

SAMPLE TEMPLATE ONLY

**JBLM and 1st Corps Social Guide
for Army Senior Spouses**

Revised June 2020



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>The Big Picture</u>	3
<u>Advocate/Advisor Opportunities</u>	5-6
<u>Welcomes & Farewells</u>	7-14
<u>Chart of Host, Planning Committee & Guests</u>	9
<u>Sample Welcome Invitation</u>	11
<u>Taking the Mystery out of Military Protocol</u>	16
<u>BDE/BN Command Team Transition Tips</u>	17



The Big Picture

What's in this document?

As you read through this document, please keep in mind these are guidelines that are a blend of tradition and senior spouse practical experience. It is intended to offer suggestions for the roles Senior Spouses *may* take within JBLM organizations. We are all busy and arrive here in different seasons of our lives. Each spouse must determine how much time and energy he/she wants to devote to the spouse role. Because this is voluntary, whatever you choose (or don't choose!) to take on should bring you joy.

Speaking the same language

The military takes the time to codify its protocol, customs and courtesies to clarify, not to confuse or make anyone feel unimportant or insignificant.

Protocol: The governing rules for good manners in official life and ceremonies involving governments, nations and their representatives. It is a recognized system of international courtesy and has developed over centuries. Examples include: receiving line order, honoring the flag, seating at official events, introductions.

Tradition: The handing down of statements, legends and customs from generation to generation by word of mouth. It is usually an unwritten code. Examples include: coffee groups, spouse welcomes and farewells, punch bowl ceremonies, baby gifts & "poundings" to mark marriages.

Etiquette: Conduct and procedures that are followed because it is kind, gracious and thoughtful. It is the observance of mutual respect between individuals as well as nations. Examples include: thank you notes, hostess gifts, nametag on the right, RSVP.

Two Roles of a Senior Spouse: Social and Advocate/Advisor

The Social role is fulfilled only by the spouse. As the spouse of a Commander, Command Sergeant Major, Deputy Commander or Chief of Staff/Executive Officer, you may be invited to participate in social functions for Senior Leaders, special seating at ceremonies, participation in coffee groups, dinner and reception events with higher levels of command. These invitations are for specific spouses based upon their soldier's position. If the designated spouse is not available or chooses not to attend, then there is no substitute.

The Advocate/Advisor role is as a representative and advocate for the families in your Soldier's unit. The Commander and Command Sergeant Major spouses may fill it as a team, but if they do not, the commander will usually look to the Deputy Commander, Chief of Staff /Executive Officer or Operations Officer spouse to take on these responsibilities. These roles include Soldier & Family Readiness Advisor, representative



at the JBLM Sound Living Summit monthly meetings and volunteer advisory roles throughout the community.

Why take this on?

You can have a profound impact on the spouses in the unit, as they look to you for guidance, mentorship and encouragement. As a positive influencer, you can have a lasting impact on the quality of family life for those stationed at JBLM. Your leadership, by example, helps set the tone for future informal leaders within our military families.



Advocate/Advisor Opportunities

Corps Level	Along with the Corps CSM spouse, you serve as the lead advocate for all families across the community to positively impact the quality of life for service members and military families.
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- Advisor to Directorate of Personnel and Family Readiness (DPFR)
- Along with the Corps CSM spouse, the Army Advocate Team for the Spouses' Club of Lewis-McChord.
- Advisor to any other Community Organizations as requested/invited.
- Maintain constructive dialogue with Executive Spouses and JBLM & 1st Corps Senior Spouse Groups (see table above)
- Maintains open communication with FORSCOM CG's spouse
- Aid in the distribution of community information to the groups identified in the Senior Spouse Groups Table.

Division/ESC/Medical Command Level	You and the CSM spouse are the lead advocate for all families within your Soldier's unit and a mentor and advisor to the BDE and BN level SFRG Advisors.
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- Advocates for families across the unit and influences programs that affect the families within the command
- Advisor to Community Organizations based upon need and interests
- Coaches, mentors and advises spouses within the unit.
- Participates in the FORSCOM Senior Spouse VTC as applicable
- Supports monthly JBLM Sound Living Summit and special events across JBLM
- Aid in the distribution of community information to your subordinate units.

