A STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS
OF MOTHERS, CAREGIVERS, AND SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN
REGARDING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES
DURING MATERNAL ARMY RESERVE COMPONENT DEPLOYMENTS

By

KRISTY CUSTER

B.A., Wichita State University, 1997
M.A., Baker University, 2005

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2014

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers, caregivers, and school-age children in regard to educational experiences (defined as social, academic, and behavioral by Kansas Department of Education, 2012) during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center, reserve component deployments have become an integral part of the total military strategy. Because the reserve component could be trained and equipped for a fraction of the active forces, fiscal realities dictated moving routine operational responsibilities to the reserve component (*National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report for 2013*, 2012). As more citizen soldiers were called to active duty deployments, the effects on children who did not typically identify with being in a military family were particularly important to their well-being.

This qualitative case study looked at perceptions regarding maternal reserve component deployments through the theoretical perspective lens of ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity. "Ambiguous Loss Theory" was a type of family stress termed by Boss (1999) that identified the loss or absence of a family member or loved one that evoked emotional uncertainty and ambiguity in the family (p. 7). "Boundary Ambiguity" was how the family interpreted or perceived the situation of ambiguous loss (Boss, 2002). Research applying Boss' Ambiguous Loss Theory showed that deployment of a family member in a military family was a major stress factor for military children and caused emotional uncertainty and ambiguity in the family (Faber, Willerton, Clymber, Macdermid, & Weiss, 2008; Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass & Grass, 2007).

As mothers were still recognized as the primary caregivers of children in the United States (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2011), the absence of a mother due to deployment

significantly shifted responsibilities not only to the new primary caregiver, but children also took on new responsibilities as well. Role ambiguity began prior to the deployment, continued during the deployment, and could have the most overwhelming effects post-deployment as family members reintegrated the deployed parent back into the family (Huebner et. al, 2007).

Utilizing a qualitative multiple case study, the research was conducted from a social constructivist worldview. Criterion sampling was used to garner four total cases for the study Data from both interviews and documents were collected. The purpose of this study was to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding their roles in the educational experiences (defined as social, academic, and behavioral by Kansas Department of Education, 2012) during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. Based on the data, six themes emerged that addressed the overarching research questions of this study:

- When deployed mothers/soldiers did not maintain a role in the child's educational experiences, families perceived role definitions as difficult to establish.

- Communication during deployment was a key factor in establishing roles of mother/soldier, child, and caregiver.

- Clearly defined roles in educational experiences of the child were a key factor in reintegration.

- Schools were perceived as a resource to families experiencing deployment.

- Children perceived their roles as maintaining or improving their educational experiences as ways to support mother/soldier during deployment.

- When roles in children's educational experiences were not clearly defined, children perceived stress.

A STUDY OF PERCEPTIONS
OF MOTHERS, CAREGIVERS, AND SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN
REGARDING EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES
DURING MATERNAL ARMY RESERVE COMPONENT DEPLOYMENTS

By
KRISTY CUSTER

B.A., Wichita State University, 1997
M.A., Baker University, 2005

A DISSERTATION

submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2014

Approved by:
Major Professor
Dr. Trudy Salsberry

Copyright

KRISTY CUSTER

2014

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers, caregivers, and school-age children in regard to educational experiences (defined as social, academic, and behavioral by Kansas Department of Education, 2012) during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. Since the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center, reserve component deployments have become an integral part of the total military strategy. Because the reserve component could be trained and equipped for a fraction of the active forces, fiscal realities dictated moving routine operational responsibilities to the reserve component (*National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report for 2013*, 2012). As more citizen soldiers were called to active duty deployments, the effects on children who did not typically identify with being in a military family were particularly important to their well-being.

This qualitative case study looked at perceptions regarding maternal reserve component deployments through the theoretical perspective lens of ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity. "Ambiguous Loss Theory" was a type of family stress termed by Boss (1999) that identified the loss or absence of a family member or loved one that evoked emotional uncertainty and ambiguity in the family (p. 7). "Boundary Ambiguity" was how the family interpreted or perceived the situation of ambiguous loss (Boss, 2002). Research applying Boss' Ambiguous Loss Theory showed that deployment of a family member in a military family was a major stress factor for military children and caused emotional uncertainty and ambiguity in the family (Faber, Willerton, Clymber, Macdermid, & Weiss, 2008; Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass & Grass, 2007).

As mothers were still recognized as the primary caregivers of children in the United States (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2011), the absence of a mother due to deployment

significantly shifted responsibilities not only to the new primary caregiver, but children also took on new responsibilities as well. Role ambiguity began prior to the deployment, continued during the deployment, and could have the most overwhelming effects post-deployment as family members reintegrated the deployed parent back into the family (Huebner et. al, 2007).

Utilizing a qualitative multiple case study, the research was conducted from a social constructivist worldview. Criterion sampling was used to garner four total cases for the study Data from both interviews and documents were collected. The purpose of this study was to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding their roles in the educational experiences (defined as social, academic, and behavioral by Kansas Department of Education, 2012) during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. Based on the data, six themes emerged that addressed the overarching research questions of this study:

- When deployed mothers/soldiers did not maintain a role in the child's educational experiences, families perceived role definitions as difficult to establish.

- Communication during deployment was a key factor in establishing roles of mother/soldier, child, and caregiver.

- Clearly defined roles in educational experiences of the child were a key factor in reintegration.

- Schools were perceived as a resource to families experiencing deployment.

- Children perceived their roles as maintaining or improving their educational experiences as ways to support mother/soldier during deployment.

- When roles in children's educational experiences were not clearly defined, children perceived stress.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acknowledgements

I give my sincerest thanks to Dr. Teresa Miller, co-chair of my committee, for encouraging me to work harder than I ever have in school. Her class was the first doctoral class I enrolled in, and it set the tone for what would be an intensive, focused, insightful, and enjoyable doctoral program that stretched my knowledge and stamina. As my advisor, Dr. Miller helped me plot an academic course culminating in this dissertation. As a friend, she reminded me that dissertations can wait, but life doesn't.

In addition, Dr. Trudy Salsberry, co-chair of my committee, graciously stepped in to assist in the final stages of this dissertation. I appreciate her enthusiasm and guidance through the final editing stages, as well as through my defense.

I also wish to thank the faculty members in the Educational Leadership department at Kansas State University for their expertise in content and model teaching. Their passion for their topics created enthusiasm that was transferable to their students' home districts. In particular, I wish to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Christy Craft, Dr. Laurie Curtis, Dr. Mary Devin, and Dr. David Thompson. They provided constructive criticism, which helped form the foundation of this study, as well as encouragement which reinforced I was heading in the right direction.

Without the cooperation of the case study participants, this research would not have been possible. I appreciate and respect the reserve component mothers who volunteered their time, their families, and their caregivers to recount the seldom told stories of mothers, who are citizen soldiers, and their journeys through the battlefield that often extend home.

I am also thankful for the support from Maize, USD 266. From my superintendent, Mr. Doug Powers, who encouraged life-long learning, to the district's administrative secretary,

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to every mother who ever tries to get an education while raising kids. Whether it is a GED or an EdD, the process is filled with exhaustion, guilt, stress, hopelessness, worry, anxiety, hassle, aggravation, desperation, irritation, and frustration. Just….keep….swimming.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Steve and Armella Ayres. Thank you for instilling in me not just a strong work ethic, but a strong love for work. Without it, I could have never completed this project. I love you both!

And, finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the four people who inspired me to write about children and deployments: my oldest son, Christian, whose big ideas will one day give others great joy; my daughter Peyton Rose, who really might be the smartest little person I know; my little deployment baby, Keaton, who is keeping me young; and my husband and very best friend, Brian, whose loyalty and love for his country are only slightly less than his loyalty and love for me. They have no need to turn one page of this dissertation; they lived it.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The reserve component (RC) of the military, consisting of the National Guard and Reserve, fought side-by-side with its active duty counterpart for over a decade of war. Since the events of September 11, 2001, the U.S. military deployed over 2.3 million soldiers toward Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in Iraq. Of those soldiers, about 28% have been from the reserve component. Women were 11% of the deploying population (Defense Manpower Data Center, 2012). This study examined the perceptions of mothers, caregivers, and school-age children in regard to their roles in the educational experiences (defined as social, academic, and behavioral by Kansas Department of Education, 2012) of the children during maternal Army Reserve Component deployments. Discussion in this chapter was organized in the following sections: (a) overview of the issues, (b) statement of the problem, (c) purpose of the study, (d) research questions, (f) limitations of the study, (g) delimitations of the study, (h) organization of the study, (i) definition of terms, and (j) summary.

Overview of the Issues

Since the World Trade Center attacks of September 11, 2001, increasingly lengthy and frequent deployments have become commonplace for active duty military personnel and their families. For example, the U.S. Army went from having 8% of its force deployed in 2001 to having more than 36% deployed in 2005 (Engel, Gallagher & Lyle, 2006). During that time, numerous studies have been completed documenting changes in family dynamics among active duty military members due to deployments. Faber, Clymer, MacDermid, Weiss, and Willerton (2008) and Gambardella (2008) focused on the spousal relationships, while other studies focused on understanding the experiences of active duty parental deployments on children emotionally,

academically, and behaviorally (Abell, 2004; Cozza, Chun, & Polo, 2005; Heubner & Mancini, 2005). Although separations of active duty military members from their families have been somewhat common, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan over 12 years caused National Guard and Reserve families to also experience a dramatic increase in deployments (Cozza, Chun & Polo, 2005). A May 2008 report from the Congressional Research Service showed 17% of the total composition of U.S. forces in Iraq and 24% of forces in Afghanistan were made up of National Guard and Reserve troops (O'Bryant & Waterhouse, 2008).

With the release of the Department of Defense's strategic guidance plan, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense* (2012), emphasis was placed on a smaller total force, with fewer objectives, and a greater reliance on mobilized forces. Assistant Secretary of Defense McGinnis stated in the *National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report for Fiscal Year 2013:*

> The National Guard and Reserve provide a trained, equipped, and ready force for a fraction of the cost of comparable active forces. The new defense strategy combined with current fiscal realities point toward moving capacity and capability into the RCs for routine operational use as well as a strategic hedge. (2012d, Forward)

For the most part, these dramatic changes in conditions for the reserve component have gone undocumented as far as understanding the impact on families and are almost nonexistent in relation to educational impact. As of 2011, over 487,000 children of Guard and Reserve families were listed as between the ages of 5-18 (Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense). "With the large number of National Guard members and Reservists being deployed, public educators find themselves endeavoring to support the emotional and academic needs of military children and their families" (Harrison & Vannest, 2008, p. 17). However, Harrison and Vannest

stated that, "research on the impact of lengthy wartime deployments on Reservists' children is scarce" (17). According to Faber, et al. (2008):

> Reservists and their families are a unique subpopulation within the armed forces and may encounter additional stressors related to deployment and reunion. In comparison with active duty military members, who often live on or near military installations and who receive military training daily, Reservists live and work in the civilian community and receive military training 1 weekend a month. (223)

Under typical (nondeployed) circumstances these families do not consider themselves members of the military (Harrison & Vannest, 2008).

Of the over 720,000 soldiers in the reserve component, women comprised 18.1% of this force (Department of Defense, 2012). As a small group within a subpopulation of the total force that is the reserve component, the exceptional needs of these female citizen-soldiers, who were, among other occupations, also mothers, lawyers, cashiers, teachers, bankers, and nurses, were frequently overlooked by their, oftentimes, male chain of command. In spite of the fact that women have been involved in the reserve component for over 50 years, there were still many areas distinctive to women that needed to be addressed.

Although women have unofficially served in the United States military since the American Revolution, it was not until the Army established the Army Nurse Corps in 1901 that women officially had a permanent residence in the military (Iskra, 1999). Women primarily served in a medical capacity through World War II when Public Law 77-554 was signed in May 1942 creating the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC). The WAAC was such a success that in July 1943, Public Law 78-110 was signed establishing the Women's Army Corps (WAC). As the human toll of WWII was counted and the contributions of women to the nation's strategic

defense were analyzed, after a yearlong debate in Congress, Public Law 80-625, the Women's

Armed Services Integration Act, was signed in June 1948 by President Harry S. Truman. This

law made it possible for women to join the regular Army, Air Force and Army Reserve.

Although *women* could join some branches of the regular military, *mothers* could not. A

1951 Executive Order (EO 10240) signed by President Harry S. Truman gave the services

permission to discharge a woman if she became pregnant, gave birth to a child, or became a

parent by adoption or a stepparent. Although it was a guide, the services took it as a mandate,

and most mothers and soon-to-be mothers were discharged. Waivers to the minor child custody

policy were given to military women in the 1950s and 1960s but often reluctantly and always on

a case-by-case basis (Devilbiss, 1990).

It would not be until almost 20 years later in November 1967, when the Vietnam conflict

caused the United States to need more soldiers, that women other than medical personnel were

able to join the reserve components through Public Law 90-130 (Women in the US Army, 2012).

In addition, the military also rescinded its policy on pregnant women and mothers in 1971. With

the end of the draft in 1973, the military began actively recruiting women into the All-Volunteer

Force as there were not enough qualified male volunteers to meet the recruitment needs of a

volunteer military (Segal & Segal, 2004). The military was still reluctant to allow mothers into

the services, and it was not until 1976 that the Second Circuit Court ruled in Crawford v.

Cushman that a Marine Corps regulation requiring the discharge of a pregnant woman Marine

violated the Fifth Amendment due process clause because it set up an irrefutable presumption

that any pregnant woman in uniform was permanently unfit for duty (Marlin, 1977).

After the onset of the Persian Gulf War in January 1991, and the deployment of over

40,000 women, the Defense Authorization Act was passed. This act repealed combat exclusion

laws that prevented women from flying combat aircraft (Women in the US Army, 2012). As more and more positions began to open up for women, there was little consistency among the forces. In 1994, the Secretary of Defense enforced the *1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule*, which restricted women from ground combat units and provided guidance on service areas where women could be limited (General Accounting Office, 1998). As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continued, it became more and more apparent that there was no longer a distinguishable front line, and women were often involved in ground conflict. Most recently, in 2013, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey announced the rescission of *the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule* for women and that the Department of Defense planned to remove gender-based barriers to service and completely integrate the United States military by 2016 (Department of Defense, 2013).

Of the approximately 154,000 women in the reserve component of the Armed Forces in 2012, 36.4% were married and over half of all women (married or single) had children. Of women with children, 16.7% were single mothers (Department of Defense, 2012a). Like their male counterparts in the reserve, families of women who served in the reserve component not only coped with separations due to military deployment that included risk of injury or death of the service member, but also a redefining of job identity associated with the nature of a Citizen Soldier. "On Friday, Mom was a doctor. On Monday, Mom is a soldier." Especially for a younger child, this transition could be ambiguous. Additionally, the child's own self-identity could be confusing. "On Friday, I was just a child. On Monday, I am a military child." Questions about what this meant, and how the evolution changed the military child's life could be unsettling. Unlike many children of the active duty force, reserve component children were

often not located close to a military installation or had contact with other reserve component children who were also sharing the same life-changes.

As National Guard and Reserve groups continued to be an integral, but unique, part of the Armed Forces, more attention needed to be focused on how parental deployments were affecting their children's educational experiences. In addition, narrowing the topic to maternal deployments and the effects on children's educations appeared to be a unique study.

Statement of the Problem

Too little was known about the perceptions of mothers, caregivers, and school-age children in regard to their roles in the educational experiences (defined as social, academic, and behavioral by Kansas Department of Education, 2012) of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. Research from Operation Desert Storm on the challenges faced by mothers in the military due to longer deployments found that mothers and their children had readjustment needs after deployment (Applewhite & Mays, 1996; Kelley, Herzog-Simmer, & Harris, 1994; Pierce, Vinokur, & Buck, 1998). Women with children reported a higher rate of emotional health problems, including anxiety and difficulty readjusting (close to 65%), than women without children (about 40%). Women with children, more than single women and their male counterparts, reported a substantial decline in health and well-being after deployment. Mothers reported difficulty accessing appropriate services that negatively affected their relationships with their children and their emotional health (Helping Military Moms Balance Family and Longer Deployments, 2007).

Boss (2002) cited research that indicated women often reported higher levels of psychological distress than their male counterparts:

This may be because "the stresses in women's roles are more intense and persistent" (Wethington et al., 1987, p. 144), or it may be due to sex role socialization and the sexual division of labor. Women appear to be "more affected emotionally than men not only by their own stressful experiences but also by the stressful experiences of the people they care about" (pp. 144-145). Wethington et al. stated that "women's roles *obligate* them to respond to the needs of others" (p. 145). Bernard (1971) and Gove and Tudor (1973) also wrote about women's social roles being more stress producing than roles occupied by men. Others have stated that women's socialization experiences produce susceptibility to depression through the learning of a "helpless" style in coping with stressors (Radloff & Rae, 1981). (p. 26)

Children reported an increase in emotional stress during their parents' absences. Since many Reserve members do not live close to a military installation, they cannot readily access on-base services such as health care, childcare, housing, exchange, and commissary that are available to them. Once a child of an activated reserve member suddenly becomes a "military child," the child could feel physically and emotionally isolated, as the child might be the only military dependent, or one of few military dependents, in the school community (Department of Defense, 2010b).

Also adding to the predicament was that many schools without a large population of military children were untrained on how to support this "sudden military child syndrome." In fact, because most reserve component families did not consider themselves "military families," they did not identify the child as "military connected" on school enrollment demographic forms. Oftentimes, the school had no indication that a child's parent was associated with the military until problems arose.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding educational experiences during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. As mothers have continued to be the primary caregivers of children in the United States (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2011), the absence of a mother due to deployment has significantly shifted responsibilities not only to the new primary caregiver, but children have also taken on new responsibilities as well. The shift in roles often presented feelings of ambiguity. This study also examined how reserve component mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers perceived their roles in the educational experiences of the children. An essential investigation of these perceptions, not previously examined, addressed the needs of this student population.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers, caregivers, and school-age children in regard to their roles in the educational experiences (defined as social, academic, and behavioral by Kansas Department of Education, 2012) of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. There were two overarching questions asked by this study:

- What are the perceptions of reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers in regard to their roles in the educational experiences of the child during maternal Army Reserve component deployments?

- How did reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers perceive boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss in their children's educational experiences when a reserve component mother deployed?

Limitations of the Study

Because research on the reserve component was limited, much of the same research outcomes were quoted numerous times. When trying to draw generalizations to help define the issues, this practice could have led to thinking that the prior research was highly reliable when it might not have been because the same research was cited over and over again. In addition, because the range of issues encompassing reserve component deployments has not been fully explored, factors contributing to outcomes are limited.

Another limitation of the study was that statistical data identifying reserve component members was gathered through the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). DEERS enrollment for dependents was not mandatory for service members, so dependent statistics have the potential to be underreported. This could have led to inaccurate data when discussing sample size in Chapter 4.

The study was based on participant interviews. Participant interviews relied on the openness of the interviewees, a degree of trust toward the researcher, and also required interviewees to recall events accurately. Participant perspectives could have changed over time as the participants had time to reflect on the events. In addition, oral interviews on sensitive topics may have kept participants from revealing some types of information, especially based on whether or not participants trusted the researcher.

Another limitation of the study was the use of Boss' boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss theory as the theoretical model to examine the issues. Very different understandings could have been found through the use of different theoretical perspectives.

It is up to the reader to determine applicability of the study to the overall military community since study participant selection was restricted to mothers deployed with a single

Army Reserve Component in one mid-western state. Any interpretation of relationship between the study and other military service families is at the discretion of the reader.

Delimitations of the Study

A geographical delimitation was established. To make one-on-one interviews feasible for the researcher, participants had to reside in one mid-western state. This geographic boundary allowed the researcher to travel to and from study participants within the same day. In addition, other branches of the reserve components in the mid-western state (Air National Guard, U.S. Air Force Reserve, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, U.S. Navy Reserve, and U.S. Coast Guard Reserve) were not part of the data collection for the current study as their mobilizations were limited to less than a year.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation was divided into five chapters and an appendix section. Chapter 1 provided an introduction, overview of issues, statement of problem, purpose of study, research questions, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, organization of the study, definition of terms, and a summary. Chapter 2 was the literature review that began with the conceptual framework and theoretical framework. Chapter 2 continued by describing military families and deployments, reserve component deployments, maternal deployments, and parental deployment's effects on school-age children. Chapter 2 concluded with the synthesis of research and a summary. Chapter 3 detailed the methodology that included research questions, research design, case selection, data collection, data analysis, validation, ethical considerations, role of researcher, and a summary. Chapter 4 presented the data analysis. Chapter 4 included procedures for analyzing the data and explained the patterns and themes emerging from the data.

Included in the patterns and themes emerging from the data were discussions of ambiguous loss, boundary ambiguity, perceptions of roles in children's educational experiences desegregated by case, themes resulting from the intersection of boundary ambiguity and educational experiences, and a summary. Chapter 5 provided conclusions. Included in Chapter 5 were discussions of research question one, research question two, significance of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future studies followed by a summary.

Definitions of Terms

Ambiguous Loss—

> Characterized by two types:
>
> > **Type One** occurs when there is physical absence and psychological presence. These include situations when a loved one is physically missing or bodily gone…Common examples of this type of ambiguous loss are situations of absent parents due to divorce, giving up a baby to adoption, and physical contact with parents and siblings due to immigration.
> >
> > **Type Two**, there is physical presence and psychological absence. In this type of ambiguous loss, the person you care about is psychologically absent-- that is, emotionally or cognitively missing. Such ambiguous loss can occur from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias; traumatic brain injury; AIDS, autism, depression, addiction, or other chronic mental or physical illnesses that take a loved one's mind or memory away. (Boss, 2012)

Caregiver—

An individual who was not a member of the Reserve Component, was at least 21 years of age, was capable of self-care and care of children or other dependent family members, and who agreed, preferably in writing, to care for one or more family members during a member's absence for indefinite periods to ensure the member was available for worldwide duties (Department of Defense, 2010a).

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)—

DEERS was a computerized database of military sponsors, families and others worldwide who were entitled under the law to military benefits (Department of Defense, 2012b).

Deployment—

The assignment of military personnel to unaccompanied (without family) tours of duty (TDY) (Department of Defense, 2012b).

Educational Experiences—

Defined to include social, academic, and behavioral (Kansas Department of Education, 2012).

*Family Care Plan—*A written plan that soldiers who met the following criteria must have filed in advance of deployment that gives instructions on the care of the soldier's family:

- single parents;
- dual-member couples with dependents;
- married with custody or joint custody of a child whose non-custodial biological or adoptive parent was not the current spouse of the Member, or who otherwise bear sole responsibility for the care of children under the age of 19 or for others unable to care for themselves in the absence of the member;
- primarily responsible for dependent family members (Department of Defense, 2012b).

Reserve Component (RC)—

To include all seven components of the five branches of the military which were active under either Federal (Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Reserve, and Coast Guard) or State (Army National Guard, Air National Guard) authority (Department of Defense, 2012b).

School-aged—

Students in grades K-12, generally defined as ages 5-18 (Kansas Department of Education, 2012).

Summary

In Chapter 1, the researcher identified that not only was too little known about how reserve component deployments impacted the educational experiences of children who were reserve component dependents, but research about maternal reserve component deployments was almost non-existent. Through this study, the researcher brought needed attention to the unique challenges posed when mothers in the reserve component deploy.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Due to the over 855,000 National Guard and Reserve members who have deployed since September 11, 2001, (Strengthening Our Military Families, 2011), it has been particularly important to study the impact deployments have had on reserve component children. Unlike their active duty counterparts who mostly live close to their duty stations, National Guard and Reserve children have had to experience deployment in isolation. Forty-three percent of reserve component members have children who total more than 364,000 dependents (Department of Defense, 2012a). Of the 43% of reserve component members with children, 11% were women. Of those women having school-age children (age 5-18), 47% of these women were married, 42% were single parents, and 11% were in joint service marriages where both parents were in the military (Defense Manpower Data System, 2012).

