

# **REPORT ON THE CANADIAN FORCES' RESPONSE TO WOMAN ABUSE IN MILITARY FAMILIES**

**Prepared by the Family Violence and the Military Community  
research teams of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family  
Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick and the  
RESOLVE Violence and Abuse Research Centre at the University of  
Manitoba**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 1996, a 20-person research team was established jointly by the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick and the RESOLVE Violence and Abuse Research Centre at the University of Manitoba whose purposes were: to learn more about woman abuse in the Canadian military community; to understand how the Canadian Forces (CF) are presently responding to woman abuse; and to make recommendations about how the CF might respond more effectively to woman abuse and take steps to reduce its incidence. Team members included university researchers, military and civilian service providers, and other members of the CF. Although the project involved collaboration with the CF, it was sponsored and carried out independently.

The team achieved its research goals by means of 126 confidential in-depth interviews with: (a) English- and French-speaking female partners and former partners of CF members who were survivors of abuse; (b) regional civilian and CF service providers and CF supervisory personnel; and

(c) National Defence Headquarters program administrators and generals. The team subsequently organized focus groups for representatives of the first two categories of research participants. The first two phases of the research were carried out in the geographical areas surrounding: (a) CFB Gagetown in Oromocto, New Brunswick; (b) CFB Winnipeg and CFB Shilo in Manitoba; and (c) CFB Halifax in Nova Scotia.

The discussion of the findings contained in this report is organized according to the following topics: CF spouses' special social vulnerability; how CF policy affects behaviour in the CF community; the contributions of military culture; the responses of particular categories of CF personnel; pre- and post-deployment screenings; and on- and off-base coordination of services to survivors. Recommendations on each of these topics follow. If the recommendations are implemented, the team believes that the CF's response to woman abuse will improve significantly.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **INTRODUCTION: WOMAN ABUSE IN CANADIAN SOCIETY AND IN THE CANADIAN MILITARY COMMUNITY**

The United Nations **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women** (1993) defined violence against women as: 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty ...' Woman abuse is a significant Canadian social problem. Each year, more than a million Canadian women are battered or sexually assaulted. A recent study done by the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children in London Ontario estimated the annual Canadian cost of violence against women to be over four billion dollars - a figure that does not include psychological abuse, the broader categories of violence that apply to disabled and elderly women (e.g., deprivation and neglect), services to women psychiatric patients whose problems were caused by violence other than sexual assault, the costs of processing and incarcerating offenders who have abuse in their family backgrounds and have committed other crimes, or the longterm costs of transmitting abuse from generation to generation. For each woman abuse victim, the consequences of being abused potentially include social isolation, low self-esteem, a desire to commit suicide, physical illness, psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and violence committed by herself. Children of woman abuse victims are also harmed. To put the problem succinctly: woman abuse costs money, and tragically wastes human lives. This report defines woman abuse as physical, sexual, or psychological suffering inflicted on women by their present or former male partners.

No Canadian research to date has attempted to compare the rates of woman abuse in civilian and military communities. However, no evidence exists to indicate that the military community rate of woman abuse is lower than the civilian community rate. Some American studies indicate that the military community rate may be higher. A recent discussion paper prepared by the research arm of the Canadian Forces (CF) cited absences, relocations, training in aggression, the authoritarian and hierarchical nature of military organization, and social isolation as aspects of military life which may contribute to woman abuse and family violence. Additional contributing aspects of military life may be: stressful deployments, excessive alcohol consumption, financial problems, conservative attitudes about gender relations, and male bonding practices. Since much military training comprises training to assert power and control, some military members may inappropriately replicate controlling behaviour in their homes. This report does not contribute to the debate about the relative frequency of woman abuse in civilian and military communities. It takes the position that the rate of woman abuse in the military community is at least as high as in the civilian community, and that this reason is sufficient for woman abuse to be considered a serious problem in the CF. Further, the authors of this report believe that certain features of military life make woman abuse an even more debilitating experience for female partners of military members than for their civilian sisters.

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH

American civilian and military research has been carried out on woman abuse with respect to the military issues of: causes, frequency relative to civilian populations, post-traumatic stress, deployments, postings, the control-oriented nature of the military workplace, combat experience, the use of weapons, characteristics of military abusers, the military community's culture of secrecy about social problems, the exercise of supervisor discretion in reporting or punishing military abusers, military supervisors' degree of cooperation with investigations into woman abuse incidents, and suggested intervention strategies. Additionally, although they have provided little or no information about woman abuse in the military community, several recent Canadian sources have provided useful insights into military culture. However, virtually no previous Canadian research exists on woman abuse in the military community, apart from three reports commissioned by the CF during the last few years.

## COMPOSITION, MANDATE, AND SPONSORSHIP OF THE RESEARCH TEAM

In 1996, a 20-person research team was established jointly by the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research at the University of New Brunswick and the Manitoba Research Centre on Family Violence and Violence Against Women at the University of Manitoba (now called the RESOLVE Violence and Abuse Research Centre) whose purposes were: to learn more about woman abuse in the Canadian military community; to understand how the CF are presently responding to woman abuse; and to make recommendations about how the CF might respond more effectively to woman abuse and take steps to reduce its incidence. Like all research sponsored by the five Canadian family violence research centres, this project (a) represented, from its beginnings, a close collaboration between university and community researchers; (b) had as its main goals action and ameliorative social change.

The team, a combination of academic, community practitioner, and military expertise, consists of:

**Dr. Deborah Harrison**, Department of Sociology, University of New Brunswick  
(**National Coordinator**)

**Chantal Bourassa**, Ecole de Service Social, Université de Moncton (et candidate au doctorat)

**Capt (Ret'd) Jerry Deveau**, former Adjutant, Engineers' Support Regiment, CFB Gagetown

**Penny Ericson**, MSN, Faculty of Nursing, University of New Brunswick

**Gaila Friars**, MSW, Social Worker, Region 3 Hospital Corporation, New Brunswick

**Joan Hanley**, Psychology PhD Student, University of New Brunswick

**Ann Koller**, BA, BSW, Counsellor, Oromocto

**Lucie Laliberté**, LLB, Lawyer, Gahrns & Laliberté, Ottawa

**Francine Langlais**, RN, Nurse, Oromocto Public Hospital

**Capt Jurden Rice**, MSW, Area Social Work Officer, CFB Gagetown

**Dr. Beatriz Sainz**, Family Physician, Oromocto

**Dr. Jane Ursel**, Director, RESOLVE Violence and Abuse Research Centre, and Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba (**Manitoba Coordinator**)

**Dr. Beverley Bailey**, Faculty of Education, Brandon University

**Marlene Bertrand**, Family Violence Prevention Branch, Winnipeg

**Kelly Gorkoff**, Research Associate, RESOLVE Violence and Abuse Research Centre, University of Manitoba

**Sharon Kuropatwa**, Research Associate, RESOLVE Violence and Abuse Research Centre, University of Manitoba

**Maj-Gen Eric Linden**, PhD, Canadian Forces and Department of Sociology, University of Manitoba

**Maj Henry Matheson**, MSW, Directorate Medical Policy/Social Work Policy and Standards, Canadian Forces, Ottawa

**Mary Jean Merry**, Women's Shelter Counsellor, Winnipeg

**Kathy Phillips**, former RCMP civilian dispatcher, Brandon

Between 1995 and 1997, the team received financial support from five sources - the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre (\$5000), the UNB Military and Strategic Studies Program (\$5000), the UNB Research Fund (\$2000), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (\$68,000), and Status of Women Canada (\$21,690). The



project was endorsed at each local participating base as a result of courtesy visits made by team coordinators. Additionally, in 1997 national endorsement of the project was sent by email to all commands and bases by the Department of National Defence's (DND's) Assistant Deputy Minister of Human Resources (ADMHR), at the request of Maj-Gen Linden.

## METHODOLOGY

The phases of the research project were: **One** - confidential oral-historical interviews with a cross-section (ranks/elements) of English- and French-speaking female partners and former partners of military members who had been victims of abuse, focusing on coping strategies, attempts to access supports and services in the military and civilian communities, the results of these attempts, and the ensuing consequences; **Two** - interviews with regional civilian and military community personnel, e.g., supervisors (sergeants, warrant officers, adjutants, commanding officers [COs], etc.), family resource centre workers, chaplains, social workers, and doctors, focusing on: (a) the general military context and each participant's work within that context; (b) military policies and practices that are relevant to woman abuse; (c) responses to the issues and problems that were identified during the interviews with female partners; (d) [for civilian service-providers] the factors which distinguish military- from civilian-community clientele; **Three** - interviews with National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) - level military personnel - especially program administrators and relevant generals (e.g., Chaplain General, Surgeon General, ADHMR), focusing on: (a) military policies and practices that are relevant to woman abuse; (b) responses to the issues and problems that were identified during the interviews with female partners and local community personnel; **Four** - analysis of the data and focus groups with representatives of the first two categories of research participants, in the collaborative development of an action plan; **Five** [still in progress] - dissemination of results to military and civilian communities, the media, and academia.

To ensure adequate investigation of all three military environments, the team carried out its Phase One and Two interviews in the geographical areas surrounding: (a) CFB Gagetown in Oromocto, New Brunswick [land and air]; (b) CFB Winnipeg and CFB Shilo in Manitoba [land and air]; and (c) CFB Halifax in Nova Scotia [sea and air]. The 126 interviews completed for the project break down as follows: Phase One - 64 (23 in Manitoba, 41 in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia); Phase Two - 52 (22 in Manitoba, 30 in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia); Phase Three in Ottawa - 10.

The team publicized the study to potential Phase One participants via the media, and information sheets distributed by community practitioners, some of whom were team members. Each potential Phase One participant contacted the team via a 24-hour dedicated phone line and answering machine. If she had been handed an information sheet by a practitioner, she was encouraged not to report back to the practitioner the fact that she had called. The message on the machine instructed the caller (in both languages) to indicate the days/times when her call could be returned safely. When the call was

returned by an academic member of the team, the potential participant was given a list of all team members and asked to indicate which ones she knew. This strategy insured that the community practitioner on the interview team was never a person previously known by the participant. Each Phase One participant was interviewed by a two-person team - an academic team member and a team member who was a woman abuse counsellor, had both professional and personal experience in the military community, and could do crisis debriefing if necessary. The New Brunswick French-language Phase One interviews comprised the only exception to this practice. These interviews were carried out by two community practitioners, one of whom was a team member and the wife of a retired military member, the other (Rina Arseneault) a professional abuse counsellor and the Associate Director of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre. Each Phase One participant was guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity, and was asked if she was in an ongoing relationship with a counsellor. If she was not, and it was evident that the interview had caused her distress, arrangements were made for her to have a pro bono session with one of the counsellors in the vicinity who had agreed to provide this service to the project. A few of the persons who called the answering machine were military abuse perpetrators; when they were willing, we interviewed them as well. All Phase One participants had been partners of military members during some part of the last 20 years. The majority of Phase One participants were women in their 20s and 30s whose experiences had occurred during the last five years. Phase Two participants (positions, not persons) were selected by the team in consultation with local base personnel. These participants were contacted either directly by team coordinators or by local base personnel. The Phase Three interviews were organized by Maj Matheson, after authorization from the ADMHR. Phase Two participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. Phase Three participants were guaranteed confidentiality with respect to their personal lives as might be revealed during their interviews, but not anonymity with respect to their positions in the CF. No participant would be identified by name in papers or reports, but some Phase Three participants would be identified by position. Interviews ranged in length from 1 to 4 hours. All interviews were audiotaped, and transcribed in code by a bonded transcriber who had no past or present connection with the military community. Each participant was given a copy of his/her transcript in a safe manner of his/her choosing, and invited to make additions or deletions. Military members of the team were not permitted to conduct interviews, see interview transcripts, or learn the identity of any participants. Other members of the team were not permitted to see the transcripts of participants they knew personally. As much as possible, the identity of each participant in Phases One and Two was known only by the persons who conducted the interview. Despite the team's enormous efforts to publicize the study to the francophone segments of the four largely-anglophone military communities - and the francophone community at CFB Valcartier, fewer Phase One interviews were conducted in the French language than the team had desired or expected.

The team's approach to its research was influenced by the feminist sociological methodology of **institutional ethnography**, as developed by Dorothy E. Smith. Institutional ethnography methodology builds on Karl Marx's theory of alienation - his understanding that those who have been excluded from 'the making of ideology, knowledge, and culture' find themselves caught up in systems that define, without

reflecting, their own lived experiences. Collectivities considered to be disempowered are thus the focus of institutional ethnographers' work. An institutional ethnography's first task is to discover disempowered persons' lived experiences in order to make these experiences its intellectual starting point. Its second task is to develop an understanding of how these experiences are embedded in social relations which, although not superficially visible, comprise a segment of the social formation's 'relations of ruling.' One among many of these relations of ruling is the social formation's 'military apparatus.'

Like many feminist methods, institutional ethnography rejects the positivist assertion that there is a detached position, uncontaminated by researchers' values, from which social phenomena can be scrutinized. Institutional ethnographers assert that since human beings are a part of what they observe, every observation is inevitably rooted in the observer's (or some other human being's) experience and value system. Every investigation begins with particular assumptions, and these assumptions shape the investigation's results. Every investigation thus begins from a determinate place. No observer can avoid the responsibility of making a choice about where this place shall be. The institutional ethnographer's human choice is to begin his/her research from the standpoints of the actualities of disempowered persons' lives. This epistemological stance is relativistic, because what the institutional ethnographer discovers is neither more nor less 'true' than what is found by a researcher using traditional methods. On the other hand, until recently most social science research began almost exclusively from the standpoints and assumptions of relatively powerful persons, with the result that the perspectives of persons with little power were seldom heard. Institutional ethnographies, whose goal is to rectify this deficiency, are thus addressing what have until now represented enormous vacuums in social science knowledge.

