Prince William County Public Library System

Subject Collection: Military Spouses

Course: Info 665-901 Collection Management

Instructor: Catherine Collins

Melissa Denike

February 24, 2013
The Library in which the new collection “Military Spouses” will be located is Chinn Park Regional Library. It is a branch of the Prince William County Public Library System located in Woodbridge Virginia. It is the first regional library to be opened in Prince William County in 1991. (http://www.pwcgov.org) The mission of this library is to engage and enhance the community through open access to a world of information through the library’s ever developing collections and programs. More information concerning this branch can be found at the official PWC Library website at http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/library/Pages/default.aspx.

The proposed collection for “military spouses” will provide information dealing with many pertinent issues. Some of the issues are: how to apply and obtain a job when you are always on the move, understanding deployment, how to help your loved one when they are overseas, military benefits (health, social security, income), and what it means to be in the military. The collection would also have books for support concerning deployment, bereavement, being a veteran spouse, etc.

The community which Chinn Park Library serves is Prince William County, Virginia. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 419,006 people reside in the county. (http://www.quickfacts.census.gov) The breakdown of ethnicity is as follows: 65.6% Caucasian, 21.3% African American, 1.1% American Indian, 7.9% Asian, .2% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, 4% are two or more races, and 20.5% is Hispanic. (http://www.quickfacts.census.gov) Of this population 88.6% are high school graduates and 37.7% hold a bachelor’s degree. (http://www.quickfacts.census.gov) The average income in the county is $36,842 and 5.6% of the population lives below the poverty line.
Based on these facts Chinn Park Library mainly serves the middle class.

The primary audience for this collection will be military spouses, girlfriends, and boyfriends of those serving. In Prince William County the population of those in the military is estimated at 20,380. Within Prince William, the community of military personnel is growing rapidly. Quantico Marine Corp Base, a large military establishment, is only 25 minutes from Chinn Park.

The library can act as a support group for this community by providing the information that they need. According to the Prince William County Library Mission Statement, part of its job is to connect “clients to information sources and developing outreach activities through its strong and exciting programs, collections and services.”

The parent organization of the Chinn Park Library is Prince William County and the whole Prince William County Library system. The system includes 10 branches; 2 regional, 2 community and 6 neighborhood libraries.

The overall mission of Chinn Park Library is to help the community better themselves by providing access to a large and diverse collection and programs. The mission for the “Military Spouse” collection will mirror this philosophy. The library will reach out to that population and connect them to the community by providing access to information that will guide them in their everyday needs in the military life. The goal of this collection is to make the community, both primary users (military spouses) and others interested in this subject, better understand topics such as the military lifestyle, benefits, coping with deployment, looking for employment and acquiring support. The importance of acquiring information to better understand these subjects is
stressed by military personnel. For example the “Manual to Military Spouses” on the website of the organization Fort Bragg Morale Welfare Recreation speaks of the importance to seek information as well as for the military to provide information concerning the military life by stating “we will provide you pertinent information to help ease in your transition from civilian to military life”. (http://www.fortbraggmwr.com/acs/newspouse.pdf) Therefore it is a realization that making a transition into military life is difficult and information regarding that must be made available.

Having and identifying selection criteria sets a standard by which materials are selected. It is important to make known how the library selects its books in order to show the community that collections are selected in a fair and balanced manner. Selection criteria will provide selectors guidance with set rules that are universal throughout the designated library system. This reduces the influence of a single selector, as well as serves as a training tool for new staff. The following will be used as part of the selection criteria for the “Military Spouse” collection: authority, accuracy, cost, comparison with other works, scope, and appropriateness. According to Evans and Saponaro, selectors will find that not all criteria will be used to select each item, but used in various ways. (Evans and Saponaro, 85)

According to The Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records some aids can “provide evaluative information and are selective in nature, while other tools are more comprehensive in their coverage such as vendor lists of titles available for purchase”. (http://www.azlibrary.gov/ct/slrbooks.aspx#EvaluationCriteria) This is true. If you want a quick way to find out what is available the first step is to visit vendor’s sites like Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or Ebay. To look for a more in depth perspective, or for more unique materials that cannot be found on retail sites, it is best to visit databases such as Ulrich or Jstor. Although I
found both types of sites to be very helpful, I found more electronic resources and journals on the database search engines. This doesn’t mean that retail sites should not be used. Most of the print and audio visual materials were found through these sites. The aids used for this collection consists of World Cat Ulrich, Barnes and Noble, Pinterest, Library Thing and Facebook.

