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Army recognizes Families of Fallen with special vehicle decal, streamlined installation access procedures

By William Bradner
FMWRC Public Affairs

During a Survivor Outreach Services working group meeting last year, several participants expressed difficulty in gaining access to military installations to take part in SOS programs and support services. Survivors, including parents of Fallen Soldiers, do not always have a DoD identification card, and are frequently required to obtain a visitor or temporary vehicle pass to enter garrisons.

Soon survivors will be able apply for a Survivor Decal—much like the standard installation access decal—for their vehicle, greatly improving their ability to access the programs designed to support them.

“My intent is to implement access control procedures making it easier for survivors to enter Army garrisons,” said Lt. Gen. Rick D. Lynch, Commander of the Army Installation Management Command and Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management.

“I want all security personnel manning our entrance gates to recognize these very special Army Families and welcome them with special respect for their sacrifice and service,” he continued.

IMCOM Protection Services Division, along with the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command SOS and Marketing Offices, created the decal and application, usage and implementation guidance for Army garrisons.

According to Maj. Gen. Jones, Commanding General, FMWRC, this new initiative underscores the Army’s commitment to providing support services to the survivors of Fallen Soldiers for as long as they need or desire.

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“Families of the Fallen deserve our respect, gratitude and the very best support, and services that we can provide,” said Jones.

Each garrison SOS Support Coordinator or equivalent Army Community Service staff member has the responsibility of working directly with survivors to assist them in the application process, which includes registering with the installation’s vehicle registration system.

Current DoD Physical Access Control policy requires everyone seeking entrance to a military installation to stop at the gate and present government-issued, photo identification. Acceptable forms of identification include a state issued driver’s license or state ID card. Survivors must still follow that policy, but once they have obtained a decal, they will no longer be required to apply for a visitor’s pass each time they enter an installation.

Judy, a survivor who frequently visits a media/game room dedicated to her son in the Fort Sam Houston Family Center, is very grateful that the decals will soon be available.

"I hate having to go through the 'survivor' and 'are you military?' explanations over and over..." she said. "I reply with 'My son was in the army but...' It brings me to tears every time I have to have that conversation."

The decal is only valid on Army Garrisons.

This is just one of the many ways the Army “will reassure survivors that they are forever members of the Army Family,” Lynch said.

Survivor Outreach Services is an Army-wide program designed to provide dedicated and comprehensive support to survivors of deceased Soldiers. It includes a comprehensive survivor services program designed specifically to meet the needs of our survivor population—with dedicated resources, and a commitment to providing first class service—for as long as the family desires.

For more information about the decals or SOS in general, visit www.MyArmyOneSource.com or the garrison Army Community Services office.

Link to Sample Decal on Flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/familymwr/5394266698/>