders often feel put-upon or stymied by certain members, including those they label "crazies," women continue to volunteer for the role. FRG leaders endeavor to recover agency and benefits from the stressful endeavor of attempting to serve both the Army and families. Their labor follows a two-for-one career pattern, and FRGs serve as a way for the Army to greedily demand third-shift

[397] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 21.

caretaking labor, but that is not the whole story. Army wives have agency. Army wife Elizabeth may have volunteered to help her husband and his career, but that did not preclude her from reaping personal rewards from participation in what was, after all, initially an organization created by wives in response to their own support needs. *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* encourages wives to take charge of their own lives, however swamped they are by the negative effects of Army life, by volunteering:

> Among the major issues facing the military spouse are frequent relocations, limited employment opportunities, financial difficulties, childcare concerns, and the soldier's routine absence due to field exercises or deployments. One way to combat these challenges is through involvement in the unit FRG and other community service work.[398]

Army wives volunteer and participate in FRGs because they get information, support, and a social network from FRGs. In these ways they gain knowledge of and a measure of stability in and sense of control over the ways in which Army life and family life articulate. In effect, they contribute their time to attempt to reconcile the two oft-conflicting, greedy parts of their lives, and they exploit the FRG system as a venue for this work.

Army wives have agency despite the Army's institutional prescriptions for how they should perform their unpaid third-shift emotional labor. The volunteers receive personal and social benefits from their demanding work, not the least of which are feeling both powerful and needed. The hot-headed entrepreneur Krista claimed the benefits trump the drawbacks of volunteering as an FRG leader: "They

[398] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 53.

[FRG members] make you cry, make you laugh, make you lose your mind. But at the end of the day you feel like you have a purpose."[399] She continued on to give more reasons for her FRG involvement, reasons that other highly active FRG members and leaders also touched on: to potentially gain

a) recognition—"It's supposed to look really good on your resume,"

b) self-satisfaction in helping others—"We empower [spouses] to do things they normally wouldn't be able to do,"

c) meaning to her life—"At the end of the day you feel like you have a purpose,"

d) support from other FRG leaders—"We all lean on each other," because they are a network of peers in similar situations who "have a connection, this understanding; it's a bond,"

e) friends, "You make friends that will last a lifetime," and

f) information—"When you need answers, there are people set up in place for those answers."[400]

Access to information was a very important benefit for Krista and for most FRG volunteers. Shy point-of-contact volunteer Camille said, almost fearfully, "[I] don't want to be left in the dark."[401] Though the Army exerts a great deal of control over soldiers' wives' lives (vacation schedules, location, frequency of moves, amount of time the entire family can be together, etc.), and though the wives cannot regain that

[399] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[400] Ibid.

[401] Camille, interviewee 11, interview by author, confidential transcript.

decision-making power while their spouse is a soldier, volunteering in the FRG is a way to at gain increased control over their own *knowledge* of the Army's decisions.

Since they are the Army's first line of homefront defense, expending their volunteer labor to contain family problems so the Army itself does not have to, FRG leaders receive bad news first. FRG leader Elizabeth had time to compose herself before she passed on the bad news about the soldiers returning after Christmas, rather than before. She said being the first to know such news was one of the main benefits of the job. Anne, who worked as an Army Family Team Building class trainer, said she became an FRG leader because of "the quest for knowledge."[402] She wanted to be in control, and she taught classes to help other spouses feel more in control.

Lori, who was described by many of her peers as their number-one example of a "crazy," overly demanding FRG member, enumerated the aspects of being an Army wife that make her feel overwhelmed. In the course of one uninterrupted outpouring, she used the words "stress" or "stressful" eleven times.[403] Sitting on an overstuffed

[402] Anne, interviewee 0, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[403] Lori, interviewee 33, interview by author, confidential transcript.

couch surrounded by religious iconography, her words tumbled over one another as she unloaded her worries:

> Deployment is hard because you're told one thing when they leave and then you hear all kinds of other things. … So, the rumor mill is going when they're gone. Not only that, but being lonely at night. Your days are stress, you call your mom, your dad, you pay bills. You do all this stuff by yourself when you're used to having someone there for support. So you don't have time to breathe. When I get stressed out and I'm missing him, I take showers so the kids don't see me cry. Lately the kids have been saying, "Mom, you're taking a lot of showers lately; you're awfully dirty." [Laughs, but with a grimace.] It's hard them [the husbands] being gone because you don't get a break, you don't get a breather. It feels like the devil works at you even harder. It seems like they deploy, everything goes wrong. Before [they deploy] it's even harder because you're nitpicking at everything. You're arguing a lot and you know he's got a lot of stress under him so the kids see this. They know dad's leaving, so before they deploy, that's stressful. … We're only going on five years and this is the third deployment. They've not even had a breather to sit and enjoy time with the family on breaks. They've had what, a year? Not even a year between each tour and you're training as soon as you get back for the next tour. So, it's a lot of stress.[404]

In part to take control over her life by accessing more information, Lori had recently became a first-time FRG leader. She said, "I wanted to because FRG gets notified as soon as someone's hurt, or information from Iraq from a higher source."[405] In her own "quest for knowledge," Lori metamorphosed from one who complains to her FRG leader about the lack of information, changes in schedules, misinformation, and other vagaries of Army life, to the FRG leader who works to manage the emotions of her members in the face of scarce information, attempting to arm them with knowledge and a sense of self-sufficiency.

---

[404] Lori, interviewee 33, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[405] Ibid.

Emotional Labor: "Women's Work"

Care work exerted in the coordination of social events and phone trees is bound up in a set of feminized responsibilities (belonging to workers with, as in *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, pink tool boxes, full of team spirit and cheerful to work on behalf of the Army and their husbands with a can-do attitude).[406] Caring for families' emotional well being in times of stress and crisis is emotional labor rooted in a gendered division of labor. In the current and historical model of military family-member support, the male soldier is absent, leaving the emotional labor to the women.

The emotional labor that is such a critical link between the Army and family members, doing the work of managing issues in the FRG before they burden soldiers and the Army's bureaucracy, is nearly invisible. Commanders and other soldiers often viewed FRG leaders as organizers only—"They do the calling chains and meetings and potlucks and stuff."[407] The hard work of performing the taxing emotional labor required of FRG leaders to help keep spouses in line or under wraps, in so doing indicating to the other spouses that such behavior is unacceptable, is given no credence as true labor.

I watched Jake, a company commander, stand next to his wife Caroline, the FRG leader, and apologize to a room full of soldiers and spouses (he required one or

[406] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 26.

[407] Quote from fieldnotes by author, confidential.

the other to attend) because they had to come to an FRG event. Jake promised the meeting would be less than twenty minutes long, and he again said he was sorry that everyone had to waste their time being there but that they (meaning he and his wife, the command team) had to hold meetings. Only then did he let his wife speak. His emphasis on the triviality and inconvenience of FRGs set up the meeting and indeed the FRG for failure. Jake insulted the amount of work Caroline had put into collecting and making photocopies of fliers, organizing other volunteer spouses to be POCs and treasurer, coordinating childcare for the meeting, and meeting attendees at the door, trying to make them feel welcome and comfortable. He may have known she stayed up late crafting the agenda for the meeting, but he was ignorant of and destructive to her efforts to use that same meeting to build a sense of community.

FRG leaders' emotional labor, if it is thought of at all, it is considered mere "women's work." The Army's actions reflect this same assessment. The Army hired over one thousand FRSAs to accomplish the measurable, "real" work of maintaining rosters and reserving meeting venues.[408] Conversely, it leaves the touchy-feely "shadow" work of maintaining relationships, modeling correct Army-supporting emotion, containing family problems, and being "nice" to volunteer Army-wife FRG leaders.[409]

---

[408] The government literally values, in terms of pay, measurable "left-brained work" more than emotion work (Mastracci, Newman, and Guy, "Appraising Emotion Work," 123).

[409] According to Hochschild, "The emotion work of enhancing the status and well-being of others is a form of what Ivan Illich has called 'shadow labor,' an unseen effort, which, like housework, does not quite count as labor but is nevertheless crucial to getting other things done. As with doing housework well, the trick is to erase any evidence of effort, to offer only the clean house and the

Emotional labor, no matter how critical to the Army's ability to contain family problems, always proves secondary to the "real" labor of soldiering. Soldiers have the final say in the amount of contact the FRG can have with their spouses (see appendix VIII). As argued in the previous chapter, FRG leaders often attempt to contain family-related issues so that soldiers will not be bothered or distracted by "trivial" matters. Additionally, soldiers sometimes sweep down to solve a problem using an authority that volunteering Army wives cannot access. For instance, Darla relayed to me a situation in which she deferred to soldiers to settle an issue among FRG members. While we spoke, she fielded text messages and phone calls to coordinate a meeting to settle an unspecified conflict in the FRG between two members. All she would say was that there was "big drama."[410] She said that she and her husband, the battalion's commander, had a "low tolerance for drama."[411] One of her solutions for managing the problematic situation, while her husband was deployed, was to call the Army wives in question in to the office of the rear-detachment commander to raise their concerns in both her presence and the presence of a soldier. She said that "green-suiters" (slang for soldiers) really "cut to the chase" and "got everything out in the open."[412] Whatever issue was creating problem in the FRG would soon be on its way to public resolution through official channels.

---

welcoming smile. We have a simple word for the product of this shadow labor: 'nice,'" Hochschild, *The Managed Heart*, 167.

[410] Darla, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

[411] Ibid.

[412] Ibid.

Darla used her authority as the FRG's advisor to engineer an intervention into the "drama," and she mobilized the authority of her husband and the rear-detachment commander (who is under the direct command of her husband) to give the intervention added clout. Darla acted as an Army employee as she performed the official, public emotional labor of managing the problem among Army wives, and though she exercised a great deal of power to orchestrate the situation and in the end the women's behaviors to suit group norms, the source of power undeniably rests with Army employees rather than volunteer wives.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

An Army wife's career may suffer from frequent moves, or she may stay home with her children to give them continuity of care in the face of their father's repeat deployments. Her psyche may be battered from worry about her husband's safety as she watches the twenty-four-hour news feed like an addict, hoping to not hear the name of the Iraqi city in which he fights. She may stay up late, laying in bed hypothesizing the sequence of events if the awful day ever came when soldiers in dress uniforms knocked on her door delivering the news her husband had been killed in action. She may expend incredible energy trying to ease her children's fears, engineering activities to help them not forget their father's face, and watching closely to see if the separation leads to emotional problems. She may have trouble being around affectionate couples because it reminds her of what she sometimes has, and sometimes does not, depending on the Army's schedule for her soldier-spouse.

Managing these emotions is not wholly a private matter. As senior officer's wife and FRG advisor Darla and I ate lunch, she told me about an instance in which she translated the private emotion work of managing her own and her three children's emotions into public emotional labor in the FRG. Darla's husband was wounded in Iraq. She put on a cheerful face, dismissing the wound as trivial when she told her daughters. Darla said they were looking to her for "cues" about how to respond. Because of her "no-big-deal" demeanor, they responded accordingly, not even crying. Similarly, Darla projected calm about her husband's injuries at the FRG steering

committee meeting. Her goal, she said, was to reassure the FRG leaders that the command team was still capable, both physically (him) and emotionally (her), of leading. She was a caretaker, and she told me she did not want anyone to feel they had to take care of her.

Choosing to become a caretaker, specifically an FRG leader, is not a private matter, either. Leah had followed her husband Dwayne and his career from one end of the country to the other, from tropical Hawaii to snowy Fort Drum, New York. I heard Leah describe herself often, in efforts to avoid helping her friends and peers with other volunteer work, as an introvert. At Leah's first FRG meeting, I watched as Dwayne's new commander stood at the front of a cinder-block room in the battalion headquarters, explained that he understood that most of the women in the room had awful experiences in FRGs due to hurtful gossip, asserted that he knew nothing about family-member support since he was unmarried, and then after creating a dismal mood called for volunteers. Not one spouse raised her hand. In the days after the meeting, the commander as well as some of the NCOs ruled out the other "high-ranking" wives as possible FRG leaders (the women lived too far or worked full-time), and so the job fell to Leah, despite her reluctance. The intensely private and shy woman said she asked Dwayne, "Please don't make me stand in front of everyone at the meetings!" Though of course her husband did not make her, the pressure on her from his boss combined with the normalcy of the job falling to the ranking officer's wife (as it did for all the other junior officers' wives in Leah's on-post neighborhood) made it impossible for Leah to say no when asked to be the FRG leader.

Leah participated in her church group and sometimes, at the bequest of her friends, in Officers' Spouses' Club events. Because she was not an outgoing or particularly needy person, those social interactions seemed to be enough for her. However, in search of information, she always participated in FRGs when they were available.

