

PRESS GUIDANCE FOR FAMILY READINESS GROUPS

All, For your distribution regarding interviews, patient or casualty information requested by the news media.

As you all are aware from watching TV, the news media works quickly. Family Readiness Groups are receiving national attention as we have already witnessed thus far from FT Campbell and FT Bliss. We must continue to follow Public Affairs and Casualty Guidance guidelines and educate our families on how to respond to media requests.

Contents of Message: RDO Casualty Public Affairs Guidance

The RDC and RDO personnel should remind family members, through Family Readiness Group channels, that media request for interviews should be coordinated through the Public Affairs Officer. All personnel should be reminded that only the commander or PAO is the designated release authority on casualty information to the media. Additionally, No one should act on, respond to or repeat rumors. Finally, initial media reports are often incomplete or wrong.

If family members are approached by the media following early or unconfirmed reports of combat casualties, or in cases where deaths have occurred but next of kin notification is not complete, recommend they the following statement:

"I have (have not) heard rumors and press reports, but until casualties are confirmed and next of kin have been properly notified, I cannot respond to your questions. We have confidence that the chain of command will provide this information by the speediest means. At this time, the thoughts and prayers of all the members of the (unit) Family Readiness Group are constantly with all the families and all the soldiers, sailor, airmen and marines engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom. I recommend contacting the post public affairs officer for up to date information."