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ARMY FAMILY PROGRAMS, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE: A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

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Over the past 20 years, the Army has recognized the critical role that the family plays in the success of the individual soldier. Recruiting, retention, and commitment to service along with willingness to endure the hardships are elements of service that must consider the impacts on family. Recently, the Army has invested significant resources developing programs to assist Army families cope with the many challenges they face. Our success as a force is dependent on the success of the family programs developed over the past 20 years and their future success in the 21st Century.

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ARMY FAMILY PROGRAMS, PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE: A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

“The Army is not conducive to married life”

—3rd Infantry Division Psychiatrist, Oct 2002¹

This quote from a doctor at Fort Stewart, Georgia provides us insight in the thoughts of one military health care professional that is on the forward edge of dealing with today's soldiers and families. The United States Army has committed extensive resources to ensure soldiers and families can maintain a satisfactory way of life while serving their country. However, even with the strong emphasis on taking care of families, there is still great concern for the loved ones left behind when the soldier is away from home.

As we experience the deployment of tens of thousands of military personnel to the Persian Gulf region for possible operations in Iraq, we see an extensive array of media reports covering the departing soldiers. These stories have become commonplace over the last ten years as the number of military operations increased significantly over the previous decades. Some stories include a sound bite or quote from the tearful spouse. This young military spouse may speak about the difficulty of the saying good bye, the hardship of the separation, or the uncertainty of the mission and not knowing when and if she will see her soldier again. Occasionally the story will also provide comments from the deploying soldier. His comments are usually mission related possibly concerning his training or unit readiness and the desire to get the job done and get home again. Rarely is anything said about the loved ones he leaves behind.

Not visible in today's media are many stories about the young spouse after the soldier is gone. Who she is, what she needs to live, what she does, where she goes when today's complex military environment or general society presents her with challenges. Yet, the hardship of separation in today's environment results in challenges faced by many young military families. These challenges present themselves in many ways including financial shortfalls, childcare problems, medical issues, inadequate housing, boredom, loneliness, and even depression. The spouse left alone or with small children must find ways to cope with the wide variety of difficulties in her soldier's absence.

The United States Army has long recognized that taking care of families is its inherent responsibility whether they are young and inexperienced or well-seasoned, experienced families. Recently, more than ever in its history, the Army's leadership has

articulated the importance of the family to the Army's Mission. In a speech delivered during his arrival ceremony, the Army's Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki said the following:

“Strategic responsiveness requires that our support structures provide soldiers and families the resources to be self-reliant both when the force is deployed and when the force is home. When we deploy, soldiers will know that their families are safe, housed, and have access to medical care, community services and educational opportunities. We have a covenant with our soldiers and families and will keep the faith with them.”²

Through its history, the Army has implemented a wide variety of programs to provide services and assistance to its families. Today, many of these programs are the cornerstones of the Army's “Well Being” program. This research paper will trace the evolution of the Army's commitment to the soldier and his family. I will examine existing family programs and their genesis, some of the current and future strategic challenges, and the way ahead for its commitment to family well-being in the transformed Army of the 21st century. Finally I'll provide some personal thoughts and recommendations that may improve the Army's way ahead as implementation of new, more robust family programs continue. Of particular concern to me is the well being of the young spouses and families who are an essential part of recruiting and retaining first term soldiers. My personal experiences commanding an Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Battalion in Training and Doctrine Command provided me insight through routine contact with new soldiers and spouses shortly after initial entry as they develop their understanding for their duties, roles and responsibilities as a members of the force. Not covered in this paper are the family challenges encountered by the reserve component soldiers activated today from towns and cities across the United States. While equally important, their family issues are far more diverse and cannot be covered adequately in this paper.

The concept of “well-being” finds its roots in a more commonly used phrase, “quality of life.” Quality of life has long been part of the military lexicon to describe the programs that were instituted to provide for the basic needs of the soldier and his family. Today, that concept is expanded in a more strategic outlook entitled “Well-Being.” According to Colonel Michael Pfenning, Chief, Army Well Being Program, G-1, Headquarters, Department of the Army, the term “quality of life” in support of soldiers and families is now historical and no longer appropriate.³

The concept of “well-being” expands the quality of life philosophy. It incorporates existing quality of life program initiatives into a broader well being framework, linking programs and initiatives to institutional outcomes of readiness, retention, and recruiting. This more holistic and

systemic framework is intended to support both mission preparedness as well as individual aspirations.⁴