Chapter 2 reviewed relevant literature related to this study and included the following sections: (a) conceptual framework, (b) theoretical framework, (c) military families and deployments, (d) reserve component deployments, (e) maternal deployments, (f) parental deployment's effects on school-age children, (g) synthesis of research, and (h) a summary.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was built around the epistemology, personal military experience of the researcher, and the theoretical perspective of ambiguous absence and boundary ambiguity (Boss, 1999). This section provided the basis for the study of maternal deployments' effects on the education of school-age children.

Epistemology. This study was grounded in the epistemology of social constructivism, as defined by Creswell (2007). Social constructivism was the worldview in which people "seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (p. 21). In a social constructivist's

perspective, reality was viewed as consisting of (a) multiple viewpoints, (b) formed through relationships within cultural and historical settings, and (c) in a constant state of change (pp. 21-22).

Researcher's personal military experience. The researcher's personal military experiences were grounded in a social constructivist epistemology and influenced the methodology chosen for the study. The researcher has been married to a National Guard soldier for 18 years and experienced multiple deployments and tours of duty both with and without school-aged children. Perhaps what made the situation even more unique was that the researcher's husband's civilian job was that of a commercial airline pilot making frequent absences, and the weaving of life with him and life without him, common prior to deployment. The researcher, as well as the researcher's family, had already adjusted to frequent spousal/parent absences and the establishment of roles with and without the spouse/parent present prior to the deployment. This lifestyle of frequent spousal absences within civilian family life was typically seen as more identifiable with the active duty component than with the reserve component.

The researcher had two fundamental beliefs regarding deployment and the effects on children. The first belief was that the attitude of the non-deployed parent greatly influenced the positive and/or negative effects of the absence on the children. "If the non-deploying parent maintains a positive attitude and models effective coping skills, most likely the child will do the same" (Virginia Joint Services, 2003, p. 18). The second belief was that frequent and/or prolonged absences could have some positive impacts on children, some of which followed:

- fostered maturity;

- induced growth;

- encouraged independence;

- encouraged flexibility;

- built skills for adjusting to separations and losses faced later in life; and

- strengthened family bonds (Virginia Joint Services, 2003, p. 17).

These beliefs aligned with those of a social constructivist epistemology. "They are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives" (Creswell, 2007, p. 21).

Theoretical Framework

Utilizing a social constructivist epistemology, the theoretical framework used for this qualitative study was further developed. The case study of maternal deployment was viewed through the theoretical perspective lens of ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity. The researcher chose ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity as the theoretical framework because the researcher wanted to explore the *perceptions* of the participants. The researcher was not so much interested in what happened during the deployment as much as how the participants *perceived* what happened. Boss' (2002) Boundary Ambiguity and Ambiguous Loss Model (see Figure 2.2) illustrated how every military family experienced ambiguous loss (stressor) during deployment; however, what distinguished whether the ambiguous loss became a crisis or not was how the family perceived the loss. Boss stated (2002), "When there is ambiguity regarding a family member's presence or absence in the family system, the situation is called *ambiguous loss*. How the family interprets or perceives this situation of ambiguous loss is called boundary ambiguity, and it is a risk factor or barrier to the management of stress" (p. 95).

"Ambiguous Loss Theory" was a type of family stress termed by Boss (1999) that identified the loss or absence of a family member or loved one that evoked emotional uncertainty and ambiguity in the family (p. 7). Boss identified two types of ambiguous loss:

Type One occurs when there is physical absence and psychological presence. These include situations when a loved one is physically missing or bodily gone. Catastrophic examples of such ambiguous losses include kidnapping and missing bodies in the context of war, terrorism ethnic cleansing, genocide, or natural disasters such as earthquake, flood, and tsunami. More common examples of this type of ambiguous loss are situations of absent parents due to divorce, giving up a baby to adoption, and physical contact with parents and siblings due to immigration. (p. 8)

In **Type Two**, there is physical presence and psychological absence. In this type of ambiguous loss, the person is psychologically absent-- that is, emotionally or cognitively missing. Such ambiguous loss can occur from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias; traumatic brain injury; AIDS, autism, depression, addiction, or other chronic mental or physical illnesses that take a loved one's mind or memory away. (p. 9)

Boss credited Hill (1958) as her mentor and the first person to conceptualize family stress theory (Boss, 2002, p. 31). Hill's ABC-X model of family stress formulated after the Great Depression and still used in adapted form by family therapists today was the foundation of Boss' Ambiguous Loss Theory. Hill's theory (1958) used the following variables:

A—the provoking event or stressor

B—the family's crisis-meeting resources

C—the definition the family makes of the event

X—stress and crisis. (p. 141)

17

In addition, Hill's 1949 study on World War II soldiers and their families also influenced Boss in her research on boundary ambiguity. Hill found that families who partially closed their boundaries when reassigning household duties and relationships with the deployed family member coped with the deployment better than those who kept the boundaries open. Families who completely closed their boundaries coped well during deployment, but did not acclimate well after the soldier returned home. Especially in reserve component families who were not used to a parent being deployed, not knowing what to expect, or how roles would change in their household, created stress. Boss and Greenberg (1984) reported that boundary ambiguity more than the stressor itself caused negative impacts on family.

Hill combined the deficiency in family organization resources (B factor) with the tendency to define hardships as crisis-producing (C factor) into one concept of family inadequacy and applied it to Koos' (1948) polygon wheel depicting how a stressor event, contributing hardships, and family resources produced a family crisis. Figure 2.1 shows the linear representation of Hill's ABC-X model

Figure 2.1 Koos' Polygon Wheel
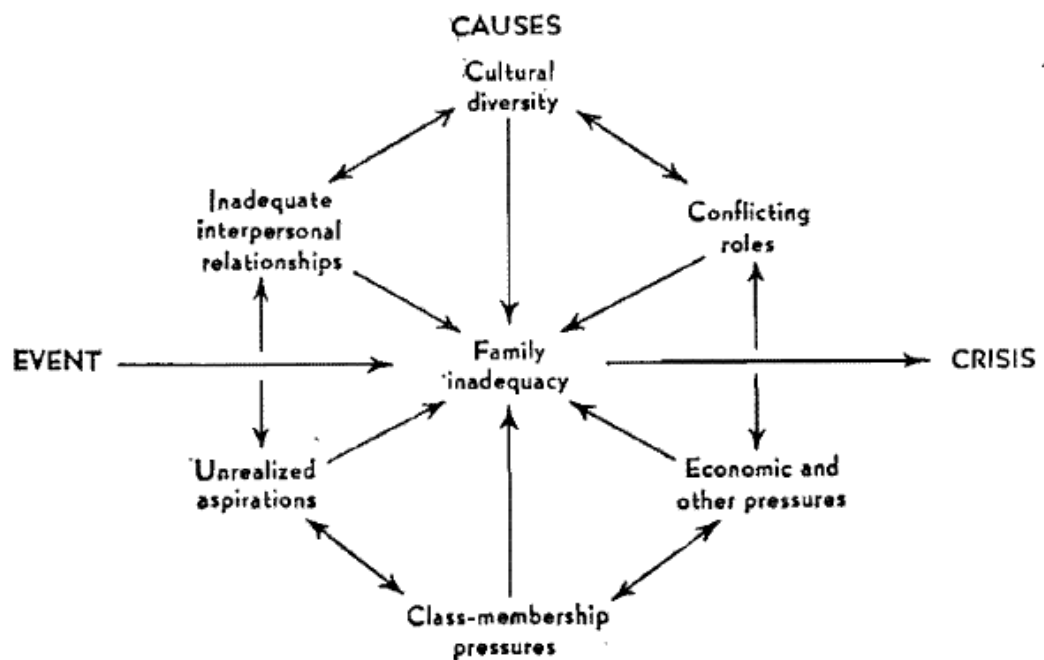
Boss (2002) modified Hill's model, which could be used to conceptualize the family stress of military families in the context of boundary ambiguity.

A—the provoking event or stressor/ambiguous loss (deployment)

B—the families' resources or strengths at the time of the event

C—the meaning attached to the event by the family/perceptions (boundary ambiguity)

X—stress and crisis (p. 96).

Figure 2.2 Boss' Boundary Ambiguity and Ambiguous Loss Model
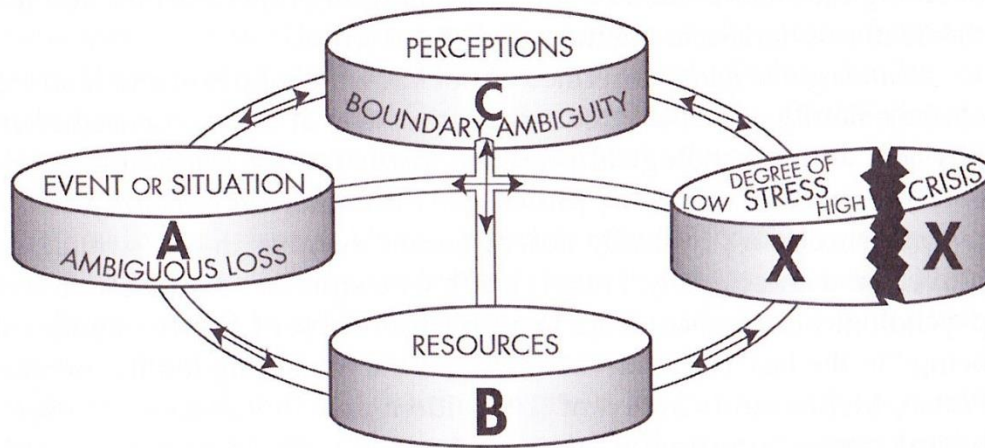
Research applying Boss' Ambiguous Loss Theory showed that deployment of a family member in a military family was a major stress factor for military children and caused emotional uncertainty and ambiguity in the family (Faber, Willerton, Clymer, Macdermid and Weiss, 2008: Huebner et. al, 2007). A quantitative study guided by Boss' ambiguous loss framework titled *Parental deployment and youth in military families: Exploring uncertainty and ambiguous loss* focused on military children from a number of military components who attended a National Military Family Association camp and whose parent had been deployed. The children, aged 12-18, were studied as a family system that reorganized itself in response to the absence of a key

family member. The objective was to explore outcomes that impeded successful adolescent development. Researchers studied youth responses and reported four response themes: overall perception of uncertainty and loss, boundary ambiguity (not knowing who was in or out of the family or relationship), changes in mental health, and relationship conflict (Huebner et al., 2007).

Faber et al. (2008) conducted a study titled *Ambiguous Absence, Ambiguous Presence: A Qualitative Study of Military Reserve Families in Wartime* in which they proposed the following research questions: "(a) What is the longitudinal course of ambiguous loss for military families in the reserve component? and (b) How and with what results do military families in the reserve component cope with ambiguous loss over time?" (p. 223). The researchers found that military families experienced ambiguous loss prior to the family member leaving and ambiguous presence prior to the reintegration process. The extent that the families closed their boundaries was related to the ambiguity they were feeling about the deployment.

Military Families and Deployments

Since World War II, countries involved in wars have increased from about five countries per year to over 30 countries per year (Bellamy, 2004). This equated to more people than ever being affected by the global influence of war.

One of the earliest studies on military families was Hill's 1949 study of post-World War II family reintegration that led to family stress theory. Hill combined interviews with questionnaires in an effort to establish the factors that affected the patterns of family adjustment to separation and reunion. Similar to Boss' (1999) findings about ambiguous loss theory and the opening and closing of boundaries, Hill reported good adjustment to the crisis of separation involved the following:

Closing of ranks, shifting of responsibilities and activities of the father to other members, continuing the family routines, maintaining husband-wife and father-child relationships by correspondence and visits, utilizing the resources, relatives, and neighbors, and carrying on plans for reunion. (p. 82)

Hill continued that good adjustment to reunion involved "…the attainment of a working dynamic equilibrium in which reorganization of roles into complementary patterns has been satisfactorily reallocated, and the emotional strains and stresses of readjustment have not left serious scars on family relations" (p. 97). Conversely, poor adjustments were made by those families "…who were unable to reorganize to meet the demands of the new situations, or who suffered extreme emotional maladjustment or nervous breakdown" (p. 84).

In the 1970s, the focus of family social scientists moved from being more concerned about family failures to family successes (Boss, 2002). In the 1970s, researchers at the Center for Prisoner of War Studies addressed how families "…remained strong, coped, and survived…they were able to provide information on how to strengthen vulnerable families before or after the occurrence of stressful events such as father absence, war, imprisonment, terrorism, or a father missing in action" (Boss, 2002, p. 72).

More recently, researchers emphasized stages of deployment and family responses during each stage. Norwood, Fullerton, and Hagen (1996) presented a three-part model of anticipation, separation, and reunion. Mateczun and Holmes (1996) added to the reunion phase return, readjustment, and reintegration emphasizing that the reunion time was also a time of renegotiation for the family and often created dysfunction. This again emphasized Hill's (1949) and Boss' (1999) theories about being open, partially open, or closed to the deployed member's absence and presence. Finally, Pincus, House, Christenson, and Adler (2001) described the five

stages during extended military separations: pre-deployment, deployment, sustainment, redeployment, and post-deployment. Essential to mastering these stages successfully were that family members understood and coped with each stage before the next stage took place.

In addition to mastering the stages of deployment, the length of deployment may have also impacted role adjustment among military families:

Rohall and colleagues compared two groups of U.S. Army enlisted soldiers stationed in Suwon, Osan, and Kunson air bases in Korea, one designated as a "high operational tempo" group (deployed for 19 months at time of survey and three times since the end of the Persian Gulf War – these soldiers were also given less warning before the separation) and another as a "low operational tempo" group (deployed for 7 months at time of survey and twice since the end of the Persian Gulf War). They found that those soldiers in the low operational tempo group reported better family adjustment (e.g., an ability to manage home routines) than those in the high operational tempo group, suggesting that length of deployment impacts a family's ability to adjust to the separation…(Rohall et al., 1999). To our knowledge, there are no studies examining the impact of the present long and frequent deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan on service members' families. In general, many of these deployments are high operational tempo, suggesting a potentially greater negative impact on families. However, to date there are no studies on whether this is consistent with the experiences of families today, and whether and how the deployment impact differs by service branch or component. (Chandra, Burns, Tanielian, Jaycox, & Scott, 2008, p. 10)

Boss' theory of Ambiguous Loss and Boundary Ambiguity drew special attention when understanding how families coped with not only the deployment stage, but also the pre-

22

deployment and post-deployment stages as well. The more open families were to reassigning family roles and adjusting to the psychological absence/physical presence or physical absence/psychological presence, the more insulated the families were to the dysfunction of deployments.

Reserve Component Deployments

"Weekend Warriors," "Armchair Soldiers," "not the *real* military"--these were all once descriptors for the reserve components of the United States military. Over the past decade, however, the reserve component of the military became a viable, operationally-ready force that fought side-by-side with the active duty military. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs McGinnis (2012) stated:

> The value of the Nation's National Guard and Reserve has been fully demonstrated as they served side-by-side with their Active Component counterparts for over a decade of war. Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, on November 8, 2011 stated, "Whether engaged in domestic support missions or serving on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, the men and women of today's National Guard have proven themselves to be an extremely effective operational force over a decade of great demand." He also went on to say "A decade of war has honed the Guard into an effective, lethal, fighting force, and it would be a tremendous mistake, in my view, to put that capability back on the shelf." These comments apply equally to the Federal Reserve as well. (Department of Defense, 2012d, Forward)

Although most communities had a National Guard Armory located in or near them, many people had no idea what it meant to be in the reserve component of the military. Although there were technically three components to the total reserve manpower (Ready Reserve, Standby

Reserve, and Retired Reserve), when talking about the "reserves" most people were talking about the Ready Reserves which encompassed the "Reserve" units and the "National Guard" units. The following branches of the U.S. Armed Forces had components in the Ready Reserves: Army National Guard of the United States, U.S. Army Reserve, U.S. Navy Reserve, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard of the United States, U.S. Air Force Reserve, and U.S. Coast Guard Reserve (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2005).

Perhaps the easiest way to discern the differences between the reserve components of the military and the active duty components was to talk about when the soldiers "wore their uniforms". "Active Duty" soldiers typically lived close to a major military installation and wore their uniforms to work every day. "Traditional Reservists" were soldiers who wore their uniforms a minimum of one weekend a month (drill) and two weeks in the summer (annual training). The rest of the time, the soldiers worked their civilian jobs. Many times traditional Reservists lived a long way from any type of military installation and simply drove to drill each month. Traditional Reservists were "mobilized" to active duty by either their governor (National Guard) or the President of the United States (Reserve) in times of crisis. If this happened, the soldiers received "Active Duty Orders" detailing their missions (this often led to deployment). The Traditional Reservists were then required to take leave from their civilian jobs and wear their uniforms to their assigned military jobs every day. In addition to the Traditional Guard/Reserve, there were also "Full-Time Guard/Reserve" positions. Soldiers who were on full-time Guard/Reserve status were in charge of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing or training as their full-time job for the reserve component. Full-time Guard/Reserve soldiers were in the reserve component; however, the reserve component was their full-time job that they not only did one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer, but also did the rest

of the month/year, too. Full-time Guard/Reserve soldiers wore their uniforms every day and

typically lived near a military installation (Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, 2005).

With the mission of the reserve component being expanded to more foreign theaters, the

Guard and Reserve struggled to meet the needs of diverse soldiers and their families as they

deployed and returned home. Several factors made reserve component deployments particularly

taxing on families. While active duty military families were accustomed to frequent changes of

duty stations and soldier absences all within the confines of military culture, when reserve

component soldiers were "activated," soldiers were pulled from civilian culture, dropped into

military culture for 6-18 months, and then assimilated back into civilian culture. In the

meantime, their family members were often caught between civilian and military culture without

the support of a military community or military installation within reasonable distance. Children

of single parents or dual-military parents might have to change schools to live with the primary

caregiver appointed in the Family Care Plan; military insurance (Tricare) must be navigated to

ensure family doctors are within network; roles that the soldier held within the family, such as

paying bills, changing the oil in the car, renewing insurance policies, attending parent/teacher

conferences, mowing the lawn, and Christmas shopping, must be reassigned; and the constant

worry of whether or not the soldier was safe, coupled with, oftentimes, unreliable lines of

communication could frequently be enough to send non-deploying family members into turmoil.

To assist with the family transition when a soldier (active duty or reserve) deployed,

soldiers must have a Family Care Plan in place. When a married soldier, whose spouse was the

biological parent of the soldier's children, deployed, the primary caregiver was automatically the

soldier's spouse. Soldiers who met the following criteria were required to have written

documentation of a Family Care Plan on file that ensured adequate care for the soldier's dependents:

- single parents,

- dual-member couples with dependents,

- married with custody or joint custody of a child whose non-custodial biological or adoptive parent was not the current spouse of the Member, or who otherwise bear sole responsibility for the care of children under the age of 19 or for others unable to care for themselves in the absence of the Member,

- primarily responsible for dependent family members (Department of Defense, 2010a).

Service members who did not fit into any of these categories might have also wanted to develop a Family Care Plan, as well. The primary caregiver specified in a Family Care Plan must have met the following Department of Defense (2010a) definition:

Individual who is not a Member, is at least 21 years of age, is capable of self-care and care of children or other dependent family members, and who agrees, preferably in writing, to care for one or more family members during a Member's absence for indefinite periods to ensure the Member is available for worldwide duties. (p. 13)

A review of past literature revealed little about the phenomena of reserve component deployments until the past several years. Faber et al. (2008) conducted a qualitative study researching ambiguous absence and ambiguous presence in Reserve families. They found that during deployment all family members experienced boundary ambiguity, but it went away after the reservist returned home and especially after the reservist returned to work.

A study about reserve component members from the first Gulf War by Benotsch, Brailey, Vasterling, Uddo, Constans & Sutker (2000) noted that the more time that elapsed after the

26

deployment was over resulted in increased emotional distress by the reserve component member and decreased resources available to deal with the stress. This indicated that future longitudinal studies of the reserve component families were needed. More recently, Gorman, Blow, Ames, and Reed (2011) did a study on mental health services and treatments after National Guard deployments. They reported that 40% of National Guard members and 34% of their significant others met screening criteria for one or more mental health problems.

A review of literature pertaining to prior research investigating the reserve component revealed that there were many gaps in the study of reserve component members and their families, and that there were no studies found that focused primarily on female reserve component soldiers, and even more specifically, maternal reserve component deployments, which indicated that this topic was an area in need of further study.

Maternal Deployments

Through 1974 women with children had either been exempted from active duty or involuntarily released from active duty if they became pregnant or assumed parenting roles. The Persian Gulf War was the first official combat engagement when mothers with children were mobilized (Bergenheier, 1995). Since then, although the number of deployed women continued to rise, little was known about how the maternal absence affected children differently from the paternal absence. Of the few studies conducted, there were conflicting sentiments concerning the effects on children of mothers being deployed. A study by Applewhite and Mays (1996) indicated that of 19 veterans and their families, separation from the mother during infancy created a fear that the mother may not return, but the fear was time-limited based upon the mother's return. In contrast, separation from the father did not create the same fear as long as the non-deployed mother insulated the child from her own anxiety and fears. Although anxiety,

depression, aggressive behavior and phobias were observed during the parents' deployments, these were not conceived as different depending on the gender of the parent deployed. The study concluded that children who were separated from their mothers for extended periods of time were not affected psychosocially any more than those separated from fathers.

Kelley, Herzog-Simmer, and Harris (1994) studied 118 U.S. Navy deploying mothers' responses on the Parenting Stress Index, the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale, the Parenting Dimensions Inventory, and on two subscales of the Family Environment Scale. The responses showed that children with deployed mothers were more likely to score higher levels of internalizing behavior than Navy children with non-deployed mothers or civilian counterparts. Mothers reported significantly higher levels of parenting stress and more sensitivity to children when they were anticipating deployment than those who were not.

Another study, conducted by Pierce, Vinokur, and Buck (1998), of deployed Air Force mothers with children during Operation Desert Storm found children of these deployed mothers experienced a number of psychological and social issues during deployment. Using a structural equation modeling approach, the researchers found that the main predictors of children's adjustment problems at the time of the war were as follows:

> Mothers' difficulties in providing for the care of the children, mothers' deployment in the theater of the war (versus deployment elsewhere), and degree of change in children's lives. Most important, war-related adjustment problems were not related to children's adjustment 2 years later, suggesting that the effects of maternal separation during the war were transient. (p. 1)

Once again, the reviewed literature found was limited to active duty mothers demonstrating a need for more research on reserve component mothers. In addition, the research

indicated that any challenges shown immediately following the deployment were not seen as long-term behaviors. This indicated the need for more longitudinal research as well as research on multiple deployments and the effects on the reserve component families.

Parental Deployments' Effects on School-Age Children

Today's U.S. military all-volunteer service members were more likely to be married and have children than ever before. In support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) over 2.1 million American men and women in uniform deployed and approximately 44% of these men and women were parents with almost 50% deploying more than once (Department of Defense, 2010b). These lengthy and multiple deployments placed particular burden on the children and support group that the service member left behind. In the March 2005 Survey of Active-Duty Military, conducted by the Defense Manpower Data Center, it was reported that, "Only 6% of the active-duty members responding to the survey actively disagreed with the following statement: 'Deployments increase the likelihood of problems at school.' Nearly one-third strongly agreed with that statement" (Question 57). As schools were often one of few constants that remained in the children's lives, it was useful to study how the parental absence affected the educational experience.

In a study of 383 children aged 3-12 and their non-deployed parent during Operation Desert Storm, children of deployed and non-deployed personnel were compared cross-sectionally, as well as longitudinally with their non-deployed counterparts. More than half of children with deployed parents were reported to have experienced sadness and behavioral problems at home; however, deployment was found to only mildly increase children's psychological symptoms, but most often the increase did not reach a clinical level of the symptoms (Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996).

Conversely, a more recent study with school-age children aged 5-12 of deployed parents serving during OEF/OIF found "one-third of military children at 'high risk' for psychosocial morbidity. The most significant predictor of child psychosocial functioning during wartime deployment was parenting stress" (Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009, p. 271). Internalizing behaviors were also more commonly observed than externalizing behaviors, and the reported level of psychological distress experienced by children was twice as high as the national normative scores (p. 277).

