

LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE (ROYAL CANADIANS)



FAMILY SUPPORT TROOP DEPLOYED FAMILIES HANDBOOK

September 2016



FAMILY SUPPORT CONTACT NUMBERS

Strathcona Family Support Troop (FST)

FST Office (Monday-Friday 0800-1600 hrs)	(780) 973-4011, ext 3040 familysupport@strathconas.ca
Regimental Padre	Blackberry (780) 238-1635 (780) 973-4011, Ext 3129
Regimental Duty Desk	(780) 973-4011, ext 3018
Base Duty Padre for After Hours	Dial (780) 973-4011 then 0 and ask the operator for the Duty Padre

Military Family Resource Center (MFRC) Contact Numbers

Military Family Resource Center	(780) 973-4011, ext 6300
Emergency Child Care Service Coordinator	(780) 973-4011, ext 6314
Kids Cottage (Emergency Child Care)	(780) 944-2888
Member Assistance Program	1-(800) 268-7708
Family Information Line (24 Hrs)	1-(800) 866-4546

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AGENCY	PHONE NUMBER	DETAILS
Edmonton Police Service	911 (Emergency) (780) 423-4567 (Non-Emergency)	
Military Police CFB Edmonton	(780) 973-4011, ext 4044	
Fire	911 (Emergency)	
Ambulance	911 (Emergency)	
Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) CFB Edmonton	(780) 973-4011, ext 6300	MFRC Receptionist

Mental Health CFB Edmonton	(780) 973-4011, ext 5332	After hours thru the Base Duty Padre
Area Social Worker CFB Edmonton	(780) 973-4011, ext 1915	DSG Front Desk will direct call
Military Chaplain CFB Edmonton	(780) 973-4011, ext 4999	After hours contact the Base Operator for emergency contact
Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP)	1-(888)-757-7427	www.sunlife.ca
Canadian Forces Housing Agency (CFHA)	(780) 973- 4011, ext 4342 ,4338, 6367	After hours emergency 1-(800)-903-2342
Base Gym	(780) 973-4011, ext 4383	
Service Income Security Insurance Plan Financial Services (SISIP FS)	(780) 973-3130	

STRATHCONA FAMILY SUPPORT

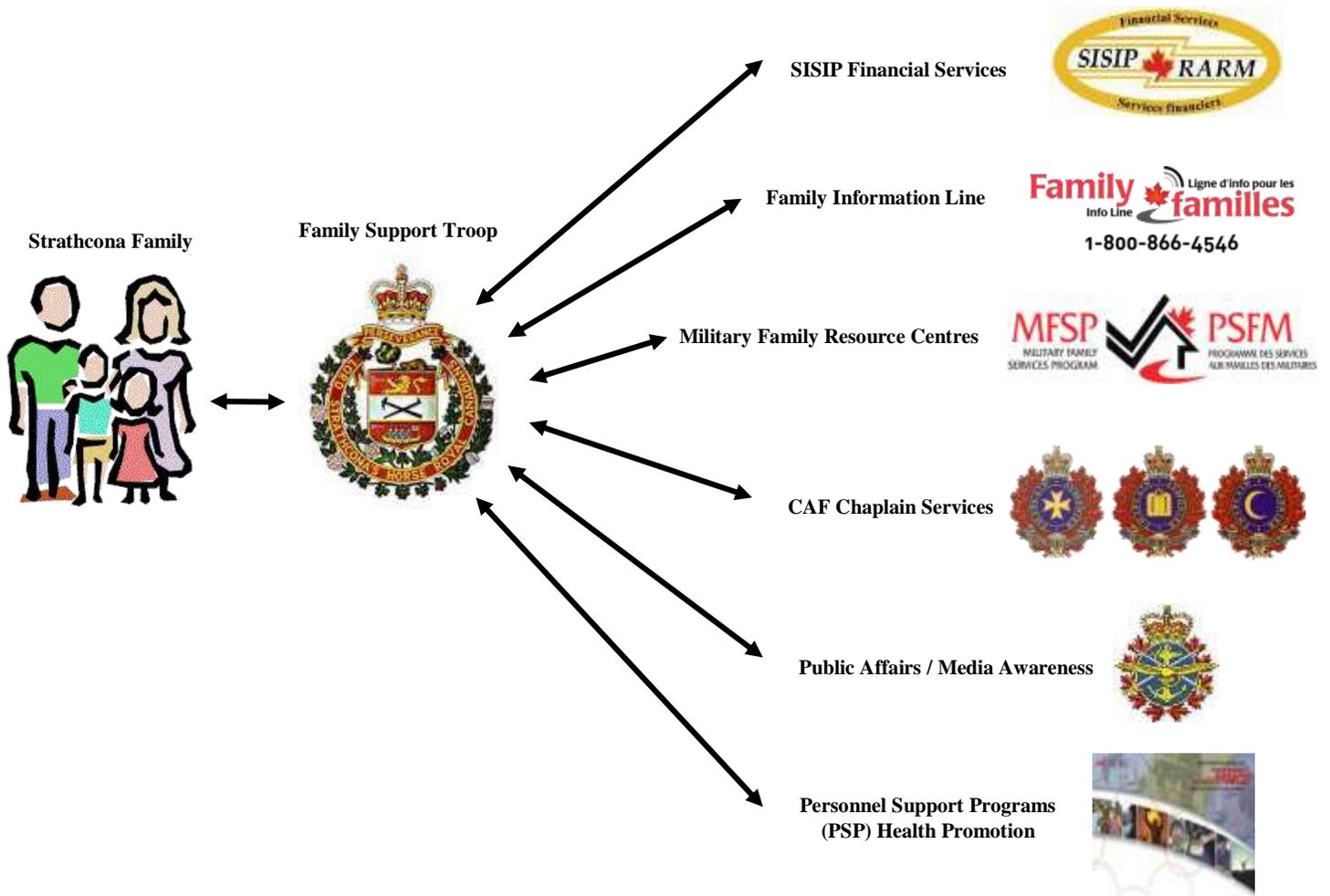


TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>SECTION</i>	<i>PAGE</i>
CHAPTER 1 - STRATHCONA FAMILY SUPPORT TROOP (FST)	
How to contact FST	8
General Information	8-9
CHAPTER 2 - COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATIONS TO AND FROM THE THEATRE OF OPERATIONS	
Situations that Originate with the Member's Family/Friends in Canada	10
Situations that Originate with the Service Member Deployed	10-11
Social Media and the Soldier	11-12
CHAPTER 3 - FAMILY MATTERS	
Money Matters	13-14
Pay Allotments	13
Access to Civilian Bank Accounts	13
Access to Military Pay Accounts	13
Special Pay and Allowances	13-14
Operations Foreign Service Premium (OPS FSP)	13
Hardship Allowance (HA)	14
Hardship Allowance Bonus (HA Bonus)	14
Risk Allowance (RA)	14
Legal Matters	15-17
Common Law Relationships	15
Power of Attorney	15
Biological Testament	16
Delegation of Guardianship	16
Authorization for Children to Travel Abroad	16
Wills	17
Insurance Matters	17-19
Provincial Health Care Coverage	17
Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP)	17
Completing a PSHCP Claim	18
Dependent's Dental Care Plan	18
Completing a Dental Care Plan Claim	18
Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and The Pension Act	19
Canadian Forces Group Insurance Plan (SISIP)	19
House Matters	19
Snow Removal and Grass Cutting	19

Homeowner Maintenance	19
PMQ Maintenance	19
Home Insurance and Municipal Taxes	19
Car Matters	20
Maintenance	20
Emergency Roadside Assistance	20
Insurance	20
Driver's License and Plates	20
Security Matters	20-23
Residential	20-21
Travel	22
Babysitters	22
Miscellaneous	23
CHAPTER 4 - DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT GROUPS	
Family and Friends	24
Spousal Committees	24
Military Family Resource Center (MFRC)	24
Family Information Line (FIL)	24
Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP)	24
Personnel Support Programs (PSP)	24-25
The Canadian Armed Forces Chaplain Branch	25
CHAPTER 5 - MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE (MFRC)	
Introduction	26
Programs and Services	26
Deployment Services	26
Ongoing MFRC Programs and Services	26-28
Child & Youth Programs	26-27
Adult Education Programs	27
Information and Referral Program	27
Employment Assistance Program	27-28
Prevention Support and Intervention	28
Volunteer Program	28
Emergency Childcare Service	28
Emergency Respite Childcare Service	28
CHAPTER 6 - FAMILY INFORMATION LINE (FIL)	
General	29

