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The Challengers



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

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Soldier's Mailing Address

Soldier's Name & Rank
M158th AVN, Platoon #
APO AE 09391
(Platoon # is optional)

Website

[www.hood.army.mil/13coscom
/frg/158aviation/158.html](http://www.hood.army.mil/13coscom/frg/158aviation/158.html)

Notes from the Commander

Your soldiers continue to work very hard to accomplish the mission. I am very proud of them and often amazed at their commitment to our mission. It certainly isn't often you get an opportunity to make an impact on a mission the way M-Company soldiers are doing here every day.

We recently recognized some of them for their extra efforts by presenting them with the Army Commendation Medal or ARCOM. SPC Carl Lawson, SGT Elizabeth Boruk, SPC Michelle Finney, SGT Henry Ford, SSG Christopher Molen, CPL Frank Smith, SGT Scott Aaron, SGT Howard Dennis, SPC David Collins, SPC Joshua Whittaker, CPL Carl Carson, and SPC Silas Heisler were awarded the ARCOM for exceptional meritorious achievement supporting aircraft maintenance operations. The awards were presented by COL Bradley Macnealy, 185th Aviation Group Commander. He presented the awards and took a moment to thank all the soldiers for their hard work. As the days go by I can't think of a better day when you get to recognize soldiers for their hard work. So that was definitely a great day for all M-Company soldiers.

I am very optimistic about our ability to complete our mission. We seem to get better and better every day. Our learning curve was steep in the beginning but we seem to have gotten our second wind and are moving forward. The experience these soldiers gain here will serve them well into the future.

As we move into the second half of this deployment it is even more critical that we focus on safety. I don't want anyone to get the infamous "get home-itis" and forget to practice safety in every thing they do. As always, I thank you for your service at home and your continued prayers.

Thanks!

Lonnie Slade
MAJ, AV
Commanding

From the RDO

By CPT Ed A. Escobedo

Hope your families and loved ones are doing great. I want you to know that I'm always happy to hear from you.

Family! This is what it's all about. For example, we welcome Mrs. Julie Lee back home and we pray for her speedy recovery. We pray for the speedy recovery of SSG Kirby's mother and father.

During this 9-11 anniversary, we also pray for all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and have lost a loved one since then.

There is no doubt that every thought and prayer counts within our FRG team.

I sincerely say to you that M Company 158th and 244th BDE extend their sincere appreciation to you and your families for your personal sacrifice and faithful service to our Great Nation. We should all be proud of our personal contributions, support, sacrifices and prayers....Proud to be an American.

I want it known that "Communication" between all of our FRG members is essential. As I have stated, "If more than one of us is feeling like we are left out of the loop, then that is one too many as far as I am concerned." There is no doubt that we are all

going through very emotional times.....some of us more than others. Any time a family member, be it a spouse or the children, has to spend a baby's delivery, baby's first step, children's first day at school, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, holiday seasons or other special days without their loved one, emotions can become so overwhelming that many of us become more isolated and introverted. These emotions are all-encompassing and there is no distinction between the Spouse, Children or the Soldier.

However, we must keep in mind that if the Soldier hears that the family is not being taken care of, then the Soldier is most likely to lose focus and place him- or herself in unnecessary risk. In order to ensure soldiers stay focused on the mission and to ensure their safe return, I will do everything within my power, resources, and ability to take care of the families.

As M158th Rear Detachment Commander, it is my goal to provide families and soldiers with support. My staff (although currently limited) will do their best within their resources and ability to minimize, de-escalate, or resolve negative factors that our families and soldiers are undergoing.

Even though we may all be

limited on what can be done, we can always do the best we can with what we have to "Minimize, De-escalate, or Resolve" the severity of emotions or tough situations that each of us may be going through.

We have to start with ourselves; however, do not hesitate to ask for help when it becomes overwhelming. As they say, "All for One and One for All." The Army of One concept is not just a Myth-it can and should become a Reality. What happens in Rear Detachment back at home will eventually affect each soldier in Theater.

We all want our loved ones to come home safe, sound, and soon. We can help our Soldiers by supporting them and keeping them focused on the mission at hand in efforts to ensure their safety. We all have to start by taking care of ourselves first before we can help others. This is what I want to see within our FRG team.

Communication is essential in making this happen, so let us keep in touch and update each other on our personal status. My numbers and that of my staff are available, so continue to let us know how you're doing.