Family support, sanctioned and indeed required by the Army in the form of Family Readiness Groups in each unit, exists because of a particular confluence of historical factors. In particular, the pool of possible Army recruits in the post-1973 all-volunteer Army brought with them wives and children. Caring for the needs of those dependents to retain already-trained soldiers in the 1980s became a focus for the Army, one that intensified with stressful deployments to operations and wars in the 1990s and then even more with the entire Army mobilizing to fight the Global War on Terrorism beginning in 2001. Family members influence soldiers' decisions to enter and stay in the Army, and Family Readiness Groups became increasingly standardized as the Army sought, also increasingly, to protect its investment in soldiers willing and able to continue to serve.

Leah felt pressure to be a "good" Army wife and become the FRG leader when asked, despite strong personal misgivings and the fact that, as she said, "I have NO IDEA what to do."[413] She threw herself into the role, creating spreadsheets and meticulously labeling three-ring binders, asking to "friend" her members on the social networking website Facebook, and creating a plan for a six-page newsletter. Her

[413] E-mail to author, fieldnotes by author, confidential.

efforts were not rewarded; fewer than five people attended the first two meetings she organized. She persisted, however, because she knew what the standard of highly involved wives and FRG leaders working in part to enhance their husbands' careers looked like from her previous FRG experiences and her friends and neighbors. She looked to the battalion commander's wife as a mentor, she attended an FRG leader class, and she eventually, as members' FRG involvement grew in conjunction with a looming deployment, had enough stories about "crazy" wives who called her at all hours with "crazy" requests for support to participate in gossip sessions at OSC luncheons and in the carpool to and from steering committee meetings. Her behavior was shaped by these socializing mechanisms, and she learned to shape others' behaviors in proper ways, imposing Army-supporting attitudes and self-sufficient behaviors. Though Leah said bad news about training or deployment dates still sent her straight to the freezer for an ice-cream binge, she braced herself to act on behalf of the Army, soothing other Army wives' anger when she delivered the same news to them.

When the Army encourages FRG leaders to accomplish a litany of tasks for family members with deference to the Army's mission, it gives them conflicting indications. They are to succeed "quietly"[414] but not by overextending themselves, serving both the Army mission and family members. Leah tried to act as an advocate for family members, she told me, voicing their problems to the commander even though she found it difficult to arrange meetings with him and then be brave enough

[414] Operation READY, *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook*, 147.

to stand up for family members in those meetings. However, during the deployment, more often than not she worked on behalf of the commander and thus the Army, trying to suppress the high-running emotions of her FRG's members.

The Theoretical Fulcrum: Emotional Labor

All employees do emotional work—salespeople put on their best faces for customers, managers coax productivity from their underlings, and underlings seek to please or at least pacify managers. An FRG leader, though, must consider an even wider variety of publics: the Army, her FRG's members at large, the core group of consistently participating members, her husband, soldiers in the unit, the unit's commander, commanders' wives in the unit, and spouses of soldiers with similar, higher, and lower ranks. These categories sometimes overlap, adding to the finesse needed in her emotion displays. The Army "hires" volunteer FRG leaders to coordinate with and perform emotional work with each of these groups to do the work of managing family members' domestic problems—domestic both in the sense of being home- rather than workplace-based and also domestic in the sense of the homefront here in the United States as opposed to the wars being fought abroad by the Army's paid employees.

Hochschild takes the case study of flight attendants, and through rich description and thoughtful theoretically informed analysis offers up a new concept that gives credence to one particular component of the world of work that had

previously been discounted. A flight attendant's job description does not include smiling, though her training, both formal and informal, does. Her emotional labor brings the values of her employer to the client, often alienating her in the process.

I use emotional labor as a theoretical tool to reveal the Army's concerted effort to shape families through the work of FRG leaders. I use it to focus on micro-level interpersonal interactions, laden with layers of meaning, loaded with social consequences, and circumscribed by institutional goals. Sometimes emotional labor is large-scale and easy to identify, such as when redeployment dates change and leaders manage the resultant emotions and problems among FRGs' members. However, sometimes group norms are enforced in the most subtle of ways. An informant relayed to me a story about a young Army wife who told drinking stories too loudly in the presence of the chaplain's wife—the young woman was sanctioned indirectly when some wives who disapproved left early from the coffee group meeting that she hosted, an *almost* imperceptible snub.

By analyzing the interpersonal aspects of FRG leaders' volunteer work as emotional labor, in the tradition of Hochschild, I illuminate the invisible or derided work of Army wives.[415] For instance, seen through a theoretical lens, their gossip and snubs are not trivial. These mechanisms are a critical component of the Army's control over soldiers' families' lives. Additionally, it is an incredible boon to the Army when an FRG leader orchestrates a calm, lighthearted meeting while delivering bad news, moderating the anger of family members. Making decisions to "stay in

[415] For possible follow-on research, see appendix IX.

your lane," and performing emotions properly like a "good" Army wife have perceived and thus real consequences for both a woman's social life and her husband's career. Not officially, unless her husband is also the commander, but off the books where group norms are often enforced.

The primary theme in the data is that there is a right and a wrong way to be an FRG member and an Army wife. The imposition of these norms is done through emotional labor, an important tool for Army as it pursues of its goal of increasing soldier readiness and retention, by women who themselves volunteer often because of social and institutional expectations, because of the social and career consequences of their successful participation, and because it sometimes makes them feel as if they have better access to information and more power over their own lives.

Summation

FRGs are a revealing place where the two institutions of family and the Army connect and collide for Army wives. The Army uses the emotional labors of RG leaders to accomplish its own goals of shaping Army families and containing their problems. The Army protects its investment in soldiers by using FRG leaders' free labor to increase family well being and thus enhance soldier readiness and retention. The Army relies on the stereotype of a "good" Army wife volunteering as is traditional in the two-for-one pattern, according to expectations, in support of her husband's career. The expectations for proper Army-supporting, "good" behavior are

enforced in part by FRG leaders. They are the official face of the Army for family members, and they are expected to modify their own actions in order to affect the behavior and attitudes of other Army wives.

The Army's guidance for FRG leaders encourages personal deference and Army-supporting behaviors. Thus, supporting family members becomes a secondary goal for FRG leaders. When they act as agents rather than advocates, they do so because of the Army's official indications, because of observed precedent and informal expectations, and sometimes because she may be "helping" her husband's career and/or the commander.

The words "volunteer" and "support," both so central to the FRG system, significantly obscure the fact that often "volunteers" volunteer not of their own altruistic volition, but rather because of pressure and traditional expectations, and also that "support" is not truly the Army's goal in promoting FRG usage, but perhaps more accurately the Army's goal is family-member containment enforced by emotional laborers in "support" of the Army, rather than Army wives.

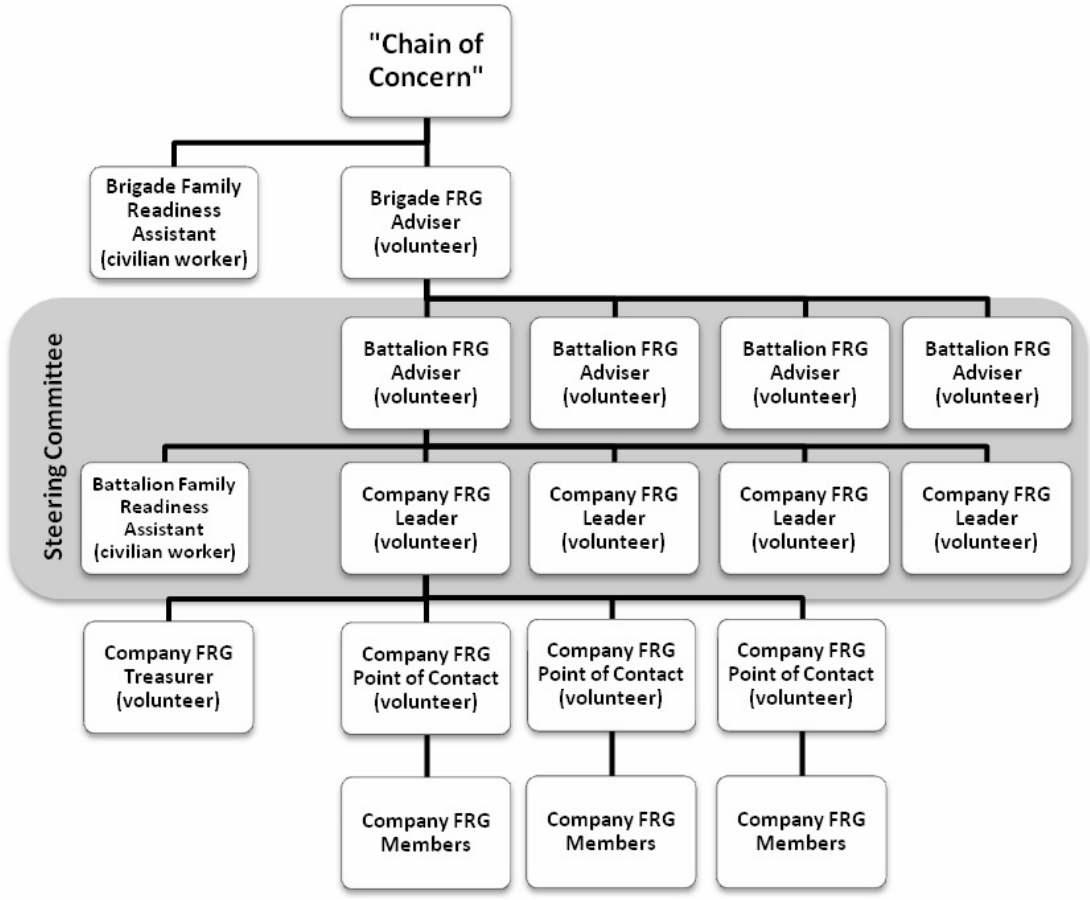
APPENDIX I: Rank Structure[416]

Grade	Rank	Title of Address	Percentage of Active-Duty Army Soldiers
E1	PV1	Private	4.0
E2	PV2	Private	6.9
E3	PFC	Private First Class	11.4
E4	SPC/CPL	Specialist or Corporal	22.7
E5	SGT	Sergeant	16.1
E6	SSG	Staff Sergeant	12.0
E7	SFC	Sergeant First Class	7.7
E8	MSG/1SG	Master or First Sergeant	2.3
E9	SGM/CSM	(Command) Sergeant Major	0.7
W-1	WO1	Warrant Officer	0.6
W-2	CW2	Chief Warrant Officer	0.9
W-3	CW3	Chief Warrant Officer	0.7
W-4	CW4	Chief Warrant Officer	0.4
W-5	CW5	Chief Warrant Officer	0.1
O1	2LT	Second Lieutenant	1.4
O2	1LT	First Lieutenant	1.8
O3	CPT	Captain	4.8
O4	MAJ	Major	3.0
O5	LTC	Lieutenant Colonel	1.9
O6	COL	Colonel	0.8
O7	BG	Brigadier General	0.03
O8	MG	Major General	0.02
O9	LTG	Lieutenant General	0.01
O10	GEN	General of the Army	0.002

Note: Light shading indicates non-commissioned officers (NCOs), who are senior enlisted soldiers. Dark shading indicates officers.

[416] There were 81,656 active-duty Army officers and 406,923 active-duty enlisted soldiers on 30 September 2005. The chart was determined based on this data found in U.S. Department of Defense, *Selected Manpower Statistics Fiscal Year 2005*.

APPENDIX II: Simplified Model of the Family Readiness Group Chain of Concern[417]



Note: This chart demonstrates relationships among FRG volunteers and paid civilian FRG workers in the "chain of concern," that echo soldiers' "chain of command" structure in which colonels command brigades, lieutenant colonels command battalions, and captains command companies.

[417] For comparison with outdated titles, see a similar model in *The Battlebook III*.

APPENDIX III: Army Family Readiness Group Operations, Appendix J of Army Regulation 608-1[418]

J-1. Concept and purpose
a. The FRG is a unit commander's program formed in accordance with AR 600-20. Normally FRGs will be established at the company level, with battalion and brigade levels playing an important advisory role. FRGs are not a morale, welfare, and recreation program; a NAFI: a private organization; or a nonprofit organization.
b. An FRG is a command-sponsored organization of Soldiers, civilian employees, family members (immediate and extended) and volunteers belonging to a unit. FRGs will provide mutual support and assistance, and a network of communications among the family members, the chain of command, and community resources. FRGs will assist unit commanders in meeting military and personal deployment preparedness and enhance the family readiness of the unit's Soldiers and families. They will also provide feedback to the command on the state of the unit "family."
c. Family readiness is the mutual reinforcement and support provided by the unit to Soldiers, civilian employees, and family; members, both immediate and extended.
d. The rear detachment commander is the unit commander's representative at home station while the unit is deployed and is the FRG link to the deployed unit. All logistic support for FRGs (for example, meeting rooms, nontactical vehicle use, office equipment and computers, newsletters, telephones, and volunteer support) is authorized by the rear detachment commander during deployment.
e. The garrison ACS Center and RC Family Programs Office will assist unit commanders in establishing successful FRGs by providing expertise, classes, training, and support to FRGs and the FRG leadership, as outlined in AR 608-1.
f. Unit commanders will ensure that their FRGs appeal to all service members, civilians, and family members regardless of rank structure or family size, composition, language spoken, and other characteristics. Commanders will seek FRG leaders who are particularly adept at energizing both officer and enlisted corps' families. FRGs that do not reflect their unit's demographics or have a high level of family participation will be reevaluated to address impediments that exist toward creating a balanced and representational FRG. Typical issues could be FRG meeting times, unmet child care needs, FRG activities that do not match FRG member needs, FRGs that do not provide training programs relevant to FRG family needs, and other family support issues.

