

COMMUNITY CORNER

Commander urges caution, safety during upcoming winter months

By Col. William Clark
GARRISON COMMANDER

In the Army, we're all about acronyms, and I've got a new one for you to remember, especially when driving in winter weather conditions: SAFETY.

- Slow down for wet, snowy, icy conditions.
- Avoid quick braking and acceleration.

- Find out about driving conditions before you go.
- Every time — buckle up.
- Turn signals, brake lights and windows need to be clear of snow.

You should never use cruise control in winter conditions.

These quick tips are just a few to remember as we prepare for the upcoming winter. I hope they help you remember that driving in the winter is very different than driving during the rest of the year.

When planning a trip, ask yourself if the trip necessary? Is my vehicle in good operating

condition? Do I have the ability to drive safely in these weather conditions and on the expected road surfaces?

As a Soldier, Family member or civilian, you have access to the Travel Risk Planning System available to help you get where you're going safely. Log in to TRIPS at <https://safety.army.mil/trips> and follow the easy directions to see things you can do to reduce your risk. By taking an overall look at your travel plans, TRIPS alerts you to dangers you may not be aware of and evaluates the hazards they pose.

And, in addition to remembering SAFETY, our local Garrison Safety Office has provided me with the following winter-weather driving tips:

Know the conditions. Before leaving home, dial 511



Col. Clark

anytime to find out about the latest driving conditions for the Kansas Turnpike and any Interstate, U.S. or state highway in Kansas. You also can visit the 511 website, <http://511.kssdot.org>, or from your Smart Phone, <http://511mm.kssdot.org>.

The Fort Riley website, www.riley.army.mil, also includes a section for "Advisories (Post Closures and Delays)" and for "Weather" on the upper left-hand column. Use these to be prepared for conditions on post.

Prepare your vehicle. You may be in a hurry, but take the time to remove any snow on your vehicle's windows, lights, brake lights and signals. Make sure you can see and be seen. Don't forget to pack your emergency preparedness kit in your car just in case you get stuck.

It's not just snow. Snow is a dangerous mixture of ice and water, which means your car can spin dangerously out of control under both icy, rainy and snowy conditions. Don't drive faster just because the

road looks like fresh powdery snow and you have four-wheel drive. Underneath the snow could be slippery, dangerous ice that can severely limit your ability to control your vehicle.

Time. Leave in plenty of time to reach your destination safely. It's not worth putting yourself and others in a dangerous situation just to be on time. Add at least 30 minutes to your normal commute time. Remember, the biggest accident contributor is your state of mind and emotions. When you're stressed, you tend to do things faster without thinking.

Reduce speed. Many drivers ignore the speed limit and drive 10, 20 and sometimes 30 mph over the speed limit in normal conditions. Those habits don't change just because it's winter. Slow down for wet, snowy or icy conditions; when visibility is poor; or when conditions are changing or unpredictable. The faster you drive, the slower your reaction time will be. Be especially careful when approaching

intersections, off-ramps, bridges or shady spots. They are susceptible to forming black ice.

Yellow really does mean slow down. During wintry conditions, don't try to barrel through a yellow light. Be more cautious about stopping on red lights and stop signs. Many rollover accidents and side-impact car accidents result from drivers that run stop signs.

Keep your distance. Drivers should allow additional room between their vehicles and others. Winter road conditions often result in longer stopping distances. Leave extra room between you and the vehicle in front of you. Also be aware when pulling out in front of approaching vehicles. Remember, they may not be able to slow down, and you may not be able to accelerate as quickly as on dry pavement.

Avoid cruise control. Avoid using cruise control in winter driving conditions. You need to be in control of when your vehicle accelerates based on

road conditions. Don't let the cruise control make a bad decision for you.

Let the snow plow do its job. Don't crowd the plow. Give them room to work. The plows are wide and can cross the centerline or shoulder. Don't tailgate and try not to pass. If you must pass, take extreme caution and beware of the snow cloud.

Don't drive distracted. Traffic delays may give you extra time in the vehicle, but that doesn't mean you should start catching up on emails and texts. Distracted drivers are the top cause of car accidents in the U.S. today. Don't divert your attention from the road.

More information is available at <https://safety.army.mil> or by calling the Garrison Safety Office at 785-240-0647.

If you would like to comment on this article or suggest a topic for Community Corner, email rile.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil.

Michelle Obama announces hiring commitment for spouses, vets

By Lisa Daniel
AFPS

WASHINGTON — First Lady Michelle Obama, on a visit with her husband, President Barack Obama, to Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., Oct. 19 announced a private sector hiring commitment of 25,000 military spouses and veterans as part of the Joining Forces campaign.

Some 270 companies represented by the American Logistics Association for doing business in military reside and morale, welfare and recreation have committed to hiring 25,000 military spouses and veterans in the next two years, the first lady said. The commitment is the largest yet toward Obama's challenge for the private sector to hire 100,000 military spouses and veterans by 2013.

"They do not want to miss out on your potential," the first lady said to a cheering audience inside the 94th Fighter Squadron's hangar. "They want American businesses to have the best, most-talented, most hard-working employees around."

The commitment came from diverse companies, she said, ranging from the corporate behemoths Procter & Gamble, Tyson Foods and Hewlett-Packard, to smaller companies such as Prime Time Services, which plans to hire hundreds of military spouses and veterans within the next year.

