Ways to Communicate

**Phone Tree**
A telephone tree, usually established in each company and used to relay information quickly, contains names and phone numbers of spouses within the company. Each company decides the best way to use their telephone trees. This roster is essential and must be constantly updated (at a minimum once a month). Use the phone tree to relay important messages only.

**Periodic Phone Calling (or Morale Calls)**
Calling spouses just to see how they are doing will probably be the best way to get others involved. It shows that you care and are concerned for them as a person. It also stops rumors and helps small problems to stay that way!

**Email**
Sending email messages can disseminate a lot of information in the minimal time. Keep email addresses up to date. Develop a system for the receiver to let the sender know that the email message was received. Ask each recipient for permission to use his/her email address to conduct FRG official business. Warn all FRG members not to give out the FRG email addresses to anyone and not to use them for personal gain.

**Websites**
Many units develop websites to keep Soldiers and family members connected to the unit. These also need to be kept up to date with current information. Make it interesting and full of FRG and unit information so anyone accessing the website will be kept current.

**Home Visits**
There are many benefits to visiting others in their home. For a newcomer it warmly welcomes them into the unit. It also lets them recognize a friendly face at a function. Many spouses are reluctant to come to activities because they don't know anyone. This is a great way to make them feel comfortable.

**Unit Newsletter**
A newsletter can be at battalion or company level. This vehicle makes a tremendous difference in the success of providing information. Printing and mailing a newsletter to each spouse in the unit is an ideal way to keep all informed of important information about the unit and community. Give your unit newsletter a name. Publishing it monthly or bimonthly takes time, effort and volunteers. But it is well worth the effort.

**Welcome Packets**
It’s nice to provide a unit welcome packet to each newcomer. This packet may include a specific welcome letter from the company. It may contain the company spouses’ roster; latest copy of the unit newsletter; particular unit information; important phone numbers in the unit and community. For the new spouse – it will contain military ranks, terms and Army organization.
**Unit Steering Committee**

This is a monthly meeting with the spouses of the battalion commander, battalion CSM, company commander, 1SG and company representative(s). This is an important meeting because they plan new or upcoming activities, assess and evaluate existing programs as well as discuss problems and find solutions. It’s also a great support system for everyone.

**FRG Meetings**

These are very beneficial to build group cohesiveness. These meetings can vary to include themes, crafts and guest speakers. Everyone should be invited to these meetings. The FSG leader runs these meetings. This is the best opportunity for the spouses to get together on a smaller scale to form a bond with each other. Ideally, these meetings should be once a month.

**Deployment Briefings**

This is one of the most important informational meetings for the spouses. They should occur before a deployment exercise. Both Soldiers and their spouses are encouraged to attend. The battalion commander and his staff conduct the briefings and provide essential information that will assist the spouses during their sponsors’ absence.

**FRG Activities**

The company spouses have complete freedom and flexibility in planning company FRG activities. The emphasis for these gatherings in each company is to foster mutual support. Activities could include picnics, roller skating, bowling, crafts, movies, potlucks, Christmas parties and Easter egg hunts, etc.

**Dining Out (Dinner Dance)**

Some units may choose to have an annual dinner dance or dining out, to include all the ranks in the unit and their spouses and guests. Normally, it’s a traditional military function; the military wearing their uniforms; a receiving line; toasts; a color guard; and often a guest speaker. It ends with dancing. For many, this is their first experience with a military formal, and it enhances the esprit de corps.

**Organization Day**

This is a semiannual event where the Soldiers play games and companies/platoons compete against each other for the guidon streamer. Families are encouraged to come and cheer their team to victory. The companies could also have an open-house to let spouses visit the company to see what the Soldiers do.

**Welcome Home Celebrations**

To further build esprit, it is encouraged that the FRG to welcomes the Soldiers home after a deployment. The FRG should coordinate with the Rear Detachment to plan these activities.

**Fund Raising Events**

Throughout the year both the battalion and individual companies raise money to support their many activities. It takes a lot of creativity to come up with different types of fund raisers other than bake sales. Remember, the purpose of the FRG is not to raise money! Don’t let the “want” of a bigger fund account overshadow the real function of the FRG to relay information, build self-reliant families and offer opportunities for social contact.