The Army's 2002 Modernization Plan⁵ translates the CSA's vision for well being from intent to action. The plan outlines the importance of well being to the Army's Transformation Plan. As part of this plan, well being initiatives will "support Transformation by improving soldier performance, readiness, recruiting and retention...The goal is self reliant soldiers, civilians, and families contributing to the Army team. Well Being programs contribute to the Army strength by producing self-reliant individuals who are able to focus on the mission (this supporting readiness), knowing that their personal lives are in balance an their needs are being met. The intent is to create "a strong bond between individuals and the Army directly affecting retention and recruiting." The modernization plan defines five strategic goals for Well-Being:

- Implement a comprehensive strategy that integrates Well-being initiatives, programs, and resources to meet the well-being needs of the Army.
- Provide a competitive standard of living for all Soldiers, civilians and their families.
- Provide a unique culture, sense of community, and a record of accomplishment that engenders intense pride and sense of belonging among Soldiers, civilians, and their families.
- Provide an environment that allows Soldiers, civilians, and their families to enrich their personal lives by achieving their individual aspirations.
- Ensure leadership that maximizes the positive, combined effect of intangibles on the outcomes of the institutional strength of the Army.

The needs of Army families are extremely diverse, as diverse as its population. My experience in more than twenty-three years of service is that the needs of the young soldier and spouse must remain at the forefront of the Army's well-being efforts. Most typically, this is the first term male soldier and his young wife. Frequently, they have one or more young children. Increasingly common today is that the wife is the service member and the civilian husband remains home responsible for childcare, housework and possibly also generates supplemental income with part-time or full time employment.

	Male	Female	Total
E-1	2,314	491	2,805
E-2	4,777	1,063	5,840
E-3	11,013	3,139	14,152
E-4	32,485	8,012	40,497
		Total	155,177

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF MARRIED U.S. ARMY JUNIOR ENLISTED SOLDIERS BY RANK AND GENDER⁶

The families depicted in the table above represent the future of the Army in the 21st century. How we care for them today will determine the quality of the Army's leadership ten, fifteen, and twenty years from now when the Objective Force is fielded and these young soldiers step up into its' leadership ranks. The Army's Strategic Well-Being plan reads: "Army families are an integral part of the Army Team. They are directly linked to readiness. We recruit individuals, we grow leaders, and we retain families"⁷ I believe that a new perspective should be considered. This new perspective should recognize that the Army recruits families, not just individuals, if the soldier is married.

How the new soldier and family adapts to military life during the first term of enlistment will play a significant role in the decision to reenlist upon completion of his first term of service. A quote frequently heard from our senior Army leadership is that "We enlist soldiers and reenlist families." But in today's environment, I believe a more aggressive approach to this way of thinking is appropriate. Leaders need to say: "We enlist soldiers and their families." The Army's institutional impact on family members begins when the potential enlistee has initial contact with a recruiter. If the young person is married or planning to be married, it will not be long before the soon-to-be recruit solicits their partner's advice, opinion, or support for their decision to join the Army. How the partner responds will likely weigh heavily on enlistment decisions. The recruit's perceived satisfaction from the mate will be an important influence to the enlistment decision making. Therefore, the mate's overall impression and satisfaction with the Army is very important from the earliest days they are both introduced to the Army.

The Army's force in the 21st Century will require highly trained soldiers with skills developed through costly training. Retaining the best soldiers will require great efforts. In exchange for continued service, these soldiers will have certain expectations for their personal well being and that of their families. They will expect that the Army will not only provide decent pay, basic shelter, and medical care, but that the benefits will be some of the best that this

nation can provide. In my opinion, their expectation is that they will receive benefits and services comparable or better than those services available to their civilian contemporaries. Unfortunately, there is a significant body of research that demonstrates clear concern that the young spouse is frequently forgotten. Later I'll examine that work and its impact on Army goals for well-being.

Self sacrifice and service to the Nation has been an integral part of our Army culture since its inception. The evolution of the Army's commitment to the Army family dates back to the earliest days of our nation as well. Families answered the call to help in the defense of the republic. This willingness to serve evolved over our country's history. I believe it valuable to review some of the highlights of Army family history in the timeline below⁸

- 1776-1847: Families were considered a hindrance to military efficiency and operations. "Camp followers" were recognized in regulations when military authorities were given complete and arbitrary authority over civilians. The Officer Corps followed the European model of "taking care of their own" while enlisted men were assumed not to marry until achieving non-commissioned officer status.
- 1847-1863: As conditions in the American frontier improved, there was increased recognition by the Army to provide for the basics of life, especially shelter, food, and medical care.
- 1863: Conscription in the Union Army offered exemptions for family or personal considerations.
- 1898: Enlisted families were compensated financially
- 1913: Military regulations discouraged marriage
- 1917-1918: In-kind benefits provided to Army families
- 1942: Draftees could be married; enlistees could not; Law enacted to provide benefits to military family members. Secretary of War directs establishment of the Army Emergency Relief (AER) fund. Fund to relieve stress among soldiers and families.
- 1954: Army study identifies lack of social services as a major problem
- 1960: Family members now outnumbered uniform personnel
- 1962: the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel develops a family service program.
- 1965: Army Community Service (ACS) established
- 1979: Quality of Life program
- 1980: First family Symposium held

