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Volume 1, Issue 4



# The Challengers



*The Challengers Family Readiness Group, M-158 Aviation Maintenance Company,  
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## **From the Commander**

### **HELLO FROM IRAQ**

We made it! Safe and sound. First to the airport in Kuwait, then to our staging area, and finally, to our mission site here at Camp Anaconda.

We spent about 2 weeks at our staging site preparing our equipment, waiting for our live-fire convoy range training, and enduring the talcum-powder dust that invaded and covered everything.

Then we made our bone-jarring trip North, but everyone is in good spirits and we are happy to be where we can settle in for a while. Our convoy route took us 2 nights and 3 days. We had minor maintenance problems with tires and such, but everyone was sharp and disciplined and the team was tight.

We had the same challenges every other unit has, but we had great officers and NCOs that made sound decisions and led the team to success.

Now that we are here at Camp Anaconda, most things are better than at our staging base, but some things are the same. We will have to continue to be disciplined and work as a team in order to overcome the weather, insects, bad guys, and the stress that naturally accompanies endeavors like this. However, all spirits are high, and the soldiers are looking forward to applying their skills.

Everyone would much rather be home enjoying their families, but they know the job at hand is important, and they are proud professionals in service to their nation.

You can all be proud of each one. Keep your spirits high, stay busy, stay in touch, and we'll all be home soon.

LTC Jack A. Wayman, Jr.



*Security of the unit and unit families is of the utmost importance.*

*Avoid any discussions of operational information.*

## Operational Security

As you communicate from home, it is crucial that you remember the importance of operational security.

Operational security consists of measures taken to ensure that sensitive information is not compromised. Ensuring the security of the unit and unit families is of the utmost importance.

Deployment areas and times, remote detachment sites, upcoming exercises, location of spouses and families during the deployment, any special pre-deployment training, and the planned return dates are all information that is sensitive.

**Speak only in general terms of your own experiences and avoid discussing operational information in public places, over the telephone, or with members of the media.**

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## Mailing Letters and Packages

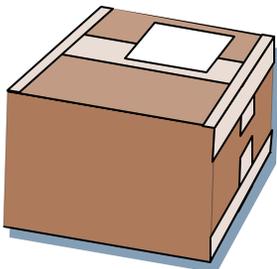
Military mail letters are typically delivered between seven and 10 days, depending on country of destination. According to MPSA (Military Postal Service Agency) officials, Priority parcels will take 10 to 15 days to deliver and Parcel Post takes about 24 days.

The Department of Defense has requested that those who send mail use the service member's full name (with or without grade, rank, or rating), or a specific title (e.g., Commanding Officer, Supply Officer, etc.). Also required is the unit designation and APO/FPO (Air/Army Post Office or Fleet Post Office) address with the full nine-digit ZIP Code (if one is assigned) and a return address.

For packages, mailers are asked to print on one side only with the recipient's address in the lower right portion. Do not include the country or the base camp's city, as it might be routed through the host country's mail system.

The current address to be used for our soldiers is:

**Rank Name, or Specific Title (Rank is optional)**  
**M. Co. 158th AVN, Platoon #**  
**APO AE 09391**



*When mailing packages and letters:*

*Use the correct address*

*Print on one side of package*

*Send via Priority Mail for swiftest delivery*

**Mail Do's and Don'ts****Do:**

**Make sure you have the full and correct address**

**Make sure you attach proper postage**

**Complete all needed paperwork such as Customs Declarations**

**Follow military and postal regulations**

**Don't:**

**Send pressurized items (shaving cream, etc.)**

**Send items that may melt**

**Send pornographic or obscene materials**

**Send firearms or ammunition**

**Send mail addressed to "Any Soldier"**

**Send political articles or materials**

**Send alcohol or any ingredients to make alcohol**

**Send pork or pork by-products**

**Send fruits, animals, or living plants**

**Send bulk religious materials contrary to the Islamic faith**

**Tips for Sending "Care Packages"**

**Extreme Temperatures:** Temperatures typically exceed 100 degrees in desert areas.

**The Box:** Select a box strong enough to protect the contents and large enough to accommodate cushioning. If reusing a box, cover all previous labels and markings with a heavy black marker or adhesive labels.

**Cushioning:** Cushioning the contents with newspaper is a novel way to send news from home. Styrofoam and bubble wrap are also good choices. Close and shake the box. If it rattles, add additional cushioning to keep items from shifting.

**Batteries:** Occasionally a battery powered item such as a radio or electric razor will turn itself on during shipment. Be sure to remove and wrap the batteries separately.

**Sealing:** Tape the opening of the box and reinforce all seams with 2" wide tape. Use clear or brown packaging tape, reinforced packing tape, or paper tape. Do not use cord, string or twine as it causes the package to get caught and possibly damaged in sorting equipment.

