

Impact Statement – Grozelle Family

The following impact statement is being provided to the Military Board of Inquiry for inclusion in their report on the death of Officer Cadet Joe Grozelle. This impact statement attempts to describe what the past five years has been like for the Grozelle family. The following outlines, not only the emotional impacts of having lost our son Joe, but also discusses the financial and physical impacts of the past five years on the Grozelle family.

The loss of Joe has had a tremendous impact on our family and is certainly a great loss and we miss him very much. In addition to our loss of Joe the family has had to experience incredible frustration with the entire process of Joe's disappearance, recovery and subsequent investigation into his death. This has been a very frustrating time for the family dealing with the authorities and the various agencies that have been involved in this case and has created incredible disappointment, mistrusts and skepticism in how the various agencies have dealt with this case.

Our greatest disappointment was in finding Joe deceased rather than alive. The loss of Joe has affected each member of the family in a different way. And each of us has had to come to terms with him no longer being with us. The key question that we all ask ourselves constantly over the past five years... is... what happened to you Joe? Why is it that you are no longer with us and what really happened to you. Whenever the family gets together the topic of what happened to Joe always comes up. And we ask ourselves over and over and over again, what happened to Joe. The answer to this question is what we were hoping that the authorities would be able to provide us as part of the complete investigation into Joe's death. The Coroner's Office in the province of Ontario is required to answer five questions whenever there is a death, who died, when they died, where they died, how they died and the manner of death. After five years of investigation and the involvement of seven organizations the Grozelle family has only one answer - **WHO** died. It is absolutely incredible that with today's science, forensic capability, and technology that only one of the five questions is answered. The fact that the family only

has answers to one of the five questions begs another question to be asked and that is “Why is it that we only have answers to one question”? To get to the answer as to why it is that we have no answers, there is a need to review in detail exactly what the police agencies did during their investigation. Trying to find out this level of detail has been next to impossible for the Grozelle family. We need to know what happened to Joe in order to make sure that the history books are written correctly with respect to what happened to him.

It is important that we find the answers to these questions for the following reasons.

1. For Joe's sake - so that the truth about his death can be identified,
2. For the family's sake, so we know what happened to Joe,
3. For all of the other cadets (and their families) who attend RMC, that they know, what happened at the school,
4. For the people of Kingston, so that they know what happened in their community,
5. And finally, for the people of Ontario, that they know why there was a death in the province.

Joe was a member of the Canadian military and was training to be an officer in the Canadian forces. He was an employee of this organization and it has been very frustrating for the family, in the lack of urgency or willingness of the Military to find out what exactly happened to one of their employees. The RMC/Military should have been providing more support for the family and should have been pushing the various agencies (Coroner's Office, OPP etc), to ensure that a thorough investigation was conducted in this case.

The fact that the family has no answers at this point in time (May 2009) stems from a number of key factors. One major area of concern has to do with jurisdiction. Who was in charge of the investigation at various stages of the case, has been a major concern! Were proper procedures and protocol followed by all of the agencies involved? Was each of these agencies as thorough as they should have been with respect to examining

evidence, looking for information, and following proper investigative procedures/protocol? Were assumptions made and incorrect conclusions drawn without the proper supporting facts? Was all the evidence properly examined and reviewed in a timely manner? Was all information and evidence shared by all of the various agencies involved?

The following text provides comments of our experiences during the various stages that have occurred over the past five years.

Missing Son.....

October 22, 2003 was a date that changed the Grozelle family forever. That was to be the beginning of a very dramatic turn in the lives of an ordinary family, with five children living on a quiet farm in rural southern Ontario. There were five children Dan, Jim, Nikki, Joe and Corri, three boys and two girls. All of the children attended Ridgeway District high school, where they all were good at athletics and did excellent academically.

Joe Grozelle decided that he was going to attend Royal military College in Kingston, where he would train to be an officer of the Canadian Military. Since Joe played basketball when he was in high school, he also had the opportunity to play varsity basketball with the RMC team. The coach Craig Norman recruited Joe to play on the basketball team at RMC. Joe really enjoyed playing basketball, and being part of the varsity team. His best friend, Steve Scriver and others such as Kevin Delude became an important part of his life at RMC. Joe did well in the first two years at RMC and by his third year was starting to aspire more towards the military and attaining Bars in his third and fourth year at school. By that time he had also achieved an "All Canadian" status which is recognition for varsity sports and high academic achievement.

