

SALUTE the KIDS

A Recognition Program For Children of the Army National Guard Soldiers

By

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Michele L. Rook

Submitted to the graduate degree program in Architecture
and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Chairperson Richard Branham

Michael Eckersley

Lois Greene

Date Defended: 04/12/2012

Thesis Proposal

Salute the Kids: A Recognition Program For Children of Army National Guard Soldiers

Michele Rook, M.A Candidate, Design Management

Abstract

Military children experience long periods of separation from a parent. The parent/parents choose to dedicate themselves to our country through the military, but the children don't have a choice. Children need to be recognized for their sacrifices and time lost. This project will research the need for recognition.

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Introduction:

The United States has been at war for ten years and counting, sending thousands of mothers and fathers overseas, causing a generation of children to grow up with deployed parents. (Alter, 2010) "Military children are often referred to as 'unsung heroes.'" (Wilson, 2010) Recognition for these children needs to be implemented along side of the soldier and significant other's appreciation for their sacrifices.

The parent chooses to join the National Guard and do their duty to their nation. Children don't make these choices they are born into the National Guard. This makes the children powerless when faced with the situation of deployment. No matter the child's age: anxiety, sadness and anger are emotions that are dealt with daily throughout the deployment. There are many things that distract and keep children's minds occupied to deal with the absence of their parent. Not many people come right out and say, "Thanks for the sacrifices that you have gone through for the deployment period."

We are a military family. Through personal experience of two deployments of a year or more each, noticed the need to give the children recognition that it was tough on them also. My boys have experienced this at two different age levels and both times the National Guard only recognized the soldier and their significant other. My children are the ones that brought this issue up when we returned home from a reintegration program. They felt that they didn't exist to the National Guard during their father's absent. Therefore, this thesis will develop a way to recognize the children of deployed soldiers.

This proposed thesis project intends to develop a program to recognize the children of deployed soldiers in the Missouri Army National Guard (MOANG). Classify age groups and determine what actions are appropriate. Develop a type of recognition appropriate for the children of deployed soldiers.

Research Question:

How could the Army National Guard best recognize to the Children of deployed soldiers for their sacrifices and time lost?

Military children are often referred to as unsung heroes. (Wilson, 2010) Recognition for these children needs to be implemented along side of the soldier and significant other's appreciation for their sacrifices. What type of recognition would validate the stress and time lost to children?

Methods:

Interview soldiers, experts in existing programs in the ANG, family members, and children that have experienced a deployment to gather what exists now in recognition for children. During this process information has been gathered to add to a brainstorming pool of ways to recognize children of deployed soldiers of the ANG. Through literature research gathering the age groups of how to separate children according to age for effectiveness of the recognition will be determined.

Surveys will be created electronically and will be taken by subjects that have experienced deployments. Two to three scenarios of children's experience/views of their experience of any recognition after deployment will be created.

Literature Review:

"Most people who have never served in the military, or had family members who have served, could not fully understand the harsh emotional stress put upon a family when a soldier is deployed. Deployment affects everyone moms, dads, wives, children, girlfriends and friends. Everyone in that soldier's life is affected to some degree." (Children and the effect of deployment, 2010)

Arguably the most vulnerable are the children and youth left at home. While younger children may not fully comprehend why a parent must leave, older children and adolescents must cope with parental deployment during a critical and rapid stage of social and emotional development, which is challenging the most supportive and stable of environments. The emerging body of research specifically on the effects of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom deployments associated with child well-being problems, particularly increases in stress levels, reports of child maltreatment, and increases in school difficulties. (Chandra, 2010)

The amount of difficulty that the children bears In 2009, approximately 1.98 million children had one or both parents in the military; 1.25 million had parents

in the Active Component and 728,000 had parents in the Reserve Components. (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010) Living with a deployed parent or the possibility of being deployed has become the new normal for military children. Serving alongside those 1.1 million others who are also experiencing the stresses and strains of a life of deployments – military children. The stress of a deployment intensifies as it spreads down through the layers of a family. It starts with the soldier, continues to their significant other, and then onto the children. (Wong & Gerras, 2010)

Very young children may exhibit separation anxiety, temper tantrums, and changes in eating habits. School-age children may experience a decline in academic performance, and have mood changes or physical complaints. Adolescents may become angry and act out, or withdraw and show signs of apathy. The child difficulties were greater for families experiencing longer periods of parental absence in the last three years.

There are programs available for the families to deal with issues that arise during deployment. It has been shown that keeping the children active and involved in many activities keeps their minds off the stresses and worries of their deployed parent. With all of the efforts to recognize the soldier and their families the children are still in the background. As a military mother with children put it: "A lot of people have said to me, 'Oh, it must be hard.' Well, I can handle it, but I think it's harder on the children. - Let them know that we recognize that you are serving this country, too." This isn't happening at this time, just saying thank you for your sacrifices would make all of the stress that the children go through validated along with their parent's sacrifices.

Programs available:

Month of the Military Child:

April

Children of military personnel have been recognized since 1986.

Activities centered on children of soldiers.

Send out "hero packs"

- After asking soldiers, parents, and children if they knew what month was designated to honor the Military Child it was overwhelming that they had no knowledge that there was a month designated to the Military Child.

Our Military Kids:

Guard and Reserve families are financially stretched for activities.

Activities are crucial to a child's sense of well-being.

Reserve and Guard families live too far from military bases and installations to access the available support services.

A grant program that pays for children's activities during a deployment.

Packet is sent to the child thanking them for their service to our country and modifying them of the award. (Our Military Kids, 2011)

Yellow Ribbon:

Connect to resources throughout the deployment cycle.

BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER

Promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, the families and communities. (About Us, 2011)

- Yellow Ribbon program offers a place for the soldier and the significant other resources that may be required throughout the deployment as issues arise. Through personal experience this program is great for solving issues that arise during the deployment and reintegrating the soldier after he returns from deployment. Our children weren't involved in going through the program with us at all. There were baby-sitters and activities to keep the younger kids busy, but nothing for adolescent.

ZERO TO THREE:

Meet the Short-and Long-term Needs of children from zero to three. (ZERO-TO-THREE, 2011)

Recognition:

A soldier advances his career by advancing up the ranks.

Gifts are given by groups to show appreciation.

Certificates and plaques are common.

Results:

Take the input from the questionnaire/interview from the families and children who have experienced deployment to:

Create scenarios from the input from the families.

Gather up all input for brainstorming idea generations.

Recommend a form of recognition for children of deployed soldiers. Develop a program to propose to the MOANG.

Time Table:

I am continuing to interview families and children of soldiers that have experienced deployments.

February 24, 2012

Gather information from the interviews of program experts, soldiers, family and children.

Finalize thesis committee.

Set date to present Thesis and make arrangements.

March 2, 2012

Create a preliminary program for recognition.

March 9, 2012

Create a thesis presentation from all information and process of research.

March 30, 2012

Finalize all of the thesis elements for presentation.

April 18, 2012

Upload thesis to KU.

Family/Children Questionnaire:

1. Is one of your parents in the National Guard?
2. Which one?
3. Have they been deployed?
4. During the time your parent was deployed did anyone tell you Thank You for what you sacrificed?
5. If someone were to say Thank You how would you like to receive the Thank You?
These are just ideas to explain the question
 - a. In a ceremony.
 - b. One on one.
 - c. In the form of a token.

Thesis Statement:

Implications of Research:

Establishing if the children of deployed soldiers are thanked for their sacrifices and time away from their loved one. Develop a program to recognize these children for what they have sacrificed.

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A vertical graphic on the left side of the page, showing a portion of the American flag with stars and stripes.

Salute the Kids

**A Recognition Program For Children of
Army National Guard Soldiers.**

Michele Rook, 2012

Design Management Thesis

University of Kansas School of Architecture, Design & Planning



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“Military children are often referred to as ‘unsung heroes.’”

(Wilson, 2010)

Overview

Military children experience long periods of separation from a parent. The parent/parents choose to dedicate themselves to our country through the military, but the children don't have a choice. Children need to be recognized for their sacrifices and time lost. This project will research the need for recognition.

Personal Motivation

We are a military family. Through personal experience of two deployments of a year or more each, noticed the need to give the children recognition that it was tough on them also. My boys have experienced this at two different age levels and both times the National Guard only recognized the soldier and their significant other. My children are the ones that brought this issue up when we returned home from a reintegration program. They felt that they didn't exist to the National Guard during their father's absent. Therefore, this thesis will develop a way to recognize the children of deployed soldiers.

Thesis Focus

This thesis is focusing on finding out if children of deployed soldiers of the Army National Guard have been **Thanked** for their sacrifices and time lost.

Problem

The United States has been at war for ten years and counting, sending of mothers and fathers overseas, causing a generation of children to grow up with deployed parents. (Alter, 2010)

CHALLENGES

ANXIETY

Family units deal with a deployed member.

Children in military families face challenges that are different from other children.

COPING

Children in military families face challenges that are different from other children.

WITHDRAW

Parents choose to serve - children aren't given a voice in the decision of whether or not a parent serves.

ANGER

Children go thru this experience - parent comes home - there is about a year of adjustment (reintegration).

SADNESS

SOCIALLY

EMOTIONAL

ACT OUT

This occurs throughout the United States.

ACADEMICALLY

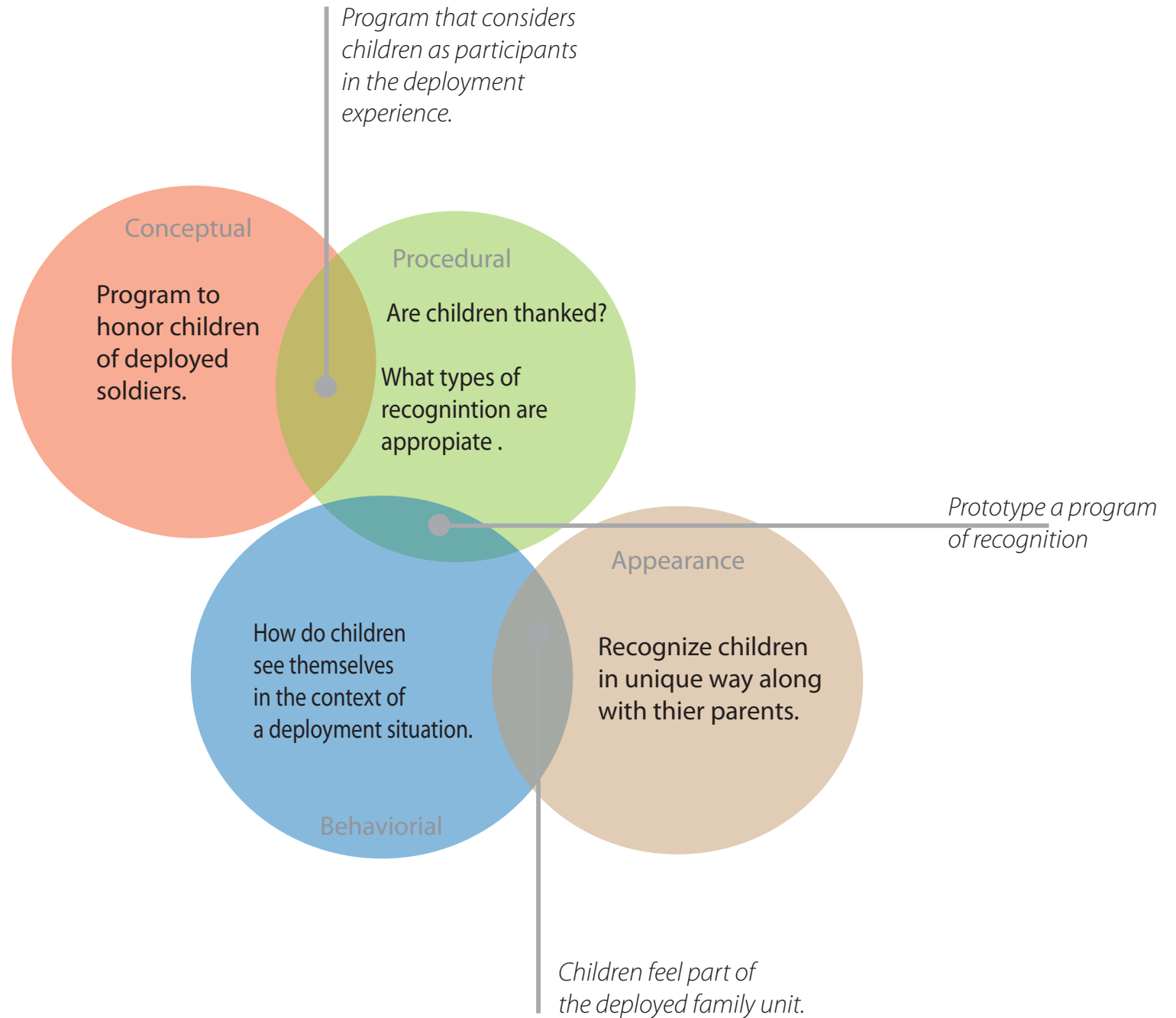
Schools deal with children of all ages going through this experience of a parent being deployed.