In the team's research, the perspective of the abuse survivor was therefore privileged. We began by gathering and reflecting on the experiences of civilian woman abuse survivors in the military community. It was from the standpoint of the survivor's perspective that we framed the questions we subsequently asked during our interviews in Phases Two and Three. Our penultimate goal was to discover how, from the survivor's perspective, military social relationships are embedded in the military community's response to her abuse. Our final goal was to enlist the help of the survivor's perspective to make constructive recommendations for change.

## **FINDINGS**

### **1. THE SPECIAL VULNERABILITY OF CIVILIAN WOMAN ABUSE SURVIVORS IN THE MILITARY COMMUNITY**

Several aspects of military life are believed by civilian woman abuse survivors to aggravate the abuse they suffer(ed) at the hands of their CF partners. These are:

### **(a) Economic Dependency**

In the majority of military families, the military member is the primary breadwinner. Largely as a result of their frequent moves (military postings), military spouses (most of them women) do not participate in the labour market on an equitable basis with their civilian counterparts. Their geographic mobility forces a disproportionate number of them into part-time or low-waged jobs, and makes it difficult for the professionally qualified among them (e.g., teachers, nurses) to acquire seniority. Most military spouses endure periods of involuntary unemployment, and fail to make significant contributions to employer pension plans. Additionally, deployments of military members can create so much instability in military families that spouses decide to confine themselves to the home as a way of compensating their children for the absences of their fathers. Their relative economic dependency makes many abused military spouses frightened to take the step of reporting or leaving an abusive relationship, and risking poverty and/or welfare. This is particularly true for the spouse who lives in Permanent Married Quarters (a PMQ) and has been convinced by her military partner that only his goodwill entitles her to remain in their joint home. In the words of one survivor: 'Whether I stay or whether I leave, I lose. It might affect him but it's going to affect me more.'

### **(b) Postings**

Historically, the normal CF career involved at least 10 moves; even during the present era of less frequent postings, fast-track careers involve more. Most military families still move several times during the member's career. Many military community woman abuse survivors are therefore living far away from their first families and old friends. Owing to physical (e.g., transportation) and/or psychological difficulties (e.g., feeling demoralized), many survivors find it hard to access civilian support services in each new place. Postings therefore separate the survivor from both previous and potential persons whose intervention might have otherwise provided the support which would have enabled her to seek help sooner. Postings exacerbate the control exercised by CF abusers within their families. Postings also make it difficult in practical terms for many survivors to leave. Despite having been responsible for bringing military families to where they now are, the CF do not pay to relocate spouses, their children, or their property back to spouses' home towns when CF families break down.

### **(c) An Alien Environment**

To many woman abuse survivors, the military is an alien intimidating environment, which nurtures and protects the military member while treating his spouse like afterthought baggage. This is true for several reasons. First, the cult-like trappings of military life (e.g., uniforms, parades, mess dinners, unit cohesion, and the ethos of unlimited liability) **are** alien to most civilians. Second, the exclusive and hypermasculine nature of military culture makes many spouses feel inferior and devalued. Third, the military member who abuses his partner often uses his partner's unfamiliarity with military culture as a way of isolating her and increasing his power over her. In doing so, he frequently deliberately misleads her about military rules and regulations, the mandate

of military chaplains and social workers, the potential interest of military supervisors in spouses' personal problems, even the trustworthiness of other 'military wives.' Military spouses who are not abused often grow to feel part and proud of the culture of the CF. However, to spouses who are abused and isolated, the military is a frightening place which represents an additional barrier between themselves and the attainment of safety. A related fear, mentioned in several interviews, is some survivors' knowledge that their partners keep weapons in the house and regularly threaten to use them.

#### **(d) PMQ Neighbourhoods**

Since the proportion of CF members who live in PMQs is presently at 30% and falling, the number of abused spouses living in PMQ neighbourhoods is declining. Nevertheless, as of mid- 2000 the existence of PMQ neighbourhoods remains real. Reviews of PMQ neighbourhoods are mixed. Some military supervisors believe that the thin walls of PMQs protect abused spouses by giving abusers no place to hide, and comprising an atmosphere where 'everyone knows everyone else's business' and 'the truth will out,' presumably solving the abused spouses' problems. Abused spouses voice more negative sentiments for two reasons. First, the fact that many bases are located far from downtown areas isolates those spouses who do not drive or whose husbands take the one family vehicle to work. Second, secrecy paradoxically arises from the fact that, unlike their civilian counterparts, PMQ woman abusers are linked to their neighbours by virtue of working at the same place. Since the consequences of being labelled as an abuser by the CF are severe (see below), many CF members refrain, and instruct their partners to refrain, from reporting the abuse they hear going on next door, sometimes because they fear repercussions from the abuser, more often because there appears to be a 'silent pact' among military members (see below) to keep information about one another's problems from the chain of command. In the words of one survivor: 'They just turned their stereo up - nobody helped me.' Feeling utterly alone while being surrounded by people is an experience reported by many woman abuse survivors who have lived in PMQs.

#### **(e) Language Disadvantages**

Some CF spouses must cope with postings, economic dependency, and the alien military environment. Simultaneously, some of them must function in an environment in which the language spoken is not their own. Language difficulties also add to some spouses' economic dependency. Several categories of CF spouses can be considered language-disadvantaged. These include: francophone spouses living on or near anglophone CF bases, anglophone spouses living on or near francophone CF bases, and German-speaking spouses living on or near anglophone or francophone CF bases. Language-disadvantaged spouses who are being abused are seldom able to obtain support in their own language from social workers, chaplains, counsellors, or doctors, either on the base or in the civilian community nearby. Living far away from family and friends is a searing experience for language-disadvantaged abused spouses who have already been isolated by other aspects of military life.

### **(f) The CF's Responsibility**

The 'whole' of the special problems of abused spouses of CF members is greater than the sum of the above parts. Two or more of these handicaps have a cumulative negative effect on the psychological resources of women whose self-esteem has already been debilitated by abuse. A unique set of obstacles impedes the progress of the CF spouse who seeks the strength to leave an abusive marriage.

The research team's position is that the CF's response to civilian woman abuse must incorporate tangible, as opposed to merely symbolic, recognition by the CF of the problems that are created for spouses by military life. The team recognizes that employers are not normally expected to concern themselves with the difficulties employees' spouses encounter in their family lives. However, as discussed in the above paragraphs, military life makes members of military families, and in particular military spouses, especially socially vulnerable. The team therefore believes that the CF are responsible for preventing, eradicating, treating, and mitigating the impact of woman abuse and other social problems which occur in their communities, to a greater extent than is true for civilian employers. This assumption pervades the discussion and recommendations which follow.

## **2. THE CF'S POLICY ON WOMAN ABUSE**

The CF's policy on woman abuse and family violence is widely believed to be 'zero tolerance,' although no military document exists which uses these exact words. Phase Two and Three participants provided the following insights:

- (a) Military members' lives depend on members' ability to rely on one another. Members with a propensity to uncontrolled violence poison the unit cohesion that is crucial to successful military functioning.
- (b) A member who is constantly in trouble with the courts cannot be deployed. The burden on other members of his unit consequently increases, eroding unit morale.
- (c) Because of the potential danger of CF operations, the CF need to know at all times which of their members they cannot deploy.
- (d) A member with such a black mark on his record as a criminal conviction is no longer considered promotable to a rank which would require him to carry out an important leadership role.
- (e) Some CF members who are convicted for woman abuse are subsequently released from the CF.

In the CF's view, woman abuse is largely a matter for the civilian justice system. However, a member who is arrested for abuse off base has a duty to inform his immediate supervisor. In some (but not all) CF communities, the relationship between the

base and the civilian police is good enough to enable the base to trust the civilian police to inform the CF themselves. If military or civilian police are called to a member's on-base PMQ, the captain or major in the member's chain of command expects to hear about it. If the member is charged, his commanding officer (CO) and base commander expect to hear about it. If the member is convicted, the news travels to the Career Review Board in Ottawa. A member who is convicted in criminal court cannot be tried or punished for the same offence by the CF, although the CF usually take the administrative measure of Informal Counselling (IC), a Recorded Warning (RW), or Counselling and Probation (C & P) [Record of Shortcomings (R of S) for officers], depending on the conviction's severity. Since administrative measures entail such tangible consequences for members as loss of income, they are regarded by members and spouses as 'discipline in disguise,' and are part of the reason that members and spouses rarely report woman abuse to the CF (see below). Once on Counselling and Probation (or Record of Shortcomings), if a member continues to be deemed unable to carry out his normal responsibilities, the CF may release him as an 'administrative burden.'

The most important CF document relating to woman abuse is Canadian Forces Administrative Order (CFAO) 19-42 (1995), **Family Violence and Abuse**. Article 19 of CFAO 19-42 requires military supervisors not to 'ignore any indication ... that a member of their staff has been involved in family violence and abuse,' and informs supervisors that their primary responsibility is 'to ensure that the individual or problem is referred to the appropriate professional staff member for assessment.' Even if charges have not been laid against the member, or the member has not been convicted, CF supervisors have this responsibility. If they are caught, supervisors who ignore the problem may be punished.

For operational reasons, the CF comprise one of the few Canadian employers which are prepared to dismiss an employee for having a Criminal Code conviction. The CF therefore take woman abuse seriously, with mixed consequences we will discuss below. However, unlike racism and sexual harassment, woman abuse has never been admitted publicly by the CF to be a major problem for which the CF must assume responsibility. Nor have the CF ever issued a concise directive to their members about woman abuse, as they have about racism and sexual harassment, with the result that some supervisors we interviewed did not know that the CF have a family violence policy.

### **3. IMPACTS OF THE CF POLICY ON BEHAVIOUR IN THE CF COMMUNITY**

Operational effectiveness requires the CF to know about the social difficulties of its members. In the past, the CF have devoted considerable energy to rehabilitating members who have acquired drug problems, alcohol problems, or criminal convictions. On the other hand the CF, like all militaries, demand 'perfect' conduct and performance from their members, on and off the job. CF members know that black marks on their records can produce career costs. As well, every member is aware that s/he can be dismissed from his/her job for more reasons than can his/her peers in the civilian world. Unsurprisingly, CF policies relating to social problems have an impact on the psychology and behaviour of every CF member who believes s/he has such a problem, and every person associated with that CF member. In each case, the impact appears to be in the

direction of minimizing the problem or covering it up, i.e. contradictory to the intentions of CF policy. While conversations during our interviews were applicable to a range of social problems, the discussion below was framed with the CF's 'zero tolerance' policy on family violence mainly in mind.

### **(a) CF Members**

Most civilians feel inhibited about disclosing personal or social problems to their bosses. In the CF culture, however, the potential consequences of superiors' knowledge of members' problems are so severe that it is common practice for members to go to great lengths to keep their problems to themselves.

Members' reasons for doing so partly reflect their structural relationships to the CF. For example, the dangerous nature of military work, and the consequent ever-present possibility of unstable members inadvertently harming or killing their peers, underscore the necessity for military supervisors to know at all times the physical and mental states of the men and women they command. These characteristics of military work require CF members to take their problems to military chaplains, social workers, and doctors, rather than to their civilian counterparts. And they require military chaplains, social workers, and doctors to pass information they acquire about CF members up the chain of command. CF members know that the CF are empowered to release members for medical reasons or as a result of having become administrative burdens. Additionally, since many military trades do not have civilian equivalents, many members believe that if they were released their skills would be unmarketable in the civilian world. The recent drastic downsizing effected by the CF has made the fears of some members all too real. Many members feel beleaguered by this collection of stark facts, and keep silent about what ails them.

Despite the CF's need to know what troubles its members, members' reluctance to disclose their problems also reflects military culture. From basic training on, members are told repeatedly that less-than-perfect job performance on their part would betray the trust vested in the CF by Canada and jeopardize their comrades' lives. Analogously, a record that is less than perfect is believed to stop a member from being promoted to the next rank. Members of all ranks are therefore obsessed with doing whatever needs to be done to maintain a clean slate. Members, especially those trained for combat, are also taught to be the kind of 'tough' men who get on with their jobs and suppress failings and weaknesses. Some members who were interviewed for this study claim that when they broke this rule by admitting family problems, or requesting time to deal with them, they were shunned by co-workers and/or they received negative annual Performance Evaluation (PER) ratings from their bosses. Military supervisors, for their part, belong to the same culture. Many of them do not liaise with military chaplains, social workers, or doctors, and do not play a proactive role in encouraging members with problems to seek help. Supervisors who are approached by members (or spouses) with problems sometimes respond by telling the members to 'Get your life under control - I don't want to hear about this again' or 'Get your wife under control so she will shut up.'



## **(b) Abused CF Spouses**

Members' secrecy about social problems has enormous impact on military spouses. The culture of punishment for disclosure described above translates into a culture of intense secrecy and non-disclosure amongst members, their spouses, and their families. Early in their marriages, many military members instruct their spouses not to discuss difficulties with other members of the military community. Abusive members instruct their spouses especially vigorously. The result is a strong taboo amongst spouses against disclosing problems. Spouses, especially officers' wives, who are known to 'gossip' are often ostracized by other members of the wives' community. Abuse perpetrators instruct their spouses not to consult such professionals as military chaplains, social workers, and Family Resource Centre counsellors. The taboo against disclosing woman abuse is so strong that even spouses who are not being abused are unwilling to be seen helping themselves to pamphlets about local women's shelters that are piled on display tables at military sports expos. Some spouses are forbidden by their husbands to exchange pleasantries with women's shelter workers who live on base.

Unsurprisingly, spouses share the same fears about disclosure as members. They fear that the family will be thrown to the streets, a fear that is especially acute for spouses living in PMQs who face the potential loss of the roof over their heads. Or, if they believe marriage breakdown to be the inevitable outcome of disclosure, they fear that they (with or without their children) will be ejected from the community and will lose their major means of financial support. Like their husbands, abused spouses are reluctant to seek help from military service providers or supervisors because of the obligation incumbent on these personnel to pass bad news up the chain of command, although many military human service personnel are more selective than spouses believe them to be about the confidences they disclose. Some abused spouses, like some military members, are treated poorly when, against all odds, they muster the courage to seek help. They are told by supervisors 'Big deal - it happens all the time. Go home.' Or 'Goodbye - I don't want to know.' Or they are told that they have 'asked for' the abuse by being unsupportive of their husbands' careers. One survivor told us that if she had believed the CF would try to help her husband instead of disciplining him or ignoring the problem, she would have reported the abuse earlier. In her words: 'The court shouldn't have had to be involved because the military could have done it a long time ago.'

