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*Captain's Call*

## New Scam Targets Military Spouses

The American Red Cross is warning military spouses about a new identity-theft scam that targets family members of deployed troops.

The Red Cross was alerted of the scam earlier this month that involves a person calling a military spouse, identifying herself as a representative of the Red Cross and telling the spouse that her husband who was hurt in Iraq has been medically evacuated to Germany. The caller then says that doctors can't start treatment until paperwork is completed; they need the spouse to verify her husband's social security number and date of birth.



It is hard to determine how many spouses have been targeted by this scam, as there are many ways for spouses to report problems like this. However, one confirmed report was enough for the Red Cross to act.

American Red Cross representatives typically do not contact military members or dependents directly and almost always go through a commander or first sergeant, according to a Red Cross news release. Military family members are urged not to give out any personal information over the phone if contacted by unknown individuals, including confirmation that their spouse is deployed.

Red Cross representatives contact military members or dependents directly only in response to an emergency message initiated by a family member, the news release said. The Red Cross does not report any type of casualty information to family members; the Defense Department will contact families directly about service members' injuries.

It is a federal crime, punishable by up to five years in prison, for a person to fraudulently pretend to be a member of, or an agent for, the American Red Cross for the purpose of soliciting, collecting, or receiving money or material, according to the news release.

Any military family member that receives such a call is urged to report it to their local family readiness group or military personnel flight.

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