The Effect of Army Support Services on Satisfaction with Army Life Experienced by Partners of Service Personnel and Their Subsequent Willingness to Remain within the Military Enclave

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Psychology at Massey University

Lieutenant Marguerite Renaud

2000

ABSTRACT

The present short-term study is a survey of the effect of Army support services on satisfaction with Army life as experienced by partners of service personnel and their subsequent willingness to remain within the military enclave. It aimed to elicit the personal perspective of partners on deployment issues, the efficacy of current Army support services, and attitudes to continuing an association with the Army. Participants were recruited from the families of those soldiers who had returned from peacekeeping deployments between January to July 2000. New Zealand Army Administration staff supplied a list of 317 addresses. Of these, 291 partners could be contacted by mail and subsequently 184 individuals returned a completed 16-page New Zealand Partner Support Survey (2000) questionnaire. This questionnaire elicited data about: socio-demographic characteristics; perceived support; Army support services; general issues; potential deployment problems; general health (GHQ-30); parenting issues and anecdotal narratives. Using quantitative methods the data was analyzed with an additional aim to collect data for a future longitudinal study on the retention of Army personnel. The participants' anecdotal narratives showed that deployments do impact the family and that family factors such as attitudes to Army lifestyle and support services do influence the soldiers' decision to remain in service. The study revealed that partners tend to mainly expect support from the Army with what they perceive is an Army related problem. These issues primarily concerned communication links with deployed partners and dissemination of information regarding soldiers.

Based on this evidence it is suggested that the Army consolidate current support services to establish positions of full-time, dedicated Information Officers. The main responsibility of this position would be to liase between the soldiers' families and the Army. From this short-term study it is apparent that the decision to remain in service can be influenced by the Army's demonstration that the soldiers' families are valued members of the Military community. The provision of a quality support service specifically tailored to meet the needs of those it purports to serve is tangible evidence of this regard.

Dedicated to all those who support the New Zealand Soldier

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude to the partners of our deployed troops for sharing their perspective on what it really means to "keep the home fires burning" and without whom this research would not have been possible. Your self-sacrifice is acknowledged.

My heartfelt thanks is offered to my supervisor Professor Janet Leathem for the time and energy she expended to assist me to prepare this research report.

Lieutenant Colonel Cosgrove provided loyal support and diligent mentoring of this young Subaltern. Major Kate Mirfin was always willing to provide advice and guidance.

My parents remain a positive, stable influence in my life and I thank them for their support and constant belief in my abilities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE OF FIGURES

GLOSSARY

Attrition

This refers to the loss of personnel during the first 5 years of service. Buddin (1981) noted that high levels of attrition are of concern to the army because they represent to the expenditure of resources with no appreciable return.

Capitalizing Army

When referring to New Zealand troops the term Army has been capitalized for two reasons. Firstly, it distinguishes the NZA from the defense force of other countries. Secondly, it is a mark of respect for the personnel who serve within the NZA.

Deployment problem

Any issue arising from a deployment that the stay-at-home partner judges to be of concern to them. For example: lack of information about their soldier-partner's safety.

Early career

Consists of the partners of soldiers who were either a Private or a Lance Corporal.

Formal source of support

Any Army service, or civilian organization, approached by the stay-at-home partner.

High GHQ-30 score

A high GHQ-30 score is a result of 10 or higher obtained by an individual when completing the GHQ-30 rating scale. A high score indicates a low general health status and implies the need for professional intervention.

Informal source of support

This refers to reliance on friends, family, or self.

Late career

Consists of Staff Sergeants, Warrant Officers, Majors, and Lieutenant Colonels.

Mid career

Consists of Corporals, Sergeants, Lieutenants, and Captains.

Percentage of problems resolved

The proportion of participants who indicated that they believe they have either solved or come to terms with a particular problem.

Potential deployment problems

Issues frequently mentioned as problems by individuals, but which are not necessarily of concern for every stay-at-home partner. For example: difficulties with offspring.

Readiness

This refers to the level of preparedness of troops to deploy on a mission. This concept includes being psychologically and physically equipped and organized to

move into theater. Making practical arrangements and coming to terms with leaving the home and family form an important part of ensuring peace of mind for soldiers deploying on active service.

Resolved

A deployment problem is perceived to have been resolved when the stay-at-home partner has indicated that a solution has been found or there has been acceptance of the situation so that it is no longer regarded as being a major issue of concern.

Retention

At regular intervals army personnel are required to decide whether to remain or leave the Service. When trained, experienced staff leave it costs a significant amount to replace them and their exit creates workforce management complications. Furthermore, a low rate of enlistment exacerbates the negative consequences of a low rate of retention (Vernez & Zellmann, 1987).

Unresolved

A deployment problem was regarded as unresolved when the stay-at-home partner indicated that there had been no satisfactory resolution of a major issue of concern.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Prior to 1970 the single major survey of military families in the United States was Hill's study of post World War 2 families (1945). The first large scale military family study on prisoners of war/men missing in action was conducted from 1971 to 1978, marking a turning point in the official treatment of US military families (Dahl, McCubbin, & Lester, 1976; Hunter, 1986; Hunter & Plag, 1973).

Observing that deployments created stress for families, a pilot study of routine military separation and reunion involving US Navy families was completed between 1975 and 1976 (Dahl *et al.*, 1976). Similarly, Orthner (1980) focused on separation due to deployment in the United States Air Force. Based on the findings, recommendations regarding the supportive treatment of defence force families were implemented.

Research focusing on the needs and concerns of United States Military Families proliferated so that by 1984 the Military Family Research Center in Washington DC was able to publish an in-house listing of 2000 annotated citations of military family publications (Hunter, 1989). Two major Australian studies were initiated, mirroring the growing interest in military family issues. These were: *Supporting service families: A report on the main problems facing spouses of the Australian Defense Force and some recommended solutions* (Hamilton, 1986) and *Careers*

in Conflict: Report of a study of service officers' careers and families in peacetime (Jans, 1988).

To date, only three major studies have centered on military families in New Zealand. Turner (1986) examined 889 military families and two years later Hunter (1989) produced *Upfront Downunder: An outsider's inside view of New Zealand military families*. She made sixty recommendations for increasing the Armed Forces' responsiveness to family issues. Hunter proposed that if these suggestions were implemented, Army families would experience a significant reduction of stress. She predicted that a contented family life would have a flow-on effect that would be manifest in high productivity and work satisfaction amongst soldiers with subsequent increased retention rates. A third study entitled *Psychological effects of peacekeeping deployments on the partners of service personnel* was completed by MacDonald, Chamberlain, Long, and Mirfin (1996). Data gathered during this study revealed that separation due to deployment increased psychological distress whilst decreasing general well-being.

These earlier studies confirmed that retaining military personnel is of prime importance considering the cost in time, effort, and resources required to train soldiers. Additionally, soldiers' commitment to a long-term career in the Army is heavily influenced by their family's attitude to military life. Although deployment is a constant possibility, the reality of the ensuing separation can precipitate significant levels of distress within Army families (Zeff, Lewis, & Hirsch, 1997).

With the NZ Army's increasing involvement in peacekeeping operations there is a growing likelihood that soldiers will be regularly mobilized thereby increasing the probability of family distress.

The nature of military service incorporates an expectation of commitment from soldiers to duty that supercedes the demands that are incumbent in most civilian jobs (Wood, 1988). The typical couple relationship is replaced by a triangular confederation of army-soldier-partner. Group dynamics and cohesion are an important component of an effective operational unit (Manning, 1991). Thus, soldiers are encouraged to bond by forming friendships amongst colleagues and spend time together in various activities such as sport. It has been shown that in some instances the soldiers' partners respond to these liaisons with feelings of rejection and isolation (Rozenzweig, Gampel, & Dasberg, 1981).

The longer a soldier remains in military service, the more important the relationship between the couple and their personal well-being becomes (Martin & Ickovics, 1987). As one New Zealand Army wife stated in Hunter's report, "In the armed forces the work life and home life are so intertwined that one drastically affects the other" (1989, p.2). In the course of duty, soldiers are routinely absent from family events such as births, deaths, and celebrations (Schumm, Bell, Knott, & Rice, 1996). Additionally, continual relocations require adjustment to the new surroundings and may impact negatively on their offspring's educational achievement. Army expectations that soldiers will move as required and fulfill

necessary work-related duties tend to mediate life decisions and influence family oriented events (Hunter, 1989).

An adjunct to this is that perceived work/family fit has been shown to have more impact on relations between couples than time spent at work (Pittman, 1994). Partners who are dissatisfied with military life, or who become distressed by the manner in which the deployment plan is being implemented, tend to encourage soldiers to leave the army. It has been documented that psychological stressors experienced during operational phases of deployment can affect the health, morale, and mental readiness of soldiers to engage in combat. According to Bartone, Adler, and Vaitkus (1998), isolation, ambiguity of roles, powerlessness, boredom, and perceived danger/threat are the most prevalent stressors soldiers have to contend with. The level of stress experienced in these areas significantly correlates with depression, psychiatric symptoms, and low morale. When soldiers who are in theater perceive that their families are facing difficulties without adequate support, this stress will add to the burden they already carry. According to Macdonough (1991) soldiers are more likely to remain operationally focused if they perceive that their families are being adequately supported.

However, it is not only the deployed soldiers who suffer stress overload. Zeff *et al.* (1997) reported that partners back home tend to experience more distress than the soldiers. Distressed partners are predisposed to pressure soldier-partners to leave the service in order to avoid further absence from home (Jolly, 1992). A

number of factors have been identified that affect the emotional well-being of partners back home. These include prior life stress, lack of confidence in dealing with army agencies, short notice on postings, financial satisfaction, contentment with relationship, predictability of partner's work schedule, and period of separation (Rosen & Moghadam, 1990; Schumm *et al.*, 1996).

It has been observed that the accumulation of stressors and perceived military stress accounts for a significant proportion of variance in the psychological well-being of partners. Knapp and Newmann (1993) found that the less the accumulation of stressors and military stress during separation, the greater the psychological well-being of the partner. One mitigator of partner distress that has been identified is availability of social support from formal and informal sources.

By its very nature troop mobilization engenders many personal adjustments within the family. The situation necessitates that the couples become reconciled to the notion of the coming separation. During the deployment soldiers have to adapt to the operational environment whilst families have to deal with problematic issues without the soldier-partner's input. Returnee troops are expected to reintegrate with family and community. In their turn, the family is called upon to fit the soldiers back into their everyday activities (Rozenzweig *et al.*, 1981).

Many variables can effect how well families adjust. Some of these are: intimacy within the relationship; the extent of the soldiers' involvement with family activities

prior to leaving; the extent that domestic roles are shared; and the degree of the partners' independence. Families that have prior relationship problems, lack of social support, and psychological instability are more predisposed to developing significant distress. Relationship problems may be exacerbated by the separation of couples. Being apart may either amplify or relieve the pressure, but upon the soldier's return the problem may still require resolution (Rosen, Westhuis, & Teitelbaum, 1994).

Socio-demographic characteristics can also heighten problems. These include ethnicity, employment status, expectations of army support, and unsatisfactory use of services. Rosen *et al.* (1994) observed that those partners who experience high distress also did not utilize available support services effectively and had unrealistic expectations of what the army would provide.

As has been shown, people who are satisfied with army life are more likely to support their partner's continued military service. A proven way of increasing the partners' willingness to stay within the military enclave is to provide effective support services. A thorough literature review is presented in the next section, demonstrating the value of research dealing with the support of military families as a factor in the retention of army personnel.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Influence of military lifestyle on soldiers, their partners, and their children

A career in the army is typically punctuated by repeated deployment, moves between bases, and returns from active duty. Most army personnel accept that the job involves periods away from home base, family, and friends. Personal relationships involving soldiers must of necessity function within the context of deployment. Both soldiers and those who care about them are confronted with difficulties associated with maintenance of intimate interpersonal connections that are repeatedly interrupted by separations. This issue is as pertinent today as it was over two decades ago when Decker (1976) expressed an opinion that, "to function within these constraints is trying at best and at some times, traumatic" (p.113).

Work done by McCubbin, Dahl, and Hunter (1976) as well as Hunter and Nice (1978) investigated the types of stressors that affect the soldiers' satisfaction with military life and willingness to remain in the service. Their findings showed that separation from partners and family due to completion of repeated tours of duty was the most significant stressor. Taylor, Morrice, Clark, and McCann (1985) were even more specific about the stress of continuous partings and reunions caused by the soldier's military responsibilities. They observed that time spent

apart could precipitate psychological pressure that would manifest as depression, anxiety, and sexual dysfunction for both soldiers and their partners.

Lavee, McCubbin, and Patterson (1985) examined family adaptation and reaction to stress. They were specifically interested in how families deal with transitional periods caused by such events as relocation to another base or departure of troops on active duty. The researchers found that there is a "pile-up" of stressors incorporating previous problems as well as fresh difficulties related with the transition. They concluded that strong family coping resources, sound social support, and a sense of solidarity all have a positive influence on the family's level of adaptation. However, they emphasized that resources exhibited varied ability to successfully cushion recipients from separation stress. They found that people who coped most effectively with stressors had strong family ties, communicated satisfactorily, and were flexible as regards change. However, although social support did not appear to have a direct effect on family adaptation to change, it was apparent that it did have an important indirect influence. In other words, involvement in community activities and friendship networks tended to decrease the perceived stressfulness of the situation.

Corroborating findings from earlier studies, Fanshawe (1986) wrote that, "absence and separation must be considered a major hazard in army life" (p.106). He pointed out that it is not only the time spent away from partners, but also the disruption of the relationship between the soldiers and their children that cause

difficulties. When soldiers depart the family are left to adjust their lifestyle. When the troops come home again there is a period of readjustment. Thus, both departures and arrivals can be inherently problematic.

Martin and Ickovics (1987) conducted a longitudinal study investigating the effects of stress on the psychological well-being of army spouses. Their research demonstrated that stress associated with both military life and marriage have important independent impacts on the general mental health of army partners. Additionally, they hypothesized that the correlation between marital satisfaction and well-being becomes more significant the longer couples remain within the military enclave. Although they acknowledged that some other careers also involve frequent spousal separation, they pointed out that soldiers and their partners tend to be young people often adjusting to a fairly new liaison. Thus, it was suggested that youth, plus inexperience, increases the vulnerability of those who assume weighty family responsibilities to personal and family dysfunction. The researchers also noted that for those who are new to the area, the pressure tends to be exacerbated by absence of support previously available from extended family or close friends.

Rosenberg (1989) discovered that even amongst partners who had accepted the deployment aspect of military duty, tolerance of separation tended to wane when trips away from home occurred frequently or were prolonged. However, a few army spouses (10%) reported that the occasional time spent apart actually

benefited the marital relationship. Based on these results Rosenburg (1989) concluded that it was not so much the separation that caused upset, but factors surrounding deployment such as rapidity of departure, preparation for time spent apart, and length of the tour of duty.

Schumm, Hemesath, Bell, Palmer-Johnson, and Elig (1998) investigated whether deployment in Operation Desert Storm reduced marital satisfaction among American Army enlisted personnel. Finding no significant over-all change to marital satisfaction, they suggested that the actual deployment was not a major instigator of dissatisfaction with army life.

A similar study by Schumm, Bell, Knott, and Rice (1996) examined the perceived effect of stressors on marital satisfaction among civilian wives of enlisted American soldiers deployed to Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. Results confirmed that being stressed during a partner's absence on deployment was not necessarily enough of a problem to detract from marital satisfaction. Limitations of the Somalia study were that deployment was brief, uneventful with few casualties and over 50% of the soldiers had previous experience of deployment. However, by way of contrast, Operation Desert Storm featured battles and troop losses. Thus, the level of military action during deployment does not appear to have had a significant effect on stay-at-home partners' marital satisfaction.

Deployment and separation from family continues to be an issue that inspires research. Recently Zeff *et al.* (1997) examined stressors experienced by soldiers in the field and problems that arise for loved ones back home. Results confirmed that stay-at-home partners registered the most distress. The researchers speculated that the active service personnel experienced less stress because they operated within the organized, supportive milieu of a specialized unit free from family concerns.

The nature of soldiering demands that personnel be separated from loved ones when they are deployed on active duty. It appears that most military families accept the soldier's absence, but problems might arise when the deployment happens so rapidly that there is insufficient time for adequate preparation for the time apart. How long the soldier is away for also has bearing on stress levels generated by deployment. Typical mood states associated with time spent apart include depression, anxiety, and sexual dysfunction affecting both soldiers and partners. Finally, solidarity, effective communication, and flexible attitudes towards change bolster levels of coping. When members of military families become involved in community activities and socializing with friends the informal support they obtain tends to relieve some of the perceived stressfulness of waiting for soldiers to return from missions that may be dangerous.

Influence of partners and children within a scenario of changing family dynamics

Around the late 1970s social scientists began showing an interest in the way changing family dynamics impacted military personnel. For example, Decker (1976) contended that the American Army had moved from promoting an insulated environment to facilitating a closer integration with society at large. She observed that the defense force had become subject to the same trends and pressures as society outside it. To accommodate these changes she suggested that it was necessary for the military hierarchy to take heed of those social values, laws, and family norms that impacted on soldiers as well as their families.

Being particularly interested in the American Navy, Grace and Steiner (1978) investigated attitudes toward life in the service as expressed by partners of naval personnel. They found that partners' degree of satisfaction with life in the services influenced retention of enlisted personnel. Wives who perceived that their husbands were committed to the defense force, comfortable within their present posting, and satisfied with their career choice tended to be more supportive of re-enlistment. These authors concluded that service personnel and their partners interactively influenced decisions to remain within the military environment. Subsequent research focused on partners' influence on retention in different branches of the defense force with similar results (Archer & Cauthorne, 1986; Derr, 1979; Lund, 1978).

Concentrating on retention of staff in the American Army, Woelfel and Savell (1978) concluded that marital contentment was unrelated to job satisfaction and intent to remain in service. However, the team acknowledged that it was important for the defense force to increase family acceptance of the military as a valuable employer by providing services specially structured to meet individual family needs thereby improving the quality of family life.

In 1982 Edna observed that the official response to families of enlisted personnel in the western defense forces had undergone significant changes since the 1940's. The author explained that this adjustment of attitude had come about because families were increasingly less willing to accommodate every demand issued by the hierarchy. Hence, it was suggested that modern families only desired to remain within the armed services if their perceptions of the positives of military life balanced and preferably outweighed the negatives.

Concentrating on military families McCubbin and Lavee (1986) observed that the enlisted families varied in terms of the particular pressures they faced as well as the family resources, personal coping skills, and community supports they could access. Of specific note was their proposal that the crucial strengths families call upon or develop in response to the stresses of military life also vary according to the stages of each family system's existence. The positive attitude of soldiers who perceived that they "belonged" in the defense force seemed to facilitate their family's adaptation to a lifestyle heavily influenced by service demands. Other

important factors were the partners' perception of being appreciated and valued as well as the quality of support services provided by the military. Emphasizing the important influence of family on enlisted personnel's' willingness to remain in service, McCubbin and Lavee suggested that the army actively promote the message that the army "takes care of its own".

Segal (1986) described the military and the family as "greedy institutions" in that they both expected complete commitment and set out to exact exclusive loyalty. Thus, military expectations plus role demands from family heightened the potential for conflict of interests. He suggested that the defense force actually vied for the soldiers' allegiance, time as well as zeal, thereby pressurizing the relationship between soldiers and their family.

The American Army commissioned a study in 1987 investigating the influence of personal problems on troops involved with combat or peacekeeping duties. Major effects were identified as combat fatigue, panic, poor judgment, and loss of the will to fight. From this result the United States Army hierarchy concluded that it was expedient to identify family needs and play an active part in satisfying them. Segal (1986) pointed out that this stance not only fostered positive public relations with the civilian population but also assisted the army in attaining its mission.

Degree of satisfaction with army life was the only direct predictor of spousal support for re-enlistment in the armed services according to a study by Pittman and Orthner (1988). Developing this further, Rosen, Moghaden, and Vaitkus (1989) were interested to discover if rank had any bearing on the extent to which soldiers were affected by a mate's attitude to their choice of career. Findings suggested that rank does make a difference. The personal morale of non-commissioned staff seemed to be directly impacted. However junior enlisted soldiers were indirectly affected by their partner's personal perception of the compatibility between military and family responsibilities.

Following on from the American Army's 1987 study, Stanley, Segal, and Laughton (1990) investigated the extent to which knowledge of the well-being of their family back home influenced the soldier's vigilance in combat. The researchers concluded that the primary way to increase commitment from soldiers and their family to the military mission is for defense force hierarchy to take a more responsive role in helping their personnel take care of family needs, particularly in times of separation due to job demands.

Commenting on changing gender roles in western society, Stanley, Segal, and Laughton (1990) observed that western women have increasingly sought parity in the workplace thereby rejecting exclusive devotion to traditional homemaker duties. The authors predicted that in seeking to achieve an equitable division of parenting responsibilities there would be an increasing conflict of personal needs

as both partners strive to fulfill their perceived career responsibilities within the framework of family demands. Further pressure is placed on families when military requirements necessitate the deployment of troops or relocation of personnel.

