

## ***Chapter 8 – Personnel Support and Recognition***

1. It is essential that members are recognized for significant achievements and milestones and that they have the support of the CME Family during transitional periods and crises. This cannot occur without careful co-ordination and the free flow of information within the CME and the chain of command. This chapter outlines the appropriate action to be taken when significant events occur to CME members.

### **PERSONNEL SUPPORT**

2. The CME member is not immune to personal or family difficulties that affect other Canadians. In fact, the CME understands that postings, prolonged absences, and other frequent changes specific to military life may aggravate problems. Leaders should always be aware of difficulties that subordinates may have in both their personal and professional lives. For example, a family that is not adapting well to a new posting, a sick child, financial troubles, excessive drinking or any other personal problems could have a detrimental effect on a member's performance. When a problem is suspected, a good leader should offer to counsel the member or provide a reference to specialty agencies, such as base or wing social workers, to help in dealing with circumstances. In this way, the health and well-being of all CME members is preserved.

3. A family support system has been developed to assist members and their dependants during these transitions and to assure the well-being of all personnel. As a part of this system, a sponsor is often assigned to each family to identify and avoid problems and to alleviate some of the trauma associated with postings, deployments, and other potentially disruptive events. The assignment of sponsors is generally co-ordinated by the unit Sergeant Major or the Adjutant (or equivalents).

4. When an Engineer is posted, the gaining unit should assign a sponsor to help with the move and transition. The sponsor should be of equal rank, of similar marital status, and be available to help before, during, and after the move. Assistance may be offered in acquainting the new member with community services such as housing, medical facilities, schools and activities for the family; introducing the new member and family to unit personnel; helping with the in routine; and problem solving.

5. When an Engineer is deployed, a sponsor is usually assigned to the family left behind. The sponsor is often someone who lives near the dependants of the deployed Engineer and who has a similar family structure. The sponsor is responsible for ensuring that the family has correct and current information on the mission and to assist with the resolution of any problems and administrative difficulties that the family is unable to cope with alone. Many units also organize a support group for dependants where spouses and children can share experiences and help each other as required.

### **PROMOTIONS**

6. Promotions are a significant event in a member's career and should be treated with importance. It is traditional for the commanding officer to present the promoted member with the new rank at a small ceremony. The member's co-workers are usually in attendance to congratulate the member and a photographer is on hand to record the moment for the unit's newsletter or base/wing newspaper. The member often hosts a promotion party later the same day in the mess (for more information on promotion parties see [Chapter 7](#)). Dress for promotions is generally dress of the day but, in some units, service dress with tunic is customary.

7. Career managers are responsible for ensuring that the Branch Advisor's office is informed of all upcoming promotions so that they may be properly recognized throughout the CME. NCMs being appointed to Master Corporal or promoted to Sergeant and above, and officers promoted to Captain and above are recognized in the CHIMO! Communiqués. In addition, the Branch Advisor issues personalized letters of congratulation to members promoted to the rank of chief warrant officer, major, lieutenant-colonel or colonel, and the Colonel Commandant sends congratulatory letters to members promoted to general and flag officer ranks.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

8. The CME is always proud when members receive prestigious appointments, particularly those outside the CME such as Base Chief Warrant Officer positions. CME members are recognized in the CHIMO! Communiqués upon announcement of any key appointment. In addition, letters of congratulation are issued from the Branch Advisor for command appointments assigned to chief warrant officers, lieutenant-colonels, and colonels. Career Managers are responsible for keeping the Branch Advisor's office informed of any appointments and course selections so that appropriate action may be taken.

## **COURSE SELECTIONS**

9. As a way of recognizing members who will soon be in command positions, all members chosen for career development courses are recognized in the CHIMO! Communiqués. In addition, letters of congratulation are issued from the Branch Advisor to officers of the rank of major and above. The CME Chief Warrant Officer issues letters of congratulation to non-commissioned members of the rank of warrant officer and above who are chosen for career courses.

## **AWARDS**

10. Supervisors should be alert to a subordinate's performance worthy of recognition by an honour or award. All too often, outstanding performance is only acknowledged as a member "*doing the job.*" Leaders should become familiar with the various commendations sponsored by the unit and higher headquarters and outstanding performers should be brought to the attention of the chain-of-command for advice on determining how the individual should be recognized.

