

February 2004

Volume 1, Issue 2



The Challengers



*The Challengers Family Readiness Group, M-158 Aviation Maintenance Company,
Building 7016, Second Floor, HAAF, Box 81, Fort Hood, Texas 76544-5081, (877) 620-4187*

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Notes from the Commander

Dear Families,

I am proud of your soldiers. They are receiving a lot of good training, and they are working hard to get themselves and their equipment ready.

They are pulling together as a proud team. I am particularly happy about how passionate our sergeants are about taking care of soldiers. I'm also very happy to have such a solid team of officers. We have done some great things as a team. Our mission; however, is to return these fine men and women to their loved ones and employers in better condition than they were when you loaned them to us. The First Sergeant and I are committed to keep the team focused on that top priority mission in all we do. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible, and we are honored to be serving your soldiers and our nation.

Sincerely,

Jack A. Wayman, Jr., Major, U.S. Army, Commanding

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. The FRG interests are: (1) Self-reliant families, aware of their benefits, how to access them, how to gain information to solve problems, and able to cope with periods of military separation, (2) Open communication network between soldiers, family members, and the chain of command, and (3) Family awareness of the unit's mission and activities.

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 email m158.frgleader@us.army.mil.

Need answers? Get in the Tree!

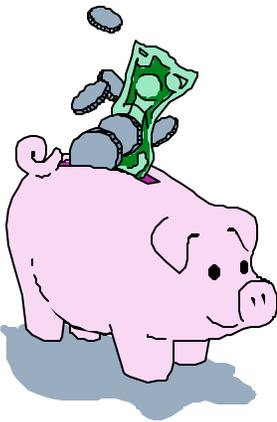
The telephone tree, that is. The Family Readiness Group's Telephone Tree is the quickest way to get answers and information.



Point of contact volunteers have advantages

As a Point of contact, you are assigned 6 to 8 families to call once every 2 weeks, or when official information is received about our soldiers. You give out official information, supply helpful phone numbers, and help squash rumors. You send questions and issues up the "chain of concern" to the Rear Detachment Commander and the unit Commander and you follow up with your families to make sure their issues and concerns are being addressed.

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 get a "kick" out of doing something important and you want to be a "branch" in the "tree", email m158.phonetree@us.army.mil or call (877) 620-4187 or (817) 249-6989.



Reduce interest rates to 6%.

Auto insurance rates may be lowered.

Send cell phones home & suspend service.

Miscellaneous Reminders

Interest Rates: Soldiers deploying, don't forget that your orders will allow your family to reduce dept rates for credit cards, home loans, auto loans, etc. to a flat 6% interest rate during your deployment. Be sure a copy of your orders is left with a family member to remit to the various institutions to take advantage of this!

Car Insurance: Contact your auto insurance agent-rates are lowered when a vehicle is not used on a daily basis and drivers can be temporarily removed from the policy. Be sure to make this effective AFTER the soldier is no longer using the vehicle to avoid legal issues.

Cell Phones: Many soldiers currently have cell phones and prefer to keep them available pending deployment. Be sure to leave the phone with a family member or keep it in a safe place while you are gone. You will need to notify your carrier of the need to suspend service until you are able to return. You should not be charged any monthly fees during your deployment.



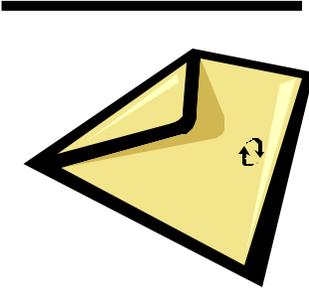
Fundraising Projects

T-Shirts: We had a very successful fundraiser selling “Mech Warrior” t-shirts. The t-shirts are black, good quality pre-shrunk cotton. Pre-paid orders received by February 7th will be available for pick up at the Family Day Event. An order form is included in this newsletter. Pre-paid orders placed at the Family Day Event will have \$3.00 per shirt added to cost for postage and insurance.