Seeking to specifically identify family variables that impact on the retention of junior enlisted officers in the American Army, Rosen and Moghadam (1991) conducted a survey that focused on three major categories. Data from the study indicated that levels of commitment to the army mission, satisfaction with work schedules, and the emotional atmosphere at work mediated whether or not junior officers remained in service. Findings failed to support the notion that happiness between partners at home influenced retention.

However, keeping partners satisfied with army support services was a definite factor in retaining military personnel according to Rosen *et al.* (1994). These researchers found that young partners with unrealistic expectations were more likely to want soldier-mates to leave the army and also displayed a high level of emotional reactivity to perceived problems including separation during deployment. Unrealistic expectations were reflected in spousal perceptions that the army had a duty to solve all family problems that might surface during deployment and that they had a right to receive special treatment from the army.

Continuing this strand of inquiry, Rosen and Durand (1995) collected data from American soldiers with partners who were deployed in Operation Desert Storm. The researchers used the Army/Family Interface Scale, which was developed to measure the perceptions of compatibility between army and family life. They found that the main predictor of retention was rank and family expectations of organizational support during deployment. In the case of non-commissioned officers it was observed that the higher the rank the greater the likelihood of remaining in the army. However, both junior and NCO couples with marital problems were more likely to leave the service. Additionally, results showed that the majority of partners (68%) of soldiers who remained on active duty for some time did not expect the army to solve all their problems, whereas 67% of partners with mates who left active service believed that they should. It was recommended that the army hierarchy take steps to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the level of support they can and will supply.

Lakhani and Hoover (1995) studied child-care use, earnings, and reenlistment desires of wives of enlisted soldiers in the United States Army. They focused on this particular group in recognition of the fact that although more females are being posted within the armed services, the majority of soldiers who are deployed are male. Furthermore, military families tend to be traditional unions with married couples raising children together. In this particular study it was found that wives of army personnel regarded access to quality child-care as important, but that for those with a lower income the service was not affordable. The authors

recommended that the army facilitate the accessibility of child-care in order to meet needs and boost satisfaction levels amongst partners thereby promoting retention of personnel.

Three decades ago the first studies were published in America that examined how family dynamics affect soldiers' willingness to stay in the army. Researchers such as Decker (1976) concluded that although the military hierarchy had traditionally favored a relatively closed community approach, they were becoming increasingly interested in interfacing with society at large. By the 1980's they had realized that soldiers were significantly influenced to stay or quit the army by their family's perception of life within the military enclave. In a move to increase satisfaction with the army as an employer, support services were set in place to bolster a policy of "taking care of our own". Commitment to aid personnel to meet family needs, especially when work-related absence occurs, has increased over the last decade in recognition that satisfaction with army support services is an important factor in retention of personnel. When a soldier's family perceives that they are adequately supported they cope more positively with deployment related absences and for the soldier this tends to facilitate peace of mind regarding the family's welfare.

Problems partners and children encounter when soldiers are away on duty

Decker (1976) established that what is problematic for some is not so for others. She was particularly interested in partners' perceptions of problems with children, home management, and personal-need satisfaction. Decker aimed to identify problems most frequently encountered and to establish whether the prevalence could be attributed to deployment-mediated separation. Furthermore, she hoped to discover if there was a significant and quantifiable relationship between the perceived severity of a problem and the partner's deployment status. From an analysis of findings Decker discovered that spouses believed that minor problems remained inconsequential even if they were separated from soldier-partners on active duty. However, serious problems were perceived to worsen during deployment. The most disruptive prevalent problems were identified as loneliness and lack of companionship.

What people decide they "need" also varies between individuals. Khantzian and Mack (1983) proposed the existence of "felt need" as derived from peoples' own perceptions. Thus, the authors argued that "felt needs" are limited according to the extent of each person's knowledge base and level of education.

Despite the uniqueness of some needs and problems, there are some that are commonly experienced by military families. Fanshawe (1986) listed the most frequently reported difficulties associated with separation from partners as being

loneliness, boredom, isolation, and loss of support. Amongst those with children the top strain was identified as solo parenting, especially managing youngsters' behavior in families where the soldier-parent usually fulfilled the disciplinarian role.

However, some subjects claimed that there were some positive aspects to being left at home. For example, these people expressed enjoyment at being able to organize their time to suit themselves and some resented having to readjust their routine to accommodate the returnee. Additionally, children might find themselves compelled to adjust to accommodate a parent's absence. However, having made the adjustment some youngsters might not be entirely welcoming when the parent returns. Fanshawe noted that "only" children are especially prone to displays of jealousy and unwillingness to share the stay-at-home adults' attention with someone else.

Another pattern of response Fanshawe (1986) reported was the tendency of some young people to "play up" during a parent's absence. One subject even recognized the interplay between her own negative feelings and her child's misbehavior. Thus, this study illustrated the diversity of response patterns and coping mechanisms amongst individual family members affected by deployment.

In 1996 results from a longitudinal study investigating the psychological effects of peacekeeping deployments on the partners of New Zealand Armed Forces personnel was published. MacDonald *et al.* (1996) found that the most common

problems were products of separation such as loneliness and isolation. Reflecting the nature of the mission most respondents reported concern for their partner's safety and were perturbed by the perceived lack of information as well as the inability to freely communicate with loved ones. Perceptions of the availability of adequate support were shown to either exacerbate or ameliorate the negative effects of separation.

Loneliness, boredom, isolation, and loss of support are major difficulties for individuals whose partners have been deployed on active service. Dealing with parenting exacerbates the stresses of coping alone. Furthermore, children and adolescents themselves are compelled to adjust to their parent's absence. Some may enjoy extra attention from the stay-at-home parent and subsequently resent a reduction in this contact upon the absentee parent's return. For others a negative reaction to the disruption in family life may manifest as misbehavior. A primary factor in how well partners and offspring cope with work-related absences is their perception of the quantity and quality of support.

Assessing individual ability to cope with problems

A few decades ago Lozowick (1955) suggested that sex role adaptability demonstrates a direct relationship with the emotional adjustment of children. He found that there was a greater similarity between the parents of his less anxious subjects than between those of his more anxious subjects. Manis (1958) concurred with this idea and reported that his "adjusted" subjects perceived their parents as more alike than did his "maladjusted" subjects. Both these studies introduced the notion that parents who eschewed strict role division for a more androgynous style found it easier to cope with sole parenting.

Supporting the positive aspects of androgyny Block (1973) posited that those who fit flexibly into a role according to the demands of the current situation display a greater maturity of ego functioning than others who adhere to stereotypical gender-mediated behavior. Continuing this line of inquiry, Bem (1975) contrasted the so-called adaptability of individuals who choose to behave androgynously with the behavioral restriction of people who steadfastly cling to traditional western male/female roles.

Similarly, Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975) found a strong positive relationship between androgyny and self esteem. They suggested that the exhibition of a high degree of both masculinity and femininity might promote the most socially beneficial outcome. According to these authors the combined

strength of both elements has the power to positively influence attitudinal and behavioral consequences for androgynous individuals. Maracek (1978) also championed an androgynous approach to roles after his research results demonstrated a significant association between strict adherence to gender-specific roles and measures of high anxiety, low self-esteem, and low self-acceptance.

Focusing specifically on army families, Hunter and Nice (1978) investigated how being androgynous helps stay-at-home mates cope with the absence of their soldier-partners. They suggested that sex role adaptability as major criterion for "wives" to perform competently despite environmental stress. It was noted that while the military "husband" is deployed, the "wife" must adopt a dual role of mother and father to their children. When troops return from duty in the field there is an expectation that the soldiers be reintegrated into the family unit. Hunter and Nice found that although it was initially difficult for partners at home to adopt a dual role, many subsequently became reluctant to return to the status quo. They concluded that this produced stress during both the separation and reunion phases of routine military deployments.

Three typical patterns of coping behavior were identified by McCubbin (1979) following a review of three studies on coping with separation of family members. Some people rely on their own inner resources to maintain family stability and manage anxiety. Others canvas social support from within the community and the

family unit. A third coping style consists of a direct attack on stressors through a combination of individual action and collective efforts.

Felton, Lehmann, Brown, and Liberatos (1980) postulated that a family member's gender role orientation might be considered as one of the important resources affecting and shaping coping behavior. They found that nontraditional sex-role attitudes provided the flexibility required for successful management of demands and hardships incumbent in most situational stressors. Also targeting gender roles as well as survival, Patterson and McCubbin (1984) confirmed that coping is both a psychological resource and a behavioral repertoire.

Apart from coping styles it has been suggested that certain personality traits make it easier for some people to deal fairly positively with the stress associated with deployment. Rosen, Westhuis, and Teitelbaum (1993) noted that previous experience of deployment, having grown up in a military family, and receiving organizational preparation for the departure of soldier-family members, assisted individuals to process the temporary absence of loved ones. Other factors that made a difference were having realistic expectations of what the military can provide for families and personal comfort with accessing army support services.

Following an investigation of family responses to the absence of active duty family members deployed to Somalia in 1993, Zeff *et al.* (1997) concluded that stay-at-home mates displayed greater stress levels than soldier-partners. Those

respondents who were older and more experienced at dealing with this type of separation found it easier to cope with deployment related problems. However, most families expressed a desire for efficacious support throughout the deployment period.

In summary, although coping behavior is varied amongst individuals, there are discernable patterns. One pattern involves turning outwards to seek support from community members. Another approach is to rely exclusively on personal strengths. A third style employs the combined efforts of internal and external resources. Another factor that impacts an individual's ability to cope is gender-role orientation. Individuals who adhere rigidly to stereotypical gender-mediated behavior tend to find it more difficult to cope with problems that arise during their partner's absence in comparison with those people who are flexible about role division. Research by Maracek (1978) suggested that an androgynous approach to roles engenders higher levels of self-esteem and self-acceptance. However, regardless of personality traits and coping styles, most partners concede that having access to army support services reduces stress associated with deployment of loved ones serving with the armed forces.

Types of support resources

McCubbin and Dahl (1974) pointed out that support services have the potential to facilitate the coping process in the case of prolonged separation affecting defense force personnel and their families. Furthermore, they expressed a belief in the necessity for research aimed at understanding the dynamics of routine separation and implementation of coping techniques as manifested by military families. Such studies were regarded as potential sources of crucial input required for the design of effective military and community support systems.

Montalvo (1976) noted that support resources were typically formal or informal. He described informal support as reliance on inner coping strengths and help from family members, friends, neighbors, or social clubs. Conversely, formal back up was regarded as support delivered by military and community social-service agencies that have organizational structure, public recognition, and employ trained staff to assist individuals with problem-solving activities. As most of these agents typically received a wage, Montalvo pointed out that a key feature of formal services is the professional relationship between helpers and clients.

A preference for informal support emerged from Fanshawe's survey (1986). Several respondents indicated that they would only discuss personal problems with their partner. Thus, when the soldiers were away from home 20% of these partners claimed that they kept their problems to themselves. However, female

stay-at-home partners regarded the family they grew up in as an important source of advice and official sources of help were relegated a relatively minor role.

Rosen and Moghadam (1990) conducted a study that considered the stress-buffering effects of four types of informal social support on the general well-being of military wives. Women were asked about support from other wives both within and outside their husband's unit. They were also canvassed on their perception of help from civilian relatives and friends. Based on the results they concluded that perceived support from military wives from other units was the only type of support most respondents regarded as providing a significant cushioning effect against the stress of separation from soldier-partners.

To summarize, effective support services have the potential to bolster families' ability to cope during lengthy deployments. Informal support arises in the form of help from family and friends, whereas formal assistance is delivered by organizations especially set-up to do so. However, military families tend to prefer to turn to informal agents when they have personal problems. It had also been noted that partners of individuals who are away on active duty find solace and comfort in sharing their feelings with others who have had first-hand experience of waiting for a solder's return.

Knowledge and utilization of formal support services

Early research showed that knowledge of support services both outside and inside the military enclave was limited (Lindquist, 1952; Montalvo, 1976; Spellman, 1976).

Decker (1976) assessed her subjects' knowledge of resources by asking each person to indicate their general knowledge of military and community resources. She was especially interested in whether people actually used the services they were aware of. Results showed that whilst many people knew about individual services, fewer respondents claimed to have been referred to these organizations for assistance or to have accessed the proffered aid. For example, even though 63% of the sample knew of the existence of officially designated unit support people, few had a clear concept of their official functions and only 6% actually made contact. Most of the subjects indicated that they knew more about military resources than community support services.

When offered the option of community resources or military aid, most of Decker's subjects said they would turn to the military for support (1976). Reasons for this preference included the perception by some that it was more comfortable to access defense force services as they felt part of the military sub-culture. It was also pointed out that the same services are available at all the bases whereas civilian services were regarded as differing in availability, quality, and name from

place to place. Furthermore, Decker discovered that most people did not try to find out about support services until they actually needed to use them and then it was perceived as easier to utilize services located at the military base.

Formal services were not the first port of call for most of Decker's participants (1976). She gauged that 93% of those who used services chose informal sources. McEvoy (1982) confirmed this tendency when he found that the military families he studied turned to other family members for help, rather than calling on more formal resources within the community.

Despite this apparent preference for informal support or military aid, American research has postulated that the civilian community, as well as the military family community, are valuable assets in management of family stress. They have pointed out that the community provides the environment and the context in which families pull together in order to deal with stressful events (Hunter & Hickman, 1981; McCubbin, 1979).

Edna (1982) has suggested that military families are reluctant to use formal support services because there is a stigma attached to seeking help for personal or family problems within an institution perceived to stand for stability, resilience, and endurance. Edna has also argued that families are the primary source of support for soldiers, suggesting that by providing efficacious support services the

military can increase the general well-being not only of families but also of service personnel.

When Fanshawe (1986) studied mothers with young children living in an army town in America he realized that many of these women were concerned that sharing personal family problems with an army-mediated service would have a negative affect on their partner's career. Fueled by this fear, women reported that the one service they did use freely was the doctor who was mostly consulted when their children were sick.

Another perceived source of disquiet identified by Fanshawe (1986) was support groups and clubs organized expressly for military partners. Several women indicated that they avoided social get-togethers, as they feared that personal information shared confidentially with others would become public knowledge. Furthermore, they were worried that not being able to readily communicate with personnel away on active duty would prevent them from dispelling rumor conveyed by gossip to their partner.

When people bear scant knowledge about support resources they tend to be reluctant to access them. However, if a need becomes sufficiently pressing, individuals will usually make an effort to find out what help is available. Even so, individuals might perceive that if they access formal aid supplied by the army, they will be revealing that there are problems within the family and this might be viewed

negatively by an organization that encourages resilience amongst the personnel. Nevertheless, others appear to prefer military support because it fits their ethos that "the army should take care of its own". Military families need to be well informed about the various support services that are available and be reassured that their approach for help will be treated with the strictest of confidence.

Evaluation of resources and recommendations for improvements

Over three decades ago Richan (1969) sagely noted that, "a service not delivered when and where needed is not a service at all" (p.22). Thus, to ensure that support services remain relevant effective military organizations must periodically evaluate the programs they offer to military personnel and their families.

Edna (1982) proposed that when families perceive that the defense force is "taking care of their own", they will be more satisfied with the military lifestyle and if they are more inclined to stay there would be a concomitant rise in retention rates of service personnel. Furthermore, Edna championed further research suggesting that as the data base expands there will be a growth in the comprehension of how the successful military family manages to blend personal goals with those of importance to the military.

Fanshawe (1986) argued that simply expanding existing programs would not solve the problem of failure to reach high risk or vulnerable families. He wrote that, "far

from being enmeshed in a supportive network of official help, these families appear to be more accurately pictured as finding their own resources." (p.124).

McCubbin and Lavee (1986) were another research team who promoted the tailoring of specific family programs to support various family strengths at different stages in the family system lifecycle. They recommended that defense force policy promote family time as a way of assisting personnel to satisfy needs for personal interaction with partners and children. As an adjunct they proposed that the official championing of family cohesiveness would facilitate soldiers and their partners' sense of "military-fit". In other words, they suggested that families are more content with army life if they perceive that there is official recognition and appreciation of their relationship with service personnel. This sense of belonging is strengthened if family have faith that they will be satisfactorily supported in time of need. McCubbin and Lavee hastened to add that this is not to say that families must always come first, but rather that soldiers along with their families have a relevant claim on quality time that is free of military service demands.

No matter how relevant and potentially efficient support services are, they have no value if the people who need them do not know they exist or have only a vague idea of what is being offered. Thus, researchers have recommended that the defense force actively market their support programs, but caution them to do so in a user-friendly manner designed to promote utilization of the resources (Decker, 1976; Edna, 1982; Schumm & Bell, 1998; Van Vranken & Benson, 1976).

Outcome measures are a significantly useful way of ascertaining the efficacy of a service for meeting the needs of consumers. Thus, routine evaluation is a necessary part of running successful support programs for families of military personnel. Disseminating information about the services is also vital to ensure that the right people know that help is available and how to access it. Research findings have suggested the expansion of existing resources or institution of more services does not necessarily result in an increase of use by at-risk families. Soldiers and their family tend to be more satisfied with a military lifestyle when they perceive that the army hierarchy does acknowledge the importance of family life. Tangible indicators of official consideration of family needs are the development of support programs that are designed specifically to bolster family resources to cope with inevitable events such as frequent moves and deployment of troops on active service.

In September 1999, the largest contingent of New Zealand troops since 1968 deployed to East Timor. The deployment raised many issues and presented the opportunity to investigate their possible solutions. Based on the reviewed research, this study sought to identify the types of problems associated with deploying troops so as to ascertain whether current levels of Army support are effective.

In the next chapter the objectives of the New Zealand Army (NZA) Partner Support Survey (2000) will be described.

CHAPTER THREE

PRESENT STUDY

Research focus

This study investigated the effect of support offered to partners of deployed personnel by the NZA on their subsequent willingness to remain within the military enclave.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1.) What support services provided by the NZA do partners of deployed personnel access?
2.) How satisfied are partners with the assistance they have received?
3.) Does the quality of service affect their satisfaction with Army life?
4.) How do partners perceive the support services could be enhanced?

This research is important for three reasons. Firstly, it may provide deeper understanding of support requirements for partners and family of deployed troops. As a result, this could lead to the design of services with an improved client fit, thereby improving the quality of Army family life.

Secondly, the study will provide a measure of current support services by identifying those that are successful in meeting the needs of partners as well as highlighting those that need reassessment.

Thirdly, based on data gathered during the present investigation, partners' unmet needs could be revealed. Addressing such needs might improve satisfaction with Army life, thereby potentially improving retention and performance of Army personnel.

Fourthly, data concerning the changing dynamics of NZA families would be added to the current literature resource base.

Purpose and research rationale

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first aim was to investigate support services as one of the possible factors that could impact retention levels of NZA personnel returning from peacekeeping duties. The second aim was to assess the effectiveness of current Army support services in meeting the needs of the partners and family of soldiers on active duty.

Four major reasons provide the rationale for investigating the effectiveness of current Army support services. Firstly, there has been no other large-scale survey examining the characteristics of NZA family life since the extensive study *Upfront Downunder: An outsider's view of New Zealand military families* (Hunter, 1989) and the *Psychological Effects of Peacekeeping Deployments on the Partners of Service Personnel* (MacDonald, Chamberlain, Long, and Mirfin (1996). Since 1989 NZ troops have been increasingly involved in peacekeeping operations overseas

thereby altering the family system's environment. The present study has provided data that demonstrates the impact of deployments on family life.

Secondly, the NZA implemented recommendations suggested by Hunter (1989) regarding the welfare of Army families that included the institution of support services. To date there has been no review of the attitudes that soldiers' partners have to Army support services during deployments. The present research will collect up-to-date information on partner's perceptions of life in the military enclave.

Thirdly, the retention of trained, skilled military personnel is of great importance for the maintenance of an efficient operational defense force. Past studies have shown that military personnel tend to be significantly influenced by their partner's willingness for them to continue in service (Archer & Cauthorne, 1986; Derr, 1979; Lund, 1978). Thus, the current study sought to establish whether those surveyed were intending to encourage their soldier partner to stay or leave the Army.

Finally, the current study can contribute up-to-date information regarding the types of problems related to deployment that effect army families and the efficacy of current support services in assisting soldier's partners and family. Not only is this data pertinent to the New Zealand Defense Force, it also adds to worldwide research on the effect of deployments on families and subsequently on the retention of personnel.

Objectives

Objective one

To establish whether there is a relationship between satisfaction with support services and attitudes to remaining within the military enclave. Participants for this survey were recruited by contacting 291 partners of soldiers who had recently returned from peacekeeping missions in order to:

1.) Identify potential deployment problems

Soldiers typically expend a great deal of energy getting ready for a military operation both on the work front and at home. Meeting job deadlines and dealing with family obligations typically generates stress. Furthermore, research has shown that the amount and severity of problems associated with deployment affects how prepared soldiers and their families are to maintain an association with the army (Grace & Steiner, 1976; Woelfel & Savell, 1976; Rosen & Durand, 1995). In the study conducted by Macdonald, Chamberlain, Long, and Mirfin (1996) concerns about endorsing enough money for "extras" and "emergencies" emerged as a common stressor. These researchers also found that throughout deployment frequent stressors were family issues concerning sex, intimacy, and the well-being of family members. Partners and family left behind during the deployment were especially stressed by deployment "hassles" concerning separation, information

about departure and arrival dates, and communication with the absentee family member, and finances.

