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NATIONAL DEFENCE AND
CANADIAN FORCES
OMBUDSMAN

REPORT TO THE MINISTER
OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

SUPPORT TO BEREAVED MILITARY FAMILIES

COLLABORATIVE REVIEW





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THANK YOU

This review would not have been as comprehensive without the invaluable input of families, key stakeholders, and Canadian Armed Forces members.

Of utmost importance, I would like to personally thank the families who accepted to share their experiences. It is with your feedback that lessons can be learned, and contribute to a better understanding of the needs of bereaved Canadian Armed Forces families.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the working group members whose open collaboration has been essential to move towards our common goal. Thank you to Lieutenant-Colonel Bishop and Major Kaduck for the lead; as well as Mr. Ouellette, Lieutenant-Commander Léveillé, Lieutenant-Colonel Staples, Lieutenant-Commander Friesen, Mr. Quinn, Major Bolt, Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison, Mrs. Côté, Mrs. Richard, and Major Tremblay.

Gary Walbourne
Ombudsman

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of the Ombudsman has been tracking and reporting on issues related to the Canadian Armed Forces' engagement of families during a Board of Inquiry process for the past 12 years. In short, engagement of families varied wildly from case to case, often unnecessarily resulting in heartache and confusion for those simply trying to understand next steps in the investigation and if, at all, they have a role to play in it.

In April 2015, the Office of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman (herein referred to as the Office) released a report entitled *Boards of Inquiry: Families in Focus*, where the Ombudsman's position was clearly stated that "families should be given the option of engagement throughout the Board of Inquiry process via a means of their choosing. However, insufficient data and family feedback currently exists to credibly recommend a definitive way forward."

As a result, one clear recommendation was made, that: "A family coordinator position be established for a one-year trial period to help identify the needs of families and effective methods of communication and liaison." This coordinator was to be a member of the Office's staff that would work alongside the Canadian Armed Forces to gather the data, and help inform recommendations for a follow-up report.

After a year of working closely and collaboratively with the Director Military Family Services (DMFS), this report has been completed. The recommendations, if implemented, will go a long way in addressing the information needs of the family, and clarifying their role in the process.

The findings of the review are grouped in three major categories:

1. The information needs of bereaved families
2. The information needs and awareness within the Canadian Armed Forces
3. The need for continuous improvement within the Canadian Armed Forces to support bereaved families

As a result, the Office makes the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces take concrete steps to better meet the information needs of families by:

- Producing plain language information for families on the specifics and impacts of key administrative documents that Canadian Armed Forces military members are required to

complete in case of serious illness, injury or death; as well as make this information available to Canadian Armed Forces members as part of the Annual Personnel Readiness Verification

- Providing readily-accessible information based on bereaved families' frequently asked questions. This needs to be consolidated into a single access point where families can find **information explaining what to expect after a Canadian Armed Forces member dies**; whether in the context of Canadian Armed Forces operations or not
- In addition to the information being provided as part of the board of inquiry process, developing clear guidelines and timelines for Commanding Officers to meet with families who express the desire for **information about the circumstances of the death of a loved one**, in a setting outside the board of inquiry process
- Providing families with information regarding bereavement and grief support programs, and services available for families
- Committing the resources required for the development and implementation of a **communications plan**. This would include activities, products, timelines, and metrics to better reach and inform family members on all the above documents, processes, benefits and support for families

RECOMMENDATION 2

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces take concrete steps to **provide the necessary tools to personnel responsible for** Casualty Administration, inquiries and bereavement services by:

- **Reviewing and updating simultaneously** all Casualty Administration guides, investigations directives, the related references and training material to: accurately reflect the roles of the stakeholders, investigations, authorities, expected timelines, benefits entitlements for bereaved families, key service providers
- Providing **adequate support to Designated Assistants**, including: training, trained Casualty Support Administration Officers and earlier collaboration with Family Liaison Officers (before Designated Assistant disengagement)
- **Building transferable expertise** with regards to providing Casualty Support within Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces
- Reviewing employment competency requirements, workload, and training of Integrated Personnel Support Centre Services Manager positions to **ensure they are provided with the necessary tools to assist individuals dealing with crisis**

RECOMMENDATION 3

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces take concrete steps to **enhance collaboration among stakeholders with a family-centric focus** by:

- Ensuring **all Command Teams are trained** for casualty notification and administration upon assuming a command role
- Establishing a **permanent Families in Focus working group**, extend participants to operational commands, to meet a minimum of once per year to ensure policies, guides and training are consistent and remain responsive to needs
- Formally recognizing and including bereaved families, along with families of medically released ill and injured members, as families who are transitioning from military to civilian life

These recommended changes are **fundamental** to fostering a trust relationship between the Canadian Armed Forces and military families during difficult and often uncertain circumstances that both parties find themselves in the event of a military casualty.

INTRODUCTION

For the past twelve years, the Office of the Ombudsman has been tracking and reporting on issues related to how the Canadian Armed Forces engages with families during a board of inquiry.¹ In March 2015, the Ombudsman's report: *Boards of Inquiry: Families in Focus* found that boards of inquiry focused heavily on military processes and were difficult to understand for many families. Therefore, more needs to be done to understand the information needs of bereaved Canadian Armed Forces families.

In response, the Commander of Military Personnel Command was directed to work with the Ombudsman's staff to identify the most appropriate and effective ways for the Canadian Armed Forces to meet the information needs of families following a tragic event. A "Families in Focus" working group was set up by the Canadian Armed Forces; led by the Director of Military Family Services with representation from offices involved in providing support to the families of deceased or seriously injured Canadian Armed Forces members. The Chief of the Defence Staff, General Vance, endorsed the terms of reference for the working group on 8 February 2016.

This report **examines current Canadian Armed Forces practices for engaging directly with families in situations when a Canadian Armed Forces member's death is not related to Canadian Armed Forces international or domestic operations.**ⁱ The recommendations are intended to be implemented by the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces – to better meet the information needs of bereaved military families.

ⁱ The investigation process differs when a death occurs during operations (dies otherwise than as a result of wounds received in action). The scope of this review is limited to the investigations under the approval authority of Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services) for deaths that are not related to Canadian Armed Forces operations. For a Canadian Armed Forces member who dies of an accidental death at work; during training; or a suspected suicide; the approving authority for the board of inquiry report is the Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services) (CANFORGEN 101/14). For a Canadian Armed Forces member who dies while on operation, the approving authority for the inquiry is the Chief of the Defence Staff (DAOD 7002-1, *Boards of Inquiry*).

SECTION I – CONTEXT

Military casualtyⁱⁱ support takes place when a member is seriously ill or injured; is reported missing; or loses his or her life. Boards of inquiry are one means of investigating military casualties.

The men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces face a high level of personal risk over the course of their careers. This is inherent to the military profession and a defining characteristic of life for a military family.² In cases where a Canadian Armed Forces member is seriously injured or loses his or her life in the service of Canada, or otherwise than as a result of wounds received in actionⁱⁱⁱ, a board of inquiry or a summary investigation is ordered.

Between 1 June 2014 and 1 June 2016, 54 boards of inquiry were convened and 47 summary investigations were recorded into the deaths of 101 Canadian Armed Forces members during the same period. Of the 54 boards of inquiries convened, nine were related to accidental deaths, 35 were following suspected suicides, two were for serious injuries, and eight were for other reasons.^{iv}

Military deaths are described as representing a double bereavement for military families – the loss of a family member and the loss of a way of life. For many, the military way of life is the only one they have ever known.

What is a Board of Inquiry in the Canadian Armed Forces?

A board of inquiry is an internal, non-judicial military investigation. It is convened if, “a matter to be investigated is of unusual significance or complexity; a Canadian Armed Forces member is suspected to have wilfully caused their own death or serious injury; or detailed medical information is required to report on any matter.”³

A board of inquiry is convened within 30 days by the Minister of National Defence, the Chief of the Defence Staff, an officer commanding a command or formation, or a Commanding Officer. The convening authority appoints a Canadian Armed Forces officer, generally of the rank of Major, to preside over the board as board president for the duration of the investigation. He or she also appoints a minimum of three members to the board of inquiry.^{v&4} Advisors, such as: a medical

ii A military casualty is defined as a: seriously ill or injured member; very seriously ill or injured member; member who is reported missing; member who is killed; or a member who dies. (*Defence Administrative Order and Directive 5018-0, Injured Members and Military Casualties*)

iii As per *Queen's Regulations and Orders 21.46 – Investigation of Injury or Death*

iv Email from Administrative Investigations Support Centre Section Head to Ombudsman Staff, 13 July 2016.

v Board of inquiry members are selected based on certain criteria such as: suitability, availability, being unbiased and not being in conflict of interest with the matter being investigated (source: AISC intranet page). Members of the board (Queen's Regulations and Order 21.08, *Composition of Boards of Inquiry*), including the board of inquiry president, are members who are tasked for the duration of the investigation.

officer, social worker, chaplain or professional subject matter experts, can also be appointed for technically complex or sensitive inquiries. Another chaplain may be assigned to assist the family during the process; as well as after when the results are released.⁵

In the case when a Canadian Armed Forces member dies outside the context of military operations, the final approving authority for the report is the Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services).⁶

Boards of Inquiry Have Changed

Since June 2014, the Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services) has been assigned the responsibility for the administration and oversight of the board of inquiry process. The Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services), including the Administrative Investigations Support Centre, have dedicated efforts to respond to shortcomings previously identified by the Administrative Investigations Support Centre and in this Ombudsman's office reports.

The board of inquiry president is the point of contact for families and she or he meets with the Canadian Armed Forces member's representative on at least three occasions:⁷

- The first meeting takes place prior to the beginning of the proceedings to explain the board of inquiry process (timelines, attendance)
- The second meeting happens during the board of inquiry process itself; when the board of inquiry president provides updates as agreed with the member's representative, and he or she coordinates his or her attendance at proceedings
- Finally, once the board of inquiry report is approved, if the member's representative wishes, the board of inquiry president provides: a final briefing, a letter of completion, and a copy of the investigation report (severed in accordance with the *Privacy Act* and the *Access to Information Act*)⁸

More details on changes are listed in Annex B – Changes to Boards of Inquiry.