The period between childhood and adulthood could cause adolescents to be particularly susceptible to deployment-related stress. Still dependent on their parents emotionally and financially, adolescents also found themselves wanting more independence. Adolescents who were already struggling with their own identities could find particular stress when dealing with boundary ambiguity due to the absence of a parent. Orthner and Rose's (2005) study titled *Adjustment of Army Children to Deployment Separations* found:

- About half of Army children cope well with deployments.

- Over one-third (37%) of children seriously worry about what could happen to their deployed parent.

- Depression and school problems occur in about one in five children.

- Parent resilience is the best predictor of children's coping with deployment. (p. 1)

A study by Huebner & Mancini (2005) used the ABC-X model of Adjustment and Adaptation to study how adolescents adjusted to military deployment. Their study found similar themes as their younger counterparts about stressors caused by deployment:

- Adolescents demonstrate a great deal of resiliency when it comes to dealing with changes in their daily lives. Though deployment was a negative event in their lives, adolescents exhibited numerous adaptive responses.

- In many cases, the adolescents demonstrated great maturity as they willingly took on more responsibilities at home. Many referred to themselves as becoming another parent for younger siblings.

- Family support for the parent remaining at home is important to these adolescents as evidenced by their attempts to protect them (usually their mothers) and other siblings from negative emotions and stress.

- Adolescents' daily routines usually changed as a result of deployment. Some reported having to miss extra-curricular activities or programs because of transportation or financial issues.

- Many adolescents reported behavior changes when a parent is deployed. These included changes in school performance as well as symptoms consistent with depression.

- Adolescents who felt supported by others seemed to exhibit enhanced resiliency, that is, their personal coping skills were complemented by support. (p. 4)

Though an exciting time, a deployed parent's return could also be very stressful for adolescents because having a deployed parent back often meant significant readjustment to the boundaries which the family had become accustomed. During the deployment, many adolescents took over some of the household responsibilities left when the deployed parent leaves. When the deployed parent returned home, these roles needed to be renegotiated. The researchers also found:

School personnel also commented that many teachers and counselors are not prepared to deal with deployment issues among the military students. These findings suggest that parents need to be better prepared to handle the stresses after a deployed parent returns. School personnel also need special training. (Mmari, Roche, Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2009, p. 455)

As with most of the other literature examined for this review, the study participants were not limited to reserve component families, nor were the focuses on children with mothers who deployed. However, the current literature did provide a sound foundation for study of how when a family member left, ambiguity did cause readjustment and family stress.

Synthesis of Research

Dating from one of the earliest studies on military families by Hill (1949), researchers have suspected that the ambiguous loss perceived by family members during deployments have an effect on the roles that family members assumed when a family member deployed. Whether or not the family responded positively or negatively to the deployment depended upon how family members perceived boundary ambiguity. Research applying Boss' boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss model by Huebner et al. (2007) reported that the deployment of a family member in a military family caused an overall perception of uncertainty and loss. However, Huebner's et al. study did not include reserve component families.

Faber et al. (2008) also applied Boss' boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss model to military families and limited the study to reserve component families. Faber's et al. study reported the perception of boundary ambiguity among reservist family members during deployment went away after the reservist returned home and especially after the reservist returned to work. However, Benotsch et al. (2000) noted that the more time that elapsed after the

32

deployment, the more emotional distress the reservist began to perceive. While emotional

distress was increasing, the resources available to the reservist from the military were also

decreasing as the soldier transitioned back into civilian life. Although both of these studies

recognized the reserve component as a unique subgroup of the military, neither considered the

distinctive characteristics of maternal reserve component deployments.

The lack of studies associated with maternal deployments in general impeded the

understanding of how maternal deployments were perceived by families of reserve component

mothers. Studies by Kelley, Herzog-Simmer, and Harris (1994); as well as Pierce, Vinokur, and

Buck (1998) both pointed to significantly higher levels of parenting stress and children's

adjustment problems; however, neither reported experiences of reserve component mothers, nor

were the research designs centered on ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity. As reported by

Galinsky, Aumann, and Bond (2011), because mothers in the United States have continued to

maintain the role of primary caregivers of children, it was important to study who took on the

mothers' roles when they were not there.

Multiple studies (Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009; Huebner & Mancini, 2005;

Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996) investigating how parental deployments affected school-age

children have supported that ambiguity caused family stress. Although studies (Mmari, Roche,

Sudhinaraset, & Blum, 2009; Orthner & Rose, 2005) reported that changes in children's

behaviors and grades in school were an outcome of deployment, no studies about the educational

experiences of reserve component children have been done.

Research supported that deployments caused ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity in

all military families. According to research, ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity manifested

in both positive and/or negative ways depending on the perceptions of family members. Some of

the ways ambiguous loss and boundary ambiguity would manifest in military children were through changes (typically negative) in behavior and/or grades at school. What lacked in the research were studies that specifically targeted maternal reserve component families and how they perceived their roles and the roles of others in the educational experiences of the children.

Summary

Chapter 2 discussed the theoretical perspective of Boss' Ambiguous Loss and Boundary Ambiguity. Following the theoretical framework, a review of the literature was completed and arranged within the following themes: military families and deployments, reserve component deployments, maternal deployments, and parental deployment's effects on school-age children. Key points identified from the review of the literature included differences between reserve component deployments and active duty deployments, ways school-age children were affected by deployment, ways the attitude of the non-deploying parent affected how the children responded to the deployment, and ways reserve component spouses reported that the support their children received from caregivers and schools was key to the successful adjustment to the deployment. Finally, a synthesis of the research was presented demonstrating alignment to the research questions and to the theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 - Methods

Chapter 3 detailed the research methods used for this qualitative case study of maternal reserve component deployments. Through the theoretical framework of Boss' Ambiguous Loss and Boundary Ambiguity Theory, the study addressed the effects of a mother's deployment on her school-age children. This chapter was divided into nine sections: (a) research questions, (b) research design, (c) case selection, (d) data collection, (e) data analysis, (f) validation, (g) ethical considerations, (h) role of researcher, and (i) summary.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding educational experiences during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. There were two overarching questions asked by this study:

- What were the perceptions of reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers in regard to their roles in the educational experiences of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments?

- How did reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers perceive boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss in their children's educational experiences when a reserve component mother deployed?

Research Design

This research was designed using a qualitative multiple case study, as defined by Creswell (2007):

…research (that) involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system…in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving ***multiple sources of information*** (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case ***description*** and case-based themes. (p. 73)

This study fit Creswell's definition of qualitative multiple case study. The participants in this study were part of multiple bounded systems identified as families of maternal reserve component military members. The cases were studied using multiple sources of information that included surveys, documents, and interviews. Finally, at the conclusion of the study, narrative case descriptions and themes were reported.

A qualitative research design for this research supported the overarching questions, "What were the perceptions of reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers in regard to their roles in the educational experiences of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments?" as well as "How did reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers perceive boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss in their children's educational experiences when a reserve component mother deployed?" because the subjects were studied "in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). In addition to supporting the overarching research questions, a qualitative case study was best used in this instance because of the lack of previous research on this subject. Creswell (2002) said, "This exploration is needed because little existing research exists on the topic or because the issue is complex and its complexity needs to be better understood" (p. 62).

The research was conducted from a social constructivist worldview. In this worldview, "Researchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they 'position themselves' in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, and, historical experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 21).

Case Selection

Criterion sampling was used to garner the participants for this study and ensure participants met the minimum requirements of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Prior to beginning the study, the researcher had intended to use maximum variation to ensure that participants represented a wide range of experiences related to maternal reserve component deployments. However, upon giving the initial surveys, the researcher determined that the sample size would be too small to utilize maximum variation sampling.

For each case study, the researcher chose to interview the reserve component mother, child(ren), and primary caregiver. The researcher focused on how these participants perceived role acquisition and loss related to the educational experiences of the child. For example, if the mother had always been responsible for communicating with the student's teachers, when the mother deployed, who (if anyone) acquired the role of communicator?

Because the study focused on educational experiences, the researcher considered also interviewing the child(ren)'s teachers. However, the researcher determined that in Boss' (2002) Boundary Ambiguity and Ambiguous Loss Model—ABC-X (see figure 2.2), teachers fit into the description of "B", a *resource* contributing to how the reserve component mothers, children, and primary caregivers perceived boundary ambiguity. This description asserts that teachers would most likely not actually be part of the reassignment of roles held by the reserve component mother prior to the deployment, but would instead be a resource contributing to the

reassignments. The participants involved in the reassignment of roles would be those who fit into the description of "A", experiencing ambiguous loss. The researcher determined that the perceptions of the reserve component mothers, children, and primary caregivers would most allow the research to focus on maximum role acquisition and loss. A future study focused on the role of teachers in the educational experiences of reserve component children could address the role teachers.

Based on Creswell's recommendation of not including more than four or five case studies in a single study, four total cases were used (2007). Each of the cases met the following criteria:

1. Mother had deployed within the past year.

2. Mother was the primary care-giver of school-aged children, 5-18.

3. Mother was a member of either the Army National Guard or Army Reserve.

4. Mother's deployment was at least a year in length.

The first criterion was in place to ensure the deployment was fresh in the minds of the participants, and the second was in place to meet the parameters of the overarching questions. The last two criteria were less obvious, but essential to study. Although there have been no known studies examining the effects of length of deployment on children, Chandra's et. al (2008) study discussed in Chapter 2, as well as the researcher's personal experiences encompassing over five deployments, warranted adding the criterion of a year-long deployment to the study. Adding the year-long deployment criterion also made it necessary to add the criterion that the participants were members of the Army National Guard or Army Reserves as the Army was the only military service that mandated year-long deployments.

After initial approval by the Kansas State University dissertation proposal committee and Institutional Review Board (IRB), the researcher contacted the Kansas National Guard

Assistance Office for help identifying participants for the study as well as to get assistance in navigating the Army's research guidelines. The Assistance Office assisted in identifying a unit that had recently returned from a year-long deployment and suggested contacting the company commander for that unit. It was determined that it would be beneficial to garner all case study participants from one unit to maintain consistency in the overall deployment scenario. After contacting the company commander, who then had the researcher contact the Officer in Charge (OIC), permission was granted to attend a drill weekend event to speak to potential participants. Of the 285 total soldiers who deployed with the identified unit, 47 soldiers were female. Eighteen of the females had children meeting the criterion of school-age children (5-18 years old). Seven of the females had attached to the identified unit on a temporary basis for deployment purposes and had already been reassigned back to their home units prior to the study. Eleven of the 47 females who deployed met the criteria and were eligible for the study. Seven females voluntarily met with the researcher and filled out the "Preliminary Questionnaire to all Potential Military Participants". It is unknown why the other four eligible participants did not meet with the researcher. During this time, the researcher explained the purpose for the study. In addition to ensuring that all women felt invited to the study, this step also helped build trust and credibility with the group by giving them the researcher's military background and experiences (Creswell, 2007). Although the researcher had prior experience with Reserve Components through her husband's service, the researcher did not know any of the potential participants or have prior information about any of the potential participants.

Upon scanning the questionnaires, one of the potential participants was in basic training and Advanced Initial Training (AIT) during the deployment. This disqualified the individual because she was only gone for eight months. Another potential participant had a child who was

five years old during the deployment; however, the child was not in school, so this potential participant was also disqualified. This left five participants who met the criteria, which was within Creswell's (2007) recommendation.

Upon contacting the participants after the preliminary meeting to set up an interview time, one of the participants did not return the researcher's phone calls or emails. After a month of attempting to contact the participant, the participant sent the researcher a text message indicating that she was no longer interested in participating in the study because her family was too busy. This left the following four mothers/soldiers, their children, and the primary caregivers as the participants in the case studies:

Case Study 1

Mother/Soldier (M1)—

- Second deployment
- Legally separated from husband (step-father) during deployment, then divorced after returning home
- Job prior to deployment was full-time as a technician in the Army National Guard (wore uniform every day)

Child (C1)—

- Age 15-16 at time of deployment (age 17 at time of interview, junior)
- Moved to a different state to live with first primary caregiver
- Attended a different school, sophomore
- Moved back at the end of the school year to prepare for Mother's (M1) homecoming, lived with second primary caregiver
- Had trouble with step-father, moved in with third primary caregiver

*Primary Caregiver (*PC1)—

- Third primary caregiver for child (C1) during same deployment

- Relative of M1 and C1

*Primary Caregivers 1 and 2 from Case Study 1 did not return requests for interviews.

Case Study 2

Mother/Soldier (M2)—

- Third deployment

- Job prior to deployment as an LPN and nursing student

- Single mom

Child (C2)—

- Age 15-16 at time of deployment (age 16 at time of interview, sophomore)

- Moved to a different state to live with primary caregiver

- Attended a different school, freshman

Primary Caregiver (PC2)—

- Relative of M2 and C2

Case Study 3

Mother/Soldier (M3)—

- First deployment

- Job prior to deployment full-time, active Army National Guard (wore uniform every day)

- Married

Child (C3)—

- Age 16-17 at time of deployment (age 17 at time of interview, senior)

- Stayed in same home during mother's deployment

- Attended same school, junior

Primary Caregiver (PC3)—

- Relative of M3 and C3

Case Study 4

Mother/Soldier (M4)—

- First deployment

- Job prior to deployment English as Second Language paraprofessional

- Single

Child (C4a)—

- Age 13-14 at time of deployment (age 15 at time of interview, freshman)

- Moved to a different state

- Attended different school, 8th grade

Child (C4b)—

- Age 10-11 at time of deployment (age 12 at time of interview, 6th grade)

- Moved to a different state

- Attended different school, 5th grade

Primary Caregiver (PC4)—

- Relative of M4, C4a and C4b

Data Collection

The preliminary questionnaire consisted of the following criterion-based questions to ensure that all cases met the qualifications for the study (Creswell, 2007):

- When was your last deployment?

- How old is(are) your child(ren)?

- What grade(s) is(are) your child(ren)?

- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your deployment experience? (1=Terrible Experience; 5=Okay Experience; 10=Great Experience)

- Would you be willing to participate in a study on the effects of maternal deployment on school-age children?

Although the question "On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your deployment experience?" was not a criterion question, it was needed to get a more diverse perspective of the deployment experience had the researcher had to use maximum variation to limit the study to four or five cases. Had there been more participants, maximum variation would have been utilized by choosing two participants who rated the deployment low, two who rated the deployment high, and one who rated the deployment in the middle. To ensure corroboration, multiple sources of data were collected including interviews and documents (Creswell, 2007). Surveys were also given to help interpret and describe the cases.

Interviews. Depending on the dynamics of the family, the researcher interviewed 3-4 people per soldier involved: the soldier/mother, child(ren), and designated caregiver during the soldier/mother absence (see Appendices I, J, K). There were three interviews per case unless there were more than one child. Case Study 4 was the only case with more than one child. This equated to 13 study participants. The soldier/mother interviews took between one to two hours. The children's interviews took between half an hour to one hour. Finally, the designated caregiver interviews also took between half an hour to one hour.

Rubin and Rubin's (2005) "responsive interviewing model" was used to develop the interview structure. There were five characteristics of the responsive interviewing model:

1. Interviewing is about obtaining interviewees' interpretations of their experiences and their understanding of the world in which they live and work.

2. The personality, style, and beliefs of the interviewer matter.

3. Because responsive interviews depend on a personal relationship between interviewer and interviewee and because that relationship may result in the exchange of private information or information dangerous to the interviewee, the interviewer incurs serious ethical obligations to protect the interviewee.

4. Interviewers should not impose their views on interviewees.

5. Responsive interviewing design is flexible and adaptive. (p. 36)

To achieve a "responsive interview" the researcher asked open-ended questions designed around the educational experiences of the children. By digitally recording the interviews, the researcher was free to engage the interviewee with eye contact, positive feedback through body language, and affirming verbal cues. The researcher emphasized both before and after the interview that confidentiality was of utmost concern to the researcher. Because of the researcher's prior experiences with the military, the researcher was cognizant of not letting her own personal experiences influence the perceptions of the interviewee. Although the researcher was careful to standardize all of the interviews for consistency, based upon responses to the standardized questions the researcher also adapted the interviews to the personal experiences of the interviewees to get the clearest and most accurate picture of the interviewees' perspectives.

The structure of the interview mixed three types of questions: main, follow-up, and probes (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 2005). Main questions were completely standardized among the

44

participants and were used to gather the overall experience of the interviewees. Follow-up

questions built on what the interviewees said and helped the researcher to attain a deeper

understanding of the interviewees' answer. Probing questions were used to flesh out narratives

and stories to illustrate the interviewees' perceptions. Interview questions were formulated

through an examination of the literature as well as by using Rubin and Rubin's guidance, which

stated, "You need to translate your research puzzle into one or several main questions that your

interviewees can answer more easily based on their experiences" (p. 152). All interviews were

digitally recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Detailed field notes were kept during and after

the interviews primarily for follow-up questions. All participants were given an informed

consent form (see Appendix B) as well as a minor consent form (see Appendix C) for children

under 18. Participants were informed that they could choose to no longer participate in the study

at any time. In addition, all participants were given a debriefing statement (see Appendix H) that

indicated that all members of the military and their families were entitled to free, confidential

counseling.

Documents. Case study participants were asked to provide any documents that they

created, accessed, or used to gather, exchange, or communicate information before, during, or

after the deployment. The document sources were in the forms of report cards from schools;

artwork exchanged between the mother/soldiers and the children; Facebook and email messages

from and to the mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers; as well as informational

pamphlets, schedules, and handouts from the Yellow Ribbon Ceremonies (see Appendix J). For

documentation purposes, the original documents were copied and identifiable information

erased.

To protect the data collected, Creswell's principles (2007) were used for storing data:

- Always develop backup copies of computer files (Davidson, 1996).

- Use high-quality tapes for audio-recording information during interviews. Also make sure that the size of the tapes fits the transcriber's machine.

- Develop a master list of types of information gathered.

- Protect the anonymity of participants by masking their names in the data (2007, p. 142).

Document data were studied to determine communication or lack of communication between mothers/soldiers, primary caretakers, and child(ren), as well as academic and behavioral progress.

Surveys. Two surveys were given to the mother/soldiers and one survey was given to other participants prior to their interviews. The first survey, which was only given to the mothers, was the "Preliminary Questionnaire to all Potential Military Participants" (see Appendix K). This survey was given to the mothers to confirm that participants met the criteria of the study. The next surveys, which were given to the mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers, were to better gauge the participants' perceptions of the deployment experience prior to the interview (see Appendices L, M, N). Sapsford (1999) stated, "The most important part of the survey project is prior analysis of the 'question'" (p. 14). Survey questions for this project were developed to assist the researcher in determining if the overarching questions of the study had importance so that "there was maximal chance of the information being useful and used" (p. 16). The surveys also assisted with verifying consistency of responses in the interviews and helped in formulating follow-up questions.

Data Analysis

Before the data were analyzed, a transcriptionist transcribed all interviews verbatim and documents and surveys were organized by case number and participant. The researcher read and organized the data for analysis making notes in the margins where key concepts were located (Creswell, 2007). After the first several reads, the researcher began coding patterns, and then "reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes" looking for tentative themes and patterns (p. 148). Both "direct interpretation of the individual instance" and "aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class" were used (Stake, 1995, p. 74). Finally, the data were entered into tables that assisted in writing the final narrative.

To make every effort to produce an analysis of the highest quality, Yin (1994) presented principles the researcher followed:

1. Showed that the analysis relied on all the relevant evidence;

2. Addressed the most significant aspect of the case study; and

3. Used the researcher's prior, expert knowledge to further the analysis. (p. 20)

The researcher utilized Yin's first principle by coding every word of the participants' interviews into an Excel spreadsheet. The second principle was adhered to by constantly revisiting the research questions of the study. Finally, the researcher applied knowledge gained not only through research, but also through close contact with her major professor to help ensure accurate and high-quality analysis.

Validation

Creswell (2007) used the term "validation" to describe how researchers documented the "accuracy" (p. 207) of their studies. He stated:

47

I use the term "validation" to emphasize a process (see Angen, 2000) rather than "verification" (which has quantitative overtones) or historical words such as "trustworthiness" and "authenticity".…I acknowledge that there are many types of qualitative validation and that authors need to choose the types and terms in which they are comfortable. I recommend that writers reference their validation terms and strategies. (p. 207)

Creswell (2007) suggested eight validation strategies to ensure validity of research:

- "prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field" including: "building trust with participants, learning the culture, and checking for misinformation" (p. 207);

- triangulation;

- peer review;

- revising hypotheses in light of disproving evidence;

- clarifying researcher bias;

- including participants in review of preliminary analysis;

- providing rich, thick, detail for the reader; and

- external audits (pp. 208-9).

Creswell recommended using at least two of the strategies for validation. For this study, the researcher practiced prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field not only through interaction with the research participants, but by also attending the post-deployment events. Validation was accomplished through the use of multiple sources collected including interviews and documents. The researcher sent each participant preliminary results documenting Ambiguous Loss, Boundary Ambiguity, and perceptions of roles in the children's educational experiences for each individual. Participants were told to respond with any questions or

comments they had about the results. The researcher received no comments from participants.

Finally, the researcher provided a "rich, thick, description for the reader" (Creswell, p. 208)

through the unique stories the participants provided regarding pre-deployment, deployment, and

post-deployment experiences. To further ensure the quality of the case study, the researcher

followed Stake's (1995) recommendations provided in the "critique checklist" (see appendix I)

for evaluating a case study report. Stake's checklist was especially utilized during the final

editing process.

Ethical Considerations

All of the participants were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the

American Psychological Association (APA) and Kansas State University Institutional Review

Board (IRB) as well as Department of Defense guidelines (Headquarters, Department of the

Army, 2012). First, a major participant group in this study was minors. As instructed by the

IRB Guidebook, special care was taken to protect their identities in addition to their well-beings.

Furthermore, each child's consent and parental permission (see Appendix A) were obtained

before approving the child for the study (1993, Chapter VI). The researcher also devised age-

appropriate interview questions (see Appendices C and F) based upon the ages of the children.

Second, the researcher was keenly aware of the issues that the Army was having with the mental

health of their soldiers, particularly soldiers who had deployed. The researcher was sensitive to

the fact that the returning soldiers might have felt uncomfortable talking about the deployment

and especially expressing possible negative feelings about their interactions with their children.

A debriefing statement (see Appendix H) containing information about free, confidential military

counseling was included at the end of each interview.

Keeping in mind these possible ethical considerations, everything possible was done to ensure participants were safe and comfortable. Participants were reminded throughout the process that they were able to withdraw from the study at any time.

Role of Researcher

The researcher was a participant-observer in this study. The role of the participant-observer included participating in the field, developing relationships, and observing and gathering data. The researcher established rapport, trust, and communication with the participants so they felt supported and engaged (Merriam, 1998).

As the participant-observer, the researcher kept in mind that past experiences could influence preconceptions of military life and deployments. Although the researcher experienced some of the same events as the case study participants, such as attending Yellow Ribbon pre- and post-deployment ceremonies, due to her husband being in the reserve component, the researcher did not know any of these participants prior to the study. The researcher was aware that personal experiences involving spousal deployment and the impact it had on their children could have influenced the way other people's deployment experiences could be interpreted. The researcher's spouse had three year-long deployments and five shorter deployments during their marriage. One of the year-long deployments, and two of the shorter deployments took place after having children. Overall, the researcher had positive deployment experiences both with and without children.

In addition to the military-family connection, the researcher recognized that being an educator also impacted her family's deployment experiences, as well as her perceptions of the educational experiences of her children. The researcher recognized that some of the resources available to the case study participants that she might think of as obvious could have been

unknown to the participants. As a high school principal, the researcher was aware that her comfort level asking other educators for assistance with the educational experiences of her children could widely differ from those of the case study participants.

The researcher recognized two preconceived notions that included the non-deploying parent's attitude affects how the children view the deployment, as well as a deployment could have positive impacts on children (both discussed in Chapter 1) that could have influenced how interviews were interpreted. Prior to interviewing, the researcher spent time thinking about these preconceptions and studying opposing views. The researcher was confident that any preconceived beliefs, emotions, and attitudes prior to this study were consciously balanced to stay neutral and minimize preconceived notions that could have possibly resulted in the distortion of data. Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested:

> Rather than pretend to have no biases, it makes more sense to examine your
> preconceptions and work out how your feelings might slant the research and then with
> this understanding in mind, work to formulate questions to offset your biases. (p. 82)

In addition, Creswell's (2007) validation strategies were frequently checked to ensure bias did not distort information.