Contact Info	29
CHAPTER 7 - SERVICE INCOME SECURITY INSURANCE PLAN (SISIP)	
Disability Insurance	30
Financial Planning	30
Financial Counselling	30-31
CHAPTER 8 - PERSONNEL SUPPORT PROGRAMS (PSP)	
Services Provided	32
Contact Info	32
CHAPTER 9 - THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES CHAPLAIN BRANCH	
What is a Chaplain	33
The Duties of a Chaplain	33-34
CHAPTER 10 - PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS	
Mail	35-37
Sending Mail To Theatre	35
Mail Regulations	36
Measurements	36
Addressing Parcels	36
Sending Mail From Theatre	36
Mail Suggestions	36-37
Telephone Calls	37
E-Mail and Faxes	37
Media Issues	37-38
CHAPTER 11 - LIVING WITH SEPARATION	
Stress	39
Pre-Deployment	39-40
Deployment	40
Post-Deployment	40-41
CHAPTER 12 - SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY	
General	42
Pre-Deployment	42-43
Deployment	44-47
Post-Deployment	47-48
CHAPTER 13 - THINGS TO DO CHECKLIST	
	49

CHAPTER 1: STRATHCONA FAMILY SUPPORT TROOP (FST)

1. How to contact FST:
 - a. **For all emergencies or after hours.** For all emergencies or for outside of regular working hours, around the clock support is available by calling the LdSH(RC) duty center at **(780) 973-4011, ext 3018;** and
 - b. **Office Hours.** Staff operate in the office during regular working hours Monday to Friday between 0800-1600hrs. For support during regular hours please call **(780) 973-4011, ext 3040;** and
2. The Regiment recognised that the separations due to deployments and tasks could be difficult on the families of its members. In response, it established the Family Support Troop (FST) to help alleviate some of these difficulties, and foster a greater Regimental Family spirit. Family Support Troop's primary role is to act as the link between the families and the Regiment when a soldier is away for more than 28 days. Thus, when information from the Regiment needs to be passed on to the families, such as important dates, Regimental activities, and special events, FST will inform the families through numerous means, from newsletters to routine phone calls. Families as well, can and should inform the Regiment through FST, of issues needing urgent attention when members are away, as the Regiment will try to help resolve these issues if possible. FST again acts as the conduit, as it has the full support of the Chain of Command of the Regiment and thus has access to it to pass along any issues so they can be addressed in a timely manner. All information will be passed only on a need to know basis, and is held in strict confidentiality.
3. In addition to its primary responsibility as the line of communication between the Regiment and families, FST also plans and organizes activities for the families of deployed members, from movie nights at a local theatre, to excursions to popular family locations around the City of Edmonton, such as the West Edmonton Mall Water Park. All these events are at no charge to the families, the funds being covered through donations made to the Regiment in support of its families. Families are encouraged to attend these events, as they are an excellent opportunity to interact with other families in similar situations and enjoy an event at no cost to themselves. Families will be informed of these events as part of the monthly newsletters and phone calls; as well, they will be posted on the Regimental website.
4. FST works in conjunction with the DSG and the MFRC in support of the families. Together they form the overall support network for the families of the deployed members. While the DSG and MFRC mandates are to cover the entirety of a deploying group, FST is regimentally centered, focusing solely on the families of members and those attached to the unit. This working relationship allows FST to focus on building a more personal relationship with the families in its care, while having access to the resources that the DSG and MFRC both possess. The three organizations work together to ensure that the support requirements of the deployed members' families are met.
5. While FST strives to ensure that the families receive support they need, there are limitations to the support it can provide. Some examples of what FST is not authorized due to liability issues:
 - a. Mowing lawns;
 - b. Snow removal;

- c. Moving household good & effects;
 - d. Routine childcare services; and
 - e. Other routine household maintenance.
6. It is extremely important that a family care plan be established prior to a member's deployment, to cover all foreseen household maintenance issues and childcare issues. In emergencies, FST will help coordinate resources to provide support in these instances.

CHAPTER 2: COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATIONS TO AND FROM THE THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

1. Situations that Originate with the Member's Family/friends in Canada
 - a. In an emergency event where you need to contact a deployed member, you are to contact our Regimental Duty Center at (780) 973-4011 ext. 3018.
 - b. Once contact has been made, the duty staff will inform the Chain of Command and brief the unit/member on the situation and/or arrange for him/her to call home;
 - c. Any action taken by the duty center will be noted and relayed back to the individual who raised the concern via a follow up call. This will include:
 - (1) Who was contacted and when;
 - (2) When the deployed service member was informed;
 - (3) What action was taken; and
 - (4) Any dates and times which are significant.
 - d. This process is confidential in nature and only those personnel directly involved will be kept informed of the situation as it is resolved.
2. Situations that Originate with the Service Member who is Deployed
 - a. In the event that an incident occurs which involves a deployed Canadian soldier, the Unit will contact the Next Of Kin (NOK) as quickly as possible and with as much information as is known at that time; and
 - b. No information will be released to anyone for any reason until after the NOK is informed. For this reason, **if you are going to be away from the address provided on the soldier's NOK form for more than 24 hours, it is vital that you let the FST know your temporary address and telephone number. Simply call (780) 973-4011 ext 3040;** and
 - c. Once the NOK has been fully informed of the situation, a summary of the events that transpired (i.e. flights home) will be sent to the FST, the Mission Information Line, and the Regimental Chain of Command in order to ensure the member and family is properly taken care of.
3. Social Media and the Soldier
 - a. Social Media continues to grow in popularity: *Facebook, Twitter, Google+, MySpace*, just to name a few. Although an online life is a quick and easy way to stay in touch with friends, loved ones and family no matter where in the world they are, unfortunately it is also a very easy way to cause problems for those same people. Not everyone online is there for fun, work or relaxation – many

people prowl the internet with the hopes of finding information that might otherwise be impossible to find offline;

- b. How does this affect our soldiers and their family? Things as simple as a photograph from your loved one overseas posted to *Facebook* might be enough for someone looking to harm the Canadian Forces or to locate where your soldier is. Worse yet, if there is something that is classified (equipment, locations, personnel, ect) found online then this information can easily fall into the wrong hands. Additionally, people looking to harm your family specifically can easily access information online, which may have been impossible to find in a non-digital age. You never know who is able to look at what you write;
- c. You can never really know who is looking at your pictures;
- d. What can you do to protect yourself? To start, be sure you know and trust the people who you share pictures and information with online. In a world where video and Social Media games often pair two complete strangers you have to be completely certain that your new “friends” are trustworthy. If you don’t or can’t trust them there are ways to ensure your pictures, posts and other online interactions are kept private;
- e. Many programs such as *Twitter* and *MySpace* allow you to hide your profile from wandering eyes, or from unwanted guests. Most of the time these are found in the privacy settings of the program itself and can easily be accessed. For example, *Facebook* has an easy to use setting in the upper right corner of your screen:
 - (1) Click the arrow beside your name and you’ll see a drop down menu, with the option of selecting “Privacy Settings”;
 - (2) Clicking on this will bring you to a page which lays out exactly what kind of settings you can use to keep your profile more private and safe to use. There’s even a custom option which allows you to select EXACTLY who can look at you; and
 - (3) A recommended default for spouses, girl/boyfriends of soldiers is “Friends”, which means that people can’t simply come across your profile and see what you post. They have to be someone you’ve accepted as a friend.
- f. Be warned; however, many programs online have very lax security settings when first activated or set-up. **You may not be protected by default;** and
- g. Social Media can be a fun and easy way to keep in touch with people no matter where they are in the world, but in an operational world we as members, friends and family members of the Canadian Forces soldiers we need to be mindful that not everyone is out to make friends. Being careful online can directly help keep our soldiers safe!

CHAPTER 3: FAMILY MATTERS

1. The deployment of a family member overseas is something that needs to be carefully planned for in advance. This will ensure that the member's family is able to sustain itself during his/her absence. We strongly recommend that you consider the following:

- a. Money Matters

- (1) Pay Allotments. All members who will participate in a deployment should have already taken steps to set-up predetermined pay to their normal bank account in Canada. This will be deposited to the account on the 15th and last day of each month. This is typically conducted by the deploying member during their pre-deployment preparations;
- (2) Access to Civilian Bank Accounts. If the deploying member wishes a specific individual to have access to his/her civilian bank account(s) during their absence, it is essential that the service member complete a Power of Attorney prior to departing Canada. This is important as banks will insist upon seeing the Power of Attorney before allowing anyone else to access that account. Some banks insist that their own forms be used – please check with your own financial institution. Arranging to issue a Power of Attorney once the member has deployed is extremely difficult. **A Power of Attorney is not required for a spouse or family member to access any joint bank account(s) that they hold in both names;**
- (3) Access to Military Pay Accounts. For a spouse or family member to be able to access the deploying member's military pay account in Canada, it is necessary that the member complete a Power of Attorney prior to deployment. Details on how to complete a Power of Attorney are explained in Chapter 3, page 9. Please understand that, like civilian banks, without the service member's Power of Attorney authorizing access, military pay clerks cannot provide information or make changes to a service member's pay account. Arranging for Power of Attorney is typically conducted by the deploying unit during the pre-deployment phase;
- (4) Special Pay and Allowances. During deployments, all members will receive extra pay and allowances as described below. The actual dollar value of each depends on the mission, and will be given to the member before deploying:
 - (a) Operations Foreign Service Premium (OPS FSP). OPS FSP is paid as an incentive to serve outside Canada and recognizes previous service outside Canada. OPS FSP is a non-taxable benefit that becomes effective the day you leave. OPS FSP continues to be paid during periods of paid leave. You receive one point for every month you served outside Canada while posted or attached posted. For the most up-to-date information on this pay incentive, please refer to the graph at:

