

UNDER AGE PAGE

Merry Christmas!

Soldiers, families pay price of service

BY TORI ARELLANO
HOLY TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL

Parents who are in the Army go through a lot for their families. Soldiers may have to sacrifice the time they get to spend with their families, and children experience having to grow up without one or both of their parents around all of the time.

Maj. Dave Hosler, father of sophomore Samuel Hosler, has been in the Army for 15 years and deployed twice.

"Basically, when you're away during Christmas, the mood is always somber. It's an incredible Christian holiday that you don't get to spend at home," Major Hosler said.

Soldiers deployed in Iraq over the Christmas holidays do get share in the Christmas spirit even though they are away from home.

Sgt. 1st class Mark Arellano, father of sopho-

more Tori Arellano, has been in the Army for 22 years and has been deployed five times. Sgt. Arellano's most recent deployment in Iraq lasted for a year.

"Everyone still has work they need to take care of but usually there is a party in the dining facility where there are Christmas decorations and special meals prepared for the soldiers," Sgt. Arellano said.

Even though soldiers that are deployed during Christmas don't get to be with their families physically, they still have ways to contact them and wish them happy holidays.

"The most important thing to a soldier is to call home. The circuits are always busy and it feels like such a success when you get through to your family. You prize that 15-minute call," Major Hosler said.

The joy of Christmas can be spread through families whether or not they are together.



Jonathan McGinnis Illustration

Santa dons camo for his trips to Iraq and Afghanistan on behalf of U.S. soldiers fighting in the war on terror.



Sgt. 1st Class Mark Arellano, center, has been in the Army for 22 years and deployed five times. He says the Army will have holiday events, such as the one pictured, and special meals prepared for soldiers.

Courtesy photo

Marchand family gathers for Christmas trip in Italy

BY TORI ARELLANO
HOLY TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL

Deployment is not stopping some families from spending the holidays together.

Sophomore Jhanel Marchand, her mother and her brother left for Italy on Dec. 11 to visit her father. Staff Sgt. Enrique Marchand is currently stationed in San Vincenzo, Italy.

"I'm really excited," Jhanel said before leaving.

This coming year will be Sgt. Marchand's seventh year stationed away from home.

Having a parent or both parents gone for a long time can have good or bad side effects for a kid growing up.

"In a way I'm affected by him being gone. A normal kid grows up with both of their parents around and I never got to experience much of

that. There are a lot of sacrifices being made. Also, I think my dad leaving when my brother Kai was really young had a big impact on him," Jhanel said.

Luckily, this year Jhanel, her mom, and her brother will get to take a Christmas vacation to Italy to visit her dad. Jhanel left school early to get a head start on her trip.

"Since this will be our first family trip, we're going mainly to support my dad because he needs us right now. Maybe if I'm lucky, we'll get to tour Italy!" Jhanel said.

This trip to Italy will be a growing opportunity for both Jhanel and her brother Kai. They will get to learn some cultural things from their father about Italy.

"It doesn't truly matter what holiday it is, what really counts is that you share it with your family," Jhanel said.

Daughter knows deployments

BY TORI ARELLANO
HOLY TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL

My father being deployed so many times has given me many learning experiences and opportunities to grow.

It is a sad thing when you have to say goodbye so many times not knowing what will happen. It usually takes me a while, but when I get more comfortable only having my mom around I think I take up more responsibility to take care of the house and do

A personal look

things to make my mom's job easier. Also, I think I've learned to be more independent the last few years because I can't expect my parents to do everything for me without any effort on my part.

Most recently, when my dad was gone in Iraq for one year, I didn't get to talk to him that much, maybe once a week. I missed him a lot but as I got older I realized I didn't have

to be so sad about it because I knew that I missed him and that he missed me and just being home. The reasons were understood that he would come home soon after doing his job at wherever he was deployed to.

I think in a way, kids that have parents in the military that get deployed have the opportunity to experience growing up in a different and beneficial way as opposed to kids that grow up having both their parents with them.

Arredondo family adjusts to Christmas apart third time around

BY TORI ARELLANO
HOLY TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL

Christmas is a holiday that you spend with your family to share the happiness in each other's presence.

This year, the Arredondo family will be spending their third Christmas in a row apart from each other. Maj. Reynold Arredondo has been deployed to Iraq for the second time, and it is his third time being deployed to out-of-the-country places before getting to spend the Christmas holidays with his family. This year, Arredondo was deployed to Iraq Nov. 10. The Arredondos back home hope to have him return in about a year.

"My dad leaving this time is not as hard because it was his third time leaving before Christmas. To me, it's not that big of a deal because he was always at work all the time anyways,

but I still miss him," Marisa, freshman at Holy Trinity said.

Having Mr. Arredondo away again for Christmas has had a similar effect on both Marisa and Mary Arredondo, Marisa's mother.

"This year will be different without him. It's sad but we're used to it so it will be easier to handle this time," Mrs. Arredondo said.

Just because Mr. Arredondo isn't physically with his family for the holidays doesn't mean that he won't get to hear from them.

"We can't call him, but since he's been gone for about two weeks, he calls at least every two days," Mrs. Arredondo said. Because of Marisa's busy school schedule, she has more difficulty getting in touch with her dad.

"He's been gone for about two weeks and I've only talked to him once for about a week," Marisa said.

The Arredondos have had experience of saying goodbye before a special time of the year. Marisa shared a story about when Maj. Arredondo left on Father's Day.

"The first time he left it was Father's Day. He told us, 'Go out to dinner for me.' So we went to the restaurant he wanted us to go to and me, my brother, and my mother had dinner together with a picture of my dad at the table. So I think in a way, him leaving this time is harder because we're a lot closer than we used to be," Marisa said.

Christmas is still Christmas if you've got the comforting love of your family. Next Christmas, the Arredondo family will hopefully be able to spend it together as a family of four.

"Hopefully he should be back before Thanksgiving of next year," Mrs. Arredondo said.



Courtesy photo

The Arredondo family will be apart for the third Christmas in a row.

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