SECTION II – ISSUE STATEMENT

After a Canadian Armed Forces member loses his or her life, the bereaved family is contacted by a number of Canadian Armed Forces personnel working in different capacities and serving different objectives. The series of actions that take place after a Canadian Armed Forces member dies form part of the casualty administration and investigation processes. The general sequence of Canadian Armed Forces engagement with deceased member's family is as follows:

General sequence of Canadian Armed Forces engagement with a deceased member's family:

1. Notification of the Emergency Contact(s) chosen by the member
2. Designated Assistant (DA) is assigned to the next of kin
3. Designated Assistant will offer support through
 - Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE)
 - Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program (CFMAP) bereavement services
4. Funeral arrangements are coordinated with the help of the Designated Assistant and chaplain
5. Investigation(s) and board of inquiry (BOI) (initial briefing and process) take place
6. Support to family is transferred to:
 - Integrated Personnel Support Centre (IPSC) Services Manager
 - Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) Family Liaison Officer (FLO)
7. The board of inquiry is completed and, when applicable^{vi}, there is a final briefing to the member's representative by the board of inquiry president
8. The Integrated Personnel Support Centre remains the point of access for Canadian Armed Forces support to bereaved families, for as long as needed

Further details for each step can be found at the following hyperlink: [“What happens after a Canadian Armed Forces member dies?”](#)^{vii}

Although the loss of a Canadian Armed Forces member does not always require a board of inquiry and may be investigated through a different investigation process, called a summary investigation,^{viii} every grieving family requires information and support. In either case, the family is offered a debrief. Access to timely and clear information on the circumstances of a loved one's death, should the family wish to have this information, can help support a healthy grieving process.

^{vi} In some instances, a family debrief will not occur, if legal or security reasons would prohibit the release of information

^{vii} <http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/en/ombudsman-questions-complaints-helpful-information/what-happens-after-a-CAF-member-dies.page>

^{viii} The Administrative Investigations Support Centre specifically directs that a board of inquiry be conducted for complex cases of workplace death/serious injuries, and for all suspected suicides. In other instances, deaths may be investigated through a summary investigation instead of a board of inquiry, such as in the case of a motor vehicle accident.

SECTION III – FINDINGS

The findings of the review are grouped in three major categories:

1. Information needs of bereaved families
2. Information needs and awareness within the Canadian Armed Forces
3. Need for continuous improvement within the Canadian Armed Forces to support bereaved families

FINDING 1 – INFORMATION NEEDS OF BEREAVED FAMILIES

Military families have little awareness of the key Canadian Armed Forces administrative documents that speak on behalf of a member in the event he or she becomes casualty. They also have little awareness to the significance of such documents.

The Canadian Armed Forces keeps important documents in case a member becomes a casualty⁹ (Annex C). Canadian Armed Forces members are required to name who they would like to be contacted in the event of their death or serious injury/illness; who will be the executor of their will; and the beneficiary of the *Supplementary Death Benefit* or the *Reserve Force Death Gratuity*.

Families are likely unaware that their loved ones were required to indicate how they would want the Canadian Armed Forces to engage with their next of kin and other family members. For example:

- If the Canadian Armed Forces member chooses “Do Not Notify” on his or her *Emergency Contact(s) Notification* (CF 742 Form), the family will be contacted only by letter.¹⁰ Families may not be aware of their loved one’s choice and this could be interpreted as a lack of sensitivity from the Canadian Armed Forces.
- The Canadian Armed Forces member may decide to put a friend as the contact person in case of an emergency.¹¹ In this case, the friend would be the first notified, even before the parents or the spouse.
- Next of kin are designated by Canadian Armed Forces members in the *Next of Kin (NOK) Identification* (DND 2587 Form). Although a member may decline to designate any next of kin, members should be aware that this: “may cause distress to persons closest to him or her when they learn about the member’s death by other means such as through the media.”^{ix}

ix *Military Human Resources Records Procedures, Chapter 10 Unit Personnel Record (UPR)*, Forms found on the UPR, (available on the Defence Information Network intranet only), <http://upkprod.desc.mil.ca/hrmsp/eng/data/toc.html>

- The decisions regarding funeral arrangements are not automatically the responsibility of the next of kin. “The executor or liquidator of the succession named in a will is, subject to provincial law, the custody of the remains. The executor or liquidator of the succession is not necessarily the deceased's next of kin.”^x

“Many of us truly don’t understand the effect that not filling out this paperwork with proper consideration can have on our loved ones in the event of a serious incident...

I’d love to see the importance of these forms literally drilled into us...

in our orderly rooms, in Town Halls, unit presentations.

Completing these forms fully informed is a no fail operation.”¹²

- A serving Canadian Armed Forces member and widowed Canadian Armed Forces spouse

The quality of delivery for the support, benefits, and services bereaved families receive is dependent on the quality of information provided in these documents.

Military families do not have ease of access to information explaining what to expect following a Canadian Armed Forces member’s death

A problem we have noted is that there is limited access to substantive information publicly available about what a board of inquiry is and what a family should expect. For example, its aim, the findings the report will contain^{xi}, and how it could affect them. This lack of information has an impact on the expectations families may have. The main information tool that currently exists for bereaved families is the pamphlet *Shoulder to Shoulder* (Annex D – Shoulder to Shoulder Pamphlet; as well as *Shoulder to Shoulder – Support for the Families of the Fallen – A Guide Book*.^{xii} The pamphlet is out of date and is missing practical information. For example, there is only one paragraph about boards of inquiry and it does not mention that the president of the board is responsible for supporting the family during an inquiry. Copies of the pamphlet are not readily available.

Information on other possible concurrent investigations and support is absent. For example, it is not mentioned that support to the family during the actual board of inquiry process is entrusted to the president of the board by the convening authority. The board of inquiry president may elect to be assisted by the chaplain assigned to the board, when he or she briefs the family (or subject to a family’s preference).¹³

^x Defence Administration Orders and Directives 7011-1, *Responsibilities for Service Estates and Personal Belongings*, paragraph 3.2

^{xi} As per *Queen’s Regulations and Orders 21.47 - Findings on Injury or Death*

^{xii} *Shoulder to Shoulder – Support for Families of the Fallen – A Guide Book* can be accessed at the web page “For Families of the Fallen” <https://www.CAFconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Families-of-the-Fallen.aspx> and *You’re Not Alone* website <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/CAF-community-health-services/mental-health-resources.page>

Neither of the guides provides a description of the casualty administration process nor the timelines associated with the respective steps shown in, “What happens after a Canadian Armed Forces member dies?”^{xiii}

Participation in the Board of Inquiry Process

**“A board of inquiry to us civilians is almost like a boogeyman.
We don’t understand it.”¹⁴**

- Bereaved family member and HOPE Peer Support Volunteer

Before a board of inquiry is convened by the Canadian Armed Forces, the deceased member’s representative is contacted by the board of inquiry president to arrange the initial meeting. During this meeting, the president provides an information pamphlet (Annex E) and explains the intent of the investigation; he/she also discusses the process, expected timelines, the frequency of updates, and the type of information likely to be provided. During the investigation, the president provides updates, as agreed with the member’s representative. The president releases a severed copy of the report at the final briefing. Once the final report is approved by the Chief of the Defence Staff or the Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services), the president releases a severed copy of the report along with a copy of the letter of completion to the member’s representative during the final briefing. The president is available to answer any questions the member’s representative may have.¹⁵

The board of inquiry president encourages families to provide feedback and share their experience. In July 2016, the Administrative Investigations Support Centre reported that, of 54 recent boards of inquiry, 35 families identified themselves as “satisfied” with the experience; ten declined to comment and nine families’ comments were pending.

During this review, the Administrative Investigations Support Centre recognized the need for accessible information, and agreed to provide Military Family Services with content to be made available on the www.CAFconnection.ca website.

Of the families who provided feedback, one stated the importance of giving families adequate advance notice of the schedule for board proceedings and interviews. This is to allow families to make the necessary personal arrangements to attend.

Additionally, the Canadian Armed Forces needs to provide families with clear information as to who can participate in a board of inquiry; as well as which proceedings are closed for legal reasons (medical confidentiality, security, operational considerations). The Administrative

xiii <http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/en/ombudsman-questions-complaints-helpful-information/what-happens-after-a-Canadian-Armed-Forces-member-dies.page>

Investigations Support Centre's Convening Order (Annex F) provides specific information about the member's representative attendance.

Protection of Personal Information after Death

Sometimes families do not understand why information is withheld from them. As part of the *Privacy Act*, the Canadian Armed Forces are required by law to protect a member's personal information (including medical information) even after his or her death.

Legislation such as the *Privacy Act* protects information for up to 20 years following the death of an individual.^{xiv} This information is not readily available or, when available, it is not communicated in plain language to military families – including parents of Canadian Armed Forces members.

Concurrent Investigations

In addition to a board of inquiry, other investigations may take place at the same time or one after another. In cases of suspected suicide, up to three separate Canadian Armed Forces investigations may take place.

The lack of early, accurate information about the military investigative processes that follow a Canadian Armed Forces member's death can make the affected families feel confused or excluded.

The board of inquiry does not need permission from the family to access records. It compels the production of all records necessary for the conduct of the inquiry. But this is not the case for other investigations; wherein investigators may contact family members to obtain consent to access the Canadian Armed Forces member's personal information.

For example, a member's representative is told that board of inquiry members have access to medical records; but the same representative is later asked to provide consent to allow the Canadian Forces National Investigative Services (military police) to view the same information.

For grieving families, this makes little sense; considering that all the investigations are being held within the Canadian Armed Forces. Multiple contacts from the Canadian Armed Forces for the same information can be seen by families as redundant and frustrating – family members are often not allowed to see the very information they are granting the Canadian Armed Forces permission to access.^{xv}

xiv Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada – *Investigator's Guide to Interpreting the Access to Information Act - Section 19 - Personal Information*, http://www.oic-ci.gc.ca/eng/inv_inv-gui-ati_gui-inv-ati_section_19.aspx

xv Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman case files received between 1 June 2014 and 1 June 2016.

Families need to receive timely and clearly communicated information regarding the circumstances of a Canadian Armed Forces member's death

The need to repeatedly advocate for access to information from the Canadian Armed Forces; having to continually follow up; as well as difficulty finding the proper points of contact for their information needs – are all well-documented sources of frustration and disappointment for families.¹⁶

A January 2015 report by the Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC): *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)*, identified being informed as a central need for family members.