The following is a list of 8 current materials selected for the “Military Spouse” collection.


   **Format:** Website

   **Description:** Military Times is a web site run by Gannett Government Media, a division of Gannett Co Inc., a large US newspaper publishing company. The site provides persons on the military and their families up to date information regarding military news, information concerning benefits, and pay, as well as a place to find discussion forums to connect to a military community.

   **Selection criteria used:** Accuracy, authority, cost, scope and appropriateness were used to evaluate this site. Because this site is run by one of the largest U.S. newspaper publishing companies, its credentials and longstanding company status gives credit to the content and creator. Second is cost. This site is widely available online, and it is free. Lastly the site is regularly updated and the information contained relates to the primary audience of this collection.

   **Selection aids used:** Ulrich and Facebook

   **Price:** $0.00 it is a free website open to all.


   **Format:** Print, Magazine

   **Description:** *Military Spouse* magazine is designed for military spouses. It contains information dealing with issues such as living on base, deployment, benefits etc. Every issue brings military spouses up to date information in order to stay informed about their lifestyle and what their spouses deal with. It also provides everyday helpful features such as exercise and fashion.

   **Selection criteria used:** The criterion used is accuracy, appropriateness, and scope. The audience for this collection is the exact target audience of the collection, military
spouses. As the primary purpose of this collection is to serve and inform military spouses, this would be an ideal addition to the collection. Being published monthly, the content is accurate and up to date.

**Selection aid used:** Ulrich and Barnes and Noble.

**Price:** $22.97/year for 12 issues


**Format:** Print Book

**Description:** The book, *Today's Military Wife: Meeting the Challenges of Service Life* helps military spouses deal with everyday military life issues such as raising a family, military programs for the family and financial questions. More serious topics are discussed to help guide the spouse when dealing with issues of deployment, moving nationally and internationally, and transitioning into civilian life when their spouse leaves the military.

**Selection criteria used:** The criterion used for this title is authority, accuracy, comparison and cost. With military self-help books that cover a wide range of topics, it is important to make sure that they are not all alike. This book is different because it is written by a military spouse and mother of children in the military. This is different, not only because it is written from a different perspective, but also because the author’s background and experiences gives her the credentials to write about this topic. The content or scope of the book lives up to the title and focuses on its main audience, military spouses, meeting the needs for appropriateness.

**Selection aids used:** Library Thing, World Cat and Barnes and Noble.

**Price:** $12.95


**Format:** eBook

**Description:** *The Military Spouse Finance Guide* helps spouses manage money, especially when their loved one is overseas. This book contains information on budgeting, loans, and deployment pay issues as well as planning for retirement.

**Selection criteria used:** Because of the nature of the topic, authority and accuracy are top selection criterion. The book is produced and written by Pioneer Services which is a financial service company that has been helping military families for over 25 years. Then comparison, scope and appropriateness are reviewed. Because this
books specializes on one specific topic it stands out among the other books. Lastly the audience of the book is intended for military spouses and not just financial aid for a soldier. Once these criteria’s were met, cost was the last to be observed.

**Selection aids used:** Barnes and Noble, Library Thing and World Cat.

**Price:** $3.47


**Format:** eBook

**Description:** Written by a military “brat” and wife, Mahoney covers all aspects of military life from pest infested military housing, choosing new schools for their children to stress disorders. Although no topic is off limits, she writes in a manner of comfort to help spouses deal with these realities.

**Selection criteria used:** Authority, accuracy and comparison with other books are the main criteria used in this selection. Written by a military “brat” and wife, who is the founder of Kids of America’s Hero’s, she has the knowledge, experience and writing skills to be able to share with fellow military spouses. Mahoney talks about the unique and somewhat harsh realities of military life such as pest infestation, stress disorders etc. This openness and frankness about all the military spouse issues makes this resource a stand-out amongst military spouse books.

