



Chief of Military Personnel Newsletter

August 2014
Volume 3, Number 1

A perspective on leadership and mental health in the Canadian Armed Forces: The importance of understanding

Contributed by Paula Ramsay, a spouse of a serving member who has battled an Operational Stress Injury and a graduate of the Social Service Worker program. Recognizing triggers, communicating in effective ways, educating others on the importance of understanding Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and advocating on her husband's behalf, as well as for others, has become part of her daily reality. In her words, "I've written this article to express the importance of understanding and consistency within the Canadian Armed Forces, and with hope that the people reading this will become educated about mental health so we will see more success stories in the future. I have seen how some in the chain of command are very helpful, and I have seen some that have hindered care to their injured member(s). Reducing the stigma surrounding mental health often requires a minor restructuring of your perception."

When a member has a mental injury such as PTSD, opening up to someone within the chain can be a difficult experience. They must trust that the person(s) they choose to inform will understand the adjustments that may need to be made on their behalf and also that the chosen individual will be a consistent presence when the need arises. Many times there are one or two individuals within the chain of command of each unit that are dedicated to supporting injured members and not only enforcing, but also being a part of the member's care plan. If those individuals are absent for an extended period of time (course, training exercise, tasking, or tour), the care for the injured member(s) is left in the hands of an alternate that oftentimes is less aware of the care plan, let alone the individual. This lack of knowledge can impede the injured member's ability to feel supported, and can cause negative reactions and interpretations to treatment and progress. It is important for all members to have a consistent understanding and strategy of how to support injured members and allow their therapy to be effective.

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) clearly care about their members and their wellbeing. But what matters is how that caring is carried out by the chain of command, whose understanding of the implications of Medical Employment Limitations and at times therapeutic treatment results in either a meaningful positive or negative impact on the members, their families, and, in fact, their unit.

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Although it is the goal of the CAF to enforce continuity of care for the benefit of every serving member, the military is never without unexpected changes, which can initiate some conflict. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that the injured member is being appropriately supported in their care through the chain of command? The simplified answer is: everyone.

Since units interact on a regular basis, there is an essential need for mutual understanding and cooperation in supporting an injured member's recovery. For obvious negative reasons, not every person within a chain of command should have direct or even indirect involvement in care plans of injured members, but there does have to be a consistent respect for those who have care plans in place. At no time should Medical Employment Limitations be open to interpretation by the chain of command, and an injured member should never be expected to stretch the limits of Medical Employment Limitations out of fear of accusations of insubordination. If a leader lacks understanding of the Medical Employment Limitations for a certain member, it is their duty to discuss them with the injured member or the member's health care team to establish better understanding and to ensure that they do not give an order that could potentially hinder the member's therapeutic growth. Injured members are not looking for special treatment; they are looking for dignity and consistency with respect to their care plan and that isn't always suitably expressed.

Many injured members display a high level of functionality in the workplace. In this regard, it may not be known to subordinates and/or leaders that a member has been placed on Medical Employment Limitations, or that they have a care plan in place. Leaders may be approached by subordinates to advise them about Medical Employment Limitations, but it is also important for leaders to recognize the use of body language expressing discomfort or potential distress. Leaders need to allow injured members the opportunity to deescalate themselves when appropriate, to avoid escalation. It is essential that leaders do not become barriers to the care of subordinates, but rather support and encourage their recovery process.

It is not the sole responsibility of health care providers to ensure the wellbeing of each member. The chain of command has the responsibility to support their members in the performance of their duties. Member and unit morale can suffer greatly if the chain of command has not made every effort to regard all members as essential parts of the military organization, and treat them as such.

Paula Ramsay



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Military Family Magazine

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The CMP Newsletter is published on the authority of the Chief of Military Personnel. The CMP Newsletter is available on the DND Intranet at

<http://cmp-cpm.forces.mil.ca/new-bul/index-eng.asp>

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Chief of Military Personnel position re-established as Lieutenant-General

Recognizing the fundamental and critical human resources responsibilities of Military Personnel Command and the Chief of Military Personnel, the Chief of the Defence Staff has re-established the Chief of Military Personnel position at the rank of Lieutenant-General. Further, General Tom Lawson has promoted the current Chief of Military Personnel to fill that role.

