



FROM THE HOMEFRONT

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CREATED TO KEEP FAMILIES CONNECTED

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HEY KIDS!

EASTER EGG HUNT
CAN YOU FIND ALL 12 EGGS
HIDDEN IN THE APRIL ISSUE?

A Note From the Director, Family Programs

There is nothing permanent except change -Heraclitus



I wanted to let our families know we are making a change to the schedule of our monthly newsletter-it will now come to you quarterly and in color! The months our newsletter will now go to print will be: April, July, October and January.

In between these publications, you can keep up with what is happening at Family Programs via our Social Media platforms:

<https://www.ngfamily.vt.gov/> (the official Family Programs website-where your search begins)

<https://www.facebook.com/VTNGFamilyPrograms/> (updates from all of our programs)

<https://www.facebook.com/VTNGCYP/> (our Child and Youth Program news)

<https://www.facebook.com/vtvot/> (invaluable information for our Vermont Veterans)

<https://www.facebook.com/VTNGMFRCII/> (find information about upcoming KS&CB webinars and workshops)

<https://www.facebook.com/Vermont.SOS/> (updates on our events for our Gold Star Families and Families of the Fallen)

In addition, you always have access to our 24/7 Military & Family Support Line at: 888-607-8773.

You can also let us know how we are doing by completing our short survey at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VT-FP> then choose Family Programs Newsletter from the type of service you utilized list.

Finally, I hope you will find this change to our newsletter schedule beneficial. A great deal of thought and planning went into this decision and we welcome your feedback, always!

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Military & Family Support Center
888-607-8773

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Airman and Family Readiness Manager

Greetings from your Airman and Family Readiness Office.

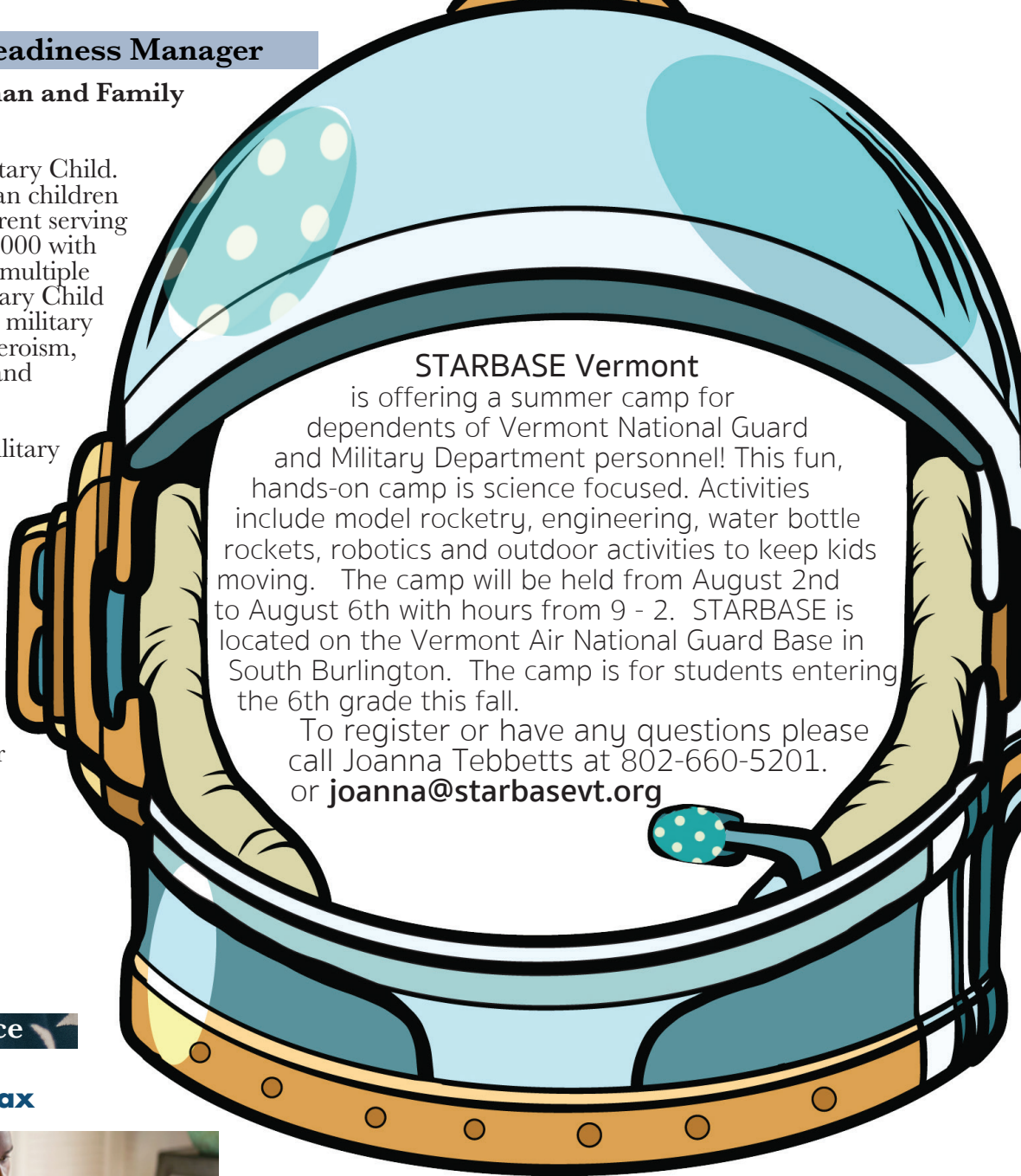
April is the month of the Military Child. There are 1.7 million American children and youth under 18 with a parent serving in the military and about 900,000 with one or both parents deployed multiple times. The Month of the Military Child is an opportunity to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience.

