

May 2004

Volume 1, Issue 5



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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From the Commander— On April 15 M company changed commanders. LTC Jack Wayman relinquished command to MAJ Lonnie Slade.

By Major Lonnie Slade

I would like to start by saying thank you for all your hard work on the home front. I was very excited when I was asked to take command of M Company. It is a great opportunity to be able to work with some of the finest soldiers in the Army Reserve. I was not able to meet many of you before we deployed, mostly due to the timeline keeping us all so busy. I apologize for this and will do my best to communicate with you all from Iraq. We have an odd situation in M Company where a vast majority of our soldiers come from other than the Ft. Hood area, including myself.

My family and I live in Marietta Georgia, which is just northwest of Atlanta. My wife's name is Becky and we have two children, Dylan, age 10, and Ashlee, age 8. Becky and I spent our first 10 years married while I served in the army and both my kids were born in army hospitals; Dylan at Ft. Bliss and Ashlee in Germany. I have spent the last 4 years working for BOC Gases as a sales representative for industrial gases and welding equipment. Becky enjoys not having to move every 3 years and works as the school nurse for the local elementary school.

Like you all did, I watched on Sept 11th 2001 when our country was attacked. Being here now is our nation's response to that attack. We have a tough job to do and we will accomplish our mission. Please keep the faith back home and don't let yourselves or your families down by spreading rumors. We have official methods of communicating facts to you directly. I will always keep your soldier informed to the best of my ability. Some things we cannot share with you all due to operational security concerns.

My commitment to you and your soldier is to get us all home safely. I will need your help to do this. When you have problems on the home front it can cause problems here. Use your support group and we will work hard to resolve any issues. We have a long way to go but we will get there together.

Thank you again for all your hard work and prayers.

To Everything...Turn, Turn, Turn

By Kelly Huseman, FRG Leader

These familiar words to an old tune are now ringing in our ears as we bid goodbye to LTC Jake Wayman and wife Valerie. Changes take place in all of our lives everyday, but it just seems to be an expected way of life when the military is your life.

On behalf of this FRG and all of it's volunteers, I want to say THANK YOU to LTC Wayman and Valerie for all of the many, many hours they spent helping us build this FRG. Most of us, (the key leaders, that is) had no idea what to do as members of the FRG. Thank you for giving us instruction, encouragement, and wings to fly as a wobbly new group of volunteers. We wish you safety, success, happiness and continued good health as you journey to this next phase of military life. Again, our many thanks for your service to our country, this unit, and this FRG.

As we bid LTC Wayman "Happy Trails," we welcome Major Slade as the new commander for M Company. We look forward to serving as volunteers in this FRG under your guidance, and we welcome any new ideas you may have for us. Mostly, we look forward to the day when we celebrate the safe and quick return of all of our loved ones serving in M Company and throughout the Armed Services!!!

From the Rear Detachment Commander

By Captain Steven R. Gambichler

My name is Captain Steven R Gambichler and I am the new rear detachment commander for Company M, 158th Aviation Regiment. I was appointed by COL Caples to lead the M/158 Rear Detachment and to assist the families of our deployed soldiers.

As a returning soldier myself I know the importance of keeping the families of our soldiers "in the loop". In this trying time clear communication is key. While I cannot take away the fears and concerns you are feeling for your service member in Iraq I promise to provide timely and accurate information.

A little background about me. I returned from deployment with Bravo Company, 5th Battalion, 159th Aviation in October. I recently completed the Captains Career Course at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Previously I served as the Commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment at Fort Hood, Texas. I have been in the Army Reserve for 16 years as both a regular reservist and an Active Duty Guard/Reserve (AGR) officer. My wife Jennifer and I have been married 4 years and have two sons, Sam and Max.

I look forward to talking with all of you and encourage all the family members to call in on the monthly conference calls.

Whether as an organization or as individuals, you can participate and show your support and appreciation for our finest military in the world during May – and all year!

