DA Pam 608-47 Cy. 1

Department of the Army
Pamphlet 608–47

Personal Affairs

A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups

Headquarters
Department of the Army
Washington, DC
16 August 1993

UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY of CHANGE

DA PAM 608-47
A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups

This revision provides--

- Defines Commanders' role in FSG management (para 1-8)
- Clarifies FSG Volunteer Leadership selection (para 2-2)
- Emphasizes volunteer participation at the lowest levels (para 2-5)
- Updates FSG roles, functions, and authorized support (chap 3)
- Updates fund raising activities (para 3-9)

Headquarters
Department of the Army
Washington, DC
16 August 1993

*Department of the Army
Pamphlet 608–47

Personal Affairs

A Guide to Establishing Family Support Groups

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

MILTON H. HAMILTON
Administrative Assistant to the
Secretary of the Army

History. This issue publishes a revision of this publication. Because the publication has been extensively revised, the changed portions have not been highlighted.

Summary. This pamphlet provides guidance for establishing and sustaining family support groups (FSGs) within units, and enhancing FSG activities for the benefit of soldiers and family members in the unit.

Applicability. This pamphlet applies to the Active Army, Army National Guard (ARNG), and U. S. Army Reserve (USAR). This publication is not applicable during full mobilization.

Proponent and exception authority. The proponent of this regulation is the U. S. Army Community and Family Support Center. The proponent has the authority to approve exceptions to this regulation that are consistent with controlling law and regulation. Proponents may delegate this approval authority, in writing, to a division chief under their supervision within the proponent agency in the grade of colonel or the civilian equivalent.

Interim changes. Interim changes are not official unless they are authenticated by the Adjutant General. Users will destroy interim changes on their expiration dates unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

Suggested improvements. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA FORM 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to HQDA(CFSC–FSA), 2461 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22331–0521.

Distribution. Distribution of the publication is made in accordance with DA Form 12–09–E, Block number 4732, intended for command level A, B, C, D, and E for Active Army, A, B, C, and D for the ARNG, and the USAR.

Contents (Listed by paragraph and page number)

Chapter 1
Program Management, *page 1*
Concept and purpose • 1–1, *page 1*
References • 1–2, *page 1*
Explanation of abbreviations • 1–3, *page 1*
Who are the members of the family support group • 1–4, *page 1*
Why does the Army need family support groups • 1–5, *page 1*
The Army Family Support System • 1–6, *page 2*
Family support groups • 1–7, *page 2*
Military unit and Family Support Group linkage • 1–8, *page 2*
Community services and family support group linkage • 1–9, *page 3*

Chapter 2
The Organization of Family Support Groups, *page 3*
Introduction • 2–1, *page 3*
Family support group volunteer leadership • 2–2, *page 4*
Organization structure • 2–3, *page 4*
The contact person • 2–4, *page 4*
The company level • 2–5, *page 5*
The battalion level • 2–6, *page 5*

Chapter 3
Family Support Group Roles, Functions, and Authorized Support, *page 5*
General • 3–1, *page 5*
Rosters • 3–2, *page 6*
Family support group role in casualty notification • 3–3, *page 6*
Family support group newsletters • 3–4, *page 6*
Telephone network • 3–5, *page 6*
Authorized support • 3–6, *page 7*
Family support group generated fund • 3–7, *page 7*
Liability • 3–8, *page 8*
Fund raising activities • 3–9, *page 8*

Chapter 4
Volunteer Leadership in Establishing a Family Support Group, *page 8*
Introduction • 4–1, *page 8*
Volunteer recruitment • 4–2, *page 8*
Family support group volunteer and member training • 4–3, *page 8*
Volunteer recordkeeping • 4–4, *page 9*

Chapter 5
Conclusion, *page 9*
Keys to success. • 5–1, *page 9*
Family support group evaluation. • 5–2, *page 9*

Appendixes
A. References, *page 10*
B. Sample Responsibilities, *page 10*
C. Sample Family Support Group Support Worksheet, *page 11*
D. Guidelines for Telephone Contact, *page 11*
E. Volunteer Job Description Format, *page 12*

*This pamphlet supersedes DA Pamphlet 608-47, 8 January 1988.

UNCLASSIFIED

Figure List

Figure 2–1. Family Support Group Interrelationships, *page 4*
Figure C–1. Sample Family Support Worksheet, *page 11*

Glossary

Index

Chapter 1
Program Management

1–1. Concept and purpose

a. This pamphlet provides guidance for commands on establishing and sustaining family support groups (FSGs) within units, and enhancing FSG activities for the benefit of members of the Total Army Family. Many different types of support groups exist within the Army community. For the purpose of this pamphlet, a FSG is an organization of family members, volunteers, and soldiers belonging to a unit, that together provide an avenue of mutual support and assistance, and a network of communications among the family members, the chain of command, and community resources. Although the typical FSG will be unit-based, many organizations, directorates, and staff agencies also benefit from active FSGs. There are also circumstances during which community-based FSGs should be established. FSGs help create a climate of mutual support within the unit. Basic FSG goals include supporting the military mission through provision of support, outreach, and information to family members. FSGs play an integral part in the Total Army Family Program (TAFP).

b. The TAFP emphasizes both military and personal preparedness and outlines commanders' responsibilities to ensure assistance to establish and maintain personal and family affairs and readiness. This can be found in AR 600–20, Army Command Policy. Roles and sample responsibilities are at appendix B. Policy includes those family assistance services and related programs which support quality of life, readiness, and retention, and meet the Army's obligation to soldiers and their families by ensuring the effective interface between Family Assistance and Family Support. Through unit family support plans, peacetime and mobilization requirements are coordinated and implemented to ensure programs and services are made available. Family support plans include the coordinated efforts of family support groups, unit commanders, and community agency staff.

(1) *Family assistance* — that contractual or statutory obligation the Army has toward its soldiers and civilian employees and retirees, (e.g., identification cards, Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS), and the programs and services available to assist commanders in fulfilling their morale, welfare and quality of life responsibilities to soldiers and their families such as Army Community Service (ACS), Child Development Services (CDS), Youth Services (YS), and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs, etc.).

(2) *Family support* — the mutual reinforcement provided soldiers and civilian employees and retirees, and family members— both immediate and extended (e.g., FSGs, new letters, telephone trees, and other volunteer programs and activities).

c. The Total Army Family (TAF) consists of soldiers (Active, Guard, and Reserve), civilian employees, and retirees, and their legal dependent family members. Single individuals are full participants in the TAFP. In quality of life issues, they should be provided the same opportunities as any other members of the TAF.

1–2. References

Required and related publications are listed at appendix A.

1–3. Explanation of abbreviations

Explanation of abbreviations are explained in the glossary.

1–4. Who are the members of the family support group

a. FSG membership as outlined in paragraph 1–1 above can include unit family members (both immediate and extended such as mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, etc) and soldiers as well as others interested in the welfare of the members (i.e., fiances, retirees, etc.).

b. There are also various levels of member involvement. Two of the most common are volunteers and participants. This distinction is important as commanders may authorize certain reimbursements for incidental expenses for recognized volunteers in the FSG. These are outlined in paragraph 3-6, Authorized Support. The following distinction is provided—

(1) *Official volunteers.* FSG volunteers are members of the FSG who donate their time and services to any of a variety of FSG projects and activities. Volunteers may be family members, soldiers or Department of the Army Civilians (DACS). Many volunteers are spouses of soldiers. Under the provision 10 United States Code 1588, FSG volunteers are recognized as official in matters of tort claims and for purposes of reimbursement.

(2) *Participants.* FSG participants are normally those who participate in FSG activities such as classes, seminars, and social events, but are not actively involved in the planning, managing, or delivery of the activity.