However, the abused spouse's largest fear is for her and her children's safety. She believes that if she discloses, and the information about the abuse reaches the chain of command, her husband will find out and beat her harder. As an abusive relationship develops over time, the control of the abuser grows and the self-esteem of the abused partner diminishes such that, no longer asserting herself equally in the relationship, the abused partner focuses all her effort on appeasing the abuser and on lessening the frequency of his attacks. All that the already-disempowered spouse can see is that the military's knowledge of the abuse would give the abuser yet another reason to be angry with her. This is one (among many) reasons why she may refuse to testify against her husband after charges have been laid, and why the Crown Prosecutor may drop the charges. When breaking up her marriage, the abused military spouse often moves quietly

away from the military community, and refrains from 'going public' by seeking help from the CF or a shelter. She thus loses out on what could have been important sources of support.

### **(c) Unit Cohesion**

Unit cohesion is a fundamental part of military training and a cornerstone of military life. The term refers to the positive ways in which military members learn to devote themselves to the military community and to the 'team' aspect of most military work. From the point of view of combat, if a member deserted his unit when it was under fire, everyone else in the unit might die. Unit cohesion exists to make sure that such a catastrophe could not happen, to make each military unit so cohesive that, under the stress of combat, its members would be psychologically prepared literally to die to save one another's lives. Unit cohesion is most important within the combat-related trades. However, it is integral to the lives of all military members. Unit cohesion has little to do with each member's loyalty to the larger CF. Rather, it expresses the primary group solidarity that is consciously created within each small military unit, incorporating members and their supervisors. As Donna Winslow has noted in her analysis of the Airborne Regiment's behaviour in Somalia, unit cohesion can become so intense that it can subvert the goals of the military as a whole and undermine organizational discipline. Similarly, as we will see below, unit cohesion can cause CF members and supervisors to behave in ways which undermine the CF's policy on woman abuse.

### **(d) The Perpetrator's Peers**

As we have seen, the consequences for a member of being labelled a woman abuser are severe. At the same time, unit cohesion among members is strong. For both these reasons, despite the fact that it is military policy to pass negative information up the chain of command, military peers rarely report on one another. Many survivors we interviewed recalled occasions when their husbands witnessed other CF members physically abusing their spouses, turned a blind eye, and intimidated their spouses into doing likewise. Other survivors told stories of walking around the base with large bruises on their faces, and being ignored. Non-disclosure of others' problems is a strong code among military peers. According to some of our survivor participants, members or spouses who violate this code are shunned.

While the above may be the norm governing relations among military peers, it does not apply in every case. A husband's peers may have a low opinion of the husband's contribution to the unit, while at the same time having a high regard for his spouse. In such an instance, the abuser's peers have been known to publicly support the spouse by shunning the abuser or roughing him up.

### **(e) The Perpetrator's Supervisor**

CF supervisors are required not to ignore indications of woman abuse among their members. They know that if they do ignore the problem they may be punished. And they

know that members who are unstable should not be deployed. These factors weigh in on one side of the scale; on the other are weighed ignorance about woman abuse and such aspects of military culture as unit cohesion and the 'macho' military tendency to deny failure, weaknesses, and social problems.

When woman abuse perpetrated by a member is suspected or charges have been laid, the immediate supervisor's role is to obtain counselling for the member, follow up, obtain help for the spouse, follow up, and pass the information up the chain of command. The commanding officer's role is to supervise the immediate supervisor, decide on the CF's administrative response to the incident (e.g., IC, RW, or C & P/R of S) and, if there is a conviction, send the perpetrator's file with a recommendation (for retention or release) to the Career Review Board. If an abuse incident happens on the base, it is the commanding officer - not the immediate supervisor - who receives the report from the military police. How CF supervisors **actually** carry out their roles varies enormously. The experience of many of the persons we interviewed is that supervisors do relatively little, in an attempt to **minimize the problem**. All supervisors are empowered to exercise **flexibility**. Some supervisors use their power to **provide the abuser with overt support**. We will elaborate on each of these responses below.

### **Minimizing the Problem:**

In any instance of woman abuse, no current CF policy compels the CO to take a particular disciplinary or administrative action. Nor does current CF policy require the CO to report suspected woman abuse to civilian or military police. To a large extent, the CO has a free rein. COs' stated reasons for this license include their belief that woman abuse is a less cut-and-dried offence than alcoholism or drug abuse and, in judging the gravity of a woman abuse offence, many factors must be weighed. Many CF personnel additionally believe that woman abuse is a symptom of another problem, such as alcoholism, and that it is the 'root' problem, rather than the presenting problem, that should be addressed. Most CF supervisors believe that extenuating circumstances (e.g., Post-Trauma Stress Disorder or an unsupportive spouse) should influence how the perpetrator is dealt with. Finally, if the abused spouse has lashed out at the perpetrator in self-defence, some CF supervisors feel uncertain about which marital partner is at fault. While supervisors who ignore woman abuse are subject to administrative action, it appears that they are permitted to use their own judgment in defining what woman abuse is. Some supervisors exercise their judgment in a knowledgeable way which makes a positive difference to survivors. Other supervisors exercise their judgment in ways that demonstrate ignorance of the causes of woman abuse and make untenable excuses for perpetrators. Widely-shared myths about woman abuse, such as 'She must have done something to provoke it,' enable them to feel justified.

Supervisors who minimize the problem do so in several ways. Some of them send the perpetrator to a chaplain or social worker, and report the incident to the chain of command. However, they do not contact the spouse or follow up with perpetrators who cease counselling after a session or two, except in cases where the abuse has had significant impact on the perpetrator's job performance. While supervisors are expected

to send perpetrators to counselling **and** pass information up the chain of command, some supervisors view these actions as mutually exclusive, and do not pass information up the chain of command about perpetrators who have agreed to submit to one session with a counsellor.

Supervisors have been trained to protect Canada and fight wars. Most of them have not been trained to manage social problems. In interviews, several supervisors expressed discomfort with the idea of dealing with social problems and an eagerness to pass the problems onto someone with human service qualifications. These supervisors believe that social problems are most properly delegated to 'experts' as opposed to members of the chain of command. They do not believe that following up is their responsibility. Some supervisors do not follow up even members who have been placed on C & P/R of S. Some supervisors believe that the 'human rights' of members preclude supervisors from being proactive about suspected abuse by insisting that perpetrators attend counselling or recording in a member's file any abuse that has not resulted in a conviction.

### **Contributions of Military Culture:**

Military culture makes its own contribution to some supervisors' non-proactivity about woman abuse. If the abuse incident took place off base and has not been made known to the CO, the supervisor may send the perpetrator quietly to a chaplain or social worker and pass the information no further. Or he may simply pass the information no further. His reasons for doing so are traceable to unit cohesion. Just as there is a code in the CF against reporting on peers, some supervisors believe that passing negative information up the chain of command would violate the trust vested in them by the members of their units, and that maintenance of members' trust is more desirable than following CF policy. Some supervisors are keen to do whatever it takes to keep their units cohesive, especially prior to a major deployment, even if doing so means keeping problems secret. In the words of one supervisor: There are some things that section commanders don't tell their superiors. Sometimes that sergeant is right, and sometimes he is dead wrong. But he does what he believes is right.' For similar reasons, some supervisors endeavour to protect 'good' members. Military supervisors' traditional distrust of chaplains and social work officers is an additional factor. Finally, despite official CF policy, informal military culture dictates that supervisors be 'tough' and handle problems at their own levels, rather than passing them up the chain of command. Some supervisors attempt to conform to this informal culture.

The emphasis on perfection in the CF is as true of supervisors as it is of rank-and-file members. With recent CF downsizing, supervisors feel even more pressured than previously to produce the exact quota of members they have been asked to provide for overseas deployments. Supervisors with identified problems in their units fear that these problems, if disclosed, would compromise the CF's capabilities and reflect poorly on their supervising skills. Some of these supervisors may fail to disclose some problems.

Some supervisors resent being required to pass information about abuse up the chain of command, because the requirement weakens the trust vested in supervisors by members

and robs supervisors of the flexibility they believe they need to get the best work out of their members and maintain unit morale. The need for a source of confidential assistance for members, which would not involve the chain of command, was articulated by several supervisors. Indeed, in April 1999 a new Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program came into effect. The new program will provide up to eight sessions of counselling to CF members - or members of their families - who are experiencing personal or social difficulties. The counselling will be carried out by civilians, and will be kept confidential from the chain of command. After eight sessions, however, members will be referred back to the CF, unless they are willing to bear the entire cost of subsequent treatment themselves.

### **Flexibility:**

Supervisors take advantage of the latitude the CF have allowed them in defining and dealing with woman abuse. The supervisors we interviewed told us that they tend to respond more proactively to woman abuse if: charges have been laid against the perpetrator (and are not dropped), the abuse was physical, the spouse was visibly injured, the perpetrator is new to the military and/or is not considered to be a valuable member, the abuse is believed to affect the perpetrator's job performance, the spouse is considered to be a credible person and, in the supervisor's view, there are no extenuating circumstances. Conversely, supervisors tend to respond less proactively if charges were not laid (or they have been dropped), the spouse was not injured, the member is longtime and/or is considered valuable, the abuse is not believed to affect the perpetrator's job performance, and there are believed to be extenuating circumstances, such as the spouse being considered to be unsupportive of the member or otherwise non-credible. These principles govern supervisors' decision-making if all things are equal. However, as we have seen, supervisors' ignorance about woman abuse, their reluctance to deal with social problems, and the influence of military culture all contribute to creating a situation in which things are often not equal, and many supervisors exercise their discretion on the side of lenience. One supervisor we interviewed summarized military policy toward woman abuse in this way: 'If you do it and you get caught, you are toast.' Many perpetrators have failed to 'get caught' within the military administrative system, on account of supervisors' leniency. Describing his own woman abuse policy, one supervisor said: 'If someone's sitting there and works for me 20 hours a day and gives me everything, I'm going to give this person my attention. Some guy that's just slug bait, then he'll get what he deserves.' According to another supervisor: 'I think it goes by the situation and the wife. Like if she's a real ... bitch, or ... has not supported him, ... or we figure that she's doing that to get money out of it, we'll do everything for him.' When supervisor leniency occurs, its consequences for survivors can be profound.

### **Providing the Abuser With Overt Support:**

A few supervisors believe that woman abuse is a 'civvy street' issue which should have absolutely no impact on a member's career. Some of these supervisors actively help the perpetrator escape the consequences of his behaviour, thereby reinforcing the perpetrator's control over his spouse. We do not need to make the case that such practices

are wrong. According to various of our Phase One and Two participants, senior base officials have done the following during the last few years:

- threatened to arrest an abused spouse for 'trespassing' on a base
- lied about a perpetrator's whereabouts to prevent him from being served with a summons
- misled Family Allowance officials into believing that a perpetrator had full custody of his children, in an effort to prevent his spouse from receiving public assistance
- threatened the lawyer of a perpetrator's spouse: 'If your client keeps making trouble, we will release her husband to make sure she receives no support.'

Some of these supportive actions of supervisors are traceable to the practice of military male bonding, a subcategory of unit cohesion which celebrates members' common masculinity and excludes and derogates women. The boss of the husband of one survivor we interviewed used to remind his men to tell him the lies they told their spouses, so that when the spouses called the unit he could get their lies straight. She added: '[My husband] used to come home and brag about it. ... Every time something happened it would empower him more, and he would always come home and let me know how much more he had. How much more clout he had, how I was nothing. "You have no rights up here, it's my house, they're my children, it's my money, it's my food."' A sergeant asked another survivor: 'Let me shake your paw.' An army supervisor told us that woman abusers are considered to be assets to some units because their abuse has proven these members 'mean' enough to engage in frontline combat.

Along the same lines, some survivors we interviewed believe that senior supervisors arrange to send members away on deployments as an escape from what is happening at home. Several Phase One and Two participants also told us that senior supervisors have been known to have abusers posted to other bases in order to 'dump' the problem and encourage spouses to rethink their plans to testify in court.

In the team's view, these practices are appalling. To the extent that they exist, the CF have a serious problem with their response to woman abuse.

#### **(f) Supervisors of Officers**

Whether supervisors of officers are more - or less - proactive about dealing with woman abuse - or, indeed, any crime - among the men they supervise is an issue which elicits strong - and differing - opinions among members of the CF community. Some members believe that standards are higher for officers, and that abused spouses of officers are advantaged over abused spouses of non-commissioned members (NCMs) in the sense of being better educated and able to 'work the system.' Other members believe that officers 'take care of their own.' Most (although not quite all) of our Phase Two participants believe that the situation is changing in the direction of dealing with perpetrators without regard to rank.

Some officers' wives who are survivors report having had difficulty accepting the fact that they were being abused and having been unwilling to seek help, on account of the shame that doing so would bring on their husbands. In the words of one such survivor: 'My husband was an officer and ... educated people don't do things like that.' Another officer's wife added that her husband's successful military career made him so conceited that he believed he was above the law.

Officer-supervisors we interviewed did not admit to having helped officers cover up crimes. However, MPs, senior NCMs, and human service professionals were able to cite specific recent instances of cover-ups of officers' behaviour. They also believed that officers received smaller administrative penalties for woman abuse than their counterparts in the ranks.

In accounting for officers' relative success in having their crimes buried by supervisors, the most frequent reason cited was the smaller number of members of the chain of command who could potentially hear about the misbehaviour of an officer, relative to the number who could potentially hear about the misbehaviour of a member in the ranks. As one officer put it: 'The more you go up the chain of command, the less people are in charge. I mean the Lieutenant-Colonel's CO is the Base Commander. ... So you have one person, whereas the corporal, you have the Master Corporal and all the master corporals have the sergeants, and then all the sergeants have a warrant, and then ... so you're talking about hundreds of people that can be involved.' A second reason cited for officers' advantage was the CF's desire to keep officers' misbehaviours hidden from the press. In the mid-1980s, a chaplain who was attempting to discuss a major's woman abuse with the man's supervisor was told flatly: 'Majors don't have problems.' Finally, officers' own higher education and ability to work the system was cited as an asset by participants who were NCMs. According to one NCM: 'It's like watching **Law and Order** - they're shift.'