J-2. Family readiness group roles and functions
a. The FRG mission is to-
(1) Act as an extension of the unit in providing official, accurate command information.
(2) Provide mutual support between the command and the FRG membership.
(3) Advocate more efficient use of available community resources.

[418] U.S. Army Regulation 608-1, *Army Community Service Center*.

(4) Help families solve problems at the lowest level.
b. The type and scope of FRG mission activities will depend on a number of factors such as
(I) The Commander's budget for FRG mission activities.
(2) The identified needs of unit Soldiers, civilian employees, and their families.
(3) Command interest and emphasis.
(4) The number of FRG members.
(5) The time, energy, and creativity of FRG membership.
(6) The makeup of the FRG, including the percentages of single Soldiers, number of years Soldiers and their families have served with the military, number of families with young children, and other family composition factors.
(7) The unit's training and deployment schedule.
c. FRGs are official DA programs established pursuant to AR 600-20. FRG mission activities and appropriated fund expenditures are subject to DOD 5500.7-R, DOD 7000.14-R, 31 USC 341, and all other applicable statutory and regulatory restraints on official activities, use of appropriated funds, and fundraising.
d. Certain FRG mission activities are essential and common to all FRGs. They include FRG member meetings, FRG staff and committee meetings, publication and distribution of FRG newsletters, maintenance of updated family rosters and family readiness information, establishment of FRG member telephone trees and e-mail distribution lists, and scheduling educational briefings for FRG members. FRG activity level can vary depending on unit mission and on whether the unit is in pre- or postdeployment, deployed, or in a training/sustainment period at the home station.
e. FRG social activities can enhance family and Soldier camaraderie, provide stress relief, and reduce family loneliness during deployments. Social activities will not be funded using appropriated funds. FRG members may use money contained in an FRG informal fund to pay for social activities described in paragraph 5-7.

J-3. Resources
FRG mission-essential activities are supported using the unit's appropriated funds, excluding Ba11/OPTEMPO. FRG mission-essential activities authorized appropriated fund support may not be supported with NAFs. FRG mission-essential activities may not be augmented with private money. Such augmentation may be a violation of 31 USC 1345. FRG appropriated fund resources may not be used to support private organization activities, internal fundraisers, or commercial ventures.
a. Government office space and equipment. FRGs may use Government office space, computer and office equipment, faxes, e-mails, scanners, and so on to support the FRG mission.
b. Paper and printing. FRGs may use Government paper and printing supplies to publish FRG newsletters to relay information from the command and to support any FRG mission activity. Commanders will decide how frequently newsletters will be published. Each unit will have a standard operating procedure (SOP) on the preparation, printing, and distribution of FRG newsletters. FRG newsletters may be distributed by the Army or installation post office or via e-mail to FRG members.

c. Army and installation post offices and official mail. FRGs are authorized to use official mail for official, mission- related purposes and as approved by the unit commander.
(1) Unofficial information may be included in an official FRG newsletter, provided: it does not exceed 20 percent of the printed space used for official information; it does not increase printing and mailing costs to the Government; and it does not include personal wanted/for sale advertisements. The FRG newsletter must state whether it contains only official information or both official and unofficial information.
(2) If the newsletter contains both types of information, it will include the following statement: "The inclusion of some unofficial information in this FRG newsletter has not increased the costs to the Government, in accordance with DOD 4525.8-M."
d. Government vehicles. In accordance with AR 58-1, the unit commander may authorize Government vehicle use in support of official FRG activities, including the transportation of FRG members for FRG mission-related activities. Government vehicles may be used to support official FRG activities when-
(1) The appropriate commander determines that the use of the vehicle is for official purposes and that failure to provide such support would have an adverse effect on the FRG mission.
(2) The driver has a valid and current license to operate the vehicle and all other regulatory requirements regarding the use of the Government vehicle have been followed.
(3) The use of the vehicle can be provided without detriment to the accomplishment of the unit's mission.
e. Child care. Depending on availability of funds, unit commanders may authorize appropriated funds for-
(1) Childcare for command-sponsored training in accordance with AR 608-10, paragraphs 3-2 and 3-4.
(2) Needed family support, including child care, education, and other youth services for Armed Forces members who are assigned to duty or ordered to active duty in conjunction with a contingency operation (see 10 USC 1788(b), DODD 1342.17 , and DODI 1342.22.
f. Statutory volunteers. The unit commander may accept statutory volunteer labor to support the FRG mission, as described in paragraph J-4 and in accordance with this regulation. However, FRG volunteers are not considered statutory volunteers when they are participating in social or fundraising activities and are not entitled to reimbursement for incidental expenses during this period of time.

J-4. Volunteers
a. Volunteers. The Soldier and Family Readiness System relies heavily on the support of a professional volunteer cadre. Unit commanders may staff their FRGs with volunteers, as provided in chapter 5 of this regulation and in accordance with 10 USC 1588.
(1) FRG volunteers in leadership and key roles, such as the FRG leader, treasurer, key caller, and welcome committee chair, must in-process through the local ACS Center

for the Active Component or through the RC Family Programs Office. Commanders will ensure their volunteers are supervised in the same manner as an employee, that they have a position description, and that they have followed all other legal and regulatory requirements in accordance with chapter 5 of this regulation and 10 USC 1588.
(2) The local ACS center, RC Family Programs Office, or Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC) will provide unit commanders or their designees with expert guidance on the Army Volunteer Corps Program. They will provide commanders with standard FRG volunteer position descriptions and answer volunteer questions. The unit commander will ensure that the AVCC is provided the FRG volunteers' work hours monthly to track volunteerism within their areas of responsibility and for volunteer recognition purposes.
(3) FRG volunteers are authorized to use Government facilities to accomplish their assigned duties. This includes the use of office and meeting spaces; telephone, computer, e-mail, and copying equipment; administrative supplies; administrative and logistical support; and additional equipment. Government computer use, including e-mail and internet use, is authorized for official FRG business only.
(4) To support official FRG activities, FRG volunteers may operate Government-owned or –leased nontactical vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of less than 10,000 pounds, provided they meet the licensing requirements set forth in AR 600-55.
(a) The authorization to drive a Government-owned or -leased nontactical vehicle will be included in the volunteer's position description.
(b) Vehicular accidents occurring while an FRG volunteer is operating a Government vehicle must be reported in accordance with AR 38540.
b. Funding for volunteer support. Appropriated funds may be used to support FRG volunteers, with command preapproval and funding availability. Appropriated funds for volunteer support may be used for-
(1) Training and travel expenses. Commanders may, at their discretion, authorize payment for travel and training of official statutory volunteers.
(a) Authorized FRG volunteer travel may include FRG volunteer visits to geographically dispersed members of the FRG in direct support of the FRG mission.
(b) Enrollment, travel, per diem, and other expenses may be funded for training to improve FRG volunteers' effectiveness or enable them to accept positions of increased responsibilities. Invitational travel orders are authorized, pursuant to the JFTR, appendix E, part I, paragraph A, and Secretary of the Army travel policy. Funding will depend on command preapproval and availability of funds.
(2) Reimbursement of incidental expenses. Unit commanders may budget for the reimbursement of official volunteer incidental expenses using appropriated funds for FRG volunteers, as authorized by this regulation and 10 USC 588. Volunteers may be provided reimbursement for incidental expenses (out-of-pocket expenses) such as child care, long- distance telephone calls, mileage, and other expenses incurred while supporting the FRG official mission, in accordance with chapter 5 of this regulation and DODI 1100.21 and the commander's FRG budget SOP (see paragraph J-6).

(3) Awards, recognition, and mementos. Appropriated funds will not be authorized or available for volunteer awards other than official certificates of recognition or volunteer incentive awards in accordance with AR 672-20. NAFs will be authorized for garrison volunteer recognition programs, awards, and banquets and to purchase mementos consistent with AR 215-1. Unit commanders will ensure that their FRG volunteers' hours are submitted monthly to the garrison AVCC and that FRG volunteers are recognized at garrison community volunteer recognition ceremonies.
c. Commanders may not authorize travel or the reimbursement of volunteer incidental expenses for members of their household or other persons that could present a potential conflict of interest (see DOD 5500.7-R). Commanders will forward these decisions to the next senior level officer within the commander's chain of command for determination. Commanders will seek guidance regarding specific ethics issues from their servicing ethics counselors.

J-5. Family readiness group deployment support assistants mobilization deployment assistants
In the Active Army, commanders may authorize units to hire FRG deployment assistants who provide unit FRG administrative support services.
a. The FRG deployment assistant will coordinate training through local community resources and provide administrative collaboration between the rear detachment commander and the FRG leader. The FRG deployment assistants will not duplicate services or overlap existing resources in the military community.
b The FRG deployment assistant works for the unit commander, who will have day-to-day operational direction of the assistant's activities. The duties of the FRG deployment assistant will not conflict with the duties of the volunteer FRG leadership. The FRG deployment assistant will not be involved in FRG informal fundraising activities, casualty assistance procedures, suicide prevention activities, teaching family readiness training, family counseling, or other non- FRG official administrative support duties.
c. The Army National Guard may hire FRG assistants to assist the State Family Program Directors at Joint Force Headquarters, and the U.S. Army Reserve may hire mobilization and deployment assistants to assist the family programs directors at regional readiness commands.

J-6. Budget process
a. FRG operations. These are funded by the unit commander's appropriated funds, excluding
BA11/OPTEMPO. Commanders will consider FRG mission activity requirements when planning their yearly budget. FRG budget needs vary widely and are highly dependent on location, the unit's mission and deployment situation, the composition of the FRG membership, and component.
b. FRG budget SOPS. Commanders will approve an SOP that describes the support available for FRG mission activities and the procedures for FRG leaders and

volunteers to request support. FRG leaders must be familiar with the SOP. A sample SOP is included in Operation READY training materials.
c. Government purchase card. Commanders will use a Government purchase card to pay for FRG operating expenses, when practicable. For example, commanders may use their Government purchase card to purchase supplies, equipment, room rental, or any other approved item to support official FRG mission activities. The FRG budget SOP will include a requirement that FRG leaders fill out purchase request forms and submit them to the commander for approval. The SOP will also state the procedures for requesting reimbursement for incidental expenses for FRG volunteers.

J-7. Family readiness group informal funds
a. Authorization.
(1) Commanders may authorize their FRG to maintain one informal fund in accordance with AR 600-20. No more than one FRG informal fund per unit may be authorized. Informal funds are private funds generated by FRG members that are used to benefit the FRG membership as a whole. FRG informal funds may not be deposited or mixed with appropriated funds, unit MWR funds, the unit's cup and flower funds, or any individual's personal funds. The expenditure of informal funds will be consistent with Army Values, DOD 5500.7-R, and AR 600-20.
(2) Examples of authorized use of informal funds include FRG newsletters that contain predominantly unofficial information and purely social activities, including, but not limited to, parties; social outings, volunteer recognition (not otherwise funded with APFs), and picnics.
(3) Examples of unauthorized use of FRG informal funds include augmenting the unit's informal funds (the unit's cup and flower funds); purchasing items or services that are authorized be paid for with appropriated funds; purchasing traditional military gifts, such as Soldier farewell gifts that are not related to family readiness; and funding the unit ball.
b. Fund custodian. The unit commander will sign a letter designating a fund custodian (treasurer) and an alternate. The fund custodian and alternate must not be the unit commander, a deployable Soldier, or the FRG leader. The fund custodian is responsible for informal fund custody, accounting, and documentation.
(1) The FRG informal fund custodian and alternate are personally liable for any loss or misuse of funds.
(2) After designation of the informal fund custodian, the custodian may establish a noninterest bearing bank account under the FRG's name (never the individual's name). The commander will authorize opening the account and prepare a letter naming the fund's custodian and alternate as persons authorized to sign checks drawn on the account. The commander will not be a signatory on the account.
(3) The informal fund custodian will provide informal fund reports to the unit commander monthly and as requested. An annual report on the FRG informal fund activity will be provided to the first colonel (06) commander or designee in the unit's chain of command no later than 30 days after the end of the calendar year. These reports will summarize the informal fund's financial status, to include current balance,

