U.S. ARMY FRG Leader's Handbook

ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE
ACS
Real-Life Solutions for Successful Army Living

U.S. ARMY FRG Leader's Handbook

ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE
ACS
Real-Life Solutions for Successful Army Living

Acknowledgements

Edition 3, Revised 2006.

This handbook was prepared for the U.S. Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC) by Deborah Mancini, a consultant, under Texas A & M University's, Cooperative State Research Education Extension Service (CSREES), USDA Grant No. 2004-48211-03128.

Cornell University, College of Human Ecology, Family Life Development Center had oversight of graphic reproduction and publication. Graphic design, Wells Communications, Ithaca, NY.

Acknowledgements

Edition 3, Revised 2006.

This handbook was prepared for the U.S. Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command (FMWRC) by Deborah Mancini, a consultant, under Texas A & M University's, Cooperative State Research Education Extension Service (CSREES), USDA Grant No. 2004-48211-03128.

Cornell University, College of Human Ecology, Family Life Development Center had oversight of graphic reproduction and publication. Graphic design, Wells Communications, Ithaca, NY.

ii

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER
4700 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA VA 22302-4418

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

CFSC-FP

1 Aug 06

MEMORANDUM FOR FAMILY READINESS GROUP LEADERS

SUBJECT: Welcome Letter

1. Congratulations on your appointment as the Family Readiness Group (FRG) Leader for your unit. Commanders make these appointments very carefully because of the crucial role FRG Leaders fulfill.

2. Families have been, and will continue to be, a cornerstone of support for our Soldiers and civilians. Volunteers such as you, who assist military families by providing the support and assistance they require, allow Soldiers to focus fully on their missions. Being a FRG Leader at times can be a daunting task, but also has many rewards. You can be proud of the assistance you provide. Your service to the Army is invaluable.

3. This Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook is written to assist you in establishing and managing a FRG for your unit. In addition to the Operation READY training program, I encourage you to take the comprehensive online FRG Leaders Course located on www.myarmylifetoo.com. This online course serves as an excellent desktop resource to get you acquainted with the full scope of your responsibilities.

4. I offer you my grateful appreciation for your dedication and support to Soldiers and families.

BELINDA PINCKNEY
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER
4700 KING STREET
ALEXANDRIA VA 22302-4418

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

CFSC-FP

1 Aug 06

MEMORANDUM FOR FAMILY READINESS GROUP LEADERS

SUBJECT: Welcome Letter

1. Congratulations on your appointment as the Family Readiness Group (FRG) Leader for your unit. Commanders make these appointments very carefully because of the crucial role FRG Leaders fulfill.

2. Families have been, and will continue to be, a cornerstone of support for our Soldiers and civilians. Volunteers such as you, who assist military families by providing the support and assistance they require, allow Soldiers to focus fully on their missions. Being a FRG Leader at times can be a daunting task, but also has many rewards. You can be proud of the assistance you provide. Your service to the Army is invaluable.

3. This Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook is written to assist you in establishing and managing a FRG for your unit. In addition to the Operation READY training program, I encourage you to take the comprehensive online FRG Leaders Course located on www.myarmylifetoo.com. This online course serves as an excellent desktop resource to get you acquainted with the full scope of your responsibilities.

4. I offer you my grateful appreciation for your dedication and support to Soldiers and families.

BELINDA PINCKNEY
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

U.S. ARMY
FRG Leader's Handbook

PART 1: Changes Impacting FRGs

	Expeditionary Army and 21st Century Environment	1
	Brigade Combat Teams	2
	Perceptions of Soldier's "Family"	3
	Integrated Multi-Component Family Support Network	3
	Deployment as a Cycle	4

PART 2: What FRG Leaders Need To Know

2.1	FRG Program Mission	6
	Definition and Mission of FRG	6
	Benefits of FRG	7
2.2	Structure of FRG Operations	8
	Company Level	8
	Battalion Level	8
	Brigade Level	8
2.3	Tips on Handling FRG Leadership Role	9
	Keys to Success	9
	Tips to Being an Effective FRG Leader	10
	Leadership Abilities and Character Traits	10
	Leadership Styles	10
	How to Take Care of Yourself	11
	Training and Resources for FRG Leaders	12

PART 3: Areas of FRG Leader's Responsibilities

3.1	Relationship with Unit Leadership	13
	Unit Leadership Responsibilities	14
	Mission Responsibilities	14
	Family Readiness Responsibilities	16
	Appointment of FRG leader	16
	FRG Leader's Responsibilities to Unit Leadership	18
	Establishing and Sustaining a Relationship	18

U.S. ARMY
FRG Leader's Handbook

PART 1: Changes Impacting FRGs

	Expeditionary Army and 21st Century Environment	1
	Brigade Combat Teams	2
	Perceptions of Soldier's "Family"	3
	Integrated Multi-Component Family Support Network	3
	Deployment as a Cycle	4

PART 2: What FRG Leaders Need To Know

2.1	FRG Program Mission	6
	Definition and Mission of FRG	6
	Benefits of FRG	7
2.2	Structure of FRG Operations	8
	Company Level	8
	Battalion Level	8
	Brigade Level	8
2.3	Tips on Handling FRG Leadership Role	9
	Keys to Success	9
	Tips to Being an Effective FRG Leader	10
	Leadership Abilities and Character Traits	10
	Leadership Styles	10
	How to Take Care of Yourself	11
	Training and Resources for FRG Leaders	12

PART 3: Areas of FRG Leader's Responsibilities

3.1	Relationship with Unit Leadership	13
	Unit Leadership Responsibilities	14
	Mission Responsibilities	14
	Family Readiness Responsibilities	16
	Appointment of FRG leader	16
	FRG Leader's Responsibilities to Unit Leadership	18
	Establishing and Sustaining a Relationship	18

iv

3.2 Administrative Tasks and Resource Management 20
Administrative Matters 20
Policy and Operational Guidance 20
Record Keeping 21
Training 23
Resource Management 23
Authorized Support and Funding 24
FRG Deployment Support Assistants 28
Volunteer Management 29
Identifying Volunteers 29
Recruiting and Training Volunteers 31
Managing and Supervising Volunteers 34
Recognizing Volunteers 34
Mentoring Future FRG Leaders 35
3.3 Management of FRG Activities 36
Identifying FRG Activities Needed 36
Communicating with Army Families 37
FRG Meetings 38
FRG Newsletter 39
Key Callers 41
FRG Email 43
Virtual Family Readiness Group Web Site (vFRG) 43
Referring Families to Military and Civilian Community Support Services 44
Sustaining The Family Readiness Group 46
Handling Traumatic Situations 47
Crisis Management 47
Trauma Support 49
Media Guidance 51
Rumor Control 53

3.2 Administrative Tasks and Resource Management 20
Administrative Matters 20
Policy and Operational Guidance 20
Record Keeping 21
Training 23
Resource Management 23
Authorized Support and Funding 24
FRG Deployment Support Assistants 28
Volunteer Management 29
Identifying Volunteers 29
Recruiting and Training Volunteers 31
Managing and Supervising Volunteers 34
Recognizing Volunteers 34
Mentoring Future FRG Leaders 35
3.3 Management of FRG Activities 36
Identifying FRG Activities Needed 36
Communicating with Army Families 37
FRG Meetings 38
FRG Newsletter 39
Key Callers 41
FRG Email 43
Virtual Family Readiness Group Web Site (vFRG) 43
Referring Families to Military and Civilian Community Support Services 44
Sustaining The Family Readiness Group 46
Handling Traumatic Situations 47
Crisis Management 47
Trauma Support 49
Media Guidance 51
Rumor Control 53

PART 4: Role and Activities of the FRG in Deployment Cycle

4.1 Train-Up/Preparation and Mobilization Phases 54
Assisting Command with Family Preparations and Ensuring FRG Readiness 55
Getting Families and Soldiers Ready 57
4.2 Deployment and Employment Phases 60
Assisting Command with Family Communications and Managing FRG Activities 61
Maintaining Communications with Families 63
Deployment Issues 65
Children's Needs and Reactions to Deployment 65
Casualty and Trauma in the Unit 65
Taking Care of Yourself and FRG Volunteers 68
4.3 Redeployment 69
Assisting Command with Reunion Preparations and FRG Planning 70
Preparing Families for Reunion and Supporting Families of Soldiers on R & R 71
4.4 Post Deployment and Reconstitution Phases 72
Assisting Command with Post Deployment and Reconstitution Tasks 73
Supporting Families with Reunion and Reintegration 74
Post Deployment Issues 75
Combat Operational Stress Reaction: "Battle Fatigue" 75
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 75

PART 4: Role and Activities of the FRG in Deployment Cycle

4.1 Train-Up/Preparation and Mobilization Phases 54
Assisting Command with Family Preparations and Ensuring FRG Readiness 55
Getting Families and Soldiers Ready 57
4.2 Deployment and Employment Phases 60
Assisting Command with Family Communications and Managing FRG Activities 61
Maintaining Communications with Families 63
Deployment Issues 65
Children's Needs and Reactions to Deployment 65
Casualty and Trauma in the Unit 65
Taking Care of Yourself and FRG Volunteers 68
4.3 Redeployment 69
Assisting Command with Reunion Preparations and FRG Planning 70
Preparing Families for Reunion and Supporting Families of Soldiers on R & R 71
4.4 Post Deployment and Reconstitution Phases 72
Assisting Command with Post Deployment and Reconstitution Tasks 73
Supporting Families with Reunion and Reintegration 74
Post Deployment Issues 75
Combat Operational Stress Reaction: "Battle Fatigue" 75
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) 75

vi

PART 5: Summary Highlights 77

References

Documents 79

Web Sites 82

PART 5: Summary Highlights 77

References

Documents 79

Web Sites 82

This *Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* is designed to be used by Family Readiness Group (FRG) leaders in the active, Guard, and Reserve Components. The handbook provides updated information regarding FRGs. A battalion commander/Rear Detachment Commander (RDC) oversees and supports all company FRGs directly and indirectly through company level commanders and a battalion FRG steering committee. When there is a battalion FRG, then the battalion commander/RDC works with the battalion FRG leader in the same manner as described above. However, if the Battalion commander chooses to have a single FRG for the battalion, the next higher level commander shall establish the advisory steering committee for the brigade's FRGs.

This handbook incorporates the guidance provided in AR 608-1, Appendix J, Army Family Readiness Group Operations and provides information and tips on how to run FRGs based on lessons learned and input from the field. The handbook is organized as follows:

Part 1 describes changes that are occurring in the military and with family support that call for FRGs to work in new ways.

Part 2 discusses key aspects of the FRG program that FRG leaders need to know. Information on the FRG mission as well as structure of FRG operations is provided. Tips on how to handle the FRG leadership role are also presented.

Part 3 outlines the areas of the FRG leader's responsibilities. Details on the relationship with unit leadership, administrative matters, volunteer management, required FRG activities, and communication systems between the FRG and families are given. Official guidance that pertains to these areas is included in this discussion. In addition, information on how to handle different types of situations the FRG leader (and FRG) may face is provided.

Part 4 provides checklists of FRG activities that must be completed during each phase of the deployment cycle to support families. These checklists highlight how the FRG leader will need to work with unit leadership and FRG volunteers to perform FRG activities in each deployment phase.

Part 5 provides a list of take away messages for FRG leaders.

Note: *The following terms are used throughout this handbook and are defined as follows:*

- ***"Soldiers"*** *refers collectively to active duty, Guard and Reserve members of the Army.*
- ***"Families"*** *refers collectively to both immediate and extended family members of Soldiers as well as other individuals identified by Soldiers.*
- ***"Deployments"*** *is used rather than deployment/mobilization and generally includes separations.*

This *Army Family Readiness Group Leader's Handbook* is designed to be used by Family Readiness Group (FRG) leaders in the active, Guard, and Reserve Components. The handbook provides updated information regarding FRGs. A battalion commander/Rear Detachment Commander (RDC) oversees and supports all company FRGs directly and indirectly through company level commanders and a battalion FRG steering committee. When there is a battalion FRG, then the battalion commander/RDC works with the battalion FRG leader in the same manner as described above. However, if the Battalion commander chooses to have a single FRG for the battalion, the next higher level commander shall establish the advisory steering committee for the brigade's FRGs.

This handbook incorporates the guidance provided in AR 608-1, Appendix J, Army Family Readiness Group Operations and provides information and tips on how to run FRGs based on lessons learned and input from the field. The handbook is organized as follows:

Part 1 describes changes that are occurring in the military and with family support that call for FRGs to work in new ways.

Part 2 discusses key aspects of the FRG program that FRG leaders need to know. Information on the FRG mission as well as structure of FRG operations is provided. Tips on how to handle the FRG leadership role are also presented.

Part 3 outlines the areas of the FRG leader's responsibilities. Details on the relationship with unit leadership, administrative matters, volunteer management, required FRG activities, and communication systems between the FRG and families are given. Official guidance that pertains to these areas is included in this discussion. In addition, information on how to handle different types of situations the FRG leader (and FRG) may face is provided.

Part 4 provides checklists of FRG activities that must be completed during each phase of the deployment cycle to support families. These checklists highlight how the FRG leader will need to work with unit leadership and FRG volunteers to perform FRG activities in each deployment phase.

Part 5 provides a list of take away messages for FRG leaders.

Note: *The following terms are used throughout this handbook and are defined as follows:*

- ***"Soldiers"*** *refers collectively to active duty, Guard and Reserve members of the Army.*
- ***"Families"*** *refers collectively to both immediate and extended family members of Soldiers as well as other individuals identified by Soldiers.*
- ***"Deployments"*** *is used rather than deployment/mobilization and generally includes separations.*

viii

Several significant changes are occurring that impact how FRGs need to operate today and in the upcoming years. It is no longer sufficient for FRGs to operate only during and/or for the purposes of deployment. FRGs are being called upon to play a more expansive role in family readiness and in assisting units and families of an Expeditionary Army.

Expeditionary Army and 21st Century Environment

The military force is being employed in many different ways due to global insecurity, the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), and natural disasters. To meet the large demands, military missions involve all components (i.e., active, Guard, and Reserve) of the force. As a result, Soldiers are experiencing more deployments and a wider array of missions. To address the demands on the force, the Army is reorganizing to an expeditionary force comprised of modular units (see the next section on Brigade Combat Teams). In other words, units are configured in different ways when the force deploys. As a more flexible, rapidly deployable force, the Army can respond more effectively to the unpredictable nature of deployments and high operating tempo (OPTEMPO) demands.

What does this mean for FRGs? It means a high level of preparedness is required. Establishing the capability to respond and adapt to unforeseen situations that arise quickly is also needed. For an FRG to work effectively and support families under these conditions, several actions are critically important:

- planning and preparation
- maintaining the infrastructure of the FRG and level of operation so the FRG can respond quickly to increased demands for information and support
- attending to the welfare of all FRG volunteers and taking other steps to sustain the FRG so the FRG can meet ongoing demands for high levels of support
- coordinating with others to ensure all families are reached and supported regardless of geographical location
- revising FRG procedures and making other changes needed based on lessons learned.

Operating the FRG on an ongoing basis is necessary to support units and families in today's environment

PART 1: CHANGES IMPACTING FRGs

1

Several significant changes are occurring that impact how FRGs need to operate today and in the upcoming years. It is no longer sufficient for FRGs to operate only during and/or for the purposes of deployment. FRGs are being called upon to play a more expansive role in family readiness and in assisting units and families of an Expeditionary Army.

Expeditionary Army and 21st Century Environment

The military force is being employed in many different ways due to global insecurity, the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), and natural disasters. To meet the large demands, military missions involve all components (i.e., active, Guard, and Reserve) of the force. As a result, Soldiers are experiencing more deployments and a wider array of missions. To address the demands on the force, the Army is reorganizing to an expeditionary force comprised of modular units (see the next section on Brigade Combat Teams). In other words, units are configured in different ways when the force deploys. As a more flexible, rapidly deployable force, the Army can respond more effectively to the unpredictable nature of deployments and high operating tempo (OPTEMPO) demands.

What does this mean for FRGs? It means a high level of preparedness is required. Establishing the capability to respond and adapt to unforeseen situations that arise quickly is also needed. For an FRG to work effectively and support families under these conditions, several actions are critically important:

- planning and preparation
- maintaining the infrastructure of the FRG and level of operation so the FRG can respond quickly to increased demands for information and support
- attending to the welfare of all FRG volunteers and taking other steps to sustain the FRG so the FRG can meet ongoing demands for high levels of support
- coordinating with others to ensure all families are reached and supported regardless of geographical location
- revising FRG procedures and making other changes needed based on lessons learned.

Operating the FRG on an ongoing basis is necessary to support units and families in today's environment

1

Brigade Combat Teams

The Army's force structure for meeting the Nation's demands is the Modular Force. The Army is creating a modular "brigade-based" Army that is more responsive to regional combatant commanders' needs, better employs joint capabilities, facilitates force packaging and rapid deployment, and fights as more self-contained units in non-linear, non-contiguous battlespaces. Key reasons for change are:

- more rapidly deployable forces that better meet combatant commanders' requirements
- leveraging joint interoperability and interdependence
- acceleration in fielding a networked force
- generating increased capabilities for force rotation
- exploiting joint enablers at tactical level
- providing modular capabilities for future conflicts
- increasing headquarters flexibility
- improving capabilities to operate in dispersed, non-contiguous battle spaces
- accelerating behavioral change to achieve a joint and expeditionary mindset.

The Army Plan as of May 2006, calls for the Active Component to field 42 brigade combat teams (heavy, infantry, and Stryker). There will also be ten modular divisions that are headquarters capable of joint operations, as well as a multi-functional and functional support brigades. The National Guard is also changing its structure to 28 BCTs (heavy, infantry, and Stryker) as well as eight modular divisions.

The restructuring is designed to enhance the capabilities of the entire Army for joint force operations and frequent contingency operations. In order for this to occur, brigades are already reorganizing. For example, support elements from the division level are being shifted to and added to each BCT. Further, the design of each type of brigade is being standardized. A "heavy" brigade combat team will have the same organizational design regardless of component or location. Each heavy BCT will have two combined arms battalions, reconnaissance squadron, artillery battalion, brigade troops battalion, and a support battalion.

What does this mean for FRGs?

1. All units need to be in a high state of readiness. Family readiness is critical to Soldier readiness and thus unit readiness. Hence, preparations for deployment need to be made well before alerts. FRGs need to be organized and running at all times to be prepared to assist units, Soldiers and families with rapid deployments.
2. All units within a BCT may not deploy and/or an entire unit may not deploy. The FRG will need to support both families of deployed and non-deployed Soldiers. Further,

1
1: CHANGES IMPACTING FRGs

Brigade Combat Teams

The Army's force structure for meeting the Nation's demands is the Modular Force. The Army is creating a modular "brigade-based" Army that is more responsive to regional combatant commanders' needs, better employs joint capabilities, facilitates force packaging and rapid deployment, and fights as more self-contained units in non-linear, non-contiguous battlespaces. Key reasons for change are:

- more rapidly deployable forces that better meet combatant commanders' requirements
- leveraging joint interoperability and interdependence
- acceleration in fielding a networked force
- generating increased capabilities for force rotation
- exploiting joint enablers at tactical level
- providing modular capabilities for future conflicts
- increasing headquarters flexibility
- improving capabilities to operate in dispersed, non-contiguous battle spaces
- accelerating behavioral change to achieve a joint and expeditionary mindset.

The Army Plan as of May 2006, calls for the Active Component to field 42 brigade combat teams (heavy, infantry, and Stryker). There will also be ten modular divisions that are headquarters capable of joint operations, as well as a multi-functional and functional support brigades. The National Guard is also changing its structure to 28 BCTs (heavy, infantry, and Stryker) as well as eight modular divisions.

The restructuring is designed to enhance the capabilities of the entire Army for joint force operations and frequent contingency operations. In order for this to occur, brigades are already reorganizing. For example, support elements from the division level are being shifted to and added to each BCT. Further, the design of each type of brigade is being standardized. A "heavy" brigade combat team will have the same organizational design regardless of component or location. Each heavy BCT will have two combined arms battalions, reconnaissance squadron, artillery battalion, brigade troops battalion, and a support battalion.

What does this mean for FRGs?

1. All units need to be in a high state of readiness. Family readiness is critical to Soldier readiness and thus unit readiness. Hence, preparations for deployment need to be made well before alerts. FRGs need to be organized and running at all times to be prepared to assist units, Soldiers and families with rapid deployments.
2. All units within a BCT may not deploy and/or an entire unit may not deploy. The FRG will need to support both families of deployed and non-deployed Soldiers. Further,

2

the BCT may consist of units from various locations. Thus, for FRGs to support BCTs, they need to operate in such a way that they can serve and cover different geographical areas.

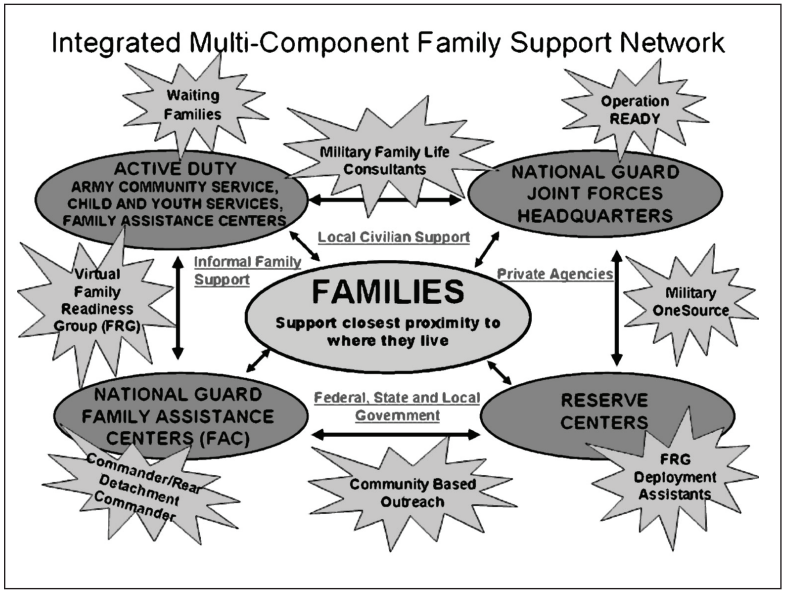
3. Information and guidance from the brigade and battalion command levels will be important to obtain to support deployed BCTs and the families involved.

Perception of Soldier's "Family"

Today, there is greater recognition of the many different people involved in a Soldier's life who represent the Soldier's support network. Many of these individuals seek accurate and timely information about the Soldier's well-being from the military. Supporting these individuals can help Soldiers to focus on the mission as well as make them more effective sources of support to Soldiers. As a result, the FRG must now provide information to a large network of individuals to include parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other important individuals (e.g., caregiver of Soldier's children during a deployment, fiancée).

Integrated Multi-Component Family Support Network (IMCFSN)

The family support systems across the active, Guard, and Reserve Components are also restructuring to a more integrated network to align with increasing joint force



1: CHANGES IMPACTING FRGs
1

the BCT may consist of units from various locations. Thus, for FRGs to support BCTs, they need to operate in such a way that they can serve and cover different geographical areas.

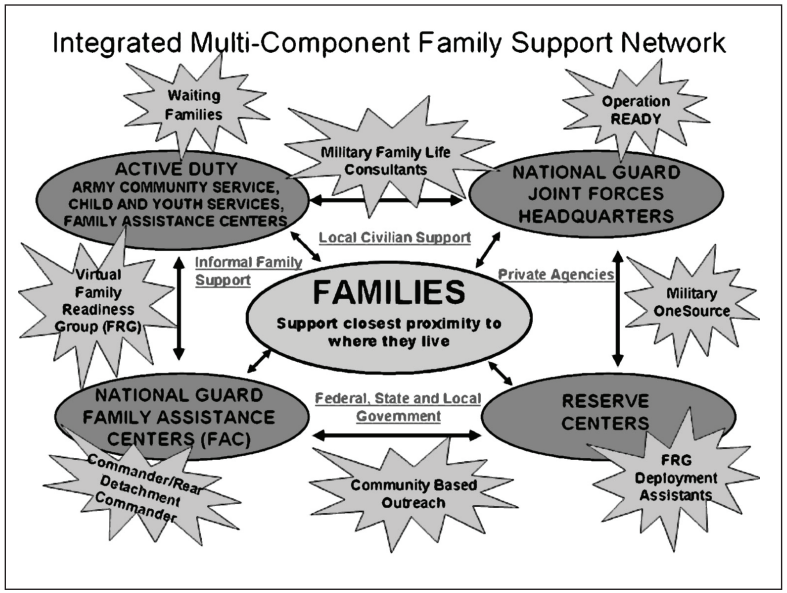
3. Information and guidance from the brigade and battalion command levels will be important to obtain to support deployed BCTs and the families involved.

Perception of Soldier's "Family"

Today, there is greater recognition of the many different people involved in a Soldier's life who represent the Soldier's support network. Many of these individuals seek accurate and timely information about the Soldier's well-being from the military. Supporting these individuals can help Soldiers to focus on the mission as well as make them more effective sources of support to Soldiers. As a result, the FRG must now provide information to a large network of individuals to include parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other important individuals (e.g., caregiver of Soldier's children during a deployment, fiancée).

Integrated Multi-Component Family Support Network (IMCFSN)

The family support systems across the active, Guard, and Reserve Components are also restructuring to a more integrated network to align with increasing joint force

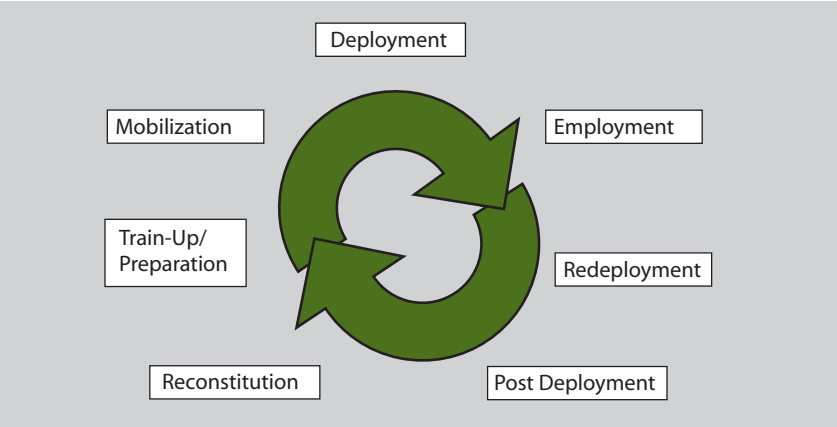


military operations. In addition, working relationships between the units (i.e., unit leadership and FRGs), military community support organizations, and civilian support organizations are being established. The IMCFSN (see diagram on previous page) reflects the integration of efforts that are intended to standardize and strengthen the quality of support efforts so the needs of all Soldiers and families are met. The various collaborative arrangements within communities and across states/regions will help the Army support Soldiers and families where they live regardless of component. This outcome is important because Soldiers and families are geographically dispersed and some families do not live near a military installation or facility. FRGs are a vital component of support in that they support families directly and connect families to this network of resources.

What does this mean for FRGs? FRGs can approach any of these agencies when assisting families. There is another benefit. This family support network allows individual organizations (such as FRGs) to have access to information and support that can enhance their capability in supporting families. For example, ACS and Reserve Component Family Programs offer training to FRGs.

Deployment As A Cycle

With the trend being back-to-back deployments, units go through a series of phases, now defined as the deployment cycle (see diagram below). The FRG plays an active role in assisting units and their Soldiers and families during each phase and in transitioning from one phase to another. Detailed information on the specific activities FRGs carry out in each phase is provided in Part 4 of this handbook. A brief explanation of the deployment cycle is provided here.



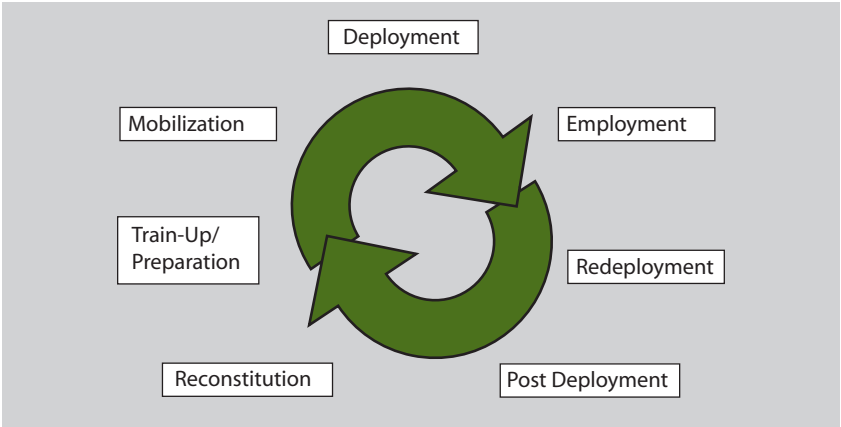
1
1: CHANGES IMPACTING FRGs

military operations. In addition, working relationships between the units (i.e., unit leadership and FRGs), military community support organizations, and civilian support organizations are being established. The IMCFSN (see diagram on previous page) reflects the integration of efforts that are intended to standardize and strengthen the quality of support efforts so the needs of all Soldiers and families are met. The various collaborative arrangements within communities and across states/regions will help the Army support Soldiers and families where they live regardless of component. This outcome is important because Soldiers and families are geographically dispersed and some families do not live near a military installation or facility. FRGs are a vital component of support in that they support families directly and connect families to this network of resources.

What does this mean for FRGs? FRGs can approach any of these agencies when assisting families. There is another benefit. This family support network allows individual organizations (such as FRGs) to have access to information and support that can enhance their capability in supporting families. For example, ACS and Reserve Component Family Programs offer training to FRGs.

Deployment As A Cycle

With the trend being back-to-back deployments, units go through a series of phases, now defined as the deployment cycle (see diagram below). The FRG plays an active role in assisting units and their Soldiers and families during each phase and in transitioning from one phase to another. Detailed information on the specific activities FRGs carry out in each phase is provided in Part 4 of this handbook. A brief explanation of the deployment cycle is provided here.



Train-Up/Preparation. Units complete the reset actions and begin to enter the traditional training cycle. Individual and collective training and readiness activities drive this phase. The Train-up/Preparation Phase begins with completion of reset activities resulting in a reconstituted unit that is prepared to enter the Reset/Train Force Pool of units and begin the training cycle. This phase ends when the individuals/units are fully prepared to deploy worldwide and conduct contingency operations.

Mobilization. Units or individuals are alerted for possible deployment and undergo preparation. The mobilization phase begins with receipt of a warning order and ends with the individuals/units' arrival at the MOB Station (RC) or home station (AA). This phase ends when individuals/units are prepared for deployment.

Deployment. Units or individuals deploy from the CONUS or OCONUS installations into the designated theater. The deployment phase begins with receipt of a warning order, proceeds through arrival at the port of embarkation and ends with arrival in theater.

Employment. Units or individuals perform their assigned mission in theater for a prescribed period of time. The employment phase begins with arrival in theater, continues throughout employment and ends with notification for redeployment.

Redeployment. Units/individuals reposture in-theater; transfer forces and material to support other operational requirements; or return personnel, equipment, and material to the home station or DEMOB station. The redeployment phase begins with receipt of a warning order, proceeds through arrival at the rear assembly area (RAA), continues through arrival at port of debarkation and ends with arrival at home station or DEMOB station.

Post Deployment. Personnel, equipment, and material arrive at home station or DEMOB station. The post deployment phase begins with units/individuals arriving at home station or DEMOB station, and includes personnel, equipment recovery, and demobilization activities.

Reconstitution. Soldiers and DA civilians are reintegrated into their families and communities. The reconstitution phase begins at home station after completion post deployment equipment recovery and administrative requirements. This phase ends when units have been reconstituted sufficiently to allow the start of individual and collective training.

1: CHANGES IMPACTING FRGs

1

Train-Up/Preparation. Units complete the reset actions and begin to enter the traditional training cycle. Individual and collective training and readiness activities drive this phase. The Train-up/Preparation Phase begins with completion of reset activities resulting in a reconstituted unit that is prepared to enter the Reset/Train Force Pool of units and begin the training cycle. This phase ends when the individuals/units are fully prepared to deploy worldwide and conduct contingency operations.

Mobilization. Units or individuals are alerted for possible deployment and undergo preparation. The mobilization phase begins with receipt of a warning order and ends with the individuals/units' arrival at the MOB Station (RC) or home station (AA). This phase ends when individuals/units are prepared for deployment.

Deployment. Units or individuals deploy from the CONUS or OCONUS installations into the designated theater. The deployment phase begins with receipt of a warning order, proceeds through arrival at the port of embarkation and ends with arrival in theater.

Employment. Units or individuals perform their assigned mission in theater for a prescribed period of time. The employment phase begins with arrival in theater, continues throughout employment and ends with notification for redeployment.

Redeployment. Units/individuals reposture in-theater; transfer forces and material to support other operational requirements; or return personnel, equipment, and material to the home station or DEMOB station. The redeployment phase begins with receipt of a warning order, proceeds through arrival at the rear assembly area (RAA), continues through arrival at port of debarkation and ends with arrival at home station or DEMOB station.

Post Deployment. Personnel, equipment, and material arrive at home station or DEMOB station. The post deployment phase begins with units/individuals arriving at home station or DEMOB station, and includes personnel, equipment recovery, and demobilization activities.

Reconstitution. Soldiers and DA civilians are reintegrated into their families and communities. The reconstitution phase begins at home station after completion post deployment equipment recovery and administrative requirements. This phase ends when units have been reconstituted sufficiently to allow the start of individual and collective training.

5

Part 2 provides important information about the FRG program with tips on how to manage the FRG leader role. It is followed by Part 3 which reviews the specific responsibilities of the FRG leader.

2.1 FRG Program Mission

The FRG is an official Army program established pursuant to AR 600-20, Army Command Policy. Unit commanders at all levels are expected to establish and/or support FRG operations. FRGs are typically established at the company level with guidance and support from the battalion commander and his/her staff. Specific guidance on the definition and mission of FRGs has been established and is described below.

