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RAND STUDY SHOWS MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS DO NOT THREATEN MARRIAGES

Just a few of days after last year's Forth of July, the front page of the *New York Times*, contained a menacing claim for thousands of service members separated from their spouses during these difficult times. "Military deployments have a way of chewing up marriages, turning daily life upside down, and making strangers out of husbands and wives." Chewing up marriages. Quite a strong claim that should rightly make everyone who has a significant other back home just a little nervous. Curiously, just a few weeks ago in the *Stars and Stripes* a much smaller headline announced the results of a new study: Deployments make divorce less likely.

So which is it? The current deployments across the globe make outlandish statements such as those made by the *New York Times* not only unsettling but potentially distracting and disruptive to thousands of service members.

A recent RAND study contradicted the myth that deployments "chew up marriages." The researchers reviewed records of over 6 million service members looking at the rates of divorce between 1996 and 2005. Obviously, the number of deployments in 1996 was substantially less than that of 2005. Yet the rates of divorce between these two points stayed the same.

To get a better look at the impact of separation, the RAND researchers compared the number of days each service member spent on deployment to their risk of later divorce. They found exactly *opposite* what most people, and the *New York Times*, would predict. The more days someone was deployed the *less* chance of divorce.

While many deployed service members view these results with skepticism, they are entirely consistent with all of the prior research on separation. Being apart does not itself cause relationships to fail. Undoubtedly, some relationships, like some individuals, will succumb to the stress. But the doomsday prophecies of the media may be set aside and deployed married service members should rest a bit easier.

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 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 www.JFMilne.com or send \$19.99 per copy to:

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