

## **Welcome to the Family Member's Section of the Family Readiness Toolkit**

This section is designed to be a guide and a resource for a very important group of individuals – family members of Guard and Reserve component members. You are in a unique position. Your family lives in two distinctly different worlds. For part of the year, your spouse goes to work; your family is entrenched in the community – work, schools, church, etc. Then comes Guard or Reserve training or deployments. You are also a military spouse! You may live quite a distance from any military installation and your spouse's military unit. As a military spouse, you have additional available resources to assist you during times of separation – medical services, legal and financial assistance, the unit and unit family readiness group, and various agencies and organizations. Your spouse's military unit and family readiness program are a powerful resource. Stay in touch – be connected.

Quality of life issues affecting Guard and Reserve families during deployments and separations can impact military morale, mission accomplishment, and retention. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between family satisfaction with military service and the reenlistment and retention of service members. Your happiness and support of your spouse's military career significantly affects his or her military duty. The Toolkit lists web sites, and toll-free telephone numbers for financial assistance, medical treatment questions (TRICARE), and other key resources that are especially crucial during deployments. A family readiness checklist describes the tasks to consider before your spouse deploys. Everyone has to deal with day-to-day problems that occur. Knowing where to turn and who to call during those times can alleviate the stress of the situation and provide the support you need.

The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs has developed this family readiness toolkit as an organizational guide to benefit you and your family. The military is a challenging and enriching profession. Guard and Reserve members make up half of the Total Force and are called to serve with active duty troops in a variety of contingencies and military operations in support of U.S. security interests. Being prepared for those call-ups is an essential step in adjusting to separations and becoming self-sustaining.

The Toolkit is designed to be individualized for your family and unit. Write on the pages. Reproduce the forms as needed. Use what is relevant to you and your family. The Service Member TAB has forms for your inventory of personal assets (bank accounts, insurance policies, etc.) and records of property. Rather than repeating the same inventory, this section provides a family readiness checklist for your use. Complete the forms together with your spouse. Know where your important documents are located. Good luck – as a family member you provide the foundation and stability for your family – be proud of all that you do, and be prepared.

The contents of this Toolkit have been developed to assist you in your efforts to support family readiness. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is current and accurate. However, because statutory and regulatory changes may have occurred since the publication of this Toolkit, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs cannot assume responsibility for its continued accuracy. Before taking any significant action based on the contents of this Toolkit, you should contact your Family Readiness Program representative or legal officer, as appropriate, to secure the most current information.