

Student Handout 1

Extracted Material from Family Readiness Group Leaders Handbook, 4th Edition, 2010

This student handout contains 18 pages of extracted material from the following publication:

Family Readiness Group Leaders Handbook, 4th Edition, 2010

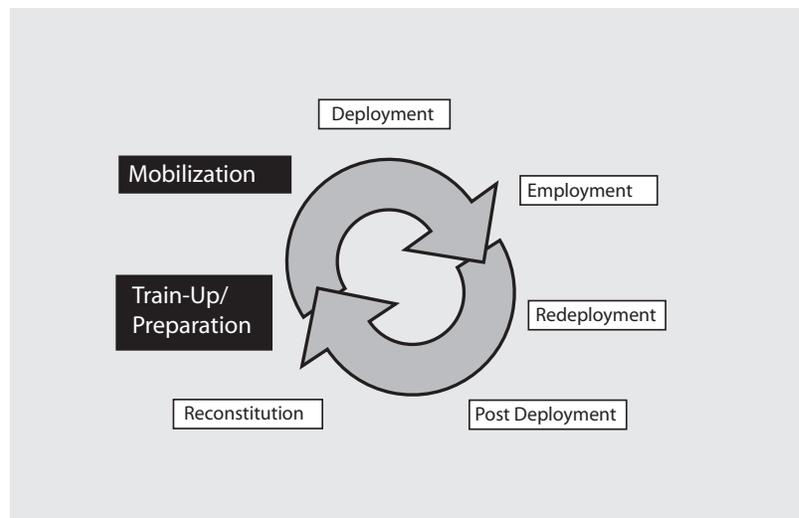
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PART IV: Role and Activities of the FRG

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 deployment. 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

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- 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.
- 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 Guard/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 Guard/Reserve Component Family Programs
 - Military and civilian community phone directories of important resources.

Getting Families and Soldiers Ready

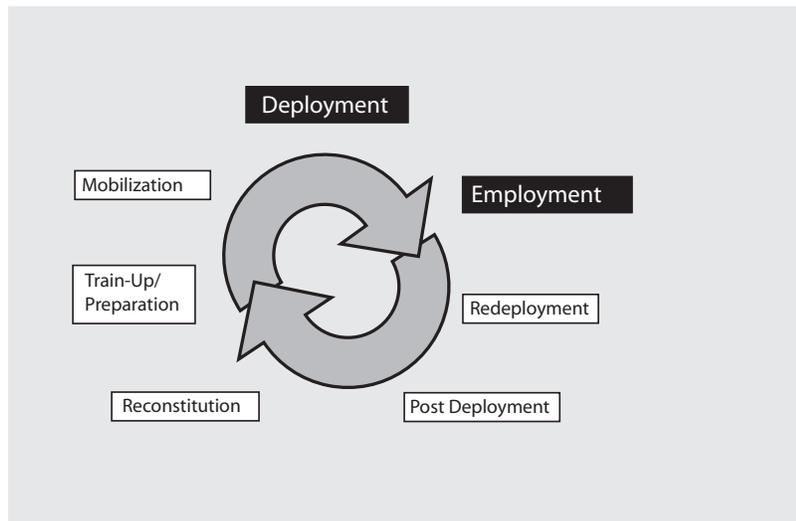
Remember, the FRG is established by the commander to assist in military and personal deployment preparedness and enhance the Family readiness of Soldiers and Families. The FRG can play a vital role in preparing Families and Soldiers for deployment.

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 MyArmyOneSource.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 OneSource 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 Guard/Reserve Component Family Programs
 - a copy of military and civilian community phone directories of important resources.
 - copies of Operation READY children and youth parenting information.
- 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.
- 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.

4.2 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
 - Family Readiness Support Assistant 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, Guard/Reserve Component Family Programs Office and other agencies to talk or to conduct briefings 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.myarmyonesource.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.

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.