### **(g) Invisible Abuse**

Members who are charged with offences by civilian police off base are required to inform their COs - but they often do not do so. Senior officers admit that relations between the CF and civilian police are poor in some municipalities, and information about civilian police dealings with CF members is not always passed on. American research indicates that, at least in the U.S., off-base woman abuse rarely gets reported to the military.

Woman abuse is not deemed to exist by the CF if the CF fail to hear about it. 'If we don't know about it we can't do anything' was the refrain of a number of our Phase Two participants. On one hand, this is common sense. On the other, this point was mentioned so often that the interviewers wondered if the CF are notable for ignoring problems that are superficially invisible from view. Certainly supervisors' relative ignorance about woman abuse, their reluctance to involve themselves in social problems, and their embeddedness in military culture comprise powerful reasons why many of them fail to make a proactive response to the woman abuse perpetrators who work under their command.

### **(h) The CF's Image**

Every military works hard to maintain a credible public image, for reasons traceable to the essence of combat. Some of the most important aspects of warfare are, indeed, psychological, such that successful military operations are believed to be predicated on the combat unit's external appearance of flawlessness. According to military thought, a flawless appearance simultaneously intimidates the enemy and bolsters the morale of one's own troops. A perfect military appearance, such as the coordination of 3,000 people raising their guns in unison, is choreographed to destroy the enemy's will. In military discipline, whatever needs to be concealed to create that perfect appearance will most likely be concealed.

Like other militaries, the CF have traditionally attempted to keep their problems hidden from the public. Some participants liken militaries to dysfunctional families whose members engage in mutual pretense about the injuries the powerful among them have inflicted. Such a metaphor is consistent with a community whose women fear picking up women's shelter brochures and in which few wall posters advertise the services women's shelters offer.

As some Phase Two participants maintained, the CF have newly bolstered their image by deciding to deal honestly with problems as they occur. On the other hand, as indicated by recent news stories, much of the CF appears to remain mired in the historical tradition of secrecy. To the extent that this is true, the CF remain publicly unaccountable and the isolation of abused CF spouses remains vast.

### **(i) The Friends, Neighbours, and Peers of the Abused Spouse**

We saw in 1(d) that PMQ neighbours tend to turn a blind eye toward woman abuse they hear or witness, and are unable to provide survivors with support. The same tendency is true of peers of abused spouses generally. One reason for this is the secrecy about woman abuse, discussed in preceding sections, that pervades the culture of members, spouses, peers, and supervisors. Another reason is the difference between civilian and military neighbourhoods. Whereas a civilian can call the police on his/her neighbour without fearing repercussions, a military member living in a PMQ patch runs the risk that his/her identity will become known to the perpetrator, who will retaliate at work. An additional contributing factor is the rank system. Many military spouses are forbidden by their husbands to talk to spouses whose husbands have a higher rank, for fear of negative information about the lower-ranking member leaking to the higher-ranking member by way of the two wives. Many spouses are also often forbidden to talk to spouses of members who have a lower rank than their husbands for similar, but opposite, reasons. The rank system therefore narrows the range of supporters to whom survivors can turn.

Nevertheless, important exceptions occur. One survivor, a corporal's wife, convinced a PMQ neighbour who was a warrant officer to call the police and to testify on her behalf at her husband's trial. Some survivors received important support from other military wives who took them aside to tell them 'You don't deserve to be treated like that.' One



survivor's isolation noticeably lessened when she moved from an apartment in town to a PMQ on the base, and became part of a network of friends. Some survivors were able to find and nurture a few 'secret' friends whom they did not introduce to their husbands and whom they were able to segregate from the havoc that was happening in their homes.

In the end, the exceptions underscore the usual practice of non-support which, in some instances, evolves into a strange form of quasi-support that laces compassion with repression and fear.

A common form of non-support suffered by survivors, consistent with unit cohesion and the military practice of protecting peers who abuse, is the closing of ranks around the perpetrator. A frequent occurrence, extremely hurtful to the survivor, is initial support expressed by a military member and/or his spouse, followed by a subsequent withdrawal of support and the expression of the desire not to 'be involved.' Unit cohesiveness is such an integral part of military culture that potential supporters of the survivor do not want to be ostracized from the unit or denied their next promotions as a result of backing a loser or 'betting on the wrong horse.' Until they are convicted and sentenced for abuse, perpetrators are considered innocent by the CF, whereas their accusers, their spouses, are often considered to be troublemakers. While a conviction with a stiff sentence - a rare event - can cause the CF to ostracize an abuser, the road to this rare event is long and treacherous, and many military members who consider aligning with the survivor subsequently step back from taking what they perceive to be an unnecessary political risk.

Another form of non-support extended to abused spouses by peers can be described as 'compassion laced with fear' - a collective form of the terror experienced by each individual CF spouse who contemplates going public, which is nevertheless often softened by concern. Some abused spouses encounter only fear when they try to confide in their peers, fear expressed in such admonishments as 'Don't tell anyone - it will get back to him' or in the potential confidante's refusal to discuss the matter in a way which signifies that she does not want to confront the fact that she is being abused too. Other survivors are encouraged by their peers to consider their abuse a normal part of marriage, or to joke about the fact that they are 'all going through it,' responses which trivialize the problem and do nothing concrete to help. On the compassion side, survivors sometimes help each other in ways that are small, organized so as not to be detected by the abuser, but nevertheless significant. These gestures include providing accommodation for the night, babysitting children, and lending a listening ear. None of these gestures rock the boat or encourage the survivor to leave the abusive relationship, but they do help her to feel that support is there. As one survivor summarized this response: 'If you know somebody is being abused in the military you can't tell anybody, but you go over and you say, "Look, it will get better.'"

The 'compassion laced with fear' response reflects the fact that covering up woman abuse is a systemic, rather than occasional, characteristic of the CF community. The frequency of the 'compassion laced with fear' response shows us that, although abused spouses do

what they can to help one another, powerful obstacles prevent them from believing that they can do more.

#### **(j) Summary**

If one were forced to find one word with which to characterize the impact of the CF's woman abuse policy on the CF community, the word 'containment' would come to mind. For reasons mentioned above, and despite specific policies to the contrary, a significant proportion of CF members, CF peers, CF supervisors, CF spouses, and CF spouses' peers keep silent about or minimize the problem of woman abuse. By doing so, they entrench the isolation of the abused spouse, whose ties with the larger society have already been weakened by her membership in the CF community.

### **4. RESPONSES OF SUPERVISORY AND HUMAN SERVICE PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL**

Every human service profession represented in the CF - including chain of command supervisors - plays a part in shaping the CF's response to woman abuse perpetrators and survivors. In the following sections we will discuss each of these professions, and present information gleaned from the interviews which provides insights into how well the members of these professions have been trained and prepared for the roles they play.

#### **(a) CF Supervisors**

The job of the CF supervisor is to maintain his/her personnel at a state of sufficient readiness to carry out the CF's mandate anywhere in the world. Physical, mental, and family health are integral parts of the readiness of CF members. Woman abuse is one among several obvious signs that a family does not function well.

In section 3 (e), we reviewed the responsibilities of supervisors and COs when woman abuse occurs. We explained how each supervisor's response to woman abuse reflects such factors as his/her beliefs about the causes of woman abuse, the severity of the abuse, his/her assessment of the respective worths of the abuser and his partner, and unit cohesion. We cited a number of reasons why the responses of some supervisors have been non-existent or lenient. Apart from the general ways in which supervisor response to woman abuse affects abuse survivors, there are several tangible ways in which supervisors can make a positive or negative difference to what happens to the abused spouse.

First, let us consider the situation of the spouse who is living apart from the CF member, has no paid job, and is receiving no spousal or child support. Let us imagine that marital property issues will not be resolved for several months, and that the CF member is refusing to contribute to the support of his estranged partner's household. When abuse has caused the relationship breakup, this situation occurs frequently, and had happened to a number of the survivors we interviewed. When we put this scenario in front of CF supervisors and asked them how they would - or would not - intervene, we received

several different answers. From the survivor's viewpoint, the best response we received was: 'I would tell the member that his career depended on him doing his duty to his family.' Fortunately, several supervisors gave us this response. While in legal terms the CF do not have the right to garnishee members' wages prior to family court settlements, some supervisors have used their administrative and disciplinary authority to convince members to support their estranged families. They have done so out of compassion and in recognition of the fact that military spouses have been made socially vulnerable by their own service to the CF. This response on the part of CF supervisors has made an important positive difference in the lives of several of the separated survivors we interviewed. Even though this response is not official CF policy, the fact that the military system is sufficiently disciplined to make it a possible response is an advantage from the survivor's point of view. Unfortunately, the worst response from the survivor's perspective, 'The member can do what he likes with his pay' is one which we also heard several times. While this response may be technically correct, it does not appear to be necessary, given the other responses we received. Preventing the CF member from refusing to carry out his family responsibilities detracts from the power exerted by the abusive member over his spouse. It can also give the estranged spouse the start she needs to strike out on her own, become economically independent, and retain productive custody of her children.

Another way in which supervisors can make a crucial difference is by permitting the estranged spouse to remain in on-base housing until she is able to get back on her feet, in the same manner as the CF usually treat widows. The belief of most CF supervisors - and the experience of some former CF spouses - is that when a relationship terminates, the CF member has the right to eject his/her spouse from the PMQ within 30 days because PMQs are rented to CF members rather than to CF families. If the member retains joint custody of his children, he may retain the PMQ for himself; if not, or there are no children, he too must relinquish the PMQ and move into barracks if he does not want to move to an apartment off base. CF policy is that PMQs are **family** homes. According to DND's ADMHR, the spouse may reside in the PMQ until a legal separation agreement has brought a formal end to what was once considered to be a legal family. CF practice sometimes deviates from this norm, as when a base commander allows an estranged spouse to remain in a PMQ with her children until the end of the school year, independent of the timing of the legal separation agreement, provided she or the member is able and willing to pay the rent.

Such largesse is laudable, and has made a crucial difference in many separated spouses' and children's lives. However, it is not CF policy and each estranged CF spouse who wants to remain in her PMQ is dependent on a base commander's warmheartedness, which may or may not occur. One survivor we interviewed was advised by her husband's base commander: 'Go to the Salvation Army.' In addition, the member often puts pressure on the base to allow him (rather than her) to stay in the PMQ, so that he may continue to entertain his children in comfortable surroundings. Hence, each base commander who must make a post-separation decision about a PMQ confronts a political dilemma. Survivors report being pressured into believing that the PMQ belongs to the member. Some survivors have been pushed into leaving PMQs by members' refusal to continue

paying for utilities. The CF have asserted the position - yet to be clarified by the courts - that they can override a judge's decision to award to a spouse tenancy in a PMQ as 'the matrimonial home.'

When the CF allow an abused spouse to be ejected from her PMQ, they augment the control exercised by the abuser over the spouse and validate what he has been taunting her with all along: 'Everything here is **mine**!' Having to leave the PMQ abruptly is an additional disruption faced by the abused spouse, who has already had to deal with the abuse, the marriage breakup and, in many cases, the impact of the breakup on children. It adds to the demoralization she feels when she hears him say during the ensuing custody hearings: 'I am the one who can provide the housing and stability!' When evicting a spouse from a PMQ, at least one base housing officer has learned to take along the FRC crisis counsellor, in case the evicted spouse threatens suicide.

Recent changes have occurred in the administration of PMQs which are not likely to benefit separating CF spouses. Although the administration of housing on military bases has recently been subcontracted to a civilian agency, the agency still reports to CF officials and does not have the latitude to allow a spouse to remain in her PMQ after a separation has occurred. As things stand, separated spouses have no tenancy status in CF PMQs. The team hopes that the CF's frequent practice of allowing separated spouses to remain in PMQs for several months can become official CF policy.

Postings move CF spouses thousands of miles away from their original extended families. When their marriages end, many CF spouses lack the means to transport themselves, their children, and their possessions back to their home provinces. They are therefore stranded in the communities where their marriages ended, and are unable to obtain support from their families and old friends. To date, the only assistance provided to such a spouse by the CF has been a maximum of \$200 from a benevolent fund managed by the base chaplain or, very occasionally, a military (compassionate) flight - without possessions - to a CF centre which is at or near the spouse's desired destination. Separating spouses frequently do not make use of these services because they are not informed about their existence. The impact of being stranded is as damaging and demoralizing to the separating spouse as being without funds or being evicted from her home.

This is another place where the chain of command can make a difference. Since the CF's posting system is responsible for depriving CF spouses of their original support systems, the authors of this report believe that it is the CF's responsibility to offer to mitigate this hardship for each separating CF spouse, whether or not she has been abused, by financing the transportation of herself, her children, and their possessions to the location of her choice.

Follow-up is another important supervisor action, owing to the special isolation suffered by the abused CF spouse. Under any circumstances, abuse is isolating for survivors. However, the aspects of military life we discussed in section 1 make the abused military spouse more vulnerable to isolation than her civilian counterpart. If an abuse incident

comes to the attention of the supervisor, whether or not charges have been laid, we believe that it is the supervisor's responsibility to make sure that the perpetrator receives such professional help as completion of a recognized professional program. Through the CO or a CF service provider, the CF should also remain in supportive contact with the spouse.

Accounts we heard during interviews indicate that CF members who are referred to counsellors are often not followed up subsequently. Some survivors report that their husbands have attended a session or two of counselling and then quit, and that no investigation has been undertaken by the CF. This pattern seems especially common in instances in which charges have not been laid, or were laid and subsequently dropped. One survivor's husband was ordered to attend counselling and was subsequently promoted and posted to a new base. He never attended counselling, and no official at the new base investigated why the order had not been carried out. At present, most supervisors do not believe that they are responsible for follow-up. Nor do MPs, social work officers, chaplains, or Family Resource Centre (FRC) counsellors believe that the responsibility is theirs. The consequence is enhanced danger and isolation for the survivor.

