

Messy Military

Mission



Marines



Table of Contents

- **What is Messy Mission**
 - Goal
 - Ideas for Programming
 - What to Consider
- **Messy Mission Plans**
 - Plan 1
 - Plan 2
- **Messy Mission Plan Resources**
 - General's Coming!
 - Messy Picture Cheat Sheet
- **Military REACH Resources**
- **Additional Resources**
- **Let's Partner Up**
- **Citation**
- **Author Notes**

What is Messy Mission

Goal:

- Messy Mission is a form of learning for teens that involves recreation, reflection, and hands-on experiences.
- Messy Mission is FUN!
- It's for people at all stages of their journey and of any age – a group of people who need support, a better understanding of military parent roles, to further expand their military knowledge, and for those who seek to understand how military families fit into a given military service branches mission.
- It models and promotes good ways of coping and general support through the involvement of MFLC's, parent volunteers, and trained staff.

Ideas for Programming:

- The design of the Military Messy Mission is for youth audiences in middle school to high school in the following settings:
 - Camp
 - After-school program/club
 - Parent and family event
 - Youth Center
 - A group session/activity collaborating with a Military Family Life Counselor
- Sessions can be as short as 30 minutes or extended to allow for a more in-depth conversation. For many youth events after school, we are limited to 1 hour, so this length fits perfectly into the common time length.

What to Consider:

- Having a knowledgeable military personal present at these activities will
 - Help answer youth questions about jobs and military experiences
 - Bring real-life examples for the teens to learn from other than their parents
 - Provide support to the lead instructor
- Ask a Military Family Life Counselor to be present to provide
 - Grief counseling if needed
 - Emotional support to participants
 - Help guide and run debrief sessions to help the conversations be thoughtful and impactful
- Not all members attending a Military Messy Mission have parents who currently serve, so be mindful of how questions are phrased and the variety of questions included. Keep in mind youth could have parents who:



- Serve in an Active Duty role
- Serve in the Reserves or Guard
- Gold Star Family
- Medically Discharged
- Retired
- Form Service
- Civilian Employee



Air Force Reserve and Air Force Guard Messy Mission: Plan 1

Objective: Let's get "messy" learning about the Air Force National Guard and Air Force Reserve (AFR/ANG) mission. Let's get "messy" learning about the impact being a military kid has on the teens; the whole group learns from a game and reflection activity about the pros and cons of being a military brat.

Time and Set-up:

- Each group will have 30 minutes to participate in two activities that will last an estimated 15 minutes each.
- For large groups divide into groups of about 10-15 youth and have them rotate between the stations.

Learning about AFR/ANG through Activities: 15 minutes per activity

- Game Station- Youth will learn about the mission of AFR/ANG through a fun game, General's coming.
- Messy Picture Game- Youth will participate in a picture card activity to learn about some of the career fields in the AFR/ANG.
 - Note: If you can connect with an AFR/ANG personal to led this activity they will be able to add great detail about the career fields and/or real-life experiences.

Activity Extension: 15 -30 Minutes

- Invite an AFR/ANG Airmen to highlight the mission of the Air Force and volunteers personal experience living out that mission.
- Provide time for a Q&A.

Reflection Stations: 1 hour/ throughout the event

- Mural: Create a simple mural on a white sheet fabric or large canvas. Create the mural to be like a paint by number color page for the youth to fill in with paint. The mural can showcase the AFR/ANG strength, a specific mission, an American flag, a special quote, or anything to show support. Once the mural is completed display it for the remainder of your event as a reminder to participants. Also, after the event deliver the mural to your local AFR/ANG installation on behalf of the teens.
- Write Letters: Have the youth write letters to the reservist and guard airmen thanking them for all they do. The AFR/ANG Airmen play a key role in our military success, so you can plan on sending letters overseas to deployed airmen or a local installation showing gratitude for stateside support.



General Military Messy Mission: Plan 2

Plan Focus: Let's get "messy" learning about the impact being a military kid has on the teens; the whole group learns from a game and reflection activity about the pros and cons of being a military brat.