- 1981: Majority of enlisted personnel now married (52.8%)
- 1983: Publication of the Army White Paper on The Army Family

The Army leadership recognized long ago the importance of the family and its role in manning the greatest military force in the world. Many leaders worked tirelessly to improve the conditions for our soldiers and families.⁹ But it wasn't until the 1980s that formal recognition of the importance of developing a strategy to provide for family needs was officially published.

The growth of the volunteer Army beginning in 1973 brought added emphasis to the efforts made to improve benefits to our service members. Pay, medical care, and retirement benefits became the cornerstones to recruiting and retaining a quality force. But it took another ten years when the Army Chief of Staff, General John A. Wickham published a White Paper in 1983¹⁰ that articulated the need for an Army Family philosophy. The cold war Army of the early eighties was a force of more than 780,000 soldiers and more than 1,000,000 family members. More than 94% of its enlisted force was between the ages of 21 and 25. General Wickham recognized that the Army needed a vision to care for this large, diverse population stationed around the world. The maintenance of a large, standing peacetime Army comprised more and more of volunteers made it culturally impossible to revert to the pre-World War II practice of discouraging enlistment of married personnel.¹¹ A large percentage of this force was now deployed overseas, mostly in Germany. An overwhelming majority of overseas families were in Germany as well.

Dr. John Hawkins, a social anthropologist at Brigham Young University and a retired Lieutenant Colonel, (U.S. Army Reserve) did extensive research on the impacts of service in Germany in the mid-eighties. For two years he lived as a civilian among the military communities while conducting his studies. In his book, Army of Hope, Army of Alienation¹², he lays out with exhaustive research the challenges presented to our soldiers and families during their service in Germany.

Hawkins writes:

“The soldiers and spouses I interviewed were hopeful and idealistic. They believed in the principles of American life and they felt that they had contributed to that American life by placing themselves at risk to defend it...The Army brought young soldiers into this tense demanding setting and pushed most of them into the task of finding housing in the German community. The mostly young new soldiers and the spouses were not skilled in dealing with foreign settings. Moreover, they did not feel they were given much support, they did not have much time, and housing was in short supply. In the rush to get settled, some made poor housing choices. The consequences of these choices lingered,

for the shortage of time or the shortage of money resulting from the housing decisions circled back to hurt them in their units. The many pains of entry established a mindset that life in Germany was a bad assignment. Soldiers and spouses proceeded to interpret the rest of their assignment through this negative filter. That attitude of course drew down upon them a negative reaction from their leaders and thus a spiral of moral deterioration within days of arrival.”¹³

These problems and attitudes identified in Dr. Hawkins’ research are the exact issues that the White Paper was designed to address. The White Paper set the course for improving the quality of life for soldiers and their families and creation of the family programs in existence today. Impetus for this new partnership between the Army and family came from a number of family symposia where family members articulated their needs to the Army leadership. With this input, the Army’s new philosophy for families was born. The philosophy recognized that informal contracts existed along with the responsibilities stated in policies and regulations. It recognized a culture with certain constants. These constants included a desire to maintain and if possible, upgrade family standards of living. A continuous need for individual growth opportunities. The importance of institutional support for family time given competing demands. The constant need to make choices between family and professional needs due to conflicting requirements. These constants remain as valid today (if not more so!) at the beginning of the 21st century as they were in the eighties.

The White Paper acknowledged the importance of linking organizational support for the family with commitment to military service. “We are concerned not only with the number of people in the force but with their degree of commitment, their willingness to not only train, but to deploy and, if necessary to fight and their acceptance of the unlimited liability contract...Total individual commitment through satisfaction of the family needs translated into the readiness to the total Army.”¹⁴

The fundamental principle of the new philosophy “is the fact that the Army is an institution, not just a job.”¹⁵ It linked the concept of “wellness” to productivity and promoted a sense of community to help foster commitment. “The Army Family philosophy gives clarity, direction, and cohesion to family programs and provides guidance to agencies responsible for developing and implementing those programs...it recognized that ad hoc programs established on a piecemeal basis that treat the symptoms but not the causes of family stress are no longer sufficient.”¹⁶ This contract remains as important today as ever.

The White Paper mandated the development of the Army Family Action Plan. It charged a number of Army agencies with advocacy responsibilities for enhanced Army Families

Programs. It addressed many of the pay and allowance issues that impacted the soldiers' decision to enlist or reenlist. Finally it recognized the importance of an Army family support system which needed to be standardized throughout the Army. The White Paper also directed that needs assessments be conducted to better shape the investment of limited resources the Army committed to this effort.