1–5. Why does the Army need family support groups

When people talk about FSGs, they may assume that they are a relatively new system within the Army. FSGs are not new. They are simply an institutionalization of activities in which soldiers and family members have been involved since the beginning of U.S. military service. FSGs are people helping people. FSGs benefit—

a. The family member. Unit FSGs foster a sense of belonging to the unit and community, and provide a vehicle for families to develop friendships while they gain information about the unit and community. In addition, they provide information, referral, and share support during deployments. Through successful FSG efforts, many spouses have developed a more positive attitude toward themselves, a better understanding of why deployments are necessary and the Army mission to maintain readiness

b. The soldier. FSGs provide support that communicates command caring, integrity of care, and as open and honest communication as possible. This allows soldiers to trust in that care, which enables them to concentrate on the mission at hand, and have the emotional readiness to carry out that mission. FSGs help develop a confidence in soldiers that family members will receive reliable and friendly support when the soldier is away. This can be a meaningful stabilizer for soldier performance in the unit, and an enhancer of training and psychological readiness to fight.

c. The unit command. FSGs and the resources they have available to them in the command structure can assist in developing resilient families that are better able to cope and function in times of separation and or crisis. A unit FSG affords increased levels of confidence, commitment, and a sense of well-being among soldiers and family members, and the potential for fewer training distractors. The FSG can contribute to unit cohesion and soldier readiness. Through prevention and education programs and family activities, FSGs can help families overcome problems that are likely to impact adversely on soldier performance. A well functioning FSG can minimize family distractors conserving the unit commanders' time and resources (psychological, social, and budgetary) for military purposes.

d. The Active Duty Installation, Army National Guard State Area Command, Major U.S. Army Reserve Command. Through information and proactive education and prevention programs, unit FSGs can provide early identification of serious family problems and provide information and referral at an earlier stage. This can reduce the amount of trauma the family experiences and the level of demand placed on installation or community agencies. FSGs are able to supply information and referral services to family members concerning military and civilian community resources and opportunities, and can foster interdependence and family member resiliency. The FSG can contribute to other Army family programs that enhance the overall quality of community life, such as sponsorship of newly arrived families to the unit, post, armory, or Reserve center, outreach programs for off-post and geographically separated families, prevention of social-psychological isolation among junior enlisted families, rumor control, and support of family members experiencing undue stress during deployment.

e. The Army. One major goal of a FSG is to help family members feel they are an integral part of the Army family. For example, Army family research has shown that young military spouses have

difficulty integrating into the Army way of life. A unit FSG program, combined with effective community resources, can instill confidence among spouses and family members that they are truly a part of the Army family. This, coupled with a training program that challenges the soldier and family members helps new families feel more at home in Army communities.

1–6. The Army Family Support System

a. FSGs are part of a larger Army system which involves implementation of unit family support plans. The Army family support system consists of family support plans which integrate the efforts of FSGs, commanders, and community support agencies for peacetime and mobilization preparedness. The requirements for peacetime family support plans are different from those during mobilization.

(1) *Family support recuirements during peacetime.* To be effective, a unit family support plan must be developed and in place prior to the deployment or the extended training exercise. A plan typically outlines the Army and civilian community agencies and services available to assist units during peacetime and deployment activities. Agency points of contact (POCs) and phone numbers with a summary of services provided is generally included in the plan. Duties and responsibilities of a rear detachment commander (RDC) are outlined should appointment be necessary. The interaction which occurs among FSG Leaders, RDC, and Family Assistance Center (FAC) staff during deployment or mobilization and emergencies is an important element of family support plans. If not already in use, FSGs may wish to test their telephone trees during peacetime to ensure better communication success during deployment.

(2) *Family support requirements during mobilization.* Family support plans are activated during deployment or mobilization. The roles of the RDC, FSG, and FAC are limited to the coordination of resources to foster a caring support network for families whose soldiers are away. Briefings in such areas as pre-deployment, deployment, mass casualty emergency situations, post deployment, and reunion are typically scheduled in preparation for deployment. Military units may create a rear detachment (RD) when it deploys for extended periods of time. It is the primary point of contact for family members who have questions or need support during the deployment process. The RDC is in charge of unit FSGs which are organized to provide mutual support for the unit's family members. Frequently, information provided through FSGs will decrease the need for individuals to seek assistance from RD or FACs. FSGs are usually very active during deployment exercises with participation at its greatest but it also operates in periods of normal operation as well when participation may be less. A FAC may be established on and off Army installations during periods of lengthy deployment. The FAC brings together POCs from key community agencies into a centralized area to provide "one stop" support and assistance in such areas as financial matters, family advocacy, ID Cards, DEERS, health care, legal concerns, and family psychological support.

1–7. Family support groups

a. Unit FSGs are a command sponsored vehicle for people within the unit to help each other. FSGs provide a communication network to pass information to families, and a conduit to identify problems or needs to the command. In addition to communication and family activities, FSGs create a unique atmosphere of mutual care and concern among unit families. FSG groups also become a vital link between families, the RD, the soldiers and community agencies during mobilization and deployments. While the general goals of FSGs outlined in paragraph 2-1 *d,* below, are the same during both peacetime and mobilizations, the focus of what the groups provide will change depending on the phase of the mobilization or deployment. Information about the unit FSG leaders and activities is normally distributed in pre-deployment briefings.

b. During deployment FSGs must closely coordinate their efforts with those of the military family support personnel listed in paragraph 2-5. Coordinated efforts are essential to—

(1) Ensure FSG integration into the unit's deployment family support plan.

(2) Clarify the role and responsibilities of FSG volunteers, the RDC, and FAC staff, and any other key resource people that may be involved. Clarification of roles both within the FSG and between the FSG representatives and military representatives is essential, especially during deployment situations. These roles need to be spelled out prior to deployment (and in the case of the Reserve Component (RC), mobilization), and closely adhered to in both a deployment and non-deployment situation.

(3) Set an early precedent on the importance of all family support components working together. When key members of an integrated system have a role in organizing and evaluating that system, their desire to see it work effectively increases.

c. Army research has shown that commands having effective FSG programs have defined two alternating missions for FSGs in relation to military unit activities and deployments. Based on this research, it is recommended that FSGs organize to provide two distinct levels of effort at different times— an action level and sustaining level. In periods of unit deployment the FSG operates at a high level of activity and during periods when the unit is at home station, the FSG operates to sustain a reduced but functional level of interest and participation among unit family members.

(1) *Activated function.* The action level of effort is concentrated around events such as pre-deployment and mobilization, deployment, and the immediate post-deployment periods. FSGs are also activated during the unit start-up and other periods of transition within the unit. FSGs provide support to family members and soldiers by offering accurate and helpful information on unit activities and referral assistance about community resources. Activities during this level are geared toward helping family members prepare for imminent separation, cope during the separation, and to bond with other family members in the unit.

(2) *Sustaining function.* The sustaining level of effort by the FSG takes place at a reduced degree of interaction between FSG volunteers and family members as well as within the FSG organization. This period occurs mainly during non-deployment periods, but minimal sustainment roles may also operate from time to time during extended deployments. During the sustainment period, FSGs update rosters of family member addresses and telephone numbers, continue regular meetings between FSG representatives and unit leaders, and, through group meetings or telephone contacts, provide welcoming, sponsorship, orientation, and networking support for new family members and families in crisis or transition.

1–8. Military unit and Family Support Group linkage

Since the purpose of a FSG is to enhance the military mission and benefit family members, the groups cannot be much more than a social group without command support. A few of the important military links are—

a. Rear detachment. A RD is usually created when a unit deploys or goes on extended field exercises. Unit RD are often the first source of information for family members who have questions on family matters during separations. The RD provides a link between families, soldiers, the deployed unit, and community support agencies.

b. Unit commander. Each FSG operates within the unit through the direct support of the commander. With clear-cut support and active backing of the commander, the FSG will develop effectively, and will not spend a great deal of its energy fighting the "system." It is important to note that the group legitimacy comes primarily from the commander's willingness to support the volunteers in the group. However, this function does not necessarily require an extensive investment of time from a commander. The commander must have full knowledge of FSG planned activities and have easy access to its representatives to provide guidance, offer unit resources and facilities, create a climate of caring for family members, and ensure recognition and appreciation for FSG leaders and volunteers.

c. Unit chaplain. The unit chaplain is often a key advisor and resource to the FSG. The chaplain, aided by the chaplain assistant, helps the commander provide a solid foundation for training, sustainment, and facilities to the FSG and key volunteers. Specifically,

the Unit Ministry Team (UMT) is a resource to the FSG in the areas of marriage and family problems, stress, parenting classes and concerns, grief and transition support, spiritual support and guidance, and communication of soldier and family concerns to the command.

d. Unit information system. The unit should be the primary source of information for FSGs. FSG representatives and the military unit representatives, such as command sergeants major, first sergeants, company commanders, executive officers, adjutants, personnel noncommissioned officers, and chaplains should develop appropriate working relationships with FSG leaders to establish an effective exchange of information. Additionally, FSG leaders can provide a wealth of information for the unit system through timely feedback on perceptions, needs, and reactions of family members. The two way communication established can substantially improve unit and family morale.

e. Unit facilities. FSG access to meeting places with the unit is an important asset the command can offer the FSG. Unit day rooms, lawns, dining facilities, chapels, theaters, and other installation facilities, Army National Guard armories, and U.S. Army Reserve centers are the most accessible and acceptable meeting places depending on the size of the group and the function and activity. Access to other types of support (i.e., unit telephones, reproduction capabilities, mailing privileges, and equipment) is outlined in chapter 3. Unit support of FSG activities through provision of facilities for meetings, parties, refreshments, and child care services can be a basis for positive bonding between the unit and the family.

