

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Madlala-Routledge (2004:vi) posits that:

As part of national foreign policy, the Department of Defence (DOD) has participated in various peace and humanitarian support missions in Africa and other parts of the world, and has made a significant contribution to the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). According to her, an average of three thousand South African troops has been deployed in these missions throughout Africa.

Furthermore, Nyanda (2004:vii) suggests that:

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF), which is the military, is structured, equipped and prepared to defend South Africa against military violence. In an endeavour to promote peace within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Africa, the SANDF currently deploys the equivalent of three battalions in peace support operations in countries such as Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The researcher agrees with the abovementioned views, and is of the opinion that it is clear that SANDF members/employees are expected to be deployed in missions outside their country of origin, that is, outside South Africa, as part of their work obligations. This task is a challenge, as they have to work under stressful circumstances. Like any other organisation that employs human beings, members of the SANDF do not function in isolation, but in the context of other systems within their lives, of which the family is the most important. In addition, this implies that, in order for the troops to be able to carry out their work obligations in an effective and efficient manner, other systems within their lives need to be provided for.

Therefore, according to Motumi (2004:2):

The Directorate Social Work's main purpose is to promote the resilience of the DOD by maintaining a balance between the demands of the military system and the needs of its members, so as to ensure the mission readiness of the organisation.

According to the researcher, it is therefore clear that a state of equilibrium needs to be maintained between the demands of the organisation and other systems within the members' lives, so as to enable them to carry out their responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner.

The researcher supports this argument, as the mandate for the Directorate Social Work is to put the necessary support programmes in place to ensure that members will be resilient enough to carry out their work obligations. Programmes of this nature include financial management, conflict management, resilience and debriefing upon return from external deployment.

McCubbin and McCubbin (1996:16) define resilience as:

The positive behavioural patterns and functional competence that individuals, families, communities and organisations demonstrate under stressful or adverse circumstances, which determine their ability to recover by maintaining their integrity as a unit while ensuring, and where necessary restoring, the well-being of the individual, family, community or organisation.

In other words, the ability of the individual and the family to survive any traumatic situation while the spouse is away on external deployment is a critical prerequisite for combat readiness amongst SANDF members.

The researcher consulted colleagues within the SANDF with regard to the topic of this study, as well as the study itself. Cilliers, as quoted by Strydom (1998a:180), postulates that:

In spite of the wealth of literature, which may exist in any discipline, it usually represents only a section of knowledge of people who are regularly involved in the specific field. Furthermore, since the field of

social work is already so broad, people automatically specialise. One finds an increasing number of persons who have trained in a specialised area, who have undertaken research or who have been active for many years in that specific area. It therefore is most valuable to prospective researchers to utilise these resources.

For this reason, the researcher consulted the following experts:

- Colonel E.S. Harrison, Senior Staff Officer within the Directorate Social Work. Once she had read the proposal of the researcher, she suggested that the researcher revisit the topic, as it did not make sense when stated as an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of spousal support services to members of the SANDF during external deployment. She suggested that the researcher rephrase the title of the study. She also evaluated Chapter 6, which contained the conclusions and recommendations at the end of the study, and assessed the feasibility of the model that was designed by the researcher. She suggested the inclusion of more role players with regard to the provision of spousal support services and the link to existing structures such as the Military Community Development Committee (MCDC).

- Lieutenant Colonel M. de Klerk, Senior Staff Officer within the Directorate Social Work. She assisted the researcher in the formulation of the topic, viz. a model for spousal support services to SANDF members during external deployment within the South African National Defence Force.

- Lieutenant Colonel A.D. Van Breda, Research Manager, Military Psychological Institute, and social worker by profession. The researcher consulted him regarding the topic under study, especially in terms of whether or not a questionnaire would be a feasible data collection method amongst spouses of SANDF members who live in rural areas, and in connection with further literature concerning deployment and support services. He suggested the use of focus group interviews with spouses of SANDF members who live in rural areas. Furthermore, he provided the researcher with a large amount of material

(journals) on deployment, support and resilience, and he aligned himself with the topic as stated in the researcher's discussion with Lieutenant Colonel de Klerk.

- Lt Col P.H. Hartslief. She is presently employed as the Senior Staff Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation, at the Chief Directorate Transformation Management. However, she was previously employed as a specialist social work researcher at the Military Psychological Institute. She also did an excellent job as acting Staff Officer at Mobile Military Health Formation, which is responsible for deployments within the SANDF. She assisted the researcher at the end of the study with the assessment of the feasibility of the model in Chapter 7, and she also went through Chapter 6, which focuses on conclusions and recommendations. She suggested that the researcher should also recommend that social workers within the mission area should serve as a link between the member and the spouse by means of contacting the spouse, particularly at times when the member cannot access the spouse due to a situation beyond his/her control (for example, terrain).

- Major M. Small, a specialist social work researcher at the Military Psychological Institute, Social Work Research and Development, a part-time lecturer at the University of South Africa, and supervisor of social work students. She assisted the researcher with the formulation of the research topic viz. a model for military support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment, and with comments on the flow of the researcher's thoughts in the proposal stage. She further assisted the researcher in the formulation of graphs and charts for the qualitative and quantitative data analyses.

Strydom (1998a:179) is of the opinion that "the prospective researcher can only hope to undertake meaningful research if he/she is fully up to date with existing knowledge on his/her prospective subject". Mouton (2001:87) asserts that:

Literature review encapsulates much more than just reviewing the literature. Mouton uses the term "existing scholarship" to indicate the existing body of knowledge or range of research products produced

by other scholars, which is more than the mere literature that a researcher should be able to identify and explore in an attempt to conduct a comprehensive review of literature.

No scientific research on the topic of spousal support in the South African National Defence Force during external military deployment could be found, and even though some United States DOD literature on related, but not similar, research is available, it is rather limited. Available material focuses more on separation during wartime, such as the Persian Gulf War (Black, 1993:272-277), than during peace missions. Models of the impact of family centre programmes on service members are available, such as during Desert Shield/Storm (DSS), in which the link between the deployment programme and family adaptation was evaluated. According to Van Breda (1993-1996:1), “a fairly substantial pool of literature is available dealing with the field of family separations, primarily with reference to military families. Particularly in the United States of America, the family’s experience of separations or deployments has received much attention”.

Therefore, according to the researcher, research that was conducted on the issue of support to families during deployment within the SANDF focused on, for example, the resilience theory, a literature review with special chapters on deployment resilience in military families and resilience theory in social work (Van Breda, 2001:i-320), an article on support to families in Kwa-Zulu Natal (Mahlambi, 2003:1-9), and emotional cycles of deployment in the South African Navy family (Van Breda, 1993-1996:i-196). As a result of the fact that most of the sources used in these studies are not primarily South African, the researcher is of the opinion that South African literature on support to families is limited. The researcher was expected to make use of original sources, of which most were not necessarily South African. In addition, source references in some of the unpublished literature were lacking.

It was also difficult for the researcher to make use of some of the literature (both published and unpublished), due to the fact that it was not exactly what the

researcher wanted to include in her research paper, and because of the fact that most of the information dated back to between 1974 and 1990. Even the emotional cycle of deployment (Logan, 1987:43-47) that the researcher made extensive use of in her study, which has been referred to by Van Breda (1993-1996:i-196) in the emotional cycles of deployment in the South African Navy family, was written in 1987.

In his study on the emotional cycles of deployment, Van Breda (1993-1996:1) indicated that “despite the lack of literature that is directly relevant to South Africa, one article (Logan, 1987) has been widely used by both husbands and wives in assisting them to understand their experience of deployment”. The researcher also made use of this (Logan, 1987:43-47) source, due to the fact that it was most relevant to the study. This status quo does not necessarily imply total absence of South African literature on the subject of spousal support to military families. Therefore, this topic cannot be regarded as the first of its kind. However, no scientific investigation into the assessment of the nature of social support services to the SANDF members and their spouses during external military deployment could be found.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that when the researcher made the decision to undertake her doctoral studies within the SANDF, she approached the Director of Social Work, General Motumi, with regard to the research topic that would ultimately be of benefit to the organisation. The researcher was requested to conduct an investigation into the efficiency and effectiveness of social support services that are rendered to SANDF members and their spouses during external military deployment. This emanated from complaints received by the Director of Social Work from some of the members of the SANDF who had been involved in external military deployment that no social support services were rendered to them and their spouses during external military deployment. In cases where services were rendered, the complaint was that they were insufficient. For this reason, the researcher made the decision to undertake this study.

The United States Department of Defence (US DOD) is implementing programmes such as pre-deployment (ongoing readiness), post-deployment (homecoming and reunion), family assistance centres, family support groups, children's readiness handbooks and operation READY videos, prepared mainly for the purpose of providing support to its members and their families during deployment. Even though the resilience programme is implemented within the SANDF, the researcher is of the opinion that these US DOD programmes can be fully adapted to fit in with the SANDF spousal support services' requirements during external military deployment, particularly if they respond to the needs of its members.

Comprehensive implementation of deployment resilience programmes for SANDF members and their spouses during external military deployment seemed to be the problem. The requirement for large-scale implementation of these programmes in the SANDF emanates from the need for implementation of such services, which was expressed by some of the SANDF members (who had been involved in external military deployment) and their spouses. No full-scale research in this regard has been conducted within South Africa.

The researcher further posits that there are various forms of deployment that can be distinguished within the SANDF, for example, internal deployment within the borders of the Republic of South Africa (RSA), deployment emanating from courses ranging from two weeks to a year, deployment to other provinces within the country, resulting in fragmented families, and deployment that is mission-specific, which ranges from one week to six months. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus will be limited to the design of a model for social support services rendered to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of the members within SADC and African Union (AU) countries. This process is ongoing, due to the political unrest situation prevalent within some of the SADC and AU countries, as well as the world at large. Instead, the need for this type of service will increase. It is therefore critical that social support services

to members' spouses be in place while the members are involved in external military deployment.

According to the researcher, the observed impact that external deployments have on military families, especially the impact that the concept of the SANDF's involvement in various peace and humanitarian support missions in Africa and other parts of the world has on the family, is a relatively new field of study within the SANDF. Therefore, according to the researcher, the design of a model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment is critical in ensuring that members are mission-ready.

The researcher has therefore selected her topic of research in order to design a model for social support services to the spouses of SANDF members during the external military deployment of the members, and also to sensitise the SANDF to the importance of a combat-ready force by ensuring that the spouses of deployed members are well taken care of while the members are carrying out the parliamentary strategic guidelines which entail involvement in peace missions in other countries, particularly African countries.

This chapter contains the following: a general introduction, problem formulation, purpose, goal and objectives of the study, research questions, a summary of the research methodology, the pilot study, ethical aspects, definition of key concepts, contents of the research report, and limitations of the study.

1.2 PROBLEM FORMULATION

Mark (1996:81) and Babbie and Mouton (2001:78) postulate that:

Social work research begins with a research problem. Often, a research problem is stated in the form of a question. If there is theory or previous research that provides some explanation of the phenomenon under study, the researcher might state the purpose of the study in a form of one or more hypothesis.

According to Goddard and Melville (2001:16):

Having performed the preliminary study and demarcated the problem, the researcher is now in a position to make a statement of the research problem (often referred to as the 'statement of the problem'). This statement will be the base on which the eventual report will stand, and needs to be clear and coherent.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:7) are in agreement with the abovementioned authors, and are of the opinion that "research begins with a problem: an unanswered question in the mind of the researcher". Leedy and Ormrod (2005:43) further state that "at the heart of every research project is the problem. It is paramount to the success of the research effort that the problem be seen with unwavering clarity, and be stated in precise and unmistakable terms".

The researcher affirms the above by indicating that research cannot take place without any cause for concern. Research emanates from the existence of a problem that compels the researcher to seek more information about the presenting problem, find possible solutions to the problem, and sensitize others, whether individuals or organisations, for example, regarding such a problem and further possible research on the same topic. Proper problem formulation is therefore critical when undertaking any research.

Upon debriefing some of the members who have been on external military deployment to countries such as Sudan and the DRC, social workers received feedback that members were not satisfied with the social support services that should have been rendered to their spouses while they were on external military deployment. There were also complaints that spousal support services were insufficient. These members included troops, spouses and the professionals such as nurses, social workers and psychologists who rendered support services during the period of deployment.

This further highlighted the importance of a scientific evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of military support services to spouses of SANDF members

while members were deployed abroad. It also became apparent that the development of a social support services model was needed in order to address this limitation.

As an employee of the South African National Defence Force, the researcher is involved in the monitoring and control of work performance among social workers. Through the staff visits that the researcher undertook to SANDF units within some of the provinces in South Africa, namely Limpopo, Free State and Gauteng, as well as 3 Military Hospital, the researcher observed a need for the designation and implementation of a model for social support services to the spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment. Information received from members in these areas can be generalised to other provinces, due to the fact that the Free State is an area where mobilisation and demobilisation of troops occur prior to and after external deployment.

