

Stay Connected During A Deployment

When your soldier is half a world away (literally!), it can sometimes be very hard to stay connected with each other. Especially since the communication tends to only originate from one side (and it's not yours). Below are a few ways that you can stay connected throughout a deployment as a military wife, fiancée, or girlfriend.

- Pick a star before he leaves so you can look up at that star and tell each other good night.
- Fill his bags and things he's taking with him with notes from you or little bags with notes inside that say they're filled with hugs or kisses. He can do the same for you.
- Buy two of the same book and read it together while he's gone. This will also give you something to talk about it when he calls (on the off chance that you run out of things to say).
- Decide to learn something new together. For instance, you could both decide to learn a foreign language. Buy the books or tapes and learn the language together. You can practice on phone calls and emails.
- Start a daily journal and every month exchange journals with each other.
- Write a story together over email. This could be a simple story or maybe even a fantasy for the both of you. Write a paragraph, send it to him, he adds a paragraph, sends it back to you and so on. You could also do this through the mail.
- Have a contest to see who can send the funniest cards or letters.
- Each of you can choose a special date or vacation for when he returns. Keep it secret but send each other clues about it. Be creative in your clues – they don't necessarily have to be written clues.
- If you scrapbook, send him disposable cameras to take pictures for you to scrap. You can present the completed book to him when he returns. Make sure he gives you descriptions for your pictures. Note: Be sure this does not violate his unit's OPSEC guidelines.
- Before he leaves, make sure he leaves you lots of messages. My husband leaves me voice messages on our answering machine and my cell phone's voicemail. He also leaves a handwritten letter and a text message on my cell phone. No matter where I am, I always have access to his voice or a note from him.
- Communicate often through whatever means you have available to you whether it's the mail, email, internet chat or packages. Let each other know you're thinking of each other. On my husband's third deployment, I got a letter in the mail from him. It was the first actual letter I've received through the mail from any of his deployments – it was like gold to me (and still is!). Something simple can mean a lot.

....from http://www.marriedtothearmy.com/army_deployments_stayingconnected.htm

...more tips to stay connected during a deployment

- It's ok to cry. When you need to cry, do it. Let it out. Holding hard feelings inside you just build up and come out in ways that are much more painful and difficult to deal with rather than "nipping them in the bud". We are human and we have feelings and we lack the self control of our God.
- Get 2 of the same book and go through a Bible study together. With email and phone call capabilities nowadays, responding quickly to chapters or activities is much easier.
- Take the time to write letters. Spray perfume on the envelope and put it in a zip lock bag each time.
- Memorize scripture together. Pick a different one each week, month, etc.
- Make a list of things I need to talk about with my spouse when the time comes for us to communicate. That way I do not forget the important things that need to be discussed. I try to never complain or say negative things that he doesn't need to know, since there is not much he can do from so far away. Some things need to be said, but others can wait or be forgotten.
....from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC
- Send a vertical plastic picture holder that he can put up on his wall with a push pin or tape. It contains pictures of all the family in various poses and everyone decorates an index card with pictures, bible verses and love notes. It's a great visual to let them know they are loved, missed and prayed for.
....from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC
- Set goals to get something accomplished while your husband is away, maybe it's to exercise more, read a book or get more organized.
....from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC
- Number each of your hand-written letters as they don't always arrive in the order they were mailed.
....from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC
- Despite the great speed and convenience of e-mail send hand-written notes and cards.
....from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC
- Keep a journal - it is therapeutic and will help you know what to write on your blog.
....from Okinawa/Kadena PWOC