

Off the Rails

Crazy Train Float Mocks
Operational Stress Injury Sufferers

March 6, 2003

Investigative Team

Director, Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT)

Gareth Jones

Ombudsman Investigators

Bob Howard

Bruce Potts

Liz Hoffman

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Overview	3
Complaint.....	5
Investigative Process	7
Phase One: What The Float Meant	9
The Evidence	9
The Stigma of the “North Side”	9
Use of the Term “Crazy Train”	9
The Parade.....	10
The CT-01 Float	11
The Meaning of “CT-01” and the Intent Behind the Float	13
Evidence from Administration Company	13
Evidence from Outside Administration Company	14
Impact of the Float	15
Factual Conclusions Relating to the Float	16
Phase Two: Was the Military’s Internal Investigation Adequate?	19
How the Allegation Was Reported.....	21
Analysis: The Investigation	22
Recommendation	25
Appendix: OSI Complaints Investigation Protocol	27

Executive Summary

- 1** This report is based on an investigation conducted by the Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT) in response to a complaint that a parade float entered in the annual 2nd Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2 PPCLI) pre-Grey Cup celebration on November 22, 2002, mocked soldiers who have been diagnosed with operational stress injuries.
- 2** Following what appeared to be a potentially inadequate investigation by the chain of command, I directed my investigators to determine:
 - 3** 1. What was portrayed by the float and did it refer to members with operational stress injuries?
 - 4** 2. Was the investigation completed by the chain of command thorough and objective?
- 5** SORT investigators interviewed approximately 120 individuals, including members of 2 PPCLI, caregivers and senior leadership. They obtained and reviewed photographs of the parade float and email correspondence on the issue. They also requested the float be secured pending the investigation, but were advised that it had already been destroyed.
- 6** Based on the evidence gathered, I found that the float portrayed a mythical Crazy Train, and that this Crazy Train is a local derogative reference to members suffering from operational stress injuries. Furthermore, I found that the Canadian Forces' investigation into the complaint about the float was neither thorough nor objective. It appears this allegation of mocking members with operational stress injuries was not given the importance it was due.
- 7** Therefore, I believe it is necessary to add the following recommendation to those I have made previously on the problem of operational stress injuries in the Canadian Forces. I recommend that necessary resources be committed, and the required planning be finalized as a matter of highest priority, for the immediate implementation of unit level education about operational stress injuries.
- 8** I sincerely hope this will help close the gap between the commitment of senior leadership and the lack of progress at the unit level in changing the culture and stigma associated with operational stress injuries.

Overview

- 9** My Office has completed considerable work on the issue of operational stress injuries (OSIs) in the Canadian Forces (CF). It is imperative, both as a practical matter, and more importantly, as a matter of human dignity and justice, that the CF treat with understanding and compassion those who have OSIs as a result of the courageous work they do on behalf of all Canadians. My first special report on this issue, entitled *Systemic Treatment of CF Members with PTSD*, was released February 5, 2002. Due to the importance of the issue and the findings in that report that post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) represents a serious problem that affects many members of the CF, I committed to follow up this report with a nine-month review to measure and report on the progress of the CF and the Department of National Defence (DND) regarding the issue of OSIs in the CF. I released that report on December 17, 2002. Of significant concern in the earlier systemic investigation and my nine-month follow-up was the need for ongoing education to eliminate unhealthy attitudes toward OSIs. The Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) has demonstrated a strong commitment to this important issue. In a dispatch to the chain of command on December 10, 2002, he called anything less than giving the utmost care and understanding to those who suffer from OSIs “an unacceptable failure of leadership.” He confirmed that the challenge is one of changing culture and attitudes. This investigation confirms how true that is, and how much work is left to be done.
- 10** On November 22, 2002, the 2nd Battalion of the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (2 PPCLI) at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Winnipeg held an officially sanctioned event. Members were expected to attend in order to build *esprit de corps*. It was a parade, carried on in a tradition handed down from the First World War. In preparation for the parade, each of the companies within the battalion constructs a float. One company constructed a float depicting a train pulling a cage. Inside the cage was a young male private dressed provocatively in women’s clothing. The cage bore signs that revealed to those with local knowledge that the float was meant to lampoon members of 2 PPCLI who have been assigned to the north side of the base because of OSIs, including PTSD. The insensitive attitude demonstrated by the construction of the float cannot be isolated to this one event. The investigation into this incident revealed that those assigned to the North Side because of OSIs are subject to ongoing stigmatization. For up to two years before the parade, there are those at CFB Winnipeg who spoke about a mythical Crazy Train that carts away those with stress-related complaints to the North Side. They believe that members who “take the train” are malingerers or fakers, who are simply trying to escape their obligations and who want benefits and/or easier assignments. This kind of attitude can cause enormous damage. In fact, this complaint came to light because a member expressed reluctance to seek help for his stress-related problems because of how they are stigmatized within the CF. For him, the Crazy Train incident was symptomatic of a larger problem. And he is right.
- 11** Unfortunately, when the Crazy Train incident was reported within the chain of command by a Peer Support Coordinator who heard about it, the response was far

from satisfactory. The Peer Support Coordinator was criticized, inaccurately, for not following the chain of command. Some of the people involved in responding to the complaint seemed to be more concerned about the possibility of a scandal than with thoroughly investigating the serious allegation. The investigation conducted by the CF was woefully inadequate, and a sanitized version of what had happened was immediately and far too easily accepted. It was not until our investigation that those who had been reported to during those cursory inquiries realized what had actually happened. Once the allegation was confirmed, to their credit, they immediately appreciated its significance. However, the failure of those in the chain of command to engage in a thorough investigation upon receipt of the complaint reflects inadequate sensitivity to the importance of OSI-related issues.