Once again, M Company 158th and 244th BDE extend their sincere appreciation to you and your families for your personal sacrifice and faithful service to our Great Nation. God Speed.

From the 1SG

By 1SG Jay Huseman

We are now more than halfway through our deployment. There are more days behind us than ahead and it feels good. That being said, there is still much to do here before we can return to our loved ones. Our focus is still on the mission and the safety of all your soldiers.

The conditions continue to improve with each passing day. We are through the hottest part of the summer and all very happy about that. The temperature is now ranging from the high 90's to the low 100's with it cooling to the high 60's to the low 70's. to say the least this has raised everyone's spirits.

The Company will hold another junior promotion board in early October. This will be the last while we are in-country, we will try to hold another with the 244th in January.

In closing I would like to say that we are still on mission for our country here in Iraq, but our hearts remain home with you all.

Happy Birthday September!

Tyler Waits
Arika Beverly
Dylan Slade

Happy Birthday...continued

Jordan Cooper
Tristan Wycoff
Dalton Siedschlag
Branden Horne
Kristi Boles
Zachary Mehegan
Germain Miller
Alexis Anders
Jasmine Kuhlman
Emily Onken
Logan Clark

*If you'd like your family's names added to or removed from the list of birthdays, please contact the newsletter editor, your phone tree contact, or the unit to update your 107R.

Phone Tree

By Julie Lee

Thank you for your patience during the recent illnesses in the phone tree. Although calls may not have been "up to speed", be assured that all of the soldiers and families are in our hearts and minds. The phone tree should be up and running again soon.

If you have never received a calls from the FRG, please call the unit and ask for a 107R form.

Wishing a speedy recovery to Tom Nickson and special thanks to the soldiers of the 3rd platoon for the beautiful flowers sent during my illness.

Back To School

If you haven't already done so, meet with teachers and school officials to make sure they are aware your child has a deployed family member and may have special emotional needs this school year.

If your soldier will be taking R&R leave during the school year, be sure to discuss the possibility of your child's absence from school with teachers and school officials.

Encourage your child to send report cards, special projects, drawings, and other school-related news to the soldier.

Freedom Calls

Freedom Calls Foundation is a non-profit organization building a communications network dedicated to keeping deployed troops in touch with family back home, all at no cost to the troops or their families. The organization has helped military parents in Iraq attend graduations and meet newborn children. It has even allowed a couple to get married, despite the fact that he was in Colorado and she was in Iraq — all accomplished through videoconferencing.

For more information regarding the organization, visit the foundation website at www.freedomcalls.org.

The Challengers

Family Readiness Group
M-158 AVIM Co

Bldg 7016, Box 81
Hood Army Airfield
Fort hood, Texas
76544-5081

PHONE:
(877) 620-4187
(24 hr answering machine)
(254) 288-6113

FAX:
(254) 288-3236

EMAIL:
M158.FRGnewsletter@
us.army.mil

FRG Leaders

Leader: Kelly Huseman

Secretary: Tracy Pederson

Treasurer: Tina Risenhoover

Telephone Tree: Julie Lee

Fundraising: Tammy Hench

Newsletter: Becky Cotton

Sponsorship: Vacant

Historian: Vacant

Events: Tracy Pederson

Database: Julie Lee
Becky Cotton

Advisor: Vacant

Published by:

Becky Cotton
Editor

Approved by:

Lonnie Slade
Major, U.S. Army

Resources and Contacts

Contact a Family Readiness Group member if you have questions or need information.

Your FRG contact name and phone: _____

For additional assistance, contact the unit resources below.

Rear Detachment Commander:	CPT Escobedo	(254) 287-6416 (877) 620-4187
Executive Officer:	CW2 Crane	(254) 287-3492 (254) 288-1755
Acting First Sergeant:	MSG Wesley	(254) 287-8590
Unit Administrator:	Mr. Schrader	(254) 287-8590
	Ms. Pace	(254) 287-8325
Rear Detachment Fax Number:		(254) 287-8339

TRICARE Information: <http://tricare.osd.mil> (800) 406-2832

Dental-Unit Concordia: (800) 866-8499

Army One Source www.armyonesource.com (800) 464-8107

**** Remember: pay issues MUST be initiated by the soldier.****

From the Editor

Let us know how we can make the newsletter and website more useful to you!

Submit photos taken during the deployment for publication on the web page and/or newsletter! Photos must be submitted electronically and should include names of soldiers shown.

Send contributions, suggestions, and comments to:

M158.frgnewsletter@us.army.mil
