Managing Presence and Absence:

Experiences of Partners of New Zealand Soldiers Deployed to Iraq

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Abstract

Deploying overseas for New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) personnel is seen as a career-defining opportunity, one that puts into action the training and skills acquired by the soldier. However, it is also important to understand who is left at home during a deployment, and what their experiences are of life without their family member. This thesis focuses on the experiences of seven women who had a partner deploy to Iraq as part of the Building Partner Capacity mission. What I found was that my participants talked about managing a presence-absence dynamic brought out as a result of the deployment. By this I mean the state of either occupying, or being absent from, a space in a particular form. During the three phases of deployment, soldiers were present and absent in different forms: physically, emotionally, and psychologically. The way in which partners managed this presence-absence dynamic was through resilience building. These women needed to become resilient to this presence-absence change, during the three phases of deployment: pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. This thesis explores how resilience was built through the concept of social capital, the social connections and networks between people. Social capital allowed my participants to maintain positive mental health, and support themselves and their families during the deployment. Social capital, coupled with the NZDF welfare support services helped with resilience building. Becoming resilient, and developing resilience in different forms, through the NZDF and through their own strategies, allowed my participants to not only manage their soldier's deployment, but to thrive.

Keywords: Military, partner, family, deployment, support, welfare, New Zealand Defence Force, resilience, social capital, Iraq, presence, absence.

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Chapter One: Introduction

> *The contact on Skype was absolutely brilliant, because you didn't feel like they were gone. I know other friends whose partners would parent via Skype. They would Skype at eight o'clock in the morning and they'd be on the dining table. Everyone's having breakfast and it was nighttime for him, but he'd be like, 'go and put your shoes on, get your school bag'. You could almost do that to a certain extent. We didn't so much, but the fact that he could see a drawing that the kids did at school today or see them growing. Things like 'oh you can reach mum's shoulder now', you actually don't miss out on that time because you can see them. Or, 'oh I've lost this tooth' or whatever. That was probably the best part of it, that you could contact them.* (Anna)

This anecdote from one of the women I interviewed, Anna, highlights the presence-absence dynamic of deployment life. Although her husband was physically absent in the deployment location, through technology he could provide a level of emotional and psychological presence at home.

This thesis focuses on the presence and absence of military partners. In particular, it investigates the experiences of women who have had their partner deploy to Iraq as part of the Building Partner Capacity mission with the New Zealand Army. What I found was that the women I spoke with talked about coping and managing the deployment. The way in which they achieved this was through resilience building. They needed to become resilient in the face of this presence-absence dynamic, during the three phases of deployment: pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. One of the key ways to build resilience was through the accrual of social capital, the social connections and networks among people. Accumulated social capital allowed my participants to maintain positive mental health, support themselves and their families during deployment, and carry on with family and work life although their deployed soldiers were absent for an extended period of time. Social capital, coupled with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) welfare support services assist with resilience building. Becoming resilient, and developing resilience in different forms, through the NZDF and through their own strategies, allowed my participants to not just cope during the deployment, but to thrive.

All of the women I interviewed had their partners deploy as part of the Building Partner Capacity (BPC) mission to Iraq. Established in 2015, New Zealand Defence Force personnel support the Iraqi Government in building a self-sustaining military capability in combatting the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (New Zealand Defence Force, 2016e, p. 1). Working with the Australian Defence Force, Task Group Taji is the combined New Zealand-Australian group that lead training courses to build soldiering skills for the local Iraqi Security Forces, at the Taji Military Complex. The deployment for New Zealand Army personnel lasts approximately six months, with an additional fortnight spent in Australia to rendezvous with the Australian contingent in Darwin. There have been eight rotations to Iraq, with approximately 100 soldiers deployed in each rotation[1]. This means a significant number of contemporary army partners have experienced the deployment to date.

Presence-Absence

One of the key themes that emerged from the interviews with my participants was the concept of presence-absence. This refers to the state of either occupying or being absent from a space, in a particular form. It is a shifting practice, and can be exhibited in the following forms: physical, emotional, and psychological. In some cases, presence was experienced under certain circumstances; in others, absence was felt. For example, during the deployment, partners felt the soldier's psychological presence through regular phone calls and video chats home, despite the soldier's physical absence. In other cases, partners experienced absence. One of my participants felt her husband's physical absence when she needed to attend a friend's wedding alone, which she did not enjoy doing.

My participants referred to the experience of presence-absence during deployment. As such, this dynamic is used as a frame for understanding and making sense of my participants' experiences of their soldier's deployment. My participants needed to become resilient to presence-absence.

Presence-absence has been used before in military literature, including in the NZDF's *Process Review of Deployment and Psychological Wellbeing* (Gardner, Hopner, McNaught, Nelson, & Chamberlain, 2015). In this review, the authors found the pre-deployment

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[1] The Coalition Government will review the deployment in early 2019, to assess New Zealand's participation in Iraq beyond June 2019 (Ardern, Mark, & Peters, 2018, p. 2).

phase to be a time during which the family prepared for the anticipated separation from the soldier. During this phase, the soldier was physically present, yet psychologically absent (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 130). As a consequence, it was potentially a time of marital stress, in particular for young families. It was also a time of anger and protest, and ultimately emotional detachment from the service member by the family. Conversely, during deployment, regular communication with the deployed soldier allowed them to be psychologically present, yet maybe physically absent from home (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 133). During post-deployment, psychological absence occurred. Although physical present, returned NZDF personnel sometimes had trouble disengaging from the operational environment (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 138). One of the ways to cope with the challenge of dealing with presence and absence, as a result of deployment, is through resilience building.

Resilience

The idea of resilience emerged from my interviews with partners of deployed soldiers. It was discussed as a response to meeting the challenges of presence-absence. In this section, both individual and community resilience will be discussed, as well as how resilience is demonstrated within a military context. This will allow me to highlight where it emerges in my participants stories, and in what way. The large body of research on resilience is interdisciplinary, as the concept is multifaceted and can be approached from a variety of different frameworks. Perspectives from psychology, educational psychology, geography, nursing, sociology, social work and anthropology have contributed to understanding the concept of resilience. In a contemporary anthropological context, resilience can be defined as "the capacity of a system, community, or society to adapt to hazards by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure" (Barrios, 2016, p. 29). When under pressure, or when a lack of control is felt, resilience is the ability of an individual to maintain positive mental health. The idea of "growing into resilience", introduced by Grace and Wells (2015), suggests that resilience is something that can be accumulated:

> The process is about capacity building, successful adaptation, and sustained competence in the face of stressors and risk taking; it involves building assets and mobilizing strategies to enhance signs of thriving in the everyday lives of vulnerable youth who have had to deal with stressors, threat, adversity, and trauma. (p. 27)

Growing to be more resilient means individuals increase their capacity to deal with a variety of influences in their daily life. However, there are also obstacles or situations that can undermine resilience (Schachman & Lindsey, 2013, p. 158). Situational barriers, such as time constraints, family obligations, and work schedules, make it difficult for an individual to maintain resilience. Social contexts, such as access to educational programmes and healthcare, mentors, counsellors and social workers, in addition to how supportive the community is in fostering a sense of value and support in the individual, can either positively or negatively influence the ability of individuals to be resilient (Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 98). Furthermore, how supportive an individual's family are, their socioeconomic status within society, and the culture that the individual is based in, can either strengthen or weaken how resilient an individual is.

Resilience is also non-linear. The individual can experience setbacks along the way. However, exposure to, and successful mediation of stressors and challenges can make the individual more resilient to future challenges (Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 29). Grace and Wells' (2015) research found individuals build strengths and capabilities, which are influenced by the "steeling of life", a concept key in resilience building. According to Ungar et al. (as cited in Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 28), steeling life allows the individual to live with comfort despite conflicts, and enables the individual to continue to find their way in life although challenges might present themselves. Factors that are associated with coping and showing a level of resilience in an individual include happiness, hopefulness, self-esteem, self-confidence, spirituality, a sense of humour, and believing that they can control their unique life and solve problems (Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 28). Not only is resilience an individual act, it can be seen at a community level.

Community Resilience

Community resilience can be understood as "the social survival processes that occur within a place that are put into action by local communities in order to address the negative social and economic impacts they perceive as common problems during crises" (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016, p. 216). Community resilience is embedded in the historical, social, and cultural constructions that direct social interactions, including the management of local institutions (Oliver-Smith, 2016, p. 237). Oliver-Smith's (2016) anthropological research on resilience highlights that if change occurs too quickly or drastically, a population is at risk of poor physical and mental health (Oliver-Smith,

2016, p. 238). To mitigate this risk, it is important to recognize local patterns of resilience, and integrate them with adaptive strategies. Community resilience is built co-operatively, where social networks converge to mitigate the stress of outside impacts. The ability to cope with adversity is what community resilience fosters. The military is a place where this occurs.

Resilience in a Military Context

The concept of resilience has also been used in military studies. Military deployments are not just experienced by the deploying service person, but they also impact the family. From a feminist family therapy perspective, the military wives in Aducci et al.'s (2011) research found their resiliency in being able to not only survive, but also prosper during the deployment. Although deployments create added difficulties, both personal and interpersonal stresses for wives, those interviewed by Aducci et al. demonstrated their ability to overcome these, and discover personal strengths they hadn't recongized in themselves before (Aducci et al., 2011, p. 244). Wives exhibited self-confidence, self-discovery, personal growth, and an acceptance of non-traditional gender practices. Military wives were able to assume the role of caretaker for their children and husband, while simultaneously maintaining their own wellbeing in the process (Aducci et al., 2011, p. 245). These successes made future deployments more manageable.

The NZDF has written about resilience in *Developing Baseline: Building Resilience* (2002), a pamphlet provided to families at the pre-deployment briefing. The bucket model of resilience is used, whereby an individual's bucket (resilience) is increased by things that help an individual cope, such as activities the individual enjoys doing or finds relaxing, or talking with others and gaining social support (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2002, p. 5). In this model an analogy of holes in a bucket represents the draining of resilience. The draining of resilience is the result of stressors, such as the possible isolation of being the only family on base with a partner deploying overseas. In order to manage stress from deployment and remain resilient, the individual needs to be able to identify stress in themselves, and manage this strain through a variety of techniques. One way in which to enhance resilience is through building up social capital, which I will discuss in the next section.

Social Capital and the Role of Social Networks

The theoretical framework that applied to my participant's stories comes from Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000). Putnam's work centers on social capital theory and the idea that social networks have significant value. Having social contacts increases productivity of both individuals and the group. According to Putnam (2000):

> Social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called "civic virtue". The difference is that "social capital" calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital. (p. 19)

Putnam's description of social capital, therefore, is defined as a producer of civic engagement, where individuals work together to make a change or difference in the community. The goal of civic engagement is to address public concerns and promote the quality of the community. Social capital can have both an individual and collective aspect (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). On the one hand it can be individualistic, whereby an individual participates in the community in order to receive a direct benefit to him or herself, such as a new job, assistance in some area of their life, or friendship. On the other, social capital has a collective aspect, whereby social connections do not accrue to a single individual, but rather to the collective. For example, if a sports club were to hold a fundraiser for the team, it comes to be of benefit to all individuals, not just one.

Social capital transforms from a resource possessed by few individuals to a quality of collectives, focusing on norms and trust as reproducers of social capital. Networks involve mutual obligations; they therefore promote a standard of generalized reciprocity (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). This refers to an individual doing something for someone else within the community, under the expectation that other community members will do something for them in the future. According to Putnam (2000):

> A society characterized by generalized reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society, for the same reason that money is more efficient than barter. If we don't have to balance every exchange instantly, we can get a lot more accomplished. Trustworthiness lubricates social life. Frequent interaction among a diverse set of people tends to produce a norm of generalized

reciprocity. Civic engagement and social capital entail mutual obligation and responsibility for action. (p. 21)

Some forms of social capital involve repeated and intensive networks, with various connections within it, such as a work group who meet for after-work drinks (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Others are more episodic and anonymous, such as a group of familiar faces at a local supermarket. Some forms of social capital can be formal, such as a school's board of trustees, while others are informal, such as an impromptu game of rugby in the park. They can also have public purposes, such as a volunteer fire service, or serve both public and private ends, such as a Rotary club.

More significantly, Putnam outlines the difference between bridging (or inclusive), and bonding (or exclusive) forms of social capital. Bridging forms of social capital emphasize networks that are outward looking, and include people across social divides (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). This form of social capital links distant members who move in different areas to one another. They also generate broader identities and reciprocity. Bonding forms of social capital emphasize exclusive identities, and an overall homogeneity within the group. They highlight specific reciprocity, and an overall solidarity to the network.

Social network theory can assist in understanding the cooperation of individual members for the mutual benefit of the group. Social capital, in Putnam's sense, would facilitate co-operation, and mutually supportive relations in communities and nations. This has the potential to therefore be a valuable way of understanding the relationships formed by my participants during deployment. It is from this theoretical framework that I analyze the stories of the women that I interviewed. Putnam's description of social capital can be tied to resilience in that it is a producer of civic engagement, where individuals work together to make a positive change in the community. Networks involve mutual obligations, which promote a standard of reciprocity. As individuals do something for someone else in the expectation that they will have the favour returned, resilience builds within the community, as they are able to rely on others during difficult times, and vice versa. Resilience for partners is constructed within these communities, which makes handling the challenges of deployment easier to deal with.

Rationale for Research

What the New Zealand Army does outside of its core military functions provides a useful insight not only relevant for social scientists, but for the New Zealand Army and policy-makers who seek a better understanding of how the Defence Force impacts society. In addition, how relationships beyond the Army impact personnel is significant, as it will allow an insight into how the Defence Force is shaped by its personnel. It may also reinforce or change some aspects of its ways of operating.

It is important to investigate the opinions of NZDF partners, to see whether support can be improved upon. By improving support, it may assist in reducing the rate of attrition following deployment. The idea of "disenfranchised deployment" (Aducci et al., 2011, p. 243), refers to how military wives have not had an opportunity to express openly or publicly how the deployment impacts them. Rather, the focus has been on the deploying partner's experience (Gewirtz, Erbes, Polusny, Forgatch, & DeGarmo, 2011, p. 57). It is important to consider the experiences of partners at home, as it has been found that they have an increased susceptibility of suffering from stress, depression, and anxiety (Gewirtz et al., 2011, p. 57). Furthermore, negative experiences of a deployment can shape the opinions of service personnel, when their family's wellbeing is jeoparized. The rate of attrition may be reduced if families feel they are well supported by the military during a deployment. A 1993 study of the United States Army confirmed that the views of a soldier's spouse are crucial when that soldier comes to decide whether or not to reenlist (Enloe, 2000, p. 174). An American army wife's support in her husband reenlisting depends on a variety of factors including: whether she believes her uniformed husband will gain satisfaction from his work within the military; whether she believes the military is a good place to raise children; and, whether she believes the senior defence officials care about the wellbeing of military families. Whether these factors play out within a New Zealand context requires further investigation. It is therefore in the interest of the NZDF to support such projects being carried out.

Moreover, the NZDF has confirmed in its own review on the psychological wellbeing of military families, that New Zealand-specific research should be welcomed, in order to improve family support of NZDF military personnel. The *NZDF Deployment and Psychological Wellbeing Process Review* (2015) stated, "Programme development [for mental health problems in the NZDF] should be in line with social science theory. Relevant theory for mental health in deployment may be psychosocial, physiological, economic, sociological, organisational among others" (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 35). Social perspectives are "widely used in risk prevention programmes and aim for changes in

knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, motivation, skills and behavior to achieve outcomes" (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 35). Community- and family-oriented workplace practices benefit not only the employer, but the employee also. Family-friendly practices become key in retaining a first-class and devoted workforce (Putnam, 2000, p. 406). In addition, under the recommendations for the improvement of family support it was stated, "there is a paucity of New Zealand specific research on family psychological wellbeing issues as they relate to deployment of service members on operations. A structured programme of research to inform policy and programme development would be beneficial" (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 145).

There is also anthropological rationale for studying the military; in particular, the impact powerful institutions have on shaping the lives of those within it, including partners. Lutz (2009) argued that anthropologists should pay more attention directly towards the structure of power. Central to this, in Lutz's opinion, involved looking at U.S. military power and its effects at home, and abroad (Lutz, 2009, p. 376). It is within this capacity that I investigate the New Zealand perspective on the effects of the NZDF's impact on family life. Anthropology can offer a crucial insight in relation to the effects and vulnerabilities of military life.

Forming a Research Project on the Partners Experiences of Deployment

Although I had a personal involvement in the topic, as I am also a partner of a New Zealand Army soldier, I was interested in the experience of deployment life before I found out that he was deploying to Iraq. Having just completed my Honours research project on the New Zealand Army's Kippenberger scheme[2], I wanted to continue down the avenue of military-related anthropological research. I came to be interested in the topic of partner perspectives after hearing the details of how the NZDF's deployment to Iraq was being carried out. It made me wonder about who was left at home when these soldiers deployed overseas for such a long stretch of time. Having a university professor as a father, who often attended overseas conferences throughout the year, it made me recall the instances that my mother and my two sisters remained at home. Normally this was only for a week or two at a time, but I can still recall the change in daily routine with having one parent absent from the family home. How would these partners handle a six-

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[2] The Kippenberger Scheme was a scholarship programme funded by the NZDF. The programme was established to give newly recruited officer cadets the opportunity of tertiary education at Massey University while serving in the New Zealand Army.

month deployment? It was a topic that I wanted to explore further through anthropological research.

The Research Process

To investigate the experience of deployment life from a family perspective, I carried out one-on-one interviews with both NZDF staff, and partners of previously deployed New Zealand Army personnel. The interviews with NZDF staff included talking to the Deployment Services Officer and Community Services Officer based in the Community Hub in the Linton housing area, a Defence Force Psychologist, and the chaplains based at Linton Military Camp. I also interviewed seven women from the Manawatu area who had partners deploy to Iraq with the New Zealand Army: Helen, Mel, Jordan, Anna, Gill, Rebecca and Leah[3]. All of my participants were in long term relationships with their deploying service partner, and all were in their late twenties to early thirties. The majority of these women were Pakeha, and had young children at the time of deployment, with the remainder living alone while their partners deployed overseas. What these qualities highlight is a young demographic of military partners present in my research.

What I also found interesting about the women I interviewed was that they all had partners in the higher rank brackets of the New Zealand Army. The Governor-General, on behalf of the New Zealand sovereign Queen Elizabeth II, commissions officers into the New Zealand Army. Commissioned officers are ranked by seniority in the following order: lieutenant general, major general, brigadier, colonel, lieutenant colonel, major, captain, lieutenant, and second lieutenant. Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) are soldiers above the rank of private, but below the rank of officer cadet. Their ranking of position is in the following order: warrant officer class one, warrant officer class two, staff sergeant, sergeant, corporal, lance corporal, and private. The rank of my participants' partners ranged from captain to lieutenant colonel, and staff sergeant to warrant officer class one. These ranks likely affected their partner's experience of deployment, as their level of resilience might differ from those of a lower rank bracket, and shape the support they wanted and needed from the NZDF. International literature has found that officers' wives reported greater accessibility to social support compared to enlisted wives (Rosen & Moghadam, 1989, p. 192). Junior enlisted wives reported

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[3] I gave my participants pseudonyms in order to protect their identity and the identity of their partners and families.

more available support than NCO wives. Furthermore, officers' wives had the largest proportion of women reporting that they were friendly with another military wife in their husband's unit. This was followed by junior enlisted wives, with NCO wives having the smallest proportion of women reporting friendships with other military wives. While a high frequency of officer's wives felt that they could rely on another military wife for help with a problem, less than half of NCO wives felt that they could do so (Rosen & Moghadam, 1989, p. 192). Therefore, the rank of my participants' partners was very likely to have impacted on support for my participants, and their experience of deployment as a result.

Structure of Thesis

Chapter Two outlines the literature relevant to this thesis. I begin with an exploration of what it means to be a military partner, in addition to the general trends in stress levels that accompany each phase of deployment: pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. I also look at some of the key challenges of deployment life as revealed by previous research, as well as some the ways in which these challenges have been met. This chapter will allow me to compare my findings with other research on the subject of deployment life.

In Chapter Three I describe my methodological approach. I consider the anthropology of organisations and some of the challenges of 'studying up' in the anthropology of the powerful. I also discuss anthropologists working with the military, including an examination of the NZDF's presence within the university sphere and some of the ethical issues that are raised by engaging in research on powerful organisations, such as the NZDF. I also discuss the methods I used for collecting my data, reflections on interviewing military personnel and the partners of deployed soldiers, as well as some of the questions I posed to partners during our interview. In terms of making sense of the data, I describe the use of narrative analysis and why I chose to pursue this analytical approach. I also outline some larger ethical considerations.

Chapter Four provides background to contextualize my field of research. I provide a brief synopsis of the conflict in Iraq, how New Zealand and the NZDF came to be present in Iraq, as well as some of the resources provided by the NZDF to its soldiers. I also consider some of the research carried out by the NZDF on welfare support, to better understand some of the previous findings of how welfare support is carried out, and

what military personnel and their partners draw on in terms of support during deployment.

In Chapter Five I present the first of three chapters of data collected during my research, which focuses on the pre-deployment phase. In this chapter I summarise the pre-deployment briefing presented to partners and families by the NZDF welfare support team, and outline some of the key personnel involved in welfare support. I also present the support resources offered to partners during the pre-deployment briefing. I then discuss what my participants made of the pre-deployment briefing, and the opinions that came from my participants on the resources for families.

Chapter Six focuses on the deployment phase of my participants. I begin this chapter with an outline of the allowances given to NZDF personnel and their partners, the deployment dinners that are hosted by the New Zealand Army for partners to attend during the deployment, in addition to the role of the unit point of contact, and the support offered by the Deployment Services Officer during the deployment. I then discuss how my participants chose to spend their deployment allowances, followed by key aspects of the deployment that helped them cope. I also consider the support offered by the NZDF and what my participants utilized, as well as some of the challenges of deployment that my participants identified.

In Chapter Seven I discuss the post-deployment phase. In this chapter I begin with what is involved for military personnel leaving the deployment location, followed by how NZDF welfare support staff approach the homecoming process. I then consider how my participants found the reintegration process, which includes some of the challenges of the soldier's physical presence, the lessons my participants learned from experiencing a deployment, and what my participants believe the NZDF can do to improve support to partners post-deployment.

In Chapter Eight I conclude with the key ideas that I identified from the three phases of deployment. I summarize what we can learn about presence-absence, social capital, and resilience, as well as some of my reflections on the research process overall. To begin, the next chapter discusses previous literature on the subject of deployment.

Chapter Two: Understanding Deployment

To understand why my participants experienced what they did, it is necessary to consider prior research on the subject of deployment. This will allow me to gain a better understanding of why my participants told the stories they did, in addition to gaining an appreciation for what invisible influences may be present within their militarized lives. The literature on deployment for families is overall very gendered, with the bulk of perspectives coming from wives of deployed spouses. In addition, the majority of literature stems from the United States, with a small proportion from New Zealand.

To begin, I discuss the militarization of women's lives. Centering on the work of Cynthia Enloe (1988; 2000), a feminist theorist, this discussion includes how women's lives are shaped as a result of being a 'military wife'. In addition, a model for what a 'good military wife' looks like in the twentieth century will also be considered. Attached to Enloe's dialogue on being a military partner is the concept of 'living as a threesome', which arises as a result of having a partner in military service. This also includes the isolation felt by some military wives. What we see from this discussion is that having a military partner significantly shapes women's lives., not only during a deployment.

Following this, some of the literature about general trends in stress levels accompanying a deployment will be discussed. This section is divided into three phases: pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. Partners experienced different challenges and stresses at different levels, which came as a result of the changing state of presence and absence of their soldier. This created a different emotional response from the partner during each phase. The pre-deployment phase was characterized by the physical presence of the soldier, yet their psychological absence, as the soldier focused on preparing for their upcoming deployment. For partners, this phase was filled with feelings of anxiety and tension because of the upcoming change, and uncertainty in terms of not knowing how the family would react to deployment. The deployment phase was characterized by the physical absence of the soldier, however, in some cases their partner could feel their psychological and emotional presence. This phase was seen as being the most challenging of the three phases, with wellbeing continuing to decline and psychological distress remaining at a high level for partners. The post-deployment phase reintroduced the soldier's physical presence within the home; nevertheless, their psychological absence was a challenge for partners. Psychological distress levels decreased for partners, and wellbeing improved. Generally, partners felt as if they had to readapt to having the soldier back within the home. Identifying general trends across

each phase of deployment allowed me to compare how my participants experienced their soldier's deployment.