- 12** When I spoke to the CDS about this case on December 10, 2002, he had not been previously advised of the incident. It is fair to say that he was clearly troubled by the allegation.
- 13** This unfortunate event demonstrates two things. First, the necessary change in attitudes will require a long-term commitment by everyone. While those attitudes are based more in ignorance than malice, they are deep-seated and long-standing. The importance of effective and comprehensive educational measures cannot be clearer. Second, unless those who encounter these kinds of incidents have a real appreciation of what is at stake, they are apt to fail to take them seriously enough. The inadequate investigation of a complaint about members with OSIs being ridiculed at an official event demonstrates a failure to appreciate the depth of the problem. Given the attention OSIs have received within the CF, a truly sensitized leadership would have conducted a complete and thorough investigation to ensure the complaint was unfounded before treating the matter as closed. There is no doubt that at National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) in Ottawa, there is a full and mature appreciation of the problem and efforts are being made. I fear that there is a disconnect, however, between the commitment at the top, and the sensitization of those in positions of command in the regions. This must be addressed.
- 14** My mandate provides me with the authority to publish a report if I consider it in the public interest to do so. It is in the public interest to do so in this case, for two reasons. First, this episode epitomizes how deep-seated, blatant, and unabashed the culture of inappropriate and destructive attitudes about OSIs is. This incident is not just germane to Winnipeg. There is no reason to suspect that the members of the unit involved, or even the members who participated in the construction of the float, are any different from anyone else. All of us, everyone who works in and with the military, can learn something about ourselves and our own attitudes, and the impact they can have, by letting this incident see the light of day. Second, I feel the need to report publicly because a senior officer at 2 PPCLI who, incidentally, is involved in this matter, made statements in the media playing down the incident. Those statements do not reflect my findings and it is important that all relevant parties are aware of that.

Complaint

- 15** On November 29, 2002, the Office of the Ombudsman was contacted by a Peer Support Coordinator with Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS). OSISS is a CF program that provides support and assistance to both current and former CF members suffering from OSIs, like PTSD.
- 16** The Peer Support Coordinator advised us that he had received information through a third party that during an annual sporting event and parade at CFB Winnipeg sanctioned by 2 PPCLI, a parade float was entered that mocked soldiers with OSIs. This person stated that a member of 2 PPCLI had been informed that the float was called the Crazy Train and depicted a locomotive pulling a jail cell holding a soldier dressed in woman's lingerie. There was apparently a sign on the train that read "NEXT STOP NORTH SIDE," which the complainant believed referred to members with OSIs who either transferred to or received treatment on the north side of CFB Winnipeg.¹ It was also alleged that the words "Crazy Train" were written on a sign attached to the float, and that the serving member of 2 PPCLI was very upset by the float.

¹ CFB Winnipeg has two locations in Winnipeg: Kapyong Barracks, which quarters the Battalion and is commonly referred to as the South Side; and 17 Wing, which is commonly referred to as the North Side.

Investigative Process

- 17** I learned that this complaint had also been passed to senior leadership at NDHQ through the OSISS chain of command and that an investigation had been initiated as a result. Because my Office acts only as a mechanism of last resort, I decided to postpone my investigation into the allegation pending the findings of the CF investigation.
- 18** The CF investigation was conducted by the chain of command at 2 PPCLI and involved 1 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (1 CMBG)². This investigation concluded on December 4, 2002. It found that the float did not allude to OSIs, nor was it targeted at members who had an OSI nor any other group. It found that, in fact, the float referred to the upcoming relocation of 2 PPCLI from Winnipeg to Shilo, Manitoba, in so far that “it was a camouflaged statement expressing a desire by some to remain in Winnipeg.” The matter was attributed to a misunderstanding and considered closed. Some parties involved in the CF investigation voiced criticism that this complaint had gone outside the 2 PPCLI chain of command.
- 19** I had concerns that the CF investigation may not have examined all the available evidence. I therefore directed the Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT) to make further enquiries. The investigation was conducted by Investigators Bob Howard, Bruce Potts, and Liz Hoffman, and was overseen by Gareth Jones, Director SORT. On December 6, 2002, a SORT investigator obtained two previously undeveloped photographs of the parade taken by 2 PPCLI’s battalion photographer. Based in part on this evidence, I instructed SORT to conduct a two-phase field investigation to determine:
- 20** Phase 1. What was portrayed by the float and did it refer to members with OSIs?
- 21** Phase 2. Was the investigation completed by the chain of command thorough and objective?
- 22** On December 10, 2002, I spoke to the CDS and advised him of our intention to conduct an investigation. I provided his office with a copy of one of the photographs we had obtained from 2 PPCLI.
- 23** The first task was to determine the facts relating to the float. To that end, the investigative team conducted in-person tape-recorded interviews with 20 individuals and conducted telephone interviews with 98 members of 2 PPCLI, plus several caregivers who work with members of the military community. The vast majority of these interviews took place between December 11 and December 18, 2002.
- 24** A member who attended the parade provided photographs of the float to my investigators. Additional photographs of the parade taken by two battalion

² 2 PPCLI is a unit of 1 CMBG (located in Edmonton) of the Land Forces Western Area (LFWA) also located in Edmonton.

photographers were also ultimately provided. We requested and received the negatives, which will be returned to 2 PPCLI's leadership following the investigation. None of the photographs had been printed prior to our involvement.

- 25** We obtained and reviewed emails between 2 PPCLI and their reporting chain of command concerning this matter. We also obtained and reviewed email traffic from various parties at NDHQ who were involved in the CF inquiry.
- 26** We requested documentation relating to the parade from 2 PPCLI, and asked that members be canvassed for video and photographs of the event. We asked that the float be secured pending our investigation. We were advised that it had already been destroyed.
- 27** The second phase of the investigation, which focused on the flow of information up and down the chain of command during the CF investigation, took place in the first two weeks of January 2003. This was due to some CF personnel being on leave over the Christmas period. The investigative team interviewed members of 1 CMBG, Land Forces Western Area (LFWA), OSISS, and Chief of the Land Staff (CLS) personnel involved in the chain of command's query into this incident.

Phase One: What The Float Meant

The Evidence

- 28** In the first phase of the investigation, my investigators focused on determining what the float portrayed and whether or not it referred to members with OSIs. My investigators interviewed members and caregivers on the base to gain an understanding of several relevant features of local culture.

The Stigma of the “North Side”

- 29** The term “North Side” is commonly understood to refer to the north area of CFB Winnipeg. This area is given the air force formation designation 17 Wing. 17 Wing provides support services to 2 PPCLI, including health and social services. The North Side is located approximately five kilometres north of 2 PPCLI headquarters and barracks. A number of soldiers from 2 PPCLI who have been diagnosed with OSIs have been reassigned for health reasons and employed at 17 Wing. There are also members still within 2 PPCLI who receive medical treatment and social work services from the health care facility at 17 Wing. Several of the members currently serving with 2 PPCLI who spoke to my investigators disclosed that they have been diagnosed with an OSI.
- 30** During the course of the investigation, it became clear that there is a widespread perception within 2 PPCLI that a significant number of members who have been diagnosed with OSIs are faking or exaggerating their symptoms. The perception is that they are doing this in order to obtain advantages that are not available to other members, such as occupational transfers and/or pensions.

