



In a time when some deployments involve great danger and the U.S. and other countries are involved in the Global War on Terrorism, it is essential that units and FRGs be prepared for and know how to respond if there is one or more unit casualties. This training focuses on the FRG's role, particularly at the company level. In a separate training, the unit leader's role and tasks are specified. Further information is forthcoming in an upcoming new Operation READY product on Trauma in the Unit.



**Objectives of FRG's Role
When Casualty**

- To review types of casualties
- To review Army response to casualties
- To identify what is and what is not the FRG's role when unit casualty occurs
- To discuss how FRG can prepare

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The objectives of this module are: *(Review slide)*

(After reviewing this slide, you may want to state):

The topic of trauma support is briefly addressed in both the FRG Leader's Handbook and Rear Detachment Commander's Handbook. However, much of the information presented in this training is not provided in these handbooks.



Types of Unit Casualties

- Soldier injured
 - Very Seriously Injured or Ill (VSI)
 - Seriously Injured or Ill (SI)
 - Not seriously injured (NSI)
- Soldier death
- Mass casualty

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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. This slide provides a detailed list of the casualty classifications for the injured.

Additional points of explanation can make:

- **Very seriously injured or ill (VSI)** – severe illness or injury that life is endangered
- **Seriously injured or ill (SI)** – severe illness or injury, but life is not endangered
- **Not seriously injured (NSI)** – illness or injury may or may not require hospitalization, and Soldier can communicate with family.



Casualty Notification Process

- Commander reports incident to Casualty Operations Branch
- Casualty Area Command (CAC) produces casualty report after verifying incident
- Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) is assigned
- Family is notified
 - In person when deceased, DUSTWUN, or MIA
 - By telephone when VSI or SI
 - No notification for NSI

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Once a casualty incident is confirmed, the military has the duty of notifying the family involved. When a Soldier has died, a casualty notification officer visits the primary and secondary next of kin to notify the family. In the case of an injured Soldier, notification depends on the nature of the Soldier's injury. Generally for VSI or SI, a CNO will notify the primary next of kin by telephone. Sometimes, a unit representative or physician may contact the family. When it is not a serious injury, the PNOK is notified by telephone if the illness or injury is a result of hostile action. In these cases, the Soldier generally notifies his/her family.

Take note the FRG does NOT have a role in casualty notification!



Army's Casualty Response Team

- Casualty Assistance Officer
- Chaplain
- RDC
- MEDFAC
- Public Affairs Officer

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These are the individuals and agencies designated to respond when Soldier injury and death. (*Review slide*) A brief description of each individual or agency's role is reviewed in the following slides.

Take note the FRG does NOT have assigned responsibilities when there is a casualty. The FRG has a supportive role which will be specified later.



Casualty Assistance Officer's Role

Death

- Provides assistance with immediate needs
- Arranges emergency financial assistance, if needed
- Coordinates funeral arrangements
- Aids with personnel-related matters (e.g., benefits and entitlements)

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The CAO is a Soldier assigned by the CAC to provide support to the family and aid with personnel-related matters. The CAO calls within 4 hours of official notification (but not between 10 pm and 6 am) to schedule visit with family. The purpose of the first visit is to identify the family's needs and offer solace. In subsequent visits, the CAO offers counsel and support to families. The CAO's role is to serve as ongoing resource for the family. A CAO is relieved of other duties so that the CAO can assist for as long as is necessary for the family to complete the transition (or to ensure the family is receiving benefits and entitlements).



Chaplain's Role

Injury

- Offer pastoral counseling, solace and comfort

Death

- Offer pastoral counseling, solace and comfort
- Provide information about funeral services, memorials and religious observances

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A Military Chaplain may be present at the time of notification and/or may be sent following notification. The Chaplain's role is to: *(Review slide)*



RDC's Role

Injury

- Provides information and support to family
- Coordinates follow-on care for Soldiers
- Assembles care team, **if requested by family**
- Handles the media

Death

- Coordinates funeral honors team and memorial service
- Coordinates support needed by family
- Assembles care team, **if requested by family**
- Handles the media

(Review slide)



Overview and Role of Care Team

- Support families of injured and deceased Soldiers.
- Is a small group of trained volunteers who provide short-term emotional and logistical support prior to affected family.
- Ask family if they want support from Care Team.
 - If family accepts, battalion RDC assembles a team of 3 to 6 individuals that family would most likely be comfortable with. RDC may appoint a Care Team leader.
- Provide support based upon family needs:
 - Call support
 - Home care assistance
 - Meal support
 - Babysitting or temporary childcare arrangements
 - Assist visiting family members
 - House sitting.
- Report to battalion RDC.

