

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Why are some duty-bound to protect?
- Explaining the war to children.
- Discussing war and terrorism.
- The unique worries of deployment.
- What are the roles of each military branch?

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

- A Personal Account** 2
- Focus on the Helpers** 2
- How do you explain war?** 2
- We're Surrounded** 3
- What does "deploy" mean?** 3
- Understanding the Military Branches** 3
- Resources & Information** 4

Our Troops & Their Families

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 4

NOVEMBER, 2009

A Personal Account

I met Trevor Romain in 1992 at a local elementary school. After speaking to a group of educators, parents and students, Trevor was autographing books. As I observed Trevor's interactions with kids, I noticed that he had an uncanny ability to speak to students on their level and in a way that they understood. As an educator, this impressed me. Less than a year later I asked Trevor to visit my campus and the rest, as they say, is history. For over ten years I've witnessed the special relationship that develops between Trevor and the students who are lucky enough to hear him speak. This in and of itself has been a remarkable experience, but

there was one event in particular that truly touched and motivated me to work with Trevor.



"Express to your child the sacrifices some great men and women have made in the name of our country and beliefs." (ehow.com, 2009)

She was in fourth grade. Her mother had died of cancer

months ago. She would not talk about her mom's death to teachers or the school counselor. After Trevor finished speaking to the group of students, I noticed her lingering back obviously hoping for a private moment with Trevor. When she had that quiet moment alone, she said three words: "My mom died." In a clear and determined voice, she went on to describe her mom's battle with cancer, her thoughts and feelings, and how she perceived others to be treating her.

What is it about Trevor's personality that draws students to him?

(continued on page 2)

When Children Are Concerned

The National Association of School Psychologists has identified key areas in which adults can help children. (1) Acknowledge how a child feels, (2) help children feel safe, (3) maintain a level of control by taking action (support our military and those working in public

safety), (4) plan activities for children who have a loved one serving in the military, (5) if a new child moves due to relocation, make sure he does not feel alone or isolated, (6) expect and be prepared to respond in changes of behavior, (7) children do not need to focus on adult

issues, and (8) communicate and coordinate between school and home. For more psychological references when helping your family "cope with the stress of war, terrorism or other crisis," visit www.nasponline.org.



“The war is a difficult thing to try to explain to your children, and it takes patience and some concerted effort to do so effectively.”
(ehow.com, 2009)

“Our children should always have a sense of hope.”
(Heartlight, 2009)

Sometimes it's easier to talk about a book than it is our own feelings.
(Purple Wagon, 2009)



A Personal Account (continued)

What makes a child want to share their deepest secrets or fears with Trevor? Honestly, I don't know. My eyes still fill with tears when I observe Trevor's unique connection with a hurting student. In these moments there is only one word that is appropriate: *magical*.

Trevor has been working with the Department of

Defense and traveling internationally, speaking to children whose parents are serving in our military. His message has been made available through books and videos that military personnel can access on the www.militaryonesource.com web page. He is touching lives; he is making a difference.

While Trevor frequently

speaks on military bases, there are many students from military families that attend our public schools. It is for this purpose that I write this month's newsletter. It is beneficial for students to have some understanding of military service and the special burdens it can place on children from those families.

Focus on the Helpers

If you were asked where you were when you first learned of the 9-11 tragedy, you would most likely have a vivid mental image. The attack on the World Trade Center is memorable because we simply have difficulty wrapping our minds around such a horrific event. The United States responded and many Americans have been dili-

gent to fight for our continued safety. When politics is involved, there is a wide array of opinions but those who put themselves in harms way do so regardless of the politics. It is right that your child would recognize the heroism of 9-11. While some were running away, others were duty-bound to go forward. For children it is proper that

we set aside the legitimate differences of opinion that may exist and still recognize that those citizens who serve in our civil and military defense forces are deserving of our gratitude and respect. And part of that respect is to recognize the unique burdens borne by our service people's families.

How do you explain war?

There have been multiple books written that can be used as springboards when discussing warfare and terrorism. It is beneficial to read a book prior to sharing it with your child. Some books will suit your purposes better than others. The

National Military Family Association (NMFA) has posted book selections for children living the military life or for families who wish to discuss the military life with their child. Bella Online has also listed books for explaining the war and terrorism to children. In a Purdue University study, 40% of children reported

they hadn't had conversations with their parents regarding war (Purple Wagon, 2009). With protests and peace marchers, and speeches and actions supporting the war, "this is a great opportunity to teach children how to get along with people even if they do not agree" (Purple Wagon, 2009).

