

*"We have to remember they're family, not soldiers."*

— Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Clack, a communications specialist who returned from Iraq last July, at a Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, a post-deployment event. For more information about the Yellow Ribbon program, see our special Reintegration Section that starts on page 46.



Deborah Mullen and her husband, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, speak with Fort Bliss enlisted spouses in El Paso, Texas. DoD photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley, U.S. Navy

*"It's one thing to be a military child during peacetime, quite another during a time of war. Every day, these young ones shoulder worry, stress and responsibility far beyond their years while mom or dad is deployed. It's not just the missed birthdays and soccer games or helping mom with extra chores that dad would normally do. It's the fear that their world can crumble at a moment's notice. When their parent comes home, the stress and challenges don't necessarily disappear. It's a safe bet dad didn't return quite the same guy he was when he left. He, too, may have emotional and even physical challenges to face. And he, too, may be afraid ... and perhaps even afraid to admit it. Many of these kids have known only war ... only worry."*

— Deborah Mullen — a Navy wife and mom and a military family advocate, who has been married to Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for 40 years —in a guest Family Forum blog for American Forces Press Service in May. Her full blog can be read at <http://afps.dodlive.mil/tag/deborah-mullen/>.

*"You're completely consumed in your work over there and what's going on ... And if you're sitting there worrying about stuff that's going on at home, you're more stressed. It's out of your control and you sit and freak out and there's nothing you can do."*

— Scott P., who deployed with the Air Force as an engineer, on why being single on deployment has its advantages. For more on single service members, see our articles beginning on page 16.