SOLDIER AND SUPPORT MEMBER ARE RECOGNIZED

National Guard families are often without the access to services available on active duty military bases.

MILITARY FOCUSES ON MOM AND DAD'S RELATIONSHIP.

LOSE



Programs Available to Families

Month of the Military Child

April

Children of military personnel have been recognized since 1986.

Activities centered around the children.

Send out "hero packs"

Our Military Kids

Guard and Reserve families are financially stretched for activities. Activities are crucial to a child's sense of well-being. Reserve and Guard families live too far from military bases and installations to access the available support services.

A simple grant program that pays for children's activities.

Packet is sent to the child thanking them for their service to our country and notifying them of the award.

Yellow Ribbon

Connect to resources throughout the deployment cycle.

BEFORE
DURING
AFTER

Promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, the families and communities

Zero to Three

Meet the Short-and Long-term Needs of children from zero to three.

Month of the Military Child: April

Children of military personnel have been recognized since 1986.

Activities centered on children of soldiers.

Send out "hero packs"

There are 1.7 million American children and youth under 18 with a parent serving in the military and about 900,000 with one or both parents deployed multiple times.

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community. The Month of the Military Child is an opportunity to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience.

After asking soldiers, parents, and children if they knew what month was designated to honor the Military Child it was overwhelming that they had no knowledge that there was a month designated to the Military Child.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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Published April 6, 2011

APRIL 2011 - MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

There are 1.7 million American children and youth under 18 with a parent serving in the military and about 900,000 with one or both parents deployed multiple times.

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child, underscoring the important role military children play in the armed forces community. The Month of the Military Child is an opportunity to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience.

VIDEO

Summit focuses on better support for military children

RELATED SITES

- Army Reserve Family Programs
- Child Care Initiative
- Child Welfare Information Gateway
- Interstate Compact
- Military Deployment Guide
- Military Family Services Programs
- Military OneSource
- National Center for Shaken Baby Syndrome
- Operation Homefront: 2011 Military Child of the Year Award Winners
- Real Warriors: Helping Children Cope
- Sesame Workshop: Deployments, Homecomings, Changes
- U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity

RELATED STORIES

- Senate Military Family Caucus Recognizes Month of the Military Child
- Fort Hood Launches Effort to Prevent Bullying
- Honoring Children Focus of Fort Riley Festival, Concert
- Three Students Share Perspectives On Growing Up in the Military
- Fort Riley Honors Children of Fallen Soldiers
- Commentary: Former Army Brat Speaks Out
- To Vaccinate or not to Vaccinate, That is the Question
- 'Let's Move' Initiative Gets Fort Hood Families Active
- Army Teens Visit Capitol Hill to Meet Senators, SMA
- Autism on the Rise
- Army Child of Year Develops 'Deployment Kit'
- New Materials Focus on Grieving Children
- CYSS Expansion Shows Army's Commitment to Kids
- Tutoring for the 21st Century
- Army Family Covenant - Enabling Army Families to Reach Their Full Potential
- Sailors Showcase STEM Importance During Austin Navy Week | Video
- Tyndall Teenager Selected as Military Child of the Year

TOP STORIES

Nonprofit Honors Military Children
WASHINGTON, VA, April 15, 2011 - Retired Marine Corps Gen. Peter Pace, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, joined the group "Our Military Kids" in honoring four children and a military family during a recent ceremony. [Story](#)

Child Abuse Prevention on 'This Week in the Pentagon'
The Pentagon Channel's 'This Week in the Pentagon' Producer Candace Hewitt guest blogs about her shows coverage of Month of the Military Child and Child Abuse Prevention Month. [Story](#)

Family Matters Blog: Kids Serve Too
WASHINGTON - In this guest blog, Robert L. Gordon III, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, thanks military children for their contributions, and highlights a few of the Defense Department programs available to support them. [Story](#)