Use of the Term “Crazy Train”

- 31** There is a song by the rock and shock performer Ozzie Osbourne called “Crazy Train.” In it, Mr. Osbourne sings that his “mental wounds [are] not healing” and that he is going “off the rails on a crazy train.” Up to two years before the incident that sparked this investigation, some 2 PPCLI members used the term “Crazy Train” with reference to the North Side. It is a well-known, derogatory reference aimed at those with OSIs. It is said that they get to the North Side on the Crazy Train.
- 32** One member said the term “Crazy Train” refers to:
- 33** People that are suffering from post traumatic stress syndrome or work-related stress that have had to seek help and assistance via the social work office on the North Side. People that have been removed away from the battalion and from their employment within the battalion and employed elsewhere in 17 Wing and also are in counselling. That’s what’s been dubbed the Crazy Train – as if there’s a mythical train that

stops over at Kapyong Barracks³ and all these people who are crazy hop on to it and then it stops over at the North Side and they're set free and given a better life...Everybody throughout the battalion knows exactly what the Crazy Train is...it may have started at the junior ranks level but everybody right up to the CO [commanding officer] knows what the Crazy Train is.

- 34** One corporal told us "everybody talks about the Crazy Train, including the chain of command." However, my investigators noted that officers and higher-ranking non-commissioned members within 2 PPCLI appeared to have less knowledge of the term "Crazy Train" than lower-ranking members. Both the Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) and Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO) reported they were unfamiliar with the term Crazy Train prior to this complaint.
- 35** Caregivers who administered post-deployment screenings to 2 PPCLI members who returned from duty in Afghanistan advised that they had repeatedly heard the term from members who joke about feeling stressed and taking the "choo-choo." Several caregivers who work with 2 PPCLI members stated that the terms "Crazy Train" and "choo-choo" were very well known and widely used like other "gallows humour" by soldiers.
- 36** Roughly half of the 118 individuals my investigators spoke to in Winnipeg said the term refers to members who have or claim to have OSIs and who are afforded sick leave or employment outside 2 PPCLI.

The Parade

- 37** The incident that sparked this investigation occurred during a parade that was held at Kapyong Barracks on the south side of CFB Winnipeg on November 22, 2002, during the so-called French Grey Cup. The French Grey Cup comprises the championships for 2 PPCLI's fall sporting events. According to the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Day, the French Grey Cup is a tradition that dates back to the First World War where Canadian soldiers serving in France participated in the event, then called *Les Folles*. The event comprises unit sports competition, followed by a parade of floats and an awards ceremony. It is a mandatory unit function intended for fun and to promote *esprit de corps*.
- 38** According to members who have served with 2 PPCLI for many years, the tradition includes the construction of a parade float by each company. Again, by tradition, the youngest member of each company is dressed as the company's "queen," and the queens and floats are judged and a winner chosen. Each is presented with a cup. It is normal practice for the "queen" to be dressed in outrageous women's clothing and encouraged to behave in a provocative manner in an effort to win favour with the crowd and the sole judge, traditionally the Commanding Officer's secretary.

³ Kapyong Barracks is where the headquarters of 2 PPCLI is located.

- 39** In keeping with tradition, a parade was held on November 22, 2002. Members from each company competed in sporting events including a flag football game in the morning followed by the float parade and award ceremonies. The parade was held inside the 2 PPCLI drill hall and was attended by all available members. Estimates are that approximately 400 members of 2 PPCLI attended. This included the Commanding Officer's secretary who judged the floats and "queens" entered by each of the four companies. The DCO and RSM were present throughout the parade. The Commanding Officer was on leave in Ottawa.
- 40** Members told my investigators that everyone who attended was given two beer tickets, and that beer, pop, hot dogs, and hamburgers were served following the parade. A number of members interviewed related that the "queens" and those directly involved with floats during the parade would typically drink to the point of intoxication before the parade.
- 41** My investigators received various accounts of the parade. Most reported that the event was "fun and enjoyable." In fact, the vast majority of the individuals we interviewed stated they found nothing offensive about the parade. No one we interviewed stated that they had observed anyone present who did. The Commanding Officer's secretary, who judged the floats and "queens" stated, "I thought everything was great; we had a really good time. I didn't find anything, whatsoever, offensive at the event."
- 42** What is depicted in the photographs of the parade is, on the face of it, troubling. In spite of the lack of general complaint about the parade, the CF may still want to revisit how this parade is carried out. It is part of a practice dating back to when the CF was an exclusively male institution, and its traditions reflect that. The parade certainly has the potential to insult and make people uncomfortable, depending on how it is conducted. This investigation, however, is neither about the tradition, nor about this year's parade in general. It is about one feature, the inclusion of one particular float that was alleged in the complaint to have been intended to mock members of 2 PPCLI with OSIs.

The CT-01 Float

- 43** The controversial float was entered by Administration Company. The construction of the float was assigned to the Field Training and Support Section. When completed, it consisted of a black locomotive pulling a pink jail cell. The "queen," a private within Administration Company, rode in the jail cell dressed in women's lingerie and wig. Four members of Administration Company pulled the float and another member rode on the float as the train conductor. The float carried signage with white text on black background stating "2 PPCLI EXPRESS," "NEXT STOP NORTH SIDE."
- 44** Initial complaints about the float reported that it also carried signs stating "Crazy Train." My investigators interviewed two members who stated that the float had such signs. One individual sketched the float and depicted the words "Crazy Train" in a semicircle on the front of the mock locomotive and on the white section that

appears to represent a window on each side of the float. None of the photographs provided to or obtained by my investigators show the front of the train during the parade and there is no conclusive evidence indicating that the words "Crazy Train" actually appeared on the float. Indeed, the second of the two individuals who described the float as housing a Crazy Train sign stated, upon being shown a photograph of the float, that he might have been mistaken.

- 45** While suggestions that the float carried a sign saying "Crazy Train" have not been borne out, the float unquestionably did have a sign, with less prominent text than the other signs, stating "CT-01." It appears that the CT-01 sign was added to the float after it was delivered from the Field Training and Support Section on November 21, 2002. The individual who reportedly added the CT-01 sign, identified as a member of the Battalion Transport Platoon, denies having placed the sign on the float. When shown a photograph of the float, he stated that it was the first time he had seen the CT-01 designation on the float.
- 46** The photograph of the float shown below was taken in the Battalion Transport Building by the battalion photographer at the beginning of the parade, as it was being pulled toward the battalion drill hall. The CT-01 sign is faintly visible next to the 2 PPCLI designation.