Finally, most supervisors, COs, and base commanders have received no formal training on woman abuse, either from CF personnel or on a contractual basis from civilian agencies. From the abused spouse's perspective this is unfortunate, given the abused spouse's relative isolation from the civilian community and her consequent reliance on military personnel to recognize the signs of woman abuse, understand the problem's causes and dynamics, hold attitudes that do not enhance the danger or isolation suffered by victims, provide skilled assistance, and be knowledgeable about sources of help that exist in the civilian community. While assistance to the survivor requires the intervention of trained service providers, CF supervisors require some knowledge of woman abuse in order to carry out the CF's woman abuse policy and because they are among the first CF personnel to learn about an incident which has occurred - especially if the survivor lives off base. During our interviews, some supervisors expressed the wish to receive training in woman abuse dynamics.

### **(b) Military Police**

Military police (MPs) play a crucial role in the CF's response to woman abuse. MPs are usually the first CF personnel to find out about each woman abuse incident and it is their job to report on each incident to the chain of command. According to some MPs, woman abuse represents a third of the average MP's caseload.

MPs have jurisdiction over the operations areas of CF bases, which means that they are sometimes asked by municipal or provincial police to arrest CF members at work. At some bases, MPs have jurisdiction over PMQ neighbourhoods; at other bases, MPs have surrendered PMQ jurisdiction to civilian police. Woman abuse is a civilian offence and, regardless of which police conduct investigations and lay charges, all woman abuse incidents are processed by civilian courts. If senior officers (majors or above) are charged

with woman abuse or any other crime, a special unit of the military police - National Investigation Service (NIS) - conducts its own investigation.

From the viewpoint of the woman abuse survivor, there are advantages and disadvantages to living off base and dealing exclusively with civilian police. The main advantage is that, unlike the military police system, the civilian justice system is independent of the military chain of command. The main disadvantage is that civilian police do not always inform the CF about charges they lay against CF members, and the CF are thus prevented from acting to ensure survivors' safety. The CF acquire information about members' criminal convictions when they carry out security checks on members who have received previous security clearance - but this happens only once every ten years. Relations between military and civilian police vary from place to place. In some communities, the relation is so close as to almost cancel any advantage the abuse survivor might have enjoyed as a result of the civilian police being independent of the military chain of command. In these communities, MPs and civilian police live in close proximity; they socialize together; civilian police pass all relevant information to MPs and sometimes put pressure on a survivor not to press charges on account of the harm a conviction could do to her husband's military career. In other communities, the same trust does not exist. Civilian police do not inform MPs about CF members they apprehend or, out of fear that the CF will hide or protect a perpetrator, they inform the CF only after the civilian process is well underway. Hence, sometimes poor communication between military and civilian police can benefit the abuse survivor. But at other times poor communication between the two forces can cause a survivor harm. When a survivor who lived off base was being stalked by her former husband, she was unable to get help from either police force - each told her that it was the other force's jurisdiction. Woman abuse evidence also often gets lost, or is ineptly handled if, following the incident, the survivor (or her neighbour) mistakenly calls the wrong force.

MPs who have jurisdiction over PMQ neighbourhoods are usually the first personnel to be called to the scene when an abuse incident has occurred. In approximately the following order they: (a) see to the victim's medical needs; (b) interview the perpetrator and victim separately; (c) take photographs of injuries; (d) provide information on counselling to both parties; (e) remove one party from the home (usually the perpetrator); (f) escort the perpetrator to barracks if there are no charges, or to military or civilian jail if there are; (g) remove weapons from the home if there are charges; (h) contact the chaplain, military social worker, and/or Family Resource Centre crisis counsellor; (i) keep a close watch on the perpetrator in case he attempts suicide; (j) write a report on the incident for the Daily Occurrence Book and send it to the perpetrator's CO; (k) prepare a more detailed investigation report for the perpetrator's CO; (l) record the incident on an '856 card,' whether or not there are charges, so that information about the incident will follow the perpetrator when he is posted to another base. If there has been no violence, MP protocols state that MPs do not have the authority to remove the perpetrator from the PMQ. MP protocols do not appear to instruct MPs to create an 856 card, or otherwise keep a record of every phone call, as is the case in some civilian jurisdictions.

During our interviews we received varying kinds of feedback on whether or not MPs do their jobs in ways that assist survivors. For example, we wondered whether MPs were part of the same unit cohesion that causes military members to protect one another and cover up for one another's crimes. We did not receive a clear answer. On the 'No' side, MPs believe that they do not bond as closely with coworkers as military members in other trades because they work exclusively alone or in pairs. They believe that they are prevented from bonding with other military members because, as police officers, they are semi-ostracized and socialize in a separate mess. Many of them feel alienated from the chain of command because they believe that the chain of command suppresses reports they file concerning the crimes of high-ranking or influential CF members. Some MPs appear to identify more with the victim of abuse than they do with the perpetrator or the chain of command.

As for the 'Yes' side, despite MP protestations to the contrary, representatives of several other categories of participants believe that MPs carry out their work in ways that indicate favouritism toward CF members. For example, some MPs are alleged to share the traditional resentment felt by civilian police officers toward woman abuse survivors, based on their ignorance of the causes of woman abuse, the dynamics of gender relations, and the reasons survivors remain in abusive relationships for a long time. As in the case of civilian police, the resentment felt by MPs is historically strong, but has diminished during the last few years. Until the 1980s, many MPs (and civilian police) either treated woman abuse as a joke or ignored it. In 1982 a survivor who telephoned MPs about her violent husband was told: 'We don't like to get involved, ma'am.' On a winter night in 1989, a survivor who had been thrown out of her PMQ in her nightgown was made to stand shivering for an hour in an MP shack while an MP filled out forms and told her, 'If you can't get along with your husband, it is you who must leave the base.' With better training and the greater enlightenment of civilian police, the attitude of many MPs has improved. However, some MPs still resemble typical military peers in their tendency to empathize with the perpetrator. In the early 1990s an MP told a survivor that she had caused her abuse by neglecting to make allowances for the fact that her husband performed 'such a stressful job.' Another MP charged a separated spouse with assault after she had returned to get some possessions from the PMQ and her husband had beaten her up. Many CF members and service providers believe that, even today, some MPs still defuse explosive situations at PMQs without filing reports or informing the chain of command. The survivors of these incidents find themselves in a disadvantaged position when, without a military record in hand, they subsequently complain to a civilian police department or seek justice from a civilian court.

When all is said and done, however, the response of MPs to woman abuse appears to have improved during the last 15 years.

Training given to MPs appears uneven, for reasons that are partly attributable to age and length of service. Some MPs report having been trained in woman abuse and gender dynamics; other MPs report having been trained in domestic violence; still others report having received general training in defusing crises. Many MPs already do their jobs well, sometimes (in their view) in spite of the chain of command. However, rigorous and

repeated training in woman abuse and gender issues would improve the ability of all MPs to respond to woman abuse in ways that helped survivors. MPs could also carry out their woman abuse work more independently if, like the NIS, they were authorized to report directly to NDHQ as well as to the local chain of command.

### **(c) Military Chaplains**

There are currently approximately 140 regular-force chaplains in the CF. The job of CF chaplains (or 'padres') is to attend to the moral and spiritual welfare of CF members so that the CF can remain combat ready. Since the majority of presentday CF members are married, combat readiness additionally requires padres to foster the wellbeing of CF members' families. Padres have no mandate to minister to former CF spouses. When, as is often the case, scarce resources necessitate choices, the CF's first priority is for padres to serve - and deploy with - CF members, rather than to serve CF members' families.

Unlike social workers, padres are not professionally bound to keep disclosures confidential unless the conversation is defined as a 'confession.' In practice confessional conditions usually apply, and padres understand that they would forfeit the trust vested in them by members of the community if they were to develop a reputation for divulging the confidences members of the community shared. Most padres do not report to the chain of command about their conversations without the applicable member's or spouse's permission although, according to the Chaplain General, such permission is not needed if keeping the secret might cause someone harm.

When a woman abuse incident happens in a PMQ, and a duty padre is at the scene, his/her responsibilities are to: see to injuries; ensure the survivor's safety by - if necessary - putting the perpetrator in barracks or jail; lend a listening ear; advocate on behalf of perpetrator and victim with the chain of command for assistance and counselling; help the victim (usually the spouse) to access resources in the civilian community; perhaps get the victim on a compassionate flight; and, if necessary, recommend to the chain of command that the member not be deployed on an upcoming exercise or combat or peacekeeping mission. The padre's role in family violence situations is often more crucial than that of the social worker, given that it is the padre who is on 24-hour call and who, without being constrained by various protocols, has access to every level of the chain of command. When a survivor seeks refuge in a women's shelter, it is frequently through the padre rather than the chain of command that shelter staff subsequently contact the base, to arrange the survivor's visits to PMQs to collect belongings, or arrange visits with children.

The fact that the padre is relatively autonomous from the chain of command potentially benefits survivors. Indeed, several survivors we interviewed recounted incidents where a padre's intervention had been heroic. One padre bought groceries for a separated spouse who was receiving no support from her former husband; another gave a stranded spouse \$400 from a base benevolent fund; another convinced a demoralized spouse who was no longer able to make decisions to accompany him to a place of safety; still another accompanied a separated spouse into the rat-infested dwelling of a violent CF member to



help her gather together some of her things. Some padres, however, conduct themselves like bureaucrats. One survivor we interviewed described how a padre halfheartedly attempted to help her remove belongings from her home but then, repelled by her abuser, told her hastily: 'Your kids can do without - this is not the military's problem.' Despite padres' well-known ability to procure compassionate flights for separating spouses, a few padres we interviewed, when asked, said that there was nothing they could do for a spouse who needed to get back home. The fact that other CF service providers believe that padres can arrange compassionate flights, and advise separating spouses accordingly, makes for difficulties when this response on the part of padres occurs.

From the perspective of survivors, there are two problems with the way padres currently do their jobs. The first problem has to do with the fact that padres are military members, and that some of them have the consequent structural tendency to adopt the member's (and/or the CF's) point of view. In many ways, padres are encouraged to think like military members; they occupy a rank (usually captain or major), they wear a uniform, they undergo basic training, they spend time with members in their workplaces, and they deploy on overseas missions. More to the point, padres know the career costs for members who are labelled as woman abusers. According to some of the survivors we interviewed, padres have recently counselled survivors not to report abusers to the chain of command; they have counselled survivors to ask prosecutors to drop charges; they have told survivors that, if they do not want to be abused again, they should make more allowances for their partners' stressful jobs; and they have sent abusers quietly to quarters for the night without informing MPs or the chain of command.

The second problem has to do with the fact that most padres have received no training in woman abuse dynamics, either from the CF or from civilian theological agencies. The CF's Chaplain General does not believe that padres need specialized training in woman abuse or any other field because they are generalists rather than clinicians. In his view: 'I'm not sure that an ambulance attendant who picks the body parts up on the highway needs to be qualified as a brain surgeon.' He adds: 'If the padre was to be totally competent in every field that he was involved in, he would need 40 years of seminary training.' On the other side of the equation, as we have noted, the role played by padres in the CF's response to woman abuse is primary and crucial. Padres who are ignorant of woman abuse dynamics can make mistakes which have horrendous implications for survivors' lives. CF supervisors and other service providers are almost unanimous in their view that padres could benefit both from training in woman abuse dynamics and from greater knowledge of resources that exist for survivors in the local town. Some padres agree with them. Padres themselves have expressed fears about being expected to cope with an explosive problem about which they know so little. According to recent incidents related by survivors, some padres believe that they can solve the problem by having a brief chat with the perpetrator, believing the perpetrator's assurances that he will mend his ways, telling no one else, either not contacting the survivor for her side of the story or convincing her to keep silent about it, and conducting no other follow up. Other padres have attempted to solve woman abuse by suggesting that the perpetrator show up more regularly at church. These (in)actions by padres indicate ignorance of woman abuse, yet often have great impact. A particularly damaging spinoff of padres' lack of training is the

mistaken perception, on the part of many CF supervisors, MPs, and survivors, that padres are, in fact, trained to handle woman abuse, and the consequent tendency of padres to be entrusted with situations that they cannot - and should not - handle. As in the case of military police, specialized training for padres in woman abuse would begin to solve this problem. Unquestionably, some woman abuse survivors have been fortunate in their dealings with CF padres. However, much of their good fortune appears to have been a function of these padres' personal qualities.

#### **(d) Military Social Work Officers**

Military social work officers contribute to combat readiness by providing social work services to CF members, CF spouses, other members of CF families, and civilian personnel who work on CF bases. Social work officers 'sell' their services partly by means of public relations presentations to military units. When appropriate, they refer clients to civilian resources. Social work officers process members' compassionate posting requests. Along with padres and medical officers, social work officers conduct pre- and post-deployment screenings of members, and pre-posting screenings of members and families who are being transferred to semi-isolated or isolated areas. Despite social work officers' clear mandate to serve families as well as members, social work officers, CF members, and many CF spouses recognize that if a social work officer attempts to serve a CF spouse while s/he is also serving the member, a conflict of interest may occur. Social work officers have no mandate to serve former CF spouses, but some of them are willing to counsel former spouses for up to six months after a couple has separated.

Important differences exist between the working conditions of social work officers and those of many of their civilian counterparts. Perhaps most important is the fact that, unlike many of his/her civilian counterparts, a social work officer cannot be, in the purest sense, an advocate for his/her client. As well as being a client-advocate, the social work officer is a 'company' employee who must help to facilitate three of the CF's most unpleasant tasks - denying compassionate postings to most members who request them, recommending that particular members be held back from postings or deployments, and setting in motion chains of events which may result in the release of particular members from the CF. Social work officers must also learn to operate within the chain of command. The social work branch has lived through difficult times during the last decade, and in the mid-1990s was almost eliminated from the CF.