First Lady Cites Children's Resilience
ARLINGTON, VA, April 8, 2011 - This year's Military Child of the Year recipients are "shining examples" of what youth can accomplish with "a little will, a little passion, and a little determination," First Lady Michelle Obama said. [Story](#)

DOD Celebrates Month of the Military Child
WASHINGTON, April 1, 2011 - Military children around the world will be honored throughout April for their contributions to their families' well-being and sacrifices on behalf of the nation. [Story](#)

Military Children Deserve Nation's Gratitude
WASHINGTON, April 1, 2011 - Military children continually rise to the challenges of military life and deserve the nation's gratitude for doing so, Robert L. Gordon III, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, wrote in a recent blog. [Story](#)

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OUR MILITARY KIDS


Our Military Kids

Our Military Kids provides substantial support in the form of grants to the children of National Guard and Military Reserve personnel who are currently deployed overseas, as well as the children of Wounded Warriors in all branches. The grants from Our Military Kids pay for participation in sports, fine arts, camps, and tutoring programs that nurture and sustain children while a parent is away in service to our country or recovering from injury.

**As of May 1, second grants are unavailable. [CLICK HERE for info.](#)*

[Donate](#) [Apply Now »](#)

Our Military Kid of the Month



Emma Mathews

For Service Members & Their Families

If you or your spouse are in the National Guard or Reserves and are deployed overseas, Our Military Kids can help pay for sports, fine arts and tutoring programs for your children.

[Learn More »](#)
[Apply Now »](#)

Information for Families of Wounded Warriors

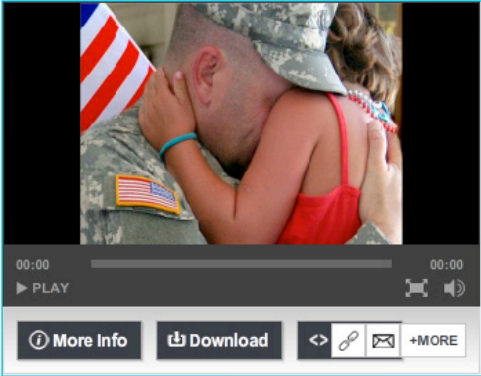
Our Military Kids provides grants to children of National Guard, Reserve, and Active Duty Wounded Warrior service members.

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Latest News

- 12/08/11 -Survey Shows Importance of Extracurricular Involvement for National Guard Children - [Click here to read more](#)
- 11/23/11 -Opera Event Recognizes Wounded Warriors and their Families - [Click here to read more](#)
- 11/22/11 -Memorial Fund Created to Help Military Children Play Baseball - [Click here to read more](#)
- 11/03/11 -Roll Call – Congressional Football Game Supports Charities
- The News Item – Youth chorale to support Our Military Kids
- 10/03/11 -Connecticut Health I-Team – Grants Available For Activities For Military Kids

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Our Military Kids:

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Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program
For Those Who Serve and Those Who Support

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Promoting the well-being of **National Guard** and **Reserve Members**, their **Families** and **Communities**, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle.

Free DoD Counseling for Service members and their Families

Military OneSource is a free non-medical DoD counseling program for Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve Service members and their families. The counseling is designed to empower participants to anticipate and resolve a broad range of challenges associated with the military lifestyle, such as: stress management; decision making; financial management; communic...

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“ Through the Department’s Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, we are striving to ensure that Guardsmen, their families, and their employers are properly prepared for their deployments, and that they have access to services, referrals, and proactive outreach throughout the mobilization cycle. ”

—Leon E. Panetta, Secretary of Defense

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program
For Those Who Serve and Those Who Support

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Yellow Ribbon:

Connect to resources throughout the deployment cycle. **BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER**
Promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, the families and communities.

Yellow Ribbon program offers a place for the soldier and the significant other resources that may be required throughout the deployment as issues arise. Through personal experience this program is great for solving issues that arise during the deployment and reintegrating the soldier after he returns from deployment. Our children weren't involved in going through the program with us at all. There were baby-sitters and activities to keep the younger kids busy, but nothing for adolescent.

ZERO TO THREE:

Meet the Short-and Long-term Needs of children from zero to three.

(ZERO-TO-THREE, 2011)

ZERO TO THREE
National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families

EARLY EXPERIENCES MATTER

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New! Duty to Care – You Make a Difference (E-Learning Course)
CTAMF E-newsletter
MOS Materials

SUPPORT US

From Baby to Big Kid
An e-newsletter that showcases how children learn and grow each month from birth to 3 years. From Baby to Big Kid translates the science of early childhood and offers strategies parents can tailor to their unique family situation and to the needs of their child.
[Sign Up!](#)

Coming Together Around Military Families®
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ZERO TO THREE is proud to support military families. We work to increase awareness and collaboration throughout the military community so that parents and professionals can more effectively care for very young children and their families.

Duty to Care Training: The Duty to Care (DTC) training series explores the helping professional's role and the needs of very young children whose families are experiencing complicated deployments and reunifications. This training is offered free of charge to helping professionals both within the military and civilian sectors.

[Click here](#) to Register

Learn More

CTAMF Training Opportunities for Professionals Serving Military Families - We are pleased to announce a new partnership between ZERO TO THREE and the U.S. Department of Defense that brings our Coming Together Around Military Families@ trainings to 65 military communities.

New! Duty to Care – You Make a Difference (E-Learning Course) - For early child education professionals, these 3 twenty-minute interactive e-learning modules offer insights and strategies for supporting young children during deployment, injury or death of a Service member. Your supportive relationship and the little things you say and do every day can make a big difference in the lives of parents and children.

Supporting Young Children - These brochures focus on the unique experience of parenting a baby or toddler, particularly during times of stress and separation that military families may be experiencing.