Please say thank you to the military children in your life.



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and Family Program Manager

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Vermont Air National Guard
Family Readiness



STARBASE Vermont
is offering a summer camp for dependents of Vermont National Guard and Military Department personnel! This fun, hands-on camp is science focused. Activities include model rocketry, engineering, water bottle rockets, robotics and outdoor activities to keep kids moving. The camp will be held from August 2nd to August 6th with hours from 9 - 2. STARBASE is located on the Vermont Air National Guard Base in South Burlington. The camp is for students entering the 6th grade this fall.
To register or have any questions please call Joanna Tebbetts at 802-660-5201. or joanna@starbasevt.org

Military OneSource

File Fearless with MilTax



Tax season is in full swing. Start filing today with MilTax, our easy-to-use, free tax software. MilTax walks you step-by-step through your federal return and up to three state tax returns. Made for the military, it takes the guesswork out of combat pay, rentals, filing OCONUS and more.

Plus, free expert tax support. Stumped on a problem? Contact MilTax experts to talk you through the answers. With extended hours during tax time, trusted help is close at hand. To access MilTax, visit www.militaryonesource.mil.



Sen\$e

Sen\$e mobile app provides personalized financial education and tips to help you to live your best MilLife — anytime, anywhere.

Service members, their family members and survivors can use the app to access customizable tools and information on everyday financial topics.

To access:
<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/health-wellness/recommended-wellness-apps/MilTax> services are always 100% FREE, and available 24/7 through the Military OneSource Program.

For more support and wellness tips, contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 or visit www.militaryonesource.mil.



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VT Veterans Mental Health Counselor

Bringing More Laughter into your Life

Here are some of the many benefits of laughing more since laughter is the best medicine:

- Laughter causes you to gulp in large portions of air, thereby oxygenating your blood.
- Laughter decreases stress hormones in the body such as cortisol and adrenaline, thus helping to stave off illness.
- Laughter strengthens the immune system.
- When we laugh our bodies release hormones and chemicals that have positive effects on our system. One of these chemicals is endorphins, the feel-good hormone.
- One minute of laughing burns the same number of calories as 6 to 10 minutes on a treadmill.
- Laughing raises your mood.
- Laughing is good for the heart and improves blood circulation.
- Laughter can reduce pain and aid the healing process.
- Laughter creates and strengthens human connections.
- It feels good to laugh.

