

COMMUNITY CORNER

Spouses offer support, advice for deployment

By Col. Kevin Brown
GARRISON COMMANDER

Fort Riley's page on Facebook continues to grow steadily. It has become a forum for spouses and new arrivals to post to connect and a place to turn for information.

Recently, a spouse going through her first deployment posted a plea for help on the page. We asked our fans to provide their advice for couples going through their first deployment together. Within minutes numerous responses were posted.

First off, I'd like to thank everyone who participates on our page — www.facebook.com/FortRiley.

It's just one of the great resources we have at Fort Riley to keep you informed. What sets Fort Riley's page on Facebook apart from our other resources is the ability for you, our Soldiers, Family members and other fans, to provide instant feedback.

Secondly, I'd like to share some of the responses posted to our question. These folks speak from years of experience and offered great advice for our newest Families. One word that was echoed throughout the posts was communication. It's a vital piece of the puzzle when it comes to surviving deployments.

Here are a few of the other suggestions from our fans:

- Concentrate on what matters most. And always remember that if you need something or have questions about something, there is always someone out there who is willing to help or just listen.
- Don't think because your spouse is gone they forgot about you. Trust me, they haven't.
- After four deployments, the biggest thing is communication. The second biggest is trying not to downplay the spouse that is back home, their role and importance in the deployment. Deployments involve the whole family equally; no part is better or greater than the other.
- Every night before bed, I send my husband an e-mail, even if I have nothing to say. Just the day-to-day stuff (not constant complaints, though). Just to let him know I love and miss him.
- Take one day at a time, and don't put unreasonable expectations on yourself. Make sure your spouse knows how much you care, and don't make them feel guilty for being gone. This is part of the job, accepting that is half the battle.
- Surround yourself with supportive people. Take help when it's



Col. Brown

offered, and ask for help when you need it. Stay busy. Anything you can do to improve yourself mentally, physically or spiritually is great and it gives you something to share with your spouse.

• Make sure you keep yourself busy and the time will fly! Always write and send packages to let your Soldier know you haven't forgotten about him.

• Send lots of letters, the Soldier can only call you when the phone lines are open, but we always like to receive letters, even if it's just a note saying "I love you." Take it one day at a time and always remember, the Soldier is thinking of you just as often as you are thinking of them. Take it one day at a time and always remember, the Soldier is thinking of you just as often as you are thinking of them.

Do you have suggestions for surviving deployments? Log on to our page on Facebook and add your comments.

And, as one fan said, "if you need something or have questions about something there is always someone out there who is willing to help or just listen." Hearts Apart is a group especially for the spouses of deployed Soldiers and the spouses of Soldiers on unaccompanied tours. The New Parent Support Program is available to parents seeking advice. Visit the Army Community Service page at www.rileyarmy.mil or call ACS at 785-239-9435 to find out about the many services they offer for Families.

If you're looking to keep busy and get involved during your spouse's deployment, visit www.rileymw.com to learn about recreation opportunities on post. Each week on our Facebook page, we also post a list of upcoming activities and on-going programs. If you miss it in your news feed, just go to www.facebook.com/FortRiley and click the Notes tab. You don't have to be a registered Facebook user to view this page.

I hope some of these suggestions help make deployments a little easier for our Families. Most importantly, remember there is always someone to help, all you have to do is ask.

If you would like to comment on this article or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, e-mail riley.post.newspaper@coms.army.mil.

Home wanted

BOBBI

Bobbi is a black, domestic shorthair with a bobbed tail. She is almost 2 years old and is litterbox trained, but she still needs her vaccinations and a microchip. She gets along with cats and smaller dogs.

Fort Riley Stray Facility
Building 226 Custer Ave.,
Main Post
Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and until 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday.
Phone: 785-239-6183



Workshop to explain unemployment benefits

EMPLOYMENT READINESS PROGRAM

Military spouses face many challenges when following their Soldier from post to post. One such challenge is leaving their jobs which sometimes cause a financial burden on the family.

Can military spouses apply for unemployment insurance benefits? The Fort Riley Employment Readiness Program in partnership with the Department of Labor will be offering an informational workshop, specifically cover unemployment for the military spouse. This workshop is part of the "Exploring Employment Campaign" being offered in February 2010.

The following information is from the Kansas Department of Labor, Unemployment Web site, <http://www.dol.ks.gov/index.html>.

1. Who pays for unemployment benefits?

The Kansas Employment Security Law requires employers to pay all eligible unemployment benefits.

2. What information do I need to file a new claim?

When filing a new claim, you will need the following information:

- Social Security number
- Mailing address, including zip code and P.O. Box, if you use one, and telephone number
- The name and mailing address of all your employers in the past 18 months, no matter how long you worked there. Note: Your paycheck stub or W-2 form usually contains this information.
- The date you began and stopped working for each employer and the reason you left each job
- The county in which you live
- Driver's license number
- If you are not a citizen or national of the United States, your employment authorization number and expiration date
- If you were in the military during the past two years, your DD-214, Copy No. 4
- If you were a federal employee, your Standard Form SF-50 or Form SF-8 eligible for unemployment claims.
- Employment authorization number and expiration date, if a non-citizen)

Have the below additional items ready before applying:

- Your employer's information:
- The company name for all your employers from the past 18 months as it appears on your paycheck stub or W-2 form.

- Complete mailing address for those employers, including ZIP code and the city in which the business is physically located.

- Employment history:
- Your start and end dates with each employer you worked for in the past 18 months including month, day, and year
- It doesn't matter how long you worked there.
- Your total wages earned with each employer and how you were paid (hourly, weekly and monthly).
- Your reason for leaving each of those employers (quit, fired, laid off, leave of absence).

