

Maureen McDonnell
First Lady of Virginia.



The Executive Mansion
Richmond, Virginia. 23219

May 27, 2011

Colonel Michael G. Morrow
Garrison Commander, Fort Lee
1100 Lee Avenue, Suite 112
Fort Lee, Virginia 23801

Dear Colonel Morrow:

Virginia is home to more active duty military and their families than any other state, and these military families deserve our support, especially during the months, or even years, they are without a dad or mom... or both. The Governor and I want our service members to know that there is a military family in the Governor's Mansion, who thanks them for protecting the freedoms we wake up to every morning, and that Virginia has their back!

In his Inaugural Speech in January 2010, my husband, Governor Bob McDonnell, pledged to pursue the laudable goal of making Virginia the "Most Veteran Friendly State in the Nation", and as First Lady of Virginia I want to do all I can to support him in this effort. For this reason, shortly thereafter, I launched "***F.L.I.T.E. ~ First Ladies Initiatives Team Effort***", and I selected serving our military families as one of my four main areas of focus, with the creation of "***S.O.S. ~ Serving Our Service Member Families***".

As a military wife, Blue Star Mom, and daughter of a WWII Marine Sergeant who fought in Okinawa, Iwo Jima and Saipan, I am well aware of the challenges facing all service member families during deployments when the family is split-up. I know how much a little help can mean. I also know that the great men and women in our military perform best when they know their families are being cared for back home.

In remembrance of those lost on September 11, when Virginia herself was attacked; and those called to arms in response to that attack; I want to honor our military and their families in a personal way. I have never forgotten the unwritten rule the military has of taking care of "*their own*", and how everyone would pitch in to support

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each others' families when a spouse was deployed. So every month, we have been doing something to honor and bring attention to our service men and women, their families, and our veterans. I'm asking all Virginians to do the same and adopt the 11th, or any day each month, as a day of "*Serving Our Service Member Families*" and do something special for the family of a deployed military member or wounded warrior in their community. It is our hope that the Commonwealth will join us in this great cause!

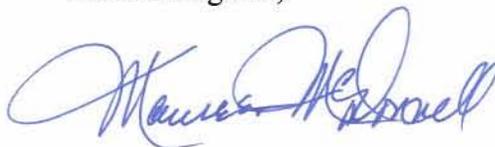
It always seemed that whenever Bob was in the field or deployed serving our country, those were the very times the car would break down, the household repairs piled up, and something always broke or needed fixing, that I couldn't repair without his help. I remember several occasions when our neighbors stepped forward to assist our family, making my job a little bit easier. I am forever grateful.

My "*SOS*" concept is built on the premise that we must encourage the citizens and businesses of the Commonwealth ~ neighbors helping neighbors ~ to step forward and assist those families of deployed service members who could use the same help I needed. My team has created a web site, www.SOS.virginia.gov, where organizations and businesses alike can sign up and identify the services they are willing to provide to assist families in need. Since the National Guard and U.S. Reserves are also being deployed to support the Nation in Afghanistan, Iraq, and many other foreign posts, there are a vast array of opportunities from Gate City to Virginia Beach, and Martinsville to Alexandria.

I am asking each of you to assist the Governor and me in this endeavor by providing a link to www.SOS.virginia.gov on your public websites. This will help to encourage the families of deployed service members to take advantage of the kindness and generosity of their neighbors; and hopefully, in the long run, will create a culture of service that will put us well on our way to becoming the most veteran friendly state in the nation.

Thank you for your service, and for all you do for our Nation and for the great Commonwealth of Virginia.

Warmest regards,



Maureen McDonnell

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of early wars were treated and appreciated by our nation."
~George Washington