Activities

- Know Your Wingman
 - Interactive Game, page 5-6
- Graffiti Wall
 - Reflection and Discussion Activity, page 6

How it will Work:

- Divide the group into two groups
- 1 group will play the game first and the other group will participate in the reflection activity first.
- After 15 minutes' groups will switch

Know Your Wingman: GAME- 10 Minutes

- Game instructions included in the resources

Know Your Wingman: Reflect/Debrief: 5 Minutes

Working with Military Teens:

- In the military, your parents have to be able to trust their team to get the job done correctly, safely, and sometimes quickly. This exercise pushes us to learn how to work with each other quickly and when one of us or several forgets a command another member steps in to assist just like in the military.
- Also, the Loose engine command is like when our parents are sent on a deployment to a new team. They have to work with a new group at moment's notice.
- Are there any other pull-outs from this quick fun game?

Working with Non-Military Teens:

- In the military servicemen and women have to be able to trust their team to get the job done correctly, safely, and sometimes quickly. This exercise pushes us to learn how to work with each other quickly and when one of us or several forgets a command another member steps in to assist just like in the military.

- Also, the loose engine command is like when military members and their families are sent on deployment or to a new place. They have to work with a new group at a moment's notice.
 - Do you think you could handle moving every 2-3 years?
 - How do you think it feels to be sent away from your family for a year or 6 months?
 - Some military jobs require members to leave at a moment's notice with little time to prepare their families. How do you think families prepare for the unknown?
- Are there any other pull-outs from this quick fun game?

Graffiti Wall: Reflection Activity – 15 minutes

- **Material Needed/ Description:** Multiple sheets of large blank paper (flip chart paper works well) and markers.
 - Posters Topics- What questions do you have about the military, what is something positive about the military, what is something hard about being a part of the military, what are some careers in the military you find interesting, if you were to join the military which branch would you join... (work with parent volunteers, MFLC, and other professional to great relevant questions)
 - Large pieces of paper/ posters are posted on walls or on tables like “graffiti”. The participants are encouraged to use markers to reflect about the military through the leading questions written on the posters. The sheets of “graffiti” are used to facilitate a group reflection discussion.
- **Step 1: Guest Speaker (Extension Pre-Activity)- 15-30 Minutes**
 - Invite a guest speaker like a former military person or current military person to speak to youth or teach some military basics to the youth about branches, deployment, career opportunities, and the like. A spouse or former dependent are also great guest speaker options. This part of the activity occurs before the start of the graffiti activity. This is particularly important if you are working with adults/teens who do not have a military background. Having an invited speaker will help set the stage for steps 2-4.
- **Step 2: Graffiti Activity Lead Up- 3 minutes**
 - Gather the participants together and ask them to reflect on what they just heard in silence for 3 minutes. Use some prompting questions to guide their thoughts: use the questions you write on the wall, so youth are prepared to write in step 3 of the activity. Depending on what the speaker shares consider adapting the suggested questions provided to fit what the youth just heard and/or provide additional time for youth to work in groups to create personal reflection topics on things they are interested in discussing as a group (great for older teens).

- **Step 3: Draw/Write: 5-8 minutes**
 - After the participants have had time to reflect, ask them to go to the area where the paper is posted and hand out writing utensils. Explain that all participants should draw pictures or write a response to the various questions around the room.
 - When all participants have finished, collect the markers/crayons and place the paper(s) in a place where everyone can view them. Ask the participants to describe what they see on the paper.
- **Step 4: Discuss: 5 minutes**
 - Bring youth back together for graffiti activity discussion. Ask the same questions that they just responded to on the papers, but know the focus changes from self-reflection to a group discussion.



General's Coming!

Goal: This game is a fun way to learn and showcase the AFR/ANG Mission.

Share: The mission of the Air Force Reserve is to Fly, Fight & Win ... in air, space and cyberspace. Airmen serve where they live without interrupting their civilian career or higher education. We are about to play a game that includes common careers in both the Air Force Reserve, Air Force Guard, and also found commonly in the civilian workforce.

Directions: This game has several parts that you have to remember, so be prepared to put your brain to the test and have a good laugh too. Also, you will be required to work in various groups depending on what I call out.