Previous research on the stresses of deployment identified a variety of challenges as being taxing for partners of deployed soldiers. This includes military-associated challenges, the deployment itself, domestic stresses, increased workload, and support. It is important to note what previous literature has found on the topic of challenges, as conclusions may be drawn between why it was similarly experienced by my participants, or why it is that my participants experienced different deployment challenges.

Following this, a discussion of some of the ways in which these challenges were met, as identified in previous literature, will be examined. This includes: self-development and independence; carrying out joint tasks with the deployed family member; 'normalizing the rollercoaster'; denying the deployment is occurring; carrying out connection-seeking practices; utilizing military-managed support groups; and, using military personnel such as chaplains, psychologists, and social workers to assist in tackling challenges brought out by the deployment. Foley (1985) concluded from her research on New Zealand Army wives that there was a need to develop systems of recognition and relief of stress within the military, before the stress evolved into high alcohol intake, which could potentially lead to violence against wives and children (Foley, 1985, p. 47). It is therefore important to recognize how past literature has found to not only relieve deployment stress, but enable them to prosper. This discussion will be important to compare to what my participants experienced, in order to understand what strategies they utilized in a New Zealand context. To begin with, a discussion of what being a military partner is like will launch us into the lived reality of what my participants experienced on a day-to-day basis.

Being A Military Partner

Cynthia Enloe, a feminist sociologist working within the political sciences, explored the militarization of women's lives, and how by considering women's experiences of militarization, it is possible to understand their lives more insightfully. Militarization, according to Enloe (2000, p. 3), is the gradual process by which a person or a thing progressively comes to be controlled by the military, or comes to rely for its wellbeing on militaristic ideas. The more militarization converts an individual or a society, the

more that individual or society comes to normalize it. It has the potential to involve cultural, institutional, ideological, as well as economic transformations. However, militarization does not shape all aspects of life all the time, and it is reversible.

According to Enloe, a woman married to a soldier experiences pressures shared by all women who are wives. She is often presumed to be dependent on her husband for her financial wellbeing. Her identity, as well as her social class or rank, come from her husband's class or rank (Enloe, 2000, p. 155). She is also expected to adapt her life to her husband's job requirements.

A woman married to a soldier, also has certain experiences and stresses unique to being a military wife. This includes being defined by society, not only by her relationship to a particular partner, but also by her association with a powerful institution. She is also not a particular partner's wife, but rather labeled as 'a military wife'. She lives in an isolated social world, which therefore potentially reduces the amount of contact with support she has from women in the wider, less closely controlled world (Enloe, 1988, p. 46). As a military wife she is subordinate to the authority of the state more than other women, although with little state support, she must manage moving and having long separations from her husband. Being a military wife means living under the authority of an organisation that portrays itself as a family, making her subject to two patriarchal authorities: that of her husband's and the military commander's (Enloe, 1988, p. 46).

Enloe has also outlined some of the characteristics that a model military wife of the twentieth-century modern military might have. This includes, that: she has come to her own decision, that the most important thing for her family's wellbeing is her husband working well in his military job; she is a part of what she thinks of as a "military family"; being a supportive wife provides a sense of doing her "patriotic duty" (Enloe, 2000, p. 163); she is comfortable with social relations based on rank, as they provide a level of order in an uncertain world; she also rises through the ranks with her husband, which she gains a sense of authority and responsibility from in nurturing younger wives; she does not feel the need to express her political views (Enloe, 2000, p. 164); she recognizes accepting a variety of restrictions that ensure a level of "national security"; the benefits of being a military wife are a source of security and satisfaction; and, she is a good mother in looking after her children who do not get into trouble, however if they do, she does not trouble her husband with these details (Enloe, 2000, p. 163).

During a husband's physical absence, Enloe reveals there are other aspects of a military wife's profile that are discovered: she has become competent as a single parent, and able to handle finances and household problems that may arise; she gets used to the inevitable non-normal time during her husband's absence, and looks forwards to the "normal" time when her husband returns, and is pleased to give the head-of-household responsibility back to her husband; and, she is aware of her husband's high-stress job, and therefore makes allowances if he has a bad mood, short temper or impatience in the weeks following a deployment (Enloe, 2000, p. 164).

The idea of 'living as a threesome', introduced by Aducci et al. (2011) is another way of thinking about military women's lives. This concept recognizes the ways in which the military is an integral part of the couple's relationship, with the authors suggesting that the military wife is married equally to both the military, and her husband. Although she may consider herself an 'insider' to her husband's experience of deployment, she can also feel as if she is an 'outsider', as the soldier's first loyalty is to the military (Aducci et al., 2011, p. 245). The military wife is therefore often demoted in the relationship, yet she is still responsible for managing this threesome. Military wives that welcome this are better able to cope with the multiple layers of stress that a deployment may trigger, however it comes at a cost of recognition. Resisting the military can increase the stressful nature of deployment. Military wives are therefore caught, "living as a threesome is what military couples signed up for whether they knew it or not" (Aducci et al., 2011, p. 245).

In contrast to 'living as a threesome', the military was also seen to be an isolating environment. Foley (1985) used a feminist perspective to investigate the enclosed world of these women's lives, often physically separate, which presents certain challenges. The wives stated that it was difficult to share personal issues, or talk about subjects that they were interested in discussing during mother's groups, as a male military figure was normally present. Because the women were unable to organize women's groups for themselves due to a lack of space in holding such meetings outside the military environment, while also feeling excluded from joining sports clubs because of babysitting costs and feeling that these groups were more for Army personnel, lacking activities that engaged with other people added to this sense of isolation in Army wives. According to Foley (1985, p. 45), the lack of access challenged the women's freedom to socialize easily with friends.

What is emphasized within this literature are the numerous ways in which partners' lives can be impacted by entering into a relationship with an individual who has a career in the military. It is important to recognize that there is more at play in the lives of these women than just having a physically absent partner, but also a myriad of hidden challenges to do with having their lives structured by the military. In the next section, an exploration of some of the general stresses that have been found by other research during the pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment phases will be considered, and the effects these phases have on partners.

Phases of Deployment and Correlated Stress for Partners

There have been a number of studies on stress and deployment from a variety of sources, including New Zealand (MacDonald et al., 1996; Gardner et al., 2015), and the United States (Sahlstein et al., 2009; Baptist et al., 2011; Enloe; 2000). What they show is that partners experienced stress at different levels, as a result of the changing state of presence and absence of their soldier. This created a different emotional response from the partner during each phase. The pre-deployment phase was characterized by the physical presence of the soldier, yet their psychological absence, as they focused on preparing for their upcoming deployment. The majority of literature found the pre-deployment phase to be the most stressful of the three phases for partners, producing feelings of anxiety, tension within the family, and uncertainty in relation to where the soldier was going and how the deployment would impact the partner. During the deployment soldiers were physically absent, however through regular communication they were able to exercise a level of emotional and psychological presence. Partners continued to experience a decline in mental wellbeing, while psychological distress remained at a high level. This phase was characterized by feelings of isolation and loneliness, however it was also a time of stabilization for partners, as they began to become accustomed to daily life without their soldier. The post-deployment phase was once again characterized by the soldier's physical presence, as they returned from the deployment location. However, there was also psychological absence as the soldier tried to disengage from the operational environment. During this phase general trends found that psychological distress levels decreased and wellbeing improved for partners, although all of the literature maintained that the partner needed to have an adjustment period. Partners felt appreciation for their soldier on homecoming, which helped fortify the bonds within the relationship. However, for couples who experienced a lack of

connection during the deployment, partners had difficulty being intimate with their soldier post-deployment.

Pre-deployment

The pre-deployment period was characterized by a general anxiety and tension between the deploying soldier and their partner. Partners reported higher levels of stress and psychological distress during this phase, in addition to lower levels of positive wellbeing (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 50). Partners of New Zealand Army personnel deployed on peacekeeping missions between February 1992 and March 1993 were found to have concerns over having enough money for necessities and emergencies, and daily hassles relating to time management, work load, housework, and amount of free time (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 25). Stress also included concerns about children, and the health and wellbeing of family members.

A more recent study characterized the pre-deployment phase as soldiers being physically present, yet psychologically absent, as they prepared themselves for the upcoming deployment with long hours of training. Simultaneously, the partner was also preparing to deal with the anticipated separation of their soldier. Partners of New Zealand Army soldiers involved in deployments between 2009 and 2013 were found to have an increase in marital disagreements, and were also found to emotionally distance themselves from their soldier during this phase (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 130).

During Deployment

The deployment phase can provide a sense of relief from the turbulent pre-deployment phase, and allow the family to stabilize themselves with the departure of their soldier (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 133). In Gardner et al.'s (2015) research involving NZDF partners, it was found that with regular communication the soldier was able to be psychologically present, yet physically absent (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 133).

During the deployment, partners of NZDF personnel were found to experience the poorest levels of mental health, and increased stress of the three phases (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 59). The most significant forms of stress during this phase included loneliness, lack of companionship, and isolation (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 30; Gardner

et al., 2015, p. 133). Furthermore, partners also identified stress associated with having to take on a dual-parenting role.

The following points of stress for partners were seen during the deployment: interruptions of standard life patterns and routines; responsibility for new tasks and functions within the family, including sole decision-making; a reduction in the ability to plan for the future; and, an insecurity over the deployed soldier's welfare (Prakash et al., 2011, p. 59).

During their partner's deployment, women of U.S. Army and Army National Guard servicemen were observed to have to balance being a sole parent, while still being required to involve their absent husbands, in order to enforce the mother as the authoritative position within the family (Sahlstein et al., 2009). This was commonly done by involving the deployed spouse in getting the children to behave appropriately, or alternatively, adopt new rules within the household to assert their role as the sole authority within the family (Sahlstein et al., 2009, p. 430). This echoes what Gardner et al. (2015) found of husbands being psychologically present, yet physically absent.

Post-deployment

This phase is characterized by the service member's physical presence, and in some cases, psychological absence, as demonstrated by NZDF personnel who had trouble disengaging from the operational environment and returning to family life (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 138). Enloe (2000) found some wives learnt new skills during the deployment, which was a source of stress on their husband's return. The newly gained sense of independence in turn caused stress between women and their returning husbands (Enloe, 2000, p. 172).

During the post-deployment phase, psychological distress levels decreased, and wellbeing improved for NZDF families (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 50). From mid-deployment through to post-deployment, NZDF partners experienced a reduction in the level of deployment challenges (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 20). Positive psychological wellbeing increased for wives from mid to post-deployment (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 21).

However, challenges were also seen in the post-deployment phase. This included changes in the family. When family members took on new responsibilities, roles, and decision-making capabilities, which were not what the deployed soldier was familiar with, it came as a point of tension. Pressure to return to normal life following a deployment, such as performing the obligations of a father and a husband were another source of stress (Prakash, et al., 2011, p. 59). This was confirmed by partners of NZDF service personnel, who had difficulty renegotiating roles and reestablishing a sense of familiarity with their deployed spouse (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 23).

On their partner's return from deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan, American Army wives experienced the strain of managing openness-closedness (Sahlstein et al., 2009). The struggle to know how much to reveal about the deployment, and when to communicate their experience to their partners, was distinctive during the post-deployment phase. Comparably, the wives experienced a feeling of having to negotiate between how much and what of the deployment they wanted to know from their partner.

The heightened emotions experienced during and after deployment shaped the reaction from partners in having their deployed soldier return home. Baptist et al. (2011) found partners of soldiers involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), had a sense of fear of losing their military partner while overseas. However, there was also an increased connection in their relationship as a result of regular communication with their partner during the deployment. These two points assisted in fortifying the bond between the spouse, and their military partner on homecoming (Baptist et al., 2011, p. 206). Overall, the deployment increased the spouse's levels of appreciation for their family, and life in general. Spouses stated that they took the notion of making the most of their time together post-deployment, and making "every moment count" (Baptist et al., 2011, p. 207). Conversely, for spouses who found the deployment traumatic, their recollection of the deployment was described as being emotionally painful, and feeling disengaged from their soldier (Baptist et al., 2011, p. 207). As a result, they noticed their emotional reactivity increased once their soldier returned home. In particular, spouses feared that communication might be restricted or stopped. When communication was halted temporarily, spouses became increasingly more stressed and worried for their soldier's wellbeing (Baptist et al., 2011, p. 208). Spouses who experienced anxiety during the deployment as a result of their soldier's history of infidelity, had difficulty being sexually intimate with their partner on reunion,

which created further distance between the couple (Baptist et al., 2011, p. 208). Conversely, an increased quality in communication, efforts to stay connected and expressions of appreciation for their soldiers, led to increased intimacy and closeness when couples were reunited.

According to previous research in this area, the three phases of deployment involve fluctuations that occur in the stresses for the partner at home, as a result of their soldier's shifting presence and absence. During pre-deployment, the partner was already seen to change in regards of their emotional state, although the soldier still remained physically present. During deployment the partner acclimatized to life with the physical absence of their soldier, which in turn affected their behavior, the roles they played within the family, and their emotional state. The post-deployment phase was characterized as being a re-acclimatization period, as the soldier was physically present once again. It is important to note the general trends during each of these phases, as it allowed me to make comparisons between previous research on the subject, and what my participants experienced within a New Zealand context involving a non-combat deployment. From here, literature on specific challenges of deployment life will be discussed.

Deployment Challenges

Academics who study stress have identified that either a single challenge, or a combination of challenges experienced by partners can influence their overall wellbeing. This section outlines a variety of challenges that have emerged as being stressful for partners of deployed soldiers, including military-associated challenges, the deployment itself, domestic stresses, increased workload, and support. The majority of research on deployment challenges comes from communication studies and psychology, with a smaller quantity from anthropology and nursing/primary care. New Zealand-specific research was also found to add to this information (Foley, 1985). The following section provides details on what earlier studies have found to be related to challenges of a deployment for partners of military personnel.

Military-Associated Challenges

As mentioned previously, women's lives are shaped by the military, which can cause particular challenges to arise during a deployment. This can include being based at

certain military camps away from extended family during a deployment (Schachman & Lindsey, 2013, p. 159). It can also be seen in a lack of support from the deployed soldier, as a result of their physical absence from the home. The relocation of the family home prior to deployment can place strain not only on supportive friendship networks, which might not have maintained the relocation to a new military base (Foley, 1985, p. 45). The awareness of available community resources in the new location was also a concern (Schachman & Lindsey, 2013, p. 159). All factors were represented as having some form of support that was then removed from the partner as a result of the military. This sense of loss of control over the partner's life can place stress on them.

The Deployment

Certain features of the deployment have been seen to be challenging for partners. The increased frequency of soldiers away from home contributed to 'psychic holes' forming in the lives of military partners (Enloe, 2000). Although some militaries have attempted to reduce the impact of having such frequent deployments, stress still manifested itself within the family unit (Enloe, 2000, p. 172). Wives suffered depression, while children were seen to act out at school and at home as a result of such frequent deployments involving their deployed soldier.

Levels of stress correlated strongly with combat exposure associated with the deployment. Wives of U.S. Army husbands on deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan, who were exposed to combat, reported significantly more stress than those involved in a non-combat role (Allen et al., 2011, p. 242).

Domestic Stresses

Another set of challenges comes from the domestic setting. This was seen in the form of economic stress, which was related to the soldier's rank. Women who did not have control of finances within the marriage were seen to experience higher levels of stress (Foley, 1985, p. 6). In relation to the status of women in Foley's research on New Zealand Army wives, participants came from low socio-economic backgrounds, with husbands from lower rank brackets (Foley, 1985, p. 2).

This was reaffirmed in Allen et al.'s research on wives of U.S. military husbands deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, where it was found that a husband's income was

linked to both husband's and wife's stress (Allen et al., 2011, p. 240). This was reflected in MacDonald et al.'s (1996) research on partners of New Zealand Army soldiers deployed on peacekeeping missions during the 1990's. Concerns about money were consistently reported, being most noticeable in the early phases of deployment (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 51).

Increased Workload

An increase in busyness during the deployment was also a challenge for partners. Women experienced difficulty in handling multiple roles and demands placed on them without their spouse (MacDonald, 1996). Wives of New Zealand Army personnel found they had to balance work, housework, and free time, which was found to be stressful to manage (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 51). Furthermore, when partners were required to handle tasks normally carried out by their spouse, such as car and home maintenance, it added to the heightened pressure felt by the partner at home.

Subsequently, having this increased business came the stress of managing sole care of children. Wives of New Zealand Army personnel deployed on peacekeeping missions in the early 1990s found they had to meet dual parental responsibilities, cope with children alone, and discipline children, which were daily challenges (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 52). Moreover, partners indicated that stress arose from having another parent around post-deployment, having to coordinate plans as opposed to acting independently, and renegotiating roles, routines and responsibilities with dual-parenting (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 53).

Support

The literature also identified support as raising challenges during deployment. In Allen et al.'s (2011) research involving U.S. Army husbands on deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan, a sense of needing more support was positively correlated with more stress, while the sense of understanding ways in which to receive support was negatively related to stress (Allen et al., 2011, p. 240). Support in the form of regular communication was also found to challenge couples during deployment. Couples who reported higher levels of negative communication and lack of separation between work and marriage had higher levels of stress (Allen et al., 2011, p. 241).

It can be seen from the above discussion that there are a variety of challenges that emerge during deployment for partners. Considering the literature on the challenges of deployment allows me to investigate whether there were challenges identified in the literature that weren't experienced by my participants, which could be explained by a different approach taken by my participants, or the NZDF in their handling of overseas deployment. Moving on from this literature, I now consider the strategies that have been identified within previous research to reduce the stress brought out during a deployment.

Meeting Challenges

There are a variety of factors that assist in reducing the levels of stress felt by partners. Previous research identified the following aspects: self-development and independence; carrying out joint tasks with the deployed family member; 'normalizing the rollercoaster'; denying the deployment is occurring; carrying out connection-seeking practices; utilizing military-managed support groups; and, using military personnel such as chaplains, psychologists and social workers to assist in tackling challenges brought out by the deployment. The majority of literature focused on self-development, an independent endeavor into managing the challenges of deployment, and connection seeking practices, a collective approach to handling deployment life. The majority of literature in this section is made up of contributions from the discipline of family therapy (Prakash, 2011; Cafferky & Shi, 2015; Baptist et al., 2011), with additions from primary care and nursing (Schachman & Lindsey, 2013), communication studies (Sahlstein, Maguire & Timmerman, 2009), psychology (Prakash, 2011), and anthropology (Enloe, 2000). The following discussion identifies some of the ways that helped partners manage the challenges and stresses of deployment.

Self-Development and Independence

Partners that focused on self-development were effective in coping with stress. Partners that concentrated on doing something to help others, such as forming a military related welfare group, and maintaining physical health by directing energy towards healthy habits and exercise, were seen to reduce stress and boredom during the deployment (Prakash etl al., 2011, p. 61).

Developing a level of self-confidence during deployment was also accomplished by having the flexibility to take on new roles and responsibilities within the home. In order to manage the physical absence of their soldier, new mothers of U.S. military personnel deployed as part of OIF/OEF took on duties that normally fell on their husbands to complete (Baptist et al., 2011, p. 209). Those that adopted new responsibilities gained a feeling of self-confidence and independence, which in turn reduced the level of stress felt at home.

Military wives have been seen to become increasingly independent during deployment. This was the case in U.S. Air Force wives who used protective factors, such as the development of self-reliant attitudes and behaviors, to support themselves during deployment (Schachman & Lindsey, 2013). Similarly, Cafferky and Shi (2015) explored how military wives' coping mechanisms related to their emotional connection with their deployed husbands. Military wives adopted various coping mechanisms during their husbands' deployment, which identified two ways to achieving this independence: self-sufficient independence through emotional avoidance, and autonomous independence through emotional connection (Cafferky, & Shi, 2015, p. 282). It was found that military wives felt pressure from their husbands and their military community to manage all household and parent responsibilities (Cafferky, & Shi, 2015, p. 287). Military wives used a variety of ideas to describe their new mindset, including having to "suck it up", or "take the bull by the horns" (Cafferky, & Shi, 2015, p. 288). Having a self-sufficient and self-confident independence in order to handle deployment life emotionally buffered wives from their feelings. However, done in excess, it also adversely affected the emotional connection to their husbands, which was the origin of the distress (Cafferky, & Shi, 2015, p. 291).

Joint Tasks

It has also been found that several participants in Maguire, Heinemann-LaFave and Sahlstein's (2013) research maintained their relationship by spending time together as a couple or family. This typically occurred pre-deployment, however other strategies, such as reading the same book while on deployment, or doing similar activities while separated, were also carried out. A spouse's successful adjustment to separation is associated with a strong marriage (Maguire et al., 2013, p. 260). Another form of carrying out joint tasks was seen in problem-solving while on deployment. Maguire et al. found one of their participants had a contract with a building maintenance company that

fell through while her husband was away. To resolve this issue, she corresponded with her husband via email to discuss how to solve the problem. The authors suggest that research on this strategy has shown that this is not easily accomplished while physically separated, however it was recognized as a strategy for maintaining a strong relationship to meet the challenges of deployment (Maguire et al., 2013, p. 259).

<u>*'Normalizing the Rollercoaster'*</u>

'Normalizing the rollercoaster', a phrase coined by Davis, Ward and Storm (2011), was another form of managing changes in terms of emotions felt during deployment. One of the themes that emerged from this research was that wives' experience of deployment was felt as an emotional rollercoaster (Davis et al, 2011, p. 51). Contradictory emotions were felt during this time including loss, powerlessness, happiness and stress. All the wives in Davis et al.'s study discussed the benefits they experienced from a deployment, including positive marital changes, a feeling of self-confidence and self-discovery. Embracing the highs with the lows provided an opportunity to find what worked for wives. According to Davis et al., "they had new routines, had developed new sources of support, and felt more in control, independent, and confident in their abilities to succeed even as they experienced irritability, anger, sadness, and despair" (2011, p. 56).

<u>*Denial*</u>

Another strategy identified in the literature as a means to cope during deployment, in particular the pre-deployment phase, was denial (Sahlstein et al., 2009, p. 428). This was a strategy used by wives of U.S. Army or Army National Guard servicemen, displayed by either sharing in the husband's excitement for the deployment, or distancing themselves from their spouse. Both strategies were non-antagonistic struggles, as wives felt an internal struggle and not as a conflict with their husbands. During the deployment phase this was demonstrated by wives focusing on their own lives, and the lives of their children (Sahlstein et al., 2009, p. 432).

Similarly in Cafferky, and Shi's (2015) research, some wives of U.S. soldiers reported living in a state of denial, where they tried not to learn about their husband's situation, in order to escape the emotional worry the realization would cause. However, this had adverse affects in the sense of inhibiting wives from fully experiencing their own

emotions, which unintentionally put them in even greater distress (Cafferky, B., & Shi, 2015, p. 292).

Connection-Seeking Practices

Partners used connection-seeking practices as a way to feel connected to their deployed soldier, and reduce stress. This involved exercises such as praying at the same time each day, husbands leaving notes around the house to be found by their spouse, and reading the same books while separated (Sahlstein et al., 2009, p. 431). In contrast, when partners withdrew from social contact with friends or people who may ask about the deployed person, they failed to effectively manage the stress related to deployment (Prakash et al., 2011, p. 61). Once again Cafferky and Shi's (2015) research found similar themes emerging from military wives of U.S. personnel deployed overseas who spent time with others, which helped them stay emotionally connected with their husbands. Each military wife struggled with feelings of loneliness, however it helped spending time with neighbors or friends who asked how their husbands were doing, offering to do tasks for them, or allowing them space to vent and release frustrations brought out by the deployment (Cafferky & Shi, 2015, p. 290). Although some wives expected civilian friends not to understand their experience, each military wife received some form of support from a civilian friend or family member. This was seen in the form of moving in with parents during the deployment, having friends or family members move into the family home to help with household or parenting responsibilities, or attending church in the local community.

Another form of connection-seeking practices was seen in the act of communication (Baptist et al., 2011, p. 205).). Military wives of U.S. military personnel deployed as part of OIF/OEF made intentional and regular effort to communicate throughout the deployment, which was demonstrated in various forms including: sending texts, instant messages or emails, making phone calls, or organizing care packages for the deployed partner. Being in contact with the deployed partner provided partners with a sense of relief and support, and assisted in building trust (Baptist et al. 2011, p. 205). Communicating was noted as the primary factor in helping partners manage anxiety and stress over the deployment. Because fear of injury to their deployed soldier was stated as being the major source of anxiety and stress, having the capability to regularly communicate let participants know that their partners were alive and well. Furthermore, when communication was constrained, either through problems with

technology or the censoring of certain information, partners felt lower levels of connection with their deployed soldier and less satisfaction with their relationship.

