



**29<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

**Anger, sleepless nights and mood swings  
The real affect of deployment on our Little Troopers**

Little Troopers, a charity that provides support for children with a parent serving in the UK Forces, has released the findings of a survey, which shows the true impact of long periods of separation on the family, caused by training and deployment.

Over 230 families completed the survey, which asked several questions about how the children dealt with deployment, moving around the world and keeping up at school. It found that deployment has many effects on our Little Troopers, the most common being:

- 73% missed the male/female influence in their life
- 50% of children have sleepless nights
- 63% of children have mood swings
- 41% struggle to speak to their parents while they are away
- 45% get angry at the parent who is at home
- 45% find it hard to settle when their parent returns home

It also found that a Serving Parent has missed on average four of their children's birthdays and at least one Christmas.

Lilly's mum Carly Van Staden, from Salisbury, said " Lilly's Daddy has been on tour three times; to Iraq once & Afghanistan twice, his first came when she was a few months old. They were all 6-7 month tours and with additional exercises & courses, he has missed 5 of her birthdays due to being away. She finds it hard when he first goes away but soon adapts a very mature mentality & we use a chuff chart (one of the charity resources) to count down the days until Daddy is home. She's so proud of Daddy & has said she wants to be a soldier when she grows up."

Louise Fetigan, Founder of Little Troopers said "Many believe separation of serving personnel and their children is less prevalent due to the withdrawal from Afghanistan but this couldn't be further from the truth. With the British Armed Forces at their lowest numbers for decades and the continued commitments, families are forever experiencing repeated separation with parents serving in Canada, Belize, Kenya, Falklands, Cyprus, German, Middle East and beyond. Just because it doesn't make the news, bonds between parent and child are still being severed."

The findings of the survey have been released to coincide with the Re-launch of the charity, formerly known, as My Daddy is a Soldier Adventures. The charity has changed its name to Little Troopers to reflect the expansion of its services. It has become the first children's charity to offer support to all three UK Forces.

Louise Fetigan, Founder of the charity, adds: "As a former soldier and wife of a serving soldier I could see the impact that deployment and training had on my little girl. When I looked for some support there wasn't really anything available so I started My Daddy is a Soldier Adventures with a friend. Over the last four years we have built up a brilliant community and set of resources and I'm over the moon that we can now help families in the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy as well."

To find out more please visit [www.LittleTroopers.net](http://www.LittleTroopers.net) or follow the charity on Twitter @LittleTroopers\_.

### **Ends**

For further information or to set up an interview please contact Cheryl Randeria on 07810 697957 or email Cheryl@clrcommunications.co.uk.

### **Notes to Editor**

Little Troopers, formerly known, as My Daddy is a Soldier Adventures, is a charity that provides support to children and families who have a Serving Parent away from the family home. These children will quite often celebrate their birthday or Christmas without one or both of their parents and they count down to the day that they will come home. They can be away for six to nine months and often will be in a combat zone.

The charity was born following a very successful fundraising event 'My Daddy is a Soldier Trek 2011' which was arranged by the founder Louise Fetigan. To find out more visit [www.littletroopers.net](http://www.littletroopers.net) or see their blog at <http://littletroopersathome.blogspot.co.uk/2015/11/today-is-day.html>