The White Paper resulted in dozens of studies to find answers to the many questions generated by the paper. These studies conducted by both organizations internal and external to the Army provided a wealth of scientific and non-scientific data to help shape the direction of Army programs.

In 1993, the U.S. Army Research Institute for Behavior and Social Sciences published an in depth report which examined more than 70 Army family research reports conducted across the force over the previous 10 years. The report, "What We Know About Army Families"¹⁷ was an executive summary tying together the 10 years of study, bringing to light the many truths about the relevance of the family in maintaining a trained and ready force. It brought the earlier studies together with its own research in a non-technical, easy to read report for commanders in the field and policy makers throughout the Army.

Findings from the report include:

- Extensive research demonstrates the importance of family issues in personnel retention.
- Spouse support for soldiers staying in the Army affects retention intentions and behavior.
- Individual readiness is affected by some family characteristics. (Even after accounting for the effects of personal and job related factors), including the soldiers' perception of the degree to which his/her superiors shows support for the soldiers family.
- The variable with the strongest impact on unit readiness is soldiers perceptions of the amount of support the unit leaders give soldiers and their families.
- The ability of the family to adapt to the military way of life is related to the degree to which the military provides formal and informal support to the family.
- Soldiers who use family programs report a higher percentage of leader support for families than soldiers who did not use the programs.
- Army spouse employment programs positively affect spouse labor force programs.

The theme throughout this capstone report is consistent. The level of institutional support and leader support that is provided to soldiers and their families significantly impacts readiness

and retention. Spouses who are able to work can improve satisfaction and adaptation to military life.

The Army's commitment supporting families made a significant jump forward with the establishment of the Army Community and Family Support Center (CFSC) in 1984. Incorporation of Army Community Service into CFSC provided ACS the visibility it required to meet the needs of its growing customer base. As the Army's lead agency to "provide comprehensive, coordinated and responsive service which support the readiness of soldiers, civilians, employees and their families..."¹⁸ ACS began developing programs to fill the voids found across the force.

My own observation of the ACS of the 1980's was that of a "go to" place for soldiers and their families. It provided assistance for those with specific needs. It frequently housed the AER offices for financial assistance. It maintained a lending closet for household items to use immediately before and after a permanent change of station move (PCS) move. Some ACS offices maintained a food locker to assist families who were unable to meet basic food needs. Staffed primarily by volunteer family members, financial counseling and informal advice was available from the more experienced volunteers. ACS missions expanded over time adding relocation services and the Exceptional Family Members Program (EFMP) among others. The EFMP was particularly important as the installation commander's integration point for families with special needs.¹⁹

Army Community Service today is designed to "facilitate the commander's ability to provide comprehensive, coordinated and responsive services which support readiness of soldiers, civilians employees and their families; to maximize technology and resources, adapt unique installation requirements, eliminate duplication in service delivery and measure service effectiveness."²⁰ In fiscal year (FY) 2001, The ACS operating budget was \$94.27 Million. Its focus is to provide specific programs and services to its customer base Army wide. The current programs are:

- Relocation Readiness Service designed to provide transferring soldiers the tools necessary to deal with stresses they may encounter during relocation.
- Transitional compensation for abused dependants established by Congress in FY 1994 to provide temporary payments to families of soldiers who are administratively discharged or court martialled for dependant abuse offenses.
- Exceptional Family Member Program is the mandatory enrollment program providing comprehensive and coordinated community support to families with special needs

- Financial Readiness Program implemented to assist commanders establish education and counseling programs in personal financial affairs.
- Employment Readiness Program is the military spouse employment program that affords every spouse the opportunity to develop a career or become employed.
- Army Family Team Building: The commander's education program to improve the overall readiness of the force by teaching and promoting personal and family readiness, adaptation to Army life, managing change, and coping with challenges are its main areas of concentration.
- Family Advocacy program helps prevent spouse and child abuse and neglect.
- Mobilization and Deployment Support: During operations, this program assists families with support services including language translation for foreign spouses, video connectivity with deployed units, and support material to unit Family Readiness Groups (FRG).
- Army Family Action Plan is a forum for the Army constituency explained in greater detail below.

The White Paper articulated a new Army Family philosophy. "A partnership exists between the Army and its families"²¹ With this new expression came guidance to establish an Army Family Action plan to "provide the roadmap to us to the 1990's."²² The Community and Family Support Center and its subordinate offices were assigned responsibility to implement the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP).