Military-Managed Support Groups

Partners coped better with deployment-related stressors when an increase in contact was made with others in a similar position. This included joining military-managed support groups, seeking help from qualified professionals within the military, and talking to others who also had a spouse deploy for an extended period of time (Prakash et al., 2011, p. 61). Those who sought frequent and early contact with other families coping in a similar situation, either through support groups or family welfare organisations, felt lower levels of stress (Prakash et al., 2011, p. 61). Educational programmes lead by the military that encouraged support from friends, family, and the community, were effective in developing constructive coping patterns for partners at home during their soldier's physical absence.

The ability of partners to experience positive outcomes while in the presence of military stressors came as a result of what Schachman and Lindsey (2013) describe as balancing risk factors with protective factors. Data collected from wives of U.S. Air Force personnel showed that partners used protective factors in the form of support networks involving the military family, both formally and informally, to assist them during a deployment. Shared history and experience among partners enabled the formation of unplanned, informal and non-traditional support networks to form. This helped ease the stress brought out during deployment by building relationships with others sharing a similar situation to their own.

Within the military, partners had distinct social identities based on their husband's position within the unit. Schachman and Lindsey (2013) stated, a husband's rank allowed the partners to "be readily integrated into supportive social networks" (Schachman & Lindsey, 2013, p. 159).

Resiliency was promoted in Family Readiness Groups (FRGs), where partners were provided news and referral support. Partners of United States Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom soldiers used FRGs to form relationships with other military spouses involved in U.S. deployments. FRGs could be utilized online or in person, and were designed to "provide information, training, and overall support for

troops, their families, and even Department of the Army civilians and community volunteers who may also participate" (Sahlstein Parcell & Maguire, 2014, p. 498). For many wives the FRGs served as a coping resource, which offered them support and helped manage their stress. Other members of the group, in particular the leaders of the FRG, found that the distraction of offering support to others helped focus their energy in productive ways (Sahlstein Parcell and Maguire, 2014, p. 503). However, there were drawbacks to this form of military support. Some women reported experiencing stress as a result of leadership and membership duties (Sahlstein Parcell and Maguire, 2014, p. 504). In addition, women in top leadership positions felt that they had to adopt their partner's work role, which made the role stressful as it filtered into home life.

Military Chaplains, Psychologists and Social Workers

Militaries have also hired specialized personnel to assist in supporting military families before, during, and after deployment. These services aimed to reduce the stresses brought out by the militarization of family life. The British Army established the Soldiers, Sailors, and Air Force Association (SSAFA) in 1885, a voluntary service of nurses and social workers, mostly women, in a response to marriage being recognized as a positive influence on soldiering (Enloe, 2000, p. 166). In conjunction with SSAFA, male military specialists arose in the form of chaplains, psychiatrists, medical officers and family officers.

During the 1980s, in response to the strains put on partners as a result of frequent moving, the United States implemented more elaborate family services in order to support families more adequately. By the 1990's the Defence Department had established a "Military Family" newsletter, which included notices on seminars about child abuse and domestic violence, youth programmes and job advertisements for spouses of military personnel (Enloe, 2000, p. 168).

Chaplains within the U.S. military act as family officers, individuals who provide support and advice to families, but are within the regular military structure (Enloe, 2000, p. 168). A military chaplain is embedded in the military's hierarchical chain of command, similar to that of a military social worker. Psychiatrists within the military keep soldiers psychologically fit to fight, while chaplains and social workers are used to maintain soldiers' wives' support for their husband's combat readiness (Enloe, 2000, p. 169).

A number of ways to reduce deployment challenges and stress have emerged from previous research. These include both individual and collective methods for adapting to life without a key member of the family present. By considering these it has enabled me to compare it to the strategies used by my participants, and whether they were successful in acclimatizing to deployment life.

Conclusion

What is emphasized within the literature on being a military wife from Enloe (2000) and Aducci et al.'s (2011) work are the numerous ways in which partners' lives are impacted by entering into a relationship with an individual who has a career in the military. A 'military wife' in Enloe's view, involves a woman entering into a social world isolated from society, being subordinate to the authority of the state, moving with, and having long separations from her husband, in addition to living under the authority of an organisation that portrays itself as a family, making her subject to two patriarchal authorities (Enloe, 1988, p. 46). Echoed in Enloe's work is Aducci et al.'s (2011) concept of 'living as a threesome' with a wife, husband and the military being involved in a relationship. Although Enloe's work is based within a British and American military context, and Aducci et al. from the American military, it is significant to note the common social setting that military wives found themselves in, which means they face tests non-military couples do not.

I have also discussed the different challenges and stresses that occur across the three phases of deployment, in addition to the impact these had on partner's overall stress levels during each phase. During pre-deployment, although physically present, the soldier is psychologically absent as they focus on training for their upcoming mission. Partners prepared themselves for the deployment by trying to remove themselves emotionally from the deploying soldier. During deployment, the soldier was physically absent, but able to exercise a level of emotional presence within the home. The most significant forms of stress during this phase included loneliness, lack of companionship, and isolation. During this phase partners adjusted to life without their soldier, which saw a change in behavior, role-specific tasks, and emotional dynamics within the home. The post-deployment phase reintroduced the physical presence of the soldier, but in some cases, there was a psychological absence as some found it difficult to disengage from the operational environment, and take on their roles and responsibilities within the home. Partners felt appreciation for their soldier on homecoming, which helped

fortify the bonds within the relationship. However, for couples that experienced a lack of connection during the deployment, partners had difficulty being intimate with their soldier post-deployment. This phase was characterized yet again as being a period of change and modification in the partner's life, and returning to life with the physically present soldier.

It is important to note the general trends during each of these phases, as it allowed me to compare between existing literature, and what my participants experienced within a New Zealand context. What I found was that my participants experiences were similar to what was found during the pre-deployment phase, when compared to that of the literature. It was a time of mild stress for some of the women that I interviewed, as they were required to put extra services in place, such as household and childcare services, to accommodate their role as solo parents. During the deployment phase, my participants experienced loneliness and a lack of companionship, similar to that of the literature. Having to attend events alone, as was the case for Helen, and being isolated from the community, as was the case for Mel, echoes what MacDonald et al. (1996) found in their research on NZDF partners. However, the women I interviewed maintained a relatively high level of mental health during the deployment, contrary to the findings from the literature. During post-deployment, psychological distress decreased for my participants, which was similar to what was found in the literature. Reduced deployment stresses were felt, however there was stress associated with adjusting to their roles with the presence of their soldier.

The challenges that emerged for partners as a result of a soldier's deployment identified the following as being points of stress: military-associated challenges, the deployment itself, domestic stresses, increased workload, and support. Considering the literature on the challenges of deployment allowed me to identify which ones also applied to my participants. They experienced similar challenges to those identified within the literature. Anna experienced the military-associated challenge of being relocated to Waiouru by the New Zealand Army. She felt this placed added stress on herself during the deployment, as she lacked the support of her friends and family. Domestic stress, in the form of economic stress, was not felt for the majority of my participants, which was what Allen et al.'s research (2011, p. 240) predicted for partners of soldiers with higher rank brackets. Because the women I interviewed had control of their finances, they experienced lower levels of stress, which aligns with the research conducted by Foley

(1985, p. 6), who stated that women who did not have control of finances within the marriage were seen to experience higher levels of stress (Foley, 1985, p. 6).

Research carried out on the topic of stress during deployment identified a variety of factors that assisted in reducing the levels of stress felt by partners. These included: self-development and independence; carrying out joint tasks with the deployed soldier; creating a pace to the deployment; managing change in a variety of different forms; denying the deployment is occurring, in some cases; carrying out connection-seeking practices; utilizing military-managed support groups; and, using military personnel such as chaplains, psychologists and social workers to assist in tackling challenges brought out by the deployment. A variety of ways to meet the challenges of deployment have emerged from previous literature. These included both individual and collective methods for adapting to life without a key member of the family present. By considering these it enabled me to compare the strategies used by my participants, and whether they were successful in acclimatizing to deployment life. A number of the women I interviewed used self-development as a way to meet the challenges of deployment. A number of them also used connection-seeking practices, such as communication through Facebook Messenger and Skype to reach their deployed soldier, which is similar to that of Baptist et al.'s (2011, p. 205) research. Military-managed support groups were also engaged in by my participants, in particular Gill who chose to participate in the unit-organized social gatherings during the deployment. What this demonstrates is numerous similarities between the experiences of my participants, and international literature on meeting stresses that can be brought out by a deployment. In the next chapter I discuss the methods I used to carry out my research.

Chapter Three: Methodology

An anthropologist's methodological approach to research significantly shapes the information collected and how it is interpreted. This chapter outlines the approach I took in conducting my research with partners of deploying soldiers. I begin first with a discussion on the anthropology of organisations, which looks into the significance of 'studying up' in anthropology, and some of the ethical considerations I made before undertaking research with a large organisation such as the NZDF. I then explore the ethics involved as an anthropologist working with the military, and how I negotiated between the academic institution that I was based within, and my interactions with the NZDF as a large military institution. Following this, I discuss the process of conducting research involving the NZDF, which describes how I engaged with Organisational Research, the association responsible for handling research within the NZDF. I then explain the methods I used for gathering data for my research, outlining the use of one-on-one interviews with my participants as a means of data collection. I also discuss how I came to recruit NZDF welfare support staff, and partners of deployed soldiers, to better understand where the participants I recruited came from within the NZDF, and the wider NZDF community. I then move on to examining the way in which I made sense of the data that I collected, and the use of thematic analysis to process and organize the information that I obtained from my interviews. To conclude, I discuss the ethical considerations that I made throughout the research process, and the precautions I took to reduce harm to my participants in taking part in my research. Collectively, this chapter examines the mechanisms behind the research that I conducted, and provides an understanding of what data was collected and produced in the process.

The Anthropology of Organisations

Organisations such as the NZDF play a key role in shaping both our personal and work lives. Anthropologists encourage research on large organisations, and in particular to 'study up', as there is a need to "see connections among groups in society and to link groups and individuals to larger processes of change" (Nyqvist & Garsten, 2013, p. 14). Studying up can enrich our comprehension of power relations, as well as the forms of dependency and control that are associated with particular organisations (Nyqvist & Garsten, 2013, p. 14). Studying the NZDF allows us to better understand the role the organisation plays in the lives of my participants by linking micro-structures to macro-

structures. This is done by comparing military perspectives on what support is offered by the NZDF to what my participants found supportive during deployment.

According to Nader, the majority of literature based on fieldwork in the United States is on ethnic groups, the poor, and the disadvantaged (Nader, 1972, p. 5). In these cases, the power relationship is in favour of the anthropologist. In contrast, this particular project not only investigated people who were impacted by the NZDF, but also the organisation itself. As a result, different facets of culture are identified, which puts into perspective the accounts collected from NZDF welfare support personnel, and the families of NZDF service personnel. Posing problems in a comparative frame improves an understanding of the forces at play. In Nader's (1972) view:

> Depending on one's view of the processes that generate behavior one would seek solutions to social problems either by a policy directed to reforming the society as a whole or one directed at modifying the behavior of the subculture, or both. (p. 9)

This is only possible by comparatively assessing both the powerful and those impacted by the powerful. One of the ethical challenges of research involving large powerful organisations, such as the NZDF, is the responsibility an anthropologist has in being honest and candid. According to the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand's (ASAANZ) *Principles of Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct* (1992), anthropologists should demand assurance that they will not be required to compromise their responsibilities and ethics as a condition of gaining permission to carry out research. More specifically, the principles set out by ASAANZ state no secret research, reports or debriefings should be agreed or given. One of the challenges with the NZDF is the level of security associated with deployments, and the level of sensitive information that they wish to be made public or kept private. However, I made this clear during my interviews with NZDF personnel that I would only disclose information that the organisation would feel comfortable sharing in the publication of this thesis.

Ethics Involved in Anthropologists Working With the Military

Carrying out research with the NZDF is both intriguing and worthwhile, given the military's close proximity and relationship with Massey University. The Centre for

Defence and Security at Massey University, established in 2001, has strong ties to the NZDF, with one of its initial responsibilities being to deliver courses to the New Zealand Defence Force Command and Staff College. The university's involvement in the 2016 Defence White Paper saw various meetings on campus take place, which allowed academics from a variety of backgrounds to contribute comments towards the government's defence policy. Social researchers have the ability to contribute their knowledge of a topic towards such documents, which makes projects such as the one that I carried out significant, as it allows the opinions and viewpoints of my participants to be incorporated into policies that affect their family's jobs.

The interaction between military and academic institutions has been carried out in the past. With controversy surrounding projects such as the Human Terrain System (HTS), which embedded anthropologists and other social scientists in United States military teams to Iraq and Afghanistan, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) outlined their concerns about the involvement of anthropological knowledge when involved with military forces (American Anthropological Association, 2007, p. 2). From the AAA report the main concerns with the HTS project were that the anthropologists were not permitted to identify themselves to participants as anthropologists; their identity would be compromised because they would not always be able to distinguish themselves from military personnel. Moreover, voluntary informed consent would be difficult to achieve in a war zone, and HTS anthropologists may have responsibilities to their U.S. military units in war zones that conflict with their obligations to the individuals they study, therefore jeopardizing their ethical responsibilities to do no harm to the communities they study. Moreover, the information that anthropologists provide to U.S. military commanders could be used to make decisions about identifying and selecting specific populations to target.

This raised the question for me in terms of what other military environments might promote such trepidation towards anthropological involvement. Lutz states that anthropologists working for the military take a variety of stances on their help, "some seeing themselves as helping the government become more competent" (Lutz, 2009, p. 372). The key concern was that anthropologists would in essence, be responsible to the organisation that they worked with. A fine line must therefore be drawn between providing the organisation with useful feedback from the research, while also having enough autonomy to act in accordance with the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand Principles of Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct. It

was therefore important for me to convey to my participants from the start of our interaction that I acted as an external researcher to the NZDF, in order to emphasize the commitments I held towards my participants.

In terms of academic studies of the military in New Zealand, there have been numerous from Psychology, which is logical given that there are military psychologists within the NZDF. However, there is also place for Social Anthropology, with its ability to encompass a more holistic approach to understanding the human experience of military life.

Research Involving the NZDF

In order to study this topic, permission from the organisation was required, and understandably so. Research involving participants with sensitive information required a level of supervision and access. My participants were not required to ask the NZDF for consent to speak to me, as I was gaining permission from Organisational Research to ask NZDF families their opinions of deployment. Gaining this access when unfamiliar with who to approach from within the NZDF was slightly daunting; the idea of being swallowed up within the system was an initial concern of mine. However, having staff within the university who had experience working with the NZDF meant that I had specific individuals to assist me, which made first contact a lot easier. Having also carried out research with the military for my Honours project, I had a familiarity with Linton Camp and some of the staff on base, which also made the prospect of carrying out research with the military less daunting.

After the initial contact was made through email, I had a meeting in Wellington to plan out my research topic at Organisational Research, the administration responsible for handling research within the NZDF. However, during this time there were a number of setbacks that delayed meetings and interviews. The 2016 Kaikoura earthquake forced the organisation to relocate into temporary offices, as the building was seriously damaged, with priority given to disaster relief efforts. Given this, I particularly appreciated the help that Organisational Research provided me in taking time to discuss my research topic, on top of their busy work schedules.

From here I needed to find a 'sponsor' for the project. This was a requirement of Organisational Research in carrying out a project with the NZDF. A sponsor enables the researcher to have a point of contact, and assists the researcher in gaining access to

NZDF personnel. After meeting with Organisational Research they recommended a specific member of the New Zealand Army at Linton Military Camp. I now had a contact who seemed well placed to assist me with any queries I had. They were enthusiastic about the project, and were able to put me in touch with the right military personnel to interview. It was a worthwhile process for me in developing resilience and dedication to a research topic.

Methods

With regards to data collection, I chose to carry out one-on-one interviews with all of my participants, both military personnel and partners of deployed service personnel. Apart from my interview with the chaplains, which involved four New Zealand Army chaplains being present at once, the interviews were private. One-on-one interviews with each participant were scheduled to last approximately an hour, but were flexible depending on how long they took. One interview lasted only twenty minutes, while another spanned over an hour and a half. After having used a form of open-ended questioning for data collection in my Honours thesis, I found it was highly effective in gaining data that was detailed and comprehensive, as opposed to using a survey recording short answers. Using this method allowed me to ask further follow-up questions to gain insight into the topics discussed by my participants.

Talking to Welfare Support Staff in the NZDF

I interviewed seven members of the New Zealand Defence Force, each of which was connected to the deployment process. I contacted my sponsor assigned to me through my Organisational Research application, who then referred me on to the coordinator of events and visits at Linton Military Camp. This person was able to provide me with contact information for all the military personnel I wished to interview, including any additional individuals they recommended I speak with who were also involved in the deployment process. My contact first passed on my invitation to potential participants with an explanation of who I was and why I was interested in speaking with them.

I met with the Deployment Services Officer and the Community Services Officer, both located at the Linton Community Hub, in addition to the chaplains and a military psychologist based at Linton Military Camp. This completed the support staff that I interviewed from the NZDF. I also met with a member of the New Zealand Army

involved in the future operations for 1st Brigade from the New Zealand Army, who was able to provide some context to the Iraq mission. In addition, I had the opportunity to meet with the Head Psychologist at Joint Forces New Zealand who organized the psychologist's deployment presentation for the family day, as well as the Personnel Welfare and Equity Officer from Joint Forces New Zealand.

Talking to Partners of Deployed Soldiers

Recruiting partners was slightly trickier in comparison to finding the welfare support staff to interview. Because it was unethical, and also a security risk, to be provided lists of individuals who had been deployed to Iraq with the New Zealand Defence Force, I had to wait for my participants to get in touch with me to volunteer to take part. Two weeks after I submitted my information sheet to the events and visits coordinator at camp, and I still had no response, I began to be concerned that I would not have any interviewees. After concluding my interview with the chaplains one day on camp, I was invited to morning tea in the officer's mess. By chance I met a senior officer who had been on the Iraq deployment. After explaining why a civilian such as myself was in the mess and the difficulty I was having with finding participants to interview, he immediately volunteered his partner for my study and gave me her contact details. She became the first partner that I interviewed. In hindsight it was extremely lucky to have bumped into him, as he also passed on my information sheet to others, inviting partners to participate in my project. Within a day I had two responses, and from there I was able to snowball further participants by asking those I had interviewed if they knew of anyone else who might be interested in taking part.

I interviewed seven women whose partners had been deployed to Iraq as part of the Building Partner Capacity mission. As stated previously, the women involved in my research had partners in the higher rank brackets of the New Zealand Army. The rank of my participants' partners ranged from captain to lieutenant colonel for the officers, and staff sergeant to warrant officer class one for the non-commissioned officers. All of my participants were in long term relationships with their deploying service partner, and all were in their late twenties to early thirties. The majority of these women had young children at the time of deployment, with the remainder living alone while their partners deployed overseas. One of my participants is in a same-sex relationship, but to protect the identity of my participant I have changed her interview transcript to talk about a male partner. As such, I will refer to the deployed soldiers as men or fathers.

The seven women I interviewed for my research were Helen, Jordan, Gill, Mel, Anna, Rebecca, and Leah. Helen was working fulltime in Palmerston North and living in the Linton housing area when her husband deployed to Iraq. Jordan is a mother of three, the oldest being five at the time of her husband's deployment. Gill was living and working fulltime in Palmerston North. This was her husband's fourth deployment, but it was his second since being together with Gill. and first since they'd been married. She had no children at the time of her husband's deployment. Mel had interesting circumstances at the time of her partner's deployment. She was living in Palmerston North during the week, but was commuting back to Waiouru on the weekend to where she and her partner were permanently living. Anna is a mother of two, and was living in Waiouru during her husband's deployment to Iraq. Rebecca was working fulltime in Palmerston North, and was living with her young daughter and her parents and the time of her husband's deployment. Leah was living in the housing area with her three children, two attending primary school at the time.

At the time of interviews all of my participants' partners had returned back to New Zealand from deployment. I chose to interview them at this point in time as they would have had time to reflect on the experience of having a partner deployed. Sahlstein Parcell and Maguire (2014, p. 501) also used the retrospective interview technique to lead their participants' dialogues of the deployment experience involving missions to Iraq and Afghanistan. The technique involved asking participants to 'story' their responses with anecdotes and examples, and discuss the events that stood out for them as being significant within that timeframe, which the authors referred to as 'turning points'. This is similar to the interview technique that I used for my research, as I framed my questions to include the month leading up to deployment, the deployment period, and the months following deployment. I also asked whether my participants could remember whether there were any points, both positive and negative, that stood out for them during that period of time. The following questions were used during my interview with the military partners:

-How did you become involved with a member of the New Zealand Army?
-Was this the first deployment they'd been on?
-What information did you receive about the deployment to Iraq?
-What is your opinion of the objectives in Iraq?
-Was there any preparation involved for you and your partner for this deployment?

-Is there anything you remember as helping you cope during this time, while your partner was away?

-What was positive about this deployment for you?

-Were there any challenges about this deployment?

-Were there ways of communicating with your partner while on deployment?

-Are there any strategies you use to make the time away from your partner easier?

-Did you find yourself changing your daily routine in any way during this time?

-How do you feel the New Zealand Army supported you when your partner was on deployment?

The recorded interviews took place in the participants' homes, or at a local café depending on what the participant felt most comfortable with.

Making Sense of the Data

Once I had completed the interviews, I began the process of transcribing. I then identified any recurring experiences, viewpoints and reactions within the interviews, to highlight themes that the discussions brought out. Similarly to Jennings-Kelsall et al.'s work (2012, p. 366), central concepts were able to be identified within the data. This was ideal for my research, as it permitted me to examine multiple texts provided from my interviews with the participants, to be processed effectively without being overwhelmed with data (Riessman, 2008). A thematic analysis of each of the narratives presented by my participants provided me with the tools to comparatively explore any common patterns across the group. Quotations from my participants are used throughout my analysis to illustrate the themes that came through in their stories.

The analysis that I carried out primarily arose from a narrative approach, and is therefore qualitative in nature. Qualitative research has the ability to highlight the systems of relationships that an individual is involved in, and is characterized by its holistic approach to a subject, which looks at the interrelated elements that make up its broader context within society (Carreiras & Alexandre, 2013; Vuga & Juvan, 2013). A number of studies have used a qualitative research approach to discuss the experiences of partners (Patzel, McBride, Bunting & Anno, 2013; Baptist, Amanor-Boadu, Garrett, Nelson Goff, Collum, Gamble, Gurss, Sanders-Hahs, Strader, & Wick, 2011).

Having the ability to identify and describe patterns, as well as relationships both within and across participants, was important for me to be able to achieve, as it allowed broader concepts to be identified. A potential challenge with this approach as identified by Baptist et al. (2011, p. 204), is the personal bias that may occur. Interpreting the meaning of a text relies substantially on the researcher coding the data; therefore, in order to reduce the risk of personal bias arising it was important to use specific quotations from my interview transcripts to support the conclusions that I was making in my analysis. In turn it allowed me to authenticate the meaning I was drawing from my participants' experiences.

My theoretical position was based within a narrative approach. Research of this description encourages participants to tell their own stories, and encourages them to develop a narrative based on how they personally experienced certain life events (Davies, 2008, p. 210). A narrative approach to ethnographic research refers to a form of data collection, as well as a method of data analysis, which aims to find narrative themes within the participant's story. The purpose of a narrative approach is to construct an understanding of the participant's perceptions of a particular life experience. For my research, I used a narrative approach to understand the themes that featured within the stories of my participants. Narrative as a way of understanding thematically was appropriate for my research, as I was examining a small group of individuals, where more focused experiences of certain events are sought.

Ethical Considerations

I discussed potential ethical issues with my supervisors prior to commencing my interviews. One issue that was raised was the potential emotional harm that may have surfaced for the participants, if the topics being discussed upset them. An example of this could be the anxiety of discussing their partner's deployment to dangerous locations. To reduce this risk I familiarized myself with family support services that the NZDF offered, so that I was able to direct my participants towards a point of support if necessary.

Before I met with my participants, I devised and posted to them an interview schedule that not only assisted me through the interview, but it also provided my participants with an idea of what questions I would be asking. This enabled my participants to think about how they chose to answer my questions, while also helping guide me through the

interview. My interviewing approach involved me asking open-ended questions, which gave my participants control over their response to the questions asked during the interview. During these semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, I posed general questions on the experience of having a partner deployed. Overall, the conversation was flexible and open to what my participants wanted to discuss, therefore reducing the risk of causing emotional harm.