Summary

Chapter 3 was an overview of the methodology used for this study. The research design was a qualitative multiple case study, chosen so the researcher could study the participants "in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Four cases were selected for this study through criterion sampling. Interviews and documents were collected for data. Surveys were given to help interpret and describe the cases. Data were reviewed and analyzed

from transcribed interviews and documents using Creswell's (2007) "Data Analysis and

Representation".

Chapter 4—Data Analysis

Chapter 4 presented the findings as they pertained to the following overarching research questions asked by the study:

- What were the perceptions of reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers in regard to their roles in the educational experiences of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments?

- How did reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers perceive boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss in their children's educational experiences when a reserve component mother deployed?

Discussion in this chapter was organized into the following three sections: (a) procedures for analyzing the data, (b) patterns and themes emerging from data, and (c) a summary.

Procedures for Analyzing Data

To insure corroboration of data, the researcher collected multiple sources of data including interviews and documents. Surveys were given to help interpret and describe the cases. Interview transcripts were the primary source of data for this study. Documents were obtained to provide the researcher with relevant information that assisted in corroborating and augmenting statements made by participants. Surveys were given prior to interviewing and before documents were collected. Surveys were used to determine whether or not participants met the criteria for the study. In addition, had more volunteers responded than the study needed participants, the surveys would have been used to help determine maximum variation. The surveys were also utilized to provide background information about participants prior to the interviews and to help interpret and describe the cases.

The researcher utilized Creswell's (2007) "Data Analysis and Representation" process suggestions:

- Create and organize files for data;

- Read through text, make margin notes, form initial codes;

- Describe the case and its context;

- Use categorical aggregation to establish themes or patterns;

- Use direct interpretation;

- Develop naturalistic generalizations; and

- Present in-depth picture of the case (or cases) using narrative, tables, and figures (pp 156-7).

Following is a detailed description of Creswell's (2007) data analysis procedures utilized during the study.

Interviews. The structure of these qualitative interviews mixed three types of questions: main, follow-up and probes (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 2005). Data were collected through individual interviews with participants. During the interview, the researcher utilized Rubin and Rubin's (2005) "responsive interviewing model" (p. 36). Following Creswell's (2007) process, files were created and organized for data. Interviews were digitally recorded, downloaded onto a compact disc, checked for clarity, and transcribed verbatim. Participants were emailed their transcripts prior to coding to check for accuracy. The audio recordings and transcriptions were then placed in a locked file. The recordings will be destroyed after three years.

The researcher began the first read of the interviews to re-familiarize herself with the context of the cases. The researcher tried to view the data obtained from the interviews through the perceptions of the participants through the conceptual lens of ambiguous loss and boundary

54

ambiguity; however, the first read was mainly to familiarize the researcher with the information

and to obtain context. The researcher again read through the interviews. During the second

read, the researcher began making margin notes and forming initial codes as instructed by

Creswell (2007). After the initial two readings of each transcript in their entireties, the

researcher began highlighting units of data such as phrases, sentences, or paragraphs, and

assigning them to the initial coding category Ambiguous Loss (AL). The data were first coded

to identify if ambiguous loss were perceived to have been present in each case study. After the

first two careful readings, the researcher then began placing examples of ambiguous loss from

the interviews into an Excel spreadsheet. The researcher determined that ambiguous loss was

perceived by all of the participants in all of the cases (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Examples of Ambiguous Loss			
Code	Type of Ambiguous Loss	Definition	Data example *(one excerpt from transcript for each case)*
AL1	Type One	Physical Absence/Psychological Presence	My greatest concern probably…I wasn't really…it was just the fact that…it was just me not…knowing that she (M1) was over there and not here. Like I mean, it's just worrying about if something were to happen, what would happen. Who would I go talk to? Who would I do this with and everything like that. So, I mean, more or less I guess, just scared to lose her, I guess, would be the main thing I would say. (C1)
AL2	Type Two	Physical Presence/Psychological Absence	I was uncomfortable with someone being around her (M2). Like I was afraid that…the way they would act would make her upset. Like, at times, she was very emotional…Sad, happy…different moods. Kind of all over the chart and that was what made it hard. (C2)
AL1	Type One	Physical Absence/Psychological	It was his mom potentially not coming home that was my chief concern. For whatever

| | | Presence | reason whether…whatever happened over there that could potentially happen. That was my chief concern. (PC3) |
| AL2 | Type Two | Physical Presence/Psychological Absence | I try to let them understand that we have to go baby steps. We have to start to get used to each other again, and I try not to argue with them and let them go a little bit farther, but sometimes I'm like, "OK, I've just had it." (M4) |

Since ambiguous loss could lead to boundary ambiguity, once ambiguous loss was identified in each case, the researcher again read through the transcripts in their entireties coding for the three types of Boundary Ambiguity (BA) (see Table 4.3). The researcher read and re-read through the transcripts many times identifying types of boundary ambiguity. Next, the researcher again read through the transcripts in their entireties and coded the Educational Experiences (EE) of the children. The initial design of the interview questions categorized the educational experiences of the children as defined by the Kansas Department of Education (2012) to include Social (EE1), Academic (EE2), and Behavior (EE3) (see Table 4.4). Finally, the roles the primary caregivers played, as perceived by the mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers during pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment were also coded (see Tables 4.11, 4.13, and 4.15). When coding data, the researcher entered data verbatim from the interviewees except to remove information that would compromise confidentiality. Table 4.2 provides a guide of initial main coding categories.

Table 4.2—Main Coding Categories		
(AL) **Ambiguous Loss**	**(BA)** **Boundary Ambiguity**	**(EE)** **Educational Experiences**
AL1 Physical Absence/ Psychological Presence	BA1 Partially Closed Boundaries	EE1 Social
AL2 Physical Presence/Psychological Absence	BA2 Open Boundaries	EE2 Academic
	BA3 Completely Closed Boundaries	EE3 Behavior

Table 4.3 Boundary Ambiguity Sub Codes			
Code	Type of Boundary Ambiguity	Definition	Data example (excerpt from transcript)
BA1	Partially Closed Boundaries	Families who reassigned household duties, but also worked to keep the family member as a decision maker and active participant at least psychologically within the family. Clear roles were defined and maintained.	When I find out I was getting deployed, right away, I contacted the school and they told me, "OK, this is what you're going to need." So, they sent me an email with all the information they needed, and then I got all the packet together and sent it to [PC4]. Then she went and took it to the school before I even got there. And then she set up an appointment with them and after we got everything set, I went in and I had a meeting with everybody at the school. (M4)
BA2	Open Boundaries	Families who did not discuss, maintain and act out clear roles.	So you're trying to do all that stuff and still play mom and make sure everything's taken care of, because even though you're gone, the roles are never-ending. Because being a single parent too, you're constantly having to talk to them, if they're grades are sliding or if they are having a bad day, or if I'm having a bad day, or you know, if they've got behaviors, you're still trying to contend with all that through either emails, or you know, if you can call. (M2)
BA3	Completely Closed Boundaries	Families completely reassigned household duties both physically and psychologically.	I had a really hard time with that [transitioning home], and I still do have a hard time with that because...obviously they [PC3 and C3] did fine. And then [PC3]...made a new circle of pretty close friends and that was pretty hard. There was this--it just felt like he had moved On--it just seemed like there are a lot of changes when you get back--I guess I just didn't think it was going to affect me that much. (M3)

	Type of Educational		Data example
Code	Experience	Definition	(excerpt from transcript)
EE1	Social	School experiences that involved child's peers	None [interaction with child's friends]. Pretty much, there was no interaction. It was just dead….I was stripped of everything. It was so frustrating for me and heartbreaking because I was not part of any decision-making Process….I was not even informed….I would find out [something that had happened], and then I would ask [PC2], you know, 'I'm the mom. I understand he's there with you, but I'm still the mom.' I should still--they don't see it as that way. They see it as, 'You're gone--you're gone'. (M2)
EE2	Academic	School experiences that involved child's academics	I did pretty good [academically]. It wasn't my best year, because I wasn't used to my mom….It was different with my mom being gone. I didn't have that study partner. (C2)
EE3	Behavior	School experiences that involved child's behavior	When she got back at first, she didn't really want me going anywhere, so she would put like restrictions on me that I didn't have before. (C3)

Table 4.4 Educational Experiences

Once data were coded, copied and pasted into Microsoft Excel documents, they were sorted

by title (mothers/soldiers, children, primary caregiver). The researcher continued to reread

transcripts in their entirety, take detailed notes, highlight key concepts that emerged, and make

summaries throughout the transcripts. By reading; describing; using categorical aggregation such as

children feeling "lost", perceptions of the lack of school support, and perceptions of difficulty

defining roles; as well as direct interpretation such as a perception of doing better in school during

the deployment; the researcher developed natural generalizations that she reported using narratives,

tables, and figures (Creswell, 2007). Upon first identifying perceived Ambiguous Loss in all the

cases, the researcher identified patterns of perceived Boundary Ambiguity as well as patterns in the roles the mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers played in the educational experiences of the children. The final analysis examined the overlap of the identified Boundary Ambiguity and the educational experiences.

During data analysis, the researcher discovered pieces of data that did not fit into these initial categories. One such example included the interview with the mother in Case Study 2 being interrupted by the pizza delivery person bringing food. The mother asked the researcher if she wanted something to eat, and a short discussion took place about the types of food available during deployment. Other examples included clarification questions or statements such as the child in Case Study 1 asking "What would that mean?" in response to a question about behavior. These data were placed into a category titled "other" for further study. Upon further investigation, the researcher concluded that the data did not impact the study and no new codes were necessary.

To ensure accurate interpretation of perceptions, the researcher spent ample engagement with participants (between 3-5 hours with each case) and also sent each participant preliminary results documenting Ambiguous Loss, Boundary Ambiguity, and perceptions of roles in the children's educational experiences for each individual. Participants were told to respond with any questions or comments they had about the results. The researcher received no comments from participants. Finally, the researcher used Stake's (1995) recommendations provided in the "critique checklist" for evaluating the case study report (see Appendix I).

Documents. A review of documents of the research study provided the researcher with relevant information that assisted in corroborating and augmenting statements made by participants. Reviewing qualitative documents to support potential themes or sub-themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) included, but was not limited to letters written to and from the soldier,

60

child(ren), and designated caregiver(s); artwork exchanged; report cards; progress reports; and Facebook posts (see Appendix J). The researcher also attended post-deployment Yellow Ribbon ceremonies where fliers, brochures, and photos were shared (see Appendix J).

Surveys. Two surveys were given to the mothers/soldiers (see Appendices K and L) and one survey was given to other participants (see Appendices M and N) prior to their interviews. The first survey was only given to the mothers and was the "Preliminary Questionnaire to all Potential Military Participants". This survey was given to the mothers to ensure that participants met the criteria of the study. The next survey, which was given to the mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers was to better gauge the participants' perceptions of the deployment experience prior to the interview (see Appendices F, G, H). Sapsford (1999) stated, "The most important part of the survey project is prior analysis of the 'question'" (p. 14). Survey questions for this project were developed to assist the researcher in determining if the overarching questions of the study had importance so that "there was maximal chance of the information being useful and used" (p. 16). The surveys also assisted with verifying responses in the interviews and helped in formulating follow-up questions. The surveys were given electronically.

Data Presentation. Narrative text and tables were used to present the data from this study. Included in the tables were the three main codes Ambiguous Absence (AA), Boundary Ambiguity (BA), and Educational Experiences (EE), as well as sub codes for each (see Table 4.2). The table for Ambiguous Loss simply documents examples of the phenomena in each case study (see Table 4.1). Boss (1986) stated that a stressor (ambiguous loss) does not necessarily impact the family negatively; rather, "it is the perception of the event as mediated by internal and external contexts that determines whether the family will cope or fall into crisis" (p. 270). When ambiguous loss led to

61

boundary ambiguity, it created family stress. Thus, once Ambiguous Loss was documented in the

cases, the researcher moved focus to the remaining sub-code tables. Included in the sub-code tables

for boundary ambiguity and educational experiences were a definition, patterns that emerged, and

evidence of the patterns in the form of direct quotes from the transcripts. The resulting patterns

emerged from interpreting concepts that were consistently repeated among interviewees.

Patterns and Themes Emerging From Data

After coding all of the data, the researcher then began looking for patterns within each

coding category. The researcher determined evidence became a pattern if the majority of the

participants of each case (three or more) stated or agreed on the evidence or the majority of the

participants from each participant group (mothers/soldiers, children, or caregivers--2 or more)

stated or agreed on the evidence. Patterns within main code Ambiguous Loss (AL) simply

served to provide evidence that ambiguous loss was present in each of the cases. Patterns within

the main code of Boundary Ambiguity (BA) were established within each sub-code. Patterns

within the main code of Educational Experiences (EE) were also established within each sub-

code, but to achieve a more in-depth picture of each case, each sub-code was also aggregated

within each of the four cases. The narrative that followed each heading was supported by a table

that provided a singular example from the transcript for each case study that typified the

responses of the participants.

Once all of the patterns for main codes Boundary Ambiguity (BA) and Educational

Experiences (EE) were determined, they were compiled into summary tables (see Table 4.9 and

Table 4.18). Themes were derived by cross-comparing the summary of boundary ambiguity

patterns and the summary of educational experiences patterns. For summary patterns to become

a theme, a majority of the cases had to state or agree on the pattern. Six themes emerged from

the analysis of the intersection of boundary ambiguity and educational experiences (see Table 4.19). The narrative that followed each heading was supported by a table organizing the summary boundary ambiguity patterns and summary educational experiences patterns into complimentary data.

Ambiguous Loss (Main Code AL)

Interview data were first coded for "ambiguous loss". As discussed in Chapter 2, "Ambiguous Loss" was a type of family stress termed by Boss (1999) that identified the loss or absence of a family member or loved one that evoked emotional uncertainty and ambiguity in the family (p. 7). All four of the case studies exhibited examples of one or both types of ambiguous loss from members of the families due to mother's/soldier's deployment (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Ambiguous Loss		
	Physical Absence/Psychological Presence	**Physical Presence/Psychological Absence**
C1	My greatest concern probably…I wasn't really…it was just the fact that…it was just me not…knowing that she [M1] was over there and not here. Like I mean, it's just worrying about if something were to happen, what would happen. Who would I go talk to? Who would I do this with and everything like that. So, I mean, more or less I guess, just scared to lose her, I guess, would be the main thing I would say.	
C1	I guess worrying too much would be the best way to describe it, because I was somewhat scared to lose her [M1]. [long pause] I really--I would be lost and wouldn't know where to go or have anyone to talk to.	
C2	…like something happening to her [M2] that she wouldn't come back...and then I had my moments where I couldn't take it, and I just talked to [PC2], and it scared me at times, because there'd be days where I'd go a couple weeks without talking to her. It was kind of bad, and then once she called, it was a lot better.	
C2	She [M2] was gone, and…it was just different.	

C2		I was uncomfortable with someone being around her [M2]. Like I was afraid that…the way they would act would make her upset. Like, at times, she was very emotional…Sad, happy…different moods. Kind of all over the chart and that was what made it hard.
M3		It's hard to figure out what exactly is wrong. It's hard for me to figure out what exactly is bothering me and communicate it to you [researcher].
PC3	It was his mom potentially not coming home that was my chief concern. For whatever reason whether--whatever happened over there that could potentially happen. That was my chief concern.	
PC3	She [M3] wasn't there, so it was like a giant void. I don't know what it's like to be a widower, but I would imagine it wouldn't be much different. You speak for a couple of minutes on the phone every day and just feel cheated.	
C3	I just knew [location of deployment] was a pretty safe place, but if something did happen and [deployment location with a higher threat] got-- they [M3's unit] would probably be the first ones to be there. And then [deployment location with a higher threat] isn't nearly as safe as [location of deployment]. And there's just always been the "what-if's" because of [deployment location with a higher threat] and stuff. That's [knowing M3 was safe] what helped me more than anything. I knew she was safe in [location of deployment]...That was probably bigger than not being able to see her.	
M4		When it was me being deployed and when I came back, nobody was there. So it's like, you get used to being all by yourself where everybody does your stuff. You don't have to do any laundry, and now you come home and have to do everything again; and you have to first of all, adjust to the time; second, adapt to the food because of what you eat there is so different than what you eat here. And just to have everybody around you asking all these questions at the same time, and you're like, "Give me a break!" because I have to like process all this. Then, when the kids get home, it's like a lot of noise, and you're not used to that, and you're like, "Oh my God, I'm going crazy!" It's not that, you're just used to being on your own, and then having the kids again with you and adapted to be all by yourself. It's just different. It's hard.

| | | I try to let them understand that we have to go baby steps. We have to start to get used to each other again, and I try not to argue with them and let them go a little bit farther, but sometimes I'm like, "OK, I've just had it." |
| M4 | | |

Boundary Ambiguity

After establishing that each family perceived experiencing ambiguous loss, the researcher then coded the data for boundary ambiguity. Boss (2002), drawing strongly from Hill's (1949) research, stated that boundary ambiguity occurred "when there is ambiguity regarding a family member's presence or absence in the family system, the situation is called *ambiguous loss.* How the family interpreted or perceived this situation of ambiguous loss was called boundary ambiguity, and it is a risk factor or barrier to the management of stress" (p. 95). The researcher coded examples of boundary ambiguity into three categories based on Hill's (1949) definitions from his study of World War II soldiers and their families: Partially Closed Boundary Ambiguity (BA1), Open Boundary Ambiguity (BA2), and Closed Boundary Ambiguity (BA3).

Partially Closed Boundary Ambiguity (BA1). Partially closed boundary ambiguity identified families who reassigned household duties, but also worked to keep the absent family member as a decision maker and active participant at least psychologically within the family. Clear roles were defined and maintained. These families managed the stress of deployment and reunion well (Hill, 1949, p. 82). Table 4.6 illustrated the following discussion.

When asked to describe how they perceived their roles in the educational experiences of the deployed mother/soldier's child(ren), the perceptions of the participants in Case Study 4 exhibited the traits of partially closed boundary ambiguity. Most notably were clear examples of how the mother/soldier was perceived by all family participants as a decision maker and active participant within the family even though she was not physically present during deployment.

This perception was corroborated by email messages from and to M4 from and to C4a and C4b, as well as email messages and Facebook messages from and to M4 from and to PC4.

Three patterns emerged throughout Case Study 4. First, mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver stated that "communication" was key to deployment success. The mother/soldier stated, "She [PC4] would give me a report—every day, every day. The first thing each day when I got to the office, the first thing I did was get on the computer, go to my Facebook and my email, and I would have a message on my Facebook and email. I cannot say there was one day that I missed [PC4's] message or email. She would message me all the time."

The second pattern was mother/soldier, children, and primary caregiver cited school as providing assistance and resources pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. The mother/soldier stated, "When I find out I was getting deployed, right away, I contacted the school and they told me, 'OK, this is what you're going to need.' So, they sent me an email with all the information they needed and then I got all the packet together and sent it to [PC4]. Then she [PC4] went and took it to the school before I even got there. And then she set up an appointment with them, and after we got everything set, I went in and I had a meeting with everybody at the school."

The third pattern that emerged was that the mother/soldier and primary caregiver perceived roles during deployment as a "team" effort. The primary caregiver stated, "It was a team, I would say because I was the hard one, but if things were getting a little bit out of hand, and I had to talk to her [M4], when I got a chance to talk to her, she would get on their [C4a and C4b] back."

66

Table 4.6 Partially Closed Boundary Ambiguity		
Definition	**Patterns**	**Evidence (examples from transcripts)**
Families who reassigned household duties, but also worked to keep the absent family member as a decision maker and active participant at least psychologically within the family **(Case Study 4)**	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver stated that "communication" was key to deployment success	I would always call her [M4] in the morning to tell her about my grades, how they got better and all that. Sometimes, when she wanted to Skype, she wanted me to go on the computer myself and show her my grades. (C4)
	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver cited school as providing assistance and resources pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment	We both [M4 and PC4] had to go to the school and make sure that they know who is taking care of the kids….The principal talks to you. All the staff tried to get involved in enrollment to make sure they are covering everything the kids have, everything they need during that time, and [PC4] had all the contact information she needed in case something happened during that time. So, I would say the school was great; they were always there for everything. (M4)
	Mother/soldier and primary caregiver viewed roles during deployment as a "team" effort.	We would put her [M4] on speaker, and she would just be going off all the time on them [C4a and C4b]. I think it was a team. (PC4)

Open Boundary Ambiguity (BA2). Families who kept *open boundaries* during the deployment, those who did not discuss, maintain and act out clear roles, adjusted poorly to the deployment (Hill, 1949, p. 82). Two cases from the study fit the description of open boundary ambiguity. Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 both fit the description of open boundary ambiguity (see Table 4.7). For example, when M1 was asked her perception of who had the most impact on her child's social experiences while she was deployed, she stated, "I would say his groups of friends, but I don't know." Similarly, when asked about who had the most impact on her child's academic experience while she was deployed, she stated, "Maybe his stepmom…" Case Study 2 participants especially struggled with role perceptions. When asked who impacted the educational experiences of the child during the deployment, none of the participant responses

coincided (see Table 4.13). Five patterns emerged from both Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 that experienced open boundary ambiguity.

The first pattern pertained to mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers all reporting perceptions of undefined roles. M2 reported being overwhelmed with trying to fill all the roles she filled prior to deployment while being in her deployed location, "So you're trying to do all that stuff and still play 'Mom' and make sure everything's taken care of, because even though you're gone, the roles are never-ending."

The next pattern was children reported feeling "lost" during deployment. C2 stated, "I wasn't as social because everyone there had their own groups already….It's hard to just go down there [to new school attended during deployment] and try to be in one group. They gotta' kind of accept you. It was kinda' different."

The third pattern was mothers/soldiers [M1 and M2], one of the children [C1], and both primary caregivers [PC1, PC2] all reported stress in relationships prior to deployment, which grew during deployment, and relationships were still stressed post-deployment. PC2 explained, "I had to make sure his homework was done; I had to make sure he had clean basketball clothes, or football clothes, and money for meals, and get prepared for trips, and meeting with teachers and having conferences, and--just stuff I hadn't had to do for a while, and I was doing it with a kid that I didn't really know."

The fourth pattern was seen in various elements throughout the study. Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers reported lack of communication during deployment. M2 explained, "He (C2) was ready to get back to *his* life, and so I would try to calm him down and tell him it was almost done. It was hard, but then a lot of times, you're not part of it when they have those days. Your kid is just gone."

Finally, mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers reported lack of support from the school. When asked about how the school responded knowing she was returning from deployment, M2 described, "I don't think anybody cares you're back. Nobody cares. They [the school] have other better things to worry about. Soldiers coming home… Yeah, they don't care. There's no outreach for us."