AFAP has become the Army's process to develop and oversee implementation of the initiatives impacting soldiers well being. "The AFAP Program provides a mechanism for all individuals who comprise the Army's global force. (Soldiers, [active and reserve component], retirees, DA civilians, and family members.) Through this process, issues requiring action are prioritized, an action plan established to achieve desired change, and assigned to lead agency for resolution."²³ AFAP is the process that has helped advance and expand a number of important benefits. Many of those were enacted in the FY2001 National Defense Authorization Act. Some of the measures included uniformed participation in the Federal Thrift Savings Plan, Tricare for Life for seniors over 65, tour stabilization for families with high school students entering their senior year and the elimination of Tricare Prime co-payments.

The VCSA chairs the AFAP General Officer Steering committee (GOSC) giving it the needed attention at the Army's highest levels. "Since 1983, the AFAP process has resulted in

77 pieces of legislation, 126 revised Army/DOD policies and 139 improved programs or services.²⁴

It's easy to see that the Army's concern for families has grown immeasurable since the days of our colonial Army. Vision accompanied by resources has set in place policies and benefits that have significantly improved the benefits and services available for soldiers and their families.

Early enhancements to this concept of improving quality of life were extremely simple to understand, yet complex and often costly to implement. In 1981 the Defense Department removed the cap on the number of families permitted overseas that played a large role in improving satisfaction among families. In the 1990's, the significant upgrade in the on-post child care facilities, now recognized as world class, was a milestone in providing spouses reasonably priced, high quality day care for their children. This benefit enabled them to continue to serve as a soldier, or to allow the spouse to return to the workforce. Implementation of the family practice medical system, revamping Tricare and increasing the number of available care providers were badly needed and fundamental requirements to provide baseline programs to take care of soldiers' families.

As the Army downsized following Operation DESERT STORM, the changing shape and composition of our force and their families became increasingly important. Across the Department of Defense, service members with families increased significantly as a percentage of the total force. By 2000, there were more than 1.23 million children under the DOD umbrella.²⁵ The number of single mothers in uniform increased as well.

Along with the shrinking force, two other changes also shaped the thinking of our soldiers. First, improving domestic economic conditions fueled individual expectations. More competitive civilian salaries along with a number of other positive economic indicators contributed to higher expectations on the part of the soldier. But even with the enhancements to so many family programs, expectations remained high. Satisfaction among family members however has not improved significantly.

Families continue to demonstrate dissatisfaction with many aspects of the Army as a way of life. Since 1987, the Army has periodically conducted sample surveys of its' family members. The most recent survey conducted in 2001 covered a wide range of topics to assess the effectiveness of its well being initiatives. "...it provides data on attitudes of non-military spouses of active duty soldiers about the Army way of life and quality of life for Army families."²⁶

Overall, a number of important satisfaction indicators show a decreasing trend compared to 1995. There has been a decrease in the percentage of spouses who are:

- satisfied with the Army as a way of life
- Have adjusted well to the demands of being an “Army Family”
- Have no or slight problems with the demands the Army makes of family members and are satisfied with the support and concern the Army has for their families

Particularly important to recognize are the low marks surveyed family members gave leaders and their perceived concern for the welfare of soldiers’ families. Only 20.4% of enlisted spouses surveyed felt that leaders are concerned to a “very great” or “great extent” about the welfare of soldiers’ families. More than half (54.7%) believe that leaders of their spouses’ units concerns for families was “slight extent or not at all.”

Similarly, family members surveyed felt that leaders were not well informed about the available family programs. Again, only 20% of enlisted spouses surveyed felt that leaders were aware of family programs to a “very great/great extent.” Almost half (47.1%) felt that their leaders were knowledgeable about family programs to a “slight extent or not at all.”

Table 2 below shows the complete survey results below regarding spouses’ view of unit leaders.

To what extent do the following apply to the leaders at your spouse's place of duty?
MARK A RESPONSE FOR EACH ITEM.

	Very great/great extent			Moderate extent			Slight extent/not at all		
	Officer	Enlisted	Total	Officer	Enlisted	Total	Officer	Enlisted	Total
The leaders of my spouse's unit know about family programs.	36.0%	20.3%	23.4%	31.8%	32.6%	32.4%	32.2%	47.1%	44.2%
The leaders of my spouse's unit are concerned about the welfare of soldiers' families.	40.1%	20.4%	24.3%	27.6%	24.9%	25.4%	32.3%	54.7%	50.3%

TABLE 2: SURVEY RESULTS FOR SPOUSES VIEW OF UNIT LEADERS.²⁷

The survey also assessed spouses’ opinions of Army leaders concern at three levels. They are leaders in “high positions/installation, officers in my spouses’ unit/place of duty, NCOs in my place of duty.” (See Table 3 below) Levels of dissatisfaction remain constant with the response in Table 2.

