

### **Flossy's story: Keeping connected while on deployment**

*'You don't know what it is like to be a little girl without a mummy'*

I was wrapped to get the chance to go on a deployment. It had always been my partner who got to go away while I kept things running on the home front and I was excited about the opportunity. I was a bit worried about the mission and what to expect, but mostly I was excited. Leaving the home front though was hard. I remember the family coming to see me off at the airport and the tears streaming down the faces of my 7 and 9 year olds in the back seat, which matched my own.

The time away was hard family-wise. Most of the time I could focus on the mission; it was busy which helped not to spend too much time thinking about home. Communications back to NZ weren't always great but there was email and the occasional phone call. Birthdays were real hard and also when the kids were sad, especially the words of my seven year old to her dad one night while she was crying herself off to sleep. But we kept in touch as time zones, work and technology allowed. The communication back home was the thing that helped the most, and the planning about things we would do when I got home. I think it was real hard for the kids, and being apart from them sucked for me too, but they had good friends and went to a school where other kids had mums and dads who went away too, which helped. The coming home, which we all knew would come, was the best bit. There was a new dog who took a couple of days to stop barking at me and I was tired, but that didn't matter.