The Meaning of “CT-01” and the Intent Behind the Float

Evidence from Administration Company

- 47** The idea for the Administration Company float originated at a meeting of the Battalion Transport Platoon, which is part of Administration Company. Approximately thirty members were reported to have attended this end-of-day meeting, which occurred a few days before November 22, 2002. Several individuals who were present stated that the idea they came up with was the Crazy Train and that the float was made in reference to individuals who have gone to the North Side claiming stress but who “don’t deserve to be there.”
- 48** One of the Battalion Transport Platoon members stated that:
- 49** We came up with the idea of the Crazy Train...everybody knows and talks about the Crazy Train. Some people deserve to be helped but some individuals that have gone to the North Side don’t deserve to be there and are getting a free ride. [The float was] not intended to insult or hurt those with legitimate injuries.
- 50** Another member of Battalion Transport Platoon explained:
- 51** Crazy Train was not written on the float, only CT-01, which I believe stood for Crazy Train...Pretty much everybody in Battalion Transport said it was the Crazy Train...another member of the platoon agreed with me and didn’t want anything to do with it because we figured it was a bad idea...but everybody knew what it was about.
- 52** A member of 2 PPCLI stated that his platoon was directed to come up with an idea for a float. He stated:
- 53** It was five to four on whatever day it was and the Warrant [Officer] said if you guys don’t come with an [idea for a float], we’re staying here until you come up with one. Somebody said, “build a train.” Everybody knew what they meant by that – but nobody ever really specifically said it’s a Crazy Train or what it is but somebody just said, “build a train” with everybody else just knowing what it meant....
- 54** Not everyone involved in the creation of the float acknowledges that it was intended, or at least generally understood, to represent the Crazy Train to the North Side. In total, seven of the twenty-three persons we interviewed from the Battalion Transport Platoon told us that the float referred to “Crazy Train.” Two others agreed with that interpretation, but also provided other explanations. The remaining fourteen gave a variety of explanations for the CT-01 sign, such as “Changing Trades,” “Career Trade,” or said it was the LOTP (Land Occupational Transfer Program) Train. The Sergeant in charge of the Field Training and Support Section (another section within

Administration Company), who was assigned by his Company Sergeant-Major (CSM) to build the train, stated that the float was called the "LOTP Train," which he said was in reference to soldiers who want to transfer to the air force. The LOTP is a program whereby members of the combat arms are selected to transfer to a range of other military occupations after serving a fixed number of years within the infantry, artillery, or field engineer occupations.

- 55** Those members of the Battalion Transport Platoon who told investigators from this Office that the CT-01 designation referred to things like "Changing Trades" and not "Crazy Train," stated that they were aware of the use of the term "Crazy Train" and understood it to refer to members of 2 PPCLI with OSIs or members claiming stress-related injuries. However, this was not the reference they had intended when they decided on a train for their float. When asked how "Changing Trades" was represented by a train, some members suggested it was because there are a large number of soldiers (as many as 89) currently seeking a transfer out of the infantry, though they were at a loss to explain why this would be represented by a train. In fact, none of the members interviewed provided any convincing reason or explanation for why a move to the North Side was represented by a train.
- 56** Outside of 2 PPCLI headquarters, two other members related the reference of a preference of moving to the North Side rather than relocating to CFB Shilo. The first of these two individuals was interviewed on December 14, 2002. He stated that he had heard the term "Crazy Train" lots of times and explained that it refers to "guys milking the system; getting time off...the term's used a lot and [they] joke about it at work." He further stated that "90 percent are not [really] stress cases." When this member was asked what the float represented, however, he responded it was about not wanting to move to Shilo. The second member who provided the interpretation of not wanting to move to Shilo was interviewed on January 3, 2003. He also provided the three other interpretations for what the float represented mentioned above. This individual explained, however, that when they first decided on the idea for the float, they had agreed on the Crazy Train and explained that the term "Crazy Train" was well known around 2 PPCLI to mean soldiers who are "stress cases."

Evidence from Outside Administration Company

- 57** My investigators asked many members if there is any specific meaning associated with CT-01. From the responses given, it does not appear to be a common acronym. A number of members said that they had to ask what the Administration Company float was supposed to be. Some people reported that when they asked what the float was, they were told it was the "Crazy Train." Several members explained it meant Crazy Train as in the song "Crazy Train" by Ozzie Osbourne, and the reference to the North Side related to the fact that "that's where the psych ward is."
- 58** My investigators spoke to one of the caregivers from the health care facility at 17 Wing who reported hearing about the float from a member of 2 PPCLI the morning of

the French Grey Cup. The 2 PPCLI member had reported that his company had built a Crazy Train float that depicted OSI sufferers being moved to the North Side.

- 59** Four of the members my investigators interviewed stated they had perceived the float as a reference to members with OSIs and had found that objectionable. They stated that when they saw the float, they anticipated it would cause problems.
- 60** Again, not everyone concluded that CT-01 referred to the Crazy Train. Explanations offered included “Changing Trades” and “Cock Tease.” A senior officer at NDHQ advised us that he understood that the letters “CT” stood for “Counter Terrorism.” Another senior officer at NDHQ offered that it could also stand for “Combat Team.” These later two interpretations were not corroborated by any party we interviewed in Winnipeg.
- 61** We interviewed the RSM who attended the parade. The RSM said that in his opinion, the float represented that “soldiers didn’t want to go to Shilo. They’d rather go to jail than go to Shilo because it was a jail cell that one of the soldiers was in.” He stated he did not understand how someone had interpreted it to be a reference to soldiers with OSIs. He explained:
- 62** This battalion has really gone out of its way as far as stress-related injuries and the soldiers are concerned and I think our background and history would prove that very sufficiently...we’ve gone out of our way here—above and beyond the call of duty—to look after soldiers with these sorts of injuries. So we would never do anything of that nature and I don’t believe that the soldiers individually involved with the making of that float would either.
- 63** When asked by my investigators when he had first heard of the Crazy Train reference, he responded that it was as a result of my investigators’ inquiries.
- 64** Other battalion members who attended the parade stated that they did not pay a lot of attention to the floats. A number of members do not remember whether the float had signs displayed on it. Other members we interviewed stated that they remembered seeing signs but that they were either too far away or that their sightlines made it impossible for them to read the signs. Some members stated that they recalled the signs saying “2 PPCLI EXPRESS” and “NEXT STOP NORTH SIDE” but did not recall the exact location of the signage on the float.