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Care Teams are another area in which FRGs have perceived (or in the past may have even held) responsibilities. However, this slide reflects the Army's current guidance on Battalion Care Teams. Care teams are not mandatory, but serve as a way for a unit under the command's leadership to support families. *(Review slide)*

(Additional points to make):

- **Short-term support** – Support provided for approximately 72 hours to two weeks. Length of time depends upon family needs, RDC guidance and when other family members arrive to support affected family.
- **Assembling a team** – If FRG leader and FRG member(s) have received care team training, then may be called upon to serve on Care Team. Whether FRG leader or member actually selected depends on who family wants to have (or is perceived to want to have) present with them.
- **Actual support provided** – A description of these areas of support are provided in the FRG Leader's Handbook and RDC's Handbook.

Be sure to stress the following:

- Care teams do not participate in casualty notification.
- The Care Team is sent only when the family accepts this support after being asked by CNO or Chaplain.
- The care team's support compliments the assistance provided by the Casualty Assistance Officer.
- The RDC (not the FRG leader) puts together the Care Team.
- The Care Team reports to the RDC and NOT the FRG leader.



Role of Care Team (continued)

If asked to serve on care team, expectations are:

- Can step into role quickly (i.e., clear calendar, etc.)
- Keep to care team role:
 - Provide comfort and listen to family
 - Honor family's requests
 - Inform RDC and seek guidance when necessary
- Respect the family's privacy:
 - Maintain confidentiality
 - Never discuss family's reactions and plans
- Be nonjudgmental

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If an FRG leader or members is asked to serve on a care team, here are the expectations of care team volunteers. *(Review slide)*

Be sure to stress the following

- Keep in mind that it is the family that states what they need and the volunteer then addresses that need rather than care team volunteers telling family what he/she will do.
- Care team volunteers do not:
 - make funeral arrangements
 - brief the family on benefits or entitlements
 - serve as a grief counselor or offer any type of counseling.
- A care team manual is available in the Operation READY Smart Book.



MEDFAC's Role

- Medical Family Assistance Center (MEDFAC) set up on adhoc basis when high number of wounded, mass casualty, natural disaster, or terrorist attack
- Provides information and support services to families of Soldiers who are patients at military medical facility

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(Review slide)



PAO's Role

- Responds to media
- Offers information and guidance to family and RDC on dealing with the media

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A Public Affairs Officer may contact the family to offer information and guidance on dealing with the media. *(Review slide)*



FRG's Role When Unit Casualty

The company level FRG leader's responsibilities are:

- Contact RDC for guidance and direction
- Notify FRG members (i.e., unit families), per RDC's guidance
- Provide input into makeup of Care Team, if asked by RDC
- Determine how FRG can support Care Team assisting a family in their company
- Encourage and provide guidance to FRG members on how to support affected family
- Help unit families cope with the unit's casualty

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So what are the FRG's responsibilities? (*Review slide*) Further explanation of these responsibilities is provided in the following slides.



Notifying and Supporting Unit Families

FRG leader's responsibilities are to:

- Arrange a briefing time and location, including child care, with RDC
- Have key callers contact family members about briefing with scripted message from RDC
- Arrange Chaplain to talk about grieving process, coping with traumatic events, and appropriate ways to talk to affected families
- Arrange PAO to talk about dealing with the media
- Provide guidance on how unit families can support the affected family

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When a casualty incident occurs, the incident affects the entire unit. As a traumatic event, it is critical that relevant information be provided in timely manner. Here is the guidance on how the FRG leader should work with the RDC to make this happen. *(Review slide)* A discussion on guidance that FRG leaders can provide to membership on ways to support families of wounded and fallen Soldiers is provided in the next slide.



Ways FRG Members Can Support Affected Families

- Provide comfort and reassurance.
- Provide logistical support as needed (or after the Care Team leaves).
- Respect family's privacy.
- Be patient while families heal and adjust.

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The FRG leader can provide suggestions and information to help unit families support the affected families. Here is guidance that FRG leaders can provide to unit families in these situations.