Table 4.7 Open Boundary Ambiguity		
Definition	**Patterns**	**Evidence (examples from transcripts)**
Families who did not discuss, maintain and act out clear roles; adjusted poorly to the deployment. (Case Study 1 and Case Study 2)	Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers all reported perceptions of undefined roles.	I felt like I was denied a lot of parenting things….You kinda' don't want to rock the boat because they [primary caregivers] got your child, so some of the things, you just had to bite the bullet as much as it bothered you. You just had to. There were times when I would get so mad and tell her [PC2] "I would not do this at home. What makes you think you have the right to let him do it? Why did you not ask me?" [PC2] "Well, he's here with me." [M2] "It does not matter. I'm his parent!" So, she didn't always see that. It was like he's there, so she's playing the parental role, and I was just on the side. (M2)
	Children reported feeling "lost" during deployment.	It felt like no one could see where I was coming from [during deployment]. Now [post-deployment], I just feel like I'm much stronger. I feel like I'm just back to my normal self, like I can be me again. (C1)
	Mothers/soldiers [M1 and M2], one of the children [C1], and both primary caregivers [PC1, PC2] all reported stress in relationships prior to deployment, which grew during deployment, and relationships still stressed post-deployment.	For a while, he went back to his dad, and then when school got out, he came back up here….He got up here and then my now ex-husband had issues with him, and my mom ended up caring for him. (M1)
	Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers reported lack of communication during deployment.	He [C2] could [misbehave], and he knew he could get away with it because we didn't do anything. We didn't say anything while she was here [during two-week rest and relaxation visit]. (PC2)

| | Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers reported lack of support from school. | Like, it [help from people at the school] was offered at the beginning, like they [school staff] told me that I could go to the counselor any time I needed to. I could go talk to him if I was having trouble in any of my classes or if I just went through like a rough time with my mom being gone, but then it was kind of dropped. Like maybe if it [help] was offered at the end, or like in the middle whenever things did get a little rough, I might have used it. (C2) |

Closed Boundary Ambiguity (BA3). Families who demonstrated *closed boundaries* completely reassigned household duties both physically and psychologically. These families adjusted well during deployment but struggled upon reunion (Hill, 1949, p. 82). The perceptions given by Case Study 3 fit the description of closed boundary ambiguity (see Table 4.8). In particular, although all participants in Case Study 3 described doing well during the deployment, post-deployment posed a difficult transition. M3 stated, "I had a really hard time with that [transitioning home], and I still do have a hard time with that because obviously they did fine. And then [PC3] made a new circle of pretty close friends, and that was pretty hard. There was this--it just felt like he had moved on. It just seemed like there are a lot of changes when you get back. I guess I just didn't think it was going to affect me that much."

Five patterns emerged when combing the interviews. Pattern one developed through the perceptions mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver reported having difficulty defining roles post-deployment. When she discussed her role as a mother, M3 stated, "I feel like it's a different role. I feel like I still am [the mother], but it's a different. It's a different… I'm still trying to get comfortable with that."

Patterns two and three went hand-in-hand exemplifying how PC3 and C3 "closed" their boundaries to cope with the deployment. Child and primary caregiver both cited perceiving having excluded mother/soldier and avoided the topic of deployment as a coping mechanism for dealing with the deployment. C3 summarized how he dealt with his mother being gone during

70

the deployment by saying, "We [C3 and PC3] just really didn't talk about it. I never even thought about it until now."

As with Open Boundary Ambiguity and Partially Closed Boundary Ambiguity, communication was once again a factor in the perceptions of roles during the deployment in looking at Closed Boundary Ambiguity. Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver discussed lack of communication as a barrier during deployment. PC3 stated, "Keep the avenues of communication wide open, because looking back at it, with the benefit of hindsight here, yeah, I can now see that I really do wish I would have communicated better. Not with [M3], but with him [C3] definitely. Maybe kind of force."

The fifth pattern that emerged, also discussed in the three other case studies, although not necessarily in the same context, was the role of the school. The participants of Case Study 3 all cited lack of school support. M3 did not blame the school for not being supportive, rather she referred to the school just not knowing what to do. "I think that with the National Guard, there is a very big disconnect between [the school and the military]… People don't--they don't have a clue."

Table 4.8 Closed Boundary Ambiguity		
Definition	**Patterns**	**Evidence (examples from transcripts**
Families completely reassigned household duties both physically and psychologically **(Case Study 3)**	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver reported difficulty defining roles post-deployment.	So, I mean he [PC3] did a really good job, and he was really sensitive about it [M3 coming home]. It's just you have to figure out your roles again. (M3)
	Child and primary caregiver both cited exclusion of mother/soldier as a coping mechanism for dealing with deployment.	We barely even celebrated Christmas when she was gone. We didn't even have a tree up…They [holidays] weren't really important to me and [PC3]; it just wasn't a big deal. It was more of a big deal to her [M3] than it was us. (C3)

	Child and primary caregiver both cited avoidance of subject of deployment as a coping mechanism for deployment.	I think from time-to-time I would bring it [M3'S deployment] up, and I think largely, foolishly, probably thought that by not bringing it up it wouldn't be as much of a hardship on him [C3]. But with the benefit of hindsight, I don't know that that was such a swell idea….I think I totally dropped the ball on that. (PC3)
	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver discussed lack of communication as a barrier during deployment.	I think with a mantel of having to do everything she [M3] was doing [while M3 was deployed], it would be foolish to think that I wasn't neglecting some things and I'm sure I was. I know I was. Frankly, with the benefit of talking to you right now, I realize that there was a lot of conversations we probably should have had but we didn't. I don't know what to call it. I guess avoidance, thinking, "Hey there's not a problem, why even bring it up?" (PC3)
	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver cited lack of school support.	I think probably with school, and I think the National Guard is probably different too because I know at like [name of highly populated military town], some of the kids go to school at [name of highly populated military town] are very familiar with the military, and they probably do good with that, but the National Guard, like at [C3's school], like there might be a couple of military parents there so the school's just not really... I don't think they really know what to do or to even do anything. (M3)

Summary of Patterns across Boundary Ambiguity

Table 4.9 illustrated a summary of the 13 patterns found across the three types of Boundary Ambiguity.

Table 4.9 Summary of Boundary Ambiguity (BA) Patterns
Partially Closed Boundary Ambiguity (BA1)
A.   Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver stated that "communication" was key to deployment success.
B.   Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver cited school as providing assistance and resources pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment.
C.   Mother/soldier and primary caregiver viewed roles during deployment as a "team effort".
Open Boundary Ambiguity (BA2)
A.   Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers all reported perceptions of undefined roles.
B.   Children reported feeling "lost" during deployment.

C.	Mothers/soldiers [M1 and M2], one of the children [C1], and both primary caregivers [PC1, PC2] all reported stress in relationships prior to deployment, which grew during deployment, and relationships still stressed post-deployment
D.	Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers reported lack of communication during deployment.
E.	Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers reported lack of involvement from school.
Closed Boundary Ambiguity (BA3)	
A.	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver reported difficulty defining roles post-deployment.
B.	Child and primary caregiver both cited exclusion of mother/soldier as a coping mechanism for dealing with deployment.
C.	Child and primary caregiver both cited avoidance of topic of deployment as a coping mechanism for deployment.
D.	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver discussed lack of communication as a barrier during deployment.
E.	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver cited lack of school support.

Perceptions of Roles in Children's Educational Experiences

Study participants were asked their perceptions of their roles in the child(ren)'s

Educational Experiences (EE) as defined by the Kansas Department of Education (2012) to

include sub-categories social (EE1), academic (EE2), and behavior (EE3), during pre-

deployment, deployment, and post-deployment. The researcher first disaggregated all case study

data related to Educational Experiences by sub-categories (EE1, EE2, EE3); however, upon the

discovery that each case study was identifiable by its unique type of Boundary Ambiguity, the

researcher then disaggregated the Educational Experiences data not only by sub-category, but

also by case to more clearly view each case through the lens of Boundary Ambiguity. When

doing so, the following patterns emerged within each case study.

Following each case study was a table that summarized who case participants perceived

as the biggest influences on the educational experiences of the deployed mother's/soldier's

child(ren). Participants were identified as Mother (M), Child (C), and Primary Caregiver (PC)

followed by the numeral case number, 1-4. Influencers who were not included in the case were

identified with an (X), and a description of the person was included.

Case Study 1—Perceptions of Educational Experiences (see Table 4.10)

Social—Three patterns emerged in the social experience of C1. First, the social status of

the child during deployment was not perceived the same by participants. Both M1 and PC1

stated that C1 had many friends at the school he attended during the deployment stage.

However, C1 stated that his sociability went down during deployment, "More or less I just kind

of--I didn't really talk to too many people, actually. I just kind of felt like no one would

understand. I mean, I didn't really talk to too many people. I would say, just 'cause I tried--kind

of--I didn't want to be seen like a big crybaby more or less. So, I mean, I just tried pushing

away."

Pattern two was the perception of all participants in Case Study 1 that the

mother's/soldier's role in the child's social experience was mostly non-existent. When

discussing who had the greatest impact on the child's social experience during deployment, M1

stated, "I would say his group of friends, but I don't know."

The third pattern that emerged was that the child had difficulty reintegrating post-

deployment, especially socially with his peer group. M1 stated, "We have always been really

close, but like I said, he does still seem a little clingy and doesn't want me to go off very far for a

long period of time.…(He) still needs that confidence to know Mom's right there, I guess. I

didn't expect for him to be so clingy."

Academic—Two patterns emerged in C1's academic experience. First, all participants

perceived that C1's grades improved during deployment. This perception was confirmed

through grade card documents. C1 contributed his improvement to wanting to make his parents

proud of him. "I just wanted to give my mom and dad a good name. Like, I mean, I don't want

to be a troublemaker, and that would look bad on their part. To make them more or less proud to

call me their son, I guess." In addition, C1 and M1 stated that they perceived M1's involvement

in the child's academics increased post-deployment. M1 stated, "I'm very involved [in child's academics], I would say. I've been to the school several times over small issues he's had with things at the school."

Behavior—Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver stated that behavior had never been an issue pre-deployment, during deployment, or post-deployment.

Table 4.10 Case Study 1--Perceptions of Educational Experiences		
Definition	**Pattern**	**Evidence**
Social—School experiences that involved child's peers	Social status of child during deployment disagreed upon by participants	--It [social status] went down. (C1) --He's probably got a larger group of friends there [school attended during deployment]. (M1) --I think he had a lot of friends. (PC1)
	Mother's/soldier's role in child's social experience mostly non-existent	It [contact with child's friends during deployment] was very rare…There were a couple of times that I would get a message on Facebook….It was pretty much non-existent. (M1)
	Child had difficulty reintegrating post-deployment	He hadn't felt like he fit in as well after returning [from school attended while deployed]….He seems pretty clingy since I got back, even for his age. (M1)
Academic—School experiences that involved child's academics	During deployment, grades improved over both pre-deployment and post-deployment marks.	"A/B" Honor Roll [during deployment], which is the first time in a long time. At least since high school started… (M1)
	Mother/soldier's participation in academics post-deployment increased over both pre-deployment and deployment.	It's [Mom's involvement] more. She always has been there, but it just seems like now, she's pushing her way even more, as much as she can. (C1)
Behavior—School experiences that involved child's behavior	Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver did not perceive behavioral issues as a factor pre-deployment, during deployment, or post-deployment.	[C1 was] never a behavioral issue. He knows what his mother expects of him. He knows what [PC1] expects of him. (PC1)

Case Study 1—Perceptions of Roles in Child's Education

Study participants were asked questions related to who they perceived as the most influential person in the Educational Experiences of the child pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment (see Table 4.11). Especially relevant in Case Study 1 was C1's perception of his educational experiences, which progressed from a mix of influences pre-deployment, to his perception that all responsibility fell to him during deployment, to all influences from his mother/soldier post-deployment.

Table 4.11 Case Study 1 Perceptions of Roles in Child's Education			
Pre-Deployment	**M1**	**C1**	**PC1***
Social	X (Best Friend)	X (Best Friend)	M1
Academic	X (Best Friend)	M1	X (Teachers)
Behavior	M1	M1 and X (Dad)	M1
Deployment			
Social	"I would say his groups of friends, but I don't know."	C1	PC1
Academic	"Maybe his stepmom…"	C1	X (Grandpa)
Behavior	X (Father)	C1	PC1
Post-Deployment			
Social	M1	M1	M1
Academic	M1	M1	M1
Behavior	M1	M1	M1

Case Study 2—Perception of Roles in Child's Education (see Table 4.12)

Social—In Case Study 2, three patterns emerged in C2's social experience. Pattern one was the perception from all participants in Case Study 2 that the social interaction of C2 with peers during deployment decreased. PC2 stated, "He [C2] had a couple of friends, but I don't

think the kids liked him too much." The second pattern, perceived by all three participants, was that PC2 had no role socially pre- or post-deployment; however, during deployment, PC2 was active in the social experiences of C2. C2 described, "She [PC2] had a lot of interaction. She allowed them [friends] to come over, allowed me to go places, she allowed me to do things." Pattern three, also perceived by all three participants, was that mother's/soldier's role in the child's social experience was mostly non-existent during the deployment. C2 stated, "There were a couple of times where I did ask her [M2 during deployment] if I could do one or two things with my friends, but it was hard to, and it just didn't work out. Mom says, 'No' [to what C2 asked permission to do during the deployment]. [I would] go ahead [and do it anyway]."

Academic—One pattern emerged in the academic experience of C2. During the deployment, C2's grades improved over both pre-deployment and post-deployment marks. "He did really good grade-wise," stated M2. This assertion was supported by C2's grade cards during the deployment.

Behavior—Two patterns emerged in C2's behavioral experience. C2 perceived that his behavior improved during the deployment. C2 stated, "I tried to be good for my mom when she was gone. I didn't want to let that [deployment] change my behavior." This perception was supported by M2 and PC2. The second pattern was that M2 and C2 perceived that they had difficulty reintegrating post-deployment. M2 described the difficulty of reintegrating back into civilian life. "Two different lives [civilian life and military life]….Two different lives and trying to combine them and live them both. Sometimes, it's unbearable."

Table 4.12 Case Study 2 Perceptions of Educational Experiences		
Definition	Pattern	Evidence
Social—School experiences that involved child's peers	Social interaction of child with peers during deployment decreased.	I wasn't as social because everyone there [at school C2 transferred to during deployment] had their own groups already. It's such a small town. It's hard to just go down

		there and try to be in one group….I didn't really have a good friendship with anyone down there…(C2)
	Primary Caregiver had no role socially pre- or post-deployment; however, during deployment, primary caregiver was active in the social experiences of child.	Quite a bit [of interaction in child's social experience] actually. "What's he doing?" "Where's he going?" "Who's he with?" "This is your time to be home." In every aspect, anything he did, he had to ask and rules had to be followed. (PC2)
	Mother/soldier's role in child's social experience mostly non-existent	Pretty much, there was no interaction. It was just dead. I was stripped of everything. It was so frustrating for me and heartbreaking because I was not part of any decision-making process. I was not even informed. I would find out [something that had happened], and then I would ask [PC2], you know, "I'm the mom. I understand he's there with you, but I'm still the mom." I should still-- they don't see it as that way. They see it as, "You're gone--you're gone." (M2)
Academic—School Experiences that involved child's academics	During deployment, grades improved over both pre-deployment and post-deployment marks.	--His grades were worse the closer to me deploying, like the last semester, they drastically changed for the worst. It was a constant battle, worse than normal… I think it was knowing what was coming up…It was an emotional rollercoaster for him. (M2) --It was difficult at first [post-deployment] because she—like it was difficult because I didn't want to do my homework. I wanted to spend time with my mom. I wanted to spend time with friends I hadn't seen in a year. And, whenever I'd do my homework, sometimes, I would forget to turn it in, and I wouldn't turn it in… It was like a way for me to get her attention a little bit. (C2)
Behavior—School experiences that	Child's behavior improved during	I tried to be good for my mom while

| involved child's behavior | deployment | she was gone....I didn't want to put stress on my mom with my behavior. (C2) |
| | Difficulty reintegrating family post-deployment | There was a lot of stress, but I think it was just the fact that everybody was confined and trying to figure out what they were doing. I came back so it was crazy for a while. (M2) |

Case Study 2—Perceptions of Roles in Child's Education

Study participants were asked questions related to whom they perceived as the most influential person in the Educational Experiences of the child pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment (see Table 4.13). Interestingly, while M2 and PC2 perceived PC2 as having influence over C2's educational experiences, C2 did not view PC2 as influential.

Table 4.13 Case Study 2 Perceptions of Roles in Child's Education			
Pre-Deployment	**M2**	**C2**	**PC2**
Social	X (Best Friend)	X (Friends)	X (Friends)
Academic	M2	M2	M2
Behavior	X (Siblings)	M2	X (Friends)
Deployment			
Social	PC2	X (Cousin)	X (Girlfriend)
Academic	PC2	C2	PC2
Behavior	PC2	C2	PC2
Post-Deployment			
Social	M2 and X (Best Friend)	X (Best Friend)	X (Friends)
Academic	X (Friend of M2)	M2	M2

Behavior	M2 and X (Best Friend)	M2	M2

Case Study 3—Perception of Roles in Child's Education (see Table 4.14)

Social—In Case Study 3, one pattern emerged in the perceptions of the social experience of C3. All participants perceived that M3 had little social communication during the deployment. This was exemplified through M3 only talking with C3 about once a month. M3 stated, "Like, if I got to talk to him, it would be on the phone, but it wasn't very often....It would be the time difference. When I would call, [PC3] would be at work and [C3] would be at school. Like on the weekends, if [C3] was there, I would talk to him, but if he was out doing something with his friend, then I wouldn't talk to him."

Academic—A continuum of three patterns emerged when analyzing data related to all Case Study 3 participants' perceptions about academic experiences in Case Study 3. Pre-deployment, M3 was the primary contact for school; during deployment, M3 had little academic influence; and post-deployment, M3's role in C3's academics had not been reestablished. M3 described the situation, "It's become--like, I started off, but it has become more [PC3]--mostly pushes. He picked up during the deployment, and then he's been more after the deployment."

Behavior—As stated by Hill in his 1949 study, families who experienced Closed Boundary Ambiguity during deployment often struggled with reintegration (p. 82). M3 perceived a difficult reintegration experience back into her family. Examining C3's behavioral experience, M3 stated her role had not returned to pre-deployment status. M3 stated, "As far as the discipline, it's definitely [PC3]."

Table 4.14 Case Study 3 Perceptions of Educational Roles		
Definition	**Pattern**	**Evidence**
Social—School experiences that involved child's peers	Mother/soldier had little social communication during deployment.	She didn't really contact them [friends] at all. I mean, she could barely contact us. (C3)
Academic—School Experiences that involved child's academics	Mother/soldier was primary contact for school pre-deployment	[Mother] handled all those things where if it were a student/teacher thing, the nature of my job sometimes where--sometime I'd be working out of town.…She normally took care of those [school] things.
	Mother/soldier had little academic influence during deployment.	She wasn't really a--I guess a parental figure at that time. (C3)
	Mother/soldier has not resumed pre-deployment role in child's academics.	It's become--like, I started off, but it has become more [PC3]… He mostly pushes. He picked up during the deployment, and then he's been more after the deployment. (M3)
Behavior—School experiences that involved child's behavior	Mother/soldier has not resumed pre-deployment role in child's behavior.	More [PC3]. (M3)

Case Study 3—Perceptions of Roles in Child's Education

Study participants were asked questions related to whom they perceived as the most influential person in the Educational Experiences of the child pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment (see Table 4.15). Although M3 was perceived to have some role pre-deployment, she was perceived as completely shut out of C3's educational experiences during deployment, and she has had difficulty reintegrating back into the family as is illustrated through the perception that she does not play a role in C3's educational experiences post-deployment, either. Case Study 3 was identified with Completely Closed Boundary Ambiguity, and the aforementioned traits are consistent with Closed Boundary Ambiguity definition (Hill, 1949).

Table 4.15 Case Study 3 Perceptions of Roles in Child's Education			
Pre-Deployment	**M3**	**C3**	**PC3**
Social	X (Friends)	C3	PC3
Academic	PC3	PC3	M3
Behavior	M3 and PC3	PC3	PC3
Deployment			
Social	PC3	C3	C3
Academic	PC3	PC3	PC3
Behavior	PC3	C3	PC3
Post-Deployment			
Social	X (Friends)	C3	PC3
Academic	C3	PC3	PC3
Behavior	PC3	PC3	PC3

Case Study 4—Perception of Roles in Child's Education (see Table 4.16)

Social—In Case Study 4, one pattern emerged in the perceptions of the children's social experiences. All participants in Case Study 4 perceived the mother/soldier was socially connected to children pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment. PC4 stated, "She [M4] always wanted to know what was going on with them. 'How was gymnastics?' 'Who are they friends with?' 'What are they doing?' She [M4] always stayed up on it."

Academic—Three patterns emerged in the perceptions of academic experiences of the children. The first pattern was that C4a's grades improved during the deployment. This was supported by C4a's grade card. M4 stated, "He [C4a] did lower his grades a little bit [at the beginning of the deployment], but then I talked to him, and that I was doing all this for you guys

[children], and I just want the best for you, and I need you to do better. And he's like, 'Yes, I know'. Then, he did better than even when he was here [prior to deployment]." The next academic pattern that was perceived by all participants in Case Study 4 was mother/soldier stayed academically connected to children during all stages of deployment. PC4 stated, "M4 was all the way out there in [location of deployment], and she was on their [children] back constantly. I think she knew their grades before I did." The third pattern that emerged was the perception from all participants that the primary caregiver had an active role in the children's academics. C4b stated, "She [PC4] was always checking my grades—every day after I came back from gymnastics, she would get on her computer and check my grades, my homework, and my brother's grades."

  Behavior—Three patterns emerged in perceptions of the educational experiences of the children as they related to their behavior. The first was that all participants perceived the children's behavior to improve during the deployment. When the researcher asked about disciplinary reports, it was stated that the children did not have any. C4b stated, "I was never bad [during deployment]. [PC4] was over-protective, so she wouldn't let me [misbehave]." The second pattern was that the mother/soldier, children, and primary caregiver all perceived good communication throughout all stages of the deployment. M4 stated, "They [children] knew Mama was there, even though I was not physical there with them. They knew Mom was there all the time because [PC4] and Mom has good communication, so nothing was going to be a secret." The last pattern that emerged in the perceptions of all of the participants were that mother/soldier and primary caregiver were comfortable with shared roles. C4a stated, "She [PC4] would be like, on me, pushing me to do everything fast and to do it right to make sure I have good grade. My mom would tell her [PC4] to tell me that."

Table 4.16 Case Study 4 Perceptions of Educational Roles		
Definition	**Pattern**	**Evidence**
Social—School experiences that involved child's peers	Mother/soldier stayed socially connected to child during all stages of deployment.	Oh, yeah, sometimes she talked to my other best friends through Skype. It would be over at [PC3]'s house. (C4a)
Academic—School Experiences that involved child's academics	Child's (C4a) grades improved during deployment.	I got better [academically]. (C4a)
	Mother/soldier stayed academically connected to children during all stages of deployment.	[I] would make phone calls and making sure they were on top of their homework and projects and all that and sending emails to the school, "Is everything good?" "How are they doing?" or whatever. At one point, their teachers had said, "Just let them know Mom misses them and that I love him or her and that I'm proud of them", and the teacher will get the message to them. (M4)
	Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver all perceived that primary caregiver had an active role in children's academics	I would do homework; I would try to do homework with them. [Child 4b] had plenty of homework where she had projects, and I would help her out with her projects doing the best I could to help out. [Child 4a] would have homework, and I told him if he needed help that I would help...I looked it up (on computer) every day to make sure they did have their homework done, and I think I did good for my age. I kept it up all the time.
Behavior—School experiences that involved child's behavior	Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver agreed that child's behavior improved during deployment.	Better [behavior], like before my mom left, I promised her I would, like, try to get better, so I did. I used to get a lot of referrals, now I don't get any. (C4a)
	Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver agreed there was good communication pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment	I just call them and ask them how they're doing in school [post-deployment], and I keep in touch with [M4]. We talk every day, and I ask her how they are doing in school and what their grades are. We always keep in touch. (PC4)

			[PC4] had to take care of the situations. Right away she let me know. She sent me an email, and she's like, "I need to talk to you." So whenever I saw an email like that, I knew something was going on, and I didn't care what time it was, I would call her, and she would be waiting for my phone call. Things went through [PC4], and then [PC4] would contact me. (M4)
	Mother/soldier and primary caregiver were comfortable with shared roles		

Case Study 4—Perceptions of Roles in Child's Education

Study participants were asked questions related to whom they perceived as the most influential person in the Educational Experiences of the children pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment (see Table 4.17). Case Study 4 participants' perceptions exemplified traits of Partially Closed Boundary Ambiguity. Pre-deployment, all participants identified the mother/soldier as the primary influencer of the children's educational experiences. During the deployment, all study participants except C4b identified PC4 as assuming many of the roles of main influencer in the children's educational experiences; however, contrary to the other three case studies, M4 was also perceived as maintaining or sharing some of the influencer roles during the deployment.

