



Family Readiness Group Overview

Third Edition, 2006



Introduction:

This class is intended to help individuals gain a good understanding about the role of the FRG. FRGs play a vital role in family readiness and resiliency and in assisting units and families with dealing with and recovering from over a decade of back to back deployments. The reality of the turmoil created within the Army way of life has moved the FRG into an increasingly important and valuable support system for units and families.



Objectives of FRG Overview

- To define the mission and role of the FRG
- To review the structure of FRG operations
- To highlight how FRGs need to adapt to changing times – what FRGs need to do now



What is a FRG?

“A FRG is a command-sponsored organization of Soldiers, civilian employees, family members and volunteers belonging to a unit.”

(Source: AR 608-1, Appendix J)



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FRG Purpose

- Assist unit commander in enhancing family readiness.
- Encourage self-sufficiency by providing information, referral assistance and mutual support.
- Provide a network of communications among family members, chain of command and community resources, which includes:
 - Providing feedback **to command** on state of unit families.
 - Disseminating official, accurate information **from command** to families
 - Offering referral assistance to community resources.



FRG Mission

- Act as an extension of the unit in providing official, accurate command information.
- Provide mutual care and concern between the command and the FRG membership.
- Advocate more efficient use of available community resources.
- Help families solve problems at the lowest level.



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FRG Activities

Mission Essential

- FRG member meetings
- FRG staff and committee meetings
- Publication and distribution of FRG newsletters
- Maintenance of updated family rosters and family readiness information
- Establishment of FRG telephone tree and e-mail distribution lists
- Scheduling educational briefings for FRG members



FRG Activities (continued)

Non-mission activities

- FRG social activities
- FRG fundraising activities

Note: While FRG social activities can be valuable, they are not funded by the unit's appropriated funds. The FRG must use its FRG informal fund.

Specific guidance on funding of FRG activities is provided in the class entitled "West Point FRG Treasurer's Training". Additionally, the West Point SOP for Resources and Fundraising provides installation specific information and guidelines.



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FRGs Are Not

- The ladies' coffee group
- Just for deployment
- Only for people with problems
- A long-term babysitting service
- Part of casualty notification process
- Fundraising entity for unit



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Discussion: FRGs Are Not

There are (have been) some misunderstandings about the purpose of the FRG.

Coffee groups and FRGs are not the same thing. A unit may have any number of coffee groups, but there is only one FRG per unit. Everyone connected to the unit is automatically considered a member of the FRG regardless of whether any of the Soldiers, civilians or family members (immediate and extended, such as parents, siblings, or fiancées) choose to participate. Further, the FRG has a specific stated function, which is to provide information and mutual support. The FRG may provide social activities, but does not serve solely as a social function.

While West Point does not have units that deploy, individuals are tasked to deploy, which creates an ongoing need for deployment support. The FRG is being called upon to assist units, Soldiers and families in each phase of the deployment cycle. Their families, in some instances, have remained here in the West Point community.



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Discussion: FRGs Are Not

The purpose of the FRG is to keep families informed and to provide education and mutual support to assist families. This is a benefit to all unit families. However, when families are experiencing a problem, the FRG will refer families to the appropriate agency for assistance. It is not the function of the FRG to solve families' problems.

In the event of an emergency or casualty, an FRG may offer to assist with child care arrangements and limited babysitting. FRGs do not provide long-term child care, but can refer individuals to installation or community child care services.

Notification of a casualty is the responsibility of the Casualty Notification Officer and never the FRG. In the event of a casualty, the FRG provides support **if requested** by the family.

Events planned by the unit are not the responsibility of the FRG. The FRG does not raise money for the unit. Unit informal funds and FRG informal funds should never be mixed. Refer to the West Point SOP for FRG Resources and Fundraising for more detailed information.



FRG Structure

Company Level: Typically establishes FRG.

Battalion Level: Advisory role to company level FRGs. May establish FRG for battalion or an FRG for battalion HQ unit.

- Battalion Commander
- FRG Steering Committee
- FRG Advisor

Brigade and Division Level: Advise battalion leadership on readiness issues and policy issues.