The FRG is an official Army program. Key legal and operational guidance is in AR 608-1, Appendix J

Definition and Mission of FRG

As a company level operation, the FRG is a command sponsored organization of all assigned Soldiers (married and single), DA civilians, volunteers and their families (immediate and extended) that together provide mutual support and assistance and a network of communications among the family members, the chain of command, and community resources. While all of these individuals are automatically considered to be members of the FRG, participation is voluntary.

The FRG plays a vital role in assisting unit commanders with military and personal deployment preparedness and enhancing family readiness of Soldiers and families. The FRG assists unit commanders in three ways. First, the FRG conducts activities that enhance the flow of information between command and families. The FRG provides feedback on the state of the unit's families to the command and disseminates information to families received from the command. Secondly, the FRG encourages resiliency among the members by providing information, referral assistance and mutual concern. Thirdly, the FRG provides activities and support that enhance the well-being and esprit de corps within the unit.

The FRG mission is to:

- act as an extension of the unit in providing official, accurate command information
- provide mutual support between the command and the FRG membership
- advocate more efficient use of community resources
- help families solve problems at the lowest level.

2

PART 2: WHAT FRG LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

Part 2 provides important information about the FRG program with tips on how to manage the FRG leader role. It is followed by Part 3 which reviews the specific responsibilities of the FRG leader.

2.1 FRG Program Mission

The FRG is an official Army program established pursuant to AR 600-20, Army Command Policy. Unit commanders at all levels are expected to establish and/or support FRG operations. FRGs are typically established at the company level with guidance and support from the battalion commander and his/her staff. Specific guidance on the definition and mission of FRGs has been established and is described below.

The FRG is an official Army program. Key legal and operational guidance is in AR 608-1, Appendix J

Definition and Mission of FRG

As a company level operation, the FRG is a command sponsored organization of all assigned Soldiers (married and single), DA civilians, volunteers and their families (immediate and extended) that together provide mutual support and assistance and a network of communications among the family members, the chain of command, and community resources. While all of these individuals are automatically considered to be members of the FRG, participation is voluntary.

The FRG plays a vital role in assisting unit commanders with military and personal deployment preparedness and enhancing family readiness of Soldiers and families. The FRG assists unit commanders in three ways. First, the FRG conducts activities that enhance the flow of information between command and families. The FRG provides feedback on the state of the unit's families to the command and disseminates information to families received from the command. Secondly, the FRG encourages resiliency among the members by providing information, referral assistance and mutual concern. Thirdly, the FRG provides activities and support that enhance the well-being and esprit de corps within the unit.

The FRG mission is to:

- act as an extension of the unit in providing official, accurate command information
- provide mutual support between the command and the FRG membership
- advocate more efficient use of community resources
- help families solve problems at the lowest level.

6

Benefits of the FRG

For family members, mutual support and care — The FRG provides a connection to the unit through which families get important information, develop friendships, and receive moral support. In feeling connected and supported, families are more likely to have positive attitudes about military life, the unit, and its mission. The FRG's efforts to educate and support families also help families become more resilient and able to cope with deployments.

For Soldiers, peace of mind — Soldiers can be assured that while they are deployed, the unit has provided an avenue for their family members to get reliable information and help when needed. This support can help reduce Soldiers' stress and enable Soldiers to focus on the mission.

For commanders, force multiplier — The FRG leader's feedback, based on the FRG's connections and contact with families, enables the command to keep a pulse on family needs and issues so that command can respond in a timely manner. By being able to communicate with and support families more effectively, the command can increase family readiness and deployment preparedness.

For the military and civilian communities, an FRG that is able to refer families to appropriate community service agencies in a timely manner can reduce the occurrence of crisis situations. Further, to the extent FRGs can learn about resources available in different communities, military and civilian communities can support Soldiers and families wherever they live.

For the Army, successful FRG programs enhance family readiness and deployment preparedness, thereby increasing unit readiness for military missions.

The FRG provides a connection to the unit through which families get important information, develop friendships, and receive moral support.

2: WHAT FRG LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

2

Benefits of the FRG

For family members, mutual support and care — The FRG provides a connection to the unit through which families get important information, develop friendships, and receive moral support. In feeling connected and supported, families are more likely to have positive attitudes about military life, the unit, and its mission. The FRG's efforts to educate and support families also help families become more resilient and able to cope with deployments.

For Soldiers, peace of mind — Soldiers can be assured that while they are deployed, the unit has provided an avenue for their family members to get reliable information and help when needed. This support can help reduce Soldiers' stress and enable Soldiers to focus on the mission.

For commanders, force multiplier — The FRG leader's feedback, based on the FRG's connections and contact with families, enables the command to keep a pulse on family needs and issues so that command can respond in a timely manner. By being able to communicate with and support families more effectively, the command can increase family readiness and deployment preparedness.

For the military and civilian communities, an FRG that is able to refer families to appropriate community service agencies in a timely manner can reduce the occurrence of crisis situations. Further, to the extent FRGs can learn about resources available in different communities, military and civilian communities can support Soldiers and families wherever they live.

For the Army, successful FRG programs enhance family readiness and deployment preparedness, thereby increasing unit readiness for military missions.

The FRG provides a connection to the unit through which families get important information, develop friendships, and receive moral support.

7

2.2 Structure of FRG Operations

Typically, FRGs are established at the company level. However at the battalion level, the battalion commander, key staff, and their families are members of the headquarters unit FRG. Occasionally, there is one FRG for the battalion rather than company level FRGs. The battalion and brigade serve in an advisory role to the company-level FRG. As a FRG leader you may ask, "What do I do first?" The answer is meet with the Commander/RDC FRGDA, ACS or the Reserve Component Family Programs. If possible, also meet with the previous commander and FRG leaders to gather lessons learned. This will give you an idea of what else you need to do.

Company Level

A company level FRG leader works most closely with the company commander (or during deployment, the rear detachment commander). The commander is responsible for appointing the FRG leader, approving FRG volunteers (statutory volunteers only), authorizing resources, providing guidance and direction to the FRG, and ensuring training is provided to the FRG (i.e., FRG leader, volunteers and members). More detailed information about this relationship is provided in Section 1, Relationship with Unit Leadership, of Part 3 of this handbook.

Battalion Level

A FRG steering committee (sometimes called advisory committee) is typically established at the battalion level by the battalion commander. The FRG steering committee is comprised of the battalion commander, command sergeant major, senior FRG advisors, all company (and battalion) FRG leaders, and, when invited, ACS/ Family Programs Unit Service Coordinators. The purpose of the committee is to provide information and to advise company FRG leaders on the battalion commander's family readiness plans and policies, FRG activities needed, and emerging FRG and family issues.

Brigade Level

Brigade commanders have family readiness goals for their command. Leadership at this level focuses mainly on policy issues and overall readiness of command. Thus, leadership at this level is seldom directly involved in company issues. However, brigade commanders advise battalion leadership on readiness issues which is then reflected in battalion guidance to company FRGs.

2: WHAT FRG LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

2

2.2 Structure of FRG Operations

Typically, FRGs are established at the company level. However at the battalion level, the battalion commander, key staff, and their families are members of the headquarters unit FRG. Occasionally, there is one FRG for the battalion rather than company level FRGs. The battalion and brigade serve in an advisory role to the company-level FRG. As a FRG leader you may ask, "What do I do first?" The answer is meet with the Commander/RDC FRGDA, ACS or the Reserve Component Family Programs. If possible, also meet with the previous commander and FRG leaders to gather lessons learned. This will give you an idea of what else you need to do.

Company Level

A company level FRG leader works most closely with the company commander (or during deployment, the rear detachment commander). The commander is responsible for appointing the FRG leader, approving FRG volunteers (statutory volunteers only), authorizing resources, providing guidance and direction to the FRG, and ensuring training is provided to the FRG (i.e., FRG leader, volunteers and members). More detailed information about this relationship is provided in Section 1, Relationship with Unit Leadership, of Part 3 of this handbook.

Battalion Level

A FRG steering committee (sometimes called advisory committee) is typically established at the battalion level by the battalion commander. The FRG steering committee is comprised of the battalion commander, command sergeant major, senior FRG advisors, all company (and battalion) FRG leaders, and, when invited, ACS/ Family Programs Unit Service Coordinators. The purpose of the committee is to provide information and to advise company FRG leaders on the battalion commander's family readiness plans and policies, FRG activities needed, and emerging FRG and family issues.

Brigade Level

Brigade commanders have family readiness goals for their command. Leadership at this level focuses mainly on policy issues and overall readiness of command. Thus, leadership at this level is seldom directly involved in company issues. However, brigade commanders advise battalion leadership on readiness issues which is then reflected in battalion guidance to company FRGs.

8

2.3 Tips on Handling FRG Leadership Role

Keys To Success

To have an FRG that effectively supports units and families, the FRG leader (and FRG) must:

★ Maintain communication and work as a team with the commander/rear detachment commander.

★ Become familiar with Army and unit policies, including FRG Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Find out what support and resources your command will provide to the FRG and seek to obtain this support.

★ Use the resources available to families. Know how to identify these community resources and which agencies to refer families for specific assistance.

★ Get training and prepare for the different types of activities and situations the FRG may handle. This includes preparing for and knowing the procedures to follow in crisis and trauma situations.

★ Create a team of volunteers who will work with the FRG leader in conducting FRG activities. Assign responsibilities and manage the volunteer team.

★ Be prepared to adapt to changing demands on the FRG to be responsive to units and families. Keep a pulse on family issues and ensure steps are taken by the FRG to respond to these issues, as appropriate.

★ Use the tools and materials prepared for FRG leaders. (This handbook, the checklist in Part 4 of this handbook, and the Operation READY Smart Book, all provide valuable information and tools to assist FRG leaders as well as FRG volunteers in their efforts.)

2: WHAT FRG LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

2

2.3 Tips on Handling FRG Leadership Role

Keys To Success

To have an FRG that effectively supports units and families, the FRG leader (and FRG) must:

★ Maintain communication and work as a team with the commander/rear detachment commander.

★ Become familiar with Army and unit policies, including FRG Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Find out what support and resources your command will provide to the FRG and seek to obtain this support.

★ Use the resources available to families. Know how to identify these community resources and which agencies to refer families for specific assistance.

★ Get training and prepare for the different types of activities and situations the FRG may handle. This includes preparing for and knowing the procedures to follow in crisis and trauma situations.

★ Create a team of volunteers who will work with the FRG leader in conducting FRG activities. Assign responsibilities and manage the volunteer team.

★ Be prepared to adapt to changing demands on the FRG to be responsive to units and families. Keep a pulse on family issues and ensure steps are taken by the FRG to respond to these issues, as appropriate.

★ Use the tools and materials prepared for FRG leaders. (This handbook, the checklist in Part 4 of this handbook, and the Operation READY Smart Book, all provide valuable information and tools to assist FRG leaders as well as FRG volunteers in their efforts.)

9

Tips To Being an Effective FRG Leader

Leadership is a critical element to a well run FRG. It requires having the skills that enables the following to occur:

- Effective teaming relationships (with command, FRG volunteers, officer and enlisted membership, and community agencies)
- Accurate and timely flow of information between FRG and command, among FRG volunteers, and between FRG and families
- Positive environment for FRG volunteers and members (i.e., individuals want to belong to the FRG and/or perceive the FRG as able to provide helpful information and assistance).

Everyone brings their own abilities, traits and styles to the FRG leadership role. This section offers information about things to consider that may enable an FRG leader to be more effective.

LEADERSHIP ABILITIES AND CHARACTER TRAITS The figure on the right identifies the characteristics of individuals who can be effective in influencing people to participate in the FRG and have a vested interest in the FRG's success.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Leading an FRG will involve using different leadership styles with different volunteer groups and/or on different activities:

- ***Directing***—Leader is task oriented with little group input, especially when limited group experience or limited time is available.
- ***Coaching***—Leader is both task and group oriented; directs and encourages the group's effort, but the group is more experienced and makes inputs to the process. The leader watches progress and coaches the group as needed to keep on track.
- ***Supporting***—Leader is group oriented; sets the overall project goals and supports the group's efforts. The group has considerable experience and therefore makes major inputs on planning and decisions. The leader reviews progress at intervals and suggests changes.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

2: WHAT FRG LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

2

Tips To Being an Effective FRG Leader

Leadership is a critical element to a well run FRG. It requires having the skills that enables the following to occur:

- Effective teaming relationships (with command, FRG volunteers, officer and enlisted membership, and community agencies)
- Accurate and timely flow of information between FRG and command, among FRG volunteers, and between FRG and families
- Positive environment for FRG volunteers and members (i.e., individuals want to belong to the FRG and/or perceive the FRG as able to provide helpful information and assistance).

Everyone brings their own abilities, traits and styles to the FRG leadership role. This section offers information about things to consider that may enable an FRG leader to be more effective.

LEADERSHIP ABILITIES AND CHARACTER TRAITS The figure on the right identifies the characteristics of individuals who can be effective in influencing people to participate in the FRG and have a vested interest in the FRG's success.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Leading an FRG will involve using different leadership styles with different volunteer groups and/or on different activities:

- ***Directing***—Leader is task oriented with little group input, especially when limited group experience or limited time is available.
- ***Coaching***—Leader is both task and group oriented; directs and encourages the group's effort, but the group is more experienced and makes inputs to the process. The leader watches progress and coaches the group as needed to keep on track.
- ***Supporting***—Leader is group oriented; sets the overall project goals and supports the group's efforts. The group has considerable experience and therefore makes major inputs on planning and decisions. The leader reviews progress at intervals and suggests changes.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

10

- ***Delegating***—Leader is more interested in group interaction than the outcome of the project. The group is highly experienced, and they define the project goals, plan, make decisions, and control their own work.

So, which leadership style should FRG leaders use? With critical tasks, coaching or directing style might be used. More routine tasks call for a mix of coaching and supporting styles. With certain groups such as FRG committee chairs, a delegation style might be used. The situation, experience of the group, and time needed to accomplish a task are all factors that determine the style to use.

How To Take Care of Yourself

Being an FRG leader is a demanding job and will no doubt be stressful at times. With lengthy deployments, an FRG leader is likely to retain this position for a considerable length of time (anywhere from 12 to 18 months). Keep the following considerations in mind as ways to avoid burnout and to help you manage the job effectively:

- First and foremost, FRG leaders should take care of themselves and their families. FRG functions, socials, and obligations should never come before the needs of your own family. A sick child, a marital problem, your job, and other basic issues take priority over FRG duties. Delegate when you need to change priorities.
- Don't try to do everything yourself. Get help. Recruit and train good people; give them clear job descriptions and goals; treat them with respect and regard; and stand back—let them shine in the FRG! Committee chairpersons and other FRG members want to help, so let them! Remember to acknowledge these contributions during meetings and in your newsletters.
- Stick to your role as a leader.
- Leadership can be difficult, so don't try to please everyone. Demonstrate that you care and want to make things work for the FRG, and everyone should understand and support you.
- Don't be afraid to try new ideas.
- Learn resources for referring problems and follow through. When a family takes up disproportionate amounts of time—refer them to the appropriate professional(s).
- Provide specific guidelines regarding rumors, chain of concern, information dissemination, and a tentative calendar of events to reduce confusion and lack of communication.

For tips on managing stress, see Coping with Stress fact sheet in the Operation READY Smart Book.

2: WHAT FRG LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

2

- ***Delegating***—Leader is more interested in group interaction than the outcome of the project. The group is highly experienced, and they define the project goals, plan, make decisions, and control their own work.

So, which leadership style should FRG leaders use? With critical tasks, coaching or directing style might be used. More routine tasks call for a mix of coaching and supporting styles. With certain groups such as FRG committee chairs, a delegation style might be used. The situation, experience of the group, and time needed to accomplish a task are all factors that determine the style to use.

How To Take Care of Yourself

Being an FRG leader is a demanding job and will no doubt be stressful at times. With lengthy deployments, an FRG leader is likely to retain this position for a considerable length of time (anywhere from 12 to 18 months). Keep the following considerations in mind as ways to avoid burnout and to help you manage the job effectively:

- First and foremost, FRG leaders should take care of themselves and their families. FRG functions, socials, and obligations should never come before the needs of your own family. A sick child, a marital problem, your job, and other basic issues take priority over FRG duties. Delegate when you need to change priorities.
- Don't try to do everything yourself. Get help. Recruit and train good people; give them clear job descriptions and goals; treat them with respect and regard; and stand back—let them shine in the FRG! Committee chairpersons and other FRG members want to help, so let them! Remember to acknowledge these contributions during meetings and in your newsletters.
- Stick to your role as a leader.
- Leadership can be difficult, so don't try to please everyone. Demonstrate that you care and want to make things work for the FRG, and everyone should understand and support you.
- Don't be afraid to try new ideas.
- Learn resources for referring problems and follow through. When a family takes up disproportionate amounts of time—refer them to the appropriate professional(s).
- Provide specific guidelines regarding rumors, chain of concern, information dissemination, and a tentative calendar of events to reduce confusion and lack of communication.

For tips on managing stress, see Coping with Stress fact sheet in the Operation READY Smart Book.

Training and Resources for FRG Leaders

The Operation READY Smart Book contains important resource materials and sample forms to assist the FRG in its efforts. (For example, the Operation READY Smart Book includes an FRG leadership Checklist which may be used to assess strengths and weaknesses for the leadership role.) If additional information or help with particular skills and tasks is needed, the FRG leader is encouraged to seek assistance from any of the following:

Rear Detachment Commander	for guidance
Battalion FRG Steering Committee	for guidance
FRG Deployment Support Assistant	for logistical and administrative support
Army Community Service/ Army National Guard State Family Program Coordinator/U.S. Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Programs Office	for orientation training for new FRG leaders, ongoing and skills training for FRG leaders, guidance on managing volunteers, and information on community resources; also coordinates FRG Forum (see below)
FRG Leader Online Course	for online FRG leader training that focuses on the management of FRG operations as well as addresses how to assist families on a wide range of family issues; the training is available on the web at MyArmyLifeToo.com and a certificate is awarded upon completion
Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC) or State/Region Family Program Director/Coordinator	for guidance on volunteer issues (including recruitment, training and recognition)
vFRG Web site	provides a secure web-based forum for FRG leaders
FRG Forum	a forum created by all FRG leaders on the installation for ongoing training and a support network
Talk with other individuals who have experience as an FRG leader	provides first hand information
Army Family Team Building/Guard Family Team Building	for online and classroom training on military culture and leadership in different skill levels

2: WHAT FRG LEADERS NEED TO KNOW

2

Training and Resources for FRG Leaders

The Operation READY Smart Book contains important resource materials and sample forms to assist the FRG in its efforts. (For example, the Operation READY Smart Book includes an FRG leadership Checklist which may be used to assess strengths and weaknesses for the leadership role.) If additional information or help with particular skills and tasks is needed, the FRG leader is encouraged to seek assistance from any of the following:

Rear Detachment Commander	for guidance
Battalion FRG Steering Committee	for guidance
FRG Deployment Support Assistant	for logistical and administrative support
Army Community Service/ Army National Guard State Family Program Coordinator/U.S. Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Programs Office	for orientation training for new FRG leaders, ongoing and skills training for FRG leaders, guidance on managing volunteers, and information on community resources; also coordinates FRG Forum (see below)
FRG Leader Online Course	for online FRG leader training that focuses on the management of FRG operations as well as addresses how to assist families on a wide range of family issues; the training is available on the web at MyArmyLifeToo.com and a certificate is awarded upon completion
Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC) or State/Region Family Program Director/Coordinator	for guidance on volunteer issues (including recruitment, training and recognition)
vFRG Web site	provides a secure web-based forum for FRG leaders
FRG Forum	a forum created by all FRG leaders on the installation for ongoing training and a support network
Talk with other individuals who have experience as an FRG leader	provides first hand information
Army Family Team Building/Guard Family Team Building	for online and classroom training on military culture and leadership in different skill levels

12

As the new leader of the FRG, it is important to understand the responsibilities of the FRG leader and to assess how the company's FRG is functioning currently. Use the handbook to determine what is needed to: 1) build up FRG operations and 2) sustain FRG operations. In some instances, it will be necessary to develop many components because the company may not have had an FRG or may have had a poorly run FRG.

The FRG leader is responsible for maintaining a working relationship with unit leadership, handling certain administrative tasks, obtaining and managing resources for FRG operations and activities, and providing leadership and direction on FRG activities. Because the FRG is an official program of the Army, regulations and guidance dictate certain aspects of the program. For each area of FRG leadership responsibility, the relevant rules are identified.

3.1 Relationship With Unit Leadership

Under AR 600-20 commanders are required to maintain, as appropriate to the needs of their units, an FRG to encourage self-sufficiency among its members by providing information, referral assistance and mutual support. Because the FRG is a command sponsored program, the company commander has oversight of the FRG and the FRG leader's role. When the company commander deploys with the unit, the rear detachment commander (RDC) takes on the role of supporting and assisting the FRG. If a rear detachment is not set up at the company level, then the FRG will work with the battalion rear detachment commander. Some battalions opt to designate a Family Readiness Liaison (FRL) to serve as a point of contact for the unit and thus the FRG may work with an FRL. Establishing an effective relationship with unit leadership (i.e., the company commander, RDC and FRL) is critical to supporting families throughout the deployment cycle. (Note: When there is a battalion FRG then the battalion FRG leader works with the battalion RDC in the same manner as described in this section.)

FRGs should also strive to appeal to both officer and enlisted Soldiers'

PART 3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

As the new leader of the FRG, it is important to understand the responsibilities of the FRG leader and to assess how the company's FRG is functioning currently. Use the handbook to determine what is needed to: 1) build up FRG operations and 2) sustain FRG operations. In some instances, it will be necessary to develop many components because the company may not have had an FRG or may have had a poorly run FRG.

The FRG leader is responsible for maintaining a working relationship with unit leadership, handling certain administrative tasks, obtaining and managing resources for FRG operations and activities, and providing leadership and direction on FRG activities. Because the FRG is an official program of the Army, regulations and guidance dictate certain aspects of the program. For each area of FRG leadership responsibility, the relevant rules are identified.

3.1 Relationship With Unit Leadership

Under AR 600-20 commanders are required to maintain, as appropriate to the needs of their units, an FRG to encourage self-sufficiency among its members by providing information, referral assistance and mutual support. Because the FRG is a command sponsored program, the company commander has oversight of the FRG and the FRG leader's role. When the company commander deploys with the unit, the rear detachment commander (RDC) takes on the role of supporting and assisting the FRG. If a rear detachment is not set up at the company level, then the FRG will work with the battalion rear detachment commander. Some battalions opt to designate a Family Readiness Liaison (FRL) to serve as a point of contact for the unit and thus the FRG may work with an FRL. Establishing an effective relationship with unit leadership (i.e., the company commander, RDC and FRL) is critical to supporting families throughout the deployment cycle. (Note: When there is a battalion FRG then the battalion FRG leader works with the battalion RDC in the same manner as described in this section.)

FRGs should also strive to appeal to both officer and enlisted Soldiers'

families. Commanders should seek FRG leaders who are particularly adept at energizing both officer and enlisted corps' families. FRGs which do not reflect their unit's demographics should be re-evaluated to address any impediments which exist towards creating a balanced and representational FRG. Typical issues could be FRG meeting times, child care needs, and other family support related issues.

Unit Leadership Responsibilities

Understanding unit leadership's responsibilities is important for an FRG leader to gain an understanding of the demands on command and to know what is and is not the FRG's task.

MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary focus of unit leadership's attention is on mission preparedness and conducting successful military operations. Deploying brigade combat teams establish rear detachments (RD) at brigade and battalion levels. The battalion RDC may appoint RDCs at company, troop, and battery levels prior to deployment. The battalion level RD leadership usually includes, at a minimum, the RDC and a Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC). The RD supports the deployed units, facilitates readiness of Soldiers who deploy, and supports the families of deployed personnel. Specifically, the mission of the RD is to pick up the daily workload of the deployed unit and provide home-station support for the unit. The RDC is responsible for all the administrative operations of the rear detachment, to include maintaining command and control, accounting for unit property and equipment, and managing personnel. In short, the RDC and the rear detachment personnel keep the unit functional.

One of the most important rear detachment duties, however, is serving as a vital communications link between the deployed unit and family members.

The deployed commander's goal is to accomplish the mission while keeping the unit's Soldiers safe and then bringing them home to their families and communities. The RDC's goal works in tandem with that of the deployed commander to help families solve their problems at the lowest level position so that the problems and resulting anxieties do not overflow to the deployed Soldier or require the attention of the deployed commander.

During a deployment, the rear detachment commander performs the duties of the unit commander. These responsibilities are listed on the next page by command function. To address expectations of how the RDC will support families, an emphasis is placed on family matters.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

families. Commanders should seek FRG leaders who are particularly adept at energizing both officer and enlisted corps' families. FRGs which do not reflect their unit's demographics should be re-evaluated to address any impediments which exist towards creating a balanced and representational FRG. Typical issues could be FRG meeting times, child care needs, and other family support related issues.

Unit Leadership Responsibilities

Understanding unit leadership's responsibilities is important for an FRG leader to gain an understanding of the demands on command and to know what is and is not the FRG's task.

MISSION RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary focus of unit leadership's attention is on mission preparedness and conducting successful military operations. Deploying brigade combat teams establish rear detachments (RD) at brigade and battalion levels. The battalion RDC may appoint RDCs at company, troop, and battery levels prior to deployment. The battalion level RD leadership usually includes, at a minimum, the RDC and a Noncommissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC). The RD supports the deployed units, facilitates readiness of Soldiers who deploy, and supports the families of deployed personnel. Specifically, the mission of the RD is to pick up the daily workload of the deployed unit and provide home-station support for the unit. The RDC is responsible for all the administrative operations of the rear detachment, to include maintaining command and control, accounting for unit property and equipment, and managing personnel. In short, the RDC and the rear detachment personnel keep the unit functional.

One of the most important rear detachment duties, however, is serving as a vital communications link between the deployed unit and family members.

The deployed commander's goal is to accomplish the mission while keeping the unit's Soldiers safe and then bringing them home to their families and communities. The RDC's goal works in tandem with that of the deployed commander to help families solve their problems at the lowest level position so that the problems and resulting anxieties do not overflow to the deployed Soldier or require the attention of the deployed commander.

During a deployment, the rear detachment commander performs the duties of the unit commander. These responsibilities are listed on the next page by command function. To address expectations of how the RDC will support families, an emphasis is placed on family matters.

Command and Control

- Establish and maintain two-way communication with forward deployed units to ensure timely and accurate information and to resolve issues. Also maintain communication with command supplying augmentees to the deploying unit.
- Serve as the official information source for families. This includes conducting information briefings, preparing postings for vFRG web site, and reviewing FRG newsletters. Also ensure deployment-related information and FRG newsletters are published on regular basis.
- Maintain regular connection with families and family readiness groups (FRGs).
- Assist with Family Assistance Center (FAC) operations as requested by the garrison or National Guard.
- Coordinate with the FRG steering committee in conjunction with FRG leaders, the chain of command, and military and community resources to support families.
- Oversee unit administrative functions.
- Carry out personnel actions.
- Submit required reports.
- Handle casualty notification, when appointed.
- Manage rumor control.
- Serve as a conduit for connectivity between the deployed unit and their families.

Operations and Training

- Attend RDC and FRG courses.
- Develop staffing plan.
- Develop battle rhythm plan for RD operations.
- Conduct or coordinate mandatory training events with garrison/ Reserve Component agencies.
- Ensure RD and staff duty personnel are trained and sensitive to family member calls and understand how to refer families to the appropriate agency for assistance.
- Coordinate and support training for FRG volunteers and families.

Logistics and Supply

- Maintain physical security and operations security.
- Maintain property and equipment. Conduct inventories.
- Ensure family members have opportunities to maintain contact with deployed Soldiers (includes establishing or providing information on mail operations, video teleconference (VTC), and internet connection).
- Provide FRGs with access to facilities, equipment, and government vehicles for official FRG mission activities.

Family Support

- Maintain contact with families in the command. This includes keeping in contact with families that return to their home of record or otherwise leave the theater during their sponsor's deployment.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

Command and Control

- Establish and maintain two-way communication with forward deployed units to ensure timely and accurate information and to resolve issues. Also maintain communication with command supplying augmentees to the deploying unit.
- Serve as the official information source for families. This includes conducting information briefings, preparing postings for vFRG web site, and reviewing FRG newsletters. Also ensure deployment-related information and FRG newsletters are published on regular basis.
- Maintain regular connection with families and family readiness groups (FRGs).
- Assist with Family Assistance Center (FAC) operations as requested by the garrison or National Guard.
- Coordinate with the FRG steering committee in conjunction with FRG leaders, the chain of command, and military and community resources to support families.
- Oversee unit administrative functions.
- Carry out personnel actions.
- Submit required reports.
- Handle casualty notification, when appointed.
- Manage rumor control.
- Serve as a conduit for connectivity between the deployed unit and their families.

Operations and Training

- Attend RDC and FRG courses.
- Develop staffing plan.
- Develop battle rhythm plan for RD operations.
- Conduct or coordinate mandatory training events with garrison/ Reserve Component agencies.
- Ensure RD and staff duty personnel are trained and sensitive to family member calls and understand how to refer families to the appropriate agency for assistance.
- Coordinate and support training for FRG volunteers and families.

Logistics and Supply

- Maintain physical security and operations security.
- Maintain property and equipment. Conduct inventories.
- Ensure family members have opportunities to maintain contact with deployed Soldiers (includes establishing or providing information on mail operations, video teleconference (VTC), and internet connection).
- Provide FRGs with access to facilities, equipment, and government vehicles for official FRG mission activities.

Family Support

- Maintain contact with families in the command. This includes keeping in contact with families that return to their home of record or otherwise leave the theater during their sponsor's deployment.

- Maintain regular contact with FRG leaders. Provide information on important unit news to FRG leaders. Ensure regular communication between FRG leaders and unit family members.
- Attend and support FRG meetings and activities. Update FRG phone trees. Coordinate with FRG leader for FRG social or recreational activities on a regular basis to build and sustain morale and camaraderie.
- Answer questions and concerns from FRG leaders and families. Resolve family issues by referring families to appropriate agencies.

Administrative

- Validate and maintain a copy of family care plans (FCP) for deployed personnel and personnel preparing to deploy. Conduct FCP counseling as required.
- Maintain unit roster including augmentees during deployments. This roster will be provided to the FRG to ensure these families receive communications and support.
- Coordinate with American Red Cross regarding emergency information on unit Soldiers and family members. Log, track and process Red Cross emergency messages and notify forward unit of impending Red Cross message.
- Review RDC and FRG SOPs. Develop/revise FRG SOPs as necessary (see AR 608-1, Appendix J).
- Oversee FRG Informal Fund, per AR 608-1, Appendix J.
- Approve FRG requests for APF funds and supplemental mission funds intended for FRG use (See AR 608-1, Appendix J.)
- Approve unsolicited donations and FRG fundraising requests after consulting with the unit's ethics counselor.
- Maintain record of contacts, actions taken and follow-up with families.

FAMILY READINESS RESPONSIBILITIES

Family readiness is an important aspect of Soldier readiness. The table on the next page identifies the unit leadership's family readiness responsibilities and their role in supporting FRG operations. Keep in mind that the battalion RDC oversees and supports all company FRGs directly and indirectly through the company level RDC and the battalion FRG steering committee.

APPOINTMENT OF FRG LEADER

The commander must approve the appointment of the FRG leader. When selecting an FRG leader, consider the following criteria:

- Understands commander's family readiness goals and value of FRG
- Has the ability to work with command leadership
- Has an interest in helping the unit's Soldiers and families

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

- Maintain regular contact with FRG leaders. Provide information on important unit news to FRG leaders. Ensure regular communication between FRG leaders and unit family members.
- Attend and support FRG meetings and activities. Update FRG phone trees. Coordinate with FRG leader for FRG social or recreational activities on a regular basis to build and sustain morale and camaraderie.
- Answer questions and concerns from FRG leaders and families. Resolve family issues by referring families to appropriate agencies.

Administrative

- Validate and maintain a copy of family care plans (FCP) for deployed personnel and personnel preparing to deploy. Conduct FCP counseling as required.
- Maintain unit roster including augmentees during deployments. This roster will be provided to the FRG to ensure these families receive communications and support.
- Coordinate with American Red Cross regarding emergency information on unit Soldiers and family members. Log, track and process Red Cross emergency messages and notify forward unit of impending Red Cross message.
- Review RDC and FRG SOPs. Develop/revise FRG SOPs as necessary (see AR 608-1, Appendix J).
- Oversee FRG Informal Fund, per AR 608-1, Appendix J.
- Approve FRG requests for APF funds and supplemental mission funds intended for FRG use (See AR 608-1, Appendix J.)
- Approve unsolicited donations and FRG fundraising requests after consulting with the unit's ethics counselor.
- Maintain record of contacts, actions taken and follow-up with families.

FAMILY READINESS RESPONSIBILITIES

Family readiness is an important aspect of Soldier readiness. The table on the next page identifies the unit leadership's family readiness responsibilities and their role in supporting FRG operations. Keep in mind that the battalion RDC oversees and supports all company FRGs directly and indirectly through the company level RDC and the battalion FRG steering committee.