“I asked at the very beginning... I was not given an answer, and I was not given permission to see anything. I was not given permission to understand... and it was exactly as I predicted at the time – they’re saying no, but what they’re really saying is no at the moment and eventually they’re going to slap me with it years down the road. Now is when I want to deal with everything that I’m going to deal with, now is when I’m ready...”¹⁷

Respecting and effectively responding to a family's need for information affords them an element of choice, and affects how they face a tragic situation that afforded them no choice.¹⁸ Many families cited, “a real need (...) to know the details surrounding the death of their loved ones,” through some form of official documentation. Not having access to such information resulted in stress, a feeling of being cut off, and was described as an overall hurdle to the grieving process.¹⁹

For anyone external to the Canadian Armed Forces, there is a lack of publicly available information about who can participate in the board of inquiry or obtain information related to a deceased Canadian Armed Forces member. The terminology “member's representative” is not well described for bereaved family members to understand why they may be precluded to access information.

Services and resources available to support bereaved Canadian Armed Forces families in their grief are not well known, easily accessible, or consistently available

The resources include: chaplain services, peer support, Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program Bereavement Services, Family Liaison Officer, Casualty Support Child Care, children and youth-specific supports, and services that are available long-term.

A 2015 assessment by the Director of Casualty Support Management on the needs of bereaved Canadian Armed Forces families found that following their loss, the vast majority of participants reported having “little knowledge of where, or to whom, they could turn for support.”²⁰ Findings

from this assessment revealed, “(...) some confusion (...) with respect to what services may be available to bereaved families, such as resources like grief counselling or therapy.”²¹

Families voiced the need to be aware of important Canadian Armed Forces resources such as: the option for ongoing chaplain support, the peer support program, and the Family Liaison Officer – who facilitates referrals to specialist support in the community. According to the *Designated Assistant Guide*,²² this information is to be provided by the family's Designated Assistant.

The Designated Assistant is the Gateway to Resources and Support for Families

Shortly after the notification of a death, the Commanding Officer assigns a Canadian Armed Forces member as Designated Assistant to the next of kin, the personal representative, or a substitute decision maker.²³ The Designated Assistant is the link between the Canadian Armed Forces, the service providers, and the next of kin. He or she temporarily serves as the point of contact for bereaved families; generally for one month but up to a maximum of three months. Families can look to the Designated Assistant for help with financial claims and for information about what supports are available.

The Designated Assistant is the primary point of access for families to peer support, bereavement counselling, the Family Liaison Officer, and bereavement support.²⁴

This Designated Assistant, who may be performing this duty for the first time, can be of any military occupation (for example: an infantry officer, a combat systems engineer, a pilot or a logistician). This individual is selected by his or her Commanding Officer based on considerations, such as: availability for an extended period, maturity, empathy, fluency in the language of the next of kin, rank, and having taken the Designated Assistant training.²⁵ The *Designated Assistant Guide*,²⁶ available online, details the responsibilities associated with this role.

Chaplains

The role of the chaplain is to assist the bereaved families in the planning of funeral services; to accompany them; to preside over a funeral; and or give them the help they need to work with civilian religious minister of the family's choosing. Additionally, they work with Designated Assistants to help when funeral homes want the bereaved family to make decisions related to expenses that might not be covered by the Canadian Armed Forces.

Peer Support Program – HOPE

Bereaved families have access to peer support^{xvi} through the group: Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE). A parent, spouse, child, stepchild, fiancé or any other person of significance to the affected Canadian Armed Forces member is eligible for this program.

The *Designated Assistant Guide* states: “If the next of kin or a family member expresses interest in the bereavement peer support program, forward his/her name and telephone number to Director Casualty Support Management at 1-800-883-6094. The Director Casualty Support Management staff will forward the contact information to the program manager. A HOPE volunteer will be designated and will contact the next of kin/family member. It is important to obtain agreement from the next of kin or the family before contacting the program manager.”²⁷

HOPE peer support is presented to families at different steps:²⁸

1. Once the Designated Assistant is appointed, HOPE sends an email to the Designated Assistant to introduce the program
2. There is a phone call follow-up with the family by a HOPE volunteer and a letter is sent
3. During the Designated Assistant disengagement phase, the HOPE program is again presented as an option to family members by the Integrated Personnel Support Centre Services Manager

This form of bereavement support has additional significance in a military context, considering the particular nature of service-related deaths, and the fact that close friends and family often live geographically far from one another. HOPE has been helping families for the past 10 years; a similar program was not offered before then (see [Annex G](#)).

Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program (CFMAP) Bereavement Services

Grieving families have immediate access to counselling services through the Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program. The Designated Assistant is also responsible to inform the family of this service; however, the guide does not mention if any other person of significance to Canadian Armed Forces personnel who died while serving is also eligible for this service.²⁹ Therefore, a Designated Assistant may not be aware that all family members can have access to this program.

^{xvi} HOPE volunteers are stringently trained and are encouraged to consult with their doctors before volunteering. The five-day intensive training gives volunteers the tools on topics like helping relationships, conflict, and boundaries – to start mentoring families. Volunteers are also given two-day suicide intervention training. Throughout the year volunteers also meet for professional development to share strategies and build on their tools. (Source: Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE) program manager, 3 October 2016)

Family Liaison Officer

Another resource available for both the family and the Designated Assistant is the Family Liaison Officer. Family liaison officers are an important Military Family Resource Centre resource located within Integrated Personnel Support Centres. They are trained social workers who are able to provide short-term psychosocial support and who have a wealth of knowledge about Canadian Armed Forces and local community psychosocial resources.³⁰ The Family Liaison Officer is formally introduced to bereaved families after the disengagement of the Designated Assistant; around two or three months following the loss, as part of the transition to the Integrated Personnel Support Centre Services Manager.³¹ Both the service manager and the Family Liaison Officer work in collaboration. Both provide continuing support for families of the fallen.³²

During this review, some families said that an earlier engagement with the Family Liaison Officer would have been beneficial.³³ An example of this was given by a Family Liaison Officer who, based on her experience, found the Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program Bereavement Services were not known to families until the Family Liaison Officer suggested they use this service, in combination with other services, to maximize counselling support while minimizing costs.³⁴ & xvii

Despite the key role they hold, the Family Liaison Officer's role is not mentioned in any of the three casualty guides.

Other Bereavement Supports

Casualty Support Child Care

Another resource absent from the casualty guides is the Casualty Support Child Care benefit.^{xviii} It is not widely known to families that they are entitled to a maximum of 168 hours of child care services through Military Family Resource Centres. These services are intended to provide support and respite throughout the funeral and bereavement process.³⁵

This benefit is not listed in the *Designated Assistant Guide*. Therefore, unless the Designated Assistant happens to be personally aware of this benefit, or families have read and remembered this information from page 74 of the *A Family Guide to the Military Experience*, some families may not be aware of this entitlement.

xvii In an April 2016 review and survey on mental health services for military families, the executive directors of Military Family Resource Centres were asked about the frequency with which they referred families to a variety of services and programs offered by Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services. The most commonly referred service, with a weekly referral frequency of 47%, was to Family Liaison Officers. (Source: Military Family Services Program, MFRC Environmental Scan and Subject Matter Expert Survey Results (April 2016), p. 14)

xviii <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/Canadian-Armed-Forces-community-health-services-r2mr-deployment/deployment-resources-family-members.page>

Children and Youth Specific Bereavement Supports

According to the April 2016 Military Family Resource Centre Survey, “Military families continue to face challenges accessing existing services, quite commonly due to lack of awareness of available services and/or difficulty navigating the health and wellness services available both in the military setting and in the community.”³⁶ For example, the Rainbows Grief Program,^{xix} aims to provide age-appropriate, community-based grief support for bereaved children. The program is named as one of the services in the, *You’re Not Alone*³⁷ book. Therefore, a bereaved parent would expect this program to be available at any Military Family Resource Centre.

In fact, the survey revealed that 91% of the time, the program was not offered.³⁸ In all locations where Military Family Resource Centres did not run the program, it was either because they did not have certified instructors, or there was no local interest from local demographics. There is no clear information available on what other support options might exist as a quality alternative for meeting the unique support needs of bereaved children.

An example of collaboration with civilian organizations is the collaboration between the Canadian Armed Forces and Dr. Jay Children’s Grief Program.³⁹ This partnership included the participation of Director Military Family Services as an important key stakeholder. Dr. Jay provided two days of training in grief counselling to Military Family Resource Centre staff in 2015. Additionally, the Toronto-based Dr. Jay Children’s Grief Program runs Camp Erin, a weekend-long bereavement camp in Muskoka for children and youth between 6 and 17 years old, who have experienced the death of a parent or sibling. The Joint Personnel Support Unit/HOPE partnered with the Toronto-based program and, since then, participation to Camp Erin is open to military children and is funded through the Military Family Resource Centres.

The lack of awareness about any of these available resources impedes a family member’s ability to receive the support they need when they need it.⁴⁰

Lack of knowledge about long-term services

Prior to the establishment of the Joint Personnel Support Unit in 2008 and the creation of the Integrated Personnel Support Centres, a gap in service support was identified with respect to continued support for bereaved families following the disengagement of the Designated Assistant from his or her duties.⁴¹

xix Rainbows Grief Program provides age-appropriate, community-based grief support to foster emotional healing. It provides a safe, non-judgemental and supportive environment for kids to process their feelings, build self-esteem and learn positive coping strategies (Source: *You’re Not Alone* <https://www.cafconnection.ca/getmedia/2e130364-e845-4783-9cf6-8053c55daa5f/You-re-not-Alone-Web-Guide-Oct-2014-E.aspx?ext=.pdf> p. 14 and <https://www.CAFconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Families-of-the-Fallen/Shoulder-to-Shoulder/Children-and-Youth/Rainbows-Program.aspx>

The Manager of the Integrated Personnel Support Centre Services assumes those duties after the disengagement of the Designated Assistant. It is the services manager's responsibility to ensure that the family continues to receive the required support from both the Department of National Defence and Veterans Affairs Canada.⁴² As part of this responsibility, service managers are required to make family members aware of key information and timelines for items such as: *Federal Priority Hiring Status* for spouses, *Relocation Benefits*, as well as available scholarships and grants.⁴³

“In the event a Canadian Armed Forces member dies while serving, the Military Family Service Program is extended to the members of his or her family in perpetuity, and to other individuals of significance to the deceased as required.”

- Military Family Services Program Policy Amendment – Populations Served
– effective 23 August 2011⁴⁴

Bereaved families have access to their closest Integrated Personnel Support Centre and Military Family Resource Centre for as long as they need.⁴⁵ However, it is unclear what supports families can access through these centres, or to which office they should make different types of requests.⁴⁶ In many cases, the bereaved family is leaving behind military life, but families are not formally offered a period of transitional support.