- Invite local service members to speak at your school
- Send notes and cards to hospitalized veterans
- Ask students of deployed parents to speak at your school
- In weekly church bulletins, list name, rank, and service organization of family and friends serving in the military
- If you see a veteran or active duty service member, shake their hand and say "Thank you"
- Display the American Flag on your home, car, or business from May 1 through Flag Day, June 14

For more information on how you can participate and show your appreciation, visit www.NMAM.org

May is National Military Appreciation Month

As a nation, we observe and participate in various national cultural and social awareness events through mass media attention and educational curriculum. However, we have not allocated appropriate recognition of the most important presence in the world today, an entity that impacts each and every American in a significant way, the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

National Military Appreciation Month (NMAM), as designated by Congress, provides a period encompassing both the history and recognition of our armed services with an in-depth look at the diversity of its individuals and achievements. It allows Americans to educate each generation on the historical impact of our military through the participation of the community with those who serve encouraging patriotism and love for America - a "reconnecting the Family of America".

The month gives the nation a forum, a framework, a time and place on which to focus, to draw attention and express our appreciation for our armed services via multiple venues and to recall our valuable history. The ideas to implement this are only limited by our imaginations. Museums, civic centers, and libraries can have exhibits. Additionally, schools might invite active military and veterans to visit with students, and cities and towns can offer proclamations and special observances.

National Military Appreciation Month (May) includes VE Day, Military Spouse Day, Loyalty Day, Armed Forces Day/Week, National Day of Prayer, and Memorial Day. This very important month therefore, honors those Americans who have given their lives in defense of our nation's freedom and the men and women now serving in uniform.

It recognizes those on active duty in all branches of the services, the National Guard and Reserves, plus retirees, veterans, and all of their families - well over 80 million Americans and more than 227 years of our nation's history. Let us celebrate them just as we celebrate the other important entities that make up this wonderful country of ours.

GOD BLESS AMERICA AND OUR ARMED FORCES!



USDA, 4H, Boys and Girls Clubs, and Morale Welfare Recreation (MWR) have partnered to create "Operation Military Kid"

Creates community support networks

Delivers programs for military youth in civilian communities

Supports military kids coping with stress

Collaborates with schools

Educates the public

Becomes part of ongoing local 4H programs

Operation Military Kid

OMK—What is it?

A partnership with USDA, 4-H, Boys, Girls Clubs and MWR.

When National Guard/Reserves and other military parents living in civilian communities are mobilized, their children suddenly become different. Now they are "military kids" but they still "look the same" to teachers, friends and the rest of the community. Their lives are turned upside down! Many of their support systems may no longer be adequate. Extensive media coverage of on going military operations creates daily anxiety. These "new" military kids need to connect with other youth in similar situations. They seek friends and adults who can empathize and can help them cope with their new world. This "partnership" is reaching out to the military youth, before, during and after their parents deploy.

How does it work?

- Create community support networks for military youth "in our own backyard" when Soldier parents are deployed.
- Delivers recreational, social and educational programs for military youth living in civilian communities.
- Supports military kids coping with the stress of knowing their deployed parents may be in harm's way.
- Collaborates with schools to ensure that staff are attuned to the unique needs of military students.
- Educates the public on the impact of the deployment cycle on Soldiers, families, kids and the community as a whole.
- Becomes a part of the ongoing 4-H Program in the locations where there are military families.

When does this "take off"? The program is currently being piloted to 5 states; Iowa, Alabama, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Washington. Once these particular areas "blossom" the program will then start to spread to other states. Stay tuned for the OMK nearest you!!!!

Note: Health care once a soldier returns was formerly 120 days, this has now been **EXTENDED to 180 Days.**



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.

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.

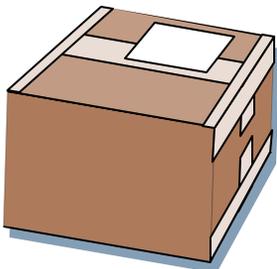
The Department of Defense has requested that those who send mail use the service member's full name (with or without grade, rank, or rating), or a specific title (e.g., Commanding Officer, Supply Officer, etc.). Also required is the unit designation, the APO/FPO address with the full 9-digit ZIP Code (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.

