



"Though only a small percentage of our Nation's population, our troops bear the great responsibility of protecting our people. They, along with their families, serve us every day with courage and dignity. Ensuring that military families receive the respect they deserve and the support they have earned is a top priority for my Administration." – President Obama

To read President Obama's entire Military Family Appreciation Month Proclamation visit:
<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=56479>

Army families are vital – the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their families. All Army families, Active, Guard, Reserve, veterans and retirees are giving back in this time of need. With thousands of Soldiers deployed, recognizing the daily sacrifices made by Army families has never been more important.

Any Soldier who has ever been separated from his or her family for an extended period, because of the needs of our Nation, fully understands the sacrifices both the Soldier and Family must make. The list of "missed moments" is long and varies with each Soldier:

- Missed weddings, births, funerals...
- Missed first steps, first days of school, first dates, graduations...
- Missed birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, family reunions...

Each event becomes a burden to be carried and shared by the Soldiers deployed, and the Family members left with an empty place at the table or seat at an important milestone to the Family. Though painful, many of these events pale when compared to the stress and uncertainty of having a loved one in harm's way. Families with Soldiers in combat know:

- The dread of unexpected knock at the door...
- The constant worry that nags in the back of your mind...

Family re-integration after deployment is also a stressful time for both the Soldier and the Family. The level of adjustment and stress varies, but all families have dealt with:

- Re-sharing family decisions concerning rules, finances, day-to-day activities...
- Re-bonding with wives, children, parents, family members...
- Coping with the effects of combat...

Military Family Appreciation Month: "Honoring the sacrifices of the military family" is an important way for a grateful Nation to recognize and acknowledge the sacrifices our military families make in support of America. Throughout the month of November, Army families serving around the world are being honored through a variety of observances and are being recognized for the commitment and contributions they make every day.

Efforts to recognize the sacrifices of the Army family by Active, Guard, and Reserve leaders are being joined and supported by DoD organizations to include the Army Air Force Exchange Service, Defense Commissary Agency, and others. In coordination with the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, U.S. Army Entertainment, and the Army Multimedia Visual Information Directorate, a music video is being produced featuring the song "Life of a Soldier," written and performed by Spc. Daniel Jens (America's Got Talent) and Sgt 1st Class Sean Bennett (Nashville Star). The song is dedicated to Army families world-wide.

At all levels, the Army will continue to recognize the support and sacrifices Army families make every day, knowing that the strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their families, and sustaining Soldiers is critical to sustaining an all-volunteer force. Through the commitments represented by the Army Family Covenant, the Army will continue to standardize and fund existing family programs and services, increase accessibility and quality of health care, improve Soldier and family housing, increase excellence in schools, youth services and child care, expand education and employment opportunities for family members, and continue to provide families a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive.

Army Families keep our Soldiers Army Strong.

SECURE THE HIGH GROUND!