Ribbons: We will be selling a magnetized “yellow ribbon” car decal at the Family Day Event. The decals are 3 7/8” x 8”. Cost per decal is \$5.00 (plus postage if mailed). You may select “Support Our Troops” or “God Bless Our Troops”. This is a great item for family members! Each decal has space available to personalize with your soldier’s unit and name.

Have your soldier order from one of our FRG volunteers, purchase at the Family Day event, email m158.frgleader@us.army.mil, or call (877) 620-4187.



Update your Family Data Information to stay informed!

Pre-deployment Packets

Pre-deployment packets were mailed in December. If you did not receive a packet, call (877) 620-4187 or email m158.frgleader@us.army.mil.

Included in the packet is a Family Information Date Sheet. Please complete the information sheet and return it as quickly as possible so we can update our family database with the most current addresses and telephone numbers for your family.

Mobilization Meeting and Family Day

Mobilization Meetings and a Family Day are tentatively being scheduled for February 21st and 22nd. Please respond on the attached registration form with the number of people planning to attend. You may mail the form to the address on the front page of the newsletter, call the unit at (877) 620-4187, or email m158.secretary@us.army.mil.



Hope to see you there!



Feel free to speak about your personal experience, but please don't be specific about dates, times, locations, missions, or capabilities.

Operational Security

by Major Jack Wayman

I need to ask for your help with something. I am committed to keeping you informed about what is going on with your soldiers. However, we must balance information with security. I am concerned about three things when it comes to security: yours, your soldier's, and the mission. We can't afford to compromise the security of any of them. So I need to ask you to be cautious with information. Any adversary can take information, put it together with other information, and use it to harm you or us, or to prevent our success. I don't want the wrong people getting sensitive information.

Here's a simple rule about sharing information. Feel free to speak about your personal experience, but please don't be specific about dates, times, locations, missions, or capabilities. Adversaries can get this information easily from email, the public press, and private conversations. They can also get it through our own newsletters. So, please be careful, and have the Rear Detachment Officer review your written publications for operational security. Security is everyone's business. Sensitive information isn't.



Friends don't let friends spread rumors.

Rumors

Please be careful about rumors. They quickly take on a life of their own, and they can hurt people and teams. I will keep you informed, and I will send factual information often. Please remember that if I have not personally validated information through the Rear Detachment Officer, it's probably a rumor. Please don't pass it along. And remember, friends don't let friends spread rumors.



Ready families make ready soldiers...

Get plugged in to your local community and Family Readiness Group

Ready Families

Ready families make ready soldiers. Ready soldiers focus better when they know their families are self-reliant and able to cope with military separation. Self-reliant families are aware of their benefits and how to get them. They know where to get answers, what's going on with their soldier, and how they can raise their concerns to the Commander. And they are connected.

That's why the Family Readiness Group (FRG) is so important. Their volunteer mission is to help you and I accomplish our goal of "ready families." It's essential that our soldiers stay alert, focus on their job, and do things that need to be done. So, get plugged in to your local community, and get plugged in to your FRG. It will make a difference to someone, and that someone may be you.

Handling Stress

- Take care of yourself.
- Make a daily schedule of things that need to be done, but be reasonable.
- Get involved in things that make you happy.
- Avoid self-medication and substance abuse.
- Be flexible; accept that you cannot control everything.
- Plan for stress. Set realistic goals that leave time for breaks and limit work.
- Keep a sense of humor with you at all times.
- Take a mental health day every two or three months.
- Learn how to express irritation and appreciation to others.

YOU CAN DO IT!

Coping With Separation

*Deployment periods provide for a time of self-growth. For most families, a deployment isn't the happiest of occasions. Long separations are hard on every member of the family, especially those left at home. As Army families, we learn to cope. Experience has shown that a deployment is much easier on families if they are prepared for it and know the tricks of getting along during separation. Take advantage of the military support. Stay informed—get involved with your FRG. Nobody understands the Army like another Army family. By following some of these suggestions, deployments might go a little easier for your family.

