



Spouse's Handbook

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Foreword

Military spouses have always been the cornerstones of support for their service members and their community. They are the continuity for our homes, health and Family. When the service members deploy, the spouses take on the additional role of mother or father; they handle all of the household chores, pay the bills and take care of each other. Without their support, we – as service members - could not be successful. Our spouses enable us to deploy on missions with the knowledge and confidence that they are there for us. In many ways, the spouse's duties are much more difficult than ours. While the service members are gone, they alone maintain the home, take care of the children and pay the bills. In many cases, they do all of this while working a full-time job or going to school. The best part is, they are there for us whether we are at home station or deployed. The service member, the spouse and the military work together as a team. It is our job, as the military's leaders, to ensure that we communicate and provide the necessary tools that allow that team to prosper and grow. We have regulations, field manuals and training manuals to guide us in our duties. The spouses, until now, have mostly had to go on their own initiative and ingenuity. This handbook is designed as a guide to assist spouses, as they become part of the military team and offers a wealth of information and resources. It's designed to help them learn about the military and better understand their service member's mission.

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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with some basic knowledge about your service member's new responsibilities as a senior Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) and to hopefully answer questions you may have concerning your role as a spouse in your service member's new position.

The military is a large Family whose members traditionally support each other, especially in times of need. As a senior NCO, your service member will have the responsibility to assist those members whom he/she supervises. It's your choice as to how involved you want to be in that process. This is a decision you will need to make for yourself. Your decision to form a "Command Team" with your service member and work together to support other Families in the unit can be very rewarding. Together you will build lasting friendships and a bond that can never be broken. The life as a military spouse is often challenging.

The number one rule if you choose to accept the challenge to be an active part of this command team is first and foremost--"Be yourself" don't try to be someone that you are not. It is a lot easier to do things if you don't have to pretend. The second rule is to take things one step at a time. Realize you are only one person and don't try to be everything to everyone. Don't become overwhelmed and discouraged. Everyone is different and you will not be able to relate to all the Family members. If they want your help and friendship, you will not need to force yourself on them. They will welcome you. You will find that some people for a variety of reasons, just don't want to get involved, and that is OK too.

Listed in this handbook are just a few of the services that are available to you. Your local Army Community Service (ACS) and Military OneSource can assist you with the location and phone numbers of all the programs available at each installation and also inform you of any other programs unique to your area. If you are planning to take an active role in assisting the Family members in your service members' unit, you will want to build your resource library. You will also want to know where to go and whom to ask for assistance.

Chapter 1 Army Family Programs

Soldier Family Readiness Groups (SFRG)



Soldier Family Readiness Groups SFRG (formerly known as the Family Readiness Group) is a command-sponsored organization of Soldiers, civilian employees, Family members (immediate and extended) and volunteers belonging to a unit. SFRG will provide mutual support and assistance, and a network of communications among the Family members, the chain of command, and community resources. SFRG will assist unit commanders in meeting military and personal deployment preparedness and enhance Family readiness of the unit's Soldiers and Families. They will also provide feedback to the command on the state of the unit 'Family'.

Advisor Responsibility

Acts as an advisor to command team on SFRG matters; provides mentorship and guidance to SFRG Leaders and volunteers; may serve on Brigade or Battalion steering committees and serve as a two-way information conduit at all levels.

Command Team Responsibilities (Commander and CSM)

Provide overall guidance and goals for SFRG; ensure that the SFRG appeals to all service members, civilians, and Family members (SFRG membership); establish and develop a unit level Family Readiness Plan; maintain command and control of SFRG activities; Appoint Command Family Readiness Representative (CFRR) and SFRG volunteers in writing; provide administrative and logistical support and guidance to CFRR and SFRG volunteers; establish and maintain a volunteer recognition and awards program; budget for mission essential activities; authorize and review informal fund account statements and promote maximum SFRG membership participation.

Command Family Readiness Representative (CFRR)

Command Family Readiness Representative (CFRR) is a military member who provides readiness related assistance in support of the commander to all civilian and military personnel associated with the unit to include the Soldier and Family Readiness Group (SFRG). The CFRR promotes a culture of mutual support and communication. Unit CFRRs assist Soldiers and Family members in organizing and sustaining the unit's SFRG. The CFRR serves as the commander's representative to the SFRG. Track all personnel readiness and SFRG related issues. The CFRR provides timely information and advice to the command team concerning Soldier and Family readiness issues and shares relevant information with the senior advisors, steering committees, fellow CFRRs, Family members, and others as appropriate.

CFRR DUTIES ARE ASSIGNED BY THE COMMANDER

Army Family Team Building (AFTB)



Army Family Team Building (AFTB) is a series of training modules taught through your local Army Community Service office or online that cover topics such as basic information about the Army, personal growth skills and leadership skills. AFTB improves personal and Family preparedness which enhances overall Army readiness and helps America's Army adapt to a changing world.

AFTB Level I Modules train basic information about the Army. Learn about the Army life and how to maneuver through daily challenges by discovering how to decipher Army acronyms, utilize Community Resources, attain better financial readiness and understand the goal and impact of the Army mission on daily life. *AFTB Level II Modules train personal growth skills.* Grow personally through self-development modules. Learn how to improve your communication skills, personal relationships, and stress management skills. Discover how teams form and grow, how to solve problems and how to resolve personal conflict. Acquire knowledge on Army traditions, customs, courtesies and protocol. *AFTB Level III Modules train leadership skills.* Thrive in the Army and civilian life by expanding leadership skills, effective communication techniques and learning to mentor others into leadership positions. Learn about the different leadership styles, how to run an effective meeting, how to manage group conflict and how to coach and mentor others.