<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras/pub/cbi-dra/doc/10-03.pdf>

- (b) Hardship Allowance (HA). The intent of the HA is to compensate for the living conditions existing at a specific post. There are seven levels of HA, from Level Zero (no difference from a typical base standard) to Level Six (very austere). The Chief of the Defence Staff approves the HA level for the post upon recommendation by the Departmental Hardship and Risk

Committee. Once established, the HA Level is reviewed on a semi-annual basis or as required for each operation:

HARDSHIP ALLOWANCE							
Level	0	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Percentage	0	10	20	30	40	50	60

INDEMNITÉ DE DIFFICULTÉ							
Niveau	0	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Pourcentage	0	10	20	30	40	50	60

- (c) Hardship Allowance Bonus (HA Bonus). The intent of the HA Bonus is to compensate a member for repeated deployments. The HA Bonus level to which a member is entitled is based on points accumulated for service on operations, and a can be found at the following link:

<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras/pub/cbi-dra/doc/10-03.pdf>

The HA Bonus is only granted to service members who are deployed within designated Areas of Operation. Service members deployed elsewhere in support of the operation are not entitled to this premium; and

- (d) Risk Allowance (RA). The intent of the RA is to compensate for the risks associated with a specific deployment. There are five levels of RA, from Level Zero to Level Four. The Chief of the Defence Staff approves the RA level upon recommendation by the Departmental Hardship and Risk Committee. Once established, the RA level is reviewed on a semi-annual basis or as required for each operation:

RISK ALLOWANCE					
Level	0	I	II	III	IV
Percentage	0	10	20	30	40

INDEMNITÉ DE RISQUE					
Niveau	0	I	II	III	IV
Pourcentage	0	10	20	30	40

- (5) These allowances are non-taxable and are credited to the member's military pay account that is administered by the Military Pay Sections in theatre. It should be noted that these allowances might not be included in any pay assignment set-up at the member's bank account in Canada. Individual members in theatre can make withdrawals from their pay account whenever they wish, and whatever balance has accumulated in this account is credited back to the soldiers regular pay account in Canada once the soldier has returned from the tour.

b. Legal Matters

- (1) Common Law Relationships. If you live with the deploying member in a conjugal relationship, you are not common-law unless your partner has submitted a Statutory Declaration to their unit. No extra benefits or allowances allotted to common-law/married partners will be given unless

the appropriate forms are completed. If both of you have the intention of engaging in a common-law relationship, ensure your partner obtains the appropriate documents prior to their departure;

- (2) Power of Attorney. The Power of Attorney form is a legal document, which gives a person (usually the spouse) permission to conduct business or personal affairs on behalf of another (usually the soldier). It is generally used in situations where the signature of the second person is required to legalize a transaction (For example: Depositing or withdrawing money from the second person's bank account; renewing a vehicle license or registration; or even something as major as buying or selling houses). The Power of Attorney document can either list specific responsibilities (such as "home insurance", "car registration", etc), or give a general authority (such as "all financial matters"). It is for the two Parties concerned to determine the wording of the document. The Power of Attorney document does not have to be completed with the assistance of a lawyer, but it is recommended. If you have Power of Attorney and you are completing a transaction where you are signing for the soldier, you must have the original document with you to prove that you have been given legal permission to conduct the transaction. A photocopy of the Power of Attorney document will most likely be taken, to be attached to whatever paperwork is being done, but you **MUST** ensure that you get the **ORIGINAL** back because you'll need that document for the next transaction. Power of Attorney is a powerful document and therefore the key word is trust. The Deputy Judge Advocates (DJA) at major Canadian Forces Bases will provide a briefing to deploying members on how to prepare this document. At other times a civilian lawyer can be contacted to provide any further information or to prepare one;

(a) Notes

- i. Some banks require a separate Power of Attorney (or other documentation) to permit one person to conduct financial transactions on behalf of a second person;
 - ii. Some Provinces and Territories do not recognize a Power of Attorney prepared outside of their jurisdiction. Any member having property or other assets outside of the Province or Territory where they reside or where the Power of Attorney is being prepared should consult their civilian lawyer; and
 - iii. A Power of Attorney is not a Will. All Powers of Attorney that a person may have are automatically cancelled at the instance that the person dies.
- (3) Biological Testament. This document is similar to a Power of Attorney except that it deals only with medical issues in the event that you are unable or incapable of making a decision for yourself. You should consult a civilian lawyer if you wish to have a Biological Testament prepared;

- (4) Delegation of Guardianship. This document allows the person(s) you designate to exercise temporary legal guardianship over your children or dependants. Both parents must sign the document. The nearest DJA can provide free advice and assistance to help you to prepare this document. It is important for the guardian to know information such as Medicare numbers, family doctor contact information, allergy information, etc. A true example of where this document was essential is described below:
- (a) A couple decided to take advantage of the Leave Travel Allowance program and meet in Europe for a holiday. Their children were dropped off with the Grandparents. Halfway through the holiday, the couple received a frantic call from the Grandparents saying that one of the children had taken ill and was in the hospital. The illness, although serious, was not immediately life threatening. The hospital refused to treat the child until a legal guardian had authorized it. The Grandparents were not legal guardians of the child because the parents had not delegated temporary guardianship while they were both away in Europe. The parents' holiday was cut short, and they incurred large expenses, when the spouse of the service member had to immediately fly back to Canada in order to authorize treatment. Happily, their child recovered fully.
- (5) Authorization for Children to Travel Abroad. Certain countries have very strict anti-child abduction laws and require that a parent entering their country present a document signed by both parents saying that the children are authorized to travel with only one. This document is required in addition to Passports and Visas. The nearest DJA can provide free advice and assistance to help you to prepare this document. A true example of where this document was essential is described below:
- (a) A spouse of a service member deployed overseas had booked a package holiday to *Disney World* in Florida with her children. The US Customs Dept refused her entry into the United States of America because she did not have an 'Authorization for Children to Travel Abroad'. The spouse had a valid Canadian Passport and her children were on it. The authorization was eventually obtained by fax from the service member overseas, but the family lost two days of their vacation and had to pay for new outward-bound airline tickets.
- (6) Wills. Everyone should have an up-to-date will. The Canadian Forces Will may be adequate for the young, single soldier, but for one who has a family or an estate, which includes property and/or investments, this simple document may not be what you require. In these latter cases we strongly advise that you have a private lawyer assist in the preparation of your Will. A spouse should also have a Will, in the event that he or she

dies before or at the same time as the soldier. In a will, mention should be made of the appointment of a trustee or executor of the estate, and a guardian to care for the children should both parents die at the same time. If these questions are not dealt with (or if one or both parents does not have an adequate will), there could be lengthy delays in settling the probate of the estate and/or the children could become wards of the Province until custody issues are resolved. Additional costs incurred in settling these issues could be taken from your estate, thereby reducing what is left to help care for the children. Copies of a soldier's civilian will should be held on his personnel file at the unit, in order to assist in a speedy settlement should a tragedy occur.

c. Insurance Matters

- (1) Provincial Health Care Coverage. Military members are not given Provincial Health Cards; instead they are issued their own Military Health Card, which entitles them to medical benefits and treatment. Upon posting to a new province spouses and family of Military members should seek a Provincial Health card as well as a PSHCP number (see below) for treatment;
- (2) Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP). A PSHCP (formerly GSMIP) provides additional medical coverage for a family, and is related to items and services not covered by the Provincial Health Plans. If you are not familiar with the PSHCP, the easiest means to obtain information on this topic is to contact them at 1-888-757-7427. You can only obtain a PSHCP card if you are in a common-law relationship or married. In order to be covered, your spouse must:
 - (a) Go to your family members Squadron Orderly Room and inform the clerk of his/her intentions;
 - (b) Set-up the insurance policy at work;
 - (c) Have your spouse go to the PSHCP website (<http://www.sunlife.ca>) and fill out the information required to have the cards sent to your home. Each family member should receive one with their name on it. He/she will need to know their Group and Certificate # before visiting the website PSHCP. If there are any problems, the member can simply call the above listed number and Sun Life employees are more than helpful in ensuring that the requisite information is filled out;
 - (d) The Sun Life card will allow you to immediately have the spousal benefits deducted without having to send in. If you choose not to apply for the PSHCP card, you will be required to fill out and submit a claim for any/all medical expenses. If you choose to take this route, than it is highly recommended you obtain Power of Attorney and ensure a copy of it is attached to each claim; and

- (e) If the soldier and spouse decide against using a Power of Attorney and acquiring a Sun Life card, there is one last option. The soldier can write a letter to PSHCP, which authorizes them to make the cheque (for the one claim only) payable to the spouse. An original letter, signed by the soldier, must be sent with each claim; so it is recommended that the soldier write out several of these before leaving.