Impact of the Float

- 65** My investigators interviewed a Medical Officer who treats some members of 2 PPCLI. The Medical Officer reported seeing a patient who had related that a float in the French Grey Cup parade had been the Crazy Train. The patient had explained to him that the float was a reference to members with OSIs who go to the North Side for treatment. According to the doctor, this patient was very upset about what the float depicted. We spoke to a number of members who were upset by the float, though it

should be noted that we also interviewed several members who had been diagnosed with an OSI who were not offended by what the float portrayed.

- 66** Caregivers who administered post-deployment screenings stated that, in their view, use of such terms has a very negative impact on members who may be suffering from OSIs, notwithstanding that members often “grin and bear it” as far as possible. Another caregiver told us that several members being treated for OSIs had expressed that they were upset by what the float represented.
- 67** In my special report *Systemic Treatment of CF Members with PTSD* released in February of 2002, I found compelling evidence that members with OSIs are extremely reluctant to come forward to get the treatment they need, as they fear being ostracized, stigmatized and ridiculed by their colleagues. I found that far too often their fears are founded. As one CF member with 20 years service told my investigators during the course of that investigation:
- 68** I have heard service members with PTSD frequently comment on the negative comments they hear from supervisors or from other personnel they do not know. They feel they are routinely accused of malingering. They are often insulted, accused of being weak, of using the system, and ostracized by the unit. Their condition is frequent the source of amusement for others, who are often in a supervisory position. Others regard these folks with disgust and very little compassion. They make fun of the soldier and talk as if having to see a psychiatrist is some sort of wonderful benefit that they are being deprived of, without regard for the terrible suffering endured by our personnel.

Factual Conclusions Relating to the Float

- 69** I find that the term “Crazy Train” is used by some as a pejorative reference to members of 2 PPCLI who are assigned to or who attend at 17 Wing because of OSIs, including PTSD, and who are perceived by those persons to be malingering or abusing the system. I find that the term is used with sufficient frequency that it is widely understood by members of 2 PPCLI.
- 70** I also find that the float entered in 2 PPCLI's French Grey Cup celebrations was intended to portray the Crazy Train, and was generally understood by many of those in attendance to be a derogatory reference to those who are at 17 Wing because of OSIs. I make this latter finding notwithstanding the mixed information supplied, for the following reasons:
- 71** 1. As indicated, “Crazy Train” is a pejorative term that is used by some, and widely recognized by members of 2 PPCLI and caregivers who provide health and welfare services to this community as a reference to those who are connected to 17 Wing because of operational stress. The vast majority of Battalion Transport Platoon members we interviewed were aware of this, save

for the two Warrant Officers with the platoon who disclaimed having heard of the Crazy Train reference before our investigation. This provides a backdrop against which the other information can be evaluated.

- 72** 2. Approximately one third of the people we interviewed in Battalion Transport acknowledged the float was meant to depict the mythical Crazy Train. Several members of the Battalion Transport Platoon confirmed that even before the CT-01 sign was added, it was understood within the platoon that the train concept was intended to relate to the Crazy Train. They are admissions against the interests of their makers, and of their platoon. Those who made such admissions tended to reveal, through statements such as, “[it was] not intended to insult or hurt those with legitimate injuries,” or “another member of the platoon agreed with me and didn’t want anything to do with it because we figured it was a bad idea,” an understanding that building a Crazy Train was a controversial idea. There would be no reason why so many members would acknowledge the nature of the float if it were not true.
- 73** 3. The statements of those Battalion Transport Platoon members who confirmed the connection between the float and the mythical Crazy Train to the North Side are corroborated circumstantially by the signage and construction of the float. First, the choice of a train as the mode of transport conforms to the mythical Crazy Train and seems a curious choice of vehicle if the float really was meant to depict “Changing Trades.” It is also in keeping with the suggestion that the T in “CT” refers to “train.” Second, the sign “NEXT STOP NORTH SIDE” fits comfortably with the geographic location of 17 Wing on the north side of CFB Winnipeg. While the train’s represented destination is clearly 17 Wing or the North Side there is no evidence that this is being suggested as an alternative to the move to CFB Shilo. Third, the presence of a person on the float, apparently locked inside a jail-like enclosure, is consistent with images of someone being carted away, not someone who wants to move to the North Side.
- 74** 4. Even many of those outside of the Battalion Transport Platoon had no difficulty recognizing that the float was intended to lampoon those on the North Side with OSIs.
- 75** Some of those who suggested that the train was about changing trades – meaning a desire to leave the infantry for another military occupation – or as a protest against an apprehended move to Shilo, could have been honestly mistaken. Others may have seized on the explanation in order to protect against any possible traces of scandal. Be that as it may, these explanations are simply not credible in light of the background, the many admissions made by members of the platoon, and the circumstantial evidence relating to the float. I therefore rejected them.

Phase Two: Was the Military's Internal Investigation Adequate?

- 76** As noted, the CF conducted an investigation into what occurred as the result of a complaint made by a 2 PPCLI member to a civilian who deals with CF personnel. On November 29, 2002, this civilian reported what the serving member had stated to Mike Spellen, a Peer Support Coordinator with OSISS. The civilian told him that a soldier who was experiencing psycho-social difficulties had expressed a reluctance to seek treatment from CF medical authorities because he perceived the battalion had an unfavourable attitude toward members with OSIs. The soldier cited the Crazy Train float at the unit's French Grey Cup festivities as evidence of this attitude.
- 77** Mike Spellen is a civilian and a former member of 2 PPCLI. The day he received this information, he reported it to his immediate supervisor, the OSISS Program Manager, Lieutenant-Colonel (then Major) Stéphane Grenier. Lieutenant-Colonel Grenier advised us that Mike Spellen was very upset at what had allegedly occurred. At the time he received the information about the alleged float, Lieutenant-Colonel Grenier had a pre-scheduled meeting on a Branch matter that day. One of the persons present at that meeting was Lieutenant-Colonel Réjean Duchesneau, who is an assistant to the Director General Land Staff (DGLS). Lieutenant-Colonel Grenier advised Lieutenant-Colonel Duchesneau of the allegation. He also advised CF Chief Warrant Officer, Chief Petty Officer (1st Class) Lupien, the Assistant Special Advisor to the CDS for OSIs, who he met by chance after the meeting. Lieutenant-Colonel Grenier confirmed his conversation with Lieutenant-Colonel Duchesneau by email later that day, noting that, in his view, the allegation "warranted some further investigation and if proven some action by the chain of command." Thus, the matter did not remain within 2 PPCLI, or even within the LFWA. Lieutenant-Colonel Grenier states that he did, however, contact the Executive Assistant to Brigadier-General Fenton, Commander of LFWA by phone later that same day, and advised him of the allegation.
- 78** The Commanding Officer of 2 PPCLI reports directly to Colonel Stuart Beare, the Commander of 1 CMBG in Edmonton. The allegation was therefore passed on to Colonel Beare. Major Dan Blanc, the staff officer responsible for all personnel-related matters at 1 CMBG, was assigned by Colonel Beare to investigate the matter. He contacted Major Bruce, the DCO at 2 PPCLI, advised him of the allegation, and sought clarification as to what happened. Major Bruce spoke to the CSM of Administration Company and directed him to ascertain what the float, constructed by members of his company, represented. Major Bruce reported to my investigators what he subsequently reported to Colonel Beare in response to Major Blanc's query:
- 79** I initially categorically denied that, saying: there was nothing actually written on that float. I was the Acting Commanding Officer that day and I was presiding over the battalion sports parade.... When I hung up