On the evening of October the 22nd 2003 family received a phone call from Coach Norman indicating that Joe had not been at practice that day. Our initial reaction was not of concern, but that Joe may have missed practice for some good reason and would

probably show up later. The next morning we received a second phone call from Coach Norman that Joe still was missing and had not been seen on campus. At this point concerns set in, and we knew that there was something wrong. Joe was always a very dependable person and would certainly let people know where he was and what he was doing. And in particular, if he was planning on going someplace or going out with friends he would indicate where he was. Joe's disappearance was reported to the military officials on Wednesday, October the 22, 2003, approximately 6 p.m., and that's when he was officially declared as missing. On Thursday morning, October the 23, 2003 I called RMC to find out what was going on, and spoke with Colonel Peters who was the Director of Cadets at the time. He indicated that Joe was missing and that the college was looking for him and taking the appropriate steps to find him. Later that day, the Canadian Forces National Investigation Services (CFNIS) was called in and eight investigators from Ottawa came to RMC Kingston to start the search for Joe.

With limited information being obtained from the CFNIS investigators and RMC, the family decided to go to Kingston on Saturday October the 25th. There was an urgent need for the family to be there to try to find out what was happening and to see what was going on with respect to trying to find Joe. We needed to find Joe! For Joe to be missing was out of character for him since he was close to family and had lots of friends.

RMC provided accommodations for the family at the Princess Anne room which was located on the Kingston Military Base property. During the course of the next three weeks numerous family members came to Kingston to assist with the search and to provide support for the family. Family members took days off work, in order to be there with us to provide support and to help search for Joe during the time that Joe was missing. The family had numerous discussions with the military CFNIS personnel to try to receive information about what was going on with the search. Although numerous meetings were held, the family found it very frustrating to deal with the CFNIS since little information was being shared and we had no idea exactly what was being done.

At approximately 8 a.m. on the morning of November 13, 2003 during a violent wind storm, a body was spotted in the Cataraqui River, on the south side of the Causeway near the shore of RMC. A short time later the body was recovered on the northeast side of the Causeway. Later that morning I attended Kingston General Hospital to identify the body, and it was that of Joe. We never dreamed that it would end this way, since we always had hoped Joe would be found and that he was maybe just somewhere with friends or whatever. There was an autopsy conducted on November the 13, 2003 and on Sunday, November 15, 2003 Joe's body was released and returned to Ridgetown. A funeral service was held at St. Joseph's Church in Chatham on Friday November the 21, 2003. Joe was provided a full military funeral and was laid to rest at the Greenwood Cemetery just outside of Ridgetown Ontario. Every Sunday morning the family attends church in Ridgetown, and after church on the way home we always stop to see Joe. On every one of these visits, I continue to ask myself why you are here Joe. What happened to you? Why is it that we don't have any information about what happened to you?

Sometime later one of Joe's fellow squad members, prepared an obituary for Joe, which was read at one of the memorial services held at RMC for Joe. The following is that obituary:

Class of 2005

23160 Officer Cadet Joseph Grozelle

Officier Cadet Joseph Theodore (Joe) Grozelle, beloved son of Ron Grozelle and Minnie Grozelle-Scholten of R.R. #1 Muirkirk, was born in Chatham, Ontario, on 11 September 1982. Dear brother of Dan Grozelle of London, Jimmy Grozelle of R.R. #1 Muirkirk, Nikki and her husband Darrell Vannieuwenhuyze of Ridgetown, and Corn Grozelle of R.R. #1 Muirkirk. Loved grandson of Ed and Ophelia Grozelle of London and Maria Scholten and her late husband Theodore (1956). Special uncle of Baylie and Owen Vannieuwenhuyze.