Some hiring efforts already have begun, Obama said, with Siemens, Sears, K-Mart and Sam's Club, and through local chamber of commerce job fairs.

"These are bold commitments, and these are companies that are making these pledges not just because it's the right thing to do or because it feels patriotic," she said. "They're also doing it because it's good for their bottom line ... because they know that veterans and military spouses, like all of you here today, represent the best our country has to offer. And they want you on their team."

The first lady then introduced the president, saying his presence shows what "a huge deal" the announcement is. The president thanked the troops for their service, noting, "Your generation has earned a special place in America's history."

Many of the 3 million post-9/11 war veterans "have taken their leadership experience, their mastery of cutting edge technologies, their ability to adapt to changing circumstances, and they've become leaders here at home," the president said. "They've become leaders at businesses all across the country."

The Obamas said, however, many military spouses and veterans struggle to find good employment.

"The truth is that sometimes employers may not always know about all that you have to offer," the first lady said. "They might have trouble understanding a military resume, or they might see a spouse who's lived in five cities in seven years as a red flag, rather than a reality of military life."

"It doesn't make sense," the president said. "If you can save

a life in Afghanistan, you can save a life in a local hospital or in a local ambulance. If you can oversee millions of dollars of assets in Iraq, you can help a business balance its books here at home. If you can juggle the demands of raising a family while a husband or wife are at war, you can juggle any demands of any job in the United States of America."

In announcing the initiative, the first lady said the administration wants to raise awareness that many important job skills — time management, organization, people skills and complex decision-making — are "second nature" to military spouses and veterans.

"That is really the reason why we're here today, because those are precisely the skills that we need in workplaces across America," she said.

"We want America to know that you're veterans who have completed missions with enough variables involved to make most people's heads spin; that you're trained in state-of-the-art technologies; that you've managed dozens if not hundreds of your peers; and when the stakes are the highest, that's when you're at your best," she added.

The American Logistics Association represents the largest consumer packaged goods companies in the United States, including major manufacturers such as Coca-Cola, Unilever and ConAgra, along with a multitude of specialty suppliers to the on-base military consumer channel, according to its president, Pat Nixon, a Vietnam War veteran who took part in a White House conference call with reporters.

Survivors present top concerns to leadership at AFAP summit

By Evan Dyson
IMCOM PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ARLINGTON, Va. — Survivors outlined their top recommendations to Army leadership this month at the conclusion of the Survivor Outreach Services Army Family Action Plan Summit.

Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, commanding general of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command, participated in the Oct. 13 event, along with his wife, Sarah.

Also in attendance and delivering remarks was Linda Odierno, wife of Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Raymond Odierno.

"We've invested time, energy and resources into the program," Lynch said about Survivor Outreach Services. "You've got to tell us how we're doing, and that's the purpose of the AFAP Summit."

The top five recommendations made to leadership were:

- Establishing face-to-face training for Soldiers about the importance of a last will and testament
- Refining the Casualty Assistance Officer selection method to include the casualty assistance centers in the screening process
- Removing time restrictions for survivors to contribute to tax-free growth accounts
- Creating a dedicated survivor resource website
- Mandating the stabilization of active-duty survivors for a minimum of one year.

According to Lynch, some topics identified as issues — including web resources — may be handled rather quickly by

enhancing existing sites and making sure people are aware of them.

"I'm absolutely convinced that the key to all of this is information," Lynch said. "You can have the best programs in the world, but if nobody knows about the programs, you might as well not even have the programs."

Other recommendations will continue to be evaluated, he said.

According to organizers, the event served as a mid-level AFAP summit. Issues presented at the conference, which cannot be resolved at a local level, will be forwarded to the AFAP summit in January, conducted by the Department of the Army.

Speaking of the nation's fiscal situation, Lynch said not every issue will be attainable, but it is important to identify the ones that will better serve the Army community.

Other topics discussed during the summit, but not included in the top five issues, ranged from replacing vehicle stickers for Gold Star Families with portable identification cards to the addition of training to ensure awareness of the meaning behind the Gold Star lapel button and service banners.

Lynch, who is nearing the end of his term as commanding general of IMCOM and assistant chief of staff of Installation Management, expressed his respect and gratitude to Linda Odierno for her attendance and for looking out for Soldiers and their Families.

"Sarah and I transition out of the Army in less than 30

days to another form of service," he said, "but we leave the Army knowing that the Army is in good hands because there are no two human beings who care for people, who love people, more than Linda and Ray Odierno."

In her remarks, Linda Odierno thanked all survivors, who participated in the summit, for their insight and recommendations, saying their feedback was critical to better serving the Army and all survivors of the fallen.

"I want you to know we will never forget about you and your Family," Linda Odierno said. "Being here shows how much you continue to care about the Army and its spouses and Families who will also experience the loss of a loved one."

The summit, conducted by Survivor Outreach Services, drew from the experience of 50 survivors.

According to Hal Snyder, program manager for SOS, the intent for these types of events is to listen and respond to what actually resonates with the Survivor community.

For the participants, the event also seemed valuable.

"I have an idea what all these Families are going through," said Roger Verela, On May 17, 2007, Verela's son, Pfc. Alejandro Verela, was killed near Baghdad. "I don't know exactly how they're grieving because we all grieve differently, but we're not just friends or acquaintances, we're Family. We are Family."

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