Confidentiality is as debated an issue for social work officers as it is for CF padres. On the one hand, an important part of the social work officer's job is to serve the chain of command. Like military physicians, social work officers are relied on by the CF to screen out members who, at a particular time, are unfit to be deployed, posted to a remote area, or to be in the military at all. Social work officers are therefore often required to report details of their interactions with members to the chain of command. Social work officers must keep written records of their interactions with clients for five years, and COs are empowered to obtain reports of the content of these records. For obvious reasons, many CF members do not trust social work officers. One member interviewed by us stopped seeing a social work officer after he had overheard the social work officer relating

confidential information about a member of his unit over the telephone to a captain. A survivor we interviewed consulted a social work officer who happened to be the wife of her husband's boss. The social work officer told her husband about the conversation, her husband hauled in his subordinate and told him to get his wife in line, and the result was an even more severe beating for the survivor.

On the other hand, social work officers belong to the social work profession and are bound by that profession's Code of Ethics to keep client disclosures confidential. For this reason, except when they are carrying out a particular screening function, most of them do not reveal details of their conversations with clients to the chain of command without the permission of their clients, unless the client in question is an obvious danger to him/herself or others, s/he admits to committing a crime, or the social work officer's records have been requested for a specific purpose. Most supervisors report that they hear almost nothing about what routinely transpires between social work officers and their clients.

The social work officer usually is not present at the scene of an abuse incident, but is contacted by an MP or a member of the perpetrator's chain of command. The social work officer in turn contacts both the victim and the perpetrator. S/he interviews the perpetrator, and makes a recommendation about counselling or anger management to the perpetrator's CO. If the perpetrator refuses to see the social work officer, some social work officers will follow up and encourage the chain of command to apply more pressure. If the victim wishes, the social work officer also interviews her and refers her to the local women's shelter and/or to other civilian resources. If contacted by the survivor after an incident which has not yet become known to the CF, social work officers have been known to contact the perpetrator's unit and arrange an interview with the perpetrator.

From the survivor's perspective, social work officers present the same two problems as padres, but not to the same extent. Like padres and MPs, social work officers, as military members, have been known to empathize with perpetrators and accuse their spouses of being insufficiently understanding of military workplace stress. For example, one social work officer who was told about repeated abuse by a survivor made no reply except to comment: 'Don't worry - he'll be deployed soon.' Some social work officers are persons who have remustered or reclassified as social work officers from other military occupations. A few of these remustered members have an orientation to their work which reflects the mindset of unit cohesion more than that of social work as a profession.

The second social work officer issue is training. Without a doubt, social work officers are better trained for handling woman abuse than padres. With a few disturbing exceptions, most social work officers have some knowledge of woman abuse dynamics; they are able to recognize the signs of a controlling husband, and can intervene in a constructive way. Many social work officers are able to be true advocates for abused female spouses. Social work officers possess the professional authority to assume a leadership role on the base about woman abuse and family violence, educating supervisors about the problems and putting on community workshops. Many social work officers have pursued these

activities proactively and with success. On the other hand, the CF themselves have provided no training to social work officers about woman abuse, and have used very few of their resources to send their social work officers for civilian training. Like padres, some social work officers have therefore responded to survivors in ways that have demonstrated ignorance. A few years ago, one social work officer sat silently without intervening while a CF member verbally abused his wife throughout the entirety of a marriage counselling session. Another survivor who was receiving no income while her husband was in jail was accused by a social work officer of financial mismanagement. Yet another survivor who was living in a PMQ was told by a social work officer: 'If your husband is abusing you, you must move off the base.' Like padres, many social work officers believe that their present training in woman abuse is insufficient for the situations they must handle, and they would welcome opportunities to upgrade their training.

#### **(e) Military Family Resource Centre Counsellors**

Like other militaries around the world, the CF have become increasingly persuaded of the view that family support is essential to the maintenance of member retention and readiness. The Canadian military family support program was brought into being in 1991 to supplement the counselling that was being provided to military families by social work officers and padres, and the 'rear party' support that was provided on an occasional basis by stay-at-home members of deployed units. Since 1991, family resource centres (FRCs) have been established on almost every CF base. These centres provide families with information, companionship, recreational diversion, childcare relief, homemaker services, programs for children, daycare, family life enrichment, assertiveness training, and counselling. Some FRCs also attempt to improve their base-community relations, for example, with outreach programs in the schools. FRCs are non-profit organizations which are incorporated under provincial laws.

As of February 1999, 46 CF FRCs had been established, 7 or 8 of them in locations outside Canada. FRCs exist for the benefit of CF families, and are intended to be quasi-independent from the chain of command. Instead of being accountable to base commanders, FRC staff report to boards whose membership must comprise at least 51 percent civilian spouses of military members. FRC staff provide shorter-term counselling to their clients than do social work officers. The mandate of FRCs does not extend to former spouses, but in practice many FRC counsellors continue to counsel estranged spouses for up to a year post-separation. During their first couple of years of operation, FRCs received their funds directly from Ottawa. From 1993-98, funding for FRCs devolved to the CF's regional commands. These five years were unfortuitous for the FRCs, as some commands transferred funds from FRC budgets to bolster other CF priorities. Since 1998, FRCs have benefited from once again being funded directly by Ottawa. The Ottawa-based Director of Military Family Services (DMFS) contracts with each FRC to provide a level of service in each of five areas which is appropriate to the size of population being served and the availability of back-up civilian resources. The minimum level of counselling required for each FRC is capability of referring clients to civilian agencies; each FRC counselling facility must also include a crisis component. In practice, most FRCs provide some of their own counselling services, and many FRCs

have crisis counsellors on their staffs. Military Family Services recently added a national Crisis Coordinator to its own staff.

Woman abuse comprises more than half of the average FRC crisis counsellor's caseload. Like social work officers, many FRC counsellors are contacted by survivors before a major abuse crisis has occurred, or after a crisis has occurred and stabilized, rather than in the middle of a crisis in progress. Crisis counsellors often find themselves providing practical information to survivors on how to prepare themselves to leave an abusive relationship, so that at the moment of needing to leave they actually can. FRC staff frequently try to involve spouses they suspect are being abused at the FRC as volunteers, in the hopes of bolstering their self-esteem and providing them with the psychological resources they need to strike out on their own. Like other CF personnel, FRC crisis counsellors who are contacted immediately after an abuse incident attempt to separate the couple and arrange for the member to move into barracks. They provide short-term counselling to the survivor if she requests it and, if she has no money, help her to access cash from the padre's Benevolent Fund. A few of them attempt to advocate to the chain of command on behalf of survivors who are separated and without financial support.

From the perspective of survivors, how effective are FRCs? Their quasi-independence from the CF should enable them to play a strong advocacy role on behalf of their civilian clients. On the other hand, FRCs operate within a confusing accountability structure and some FRC counsellors appear to have been inadequately prepared to do their jobs.

Let us start with the positives. FRCs are perceived by many to have made the CF more responsive to the problems of abused spouses. To assist stranded survivors, they have provided everything from used clothing to grocery orders to counselling, and many other services in between. Some of them have written informative articles about woman abuse in their newsletters. Many have worked harder to liaise with community agencies than any other facility on the base.

Since FRCs' quasi-independence from the CF permits FRC staff not to divulge confidences to the chain of command, the ability of FRC staff to keep secrets is one of the key potential usefulnesses of the FRC to survivors. In theory, FRC counsellors reveal their interactions with clients under the same narrow circumstances as social work officers. In practice, FRC counsellors have more latitude for confidentiality than social work officers because they do not perform screening functions on behalf of the CF and they are less accountable to the chain of command. FRCs' quasi-independence from the chain of command is regarded with suspicion by some members of the chain of command, who accuse FRC staff of keeping problems 'too secret.' On at least one base, the FRC's insistence on confidentiality has led to a new rule which specifically instructs CF members to use social work officers or padres instead of the FRC, so that COs can be reasonably assured of not being kept in the dark about what is happening with the members they supervise.

FRCs are also attacked from the opposite side. Survivors and civilian service providers cite lack of confidentiality as a problem of FRCs more frequently than they attribute lack

of confidentiality to any other segment of the CF. Some of this negative perception may be based on bad experiences survivors have had with other segments of the CF; some of it may be based on unfortunate associations, such as the location of an FRC counsellor's office right next to the office of the base financial counsellor - a position which is obligated to report many of its consultations to the chain of command. However, some of the negative perception is based on fact, as some survivors report having had their conversations with FRC counsellors divulged immediately to their husbands' units. Conversely, some former FRC counsellors who were fired by their FRCs believe that they were fired because they insisted on maintaining clients' confidentiality.

Training is another FRC issue. Some FRC staff seem to have had less background preparation for their jobs than one might expect. With the permission of their boards, a few FRCs have hired counsellors who are not trained. From a survivor's perspective, the results have been disastrous. One FRC counsellor told a survivor that she needed to be a better wife. Another gave a survivor no support except the advice: 'Go home to your mother.' When a seriously depressed survivor told an FRC counsellor that she needed counselling, the counsellor gave her a flyer about a workshop on how to get a part-time job. The DMFS's arms-length relationship with FRCs so far prohibits the DMFS from specifying minimum qualifications for FRC staff.

While FRCs have been lauded for combining the best of military and civilian realities, their midway position between the two worlds has made them vulnerable to attack from both sides. On one hand, when FRCs were first established traditional CF members exercised influence based on their fear that the new organizations would be uncontrollable and feminist. As a result, efforts were made at some bases to recruit only the 'right' people as board and staff members. Where these efforts were successful, FRCs were run by conservative persons who confined their focus to 'healthy' families and attempted to prevent FRCs from supporting victims of family violence. During this period in their history, FRCs developed the reputation, which some have retained to this day, of being excessively 'middle class.' On this basis, CF spouses with feminist leanings developed the view that the FRCs had been co-opted by the CF and had forfeited their ability to exercise independent judgment. For example, one FRC counsellor set up a meeting between a CO and a separating survivor, at which the CO bluntly ordered the survivor to move out of her PMQ. Previous to the meeting, the survivor had asked the counsellor if she should bring her lawyer and had been reassured by the counsellor that the meeting would be 'just a chat.' At some bases, FRC staff members have been made associate members of the officers' mess. While good communication between FRCs and the CF has sometimes advanced FRCs' true goals, at other times it appears to have represented co-optation.

The composition of FRC staff is a related issue. Over the years, whichever constituency has been perceived to dominate the FRC staff has been accused by its detractors of being a CF mouthpiece. Some FRCs are not trusted by survivors because they are perceived to be 'full of officers' wives.' On the other hand, some CF spouses believe that they have been turned down for FRC employment in favour of persons who have had no prior

experience in the CF community, have 'gone native' in favour of the traditional CF perspective, and have compromised FRCs' independence.

One area of genuine ambiguity is FRCs' rights to base resources and political support. While they are not the responsibility of the chain of command, FRCs nevertheless rely on the chain of command for some of their resources and political support. Because little is written down about how FRCs and base administrations should cooperate, each FRC is dependent on the goodwill of its base commander - a position which rotates to a new person every two years. While many base commanders have treated FRCs well, the lack of written policy governing the day-to-day interaction between FRCs and the CF has kept FRCs occupying a vulnerable place.

To serve their clients adequately, FRC staff must be well-trained, professional in the way they do their jobs, and staunch advocates. Although FRCs are financially dependent on the CF, the hardships caused to CF families by the military lifestyle require FRCs to assert their right to be autonomous from the organization that pays their bills. On the other hand, the CF have the right - indeed the duty - to insist on professional qualifications, or their equivalent, for FRC staff and to specify base commanders' obligations to FRCs.

#### **(f) Military Physicians**

Like other military service-providers, military medical officers (MOs) have a dual allegiance. As CF members, their primary allegiance is to the military; on the other hand, they are also members of a profession with which they identify. Many MOs identify less with the military than with the medical profession; more than other military service-providers, MOs tend to be young practitioners who serve the time that is required to repay the CF for their education, and then reintegrate into civilian life. Like other military service providers, MOs have difficulty reconciling the confidentiality requirements of their professional ethics with the CF's need to know everything pertinent about its members. They are aware of the fact that CF members are required to be their patients, are not allowed to consult civilian doctors, and consequently find it hard to hide their ailments from the CF. Like social work officers and padres, MOs play an important role in the screening which takes place prior to deployments, isolated postings, and CF decisions to release members who are medically unfit. After screenings and other professional encounters with CF members, MOs are required to disclose their unpleasant clinical findings to members of the chain of command. Descriptions of how MOs carry out their jobs depend on the speaker's vantagepoint. The average MO is keenly conscious of the differences between military and civilian practice, and resents having to divulge the contents of patient files. For their part, COs complain about what they consider to be MOs' excessive secrecy.

Except in a dwindling number of overseas and isolated postings, MOs care only for CF members and have no relationship with CF spouses or families. Like other physicians, MOs are trained to be aware of signs in their patients of inability to handle anger (e.g., self-inflicted injuries). They attempt to steer these patients into anger management

programs. MOs who suspect that a CF member is experiencing woman abuse, either as a perpetrator or a victim, are encouraged to communicate their suspicions, through the Base Surgeon, to the member's supervisor. However, partly because MOs have little contact with CF spouses, they freely admit that there are likely many undetected woman abusers among the ranks of the patients under their care.

While an increasing number of MOs are acquiring some exposure to woman abuse training during medical school, the CF do not include woman abuse in any of their own MO training programs.

### **(g) CF Pre-Deployment Screenings**

CF members frequently leave Canada for several months at a time on peacekeeping tours, or to participate in combat or war. In preparation for departure, each member is screened by a series of CF personnel - e.g., MOs, dental officers, social work officers, and padres - who make recommendations about the member's deployment suitability to the chain of command. The purpose of pre-deployment screenings is to weed out members who for medical, dental, psychological, legal, or family-related reasons are at this time poor candidates for undertaking an absence from home. In the CF's view, screenings which are done effectively minimize the possibility that the CF will be put to the trouble and expense of sending unfit members home during a deployment and substituting other personnel. Effective screenings also minimize the possibility that the Canadian government will be embarrassed in international circles by CF members' difficulties.