According to the researcher, the importance of spousal resilience has been shown by the nature of problems that have been experienced by spouses at home while members were on external military deployment - for example, divorce, as well as marital and financial problems. However, this cannot be statistically proven due to the fact that social workers did not make a distinction between normal problems and those that are deployment-related in the Management Information System (MIS). However, a relationship does exist between these problems and external military deployment. In other words, problems experienced by spouses and members who have been involved in external military deployment, such as divorce, marital problems and financial problems, can be linked to external military deployment.

Spousal support services that are rendered within the SANDF during external deployment entail preparation for deployment, which includes programmes such as financial management, stress management, conflict management and health awareness programmes such as HIV and AIDS, support during deployment in

the form of telephone calls and crisis management where possible, and reintegration into the family in the form of debriefing and preparation for the unexpected. As a result of the lack of resources such as telephones and transport to carry out home visits, this service is not rendered within all the deploying units in the SANDF. This is evident from complaints received from members and spouses of deployed and deploying members from the organisation. Lack of resources to undertake home visits, distance between military bases and residential areas, and lack of access to telephones also pose limitations in terms of the provision of this service by social workers within the SANDF.

The researcher has identified the following as problem areas to be investigated by this study:

- Lack of scientific investigation on the subject of social support services to SANDF members' spouses while members are on external military deployment.
- Lack of a model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses while members are on external military deployment.
- Lack of formal evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of existing social support services to SANDF members' spouses while members are on external military deployment.
- Lack of resources (logistical and human) to provide efficient and effective social support services to SANDF members' spouses while members are on external military deployment.

- Lack of intervention programmes by the SANDF in order to render social support services to SANDF members' spouses while members are on external military deployment.
- Lack of buy-in by SANDF managers regarding the pressing need for the provision of efficient and effective social support services to SANDF members' spouses while members are on external military deployment.

Despite the fact that a resilience programme is in place for use by social workers within the SANDF, the researcher is of the opinion that a model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment is not in place. The researcher could not conclude that the resilience programme that is in place within the SANDF is a model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment. The fact that the efficiency and effectiveness of spousal support services during external military deployment within the SANDF have not been scientifically evaluated poses a problem in terms of the comprehensive promotion of a combat-ready force and healthy military families by the organisation, reflecting in particular upon the Social Work Directorate, as it forms part of its core business. Hence, the Director of Social Work requested the researcher to undertake this study.

1.3 PURPOSE, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

According to Fouché (2002a:107-108):

The terms "goal," "purpose" and "aim" are often used interchangeably, that is, as synonyms for one another. Their meaning implies the broader, more abstract conception of "the end toward which effort or ambition is directed", while "objective" denotes the more concrete, measurable and more speedily attainable conception of such "end toward which effort or ambition is directed". The one (goal, purpose, or aim) is the "dream"; the other (objective) is the steps one has to take, one by one, realistically at grass-roots level, within a certain time-span, in order to attain the dream.

As described by Fouché (2002a:108), the terms “goal” and “objective” will be used in this study. According to the researcher, therefore, purpose implies the rationale behind undertaking a particular study.

Neuman (2000:21) postulates that:

There are almost as many reasons to do research, as there are researchers. Yet, the purpose of social research may be organized into three groups based on what the researcher is trying to accomplish, explore a new topic, describe a social phenomenon, or explain why something occurs.

Furthermore, according to Neuman (2000:21), “studies may have multiple purposes (example, both to explore and describe), but one purpose is usually dominant”.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:79) state that “social research serves many purposes”.

According to Babbie (2005:88):

Three of the most common and useful purposes are exploration, description, and explanation. Furthermore, a large proportion of social research is conducted to explore a topic, or to provide a basic familiarity with that topic. This approach is typical when a researcher examines a new interest, or when the subject of study is relatively new.

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:42), “the purpose of exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person. The need for such a study could arise out of lack of basic information on a new area of interest”. Durrheim (1999:39) is of the opinion that “exploratory studies are used to make preliminary investigations into relatively unknown areas of research. They employ an open, flexible, and inductive approach to research, as they attempt to look for new insights into phenomena”.

According to Mouton and Marais, as quoted by Brink (2001:11), “the purpose of exploratory research is to explore the dimensions of a phenomenon, the manner

in which it manifests, and the other factors with which it is related (it provides more insight about the nature of a phenomenon)”.

Due to the fact that an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of social support services to SANDF members’ spouses while the member is on external military deployment is a new area of research, the purpose of this study was therefore exploratory in nature. In other words, the main objective of this study was exploration.

1.3.1 Goal

The goal of this study was to design a model for social support services to SANDF members’ spouses during external military deployment of members.

1.3.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To undertake an in-depth literature review that would conceptualise social support services to SANDF members’ spouses during external military deployment of members.
- To evaluate the implementation, efficiency and effectiveness of existing social support services to SANDF members’ spouses while members are on external military deployment.
- To inform the SANDF management about the results of the study in terms of the need for social support services to SANDF members’ spouses during the members’ external military deployment.

- To design a model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses while members are on external military deployment as a prerequisite for combat readiness amongst SANDF members.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

De Vos (1998:115-16) postulates that “research always commences with one or more questions or hypotheses. Questions are posed about the nature of real situations, while hypotheses are statements about how things can be”. Maxwell (1998:80) goes further to describe the research question as “what the researcher specifically wants to understand by doing the study. Research questions are more relevant if the researcher works qualitatively, and hypotheses when the researcher works quantitatively”. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:4), “research is guided by a specific research problem, question or hypothesis”.

Winberg (1997:31) states that “all research, like any process of knowledge production, usually start with a question”. In this study, therefore, the researcher began with a research question. Due to the fact that this study was aimed at understanding the nature of social support services to be rendered to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of members and the designation of a model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of members, the research problem will be stated in the form of a question, not a hypothesis, which is a tentative assertion regarding how things could be.

In this study, the researcher did not make assumptions about social support services to be rendered to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of members, but undertook an exploratory study, which was aimed at the designation of a model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment. Hence, the researcher made use of research questions instead of a hypothesis.

The following research questions were posed:

- What is the nature of social support services rendered to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment?
- What is the efficiency and effectiveness of social support services rendered to the spouses of the SANDF members during external military deployment? In other words, whether or not there are any social support services that are rendered to the spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment, what services are rendered if any, how they are rendered, whether or not these services are rendered as expected, and whether or not the desired outcome is achieved.
- What is the nature of the problems experienced by SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of members?
- Is there a need for additional social support services to be rendered to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of members?
- Are there sufficient resources to render efficient and effective social support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of members?
- Is there a need for a model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of members?
- If necessary, what type of model should be implemented?
- Which discipline will be the main custodian of such a model?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research approach that was used in this study is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the case of the quantitative study, the population that the researcher was interested in was the 6,414 SANDF members who were married or in a permanent partnership, and had been involved in external military deployment. A sample of 350 research subjects took part in this study, and the sampling method that was used to select research subjects was purposive sampling. Self-constructed questionnaires were used as a quantitative data collection technique to elicit information from the SANDF members who have been involved in external deployment regarding the nature of social support services during their external military deployment. Social workers who were deployed with these members assisted with the administration of questionnaires.

In the case of the qualitative study, the population that the researcher was interested in was the 6,414 spouses of SANDF members who had been externally deployed. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to solicit information that aided in the design of a model for social support services to spouses of SANDF members while the latter are on external military deployment. A sample of 60 research subjects was involved in this study. The sampling method that was used in the selection of research subjects was the sequential sampling method. Interviews were conducted with spouses of members of the SANDF who had been involved in external military deployment. Social workers from each of the deploying units in eight provinces of South Africa conducted interviews with the spouses of SANDF members who had been involved in external military deployment, while the researcher conducted interviews in the ninth province, namely Gauteng.

The following ethical issues, inter alia, will be applicable to this study; protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, deception of respondents, release or publication of findings, debriefing of

respondents, cooperation with contributors, and actions and competence of the researcher.

1.6 PILOT STUDY

According to Royse (1995:172):

It is important to conduct a pilot study, whether it is a qualitative or a quantitative study. In qualitative research, the pilot study is usually informal, and few respondents possessing the same characteristics as those of the main investigation can be involved in the study, merely to ascertain certain trends. The purpose is to determine whether the relevant data can be obtained from the respondents.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) define a pilot study as “a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling instruments, and analysis are adequate and appropriate”.

Huysamen, as quoted by Strydom (1998a:179), is of the opinion that “the purpose of a pilot study is to investigate the feasibility of the planned project and to bring possible deficiencies in the measurement procedure to the fore”. According to the researcher, a pilot study is therefore a preliminary, small-scale investigation whose purpose is to determine whether or not the data collection techniques used in this study, i.e. the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, had the desired effect. In other words, the purpose was to determine whether or not the required information was obtained from the research subjects.

1.6.1 Pilot testing

The pilot testing, in the form of semi-structured interviews, was conducted at one of the deploying units in Gauteng, within rural areas such as Hammanskraal and urban areas such as Thaba Tshwane, with two of the spouses of SANDF members who had been on external military deployment. These spouses were

not involved in the main study. Questionnaires were further pilot-tested at one of the deploying units in Gauteng, 21 South African Infantry Battalion (21 SAI Bn), with two of the SANDF members who had been on external military deployment. These SANDF members were not involved in the main study. The outcome of the pilot test was that the data collection techniques were adequate and did not require any form of refinement. As a result, the desired outcome was achieved. Therefore, there was no need for revision.

1.6.2 Feasibility of the Study

The research subjects were SANDF employees and were always available. Social workers who were employed within deployment units in South Africa, as well as those who were deployed in external deployment areas, were requested to participate in data collection. The study was conducted at minimal costs, which involved only photocopying and telephone calls. Social workers were already working in deployment units and deployment areas such as the DRC, Burundi and Sudan. Therefore, no further travelling costs were incurred. The researcher made use of sustainment flights that regularly travel to mission areas, in order to deliver and collect questionnaires, which were channelled through the military post office.

The Director of Social Work requested the researcher to conduct this study. Written permission was obtained from the Director of Social Work within the SANDF to conduct the study. The researcher was also subjected to the Defence Intelligence Department Committee for the purpose of confirming that confidential information about the organisation would not be compromised in any way by this study, and also to obtain further authorisation to continue with the investigation. The rationale for this procedure was to confirm that ethical guidelines would not be violated in this study.

1.7 ETHICAL ASPECTS

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101-102):

Within certain disciplines, namely the social sciences, education, criminology, medicine, and similar areas of study; the use of human subjects in research is quite common. And whenever human beings are the focus of investigation, the researcher must look closely at the ethical implications of what we are proposing to do. Furthermore, most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues.

According to Strydom (1998b:24), different authors emphasise more or less the same aspects when describing the concept of ethics. Strydom defines ethics as:

A set of moral principles, which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants, and students.

In the researcher's view, since the research subjects involved in this study are human beings, ethical issues are imperative. The following ethical issues, inter alia, were applicable to this study:

1.7.1 Protection from Harm

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101-102):

Researchers should not expose research participants to undue physical or psychological harm. Participants should not risk losing life or limb, nor should they be subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem. In cases where the nature of study involves creating any amount of psychological discomfort, participants should be informed beforehand and the necessary debriefing or counselling should follow immediately after their participation.

Babbie, as quoted by Strydom (2002:64), mentions that:

The more concrete harm that respondents may experience is with regard to their family life, relationships, or employment situation. The

fact that negative behaviour of the past may be recalled to memory during the investigation could be the beginning of renewed personal harassment or embarrassment. For this reason, the researcher should have the firmest of scientific grounds if he/she extracts sensitive and personal information from research subjects.

The researcher did not foresee any form of physical or psychological harm being incurred by the research subjects. However, the study had the potential to make the subjects and their spouses relive bad experiences related to external deployment. This status was prevalent during the debriefing process and among those who had already had the experience of deployment. The researcher referred some of the research subjects to the social work officers, who were not involved in the research process, for debriefing. Research subjects were informed beforehand about the impact that the investigation might have. They were also given the opportunity to withdraw from the investigation if they so wished. The researcher therefore ensured that the research subjects were protected from any form of harm throughout the study.

1.7.2 Informed Consent

According to Christians (2000:138):

Research subjects have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of an experiment in which they participate. Proper respect for human freedom generally includes two necessary conditions. Subjects must agree voluntarily to participate, that is, without physical or psychological coercion. In addition, their agreement must be based on full and open information.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101-102) elaborate further by saying that:

The participants should be told that, if they agree to participate, they would have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Any participation in a study should be strictly voluntary. A common practice is an informed consent form that describes the nature of the research project, as well as the nature of research subjects' participation in it.

In summary, according to the researcher, informed consent entails a written document that clearly discloses all information about the study, which serves as an agreement between the researcher and research subjects. In the case of this study, research subjects signed informed consent forms. These forms contained information about the content of the study, the purpose of the study and procedures to be followed, the rights of research subjects, such as confidentiality, the fact that research subjects were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time if they so desired, and the contact numbers of the researcher. This would enable research subjects to contact the researcher in case of any questions or comments.

Furthermore, in the researcher's view, due to the nature of the organisation (that is, in terms of security and previous negative experiences that some of the members had had), some of the research subjects refused to complete the consent forms, even after an explanation was provided regarding the rationale behind these forms. Some signed the forms without identifying themselves. As a result, 255 consent forms were received. However, this will not have any legal implications for the study. In other words, it will not be possible for anyone to make claims against the researcher, because it is impossible to make a comparison or distinguish between who completed the questionnaire and informed consent forms and who did not.