USPS will supply pre-addressed Priority Mail labels and boxes at no charge. Call (800) 610-8734 for more information.

The current address to be used for our soldiers is:

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



When mailing packages and letters:

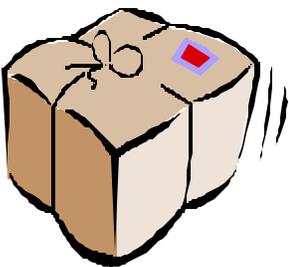
Use the correct address

Print on one side of package

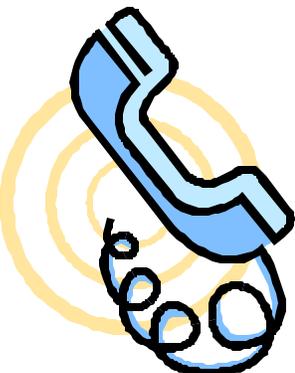
Send via Priority Mail for swiftest delivery



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/

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/

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/

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/

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.

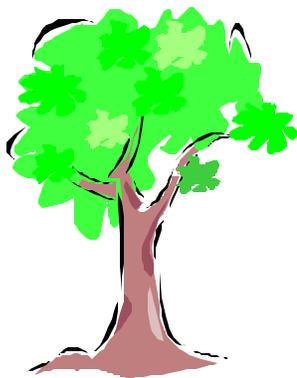
Find more ways to support our troops at:

www.defendamerica.mil/support_troops.html



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!

The Family Readiness Group, otherwise known as the FRG, is 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, and 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.

Telephone Tree

By Julie Lee, FRG Telephone Tree Coordinator

Thanks to all of the Telephone Tree volunteers! Volunteers stay "in the loop", stay involved, make new friends, and 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 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
(24 hr answering machine)
(254) 288-6113
FAX:
(254) 288-3236

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

FRG Leaders

Leader: Kelly Huseman

Secretary: Tracy Pederson

Treasurer: Tina Risenhoover

Telephone Tree: Julie Lee

Fundraising: Tammy Hench

Newsletter: Becky Cotton

Sponsorship: Jane Dennis

Historian: Need Volunteer

Events: Tracy Pederson

Database: Julie Lee
Becky Cotton

Advisor: Need Volunteer

Published by:

Becky Cotton
Editor

Approved by:

Lonnie Slade
Major, 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: _____

For additional assistance, contact the unit resources below.

Home Detachment Commander: Capt. Gambichler (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

TRICARE Information: (800) 406-2832
Dental-United Concordia: (800) 866-8499
Army One Source (www.armyonesource.com): (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**. 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.

Farewell From LTC Wayman

Farewell speech made by LTC Wayman to the soldiers of M-158 at his change of command ceremony on 15 April 2004.

COL Bunch¹ and CSM Martel², thank you for attending this ceremony. LTC Bobeck³, thank you for hosting the ceremony. Mech Warriors, and fellow soldiers; thank you for serving your country. It's a pleasure to serve with you.

My name is Jack Wayman, and I'm a soldier. I love to quote the General who first used that phrase.

I have served our country as a soldier on active duty for 17 years. I've served in a lot of units. While I was serving in the 7-6 Cav Squadron in Conroe, TX, I found out that an Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Company was forming up at Fort Hood, TX, just 2-1/2 hours away. I loved aviation maintenance and logistics, and I wanted to join the M-158 AVIM so bad I could taste it. I would have to serve another 6 years before being assigned to my idea of the ultimate assignment. I loved serving M-158 for 2-1/2 years as the S4 of the 244th Aviation Brigade, and to finally become a member of M Company was an honor. To command it has been an undeserved privilege.

In every assignment, to the detriment of my relationship with my bride, Valerie, I have sought the tough jobs nobody else wanted; I have suffered hardship as a good soldier;

I have not entangled myself in the affairs of everyday life; I have competed according to the rules, and I have worked hard. But by God's grace alone, I am one of the luckiest men alive for three reasons. First, I finally got my dream assignment. Second, I am still happily married to the person, whom I will argue till my dying day, is the best woman in the world. And, third, although we all secretly dreaded the day we would be activated, you made it this far as a team, and I am confident you will make it all the way.