APPOINTMENT OF FRG LEADER

The commander must approve the appointment of the FRG leader When selecting an FRG leader, consider the following criteria:

- Understands commander's family readiness goals and value of FRG
- Has the ability to work with command leadership
- Has an interest in helping the unit's Soldiers and families

16

Company Commander Family Readiness Responsibilities	Rear Detachment Commander (RDC) Family Readiness Responsibilities
• Prepares Family Readiness Plan and sets family readiness goals for the unit. • Maintains appropriate SOPs for FRG operations. • Authorizes FRG's use of government facilities, supplies, vehicles and mail. • Authorizes an FRG informal fund for FRG's use. • Approves FRG leader and FRG informal fund custodian (treasurer) and alternate. • Reviews and approves FRG informal fund reports and FRG newsletters. • Approves content and users of vFRG. • Notifies FRG leader when a deployment is scheduled. • Encourages all Soldiers and families to participate in FRG activities. • Ensures that family readiness information sheets and/or rosters are provided to FRG leader. • Maintains flow of information with FRG so families are kept informed. • Determines how to address family issues. • Provides guidance and support to FRG leader in other ways as practical. • Plans and coordinates unit briefings, homecoming, and supplemental activities.	• Serves as unit commander during deployment. • Performs same duties as commander. • Maintains regular contact with deployed unit. • Maintains regular contact with FRG leader. Provides information on important unit news to FRG leader. This includes notifying FRG leader on all unit briefings, welcome home activities, and other unit activities. • Attends and supports FRG meetings and activities. Provides information to FRG leader to update FRG phone tree. Coordinates with FRG leader for FRG social or recreational activities that build and sustain morale and camaraderie. • Authorizes resources and support for FRG when unit deployed. • Ensures regular communication between FRG leader and unit family members. This includes keeping in contact with families that return to their home of record or otherwise leave the area during their sponsor's deployment. • Helps resolve family issues or identifies appropriate agencies to refer families, especially for families of killed or wounded Soldiers. • Handles casualty notification, when appointed.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

Company Commander Family Readiness Responsibilities	Rear Detachment Commander (RDC) Family Readiness Responsibilities
• Prepares Family Readiness Plan and sets family readiness goals for the unit. • Maintains appropriate SOPs for FRG operations. • Authorizes FRG's use of government facilities, supplies, vehicles and mail. • Authorizes an FRG informal fund for FRG's use. • Approves FRG leader and FRG informal fund custodian (treasurer) and alternate. • Reviews and approves FRG informal fund reports and FRG newsletters. • Approves content and users of vFRG. • Notifies FRG leader when a deployment is scheduled. • Encourages all Soldiers and families to participate in FRG activities. • Ensures that family readiness information sheets and/or rosters are provided to FRG leader. • Maintains flow of information with FRG so families are kept informed. • Determines how to address family issues. • Provides guidance and support to FRG leader in other ways as practical. • Plans and coordinates unit briefings, homecoming, and supplemental activities.	• Serves as unit commander during deployment. • Performs same duties as commander. • Maintains regular contact with deployed unit. • Maintains regular contact with FRG leader. Provides information on important unit news to FRG leader. This includes notifying FRG leader on all unit briefings, welcome home activities, and other unit activities. • Attends and supports FRG meetings and activities. Provides information to FRG leader to update FRG phone tree. Coordinates with FRG leader for FRG social or recreational activities that build and sustain morale and camaraderie. • Authorizes resources and support for FRG when unit deployed. • Ensures regular communication between FRG leader and unit family members. This includes keeping in contact with families that return to their home of record or otherwise leave the area during their sponsor's deployment. • Helps resolve family issues or identifies appropriate agencies to refer families, especially for families of killed or wounded Soldiers. • Handles casualty notification, when appointed.

- Displays a caring and supportive personality
- Knowledgeable about military structure and procedures
- Knowledgeable about community resources (desired but not required)
- Is dependable
- Has leadership potential/skills
- Exhibits good communication skills
- Able to work with people and encourage diverse representation in FRG
- Willing to learn.

FRG Leader's Responsibilities to Unit Leadership

The FRG leader has a supportive role to command. The company leadership will be relying on the FRG leader to fulfill the following roles and responsibilities:

- Support commander's family readiness goals
- Provide overall leadership of the FRG (which includes planning, managing, and supervising FRG activities)
- Establish effective communication systems with families (which includes getting contact information for immediate and extended family members and making sure phone tree is up-to-date)
- Ensure families get timely accurate information from command
- Recruit the volunteers needed to conduct required FRG activities as well as those activities requested by command
- Ensure families are referred to appropriate military and community agencies for needed assistance
- Identify important FRG and family issues for the command
- Assist the command in maintaining contact information for families, especially family members that leave the area during deployment
- Ensure regular communication is maintained with geographically separated families.

Establishing and Sustaining a Relationship

Each relationship between a command and FRG leader is unique. Each commander has his/her own interests, areas of emphasis, and leadership styles which influence the commander's expectations of the FRG leader and the nature of the working relationship with command. Likewise, each FRG leader has particular strengths, personality traits, and knowledge and familiarity with the military which will influence the level and type of support sought from command. It is essential that the FRG leader find effective ways to work with unit leadership. Establishing and maintaining two-way communication is highly important and critical. For this reason, the FRG leader is advised to meet with the company commander soon after becoming the company's FRG leader. In this initial meeting, a discussion should be held about the FRG leader's role, FRG

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

- Displays a caring and supportive personality
- Knowledgeable about military structure and procedures
- Knowledgeable about community resources (desired but not required)
- Is dependable
- Has leadership potential/skills
- Exhibits good communication skills
- Able to work with people and encourage diverse representation in FRG
- Willing to learn.

FRG Leader's Responsibilities to Unit Leadership

The FRG leader has a supportive role to command. The company leadership will be relying on the FRG leader to fulfill the following roles and responsibilities:

- Support commander's family readiness goals
- Provide overall leadership of the FRG (which includes planning, managing, and supervising FRG activities)
- Establish effective communication systems with families (which includes getting contact information for immediate and extended family members and making sure phone tree is up-to-date)
- Ensure families get timely accurate information from command
- Recruit the volunteers needed to conduct required FRG activities as well as those activities requested by command
- Ensure families are referred to appropriate military and community agencies for needed assistance
- Identify important FRG and family issues for the command
- Assist the command in maintaining contact information for families, especially family members that leave the area during deployment
- Ensure regular communication is maintained with geographically separated families.

Establishing and Sustaining a Relationship

Each relationship between a command and FRG leader is unique. Each commander has his/her own interests, areas of emphasis, and leadership styles which influence the commander's expectations of the FRG leader and the nature of the working relationship with command. Likewise, each FRG leader has particular strengths, personality traits, and knowledge and familiarity with the military which will influence the level and type of support sought from command. It is essential that the FRG leader find effective ways to work with unit leadership. Establishing and maintaining two-way communication is highly important and critical. For this reason, the FRG leader is advised to meet with the company commander soon after becoming the company's FRG leader. In this initial meeting, a discussion should be held about the FRG leader's role, FRG

18

activities, ways in which the command wants to be kept informed on FRG activities and concerns, ways in which the FRG leader and command will communicate, and other pertinent issues. The FRG leader will then have an understanding of the commander's expectations on FRG activities and operations. Following this initial meeting, communications and meetings will need to be conducted as necessary to plan and to support Soldiers and families throughout the deployment cycle.

Tips To Successful Working Relationship

- ★ Understand each other's roles and responsibilities.
- ★ Define official military issues versus FRG issues.
- ★ Begin communication prior to deployment to develop relationship and to discuss important issues (including tough topics such as casualty notification).
- ★ Establish communication methods and maintain two-way communication.
- ★ Know the organizational structure (i.e., identify key FRG volunteers for RDC and have RDC identify chain of command within RD for FRG) and ensure each has appropriate contact information.
- ★ Aim to speak with one voice.
- ★ Promote mutual respect.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

activities, ways in which the command wants to be kept informed on FRG activities and concerns, ways in which the FRG leader and command will communicate, and other pertinent issues. The FRG leader will then have an understanding of the commander's expectations on FRG activities and operations. Following this initial meeting, communications and meetings will need to be conducted as necessary to plan and to support Soldiers and families throughout the deployment cycle.

Tips To Successful Working Relationship

- ★ Understand each other's roles and responsibilities.
- ★ Define official military issues versus FRG issues.
- ★ Begin communication prior to deployment to develop relationship and to discuss important issues (including tough topics such as casualty notification).
- ★ Establish communication methods and maintain two-way communication.
- ★ Know the organizational structure (i.e., identify key FRG volunteers for RDC and have RDC identify chain of command within RD for FRG) and ensure each has appropriate contact information.
- ★ Aim to speak with one voice.
- ★ Promote mutual respect.

3.2 Administrative Tasks and Resource Management

Running an FRG requires handling specific administrative tasks, obtaining needed resources, and managing FRG volunteers.

Administrative Matters

Certain documents are required for managing FRG operations. Additionally, certain training is necessary to implement FRG operations. It is important that the FRG leader ensures that the necessary documents are available and trainings conducted.

POLICY AND OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

The FRG leader needs to review and become familiar with relevant Department of the Army and unit policies and regulations related to FRGs. The most important regulations and SOPs are identified below. An expanded list with web links to other documents is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.

AR 608-1, Appendix J, Army Family Readiness Group Operations. This regulation provides the commander and FRG with Army guidance on funding and managing FRGs. The details are summarized in the Resource Management section (see page 23). A copy is included in the Operation Ready Smart Book.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). FRG leaders are responsible for obtaining and familiarizing themselves with the following required unit SOPs related to FRG operations. In some instances, the FRG leader may need to provide information to the company commander (or RDC) in order for the required document to be prepared.

- ***FRG Budget SOP*** – This SOP, which is prepared by the commander, specifies the appropriated fund (APF) support available for FRG mission activities. This SOP should also address funding for volunteer support (i.e., travel and training expenses and reimbursement of incidental expenses for official statutory volunteers). In addition, this SOP should describe the procedures and request forms required for the FRG leader and FRG volunteers to obtain command approval for purchases and reimbursement. A sample FRG Budget SOP is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.
- ***FRG Informal Fund SOP*** – If the company commander approves, the FRG can establish one informal fund. An SOP must be written for managing the informal fund. The SOP must include the following information:
  – the FRG name
  – description of the FRG's informal

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

3.2 Administrative Tasks and Resource Management

Running an FRG requires handling specific administrative tasks, obtaining needed resources, and managing FRG volunteers.

Administrative Matters

Certain documents are required for managing FRG operations. Additionally, certain training is necessary to implement FRG operations. It is important that the FRG leader ensures that the necessary documents are available and trainings conducted.

POLICY AND OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE

The FRG leader needs to review and become familiar with relevant Department of the Army and unit policies and regulations related to FRGs. The most important regulations and SOPs are identified below. An expanded list with web links to other documents is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.

AR 608-1, Appendix J, Army Family Readiness Group Operations. This regulation provides the commander and FRG with Army guidance on funding and managing FRGs. The details are summarized in the Resource Management section (see page 23). A copy is included in the Operation Ready Smart Book.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). FRG leaders are responsible for obtaining and familiarizing themselves with the following required unit SOPs related to FRG operations. In some instances, the FRG leader may need to provide information to the company commander (or RDC) in order for the required document to be prepared.

- ***FRG Budget SOP*** – This SOP, which is prepared by the commander, specifies the appropriated fund (APF) support available for FRG mission activities. This SOP should also address funding for volunteer support (i.e., travel and training expenses and reimbursement of incidental expenses for official statutory volunteers). In addition, this SOP should describe the procedures and request forms required for the FRG leader and FRG volunteers to obtain command approval for purchases and reimbursement. A sample FRG Budget SOP is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.
- ***FRG Informal Fund SOP*** – If the company commander approves, the FRG can establish one informal fund. An SOP must be written for managing the informal fund. The SOP must include the following information:
  – the FRG name
  – description of the FRG's informal

fund's purpose and functions and a summary of routine activities
– the following statement, "This FRG informal fund is for the benefit of the FRG members only and is established exclusively for charitable purposes, and to provide support to Soldiers and family members as the Soldiers and families adapt to Army life. It is not a business and is not being run to generate profits. It is not an instrumentality of the United States government."

The SOP must be approved by the commander and a majority of the FRG membership. A sample FRG Informal Fund SOP can be found in the Operation READY Smart Book.

- ***Unit SOP on FRG Newsletter*** – The company must have a SOP on the preparation, printing, and distribution of FRG newsletters.

Appointment Letters. The FRG leader will need to obtain the commander's signature on the following letters.

- Appointment letter for FRG leader. It is essential that the commander appoint the FRG leader in writing.
- Appointment letter for FRG informal fund custodian. If the FRG establishes an FRG Informal Fund, the company commander must sign a letter designating a fund custodian and alternate.
- FRG Checking Account Authorization. If the FRG establishes an FRG informal fund, the company commander must sign a letter naming the person(s) authorized to sign checks on the bank account. A sample letter is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.

RECORD KEEPING

Limited record keeping is required. The RDC, ACS/Reserve Component Family Programs, and FRGDA can assist the FRG leader in these efforts.

Volunteer Records. Under current Army regulations, certain forms and documentation must be kept in a volunteer administrative file. (See Chapter 5 of AR 608-1.) Due to the turnover in FRG leadership, the company (i.e., unit) should maintain the volunteer administrative file rather than the FRG leader. However, the FRG leader is responsible for obtaining the appropriate forms from the files and distributing to FRG volunteers. The FRG leader can also prepare documents (such as job descriptions and letters of appreciation) as needed. The forms and documents that the company needs to have on hand include:

- volunteer position descriptions (note: sample FRG volunteer job descriptions are provided in the Operation READY Smart Book)
- blank volunteer forms (including all required forms for statutory volunteers in accordance with AR 608-1, NGR 600-12, and USARC 608-1, and in accordance with 10 USC 1588)

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

fund's purpose and functions and a summary of routine activities
– the following statement, "This FRG informal fund is for the benefit of the FRG members only and is established exclusively for charitable purposes, and to provide support to Soldiers and family members as the Soldiers and families adapt to Army life. It is not a business and is not being run to generate profits. It is not an instrumentality of the United States government."

The SOP must be approved by the commander and a majority of the FRG membership. A sample FRG Informal Fund SOP can be found in the Operation READY Smart Book.

- ***Unit SOP on FRG Newsletter*** – The company must have a SOP on the preparation, printing, and distribution of FRG newsletters.

Appointment Letters. The FRG leader will need to obtain the commander's signature on the following letters.

- Appointment letter for FRG leader. It is essential that the commander appoint the FRG leader in writing.
- Appointment letter for FRG informal fund custodian. If the FRG establishes an FRG Informal Fund, the company commander must sign a letter designating a fund custodian and alternate.
- FRG Checking Account Authorization. If the FRG establishes an FRG informal fund, the company commander must sign a letter naming the person(s) authorized to sign checks on the bank account. A sample letter is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.

RECORD KEEPING

Limited record keeping is required. The RDC, ACS/Reserve Component Family Programs, and FRGDA can assist the FRG leader in these efforts.

Volunteer Records. Under current Army regulations, certain forms and documentation must be kept in a volunteer administrative file. (See Chapter 5 of AR 608-1.) Due to the turnover in FRG leadership, the company (i.e., unit) should maintain the volunteer administrative file rather than the FRG leader. However, the FRG leader is responsible for obtaining the appropriate forms from the files and distributing to FRG volunteers. The FRG leader can also prepare documents (such as job descriptions and letters of appreciation) as needed. The forms and documents that the company needs to have on hand include:

- volunteer position descriptions (note: sample FRG volunteer job descriptions are provided in the Operation READY Smart Book)
- blank volunteer forms (including all required forms for statutory volunteers in accordance with AR 608-1, NGR 600-12, and USARC 608-1, and in accordance with 10 USC 1588)

- volunteer agreement (DD Form 2793) (to be completed by all FRG volunteers)
- form for recording volunteer hours
- parental permission form (to be given to youth who volunteer)
- sample letters of appreciation
- requirements for awards
- sample letters of recommendation.

If the company does not have these forms, contact the local ACS, Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC), National Guard State Family Program Coordinator, or Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Program Office for assistance. Once appropriate forms are completed and submitted for command (or appropriate designee) signature, they need to be retained. Documentation on individuals' volunteer hours, record of service, and awards/letters of appreciation must also be kept. Volunteers' work hours are to be submitted to the AVCC, National Guard State Family Program Coordinator, or Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Program Office or they may be submitted using the active, Guard or Reserve volunteer management web sites.

FRG Rosters (Membership, Telephone Tree, Email Distribution Lists). The FRG membership roster—compiled from the company alert roster and completed family readiness information forms—consists of names, addresses (mailing and email), telephone numbers, and other pertinent information on company Soldiers and families (including other individuals identified by Soldiers). (Keep in mind it is important to get this same information for Soldiers detailed to the company for deployment who are not permanently assigned to the unit.) The RDC and Family Readiness Group Deployment Assistant (FRGDA) can assist in these efforts. If the FRG leader asks Soldiers or families to complete a family readiness information form, then the FRG leader needs to be aware of privacy regulations. When personal information is collected, the FRG leader is required to explain the purpose for collecting the information, how it will be used, and how it will be protected from unauthorized use.

People have the choice of having their information posted on a general roster and/or the confidential roster that is given to the FRG leader. If a spouse strongly resists giving the FRG important information, then it should be noted, signed by the spouse and Soldier, and the spouse instructed that the only contact made with the spouse will be by the military chain of command/rear detachment. In addition, a Privacy Act statement should appear on the family readiness information form and every FRG roster. (A sample Family Readiness information form is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.)

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

- volunteer agreement (DD Form 2793) (to be completed by all FRG volunteers)
- form for recording volunteer hours
- parental permission form (to be given to youth who volunteer)
- sample letters of appreciation
- requirements for awards
- sample letters of recommendation.

If the company does not have these forms, contact the local ACS, Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC), National Guard State Family Program Coordinator, or Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Program Office for assistance. Once appropriate forms are completed and submitted for command (or appropriate designee) signature, they need to be retained. Documentation on individuals' volunteer hours, record of service, and awards/letters of appreciation must also be kept. Volunteers' work hours are to be submitted to the AVCC, National Guard State Family Program Coordinator, or Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Program Office or they may be submitted using the active, Guard or Reserve volunteer management web sites.

FRG Rosters (Membership, Telephone Tree, Email Distribution Lists). The FRG membership roster—compiled from the company alert roster and completed family readiness information forms—consists of names, addresses (mailing and email), telephone numbers, and other pertinent information on company Soldiers and families (including other individuals identified by Soldiers). (Keep in mind it is important to get this same information for Soldiers detailed to the company for deployment who are not permanently assigned to the unit.) The RDC and Family Readiness Group Deployment Assistant (FRGDA) can assist in these efforts. If the FRG leader asks Soldiers or families to complete a family readiness information form, then the FRG leader needs to be aware of privacy regulations. When personal information is collected, the FRG leader is required to explain the purpose for collecting the information, how it will be used, and how it will be protected from unauthorized use.

People have the choice of having their information posted on a general roster and/or the confidential roster that is given to the FRG leader. If a spouse strongly resists giving the FRG important information, then it should be noted, signed by the spouse and Soldier, and the spouse instructed that the only contact made with the spouse will be by the military chain of command/rear detachment. In addition, a Privacy Act statement should appear on the family readiness information form and every FRG roster. (A sample Family Readiness information form is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.)

22

As a rule, to protect families' personal data from identity theft or unauthorized use, Social Security numbers and other sensitive information should be omitted. Further to ensure FRG lists do not "fall into the wrong hands," it is important that the FRG leader discuss with the commander (or during deployment, the RDC) who should have a complete copy of the FRG membership roster, phone tree list, and/or email distribution list. A decision may be made that the RDC and a few key FRG volunteers in addition to the FRG leader retain copies of these lists (or only FRG roster). (Note: For emergency purposes, the RDC will need to have a copy of the FRG roster.) Whatever the decision, steps need to be made to ensure that FRG rosters and phone trees are not given to any third party. For this reason, obsolete copies should be destroyed (i.e., shredded). In addition, when a key FRG volunteer or you as the FRG leader leave a position or move out of the area, these individuals' copies should be turned in and/or shredded.

FRG Informal Fund Reports. If the FRG establishes an informal fund, the fund custodian must submit a report to the company commander monthly, and as requested. The fund custodian must also provide an annual report on the FRG informal fund activity to the first Colonel (O6) commander in the unit's chain of command no later than 30 days after the end of the calendar year. These reports will summarize the informal fund's financial status to include current balance; itemized list of income; and an itemized list of expenditures along with an explanation showing how the expenditures are consistent with the purpose of the FRG informal fund as established in the SOP.

TRAINING

Training is essential to the FRG leader and volunteers being able to carry out their responsibilities. The FRG leader needs to ensure that all appropriate individuals (including the FRG leader) get the training needed. For information on training opportunities for FRG leaders, see section entitled "Training and Resources for FRG Leaders" in Section 2 of Part 2 of this handbook. For information on training available for FRG volunteers, see page 31 "recruiting and training." Much of the training available is free. However, if any costs are to be incurred, the FRG leader is advised to seek approval from the commander.

Resource Management

In planning and conducting FRG activities, consideration should be given to resources needed such as:

- Funding
- Volunteers (see section on volunteer management)
- Equipment
- Transportation
- Interpreters (Note: Free translation services are available through Military One Source.)

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

As a rule, to protect families' personal data from identity theft or unauthorized use, Social Security numbers and other sensitive information should be omitted. Further to ensure FRG lists do not "fall into the wrong hands," it is important that the FRG leader discuss with the commander (or during deployment, the RDC) who should have a complete copy of the FRG membership roster, phone tree list, and/or email distribution list. A decision may be made that the RDC and a few key FRG volunteers in addition to the FRG leader retain copies of these lists (or only FRG roster). (Note: For emergency purposes, the RDC will need to have a copy of the FRG roster.) Whatever the decision, steps need to be made to ensure that FRG rosters and phone trees are not given to any third party. For this reason, obsolete copies should be destroyed (i.e., shredded). In addition, when a key FRG volunteer or you as the FRG leader leave a position or move out of the area, these individuals' copies should be turned in and/or shredded.

FRG Informal Fund Reports. If the FRG establishes an informal fund, the fund custodian must submit a report to the company commander monthly, and as requested. The fund custodian must also provide an annual report on the FRG informal fund activity to the first Colonel (O6) commander in the unit's chain of command no later than 30 days after the end of the calendar year. These reports will summarize the informal fund's financial status to include current balance; itemized list of income; and an itemized list of expenditures along with an explanation showing how the expenditures are consistent with the purpose of the FRG informal fund as established in the SOP.

TRAINING

Training is essential to the FRG leader and volunteers being able to carry out their responsibilities. The FRG leader needs to ensure that all appropriate individuals (including the FRG leader) get the training needed. For information on training opportunities for FRG leaders, see section entitled "Training and Resources for FRG Leaders" in Section 2 of Part 2 of this handbook. For information on training available for FRG volunteers, see page 31 "recruiting and training." Much of the training available is free. However, if any costs are to be incurred, the FRG leader is advised to seek approval from the commander.

Resource Management

In planning and conducting FRG activities, consideration should be given to resources needed such as:

- Funding
- Volunteers (see section on volunteer management)
- Equipment
- Transportation
- Interpreters (Note: Free translation services are available through Military One Source.)

- Location(s) for FRG events
- Child care for FRG events
- Food for FRG events
- Materials and supplies for FRG events.

With the issuance of AR 608-1, Appendix J, FRGs can obtain many of these resources from the unit they serve.

AUTHORIZED SUPPORT AND FUNDING

The Army issued AR 608-1, Appendix J to help commanders and FRG leaders legally and ethically manage Family Readiness Groups, an extremely important facet of the Expeditionary Army.

Appropriated funds (APF). Unit commanders are responsible for funding FRG mission essential activities. Because the FRG is an official Army program, the commander must use the unit's appropriated funds (APF) to support FRG mission activities. APFs are used to support both the FRG's volunteers and mission activities. The level of support provided at the company level will depend upon command approval and funding availability. The support that command is authorized to provide to the FRG (and statutory FRG volunteers) includes:

- Government office space and equipment (e.g., meeting rooms, telephone, fax, computer, email, copier, scanner, equipment, and administrative supplies for official FRG business)
- Government paper and printing supplies for FRG newsletters relaying information from command and to support FRG mission activities
- Official mail for mission-related purposes and as approved by the commander (e.g., FRG newsletter containing official information)
- Government owned or leased

TIP

Resource Options for Child Care:

★ Funding may be available from the unit so speak to the unit commander. (See authorized support and funding section.)

★ Access a Standard Alternative Childcare (STACC) site.

★ Arrange a "kiddie corner" within the same room as the parents and provide TV/VCR/DVD, coloring materials, a craft project, and snacks.

★ Set up a pool of trained child care volunteers at the battalion level. Child and Youth Services (CYS) can provide training through their program called Volunteer Child Care in a Unit Setting (VCCUS).

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

- Location(s) for FRG events
- Child care for FRG events
- Food for FRG events
- Materials and supplies for FRG events.

With the issuance of AR 608-1, Appendix J, FRGs can obtain many of these resources from the unit they serve.

AUTHORIZED SUPPORT AND FUNDING

The Army issued AR 608-1, Appendix J to help commanders and FRG leaders legally and ethically manage Family Readiness Groups, an extremely important facet of the Expeditionary Army.

Appropriated funds (APF). Unit commanders are responsible for funding FRG mission essential activities. Because the FRG is an official Army program, the commander must use the unit's appropriated funds (APF) to support FRG mission activities. APFs are used to support both the FRG's volunteers and mission activities. The level of support provided at the company level will depend upon command approval and funding availability. The support that command is authorized to provide to the FRG (and statutory FRG volunteers) includes:

- Government office space and equipment (e.g., meeting rooms, telephone, fax, computer, email, copier, scanner, equipment, and administrative supplies for official FRG business)
- Government paper and printing supplies for FRG newsletters relaying information from command and to support FRG mission activities
- Official mail for mission-related purposes and as approved by the commander (e.g., FRG newsletter containing official information)
- Government owned or leased

TIP

Resource Options for Child Care:

★ Funding may be available from the unit so speak to the unit commander. (See authorized support and funding section.)

★ Access a Standard Alternative Childcare (STACC) site.

★ Arrange a "kiddie corner" within the same room as the parents and provide TV/VCR/DVD, coloring materials, a craft project, and snacks.

★ Set up a pool of trained child care volunteers at the battalion level. Child and Youth Services (CYS) can provide training through their program called Volunteer Child Care in a Unit Setting (VCCUS).

vehicles for official FRG activities (including transportation of FRG members for FRG mission-related activities)
- Child care for command-sponsored training
- Child care, education and other youth services for needed family support (applicable when the FRG's Armed Forces members are assigned to active duty or ordered to active duty in support of a contingency operation).

A word of caution:
APFs may not be used for FRG's social activities.

In addition, the company commander may at his/her discretion use the unit's APFs to support FRG volunteers in other ways such as:
- Pay for travel expenses of official statutory volunteers. With commander pre-approval, authorized FRG volunteers may travel to geographically dispersed members of the FRG to conduct official FRG activities.
- Pay for training expenses (i.e., enrollment, travel, and per diem) of statutory FRG volunteers to improve the volunteer's effectiveness in his/her assigned role or enable the volunteer to accept increasingly responsible challenges. Funding depends on command pre-approval and availability of funds.
- Reimbursement of official volunteer incidental expenses (out-of-pocket expenses such as child care, telephone bills, mileage, and other expenses in accordance with chapter 5 of AR 608-1, Army Community Service Center, and the Commander's FRG Budget SOP) for FRG volunteers with prior approval of the responsible commander. (Note: Reimbursement is limited and the commander should inform the FRG leader on reimbursement in advance so that the FRG leader can manage FRG volunteers' expectations.)
- Official certificates of recognition for volunteers or volunteer incentive awards (see NAF for authorized funds for volunteer recognition programs).

Nonappropriated funds (NAF). The company commander is authorized to use NAFs for volunteer recognition programs based upon approval of Director, MWR. NAFs are to be used for annual volunteer recognition programs, awards, banquets and to purchase mementos. Most installations host an annual volunteer recognition program for all community volunteers rather than host several agency sponsored events. These annual volunteer recognition programs can be used to recognize FRG volunteers.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

vehicles for official FRG activities (including transportation of FRG members for FRG mission-related activities)
- Child care for command-sponsored training
- Child care, education and other youth services for needed family support (applicable when the FRG's Armed Forces members are assigned to active duty or ordered to active duty in support of a contingency operation).

A word of caution:
APFs may not be used for FRG's social activities.

In addition, the company commander may at his/her discretion use the unit's APFs to support FRG volunteers in other ways such as:
- Pay for travel expenses of official statutory volunteers. With commander pre-approval, authorized FRG volunteers may travel to geographically dispersed members of the FRG to conduct official FRG activities.
- Pay for training expenses (i.e., enrollment, travel, and per diem) of statutory FRG volunteers to improve the volunteer's effectiveness in his/her assigned role or enable the volunteer to accept increasingly responsible challenges. Funding depends on command pre-approval and availability of funds.
- Reimbursement of official volunteer incidental expenses (out-of-pocket expenses such as child care, telephone bills, mileage, and other expenses in accordance with chapter 5 of AR 608-1, Army Community Service Center, and the Commander's FRG Budget SOP) for FRG volunteers with prior approval of the responsible commander. (Note: Reimbursement is limited and the commander should inform the FRG leader on reimbursement in advance so that the FRG leader can manage FRG volunteers' expectations.)
- Official certificates of recognition for volunteers or volunteer incentive awards (see NAF for authorized funds for volunteer recognition programs).

Nonappropriated funds (NAF). The company commander is authorized to use NAFs for volunteer recognition programs based upon approval of Director, MWR. NAFs are to be used for annual volunteer recognition programs, awards, banquets and to purchase mementos. Most installations host an annual volunteer recognition program for all community volunteers rather than host several agency sponsored events. These annual volunteer recognition programs can be used to recognize FRG volunteers.

FRG Informal Fund	
Authorized Use Examples: • FRG newsletters that contain predominantly unofficial information • Purely social activities (such as parties, outings, and picnics) • Volunteer recognition • Refreshments/meals for FRG meetings	**Unauthorized Use** Examples: • Unit's informal funds (e.g., augmenting the "cup and flower" fund) • Items or services which may be paid for using APFs • Traditional military gifts (such as Soldier farewell gifts) • Division Ball • Personal funds (i.e., cannot be deposited or mixed with the treasurer's personal funds).

FRG informal fund. With the authorization of the company commander, the FRG can maintain one informal fund. No more than one FRG informal fund per unit is authorized.

The informal fund is private monies which belong to the FRG members and must be spent to benefit the FRG membership. Use of the fund monies is limited to the specific planned purposes stated in the FRG's Informal Fund SOP. The table shows the intended use of FRG Informal Fund per AR 608-1, Appendix J.

1. ***Specific regulations must be followed with an FRG Informal Fund.*** FRGs may conduct internal fundraising, in compliance with AR 600-29, Fundraising within the Department of the Army, paragraph 1-5b, and DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation. The Joint Ethics Regulation, paragraph 3-210(a)(6) authorizes official fundraising by organizations composed primarily of Department of Defense or Department of the Army employees and their dependents when fundraising among their own members or dependents for the benefit of their own welfare funds. Fundraising shall be approved by the appropriate commander after consultation with the Department of Army Ethics Official (DAEO) or designee.

According to the Office of Army General Counsel (Ethics and Fiscal Law) and the Army Standards of Conduct Office, an Army organization - including but not limited to units, installations, and Family Readiness Groups - may officially fundraise from its own community members or dependents and from all persons benefiting

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

FRG Informal Fund

Authorized Use
Examples:
• FRG newsletters that contain predominantly unofficial information
• Purely social activities (such as parties, outings, and picnics)
• Volunteer recognition
• Refreshments/meals for FRG meetings

Unauthorized Use
Examples:
• Unit's informal funds (e.g., augmenting the "cup and flower" fund)
• Items or services which may be paid for using APFs
• Traditional military gifts (such as Soldier farewell gifts)
• Division Ball
• Personal funds (i.e., cannot be deposited or mixed with the treasurer's personal funds).

FRG informal fund. With the authorization of the company commander, the FRG can maintain one informal fund. No more than one FRG informal fund per unit is authorized.

The informal fund is private monies which belong to the FRG members and must be spent to benefit the FRG membership. Use of the fund monies is limited to the specific planned purposes stated in the FRG's Informal Fund SOP. The table shows the intended use of FRG Informal Fund per AR 608-1, Appendix J.

1. Specific regulations must be followed with an FRG Informal Fund. FRGs may conduct internal fundraising, in compliance with AR 600-29, Fundraising within the Department of the Army, paragraph 1-5b, and DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation. The Joint Ethics Regulation, paragraph 3-210(a)(6) authorizes official fundraising by organizations composed primarily of Department of Defense or Department of the Army employees and their dependents when fundraising among their own members or dependents for the benefit of their own welfare funds. Fundraising shall be approved by the appropriate commander after consultation with the Department of Army Ethics Official (DAEO) or designee.

According to the Office of Army General Counsel (Ethics and Fiscal Law) and the Army Standards of Conduct Office, an Army organization - including but not limited to units, installations, and Family Readiness Groups - may officially fundraise from its own community members or dependents and from all persons benefiting

26

from the Army organization. For example, an installation may benefit from the Brigade or Unit FRG, thus the FRG may fundraise on the installation. Fundraising must be (1) for the organization's informal fund, as opposed to a private charity, particular military member or similar cause; and (2) approved by the unit commander and coordinated with the commander with cognizance over the location of fundraising if different from the organization area. Commanders shall consult with their SJA or Ethics Counselor and avoid all conflicts with other authorized fundraising activities.

Army Reserve FRGs may only fundraise on post or among their own members. They cannot fundraise off post, even if they work or train in an off post building.If the FRG leader has any fundraising questions, the FRG leader should consult the unit commander, who will consult with the appropriate ethics advisor. Funds should be collected for a specific planned purpose and earmarked accordingly in the FRG informal fund ledger.

2. ***An FRG Informal Fund SOP is required and must be approved by the unit commander and a majority of the FRG members.*** Once approved, the SOP is signed at a minimum by the Unit Commander, FRG leader, fund custodian (treasurer), and the alternate fund custodian. A sample FRG informal fund SOP is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.
3. ***A fund custodian (treasurer) and an alternate, who will manage the FRG informal fund, must be designated in writing with the commander's signature.*** Once the custodian is appointed, a bank account in the FRG's name can be opened under the authorization by the company commander. The annual gross income of the FRG informal fund is not to exceed $5,000 per year to avoid tax liability. At the same time, the FRG informal fund balance should not exceed $5,000 at any time. (Note: In overseas locations, local policy may require a lower fund balance be maintained. If this is the case, the commander should include the correct limits in the informal budget SOP.)