Brigade/Wing/Group/Battalion Level	You and the CSM spouse are the Command Team's Subject Matter Expert on family matters bringing the family perspective to the table.
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- Brigade/Wing/Group/BN Service Member & Family Readiness Advisor
- Coach, mentor, and advise the SFRG Advisors and/or SFRG Leaders in the subordinate units.
- Bring forward unit family issues and concerns to senior leadership as appropriate



Deputy Commanding Generals' Level	You play a key supportive role at many unit and community events. You may fill in for the Commander's spouse in his/her absence.
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- Attend monthly JBLM Sound Living Summit and aid in distribution of information
- May serve as an advisor to community organizations on JBLM.
- Supports unit activities and JBLM community functions
- Serves as a sounding board and support for the CG and CSM spouses in their roles as family advocates.
- Serves as an advisor to community organizations.
- Attends the monthly JBLM Sound Living Summits and helps disseminate information.
- Participates in the FORSCOM VTC

Chief of Staff/Executive Officer Level	You are the "utility player"!
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- Serves as the primary point of contact and information source for the primary staff spouses
- Serves in an advisory capacity to the HHQ (HHBn at Corps level).
- Organizes and leads the Headquarters Coffee Group
- Sets an example of loyalty and adaptability during the Changes of Command.
- Initiates welcome and farewell events for the incoming and outgoing Command Team (CDR and CSM) spouses.
- Provides a sounding board for the unit spouses and is a confidential listener for the commander's spouse



WELCOMES

What:

- A tradition among military spouses to give a reception in honor of the spouses of the Commanding General, Deputy Commanding Generals, Command Sergeant Major, Brigade/Regiment Commander and Command Sergeant Major, Battalion/Squadron Commander and Command Sergeant Major.
- A Welcome event may be a tea, coffee, lunch, dinner, or a casual gathering.
- Because this is a tradition and not protocol, it is not considered an official event and protocol should not be involved with its planning or execution. You may request protocol help to identify who should be invited and their contact information if community members are to be included.

Why:

- An opportunity for the military community to officially meet these spouses
- Allow the guest of honor to circulate, network and start forming relationships that will be important as he/she steps into an advisory role for unit families.

Good to Know:

- Given this event is intended to be a networking and connection opportunity, if you, as the senior spouse, do not intend to take on an active role as an advocate/advisor it would be appropriate for you to forgo an official event.
- The guest of honor is the incoming spouse(s) so their wishes should be considered. In some cases, they may not want a formal welcome so it's important to initiate a conversation with the incoming spouse(s) before any planning begins.
- The Corps Commanding General's spouse and the Corps Command Sergeant's Major spouse have a reception with their Soldier immediately following the change of command. This is planned and executed through First Corps Protocol. This is considered their welcome to the community. If the Commander and CSM do not change out at the same time, the spouse may decide to host a welcome in honor of the new spouse.
- Welcomes for all other honorees are organized by their units.
- Keep the cost of the event to no more than \$15.00 per person. This includes any gifts that are to be presented.

Setting the date and sending the invitations:

- If possible, hold it within 2 weeks of the change of command/responsibility
- Deconflict a few possible dates with Senior Spouses being invited and then offer those up to the guest of honor to make a final choice.
- There may be occasions where it is appropriate to welcome more than one spouse in a single event. Be sure the date and time are acceptable to all the new spouses being welcomed.



- Be sure to ask the honoree(s) for any special guests that should be invited.
- Invitations go out 14 days prior to the event. See sample on Page 11. NOTE: This is a “guest of honor” sample. Instead of “To Remind” you would put the RSVP and Cost information on invitations sent out to the guest list.
- Evites are acceptable for guests, but not for the guest of honor.
- One hardcopy invitation should be mailed or hand-delivered to the guest of honor. It should not include the cost and RSVP. Replace these terms with “To Remind”.

The official host/hostess and the invitees:

Military tradition suggests including Senior Spouses from two levels above, as well as Junior Spouses from one level below the unit. For example, if you are planning a Brigade level welcome, you would invite Senior Spouses from Corps and Division and spouses from the Battalions in that Brigade.

The host/hostess is generally specific for most communities; however, as this is all voluntary, if your Soldier is in a position that deems you are the designated host/hostess and you are not inclined to volunteer in this way, don’t “drop the baton”! “Pass the baton” by letting the next senior spouse in your Soldier’s unit know that you would rather pass on planning these types of events.



