



Because of the considerable demands on the Army related to the Global War on Terrorism and other events occurring at home and around the world, there are more back-to-back deployments. Thus, units and Soldiers are going through distinct phases that form “the deployment cycle”. Each phase has specific issues that need to be addressed. The FRG plays a vital role in assisting command and families in each phase and in transitioning from one phase to another.



Objectives of FRG Deployment Tasks

- To define the phases of the deployment cycle.
- To identify stresses and Soldier and family issues related to deployment.
- To discuss the role and activities of the FRG in each phase of the deployment cycle. (based on Army's deployment cycle support directive)

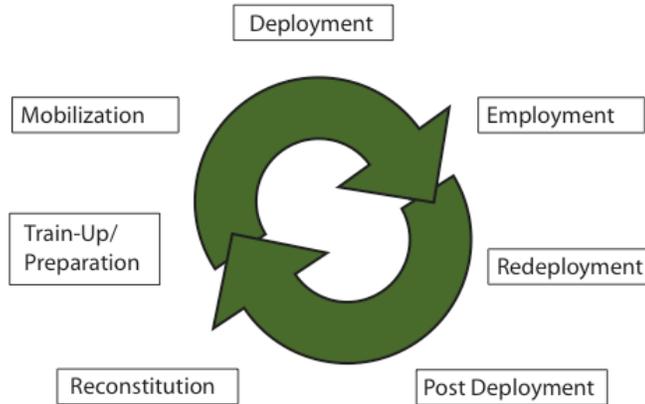
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The objectives of this module are: *(Review slide)*

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

Part 4 of the FRG Leader's Handbook provides a comprehensive checklist of FRG's activities in each deployment phase. An abbreviated list is provided in this module.

FRG Supports Deployment Cycle



The deployment cycle is made up of seven phases as seen here. In the following slides, a description of what occurs in the phases; the command, Soldier and family issues associated with each phase; and the FRG's tasks will be discussed.



Train-up/Preparation and Mobilization Phases

- Unit focus is on reestablishing unit, Soldier and family readiness and preparing for next mission
- Brigade Combat Team receives orders
- Soldiers are notified of upcoming mobilization (USAR/ARNG) and deployment.

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In the train-up/preparation phase, the focus of command and FRG efforts is on Soldier and family preparedness. Even though the unit recently returned, emphasis focuses on planning and preparing for the next deployment.

With U.S.'s ongoing involvement in Iraq and global hot spots, units have been deploying to war zone multiple times. As a result, units are increasingly also focused on preparing families for combat deployments and addressing mental health impacts of war on both Soldiers and families.

During the mobilization phase, service members receive notification of an impending deployment. This may be done for entire units or for individual Soldiers. National Guard and Army Reserve will receive mobilization orders and will move to a designated location for further training before deploying. The emphasis continues to be on planning and preparation.



Pre-Deployment Stressors

- Anxiety about leaving families; family separation
- Anticipation of combat
- Concerns about family's and Soldier's safety
- Length and level of danger of deployment
- Guard/Reserve concerns about employment/businesses
- Children's care (finding needed childcare, identifying guardian/caregiver)
- Financial concerns
- Arrangements in case of injury or death

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In these pre-deployment phases, Soldiers' and families' concerns typically are about the nature of the deployment and the effects of the separation on many different aspects of Soldier's and family's life including:

- Relationships and marriages
- Children
- Family life
- Finances: (that include:)
 - How much money will be coming in?
 - Will the spouse have to quit a job or find one?
 - How will child care costs be covered?
 - Guard and Reserve members and their families will have concerns about their employment and businesses
- Personal safety: both Soldier's safety during deployment and family's safety.

Although with all deployments Soldiers and families should make all necessary arrangements, with dangerous deployments it is increasingly important that plans and appropriate arrangements be made in the event of Soldier injury or death and emergency situations (e.g., terrorist incident). This planning includes:

- Preparing documents such as living will and medical powers of attorney
- Identifying guardianship if wounded (for single parents).

These issues along with questions about the nature of the deployment (e.g., how long the deployment will last, how dangerous, what location) can create stress and anxiety for Soldiers and families.

Command's goal is to prepare Soldiers and families to reduce the stress and anxiety as well as give them the means to cope with the demands of deployment, which for many currently is a combat deployment.



FRG Pre-Deployment Tasks

Assist command with family preparations

(FRG Leader responsibility)

- Meet with company commander and RDC to establish roles and responsibilities.
- Discuss with command processes and procedures for supporting families.
- Recruit and train new FRG leaders and volunteers.
- Get information from command on unit pre-deployment activities (e.g., SRP, pre-deployment briefings) and attend pre-deployment briefings.
- Identify family issues of concern to command.
- Assist in getting volunteers trained for Battalion Care Teams.