A word of caution:

FRGs may not:

- Engage in external fundraising.
- Solicit donations or gifts.
- Enter into commercial sponsorship agreements. (Commercial sponsorship is an agreed upon arrangement under which a business provides assistance, funding, goods, equipment, or services in exchange for public recognition or other promotional opportunities.)

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

from the Army organization. For example, an installation may benefit from the Brigade or Unit FRG, thus the FRG may fundraise on the installation. Fundraising must be (1) for the organization's informal fund, as opposed to a private charity, particular military member or similar cause; and (2) approved by the unit commander and coordinated with the commander with cognizance over the location of fundraising if different from the organization area. Commanders shall consult with their SJA or Ethics Counselor and avoid all conflicts with other authorized fundraising activities.

Army Reserve FRGs may only fundraise on post or among their own members. They cannot fundraise off post, even if they work or train in an off post building.If the FRG leader has any fundraising questions, the FRG leader should consult the unit commander, who will consult with the appropriate ethics advisor. Funds should be collected for a specific planned purpose and earmarked accordingly in the FRG informal fund ledger.

2. ***An FRG Informal Fund SOP is required and must be approved by the unit commander and a majority of the FRG members.*** Once approved, the SOP is signed at a minimum by the Unit Commander, FRG leader, fund custodian (treasurer), and the alternate fund custodian. A sample FRG informal fund SOP is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.
3. ***A fund custodian (treasurer) and an alternate, who will manage the FRG informal fund, must be designated in writing with the commander's signature.*** Once the custodian is appointed, a bank account in the FRG's name can be opened under the authorization by the company commander. The annual gross income of the FRG informal fund is not to exceed $5,000 per year to avoid tax liability. At the same time, the FRG informal fund balance should not exceed $5,000 at any time. (Note: In overseas locations, local policy may require a lower fund balance be maintained. If this is the case, the commander should include the correct limits in the informal budget SOP.)

A word of caution:

FRGs may not:

- Engage in external fundraising.
- Solicit donations or gifts.
- Enter into commercial sponsorship agreements. (Commercial sponsorship is an agreed upon arrangement under which a business provides assistance, funding, goods, equipment, or services in exchange for public recognition or other promotional opportunities.)

27

Other pertinent information related to the FRG informal fund follows:

- The commander authorizes opening of a bank account for the FRG fund and prepares a letter naming the persons authorized to sign checks drawn on the account. (Note: The bank account is to be set up under the FRG's name and not the custodian's name.) For additional protection of FRG informal funds, the commander may require the FRG fund be bonded in accordance with the procedures of AR 210-22, Private Organizations on Army Installations, paragraph 3-2 b, Fidelity Bonding.
- Custody, accounting, and documentation of the FRG informal fund are the responsibility of the fund custodian or alternate. Accounting or record keeping on the FRG informal fund may be maintained like a personal check register.
- The FRG's informal funds cannot be placed in either an interest or dividend bearing account. This is necessary to avoid potential tax liabilities.

FRG DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT ASSISTANTS (FRGDA)

The Family Readiness Group Deployment Support Assistant (FRGDA) (referred to as Mobilization and Deployment Assistant in the Reserve Component) is a paid position supervised by the unit commander. In the active component, the number of FRGDAs varies across divisions/corps. They are typically assigned to support brigade, and sometimes battalion, units with a high number of deployments. In the Guard, there is one FRGDA per state. In the Reserve, the number of FRGDAs assigned to the Reserve Regional Readiness Commands varies.

The role of the FRGDA is to provide administrative support to both commanders and FRG leaders in support of family readiness programs and activities. (Note: The FRGDA is not to impinge on the FRG leader's role and responsibilities. Further, the FRGDA is not an intermediary but works in a triangular relationship with commanders and FRG leaders.) This administrative support is intended to lighten the administrative burden on FRG leaders. The actual tasks performed are dependent upon unit needs, command direction (i.e., RDC during deployment), FRGDA's position description, and number of FRGs, but may include:

- Assisting with scheduling/coordinating unit pre-deployment and reunion activities
- Scheduling and coordinating family readiness training or unit sponsored training for Soldiers and families
- Working with RDC to provide FRG leaders with timely and accurate information (e.g., email all FRG leaders)
- Helping develop and distribute unit newsletters, announcements, and flyers

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

Other pertinent information related to the FRG informal fund follows:

- The commander authorizes opening of a bank account for the FRG fund and prepares a letter naming the persons authorized to sign checks drawn on the account. (Note: The bank account is to be set up under the FRG's name and not the custodian's name.) For additional protection of FRG informal funds, the commander may require the FRG fund be bonded in accordance with the procedures of AR 210-22, Private Organizations on Army Installations, paragraph 3-2 b, Fidelity Bonding.
- Custody, accounting, and documentation of the FRG informal fund are the responsibility of the fund custodian or alternate. Accounting or record keeping on the FRG informal fund may be maintained like a personal check register.
- The FRG's informal funds cannot be placed in either an interest or dividend bearing account. This is necessary to avoid potential tax liabilities.

FRG DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT ASSISTANTS (FRGDA)

The Family Readiness Group Deployment Support Assistant (FRGDA) (referred to as Mobilization and Deployment Assistant in the Reserve Component) is a paid position supervised by the unit commander. In the active component, the number of FRGDAs varies across divisions/corps. They are typically assigned to support brigade, and sometimes battalion, units with a high number of deployments. In the Guard, there is one FRGDA per state. In the Reserve, the number of FRGDAs assigned to the Reserve Regional Readiness Commands varies.

The role of the FRGDA is to provide administrative support to both commanders and FRG leaders in support of family readiness programs and activities. (Note: The FRGDA is not to impinge on the FRG leader's role and responsibilities. Further, the FRGDA is not an intermediary but works in a triangular relationship with commanders and FRG leaders.) This administrative support is intended to lighten the administrative burden on FRG leaders. The actual tasks performed are dependent upon unit needs, command direction (i.e., RDC during deployment), FRGDA's position description, and number of FRGs, but may include:

- Assisting with scheduling/coordinating unit pre-deployment and reunion activities
- Scheduling and coordinating family readiness training or unit sponsored training for Soldiers and families
- Working with RDC to provide FRG leaders with timely and accurate information (e.g., email all FRG leaders)
- Helping develop and distribute unit newsletters, announcements, and flyers

- Coordinating video teleconferences between deployed Soldiers and families
- Maintaining a list of FRG leaders in the division
- Assisting in establishing and updating FRG rosters
- Coordinating FRG events across corps/division/brigade
- Identifying POCs and obtaining information on community resources
- Providing referrals to community agencies (such as ACS, Chaplain, Social Work Service, etc.)
- Helping FRGs with producing newsletters, flyers, and activity calendars; submission of volunteer forms; scheduling and coordinating FRG meetings and events; arranging guest speakers for FRG meetings or events; and FRG mailings.

Volunteer Management

Leading an FRG is not expected to be a one-person job. A team of dedicated, caring volunteers will be needed to support the FRG leader in operating a successful FRG and supporting families. The key is to find creative ways to get everyone involved and excited about participating in the FRG at some level.

IDENTIFYING VOLUNTEERS

FRG Volunteer Positions. To determine what positions are needed to run the FRG, consider the command's vision for family readiness, deployment timetable, company's specific needs, scope of FRG operations to be carried out, and geographical dispersion of family members. The following is a suggested list of volunteer positions and chairpersons for committees that can help an FRG run smoothly and effectively. All of these individuals would report to the FRG leader except where noted:

- ***FRG Fund Manager and Alternate***—(treasurer), serves as custodian of the FRG's informal fund. (Note: This is a required position.) (Reports to FRG leader and company commander)
- ***Phone Tree Chairperson***—organizes the phone tree and email list, identifies and supervises phone tree key callers.
- ***Phone Tree Key Callers***—maintains regular contact with assigned families; passes along official information and provides other information to families. (Note: These volunteers are essential.) (Reports to Phone Tree Chairperson or FRG leader)
- ***FRG Recorder***—(secretary), maintains accurate minutes of meetings and distributes information and correspondence to the FRG leader and newsletter editor.
- ***FRG Newsletter Editor***—coordinates newsletter preparation, publishing, and distribution. (Note: In some cases, the newsletter may be handled at the battalion level.) (Reports to company commander and FRG leader)
- ***vFRG Coordinator***—coordinates with FRG leader and other appropriate individuals to

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

- Coordinating video teleconferences between deployed Soldiers and families
- Maintaining a list of FRG leaders in the division
- Assisting in establishing and updating FRG rosters
- Coordinating FRG events across corps/division/brigade
- Identifying POCs and obtaining information on community resources
- Providing referrals to community agencies (such as ACS, Chaplain, Social Work Service, etc.)
- Helping FRGs with producing newsletters, flyers, and activity calendars; submission of volunteer forms; scheduling and coordinating FRG meetings and events; arranging guest speakers for FRG meetings or events; and FRG mailings.

Volunteer Management

Leading an FRG is not expected to be a one-person job. A team of dedicated, caring volunteers will be needed to support the FRG leader in operating a successful FRG and supporting families. The key is to find creative ways to get everyone involved and excited about participating in the FRG at some level.

IDENTIFYING VOLUNTEERS

FRG Volunteer Positions. To determine what positions are needed to run the FRG, consider the command's vision for family readiness, deployment timetable, company's specific needs, scope of FRG operations to be carried out, and geographical dispersion of family members. The following is a suggested list of volunteer positions and chairpersons for committees that can help an FRG run smoothly and effectively. All of these individuals would report to the FRG leader except where noted:

- ***FRG Fund Manager and Alternate***—(treasurer), serves as custodian of the FRG's informal fund. (Note: This is a required position.) (Reports to FRG leader and company commander)
- ***Phone Tree Chairperson***—organizes the phone tree and email list, identifies and supervises phone tree key callers.
- ***Phone Tree Key Callers***—maintains regular contact with assigned families; passes along official information and provides other information to families. (Note: These volunteers are essential.) (Reports to Phone Tree Chairperson or FRG leader)
- ***FRG Recorder***—(secretary), maintains accurate minutes of meetings and distributes information and correspondence to the FRG leader and newsletter editor.
- ***FRG Newsletter Editor***—coordinates newsletter preparation, publishing, and distribution. (Note: In some cases, the newsletter may be handled at the battalion level.) (Reports to company commander and FRG leader)
- ***vFRG Coordinator***—coordinates with FRG leader and other appropriate individuals to

prepare postings on FRG activities, FRG announcements, and education information for families. These postings are given to the command. (Note: The command will prepare postings pertaining to information on deployed unit. The unit commander or RDC reviews all proposed postings and ensures the approved postings are made to the vFRG web site. In some instances, the FRGDA may be assigned the administrative responsibility of putting the postings on the vFRG web site.) (Reports to company commander and FRG leader)

- ***Special Events Chairperson***—plans, organizes, and executes FRG activities and special events.
- ***Hospitality/Welcome Committee Chairperson***—contacts and welcomes all new Soldiers and families to the company, helping them find needed resources.
- ***Publicity Chairperson***—informs Soldiers and family members of upcoming FRG activities.
- ***Fundraiser Chairperson***—manages internal FRG fundraising activities for FRG informal fund. (Reports to FRG leader)
- ***Childcare Chairperson***—ensures acceptable childcare for FRG meetings and special events.

Based on the needs of the FRG and the number of volunteers willing to help, other volunteer positions may be created such as food committee chairperson, youth committee chairperson, or FRG co-leader.

FRG Committees and Other Activities. While the previous section mostly talked about volunteers who will serve in important leadership positions providing

TIP

★ Co-Leader Option

In these times of rapid, unpredictable and lengthy deployments, leading an FRG for an extended period of time can be overwhelming and an FRG leader can easily burn out. One option to managing the role is to have a co-leader. A co-leader can assist in providing leadership of the FRG, oversee particular FRG activities, help get individuals involved in FRG activities, or serve as an advisor or assistant, depending upon how the co-leadership role is defined. This help in sharing the burden can reduce some of the stress.

Splitting leadership can have some drawbacks, unless steps are taken to define and create a working partnership relationship. With a co-leader it is important to talk to each other regularly. Agree on what areas and activities each of you will supervise and how decisions on important issues will be made.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

prepare postings on FRG activities, FRG announcements, and education information for families. These postings are given to the command. (Note: The command will prepare postings pertaining to information on deployed unit. The unit commander or RDC reviews all proposed postings and ensures the approved postings are made to the vFRG web site. In some instances, the FRGDA may be assigned the administrative responsibility of putting the postings on the vFRG web site.) (Reports to company commander and FRG leader)

- ***Special Events Chairperson***—plans, organizes, and executes FRG activities and special events.
- ***Hospitality/Welcome Committee Chairperson***—contacts and welcomes all new Soldiers and families to the company, helping them find needed resources.
- ***Publicity Chairperson***—informs Soldiers and family members of upcoming FRG activities.
- ***Fundraiser Chairperson***—manages internal FRG fundraising activities for FRG informal fund. (Reports to FRG leader)
- ***Childcare Chairperson***—ensures acceptable childcare for FRG meetings and special events.

Based on the needs of the FRG and the number of volunteers willing to help, other volunteer positions may be created such as food committee chairperson, youth committee chairperson, or FRG co-leader.

FRG Committees and Other Activities. While the previous section mostly talked about volunteers who will serve in important leadership positions providing

TIP

★ Co-Leader Option

In these times of rapid, unpredictable and lengthy deployments, leading an FRG for an extended period of time can be overwhelming and an FRG leader can easily burn out. One option to managing the role is to have a co-leader. A co-leader can assist in providing leadership of the FRG, oversee particular FRG activities, help get individuals involved in FRG activities, or serve as an advisor or assistant, depending upon how the co-leadership role is defined. This help in sharing the burden can reduce some of the stress.

Splitting leadership can have some drawbacks, unless steps are taken to define and create a working partnership relationship. With a co-leader it is important to talk to each other regularly. Agree on what areas and activities each of you will supervise and how decisions on important issues will be made.

oversight on specific FRG operational activities (or committees), volunteers are also needed to serve on committees and to carry out other FRG activities. For example, volunteers willing to help with special events will be needed.

RECRUITING AND TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

There are many ways to recruit volunteers, but the most effective way is simply to ask individuals to volunteer. On the family readiness information sheet, family members have an opportunity to indicate what areas or ways they would be willing to assist the FRG. Another direct approach is to decide who might be best suited to handle a particular task and ask the individual about performing the task. However, remember that individuals who are not located in your geographical area can perform important functions such as serving as newsletter editor.

During recruiting, individuals may ask "What do I need to do?" and "How long do I need to do it?" Be prepared to provide this information. Present a written description so that individuals will know what their duties will be if they accept. For key FRG volunteer positions, sample FRG volunteer position descriptions are provided in the Operation READY Smart Book for the FRG leader's use.

For ALL volunteers serving in the key FRG leadership positions, the FRG leader must ensure the volunteer does the following: 1) completes a Volunteer Agreement (DD Form 2793), 2) receives a position description, 3) in processes with the local Army Community Service, Family Programs Office, or Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator and Mobilization and Deployment Program, 4) maintains a record of volunteer hours on the Volunteer Management Information System or on a form for recording volunteer hours, and 5) completes training as needed (see training resources box on page 33). (Note: If a minor volunteers, then a parental permission form must be completed.) For forms and guidance on these volunteer matters, consult AR 608-1 as well as one of the following offices: the Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator at a military installation, the National Guard State Family Program Coordinator, or the Army Reserve Family Program Office. Information is also available from the Army Volunteer Program at http://www.MyArmyLifeToo.com,

A word of caution: All individuals who volunteer to help do not need to register. For example, a FRG member who volunteers to bring food to an FRG event does not need to register. Job descriptions and registration should only be conducted for those individuals who want to serve in a key official capacity and seek credit for their volunteer hours.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

oversight on specific FRG operational activities (or committees), volunteers are also needed to serve on committees and to carry out other FRG activities. For example, volunteers willing to help with special events will be needed.

RECRUITING AND TRAINING VOLUNTEERS

There are many ways to recruit volunteers, but the most effective way is simply to ask individuals to volunteer. On the family readiness information sheet, family members have an opportunity to indicate what areas or ways they would be willing to assist the FRG. Another direct approach is to decide who might be best suited to handle a particular task and ask the individual about performing the task. However, remember that individuals who are not located in your geographical area can perform important functions such as serving as newsletter editor.

During recruiting, individuals may ask "What do I need to do?" and "How long do I need to do it?" Be prepared to provide this information. Present a written description so that individuals will know what their duties will be if they accept. For key FRG volunteer positions, sample FRG volunteer position descriptions are provided in the Operation READY Smart Book for the FRG leader's use.

For ALL volunteers serving in the key FRG leadership positions, the FRG leader must ensure the volunteer does the following: 1) completes a Volunteer Agreement (DD Form 2793), 2) receives a position description, 3) in processes with the local Army Community Service, Family Programs Office, or Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator and Mobilization and Deployment Program, 4) maintains a record of volunteer hours on the Volunteer Management Information System or on a form for recording volunteer hours, and 5) completes training as needed (see training resources box on page 33). (Note: If a minor volunteers, then a parental permission form must be completed.) For forms and guidance on these volunteer matters, consult AR 608-1 as well as one of the following offices: the Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator at a military installation, the National Guard State Family Program Coordinator, or the Army Reserve Family Program Office. Information is also available from the Army Volunteer Program at http://www.MyArmyLifeToo.com,

A word of caution: All individuals who volunteer to help do not need to register. For example, a FRG member who volunteers to bring food to an FRG event does not need to register. Job descriptions and registration should only be conducted for those individuals who want to serve in a key official capacity and seek credit for their volunteer hours.

www.arfp.org, and www.guardfamily.org. FRG volunteers who register are classified as statutory volunteers are eligible for reimbursement of authorized incidental expenses, following the procedures established in the unit's FRG Budget SOP.

Once volunteers have been recruited, it is important to inform volunteers of the company commander's and FRG leader's expectations. When discussing expectations, be clear about the parameters regarding to what degree, and when, volunteers may act independently. Address important issues such as punctuality, attitude, dealing with command and families, attire, confidentiality, communication with FRG leader and committee chairpersons, communication between FRG leader and FRG volunteers, and reimbursement of volunteer expenses.

Sample Talking Points on Expectations of FRG Volunteers

- ***Be punctual and dependable.*** Volunteers need to be on time and dependable. This is particularly important for key callers, who need to make calls to families in a timely manner. When you, as a volunteer, cannot carry out a commitment, notify your supervisor or FRG leader. Keep in mind that you are not expected to make commitments that will put your own family's needs at risk.
- ***Be friendly and courteous***. Be helpful and maintain a courteous attitude when dealing with the chain of command, Soldiers, family members, and other FRG volunteers.
- ***Be flexible.*** Given the high and changing demands on the military and unpredictable nature of deployments, we need to be able to adapt to change with understanding and calmness.
- ***Know your role.*** The FRG (and in particular key callers) is not expected to solve all problems, but is expected to provide accurate information and/or referrals. Know when to refer individuals to the appropriate agency. Also do not hesitate to seek guidance and assistance with referrals when trying to assist with issues outside your professional knowledge. Follow-up to ensure individual's needs were met.
- ***Maintain confidentiality.*** FRG volunteers deal with problems of a highly personal nature. Be professional with personal information. Gossiping is taboo.
- ***Be nonjudgmental.*** Treat others with respect and dignity, regardless of rank. When assisting individuals, it is important to respect individual's decisions.
- ***Notify FRG leadership of important issues.*** While it is important to be respectful of individual's privacy and sensitive to family problems/issues, keep the FRG leader informed of any important issues. By doing so, the FRG can address common and emerging issues of concern to families. The FRG leader can also bring certain issues to the attention of command or community agencies, as appropriate.
- ***Take care of yourself.*** There will likely be times when you may feel great stress or overwhelmed. Take the time to take care of yourself and your family. Maintain a balance in your life.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

www.arfp.org, and www.guardfamily.org. FRG volunteers who register are classified as statutory volunteers are eligible for reimbursement of authorized incidental expenses, following the procedures established in the unit's FRG Budget SOP.

Once volunteers have been recruited, it is important to inform volunteers of the company commander's and FRG leader's expectations. When discussing expectations, be clear about the parameters regarding to what degree, and when, volunteers may act independently. Address important issues such as punctuality, attitude, dealing with command and families, attire, confidentiality, communication with FRG leader and committee chairpersons, communication between FRG leader and FRG volunteers, and reimbursement of volunteer expenses.

Sample Talking Points on Expectations of FRG Volunteers

- ***Be punctual and dependable.*** Volunteers need to be on time and dependable. This is particularly important for key callers, who need to make calls to families in a timely manner. When you, as a volunteer, cannot carry out a commitment, notify your supervisor or FRG leader. Keep in mind that you are not expected to make commitments that will put your own family's needs at risk.
- ***Be friendly and courteous***. Be helpful and maintain a courteous attitude when dealing with the chain of command, Soldiers, family members, and other FRG volunteers.
- ***Be flexible.*** Given the high and changing demands on the military and unpredictable nature of deployments, we need to be able to adapt to change with understanding and calmness.
- ***Know your role.*** The FRG (and in particular key callers) is not expected to solve all problems, but is expected to provide accurate information and/or referrals. Know when to refer individuals to the appropriate agency. Also do not hesitate to seek guidance and assistance with referrals when trying to assist with issues outside your professional knowledge. Follow-up to ensure individual's needs were met.
- ***Maintain confidentiality.*** FRG volunteers deal with problems of a highly personal nature. Be professional with personal information. Gossiping is taboo.
- ***Be nonjudgmental.*** Treat others with respect and dignity, regardless of rank. When assisting individuals, it is important to respect individual's decisions.
- ***Notify FRG leadership of important issues.*** While it is important to be respectful of individual's privacy and sensitive to family problems/issues, keep the FRG leader informed of any important issues. By doing so, the FRG can address common and emerging issues of concern to families. The FRG leader can also bring certain issues to the attention of command or community agencies, as appropriate.
- ***Take care of yourself.*** There will likely be times when you may feel great stress or overwhelmed. Take the time to take care of yourself and your family. Maintain a balance in your life.

In addition, identify the training volunteers need and provide them with the appropriate materials from the Operation READY Smart Book and/or refer them to the appropriate resource.

Training Resources for FRG Volunteers

- ***Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC).*** Offers general skills training to volunteers. (Note: ACS and Family Programs Mobilization and Deployment managers and assistants provide skills training for specific FRG activities.)
- ***Operation READY Smart Book.*** The Operation READY Smart Book contains training materials that may be used by the FRG leader to provide specific training to FRG volunteers such as key callers. In addition, there are resource materials and information sheets which can be given to appropriate FRG volunteers. For example, the Operation READY Smart Book contains a Key Caller Handbook. Another example is a Coping with Stress tips sheet that might be given to all FRG volunteers.
- ***Army Community Service (ACS).*** ACS provides FRG volunteer orientation training through the Mobilization and Deployment Program. Volunteers serving as key callers or FRG co-leader can also receive training through a garrison ACS. Handbooks will be distributed at their training. Those FRG volunteers who are in leadership positions (i.e., committee chairpersons) can seek guidance on managing volunteers.
- ***CYS.*** CYS through their Volunteer Child Care in a Unit Setting (VCCUS) program can provide training to volunteers so that the FRG can offer child care at FRG events.
- ***Army National Guard State Family Program Office*** *and* ***Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Programs Office.*** Volunteers serving as FRG leaders, co-leaders and key callers can get training from these sources to become familiar with issues and resources related to Guard and Reserve families.
- ***Army Family Team Building Program/ Guard Family Team Building.*** This three-level training program comprises 43 classes that help individuals learn about military culture and adjust to military life. Level I is designed for new Soldiers and spouses. Level II focuses on basic leadership skills whereas Level III offers advanced leadership. This training program is available online and as classroom based training. FRG volunteers can use this training to become familiar with the military and develop particular skills.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

In addition, identify the training volunteers need and provide them with the appropriate materials from the Operation READY Smart Book and/or refer them to the appropriate resource.

Training Resources for FRG Volunteers

- ***Army Volunteer Corps Coordinator (AVCC).*** Offers general skills training to volunteers. (Note: ACS and Family Programs Mobilization and Deployment managers and assistants provide skills training for specific FRG activities.)
- ***Operation READY Smart Book.*** The Operation READY Smart Book contains training materials that may be used by the FRG leader to provide specific training to FRG volunteers such as key callers. In addition, there are resource materials and information sheets which can be given to appropriate FRG volunteers. For example, the Operation READY Smart Book contains a Key Caller Handbook. Another example is a Coping with Stress tips sheet that might be given to all FRG volunteers.
- ***Army Community Service (ACS).*** ACS provides FRG volunteer orientation training through the Mobilization and Deployment Program. Volunteers serving as key callers or FRG co-leader can also receive training through a garrison ACS. Handbooks will be distributed at their training. Those FRG volunteers who are in leadership positions (i.e., committee chairpersons) can seek guidance on managing volunteers.
- ***CYS.*** CYS through their Volunteer Child Care in a Unit Setting (VCCUS) program can provide training to volunteers so that the FRG can offer child care at FRG events.
- ***Army National Guard State Family Program Office*** *and* ***Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Programs Office.*** Volunteers serving as FRG leaders, co-leaders and key callers can get training from these sources to become familiar with issues and resources related to Guard and Reserve families.
- ***Army Family Team Building Program/ Guard Family Team Building.*** This three-level training program comprises 43 classes that help individuals learn about military culture and adjust to military life. Level I is designed for new Soldiers and spouses. Level II focuses on basic leadership skills whereas Level III offers advanced leadership. This training program is available online and as classroom based training. FRG volunteers can use this training to become familiar with the military and develop particular skills.

MANAGING AND SUPERVISING FRG VOLUNTEERS

As the supervisor to FRG volunteers, it is important to maintain contact and oversee volunteers' performance. Maintaining ongoing communication with FRG volunteers and committees is also important to monitor how well specific activities are being carried out and how well the FRG is supporting families. If key FRG volunteers are not co-located with the FRG leader, the FRG leader will need to manage volunteers by telephone (both individual and conference calls), email, and forum on vFRG web site. If FRG volunteers are co-located, then a combination of meetings and telephone and email communications can be used.

RECOGNIZING VOLUNTEERS

Recognizing volunteers is an important aspect to maintaining a group of enthusiastic and committed volunteers who support the FRG. Creating an environment in which FRG volunteers are well recognized and feel supported by the FRG and company leadership can also be a motivating factor for family members to be inclined to volunteer in the future. Recognition needs to be provided in different ways that includes both formal methods (e.g., certificates, pins, and awards) and informal methods (e.g., saying "Thanks!" or "I'm glad you're here," or "You really did a great job."). Suggestions on ways to recognize volunteers include:

- public praise
- newsletter articles
- thank-you notes
- honoring volunteers at a special luncheon, party, or FRG meeting
- announcements on bulletin boards or via email

TIP

★ All volunteers need to be recognized!

Volunteers like to be appreciated for what they do for the FRG. When recognizing an individual, it is important to point out something of importance such as the job/task performed, quality of performance, accomplishment, or desirable character trait or ability. It is a wonderful boost to a volunteer's self esteem. Recognition is easy to give so give it often. Also take advantage of annual volunteer recognition programs.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

MANAGING AND SUPERVISING FRG VOLUNTEERS

As the supervisor to FRG volunteers, it is important to maintain contact and oversee volunteers' performance. Maintaining ongoing communication with FRG volunteers and committees is also important to monitor how well specific activities are being carried out and how well the FRG is supporting families. If key FRG volunteers are not co-located with the FRG leader, the FRG leader will need to manage volunteers by telephone (both individual and conference calls), email, and forum on vFRG web site. If FRG volunteers are co-located, then a combination of meetings and telephone and email communications can be used.

RECOGNIZING VOLUNTEERS

Recognizing volunteers is an important aspect to maintaining a group of enthusiastic and committed volunteers who support the FRG. Creating an environment in which FRG volunteers are well recognized and feel supported by the FRG and company leadership can also be a motivating factor for family members to be inclined to volunteer in the future. Recognition needs to be provided in different ways that includes both formal methods (e.g., certificates, pins, and awards) and informal methods (e.g., saying "Thanks!" or "I'm glad you're here," or "You really did a great job."). Suggestions on ways to recognize volunteers include:

- public praise
- newsletter articles
- thank-you notes
- honoring volunteers at a special luncheon, party, or FRG meeting
- announcements on bulletin boards or via email

TIP

★ All volunteers need to be recognized!

Volunteers like to be appreciated for what they do for the FRG. When recognizing an individual, it is important to point out something of importance such as the job/task performed, quality of performance, accomplishment, or desirable character trait or ability. It is a wonderful boost to a volunteer's self esteem. Recognition is easy to give so give it often. Also take advantage of annual volunteer recognition programs.

- media coverage—local and post newspapers
- certificates of appreciation.

Remember copies of certificates and awards and volunteer service records need to be maintained as discussed in the Administrative Matters section (see page 20).

MENTORING FUTURE FRG LEADERS

During the course of working with different FRG volunteers, it may become apparent to you who might be a good FRG leader in the future. Consider mentoring this individual. Alternatively, spend some time talking with and helping the next FRG leader that the company commander assigns. It is important to pass on the knowledge gained and lessons learned to ensure a smooth transition and to assist the next FRG leader in their efforts.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

- media coverage—local and post newspapers
- certificates of appreciation.

Remember copies of certificates and awards and volunteer service records need to be maintained as discussed in the Administrative Matters section (see page 20).

MENTORING FUTURE FRG LEADERS

During the course of working with different FRG volunteers, it may become apparent to you who might be a good FRG leader in the future. Consider mentoring this individual. Alternatively, spend some time talking with and helping the next FRG leader that the company commander assigns. It is important to pass on the knowledge gained and lessons learned to ensure a smooth transition and to assist the next FRG leader in their efforts.

3.3 Management of FRG Activities

This section specifies the required FRG activities, per Army guidance. Procedural details on how to perform these activities are provided here. However, the specific information and assistance provided when these activities are performed in each phase of the deployment cycle are presented in Part 4 of this handbook. This section also addresses the following issues: referrals, FRG participation, and several situations that FRGs may encounter.

Identifying FRG Activities Needed

Army guidance stipulates that certain FRG activities are essential. Further, FRGs are known to conduct other activities, some of which are identified in the table on the opposite page.

The type and scope of activities an FRG conducts depends on a large number of factors, including:

- commander's budget for FRG mission activities
- identified needs of unit Soldiers, civilian employees, and their families
- command interest and emphasis
- number of FRG members
- time, energy, and creativity of FRG membership
- make up of the FRG (e.g., the percentage of single Soldiers, number of years Soldiers and their family have served with the military, number of families with young children, and other family composition factors)
- unit's training and deployment schedule (i.e., whether the unit is in pre/post deployment, deployed, or in a train-up/preparation phase).

For these reasons, it is important to determine with command what activities (or level of effort in each area) your FRG will provide. Keep in mind that the FRG may be serving family members who are geographically dispersed across a wide area or a number of states. Also remember that the FRG is providing information to a broader array of family members than just spouses and children. For these reasons, the FRG's communication systems will need to be strong and will likely be the primary focus of support activity with certain family members.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

3.3 Management of FRG Activities

This section specifies the required FRG activities, per Army guidance. Procedural details on how to perform these activities are provided here. However, the specific information and assistance provided when these activities are performed in each phase of the deployment cycle are presented in Part 4 of this handbook. This section also addresses the following issues: referrals, FRG participation, and several situations that FRGs may encounter.

Identifying FRG Activities Needed

Army guidance stipulates that certain FRG activities are essential. Further, FRGs are known to conduct other activities, some of which are identified in the table on the opposite page.

The type and scope of activities an FRG conducts depends on a large number of factors, including:

- commander's budget for FRG mission activities
- identified needs of unit Soldiers, civilian employees, and their families
- command interest and emphasis
- number of FRG members
- time, energy, and creativity of FRG membership
- make up of the FRG (e.g., the percentage of single Soldiers, number of years Soldiers and their family have served with the military, number of families with young children, and other family composition factors)
- unit's training and deployment schedule (i.e., whether the unit is in pre/post deployment, deployed, or in a train-up/preparation phase).

For these reasons, it is important to determine with command what activities (or level of effort in each area) your FRG will provide. Keep in mind that the FRG may be serving family members who are geographically dispersed across a wide area or a number of states. Also remember that the FRG is providing information to a broader array of family members than just spouses and children. For these reasons, the FRG's communication systems will need to be strong and will likely be the primary focus of support activity with certain family members.

A word of caution.
The FRG does not serve as a:
- babysitting service
- taxi service
- financial institution
- professional counseling agency
- part of the casualty notification process
- religious activity
- social club/rumor mill.

Communicating With Army Families

Ongoing communication with family members during all stages of the deployment cycle is important to maintaining the flow of information from command to families. Working with company leadership (including the RDC) will be critical to obtaining important news from the unit that the FRG leader can then pass on to family members through these communication activities. Guidance on each of these activities is detailed in this section. Using multiple communication methods is encouraged and is necessary to reach all family members. Discuss with the company commander to what extent each of these methods will be used based on the number of FRG volunteers available and geographical dispersion of family members.

TIP

★ In a time where there is high media coverage of many military missions, keeping the lines of communication open and sharing accurate information in a timely manner can greatly help to control stories or rumors. In addition, the FRG leader will need to convey the message to both FRG volunteers and family members that gossip and rumors have no place in the FRG. It will be important to emphasize to individuals not to pass on stories that have not been confirmed with a person in authority (RDC, company commander, military leadership).

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

A word of caution.
The FRG does not serve as a:
- babysitting service
- taxi service
- financial institution
- professional counseling agency
- part of the casualty notification process
- religious activity
- social club/rumor mill.

Communicating With Army Families

Ongoing communication with family members during all stages of the deployment cycle is important to maintaining the flow of information from command to families. Working with company leadership (including the RDC) will be critical to obtaining important news from the unit that the FRG leader can then pass on to family members through these communication activities. Guidance on each of these activities is detailed in this section. Using multiple communication methods is encouraged and is necessary to reach all family members. Discuss with the company commander to what extent each of these methods will be used based on the number of FRG volunteers available and geographical dispersion of family members.

