

## Be Prepared

Can you ever truly prepare for a deployment? *I mean really.* I've been through three deployments now and I can honestly say that each one of them was completely different. I just wish I could be prepared for what I was about to experience. During each one I was at a different part of my life, a different part of my career, and a different part of my family's life. I've done one where I lived near family, one where we had just PCS'd and one where I gave birth to a brand new baby while he was away. Let me stand here and tell you no one can prepare you for that.

Sure, there are things we can do like get all of our care package supplies together, fill out our power of attorney, make sure we have the daddy dolls and the stories all videotaped. We can even hook up the webcam. If you're anything like my husband and I about three months prior I started this incredibly long list of things we needed to get done around the house knowing he wouldn't be there to help me. His list always includes home improvement projects. Of course this always turns out just peachy because he is just *so* excited to be doing work when he is working excessively late hours, not getting much sleep, and about to leave for a fifteen month tour in the desert (ha!).

I assure you though no matter what you do to prepare even if you are the best preparer in the world when your husband leaves and you drive off from dropping him off there will always be that giant feeling of "what the hell do I do now?"

As I type we're currently experiencing a deployment. The day my husband marched off I got back in the car and cried and I cried hard. The next morning, the mission began. I was prepared for my mission, or so I thought. Now I can tell you that even the most resourceful person couldn't have been prepared for the week that followed. I am not kidding you the garbage disposal exploded under the sink and spaghetti went everywhere, the dog chewed the cord off of my Kirby, and the sprinkler system sprung a leak. Not to mention the morning sickness from the pregnancy! Anything else? I shouldn't have asked. It just went downhill from there.

Thankfully though I was prepared with a few things and that has kept me out of some hard times during deployment. I did have my ducks in a row when it came to checking off the deployment readiness checklist and I do highly recommend it. Just the other day I was lucky enough to catch my husband online (he doesn't have the access he has had in the past deployments) and I was telling him that the only way I was making it through was if I focused on the mission. If I varied from the mission, then I started to get emotional and the walls come tumbling down.

My best advice? Mission readiness, empowerment, and focus is the way to go! Man, does that sound like a new Army commercial or what? Still, nothing can prepare us for those many days of uncertainty and worry.