

Deployment and Divorce

There exists clear evidence that repeated deployments have had and continue to have profound impacts on military families. This is illustrated by the steady increase in the divorce rate in every branch of the service affected by deployment to Afghanistan and Iraq.

The following article highlights the astonishing relationship between deployments and divorces.

“THE TOLL OF WAR HITS MILITARY FAMILIES IN FORM OF INCREASED DIVORCE RATE” By The Associated Press 11/28/09

“Washington>> The toll for a nation long at war is evident in military home: The divorce rate in the armed forces edged up again in the past year despite many programs to help couples, and the rate now is a full percentage higher than around the time of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

There were an estimated 27,312 divorces among roughly 765,000 married members of the active-duty Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps in the budget year that ended Sept. 30, the Pentagon said Friday.

That is a divorce rate of about 3.6 percent for fiscal year 2009, compared with 3.4 percent a year earlier, according to figures from the Defense Manpower Data Center. Marriages among reservists failed at a rate of 2.8 percent, compared with 2.7 the previous year.

Air Force Maj. April Cunningham, a Defense Department spokeswoman, said the changes from 2008 to 2009 were relatively small because of myriad programs offered by the services.

As in previous years, women in uniform suffered higher divorce rates than their male counterpart: 7.7 percent in 2009, compared with 3 percent for men.

There is no comparable annual system for tracking the national or civilian divorce rate, though the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said in 2005 that 43 percent of all first marriages end in divorce within 10 years.”

For a service member who is away, either on a deployment or serving on foreign soil, a divorce may be necessary to protect that service member’s rights, particularly when a spouse is engaging in destructive behavior such as:

- Using the service member’s good credit to run up debt.
- Relocating the children without the service member’s knowledge.
- Making financial and parenting decisions that are detrimental to the wishes of the service member.

Therefore, it is important to understand that, despite a deployment, a service member can seek the protections of his or her rights in a divorce case. An extremely qualified lawyer, who is familiar with the urgency of the factors impacting the marriage, should be consulted. In my experience, the goal of establishing the necessary court orders sends a strong message to the stateside spouse that, further breaches of the marital relationship will not be tolerated.

With my history of assisting hundreds of military service members, each year, I can immediately provide legal counsel no matter what corner of the globe a service member may be serving.