The current study sought to identify problems associated with deployment because it is essential to be informed about areas of need when evaluating or planning a support service that effectively meets the consumers' needs.

2.) Gauge current knowledge of available support services, identify the specific support sources partners use and assess level of satisfaction with them

There are several reasons why support services may be underutilized. Firstly, people tend to be reluctant to approach agencies they know little about. A straightforward solution is to ensure that potential consumers receive information advertising the resource. Secondly, services may not be meeting the needs of that specific population group. Routinely surveying military families to ascertain what kind of support they perceive they require facilitates the establishment and maintenance of effective services. As Cohen and Wills (1985) have proposed, when support is effectively matched to the stressor it acts as a buffer against the impact of the specific source of tension. Thirdly, dissatisfied consumers are likely to discontinue accessing that particular support resource. Routine performance evaluation and outcome measures assist organizations to gauge effectiveness. A

next step involves addressing points of dissatisfaction and instituting relevant changes.

3.) Measure the response of offspring to a parent's deployment

In order to discover to what extent offspring's adaptation and adjustment to separation from a parent affected stress levels within the family it was necessary to gauge their individual response. When Thompson (1998) examined the effects of parental military deployment on children's adjustment at school she found differences in emotional experience and coping mechanisms emerged as a function of age, gender, and emotional experiences associated with deployment. Her findings concurred with those of Kelley (1994) who found that separations commonly resulted in disruptions of a family's ability to maintain supportive relationships. Thus, when service personnel are sent away on military duty, there is an increased need for services that promote family cohesiveness and strengthen their internal coping capabilities.

4.) Assess the mental health of stay-at-home partners during the deployment

During separation partners at home typically cope with a lack of companionship, fears for the soldier's well-being, and keeping the family intact. Variables such as personality traits, previous experience, capacity to cope, and health status

determine how well they cope during a deployment. As Godwin (1997) discovered, when individuals are exposed to subtraumatic stressors such as separation from a partner occupied with military peacekeeping duties, psychosocial adjustment becomes necessary.

The NZ Army policy is to facilitate the strengthening of families by offering relevant support services. The current study considered partner's mental health status as a factor that impacts family dynamics, influences how individuals cope with separation due to deployment, and highlights support needs.

5.) Identify the current attitudes held by partners concerning aspects of Army life

In the last two decades organizational research has become more sensitive to the potential competition for commitment and time between employers and the employees' families. Issues that cause conflict between work and home have been identified as long hours on the job, frequent transfers, scheduling problems, and financial insecurity (Pleck, 1979). Following this line of enquiry, Orthner and Pittman (1986) investigated family contributions to work commitment. They found that family-related variables do have a noteworthy impact on job commitment. They explained that the family's psychological support of the worker is reflective of their perception of the organization. Their perceptions are conveyed to the worker subsequently influencing that individual's attitudes towards the workplace. These

researchers proposed that, "....organizations that increase family support activities are likely to benefit from those efforts" (1986, p. 581).

The current study identified the attitudes held by partners concerning army life in recognition of the potential influence of these definitions on personnel's determination to remain within the army. As shown by Rosen and Durand (1995), the impact of soldiers' work environment on the family changes during deployment. Deployment-related stress can be ameliorated by efficacious support services. Military leadership concerned with the retention of capable soldiers' pay heed to factors that affect military families during deployment.

6.) Identify support issues pertinent to partners

Over two decades ago Van Vranken and Benson (1976) canvassed military families in the United States Army to discover what kind of support they wanted. They found that access to counseling and the provision of satisfactory communication links between families and soldiers were of prime importance to participants. These researchers pointed out that as support needs change with time it is necessary to periodically survey consumers, institute new initiatives, and make adjustments to existing support services as necessary.

The current study requested that participants indicate what kind of support they would like the NZ Army to supply so that this information could form the basis of data considered when evaluating existing services.

Objective two

To provide feedback to the Human Resources Branch of the NZA regarding the efficacy of support services thereby providing recommendations for improved support services.

Support services tend to only be accessed if potential consumers perceive them as being relevant. Thus, when planning, developing, and delivering services it is essential to consult with the target population to ensure that resources supplied are reflective of their specific needs.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter four presents the methods and procedures of the study. For the purpose of presentation, the chapter has been divided into four sections: Type of research; Description of the sample; Description of the research instrument; and the Description of the procedure.

Type of research

This study investigated the support that soldiers' partners received from the NZA whilst the troops were deployed overseas on peacekeeping missions. This survey used an eight-part questionnaire specifically designed for this study. As applied research, the study focused on extending existing knowledge and gathering new information. This would assist with the identification of the support issues that are of concern to military families in the absence of their soldier-members and facilitated the development of recommendations for the improvement of Army support services.

Description of the procedure

Between January and June 2000 an estimated 317 NZA personnel in recognised relationships, returned from various peacekeeping missions overseas. A recognised relationship encompasses any type of union the

soldiers have formally informed the Army about. The researcher attempted to contact all partners of these soldiers to invite them to participate in the study. Data collection proceeded over a one-month period following a mail-out of questionnaires to 291 potential participants. Individuals received a self-report questionnaire, freepost return envelope, and covering letter inviting them to participate in the study (See Appendix III for feedback to participants). Two months later a follow-up letter was sent to the participants who had indicated that they were interested in a summary of the research findings (See Appendix II for copies of the questionnaire and letters).

Description of the sample

The participants were recruited from amongst the families of those soldiers who had been deployed within the last nine months. The NZA administrative staff supplied a list of 317 addresses of partners. Of these, 291 could be contacted by mail, but inaccurate addresses were given for the remaining 26 individuals. By July 2000, 184 (63%) of the potential participants had completed and returned questionnaires indicating their willingness to be part of the study.

Socio-demographic information

Socio-demographic information of 184 partners is detailed in Table 1. Almost all of the partners were female (97%), the majority being of European descent (57%). Most (63%) were less than 30 years old. Almost half of the partners

(49%) were in full-time paid employment, and over a third (37%) had achieved more than 14 years of schooling. A minority of partners (29%) had extended family living in the same area, with almost half (47%) having to travel more than 300km to visit relatives.

Family relationship information

Family relationship information from partners is detailed in Table 2. Most partners (62%) had been in the relationship from two to seven years. Two thirds (65%) of those who participated had children still at home, with 29% of this group taking care of three or more children. Nearly half (45%) lived in service-provided housing.

Table 1

Summary of Socio-Demographic Information of Partners

	Partners	
	n	%
Gender		
Female	179	97
Male	5	3
Age (years)		
20 – 24	60	33
25 – 29	56	30
30 – 34	27	15
35 – 39	25	14
40 – 44	10	5
45 – 49	5	3
50+	1	1
Ethnicity		
New Zealander of Maori descent	60	33
New Zealander of European descent	105	57
New Zealander of Pacific Island descent	11	6
Other	8	4
Employment status		
Working full-time in paid employment	91	49
Working part-time in paid employment	35	19
Not in paid employment but seeking work	14	8
Not in paid employment	44	24
Educational qualification		
No school qualification	18	10
School qualification	97	53
Trade or professional qualification	15	8
University Degree	54	29
Distance to nearest extended family member (km)		
In area	54	29
100<	10	5
100>200	12	7
200>300	22	12
300 and over	86	47

Table 2

Summary of Family Relationship Information of Partners

	Partners	
	n	%
Length of Relationship (years)		
Less than 2	8	4
2-4	60	33
5-7	53	29
8-10	40	22
over 11	23	13
Number of children in household		
0	64	35
1-2	67	36
3-4	53	29
Current accommodation		
Service housing	83	45
Non-service housing	101	55
Percentage of time spent apart		
0-20	44	24
21-40	59	32
41-60	22	12
60+	10	5
too numerous*	49	27
Number of postings during relationship		
No postings	88	48
1-2	64	35
3-4	24	13
5 and over	8	4
Military association(s)		
Partner only	89	48
Relative	47	26
Ex-service person	18	10
In military service	21	11
Territorial	9	5

Note. "too numerous" indicated partners who were unable to give an estimate because of extensive time spent apart.

Military information of service personnel

Military information of service personnel is detailed in Table 3. The four missions represented in the study varied in terms of the size of the operation, the destination, the duration, and whether the personnel deployed as a contingent or as United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs).

Table 3
Summary of Military Information of Soldiers

	Soldiers	
	n	%
Length of service (years)		
5 or less	38	21
5 to 10	56	30
over 10	90	49
Rank		
Private	28	15
Corporal/Lance Corporal	58	32
Sergeant/Staff Sergeant	45	24
Warrant Officer Class One/Two	29	16
Lieutenant/Second Lieutenant	2	1
Captain and above	22	12
Deployment destination		
East Timor	138	75
Sinai	36	20
Papua New Guinea	9	5
Egypt	1	1
Deployment duration (months)		
3 or less	9	5
3>6	39	21
6<12	136	74

Almost a third (30%) of the deployed service personnel had been in service for five to 10 years and many (47%) were below the rank of Sergeant. Only 13%

were Commissioned Officers. The main mission destination was East Timor (75%). Most (74%) were deployed on various overseas missions for over 6 months. The total length of the deployment ranged from three months to 12 months.

Description of the research instrument

The current survey elicited information about the participants' perceptions of support given by the Army during deployment of troops on recent peacekeeping missions. This research instrument consisted of a 16-page questionnaire divided into eight parts. A description of the eight parts follows shortly. Included were two self-report inventories, namely the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30).

Part One: Socio-demographic Information

Part one gathered data on participants: gender; age; ethnicity; residential locale; educational qualifications; employment status; distance from nearest extended family member; and length of relationship with soldier-partner. Participants were also asked about any military association outside their relationship with their partner. Information was recorded regarding the service person's: length of service; rank; deployment destination; length of time away; details of other work-related separations and number of posting re-locations. Socio-demographic information facilitated the construction of a background

profile of participants, thereby identifying the characteristics of soldiers' partners. In future studies involving soldiers' partners it will be possible to compare their profile with those individuals who took part in the current survey.

Part Two: Perceived Support

A significant characteristic of industrialised societies has been the separation of work life and family life (Kamerman, 1979). However, across time traditional gender roles have changed and women have increasingly entered the paid work force. The current notion is that there is a reciprocal relationship between work and the family (Orthner & Pittman, 1986). Focusing on the army, Rosen, Moghadam, and Vaitkus (1989) found that perceived support from military personnel's partners typically impacts the soldiers' attitudes and morale. Thus, soldiers' readiness to cope effectively during active service and willingness to continue soldiering as a career can be heavily influenced by their partners' stance. From the family's perspective, contentment with military life is in part determined by satisfaction with support services.

To ascertain how satisfied soldiers' partners were with support services part two of the present study employed a modified version of the Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) (Macdonald et al., 1996). For each of the six items, respondents indicated the perceived availability of support from civilian and military sources as well as rating their overall satisfaction with this support. Additional items were included to elicit details about any other types of support

participants perceived as potentially useful. These were to be listed in order of preference.

Sarason, Sarason, Shearin, and Pierce (1987) reported that the original six-item version had sound internal reliability and was highly correlated with the more recent longer publication. The modified version used in this study had successfully been employed in a NZA study conducted by MacDonald *et al.* (1996). The SSQ was employed to gauge the overall level of satisfaction participants had with support they received.

Part Three: Army Support Services

Part three used eight questions to assess the participants' perception of the efficacy of six types of support services offered by the NZA. The first six questions used a five point Likert-type rating scale that measured degrees of satisfaction from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied". One of the pair of remaining questions encouraged suggestions for other types of support participants would like to access in the future. The second open-ended question requested input on the positive effects (if any) of deployments on relationships. These questions were designed to gauge the level of satisfaction with specific current support services offered by the Army. Data from these questions enabled feedback to the Human Resource branch at Army General Staff regarding the efficacy of current services. Additionally, this data enables

the comparison between level of satisfaction with perceived support with partners' attitudes.

A major investigation conducted by Rosen and Durand (1995) considered the family factor in the retention of military personnel. They found that expectations of what the army could provide as resources for families of deployed soldiers was an important indicator of their satisfaction with an army lifestyle. In turn, family attitudes were seen to partly determine the level of commitment soldiers have for the organisation. Thus, satisfaction with army support services has a dual importance for attaining the employer's goal of strengthening military families, and of retaining personnel. In order to allocate resources wisely it is necessary to ensure that support services are readily available, approachable, relevant, and regarded as effective by the target population.

Part Four: General Issues

Over two decades ago Woelfel and Savell (1976) surmised that there might be a relationship between family variables such as contentment between partners and job satisfaction that impacted the level of commitment to an army lifestyle. Since that time several studies have produced evidence that it is in the best interests of the military Command to improve the quality of life for families in order to retain quality personnel (Lakhani & Hoover, 1995; Mc Cubbin & Lavee, 1986; Rosen & Durand, 1995; Stanley, Segal, &Laughton, 1990). A primary

means of improving the quality of life for families is to provide efficacious support services.

In the present study, part four consisted of 36 statements. Participants were asked to use a four-point scale to prioritise each statement and indicate how strongly they agreed with it. The statements were divided into four categories and were designed to gauge the participants' attitudes to: the military lifestyle; their partner's Army career; level of communication between partners; their perception of their partner's satisfaction with Army work. These attitudes were reviewed as possible outcomes of level of satisfaction with Army support and participants' general health.

Part Five: Potential Deployment Problems

When Milgram and Bar (1993) studied stress on military families associated with soldiers' choice of career they discovered that problems caused by deployment were a major source of upheaval and tension. Chronicling the adverse effect of frequent and lengthy absences on family functioning, they concluded that negativities could be somewhat offset by the availability of compensating support services.

Part five listed 18 frequently reported problems associated with partner absence. Of these, MacDonald *et al.* (1996) had identified 15 and three were incorporated from the literature review. Participants were asked to indicate

which of these they experienced during the deployment and where they sought help. It was necessary to identify the problem areas pertaining to Army issues. This enabled an assessment of whether or not the Army could eliminate those problems or how partners could be effectively supported in coping with these issues.

Part Six: General Health

When individuals experience difficult events they generally find it easier to cope if they are feeling physically and mentally well. Accordingly, Nice (1983) proposed that for people with compromised mental health, the reduction of social support when a close family member is away from home is likely to exacerbate their condition. Subsequently, they find it more difficult to deal with problems associated with deployment.

To assess whether the participant's health status was related to their ability to resolve employment related problems, part six of the present study assessed their general mental health using the GHQ-30 (Goldberg & Williams, 1988). Participants indicated how frequently they had experienced 30 conditions during the deployment, on a four-point response scale. The inventory was scored to provide a general mental health score.

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30) is a self-administered screening test, developed to ascertain what short-term changes (if any) have occurred in

the participant's general mental health status. It focuses on depression, anxiety, social dysfunction, and somatic symptoms. Participants were asked to answer the questionnaire as if they were still in the deployment phase in order to assess their general health status at that time. The GHQ-30 does not purport to deliver clinical diagnoses and is not recommended for assessing long-standing mental health problems. This test has proven split-half reliability (0.95) (Goldberg & Williams, 1988) and validity has also been confirmed (LoBello, 1995; Reynolds, 1995).

Part Seven: Parenting Issues

As noted by Rosen, Teitelbaum, and Westhuis (1993), awareness of the way offspring respond to a parent's absence assists organisations such as the army to deliver efficacious support services to help young people to adjust to the separation. These researchers found that although certain symptoms such as sadness were common, few children had been perceived to need counselling. The strongest predictor of children's receiving counselling during deployments was a previous history of being in counselling for emotional problems. However, they did conclude that support of the stay-at-home parent is particularly important in view of the finding that how well the individual is coping with the separation impacts heavily on the manner in which offspring will respond.

Part seven targeted those participants who were caring for children. These individuals were asked what strategies they used to help the children cope with the absence of their parent. They were also canvassed for recommendations for support services the Army could provide to facilitate the adjustment process.

Part Eight: Additional Comments

Although the main focus of the present study is on statistical analysis of qualitative data, it is the opinion of this researcher that anecdotal narrative supplied by participants enriches the general understanding of how military families perceived deployment and Army support. For this reason part eight provided an opportunity for respondents to record any other comments they wanted to make about these topics. Furthermore, these responses provided complementary qualitative information on issues of concern.

The results from the present survey will be presented in the next chapter, followed by an in-depth discussion of these findings in Chapter six.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

As was stated in Chapter one, the current study sought to investigate the possible impact that support issues had on the retention of Army personnel returning from peacekeeping duties and the effectiveness of current Army support services. To review, the study surveyed 184 partners of Army personnel who had recently returned from various overseas deployments.

Objective One: Identify potential deployment problems

Part five of the present survey was designed to identify the most frequently experienced problems associated with partner absence. Of the 15 problems explored, the 10 most frequently reported ones in this study are detailed in Table 4, and are arranged into three groups: general emotional response to deployment; information relay between Army and military families; and communication between partners. Few partners indicated that financial matters, isolation, personal safety, lack of freedom, and rumors were problems for them.

The first group of problem issues was a product of the emotional response to their partner's deployment. These emotional responses included separation (53%), loneliness (45%), companionship (42%), and the dual parental role (38%). Of those indicating that separation was a concern, 36% felt they had eventually dealt with their partner's absence. Similarly, 39% of those finding lack of companionship

an issue also indicated a successful resolution. Just over a quarter (27%) of those experiencing loneliness and almost a third (30%) of those having difficulties assuming a dual parental role, resolved the issues.

The second group dealt with issues of information relay between the Army and military families. Information issues concerned the availability, as well as accuracy, of departure (55%) and return dates (38%), along with information over their deployed partner's safety (47%). Only about a third of these individuals (34% departure date, 36% return date) adjusted to the set time frame. Lack of information on troop movement raised concerns for their partners' personal safety, with 39% of these individuals later having their fears dispelled.

The third group encompassed problems of communication between the separated parties. These consisted of receiving/sending mail (46%), receiving phone calls (38%) and a general feeling of lack of control (40%). Participants experiencing these communication problems tended to accept the satellite difficulties more readily (43%) than the unreliable mail system (29%). Finally, a quarter (24%) of those who perceived an inability to control events affecting them resolved their concerns.

Table 4

Deployment Problems Experienced by Partners and Proportion of those Indicating Successful Resolution

Deployment Problem	Partners		Problem resolved	
	n	%	n	%
Emotional response to deployment				
Separation	98	53	35	36
Loneliness	83	45	22	27
Companionship	77	42	30	39
Dual parental role	70	38	21	30
Information relay between Army and military families				
Departure Date	101	55	34	34
Return Date	70	38	25	36
Anxiety over partner's safety	87	47	34	39
Communication between partners				
Receiving/sending mail	85	46	25	29
Receiving phone calls	70	38	30	43
Lack of control over events	74	40	18	24

Objective Two: Gauge current knowledge of available support services, identify the specific support sources partners use and assess level of satisfaction with them

Part five of the present survey also asked partners to indicate who they had approached for support for certain problems and whether they felt the problems had been successfully resolved. For the purposes of analysis, sources are categorized as formal support and informal support.

Question eight of Part Two of the survey asked participants to list five sources of support in preference of use. Table five shows that overall participants tend to first rely on their own abilities (80%) to solve problems. However if assistance was sought, they reported that they would approach friends (65%) and then family (70%). The Army (85%) or civilian agencies (90%) would be the last options to be explored.

Table 5

Order of Preferential Use of Support Sources by Partners

		Partners	
Priority	**Support source**	**n**	**%**
1	Self	143	80
2	Friends	116	65
3	Family	125	70
4	Army	152	85
5	Civilian agencies	161	90

Note. Maximum n value = 179

Formal sources of support

Participants who indicated they experienced specific deployment problems were divided according to whether they perceived they had reached a successful resolution of their problem. Figure 1 graphically depicts the proportions of participants, within their respective groups, who approached a formal source for assistance.

Extent of use of Army support services and level of satisfaction with the subsequent support received

Part three of the present survey, established the degree of usage of specific Army support services by partners and their level of satisfaction with the subsequent support received.

Partners were asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with a number of specific support sources currently available. These sources included the Welfare Support Officer, Unit Point of Contact, Army Chaplain as well as the various booklets provided by Army Psychologists. Partners indicated their level of satisfaction with the support received using a five-point scale ranging from 1, "very dissatisfied", to 5, "very satisfied". Figure 1 breaks down each support source into the percentage of respondents who: used the source; did not want to access the source; or did not know the source was available. Following this, the mean levels of satisfaction with each source are presented in Figure 2.