Table 4.17 Case Study 4 Perceptions of Roles in Child's Education				
Pre-Deployment	**M4**	**C4a**	**C4b**	**PC4**
Social	M4	M4	M4	M4
Academic	M4	M4	M4	M4
Behavior	M4	M4	M4	M4
Deployment				

Social	PC4	PC4	C4b	PC4
Academic	PC4	PC4	M4	PC4
Behavior	PC4	PC4 and M4	C4b	PC4 and M4
Post-Deployment				
Social	M4	X (Grandpa)	C4b	M4
Academic	M4	M4	C4b	M4
Behavior	M4	M4	M4	M4

Summary of Patterns Across Educational Experiences

A summary of the 24 patterns found across the three types of Educational Experiences

can be found below.

Table 4.18 Summary of Educational Experiences Patterns (EE)
Case Study 1
Social (EE1)
A. Social status of child during deployment disagreed upon by participant.
B. Mother's/soldier's role in child's social experience during deployment mostly non-existent.
C. Child had difficulty reintegrating post-deployment.
Academic (EE2)
A. During deployment, grades improved over both pre-deployment and post-deployment marks.
B. Mother's/soldier's participation in academics post-deployment increased over both pre-deployment and deployment.
Behavior (EE3)
A. Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver did not perceive behavioral issues as a factor pre-deployment, during deployment, or post-deployment.
Case Study 2
Social (EE1)
A. Social interaction of child with peers during deployment decreased.
B. Primary caregiver had no role socially pre- or post-deployment; however, during deployment, primary caregiver was active in the social experiences of child.
C. Mother's/soldier's role in child's social experience during deployment mostly non-existent.
Academic (EE2)
A. During deployment, grades improved over both pre-deployment and post-deployment marks.
Behavior (EE3)

A.	Child's behavior improved during deployment.
B.	Difficulty reintegrating family post-deployment.
Case Study 3	
Social (EE1)	
A.	Mother/soldier had little social communication during deployment.
Academic (EE2)	
A.	Mother/soldier was primary contact for school pre-deployment.
B.	Mother/soldier had little academic influence during deployment.
C.	Mother/soldier has not resumed pre-deployment role in child's academics.
Behavior (EE2)	
A.	Mother/soldier has not resumed pre-deployment role in child's behavior.
Case Study 4	
Social (EE1)	
A.	Mother/soldier stayed socially connected to child pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment.
Academic (EE2)	
A.	Child's grades improved during deployment.
B.	Mother/soldier stayed academically connected to children.
C.	Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver all perceived that primary caregiver had an active role in children's academics.
Behavior (EE3)	
A.	Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver agreed that child's behavior improved during deployment.
B.	Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver agreed there was good communication pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.
C.	Mother/soldier and primary caregiver were comfortable with shared roles.

Themes Resulting from the Intersection of Boundary Ambiguity and Educational Experiences

The final step of the data analysis was to study the patterns that emerged from the intersection of Boundary Ambiguity and Educational Experiences to identify themes that resulted from the intersection of both. Six themes were present (see Table 4.19)

.

Table 4.19 Summary Table of Themes Emerging from Analysis of Intersection of Boundary Ambiguity and Educational Experiences
1. When deployed mothers/soldiers did not maintain a role in child's educational experiences, families perceived role definitions as difficult to establish.
2. Communication during deployment was a key factor in establishing roles of mother/soldier, child, and caregiver.
3. Clearly defined roles in educational experiences of child were a key factor in reintegration.

4.	Schools were perceived as a resource to families experiencing deployment.
5.	Children perceived their roles as maintaining or improving their educational experiences as ways to support mother/soldier during deployment.
6.	When roles in children's educational experiences were not clearly defined, children perceived stress.

Theme one. When deployed mother/soldiers did not maintain a role in child's educational experiences, families perceived roles as more difficult to define (see Table 4.20). The child in Case Study 2 reported that the mother's/soldier's role in the child's social experience during deployment was mostly non-existent. The lack of participation in the social experience during deployment may have contributed to all participants in Case Study 2 also reporting perceptions of undefined roles. The mother/soldier in Case Study 3 reported difficulty defining roles post-deployment. All participants in Case Study 3 also reported little communication during the deployment. Conversely, all participants in Case Study 4 reported that mother/soldier communicated with children and caregiver daily. All participants in Case Study 4 also viewed mother/soldier as actively involved in the educational experiences of the children. The mother/soldier and primary caregiver reported their roles as a "team effort".

Table 4.20 Patterns Contributing to Theme One

Theme	Pattern for Boundary Ambiguity (BA) Contributing to Theme	Patterns for Educational Experiences (EE) Contributing to Theme
When deployed mothers/soldiers do not maintain a role in child's educational experiences, families perceive roles as more difficult to define.	BA2a Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers all reported perceptions of undefined roles.	*Case Study 2* EE1c Mother/soldier's role in child's social experience during deployment mostly non-existent.
	BA3a Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver reported difficulty defining roles post-deployment.	*Case Study 3* EE1a Mother/soldier had little social communication during deployment.
	BA1c Mother/soldier and primary caregiver viewed roles during deployment as a "team" effort.	*Case Study 4* EE1a Mother/soldier stayed socially connected to child pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment.
		Case Study 4

		EE2c	Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver all perceived that primary caregiver had an active role in children's academics.
		Case Study 4	
		EE3c	Mother/soldier and primary caregiver shared rolls.

Theme two. Communication during deployment was a key factor in establishing roles of mother/soldier, child, and caregiver (see Table 4.21). The patterns identified in this study supported the perception of difficulty establishing roles when there was a lack of communication. Participants in Case Study 2 had difficulty defining roles both during deployment and upon reintegration. The perception of lack of communication and difficulty was also present for Case Study 3, which also perceived difficulty defining roles upon reintegration. As well as the perception of good communication and success, Case Study 4 experienced defining roles during the deployment and upon reintegration.

Table 4.21 Patterns Contributing to Theme Two		
Theme	**Pattern for Boundary Ambiguity (BA) Contributing to Theme**	**Patterns for Educational Experiences (EE) Contributing to Theme**
Communication during deployment is a key factor in establishing roles of mother/soldier, child, and caregiver.	BA2d Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers reported lack of communication during deployment.	*Case Study 1* EE1a Social status of child during deployment disagreed upon by participants.
	BA3c Child and primary caregiver both cited avoidance of topic of deployment as a coping mechanism for deployment.	*Case Study 3* EE1a Mother/soldier had little social communication during deployment.
	BA3d Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver discussed lack of communication as a barrier during deployment.	
	BA1a Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver stated that "communication" was key to deployment success.	*Case Study 4* EE3b Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver agreed there was good communication pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment

Theme three. Clearly defined roles in educational experiences of child were a key factor

in reintegration (see Table 4.22). All of these patterns supported the perception in Case Study 1,

Case Study 2 and Case Study 3 that there were not clearly defined roles in the children's

educational experiences and reintegration was difficult. The patterns also supported the

perceived success Case Study 4 experienced defining roles in the children's educational

experiences as well as successful integration.

Table 4.22 Patterns Contributing to Theme Three		
Theme	**Pattern for Boundary Ambiguity (BA) Contributing to Theme**	**Patterns for Educational Experiences (EE) Contributing to Theme**
Clearly defined roles in educational experiences of child is a key factor in reintegration.	BA2c Mothers/soldiers [M1 and M2], one of the children [C1], and both primary caregivers [PC1, PC2] all reported stress in relationships prior to deployment, which grew during deployment, and relationships still stressed post-deployment	*Case Study 1* EE1c Child had difficulty reintegrating post-deployment
		Case Study 2 EE1b Primary caregiver had no role socially pre- or post-deployment; however, during deployment, primary caregiver was active in the social experiences of child.
		Case Study 2 EE1c Difficulty reintegrating family post-deployment.
	BA3b Child and primary caregiver both cited exclusion of mother/soldier as a coping mechanism for dealing with deployment.	*Case Study 3* EE2a Mother/soldier was primary contact for school pre-deployment.
		Case Study 3 EE2b Mother/soldier had little academic influence during deployment.
		Case Study 3 EE2c Mother/soldier has not resumed pre-deployment role in child's academics.
	BA1c Mother/soldier and primary caregiver viewed roles during deployment as a "team" effort.	*Case Study 4* EE1a Mother/soldier stayed socially connected to child pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment.
		Case Study 4 EE2b Mother/soldier stayed academically connected to children.
		Case Study 4 EE2c Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver all perceived

		that primary caregiver had an active role in children's academics.
		Case Study 4
		EE3c Mother/soldier and primary caregiver were comfortable with shared roles.

Theme four. Schools were perceived as a resource to families experiencing deployment (4.23). All case study participants discussed how schools could be a resource to deployed families experiencing deployment. Case Study 1, Case Study 2, and Case Study 3 participants stated that they did not receive assistance with the educational experiences of their children. All of the Case Study 4 participants, however, identified specific supports the children received from their schools. It was important to note that the children in Case Study 1, Case Study 2, and Case Study 3 all attended civilian schools, and the children in Case Study 4 attended Department of Defense schools.

Table 4.23 Patterns Contributing to Theme Four		
Theme	**Pattern for Boundary Ambiguity (BA) Contributing to Theme**	**Patterns for Educational Experiences (EE) Contributing to Theme**
Schools were perceived as a resource to families experiencing deployment.	BA1b Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver cited school as providing assistance and resources pre-deployment, during deployment, and post-deployment.	
	BA2e Mothers/soldiers, children, and primary caregivers reported lack of involvement from school.	
	BA3f Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver cited lack of school support.	

Theme five. Children perceived their roles as maintaining or improving their educational experiences as ways to support mother/soldier during deployment (see Table 4.24). It was important to note that this theme did not derive from a specific question about supporting the mother/soldiers, and it was not recognized as a pattern until data examination. Although Case

91

Study 3 was not included in the pattern for theme five, mother/soldier, primary caregiver, and

child did report that grades and behaviors did not change throughout the deployment process.

However, the child did not state that this was a conscious effort in support of mother/soldier.

Table 4.24 Patterns Contributing to Theme Five		
Theme	**Pattern for Boundary Ambiguity (BA) Contributing to Theme**	**Patterns for Educational Experiences (EE) Contributing to Theme**
Children perceived their roles as maintaining or improving their educational experiences as ways to support mother/soldier during deployment.		*Case Study 1* EE2a During deployment, grades improved over both pre-deployment and post-deployment marks.
		Case Study 1 EE3a Mother/soldier, child, and primary caregiver did not perceive behavioral issues as a factor pre-deployment, during deployment, or post-deployment.
		Case Study 2 EE2a During deployment, grades improved over both pre-deployment and post-deployment marks.
		Case Study 2 EE3a Child's behavior improved during deployment.
		Case Study 4 EE2a Children's grades maintained or improved during deployment.
		Case Study 4 EE3a Mother/soldier, children and primary caregiver agreed that child's behavior improved during deployment.

Theme six. When roles in children's Educational Experiences were not clearly defined,

children perceived stress (see Table 4.25).   Theme six was supported by patterns in Case Study

1 and Case Study 2, which supported the perception of feelings of being "lost" and "not fitting

in" during deployment. Although this theme was only supported by two of the case studies, after

careful consideration, the researcher determined that indeed it was a pattern. As with Theme

One, the unstated converse to Theme Six contributed to making Theme Six true. Theme Six

stated, "When roles in children's educational experiences are not clearly defined, children feel

stress." The converse was "When roles in children's educational experiences are defined,

children do not feel (or feel less) stress." Neither the child in Case Study 3, nor the children in

Case Study 4 reported perceptions of stress; however, both Case Study 3 and Case Study 4 had

clearly defined roles during the deployment. Case Study 3 exhibited Closed Boundaries that

made the deployment fairly uneventful for the participants, but reintegration was more difficult.

Case Study 4 exhibited Partially Closed Boundaries, which included the mother/soldier in the

educational experiences of the children.

Table 4.25 Patterns Contributing to Theme Six		
Theme	**Pattern for Boundary Ambiguity (BA) Contributing to Theme**	**Patterns for Educational Experiences (EE) Contributing to Theme**
When roles in children's educational experiences are not clearly defined, children feel stress.	BA2b Children reported feeling "lost" during deployment.	*Case Study 1* EE1a Social status of child during deployment disagreed upon by participants.
		Case Study 1 EE1b Mother/soldier's role in child's social experience during deployment mostly non-existent.
		Case Study 2 EE1a Social interaction of child with peers during deployment decreased

Summary

Chapter 4 presented a data analysis for the study of the perceptions of mothers/soldiers,

caregivers, and school-age children regarding their roles in the educational experiences of the

children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. Chapter 4 began with the

procedures used in analyzing the data presented through the perceptions of the study participants

and concluded with a discussion of the patterns and themes that emerged through the

examination of the data.

Chapter 5—Discussion and Conclusions

This study examined the perceptions of mothers, primary caregivers, and school-age children regarding their educational roles during maternal Army Reserve Component deployments. It also explored how mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers perceived boundary ambiguity in their children's educational experiences when a reserve component mother deployed. Based on the perceptions of those interviewed, six themes emerged that addressed the overarching research questions of this study. This chapter was divided into six sections: (a) discussion of research question one, (b) discussion of research question two, (c) significance of study, (d) implications for practice, (e) recommendations for future studies, and (f) summary.

Discussion of Research Question One

What were the perceptions of reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers in regard to their roles in the educational experiences of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments?

This study explored Boss' (2002) Boundary Ambiguity and Ambiguous Loss Model (ABC—X) which identified deployment as a cause of stress.

A—the provoking event or stressor/ambiguous loss (deployment)

B—the families resources or strengths at the time of the event

C—the meaning attached to the event by the family/perceptions (boundary ambiguity)

X—stress and crisis (p. 96).

Each of the case study participants perceived the deployment as a stressor/ambiguous loss (see Table 4.5). Although deployment was perceived as a stress on the participants, not all of the cases perceived the deployment adversely. Boss (1986) stated that a stressor (ambiguous loss)

did not necessarily impact the family negatively; rather, "it is the perception of the event as mediated by internal and external contexts that determines whether the family will cope or fall into crisis" (p. 270). In this study the researcher discovered, when ambiguous loss was perceived as boundary ambiguity, it created family stress.

The researcher discovered that the more study participants perceived that the reserve component mothers maintained a role in their children's educational experiences, the easier families found reassignment of family roles and adjustment to the psychological absence/physical presence or physical absence/psychological presence experienced during all stages of deployment. In addition, the researcher discovered that families who perceived the reserve component mother as maintaining a role in the children's educational experiences also perceived being more insulated to the dysfunction of deployments.

Case Studies 2 and 4 supported the theme of the importance of the reserve component mother maintaining a role during deployment. Case Study 2 participants experienced open boundary ambiguity during the deployment. Case Study 2 participants did not discuss, maintain or act out clear roles. They adjusted poorly to the deployment and also experienced difficulties with reintegration (Hill, 1949, p. 82). Although M2 was identified as actively involved in the educational experiences of C2 pre-deployment (see Table 4.13), she was not perceived as being influential during deployment. M2 stated, "I sort of was black-balled….I felt like I was denied a lot of parenting things. I would even tell her [PC2] I didn't appreciate it….It was like he's there with her [PC2], so she's playing the parental role, and I was just on the side." In addition, C2 did not identify either M2, PC2, or any other adult as having an influential role in his educational experiences during deployment. While M2 and PC2 identified PC2 as being the biggest

96

influence on C2's educational experiences, C2 identified himself as the person being the most influential. This role ambiguity caused turmoil post-deployment for M2. M2 stated:

I was the outsider for a while when I first came back. I would say at least 2 ½ months. I was the outsider. He [C2] was so upset with me--I was the bad person. You know, and I understood, but also, you expect different. You gotta give 'em space, but you still got to be the parent. It was hard. It was hard because I was trying to reach back to my kids [M2 also has two children who are over age 18 and out of school], and for a while, they weren't. It finally just got to a point, I was an emotional mess, and then I think it was the fact that they started needing "Mom". He started needing "Mom", started realizing I'm here. And so then it was like "okay", you know, he could breathe and "Mom's" here. But it takes a while. It does take a while for them to accept you back and start building the trust and the relationship.

Conversely, Case Study 4 experienced partially closed boundary ambiguity. Participants in Case Study 4 reassigned household duties, but also worked to keep M4 as a decision maker and active participant within the family. Roles were clearly defined and maintained (Hill, 1949, p. 82). Participants in Case Study 4 perceived their roles during deployment as a "team" effort. PC4 stated:

It [parenting during deployment] was a team. If things were getting a little bit out of hand, and I had to talk to her [M4] when I got a chance to talk to her, she would get on their [C4a and C4b] back. We would put her on speaker, and she would just be going off all the time on them. I think it was a team.

97

Although PC4 was perceived as having the greatest impact on the educational experiences of C4a and C4b during the deployment (see Table 4.16), C4a, C4b, and PC4 all stated that M4 had an impact either academically or behaviorally during the deployment.

Another significant element in establishing roles during deployment was communication. Hill's 1949 study of post-World War II family reintegration identified the factors that affected the patterns of family adjustment to separation and reunion. Hill reported good adjustment to the crisis of separation involved several steps:

> …closing of ranks, shifting of responsibilities and activities of the father to other members, continuing the family routines, maintaining husband-wife and father-child relationships by correspondence and visits, utilizing the resources, relatives, and neighbors, and carrying on plans for reunion. (p. 82)

Hill's findings were similar to Boss' (1999) discoveries about Ambiguous Loss Theory and the opening and closing of boundaries. The perceptions of the participants in Case Study 1, Case Study 2, and Case Study 4 supported that communication (Case Study 4) or the lack of communication (Case Study 1, Case Study 2, and Case Study 3) during deployment was a key factor in establishing the roles of the reserve component mother, child, and caregiver.

Case Study 4 participants not only communicated on a daily basis with each other, but they also reached out to other potential resources such as the schools the children attended, other family members, and neighbors to ensure supports were in place. Consistency of communication was also important for this group. M4 stated, "I usually called them every morning, so it was always like from me to her [PC4]. She would email me every day, every night to let me know what happened with the kids, and I would call her right away in the morning."

Conversely, Case Study 3 participants communicated with each other only about once a month. M3 discussed her frustration with not receiving any type of correspondence either from her child or about her child from PC3. M3 stated:

I'm like, you [C3] don't understand how much I need pictures right now. I need you to--I need to see pictures when you do stuff--when you go to dances, when you do wrestling. [PC3] would send me the wrestling videos, and when [C3] went on spring break, you know, I was like, "I want to see pictures". It was like pulling teeth trying to get pictures.…They don't realize that you need all that information to make you feel like you know what is going on back there.…I needed to know, to feel like I knew what was going on with them socially, academically, and his sports and stuff like that.

All three participants in Case Study 3 discussed the lack of communication as a barrier during the deployment.

While most people understood why the elements of a deployment, such as lengthy absences, limited communication, and boundary ambiguity, could cause stress on a family, few people realize that often the most stressful time of the deployment process was during the post-deployment stage where service members were trying to reintegrate back into the family. Mateczun and Holmes (1996) stated that the reunion time, although filled with excitement at seeing the service member after an absence, was also a time of renegotiation for the family and would often create dysfunction. The perceptions of participants in Case Study 1, Case Study 2, Case Study 3, and Case Study 4 supported that clearly defined roles in the educational experiences of the child were a key factor in reintegration. Hill (1949) stated that good adjustment to reunion involved "…the attainment of a working dynamic equilibrium in which reorganization of roles into complementary patterns has been satisfactorily reallocated, and the

99

emotional strains and stresses of readjustment have not left serious scars on family relations" (p. 97). Conversely, poor adjustments were made by those families "…who were unable to reorganize to meet the demands of the new situations, or who suffered extreme emotional maladjustment or nervous breakdown" (p. 84).

Hill's (1949) assertions about reintegration in the context of Boss' (2002) Boundary Ambiguity and Ambiguous Loss Model, ABC—X, assisted in describing the perceptions of the four cases in this study. Participants in both Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 perceived a lack of clearly defined roles which were the characteristics described in Open Boundary Ambiguity. This led to difficulty reintegrating during post-deployment for both the mothers/soldiers and children in Case Study 1 and Case Study 2.

Case Study 3 participants also experienced difficulty with reintegration. The characteristics of Closed Boundary Ambiguity were perceived by Case Study 3 participants. During M3's deployment, C3 and PC3 unintentionally excluded M3 from any role within the family under the pretext of protecting M3 from worry. PC3 stated, "I only told her [M3] the good stuff. I always kept it positive when I spoke to her. I know her. She would worry like nobody you've ever seen." When the researcher asked if keeping things from M3 so not to upset her was consistent to pre-deployment routines, PC3 responded:

> If there's an issue with anybody, I think it's good policy that if you have an issue, deal
>
> with it, and get to the bottom of it and move on. It's amazing because I didn't realize a lot
>
> of this stuff 'til I'm sitting here talking about it because--yeah, that was 180º out of phase
>
> for me because. Wow, um--yeah, because that was really 180º out of phase for me.
>
> Because if there was an issue, or, whatever the nature of it may be, yeah, I would let it
>
> out before and after. But when she was gone, I suppressed every bit of that.

In Case Study 4, participants perceived M4 as being available and active in the educational experiences of the children. C4a stated, "During the deployment, she was like 'You better behave, do your homework, everything you need to do'. It was the same way [as prior to deployment]." Echoing the characteristics of Boss' (2012) definition of Type One Ambiguous Loss where there was physical absence and psychological presence, C4b described M4's role during the deployment as, "She was always there; always checking on me." Although participants in Case Study 4 reported adjustments once M4 came back from her deployment, none of the participants perceived any particular difficulties during reintegration.

Discussion of Research Question Two

How did reserve component mothers, school-age children, and primary caregivers perceive boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss in their children's educational experiences when a reserve component mother deployed?

All participants in Case Study 1, Case Study 2, Case Study 3, and Case Study 4 perceived schools as a resource to families experiencing deployment. Faber et al. (2008), in their study titled *Ambiguous Absence, Ambiguous Presence: A Qualitative Study of Military Reserve Families in Wartime* stated, "The degree to which a family closed its boundaries seemed to fluctuate on the basis of the level of ambiguity the family was experiencing." Utilizing Boss' (2002) ABC-X model for boundary ambiguity and ambiguous loss, the researcher discovered that variable B—the family's perceived resources or strengths at the time of the event—may have been a factor to how opened or closed a family was able to adjust their boundaries. A study by Huebner and Mancini (2005) also supported resources and strengths as crucial to perceptions on ambiguity, "Adolescents who felt supported by others seemed to exhibit enhanced resiliency, that is, their personal coping skills were complemented by support" (p. 4).

101

The participants in Case Study 4 reported extensive support from the schools the students

attended pre- and post-deployment, as well as the school the students transferred to while living

with the primary caregiver during the deployment. It should be noted that the schools the

children in Case Study 4 attended were Department of Defense (DoD) schools. M4 stated:

> They [DoD schools] treat the kids different because they're dealing with kids that –
>
> maybe 75%--of their parents are gone. So, I know that in public schools, they were not
>
> going to be able to give them the support and help. They were not going to have the
>
> concept. So I think the school has like—they're prepared to see Mom and Dad be gone.

From the time M4 found out about her pending deployment and notified the schools, all of the

schools involved began working toward a successful transition. M4 stated:

> The first thing they [school personnel] asked us for was a family care plan. Second thing
>
> is copy of your orders. Power of attorney in case [PC4] has to make any decisions. We
>
> both had to go to the school and make sure that they know who is taking care of the kids,
>
> because you are deployed like, lunches are free, so you don't have to pay money for that
>
> while you are deployed or on orders. The principal talks to you, all the staff tried to get
>
> involved in enrollment to make sure they are covering everything the kids have,
>
> everything they need during that time and [PC4] had all the contact information she
>
> needed in case something happened during that time.