Suggestions:

Smile

- Find a funny friend
- Pin up laughter quotes
- Set the intent to laugh more
- Try laughing yoga or meditation
- Do the things that make you laugh
- Include laughter in your morning routine
- Start a funny scrapbook with your kids.
- Take up something new that is enjoyable
- Read the funnies/comic strip/funny book
- Find a favorite comedian/sitcom
- Follow funny people on Twitter
- Start a funny Pinterest board
- Play fun games with friends
- Have a fun date night
- Laugh at yourself
- Start a joke jar

Charlene Caiano-

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Kitchen Spoons & Combat Boots Brought to you by VTNG Family Programs

Military deployment and prolonged separations have become a way of life for many military families. Whether the the Service member is away from home for a month, one year, or more, his/her absence can have a profound impact on a child's social, emotional and physical health. Join us for tips and suggestions on how to strengthen relationships, and maybe even enable your military child to excel and grow positively through these time of challenge.



The Kitchen Spoons & Combat Boots webinars were developed by Family Programs to provide Service Members and their families with informational content based on identified gaps in services. From Kitchen Spoons to Combat Boots, these webinars help balance life on the home front, during military service, and everything in between. The Kitchen Spoons & Combat Boots webinar series meets monthly, the first Wednesday from 7:00PM-8:00PM. By providing virtual opportunities for education, you have the capability to access the webinar wherever it's convenient for you.

To view our "Second Time Around" KS&CB Multimedia Educational Series visit:
<https://www.ngfamily.vt.gov/Programs-Services/Kitchen-Spoons-Combat-Boots/>

Upcoming Webinar Topics:

"Military Youth Can Thrive! Not Just Survive Deployment!"
April 7th 2021 • 7PM-8PM

"Deployment Peer-to-Peer Support Forum"
May 5th 2021 • 7PM -8PM

"IDEAL Communications"
June 2nd 2021 • 7PM-8PM

"Deployment Strong: Operation Relationships!"
July 7th 2021 • 7PM-8PM

Register in advance for these webinars:
<http://bit.ly/2Wp9ubP>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Zoom meeting.

NOTE: Please join the meeting from your personal device.
(Government devices are NOT permitted)

Vermont Veterans Outreach

Getting Ready for Spring

The weather's getting warmer and the days are getting longer and it's exciting to think that spring is right around the corner. It's almost time to open up those windows and pack away those winter clothes but wait...what about all the mess winter has left behind?

Spring is a good time to clean out the winter dirt in your homes and complete some important home maintenance projects. There are many things that can get cleaned in the spring like windows, carpets, and your baseboards but have you considered some essential spring maintenance for the home. Here is quick checklist of things you should consider doing in your home this spring.

- Clean out your gutters
- Pressure wash your siding and stone surfaces
- Flush your water heater
- Clean your dryer vents
- Clean you're A/C and home air exchange systems filters
- Clean out and behind your fridge and stove. Especially the fridge coils and drip pan
- Inspect and replace the caulking around your sinks, toilets and tubs
- Clean or replace your faucet aerators
- Check your roof for missing shingles, soft spots and check your siding.
- Test and replace your fire alarms and CO2 alarms
- Check that your fire extinguishers aren't expired and/or no longer charged.
- Pour drain cleaner in your drains and have your septic pumped if it's been 3 years
- Test your sump pump (if applicable)
- Inspect window sills and screens for holes and tears. Caulk and replace if needed.
- Check your decks for loose, warped or rotten boards and replace as needed.



Check us out on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/vtvfot/>

Completing the annual spring checklist helps you save money on your heating, A/C and electric bills but it also keeps you and your family safe. Cleaning out your appliances on an annual bases helps them work correctly and could extend the life of your appliances too. Identifying what things around your home that need to be fixed in the spring allows you the time to have it fixed and repaired before another blustery New England winter comes our way.