Army Emergency Relief (AER)

Army Emergency Relief (AER) Services provided: Financial assistance is available to active duty and retired service personnel and their Family members, Army National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers & Families, members of the reserve components on continuous active duty for at least 31 days, and Surviving Spouses and Children. Assistance will usually be provided as a non-interest bearing loan, a grant (when appropriate), or a combination loan and grant. Access at 78 Army locations worldwide; through 270 other Military Aid Societies locations worldwide, and the American Red Cross – Toll Free 1-877-272-7337

How to Obtain Assistance in Soldier's Absence:

Special Power of Attorney (SPOA)

- Provides eligible dependent the authority to incur debt in Soldier's name
- May use AER SPOA (AER Form 53)
- Must be notarized by a civilian or military notary

AER Account and Allotment Authorization Form

- May be executed by the AER Officer in lieu of the SPOA
- AER Form 55 is sent to the Soldier electronically for consent and authorization to establish an allotment
 - Identity & concurrence is validated through a digital signature from the Soldier's Common Access Card (CAC)
 - A separate AER Form 55 is required for each request for assistance

Some Authorized Categories of Assistance

- Emergency Travel
- Rent
- Essential POV Repair
- Auto Repossession
- Funeral Expenses
- Utilities
- Clothing
- No-pay
- Natural Disaster
- Advanced Travel Funds
- Minor Home Repair
- Repair of HVAC
- Purchase/Repair of Stoves, Refrigerators, Washer and Dryer
- Cranial Helmets
- Rental Vehicles
- Replacement Vehicles
- Essential Furniture

Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS)

VMIS is the system used by the Army to track volunteer hours. It allows volunteers to keep a permanent, portable record of volunteer hours, trainings, duties and awards. Volunteers can also search for new volunteer opportunities using VMIS. Anyone 13 years of age or above should use VMIS. It is beneficial when applying for a scholarship, to college, or a job. The Fort Bliss Army Volunteer Corps can provide references based on the information in VMIS. Registration in VMIS is required in order to receive awards and recognition on the installation. Even if you don't think VMIS will benefit you, using it will benefit Fort Bliss. You will help add to the number of volunteer hours on the post by using the VMIS system. When registered & during volunteer hours worked, volunteers are treated like employees, and you receive protection in the event of an injury, accident, etc. A record of your volunteer service will be always available when you travel from installation to installation. Benefits received: Training, TDY's, childcare, formal awards and recognition. The government is only funded to support programs and services where you can document participation. Register at www.myarmyonesource.com.

Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP)

Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) This program is a mandatory enrollment program that works with other military and civilian agencies to provide comprehensive, coordinated community support, housing, personnel, medical and educational services to Families with special needs (medical, psychological or educational). Enrollment allows military personnel agencies to consider exceptional Family members in the assignment process.

Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC)

Military Family Life Counselors (MFLC) assists service members, their Families and survivors with flexible non-medical counseling when and where needed. Military and Family life counselors are highly-qualified professionals trained to understand the unique challenges you encounter and deliver face-to-face counseling services, as well as briefings and presentations to the military community both on and off the installation. Services are **CONFIDENTIAL**, **FREE**, and with **NO RECORDS KEPT**. *Duty to warn does apply in case of threat to self, others, and any reportable abuse issues*. Flexible appointment times and locations are available. If you're facing something that a counselor can't address, you will receive a referral for medical counseling services in your community through a military treatment facility or TRICARE. In general, military and Family life counselors do not address: abuse cases, suicidal thoughts, and other mental health issues that may require long-term attention or medication. MFLCs are embedded in the Soldiers unit, children schools, and child/youth centers.

MILITARY ONESOURCE



Military OneSource, both a call center and a website, provides comprehensive information, referral and assistance on every aspect of military life 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to all component members of the Armed Forces, their Family members, and survivors. The Military OneSource program is accessible worldwide via the toll-free telephone number (800-342-9647) or the website (www.militaryonesource.mil). Military OneSource also provides Service members, their Families, and survivor's access to confidential non-medical counseling on a face-to-face basis in the local community and also via telephone, secure online chat, and video. Moreover, Military OneSource offers financial and tax counseling, specialty consultations (for example, health and wellness coaching, wounded warrior consultations, etc.), educational materials available in a variety of topics and formats, mobile solutions, translation of official documents, and simultaneous interpretation in more than 150 languages.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross serves and supports members of the military, veterans, and their Families by providing needed comfort and care in military and veteran's hospitals support for military Families with vital social services and emergency communications to keep Families connected when they need it most.

Emergency Communication Message

An Emergency Communication Message provides a brief, timely description of the emergency, independently verified by the American Red Cross. It is relayed to the command. The command relays the message to the service member, and the command makes the decision on whether or not to grant emergency leave.

Emergency Communication Messages

877.272.7337

24/7/365

Download our free Hero Care App
Visit redcross.org and go to
Get Help / Military Families for information

Chapter 2 Other Family Programs

Legal/Administrative

The Family Legal Services Office advises you and your Family about personal legal affairs, including wills, power of attorney, adoptions, name changes, landlord, and tenant relations, consumer affairs, marital rights and obligations, and other legal matters. In addition, notary public services are normally available. All assistance is free. However, some legal matters involve civilian court proceedings. Generally, a military attorney may not represent you in court but can refer you to civilian attorneys or to civilian legal service agencies that may be able to represent you. You may ask a Legal Assistance Officer to read and advise you on any contract free of charge. Never sign a contract without completely reading and understanding it. Never accept verbal promises; always ensure any work or payments agreed upon are written into the contract. Contact your local Legal office for more information.

Important Documents

It is important to have certain documents and Family records in your possession. Should an emergency arise, you may need some or all of those documents. Some of the documents listed below may be used often, even when an emergency does not exist. Using this information, gather these documents now and put them in a special container or a safe place so you and your spouse (or someone outside of your household) knows where they are. A fireproof safe/container is ideal. These documents should be available to the spouse in the absence of the military member.

- Marriage Certificate.
- Birth Certificate for all Family members.
- Social Security Numbers for each Family member.
- Shot records, up-to-date, of all Family members--to include pets.
- Adoption papers (if any).
- Passports (if any).
- Proof of residency.
- Vaccine Record.
- All government and civilian life insurance policies or a list of companies, policy numbers, types of insurance, and local or out-of-town addresses--include each company's number when possible.
- Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) for past three months.

- Power of Attorney (General or Special). There are many things you cannot accomplish in the absence of your spouse without this document-- moving--purchasing or selling large items, e.g., car, house, etc., --signing certain legal papers.