- Provide comfort and reassurance. For example:
 - Acknowledge family's feelings and listen.
 - Send a note or card.
 - Offer a hug.
 - Attend the funeral or memorial service.
 - Visit hospital
 - Sit with spouse during Soldier's surgeries.
- Provide logistical support as needed (after the Care Team leaves). For example:
 - Offer to run errands or do chores.
 - Offer to answer the phone or door.
 - Offer to look after the children for a while or take the children on an outing.
 - Bring meals.
- Check on family periodically to let them know someone cares and is thinking of the family.
- Respect family's privacy.
- Be patient while families heal and adjust.



Guidance on Dealing with Grieving Families

What to say:

- “I’m sorry.”
- “I care.”
- “I know you are hurting.”
- “Go ahead and cry.”
- “I’ll call you later.”

What not to say:

- “Time heals everything.”
- “It could have been worse.”
- “It was God’s will.”
- “I know how you feel.”
- “You have to be strong.”
- “You have to forget about it.”

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Here is information FRG leaders can provide to key callers and unit families on what to say to affected families. It is important to keep in mind that both wounded and fallen Soldiers’ families will be experiencing grief. *(Review slide)*



Ways FRG can Support Care Team

- Provide meals for care team volunteers
- Prepare and give meals to care team who coordinates meal support for family
- Provide childcare for care team volunteers
- Provide transportation and other support as requested by care team

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Providing round the clock support to families, who have just experienced a traumatic event, is very demanding. Here is a list of suggested ways a company-level FRG can support a Care Team assisting a family in their company. (*Review slide*) To determine the specific ways the FRG can assist, it is suggested that FRG leaders contact the Care Team leader.



How FRG Can Prepare

BEFORE deployment, FRG leader's responsibilities are to:

- Talk with unit commander to discuss procedures for casualty situations and use of care teams
- Inform key callers of procedures and provide any necessary training

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Having reviewed the FRG's responsibilities, let's discuss how the FRG should prepare for unit casualty situations.

- **Talk with unit commander about casualty situations.** Serving as an extension of the unit and with an established connection with unit families, families are likely to use the FRG (especially FRG leader and key callers) as an initial point of contact and/or to seek information about incidents. Therefore, FRG leaders should seek procedural guidelines since these situations arise quickly and require quick response. In this discussion, it is important to identify and discuss potential issues or situations that might arise and how to respond so that you as the FRG leader know what you are expected to do and can say to help unit families.
- Issues to address include:
 - Dealing with the media - this topic is addressed in the FRG training series
 - Different ways families can hear about incidents (e.g., spouse hears of casualty from deployed Soldier, a spouse hears from another spouse, spouse hears of casualties on the news, etc.) can raise issues about notification procedures and rumor control - it is important that information about local procedures be discussed
 - Emotions and responses of unit families
 - Resources for families
 - Funerals
- **Talk with unit commander about use of care teams.** Battalion commander decides whether Battalion Care Team will be offered. Note: Battalion Care Teams are not mandatory, but is a way battalions are choosing to support their families. If Care Team volunteers are to be available, then FRG leader:
 - Helps with recruitment by encouraging FRG members to volunteer
 - Provide information on care team training available from (unit or garrison) chaplain, garrison Army Community Service (ACS), and Reserve Component Family Programs office
- Note: FRG leaders are not responsible for training Care Team volunteers; however FRG leaders can participate in training to become a care team volunteer.
- A roster of trained Care Team volunteers is given to battalion commander, RDCs, FRG Battalion Advisor, and FRG leaders prior to deployment. (This roster is maintained by the Battalion Care Team Coordinator.)
- **Inform key callers of procedures.** Following discussion with unit commander, it will be important to inform key callers of procedures so that they are prepared should this situation arise.
- Further information on these issues will be provided in forthcoming Operation READY Trauma in the Unit product.



Things to Remember About FRG Role

- Unit commander (or RDC) will provide direction to FRG leader AFTER notification is made.
- FRG leader and some FRG members may be asked to serve on Care Team, but not always.
- FRG's role is to support the unit's families and to offer assistance to Care Team volunteers.

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- When there is a casualty, unit commander (or RDC) will provide direction to FRG leader AFTER notification is made. If the FRG leader is not contacted by the RDC, then the FRG leader should contact the RDC.
- FRG leader and some FRG members may be asked to serve on Care Team, but this will not always happen.
- FRG's role is to support the unit's families and to offer assistance to Care Team volunteers who are helping an affected family in the unit.

(Ask if there are any questions)