In contrast, a more formal period of transition is acknowledged for families of ill or injured Canadian Armed Forces members who are released for medical reasons. A program such as the Veteran Family Pilot Program^{xx} offered at some Military Family Resource Centres, affords transitioning families time to adjust to their new reality; thereby facilitating the transition into broader civilian community support in the long-term. Families would benefit from formal information about supports available from the Family Liaison Officer, the Joint Personnel Support Centre, as well as who would be the family's contact for assistance.

FINDING 2 – INFORMATION NEEDS AND AWARENESS WITHIN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Outdated reference materials hamper the ability to properly support families. This leads to unnecessary delays, frustration, and a perceived lack of attention or collaboration among different stakeholders.

xx “Since October 2015, a new four year pilot project will expand access to the Military Family Resource Centers at seven locations to medically releasing Canadian Armed Forces personnel and their families for two years post release. Military family resources are available at military establishments across Canada, through the 1-800 Family Information Line, and <https://www.cafconnection.ca/>. Up to 1200 medically releasing veterans and their families will take part in the pilot.” – “Archived News Release - Government of Canada takes action to strengthen mental health support for Canadian Armed Forces personnel, Veterans and their families” 23 March 2014 and <https://www.cfmws.com/en/AboutUs/MFS/Pages/Veteran%20Family%20Program.aspx>

Outdated Casualty Administration, Investigations and Bereavement Resources Source Documents

Casualty Administration Guides and Related References

Numerous references are made to documents and rules in the Casualty Administration Process. The three main guides published by the Director of Casualty Support Management – the offices with national responsibility for Canadian Armed Forces Casualty management – are:

- The Casualty Administration Manual (May 13, 2014 edition)
- The Commanding Officer Guide – Casualty Support & Administration (July 30, 2013 edition)
- The *Designated Assistant Guide*⁴⁷ (December 12, 2014 edition)

We also reviewed the Military Human Resources Records Procedures, which is the tool used by resource management clerks and administrative staff as source document for all administration procedures; including the Canadian Armed Forces annual personnel verification (which includes the verification of important documents listed in [Annex C](#)). We included in our review the *Canadian Forces Administration Order 24-1, Casualties – Reporting and Administration*, which is still listed as a source document. (See attached.)

We found that the guides and relevant documents are not consolidated. They are out of date and/or missing pertinent information for stakeholders who rely on those documents; particularly with regards to the needs and engagement of families. Generally, we observed a lack of information, or very limited information, related to:

- The chronology of what to expect from a family's perspective
- Who can access a deceased Canadian Armed Forces member's belongings
- The number of hours available for Casualty Child Care at the Military Family Resource Centre
- Funeral options and financial assistance
- The possibility of multiple concurrent or consecutive investigations of the same fatal incident; as well as little explanation of the different investigative mechanisms involved or their varied abilities and requirements for accessing information
- The duration of the protection of personal information under the *Privacy Act* after a Canadian Armed Forces member dies
- The importance of a proactive offer of peer support through Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE)
- The availability of Bereavement Support through Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program and the number of sessions that can be accessed

- The role of the Family Liaison Officers, and the support they are available to provide prior to the Designated Assistant Disengagement phase
- The benefits and services available; provided by which offices and for how long

The *Canadian Forces Administrative Order 24-1, Casualties – Reporting and Administration*, describes the procedures for reporting and administering casualties. When accessing the internal document online, we discovered that this order was issued in 1995 and no longer contains current references. **Out of 32 related regulations the document refers to, all but seven references are superseded, repealed, cancelled, or cannot be accessed.** This order can only be found on the internal Defence Information Network but is referred to in the three casualty guides previously named. The support staff, Casualty Support Administration Officer and Designated Assistant should not have to spend time finding and piecing information together when they should be focussing on helping families instead.

Current Bereaved Family Entitlements Missing in Guides

Additionally, the changes in policies and entitlements that directly affect bereaved families are either not incorporated or are only partially incorporated in the guides:

- Next of kin-associated benefits (changes effective 7 June 2012, 14 September 2014 and 1 November 2014)
- Casualty Support Child Care benefit
- Board of inquiry approving authorities (effective 1 June 2014) and family support available during board of inquiry proceedings
- Changes to the Intended Place of Residence and the Relocation Benefit (effective 16 September 2014)

Investigations and Inquiries References

The *Defence Administrative Order and Directive 7002-1, Boards of Inquiry*⁴⁸ was last modified in 2011. Some key information, which at present is only available on the Administrative Investigations Support Centre intranet site and in Canadian Forces General Messages (CANFORGENS), has not been incorporated in the directive. For example:

- The timelines to order a board of inquiry following the death of a Canadian Armed Forces member
- The approving authorities in effect since 1 June 2014
- The projected time to complete a board of inquiry
- The levels of review of the report

- The documents the member's representative can access
- The contact if the members' representative requires clarification after the completion of the board of inquiry report

Bereavement Resources for Families

Information on bereavement resources for families is neither consistent nor consolidated in one location. For example, eligibility for bereavement services through the Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program is described differently in the *Designated Assistant Guide*,⁴⁹ the *Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services for Serving and Former Canadian Armed Forces Members and their Families*,⁵⁰ and the Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program web page.⁵¹

A Designated Assistant who is supposed to relay information about this service for the bereaved family would not be in a position to say with certainty who is eligible for this service, for how long, or if there are associated costs.

The Designated Assistant Role is only a tasking – It is not a permanent job

The training and support provided to the Designated Assistant does not seem adequate to enable the best possible support to families.

HOPE peer support participants expressed that, “the role of the Designated Assistant is one of the most crucial components for the bereaved families following the death of a Canadian Armed Forces member.”⁵² This is in contrast to the reality of the situation. This responsibility may be a first-time undertaking, and the member is provided training sessions along with the *Designated Assistant Guide* (last updated in 2014). However, based on the input of military families, we find that the training and support provided to the Designated Assistant does not seem adequate to enable the best possible support to families.

The *Designated Assistant Guide* states that the mandatory training takes two days; the Casualty Support website says three days. Again, the information is not kept up to date in the source references.

The *Designated Assistant Guide* indicates that the Designated Assistant is responsible for abundance of tasks; specifically, to make sure families are referred to the available resources accurately and in a timely way. The Designated Assistant is to be supported by the Casualty Administration Support Officer, at the Base/Wing or Unit.^{xxi}

xxi The Casualty Administration Support Officer is “the person whom the Commanding Officer names as the main point of contact for and provider of all administrative support to the Designated Assistant. This officer is responsible for planning transportation, preparing applications and travel orders, reserving hotels, and researching regulations to support the Designated Assistant, the personal representative, and the next of kin as needed.” (Source: *Designated Assistant Guide* – Definitions)

Designated Assistants are selected and trained in anticipation of a requirement. It may be some time between the training and actual employment as a Designated Assistant. When a Designated Assistant is acting in that capacity for the first time, that person may require more support to ensure the needs of the family are met.

FINDING 3 – NEED FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WITHIN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES TO SUPPORT BEREAVED FAMILIES

Limited Expertise in Casualty Administration within the Canadian Armed Forces

Few military members are trained specifically about the Casualty Administration Process. Canadian Armed Forces officers of the Logistics Branch may choose Human Resource Management as a primary leadership function for their careers. For those who do, they receive 2.5 days training on Conducting Casualty Administrative Procedure as part of their qualification requirements.^{xxii}

Throughout their career, Logistics Officers (Human Resource Management) are called to assume the role of Casualty Administration Support Officer at the Base and Wing level. They can be an invaluable support to Designated Assistants.

Not all Canadian Armed Forces members who occupy positions responsible for providing Casualty Administration Support possess relevant expertise or have received Casualty Administration training. As of 7 November 2016, 91 Regular Force officers and 32 Reserve Force officers had received the specific training on Conducting Administrative Procedures. Only 123 officers are trained in the entire Canadian Armed Forces.^{xxiii}

Families perceive a lack of cooperation, communication and collaboration among the different individuals and offices that contribute to both investigations and Casualty Support

Despite having a Designated Assistant assigned to the bereaved family, other individuals and Canadian Armed Forces offices also need to engage with the family. Many elements of these interactions with families and what information is provided to them are not standardized. These individuals and offices do not have consistent awareness of each other's efforts. This leads to inconsistent information and support to bereaved families.

“You can’t make it better [for the family], but you can definitely make it worse.”

- Dr. Nancy Davis, former chief of counselling services Federal Bureau of Investigation

xxiiThe AIHL qualification (Human Resource Management) is comprised of two modules. A self-paced online module, (approximately 16 hours) and 20.5 days in-residence training. (Source: Officer Training Division Borden <http://borden.mil.ca/26/18.aspx>, 18 October 2016)

xxiii Director Human Resources Information Management Adhoc Report dated 7 November 2016

How early a family is made aware of the many support programs and services a Family Liaison Officer can provide varies considerably depending on local Base or Wing Casualty Support practices, and the views of the particular command team that is in place.^{xxiv}

Most reported success with regards to providing timely services to families, happened when command teams, including the Family Liaison Officer, met on a regular basis throughout the casualty process steps.⁵³

Maintaining Contact with Families Long-Term

After the Designated Assistant disengages, the Integrated Personnel Support Centre Services Manager is responsible for maintaining a contact list for all families that have been contacted through formal introduction, or Designated Assistant disengagement. Periodic follow up, no less than annually, is required unless the family specifically requests no further contact.

