

## COMMUNITY CORNER

# Commander encourages participation in upcoming Community Forum

By Col. Kevin Brown  
GARRISON COMMANDER

March's Community Forum is going live online.

Several methods will be available for you to submit your questions to be answered live beginning at 10:30 a.m. March 11.

Between March 1 and the Community Forum date, submit your questions under the Discussion tab on Fort

Riley's page on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/FortRiley](http://www.facebook.com/FortRiley).

Questions posted will be read and answered on air.

If you'd rather call in your question, leave a message at 785-240-TOWN (8696) before the forum, or call in during the show.



Col. Brown

The Community Forum will be available on Riley TV, Channel 2, for those who receive cable service on post. For others, view the Community Forum live online at the Voice of the Commander site - [voc.rileyarmy.mil](http://voc.rileyarmy.mil).

If you have a question, I encourage you to take advantage of this forum. We host this event to provide spouses, Soldiers and civilian employees with a direct line of communication to our senior

leaders. If there are issues or questions you aren't sure where to find the answers to, bring them here. Directorate heads, Picerre Military Housing and Iwita Army Community Hospital representatives will join me in our television studio during the forum to listen to your concerns and provide you with answers.

U.S. Army Garrison Fort Riley's mission is to provide our Soldiers and Families with services commensurate with

their service to the nation. While we strive to provide the programs you need and want, your feedback is what helps us hone those services to be the best they can be.

We want to hear from you. Even if you don't have any questions, I encourage you to tune into the Community Forum. It's a chance to hear from your leadership, and you may learn about a service you weren't aware of.

In case you can't watch the

live broadcast, video from the event will be posted to Fort Riley's page on Facebook and Fort Riley's homepage, [www.rileyarmy.mil](http://www.rileyarmy.mil), after the event.

Please submit your questions and tune in March 11 to learn more about your community.

To comment on this column or suggest a topic for the Community Corner, send an e-mail to [rile.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil](mailto:rile.post.newspaper@conus.army.mil).

## Fort Riley teen semi-finalist for Military Child of Year

By Katherine Rosario  
1ST INF. DIV. POST

A Fort Riley teenager is among 100 semi-finalists for the Operation Homefront 2011 Military Child of the Year award.

Shannon Nolan, 14, was nominated by her father, Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Nolan, Division Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, after he heard about the award at a January meeting.

"No one had nominated a child from Fort Riley, so I decided to nominate my daughter," he said.

Winners will be announced March 9, and awards will be presented to a military child from each branch of the service - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard - April 7 at a ceremony in Washington. Each winner also will receive \$5,000.

While Nolan was deployed last year, he said he was amazed at the relationship his wife, Edith, and daughter formed.

"They really grew closer and created a stronger bond and made the most of their time together," he said.

Shannon made time each weekend to speak with her father on the Internet through video chat and kept him informed on her latest community service and athletic activities.

"Shannon demonstrates resilience and doesn't let anything faze her," Nolan said.

Shannon is involved in JROTC, where she is a private first class, and is on the volleyball and swimming teams at her high school.

She was president of the National Junior Honor Society at Fort Riley Middle School last year, was nominated by teachers at the middle school as "Trooper of the Year," and received the middle school Citizen's Award. "Trooper" is the school's mascot name.

Shannon said she is waiting to hear back from the high school National Honor Society



Katherine Rosario | POST

Shannon Nolan, 14, a freshman at Junction City High School, was selected as one of 100 semi-finalists for the Operation Homefront 2011 Military Child of the Year award. Winners will be announced March 9, and awards will be presented April 7 at a ceremony in Washington.

To see if she was selected to be part of the program.

She graduated middle school with a 4.0 grade point average and has maintained a 4.0 GPA this year.

"I try to make good grades and take honors courses," she said. "Staying busy helps the time go by faster when my dad is deployed."

Shannon also is involved in the high school's Student to Student program, which helps new students become acquainted with the school and make new friends.

When she is not in school or participating in after-school activities, Shannon volunteers by babysitting at Family readiness group meetings, as well as volunteering at USO Fort Riley's No Dough Dinners each month.

