



SMSD Information and Resources

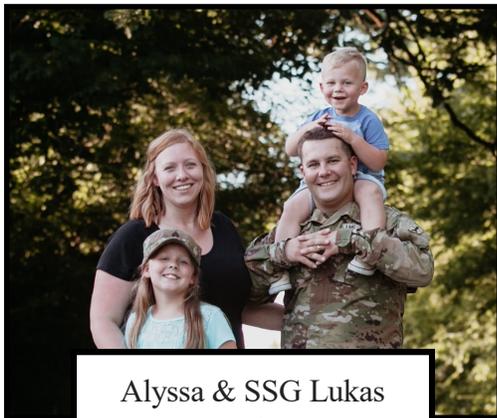
Service Members and Military Families

May 26, 2020

Military Spouse Appreciation Showcase

As May draws to a close, so must our showcase. Thank you to the military spouses who shared their experiences and offered guidance to new military spouses. Although the designated time for military spouse appreciation is ending, it does not mean our appreciation is waning. WI Family Programs will continue to be available to provide necessary support and resources.

Our final showcase features Alyssa Gardner, married to SSG Lukas Gardner A Co 1-128th IN BN. We also feature SMSgt Jason Kasten, married to MSgt Melanie Kasten AGR Services Team Chief.



Alyssa & SSG Lukas
Gardner

What does it mean to be a military spouse?

Alyssa: When I married my high school sweetheart 12 years ago, I didn't know what it would take to be a military spouse. My husband is currently on his second deployment. I have realized that it takes your whole 'self' to survive the military life. It takes grit, it takes resiliency, and most of all, it takes flexibility. When your spouse joins the military, you become the foundation of the family. You support your husband, you support your children, you keep the house in check. Even though you don't wear a rank, the military lifestyle takes all of you. For me, it meant taking 10 years to finish my degree in college, raising my first born in places hundreds of miles away from family. It meant not starting my career until my late 20s, only to leave everything behind to care for my children while my spouse is overseas. There's an undeniable sacrifice

we take to put our energy into supporting our spouse through challenges, frustrations, and long distances. While communicating long-distance you grow an incredible bond. Each moment you are together is more valuable than anyone can ever understand. As a military spouse, I found civilians struggle to understand. It's a challenge for them to empathize. Sometimes, I have to explain why my husband has to be gone or what his job entails, even when I don't feel like describing it for the hundredth time. We give so much, and stand in the shadows of our spouses' career in the military. We go unnoticed, and aren't acknowledged as much as we think. But [military spouses] are there for each other, we are there for our soldiers. With all our love and devotion, the hearts of our spouses are overfilled. We will wait for them. It's never goodbye, it's see-you-later.



SMSgt Jason &
MSgt Melanie Kasten

Jason: I am very proud to be married to her and support her service in the military. She makes up less than 1.4% of the US population of those who serve in the Air Force and that is a tremendous honor. We are in a unique situation that we are dual military serving together with kids and I am very grateful that I can serve alongside her. However, the balance of home, 3 young boys (5 year old and 2 1/2 year old twins), work and schedules can be very challenging at times. With my role as a spouse, my job is to help her balance those things so she can concentrate on her job and remove any outside distractors that would prevent her from top performance. This also goes both ways as I stated previously, we are dual military serving together.

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What advice would you give a new military spouse?

Alyssa: My top piece of advice would be to expect the unexpected. Be flexible with what you think the outcome could be. Don't take dates and timelines as set in stone. I have learned over the last 12 years that schedules are hard to live by, and things change by the minute. Avoid the rumor mills, and wait for official information to come from your spouse's leadership. Sometimes creating a support network is difficult, especially if you don't live close to other military spouses. Utilize community support and reach out (something I have a hard time doing) for help.

Often, others don't know what you need help with unless you speak up! Lastly, and most importantly, love yourself, and love your spouse. Be confident in who you are before anything else!