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 promote training on Children and Deployment. A module on children's issues during wartime is available online or from Army Community Service. In addition, a variety of Child, Youth, and School (CYS) Services' 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://www.myarmyonesource.com>

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>

<http://www.nmfa.org>

<http://www.ptsd.va.gov>

<http://www.operationmilitarykids.org>

<http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/myom>

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 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.

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

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).

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.

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 the *Operation READY Trauma in the Unit Handbook* and training materials.

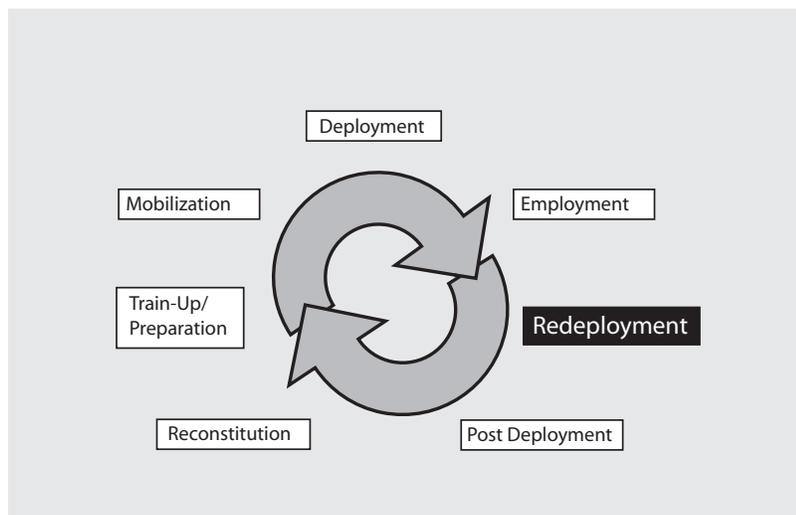
TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND FRG VOLUNTEERS Given the high level of demands placed on an FRG leader and FRG staff, it is important to take steps to reduce stress and maintain personal well-being. For tips, consult the Coping with Stress fact sheet in the *Operation READY Smart Book*. If there is a casualty 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.

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.

4.3 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 Behavioral 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.

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

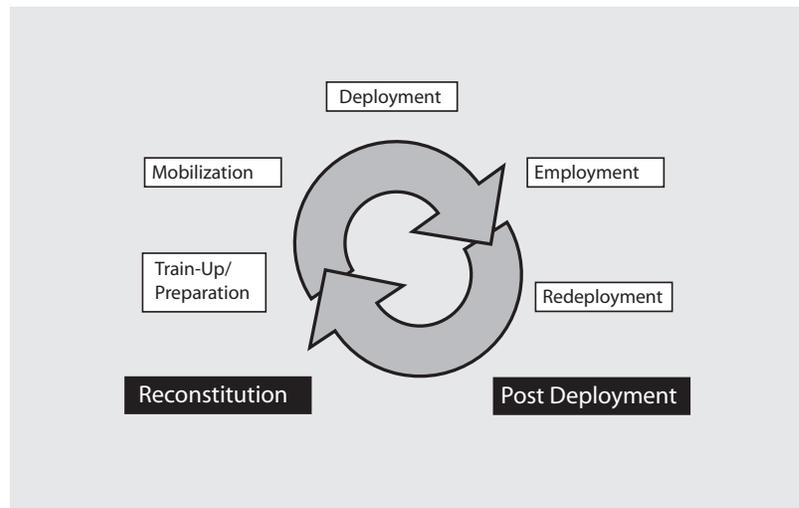
With limited time available, the FRG's efforts in this area are likely to start during this phase and continue into the post deployment phase. Preparing Families for reunion and reintegration of Soldiers needs to begin prior to Soldiers' return. Within this phase, do not forget to support the subgroup 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 FRSA 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.

4.4 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 Guard/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 OneSource 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 Guard and Reserve 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.

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 OneSource.
- 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 OneSource, 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.

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 OneSource, <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.

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* and the spectrum of services in the Resources section.

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