To Welcome	Host/Hostess (the Initiator)	Planning Committee	Invite List
Corps CG/CSM Spouse	Their welcome is considered part of the Change of Command Reception so Corps Protocol plans and executes this event.		
Corps DCGs Spouse	CG, CSM & CofS Spouses. If the unit is hosting a retreat ceremony in the Soldier's honor, you could consider also welcoming the spouse at that time rather than planning a separate event.	Courage Spouses	Executive Spouses, Courage Spouses, JBLM Senior Spouses
Division/ ESC/ Medical Command CG's Spouse	That Division's Chief of Staff spouse or designee	Spouses of DCGs, CSM & Bde Cdrs	1 st Corp Command Team spouses, Executive Spouses, JBLM Sr. Spouses, Coffee Groups for each Brigade
Division DCGs Spouse	Spouses of that unit's CG, CSM and CofS	Spouses of the DCG and Bde Cdr/CSM spouses	1 st Corps Command Team Spouses, Executive Spouses, JBLM Sr Spouses, Spouses of all Field Grade Officers, BN Cdr/CSM spouses in that Division
Division/ESC/Medical Cmd CSM Spouse	Spouses of that unit's CG, DCGs and CofS	Bde Cdr/CSM spouses	Same as Div DCG welcome



To Welcome	Host/Hostess (the Initiator)	Planning Committee	Invite List
Bde Cdr Spouse	Spouses of that Brigade's CSM and XO	HQ Staff and BN Cdr/CSM Spouses	1 st Corp Command Team spouses, CG and CSM Spouses of Cdr/CSM of the sister Brigades, Coffee Groups for each Battalion
BDE CSM Spouse	That Brigade's Cdr and Ops SGM spouses	Same as for BDE Cdr Spouse Welcome	Same as for BDE Cdr Spouse Welcome
BN/Squadron Cdr's Spouse	BN/Squadron XO and CSM spouses	Spouses of Staff and Company Cdrs/1SG	That Division's CG, CSM, DCG and Cof S spouses, Bde Cdr/CSM Spouse, Sister BNs Coffee Group
BN/Squadron CSM Spouse	BN Cdr and Ops SGM spouses	Same as for BN Cdr spouse welcome	Same as for BN Cdr Spouse Welcome

FAREWELLS

- Guest of Honor decides upon the date, location, type of event (formal, informal, casual), and invited guests
- Host/Hostess/Planning Committee is the same as Welcome *as long as the planning committee members are on the guest of honor's invite list.*
- Gift- Three things to consider. 1. The greatest gift you can give someone who is departing is your presence at the farewell. 2. Be sure, if you are giving a gift on behalf of all who are attending, you have told the invitees so they don't bring their own gift not realizing a gift has already been arranged. 3. Remember, the total cost for the event should be no more than \$15.00 per person so consider this as you



brainstorm farewell gifts!

- As with the welcome, all costs are paid by the attendees only (not guest of honor).
- Evites are acceptable for everyone.
- Consider offering to “escort” the guest of honor to the event.

SAMPLE INVITATION:

GUEST OF HONOR: Hard copy and hand-delivered or mailed.





Planning & Executing the Welcome or Farewell

Remember, these are guidelines only. Your event may be more casual and simple and that's fine! The most important thing is the guest of honor feels welcomed (or honored with the farewell) and the other guests have the opportunity to interact with the guest of honor at some point during the event.

Host/Hostess

- * Coordinates date, time and location with the guest of honor and senior spouses.
- * Determine several tentative dates with the CG's spouse.
- * Telephones or writes the guest of honor for her preference on dates.
- * Arranges the location, reserving it as soon as possible.
- * Requests a list of special guests with addresses from the guest of honor and determines if the honoree has a guestbook to use for the event.
- * Prepares guest list with copies for the guest of honor and reservation chair.
- * Assists invitation chair to determine source of invitations, wording of invitations (see sample), and method of printing/writing the invitations.
- * Makes arrangements for parking and escort of guest of honor.
- * Coordinates with the committee for a gift and arranges for its purchase.
- * Stands in the receiving line with the guest of honor.
- * Acts as master/mistress of ceremonies for introduction of guest of honor, introduction of special guests, and presentation of gifts, allowing an opportunity for the guest of honor to speak.
- * Writes any thank you notes.
- * Ensures the guest of honor receives a "To Remind" copy of the invitation.
- * Prepares an after-action report to combine with those of the committee chairs.
- * Orchestrates activities of the committee chairs.

Committees & those Duties:

The following is a list of **possible** committees. The size, location, and level of event formality will determine what committees you need.

- Invitations
- Reservations
- Finances
- Decorations
- Refreshments
- Nametags
- Escorts
- Guestbook
- Publicity/photographer
- Music



Invitations:

- Determines source of invitations, printing or writing of invitations, and wording of invitations with the assistance of the official host/hostess.
- Obtains a copy of the guest list from the official host/hostess and emails, mails or hand delivers invitations.
- Gives hard copy invitation with “To Remind” to honoree.
- Coordinates with the reservations chair for R.S.V.P. names.
- Note: These are not official events which means invitations are not done by the unit, by protocol, or by any other official organization.