Spring maintenance \$\$\$\$ saving tip: Many chimney cleaners or heating companies offer furnace, chimney and wood stove cleaning at a discounted price in the spring. Take advantage of the warmer weather and have these items serviced now and don't wait until the prices are high in the fall. **DON'T FORGET** to ask service providers if they offer a military/veteran discount and save yourself some dough!

Respectfully Yours,
Morgan Langlois -
Outreach Specialist
for Lamoille County
and the surrounding
towns in Caledonia,
Orleans and
Washington
Counties.

(c) 802-497-7189
(w) 802-338-3411



Our Survivor Outreach Services Program cordially invites you to "Cooking With Care"

Cooking With Care

In honor of the ones we have lost, service members who are currently deployed or serving our nation from afar, let's come together and share cherished memories through the efforts of a collaborative cookbook. Please provide a recipe, picture and story for each entry for this project.

Visit the Survivor Outreach Page on the family programs website to submit.

For electronic submission email to: Tammie.l.conner.ctr@mail.mil

Kids Creating Change for a Better Tomorrow

Month of the Military Child – April 2021

Did you know that the official flower of the Military Child is the Dandelion? This may seem disappointing, but take a few moments to see their true magnificence: they are extremely **resilient**, can put down **roots** almost anywhere, **proud** of who & what they are, are **impossible to destroy**, are **includers**-attentive to outsiders, working to include them, **adapt** easily, and can **survive** nearly anywhere. Military children bloom everywhere the wind carries them and they stand ready to fly into breezes to take them into new adventures, new lands and new friends. The poem below is a wonderful tribute to all the things that make Mil Kids amazing:

"The official flower of the military child is the dandelion. Why? The plant puts down roots almost anywhere, and it's almost impossible to destroy. It's an unpretentious plant, yet good looking. It's a survivor in a broad range of climates. Military children bloom everywhere the winds carry them. They are hardy and upright. Their roots are strong, cultivated deeply in the culture of the military, planted swiftly and surely. They're ready to fly in the breezes that take them to new adventures, new lands, and new friends. Experts say that military children are well-rounded, culturally aware, tolerant, and extremely resilient. Military children have learned from an early age that home is where their hearts are, that a good friend can be found in every corner of the world and that education doesn't only come from school. They live history. They learn that to survive means to adapt, that the door that closes one chapter of their life opens up to a new and exciting adventure full of new friends and new experiences." ~ Author Unknown

Month of the Military Child (MoMC) Dates to Remember:

2 April – MoMC Poetry Contest submissions due; see flyer!

6 April @ 11:00am – MoMC-Kick Off Event on Facebook Live join us at: <https://www.facebook.com/VTNGCYP>

12-15 April – MoMC April Camp 2021, Session 1; see flyer!

19-22 April – MoMC April Camp 2021, Session 2; see flyer!

21 April – **Purple Up Day**: Show your support for the Military Kids of VT by wearing purple! You will find an attached poster for you to use on that day. **#PurpleUpVT**

Kids Creating Change for a Better Tomorrow

Month of the Military Child (April) Camp 2021



Session 1: 12-15 April

Session 2: 19-22 April

Live Twice Daily at:

11:00am & 2:00pm

Fun, Engaging Activities and Events!

Camp will be held via password protected ZOOM

For EVERYONE'S security you MUST register to attend.

Register via QR Code, or the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MoMCCamp2021>



****ZOOM is prohibited by the DoD for use on Government issued equipment. Please use a personal device.****



Got Questions? Contact Brian Stoudnour at 802-310-6745 or brian.r.stoudnour.ctr@mail.mil





COVID-19 Planning: We are working closely with community partners who are getting recommendations from the Vermont Department of Health, and American Camp Association (ACA) to have confirmed plans in place. These will continue to be monitored, and updated as recommendations are adjusted.

We are very excited to be perusing camps for this coming summer! Safety is our top priority and we are taking significant measures to establish an autonomous community of healthy participants for each of our offerings.

As campers, parents/guardians, and families, you play an essential role in supporting your camper(s) and helping us create a safe, and FUN summer community for all.