Tricare



TRICARE is the Department of Defense's (DoD) medical entitlement program, it's possible that you might be referred by your primary care manager to, for instance, a nearby Air Force or Navy medical facility for some examinations or treatment. This military medical system also makes use of civilian doctors and hospitals for some care.

TRICARE is free to Soldiers. For Family members, TRICARE may involve some out-of-pocket expenses. The cost varies depending on the Soldier's rank and the specific TRICARE program option in which the Family member is enrolled.

Through the TRICARE program, Family members can also go to civilian health care providers if they desire. But before going to a civilian practitioner, it is a good idea to check out the TRICARE rules and find out how TRICARE works. Otherwise you could end up with bills to pay by yourself.

TRICARE Web site: www.tricare.mil

TRICARE North Region

Health Net Federal Services, LLC 1-877-TRICARE (1-877-874-2273)

www.hnfs.com

TRICARE South Region

Humana Military, a division of Humana Government Business 1-800-444-5445

Humana-Military.com

TRICARE West Region

UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans 1-877-988-WEST (1-877-988-9378)

www.uhcmilitarywest.com

The Uniformed Services ID Card



The Uniformed Services ID Card is for military Family members – including military spouses and dependent children over 10 – retirees and former service members, members of the Individual Ready Reserves and inactive National Guard. Other military community members also are eligible for military benefits because of their affiliation with the Defense Department including former spouses who have not remarried, 100% disabled veterans, eligible foreign military, Transitional Health Care recipients, and other eligible populations as described in DoD policy. This ID lets you use certain military services and programs.

To enroll a dependent or other eligible individual in DEERS, you will need a DD Form 1172-2. You can submit the form through the ID Card Office Online or in person at a RAPIDS site. Go to <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/> to find a location near you to make an appointment.

You will need to go to a RAPIDS site with your completed DD Form 1172-2 and two forms of identification, including a state or federal government photo ID. Newly married military spouses should bring their marriage certificate. Children under 18 will need proof of relationship to their military sponsor, like a birth certificate, to get their Uniformed Services ID Card. You may require additional documentation depending on your eligibility or circumstances.

Lost ID Card

If you lose your ID you can apply for a new one at a RAPIDS site or through the ID Card Office Online. [ID Card Office Online \(osd.mil\)](https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/)

Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA)

A status of forces agreement (SOFA) is an agreement between a host country and a foreign nation stationing military forces in that country. SOFAs are often included, along with other types of military agreements, as part of a comprehensive security arrangement.

In order to be eligible you must belong to one of the following categories: U.S. DoD civilians or DoD-sponsored contractors and their Family members as well as military dependents accompanying the force. Certain foreign nationals from NATO-sending states employed by the armed forces are also eligible.

The SOFA stamp may be obtained through a U.S. military passport agent/office and should be obtained prior to arrival overseas. Non-U.S. citizen dependents must have a valid passport from the country of citizenship and a SOFA stamp.

A government-issued or "no fee" passport can be very convenient. It is free of charge to command-sponsored military Family members and Department of Defense civilians stationed overseas and allows them to bypass the process of applying for a tourist passport.

The most common issue addressed in a SOFA is which country may exercise criminal jurisdiction over U.S. personnel while serving in a foreign country. The U.S. has entered into agreements where it maintains exclusive jurisdiction, but the more common agreement results in shared jurisdiction between the United States and the signatory country. Shared jurisdiction occurs when each party to the agreement retains exclusive jurisdiction over certain offenses, but also allows the United States to request that the host country waive jurisdiction in favor of the United States exercising criminal and disciplinary jurisdiction. Other provisions that may be found in a SOFA include, but are not limited to, the wearing of uniforms, taxes and fees, carrying of weapons, use of radio frequencies, licenses, and customs regulations. SOFAs are peacetime documents, and therefore do not address the rules of war or the Laws of Armed Conflict. The existence of a SOFA does affect or diminish the parties' inherent right of self-defense under the law of war. In the event of armed conflict between parties to a SOFA, the terms of the agreement would no longer be applicable.

More information:

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/search/?s=status+of+forces+agreement>

Federal Employment

As a military spouse, you may be eligible for Priority Placement Positions. The program gives preferences to military spouses applying for certain Department of Defense positions. You can apply for the program through your local Civilian Personnel or Human Resources Office. Search online for Federal openings by visiting: USAJOBS <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

Military Spouse Interstate License Recognition Options

Generally speaking, licenses are state-specific. Laws vary by state, and each state has their own licensing requirements. Before you can establish yourself in a new state, you need to understand the laws of the state and get your license for that new home state. But that doesn't necessarily mean you have to start the education and licensing process from scratch. Some states offer "license reciprocity". License reciprocity means that, if you already hold an active license in one U.S. state, you can apply for a license in your new state without taking all the state-required pre-licensing courses. These reciprocal agreements vary widely from state to state: some have reciprocal agreements with all other states, while others may have agreements with only one or two neighboring states. It is the policy of the U.S. Department of Labor to reduce employment barriers and enhance career opportunities for military spouses.

<https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/VETS/files/Military-Spouse-License-Recognition-A-Guide-to-State-Legislation.pdf>

Military Spouse Education & Career Opportunities

<https://myseco.militaryonesource.mil/portal/>

Courses for Spouses

Spouse Leadership Development Course SLDC (Fort Bliss, Texas)

The Spouse Leadership Development Course is a 40- hour resident Army Training Requirements Resources System leadership support course designed for senior enlisted spouses from the U.S. Army, sister services, and allied militaries. It prepares them for leadership support positions in the military community. Major subject areas include programs in human psychology, human relations training, and leadership development. Spouses also learn healthy conflict management resolution techniques, protocol, public speaking and communication, effective listening, and team building skills. Soldier & Family readiness group training is also part of the curriculum, and spouses also receive in-depth information about benefits and entitlements. The Spouse Leadership Development Course applies a combination of lecture, discussion, and small group experiential learning methodologies.