In contrast, M1, C1, and PC1 in Case Study 1; M2 and C2 in Case Study 2; and M3, C3

and PC3 in Case Study 3 identified their schools as a potential resource, but did not perceive

their schools as providing resources to the family during the pre-deployment, deployment, or

post-deployment processes. M2 explained:

I had informed the school that I was deploying and you know, tried to let them know that if he's upset, or you know, just to know, he might not be 100% sometimes because of you know, the parent being gone…I went and spoke to…his school counselor, the principal, and I think like an attendance person…They were just like "Okay." They take it in, they listen to you, they do the nodding-grin thing.…So I tried to, you know, explain that to them, and then I tried to explain to them, you know, I would be home for two weeks during the school year, and you know, I would like to be with my son. We won't be in one central area, you know, because I have kids spread out, so I tried to work with them on his sports and stuff, and it turned into a big, ugly ordeal. A lot of schools, they don't understand.…I tried to talk to the coach to see if we could set up a deal to, you know, where it wouldn't penalize him on all the games. He might not make it to one or two practices per week [for the two weeks M2 was home for leave], but if he could still go to the games and participate and stuff, only due to the fact that I was only home for two weeks. I told him [the coach] that I understand the rules are if you don't go to school or you don't show up for practice, you can't play the game, but I said, "But if you could just keep in mind the situation. It's not that he's not wanting to go or skipping out. It's because I've not seen him for 'x' amount of time." I think it was 6 months maybe. And they did not let him play.…It was a mess, and I don't expect them to conform to, you know, the military, but be understanding.…This is an exception to the rule. It's an exception to the rule.

Although there was an expectation that schools would help provide resources for the educational experiences of their children, there was also a realization that public schools were not familiar enough with military culture to meet the unique needs of the children. M3 stated:

103

I think the National Guard is probably different, too, because I know at like [name of town with high population of active duty military] some of the kids who go to school at [name of DoD school] are very familiar with the military, and they probably do good with that, but the National Guard like at [name of town with low population of military personnel], like there might be a couple of military parents there, so the school's just not really—I don't think they really know what to do or to even do anything.

The perception that non-military schools were unsure of what to do was not only observed by parents, but it was also recognized by school personnel. Mmari, Roche, Sudhinaraset, and Blum (2009) found that, "School personnel also commented that many teachers and counselors are not prepared to deal with deployment issues among the military students. School personnel also need special training" (p. 455).

Far from experiencing problems, especially academically and behaviorally, this study found that children perceived their roles as maintaining or improving their educational experiences as a way to support their reserve component mothers during deployment. In Case Study 1, Case Study 2, and Case Study 4, participants perceived children as either intentionally improving or intentionally maintaining their behaviors and or grades while their mothers were deployed. PC2 stated, "He [C2] behaved good, and I know just from talking to like, his sisters and stuff, that it was better than when he was home."

This perception was supported by grade reports obtained from participants as well as the lack of behavior reports that participants had. It was important to note that this was not a question directly asked of participants, and the pattern was not recognized prior to disaggregating the data. That Case Study 3 did not report this as a perception did not necessarily mean that it did not occur. C3's report cards did not indicate any change in grades from pre-deployment

through post-deployment, nor did C3 have any behavior reports. However, none of the Case Study 3 participants mentioned identifying grade or behavior maintenance as intentional.

Flake et al. (2009) found that internalizing behaviors were more commonly observed than externalizing behaviors, and a study by Huebner and Mancini (2005) found "…many adolescents reported behavior changes when a parent is deployed. These included changes in school performance…" (p. 4). Although these two studies documented changes in military children's academics and behaviors when a parent deployed, the researchers observed negative changes. This was in contrast to the perceptions in this study that the children intentionally attempted to improve or maintain their academics and behaviors as documented in this research study.

The final theme emerging from this study revealed that when roles in children's educational experiences were not clearly defined, children perceived stress. Guided by Boss' ambiguous loss framework, Huebner et al. (2007) studied the outcomes that impeded teenage development in the absence of a key military family member. They reported four response themes: overall perception of uncertainty and loss, boundary ambiguity, changes in mental health, and relationship conflict. In this study, participant perceptions of uncertainty and loss as well as boundary ambiguity in Case Study 1 and Case Study 2 were negative perceptions that hindered the well-being of the children. C1 stated, "I guess worrying too much would be the best way to describe it, because I was somewhat scared to lose her [M1]. [long pause] I really--I would be lost and wouldn't know where to go or have anyone to talk to." Not knowing who to depend on, who to talk to, or who to ask questions of contributed to children's perceptions of stress.

Significance of the Study

Secretary of Defense Panetta (2012c), in a speech given to the Military Child Education Coalition, stated, "There are about 1.5 million school-aged military children, and more than 80 percent of them attend public schools in every state" (Department of Defense). Teachers, school counselors and principals have expressed concern that they are not adequately prepared for all of the changes in children's needs and behaviors. Houston et. al (2009) stated:

> Research has found that children with a deployed parent may exhibit increased anxiety, sadness, depression, behavior or disciplinary problems, and somatic complaints. Medway and colleagues found a strong relationship between distress in the spouse of a deployed soldier and the behavioral problems in children. Families of deployed troops report more family life stressors than families of non-deployed soldiers, and child maltreatment rates are greater for military families with a deployed family member compared with families whose service member is not deployed. Seventy percent of Army spouses expected to have problems coping with an Army deployment that lasted more than 1 year, and one-fifth of spouses of soldiers deployed to the GWOT (*Global War On Terrorism)* said their oldest child coped poorly with the soldier being away from home. (806)

This study was significant because educators were interested in training and information in areas such as deployment and reunion adjustment, non-deployed spousal intervention, and military coping strategies in order to be better prepared for future deployments (Caliber Associates, 1992). Because children of reserve component members were unique to the military, awareness of the issues that affected their educational performance during deployments created an opportunity for educators to provide needed scaffolding for their educational success. A

Report on the Impact of Deployment of Members of the Armed Forces on Their Dependent Children (2010b) stated:

- Almost three quarters (73%) of school-age children experienced increased levels of fear and anxiety, while older teens were less likely to have increased levels of fear and anxiety (55%).

- Nearly three quarters (72%) of school-age children showed an increased degree of pride in having a military parent. At the same time, two-thirds (64 percent) of them exhibited higher levels of distress over discussions of the war.

- While demonstrating an increased level of independence (44%), a little over half of adolescents (53%) experienced academic problems during deployment.

- Children of reserve component members in all age groups, like their peers with active duty parents, exhibited increased problem behaviors:
  - 50% of children had increased problem behaviors at home.
  - 34% of children had increased problem behaviors at school (p. 17).

During deployment, the routine of school was often one of the few constants that students could count on, and school often provided a needed reprieve from the sometimes chaotic home environment.

This study's focus on maternal reserve component deployments should open dialogue and provide insight on the particularly understudied phenomenon of mothers' deployments. Of the relatively few studies focused on maternal deployments of all service members (active and reserve component) the *Report on the Impact of Deployment of Members of the Armed Forces on Their Dependent Children* (2010) stated:

Children's adjustment to maternal deployment was significantly associated with mothers'

ability to provide child care, the type of deployment (combat zone or elsewhere), and the

level of changes in children's lives. Nevertheless, there were no long-term, negative

effects of maternal deployments on children being observed (Pierce, Vinokur, & Buck,

1998). Ternus (2009) conducted an exploratory study on the deployed female Service

members and their adolescent children during the current conflicts. She reported that

maternal absence due to deployment created significant changes in family routines and

parenting, which may be unique to maternal absence from the home. (p. 22)

As the military moved toward total integration of women in the military, coupled with the

continued use of reserve component forces as a more cost-efficient way to augment a shrinking

active force, this study was significant because it added to the small body of research available

on reserve component deployments and the almost non-existent research specific to maternal

deployments.

In addition to providing schools with varied perspectives on the educational experiences

of maternal reserve component families, this study also provided military personnel with a

unique perspective not often viewed independently of the entire reserve component. Pre-

deployment, deployment, and post-deployment family preparations were not gender specific, nor

were there distinctive primary caregiver training outside of the traditional non-deploying parent

role. Three of the four cases in the study assigned someone other than the non-deploying parent

as the primary caregiver.

This study was also significant due to the disparity between the increase in reserve

component deployments and the amount of research that has been devoted to studying the impact

on the families of this population. At different times during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan,

the percentage of the force on the ground reached near and over 20% for this part-time force (O'Bryant & Waterhouse, 2008). During that time, numerous studies were done documenting changes in family dynamics among active duty military members due to deployments, but little research was done as far as understanding the impact on reserve component families and was almost nonexistent in relation to educational impact. Harrison and Vannest stated that, "research on the impact of lengthy wartime deployments on Reservists' children is scarce" (17). This study was significant because it helped bridge the gap in the research that had not even begun to uncover the current experiences, much less the future implications for this population.

Implications for Practice

This study provided knowledge that reserve component families were a unique piece of the United States military that were not always easily identified in everyday situations. An important element in schools assisting reserve component families was simply the knowledge that they existed within the schools. Besides a parent "wearing the uniform", most civilian schools attempted to identify military children through enrollment questions; however, because of the lack of knowledge about military culture, many schools did not understand the role of the reserve component soldier. For example, one low-military population school asked this question on enrollment forms: "Is student an active duty military dependent? (Parent is currently on active duty orders.)" Reserve component soldiers who were not currently on active duty orders would answer "no" to this question; however, theoretically, at any time, the reserve component soldier could be called to active duty orders. Asking such an exclusory question undermined the intent of the school to identify military children.

Not only could this study help schools reexamine how they identified military children, but this study could also encourage administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff that

109

they needed to be more persistent and aggressive in helping reserve component children, especially when a parent deploys. C2 stated, "It [help] was offered at the beginning—like, if it [help] was offered at the end, or like in the middle, whenever things did get a little rough, I might have used it." Mmari, Roche, Sudhinaraset and Blum (2009) found that many teachers and counselors were not prepared to deal with deployment issues among military students. In addition, as found by Flake et. al (2009) internalizing behaviors were more commonly observed in military children with deployed parents than externalizing behaviors. It was often difficult for school personnel to "see" when something was bothering a child whose parent was deployed.

There were over 40,000 women in the reserve component of the United States Military who had school-age children. Of those, over 41% were single (Reserve Duty Family File, 2012). This study provided rich and varied examples of non-parental primary caregivers. By studying these examples, schools should consider that many of the primary caregivers, potentially, have not had children in their care for a long time or ever and may not be familiar with the school system. PC2 stated, "My kids were already graduated and gone, so we were kind of starting over with a 15-year-old, so I was a little nervous." In addition to providing resources to the children, schools should contemplate what assistance and guidance they can also give to the non-parental primary caregiver.

This study could also serve as a resource for military personnel involved in assisting reserve component soldiers through the deployment process. Through pre- and post-deployment Yellow Ribbon observations, attending several Military Child Education Coalition conferences, along with an examination of the literature provided throughout the deployment process, the researcher was able to discern that many of the panel presenters, as well as reserve component leadership, and Family Readiness Group (FRG) leadership were either employed full-time in the

reserve component or had a spouse who was employed full-time in the reserve component. Although a wealth of information and experience, the researcher observed that there was a distinct difference between full-time reserve component soldiers (those who wore the uniform every day) and traditional reserve component soldiers (those who went to civilian jobs every day and wore the uniform one weekend a month and two weeks in the summer). This study identified several of the differences from proximity to military installations and schools to knowledge of resources available to reserve component soldiers. The results of this study could encourage reserve component leadership to focus on the types of resources available to and the type of training given to their traditional reserve component soldiers and their families.

A study done on reserve component members from the first Gulf War by Benotsch, Brailey, Vasterling, Uddo, Constans and Sutker (2000) noted that the more time that elapsed after the deployment was over resulted in increased emotional distress by the reserve component member and decreased resources available to deal with the stress. This study could assist military leadership in reconsidering the timing and resources of the post-deployment itinerary. M2 stated:

The differences between Guard and Active Duty, once we're [Guard] done with our deployment, we're done. We don't have the money coming in. We don't have "Yeah, your house is still here." You don't have the job. A lot of people do lose your job. So, you have to try to come back, find a job, raise your children, deal with the issues you come back with and carry on. If you're full-time, you have all that, but if you're a traditional M-Day [Man-Day] soldier, you have absolutely nothing. No support, no nothing. You're basically—your order—you come back, you have your leave, and when that is done, you're done. "Bye, see ya'. You're on your own. We don't care. We'll see

111

you next month or in two months", and that's it. There's nothing there for you. If you're

having a hard time, you're homeless or whatever.

M3 also found the post-deployment agenda difficult to absorb and offered reasons as to why

some soldiers have difficulty retaining the information:

When you come back, they hit you so hard on all of these mandatory briefings. All this

stuff. Your focus is just to try to catch your breath and get back in touch with your

family, get back in touch with your children. Within the first 30 days, we had to go to this

Yellow Ribbon meeting, and you know what? During those first 30 days, I was trying to

get my house organized; I was trying to get my family situated; and then I had to turn

around and drop everything to go listen to the same thing that they told me at the demobe

[demobilization] site. And then you have to do it again in 60 days and 90 days. I

understand that they want to make sure that you have all these things, but it's just so

much at once, because you're trying to reconnect. You don't get that opportunity,

because then they want more from you again.

This study supported that there were many resources available to reserve component

soldiers who were returning from deployment, such as free, confidential counseling through

Military One Source. By adjusting the post-deployment Yellow Ribbon timeframe, soldiers may

be more likely to recognize they need help and then to seek the help they need. M2 stated:

I think they [military leadership] do it [Yellow Ribbon] too quickly. Allow me to--allow

the person to come home and just sort of like--dump everything and get their priorities

straight. You know, getting my family situated was my priority and I was so worried

about that. You know, I think, "I don't need counseling, I'm fine. I can juggle

everything." Well, in all actuality, you can't, and now when you're finally trying to get

112

everything back together, that's when you hit rock bottom. And now, when you finally

get a moment to breathe, you're like, "OK," then you need it, but they've already

crammed all these meetings down your throat. You're just like, "Whatever. I've gone this

long, I'll just keep going."

Schools, as well as the military components, were well-established systems with vast and

effective resources and traditions. Navigating the sheer number and size of resources available

could leave the most experienced soldier, mother, caretaker, or student too intimidated to ask

questions and too self-conscious to seek help; never mind, the anxiety caused to the most

vulnerable. Encouraging schools to assess how they were identifying reserve component

children, to be more persistent about seeking out reserve component children to offer them help

throughout the deployment cycle, and to support non-traditional caregivers; as well as

encouraging the reserve component military to seek traditional reserve component soldiers and

their spouses, both male and female, as experts, and to reevaluate the Yellow Ribbon timeframe

post-deployment could assist in more dynamic educational experiences for the children and

smoother transitions home for their parents.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Recommendation One

One theme that emerged in this study was that children perceived their role of

maintaining or improving their educational experiences as a way to support their reserve

component mother during deployment. Huebner and Mancini (2005) identified, "Family support

for the parent remaining at home is important to these adolescents as evidenced by their attempts

to protect them (usually their mothers) and other siblings from negative emotions and stress" (p.

4). A study identifying how reserve component children perceive "supporting" their deployed

parent, especially their mothers, would be an interesting comparison or contrast to Huebner and Mancini's findings.

In addition, there have been multiple studies examining the effects of working mothers on the educational development of children. Results on whether a mother who worked produced positive or negative influences on children vary depending on individual circumstances. A Danish study by Dunifon, Hansen, Nicholson, and Nielsen (2013) reported that "maternal employment has a positive effect on children's academic performance in all specifications, particularly when women work part-time" (p. 1). The study acknowledges, "This is in contrast with the larger literature on maternal employment, much of which takes place in other contexts, and which finds no or a small negative effect of maternal employment on children's cognitive development and academic performance" (p. 1).

The perceptions from the maternal reserve component study's theme five finding that, "Children perceived their roles as maintaining or improving their educational experiences as ways to support mother/soldier during deployment," was also in contrast to the results of the larger literature active duty studies that reported academics as an area that suffered during parental deployment. A study that classified traditional reserve component service as a "part-time job" and studied the grade point averages of the children of reserve component parents might offer parallels into Dunifon's et. al (2013) assertions.

Recommendation Two

Because traditional reserve component soldiers did not wear their uniforms every day, they were not always identified as members of the military. In addition, reserve component soldiers did not often identify with being in the military unless they were actively participating or preparing for a military exercise, which could have been only one weekend a month and two

114

weeks in the summer per year. This made it difficult for schools to identify children who may

have needed supportive resources that the school had available when their parents deployed.

A study on the ways schools identify military children with an emphasis on how reserve

component children were or were not separately identified could assist schools in identifying

possible gaps of support for these students. In addition, a study with those characteristics could

also help clarify to schools the different needs that reserve component children have than their

active duty counterparts.

Recommendation Three

Many studies (Huebner & Mancini, 2005; Applewhite & Mays, 1996; Chandra, Burns,

Tanielian, Jaycox & Scott, 2008; Mmari, Roche, Sudhinaraset & Blum, 2009) identified the

"primary caregiver" as the "non-deploying parent"; however, only one of the four cases in this

study identified the child(ren)'s father as the primary caregiver on the Family Care Plan. It

would be beneficial to conduct a larger research study of reserve component mothers to identify

who the "typical" primary caregiver is on the Family Care Plan and perhaps investigate the

results.

Recommendation Four

This study found that schools were perceived as a resource to families experiencing

deployment. The participants in Case Study 4 who attended the Department of Defense (DoD)

schools were extremely satisfied with their educational experiences and gave a lot of credit to the

guidance of the schools. In contrast, Case Study 1, Case Study 2, and Case Study 3 did not

convey the same enthusiasm for their schools or their educational experiences. A Research and

Development process for creating a handbook for schools with low military populations could be

a beneficial resource for administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff who wanted to assist military children, but were not sure how.

Recommendation Five

For each case in this study, the researcher chose to interview the reserve component mother, child(ren), and primary caregiver to focus on maximum role acquisition and loss most closely related to the educational experiences of the child(ren). The researcher considered also interviewing the child(ren)'s teachers but determined that teachers did not fit into the theoretical framework of the study. The researcher determined that in Boss' (2002) Boundary Ambiguity and Ambiguous Loss Model—ABC-X (see figure 2.2), teachers could have been "B", a resource contributing to how the reserve component mothers, children, and primary caregivers perceived boundary ambiguity, but teachers would most likely not actually be part of the reassignment of roles held by the reserve component mother prior to the deployment that contributed to the educational experiences of the child. A study focused on the role of teachers in the educational experiences of reserve component children could address the role teachers play and assist schools in determining ways teachers could act as positive resources in the educational experiences of the children.

Summary

Chapter 5 reported the conclusions of this study. This chapter began with a discussion of the overarching research questions. It was followed by an examination of the significance of the study, implications for practice, and recommendations for future studies. As of 2011, over 487,000 children of reserve component families were listed as between the ages of 5-18 (Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense), and almost all of them attended schools that were not located on a military installation. For the most part, the educational experiences of reserve

component children have gone undocumented and research is almost nonexistent when limited to maternal reserve component soldiers. Little was known about the impact of deployment on reserve component families. Although the past 12 years of war has seen unprecedented use of the reserve component in the deployment rotation cycle, research has not even begun to uncover the current experiences, much less the future implications of this population.

The results from this study could potentially impact practice for both schools and the military. Unique challenges are posed when mothers who were also soldiers in the reserve components were separated from their children through deployments, and as one of the few dependable constants in a child's life, schools should be in the lead when it comes to providing support for reserve component children. As schools constantly seek quality educational experiences for all children, reserve component children, though a small population, should not be overlooked.

References

Applewhite, L.W., & Mays, R.A. (1996). Parent-child separation: A comparison of maternally and paternally separated children in military families. *Child Adolescent Social Work,* 13(1), 23-39.

Bellamy, C. (2004). *The state of the world's children 2005: Childhood under threat*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.

Benotsch, E. G., Brailey, K., Vasterling, J. J., Uddo, M., Constans, J. I., & Sutker, P. B. (2000). War zone stress, personal and environmental resources, and PTSD symptoms in Gulf War veterans: A longitudinal perspective. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 109(2), 205-213.

Bergenheier, P.S. (1995). Parents and children: War and separation. *Journal of Military Nursing Research,* 1(3), 30-33, 45.

Boss, P. (1999). *Ambiguous loss: Learning to live with unresolved grief.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Boss, P. (2002). *Family stress management.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Boss, P. (2012). Four questions about ambiguous loss. Retrieved from http://www.ambiguousloss.com/four_questions.php

Boss, P., & Greenberg, J. (1984). Family boundary ambiguity: A new variable in family stress theory. *Family Process, 23*(4), 535-546.

Chandra, A., Burns, R. M., Tanielian, T., Jaycox, L. H., & Scott, M. M. (2008). *Understanding the impact of deployment on children and families* (Working Paper). Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/2008/RAND_WR566.pdf

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative*

and qualitative research. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Defense Manpower Data Center. (2005). March 2005 status of forces survey of active duty Members. Washington, DC: Defense Manpower Data Center.

Defense Manpower Data System. (2012). DRS 51504: Selected reserve females with school age (5-18) child dependents by component, race, Hispanic indicator and marital status. Washington, DC: Defense Manpower Data Center.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Department of Defense. (2010a). Department of Defense: Instruction number 1342.19. Retrieved from http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/134219p.pdf

Department of Defense. (2010b). *Report on the impact of deployment of members of the armed forces on their dependent children.* Retrieved from http://www.militaryhomefront. dod.mil/12038/Project%20Documents/MilitaryHOMEFRONT/Reports/Report_to_ Congress_ on_Impact_of_Deployment_on_Military_Children.pdf

Department of Defense. (2012a). Demographics 2012: Profile of the military community. Retrieved from http://www.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/ Reports/2012_Demographics_Report.pdf

Department of Defense. (2012b). Dictionary of military terms. Retrieved from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/

Department of Defense. (2012c). Military Children Education Coalition speech. Retrieved from http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1690

Department of Defense. (2012d). National Guard and Reserve equipment report for fiscal year

2013. Retrieved from http://ra.defense.gov/documents/publications/

NGRER%20FY2013%20Final%20with%20covers%20-%20FEB%2012.pdf

Department of Defense. (2013). Memorandum for secretaries of the military departments acting

undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness chiefs of the military services.

Retrieved from http://www.defense.gov/news/wisrjointmemo.pdf

Devilbiss, M. C. (1990). Women and military service: A history, analysis, and overview of key

issues. Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press.

Dunifon, R., Hansen, A., Nicholson, S., & Nielsen, L. P. (2013). The effect of maternal

employment on children's academic performance. Retrieved from

http://www.nber.org/papers/w19364

Faber, A. J., Willerton, E., Clymer, S. R., MacDermid, S. M., & Weiss, H. (2008). Ambiguous

Absence, Ambiguous Presence: A Qualitative Study of Military Reserve Families in

Wartime. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(2), 222-230. doi: 10.1037/0893-

3200.22.2.222

Flake, E. M., Davis, B. E., Johnson, P. L., & Middleton, L. S. (2009). The psychosocial

effects of deployment on military children. *Journal of Developmental and

Behavioral Pediatrics*, 30(4), 271-278.

Galinksy, E., Aumann, K., & Bond, J.T. (2011). Times are changing: Gender and generation at

work and at home. Retrieved from http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/

Times_Are_Changing.pdf

General Accounting Office. (1998). Gender issues: Information on DOD's assignment policy

and direct ground combat definition. http://www.gao.gov/archive/1999/ns99007.pdf

Harrison, J., & Vannest, K. J. (2008). Educators Supporting Families in Times of Crisis: Military Reserve Deployments. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 52(4), 17-23.

Headquarters, Department of the Army. (2012). Obtaining Approval for a Survey of U.S. Army Personnel. Retrieved from http://www.hqda.army.mil/ari/pdf/Instructions% 20for%20Army%20Survey%20Review%20and%20Approval%20for%20Web.pdf

Hill, R. (1949). *Families under stress: Adjustment to the crises of war separation and reunion.* New York: Harper.

Hill, R. (1958). Generic features of families under stress. *Social Casework,* 49, 139-150.