total income, and an itemized list of expenditures along with an explanation showing how the expenditures are consistent with the purpose of the FRG informal fund as established in the SOP.
(4) Although not required, commanders may consider requiring the FRG informal fund to be bonded in accordance with the procedures of AR 210-22, paragraph 3-26.
c. The FRG informal fund SOP. All FRG informal funds will have an SOP. This document memorializes the FRG members' determination of the purpose of the FRG informal fund. The SOP may be a one-page document and must include
(1) The FRG name.
(2) A description of the FRG's informal fund purpose and functions and a summary of its routine activities. For example, "The FRG's informal fund purpose and function are to provide support and recognition to FRG members during the following life events: births, birthday parties, new member welcome parties, departing member farewell parties, holiday parties, and so on."
(3) The following statement must be included in the FRG informal fund SOP: "This FRG informal fund is for the benefit of the FRG members only and is established exclusively for charitable purposes and to provide support to Soldiers and family member as the Soldiers and families adapt to Army life. It is not a business and is not being run to generate profits. It is not an instrumentality of the United States Government."
(4) The FRG informal fund SOP must be approved by the unit commander and a majority of the FRG members. It will be signed at a minimum by the FRG leader, the fund custodian (treasurer), and the alternate fund custodian. (A sample informal fund SOP is included in Operation READY training materials.)
d. Fundraising for FRG informal funds DOD 5500.7-R, paragraph 3-210(a)(6), authorizes official fundraising by organizations composed primarily of DOD or DA employees and their dependents when fundraising among their own members or dependants for the benefit of their own welfare funds. Fundraising will be approved by the appropriate commander after consultation with the DA ethics official or designee.
(1) An Army organization-including, but not limited to, units, installations, and FRGs-may officially fund raise from its own community members or dependents and from all persons benefiting from the Army organization. (For example, an installation may benefit from the brigade or unit FRG, thus permitting a brigade or unit FRG to fundraise throughout the installation.) Fundraising must be for the organization's informal fund, as opposed to a private charity, a particular military member, or a similar cause, and be approved by the commander with cognizance over the organization and coordinated with the commander with cognizance over the location of fundraising if different from the organization area. Commanders will consult with their Staff Judge Advocate or ethics counselor and avoid all conflicts with other authorized fundraising activities.
(2) Commanders may approve requests from FRG informal funds to conduct fundraising events in accordance with the requirements of DOD 5500.7-R as described above and in compliance with AR 600-29.

(3) Informal fundraising that occurs within the Army Reserve will have the approval of the unit commander and the servicing Staff Judge Advocate and/or ethics counselor. To address fundraising issues within the Army Reserve, refer to Army Reserve regulations.
e. Informal fund cap. FRGs are not established to raise funds, solicit donations, or manage large sums of money. They are not equipped to handle the complex tax ramifications and stringent accounting requirements that can result from excessive informal funds. FRG informal funds will therefore not exceed an annual gross receipt (income) cap of $5,000 per calendar year from all sources, including fundraising, gifts, and donations. Unit commanders may establish a lower annual income cap.
(1) State and local laws and the requirements of Status of Forces Agreements may make a lower FRG informal fund cap necessary at some locations within or outside the continental United States. Commanders and fund custodians will consult their Staff Judge Advocates to ensure that FRG informal funds comply with all local requirements.
(2) FRG informal funds may only be raised and maintained for specific planned purposes consistent with the purpose of the informal fund. If the purpose of the fundraising event is inconsistent with the FRG informal funds SOP, commanders will not approve the fundraising event.
(3) The FRG informal fund ledger will reflect the costs earmarked for the planned event. For example, if an FRG is planning a holiday party with a planned cost of $3,000, the ledger might reflect the following costs: dinner $2,100; hall rental $250; and band $650.
J: Gifts to FRG informal funds. Unit commanders may accept an unsolicited gift or donation of money or tangible personal property of a value of $1,000 or less for its FRG informal fund after consultation with the unit ethics counselor. Unsolicited gifts or donations to the FRG informal funds are considered income and impact the FRG informal fund annual income cap of $5,000.

J-8. Family readiness group external fundraising
As an official activity of the DA, the FRG may not engage in external fundraising and may not solicit gifts and donations. However, in accordance with AR 1-100 and with the advice of the ethics counselor, commanders and FRG leaders may, in response to an appropriate inquiry, inform potential donors of the needs of the Army in relation to assisting Army families.

J-9. Unsolicited donations to the Active Component
a. Appropriate gift acceptance authorities may accept unsolicited gifts and donations made to the Army intended for FRG support; these donations will be added to the garrison's FRG supplemental mission account, pursuant to paragraph 3-2a of this regulation and AR 215-1 after consultation with an ethics counselor. The director, MWR (DMWR) will assign these donations intended for FRG use to program code SA, department code "9J," to prevent disbursing donations intended for FRG use into another ACS mission or for any other purpose. These supplemental mission donations

do not expire at the end of the fiscal year, and balances automatically roll over into the following fiscal year.
b. Acceptance authority levels for unsolicited gifts and donations to the FRG supplemental mission account will be in accordance with the rules governing gifts to NAFI in AR 215-1.
c. Supplemental mission donations are NAFs that may be used only to supplement the mission activity. They are not MWR NAFs. MWR NAFs may not be expended for FRG support. Commanders may use supplemental mission donations intended for FRGs for any purpose that the commander determines clearly supplements an established mission of the FRG so long as appropriated funds are not authorized. However, in accordance with the policies listed in chapter 5 of this regulation, supplemental mission donations may be used for reimbursement of statutory volunteer incidental expenses if appropriated funds are not available. The use must be consistent with this regulation and the provisions governing supplemental mission NAFs in AR 2 15-1 and DODI 10 15.15.
(1) The first priority in using supplemental mission NAFs intended for FRGs is to encourage maximum attendance and participation at FRG meetings-for example, by providing food and refreshments. Using supplemental mission NAFs to support a unit ball is an example of an unauthorized expenditure because it fails to supplement an established mission of the FRG.
(2) Commanders may not authorize the use of supplemental mission NAFs for any purpose that cannot withstand the test of public scrutiny or which could be deemed a misuse or waste of funds. Using supplemental mission NAFs to fund a lavish cruise to promote "cohesion" among FRG members is an example of an excessive and inappropriate use of funds.
d. Supplemental mission NAFs are not informal funds. The provisions concerning informal funds contained in this regulation are inapplicable to supplemental mission NAFs. Supplemental mission NAFs will not be deposited into an FRG informal find and will not impact the annual FRG informal fund income cap.
e. The DMWR will properly disburse supplemental mission donations intended for FRG support. The unit commander will submit an approved purchase request that includes a brief description of the item(s) requested, total funds required, dates the items are needed, and vendor or source of the items to be purchased to the DMWR for processing. The DMWR will disburse such supplemental mission donations between FRGs supported by that garrison's ACS Center, to include recruiting and the Army Reserve Component. Army National Guard units are not included for these supplemental mission accounts.
f: Garrison commanders may accept unsolicited gifts into the supplemental mission program when the donor intends the donation or gift to be used only in support of FRGs that are experiencing certain deployment cycle events, such as preparing for deployment, deployment, and redeployment. The DMWR will ensure that the supplemental mission donations are disbursed to FRGs whose Soldiers are experiencing the deployment cycle event stated in the

donation. This ensures that the garrison fulfills the conditions of the gift which the commander accepted. For example, a donor intends a gift to be used "for the families of deployed Soldiers." The DMWR ensures only FRGs whose units have deployed Soldiers share in the supplemental mission donation.
g. The garrison commander may not accept unsolicited gifts into the supplemental mission program when the donor intends the donation or gift to be used only by a named FRG. For example, a donor intends a gift to be used "for Brigade X's FRG." Garrison commander must decline the gift because it creates disparity between FRGs experiencing the same deployment cycle events.
h. Commanders and FRG leaders must be careful to avoid stating or implying that the Army officially endorses any person or private organization that offers a gift. The commander and FRG leadership may not promise donors that donations are tax deductible. Businesses may be encouraged to speak with their tax adviser regarding business tax deductions.
i. Commanders who are offered donations they may not accept will consider referring the prospective donor to other Government or private organizations, such as Army Emergency Relief, local tax qualified charities, foundations, and fraternal or service organizations.
j. Commanders will seek guidance from their servicing Judge Advocate and ethics counselor when they receive offers of unsolicited donations for FRG support. For further regulatory instruction regarding gifts offered to the Army or to individuals, see AR 1-100 and AR 1-101

J-10. Unsolicited donations to a Reserve Component
The procedures for accepting donations or gifts for an RC may differ, depending upon location and activation status. For RC units attached to an Army garrison or installation, see instructions above regarding the acceptance authority for accepting unsolicited donations intended for FRG support. For guidance regarding gifts intended for an RC not attached to a garrison or installation, see AR 1-100 and AR 1-101. Commanders are also encouraged to seek guidance from their ethics counselors. For specifics, refer to Reserve Command regulations.

J-I I. Private organizations Private organizations (POs) have substantially more authority than FRGs to conduct fundraising and to engage in social activities in accordance with AR 210-22, AR 600-29, and DOD 5500.7-R. Individuals may establish POs that share the same family readiness goals and objectives as FRGs. To prevent potential conflicts of interest, if such POs are established, managers or board members of the PO will not also be placed in FRG leadership positions. It is essential that commanders and Government personnel treat such POs in the same manner as all similarly situated POs. Commanders may not direct the establishment or the activities of a PO and must treat POs according to the requirements of AR 210-22, AR 600-29, and DOD 5500.7-R, as applicable. Commanders will seek guidance from their servicing Judge Advocate's office and ethics counselor regarding private organization issues.

J-12. Commercial sponsorship
FRGs may not enter into commercial sponsorship agreements. Commercial sponsorship is an agreed upon arrangement under which a business provides assistance, funding, goods, equipment, or services in exchange for public recognition or other promotional opportunities on the installation. In accordance with AR 2 15-1 and DODI 1015.10, commercial sponsorship is generally only authorized for official MWR programs and events.

J-13. Official information
Official FRG information relates to command and mission-essential information that the commander believes families need to be better informed. Official information relates to unit mission and readiness. It includes training schedule information, upcoming deployments, unit points of contact, and the chain of concern. Official information is subject to all applicable regulations governing its use and to guidance in AR 25-55 and 5 USC 552(b).

APPENDIX IV: DoD Directive Implementing the Reagan Administration's Family Policy[419]

Department of Defense Directive Number 1342.17 December 30, 1988 (Certified current as of November 21, 2003). Family Policy. Implements Reagan's Executive Order 12606 "The Family"

Sept 2 1987

It is DoD policy that:

4.1. Family policy-making criteria, as prescribed in E.O. 12606 (reference (b)) be followed, to the extent permitted by law, in formulating and implementing policies that have significant impact on DoD personnel and their families.

4.2. DoD personnel and their families be provided a quality of life that reflects the high standards and pride of the Nation they defend, and that this policy be achieved by working in partnership with DoD personnel and their families, recognizing their role in the readiness of the Total Force.

4.3. DoD personnel, both married and single, bear priMary responsibility for the welfare of their families. Nevertheless, the total commitment demanded by military service requires that they and their families be provided a comprehensive family support system. The extent and exact nature of this system shall be based on installation-specific requirements and shall address needs for pre-mobilization indoctrination, deployment support, relocation assistance, information and referral (with follow-up), child care, youth recreation and development, private and public sector employment assistance (including self-employment in Government quarters), special needs support, family advocacy, foster care, family life education, dependents' education, substance abuse prevention, family health and fitness, spiritual growth and development, emergency services, counseling, support and services for off-base families (outreach), consumer affairs and financial planning assistance, volunteer training and management, separation and retirement planning, family centers, and community development.

4.4. Family support systems be designed to assist commanders in accomplishing installation mission requirements, consistent with DoD Directive 4001.1 (reference (c)).

4.5. Family support systems be allocated resources to accomplish their missions, as prescribed in this Directive.

[419] U.S. Department of Defense Directive 1342.17, *Family Policy*.

4.6. Family support system agencies and activities shall collaborate and coordinate with each other and civilian agencies to ensure maximum use of resources.

4.7. Family support systems shall be monitored and evaluated by the Military Services to ensure their accessibility, effectiveness, and responsiveness to the needs of DoD personnel and their families.

APPENDIX V: Original Interview Protocol

The following is the interview schedule in its original form, before revisions:

Spouse Interview Protocol[420]

First, give the interviewee the consent information form and let them read it and ask any questions. Then talk to them about the oral consent. Turn on the recorder and read the oral consent form. Have them, if they agree, read the agreement at the end of the consent information form. Thank them for participating, and then start the interview.

1) Background information

1.1) Please tell me about your husband's background

- **1.1.1)** Where did he grow up?
- **1.1.2)** What did his parents do?
- **1.1.3)** Was there military in his family?
- **1.1.4)** Did he have other prior familiarity with the military?
- **1.1.5)** Why and when did he join the military?
- **1.1.6)** Education?
- **1.1.7)** If you feel comfortable, what is his age?
- **1.1.8)** If you feel comfortable, with what race does he identify?
- **1.1.9)** What is his rank and job in the unit?
- **1.1.10)** What are his future plans for military service? Career?