Before coming to the Royal Military College (RMC) in Kingston, Joe graduated with honours from Ridgetown District High School where he played many sports including cross country, volleyball, soccer, badminton and especially basketball. Enrolled as a logistic officer in the Canadian Forces, he successfully completed his Basic Officer Training Course (BOTC) during the summer of 2002 at

the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruits School (CFLRS) in St-Jean, Quebec. The following summer he completed his second language training.

At RMC, Joe was a 3rd year business administration (with honours) student. He was on the Dean's list and in the top 10 of his program. He was also a proud member of the RMC Paladins varsity basketball team. He was happy to be among fellow athletes playing at a university level. Joe was hard working and looking forward to make the playoffs. He was also the Cadet Squadron Sports Officer (CSSO), and fulfilled his duty with loyalty, responsibility and courage. He was considered by his peers as an example of leadership to follow.

During his free time, Joe truly loved going home just to relax and be with his family, or to spend some time with his girlfriend Melissa, or just to hang out with friends. We will remember him as being good hearted and caring, fun and loving. Although, if there is one thing everyone who had the chance to meet Joe will never forget is his smile; a warm genuine smile reflecting a cheerful personality who lit up the lives of many, each touched in their own way.

Joseph Theodore (Joe) Grozelle disappeared from his family and friends on the 22nd of October 2003. He was 21 years old. "His friendly face and sweet smile bring sad tears as he is dearly missed by his family and friends."

23049 F. Dumont

A journey into the bureaucratic world of Government Agencies - Police, Coroners Office, Freedom of Information

After Joe's funeral our focus turned to the investigation, autopsy results and what was being done to find out why and how Joe died. This process would prove to be filled with lack of details, bureaucratic processes, delays and frustration with the "system". Most people don't ever get involved with the system (government bureaucracy, police agencies, etc) other than perhaps the occasional speeding ticket or parking infraction. We have the impression that all of these agencies work well but we were soon to learn that was not the case. Shortly after Joe's body was discovered, the CFNIS packed up and went back to Ottawa. During the time that Joe was missing, the CFNIS had seven investigators located in Kingston, looking for Joe. Once the body was recovered, the CFNIS should have increased their efforts, now that there was a death rather than scaling

back and leaving RMC. We discovered later, at the Coroners inquest that the CFNIS had developed a list of 16 points, which were reviewed with the Coroners Office. A number of the items listed would give the impression that Joe was not happy at school and was going to be kicked off the basketball team. Many of the points listed were never substantiated by the CFNIS and if not challenged would have left the impression that Joe was a very disturbed and sad individual. The CFNIS investigation did not substantiate these facts to be true and if left unchallenged, might have resulted in a situation where suicide may have been suspected. The Coroners Office completed an autopsy on the body and the results of this autopsy were not provided to the family until November 2004. As a result of the review of the autopsy report, along with other forensic testing that was done, it was found that a less than stellar job was completed. With regards to Joe's death, investigation, the Coroners Office did not follow their own regulations for the death investigation by allowing the CFNIS to continue with the case, even though the Coroners Office was supposed to obtain the services of the OPP to conduct their investigation. It was only after our persistence and pointing this act to the Coroner that the OPP eventually did get involved in the case in February 2004. Two OPP officers came to the Grozelle home in February and indicated that they were going to be assisting the Coroner with the death investigation and that we would be very impressed with the quality of their work. We trusted them and took their word that this would be the case. The family continued to correspond with the OPP during their investigation, but received very little detail information about the specifics of the investigation, and what was going on. In November of 2004, the decision was made by the Coroners Office and the OPP that at exhumation of Joe's body would occur and that a second autopsy would be completed. The autopsy report that was generated in July of 2004 did not have a specific cause of death identified. Forensic reports did not show any specific problems with drugs, etc. and some of the samples sent to the forensic lab's were not even tested at all. Once the family became aware of the autopsy reports, the forensic reports, and the lack of testing that was done on a number of the samples, we obviously were very frustrated and asked questions as to why these have not been tested. In addition, Joe's clothes, which he was recovered in, did have damage to them and had not initially been sent to the Centre of Forensic Science for analysis. The family had to request, after viewing the clothes at