SECTION IV – RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations should be implemented:

RECOMMENDATION 1 – Meet the Information Needs of Bereaved Families

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces take concrete steps to better meet the information needs of families by:

- Producing plain language information for families on the specifics and impacts of key administrative documents that Canadian Armed Forces military members are required to complete in case of serious illness, injury or death; as well as make this information available to Canadian Armed Forces members as part of the Annual Personnel Readiness Verification
- Providing readily-accessible information based on bereaved families' frequently asked questions. This needs to be consolidated into a single access point where families can find **information explaining what to expect after a Canadian Armed Forces member dies**; whether in the context of Canadian Armed Forces operations or not
- In addition to the information being provided as part of the board of inquiry process, developing clear guidelines and timelines for Commanding Officers to meet with families who express the desire for **information about the circumstances of the death of a loved one**, in a setting outside the board of inquiry process

xxiv *Commanding Officer Guide – Casualty Support & Administration*, p. 17 (accessible only on the Defence Information Network intranet)

- Providing families with information regarding bereavement and grief support programs, and services available for families
- Committing the resources required for the development and implementation of a **communications plan**. This would include activities, products, timelines, and metrics to better reach and inform family members on all the above documents, processes, benefits and support for families

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Meet the Information Needs and Awareness for the Canadian Armed Forces members

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces take concrete steps to **provide the necessary tools to personnel responsible for** Casualty Administration, inquiries and bereavement services by:

- **Reviewing and updating simultaneously** all Casualty Administration guides, investigations directives, the related references and training material to: accurately reflect the roles of the stakeholders, investigations, authorities, expected timelines, benefits entitlements for bereaved families, key service providers
- Providing **adequate support to Designated Assistants**, including: training, trained Casualty Support Administration Officers and earlier collaboration with Family Liaison Officers (before Designated Assistant disengagement)
- **Building transferable expertise** with regards to providing Casualty Support within Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces
- Reviewing employment competency requirements, workload, and training of Integrated Personnel Support Centre Services Manager positions to **ensure they are provided with the necessary tools to assist individuals dealing with crisis**

RECOMMENDATION 3 – Foster Continuous Improvement within the Canadian Armed Forces to Support Bereaved Families

It is recommended that the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces take concrete steps to **enhance collaboration among stakeholders with a family-centric focus** by:

- Ensuring **all Command Teams are trained** for casualty notification and administration upon assuming a command role

- Establishing a **permanent Families in Focus working group**, extend participants to operational commands, to meet a minimum of once per year to ensure policies, guides and training are consistent and remain responsive to needs
- Formally recognizing and including bereaved families, along with families of medically released ill and injured members, as families who are transitioning from military to civilian life

CONCLUSION

This collaborative review found that families' information needs would better be met by also addressing Canadian Armed Forces members' awareness about source documents related to casualties. Families need to know what to expect after a Canadian Armed Forces member dies to be informed of different responsibilities and rights; what investigation(s) take place; and what resources are available to each family member. Families should not have to chase after information they have a right to access – whether the death happened during operations or not – they should be assisted in their efforts to obtain it. Finally, families need to be supported throughout their own transition to the civilian community.

Canadian Armed Forces members cannot properly assist bereaved families if they do not have the necessary information, training, guidance and support. The women and men of our military recognize the importance of continuous learning and development, and will excel in helping families if they have the right tools.

I am encouraged by the interest this collaboration review has drawn among stakeholders. I look forward to the Families in Focus working group work on the Canadian Armed Forces strategy following this report's recommendations.

ANNEX A – METHODOLOGY AND WORKING GROUP

This review, conducted by the Office of the Ombudsman in cooperation with Canadian Armed Forces experts, focussed mainly on an examination of current Canadian Armed Forces practices for engaging with families in situations where a Canadian Armed Forces member's death **was not related to Canadian Armed Forces operations**.^{xxv}

Important resources used to identify the families' information needs included, but were not limited to, the January 2015 scientific report: Exploring the needs of bereaved families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF),⁵⁴ and the April 2016 Mental Health Services for Military Families MFRC Environmental Scan and Subject Matter Survey Results.⁵⁵

Documentation Research

Information was gleaned from the following sources:

1. Information from families who voluntarily provided input
2. Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman case files from 1 June 2014 to 1 June 2016
3. Previous Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman investigations
4. Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM) publications and other relevant casualty related references
5. Director Military Family Services website
6. Administrative Investigations Support Centre (AISC) Defence Information Network site
7. Defence Information Network (DIN) intranet
8. *Military Human Resources Records and Procedures* (MHRPP)
9. Shoulder to Shoulder – A Guide Book
10. Military Families Research
11. Coulthard, J. & Wright J. (2015), Exploring the needs of bereaved families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), The Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE) program, Ottawa, ON: Prepared for Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM)

xxv For a Canadian Armed Forces member who dies while deployed to an international or domestic operation, the approving authority for the inquiry is the Chief of the Defence Staff (DAOD 7002-1, *Boards of Inquiries*).

12. MFSP Mental Health Services Framework – A Conceptual Overview, Best Practice Guidance and Risk Management Tool for MFRCs Version 2.0 (February 2016), Military Family Services Program
13. Manser, L., Bain, S., & Swid, G. (2016). Mental Health Services for Military Families – MFRC Environmental Scan and Subject Matter Expert Survey Results. Ottawa, ON: Military Family Services
14. A Family Guide to Military Experience
15. You're Not Alone – Connecting Military Families to Mental Health and Social Wellness Programs
16. Defence Forms Catalogue (accessible on the Defence Information Network intranet only)
17. Dr. Jay Children's Grief Centre <https://drjaychildrensgriefcentre.ca/>
18. Other open sources

Subject Matter Expert Engagement

Meetings were conducted in person, on the telephone or feedback in email format, with individuals and staff, working group members and other organizations as follows:

Working Group

- Director Military Family Services (Canadian Armed Forces Lead)
- Director Casualty Support Management
- Director Mental Health Services
- Canadian Forces Health Services Group
- Helping Our Peers by providing Empathy (HOPE) Peer Support Program
- Chaplain General
- Military Family Resource Centre Family Liaison Officer (FLO)
- Administrative Investigations Support Centre (AISC)

Other Organizations

Open source information of three allied countries were reviewed. Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom were chosen because families are included in their respective Defence Policies. The aim was to see what information was available for families following the death of a serving member.

United Kingdom

- *Review into the Needs of Families Bereaved by Homicide*, Louise Casey CB, Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses (United Kingdom)(July 2011). Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice commissioned the review to improve their understanding of the needs of this vulnerable group. It was undertaken over a six-month period and has drawn on the experiences of over 400 bereaved families.
- **Cruse Bereavement Care (UK)** – Cruse Bereavement Care is the leading national charity for bereaved people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They offer support, advice, and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies. They work to enhance society's care of bereaved people. The Supporting the Military Family Project, "aims to further develop and raise awareness of bereavement services available for the Military Family. Over a two-year period the project, funded by the Department of Defence will support over 30,000 bereaved serving personnel, their families and the ex-services community." <http://www.cruse.org.uk/Military>
- The charity for bereaved children: Winston's Wish <http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/> – helping children to rebuild their lives

United States

- The Dougy Centre – United States National Centre for Grieving Children and their Families, <http://www.dougy.org/>
- United States Army Human Resources Command – Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center, survivor family resources:
 - <https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/Survivor%20Family%20Resources>, including – [A Survivor Guide to Benefits, Taking Care of Our Families](#)

Limitations

Outside the scope of this review: deaths and serious injuries that occurred in Canadian Armed Forces Operations under Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) and Canadian Special Operations forces Command (CANSOFCOM).

Due to time constraints, the study did not reach out to: bereaved families who did not access the peer support group HOPE, nor the families of seriously ill and injured Canadian Armed Forces members.

The following department, directorates and individuals were not interviewed: Veterans Affairs Canada, Judge Advocate General (JAG) Director of Estates, Director Access to Information and Privacy (DAIP), Canadian Forces National Investigation Services (CFNIS), Vice-Chief of the

Defence Staff (for the OUTCAN Program), Integrated Personnel Support Centre Service Managers, individuals previously tasked as board of inquiry president, as well as Designated Assistants.

These stakeholders hold a role in Casualty Administration, in their respective areas of responsibilities. The Families in Focus working group should consider consulting them when developing a comprehensive strategy to support families.

ANNEX B – CHANGES TO BOARDS OF INQUIRY^{xxvi}

Change in delegated authority

Since 1 June 2014, the Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services) was delegated the authority to approve boards of inquiry and summary investigations related to injuries or death that do not arise from Canadian Armed Forces operations. The Chief of the Defence Staff is the authority to approve investigations related to injuries or death that arise from Canadian Forces Operations. With this transfer of authority came a backlog of 151 summary investigations into serious injuries or deaths awaiting conclusion; these proceedings and reports were completed on 3 October 2014.

Convening Orders are required to be signed within 30 days from the date the chain of command was made aware of the incident, as stated in CANFORGEN 206/12.^{xxvii} The Administrative Investigations Support Centre's Performance Measurement matrix on boards of inquiry convened between 3 October 2013 (file 14-001) and 6 April 2016 (file 16-008) reveals that in 64% of the *Board of Inquiry Convening Orders*, it took 66 days on average to have a *Convening Order* signed; more than double the 30-day benchmark. Delays oftentimes are due to availability of personnel who meet the criteria set out in *Queen's Regulations and Orders Chapter 21, article 21.08 (2) – Composition of Boards of Inquiry*. Of note, this figure is all-inclusive and represents not only those limited to death or serious injuries. Thus, the average does not represent the reality as the non-deaths/injuries board of inquiry tend to take more time to organize.

Reports are being completed, on average, between nine and 12 months after a board of inquiry has been convened. These timelines respond to prior complaints about excessively long delays in the process; sometimes more than three years. The six key stages to complete a board of inquiry are:

1. The issue of the *Convening Order*
2. Board of inquiry training
3. Completion of the investigation
4. Review of the draft report by the Administrative Investigations Support Centre
5. Comprehensive legal and subject matter expert review by the convening authority
6. Approval by Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services)

The two stages which require the most time are: convening the board of inquiry (in phase 1) and the comprehensive review of the report by the convening authority (in phase 5).

xxvi Meeting Administrative Investigations Support Centre and Ombudsman staff (May 2016) and email exchanges (13 July 2016)

xxvii CANFORGEN 206/12, *Administrative Investigation – Time Limits*, (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

In cases of suspected suicide, boards of inquiry are now convened above unit level to ensure there is no real or perceived conflict of interest.

Boards of Inquiry have been made less intrusive for families as part of lessons learned, with personal family considerations no longer allowed to be taken into account during investigations.

Efforts have been made to better respond to the sensitive issue of whether a serious injury or death is attributable to military service with the old Nexus test replacing the Balance of Probability test. This change means that a conclusion that attributes a death to military service could be arrived at if there is some nexus or causal relationship; and not necessarily a direct or proximate causal relationship between military service and the member's death.

ANNEX C – IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND FORMS^{xxviii}

Canadian Armed Forces members are required to update the listed documents 1 to 6 (included) at least yearly, during the Annual Personnel Readiness Verification.^{xxix xxx}

1. *Emergency Contact(s) Notification* (CF 742 Form)⁵⁶
2. *Next of Kin (NOK) Identification* (Department of National Defence 2587 Form)⁵⁷
3. *Will* (DAOD Form 7012-1A, CF 30-1) and *Affidavit of Execution of Will* (DAOD Form 7012-1B, CF 30-2)⁵⁸
4. *Will Certificate* (DAOD Form 7012-1C, CF 30-3)⁵⁹
5. *Supplementary Death Benefits Plan* (CF-FC 2196) or *Death Gratuity – Reserve Force*⁶⁰
6. *Designation of Memorial Cross Recipients* (Department of National Defence 2105 Form)^{61 62}
7. Life insurance (if applicable) private or Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) Term Life Insurance⁶³

However, other instances require updating these documents: deployment screening, postings, and changes in marital status, for example. Keeping these documents up to date and accurately completed is critical for receiving benefits and services.

