

UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE (TRI-SERVICE)

Barracks/station/unit	Place where Armed Forces workers live/work
Posted/drafted/assigned	Told that you have to move location
Deployed/detached	Working for periods of time away from home either on training active service or on other duties
Weekending/dispersed	When a parent works away from home during the week and comes home only at the weekends. The family may well not live near to a station/barracks/unit.
R and R	A period of leave to enable the serving person to 'rest and recuperate'
POTL or POL	Post Operational Leave straight after returning home from a deployment. May lead to requests for mid-term absence.
Quarters / SFA / patch	Living accommodation or Service Family Accommodation
I/C	In charge
Commanding Officer or CO	The officer responsible for all of those under their command and by extension their families.
BFPO	British Forces Post Office - A postal address for members of the armed forces and their families based overseas.

ARMY-SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY



AFF	Army Families Federation. AFF is independent from the Army and is there to support families in all aspects of life affected by an Army lifestyle.
AWS	Army Welfare Service. The Army's professional welfare support service, providing confidential support.
Assignment order/posting order	The formal instruction given to the serving member of the family to change role, often instigating a move.
Unit Move	When a whole unit moves from one station to another.
Regiment, Battalion, Company, Platoon	Organisational terms to describe common structures within the Army.
Pad Brat/Military Brat	A child whose parent is in the Armed Forces. It has no negative connotations and is title many children and their families use with pride.
Squaddies	A colloquial term for a Private soldier in the Army.
UWO	Unit Welfare Officer

ROYAL NAVY-SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY



NFF	Naval Families Federation
NSFPS	Naval Service Family and People Support (welfare services provided by the Royal Navy via a telephone portal)
Shipmate/ 'oppo'	Friend, buddy (opposite number)
RM/Bootneck	Royal Marine (UK Commando forces)
Sailor/Matelot	Royal Navy sailor
SBS	Special Boat Service (Royal Navy's special forces)
Boat	Submarine
Ship	Surface warship
Familygram	A one-way only 120 word message from a family to a submarine
Carrier	Aircraft carrier
Fleet Air Arm	Aviation branch of the Royal Navy
Base port	One of the 3 Naval Bases (Clyde, Devonport and Portsmouth) from which warships and submarines operate

RAFA	Royal Air Force Association – charity offering a range of welfare support to RAF personnel, veterans and their families as well as funding activities on stations, including KidZone nurseries.
RAF Benevolent Fund/'Ben Fund'	Charity offering support to RAF stations, personnel, veterans and families including Airplay and counselling (including youth counselling). Offer targeted financial assistance.
Airplay	A specific youth group run on RAF stations.
CDO	Community Development Officer – staff member on a unit or station with responsibility for youth activities and community engagement. Good point of contact for education providers.
RAF Community Support	The part of the RAF that is responsible for coordinating and providing support to families.
RAF Families Federation	The RAF Families Federation provides all RAF personnel and their families – Regular and Reserve, single or married –support, assistance and an independent voice regarding issues or concerns that they may have.
SSAFA Support workers	Specific SSAFA staff contracted to provides support to RAF personnel and families.
RAF HIVE	Information service for RAF personnel and families. There is an office with a Hive Information officer on most units/stations.
Station Commander	The person who is head of the Unit/Station
Wing/Squadron/Flight	Organisational terms to describe common structures within the RAF
Aircrew	Personnel who fly in planes (as opposed to those who are ground based).

MILITARY RANKS

Note:

Promotion is not automatic between all ranks

‘Lieutenant’ is pronounced ‘Leftenant’ in the UK

Disclaimer - This is an introductory guide only and doesn't include unique ranks in the Army or specialist/technical ranks in the Navy or RAF

ROYAL NAVY	ROYAL MARINES	ARMY	ROYAL AIR FORCE
Admiral	General	General	Air Chief Marshal
Vice-Admiral	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General	Air Marshal
Rear-Admiral	Major General	Major General	Air Vice Marshal
Commodore	Brigadier	Brigadier	Air Commodore
Captain	Colonel	Colonel	Group Captain
Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	Wing Commander
Lieutenant-Commander	Major	Major	Squadron Leader
Lieutenant	Captain	Captain	Flight Lieutenant
Sub-Lieutenant	Lieutenant	Lieutenant	Flying Officer
Midshipman	Second Lieutenant	2nd Lieutenant	Pilot Officer
Warrant Officer 1	Warrant Officer Class 1	Warrant Officer 1	Warrant Officer
Warrant Officer 2	Warrant Officer Class 2	Warrant Officer 2	N/A
Chief Petty Officer	Colour Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	Flight Sergeant
Petty Officer	Sergeant	Sergeant	Sergeant
Leading Hand	Corporal	Corporal	Corporal
N/A	Lance Corporal	Lance Corporal	Senior Aircraftman
Able Rate	Marine	Private	Aircraftman