1.7.3 Right to Privacy/Confidentiality/Anonymity

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101-102):

Any research study should respect the participants' right to privacy. Under no circumstances should a research report, either oral or written, be presented in such a way that others become aware of how a particular participant has responded or behaved, unless the participant has specifically granted permission for such disclosure, in writing. In general, a researcher must keep the nature and quality of participants' performance strictly confidential.

Christians (2000:139) is of the opinion that:

The codes of ethics insist on safeguards to protect peoples' identities and those of the research locations. Confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. All personal data ought to be secured or concealed and made public behind a shield of anonymity.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101-102) postulate that “under no circumstances may the identity of research subjects be revealed to anyone”.

Therefore, the interview responses from research subjects were treated with anonymity and utmost confidentiality. SANDF social workers underwent training in confidentiality as one of the values in social work, and they therefore possessed the necessary knowledge and skills in dealing with confidential information. In this regard, SANDF social workers were competent and adequately skilled in dealing with data collection. This information was explained to the social workers who were involved in data collection, as well as to the research subjects, before the interview process began.

A covering letter with details regarding the interview process, which spelt out the confidentiality aspect to the research subjects, was also distributed. The researcher ensured that none of the research participants' identities were revealed in the research questionnaires or reflected in the research report. The research participants were ensured of their right not to participate in the study if they did not want to respond. Furthermore, the researcher personally undertook data collection within the Gauteng province.

1.7.4 Deception of Respondents

According to Neuman (2000:229), “deception occurs when the researcher intentionally misleads subjects by way of written or verbal instructions, the actions of other people, or certain aspects of the setting”. According to Bailey (1994:463), “lying about the research purpose is common, especially in the case

of small qualitative projects. Deception is hardly needed in large quantitative surveys, however". Strydom (2002:67) is of the opinion that "no form of deception should be inflicted on respondents. If this happens inadvertently, it must be rectified immediately after or during the debriefing interview". The researcher therefore ensured that all the information concerning the study, its purpose and the research process was disclosed before the commencement of the study.

1.7.5 Release or Publication of Findings

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:101-102):

Researchers must report their findings in a complete and honest fashion, without misrepresenting what they have done or intentionally misleading others about the nature of their findings. Under no circumstances should a researcher fabricate data to support a particular conclusion, no matter how seemingly noble that conclusion may be.

According to Strydom (2002:72):

An ethical obligation rests on the researcher to ensure that the investigation proceeds correctly at all times, and that no one is deceived by the findings. Furthermore, the information must be formulated and conveyed clearly and unambiguously to avoid or minimise misappropriation by subjects, the general public, or the colleagues.

The researcher ensured that the findings of this study were disseminated in a comprehensive and candid manner. Feedback was also provided to research subjects as a way of acknowledging their contributions, and in order to make this study worthwhile for them. Information was also made available to the reading public, such as the University of Pretoria and the SANDF, as the study concerned the implementation of a model for social support services to the spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment of members.

1.7.6 Debriefing of Respondents

According to Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991:517), “debriefing sessions during which subjects are given the opportunity, after the study, to work through their experience and its aftermath, is possibly one way in which the researcher can assist subjects to minimise harm”. According to Babbie (2001:475), “problems generated by the research experience can be corrected through debriefing”. Salkind (2000:38) is of the opinion that “the easiest way to debrief participants is to discuss their feelings with regard to the project immediately after the session or to send a newsletter telling them the basic intent or results of the study”.

The researcher therefore requested social workers in the deployment units to debrief research subjects at the end of the research process. However, social workers who assisted with the investigation did not participate in the debriefing of research subjects. Social workers who took part in this study as researchers could not act as therapists. Therefore, social workers who were not researchers in the study were requested to debrief research subjects at the end of the study. The spouses of SANDF members were also debriefed by social workers who had not taken part in the study in all nine provinces of South Africa.

1.7.7 Cooperation with Contributors

According to Strydom (2002:71):

When a researcher has to rely financially on a sponsor, both parties need to clarify ethical issues beforehand, for example, that the sponsor should not act prescriptively towards the researcher, that the identity of the sponsor will remain undisclosed, that the real findings will not remain undisclosed in order to concur with the expectations of the sponsor or that the real goal of the investigation will not be camouflaged. This author continues by saying that when colleagues are involved, formally or informally, a clear contract between the parties is preferable, because everyone then knows what everyone else’s share comprises of. A formal contract avoids any misunderstanding.

In the case of this study, no financial sponsors were involved. However, the researcher ensured that the real findings of this study were disclosed. The researchers' colleagues assisted with the data collection and debriefing of research subjects. Therefore, their contributions had already been acknowledged by word of mouth. Nevertheless, they were also formally acknowledged in writing at the end of the study.

1.7.8 Action and Competence of the Researcher

According to Babbie (2001:475), "the entire research project must run its course in an ethically correct manner. An obligation rests on the researcher towards all colleagues in the scientific community to report correctly on the analysis of data and the results of the study". Strydom (2002:69) is of the view that "researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation. When sensitive investigations are involved, this requirement is even more important". In summary, it is critical that the researcher is equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to undertake research. The SANDF social workers underwent training in research, which enabled them to participate in this study. The researcher was also competent to conduct this research.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following provides definitions of concepts which are important in this study:

1.8.1 Model

According to De Vos et al. (1998:12), "a model is the content of the way in which the researcher or scientist views his/her material". According to Kerlinger (1986:167-168):

A model is an abstract outline specifying hypothesised relations in a

set of data. Doing research is in effect, setting up models of what 'reality' is supposed to be and then testing the models against empirical data. Furthermore, the model springs from a theory.

According to Silverman (2000:77):

Models provide an overall framework for how we look at reality. In short, they tell us what reality is like and the basic elements it contains (ontology) and what is the nature and status of knowledge (epistemology). Furthermore, in social research, examples of such models are functionalism (which looks at the functions of social institutions), behaviourism (which defines all behaviour in terms of 'stimulus' and 'response', symbolic interactionism (which focuses on how we attach symbolic meanings to interpersonal relations) and ethnomethodology (which encourages us to look at people's everyday ways of producing orderly social interaction).

The researcher describes a model as a framework that guides the implementation of a particular intervention programme in order to address the particular problem at hand, such as social support services to the spouses of SANDF members during the external military deployment of members.

1.8.2 Spouses

According to Hawkins (1998:429), the term 'spouse' refers to "a person's husband or wife". The SANDF (2004: 8) defines a spouse as:

A person who is married to a member and which marriage is recognised as a valid marriage in terms of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act, 1998 (Act No 120 of 1998); or the Marriage Act, 1961 (Act No 25 of 1961); or a life-partner, the partnership being either heterosexual or homosexual in a permanent life partnership, if such partnership is contained in a duly signed Notary Agreement prepared and executed by a Notary Public with a protocol number or registered in terms of any legislation regarding life-partnerships but does not include the spouse of a beneficiary, which beneficiary became the main beneficiary after the death of his or her former spouse.

The researcher based her study on the definition provided by the SANDF. The focus of the study was on husbands and wives of the members of the SANDF,

and those SANDF members who are in permanent life partnerships. In other words, those members who are bound together by marital ties, be it legally or customary, and those who are in permanent legalised partnerships, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

1.8.3 Support

According to Sims (2002:65):

Family support involves a process of supporting and nurturing children, families and communities. Furthermore, family support is sometimes seen as ‘treatment’; something that is offered to families to increase resilience and the likelihood of positive outcomes for children, families and communities.

According to Rapp (1998:137-138), supported living refers to “the collection of service approaches consistent with the choose-get-keep that are called supported employment, supported housing, supported education and supported recreation”. Furthermore, according to this author, a central tenet of this approach is to “separate the setting of activity from the recipient of services. The supported living perspective separates setting from services and asserts that it is the professional’s job to arrange the needed support to make the desired setting work”.

Garbarino and Kostelny (1994:297) define family support as “a condition of life, a way of living and being”. Cutrona (1996:3) is of the opinion that:

All definitions of social support are based on the assumption that people must rely on one another to meet certain basic needs. For some theorists, social support is the fulfilment by others of basic ongoing requirements for well-being. For other theorists, social support is the fulfilment of more specific time-limited needs that arise as the result of adverse life events or circumstances.

In the researcher’s view, support can be referred to as the application of key intervention measures in order to enhance coping skills among individuals, families and communities. Various forms of social support services to families

and members during external military deployment of members were addressed in this study.

1.8.4 Military Deployment

Knox and Price (1995:1) postulate that “deployment is separations in the family due to military operations, missions and exercises”. Suttle (2003:2) postulates that “deployment and separation are facts of military life. Saying goodbye is difficult, no matter how long the separation lasts or how many times loved ones are apart, and the strain doesn’t end when soldiers return home”. Suttle (2003:3) continues to say that “deployment is difficult. It brings change, separation, and loneliness”. According to Motumi (1999:6), “separation is a demand that affects most military members at one time or another and these separations can be necessitated by deployment, courses to present, or duties”.

The researcher thus views military deployment as the absence of one of the family members from home as a result of work-related military demands such as involvement in peace missions. In the case of this study, the focus was on absence or separation from the family as a result of military deployment outside the country.

1.8.5 Resilience

According to Saleebey (1997:9), resilience refers to “a growing body of inquiry and practice that makes it clear that the rule, not the exception, in human affairs is that people do rebound from serious trouble, that individuals and communities do surmount and overcome serious and troubling adversity”. Kaplan, Turner, Norman and Stillson (1996:158) define resilience as “the capacity to maintain competent functioning in the face of major life stressors”. Vaillant, as quoted by Saleebey (1997:30), defines resilience as “the self-righting tendencies of the

person, both the capacity to bend without breaking, and the capacity, once bent, to spring back”.

Therefore, resilience refers to the ability to revert to the state of normal initial functioning after having experienced a difficult situation. In the case of this study, the focus was on the ability of military spouses and members to cope under difficult circumstances during external deployment of members of the SANDF, and to return to their normal state of equilibrium.

1.8.6 Empowerment

According to the New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:21), empowerment refers to “a process whereby individuals or groups attain personal or collective power, which enables them to actively improve their living conditions”. Forrest (1999:93) postulates that “empowerment occurs at the level of individuals whose recognition of their lack of access to resources prompts them to take action. Individual empowerment is thus associated with feelings of increased assertiveness and self-confidence”.

The Department of Social Development (2004:21), on the other hand, defines empowerment as “the resourcefulness and sense of value of each family and its respective members that is promoted through self-determination by providing opportunities to use and strengthen their own support networks, and to act on own choices and sense of responsibility”.

Therefore, empowerment refers to a process whereby individuals, groups and communities are enabled to realise and tap into their existing potential, and to take actions that will make it possible for them to improve their standard of living. In the case of this study, the empowerment of members of the SANDF and their spouses during external military deployment was explored.

1.9 CONTENTS OF RESEARCH REPORT

This study is divided into seven chapters as follows:

CHAPTER 1: General orientation and introduction to the study.

CHAPTER 2: In-depth literature review with regard to the concept of social support services to members during external deployment, including aspects such as deployment effects on spouses and members, the rationale behind spousal support services during external military deployment of members, and the nature of support services that can be rendered to spouses during the external military deployment of members.

CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER 4: The empirical part of the study, which deals with the challenges involved in providing social support to the spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment of members, and an interpretation of the qualitative data analysis.

CHAPTER 5: Interpretation of the quantitative data analysis.

CHAPTER 6: Research findings of the study, as well as conclusions and recommendations regarding the proposed model to SANDF management.

CHAPTER 7: The proposed model for social support services to SANDF members' spouses during external military deployment of members.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following are limitations of this study:

- Limited information/literature is available in terms of the model for social support services to the spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment of members, as well as within the African context and other, more developed countries. The focus is mainly on family support services during times of war. Older versions of publications were also used, as these were more relevant and applicable. The resilience programme that is rendered to members and spouses during deployment in the SANDF was used as a point of reference in this study. This status quo had a negative impact on the goal of this study. It would have enriched the model that was developed in this study.

- Difficulty in getting access to all the spouses of SANDF members involved in external military deployment, especially those within rural areas (areas which are underdeveloped and not within reach due to a lack of roads and transport). The researcher is of the opinion that more information could possibly have been obtained if more spouses from rural areas had been accessible.

- Inconsistencies were also found in response to some of the questions. More specifically, there were several filtering questions that had follow-up questions which were answered in an incoherent manner. For example, a research subject might respond with a **yes** to observation V18, which is a question relating to participation in the preparation for deployment programme, and respond with a **no services were rendered** before deployment in observations V31 to V39, which relate to rating of the nature of social support services that were rendered to him/her and his/her spouse before deployment. It would have made a substantial difference to this study if all the research subjects responded accordingly.