ANNEX D – SHOULDER TO SHOULDER PAMPHLET

See attached.

ANNEX E – BOARDS OF INQUIRY PAMPHLET

See attached.

xxviii http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/assets/OMBUDSMAN_Internet/docs/en/boi_sequenceofevents_oct5.pdf

xxix CANFORGEN 118/05, *Screening and Reintegration for Canadian Forces*, 4 July 2005, (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet), http://vcds.mil.ca/vcds-exec/pubs/default-eng.asp?path=/vcds-exec/pubs/canforngen/2005/118-05_e.asp

xxx *Military Human Resources Records Procedures – Chapter 33 Personnel Readiness Verification* (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet) <http://upkprod.desc.mil.ca/hrmsp/eng/data/toc.html>

ANNEX F – BOARD OF INQUIRY – STANDARD CONVENING ORDER

Paragraph 9 of the *Standard Convening Order* reads:

Member's Representative. The President must ensure that the proceedings and activities of the BOI are conducted in such a manner as to strike an appropriate balance between the Canadian Armed Forces interest in preserving the internal, in-house nature of the BOI and the wish of the member's representative in being informed of the progress of the BOI. To that end, the President must:

- a. contact the member's representative upon commencing the investigation, in order to arrange a briefing on the aim of the BOI and its procedures;
- b. provide periodic progress updates to the member's representative during the course of the investigation;
- c. make full use of the professional advice of the Chaplain with respect to communicating with the member's representative;
- d. consider inviting the member's representative to attend witness testimonies after due consideration of the following factors;
 - 1) the purpose and nature of this BOI,
 - 2) the convening authority's intent,
 - 3) the presence of any legal, medical confidentiality, security or operational considerations'
 - 4) the need to maintain control over the BOI process and its orderly conduct'
 - 5) the need to ensure the forthrightness of witnesses'
 - 6) the nature of the evidence and
 - 7) the wish of the member's representative to be in attendance at witness testimony
- e. ensure that, pursuant to reference C, paragraph 21.12(d), any legal counsel to the member's representative be permitted to attend meetings of the Board only when his/her client is giving evidence as a witness, and not at any other time

ANNEX G – PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM – HOPE

Sources: A. HOPE Program Manager, 3 October 2016

B. Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)*. This study was conducted to assess whether the HOPE program is meeting the needs of bereaved military families; and to examine families' perceptions of the support provided to them by the Canadian Armed Forces.

Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE) Peer Support Program

Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE) provides a unique community of support for bereaved families and is seen as the most effective piece in helping families cope with their loss. It offers unique support not found in the civilian community.

Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE) is a peer support program for bereaved families of Canadian Armed Forces members. The program is available to parents, spouses, children, step children, fiancé or any other person of significance to affected Canadian Armed Forces members. Additionally, if the deceased Canadian Armed Forces member's spouse is also military, HOPE Peer Support is also available to him or her.

HOPE strives to match peer volunteers to grieving family members based on similar sets of experiences. For example, parents of a deceased Canadian Armed Forces member would be matched with another parent, a spouse with a spouse).

As of May 2016, HOPE had 55 trained volunteers; 35 whom are active, and ten more coming into the program who will be matched with bereaved family members.

Bereavement support volunteers undergo an initial peer support training week by a psychologist from Veterans Affairs Canada in partnership with the Department of National Defence. Training includes teaching the program philosophy, instruction on developing helping relationships, establishing boundaries, conflict resolution, and other useful tools. The program also provides coaching, monthly teleconferences, annual conferences, as well as continuing training and education.

Additionally, a key component of the program for volunteers is the emphasis that is put on self-care. Volunteer training not only prepares for their role but also helps them in their own grieving process.

HOPE eases isolation and provides HOPE volunteers and families access to a close-knit, actively engaged community of support by those who have "been through it". As a result, families are

provided with realistic and honest expectations about their grieving experience, and how to confront their new reality.

It offers a safe place of support without the concerns over “grieving fatigue” (i.e., becoming alienated from their family and friends). Needs of the families don’t end with the mission; HOPE is always there for them.

The HOPE bereavement support group is small in size, but succeeds in responding meaningfully to grieving family members need for a personal connection to a peer support community. HOPE offers unique support not found in the civilian community and helps connect two worlds; bridging the gap between military family identity and their civilian identity.

Training Designated Assistants

HOPE peer support is integrated in the Designated Assistant training. Based on the experience they have with families, HOPE participants give lectures about suicide prevention and grief to Canadian Armed Forces members taking the Designated Assistant course.

Impact of HOPE on the Volunteers

Overall, participants reported their volunteer experiences provide them with positive and significant benefits. It helps facilitate their own ability to process and manage their grief. Volunteers found it was an opportunity to give back, make a difference to others in need, and they viewed their participation and involvement as a means of paying tribute to fallen members.

ANNEX H – RESPONSE FROM THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

13 April 2017

Mr. Gary Walbourne
National Defence and
Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman
100 Metcalfe Street, 12th Floor
Ottawa, ON K1P 5M1

Dear Mr. Walbourne:

Thank you for your letter of March 22, 2017, with which you enclosed a copy of your report entitled *Support to Bereaved Military Families: Collaborative Review*.

I am particularly pleased to see the shared commitment of your office and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) on this important issue. Families who have made the supreme sacrifice through the loss or serious injury of a loved one in the name of Canada deserve the best possible support.

I concur with your recommendations. While there are many helpful programs and services in place for grieving families, there are clearly gaps, both in documentation and in how we prepare CAF personnel to communicate with families at a most vulnerable time. The Working Group struck by the Chief of the Defence Staff will carefully examine how to address these gaps to ensure that families receive effective, consistent and valuable information.

Thank you again for providing me with a copy of your report and for your continued support to the men and women in uniform and their families.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, PC, OMM, MSM, CD, MP

ANNEX I – RESPONSE FROM THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE STAFF

17 February 2017

Mr. Gary Walbourne
DND CAF Ombudsman
100 Metcalfe St, 12th Floor
Ottawa ON K1P 5M1

Dear Mr. Walbourne,

Thank you for writing the collaborative report, Support to Bereaved Military Families. I certainly share your interest in ensuring that the families of CAF casualties receive the best possible support at their most vulnerable time. We learned a great deal during the Afghanistan campaign and have improved our processes considerably; however, there is more work that can be done. As you point out, and families have validated, clear, accurate, and consistent information is central to supporting the families effectively and with compassion.

The Working Group has considered, in a holistic way, the issue of engagement with grieving families. In addition, the Working Group will continue to make recommendations regarding changes in policies or processes to ensure that all CAF families who face the death of serious injury of a loved one receive the information and support needed.

I would like to thank you for providing a key member of your staff for the Working Group. Ms. Lavoie was invaluable in ensuring that all aspects of the issue were carefully assessed and is to be commended for her diligence in preparing a thorough and accurate report.

In conclusion, I support the findings and recommendations included in this report. This joint effort has proven to be a successful endeavor and an effective means to cooperatively find ways to best support our soldiers and their families. I look forward to similar opportunities for collaboration in the future,

Sincerely,

J.H. Vance
General

Cc: Mr. John Forster, Deputy Minister

Lieutenant-General; Christine Whitecross, Commander Military Personnel Command

REFERENCES – CASUALTY RELATED REGULATIONS, ORDERS, DIRECTIVES AND GUIDES

There are several administrative documents that are pertinent to the serious injury illness or death of a Canadian Armed Forces member. This list is not all-inclusive.

Acts

Access to Information Act

Canadian Forces Superannuation Act Part II – Supplementary Death Benefit

National Defence Act

Privacy Act

Queen's Regulations and Orders (QR&O)

QR&O Chapter 1 *Introduction and Definitions*

QR&O Chapter 21 *Summary Investigations and Boards of Inquiry*

QR&O Chapter 24 *Casualties and Funerals*

QR&O Chapter 25 *Service Estates and Personal Belongings*

QR&O Chapter 26 *Personal Records and Documents*

QR&O Chapter 209 *Payment of Travel and Living Expenses and Relocation Expenses*

Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAOD)

DAOD 1002-1, Requests under the Privacy Act for Personal Information

DAOD 1002-2, Informal Requests for Personal Information

DAOD 2008-3, Issue and Crisis Management

DAOD 5018-0, Injured Members and Military Casualties

DAOD 5018-2, Report of Injuries and Exposure to Toxic Substances

DAOD 5018-3, National Military Cemetery

DAOD 5044-1, Families

DAOD 5044-2, Notification of Family Death, Illness or Injury

DAOD 5050-0, Canadian Forces Personnel Records

DAOD 5050-1, Canadian Forces Personnel Records of the Director General Military Careers and the Director Human Resources Information Management, and Service Estate Records of the Judge Advocate General

DAOD 5050-3, Canadian Forces Personnel Casualty Administration Records

DAOD 7002-0, Boards of Inquiry and Summary Investigations

DAOD 7002-1, Boards of Inquiry

DAOD 7002-2, Summary Investigations

DAOD 7002-3, Subjects of Investigation and References

DAOD 7002-4, Examination of Witnesses

Administrative Investigations Support Centre (Department of National Defence intranet site only) accessible by contacting Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services)
<http://www.crs.forces.gc.ca/contact-contactez-eng.aspx>

DAOD 7004-0, Claims By or Against the Crown and Ex gratia Payments

DAOD 7004-1, Claims and Ex gratia Procedures

DAOD 7011-0, Service Estates and Personal Belongings

DAOD 7011-1, Responsibilities for Service Estates and Personal Belongings

DAOD 7011-1A (Department of National Defence 2885), *Minutes of Proceeding of Committee of Adjustment* (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

DAOD 7026-0, Administrative Investigations

DAOD 7026-1, Management of Administrative Investigations

Compensation and Benefits Instructions (CBI)

CBI 203.07 - Payments on Behalf of Personnel Mentally or Physically Incapacitated

CBI 205.73 Death Gratuity - Reserve Force

CBI 205.536 - Allowance – Loss of Operational Allowances (ALOA)

Canadian Forces Relocation Benefits

CBI 208.971 – Canadian Forces Integrated Relocation Program (CFIRP) A-PP-005-IRP-AG-001