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Discussion: FRG Structure

FRGs are typically established at the company level. In some instances, a single central FRG may exist at battalion level. These are usually found in military school situations, separate companies, or units that typically do not deploy as a unit, such as a hospital.

The battalion commander provides guidance and support through the battalion FRG steering committee and company commanders. The battalion commander also advises and authorizes support and funding for FRGs.

The battalion steering committee is headed by the FRG Advisor, who is typically, but not always, the commander's spouse. The FRG steering committee informs FRGs on battalion commander's family readiness plans and policies. The committee also provides guidance to company-level FRGs on activities needed and how to address emerging FRG and family issues.



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FRGs in Changing Times

- Army reorganized into more flexible, rapidly deployable force for wartime.
- Military operations conducted by Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) AND joint forces.
- Transitioning from back-to-back deployments to few-to-no deployments
- Army recognizes broader Soldier's "family".
- Keeping the family ready and resilient in the face of new changes.



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Discussion: FRGs in Changing Times

The Army's goal is to be a more flexible, rapidly deployable force. As part of attaining this goal, the Army transitioned to Brigade Combat Teams to conduct military operations. The reliance and use of joint forces (i.e., multi-component and sister services) for military operations remains ongoing. Thus, FRGs are needed in all components (i.e., active, National Guard, and Reserve). Also each FRG may be called upon to serve families in other Army components and military services when Soldiers are temporarily assigned to other units for deployment.

There are many different people involved in a Soldier's life who will be seeking information from the military about the Soldier's well-being during deployment. As a result, the FRG must now provide information to a larger network of Soldier's family to include parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other important individuals identified by Soldiers (e.g., caregiver of Soldier's children during deployment, fiancée).



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Discussion: FRGs in Changing Times (cont)

After more than a decade of seemingly endless deployments, the momentum and focus of the Army is changing again. FRGs play a large role in keeping families ready and resilient in the face of the new changes and challenges that come with change.



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What FRGs Need To Do in Today's Environment

- Support a diverse FRG membership
- Be operational in all phases of Army Force Generation (ARFOGEN) Cycle
- Support individual Soldiers and their families
- Prepare for situations that can impact a unit/unit family
- Conduct practice exercises



Discussion: What FRGs Need To Do in Today's Environment

Recognize new definition of unit “family”; FRG must support a diverse FRG membership; Refer back to Slide 14.

Be operational at all times not just “during deployment”; FRG has tasks to perform in each phase of ARFOGEN cycle

Need to support individual Soldiers and their families not just solely focused on unit; FRG must provide same service regardless of number deploying

Prepare for situations that can impact a unit/unit family; Conduct practice exercises to ensure system is working properly (phone tree, emails, etc)



FRG Supports the Unit's "Family"

Soldiers/Service Members

- Assigned
- Attached to unit for deployment (augmentees)

Family Members

- Spouses
- Children
- Extended family (parents, grandparents, etc.)
- Others as identified by Soldiers (e.g., boy/girlfriends, fiancées, guardians).

These individuals may be geographically dispersed.



FRG Supports the Unit's “Family”

All service members (Soldiers, sailors, airmen) in a unit are part of a family that may comprise parents, grandparents, siblings and other relatives. It's possible that three generations reside with the Soldier: Soldier's parents, Soldier and spouse, and Soldier's children. Or many of these family members could live in different geographical areas and some distance from the location of the FRG. Nonetheless, these families are considered part of the FRG and should be included in information sharing if the Soldier wishes. Sending a newsletter or e-mail to geographically distant family members can be a useful way to keep these family members informed of unit happenings, and not just about deployments.