**Selection aids used:** Barnes and Noble and Pinterest

**Price:** $9.99


**Format:** eBook

**Description:** Being a military spouse and having to move around many times presents unique and difficult challenges when looking for employment. *The Military Spouse's Employment Guide: Smart Job Choices for Mobile Lifestyles* helps spouses with their resumes, interviewing skills, gaining information on loans for education and much more.

**Selection criteria used:** Authority, accuracy, scope and appropriateness were the criteria used for this book. Jane Farley has authored 5 books dealing with job searching, military spouses and soldiers. Because of her many published titles, she
specializes in this topic. She is considered an authority on the subject, and the content of her books is accurate. Everything needed to know about finding employment as a military spouse can be found in this one monolithic book.

**Selection aids used:** Barnes and Noble and World Cat

**Price:** $10.41


**Format:** Print book

**Description:** This book is written in the well-known easy to understand “Dummy” format. Although it is intended for all military families, it is particularly informative to those new to the military life. Hoppins helps to illustrate the joys and trials of military life.

**Selection Criteria:** Comparison with other books is the main criteria used for this selection. With so many other books on this topic in the collection, why choose this one? First it is written in particular for those who are new to military life. Second, it deals with topics not seen in the other resources such as learning the military language, creating support groups, dealing with life on an international base and knowing how to keep track of where your spouse is when deployed.

**Selection aids used:** Barnes and Noble and World Cat

**Price:** $13.22


**Format:** Musical CD

**Description:** A musical group composed of British military wives under the direction of Gareth Malone. Their songs include ballads relating to the feelings military spouses experience when their loved ones are overseas.

**Selection criteria:** Appropriateness and cost. Having a diverse format such as a music cd to add to the collection will bring color and variety. Because the artists are all military wives, their song lyrics can reach out to the users of this collection.

**Selection aids used:** Barnes and Noble and World Cat

**Price:** $30.39
Selecting retrospective books is more difficult than newly published books. Primarily because these books could be out of print and difficult to find. Due to their age and availability, these resources also tend to be more expensive. Why bother looking for books that could be considered outdated? According to Evans and Saponaro “libraries buy retrospectively for two reasons: to fill gaps in the collection and to replace worn out or lost copies of titles.” (Evans and Saponaro, 119) Buying books that are no longer published or outdated can still provide the collection with rich and unique content.

The process for selecting retrospective materials is different than choosing new materials. The retrospective items need to contain information that can relate to the collection and add information to the newly published selections. The majority of the retrospective items for this collection were discovered during the search for newer materials. Many sites offer refine search engines that allow the input of search options such as date ranges or “ceased” status as allowed by the Ulrich database. Once the items were found, the next criteria used to evaluate the content were comparison to other books. There are already books in the collection that provide a broad range of information regarding “military spouses, therefore it is important to compare the new with the old to be sure books with the exact content are not being selected. It is best that the retrospective collection should provide a unique and different perspective than the current selections. As important as avoiding duplication, it is also important that the older published material provide still can be applied to today in order to promote accuracy. Another factor to consider is the condition of the item especially if the material is no longer published. In order to ensure longevity in the collection, it is important to select a book that is in good condition. Finally, cost is an important criterion as rare and out of print material can be expensive.
The three selection aids that were the most useful for the retrospective collection are Barnes and Noble, World Cat, and Ulrich. Barnes and Noble is a great retail vendor that allows librarians to easily and quickly search for new, used and out of print books. Online bookstores provide publication information, reviews, prices, conditions, and more (http://www.azlibrary.gov/cdt/slrbooks.aspx#EvaluationCriteria) World Cat is a bibliographic site that provides articles, journals, sounds, scores, visual, serials, and more. This tool helps selectors to see what their neighboring libraries have in their collection. It also provides access to links of booksellers of both current and out of print (antique) books. The last aid used is Ulrich. This site provides information regarding books, journals, magazines and internet articles as well as books. Ulrich gives selectors a multitude of options to narrow a search by choosing filters to look for only peer reviewed items, website, abstracted and open access items. From there, a search can be refined by format, publication status, content, publishers, and edition types. Once the item is located, the site provides information such as material description, publication details, pricing, and who to contact to purchase the items. These three aids simplify searching for books that are out of print or older. These sites provided ample information on material selection for the collection. The following is a list of the 3 retrospective materials.


**Format:** Serial: Magazine

**Description:** *Military Life* is a magazine started in 1969 and circulated until 1995. It contains valuable information for military families regarding finances, starting a second career, parenting, travel and military news.