CBI Chapter 209 - Transportation and Travelling Expenses

CBI Chapter 210 - Section 2 – Funeral and Burial Expenses

CBI Chapter 211 - Service Benefits for Ill and Injured Members

Canadian Forces Administration Orders (CFAO) (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

CFAO 24-1, Casualties – Reporting and Administration

CFAO 24-5, Funerals, Burials and Graves Registration

CFAO 26-2, Death Certificates and Registration of Death

CFAO 61-4, Co-ordinating Authorities for Ceremonial Functions

CFAO 203-5, Personnel Deceased, Presumed Dead, or Reported Missing, Prisoner of War, or Interned or Detained by a Foreign Power – Administration of Pay and Allowances

Vice Chief of the Defence Staff Group Order (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

1002-1, Boards of Inquiry – Strategic Level Staffing (date of issue 2013-07-10)

Canadian Forces Health Services Group Instructions (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

4000-09, Fatal Accidents – Medical Examination of Remains

4090-12, Casualty Reporting and Notification of Next of Kin (CFMO 13-01)

4200-48, Patient Drug Profile Record (CFMO 6-04)

5020-20, Disclosure of Personal Health Information

5020-25, Personal Health Information – Use

5020-68, Sharing of Information amongst Health Professionals

5100-11, Medical Professional Technical Suicide Reviews (MPTSR) and Report of the Canadian Forces Expert Panel on Suicide Prevention

5100-24, *Mental Health Files*

5100-40, *Psychosocial Services Files*

6000-08, *Sacrifice Medal*

7000-34, *General Overview: Health Information/Records Management*

Other references

A-LG-007-000/AF-010, *Military Administrative Law Manual*, (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet) <http://jag.mil.ca/adminlaw-loiadmin/index-eng.asp>

A-PM-245-001/FP-001, *Military Human Resources Records Procedures* (publication managed by the Military Personnel Management Capability Transformation Policy and Procedures), (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet) <http://upkprod.desc.mil.ca/hrmsp/eng/data/toc.html>

B-MD-007-000/AF-003, *1 Canadian Air Division, Defence and Civil Institute of Environmental Medicine, CF Flight Surgeon's Guideline for Flight Safety Investigation and Other Flight Line Duties* (August 2001) (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet) http://cmp-cpm.mil.ca/assets/CMP_Intranet/docs/en/health/policies-direction/fsg-flight-safety-investigation.pdf

Chief of the Defence Staff Guidance to Commanding Officers – Chapter 27, *Casualty Support and Transition Program* (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet) http://cda-acd.mil.ca/cds/doc/CDSgv3_2015.pdf

Military Human Resources Records Procedures – Military Guides (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet) <http://upkprod.desc.mil.ca/hrmsp/eng/data/toc.html>

Military Pension Renewal – Canadian Armed Forces Pension Plans Administration Transition – “What happens when there is a Death in Service?” <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/CAF-community-pension/military-pension-renewal.page>

Memorial Cross <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/honours-history-medals-chart/other-mem-cross.page>

Supplementary Death Benefit Plan <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/fac-caf/accueil-home-eng.html>

Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff Letter, Chaplains – Advisory Member of Sensitive BOIs, dated 9 November 2010 (internal document)

Director Casualty Support Management Publications

Casualty Administration Manual (May 13, 2014 edition) (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

Commanding Officer Guide – Casualty Support & Administration (July 30 July, 2013 edition) (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

A-PS-007-000/AF-008 *Designated Assistant Guide* (December 12, 2014 edition)

The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services for Serving and Former Canadian Armed Forces Members and their Families (October 19, 2015 edition)

Caring for Our Own (2012)

Director Military Family Services (DMFS) Publications

A Family Guide to the Military Experience, Military Family Services, March 2015, accessed on 25 Jan 2016, can be downloaded from <https://www.cafconnection.ca/getmedia/5d8caf66-d97f-4f59-b444-e0aa98404501/A-Family-Guide-E.aspx>

You're Not Alone, Connecting Military Families to Mental Health and Social Wellness Programs, Military Family Services, 2014, can be downloaded from: <https://www.cafconnection.ca/getmedia/2e130364-e845-4783-9cf6-8053c55daa5f/You-re-not-Alone-Web-Guide-Oct-2014-E.aspx?ext=.pdf>

For Families of the Fallen <https://www.CAFconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Families-of-the-Fallen.aspx>

You're not alone – Mental Health resources for CAF members and families (including *Shoulder to Shoulder* Program) and backgrounder

The Veteran Family Program

Canadian Forces General Messages (CANFORGENS) (in order of publication by calendar year; most recent first) (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

CANFORGEN 151/16, *Requirement for Prompt Reporting of Casualties*

CANFORGEN 198/15, *Joint Personnel Support Unity Renewal*

CANFORGEN 169/15, *Policy Concerning the Investigation of Accidental Deaths and Serious Injuries of CAF Members in the Workplace*

CANFORGEN 115/14, *Completion of CF 742 Emergency Contact(s) Notification (ECN) and Department of National Defence 2587 Next of Kin (NOK) Identification Forms*

CANFORGEN 101/14, *Staffing of boards of inquiry and summary investigation reports (Serious Injury or Death not related to CF Operations) for Approval*

CANFORGEN 074/14, *Reserve Force Compensation during a period of injury, disease or illness under the Government Employees Compensation Act (GECA)*

CANFORGEN 191/13, *Summary Investigation (SI) on-line Training Package*

CANFORGEN 206/12, *Administrative Investigations – Time Limits*

CANFORGEN 135/12, *Compensation and Benefit Administration – Approval of next of kin (NOK) and Honorary Appointees Travel Benefits and Definition of NOK and Primary NOK*

CANFORGEN 006/09, *Memorial Cross and New Memorials*

CANFORGEN 182/06, *Memorial Cross*

CANFORGEN 118/05, *Screening and Reintegration for Canadian Forces*

GLOSSARY

Administrative Investigations Support Centre (AISC) – Part of the Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services).⁶⁴ Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services) is the final approving authority for the board of inquiry reports (not related to operations).⁶⁵

Board of inquiry (BOI) president – A military member, generally of the rank of Major or above,⁶⁶ appointed in accordance with *Queen's Regulations and Orders article 21.08, Composition of boards of inquiry*. "Where a board of inquiry is convened by the Minister, the Minister may, under exceptional circumstances, appoint a civilian as president of the board."⁶⁷

Casualty Administration – The series of actions taken by the Canadian Armed Forces after "any injury to or illness of an officer or non-commissioned member whether or not it is fatal, and includes the absence of a missing officer or non-commissioned member."⁶⁸

Canadian Armed Forces Member's representative – Same meaning as personal representative.

Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program (CFMAP) Bereavement Services – "Is a 24-hour, bilingual telephone service, available 365 days a year to a parent, a spouse, children and step children, a fiancé(e), and any other person of significance to Canadian Armed Forces members who died while serving. It provides access to a professional counsellor by telephone from anywhere at any time. An appointment will be arranged within a maximum of 48 hours by CFMAP. Short and long term counselling options are available and are free of charge."⁶⁹

Casualty Support Administration Officer – "The person whom the Commanding Officer names as the main point of contact for and provider of all administrative support to the Designated Assistant. This officer is responsible for planning transportation, preparing applications and travel orders, reserving hotels, and researching regulations to support the Designated Assistant, the personal representative, and the next of kin as needed."⁷⁰

Canadian Forces National Investigative Services (CFNIS) – Is an independent Military Police unit. Its mandate is to: "investigate serious and sensitive matters in relation to National Defence property, Department of National Defence employees and CF personnel serving in Canada and abroad. The CFNIS has authority and jurisdiction over persons subject to the Code of Service Discipline, wherever Canadian Forces are established or deployed throughout the world, regardless of rank or status."⁷¹ CFNIS conducts investigations; for example in the case of the sudden death of a Canadian Armed Forces member.

Chaplains – Serving in the Royal Canadian Military Chaplain Service (RCChS) – Mandated to offer spiritual care and support to every member of the military community regardless of faith,

religion, belief, or lack thereof. The chaplain's role is to be present with military units wherever they are tasked to operate, and as such, the chaplain is present to military members as they work, train, and deploy, as well as at home. A 24/7 duty response is maintained for members and their immediate families across Canada.⁷²

Commanding Officer (CO) – “Means: a. except when the Chief of the Defence Staff otherwise directs, an officer in command of a base, unit or element, b. or any other officer designated as a commanding officer by or under the authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff.”⁷³

Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM) – Organization within the Canadian Armed Forces responsible for “providing support and services to ill and injured military personnel, serving and retired, their families and the family of the deceased, provided by Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU).”⁷⁴ It is comprised of eight regional command elements, and 30 Integrated Personnel Support Centres (IPSCs) and satellites that provide service delivery across Canada.

Designated Assistant (DA) – “The person assigned by the Commanding Officer (CO) of a casualty's parent unit to represent the Canadian Armed Forces (Canadian Armed Forces) chain of command in supporting the casualty and/or the casualty's family.”⁷⁵

“A DA will be assigned to the Regular or Reserve Force member and/or his/her family in the event of the member's very serious illness/injury or death. The DA's role is to be the vital link between the Canadian Armed Forces and the member, the member's family, the personal representative or a substitute decision maker. The DA is responsible to the Commanding Officer and will act as the Canadian Armed Forces representative to the member's family and the family ambassador towards the Chain of Command. He/she ensures that the member and/or the family are informed of the benefits and services to which they are entitled and helps to obtain them. The DA also assists next of kin (NOK) with travel arrangements and claims⁷⁶ related to military funeral and attending meetings of a board of inquiry, for example⁷⁷.

Estates – The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (11th ed.) defines estate as “the person's money and property in its entirety at the time of their death.” The disposition and administration of a deceased person's estate is governed by provincial law.⁷⁸

Family Liaison Officer (FLO) – “Is a trained Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) Social Worker who is located within the IPSC, connecting both Centres to ensure that the widest variety of support is offered to families of Canadian Armed Forces personnel who are coping with an illness, injury or special need.

Family Liaison Officers can provide the following services:

- Confidential individual, family or group counselling;
- Referrals to mental health services for adults and children;

- Access to education and prevention-based programs in the community;
- Short-term individual or group support for families of ill, injured and deceased Canadian Armed Forces personnel; and
- Outreach support to families in the surrounding area.”⁷⁹

Helping Our Peers by Providing Empathy (HOPE) – “The purpose of HOPE is to provide social support assistance to families that are affected by the loss of a loved one. HOPE matches trained peer volunteers to bereaved families. HOPE assists family members who have lost a loved one who served in the Canadian Armed Forces (Canadian Armed Forces), either active or retired, Regular or Reserve Force. The loss may be attributed to military service or any other cause.”⁸⁰

Integrated Personnel Support Centre (IPSC) Services Manager – “Is the point of contact for the next of kin (NOK) after the Designated Assistant has completed his/her tasking.”⁸¹ The IPSC Services Manager works in collaboration with the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and are generally both co-located within the IPSC.