1–9. Community services and family support group linkage

a. There are many agencies on the installation or in the community dedicated to assisting or supporting the Army family. Installation and Unit Chaplains, ACS, Installation Volunteer Coordinator (IVC), the Family Support Division, Army National Guard State Family Program Coordinators, U.S. Army Reserve Family Program Coordinators, the ARC, United Service Organization (USO), and other community human resource agencies and private organizations can help in providing training and assist in linking to other installation and community services. FSGs at the unit level should make effective use of all available community resources on behalf of their family members.

b. The purpose of a Family Assistance Center (FAC) is to furnish information, assistance, guidance, and referral to units and families of soldiers in the event of unit mobilization, deployment, or at times, in response to a major disaster during a deployment. An example of the latter was the activation of a FAC in response to the 101st Airborne plane crash in Gander, Newfoundland.

(1) An installation FAC is activated at the commander's discretion. It is not necessarily activated for all deployments and field exercises. When activated, services from a wide variety of military and civilian agencies are available at a centralized location. In some cases, commanders may decide to offer extended or 24-hour service at the FAC for periods that warrant these extended hours. On post agencies participating in the FAC often include ACS, medical treatment facilities, the American Red Cross (ARC), Army Emergency Relief (AER), finance, provost marshal, legal advisors, chaplains, housing, and transportation. A FAC officer is designated to coordinate the activities of the FAC. This is usually the ACS officer for the active component.

(2) The Army National Guard is the lead agency to establish FACs during all levels of contingency and mobilization for those military families who do not live near installations. These FACs will link families with information and available services. The Army National Guard FACs will provide services to any family of deployed military personnel, regardless of service or component, who live in the vicinity. For the Army National Guard, the FAC will also fulfill Rear Detachment requirements.

Chapter 2
The Organization of Family Support Groups

2–1. Introduction

a. When we talk about FSGs, people usually think we are talking about something new. FSGs are not new. They are, quite simply, a formalization of activities spouses have been involved in since the beginning of military service. We also often hear statements like "this FSG is nothing like the one in my last unit." This is probably very true, but isn't necessarily bad. Each FSG will reflect the particular needs of the unit and of the families who are members. A Special Forces unit at Fort Bragg would have a FSG with needs different from soldiers stationed at a training installation, National Guard or U.S. Army Reserve unit, or Army depot.

b. There is no "best way" to structure a FSG. The structure should be tailored to the unit, its mission, and the makeup of its family members. There are many different agencies that can help you establish a FSG in your unit. One of the first places to check, once you decide to set up a program in your unit or organization, is with other units or organizations which already have a program in place. Then visit the ACS office at your installation. Reserve Component units should contact the Army National Guard (ARNG) State Family Program Coordinator or Major U.S. Army Reserve Command (MUSARC) Family Program Coordinator through their unit chain of command. These agency representatives can help identify what is already in place, and help design or tailor a program to meet specific identified unit and family needs. Five other places to find out what is available in the local area are—

(1) The unit or organization staff.
(2) Chaplain in the unit or chapel.
(3) The installation Family Support Division.
(4) The Installation Volunteer Coordinator (IVC).
(5) Reserve Component program coordinators

c. The FSG approach focuses on unit of deployments. Its organizational structure depends on local conditions such as the type of military organization, geographic proximity, and unit size.

d. General goals and activities of FSGs include—

(1) Provide an opportunity for family members to mutually support and assist one another.

(2) Develop and operate systems to provide information and education programs, welcome and orient new families, promote involvement, and prevent isolation.

(3) Interact with military family members, the unit commander, and the rear detachment commander or military POC at the unit and higher levels.

(4) Help involve families in unit activities.

(5) Refer family needs that cannot be met by the FSG to the appropriate unit, installation, or community resource.

(6) Provide information to families who remain in the local area while soldiers serve unaccompanied tours.

(7) Assist the unit in developing and evaluating mobilization and deployment handbooks. Ensure that all family members have deployment handbooks and installation and unit telephone directories.

e. Activities in which FSGs should not be involved include—

(1) Becoming surrogate parents.
(2) Becoming social workers.
(3) Lending money, cars, or expensive items.
(4) Dividing into groups (i.e., enlisted vs officer spouses, ethnic groups, religious groups, etc.).
(5) Becoming a babysitting or errand service.
(6) Duplicating on-post or community activities (i.e. providing food, money, etc.).

f. Participation in a FSG should be strongly encouraged but, cannot be mandated. When family members understand the need for a FSG they are more willing to become involved in one. Even when interest is present, the development of a responsive, well functioning FSG is often a slow process, especially in units that are not facing an impending deployment or extended training exercise. An impending or anticipated deployment creates a coalescing effect by increasing

the need felt by family members to bond together to help one another cope with a common "crisis." Without this "crisis," whether impending or anticipated, a coalescing effect may not be present. This does not mean that the formation of a FSG will be impossible, just more difficult.

g. Other factors often mentioned in starting and maintaining successful FSG programs are—

(1) The genuine concern, interest, and willingness of family members to establish and sustain the FSG.

(2) Family member leadership and participation in organizing and operating the FSG.

(3) Commander linkage to demonstrate and assure active support for an approval of FSG activities.

(4) Early contact of spouses new to the unit by leaders or volunteers of the FSG.

(5) Existence of a command and family member committee to develop the organizational structure of the total family support system for mobilization and deployment, to delineate the respective roles of each component, and to formalize an ongoing command linkage to the FSG and family members for information exchange.

(6) Appointment of FSG volunteer leaders at the company or battery and battalion levels.

(7) Formal incorporation of the FSG into the unit written deployment family assistance plan.

(8) A local FSG plan with purpose, goals, objectives, structure, and responsibilities outlined to define it as a command program.

h. Although the FSG must have strong command support and backing, it must belong to the unit FSG members. They must organize and operate the FSG, with unit support. Without an organized, well developed, and self-directed structure, a FSG may not survive adverse events, may not maintain an effective and comprehensive family support network, may not maintain adequate participation on the part of family members, and may not effectively anticipate and address the issues and concerns important to family members.

2–2. Family support group volunteer leadership

a. Studies have shown that a variety of volunteer leadership options occur in FSGs. The overriding factor that contributes to the leader's success and group satisfaction is that he or she is truly a volunteer and not assuming the position of leadership merely because of his or her spouse's military position. Commanders are ultimately responsible for unit FSGs. In all cases, FSG leaders must be approved by the commander. Volunteer leaders of FSGs are usually—

(1) Volunteers elected by the group.

(2) Volunteers who emerge from the group.

b. Regardless of the method used in designating the FSG leader, leaders and key volunteers should be acknowledged in writing. For example, if the commander's spouse does not play the role of the unit FSG leader, this person can be recognized as an advisor to the FSG and an informal intermediary with senior spouses in the "chain of concern" or command spouse organization within the community. The commander's spouse may be included in planning and executing programs and activities to the extent they wish to be involved.

c. The commander's spouse or his or her representative is the person who participates in command and staff spouse activities and functions regardless of whether they are the FSG leader. As such, they will be a conduit of pertinent information from this source for the FSG. For example, there are also various social and coffee groups such as battalion officers or NCO and EM spouse groups within units which are not "official". There are also numerous other sub-groups that can form within the unit. Individuals within the FSG may be members of one or many of the various groups at one time which are not necessarily the official FSG. See figure 2–1.

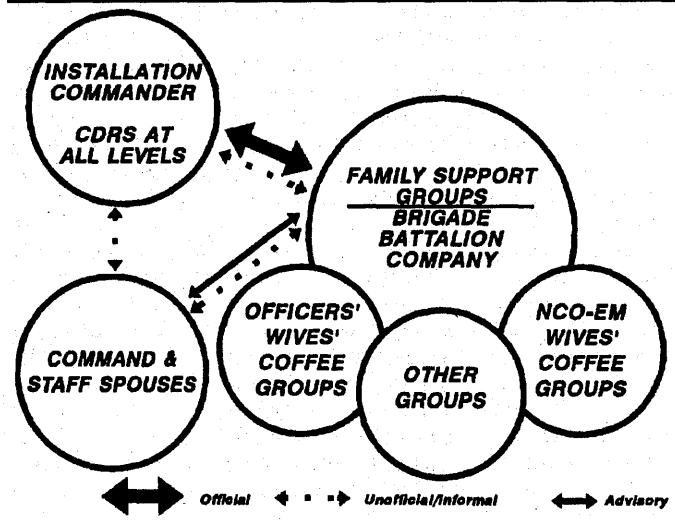


Figure 2–1. Family Support Group Interrelationships

2–3. Organization structure

a. FSGs can be organized to form a communication and support network as follows—

(1) Contact person.

(2) Company volunteer leadership.