Honoring our Babies and Toddlers - This 3-piece set, designed for professionals and military parents, provides methods to support young children affected by stress, trauma, grief, and loss due to a military parent's deployment, injury, or death.

CTAMF E-newsletter - Coming Together Around Military Families@ E-newsletter- A quarterly newsletter for professionals from Military Projects at ZERO TO THREE, which provides the most up-to-date resources and knowledge specifically tailored to the needs of military families with very young child and for a multidisciplinary audience of health, mental health, family support and early education professionals.

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Select a Key Topic

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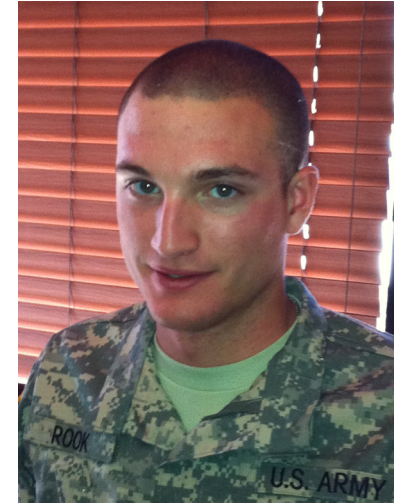
The Highs and Lows of R&R Leave
[Read More](#)

DOWNLOAD OF THE WEEK

Your Child's Development 18 to 24 Months
This resource offers key information on child development at nine pivotal stages of early life from 18 to 24 months.

Taylor and Zach

We were born into a military family. Our dad has always been gone once a month or longer for the Army National Guard. The things that we remember the most about him being gone that he was never home for our birthday parties. He would be gone for the weekend or come home after they were over. He has also traveled to many different countries and we always get something unique from where ever he had returned from.



Our parents choose to go full time Army National Guard six years ago, so now the military is our way of life. Our parents have always explained what was happening and never keep anything from us for as long as we can remember. We have been through two deployments so far and sure to have more to come. The older that we got the deployment were harder to go through. Maybe, because we understand what could happen and understand time.



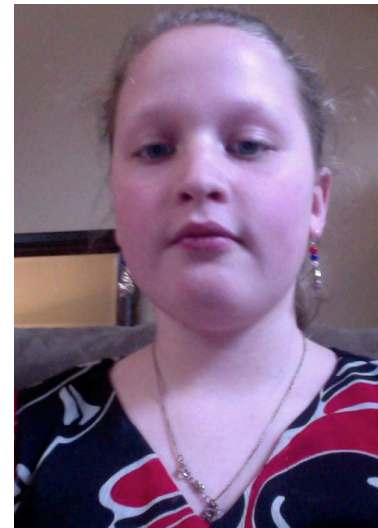
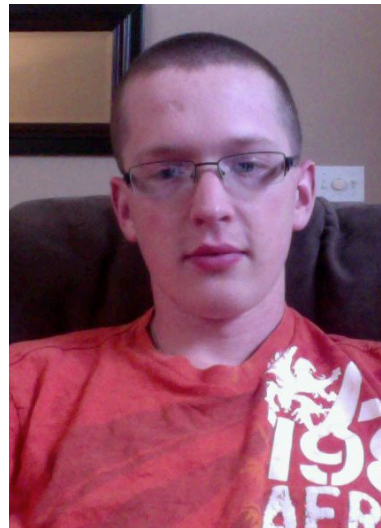
Interview



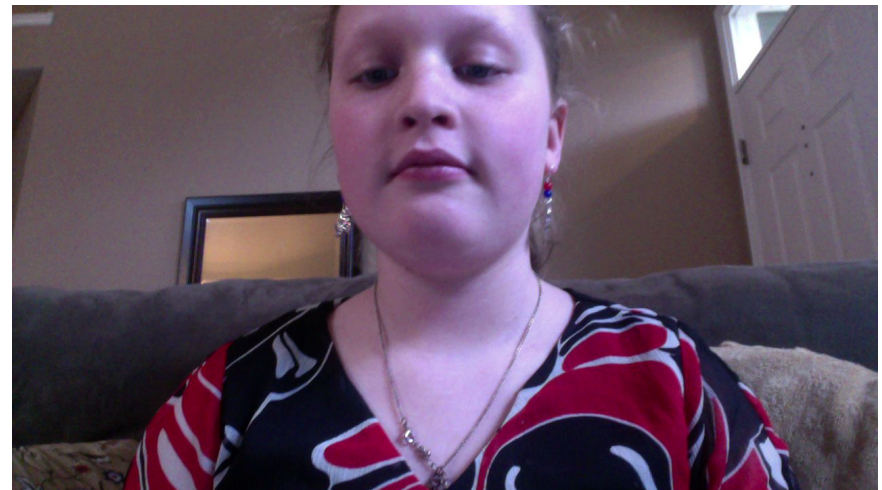
Vaughn and Ashton

We were born into a military family. Our dad has always been in the Army National Guard. He has been deployed to Afghanistan for over year. After that deployment our parents choose to go full time Army National Guard.

Vaughn was a sophomore and Ashton was in third grade. Vaughn remembers that year as being very hard dealing with the unknown. Ashton remembers that her dad was gone and would be home sometime after the summer.



Interviews



Survey

Have You Been Thanked?

1. Is one of your parents in the National Guard?

Yes No

2. Which one?

Mom Dad

3. Have they been deployed?

Yes No

4. During the time your parent was deployed did anyone tell you Thank You for what you sacrificed?

Yes No

5. If someone was to say Thank You how would you like to receive the Thank You?

In a ceremony.

One on one.

In the form of a token.

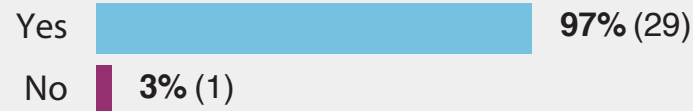
Please provide ideas of how you would like to be thanked.