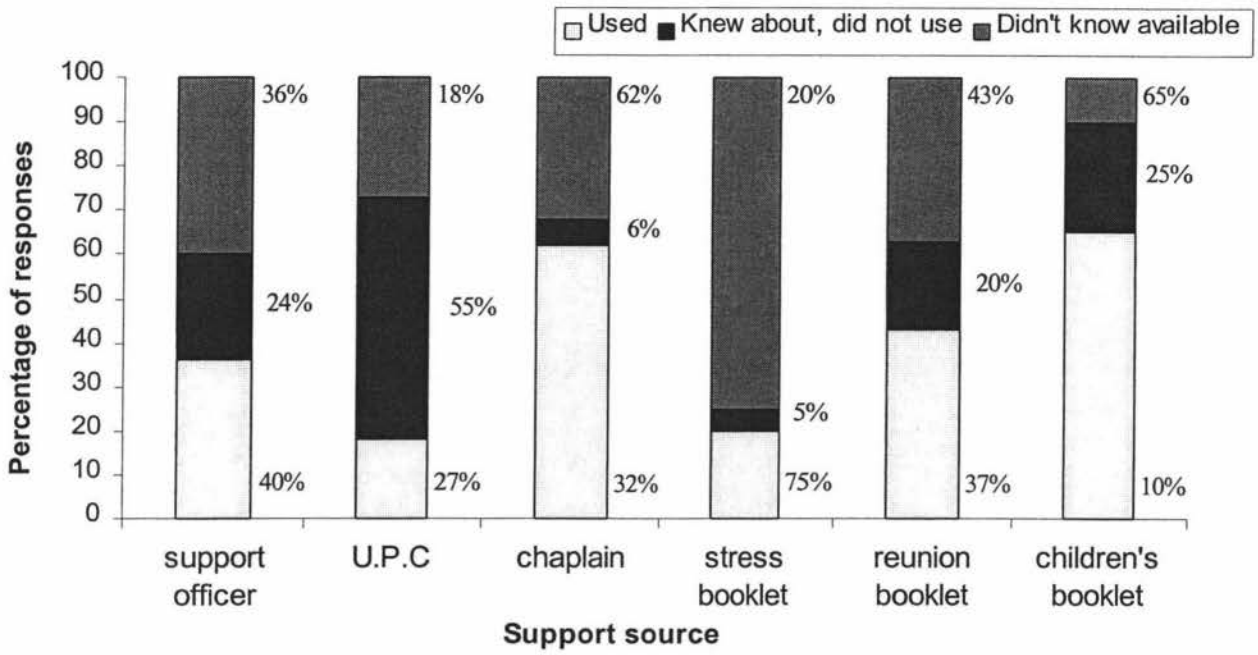

Figure 1. Percentage of partners using specific sources of support.

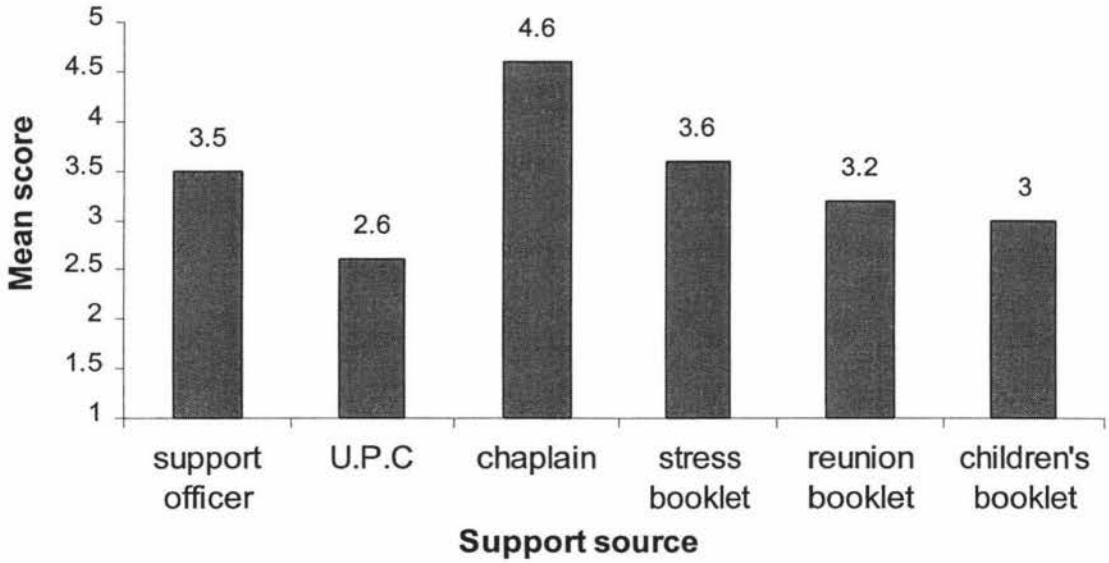

Figure 2. Mean level of satisfaction with support from specified sources.

Generally partners reported moderate levels of satisfaction with the various military sources. No one was "strongly dissatisfied" with any of the support services. Less than half (40%) of partners in the Palmerston North area approached the Welfare Support Officer. Of these most were neutral to slightly satisfied with the quality of the support given (3.5). A quarter (24%) did not want to access the support, whilst a further 36% were unaware that this type of service was available.

Just over a quarter (27%) of partners had communicated with the Unit Point of Contact (U.P.C) and were slightly dissatisfied to neutral (2.6) with the response. Over half (55%) did not seek contact during the deployment, with 18% of partners not realizing that there was a contact person at their partner's unit.

A large proportion (62%) of participants were not advised of the availability of the camp chaplain. Only 6% of those who knew about the chaplaincy service did not seek this type of aid. Of those who did know, 32% sought counsel and were "very satisfied" with the help supplied (4.6).

The Army Psychologists have developed a series of informational booklets designed to aid partners and their children to adjust to deployments. The Psychologists generally endeavor to supply booklets to all stay-at-home partners. Three-quarters (75%) of partners received the publication entitled *Management of Deployment Stress and Deployment – Related Family Stress*, and were neutral to

slightly satisfied (3.6) with the contents. The second booklet, *Reunion Information for Partners*, was read by 37% and rated neutral (3.2). However 43% had not received the information. A minority of those with children (35%) received a copy of *Children and Deployments*. Of these 10% read the material and were indifferent to the contents (3).

Army and civilian organizations as support

As shown in Figure 3, when assistance was sought, individuals tended to approach the Army more for assistance with Army-related problems. Of those participants who were concerned about communication with their deployed partner, a total of 12% contacted the Army for mail-related matters whilst 10% sought satisfaction for problems with telephone calls. Of those who had problems with the mail, 29% who managed to find a solution or accepted the difficulties had also approached Army. Only 5% of those who could not reach an acceptable conclusion regarding mail issues had contacted the Army. Fewer of those who resolved phone call difficulties (15%) had approached the Army about this matter. Only 4% of those who did not resolve their problems sought Army assistance.

Many participants experienced difficulties with information relay from the Army. Of those who no longer found the departure and return date of concern, 23% had inquired about the return date and 28% asked about the departure time. Of those who felt unable to come to terms with the consequences of the imposed leave and

return dates, 19% made inquires pertaining to departure time and 4% about their partner's return date. In response to lack of information about the soldier's safety, 21% of those who had their fears allayed sought details from the Army compared to 15% of those who did not.

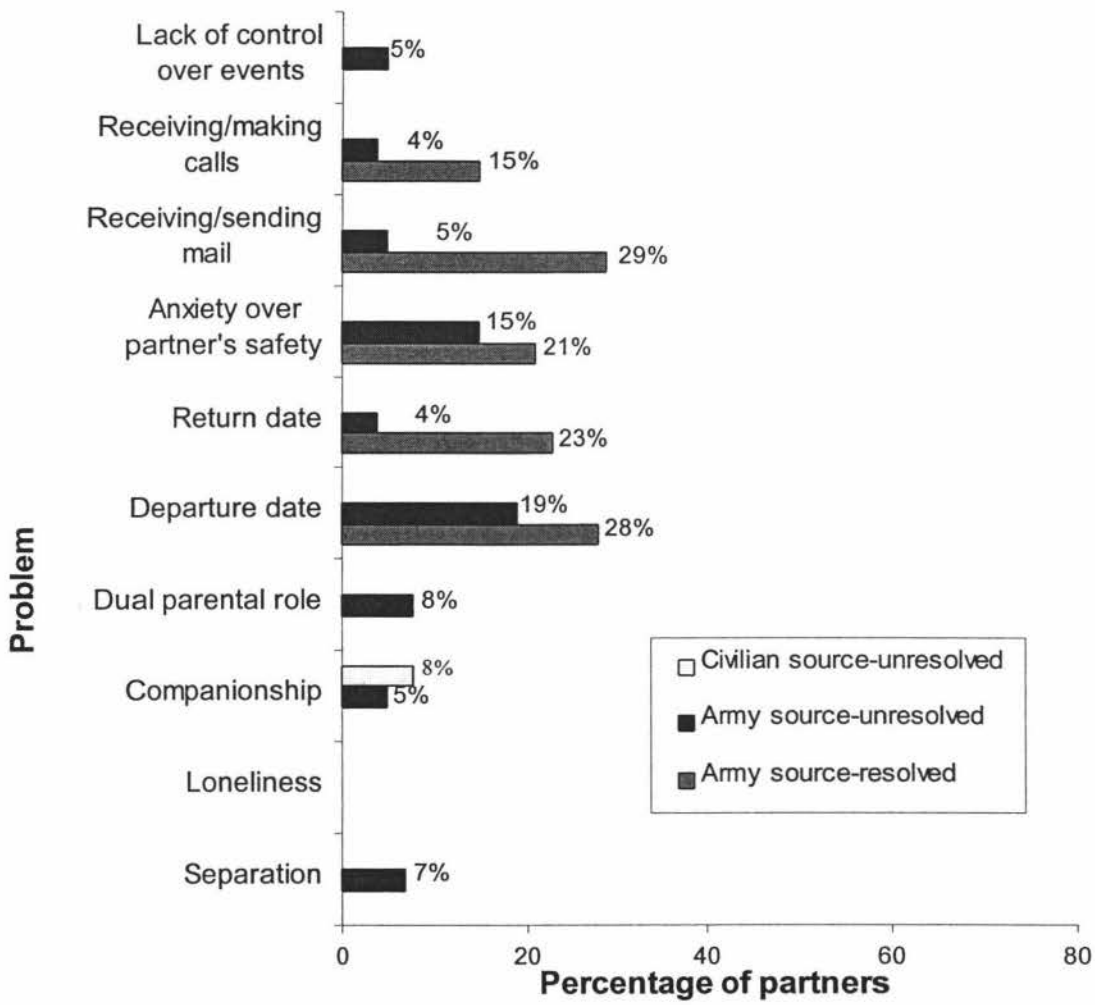

Figure 3. Percentage of partners who either resolved, or failed to resolve, problems when approaching a formal source for assistance.

Participants rarely approached the Army for assistance with emotional issues. However, those who had not been able to resolve these concerns sought help from the Army for parenting problems (8%), companionship (5%), separation (7%) and a feeling of lack of control (5%). No one from either group expected help with loneliness. Civilian Agencies were only approached for assistance with companionship (8%) by those who still felt they had not being able to compensate for the companionship of their absent partner.

Informal sources of support

Part five of the present survey elicited information on what types of informal sources of support partners approached for assistance with deployment related problems and whether a successful resolution was found. An informal source of support refers to either reliance on self, family or friends.

Partners were divided into whether or not each problem they experienced during the deployment had been resolved. As Figure 4 shows, the percentage of partners in each group were then asked where they sought support. The maximum n value to each problem is presented in Table 4.

Emotional response to deployment

The majority of partners indicating resolution of problems within this category, sought assistance from family members. Friends were approached to a slightly

lesser degree, with few relying on their own inner resources. In comparison, those indicating the problems were still unresolved by the end of the deployment tended to approach friends before family, accessing their help to a lesser degree. Unresolvers also relied heavily on themselves.

Information relay between Army and military families

Except in the case of anxiety, those who successfully resolved emotional problems sought support from friends before family or relied more on themselves. Those not resolving their problems tried coping by themselves before approaching family and then friends. When dealing with their personal concerns over their partner's safety they tried to come to terms with their feelings on their own, before approaching friends and family. Their counterparts elicited assistance from friends, in preference to approaching their families.

Communication between partners

Both groups tended not to approach friends and family about their frustrations over communication difficulties. However, when it came to dealing with feeling of lack of control over events, two-thirds (64%) of unsuccessful resolvers approached friends compared to a quarter of their counterparts (26%). Both parties approached family to a similar degree.

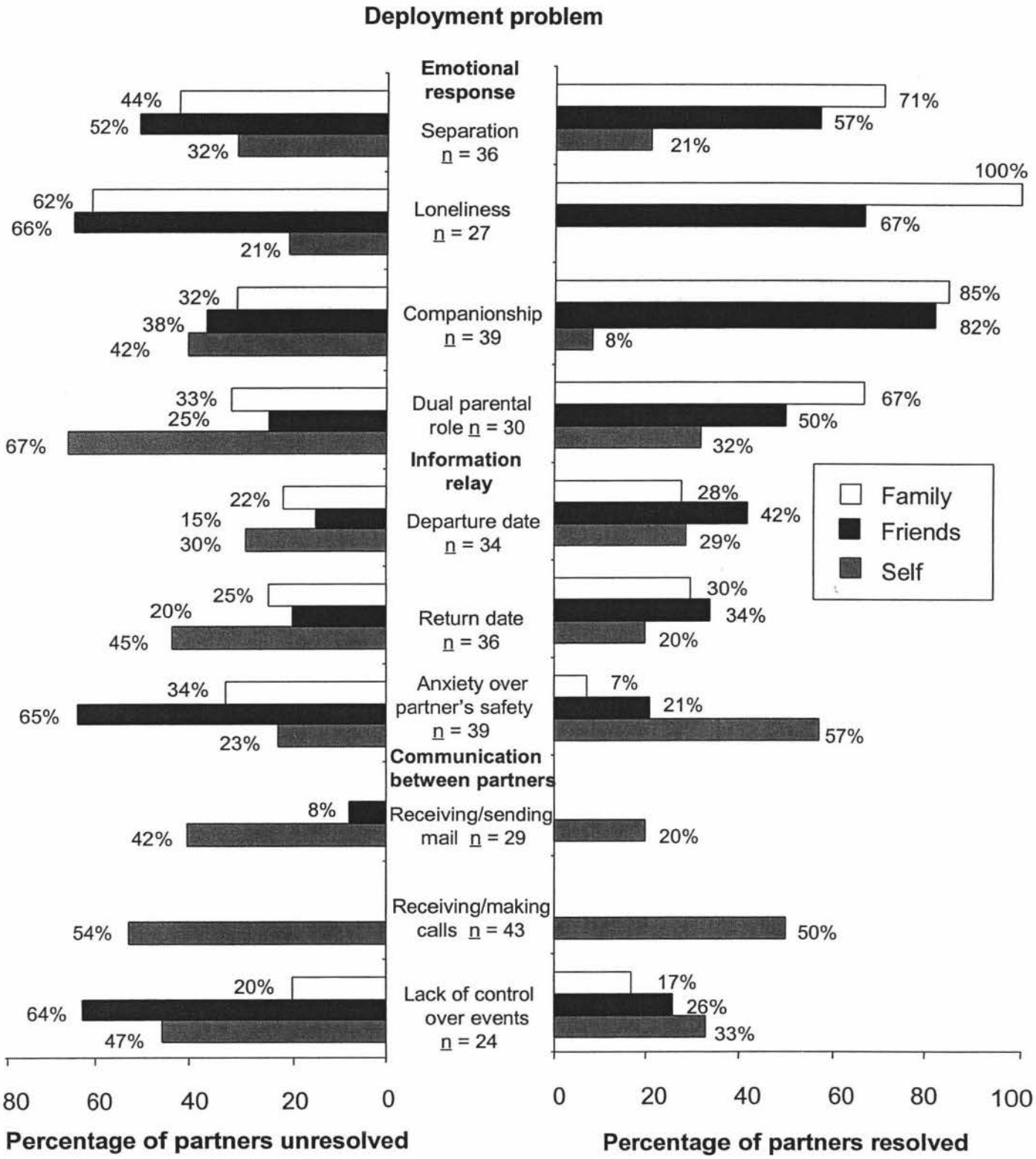

Figure 4. Percentage of partners who resolved, or failed to resolve, problems when relying on either themselves, their friends, or family for support.

Objective Three: Measure the response of offspring to parent's deployment

Part seven of the present survey asked parents if they felt that their children were affected by the deployment and if so, in what ways. Parents were also encouraged to list any strategies they employed to help their children cope. Table 6 reports the number of parents experiencing particular changes in their child's demeanor.

A quarter (25%) of participants reported that the children up to seven years of age adjusted well to the other parent's absence, although 35% were considered too young to notice the change in family dynamics. Many of these children experienced periods of insecurity (56%), feelings of rejection (34%), and resentment towards the absent parent (46%). Furthermore, 10% were perceived to be "clingy" by the remaining parent.

Although initial adjustment problems may have surfaced for 40% of the children aged between seven and 12, just over half (56%) of participants felt that their child did not change in any significant manner. The deployment facilitated emotional maturation in 42% of the cases.

The majority (95%) of children 12 and over, were perceived to be accustomed to deployments. Just over half (56%) became more willing to help with everyday housekeeping duties, with a quarter (25%) engaging in long discussions.

Common observations were missing the parent (65% 0>7, 86% 7>12, 62% 12+), behavioural problems (60% 0>7, 38% 7>12, 16% 12+), and seeking a parental substitute (35% 0>7, 30% 7>12, 25% 12+).

Table 6

Changes in Children's Demeanor as Observed by Parents During Deployment

	Parents	
Age group (years)	**n**	**%**
0>7 (maximum n = 39)		
Emotional problems	30	76
Missed parent	25	65
Behavioral problems	23	60
Felt insecure/lost	22	56
Resented absent parent	18	46
Sought parent substitute	14	35
Too young to understand	14	35
Felt rejected	13	34
Well adjusted	10	25
More clingy	4	10
7>12 (maximum n = 62)		
Missed parent	53	86
Generally no change	35	56
Matured/more helpful	26	42
Initial adjustment problems	25	40
Behavioral problems	24	38
Sought parent substitute	19	30
12+ (maximum n = 19)		
No change: used to deployment	18	95
Missed parent	12	62
More willing to help	11	56
Sought parent substitute	5	25
Talked a great deal	5	25
Behavioral problems	3	16
Happy: more perceived freedom	2	12

Strategies employed to support children

As shown in Table 7, parents used combinations of strategies to assist their offspring to adjust to the change in circumstances caused by the deployment. Showing offspring photographs of the absentee parent (96%), explaining the reason for the parent leaving (92%), keeping the children well informed (94%), and keeping them busy (94%) were the most popular strategies.

Table 7

Strategies Parents Employed to Help Their Child(ren) Adjust

	Parents	
Strategies	**n**	**%**
Education		
Explain parent's role and importance	110	92
Educate the child about the destination country	90	75
Keep a map of the deployment destination	74	62
Communication		
Inform child of absentee parent's status	113	94
Send pictures/painting/ letters to absentee parent	102	85
Have absentee parent write letters and read them	96	80
Talk about the absentee parent	96	80
Listen to their emotional concerns	82	68
Talk on phone/e-mail	30	25
Reinforcement		
Pictures of parent	115	96
Extra affection	41	34
Story tapes/videos made by parent	34	28
Scrap book/Diary	15	12
Time out		
Respite care	104	87
Child-care	54	45
Other		
Keep busy	113	94
Maintain routines	103	86
Arrange special outings	42	35
Remain stable	28	23

Objective Four: Assess the mental health of stay-at-home partners during the deployment

Part six of the present survey consisted of the GHQ-30. The scale retrospectively assessed the general mental health of participants during the deployment. The higher the score, the more their general health was adversely affected. It is recommended that individuals who obtain a score of 10 or more (termed a "high score") consult a health professional. Table 8 shows the comparison between partners with low and high GHQ-30 scores and their ability to resolve deployment issues. Participants were divided into those who indicated they resolved at least 60% of problems they perceived to be the product of the deployment (successful problem solvers) and those who could not (unsuccessful problem solvers). Just over two thirds (67%) of unsuccessful problem solvers had high GHQ-30 scores compared to 3% of their successful counterparts.

Table 8

Percentage of Partners Scoring High GHQ-30 Scores

	High score	
Group	**n**	**%**
Successful problem solvers	4	3
Unsuccessful problem solvers	32	67

Note. Maximum n value for successful problem solvers = 136
Maximum n value for unsuccessful problem solvers =48

As can be seen in Table 9, the partner's GHQ-30 scores were divided into three groups. Those in the late-career bracket overall held the lowest GHQ-30 scores (mean 2.6), followed by members in their early-careers (4.4). Partners in the mid-career group scored the highest (6.5). The three highest scoring sub-groups were the partners of Lieutenant/Captains (8.6), Lance Corporals (6.0), and Sergeants (5.7). The partners of Lieutenant Colonels (0.2) and Warrant Officers (1.6) scored the lowest. Partners of soldiers in mid-career (26%) were the group with the highest incidence of GHQ-30 scores of 10+. Those in the late-career group scored the least (17%), and by comparison, Staff Sergeants had 30% more partners who obtained high scores.

Table 9

Mean GHQ-30 Scores and Percentage of High Scores of Partners within the Three Stages of Career

Career stage group	Mean GHQ-30 score	High score n	High score %
Early-career			
Private	2.7	6	23
Lance Corporal	6.0	7	19
Mid-career			
Corporal	5.3	5	24
Sergeant	5.7	7	28
Lieutenant/Captain	8.6	4	27
Late-career			
Staff Sergeant	5.0	6	30
Warrant Officer	1.6	0	0
Major	3.4	1	20
Lieutenant Colonel	0.2	0	0

Overall there was no significant difference between the number of high scores within the three groups (χ^2 (2,N=184) = 3.6, p<.05).