On July 9, 2014, Gen Lawson presented Major-General David Millar, Chief of Military Personnel, with the LGen's slip-on—three gold maple leaves embroidered beneath the general officers' insignia of a crown over the crossed sabre and baton.

“Re-establishing the Chief of Military Personnel’s position at the rank of Lieutenant-General reflects our current organizational imperatives, the priority I place on supporting our members and their families, and on building our future force,” said Gen Lawson. “I have great confidence in Lieutenant-General Millar’s leadership; his promotion recognizes the vital work he and his team perform on a daily basis to sustain and strengthen our military family.”

Military Personnel Command was created in 2006 with the position of Chief of Military Personnel ranked at MGen. Prior to the 2006 Transformation, the military human resource function was performed by ADM Human Resources – Military, at the rank of LGen. The total number of “three-leaf” Generals remains at nine due to a retirement.

“Personnel leadership involves complex and often sensitive dynamics and I am honoured to continue in my role as Chief of Military Personnel,” said LGen Millar. “While addressing



Gen Tom Lawson, Chief of the Defence Staff (far left), poses with LGen David Millar (far right) with his wife, Sheila, and his sons, Scott and Jason, at his promotion ceremony in Ottawa, Ontario on July 9, 2014.

Photo credit: Cpl Lisa Fenton, Canadian Forces Support Unit (Ottawa) – Inaging Services

the well-being of our members and support to their families, personnel leadership also includes addressing the challenges of changing demographics and attracting tomorrow’s generation to become brilliant future warriors in whatever capacity the Canadian Armed Forces is required to serve.”

The Chief of Military Personnel’s mission is to recruit, train and educate, prepare, support, honour and recognize military personnel and their families for service to Canada.



The Memorial Ribbon Project

Courtesy of Military Family Magazine

The death of a Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) member is felt by Canadians across the country. But no one suffers more than the member's close friends and family.

The creation of the Memorial Ribbon, a memento of personal loss and sacrifice, was announced November 6, 2012, and is offered to close family and friends of deceased CAF members. As of July 2014, more than 600 Memorial Ribbons had been presented with applications being processed daily.

Memorial Ribbons may be issued in commemoration of every CAF member whose death is attributed to duty-related injury or illness sustained on or after October 1, 1947. This date coincides with the first date inscribed in Veterans Affairs Canada's Seventh Book of Remembrance.

The Memorial Ribbon is part of the Memorial Package, which also includes the Memorial Cross, the Memorial Scroll, the Memorial Bar, the Sacrifice Medal, and inscription in the Seventh Book of Remembrance.

When a CAF member passes away, the family receives up to three Memorial Crosses. The Cross is traditionally sent to the parents and widow or widower of a deceased soldier. The Memorial Ribbon compliments the Memorial Cross by expanding the eligibility to a greater number of family members and close friends. This also presents the opportunity for children to receive a special token to remember and honour their parent.

The Ribbons are assembled by hand at the Directorate of Honours and Recognition with the care and attention befitting the sacrifice of the families and friends of our fallen.

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Photo credit: Bruce Nevitt

Capt(N) Josée Kurtz, Director Navy Personnel (far right) presents a Memorial Ribbon to Mary Shirley Henderson (middle) and Madonna Maria Nevitt (second from right) in Ottawa, Ontario on June 6, 2014. This honour was provided as a memento of personal loss and sacrifice, in recognition of the passing of LS Edward Ingram Henderson. LS Henderson, the husband of Mary and father of Madonna, was killed by a 20 mm round on board Her Majesty's Canadian Ship *Bonaventure* on December 13, 1960. Also pictured are Jeffrey de Fourestier, Manager, Memorial Ribbon (far left) and CPO1 Mike Dionne, Navy Honours and Awards Officer (second from left).



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“When I visited the Directorate of Honours and Recognition, it was evident that everyone there understands the importance of their efforts and what this token of recognition means to our families”, said Lieutenant-General David Millar, Chief of Military Personnel.

Ribbons will be issued automatically for deaths attributable to service which occurred on or after November 6, 2012. For deaths

which occurred between October 1, 1947 and November 5, 2012, application forms must be sent to the Directorate of Honours and Recognition.

For more information on the Memorial Ribbon or to access an online application, please visit the [Directorate of Honours and Recognition web site](#) or contact the Memorial Ribbon project directly [by email](#) or by telephone at 1-855-433-2976.