Whenever I say General's Coming you should Salute me! Let's practice... General's Coming! You can't release your salute until I say at ease. ... At ease. If you do not follow this correctly, you will have to step to the side and go to the security forces jail until released. aka you kicked out of the game and sit out until I call you back in. Let's Practice...

Now, let's add in a couple of jobs commonly found in the Reserve and Guard. It is important to pay attention to the numbers allowed per job as each will have a different group associated with it. If you do not make it to a group in time you have to go the Security Forces jail (only teach 2 new jobs at a time)

Commands:

Nurse: groups of 2 people. One will be the victim and the second will act as the nurse. Let's practice... Nurse! (youth act like they are saving each other in groups of 2)

Combat Controllers: Youth get in groups of 3 and act out pointing to the sky. Combat controllers are in charge of keeping our skies safe even in hostile environments. Let's practice... Combat Controllers! (group acts out)

Air Craft Load Master (Load Master for Short): These folks are in charge of loading and unloading cargo, vehicles, and people on aircraft. What an important job that is necessary to support troops all over. When you hear me say Load Master get in groups of 4 then pretend to load a plane/ lift boxes.

Security Forces: These individuals protect the people and the equipment on the base. Like cops, so for that reason, you will work in groups of 5 and spin in a circle making siren sounds Let's practice...

Maintenance: Groups of 6 should pair up together and pretend to work on a plane. Let's practice... Maintenance!



Debrief:

Have the youth discuss if they are surprised by jobs in the AFR/ANG, why the jobs are needed, and if anyone knows of other jobs common in the AFR/ANG.

Activity Extension:

You can have the youth create their version of General Coming. Have the youth create new commands based on different Air Force or other service branch jobs. Teens can choose to highlight careers fields they are interested in or their parent(s) career field. This lesson extension can be a great tie in at the end or beginning of the activity. Allowing high school teens, in particular, the opportunity to design their roles will allow them to take ownership and showcase leadership along with creativity.

Messy Picture Cheat Sheet

1. President Harry Truman personally sought to revitalize the reserve program, envisioning Reservists standing ready to serve as replacements during wartime. The Air Force Reserve was formally established on April 14, 1948.
2. The Air Force Reserve has specialized capabilities not found in Active Duty Air Force units. One example is aerial spray missions. The graphic in picture 2 is one example- Hurricane & Weather Reconnaissance
3. The Air Force has three core values that were adopted in January 1997. Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do. What does that mean to you or how is that represented in the picture?
4. Why do we have a picture of Warner Robins? Because, it is the Reserve Command headquarters. Is anyone from there?
5. The Air National Guard has both a federal and state mission. What is the state mission of the Air National Guard? provide protection of life and property and to preserve peace, order, and public safety. The Air National Guard currently provides 19% of the Air Force's total personnel and 35% of Air Force fighter, tanker and airlift capability for 6% of the cost.
6. Who do Air National Guard units report to when they are not mobilized or under federal control? the governor of their respective state/territory
7. The Air National Guard Readiness Center's mission is to ensure the combat readiness of Air National Guard units and act as a liaison between the National Guard Bureau and the individual states/territories. Where is the Air National Guard Readiness Center located? Joint Base Andrews, Maryland



8. There are a lot of careers in the Air Force. This image represents the career field of advanced fighter aircraft integrated avionics. The person maintains the electronic systems and avionics that allow the pilot to unleash the aircrafts full potential. Does anyone know of any other careers in the National Guard or Reserve?
9. What do you think of when you this picture? How many of you have experienced a parent deploying?
10. There are several Air Force Reserve locations throughout the country. Most states have a unit allowing the opportunity for you later or your parents currently serve. Some Reservist even choose to travel outside their home state for their role in the reserves.
11. What do you think is occurring in this picture? - Airmen from the New York Air National Guard's 105th Airlift Wing move debris from a road in the town of Carmel N.Y. on Monday March 5th Twenty Airmen assigned to the 105th Airlift Wing deployed to Putnam County New York to help town and county workers clear debris from roadways. The county was hit hard with a winter storm knocking down trees and causing widespread power outages.
12. Chief Master Sergeant (CMSgt) is the ninth, and highest, [enlisted rank](#) in the [U.S. Air Force](#), just above Senior Master Sergeant, and is a senior non-commissioned officer rank. The official term is "Chief Master Sergeant" or "Chief". Attaining the rank of Chief Master Sergeant is the pinnacle of an Air Force enlisted person's career. Some Chief Master Sergeants manage the efforts of all enlisted personnel within their unit or major subsection while others run major staff functions at higher headquarters levels. All Chief Master Sergeants are expected to serve as mentors for non-commissioned officers and junior enlisted members, and to serve as advisers to unit commanders and senior officers. By federal law, roughly one percent of the Air Force enlisted force may hold the rank of chief master sergeant.