- Answers were not always appropriate. The reason for this could not be determined. However, it could have been as a result of deployment-related

- frustrations, the length of the questionnaire, misunderstandings, completing the questionnaire without reasoning first, confusion about the process or not being in the mood to complete the questionnaire. Appropriate responses from all the research subjects could have enriched the quality of this study.
- Questions 15-17 on the rating of the nature of social support services that were rendered to members and their spouses before, during and after deployment, and Question 18 on the ability of the member to cope during deployment, were entirely omitted from the analysis due to the fact that they were not appropriately worded, and as such, difficult to interpret. However, responses to these questions by research subjects in the quantitative study could have enhanced the data.
 - While the researcher was analysing some of the data that were obtained from the various social workers, she wished that she could have conducted the interviews herself. She felt like exploring the concerns of the spouses further, particularly in cases where some of the research subjects indicated that they had a bad experience of deployment during the absence of the member, but did not want to talk about it. The researcher would not have forced them to talk about it, but would have perhaps succeeded in getting them to do so. This is, however, not a guarantee that they would have opened up. Due to the fact that they were emotional about the issue of external military deployment, they were referred for counselling. This information could have added more value to the model for spousal support during the external military deployment of the member.
 - Finally, due to the cost implications, it was not possible for the researcher to conduct interviews with the spouses of SANDF members in all the provinces of South Africa. Hence, the researcher requested social workers

within the deploying units outside Gauteng Province to assist with the interviews.

1.11 SUMMARY

It is expected that SANDF members will be deployed to various missions in Africa and other parts of the world as part of their military work obligations. This poses a serious challenge to their normal functioning, as they have to work under stressful circumstances and be separated from their families. The importance of spousal survival has been reflected by the nature of problems that have been experienced by spouses at home while members were on external deployment, for example, marital and financial problems. During debriefing, social workers in the SANDF received the feedback from members who had been on external military deployment to countries such as Sudan that they were not satisfied with the social support services which were rendered to their spouses while they were on external military deployment. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct this study, based on the observed impact that external military deployments have on military families, and in order to highlight the importance of a scientific evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of military support services which are rendered to the spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment. The development of a model for social support services to spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment is thus critical in ensuring that members are mission-ready.

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were followed in this study, and the type of applied research used was intervention research, which resulted from the fact that the study was aimed at the design and development of a technological item that could be used as a model for social support services to spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment of members. It can thus be described as the design and development phase (D&D) within the domain of intervention research. Chapter 2 will focus on the nature of support services that



can be rendered to members' spouses during the external military deployment of members.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES DURING EXTERNAL MILITARY DEPLOYMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Nyanda (2004:vii), the Department of Defence (DOD) is responsible for the “defence and protection of the RSA against any military threat, thereby enhancing national, regional and global security. The capabilities required to execute its primary role allow it to render secondary services in support of and in co-operation with other state departments”.

According to Hornig (1994:1):

A vital part of maintaining combat readiness is maintaining individual readiness. The importance of family support and family preparedness to the overall goal of total readiness and ultimately to the outcome of a mission cannot be overemphasized. Furthermore, studies show that soldiers can cope with stress better if they know that their families are being cared for during their absence. This means that a system of family support and assistance must be in place prior to deployment. It means that the unit commander must make sure that each soldier, along with packing his or her individual weapon and equipment, has left behind a family well prepared for separation. Among the benefits to the unit of family support and assistance programs are that soldiers who are mentally and emotionally present during combat training, are able to concentrate fully on the mission and sustained manpower to accomplish the mission, with less likelihood of casualties and less chance that a soldier will have to leave the field to fill out a form or be sent back to post because a family task was neglected. Family readiness is everybody’s business in that everyone benefits from the family being prepared. It follows that family support and family readiness should carry the full endorsement of the command, the soldier and the family.

McCubbin and McCubbin (1992:160) are of the opinion that support systems function in two primary ways:

Firstly, they protect the family from the effects of the stressor. In other words according to the researcher, they enable the family to deal with whatever stressor that they might encounter in their daily functioning, particularly during the absence of the member. Secondly, support systems enable individuals and families to recover more quickly from stress, thereby promoting the resilience and adaptability of the family system. Therefore, when the necessary support systems are in place, it is easy for any family to revert back to their normal state without difficulty after an experience of a crisis.

According to Segal and Harris (1993:23), “there are many ways to define and measure readiness. In general, readiness is the ability of the Army to carry out its missions”. Therefore, in the researcher’s view, deployment and support are complementary terms. The one cannot exist without the other. Separation from the family poses its own challenges for both the spouse and the member. According to the researcher, in order for SANDF members to carry out their task efficiently and effectively, it is critical that they are mission ready. Mission readiness includes putting measures in place in order to ensure that families are well cared for during the absence of the member. Social support to the spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment is a critical determinant of mission readiness of members.

DeLong (2004:21) postulates that:

Due to political and military conflicts, American military and civilian personnel are being deployed to near and remote parts of the world. When a person is deployed, he/she is not the only person who undergoes changes. Co-workers have to assume additional duties, children are challenged by new family roles, and spouses find their time and energy taxed and their responsibilities greatly magnified. Furthermore, just as returning military and civilian personnel should expect to encounter a changed workplace, they should anticipate changes in their families as well. A returning person might naturally expect that his/her spouse will have been exhausted by additional responsibilities, but the husband or wife who stayed home may have developed new interests and hobbies, new approaches to doing

things around the home, and new confidence. Rather than feeling more than ready to share household responsibilities again, the spouse may feel anxious about the deployed person attempting to “take over”. The returning spouse may want to assume his/her old duties as a means of reconnecting with home life.

According to Van Breda (1993-1996:7), “any separation is difficult for a family to adapt to, but regular separations are surely the most difficult”.

Segal and Harris (1993:35) are of the opinion that:

The ability of the family to adapt to the military way of life is related to the degree that the military provides formal and informal support to the family (as well as to family adaptive resources such as flexibility and spouse education). The Army spouses’ level of satisfaction with the military as a way of life is positively related to their perception of the service’s support for families and help with family problems.

In light of the abovementioned, the researcher is of the view that during external military deployments, SANDF members and their spouses encounter similar experiences to those indicated by the abovementioned authors. As a result of the fight for power and military conflicts, members of the SANDF are expected to be deployed to missions in Africa, such as the DRC and Sudan, for the purpose of bringing about stability in these countries. This implies separation from families, which has its own challenges and stressors. Members of the SANDF are not immune to deployment-related stressors. In other words, they face great challenges and changes that they have to overcome. However, in order for them to successfully overcome these problems, they need to be resilient. Therefore, it is clear that mission readiness is critical to the attainment of organisational objectives. Resilience is a determinant of mission readiness. In order for SANDF members to be seen as resilient and mission ready, all facets of their lives should be in a state of balance. They do not exist in isolation, but as part of a system made up of elements such as the family, spouse, church, the SANDF and the society in which they live. Therefore, intervention measures should be put in place to enhance their ability to carry out peacekeeping missions outside the country.

The focus of this study is on the effects of deployment on members and their spouses and the nature of support systems that should be in place in order to ensure that members are mission ready, for the purpose of designing a model for social support services to spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment.

2.2 DEPLOYMENT EFFECTS ON SPOUSES AND MEMBERS

According to Boss, McCubbin and Lesteram (in Van Breda, 1993-1996:7), “from a systems perspective, the routine absence of the corporate executive husband/father/wife/mother is a stressful event for the family, since his/her exits and returns require constant change in the family system’s boundaries and role assignments”.

Many authors (Paap, 1991:39-40; Wood, Scarville and Gravino, 1995:217-218; Suttle, 2003:2-4) have documented stressors related to deployment. According to these authors, deployment and separation form an essential part of the military way of life. As much as saying goodbye is challenging, so is returning home. Family resilience determines the extent to which they are able to deal with deployment-related challenges and stressors. Depending on the extent and nature of their resilience, some families are better able to cope with deployment than others. As a result, deployment brings about change, separation and loneliness.

Porter (1995:24) is of the opinion that “a good family strives to be good for two main reasons, it contributes to creating good social citizens and it develops special relationships that are unique to families, which are important for individual development and for well-being”. Furthermore, according to Porter (1995:190), “in order to have good societies, we need to develop good families as the base unit of society”.

In addition, according to Hornig (1994:113; see also Moritz, 1991:109):

Separation of family members due to deployments and extended unaccompanied tours is stressful. Individual family members are subjected to different worries, fears and anxieties before, during and after these separations. The soldier and his/her family (children as well as spouse) need to be aware of the problems which are likely to arise as a result of separation, therefore the necessary preparation is vital to enable them to cope.

Logan (1987:43-46) postulates that:

A deployment can be an emotional experience for those left behind. But understanding the different stages of emotion and that those feelings are perfectly normal can make it a lot easier for everyone. In the study of the Navy wives, the Emotional Cycle of Deployment (ECOD) model describes the changes in Navy wives' behaviour and emotions during deployments of three months or more. Although it was initially developed for wives, the model has been useful in working with husbands and children as well. Getting ready for a deployment starts long before the husbands actually walk out of the door. For a period of time, the women tend to ignore the deployment, fantasizing that somehow it will not happen: "surely the ship will sink or he'll get orders to shore duty." Eventually, something happens to trigger recognition of the reality of departure, perhaps a flip of the calendar so that "The Date" is visible. At this point, the ECOD begins. The different stages that families undergo during deployment have been indicated as follows by Logan (1987:43-46):

- Stage One: Anticipation of loss.
- Stage Two: Detachment and withdrawal.
- Stage Three: Emotional disorganisation.
- Stage Four: Recovery and stabilisation.
- Stage Five: Anticipation of homecoming.
- Stage Six: Renegotiation of marriage contract.
- Stage Seven: Reintegration and stabilisation.

The following is thus an elaboration of the abovementioned ECOD model, as described by Logan (1987:43-46):

2.2.1 Stage One: Anticipation of Loss

According to Logan (1987:44):

This stage occurs four to six weeks before deployment. During this time it is hard for a woman to accept the fact that her husband is

going to leave her. She may find herself crying unexpectedly when she hears certain songs, TV shows and such other “silly things” that would not normally affect her. These incidents allow her to release some of her pent-up emotions. There is a lot of tension during this period as both husband and wife try to cram in a multitude of projects and activities such as the fixing of cars, bikes, repairing roofs, installing deadbolts, cleaning garages, visiting family and inviting neighbours and friends over to the house. In addition, the wife will have some unexpressed anger and the couple may bicker even though they usually do not. This can be upsetting if it is viewed out of context. Although unenjoyable, these arguments can be functional, they provide one way for the couple to put some emotional distance between themselves in their preparation for living apart. It is hard for a wife to feel warm and loving toward her husband when she is mad at him and as one woman said, “It’s easier to let him go”. Other frequent symptoms of this stage include restlessness (productive), depression and irritability. While women feel angry or resentful (“He’s really going to leave me alone with all this”), men tend to feel guilty (“There is no way I can get everything done that I should before I leave”).

Spellman, DeLeo and Nelson (1991:2) are of the view that “the process of family support has three distinct phases namely, pre-deployment, deployment and post deployment/reunion. Pre-deployment goes through the stages of anticipatory loss and detachment/withdrawal”. Adams (2003:ii) suggests that:

Whilst they are focusing on preparing for their next mission or contingency, we have to bear in mind that if they have not spent quality time with their family members, they are not truly prepared. They need memories to sustain them during their absences as well as experiences to look forward to or repeating upon their return. If we leave them totally unprepared, administratively or emotionally, they cannot fully focus on the mission during deployment.

In his study on naval families, Van Breda (1997b:157) found that:

The pre-separation phase (stages 1-2) seems characterised by conflict, anxiety and sadness. In addition, many subjects seem to withdraw, particularly just prior to the actual separation. Apprehension or fear of the separation as well as optimism or bravery about the separation is also apparent, particularly in the few weeks prior to separation. It would appear that detachment by means of passive emotional withdrawal, conflict or task orientedness is functional in this phase.

The researcher aligns herself with the abovementioned authors, and is of the opinion that both the member and the spouse experience certain feelings and emotions prior to deployment. The spouse may experience emotions such as anger and disbelief because the member is leaving them behind, while the member may experience emotions such as anxiety, which emanates from the worry or concern as to whether or not the spouse will be able to cope during his/her absence, particularly when it is the first deployment. It is however vital for the spouse and the member to acknowledge that these feelings are normal, but that they have to be dealt with accordingly. Knowing that there is someone to turn to during the absence of the member makes a difference to the family's coping abilities during the absence of the member. Preparation before deployment is also very important. Sufficient time for preparation before deployment makes a difference in the coping abilities of the spouse during the absence of the member. Support in terms of acknowledging and dealing with deployment-related challenges and frustrations is thus critical.