- (3) Completing A PSHCP Claim. Claims may be submitted at any time during a calendar year. Claims must be received no later than six months after the end of the year in which the expenses occurred. The Administrator has no obligation to recognize claims received beyond the six months, however claims may be submitted for a longer period of time if the Administrator is satisfied that the delay was unavoidable. For your convenience, several copies of the PSHCP claim form can be found at the back of this manual. If you experience difficulties filling out the form, you can contact Sun Life at 1-888-757-7427, and they can easily provide you with assistance;

- (4) Dependent's Dental Care Plan. Dependants of Regular Force personnel and Reservists on Class C service are automatically covered, provided that the Marriage Certificate or Common-Law Declaration, and the Birth Certificates of the children have been registered and placed on the soldier's personnel file. This is a very comprehensive plan, and it is to your benefit to become familiar with what is claimable and what is non-claimable dental work;
 - (a) You can obtain a Dental Care Plan Guide book by contacting the DSG or FST, or simply visiting the following web page:
 - i. <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dgcb-dgras> (Enter in your language of preference and select the "Programs and Services" link found at the left side of the screen).

 - (b) Although automatically covered with our dental plan, there are a few preliminary steps you must take to ensure that you receive the proper benefits:
 - i. Find a dentist that accepts the military insurance plan (Great West Life). Most (if not all) do, so this should not be difficult;

 - ii. Fill out the dental insurance form found at the back of the manual. The instructions are on the right side of the page. Your dentist will fill out Part 1 and your spouse must fill out Part 2;

 - iii. Take the document to your dentist on your first visit. They will enter you into their system and will always charge you in accordance with your benefits package; and

iv. Know what your benefits are! **Visit the link listed above and make sure you are covered.**

- (5) The Canadian Forces Superannuation Act and The Pension Act. The CF Superannuation Act and The Pension Act both provide benefits to the Regular Force or Reserve members on Class C service or to their beneficiaries if a service member is disabled or killed while in service. If you or your spouse would like to know more, the deploying member can visit their squadron orderly room and obtain the information from the clerks; and
- (6) The Canadian Forces Group Insurance Plan (SISIP). SISIP offers disability, survivor income, optional group term insurance, dependant life insurance and coverage after release to both Regular Force and Reserve members. It is suggested that members review their insurance coverage prior to deploying. Further information and advice on SISIP can be obtained from your local SISIP representative.
- d. House Matters. Deployments can occur at the last-minute; therefore a great deal of work may need to be done around the family home. Many problems for the family at home can be easily avoided by putting arrangements into place prior to your departure:
- (1) Snow Removal and Grass Cutting. It is suggested that you consider arranging snow removal and/or lawn maintenance contracts for the duration of a tour if it is reasonable to assume that your family will not be in a position to do this work. The DSG and FST can provide guidance in finding lawn care, snow removal and other maintenance services. Additionally you can contact MFRC Youth Outreach at (780) 973-4011, ext 6324;
- (2) Homeowner Maintenance. It is suggested that the family make arrangements for both routine and emergency maintenance of your home heating, plumbing and electrical systems during the winter months;
- (3) PMQ Maintenance. For any issues regarding PMQ maintenance during regular working hours, you can contact (780) 973-4011, ext 4342, 4338, or 6367. For after-hour emergencies, you can call 1-800-903-2342; and
- (4) Home Insurance and Municipal Taxes. All families, be they homeowners or PMQ residents, are strongly advised to have home insurance. Prior to departure, make sure to renew the insurance, if applicable and to arrange to pay any municipal taxes that will become due during your deployment.
- e. Car Matters. Personal vehicles are often the cause of worry. It is crucial that those who drive, but have limited mechanical skills obtain as much information as possible on this subject.
- (1) Maintenance. It is best to find a reliable garage or service centre that you trust and stick with them. It is important to comply to the terms of your car warranty, if it is still applicable. The owner's manual is the ideal

source of information. You should familiarize yourself with the following routine maintenance checks on your car:

- (a) How to check and top up fluid levels under the hood such as engine oil, transmission oil, power steering fluid, engine coolant, brake fluid, battery acid, washer fluid, etc;
 - (b) How to tell if the brakes are worn/require maintenance (squeaking noises, uneven braking, brake fading, etc); and
 - (c) How to check and adjust tire pressure regularly.
- (2) Emergency Roadside Assistance. Consider joining a club that will provide you with 24-hour roadside assistance, like the *Canadian Automobile Association*. The cost is not excessive and it provides you with a number of services (boosting your car, towing, unlocking doors if you accidentally lock your keys in the car, etc) at either no extra charge or nominal cost;
- (3) Insurance. The date for insurance renewal may occur during your deployment. Make sure to discuss with your spouse the procedure for renewing the insurance; and
- (4) Driver's License and Plates. If your driver's licence or plates will expire during your deployment you should consider either renewing them prior to your departure or leaving a specific Power of Attorney with your spouse or relative for this purpose.
- f. Security Matters. With your family member deployed overseas, you may be travelling by yourself more often. The following are some common-sense tips to aid in your well-being:
- (1) Residential
 - (a) House
 - i. If you go away on a trip, leave a key with a friend or neighbour so the mail can be picked up and the contents checked on a regular basis;
 - ii. Make arrangements for someone to mow the lawn or shovel snow; and
 - iii. Most home insurance policies require that your home be regularly checked (i.e. every 48-hours) in order to maintain your policy, so plan ahead.
 - (b) Apartment
 - i. Never buzz anyone into the building you do not know;

- ii. Do not put anything valuable in downstairs storage areas;
- iii. Go to the laundry area during the day, when you know there will be someone else you know around; and
- iv. Don't go to the garage area alone if you can avoid it. If you must, be alert and have your keys ready.

(c) House or apartment

- i. If you've just moved into a new residence, get the locks changed or re-tumbled;
- ii. Lock all your outside doors. If you have screen, storm, or patio doors, make a habit of locking them too. Keep your doors locked during the daytime as well, and don't forget to close and lock the windows when you leave;
- iii. Do not leave notes on the door, such as "back in 30-minutes" if you are expecting a friend to come by;
- iv. Do not open your door to a stranger;
- v. Leave some lights on at night;
- vi. If an unexpected visitor needs assistance, offer to make a phone call for them, but do not let them inside;
- vii. If it is a delivery and you have doubts, you can ask for ID or ask them to leave the parcel on the doorstep in front of the door and not retrieve it until they are gone;
- viii. Try not to go out walking alone at night. If you must, plan your route and travel in well-lit areas. Steer clear of bushes and shrubs and stay alert. You may wish to carry a whistle in case of emergencies; and
- ix. Try to have visitors. In addition to keeping you company, they will help with security simply by being with you.

(2) Travel

- (a) Don't forget to stop delivery of your newspaper and the mail. An overflowing mailbox can signal there is nobody home;
- (b) At a modest cost (\$15.00 or less), well-placed automatic switches give the impression that there is someone home by turning the lights on and off at irregular times;

- (c) Arrange for a friend or neighbour you trust to be able to enter your home to inspect it from time to time;
 - (d) Make sure that your car is in good working order, and try to always have at least ¼ tank of gas;
 - (e) When driving alone, make sure that ALL the doors are locked and the windows are up far so that no one may reach in through one. Many motorists are victimized by people who jump into cars at traffic lights or stop signs. If someone tries to get into your car in this manner, sound the horn to attract attention;
 - (f) If your car becomes disabled at night while you're on a trip, raise the hood or tie a white cloth to the driver's door handle. Get back into the car, lock the doors, and roll up the windows. When someone stops, ask him or her to go for help but do **NOT** let them into your car;
 - (g) If you see a disabled car, continue on and stop at a garage or a well-lit phone and get help; and
 - (h) **NEVER** pick up hitch-hikers.
- (3) Baby Sitters. If at all possible, hire only those who have completed a certified course. The MFRC manages a list of qualified sitters. They can be contacted at (780) 973-4011, ext 6300. Ensure the sitter has:
- (a) A list of emergency contact numbers;
 - (b) Instructions on how to reach you;
 - (c) The phone number of a neighbour who can help if required;
 - (d) Watch your child(ren)'s reaction to the sitter. Do not re-hire a sitter with whom the child(ren) clearly cannot get along with - in an emergency, the child(ren)'s life may depend on how quickly they respond to the sitters instructions; and
 - (e) Ensure that your home is "child-proof". All medicines, cleaning supplies and other hazardous or poisonous materials should be locked up or placed out of reach.
- (4) Miscellaneous
- (a) If you advertise in the newspaper, do not put your address in the ad. When prospective buyers call, give them the details, price, etc and if they are still interested, ask for their name and phone number and say you will call them back - don't give out your address yet! Check out their names in the phone book to ensure that everything is OK; and

- (b) It's not a good idea to tell someone you don't know (or don't know well) that your spouse is away. It's very tempting to tell a pushy salesperson over the phone: "My spouse is away and will be back in April, call back then..." but you have no way of determining the legitimacy of the call. A simple "NO," and then hanging up is the most effective way of getting rid of them. A similar approach to pushy sales staff in a store also works: "NO", and walk away.