Before undertaking any interviews with my participants, I provided each of them with an information sheet that invited them to participate in my research, and outlined my objectives for their involvement in the project. They also received a consent form to complete, which acknowledged that the individual understood what I intended to do, and agreed to participate in my research project. The consent form served as a privacy agreement between the participant and myself to keep their identity confidential. To conceal their identity further, participants were given a pseudonym, and some details about their identity were also changed. The consent form enabled my participants the option of having their interview transcript returned to them for checking. This provided participants with the opportunity to withdraw any information from the transcript that they decided they would rather not have included in my work.

I also considered the potential for harm if my participants had a negative impression on the support offered by the Army, given their position as New Zealand Army wives. The conclusions within my research were aimed at identifying what worked well, and what could be improved on in regards to support, to better the experience of deployment life for future partners. Furthermore, my sample was unique to the experiences of these women, and may not represent all experiences of deployment life.

Conclusion

Although research involving the military comes with particular challenges, such as gaining access to participants, and the confidentiality of some of the information associated with the deployment, it was important for me to make sure that I persevered with my topic and gaining access to the field. It was certainly worthwhile, as the stories that came out of my interviews were all very unique, and at times quite unexpected. In the next chapter I begin to explore the background to the deployment to Iraq, to understand the circumstances under which my participants' partners were being sent overseas.

Chapter Four: Background to the Deployment to Iraq

The soldiers part of the deployment to Iraq are employed by the New Zealand Army. To understand the commitments the soldiers' work lives had on my participants, it is important to understand the New Zealand Army in more detail. I begin with a description of the New Zealand Army, outlining the principles of the organisation, in addition to the volunteer-based and professional focus of the organisation.

A brief synopsis of the conflict in Iraq, followed by New Zealand's engagement in the area will then be discussed, to understand why my participants' partners came to be deployed into the location. The New Zealand Army's role in a non-combat, training-focused mission is emphasized, where personnel play a key part alongside the Australian Defence Force to support the training of Iraqi Forces against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). I also include a discussion on the current NZDF welfare support plans, which describe the method by which personnel are selected for overseas operations, emphasizing who and why certain personnel are selected over others.

The NZDF has released a variety of welfare support booklets for partners to take and read, which includes the *Deployment Guide for Families* (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2016), *Developing Baseline: Building Resilience* (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2002), and *Returning home from deployment: A guide to psychological resilience for personnel and families* (2014). These three resources provide partners with information on the three phases of deployment, and strategies to reduce the stress that may come as a result of the soldier's participation in an overseas deployment.

I then focus my discussion on research that has investigated the impacts overseas deployment has on the family. This includes three key research projects conducted by the NZDF, including *Welfare Support for Dependents of Deployed NZDF Personnel* (1996), lead by the Ministry of Defence, and two reports from the Department of Psychology at Massey University, *Psychological Effects Of Peacekeeping Deployments on Partners* (1996) and *A Process Review of Deployment and Psychological Wellbeing in the New Zealand Defence Force* (2015). What I found from these three reports is that significant research and efforts from the NZDF have been made within the last 20 years on improving policies and processes around access to welfare support for partners of NZDF personnel. It is important to consider these research projects, as similarities between

the stories my participants tell of their deployment experience and those discussed in the reports arose. These reports also highlight the need for further research to be conducted into the contemporary experience of deployment life, more specifically in relation to the Iraq deployment. To begin, a description of the New Zealand Army will establish the context of the soldier's work.

The New Zealand Army

The New Zealand Army established in 1845 is part of the larger New Zealand Defence Force, which comprises the New Zealand Army, the New Zealand Naval Forces and the Royal New Zealand Air Force. The Armed Forces in New Zealand were founded and preserved to: defend the nation and any area for which New Zealand is responsible; protect the interests of New Zealand, whether that is in New Zealand or abroad; contribute forces under collective security treaties, agreements or arrangements; contribute forces to, and for the purposes of the United Nations, or with any State or organisations in relation to the United Nations; provide support to the civil power in New Zealand or abroad in a time of emergency; and, provide public service where required (New Zealand Defence Force, 2015b, p. 2).

The New Zealand Army is comprised of 6532 members, including military, civilian and reserve personnel, and is primarily volunteer based and professional (New Zealand Army, 2016, p. 3). One of the Army's key priorities is 'force' generation, whereby it seeks to create an integrated, diverse and available work force that are output-focused. In order to be better positioned to support New Zealand's national interest and to assist its efforts in contributing to international order, the Army has developed a variety of mechanisms within the organisation to promote professional development, including: The Officer Career Model, which enables performance based promotion without time barriers; the Linton Soldier Performance Centre, which supports medical groups in delivering effective assistance to the force; and, a direct entry of trade qualified personnel into the Army to promote a greater depth of skill and experience (New Zealand Army, 2016, p. 5). A consistent training continuum reinforced by effective career management underlines the Army's strategy to create a framework that maintains professional standards. In turn, this allows the Army to retain a core structure of knowledge and experience at the corporal, sergeant, captain, and major level (New Zealand Army, 2016, p. 4).

Deployment to Iraq

To understand New Zealand's presence in Iraq, it is first necessary to explore the history of the Middle East, and how ISIL emerged. Iraq has a population of approximately 32 million, which is ethnically divided amongst Arab, Kurdish and smaller groups of Turkmen (Mabon, 2017, p. 20). Within the Middle East, the Muslim population within these groups are further segmented into the Sunni and Shia factions. The Sunni population contains 35 percent of the overall population in Iraq, the majority of which are Arab and Kurd, with the remaining 65 percent of the population being Shia. During the 2003 invasion of the United States into Iraq, and the removal of President Saddam Hussein, the Shia-controlled government came to power. As a result, Sunni Arabs in the northern regions of Iraq and Syria struggled with the new political arrangement, as enduring tensions resurfaced. The shift in power relations came to affect land, financial arrangements, and resource distribution, which resulted in conflict and open rebellion (Mabon, 2017, p. 21).

Jordanian-born Sunni Islamist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi established a foreign fighter network to defeat the occupying U.S. forces (Celso, 2015, p. 24). Zarqawi had formerly associated with al-Qaeda, however in 2004 he sought to create a new organisation known as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). By 2006 AQI had fused with six Iraqi Islamist organisations to form the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), which focused its policies on attacking the Shiite population (Celso, 2015, p. 25). Zarqawi was killed in June 2006 by a U.S. airstrike, whereby his successor Abu Bahr al-Baghdadi became the group's leader. In 2010 President Bashar al-Assad of Syria started a civil war against his own people during the Arab Spring, which in turn created a wave of riots, demonstrations, and protests that occurred in the Arab league (Mabon, 2017, p. 26). A variety of foreign groups joined the fight in Syria as time progressed, the majority for religious reasons, one in particular with the goal of building an Islamic State in the region. One of these groups was the ISI, which became the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Following the 2003 invasion, Iraq has faced declining socioeconomic conditions, which drove violence and political fragility, creating a climate for radical groups to emerge. Mabon (2017) concludes:

> For ISIS, Iraq has become the front line in its protection of Islam against 'colonial governments', the threat on Shi'ism and anything it deems as apostasy, which

has resulted in the group undertaking the destruction of archeological sites important to both Christian and Muslim faiths. (p. 26)

After the 2010 death of Baghadi, the group's network continues to stretch across the Levant, linking Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, thereby creating ISIL (Celso, 2015, p. 26). The former Prime Minister John Key[4] noted, "ISIL's ability to motivate Islamist radicals make it a threat not only to the stability in the Middle East, but regionally and locally too" (2015a, p. 1). Based in Raqqa, Syria, ISIL captured the Iraq city of Mosul in 2014, where widespread human rights abuses and the displacement of Iraqi and Syrian civilians created a humanitarian crisis (Brownlee, & McCully, n.d., p. 4). With the ongoing fighting in Iraq and Syria, a response from the New Zealand government was inevitable given its prior engagement within the region.

New Zealand's Involvement in Iraq

As a founding member of the United Nations, New Zealand and the New Zealand Army has been a provider of forces to UN peace operations. The United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), an inspection administration created by the United Nations in 1991, was created to ensure Iraq's commitment in the removal of chemical, biological and missile weapons under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 687 (1991, p. 1). For this mission, New Zealand contributed a medical team, which developed into a staff officer, and administrative and communications staff. More recently, since 2003 the New Zealand Army has contributed Defence Force personnel, including 35 New Zealand Army engineers to Southeast Iraq in order to undertake humanitarian and reconstruction work within the state (New Zealand Army, 2015, p. 1). Three New Zealand Army officers deployed to Iraq under a United Nations mission, providing the United Nations Assistance Mission Iraq (UNAMI) with a military advisor, a NZDF officer who liaised between the UNAMI, the Multinational Force and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), and a NZDF officer offering advice on military matters to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

In a letter addressed to the United Nations Security-General in June of 2014, the Permanent Representative of Iraq outlined the security situation in Iraq (Alhakim, 2014,

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[4] John Key served as Prime Minister of New Zealand from 2008 to 2016 under the National Party.

p.1). On the night of June 11, 2014, armed terrorist groups entered the former chemical weapons facility, where remnants of the weapons programme were kept, and seized the Iraqi military personnel of the protection force. Subsequently, the terrorist groups seized chemical weapons and project equipment. The Government of Iraq requested the State Members of the United Nations to assist in ground support, logistics, intelligence and training support (Brownlee & McCully, n.d.,, p. 3).

On the 24 February 2015, the New Zealand Government announced its decision to deploy the NZDF to Iraq (New Zealand Defence Force, 2016a, p. 1). Since May 2015, up to 143 NZDF personnel have worked for each deployment as part of the Building Partner Capacity (BPC) mission (Brownlee, 2015, p.1). The BPC mission is an international effort to train ISF, in order to provide the Iraqi Government with a self-sustaining military capability in combatting ISIL (New Zealand Defence Force, 2016b, p. 1). Task Group Taji, the combined New Zealand-Australia training group, are based at the Taji Military Complex, northwest of Baghdad. Training courses run for six weeks, where individual soldier skills, such as weapons handling and marksmanship at close and long ranges are run, in addition to the fundamental aspects of international human rights law, and the Law of Armed Conflict. Military skills are also taught, including "combat first aid, obstacle breaching techniques as well as counter-Improvised Explosive Device and Explosive Hazard Awareness Training" (New Zealand Defence Force, 2016c, p. 1). In 2015, as a response to the Prime Minister's announcement of the government's decision to send NZDF personnel on a non-combat mission to Iraq, the Chief of Defence Force at the time, Lieutenant General Tim Keating stated, "Since the 1950s the NZDF has trained and partnered with security forces – most recently, in Afghanistan. We have a track record of providing quality military training. This is where we are again going to make a difference" (Keating, 2015, p. 1).

The primary role the NZDF has played in Iraq has been a non-combat role in training ISF. Op Manawa is the mission name given to the New Zealand personnel deployed. According to the former Minister of Defence, The Honourable Gerry Brownlee[5], "a training mission like this is not without danger" (2015, p. 1). Because of the presence of ISIL within the region, to support these training activities from various risks, force protection has also been required. Up to 106 troops have carried out this role, in addition to personnel involved in logistics and medical support, as well as headquarters staff to enable the deployment to function while overseas (Brownlee, 2015, p. 1).

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[5] Gerry Brownlee served as Minister of Defence from 2014 to 2017.

The New Zealand Government has also taken diplomatic measures to combat ISIL in the form of humanitarian support. Contributions of $14.5 million were provided in 2015 to the region to assist those displaced as a result of the conflict (McCully, 2015, p. 1). In a statement made to the New Zealand House of Representatives in February 2015, Prime Minister Key (2015b) outlined the importance of New Zealand's presence in Iraq:

> Mr Speaker, New Zealand is a country that stands up for its values. We stand up for what's right. We have an obligation to support stability and the rule of law internationally. We do not shy away from taking our share of the burden when the international rules-based system is threatened. We have carved our independent foreign policy over decades and we take pride in it. (p. 1)

In 2018 the New Zealand Government announced its decision to extend New Zealand's contribution to the training mission in Iraq until June 2019 (Ardern, Mark, & Peters, 2018, p. 2). Also agreed was an alteration to the mission's order, to allow small groups to train for short periods of time at Besmaya, a training facility 52 kilometres south east of Taji. Iraqi Federal Police and the Iraqi Border Guards have also been trained in conjunction with the Iraqi Army to establish a stabilizing force within the state (Baguioro, 2016, p. 6).

New Zealand's participation in the maintenance of international peace and security, in addition to delivering humanitarian aid, reflects the state's relationship with the United Nations.

Current NZDF Deployment Welfare Processes

For NZDF personnel to be deployed on overseas operations, a welfare process established by Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand is followed. In this section I discuss the process by which soldiers are selected to participate on overseas operations, which includes a description of the assessments that occur during the pre-deployment and post-deployment phases, the Defence Welfare Network, and some of the reasons for soldiers returning home early from deployment. Collectively, the welfare processes provided by the NZDF ensure that not only the most suitable soldiers are selected to be able to perform overseas and be mentally-prepared, but it also ensures their welfare is maintained throughout the deployment.

The welfare processes begin with gaining command clearance, which denotes that if a soldier is to be put forward by their commanding officer for a deployment, they must first be cleared by their unit commander (Smith, 2017, p. 1). This is to make sure that the soldier has been confirmed to not have any unmanageable outstanding welfare issues. From here, in order to have a candidate selected for a deployment, an assessment of their known welfare situation is compiled and compared against others also interested in the deployment, which identifies any manageable issues that the soldier may be dealing with. The best candidate is then selected from the pool of candidates to go on deployment.

Military personnel being deployed are then required to complete a Family Support Plan, which contains a declaration from the soldier identifying any potential welfare issues that may affect their performance while overseas (Smith, 2017, p. 1). These declarations are reviewed and put forward to Joint Operations to establish whether the deployment should go ahead, and if the management plan put in place for the soldier is suitable.

During pre-deployment training a Welfare and Family Service Brief is presented to partners and families of deploying military personnel. The presentation made by the NZDF is for friends and family to attend, in order to show where their service person is going to be, and what the living spaces will be like over there, in order to provide the families with as much information as the NZDF can about the mission, about the conditions, and about how to get in touch while on deployment. Experiences from families of previously deployed military partners are also presented during the family day, to provide an account of what could potentially happen during the deployment, and "how problems can be avoided or resolved" (Smith, 2017, p. 1). The psychologists also deliver a presentation on the psychological aspects of deployment, including an outline of the emotional cycle of deployment for both the deployed partner and the family, strategies to 'build resilience', a note for children during deployment and the support and resources offered by the NZDF. Briefings such as the family day were shown to lower levels of family stress, as well as demonstrate more effective coping patterns within families (Prakash et al., 2011, p. 61).

During deployment the partners and family members of deployed personnel are able to utilize the Defence Welfare Network. This network includes the Deployment Service Officers who provide an important connection between the families and the NZDF,

which includes a 24 hour, seven days a week phone service (Smith, 2017, p. 1). Unit points of contact are also available to Army personnel, in addition to the community services and the Homebase internet website. Accurate and timely information regarding the deployment, as facilitated by the DSO, has been seen to reduce family stress levels as a result of deployment (Prakash et al., 2011, p. 61).

If necessary, for compassionate and medical returns, an Unexpected Return to New Zealand (RTNZ) is possible for military personnel (Smith, 2017, p. 1). This provides military personnel with a means in which to return to New Zealand, such as in instances where a family member has life-threatening medical issues, bereavements, or the individual becomes injured and is no longer able to perform their task overseas.

The final welfare procedure included in the deployment welfare processes are the post-deployment debriefs and questionnaires conducted by NZDF psychologists on returning military personnel (Smith, 2017, p. 1). Included in these questionnaires are sections on family welfare support; if required, the family will be offered it. Early detection and referral of family members with welfare issues has been seen to be an effective intervention method (Prakash et al, 2011, p. 61). Furthermore, any lessons learned from the deployment in terms of welfare are submitted back into the system, in order to continuously improve the process. As stated previously, booklets that are given to families of deploying soldiers supplement these welfare support processes. The next section discusses these booklets in more detail.

NZDF Resources for Partners

The New Zealand Defence Force has published a variety of resources about military separation for families of deployed personnel. This includes activity booklets for children aged between three and twelve, pamphlets for teenagers which outline the emotional cycle of deployment separation, and guides for parents on how to deal with children's and teenagers' reactions to deployment (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand*, 2008a; Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2008b). These resources are available at the family briefing for familes to take home. In this section I focus on the *Deployment Guide for Families* (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2017), *Developing Baseline: Building Resilience* (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2002), and *Returning home from deployment: A guide to psychological resilience for personnel and families* (2014), which relate to the experience of partners of deploying soldiers. These three resources are

provided by the NZDF to provide information to partners on the deployment location, help answer any questions they may have about the deployment, and provide strategies which aim to reduce stress that may arise as a result of their soldier's absence while on deployment.

Deployment Guide for Families

The Deployment Guide for Families is one of the resources provided to the primary next of kin, partners, and family members of the deploying serviceperson. The guide begins with a summary of the deployment location, which includes the time difference between the deployment location and New Zealand time, the area, population and climate (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2017, p.4). Next, the guide proceeds to explain what processes to follow if the family has an urgent situation such as a critical illness or death in the immediate family.

The Operational Welfare Network is then explained, which outlines the avenues of the Defence community that partners of deploying soldiers are available to engage with (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2017, p. 5). The pages that follow give details about each part of the network, including a description of each individual or group's role within the Operational Welfare Network and contact details. Providing a point of contact for partners who do not live at or near a military base has been seen to lower levels of family stress that may result from having a spouse on deployment (Prakash, Bavdekar & Joshi, 2011, p. 61).

The guide also discusses the ways in which partners can keep in contact with the deployed soldier (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2017, p. 15). This includes details on how to send mail such as letters or packages, and the conditions of using phones, cellphones and internet while their soldier is on deployment. In relation to communicating with the deployed family member, a note on Operations Security is covered. This advises those communicating with the serviceperson to protect critical information, by not discussing details about the mission, location, timings, unit leadership, command structure, roles of certain personnel and any personnel within the contingent (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2017, p. 19).

The deployment guide then explains some of the ways in which the NZDF provides information to partners in a more public arena. This includes: a description of *The Bugle*,

the deployment newsletter published monthly; the Homebase internet website, a webpage created by Headquarters Joint Forces to provide useful information to partners; and Force 4 Families, a group of volunteers with a website and family discount card established "with the aim of helping members of the wider NZDF community to better link to the services provided by the NZDF and other community services" (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2017, p. 21).

Following on from this is an administrative section in the guide, which discusses some of the legal and financial matters that partwners may need details on (Headquarters Joint Forces, 2017, p. 23). This includes information on legal representation and power of attorney, conditions of service, changes to pay or other administration requirements, leave, and insurance. The administrative section also features a glossary of terms, which helps partners better understand the obligations that are associated with the primary next of kin, casualty next of kin[6] and alternative next of kin. A home safety section gives safety tips to take into account while the partner is left at home, in addition to a list of NZDF support personnel contact numbers.

The Deployment Guide for Families acts as a bible of important information for the partners of deployed soldiers. Because it includes facts on the deployment location, support avenues for partners to reach out to, and details on the more administrative side to deployment, it is a resource that provides information of the procedures associated with the deployment.

<u>*Building Resilience for Deployed Personnel and Partners*</u>

The New Zealand Defence Force offers an in-depth guide on how to reduce stress as a result of deployment. *Developing Baseline: Building Resilience* (2002) expands upon how the stress response works, symptoms that are commonly associated with stress, stress management principles and techniques, management of deployment-related stress, the emotional cycle of deployment, in addition to information on points of contact that can be utilized by partners.

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[6] Deploying soldiers may wish to appoint a Casualty Next of Kin. This person will be contacted by the NZDF if the service person is involved in an accident causing serious harm or fatality.

Overall, the resource aims to provide a 'how-to' on dealing with stress, encompassing plans on diet, exercise, breathing exercises, meditation and relaxation techniques. By providing such an extensive tool for building resilience, it allows soldiers and their partners from a variety of backgrounds to pick and choose what strategies work best for them. In doing so, all facets of daily life are explored to ensure that any difficulties experienced by either the deployed soldier or partner are able to be resolved. Not only does the resource draw on academic literature to supplement information provided by Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, but in addition, advice from partners and family members from previous deployments is also included. Together, this resource provides on-hand advice for reducing stressors, and maintaining positive mental and physical health.

Reintegration Following Deployment: Engagement, Enlightenment and Empowerment

The NZDF emphasizes a holistic approach to reintegration following deployment. In *Returning home from deployment: A guide to psychological resilience for personnel and families* (2014), the Te Whare Tapa Whā model of Māori mental health is explained. This model refers to the four cornerstones of health, with each side of the marae or 'house' representing an aspect of wellbeing: Taha Tinana the physical side, Taha Whānau, the family side, Taha Hinengaro, the psychological side and Taha Wairau, the spiritual side (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2014, p. iV). In order for an individual to be in the best health and successfully reintegrate following deployment, it is necessary to balance these four sides, or 'taha'. This model is not solely for use by soldiers, but also for partners. The focus of this model is on addressing issues within an individual's life, deployment related or not, in a holistic manner. Each taha is important to consider in building a well-rounded sense of wellbeing prior to, during, and post-deployment (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2016b, p. V).

Taha Tinana refers to the importance of considering an individual's physical health. Being mindful of exercise routines and diet can play a key role in an individual's overall health on homecoming. The family side to mental health, known as Taha Whānau, denotes the role partners, family, friends and colleagues play in the lives of service members. Having family at home can provide a form of support in successfully moving through the post deployment transition back to life at home. Taha Hinengaro, or the psychological side, refers to an individual's thoughts and feelings on returning home. Setting accurate expectations about what may happen will allow the individual to

reintegrate easily into daily routine. Taha Wairau, the spiritual side to wellbeing, focuses on looking after the spiritual health of the individual in order to feel a sense of belonging upon return. Exploring relationships with people, their environment and heritage can assist a service member in feeling this connection. Information provided in *Returning home from deployment* (2014) provides service members and their partners with information, and a variety of tools to strengthen any aspect to their wellbeing they may need. In the next section, I explore three research projects from the NZDF that studied welfare support.

Previous Research from the NZDF on Welfare Support for Partners

The NZDF has carried out research on the effectiveness of welfare support through the Ministry of Defence and Massey University's Psychology Department. The following discussion is a summary of some of the key findings from the three studies including *Welfare Support for Dependents of Deployed NZDF Personnel* (1996), conducted by the Ministry of Defence, which provides a history of welfare support policies in relation to deployment. Two reports from the Department of Psychology at Massey University are also discussed, which includes *Psychological Effects Of Peacekeeping Deployments on Partners* (1996) and, *A Process Review of Deployment and Psychological Wellbeing in the New Zealand Defence Force* (2015). What is made clear across all three reports is that partners require, in some form or another, support from the NZDF. If this is solely in the form of perceived access to support, it nonetheless plays a key role in the effective adaptation of life during the physical absence of their soldier. Central to this is having effective policies and procedures in place that make this support possible, having welfare and military personnel to deliver support, and facilitating the partner's engagement with the NZDF in knowing how to access such support.

Welfare Support for Dependents of Deployed NZDF Personnel

At the time the report was published in 1996, there was no comprehensive central policy that covered support for families of deployed personnel (Ministry of Defence, 1996, p. 18). Defence Force Orders 4 and 36 contained procedures for compassionate return to New Zealand for personnel deployed overseas, as well as guidelines on frequency of phone calls home. In 1993 the Minister of Defence approved the development of anNZDF Family Policy, which progressed into a NZDF family support policy with the order of priorities including family violence, family support during

deployment, childcare, and spouse employment assistance. As stated previously, because there was not a centrally developed policy at the time of the report, there was a wide divergence of opinion across the NZDF in terms of whose responsibility it was to provide support for partners of deployed personnel. This was complicated by the difference in opinion from partners of what support they expected; some elected to be self-contained and independent, while others needed or expected extensive assistance.

According to the 1996 report, developing a central philosophy of welfare support, would provide a consistent and clear welfare procedure that would ensure peace of mind for deployed personnel, and therefore enhanced operational effectiveness (Ministry of Defence, 1996, p. 19). One of the key recommendations that arose from the report was that the NZDF develop and implement policies, which require standards to be set for the provision of partner support for each deployment, enabling all parties involved to clearly understand the obligations and entitlements of support (Ministry of Defence, 1996, p. 21).