Allow me to remind you of how you made it, and allow me to encourage you one last time to continue in the path you have begun, to endure, to adapt, to overcome, and to finish this fight in the same professional manner that you started it.

Purpose: To support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. The same Constitution which ensures freedom for all, even the cowards who think there is no cause worth warring for, who cannot win or keep their own freedom, and secretly thank God for soldiers like you. **Purpose!**

Values: Embody all the Army values, especially respect, which is the foundation of trust, which is the foundation of teamwork, which is the cohesive bond that will bring us all home together. **Values!**

Continued on next page...

Farewell From LTC Wayman—Continued

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Ethos: The Warrior's ethos that drives us to toughen our bodies, minds, and emotions to forge and preserve our ability to give every last ounce for our fellow soldiers, our leaders, and our mission. **The Warrior Ethos!**

Discipline: To me, the Army of One, means every single one can be counted on to do the right thing every single time for the good of the team which is more powerful than its collective parts. **Discipline!**

Culture: You come from the Flying Tigers, Fast Guns, Timber Wolves, Hookers, Flying Dragons, and a host of other proud, professional units. Your families, friends, and former units have every good reason to be proud of you. Not because you are Mech Warriors, or just because you are serving with honor in harms way. But because you love your country and your freedom enough to sacrifice days per month, weeks per year, and now a whole year-and-a-half of your lives to ensure freedom for post-911 generations who may never know you or your families, and the things you love, or the sacrifices you make. **Culture!**

You are Mech Warriors. You are the first team in 142 rotations to be noted by our mobilization trainers as a team who kept going and wouldn't quit. You are my heroes, and it was my undeserved privilege to serve as your commander.

I wish I could stay young forever, and do the things I love. I wish I could stay in command and do the things I feel I am especially suited for. I wish I could command, serve, and care for the unit I have loved, and for the team that I have come to love. I wish I could personally fulfill the promises I made to you and your families. I am glad you made it this far by teamwork and God's grace, and I pray your teamwork and His grace will continue.

Nevertheless, there are several Lieutenant Colonel vacancies that need to be filled in units that have far fewer people to do their current mission than did the units they replaced. I don't know exactly where I will go. I do know it will be in a slightly more dangerous place. I hope it will be tough. I hope it will be meaningful. I hope it will be worthy of the sacrifices of you, your families, and my wife. I will remain assigned to M Company; I will remain a Mech Warrior; and as much as I am able, I will watch out for you. And unless I am extended beyond the date that you redeploy, I look forward to convoying with you back down to lovely Camp VIRGINIA – with Major Slade's permission, of course.

I've dreaded saying good-bye. I wish I could stay and be part of the proud name you will surely earn for yourselves. I know you will do great things. Let me leave you with my variation of the mantra of the III Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Metz: "Scan, Focus, Act."

Continued on next page...

Farewell From LTC Wayman—Continued

Continued from previous page...

Scan: Scan for hazards, dangers, and opportunities to make a difference in aviation maintenance, which is our center of gravity. Scan, observe, and make your observations known so they can be of use to your teammates, your leaders, and the customers you support.

Focus: Focus on your mission, on safety, and on strengthening the team; not only the one here, but also the one at home.

Act: In the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his poem, The Ladder of Saint Augustine, “Act. Act in the living present; heart within, and God o’er head. Let us then be up and doing, with a heart for any fate. Still achieving, still pursuing. Learn to labor, and to wait.”

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. And may the Lord bless our warriors, their helicopters, gun trucks, and ammunition that with them they may blow our attackers to tiny bits, and, thereby, assist in persuading our remaining enemies to follow a more productive path to peace. . . . Mech Warriors

¹ Commander of the 172d Corps Support Group, the second higher headquarters for M-158 AVIM Co during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

² Command Sergeant Major of the 1-142d Aviation Maintenance Battalion, the higher headquarters for M-158 AVIM Co during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II.

³ Commander of the 1-142d Aviation Maintenance Battalion, the higher headquarters for M-158 AVIM Co during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II.