**Include a card describing the contents:** Occasionally, improperly wrapped packages fall apart during shipment. Including a card inside the package that lists the sender's and recipient's addresses along with a description of the contents helps in collecting items from boxes that have fallen open during processing.

Parcel mail is being examined on a spot-check basis to determine conformity with host country customs regulations and for terrorist-type mailings.

At times, some military units may have additional restrictions imposed by the unit commanders, such as those on size and weight, to ensure logistics support can handle the mail along with other necessities. The maximum length of a package in any category is 72 inches.

For specific APO address restrictions, please visit the Overseas Military Mail Page ([www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/bulletin/2003/html/pb22101/apofpo.html](http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/bulletin/2003/html/pb22101/apofpo.html)). You can also call (800) ASK-USPS or consult your local post office. The Military Postal Service Agency's toll free number (800) 810-6098, is available Monday-Friday, 7:30 am – 4:30 p.m.

**Send Fun Stuff!**

Board games

Puzzles

Yo Yo's

Frisbees

**Birthday & holiday decorations****Silly toys (slinky, sidewalk chalk, etc)****Hand-held games (electronic or not)****Foam footballs and basketballs—the miniature size**

Hackie sacks

Jump ropes

Koozies

DVDs

CDs-music and photo

Playing Cards

Paperback books

Magazines

**Comic books (non-horror)**

Stress balls

Poker Chips

**Word puzzle books****Mini Scrapbooks****Communicating With Your Soldier**

If you'll be communicating with your family member through the mail, be sure you have the correct address so that letters and packages will get there quickly. Learn about any guidelines for military mail, such as how and where to pick up mail, what you can and cannot send, and how long it may take for a letter or package to reach your family member. The same advice holds for e-mail, too: Be sure you have the exact address, and find out about any rules for sending messages or attachments.

Try to write to your family member as often as you can, but don't be disappointed or worried if you don't always get quick responses. There may be times when your family member is in places where mail cannot go or he or she may be too busy to respond right away. Here are some things you should think about when you're writing to a family member:

- **Be honest.** You don't have to hide things or pretend that you're feeling fine when you're not. Your family member may be able to tell that there's something you're not saying and will only worry.
- **Let your family member know how much you appreciate his or her response.** Tell him how much it means for you and other members of your family when you get a letter or e-mail.
- **Answer any questions he or she asked in an earlier message.** If you ignore questions, your family member may wonder and worry why you didn't respond.
- **Try to express yourself clearly.** Remember that you won't be there to explain what you mean when your family member reads your letter, so try not to leave any doubt about exactly what you're saying.
- **Keep some addressed and stamped envelopes on hand, ready to mail.** This may make it easier to write a quick note. You can also pass out addressed and stamped envelopes or postcards to friends and family members to encourage them to write.
- **Don't try to read between the lines of letters or notes that you receive.** Try not to make assumptions or judgments based on just a single sentence or the overall tone of a letter. If you have a question or don't understand something, ask your questions in your next letter or phone call rather than wasting time wondering or worrying.

### Tips for E-mail

E-mail is a great way to communicate!

Make sure you have the full and correct e-mail address for your soldier

Use a digital camera to send photos

Use a scanner to upload and send 'regular' photos

Don't argue over the internet. If you're upset when you type your message, wait until the next day to click the 'Send' button

Don't send obscene, pornographic, or political messages and attachments

Send an e-card to your soldier for birthdays, anniversaries, and special events

Visit [www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil) to set up an official guest e-mail account to be sure your soldier can contact you via e-mail.

## Communicating With Your Soldier—continued

- **If you send a package, try to remember that your family member may not have a lot of space.** Send some small, funny presents, like souvenirs or a favorite section of the Sunday paper, or personal items such as soap or toothpaste. If you plan on sending food items, take care with packaging. Always check to make sure that any package you send fits with postal and military regulations.
- **Be creative.** Letters and e-mails are wonderful, but there are lots of ways you can make them even better. You can send a message in the form of a tape recording or a video. If you have children, send artwork, school papers, or even a photocopy of their handprints. You can send clippings from the local paper or tape recordings of a family gathering, a child reading, singing, or playing music, or even just the sounds of your home. You may come up with your own ideas that have special meaning for your family member.

**Send photos.** Pictures of loved ones can be very comforting when a family is separated. Just as you like to look at photos of your family member who has been deployed, he or she will enjoy seeing photos of people at home. You don't have to send professional pictures or photographs of special events. Send photos of your pets, your neighbors, your child's sporting event, a recital, or another occasion. You can also send photos of your home and other places that are special to you and your family member. Some families document a normal day in photos and send them as a kind of "picture story."