<https://www.ncoworldwide.army.mil/Academics/Spouse-Leadership-Development-Course/>

Command Team Spouse Development Program (CTSDP) Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

The Command Team Spouse Development Program is a one week course conducted concurrently with the Brigade and Battalion Pre-Command /Command Sergeants Major Courses. Spouses of brigade command selectees, division and corps General Staff selectees, brigade Command Sergeant Major selectees, battalion command selectees and battalion Command Sergeant Major selectees are invited to participate in the course. During CTSDP, spouses will attend some large group presentations with their military spouse but the majority of the time will be in small group discussions with other CTSDP attendees. A variety of topics will be presented and discussed that will be beneficial to you as a member of the command team.

<https://usacac.army.mil/organizations/cace/cgsc/scp/ctsdp>

Nominative Spouse Seminar (NSS) U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

NSS promote total force readiness by preparing Nominative Sergeants' Major Spouses for the challenges of informal leadership roles at the senior executive level. NSS uses a small group, round-table format to encourage open discussion and debate of Nominative Spouse issues and opportunities. Participants engage with Army and Civilian Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) detailing leadership strategies, skills for both personal and community resiliency, and current Army plans, policies and initiatives, as well as interact with Senior Nominative Spouse Mentors. Sessions include experience-based vignettes, hands-on role playing, and take-away reference materials to assist Nominative Spouses in every facet of their lives. Attendees are encouraged to question and discuss topic areas or other areas of interest with the SMEs.

Request a course seat by contacting Lauren O'Donnell, NSS Curriculum Developer at lauren.c.odonnell.ctr@mail.mil

Chapter 3 Customs and Courtesies



Your behavior should reflect your pride in yourself and your spouse. Treat others as you wish to be treated.

Protocol The customs and courtesies dealing with diplomatic formalities, order of precedence, and etiquettes.

Etiquette

Conventional requirements pertaining to social behavior; a prescribed or accepted code of conduct in matters of ceremony; implies observance of the formal requirements governing behavior in polite society.

Tradition

The handing down of statements, legends, customs, etc., from generation to generation by word of mouth; the practice of an unwritten body of law and doctrine.

Invitations

The invitation is a notification of an upcoming event. Formal invitations may be typed, engraved, or handwritten. Today, invitations are widely extended using electronic invitation systems. As a cost-saving measure, the Army has adopted usage of the Air Force Institute of Technology's E-Invitation system at <https://einvitations.afit.edu/generator/index.cfm>. Invitations mailed or hand delivered should be addressed to whom is being invited. If a husband and wife are both invited, it should be addressed to the couple so the recipient knows how to respond. Emailed invitations should include clarity in the body of the email so that it, likewise, is clear who is being invited. Invitations should be extended approximately two to three weeks in advance for smaller events and three to four weeks in advance for larger events to allow the guest enough time to arrange his or her personal calendar. On the other hand, invitations should not be extended so far in advance that the guests are unable to determine whether their schedule will permit them to attend. When children are invited, it will be specified on the invitation.

Dining In: As the most formal of events, a Dining In allows officers and NCOs of a unit to celebrate unit successes and to enjoy its traditions and heritage. It is strictly an Officer/NCO function. **Spouses are not invited.**

Dining Out: When spouses are invited to a Dining In, it becomes a Dining Out. This gives the spouses an opportunity to see all the “pomp and circumstance” that goes with the tradition. The spouses dress in formal gowns or tuxedos.

Formal Balls: Balls are usually held to celebrate special military occasions or a holiday.

- Proper dress is a formal gown or tuxedo. If Service Member is attending as a guest (not their own unit), then they may wear “spouse or guest” attire.
- On arrival, find your seats on seating chart.
- Mingle with the other guests.
- Visit with your host/hostess/special guest.
- At a formal or Dining Out, you will stand for the posting and retiring of the colors (bringing in and taking out of the flags).
- Stand for the invocation and toasts (with the exception of the toast, “to the ladies” (all ladies, including female Soldiers, are seated) or “to the spouses” (female Soldiers will remain standing and their spouse will be seated)).

Spouse welcomes and farewells

Spouses of senior military personnel in the higher unit command are traditionally welcomed and fare welled separately from the Unit Hail and Farewell. The formality of the event will depend on how it’s been done in the past within that unit as well as what the desires of the honoree are. Usually, they are held within the two weeks after the Change of Command unless there are extenuating circumstances like taking command during a deployment or during the summer months.

The reason a Tea or Coffee is recommended as a Welcome is to allow the Guest of Honor to circulate. A farewell function need not always be a Tea or Coffee. It could be a Brunch, Luncheon, or Dinner based on the preference of the Guest of Honor. Coffee, tea, punch and hors d’oeuvres are served. A receiving line and guest book is typically present at the Tea or Coffee. Civilian attire would still be “informal” as described earlier. The outgoing spouse does not usually attend a Welcome for an incoming spouse. Consult the incoming or outgoing command spouse as to their desires, such as the date and start time, type of event, and how formal of an event the command spouse wants the Tea or Coffee to be.

Unit Hail & Farewells (Unit Parties) Like the —Dining-In, this is a function of unity. These get-togethers build esprit de corps and camaraderie, and are successful only if everyone supports them and participates in them. Unit members and guests share the cost and planning of these get-togethers. They range from dinners at local restaurants, to picnics and barbecues, to treasure hunts. This is a time to welcome incoming members and farewell members who are leaving the unit. As a general rule, this is a wonderful opportunity to get to know others in the unit so use this opportunity to mingle. Depending upon the type of event, children may or may not be invited.

Retirement Ceremonies

These ceremonies may be held with or without an accompanying parade or review.

- You are to rise when the presiding officer enters and is announced.
- As with promotions and awards, if Attention to Orders (the reading of the retirement orders) is announced, Soldiers will rise. Out of courtesy, civilians should as well.
- For all other portions, remain seated unless otherwise directed.
- There may be a reception afterwards. If not, it is customary for the audience to line up to walk by the retiree and spouse to shake hands and offer a few words.
- Children may be welcome depending upon the formality of the event.

Memorials

There are two types of Memorials—Service and Ceremony. A Memorial Service is religiously oriented and voluntary because on its religious affiliation. A Memorial Ceremony is a command program with a ceremonial program and attendance may be mandatory for Service Members.

