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Corona, CA 92882
(909) 739-7535 or Toll Free 1-866-JFMilne

www.jfmilne.com
customerservice@jfmilne.com

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CONTACT: Amy Leinen Tel (1-866-JFMilne)
Fax (909) 739-7535
Email: aleinen@jfmilne.com

**MORE MILITARY COUPLES FACE SEPARATION:
PENTAGON ANNOUNCES AN ADDITIONAL 37,000 RESERVISTS
TO BE SENT TO IRAQ**

In early May the Pentagon announced that an additional 10,000 active duty military personnel and 37,000 reservists and national guard members will be called on to replace troops already in Iraq. Currently, there are about 150,000 soldiers, sailors, and marines in Iraq, most of whom left a spouse, girlfriend, or boyfriend back in the United States. As families and couples brace themselves for a long and difficult separation, the Army has turned to an expert on long distance relationships in the hope of making the experience a little less painful. "Being separated from loved ones for whatever reason is difficult, but combat deployments are certainly the most stressful reason for separation," says southern California researcher and psychologist Dr. Gregory Guldner. The combination of the usual difficulties of separation, coupled with the real possibility of physical harm, can result in high levels of anxiety, depression, and anger – both for the soldier and for his or her loved ones back home. While these difficulties are nothing new to the military, experts now know enough about separated relationships that they can actually make a difference for separated couples, says Dr. Guldner, an Army reservist himself. The

military agrees. Army Chaplains at Ft. Hood, Texas, and elsewhere are turning to Dr. Guldner's expertise and his new book, *Long Distance Relationships*, to help them understand separated relationships and to teach them how best to support military families during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Studies of military separations have shown some staggering statistics. As many as 1 in 5 military spouses report major depression and nearly all have some symptoms of depression, such as sleeplessness, difficulty concentrating, or disinterest in daily activities. In addition to the stress on an individual, the couple can suffer as well. "Prolonged separation can lead to a feeling of being disconnected from a loved one – it can be difficult to feel like you're really in a relationship at all," explains Dr. Guldner. In fact, one study found that military marriages separated by combat deployments had more than twice the divorce rate following reunion than pre-war marriages. According to Dr. Guldner, it isn't the separation itself that creates the problem. "Research shows that long distance relationships work just as well as geographically close relationships," says Dr. Guldner, "You just need to know how best to cope with the predictable difficulties that come with being apart."

At Ft. Hood Army Major and Chaplain Robert Williams has integrated portions of Dr. Guldner's book into presentations designed to teach other Chaplains and professionals how best to educate and support the thousands of families preparing for deployment to Iraq. Dr. Guldner conducted the most comprehensive study of long distance relationships to date and is now the director of *The Center for the Study of Long Distance Relationships* in southern California. His new book integrates over five decades of research on separation into one practical guide for military or civilian couples who have to be apart. The center's website (www.ldrexpert.com) contains a clearinghouse of information on long distance relationships for couples, counselors, researchers, and the media – including free downloadable versions of the information now being used by the Army.

About the Author

The author, Gregory Guldner, MD, MS, is a graduate of Stanford Medical School and Purdue University's Clinical Psychology Program. He is the leading authority on long distance relationships, the director for *The Center for the Study of Long Distance Relationships*, and the author of the most comprehensive study of long distance relationships ever completed. He has published numerous articles on relationships and sexuality and serves as a peer reviewer for multiple professional journals including *Military Medicine*. He is also an officer in the Army Reserve with knowledge about military related separations. He combines his scientific expertise, interviews with hundreds of couples in long distance relationships and his own personal experience into his comprehensive book.

Ordering Information

Long Distance Relationships: The Complete Guide (ISBN: 0972114807) is available from *The Center for the Study of Long Distance Relationships* at ldrexpert.com or at Atlasbooks.com, Amazon.com, and better bookstores everywhere. It is available to the trade through Biblio Distributions (a Division of NBN) at 1-800-462-6420, 1-800-338-4550 (fax), or custserv@nbnbooks.com. It is also available from the publisher at JFMilne.com or send \$19.99 + \$4 shipping and handling per copy to:

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