30 years of meritorious service recognition

After Canada ceased to use British Commonwealth Honours in the years following the Second World War, Canada found itself without formal methods to recognize distinguished and meritorious service, whether civil or military. The creation of the Order of Canada in 1967 and the Order of Military Merit in 1972 constituted a significant improvement on the situation. However, both orders were primarily intended to recognize long-term merit and were therefore not well-suited for the recognition of specific actions.

On June 11, 1984, The Queen created the [Meritorious Service Cross](#), which was an award junior to the Order of Military Merit and which recognized ‘short-term outstanding achievement.’

However, it soon became obvious the single level of the Cross lacked flexibility and so the Meritorious Service Medal and a Civil Division of the Meritorious Service Cross and Meritorious Service Medal were created in 1991.

Unlike the Order of Military Merit, the rank or level of responsibility of the potential candidate do not factor into the eligibility for the Meritorious Service Cross. It is open to all ranks and the only criteria is merit. As such, the Meritorious Service Cross has been awarded to personnel of all ranks since its creation, however, since the award is often used to recognize operational or strategic leadership, it has mostly been awarded to members of senior ranks.

Since its creation 30 years ago, 205 Meritorious Service Crosses have been awarded and it has remained true to its original criteria of recognizing short-term outstanding merit.

Only five recipients received a second Meritorious Service Cross, denoted by a bar on the original decoration, while nine persons have received both the Meritorious Service Cross and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Canadian Astronaut Chris Hadfield is the only person to have received the Meritorious Service Cross in both the Military and Civil Divisions.

Only one award was ever made to a member of the Primary Reserve, that to Brigadier-General Gary O’Brien for his service in Afghanistan.

Holders of Honorary Appointments have been eligible for the Meritorious Service Cross since its creation, however, it has only been presented to one of them, The Countess Mountbatten of Burma in 1997, who, coincidentally, is also the only female recipient.

Members of allied forces have been eligible since 1990 and the first presentations were soon made in connection with the Gulf War. Since then, 38 Meritorious Service Crosses (19% of all awards) have been awarded to allied military members. Of those, 30 have been given to Americans with the others going to France, Poland, Germany and the United Kingdom.

The Meritorious Service Cross is a powerful yet flexible tool to recognize outstanding military achievement accomplished over a limited and defined period of time, be it five minutes or five years. The criteria are broad and allow for recognition of outstanding merit in a wide variety of settings, which are not limited to overseas operations.

With the end of operations in Afghanistan, the Canadian Forces Decorations Advisory Committee is hoping to see nominations that maintain the high standard of merit as well as nominations more representative of the overall Canadian Armed Forces demography and its activities.





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Waived baggage fees for Canadian Armed Forces travellers

Through travel partnerships with the Canadian Forces Appreciation Program, current and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces travelling for leisure or business may take advantage of enhanced baggage allowances provided by WestJet and Air Canada.

Both airlines, once checked-in and presented with valid ID (CFOne Card, NDI 20, NDI 10 or NDI 75) will waive associated

baggage fees. WestJet will waive a maximum of four bags while Air Canada will waive up to three bags. Limitations exist on overweight and oversized items.

For complete details and other travel and leisure discounts and special offers, please visit the [Canadian Forces Appreciation Program website](#).

Writing emails in a bilingual organization or unit

Are you unsure in which language your emails should be written? The following communications rules will help you to write emails to Department of National Defence (DND) employees and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members within bilingual organizations or units.

As a DND employee or CAF member holding a bilingual position in a bilingual organization or unit, you may use French, English or both when communicating with your colleagues. You should do your best to be supportive of people from the other linguistic group, because they also exercise the same right to work in their language of choice. Consequently, it is essential to do your best to be courteous and to use common sense when writing emails.

Emailing a group of people

When sending an email to a group of people, you must communicate your message in both official languages. If an email is written to you in one official language and you decide to forward it to several people within the bilingual organization



or unit, you become responsible for translating it before sending. Should a recipient respond to your group email, subsequent emails can be written in the official language of their choice.

Order of Official Language

The order in which the official languages appear in an email is determined by the language used by the majority of the population in the province or territory where your office is located. For example, the French appears first when you are sending an email from an office located in Quebec and the English appears first when sending an email from an office located in Ontario. Emails with the French first should start with the statement “The English text follows” and those with the English first, with the statement “Le texte français suit.”