Medical Professional Technical Suicide Review (MPTSR)⁸² – Review done by the Canadian Forces Health Services Group when a Canadian Armed Forces member dies by suicide.

Military Casualty – “Is a: seriously ill or injured member; very seriously ill or injured member; a member who is reported missing; a member who is killed; or a member who dies.”⁸³

Military Families⁸⁴ – A military family is understood to be all Canadian Armed Forces’ personnel – Regular and Reserve Force – and their parents, spouses, children, relatives, family members, and persons of significance to Canadian Armed Forces personnel who die while serving remain part of the military family community in perpetuity.⁸⁵

Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) – Non-profit organizations located on Canadian Armed Forces Bases across the country, in the United States and Europe. Military Family Resource Centres (MFRC) provide support to the parents or the spouses and children of Canadian Armed Forces members. To locate an MFRC, follow this link <https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Local-Sites/Connect-to-Your-Local-CAF-Community.aspx>.

Next of kin (NOK) – “In respect of an officer or non-commissioned member, means persons designated, in order of preference, as next of kin by the officer or non-commissioned member, on a form that is approved by the Chief of the Defence Staff for that purpose.”⁸⁶

As per the *Next of Kin (NOK) Identification* (Department of National Defence 2587 Form), NOK means persons the Canadian Armed Forces member considers to be part of his/her immediate family or persons most close to him/her.⁸⁷

Nexus Test – *The nexus test applies to BOI and SI.*

Finding 3 aims at assessing whether the death arose out of or was directly connected to military service. The Convening Authority recognizes that there will be circumstances where this finding will be difficult to make. A conclusion that the death was attributable to military service will be possible if there is some nexus or causal relationship (not necessarily a direct or proximate causal relationship) between military service and the member's death that is not merely incidental or fortuitous.⁸⁸

Personal representative or Canadian Armed Forces Member's representative – “A person appointed by a will or by a court to administer a deceased member's estate. A personal representative of the estate may have different names in different provinces, depending on whether they are appointed by a will or by a court, such as: estate trustee, administrator, liquidator, or executor.”⁸⁹

Service Estate – As per Section 42(2) of the *National Defence Act* (NDA),⁹⁰ “the Service Estate is comprised of three main components: severance pay entitlement (if applicable); service pay and allowances; and personal effects in the care and custody of the Canadian Armed Forces”.⁹¹ “In the case of a Canadian Armed Forces member dying outside Canada, all other personal and movable property belonging to the deceased and situated outside Canada.”⁹²

Substitute decision maker – “A person appointed by a power of attorney, by a board or court, or by law to act on behalf of a member in making property or health-care decisions. A “substitute decision-maker” may have different names in different provinces, such as attorney, guardian of property, or representative, depending on whether he/she is appointed by a power of attorney, by a board or court, or by law.”⁹³

ENDNOTES

1 *When a Soldier Falls: Reviewing the Response to MCpl Rick Wheeler's Accidental Death* (January 2005), *Review of Board of Inquiry Examining Serious Injury* (February 2005) and last year, this office published *Boards of Inquiry – Families in Focus* (April 2015)

2 Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman Special Report *On the Homefront - Assessing the Well-being of Canada's Military Families in the New Millennium* (2013), p. 2 and *A Family Guide to the Military Experience (2015)*, p. 22

3 *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 7002-1, Boards of Inquiry* and (1) Subsection 45(1) of the *National Defence Act* provides: "45. (1) The Minister, and such other authorities as the Minister may prescribe or appoint for that purpose, may, where it is expedient that the Minister or any such other authority should be informed on any matter connected with the government, discipline, administration or functions of the Canadian Forces or affecting any officer or non-commissioned member, convene a Board of Inquiry for the purpose of investigating and reporting on that matter."

4 *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 7002-1, Boards of Inquiry*

5 Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff Letter, Chaplains – Advisory Member of Sensitive BOIs, dated 9 November 2010. Internal document

6 CANFORGEN 101/14, *Staffing of BOIs and SI Reports (Serious injury or death not related to CF operations) for Approval*, (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

7 Administrative Investigations Support Unit - *Boards of Inquiry and Summary Investigations in the Canadian Armed Forces – Overview* (available on the Defence Information Network intranet only)

8 Administrative Investigations Support Unit - *Interaction with the Family of a Deceased CAF Member or with an Injured CAF Member* (available on the Defence Information Network intranet only)

9 CANFORGEN 118/05, *Screening and Reintegration for Canadian Forces*, 4 July 2005, (only available on the Defence Information Network intranet)

10 Instructions for Completing the *Emergency Contact(s) Notification* (CF 742 Form) (accessible on the Defence Information Network intranet only)

11 Instructions for Completing the *Emergency Contact(s) Notification* (CF 742 Form) (accessible on the Defence Information Network intranet only)

12 A Canadian Armed Forces member who shared her personal experience following the death of her Canadian Armed Forces spouse, email dated 12 August 2015

13 Email from Administrative Investigations Support Centre to Ombudsman staff, 16 July 2016.

14 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, *DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)*, p.24

15 Administrative Investigations Support Centre - *Interaction with the Family of a Deceased CANADIAN ARMED FORCES Member or with an Injured CANADIAN ARMED FORCES Member* <http://ajisc-csea.mil.ca/boisi-cees/interaction-eng.aspx>, accessed on 2 August 2016, (accessible on the Defence Information Network intranet only)

16 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, *DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)* pages 24 and 25 and Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Ombudsman case files received between 1 June 2014 and 1 June 2016.

17 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)* p. 23

18 Cruse website <http://www.cruse.org.uk/> (Military Bereavement - bereavement services for the Military Family Project) and Working Group Chaplains' information provided to Ombudsman Staff.

19 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)*, p. 23, and HOPE Program Peer Support focus group (October 2015)

20 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)* p. 19

21 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)* , p. 20

22 *Designated Assistant Guide*

23 *Designated Assistant Guide - Role*, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/Canadian-Armed-Forces-community-support-services-for-members-designated-assistance-guide/part3-role.page>

24 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001, January 2015, *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)*, p.20, p.i

25 *Commanding Officer Guide – Casualty Support & Administration* (accessible only on the Defence Information Network intranet only), p. 17

26 *Designated Assistant Guide*

27 *Designated Assistant Guide*, p. 31

28 Phone interview HOPE Program Manager/Ombudsman staff, 3 October 2016

29 Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program (CFMAP) Bereavement Services
<https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Families-of-the-Fallen/Shoulder-to-Shoulder/Professional-Support/Canadian-Forces-Member-Assistance-Program.aspx>

30 Family Liaison Officers <https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Families-of-the-Fallen/Shoulder-to-Shoulder/Professional-Support/Family-Liaison-Officers.aspx>

31 Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM) Directive and Procedure 7.09, *Support to Families of the Fallen and Designated Assistant Disengagement*, February 2016 (DCSM internal document)

32 Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM) Directive and Procedure 7.09, *Support to Families of The Fallen and Designated Assistant Disengagement*, February 2016 (DCSM internal document)

33 Family feedback after HOPE participants focus group (October 2015)

34 Phone conversation between Family Liaison Officer and DND/CAF Ombudsman Staff, May 2016

35 *A Family Guide to the Military Experience (2015)* Military Family Services, p. 74

36 Military Family Services Program, *MFRC Environmental Scan and Subject Matter Expert Survey Results* (April 2016)

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- 37 You're Not Alone, Connecting Military Families to Mental Health and Social Wellness Programs, p. 14
<https://www.cafconnection.ca/getmedia/2e130364-e845-4783-9cf6-8053c55daa5f/You-re-not-Alone-Web-Guide-Oct-2014-E.aspx?ext=.pdf>
- 38 Military Family Services Program, *MFRC Environmental Scan and Subject Matter Expert Survey Results* (April 2016), p. 9
- 39 Military Family Services Newsletter KUDOS! Issue 2, January 2016 "Dr. Jay Children's Grief Program Provides Helping Hand"
<https://www.cfmws.com/en/AboutUs/MFS/NewsandUpdates/Pages/default.aspx> and <https://drjaychildrensgriefcentre.ca/camp-erin/>
- 40 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, *DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001*, January 2015, *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)* pages 5, 19-22 and 34
- 41 Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM) Directive and Procedure 7.09, *Support to Families of the Fallen and Designated Assistant Disengagement* (internal document), p. 2
- 42 Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM) Directive and Procedure 7.09, *Support to Families of the Fallen and Designated Assistant Disengagement* (internal document), p. 1
- 43 Director Casualty Support Management (DCSM) Directive and Procedure 7.09, *Support to Families of the Fallen and Designated Assistant Disengagement* (internal document), p. 7
- 44 "Populations Served" amendment Annex dated September 2011
<https://www.cfmws.com/en/aboutus/mfs/resourcesmfrcs/pages/reference-documents.aspx>
- 45 "Populations Served" amendment dated September 2011
<https://www.cfmws.com/en/AboutUs/MFS/ResourcesMFRcs/Documents/Policies%20and%20Standards/MFSP%20Policy%20Populations%20Served%20Annex%20A%20Sept%2011%20E.pdf>
- 46 Defence Research and Development Canada, Scientific Report, *DRDC-RDDC-2015-R001*, January 2015, *Exploring the Needs of Bereaved Families of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)*, p.19
- 47 Only the *Designated Assistant Guide* is available on Internet [http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/Canadian Armed Forces-community-support-services-for-members-designated-assistance-guide/toc.page](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/Canadian%20Armed%20Forces-community-support-services-for-members-designated-assistance-guide/toc.page)
- 48 *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives 7002-1, Boards of Inquiry*
- 49 Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program Bereavement Services, <https://www.cafconnection.ca/National/Programs-Services/For-Families-of-the-Fallen/Shoulder-to-Shoulder/Professional-Support/Canadian-Forces-Member-Assistance-Program.aspx>
- 50 *The Guide to Benefits, Programs, and Services for Serving and Former Canadian Armed Forces Members and their Families*, [http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/Canadian Armed Forces-community-benefits-ill-injured-deceased/guide-toc.page](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/Canadian%20Armed%20Forces-community-benefits-ill-injured-deceased/guide-toc.page)
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