



Sarah Lynch addresses spouses Friday during Military Spouse Appreciation Day.

Photo by Heather Graham, Sentinel News Editor

# Honoring the Military Spouse

## III CORPS PAO

They keep the home fires burning and the household running while their Soldiers are off training and at war. They raise the children, endure long separations from their loved ones and ask for little in return. On May 8, the Army took a day to honor the sacrifices and service of military spouses.

At Fort Hood, spouses enjoyed a chocolate breakfast and some recognition and appreciation for all they do Friday at the Oveta Culp-Hobby Soldier and Family Readiness Center.

But one day was not enough.

On Monday, the III Corps and Fort Hood command team of Lt. Gen Rick Lynch and Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola were joined by their spouses for a TV Town Hall devoted to military spouses.

The four addressed questions and concerns from spouses during the hour-long program. Half of the questions submitted were answered on the air. The inquiries and their respective replies are published in this week's *Sentinel*.

### Thank you

The Friday morning celebration and the town hall were just a few ways to show appreciation for and thank military spouses for all they have done and continue to do.

"You taught us how to empathize and nurture without sympathizing and coddling," Ciotola told the spouses on Friday.

Military spouse appreciation is much more than one day. After all, the Army recruits the Soldier and retains the Family.

Of course, no one knows more about military spouses than other military spouses.

### The best part

For Sharla Beth Williams, who has been married to a Soldier for the past nine years, the best part of being an Army spouse is "supporting your Soldier."

### Advice

Lisa Rosario, who has been married to a Soldier for 28 years, has seen a lot.

She came to Military Spouse Appreciation Day for a "break."

As a longtime Army spouse, Rosario said her best advice to new spouse is "have patience."

### Pride and Family

Military spouses are proud of their Soldiers, their Families and their Army.

"There is no definition for the sense of pride you feel when you love a Soldier," Nadine Albrecht, a former Soldier and Army spouse for 13 years, said.

"The Army community is so close," she said. "You make such great friends."

Kasinda Thomas, who has been an Army spouse for 10 years, said the best part of being an Army spouse is inclusion in something bigger than herself and her Family.

"It's being a part of a larger extended Family," she said.

Daniela Freitas has been an Army spouse for one month and already found a welcoming Family although hers lives in Brazil.

"I was surprised to find a big Family here," Freitas said. "I was not expecting it."

### The general's wife

Lynch's wife, Sarah, is just doing what her mother taught her.

The youngest of six children, Sarah's father was a master sergeant in the Army and her mother served in the Women's Air Corps as a medic.

"My mother is my favorite military spouse," Sarah said.

Sarah has used her mother's example in her own marriage and life as a military spouse.

Through 26.5 years, 20 moves and many separations, Sarah said the couple has grown together, but not much has changed.

"It's much like being married to any community leader," Sarah said.

"It's been a great learning process."

The Lynches work as a team.

They decided what they wanted to accomplish and where to place their focus.

"For us, it was Family," Sarah said. "However I can help him is what I want to do."

As the First Family of III Corps and Fort Hood, the Lynches meet high-profile leaders and celebrities, but none compare to their heroes at the Great Place.

"These Soldiers and their Families are truly our heroes," she said.

Their position, Sarah said, allows them to affect a broader range of people.

Sarah knows the sacrifices and challenges of being a military spouse.

Frequent moves make it difficult to obtain and keep a career or any employment.

A teacher, Sarah continued her education to broaden her career path. She has taught at all levels and was once the recreation supervisor for the City of Killeen. She understands employment issues

are important to spouses.

"It's hard to find a job," she said.

Programs such as the Army Spouses Employment Program will help ease that, Sarah hopes.

Fort Hood's first lady also understands the basic needs and concerns that all military spouses face when moving — schools, child care, even finding a hairdresser.

Through the struggles and challenges, Sarah said, communication has been key in her marriage.

The Lynches ensure they spend 15 minutes

each day talking to each other to keep communication lines open.

For new spouses, Sarah urges them to educate themselves about their post and surrounding communities.

Find out what services are available and where they are. Take Army Family Team Building Classes; research online.

She also urges relationship education.

"Educate yourself about your relationship," she said.

Most importantly, Sarah wants military Families to cherish their time together.

Extended separations and frequent moves are just two of the more obvious challenges faced by military spouses.

Whether raising the children while Soldier is deployed or moving entire households to installations far and wide, military spouses face challenges unfamiliar to many civilians.

### A male spouse

For Rich Lucas, the biggest challenge has been getting over his fear of talking to people.

Lucas, a former Soldier, has the "advantage of seeing both sides."

"Soldiers stay in the Army because of the Family," Lucas said.

"I wish Soldiers would understand you've got to get the Family involved," he added.

Lucas got involved with the Army Family when his wife of 27 years, Col. Glynda Lucas, deployed. He wishes he had gotten involved earlier.

"Too many spouses wait to get involved until their Soldier deploys," he said.

"They need to build a foundation as soon as their Soldier gets to a unit," he added.

To Lucas, getting involved means educating one's self about the post and making connections such as joining the unit Family readiness group.

He hopes spouses seek out information.

"It's not going to come to you," he said.

He joined the FRG. Lucas saw the surgeon's FRG leader trying to do everything by herself, so he took an AFTB class to help and gained an appreciation for the FRG.

"It's not the social club that everyone thinks it is," Lucas said. "They're trying to help."

As the sole male member of Fort Hood's Officers' Wives' Club, Lucas is getting used to being surrounded by women.

"It's just me and 200 women," he said. "I wish more guys would get involved."

He also learned guys need hugs too.

"I cannot tell you how much that meant while Glynda was deployed," Lucas said. "It sure helps if you have that support."

Lucas said he is overjoyed just knowing how strong military spouses are and how



willing they are to help each other.

### A command sergeant major's wife

For Faye Gioia, wife of Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia, 4th Infantry Division's senior enlisted man, the best part of being a military spouse is, "loving my Soldier."

"We serve too," Gioia said. "The entire Family serves."

"We are very proud of our Soldiers and their professions," Gioia said.

Spouses of Soldiers are self-sufficient and self-reliant, she added.

The sergeant major was already in the Army when he married Faye, who also was a Soldier at the time.

The best way to honor military spouses, Gioia said, is to recognize they serve too.

"There are a lot of things they do in support of military service," she said.

Her favorite part of being an Army spouse is the Family she has found.

"We're all in it together," she said. "We're all Family. It's an instant bond."

Her advice to other spouses is "be proactive" in seeking information on available programs, classes and services on and off the installation.

"There are a lot of wonderful programs in place, but they are under utilized" she said.

Faye also mentioned AFTB classes, a must for Army spouse, and stressed a need to get information about available programs to spouses.

She said one of the biggest changes to the role of the spouse occurred in October 2001 when the Army took a new view on Family readiness groups.

"The FRG is part of the Army," Faye said.

Although the FRG's mission is to get out timely and accurate information, Faye gives credit to the social aspect as well.

"Social events are so important," she said. "This is your continuity, your esprit d'corps."

She said the FRG also gives spouses a sense of belonging to their Soldiers' units.

"Falling in love with a Soldier is very special," she added.

For Gioia, her favorite part about being a military spouse is loving her Soldier, a sentiment echoed by all the spouses.