1.2) Now please tell me about your background

- **1.2.1)** Where did you grow up?
- **1.2.2)** What did your parents do?
- **1.2.3)** Was there military in your family?
- **1.2.4)** Did you have other prior familiarity with the military?
- **1.2.5)** Education?
- **1.2.6)** Do you have children?
- **1.2.7)** Do you live on or off base?
- **1.2.8)** If you feel comfortable, what is your age?

[420] I thank Meg Harrell for her permission to model this interview schedule in part on hers in Harrell, "*Brass Rank and Gold Rings*," and for useful discussions about the topic generally.

1.2.9) If you feel comfortable, with what race do you identify?
1.2.10) How and when did you meet your husband?
1.2.11) What were your first impressions of being a military spouse?

2) Tell me about being a military spouse

2.1) What impact do you have on the unit?
2.2) How did you learn your role?
2.2.1) How do you know if you're doing things correctly?
2.2.2) Do you own a handbook? What is useful in it?
2.2.3) Do you have a mentor?
2.2.4) Did you teach others?
2.3) What is expected of you as a military spouse?
2.3.1) Participation
2.3.1.1) What kinds of activities are expected?
2.3.1.2) Frequency? Always, sometimes, never
2.3.2) Entertaining
2.3.2.1) Often, sporadically, never
2.3.2.2) How often per month?
2.3.2.3) How much do you spend?
2.3.2.4) Do others entertain more or less? Who? Why?
2.3.3) Volunteering
2.3.3.1) Have you ever been asked to volunteer?
2.3.3.2) Does this affect your spouse's career or evaluation?
2.3.3.3) How many hours per month? Often, sporadically, never
2.3.3.4) What do you volunteer to do? If never, why and with what results?
2.3.3.5) How have the things that have been asked of you changed as your spouse's rank has progressed?
2.3.3.6) Do you ever think about stopping volunteering?
2.3.3.7) If you stopped volunteering, what impact would that have?
2.3.3.7.1) On your spouse's career?
2.3.3.7.2) On your life in the military community?
2.3.3.7.3) On your happiness?
2.3.3.8) Have you ever stopped volunteering/participating? Why?
2.3.3.9) What changes in your life affected how much you participated?

3) Family Readiness Groups (FRGs)

3.1) What is the FRG like in your current unit?
3.1.1) Who runs it?
3.1.1.1) Husband's rank?
3.1.1.2) What amount of time do they spend?
3.1.1.3) What kind of atmosphere do they create?
3.1.1.4) How are you notified about FRG activities? Is that effective?
3.1.1.5) What events/opportunities/information does the FRG offer?
3.1.1.6) Is this too much or too little?

3.1.1.7) Who is targeted/supported most?

3.1.2) How do you participate?

3.1.2.1) How many hours per month?

3.1.2.2) What benefits do you get from it?

3.1.2.3) What are your feelings about the FRG?

3.1.2.4) What could be improved?

3.1.3) Who does participate?

3.1.3.1) Children?

3.1.3.2) Rank? Enlisted/officer spouses more?

3.1.3.3) On or off base?

3.1.3.4) Working?

3.1.3.5) Why do you think they participate?

3.1.4) Who does not participate?

3.1.4.1) Children?

3.1.4.2) Rank? Enlisted/officer spouses more?

3.1.4.3) On or off base?

3.1.4.4) Working?

3.1.4.5) Why do you think they do not participate?

3.1.5) Is the FRG a high priority in your life?

3.1.5.1) Have you ever cancelled something else for an FRG activity?

3.1.5.2) How much pressure do you feel to participate in the FRG?

3.1.5.3) Does your husband tell you to participate or not to participate? Why?

3.2) What has your experience been with FRGs in the past?

3.2.1) Who ran them?

3.2.2) Where were they?

3.2.3) How were they different?

3.2.4) How was your participation different and why?

3.3) How has having children affected your/others' participation in FRGs?

3.4) How has having a job affected your/others' participation in FRGs?

3.5) How has living on or off post affected your/others' participation in FRGs?

3.6) Who are your friends?

3.6.1) How did you meet them?

3.6.2) Officer or enlisted spouses?

3.6.3) Do officer and enlisted spouses socialize in FRGs? Informally? Why?

3.6.4) What other kinds of support do you rely on?

3.6.5) Family support?

4) Deployment

4.1) How does deployment affect you?

4.2) How does deployment affect the FRG?

4.2.1) Do the number or kind of social events change?

4.2.2) Does your level of participation change?

4.2.3) Are FRGs more or less effective during deployments? In what ways?

4.2.4) Do you need more or less from the Army or FRGs?

4.3) What kinds of deployments has your spouse been on?
- **4.3.1)** Length
- **4.3.2)** Number
- **4.3.3)** Location

4.4) How do you communicate with your spouse during deployments?

4.5) How has deployment changed over the years?
- **4.5.1)** Does the Army or FRGs expect different things of you?
- **4.5.2)** Do you need different things now from the Army or FRGs?

5) General Questions

5.1) What are the biggest benefits of being an Army family? If this question seems overwhelming, just list a few.

5.2) What are the biggest problems with being an Army family? If this question seems overwhelming, just list a few.

5.3) Does the Army understand or listen to your problems? What does it do to about them?

5.4) What kinds of Army families get the most out of the Army community? The least? Why?

5.5) In summary, what are the good and bad parts about being an Army spouse?

5.6) Are there any spouse activities that I might attend or volunteer for?

Do you have anything else you would like to talk about?
Thank you for your participation.
Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix VI: Becker's Typology of Deviance

Becker's typology in *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, mapped in figure 6 as individuals' behaviors cross-correlated with the responses of the group, offers useful terms for describing different types of Army wife behavior in FRGs. Defining outsiders and insiders in this research with Becker's classic "interactionist theory of deviance" provides one possible way to identify, parse, and categorize the actions and relationships of Army wives as they use emotional labor to socialize each other and impose institutional Army ideals through Family Readiness Groups.[421] He stresses that no behavior is deviant in and of itself; it is made deviant by others in the group through a labeling process.

Becker cross-classifies behaviors and the group's reactions to those behaviors to parse outsiders from conformers and give nuance to each category. Behaviors are divided into those that are obedient and those that are rule-breaking. The group's reactions are divided into those perceived as deviant and those not. The following matrix results.

[421] Becker, *Outsiders*, 181.

Figure 6: Becker's Four Theoretical Types, Determined by Both Individual Behavior (x-axis) and Group Responses (y-axis)[422]

	Obedient Behavior	**Rule-Breaking Behavior**
Perceived as Deviant	Falsely Accused	Pure Deviant
Not Perceived as Deviant	Conforming	Secret Deviance

Generally, I find this typology to be a useful way of categorizing the data gathered for the dissertation. FRG leaders and other senior officers' wives typify the conforming category, though they often express ambivalence about their volunteer work, which can be explained as secret deviance. Some FRG members demand notably more time and effort of the leadership than others, and these higher-maintenance members are often falsely accused of deviant behavior even though they are seeking support through the proper channels. The pure deviant category captures a variety of FRG outsiders: the disenchanted, the ostracized, the snubbed, the aloof, the too-busy, the truly over-demanding, and those who are prevented from participating by their soldier-spouses who put them on a do-not-call list.

However, Becker's focus on deviant actions ignores another way of obtaining outsider status: deviant *attitudes*. As opposed to the closet marijuana smokers, who are Becker's examples of secret deviants, FRG members fall into the category of

[422] Becker, *Outsiders*, 20.

secret deviants not because of what they *do* but because of the attitudes they express in private among their peers, with their husbands, and/or in confidential interviews. Furthermore, there is no room in figure 6 to account for two sets of rules: both formal and informal. There is very little rule-breaking behavior of an FRG's actual rules. Most deviance is a violation of *informal* group norms. For example, non-participation and speaking negatively about FRGs are not violations of set rules. They are violations of informal rules. Yet these violations garner aggressive policing in, as Becker indicates, a process of defining what is proper and what is outsider behavior.

Becker's typology proves too strict to offer thorough explanatory power of the FRG case study. However, his focus on the *process* of labeling in order to enforce "commitments to norms and institutions"[423] contributes to the dissertation's analysis of emotional labor. Furthermore, this research co-opts some of his terms such as conforming to good use.

[423] Becker, *Outsiders*, 27.

Appendix VII: Letter to Soldiers and Families

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON DC 20310

APR 10 2008

To Our Soldiers and Families

Today, President Bush announced his decision to return to twelve-month deployments in the CENTCOM theater for active Army units. The President's decision reflects the improved security situation in Iraq – one made possible by your unwavering commitment and willingness to sacrifice – as well as the recognition of the impact of extended deployments on Army Families and our readiness. Today's policy change will help reduce that strain as we continue to grow the Army and restore balance.

The Army will reduce "Boots On the Ground" time to no more than twelve months for all active component Soldiers deploying to the CENTCOM area of operations after 1 August 2008. Soldiers deploying prior to 1 August will complete their scheduled deployments.

The return to twelve-month deployments does not change the Army's dwell time policy. This policy is intended to give units time to properly reset and allow Soldiers, Families, and friends to reconnect.

You have chosen a most noble profession. With your Families standing with you in support, you have borne the increased stress and burden of this war for our Army and our Nation. A grateful Army and Nation thank you.

Sincerely,

Kenneth O. Preston
Sergeant Major of the Army

George W. Casey, Jr.
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Pete Geren
Secretary of the Army

Appendix VIII: Barriers to Participation

The dissertation's focus on FRG leaders' emotion work sometimes eclipses other spouses' use or lack of use of the FRG system. This appendix identifies factors that hinder or prevent FRG involvement for some Army wives.

Logistics

FRG leaders struggle to build community among spouses when some members cannot or do not participate due to logistical barriers such as travel time or childcare. Greater distance from FRGs' meeting places (generally on the Army post) decreased FRG participation for many wives. Lanie did not drive forty minutes to the FRG meetings, even though she planned to take over as FRG leader within a few months.[424] Her attendance at unit coffee group meetings, which were held in the town where she lived, illustrated her willingness to participate if distance would not have been factor.

Despite the possibility that e-mail or the virtual FRG can connect spouses to the group without requiring their physical presence, some spouses found that they still felt like outsiders. Michelle found geographical distance cut her out despite her eagerness to participate: "It was hard because I wasn't living in the military

[424] Lanie, interviewee 22, interview by author, confidential transcript.

community; I wasn't privy to a lot of the information that flowed."[425] Living on-post in military housing facilitates social engagement with women with similar experiences in close proximity, according to Maggie: "I really have found that I prefer to live on post because then I have other military spouses around me."[426] For some women, the actual distance was not the core issue. Living one mile from the entrance to post might as well have been fifty miles for Holly: "Living off post, no, it's too much of a pain in the butt to come on post."[427] She perceived on and off post as two different worlds, in and out of the community, respectively, with FRGs firmly as part of the on-post world.

Children also limited or altered many interviewees' participation and thus FRG leaders' ability to connect with those spouses. The availability and cost of child care during meetings arose time and again as an issue in the interviews. Beyond childcare, the basic demands of scheduling a busy family (often as a "single mom" when the soldier-father is in the field or deployed and unable to share parenting responsibilities) sometimes conflicted with "Army family" activities such as FRG meetings. For instance, former soldier Andi said that her ability to participate depended on her children's schedules; if they did not have soccer practice, then

[425] Michelle, interviewee 35, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[426] Maggie, interviewee 7, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[427] Holly, interviewee 13, interview by author, confidential transcript. Army posts are gated, and all entering vehicles are stopped at this particular post's gates where IDs are checked and, if the car is not registered on post and does not display a registration sticker, the car is searched. Lines at the gates can be long at peak traffic hours.

attending the FRG meeting that evening became a possibility.[428] Nikki variously altered the quantity and quality of participation based on her children's ages. When they were very young, she ceased participation: "I had a newborn at home and a crazy two-year-old, so I wasn't really going to the meetings."[429] When Nikki's children were slightly older, she volunteered to do types of volunteer work that allowed her to balance her responsibilities: "I felt that I needed something to do that was simple and easy and I could have my kids present."[430] Subdued twenty-four-year-old Beth took her four children to a meeting and was overwhelmed with keeping track of them and fending off other children who she felt were bullying hers; she could not pay attention due to the distractions of her crying, screaming kids and so decided going to meetings was not worth the stress they caused her.[431]

The continuous cycle of deployments facing the majority of soldiers in the Army today shapes variation in Army wives' participation in FRGs as well.[432] Since the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism, deployments for active-duty Army soldiers have been approximating one year at war alternating with one year "home" in

[428] Andi, interviewee 4, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[429] Nikki, interviewee 1, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[430] Ibid.

[431] Beth, interviewee 9, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[432] The Army's personnel department identifies seven stages in the deployment cycle: support - train-up / preparation, mobilization, deployment, employment, redeployment, post-deployment, and reconstitution. See Army G-1 Deputy Chief of Staff, Deployment Cycle Support Process - (DCS), http://www.armyg1.army.mil/dcs/default.asp (accessed 11 May 2008).

the United States.[433] The year of dwell time in the U.S. consists of reintegration training to acclimate the soldiers, leave time for vacations, some months of work at the home base, and then training (often extended time away from families) to gear back up for another deployment abroad.

