

His Military Service... What to Do

The engaged or newly married couple facing the military service have to accept rough days ahead as separations, and the interruption of education or career loom with dark realism.

For the new wife, with a husband off to the military service, life means a return to aloneness, or to family.

But she's a different woman now — and she doesn't fit well into the old patterns. She's also discovering an entirely new and painful meaning of loneliness.

"Nobody understands that part of you is gone with him. They can't imagine your personal grief, and your resentments sometimes of other couples who don't have to be separated. They wouldn't believe how hard it is for you to get up in the morning. The meaning of your life has gone — and it's hard to work.

Most young wives feel that if it is at all possible, the wife should travel with her husband.

"At least you're together then, and you get to know his problems, too. My husband was in Okinawa. I would have swam the ocean to get there, if I could have," said one wife of an ex-soldier.

Another service wife agreed. "Living conditions are not the most convenient. And you have to be able to adjust to living far away from home. But at least you're with your husband.

Former military-service wives stress that brides have a very particular responsibility to

their husbands, if he is overseas.

"This is the time to make him understand how much you love him. So many of his friends are getting 'dear John' letters, that he's always wondering if he'll be next," said one gal, adding:

"My husband told me that he never worried that I'd leave him. My letters kept me real to him and reassured him of my love."

Another woman said, "If your husband is overseas, he's in a war, not in New Jersey. He can hardly remember what normal living is like.

"Your responsibility is to keep up his morale. Write always, and put in good news only; send him pictures; keep reassuring him of your love. Above all, be careful not to make him jealous by careless references to old boyfriends or to new friends."

Practical matters must be taken care of too, when a husband is ordered to active duty.

These should include: preparing a will, or making certain the old one is up to date; determining whether or not to give someone power of attorney; reviewing life insurance policies; planning the disposition of bank accounts; considering the status of any real estate or personal property the couple owns; deciding whether or not to keep an automobile; and preparing a record of any previous military service, whether active or reservist.

When reporting, the inductee



June is graduation month and at the naval and military academies the ceremony is often capped with a wedding. A young ensign and his happy bride pass under the traditional arch of swords after their wedding in Annapolis. (Religious News Service)

should have certified copies of birth certificates for him and his wife. He should also have a marriage certificate. These will

be necessary for obtaining family privileges, including financial entitlements for his wife and family pay allowance.

Bridegroom's Duties

The most important part of the groom's pre-marriage obligations is the ring. It is best to buy both the engagement ring and the wedding ring at the same time, either before or after the engagement.

The groom is also responsible for obtaining the license and should plan to do so well in advance for there is often a waiting period.

The groom must also:

—Compile a guest list of his family and friends, making sure there are no duplications with the bride's list.

—Choose the best man and ushers.

—Buy a gift for the future bride and the best man and ushers.

—Pay for the bride's bouquet and boutonnières for himself and the best man. If it is to be a formal wedding, he pays for the ties and gloves of the best man, ushers and himself.

—The groom-to-be pays for a corsage for his mother and new mother-in-law.

—He arranges for transportation to the wedding for the best man and himself, and for transportation after the ceremony.

—He plans and pays for the wedding trip, and expenses involved.

—He provides the offering for the best man to give to the priest.

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