**For media inquiries, contact:**

Marla Bautista [marla.bautista.author@gmail.com](file:///C:\Users\Owner\Downloads\marla.bautista.author@gmail.com)

Brian O’Malley [bomalley@gcjpr.com](mailto:bomalley@gcjpr.com) or 602-274-1988

**Fort Drum Spouse Named**

**Armed Forces Insurance**

**2019 Military Spouse of the Year Base Level Winner®**

*Spouse recognized for work within the Community*

**Fort Drum, NY** — Following more than 1200 nationwide nominations and a national vote yielding more than 86,000 votes, Marla Bautista has been named the 2019 Armed Forces Insurance Fort Drum Spouse of the Year®. Bautista is currently stationed with her husband, SSG Ulisses Bautista at Fort Drum.

Now in its twelfth year honoring the dedication and sacrifices of our nation’s more than 1.1 million military spouses, Armed Forces Insurance is proud to recognize military spouses from all six branches of the Armed Forces who are making a difference in their communities.

Marla is an Army Spouse of 11 years. Living all over the world, she knows how important diversity and community service is. Her efforts to bridge the gap between the Civilian and Military community through selfless service has encouraged people to get involved within their own communities and has helped create a family like atmosphere every where she goes. She volunteers as a Creative Writing Instructor, President of the North Country Spouses’ Club, and as an FRG leader on the Fort Drum Installation. Outside the gates, she has volunteered with the Watertown Urban Mission. Her company, The Bautista Project, has provided over 500 meals throughout the years and recently made blankets and pillows from old army uniforms for residents at a local children’s home. She is the epitome of a great leader and humble servant.

“It is an honor to be recognized along side of some of the most empowering spouses in the military community. This platform has given me an opportunity to teach and encourage other military spouses and community members to make a positive impact on society. I am grateful to be named the Armed Forces Insurance 2019 Military Spouse of the Year for Fort Drum.” Marla Bautista

As a base winner, Bautista is now a step closer to being named the overall **2019 Armed Forces Insurance Military Spouse of the Year®** (MSOY). Nominations from non-family members were accepted January 2-31 across all six branches of the United States military. Through a combination of popular vote and judging panels, the nominees have been whittled down to base winners with branch winners announced next. After a final vote conducted on March 7-8, the overall winner will be announced at an awards dinner on May 9 at Fort Meyer in Arlington, VA in conjunction with National Military Spouse Appreciation Day which occurs on May 10.

“Over the nine years Armed Forces Insurance has been involved with he Military Spouse of the Year® awards program, we have seen it grow and amplify the voice of the military spouse on a national stage,” says Lori Simmons, chief marketing office at Armed Forces Insurance. “These spouses have pioneered initiatives, founded organizations and advocated for issues impacting the military community in the best ways imaginable. We are thrilled to welcome the 2019 base winners to the AFI-MSOY family and work alongside them to make an even bigger impact.”

To learn more about Marla Bautista and the other base winners, please visit www.msoy.afi.org.

# # #

**About Armed Forces Insurance:**

Armed Forces Insurance was founded in 1887 by military leaders with a single mission: to protect the property of those who protect our nation. The company provides premium quality, competitively priced property and casualty insurance to military professionals throughout the United States and overseas. Armed Forces Insurance understands that its members have unique circumstances and insurance needs, enabling the company to offer a level of personalized service that's unequalled in the industry. For more information, visit the website at [www.afi.org](http://www.afi.org/) or call 1-800-495-8234, and follow us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/armed-forces-insurance?trk=nmp_rec_act_company_photo), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ArmedForcesInsurance/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ArmedForcesIns)and [Instagram](http://instagram.com/armedforcesinsurance).