Participation in FRG activities ebbs and flows during the deployment cycle, though the pattern of activity and inactivity is different within different FRGs. Some FRGs' members coalesce during deployments but quit participating when the soldiers are home in order to spend time with their nuclear families. The on-post Mobilization/Deployment Specialist put it thus:

> We're still, I mean, really recovering from a redeployment. … And so the need, in family members' minds for the Family Readiness Group is not where it should be or where it will be during times of deployment. They're like, "Well, I don't need the Family Readiness Group right now because my soldier's home." Which is, really that's not the way it should be. Your FRG should be up and running; you know, it should be effective all the time, weather your soldiers are here or whether they're deployed.[434]

Krista focused on the soldiers' presence not so much for the information they bring to their families but because they make families whole again. She said, "Because they're never home, when they are home the time is precious; they [the spouses] don't want to take that time to be involved in the FRG."[435] Echoing this sentiment, Nikki reported, in broad strokes, "There's no participation when the soldiers are home, but there's probably seventy-five percent or more participating when the soldiers are

---

[433] The effects of this schedule on families is explored in James Hosek, Jennifer Kavanagh, and Laura Miller, *How Deployments Affect Service Members* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006).

[434] Interview by author, transcript, 28 September 2006.

[435] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

gone."[436] She reasoned about these FRG members that during deployments "they need that socialization and they need information; their soldier isn't there to bring that information home."[437] While the soldier-spouses were gone, wives sometimes turned to their FRGs as replacement families.

However, some interviewees reported that FRG involvement is highest as the deployment looms, but drops drastically during the deployment. I observed this to be true particularly if a group's activeness was artificially created by the emphasis commanders put on attendance during pre-deployment train-up. Some commanders make attendance at pre- and post-deployment meetings and events compulsory (called, jokingly, "mandatory fun") for each soldier and/or his spouse. Then the commander and his troops deploy, leaving an FRG full of family members who never formed a community of their own volition.

Perceptions of Rank

A soldier-spouse's time-in-service (which is implied, often but not always correctly, by rank) and the number of years the wife has been married to the soldier increase the amount of knowledge about Army life a spouse has had a chance to amass. Participation in FRGs is one way for spouses to learn about the Army, and often inexperienced spouses make up the core group of participants. Senior non-

[436] Nikki, interviewee 1, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[437] Ibid.

commissioned officer's wife Debbie explained, "The people I do see coming to the meetings are brand new wives to the military. … They just want to find out what's going on and how it works."[438] More senior soldiers' spouses often already know the gist of a meetings' information and some feel they can rely on their husbands for specifics, and so their participation sometimes wanes unless they feel a leadership imperative based on their husband's job in the unit.

Spouses of soldiers who have been in the Army longer, including NCO's wives and senior officers' wives, are more often expected to lead when an FRG leadership role needs to be filled. However, at the company level where most FRGs operate, there are no senior (i.e., field-grade) officers. Within a company, senior NCOs wives and junior (i.e., company-grade) officers' wives are all expected to be leaders despite the disparity in amount of Army experience and expertise, which could be ten years or more.[439] In fact, despite their relative lack of experience, company-grade officers' wives carry additional pressure to lead based on the traditional role of the commanders' wife as the leader of the "chain of concern," as is illustrated in chapter four.

Drawbacks to the commander's wife being the FRG leader include the problem of those spouses' relative inexperience and the high turnover rate for junior officers relative to enlisted soldiers (whose tenure in a particular unit often spans multiple commanders' or platoon leaders'). As a rough estimation, it would be

[438] Debbie, interviewee 15, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[439] For a table depicting rank, please see appendix I. Lieutenants and captains are "junior" company-grade officers, and all higher ranking officers are "senior" field-grade officers.

unusual for a company commander to have been in the Army more than seven or eight years (unless he was enlisted prior to becoming an officer). Thus, it is unlikely his wife has been involved in Army life as a spouse longer than a senior NCO's wife. Commanders and other company-grade officers change companies more often than most enlisted soldiers, causing those enlisted soldiers' tenure in a particular unit to span multiple leaders. Because of the common occurrence of the "command team" of commander and his FRG-leader wife, this often creates an FRG leadership turnover rate that would be slowed if enlisted soldiers' wives were the leaders instead. Scholar Doris Durand found that the volunteer jobs historically filled by officers' wives are increasingly filled by noncommissioned officers' wives.[440] I also observed this trend, as did multiple interviewees, though I also observed that in some battalions, each and every FRG leader was a commander's wife.

Many interviewees discussed the lack of approachability of officers' wives versus that of enlisted soldiers' wives. They reported that negative experiences with officers' wives negatively affected their FRG participation. Nikki detailed the commonly held view that for enlisted soldiers' spouses, other enlisted soldiers' wives are more approachable than officers' wives: "Considering that the majority of the unit is going to be enlisted wives, they make you more comfortable having that enlisted soldier's wife as their FRG leader … and some of the officers' wives don't make themselves accessible."[441] Andrea, an NCO's wife, also argued for NCOs' wives as

[440] Durand, "The Role of the Army Wife."

[441] Nikki, interviewee 1, interview by author, confidential transcript.

FRG leaders: "I think they relate, based on experience, they'll relate better with other enlisted spouses."[442] Andrea points out that NCOs' wives were usually once lower-enlisted soldiers' wives, with the added benefit of years of experience with Army life.

Regardless of the actual behavior of the leader, rank-based stereotypes affect the perceived approachability of the leader and thus overall participation. A basic theme among interviewees was, "When you come in as a PV2's [a low-ranking enlisted soldier's] wife, it's intimidating having the captain's wife in charge."[443] The same interviewee, Brie, also phrased her opinion more negatively. She said, summarily, "Officers' wives can't relate to most women."[444] As a result, according to Katie, an enlisted soldier's wife who is an FRG leader, "A private's wife feels more comfortable going to an enlisted soldier's wife than an officer's wife. They feel like: 'They've been here before, you're not looking down on me.'"[445] Andrea commented, in the same vein, "I think they feel more comfortable. We have a lot of junior enlisted folks who don't feel comfortable putting their hands up when the officers or the spouses are around. I don't think the comfort level is there really."[446] Rank-based intimidation was a major theme in enlisted soldiers' interviews.

Lonna, who is a high-ranking officer's wife, expressed enthusiastic support for the wives of low-ranking enlisted soldiers volunteering as FRG leaders, because

---

[442] Andrea, interviewee 26, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[443] Brie, interviewee 8, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[444] Ibid.

[445] Katie, interviewee 31, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[446] Andrea, interviewee 26, interview by author, confidential transcript.

of their approachability for all wives in the company. However, Lonna also noted the complicating factor that lower-ranking enlisted soldiers' wives sometimes were hesitant to approach the commander's wife or other officers' wives in the chain of concern "because there's a huge difference in experience and age, normally, but also there's that concern, 'If I say this then it's going to get back and somehow it's going to affect my husband's career.'"[447] Diane claimed, "A lot of enlisted soldiers' families do have reservations about talking to the wife of the officer."[448] Another interviewee, Jenna, who is an enlisted soldier's wife and an FRG leader, expands: "I think that's how a lot of the wives and soldiers think, 'Don't call the commander's wife, I don't want the commander to know that we're having issues and that we need help.'"[449] Issues that spouses are hesitant to let the FRG leader know about for fear the commander will penalize the soldier-spouse include financial, mental, parenting, marriage, and legal problems. They fear, in a culture where strength, perseverance, and machismo are valued, that a soldier's problems at home could be interpreted as personal and perhaps professional failure.

Analysis of the data reveals that soldier rank influences spouses' perceptions of FRGs as well as the nature of relationships women form in FRGs. For instance, Lori expanded on how she perceived rank to have an overarching influence on a wife's perceived worth in the FRG: "When I was enlisted [her husband was enlisted and later became an officer] nobody called us about the FRG, you were just supposed

[447] Lonna, interviewee 3, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[448] Diane, interviewee 10, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[449] Jenna, interviewee 30, interview by author, confidential transcript.

to attend. In your FRG your opinion didn't matter. You could give your opinion [about an FRG activity] but whether it was acted upon was different. When you become higher rank and you speak your opinion, people start to listen and care."[450] Kendra expressed a similar opinion: "I was just this little person; that's how I felt. I don't think it was anything they ever did to make me feel that way, but when you see the higher-ups running the meetings you think that's how it's supposed to be."[451] The ranked hierarchy she observed made her shy away from anything more than minimal participation.

Katie, acutely aware of rank hierarchy because she is an enlisted soldiers' wife leading an FRG when most of her peers are officers' wives, explained the problem, "Every now and then you have a snotty wife because they wear their husband's rank."[452] Robin flatly said, "I have met a lot of spouses who wear their husbands' rank."[453] No Army wife "ranks" higher than another; they are civilians brought together in FRGs because of their common status as the spouses of soldiers. Even though the Army and its employees stress that FRGs are a rank-free space, in which the rank of soldiers should not affect the interactions of their family members, the relationships among spouses within the volunteer groups and the spouses' level of participation are heavily informed by the hierarchy of rank.

---

[450] Lori, interviewee 33, interview by author, confidential transcript. It is notable that it is common in Army wife parlance, not just in this quote, to say "we" or "I" when really it is the soldier-spouse ("he") who holds the rank and is employed in the job.

[451] Kendra, interviewee 32, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[452] Katie, interviewee 31, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[453] Robin, interviewee 5, interview by author, confidential transcript.

In fact, rank circumscribes all relationships within FRGs. Enloe observes that for military wives all "daily interactions, friendships and social obligations are bound round by a military ranking system that usually exacerbates the class/racial stratification of the larger society."[454] More specifically to FRGs, majority-enlisted membership traditionally led by the commanding officers' wife, Enloe argues, "Many of the unpaid volunteer jobs done by officers' wives are in organizations meant to benevolently service the wives of enlisted men. This, of course, reinforces the stratified structure in which military wives are supposed to relate to each other."[455] Within such an entrenched hierarchy, an Army wife's "peers" are not her fellow FRG members at large, but instead are the spouses whose husbands are of similar rank. Rank disparity can strain relationships, which negatively affects FRG participation for some women. Often, Army wives' past experiences with rank relations in FRGs serve as the determining factor for their continued involvement in FRGs.

Indifference

Some Army wives do not participate in FRGs, and others participate only if the group provides them with something they want when it is convenient in their schedules. They may participate only when an FRG meeting is mandatory for soldier or spouse—usually prior to a deployment, a time when there is a great deal of

[454] Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, 47.

[455] Ibid., 73-4.

information distributed. At other times, the FRG is simply not of interest to these spouses.

These Army wives' intent is not to be deviant FRG members. Rather, their allegiances lie elsewhere, with other subcultures' group norms. Becker explains that "groups need not and, in fact, often do not share the same rules," and continues on to point out that "insofar as the rules of various groups conflict and contradict one another, there will be disagreement about the kind of behavior that is proper in any given situation."[456] For instance, a devout Army wife may value her religious group's norms more highly than the FRG's, and her allocation of free time will reflect her evaluation of the importance of each group.

Low-participating spouses (1) primarily connect to other sources of information and support such as their husbands, their families, coffee groups, or church groups instead of the FRG, (2) do not care to have information about the Army community, (3) feel they know the necessary information because they themselves serve or served in the military, (4) have little interaction outside the home (as Violet said, "I have about five friends; I really don't go anywhere. I'd rather mind my own business"[457]), or (5) some combination of these reasons. For example, Lanie, a captain's wife, participated little, was not very outgoing, had a young child, worked from home, trusted her husband to get information to her, and lived off-post.[458] She

[456] Becker, *Outsiders*, 15.

[457] Violet, interviewee 9, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[458] Lanie, interviewee 22, interview by author, confidential transcript.

did not have strong opinions about FRGs, good or bad, though she did view them as a resource that was perhaps good for other spouses who may need it.[459]

Some low-participating spouses exhibited an even deeper level of indifference and lack of knowledge. They neither knew nor cared about the very existence of FRGs.[460] FRG leader Katie described such spouses: "You have the girl who doesn't know what FRG is, never heard of it, never been to a meeting, doesn't know anything about the Army and doesn't care to."[461] One interviewee, Violet, fit that description; she had participated in almost no Army-related activities.

These Army wives fail to provide the Army with volunteer labor. They do not work on behalf of their husbands' careers. They do not care if their husbands stay in the Army, and some such as Violet said they do not know if their husbands intend to stay or not. If a soldier intends to leave the Army before he is eligible for retirement after twenty years of active-duty service, his limited career ambition may affect his spouse's participation. Because the spouse's FRG involvement will not help his career advancement, and because career goals are not a focus of either the soldier or spouse, she often limits her involvement.

---

[459] Lanie, interviewee 22, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[460] Harrell's "invisible women" would fall under this category. Margaret C. Harrell, *Invisible Women: Junior Enlisted Army Wives* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2000).