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What does the FRG do in this phase? (*Review slide*)



FRG Pre-Deployment Tasks (continued)

Ensure FRG readiness (FRG Leader responsibility)

- Get updated roster information and make sure FRG phone tree current and active.
- Ensure key callers prepared and know community resources.
- Network with community agencies
- Collect informational materials for families from unit or agencies.

Note: Pre-deployment is not the time to set up an FRG! Like the unit, the FRG needs to be ready to assist at a moment's notice.

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(Review slide)

Some additional points to make about Ensuring FRG Readiness:

- **Unit roster and family contact information:**
 - Make sure you have a phone number and address for everyone in the unit
 - Get contact information for extended family and other individuals Soldiers identify (e.g., single soldiers' families, caregivers)
 - Determine which families plan to leave the area during the deployment and get contact information
 - Get contact information for the families of Soldiers temporarily assigned to the unit



FRG Pre-Deployment Tasks (continued)

Get Soldiers FRG readiness and families ready for deployment

- Disseminate information and encourage families to attend pre-deployment briefings
- Ensure families understand casualty notification procedures
- Notify Soldiers and families about FRG
- Encourage Soldiers and families to provide contact information
- Ensure families can access unit's vFRG web system
- Distribute information on military and community resources and Military One Source
- Ensure families have contact information for unit and FRG
- Have families identify issues of concern and notify command or provide information and referral

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These are the FRG's tasks for getting Soldiers and families ready for deployment.
(Review slide)

A detailed checklist of pre-deployment tasks is provided in section 4.1 of Part 4 of the Operation READY FRG Leader's Handbook.



Deployment and Employment Phases

- Individuals or units leave for assigned mission to a CONUS or OCONUS location
- Length may be short or long term (e.g., 12 to 18 months)
- During deployment, individuals or small groups may deploy to replace Soldiers in theatre
- Unit focus is on helping families cope with stresses of separation and deployment

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The deployment phase begins when Soldiers leave home station for their assigned duty overseas or stateside. The employment phase begins when the Soldiers arrive at the deployment location. The length of deployments varies. However, deployments to certain locations such as Iraq and Afghanistan are currently 12 months or more. The focus of command and FRG's efforts is on helping families cope with stresses of separation and deployment.



Deployment Stressors

- Type of mission and conditions in deployment area
- Uncertainty about length of deployment/Soldier's return date
- Dealing with lengthy absence of a spouse and parent; Handling loneliness
- Coping with ups and downs of emotions, emotional toll of lengthy separation
- Intense concern and worrying about Soldier's well-being
- Potential for and incidents of Soldier injuries and death
- Gossip and rumors as well as 24 hour news

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(Start with this remark):

- **Type of mission** - Soldiers (including Guard and Reserve) are deploying for more varied types of missions such as war, peacekeeping, humanitarian, and disaster relief. Some of these missions involve great danger, are in harsh conditions, can be traumatic for Soldiers, and can be lengthy. Collectively these factors can cause families to have great concerns about Soldiers' welfare. Fears about Soldier injuries and death can be expected. Also with highly publicized deployments, some families may watch a lot of news which can become stressful for these families. These types of deployments create even greater challenges for families and children to deal with the typical aspects of deployment (i.e., separation, managing household, etc.). It is important to understand how these types of deployments impact families because in the fight against Global War on Terrorism, these types of dangerous missions and deployments are expected to continue. This creates a greater demand on FRGs and command to help families cope. The role of the FRG to serve as an "extension of the unit" and to provide information is critical and essential.

Here is a list of deployment stressors for families. *(Review slide)*



Deployment Stressors (continued)

- Communication with Soldier
- Managing household affairs and change in family responsibilities
- Children's reactions and helping children cope
- Financial impact (especially if income declines and expenses increase) and managing finances
- Learning about available resources and navigating military system

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Here are other deployment stressors for families. *(Review slide)*

(Additional point to make):

- **Communication with Soldiers** – How often and whether families can communicate with Soldiers is typically an issue. However, with combat deployments, communication raises even greater emotional responses. For example, families feel better in the moment that they talk to the Soldier because it confirms the Soldier is alive. In the silence, they are left to worry. Communications in which Soldiers convey close calls can heighten families' concerns.



FRG Deployment and Employment Tasks

Assist command with family communications

(FRG Leader responsibility)

- Maintain communication with RDC to get information to be relayed to families and get approval when necessary (e.g., FRG newsletters).
- Identify family issues of concern to command.
- Discuss family problems/issues and how to assist families.