TIP

★ In a time where there is high media coverage of many military missions, keeping the lines of communication open and sharing accurate information in a timely manner can greatly help to control stories or rumors. In addition, the FRG leader will need to convey the message to both FRG volunteers and family members that gossip and rumors have no place in the FRG. It will be important to emphasize to individuals not to pass on stories that have not been confirmed with a person in authority (RDC, company commander, military leadership).

FRG MEETINGS

FRG meetings are an opportunity to share important information with family members, provide education on important topics, and foster connections with family members. Meetings are also an opportunity for getting family readiness information forms completed. However, with families being geographically dispersed, working outside of the home, and for other reasons, keep in mind that families may not be able to attend meetings. It is therefore important to determine early on the degree to which meetings should be held.

Here are some general guidelines on conducting meetings:

- Identify whether there are any issues of concern that need to be addressed; consult with company leadership as appropriate prior to the meeting to determine how this issue will be addressed by the company or FRG
- Assess FRG needs (e.g., discuss need for volunteers, brainstorm to get input from participants on topics or activities of interest to FRG membership)
- Identify FRG activities to be publicized (e.g., vFRG, newsletter, holiday party)
- Establish the purpose of the meeting
- Develop an agenda
- Determine how long the meeting will be and establish a timeline for the different segments of the meeting (e.g., welcome, guest speaker, announcements, concluding remarks)
- Determine what resources will be needed (e.g., interpreters, child care, food, pens and other supplies, music, equipment, transportation, parking)
- Determine what the "social" component will be (e.g., potluck dinner, award ceremony, set aside time for people to talk amongst themselves)
- Select a location
- Publicize the meeting
- Identify what materials will be distributed or need to have on hand (e.g., family readiness information forms, FRG newsletter, sign in sheets, community resource directory, door prizes if desired)
- Arrange for company or military leadership to speak, if desired or a guest speaker, if needed.

★ **TIP** Asking and/or surveying FRG membership periodically to identify issues and activities of interest is important to finding out what needs to be done at FRG meetings (and other activities). When FRG members are given the opportunity to provide input, then they will feel more involved and engaged in the FRG. Further, when FRG meetings meet membership's needs, FRG members are more likely to view FRG meetings as worthwhile and thus be more inclined to participate. Both are critical to sustaining the FRG.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

FRG MEETINGS

FRG meetings are an opportunity to share important information with family members, provide education on important topics, and foster connections with family members. Meetings are also an opportunity for getting family readiness information forms completed. However, with families being geographically dispersed, working outside of the home, and for other reasons, keep in mind that families may not be able to attend meetings. It is therefore important to determine early on the degree to which meetings should be held.

Here are some general guidelines on conducting meetings:

- Identify whether there are any issues of concern that need to be addressed; consult with company leadership as appropriate prior to the meeting to determine how this issue will be addressed by the company or FRG
- Assess FRG needs (e.g., discuss need for volunteers, brainstorm to get input from participants on topics or activities of interest to FRG membership)
- Identify FRG activities to be publicized (e.g., vFRG, newsletter, holiday party)
- Establish the purpose of the meeting
- Develop an agenda
- Determine how long the meeting will be and establish a timeline for the different segments of the meeting (e.g., welcome, guest speaker, announcements, concluding remarks)
- Determine what resources will be needed (e.g., interpreters, child care, food, pens and other supplies, music, equipment, transportation, parking)
- Determine what the "social" component will be (e.g., potluck dinner, award ceremony, set aside time for people to talk amongst themselves)
- Select a location
- Publicize the meeting
- Identify what materials will be distributed or need to have on hand (e.g., family readiness information forms, FRG newsletter, sign in sheets, community resource directory, door prizes if desired)
- Arrange for company or military leadership to speak, if desired or a guest speaker, if needed.

★ **TIP** Asking and/or surveying FRG membership periodically to identify issues and activities of interest is important to finding out what needs to be done at FRG meetings (and other activities). When FRG members are given the opportunity to provide input, then they will feel more involved and engaged in the FRG. Further, when FRG meetings meet membership's needs, FRG members are more likely to view FRG meetings as worthwhile and thus be more inclined to participate. Both are critical to sustaining the FRG.

38

FRG NEWSLETTER

The purposes of an FRG newsletter are to relay information from the commander, highlight military and community resources, advertise upcoming FRG events, address issues of concern, and build camaraderie. Given that FRG newsletters relay information from the command, they are done under the direction of, and must be approved by, the company commander (or during deployment, the rear detachment commander). The company commander decides how frequently the newsletter will be published. Further, according to AR 608-1, Appendix J, the FRG newsletter must be conducted according to the company's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the preparation, printing and distribution of FRG newsletters.

Preparation of FRG Newsletter. While the company's SOP will address preparation of the FRG newsletter, here are some important things to know. The company commander (or RDC) determines what official information can be included and will provide this information. Some official information, such as training or deployment schedules though of interest to families may be classified; thus, the company commander (or RDC) will not allow this information to be included. When mailing the newsletter, the FRG will need to state whether the newsletter contains official, unofficial, or both types of information. For this reason, the table below is provided so that FRG volunteers working on the FRG newsletter can be advised accordingly.

PREPARATION OF FRG NEWSLETTERS

Official Information	Unofficial Information
Definition: relates to command and mission essential information that the commander believes families should have to be better informed. Official information relates to unit mission and readiness.	*Definition: Non-mission related information*
Examples: • training schedule information • upcoming deployments • unit points of contact and the chain of concern • new Army programs or benefits available to families • upcoming garrison events for families of deployed Soldiers • educational information (such as information on the military community, how to budget, where to find medical care or legal assistance, how to prepare for emergencies)	Examples: • personal information (e.g., phone numbers, addresses, birth or adoption announcements, birthdays) • accomplishments by Soldiers or family members • FRG member job changes, promotions, and awards • FRG fundraisers • recipes

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

FRG NEWSLETTER

The purposes of an FRG newsletter are to relay information from the commander, highlight military and community resources, advertise upcoming FRG events, address issues of concern, and build camaraderie. Given that FRG newsletters relay information from the command, they are done under the direction of, and must be approved by, the company commander (or during deployment, the rear detachment commander). The company commander decides how frequently the newsletter will be published. Further, according to AR 608-1, Appendix J, the FRG newsletter must be conducted according to the company's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the preparation, printing and distribution of FRG newsletters.

Preparation of FRG Newsletter. While the company's SOP will address preparation of the FRG newsletter, here are some important things to know. The company commander (or RDC) determines what official information can be included and will provide this information. Some official information, such as training or deployment schedules though of interest to families may be classified; thus, the company commander (or RDC) will not allow this information to be included. When mailing the newsletter, the FRG will need to state whether the newsletter contains official, unofficial, or both types of information. For this reason, the table below is provided so that FRG volunteers working on the FRG newsletter can be advised accordingly.

PREPARATION OF FRG NEWSLETTERS

Official Information
Definition: relates to command and mission essential information that the commander believes families should have to be better informed. Official information relates to unit mission and readiness.
Examples:
• training schedule information
• upcoming deployments
• unit points of contact and the chain of concern
• new Army programs or benefits available to families
• upcoming garrison events for families of deployed Soldiers
• educational information (such as information on the military community, how to budget, where to find medical care or legal assistance, how to prepare for emergencies)

Unofficial Information
Definition: Non-mission related information
Examples:
• personal information (e.g., phone numbers, addresses, birth or adoption announcements, birthdays)
• accomplishments by Soldiers or family members
• FRG member job changes, promotions, and awards
• FRG fundraisers
• recipes

39

Printing the FRG Newsletter. Government paper and printing supplies are authorized for use to publish FRG newsletters that relay information from command.

A word of caution.

Copyright laws pertain to original works such as books and novels, poetry, songs, sheet music, photographs, computer software, graphics-anything created that exists as a "tangible medium." Using any portion of an author's published or unpublished work without permission is a copyright infringement and subject to lawsuit. Keep in mind that simply giving the author credit does not give protection from copyright infringement. Under the "fair use" rule of copyright law, you may use limited portions of someone's work (including quotes) or reproduce works without getting permission for such purposes as commentary or criticism, a summary of an article or address with quotes for news reporting, teaching, and research. However, material that is in the "public domain" may be used freely. (For example, Army materials and many government publications and web sites can be used without permission and are not covered under copyright laws.) For more information, check the U.S. Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov.

Distributing the Approved Newsletter. FRG newsletter may be distributed by mail using the Army or installation Post Office, email, and/or posted on the company's page on the battalion vFRG web site. For those families who do not have access to a computer or internet connection, mailing the newsletter is essential.

Guidance on Mailing FRG Newsletters

Postal Regulations limit how much unofficial information may be included in an FRG newsletter. As long as the inclusion of unofficial information does not increase the cost to the Government in printing and mailing the FRG newsletter, does not exceed 20 percent of the printed space used for the official information, and does not include personal wanted/for sale advertisements, some unofficial information may be included in an official FRG newsletter. The FRG newsletter must state whether it contains only official or both official and unofficial types of information. If the newsletter contains both types of information, it should include the following statement: "The inclusion of some unofficial information in this FRG newsletter has not increased the costs to the Government, in accordance with DoD 4525.8-M, Official Mail Management Manual." If the inclusion of unoffcial information in the FRG newsletter has increased the costs to the Government, the FRG must use the FRG's Informal Fund to cover the costs.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

Printing the FRG Newsletter. Government paper and printing supplies are authorized for use to publish FRG newsletters that relay information from command.

A word of caution.

Copyright laws pertain to original works such as books and novels, poetry, songs, sheet music, photographs, computer software, graphics-anything created that exists as a "tangible medium." Using any portion of an author's published or unpublished work without permission is a copyright infringement and subject to lawsuit. Keep in mind that simply giving the author credit does not give protection from copyright infringement. Under the "fair use" rule of copyright law, you may use limited portions of someone's work (including quotes) or reproduce works without getting permission for such purposes as commentary or criticism, a summary of an article or address with quotes for news reporting, teaching, and research. However, material that is in the "public domain" may be used freely. (For example, Army materials and many government publications and web sites can be used without permission and are not covered under copyright laws.) For more information, check the U.S. Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov.

Distributing the Approved Newsletter. FRG newsletter may be distributed by mail using the Army or installation Post Office, email, and/or posted on the company's page on the battalion vFRG web site. For those families who do not have access to a computer or internet connection, mailing the newsletter is essential.

Guidance on Mailing FRG Newsletters

Postal Regulations limit how much unofficial information may be included in an FRG newsletter. As long as the inclusion of unofficial information does not increase the cost to the Government in printing and mailing the FRG newsletter, does not exceed 20 percent of the printed space used for the official information, and does not include personal wanted/for sale advertisements, some unofficial information may be included in an official FRG newsletter. The FRG newsletter must state whether it contains only official or both official and unofficial types of information. If the newsletter contains both types of information, it should include the following statement: "The inclusion of some unofficial information in this FRG newsletter has not increased the costs to the Government, in accordance with DoD 4525.8-M, Official Mail Management Manual." If the inclusion of unoffcial information in the FRG newsletter has increased the costs to the Government, the FRG must use the FRG's Informal Fund to cover the costs.

KEY CALLERS

Establishing and maintaining a current telephone tree is essential to providing timely and accurate information to families. Reasons for using the telephone tree range anywhere from planning social functions, passing on information about meetings, deployment training, homecomings, or emergency information. To support this activity it is also essential to have a roster of volunteers who will serve as key callers. When taking on the FRG leader role, it is important to find out and monitor the status of the telephone tree operations and issues of concern or problems experienced and then take the appropriate actions necessary.

Telephone tree roster. Maintaining an accurate roster of the company's family contact information is important and needs to be done on an ongoing basis. Phone tree lists can be developed from these rosters in a number of different ways in order to group family members according to platoons, geographical area, or alphabetically. To make the key caller's task manageable, consider setting up the tree such that each key caller is responsible for contacting a small number of families (i.e., between five and 10) and preferably in the same geographical area to minimize the volunteer's phone expenses. Information for the initial set up of the roster should come from the FRG Soldier/spouse questionnaire. People should have the choice of having their information posted on a general roster and/or the confidential roster that is given to the FRG leader. If a spouse strongly resists giving the FRG important information, then it should be noted, signed by the spouse and Soldier, and the spouse instructed that her only contact will be with the military chain of command/rear detachment. Spouses need to be instructed not to use the roster for any type of recruitment for "business" parties or other purposes (Mary Kay, Tupperware etc). A Privacy statement should be printed on every type of roster (AR 340-21,023 The Army Privacy Program).

At the company level, updating the telephone tree roster is a task that can be delegated to the FRG phone tree chairperson if one has been assigned. (The RDC or FRGDA can provide the phone tree chairperson with a regularly updated copy of unit rosters.) In general, the telephone tree list can be updated using the following sources: vFRG web site (see this section), company commander or first sergeant, FRG volunteers who have been in regular contact with family members (i.e., key callers), and completed family readiness information forms. Examples of a phone tree diagram and chain of concern responsibilities can be found in the Operation Ready Smart Book.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

KEY CALLERS

Establishing and maintaining a current telephone tree is essential to providing timely and accurate information to families. Reasons for using the telephone tree range anywhere from planning social functions, passing on information about meetings, deployment training, homecomings, or emergency information. To support this activity it is also essential to have a roster of volunteers who will serve as key callers. When taking on the FRG leader role, it is important to find out and monitor the status of the telephone tree operations and issues of concern or problems experienced and then take the appropriate actions necessary.

Telephone tree roster. Maintaining an accurate roster of the company's family contact information is important and needs to be done on an ongoing basis. Phone tree lists can be developed from these rosters in a number of different ways in order to group family members according to platoons, geographical area, or alphabetically. To make the key caller's task manageable, consider setting up the tree such that each key caller is responsible for contacting a small number of families (i.e., between five and 10) and preferably in the same geographical area to minimize the volunteer's phone expenses. Information for the initial set up of the roster should come from the FRG Soldier/spouse questionnaire. People should have the choice of having their information posted on a general roster and/or the confidential roster that is given to the FRG leader. If a spouse strongly resists giving the FRG important information, then it should be noted, signed by the spouse and Soldier, and the spouse instructed that her only contact will be with the military chain of command/rear detachment. Spouses need to be instructed not to use the roster for any type of recruitment for "business" parties or other purposes (Mary Kay, Tupperware etc). A Privacy statement should be printed on every type of roster (AR 340-21,023 The Army Privacy Program).

At the company level, updating the telephone tree roster is a task that can be delegated to the FRG phone tree chairperson if one has been assigned. (The RDC or FRGDA can provide the phone tree chairperson with a regularly updated copy of unit rosters.) In general, the telephone tree list can be updated using the following sources: vFRG web site (see this section), company commander or first sergeant, FRG volunteers who have been in regular contact with family members (i.e., key callers), and completed family readiness information forms. Examples of a phone tree diagram and chain of concern responsibilities can be found in the Operation Ready Smart Book.

Roster of Key Callers. The FRG leader in coordination with the FRG phone tree chairperson, if assigned, should review the roster of key callers to identify when new key callers need to be recruited. The recruitment of these volunteers can be delegated to the phone tree chairperson, if available. The responsibilities of the key caller are to: provide accurate information, maintain confidentiality, assist families in resolving problems, communicate with FRG leader (or chairperson) issues of concern, and maintain phone records (e.g., phone tree log form, family contact form). A Key Caller Handbook and sample forms are provided in the Operation READY Smart Book to assist volunteers in this role. Additional training should be arranged and offered to these volunteers as necessary.

Phone tree operations and protocols. The box opposite describes the basic operations of a telephone tree. However, procedures and tools should be revised and adjusted based on company needs and experiences.

How Does a Phone Tree Work?

The FRG leader calls the phone tree chairperson (or each of the key callers if a chairperson is not available) to relay command or FRG information. The phone tree chairperson, in turn, contacts each key caller and passes on the message. When all calls are completed to their branch of the phone tree, each key caller contacts the phone tree chairperson or FRG leader and reports the outcomes of the calls.

The process is reversed when family members contact their key callers. For guidance on handling a crisis call, key callers can use the Decision Diagram for Helping a Distressed Person, which is included in the Operation READY Smart Book. If a key caller can't answer a question or concern, the key caller contacts the phone tree chairperson or FRG leader.

The key caller logs every call on a phone tree log form (a sample of this form is located in the Operation READY Smart Book) and, when appropriate on the Key Caller Family Contact Form, for record keeping purposes. The key caller is to report any significant event or information to the phone tree chairperson or FRG leader.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

Roster of Key Callers. The FRG leader in coordination with the FRG phone tree chairperson, if assigned, should review the roster of key callers to identify when new key callers need to be recruited. The recruitment of these volunteers can be delegated to the phone tree chairperson, if available. The responsibilities of the key caller are to: provide accurate information, maintain confidentiality, assist families in resolving problems, communicate with FRG leader (or chairperson) issues of concern, and maintain phone records (e.g., phone tree log form, family contact form). A Key Caller Handbook and sample forms are provided in the Operation READY Smart Book to assist volunteers in this role. Additional training should be arranged and offered to these volunteers as necessary.

Phone tree operations and protocols. The box opposite describes the basic operations of a telephone tree. However, procedures and tools should be revised and adjusted based on company needs and experiences.

How Does a Phone Tree Work?

The FRG leader calls the phone tree chairperson (or each of the key callers if a chairperson is not available) to relay command or FRG information. The phone tree chairperson, in turn, contacts each key caller and passes on the message. When all calls are completed to their branch of the phone tree, each key caller contacts the phone tree chairperson or FRG leader and reports the outcomes of the calls.

The process is reversed when family members contact their key callers. For guidance on handling a crisis call, key callers can use the Decision Diagram for Helping a Distressed Person, which is included in the Operation READY Smart Book. If a key caller can't answer a question or concern, the key caller contacts the phone tree chairperson or FRG leader.

The key caller logs every call on a phone tree log form (a sample of this form is located in the Operation READY Smart Book) and, when appropriate on the Key Caller Family Contact Form, for record keeping purposes. The key caller is to report any significant event or information to the phone tree chairperson or FRG leader.

FRG Email
Just as creating and maintaining a telephone tree list is important to being able to communicate with families, so too does an email distribution list need to be created and maintained. Email provides another easy way to provide timely and accurate information to family members, including extended family members that Soldiers have identified. Email can also be used as a way to publicize or provide information related to FRG meetings and social events.

Email distribution list. Like with the telephone tree, information from the company roster should be used to create an email list for the FRG. Creation and maintenance of the email distribution list can be delegated to the telephone tree chairperson or a key caller. (If the company has access to a battalion vFRG web site, then this web site provides an easy means for doing this task.)

Email protocols. Like with telephone calls, protocols also need to be in place. It is advised that any emails sent out on behalf of the FRG contain important company or deployment-related information be approved by the Commander or RDC. The FRG leader can then elect to send the email or forward to a designated person (e.g., telephone tree chairperson, key caller, vFRG coordinator) for distribution to all individuals on the email list. However, a message about FRG meetings and social events can be prepared by other FRG volunteers as appropriate, but should be approved by the FRG leader.

VIRTUAL FAMILY READINESS GROUP WEB SITE (vFRG)
The Army web site for FRGs, http://www.armyfrg.org, allows units to provide some of the FRG functions online thereby enabling units to meet the needs of family members where they live. The web site provides a secure means by which FRGs can have two-way communication with family members as well as provides a secure means for family members and Soldiers to communicate while Soldiers are in theatre. In addition, commanders can post updates on the deployed unit. This is a powerful tool for FRG's use and a helpful way to provide timely accurate information to unit family members who are geographically dispersed as well as a Soldier's other family members such as parents. The FRG can use the vFRG to post newsletter, articles, and other information. The vFRG web site also enables telephone tree and email lists to be updated, allows for email communication, two-way instant messaging, and the posting of pictures, articles and downloads. However, the unit commander (and when deployed, the rear detachment commander) controls and approves

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

FRG Email
Just as creating and maintaining a telephone tree list is important to being able to communicate with families, so too does an email distribution list need to be created and maintained. Email provides another easy way to provide timely and accurate information to family members, including extended family members that Soldiers have identified. Email can also be used as a way to publicize or provide information related to FRG meetings and social events.

Email distribution list. Like with the telephone tree, information from the company roster should be used to create an email list for the FRG. Creation and maintenance of the email distribution list can be delegated to the telephone tree chairperson or a key caller. (If the company has access to a battalion vFRG web site, then this web site provides an easy means for doing this task.)

Email protocols. Like with telephone calls, protocols also need to be in place. It is advised that any emails sent out on behalf of the FRG contain important company or deployment-related information be approved by the Commander or RDC. The FRG leader can then elect to send the email or forward to a designated person (e.g., telephone tree chairperson, key caller, vFRG coordinator) for distribution to all individuals on the email list. However, a message about FRG meetings and social events can be prepared by other FRG volunteers as appropriate, but should be approved by the FRG leader.

VIRTUAL FAMILY READINESS GROUP WEB SITE (vFRG)
The Army web site for FRGs, http://www.armyfrg.org, allows units to provide some of the FRG functions online thereby enabling units to meet the needs of family members where they live. The web site provides a secure means by which FRGs can have two-way communication with family members as well as provides a secure means for family members and Soldiers to communicate while Soldiers are in theatre. In addition, commanders can post updates on the deployed unit. This is a powerful tool for FRG's use and a helpful way to provide timely accurate information to unit family members who are geographically dispersed as well as a Soldier's other family members such as parents. The FRG can use the vFRG to post newsletter, articles, and other information. The vFRG web site also enables telephone tree and email lists to be updated, allows for email communication, two-way instant messaging, and the posting of pictures, articles and downloads. However, the unit commander (and when deployed, the rear detachment commander) controls and approves

all content and users, who must be registered to access the information, and manages postings to the web site.

The FRG leader should promote and encourage access to this resource. The vFRG web sites are established at the battalion level but may include separate pages for each company. An instruction book as well as start-up and technical support is available on the web site.

A word of caution.
FRGs are encouraged to use either AKO or the vFRG for their web sites. Both of these web sites are secure. Register for a vFRG site at www.armyfrg.org.

Referring Families To Military and Civilian Community Support Services

One of the functions of the FRG is to assist families in their abilities to cope with deployments and to help them solve problems. The FRG will need to refer families to military and civilian organizations for assistance. Knowing all the resources in every community where families live is too much to expect an FRG to know. For this reason, the Army has developed web sites as an avenue for families to find the assistance they need. Additionally, a wide array of installation and other military organizations can provide information and assistance to FRGs. Although learning about available support services will be an ongoing effort, here is where the FRG can start:

- ***Rear Detachment Commander***—for identification of appropriate agencies for referring families for needed assistance
- ***Key Caller Handbook*** *(in the Operation READY Smart Book)*—for identification and description of different types of services available to families
- ***Installation and community directories***
- ***Garrison Army Community Service (ACS)*** — primary resources for all Soldiers and their families. ACS can assist Soldiers and families through a myriad of services and activities (including pre-deployment and reunion planning). ACS can also assist the FRG in referring families to military and civilian community agencies. To locate the nearest ACS, go to www.myarmylifetoo.com.
- ***Army National Guard State Family Program Coordinator***—in each state, the National Guard has a Family Program Office that can provide assistance with and guidance on Guard issues and community resources for families. To locate a State Family Program Coordinator, go to www.guardfamily.org.
- ***U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Regional Readiness Command (RRC) Family Programs Office***—can provide assistance and guidance on Reserve issues and

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

all content and users, who must be registered to access the information, and manages postings to the web site.

The FRG leader should promote and encourage access to this resource. The vFRG web sites are established at the battalion level but may include separate pages for each company. An instruction book as well as start-up and technical support is available on the web site.

A word of caution.
FRGs are encouraged to use either AKO or the vFRG for their web sites. Both of these web sites are secure. Register for a vFRG site at www.armyfrg.org.

Referring Families To Military and Civilian Community Support Services

One of the functions of the FRG is to assist families in their abilities to cope with deployments and to help them solve problems. The FRG will need to refer families to military and civilian organizations for assistance. Knowing all the resources in every community where families live is too much to expect an FRG to know. For this reason, the Army has developed web sites as an avenue for families to find the assistance they need. Additionally, a wide array of installation and other military organizations can provide information and assistance to FRGs. Although learning about available support services will be an ongoing effort, here is where the FRG can start:

- ***Rear Detachment Commander***—for identification of appropriate agencies for referring families for needed assistance
- ***Key Caller Handbook*** *(in the Operation READY Smart Book)*—for identification and description of different types of services available to families
- ***Installation and community directories***
- ***Garrison Army Community Service (ACS)*** — primary resources for all Soldiers and their families. ACS can assist Soldiers and families through a myriad of services and activities (including pre-deployment and reunion planning). ACS can also assist the FRG in referring families to military and civilian community agencies. To locate the nearest ACS, go to www.myarmylifetoo.com.
- ***Army National Guard State Family Program Coordinator***—in each state, the National Guard has a Family Program Office that can provide assistance with and guidance on Guard issues and community resources for families. To locate a State Family Program Coordinator, go to www.guardfamily.org.
- ***U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) Regional Readiness Command (RRC) Family Programs Office***—can provide assistance and guidance on Reserve issues and

locating community resources. To locate a Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Programs office, go to www.arfp.org.

- ***Family Assistance Center (FAC)***—set up as a one-stop shop where families can get information and assistance from a diverse range of agencies during the initial months of a large-scale deployment, natural disaster, or mass casualty event
- ***Chaplain***—provides counseling, offers religious support, and conducts training and workshops for Soldiers and families on wide range of issues.
- ***Military One Source (MOS) (www.militaryonesource.com)***— a 1-800 telephone number and web site where Soldiers and families can self refer for confidential counseling at any time.
- ***MyArmyLifeToo.com***—an official Army web site offering information on programs available for Soldiers and families; also serves as a "one-stop" knowledge center providing access to a variety of information including downloadable documents such as select Operation READY materials.
- ***Official FRG web site***—The vFRG web site includes the official Army web site for FRGs. FRG leaders must register online to gain access to the site.
- ***Garrison Children and Youth Services (CYS)***—offers child care and youth programs on military installations as well as has established partnerships and arrangements to offer these services in communities. CYS can provide assistance in locating child care and youth services available to Army families in the communities where families live.
- ***Operation Military Child Care***—A Department of Defense initiative to help families/child care guardians of geographically dispersed active duty personnel and mobilized National Guard and Reserve service members find affordable child care options in their local communities. Under this initiative, reduced child care fees are offered at licensed child care providers. To locate child care options, contact the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) at 1-800-424-2246 or on the internet at www.childcareaware.org.
- ***Operation Military Kids***—Army CYS has, and is continuing to establish, partnerships with youth serving organizations in targeted states with high deployment rates to set up local support networks that connect and support the youth of mobilized Army National Guard and Reserve service members. Through these community support networks, military youth receive a wide range of recreational, social and educational programs in communities where they live. For further information, visit the Web site www.operationmilitarykids.org.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

locating community resources. To locate a Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Programs office, go to www.arfp.org.

- ***Family Assistance Center (FAC)***—set up as a one-stop shop where families can get information and assistance from a diverse range of agencies during the initial months of a large-scale deployment, natural disaster, or mass casualty event
- ***Chaplain***—provides counseling, offers religious support, and conducts training and workshops for Soldiers and families on wide range of issues.
- ***Military One Source (MOS) (www.militaryonesource.com)***— a 1-800 telephone number and web site where Soldiers and families can self refer for confidential counseling at any time.
- ***MyArmyLifeToo.com***—an official Army web site offering information on programs available for Soldiers and families; also serves as a "one-stop" knowledge center providing access to a variety of information including downloadable documents such as select Operation READY materials.
- ***Official FRG web site***—The vFRG web site includes the official Army web site for FRGs. FRG leaders must register online to gain access to the site.
- ***Garrison Children and Youth Services (CYS)***—offers child care and youth programs on military installations as well as has established partnerships and arrangements to offer these services in communities. CYS can provide assistance in locating child care and youth services available to Army families in the communities where families live.
- ***Operation Military Child Care***—A Department of Defense initiative to help families/child care guardians of geographically dispersed active duty personnel and mobilized National Guard and Reserve service members find affordable child care options in their local communities. Under this initiative, reduced child care fees are offered at licensed child care providers. To locate child care options, contact the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) at 1-800-424-2246 or on the internet at www.childcareaware.org.
- ***Operation Military Kids***—Army CYS has, and is continuing to establish, partnerships with youth serving organizations in targeted states with high deployment rates to set up local support networks that connect and support the youth of mobilized Army National Guard and Reserve service members. Through these community support networks, military youth receive a wide range of recreational, social and educational programs in communities where they live. For further information, visit the Web site www.operationmilitarykids.org.

Sustaining The Family Readiness Group

Getting family members to be aware of and connected with the FRG are important efforts. While all of the FRG staff (including the publicity chairperson) and members can play a role, the FRG leader, can be instrumental in increasing the visibility of the FRG. As the FRG leader, it is important to assess and continually evaluate publicity and participation. Participation in the FRG is very important but how well the FRG provides timely accurate information to support families when needed are valued measures of success. For that to happen, getting connected to families is necessary.

TIP

★ The FRG should strive to appeal to both officer and enlisted Soldiers' families. The FRG should reflect the company's make-up.

There are two reasons Soldiers and family members participate in FRGs:

- because they think their NEEDS will be MET
- because they get their NEEDS MET.

To attract and keep FRG membership high, take time to determine who needs what from the FRG:

- identify differences between individuals (ages, ranks, family structure, experience in the community, location, income)
- identify the challenges people face
- identify the resources people need (activities, information, training/skills, help/support)
- consider how resources and needs can be matched throughout the deployment cycle (pre, during and post)
- brainstorm a list of challenges with FRG members – prioritize and dedicate a FRG meeting to addressing each one.

Once the needs and demographics of the FRG membership have been identified and addressed, there are a variety of opportunities and ways to get connected to encourage involvement in the FRG by families who have not been attending meetings. Use different opportunities to make Soldiers and families aware of the FRG such as by speaking at briefings, introducing yourself informally to Soldiers and family members at events, and encouraging company leadership to talk about the FRG to Soldiers. Other ways to encourage participation are:

- Use word of mouth, the vFRG, and other ways to get the word out to all Soldiers and spouses.
- Survey Soldiers and family members to determine needs and interests to shape FRG communications and activities for families.
- Be personable and approachable.
- Invite individuals to participate. Let individuals know what opportunities to help are available. Accept any offer to help.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

Sustaining The Family Readiness Group

Getting family members to be aware of and connected with the FRG are important efforts. While all of the FRG staff (including the publicity chairperson) and members can play a role, the FRG leader, can be instrumental in increasing the visibility of the FRG. As the FRG leader, it is important to assess and continually evaluate publicity and participation. Participation in the FRG is very important but how well the FRG provides timely accurate information to support families when needed are valued measures of success. For that to happen, getting connected to families is necessary.

TIP

★ The FRG should strive to appeal to both officer and enlisted Soldiers' families. The FRG should reflect the company's make-up.

There are two reasons Soldiers and family members participate in FRGs:

- because they think their NEEDS will be MET
- because they get their NEEDS MET.

To attract and keep FRG membership high, take time to determine who needs what from the FRG:

- identify differences between individuals (ages, ranks, family structure, experience in the community, location, income)
- identify the challenges people face
- identify the resources people need (activities, information, training/skills, help/support)
- consider how resources and needs can be matched throughout the deployment cycle (pre, during and post)
- brainstorm a list of challenges with FRG members – prioritize and dedicate a FRG meeting to addressing each one.

Once the needs and demographics of the FRG membership have been identified and addressed, there are a variety of opportunities and ways to get connected to encourage involvement in the FRG by families who have not been attending meetings. Use different opportunities to make Soldiers and families aware of the FRG such as by speaking at briefings, introducing yourself informally to Soldiers and family members at events, and encouraging company leadership to talk about the FRG to Soldiers. Other ways to encourage participation are:

- Use word of mouth, the vFRG, and other ways to get the word out to all Soldiers and spouses.
- Survey Soldiers and family members to determine needs and interests to shape FRG communications and activities for families.
- Be personable and approachable.
- Invite individuals to participate. Let individuals know what opportunities to help are available. Accept any offer to help.

- Plan practical and fun activities.
- Keep meetings brief and enjoyable.
- Communicate with newcomers on their arrival. Tell them about FRG activities and help them feel welcome.
- Create a positive reputation of the FRG. Ensure that the FRG provides timely and accurate information and doesn't become a rumor mill. Maintain control of FRG meetings and take steps to ensure they do not become a forum for political or personal agendas, Army bashing, and especially gossip!
- Promote a friendly community environment where everyone is treated as equals. Be careful not to allow the FRG to polarize into separate factions.
- Offer child care and publicize that child care will be available at FRG meetings and events, if funded/approved by the unit commander.
- Provide food at FRG events, using FRG informal funds or supplemental mission funds intended for FRGs.
- Use the media to publicize FRG activities and events. Installation and/or local newspapers and television (e.g., community channel on cable television) are a way to reach large number of families. For guidance, check with the Public Affairs Office.
- Use incentives.
- Recognize volunteers' contributions. It is another way of creating a positive and warm friendly environment.
- Identify barriers and resolve as many as possible.

Handling Traumatic Situations

Every deployment is unique. Yet, certain family issues are typically seen during every deployment. Handling these situations requires knowing the appropriate referral agencies for these "typical" issues. (See the military and civilian community resource information in the Operation READY Smart Book.) However, some issues or situations cannot be anticipated. This section discusses approaches for dealing with other anticipated and emergency situations. Planning and preparing for all types of situations are important in being able to respond effectively.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

An FRG leader (and key callers) can expect to handle families in "crisis". Here is information on what can create a crisis for families, how they cope, and ways to deal with individuals in a crisis.