Objective Five: Identify the current attitudes held by partners concerning aspects of Army life

Part four of the present survey asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with 36 attitudinal statements. The statements were designed to reveal their attitudes to: deployments; being part of the military enclave; receiving Army support; interpersonal communication levels; and their partner's service career. For analysis, participants were separated into early- (n = 64), mid- (n = 62) or late- (n = 58) career groups.

Attitudes towards partner remaining in service

In Table 10 it can be seen that equal proportions of participants (86%) in the mid and late-career group were in favor of their partners remaining in military service. More partners of mid-career soldiers (40%) than any other group stated that they would proactively encourage their partners to remain in the Army even if they personally wanted to leave. However, over half of the participants (early 69%; mid 68%; late 57%) believed that there were better financial opportunities for their partners in the civilian sector.

More participants from the early-career group felt that their partner's military duties affected family life (59%), with the least conflict being reported by those in the late-career group (36%). Participants in the three groups gave similar responses to the

notion that living with a soldier-partner was more stressful than a civilian (early 59%; mid 55%; late 60%).

Almost half of the participants (47%) from the late-career group perceived their partner's work as separate from family life as opposed to 69% of partners from the early-career group.

Table 10

Level of Agreement With Attitudinal Statements About Support for Soldier to Remain in Service

Attitudinal statement	Early-career		Mid-career		Late-career		χ^2 (2)
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
If my partner wanted to leave the service I would encourage him/her to stay	17	27	25	40	12	21	5.9
I am in favor of my partner remaining in the Army	49	77	53	86	50	86	2.6
There is greater opportunity for my partner in the civilian sector	44	69	42	68	33	57	2.2
I feel that my partner's military career conflicts with our family life	38	59	25	40	21	36	7.7*
My partners job and family life are totally separate	44	69	31	50	27	47	7.1*
Being a partner to a soldier is more stressful than if they were a civilian	38	59	34	55	35	60	0.4

*Significant at 0.05 level

A chi-square analysis revealed that partners significantly differ in their perception that their soldier's military career conflicts with family life (χ^2 (2,*N*=184) = 7.7,

$p<.05$) and that their family life and soldiers job are separate (χ^2 (2,N=184) = 7.1, $p<.05$).

Attitudes towards their partner's Army career

According to Table 11, almost three-quarters (76%) of late and 82% of mid-career partners felt that their soldier-partner was satisfied with an Army career. Almost equal proportions (early 83%; mid 84%; late 79%) were subsequently content to remain within the service. However, a quarter (24%) of late career partners and almost a third of the remaining groups (early 33%; mid 34%) reported that their partner wished to leave military service.

Table 11

Agreement With Attitudinal Statements About Soldier's Desire to Remain in Service

	Early-career		Mid-career		Late-career		χ^2 (2)
Attitudinal statement	n	%	n	%	n	%	
My partner has career satisfaction	41	64	51	82	44	76	4.4
My partner is happy in the Army	53	83	52	84	46	79	0.5
My partner wants to leave the Army	21	33	21	34	14	24	1.6

Attitudes towards communication levels between participants and their partners

As illustrated in Table 12, partners in all groups communicated extensively with one another. All partners, except those in mid-career (95%), felt that their deployed partner readily maintained communication links whenever possible. Furthermore, most (early 77%; mid 86%; late 97%) had discussed issues related to deployment upon the troop's return. All partners of those in their early or mid-career stages indicated that they had discussed the continuance of Army service.

Only 71% of those individuals whose partners were at the end of their first term of service (late-career group) indicated that they had spoken to each other about continuance of service. However, the partners in this same group reported that leaving the service would be a joint decision. Most (95%) of the partners of soldiers in early-career felt that it would be a joint decision whilst fewer (84%) in the mid-career group reported the intention to do so.

A chi-square analysis revealed that communication level between partners and their soldiers, with the exception of one topic (i.e. being well informed on army matters) varied according to the length of service.

Table 12

Percentage of Partners Agreeing with Attitudinal Statements About Level of Communication Between Themselves and Their Partners

Attitudinal statement	Early-career		Mid-career		Late-career		χ^2 (2)
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
When home, my partner keeps me well informed about Army matters	53	83	59	95	52	90	3.3
My partner, when able, communicated regularly with me during the deployment	64	100	59	95	58	100	6.2*
My partner and I have talked extensively about deployment	49	77	53	86	56	97	10.1*
I express how I feel about the Army lifestyle to my partner	64	100	62	100	54	93	8.6*
I have discussed my partner's future in the service with them	64	100	62	100	41	71	40.9*
My partner and I will decide together when to leave Army service	61	95	52	84	58	100	12.6*

*Significant at 0.05 level

Attitudes towards being associated with the military

Table 13 indicates that the majority of the participants (early 83%; mid 86%; late 90%) are proud to be associated with the Army, felt that military life met their expectations (early 77%; mid 81%: late 71%), and were satisfied with the lifestyle (early 69%; mid 84%; late 86%). Most (early 73%; mid 81%; late 83%) thought that there was a positive relationship between those in the military and members of the civilian community.

Table 13

Level of Agreement With Attitudinal Statements About Being Associated With the Army

Attitudinal statement	Early-career n	Early-career %	Mid-career n	Mid-career %	Late-career n	Late-career %	χ^2 (2)
I am proud to be associated with the Army	53	83	53	86	52	90	1.2
Army life has met my expectation	49	77	50	81	41	71	1.6
I am generally satisfied with the Army lifestyle	44	69	52	84	50	86	3.3
There is a good relationship between the military and civilian community in our area	47	73	50	81	48	83	1.7

Attitudes towards Army support

Table 14 shows that most participants (early 73%; mid 86%; late 71%) were comfortable with accessing support services provided by the Army and most would like Army support in the future (early 64%; mid 79%; late 83%). However, almost 60% were of the opinion that there is a stigma attached to using such services.

Almost equal numbers of those in the early (41%) and late (40%) career groups believed that if they did request help this action would adversely affect their partner's career. More early-career partners (77%) expected the Army to pay for the use of civilian support services and 34% of mid-career partners wanted Army

to take care of all problems arising from the deployment. Of the three groups the late-career partners had the least expectations of Army support.

Table 14

Level of Agreement With Attitudinal Statements About Army Support Amongst Partners

Attitudinal statement	Early-career n	Early-career %	Mid-career n	Mid-career %	Late-career n	Late-career %	χ^2 (2)
I am generally comfortable dealing with Army support services	47	73	53	86	41	71	4.1
I don't want any support from the Army	23	36	13	21	10	17	6.5*
There is a stigma about using Army support	35	55	35	57	31	53	0.1
If I seek help from the Army it might affect my partner's career negatively	26	41	25	40	17	29	12.9*
If I receive help from a public service the Army should pay the bill	49	77	40	65	33	57	5.5
The Army should take care of all the problems of partners of deployed soldiers	17	27	21	34	10	17	4.2

*Significant at 0.05 level

A chi-square analysis was carried out to determine if the career stage of soldiers was significantly associated with the support attitudes of their partners. The analysis revealed that there was no significant difference amongst partners except in relation to wanting support from the Army (χ^2 (2,N=184) = 6.5, p<.05),

and feeling that seeking help would have a detrimental effect on their partner's career (χ^2 (2,*N*=184) = 12.9, *p*<.05).

Attitudes to deployments

Table 15

Level of Agreement With Attitudinal Statements About Deployments

Attitudinal statement	Early-career		Mid-career		Late-career		χ^2 (2)
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
My partner's deployment was important	58	91	56	90	54	93	0.3
I understood enough of what my partner was doing during the deployment	61	95	61	98	58	100	3.3
I accepted that my partner was deployed	49	77	49	79	48	83	0.7
Deployments are the worst thing about Army life	38	59	35	57	27	47	2.2
I am confident that my relationship with my partner remained stable throughout the deployment	58	91	61	98	56	97	4.3
I coped well with the separation caused by the deployment	58	91	56	90	56	97	2.7

*Significant at 0.05 level

In Table 15 it can be seen that at least 90% of partners believed that their partner's deployment was important and indicated that they understood enough of

what their partner did during that deployment. Fewer partners from the early-career group were less accepting about their partner being deployed than the other groups (77%). This group also indicated that deployments were the worst thing about Army life (59%). Less than 10% of participants within the groups felt that they did not cope well with the separation and perceived that their relationship had been adversely affected.

Objective Six: Identify support issues pertinent to partners

Part three of the survey included an open-ended question asking partners what further support, if any, they would like the Army to provide during a deployment.

Table 16 shows that a third of the recommendations made by participants indicated a desire for up-to-date information from the Army. Details concerning the deployed partner's welfare was of prime importance (95%). Improved communication links between the stay-at-home partners and their deployed counterpart accounted for a further third of suggestions. A more efficient mail service was suggested by 75% of the participants. The final third of support ideas requested a support person for young families (25%), a civilian point of contact (36%), and non-military language in correspondence sent to them (42%).

Table 16

Types of Army Support Suggested by Partners for Future Deployments

Support type	Partners suggesting n	%
Information about deployed partner's welfare	175	95
Information about working conditions in operational environment	151	82
Newsletter about troop movement	140	76
Efficient mail service	138	75
E-mail system available to all deployed personnel	98	53
Longer & more frequent phone calls	96	52
Use of non-military language in documents sent to partners	77	42
Civilian point of contact representing Army	66	36
Support person for young families	46	25

Note. Maximum n value = 184.

The next chapter presents a discussion of the findings, identifies limitations of the present research, and also proposes related topics for future research.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

The present study used a 16-page questionnaire including two self-report inventories (SSQ and GHQ-30) to survey the partners and families of New Zealand soldiers deployed on peacekeeping missions overseas. It sought to identify the types of problems associated with deployment that these individuals encounter in order to ascertain whether current levels of Army support are effective. Recommendations for improving support services were developed from the findings and will be presented in the conclusion. This chapter discusses the findings of the study, identifies limitations, and suggests potential topics of interest for future research.

POTENTIAL DEPLOYMENT PROBLEMS

Emotional response to deployment

Nearly three decades ago Decker (1976) observed that separation during active service increased the problem burden and their perceived severity. Confirming this only 53% of participants in the present survey felt that separation was a problem.

One participant reflected that partners of Army personnel have various levels of access to resources, and that problems that arise during deployment may seriously challenge the strength of personal coping mechanisms. However, she noted that it would be "an enormous task to satisfy the needs/requirements for all". This comment is illustrative of a general attitude expressed by participants that personal issues of separation, loneliness, and dual parental role responsibility are highly personal.

According to Rosen *et al.* (1993), individuals will fare positively or negatively according to the efficacy of their own coping mechanisms, strength of informal support resources, and the unique circumstance of their particular relationship with the absentee family member. However, although the participants did not express an overall expectation or desire for military intervention in matters of loneliness, there was an urgent demand for quality communication. This is summed up by a participant who wrote, "I do not think that the Army needs to baby-sit either myself or my children if my husband is away, although I am very grateful to them for information and/or news of what is going on". Others stressed the importance of a reliable system of personal contact via mail, telephone or electronic mail. A participant requested, "Please get the mail sorted! Not interested in excuses! Get email lines sorted for the families".

As observed by MacDonald *et al.* (1996) separation concerns are exacerbated by problems concerning satisfactory communication with service personnel and with availability of information about troops during the deployment. This was found to be the case in the current study as well. As one participant wrote, " I personally found the hardest thing was not knowing what was going on and not having contact with my partner was especially hard.....my main upset was not receiving mail from him in a steady flow as for a while we had no phone contact and mail was our only source of contact".

Communication between partners

Just under half (46%) of partners encountered difficulties sending mail to and receiving mail from deployed soldiers. Phone calls were infrequent and when they were possible they were often deemed unsatisfactory. One participant noted that, "The satellite phone crackled and cut out....when your whole week revolves around the 10 minutes it is really disappointing". Participants were also of the opinion that the time allowance was too restrictive. Although there was a realization that the Army needed time to sort out the mail/phone services, mention was made of "false promises" regarding the rectification of hitches that had occurred. The following examples illustrate the frustration caused by problems with personal communication: "There was great trouble in finding out the correct mail address, I had mail diverted through three channels only to have it changed

again"; "the mail system is poor, to the point you wonder what value it has....three to four weeks for delivery sucks!".

Maintaining a personal link is important for reassuring family who tend to be anxious as a natural response to the exposure of a loved one to danger. At least 47% of participants mentioned being especially concerned about the soldier's personal safety. Several participants expressed a realization that danger, "...is part of the job that our spouses are contracted to do", thus having regular, reliable contact was regarded as essential. This attitude reflects research findings from Rosen *et al.* (1993) who proposed that when those at home can communicate directly with the soldier this contact functions to reassure them that the welfare of the loved one is currently safe.

For those partners with children, 38% had difficulties with the dual parental role. Foregoing personal activities in order to focus on parenting was an issue that placed strain on some participants. For example, university studies were discontinued by a woman who wrote that it was "unrealistic to continue doing this at the same time as doing dual duty as mother and father". This echoes observations by Fanshawe (1986) who noted that the effects of separation on partners included the strain of trying to fulfill the role of both parents. Although sole parenting is a fairly common feature of New Zealand society a unique feature of one-parent situations due to military deployment is that absentee parents are in particular danger of losing their life.

Information relay between Army and military families

It is a characteristic feature of military service that personnel will be deployed and that information about their exact whereabouts, as well as their activities, will be classified. Research has shown that it tends to be a challenge for the family back home to process feelings of anxiety associated with lack of control over a situation if this is coupled with a low level of information (Van Laar, 1999). Although military family members may comprehend and accept that it is not appropriate for them to be given classified information, they do expect dissemination of general facts concerning matters such as welfare status of their soldier-partners as well as date of deployment and return.

Even though participants of the current study were promised a general information package at the start of their partner's deployment on peacekeeping duties, some did not receive it. The participants perceived that general information during the deployment was mostly gleaned from the media or by contacting the Army directly. Just over half (55%) of partners found the departure date of concern because it was so sudden. Establishing a return date was a difficulty for 38% who reported being given inaccurate information or none at all. A participant was particularly upset and disappointed when she arranged a day off work for a reunion with her husband according to the flight, day, and time supplied by the Army only to discover that the information was incorrect. She expressed thoughts typically representative of other partners when she wrote, "The Army should ensure that

the information they are giving is correct to save any more anger and ill-feeling". These findings confirm observations by Rosenberg (1989) who noted that rapid deployment, lack of time to prepare for separation, and prolonged periods apart are key stress factors.

When participants contacted Army personnel for information they were mostly dissatisfied with the perceived tone of the reception. Some of the comments included "less than helpful", "patronizing", "unsympathetic", "terse", "gave unclear answers", "unsupportive", and "promises made....promises broken". Furthermore, Jolly (1992) pointed out that an organization such as the Army places a strong emphasis on chain of command and following rules. Whilst this style may be appropriate for dealing with military personnel it is probably obstructive to satisfactory interaction with civilians. As one participant wrote, "I found them (Army administrative staff) extremely bureaucratic, slow, disinterested, and generally really hard work. Lots of passing the buck". Another participant reported that, "More often than not people who are meant to be the Point of Contact don't know what is going on with the deployed personnel". Another person who described herself as "most resentful" commented that, "In the majority of occasions the Administration Center were not able to assist with my queries, which was disappointing. My expectation was that I would be dealt with in a professional and friendly manner, but sadly this was rarely the case". These comments imply that the specific individuals who answered the calls from soldiers' family members did

not have the information readily available and were either unwilling or unable to get it.

Partner support services exist to meet the express needs of military families. The next section will discuss specific formal sources of assistance.

Support

Formal sources of support

According to the present study successful problem-solvers tended to approach the Army directly when they had concerns with an Army-related issue. These issues can be categorized as Information relay between Army and families and Communication between partners. Unsuccessful problem-solvers had approached the Army less frequently for help with any of the above issues and more frequently approached the Army on issues concerning their emotional response to the deployment. Neither group had contacted the Army on the issue of loneliness. The only time a civilian organization was approached at all was by 8% of the unsuccessful problem-solvers who requested assistance with companionship. This would suggest that those people who can distinguish which support resources it is appropriate to approach for specific difficulties tend to cope more effectively with problems that arise during deployment.

In 1976 Cobb postulated that the degree of an individual's awareness of available support resources is associated with heightened flexibility and an increased capacity to deal positively with problems. He redefined support as information that facilitates the family's perception of being respected members of a network that functions via reciprocity and cares for the individuals who form a part of it. Additionally, Van Vranken and Benson (1976) suggested that when people are living under stressful conditions they are safeguarded from "a wide variety of pathological states" to a significant extent by affiliation with a supportive group (p. 210). Thus, it may be concluded that even if the stress a family experience during deployment cannot be completely eradicated, quality support services can greatly reduce the stress burden. Thus, in light of such observations it is of concern that according to the present survey, 62% of the participants were unaware of the Chaplaincy service and over a third (36%) did not know about the Linton Support Officer. Some people might perceive that they were inadequately informed about Army support services and interpret this as evidence that the Army do not really care about the soldiers' families. Some of the comments made by participants give credence to this notion. For example: "I never received the information pack, we happened to be talking to a clerk at the Administration Center whose partner was already in East Timor and she gave me her information pack"; "As far as I am concerned the Army is not family focused"; "Personally I don't find the Army to be family oriented"; "I feel the Army pays lipservice to its concerns about families' welfare".

Anecdotal narrative from the present survey testified that families value being part of a network that they perceive genuinely cares about their welfare. Individuals who did not believe they were receiving this kind of regard spoke about being "condescendingly called dependents" and being thought of in terms of "camp followers". Conversely some people felt that specific individuals within the military organization genuinely cared about them, but that these people were not "backed up by good administration". Such comments suggest that whilst there are some military personnel who are skilled and capable of providing an efficacious support service, the milieu in which they have to operate is not consistently conducive to cooperative teamwork.

Those participants who turned to the Chaplains for help (32%) all perceived that they had been responded to with empathy and they were of the opinion that their needs had been met. As previously stated, a high proportion of participants (62%) reported not having known about the Chaplaincy service. Thus, it is possible that the rate of usage would have been higher if the service had been more widely advertised. Several individuals were specifically upset that a particular padre had exited the service and they expressed a belief that it was not his choice to leave. In view of the deployment of troops overseas these soldiers' partners felt they particularly needed this type of support at this time.

It would seem that if individuals did not perceive that the military were approachable on matters of support, that they would seek help from civilian organizations. However, the only time participants approached a civilian organization it was for assistance with issues of companionship. Of these people, none perceived that the problem was satisfactorily dealt with. It is possible that paying for services was a deterrent. A total of 66% of participants suggested that it would be helpful if the Army paid for services provided by civilian agencies. However, although provision is made for military personnel to receive assistance from civilian social services, there is no such allowance for partners who seek assistance.

When partners are accustomed to being left to keep home life intact whilst the soldiers are away, they tend to develop self-help strategies that include accessing informal as well as formal sources of support.

Informal sources of support

Support means to bolster, strengthen, encourage, comfort, buoy up, hearten, fortify, validate, champion, promote, advocate for, and defend (Chambers, 1989). This definition implies that by necessity supporters should be a diverse group. Family, friends, and empathetic acquaintances motivated by a variety of motivators such as love, affection, empathy, and duty provide practical as well as emotional back-up. However, in the current survey almost half of the partners

(46%) relied on their own personal resources in combination with help from friends (23%), and family (21%). It appeared that the tendency was for the soldiers' partners to only approach formal support services if the informal sources were unavailable or provided unsatisfactory assistance.

When Fanshawe (1986) conducted a study investigating the support that mothers in an army town sought, the findings showed that most military families attempt to handle their own problems. This also proved to be the case in the current research, as the findings showed that for every source of Army support a proportion of participants knew about the service but refused to use it. For example: over half (55%) of those canvassed would not approach the Unit Point of Contact staff member and a quarter (24%) said they would not contact the newly appointed Welfare Support Officer. One participant summed up an opinion expressed by several others when she wrote, " I don't by any means expect nor rely on the Army itself for anything" and "I don't expect the Army to be in my face as such". Another person expressed the following opinion, "I do not think it is a good idea for the Army to handle all the problems of deployed personnel. Family has a role to play and the Army should not try to become a "crutch". "The deployed person has a responsibility toward the family's welfare and should plan for contingencies before deployment". Thus, it appears that a relatively large proportion of partners do not expect or wish to access official military channels for support. Although the reasons for this can be many, including disillusionment with Army support based on disappointing experiences, 55% of those surveyed said

that they believed that there was a stigma attached to using an Army support service and 37% felt requesting help would adversely affect their partner's career. This notion was reported by Vernez and Zellmann (1987) who noted a common perception by personnel in the military that there is a stigma attached to using official support services. These authors postulated that this perspective was even more evident in environments that lacked confidentiality and where the soldiers' commanders become actively involved in sorting their troops' family issues.