Reservations:

- Obtains a copy of the guest list from the official host/hostess so the names can be checked off upon arrival and monies collected.
- Sets up a committee to take responses.
- Confirms the correct spelling of the invitees who plan to attend.
- Provides copies of the final list to official host/hostess and Nametag Chair.
- Verifies the final count deadline with the venue and contact venue prior nlt that date to confirm number of attendees. Contacts venue on Friday prior to event with exact number of attendees.

Finances:

- In the age of Paypal and Venmo, we recommend this is how you collect payment from guests. Ideally, you should keep the cost to no more than \$15.00 per person.
- Keeps a receipt for all expenses and a record of money collected for the event.
- Pays for the event and reimburses expenditures after the event.
- Contacts those who R.S.V.P.’d “yes”, but did not attend, to collect monies (except in the case of emergencies)

Decorations:

- Orders corsage and flowers for head table (if used).
- Coordinates with venue about placement of tables, chairs, color of linens, etc.
- Allows sufficient time to check the final set-up.
- Submits all receipts for decorations and corsage to the finance chair for reimbursement.

Refreshments:

- Makes food selection, with caterer if one is used.
- With committee members, checks the food/beverages to ensure they are refilled when necessary.

Nametags:

- YES! You need these! Purchases or makes nametags for each attendee.
- Provides extra nametags and pens for misspellings or unexpected guests, and a committee member to write them.



- Arranges nametags in alphabetical order on a table to allow for smooth traffic flow.
- Submits all receipts for reimbursement from the finance chair.

Escorts:

- Determines how many senior spouses or special guests will need an escort and assigns those duties.
- Explains duties to the escorts.
- Ensures that the honoree has an escort.

Guestbook:

- If the honoree does not have one and will be in a position of officially entertaining, consider purchasing a guestbook.
- Fills out the first page of the guestbook with a copy of the invitation (which does not include the cost and R.S.V.P. information)
- Arranges for someone to sit or stand at the guestbook table.
- Reminds decorations chair to ensure that venue has flower decoration on the table.
- Submits all receipts to the finance chair for reimbursement.
- Ensures guestbook is given to honoree upon her departure.

Photography:

- Arranges for a photographer, either professional or interested individual, to take photos throughout the event with a focus on the honoree, food tables, receiving line as guests are introduced, special guests, and the presentation of gifts or guestbook.
- Saves receipts for photo prints.
- Ensures selected pictures are provided to the guest of honor in a scrapbook or to the Hosting group for presentation to him/her.
- Submits all receipts to the finance chair for reimbursement.

Music:

- Arranges for soft background music.
- Music choices include live pianist, harpist, violinist or playlist
- Location of speakers and/or musician.
- Responsible for volume control during event.
- Pause music during announcements and official portions of the event.

The Event:

- A receiving line includes the host/hostess and then honoree(s) in that order.
- Nametags should be prepared in advance of the event with extra nametags on hand for late arrivals (and may be handwritten).
- Attendees are charged a nominal fee (not to exceed ~\$15.00) to cover the entire cost of the event. *Word of warning- stay within your budget. The host/hostess should never have to contribute more personal funds for this event! Scale the event down if you see that happening!*
- Coffee groups/FRGs are not to be solicited for funds for these events.
- Welcome gifts need not be extravagant and may be as simple as a unit pin,



guestbook, floral centerpiece or a handcrafted item unique to the unit.

- *An important note: the gift to the spouse is part of the dollar limit of gifts presented to the Soldier so be sure your committee is cognizant of this! If you are unsure, check with JAG or Protocol.*
- Be sure the guests all know that a gift is being presented on their behalf.
- *Unit funds may not be used to pay for Welcomes and Farewells!* The cost of the entire event is paid by the attendees.



TAKING THE MYSTERY OUT OF MILITARY PROTOCOL

When to Stand:

- During “Ruffles and Flourishes”
- Posting of the Colors/Retiring of the Colors National Anthem (ours and host country) and during the Invocation
- Flags passing in review (6 steps before and 6 after you) Division and Army song played
- Retreat and Reveille
- When receiving a bouquet of flowers at a Change of Command/Change of Responsibility

Note: *Hand goes over heart when outdoors only, unless senior lady does otherwise.*

RSVP:

- Answer with a “Yes” or “No”.
- Respond within 48 hours of receiving invitation, and always by the NLT date.
- Call or write your RSVP; don’t just tell the host/hostess when you bump into him/her.
- If the invite does not mention children, assume this is not a “kid friendly” event.