2.2.2 Stage Two: Detachment and Withdrawal

Logan (1987:44) is of the opinion that:

This is the most difficult stage. It occurs sometime in the final days before departure. Such statements as, "I know I should be enjoying these last few days together but all I want to do is cry" indicate a sense of despair and hopelessness. The marriage is out of the couple's control. Although they push ahead trying to complete the list that never gets shorter, the wife often feels a lack of energy and is fatigued. Making decisions becomes increasingly difficult. During this time, the wife may experience some ambivalence about sexual relations. The brain says, "We've got to have sex, this is it for six months" while the heart may rebel, "But I don't want to be that close." Intercourse represents the ultimate intimacy in a marriage, yet it is hard to be intimate when husband and wife are separating from each other emotionally. This can be especially difficult if it is seen as rejection rather than as a reaction to trying circumstances. The couple may find that they stop sharing their thoughts and feelings with each other. Furthermore, this stage is most evident when departure is delayed for some reason. When asked if they enjoyed the extra time together wives invariably respond, "It was

awful!" The detachment and withdrawal stage is an uncomfortable time. Though both spouses are physically in the same house, emotionally they have separated. Wives think, "If you have to go, go" and husbands think, "Let's go on with it!"

The researcher affirms the abovementioned, and is of the opinion that deployment negatively affects the stability of sexual relations in marriages. Both the member and the spouse experience difficulties in continuing with their normal sexual relations, as a result of fear of the unknown. They experience emotional turmoil that emanates from being uncertain about how they are going to cope during the time of separation. Instead of enjoying their last moments together, they focus on these uncertainties. As a result, they end up withdrawing. Again, postponement of the deployment period does not make things better, with the end result being detachment and withdrawal. Therefore, the importance of preparation for deployment, particularly with regard to the marital relationship, cannot be overemphasised.

2.2.3 Stage Three: Emotional Disorganisation

According to Logan (1987:44-45):

No matter how prepared Navy wives think they are, the actual deployment still comes as a shock. An initial sense of relief that the pain of saying goodbye is over may be followed by guilt. The worry, "If I really love him, why am I relieved that he's gone?" They may feel numb, aimless and without purpose. Old routines have been disrupted and new ones not yet established. Many women are depressed and withdraw from friends and neighbours, especially if the neighbours' husbands are home. They often feel overwhelmed as they face the total responsibility for family affairs. Many women have difficulty sleeping, suddenly aware that they are the "security officer" whilst others sleep excessively. A wife may feel some anger at her husband because he did not, for an example, provide for her physical security by installing deadbolts. Furthermore, wives often report feeling restless (though not productive), confused, disorganized, indecisive and irritable. The unspoken question is, "What am I going to do with this 'hole' in my life?" Whereas wives experience a sense of being overwhelmed, husbands report feeling "lonely and frustrated." Unfortunately, a few women get stuck at this

stage, either unable or unwilling to move on emotionally and they will both have and cause problems throughout the cruise.

Bell, Stevens and Segal (1996:21) are also of the opinion that “families are always affected by deployments, both the soldiers and their spouses worry about each other and experience loneliness”.

In his qualitative study on naval families, Van Breda (1997b:157) found that:

The separation phase itself (stages 3-5) is characterised by longing and loneliness, two closely related variables, which indicate the importance of the family relationships. Men express marked concern about the family’s coping over the bulk of the separation. A task or work orientation serves as a strong protective mechanism during this time. As the separation progresses from the initial stages into the middle of separation, loneliness appears to give way to a sense of adjustment or having come to terms with the separation, which seems to indicate the growth and tenacity of Naval couples. However, by the middle of the separation subjects are feeling restless and bored and frustrated by the separation. As the separation draws to an end, couples feel excited and experience strong desires to be reunited, but also feel anxious and nervous about the pending homecoming.

The researcher agrees with the abovementioned, and believes that both the member and the spouse experience emotions ranging from anxiety, which emanates from fear of the unknown, and loneliness, to happiness, which emanates from the prospect of making money as a result of deployment. The spouse also feels overwhelmed by the responsibility of having to take full control of family affairs during the absence of the member. These responsibilities are normally shared between the member and the spouse, and include taking care of the children and seeing to their discipline. Having no-one to talk to enhances the experience of loneliness for both parties, particularly over the weekend. On the other hand, the researcher is of the opinion that if the marriage was in trouble before the deployment of the member, there would be no feelings attached to the separation - it would probably be a case of taking a break from one another.

2.2.4 Stage Four: Recovery and Stabilisation

Logan (1987:45) postulates that:

At some point, wives may realize, “Hey, I’m doing OK!” They have established new family patterns and settled into a routine. They have begun to feel more comfortable with the reorganization of roles and responsibilities. Broken arms have been tended, mowers fixed, cars tuned up and washing machines bought. Each successful experience adds to their self-confidence. The wives have cultivated new sources of support through friends, church, work, wives’ groups, etc. They have often given up real cooking for “cruise food”, they may even run up higher long-distance phone bills and make contact with old friends. Furthermore according to (Logan, 1987:45), Dr Alice Snyder of the Family Services Center, Norfolk, calls the women “single wives” as they experience both worlds. Being alone brings freedom as well as responsibility. They often unconsciously find themselves referring to, “My house, my car and my kids.” As a group, they are more mature and they are more outwardly independent. This stage is one of the benefits of being a Navy wife, each woman has the opportunity to initiate new activities, accept more responsibilities and stretch herself and her abilities, and still feel the security of being married. Nevertheless, all the responsibility can be stressful and wives may find that they are sick more frequently. Many women continue to feel mildly depressed and anxious. Isolation from both their husbands and their own families can leave them feeling vulnerable. There is not much contact with men, by choice or design and women may begin to feel asexual. Most women have a new sense of independence and freedom and take pride in their ability to cope alone.

Spellman et al. (1991:2) state that “during the deployment phases both the soldier and family members go through three distinct mood swings. These are emotional disorganization, recovery/ stabilization and anticipation of homecoming”. In his study on naval families, Van Breda (1993-1996:55) found that:

The deployment phase itself is characterized by longing and loneliness, two closely related variables, which indicate the importance of the relationship to each other. A task or work orientation serves as a strong protective mechanism during this time. As the deployment progresses from the initial stages into the middle of deployment, loneliness appears to give way to a sense of adjustment or having come to terms with the deployments, which

seems to indicate the growth and tenacity of Naval families. However, by the middle of the deployment subjects are feeling restless, bored and frustrated by the separation. As the deployment draws to an end, couples feel excited, experience strong desires to be reunited and feel anxious and nervous about homecoming.

In light of the abovementioned, the researcher is of the opinion that the spouse cannot remain in a state of withdrawal and frustration throughout the deployment period of the member. At some stage in the process, they seek ways of doing things in the home in order to bring about stability within the family. Support systems are also utilised in dealing with whatever crisis they might encounter during the absence of the member.

2.2.5 Stage Five: Anticipation of Homecoming

According to Logan (1987:45-46):

Approximately four to six weeks before the ship is due back, wives often find themselves saying, "Oh my gosh, he's coming home and I'm not ready!" That long list of "things to do while he's gone" is still unfinished. The pace picks up. There is a feeling of joy and excitement in anticipation of living together again. Feelings of apprehension surface as well, although they are usually left unexpressed. This is the time to re-evaluate the marriage. That "hole" that existed when their husband left was filled with tennis classes, church, a job, new friends, school and now they instinctively know that they must "clean the house" in their lives in order to make room for men. Most experience an unconscious process of evaluating, "I want him back, but what am I going to have to give up?" Therefore, they may feel nervous, tense and apprehensive. The wives are concerned about the effect the husband's return will have on their lives and their children's: "Will he understand and accept the changes that have occurred in us? Will he approve of the decisions I made? Will he adjust to the fact that I can't go back to being dependent?" The husbands are anxious too, wondering, "How have we changed? How will I be accepted? Will the kids know me? Does my family still need me?" Most women bury these concerns in busywork. Once more, there is a sense of restlessness (but productive) and confusion. Decisions become harder to make and may be postponed until homecoming. Women become irritable again and may experience changes in appetite. At some point, a psychological decision is made. For most women, it is "Do I want

him back? You bet! I can't wait to see him".

Suttle (2003:3) is also of the opinion that:

When the anticipated reunion date finally arrives, many people find themselves overwhelmed with a rush of emotions, namely relief, hope, anxiety and even resentment. Some fear that they have permanently lost a deep connection with their loved ones or that their loved ones have lost intimate desire. Others may fear that they have changed so much during the separation that they no longer have anything in common with loved ones.

The researcher agrees with the abovementioned and holds the view that the anticipation of homecoming is not as easy as it sounds. In general, one would expect that there would be excitement associated with the anticipation of the member's homecoming, since he/she has been away for a period of six months. However, this is not necessarily the case. The pattern of adjustment that was established by the spouse will have to be redefined in order to accommodate the member. For example, the spouse who has been managing the finances of the home without consulting anybody will have to adjust to a different type of management system upon the arrival of the member. It might even imply not handling the finances of the home at all, because "Mr T. Manuel", the Minister of Finance at Home, is back. Cooking, which normally took place whenever the spouse wished, will also have to change. Some members prefer home-cooked meals all the time. Obviously, this indicates some form of adjustment on the part of the spouse, which implies that the spouse will definitely experience certain emotions. On the other hand, the member also goes through similar emotions, such as concern as to whether or not he will still be recognized as the head of the family and be treated as such. Therefore, preparation for homecoming is imperative.

2.2.6 Stage Six: Renegotiation of the Marriage Contract

Logan (1987:46) suggests that:

This stage, is one in which the husband and wife are together

physically but not necessarily emotionally. They will have to have some time together and share experiences and feelings before they feel like a couple again. They both need to be aware of the necessity to refocus on the marriage. For instance: After one of the wives' husband had been home for a few days, she became aggravated with him when he would telephone his shipboard roommate every time something of importance came up within the family, finally declaring, "I'm your wife. Talk to me!" During this stage, the task is to stop being "single" spouses and start being married again. Most women sense a loss of freedom and independence while a minority is content to become dependent once more. Routines established during the cruise are disrupted: "I have to cook a real dinner every night!" These cause the wives to feel disorganized and out of control. Although most couples never write it down, there is a "contract" in every marriage, a set of assumptions and expectations on which they base their actions. During this stage, the couple has to make major adjustments in roles and responsibilities, before that can happen; they must undertake an extensive renegotiation of that unwritten contract. The marriage cannot and will not be exactly the same as before the cruise: both spouses have had varied experiences and have grown in different ways, and these changes must be accommodated. Too much togetherness initially can cause friction after so many months of living apart. More than one wife has had to cope with the fleeing shock of wondering, "Who's that man in my bedroom!" Some resent their husbands "making decisions that should be mine". Still others question, "My husband wants me to give up all my activities while he's home. Should I?" On the other hand, the husband may wonder, "Why do I feel like a stranger in my own home?" All of these concerns and pressures require that husband and wife communicate with each other. Assumptions will not work. Some find that "talking as we go along" works best, while others keep silent until "We had our first good fight, cleared the air and everything is OK now". Sexual relations, ardently desired before the return, may initially seem frightening. Couples need sufficient time together to become reacquainted before they can expect true intimacy. This stage can be difficult as well as joyful. But it does provide an opportunity offered to few civilian couples, the chance to evaluate what changes have occurred within themselves, to determine what direction they want their growth to take and to meld all this into a renewed and refreshed relationship (Logan, 1987:46).

In his study on naval families, Van Breda (1997b:157-158) found that:

Happiness and contentment are the hallmarks of the post-separation phase (stages 6 and 7), with a growing sense of having adjusted to

a normal family life. The anxiety experienced immediately after reunion gives way to a sense of calm. However, conflict plays a role immediately after the reunion, and is perhaps a result of the difficulty experienced in resuming family roles and rules. In addition, apprehension about the next separation emerges within a week of the homecoming - a manifestation of the rapid deployments experienced by local sailors.

According to Suttle (2003:3), “soldiers and family members must recognise that reunion is a process that occurs over time. Adjustment depends on the length of separation, the ability to communicate and the willingness to accept change”. Spellman et al. (1991:2) are of the opinion that “during the post-deployment/reunion phases the soldier and family members experience two emotional cycles. These are the renegotiation of a contract with significant others and reintegration/stabilization”. According to the researcher, it is critical that appropriate measures are put in place to ensure that the couple receives the necessary support to enable them to deal with their reunion. Both of them have undergone some form of transformation as individuals during the separation, and if they are not assisted in this process, their relationship might end up in divorce. Therefore, in order to ensure the maintenance of marital relationships, comprehensive support measures should be put in place to enable the couple to deal with these deployment-related challenges.

2.2.7 Stage Seven: Reintegration and Stabilisation

According to Logan (1987:46):

Sometime within the four to six weeks after homecoming, wives notice that they have stopped referring to “my car, my house, my bedroom” instead they use “our” or “we”. New routines have been established for the family and the wives feel relaxed and comfortable with their husbands. There is a sense of being a couple and a family. They are back on the same track emotionally and can enjoy the warmth and closeness of being married.

Spellman et al. (1991:2) are of the opinion that “during the post-deployment/reunion phase, the soldier and family members experience the

emotional cycle of reintegration/stabilization”. In the researcher’s view, based on the abovementioned, it is only during this stage that everything is back to the normal state of functioning. Both the member and the spouse have now found each other and are once again a family.

Furthermore, in the researcher’s view, the abovementioned clearly shows that deployment is not an easy process. It is complex due to the nature of problems that are associated with it. Spouses remaining at home during the absence of members experience psychosocial problems emanating from deployment. Homecoming also has its own challenges. It is thus vital for the spouse and the member to have a thorough understanding of typical problems and emotions that are related to deployment. Intervention measures should be introduced to ensure that issues are addressed well in advance, in order to prevent divorces and raising children in broken families. Obviously, one cannot expect these families to be problem-free. However, a lot of problems encountered by spouses during the absence of members and during reintegration into the home can be prevented if the necessary support measures are in place.