Response of offspring to parent's deployment

The way offspring respond to separation from a parent varies across age groups (Compas *et al.*, 1994). Only 35% of participants in the current survey were not responsible for the care of offspring. Thus, the majority of individuals had to take over the role/tasks their military partners performed with regard to parenting. All of the participants with offspring perceived that there were some problems associated with their partner's absence and that there was a negative effect on their children.

In 1988 Hunter conducted the first study of families in the New Zealand Defense Force. She found that 43% of participants had no difficulty taking on the dual-parenting role, compared to 62% in the current survey. Thus, although more than a decade has passed between these two studies the proportion of partners at home experiencing problems with sole parenting has remained across time.

A comment from one participant illustrated the main issues noted by others. She wrote that, "sole responsibility is tiring, especially when the eldest's behavior got difficult". Thus, in cases where offspring react negatively to the absence of the soldier parent, it exacerbates the burden the stay-at-home adult has to shoulder. Even though the parent may understand why the child is behaving in a negative manner, this individual is faced with the practicalities of dealing with the issue. If the partner at home is also having problems coping with the soldier's absence, then dealing with the offspring's discomfort might seem an extremely daunting task.

Children aged 0-7 years

Overall the younger age group (0-7) tended to blame themselves for their parent's absence and felt insecure, rejected as well as resentful. The following anecdotal narrative illustrates this response, "Their dad has a great relationship with the girls so they found it very hard and felt that their dad had left them. Our three year old was very sure he had gone and would never come home."

The majority of children exhibited both behavioral and emotional problems. Only 25% were reported to have adjusted well to the experience. It was noteworthy that just over a third (35%) of the children fixated on a parental substitute. For example a participant reported that her son, "really missed the male contact" and another observed that "he forgot who his dad was, thought granddad was dad".

The findings from the current survey concurred with observations made by Myers (1990) who submitted that young children become attached to their parents not only because their mothers and fathers gratify their needs, but also because they are, "comfortable, familiar, and responsive" (p.87). Furthermore, although young children may become distressed if separated from a parent, Myers suggested that the distress tends to dissipate if there is a substitute stable, loving caregiver. Although it has been generally accepted that preschool youngsters are capable of some altruism and are not purely egocentric as Piaget has suggested, their ability to take another's perspective is limited (Siegel & Hodkin, 1982). Lacking sophisticated language skills at this stage, it is more likely that young children will manifest their distress indirectly. Thus, their response may present as negative behavior. This is evident from a report of one of the mothers in the current survey who wrote, "My 4 year old missed his dad terribly. He developed behavior problems at home, but was all right at kindy and then later at school. School took a lot of pressure off me". Thus, as children grow older and enter school the change in situation alters the focus. According to Rosen *et al.* (1993) whereas younger age is related to home discipline problems, older age is associated with school discipline problems and poor academic achievement.

Children 7-12 years

Compared to their younger peers, the overall rate of behavioral problems dropped by 22% to 38%. Parents observed that their offspring became more helpful and significantly matured over the period. About 56% felt that there was no significant change in their child, whilst only 14 % of children were reported not to have shown obvious signs of missing the parent. There was a 5% decrease amongst those children seeking a parental substitute. These findings show that as children develop cognitively they are more able to comprehend the situation and think in abstract terms of future return dates of the absentee parent. Some participants observed this and commented on the differences between the way their children responded to the deployment. According to one person, "Depending on the age of your children, there is a difference in the parenting role. For example, at two to three years old my son was more worried about where dad was as opposed to his understanding (of the situation) at nine years old".

Offspring over 12 years old

The majority of parents perceived no change in their offspring (95%) with over half (56%) being more willing to help the parent with everyday living activities. At least 25% were anxious to find a parental substitute and 62% showed signs of missing the absentee parent. These results demonstrate that as children move into adolescence they become increasingly independent and although they miss the company of the absentee parent, being less reliant, they are more accepting of it.

However, although adolescents may be closer to independence many still rely on their parents to help meet their basic needs. At the same time their capacity for altruism tends to have developed to a stage where they might believe they ought to be able to do something to help the parent at home to shoulder the responsibilities of everyday living activities. Consequently, young people may experience both negative and positive responses towards a parent's deployment. However, the tendency is for older adolescents to adjust more easily to the change in the family system than the less resilient, more dependent youngsters. As noted by Rosen *et al.* (1993), being aware of "vulnerability factors" may facilitate the development of support services that target the specific needs of the various age groups of offspring. Additionally they noted that it is extremely important to support the stay-at-home parent because how successfully these individuals cope will impact on how well the children manage.

Mental health of stay-at-home partners during deployment

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-30) constructed by Goldberg and Williams (1988) was one of the tools used in the current survey to identify the short-term changes in mental health caused by deployment. However, this measure is not designed to pick up on any long-term pathological conditions. According to the findings from the analysis of data using the GHQ-30 unsuccessful problem-solvers tended to have high scores. This signifies that these people had more difficulty carrying out everyday activities as a manifestation of inability to

adjust to changes associated with deployment. According to Martin and Ickovics (1987) deployment can cause "acute psychological strain, often leading to symptoms of depression and anxiety" (p.108). Participants in the present study obtained low scores, thus the majority had no changes in their mental health. However, those individuals who had difficulty dealing with problems associated with deployment mostly had high scores on the GHQ-30. If people have mental health problems a buffer effect can be provided by offering formal support as an adjunct to informal support from family and friends.

However, even for those individuals who typically experience emotional stability, deployment may raise psychological issues if they are new to military life. For example one participant in the current study wrote, "For me the time was stressful because everything happened at once...sudden deployment ... deployment three weeks prior to posting move, I had to find a new home on my own...had to move on my own and find a new job". Those partners who have had more experience of military life typically tend to develop support systems and strategies they can activate whenever their soldier-partner leaves on active service. This is evidenced by the following comments, "Deployments are not a problem. I am used to my husband being away from home fairly frequently due to his occupation" and "I am very independent and when there is a deployment overseas, although it is a very difficult time, I tend to be self-supporting".

However, as another participant observed, "A lot of partners are not prepared (for deployment) and they cannot cope if left alone". This highlights the influence of individual coping abilities on how people perceive the deployment of their partner. In other words, individuals with sound problem-solving skills and who make a determined effort to plan ahead for any contingencies that might typically arise during the deployment are more likely to adjust to changes that are a direct result of their partner's absence. Thus, it seems likely that those individuals who have mental health problems and also lack effective problem solving skills will view deployment more negatively than those who do not. Additionally, difficulties that arise whilst their partner is away may also exacerbate prior mental health problems. For this reason, formal support that specifically targets mental health would be of obvious benefit.

Attitudes towards specific military issues

Staying in service

Attitudes can be used to predict whether personnel will remain in service. Over three decades ago Grace and Steiner (1978) noted that, "Wives who perceived that their husbands were happy, liked their present jobs and were experiencing career satisfaction, tended to be more likely to be willing for their husbands to reenlist" (p.45). Participants in the current survey exhibited the same outlook as the military wives in Grace and Steiner's study with 83% stating that they were in

favor of the soldier-partner remaining in service. The majority perceived that their partner was happy in service (82%) and 74% believed that career satisfaction was high. With 70% reporting that their partner wished to remain in service it was noteworthy that although 65% personally believed that there are greater employment opportunities in the civilian sector most (71%) said they would not try to dissuade the soldier from remaining in uniform. These findings suggest that personnel and their families remain within the military enclave for reasons that transcend pecuniary advantage.

The decision to remain in the Army is also influenced by deployment issues. Vernez and Zellmann (1987) specifically identified separation due to deployment as a prime reason why officers left the service, and the second after income issues for enlisted personnel. In the current study over half (54%) of the participants indicated that deployments were the worst aspect of military life. Even so, the majority (91%) felt that active service was important and 79% consequently accepted their partner's absence. However, those in the early-career group were more inclined to view deployments as the worst part of Army service and were the least confident that their relationship with their partner would ultimately survive the separation caused by the recent peacekeeping missions.

Attitudes to being a military family

In respect to service in the military, Van Laar (1999) has defined a sense of community as an affinity with the work group based on attachments to individuals, the work itself, and the values of the organization. She pointed out that social support facilitates an emotional link among members and that identification with the community fosters a sense of belonging. An overwhelming majority of partners indicated that they were proud to be associated with the NZ Army (86%) and that they were generally satisfied with the lifestyle (79%). This still leaves 21% who expressed dissatisfaction. From this it may be concluded that there was dissatisfaction associated with specific issues that occurred on an individual basis rather than general unhappiness with the Army.

Just under half (46%) of participants acknowledged that the nature of military service was such that it conflicted with family needs on occasion. Additionally, disruption to family life was regarded as being compounded by the frequency with which soldiers were deployed and the length of time they were away from home. As one participant noted, "It was a nine month tour....missing out on Christmas, New Year and birthdays". Another person commented that "my husband had been away for most of the year immediately before he was deployed again and we were extremely angry that this was not taken into account and it had extremely negative consequences on our daughter. Until my husband returned, she had not really seen him for over a year and a half. As a result she is very unhappy and

angry. I believe we will be dealing with these consequences for many years to come as a result".

The findings of the current study confirm Grace and Steiner's (1978) hypothesis that soldiers are heavily influenced by their partner's attitudes to the army. It was apparent that 86% of the participants talked to their partners extensively with 98% reporting that soldiers communicated as much as possible during their most recent deployment. Most participants (89%) believed that they had been kept well informed by soldier-partners and 93% stated that important family decisions were jointly made. This is particularly significant in view of the fact that 91% of participants claimed to have discussed the issue of remaining in the military enclave with their soldier-partners. This finding has important ramifications from the perspective of retention of Army personnel. Part of the satisfaction that soldiers' partners may feel is due to the affinity they have with being associated with the Army. Providing efficacious support is a major way of increasing the military family's sense of belonging and satisfaction with the lifestyle. Consequently, recommendations based on the findings of the current survey will be presented in the concluding chapter.

The following section will identify the limitations of this study and present suggestions for future research projects.

LIMITATIONS

1.) *Mail-out versus interviewer delivery of questionnaire*

When the sample is large it is obviously more cost effective to mail the survey questionnaire. However, there are potential problems associated with mail-out delivery.

Firstly, the researcher had to rely on contact details recorded on the NZ Army ATLAS electronic database. This information is reliant upon the soldiers ensuring that information about their partner is recorded on the system and that the contact details are current. At least 27 of the addresses that were supplied were inaccurate and the mail was returned. It is also known that some soldiers in de-facto relationships did not submit their partner's details. Soldiers in de-facto relationships are required to complete an official form and obtain their commanding officer's signature in order to receive official recognition of the union. Thus, the results may not be representative of the entire population of partners.

Secondly, the participants had a limited opportunity to seek clarification of those questions they did not fully understand. For example, in Part four of the Questionnaire 38% of the participants misinterpreted the instructions for the completion of the attitudinal table. Consequently, only half of the question was completed thereby compromising the results.

2.) *Length of questionnaire*

The Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) devised by Sarason, Sarason, Shearin, and Pierce (1987) was incorporated into the present study. However, Part three (Army Support Services) as well as Part five (Potential Deployment Problems) of this questionnaire elicited the same data as the SSQ. This duplication could have been avoided and reduced the overall length of the questionnaire by three pages.

3.) *Late administration time*

The present study was administered after soldiers had returned from their deployment. Thus, responses were made in retrospect of issues that arose during deployment and consequently it is possible that the time delay may have affected accurate recollection of events.

4.) *External environmental influences*

Soldiers' families are not only associated with the Army, but are also part of the wider community. Factors outside the Army might combine with internal factors to influence workforce outcomes. For example: the surrounding environment determines to a certain extent what opportunities there will be for employment, education, and leisure activities. The areas where camps are located vary considerably as to the availability of civilian support services and amenities.

Additionally, as Vernez and Zellmann (1987) have pointed out, it is essential to consider the perception Army personnel have of opportunities in the civilian sector. Thus, to identify the factors that combine to determine whether personnel stay in service or not, it is necessary to compare their satisfaction with Army life with their view of the satisfaction they believe they could experience outside it.

The current survey did not consider the influence of outside factors on decisions to remain in the Army. Unrealistic expectations of what the Army should be offering and what is currently available in the civilian sector may have affected the responses. High expectations may have resulted in a higher rate of negative comments. A positive perspective of the opportunities available in the civilian community could impact on partner happiness and soldiers' subsequent contentment to remain in service.

5.) *Pilot study*

A pilot study was not conducted to ensure that questions had face value and elicited pertinent information.

6.) *Focused sample pool*

Participants were drawn largely from amongst those partners of soldiers deployed on the first rotation to East Timor. This was a deployment that caused a unique set of circumstances that made this mission very different from the previous peacekeeping excursions. It was the largest deployment since Korea and as such

put a strain on resources causing logistical problems. It was also one of the most dangerous missions as NZ Army troops were the first in theater in Suai within a largely unknown ground situation with potential troop losses. Upon the receipt of the authority to deploy, the Army had to respond rapidly within time constraints. This translated as a short deployment notice to troops, limited pre-deployment leave, and intensive combat readiness training. There were many changes in decisions due to the dynamic events in East Timor. The resultant changes in priorities made it difficult to disseminate up-to-date information to soldiers and their families.

FUTURE RESEARCH

1.) *Longitudinal study of attrition, retention, and readiness of troops*

Vernez and Zellmann (1987) regard longitudinal data as superior to cross-sectional data. They pointed out that the manner in which the Army operates includes regular occasions when life-changing decisions are made. For example: relocation, deployment, promotion, and re-enlistment. They referred to "trade-offs" that may be offered to the soldiers and their families depending on the individual's age, rank, and term of service. This implies that longitudinal data will provide a clearer picture of Army family decision-making. It can source more data via repeated measures about the use of support services, behavior, and attitudes to factors that influence the lifestyle choices they make. Additionally, longitudinal data can offer information about the antecedents and the outcomes of specific

events such as marriage breakdown. By considering such information it is easier to rule out "causal ambiguities in understanding the role of family factors in army outcomes" (Vernez & Zellmann, 1987, p.18.)

Part four (General Issues) of the present survey elicited data about the attitudes participants had towards the soldier's continued Army service. A follow-up study that compares the reasons why a service person has left the Army with their partner's responses to this issue would be beneficial as it would indicate whether or not there is any predictive value between a partner's attitudes and subsequent attrition rate.

When soldiers wish to terminate their service they do so by formal application using the MD 717 form that elicits reasons for early termination. Once individuals are formally discharged it would be possible to use data gathered by the form to re-examine their partner's reply in the present survey to discover possible relationships between these responses.

2.) *Implementation and evaluation of support initiatives*

Implementing new support strategies and then repeating the NZA Partner Support Questionnaire (2000) in the wake of the next deployment would facilitate the discovery of whether or not these support initiatives influenced the partner's well-being and attitudes to Army life. However, as the establishment and maintenance

of new support initiatives will require ongoing funds it is important to audit the efficacy of this service at regular intervals.

Chapter eight summarizes the conclusions that were reached.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Military service characteristically exposes families of soldiers to a wide range of stress overload that encompasses separations that tend to be frequent as well as lengthy and relocations to other postings. At times the intrinsic nature of the army way of handling issues and the chain of command structure intrudes into family life at the expense of attempts to keep family life separate from army influence. Thus, for some partners a response to this intrusion may be to encourage soldier-partners to terminate their service during the first four years of service (attrition) or not to renew their employment contract beyond the first term (retention). Over a decade ago Vernez and Zellmann (1987) reported that family attitudes influence the soldier's decision to stay or leave the army, and that these viewpoints accrue importance with increasing years of service.

According to Vernez and Zellmann (1987) families respond positively to a philosophy of "partnership" and "reciprocity". By this definition, soldiers pledge allegiance to the army and the organization assumes the responsibility to put in place services to facilitate a satisfactory quality of life for themselves along with their families. These authors point out that whilst the basic intention is to operate in this fashion, the reality is that when there are budget constraints a utilitarian

perspective takes precedence. Accordingly, family support services are evaluated as "worthwhile" not only because they are beneficial to those individuals, but also as aids to improve the troops' rate of attrition, retention, and readiness to carry out duties. If significant funds are to be allocated to run specific support initiatives, then it is prudent to not only regularly inquire as to family expectations and needs for support, but also to assess how well services function. However, it is recommended that a further step be added to the process. By analyzing the data it is possible to identify the influence such services have on keeping trained personnel in the military enclave. In instances where needs have not been swiftly addressed it is necessary to reassure soldiers' partners and families that they are indeed valued, respected members of the Army community. Regardless of whether the prime philosophy is purely quality of life or has an additional utilitarian focus, an efficacious support service is vitally important.

Summary

The research undertaken for this thesis attempted to examine Army support services as a factor implicated in the retention of NZA personnel who are deployed on active service. A second focus was to discover if the soldier's partner and family perceived the present Army support as satisfactory. Results from the current study revealed the following:

1.) A resource of relevant information dealing with support issues gathered from an in-depth literature survey.

2.) A resource of new data about the support needs of military families in New Zealand during deployment. This was gathered as part of an empirical study using a specially designed questionnaire presented to partners of soldiers deployed recently on peacekeeping missions. Following this, quantitative analysis of the data as well as discussion of qualitative anecdotal narrative proffered by participants was completed.

3.) Further insight into the relationship between family satisfaction with Army life and retention of military personnel.

4.) The development of recommendations that can facilitate the improvement of Army support services and thereby benefit the retention of trained soldiers.

Conclusions

Conclusions were reached from information gained from the literature review and the questionnaires completed by participants with firsthand experience of coping with problematic issues raised by the deployment of their soldier-partners. Important conclusions from this study included the following:

1.) Deployment has an important impact on family life and raises support issues.

2.) Efficacious Army support services are necessary to facilitate quality of life within the military enclave and bolster the soldier's decision to remain in service.

3.) Although military families may desire assistance from the Army, their expectations are that issues pertinent to the military will delineate the services. For example, communication channels with soldiers during deployment and accurate, timely information regarding service personnel who are away on active duty.

4.) Partners generally perceived that the Army staff they contacted about information or other support issues were not specifically skilled or trained to deal with this type of interaction. The Unit Point of Contact service has been found to be detrimental to the creation of a positive relationship between the Army and the soldiers' partners. Unit Points of Contact staff not only have to fulfill their current duties but also deal with additional responsibilities of those who have been deployed. They are also not trained to deal with partner inquiries and quite often do not carry detailed knowledge about the issues of concern. Thus, these individuals tend not to have the time, training, specific information, or inclination to spend trying to sort support issues.

5.) The Chaplaincy service was held in high regard by those participants who used it and several individuals were upset by the departure of their "favorite padre". There was also recognition that the chaplains are "overworked" as they are in such demand. Comments offered by participants are couched in a highly emotive tone, suggesting that the chaplaincy is very significant to these people (See Appendix III.). Thus, it is evident that this service is valued, and met the needs of those who accessed it.

6.) Although some partners may wish to leave the military enclave, most said that they would support their soldier-partner if this person wanted to carry on in the Army. However, as partners reported that making joint decisions was a common event, it is logical to assume that soldiers will be influenced to leave if their family is unhappy with their choice of career.

7.) At the moment there is an 0800 number soldiers' partners are free to call whenever they have an inquiry. Anecdotal data suggests that this number is not sufficiently effective as a source of support to justify the expenditure. For example a participant said, "If the Army is to continue with providing an 0800 service, please could it be staffed by approachable, and mature individuals".

8.) On the whole, partners and their families are content and even proud to be associated with the military, but value their independence and privacy.

Recommendations

It is noteworthy that at least half of the ten most problematic support issues participants in the present survey identified were Army related. These are:

1.) Sending mail to and receiving mail from deployed troops.

2.) Making phone calls to and receiving phone calls from deployed troops.

3.) Receiving accurate and timely information regarding troop departure and return dates.

4.) Receiving regular and accurate information about the deployed soldiers' welfare.

5.) Having access to trained, specially appointed individuals who may be approached in complete confidence for information and support inquiries.

Based on these findings it is recommended that the Army take cognizance of the concerns that participants raised. Subsequently they need to take the appropriate action to ensure that the family support services offered by the Army are tailored to meet the specific needs of the individuals they purport to assist. This can be done by terminating the allocation of Unit Point of Contact duty, strengthening the Chaplaincy service, establishing the position of Information Officer (IO), and restructuring the current way of administering the 0800 helpline.

Responsibilities of an Information officer

Duties should include:

1.) Liaison between soldiers' partners and the Army. This necessitates the IO having a point of contact within Army companies dealing with certain aspects of a deployment so that the IO can obtain information directly from the most knowledgeable staff member.

2.) Monitoring of partners' level of satisfaction with communication links.

3.) Investigating reasons for hitches. For example: why deployed individuals fail to leave or return on the dates that have been specified. Most people tend to accept that hitches happen with relatively good grace if they receive an empathetic response to their inquiry and a prompt, accurate explanation.

4.) Collection and dissemination of the following information:

i.) Resource material. For example: information booklets currently held by Army Psychologists.

ii.) Procedures concerning soldier welfare. For example: allowances.

iii.) Troop movements within the boundaries to the extent permitted by issues of classified material.

iv). Deployment and return dates.

v). Current mail/phone contact details of soldiers' partners and family.