The NZDF has developed progressively to provide support to partners. Support is shared between the command chain and the point of contact (Ministry of Defence, 1996, p. 13). For larger deployments, several points of contact were allotted per Army unit. These personnel provided a link between the Army and the partner of the deployed service person. The degree of success of the point of contact system was principally determined by the effort and commitment of the person whose responsibility it was to provide support to nominated partners. Therefore, the role of the Commanding Officer was key in ensuring that points of contact were fulfilling their task to the best of their ability.

According to the report from the Ministry of Defence, support for partners was also available at Army camps, where the Community Services Officer (CSO) was the first point of contact. The CSO provided a link between the community and the military environment through the working relationship they had between themselves and the chaplains. The chaplains assessed and counseled military personnel and their partners, and where appropriate, offered referrals on to other health and welfare providers (Ministry of Defence, 1996, p. 15). Furthermore, it was important that social workers and chaplains were adequately qualified and trained to provide counseling. In order to meet the expectations on the part of partners, it needed to be made clear what level of

support the NZDF was able to offer. Not only has prior research focused on policy in relation to welfare support, but also the psychological effects of deployment on partners.

Psychological Effects Of Peacekeeping Deployments on Partners

In 1996 the School of Psychology at Massey University undertook a study, sponsored by the NZDF, on the psychological effects of peacekeeping deployments on the partners of service personnel. Partners of New Zealand Army personnel deployed on peacekeeping missions between February 1992 and March 1993 were invited to take part in the study. Using five self-report questionnaires, participants were examined in relation to their mental health status, stress experience, perceived social support, and family functioning during this time (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. vi).

It was found that social support was significantly related to wellbeing (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 55). During deployment, partners indicated moderate levels of satisfaction with NZDF sources of support, the unit point of contact, other members from the deploying person's unit, and friends connected with the military (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 55). It was found that the highest levels of satisfaction came from support offered by family members, and non-military friends.

NZDF Deployment and Psychological Wellbeing Process Review

The most recent study conducted by the School of Psychology, Massey University, involving partners of service personnel was *A Process Review of Deployment and Psychological Wellbeing in the NZDF* (Gardner et al., 2015), Taking a multidimensional approach to data collection, and funded by the NZDF, the report included investigation into NZDF policy and procedure documentation, observation of pre- and post-deployment wellbeing training activities, interviews with serving and former service NZDF members involved in deployments overseas, interviews with NZDF personnel involved in planning and delivery of wellbeing processes, in addition to interviews with previously deployed personnel and their partners. Carrying out thematic analysis of interview transcripts, recommendations for the NZDF were made on the basis of inductive exploration of the themes identified (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 5).

The report found that military partners who cope best with the deployment were those that developed a variety of skills that enhanced resilience, and those who established

strong social support systems (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 142). While some partners had the ability to develop skills independently, it was found that a significant number struggled. Therefore, the NZDF's obligation was to establish deployment support programmes that spanned the entire deployment cycle, and helped partners develop the knowledge and skills that would allow them to successfully manage during a deployment.

Key recommendations were made in the report that would work towards these aims. This included carrying out a 'needs analysis' of differing family groups, to better understand the support required for partners (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 144). In addition, it was also recommended to continue to review Deployment Support Plans to ensure their effectiveness and relevance, and to commence the Deployment Support Plan as soon as soldiers are notified of the deployment. Establishing clear communication between the NZDF and the partners of deploying soldiers was also important, as well as centralizing the approach to the coordination of family support to improve consistency of the delivery of services and better use of resources (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 142). Furthermore, continuing to review processes and policies in terms of communication between the deployed soldier and their partners while on deployment was also a priority, not only to maintain operational security, but to also make sure crises at home did not impact the service person while on operation (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 141).

<u>Conclusion</u>

In this chapter I have provided a description of the New Zealand Army to give context to the organisation that my participant's soldiers are employed by, to gain a sense of the values and principles that the service is grounded in. Although the organisation is a professional and volunteer-based workforce, it still calls on its employees to make sacrifices to family life by deploying overseas for significant spans of time, such as is involved in the deployment to Iraq. Similarly to Enloe's (2000) discussion on the militarization of women's lives, the wellbeing of partners has been impacted by the work that their soldier does, in particular, participating in overseas missions and being physically absent from home.

The step-by-step assessment process for selecting soldiers for overseas deployment has numerous checkpoints to it. Families are provided information and support as early as possible to prepare them for their soldier's physical absence while on deployment. What

this demonstrates is the NZDF's sustained concern and care of not only it's employees, but partners and families also.

Research on the welfare of partners of deployed soldiers carried out by the NZDF was discussed, and showed that New Zealand-specific research should be welcomed in order to improve welfare support offered by the NZDF to partners of deployed soldiers. The review of current Deployment Support Plans was at the core of this research, and showed that to ensure the relevancy and effectiveness of these plans, it was necessary to continue to review how partners received them. Not only is this research able to supplement the three reports from the NZDF, it allows comparisons to be made between how the support is currently received. The next chapter is the first of three data chapters, which begins with the pre-deployment phase. In this chapter I explore how the NZDF prepares partners for the upcoming deployment, including what my participants did to prepare for the time away from their partner.

The Three Phases of Deployment

My analysis is segmented into three parts, which mirror the three phases of deployment: pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. I found that the information collected from the women I interviewed was easily grouped into these three phases, and naturally fell into these groupings. The NZDF also organizes deployment life within its welfare support booklets in this manner. The pre-deployment phase begins as soon as the soldier is notified of their participation overseas, including the time up until their departure from New Zealand. The deployment phase spans the length of time the soldier is overseas, which depends on the length of deployment. For the Iraq deployment, this was six months. The post-deployment phase commences once the soldier is back in New Zealand again. According to the NZDF, for the majority of partners this phase lasts approximately six weeks, however, for others it can continue for several months or longer (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2016b, p. 31). Each of my analysis chapters focuses on one phase of the deployment, which includes anecdotes from the women I interviewed, and literature from the NZDF. I also discuss the presence-absence of soldiers during each of these phases, the impact this has on resilience building, and the role social capital plays in fostering this sense of resilience. To begin with, I look at the pre-deployment phase.

Chapter Five: The Pre-Deployment Phase

The pre-deployment phase marks the beginning of the path to the physical absence of the deploying partner. During this phase he is still physically present, but we see the beginning of psychological absence as he prepares to leave, and his partner prepares for his absence. This may produce stress and problems in the family. In order to reduce the impact of these challenges, the partner at home needs to develop resilience. The New Zealand Army employs strategies to assist with this in various ways, as I discuss in this chapter. By facilitating a network of support, the level of social capital each of the women possesses is strengthened. The women I spoke with told me the most valuable part of the pre-deployment phase centered on the Welfare and Family Service Brief presented by the NZDF to families of deploying partners.

Commonly referred to as the 'family day' or 'family briefing', the Welfare and Family Service Brief is an opportunity for the NZDF to supply families with information and advice on the upcoming overseas deployment. During this family day, families were provided information about the deployment in the form of welfare booklets, they saw pictures of the living quarters that the deploying partner was going to be staying in, and heard from welfare support staff about their role in relation to support. In addition, the women I spoke to heard stories from previously deployed partners, which they reported as being useful, as it allowed them to hear from others who had been in a similar situation. My participants were able to gain a familiarity with where their deploying partner was going to be living, which added to a sense of connection between themselves and the deployment location.

Bringing NZDF families together, and introducing NZDF welfare support staff to families, formed a sense of community between these members. Social connectedness is encouraged through the family briefing by developing this all-encompassing community. This raises the level of social capital possessed by its members, by enabling them access to information and support. A sense of being part of a community develops, along with a feeling that partners left at home are not alone with the absence of their deploying partner. In turn, resilience develops within these members, which makes the next phase of deployment easier to cope with, despite the upcoming deploying partner's absence.

I begin this chapter with a description of the pre-deployment briefing given by the NZDF to the families of deploying partners. This section includes how the briefing made by the

NZDF came about, and what the NZDF presents to families on the day. From my interviews with the Deployment Services Officer (DSO), the NZDF chaplains, and NZDF psychologists, I explore their roles during the family briefing, as well as introduce key military staff such as the Senior National Officer (SNO) and the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) who accompanies the deploying partner overseas. All of the NZDF staff mentioned play a key role in relation to the deployment. It is important to understand what is offered in terms of support by the NZDF, to see what support my participants used. This will allow comparisons to be made between what my participants utilized, versus what was offered. A significant site of social capital accrual was seen at the pre-deployment briefing presented by the NZDF, where the process of networking was performed. This enabled the women I interviewed to begin to establish a network of support for themselves, which in turn provided an initial building-up of resilience. Developing resilience allowed my participants to not only prepare for their partner's absence during deployment, but to flourish during it.

The Pre-Deployment Briefing for Partners and Families

Prior to the pre-deployment briefing, my participants were notified by their deploying family member of their forthcoming participation in Iraq. Similarly, Gardner et al. (2015, p. 130) stated that families received the majority of information relevant to them as part of the pre-deployment process through the deploying partner. This is important to note as the authors stated in their report that the deploying partner may not be the best person to provide timely and useful information to the family. It was understandable for practical and convenience reasons to do this, however, given the nature of pre-deployment activities, such as pre-deployment training and the tension that has been found to rise in the relationship during this time, this may not be the best strategy.

The pre-deployment briefing given to families first came about in 1994 with the New Zealand Government's participation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as part of the New Zealand Army's support for the United Nations Protection Force (New Zealand Defence Force, 2015a, p. 1). This was the first company-sized group of approximately one hundred personnel deployed at once since the Vietnam War (*"The Vietnam War"*, 2016, p. 4). It was important to provide families with an awareness of what the mission was, why the New Zealand Army was involved, and the support mechanisms in place for the families. In order for their personnel to function well while on deployment, it was important that the NZDF looked after its people and their families, by providing as much information as

they could. Although I was unable to attend a family day, I was able to reconstruct what happened from my interviews with NZDF welfare support staff, and from my participants who attended.

For this Iraq mission, the Deployment Services Officers (DSOs) toured across New Zealand to reach families. Briefings in Auckland, Linton and Burnham were carried out for the current mission so that families did not need to travel far. The briefings took place relatively close to the time of departure of the service person, approximately four weeks before deployment, as was the case for the past three years. For the majority of personnel leaving from Linton, which is where all of my participants were based at the time of the deployment, the VC Elliot club was used. This large complex at Linton Camp includes a sports bar, conference room, café and barber. The Linton Military Camp commander at the time, Colonel Hugh McAslan stated the club's intent was to be "the absolute hub of not only our serving young soldiers, but also their families" (Eade, 2015, p. 1). This provided a relaxed environment that families were familiar with, while allowing presentations to be supported with access to a projector, and nibbles and light refreshments to be shared by NZDF staff, the deploying service personnel, and their friends and family.

The 'family day' is an opportunity for partners to receive briefings around the expectations associated with the deployment (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 130). As noted already, families and deployed partners from previous missions were also given an opportunity to speak during the day. The content and format of the day are the same from year to year. Changes depend on how much time is available, and who can attend to give presentations. Typically, the Deployment Services Officer (DSO) speaks, in addition to a NZDF psychologist, the Senior National Officer (SNO) and the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM). The day was seen by the NZDF as, "an important opportunity for partners to build relationships with each other and thus establish an additional social support network to that offered by the military" (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 130).

Briefings such as the family day have been shown to lower levels of family stress, as well as develop more effective coping patterns within families (Prakash et al., 2011, p. 61). In Prakash et al.'s review of literature on the families of soldiers and other paramilitary forces deployed in operation situations, families coped better with deployment-related stressors when an increase in contact was made with others in a similar position (Prakash et al., 2011, p. 61). The NZDF's family brief provides the opportunity for

partners to meet others in the same situation, which has the potential to offer a form of support that lowers stressors through the sharing of experiences. In the next section, the role of the Deployment Services Officer will be explored, as she is a key member of the welfare support network.

The Deployment Services Officer

The Deployment Services Officer (DSO) played a major role in running the family day. The DSO is an intermediary between partners and the deploying soldier. During my interview with the DSO, she stated her role was introduced into the NZDF in early 2000. Working tri-service, the DSO engages with New Zealand Army, the Royal New Zealand Navy and the Royal New Zealand Air Force families who have a partner participating in land-based missions overseas. There are two DSOs based across the NZDF, one at Linton for the North Island and another in Burnham for the South Island. Their role is to provide advice and support for families, including information about coffee groups, babysitting services, and recommendations on how to become more involved in the community. Their contact number is available to families twenty-four hours, seven days a week, which allows families to ring whenever they have questions, or when they need to send urgent messages through to the deployment location. According to the DSO:

> You can guarantee a family crisis is going to happen in the middle of the night, or on the weekend, or families will get home from work and think 'oh, I need to ring the DSO and ask what the mailing address is', or, 'I'm not having a particularly good day I need someone to talk to'…any of those sorts of things.

The DSO's role also includes producing *The Bugle*, a monthly publication distributed to people who have a family member or friend deployed. The NZDF's aim with the publication is to "keep you informed about what is happening and provide you with an opportunity to send and receive messages, to and from home" (New Zealand Defence Force, n.d., p. 1). Both DSOs pool as much information as they can for the magazine, and encourage deployed personnel and families to send messages in to be included in the issues. Also included are notices on family events occurring on camp, and articles from NZDF staff on overseas missions. The DSO based at Linton said she tries to look at it from a family perspective and include things they might be interested in reading, which might be deployment related, or from the DSO's personal lives:

We might be doing spring-cleaning or anything that might be of interest or humorous just to lift the articles a bit...but for me personally, because I'm a military wife and a military mum, so both my husband and my son have been away on missions, I draw a lot from my personal experience as well as the stuff we do from within this role.

If the NZDF is deploying a large group overseas, the DSOs go wherever the families congregate. This means they appear first at the family day, then on base when families say goodbye to their deploying partner before they board buses to be taken to where they fly out of New Zealand from. They are also at the family dinners in the mess, and again when the personnel return from overseas.

For the pre-deployment briefing, the DSO wants to make sure that families know the people who are there for them during the deployment:

One of the things about these briefings is they get to know who we are. They put a face to the name. We can have a chat either at the briefings or ring up, because they know who they're talking to. So you start that relationship and then they're more likely to give you a call, and try and take away the fact that I'm not a scary person.

Being able to go into a deployment location in 2010 allowed the two DSOs to experience what deployment life was like for military personnel. This enabled the DSO based at Linton to collect original stories of the experience. The DSO stated, as opposed to "having to use other people's anecdotes or photos we could say 'this is what it was like, this is what I noticed when I first got off the plane and this is what I saw', and it was just great". Not only does the DSO bridge the divide between the deployment location and the families at home, the Senior National Officer and the Regimental Sergeant Major also play a role, particularly during the pre-deployment briefing.

The Senior National Officer and Regimental Sergeant Major

The Senior National Officer (SNO) also speaks at the family briefing, and deploys with the New Zealand contingent as part of the ANZAC Task Group in Iraq. The NZDF staff member I interviewed who provided background information to me on the deployment, stated the SNO holds the duty of reporting back to the NZDF on the progress of the

mission, in addition to looking after the group in the deployment location. During the family briefing the SNO provides a situation brief on what is going on in the country in relation to the environment, culture, and military climate they will be entering. They also reassure families about the security and safety of their loved ones, the camp environment, and the layers of security on camp.

The Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) supports the SNO by looking after the welfare of soldiers, in addition to being in charge of discipline for the New Zealand contingent. These two NZDF personnel introduce themselves at the family day to give families the chance to put a face to a name, so that they know who will be looking after their deploying service person while they are overseas. Another member of the NZDF who talks at the family day are the chaplains.

The NZDF Chaplain Service

The NZDF chaplaincy provides pastoral care to all serving military personnel and their families. Their role within the NZDF involves providing spiritual and pastoral care of personnel, fostering the development of relationships, being an informal liaison between families and the unit, and offering a listening ear and confidential advisor (New Zealand Defence Force, 2015c, p. 1). Being trained in counseling techniques and suicide prevention, chaplains are able to relate effectively with a diverse range of people, making them easy to approach and talk to with any issues (Defence Careers, 2018). If the chaplain is unable to assist the individual with their concern, they are able to refer them on to others within the NZDF who may be more suitable.

At the family day the chaplain starts the day's briefing with an opening prayer. They then outline their role within the NZDF and what they can offer in terms of support. None of my participants discussed using the chaplaincy service during the deployment, as they drew on other support avenues such as friends, family, or the DSO. However, it is still important to note the role the chaplains play, as this service may have appealed to other partners I did not interview. Another NZDF member who remains close to the deploying service person is the NZDF psychologist.

The NZDF Psychologist

The NZDF psychologists deliver a presentation on the psychological aspects of deployment at the family briefing, including an outline of the emotional cycle of deployment, a note on how children may react to the deployment, and the support and resources offered by NZDF psychologists. This provides an account of what could potentially happen during the deployment, and how problems can be avoided or resolved.

The key aim of the psychologist's brief is to highlight the reality of deployment life for the deploying partner and family. From my interview with an NZDF psychologist, he stated that having a family member leave for a number of months is likely to result in extra responsibilities, an increase in workloads and the added stress of having loved ones overseas. The psychologist's goal for the brief, therefore, is to help families set accurate expectations about the deployment and encourage them to start planning and developing resilience, which the psychologist's brief includes strategies on.

The NZDF psychologists stress that at any stage of the deployment process families may need help, which they urge them to seek. Families are able to access an array of free services which they remind families includes the DSO, welfare facilitators such as social workers, and psychologists. The psychologists also stated that reaching out for support will not affect the deployability of the service person. The emphasis that is placed on the psychologist's briefing is that any reaction to deployment is normal, and that there is not one way of reacting. Recognizing how individuals feel and then trying to shift those thoughts into a positive way is central to managing stress or discomfort that the deployment may bring with it. The NZDF psychologist I spoke with emphasised that the family day is a good opportunity to meet others in a similar situation:

> Part of this is to also meet others on the deployment. It's not necessarily that people are going to do all that stuff, but if they can do one or two things that is going to work for them and make stuff easier to get over those little disturbances, that helps.

The NZDF psychologists offer additional avenues of support for both deploying partners and families if they require external referrals for issues around the deployment. In the past this was demonstrated in setting up support for a family struggling with the

deployment who had concerns with their children, which required additional help. Having discussed the NZDF welfare support staff, I now consider what my participants made of the family day.

<u>Reaction from Partners of the Family Briefing</u>

For the women I interviewed, two of the key benefits that came from the pre-deployment briefing was gaining a familiarity with the deployment location, and being able to network with NZDF welfare support staff and other families involved in the deployment. Through the process of networking, families involved in the deployment were able to accrue social capital, as a network of support could be established. This created an initial building up of resilience, which made the deployment phase easier to cope with for the women I interviewed, despite their partner's absence.

<u>Gaining Familiarity With the Deployment Location</u>

Rebecca found it useful seeing videos of the camp her partner would be based in, as it enabled her see the living conditions and what life was going to be like while overseas. This assisted her in gaining an idea of what the environment was going to be like for her husband.

Gill appreciated the opportunity to meet other partners in a similar situation to herself, and to also:

> Have the Defence Force's kind of line on it to hear from some of the people who had returned from the previous deployment, talk about their experiences and kind of see the environment they were going into.

Hearing about where they would be living and their day-to-day life was something Helen appreciated about the briefing, "because it's so extreme, you can't imagine what it looks like. So hearing that and seeing pictures of their food hall, you can imagine where they are and what they're doing. I found that helped".

Mel said that her partner downplayed his military life to his parents, because that is what most people do with their families. He said:

Because you don't want to say to your family 'I'm going somewhere so dangerous, we'd better have a big hug now because I don't know if I'll be coming home'. So I think it's easier to go 'nah it'll be fine, we'll be in a camp'.

Mel's partner's parents were glad to be able to attend the briefing and ask questions they had. Mel stated:

I can understand that when they ask him a question he'll be like 'oh it's no big deal', and they'll be like 'I don't know if he's telling me the truth, I'll go to the information day and somebody will tell me'. I think both his parents felt a lot better being able to ask questions that their kids weren't just going to be like 'oh shut up mum you're making a big deal out of nothing'. At least they were going to get an answer.

According to Jordan, "it's better to have more information than not enough…it's kind of good to ask the questions you want". The families of soldiers deploying for the first time, such as parents and siblings, haven't had the day-to-day talking about the trip as Jordan had. Her partner had already been on two other deployments before his Iraq mission. It came as a surprise to her when she realized, "oh I actually know quite a bit about what's going on and what to expect rather than these people who are sending away their sons for the first time who have got absolutely no understanding".

The family day offers a holistic approach to support for parnters in the form of being both informative, by showing photos and videos of the deployment location and camp, as well supportive, by allowing partners to meet with one another and begin the process of networking.

Networking

The NZDF stated that the pre-deployment briefing for families is a key time for partners to meet one another and build relationships before their deploying partner's absence overseas.

Rebecca said there was a wide variety of support available to her, and she appreciated being able to put faces to names of the DSO, psychologists, and Senior National Officer as

a result of attending the family day. Helen also found the briefing very informative. Although she already worked in the Linton community area, she said:

> I made sure that I was aware of anything that was going on for my own personal perspective…I guess you know it's always going to happen to you at some point so you're always talking to people whose partners are deployed, getting their perspective before it happens to you.

In one of the interviews conducted by Gardner et al. (2015), one individual stated that his partner already knew others from work before the deployment, but if a family were new to the organisation, or geographically isolated, as was the case with Anna, forming relationships might be more difficult. Anna found that she did not feel as if the families were going to be supported. She told me it relied heavily on how much the deploying partner passed on to their family. With Anna being based in Waiouru, there was not a local DSO to get in touch with. The responsibility therefore passed on to the Community Services Officer (CSO). Although she still had someone near her to reach out to, she thought the military would only help her in a crisis:

> So in a crisis, totally. They would be on the ball. If somebody died and we needed to contact my husband, they would do that. Or if something happened to him they would let me know immediately. But the kind of stories the DSOs would tell you in their chitchat were the same stories I'd heard previously for the Afghan tour. Nothing had changed in their briefing. And it made me feel like 'you haven't updated anything, you haven't moved on, things are different now'.

Using the family day to introduce everyone to each other, such as Anna did, helped her establish a support network for herself. Because the majority of families were all living in Linton or Burnham, Anna knew that there was not going to be anything for her out in Waiouru where she and her family were living. This is similar to the challenges mentioned in Jennings-Kelsall et al. (2012, p. 375) research. The authors stated that many of the Marine Corps wives in their study also experienced feeling frustrated, as they were unable to have control and certainty with their social network. The frequent moving of the household to different bases across the country inhibited this control.

Anna needed to create the support for herself. According to Gardner et al., "a number of more established [NZDF] service families were able to self-initiate a variety of processes

to provide the necessary support during their partner's absence and this led to positive adaptation" (2015, p. 136). As Anna's husband had been in the Army for several years, and their relationship had always involved the NZDF and deployment, Anna was comfortable in seeking out the support she would need during deployment. The everyday support she would get from others in a similar situation she knew would be difficult to gain, because she was not connected to others. She used the 'buddy system' to help her form this network. This is a cooperative arrangement where the women she paired up with assumed responsibility for one another's welfare. Anna had met two of the women sitting near her during the briefing before, but did not know them very well. She "adopted them as buddies". Because her husband was going as a senior instructor, she felt a certain responsibility to make the deployment work for her:

> I felt a little bit of responsibility to have it together and know how to deal with this, and know how to support other people. He was their boss, and if I couldn't cope, the boss' wife couldn't cope, how are these people who have never had a partner away going to cope? It was pressure, and people said to me 'oh it was all self-imposed pressure', and I'm like 'well it was still there though'. I didn't purposefully do it, but I did feel because obviously I am his wife, and everybody knew who I was, I did feel a lot of pressure to cope with it, to be a good role for 'this is how you could do it'.

She gave these women her phone number and told them that she was going to be their deployment buddy. Anna sent text messages on the odd occasion to talk about life, sent them a card at the halfway mark of the deployment, and shared baking. Having a way to connect with other people was helpful for Anna, because she found that when she helped others see the silver lining in situations, it lifted herself up at the same time. This echoes Cafferly and Shi's (2015) findings of military wives of U.S. personnel deployed overseas using connection-seeking practices to meet the challenges of deployment life. Spending time with neighbors or friends who asked how their husbands were doing, allowing them space to vent and release frustrations brought out by the deployment, reinforced a feeling of connectedness to others in the absence of spouses (Cafferky & Shi, 2015, p. 290). This demonstrates the collective aspect to the accrual social capital. Social connections do not amass to one individual, but rather to the group that Anna engaged with. Social capital increases as a result of the interactions these women have with one another, which in turn develops a community level resilience.