the phone, I said I probably shouldn't have been so quick off the mark. It probably would have been better if I spoke to the company in question and confirmed that in fact there was no writing on the float. I did and I was found to be in error. The Company Sergeant Major...actually informed me there had been writing on the float. I said, did it say Crazy Train? - which was the term used by the Brigade Commander [Colonel Beare] ...He [the CSM] indicated that it did not....I said so what was the intent or meaning behind the float and the CSM then told me at that particular time that to the best of his knowledge it was meant to indicate [the soldiers'] preference to move to the North Side rather than to Shilo. So armed with that information, I phoned the Brigade Commander back and gave him that piece of information.

- 80** My investigators asked Major Bruce if he informed Colonel Beare that the information passed to him was based solely on his discussion with the CSM. Major Bruce responded:
- 81** No.... The Brigade Commander [Colonel Beare] would take my word at face value...he would assume that I would do the investigation; come up with the thing.
- 82** Two things should be noted. First, Major Bruce had been present at the parade, and advised my investigative team that he saw no connection between the float and members with OSIs. He advised us that he had never heard the phrase "Crazy Train" used by 2 PPCLI members prior to this incident. Second, he was the Acting Commanding Officer on the day of the parade, and presided over it. He reported he had inspected and approved the floats.
- 83** Major Bruce's verbal assurance was the full extent of the CF investigation into this incident. In fact, photographs Major Bruce was aware had been taken were not developed. Apart from his conversation with the CSM, no attempt was made to interview anyone, nor was any attempt made to secure the float, which had by this time apparently been dismantled.
- 84** On December 4, 2002, Major Jon Gri, of G1 Management at LFWA, spoke to Major Blanc then sent an email to Lieutenant-Colonel Ivy Mieзитis, who was investigating this matter on behalf of the Chief of the Land Staff. Unbeknownst to Major Gri, the information he was reporting was inaccurate. In this email, Major Gri indicated that the float had "2 VP [PPCLI] Express - Next Stop North Side" written on it. This was "in ref[erence] to the soldiers' preference to moving the [battalion] to the north side of CFB Winnipeg vice making the move to Shilo. The reference was not aimed at pers[onnel] working on the North Side for various reasons."
- 85** While Major Gri asked for pictures of the incident to be forwarded to him electronically "to put the controversy to bed," this was not done. Our investigation revealed that the photographs were not sent to anyone. Indeed, they were not

printed until my investigators began their work a week later, and specifically requested prints be made.

86 While Major Gri was forwarding the above information to Lieutenant-Colonel Mieзитis, Colonel Beare wrote the following email to Major Bruce and Colonel Tatersall, the Chief of Staff at LFWA. He stated:

87 - The word crazy or any simile was not on any float

88 - No float had a message or intent that targeted [injured members] or any other body of people

89 - The banner on the float with the phrase "fast train to the north side" (or words to that effect) was a camouflaged statement expressing a desire by some to remain in Winnipeg vice moving the Bn [2 PPCLI] to Shilo

90 - The floats were inspected by the DCO and were deemed appropriate and very well constructed

91 This concluded the CF investigation into the matter. On December 5, 2002 Lieutenant-Colonel Mieзитis sent an email to the Director General Land Staff and the Director Land Personnel advising them "...this is [the] end of [the] mission."

How the Allegation Was Reported

92 The fact that the allegation had been reported through the OSISS chain of command was not well received by some. In Major Gri's December 4, 2002 email to Lieutenant-Colonel Mieзитis, he advised him that Major Blanc indicated to him "this matter had been blown out of all proportion and has usurped the chain of command, primarily by misinformation being fed up the medical stovepipe."

93 Additionally, Colonel Beare expressed discontent that complainants do not report their concerns to the chain of command at 2 PPCLI. In an email dated December 4, 2002 he wrote:

94 It remains an unsatisfactory condition that individuals are unable to address concerns - be they founded or not - to those on the scene.... In the end, I would hope that future local issues can be dealt with locally by those concerned.

95 On December 5, 2002, based on the information he had received, Major Blanc sent the following email to LFWA Headquarters:

96 The whole issue was spooled up by Mike Spellen the OSISS coordinator in Winnipeg. He admits to overreacting based on incomplete info passed on to him from soldiers. He apologized to the DCO of 2 VP

[PPCLI] and Mr. Spellen's quests for photos have ceased. 1Bde [1 CMBG] considers this matter closed.