[461] Katie, interviewee 31, interview by author, confidential transcript.

Disallowed by Soldier-Spouses

A few Army wives are disenfranchised by soldier-spouses who disallow the Army access to their wives by signing a form that forbids the FRG to interact with the civilian spouses. Gwen explains, "Sometimes the husbands don't want the spouses participating in the FRGs or support groups of any kind."[462] Some soldiers had heard of the bad reputation of FRGs and feared involvement, some peremptorily rejected the Army's official support program as overly demanding and invasive, and some wanted to control the information their wives receive about the units and their activities.

Among husbands who do not want their wives to participate, some told their wives of that decision, but others did not. Brie explained, "When we first got down here, my husband didn't want me to participate. I guess before we got here, the FRG had caused a lot of problems."[463] Other soldiers' wives were put on the DNC list without their knowledge, said Lonna: "There are some husbands who tell the FRG don't contact my wife, and the wife doesn't know that he's said that."[464] Either way, the wives were disenfranchised.

According to FRG leaders' accounts, soldiers who signed the DNC form either seek to protect their spouses (and themselves) from gossip and bad situations in FRGs or wanted to control the information that their spouses received during a

[462] Gwen, interviewee 36, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[463] Brie, interviewee 8, interview by author, confidential transcript.

[464] Lonna, interviewee 3, interview by author, confidential transcript.

deployment—sometimes for benevolent and sometimes for more oppressive reasons. A benevolent reason may be a soldier knew his wife figuratively or literally worries herself sick if she knew how dangerous his deployment was, so he may have been protecting her from knowledge about soldiers' deaths and injuries. Some soldiers, though, controled their wives' access to the world to dominate every aspect of their lives; as Krista said, "Some of them don't even want their spouse to know anything. 'Don't send her anything.' Knowledge is power. And it might be power in a way they don't want their spouse to have any power."[465] For instance, multiple Army wives told stories of such soldiers not allowing or helping their foreign-born wife get a driver's license before the deployment, ostensibly so the woman could not cheat on him but actually leading to her total isolation from society and immense difficulty accomplishing chores necessary to run a household. FRG leaders report problems during deployments when women who are kept from the flow of official information through the FRG by their husbands demand to know why they have not been contacted, but then find out their husbands made that decision for them.

This moment, when a soldier puts his wife on the DNC list without her agreement, is a moment when the "power" of the FRG leaders and the "empowerment" of the support groups' members is revealed to be an Army-controlled construct that is granted at the pleasure of the institution and can be easily taken away. The soldier—the spouse's link to the Army—has the final say, not the spouse. Spouses are not entitled to information; FRGs are not entitled to support all

[465] Krista, interviewee 29, interview by author, confidential transcript.

spouses who want such support. Women who are excluded from the system against their wishes by their husbands cannot supplement the information and support they receive from their husbands with the FRG.

Appendix IX: Future Research Considerations

Further research regarding the effects of Army-sponsored support groups on soldiers, the institution of the Army, and Army spouses would benefit from a sampling mechanism that includes both current and former soldiers' spouses. My dissertation only captures the range of opinions and experiences of current Army wives, most of whom have not yet or may never encourage their soldier-spouses to leave the Army. Wives who have successfully pushed their husbands to leave the Army's employ or who have acceded to their soldier-spouses' wishes to do so would provide depth to the data and, potentially, an entirely new perspective on the relationship of the institution of the Army to the institution of the family.

In 1997, the Army published a study titled *An Assessment of Burnout among Army Volunteers and the Implications for Soldier and Family Readiness and Quality of Life*.[466] The assessment concluded that "burnout was not a serious problem for most Army volunteers. Only 15% to 20% of the over 700 respondents self-reported being burned-out."[467] A repeat of this study would be illuminating, particularly after nearly a decade of sustained back-to-back year-long deployments for the majority of soldiers and in light of increased Army focus on, funding of, and control over family support.

---

[466] Doris Briley Durand, *An Assessment of Burnout among Army Volunteers and the Implications for Soldier and Family Readiness and Quality of Life* (Washington, D.C.: The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, 1997).

[467] Ibid., 1.

Family Readiness Group volunteers track their hours, if they are so inclined. However, there is no quantitative dataset revealing the demographic profile of the unpaid caring face of the Army.[468] Information about FRG leaders' gender, age, formal education, employment status, FRG-related training, rank of spouse, time as a volunteer, and satisfaction would provide a baseline for understanding who, in the aggregate, these volunteers are. Furthermore, an analysis of how the Army entices volunteers and why volunteers terminate their service would contribute greatly to both the study of the subculture and more broadly to the study of volunteering and volunteers' relationships to organizations.

A great many Army wives perceive that their volunteer and social efforts affect their husbands' careers. They act accordingly, as my dissertation reveals. However, military ethnography investigating soldiers' perceptions of spousal affect and any observable consequences would round out my investigation.

[468] Mobilization/Deployment Specialist, interview by author, 28 September 2006. The Survey of Army Families provides information regarding spouses' volunteer work broadly, but it does not differentiate between FRG and non-FRG volunteer work (Orthner and Rose, "SAF V Survey Reports").

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albano, Sondra. "Military Recognition of Family Concerns: Revolutionary War to 1993." *Armed Forces & Society* 20, no. 2 (1994): 283-302**.**

Alt, Betty Sowers, and Bonnie Domrose Stone. *Campfollowing: A History of the Military Wife.* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991.

Becker, Howard S. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance.* New York: The Free Press, 1973.

Bell, D. Bruce, Walter R. Schumm, Mady Wechsler Segal, and Rose E. Rice. "The Family Support System for the MFO." In *Reserve Component Soldiers as Peacekeepers*, edited by Ruth H. Phelps and Beatrice J. Farr, 355-94. Alexandria, VA: US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1996.

Biank, Tanya. *Under the Sabers: The Unwritten Code of Army Wives.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006.

Bonn, Keith E. *Army Officer's Guide*, 49th ed. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002.

Booth, Bradford, Mady Wechsler Segal, D. Bruce Bell, James A. Martin, Morten G. Ender, David E. Rohall, and John Nelson. *What We Know About Army Families*. Fairfax, VA: Caliber Associates, 2007.

Bourg, Chris, and Mady Wechsler Segal. "The Impact of Family Supportive Policies and Practices on Organizational Commitment to the Army." *Armed Forces & Society* 25, no. 4 (1998): 633-52.

Canfield, Jack, Mark Victor Hansen, Charles Preston, and Cindy Pedersen. *Chicken Soup for the Military Wife's Soul: Stories to Touch the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit*. Deerfield Beach, FL: HCI, 2005.

Chief of Staff, Department of the Army. *White Paper 1983: The Army Family*. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1983.

Cline, Lydia Sloan. *Today's Military Wife: Meeting the Challenges of Service Life*, 5th ed. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003.

Cocke, Karl E. *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1985*. Edited by Marilee S. Morgan. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1995.

Cody, Vicki. *Your Soldier, Your Army*. Arlington, VA: The Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the United States Army, 2005.

Condon-Rall, Mary Ellen. *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1983.* Edited by Cheryl Morai-Young. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990.

Cooke, Thomas J., and Karen Speirs. "Migration and Employment among the Civilian Spouses of Military Personnel." *Social Science Quarterly* 86, no. 2 (2005): 343-55.

Cooney, Richard Thomas, Jr. "Moving with the Military: Race, Class, and Gender Differences in the Employment Consequences of Tied Migration." Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2003.

Correa, Patti A. *From a Pebble to a Rock*. Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2004.

Coser, Lewis A. *Greedy Institutions: Patterns of Undivided Commitment*. New York: The Free Press, 1974.

Coser, Rose Laub, and Gerald Rokoff. "Women in the Occupational World: Social Disruption and Conflict." *Social Problems* 18 (1971): 535-54.

Crossley, Ann, and Carol A. Keller. *The Army Wife Handbook: A Complete Social Guide*, 2d ed. Sarasota, FL: ABI Press, 1996.

Dawalt, Sara. *365 Deployment Days: A Wife's Survival Story.* Austin, TX: Bridgeway Books, 2007.

Demma, Vincent H. *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1989.* Edited by Susan Carroll. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1998.

Diefendorff, James M., and Erin M. Richard, "Antecedents and Consequences of Emotional Display Rule Perceptions." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88 (2003): 284-94.

Dumler, Elaine Gray. *I'm Already Home*. Westminster, CO: Frankly Speaking, 2003.

Durand, Doris Briley. "The Role of the Army Wife as Perceived by Male Officers and Their Wives: Is It a Commitment to the 'Two-for-One' Career Pattern?" Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1995.

Durand, Doris Briley. "The Role of the Senior Military Wife—Then and Now." In *The Military Family: A Practice Guide for Human Service Providers*, edited by James A. Martin, Leora N. Rosen, and Linette R. Sparacino, 73-86. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000.

Durand, Doris Briley. *An Assessment of Burnout among Army Volunteers and the Implications for Soldier and Family Readiness and Quality of Life*. Washington, D.C.: The Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. 1997.

Eckhart, Jacey. *Homefront Club: The Hardheaded Woman's Guide to Raising a Military Family*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005.

Enloe, Cynthia. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 2d ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Enloe, Cynthia. *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives.* Boston: South End Press, 1983.

Enloe, Cynthia. "Foreword" In *Wives and Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*, edited by Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White, ix-x. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1997.

Enloe, Cynthia. *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

Erickson, Rebecca J., and Christian Ritter. "Emotional Labor, Burnout, and Inauthenticity: Does Gender Matter?" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 64 (2001): 146-63.

Etheridge, Rose M. *Family Factors Affecting Retention: A Review of the Literature*. Research Report 1511. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1989.

Everson, Ronald B. "Quality of Life among Army Spouses: Parenting and Family Stress During Deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom." Ph.D. diss., The Florida State University, 2005.

Farley, Janet I. *Jobs and the Military Spouse: Married, Mobile, and Motivated for Employment*, 2d ed. Manassas Park, VA: Impact Publications, 1997.

Glaser, Barney, and Judith Holton. "Remodeling Grounded Theory." *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 5, no. 2 (2004): 1-22.

Glaser, Barney. *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1998.

Glomb, Theresa M., John Daniel Kammeyer-Mueller, and Maria Rotundo. "Emotional Labor Demands and Compensating Wage Differentials." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 89 (2004): 700-14.

Goffman, Erving. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

Goffman, Erving. *Interaction Ritual*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1967.

Gomulka, Gene Thomas. *Marriage and Military Life*. Groton, CT: PlainTec, 2004.

Grandey, Alicia A. "Emotion Regulation in the Workplace: A New Way to Conceptualize Emotional Labor." *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 5 (2000): 59-100.

Grandey, Alicia A., David N. Dickter, and Hock-Peng Sin. "The Customer Is Not Always Right: Customer Verbal Aggression Toward Service Employees." *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 25 (2004): 397-418.

Grandey, Alicia A., Glenda M. Fisk, and Dirk D. Steiner. "Must 'Service with a Smile' Be Stressful? The Moderating Role of Personal Control for U.S. and French Employees." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 90 (2005): 893-904.

Granovetter, Mark S. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360-80.

Gross, Mollie. *Confessions of a Military Wife*. New York: Savas Beatie, 2009.

Harrell, Margaret C. "Army Officers' Spouses: Have the White Gloves Been Mothballed?" *Armed Forces & Society* 28, no.1 (2001): 55-75.

Harrell, Margaret C. "Brass Rank and Gold Rings: Class, Race, Gender, and Kinship within the Army Community." Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2000.

Harrell, Margaret C. "Gender- and Class-Based Role Expectations for Army Spouses." In *Anthropology and the United States Military: Coming of Age in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Pamela R. Frese and Margaret C. Harrell, 69-94. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Harrell, Margaret C. *Invisible Women: Junior Enlisted Army Wives*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2000.

Harrell, Margaret C., Nelson Lim, Laura Werber Castaneda, and Daniela Golinelli. *Working Around the Military: Challenges to Military Spouse Employment and Education.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2004.

Haynes, Mary L. *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1987.* Edited by Cheryl Morai Young. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1995.

Heifferon, Linda. "Statement Before the Personnel Subcommittee Committee on Armored Services, United States Senate, First Session, 108th Congress, on Families and Children." 2 June 2003, http://armed-services.senate.gov/statemnt/2003/June/Heifferon.pdf (accessed 10 November 2007).

Hightower, Kathie, and Holly Scherer. *Help! I'm a Military Spouse—I Want a Life Too!: How to Craft a Life for YOU as You Move with the Military*. Tacoma, WA: BookSurge Publishing, 2005.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell, and Anne Machung. *The Second Shift.* New York: Avon Books, 1989.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 3 (1979): 551-75.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Hogan, Paul F. *Family Annualized Cost of Leaving (ACOL): The Household as the Decision Unit in Military Retention.* Technical Report. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, May 1990.

Hosek, James, Jennifer Kavanagh, and Laura Miller. *How Deployments Affect Service Members*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006.

