INFORMATION PAPER

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SUBJECT: Family Readiness Group (FRG) Support

1. Purpose: FRG status, authorized support, and re-occurring legal issues.

2. Facts:

a. FRGs are a command sponsored organization (AR 600-20, and OTJAG Legal Review (29 August 2005)). They are not a private organization, a non-appropriated fund instrumentality, nor a morale, welfare and recreation program. Providing support to Armed Forces families is well established (DoDD 1342.17, Family Policy; DoDI 1342.22, Family Centers).

b. FRGs are authorized OMA support using commander mission funds, consistent with any command program. FRGs may use government equipment, computers, statutory volunteers (10 U.S.C. § 1588; AR 608-1), non-tactical vehicles (AR 58-1), print and mail official newsletters (AR 25-30), and receive logistical support for FRG meetings, for example.

c. In the past, FRG status was not well defined. Recognizing FRG status as a command sponsored organization results in the even application of fiscal and fundraising law, and other Army policies.

d. Unit Commanders have an obligation to provide assistance to establish and maintain personal and family affairs readiness through the Total Army Family concept, which includes Family Support Groups (FRGs) (AR 600-20, para 5–10).

e. FRGs are extremely limited in their ability to fundraise. FRGs may fundraise internally, amongst their own members, for informal funds, consistent with the Joint Ethics Regulations (JER) DoD 5500.7-R, and AR 600-29, para. 4-21, for informal funds. FRGs may not engage in external fundraising. Army personnel and FRG volunteers must abide by ethics rules including the prohibition against soliciting for gifts or donations (5 CFR § 2635.101(b)).

f. The garrison Army Community Services (ACS) mission includes the provision of expertise, classes, training, and support to assist unit Commanders in establishing successful FRGs, IAW AR 608-1, paras 2-09g, 2-10r, and chapter 4.

g. Unsolicited donations may be accepted into the Garrison's supplemental mission fund account by Garrison Commanders IAW AR 608-1, para 3-2a, for FRGs provided support by that Garrison's ACS program. See AR 215-1, para 7-39 for further instructions regarding the acceptance authority for gifts into non-appropriated funds (NAF) accounts.

h. Supplemental mission monies are NAFs. They may be used only to provide quality of life services as adjuncts to the FRG mission activity, consistent with DOD Instruction, 1015.15, Enclosure 5 para E5.2.1.1. The Garrison's Director of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation can assist unit Commanders with the proper use of supplemental mission program funds. Donations accepted into the Garrison's ACS supplemental mission program for FRG support may only be used for FRG

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activities not authorized to be paid for by appropriated funds (APFs). Donations accepted into the Garrison's ACS supplemental mission program should be share equally by all Garrison FRGs which receive support from that Garrison ACS, IAW AR 215-1, paras 4-9 and 4-12.

i. Private organizations with a mission of providing family support must be treated without preference by the Garrison, Commanders, and other government officials. The Army cannot officially support or endorse private organizations (JER, para 3-210, and AR 210-22). FRG leaders should not be managers or Board members of private organizations with the same family support mission. Commanders should seek ethics advisor assistance from their Staff Judge Advocate's office regarding private organization issues affecting their command.

j. FRGs whose Armed Forces members are assigned to duty or ordered to active duty in conjunction with a contingency operation are authorized APFs to provide for needed family support including child care, education, and other youth services (See 10 U.S.C. § 1788(b)).

k. Commander's may accept statutory volunteer services to fill positions within the FRG including the FRG leader, IAW AR 608-1, and 10 U.S.C. § 1588. Statutory volunteers should have a position description and be supervised like employees, and should register with the Installation (Garrison) Volunteer Corps Coordinator, or ACS. Commanders should not make any travel or reimbursement determinations for statutory volunteers who are also their immediate family members, to avoid violation of the JER, conflict of interest provisions. Those determinations should be made by the next person within the commander's chain of command.

l. For more guidance, see the Army Commander's Guide to Family Readiness Group Operations.

m. References:

AR 25-30, The Army Integrated Publishing and Printing Program
AR 58-1, Management, Acquisition, and Use of Motor Vehicles
AR 210-22, Private Organizations
AR 215-1, Morale Welfare and Recreation and Nonappropriated Fund Instrumentalities
AR 608-1, Army Community Service
AR 600-20, Army Command Policy
AR 600-29, Fundraising within the Department of Army
AR 600-55, The Army Driver and Operator Standardization Program (Selection, Training, Testing and Licensing)
5 CFR § 2635.101(b), Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch
DoD 4525.8-M: DoD Official Mail Management
DoD 5500.7-R Joint Ethics Regulation
DoDD 1342.17, Family Policy
DoDI 1342.22, Family Centers
DoDI 1015.10, Programs for Military Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)
DoDI 1100.21, Voluntary Services in the Department of Defense
Operation READY Army Leaders Desk Reference for Soldier/Family Readiness
10 U.S.C. § 1588, Authority to Accept Certain Voluntary Services
10 U.S.C. § 1788(b), Family Support for Children of Armed Forces Members Assigned to Support Contingency Operations

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