Accessibility

Participants in the present survey emphasized the importance of having ready access to someone within the Army who would be empathetic and proactive in seeking answers to queries.

Based on the findings it is recommended that during deployments:

1.) Information officers be assigned to every camp. It is advisable to appoint two people respectively at Linton and Burnham as the bulk of Army families reside at these camps.

2.) Office hours be timetabled so as to facilitate access for soldiers' partners who work. For example: staffing the office for some hours on a Saturday. This can be achieved within camps where there is only one IO by creating a working week that runs from Tuesday to Saturday. Where there are two Information Officers those individuals could alternate weekend duties.

3.) The position of IO be widely publicized so that all soldiers' partners are aware of the function of these officers and how to contact them. This may be done by:

   i.) Regular submissions of articles by Information Officers to the Army newspaper and Camp Community Bulletin.

   ii.) The initial introduction of the IO via a letter sent to all soldiers'

partners and signed by the General. Such a letter would include an acknowledgment of the importance of Army families' welfare, the reasons for the creation of the Information Officer position, and the value of accessing this service. It is vital to stress that Information Officers abide by the ethics of confidentiality. There is a stigma attached to using Army support based on fear of possible adverse effects on the partner's career for doing so.

4.) A staff memo sent to all units explaining the new family support initiative and requesting cooperation between platoon commanders and the IO. This will facilitate the release of information that is pertinent to inquiries as far as possible within the Army restraints to classify sensitive material pertaining to troop activities.

5.) An official form for soldiers to fill out prior to deployment that elicits the most recent information about their current partner and family situation. It is only possible for Information Officers to fulfill their support role adequately when they are in receipt of accurate contact data.

Final observation

Frequent relocation and prolonged separation have been associated with reluctance to stay in military service (Vernez & Zellmann, 1987). Additionally,

workforce outcomes are affected by how essential the family perceives a mission to be. Thus, positive family attitudes favor retention, whilst negative views lower the chance of keeping personnel in service. Another factor that might impact on whether personnel stay or leave was whether or not participants and their soldier-partners perceived more opportunities in civilian life. It became evident that even though the majority discussed their partner's future in the service with a view to making a joint decision, participants declared that they would support the decision of soldier-partner who wished to stay in the military enclave. However, as a participant noted, "A happy family is a happy soldier". Thus, it seems unlikely that personnel would stay on in the Army, even if they personally enjoyed military life, if the family were unhappy. Thus, by supporting the family effectively the likelihood is strengthened that the Army will retain their skilled personnel.

Most participants did not expect or wish the Army to take responsibility for more than those issues that are directly associated with a soldier-partner's welfare. Thus, during deployment they want reliable, regular communication services, accurate information about arrivals and departures, and access to Army staff who accept responsibility for resolving relevant issues. Aside from possibly boosting retention levels, it would seem that these are reasonable requests that are well within the capabilities of an efficient military organization that espouses a philosophy of taking care of and valuing soldiers and their families.

REFERENCES

Archer, R. P., & Cauthorne, C. V. (1986). A final report on an investigation of deployment related factors on performance and psychological adjustment. *Technical Report,* 14-84-C-0666. Arlington, Office of Naval Research.

Bartone, P. T., Adler, A. B., & Vaitkus, M. A. (1998). Dimensions in psychological stress in peacekeeping operations. *Military Medicine, 163,* 587-593.

Bem, S. L. (1975). Sex role adaptability: One consequence of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 31,* 634-643.

Block, J. H. (1973). Conceptions of sex role: Some cross-cultural and longitudinal perspectives. *American Psychologist, 28,* 512-527.

Buddin, R. (1981). *The role of service experience in post-training attrition in the Army and Air Force*. Santa Monica, California: The RAND corporation.

Chambers Concise Dictionary (1989). London: Chambers.

Cobb, S. (1976). Social support as a moderator of life stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 38*, 300-314.

Cohen, S., & Wills, T.A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin, 98*, 310-357.

Compas, B. E., Worsham, N. L., Epping-Jordan, J. E., & Grant, K. E. (1994). When mom or dad has cancer. *Health Psychology, 13,* 507-515.

Dahl, B. B., McCubbin, H. I., & Lester, G. R.(1976). War-induced father absence: Comparing the adjustment of children in reunited, non-reunited, and reconstituted families. *International Journal of Sociology of the Family, 6,* 99-108.

Decker, K. B. (1976). Coping with sea duty: Problems encountered and resources utilised during the period of family separation. In E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice, (Eds.), *Military families: Adaptation to change.* New York: Praeger.

Derr, C. B. (1979). *Managing marriage/family issues across career stages: The case of the U.S. naval officer.* Unpublished manuscript, University of Utah Department of Management, Salt Lake City.

Edna, J. H. (1982). *Families under the flag: A review of military family literature.* New York: Praeger.

Fanshawe, P. G. (1986). Mothers in an Army town: A survey of mothers with young children. *Early Child Development and Care, 25,* 79-160.

Felton, B., Lehmann, S., Brown, P., & Liberatos, P. (1980). The coping function of sex-role attitudes during marital disruption. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 21,* 240-248.

Glynn, T. J. (1981). Psychological sense of community: Measurement and application. *Human Relations, 34,* 789-818.

Godwin, S. (1997). An ethnography of women's experience with military deployment. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 57 (8),* 53-59.

Goldberg, D., & Williams, P. (1988). *A user's guide to the General Health Questionnaire.* Windsor, USA: NFER Nelson.

Grace, N. L., & Steiner, M. B. (1978). Wives' attitudes and the retention of Navy enlisted personnel. In E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice (Eds.), *Military families: Adaptation to change.* New York: Praeger, 42-56.

Hamilton, S. (1986). *Supporting service families: A report on the main problems facing spouses of Australian Defence Force personnel and some recommended solutions.* Canberra, ACT: Office of the Status of Women.

Hill, P. (1945). The returning father and his family. *Marriage and Family Living, 7,* 31-34.

Hunter, E. J. (1986). Families of prisoners of war held in Vietnam: A seven-year study. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 9,* 253-251.

Hunter, E. J. (1989). *Upfront Downunder: An outsider's view of New Zealand military families*. A report on the New Zealand Military Family Study. Wellington, NZ: United States Educational Foundation.

Hunter, E. J., & Hickman, R. (1981). *Orientation to the military family: Factors and environmental considerations.* The centre for Women Policy Studies' Conference on Domestic Violence in the Military, Georgia, March 10-13.

Hunter, E. J., & Nice, D. S. (Eds.), (1978*). Military families: Adaptation to change*. New York: Praeger.

Hunter, E. J., & Plag, J. (1973). *An assessment of the needs of POW/MIA wives residing in the San Diego Metropolitan Area: A Proposal for the establishment of family services.* San Diego CA: Naval Health Research Centre.

Jans, N. (1988). *Careers in conflict: Report of a study of officers' careers in conflict: Report of a study of officers' careers and families in peacetime.* Canberra, ACT: Canberra College of Advanced Education.

Jolly, R. (1992). *Military man family man.* London: Brassey.

Kelley, M. (1994). The effects of military-induced separation on family factors and child behaviour. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 64 (1)*, 103-111.

Khantzian, E., & Mack, J. (1983). Self-preservation and care of the self: Ego instincts reconsidered. *Psychoanalytic study of the Child, 38,* 209-232.

Knapp, T. S., & Newman, S. J. (1993). Variables related to the psychological well-being of Army wives during the stress of an extended military separation. *Military Medicine, 158,* 77-80.

Lakhani, H., & Hoover, E. C. (1995). Child-care use, earnings, and reenlistment desires of wives of enlisted soldiers in the U.S. Army. *Military Psychology, 7,* 265-276.

Lavee, Y., McCubbin, H. I., & Patterson, J. M. (1985). The double ABCX Model of family stress and adaptation: An empirical test by analysis of structural equations with latent variables. *Marriage and Family Review,* 811-825.

Lindquist, R. (1952). *Marriage and family life of officers and airmen in a strategic air command wing.* Technical Report No. 5. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina: Institute for Research in Social Sciences.

LoBello, S. G. (1995). Review of the General Health Questionnaire. In J. C. Conoly and J. C. Impara (Eds.), *The Twelfth Mental Measurements Yearbook.* Buros Institute: University of Nebraska Press.

Lozowick, L. M. (1955). On the nature of identification. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 51,* 175-183.

Lund, D. A. (1978). Junior officer retention in the modern volunteer Army: Who leaves and who stays? In E. Hunter and D. S. Nice, (Eds.), *Military Families: Adaptation to Change.* New York: Praeger.

McCubbin, H. (1979). Integrating coping behaviour in family stress theory. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 4,* 237-244.

McCubbin, H., & Dahl, B. (1974). Social and mental health services to families of servicemen missing in action or returned prisoners of war. *Family Separation and Reunion,* Cat.no. D-206.21, 74-79, Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office.

McCubbin, H., Dahl, B., and Hunter, E. J. (Eds.), (1976). *Families in the Military System.* Beverly Hills, USA: Stage.

McCubbin, H. I., & Lavee, Y. (1986). Strengthening army families: A family life cycle stage perspective. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 9,* 221-231.

MacDonald, C., Chamberlain, K., Long, N., and Mirfin, K. (1996*). Psychological effects of peacekeeping deployments on the partners of service personnel.* Palmerston North, New Zealand: Department of Psychology, Massey University.

Macdonough, T. S. (1991). Noncombat stress in soldiers: How it is manifested, How to measure it and How to cope with it. In R. Gal and D. Mangelsdorff. (Eds.*), Handbook of military psychology.* London: John Wiley.

McEvoy, P. (1982). *Navy wives' knowledge of, interest in, and willingness to utilize naval and civilian support services during deployments.* Unpublished dissertation. San Diego: US International University.

Manis, M. (1958). Personal adjustment, assumed similarity to parents, and inferred parental evaluations of the self. *Journal of Consulting Psychology, 22,* 481-485.

Manning, F. J. (1991). Morale, cohesion and esprit de corps. In R. Gal and D. Mangelsdorff. (Eds.), *Handbook of Military Psychology.* London: John Wiley.

Maracek, J. (1978). Psychological disorders in women: Indicators of role strain. In I. Frieze, J. Parsons, P. Johnson, D. Ruble, and G. Zellman (Eds.), *Women and sex roles: A social psychological perspective.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Martin, J. A., & Ickovics, J. R. (1987). The effects of stress on the psychological well-being of army wives: Initial findings from a longitudinal study. *Journal of Human Stress, 13,* 108-115.

Montalvo, F. F. (1976). Family separation in the army: A study of the problems encountered and care-taking resources used by career army families undergoing military separation. In H. I. McCubbin, B. Dahl, and E. J. Hunter (Eds.,) *Families in the Military System.* Beverly Hills: Sage, 147-173.

Myers, D. G. (1990). *Exploring Psychology.* New York: Worth.

Orthner, D. (1980). *Families in blue: A study of married and single parents in the U.S. Air Force,* Greensboro, NC: Family Research and Analysis.

Orthner, D.K., & Pittman, J.F. (1986). Family contributions to work commitment. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 48,* 573-581.

Patterson, J. M., & McCubbin, H. I. (1984). Gender Roles and Coping. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 46,* 95-104.

Pittman, J. F. (1994). Work/family fit as a mediator of work factors on marital tension: Evidence from the interface of greedy institutions. *Human Relations, 47,* 183-209.

Pittman, J. F., & Orthner, D. K. (1988). Predictors of spousal support for the work commitment of husbands. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 50,* 417-427.

Pleck, J.H. (1979). Men's family work: Three perspectives and some data. *Family Coordinator, 28,* 481-488.

Reynolds, C. R. (1995). Review of the General Health Questionnaire. In J. C. Conoly and J. C. Impara (Eds.), *The Twelfth Mental Measurements Yearbook.* Buros Institute: University of Nebraska Press.

Richan, W. C. (1969). *Human services and social work responsibility.* New York: National Association of Social Workers.

Rosen, L. N., & Durand, D. B. (1995). The family factor and retention among married soldiers deployed in Operation Desert. *Military Psychology, 7,* 221-234.

Rosen, L. N., & Moghadam, L. Z. (1990). Matching the support to the stressor: Implications for the buffering hypothesis. *Military Psychology, 2,* 193-204.

Rosen, L. N., & Moghadam, L. Z. (1991). Predictors of general well-being among army wives. *Military Medicine, 156,* 357-361.

Rosen, L. N., Moghadam, L. Z., & Vaitkus, M. (1989). The military family's influence on soldiers' personal morale: A path analytic model. *Military Psychology, 1,* 201-213.

Rosen, L. N., Teitelbaum, J. M., & Westhuis, D. J. (1993). Stressors, stress mediators, and emotional well-being among spouses of soldiers deployed to the Persian Gulf during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 23,* 1587-1593.

Rosen, L. N., Westhuis, D. J., & Teitelbaum, J. M. (1993). Children's reactions to the Desert Storm deployment: Initial findings from a survey of army families. *Military Medicine, 158,* 465-469.

Rosen, L. N., Westhuis, D. J., & Teitelbaum, J. M. (1994). Patterns of adaptation among Army wives during operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. *Military Medicine, 159,* 43-47.

Rosenberg, F. R. (1989). *The wife of the first-term enlisted soldier: A study of socialisation and role.* Washington, DC: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Department of Military Psychiatry.

Rozenzweig, M., Gampel, J., & Dasberg, H. (1981). Separation and stress in the military family in Israel. *Israeli Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences, 18,* 87-98.

Sarason, S. B. (1974). *The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sarason, I. G., Sarason, B. R., Shearin, E. N., & Pierce, G. R. (1987). A brief measure of social support: Practical and theoretical implications. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 4*, 497-510.

Schumm, W. R., & Bell, D. B. (1998). Response rates and couple type in the U.S Army family research program survey: A research note. *Psychological Reports, 82,* 1387-1393.

Schumm, W. R., Bell, D. B., Knott, B., & Rice, R. E. (1996). The perceived effect of stressors on marital satisfaction among civilian wives of enlisted soldiers deployed to Somalia for Operation Restore Hope. *Military Medicine, 161,* 601-606.

Schumm, W. R., Hemesath, K., Bell, D. B., Palmer-Johnson, C. E., & Elig, T. W. (1998). Did Desert Storm reduce marital satisfaction among army enlisted personnel? *Psychological Reports, 78,* 1241-1242.

Segal, M. (1986). The military and the family as greedy institutions. *Armed Forces and Society, 13*, 9-38.

Siegel, L. S., & Hodkin, B. (1982). The garden path to the understanding of cognitive development: Has Piaget led us into poison ivy? In S. Modgil and C. Modgil (Eds.), *Jean Piaget: Consensus and controversy.* New York: Praeger.

Spellman, S. (1976). Utilisation of problem-solving resources among military families. In H. Cubbin, B. Dahl, and E. Hunter, (Eds.), *Families in the military system.* Beverly Hills: Sage.

Spence, J., Helmreich, R., & Stapp, J. (1975). Ratings of self and peers on sex role attributes and their relations to self-esteem and conceptions of masculinity and femininity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 22*, 29-39.

Stanley, J., Segal, M. W., & Laughton, C. J. (1990). Grass roots family action and military policy responses. *Marriage and Family Review, 15,* 207-223.

Taylor, R., Morrice, K., Clark, D., & McCann, K. (1985). The psychosocial consequences of intermittent husband absence: An epidemiological study. *Social Science and Medicine, 20,* 877-885.

Thompson, E. (1998). The effects of parental military deployment on children's adjustment at school. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 59 (4),* 1071.

Turner, J. (1986). *Brief for CGS on Army Families Survey.* Papakura Army Camp: New Zealand Defence Psychology Unit.

Van Laar, C. (1999). *Increasing a sense of community in the military: The Role of personnel support programs.* USA: RAND Corporation.

Van Vranken, E., & Benson, D. (1976). Family awareness: Perceived helpfulness of community supports. In E. Hunter and D. Nice (Eds.), *Military families: Adaptation to change.* New York: Praeger, 209-221.

Vernez, G., & Zellmann, G. L. (1987). *Families and mission: A review of the effects of family factors on army attrition, retention, and readiness.* Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation.

Woelfel, J. C., & Savell, J. M. (1976). Marital satisfaction, job satisfaction, and retention in the Army. In E. J. Hunter and D. S. Nice (Eds.). *Military Families: Adaptation to change.* New York : Praeger.

Wood, F.R. (1988). Institution versus occupation. In C. C. Moskos and F. R. Wood (Eds.), *The military, more than just a job.* Washington, U.S.A.: Pergamon-Brassey.

Zeff, K. N., Lewis, S. J., & Hirsch, K. A. (1997). Military family adaptation to United Nations operations in Somalia. *Military Medicine, 16,* 384-387.

Appendix I

NGATI TUMATAUENGA

Address all correspondence:

ARMY GENERAL STAFF
Defence House
15-21 Stout Street
Wellington
New Zealand

Telephone: (04) 496 0487

19 June 2000

Dear .....,

Many partners have to make substantial adjustments to their lives when their loved ones are deployed overseas. To learn how to effectively support the partners of future deployed personnel, we would like about 30 minutes of your time to answer the enclosed questionnaire. The research is also being conducted in partial fulfilment of a Masters in Arts Degree with Massey University.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. All information given is in confidence and will only be seen by the researcher, Marguerite Renaud.

I hope that you take this chance to have your say.

Thank you,

Marguerite Renaud
Lieutenant
Human Resources Project Officer

Whilst completing this questionnaire please remember:

* You don't have to answer a particular question if you don't want to
* No individual data will be kept - the final report will only contain summary data
* Only the researcher will have access to the returned questionnaires
* The data will only be used for research purposes
* Return this letter with your address if you would like a summary of the findings

New Zealand Army Partner Support Survey (2000)

Thinking back to the last deployment your partner was on, please answer the following questionnaire.

Background Information

Firstly we would like some general information about you. Please tick the appropriate answer box.

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What age group do you belong to?

☐ Under 20 ☐ 35 - 39
☐ 20 – 24 ☐ 40 - 44
☐ 25 – 29 ☐ 45 - 49
☐ 30 – 34 ☐ 50+

3. What ethnic group do you belong to?

☐ New Zealander of Maori descent
☐ New Zealander of European descent
☐ New Zealander of Pacific Island descent
☐ Other (specify)_____

4. Have you had any association with the military (other than your partner)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered yes to the above question, please explain:

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Do you live in a military housing area?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. **During your partner's deployment, did you have extended family living in the same area?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, approximately how far away in kilometres was your nearest family member?_____

7. **Are you presently in paid employment?**

☐ Yes – full-time ☐ No – but seeking employment

☐ Yes – part-time ☐ No

8. **What is your highest educational qualification?**

☐ No school qualification

☐ School Certificate passes

☐ Sixth Form Certificate or equivalent

☐ Bursary/UE

☐ Trade or Professional

☐ University

9. **How many years have you and your partner been together?**

_____

10. **Which country did your partner deploy to?**

_____

11. **What rank was your partner during the deployment?**

_____

12. **How many years has your partner been in the Regular &/or Territorial Force?**

Years in RF:_____ Years in TF:_____

13. **Since being together, how many weeks have you and your partner been separated due to your partner's work?**

_____

14. **Since being together, how many postings to a new location have you and your partner experienced?**

_____

Support Issues

The following questions ask about people who gave you help or support during your partner's deployment. Each question has three parts.

Part one: *list all the people you knew, but not yourself, who you could count on for help or support in the way described. Give the person's initials. Do not write more than one person next to each of the numbers beneath the question. If you had no support for a question, tick in the space ( ) beside the words "no one".*

Part two: *to indicate if the people listed were connected with the military, circle "M" for military or "C" (civilian) for others.*

Part three: *circle how satisfied you were with the overall support you had for each question area. Do this for all questions, even where you have ticked "no one"*

Example:

Who could you trust with information that could get you into trouble?

0	No one ( ) Tick	5	_____ M/C
1	_____ M/C	6	_____ M/C
2	_____ M/C	7	_____ M/C
3	_____ M/C	8	_____ M/C
4	_____ M/C	9	_____ M/C

How satisfied were you with the support you received?

1	2	3	4	5	6
very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied

1. Who could you really count on to take your mind off your worries when you felt under stress?

0	No one ( ) Tick	5	_____ M/C
1	_____ M/C	6	_____ M/C
2	_____ M/C	7	_____ M/C
3	_____ M/C	8	_____ M/C
4	_____ M/C	9	_____ M/C

How satisfied were you with the support you received?

1	2	3	4	5	6
very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied

During your partner's deployment...

2. Who could you really count on to help you feel more relaxed when you were under pressure or tense?

0	No one ( ) Tick	5	_____ M/C
1	_____ M/C	6	_____ M/C
2	_____ M/C	7	_____ M/C
3	_____ M/C	8	_____ M/C
4	_____ M/C	9	_____ M/C

How satisfied were you with the support you received?

1	2	3	4	5	6
very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied

3. Who accepted you totally, including your worst and best points?

0	No one ( ) Tick	5	_____ M/C
1	_____ M/C	6	_____ M/C
2	_____ M/C	7	_____ M/C
3	_____ M/C	8	_____ M/C
4	_____ M/C	9	_____ M/C

How satisfied were you with the support you received?