The aspects of pre-deployment screening that are most relevant to woman abuse are the screenings pertaining to members' family situations that are carried out by social work officers and padres. If the member has been charged with woman abuse and has a court date, or if s/he has been found guilty of woman abuse and is on probation, it is important that the screening social work officer or padre find out. If the member is a woman abuser, especially a physically violent one, the social work officer or padre should also find out, as a violent and unstable member is a poor deployment risk.

We received mixed messages about pre-deployment screenings during our interviews. While some Phase Two participants believe that screenings have become more thorough in recent years, others believe that screenings continue to be 'done in a rush' and that poor deployment candidates continue to slip through. In addition, recent downsizing of the CF has meant that CF members are deployed more often than they used to be. For this reason, it has become especially important that as high a proportion of CF members as possible remain deployable; hence, some problems that were once considered serious are no longer deemed to comprise sufficient grounds to keep a member at home.

Screenings represent a complex social process. On one hand, since it is in the CF's interest for non-deployable members to be held back, it is also in the CF's interest for members to be honest about their problems during screenings. On the other hand, there are incentives for all participants in the screening process to cover up difficulties and push the member's clearance through:



- (i) members who are deployed receive an attractive amount of extra pay
- (ii) members who ask to be kept back from a deployment can be subject to negative career repercussions
- (iii) members who are labelled permanently undeployable are released from the CF
- (iv) pressure is put on COs to contribute their fair share of members to each deployment.

It follows that there exists a high probability of some members being deployed who should not be.

The situation presented most often to us by survivors who discussed deployments was that of the violent member being deployed without the survivor being given the chance to tell her story. Apart from the usefulness of this story to the CF, the survivor who is in the process of separating does not want her husband to be deployed until both criminal and civil court matters have been resolved. Hence, how her participation in the screening process is solicited is a matter of concern to her. From the survivor's perspective, each screening scenario falls into one of the following four categories: spouse not interviewed at all, spouse and member interviewed together, spouse and member interviewed separately after they have been interviewed together, spouse and member interviewed separately from the beginning.

#### **Spouse Not Interviewed at All:**

Some spouses are not interviewed during pre-deployment screenings. Navy spouses whose partners are deployed for six months at a time on ships are the most visible representatives of this category. Spouses whose partners belong to other deployment categories are supposed to be consulted, but some military service providers consider interviewing spouses to comprise a guideline rather than a requirement. Navy personnel argue that since working on moving ships is routine navy business, being sent away on a ship does not constitute a deployment in the same sense that being sent to Bosnia comprises a deployment for a member of the army. In our view, being sent away for six months on a ship puts the member in essentially the same social situation as being deployed to Bosnia - i.e., it is a long deployment outside Canada - hence the same procedures should apply. In our view, not interviewing the spouse prior to a major deployment constitutes ineffective procedure in any element. Some service providers refuse to consider a screening complete unless they have interviewed the member's spouse.

#### **Spouse and Member Interviewed Together:**

Interviewing spouses together is the most common practice. From the survivor's standpoint, this practice is potentially more desirable than not being interviewed at all. However, it can be fraught with pitfalls. The most obvious pitfall, reported by many survivors, is that the abuser tells his partner exactly what to say before the screening, and

threatens her with a beating if she does anything during the screening to step out of line. Although the survivor quoted below was recounting a screening for a family posting in Germany rather than a pre-deployment screening, the emotions she experienced were the same. In the following passage, she describes her frustration at feeling unable to tell the social work officer that she and her husband had separated:

[I wanted to say to the social worker] 'Give me five minutes alone with you and I'll tell you why I don't think we should go,' but he kept us in the room together the whole time and I really felt, okay, now I've got him beside me and the fear came right back. I was really amazed, the fear was right there again, and I thought, I have to agree. I have to sit there and agree with him, whatever he says. I didn't feel I had an out.

### **Spouse and Member Interviewed Separately After They Have Been Interviewed Together:**

Some padres and social work officers report that, through repeated screening exercises, they have become adept at reading body language. If they believe that a spouse has been coerced to respond to their questions in a particular way, they take her aside after the joint interview and question her alone. This strategy gives the survivor a chance to speak outside of the presence of the CF member. On the other hand, the member knows that the spouse has been taken aside, she knows that he knows, and this combination of circumstances may prevent her from speaking candidly. At least one social work officer never takes the spouse aside, whatever he witnesses during the joint interview, because he fears putting her in danger.

### **Spouse and Member Interviewed Separately From the Beginning:**

No one that we interviewed reported following, or being subjected to, this practice. However, it might be the most desirable screening practice of all. A separate interview with the spouse at a separate time would give the spouse the opportunity to tell her own story, and would be less likely to irritate the member than his watching her being taken aside after a joint session.

It is important to understand that the nature of military culture and the nature of an abusive relationship both work against the possibility of a spouse revealing that she is being abused at a screening interview, whatever the circumstances under which the interview takes place. However, some possible ways of structuring the screening interview are more potentially helpful to the survivor than others. A related issue is the background training required for screeners. One of the padres we interviewed suggested that padres are less professionally prepared to handle complex screening interviews than are social work officers. A few of our survivor participants concurred.

### **(h) The CF in General**

Almost every survivor we interviewed felt bitter, not only toward her husband or former husband, but toward the CF as well. Regardless of the positive or negative quality of their

interactions with individual supervisors, MPs, padres, social work officers, or FRC staff, survivors had negative things to say, overall, about the CF. In section 1, we established that several characteristics of military life routinely make spouses socially vulnerable, especially those spouses who are abused. In order to play the supportive role toward the military that is required of a military spouse, military spouses forego economic and social opportunities that they might have enjoyed otherwise. In recognition of these sacrifices, one would expect the CF to extend compensatory reparations to CF spouses. But little of any kind of compensation has occurred. Instead, despite some lip service to the contrary, the CF have failed to acknowledge the contributions of spouses. Almost unanimously, survivors believe that when a CF marriage becomes troubled, the CF's only interest is to salvage their investment in the member. They believe that the CF have little or no interest in assisting an abused or stranded spouse, and hope that she will go away. In the words of an officer's wife:

I'm still here, but I feel that I've been booted out. I feel that I have no credibility. ... I feel I have no significance.

Additionally, when visiting CF bases to put on workshops about woman abuse, some community service providers report having been treated with defensiveness and hostility by base officials. According to the (1992) recollection of one such service provider:

First of all they wanted to screen the material that we would be presenting ... And then we had opening remarks from the base commander ... As I recall, I felt like we were getting a little bit of a lecture on being feminists before we started. And I ... felt ... that he was a little bit mad that [we were there]. And I think one of his lines was that he wanted to remind us that these men are trained to kill. And that just sort of stunned me.

These criticisms of the CF are damning; the team hopes that they do not reflect widespread practice.

## **5. COORDINATION AMONG SERVICE PROVIDERS**

### **(a) On Base**

According to CFAO 19-42, there should be a committee of service-providers (a 'family crisis team') established on every CF base, to monitor the coordination of family violence services, carry out educational or other initiatives and, where appropriate, share information about individual cases. Such a committee would pool the collective expertise of various service providers and benefit survivors by enabling service providers to function as a team. If a team, instead of zero or one service provider, were involved in each case, the survivor would have more hope of receiving competent follow-up than she has today. Coordination of services at each base would also improve if a clear protocol were developed which specified which base personnel were to be brought into the picture after an abuse incident, and in which order. The preparation of such a protocol would be an obvious task for the family crisis team.

According to our interviews in 1998 and 1999, as things now stand family violence team work is a fragile edifice on each base, which happens or does not happen depending on the personalities involved. Some bases have a family crisis committee - others do not. Some bases have no clear policy about who is to tell whom when a woman abuse incident has occurred.

At various bases during our interviews we heard about the following:

- an FRC executive director who was unaware of the policies and protocols about family violence which existed at her base
- a padre who claimed that he was never informed about woman abuse incidents at his base
- two different social work officers at two different bases who claimed that they were rarely or never informed about the woman abuse incidents that occurred at their bases
- an FRC counsellor who rarely or never interacted with the military service providers at her base, and was unaware of their respective responsibilities when a woman abuse incident occurred.

A number of members of the chain of command displayed ignorance concerning what their respective service providers had to offer.

Another problem which appeared to be almost universal were 'turf wars' between service providers, most notably social work officers and FRC staff, which have been an inevitable byproduct of recent downsizing of the CF and of the very real threat to the continued existence of social work officers that occurred in the mid-1990s. These turf wars erected walls between some subgroups of service providers which inhibited what might otherwise have been a smoother information-sharing. The situation has apparently improved in some locations.

Survivors would be better served and better followed up if service providers and supervisors were better coordinated on CF bases. However, this point is made with the important caveat that better coordination must not entail the sacrifice of confidentiality. The ideal situation would be one in which service providers interacted frequently, offered information and support to one another, found ways to share their difficulties with individual cases without violating their clients' needs for confidentiality, and did not share any information at all about cases without their clients' consent.

### **(b) Between Military and Civilian Agencies**

Coordination between military and civilian agencies is also a desirable strategy. From the viewpoint of survivors, there are two reasons why the CF need a degree of knowledge of community resources that is beyond the scope of what most civilian employers need to know. First, as a result of the posting system a large proportion of military families have

lived only a short time in their current community and are less likely to be familiar with community resources than their civilian counterparts. Second, the CF base, where many members still live, is often geographically isolated from the surrounding city or town. Third, from the standpoint of the CF it makes economic sense to build strong links to the community, since working together on social problems is more efficient than working separately.

In practice, despite the instructions contained in some CF protocols, liaising with the community often fails to happen on CF bases. One adjutant we interviewed made a point of telling us that he each year provided every service provider on his base with an up-to-date list of community resources. However, most base commanders and supervisors seemed to know nothing about the resources in their communities. Two supervisors we interviewed referred to a women's shelter as a 'halfway house.' One base commander indicated that teaching supervisors and service providers about community resources was not part of his job.

The result is major deficiencies in knowledge about community resources on the part of CF service providers. For example, a young and newly-trained MP reported that he had heard very little during his training about services to abused women, especially women's shelters. He added that he had had no contact with the women's shelter in his community. He had a referral list of community resources which had been provided to him not by the base but by his wife, who had clipped it from the local paper. He expressed a wish for more education about civilian resources and more contact with civilian agencies. In general, padres appeared to have little knowledge of community resources. Civilian service providers admired the effort expended by some social work officers and FRC staff on liaising with their local communities. Other social work officers and FRC staff were persons with whom they had had no contact. Some social work officers and FRC staff claim that their caseloads are too high to permit them to liaise with civilian agencies. In general, civilian service providers are contacted seldom by CF personnel. Some civilian service providers have the impression that the CF discourage members and spouses from seeking help off the base. Women's shelters are visited rarely or never by CF personnel, although in one community the crew of a ship volunteered its labour to make renovations to a shelter's exterior.

Some civilian agencies are proactive in the CF community. At at least one base, the local women's shelter does a presentation each year. In another military community, the local women's shelter does regular presentations in the schools. However, since the military is intimidating to many civilians, the onus should be on CF personnel to reach out to the community, rather than the reverse.

In our view, knowledge of and regular contact with community agencies should be part of the written CF policy governing the conduct of base commanders, COs, MPs, social work officers, padres, and FRC counsellors.

# CONCLUSION

Like all military communities, the CF comprise an environment in which work and family life cannot be segregated. Being in the military has a significantly greater impact on military members and their families than working for almost any civilian employer has on their civilian peers. Unlike civilian employers, the CF must therefore accept some responsibility for preventing, eradicating, and treating woman abuse, and for mitigating the harsh consequences of woman abuse for survivors. As things stand, however, career costs are potentially high for members with family problems, and our interviews with survivors and civilian service providers indicate that woman abuse in the CF community is underreported to a marked degree.

We have recommended strategies designed to enhance the CF's knowledge of woman abuse among its members, and the CF's control over the aftermath of woman abuse incidents. At the same time, we have recommended supplementing punishment with assistance at several points in the process of managing perpetrators. We have also recommended a stronger advocacy role for FRCs. Most of all, we have endeavoured to increase the help provided to survivors. In doing so, we have placed considerable emphasis on improving the ability of supervisors and service providers to empathize with survivors and with one another. To this end, we have recommended expanding the opportunities made available for supervisors, service providers and survivors to be trained, informed, supported, and coordinated.

Woman abuse is a serious and significant problem. Woman abuse poisons and stunts the life chances of survivors, their children, and the children of succeeding generations. Because military life exacerbates woman abuse, the CF and other militaries have a special responsibility to help service providers and survivors find solutions. The CF have recently committed themselves to improving the quality of life for CF families. In our view, continuing to improve their response to woman abuse should comprise an important part of how the CF honour this commitment.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## General

1. The CF must understand and acknowledge that woman abuse is a significant and serious problem in Canadian society and in the CF community.
2. The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) should send a brief directive to all CF members and supervisors, stating that neither woman abuse nor covering up woman abuse will be tolerated in the CF, and that CF members and supervisors are accountable for taking a proactive stance toward woman abuse.
3. The CF must assume responsibility for teaching their members on a regular basis how to set aside their aggressive training at home.
4. The CF should take steps to ensure that intake interviews of potential recruits are conducted by personnel who have the professional ability to recognize poor impulse control and other psychopathologies that are relevant to woman abuse.
5. The CF should make more resources available for the support of CF woman abuse survivors and their children.

## Section 1: The Special Vulnerability of Civilian Woman Abuse Survivors in the Military Community

The CF should counteract the disempowering impacts of military life on CF spouses by regularly:

6. Providing in-person briefings about military life to CF spouses which include information about woman abuse, suggested courses of action if woman abuse should occur, information about community resources (including useful phone numbers), and a list of rights and entitlements which will accrue to the CF spouse whose marriage ends. Personnel who provide the briefings should consult, and perhaps collaborate with, provincial family violence prevention bureaus or regional family violence research centres.
7. Providing compulsory in-person briefings to CF members which include information about woman abuse, and a list of rights and entitlements which will accrue to the CF spouse whose marriage ends. Personnel who provide the briefings should consult, and perhaps collaborate with, provincial family violence prevention bureaus or regional family violence research centres.