Regrets only: Call, email or text if you cannot attend. The assumption will be you are attending if the host/hostess does not hear back from you.

Nametags: Wear on your right side.

Unit pins or brooches: Wear on your left side

Receiving Line:

- Stand with your service member. Spouse before Service Member, except in the Air Force or at White House functions. Service Member gives names to adjutant (protocol officer, first person in line) Do not shake hands with first person in line.
- Think HANDS FREE in this line: No food, drink or cigarettes in line.

Introductions: Elderly people, women, VIPs first.

Toasts: Stand and participate, even if you do not drink. Never drink a toast to yourself.

Silverware:

- Start from the outside and work your way in.
- Dessert utensils are frequently at the top of the place setting.

Cell Phones:

- Keep phone on silent or vibrate when in meetings or ceremonies.
- Don’t text or email during meetings or ceremonies.
- If in a meeting or ceremony, and you must answer a call, quietly step out to talk.

Social Media:

- Practice good OPSEC.
- Remember what you post reflects on you and your military spouse. Keep personal comments on your personal page and not our public or professional page.



COMMAND TEAM TRANSITION GUIDELINES

Tips for Brigade and Battalion Commanders/Command Sergeants Major and their Spouses.

The departure of a commander/command team is a major event in the life of a unit. It marks the end of one chapter in the continuing story of the unit and the beginning of another. The goal is to ensure a smooth transition.

OUTGOING TEAM:

Need to do:

- Place a congratulatory/welcome phone call, e-mail or letter as soon as your successor is announced.
- Send information (or the link to the official website) regarding the post, schools, housing, etc., if appropriate.
- Make sure the continuity notebook or website/page is updated with the most current rosters, coffee host/hostess lists, ongoing programs, newsletters, established routines regarding baby showers, birthdays, SFRG meetings, hails and farewells and training schedules about three months out)
- Provide your successor an opportunity to ask questions through follow-up phone call or letter.

Nice to do, too:

- Provide video or pictures of quarters.
- Provide video or pictures of people in unit (XO, CSM and their spouses).

When your successor arrives (or shortly before the change of command, if they have been assigned elsewhere on the installation):

- Warmly and personally welcome them; invite them to dinner or bring a welcome basket of some sort to them.
- Initiate a one-on-one meeting with your successor.
- Don't discuss personalities of individuals within the unit.
- Do share important facts, special roles, projects or unit commitments.
- Acknowledge and emphasize confidentiality.
- Introduce him/her to key people in the unit (CSM's spouse, XO's spouse).
- Inform him/her of change of command schedule, procedures, etc.
- If possible, bring them to your last JBLM Sound Living Summit and/or SFRG Steering Meeting



Additional tips:

- The XO's spouse is the continuity. Keep him/her informed about what you've discussed with your successor. Encourage the XO's spouse that a reach out with a welcome call/email/text and offer of assistance to the new commander's/CSM spouse is entirely appropriate. Tactfully inquire about the welcome planning just to be sure it is happening or the incoming spouse has indicated she/he does not want that.
- **Positively** discuss the transition at your last Coffee. Acknowledge that the time has come for you to move on, and encourage the group to warmly welcome the new commander's spouse.

INCOMING TEAM:

Before the Change of Command:

- Graciously accept outgoing commander's spouse suggestions and information – decide later to keep or delete.
- Discuss with your spouse what type social events you are comfortable hosting.
- Determine your budget and then decide on gifts you may want to give (i.e., baby, wedding, welcome, farewell). Be sure you and your wallet can sustain this for 2+years and that you will have a good system to ensure you won't miss anyone.
- Standardize and possibly buy ahead.

After the Change of Command:

- Keep in mind that you are the newcomer. The other spouses may welcome you with open arms and much warmth, or they may hold back and come around slowly. Don't take it personally. They have lost a friend with the departure of the last commander/CSM spouse. Give them time to respond to the change.
- Don't make instant changes: watch, listen, learn.
- Meet soon with other key spouses in the unit, to include the CSMs spouse. Begin to get to know each other and to discuss SFRG business.
- Remember, coffee groups are purely social. They should be fun and focused on building camaraderie. Try to determine the needs, desires, and interests of the group. Be willing to accept the group's preference for the status quo, if that appears to be the case.
- Forge strong working relationships with the Chaplains, the S-1, the CSM's spouse, and SFRG leaders.