Resources For Partners: What My Participants Made of Them

In regards to the resources provided during the pre-deployment briefing, they were found to be useful in different ways to each of the women I interviewed. In Mel's opinion, the books on deployment and the family day were written for "mums and dads, or people who don't have any inside knowledge". She therefore did not use them during the deployment. However, Mel did read the information regarding reintegration before her partner returned home, as this had been an issue for herself and a previous partner:

> I've seen so many couples break up after they spend seven or eight months apart. And the person at home has this mean as routine going on and then the other person, especially if they've got kids, comes in and tries to get in there…so we spoke a lot about it before he got home about striking the right balance between still having some alone time and hanging out together was important.

Knowledge about the emotional stages of deployment, and what might be potentially felt throughout the deployment were important for Jordan and Leah to learn about. Jordan stated, "when you're hitting different stages of that you can kind of go 'oh yeah this stage will pass'". Leah was reassured to know what to expect, which the resources helped outline. She found the booklets for children useful, as she'd never had children during her husband's prior deployments. It was useful for her to have the information for each of her children, to go through and read through it.

Conclusion

One of the key events that emerged from the pre-deployment phase was the significance of the family briefing delivered by the NZDF. The women I interviewed were able to meet NZDF welfare support staff, gain information in the form of presentations and resources such as welfare booklets, as well as meet other families who were also about to experience the absence of their deploying family member. Meeting key welfare support staff such as the DSO, NZDF psychologists and chaplains, allowed my participants to be introduced to the support network the Army offered. They learned that if they were having problems during the deployment, these members of staff could be contacted. Furthermore, being able to see where their deploying partners would be staying, allowed the women to form a connection to the deployment location. Meeting

NZDF staff such as the SNO and RSM who would be accompanying their deploying partner overseas enhanced this connection further.

The narrative sharing that came as a result of previously deployed partners and families speaking at the family day was something that the women I interviewed found to be comforting. This engagement from other members within the social group exhibits how social capital is boosted in its members. The goal of this engagement from previously deployed partners and their families promotes the quality of the community by reassuring families that they can be resilient to the hardships of deployment life, with the physical absence of their deploying family member.

Hearing from other families who had been through the deployment, and enabling families to meet other military families, are examples of building forms of social capital. This emphasizes networks that are outward looking and include people across social divide (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Allowing people who live in different areas, such as families living in a town from a variety of social backgrounds to connect, promotes social capital within its members. Establishing connections to others in similar circumstances increase social capital, which builds resilience. Community resilience is accrued as a collective, where social networks converge to mitigate the stress of outside impacts, such as the stress deployment can potentially bring. The family briefing allows these women to come together and to form a network for which resilience is nurtured within. In the next chapter I explore what worked well for the women I interviewed during the physical absence of their deploying partner, as well as some of the challenges that arose during the deployment phase.

Chapter Six: The Deployment Phase

The deployment phase for the mission to Iraq spans six to seven months. This chapter focuses on that period, and the experiences of my participants during this time. What I found was that the women I talked to spoke about how the physical absence of their deployed soldier impacted their day-to-day routine. They used deployment allowances to help ease the strain of maintaining a household by themselves, in addition to reaching out to family and friends for help and companionship. By seeking out connections with others, my participants were able to accrue social capital, by forming a network of support for themselves within their group of family and friends. As a result of this increase in social capital, my participants were able to be resilient to the challenges that the deployment phase brought out.   This included the trials of solo parenting, physical isolation from their partner, and added household responsibilities. The majority of my participants had the ability to overcome these challenges and discover personal strengths within themselves.

Facilitating the connection-seeking practices of my participants with their deployed soldier, communication played a central theme to the women's discussions. This was primarily carried out through regular conversations made possible through instant messaging, phone calls and video calls. Feeling as if their partner were still part of the household and kept informed of what was going on was key in keeping soldiers emotionally present, although physically absent during the deployment. Social capital was developed through the use of this technology, which can be a form of 'virtual' capital. In this regard, social capital is accrued by the members who participate within this interaction. In this case, although geographically separated, the family network could be maintained between the deployed soldier and their partner at home.

The deployment phase is also characterized by the networks of association that each of my participants engaged in. My participants attended events such as the deployment dinners and unit-organized social gatherings, and reached out to other military families and friends during this phase. In this sense, the New Zealand Army can be identified as a social group, as the networks of association are grounded within the military. These bonding forms of social capital, where an overall companionship of shared experiences within the group is gained by assembling at events such as the family dinners, give an overall solidarity to the network. In contrast to the military-focused network, Anna established her own network in Waiouru when she did not feel she had one. Reaching

out to other women she had met at the family day allowed her to form her own network of association, which bridged the geographical isolation she had from the majority of the community based at Linton.

This chapter is segmented into two parts. The first half provides context to some of the services offered by the NZDF during the deployment phase, so that I am able to relate it to how my participant's used these services in the second half of the chapter. I begin with a description of the financial assistance given to partners of deployed soldiers, to understand what the NZDF's objectives are in providing such assistance during the soldier's deployment. I then explain the deployment dinners hosted by the NZDF, and what the Unit Point of Contact and the Deployment Services Officer's roles are during this time, to highlight how previous partners of deployed soldiers have experienced the deployment phase. I then move into the second half of the chapter, which focuses on my participants' experiences during the deployment. I begin with how my participants used their allowances, before moving into a discussion on some of the themes of the deployment phase that emerged from my interviews with these women. This includes how technology allowed for better communication between the deployed soldiers and partners, the role of friendships and social networks, and how the timing of the deployment impacted my participants. I then discuss the support that partners utilized from the NZDF and how they played a role in resilience building. To conclude, the challenges of a soldier's absence during deployment will be discussed.

Financial Assistance for Partners of Deployed Soldiers

The purpose of the financial assistance provided to deployed soldiers by the NZDF is to provide them and their partners with the financial means of employing extra services that may be needed in the absence of the deployed soldier. Also referred to as 'deployment allowances', this type of financial assistance is given to all military personnel posted overseas. The amount is based on the level of risk that the deployed soldier is in while they are overseas (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2017, p. 24).

The *Deployment Guide for Families* (2017) suggest that deploying soldiers and their families should not commit to any investment purchases based on the intended allowances received while on deployment (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2017, p. 24). If circumstances change, such as the service person returning home early

from deployment, or changing deployment locations, allowances may be reduced, therefore affecting investment purchases. Not only does financial assistance support partners during deployment, but so too do the deployment dinners hosted by the NZDF.

Deployment Dinners for Partners and Families

The family dinners hosted by the NZDF provide a way for partners and families of deployed service personnel to connect with one another during deployment. In each issue of *The Bugle* a section is dedicated to informing readers of upcoming events in and around camp, including an invitation to attend a dinner in camp at one of the military bases across New Zealand. Dinners are typically held in the Junior Rank's mess in Linton camp, the Community Hub in Burnham, and the Main Mess at Trentham. These are held approximately monthly, and are advertised as a night off cooking, "low key, no speeches or presentations, no mess, no fuss" (New Zealand Defence Force, 2017, p. 27). Some of the women I interviewed attended these family dinners. Not only does the NZDF offer deployment dinners to partners, a Unit Point of Contact is also organized for them during the soldier's absence on deployment.

Unit Point of Contact's Role During Deployment

The Unit Point of Contact (UPOC) is a member of the soldier's unit that is appointed for that person's family during deployment (Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand, 2017). The UPOC is a member of the team established to support deployed personnel and their families. The level of contact of each UPOC has with a service person's Primary Next of Kin differs from case to case, depending on the wishes of the family.

During our interview Anna stated that it would help to nominate a specific point of contact from the NZDF who would notify families of a critical incident. Anna said she would have appreciated having someone she had designated to tell her if her partner was injured. In her view:

> Sometimes that point of contact is someone you don't know very well. If you're new to a unit or new to a location, the point of contact may be someone you don't even know. I think that's something there could be improved. That point of contact person would be good if they had some guidelines of what they're meant to do or how they could be more supportive. I've had some people say their

point of contact was brilliant, some people say they never heard from them. But what is their job? I chose my point of contact with my husband and that's how I think it should be, but if you don't know anyone or if you're new it's hard to do. The first time he went away the point of contact was someone I didn't know very well, and they never rang me, and that was fine because I didn't really care. But this time I chose somebody I'd see on a weekly basis and they wouldn't have to ring me up I'd see them anyway kind of thing…So the point of contact role is sort of confusing. What is that person's job?

Anna stated because you can contact your partner quite regularly on the Iraq deployment, and the DSO's role is to be there for in an emergency, the role the Point of Contact played was uncertain. Anna stipulated:

They are a point of contact but maybe they could be there for more of a support role, rather than as a contact person. If that is what their role is then they need to do it. Also be given time to do it by their bosses. If they're going to take an extra long lunch hour to meet you as a support person then they should be allowed to do that. Making sure that whatever their job is means they can fulfill both, because everyone in the Army seems to be doing a job and a half.

Not only is the Unit Point of Contact a key member of the NZDF during deployment for partners, but so too is the Deployment Services Officer.

Support from the Deployment Services Officer During Deployment

The Deployment Services Officers aim to provide as much information as they can about the deployment, and what support is available to families before the service person is sent overseas. The DSO works in combination with support offered by the service person's unit colleagues and friends, chaplains, field psychologists, as well as the family's friends to provide a holistic approach to support during the deployment. In the DSO's opinion:

We just put it out there, we've got lots and lots of support available to you, but we don't have a crystal ball so you actually need to put up your hand and say 'I'm not doing so well today'. Even if it's just to sound off, or we can refer people through for counseling. Our field psychs aren't clinical psychs, but we do have a

fund where if families with children aren't coping, we can send them through for psych support. They can see a counselor in town outside of the military, we don't have clinical psychs in the military so they are referred out. Initially they get funded for four sessions, and then if the clinical psych thinks they need more they just come back to the corporation and say 'hey we need to do a few more', and they generally say yes.

The support offered by the DSO begins early in the deployment, as soon as families are made aware of the DSO's role. One example that the DSO mentioned was a young woman, newly married to her deployed spouse, who reached out to the DSO for help:

She came here about three months before the deployment and said 'I'm not going to make it, I just can't see myself coping'. Her family weren't here, she didn't have a job so she didn't have friends, she didn't live in the housing area, she lived a little bit south of here, so she just said 'I just can't do it'. But she's looking towards the end. I said 'look, just break it up into small chunks, take it one day at a time. Join a club, connect with other young people on this deployment', and she did amazingly well. She surprised herself. She made friends with a wife of another guy who was on the same mission, and she came down to the family briefing in Trentham. She didn't even know how to get to Trentham, so I said 'look I'm going at this time, I'll stop by and you can follow me'. She didn't have any self confidence, but I said 'look, we've got a big university out there, we've got UCOL in town, broaden your horizons. There's lots of clubs you can be part of. Go and see the Citizens Advice Bureau, they'll give you lots of clubs and sports you can do in the area'. She actually ended up joining a gymnasium where she made friends with this girl. She came to all our dinners, she met up with her husband overseas. She made that trip all by herself and made it there. She came in about a month after he was back and she was just beaming. I said 'just do it in little chunks, don't look to the end of the deployment. You know, look to Easter, look to Anzac Day. Every time you put out the rubbish that's another week down, every time the Bugle arrives in your letterbox it's another month done'. She was amazing.

Reaching out to the DSO during deployment also allows the DSO to get in touch with who best to pass the family on to, depending on their concern. Another example the DSO recalled was helping out a new mother while her partner was overseas:

I just put my number out there and say 'hey, look give me a call we'll see what we can do'. I mean because I'm only one person, and a lot of the time I can just take the information, go back to a unit and say 'hey look, so and so is eight months pregnant and needs help doing the gardens'. And then they've got people they can just send around to do that or those sorts of things. So the units are still responsible for the families here so they can chip in and do those sorts of things. We had someone in Ashurst who had a huge storm and the fence fell down and the dog ran away, so she was part of the engineers and the guys put the fence back up and corralled the dog. So long as we know what's going on there's generally a solution. We can usually find a solution to most things.

The DSO can be a first point of contact to families with any questions or concerns they have relating to their service person's deployment, given her twenty-four hour, seven days a week phone line for families to call. The DSO stated that the families she helps appreciate this:

Families are grateful for what we do on the whole, you can't please everyone all the time. So we say to families 'put our 0800 number in your phone. You probably won't need to ring us, but we're just a touch of a button away'. But most of the calls we get are 'oh I'm in the post shop and I can't remember the addresses', things like that. Don't really appreciate those calls at three o'clock in the morning, but anything else...they could send a text or an email to deal with it later but you know, it happens. It's a good job and I believe in what Defence do...that we do make a difference because of our nature. I think we do make a difference in these deployment regions. I think our families do deserve to be supported up to a certain level. We're not here to live their lives for them as I said, but we do as much as we can.

Overall, the DSO acts as a first point of contact, and is able to provide families with advice on both small and large matters relating to the daily life of a military family.

This section highlights the support the NZDF offers to families during deployment. Although the soldier is physically absent, the NZDF attempts to reduce the strain brought on by the soldier's physical absence by providing financial support to be used by the partner at home in any way that will suit them. In addition, the NZDF uses the

DSO and the Unit Point of Contact for partners to reach out to if they need information or help. This network of NZDF staff is available to partners, which provides a means of gaining social capital through the interactions made between partners and NZDF staff. The deployment dinners further provide an opportunity for partners to meet with welfare support staff, in addition to other partners and families. By fostering a network of support, social capital is accrued by these individuals, which builds resilience and makes the physical absence of the deployed soldier easier to manage. In the next section, I discuss what my participants made of the deployment allowances.

How Partners Used Their Deployment Allowances

Many of the women I interviewed discussed the changes that occurred within their household during the deployment phase, which centered on the use of deployment allowances to help pay for extra services within the home. This section discusses the ways in which two of my participants, Jordan and Anna, used them within their household.

Jordan

Jordan employed a cleaner, a person to mow the lawns, and a babysitter every fortnight while her husband was on deployment. She said that she prepared all these things before her husband left, because as she said:

> Waiting until you realize you need a break is too late. I had discovered on the previous deployment that waiting until you realize you need a break is too late. You want to have things in place so it's relatively straightforward, not necessarily enjoyable, but so that your life carries on. I think lots of people approach it like they have to get through that period, which is exhausting and not much fun. And the two little kids were still at preschool, and my oldest daughter was in year one, so we had things like long weekends and I just skipped out of school and we made the most of it, just being the four of us, and there are no real commitments. We weren't tied to my husband being on leave or not. If we wanted to go out and do stuff, we could.

Allowances in Jordan's opinion were "designed to assist with things while that person isn't around". Her husband's view of the allowances was that the money was there to

make life easier, so it should be put towards things within the household that would help make daily life run smoothly. Jordan learnt from a previous deployment to put things in place and later remove them if need be, rather than reaching a breaking point, as, "it's easier to have a few things in place and get rid of them if you need to rather than getting to a point where the extra support is needed and you're already losing your mind". This confirms what MacDonald et al. (1996) found to be one of the challenges of deployment life. Having to balance work, housework, and free time, was found to be stressful for wives of New Zealand Army personnel during deployment (MacDonald et al., 1996, p. 51). When partners were required to handle tasks normally carried out by their spouse, such as mowing the lawns and parenting by herself in Jordan's case, it potentially could add to the heightened pressure felt by the partner at home. The physical absence of Jordan's partner was felt in this context, where Jordan was attempting to parent by herself, while also picking up extra duties that her husband normally did. This aligns with what MacDonald et al. (1996, p. 53) found in wives of New Zealand Army personnel deployed on peacekeeping missions in the early 1990s. Wives experienced an increase in stress levels with managing the solo care of children.

Having the flexibility to take on new roles and responsibilities in order to manage the absence of a partner mirrors what Baptist et al. (2011) found in new mothers of U.S. military personnel. The ability to discover their capabilities and develop their self-confidence during the deployment came as a result of taking on these new roles (Baptist et al., 2011, p. 209). This confirms Grace and Wells' (2015) research on the 'steeling of life' for resilience building. Despite these challenges, Jordan continued to find her way through deployment although challenges presented themselves. Exposure to these stressors of single parenting and added household tasks, and successful mediation of these challenges had steeling effects on Jordan.

Anna

Similarly to Jordan, during her husband's deployment Anna hired household services such as an au pair to help out with the children at busy times during the day, and as a precaution in case Anna got sick. She remembered thinking, when her husband said he had been nominated:

> Immediately my mind switches to 'how am I going to do this? I'm in Waiouru completely away from my family. I don't have any extended family because

they're all in the South Island'. So we don't get help from our extended family often so it's a big ask to do that, so it was like 'should I move home? What would that entail moving the children again? We've only just moved to Waiouru'. I knew I'd be able to cope on my own, but I wouldn't enjoy it. It'd be hard work, and the thing that always gets people first is fatigue. You just get worn out. I don't know how single parents do it, it's exhausting. So you have to work out quickly how you're going to spend some of that money to make your life easier.

Like Jordan, Anna wanted the deployment to run smoothly with the physical absence of her husband. She wanted to make the most of the time while her husband was away. She talked to people about not surviving the deployment, but rather living the deployment:

I wanted to live the deployment not just get through the deployment. I actually wanted to enjoy it as much as I could, find ways to enjoy it. They're given extra money while they're away, and a lot of people see that as 'oh I can buy a new car'. There's lots of very sensible ways to use that money, there are also lots of sensible ways to use the money to make it easier on the people at home, whether you get a cleaner or whether or not you employ someone to look after your children after school, whether or not you go on a family holiday.

Anna's response to her husband's nomination of going on deployment embodies Davis et al.'s (2011) concept of 'normalizing the rollercoaster'. One of the themes that emerged from their research was that wives' experience of deployment was felt as an emotional rollercoaster (Davis et al., 2011, p. 51). Contradictory emotions were felt during this time including loss, powerlessness, happiness and stress. Embracing the highs with the lows provided an opportunity to find what worked for these women, and for Anna also. The loss of her partner, the stress of solo parenting, but the happiness that came with opportunities to gain a helping hand such as a cleaner, or go on a family holiday echo Davis et al.'s peaks and troughs of deployment life. Anna's focus on not only surviving the deployment, but enjoying the process resonates with the concept of 'normalizing the rollercoaster'. It also demonstrates the nature of resilience. The process of capacity building and successful adaptation to thrive in everyday life, although in the presence of stressors, shows that resilience has the potential to grow from difficult situations. When difficult circumstances are worked through and resolved, it fosters a level of resilience in individuals. Not only did my participants mention the use of deployment allowances, they also spoke about other practices that helped them cope during the deployment.

<u>Helping Partners Cope During the Deployment</u>

Each of the women I interviewed recalled certain aspects during the deployment that helped them manage the physical absence of their deployed soldier. This section discusses the use of technology, and how it allowed for better communication between my participants and their deployed soldier, the friendships and social networks that partners talked about having during the deployment, as well as the timing of their soldier's deployment and how for some of them it suited them well.

<u>Technology Allowing for Better Communication</u>

An idea that was frequently discussed was the amount of communication that was available to my participants. The *NZDF Deployment and Psychological Wellbeing Process Review* (2015, p. 133) states that communication between the service, the service member and the family is key in keeping the service member psychologically present, while being physically absent. Enhanced communication has been shown to have "a very positive impact on morale and family support for many service members" (Gardner et al., 2015, p. 133).

Leah appreciated the amount of contact she was able to make in the form of Skype, Facebook Messenger and through the parcel system compared to her husband's previous deployment. In this way her husband had an emotional presence during the deployment, which had not occurred before for his other deployments.

The amount of communication Anna had with her husband also included Skype access everyday, messaging through Facebook Messenger, which was only restricted by when her husband could reply to her after work, in addition to her husband having regular access to a phone in order to call home. In the past Anna said it had been a six-minute phone call home once a week, whereas now the level of communication changed the deployment for her. Having the DSO's talk about not worrying your partner if the washing machine broke down aggravated Anna:

> I'm like, 'you're basically telling me that I have to deal with everything on my own, and only tell them if it's massive and I can't deal with it'. It was kind of like 'suck it up, get on with it', and that was really insulting.

Because communication was so readily available, Anna didn't feel she needed to hide her emotions or feelings, she could be honest with her husband and open about how she was feeling. She said:

> I think that is a much healthier approach than with the previous Afghan tour, because you only had a six-minute phone call. You did suck it up, you didn't tell them you were having a really bad day because you're only going to speak to them once a week...but if you speak to them once or twice a day you can be more like you are when you see them at home, like 'oh I had a really shit day', and know that you'll talk to them again tomorrow and things would have changed. You also need to say to them 'is our washing machine under warranty? Should I get it fixed or should I get a new one?', making joint financial decisions as couples do. Being told by the DSO that you shouldn't let your partner know about these little things, I thought it was unnecessary and put a lot more pressure on the person at home to make sure that they looked like they were coping...the longer you try and hold on there, the bigger the fall. You've really got to put your hand up as soon as anything comes up.

Helen also appreciated being able to keep in contact with her husband, as she was able to "speak on Facebook Messenger pretty much every day, and I know we were lucky because he worked in an office so he was able to do that". This is similar to what Baptist et al. (2011) found in their research on U.S. military wives. Being in contact with their partner provided participants with a sense of relief and support, assisted in building trust, and allowed the participants to let their deployed partner know how much they needed them (Baptist et al. 2011, p. 205).

Friendships and Social Networks

In terms of friendships, Helen found that she reached out to another military partner whose husband was also on deployment:

> There was another girl whose husband was deployed to somewhere else at the time and they just kind of coincided, and we probably saw each other a little bit more. My family was really good, because it was over the summer I went and spent most of the summer up with them.

Helen's friendship with another member of the NZDF community in a similar situation to her own demonstrates the individual nature to social capital (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). By participating in the community in this way, social capital directly benefits the individual. In this case, Helen gained friendship and connection, which combats loneliness and isolation during deployment.

Having a mixture of military and non-military people to reach out to helped Leah cope during the deployment. She had a friend in another military camp who she'd known for a while, who she messaged from time to time. She recalled:

> We'd do the Army side of things and we'd moan and say why we were scared, all that, and then you have the civvy side where people don't really understand what it's like to have a husband away for that long. And just having things a bit normal in a way. And helping with the children if I needed it. If I couldn't be somewhere on time or something happened with work, I could just have someone to support me. It's kind of having both worlds.

In the span of two months Leah recalled that there had been two suicide bombers outside the camp in her husband's deployment location, which she was worried about. She said that so much had happened within the first two months while her husband was on deployment, she remembered thinking, "is this what it's going to be like for the rest of the deployment?". She was relieved to find that it quieted down for the rest of the deployment, however, having that friend to talk to about what she was going through helped:

> We went to the first family dinner they offered, but only because a friend of mine's husband was on the previous one, and he was still over there, and my husband had just left. So we just went along because I knew she'd be going and we could catch up with her. I didn't go back for any other dinners, just because I felt that I didn't need that extra support because I was getting it from other sources. It wasn't that I didn't want to go, I just felt that I didn't need to go.

Leah said that she wasn't a group person, and having one person to understand what she was going through was enough for her:

Other people need to have lots of people around them, and that's okay, but I'm not one of those people. So that's probably why I didn't end up going to the other family dinners because I was quite happy just with the one person, and if I felt I needed extra support I would have approached someone.

Schachman and Lindsey's (2013) research on wives of U.S. Air Force personnel showed that new mothers used protective factors in the form of support networks involving the military family, both formally and informally to assist them during a deployment. Shared history and experience among military wives enabled the formation of unplanned and informal support networks.

Leah found friendship in her point of contact, who was assigned to her by her partner, and took care of her during the deployment:

> I guess they appoint someone in the Army to look after you, to support you, and it just happened to be that her and I were great mates for a very long time, and her husband is in the Army as well. So I guess if I needed anything I would have most likely gone to that person who was appointed by my husband, rather than a Deployment Services Officer, only purely because of the relationship. Because I hadn't gone to those dinners, the relationship wasn't there with the DSO, but that's not her fault. There's only so much they can offer us to do, but they can't make us go to these dinners. They can only offer those things. But it's purely just because of that relationship I had with my friend.

Living in the housing area was also a benefit for Leah. Having a neighbor next door that was within her social network who she could call was reassuring, and made her feel safe:

> I guess for that sense of security I think it did only because just having a neighbor right there that I could call, which one night it did happen. One night we had a little incident and I was able to call him and the military police were involved, so I guess just having them on call and having such a small community around me, I felt safe apart from that little thing that happened. But that was fine, we got over that. I guess it did help living in the housing area.