Submit

Page 1 of 1

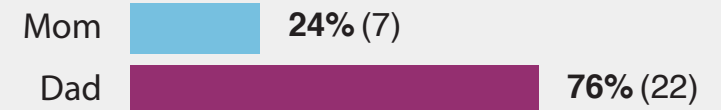
Surveys Answered

1. Is one of your parents in the National Guard?



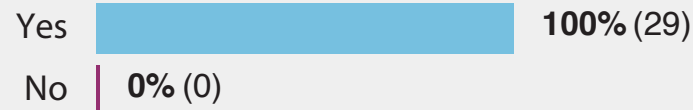
* Total Responses: 30, 100% of submissions

2. Which one?



* Total Responses: 29, 97% of submissions

3. Have they been deployed?



* Total Responses: 29, 97% of submissions

4.



* Total Responses: 29, 97% of submissions

1. Is one of your parents in the National Guard?	2. Which one?	3. Have they been deployed?	4. During the time your parent was deployed did anyone tell you (the child) Thank You for what you sacrificed?	5. If someone was to say Thank You how would you like to receive the Thank You? In a ceremony. One on one. In the form of a token. Please provide ideas of how you would like to be thanked.
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	someone saying thank you
Yes	Dad	Yes	Yes	A simple thank you
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	acknowledge that it happened to me also - token
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	thanked with something
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	one on one token
Yes	Mom	Yes	No	token
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	something that shows it happened to me also
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	one on one
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	token
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	anything would do
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	something to remember the hardship
Yes	Mom	Yes	No	just a thank you would do
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	a token would help make me feel like I went through something also
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	token given one on one
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	A token
Yes	Mom	Yes	No	One on one w/ token
Yes	Mom	Yes	No	Token something to remember
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	token to remember
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	Ceremony with a token
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	token
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	one on one with token
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	token
Yes	Mom	Yes	No	One on one with a token
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	One on one or in a token.
Yes	Dad	Yes	Yes	One on One 3-10-2012 Michele--I printed this and took it to bingo last night, because I knew one person there that fit the requirements--Alisha from Huntsville, MO (junior in high school) filled out the paper--Do you need me to send the paper OR will this work-- LOVE, Mary
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	I feel a ceremony just for kids of not only returning but also those military kids whose parents haven't deployed. They are effected by the Soldier leaving for duty. It would be nice to do at a yellow ribbon to recognize the sacrifice that they made to ensure our safety. A one on one would be good also to let them know they are appreciated.
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	my name is Troy Crawford and my dad was deployed 18 months to Afghanistan ...I would liked to be thanked with a token... thank you /r Troy.
Yes	Mom	Yes	Yes	Either one on one or in the form or a token

1. Is one of your parents in the National Guard?	2. Which one?	3. Have they been deployed?	4. During the time your parent was deployed did anyone tell you (the child) Thank You for what you sacrificed?	5. If someone was to say Thank You how would you like to receive the Thank You? In a ceremony. One on one. In the form of a token. Please provide ideas of how you would like to be thanked.
No				I don't have a parent in the national guard, but my significant other is active duty and I got a "Thank you" one time and it meant a lot to me because I feel like the support roles are often forgotten about
Yes	Mom	Yes	Yes	One on one. Especially teachers at school - school is very hard when Mom is deployed, especially when she is the only real parent. Teachers may need some ideas to help us. Also a real short ceremony followed by a big cookout where I can invite 5 friends who supported me while she was gone, and they should get a small token too, like a gift-card to Wal-mart, because they were my support while she was away. At the cookout there should be organized games for me and my mom like three-legged race - balloon-toss, obstacle course, hot-air balloon rides - something really cool to remember... Thanks, Jesslyn Clark.
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	A token. A military coin
Yes	Dad	Yes	No	A military coin designed just for Thanking children would be something I could keep and remember.

Survey Results

1. Children who filled out the survey had a parent in the National Guard.
2. Out of all the children surveyed 24% had their mothers deployed and 76% had their fathers deployed.
3. Children who filled out the survey had a parent deployed.
4. Out of all the children surveyed 10% had been thanked and 90% had not been thanked.
5. Ideas that the children submitted for recognition ideas:

One on One recognition: 27.5%

“Acknowledge that it happened to me also.”

“A one on one would be good also to let them know they are appreciated.”

“A real short ceremony followed by a big cookout where I can invite 5 friends who supported me while she was gone, and they should get a small token too.”

Given a token for recognition: 52.5%

“Something that shows it happened to me also.”

“Something to remember the hardship.”

“Token to remember.”

“My dad was deployed 18 months to Afghanistan ...I would liked to be thanked with a token...”

In a ceremony: 7.5%

"A real short ceremony followed by a big cookout where I can invite 5 friends who supported me while she was gone."

"I feel a ceremony just for kids of not only returning but also those military kids whose parents haven't deployed."

"Ceremony with a token."

Thanked with something: 7.5%

"Thanked with something."