In addition, it is obvious that deployments have an influence on the functioning of the family, be it positive or negative. Despite the fact that the abovementioned model was based on a study that was conducted among navy families, deployment effects on spouses are common to all, irrespective of whether they are in the Navy or not. They all experience the same problems and emotions. The researcher aligns herself with the abovementioned emotional cycle of deployment, in that understanding the process of adjustment will probably alleviate many of the problems that spouses encounter as a result of external military deployment. Therefore, the SANDF has a critical role to play in terms of ensuring that the necessary intervention measures are in place and enforced before, during and after the deployment of the member. Evaluation of support services rendered to the member and the spouse during external military

deployment is of great importance, due to the fact that it has an impact on the mission readiness and effective mission accomplishment of members.

Furthermore, while acknowledging the fact that deployment is part of the military way of life, it is imperative that the organisation provides the necessary resources to ensure that spouses are supported during the absence of members. The SANDF has a clear role to play in terms of making a contribution towards building families and societies. The promotion of peace should not only focus on international communities, but also on those families who remain behind during the external deployment of members. Hence, there is a need for the design of a model for spousal support services in the SANDF during external deployment of members. As a result, the aim of this study was to investigate the need for a model for spousal support during external military deployment of the member within the SANDF.

It is thus essential for one to have a clear understanding of the rationale behind spousal support during the absence of the member. The following section presents a discussion on the importance of spousal support during the external military deployment of the member.

2.3 RATIONALE BEHIND SPOUSAL SUPPORT DURING THE EXTERNAL MILITARY DEPLOYMENT OF THE MEMBER

According to Segal and Harris (1993:2), “the demands of the military life style such as frequent relocation and separation, coupled with the size of the military community, has created the need to provide formal support services to fulfil various functions”.

Cutrona (1996:59-60) is of the opinion that:

The quality and probability of survival of marital relationships can be significantly affected by the frequency and sensitive supportive acts

exchanged by husbands and wives. Support within the marital relationship can promote a positive emotional tone and prevent the acceleration of negative interactions that cause relationship deterioration. Support also can foster intimacy and closeness that hold couples together through difficult times.

Cutrona (1996:60) gives an indication of mechanisms through which social support may contribute to the quality and survival of marital relationships:

- During times of severe stress, support from the spouse can prevent emotional withdrawal and isolation that can damage the relationship.
- During times of stress, support from the spouse can prevent the onset of clinically significant depression and the aversive behaviours associated with depression that are damaging to relationships (for example, self-pity, irritability, loss of sex drive).
- Self-disclosure and emotional intimacy are facilitated by supportive communications.
- Intimate interactions promote a sense of bonding and trust that can ease couples through potentially difficult circumstances.

According to Roberts (2005:38-39):

Deployments have become a way of life for approximately 8,500 Airmen of Offutt's wing, the largest in Air Combat Command and second largest in the US Air Force. In this study, the Colonel indicated that the base doesn't take for granted the effect the deployments have on those left behind. As a result, many new programs evolved to handle family issues and problems that have remained much the same since the 1950's when the wing flew RB-50's for strategic Air Command. They include, dealing with financial problems, depression, house repairs, cars breaking down and behaviour problems with children at school, as according to Billie Gaines, the director of the Offutt Family Support Center. Furthermore, according to Roberts (2005:39), in a study on the deployed way of life, Mrs Gaines indicated that if they are left alone with no one to turn to, it is easy for spouses to develop a "my spouse is gone, nobody cares about me" attitude. However, they do not want that. Spouses don't have to feel like the lone soldier. Before deploying, Airmen and spouses should attend a family support center pre-deployment briefing to increase awareness of issues, like powers of attorney and finances. It can also reinforce that the center is a point of contact for free phone cards, child care and car inspections, video phone access and details on volunteering

and employment. In addition, Airmen are expeditionary and deployable anytime, anywhere. Across the Air Force, Airmen must leave families behind when they deploy, most recently to fight the global war on terrorism. Many base support agencies – family support centers, services, squadrons and chaplains, community and private base organizations have programs to help families left behind.

Therefore, according to Hornig (1994:1-2; see also Pehrson, 1993:441-442):

A vital part of maintaining combat readiness is maintaining individual readiness. The importance of family support and family preparedness to the overall goal of total readiness and ultimately, to the outcome of a mission cannot be overemphasized. Furthermore, studies also show that soldiers can cope with stress better if they know that their families are being cared for during their absence. This means that a system of family support and assistance must be in place prior to deployment. It means that the unit commander must make sure that each soldier, along with packing his or her individual equipment, has left behind a family well prepared for separation. In addition, among the benefits to the unit of family support and assistance programs are these:

- Soldiers who are mentally and emotionally present during combat and training, are able to concentrate fully on the mission, and
- Sustained manpower (employees) to accomplish the mission, with less likelihood of casualties and less chance that a soldier will have to leave the field to fill out a form or be sent back to post because a family task was neglected.

Hornig (1994:2) continues by stating that:

Family readiness also means that a soldier can leave for deployment with the peace of mind that comes from knowing that he or she has done everything possible to provide for family needs during separation. It is the same peace of mind soldiers experience when they are certain that their duffel bags contain everything needed on deployment. This means less stress for both soldiers and family members and a better chance that the soldier will return from deployment in good health. Finally, the level of family readiness at deployment has a direct effect on the quality of family life during the homecoming period. Fitting back into the family after an extended deployment has its own stress factors. Coming back to a family that is angry, or one that has suffered unnecessary hardship during separation, will create even more family problems. The chance of coming home to a loving family is increased if the family has been

fully prepared prior to deployment. It is difficult to imagine a spouse looking forward to the homecoming of a soldier who has either deliberately confiscated his/her ID card (an illegal act) or who had forgotten to renew the ID or to provide for financial needs. In addition, family readiness means that family members will suffer less stress due to deployment. They will be better prepared to cope with whatever stress does result from the soldier's absence. Life is likely to be less stressful if the spouse has all the information needed to take care of emergencies. Family members will feel loved and cared for if they know that the soldier has done everything he/she could to ensure their welfare. This helps ensure the soldier's coming home to a warm welcome.

Hornig (1994:2-3) is of the opinion that:

When family readiness is treated as a family affair and all family members are included in the process, it can also promote togetherness. If the family has worked together to maintain family readiness as an ongoing activity, they will have time when deployment is announced to psychologically prepare each other and their children for separation. There will be time to talk about feelings, alleviate fears and plan activities that will help maintain the soldier's presence in the family and help the spouse use the separation time constructively. Therefore, family readiness is everybody's business. Everyone benefits from the family being prepared. It follows that family support and family readiness should carry the full endorsement of the command, the soldier and the family.

Finally, "deployments have been found to be less stressful when one has a positive attitude towards them" (Eastman, Archer & Ball, 1990:114). Van Breda (1997:20) holds the view that:

The management of deployments by the military organisation can precipitate negativity among family members. In the South African Navy, during the mid 1990's, a lot of external factors were found to impede the maintenance of positive attitudes. These factors include unpredictable and erratic deployments (which correlated with high deployment stress), lack of personnel which results in extended sea duty and slow promotions, frequent night duties which disrupt family life, frequent and brief deployments which increase the frequency of family adjustments and lack of material and interpersonal rewards for going to sea. As a result thereof, the subjective impression of Naval social workers is that these factors prompt perpetually negative perceptions of deployment, which result in poor deployment coping.

According to Segal and Harris (1993:24; see also Segal and Bourg, 1999:636-637), studies have also shown that:

Qualitative research also shows that spouses' attitudes and abilities are affected by the climate in the unit. The way supervisors treat soldiers affects the way the unit behave toward their families, what soldiers tell their spouses about their lives at work affects the spouses' attitude toward the unit and the Army. Families are also affected by unit leaders' attitudes and behaviour specifically regarding family issues and activities.

The literature further stipulates that social support services enhance the resilience of families during separation and deployment (see Amen, Merves, Jellen & Lee, 1988:445; Koshes & Rothberg, 1994:456; Adler, Bartone & Vaitkus, 1995:18).

In the researcher's view, based on the abovementioned, it is important to note that support to the spouse during the external deployment of the member plays a significant role in ensuring that members are mentally fit and ready for deployment, and also in ensuring that the mission is successfully accomplished. It is thus the responsibility of the member and the organisation to ensure that the family is well prepared for overcoming and dealing with whatever challenges or crises they may encounter during the absence of the member. Thus, support to families during the external deployment of members is one aspect that cannot be avoided. Intervention measures or resources should be put in place in order to ensure that spouses have the necessary survival kit at their disposal for use in times of need. The next section discusses the nature of support services that can be rendered to spouses during the external deployment of members.

2.4 THE NATURE OF SUPPORT SERVICES THAT CAN BE RENDERED TO SPOUSES DURING EXTERNAL MILITARY DEPLOYMENT OF MEMBERS

According to Kaslow (1993:30-31):

The dramatic increase in the number of married enlisted personnel since the advent of the all-volunteer force has been responsible for the growth in support services in the armed forces. Facilities such as commissaries and exchanges, medical services for dependants, family housing, child development centers, family service centers, after-school and youth programs are now found on almost all bases and posts. Mothers in uniform, who make up less than 5% of the total active force, have greatly benefited from these facilities. It is difficult to assess the degree to which mothers, as compared to fathers, are responsible for the growth of these services, few would argue that female parents almost always shoulder more of the day-to-day responsibility for a family's well being than do male parents. The recognition that childcare is an appropriate and necessary function for the military to provide resulted from changes in the demographics of the male military population, but it has also benefited women. Twenty-five years ago, few had both children and a spouse who worked. Childcare was the responsibility of the non-working mother. At that time, male single parents were not prevalent enough to be counted.

Therefore, as a result of the increase in the number of married personnel and women in the SANDF, it is vital that support services are put in place during the external deployment of the member. The researcher aligns herself with Kaslow, and is of the opinion that the dire need for support services during the external deployment of the member within the SANDF emanates from the fact that the demographics of a previously male-dominated organisation are transforming. Presently, more and more women are gainfully employed in the SANDF in various capacities. In addition, most of the women shoulder the responsibility of running the family, hence the need to investigate a model for spousal support during the absence of the member.

Segal and Harris (1993:45) postulate that:

Today, large arrays of support, both "formal" and "informal" are available for soldiers and their families. Formal support systems include concrete services such as schools, leadership systems, utility services, fire and police protection, community mental health and other community services. Informal support systems on the other hand refer to personal relationships such as family members, friends, neighbours, co-workers and voluntary associations such as civic clubs or churches. These informal support groups are essential

for good family functioning. When individual, family and community needs are met, the community can be considered as strong. In a strong community, leaders are perceived to allow community participation in the leaders' decision-making process. Military family support systems play a major role in the life of the soldier and the family.

2.4.1 Components of Family Support

Sims (2002:90) suggests that:

Family support operates in different ways in different communities. Some communities offer a range of services from the one agency; in others different agencies offer different programs. Often programs overlap in the services they offer, the outcomes they are attempting to achieve or the processes they use to achieve these outcomes.

According to Van Breda (2001:239), "evaluations of the deployment resilience seminar, developed by Van Breda found deterioration in satisfaction with family support following participation in the seminar". Therefore, in the researcher's view, assessment and evaluation of social support services rendered to the spouses of SANDF members during external military deployment serves as a critical mission success factor.

2.4.1.1 Family Preparation

Hornig (1994:27) is the opinion that:

Many deployments are announced in advance. This knowledge can and sometimes leads to complacency. It leaves the soldier with a false sense of security, the feeling that there is always time to take care of family needs before he/she deploys. The high percentage of announced deployments may tend to blind soldiers, families and the chain of command to the real needs for an ongoing effective family support system, one that provides for the needs of the family while the soldier is away but also emphasizes the need for total family readiness. But the possibility remains that the phone could ring in the middle of the night with orders for the soldier to take off to an undisclosed destination for an unknown length of time, or the soldier could wake up to a situation that leaves no time to prepare.

According to Adams (2003:ii):

While they are focusing on preparing for their next mission or contingency, they have to keep in mind that if they have not spent quality time with their family members, they are not truly prepared. They need memories to sustain them during their absences as well as experiences to look forward to repeating upon their return. If they leave them unprepared, administratively or emotionally, they cannot fully focus on the mission during deployment. In addition, it is a good idea to get to know the people who are responsible for the program in their local organisation. Furthermore, the primary responsibility for family preparation and support is like charity begins at home. Everyone has to play their part in ensuring that their family is ready, willing and able to support them during the mission.

Hornig (1994:149) suggests that:

Prior to leaving, there is an immediate need for the family to plan finances. A question about how much money is available and how much should be left for the family should be addressed. As a minimum, family members must be left with enough money to cover monthly expenses. The best way to ensure family financial security is through the monthly allotment. Soldiers should be encouraged to set up an allotment in the spouse's name not only to cover basic needs (rent, utilities, food, clothing and transportation) but also for some pleasures such as entertainment. The need to make proper adjustment to the family's requirements and income should be emphasized. So too should the need to reach an understanding with creditors or combine and refinance debts. Therefore, family financial security during the absence of the member is vital.