- **Use the Internet for more than e-mail.** If you can use the Internet to stay in touch, there are lots of things you can do beyond sending e-mail messages. You can set up a Web page with pictures and news -- or find a service that hosts Web pages -- or you can "talk" with your family member in chat rooms or by using an instant messenger. You can also send digital pictures or use a scanner to send newspaper clippings, artwork, photos, or a child's report card or school papers.
- **Write with his or her picture and letter in front of you.** Writing your letter while reading your soldier's letter will insure a response to all questions and comments and will help you feel as if you're having a conversation with your soldier.
- **Try numbering the envelopes.** That way, if more than one letter is received at once your soldier will know which was written first.



*Help the child find a way to communicate that works for them.*

*Some children like to communicate with pictures.*

*Others may write letters or send e-mail.*



*Putting a care package together is as much fun for the child as it is for the parent receiving it.*

## Ways Children Can Communicate

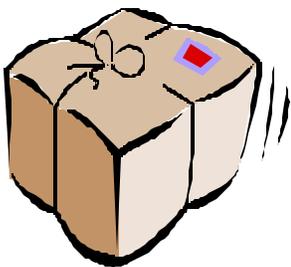
It's important for children to feel like they are keeping in touch with a deployed parent or family member instead of hearing news or greetings secondhand. Encourage your child to send artwork or write letters, and make sure that the family member who has been deployed sends e-mail or letters addressed and mailed directly to the child. This may help a child understand that her family member is thinking about and missing her.

Here are some other ways to help children keep a sense of connection with a deployed family member:

- **Let children find a way to communicate that works for them.** Some children may like to use a tape recorder to exchange spoken messages, while others may like to write letters or send e-mail. Others, especially younger children, like to communicate with pictures. Help your child explore all of the different ways she can communicate. Encourage the deployed family member to follow the child's cues -- by responding with a recorded message, for example, or by drawing a picture of where he sleeps or a typical meal.
- **Give your child his own stack of pre-addressed and stamped envelopes and paper** to make it easy to write on the spur of the moment. If there is more than one child in the family, purchase different-colored envelopes and choose one color for each child. Send some of the colored envelopes to your soldier to use when writing to each child.
- **Help children think of things that their family member may like to know about.** Sometimes children have trouble starting a letter or knowing what to say. Help children understand that their deployed family member is interested in anything that's going on in their life.
- **Care Packages.** Putting a box of goodies together is almost more fun for the kids than it is for the parent receiving it. Let the child decorate the outside with pictures, stickers, and little notes. Place the decorated box inside the mailing box. The excitement lasts all the way to the post office and while waiting for a response.
- **Just for Kids.** Kids can send a note and artwork to their soldier. Download a coloring page/letter for their Army Reserve "hero" and more at [www4.army.mil/USAR/families/justforkids.htm](http://www4.army.mil/USAR/families/justforkids.htm).



*There are lots of ways you can help support our troops*



*"Care Packages", Calling Cards, and E-mails can be sent to support soldiers serving overseas.*



## Supporting Our Troops

Due to heightened security, individuals can no longer send letters or packages marked for delivery to "Any Service Member".

So if you can't send letters or packages, what can you do to help show your support?

### **To Our Soldiers:** [www.army.mil/tooursoldiers/](http://www.army.mil/tooursoldiers/)

The Army has developed a web site where people can send an electronic message of support to soldiers who are serving in the "War on Terrorism." This includes soldiers deployed to the Gulf, Afghanistan, and other areas.

### **Operation USO Care Package:** [www.usocares.org/](http://www.usocares.org/)

You can buy a "care package," which will be delivered to a deployed service member with a personal note from you. These "care packages" are purchased and delivered by the USO (United Service Organization) with permission and support from the Department of Defense.

### **Operation Uplink:** [www.operationuplink.org/](http://www.operationuplink.org/)

Donate a calling card through Operation Uplink. Operation Uplink is a unique program that keeps military personnel and hospitalized veterans in touch with their families and loved ones by providing them with a free phone card. Using contributions from supporters like you, Operation Uplink purchases phone cards and distributes them to servicemen and women who are separated from those they care about.

### **Military Pets Foster Project:** <http://netpets.org>

### **Operation Noble Foster:** [www.operationnoblefoster.org/](http://www.operationnoblefoster.org/)

Volunteer to be a "Foster Parent" for the pet of a deployed service member.

### **Volunteer:**

Interested Americans can show their support and honor their military by volunteering in their local communities. Visit residents or volunteer at a VA hospital or nursing home. You can also volunteer in your community to make up for service members who normally would volunteer, but are now deployed or are otherwise too busy with their duties. Many service members volunteer to coach children's teams, feed the homeless, and aid their communities in a variety of other ways.