Houppert, Karen. *Home Fires Burning: Married to the Military—For Better or Worse*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2005.

Johnson, Paulette K. *Wings of Our Own*. Reston, VA: Wingspan Publications, 2001.

Johnson, Roni S. *Civilian Husbands in the Military Family: Current Issues and Future Concerns.* Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1998.

Kay, Ellie. *Heroes at Home: Help and Hope for America's Military Families*. Minneapolis, MN: Violetany House Publishers, 2002.

"Key Trend." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Army Personnel Survey Office, 12 September 2007, http://www.army.mil/cfsc/docs/MaritalStatus91207.ppt (accessed 15 May 2010).

Lakhani, Hyder, and Paul A. Gade. "Career Decisions of Dual Military Career Couples: A Multidisciplinary Analysis of the U.S. Army." *Journal of Economic Psychology* 13, no. 1 (1992): 153-66.

Lange, Janel. *The Treasure of Staying Connected for Military Couples.* Kingsport, TN: Serviam, 2003.

Levy, Diane E., Gary L. Faulkner, and Renee Steffensmeier. "Military Wives: Ambiguity in a Traditional Role." *Psychological Reports* 68 (1991): 1307-8.

Leyva, Meredith. *Married to the Military: A Survival Guide for Military Wives, Girlfriends, and Women in Uniform*. New York: Fireside, 2003.

Lim, Nelson, Daniela Golinelli, and Michelle Cho. *Working Around the Military Revisited: Spouse Employment in the 2000 Census Data.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Defense Research Institute, 2007.

Little, Roger D., and John J. Hisnanick. "The Earnings of Tied-Migrant Military Husbands." *Armed Forces & Society* 33 (2007): 547-70.

Mann, Sandi. "'People-Work': Emotion Management, Stress, and Coping." *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 32 (2004): 205-21.

Martin, Hilary. *Solo-Ops: A Survival Guide for Military Wives*. Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2003.

Martin, James A., and Dennis K. Orthner. "The 'Company Town' in Transition: Rebuilding Military Communities." In *The Organization Family: Work and Family Linkages in the U.S. Military*, edited by Gary L. Bowen and Dennis K. Orthner, 163-77. New York: Praeger, 1989.

Marx, Karl. *Capital*. Vol. 1. Translated by Ben Fowkes. New York: Vintage, 1977.

Mastracci, Sharon H., Meredith A. Newman, and Mary E. Guy. "Appraising Emotion Work: Determining Whether Emotional Labor Is Valued in Government Jobs." *The American Review of Public Administratio*n 36 (2006): 123-38.

Maxfield, Betty D. *Army Profile FY08*, DSN 426-5128. Washington, D.C.: Office of Army Demographics, 2005, http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/demographics/FY05%20Army%20Profile.pdf (accessed 26 November 2007).

McGrath, Lisa. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Life as a Military Spouse*. New York: Penguin, 2008.

Mead, George Herbert. *Mind, Self, and Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Meyer, John W., and Brian Rowan. "Institutional Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." In *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, edited by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio, 41-62. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Mock, Janelle Howe. *Portraits of the Toughest Job in the Army: Voices and Faces of Modern Army Wives*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2007.

Moreau, Donna. *Waiting Wives: The Story of Schilling Manor, Home Front to the Vietnam War*. New York: Atria, 2005.

Moskos, Charles C. “From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization.” *Armed Forces & Society* 4 (1977): 41-50.

Moskos, Charles C. “Institutional/Occupational Trends in Armed Forces: An Update.” *Armed Forces & Society* 12 (1986): 377-82.

Moskos, Charles C. *Institution Versus Occupation: Contrasting Models of Military Organization*. Washington, D.C.: Air Force Office of Scientific Research, 1981.

Näring, Gérard Mariette Briët, and André Brouwers, “Beyond Demand-Control: Emotional Labour and Symptoms of Burnout in Teachers.” *Work & Stress* 20 (2006): 303-15.

O’Beirne, Kathleen. *Pass It on: Living and Leaving the Military Life.* West Mystic, CT: Lifescape Enterprises, 1995.

Obama, Barack. Presidential Proclamation 8515. “Military Spouse Appreciation Day.” *Federal Register* 49:2 (6 May 2010).

Operation READY. *The Army Family Readiness Group Leader’s Handbook*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 2002.

Operation READY. *U.S. Army FRG Leader’s Handbook*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2010.

Orthner, D. “Family Contribution to Work Commitment.” *Journal of Marraige and Family* 48 (1986): 573-81.

Orthner, Dennis K., and Roderick Rose. *SAF V Survey Reports*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005, http://www.armymwr.org/home/show_file.asp?fileID=931 (accessed 15 June 2006).

Orthner, Dennis K., Gary L. Bowen, and Varga G. Beare. “The Organization Family: A Question of Work and Family Boundaries.” In *Corporations, Businesses, and Families*, edited by Roma S. Hanks and Marvin B. Sussman, 15-36. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press, 1990.

Pace, Brenda, and Carol McGlothlin. *Medals Above My Heart: The Rewards of Being a Military Wife*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2004.

Papanek, Hanna. “Men, Women, and Work: Reflections on the Two-Person Career.” *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 4 (1973): 852-72.

Pavlicin, Karen M. *Surviving Deployment: A Guide for Military Families*. Saint Paul, MN: Elva Resa Publishing, 2003.

Portes, Alejandro. “Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Society.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 1-24.

Powell, Alma. “Forward.” In *The Army Wife Handbook: A Complete Social Guide*, 2d ed., by Ann Crossley and Carol A. Keller. Sarasota, FL: ABI Press, 1996.

Rakoff, Stuart H., and Julia H. Doherty. *Army Family Composition and Retention*. Research Report 1535. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1989.

Redmond, Jessica. *A Year of Absence: Six Women's Stories of Courage, Hope and Love*. St. Paul, MN: Elva Resa Publishing, 2005.

Reeves, Connie L. “Dual-Service and Single Parents: What About the Kids?” *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military* 13 (1995): 25-68.

Rosenberg, Florence R. *Spouses of Reservists and National Guardsmen: A Survey of Effects of Desert Shield and Desert Storm*. Washington, D.C.: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, 1992.

Sarkesian, Sam C. *The Professional Army Officer in a Changing Society*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975.

Sass, James S. “Emotional Labor as Cultural Performance: The Communication of Caregiving in a Nonprofit Nursing Home.” *Western Journal of Communication* 64 (2000): 330-58.

Schumm, Walter R., and D. Bruce Bell. *Trends in Single Parenting and Dual Military Couples in the U.S. Army*. Alexandria, VA: Army Family Research Program, 1994.

Schumm, Walter R., D. Bruce Bell, Lynn M. Milan, and Mady Wechsler Segal. *Family Support Group Leaders' Handbook*. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2000.

Schumm, Walter R., Stephan R. Bollman, and Gary Resnick. "Gender Effects and Marital Satisfaction: A Brief Report from a Sample of Dual Military Couples from the 1992 Department of Defense Worldwide Survey of Members and Spouses." *Psychological Reports* 82, no. 1 (1998): 161-2.

Segal, David R., and Mady Wechsler Segal. "Peacekeepers and Their Wives: American Participation in the Multinational Force and Observers." Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993.

Segal, Mady Wechsler, and Jesse J. Harris. *What We Know About Army Families*. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1993.

Segal, Mady Wechsler. "The Military and the Family as Greedy Institutions." *Armed Forces & Society* 13, no. 1 (1986): 9-38.

Segal, Mady Wechsler. "The Nature of Work and Family Linkages: A Theoretical Perspective." In *The Organization Family: Work and Family Linkages in the U.S. Military*, edited by Gary L. Bowen and Dennis K. Orthner, 3-36. New York: Praeger, 1989.

Shea, Nancy. *The Army Wife*, 3d revised ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1954.

Smiley, Sarah. *Going Overboard: The Misadventures of a Military Wife*. New York: New American Library, 2005.

Stander, Valerie A. "Civilian Husbands and Military Wives." In *Military Marriages in the 1990s*, edited by Valerie Stander, Peggy McClure, Timothy Gilroy, Jolene Chomko, and Jennifer Long, 65-89. Scranton, PA: Military Family Institute, Marywood University, 1998.

Stone, Bonnie Domrose, and Betty Sowers Alt. *Uncle Sam's Brides: The World of Military Wives.* New York: Walker and Company, 1990.

Teitelbaum, Joel. *Soldier Family Status and Deployability Before and During Operation Just Cause.* Washington, D.C.: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Department of Military Psychiatry, 1990.

The Battlebook III: A Guide for Spouses in Leadership Roles, 3d ed. Carlisle, PA: United States Army, 2007,

www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/battlebook3.html (accessed 10 September 2007).

"The Yellow Ribbon." *Army Lessons from the Home Front*. Special Bulletin No. 91-2. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, June 1991.

Tracy Sarah J. and Karen Tracy. "Emotion Labor at 911: A Case Study and Theoretical Critique." *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 26 (1998): 390-411.

Tracy, Sarah J. "Becoming a Character for Commerce Emotion: Emotion Labor, Self-Subordination, and Discursive Construction of Identity in a Total Institution." *Management Communication Quarterly* 14 (2000): 90-128.

U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center. *Family Readiness Groups*. Washington, D.C.: CFSC-SF-A Information Paper, 2000.

U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center. *Your Paid and Volunteer Work: Survey of Army Families V*. United States Army, 2005, www.army.mil/cfsc/documents/research/safv/8.ppt (accessed 10 September 2007).

U.S. Army Regulation 600-20. *Army Command Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 7 June 2007.

U.S. Army Regulation 608-1. *Army Community Service Center.* Appendix J. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 21 July 2006.

U.S. Department of Defense Directive 1342.17. *Family Policy.* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 30 December 1988.

U.S. Department of Defense Directive 1400.33, *Employment and Volunteer Work of Spouses of Military Personnel.* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 13 June 1988, http://www.usa-federal-forms.com/usa-fedforms-dod-secnavinst/dod-secnavinst-5300-31-nonfillable.pdf (accessed 13 November 2007).

U.S. Department of Defense. *Selected Manpower Statistics Fiscal Year 2005.* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2005, http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/M01/fy05/m01fy05.pdf (accessed 21 December 2007).

U.S. Department of Defense. *Worldwide Manpower Distribution by Geographical Area September 30, 2005.* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2005, http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/Pubs.htm#M05 (accessed 22 October 2006).

U.S. Department of the Army Pamphlet 608-47. *A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups.* Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 16 August 1993.

Van Vranken, E. W., Linda J. Jellen, Kathryn H. Knudson, David H. Marlowe, and Mady W. Segal. *The Impact of Deployment/Separation on Army Families*. Report NP-84-6. Washington, D.C.: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, 1984.

Vandesteeg, Carol. *When Duty Calls: A Guide to Equip Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve Personnel and Their Loved Ones for Military Separations.* Enumclaw, WA: Winepress, 2001.

Vandevoorde, Shellie. *Separated by Duty, United in Love: A Guide to Long-Distance Relationships for Military Couples*. New York: Citadel, 2006.

Waddell, Marshele Carter. *Hope for the Home Front: God's Timeless Encouragement for Today's Military Wife*. Monument, CO: One Hope Ministry, 2003.

Walker, David M. *War on Terrorism: Observations on Funding, Costs, and Future Commitments*. Testimony to the Chairman, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives. United States Government Accountability Office GAO-06-885T, 18 July 2006, http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06885t.pdf (accessed 17 May 2010).

Waters, Brian F. *Family Support Groups: Making the Most of a Combat Multiplier*. Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1994.

Webb, William Joe. *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Year 1988*. Edited by Cheryl Morai-Young. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1993.

Webb, William Joe. *Department of the Army Historical Summary Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991*. Edited by W. Scott Janes Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1997.

Weinstein, Laurie, and Helen Mederer. "Blue Navy Blues: Submarine Officers and the Two-Person Career." In *Wives and Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*, edited by Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White, 7-18. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1997.

Wharton, Amy S. "The Affective Consequences of Service Work: Managing Emotions on the Job." *Work and Occupations* 20 (1993): 205-32.

Wharton, Amy. "The Sociology of Emotional Labor." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (2009): 147-65.

Whyte, Jr., William H. *The Organization Man.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1956.

Wilk, Steffanie L., and Lisa M. Moynihan, "Display Rule 'Regulators': The Relationship between Supervisors and Workers Emotional Exhaustion" *Academy of Management Journal* 44 (2005): 1018-27.

Wisensale, Steven K. "Toward the 21st Century: Family Change and Public Policy." *Family Relations* 41 (1992): 417-422.

Zapf, Dieter. "Emotion Work and Psychological Well-Being. A Review of the Literature and Some Conceptual Considerations." *Human Resource Management Review* 12 (2002): 237-68.

Zhang, Qin, and Weihong Zhu. "Exploring Emotion in Teaching: Emotional Labor, Burnout, and Satisfaction in Chinese Higher Education." *Communication Education* 57 (2008): 105-22.