(3) Battalion volunteer leadership and facilitators.

b. Each level in the structure is designed to facilitate communication, to ensure contact, and to encourage mutual support. This structure may need to be modified depending on the organization and geographic location of the various components.

c. FSG structure within the company are the contact people and company volunteer leadership. In many cases the primary focus of FSG activity occurs at the company level. This is particularly true when group members have a sense of ownership. Army research indicates that FSGs at the smallest unit level are the most successful. The quality of FSG activity within a unit will most directly determine its effectiveness. Strong and visible unit command support is essential to ensure that an active communication and support network extends throughout the unit and reaches all family members. Strong unit command support also encourages volunteerism and participation by family members, soldiers, and even the single soldier.

2–4. The contact person

a. A common FSG organization, in order to form a communication and support network, needs a system by which it can contact everyone. The FSG contact system is the most essential network of the organization. In this network, the unit's entire family member population is divided into sub-segments or groups. Each segment is centered around a contact person. A contact person is a family member volunteer who assumes communication and support responsibility for a group.

b. Contact people initiate and maintain basic contact with family members. Suggested basic contact generally consists of at least one telephone call or visit every two weeks to everyone in the contact group during deployment, and less often, as appropriate, when the soldiers are at home station. This process reduces social isolation and reassures family members that there is a communication, support, and information system operational and at their disposal. Information calls are normally better received than calls merely to "check up on" families. Contact people also—

(1) Distribute accurate, timely information.

(2) Identify family member concerns arising within their groupings.

(3) Act to have these concerns addressed in a timely manner at appropriate organizational levels.

c. During deployments, contact people may become major sources of unit information for family members. They are often the first to know of family concerns and, most often, are available to coordinate support for family members. They are helpful in providing accurate information, in soliciting volunteer assistance, and reducing stressful fears or countering false rumors.

d. Several factors determine the number and size of groups in each unit. These factors include the number of family members in a unit, and the number of family member volunteers recruited as contact people. Generally, three to ten contact groups will cover company size units, with six to ten family members in group. A contact group circle should not exceed ten families. Larger groups tend to be less cohesive, less personal, overtax the efforts of contact people, and develop communication and support gaps. Often FSGs must live for awhile with a few groups that are larger than desired. This is especially true in the early phases of organization, or when there is no immediate crisis. During those times, it may be more difficult to recruit volunteers.

e. While groups most often follow the organizational alignment of the associated military unit (i.e., the group based on the sponsor's unit assignment) some groups have experienced success geographically where large numbers of military families live in one area. The RC has had success with geographical contact groups since many of their families live far from National Guard armories or Reserve centers.

2–5. The company level

a. The company FSG leader or point of contact (POC) is one of the first volunteer leadership roles within a FSG. Its participants are the contact people and the company FSG leader(s) who together operate company FSGs.

b. FSGs benefit by meeting regularly to organize activities. FSG members—

(1) Implement FSG activities and a communication support network within the company.

(2) Coordinate its activities with the company chain of command.

(3) Form a link with the company military unit, especially the first sergeant.

(4) Initiates supportive actions identified as needed by soldiers and families at this level.

(5) Relates soldier and family member concerns to the battalion when appropriate.

c. Responsibilities of the company volunteer FSG leader include—

(1) Communicating with each contact person regularly as information and need dictate during periods of deployment and as needed during the sustainment period. The purpose of these calls is to support the contact people, to ensure that contact within groups is being maintained, to present frequent opportunities for the transmission of information and the identification of family concerns, to assist contact people in addressing family members concerns, and to obtain concerns that need to be addressed.

(2) Establishing and maintaining military linkages at the company for exchanging pertinent information with company chain of command.

d. Contact people call FSG volunteer leaders as the first step in handling family member issues where they are not sure of the appropriate answer or agency to call. During deployments, FSG leaders interface with unit RDC at company levels.

e. Usually more than one person in each company will assume a role as company volunteer representative. In this case, responsibilities of these representatives must be clearly divided. Overlapping responsibilities lead to confusion and create gaps in the communication and support network. Inclusion of both officer and enlisted family members in FSG leadership is recommended.

f. Personal and face-to-face interaction characterizes the company and contact component within the FSG. Usually, family members come to know one another rather closely. Some FSGs have functioned without need to organize at the battalion and Company FSGs are often short on resources, influence, and access. Organizing and conducting family member events, getting information and resources, and responding to family member concerns can be taxing for a company FSG. For example, producing a unit FSG newsletter can be a difficult task when attempted by one company FSG, but it's a fairly easy task when shared with other FSGs within a battalion.

2–6. The battalion level

a. The battalion FSG leader and or POC is usually the "facilitator" in the FSG network. Participants include battalion FSG volunteers and company FSG volunteer leaders. These representatives—

(1) Plan, activate, and coordinate battalion-wide FSG support.

(2) Support company FSG volunteer leadership.

(3) Address family member concerns appropriate to battalion roles.

(4) Form linkages with the military chain of command.

(5) Transfer pertinent information to company representatives accurately and rapidly.

(6) Form volunteer committees as needed.

(7) Train new members and volunteers.

b. Battalion FSG representatives serve as the interface between family members and battalion leadership. They gather information and access resources from the military battalion and community resource agencies, and manage and coordinate the activities of the FSG. Battalion FSGs serve as a key interface between unit level FSGs and the community. During deployment, FSG leaders are usually the first to be given official information of importance to family members in each unit.

c. Battalion representatives should communicate with all principal company representatives at least once every week during deployment, and as needed during the sustainment period when soldiers are in garrison. The purpose of these contacts is to provide support, ensure continuity of activities, and establish frequent opportunities for the exchange of family member information and concerns.

d. Frequency of battalion representative meetings should be determined by the tasks to be accomplished and the availability of volunteers, however, the battalion committee should attempt to meet at least once a month even during the sustainment period to ensure organizational continuity.

Chapter 3
Family Support Group Roles, Functions, and Authorized Support

3–1. General

a. The type and scope of activities in which the FSG becomes involved depends largely on—

(1) The identified needs of unit soldiers and their families.

(2) The number of FSG volunteers available.

(3) The time, energy, and creativity of those volunteers.

b. The emphasis of activities will also vary depending on whether it is a deployment or non-deployment period for the unit. Since the goal of a FSG is to support the military mission through provision of support, outreach, and information to family members prior to and during periods of family separations, certain FSG activities are essential and common to all groups. These include meetings of FSG volunteer leaders and contact people, publication and distribution of FSG newsletters, maintenance of updated family rosters, and a member telephone tree. Other activities that FSGs commonly sponsor, coordinate, or participate in that directly or indirectly foster unit family support goals are—

(1) Soldier and family sponsorship.

(2) Unit welcoming or newcomers orientation.

(3) Holiday and unit parties or outings.

(4) Deployment briefings.
(5) Relocation briefings.
(6) Workshops (i.e. military benefits, prenatal care, preparing for deployments, services available, coping with stress, reunion, and homecoming, etc.)

3–2. Rosters

a. Three types of rosters are made available to, or generated by, FSGs. These include a unit roster, a FSG membership roster available to all, and a FSG volunteer roster.

b. The unit roster consists of updated names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all soldiers and their families within the unit. This roster can be made available by the unit chain of command to FSG leaders and key volunteers provided consent is obtained from all individuals whose name, address and telephone number appears on the roster. A Privacy Act statement may be used for this purpose. This roster cannot be made available to general membership or be provided to other agencies or groups. The information will be used by those who initiate and maintain contact with families. Release of lists of names, addresses, and telephone numbers to persons other than those who have a specific need for this information in the course of official duties will be according to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and AR 25–55, The Department of the Army Freedom of Information Act Program, paragraph 3–200 (No. 2 and No. 6) and paragraph 5–101 *g*. Release of home addresses or telephone numbers of family members to persons other than those who have a need for this information in the course of official duties will be according to the FOIA, AR 25–55, AR 340–21, The Army Privacy Program, and DA Pam 25–51, The Army Privacy Program-System Notices and Exemption Rules.

c. The FSG membership roster consists of updated names, addresses, and telephone numbers of soldiers and families in the unit. Participation must be on a voluntary basis. A Privacy Act statement must be included on the locally designed form. This roster will be used to prepare a listing of member information to be provided to unit families. To maintain maximum participation, the purpose of collecting this information will need to be explained to soldiers and their family members. This can be done during inprocessing into the unit, at a unit newcomers' briefing, or at a FSG briefing.

d. A FSG volunteer roster contains the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of each unit volunteer and contact person. To make these volunteers accessible, this roster should be given maximum official visibility. All potential FSG leaders and contact people must be informed and their names used only if individuals voluntarily agree in writing to have this information published through use of a Privacy Act Statement disclosure. These rosters should definitely be available in the Staff Duty Officer and FAC duty books, family member directories, and deployment assistance handbooks. FSG volunteer representatives and contact people cannot be effective unless soldiers and family members see them as a legitimate source of help, and know how to contact them. Single soldiers should be made aware that they can designate family members to receive information from the FSG while the soldier is deployed. FSG volunteers can provide a variety of services, but they must be known, and their credibility must be established.