How satisfied are you with the support and concern the following Army leaders show for your family? MARK A RESPONSE FOR EACH ITEM.

	Very satisfied/satisfied			Neutral			Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied		
	Officer	Enlisted	Total	Officer	Enlisted	Total	Officer	Enlisted	Total
Leaders in high post/installation positions	34.9%	19.8%	23.0%	40.6%	42.7%	42.3%	24.5%	37.4%	34.7%
Officers in my spouse's unit/place of duty	53.3%	26.5%	31.9%	28.1%	35.4%	33.9%	18.5%	38.1%	34.2%
NCOs in my spouse's unit/place of duty	47.2%	31.8%	34.3%	41.2%	33.6%	34.9%	11.6%	34.8%	30.9%

TABLE 3: SURVEY RESULTS FOR SPOUSES VIEW OF POST AND INSTALLATION LEADERS.²⁸

These statistics demonstrate that Army leaders at all levels must find ways to improve spouses' perceptions as well as support for families. The statistics alone do not tell the entire story of dissatisfaction with Army life. A RAND Corporation cultural anthropologist, daughter of a retired Army officer and Navy spouse, Dr. Margaret Harrell has conducted extensive research on attitudes and experiences of junior enlisted spouses. During her research, she interviewed more than 100 military spouses on 2 major Army installations. A common thread among the overwhelming majority of junior enlisted spouses was they were stereotyped.

In the book "Invisible women: Junior Enlisted Army Wives,"²⁹ Dr. Harrell makes a strong argument that a common stereotype of the junior enlisted spouse exists in our Army today. This "Stereotype was shared not only by more senior military personnel and their spouses, but also by the other junior enlisted spouses, many of who discussed their peer group negatively even when they shared similar attributes."³⁰ Harrell interviewed more than 100 military spouses on 2 major Army installation along with other installation personnel. The stereotype that emerged is one that characterizes junior enlisted spouses as a lower class who are predominantly uneducated and unintelligent, are in unstable relationships yet are frequently sexually and reproductively out of control. Included in the stereotype is one of young families with much financial instability.

Dr. Harrell found great consistency among the spouses she interviewed. Not surprisingly, she recognized the long-standing separation that exists between officer and junior enlisted wives. The social barriers of stereotyping and class separation were frequent barriers viewed by the interviewees as impediments to enable young enlisted wives to adapt to their new military culture. Combined with the likelihood that the newly arrived spouse did not reside on post, but rather in a strange civilian community, added markedly to the isolation of the new spouse.

The isolation was not uncommon. This isolation resulted in other problems such as financial hardships caused by irresponsible spending or excessive phone bills created by the spouse calling friends and family to relieve boredom and loneliness. Limited income permits most soldiers to own only one car most frequently needed to get the service member to work, leaving the spouse home, further contributing to the isolation.

In addition to the stereotype developed in Dr. Harrell's research, another important factor is manifested throughout her interviews. The isolation is further expanded by separation between the soldier's private life and his duty life. Officers' wives tend to maintain a more active community among themselves and frequently participate in unit activities and social gatherings. Enlisted wives in contrast were found to be isolated from both unit and installation activities. This is often because the soldier consciously decided to keep their wives uninformed about the unit or post activities. Flyers and other information not mailed directly home will never get to the spouse. Soldiers don't do well relaying beneficial information home.³¹

Stereotyping and isolation are both factors which have a negative effect on the attitudes and perceptions of the enlisted spouse, often resulting in negative attitudes about the Army and their husband's continued service. But not all find themselves in a relatively hopeless situation. Some wives recognize the value of continuing the education or if possible beginning a career with education or experience they may already possess. Some will seek employment rather than seek training and return to the job market on post or more frequently in the civilian community.

Some spouses were able to overcome the common challenge of transportation to school or work; others cannot for various reasons. Those who are able to get out of the house for work or to further their education find their level of satisfaction much higher. Dr. Harrell's research provided numerous anecdotal stories to support my opinion. But for the spouse with one or more children, things change. The children present an entirely different set of circumstances for the stay at home spouse; most notably is the cost of quality childcare. Can the spouse earn enough to cover the care costs? More than one child can make child care costs prohibitive. Few junior families have sufficient resources for schooling and childcare unless they have extra financial assistance such as from family. The lack of resources contributes to the frustration for the spouse who may be determined to beat the isolation.

Even when the spouse with children overcomes the challenges, another factor comes into play. Should the spouse choose to go to school in the evenings or at night rather than pay child care costs, most young soldiers in today's uncertain environment do not have a simple work schedule 7-4:30 or 8-5. Will the soldier be home to help with the childcare? Increased

frequency of unit deployments and unpredictability probably increases the likelihood that the soldier will not be there. These factors contribute as well to the spouses' frustration with the military way of life.