**Selection criteria used:** Because this magazine is out of print it is important that the articles are still relevant to issues of today. It is helpful to learn about military life seen through the ideas of many generations. Because this collection is no longer in print, cost was also a selection criterion to make sure it would be affordable due to its rarity.
Selection aids used: Ulrich and World Cat.

Price: According to Ulrich it was 24.00 a year for a subscription. However it is not known if this is the price for the last year of circulation in 1995.


Format: Print Book

Description: *A Year of Absence* follows 6 military wives whose husbands are deployed to Iraq for 15 months in 2003. The story follows their emotions and how they coped with being so far away from their soldier spouses.

Selection criteria used: Being a retrospective aspect of the collection it is important that the information is still useful to the users. As a result, scope is used which includes checking for current information. Comparison to other books is needed in order to make sure that the content of the book is not exactly like the other books. Because this book is written as a biography of 6 military spouses, it is unique over the self-help books selected for this collection. Authority and accuracy are used to ensure quality. Jessica Redmond is a military wife of the US Army 1st armored division which is where she met the 6 wives. Lastly, cost was considered a criterion. Being a retrospective book the cost could be high and needs to be considered.

Selection aids: World Cat, Barnes and Noble, Library Thing and Pinterest.

Price: $24.95


Format: eBook

Description: This book is for both military spouses as well as those who want to know more about the lives of military wives. The text includes: interviews with spouses, studies of military wives whose spouses fought in Iraq or Afghanistan, and a section for civilian men whose spouses are in the military and how to cope.

Selection criteria used: Being a retrospective aspect of the collection it is important that the information is still useful to the users. As a result, scope is used which includes checking for current information. Comparison to other books is needed in order to make sure that the content of the book is not exactly like the other books. The unique case studies and the section on male civilians married to military spouses make this a unique relevant book. Authority and accuracy are used in order
to ensure quality. Betty Alt is a lecturer of sociology and has co-authored two books on military spouses. Lastly cost was considered on account of the book being retrospective.

**Selection aids used:** Barnes and Noble and World Cat

**Price:** $45.00

This assignment has taught me four lessons: first, selecting books is not as easy as a shopping spree; annually checking the inventory of a certain collection compared to the community analysis will help to bridge any gaps; third, I didn’t realize that libraries bought retrospective books to add to their collection; and lastly, the community does not have a full understanding and appreciation for the workings of a library.

Building a collection is not as easy as just receiving funds and going on a shopping spree. Extensive research and hard work goes into putting each book on the shelf. First, there is a community analysis to see if there is a need for this collection. I also discovered from the statistics of the military in the area, that the collection was needed in the library. In determining the need for the collection, it is important to perform a yearly analysis of the collection to see if there is anything lacking. Once this analysis is complete it is time to select.

Selecting a book just for the sake of buying is not how a successful professional selection process works. There needs to be a justification as to why each book should be added to the collection. Justification can develop through the use of selection criteria. This criterion is a checklist used to analyze each title to be sure of good quality and the right price. Although authority, accuracy, and cost tend to be the most used criteria, I found that the comparison to other books was the criteria that made the final decision for this collection. With limited funds, choosing a book that is similar to an existing book in the library is counterproductive to the
As part of the selection process, books that deal with a specific issue that is not covered in the other books can be identified and selected for the collection.

I never knew that libraries added retrospective materials to their collection. Like most people, I thought they only purchased new books. Through this project, I was able to see that there are a lot of good materials out there that have rich content that should not be pushed aside because of their age. Would we say that artifacts at museums should be thrown away for newer things just because of its age? No. Why, because it brings value to the museum collection. Same applies to the library.

Finally I do not believe that the majority of users and the public in general, know what goes into the running of a library. Most assume that everything appears on the shelves with little work. I learned from this exercise how many check points a book needs to pass through in order to have the justification needed to be added to a collection. Selectors make sure that only the best quality of items are chosen as well as those that users are requesting. If all library patrons could partake in the selection exercise they would see what is involved and the fact that their tax money is wisely spent. They would also see that a library does not just open its doors and everything magically runs smoothly. It takes a dedicated staff, time and hard work to run a library.
Reference

Books:


Websites:


