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Born to be Wives of Military Men

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WHO HELPS INSTRUCT THE MILITARY BRIDE on her duties? What is the difference between a civilian marriage and a military marriage? What kind of problems does the military bride have?

If it can be said that boys today are born with military service ahead of them, then it can also be said that girls are born to be wives of military men. Basic training and indoctrination help men make the adjustment from civilian living to army life. But today many girls have to switch to military living without necessary questions answered.

"What type of jobs are appropriate and practical for a military wife?"

"Is there job stigma?"

"Does the service pay traveling expenses for wives?"

Each spring, these questions and more are answered at informal get-togethers held by the staff officer's wives at Iowa State. Given once a year, the discussions are open to any girl interested in learning more about what will be expected of her. Invitations are sent to the girls through the individual R.O.T.C. (Reserve Officer's Training Corps) members. In this way attendance can be judged. Any girls interested should notify either a cadet or the party hostess of her desire to attend.

The naval R.O.T.C. held, for the second time last spring, a tea similar to the gatherings held by the other branches. Meeting at the home of Captain Jesse S. McClure, head of naval science, the naval hostesses attempted to educate the future military bride on her duties. The material was presented by a panel, each officer's wife taking one facet of navy life.

Like this navy panel, talks may be broken down into six parts.

1. Social customs
2. Formal calls
3. Parties
4. Husband's orders and what they mean
5. Business affairs
6. Climate, dress, and custom

Afterward, the girls' questions and problems are discussed. Here are a few typical questions and Mrs. McClure's answers.

Q. Is a wife allowed to take her furniture and follow her husband to his service post?
A. If the husband's orders are permanent (for a year or two), the wife can follow him with her transportation paid, taking along all possessions. The supply depot will pack, ship, and unpack all belongings except those transported by automobile.

Q. What should the wife know about budgeting and banking?
A. Because of absences at sea the couple should have a joint bank account. If this is not desirable, the husband can convert part of his salary into an allotment to his or her bank. This can be arranged through the paymaster. Without a joint account or allotment checks, the wife would have to wait for mail or until her husband returned to port before she could get money. The wife should have joint title to the car and other possessions.
and also the power of attorney. When traveling, most of the money should be in traveler's checks. Since the pay of an Ensign is limited, the newlywed must be able to make and keep a budget.

Q. How long are the leaves and how often do they come?
A. Ensigns receive a thirty day leave per year. It almost always comes during periods of transfer. He will receive a travel allowance.

Q. Where will most Iowa State N.R.O.T.C. graduates be stationed?
A. At present one third are being given air training. Two-thirds will be sent to sea. Half of them are sent to the Atlantic and half to the Pacific coast.

Q. Is medical care provided by the navy for the family?
A. Medical care provided by the navy is left to the discretion of the senior medical officer at the base. It varies at different places. Dental care is never provided.

Q. Are there any stigmas on the wives working?
A. No, however, teaching or nursing are the most common types of employment.

Q. What are navy "formal calls"?
A. Within two weeks after a couple arrives at a base, they must make a formal call on the husband's commanding officer. The formal call lasts from 20 minutes to half an hour, usually between 4 to 5 p.m. or 5 to 6 p.m. It varies with the base and should be checked by the husband. An engraved calling card is left.

Members of the husband's immediate division or officers on his ship (sometimes 20 to 30 men) and their wives will also call on the couple. These calls are expected to be returned as soon as possible and are the navy's way of becoming acquainted with the couple. At social gatherings liquor may be, but does not have to be served.

Service branches differ
Each branch of the service has its own individual problems. For example, unlike men in the other branches, navy R.O.T.C. men can't marry until after graduation. However, many rules for living on military bases are similar. The wives must learn to budget their money and care for the finances of the family. A certain amount of entertaining is expected.

The wife must learn to adjust to new situations easily, since she is always subject to transfer. Above all, she must be willing to prepare to make her home for herself and her family anywhere.

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