CHAPTER 4: DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT GROUPS

1. FST acts as a liaison between the soldier and his/her family, and various support organizations. Below is a list of some of the resources available:
 - a. Family and Friends. First and foremost is the family and friends of the deployed member. Experience and common sense have shown us that the best support group is your own family and close friends. These are the people who are there for you when you need help, a sympathetic ear or a break from the added responsibilities of single-handed parenthood;
 - b. Spousal Committees. The *Strathcona Ladies* hold a monthly social evening participating in a variety of events such as BBQs, wine tasting, game nights, sending packages to our deployed members (Taste of Home) and more. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet and talk to other spouses who have experience from their loved one's deployments. The CO's secretary, Mrs. Kathy Batty, is the organizer of these events. If you would like more information on the Strathcona Ladies, or if you would like to be kept apprised of upcoming events, please send an email to Kathy Batty (km.batty@gmail.com) and she will add you to the email distribution list. Alternatively you can join our closed Facebook Group, just search for 'Strathcona Ladies';
 - c. Military Family Resource Center (MFRC). MFRCs are non-profit organizations, which exists to create and promote conditions that enhance and support the values, strengths and personal resources of the military family. They provide information, services, programs and activities specific to the military community. During deployments, local MFRCs will assist unit support organizations as required. Details on the services and programs offered by the CFB Edmonton MFRC are contained in Chapter 5. Other MFRCs across Canada offer similar services and programs;
 - d. Family Information Line (FIL). The Family Information Line counselors are experienced, caring professionals familiar with Canadian Armed Forces policies and operating procedures. Further details on the services and programs offered are contained in Chapter 6;
 - e. Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP). An integral part of the Department of National Defense, through the Canadian Forces Personnel and Family Support Services, SISIP has been the CF delivery arm for term life and long term disability insurance and vocational rehabilitation. SISIP also provides other products and services such as financial planning, financial counseling (which includes access to loans and grants from the Canadian Forces Personnel Assistance Fund) and Financial Education. Further details on the services and programs offered are contained in Chapter 7;
 - f. Personnel Support Programs (PSP). PSP provides physical and mental strengthening programs for military members and their families. Further details on the services and programs offered are contained in Chapter 8; and
 - g. The Canadian Armed Forces Chaplain Branch. The primary function of the Chaplain is "To provide spiritual, religious, moral, and ethical support to the Canadian Armed Forces and their families at all times and under all

circumstances, irrespective of religious belief and practice”. Further details on the services and programs offered are contained in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 5: MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE (MFRC)

During Regular Working Hours: **(780) 973-4011, ext 6300**

<http://www.familyforce.ca/sites/Edmonton/EN/Pages/default.aspx>

1. Introduction

- a. The Edmonton Garrison MFRC is a non-profit charitable organization that exists to foster and support individual, family and community well-being by providing services and supports to address the uniqueness of our military families. The Edmonton MFRC will work very closely with the Deployment Support Group and unit rear party to ensure that the full range of their expertise is available to support your requirements. The staff of the MFRC consists of trained experts who are responsible to co-ordinate and act as facilitators for a wide variety of programmes and activities. If you do not live in the Edmonton area or the surrounding communities we serve, please contact your local MFRC (Contact information in back of this book), which will offer similar programs and services.

2. Programs and Services

- a. Deployment Services. The MFRC deployment program provides resources, programs and support to CF families prior to, during and after a deployment. If you are, looking for a service not listed please contact the Resource Centre and we will make every effort to make it available to you. Deployment Services include:
 - (1) Resources and up-to-date mission/deployment information for children and adults;
 - (2) Assistance during family-related difficulties;
 - (3) Drop-in Centre for families;
 - (4) Special events and activities for adults and families (i.e. social events, regular informal gatherings etc);
 - (5) Family and reunification briefings;
 - (6) Deployment related workshops;
 - (7) Deployment child care; and
 - (8) The “Warm Line” phone service (a confidential, informal phone support network which keeps families informed of upcoming activities, community resources and provides an empathic ear if needed).

3. Ongoing MFRC Programs and Services

- a. Child and Youth Programs
 - (1) Playgroups;

- (2) Parent/Tot Programs;
 - (3) Infant to Teen Workshops;
 - (4) Pre-Teen Programs;
 - (5) Casual Child Care,
 - (6) Children's Programs;
 - (7) Teen Zone; and
 - (8) Outreach Programs.
- a. Adult Education Programs
- (1) Adult Programs and Workshops;
 - (2) Self Care & Self Improvement Workshops; and
 - (3) Craft workshops.
- b. Information and Referral Program
- (1) Information on the services available to the community;
 - (2) Referral to local services and agencies;
 - (3) Documentation on existing resources;
 - (4) Education on posting service;
 - (5) Tourism information;
 - (6) Information on resources for special needs;
 - (7) Resource Library; and
 - (8) Outreach to newcomers.
- c. Employment Assistance Program
- (1) Job Search and Interviewing Skills;
 - (2) Career Coaching/profile and Planning;
 - (3) Up-to-Date Job Posting Board;
 - (4) Assistance with resume writing and cover letters;
 - (5) Career Resource Library;

- (6) Home-Based Business Information; and
 - (7) Work Transition.
- d. Prevention Support and Intervention
- (1) Short term counselling (individual or family);
 - (2) Prevention Programs;
 - (3) Crisis Intervention;
 - (4) Resource Library; and
 - (5) Parenting Programs.
- e. Volunteer Program
- (1) Youth and Adult Volunteering;
 - (2) Placements designed for individual interests and talents;
 - (3) On-the-Job training (Develop new or existing skills);
 - (4) Gain experience to enhance your resume;
 - (5) Professional development courses and workshops;
 - (6) Volunteer Recognition Activities; and
 - (7) Help make a Difference – Join the Team!
- f. Emergency Childcare Service. The emergency childcare service provides timely, affordable and regulated childcare for CF members and their families in time of emergency. Funding of emergency childcare is available for up to 72-hours. Contact Jana Stirling at (780) 973-4011, ext 6314 during working hours. If outside working hours, dial (780) 973-4011, wait for operator, and ask for the Duty Padre; and
- g. Emergency Respite Childcare Service. Is available to CF families when it has been determined that a period of respite is absolutely essential for the family's continued health and well-being, (i.e. critical to the mental health of the child or caregiver). Contact Kid's Cottage at (780) 944-2888 or visit their website at <http://www.kidskottage.org/>.

CHAPTER 6: FAMILY INFORMATION LINE (FIL)

1. FIL offers bilingual and confidential service for all Canadian Forces families and members. The following services are offered:
 - a. Counsellors available 24/7;
 - b. Collect calls accepted from anywhere in the world;
 - c. Information and referrals to national and local resources;
 - d. Supportive counseling;
 - e. Mailing overseas and return flight info;
 - f. Transmission of urgent messages; and
 - g. Any other family-related questions or concerns you may have.

2. FIL has recently launched **Family Forums** where you can post questions or comments about CAF family-related issues and other families can reply. To contact FIL:
 - a. Visit www.familyforce.ca;
 - b. Call **1-800-866-4546**; and
 - c. E-Mail **FIL@familyforce.ca**.

CHAPTER 7: SERVICE INCOME SECURITY INSURANCE PLAN (SISIP)

1. SISIP provides the following services:
 - a. Disability Insurance
 - (1) Providing medically released members with income protection;
 - (2) Long Term Disability (LTD). Medically released members are provided with replacement income to a maximum of 75% of salary in combination with other relevant sources of income and where the need exists, access to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VRP);
 - (3) Accidental Dismemberment Insurance Plan (ADIP). Offered at no cost to all Regular, Class C, and Primary Reserve members for any accidental dismemberment attributable to military service. Coverage is provided automatically;
 - (4) Term Life Insurance. Guarantees payment of claims, even if someone dies in a theatre of operations.
 - b. Financial Planning
 - (1) Wide range of investment products available and comprehensive advice;
 - (2) Tailored to realities of the CAF military lifestyle;
 - (3) Expert comprehensive advice from qualified Certified Financial Planners (CFP), who receive no commissions;
 - (4) Small monthly fee for service from \$6 to \$12, which includes a free annual basic tax return;
 - (5) Convenience of pre-authorized contributions or payroll deduction;
 - (6) Access to a wide range of investment vehicles; and
 - (7) Preferred interest rates & lower investment management fees.
 - c. Financial Counseling
 - (1) Providing advice and assistance in resolving financial difficulties;
 - (2) Personal financial assistance in budgeting and debt repayment;
 - (3) Access to Canadian Forces Personnel Assistance Fund (CFPAF) loans and grants;
 - (4) Corrective financial plans; and
 - (5) Referrals to third party professionals, if deemed appropriate.

- d. Personal Financial Management Education. Providing recruits, officer cadets and supervisors with strategies to manage personal financial affairs, and tools to help resolve financial problems.

CHAPTER 8: PERSONNEL SUPPORT PROGRAMS (PSP)

1. PSP provides the following services:
 - a. Nutritional Wellness. Weight Wellness courses designed to help participants achieve their goals by developing healthier lifestyle habits;
 - b. Social Wellness. Modules include communication skills, relaxation techniques and learning how stress affects performance; and
 - c. An education program to increase the ability to recognize the signs of drug or alcohol use/abuse issues, and learn how to appropriately deal with them.