According to Bell (1991:2-3):

The Operation Desert Shield/Storm (ODS/S) researchers also documented financial difficulties. Most families reported that ODS/S strained their budgets but most could pay their bills. Late pay and loss of civilian income was a problem for the reserve families. Among the active force, loss of spouse jobs (due to economic conditions regarding Army posts) proved more of a problem than the loss of pay from soldiers' second jobs. Furthermore, pre-deployment briefings were well attended and helpful but some groups were less likely to attend for example, off-post spouses, parents, girlfriends and ex-spouses. There was also some criticism that the briefings produced an overload of information and confusion among spouses relating to Army entitlements.

Roberts (1991:49) states that:

Many wives are unfamiliar with the family finances. If this is usually the husband's responsibility, role adjustments should begin well before deployment, so that the wife can become accustomed to the leave and earnings statement, automatic deposits, savings accounts, check-writing and monthly bills. It might be helpful to draft a new budget for the duration of the deployment, to take into account varying needs. The wife should be aware of what bills are due, when they must be paid and to whom.

The researcher supports the abovementioned views, in that family support is critical to ensuring successful mission accomplishment. Obviously, there are certain deployment-related challenges that one cannot control, such as death and illness. However, deployment readiness plays a critical role in ensuring effective task accomplishment and that family matters are well taken care of. In addition, a lot of family-related problems/issues could be alleviated if preparation for deployment occurred on an ongoing basis, and not at a time when soldiers are about to mobilise for deployment. They should be ready for deployment at any point in time. Finally, a multidisciplinary approach should be followed in addressing this issue.

2.4.1.2 Spousal Support Group programme

According to the 101 Airborne Division and 1st Battalion 327 Infantry (n.d.:4):

The concept family support groups (more commonly referred to as FSGs) are relatively new to United States (US) Army. They are direct offshoots from the Grenada (Operation Urgent Fury), Panama (Operation Just Cause) and Southwest Asia (Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm) experiences. Commanders of deploying units discovered that while their units were highly trained to fight, little if anything was done to train and prepare unit families to cope better with stresses and unique problems that often arise during extended and unexpected deployments of their spouses. Some type of organization was needed within units to address this serious shortcoming in peacetime, so that in a time of crisis, families would be better able to stand on their own feet; the concept of the Family Support Group (FSGs) was born. Furthermore, (n.d.:4), FSGs are managed differently in every unit. How they are managed depends

upon many factors such as the personality of the leaders, the number of family's involved and available resources. The core of FSGs is the company, for this is where the rubber meets the road. The company commander's spouse typically leads many company FSGs. The battalion commander's spouse serves as an advisor. All FSGs throughout the Army share the same purpose being, to support army families. The purpose of FSGs is to ease the strain and possible traumatic stress associated with military separation for both the family and the soldier. The main objective of FSGs is to enable a unit's family members to establish and operate a system through which they can effectively gather information, solve problems and maintain a system of mutual support. The author further stipulates that for the family member, a unit's FSG is an effective way of gaining information and support during deployment. Through successful FSG efforts, many spouses have developed a more positive attitude toward themselves, the deployment and the Army.

Furthermore, various authors (Hornig, 1994:28-29; see also Bell et al., 1996:4) suggest that:

For the soldier, it is reassuring to know that family members will receive reliable and friendly support when the soldier is called away. This can lead to a consistent level of performance in the unit, increase the effectiveness of training and ensure a psychological readiness to fight. For the Army, a successful unit FSG program, combined with effective community resources, will make spouses, especially younger ones feel that they are truly a part of the Army family. That, coupled with a training program that challenges the soldier, makes an unbeatable combination that will assure success in the all-important mission of retaining high-quality service members. Therefore, the goals of FSG program include:

- Becoming an essential part of a military unit's family support system through activities such as a unit activity day, unit family briefings and family meals in the dining facility,
- Reducing social isolation among family members, especially in the junior enlisted members.
- Enabling the members to provide each other with close, personal, mutual support,
- Assisting members to gather important information and access to resources more efficiently and effectively,
- Facilitating and establishing a real sense of community among soldiers and their family members, and;

- Enhancing the military member's feelings of belonging, control, self-reliance and self-esteem.

Kaslow (1993:168) postulates that:

The US DOD Marine Corps Family Service Centres (FSCs) were established in 1980 as a result of the White Paper on Marine Families issued by the commandant of the Marine Corps with a strong focus upon supporting the commander in meeting the needs of the Marine members and their families. The primary mechanism for providing this support is that of positioning the FSC as the base focal point of family issues. Several of the specific services offered by the FSC assist with this positioning. The first one is information referral and follow up, while the second is counselling assistance. Both of these are direct services and put the FSC in the position of being one of the first places marine and their family members turn to for help. All counselling services seek to follow a non-medical model, which is provided by qualified and credentialed staff members. Other services offered by the Marine Corps FSCs are almost identical to those offered by the Navy FSCs. They are as follows:

- Financial counselling,
- Family separation and deployment support,
- Spouse and child abuse services through the family advocacy program,
- Employment resource center, and
- Special needs families.

In addition, according to Kaslow (1993:169-171):

The dual-focus mission of Air Force FSCs is to help the service understand and respond to the needs of Air Force families while helping them to understand the needs of the organisation and to adjust to the life-style required by the organisation. As a result, four functional areas were identified to serve as a structure to fulfil the dual focus mission namely:

- Information, referral and follow-up counselling to help family members access existing resources on base and in the civilian community,
- Leadership consultation to provide assistance to unit commanders and supervisors in their task of responding to family issues in the most positive way,
- Policy, planning and coordination to help commanders develop family supportive policies and practices, and to facilitate the coordination of programs and services which seek to enhance family well-being, and

- Direct services to provide family life education and skill development in the support of family adaptation to the military life style.

The direct service area within Air Force FSCs is comparable to that in all other military family centers, with the exception of child and spouse abuse services through the family advocacy program which is primarily operated by those in this career field. In general, key issues that are relevant to all FSCs in the military are as follows:

- Credentialing of counsellors. All of the service branches except the Air Force provide ongoing counselling services in their centers. These services require that staff members who are providing counselling must be properly trained and appropriately certified or licensed. Air Force centers on the other hand do not provide ongoing counselling services of any type and therefore do not require any form of counselling training or certification for staff members,

In the researcher's view, within the SANDF, all the multi-professional team members possess the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are registered with the various appropriate professional bodies/associations. For example, social workers in the SANDF are registered with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP).

- Confidentiality. There is no form of privileged information between counsellors or other staff members and any person using services in any of the family centers,

Therefore, all professionals within the SANDF are bound by an ethical code that prescribes that the confidentiality of the client/patient should be upheld at all times.

- Liability risks for FSC staff members. The federal government insures staff members, who are part of the civil service as long as they are operating within the normal scope of their job requirements

The SANDF does not carry the responsibility of insuring professional members against any suit. It is their responsibility to ensure that they are insured, and it is not enforced upon professional members.

- Prevention versus intervention. Most programs and services

offered by the military family centers are preventative in nature. That is certainly the intent of most of these efforts. Those programs that are primarily interventive are family advocacy and individual, marital and family counselling. The family advocacy programs are both interventive and preventive since they are geared towards education and prevention.

The abovementioned is thus indicative of the fact that support programmes for families and the military are inseparable. The one cannot be fully functional without the other. In addition, these programmes vary depending on the expressed needs of the families within each unit. In order for the organisation to successfully achieve its objectives, particularly during the external deployment of members, intervention measures should be put in place to ensure that the family is well taken care of during the absence of the member. Those services should be promotive in nature. In other words, treatment should be focused on ensuring that problems are curbed long before they can occur. As a result, this approach will contribute to the mission readiness of the member. Productivity will also be enhanced due to the fact that there will be no family-related stressors that negatively impact on service delivery. A resilience programme for deployed members and their families is in place within the SANDF, and it is inclusive of life skills programmes such as financial management, stress management, conflict management, marriage enrichment and reintegration into the family. However, evaluation of such a programme has not been undertaken. Therefore, it is critical that a model for spousal support during the external military deployment of the member is responsive to the needs of members and their spouses.

2.4.1.3 Social Support System

According to Cutrona (1996:9):

The term social support is sometimes applied to constructs that should properly be termed social integration or social networks. Social integration (also termed social involvement) reflects the presence or absence of key social ties, most often marriage and membership in groups such as churches, clubs and other voluntary organisations. Social integration is an important construct because

the absence of such ties (social isolation) is a serious health risk factor. The social network approach involves more detailed quantitative assessments of the individual's social ties. A person's social network includes the people with whom he or she interacts on regular basis (for example, friends, neighbours, co-workers, family members).

Other research (Pehrson, 1993:442; see also Wood et al., 1995:219) indicates that "when all the subjects' responses to the types of social supports were analysed, they listed family as the most used social support, followed by friends, no-one, outside (non-military) sources and religious sources".

Zinn and Eitzen (1993:215-216) are of the view that:

Juggling work and family produces considerable stress and strain. Individuals with multiple roles of worker, spouse and parent must manage the competing demands of each role. They must reduce overload and interference in order to fulfil the requirements of both work and family roles and to construct workable patterns of relationships and activities. Furthermore, two problems stand out for parents who are paid workers namely: Firstly arranging childcare and secondly accomplishing household tasks and other family work. Since no institutionalized support exists for families, both of these problems require innovative family strategies that are often based on informal coping techniques.

In addition, according to McEnroe (1991:51), "strategies can be devised to obtain support from outside the family, for example, hiring help, developing supportive relationships with friends and establishing more favourable work arrangements".

Moreover, Cutrona (1996:9) is of the opinion that:

Researchers who emphasize the stress – buffering functions of social support differ in the extent to which they focus on support provided before the onset of life crises (throughout the history of the relationship) versus supportive acts performed after a stressful event has occurred.

Other scholars (Kaslow, 1993:128; see also Wood et al., 1995:218) suggest that:

For the wife living with the circumstances of marriage to a special warfare operator, there are numerous pluses and minuses. The pride gleaned in knowing the husband is not only involved in

important missions but also is extremely dedicated gives a sense of being special in an ordinary world. The knowledge that when the operator is allegedly working he is engaged in important government service provides some relief from suspicious thoughts. The hours of separation, loneliness, feelings of jealousy, anger relating to missed family outings and celebrations or commitments, broken-down cars, blown fuses he is not there to fix and a host of other major and minor disasters are among the bad points. Not having someone to turn to, to satisfy urges or special needs, watching CNN and wondering/waiting, fearing the knock on the door that brings news of a fatality or a serious problem, rearing children alone, children's behavioural and emotional difficulties, attending Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings alone, missing proms, financial difficulties, problems accessing military services graduations and many other such occasions marked by the operator's absence sometimes make the spouse want to "throw in the towel" and end the marriage.

Furthermore, according to Kaslow (1993:128):

Interestingly enough, there is an internal strength that keeps the spouse and the family going. There are external aids, ombudsmen, wives groups, informal team gatherings, neighbours, extended family and friends who offer excellent support. Professional counselling with the base chaplain and referral to family services, local mental health units and self-help groups can also be utilized. The main resource is within the couple. Communication between the husband and wife is essential. Times and events may limit what can be shared, but talking about concerns, feelings, desires and personal issues will sustain family survival and success. To enable the family to keep functioning well, both partners need to commit to each other and establish a common goal of staying together regardless of external influences and pressures.

Bell (1991:1) holds the view that "family crises are events that place demands upon the family's total coping abilities. Manifestations of family strain include lowered family integrity, increased stress symptoms and reduced sense of well-being or health among family members".

Finally, according to Bell et al. (1996:1):

Deployment of a unit or an entire post produces additional strains for the families involved. The families may need additional psychological or material resources because the soldier is absent for

example, childcare, money, companionship, information about the Army or the mission the troops are being asked to fulfill. These family needs may be met through military actions and agencies or through the third family support system namely, the families' own interpersonal resources for example friends and relatives

The researcher aligns herself with the abovementioned authors, in that deployments have a positive and negative effect on marital relationships. Indeed, it seems as though the negative surpasses the positive. It is positive in the sense of financial incentives associated with deployment and making a significant contribution towards the attainment of organisational objectives with regard to participation in peace missions. However, having to survive in the absence of the member is a daunting task, particularly when there are no support systems available.

The researcher acknowledges the fact that spouses encounter many problems and challenges during the absence of members, such as illness and hospitalisation, death and dying, and celebration of special events in his/her absence, such as giving birth, birthdays and car breakdowns. Having to take full responsibility for running the home single-handedly is not an easy task, particularly when those tasks are normally shared between husband and wife. The lack of support systems will make it difficult for the spouse to survive deployment-related challenges in the absence of the member. However, various support systems such as family and friends are often available for use by spouses.