3–3. Family support group role in casualty notification

a. FSG leaders, as volunteers, have no role in the official casualty notification process; however, because of the rapidity of media coverage and the availability of other means of communication, family members may get unofficial word before official notification. The relationship between the family members and the FSG often results in the FSG being the initial source for emotional support. FSGs should limit support to emotional and logistical assistance REQUESTED by the family, not offer to duplicate assistance and services provided through the official military chain and Army service agencies.

b. Coordination should be established during deployments between the installation casualty office, the rear detachment commander (RDC) or military point of contact (POC), and FSG leaders. This will help foster a caring support network and enhance the unit and or installation ability to provide necessary assistance. When FSG leaders are informed of a casualty, they can initiate unit emotional support and give valuable insight to support teams into the family members coping style. FSG leaders and volunteers will not accompany the Casualty Notification Officer, but the support team will offer to call FSG members to assist the family if support is desired.

c. The chaplain is a key individual in the unit, or involved with the unit, in casualty notification and family member support assistance. The unit chaplain is the person the unit FSG leaders can contact for needed family assistance or support in times of grief, and follow-on care for families experiencing grief and loss.

d. Additionally, when FSG leaders become aware of rumored casualties, they should contact the RDC or unit military POC to help clarify and control rumors.

3–4. Family support group newsletters

a. Since the FSG newsletter is designed to reach all family members, its tangible and intangible importance cannot be overemphasized. The FSG newsletter represents one aspect of the FSG outreach program and communication system. Its purpose is to —

(1) Create a family camaraderie similar to that shared by the soldiers.

(2) Relay information from the command and FSG in an effort to reduce social isolation, and convey the command's concern for the soldier and family.

(3) Inform family members about installation, unit assistance programs, and local civilian agencies which may be available to families for both routine and emergency services.(4) Bridge the communication gap between the military unit and family members, thus helping family members better understand not only what the unit is doing, but why.

(5) Inform the spouse of unit-sponsored and military activities.

(6) Provide the spouse an opportunity to realize that others are experiencing many of the same tensions and strains unique to life as part of the military community.

(7) Reflect the Army's concern for a soldier's family and its subsequent importance to his or her job performance.

(8) Institutionalize an important communication link and information source that is vital during a deployment.

b. Each unit should have a Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) or standing operating procedure (SOP) on the preparation, printing, and distribution of the FSG newsletters.

c. The following guidelines meet the requirements of AR 25–30, The Army Integrated Publishing and Printing Program.

(1) FSG newsletters may contain two types of information, official and unofficial. Official FSG information relates to command and mission essential information that the commander believes families should have to be better informed. This includes information about the Army, installation, unit, benefits, unit and FSG sponsored activities, and programs and services available. Unofficial information is non-mission related information such as fund raisers for private organizations, etc.

(2) FSG newsletters must be published in one color ink only and should be limited to a maximum of 16 printed pages. Frequency of publication is at the commander's discretion. In addition, the newsletter must state whether it contains official or unofficial information or both.

(3) Chapter 3 of DoD 4525.8–M, Jul 87, DoD Official Mail Manual, prohibits the use of appropriated funds to mail newsletters that contain unofficial information. It is recommended that nonappropriated funds (NAFs) or FSG generated funds be used when unofficial information is included.

3–5. Telephone network

a. The telephone network (often called the Telephone Tree or Chain of Concern) extends from the military unit to the family member through the battalion and unit representatives and contact people. Contact people probably use the telephone chain the most frequently to convey information, concern, and support to family members, especially during deployment. As with the family member

roster, confidentiality and discretion must be used in conveying information through the telephone chain, whether to another FSG volunteer or to a family member. It is important to transmit valid, accurate information and not rumors or gossip. FSG credibility can be lost if information provided in confidence is passed to individuals who have no need to know the information.

b. There are situations the FSG volunteers should not try to handle, but should immediately try to link the individual with the appropriate community resource personnel. These personnel and agencies should be identified so that appropriate referrals can be made. Sample FSG Support Worksheet and Guidelines on Telephone Networks are at appendix C and appendix D.

3–6. Authorized support

There are three sources from which various FSG activities may receive funds. These include Appropriated Funds (APFs), NAFs, and FSG generated funds.

a. In the category of APF support, there are four types of support to FSGs, with command planning and approval, that can be provided. Support is authorized to "official" volunteers and is outlined in chapter 4, AR 608–1, Army Community Service. These are —

(1) *Official mail.* Volunteers are authorized to use official mail. The requirements are that it must be for an official, mission-related purpose and be approved by the commander. Official mail cannot be used to support private organization activities, fund raisers, or commercial ventures. FSG newsletters are authorized to be mailed with APFs as long as they do not contain unofficial information. Guidelines for defining official information are listed in the next paragraph.

(2) *FSG newsletters.* Newsletters can be printed with APFs provided information is considered official and approved by the commander. Commanders should apply the following guidelines in determining whether the content of these newsletters is official—

(a) Information related to unit mission and readiness, including family readiness.

(b) Information which is educational in nature, designed to promote informed self-reliant Servicemembers and families.

(c) Information regarding Servicemembers and families which promotes unit cohesion and helps strengthen the ongoing esprit among family members within the unit. Personal and social information and information regarding private organizations, fund raisers, and commercial ventures is expressly prohibited.

(3) *Use of Government facilities.* FSG volunteers may use government facilities to include dedicated office space, desks (or desk drawers if more than one volunteer uses the same desk), equipment, supplies, and telephones needed to accomplish their assigned duties. Some installations have chosen to establish FSG resource centers with computers, copiers, files space, and meeting areas to encourage sharing among FSGs.

(4) *Use of military vehicles.* Requirements for use of military vehicles is outlined in AR 58–1, Management, Acquisition, and Use of Administrative Vehicles. Government vehicles may be used to support FSG activities when the following exist—

(a) The appropriate commander determines that the use of the vehicle is for official purposes, and that failure to provide such support would have an adverse effect on soldier morale.

(b) The driver has a valid and current license to operate the vehicle.

(c) The use of the vehicle can be provided without detriment to the accomplishment of the unit's needs.

b. Volunteers may be permitted to operate government-owned or leased administrative vehicles under 10,000 pounds, provided they meet the requirements of AR 600–55, Motor Vehicle Driver and Equipment Operator Selection, Training, Testing and Licensing, (i.e., they possess a valid state driver's license and measures are taken to identify those personnel who are authorized and qualified to operate such vehicles). Those people who operate the administrative vehicles should be screened through the national driver register, to the extent possible, to preclude those personnel with questionable driving records from operating government vehicles. Reports of volunteers injured while performing accepted volunteer work will be according to AR 385–40, Accident Reporting and Records. Permission to operate government-owned or leased administrative vehicles will be in writing. Volunteers may operate government vehicles that have been dispatched to them, and they will be informed of the requirement that government vehicles may be used only for official business.

c. There are three areas where APFs and or NAFs can be used to support FSG volunteers and activities, depending on command approval and funding availability. These are—

(1) *Training and travel.* Commanders may, at their discretion, authorize either APFs or NAFs to pay for travel and training of volunteers to improve their effectiveness in assigned roles or to enable them to accept increasingly responsible challenges. If it is determined that a volunteer and the organization would benefit from training held at another site, or a part of a regularly scheduled conference or workshop, APFs or NAFs can be used to cover enrollment, expenses, travel, and per diem. Invitational travel orders (ITOs) are authorized. AR 37–106, Finance and Accounting for Installations— Travel and Transportation Allowances, authorizes advance travel and transportation allowance to individuals issued ITOs under the provisions of the Joint Federal Travel Regulations.

(2) *Reimbursement of incidental expenses.* It has been recognized that many volunteers take money out of their pockets to provide their volunteer service. Commanders are authorized to use either APFs or NAFs to reimburse FSG leaders and designated volunteers for out-of-pocket costs. Where money is available, volunteers can be provided reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses like child care, telephone costs, and similar expenses. Procedures for reimbursement of incidental expenses are included in ARs 608–1 and 215–1. Again, reimbursements depend on command approval and availability of funds.

(3) *Awards, banquets, and or mementos.* NAFs are authorized for volunteer recognition programs. They can be used for awards, banquets, and to purchase mementos, if budgeted for and approved by the installation commander or Reserve Component (RC) fund custodian. Currently, APFs are not authorized or available for volunteer awards other than official certificates of recognition.