Together, the Army surveys and Dr. Harrell's research all validate my position that the Army must continue its efforts in improving the ways and means available to assist families. The assistance must be not only with the correctly tailored and resourced programs, but that leaders throughout the chain of command recognize the needs of the families in their units and understand how to access the appropriate support.

We must recognize that the Army family surveys reflect spouses perceptions. But these perceptions, combined with the longstanding stereotypes of junior enlisted spouse create an environment that is counter-productive to the Army's strategic intent for well-being. Yet, strategic intent alone cannot change the current perspective of well being as outlined above. Change is necessary to create the effects intended by the Army's Well-Being Plan.

Modification of the existing programs, implementation of new programs and better training for the chain of command at all levels will be necessary. Currently, the Well-being program remains at the strategic level of implementation within Headquarters, Department of the Army.³² The mission is to institutionalize the current vision and plan across the Army's leadership and their supporting staffs. This is a complex undertaking requiring the execution of a complex set of tasks to enable its success. Of the many changes needed, two in my view are critical to achieving this goal. They are the synchronization of financial resources and developing means to measure the effectiveness of well-being programs across the Army. As the Army pushes Transformation forward, the distribution for resources will be a continuous issue for debate.

Today in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, the Well-Being program has received \$12.1 Billion Dollars that provides for 60% of its program requirements. Over the five year period, FY2004-2009, growth is programmed and funding increases to 76% of validated requirements. Yet, a more than \$34 Billion Dollar shortfall exists over this period.³³ Family programs will compete with funding for other, new transformational programs and equipment. How the Army prioritizes and allocates limited financial resources to the most effective family programs is paramount in determining their success.

Measuring the well-being program's success is a new and essential component to implementing this new vision. With the right performance measures, leaders at all levels must utilize the result of continuous assessments throughout their areas of command to make the necessary adjustments to better address shortfalls. Teaching leaders throughout the Army to

understand the measurement indicators and translate them into meaningful results will require training and well-being expertise throughout the force.

Among the other strategic challenges the new Well-Being Program faces is the integration of a wide variety of existing programs across the Army in 13 categories comprised of 51 functions managed by many different parts of the Army leadership. These 13 categories receive funding from five of the six Program Executive Groups (PEGs) who allocate Army financial resources.³⁴ Additionally, the creation of an Army stove-piped organization to manage installations creates new considerations for horizontal integration of these numerous and complex functions.

The implementation of the new Well-Being vision is not a series of quick events, but rather a deliberative process over time. Institutionalizing it will take even longer. In the meantime, the Army is continuing its Army Family Action Plan forum to identify means to correct existing problems as well surface new issues of concern. Two new programs, Building Strong and Ready Families and Army SOLD XXI, Spouse Orientation and Leader Development for the 21st Century, are both being implemented throughout the Army.

Building Strong and Ready Families³⁵ was initiated in the 25th Infantry Division and adopted by the Office of the Chief of Army Chaplains for Army wide development and implementation. This unit commander's voluntary program is targeted at married soldiers who have been in the unit less than six months and newly married couples. The program is designed to provide these new families the knowledge and tools they need to solve problems before they become crises. It is comprised of marriage education, health risk assessment, problem solving and conflict avoidance skills, and marriage enrichment. It is no surprise that the problems faced resourcing issues in its development and it competed for funding approval.

Army SOLD XXI³⁶ developers have recognized through the AFAP process that there are a number of shortfalls with existing programs and are attempting to bridge some of those gaps. SOLD XXI is focused on helping spouses develop the skills they need to adapt to the Army's way of life. Its intent is to put a paid spouse orientation and leader development coach on every installation. It is intended to help spouses' self development and increase their self reliance. It hopes to make more positive connections between spouses and the Army, develop spouses as community leaders and create more contributors to Army communities.

Both of these programs have recognized some of the challenges young Army families face today that were identified earlier in this paper. The success of these new programs is yet to be proven on installations around the Army. Like other programs before them, my prediction is that the results will vary greatly and will depend heavily on local unit and installation leaders.

It will also depend on the commitment and concern of those responsible for executing the programs through the assistance and education they provide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through my research, I have developed some potential enhancements that I believe will significantly enhance the quality and effectiveness of the Army Well Being Program. While each of these recommendations varies in scope and complexity, they will improve the specific aspect of family well-being that they address.

RECOMMENDATION #1: "RECRUIT" THE SPOUSE, NOT JUST THE SOLDIER.

