



**Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island  
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General R. Hillier, CMM, MSC, CD  
Chief of Defence Staff,  
Department of National Defence  
National Defence Headquarters  
Major-General George R. Pearkes Building  
101 Colonel By Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
K1A 0K2

26 Feb 2007

Dear General Hillier,

A few months ago a small group of experienced and qualified individuals met to discuss two questions which we found vexing and intriguing. Firstly, why are some of our best-trained Canadian Forces personnel seriously affected by combat related posttraumatic stress disorder while others, hopefully the majority, are not? Secondly, are there practical measures that can be taken to minimize the risk that personnel in combat will develop PTSD? To the first question we can find little resolution, to the second question it appears that some work is in progress. However, over the course of a number of meetings and with the support of a good deal of literature search we came to the conclusion that there might be merit in conducting a significant research project exploring the influence that the cohesiveness of the deployed unit, its leadership (at all levels) and its training regime have on the incidence of that particular strain of PTSD which is caused by exposure to combat situations.

To that end we have prepared a “thought paper”, which we suggest might be used by you and your staff to initiate such a research project. We do this in the hope that our effort would be seen not as interference but as a sincere effort on our part to be helpful. Of course we would be eager to meet with any of your specialist officers as well as others and discuss the proposal in more depth.

I trust the attached listing of our group will demonstrate our interest and experience in this subject.

Yours sincerely,

***Original Signed by:***

Colonel John C. Eggenberger, OMM, CD PhD (Retired)  
President, United Services Institute of Vancouver Island  
Federation of Military United Services Institutes of Canada

Attachment to RUSI VI letter signed by John C Eggenberger, February 26, 2007

**THE RESEARCH THOUGHT PAPER WAS CONCEIVED AND IS ENDORSED BY:**

Colonel John Eggenberger, OMM, CD, PhD (Retired) former director Personnel Applied Research.

Vice Admiral Nigel Brodeur, CMM, CD (Retired) former Deputy Chief of Defence Staff.

Timothy Black, PhD, R.Psych (Limited Register), Assistant Professor, Counselling Psychology, University of Victoria.

Lieutenant General Kent Foster, CMM, CD (Retired) former Commander FMC.

Colonel Peter Green, MD MB BS (Retired) former Army medical officer.

James Main, MD (in practice) Contracted to DVA/DND for PTSD treatment.

George Nichol, PhD (in practice) Clinical Psychologist, Contracted to DVA/DND for PTSD treatment.

Major General David Wightman, CMM, CD (Retired) former Commander, Canadian Forces Europe.

Institutional Endorsement:

**Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver Island**