Each installation and their command will decide whether or not to have memorials for their fallen heroes. You will be informed by the Senior Spouse or the chain of command how the command has chosen to honor the fallen. If the command allows memorials, it will also decide when and where. These are sometimes held at the main post chapel or theater. In front of the pews or rows, the unit will have set up an altar of photos of the fallen placed beside their own memorial stand. The memorial stand is made up of the Soldier's pair of boots, their rifle with ID tags hanging and their Ballistic helmet placed atop the rifle.

- Try to be on time, earlier if possible.
- If you are the Commander's Spouse or representative, you will likely sit on the opposite side of the gold star Families; unless you have been specifically asked to sit with them.
- Maintain your own composure (try counting stained glass panes or pews) during the service and be prepared for raw emotions of those experiencing the loss.
- Stand for the 21 gun salute.
- After the service, it is customary that the highest ranking officer pay honors by proceeding to the memorial stand to render honors with a salute and usually places their coin at the base of the memorial stand.
- If your Senior Spouse honors the fallen at the altar of photos after the service, you may follow their lead.

- Dress according the solemnity of the occasion; therefore dress attire is categorized as “Informal.” This means: Service Uniform with four-in-hand tie and appropriate “church wear.”

The Flag



Flag Etiquette- Courtesy to the national flag is not just a matter for military service members; all Americans should know the proper ways to show respect for our nation's symbol. For Retreat or Reveille on posts, when outdoors, stop and face the flag; military in uniform salute; courtesy is for civilians to put their hand over their heart during "To the Colors." When the "National Anthem" is played outdoors and the flag is displayed, it is customary to place your hand over your heart.

Bugle Calls- There was a time when clocks and such were not readily available. Soldiers and Families relied on the Installation to make everyone aware of what was going on. So, there is bugle call to wake up, one to go to breakfast, one for lunch etc. The one we know best, is the call for Retreat. When the flag comes down. It is the time of day we render honors. The music comes in two parts. Stand with your hands at your sides, and face where you see the flag, or where you think the flag is. There is a pause, perhaps a few seconds. This is when the cannon fires. Some installations do not have the cannon fire, so there is just a small silence. You place your hand over your heart for the second part of the bugle call. It is a time to reflect on the great work that has been done on behalf of a grateful nation. When the music is over, get back in your car or continue walking on your way, knowing you are fortunate to be a part of a great tradition!

Army Values



The Army Values are inherent within the moral principles of the Army Ethic and form the basic moral building blocks of an Army Professional's character. They help us judge what is right or wrong in any situation.

LOYALTY Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers.

DUTY Fulfill your obligations.

RESPECT Treat people as they should be treated.

SELFLESS-SERVICE Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own.

HONOR Live up to all the Army values.

INTEGRITY Do what's right, legally and morally.

PERSONAL COURAGE Face fear, danger, or adversity (Physical or Moral).

= L D R S H I P

The Army Song

March along, sing our song, with the Army of the free.
Count the brave, count the true, who have fought to victory.
We're the Army and proud of our name,
We're the Army and proudly proclaim!

First to fight for the right,
And to build the Nation's might,
And The Army Goes Rolling Along.
Proud of all we have done,
Fighting till the battle's won,
And the Army Goes Rolling Along.

Then it's Hi! Hi! Hey!
The Army's on its way.
Count off the cadence loud and strong
For where'er we go,
You will always know
That The Army Goes Rolling Along.

Army Ranks



Military Time

Telling military time can also confuse the new Army spouse. If you just remember that the time up to 1200 (noon) is the same as civilian time without the colon (:). After 1200 hours the time is in the p.m. and you subtract 1200 from the number (e.g., 1400 minus 1200 is 2:00 p.m.). Once you master this you will be able to go back and forth between military time and civilian time (see the following chart).

Normal Time	Military Time	Normal Time	Military Time
12:00 AM	0000	12:00 PM	1200
1:00 AM	0100	1:00 PM	1300
2:00 AM	0200	2:00 PM	1400
3:00 AM	0300	3:00 PM	1500
4:00 AM	0400	4:00 PM	1600
5:00 AM	0500	5:00 PM	1700
6:00 AM	0600	6:00 PM	1800
7:00 AM	0700	7:00 PM	1900
8:00 AM	0800	8:00 PM	2000
9:00 AM	0900	9:00 PM	2100
10:00 AM	1000	10:00 PM	2200
11:00 AM	1100	11:00 PM	2300

Staff Offices

S-1/ G-1 PERSONNEL

- Responsible for all force structure, manpower, personnel, and administration requirements.
- Provides recommendations to the Commander/CSM in resourcing current manpower requirements and in determining future organizational structure.
- Advises and assists the Commander/CSM in the management of personnel, personnel replacements, discipline, morale, and welfare.
- Develops personnel and administrative programs, policies, and procedures to support the Command's goals and objectives.

S-2/ G-2 INTELLIGENCE

- Provides Command and Army/Ground Forces with actionable and tailored intelligence in support of information, operations planning, and execution.

S-3/G-3 OPERATIONS

- Operations staff serves as the principal staff section for all matters concerning training, operations, plans, force development, and modernization.
- The S-3 section is responsible for advising, planning, coordinating and supervising all current and future Command operations to meet Army directed full spectrum requirements, and administering comprehensive training for the Command.

S-4/G-4 LOGISTICS

- Enable a ready Command by providing and overseeing integrated logistics policies, procurement functions, programs, and plans that enable information operations support throughout the Army and other military forces.

S-5/G-5 CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS

- The G-5 (S-5) is the principal staff officer for all matters concerning civil-military operations (the civilian impact on military operations and the impact of military operations on the civilian populace).

S-6/G-6 AUTOMATION

- Manages, plans, coordinates, installs and maintains the communications and automated systems.
- Ensures a communications, computers, and data are available to support the mission.
- Ensures personnel understand how to operate the technology to meet operational requirements.