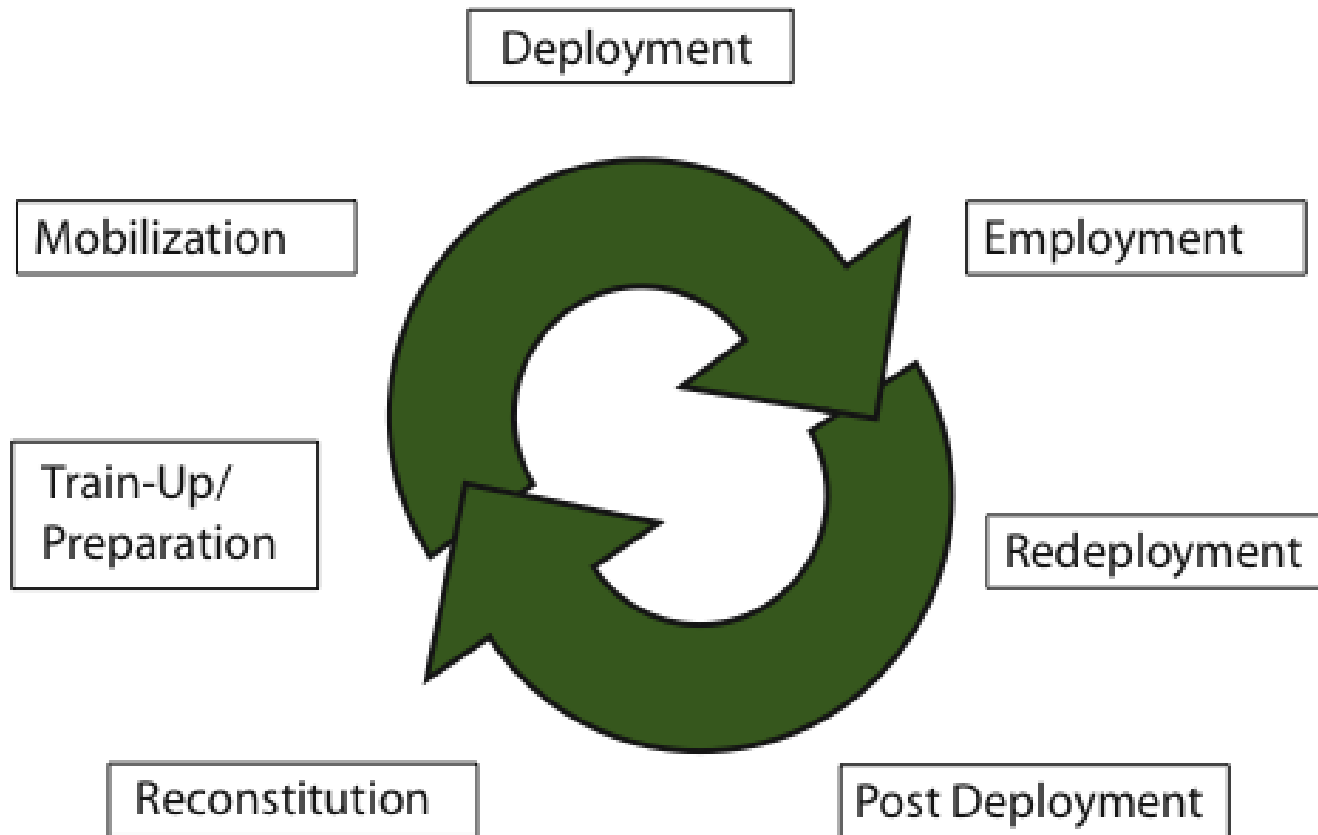


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FRG Supports ARFORGEN Cycle





Discussion: FRG Roles in ARFORGEN Cycle

Train-up/Preparation and Mobilization Phases: Units focus on reestablishing Soldier readiness and preparing for next mission. Brigade Combat Team receives orders. Soldiers are notified of upcoming mobilization (USAR/ARNG) and deployment. The FRG assists command with Soldier and family preparedness and resiliency.

Deployment and Employment Phases: Individuals and units deploy. During this period, individual Soldiers deploy to replace Soldiers in theatre. The FRG assists command with helping families cope with stress of deployment and separation.

Redeployment: Soldiers start receiving reunion training as part of out-processing while in the theatre. The FRG assists command with preparing families for Soldiers' return, hosting useful classes to assist with the upcoming transition of their Soldiers into the family unit.