- 97** In fact, Mr. Spellen acted in a reasonable manner. He notified his immediate supervisor, the head of OSISS, Lieutenant-Colonel Stéphane Grenier. Lieutenant-Colonel Grenier told my investigators that, in his view, Mr. Spellen did exactly the right thing by reporting the allegation to him. Lieutenant-Colonel Grenier in turn reported the allegation to various parties, as noted above.
- 98** My investigators asked Mr. Spellen about his apologizing to Major Bruce for making a complaint. Mr. Spellen responded that at no time did he apologize for making the complaint. He stated that Major Bruce called him November 29, 2002, and said he had heard that he [Mr. Spellen] was looking for pictures. Mr. Spellen confirmed that he was. According to Mr. Spellen, Major Bruce also stated to him that the float did not say "Crazy Train," it said "Last Train" and that he wished Mr. Spellen had come to him directly if he had concerns. Mr. Spellen recalled apologizing for not informing Major Bruce first but asserts that he did not apologize for making the complaint.
- 99** On January 7, 2003, the Director SORT and the lead investigator met with Colonel Beare. After interviewing him on his involvement in this matter, they briefed him on our findings to that date. Colonel Beare indicated that he fully accepted our findings and, in an email the following day to Brigadier-General Fenton, the Commander of LFWA, acknowledged "there does persist at the more junior levels a culture of friction or lack of understanding of OSIs, and this issue needs to be addressed." He indicated that he would pursue the matter with Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Day, the Commanding Officer of 2 PPCLI. Colonel Beare also noted that 2 PPCLI has been extremely heavily tasked over the last three years, yet has "performed superbly under less than ideal conditions" and "has delivered as part of every operational commitment imposed on LFWA" in that time. We understand that Colonel Beare briefed Brigadier-General Fenton about our findings immediately after meeting with my investigative team.

Analysis: The Investigation

- 100** It is not easy for those who have been stigmatized for having stress-related illnesses to come forward. When asked by my investigators if they could raise objections with their chain of command, two members responded, "If you do that, you're black-listed." A third member stated, "Complaints fall on deaf ears most of the time.... You're expected to suck it up and soldier on." A fourth suggested, "The padre is a pretty good guy to talk to."
- 101** No doubt there are many in the chain of command who do in fact deal effectively with such complaints. However, the belief reflected in these comments is not entirely imagined. There remains a perception, grounded on past experience, and unfortunately, episodes like this one, that military culture is insensitive to PTSD and other stress-related illnesses. Change in attitude takes a long time to come about.

Incidents like this one, when handled properly, can provide an opportunity to encourage this change.

- 102** It is therefore unfortunate when, as in this case, a legitimate complaint is not treated with the seriousness it deserves. First, the messenger, the Peer Support Coordinator, was criticized for having taken the matter outside of 2 PPCLI. In fact, he acted entirely appropriately. This complaint was of direct interest to OSISS because it dealt with an issue squarely within their mandate and typified the kind of concern many people with OSIs have. Criticizing Mr. Spellen for “usurping” the chain of command in such circumstances can only discourage the reporting of complaints.
- 103** While I agree with the principle of giving a respondent an early opportunity to resolve concerns, there are two points I would make. While this was a particular incident, it reflects a far more general problem of concern to OSISS, and is not a purely local matter. Moreover, when 2 PPCLI leadership undertook an investigation, it was not thorough and objective. There is every reason to believe this matter would have simply died had Mr. Spellen only brought his concern to 2 PPCLI.
- 104** The second thing that demonstrates the complaint was not given the seriousness it warranted was the investigation itself. Lieutenant-Colonel Grenier took reasonable steps to ensure the complaint was treated seriously, and there was a flurry of communications between high-ranking officers who took an interest in the issue. However, the effort to get to the bottom of things died when the matter was referred back to 2 PPCLI. Major Bruce, who had been in charge of the event, assumed the verbal assurances of the CSM were sufficient to put the matter to rest without any written or even extensive oral report being requested. No interviews were conducted, available photographs were left undeveloped, and no effort was made to secure the float. On this paltry record, assurances were sent up the chain of command and the matter was considered closed. No concerns were raised about the adequacy and objectivity of the investigation even though Major Bruce’s first response was a complete denial, before he had even called anyone to confirm whether his denial was accurate. No concerns were raised about the adequacy of the investigation even though the matter was put to bed before requested photographs were received.
- 105** I have no doubt that those who asked for the inquiry wanted the truth. On the other hand, and not surprisingly, there was an obvious desire by those involved that the allegation be refuted. This is clear from the correspondence. One need merely peruse the emails that were exchanged to appreciate that the over-arching hope of those involved was that the complaint simply go away: “I have asked that any pictures that were taken of the float be forwarded electronically to put the controversy to bed,” “This should close the issue,” “The whole issue was spooled up by Mike Spellen... 1 Bde [1 CMBG] considers the matter closed.” Even after the investigation by my Office was underway, messages exchanged included references like “Can you get me something to put this to bed?” and “Actually, CT could stand for something like ‘Combat Team’.” This just doesn’t want to go away.” The impulse to avoid a scandal and refute an embarrassing allegation is entirely natural, but it

created a climate in which the adequacy of the investigation into the complaint was not questioned. The assurances pushed up the chain of command, however ill-founded, were far too readily accepted, without a reasonable attempt to ensure the quality of the information or even to determine what kind of inquiries were undertaken.

106 In my opinion, the inadequacy of this pseudo-investigation and the readiness to accept that the matter was “put to bed” illustrate that many members do not yet have an adequate appreciation of the importance of OSI-related problems. What should be “put to bed” is the stigmatization and rejection of injured members. This complaint should have been given much higher priority and attention. Leaders should have insisted the matter be investigated thoroughly and objectively. Instead, cursory inquiries were accepted, even though they were made by a member of 2 PPCLI leadership who, at best, was so out of touch with the prevailing climate surrounding OSIs in 2 PPCLI that he had never even heard about the broadly understood reference to the Crazy Train and was thereby incapable of understanding what had gone on. If a minimum of investigation had been conducted within 2 PPCLI, I am confident the truth would have been discovered. I say this notwithstanding the fact that the original complaint may not have been entirely accurate. Those charged with the investigation were asked to determine whether the words “Crazy Train” appeared on the float, and those words may not have been used. Indeed, it appears they were not. Still, this does not alter the fact that the measures taken could more accurately be styled as simply making inquiries than as an actual investigation. It took my investigators, who had received the same complaint, little time to learn that there were significant reasons to believe that the complaint was serious, merited and urgent. A real investigation would have uncovered the truth.