S: BATTALION LEVEL AND BELOW

G: DIVISION LEVEL AND ABOVE

Chapter 4 Common Terms

Attire- The eternal question: what do I wear? In the old days, it was a bit easier as there were fewer options. On the other hand, it's great to have so much to choose from! A formal invitation will have the "attire" printed on it. It may say "formal" or it may say "casual" etc. Formal used to mean a floor length formal for the ladies, though now it can mean black pants with a sequined top. Casual implies slacks or skirt, but Texas Casual includes jeans. There are some hard and fast rules though. Don't wear something you will be embarrassed to wear to your Mom's house, or something that can also be worn as an under garment! Seriously, if you have a question about attire, don't hesitate to call and ask. Nobody wants you to feel uncomfortable.

Awards Ceremony- One thing the Army does well is recognize the hard work being done. Awards ceremonies can be public or private. Some are large affairs held on a monthly basis to recognize participation, promotions and retirements of an organization. Some are small and private with attendees including Family only. It may be routine for those who have spent years in the military, but for most, receiving an award is a once in a lifetime event. It is an honor and a privilege to be invited. Remember, you go as a representative of all the people the awardee has worked with and for. Show up on time with a smile and know that you are appreciated! See Awards Chart in Chapter VII.

Anthems- The song of a Nation. Generally refers to ours, but if you are at an International event you might hear another Nation's song. For the United States Anthem, it is customary to stand (if you are able) and it's hand over your heart and eyes on the flag. You render this honor as a citizen. If another National Anthem is playing, stand silently with your arms at your sides. You do not pledge allegiance to any flag other than the one representing the country you are a citizen of.

Battlefield Cross-The "battlefield "cross is made up of the Soldier's pair of boots, their rifle with dog tags hanging and their ballistic helmet placed atop the rifle.

Biography (BIO)- Is a brief summary of a military spouse's career, it is intended to highlight important aspects of that spouse's career. Some items to include would be notable personal achievements, education, employment, military assignments, and volunteer duties.

Blessings- Also called Invocations- Words of comfort and encouragement included in ceremonies, spoken by the Chaplain. Especially important during deployment activities.

Change of Command- All units and organizations have leaders that rotate in and out. Other nations are amazed that we pass the power and responsibility of command from one team to another, without bloodshed or pain. It is a testament to the Nation, each time the guidon is passed. To honor this peaceful shift, the Change of Command usually has a small ceremony with food and drink shared afterward. The incoming team is on the ground, eager to move forward. The outgoing team is respectful and doesn't linger, so as to not impede the bonding that takes place with the new command team.

Change of Responsibility- The same as a Change of Command, usually used for Command Sergeant Major or referencing a unit that is not designated as a "Command."

Ceremonies- Check with your Protocol Office for their guidance. There are a lot of websites with great advice. Things to look for in the program: Indoor or Outdoor Ceremony, sequence of events, standing for flower and/or gift presentation, and "Honors."

Coffees- A term used to refer to a monthly gathering of the spouses of a unit. It is NOT an official event. It is a time for friendship and to support one another. Some are quite active, others loosely constructed. Generally they have a roster and are managed by the commander's spouse. Inclusive to all spouses.

Coming and Going- Please greet the host and hostess upon arriving to an event; and please try to say your thanks and farewell upon your departure.

Cellphone Etiquette- Place cellphones on vibrate or silence upon arriving to an event. Only emergency phone calls should be taken or returned during an event.

Cresting Ceremony- This ceremony serves as the formal unveiling of the unit crest, and is an opportunity for key leaders to come together and celebrate the colors. The unit crest is affixed outside, usually the battalion level and higher Commander's and Command Sergeant Major's quarters, upon their assumption of command or responsibility.

Cup and Flower Fund- An informal fund that is set up using a standard operating procedure (SOP) in accordance with AR 600-29 regarding fundraising. Confer with your legal assistance for guidance. This fund is typically set up and maintained by the Adjutant for a headquarters to cover flowers (a welcome or farewell rose) and farewell gifts; and if all are in agreement, baby cups for new babies, and flowers if there is a death in the Family.

Dining-In- Traditionally a "Dining-In" is a Soldiers only event. Dining-Ins build esprit de corps and educate young unit members to formal social traditions. They are extremely ceremonial with the President of the Dining-In, typically the Commanding Officer, and a "Mr. Vice/Madam Vice," the person responsible for the evening, usually selected for possessing wit and the ability to speak. There are many toasts with the appropriate responses printed in your program. There are also many traditions carried out in the *utmost seriousness* with infractions incurred (trips to punch bowl).

Dining-Out- The tradition of the "Dining-In" but including spouses.

Dining Inside Out- A "Spouse Dining-In" with Mr. Vice and Rules of Order usually conducted by a Spouses or Community Club.

Email- A great way to send out communication to one or multiple sources for coffee groups and SFRGs. Please remember that messages can be forwarded so do not send sensitive information via email. Also use the “bcc” line if sending out information to many individuals as to keep email addresses confidential.

Esprit de Corps- From Army Doctrinal Publication 1.0, a jealous regard for the honor of one’s unit. From the dictionary, the common spirit existing in the members of a group and inspiring enthusiasm, devotion, and strong regard for the honor of the group morale. From French, *corps* translates body and *esprit* translates spirit.

Facebook- (Closed and Secret Groups): A great way to keep the SFRG informed of events. Closed and Secret Groups are recommended for privacy but check with your legal office, S6/G6 and the Commander for guidance. Always keep Operational Security (OPSEC) in mind when sending out via Social media, i.e. Facebook messages about deployments or redeployment ceremonies, Twitter and Snapchat.

Fallen Soldier Table- An important part of military etiquette is honoring Service Members who have fallen in the line of duty. Remembering them honors their sacrifice and that of their families. It also underscores the importance of the commitment to duty made by the living. At military balls, reunions and other formal occasions, one beautiful, thoughtful way to honor those who have died is a Fallen Soldier Table. Each element on the table symbolizes something specific.