Hints for the Family

KEEP IN TOUCH! Communicate with the soldier by e-mail, if possible, AND by writing, even if it is only a post card to say "I love you and miss you". Soldiers love mail and need to hear from home frequently.

- "No news is good news" does not necessarily apply. Be sure to write regularly and to use the correct mailing address.
- Other address information will be issued by the unit, or if known, at the Pre-deployment briefing. FRG contacts will also know this information, if it is published.
- Plan ahead
- Be aware of the possibility of mail arriving late or being slow
- Money may not arrive according to schedule
- Important documents may arrive late
- It is OK to cry.
- To reduce worries when you haven't heard from your family member, you can get information on:

Where he/she is (If able to be known)

How he/she is doing

Rumors

Return Home

Call your unit point of contact or your contact in the Family Readiness Group

Coping Strategies The 4 M's

MAINTAIN

- Stay in good physical condition
- Eat Balanced meals and get plenty of sleep
- Keep in touch with positive people
- Avoid things that make you feel worse
- Avoid spending sprees, but treat yourself to a special outing

MANAGE

- Manage your life—set goals
- Start a project that you've put off. Go back to school or begin a self-help program.
- Take time away from the children so you can take care of yourself.
- Travel-new scenery and a change of pace can do wonders for the spirit.
- Become a volunteer
- Know your limits.

MONITOR

- Be aware of early signs of stress.
- Don't lose your sense of humor.
- Ask for help if you need it.

MANEUVER

- Relieve stress-try relaxation exercises
- Use coping strategies that work for you.
- Stop and smell the roses.

Preparing Your Home Life for Deployment

*The absence of a family member may mean that you'll have to do things differently at home. If you take the time to prepare for these changes, you may find it easier to adjust. Here are some things you should think about when you're preparing for deployment:

- **Review child and elder care arrangements.** Contact services that may be available to you through the military, in your community, or through an employer for support and resources. If you already have a care plan in place, review it to make sure that the absence of a family member will not be a problem.
- **If there are chores or duties that the deployed family member always does, make sure you know how to do them, too.** In some families, one person is responsible for maintaining the car or for grocery shopping. If this is the case in your family, make sure you feel comfortable taking on that responsibility on your own.
- **Update and check legal and financial document details.** This should include updating wills and medical directives, creating powers of attorney documents, and ensuring that family members have access to accounts and documents.
- **Make sure all contact numbers are easy to find.** Gather information about how to reach the deployed family member, including numbers for contacting appropriate military officials for information and updates. Make sure you also know how to contact your spouse's family.
- **Create a family emergency plan.** Talk about what you'd do in the case of an emergency, including where you'd go and how you would get in touch. Involve children and other family members in these discussions in appropriate ways.
- **Talk about how you'll handle finances during the deployment.** Make sure that you feel comfortable assuming the financial responsibilities and that you agree on a plan for accessing and using checking, savings, or investment accounts as well as safety deposit boxes. Go over bills that will need to be paid during the deployment period, including taxes. If necessary, make arrangements for the direct deposit of the paycheck of the person who will be deployed.

Do...

Talk about the deployment. Let the child pack 1 or 2 small items for the deploying parent to take along.

Talk about the deployed parent frequently. Let the child write letters, draw pictures, and mail them in separate envelopes.

Tell teachers and caretakers about the deployment.

Get maps of the deployment area. It helps children to see where the missing parent will be located.

Put a picture of the soldier in the each child's room.

Count down days.

Expect that children might manifest anger or sadness by acting out.

Maintain stable routines. Children like to feel that they have some control over their world if they know what will happen next.