An individual is in crisis when he/she experiences an event or series of events that temporarily cause the individual to feel unable to cope. There is a diverse range of events that can create a crisis for Soldiers and families. These events include:

- Unexpected and unplanned events (e.g., accident, natural disaster, act of terror, loss of Soldier or family member, illness of family member)

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

- Plan practical and fun activities.
- Keep meetings brief and enjoyable.
- Communicate with newcomers on their arrival. Tell them about FRG activities and help them feel welcome.
- Create a positive reputation of the FRG. Ensure that the FRG provides timely and accurate information and doesn't become a rumor mill. Maintain control of FRG meetings and take steps to ensure they do not become a forum for political or personal agendas, Army bashing, and especially gossip!
- Promote a friendly community environment where everyone is treated as equals. Be careful not to allow the FRG to polarize into separate factions.
- Offer child care and publicize that child care will be available at FRG meetings and events, if funded/approved by the unit commander.
- Provide food at FRG events, using FRG informal funds or supplemental mission funds intended for FRGs.
- Use the media to publicize FRG activities and events. Installation and/or local newspapers and television (e.g., community channel on cable television) are a way to reach large number of families. For guidance, check with the Public Affairs Office.
- Use incentives.
- Recognize volunteers' contributions. It is another way of creating a positive and warm friendly environment.
- Identify barriers and resolve as many as possible.

Handling Traumatic Situations

Every deployment is unique. Yet, certain family issues are typically seen during every deployment. Handling these situations requires knowing the appropriate referral agencies for these "typical" issues. (See the military and civilian community resource information in the Operation READY Smart Book.) However, some issues or situations cannot be anticipated. This section discusses approaches for dealing with other anticipated and emergency situations. Planning and preparing for all types of situations are important in being able to respond effectively.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

An FRG leader (and key callers) can expect to handle families in "crisis". Here is information on what can create a crisis for families, how they cope, and ways to deal with individuals in a crisis.

An individual is in crisis when he/she experiences an event or series of events that temporarily cause the individual to feel unable to cope. There is a diverse range of events that can create a crisis for Soldiers and families. These events include:

- Unexpected and unplanned events (e.g., accident, natural disaster, act of terror, loss of Soldier or family member, illness of family member)

- Life or development events (e.g., death of an elderly parent and birth of a child). A deployment can be considered in this category because deployments are a part of military life
- Functional crisis occurs in families that are not coping or experiencing individual or family problems such as financial problems/crisis, substance abuse, family violence, and infidelity
- Caregiver crisis occurs when something happens to the caregiver, such an injury, illness or death, or for some other reason, the caregiver can no longer care for the children of deployed Soldiers and civilians. In essence, the Family Care Plan is no longer valid.

An individual's reactions to a crisis often proceed through distinct stages.

- Denial ("This can't be happening.")
- Recognition (i.e., the person sees what has happened but still has not accepted reality)
- Reminiscence (i.e., how things used to be)
- Adjustment ("What do I need to do?")
- Resolution (i.e., the situation is accepted, and life goes on).

Tips for Dealing with Individuals in Crisis

★ Understand what coping stage the individual is in when he/she contacts the FRG as it gives an indication of the individual's receptivity to help and type of support needed.

★ Recognize that an individual will be experiencing a range of emotions. An individual will most likely be expecting to get information or assistance that will solve the problem.

★ Treat the individual with care. Listen carefully and speak calmly.

★ Do not make promises that can't be kept. Assist when able and refer when a situation or issue is not your area of expertise. For example, do not handle individuals who are suicidal or may harm themselves or others, refer them to Chaplain, Mental Health or immediately call the Military Police.

★ Address the presenting problem(s). If an individual rambles when talking, try to identify a major issue of concern that can be solved easily. Solving an "easy" problem first can help to calm the individual and win trust.

★ Refer to ACS, Reserve Component Family Programs, Social Work Service, Military One Source, or other community agencies if the individual does not respond to your intervention.

★ Follow up to ensure the individual is getting the assistance needed.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

- Life or development events (e.g., death of an elderly parent and birth of a child). A deployment can be considered in this category because deployments are a part of military life
- Functional crisis occurs in families that are not coping or experiencing individual or family problems such as financial problems/crisis, substance abuse, family violence, and infidelity
- Caregiver crisis occurs when something happens to the caregiver, such an injury, illness or death, or for some other reason, the caregiver can no longer care for the children of deployed Soldiers and civilians. In essence, the Family Care Plan is no longer valid.

An individual's reactions to a crisis often proceed through distinct stages.

- Denial ("This can't be happening.")
- Recognition (i.e., the person sees what has happened but still has not accepted reality)
- Reminiscence (i.e., how things used to be)
- Adjustment ("What do I need to do?")
- Resolution (i.e., the situation is accepted, and life goes on).

Tips for Dealing with Individuals in Crisis

★ Understand what coping stage the individual is in when he/she contacts the FRG as it gives an indication of the individual's receptivity to help and type of support needed.

★ Recognize that an individual will be experiencing a range of emotions. An individual will most likely be expecting to get information or assistance that will solve the problem.

★ Treat the individual with care. Listen carefully and speak calmly.

★ Do not make promises that can't be kept. Assist when able and refer when a situation or issue is not your area of expertise. For example, do not handle individuals who are suicidal or may harm themselves or others, refer them to Chaplain, Mental Health or immediately call the Military Police.

★ Address the presenting problem(s). If an individual rambles when talking, try to identify a major issue of concern that can be solved easily. Solving an "easy" problem first can help to calm the individual and win trust.

★ Refer to ACS, Reserve Component Family Programs, Social Work Service, Military One Source, or other community agencies if the individual does not respond to your intervention.

★ Follow up to ensure the individual is getting the assistance needed.

TRAUMA SUPPORT

There is a diverse range of trauma situations that can occur including:

- Death of a Soldier
- Death, illness or injury of a leader
- MIA/POW
- Mass casualties
- Suicide
- Death of a spouse or child.

These are very difficult times for units and families. It is important for the FRG leader to be clear about the role of the FRG in these situations and how it can support the unit and families.

Battalion Care Teams. The battalion commander decides whether to have the Battalion Care Team available for casualty or trauma situations. If the battalion commander chooses to have these teams, then FRG leaders advertise to its members that a cadre of care team volunteers is needed and provide information on the training available to all interested individuals. Training is conducted by either unit or garrison chaplains, Army Community Service or Reserve Component Family Programs. Once individuals have completed training, a care team roster is prepared by the care team coordinator and made available to the battalion commander, RDCs and FRG battalion advisor PRIOR to deployment. In the event of a casualty incident, the chaplain or Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) will ask the family if they want assistance from a care team. If requested by the family, the CNO or chaplain will contact the battalion RDC, who will determine the 3-6 individuals from the roster that will form the "team" sent. The battalion RDC may seek input from the commander's spouse, battalion FRG advisor or care team coordinator in determining the team's make-up and/or role based on the family's wishes (including the individuals with whom the family feels comfortable). As a result, care teams can be comprised in different ways and may include any of the following individuals: key spouses from the brigade, battalion, and/or company; FRG leader, or spouses from the same platoon or company. The RDC may appoint one individual of the team to serve as the care team leader. The care team reports to the RDC and not the FRG leader.

FRG Support. A company level FRG can provide valuable support to care teams assisting a family in their company. (For ideas and additional information, see "Casualty and Trauma in the Unit" Section 2 of Part 4 of this handbook or the Operation READY Trauma in the Unit Handbook.) In addition, the FRG leader may need to take action to help manage the FRG membership's reaction to the situation. See the tips box on the next page.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

TRAUMA SUPPORT

There is a diverse range of trauma situations that can occur including:

- Death of a Soldier
- Death, illness or injury of a leader
- MIA/POW
- Mass casualties
- Suicide
- Death of a spouse or child.

These are very difficult times for units and families. It is important for the FRG leader to be clear about the role of the FRG in these situations and how it can support the unit and families.

Battalion Care Teams. The battalion commander decides whether to have the Battalion Care Team available for casualty or trauma situations. If the battalion commander chooses to have these teams, then FRG leaders advertise to its members that a cadre of care team volunteers is needed and provide information on the training available to all interested individuals. Training is conducted by either unit or garrison chaplains, Army Community Service or Reserve Component Family Programs. Once individuals have completed training, a care team roster is prepared by the care team coordinator and made available to the battalion commander, RDCs and FRG battalion advisor PRIOR to deployment. In the event of a casualty incident, the chaplain or Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) will ask the family if they want assistance from a care team. If requested by the family, the CNO or chaplain will contact the battalion RDC, who will determine the 3-6 individuals from the roster that will form the "team" sent. The battalion RDC may seek input from the commander's spouse, battalion FRG advisor or care team coordinator in determining the team's make-up and/or role based on the family's wishes (including the individuals with whom the family feels comfortable). As a result, care teams can be comprised in different ways and may include any of the following individuals: key spouses from the brigade, battalion, and/or company; FRG leader, or spouses from the same platoon or company. The RDC may appoint one individual of the team to serve as the care team leader. The care team reports to the RDC and not the FRG leader.

FRG Support. A company level FRG can provide valuable support to care teams assisting a family in their company. (For ideas and additional information, see "Casualty and Trauma in the Unit" Section 2 of Part 4 of this handbook or the Operation READY Trauma in the Unit Handbook.) In addition, the FRG leader may need to take action to help manage the FRG membership's reaction to the situation. See the tips box on the next page.

Tips for Handling Trauma Situations

★ In most instances, the RDC will contact the FRG leader. However, in all instances, the FRG leader should contact the RDC for guidance and direction. If the RDC determines there is a need for an information briefing, then the RDC will provide the specific message to be given by FRG key callers when contacting families about the briefing. Regardless of whether there is a briefing, the RDC will provide the information that can be conveyed to FRG membership.

★ The FRG can support the Battalion Care Team who help coordinate support for families. In some instances, other units may also help coordinate support efforts.

★ Families will be experiencing a range of emotions as they go through the grieving process. Encourage FRG members to be patient and supportive of grieving families. Remind FRG members to acknowledge and support grieving children.

★ Provide FRG members with guidance on what to say and what not to say. Invite PAO to talk about how to deal with the media. Invite the Chaplain to talk about the grieving process and acceptable responses. Help FRG members also deal with the unit loss.

★ Remind FRG membership to respect family's privacy.

★ The grieving process takes a long time, often years. Further, grieving families often do not reach out for help. The FRG can provide emotional and logistical support as needed. Encourage FRG members to listen to grieving families. It is a simple thing that can be very helpful. Have the FRG call, send cards, visit, and take other steps to let the family know that people care and are thinking of them.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

Tips for Handling Trauma Situations

★ In most instances, the RDC will contact the FRG leader. However, in all instances, the FRG leader should contact the RDC for guidance and direction. If the RDC determines there is a need for an information briefing, then the RDC will provide the specific message to be given by FRG key callers when contacting families about the briefing. Regardless of whether there is a briefing, the RDC will provide the information that can be conveyed to FRG membership.

★ The FRG can support the Battalion Care Team who help coordinate support for families. In some instances, other units may also help coordinate support efforts.

★ Families will be experiencing a range of emotions as they go through the grieving process. Encourage FRG members to be patient and supportive of grieving families. Remind FRG members to acknowledge and support grieving children.

★ Provide FRG members with guidance on what to say and what not to say. Invite PAO to talk about how to deal with the media. Invite the Chaplain to talk about the grieving process and acceptable responses. Help FRG members also deal with the unit loss.

★ Remind FRG membership to respect family's privacy.

★ The grieving process takes a long time, often years. Further, grieving families often do not reach out for help. The FRG can provide emotional and logistical support as needed. Encourage FRG members to listen to grieving families. It is a simple thing that can be very helpful. Have the FRG call, send cards, visit, and take other steps to let the family know that people care and are thinking of them.

50

FRGs can refer families to the following resources for additional support:

- ***Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO)***—for assistance in accessing services and benefit information
- ***Chaplain***—for counseling
- ***Army Community Service***—for short-term emotional support
- ***Military Family Life Consultants***—for short-term emotional support
- ***Battalion Care Team***—for short-term emotional and logistical support
- ***Military One Source***—for counseling services, information, and referrals
- ***Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operation Center (CMAOC)***— assists families in times of bereavement (1-866-272-5841)
- ***Medical Family Assistance Center (MEDFAC)***—set up on adhoc basis in the event of a high number of war wounded, mass casualty, natural disaster, or terrorist attack to provide information and support services to families of Soldiers who are inpatients or outpatients at a military medical treatment facility (MTF)
- ***Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2)***—provides personal support, advocacy and follow-up to severely disabled (i.e., categorized as Special Category or SPECAT) Soldiers and their families, accessed via web at www.AW2.army.mil or telephone at 1-800-237-1336.
- ***Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO)***—helpful information can be accessed on their web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo/family/index.htm
- ***Community Based Health Care Organization (CBHCO)***—helps Guard and Reserve Soldiers on medical hold locate medical services in their local community
- ***Army Family Assistance Hotline*** (1-800-833-6622).

MEDIA GUIDANCE

The news media like to attend certain events such as farewells and welcome home ceremonies when Soldiers deploy and return from deployment. These are occasions when media frequently seek to interview family members. In addition, with round the clock news on television, radio, and the internet, families can hear things very quickly. In fact, the media may release information before it is officially released by the Army/Department of Defense. This is another time when media may want to interview military families. If the FRG leader or member is approached by the media for an interview, contact Public Affairs and request that a public affairs officer (PAO) be present. The PAO can also provide guidance on what you should and should not say. Keep in mind that speaking with the media is an opportunity to present information about the FRG to the public. It is also a chance to tell the Army story and to emphasize the important role of the family.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

FRGs can refer families to the following resources for additional support:

- ***Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO)***—for assistance in accessing services and benefit information
- ***Chaplain***—for counseling
- ***Army Community Service***—for short-term emotional support
- ***Military Family Life Consultants***—for short-term emotional support
- ***Battalion Care Team***—for short-term emotional and logistical support
- ***Military One Source***—for counseling services, information, and referrals
- ***Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operation Center (CMAOC)***— assists families in times of bereavement (1-866-272-5841)
- ***Medical Family Assistance Center (MEDFAC)***—set up on adhoc basis in the event of a high number of war wounded, mass casualty, natural disaster, or terrorist attack to provide information and support services to families of Soldiers who are inpatients or outpatients at a military medical treatment facility (MTF)
- ***Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2)***—provides personal support, advocacy and follow-up to severely disabled (i.e., categorized as Special Category or SPECAT) Soldiers and their families, accessed via web at www.AW2.army.mil or telephone at 1-800-237-1336.
- ***Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO)***—helpful information can be accessed on their web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo/family/index.htm
- ***Community Based Health Care Organization (CBHCO)***—helps Guard and Reserve Soldiers on medical hold locate medical services in their local community
- ***Army Family Assistance Hotline*** (1-800-833-6622).

MEDIA GUIDANCE

The news media like to attend certain events such as farewells and welcome home ceremonies when Soldiers deploy and return from deployment. These are occasions when media frequently seek to interview family members. In addition, with round the clock news on television, radio, and the internet, families can hear things very quickly. In fact, the media may release information before it is officially released by the Army/Department of Defense. This is another time when media may want to interview military families. If the FRG leader or member is approached by the media for an interview, contact Public Affairs and request that a public affairs officer (PAO) be present. The PAO can also provide guidance on what you should and should not say. Keep in mind that speaking with the media is an opportunity to present information about the FRG to the public. It is also a chance to tell the Army story and to emphasize the important role of the family.

Here is additional information about dealing with the media, especially for unplanned interviews.

Tips for Dealing with the Media

- ★ Complete garrison or Reserve Component scheduled public affairs training.
- ★ All individuals (FRG leader and family members) have the right to refuse an interview.
- ★ Know with whom you are talking. Write down the reporter's name, telephone number, and name of the media organization.
- ★ Anticipate what questions reporters are likely to ask. Determine response to questions.
- ★ Listen carefully to the question. Think before speaking.
- ★ Know your limitations. If you do not have first-hand knowledge, do not speculate. Provide explanation when you cannot answer a question.
- ★ Be brief in answer and just answer the question. Be cautious about questions that lead to only "yes" or "no" responses.
- ★ Avoid acronyms.
- ★ Know what not to discuss or say. Know how to respond to specific types of questions. Do not say "off the record". Never give sensitive information that could jeopardize the safety and security of either Soldiers or family members.
- ★ Be positive. Do not argue. Be yourself.
- ★ Notify PAO, if you have not already done so.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

Here is additional information about dealing with the media, especially for unplanned interviews.

Tips for Dealing with the Media

- ★ Complete garrison or Reserve Component scheduled public affairs training.
- ★ All individuals (FRG leader and family members) have the right to refuse an interview.
- ★ Know with whom you are talking. Write down the reporter's name, telephone number, and name of the media organization.
- ★ Anticipate what questions reporters are likely to ask. Determine response to questions.
- ★ Listen carefully to the question. Think before speaking.
- ★ Know your limitations. If you do not have first-hand knowledge, do not speculate. Provide explanation when you cannot answer a question.
- ★ Be brief in answer and just answer the question. Be cautious about questions that lead to only "yes" or "no" responses.
- ★ Avoid acronyms.
- ★ Know what not to discuss or say. Know how to respond to specific types of questions. Do not say "off the record". Never give sensitive information that could jeopardize the safety and security of either Soldiers or family members.
- ★ Be positive. Do not argue. Be yourself.
- ★ Notify PAO, if you have not already done so.

RUMOR CONTROL

It is inevitable that at some point(s) during a deployment, rumors will surface. In some cases, news media coverage of military operations will provoke families to seek information related to what they may have seen or heard. When families do not receive timely information, this can create panic or lead to gossip or rumors running rampant. It is essential that families receive timely and accurate information from the RDC to curtail rumors. The FRG needs to convey to families that the RDC and other military leaders serve as the official source of information.

Tips for Managing Rumors

- ★ Discuss questions/issues that families have in a timely manner with RDC. This may help to prevent rumors.
- ★ When there are rumors, contact the RDC to discuss the steps that need to be taken. Determine what information the RDC wants the FRG to give to families.
- ★ Disseminate the information to families that has been provided by the RDC to the FRG leader. Ensure official information is passed on using multiple communication systems (e.g., FRG telephone tree, email, and vFRG).
- ★ Have the RDC attend and speak at an FRG meeting or event to provide "official" information to families.
- ★ Notify families of any information briefings scheduled.

Bottom line: It is essential that families get accurate information in a timely manner. This will help to avoid rumors.

3: AREAS OF FRG LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

3

RUMOR CONTROL

It is inevitable that at some point(s) during a deployment, rumors will surface. In some cases, news media coverage of military operations will provoke families to seek information related to what they may have seen or heard. When families do not receive timely information, this can create panic or lead to gossip or rumors running rampant. It is essential that families receive timely and accurate information from the RDC to curtail rumors. The FRG needs to convey to families that the RDC and other military leaders serve as the official source of information.

Tips for Managing Rumors

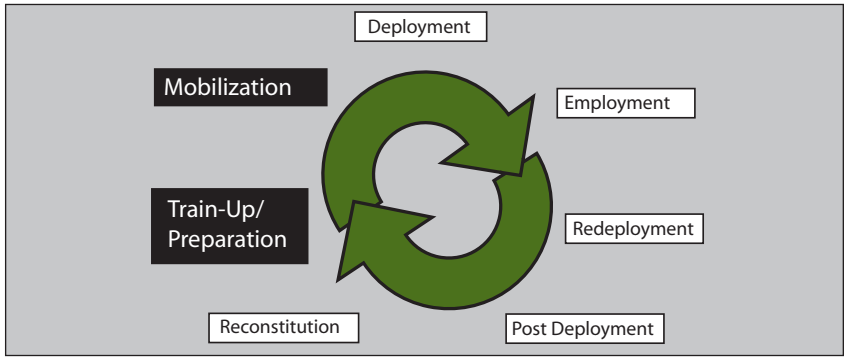
- ★ Discuss questions/issues that families have in a timely manner with RDC. This may help to prevent rumors.
- ★ When there are rumors, contact the RDC to discuss the steps that need to be taken. Determine what information the RDC wants the FRG to give to families.
- ★ Disseminate the information to families that has been provided by the RDC to the FRG leader. Ensure official information is passed on using multiple communication systems (e.g., FRG telephone tree, email, and vFRG).
- ★ Have the RDC attend and speak at an FRG meeting or event to provide "official" information to families.
- ★ Notify families of any information briefings scheduled.

Bottom line: It is essential that families get accurate information in a timely manner. This will help to avoid rumors.

The following information is written for company level FRGs for active, National Guard, and Reserve Components. However, the information is applicable to FRGs at all levels. This part of the handbook provides suggestions on the specific activities the FRG should perform during each phase of the deployment cycle. Each section is divided into two checklists. The first checklist focuses primarily on the activities the FRG leader needs to conduct with command and FRG staff. The second checklist focuses on FRG activities for families. For official guidance on FRG activities, see section 3 entitled Management of FRG Activities in Part 3 of this handbook. Procedural information on communications systems to be used with families also appears in Section 3.3 of Part 3 of this handbook.

4.1 Train-Up/Preparation and Mobilization Phases

Once the reset activities after a deployment are complete and the unit is reconstituted, the company begins the train-up preparation phase. The focus of the train-up phase is to reestablish unit and Soldier readiness and prepare for the next mission. During this time, there are often changes in unit leadership, Soldiers and family members, and/or FRG leadership due to Permanent Change of Station (PCS) or other reasons. Certain activities need to be performed to sustain the FRG and to plan for the next deployment cycle. Given these times of high OPTEMPO and ongoing rapid deployments, FRGs need to operate on an ongoing basis rather than starting from scratch with each deployment. Work to preserve what the FRG has done so that new FRG leadership can build on the systems (e.g., telephone tree), procedures (e.g. key caller protocol, newsletter), and programs in place and thereby effectively support the company mission. In addition, it is important to embrace new Soldiers and families into the company and to maintain communications with them.



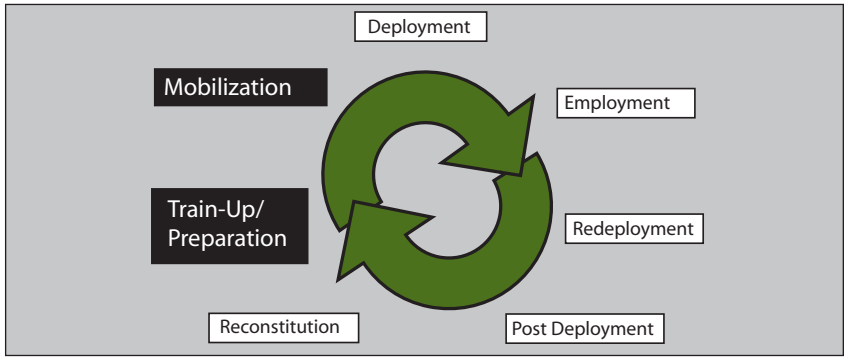
PART 4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

The following information is written for company level FRGs for active, National Guard, and Reserve Components. However, the information is applicable to FRGs at all levels. This part of the handbook provides suggestions on the specific activities the FRG should perform during each phase of the deployment cycle. Each section is divided into two checklists. The first checklist focuses primarily on the activities the FRG leader needs to conduct with command and FRG staff. The second checklist focuses on FRG activities for families. For official guidance on FRG activities, see section 3 entitled Management of FRG Activities in Part 3 of this handbook. Procedural information on communications systems to be used with families also appears in Section 3.3 of Part 3 of this handbook.

4.1 Train-Up/Preparation and Mobilization Phases

Once the reset activities after a deployment are complete and the unit is reconstituted, the company begins the train-up preparation phase. The focus of the train-up phase is to reestablish unit and Soldier readiness and prepare for the next mission. During this time, there are often changes in unit leadership, Soldiers and family members, and/or FRG leadership due to Permanent Change of Station (PCS) or other reasons. Certain activities need to be performed to sustain the FRG and to plan for the next deployment cycle. Given these times of high OPTEMPO and ongoing rapid deployments, FRGs need to operate on an ongoing basis rather than starting from scratch with each deployment. Work to preserve what the FRG has done so that new FRG leadership can build on the systems (e.g., telephone tree), procedures (e.g. key caller protocol, newsletter), and programs in place and thereby effectively support the company mission. In addition, it is important to embrace new Soldiers and families into the company and to maintain communications with them.



Assisting Command With Family Preparations and Ensuring FRG Readiness

FRG LEADER'S TRAIN-UP/PREPARATION AND MOBILIZATION "PRE-DEPLOYMENT" CHECKLIST

- ☐ Meet with the company commander to:
  - be introduced to and establish relationship with RDC
  - develop a plan of action for preparing families for deployment and for supporting families during deployment (i.e., specifying responsibilities of FRG and RDC)
  - discuss with the company commander and RDC the process to be followed in the event of casualties in the unit and the role and use of Battalion Care Team to gain an understanding of casualty notification procedures
  - determine methods by which command and FRG leader will maintain communication during deployment
  - set up company Web page on the Battalion vFRG web site
  - obtain particulars (i.e., date, time and location) about pre-deployment briefings and Soldier Readiness Processing (SRP) in order to notify families
  - ensure that children's issues are addressed in pre-deployment briefings and that age appropriate activities are conducted with children
  - discuss at-risk families and how to refer them for assistance.
- ☐ Recognize all volunteers.
- ☐ Promote smooth transitions of FRG leadership and individual FRG volunteers into new roles. Recruit volunteers, ensure they are enrolled with the ACS Volunteer Corps Coordinator or Reserve Component Family Programs and have attended FRG training.
- ☐ Review FRG operations and make adjustments as needed to be prepared for next deployment even if the deployment date is not known.
- ☐ Write lessons learned and submit to RDC for inclusion in unit after action report.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

Assisting Command With Family Preparations and Ensuring FRG Readiness

4

FRG LEADER'S TRAIN-UP/PREPARATION AND MOBILIZATION "PRE-DEPLOYMENT" CHECKLIST

- ☐ Meet with the company commander to:
  - be introduced to and establish relationship with RDC
  - develop a plan of action for preparing families for deployment and for supporting families during deployment (i.e., specifying responsibilities of FRG and RDC)
  - discuss with the company commander and RDC the process to be followed in the event of casualties in the unit and the role and use of Battalion Care Team to gain an understanding of casualty notification procedures
  - determine methods by which command and FRG leader will maintain communication during deployment
  - set up company Web page on the Battalion vFRG web site
  - obtain particulars (i.e., date, time and location) about pre-deployment briefings and Soldier Readiness Processing (SRP) in order to notify families
  - ensure that children's issues are addressed in pre-deployment briefings and that age appropriate activities are conducted with children
  - discuss at-risk families and how to refer them for assistance.
- ☐ Recognize all volunteers.
- ☐ Promote smooth transitions of FRG leadership and individual FRG volunteers into new roles. Recruit volunteers, ensure they are enrolled with the ACS Volunteer Corps Coordinator or Reserve Component Family Programs and have attended FRG training.
- ☐ Review FRG operations and make adjustments as needed to be prepared for next deployment even if the deployment date is not known.
- ☐ Write lessons learned and submit to RDC for inclusion in unit after action report.

55

- ☐ Communicate to command any family questions or issues that become known to the FRG.
- ☐ Make sure the FRG phone tree is current and active. Work with RDC to get updated roster information and family information data.
- ☐ Ensure key callers are aware of resources so they can provide appropriate referrals to families.
- ☐ Assist in getting volunteers trained for the Battalion Care Teams.
- ☐ Attend pre-deployment briefings. (Note: Attending briefings is important because it provides the opportunity to obtain important information to pass on to families, introduce the FRG leader and co-leader, collect accurate family information on company families as well as for Soldiers who are assigned to the unit for deployment, and meet Soldiers and families.)
- ☐ Meet with ACS Mobilization and Deployment Program Manager and/or Reserve Component Family Programs staff to identify deployment support available. Discuss what support they can provide to both the FRG and families. This discussion should address programs, services, and support available for the FRG, FRG volunteers and/or families; educational and information materials available; registration of FRG statutory volunteers; and assistance with referrals and coordination of services; Obtain helpful information materials that will be distributed to families, such as:
  - *Operation READY Soldier/Family Deployment Handbook* available from ACS and Reserve Component Family Programs
  - Military and civilian community phone directories of important resources
  - Operation READY children's workbooks.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

- ☐ Communicate to command any family questions or issues that become known to the FRG.
- ☐ Make sure the FRG phone tree is current and active. Work with RDC to get updated roster information and family information data.
- ☐ Ensure key callers are aware of resources so they can provide appropriate referrals to families.
- ☐ Assist in getting volunteers trained for the Battalion Care Teams.
- ☐ Attend pre-deployment briefings. (Note: Attending briefings is important because it provides the opportunity to obtain important information to pass on to families, introduce the FRG leader and co-leader, collect accurate family information on company families as well as for Soldiers who are assigned to the unit for deployment, and meet Soldiers and families.)
- ☐ Meet with ACS Mobilization and Deployment Program Manager and/or Reserve Component Family Programs staff to identify deployment support available. Discuss what support they can provide to both the FRG and families. This discussion should address programs, services, and support available for the FRG, FRG volunteers and/or families; educational and information materials available; registration of FRG statutory volunteers; and assistance with referrals and coordination of services; Obtain helpful information materials that will be distributed to families, such as:
  - *Operation READY Soldier/Family Deployment Handbook* available from ACS and Reserve Component Family Programs
  - Military and civilian community phone directories of important resources
  - Operation READY children's workbooks.

Getting Families and Soldiers Ready

Remember, the FRG is established by the commander to assist in military and personal deployment preparedness and enhance the family readiness of Soldiers and families. The FRG can play a vital role in preparing families and Soldiers for deployment.

FRG'S TRAIN-UP/PREPARATION AND MOBILIZATION "PRE-DEPLOYMENT" CHECKLIST

- ☐ Disseminate information about company pre-deployment briefings (including childcare arrangements), mission and schedule information (if allowed), Soldier Readiness Processing (SRP) schedule, and FRG meetings to Soldiers and families using the phone tree, vFRG web site, and email.
- ☐ Ensure families all understand the process of notification in case of casualty or injury.
- ☐ Encourage Soldiers and families to attend pre-deployment briefings, if possible. Provide important information disseminated at pre-deployment briefings to Soldiers and families.
- ☐ Encourage Soldiers and families to provide contact information for all desired loved ones (i.e., immediate family, extended family/relatives, and fiancés/fiancées). (Note: This information will be obtained by the RDC, FRG and ACS.) Also get information on families' interest in participating in FRG activities or vFRG. Ask the Soldier to provide a form authorizing family members' access (by name and relationship) to the RDC or vFRG system administrator.
- ☐ Ensure family members know how to access the unit's vFRG web system and MyArmyLifeToo.com for up-to-date information.
- ☐ Provide information on how families can contact Soldiers while deployed, if known.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

Getting Families and Soldiers Ready

Remember, the FRG is established by the commander to assist in military and personal deployment preparedness and enhance the family readiness of Soldiers and families. The FRG can play a vital role in preparing families and Soldiers for deployment.

FRG'S TRAIN-UP/PREPARATION AND MOBILIZATION "PRE-DEPLOYMENT" CHECKLIST

- ☐ Disseminate information about company pre-deployment briefings (including childcare arrangements), mission and schedule information (if allowed), Soldier Readiness Processing (SRP) schedule, and FRG meetings to Soldiers and families using the phone tree, vFRG web site, and email.
- ☐ Ensure families all understand the process of notification in case of casualty or injury.
- ☐ Encourage Soldiers and families to attend pre-deployment briefings, if possible. Provide important information disseminated at pre-deployment briefings to Soldiers and families.
- ☐ Encourage Soldiers and families to provide contact information for all desired loved ones (i.e., immediate family, extended family/relatives, and fiancés/fiancées). (Note: This information will be obtained by the RDC, FRG and ACS.) Also get information on families' interest in participating in FRG activities or vFRG. Ask the Soldier to provide a form authorizing family members' access (by name and relationship) to the RDC or vFRG system administrator.
- ☐ Ensure family members know how to access the unit's vFRG web system and MyArmyLifeToo.com for up-to-date information.
- ☐ Provide information on how families can contact Soldiers while deployed, if known.

- ☐ Coordinate with PAO to provide information to Soldiers and families on how to deal with the media.
- ☐ Remind spouses to check that they have access to important personal documents (e.g., power of attorney), safe deposit box, car keys, checkbook, etc. and family care plans if an emergency arises during deployment.
- ☐ Distribute information on Military One Source and Community Mental Health resources.
- ☐ Give all FRG members a pocket guide list of emergency phone numbers on their post including RDC, RDNCO and FRG POC.
- ☐ Provide families with appropriate information and education materials such as:
  - a copy of the Operation READY Soldier/Family Deployment Handbook available from ACS and Reserve Component Family Programs
  - a copy of military and civilian community phone directories of important resources
  - copies of Operation READY children's workbooks for the appropriate ages (also available from ACS and Reserve Component Family Programs).
- ☐ Introduce yourself (FRG leader) to Soldiers and families at pre-deployment briefings, FRG meetings, and other opportunities that arise. (Note, if time and space permit, a short FRG meeting can be conducted following a pre-deployment briefing.) These occasions are an opportunity to talk about the FRG and explain the benefits of participation. Keep in mind, this is a brief sales presentation. The first impression the FRG leader conveys and what is said will influence whether families choose to participate or not; so it is important to plan and execute well.
- ☐ Provide families with point of contact information for both command and FRG.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

- ☐ Coordinate with PAO to provide information to Soldiers and families on how to deal with the media.
- ☐ Remind spouses to check that they have access to important personal documents (e.g., power of attorney), safe deposit box, car keys, checkbook, etc. and family care plans if an emergency arises during deployment.
- ☐ Distribute information on Military One Source and Community Mental Health resources.
- ☐ Give all FRG members a pocket guide list of emergency phone numbers on their post including RDC, RDNCO and FRG POC.
- ☐ Provide families with appropriate information and education materials such as:
  - a copy of the Operation READY Soldier/Family Deployment Handbook available from ACS and Reserve Component Family Programs
  - a copy of military and civilian community phone directories of important resources
  - copies of Operation READY children's workbooks for the appropriate ages (also available from ACS and Reserve Component Family Programs).
- ☐ Introduce yourself (FRG leader) to Soldiers and families at pre-deployment briefings, FRG meetings, and other opportunities that arise. (Note, if time and space permit, a short FRG meeting can be conducted following a pre-deployment briefing.) These occasions are an opportunity to talk about the FRG and explain the benefits of participation. Keep in mind, this is a brief sales presentation. The first impression the FRG leader conveys and what is said will influence whether families choose to participate or not; so it is important to plan and execute well.
- ☐ Provide families with point of contact information for both command and FRG.