Recommendation

- 107** I made a number of recommendations pertinent to this incident in my first report on PTSD, released February 5, 2002. For example, Recommendations 8 and 9 urged that “CF units be mandated to provide ongoing continuation training about PTSD to all members at regular intervals, in addition to any deployment-related training,” and that the “CF make PTSD a mandatory part of education and training to all ranks and that educating CF members about PTSD be made a priority.”
- 108** On December 17, 2002, I reported on the progress of the CF and DND regarding the issue of OSIs. I was then, and still am, heartened by the response of the CDS, those at NDHQ, and many others who endorse these recommendations fully and are working hard to achieve their realization. I was then, and remain, pleased by the appointment of the Special Advisor to the CDS for OSIs. When I released that follow-up report, however, I noted that there is a disconnect between the obvious and sincere commitment of those at the top, and what is happening at the unit level. My investigators found that there was very little improvement in the quantity of training given to units. Moreover, we were unable to detect any evidence that coordination from the national level has had an influence in the field at this time. I am aware of the complexity of training in the military and that resource strains exist. I am also aware that the attitudes are deep-seated and education takes time to organize, deliver, and have impact. The Crazy Train episode demonstrates, however, that this is a matter of great urgency. Members who provided first hand knowledge of their participation in the float’s concept did not seem to appreciate how such a portrayal could have been disrespectful to soldiers with OSIs. The need for education to improve these attitudes and misconceptions about OSIs at the unit level is both pressing and urgent. The feasibility of an immediate response is evidenced by the reaction of Colonel Beare. In a letter dated January 20, 2003, Colonel Beare reported to me that:
- 109** Commander, Land Forces Western Area conducted a Senior Leadership Symposium for all Commanding Officers and Regimental Sergeants Major in Calgary 11-12 January 2003. The highlight of the Symposium was a two-hour session on OSIs. In that session over 180 senior leaders of the Area were presented the matters of fact of OSIs by a tremendously articulate physician, by a member of OSISS and by a highly regarded Warrant Officer who was able to impress upon us all the realities of PTSD and the impact it has had upon his life. 2 PPCLI is planning now to invite this Warrant Officer and other individuals to continue the education process and the journey of shaping the attitudes regarding OSIs within 2 PPCLI. This event will take place before the Unit deploys to Bosnia this April.
- 110** Apart from the urgent need to educate at the unit level, this episode also demonstrates that while those in positions of leadership are being given the message, not everyone is as yet completely acculturated. Those in positions of leadership who

encounter indications of concern relating to the treatment or stigmatization of members who have OSIs have to give these matters the highest priority. Only a careful and thorough review in such cases is acceptable, and only when complaints are treated with priority will the commitment that is required be demonstrated. A climate has to be created not only where those afflicted with OSIs feel comfortable seeking treatment, but also in which remnant discrimination and ill-informed attitudes can be identified and ameliorated. For this to happen, complaints have to be taken seriously.

- 111** Clearly, the CF investigation into this incident was seriously deficient. However, I do not think it necessary to make a trite recommendation that these types of investigations should be done thoroughly and objectively by the CF. That is, or should be, a given in every case. That said, in the interest of providing guidance and assistance in what I consider are reasonable expectations of proficiency in these kinds of internal investigations, I have provided, as an addendum, an investigation protocol which I will be using to monitor the quality of future investigations conducted by the CF into cases of this nature.
- 112** I have already given a comprehensive list of general recommendations to address problems related to PTSD and other OSIs, giving the strongest of emphasis to education. I have every faith that my commitment to see such education take place is shared by those who have recently themselves become fully educated about the unfortunate culture surrounding PTSD and other OSIs. We are at a time in our history, however, when the risk of a proliferation of OSIs is high. We have to be prepared, now. In an effort to put the issues into sharper relief, I am following up my previous recommendations on OSIs with one more.
- 113** I recommend that:
- 114** **Necessary resources be committed, and the required planning be finalized as a matter of the highest priority, for the immediate implementation of unit level education about operational stress injuries.**



André Marin
Ombudsman

Appendix:

OSI Complaints Investigation Protocol

The preparation of this protocol was inspired by events that transpired during my investigation of events that took place at CFB Winnipeg during the 2002 French Grey Cup Parade.

While some of the propositions contained in this protocol were inspired by the nature of the investigation conducted in that case, not all were. I see this as an opportunity to address not only issues that arose in that investigation, but to encourage the development of an investigative protocol that responds to a range of potential problems that could arise.

Given the stigma surrounding OSIs, particularly in a military context, people suffering from OSIs are not apt to seek counselling, nor will they tend to be anxious to complain about the treatment they have received by their peers or superiors. An environment should be created that encourages the address of complaints and concerns. As overriding general principles:

1. When a request for assistance or a complaint is received, it should be handled in a fashion that will not discourage the complainant or other complainants from seeking assistance or making complaints; and
2. The request for assistance, or the complaint, should be dealt with in a prompt, thorough, and objective way.

These principles require that:

- a. Any complaint should be treated as a matter of substance and not dealt with in a technical fashion.

This would include refraining from using a lack of personal standing by the person bringing the complaint or concern forward as basis for refraining from investigating. Whether it be that a complainant has been affected personally and comes forward, that someone complains on that person's behalf, or that a caregiver or other member is concerned about the impact of particular acts or omissions on those who have an OSI, the complaint should be taken seriously.

- b. Those who receive the complaint should not engage in any conduct that gives the impression that those in the chain of command are more interested in preventing scandal or embarrassment than dealing with the substance of the complaint. This would include things like:
 - expressing criticism of persons for not following the appropriate chain of command, without first ensuring that chain of command requirements were indeed contravened;

- expressing criticism of persons for using appropriate mechanisms that bring the complaint to the attention of persons outside of the unit or region in question; or
- failing to treat the substance of the complaint seriously, because the chain of command requirements have not been properly followed. (The substance of the complaint and the utilization of appropriate procedures are separate issues.)

c. The investigation of the complaint should be prompt, thorough, and objective.

Thoroughness

Obtaining verbal assurances from select individuals is not a thorough investigation. Depending on the nature of the issue, a suitable range of possible, relevant witnesses should be identified and questioned.

Available information, such as documents that one would reasonably expect to exist, photographs, or any other items connected to a relevant event, should be promptly secured and evaluated.

Before an ultimate decision is made on a complaint, those responsible for making that decision should ensure that opinions or conclusions furnished to them are based on a thorough investigation. Details as to the nature of the investigation should be sought. A complete oral or (preferably) written report should be provided including details of the investigation and the basis for the conclusions.

Objectivity

Notwithstanding the appropriate presumption that honest answers will be provided to the chain of command, it is imperative that the investigation not only be objective, but that it have the appearance of objectivity. Persons who have immediate connection to impugned events or conduct should be given an opportunity to be heard, but should not be asked to investigate complaints.

Ultimate decisions on complaints should be made by persons who are not connected to impugned events through immediate command responsibility.

d. Reasons for decisions should be provided to the complainant, and the complainant should be advised as to the nature and extent of the investigation that has been conducted.