Helping Children Prepare for Deployment

It's important to involve children in the preparations for deployment and explain to them exactly what a deployment involves in a way that they will understand. You may also want to:

- **Go over the "house rules."** Explain to your child that rules will not change during the deployment just because a parent or family member is gone. Enlist older children to help around the house by taking over a chore or duty that the missing parent or family member always did.
- **Encourage younger children to talk with older children who have already been through a deployment.** If you don't have older children, help your child make connections with the children of relatives, friends, or other military families who are familiar with deployment.
- **Make time for the family member or parent who will be deployed to spend "alone time" with each child in the family.**
- **Take lots of pictures or make videotapes of your child and the parent who will be deployed doing everyday activities.** Document ordinary things, like getting ready for bed, reading a story, eating dinner, or playing a game. Put these pictures in a small album for your child or display them somewhere your child can easily see them. Many families also make recordings of the parent or loved one who will be deployed reading favorite stories so that children can listen to their voices when they are gone.
- **Give your child a special gift before the deployment.** This could be anything -- a diary, a scrapbook, a watch, or a bracelet -- as long as it's something your child can hold and look at when she's missing her parent or family member.
- **Make sure your child understands that he or she will be able to stay in touch with the deployed parent or family member by writing letters, talking on the phone, or sending recordings or drawings.** Sometimes children have trouble understanding the idea of a temporary separation, and they may think that they won't be able to talk to or communicate with their deployed loved one.

Don't...

Don't say things that will frighten the child. Avoid saying things like 'fighting' and 'war'. Associations with these words as they are heard on TV and in movies are negative and scary.

Don't make your child head-of-household during the deployment. Elevating their status while a parent is away will burden them with responsibility they shouldn't have and disappoint them by having it pulled when the deployment is over.

Don't invite the child into your bed during the deployment. It makes the transition for the soldier coming home harder-it can make the child feel replaced.

Don't forget your own mental health during the deployment. If you don't take care of yourself, it will make your parenting job more difficult.

Helping Children Prepare for Deployment—cont.

- **Find a way to count down the time that the parent will be gone that children can understand.** Some families create calendars and mark off the days while others may come up with other ideas like filling up a jar with a 'goody' for each day the loved one will be gone. If you're not sure how long the parent will be gone, mark the passage of time by making a paper chain and adding a link each day that the parent is gone, then use the chain as a decoration when they return.
- **Help your child understand that she has not done anything wrong.** Young children may think a parent is leaving because of something they've done. Try to explain that serving in the military is her parent's job, just as going to the factory or office every day is what other parents do for work.
- **Talk about where his parent will be and what he or she will be doing.** Post a map where the child can see it. Spend some time together learning about where the parent is serving. Talking about the deployed parent's daily routines and getting a better picture of where he is can help your child cope with the separation.
- **Be as honest and give as much information as possible.** The child may have many questions about the military, and why her parent has to leave or whether he or she is safe. It's important to give her as much information as possible in words that she will understand.
- **Make sure she doesn't feel like she has been abandoned.** Telling the child that her parent is "on assignment" or "at work" may help her understand the separation and that this is a normal part of military life.
- **Encourage your child to talk about his feelings.** Let him know that it's OK to admit that he misses his parent or feels lonely.
- **Talk about the deployed parent frequently.** Tell stories or jokes. Talking about the parent will help keep his or her presence in the child's life.
- **Tell the child how much the missing parent loves and misses her.** Remind the child of this as often as possible.

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

FAX:
(254) 288-3236

EMAIL:
M158.FRGnewsletter@
us.army.mil

FRG Leaders

Leader: Kelly Huseman

Secretary: Tracy Pederson

Treasurer: Tina Risenhoover

Telephone Tree: Julie Lee

Fundraising: Tammy Hensch

Newsletter: Becky Cotton

Sponsorship: Vacant

Historian: Vacant

Events: Tracy Pederson

Database: Jane Dennis

Advisor: Valerie Wayman

Published by:

Becky Cotton
Editor

Approved by:

Jack A. Wayman, Jr.
Major, U.S. Army
Commanding

Resources and Contacts

Unit Point of Contact:	MSG Wesley	
Home Detachment Commander:	MSG Wesley	(254) 287-6416
Home Detachment S-1 NCOIC:	SSG Schrader	(254) 287-8590
Unit Administrator:	Ms. Heather Rivera	(254) 287-8325
Administrative Specialist:	SPC Mosley	(254) 287-8340
Records Administrator:	SGT Bowers	(254) 287-8340
Home Detachment Fax Number:		(254) 287-8339
TRICARE Information:		(800) 406-2832
Dental-United Concordia:		(800) 866-8499