11. Most medals and awards such as the Canadian Forces Decoration, Special Service Medals, and Unit Commendations are presented by the member's commanding officer at a ceremony or on parade. All Commendations should be presented by the sponsoring authority, whenever possible. For example, the Wing Commander should always present a Wing Commander's Commendation. The Wing or Base Commander may also present other medals and awards at parades. Very prestigious awards, such as the Order of Military Merit, are presented at ceremonies organized for that purpose. Dress for receiving medals and awards is generally service dress with tunic.

12. The CME Family is very proud of the many members who have won awards. Upon declassification of information, all members receiving awards are recognized in CHIMO. Upon the approval of a medal, such as the Order of Military Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, or other equally prestigious award, all members receive a congratulatory note from the Colonel Commandant.

## **RETIREMENTS**

13. To recognize members for their service, the Branch Advisor's office must be notified of all upcoming retirements. All CME members are recognized in the CHIMO! Communiqués upon retirement. This ensures that any former colleagues who wish to congratulate the member have the opportunity to send a

short message. The Branch Advisor issues personalized letters of congratulation to retiring members of the rank of chief warrant officer, major, lieutenant-colonel and colonel. The CME Colonel Commandant sends letters of congratulation to retiring general and flag officers. All members reaching compulsory retirement age, regardless of rank, also receive a certificate of appreciation, signed by the Branch Advisor.

14. It is traditional to say farewell to retiring members at a luncheon or mess dinner, although each unit has different customs regarding retirement functions. At the function, a gift is often presented from the unit. Retiring officers who were members of the Officer's Fund are also presented with a gift from that Fund (see [Chapter 2](#) for more information on the Officer's Fund). The member's immediate superior usually gives a light-hearted speech about the member's career, messages of congratulations received from fellow Engineers are read aloud, and the member then gives a short farewell speech summarizing his or her career and outlining any future plans. Although they can retire from the Canadian Forces, members forever remain a valued part of the CME Family. For this reason, it is customary to ensure that a retired representative of the Engineer Association is invited to participate in retirement functions, to formally welcome the retiring members to his or her new status within the CME Family.

## **DEATHS AND FUNERALS**

15. The stress that bereavement imposes must be recognized and, upon learning of a death of an Engineer, it is customary for some members to visit promptly. However, the member's commanding officer should be contacted for direction in order to avoid subjecting the family to too many visitors. If a visit is not appropriate, an offer of assistance by telephone or by card will likely be appreciated. Assistance should be offered to assume the duties of the bereaved at the workplace, assist with funeral arrangements, or perform any other helpful activity. The family may also be comforted by an offer to liaise with military authorities.

16. In the case of the death of a retired member, the CME association to which the member belonged is responsible for contacting the Canadian Military Engineers Association National Registrar. The Registrar ensures that the CME Branch Advisor and all CME association members are notified of the funeral arrangements. The Association will ensure that the family is immediately contacted, to assist where possible with any arrangements, such as liaison with the Superannuation Directorate, the Public Service Health Care Plan, the Last Post Fund, etc.

17. In the case of the death of a serving member, the commanding officer shall notify the office of the Branch Advisor as soon as possible. The CME Adjutant then ensures that all CME members are notified of the funeral arrangements so that suitable condolences may be offered.

18. The Branch Advisor sends a letter of condolence when advised of the death or serious injury of any CME Family member and the passing of all members is recognized in the CHIMO! Communiqués. It is appropriate for units and individuals to send cards or flowers to the family of the deceased or donations in lieu.

19. If it is in accordance with the wishes of the next-of-kin, a military funeral may be accorded to a serving member. Funeral arrangements for Reserve Force and retired personnel are normally carried out under local arrangements at no cost to the Department of National Defence. QR&O Chapter 210, Section 3, outlines the policy regarding funeral expenses paid by the Department of National Defence. The unit Sergeant Major and Adjutant (or equivalents) are usually assigned to arrange a military funeral. QR&O Chapter 24 – Casualties and Funerals, and Chapter 15 of A-PD-201-000/PT-000 – Manual of Drill and Ceremonial, detail the protocol and procedures for military funerals.

20. Unless the family specifically requests otherwise, it is customary to wear uniform with medals and mourning band when attending the funeral of a CME Family member.