13. The picture of the beach is of the coastline of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico along with Guam and Virgin Islands also have active Air National Guard. Each of the 54 National Guard organizations is supervised by the adjutant general of the state or territory. Under state law, the Air National Guard provides protection of life, property and preserves peace, order and public safety. These missions are accomplished through emergency relief support during natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and forest fires; search and rescue operations; support to civil defense authorities; maintenance of vital public services and counterdrug operations.
14. Airborne Cryptologic Language Analyst are language translators in the sky, Airborne Cryptologic Linguist personnel constantly monitor the radio frequency spectrum and translate, evaluate, and report on messages and other in-flight intelligence received in foreign languages.
15. Bioenvironmental Engineer focus on reducing health risks in the workplace and surrounding environment, which in the military is complicated by the proximity and handling of weapons, munitions, liquid fuels, and radioactive materials. They are also essential in achieving environmentally safe designs for medical facilities which routinely utilize radioactive procedures for diagnosis and treatment.
16. Aerospace Medical Service is a medical "jack of all trades," performing a wide range of technical nursing duties, from drawing blood to assisting in delivering newborn babies. In this job, you'll be directly involved in the care and treatment of patients, including feeding, measuring and recording vital signs, administering medications, and prepping patients for surgery. You'll also undergo training that will entitle you to take the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technician's examination – which can lead to a great civilian career as an EMT.
17. Families play a big role in Reserve and Guard families. Many Reserve and Guard families have wives, husbands, and/ or children they are supporting through their job.
18. Many Reserve and Guard individuals are able to receive an education by working in the military. Also, the Reserve and Guard has different jobs for individuals depending on the level of education a member has.



2.



1.



4.



3.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9.



10.

Messy Military Mission 18



11.



12.



13.

مرحبا العالم! **Hallo Welt!**
Hej Värld! **Hello World!**
Ciao Mondo
ハローワールド!
iOlá mundo! 世界您好!
Salut le Monde!

14.



15.



16.



17.



18.



Know Your Wingman Game

Set-up:

- Establish groups of 4 and explain groups must follow commands
- Go over commands with the group
- Allow groups to practice together to work on communication as a team and to familiarize themselves with the commands
- After practice start going through commands more quickly and after a few minutes include the Loose Engine into the commands

Game Instructions:

- Have participants get in groups of 4 and explain they have to follow commands from the leader. Go over commands with the teens and allow them time to practice commands and encourage them to find the best way to rotate positions when commands are given. During the practice, time give out commands slowly and then speed up slightly. Throughout the practice do not give the Loose Caboose command, so teens can practice within the same group. Next, put their practice to work and begin the actual play by speeding up the commands (but ensure the group has enough time to successfully maneuver). You can now add in the loose caboose, which adds a new challenge to the group since now they are working with different people. The game ends when youth become bored or after 10 minutes of play.

Commands:

- Change: 1st person and 4th person change places
- Switch: 2nd and 3rd person switch places
- Rotate: the entire group changes direction (the reverse direction)
- Loose Engine: the 4th person finds a new group
- Station: All players find a new train



The Military REACH Project Translating Research into Practice (TRIP) reports

TRIP Reports:

Reports included in the packet were chosen based on their relevance of supporting staff who plan to lead the Military Messy Mission. The TRIP reports focus on children, mental health, and recreational activities benefits for military families and children. Additionally, the included reports summary and key points are pulled directly from Military REACH's February and January 2020 newsletter and can be found at <https://militaryreach.auburn.edu/Updates> . I encourage staff to look through The Military Reach Project resources in addition to other resources that are intended to prepare staff for understanding mental health and the life of military children and their families.

