

Positive aspects of deployment

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Health studies among deployed military personnel often focus on risk factors as predictors of subsequent ill-health, but it is also important to identify factors that may be protective and/or promote future health. The Deployment Health Surveillance Program has been collecting self-report data from a sample of military personnel who were deployed to the Solomon Islands. We asked open-ended questions about positive as well as negative experiences. Early data suggest that similar numbers of participants are reporting positive and negative experiences. Nearly all of the early respondents reported at least one positive aspect to the deployment, one saying "the whole thing". Specific comments commonly mention interaction with local people, and others reported job satisfaction in an operational environment, teamwork, and the "can do" attitude. We will discuss the range of perceptions and the themes emerging from the full set responses.