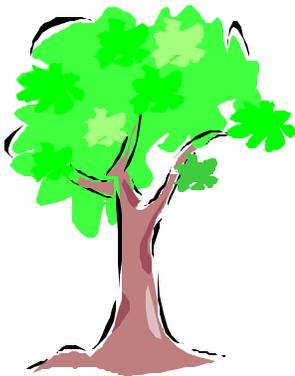
Find more ways to support our troops at:

[www.defendamerica.mil/support\\_troops.html](http://www.defendamerica.mil/support_troops.html)



*The best way to serve our loved ones while they are away is to serve each other.*

*Contact your FRG Leader for more information.*



*Point of contact volunteers have advantages*

## Join the Challenger Team!

We are the Family Readiness Group, otherwise known as the FRG. We are here to augment the support systems that are already in place through the Army. FRG members are provided with information, assistance, referrals, connections, and a sense of community in areas unique to military separation.

Please consider where you would like to serve as a volunteer. We must stick together while our loved ones are away. The best way to serve them is to serve each other. If you are interested in joining this worthwhile group, or would like more information, please call (877) 620-4187 or e-mail [m158.frgleader@us.army.mil](mailto:m158.frgleader@us.army.mil).

## Need answers? Get in the Tree!

The telephone tree, that is. The Family Readiness Group's Telephone Tree is the quickest way to get answers and information. Point of Contact volunteers have advantages: they stay "in the loop", they stay involved, and they get the satisfaction of helping other families.

If you are interested in becoming a "branch" in the "tree", e-mail [m158.phonetree@us.army.mil](mailto:m158.phonetree@us.army.mil) or you may call (877) 620-4187 or (817) 735-9732.

## Family Information Data Sheet

At the back of this newsletter you will find a Family Information Data Sheet. The information on this form is used exclusively by your Family Readiness Group to contact you with news and information about your soldier and to assist you with any concerns or questions you may have. Without a completed form, we are unable to contact you. Please make copies of the form for additional immediate family members wishing to receive calls. Completed forms should be mailed to: M-158 AVIM, Bldg 7016, Box 81, Hood Army Airfield, Fort Hood, Texas, 76544-5081.

If you have not received any calls from the Family Readiness Group, we either do not have written permission to contact you or the telephone number listed on your previously submitted form may not be current. Please call (817) 735-9732 to leave a message and you will be contacted to update your information.

## The Challengers

Family Readiness Group  
M-158 AVIM Co

Bldg 7016, Box 81  
Hood Army Airfield  
Fort Hood, Texas  
76544-5081

PHONE:  
(877) 620-4187  
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(254) 288-6113  
FAX:  
(254) 288-3236

E-MAIL:  
**M158.frgnewsletter@  
us.army.mil**

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### FRG Leaders

**Leader:** Kelly Huseman

**Secretary:** Tracy Pederson

**Treasurer:** Tina Risenhoover

**Telephone Tree:** Julie Lee

**Fundraising:** Tammy Hench

**Newsletter:** Becky Cotton

**Sponsorship:** Need Volunteer

**Historian:** Need Volunteer

**Events:** Tracy Pederson

**Database:** Jane Dennis

**Advisor:** Valerie Wayman

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### Published by:

Becky Cotton  
Editor

### Approved by:

Jack A. Wayman  
LTC., U.S Army  
Commanding

## Resources and Contacts

Contact a Family Readiness Group member if you have questions or need information.

Your FRG contact name and phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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### For additional assistance, contact the unit resources below.

|                             |                    |                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Home Detachment Commander:  | MSG Wesley         | (254) 287-6416 |
| Personnel Specialist:       | Mr. Schrader       | (254) 287-8590 |
| Unit Administrator:         | Ms. Heather Rivera | (254) 287-8325 |
| Home Detachment Fax Number: |                    | (254) 287-8339 |

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|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| TRICARE Information:  | (800) 406-2832 |
| Dental-United Concordia:  | (800) 866-8499 |
| Army One Source ( <a href="http://www.armyonesource.com">www.armyonesource.com</a> ): | (800) 464-8107 |

**\*\* Remember: Pay issues MUST be initiated by the soldier. \*\***

## Internet Resources

Family Readiness  
<http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/>

Deployment Connections  
<http://www.deploymentconnections.org>

## From the Editor

Let us know how we can make the newsletter more useful to you! Send newsletter contributions, suggestions, and comments to:

**M158.frgnewsletter@us.army.mil**

Due to the concern for our soldiers' security, the Challengers newsletter can be sent electronically to official military e-mail accounts only. You may register for an official AKO guest account at **[www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil)**. You must have the AKO User name of your sponsor. AKO includes a comprehensive help guide and tutorial to allow you to personalize your AKO portal.

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