Houston, J. B., Pfefferbaum, B., Sherman, M. D., Melson, A. G., Jeon-Slaughter, H., Brand, M. W., Jarman, Y. (2009). Children of Deployed National Guard Troops: Perceptions of Parental Deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom. *Psychiatric Annals* 39(8), 805-811. doi: 10.3928/00485713-20090728-03

Huebner, A. J., & Mancini, J. A. (2005). Adjustment among adolescents in military families when a parent is deployed: A final report submitted to the Military Family Research Institute and the Department of Defense Quality of Life Office. Falls Church, VA: Virginia Tech, Department of Human Development.

Huebner, A. J., Mancini, J. A., Bowen, G.L., & Orthner, D. K. (2009). Shadowed by War: Building community capacity to support military families. *Family Relations*, 58(2), 216-228.

Huebner, A. J., Mancini, J. A.,Wilcox, R. M., Grass, S. R., & Grass, G. A. (2007). Parental deployment and youth in military families: Exploring uncertainty and ambiguous

loss. *Family Relations*, 56(2), 112-122.

Jensen, P. S., Martin, D., & Watanabe, H. (1996). Children's response to parental

separation during Operation Desert Storm. *Journal of the American Academy of*

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 35, 433-441.

Kansas Department of Education. (2012). School-age children. Retrieved from

http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=83

Kelley, M. L., Herzog-Simmer, P., & Harris, M. A. (1994). Effects of military-induced

separation on the parenting stress and family functioning of deploying mothers. *Military*

Psychology, 6(2), 125-138. doi: 10.1207/s15327876mp0602_4

Manning, L. (2008). Women in the military: Where they stand. Arlington, VA: Women's

Research and Education Institute.

Marlin, Donald I. (1977). Reviewability and constitutionality of military pregnancy discharge

(Crawford v. Cushman). *St. John's Law Review* 51(2), 334-348.

Mateczun, J.M., & Holmes, E.K. (1996). Return, readjustment, and reintegration: The three R's

of family reunion. In R.J. Ursano & A.E.Norwood (Eds.), *Emotional aftermath of the*

Persian Gulf War: Veterans, families, communities, and nations (pp 250-282).

Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San

Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994)). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new*

methods (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mmari, K., Roche, K., Sudhinaraset, M., & Blum, R. (2009). When a parent goes off to war:

Exploring the issues faced by adolescents and their families. *Youth and Society, 40*(4),

455- 475.

Norwood, A.E., Fullerton, C.S., & Hagen, K.P. (1996). Those left behind: Military families. In

R.J. Ursano & A.E.Norwood (Eds.), *Emotional aftermath of the Persian Gulf War:*

Veterans, families, communities, and nations (pp 163-197). Washington, DC: American

Psychiatric Press.

Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. (2005). Reserve components of the Armed Forces:

Reserve component categories. Retrieved from http://ra.defense.gov/documents/

publications/RC101%20Handbook-updated%2020%20Sep%2005.pdf

Office for Human Research Protections. (1993). *IRB Guidebook*. Retrieved from

http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/archive/irb/irb_guidebook.htm

Pierce, P. F., Vinokur, A. D. & Buck, C. L. (1998). Effects of war-induced maternal

separation on children's adjustment during the Gulf War and two years later. *Journal*

of Applied Social Psychology, 28: 1286–1311. doi: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.1998.tb01677

Pincus, S.H., Hyouse, R., Christenson, J., & Adler, L.E. (2001). The emotional cycle of

deployment: A military family perspective. *Army Medical Department Journal,* PB 8-01-

4/5/5, pp. 15-23.

Reserve Duty Family File. (2012). DRS 51504 - Selected Reserve females with school age (5-

18) child dependents.

Rubin, H. & Rubin I. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data.* Thousand Oaks,

CA: Sage Publications.

Ryan, G.W., & Bernard, H.R. (2003). Techniques to identify themes. *Field Methods. 15*(1), 85-

109.

Sapsford, R. (1999). *Survey research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Strengthening our military families. (2011). Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov
/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/strengthening_our_military_families
_meeting_americas_commitment_january_2011.pdf

Ternus, M. P. (2010). Support for adolescents who experience parental military deployment.
Journal of Adolescent Health, 46(3), 203-206. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.12.019

Virginia Joint Military Family Services Board. (2003). Working with military children: A
primer for school personnel. Retrieved from http://support.militaryfamily.org/site/
DocServer?docID=642

Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
Publishing.

Appendix A - Written Informed Consent Form

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
WRITTEN INFORMED CONSENT

PROJECT TITLE: **A Study of Perceptions of Mothers, Caregivers, and School-Age Children i Regard to Their Roles in the Educational Experiences of the Child During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments**

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: Nov. 29, 2012   EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT: Nov. 28, 2013

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Teresa Miller
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):   Kristy Custer

CONTACT AND PHONE FOR ANY   785-532-5609
PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATIC Rick Scheidt/785-532-1483

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH **The purpose of this study is to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding their roles in the educational experiences the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments.** This study will particularly focus on the social, academic and behavioral experiences of school-age children in grades kindergarten through 12th grade.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE   The researcher will give surveys, conduct interviews,
USED: collect documents from participants that will provide for analysis. The data will then be coded, analyzed, a synthesized for meaning related to the research questi

LENGTH OF STUDY Dec. 2012-April 2013

RISKS ANTICIPATED A forseeable risk of this study is the emotional stress of reliving the deployment. To address emotional stress, participants should be aware of encouraged to utilize the free, confidential military counseling services available through the military for military members and their dependents through Chaplain Services as well as Military OneSource. These services offered face-to-face, online, and through telephone communication.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED Educators are interested in training and information in areas such as deployment and reunion adjustment, non-deployed spousal interventi and military coping strategies in order to be better prepared for future deployments. Because children of Reserve Component members are unique to the military, awareness of the issues that affect their

	educational performance during deployments creates an opportunity f educators to help those children. Understanding how Reserve Component mothers not only transition from their civilian jobs to thei military jobs, but also transition their role as maternal caregiver throu their family care plan can help discover potential areas where schools provide support. In addition, a copy of this study will be given to the Kansas Army National Guard who will also benefit by having more information on how mothers, caretakers, and children perceive deployment.
EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	The data will be treated confidentially and none of the data will be persona identifiable. Participation is strictly voluntary and participants may withdra at any time without fear. Participants will be assured of complete confidentiality and all data will be protected for confidentiality. A participant's decision to participate or not participate will be kept complete confidential. The names of participants will not be associated with the data Data collected from participants will only be available to the researcher. Consent forms will be signed by all participants and parents/guardians to document their voluntary participation; this will be completed prior to any involvement in the study.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILAE No
IF INJURY OCCURS:

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINOI Yes

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. My decision to participate or not participate will be kept completely confidential. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant

Appendix B - Survey for Mothers

Thank you for agreeing to participate in *A Study of Perceptions of Mothers, Caregivers, and School-Age Children in Regard to Their Roles in the Educational Experiences of the Child During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments***. The purpose of this study is to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding their roles in the educational experiences of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. This study particularly focuses on the social, academic, and behavioral experiences of school-age children in grades kindergarten through 12th grade. The following survey is intended to assist the researcher in becoming more familiar with your deployment circumstances. All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential and only used in the context of this study.**

Name: _____

1. How long before your departure date did you know that you were going to be deployed?

2. Did you feel this was enough time to prepare for your departure? Please explain.

3. Who was the primary caregiver for your child(ren) while you were deployed?

4. Why did you choose this(these) person(people) to care for your child(ren)?

5. Did your child(ren) have to change schools because of the new childcare situation due to the deployment?

Appendix C - Survey for Child(ren)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in *A Study of Perceptions of Mothers, Caregivers, and School-Age Children in Regard to Their Roles in the Educational Experiences of the Child During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments***. The purpose of this study is to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding their roles in the educational experiences of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. The following survey is intended to assist the researcher in becoming more familiar the deployment circumstances. All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential and only used in the context of this study.**

Name: _____

Name of deployed mother: _____

1. List what things you did to prepare for your mother's deployment:

2. What were the main things your mother did for your prior to deployment?

    a. Who did those things while your mother was deployed?

3. Was there anyone at school who really helped you while your mother was deployed? If so, please tell me about that person.

4. Where there things that you did during your mother's deployment that you did not do before her deployment? If so, please list.

5. Do you think that the military did enough to help prepare you for your mother's deployment? Please explain your answer.

Appendix D - Survey for Caregivers

Thank you for agreeing to participate in *A Study of Perceptions of Mothers, Caregivers, and School-Age Children in Regard to Their Roles in the Educational Experiences of the Child During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments*. **The purpose of this study is to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding their roles in the educational experiences of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. The following survey is intended to assist the researcher in becoming more familiar the deployment circumstances. All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential and only used in the context of this study.**

Name: _____

Name of deployed mother you assisted: _____

1. How long before the departure date did you know that the military member was going to be deployed?

2. Did you feel this was enough time to prepare for the departure? Please explain.

3. What is your relationship to the deployed mother?

4. Do you feel that the military adequately helped to prepared you for to be the primary caretaker of the child(ren) during the deployment? Please explain.

5. Do you feel that the military adequately helped to prepare the deployed mother for the separation of her children during deployment? Please explain.

6. Do you feel the military adequately helped to assist in the preparation of the child(ren) from their mother during the deployment? Please explain.

7. Did you feel the school the child(ren) attended provided support for you while the mother was deployed?

    a. If yes, please explain how.

    b. If no, please explain how you felt they did not.

8. Did you feel the school the child(ren) attended provided support for them while the mother was deployed?

    a. If yes, please explain how.

b.   If no, please explain how you felt they did not.

Appendix E - Interview Questions for Mothers

Interview Questions for Mothers

Thank you for taking time to complete the following interview questions for my original research about your perceptions related to maternal Army Reserve component deployments. If you consent, your interview will be recorded and transcribed, and then the comments compiled as group responses to protect your identity. Those interview responses will be used as part of my research study: Perceptions Regarding the Educational Roles of Mothers, Caretakers and School-Age Children During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments. Should you have any questions, my contact information is listed below:

Kristy Custer, █████████████████████████████████, kcuster@usd266.com.
My major professor is Teresa Miller, Kansas State University, 1100 Mid-Campus Drive, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-5609, tmiller@ksu.edu.

Deployed Mother Interview Questions—Conversational Questions

1. What were your thoughts when you first found out about your deployment?

2. How did you determine who the primary caregiver of your child(ren) would be while you were gone?

3. What special arrangements, if any, were made regarding your child(ren) going to school?

4. What was your greatest concern for your child(ren) while you were gone? What did you do to address that concern?

Deployed Mother Interview Questions—Post Questions

1. Now that you have returned home, do you think your relationship with your child(ren) has returned to "normal"? Please explain.

Deployed Mother Interview Questions—
Pre-Deployment

1. Describe the interaction you had with your child(ren)'s friends pre-deployment. (social)	
2. Describe your role in your child's education pre-deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
3. Describe your child(ren)'s behavior in school pre-deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
4. Who had the greatest impact on your child(ren)'s education pre-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
5. Describe your student's role socially, academically and behaviorally pre-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
6. In what ways did you communicate with the school (and the school communicate with you) pre-deployment? (academic)	

Deployed Mother Interview Questions—
During Deployment

1. Describe the interaction you had with your child(ren)'s friends during deployment. (social)	
2. Describe your role in your child's education during deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
3. Describe your child(ren)'s performance in school during deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
4. Who had the greatest impact on your child(ren)'s education during deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
5. Describe your child(ren)'s role socially, academically and behaviorally during deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
6. In what ways did you communicate with the school (and the school communicate with you) during deployment? (academic)	

3

Deployed Mother Interview Questions—
Post-Deployment

1. **Describe the interaction you had with your child(ren)'s friends post-deployment. (social)**	
2. **Describe your role in your child's education post-deployment. (social, academic, behavior)**	Social— Academic— Behavior--
3. **Describe your student's role socially, academically and behaviorally post - deployment? (social, academic, behavior)**	Social— Academic— Behavior--
4. **Who had the greatest impact on your child(ren)'s education post-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)**	Social— Academic— Behavior--
5. **Describe your student's role socially, academically and behaviorally post-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)**	Social— Academic— Behavior--
6. **In what ways do you communicate with the school (and the school communicate with you) post-deployment? (academic)**	

4

Appendix F - Interview Questions for Children

Interview Questions for Children—

Thank you for taking time to complete the following interview questions for my original research about your perceptions related to maternal Army Reserve component deployments. If you consent, your interview will be recorded and transcribed, and then the comments compiled as group responses to protect your identity. Those interview responses will be used as part of my research study: Perceptions Regarding the Educational Roles of Mothers, Caretakers and School-Age Children During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments. Should you have any questions, my contact information is listed below:

██ kcuster@usd266.com.
My major professor is Teresa Miller, Kansas State University, 1100 Mid-Campus Drive, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-5609, tmiller@ksu.edu.

Child Interview Questions—Conversational Questions

1. What were your thoughts when you first found out about your mother's deployment?

2. What was your greatest concern about your mother deploying? What did you do to address that concern?

Child Interview Questions—Post Questions

1. Now that your mother has returned home, do you think your relationship with her has returned to "normal"? Please explain.

2. Reflecting on the deployment now, what suggestions would you give on how people can help school-age children during a deployment?

Appendix G - Interview Questions for Caregivers

Interview Questions for Caretakers--

Thank you for taking time to complete the following interview questions for my original research about your perceptions related to maternal Army Reserve component deployments. If you consent, your interview will be recorded and transcribed, and then the comments compiled as group responses to protect your identity. Those interview responses will be used as part of my research study: Perceptions Regarding the Educational Roles of Mothers, Caretakers and School-Age Children During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments. Should you have any questions, my contact information is listed below:

███, kcuster@usd266.com.
My major professor is Teresa Miller, Kansas State University, 1100 Mid-Campus Drive, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-5609, tmiller@ksu.edu.

Caretaker Interview Questions—Conversational Questions

1. What were your thoughts when you first found out about the military member's deployment?

2. How did you feel about becoming the primary caregiver of the military member's child(ren) while she was gone?

3. What special arrangements, if any, were made regarding the child(ren) going to school?

4. What was your greatest concern for the child(ren) while their mother was gone? What did you do to address that concern?

Caretaker Interview Questions—Post Questions

1. Now that their mother has returned home, do you think your relationship with the child(ren) has returned to "normal"? Please explain.

2. Reflecting on the deployment now, what suggestions would you give on how primary caregivers can help their school-age children with a deployment?

1

Caretaker Interview Questions—
Pre-Deployment

1. Describe the interaction you had with the child(ren)'s friends pre-deployment. (social)	
2. Describe your role in the child's education pre-deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
3. Describe the child(ren)'s performance in school pre-deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
4. Who had the greatest impact on the child(ren)'s education pre-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
5. Describe the student's role socially, academically and behaviorally pre-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
6. In what ways did you communicate with the school (and the school communicate with you) pre-deployment? (academic)	

2

Caretaker Interview Questions—
During Deployment

1. Describe the interaction you had with the child(ren)'s friends during deployment. (social)	
2. Describe your role in the child's education during deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
3. Describe the child(ren)'s performance in school during deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
4. Who had the greatest impact on the child(ren)'s education during deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
5. Describe the student's role socially, academically and behaviorally during deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
6. In what ways did you communicate with the school (and the school communicate with you) during deployment? (academic)	

Caretaker Interview Questions—
Post-Deployment

1. Describe the interaction you have with the child(ren)'s friends post-deployment. (social)	
2. Describe your role in the child's education post-deployment. (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
3. Describe the student's role socially, academically and behaviorally post-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
4. Who had the greatest impact on the child(ren)'s education post-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
5. Describe the student's role socially, academically and behaviorally post-deployment? (social, academic, behavior)	Social— Academic— Behavior--
6. In what ways do you communicate with the school (and the school communicate with you) post-deployment? (academic)	

4

141

Appendix H - Debriefing Statement

The purpose of this study was to gain better insight into the perceptions of mothers/soldiers, caregivers, and school-age children regarding their roles in the educational experiences of the children during maternal Army Reserve component deployments. This study particularly focused on the social, academic, and behavioral experiences of school-age children in grades kindergarten through 12th grade.

This study's focus on maternal Reserve Component deployments will open dialogue and provide insight on the particularly understudied phenomenon of mothers' deployments. Gathering more information related to ways Reserve Component mothers not only transition from their civilian jobs to their military jobs, but also transition their roles as maternal caregivers through their family care plans can help discover potential areas where school personnel can provide support. In addition to educators, the military has also shown interest in this research. Because there are no research studies targeting Reserve Component mothers who deploy, this will not only provide valuable information about deployed mothers and their families, but also provide insight into other areas of maternal deployment that have gone unstudied.

As stated earlier, your responses to all of the questionnaires will be absolutely confidential. Your name will be converted to a pseudonym, and only people who are associated with this research will see your name or your responses. If at any time you or any of your dependants are feeling distressed about your discussion of this topic, you are encouraged to utilize the free, confidential military counseling services available through the military for military members and their dependents through Chaplain Services as well as Military OneSource. These services are offered face-to-face, online, and through telephone communication.

Kansas National Guard Chaplain—Chaplain (Capt.) ███████████████], (office) █████████████, (mobile) ██████████. Military One Source--1-800-342-9647 or militaryonesource.mil
Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated. If you'd be interested in obtaining a copy of the results once the study is complete, you may contact Kristy Custer, ██████████████████████████ █████████████████, kcuster@usd266.com.

If you have any complaints, concerns, or questions about this research, please feel free to contact Dr. Teresa Miller, Kansas State University, 1100 Mid-Campus Drive, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-5609, tmiller@ksu.edu, or Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224..

Thank you very much for your participation!

Appendix I - Stake's Checklist

1. Is this report easy to read?

2. Does it fit together, each sentence contributing to the whole?

3. Does this report have a conceptual structure (i.e. themes or issues)?

4. Are issues developed in a serious and scholarly way?

5. Is the case adequately defined?

6. Is there a sense of story to the presentation?

7. Is the reader provided some vicarious experience?

8. Have quotations been used effectively?

9. Are headings, figures, artifacts, appendixes, indexes effectively used?

10. Was it edited well, then again with a last minute polish?

11. Has the writer made sound assertions, neither overall or underinterpreting?

12. Has adequate attention been paid to various contexts?

13. Were sufficient raw data presented?

14. Where data sources well-chosen and in sufficient number?

15. Do observations and interpretations appear to have been triangulated?

16. Is the role and point of view of the researcher nicely apparent?

17. Is the nature of the intended audience apparent?

18. Is empathy shown for all sides?

19. Are personal intentions examined?

20. Does it appear that individuals were put at risk? (1995, p. 131)

Appendix J - List of Documents

Case Study 1—
- 2 letters written to child from mother
- 1 drawing to mother from child
- 2 report cards

Case Study 2—
- 5 letters written to child from mother
- 2 report cards
- 2 progress reports

Case Study 3--
- 2 report cards

Case Study 4—
- 9 letters written to child 1 from mother
- 9 letters written to child 2 from mother
- 5 letters written to mother from child 2
- Running Facebook messages from July 2011 to September 2012
- 4 emails to child 1's school from mother with replies from staff members
- 2 emails to child 2's school from mother with replies from staff members
- Multiple emails between mother and caregiver (participants responded to one another, so individual emails were not tracked)
- 2 report cards, child 1
- 2 report cards, child 2

Post-Deployment Yellow Ribbon Ceremony
- *Living in the New Normal* public engagement workbook
- *Workgroup on Intervention with Combat Injured Families* brochure
- *The Electric Company For Military Kids Special Edition* brochure
- *Military Kids Shining from Sea to Sea* brochure
- List of post-deployment services handout
- Post-deployment checklist handout

Appendix K - Mothers' Survey 1

Preliminary Questionnaire to all Potential Military Participants

Approval from your commander has been given to conduct a study on the *Perceptions Regarding the Educational Roles of Mothers, Caretakers and School-Age Children During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments*. The purpose of this study is to help bring attention to the unique challenges posed when mothers who are also soldiers in the Reserve Components are separated from their children through deployment, and, particularly, what, if any, academic challenges are presented when the deployment happens. The following short survey is to assist the researcher in determining interest in and criteria for the study. This survey is completely voluntary. All survey results will be kept completely confidential. If you indicate interest in the study and are chosen to participate, the researcher will contact you no later than Feb. 1, 2013.

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Name:

Contact information in the event that you are chosen for the study:

Home Phone: _____   **Cell Phone: _____**

Email:_____   **Other:_____**

When was your last deployment?

How old is(are) your child(ren)?

What grade(s) is(are) your child(ren)?

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your deployment experience? (1=Terrible Experience;

5=Okay Experience; 10=Great Experience)

Would you be willing to participate in a study on the effects of maternal deployment on school-

age children? (Please circle one.)   **Yes   No**

Appendix L - Mothers' Survey 2

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study of *Perceptions Regarding the Educational Roles of Mothers, Caretakers and School-Age Children During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments*. The purpose of this study is to help bring attention to the unique challenges posed when mothers who are also soldiers in the Reserve Components are separated from their children through deployment, and, particularly, what, if any, academic challenges are presented when the deployment happens. The following survey is intended to assist the researcher in becoming more familiar with your deployment circumstances. All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential and only used in the context of this study.

Name: _____

1. How long before your departure date did you know that you were going to be deployed?

2. Did you feel this was enough time to prepare for your departure? Please explain.

3. Who was the primary caregiver for your child(ren) while you were deployed?

4. Why did you choose this(these) person(people) to care for your child(ren)?

5. Did your child(ren) have to change schools because of the new childcare situation due to the deployment?

6. Do you feel that the military adequately helped to prepare you for the separation of your child(ren) during the deployment? Please explain.

7. Do you feel that the military adequately helped to assist in the preparation of the caregiver of your child(ren) for your deployment? Please explain.

8. Do you feel the military adequately helped to assist in the preparation of your child(ren) for your deployment? Please explain.

9. Was the school your child attended aware that you deployed?

    a. If yes, do you feel that the school was supportive of your deployment? Please explain.

    b. If no, why did you choose to not inform the school of your deployment?

Appendix M - Caregivers Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study of *Perceptions Regarding the Educational Roles of Mothers, Caretakers and School-Age Children During Maternal Army*

Reserve Component Deployments. **The purpose of this study is to help bring attention to the unique challenges posed when mothers who are also soldiers in the Reserve Components are separated from their children through deployment, and, particularly, what, if any, academic challenges are presented when the deployment happens. The following survey is intended to assist the researcher in becoming more familiar the deployment circumstances. All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential and only used in the context of this study.**

Name: _____

Name of deployed mother you assisted: _____

1. How long before the departure date did you know that the military member was going to be deployed?

2. Did you feel this was enough time to prepare for the departure? Please explain.

3. What is your relationship to the deployed mother?

4. Do you feel that the military adequately helped to prepared you for to be the primary caretaker of the child(ren) during the deployment? Please explain.

5. Do you feel that the military adequately helped to prepare the deployed mother for the separation of her children during deployment? Please explain.

6. Do you feel the military adequately helped to assist in the preparation of the child(ren) from their mother during the deployment? Please explain.

7. Did you feel the school the child(ren) attended provided support for you while the mother was deployed?

    a. If yes, please explain how.

    b. If no, please explain how you felt they did not.

8. Did you feel the school the child(ren) attended provided support for them while the mother was deployed?

    a. If yes, please explain how.

    b. If no, please explain how you felt they did not.

Appendix N - Children's Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study of *Perceptions Regarding the Educational Roles of Mothers, Caretakers and School-Age Children During Maternal Army Reserve Component Deployments*. **The purpose of this study is to help bring attention to the unique challenges posed when mothers who are also soldiers in the Reserve Components are separated from their children through deployment, and, particularly, what, if any, academic challenges are presented when the deployment happens. The following survey is intended to assist the researcher in becoming more familiar the deployment circumstances. All responses to this survey will be kept strictly confidential and only used in the context of this study.**

Name: _____

Name of deployed mother: _____

1. List what things you did to prepare for your mother's deployment:

2. What were the main things your mother did for your prior to deployment?
    a. Who did those things while your mother was deployed?
3. Was there anyone at school who really helped you while your mother was deployed? If so, please tell me about that person.

4. Where there things that you did during your mother's deployment that you did not do before her deployment? If so, please list.

5. Do you think that the military did enough to help prepare you for your mother's deployment? Please explain your answer.