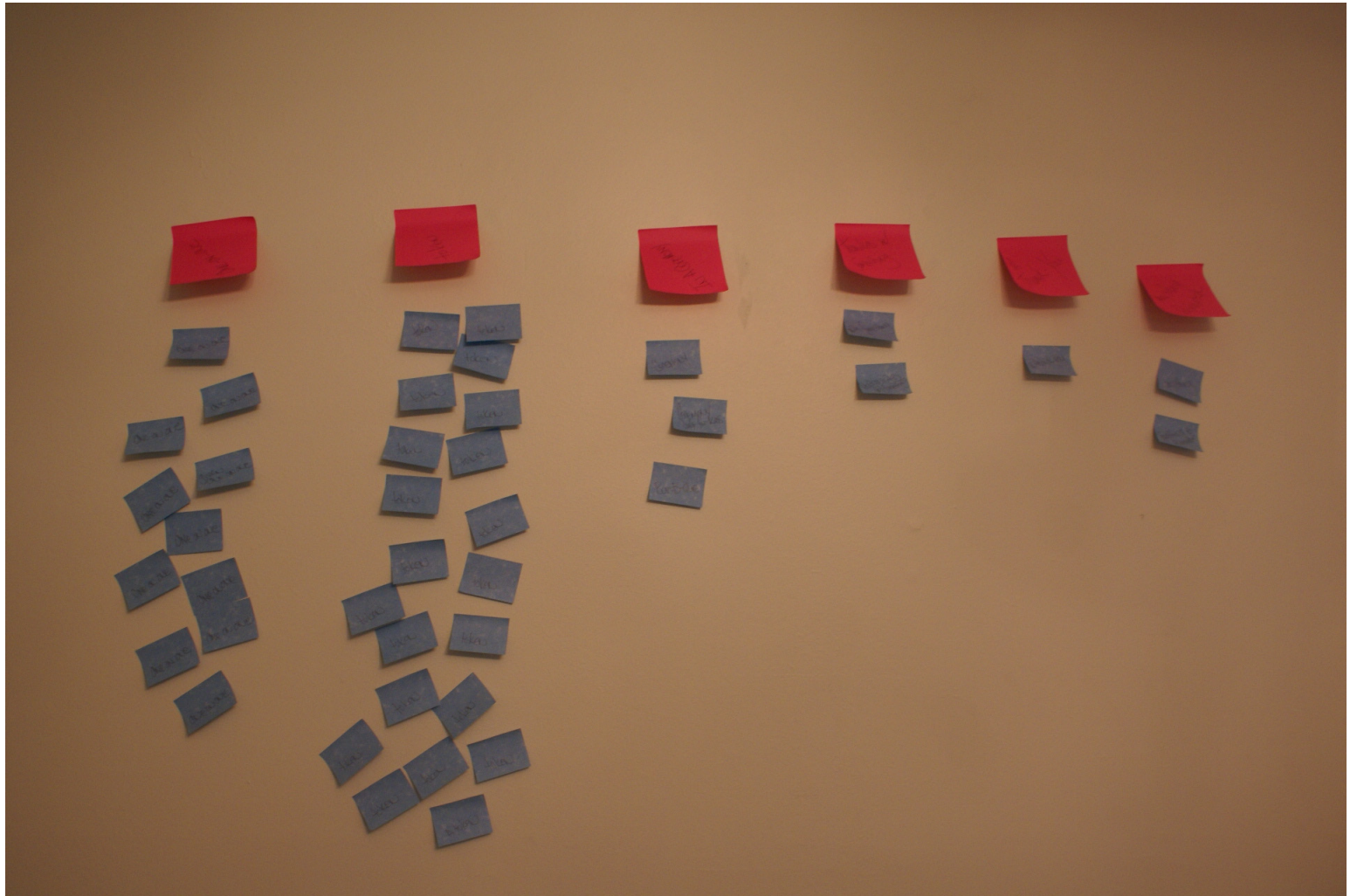
"Something that shows it happened to me also."