58

- ☐ Make sure Soldiers are told specifically to add any person (such as fiancée's, significant others, parents, etc.) on their information sheet that they would like the FRG to contact.
- ☐ Make sure all FRG member's have an FRG member on emergency pick up on school information for children in case of emergency.
- ☐ Advise members to share with school counselors that their spouses are being deployed so that schools may support or at least be aware of home situation.
- ☐ Make sure all spouses have AKO accounts.
- ☐ Ascertain whether families have any questions, especially after pre-deployment briefings, and address family questions as appropriate.
- ☐ Conduct social activities to build family camaraderie.
- ☐ Encourage families who are considering leaving the area to notify the unit and provide the FRG and RDC with new contact information.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

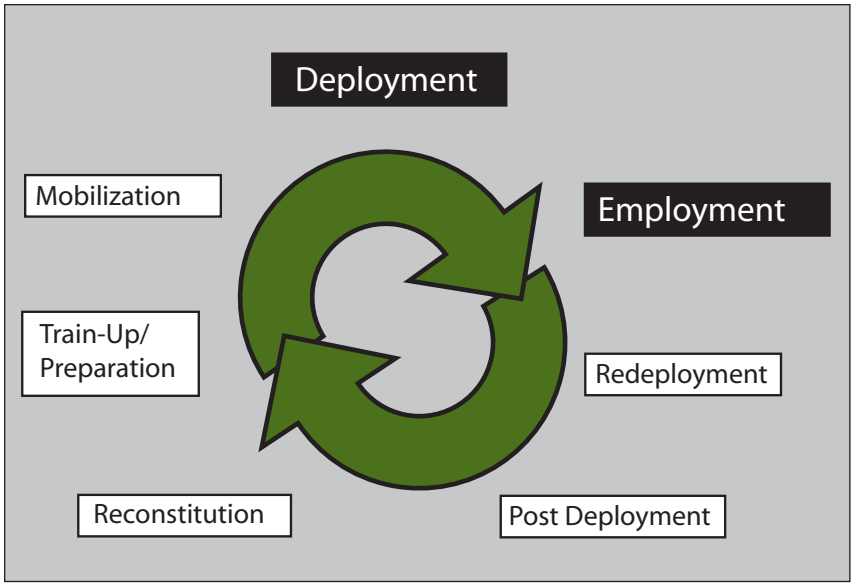
4

- ☐ Make sure Soldiers are told specifically to add any person (such as fiancée's, significant others, parents, etc.) on their information sheet that they would like the FRG to contact.
- ☐ Make sure all FRG member's have an FRG member on emergency pick up on school information for children in case of emergency.
- ☐ Advise members to share with school counselors that their spouses are being deployed so that schools may support or at least be aware of home situation.
- ☐ Make sure all spouses have AKO accounts.
- ☐ Ascertain whether families have any questions, especially after pre-deployment briefings, and address family questions as appropriate.
- ☐ Conduct social activities to build family camaraderie.
- ☐ Encourage families who are considering leaving the area to notify the unit and provide the FRG and RDC with new contact information.

59

4.2 Deployment and Employment Phases

The FRG is responsible for keeping critical information from command flowing to families, a very important task during deployment. Supporting families, especially during long and dangerous deployments, is another focus of the FRG's efforts at this phase of the deployment cycle. To support families effectively, the FRG must remain connected with families, help families solve problems and become resilient, and provide social activities and other means to reduce stress and boost morale. In addition, the FRG (in particular the FRG leader) will need to work closely with the command staff and establish and maintain connections with key military and community individuals and agencies who can serve as a resource and support to the FRG.

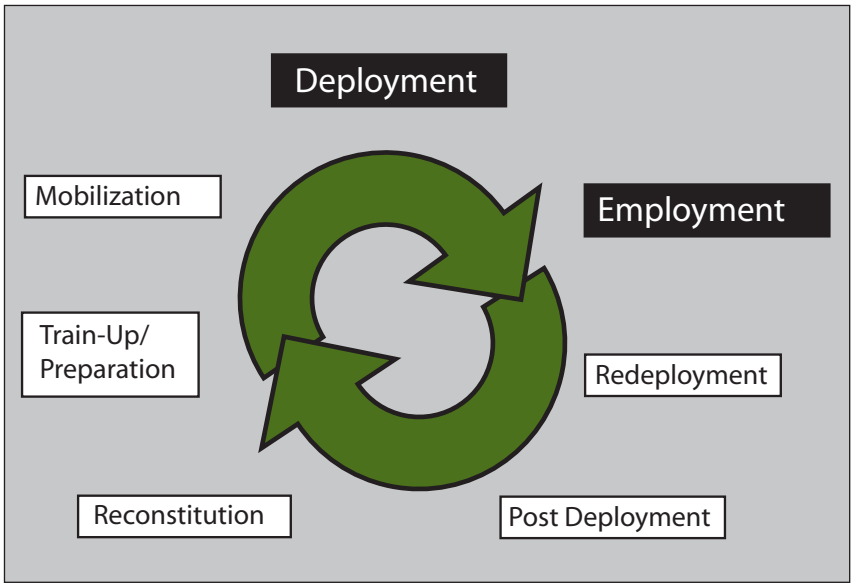


4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

4.2 Deployment and Employment Phases

The FRG is responsible for keeping critical information from command flowing to families, a very important task during deployment. Supporting families, especially during long and dangerous deployments, is another focus of the FRG's efforts at this phase of the deployment cycle. To support families effectively, the FRG must remain connected with families, help families solve problems and become resilient, and provide social activities and other means to reduce stress and boost morale. In addition, the FRG (in particular the FRG leader) will need to work closely with the command staff and establish and maintain connections with key military and community individuals and agencies who can serve as a resource and support to the FRG.



Assisting Command With Family Communications and Managing FRG Activities

FRG LEADER'S DEPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Maintain communication with RDC to:
  - obtain support and assistance for FRG activities
  - obtain company information that is to be relayed to families via FRG newsletter, telephone tree, email, vFRG, and FRG meetings
  - discuss content of FRG newsletter and obtain company commander's (RDC's) approval
  - ensure that children's issues are addressed and that age appropriate activities are conducted with children
  - coordinate video teleconference (VTC) time for families to communicate with deployed Soldiers, if available
  - review assistance provided to families and discuss the family problems/issues/questions the FRG is unable to address and identify appropriate referrals for these issues
  - assist families of wounded or injured Soldiers when asked.
- ☐ Take care of yourself and FRG volunteers.
- ☐ Attend briefings. (Attending briefings is important because it provides an ongoing opportunity to obtain important information to pass on to families, introduce the FRG leader and FRG, collect accurate family information on both company families and families of Soldiers who are temporarily assigned to the company, and meet families.)
- ☐ Maintain communication with other key military and civilian community representatives including:
  - FRG Deployment Support Assistant
  - FRG advisor or steering committee leader
  - Chaplain
  - Army Community Service
  - Army National Guard State Family Program Office
  - Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Programs Office.
- ☐ Arrange guest speakers from ACS, Reserve Component Family Programs Office and other agencies to talk or to conduct briefings

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

Assisting Command With Family Communications and Managing FRG Activities

4

FRG LEADER'S DEPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Maintain communication with RDC to:
  - obtain support and assistance for FRG activities
  - obtain company information that is to be relayed to families via FRG newsletter, telephone tree, email, vFRG, and FRG meetings
  - discuss content of FRG newsletter and obtain company commander's (RDC's) approval
  - ensure that children's issues are addressed and that age appropriate activities are conducted with children
  - coordinate video teleconference (VTC) time for families to communicate with deployed Soldiers, if available
  - review assistance provided to families and discuss the family problems/issues/questions the FRG is unable to address and identify appropriate referrals for these issues
  - assist families of wounded or injured Soldiers when asked.
- ☐ Take care of yourself and FRG volunteers.
- ☐ Attend briefings. (Attending briefings is important because it provides an ongoing opportunity to obtain important information to pass on to families, introduce the FRG leader and FRG, collect accurate family information on both company families and families of Soldiers who are temporarily assigned to the company, and meet families.)
- ☐ Maintain communication with other key military and civilian community representatives including:
  - FRG Deployment Support Assistant
  - FRG advisor or steering committee leader
  - Chaplain
  - Army Community Service
  - Army National Guard State Family Program Office
  - Army Reserve Regional Readiness Command Family Programs Office.
- ☐ Arrange guest speakers from ACS, Reserve Component Family Programs Office and other agencies to talk or to conduct briefings

61

for families at FRG meetings that address issues such as coping with separation, dealing with loneliness, securing home/safety, dealing with the media, and other issues of interest to family members.

- ☐ Manage gossip and rumors. Ensure there is a set diagram of how and when and from whom official information will be distributed. Explain only official chain of information is valid.
- ☐ Make weekly phone contact with FRG members.
- ☐ Adjust the breadth and frequency of FRG activities throughout the deployment period to address family needs and based on command direction. Plan and conduct social activities.
- ☐ Take steps to encourage and sustain participation in FRG meetings and activities. (See section entitled Sustaining the FRG in Section 3 of Part 3 of this handbook.)
- ☐ Attend regular meeting or briefing sessions with the garrison commander and rear detachment commander.
- ☐ Maintain communication among FRG staff to plan, coordinate, and conduct FRG activities; monitor activities and FRG procedures (e.g., key caller protocol); and identify emerging family issues.
- ☐ Ensure accurate information is distributed in a timely manner. This is important throughout the deployment and will be very important if something happens to the unit. Help dispel rumors when possible.
- ☐ Notify FRG members of community programs of interest. These programs can be identified by checking out key web sites (such as www.MyArmyLifeToo.com and www.armyfrg.org), reviewing military publications (such as newspapers, MWR newsletter), and through communications with military and community individuals and agencies.
- ☐ Attend installation/community FRG Forum meetings to discuss and seek help from other FRG leaders on how to address FRG and family issues.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

for families at FRG meetings that address issues such as coping with separation, dealing with loneliness, securing home/safety, dealing with the media, and other issues of interest to family members.

- ☐ Manage gossip and rumors. Ensure there is a set diagram of how and when and from whom official information will be distributed. Explain only official chain of information is valid.
- ☐ Make weekly phone contact with FRG members.
- ☐ Adjust the breadth and frequency of FRG activities throughout the deployment period to address family needs and based on command direction. Plan and conduct social activities.
- ☐ Take steps to encourage and sustain participation in FRG meetings and activities. (See section entitled Sustaining the FRG in Section 3 of Part 3 of this handbook.)
- ☐ Attend regular meeting or briefing sessions with the garrison commander and rear detachment commander.
- ☐ Maintain communication among FRG staff to plan, coordinate, and conduct FRG activities; monitor activities and FRG procedures (e.g., key caller protocol); and identify emerging family issues.
- ☐ Ensure accurate information is distributed in a timely manner. This is important throughout the deployment and will be very important if something happens to the unit. Help dispel rumors when possible.
- ☐ Notify FRG members of community programs of interest. These programs can be identified by checking out key web sites (such as www.MyArmyLifeToo.com and www.armyfrg.org), reviewing military publications (such as newspapers, MWR newsletter), and through communications with military and community individuals and agencies.
- ☐ Attend installation/community FRG Forum meetings to discuss and seek help from other FRG leaders on how to address FRG and family issues.

62

Maintaining Communications With Families

Providing accurate timely information to Soldiers' families (immediate and extended) is the FRG's primary role throughout the months of deployment. To help families cope with the stresses of deployment, a variety of efforts should also be made to get families out, reduce isolation, and help family members connect with each other. Don't forget to contact and involve new family members as new Soldiers are added to the company. Additionally, try to assist families in solving issues to reduce demands on company leadership.

FRG'S DEPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Disseminate information about the company and FRG to families using the phone tree, virtual FRG web site, email, FRG newsletter, and FRG meetings.
- ☐ Encourage families to attend briefings. Provide important information disseminated at briefings to families.
- ☐ Encourage families to provide the FRG with contact information if they move.
- ☐ Provide information on how families can contact Soldiers while deployed. Encourage frequent contact with Soldiers. Coordinate with RDC to provide VTC time for Soldiers and families.
- ☐ Maintain communication and connection with families. Use a variety of methods such as telephone calls, FRG newsletter, FRG activities, and vFRG web site. Don't forget to maintain contact with caregivers who are taking care of children of single parents and dual-military couples and those family members who are geographically displaced from the group.
- ☐ Provide families with appropriate information and education materials available. Give out resource information so families can get help when needed and pass information on to other families with whom they may be in contact. Have guest speakers at FRG meetings and events.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

Maintaining Communications With Families

Providing accurate timely information to Soldiers' families (immediate and extended) is the FRG's primary role throughout the months of deployment. To help families cope with the stresses of deployment, a variety of efforts should also be made to get families out, reduce isolation, and help family members connect with each other. Don't forget to contact and involve new family members as new Soldiers are added to the company. Additionally, try to assist families in solving issues to reduce demands on company leadership.

FRG'S DEPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Disseminate information about the company and FRG to families using the phone tree, virtual FRG web site, email, FRG newsletter, and FRG meetings.
- ☐ Encourage families to attend briefings. Provide important information disseminated at briefings to families.
- ☐ Encourage families to provide the FRG with contact information if they move.
- ☐ Provide information on how families can contact Soldiers while deployed. Encourage frequent contact with Soldiers. Coordinate with RDC to provide VTC time for Soldiers and families.
- ☐ Maintain communication and connection with families. Use a variety of methods such as telephone calls, FRG newsletter, FRG activities, and vFRG web site. Don't forget to maintain contact with caregivers who are taking care of children of single parents and dual-military couples and those family members who are geographically displaced from the group.
- ☐ Provide families with appropriate information and education materials available. Give out resource information so families can get help when needed and pass information on to other families with whom they may be in contact. Have guest speakers at FRG meetings and events.

- ☐ Refer families to the appropriate resource when needed. For a list of resources, see the Operation READY Smart Book.
- ☐ Provide information and refer families to programs of interest that are being offered by the community.
- ☐ Introduce yourself (FRG leader) to families at briefings, FRG meetings, and other opportunities that arise.
- ☐ Ensure families have point of contact information for both command and FRG.
- ☐ Ascertain whether families have any questions, especially after briefings, and address family questions as appropriate.
- ☐ Coordinate or refer families to activities for children.
- ☐ Conduct social activities as needed to provide stress relief and reduce family loneliness.
- ☐ Explain the importance of contacting someone from the FRG ANY-TIME family members go out of town and be sure to have a cell phone number/emergency contact number for all FRG members.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

- ☐ Refer families to the appropriate resource when needed. For a list of resources, see the Operation READY Smart Book.
- ☐ Provide information and refer families to programs of interest that are being offered by the community.
- ☐ Introduce yourself (FRG leader) to families at briefings, FRG meetings, and other opportunities that arise.
- ☐ Ensure families have point of contact information for both command and FRG.
- ☐ Ascertain whether families have any questions, especially after briefings, and address family questions as appropriate.
- ☐ Coordinate or refer families to activities for children.
- ☐ Conduct social activities as needed to provide stress relief and reduce family loneliness.
- ☐ Explain the importance of contacting someone from the FRG ANY-TIME family members go out of town and be sure to have a cell phone number/emergency contact number for all FRG members.

Deployment Issues

Each deployment is unique. While some issues typically occur with each deployment, unusual issues can also arise during a deployment. Having information and guidance are essential to being able to respond effectively. This section highlights three issues that are increasingly important and call for specific actions to be taken. Additional information on these issues is available in the Operation READY Smart Book and in other Operation READY materials.

CHILDREN'S NEEDS AND REACTIONS TO DEPLOYMENT

Children react to deployments and the separation from parents in different ways. They need to be supported as well. The FRG can plan age-appropriate events for children and/or arrange special speakers at FRG meetings to address issues families are experiencing. The FRG can also disseminate information to families to help deal with children's issues pre-, during, and post deployment. The Operation READY materials to promote are the children's workbook series and a Children and Deployment Cycle handbook for parents. A module on children's issues during wartime is available online or from Army Community Service. In addition, a variety of Children and Youth Services' (CYS) materials and programs are available to help children and parents.

Helpful information can also be found at the following web sites:
http://www.militaryonesource.com
http://militarychild.org/
http://www.myarmylifetoo.com
http://deploymentconnections.dod.mil
http://www.nmfa.org
http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/fs_children_war.html
http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil
http://www.armyteenpanel.army.mil
http://www.defenselink.mil/mtom/

CASUALTY AND TRAUMA IN THE UNIT

One of the most difficult situations to deal with in any unit is trauma, whether the injury or death involves a Soldier or a family

By definition, a casualty is any person lost to the organization by reason of having been declared beleaguered, besieged, captured, dead, diseased, detained, Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown, injured, ill, interned, missing, missing in action or wounded. There are seven casualty statuses:

- Deceased
- Duty status—Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN)
- Missing in Action (MIA)
- Very Seriously Injured or Ill (VSI)
- Seriously Injured or Ill (SI)
- Not seriously Injured (NSI).

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

Deployment Issues

Each deployment is unique. While some issues typically occur with each deployment, unusual issues can also arise during a deployment. Having information and guidance are essential to being able to respond effectively. This section highlights three issues that are increasingly important and call for specific actions to be taken. Additional information on these issues is available in the Operation READY Smart Book and in other Operation READY materials.

CHILDREN'S NEEDS AND REACTIONS TO DEPLOYMENT

Children react to deployments and the separation from parents in different ways. They need to be supported as well. The FRG can plan age-appropriate events for children and/or arrange special speakers at FRG meetings to address issues families are experiencing. The FRG can also disseminate information to families to help deal with children's issues pre-, during, and post deployment. The Operation READY materials to promote are the children's workbook series and a Children and Deployment Cycle handbook for parents. A module on children's issues during wartime is available online or from Army Community Service. In addition, a variety of Children and Youth Services' (CYS) materials and programs are available to help children and parents.

Helpful information can also be found at the following web sites:
http://www.militaryonesource.com
http://militarychild.org/
http://www.myarmylifetoo.com
http://deploymentconnections.dod.mil
http://www.nmfa.org
http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/war/fs_children_war.html
http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil
http://www.armyteenpanel.army.mil
http://www.defenselink.mil/mtom/

CASUALTY AND TRAUMA IN THE UNIT

One of the most difficult situations to deal with in any unit is trauma, whether the injury or death involves a Soldier or a family

By definition, a casualty is any person lost to the organization by reason of having been declared beleaguered, besieged, captured, dead, diseased, detained, Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown, injured, ill, interned, missing, missing in action or wounded. There are seven casualty statuses:

- Deceased
- Duty status—Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN)
- Missing in Action (MIA)
- Very Seriously Injured or Ill (VSI)
- Seriously Injured or Ill (SI)
- Not seriously Injured (NSI).

65

member. Notification and assistance is not a function of the FRG, but the FRG can play a role in helping both individuals and the unit.

Supporting the family. In the event of a serious injury or death of a Soldier, the military is responsible for casualty notification and helping family members. The notification process depends upon the casualty status and location of the next of kin. Typically, the incident is first reported by the commander to the Casualty Operations Branch, Human Resources Command. Once the Casualty Area Command (CAC) has confirmed the incident, it produces an initial casualty report. If the Soldier is wounded in action (WIA), then notification is made by telephone. If the Soldier is deceased, Duty status – Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN), or MIA, a casualty notification officer, generally accompanied by a chaplain, visits the primary next of kin (PNOK) to notify the family in person. Following notification, a casualty assistance officer (CAO) visits the family to assist with survivor benefits, funeral arrangements, personnel-related matters, and emotional support. The Public Affairs Office may also contact the family to offer assistance in dealing with the media. The Casualty Notification Officer or Chaplain will notify the brigade or battalion RDC who will send out a care team if the family requests assistance.

A word of caution.
The spouse of the deceased Soldier identifies who she/he would like to provide comfort to the family. The rear detachment commander will identify and assemble the care team from a list of trained care team volunteers, based upon the spouse's request. When a unit sustains several casualties at once, the battalion commander may request other battalions' care teams to assist. Care teams report to the RDC and not the FRG leader. The care team may need to be debriefed by someone who is experienced in trauma. Often school districts near bases have crisis response teams trained and in place for crisis intervention. School districts are often very open to helping with crisis intervention by supplying trained professionals to debrief Care Teams assisting a casualty's family. Army Community Service Family Advocacy Specialists or Chaplains can also debrief the care team.

The Battalion Care Team offers short-term emotional and logistical support to families of injured and deceased Soldiers. The care team can also serve as a facilitator to all the

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

member. Notification and assistance is not a function of the FRG, but the FRG can play a role in helping both individuals and the unit.

Supporting the family. In the event of a serious injury or death of a Soldier, the military is responsible for casualty notification and helping family members. The notification process depends upon the casualty status and location of the next of kin. Typically, the incident is first reported by the commander to the Casualty Operations Branch, Human Resources Command. Once the Casualty Area Command (CAC) has confirmed the incident, it produces an initial casualty report. If the Soldier is wounded in action (WIA), then notification is made by telephone. If the Soldier is deceased, Duty status – Whereabouts Unknown (DUSTWUN), or MIA, a casualty notification officer, generally accompanied by a chaplain, visits the primary next of kin (PNOK) to notify the family in person. Following notification, a casualty assistance officer (CAO) visits the family to assist with survivor benefits, funeral arrangements, personnel-related matters, and emotional support. The Public Affairs Office may also contact the family to offer assistance in dealing with the media. The Casualty Notification Officer or Chaplain will notify the brigade or battalion RDC who will send out a care team if the family requests assistance.

A word of caution.
The spouse of the deceased Soldier identifies who she/he would like to provide comfort to the family. The rear detachment commander will identify and assemble the care team from a list of trained care team volunteers, based upon the spouse's request. When a unit sustains several casualties at once, the battalion commander may request other battalions' care teams to assist. Care teams report to the RDC and not the FRG leader. The care team may need to be debriefed by someone who is experienced in trauma. Often school districts near bases have crisis response teams trained and in place for crisis intervention. School districts are often very open to helping with crisis intervention by supplying trained professionals to debrief Care Teams assisting a casualty's family. Army Community Service Family Advocacy Specialists or Chaplains can also debrief the care team.

The Battalion Care Team offers short-term emotional and logistical support to families of injured and deceased Soldiers. The care team can also serve as a facilitator to all the

well-intended outside support until the family's own support system begins to work. The support provided and the ways in which the care team assists a family will depend on the family's requested needs. The services care teams can provide include:

- call support (e.g., screen calls per family's wishes, keep phone log of calls to family, help family identify whom THE FAMILY needs to contact)
- home care assistance (e.g., arrange for help with laundry, lawn care, pet care or boarding, and other household matters in which family may need assistance; keep log of cards/flowers sent to family; stop mail and newspaper while family on travel to medical facility; reschedule appointments; run errands)
- keep log of questions the family wants to ask the Casualty Assistance Officer
- meal support
- baby sit or make temporary child care arrangements
- assist visiting family members and friends with installation access, lodging and transportation, as needed
- house sit (or arrange MP/civilian police to check on house) while the family visits a hospitalized Soldier.

The care team can provide these services themselves or coordinate the services needed (e.g., get individuals to assist with meal support). The team provides only what the family requests. This short-term care is generally provided for 7 to 14 days. However, support may be provided for a longer period, especially for families of injured Soldiers. The length of time the care team serves will depend on the family's needs and support network.

Support to the unit. Once the family has been notified, the RDC communicates with the FRG leader to arrange a briefing for all other spouses and family members in the unit. FRG key callers are to contact family members about the briefing date and location. A scripted message will be provided by the RDC to be used when contacting families. No other information is to be given out during the phone calls. Be sure the affected family is not called and that rumor control is emphasized. In addition, it is helpful if the RDC and/or FRG leader can arrange to have the Chaplain talk with families (or FRG) about the grieving process and appropriate responses. Additional information related to care teams and casualty situations is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book and addressed in Operation READY Trauma in the Unit handbook and training materials.

Tip
Keep in mind the care team members will need support too. FRG members can support the care team with an occasional meal and child care when possible.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

well-intended outside support until the family's own support system begins to work. The support provided and the ways in which the care team assists a family will depend on the family's requested needs. The services care teams can provide include:

- call support (e.g., screen calls per family's wishes, keep phone log of calls to family, help family identify whom THE FAMILY needs to contact)
- home care assistance (e.g., arrange for help with laundry, lawn care, pet care or boarding, and other household matters in which family may need assistance; keep log of cards/flowers sent to family; stop mail and newspaper while family on travel to medical facility; reschedule appointments; run errands)
- keep log of questions the family wants to ask the Casualty Assistance Officer
- meal support
- baby sit or make temporary child care arrangements
- assist visiting family members and friends with installation access, lodging and transportation, as needed
- house sit (or arrange MP/civilian police to check on house) while the family visits a hospitalized Soldier.

The care team can provide these services themselves or coordinate the services needed (e.g., get individuals to assist with meal support). The team provides only what the family requests. This short-term care is generally provided for 7 to 14 days. However, support may be provided for a longer period, especially for families of injured Soldiers. The length of time the care team serves will depend on the family's needs and support network.

Support to the unit. Once the family has been notified, the RDC communicates with the FRG leader to arrange a briefing for all other spouses and family members in the unit. FRG key callers are to contact family members about the briefing date and location. A scripted message will be provided by the RDC to be used when contacting families. No other information is to be given out during the phone calls. Be sure the affected family is not called and that rumor control is emphasized. In addition, it is helpful if the RDC and/or FRG leader can arrange to have the Chaplain talk with families (or FRG) about the grieving process and appropriate responses. Additional information related to care teams and casualty situations is provided in the Operation READY Smart Book and addressed in Operation READY Trauma in the Unit handbook and training materials.

Tip
Keep in mind the care team members will need support too. FRG members can support the care team with an occasional meal and child care when possible.

4

67

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND FRG VOLUNTEERS

Given the high level of demands placed on an FRG leader and FRG staff, it is important to take steps to reduce stress and maintain personal well-being. For tips, consult the Coping with Stress fact sheet in the Operation READY Smart Book. If there is a casualty or trauma in the unit, it is important to allow yourself and the members of the FRG to grieve. Know the resources in the community and use them.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

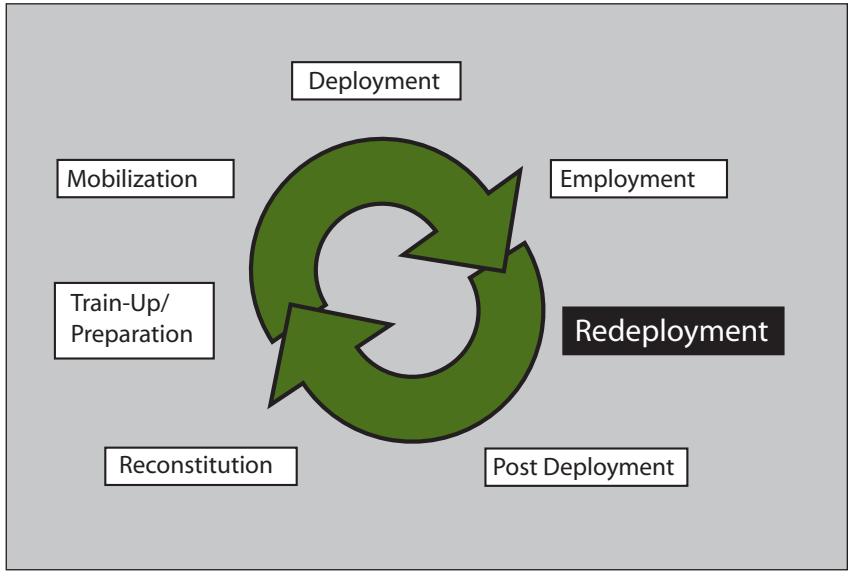
4

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND FRG VOLUNTEERS

Given the high level of demands placed on an FRG leader and FRG staff, it is important to take steps to reduce stress and maintain personal well-being. For tips, consult the Coping with Stress fact sheet in the Operation READY Smart Book. If there is a casualty or trauma in the unit, it is important to allow yourself and the members of the FRG to grieve. Know the resources in the community and use them.

4.3 Redeployment

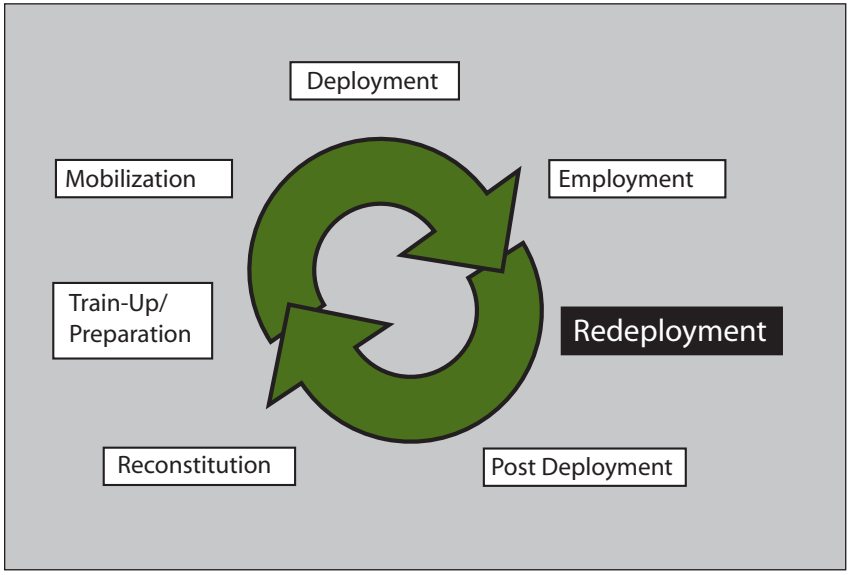
Redeployment is the point in the deployment cycle when Soldiers prepare to return and out-process at deployment site or in the theatre of operations. It is generally a brief period of time ranging anywhere from five to 30 days. Redeployment also refers to individual Soldiers who return mid-tour for an approximately two-week period known as "R&R". This is a key time to prepare (if this has not been done in the last month of the "deployment" phase) or continue preparing families for Soldiers return and reintegration into the family. Spouse and family education is an important activity in this phase.



4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4.3 Redeployment

Redeployment is the point in the deployment cycle when Soldiers prepare to return and out-process at deployment site or in the theatre of operations. It is generally a brief period of time ranging anywhere from five to 30 days. Redeployment also refers to individual Soldiers who return mid-tour for an approximately two-week period known as "R&R". This is a key time to prepare (if this has not been done in the last month of the "deployment" phase) or continue preparing families for Soldiers return and reintegration into the family. Spouse and family education is an important activity in this phase.



Assisting Command With Reunion Preparations and FRG Planning

FRG LEADER'S REDEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Contact or meet with the rear detachment commander to:
  - obtain particulars (date, time and location) about return of company and individual Soldiers, reunion briefings, and company (and installation) homecoming activities in order to notify families per command approval AND to discuss how the FRG can and will support company activities, particularly welcome home events. (Note: Homecoming ceremonies/ activities are a company and installation responsibility.)
  - get information on reunion and reintegration training conducted for families by ACS, Reserve Component Family Programs, Chaplains and other military agencies; also assist in coordinating meetings/activities held specifically for the company to help prepare families for reunion issues
  - get information on briefings and information for families by Mental Health Services on health symptoms and potential signs and symptoms of distress
  - ensure that children's issues are addressed in reunion briefings and that age appropriate activities are conducted with children
  - identify at-risk families and families who have experienced significant problems during the deployment. Also identify potential family issues to advise company commander.

- ☐ Arrange guest speakers (such as Chaplain or ACS) to talk at FRG meetings about reunion and reintegration issues, including such topics as stress management, marital issues, children's reactions to a returning parent, returning to work issues, combat stress and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and benefit changes. Also consider having the PAO talk about dealing with the media since the media may be present at welcome home events.

- ☐ Review plans of how the FRG will support Soldiers and families during the post deployment phase.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

Assisting Command With Reunion Preparations and FRG Planning

FRG LEADER'S REDEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Contact or meet with the rear detachment commander to:
  - obtain particulars (date, time and location) about return of company and individual Soldiers, reunion briefings, and company (and installation) homecoming activities in order to notify families per command approval AND to discuss how the FRG can and will support company activities, particularly welcome home events. (Note: Homecoming ceremonies/ activities are a company and installation responsibility.)
  - get information on reunion and reintegration training conducted for families by ACS, Reserve Component Family Programs, Chaplains and other military agencies; also assist in coordinating meetings/activities held specifically for the company to help prepare families for reunion issues
  - get information on briefings and information for families by Mental Health Services on health symptoms and potential signs and symptoms of distress
  - ensure that children's issues are addressed in reunion briefings and that age appropriate activities are conducted with children
  - identify at-risk families and families who have experienced significant problems during the deployment. Also identify potential family issues to advise company commander.

- ☐ Arrange guest speakers (such as Chaplain or ACS) to talk at FRG meetings about reunion and reintegration issues, including such topics as stress management, marital issues, children's reactions to a returning parent, returning to work issues, combat stress and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and benefit changes. Also consider having the PAO talk about dealing with the media since the media may be present at welcome home events.

- ☐ Review plans of how the FRG will support Soldiers and families during the post deployment phase.

70

Preparing Families For Reunion and Supporting Families of Soldiers on R & R

With limited time available, the FRG's efforts in this area are likely to start during this phase and continue into the post deployment phase. Preparing families for reunion and reintegration of Soldiers needs to begin prior to Soldiers' return. Within this phase, do not forget to support the subgroup of families who are having a brief reunion with Soldiers home on R & R. These families may be experiencing issues in which the FRG can offer support.