The table is set for one. A white tablecloth represents the purity of their intentions to serve. Black represents our mourning. A single rose and single candle reminds us of the Families and loved ones, our comrades in arms, who keep the faith awaiting their return. The sword and gloves remind us and are symbolic of our profession of arms. A lemon wedge is placed on the bread plate to represent the bitter loss of the life of the fallen Soldier. Salt is sprinkled over the lemon, and it represents tears shed for the Soldier who is missed. A wine glass is placed upside-down to represent the fact that the fallen comrade will not be able to participate in the happy toasts at this event. An empty chair remains vacant for our Comrades. The Master of Ceremonies reads a script explaining these elements and the significance of the Fallen Soldier’s Table in preparation for a Silent Toast.

Farewells- These events whether formal or informal commemorate and celebrate one’s service to their unit as they depart or PCS. Unit Farewells are typically for the Commanders and Command Sergeants Major along with their Spouses (usually a separate event like a Tea/Coffee/luncheon).

Formals- Similar to “Balls.” Ceremonial formal events with dinner and perhaps dancing. The event dictates formal attire – ASU (Blue Mess or Blue Dress) with bow tie, tuxedo or dark dinner jacket, and cocktail dress or evening formal gown for the ladies.

Funerals- The Family ceremony for honoring and celebrating the life of a service member who has died and usually involves arrangements for the burial or cremation. Funerary customs comprise the complex of beliefs and practices used by a culture to

remember the loved one. A funeral for a military service member is usually held in their home of record and where the service member will be interred.

Gift Giving- Check with Legal (Ethics Officer) for gift amounts and to whom you may give or receive gifts. Traditional welcome gifts are modest and reflect the unit or area; i.e. coffee table book of the area, afghan of the post or unit, or unit cookbooks. Farewell gifts traditionally reflect the unit, post or personality of the individual being farewelled; i.e. picture/painting of their home, unit crested vases or platters, unique charms, or other such items within the legal gift limits.

Gold Star Families- As defined on the Gold Star Wives' website, they are the widows/widowers whose spouses died while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States, or as result of service-connected disabilities; the widows/widowers of service personnel of all armed conflicts involving the United States of America; the mothers and fathers of children whose parents gave their life in the service of the country; and the widows/widowers of service personnel of all ranks, races, and creeds. The Gold Star Lapel pin (Gold Star on a purple background) is presented to surviving spouses, parents and immediate Family members of Armed Forces members killed in combat operations. Next of Kin Pins (Gold Star on Gold background) are presented to immediate Family members of Armed Forces members who die while serving outside combat operations.

Guest Books- A wonderful memory of an event. Traditional guest books contain guest signatures. A scrapbook is a wonderful item to hold menus, programs, and other items for future reference. Use at all events, also good for thank you.

Hosting- It is always your prerogative to host an event in your home. The military is well known for opening their homes to many events -- opening your home is opening your heart to your guests. But, if you are uncomfortable doing that, feel free to meet at a restaurant for a no-host event! Camaraderie is the strongest bond in the military. It doesn't matter the venue, it is the camaraderie and getting together that is the most important element!

Hostess Gifts- Some of us have been told by our elders that we should not arrive at someone's home with one hand extended (in receiving) without the other hand having a gift or contribution (potluck) in return in the other hand. Hostess gifts are simple tokens of gratitude – a bottle of wine, flowers, candy, homemade goodies, a box of soap, or candles. Something small but thoughtful. Consult with your assigned ethics counselor concerning gift guidance.

Information Briefs- Typically, the Senior Mission Commander along with ACS and perhaps the Chief of Staff's Spouse host a monthly meeting usually for the Spouses of the Battalions, Brigades, Division Commanders/CSMs, and SFRG Leaders. Organizations share upcoming, monthly events and activities on post and brief about five minutes with slides and handouts.

LinkedIn- A business-oriented social networking service. Many retirees and Active Duty service members use this service. Be aware that this system will auto generate invites to join using your contacts.

Memorial Services- A Memorial Service is the religious service for a Fallen Hero/Service Member, usually held in their hometown.

New Year's or Holiday Receptions- A commander's holiday reception is an annual tradition designed to provide an opportunity for units to socialize outside of work with the community and to thank them for their continued support. For over a hundred years, military custom called for Soldiers to travel to their headquarters to greet their commander at the beginning of the New Year. In the post-Civil War era, particularly for the horse cavalry in the American West, this might be the only opportunity during the entire year when commanders were able to physically see the Soldiers in their charge. Over the years the tradition evolved into a formal receiving line where the commander and spouse would greet members of the organization, senior leaders, and community members and host a reception. The Commander would typically host the Reception in their home and invitees would bring Calling Cards. The custom has changed to host an event (daytime or evening event) sometime in January in their home or the post club and Calling Cards are no longer a requirement.

Open House- Usually an event at the Commander's or Command Sergeant Major's home celebrating the holidays with their unit's Senior Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers.

OPSEC- Operational Security. Please always keep OPSEC in mind when sending out via Social media, i.e. Facebook messages about deployments or redeployment ceremonies, Twitter and Snapchat.

Parades and Review- Military parades are ceremonial. The Pass in Review is a long-standing military tradition that began as a way for a newly assigned commander to inspect his troops. Visiting officers and guest speakers are also invited to review the troops.

Pounding Basket- Giving a pounding basket is an old-fashioned way to welcome new neighbors. Bringing over some items to help stock their pantry with non-perishable foods or cleaning supplies is a thoughtful and helpful gesture. Some trace it back to the Revolutionary War when basic necessities were very hard to come by and only a very few spouses accompanied their husbands to the front lines. Others attribute this tradition to the Quaker culture which would use these baskets as a welcome gift, a wedding gift, or a house warming gift for a Family who just built a new home. Though "pounding baskets" are rarely done today, they are still part of Army spouses' traditions. They have been adapted as 'welcome wagon' baskets with baked goods, wine, flowers, etc., or as a baby basket with donated gift items that are collected and presented to the new mom at a unit coffee.

Receiving Lines- A receiving line is a practical and efficient way to accomplish a greeting. Receiving lines are frequently used to greet a new commander and spouse after his or her change of command ceremony, at traditional holiday receptions, and at unit Balls. Typically, the receiving line is formed first by the unit Adjutant (and they do not shake hands with the guests), next is the host and their Spouse, etc. For Army functions, ladies precede their gentleman guest walking through the receiving line, but there are so many variations these days that it is best to check with your local Protocol Office for their guidelines.

