

* "The hardest part for me isn't my husband being gone so much, it's raising two kids on my own (for the most part). My suggestion for new families is to set up a support system for those hard days. Having friends that can take the kids occasionally or getting kids enrolled for drop in daycare so you can use it if need be. Keeping open communication between husband and wife. Attend Battalion events! It's a good way to meet people and develop your new 'family'."

—1st Battalion Spouse, 2 cycles

* "My opinion changed about the drill field about a year and a half of being here. I was a little negative at first, I was upset to see my husband so tired and run down all the time, but all that changed after I went to graduations and outpost parties. From then, I realized all that dedication and hard work really did pay off. The DI's make such an impact on another person's life that it only makes me proud to be his wife. You HAVE to find the positive and go from there! Also, take advantage of all the opportunities on the Depot! There is ladies night, sporting events and also volunteering. You never know who you will meet, and remember we are all in the same boat!! You can make some solid relationships here. This is a tough duty station so I think if you have friends to talk to and stay active in events you will have a positive three years!!" —1st Battalion Spouse, 8 cycles

* "My best advice would be to not have unrealistic expectations. Try to have understanding and know that he will be tired, and it's nothing that you (as a wife) are doing wrong. Remember that this experience will strengthen your relationship. Focus on the long run. Communicate! Keep your relationship alive. Address major issues, but keep petty arguments and spite at bay." —1st Battalion Spouse, 6 cycles

* "When my husband became a DI, I came with the expectation that he would rarely be home. I really did not think it would be quite as intense as it has been. I have done multiple deployments, but having my husband home during breaks was an adjustment that was hard with kids. It's not any different than any training or deployment, except it's continual adjustments.

Some things I did for myself was kept busy and enjoy my moments, got counseling for my son. He had a lot of issues with the adjustment of the cycles, and I go to family events. This was honestly the most supportive Family Readiness that we have experienced as a spouse of the Marine Corps. Most importantly, I learned to set realistic expectations for myself and my kids. (I.e., I learned to say no) If my spouse asked me for something that was hard for me to do. (i.e. bring him food or drinks when he needed or if he needed me to look for something for example), I said no if it inconvenienced me and my routine. Sitting down and discussing with my spouse what I was and wasn't willing to do during cycle was very important. It's a fine line between keeping busy and still staying connected to your spouse. You need to know your limits and discuss them ahead of the cycle.

Well, that's my thoughts. It's different for everyone and everyone will have different experiences from it, but hopefully it's growth."

—1st Battalion Spouse, 5 cycles

* "Coming to the drill field I didn't know how to feel about everything. I already heard stories about peoples bad marriages or how disconnected I would be from my husband. Everything I have come across has been the opposite. I feel like being here has made my family so much stronger! Yes there are moments where we would fight because he was too tired to do anything or he worked a lot. But once we got past all that I loved how much family memories we have made. We really try now during breaks to have family time. And we have made sure during cycle we keep the communication going so if we have a problem it gets solved before it gets to bad! My advice in regard to coming here is stay positive. It will get better and just remember this is just another duty station. Its very rewarding not only for our Marine, but I'm so proud of my husband and how much he had grown here. Also I highly recommend volunteering! That has pasted a lot of my time by. I love being with all the other wives and helping out with the events. It has opened my eyes in volunteering when we leave here!

Keep you and you're family going like normal and if your husband can join then its a bonus:-) keeping the kids on a schedule will help keep their minds off of daddy being gone! Good luck with your new adventure and remember we are all going through the same stuff so you have plenty of people to talk to!"

—1st Battalion Spouse, 8 cycles

* "Welcome to the Drill Field, I must say in all the years my husband has been a Marine this by far has been the most rewarding and challenging at the same time. I have met a great group of ladies who I met at DI Discovery Night. Our husbands were in DI school together and since then we've shared the ups and downs of this duty station together. We are an EFMP family, checking into DI school began the labeling of being a problem because our child was in major medical care. Upon checking in with the Company they were hesitant to except him, immediately being given a speech on how he needed to focus on work and how he needed to speak to me about not calling or bothering him or the company regardless of life or death situations. I was upset and bitter with the reception and labeling my husband had received upon checking in, but I chose to prove them wrong. I wanted them to see EFMP doesn't mean an inconvenience and how their assumptions were invalid. I turned a negative into a positive by getting involved, volunteering, and coming to events.

My children didn't understand what daddy was doing so I chose to come bring him food, sit in the parking lot when he was on the parade deck, running the recruits, etc. He told the kids when he touched his cover and ear it was his sign that he saw them because he couldn't waive. On Family Day we would come to cheer him on, to our surprise when families would find out we were a DI family they would shake the kids hands and thanks them for sacrificing their daddy. The moment they realized how important daddy's job is was in the Base Theater during the Family Day Welcome. They announced all the DI's names and as they all stood on stage, everyone stood up clapping and cheering.

Things will be hard and their will be tough times but you have to definitely find a positive in every situation. As our time on the Drill Field is coming to an end, it has been the best duty station we've ever been too." —1st Battalion Spouse, 8 cycles