2. For a complete listing of courses:
 - a. http://www.forces.gc.ca/health/services/health_promotion/Engraph/what_is_STF_e.asp;
 - b. <http://www.pspedmonton.com>; and
 - c. Call (780) 973-4011, ext 6146.

CHAPTER 9: THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES CHAPLAIN BRANCH

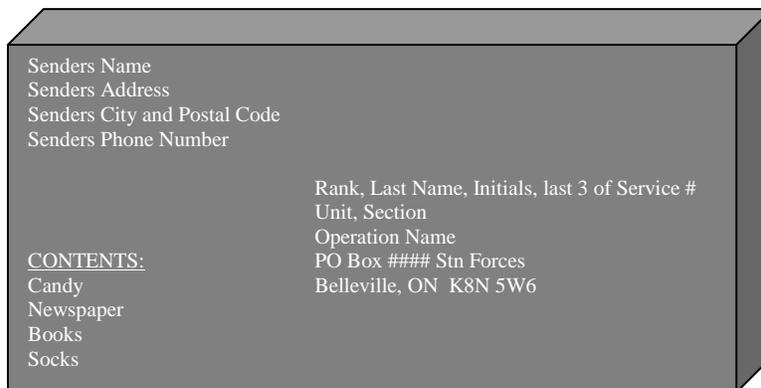
1. Contact the Strathcona Family Support Troop for access to the Strathcona Regimental Padre.
2. A Chaplain is:
 - a. Prepared to give assistance and instruction on religious subjects;
 - b. A ministry of presence who will meet with people and learn where they are in their own life;
 - c. A daily counsel to members on Emergency Contact(s) Notification and Next of Kin (NOK) Identification forms / Designation of Memorial Cross Recipients, etc.; and
 - d. An active partner in the Departure Assistant Group (DAG) process.
3. A Chaplain provides the following duties:
 - a. Upholds spiritual and moral values in the unit by providing pastoral care to members and their families;
 - b. Advises the Commanding Officer regarding morale and welfare of members and their families;
 - c. Arranges for religious practices to those of other faith traditions;
 - d. Provides a religious and spiritual ministry in accordance with his/her faith tradition including prayer, Sunday worship, baptism, marriage, ministry to the sick, funeral or memorial services;
 - e. Assists with family and marriage concerns;
 - f. Assists with grief and bereavement;
 - g. Assists during compassionate situations (i.e. illness, death, family emergencies);
 - h. Provides a “Listening Ear” non-judgmental, open- minded, and provides emotional support;
 - i. Hospital visits;
 - j. Counseling and referrals to other helping agencies;
 - k. Establishing a ministry of presence at Family Days and through DAG family communication;
 - l. Builds trusting relationships to provide care;
 - m. Assists with notifications of injury or death;

- n. Conducts or assists at funerals and memorial services;
- o. Provides follow-up for those in crisis care – injury / death and illness; and
- p. Is appointed to be with the NOK in the event of death or serious injury of a service member in order to:
 - (1) Accompany family members;
 - (2) Provide ongoing support (Pastoral / Emotional);
 - (3) Provide assistance in arranging for any religious practices desired by the family; and
 - (4) Provide a liaison between the military and any civilian religious support the family may have.

CHAPTER 10: PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Mail.** The Canadian Forces Postal System is the only way that mail can be delivered to or received from members in theatre. The addresses are different for each deployment. Ensure you have the address for the specific mission.
 - a. **Sending Mail to Theatre.** To send mail to a member in theatre you can:
 - (1) Drop off letters to any Post Office in Canada free of charge. Be advised no insurance coverage is available for this service. Despite the free services provided by Canada Post you can still drop off your letters at the Strathcona Family Support Troop Office, the Garrison Mail Room, and the Base Duty Centre (on weekends); and
 - (2) Parcels may be sent both to and from theatre through the military postal service. A parcel from theatre must have correct postage to get from Belleville, Ontario to its Canadian destination. The cost varies with the weight of the package. A Canada Customs declaration form is required with every parcel departing or entering Canada. Gifts to friends and relatives sent from theatre are admitted duty free if the value of the each gift does not exceed \$60.00 Canadian. Customs regulations permit a number of gifts in the same parcel with a total value of over \$60.00 Canadian if the gifts are being sent to more than one person. The soldier should list the value of each gift and whom it is for on the Canada Customs Declaration.
 - b. **Mail Regulations.** No articles may be sent by mail if their nature or packaging may expose postal employees to hazards, or damage the other items of mail. Mailing of the following items is strictly prohibited:
 - (1) Alcohol, Beer and Wine;
 - (2) Explosives, Radioactive Materials or Ammunition;
 - (3) Matches;
 - (4) Flammable liquids or solids;
 - (5) Compressed gas;
 - (6) Propane cigarette lighters;
 - (7) Corrosive fluids;
 - (8) Illegal or prescription drugs; and
 - (9) Perishable items.
 - c. The Customs authorities of the destination country may examine all mail and any prohibited item may be confiscated by them. Mailing such items may lead to criminal charges being laid against the sender;

- d. Measurements. The maximum permitted weight is 20 kilograms (44 pounds). The length, width or depth of the parcel must not exceed 1 metre, and the combined measurement of length plus width plus girth must not exceed 2 metres. Parcels must not exceed 1 m in length and length + width + height must not exceed 2 m;
- e. Addressing Parcels. Please put all info on the FRONT of the Parcel to include the following:
- (1) Senders Info: Name, Full Address and Phone Number;
 - (2) Recipients Info: Rank, Last Name, Initials and last 3 numbers in his/her service number; and
 - (3) Contents: An itemized list of everything inside



- f. Sending Mail From Theatre. All letters, except letters over 30 grams and all packages, will be sent free of charge from the theatre of operations to Canada. Deployed members will have to pay proper Canadian postage for letters over 30 grams or parcels when they hand these in to the military postal clerks in theatre. The postal service of the contingent will take all the steps required to forward the mail as quickly as possible to Canada;
- g. Mail Suggestions. Given the limited telephone communication facilities in Theatre, mail remains a good means of maintaining contact between the deployed member and family and friends back home. Moreover, letters can be kept and read several times, which is a great help when things are slow. The following are a few ideas when you send mail:
- (1) Number the envelope of each letter; in this way, if several letters arrive simultaneously, it will be easier for the reader to keep them in order;
 - (2) Send photographs, drawings and even newspaper clippings; and
 - (3) Have the children write.
- h. Another effective means of communication is to send the occasional CD/DVD. There are CD/DVD players at all of the Canadian camps in theatre. Memory sticks are not recommended as civilian sticks are not authorized for use in

military computers. This can be avoided if your deployed member has a personal laptop that he/she brought from home; and

- i. Care packages are always appreciated and excellent for morale. Non-perishable foodstuffs and magazines are items you may wish to include.
2. Telephone Calls. Given the status of the civilian telephone systems in theatre, it may not be possible for someone in Canada to make a long distance call directly to a civilian telephone number in theatre. The Canadian camps have military satellite telephones that can be used by soldiers to make personal calls, at no cost, to their families and friends in Canada from time to time. Please bear in mind that these satellite phones are not secure, and it is possible for someone else to deliberately or accidentally eavesdrop in on a conversation.
 3. E-Mail and Faxes. The deployed members may have internet accounts once they have deployed to theatre. The MFRC provides computers with internet access. These computers are intended to be used by the families and friends of deployed members who wish to send or receive e-mail from theatre. Please note that these elements will probably have only one internet account each, located at each camp. This system is the best that can be arranged but it is not entirely private. Users should therefore exercise discretion and not put intimate or private details into their e-mail letters. Please refrain from sending e-mails with large attachments as this will slow down the e-mail system in theatre.
 4. Media Issues. The media will no doubt take greater interest in the contingent's deployment as the departure date approaches. Newspaper, radio and television reporters will focus on the operation itself and its impact on military families. The Canadian Forces cannot control the action of the media. Families are neither obliged to speak with the media, nor are you discouraged from doing so. Should a representative of the news media contact you, however, the following is a list of points for your consideration:
 - a. If you do not wish to be interviewed, simply decline. Your privacy is important! You can direct them to the Public Affairs Officer at (780) 973-4011, ext 4139. If you do agree to participate:
 - (1) Be yourself;
 - (2) Stay within your area of expertise and experience; and
 - (3) DO NOT BLUFF! If you do not have the factual answer to a question, say so. Reporters will respect your honesty.
 - b. Depending on the type of media conducting the interview, you may be asked for:
 - (1) An on-camera interview;
 - (2) A taped or live radio interview; either in-person or by telephone; and
 - (3) An interview with a newspaper reporter; either in-person (with or without photographs), or by telephone.
 - c. In their search for the story, reporters may make initial contact with you by simply using a city directory (which lists names and occupations), or by just calling into the neighbourhood where service families are known to reside.

REMEMBER: You do NOT have to be the subject of an interview if you do not wish to be!