In contrast to Leah, not all of my participants sought out friendships and social networks during the deployment. Drinking helped Mel cope during her partner's absence while on deployment. At the time, Mel was working in Palmerston North, but lived in Waiouru. This meant that on the weekends she drove home and was by herself for the majority of the weekend, as, "I don't want to go to nightclubs and all that shit, big parties. Half the time I don't want to leave the house because I'm always so busy". She found that this was an opportunity for her to drink, and said, "I think a lot of people who don't have kids, especially when you don't have to moderate your behavior for the safety of this small human, you can go 'Well if I want to be drunk all weekend I'm allowed, because I'm a grownup'".

Timing of Deployments

Rebecca found the timing of the deployment to be well placed in the year, departing in October and being away over summer. She remembered, "it's a busy time of year. My daughter's birthday is in November, and then Christmas, so having those milestones ahead helped to keep my mind occupied and busy". Planning an overseas holiday for herself, her daughter and her mother was another event to look forward to, and something to do. She did not find that her life drastically changed during the deployment, apart from changing who was to collect her daughter from daycare. Her husband would normally pick their daughter up on his way home from work, but because he was overseas, Rebecca took on the role. However, because she was working, she stated it was "nothing major, more 'Oh he can't do the pickup I'll do the pickup', those kinds of things. Nothing that upset the routine too much".

Like Rebecca, Gill also found having the deployment over summer to be of benefit to her, as she had various social events to attend that allowed her to catch up with friends and family. She had a calendar of pre-Christmas parties and Christmas, as well as weddings that flowed through the summer. She said:

> Just through normal life I kind of had lots of points where I was meeting up with our friends and families and having fun, and I didn't need to have a specific strategy. Our calendar was planned out, I had something fun happening every month.

She recalls, if she hadn't had those opportunities to meet with her friends and family, she probably would have needed a way to make sure that those regular catch-ups were happening.

Having her husband away on deployment, however, had become almost a routine. Gill said that while she had known her partner, he had been on two deployments while they had been friends, and then when they were married he had been on another deployment before participating in the mission to Iraq:

> I think people say that every deployment is different. So when my husband went on his previous deployment it was nine months long. He left a week later, I had three months overseas, came back for ten weeks…and this was all for my job as well…came back for ten weeks, but then I went on holiday for a month, and caught up with him for three weeks of that. I was back for a month and then away for another three months, and then he was home. So it was quite nice timing. You know, every deployment is different.

Although Enloe (2000, p. 172) found an increase in the absence of soldiers away from the home to contribute towards partner stress, Gill in particular did not find the frequency of her husband being deployed to be a challenge. Because of Gill's strong independency, and how deployment had come to be part of her and her husband's relationship, it seemed normal for him to be absent for part of the year. It happened to be that her husband's deployment coincided with Gill starting a new job, which she launched herself into:

> Whether that was because my husband wasn't there or because it was a new job, which demanded more of me. There's a correlation of my husband being away and my work hours being up, but there's also a strong relation between me having a new job, which was a step up.

Not only did my participants talk about certain aspects that helped them cope during the deployment outside of the NZDF community, there was also support from within the NZDF that they utilized.

Support for Partners from the NZDF

A variety of avenues of support are offered by the NZDF. My participants discussed which aspects they particularly appreciated.

Gill enjoyed the smaller get-togethers organized by her husband's unit throughout the year. These were held outside of camp and were typically held at public playgrounds to accommodate families with children. Taking place in a relaxed environment off camp, Gill found them "really cool, and just an opportunity to get together as a slightly smaller unit, and just go down to the esplanade and get a hot drink and a slice and catch up with everyone else who was around". Gill also appreciated *Army News* and *The Bugle* to hear about what was going on, "just getting them in the mail. It's nice to receive something". Prakash et al. (2011, p. 61) stated in their research on families of soldiers deployed overseas that partners coped better with deployment-related stressors when an increase in contact was made with others in a similar position. This is what Gill found helpful also. To meet the challenge of her partner's physical absence, Gill reached out to other partners and families in the NZDF facing a similar situation.

The support given to children during deployment that the Army provided was amazing in Rebecca's opinion. In particular, the briefings included a lot of activities for the children, including handing out special dog tags for children of parents serving on overseas deployment that were inscribed with messages such as "my Dad is deployed overseas with the NZDF". Rebecca stated:

> So those kind of symbolisms really helped make my husband feel close or kind of here. It reminds her of what he's doing overseas...I guess because I'd been through it before you know what to expect. So I think the added bonus was the added support for the kids, the materials for the kids to do.

She mentioned that the added support was important, "because they [the children] don't understand the process. They don't understand the length of time. But it was good". Having children also provided a distraction for Rebecca, as "having my daughter kept me busy and more focused on her, as opposed to worrying about myself". In regards to Army-related events, Rebecca also attended a few dinners at camp, which she brought her daughter and parents along to, "just to meet the other [deployed] families". Although

my participants talked about the positive aspects during the deployment, there were also certain challenges that they faced.

<u>Challenges of the Soldier's Absence During Deployment</u>

The NZDF offer a variety of support mechanisms, however my participants still found parts of the deployment to be a challenge. In particular, this centered on the physical absence of the soldier during deployment.

As mentioned earlier, Mel spent the majority of weekends on her own. Because she had started drinking more while her partner was physically absent, she fell back into a habit she had had a few years earlier of spending the majority of her pay each fortnight. She knew that she was making poor decisions, but she said the deployment made it difficult to resolve:

> Addiction is difficult like that, but I knew it wasn't something I should keep from him. I was afraid that he would be angry and then we wouldn't have a way to play that out. Normally when he's angry at me he says something and then I say something and someone cries and someone yells, you know, normal. And then you get there in the end. But it's very difficult to do when one of you is on the other side of the world with shitty phone connection.

Mel found it difficult to communicate with her partner on certain topics, including her addiction, while they were separated during the deployment. Not only was Mel's partner physically absent during the deployment, but he was also emotionally absent from the home because Mel did not communicate openly what was happening. She stated:

> I didn't want to make him feel helpless, like 'what do you expect me to do from over here?' type of thing. We talked about it afterwards and that turned out to be a poor decision on my part. So I told him about an issue that I had while he was away when he came home and he was like 'why didn't you say anything?', and I said, 'well I didn't want you to feel like you now had this negative information on a subject that you couldn't do anything about from where you were. I didn't want to put a down buzz on your trip'. And he was like 'nah you should have said something'.

In retrospect, Mel has learned from the experience and said, "I know what to do for next time, but because it was his first trip away it was a learning experience for both of us".

The level of security associated with the mission was difficult to handle for Jordan, as she never knew how much she could talk about. She had uncertainty over how much she could disclose:

> I was never quite sure where the line was for us in terms of if someone asks 'oh is your husband away at the moment?' you'd be like 'yeah', and then they'd ask 'where is he?', and you'd be like 'oh Iraq' or 'oh the Middle East'. That was always a bit tricky.

Jordan found that she needed someone to debrief to, as "it's not like they're telling us anything over the phones and stuff like that but I just found that a little bit of a different experience from the other trips". Jordan found it difficult not to disclose too much as, "it's such a small community, Palmy is a small place. It's a small army. Everyone knows each other". The other challenge Jordan had was with managing as a single parent. In her opinion:

> It was like being a single parent but a married single parent. So you're doing everything but you're still in a relationship in terms of running things past the other person but they're not here, so sometimes you just have to make calls about things.

Missing the physical presence of her partner was a challenge for Helen, as she had to get used to going to events by herself. One of her friends was getting married and she remembered thinking "you kind of get over it [being alone at events] after a while, you're like 'I have a husband, I just wish he was here'".

Rebecca found little things such as being tired, or falling sick to be a challenge with her husband being away. However, she found the help her parents offered by living with her to be a major asset. When she was away from the family home for two or three days at a time on work trips, it left her feeling extremely guilty, having to leave her daughter who was only in preschool at the time. This posed a different kind of challenge. She wanted her daughter to understand why both parents were away, but she said that her daughter handled it extremely well:

My mum had always been here since she was little, so it was just like having another parent here. For me it was more the feeling of guilt because my husband had gone away and then I was away, but she coped amazingly well.

Fatigue was to be the biggest challenge for Anna. She mentioned that she felt it was lucky for her that the deployment her husband went on did not fall over the Christmas break. As opposed to having both parents at home to help with the kids, it was Anna by herself, which she stated, "as much as everyone loves their kids it's just more exhausting". One of the main reasons to have the au pair while her husband was away to combat that fatigue: "I had set myself up not to have challenging moments. I was really pleased that I hadn't gotten sick, because that was one thing I got the au pair for was if I got sick".

<u>Conclusion</u>

This phase of deployment was characterized by the physical absence of the deployed soldier. The women I interviewed launched into deployment life by organizing services that they needed with the assistance of deployment allowances, and reaching out to family and friends for help and companionship. At the core of these actions is a sense of resilience in my participants. Although they discussed having certain challenges during the deployment, such as solo parenting, isolation from their partner, and added household responsibilities, the majority of my participants had the ability to overcome these and discover personal strengths within themselves. This is similar to what Aducci et al. (2011, p. 244) found in partners of military personnel. Wives exhibited self-confidence, self-discovery, personal growth and an acceptance of non-traditional gender roles.

Facilitating the connection-seeking practices of my participants, communication played a central theme to the women's discussions. This was primarily carried out through regular conversations made possible through instant messaging, phone calls and video calls. Feeling as if their partner were still part of the household and kept informed of what was going on was key in keeping them emotionally present, although physically absent during the deployment. Social capital was developed through the use of this technology, which can be a form of 'virtual' capital. In this regard, social capital is accrued by the members who participate within this interaction. In this case, although

geographically separated, the family network could be maintained between the deployed soldier and their partner at home.

The examples given by the DSO during our interview demonstrate the strength of social networks. The young woman the DSO mentioned was able to form meaningful connections within the network, through support staff such as the DSO, and other women in a similar situation to her own. Social capital does not accrue to a single individual, but rather the collective. The young woman who reached out to the DSO gained social capital and built resilience through her relationships, but it also benefited the wife she befriended. By having another person in the same situation as herself, and being able to meet her husband during his mid-tour break, creates a strong support network where individuals benefit from the mutual relationships they form within it.

What this section also speaks to are the networks of association that each of my participants encountered. A number of the women I interviewed mentioned reaching out to other military families and friends, and attending Army-lead events such as the afternoons in the Esplanade hosted by military units, and the family dinners held at Linton Military Camp. This network of association is grounded within the military. In this regard the New Zealand Army in itself can be viewed as a social group. A sense of belonging is therefore felt through this network of association. These bonding forms of social capital, where an overall companionship of shared experiences within the group is gained by assembling at events such as the family dinners, give an overall solidarity to the network. In contrast to the military-focused network, Anna established her own network in Waiouru when she did not feel she had one. Reaching out to other women she had met at the family day allowed her to form her own network of association, which bridged the geographical isolation she had from the majority of the community based at Linton. Mel was relatively isolated in Waiouru and chose not to participate in a network. It would be interesting to speculate, if she had participated in a network for herself in Waiouru, whether her drinking and financial problems would have escalated to the severity that they came to be. In the final section, that of post-deployment, my participants explore how it was to reintegrate their soldier back into home life, and some conclusions that they drew from the experience of having a partner deploy overseas.

Chapter Seven: The Post-Deployment Phase

The post-deployment phase involves reintegrating the deployed soldier back into home and work life. This phase is characterized by the physical presence of the deployed soldier, and how my participants managed this change. Central to this was the expectation that the soldier would return to performing the roles and responsibilities they had before leaving. For some of my participants this was a challenge, but it was also a time of happiness being reunited with them again.

The post-deployment phase is also characterized by reintroducing the deployed soldier back into home life to be emotionally and psychologically present with their partner. Although some of my participants experienced challenges of reintegrating their partners into their lives again, the women I spoke with were able to learn from their previous experiences of deployment. This exposure to and successful negotiation of challenges made my participants more resilient to future challenges. This process demonstrates the non-linear nature to resilience building (Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 29). Resilience is built by being able to successfully adjust and learn from previous experiences by encountering difficult circumstances.

This phase also demonstrates the importance of social networks. When Mel reflected on her experience of deployment, she said that she might have managed the physical and emotional absence of her partner better if she had kept a small group of friends to reach out to. By participating in such networks, social capital accrues to its members by forming mutually supportive relationships. This makes its members more resilient to the challenges brought out during a deployment. When Mel was having trouble with her financial spending, her financial problems may not have worsened to the degree that they had if she had participated in a social network.

The post-deployment phase also highlighted how community resilience can be fostered. Anna shared her strategies on what worked for her family with friends who were about to experience a deployment of their own. Talking with other members of the social group and discussing strategies that made deployment life easier displays how through civic engagement, the quality of the community is promoted. In this case, by having a better experience of deployment life. This sharing of experiences promotes the quality of the community as members are able to support and assist one another. This nurtures

community resilience, as members are able to lean on one another in difficult times, and allow the community to cope during stressful times.

This chapter begins with a description of how soldiers leave the deployment location, to provide context to how they are reunited with their partners. Following this I discuss how the Deployment Services Officer and Community Services Officer reflect on the support provided to partners by the NZDF. I then consider what my participants experienced during the post-deployment phase, including how they found the reintegration of their soldier back into home life. The key themes that emerged from my interviews were the challenges that came with the physical presence of the soldier at home, lessons that were learned from the deployment, and what support from the NZDF my participants would have sought post-deployment. To begin, I consider how soldiers are brought back to New Zealand after concluding their overseas service.

Leaving the Deployment Location

The process of returning to New Zealand from Iraq takes approximately five days for military personnel to complete. Flying first from Iraq into Dubai on a military flight, both New Zealand and Australian personnel take three to four days in Dubai to return military gear. As mentioned previously in the NZDF deployment welfare processes, the next day soldiers are briefed by a military psychologist, which involves completing a questionnaire on any issues they had on the deployment (Smith, 2017, p. 1). The NZDF overseas operations expert I interviewed told me the group then travel on a military airline from Dubai to Australia, to drop off the Australian contingent in Darwin, before flying to New Zealand. The group then makes their way up New Zealand, dropping personnel off along the way to return them to the camp from which they are based. Arriving in Christchurch first to drop personnel at Burnham Military Camp, then to Wellington for Trentham Military Camp personnel, Ohakea for Linton Military Camp, and then finally on to Auckland. Once at their home location, the command chain meets the returning soldiers, which often includes their Commanding Officer or Regimental Sergeant Major. If based in Wellington, the Chief of Army has met returning contingents in the past, or if based at Linton Military Camp, the Land Component Commander has also welcomed personnel home. In addition to the military presence, soldiers are reunited with their partners, family and friends, ready for the process of reintegration into home life.

When soldiers return home, they are required to attend work for a minimum of five days, primarily to reintegrate back into camp life, but also to create a structured routine for the first week back in New Zealand (Garnder et al., 2015, p. 112). This consists of a brief from their Commanding Officer on what the unit has been up to while they have been away, and what has been planned for the remainder of the year. Soldiers are also advised where they will be posted next, to provide stability for the reintegrating individual. These five days are half days on camp, where soldiers take part in personal training, and meet those who they will be working with when they return from leave. After these five days soldiers go on a minimum of two weeks leave or more, depending on leave balances. Having discussed the process of bringing soldiers back to New Zealand, I now consider how NZDF staff reflect on the support provided to partners, to highlight their view on the challenges partners face in experiencing a deployment.

Support From the NZDF on Homecoming

The Deployment Services Officer (DSO) made it clear during my interview with her that support does not end because the service person has returned home. The DSO drew on her own experience of being a military wife to understand what issues partners may have. Having her husband away on deployment was not the biggest challenge for her family, but rather it was having him return and reintegrate into home life:

> Fitting him back into our lives and how we treated our children and got them to do what we wanted them to do were very different. Because you set up new routines and the way of doing things, and then they come back and disrupt everything…I often quip to families, it might be as simple as learning to share the remote for the TV, but it might be bigger than that. They just need to know that they're not alone. And again, families know their loved ones best, so they can put a good front at work and they're fine, but they'll go home and see mum and dad and say something really bizarre and you're thinking 'that's not right'. Or partners will ring and say 'hey look, they're not sleeping' or 'they're not communicating' or 'they're not interacting with their children'. It's not abnormal, so long as it doesn't go on too long. If it does, then we do continue to support our people, we just need to know that.

The DSO speculated that support for partners might be more effective if young couples were able to trust in themselves that they can handle the deployment:

I think they just need to believe in themselves that they can do stuff other than have someone else come and change a light bulb. When I was a young wife I always did the lawns, for example, even though I had young kids. My husband was never home, they were always away. I never had anyone come and do my lawns, I used to do my own. Or these days it just doesn't happen, they have to have a contract. If they 're pregnant or they're unwell, you know. And in those days you didn't get free hours for childcare and stuff, so you'd go out and find a playgroup. Then not only would your children be socializing but you would also socialize too. And not necessarily with military people, so you wouldn't be talking their job or their work, you're actually out in the real world and having conversations with other mums. I think these days, I know a lot of our young people have to work, but in doing that they are building a circle of friends separate to the military. It's a big world out there. The military can sometimes be quite insular, so having their own friends, having their own circle of support. We do try and chivvy that along, and there's only so much you can do.

The Community Services Officer (CSO) provided some reflection on how support could be offered to partners post-deployment. She stated that the NZDF has a strong foundation for support, and subsequently have an ongoing process of evaluation to see what could be improved:

I think we do lessons learned really well. If we've missed anything out, we've been doing it for so long now that you think we'd have it right. There's the occasional muck-up that happens, but generally that's human error more so than the process of support. If we were to go straight to the numbers, and you've got a hundred people deployed, maybe over a year there might be one person who slips through the gaps that you don't know. It's the transition back into the family that's huge so a lot of work goes into that as well. The psychologists will interview the people that are away, they give them a whole lot of resources around what to do and how to reintegrate into the family, and we tell them 'gently, gently'.

Not only is it important to consider how welfare support staff regard the post-deployment phase, it is also significant to understand the experience from a partner perspective.

Reintegrating Into Home Life

The homecoming of the deployed soldier reintroduced their physical presence. In this section I discuss three key themes that emerged from my interviews with partners of deployed soldiers. This includes the challenges of having the soldier physically present, some of the lessons that my participants learned from the deployment, and, how support from the NZDF could be improved from the opinions of the women I interviewed.

The Challenges of the Soldier's Physical Presence

Leah said that it helped taking a week for her husband to return home, as it gave him time to rest, and then settle in to work again. However, Christmas holidays and then her husband taking five weeks leave became tricky for Leah:

> Even just driving, he would drive and then turn the wipers on for the indicator because over there it was the other way around. And just little stuff like that it was like, 'oh just let me drive it'd be so much quicker', you know? So you kind of get on with it because you have to. Then they come home and you have to share everything again.

Leah believed that there were challenges that her husband had to face as well, such as "they've had their little group of friends over there that they would do stuff with, and then suddenly they're all gone and there's no one there". Not only were his work colleagues for the past six months in different camps across New Zealand, it was also the matter of getting back into family life:

> For him being back in the demands of family life and children, he came back into sport again and for the children's after-school activities. I think he's gone from doing his own thing in a way for all that time of just worrying about himself and his job and his position and what he has to do there, and then coming back and having that extra demand from four other people.

Leah's experience of needing to be patient with her husband as he not only physically but psychologically adjusted to home life was similar to what Prakash et al. (2011, p. 61)

found in their research on families of soldiers deployed overseas. Resettling into the role of a father and a husband was a source of stress for partners.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mel struggled with her finances during the deployment. When her partner returned from overseas Mel realized she had to be honest with him:

> It was the day he came home, I was like 'fuck I have to stop. It's the day he's coming home'. I think addicts can be very good at telling themselves that the problem isn't as bad as it is. And you think 'no I'll be able to fix it, no-one will know', and then you get to a point where you're just like, shit.

Not only was Mel's partner physically present, but he was also psychologically present once again. Mel's partner told her that it would have been better for Mel to be honest about what was going on at home while he was overseas. If she had told him, Mel might not have continued to spend the majority of her pay each fortnight.

Lessons Learned From Deployment

Rebecca said that reintegrating her husband back into family life came easier this time, as their daughter provided something for them to both focus on. She stated:

> When he went overseas before, I guess we were still young then, we struggled getting back on the same page. So he left in 2003/2004 and we were still young, but in the back of my mind that was kind of plaguing on me a little bit this time, because when he came back last time we weren't able to communicate, and we actually broke up for a couple of years. We found we couldn't get back to where we were before he left. So we separated. This was before our daughter was born of course, for about two years actually. I moved to Auckland and six months later he got transferred up there and we thought 'oh maybe it's meant to be', and we gave it a go again. Having that happen in his last deployment I kind of thought 'oh what's that going to do?'. I think it helped in some way with our daughter being there because she helped us to focus on her more, to break the ice, and there's this little person we have to think about. It was great, really useful.

Rebecca believed that she wasn't able to comprehend what her partner had gone through back in 2004, and that she couldn't reach out to him or make him open up about what he had gone through. She also said that it might have been an issue with her approach as well in that she was not willing to understand what her partner had gone through:

> Because I remember then we'd actually had regular partner's dinners as well, so the support was there. Maybe a lot of the age thing while he was gone, I partied a lot, I drank a lot, because I was young and lonely and then I found it hard to kind of reintegrate into a routine and we couldn't communicate.

Although her husband's 2004 deployment had not been his first deployment while they were together, it had been the first that Rebecca was by herself in a town she was new to:

> We were already living apart then you see [on his previous deployment], he was living in Waiouru and I was in Auckland. And I think it was early on in the relationship, there wasn't the same sort of dependency, for me at least towards him at that time. So the 2004 rotation was when I'd just moved to Palmy we'd just started living together, and then six months down the track we found out he'd be getting deployed. So there were a lot of adjustments.

Having her husband participate in the Iraq deployment showed Rebecca that she and her daughter could handle him being physically absent for longer periods of time. She said, "it was good to go through another deployment now and know that we can cope. It's good". The experience was worthwhile for Rebecca and her family as it helped to solidify their family unit as something that can cope with having one parent physically absent, but remain emotionally present. This demonstrates the non-linear nature to resilience building (Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 29). Although Rebecca experienced setbacks along the way, such as handling her husband's first deployment not so successfully, she was then able to meet the challenges of the Iraq deployment. This exposure to and successful mediation of challenges has made Rebecca more resilient to future challenges.

Anna did not discuss much of the homecoming of her partner; it had come to be a regular part of her family life that her husband was away for work. She did say however that:

> I think we made it as easy as we could on the kids and made the right choices for the situation of us as a family. They're not the right choices for everybody. I think it would be good for people to hear their stories about how people did things just to give them ideas. A friend whose husband is away now, we talked a lot before he went. Another friend whose husband goes away in a few months we're talking about how I got an au pair, what I thought about that, should she go back to Canada to live with her parents, just all sorts of things. It's so good having someone to talk to about it.

Jordan believed that her family had a positive experience of the deployment. She said that it wasn't sad or lonely, rather that her family got on with life and made the most of the time while her partner was physically absent. She did feel uneasy about being able to handle the deployment in some ways, "sometimes I don't think that's a positive for them, because they're the deployed person, and they come back into a house that's been fine without them". Of the three deployments that her husband has done, Jordan said that the support was the best for this deployment:

> But I think I say that with a bit of a disclaimer, because the last trip he did was Sinai, which is only a handful of people at a time, so there weren't the same kind of numbers, and then the previous trip we didn't have kids so I don't know whether that made a difference or not. And it was a long time ago.

Mel thought she should have been more honest with her partner and her friends, and for the next deployment she said she would have a small group of friends that she could reach out to when she's having trouble:

> My partner came up with a good idea. Instead of having a group of friends to reach out to, nominate a couple of specific friends and talk to them before and go, 'hey if I'm having a shit day I'm going to ring you'. Just so they know if they get a phone call they're not like 'why are you telling me how hard your life is?'. So we have thought about that in preparation for next time, because we know there will be a next time, and there will be times when it's not me left behind.

For Mel, striking the right balance between spending time with her partner and having time apart was also important. Mel had been married previously, but when her partner went on deployment she said reintegration was difficult because the couple had become too independent from one another, and emotionally detached from one another. When they did try to reintegrate it did not go successfully:

> One of us was a little more interested and one of us was more 'nah, I've found my freedom. I'm quite happy with that'. So we tried for a little bit but then nine months later it was like 'this isn't working at all'. So I was aware of having that in the background and thinking 'okay, I wonder if there's anything I can learn from last time'.