During the summer, she volunteers her time at vacation Bible school and helps with the Commanding General's Mounted Color Guard by brushing the horses and helping carry equipment.

"I volunteer a lot with JROTC after school, and we clean roads and help out with flag ceremonies," she said. "I joined JROTC because I wanted to try something new."

She encourages military children to become involved in their community, even though they will probably move again.

"It's important to leave your mark on the town you are living in so you can leave it a better

place," she said.

Shannon also said it is important for military children to be resilient and be able to bounce back from adversity.

"You've got to be able to pull it together," she said. "Motivate yourself and keep busy during deployments."

Her father has deployed three times since she can remember, Shannon said, and staying busy and being involved in the community has helped her through the time away from her father.

"Seeing new people and partaking in new activities helps a lot," she said.

If she wins the \$5,000, Shannon said she will keep some of it for herself and put the rest toward college.

Although she said the award would be nice, seeing the other winners recognized is more important.

"It's important to let military children know that what they've done has made an impact, and they're appreciated," she said.

The Nolan Family was awarded the National Military Family Association 2009 Army Volunteer Family of the Year for the hours dedicated to helping others.

Shannon has an older brother, Stephen, 19, who graduated from JCHS two years ago and is a 3rd Classman at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

Any military, spouse or government worker is able to nominate a military dependent for the award. A committee made up of active-duty military personnel, Family readiness support assistants, teachers, military mothers and community members selected the semi-finalists.

Ideal candidates for the Military Child of the Year Award demonstrate resilience and strength of character; thrive in the face of challenges; and demonstrate leadership within their families and within their communities, according to an Operation Homefront press release.

Operation Homefront is a national nonprofit organization that provides emergency financial and other assistance to military families and wounded warriors.



Katherine Rosario | POST  
Donors give blood during Fort Riley's quarterly American Red Cross Blood Drive Feb. 15 and 16 at ACS. The blood drive collected 53 units of blood. The next blood drive will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 17 and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 18 at ACS.

## Father, daughter join together to donate blood for those in need

By Katherine Rosario  
1ST INF. DIV. POST

Amanda Smith, a military spouse, and her father, Jerry West, took turns giving blood Feb. 15 at Army Community Service during Fort Riley's quarterly American Red Cross Blood Drive.

Fifty-three units of blood were collected during the drive, Feb. 15 and 16. Thirty units were from active-duty Soldiers.

Smith and West decided to donate blood together, they said, because they wanted to do something to help others in need.

"I started after 9/11 because I was only 15, and I wanted to do something to help the people who were hurt in the attacks," Smith said.

Now 25, Smith said she has been donating blood for about 10 years and is on her way to earning an American Red Cross gallon pin.

"I donate now for my husband and the deployed Soldiers because they may need blood some day, and it comes from people who donate at drives

"What if I needed blood and there wasn't any. This is kind of like self insurance."

JERRY WEST | FATHER-IN-LAW OF FORT RILEY SOLDIER

like this," she said.

Although some people do not donate because they are afraid of the pain, Smith said it

doesn't hurt and feels the same as when she gives blood during her yearly physical.

West started donating blood in high school, but stopped after he was exposed to Hepatitis B about 20 years ago. Feb. 15 marked the third time he has donated since high school.

"What if I needed blood and there wasn't any," he said. "This is kind of like self insurance."

Lois Brokmeier, administrative assistant, Environmental Division, Directorate of Public Works, recently received her gallon pin from the Red Cross.

She said she donates because she wants to make sure there is enough blood available if someone is hurt in an accident.

"If my kid or husband get

in a wreck and need blood, I know I've done a part in making sure there is enough," she said.

After seeing her sister faint while giving blood in high school, she said she was always afraid of donating.

"My kids started donating in high school, and they told me to donate, too, so I tried it. My oldest kid just received a gallon pin as well," she said.

By the first day, American Red Cross officials had collected more than half their goal, said Ron Gilmore, American Red Cross team supervisor.

The need for certain blood types constantly change, Gilmore said, which is why it is so important that as many people donate as possible.

The next blood drive will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 17 and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 18 at ACS, Building 7264 Normandy Drive on Custer Hill.

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