FRG'S REDEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Announce to families redeployment dates once RDC authorizes information for release. (Note: The RDC may elect to call or have the FRGDA call all families.) State that often dates and times of redeployments change at the last minute; emphasize flexibility.
- ☐ Provide families with tentative post deployment schedule (i.e., mandatory reintegration training schedule, block leave information, etc.). Let families know what to expect and have a meeting with an open floor for questions regarding redeployment. Have RDC and RDNCO and Battalion FRG leader there to answer questions.
- ☐ Notify spouses that the chaplain can conduct a marital assessment to help spouses identify and prepare for potential relationship issues during reunion.
- ☐ Disseminate information about upcoming reunion briefings and homecoming activities to be held once the Soldiers return. Use the phone tree and email to notify families and encourage attendance.
- ☐ Provide families with appropriate education and information materials about reunion and reintegration issues. Use FRG newsletter, vFRG web site, and guest speakers at an FRG meeting as forums for talking about these issues. When presenting this information, be sure to identify resources where Soldiers and families can get help if needed.
- ☐ Have PAO provide families with information on how to deal with the media.
- ☐ Arrange to have Military Family Life Consultants on hand at reception site for those families or Soldiers who may need support.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

Preparing Families For Reunion and Supporting Families of Soldiers on R & R

With limited time available, the FRG's efforts in this area are likely to start during this phase and continue into the post deployment phase. Preparing families for reunion and reintegration of Soldiers needs to begin prior to Soldiers' return. Within this phase, do not forget to support the subgroup of families who are having a brief reunion with Soldiers home on R & R. These families may be experiencing issues in which the FRG can offer support.

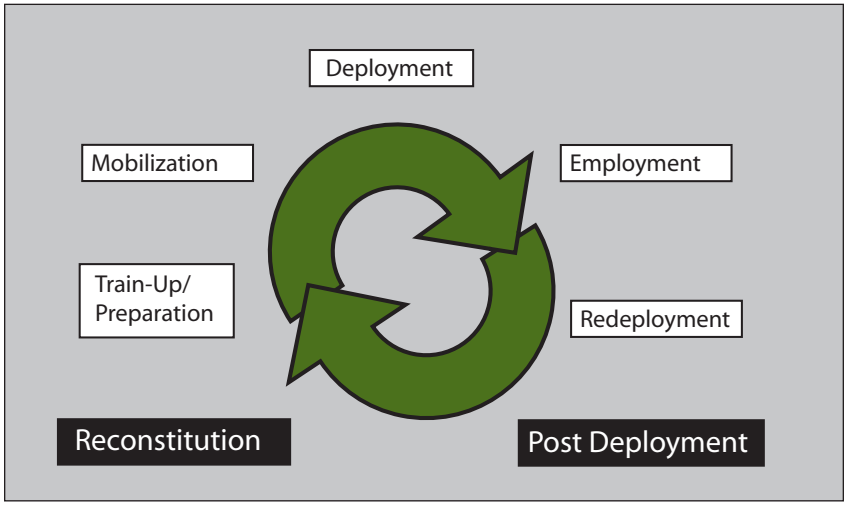
FRG'S REDEPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ Announce to families redeployment dates once RDC authorizes information for release. (Note: The RDC may elect to call or have the FRGDA call all families.) State that often dates and times of redeployments change at the last minute; emphasize flexibility.
- ☐ Provide families with tentative post deployment schedule (i.e., mandatory reintegration training schedule, block leave information, etc.). Let families know what to expect and have a meeting with an open floor for questions regarding redeployment. Have RDC and RDNCO and Battalion FRG leader there to answer questions.
- ☐ Notify spouses that the chaplain can conduct a marital assessment to help spouses identify and prepare for potential relationship issues during reunion.
- ☐ Disseminate information about upcoming reunion briefings and homecoming activities to be held once the Soldiers return. Use the phone tree and email to notify families and encourage attendance.
- ☐ Provide families with appropriate education and information materials about reunion and reintegration issues. Use FRG newsletter, vFRG web site, and guest speakers at an FRG meeting as forums for talking about these issues. When presenting this information, be sure to identify resources where Soldiers and families can get help if needed.
- ☐ Have PAO provide families with information on how to deal with the media.
- ☐ Arrange to have Military Family Life Consultants on hand at reception site for those families or Soldiers who may need support.

71

4.4 Post Deployment and Reconstitution Phases

In the post deployment and reconstitution phases, Soldiers return to home station, complete redeployment and demobilization processing (i.e., reverse SRP and medical screening), and begin the process of reintegrating into family life and the community. (The Army refers to the reintegration process as reconstitution phase.) Guard and Reserve also face readjustment to their civilian jobs. Both Soldiers and family members go through an adjustment period. The length of the adjustment period varies across Soldiers and families. It is important to monitor Soldiers and families' well-being for many months to ensure Soldiers and families receive the support needed with transition issues Information and referral are important FRG activities during the post deployment phase, especially for Reserve Component Soldiers who may not live near a military installation. The FRG should distribute information on how to access post deployment resources such as Military One Source and Military Family Life Consultants.

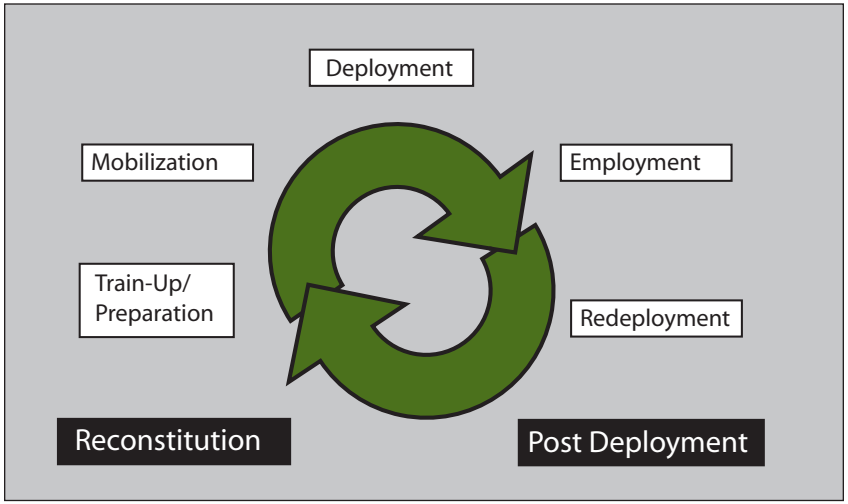


4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

4.4 Post Deployment and Reconstitution Phases

In the post deployment and reconstitution phases, Soldiers return to home station, complete redeployment and demobilization processing (i.e., reverse SRP and medical screening), and begin the process of reintegrating into family life and the community. (The Army refers to the reintegration process as reconstitution phase.) Guard and Reserve also face readjustment to their civilian jobs. Both Soldiers and family members go through an adjustment period. The length of the adjustment period varies across Soldiers and families. It is important to monitor Soldiers and families' well-being for many months to ensure Soldiers and families receive the support needed with transition issues Information and referral are important FRG activities during the post deployment phase, especially for Reserve Component Soldiers who may not live near a military installation. The FRG should distribute information on how to access post deployment resources such as Military One Source and Military Family Life Consultants.



Assisting Command With Post Deployment and Reconstitution Tasks

FRG LEADER'S POST DEPLOYMENT AND RECONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Communicate with the rear detachment and/or company commander to:
  - obtain particulars (date, time and location) about return of company and individual Soldiers, reunion briefings, and company (and installation) homecoming activities in order to notify families
  - assist in coordinating trainings/classes by Military Family Life Consultants, ACS, Reserve Component Family Programs, Chaplains, and other agencies to help Soldiers and families with reunion and reintegration issues; ensure attention is given to the transition issues of Reserve and Guard Soldiers
  - ensure that children's issues are addressed in reunion briefings and that age appropriate activities are conducted with children
  - discuss family problems/issues/questions that FRG is unable to address and identify appropriate referrals for these issues
  - identify at-risk families and families who have experienced significant problems during the deployment. Also identify potential family issues to advise company commander
  - identify families with high levels of reported stress/separation issues after Soldiers return.
- ☐ Arrange guest speakers to talk at FRG meetings about reunion issues, including such topics as stress management, marital issues, children's reactions to a returning parent, returning to work issues, and combat operational stress reaction and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- ☐ Participate in the company's Soldier and family welcoming events and official homecoming events based on FRG leader's discussions with command.
- ☐ Attend briefings and homecoming events.
- ☐ Ensure key callers are aware of resources so they can provide appropriate referrals to families.
- ☐ Start thinking about lessons learned and preparing the after action report.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

Assisting Command With Post Deployment and Reconstitution Tasks

4

FRG LEADER'S POST DEPLOYMENT AND RECONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Communicate with the rear detachment and/or company commander to:
  - obtain particulars (date, time and location) about return of company and individual Soldiers, reunion briefings, and company (and installation) homecoming activities in order to notify families
  - assist in coordinating trainings/classes by Military Family Life Consultants, ACS, Reserve Component Family Programs, Chaplains, and other agencies to help Soldiers and families with reunion and reintegration issues; ensure attention is given to the transition issues of Reserve and Guard Soldiers
  - ensure that children's issues are addressed in reunion briefings and that age appropriate activities are conducted with children
  - discuss family problems/issues/questions that FRG is unable to address and identify appropriate referrals for these issues
  - identify at-risk families and families who have experienced significant problems during the deployment. Also identify potential family issues to advise company commander
  - identify families with high levels of reported stress/separation issues after Soldiers return.
- ☐ Arrange guest speakers to talk at FRG meetings about reunion issues, including such topics as stress management, marital issues, children's reactions to a returning parent, returning to work issues, and combat operational stress reaction and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
- ☐ Participate in the company's Soldier and family welcoming events and official homecoming events based on FRG leader's discussions with command.
- ☐ Attend briefings and homecoming events.
- ☐ Ensure key callers are aware of resources so they can provide appropriate referrals to families.
- ☐ Start thinking about lessons learned and preparing the after action report.

73

Supporting Families with Reunion and Reintegration

Preparing families for reunion and supporting families during reunion and reintegration are important since this is another challenging time for Soldiers and families. While the level of FRG activities will decrease after reunions, it is important to maintain periodic communications with families to monitor their well-being and to sustain camaraderie.

FRG'S POST DEPLOYMENT AND RECONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Disseminate information about reunion and other briefings, family day activities, homecoming activities, and important materials using the phone tree, virtual FRG web site, email, FRG newsletter, and FRG meetings. (Briefings and information materials for Soldiers and families need to address a variety of topics including finance, benefit changes, Tricare benefits, health care, transition entitlements, legal rights, reemployment rights, distress symptoms, job assistance to Reserve Component Soldiers, children's adjustment, domestic violence, and other deployment-related problems.)
- ☐ Encourage families to attend reunion and homecoming events. Provide important information disseminated at briefings to families.
- ☐ Encourage Soldiers and families to participate in helpful programs such as marriage enrichment and counseling through Military One Source.
- ☐ Provide families with appropriate information and education materials. Use FRG newsletter, vFRG web site, and guest speakers at FRG meetings as forums for talking about issues of concern. When presenting information, be sure to identify resources where Soldiers and families can get help if needed. Refer families to helpful resources such as Military One Source, Military Family Life Consultants, Chaplain, ACS, and JAG.
- ☐ Maintain communication and connection with families. Provide referrals when necessary.
- ☐ Coordinate or refer families to activities for children.
- ☐ Conduct social activities as needed to relieve stress and for camaraderie.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

Supporting Families with Reunion and Reintegration

Preparing families for reunion and supporting families during reunion and reintegration are important since this is another challenging time for Soldiers and families. While the level of FRG activities will decrease after reunions, it is important to maintain periodic communications with families to monitor their well-being and to sustain camaraderie.

FRG'S POST DEPLOYMENT AND RECONSTITUTION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Disseminate information about reunion and other briefings, family day activities, homecoming activities, and important materials using the phone tree, virtual FRG web site, email, FRG newsletter, and FRG meetings. (Briefings and information materials for Soldiers and families need to address a variety of topics including finance, benefit changes, Tricare benefits, health care, transition entitlements, legal rights, reemployment rights, distress symptoms, job assistance to Reserve Component Soldiers, children's adjustment, domestic violence, and other deployment-related problems.)
- ☐ Encourage families to attend reunion and homecoming events. Provide important information disseminated at briefings to families.
- ☐ Encourage Soldiers and families to participate in helpful programs such as marriage enrichment and counseling through Military One Source.
- ☐ Provide families with appropriate information and education materials. Use FRG newsletter, vFRG web site, and guest speakers at FRG meetings as forums for talking about issues of concern. When presenting information, be sure to identify resources where Soldiers and families can get help if needed. Refer families to helpful resources such as Military One Source, Military Family Life Consultants, Chaplain, ACS, and JAG.
- ☐ Maintain communication and connection with families. Provide referrals when necessary.
- ☐ Coordinate or refer families to activities for children.
- ☐ Conduct social activities as needed to relieve stress and for camaraderie.

74

Post Deployment Issues

This section highlights issues that demand careful attention during post deployment. These issues are increasingly more prevalent given the nature of the Army's missions in the 21st century. Often, there is a reluctance of Soldiers to ask for help. The FRG can help Soldiers understand that asking for help is a sign of strength, not of weakness. Fact sheets and additional information are provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.

COMBAT OPERATIONAL STRESS REACTION: "BATTLE FATIGUE"

Service members may experience combat operational stress reaction (COSR) in combat and other dangerous missions. The FRG, through the speakers and classes offered, can help family members become aware of the physical, mental, and emotional symptoms of COSR. These signs are normal for a person in combat situations and should fade with time. If symptoms become extreme, the family should seek help for the Soldier. For more information, contact the Social Work Care Manager Program at the nearest military medical facility, the nearest Veteran Administration hospital or clinic, or the local Veteran Center. All have counselors available to assist. Additional help is available through Military One Source, http://www.militaryonesource.com and http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/documents/TG/TECHGUID/TG240.pdf.

Signs of Combat Operation Stress Reaction

Physical
- Aches and pains
- Fidgeting
- Pounding heart
- Light-headedness
- Tingling of fingers and toes
- Stomach and bowel upsets
- Lack of energy

Mental and emotional
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Inability to focus or remember details
- Sleeplessness
- Grief
- Anger
- Loss of self esteem

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

In a time of war and/or lengthy dangerous missions, it is particularly important to be aware of the causes and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder to ensure Soldiers get the counseling and support needed. The FRG can make information available to family members that will foster awareness of PTSD symptoms and the resources that are available for help.

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

Post Deployment Issues

This section highlights issues that demand careful attention during post deployment. These issues are increasingly more prevalent given the nature of the Army's missions in the 21st century. Often, there is a reluctance of Soldiers to ask for help. The FRG can help Soldiers understand that asking for help is a sign of strength, not of weakness. Fact sheets and additional information are provided in the Operation READY Smart Book.

COMBAT OPERATIONAL STRESS REACTION: "BATTLE FATIGUE"

Service members may experience combat operational stress reaction (COSR) in combat and other dangerous missions. The FRG, through the speakers and classes offered, can help family members become aware of the physical, mental, and emotional symptoms of COSR. These signs are normal for a person in combat situations and should fade with time. If symptoms become extreme, the family should seek help for the Soldier. For more information, contact the Social Work Care Manager Program at the nearest military medical facility, the nearest Veteran Administration hospital or clinic, or the local Veteran Center. All have counselors available to assist. Additional help is available through Military One Source, http://www.militaryonesource.com and http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/documents/TG/TECHGUID/TG240.pdf.

Signs of Combat Operation Stress Reaction

Physical
- Aches and pains
- Fidgeting
- Pounding heart
- Light-headedness
- Tingling of fingers and toes
- Stomach and bowel upsets
- Lack of energy

Mental and emotional
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Inability to focus or remember details
- Sleeplessness
- Grief
- Anger
- Loss of self esteem

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

In a time of war and/or lengthy dangerous missions, it is particularly important to be aware of the causes and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder to ensure Soldiers get the counseling and support needed. The FRG can make information available to family members that will foster awareness of PTSD symptoms and the resources that are available for help.

75

PTSD is an extremely debilitating condition that can occur after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. When individuals are exposed to events or objects reminiscent of the trauma, many people with PTSD frequently re-experience the ordeal in the form of flashback episodes, memories, nightmares, or frightening thoughts. Anniversaries of the event can also trigger symptoms. PTSD is a medical diagnosis and is often diagnosed when symptoms last more than one month.

Symptoms typically begin within three months of a traumatic event, although occasionally they do not begin until years later. Once PTSD occurs, the severity and duration of the illness varies.

For additional information on PTSD and PTSD resources, see Operation READY Smart Book.

Signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Emotional numbness
- Sleep disturbances
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability or angry outbursts
- Guilt
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal complaints
- Immune system problems
- Dizziness
- Chest pain or discomfort in other parts of the body
- Alcohol or substance abuse

4: ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE FRG IN DEPLOYMENT CYCLE

4

PTSD is an extremely debilitating condition that can occur after exposure to a terrifying event or ordeal in which grave physical harm occurred or was threatened. When individuals are exposed to events or objects reminiscent of the trauma, many people with PTSD frequently re-experience the ordeal in the form of flashback episodes, memories, nightmares, or frightening thoughts. Anniversaries of the event can also trigger symptoms. PTSD is a medical diagnosis and is often diagnosed when symptoms last more than one month.

Symptoms typically begin within three months of a traumatic event, although occasionally they do not begin until years later. Once PTSD occurs, the severity and duration of the illness varies.

For additional information on PTSD and PTSD resources, see Operation READY Smart Book.

Signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Emotional numbness
- Sleep disturbances
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability or angry outbursts
- Guilt
- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal complaints
- Immune system problems
- Dizziness
- Chest pain or discomfort in other parts of the body
- Alcohol or substance abuse

76

Here are the key points for FRG leaders to take away from this handbook:

★ In today's environment with frequent back-to-back deployments, the FRG needs to be operational at all times. Both the FRG leader and company commander need to ensure an FRG leader and staff are maintained even when the unit is at home. With the unpredictability of when the next deployment will occur, the FRG needs to be ready to assist command whenever an alert occurs. It is no longer feasible "to start from scratch" with each deployment.

★ The FRG is an official Army program. It is important to become familiar with the policies and guidance pertaining to FRG operations and activities. (See AR 608-1, Appendix J)

★ The FRG is a command sponsored program. Running an effective FRG requires establishing a relationship with command leadership (which includes the Rear Detachment Commander when the company deploys), maintaining two-way communication, and working together as a team. During deployment, the RDC is the official source of information and vital resource for an FRG. Maintaining communication is essential for ensuring families get timely and accurate information and that the RDC and FRG can effectively support families together.

★ Supporting Soldiers today involves supporting Soldiers' immediate and extended family members as well as other individuals identified by a Soldier. An FRG needs to serve and support this broader Soldier "family".

★ The FRG leader is not expected to be "the FRG" and to do FRG activities alone. Recruit the volunteers needed to carry out the required FRG activities as well as those requested by command.

PART 5: SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

5

Here are the key points for FRG leaders to take away from this handbook:

★ In today's environment with frequent back-to-back deployments, the FRG needs to be operational at all times. Both the FRG leader and company commander need to ensure an FRG leader and staff are maintained even when the unit is at home. With the unpredictability of when the next deployment will occur, the FRG needs to be ready to assist command whenever an alert occurs. It is no longer feasible "to start from scratch" with each deployment.

★ The FRG is an official Army program. It is important to become familiar with the policies and guidance pertaining to FRG operations and activities. (See AR 608-1, Appendix J)

★ The FRG is a command sponsored program. Running an effective FRG requires establishing a relationship with command leadership (which includes the Rear Detachment Commander when the company deploys), maintaining two-way communication, and working together as a team. During deployment, the RDC is the official source of information and vital resource for an FRG. Maintaining communication is essential for ensuring families get timely and accurate information and that the RDC and FRG can effectively support families together.

★ Supporting Soldiers today involves supporting Soldiers' immediate and extended family members as well as other individuals identified by a Soldier. An FRG needs to serve and support this broader Soldier "family".

★ The FRG leader is not expected to be "the FRG" and to do FRG activities alone. Recruit the volunteers needed to carry out the required FRG activities as well as those requested by command.

- ★ Success is determined by effective teamwork at many levels, with the RDC, garrison commander, and military and community agencies. This will ensure available use of resources and avoid burnout by sharing responsibilities.
- ★ The FRG is not on its own. Work with company leadership on how to assist families. Learn about and use the various Army resources for FRGs and families. Use this handbook and other Operation READY materials, which have been specifically designed to assist the FRG in its efforts. Get information and assistance from ACS/Family Program Offices and the battalion FRG steering committee who are prepared to support FRGs.
- ★ FRGs must reach out to all Soldiers and families (immediate and extended) attached to the unit, no matter where they live. Special attention should be given to ensuring geographically dispersed active, Guard and Reserve families have the information and support they need to successfully manage Army life.

5: SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

5

★ Success is determined by effective teamwork at many levels, with the RDC, garrison commander, and military and community agencies. This will ensure available use of resources and avoid burnout by sharing responsibilities.

★ The FRG is not on its own. Work with company leadership on how to assist families. Learn about and use the various Army resources for FRGs and families. Use this handbook and other Operation READY materials, which have been specifically designed to assist the FRG in its efforts. Get information and assistance from ACS/Family Program Offices and the battalion FRG steering committee who are prepared to support FRGs.

★ FRGs must reach out to all Soldiers and families (immediate and extended) attached to the unit, no matter where they live. Special attention should be given to ensuring geographically dispersed active, Guard and Reserve families have the information and support they need to successfully manage Army life.

Documents

MILITARY REGULATIONS

AR 600-8-1, Army Casualty Program (7 April 2006)
AR 608-1, Army Community Service Center Appendix J (July 2006)
AE Regulation 608-2, Family Readiness System (1 March 2005)
AE Regulation 600-8-108, Rear Detachment Command (10 August 2004)
AE Pamphlet 600-8-108, Family Readiness Support Assistant Guide (4 April 2005)
USARC Regulation 608-1, Family Readiness Handbook (1 August 2000)

CFSC DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

AUSA Resolution #B-1-06a/B-1-06b: Family Readiness Support for Parents [Information Paper]. (2005, September 15). Alexandria, VA: CFSC-FP.

Burcham, J. (2005, July 26). Virtual Family Readiness Group [Information Paper]. Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army and Community Family Support Center.

Burcham, J. (2005, July). Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG) [Briefing]. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center.

Christiansen, H. (2005). Operation Ready Process Action Team (PAT) meeting on 7-9 July 2004: Meeting documentation. Annapolis, MD: OCC Group.

Guidelines for Establishing a vFRG. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army and Community Family Support Center.

InterLock Performance Inc. (April 2005). Draft Course Map for Family Readiness Group Leader [online training course]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Johnson, D. (2005, 6 June). Multi-Component Army Family Support Network. Information briefing conducted at the Multi-Component Family Support Network (MCFSN) Training Conference, Miami, FL.

Mancini, D. (2005). Supporting Families in an Expeditionary Army: Overview and Philosophy. In MCFSN Training Manual for MCFSN Training Conference, Miami, FL.

Mancini, D. (2005). Supporting Families in an Expeditionary Army: Multi-Component Family Support Network. In MCFSN Training Manual for MCFSN Training Conference, Miami, FL.

Mancini, D. (2006). Rear Detachment Commander's Handbook on Family Readiness [Operation READY Handbook]. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

MCFSN Baseline Services Reference Guide [Spiral flip book in Multi-component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

REFERENCES

Documents

MILITARY REGULATIONS

AR 600-8-1, Army Casualty Program (7 April 2006)
AR 608-1, Army Community Service Center Appendix J (July 2006)
AE Regulation 608-2, Family Readiness System (1 March 2005)
AE Regulation 600-8-108, Rear Detachment Command (10 August 2004)
AE Pamphlet 600-8-108, Family Readiness Support Assistant Guide (4 April 2005)
USARC Regulation 608-1, Family Readiness Handbook (1 August 2000)

CFSC DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

AUSA Resolution #B-1-06a/B-1-06b: Family Readiness Support for Parents [Information Paper]. (2005, September 15). Alexandria, VA: CFSC-FP.

Burcham, J. (2005, July 26). Virtual Family Readiness Group [Information Paper]. Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army and Community Family Support Center.

Burcham, J. (2005, July). Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG) [Briefing]. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center.

Christiansen, H. (2005). Operation Ready Process Action Team (PAT) meeting on 7-9 July 2004: Meeting documentation. Annapolis, MD: OCC Group.

Guidelines for Establishing a vFRG. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army and Community Family Support Center.

InterLock Performance Inc. (April 2005). Draft Course Map for Family Readiness Group Leader [online training course]. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Johnson, D. (2005, 6 June). Multi-Component Army Family Support Network. Information briefing conducted at the Multi-Component Family Support Network (MCFSN) Training Conference, Miami, FL.

Mancini, D. (2005). Supporting Families in an Expeditionary Army: Overview and Philosophy. In MCFSN Training Manual for MCFSN Training Conference, Miami, FL.

Mancini, D. (2005). Supporting Families in an Expeditionary Army: Multi-Component Family Support Network. In MCFSN Training Manual for MCFSN Training Conference, Miami, FL.

Mancini, D. (2006). Rear Detachment Commander's Handbook on Family Readiness [Operation READY Handbook]. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

MCFSN Baseline Services Reference Guide [Spiral flip book in Multi-component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

79

R

Operation Military Kids [Card in Multi-component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

Operation Military Child Care [Card in Multi-component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

Post Traumatic Stress [Operation READY brochure]. (n.d.) Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

Texas A & M University. (2005). Draft Family Readiness for the Rear Detachment Handbook [Operation READY Handbook]. College Station, TX: Author.

Texas A & M University. (2005). Draft Key Caller Handbook [Operation READY Handbook]. College Station, TX: Author.

Useful Family Web sites [Bifold brochure in Multi-component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

U. S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2004, August). Public Relations and Current Events. In AFTB Level III (part 3.17). Alexandria, VA: Author.

U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2005). Volunteer Program Administrative Files. In The Army Volunteer Corps Guidebook (part 5.5). Alexandria, VA: Author.

U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2005). Volunteer Files. In The Army Volunteer Corps Guidebook (part 5.6). Alexandria, VA: Author.

U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2005). Record Keeping. In The Army Volunteer Corps Guidebook (part 5.7). Alexandria, VA: Author.

U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2005). Privacy Protected Records. In The Army Volunteer Corps Guidebook (part 5.16). Alexandria, VA: Author.

Youth Programs [Trifold brochure in Multi-Component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

MILITARY PUBLICATIONS

Army War College (2004, April). A Leader's Guide to Trauma in the Unit. (available from http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/milfamhd.htm)

Care Team Training (n.d.). Fort Hood, TX.

REFERENCES

Operation Military Kids [Card in Multi-component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

Operation Military Child Care [Card in Multi-component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

Post Traumatic Stress [Operation READY brochure]. (n.d.) Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

Texas A & M University. (2005). Draft Family Readiness for the Rear Detachment Handbook [Operation READY Handbook]. College Station, TX: Author.

Texas A & M University. (2005). Draft Key Caller Handbook [Operation READY Handbook]. College Station, TX: Author.

Useful Family Web sites [Bifold brochure in Multi-component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

U. S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2004, August). Public Relations and Current Events. In AFTB Level III (part 3.17). Alexandria, VA: Author.

U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2005). Volunteer Program Administrative Files. In The Army Volunteer Corps Guidebook (part 5.5). Alexandria, VA: Author.

U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2005). Volunteer Files. In The Army Volunteer Corps Guidebook (part 5.6). Alexandria, VA: Author.

U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2005). Record Keeping. In The Army Volunteer Corps Guidebook (part 5.7). Alexandria, VA: Author.

U.S. Army and Community Family Support Center. (2005). Privacy Protected Records. In The Army Volunteer Corps Guidebook (part 5.16). Alexandria, VA: Author.

Youth Programs [Trifold brochure in Multi-Component Family Support Network Purple Box]. (n.d.). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army and Community and Family Support Center.

MILITARY PUBLICATIONS

Army War College (2004, April). A Leader's Guide to Trauma in the Unit. (available from http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/dclm/milfamhd.htm)

Care Team Training (n.d.). Fort Hood, TX.

80

DCS Directive 01.05.06 v.20 Pre-Decisional. Deployment Cycle Support (DCS) Directive. [Memorandum] (also referred to as DCS Con Plan).

Deployment Cycle Support (diagram available in DCS Con Plan on www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/DCS.asp)

Fort Bliss (n.d.). Family Readiness Group Procedures. Fort Bliss, TX: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Casualty Notification. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Ft Drum Family Readiness Group Assistant Program. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Key Caller Notebook. [Operation Ready handbook]. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Operation READY. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Rear Detachment Responsibilities. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.) Vignettes. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Riley (2005, June 30) Casualty Operations. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS: Author.

Fort Riley (2005, June 30) Family Readiness Group Tips for Avoiding Burnout [fact sheet]. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS: Author.

Fort Riley (2005, June 30) Media Awareness [PowerPoint presentation]. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS: Author.

Harvey, F.J. (2005, March 23). 2006-2007 Army Strategic Context. Presentation at World-Wide Public Affairs Symposium. Presentation retrieved September 16, 2005 from http://www.army.mil/professionalvideo/movies/strategic.html

HQ 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, Rear Detachment Operating Procedures (15 August 2005)

Macdonald, J. (2005, November). Deployment Cycle Support (DCS) (diagram in briefing, slide 11 of 18). Alexandria, VA: Army G-1, HPRD.

Miller, J. (2005, June 30) Combat Life Saver: Manage a Casualty with Combat Stress Reaction (battle fatigue) [lesson 24]. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS.

Nichols, Ted (2004, 22 November). Responding to Grief and Trauma. Presentation given at FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop, Fort Drum, NY.

Post-Conflict/Mobilization Personnel Operations: Deployment Cycle Support [briefing]. (2004, September 3) Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army.

REFERENCES

DCS Directive 01.05.06 v.20 Pre-Decisional. Deployment Cycle Support (DCS) Directive. [Memorandum] (also referred to as DCS Con Plan).

Deployment Cycle Support (diagram available in DCS Con Plan on www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/DCS.asp)

Fort Bliss (n.d.). Family Readiness Group Procedures. Fort Bliss, TX: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Casualty Notification. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Ft Drum Family Readiness Group Assistant Program. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Key Caller Notebook. [Operation Ready handbook]. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Operation READY. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.). Rear Detachment Responsibilities. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Drum (n.d.) Vignettes. In FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop. Fort Drum, NY: Author.

Fort Riley (2005, June 30) Casualty Operations. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS: Author.

Fort Riley (2005, June 30) Family Readiness Group Tips for Avoiding Burnout [fact sheet]. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS: Author.

Fort Riley (2005, June 30) Media Awareness [PowerPoint presentation]. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS: Author.

Harvey, F.J. (2005, March 23). 2006-2007 Army Strategic Context. Presentation at World-Wide Public Affairs Symposium. Presentation retrieved September 16, 2005 from http://www.army.mil/professionalvideo/movies/strategic.html

HQ 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, Rear Detachment Operating Procedures (15 August 2005)

Macdonald, J. (2005, November). Deployment Cycle Support (DCS) (diagram in briefing, slide 11 of 18). Alexandria, VA: Army G-1, HPRD.

Miller, J. (2005, June 30) Combat Life Saver: Manage a Casualty with Combat Stress Reaction (battle fatigue) [lesson 24]. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS.

Nichols, Ted (2004, 22 November). Responding to Grief and Trauma. Presentation given at FRG/RDC Team Building Workshop, Fort Drum, NY.

Post-Conflict/Mobilization Personnel Operations: Deployment Cycle Support [briefing]. (2004, September 3) Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army.

R

81

Stowell, D. (2005, July 5) FRG and Family Support Operations [briefing]. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS.

Third Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Rear Detachment Standard Operating Procedures (18 October 2004)

III (US) Corps Artillery. (2005, November). Phantom Thunder Care Team Guide. Fort Sill, OK: Author.

10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum. (2005). Managing Crisis: Quick Reference Guide for Battalion and Company Family Readiness Group Leaders. Fort, Drum, NY: Author.

Web sites

MILITARY

Army Casualty Web site (also referred to as Casualty and Memorial Affairs Center or CMAOC
(www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/TAGD/CMAOC/cmaoc.htm)

Army Families Online
(www.armyfamiliesonline.org)

Army Wounded Warrior Program
(www.aw2.army.mil)

Child and Youth Services (CYS) Programs
(http://www.armymwr.com/portal/family/childandyouth/programs.asp)

The Way Ahead: Our Army at War – Relevant and Ready
(www.army.mil/thewayahead/)

MyArmyLifeToo
(www.myarmylifetoo.com)

Virtual FRG
(www.armyfrg.org)

COMMUNITY

National Mental Health Association (www.nmha.org)

REFERENCES

Stowell, D. (2005, July 5) FRG and Family Support Operations [briefing]. In CDR/1SGT Course [CD]. Fort Riley, KS.

Third Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Rear Detachment Standard Operating Procedures (18 October 2004)

III (US) Corps Artillery. (2005, November). Phantom Thunder Care Team Guide. Fort Sill, OK: Author.

10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum. (2005). Managing Crisis: Quick Reference Guide for Battalion and Company Family Readiness Group Leaders. Fort, Drum, NY: Author.

Web sites

MILITARY

Army Casualty Web site (also referred to as Casualty and Memorial Affairs Center or CMAOC
(www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/TAGD/CMAOC/cmaoc.htm)

Army Families Online
(www.armyfamiliesonline.org)

Army Wounded Warrior Program
(www.aw2.army.mil)

Child and Youth Services (CYS) Programs
(http://www.armymwr.com/portal/family/childandyouth/programs.asp)

The Way Ahead: Our Army at War – Relevant and Ready
(www.army.mil/thewayahead/)

MyArmyLifeToo
(www.myarmylifetoo.com)

Virtual FRG
(www.armyfrg.org)

COMMUNITY

National Mental Health Association (www.nmha.org)

82

Getting prepared — Staying prepared

OPERATION
READY
Resources for Educating About Deployment and You

Getting prepared — Staying prepared

OPERATION
READY
Resources for Educating About Deployment and You