CHAPTER 11: LIVING WITH SEPARATION

1. Stress

- a. Research has revealed a special set of stress factors that are harmful to the well-being of CF members and their families. The worst of those factors is undoubtedly the situation of a member who must be involved in a war or go to a part of the world where violent combat is occurring. Military deployments to dangerous or unknown areas cause additional stress for the spouse left behind. Stress factors include:
 - (1) The fact that your main source of support and strength (your spouse) is absent;
 - (2) In some cases, uncertainty as to the length of deployment;
 - (3) Questions and fears regarding the seriousness of the situation and the safety of your family member;
 - (4) Lack of accurate information;
 - (5) The fact that it is difficult to establish personal contact with your family member;
 - (6) Loneliness; and
 - (7) Problems with your children's behaviour.
- b. The separation is a difficult time for the entire family. It is very demanding, both physically and emotionally, for the CF member, the spouse and the children. By identifying some of the difficulties related to the deployment of your spouse, the situation can be improved and made easier. The spouse who stays behind must not only change his/her emotional and physical behaviour, but also carry out additional tasks for the home and family.
- c. Each separation follows a cycle with 3 separate stages, namely:
 - (1) Pre-Deployment. This is the physical and emotional preparation for the departure of the member;
 - (2) Deployment. Facing separation on a day-to-day basis; and
 - (3) Post-Deployment. The return home, and the relations that are re-established between the family members.

2. Pre-Deployment

- a. Communicate. It is normal for the couple to experience a tenser situation during this period. It is also quite legitimate to feel anger and resentment, since it is easier to leave someone when you are angry with him/her. On the other hand, there may be little conflict but the couple must remember that it is easier to settle emotional problems by talking about them. Communication can be improved by:

- (1) Expressing feelings as frankly as possible. It is important that you show love and express comforting thoughts when you discuss the concerns you may have about the upcoming events;
- (2) Encouraging your family member to express his/her feelings; and
- (3) Planning activities surrounding the departure in order to have nice things to remember.

3. Deployment

- a. At the time of deployment, the spouse who stays behind must deal with different reactions. After spending days and weeks worrying about the departure, the spouse may feel relieved that the other party has left and that he/she can now "get down to work". Some depressive symptoms are usually noted, such as loss of sleep and appetite as well as physical aches and pains. Some spouses end up with a fanciful train of thought, ascribing to the absent person everything that is going wrong. They may also feel overloaded because they find themselves in the position of a single parent. Others, on the contrary, may increase their level of activity and become extremely busy. Separation may have positive effects in that the spouse becomes aware of his/her independence and realises that he/she is able to cope, but he/she may subsequently cause problems. Here are a few tips to help reduce the impact of deployment:

- (1) Stay in touch;
- (2) Become aware of your feelings;
- (3) Try to understand and accept your doubts and fears;
- (4) Talk about your feelings with someone you trust;
- (5) Get involved with other Strathcona wives as mentioned in Chapter 4. Also, join the Strathcona *Facebook* page and visit the website regularly;
- (6) Ask for professional help if you feel crushed by your emotions;
- (7) Monitor your children's feelings;
- (8) Take good care of yourself and your children; and
- (9) Do not neglect safety.

4. Post-Deployment

- a. Difficulties. Many people believe that there are no problems during post-deployment, since the family is back together. In fact, this period can be just as difficult because most adults fantasize about it for weeks prior to their family member's return. You plan the meals, buy new clothes, and try a new hairdo. Reality is seldom in line with fantasy. The roast is maybe overdone, or your spouse may note that you have exceeded the \$200.00 budget before noticing the

new changes. The issue of personal space may also arise. You are happy about the return of your family member, but that return is a disturbance as well. The expression of your feeling of love, sidelined for so long, may take a while to come back;

- b. The CF member deployed also fantasizes about the perfect spouse. He/she no longer thinks of the noise, disorder and the usual bedlam he/she has left behind. He/she may feel threatened not only by the independence of his/her children but also by that of his/her spouse;
- c. False Expectations. The reunion is a magic moment, which requires; however, certain adjustments. This period may be rendered easier if you:
 - (1) Do not think that everything will be perfect. Was the situation perfect prior to the deployment;
 - (2) Realise that time changes people; try to spend pleasant moments together without expecting miracles;
 - (3) Remember that open, frank communication can help solve problems and conflicts; and
 - (4) Remember that roles change.
- d. The returning spouse may want to resume his/her traditional roles within the family. Take the time to discuss the new roles and responsibilities;
- e. If your family experiences difficulty reintegrating, the Regiment can help you get in contact with services that can help. The MFRC; however, is a great first step as they can link you in with counsellors or social workers to assist in the transition back to a complete family. There is nothing to be ashamed of in doing this, and all information regarding your situation is completely confidential;
- f. Outside of the military, you can contact the Member Assistance Program at 1-800-268-7708. This is a toll-free number and you can have up to eight sessions for free to see if this works for you. For the hearing impaired, the number is 1-800-567-5803.

CHAPTER 12: SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

1. General

- a. Separation is never pleasant, and all people live through it differently. Here are some suggestions that have been useful to other people and may work for you. The best advice one could give is to **COMMUNICATE**. By talking to your loved one about your feelings, you will be able to avoid many misunderstandings. The better your communications the easier it will be to maintain them when you are apart and to get used to each other once again when you return. Remember that you are a team. Discuss important topics together before your spouse departure and upon return. The more you talk to each other, the better everything will be;
- b. Remember that your loved one will also feel lonely. In some ways, his/her situation is worse. While your environment stays virtually the same, he/she finds himself/herself in a part of the world alien to him/her. The children, who may sometimes seem to be a burden, express to you the love and affection that your spouse or loved one misses;
- c. Remain as positive as possible when communicating and in general. When you write or talk to your loved one, try not to mention all of your burdens; tell him/her the good news as well. Do not hide important information. If you have already talked to each other about a problem, tell the other party where things are at;
- d. One of the best investments you can make is to get inexpensive tape recorders, particularly if you have young children. For instance, a father has bought 2 copies of the same book for his son. He left a copy at home and he took the other one with him. From time to time, he reads the story and records it on a cassette that he sends to his son who can then read the book, turn the pages and hear his father tell the story; and
- e. Do tell your loved one that he/she is still a crucial part of the family. Encourage the children to write letters, even if they do not know how to write!

2. Pre-Deployment

- a. Preparations. If every family member makes thorough preparations to live through the separation, you should experience fewer problems. In some families it may happen that the issue of separation is not raised because they believe that it would be worse if they talked about it. Although mentioning the subject might be difficult, it is crucial that you talk about it;
- b. Discussion. Enables the family to prepare mentally for the separation, to imagine what will happen, to identify potential problems and to find solutions as well as to eliminate any confusion about the separation. Such a discussion is particularly important for the children who may not be able to fully grasp what is going on;

c. Deploying Member

- (1) Be honest with your family from the outset as regards to the type of schedule you will have;
- (2) Explain to your family your role in the CF. Describe your work to your spouse and children or family members. Talk about the importance of your work for the overall mission of the Canadian Forces;
- (3) Prepare your luggage early enough to be able to spend the last evening peacefully with your family; and
- (4) Tell your family that even though you like your work, it is hard to leave them. Tell them that you are going to miss them as much as they are going to miss you.

d. Spouse or Family Members

- (1) Begin to think of yourself not only as a member of a couple, but also as an independent individual. Set-up the budget, mow the lawn, go to the garage and carry out other tasks while the family is complete. Thus if you have problems, you will be able to talk about them;
- (2) Create a support network for yourself. Meet your neighbours, other spouses or families within the unit or living in the area that may be experiencing similar separation; and
- (3) Set objectives. Think of participating in an activity you like. Do something you have always wanted to but for which you have never had time.

e. Children

- (1) Talk to your children about the separation well in advance, except if they are too young to understand. Explain to them the importance of the mission and let them know how much you are going to miss them;
- (2) Let the children tell you how they feel about the separation. Do not ignore them;
- (3) Schedule several special family activities prior to the separation;
- (4) Read to your children some of their favourite stories and record them on cassette; and
- (5) Ask someone to take a picture of you while you are doing some work around the home, playing with the children, horse-playing, etc.