We're Surrounded



No matter how much you would like to protect your child, he will either hear or talk to another child about the war, terrorism or something she saw on the news. Young children are not normally equipped to watch the news and completely understand what is being reported. As children get older and mature, they begin to realize that the world is complex and the issues complicated. Here are some suggestions when your child

“Reassure children without ignoring the war.” (Purple Wagon, 2009)

wants to discuss war or terrorism:

- Make sure you understand what your child perceives. *Tell me what you know. What have you heard? What do you believe?* “Children require honest feedback on their perception of events” but understand that “whether for or against, an individual can be passionate without inciting hatred” (Heartlight, 2009).
- Adolescents will begin to form perceptions about what they

believe is right or wrong. Acknowledge his interest and feelings and listen willingly. “If a parent models a balance of critical thinking with possessing an open mind, a child learns to temper curiosity with responsibility for getting adequate information before forming opinions” (Heartlight, 2009).

As adults, we are often conflicted with the political events that surround us. “Reveal your own confusion, if it exists, and explain the complexity of the world and its issues” (Heartlight, 2009).

What does “deployed” mean?

A child who has a parent who is “deployed” has his own set of worries incomprehensible to others. He may be uncertain as to the exact location of the parent, adding to his anxiety. Separation from a parent may be a week, a month, a year or multiple combinations of these time periods. If a child is living

with one parent, the other parent must take on different parental roles often leading to added confusion as the child misses her mom or dad. Some children must live with relatives if both parents are deployed. Regardless of the situation, deployment means less contact between parent and child. Par-

ents who serve in the reserve often leave their family with less support, as they do not live on a base or within an understanding military community. As parents, we need to make certain our children can talk to someone who understands the pressures of deployment (Purple Wagon, 2009).

“Let children guide you in discussions.” (Purple Wagon, 2009)

Understanding the Military Branches

The United States military is comprised of several branches, each having a unique role in defending our country. The branches may work independently or in concert depending upon the mission. The **Navy** is composed of seaborne forces that include ships, submarines and aircraft carriers. The **Marine Corps**, which operates under the department of the Navy, is a fighting force com-

prised of combat infantry, armor, and air power. The **Coast Guard** is tasked with protecting our shores. The **Air Force** is the primary source of air defense and global supply of our forces abroad. The largest branch of the U.S. armed forces is the **Army**, whose mission includes all land-based efforts with infantry, armor and airborne troops. It is important to remember that the **United**

States Army Reserve and the **Army National Guard** are frequently called upon to deploy in times of national emergency.

To learn more about the military or an individual branch, visit www.military.com.



“Many parents have had to explain the war in Iraq to their children.” (Psychology Today, 2009)

**The Trevor
Romain Company**

4412 Spicewood Springs Rd.
Suite 705
Austin, Texas 78759
Phone: 512-480-8818
Fax: 512-480-8815

We want to hear from you!

Please tell us how our newsletter is
benefiting you.

(502) 477 - 1693

**Promoting social & emotional fitness
for kids.**

Daphne Morris, M.Ed., met Trevor Romain in 1992 when he visited a school as a guest speaker. Impressed by Trevor's profound and meaningful impact on students and educators, Daphne joined The Trevor Romain Company in 2006. A former elementary school principal, Daphne holds two Master's degrees in education.



Resources:

Bella Online. "Books For Explaining War & Terrorism to Children." <http://www.beallonline.com/ArticlesP/art11039.asp> (accessed September 2009).

ehow.com. "How to Explain the War to Young Children." http://www.ehow.com/how_2173037_explain-war-children.html (accessed September, 2009).

Heartlight. "Talking With Children About War, Terrorism, and the News." http://www.heartlight.org/cgi/simplify.cgi?20030322_talking.html (accessed September, 2009).

Military.com. "Tips for Choosing the Right Branch of Service." <https://www.military.com> (accessed September, 2009).

National Association of School Psychologists. "Children and Fear of War and Terrorism." http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/children_war_general.aspx (accessed September, 2009).

National Military Family Association. "Book Selections for Children Living The Military Life." http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=books_for_children (accessed September, 2009).

Psychology Today. "A Parent's Guide to Explain the War." <http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200303/parents-guide-explain-the-war> (accessed September, 2009).

Purple Wagon. "When War Is in the News." http://www.ces.purdue.edu/purplewagon/PARENTS/Resources/When_War_in_News.htm (accessed September, 2009).