Post Deployment and Reconstitution: Soldiers return and face readjustment to work and family life. The FRG assists command with helping Soldiers and families with reunion and reintegration, with more classes or referrals to agencies that can assist with stress management or effective communication within the family.



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FRG Planning and Preparation for Unit/Family Situations

- Get relevant training thru ACS or other sources
- Review the Operation READY materials
- Meet with unit leadership to discuss how unit families will be supported in any situation



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Discussion: FRG Planning and Preparation for Unit/Family Situations

Part of being prepared is preparing for the unexpected. It is important to anticipate what situations might occur (e.g., casualty, natural disaster, family death, combat stress, etc.) and determine, prior to a situation arising, how to handle these situations if and when they occur.



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Discussion: FRG Planning and Preparation for Unit/Family Situations (cont)

Ways to prepare include:

- Ensure FRG Leader and volunteers receive needed training thru ACS and other entities.
- Review the Operation READY materials to enhance knowledge and awareness of key resources
- Have a meeting between unit leadership and FRG leader to discuss how unit families will be supported in any situation (e.g., casualties, natural disaster, family death, etc.).



Benefits of Effective FRGs

These groups reap different benefits from having and using a FRG effectively.

- Families
- Soldiers
- Commanders
- Communities



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Benefits of Effective FRGs

Families

- Connection to unit and unit families
- Connection to community resources
- Able to problem-solve
- Ability to cope with issues that arise
- Improved resiliency

Soldiers

- Peace of mind/
Reduced stress
- Ability to focus on mission



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Discussion: Benefits of Effective FRGs

Families:

FRGs provide families with a sense of belonging to the unit and Army community. They provide a means for families to develop friendships and connect with people with similar issues. In addition, the FRG connects families to available community resources through referrals to agencies and scheduling educational briefings or guest speakers from community agencies. These referrals and educational efforts also enable families to solve their problems, help cope with the stresses inherent with being a military family, and improve overall resiliency.

Soldiers:

Soldiers also benefit from a well-run FRG. They can be assured that their families are cared for and supported during separations, allowing them to focus on their duties.



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Benefits of Effective FRGs (cont)

Commanders

- Ability to be more responsive to family issues
- Reduced time spent handling individual soldier/family issues
- Increased family readiness and unit preparedness

Community

- Reduced occurrence of crisis situations
- Increased ability to support Soldiers and families where they live



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Discussion: Benefits of Effective FRGs (cont)

Commanders:

The degree to which the FRG can keep command informed enables command to be able to address family issues. Also to the extent that FRG's assistance with educational efforts and referrals helps families, reduces the likelihood that families will contact command for help with family problems.

Community:

A FRG can assist the community, whether military or civilian, by referring families to agencies before problems become a crisis (which generally occurs when families are unable to solve a problem on their own). Since communities often do not know about the military families in their area, the FRG referring families to local community agencies enables communities to help Soldiers and families where they live.



YOUR TRAINING IS COMPLETE!

Thank for completing the FRG Overview Training Online.

For your convenience, you may save this PDF file for future reference.

**PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE NEXT SLIDE TO
TAKE THE QUIZ AND RECEIVE YOUR CERTIFICATE OF TRAINING.**

**If you have any questions that weren't answered during this class, please
contact our office at 845-938-4621.**



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Open a new internet browser and visit <http://quizstar.4teachers.org/indexs.jsp>.

- Register for Quiz Star by clicking the yellow “**SIGN UP**” arrow and create a username and password.
- On the next screen, select “Click here to search for a new class.”
- In the Class #1 box, type “West Point FRG Overview” and select “Exact Match”. Check the checkbox next to the training and click the “Register” button.
- The following screen confirms your enrollment in the class. Click the “Classes” tab at the top of the page to view your enrollment.
- Click on 1 Untaken Quizzes and on the next page, click “Take Quiz” to begin.
- You must pass with an 80% or better to receive a Certificate of Training.
- Once you pass the quiz, email michelle.bradley@usma.edu with your contact information. It may take 1-2 business days to process your certificate.