the Kingston police office, that they be sent to the forensic lab for testing and analysis. It would appear that initially this was going to be a classic case of a suicide by drowning, and the case would be closed quickly. Unfortunately, none of the evidence and testing that was completed supported that theory and the investigators were left with no definitive answers. Meanwhile, months have passed and lack of proper evidence gathering, immediately following the death, would no longer be available to support the investigation. A second autopsy was done on Joe in November of 2004 and the family had to go through the experience of the exhumation as well as reburial of Joe after the autopsy. The Grozelle family hired a pathologist to represent the family at the second autopsy to ensure that proper procedures were followed by the Coroners Office. The family once again experienced extreme anxiety and frustration, as well as financial impacts of hiring the pathologist as a result of the second autopsy. The results of the second autopsy were made available to the family in early 2005 and no cause of death was determined at that time. At this point in time, the family still had no answers as to what happened to Joe. The only thing we knew was that Joe was dead and no one could provide answers to the other four questions - when he died, where he died, cause of death, and manner of death.

The Coroners death investigation continued throughout most of 2005 and in December of 2005 there was a meeting between the Coroners Office and the Grozelle family to discuss their findings to date. The family attended this meeting in Toronto at the Coroners Office, with hopes that we would finally be getting some detail information about the investigation. Our son Jim, who was working in the Caribbean at the time, quit his job and came to Toronto with the expectations of finding out what happened to his brother. Our expectations were dashed when the Coroners Office and the OPP investigators indicated to us that they did not have any answers to give us and would not be providing any details of their investigation. The Chief Coroner, Dr. Cairns, advised us that they had no answers for us and that they would hold an inquest into the death of Joe in order to provide answers for the family. The family was asked if we had any objections to having an inquest or if it would be too painful for us to go through. We wanted answers! We were not getting them from this particular meeting, and therefore agreed to move forward

with the Coroners inquest in the hopes of perhaps being provided with additional information that might help us to determine what happened to Joe. The Coroner indicated that the inquest would be held in the spring of 2006. So the family had to wait for the Coroner to prepare the information that would be provided to the family for the inquest. Numerous delays occurred over that next six months, and the Coroners inquest was not scheduled until October of 2006.

1st Coroners Inquest (October 2006).

In order to properly prepare for the inquest process, the family hired a lawyer to assist them. The Coroners inquest had numerous difficulties with it. The Brief where the documentation summary that is to be provided to the parties with standing, was late in being prepared and given to the family, and actually was revised for the third time on the day that the inquest started. Parties with standing at the inquest were the Grozelle family, RMC, CFNIS and the Kingston Police Services. During the early stages of the inquest the Grozelle family and our Council became very frustrated with the way the proceedings were occurring. Any questions relating to how the investigation was conducted or who was in charge of the investigation were quickly dismissed by the Coroner and not allowed to be asked. Approximately 5 days into the inquest, the Coroner abruptly halted the inquest due to what he said was an “issue of fairness”. The family was advised that the jury had seen some documentation, which they were not privy to see and as a result, he altered the inquest. The Coroner indicated that canceling the inquest was due to no fault of any of the parties with standing or the jury. If this in fact is the case, then it would appear that there was a breach of procedure on the part of the Coroners Office in the way the inquest was being conducted. This delay of the inquest was very significant for all the parties involved. The Grozelle family automatically incurred a huge financial cost as a result of this delay and having to redo the entire process all over again at some later date. This decision also resulted in a huge financial burden for the Ontario taxpayer since the Canadian military had coordinated the bringing in of numerous witnesses from across Canada to testify at the inquest. All of these arrangements would have to be made again, all at the taxpayer's expense. All of the other parties with standing along with their

counsel are basically being paid by the taxpayer. And no one was out of pocket any personal expenses except for the Grozelle family who had to pay all of our own expenses but also of our counsel!