The young spouse (or future spouse) should be introduced to the Army as early as the second or third visit to the recruiter's office. Information packets, videos, Digital Video Disks and interactive compact disks should be available that tells the Army story, explains what to expect during an initial tour in the Army and the meaning and purpose of Army Well-Being. The introductory packet will serve as an introduction to understand important military benefits including health care, education, job assistance, and housing. While broad in scope, it will serve as an early education on Army life.

A similar and follow on introductory packet should be available shortly after arrival at the first duty station. Provided by the chain of command, this packet will supplement the first, and enable the spouse to connect early with the resources available on the specific installation. A follow up by the chain of command representative will enhance this package and open the door to assist the spouse with getting settled in new environment.

Finally, all of this helpful information and educational material should be available on the Internet. For those spouses who may not have access to a personal computer, recruiting stations should enable access to future Army spouses at the earliest appropriate opportunity. Implementation of his recommendation requires that TRADOC's Assessments Command accept responsibility for making the first step to educate the new or future Army spouse. Making and maintaining a wealth of information on the internet may be expensive but, given the appeal of the Army's up to date recruiting website, it will pay dividends in helping educate and solve problems early.

RECOMMENDATION #2: INCORPORATE WELL-BEING TRAINING AT ALL LEVELS IN ARMY EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

All Army leadership schools, beginning with the Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC) and the Officer Basic Course progressing all the way to the Sergeants' Major Academy

and War College, should provide level-appropriate training on the importance of well-being, the supporting programs, and how leaders can use the resources available to enhance their unit or place of duty. Army survey perceptions that leaders are uninformed about family programs must be corrected. Institutional training throughout the non-commissioned officer and officer education system is essential. Continuing education between courses is also important. Given the large number of resources committed to this program, maximizing its capabilities is essential. Well-being training will help develop awareness and heighten understanding of family needs. Leader commitment to well-being will grow and program leaders, working closely with unit and installation leaders, will institutionalize well-being throughout the force.

RECOMMENDATION #3: A "RE-BRANDING" OF CURRENT PROGRAMS IS ESSENTIAL.

Today the Army has a myriad of programs in existence and outlined earlier in this paper. Most come under the umbrella of Army Community Service. This 37-year-old organization needs to update its name and associated image. ACS needs a new look and brand identity that better reflects the soldier and family identity in the 21st century. It's ACS name retains a dated image of an organization for officers' wives volunteering their time for installation social services. ACS must adopt the "Army of One" mentality that the recruiting campaign has as its cornerstone. Synchronizing ACS' image into well-being and Transformation will make it a more attractive resource for young soldiers and their families. Target marketing has been a highly developed science in the commercial sector utilizing it attributes to identify its customers. Using a similar approach to develop "products" that appeal to a segmented market, well-being programs designed for selected groups such as young spouses could provide long term benefits to generate access and self-reliance throughout the force.

RECOMMENDATION #4: BRING WELL-BEING COUNSELORS DOWN TO UNITS IN SUPPORT OF COMMANDERS.

The two most critical components to successful well-being are education and access to programs. Bringing well-being representatives into units down to the battalion level would change the entire "customer contact" perspective for family programs. Although difficult to achieve given limited resources, an investment in a professional cadre to assist commanders in his unit area would dramatically change how these programs are implemented.

Soldiers and spouses must be educated on the programs to recognize if these services could enhance their lives. Leaders also must be well informed. Today, program representatives are available from the installation staff to connect with soldiers and spouses. However, few connect on a habitual basis with commanders and staff. While many attend

support group meetings and provide briefings when requested, few connect regularly with chains of command. Too often, they only communicate with commanders during times of need. Providing unit based well-being representatives would support the commander in an unprecedented manner. Chaplains often serve as the front line for determining if a soldier and family needs assistance. A well-being representative will enable the chaplain to focus on his mission for spiritual support and serve as a first line of response in assisting commanders with family issues.

The SOLD XXI program comes close to achieving this objective, but falls short in one area: outreach. To make this program truly successful, create an outreach program at the battalion level and below to seek out newly arrived spouses and introduce them to the installation and its programs. Early contact along with the educational information provided in my first recommendation could provide a significant change in preventing the isolation faced by many young spouses.

CONCLUSION

As the Army works to set the conditions for strategic well-being, hundreds of thousands of soldiers are deployed to Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan and other areas of conflict around the world. Thousands of families are left behind who are utilizing the many long-standing family service programs already in place around the world at Army installations. While many of these families will remain in the Army after their spouses return, others will not. Some will retire and others leave the service. Married soldiers who leave the Army will probably make that decision as a family. I am convinced that the decision will be swayed heavily by the spouses' ability to deal with the stresses of Army life. Implementing a successful well-being program throughout the force and incorporating my recommendations will significantly improve future Army families and our nation alike.

WORD COUNT = 7,456

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