From that experience with her previous partner Mel made sure to talk about reintegration on this deployment: "We're quite emotionally honest with each other normally so that makes it a bit easier".

Helen did not say much about the homecoming of her husband, but instead she had a few realizations about their relationship while apart. She found that, "I think you learn about yourself when you live by yourself. I learnt I was the one who messed up the toothpaste tube, I always thought it was him, but no it was me". Having the time apart from her husband made Helen realize how much she appreciated having her partner in her life. On the mid-tour break[7] she met her husband overseas and found, "my whole impression of that was 'oh you're so awesome, we should hang out more often, why don't we?'".

Similarly to Helen, Gill found the return of her husband to be very relaxed. The impression Gill gave was that her husband's time away was an expected and routine part of life. She had been friends with him before they had began a relationship together, so deployments were a regular occurrence in their lives.

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[7] Soldiers participating in Op Manawa are given approximately fourteen days of leave halfway through the deployment. Some of my participants, such as Helen, chose and were able to meet overseas.

Leah would have appreciated an end briefing of some sort. In her opinion it felt "sort of just, 'he's home, deal with it' type of thing. And I often wondered if perhaps other families might have needed more support coming home from the Army". She stated:

> I kind of wondered if perhaps they would have had as they did on previous deployments a mid-deployment briefing. Then perhaps an end one or six months on from the deployment, which they do with the soldiers for when they come back, but there was nothing for the wives or the children that I know of. It kind of took us a good three months to get used to living with him again....even just something for the children, to have them checked up on through a psychologist or something. I don't know, even children may not voice how they're feeling, and it may be confusing for dads or mums to come home and their life is turned upside down. I guess it's just for their wellbeing.

Gardner et al. (2015, p. 118) stated that it was the responsibility of the service member, peers and command to ensure follow up and care of psychological wellbeing was delivered to NZDF personnel post-deployment. The majority of NZDF personnel stated that they shared their experience of deployment with one another as a means of support. However, in Leah's opinion she did not feel that she was being supported.

It was also found that NZDF families who had no contact with the NZDF during the deployment, this continued post-deployment (Gardner et al.,2015, p. 139). For those that had contact with the NZDF during the deployment, this ceased immediately after the return of the service member. This echoes what Leah mentioned during our interview, that she may have appreciated maintaining some form of contact post-deployment, to ensure her children were adjusting to having their father back at home.

Conclusion

The post-deployment phase centered on the reintegration of the soldier back into home life. Because the soldier had been removed for such a prolonged period of time, readjusting into routine was, at times, an adjustment. Soldiers lose a social network that had established between themselves and their colleagues during the deployment, as soldiers are redistributed across the country to their various bases. However, they are

also reunited into the family network, which they were physically absent from during the deployment.

Reestablishing the physical presence was at the forefront during this phase. Accompanying this came the expectation that the soldier would return to performing the roles and responsibilities they had before leaving. For some of my participants this was a challenge, but it was also a time of happiness. For Helen, having the physical presence of her husband back in her life was something she appreciated. In contrast, Leah's experience of needing to be patient with her husband as he acclimatized to home life was somewhat of a challenge. Resettling into the roles of a father and a husband were a source of stress for some of the women I interviewed.

The post-deployment phase is also characterized by reintroducing the deployed soldier back into regular routine, to be emotionally and psychologically present with their partner. Although some of my participants, such as Rebecca and Mel, experienced challenges of reintegrating their partners into their lives again, both women were able to learn from their previous experiences of deployment. Rebecca was not able to psychologically relate with her husband after his first deployment, and Mel was emotionally detached from her partner in a previous relationship. However, this exposure to and successful mediation of challenges made my participants more resilient to future challenges during post-deployment. This process demonstrates the non-linear nature to resilience building (Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 29). Being able to successfully adapt and learn from previous experiences emphasizes that encountering difficult circumstances, and learning from them, can build resilience.

What the post-deployment phase also demonstrates is the importance of social networks. When Mel reflected on the deployment experience she said she would have managed the physical and emotional absence of her partner better if she had had a small group of friends to reach out to. This shows the significance of social networks. By participating in such networks, social capital accrues to its members, which makes individuals more resilient to the challenges brought out during a deployment. When Mel was having trouble with her financial spending, if she were part of a network, her financial problems may not have worsened to the degree that they had if she had participated in a social network.

Furthermore, this phase was also characterized by how community resilience can be fostered. This is demonstrated in the way Anna shared her strategies on what worked for her family with friends who were about to experience a deployment also. Talking with other members of the social group and discussing strategies that made deployment life easier displays how through civic engagement, the quality of the community is promoted by having a better experience of deployment life. This sharing of experiences promotes the quality of the community as having supportive and assisting members. This therefore fosters a level of community resilience, as members are able to lean on one another in difficult times, and allow the community to cope in difficult circumstances.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This thesis focused on the lives of military partners during deployment. I wanted to understand how partners in the Manawatu experienced deployment life, what challenges arose as a result of being in such a situation, and what support they drew on, from the NZDF, and also outside of the NZDF. The women I interviewed all experienced their partner deploy to Iraq as part of the Building Partner Capacity mission. What I found was that my participants talked about needing to manage the presence-absence dynamic brought out during the deployment. By this I mean the state of either occupying, or being absent from, a space in a particular form. This was seen physically, emotionally, and psychologically. During the three phases of deployment, soldiers were present and absent in different forms. For example, during the pre-deployment phase, soldiers were still physically present in the lives of my participants, however they were also psychologically absent as they prepared for their upcoming overseas mission. During the deployment, although physically absent overseas, communication enabled the soldier to have an emotional and psychological presence. Post-deployment saw the reunification of the couple, and the physical presence of the soldier, however in some cases their mindset was still that of being on deployment, exhibiting a psychological absence. Presence-absence is used as a frame for understanding, and making sense of my participants' experiences of their soldier's deployment.

One of the key ways to manage this presence-absence was through resilience building. Resilience is the ability of an individual to adapt to, and overcome difficult circumstances, in order to be able to successfully participate within society (Barrios, 2016, p. 29). It is the process of gaining a competency to face stresses and challenges, and find strategies in order to mitigate them. Resilience is non-linear, meaning that the individual can experience setbacks along the way. However, it is through this process of experiencing and working through such challenges that the individual builds resilience. Demonstrating a level of resilience is shown in an individual's happiness, hopefulness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and believing in that they can control their unique life and solve problems (Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 28). Not only is resilience built from the individual, it also develops from communities. Community resilience is built from the collective, where social networks converge to reduce the stress of outside impacts (Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016, p. 216).

Building resilience for my participants was accomplished through the accumulation of social capital, the networks and relationships between people. Social capital, or the connections among individuals, creates social networks, where reciprocity is at the core of engaging members of the network. Through this engagement, individuals work together to produce change within the community. Social capital can be accrued to the individual, where the participation of a single actor directly benefits the person, or collective, where the community as a whole reaps the rewards. Mutual obligations promote the idea of reciprocity; when one individual reaches out within the network to assist another, it is implied that other members will return the favour in the future. In a sense, this ties in with community resilience, as members of the network are reassured that if they are experiencing challenges, the community or network will support them. Social capital theory assists in understanding how members cooperate with one another for the mutual benefit of the group.

Accrued social capital helped generate resilience, which allowed my participants to maintain positive mental health, support themselves and their families during deployment, and carry on with family and work life although their deployed soldiers were physically absent for a long period of time. Social capital, coupled with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) welfare support services, helped with resilience building. Becoming resilient, and developing resilience in different forms, through the NZDF and through their own strategies, allowed my participants to not just cope during the deployment, but to thrive.

The Three Phases of Deployment: What I Learnt About Presence-Absence, Social Capital, and Resilience

The three phases of deployment presented challenges under various circumstances, which my participants needed to respond to, and become resilient to. The pre-deployment phase was characterized by the physical presence of the soldier, but for some of my participants they felt their soldier's psychological absence as their focus was on pre-deployment training. During the pre-deployment phase the family briefing is delivered by the NZDF to partners and families of deploying soldiers. The women I interviewed were able to meet NZDF welfare support staff during the day, gain information from welfare support staff and through NZDF resources, and meet other families involved in the upcoming deployment. Meeting key welfare support staff such as the DSO, NZDF psychologists and chaplains, allowed my participants to be introduced

to the support network the Army offered. They learned that if they were having problems during the deployment, these members of staff could be contacted. Furthermore, being able to see where their deploying partners would be staying, allowed the women to learn more about the deployment location. Meeting NZDF staff such as the SNO and RSM who would be accompanying their deploying partner overseas enhanced this connection further.

Enabling families to meet other military families, and hearing from families having been involved in a previous deployment, demonstrates how social capital can be cultivated. Allowing people living in different areas, such as families living in a town from a variety of social backgrounds to connect, promotes social capital within its members. Connecting others in similar situations increases social capital, which builds resilience. Community resilience is as a collective, where social networks converge to mitigate the stress of outside impacts, such as the stress deployment can potentially bring. What I learnt about the pre-deployment phase was that the family briefing is an opportunity for families to meet, and to form a network of support, from which resilience is nurtured within.

The deployment phase saw the physical absence of the deployed soldier. The women I interviewed sprang into deployment life by putting household services in place to assist them and their family during the deployment. The deployment allowances enabled these services to be purchased. The women that I interviewed also reached out to family and friends for help, and for companionship. Although they discussed having certain challenges during the deployment such as solo parenting, isolation from their partner and added household responsibilities, the majority of my participants had the ability to overcome these and discover personal strengths within themselves. At the core of these actions is a sense of resilience in my participants. This is similar to what Aducci et al. (2011, p. 244) found in partners of military personnel. Wives exhibited self-confidence, self-discovery, personal growth and an acceptance of non-traditional gender roles.

Communication played a key role in facilitating connection-seeking practices. For my participants this was primarily carried out through regular conversations through instant messaging, phone calls and video calls. Feeling as if their partner were still part of the household and kept informed of what was going on was key in keeping them emotionally present, although physically absent during the deployment. Social capital was developed through the use of this technology, which can be a form of 'virtual'

capital. In this regard, those who participate within this interaction accumulate social capital. In this case, although physically separated, the relationships could be maintained between the deployed soldier and their partner at home.

What the deployment phase also highlights is the function of networks of association. A number of the women I interviewed stated that they spoke regularly with other military families and friends. They also attended Army-lead events hosted by military units, and the family dinners held at Linton Military Camp. This network of association is grounded within the military. In this regard the New Zealand Army can be viewed as a social group, which builds a sense of belonging for the members that take part within it. Feelings of companionship through the sharing of experiences are developed, which are bonding forms of social capital. By gathering at events such as military-organized social events and family dinners, an overall solidarity to the network is established. In contrast to the military-focused network, Anna established her own network in Waiouru. Reaching out to other women she had met at the family day allowed her to form her own network of association, which bridged the isolation she felt living in Waiouru away from Linton. Mel was relatively isolated in Waiouru and chose not to participate in a network. It would be interesting to speculate, if she had participated in a network for herself in Waiouru, whether her problems would have developed in the way they did.

The post-deployment phase centered on the reintegration of the soldier back into home life. Soldiers returning from the deployment location lose a social network that had established between themselves and their colleagues during the deployment, as soldiers are redistributed across the country to their various bases. However, they are also reunited into the family network, which they were physically absent from during the deployment. Reestablishing the physical presence was at the forefront during this phase. Because the soldier had been removed for such a long period of time, readjusting into routine was, at times, a source of stress for partners. The expectation that the soldier would return to performing the roles and responsibilities they had before leaving were difficult for some partners to manage. Some partners found this to be challenging, but for some it was also a time of happiness. For Helen, having the physical presence of her husband back in her life was something she looked forward to having again. In contrast, Leah's experience of needing to be patient with her husband as he acclimatized to home life was somewhat of a challenge.

The post-deployment phase also highlights how resilience is built through the successful mediation of challenges. The soldier is reintroduced back into home life, to be emotionally and psychologically present with their partner. Although some of my participants, such as Rebecca and Mel, experienced challenges of reintegrating their partners into their lives again, both women were able to learn from their previous experiences of deployment. Rebecca was not able to psychologically relate with her husband after his first deployment, and Mel was emotionally detached from her partner in a previous relationship. However, this exposure to these challenges made my participants learn from their experience, and allowed them to be more resilient to future challenges during post-deployment. This process demonstrates the non-linear nature to resilience building (Grace & Wells, 2015, p. 29). Being able to successfully adapt and learn from previous experiences emphasizes that encountering difficult circumstances, and learning from them, can build resilience.

What the post-deployment phase also demonstrates is the importance of social networks. When Mel reflected on the deployment experience she said she would have handled the physical and emotional absence of her partner better if she had established a small network of friends to reach out to. When she was having trouble with her financial spending, if she were part of a network, her financial problems may not have worsened to the degree that they had if she had participated in a social network. This shows the value of social networks. By participating in such networks, social capital accrues to its members, which makes individuals more resilient to the challenges brought out in difficult situations.

Furthermore, this phase also illustrates how community resilience can be fostered. Talking with other members of the social group and discussing strategies that made deployment life easier displays how through civic engagement, the quality of the community is promoted by having a better experience of deployment life. This sharing of experiences promotes the quality of the community as having supportive and assisting members. This is demonstrated in the way Anna shared her strategies on what worked for her family with friends who were about to experience a deployment also. This therefore fosters a level of community resilience, as members are able to lean on one another in difficult times, and allow the community to cope in difficult circumstances.

Returning to Enloe's discussion on the militarization of women's lives, it can be seen that this occurred for partners of NZDF soldiers. The militarization of partner's lives during a deployment manifested itself as having to manage the dynamic of presence-absence. This produced specific challenges and stresses within the lives of partners, which they were required to respond to. Building social capital made partners more resilient to the challenges and stress brought out by a deployment. What this research highlights is the significance of social networks for building resilience. Similarly to Putnam (2000), I found social capital produced civic engagement, which promoted the quality of the community. Partners participated within the social network of the NZDF community through the sharing of experiences of deployment life, and forming friendships with other members of the community. This enabled social capital to accrue within these members, as it was through these interactions that a dense network of reciprocal social relations could form. Civic engagement addresses the challenges of deployment, by engaging its members with one another.

I also found that reciprocity was not the focus of my participants' social interactions, but rather on the general improvement of the lives of other community members. According to Putnam (2000, p. 20), networks involve mutual obligations and promote a standard of reciprocity. Generalized reciprocity occurs when an individual does something for someone else within the community, under the expectation that someone else will do something for them in the future (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). Although my participants drew on the help of others within the community, their focus was on sharing their experiences of deployment to improve the lives of other community members. Engaging within the network provided companionship and friendship, which improved my participants lives, but it also improved the lives of others. In this case, reciprocity is focused on the community level, and for many of my participants they talked about wanting to help others going through the deployment, and those about to face deployment life, not how the social interactions would directly benefit them. I believe this is something that occurred as a result of studying the New Zealand military. As stated by one of my participants, the New Zealand Army is relatively small in comparison to other militaries. Therefore, the focus is on promoting the quality of the tight-knit community, and banding together to overcome the stresses of deployment. Social network theory assisted me in understanding this cooperation of individual members for the mutual benefit of the group. Social capital facilitated co-operation and mutually supportive relations in communities, and it was a valuable way of understanding the relationships that formed for my participants during deployment.

Methodological Findings

With regards to data collection, I chose to carry out one-on-one interviews with all of my participants, both military personnel, and partners of deployed soldiers. Apart from my interview with the chaplains, which involved four New Zealand Army chaplains being present at once, the interviews were private. Not only did this provide a private space for my participants to talk to me, it enabled me to focus on one individual's account of deployment at a time.

I chose a narrative approach for my research, to allow my participants with the potential to include stories from their experience of deployment. A narrative approach to ethnographic research refers to a form of data collection, as well as a method of data analysis, which aims to find narrative themes within the participant's story. The purpose of this was to create a more organic way of describing the experience, as the women I interviewed were able to insert anecdotes from the experience, which would not have been possible with more constrained forms of data collection. Narrative as a way of understanding thematically was appropriate for my research, as I was examining a small group of individuals, where more focused experiences of certain events were sought. Having the ability to identify and describe patterns as well as relationships both within and across participants was important for me to be able to achieve, as it allowed broader concepts to be identified. I also hope that by sharing their story with me, my participants have found closure in the experience.

Organisations such as the NZDF play a key role in shaping both our personal and work lives. Anthropologists encourage research on large organisations, and in particular to 'study up', as there is a need to "see connections among groups in society and to link groups and individuals to larger processes of change" (Nyqvist & Garsten, 2013, p. 14). Studying up can enrich our comprehension of power relations, as well as the forms of dependency and control that are associated with particular organisations (Nyqvist & Garsten, 2013, p. 14). Studying the NZDF allowed me to better understand the role the organisation plays in the lives of my participants by linking micro-structures to macro-structures. This is done by comparing military perspectives on what support is offered by the NZDF to what my participants found supportive during deployment.

Carrying out research within the military environment presented a unique challenge in terms of an anthropologist's autonomy. Lutz states that anthropologists working for the

military take a variety of stances on their help, "some seeing themselves as helping the government become more competent" (Lutz, 2009, p. 372). The key concern was that anthropologists would in essence, be responsible to the organisation that they work with. It was therefore important for me to be able to maintain a level of autonomy, to allow me to act in accordance with the Association of Social Anthropologists of Aotearoa/New Zealand Principles of Professional Responsibility and Ethical Conduct.

<u>Final Reflections</u>

This research brought me to reflect on the nature of people's work lives, and how the work we choose to participate in impacts our partners, families and friends. Palmerston North has a culture of the military embedded in it as a result of being so close to Linton Military Camp, and so it is important to continue to investigate how the military impacts the local community. In particular, further investigation needs to be done on how other deployments impact partners and families, as the nature of the deployment may affect partners and families in a different way. I hope that my research will work towards the goal of developing NZDF policies that are more aligned to how partners need support. According to Putnam (2000, p. 403), creating policies and practices that renew civic engagement between organisations and communities will positively affect partners and families. By promoting civic engagement, community resilience will be promoted within the NZDF.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Participant Information Sheet

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

On the Home Front:
The Complexities of Being a Partner of New Zealand Army Personnel on Deployment

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Maike Guesgen, a Master of Arts student in Social Anthropology at Massey University, Palmerston North.

Project Description
The aim of this project will be to explore the experience of New Zealand Army spouses and partners of military personnel who have been deployed to Iraq. The purpose of this is to offer a multi-faceted look at the various components of, and challenges to the lives of these individuals, including an exploration of the following topics: what support networks the New Zealand Army offers, what relationships are sought when partners are absent, and, if applicable, understanding the impact having a military partner has on the family unit. This research will also aim to identify whether there is a difference in support offered by the New Zealand Army, depending on marital status of the relationship.

This project will invite participants to take part in a one-on-one interview. This will last approximately one hour, during which time I invite you to respond to the following questions:

-How did you become involved with a member of the New Zealand Army?
-What information did you receive about the deployment to Iraq?
-What is your opinion of the Army's objectives in Iraq?
-Was there any preparation involved for you and your partner for this deployment?
-Is there anything you remember as helping you cope during this time, while your partner was away?
-What was positive about this deployment for you?
-Were there any challenges about this deployment for you?
-Were there ways of communicating with your partner while on deployment?
-Did you find yourself changing your daily routine in any way during this time?
-How do you feel the New Zealand Army supported you when your partner was on deployment?

In addition to the interview, a focus group may also be held depending on the responses given during each individual interview. This will be used to talk more generally, if need be, about developing solutions to scenarios brought out during the one-on-one interviews.

Project Procedures
Each participant will be invited to attend an initial one-hour interview, which will either take place at the participant's residence or at a location of his/her choice. These interviews will be voice recorded in order to reduce any disruption caused by note taking, however if the participant does not wish to be sound recorded, the researcher will take notes instead. Interviews will also be open-ended and based loosely on the above questions, but not constrained by them. If the participant wishes to discuss certain occurrences, actions or opinions of their experience, they are welcome to do so. Once I have reviewed the interview data, I may

ask the participant to have a follow up interview to cover any points that I wish to know more about. This will be of course at the participant's discretion.

If applicable, in addition to the interview, participants are also invited to take part in a one-hour focus group, which will take place at a location yet to be confirmed. The focus group will also last approximately one hour, and will work through general scenarios about what the Army could do to improve its services to partners. Once again, these interviews will be voice recorded in order to reduce any disruption caused by note taking, however if the participant does not wish to be sound recorded, the researcher will take notes instead.

In total, participants will be asked to give approximately two to four hours to the project.

Data Management and Confidentiality

Data acquired from recorded interviews will be used in the final report; however, information in this study will be kept confidential and will not reach the public domain. You will not be identified by name in the report to protect your privacy. All voice recordings and transcripts will be archived in a secure location until the conclusion of the study, at which point all interview information will be destroyed. A summary of the research findings will be made available to each participant, and will be made accessible when this is available.

Participation and Withdrawal

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

-Decline to answer any particular question;
-Withdraw from the study at any time;
-Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
-Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
-Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded;
-Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Questions and Contact Information

If you have any further questions on the research project, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisors at the following locations:

Maike Guesgen

█████████████

Dr. Robyn Andrews
(06) 356 9099 ext. 83653
R.Andrews@massey .ac.nz

Dr. Carolyn Morris
(06) 356 9099 ext. 4474
c.m.morris@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 16/22. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83657, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

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Appendix Two: Participant Consent Form

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

On the Home Front:
The Complexities of Being a Partner of New Zealand Army Personnel on Deployment

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I wish/do not wish to be sound recorded during the interview.

I wish/do not wish to have notes taken during the interview instead of being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my interview transcript returned to me for checking.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Full Name – printed: _____

Appendix Three: Military Personnel Information Sheet

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

On the Home Front:
The Complexities of Being a Partner of New Zealand Army Personnel on Deployment

MILITARY PERSONNEL INFORMATION SHEET

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted by Maike Guesgen, a Master of Arts student in Social Anthropology at Massey University, Palmerston North.

Project Description
The aim of this project will be to explore the experience of military families who have had New Zealand Army partners deploy to Iraq as part of Op Manawa. The purpose of this is to offer a multi-faceted look of the various components of, and challenges to the lives of these individuals. More specifically, this study will focus on the adaptations, support used, challenges, coping mechanisms and resilience factors.

This project will invite participants to take part in a one-on-one interview. This will last approximately one hour, during which time I invite you to respond to the following questions:

-What is your role within the NZ Army?
-What role do you perform in relation to deployment?
-How long has this position been there? Has it changed from what it previously involved?
-What is your understanding of how partners are supported during deployment? What is your role in terms of support?
-How do partners get in touch with you?
-Who do you interact with the majority of the time?
-Is there a difference in your job description and the reality of what you do on a day-to-day basis?

Project Procedures
Each participant will be invited to attend an initial one-hour interview. These interviews will be voice recorded in order to reduce any disruption caused by note taking, however if the participant does not wish to be sound recorded, the researcher will take notes instead. Interviews will also be open-ended and based loosely on the above questions, but not constrained by them. If the participant wishes to discuss certain occurrences, actions or opinions of their experience, they are welcome to do so. Once I have reviewed the interview data, I may ask the participant to have a follow up interview to cover any points that I wish to know more about. This will be of course at the participant's discretion.

Data Management and Confidentiality
Data acquired from recorded interviews will be used in the final report; however, information in this study will be kept confidential and will not reach the public domain. You will not be identified by name in the report to protect your privacy. All voice recordings and transcripts will be archived in a secure location until the conclusion of the study, at which point all interview information will be destroyed. A summary of the research findings will be made available to each participant, and will be made accessible when this is available.

Participation and Withdrawal

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

-Decline to answer any particular question;

-Withdraw from the study at any time;

-Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;

-Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;

-Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded;

-Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Questions and Contact Information

If you have any further questions on the research project, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or my supervisors at the following locations:

Maike Guesgen

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R.Andrews@massey.ac.nz   c.m.morris@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 16/22. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83657, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Appendix Four: Military Personnel Consent Form

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

On the Home Front:
The Complexities of Being a Partner of New Zealand Army Personnel on Deployment

MILITARY PERSONNEL CONSENT FORM

I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I wish/do not wish to be sound recorded during the interview.

I wish/do not wish to have notes taken during the interview instead of being sound recorded.

I wish/do not wish to have my interview transcript returned to me for checking.

I agree to participate in this study.

Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Full Name – printed: _____