2nd Coroners Inquest (March 2007)

The second Coroners inquest was scheduled for March of 2007. Prior to the inquest, the Grozelle family wanted to request some clarification with regards to the line of questioning that would be allowed as well as having additional relevant witnesses testify at the inquest. A meeting was held at the Coroners Office in early 2007 to review the family's requests. At this meeting, we presented all of our concerns and issues and the resulting verdict was that the Coroner basically denied all of our requests. At this meeting the other parties withstanding, the CFNIS, and Kingston Police Services did not support any of the Grozelle requests and did not offer any additional information to assist the jury at the upcoming inquest. Having read the Brief that was provided; the family did not see any details in the information that would lead to answers to the four questions that still remained. All the parties with standing also would have known this and should have been more willing to provide whatever information possible, to assist the jury in identifying the answers to the four questions that remained. It became clearly apparent to the family that it was the family versus all of the other parties at this inquest and that no additional information would be provided to assist the jury. It soon became apparent that the Kingston Police Services, RMC and the CFNIS were going to protect and support each other in this inquest rather than offer any information to assist the jury. At the conclusion of the inquest approximately 5 weeks after it started, the jury was not able to provide any specific answers to the four questions that needed to be answered. This verdict certainly was a disappointment to the family since we didn't have any more information at the conclusion of the inquest. As a matter of fact we were left with even more questions about what was actually done and not done as part of the investigation and also frustrated at the way the inquest was handled by the Coroners Office. This whole process was a total waste of taxpayer dollars and was a huge financial burden on

the Grozelle family to go through this process, and especially to come out with no more information about what happened to Joe.

How is it that with the number of agencies involved in this case that we have so little information about what happened to Joe? The agencies involved include, the Coroners Office, Center of Forensic Science - Toronto, Kingston Police Services, Ontario Provincial Police, and the CFNIS. Two autopsies were completed and two Coroners inquests were done with the results being – no further answers....!!

Why is it that we have no answers to these questions?

In order to answer this question one must review and get into the details of the specific activities completed by each of the various agencies in order to see if there are any areas that have been missed, overlooked, or not thoroughly examined.

The following text was prepared many months ago and passed on to some of the authorities in an effort to summarize what we had from Joe when he was recovered and the amount of evidence that was available from his person alone. What was done with this information?

JOE GROZELLE'S – LAST GIFT TO HIS FAMILY

Joe Grozelle's mysterious disappearance and death is certainly a great tragedy. But when Joe died he left us with the only thing that he could to help us determine what happened and that's his – body.

He left us with:

- *A body that was not badly decomposed, (i.e. not in water for 22 days!),*
- *Hands with fingernails missing, yet only two toenails missing on right foot,*
- *Hands that showed signs of wrinkling on the palm side but no wrinkling on the back side,*
- *Hands that showed wrinkling on the palm side and feet that showed no signs of wrinkling,*
- *A body that was naked from the waist up – no hoodie, no dark blue golf shirt, no tee shirt and no belt, no necklace, no watch, nothing in his pants pockets (no change, Kleenex etc. only a stone and zebra mussel in pocket?), What about this stone and zebra mussel?*

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- *A bruise on the bridge of his nose,*
- *A bruised lip,*
- *A broken tooth,*
- *A bruise on his right forearm,*
- *Stomach contents – 400 ml of brown fluid and various food particles that could be identified by the naked eye,*
- *Two femur bones for testing,*
- *Pants that had blood stains on them, damage to the left outside leg seam, damage to the left leg - back of knee (unique fabric damage),*
- *Shoes that had an unknown stains on the heel of the left shoe,*
- *Shoe laces that were both untied when recovered.*

*Joe left us all of these **items** – it's up to us (family and authorities) to review these in detail - not only from a medical but investigative perspective in order to determine what happened to him.*

WE WILL BE DOING JOE A HUGE DIS-SERVICE IF WE CHOOSE TO IGNORE, OVERLOOK, OR NOT THOROUGHLY EXAMINE EVERY ASPECT OF HIS "LAST GIFT" TO HIS FAMILY AND AUTHORITIES.