1	2	3	4	5	6
very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied

4. Who could you really count on to care about you, regardless of what was happening to you?

0	No one ( ) Tick	5	_____ M/C
1	_____ M/C	6	_____ M/C
2	_____ M/C	7	_____ M/C
3	_____ M/C	8	_____ M/C
4	_____ M/C	9	_____ M/C

How satisfied were you with the support you received?

1	2	3	4	5	6
very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied

During your partner's deployment...

5. Who could you really count on to help you feel better when you were feeling generally "down in the dumps"?

0	No one ( ) Tick	5	_____ M/C
1	_____ M/C	6	_____ M/C
2	_____ M/C	7	_____ M/C
3	_____ M/C	8	_____ M/C
4	_____ M/C	9	_____ M/C

How satisfied were you with the support you received?

1	2	3	4	5	6
very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied

6. Who could you count on to help you feel better when you were very upset?

0	No one ( ) Tick	5	_____ M/C
1	_____ M/C	6	_____ M/C
2	_____ M/C	7	_____ M/C
3	_____ M/C	8	_____ M/C
4	_____ M/C	9	_____ M/C

How satisfied were you with the support you received?

1	2	3	4	5	6
very satisfied	fairly satisfied	a little satisfied	a little dissatisfied	fairly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied

7. What things, if any, proved most helpful to you in coping with the separation caused by the deployment?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Please list the following sources of support in preference of use: family, civilian service, friends, Army source, yourself:

a)_____

b)_____

c)_____

d)_____

e)_____

Army Support Services

*Please answer each question by either ticking the applicable box **or** circling the number which best describes how satisfied you were with the quality of the support you received.*

If you have been dissatisfied with a particular service, please write exactly what you were dissatisfied with and what the Army could do to improve this. If you have been happy with a particular service, please write what aspects were you particularly happy with.

1. Welfare Support Officer based at the Linton Community Centre

☐ I didn't know the service was available
☐ I knew the service was available but I did not use it
☐ Not applicable, my partner is not from Linton

1------- ---------2------- ---------3------- ---------4------- ---------5
very dissatisfied neutral very satisfied

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Unit Point of Contact (contact person at your partner's unit)

☐ I didn't know that my partner's unit had a point of contact
☐ I knew the contact person was available but I did not use them

1------- ---------2------- ---------3------- ---------4------- ---------5
very dissatisfied neutral very satisfied

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

3. **Blue booklet from Army Psychologists entitled "Management of Deployment Stress and Deployment – Related Family Stress"**

☐ I didn't receive the booklet

1------- ---------2------- ---------3------- ---------4------- ---------5
very dissatisfied neutral very satisfied

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. **Green booklet from Army Psychologists entitled "Reunion Information for Partners"**

☐ I didn't receive the booklet

1------- ---------2------- ---------3------- ---------4------- ---------5
very dissatisfied neutral very satisfied

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. **Blue booklet from Army Psychologists entitled "Children and Deployments"**

☐ I didn't receive the booklet

1------- ---------2------- ---------3------- ---------4------- ---------5
very dissatisfied neutral very satisfied

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. **Army Padre/Chaplain**

☐ I didn't know the service was available
☐ I knew the service was available, but I did not use it

1------- ---------2------- ---------3------- ---------4------- ---------5
very dissatisfied neutral very satisfied

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. **What further support, if any, would you have liked the Army to provide during the deployment?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. **In what ways, if any, was the deployment beneficial to your relationship with your partner?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

General Issues

Please tick the box that best describes how important each of the following statements were for you and how much you agree with them.

Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				I am proud to be associated with the Army				
				Army life has met my expectations				
				I am generally satisfied with the Army lifestyle				
				There is a good relationship between the military and civilian community in our area				
				I feel our personal circumstances were taken into consideration when my partner was named for the deployment				
				I believe the Army is aware that family roles have changed in recent years				
				My partner's military unit keeps me well informed as to events which affect the family				
				If I receive help from a public service the Army should pay the bill, e.g. counselling				
				The Army should take care of ALL the problems of partners of deployed soldiers				
				I am generally comfortable dealing with Army support services				
				I don't want any support from the Army				
				All I want from the Army is information				
				There is a stigma about utilising Army support				
				If I seek help from the Army it would negatively affect my partner's career				
				My partner is satisfied with their career				
				My partner is happy in the Army				
				My partner likes their present posting				
				My partner wants to leave the Army				
				When home, my partner keeps me well informed about general Army matters				
				My partner's deployment was important				

Continuation of above table...

Not at all	Somewhat	Quite a bit	Very much	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
				I understood enough of what my partner was doing during the deployment				
				I was happy that my partner went on the deployment				
				Deployments are the worst thing about Army life				
				My partner and I have talked extensively about their deployment				
				My partner, when able, communicated regularly with me during the deployment				
				I am confident that my relationship with my partner remained stable throughout the deployment				
				I coped well with the separation caused by the deployment				
				I express how I feel about the Army lifestyle to my partner				
				I have discussed my partner's future in the service with them				
				My partner and I will decide together when they will leave the Army				
				If my partner wanted to leave the service I would encourage them to stay				
				I am in favour of my partner remaining in the Army				
				There is greater opportunity for my partner in the civilian sector				
				I feel that my partner's military career conflicts with our family life				
				My partner's job and family life are totally separate				
				Being a partner to a soldier is more stressful than if they were a civilian				

Have you noticed any changes in yourself and your partner as a result of the deployment?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please list the main ones:

Yourself: _____

_____

_____

Partner: _____

_____

_____

Potential Deployment Problems

Please circle the number that matches how much of a problem each of the following was for you during your partner's deployment.

0-------1-------2-------3
not at all somewhat quite a bit very much

Financial concerns..... 0 1 2 3

Isolation..... 0 1 2 3

Separation..... 0 1 2 3

Date of partner's departure..... 0 1 2 3

Date of partner's leave..... 0 1 2 3

Date of partner's homecoming..... 0 1 2 3

Loneliness..... 0 1 2 3

Your personal safety..... 0 1 2 3

Lack of control over events..... 0 1 2 3

Lack of companionship..... 0 1 2 3

Lack of support..... 0 1 2 3

Restrictions/lack of freedom..... 0 1 2 3

Information about partner..... 0 1 2 3

Rumours 0 1 2 3

Making/receiving phone calls..... 0 1 2 3

Sending/receiving mail..... 0 1 2 3

Anxiety over safety of partner..... 0 1 2 3

(If you have children)
Dual mother/father role..... 0 1 2 3

*Using ticks, please indicate those items you had **no** problems with, where you went for help for those items which were problems and if those problems were successfully resolved.*

	Potential Problem	**Not a problem**	**Handled myself**	**Friends**	**Family**	**Army**	**Civilian**	**The problem was successfully resolved**
ample:	*Transport Difficulties*							
	Financial concerns							
	Isolation							
	Date of partner's departure							
	Date of partner's leave							
	Date of partner's homecoming							
	Loneliness							
	Separation							
	Anxiety over safety of partner							
	Your personal safety							
	Lack of control over events							
	Lack of companionship							
	Lack of support							
	Restrictions/lack of freedom							
	Information about partner							
	Rumours							
	Making/receiving phone calls							
	Sending/receiving mail							
	(If you have children) Dual mother/father role							

General Health

We would like to know if you had any medical complaints, and how your health was in general during the deployment. Please read each statement and then circle the one answer that best indicates your experience during the deployment.

During the deployment were you:

Able to concentrate on whatever you were doing?	Better than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Loosing much sleep over worry?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Having restless, disturbed nights?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Managing to keep yourself busy and occupied?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Rather less than usual	Much less than usual
Getting "out of the house" (or away from your everyday environment) as much as usual?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less than usual	Much less than usual
Managing as well as most people would in your shoes?	Better than most	About the same	Rather less well	Much less well
Feeling on the whole you were doing things well?	Better than usual	About the same	Less well than usual	Much less well
Satisfied with the way you've carried out your task?	More satisfied	About same as usual	Less satisfied as usual	Much less satisfied
Able to feel warmth and affection for those near to you?	Better than usual	About same as usual	Less well as usual	Much less well
Finding it easy to get on with other people?	Better than usual	About same as usual	Less well than usual	Much less well
Spending much time chatting with people?	More time than usual	About same as usual	Less time than usual	Much less than usual
Feeling that you are playing a useful part in things?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less useful than usual	Much less useful
Feeling capable of making decisions about things?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less so than usual	Much less capable
Feeling constantly under strain?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual

During the deployment were you:

Feeling you couldn't overcome your difficulties?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Finding life a struggle all the time?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less so than usual	Much less than usual
Taking things hard?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Getting scared or panicky for no good reason?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Able to face up to your problems?	More so than usual	Same as usual	Less able than usual	Much less able
Finding everything getting on top of you?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Feeling unhappy and depressed?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Losing confidence in yourself?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Thinking of yourself as a worthless person?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Feeling that life is entirely hopeless?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Feeling hopeful about your own future?	More so than usual	About same as usual	Less so than usual	Much less hopeful
Feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?	More so than usual	About same as usual	Less so than usual	Much less than usual
Feeling nervous and strung-up all the time?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Feeling that life isn't worth living?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual
Finding at times you couldn't do anything because your nerves were too bad?	Not at all	No more than usual	Rather more than usual	Much more than usual

Children

If you have a child/children, please answer the following questions; otherwise turn to the next page.

1. **Please list your child/children's ages and indicate their gender.**

2. **How do you feel your child/children reacted to the absence of your partner?**

3. **What did you do to help your child/children cope with the deployment?**

4. **How could the Army help you to support your child/children?**

Additional Comments

If *you have any additional comments please write them below:*

THE END

Thank you once again for participating.

Please return in the self-addressed envelope

Appendix II

PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ARMY SUPPORT

Deployment meetings

- Deployment meetings have always been in Linton. Why can't Burnham have a meeting? Being in the South Island we have to upend the family to get to a deployment meeting which partners are supposed to attend.

- If meetings are to continue in different camps the cost of children going with their parents should be met, otherwise people are reluctant to attend due to the hassles of childcare problems.

- Partner days/support group meetings always seem to happen during the week. What happens to the people that work full-time?

- It would have been useful for information meetings to include times after 5pm. I think within the housing area there is an assumption that female partners don't work and they forget about those that do and are therefore unable to attend "morning tea" get-togethers for support.

- Encourage units to have support meetings at a time when people can actually attend. Morning tea-time is completely useless for those of us who work.

Contact number

- If the Army is to continue providing the 0800 service, please could it be staffed by approachable and mature individuals?

Communication systems linking soldiers and their families

- The mail system was a joke. He left in October and I only received mail in December.

- He wrote every second day but I was lucky to get one letter every two weeks.

- There was great trouble in finding out the correct mail address, I had mail diverted through 3 channels only to have it changed again.

- The mail and phone lines were shit.

- The mail system is poor to the point you wonder what value it has three to four weeks for delivery sucks! If it wasn't for the phone calls weekly and emails the stress would have been greater.

- For two weeks running we did not have a very good satellite phone. It crackled and cut out. When your whole week revolves around six minutes it is really disappointing.

- Sometimes my mail took six to eight weeks to reach him.

- Allow deployed personnel longer than six minutes for phone calls home.

- The Saturday phone call. It was very difficult to hold a conversation and I feel six minutes is too short a time to be allocated, especially for deployed personnel with children.

- Emphasize strong communication links to partners, particularly the resources/facilities/assistance that is available whether by mail, phone or regular meetings.

- Please get the mail sorted! Not interested in excuses!!

- Get email lines sorted for the families. Stop excuses....it means the Army is defending itself for poor management of this area.

- Email has made accessibility, contact, and communication so much easier on both sides (soldier and family). Having not had it previously I think it is marvelous and its costs are minimal.

- Whilst my husband was away on this deployment he was able to email on a regular basis and this helped immensely.

- Email was excellent

Counseling

- Provide some form of compulsory counseling post deployment for soldiers and partners. I know there are people available but it is difficult to get my partner to attend, as he doesn't think there is a problem. If it was compulsory then things would get talked about without either of us feeling as though we were not coping.

- I think it would be helpful for the Army to help with counseling related costs if counseling is for families who cannot afford to pay for specialist services.

Welfare Officer

- Our Welfare Officer was great and was an awesome help.
- The appointment of the Welfare Support Officer was a welcome one, although it should have been arranged before deployment.

- Support through the Army and Welfare Officer was good. I constantly got invited to activities for partners of soldiers in Timor and constant updates on Timor information.

- The most stressful period of the year is Christmas and they bring in the extra support afterwards!

- It took too long to get the Family Support Worker established.

- The Welfare Support Officer needs to come from your own camp not from Linton or Burnham as they do for the East Timor deployment because what works in the other camp does not work here (Waiouru).

- I would be interested to know how much the welfare officers get paid because I don't think they did their job.

- I got some contact and support after I nearly had a nervous breakdown and told the Welfare Officer and the Army what they could do when we had a meeting as they didn't offer any help with any problems. They just wanted to make things worse by bringing my husband home. All I needed was someone's help for half an hour at home. Never again will I go for help from them. I would rather struggle on my own. The support was really disgusting.

- I am sure the majority would not contact someone they didn't know for help. Phone calls from someone they know on a regular basis is far more personal and lets you know you are not just a number.

Unit Point of Contact

- Unit Point of Contact person was not very supportive at all.

- In the first 2 months I noticed a lot of partners complaining about the mail and phone system. While I realize they needed time to sort these out, I think the problems were compounded by the Unit Point Of Contacts making false promises.

- I think the Point of Contact personnel need to be well aware of what that requires. As in the past I had one nominated but never heard from that person.

- Be honest no matter what!!

- As far as I am concerned, the Army is not family focused and more often than not people who are meant to be the POC don't know what is going on with the deployed personnel.

- I don't want anyone to mow my lawns or baby-sit, but sometimes it would be nice to be asked if I'm having a bit of a rough time. The gesture of being thought of is important to me. I haven't heard from anyone yet that said that the Point of Contact system worked for them. I hardly heard from them and when I did they were no help whatsoever.

- Found getting information about partner's welfare difficult.

- The Army should be an efficient structure as the personnel are supposedly highly trained in what they do...the phrase "couldn't organize a piss up in a brewery" comes to mind.

Administration Center

- I felt that the good efforts of some of the Army staff were not backed up by good administration.

- When I have had the need to find out information or clarify something regarding my husband's posting I am often met with less than helpful, patronizing personnel.

- I contacted the Administration Center approximately a dozen times during my husband's deployment and on the majority of occasions was dealt with in an unsympathetic and terse manner. In the majority of occasions they were not able to assist with my queries which was also disappointing. My expectation was that I would be dealt with in a professional and friendly manner by AC Staff but sadly this was rarely the case (and I feel most resentful about this).

- While my partner was away I had to deal with the Army for two administrative matters. I found them extremely bureaucratic, slow, disinterested and generally just really hard work. Lots of passing buck.

- I never received the information pack. We happened to be in AC talking to a clerk whose partner was already in East Timor and she gave me her information pack.

Chaplaincy

- I made contact with the madre and she was helpful and supportive.

- Padre Teepa was awesome. Getting rid of him just before a major posting was stupid. The new-old guy seemed like an idiot!

- I was very satisfied. He was rather overworked at the time.

- Not interested after Jack Teepa was shunted out by the Army.

- Other people have commented Jack was really good. Don't know about the new one.

- Went through some trouble with children. Padre was very helpful.

- The only padre they had that you could really talk to was discharged from the Army as his time had finished.

- I spoke to the padre on two occasions and had a visit from him. I was satisfied.

- I have never met the new chaplain and I am sure he is doing a great job. But the transfer of Padre Teepa I thought was untimely and thoughtless to say the least, at a time when he was most needed.

- Excellent job by Teepa and Kevey!!

- With the moving and dismissal of one of Linton's favorite padres nobody knew the padre's office was still available. We believed the new padre was deployed overseas.

Army Psychologists

- I personally would not tell my deepest thoughts to any of the Army psychologists I met.

Perception of Army's approach to family support

- I found the Army quite slack. On paper I think they looked better than they were. I think that they said that they were doing stuff for the families to keep the wider community happy.

- I feel the Army pays lipservice to its concerns about families' welfare.

- The Army does not give a second thought to what it condescendingly calls "dependents". We are still "Camp-followers" to their way of thinking.

- So far this is the second survey from the Army. Ironically it is the most communication the Army has given me through the deployment-albeit letters from Battalion with words to the effect of "we don't really know what's going on over there, you'll probably know before us".

- It was good to receive things in the mail from the Army such as a map of East Timor, Army news and a Christmas card.

- I feel the Army has done well in helping those who feel a little inadequate and who don't have that extended whanau support.

Departure and return dates of Troops

- Departure dates changed at least four times before my husband left.

- Army never rang me to let me know when my partner was coming home. I only knew from him ringing me two to three times updating me.

- I couldn't get through to Air Movements in Ohakea to confirm the plane's arrival times as the phone was constantly engaged or off the hook.

- I rang my husband's bosses in Linton telling them when he was coming home. You would've thought that Army personnel in Darwin would have contacted Linton.

- The hardest part of deployment was not knowing the exact date he was leaving until two days prior to leaving. The deployment date had been changed several times at short notice. Very stressful preparing, unpreparing, and then preparing myself for his departure as well as taking time off work. This was the same when he came home.

- Getting clear answers about leave and return dates was difficult. We had someone ring us to advise of a transport delay when my partner had already

been home for a week. One wonders if the left hand knows what the right hand is doing.

- I was phoned and given a flight day and time. I arranged time off from work and a motel for our reunion only to discover that night that the information I had been given was incorrect. I was stuck with a motel room that I had to pay for as I had already used the facilities.

- Leave dates were confirmed early and not changed and that was really good.

NGATI TUMATAUENGA

Address all corresponde

ARMY GENERAL STAFF
Defence House
15-21 Stout Street
Wellington
New Zealand

Telephone: (04) 496 048

4 September 2000

Dear .....,

In July this year you took part in the NZ Army Partner Support Survey (2000) by completing a questionnaire. This short-term survey studied the effect of your satisfaction with Army support services on how content you are with Army life, and on your subsequent willingness for your partner to remain in service. The information gathered during the study has now been analysed and I am pleased to send you a brief summary.

All the people who participated in the study are partners of soldiers who had returned from a peacekeeping deployment between January and July 2000. Out of the 291 partners contacted by mail, 184 completed the questionnaire. All camps were represented.

Conclusions

The statistics and the comments given by the participants show that:
1). Deployment has an important impact on family life and raises support issues.

2.) Effective Army support services are necessary to facilitate quality of life within the military community and bolster the soldier's decision to remain in service.

3.) Although military families want assistance from the Army, their expectations are that these services mainly address Army-related issues.

4.) Participants generally perceived that the Army staff they contacted about information or other support issues were not specifically skilled or trained to deal with this type of interaction.

5.) The Chaplaincy service was held in high regard by those participants who used it. It is evident that this service is valued, and met the needs of those who accessed it.

6.) Although some partners may wish to leave the Army, most said that they would support their soldier-partner if this person wanted to stay. However, as partners reported that making joint decisions was a common event, it is logical to assume that soldiers will be influenced to leave if their family is unhappy.

7.) At the moment there is an 0800 number soldiers' partners are free to call whenever they have an enquiry. Comments suggest that there is a need to review this service, as participants were dissatisfied with the manner in which staff dealt with their calls.

8.) On the whole, partners and their families are content and even proud to be associated with the military, but value their independence and privacy.

Recommendations

It is noteworthy that at least half of the ten most problematic support issues participants in the NZA Partner Support Survey (2000) identified were Army related. These are:

- Sending and receiving mail to deployed troops.
- Making and receiving phone calls to deployed troops.
- Receiving accurate and timely information regarding troop departure and return dates.
- Receiving regular and accurate information about the deployed soldiers' welfare.
- Having access to trained specially appointed individuals who may be approached in complete confidence for information and support inquiries.

Based on these findings it is recommended that the Army take cognisance of the concerns that participants raised. Subsequently they need to take the appropriate action to ensure that the family support services offered by the Army are tailored to meet the specific needs of the individuals they purport to assist. This can be done by terminating the allocation of Unit Point of Contact duty, strengthening the Chaplaincy service, establishing the position of Information Officer (IO), and restructuring the current way of administering the 0800 helpline.

Further Information

Once it has been printed and bound, copies of the 90 page completed report on the NZA Partner Support Survey (2000) will be lodged in the Massey University Library in Palmerston North and the Army Library in Wellington. The Army will receive an official report detailing recommendations for improving their support services. They will also receive a copy of the following summary of participants' requests.

Summary of Most Frequent Partner Requests for Army Support During the Deployment

Support Category	**% reporting**
Information about deployed partner's welfare	95
Information about working conditions in operational environment	82
Newsletter about troop movement	76
Efficient mail service	75
E-mail system available to all deployed personnel	53
Longer & more frequent phone calls	52
Use of non-military language in documents sent to partners	42
Civilian point of contact representing Army	36
Support person for young families	25

Once again, thank-you for giving your time and energy to take part in this survey.

Marguerite Renaud
Lieutenant
Human Resources Project Officer