2.4.1.4 Communication

Some literature (Hornig, 1994:99; see also Harryman, 2006:89) suggests that:

Communication during separation plays a critical role in maintaining an emotional presence of the soldier not physically present. It is very important for the family members to share their thoughts and feelings with the soldier. Helpful ways to sustain the relationship and prepare for a happy homecoming includes commercial phone calls

that can be an expensive way for a family to communicate. The cost of collect calls can be a burden on a spouse's already tight budget. An alternative to commercial telephone call is the Military Affiliated Radio Systems (MARS) network. Many military installations have MARS stations, which can be accessed by soldiers and families by contacting the nearest one. This system is an economical way to handle non-emergency calls. Letters are least expensive and most satisfactory lifelines.

The researcher agrees with the abovementioned, and is of the opinion that communication is critical to the maintenance and enhancement of marital relationships. Even though the SANDF does not have the MARS communication system in place, an alternative could be the use of the radio system that is utilised by the SANDF within mission areas and SANDF units. This system could be equated with the MARS. At present, this system is not open for use by deployed members – however, it could be of value to members and spouses who have access to the units. In this way, communication frustrations and challenges that are experienced by members and spouses could be averted. Although they are time consuming, another option would be that of communicating by means of letters. As a result, family relationships would be promoted.

Martin, Vaitkus, Johnson and Mikolajek (1992:3) state that:

The flow of information between partners has been identified as the major concern of family members during the deployment of US soldiers to Europe and South-West Asia in 1991. The major family consequences of separations and deployments identified prior to ODS/S research are spouse loneliness, increased childcare responsibilities and added expenses. Spouses must also adjust to their lack of control over deployment events and their inability to communicate with the deployed soldier.

In addition, “deployments that are rapid, dangerous, unplanned and that eliminate rapid reliable communication with the soldier, have worse consequences for families than more routine deployments” (Bell, 1991:1; see also Krueger, 2001:15).

The view of Suttle (2003:8; see also Kipp, 1991:59) is that:

Communication during separation plays a critical role in maintaining an emotional bond between partners. Open two-way communication lines will encourage soldiers and families to start sharing their expectations, concerns and fears about reunion. By communicating these things early, partners can acquire the information and skills needed to cross barriers and minimize problems during reunion.

ODS/S research (Bell, 1991:2) has confirmed that:

Lack of control and communications are indeed important stressors. Research showed that spouses were concerned about soldiers' living conditions and safety. Spouses were also frustrated by the lack of knowledge concerning the length of operation and confused rumours, Army information that often appeared to be out-of-date and the inaccurate coverage of the war, by the news media. Spouses attempted to communicate with the deployed soldier via various electronic media (for example faxes) but found that they were neither fast nor reliable. Electronic messages were rapidly relayed to South West Asia, but once in theatre, became part of the overtaxed mail system. The most reliable and immediate communication media was the Army telephone system, however, it was only available to a few individuals. The commercial telephone system served more people but was costly and not always available.

Therefore, communication plays a critical role in maintaining relationships. It is one means by which contact can be maintained with the member while he/she is on deployment. The organisation has a responsibility to ensure that contact between the spouse and the member is maintained at all times during deployment. Therefore, measures should be put in place to ensure that family relationships are preserved. Functional communication systems such as the radio system should thus be available.

2.4.1.5 Children and separation

Some authors (Hornig; 1994:103; see also Kelly, 1994:171) suggest that:

There is a notion that children are relatively unaffected by their father's absence but studies show that this is not true. Children probably experience the same psychological pattern as their mothers due to their own feelings of loss and their awareness,

conscious or unconscious, of the mother's emotional situation. They are generally upset when she is and calm when she is. Children often test Mom to find out if she will bend more when Dad's gone especially when he leaves and again upon his return. Additionally, some women compensate for their husband's absence by becoming permissive or overly protective with their children. Rules change. Some decisions are harder to make alone, so the mother may not be able to make clear-cut decisions. The children are being subjected to a different environment. They become caught between two worlds, judging their behaviour according to whether or not their father is home. Therefore, helping a child cope with emotions of separation requires that the family be open to the honest expression of feelings.

Studies have determined that financial readiness (for example having emergency funds available) reduces deployment-related stressors (See Martin et al., 1993:25; Segal & Harris, 1993:85). In the researcher's view, financial preparedness plays a critical role in alleviating most of the problems related to children during times of separation. Lack of sufficient financial resources to sustain both the spouse and the children is of critical importance to family resilience during the absence of the member. Children also experience emotions as a result of external military deployment. Having the necessary resources at hand, financial ones in particular, makes dealing with deployment-related stressors easier, particularly with regard to problems associated with children, such as maintenance.

2.4.1.6 Professional therapy

Kaslow (1993:128-29) is of the opinion that:

Individual, marital and family therapy help reduce barriers to communication and provide a non-threatening forum in which to express concerns that normally end in conflict. A therapist with knowledge of their special concerns and the intense, mission driven, military context or ecosystem in which they live, may be accepted as a caregiver. The therapist must realize the inner commitment to self-sufficiency and the profound concern over disclosing personal information. The most successful therapist is the team member such as the psychologist, assigned to the team fulltime. The spouse may

at first resist talking to the psychologist due to the assumed close relationship established in the team with the husband, however in time, trust can be established and maintained. Furthermore, carefully selected self-help books and literature can offer useful suggestions on overcoming problems. Courses in stress management, family finances, child development, parenting, home appliance repair, and car maintenance are available through local schools and colleges. These might be useful adjuncts to therapy for one or both spouses. Finally, trust, faith and confidence in each other and in oneself will go far in eliminating fears and doubts. Maintaining a strong belief in personal capabilities to perform a task, under reasonable expectations and with a realistic outlook is difficult. Remember these two people met, selected one another, fell in love and married. Most often they complement one another. It can generally be asserted that the special warrior wife is competent and resourceful and in every way a fine match for her operator spouse.

According to Spellman et al. (1991:7), “with regard to treatment, counselling hours were extended to monitor and make available time for struggling families. Counselling issues included marital, parent and child rearing conflicts, questions of fidelity and anxiety over reunion”.

Based on the abovementioned, the researcher holds the view that professional therapy is a prerequisite for any deployment. One cannot do without it, particularly with the negative impact that deployment has on the member's relationship with his/her spouse. Within the SANDF, a multi-professional team approach is followed in addressing this issue, in particular, social work officers, psychologists where feasible, and chaplains, who all possess the necessary knowledge and skills to render such a service, both internally and externally. However, this service is not an ideal one, in that not all members and their spouses have access to it. Hence, this research is aimed at determining the needs of spouses and members during the external military deployment of members, assessing social support services that are rendered to spouses during the external military deployment of members and the designation of a model for support services during the external military deployment of members.

2.4.1.7 Family-Supportive Employer Responses

Zinn and Eitzen (1993:217-18) postulate that:

The complex struggle that many women and men face in trying to combine work and family raises important issues for employers and public policymakers. Workplaces have been slow to respond to the needs of their employees who are parents. The traditional organization of work, an inflexible eight-hour workday makes it difficult for parents to cope with family problems or the conflicting schedules of family members.

Figley (in Kaslow, 1993:176) is of the opinion that:

Since early 1991 their family center staff had consulted with many individuals and institutions. These included other family-centered institutions, military service assistance programs, national mental health associations and other professional organisations. Most of them wanted to help military families. It was obvious that no plan of action existed on either a national or regional level. Few communities in the USA reacted to this emergency in a unified manner. As a result, agencies were grouping for direction in coordinating their efforts with others in their area. A critical need for national policies that focus on helping military families, especially in times of war was identified. There is a need for an emergency plan to identify and attend to the needs of our military families, especially our children, during periods of crisis.

The researcher agrees with the abovementioned and is of the opinion that an approach similar to that of family-centred institutions in the USA, as referred to by Kaslow above, could be followed within the SANDF. In fact, a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach within a one-stop service centre for use by spouses of deployed members could be the answer to most of the challenges faced by spouses during external military deployment of members. The importance of organisational involvement in ensuring that the necessary support measures are in place and enforced during the absence of the member cannot be overemphasised.

According to Segal and Harris (1993:1):

The Army way of life has led to special concerns about soldiers'

families and to policy actions to assure a decent quality of life. These concerns and ameliorative actions arise from the Army's moral and social responsibilities, they also contribute to mission readiness and personnel retention.

Therefore, in the researcher's view, it is critical that a model for spousal support is developed, in order to ensure that families are given the necessary support during the absence of members, particularly with regard to external deployment. A civil military alliance that will network with regard to the provision of support services to families during the absence of members will bring about stability in the home, and serve as a resource in times of crisis.

2.4.1.8 Homecoming

According to Kaslow (1993:180-181):

Most people assume that the homecoming is a time of pure joy and satisfaction. Yet for many families, this period is extremely stressful. They and the returning trooper not only share the relief of the separation finally ending, but they soon face a large number of challenges which intrude on the joy of reunion. These challenges are associated with the strains of reviewing what has happened to them during the separation and attempting to reorganize their lives as quickly as possible. There is often conflict over what is to be reorganized, by whom and in what way. It is often a period, which holds considerable ambivalence, the mixture of great relief and exhilaration. Among the many challenges faced by reunited veteran families during this period have been the following:

- Family conflict over what was done at home, how and by whom,
- Evaluation of the frequency and quality of letters, calls and other communications from the trooper during her/his absence,
- Family rearrangement (reorganisation of family roles, routine and rules due to the trooper's absence),
- Shifts in the friendship support network (for example, the trooper may discourage continuing contact with the family system), and
- Marital conflict over potential or real extramarital affairs and conflict over each person's homecoming fantasies (competition among the trooper and family members about activities to do when, where and with whom).

Wood et al. (1995:226) propose that:

By the second month, some wives were realizing that life with the husbands was “really boring”. Early evenings at home in front of the TV and the now-minimal conversation had become monotonous. Even sex became predictable and dull. In some marriages, resentment by the men was expressed through jealousy and accusations about separation. For a few, quarrels led to a talk of separation or divorce and several wives mentioned that they had urged their husbands, unsuccessfully, to go for counselling.

Furthermore, according to Kaslow (1993:180-181):

The deployment period has its own stresses. Tension emerges approximately two weeks before and two weeks after return. Various kinds of expectations are set. The soldier may feel confident that everything and everyone will be just as they were when he/she left and the soldier will be welcomed with open arms immediately into old places and roles. On the other hand, he or she may fear that everything will be changed; the family will take him/her back. Roles may have been taken over by other family members and he/she is no longer needed and jealousy regarding potential or real extramarital affairs. The spouse on the other hand may fear that the soldier will not like the new competence gained during the separation or that newfound freedom and confidence will be taken away when old roles are resumed. Conflicting emotional reactions surface namely, anger, resentment of intrusion, fear of loss of freedom, self-esteem, love or acceptance and blaming the spouse for whatever went wrong or for changes that have taken place. The children may fear that the soldier will return and express anger for a long list of misdeeds that the other parent has saved up for him or her. All those “wait till Dad gets home” situations will now become a reality. It is critical that feelings and expectations associated with homecoming are discussed during the briefing. Effective family communication during deployment may help reduce the re-entry stress. Thus, the homecoming for both the troops and families may be more stressful than the departure.

According to Suttle (2003:8):

During separation, most couples face the question, “How can two people work together toward achieving intimacy when one of them is absent from the relationship for extended periods?” Military couples often find that reunion may bring out feelings of awkwardness and that their personal relationships are strained. Through an understanding of the effects of separation, you can better cope with stress that accompanies reunion.

In the researcher's view, based on the abovementioned, the homecoming is just as challenging as the separation itself. While the spouse may have found it difficult to adjust during the absence of the member, it will also be difficult to get used to the fact that he/she is now back home. Coping mechanisms that the spouse developed in an attempt to cope and deal with the absence of the member have to be abandoned, and new ways of dealing with his/her presence have to be learned. It may also imply reverting back to the old ways of doing things in the family, which requires understanding and cooperation by both parties. Obviously, problems will be encountered in the process of acclimatising to the status quo. Therefore, a spousal support programme is a necessity for spouses, even upon reunion, that is, during the post-deployment period. Through the spousal support programme, the needs of the spouses will be met even after deployment. This will also enhance the sense of security in both the spouse and the member, due to the fact that a support system will be available to offer assistance during times of crisis and beyond. In this way, mission success will be guaranteed, and military families will be kept intact.

2.5 SUMMARY

Recent literature on the subject of spousal support during external deployment has been limited. Older versions of books, journals and articles were used in this study, as they were found to be appropriate. Deployment forms an integral part of military life and has its own challenges, which have an impact on the combat readiness of members and mission accomplishment. In order for combat readiness to be achieved and the mission to be accomplished, it is critical that all facets of the members' lives are addressed, especially the family. Therefore, the organisation has a critical role to play in terms of ensuring that comprehensive needs-based intervention measures are put in place and enforced for the purpose of spousal support during the external deployment of the member. However, it is vital that preparation for deployment occurs before the member is deployed, and that spousal support is offered during and after deployment as



well. This will enable the member to successfully accomplish the mission, and the spouse to be able to cope during the absence of the member. In this way, families will be kept intact.

This research is thus aimed at making a significant contribution towards a model for spousal support within the SANDF during the external deployment of the member. The focus of the following chapter is on the research methodology used in this study, which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative studies.