UPCOMING CAMP DATES

- **Vermont National Guard Family Camp for Deployed Families-20-25 June:** Open to VTNG Families that have recently completed a deployment, are currently deployed, or have one forthcoming. Registration will open in April/May 2021 (Orange County)*If camp does not fill with deployed families, it will get opened up to other eligible VTNG Families.
- **Conservation Camp-4-9 July:** Open to VTNG dependent youth between 10-17yo (Rutland County) Registration is OPEN!
- **Vermont National Guard Family Camp-14-18 August:** Open to eligible (current) VTNG Families Registration will open in April/May 2021 (Orange County)
- **VTNG End of Summer Camp-15-21 August:** Open to VTNG dependent youth 8-17yo (Orange County) Registration is OPEN!

To register, get added to a camp contact list, or for more information contact Brian Stoudnour, VTNG Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator via email: brian.r.stoudnour.ctr@mail.mil or phone: 802-310-6745.

FYSA: VTNG-Child & Youth Program youth specific summer camps are in the contracting phase and cannot be guaranteed at this time.



In the Spirit of Adventure,

Brian Stoudnour
Lead Child & Youth Program Coordinator- Contractor
O: 802-338-3369 | M: 802-310-6745 | brian.r.stoudnour.ctr@mail.mil



Check us out on Facebook!
<https://www.facebook.com/VTNGCYP/>

Seeking Participants for Childcare Focus Groups

Finding **affordable, quality childcare with flexible hours** is difficult for most parents, but can be especially challenging for members of the Vermont National Guard.

We are forming a few small focus groups around Vermont (Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast) to discuss the childcare issues facing our VTNG families. Ideally, our groups will include single parent, m-day, dual military and technician families. Our goal is to develop a few workable childcare options to help Guard Members balance their military careers with family life.

Interested in being part of the solution or know someone with childcare issues? Contact Miriam Boyle, miriam.g.boyle.ctr@mail.mil or 802 338 3364 on or before April 16, 2021. Let us work on this issue together!



IDEAS FOR A TAX REFUND



So, you got a tax refund, what's the best thing to do with the money? Let's talk about 4 ideas of what to do with your tax refund.

How about starting or increasing an **emergency fund**. This is the best time to start saving for emergencies that will eventually happen. If you don't have an emergency fund this is a great time to start saving, experts say you should have at least 6 – 8 months of living expenses in an emergency fund, but that can be an intimidating number to save all at once, so let's just start with saving \$500 and consistently putting money into the account to build it up. The key is consistently, once you get into the habit of saving monthly you will see the money start to grow. I have found that having the money taken out of my paycheck and put in an account for me, keeps me on track to saving monthly. I also have my emergency fund in a different bank from my checking account, as long as I don't see the money, I don't spend it.

Once you have started an emergency fund, your second priority should be to pay off debt, whether you choose to pay off the highest interest rate, or the smallest balance, any extra money you can put to paying off debt will pay it off faster and eventually put more money in your pocket.

Now let's talk about spending some of that money. Is there something you have put off doing or buying because of the expense? Do you need new snow tires, or need to have some expensive dental work done, maybe some home improvement projects you've been putting off? This is a great time to do some of the things you have put off because of the expense. Last but not least have a little fun.

I always tell my clients to use some of a tax refund to go do something, maybe a weekend away, a nice dinner, just don't go crazy. Getting money back in a refund isn't like found money, this is money that you worked hard for, so make sure what you do with it will work just as hard for you.

FACT SHEET

Approximately two million military children have experienced a parental deployment since 2001.



There are currently 1.2 million military children of active duty members worldwide.

The average military family moves three times more often than their civilian counterpart.

courtesy aasa.org

VTARNG JFHQ State Chaplain

Chaplain's Reflection:



As winter ends and spring begins, I always look for Bald Eagles, since they live in our area. I enjoy watching the eagles soar on the wind currents and go higher. It appears effortless for them as they spread their wings and soar.