3. Voluntarily leaving (Quit) K.S.A. 44-706 (a)

You are not eligible for unemployment benefits if you voluntarily quit your job without good cause, effective the day after your separation, and continuing until you become re-employed and have insured earnings of at least three times your weekly benefit amount.

- There are 12 exceptions to this:
- Quit due to illness or injury upon the advice of a licensed and practicing health care provider.
- Quit temporary work to return to your regular full-time employer.
- Quit to enlist in the armed forces

of the United States, but were rejected or delayed from entry.

Quit due to your physical, mental or moral well being.

- Quit due to unwelcome harassment by the employer or another employer.
- Quit to accept better work.
- Quit because the employer requested that you violate an ordinance or statute.

- Quit due to a violation of the work agreement.

- Quit due to a personal emergency.
- Quit due to the voluntary or involuntary transfer of your spouse from one job to another.
- Quit to enter training approved under the Federal Trade Act of 1974.
- Quit due to circumstances resulting from domestic violence.

For details concerning the 12 exceptions, you may obtain a copy of K.S.A. 44-706 (a) at your local public library or online at www.kslegislature.org.

Each person, claim and state is different. Attend the Employment Readiness workshop from 10 a.m. to noon Feb. 10 at Army Community Service, Building 7264 Normandy Drive. To ensure a spot, reservations can be made by contacting ERP at 785-239-9435.

CPAC to help spouses with job hunt

EMPLOYMENT READINESS PROGRAM

Military spouses have employment preference rights. Working and living on a military installation can make life easier for spouses of deployed Soldiers.

Army resumes, job announcements and preferences also can be daunting for everyone. The Employment Readiness Program in partnership with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center is here to assist spouses through an informative workshop Feb. 18. The workshop will help spouses get questions answered on what is needed to gain preference status, how to fill out applications and RESUMIX, and reading the job announcements, or to learn the difference between Appropriated Funds and Non-appropriated Funds positions. This workshop is part of the "Exploring Employment Campaign" being offered in February 2010.

Information about NAF applications will be from 10 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 3 p.m. for Army RESUMIX applications and qualification/preference status.

Both workshops will be at Army Community Service, Building 7264 Normandy Drive.

To ensure a spot, reservation can be made by contacting ERP at 785-239-9435. Reservations will be taken until Feb. 1.

The following information is provided by the Civilian Personnel On-Line Web site: <http://acpola.army.mil/employment/index.htm> and the NAF Job Application Kit March 2005.

APPROPRIATE FUNDS POSITIONS

Military Spouse Preference derives from Public Law 99-145, "DoD Authorization Act of 1986," Section 806, "Employment Opportunities for Military Spouses."

This section implemented measures to increase employment opportunities for spouses of members of the Armed Forces. The intent is to lessen the employment and career interruptions of spouses who relocate with their military sponsors. Military spouse preference provides worldwide employment preference for spouses of active duty military members of the armed forces who are relocating to accompany their military sponsor on a permanent change of station move to an active-duty assignment.

The Military Spouse Preference Program applies to eligible spouses of active duty military members of the armed forces, including the U.S. Coast Guard and full-time National Guard, who are applying and referred for certain positions at Department of Defense activities in the U.S., its territories and possessions, and in overseas areas.

Applies only within the commuting area of the permanent duty station of the sponsor.

Applies only if the spouse entered into the marriage with the military sponsor prior to the reporting date to the new duty assignment; and applies only if the spouse meets all preference and appointment eligibility requirements.

This program does not apply when the sponsor is separating or retiring.

Executive Order 13473 - Noncompetitive Appointing Authority for Certain Military Spouses establishes a noncompetitive appointment to permanent, term or temporary positions for certain military spouses into the competitive service.

The purpose of this authority is to assist military spouses obtain federal civil service positions. Its intent is to recognize and honor the service of members injured, disabled or killed in connection with their service and minimize disruption when military Families move due to permanent relocations.

Eligibility requirements for the active-duty spouse: A spouse who is married to a servicemember who receives PCS orders that authorize the spouse to accompany him or her to the new duty station is eligible for this appointing authority, provided the spouse moves with the service member to the new duty location.

Employment must be within the geographic area of the new permanent duty station, it includes the duty station and the surrounding area. Until delegation is received from DOD, a waiver of the geographic restriction cannot be approved. This appointing authority may be used immediately, and the spouse remains eligible for a maximum of two years from the date of the PCS orders.

The spouse will be required to present the PCS orders and proof of marriage (certificate of marriage or license) upon selection for employment.

EO 13473 specifically excludes training duties and attendance at service schools from coverage under this author-

ity. There is a limit of one permanent appointment per PCS.

NOTE: Having military spouse preference does not guarantee job placement.

NON-APPROPRIATE FUNDS POSITIONS

The Military Spouse Preference Program applies to spouses of active duty military members of the armed forces who desire priority consideration for positions at DoD activities. To receive preference eligibility, the spouse must be married to the military sponsor before reporting to the new duty assignment.

MSP applies only within-in the commuting area of the military sponsor's permanent duty station and if you are ranked among the "best qualified" for the vacancy for which you are applying. Military spouses will not lose MSP eligibility when accepting a temporary or limited tenure position or permanent position with a flexible work schedule (non-continuing positions).

MSP eligibility is retained until the military spouse accepts or declines the offer of a permanent appointment to a full-time or part-time position with fixed work schedules (continuing positions).

MSP can only be used once during a sponsor's tour. Once the spouse accepts or declines a continuing position, eligibility terminates whether or not the position was obtained through MSP.

MSP eligibility is lost when the spouse accepts or declines an offer of a continuing position or declines a job interview for a continuing position.

HOUSE FILL AD