

# Keep the Communications Flowing!

When you are separated by a deployment, keeping the communication open and flowing is very important. No news is bad news!!! Before your Service Member leaves, talk about how you will stay in contact with each other during the deployment. In this day and age, there are many ways to "talk."

- ✓ **Letters** – Mailing addresses are listed on Page 3 of this booklet. As soon as the unit gets to its destination, your Service Member will send home a mailing address to verify this information is correct. Service Members will enjoy letters over and over again. Letters give the Service Member a feeling of contact, since the physical paper has touched the hands of their loved ones.
- ✓ **Emails** – If you have access to email, this is a cheap, instant way to keep in touch. If you don't have email accounts, maybe now is the time to get into this special way of communicating. Guest email accounts are available to families through Army Knowledge Online (AKO) at [www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil). You need your Service Member's AKO username to set up the account, and your Service Member will be asked to verify your account (through their AKO account) once you are registered. If you have any problems or questions, contact the nearest FAC.
- ✓ **Care Packages** – For Service Members away from home, having some of their favorite things – little bits of home - will help during the separation. Mailing restrictions can be found at <http://www.usps.com/supportingourtroops>. A few things to remember:
  - Depending on where the unit is stationed, there may be some restrictions on what will be accepted through the mail system. Be sure to know what can and cannot be sent through the mail to that particular station.
  - Use sturdy containers and don't send perishable goods. Sometimes it takes as long as six weeks for the mail to find Service Members.
  - Ensure your privacy. Sometimes these packages are opened for security reasons or in front of others.
  - Flat Rate Boxes – Information regarding the use of USPS Flat Rate boxes can be found at <http://shop.usps.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/ProductDisplay?langId=-1&storeId=10001&catalogId=10152&productId=36604>
- ✓ **Videos and voice cassettes** – Seeing and hearing loved ones during times of separation is a very special thing. Remember, cassettes do require special equipment.
- ✓ **Phone calls** – Phone calls can be very special during these deployments; however, they can also be a very expensive item. Always plan out ahead of time what you want to talk about.

# Family Deployment Handbook

## DSN Calling Instructions from Overseas

**A Service Member can call home with DSN (*Defense Switched Network*) if it is available at his/her location.**

For a Service Member to call home they can dial into St. Paul or Camp Ripley from there they only have to pay long distance fee from that site to their home. They will require a calling card to do this. They should call into the facility that is closest to their family to save on long distance.

### Instructions

#### **To Dial Through St. Paul**

1. Dial from overseas DSN number **312-825 4545**
2. When they hear the beep enter in code **625143**
3. They will get another dial tone from there they can dial **9** and the **800 number** for the calling card
4. Follow the instructions for you calling card to complete the call.

#### **To Dial Through Camp Ripley**

1. Dial from overseas DSN number **312-871-7654**
2. When they hear the beep enter in code **625143**
3. They will get another dial tone from their they can dial **9** and the **800 number** for the calling card
4. Follow the instructions for you calling card to complete the call.

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#### **To call your units 8000 number**

Dial from overseas the DSN number is **312-825 8XXX** (*8XXX is the unit extension you are trying to contact*)

- ✓ **Photos and artwork** – Pictures of family and loved ones are very important during a time of separation. Special hand-drawn items from children bring home into a faraway place.
- ✓ **Operations Security (OPSEC)** - The objective of OPSEC is to protect our operations because the enemy is watching us, listening to us, and monitoring our communications within the operations area and outside to include communications to the home front. For more information refer to the following web site:  
[www.army.com/articles/item/3305](http://www.army.com/articles/item/3305).

#### **What to do in times when you are not able to communicate with one another.**

There will be times when your Service Member is involved in his or her mission and won't be able to easily communicate with you. Sometimes you will have a warning of this, but, sometimes you will not. What to do during these times:

#### **Accept it when it happens:**

The only time this happens is when it is REQUIRED for the duty at hand. When it occurs – it occurs for a reason. It could go on for an extended period of time or it could only be for a few hours or a few days.

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### **Plan for it before:**

These silences are the times to stay in contact with the unit Family Readiness Group. The Volunteer Leader(s) assigned by the commander will be one of the first outside people contacted when the unit is once again able to communicate. The Leader(s) will let the families know – through its established communication tree – as soon as they know and the unit says it is OK to spread the word.