8. Providing in-person briefings to CF spouses about FRC programs and other programs available to spouses and children, on base and off.
9. Providing, through posters, newsletters, and community media, frequent information about women's shelters and other community resources that are available for abused women.
10. With respect to all of the above, making special outreach efforts to provide information to spouses who live off-base.
11. Funding the transportation of the CF spouse, her children, and her belongings to the location of her choice after she and the CF member have separated.
12. Putting separated CF spouses high on the PMQ occupancy priority list, to enable each separating spouse (and her children, if applicable) to remain in the PMQ until a final separation agreement or order is obtained, or until 18 months have passed, whichever period is shorter. Ensuring that separating spouses with children are never asked to leave a PMQ before the end of the applicable school year.
13. Assuming responsibility for ensuring that dependent spouses and children receive financial support from the time of separation until support issues have been resolved by the courts.
14. Providing shuttle transportation for members of military families who live on bases which are not geographically integrated into towns.
15. Ensuring that, at every CF base and station, services provided by social work officers, chaplains, FRC counsellors, and military police are available in both official languages.
16. Making available sufficient resources to fund a civilian study of the special problems of abused CF spouses who have been posted to locations where they are forced to speak their second or third language.
17. Ceasing (officially and unofficially) to use the term 'dependents' to describe military spouses and children, and ceasing to use the expression 'dependents, furniture, and effects.'

### **Section 3: Impacts of the CF Policy on Behaviour in the CF Community**

CF policy should state that:

18. Supervisors who fail to report the woman abuse perpetrated by their subordinates to their commanding officers are subject to administrative action.



19. Perpetrators whose woman abuse is reported to the chain of command must be followed up vigorously by their commanding officers. Perpetrators must undergo counselling or other remedial measures, and their compliance with these directives must be monitored. The perpetrator's CO should submit written reports on the perpetrator's progress to the Base Commander one year and two years after the abuse incident occurred.

20. In cases where woman abuse has occurred but criminal charges have not been sustained, reasonable efforts should be made to correct the problem with counselling or other remedial measures before disciplinary or administrative action is taken against perpetrators. The CF must understand that couple counselling is an inappropriate way of trying to end violence in a relationship.

## **Section 4: Responses of Supervisory and Human Service Professional Personnel**

21. Every CF supervisor must receive regular and repeated training by qualified professionals in the identification of woman abuse, gender dynamics, military resources that exist for survivors, and the CF's woman abuse policy. Additionally, this training should be built into such mandatory career courses as basic training, Basic Officer Training (BOTC), Junior Leader (JLC), and Senior Leader (SLC). This training must include the clear message that, whatever the circumstances, woman abuse is wrong. Provincial family violence prevention bureaus and/or regional family violence research centres should have a role in planning and carrying out the training.

22. The Office of the Provost-Marshal should be tasked to recommend additional ways of enhancing the communication in each vicinity between MPs and civilian police.

23. The chain of command should be authorized to order the removal of a CF woman abuse perpetrator from a PMQ if the survivor requests it or if, in the MP's opinion, the survivor would be in danger if the perpetrator remained.

24. If the court has issued a peace bond or restraining order in respect to a woman abuse incident, the CF should pay the cost of keeping the CF perpetrator in barracks for the period recommended by the court or for six months, whichever is shorter.

25. MPs should open a file and create an 856 card for every phone call they receive about a woman abuse incident. 856 cards should follow applicable members to each new base, and be made available to local civilian police.

26. Every CF human service provider should receive regular and repeated training by qualified professionals in the identification of woman abuse, gender dynamics, military and civilian resources that exist for survivors, and the CF's woman abuse policy.

Provincial family violence prevention bureaus and/or regional family violence research centres should have a role in planning and carrying out the training. This policy should apply to MPs, chaplains, social work officers, FRC crisis counsellors, MOs, and financial counsellors.

27. MPs should have the option of reporting woman abuse directly to the Office of the Provost-Marshal as well as to the local chain of command.

28. The CF should make resources available to augment its present complement of social work officers.

29. The Director of Military Family Services (DMFS) should insist that all FRC crisis counsellors have experience working in the field of family violence which has led to an understanding of how the dynamics of family violence impact on women, children, and men. Clinical supervision from licensed human service practitioners (e.g., clinical psychologists or social workers) should occur on a regular basis.

30. A policy and procedures manual should be developed that covers all aspects of services provided by FRC crisis counsellors, including rights of clients to appeal.

31. A bill of FRC clients' rights should be developed and posted in each FRC.

32. FRC board members should be required to attend yearly orientation sessions on board roles and responsibilities, which include training in family violence issues.

33. Wherever possible, each FRC board should have a member who is a family violence service provider in the civilian community.

34. CF policy should specify more clearly the obligations of base commanders to FRCs.

35. DMFS policy should specify 'advocacy on behalf of their clients' as one of the mandates of FRCs.

36. Where possible, FRCs should be located either off the base or within the base shopping mall, rather than being adjacent to financial counselling, medical, or social work services, or near the offices of the chain of command.

37. A 1-800 number national hotline should be established to provide confidential crisis assistance to CF spouses.

38. The position of Civilian Ombudsperson should be established in each CF region to deal with woman abuse issues amongst CF military spouses.

39. All long deployments (six months or more) should be preceded by family screenings.

40. Spouses should be interviewed separately - and discreetly - during pre-deployment screenings.
41. Pre-deployment screening interviews should include specific questions relating to woman abuse, other forms of family violence, and possible outstanding court issues.
42. Only social work officers trained in woman abuse issues should conduct pre-deployment screening interviews.
43. Separate pre- and post-deployment group briefings should be held for spouses which include warnings about the possibility of woman abuse and advice on how to get help.
44. Members should be interviewed separately by social work officers during post-deployment screenings, rather than in batches.
45. When a member's family has unresolved civil or criminal issues around woman abuse or separation, the member's postings and/or overseas tours should be delayed until the issues have been resolved.

## **Section 5: Coordination Among Service Providers**

46. CF policy should direct every base commander to ensure that a multidisciplinary family crisis team is established at his/her base, in accordance with CFAO 19-42. One or more CF spouses should participate in the 'policy' part of each team's work. Spouses who participate should represent all CF ranks. Compliance with this policy should be monitored.
47. Base commanders should be responsible for ensuring that family crisis teams follow up and provide support to every abused CF spouse.
48. As part of its work, each family crisis team should develop (and communicate widely) a 'referral path' for each woman abuse incident, so that no known incidents slip through the cracks.
49. As part of its work, each family crisis team should develop protocols which will enable the team to function effectively without sacrificing the confidentiality needs of team members' clients.
50. As part of its work, each family crisis team should keep statistics on woman abuse for the purpose of program planning and evaluation. These statistics should be nationally coordinated.

51. CF policy should direct base commanders and family crisis teams to work closely and on a regular basis with military spouses and with local civilian agencies, including women's shelters, civilian police, victims' services, legal aid committees, family services.

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## Notes

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<sup>14</sup> Caliber Associates, **Preliminary Installation Process Study Report - CDRL #A003** (Washington D.C.: Office of Family Policy, Support and Services, February 1994); Caliber Associates, **Victims' Survey Preliminary Report - CDRL #A006** (Washington D.C.: Office of Family Policy, Support and Services, May 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Claudia Nichols, 'The Military Installation: How the Company Town Deals With Rape, Spouse Abuse and Child Abuse,' **Victimology** 7:1-4 (1982): 242-51; West, **Wife Abuse in the Armed Forces**, pp 74-5.

<sup>16</sup> Caliber Associates, **Final Report on the Study of Spousal Abuse in the Armed Forces** (Washington D.C.: Office of Family Policy, Support and Services, September 1996), p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> Col James T. Rackstraw, **Crisis Intervention and the Military Family: A Model Installation Program** (USAWC Military Studies Program, U.S. Army War College, Pennsylvania, 1988); LTC Stephen J. Brannen et al., 'Spouse Abuse: Physician Guidelines to Identification, Diagnosis, and Management in the Uniformed Services,' **Military Medicine** 164 (January, 1999): 30-36.

<sup>18</sup> See especially Deborah Harrison and Lucie Laliberté, **No Life Like It: Military Wives in Canada** (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1994); David Bercuson, **Significant Incident: Canada's Army, the Airborne, and the Murder in Somalia** (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996); (Canadian) Organization of Spouses of Military Members, **Brief to the Special Advisory Group on Military Justice and Military Police Investigation Services** (Ottawa: February, 1997); Martin L. Friedland, **Controlling Misconduct in the Military: A Study Prepared for the Commission of Inquiry Into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia** (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997); Donna Winslow, **The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia - A Socio-Cultural Inquiry: A Study Prepared for the Commission of Inquiry Into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia** (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997); James O'Reilly and Patrick Healy, **Independence in the Prosecution of Offences in the Canadian Forces: A Study Prepared for the Commission of Inquiry Into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia** (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997); Jean-Paul Brodeur, **Violence and Racial Prejudice in the Context of Peacekeeping: A Study Prepared for the Commission of Inquiry Into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia** (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997); Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, **Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair** (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997); Lieut(N) K.D. Davis et al., **Chief Land Staff Gender Integration Study: The Experience of Women Who Have Served in the Combat Arms** (Ottawa: National Defence Headquarters, 1998); Donna Winslow, 'Misplaced Loyalties: The Role of Military Culture in the Breakdown of Discipline in Peace Operations,' **Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology** 35:3 (August, 1998): 345-67.

<sup>19</sup> Department of National Defence Canada, Directorate of Social and Economic Analysis, ORA Research Note RN 9501, **Family Violence in the Military: An Annotated Bibliography** (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1995); Department of National Defence Canada Operational Research Division ORD Report 9602, **Military Family Violence and Violence Against Women: Causes and Incidence** (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1996); and Department of National Defence Canada Operational Research Division ORD Report 9701, **Military Family Violence and Violence Against Women: Qualitative Data** (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> Now a lawyer for the Children's Aid Society in Hamilton-Wentworth.

<sup>21</sup> Now Maj Jurden Rice, Senior Social Work Officer, Air Command, Canadian Forces Winnipeg.

<sup>22</sup> See Dorothy E Smith, 'Institutional Ethnography: A Feminist Method,' **Resources for Feminist Research** 15:1 (1986), pp. 6-13; and also her **Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> Smith defines the 'relations and apparatuses of ruling' as 'that extraordinary complex of relations and organization mediated by texts that govern, manage, administer, direct, organize, regulate, and control contemporary capitalist societies.' See 'Feminist Reflections on Political Economy,' pp. 1-21 in M. Patricia Connelly et al. (eds.), **Feminism in Action: Studies in Political Economy** (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> See C. Wright Mills, **The Power Elite** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

<sup>25</sup> In this report, the term 'military spouse' refers to civilian spouse of military member.

<sup>26</sup> See Department of National Defence Canada, Directorate of Social and Economic Analysis, Operational Research and Analysis Project Report 712, **Military Spousal Employment and Loss of Income** (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1995); also Harrison and Laliberté, **No Life Like It**, chs 2, 5, and 7.

<sup>27</sup> See Major J.C. Baril, 'The Child in the Military Family,' **Proceedings of the Regional Social Work Conference on The Child in the Military Family** (CFB Trenton, 1978), pp. 1-7.

<sup>28</sup> Some discussion of this topic is contained in Harrison/Laliberté, **No Life Like It**.

<sup>29</sup> The weapons referred to here are personal weapons. Military members are not permitted to take military firearms home with them.

<sup>30</sup> Lt-Col Dave Grossman, Lt-Col D., **On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society** (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), pp. 148-55.

<sup>31</sup> Donna Winslow, 'Misplaced Loyalties .. '

<sup>32</sup> James O'Reilly and Patrick Healy, **Independence in the Prosecution of Offences in the Canadian Forces ...**, p.9.

<sup>33</sup> Department of National Defence, **Memorandum of Understanding Between the Department of National Defence and the Occupational Health and Safety Agency (OSHA) Concerning the Addition of the Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program to the Employee Assistance Services Program of the OSHA** (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> See Lieut(N) K.D. Davis et al., **The Experience of Women Who Have Served in the Combat Arms ...**

<sup>35</sup> According to recent American statistics, 95 percent of reported spouse abuse occurs in military housing, yet two-thirds of U.S. military members do not live in military housing. See Karen Jowers, 'For Military Spouses Who Endure Abuse, Getting Help - and Justice -



Can Be a Nightmare as Real as the Violence Itself,' **The War at Home** (Army Times Publishing Company, May 1999).

<sup>36</sup> See Harrison/Laliberté, **No Life Like It**, ch 5.

<sup>37</sup> See Canadian Forces Provost-Marshal, **Military Police Policies and Technical Procedures Manual** (Ottawa, Department of National Defence, 1999), Chapter 5.

<sup>38</sup> Reporting practices of MPs are discussed at some length in James O'Reilly and Patrick Healy, **Independence in the Prosecution of Offences in the Canadian Forces ....** See also Rt Hon Brian Dickson et al., **Report of the Special Advisory Group on Military Justice and Military Police Investigation Services** (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1997).

<sup>39</sup> A **compassionate posting** is a posting at or near the geographical location of the CF member's preference, which will last for a two-year period. If the compassionate posting is granted, it will arrest the member's career. For the two years of its duration, the member will only do his or her job; s/he will go on no courses, and will be ineligible to receive a promotion.

<sup>40</sup> Both FRC and MP operating protocols specify maintaining contact with community agencies. See Director of Military Family Services, **Military Family Support Program Operational Plan** (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1997), p. 33. Also Canadian Forces Provost-Marshal, **Military Police Policies and Technical Procedures Manual ...**, Chapter 5.

<sup>41</sup> Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs, **Moving Forward: A Strategic Plan for Quality of Life Improvements in the Canadian Forces** (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1998).

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