IMPACT OF DEPLOYMENT ON MILITARY FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

BRIEF SUMMARY: Parental deployment can be a stressful experience for young children and their families, especially during the early years of child development when children rely heavily on their parents' physical and emotional availability for positive development. Using 26 articles published between 2001 and 2014, this systematic review examines the literature on (1) how deployment impacts military families with young children (five-years-old or younger), (2) evidence-based interventions for these families, and (3) the needs of military families from minority racial/ethnic backgrounds and/or lower socioeconomic status. Findings of this review indicate that deployment is associated with poorer individual and family outcomes, but that some intervention programs are helpful to military families with young children.

KEY FINDINGS: Generally, more frequent and longer deployments were related to higher levels of parent stress, depressive symptoms, lower family/couple functioning, lower child well-being, and the use of more mental health services and resources by the at-home spouse. – Behavior problems were higher among children 3-5 years old of deployed parents compared to younger children. They were also higher for children who experienced more frequent and longer separations. – Rates of child maltreatment and neglect were higher during deployment, and children younger than four-years-old were at greater risk of maltreatment and neglect compared to older children. – Very few studies of military families investigated differences in parenting, child well-being, or child behavior by race/ ethnicity . Of the studies that were found, the majority (n = 16) merged all racial/ethnic minority groups into a single category, which made it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions. The one consistent finding related to race/ethnicity was that maltreatment rates were higher for non-Hispanic white families during deployment than families of a racial/ ethnic minority.

THE CREATION OF MILITARY FAMILY LEISURE EXPERIENCES

BRIEF SUMMARY: Leisure time is integral to family functioning and personal wellbeing, in part because it provides opportunities for family members to build bonds and maintain a sense of solidarity. The purpose of this study was to apply the Creation of Family Experiences (CFE) framework to promote positive leisure experiences for military families. CFE takes into consideration family factors, aspects of leisure activities, and social norms to identify the circumstances in which family leisure activities may promote family cohesion (i.e., the emotional bonds experienced between family members). The authors suggest that the CFE Framework could be used to help military families identify appropriate leisure activities that can assist in mitigating military-related stressors while enhancing family relations.

THE PRELIMINARY EFFECTS OF A RECREATION-BASED MILITARY FAMILY CAMP ON FAMILY FUNCTIONING

BRIEF SUMMARY: Family Warrior Weekend is a recreation-based program designed to educate and support military and veteran families' physical, mental, and emotional well-being through recreational activities. This study examined how family functioning (i.e., cohesion, flexibility, communication, and satisfaction) was impacted by participation in Family Warrior Weekend over the period of about a month. All families had experienced at least one deployment, and parents answered surveys on the first day of camp, final day of camp, and three weeks after camp ended. Both quantitative and qualitative data were used to evaluate family functioning. Quantitatively, family functioning did not change over time as a result of Family Warrior Weekend; however, qualitatively, families acknowledged that Family Warrior Weekend provided an opportunity to become aware of, and improve on, aspects of family functioning, such as family communication.

KEY FINDINGS

- Over the period of approximately one month, quantitative data analysis showed that Family Warrior Weekend did not significantly contribute to changes in),
 - family cohesion (e.g., bonding through the uses of military resources),
 - family flexibility (e.g., adapting to challenges of the new recreation setting)
 - family communication (e.g., improved dialogue by being more direct towards each other),
 - or family satisfaction (e.g., sharing fun and positive experiences together).
- Qualitative data analysis demonstrated that Family Warrior Weekend provided families with opportunities to promote family interactions, cohesion, and individual improvement.
- Both quantitative and qualitative findings showed that Family Warrior Weekend had minimal impact on family flexibility and satisfaction.

