October 2, 2008

Dear Nebraska Army National Guard Spouse,

I am writing to ask for your help in a study of Nebraska Army National Guard spouses who have experienced deployment. I would like to start by taking a moment to introduce myself. My name is Angela Wheeler. I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and also the spouse of Nebraska Army National Guard Captain Charles Gilkey (Commander of the 189th Transportation Company).

Charlie and I experienced our first deployment during 2004-2005. At that time, Charlie was with the 1075th Transportation Company and deployed with his unit in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since you have also experienced deployment, there is no need for me to explain how much our lives changed because of this experience. I had just begun my graduate career when Charlie left to go overseas. It was at this time that I began to wonder what I could do to contribute to the lives of other Guard families.

I began a small research study in 2005 in which I spoke with several spouses throughout the state about their experiences with deployment. What I want to do now is hear from all of the spouses of Nebraska Army National Guard soldiers to get a full understanding of how deployment impacts their families. With your help, the enclosed survey provides an opportunity to do just that.

Your experience and voice are very important. The results of this study will be of benefit to you as you share your experiences and to other Guard families who may one day experience the deployment of their soldiers. Please help me and other Guard families by taking a few minutes of your time to share your experiences. I realize how valuable your time is and how many demands are already placed on Guard families. I am enclosing a $1 bill as a small token to communicate my sincere appreciation for your participation.

Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries in which no individual’s answers can be identified. On the back side of this letter is a list of frequently asked questions, which should help to answer any questions you may have regarding this study. If you have any questions that I may not have answered here or any comments, do not hesitate to contact the project manager, Ashley Frear Cooper, toll-free at 1-800-480-4549, by e-mail to bosr@unl.edu, or by writing to the address listed on the letterhead.

If you are not currently the spouse of a Nebraska Army National Guard soldier, I would be grateful if you could note this on the first question of the survey and return the unfinished survey in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for helping with this important research and for the support you have shown to your soldier and other Nebraska National Guard spouses and families. I wish the best for you and your family.

Sincerely,

Angela Wheeler
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Sociology
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of this study?
The Nebraska Army National Guard Spouse’s Survey is a chance for spouses who have experienced
deployment to have their voice heard. This research project will identify ways in which Guard families
experience deployment in order to help direct necessary resources to these families. The information obtained
in this study will be reported in the Principal Investigator’s doctoral dissertation.

Who is receiving this survey?
You are receiving this survey and being invited to participate in this research because you are the spouse of a
Nebraska Army National Guard soldier who has experienced deployment since September 2001. You must be
19 years of age or older to participate.

How did you get my address?
The Nebraska Military Department agreed to cooperate with this study because of the important information that
may be gained, which may benefit Guard families by directing resources. They provided a database of
addresses only (no names were provided), so that we were able to send you this survey.

How much time will the survey take me to complete and where do I return it?
It should take approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey. Participants respond by returning the survey to
the Bureau of Sociological Research (BOSR) in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Are there any risks for me if I complete the survey?
You will be asked to recall events from your spouse’s deployment, so there is minimal risk of emotional stress
because of the types of questions that you will be asked. In the event of problems resulting from participation in
the study, you may contact Angela Wheeler, Ph.D. candidate and principal investigator, at 402-472-3631 or
awheeler@unlserve.unl.edu for assistance or referral. Further, Military One Source provides free assistance for
all military personnel and their families. They provide confidential support and practical solutions for many
issues that military families face. If you think you might be in need of such assistance, call 1-800-342-9647 or

Are there any benefits if I complete the survey?
Participants will have the opportunity to have their voices heard and the results of the study may help to direct
resources to National Guard families. All survey recipients receive a $1 cash incentive.

How do I know my answers are confidential?
Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data from
the survey will be maintained by the BOSR. The Principal Investigator will receive a summary of the responses,
in which no individual’s answers can be identified. The information obtained in this study will be reported in the
researcher’s doctoral dissertation and to the Nebraska Military Department; results also may be published in
scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but the data will be reported as group results without any
information that will identify the participants.

If I still have questions that are not answered here who can I contact?
You may ask questions about this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate
or at any time during the study by contacting the principal investigator, Angela Wheeler (contact information
above). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the
investigator, or to report any concerns, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review
Board at 402-472-6965. This study has been approved under IRB # 2008098595EP.

Can I choose not to participate?
While we would like to hear from all Nebraska Army National Guard spouses, you are free to decide not to
participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the
principal investigator, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, or the Nebraska Military Department. Your decision
will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are voluntarily making a decision
whether or not to participate in this research study. Your response to the survey is your indication that you
agree to participate, having read and understood the information presented above. You do not need to sign or
return this letter, it is yours to keep.