

## **Dealing With The Media: A Guide For Family Members**

Some time during your soldier's mobilization and deployment, reporters may want to talk to you and other members of your family. Here are some tips to help you make the experience of being interviewed a success.

**IT'S UP TO YOU!** When a reporter asks to talk to you or your children, the choice to agree or refuse is completely up to you. If you'd like to talk about being a military spouse, the hardships of separation, the Family Support Program, etc., you're free to do so. If you think being interviewed would be too stressful for you or your children, just say so. You are under no obligation to talk to reporters, ever. But if you're comfortable with the idea your viewpoint can help present a more complete picture of today's military.

**KEEP SECURITY IN MIND.** It's fine to talk generally about mobilization and deployment and what your spouse does. Avoid details such as the exact number of soldiers in the unit, what type of weapons they carry and their exact destination. If you aren't sure whether or not to answer a question, don't. Call the Public Affairs Office at (402) 309-7300 for guidance at any time. A good reporter won't mind waiting a few minutes for an answer.

**AVOID RUMORS AND SPECULATION.** They won't add anything to your viewpoint and will subtract from your credibility.

**WHAT ABOUT COMPLAINTS?** Everyone has at least one or two—but if you want to complain about your spouse's unit or mission, be sure to tell the reporter you're speaking only for yourself.

**WHAT ABOUT "OFF THE RECORD"** Talking to a reporter "off the record" is almost always a bad idea. It's too easy to lose track of what you said when, and find something that you didn't mean to make public in the media. The best general rule is, if you wouldn't want to see it in the media, don't say it.

**WE'D LIKE TO KNOW.** If you do talk to a reporter, and can take a minute to let us know, we'd appreciate it. We look for news stories about our units and families, both for our historical files and to forward to others in the organization.

If you have any questions, need information or just want to tell us about your experience, call the Nebraska National Guard Public Affairs Office at (402) 309-7300.