3. Deployment

- a. Communication between family members is probably the most important factor that enables families to stay united emotionally in spite of the physical separation. Communication helps maintain the link that unites the family members and it allows them to grow together within the separation experience, rather than growing apart;
- b. By talking regularly about everyday matters, everybody realises that no one has to "come out ahead." The advantages and disadvantages of separation are there for everyone, and each individual must make additional efforts for the family to continue to function well;
- c. CF Member
 - (1) Letters. Try to write regularly. Several weeks' letters often arrive at the same time. Mark the date clearly on the envelope so that your spouse or family will be able to open the letters and read them in the order in which you wrote them. Send letters regularly to each of your children instead of ending every letter with "Say hello to the kids for me." Children love to receive mail addressed to them. It makes them feel special;
 - (2) Cards. Before leaving, go to the local store and pick out some "special" cards. If you do not have the time to write the letter or if a special event occurs during your absence, you will be all set to mail a card. Another nice gesture that shows your family that you are thinking of them consists of leaving, on the day of your departure, a card or note at home, so that your family discovers this pleasant surprise when they come home. You can also mail a card or note that your family will receive next day;
 - (3) Postcards. Whether you are in Canada or abroad, postcards will allow your family to travel a little with you;
 - (4) Photographs. Photographs of your place of work or the sites you visit make it possible for your family to visualise that "remote place." Remember, "A picture is worth a thousand words;"
 - (5) Telephone Calls. Nothing can really replace the voice of somebody you love. A call can brighten your whole day or, on the contrary, could cause problems if things do not happen the way you expect it. Everybody seems to agree on one point: you must not "fight over the phone," because you could be left with regrets for many days; and
 - (6) If something is not going well at home, try not to immediately blame your family by saying "What have YOU done wrong this time?" Your family is undoubtedly doing their best under the circumstances, but the car needs new parts and bank accounts are overdrawn. Try instead to find solutions and discuss various ways to solve the situation if it recurs,

rather than making reproaches. Try to end the conversation on a positive note.

d. Spouse

- (1) Isolation. Avoid being isolated during the separation. Go out regularly, if only to window shop or to pick up groceries. Meet other people. Time for your personal needs. Set aside some time for yourself, without your children, at least once a week;
- (2) Rewards. It is difficult to live through a separation day after day. Congratulate yourself by getting for yourself something you like;
- (3) Activities. Take part in activities that you like and that keep you busy throughout the day. It may be difficult to initially call or find out about the activities at the base or within the community. It is by getting involved in some activities that you will probably discover others;
- (4) Countdown. Do not think of the separation as a whole because you may find it discouraging. Instead, divide it mentally into smaller units. For example, a separation of 120 days may become 16 weeks, or 4 months, or the third of a year, or a college term. Take the time to pick out the day that marks one-half of the separation. Use vacations, holidays and special occasions as milestones;
- (5) Mail. Try to write regularly, every day if you can. The distribution of mail is the highlight of the day for CF members who are away. The letters are their link with family life. You may also decide to send a postcard, a special event card, a newspaper or magazine clipping, The Sunday newspaper comics, or a photograph. Keep in a box the items you want to mail. In the meantime, if you do not have time to write a long letter, write a "continuous letter" adding something every day and mail it at the end of the week. Remember to write the date on the envelope, because several weeks' mail may arrive at the same time. You may want to place the cards and postcards received here and there throughout the house; they are a happy souvenir. In some families, the letters and cards exchanged during separation periods are kept. Years later, it may be interesting to look at them and remember things;
- (6) CDs/DVDs. Taping family members engaged in various activities is surely one of the best means to share the family life with your spouse;
- (7) Telephone Calls. As already stated, telephone calls may be very pleasant, or they may be very disappointing if they do not go as expected. You often get the phone call late at night, the line is poor, you are cut off in the middle of a conversation, or you have just had one of those days where nothing goes right. It is easy to blame the other for all your problems;
- (8) Emergencies. A family emergency is a difficult time for you (because you have to cope with it alone) as well as your spouse, who is too far away to help you. Assess the situation before deciding to communicate

with your spouse. However, you must not hesitate to contact him/her when a family member is in critical condition or there has been a death, because he/she must then request emergency leave. If one of the children has suffered a fracture or must go to emergency for stitches, it is perhaps better for you to wait until the situation has stabilized before phoning your spouse. You may have a feeling of powerlessness and frustration when you are unable to act. It is sometimes as difficult to do nothing and wait for a telephone call as to take care of the emergency yourself. It is always important to keep your spouse up to date about what is happening to your family. Do not make the mistake of withholding information in order not to worry your spouse. This causes resentment and may embarrass your spouse, for he may get the news from someone else or find himself/herself, upon his/her return, in a situation for which he/she was not prepared. It is very important for you to select the most appropriate time to inform your spouse. If you happen to have very strong emotional reactions following serious incidents (a serious illness or death in the family, or Canadian losses abroad) do not hide your feelings and do not deny them. Talk about them and ask for professional help; and

- (9) Social Life. Do not think that you must reject all invitations extended to you while your spouse is away. Keeping up good social relations will help you feel good and have a positive attitude during the separation.

e. Children

- (1) Children need a regular schedule, particularly when the family is living through a separation. Keep the same rules regarding the time to go to bed, household chores, homework, etc. If you relax discipline, the children may be disappointed by the return of your spouse, which means rules and orders in the home like before. Avoid telling your children "wait until your father/mother is back" as a method to enforce discipline;
- (2) Encourage the children to communicate directly with the spouse who is away. They may write him/her themselves and send him/her things and drawings they made at school. If they know how to write, let them address the envelope and help you mail it; and
- (3) Like military families, children are not alike. Expect your children to experience the separation in very personal fashion, and respond accordingly to their needs. While some children become very helpful and independent, others may adopt infantile behaviour such as wetting their bed, clinging to you or using baby talk for a while. Expect some behavioural changes to occur, and expect the children to try to "test the limits" in various situations. It is their way of discovering whether other parts of their lives will also change now that one of the parents is away. Be patient, even though this may sometimes be difficult. Understand, but be as firm as possible. The child will then know that some things remain unchanged, and he/she will feel reassured.

4. Post-Deployment

a. The reunion of a family following a separation can be as difficult as the separation itself. If that moment was a source of tension for your family, tell yourself that you are no exception. You have perhaps wondered why a time that should normally be romantic and exciting turns out to be difficult. The important thing is to talk to each other and to share the situations that confront the family each day. You must not try to do everything on the very day when you get together again. Take the time to share pleasant moments. Everyone needs some time to get acquainted again before thinking about solving the problems;

b. CF member

(1) Gradually resume your place within the family. If you come back like a Leopard tank and try to bulldoze everything in order to get back into family life, the others may resent this. Consider yourself a 'special guest' for a while;

(2) Take the time to check out how the family functioned during your absence. Maybe you will want to say, "Now that I am back, there are going to be some changes here." Your presence at home will inevitably bring some changes. If you disagree with what has happened during your absence, wait a few days and talk about it frankly with your spouse; and

(3) Do not be astonished if your spouse has changed. You are no longer the same people as a few months or even a few weeks before. Separation triggers a role change to which one may become accustomed. Your spouse was forced to learn to manage alone. Circumstances force him/her to take over some tasks. Try not to feel threatened if, upon your return, you have an independent person before you. The fact that your spouse has managed to get organized in your absence does not necessarily mean that he/she wanted it.

c. Spouse

(1) Remember that your spouse has worked in a regulated environment where he/she had to conform to a daily schedule. He/she needs some time to readapt to family life. He/she may tend to manage the family like a military unit or, on the contrary, to refuse any kind of schedule or planned activity that you have planned. Be patient! Initially, he/she may also have trouble sleeping, particularly if he/she has worked shifted or irregular hours;

(2) Do not be offended if your spouse thinks about his/her work instead of mentioning the wonderful meal you have prepared or the new curtains in the family room. During his/her absence, your spouse has lived in an environment exclusively focused on work. He/she needs some time to leave that frame of mind behind, even though he/she is happy to be home; and

(3) Do not be upset if your spouse has changed. Remember to what extent you have probably had to change yourself in order to adapt to the situation. Work pressures, the discovery of a new culture in other parts

of the world, and the time spent away from the family have changed his/her behaviours, beliefs, and feelings.

d. Children

- (1) Some children will avoid the returning parent for awhile;
- (2) On the other hand, other children will "cling". That reaction will disappear over time as they realize that you leave and then come back;
- (3) Spend some time with each of your children doing an activity they are particularly fond of. You can thus re-acquaint yourself with each child within an environment where the child feels comfortable. Each child thus feels that he/she is special and appreciated for what he/she is; and
- (4) Expect your children to have changed as well, both physically and emotionally. The changes in your children are sometimes barely discernible, but if you leave for awhile you will note upon your return that your youngest one is walking, that your fourth grader learned the multiplication table, and that your teenage daughter has a new boyfriend.

CHAPTER 13: THINGS TO DO CHECKLIST

DONE	TO DO	DATE
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Support Cell informed of how to contact you when you are not staying at your normal residence?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parents, in-laws and other relatives/friends made aware of new address?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	All banking and other finances in good order?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget prepared, including accounting for savings for leave, phone calls, etc?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Insurance policies up to date (including life, home and vehicle)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wills current and location known to all applicable parties?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Power of Attorney initiated (if required)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guardianship papers initiated (if required)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	All important papers and other documents in safety deposit box?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family medical/dental records up to date?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you signed extra medical/dental forms?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you discussed your absence with your children?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Home and auto maintenance understood (phone number of service agencies etc.)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	What to do in case of an emergency (understood and written down) for both?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who to contact (friends, relatives or neighbours) in the event of an emergency?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Important records check list filled out (bank account #, credit cards, investments, etc.)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Passport and Visas (if required) applied for?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	International drivers licence (if required) applied for?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are your spouse and children's vaccinations (if required) up to date, in the event of a reunion abroad?	