

How to Write a Good Retirement Biography

General

After having served a career in the Canadian Military Engineers and now moving on to Phase II of their life, our members deserve recognition of that service and best wishes for their future endeavours. The CMEA plays an important role in this transition by publishing a biography on our website.

Aim

This guideline outlines the components and characteristics of an appropriate biography.

Retirement Biography Format

The biography should follow a logical format with the right balance between the routine aspects of a career and the appropriate detail of any highlights in terms of achievements or events as appropriate.

- Make it an interesting narrative to read. Please do not simply copy the entries in the person's UER.
- As a rule, the biography should easily fit on one page -- 400 or so words should be sufficient.
- Use single spacing.
- Do not use ALL CAPS. Write the narrative as a normal document.
- The biography can be written in English, French or both.
- A 'head & shoulders' photo of the person in uniform should also be included. It should be of sufficient resolution (preferably 300 dpi) to show properly on a webpage. The CMEA will crop and edit the photo if needed so long as the quality is sufficient.

The CMEA does not edit these submissions, so poorly written biographies reflect badly on both the individual and the writer.

See Annex A for more detail and examples. In addition, the CMEA website (<https://cmea-agmc.ca/cme-family-retirements>) has many examples of well-written and effective biographies.

Style

The style of a retirement biography can be informal, but not casual. Annex B provides some points of style with some examples.

Legacy Value of a Retirement Biography

Years from now, this person will die and few of us will be around to honour their passing. Family members are likely to write an obituary, but our experience shows most obituaries do not provide a good description of the deceased's military career. Our Retirement narrative may be the only available source without which an appropriate Last Post tribute may not be possible.

A copy of the biography will also be kept in the Personality File at the CME Museum.

A retiring individual should receive a printed copy of their biography and a copy should also be placed on the individual's personnel file.

Annex A – Elements of a Retirement Biography

Element	Content	Example
Title	Rank, Name, Post-Nominals Centred and bold, Arial 18 px	Sgt Joseph “Joe” Jones, MMM, CD
Photo	A recent photo should be included. Normally place these at the top of the page, under the title, justified Left with Word Wrap.	
Introduction	An introduction announces when the person will retire, their length of service and summarizes their career.	Sergeant Joseph “Joe” Jones, MMM, Canadian Military Engineers on 12 S of service in Canada, Europe, Afghar
Body – Career Summary	The body should begin with some personal details covering the person’s life before they joined the Forces. This should be followed by a chronological summary of the person’s military career. It does not have to have detail any routine and trades progression training but can include notable highlights. Notable tours of duty need to be mentioned.	Joe was born and raised in The Pas, MB in 2000 and moved to Winnipeg, MB in construction technology at Red River. After working in Fort McMurray, AB Canadian Military Engineers in Edmo Joe completed his basic training in S Training at CFSME. He served in Col Afghanistan in 2006. On return he w Trenton followed two years later with Brussels, Belgium. On promotion to Edmonton and completed a 6-month Heights in 2012. He was posted to C on his final posting.
Body – Notable Achievements or Recognition	If the person has received special recognition or achieved something notable or received a significant award, a brief mention is warranted.	During his time in the Golan, Joe rec Commendation for his role in the res shepherd who had inadvertently det zone. Joe administered first aid and Syrian Army checkpoint in Sasa. Sgt Joseph Jones received the Meda
Body – Community Involvement	Most members have played a role in their communities. If appropriate, these could be included here.	Joe was active in the scouting mover leadership roles. As a minor hockey the Year while serving in Trenton in
Body – Future Plans	This is where you can describe what the person is going to do after retiring including any training, education or employment opportunities they plan to pursue. Their family can also be mentioned at this point.	Joe has been accepted at the Univer be completing a degree in Civil Engir He, his wife Sarah and two boys, Jer in the Fredericton area.

Annex B – Points of Style

As mentioned above, the style can be informal but not casual. The following points serve as a guide.

1. **Font:** Except for the title (Arial 18 Bold) the text will be Arial 11. Avoid any other bolding or Italics unless required.
2. **Ranks:**
 - a. Use the official rank abbreviation in the Title and any subsequent mention of the person's rank, but do spell out the rank in full in the first paragraph in the narrative.
 - b. If the person was commissioned from the ranks, simply state their rank at retirement. Do not use names that include needless detail in the name. For example, do not write Captain (former CWO) Charles Thumperhead. Simply say, Captain Charles Thumperhead. You can describe his commissioning in the narrative.
3. **Names:** If the person has a nickname or goes by a shortened form of their name, mention it in the title and use it as appropriate in the narrative. For example, Sgt Michael "Mike" Jones or MCpl Edward "Fast Eddie" Jackson. In the latter case, one would use "Ed" in the narrative rather than "Fast Eddie".
4. **Release Item:** There is no need to mention why this person is being released. It may be that they have a medical reason that we do not need made public. Similarly, there may be embarrassing and potentially damaging administrative or disciplinary reasons that are also need not be mentioned. Every member of our CME Family deserves our best wishes in their send off and not any judgement.