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The operation of the FRG goes into high gear during the deployment phase. The most important function here is information flow. *(Review slide)*



FRG Deployment and Employment Tasks

Maintain communication with families

- Disseminate information from command.
- Provide information on available educational materials, programs and resources helpful to families.
- Encourage families to attend social and educational programs by FRG and others.
- Facilitate communication between families and Soldiers.
- Refer families to appropriate resources as needed.
- Manage gossip and rumors.
- Identify and monitor family issues to inform command and to determine focus of FRG activities.

Note: Keeping information flowing between command, FRG, community resources, and families is very important for family support!

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(Review slide)

Some additional points to make:

- The Rear Detachment is the source of all official information. Families, near and far, need to be able to rely upon the FRG to disseminate information from command accurately and in a timely manner. For this to happen the FRG must:
 - Use multiple methods of getting information out
 - Constantly update the telephone tree. Families may decide to leave the area, and new service members will be arriving so ensuring the FRG has accurate contact information is essential.
- Providing accurate and timely information is key to managing gossip and rumors, which often create stress for families. Keep in mind that gossips and rumors often surface when there is a lack of information so keeping the information flowing is important.
- Conducting social activities as part of FRG meetings or as separate events is another way to help family members because they offer an opportunity for families to connect and talk with other families. This is helpful in dealing with the stresses of deployment.

A detailed checklist of deployment tasks is provided in section 4.2 of Part 4 of the Operation READY FRG Leader's Handbook.



Redeployment

- Soldiers out process in theatre
- Soldiers start receiving reunion briefings while still in theater
- Unit focus on preparing Soldiers and families for Soldiers' return

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During the redeployment phase, Soldiers are out-processing in theatre in preparation for returning home. This return can be for a short term R&R (usually two weeks) or as end of Soldier's deployment assignment. During this brief period, Soldiers receive a variety of briefings and undergo several assessments (including a mental health assessment) while they are in theatre. These are designed to prepare them for reintegrating into daily life and to identify Soldiers at risk. Families receive similar briefings. The focus of command and FRG's efforts is on preparing Soldiers and families for Soldiers' return.



Redeployment Stressors

Family Stressors

- Fear of Soldier's reaction to changes (family life and roles, spouse employment, children)
- Concerns about adjustments Soldier and family will need to make; Ability of Soldier to reintegrate into family
- Concerns about impact of (combat) deployment on Soldier

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These are families' concerns that may create stress in the redeployment phase.

(Review slide)



Redeployment Stressors

Soldier Stressors

- Early return due to injury or family problems
- Concern about ability to reintegrate into family
- Concern about ability to change behavior once home
- Impact of combat deployment

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These are Soldiers' concerns that may create stress in the redeployment phase.
(Review slide)



FRG Redeployment Tasks

Assist command with reunion preparations

(FRG Leader responsibility)

- Meet with RDC to get information about reunion and reintegration trainings conducted by different agencies for families.
- Identify at-risk families or families who experienced problems during deployment to command.

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What does the FRG do in this phase? (*Review slide*)

(An additional point to make):

- Several Army agencies conduct a variety of briefings and trainings for families on various reunion and reintegration issues. The FRG is NOT responsible for coordinating these briefings, but informing families about these briefings. The RDC will provide the FRG leader with details about these briefings.



FRG Redeployment Tasks

Prepare families for reunion

- Provide information on tentative post deployment schedule (i.e., mandatory reintegration training, block leave, etc.).
- Inform families about briefings and trainings available and upcoming homecoming activities.
- Provide educational material and address reunion and reintegration issues in communications with families (e.g., guest speakers at FRG meetings).

Support families of Soldiers on R&R

- Provide families with informational material.
- Maintain connection with families and provide referrals when necessary.

Note: Family education is important!

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These are ways the FRG can assist and support families in preparing for reunion. It is also important to remember to support those families of Soldiers on R&R, if these families remain in the area during R&R period. *(review slide)*

(An additional additional point to make):

- With limited time available, the FRG's efforts are likely to start during this phase and continue into the post-deployment phase. Keep in mind that it is essential to educate families BEFORE the Soldiers return from deployment.

A detailed checklist of redeployment tasks is provided in section 4.3 of Part 4 of the Operation READY FRG Leader's Handbook.