Have all the forensic tests been completed that can be completed? Has all the evidence such as clothing, body samples, and other physical evidence obtained been properly and thoroughly tested for any clues that might indicate what happened to Joe? For example, what happened to the zebra mussel that was found in Joe's pocket or the stone that was found in his pocket? Would the zebra mussel have provided a clue as to where Joe may have been in the water? Or how would the stone have gotten into Joe's pocket and where might it have come from are questions that no one has examined. A proper and thorough analysis of Joe stomach contents that were taken at the first autopsy has never yet been thoroughly examined. Could this information, tie in with the time of death, or perhaps the location of death? Are these stomach contents consistent with the meal that Joe had in the cafeteria at RMC on the evening that he went missing? Based on the contents of the stomach, once identified, could it mean that Joe had a meal elsewhere the evening he went missing? The degree of stomach content decomposition might also provide some general indication as to how long after consuming this last meal Joe died. To our knowledge none of this information was ever followed up on. One would think that with no answers in this case, that the authorities would be eager to explore every shred of

evidence that they have which might lead to some answers. A detail examination and gathering of all evidence would surely be standard procedure for any police death investigation regardless of how minor it may seem. Why was this not done in this case?

After the Coroners inquest was completed the Coroners Office and the OPP advised the Grozelle family that the case was closed. No further investigation would be done, unless some clues or evidence came forward and then it would be acted upon by someone.

Military review of files (fall 2007)

In the fall of 2007, the military CFNIS indicated to the Grozelle family that they would be conducting a review of their files in this case. In December of 2007 two CFNIS investigators met with the Grozelle family to indicate to us that they were going to hire the RCMP to conduct an independent review of the Joe Grozelle case files for them. This review was to be conducted by the RCMP E - Division located in British Columbia, and it would start in early 2008.

Two RCMP investigators met with the Grozelle family in November 2008 to explain the details of what their task was and to obtain general information from the family about this case. The family had contacted the RCMP independently, and had advised them that if they were conducting a review of only the CFNIS files that their case investigation would be incomplete. They were provided with detailed information of all sources, and agencies involved in the Grozelle case, so that they could do a complete examination of the entire Grozelle case, just the military files. The RCMP requested files from CFNIS in early 2008 but found that the information was not in a proper format for them to use for their review. As a result, the CFNIS spent the majority of 2008 revising and updating their files in order to make them acceptable for the RCMP review. This has caused significant delays in the review process for the RCMP. It also raises some serious questions with regards to what kind of file management and investigative techniques were being used by the CFNIS during their investigation.

Military Board of Inquiry

In early 2008 a military board of inquiry was established to review the circumstances surrounding the death of Joe Grozelle. The military Board of Inquiry is basically an internal administrative review process which looks into the circumstances of serious incidents, which occur in the military, such as a death of one of its members.

As per the terms of reference for the Board of Inquiry, the board can obtain statements from all relevant witnesses, obtain all relevant records and documentary evidence, and identify any individuals who may assist the BOI with its inquiries. The Board of Inquiry is also required to obtain and include with the report other documentary evidence pertaining to the incident such as autopsy reports, death certificates, medical examiners or Coroner's reports, as well as any police investigation files related to the case.

The Board of Inquiry is required to make findings to the following questions;

1. medical cause of death,
2. whether the deceased member was on duty at the time of death,
3. whether the death was attributable to military service,
4. circumstances surrounding the death including the cause, contributing factors, date, time and location,
5. the CF response to the incident and its adequacy,
6. whether the incident was preventable, and,
7. any other issues of relevance to the investigation after consulting with the Convening Authority.

The Board of Inquiry may also make recommendations concerning any measures that may reduce the risk of similar incidents in the future as well as changes if any on policies and procedures for emergency response in an incident of the type in which the member died. In order to complete a thorough review, the Board of Inquiry should obtain all

documentation, exhibits, and witness statements from all sources, including all previously completed police investigations into the case. During the course of 2008, the Board of Inquiry conducted numerous interviews with the witnesses involved in this case. Former cadets, faculty members, police investigators and medical experts, including pathologists were interviewed by the BOI as part of the inquiry process. All of the interviews were completed by March 2009.

The Grozelle family was permitted to participate in the inquiry process by attending all of the interviews that were conducted and being able to submit questions to the Board of Inquiry president to be asked of the witnesses. The family certainly appreciated very much the opportunity to participate to this level in the inquiry process. It did allow us to learn a lot of additional information based on the questions that the Board of Inquiry asked the witnesses about this case. The family cooperated with the Board of Inquiry to the fullest extent by sharing information that we had relative to all of the previous events that had occurred in this case, up until that point in time that the Board of Inquiry was started. The family was also able to provide sources of key information for the Board of Inquiry, and we were able to confirm various items of information relevant to the board, in this case.