3–7. Family support group generated fund

a. Rules for FSG generated funds are outlined in AR 210–1, Private Organizations on Department of the Army Installations and Official Participation in Private Organizations. FSGs are considered informal funds and do not have to apply for Private Organization status as long as their funds do not exceed $1,000 at any given time. An informal fund reaches the $1,000 threshold at the moment that its net worth (total assets less total liabilities) exceeds $1,000. Commanders have some flexibility to allow FSGs to carry more funds for short periods. Example: The FSG is planning a Holiday Ball. Known costs are $3,000 (dinner, $2,100; hall rental $250; and band $650). They have planned fund raisers to earn the money. With a written plan and contracts for services or supplies (ballroom, band, etc.), the FSG account may exceed the $1,000, and may even go as high as $4,000 for a period of time because it has liabilities which offset the excess assets. Liabilities should not be long-term. It must be remembered that FSGs are not in the business of collecting and maintaining funds, but are established to provide activities and support that will enhance the flow of information, morale, and esprit de corps within the unit.

b. Once the informal fund's net worth exceeds $1,000, it is subject to regulatory requirements applicable to a private organization. If established, the private organization does not replace the FSG, which continues to operate with command approval, but serves as an auxiliary organization. Basic rules for managing the FSG informal funds are—

(1) Only one person is responsible for maintaining, accounting for, and documenting spending of the fund. This does not mean that only one signature is required to spend money, however. The person responsible for maintaining the fund will tell the command about

the fund existence and purpose annually. They will also give the commander an annual financial report.

(2) Use of the funds is limited to expenses that support the purpose and mission of the FSG, and the money will not be spent in a way that appears to be improper or contrary to Army interests.

(3) Commanders are to make sure that all FSG leaders are aware of Army policy regarding private organizations and informal funds.

c. It is also important to remember that FSG funds should be used for activities that support the entire group rather than for specific individuals. Use of funds should not duplicate what other agencies provide (i.e., establishing a loan fund or emergency food locker when other agencies such as ACS, AER, ARC already have programs established.)

3–8. Liability

a. FSG volunteers are considered to be employees of the Government for the purposes of Chapter 81 of Title 5, relating to compensation for work-related injuries, and to be employees of the Government for the purposes of Chapter 171 of Title 28, relating to tort claims.

b. Liability for command sponsored activities will differ from installation to installation. This results from variations in liability responsibilities depending on the law of the state in which the installation is located. Accordingly, you should contact the servicing Staff Judge Advocate Office for advice and assistance in resolving liability issues related to FSG activities.

c. It is recommended that FSG funds not be invested in interest or dividend bearing accounts. If invested in such accounts, the FSG may be liable for local, State, or Federal taxes, or responsible to file tax returns. Although FSGs may qualify for exemption from Federal income tax, pursuant to section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code, the savings to be achieved may not equal the time and effort required to obtain an exemption.

3–9. Fund raising activities

FSGs can raise money for their activities through authorized fund raising activities. Fund raising activities must be approved by appropriate local authority (i.e. installation or unit commander or his or her designated representative such as the Director for Personnel and Community Activities). Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) policy for fund raising activities contained in AR 215–1, Administration of MWR Activities and NAFIs, may be adapted for FSGs. Informal funds policy is contained in AR 210–1, Private Organizations on Department of the Army Installations and Official Participation in Private Organizations. AR 600–29, Fund Raising within the Department of the Army is policy publication pertaining to fund raising within the Army.

Chapter 4
Volunteer Leadership in Establishing a Family Support Group

4–1. Introduction

Volunteerism is a tradition within the Army community. The spirit of volunteerism is alive today. Research shows it is competing with a host of other interests of the potential volunteer— the desire for paid employment, the desire to pursue educational or recreational interests, family responsibilities, etc. As managers of volunteers, leaders must address these competing needs to ensure that our volunteer spirit remains vibrant and as significant a force in our communities as it has been. It must be noted that well meaning programs are not enough. Leaders must provide solid volunteer opportunities, sound management, and ability to grow.

4–2. Volunteer recruitment

a. Methods used to elicit volunteer involvement from spouses and other family members vary. The most frequently used methods include—

(1) Command letters to all family members in each company inviting them to participate on a committee or attend a briefing.

(2) A command invitation to key family member leaders to attend a committee or briefing.

(3) A command briefing to soldiers and spouses of each company outlining the unit family support system and the importance placed on FSG involvement.

b. Whatever the method and whoever the audience, command support must be provided. In addition to the commander, the briefing should be attended by key support and resource personnel. These may include the FSG leader, commander's spouse, command sergeant major's spouse, rear detachment personnel, the chaplain, mental health personnel, and ACS, Army National Guard (ARNG) or U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) family support representatives.

c. The agenda for the first briefing generally covers the mission of the unit, outlines the basic concepts and goals of a deployment family support system, and states the reasons why family member involvement in a FSG is so important. Personal or written testimonials about successful FSG initiatives are often helpful to convey the concept in concrete terms, especially if a large group of soldiers and family members is present. Attendees should be given an opportunity to ask questions, make comments or suggestions, and indicate an interest in FSG involvement. If initial volunteer response is not overwhelming, do not become discouraged. Remember that the most successful method of recruitment is personal contact, and that a large steering committee is neither necessary nor desirable to get the plans off the ground.

d. Any nondeployable soldier or civilian employee, male or female, should be considered a potential candidate for a FSG position. During the sustainment period, soldiers (including single soldiers) should also be encouraged to assist with FSG functions. Selection should be based on good leadership and organizational skills, a caring attitude, a willingness to help, and an ability to work with others.

e. All FSG volunteers, to include committee chairpersons and workers, should receive a job description. Job descriptions help clarify roles and group expectations, and provide added protection for volunteers in case any possible litigation action is taken against them. Company contact volunteers are especially valuable since they are the primary information and direct service delivery providers. A sample volunteer job description format is at appendix E.

4–3. Family support group volunteer and member training

a. Since the FSG exists to support the military mission, commanders must ensure that FSG volunteers are well-trained. Training is a major area where a strong link to community assistance resources can be of great benefit to the commander. FSG volunteers must receive well-designed training on how to establish, operate, lead, support, and sustain a FSG. Inclusion, in part or all of the training, of key military unit personnel might also be advisable if they have had no prior experience with a FSG. Complete training modules can be obtained from ACS for the Active Component, or from either the ARNG or the USAR family program coordinators in the RC.

b. Some FSG volunteers are placed in the position of being the first contact point for family members who are in a crisis situation. Because of their unique function prior to and during deployments, they are also often in a position to be the best ones to evaluate how a family is coping or going to cope with the separation and to arrange for early intervention to prevent a crisis situation from developing. To perform this role effectively, adequate training must be received.

c. Examples of training that will help FSG volunteers perform their functions more effectively include—

(1) Effective communication.
(2) Active listening.
(3) Problem solving.
(4) Crisis intervention.
(5) Community resources.
(6) Principles of information and referral.
(7) Use of a telephone tree.
(8) Coping with stress.

(9) Conflict resolution.
(10) Effective meetings.
(11) Management and leadership skills.
(12) Time management.
(13) Volunteer management and motivation.
(14) Preparing a newsletter.
(15) Military correspondence.
(16) Team building.

d. FSG volunteers should receive training in (1) through (9) above prior to soldiers' deployment. Training should be ongoing and periodically reevaluated based on the problems that are encountered prior to, during, and after deployment. Some FSG volunteers will require specialized training, and others, as they gain experience, may benefit from refresher courses.

4–4. Volunteer recordkeeping

It is important to maintain a record of volunteer performance and contributions. This includes hours donated, jobs performed, training received, and awards given. It is important to maintain this information to assist in volunteer growth and documentation for use in obtaining future volunteer or paid positions. This can be documented through a letter acknowledging the volunteer's contributions. Your local IVC and or ACS office can be of assistance in these matters.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

5–1. Keys to success.

One of the keys to continued success is the ongoing reevaluation of FSG activities. FSG needs are never static, especially with the constant personnel changes in the military environment. Although initial goals and objectives are essential to get the FSG organized and functional, these goals and the activities and roles of all participants, both unit and FSG, must be periodically reevaluated.

5–2. Family support group evaluation.

An evaluation of FSG effectiveness cannot take place independent of an evaluation of the unit's total family support plan for deployment. Therefore, input must be obtained from FSG volunteers, family members, soldiers, the chain of command, the RDC commander or military POC, and the key community staff involved.

Appendix A
References

Section I
Required Publications

This section contains no entries.

Section II
Related Publications

A related publication is merely a source of additional information. The user does not have to read it to understand this publication.

AR 25–30
The Army Integrated Publishing and Printing Program

AR 25–55
The Department of the Army Freedom of Information Act Program

AR 37–106
Finance and Accounting for Installations Travel and Transportation Allowances

AR 58–1
Management, Acquisition, and Use of Administrative Use Motor Vehicles

AR 210–1
Private Organizations on Department of the Army Installations and Official Participation in Private Organizations

AR 215–1
Administration of Army Morale Welfare and Recreation Activities and Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentalities

AR 340–21
The Army Privacy Program

AR 385–40
Accident Reporting and Records

AR 600–20
Army Command Policy

AR 600–55
Motor Vehicle Driver and Equipment Operation Selection, Training, Testing and Licensing

AR 608–1
Army Community Service Program

DoDI 4525.8–M
Official Mail

DA Pam 25–51
The Army Privacy Program-System Notices and Exemption Rules

DA Pam 608–43
A Guide to Family Member Predeployment Briefings

Section III
Prescribed Forms

This section contains no entries.