THE LASTING EFFECTS OF GROWING UP IN A MILITARY-CONNECTED HOME: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COLLEGE-AGED AMERICAN MILITARY KIDS

BRIEF SUMMARY: Unique experiences in childhood, such as those connected to military life, may have longterm impacts on individuals as they develop. College students from military families (n = 21) were interviewed and asked to reflect on how their upbringing in a military



family impacted their behavior, affect, and cognition in emerging adulthood (ages 19-22). Among other themes, participants reported feelings of pride, connection to their family, and a sense of instability.

MILITARY POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER: A QUALITATIVE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE EXPERIENCE OF FAMILIES, PARENTS AND CHILDREN

BRIEF SUMMARY: Qualitative interviews have been used to understand the experiences of war veterans, their partners, and their children in the context of military posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The current study synthesized and summarized findings from 11 qualitative studies related to the experiences of parenting in the context of military-related PTSD. The summarized themes presented below suggest that, though PTSD does cause familial stress, parents with PTSD are still valued members of the family.

Additional Resources

The Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, Character Development: Lesson plans are designed for elementary, middle and high school students. Lessons focus on the medal of honor recipients while learning important character traits. The site includes videos that are great teaching tools as well. <https://themedalofhonor.com/character-development/>

The Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, Resources: This resource on the Medal of Honor website includes recorded webinars, videos, and photo galleries. Included resources are a perfect addition to a variety of topics you might be teaching and all of the resources are high quality. <https://themedalofhonor.com/resources/>

Let's Partner Up

I, Laura Goss, would love to partner with other professionals on creating my next Military Messy Mission plan. If you are interested in collaborating, please reach out to laurwalt@uga.edu or call at 706-542-4444 (Office). Let's get "messy" and create a great research-based program for military teens/families.

Author Notes

This resource is not a published resource by the University of Georgia at this time. The resource is meant to be a tool for educators and overtime resources will be added to create a complete Military Messy Mission packet. Finally, the idea of these programs was created based on the mission of Messy Church and this resource uses a similar objective. To learn about Messy Church go to <https://www.messychurch.org>

Citation

1. Air Force Reserve. (n.d.). Jobs. Retrieved 2018, from <https://afreserve.com/jobs/>
2. Building Unity, Community, Connection and Teamwork Through Active Learningsm Jim Cain- Teamwork & Teamplay - <http://www.teamworkandteamplay.com/>
3. FIND A CAREER THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU. (n.d). Retrieved 2017, from <https://www.goang.com/careers/find-your-career.html>
4. Hawkins, B. L., Townsend, J. A., Heath, S. E., & Lipton, K. (2018). The preliminary effects of a recreation-based military family camp on family functioning. *American Journal of Recreation Therapy*, 17(3). 15-24. <https://doi.org/10.5055/ajrt.2018.0164>
5. HEROS AMONG US CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. (2020). Retrieved February 27, 2020, from <https://themedalofhonor.com/>
6. History. (n.d). Retrieved 2017, from <https://www.goang.com/discover-ang/history.html>
7. McGaw, V. E., Reupert, A. E., Maybery, D. (2019). Military posttraumatic stress disorder: A qualitative systematic review of the experience of families, parents and children. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28 , 2942 - 2952. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01469-7>
8. Melton, K. K., Townsend, J., & Hodge, C. J. (2018). The creation of military family leisure experiences. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 10 (3), 602-619. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12273>
9. Messy Church. (2020). Retrieved February 27, 2020, from <https://www.messychurch.org/>
10. REOURCES. (2020). Retrieved February 27, 2020, from <https://themedalofhonor.com/>
11. Scannell M., & Cain, J. (2012). *The big book of low-cost training games*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
12. Trautmann, J., Alhusen, J., & Gross, D. (2015). Impact of deployment on military families with young children: A systematic review. *Nursing Outlook*, 63, 656-679. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2015.06.002>
13. Zurlinden, T. E., Firmin, M. W., Shell, A. L., & Grammer, H. W. (2019). The lasting effects of growing up in a military-connected home: A qualitative study of college-aged American military kids. *Journal of Family Studies*, Advanced Online Only. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2019.1650800>