Isaiah tells the people of Israel that they too can soar like eagles if they will wait on the LORD. One of the major hindrances that each of us face to soar like eagles is our attitude. Do we focus on problems and resign ourselves that there is no hope? On the other hand, do we accept problems as an opportunity to catch a wind current and soar to new heights?

Catherine Marshall, There is a difference between acceptance and resignation.

Resignation is barren of faith in the love of God. It says, "Grievous circumstance have come to me. There is no escaping them."

Acceptance says, "I trust the goodwill, the love of my God. I'll open my arms and my understanding to what He has allowed to come to me."

Thus, acceptance leaves the door of hope wide open to God's creative plan. (Moments that Matter)

The COVID-19 affected all of us throughout the nation and the world. This past year, people experienced separation, loneliness, adjustments for students attending school and parents working from home, sickness and death. How is your soul after one year of the pandemic? Reach out for help if you need to talk with someone.

May the LORD bless you!
For God and Country-Live out the Call!

CH Brett Charsky
Office: 802-338-3090

"Caring for the SOUL of the Army"
Invest in PEOPLE, Connect them in SPIRIT, and Cultivate COMMUNITY!



Check us out on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/VTNG-Religious-Affairs-101913244864999



Reminders from Vermont Employment Support Program

Deployment Resources:
www.esgrevents.org/courses

- Service Member Briefing for Pre-Deployment (6 minute video)
- Talking to Your Employer About Deployment (30 minute video)

While ESGR’s mission is to educate Service members and Employers on their USERRA rights, mediate conflicts, and recognize supportive employers, ESGR appreciates the unique skills a Guard or Reserve Service member can bring to a civilian employer.

Guard and Reserve members seeking new employment may benefit from the following resources.

Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration program Center for Excellence, with the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness at Penn State features an Employment Resource guide with information and links covering many aspects of employment including career exploration, interviewing, resume writing, networking, job search, and military skills translation.

American Job Centers

There are 2,400 Department of Labor American Job Centers located throughout the states and territories, providing local assistance job seekers and employers. The centers offer Guardsmen, Reservists, and Veterans access to career and financial counseling, résumé and interviewing

assistance, education and retraining, job search methods, registered apprenticeships, and a vast employer network. Certain locations also provide access to on-site financial advisors. Employers receive labor market counseling, interview and job seeker selection tips, a vast job seeker network, and subsidies for hiring Veterans.



Workforce Development | Department of Labor
vermont.gov

Military OneSource

The Joint National Guard Employment Support Program page on Military OneSource provides a range of resources on finding new employment and returning to work after service.

USA Jobs

USA Jobs details how Guard and Reserve members can apply for specific federal roles.

As always, if you have a question or need assistance, we are here to help.

Whether you reside in Vermont, or another state, you can find a point of contact at

<https://esgr.mil/About-ESGR/Contact/Local-State-Pages> and click on your state.

Sabrina Milano
 Vermont State Chair

Military and Family Readiness Centers



Are you familiar with the Soldier & Family Readiness Group (SFRG) Program?

These are groups of people - soldiers, family members, close friends, volunteers - who come together to share

their knowledge with one another, build a community of like-minded people, and offer mutual support to one another to thrive within the military lifestyle. These groups also assist unit commanders in meeting military and personal deployment preparedness. Unit commanders are an integral part of the process and work directly with SFRG leaders (who are also volunteers) to build that community which enables soldiers and families to be resilient through the rigors of deployments and extended training.

Often, these groups have social media sites that can help pass information or serve as a message board. Have a question about TRICARE? Chances are good that someone

else in your group does too; maybe post that question on the website and see if your peers can help you find the answer. Interested in volunteering? SFRGs are a great place to get started. The volunteer opportunities offered by SFRGs are limited only by your imaginations.

Below are a few links with more information about the SFRG program and how it can help you and your soldier. As always, my Military & Family Readiness Team is standing by to provide information and help where needed. Feel free to reach out to any one of us 24/7 for more information on the SFRG program: 1-888-607-8773.

www.armyfrg.org
www.army.mil/standto/archive/2019/08/16/

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