Section IV
Referenced Forms

This section contains no entries.

Appendix B
Sample Responsibilities

B–1. Army command policy.
Basic responsibilities are prescribed in AR 600-20, Army Command Policy.

B–2. Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER)
a. The DCSPER will establish policy and ensure coordination and integration of the TAFP.

b. DCSPER, through the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (USACFSC), will foster family assistance and support initiatives by—

(1) Providing guidance, technical assistance, and consultation to support the development and implementation of family initiatives, programs, and services.

(2) Identifying needs and, where appropriate, designing and conducting Army-wide soldier and family member training and awareness events.

(3) Determining and developing training packages for individuals responsible for family program execution.

(4) Providing consultation and liaison with ARNG and USAR to ensure integration of active and Reserve Component family assistance and support issues.

B–3. Director, Army National Guard (ARNG)
a. The ARNG is the Army's lead agent for establishment of FACS for Total Army families not living near military installations at all levels of contingency and mobilization.

b. The National Guard Bureau (NGB), through the NGB Family Program Manager—

(1) Provides policy, guidance, technical assistance, and consultation to support the development and implementation of the TAFP within the NGB.

(2) Identifies and, where appropriate, designs and provides Guard soldier and family member training and awareness support.

(3) Determines and develops desired training for individuals responsible for family program execution.

B–4. Chief, Army Reserve (CAR)
The CAR, through the USAR Family Program Manager—

a. Provides policy, guidance, technical assistance, and consultation to support the development and implementation of the TAFP within the USAR.

b. Identifies needs and, where appropriate, designs and provides USAR-wide soldier and family member training and awareness support.

c. Determines and develops desired training for individuals responsible for family program execution.

B–5. Commanders
a. Commanders at all levels will provide an environment which encourages an effective family program. At a minimum, commanders will—

(1) Ensure command emphasis to the unit level.

(2) Ensure soldier, civilian, retiree, and family member awareness of the TAFP.

(3) Ensure soldier, civilian, retiree, and family member access to entitlements, family programs, and family services.

(4) Ensure the proper documenting and monitoring of personal affairs readiness of soldiers.

(5) Ensure inclusion of single soldiers in all quality of life programs and initiatives.

B–6. Additional sample responsibilities for key personnel
a. Unit level commanders. These commanders should—

(1) Anticipate and address the needs of unit soldiers and their families when a temporary separation occurs through orientation programs, FSG newsletters, predeployment briefings and letters, family assistance handbooks, and social functions.

(2) Facilitate organization of systems of mutual assistance and a network of communication prior to and during deployment that includes the FSG and the chain of command.

(3) Actively sanction the FSG and officially appoint the key FSG representatives.

(4) Provide unit information systems, facilities, and resources to FSGs, to include unit rosters, "postage and fees paid" mailing, administrative supplies, equipment, transportation (when available and applicable), training from unit and installation professional resources, and recognition.

(5) Involve community resource people in planning and implementing the deployment family support plan. Examples include ACS, JAG, medical, Chaplain, ARC, finance, and adjutant general.

(6) Ensure that family members receive an installation telephone directory and, prior to deployment, a family assistance handbook.

(7) Appoint a point of contact to coordinate deployment family assistance plans.

(8) Include soldiers in predeployment briefings and provide child care whenever possible.

(9) Ensure that the necessary regulations and standing operating procedures are in place prior to deployment to include family information sheets.

b. ACS, ARNG State and USAR Family Program coordinators. ACS directors, ARNG and USAR family program coordinators should—

(1) Provide preventive or educational programs that enable and enhance soldier and family self-sufficiency.

(2) Provide resources as appropriate to the FSG.

(3) Assist in developing, providing, and coordinating FSG and unit personnel training programs.

(4) Assist unit and installation personnel with predeployment briefings.

(5) Ensure units have copies of installation telephone directories for family members and DA Pam 608–43, A Guide to Family Member Predeployment Briefings, to assist in developing these briefings.

(6) Establish coordination with AER and the ARC to ensure rapid response to emergency financial situations.

(7) Develop a family assistance mobilization plan and coordinate plan with units.

(8) Assist with unit and FSG outreach efforts, especially to junior enlisted soldiers and their families.

c. Soldiers, civilian employees, and retirees. Soldiers, civilian employees, and retirees are responsible for preparing themselves for deployment and their families for the soldier to deploy and fight. Families must be prepared to carry on without the presence of the soldier. This means they should be able to conduct daily activities to include transportation, child care, bill paying, all activities that continue whether the soldier is there or not. They should support and participate in the TAFP. At a minimum, soldiers, civilian employees, and retirees are expected to—

(1) Keep the command informed of any change in family status (e.g., marriage, births, deaths, divorce, etc.).

(2) Keep appropriate mobilization and deployment documents (such as Family Care Plans) and required emergency data updated in their personnel files.

(3) Keep themselves and their families informed concerning key (unit) personnel information, benefits, programs, etc. Ensure that information regarding the TAFP is provided to family members.

(4) Support and, where appropriate, encourage their family members to support the programs, services and activities designed to maintain and or enhance the quality of life and well-being of all members of the TAF. Many of those programs, services and activities are primarily dependent upon volunteers to ensure their success and continued effectiveness.

Appendix C
Sample Family Support Group Support Worksheet

Below are guidelines which can be used to develop an FSG support worksheet. (See figure C–1).

Figure C–1. Sample Family Support Worksheet

On the top portion of worksheet include date of initial request, contact person, name, phone number, and address of person contacted, and sponsor's name and rank.

Nature of Requested Support:

Sample:

Wants husband to return home and help her with children. Both children (girl, age 6 months; boy, age 2 years) have had colds for past week, and they are getting worse. Out of medicine and car broke down this morning.

Notes/Comments/Support Rendered:

Mom quite hysterical. Hasn't been sleeping well because kids keeping her awake with their colds. She states she feels that she will "hurt children if husband doesn't return" to help her.

Spoke with her for long time. Reminded her we'd met at the last unit social, and that our boys were same age. She gradually calmed down enough to agree to wait for a return call from me. Said I planned to see if a Community Health Nurse could visit her, or if I could get an ACS Outreach volunteer to take her and the children to the hospital. Called back in an hour. The Community Health Nurse will call and arrange a time to visit her today.

Called next day. Children had been seen. All felt better. Had good night's sleep. Community Health Nurse will make follow-up visit. Told her I'd found a neighbor who agreed to see if he could get her car started. He'd come over with me tonight if she'd like. She agreed. She also has enough money for car repairs if he can't get the car started.

Appendix D
Guidelines for Telephone Contact

D–1. General

a. A large portion of your time will be spent dealing with individuals on the telephone. Therefore, you must be prepared for any type of call. The more information and resources you have, the better equipped you'll be to inform and refer those seeking support.

b. To keep unit families well informed, you should ensure that you have current command information. The information you receive from callers should be clear, concise, and accurate. Make sure you understand what is being said and, if not, have it repeated.

c. Many ways exist to gather information and develop resources. Many commands have deployment handbooks. Various types of meetings are available to you as well. Be innovative in your ideas, and if you should come up with information, resources, or ideas that are not yet available, share your information so all of the FSG can benefit. Create a network of communication, as other FSG representatives are sources of information.

D–2. Types of calls and suggested ways of handling.

a. Information calls. As has been previously stated, keep your information current and accurate. Giving outdated information creates many problems. If the information the caller is looking for is not available to you, then you should seek out this information. Maintain a notebook of all resources, announcements, and information relating to Army families. The Army and civilian communities offer many services and you should be constantly gathering information concerning them.

b. Social calls. You should limit the length of this type call. Everyone needs someone to talk to occasionally as loneliness is something all Army spouses face, and talking with someone helps, however, you have other obligations that require your time, and these type calls need to be carefully controlled.

c. Problem calls. Record all pertinent information on the worksheet. Ensure that you follow up on all calls, even if it is to check that everything is alright. When dealing with a problem call, ask pertinent questions and use the FSG worksheets for listing the information you gather. When possible, give the available resources to them, and encourage them to do it on their own. If this does not work, then you should attempt to find a reasonable solution. In doing this, be sure to tell the caller of your intentions. Do not tell them you cannot or will not help them. If you don't know the solution, continue to investigate, keeping the caller informed.