Internet Resources

Service Member Deployment Checklist
<http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/pdf/B-1.pdf>

Family Readiness Checklist
<http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/family/toolkit/pdf/C-1-1.pdf>

Guide to Reserve Family Members Benefits
<http://www.defenselink.mil/ra/documents/family/benefits.pdf>

Personal Financial Readiness and Deployability Handbook
<http://www.wadtdl.army.mil/cgi-bin/atdl.dll/tc/21-7/217dft3.html>

Feedback

Let us know how we can make the newsletter more useful to you! Would you rather receive the newsletter by regular mail or email?

Send newsletter contributions, suggestions, and comments to:
M158.frgnewsletter@us.army.mil

Be sure to keep your Family Information Data Sheet updated so we don't lose contact with you!

Coping articles provided are excerpts taken from complete articles found at:
www.armyonesource.com

The following is a partial list of area hotels with contact information. *Please be sure to notify them* that you are part of **M Company 158 FRG**. (Special rates may be available) Please note – space is limited, so the sooner you make the reservations – the better!! All hotels are at your expense.

Base facilities 254/532-8233

Paxon Guest House

*Must check in at the Paxon Guest House location

Keith Ware Hall (not recommended for family, but solely for 2 person accommodation).

5700 area – 2 bedroom, shared bathroom, roll-aways

**Both Keith Ware Hall & 5700 check in is at the Keith Ware Hall location (main entrance – Fort Hood – first light – take left, first light – another left, will be first bldg. to your left – but 2nd driveway is the MAIN entrance to the Keith Ware Hall.

La Quinta 254/526-8331 or 800/642-4239; Fax 254/526-0394
1112 S Fort Hood Rd.; Killeen, TX

Super 8 Motel 254/634-6868 PH & Fax; or 800
Off 190 – between Trimmier & Jasper exits, Killeen, TX

The Killeen Inn 254/634-0142 / Fax: 254/634-6265
1100 S Fort Hood Rd.; Killeen, TX (immediately behind LaQuinta)

Howard Johnson's Ph: 254/547-2345 or 800/446-4656 Fax: 254/547-5124
302 W Hwy 90; Copperas Cove, TX quoted by Jon

Comfort Inn Ph 254/554-3615 or 800/228-5150 Fax: 254/634-4979
2506 Trimmier (on 190 access), Killeen, TX Juanita

Days Inn 254/634-6644 or 800/DAYS INN Fax 254/634-2751
810 E Central TX Expwy, Killeen, TX (off 190 & Trimmier)

The Plaza Inn – 254/634-1555 or 800/633-8756
1721 Central TX Expwy (190) @ WS Jones exit; Killeen, TX 76541

Howard Johnson 254/526-4343 or 800/648-6551 Fax: 254/526-4763
803 E Central TX Expwy (190) @ Trimmier exit ; Killeen, TX 76541

Motel 6 254/634-4151 or 800/466-8356
800 E Central TX Expwy (190) @ Trimmier exit; Killeen, TX 76541

Co M, 158th Aviation Regiment Unit T-Shirt
 Order Form and Receipt

Prepay orders payable to: The Challengers FRG. Mail to:
 T. Risenhoover
 2931 Willow Loop
 Kempner, TX 76539



Child Sizes
 M _____
 L _____
Total _____ X \$10.00 = \$ _____

Adult Sizes
 S _____
 M _____
 L _____
 XL _____
Total _____ X \$15.00 = \$ _____
 XXL _____
 XXXL _____

Total Shirts _____ **Total Cost \$** _____

Amount Received \$ _____ Seller's Initials _____

SOLDIER'S NAME _____ LAST FOUR _____ PLATOON _____