Reception- Receptions are lovely, stand-up affairs held in honor of a special occasion or an honored guest. When held alone and not in conjunction with another event, a reception is considered to be more formal than tea or a cocktail party. Accordingly, it is an adult gathering, not intended for children. Receptions usually begin with guests going through a receiving line to be greeted by their host and hostess and to meet any guests of honor. This is followed by an opportunity to mingle with the other guests and enjoy the beautiful array of food and wide variety of drinks.

Red Carpet- The “Red Carpet” is to honor those IN the receiving line shaking hands with the invitees. Tips of toes on the edge of the carpet. Reference Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-60 paragraph 3-2(2).

R.S.V.P. - If the host or honoree of an event should extend an invitation to you, it is your social obligation to let the host/hostess or protocol office know either in writing or via the telephone number provided if you plan to attend the event. Any invitation with an R.S.V.P. must be answered with a “yes” or “no”. R.S.V.P. is the abbreviation for “répondez s’il vous plaît,” which translates “please reply.” An answer should be given within 24 to 48 hours if possible as the hostess may want to invite someone else to complete her dinner party guest list. If R.S.V.P. is stated on the invitation and no telephone number is given, then the reply should be in writing. If a person should meet the host/hostess while running errands and mention “We just received your invitation today, and we will be delighted to come,” remember that this does not constitute a reply. The reply should be written or telephoned as the host/hostess may forget to include this guest on the list of acceptances. For unofficial social events, given today’s increased usage of technology, it may be acceptable to respond to an invitation using social media, but care should be given to attempt to respond using the method identified on the invitation.

Service Banners- A **service flag** or **service banner** in the U.S. is an official banner that Family members of service members can display. The flag or banner is defined as a white field with a red border, with a blue star for each Family member serving in the Armed Forces of the United States during any period of war or hostilities in which the Armed Forces of the United States are engaged. A gold star (with a blue edge) represents a Family member that died during service, without specifying cause of death. The deceased might have been killed in action or died due to unrelated causes. A silver star banner was added after the Iraq conflict. It honors those who were wounded or

incurred an illness during combat while honorably serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. It may be flown anytime, not just wartime, by anyone in remembrance of our wounded, ill or dying veterans.

Spouses' Clubs- It is wonderful to join a Spouses' Club for fellowship, camaraderie, and networking! Spouses' Clubs give back to their communities through welfare grants and scholarships. They are a private organization that usually have a membership fee and many social activities to participate in.

Teas- The traditional way of welcoming and farewelling Senior Spouses. Usually includes a Receiving Line, Tea/Coffee/Punch Pouring, simple desserts, and a gift presentation.

Toasting- Most formal dinners have a program with a set toasting sequence. The Toast and then a Response are both typed out. If you are giving the toast, be bold and loud so everyone can hear the importance of the person or group that you are honoring and recognizing. Toasting includes a sip of wine or water.

Thank You Notes- Depending on the event, hand-written, phone call, email or text are great ways of sending your thanks to your host and hostess. The gracious hosts have spent many hours preparing for the event, and a lovely handwritten note of thanks is always appreciated!

Thanksgiving Dinner at the Dining Facility- A tradition for the Officers of the unit along with their Command Sergeant Major to serve the Thanksgiving meal to their Soldiers at the Dining Facility.

Telephone Etiquette- When at all possible, speak in private.

Text Etiquette- Although very common, it is a limited way to communicate an important sentiment. A rule of thumb, text when you have to communicate a change of plans or an estimated time of arrival. Pick up the phone when you want to have a conversation.

Unit Memorials- Unit Memorial Ceremonies are an integral part of the fabric of the unit. Of all the activities in the life cycle of a group, Unit Memorial Ceremonies are extremely important and require special care. It is said that a Nation is judged by how it treats those that have made the ultimate sacrifice. We are the stewards of a most sacred process. The Memorials on our installations need to be kept in good stead. Those stationary memorials (a bench, tree or stone that serves to remind those serving of the cost of freedom) found in the unit areas should always be well tended and in good repair, especially on Memorial Day or when Gold Star Families are in the area for a remembrance ceremony. One of the most important things to pass from outgoing leadership to the incoming leadership is the unit's Fallen Heroes Memorial Book containing information regarding Memorials and Ceremonies along with special customs and points of contact. It is important to remember that future events will be built upon your contributions to honor those who are deserving of the effort.

Volunteers- Ensure that all volunteers for Spouses' Clubs, SFRGs, Red Cross, etc. are registered in the Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS). Volunteers play an integral role in the life of Soldiers and their Families and are found throughout the military community. VMIS assists the Army Volunteer Corps manage these dedicated volunteers and allows volunteers a way to track their hours, awards, training and certificates.

“Volunteer of the Year” Ceremonies- Acknowledging Volunteers for all the time and effort that they give selflessly to their units and posts. If possible, please attend these important ceremonies to honor all Volunteers. It's a unit's responsibility, but if you are a senior spouse, please ensure those who do volunteer are adequately honored and thanked.

Welcomes- Welcomes or Teas are traditionally for the Spouses of the Commander and Command Sergeant Major. They consist of a receiving line, guest book, a small token unit welcome gift, light foods, punch, traditional tea and coffee pouring, and a cake. A corsage or a boutonniere is always a nice touch.

Chapter 5 References, Recommended Resources

Army Regulation 600-25. *Salutes, Honors and Visits of Courtesy*.

Army Regulation 670-1. *Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms*.

Army Regulation 840-10. *Flags, Guidons, Streamers, Tabards, and Automobile and Aircraft Plates*.

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U.S. Army War College Spouses Academic Year 2010. *The Company Commanders Spouse Battle Book*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College.

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Conclusion

You are beginning a new chapter in your military Family Life. Know that there will be good times and not so good times. But also know whatever role you choose to take in your service member's unit, hopefully it will be made a little easier and a lot less scary armed with the knowledge provided to you in this pamphlet. Always remember you are not alone, there is another military spouse just a phone call away.