(1) Exercise tact, politeness, and good listening skills when handling phone calls. Ask yourself how you would like to be treated over the phone. If you don't know what to do or don't have an answer, don't be afraid to say this. Assure the caller that you will try to find the answer. Utilize the resources that are available to you such as your rear detachment commanders, the ACS, ARNG or MUSARC family program coordinator, or chaplains. This is another reason to keep yourself well informed and up to date on current resources.

(2) Confidentiality plays an important part in your position as an FSG representative. When a family within your command comes to you with any problem, or tells you something in confidence, you must *keep the confidence.* Your worth as an FSG representative may depend on how well you keep a confidence. The confidentiality concerns personal problems of a particular person.

d. Crisis calls. The handling of this type call can be a delicate situation. What determines a crisis? Since we are not trained as counselors, we have to rely on our sound judgment. How do you recognize if the crisis is genuine? This can be determined by listening and answering questions. Don't give a rash answer, but think about it first. If you are in doubt about what to do, don't hesitate to contact someone in your command for assistance. Do not try to handle a situation that you are not sure of. Five guidelines to help deal with such calls—

- Give them alternatives from which to choose.
- Help them to help themselves.
- Be positive.
- Stay objective but responsive to their problems.
- Don't feel guilty for not being able to solve all problems.

Your availability for calls from families within the command is important and required to have a successful FSG program. This will ensure that you are a visible part of the command.

e. Unnecessary calls. If you think that a caller is talking just to gossip or seems to be passing on unfounded rumors, remind the caller that you are not interested in this type of call. State that if the rumor was true, you would be notified.

f. Chronic calls. Chronic callers may often have underlying problems that may best be helped by referral to professionals. You should use tact and diplomacy with chronic callers.

D–3. Organize and take care of yourself

Recognize when you are overextending yourself, don't allow people to exploit you. Encourage those who will call for FSG business or information only during certain hours. Encourage the command to appoint others to assist you with the load. Identify and use helpful people within the command. Remain alert and consistent and try to accomplish everything in a professional manner.

a. Realize that you are not all things to all people!

b. Things we are not—

(1) Convenience babysitters.

(2) Community taxi service.

(3) Financial institutions.

(4) God.

c. Keep a proper perspective!

D–4. Telephone techniques

a. Ask yourself. Active listening questions to ask yourself while listening—

(1) What is the caller feeling? (Keep in mind that every call is important to the caller.)

(2) What basic needs are not being met?

(3) What are their expectations? Are they realistic?

(4) Who might assist? (Referral resources)

(5) How may I show caring and concern for this caller?

b. Establish your sincerity. Upon initial contact, you should try to be calm and sympathetic. Be realistic; most people can see through insincerity.

c. Reflect that you know how they feel. A simple confirmation of "yes, it sounds to me like you have a problem, but I think we can help you," may soothe even a person who is very upset. Maybe not initially, but with a few repetitive phrases of concern. "You really have had a rough time!" or— "I'm sure we can do something to help you." The tone of your voice can convey a feeling of understanding to the caller.

d. Worksheet information. As you fill out the worksheet with the pertinent information needed to assist the individual, use their first name if you feel comfortable doing so.

e. Positive strokes.

(1) People sometimes feel embarrassed and are likely very depressed when they finally call you. Their world has come down around them and they may feel angry, hurt, panic-stricken, alone, lonely, sad, fearful, and a host of other feelings too numerous to list. Their actions or inactions may have caused their present predicament.

(2) By using positive stroke statements you can reinforce their capability of coping with the problem. "You're doing the right thing by calling me." "You're right, the baby does need to see a doctor."

(3) In some cases you can ask the callers what they think they should do. If their suggestions are poor, saying, "That's an idea" or "That's a thought," "What do you think about doing this?", "We could" or "You might ...," are all positive statements.

f. Avoid negative "I" judgments. "I" statements tend to create feelings of inferiority and insecurity. The individual is already feeling insecure, don't enhance the emotion by saying, "I wish you would have called last week" or "You should have called housing a long time ago." Table E-1 provides "positive stroke" phrases to replace negative judgment phrases.

Appendix E
Volunteer Job Description Format

E–1. Position title

The position title should describe the volunteer's responsibilities—that is, what the volunteer actually does.

E–2. Goals and objectives

This should be a short, concise statement reflecting the ultimate goal or results of the service to be performed. Most job descriptions are not defined in terms of results because the responsibility for the results is so fragmented, with several people all having a few activities to perform if the result is to be achieved. If the desired results are not articulated, chances are that they will not be actualized. The two primary benefits to refining volunteer jobs in terms of results are—

a. It helps to meet people's need for a sense of achievement or accomplishment by making them feel valuable and worthwhile in their volunteer activity.

b. It helps to make programs more effective because people understand what they are supposed to accomplish and, therefore, are more likely to succeed in their efforts.

E–3. Description of duties

This is the "what" and the "how" of the job. Duties should be described clearly and concisely. List "task specific" duties. Do not put them in paragraph form. A "task-specific" job description lists the major tasks involved in each area of responsibility. One of the major

reasons for uncertainties in volunteer and paid staff roles is the failure to write a "task-specific" job description. These should be reviewed to ensure that the "task-specific" duties have been accurately captured. Each job description will make specific mention as to whether or not the regular use of a motor vehicle, private or Government owned, is required and, if required, the "specific" duties have been accurately captured.

E–4. Time required

Honestly state the actual time commitment required. One of the most serious mistakes an agency can make is to fail to indicate truthfully how much time the volunteer will need to do the job. Too frequently volunteer managers will say, "But I can't really expect volunteers to devote enough time to complete the job." If that is true, then volunteers should not be involved in that job. Volunteers should be recruited and trained only for duties they can handle. Recruiting volunteers without clearly defining the time commitment will ultimately result in failure of the project. Time can also be expressed in number of months the volunteer is expected to be in the position.

E–5. Qualifications

Include all the things necessary for the effective performance of duties by listing requirements from physical to human qualities desired. Be careful not to over-qualify the position. This might result in the loss of some excellent volunteers due to, for example, stringent educational requirements. Once the qualifications are established, the agency or activity should stick to its written statements. When qualifications are waived because the recruiting staff does not know how to say no to the well-meaning, over-enthusiastic volunteer, the chances of the project failing increase. In comparing the volunteer setting to the paid work setting, obviously supervisors normally would not hire an applicant unless he or she meets the minimum qualifications for the position. The same rule must also be applied to all applicants for volunteer positions.

E–6. Training

Include the nature of local and on-the-job training, specific content of the training, the approximate hours and timing of orientations and job specific training, and the person(s) who will conduct the training. Depending on the nature of the job and the amount of responsibility, the training period for a new volunteer may last from a few hours to a few days or be given over a period of weeks or months. Proper orientations and training gets new volunteers off to the proper start and familiarize them with the agency's or activity's mission, organization, goals, and objectives, and usually introduces them to their co-workers and supervisors. Orientations and training sessions should be carried out on a fairly regular basis.

Glossary

Section I
Abbreviations

ACS
Army Community Service

AER
Army Emergency Relief

APF
Appropriated Funds

ARC
American Red Cross

ARNG
Army National Guard

CAR
Chief, Army Reserve

CDS
Child Development Services

CHAMPUS
Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services

DCSPER
Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel

DEERS
Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System

FAC
Family Assistance Center

FSG
Family Support Group

ITO
Invitational Travel Order

IVC
Installation Volunteer Coordinator

MOI
Memorandum of Instruction

MUSARC
Major U.S. Army Reserve Command

MWR
Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

NAF
Nonappropriated Funds

NGB
National Guard Bureau

POC
Point of Contact

RC
Reserve Component

RDC
Rear Detachment Commander

SOP
Standing Operating Procedure

STARC
State Area Command

TAF
Total Army Family

TAFP
Total Army Family Program

UMT
Unit Ministry Teams

USACFSC
U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center

USAR
U.S. Army Reserve

USARC
U.S. Army Reserve Command

USO
United Service Organization

YS
Youth Services

Section II
Terms

There are no entries in this section.

Section III
Special Abbreviations and Terms

There are no entries in this section.

Index

This index is organized alphabetically by topic. Topics and sub-topics are identified by paragraph number.

Family Support Groups (General).
Types of, 1-1
Benefits of, 1-5
Organization of, 2-1

Army Family Support System.
Military Unit and FSG Linkage, 1-8
Community Services and FSG Linkage, 1-9

FSG Volunteer Management.
Leadership, 2-2
Contact Component, 2-4
Company Component, 2-5
Battalion Component, 2-6
Recruitment, 4-2
Recordkeeping, 4-4

FSG Roles and Functions.
Rosters, 3-2
Casualty Notification, 3-3
Newsletters, 3-4
Telephone Network, 3-5
Authorized Support, 3-6
FSG Generated Funds, 3-7
Liability, 3-8
Fund Raising, 3-9

*U.S. G.P.O.:1993-342-064:40392

PIN 062979–000