Post Deployment and Reconstitution

- Soldiers return to home station either individually or with unit
- Some Soldiers return only for R&R
- Soldiers begin reintegration into work and family life
- Some Soldiers return to civilian employment
- Soldier and family adjustments occur over many months
- Unit returns to normal mission and routines (reconstitution)
- Unit focus on helping Soldiers and families with reunion and reintegration issues

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In the post deployment and reconstitution phases, Soldiers return to home station, complete redeployment and demobilization processing, and begin the process of reintegrating into family life and the community. After block leave, Soldiers are expected to return to duty as the unit returns to its normal routines and mission. Between 3 to 6 months after Soldiers have returned, mental health screening is conducted again. The readjustment process for Soldiers and families can take months. The focus of command and FRG's efforts is on helping Soldiers and families with reunion and reintegration issues.



Post Deployment Stressors

Family Stressors

- Reintegration of Soldier into family
- Children's reactions
- Dealing with impact of combat deployment on Soldier and family members
- Dealing with conflict
- Dealing with ups and downs of emotions
- Anticipation of and anxiety about next deployment (especially deployment to war zone)

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The post deployment phase is also a stressful time for Soldiers and families. There are many adjustments to be made by Soldiers and families, especially following a long (combat) deployment, to ease the Soldier's transition home and to reestablish a thriving military family life. *(Review slide)*

Some additional points to make:

- **Reintegration of Soldier into family**
 - Reestablishing marital relationship and emotional bonds
 - Reestablishing Soldier's family role (including parenting)
- **Dealing with impact of combat deployment on Soldier and family members**
 - Changes in Soldier's behavior and personality; Dealing with Soldier's emotions and behaviors (such as anger, withdrawal, social isolation, nightmares)
 - Health and/or mental health problems related to deployment/stress (applicable to Soldier and family members)
 - Length of time for Soldier to readjust or PTSD symptoms to disappear

Note: Several forthcoming Operation READY products provide a comprehensive look at reunion, combat stress, and children's issues.



Post Deployment Stressor

Soldier's Stressors

- Dealing with personal impact of combat deployment (range of emotions, thoughts and memories)
- Reintegrating into family
- Reestablishing relationships
- Reestablishing family role (including parenting)
- Adjusting to routines (family and work)
- Returning to work
- Finding a job, if necessary

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The post deployment phase is also a stressful time for Soldiers. There are many adjustments to be made by Soldiers. *(Review slide)*



FRG Post Deployment/Reconstitution Tasks

Assist command with post deployment tasks

(FRG Leader responsibility)

- Get information from command about unit reunion activities.
- Identify at-risk families, families who experienced problems during deployment, and family issues to command.
- Identify families with high stress or issues after Soldier's return.

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What does the FRG do in this phase? (*Review slide*)

Some additional points to make:

- Several Army agencies conduct a variety of briefings and trainings for Soldier and families on various reunion and reintegration issues. The Garrison Army Community Service/Reserve Component Family Programs, or their designated training teams, are available to conduct Operation READY reunion/reintegration training for families. The RDC is responsible for coordinating these briefings and providing information about the briefings to FRG leaders so families can be informed.



FRG Post Deployment/Reconstitution Tasks

- Encourage families to attend homecoming events.
- Disseminate information about reunion activities and educational programs addressing reunion issues.
- Encourage Soldiers and families to attend programs and use available resources.
- Address reunion issues in FRG communications and activities.
- Maintain connection with families and provide referrals, when necessary.
- Recognize FRG volunteers for their service during the deployment.
- Continue to conduct FRG social activities, meetings, and other activities on a regular basis.
- Conduct a “lessons learned” activity for FRG members.

Note: *Monitoring Soldier and family well-being and providing information and referrals are important to helping Soldiers and families with this transition.*

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What does the FRG do in this phase? (*Review slide*)

Some additional points to make:

- The length of time it takes for Soldiers and families can vary, often taking months. Because reintegration typically does not occur quickly, it is important for the FRG to maintain connections with families to help command monitor Soldier and family well-being. Some Soldiers and families may experience great difficulties, and thus it is important for the FRG (and command) to know the warning signs and agencies to refer Soldiers and families for help.
- Communication with families is likely to be less frequent than during the deployment. However, it is important to have periodic communications to maintain the connection between the FRG and families. For this reason, some level of effort will be required to ensure the phone tree remains accurate and functional.
- Recognizing FRG volunteers through FRG-sponsored events with command in attendance and through community-sponsored volunteer award ceremonies is very important.
- Before FRG members PCS and/or FRG leadership changes, consider conducting an activity to capture the “lessons learned” from the deployment to be used in planning for the next deployment.

A detailed checklist of post deployment tasks is provided in section 4.4 of Part 4 of the Operation READY FRG Leader’s Handbook.