Jason: Be open minded, have patience, be flexible and most importantly support. In the Air Force the slogan, "Flexibility is key to air power" is also a good slogan for spouses at home. Not only is support and patience important to a military spouse, but flexibility is key to a successful marriage because things change and information is not always given right away. If you stay flexible and have that mind set, you are least likely to set yourself up to be disappointed when a spouse has to deploy, work weekends, or work 21 days in a row.

Get Back to Work with These Job Searching Tips

MADISON, WI—May 20, 2020--- At nearly 27%, Wisconsin's unemployment rate due to COVID-19 is the highest it has been in decades, even surpassing the 11% unemployment rate of the Great Recession. Many service members and their families across the state are facing joblessness and financial hardship which greatly impacts our military readiness. These job searching tips can help you get back to work with a company that is currently hiring and later when business re-open their doors for full service.

1. Write a good resume: A polished resume will help you get facetime with hiring officials— even if it is over video conference. Visit www.wisconsinmilitary.org or call 1-800-292-9464 (option 1) to work with a Soldier & Family Readiness Specialist to tighten up your resume.

2. Tailor your resume: You must use language that the employer is looking for when you submit your resume with an application. This could be as simple as changing "personnel manager" to "human resource manager" but it makes a HUGE difference. This is because your resume often goes through a computer program called an applicant tracking system to ensure you are minimally qualified. Some businesses use people to do this, but they are still scanning for key words.

- Compare the position description with your resume. You can use programs like www.tagcrowd.com and www.jobscan.co. Copy and paste the position description against your resume and the program will do it for you. Adjust your resume based on the results of the scans.
- Re-arrange your bullet points from most important and relevant to the job to least based on the position description. This is for when HR specialists skim your resume to see if you are qualified for the job. It makes it easy for them to find what they are looking for.

3. Know where to look: You can do Google searches to find businesses in your area and apply directly on their websites. Below is a listing of places to start. For a comprehensive list go to the [WisMil Blog](#).

Private Sector

linkedin.com
indeed.com
jobcenterofwisconsin.com
careerbuilder.com
monster.com

Geographically Sorted

milwaukeejobs.com
jobsinmadison.com
weau.com
jobsinfoxvalley.com

Government

dma.wi.gov
wisc.jobs
usajobs.gov
clearancejobs.com

USERRA Rights Protection FAQ

USERRA rights and obligations in light of COVID-19 require a service member to notify their employer of their return to work following military leave. The included flowchart illustrates some scenarios that might arise from the application of USERRA in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and reporting back to work.

Does a member of the National Guard or Reserves who is called to active duty in response to the COVID-19 emergency have employment and reemployment protections under USERRA?

- Yes, if called to duty under federal authority. National Guard or Reserve duty under federal authority (such as Title 10 or Title 32) is covered by USERRA.
- National Guard duty under state authority, commonly referred to as State Active Duty, is not covered under USERRA. However, members of WI National Guard serving on State Active Duty have similar employment protections under state law and should contact the appropriate state office for assistance. WI National Guard Legal Office: 608-242-3083. (Note: The authority under which orders are issued can change, even in the course of a service member’s performance of service.)

Can a service member be furloughed or laid off upon return from uniformed service?

- Yes, if it is reasonably certain that he or she would have been furloughed or laid off had he or she not been absent for uniformed service.

May an employer delay a service member’s reemployment out of concern that the service member’s service in a COVID-19 affected area may have exposed him or her to COVID-19?

- No. If the employee satisfies the prerequisites for reemployment, the employee should be promptly reemployed in the job position that he or she would have attained with reasonable certainty if not for the absence due to uniformed service. Reemployment must occur within two weeks of the employee’s application for reemployment.
- When reemploying a service member who might have been exposed to COVID-19, an employer must make reasonable efforts in order to qualify the returning employee for his or her proper reemployment position. This can include temporarily providing paid leave, remote work, or another position during a period of quarantine for an exposed reemployed service member or COVID-19 infected reemployed service member, before reemploying the individual into his or her proper reemployment position.