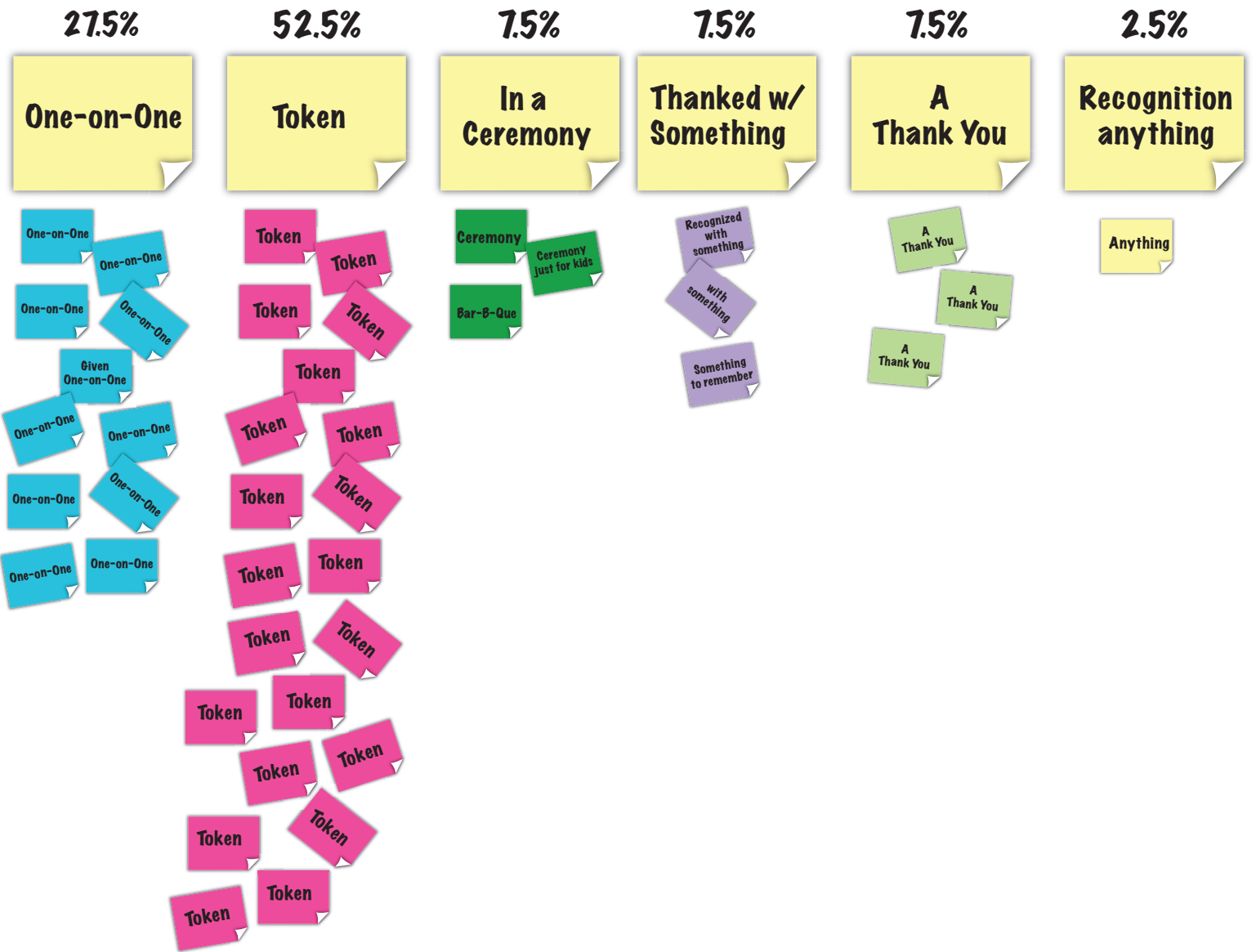
A Thank You: 7.5%

"Just a thank you would do."

Recognition anything: 2.5%

"Anything would do."





Conversations

I engaged conversations with numerous families with children that have been through deployments. The consisted of children with varying ages and number of deployments. The children and parent that were home during the deployment confirmed that being thanked for their hardships didn't exist.

I contacted the Soldier and Family Support Division at the Army National Guard Bureau to verify the what they actually do for the children of the deployed soldiers. The direct you to different organizations that give options for problems and issues that may occur during the deployment. They don't do anything to thank the families members that are left behind due to regulations and funding issues.

Through these conversations the children aren't thanked for their hardships during their parents deployment.

Solution

Create a program that would distribute a token that represents their hardships and sacrifices as part of the deployment along with their parent.

Naming of the program represents respect and acknowledgement. A salute is a gesture or other action used to display respect. This is a symbol/gesture used by the military and other organizations. By using this symbol and gesture the children have an understanding of what it represents.

Salute the KIDS



Solution cont.

Token:

Creating a military coin that represents the mission in which their parent's deployment was issued. These coins can only be earned by being a child 18 years old and under with a parent away on a deployment.



Solution cont.

The United States has been at war for ten years and counting, sending thousands of mothers and fathers overseas, causing a generation of children to grow up with deployed parents. (Alter, 2010) “Military children are often referred to as ‘unsung heroes.’” (Wilson, 2010)

The amount of difficulty that the children bears In 2009, approximately 1.98 million children had one or both parents in the military; 1.25 million had parents in the Active Component and 728,000 had parents in the Reserve Components. (Chandra, Martin, Hawkins, & Richardson, 2010) Living with a deployed parent or the possibility of being deployed has become the new normal for military children. Serving alongside those 1.1 million others who are also experiencing the stresses and strains of a life of deployments – military children.

Problem

Getting funding for the production of the coins and methods of distributing them.



Pricing

Coin Type	Prices Per Coin					
1.5" Challenge Coins	50	100	300	500	1000	2000
Coins with No Color	\$4.97	\$3.14	\$2.64	\$2.59	\$2.53	\$2.48
Coins with One Side with Up to 7 Colors	\$5.36	\$3.38	\$2.86	\$2.81	\$2.75	\$2.71
Coins with Up to 7 Colors on Both Sides	\$5.68	\$3.58	\$3.08	\$3.03	\$2.96	\$2.90
1.75" Challenge Coins	50	100	300	500	1000	2000
Coins with No Color	\$5.46	\$3.44	\$2.92	\$2.86	\$2.81	\$2.76
Coins with One Side with Up to 7 Colors	\$5.94	\$3.74	\$3.26	\$3.19	\$3.14	\$3.09
Coins with Up to 7 Colors on Both Sides	\$6.42	\$4.04	\$3.58	\$3.52	\$3.47	\$3.43
2.0" Challenge Coins	50	100	300	500	1000	2000
Coins with No Color	\$5.92	\$3.73	\$3.19	\$3.08	\$3.06	\$3.01
Coins with One Side with Up to 7 Colors	\$6.53	\$4.11	\$3.66	\$3.59	\$3.52	\$3.47
Coins with Up to 7 Colors on Both Sides	\$7.15	\$4.50	\$4.07	\$4.02	\$3.97	\$3.93

Solution cont.

One on One Thank You

Recognition for these children needs to be implemented along side of the soldier and significant other's appreciation for their sacrifices. Incorporating this into the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program that the soldier and their significant other participate in after the deployment.

- A. Having a designated time and place for the soldier and their children to receive one on one recognition with a token presented.
- B. During the divisions soldier and significant other recognition, include the children.
- C. Upon return to the unit and their families recognize the children and families and distribute tokens through a receiving line.

Feedback on Proposed Program

Taylor and Zach think that the idea is perfect for children of deployed parents. They feel that it would give acknowledgement of the hardships that they have experienced through deployments.

Vaughn and Ashton liked the one on one thank you and the coin would be something for them to remember what they and their father went through.

I asked my friend Amy Clark to present the idea to her daughters that I knew answered the survey and they loved the idea. I also received the following email from her:

It just so happens that the Civilian FRG State Sponsor for the 35th EN BDE, works right next to me, and she thinks it is a great idea. With your permission, she would like to present it to the State FRG/Yellow Ribbon Coordinator.