Although the family welcomes the fact that the military is conducting a board of inquiry review into the death of Joe, there are numerous concerns with respect to how the process is being conducted and the order with which investigations are being completed.

One major concern with respect to the BOI was the fact that the inquiry was proceeding even though they did not have all of the relevant information in their possession. Information from the various agencies was being obtained as the interview process was ongoing. Since the military CFNIS are currently doing a review of their files, by the RCMP, the Board of Inquiry was not able to obtain the CFNIS files, since there is currently an ongoing investigation.

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The fact that the Board of Inquiry did not have all of the relevant investigative materials prior to the start of their process raises questions of how can they be completing a thorough review of all aspects of the case, when lacking key material from some of the agencies involved, in particular, the military CFNIS investigation files? Another area of concern for the family is that the Board of Inquiry did not have access or review the exhibits that had been gathered in this case by the various agencies.

Although the family was allowed to submit questions for the witnesses through the Board of Inquiry president, not all of the family's questions were asked of the witnesses. Here again, like the Coroners inquest, the family was not able to have all of their questions posed to the witnesses.

There have been numerous previous Boards of Inquiries completed by the military in the past. Many of these BOI's have produced recommendations for changes to how Boards of Inquiries are conducted and the level of participation by the victims or the victim's families in these cases. Many of these recommendations have yet to be implemented by the military as part of their Board of Inquiry process. Many of these BOI's have been reviewed by the Military Ombudsman's Office who have pushed to ensure that the recommendations outlined in the reports are in fact implemented. Unfortunately many of these recommendations are still outstanding and not yet implemented which impacts the process for subsequent Boards of Inquiries.

The following provides a number of comments with respect to the pros and cons of the Board of Inquiry process that the Grozelle family has recently experienced.

On the positive side, this particular Board of Inquiry did allow for the family to participate in the inquiry process by being able to attend and submit questions through the board president for the witnesses. In addition, the family's expenses for attending the inquest (i.e. travel, hotel, and meals) was covered by the military. This was the first time that the Grozelle family received any financial support from the military since Joe's funeral on November 21, 2003.

In the areas of improvement for future BOI's, families and victims should be provided with a complete package, which outlines the process of the Board of Inquiry, including procedures, terms of reference, all information related to travel and expenses covered, as well as a contact person from the military to assist with any questions or needs that the family have. Family members should be granted full standing and be allowed to pose questions of the various witnesses either themselves or through their counsel.

Impact on family.....

The impact to the family and to myself in particular, over the past five years has been huge. It is extremely difficult for us to move on with our lives, especially when we are lacking so much information about what happened to Joe. Questions, there are always questions, hundreds of questions, - Joe's death is the topic of discussion whenever the family gets together. The majority of our questions always come back to the specific details of what was and was not done by the agencies during their investigations. To date no one has offered or is willing to sit down with the family and discuss any details with us. This apparent lack of transparency on their part only adds to the frustration and creates suspicion about each of these agencies and the thoroughness of their investigation process. After all, they do work for the citizens of the province and therefore do have some accountability for their actions. We are all hurting in our own way and seeking answers to satisfy ourselves about what happened to Joe. We all miss Joe very much and his death must not go in vain. If there are no answers to be found in this case then we must all ask ourselves why not and as a minimum do an honest review of our systems to identify and implements changes where necessary to improve future investigations. No family should have to endure the levels of frustration and expense that we have experienced over the past five years. It's not the families' responsibility to have to examine and determine what happened, it's their (agencies) job and they didn't do their job in this case!

Trying to find answers to what happened to Joe has been my prime focus for the past five years. I've spent hundreds of hours researching information, writing letters to the authorities, attending meetings and traveling the road to Kingston, in my quest to find answers. All of this effort and commitment has come with a price. Many sleepless nights tossing and turning because my mind is constantly racing, thinking and totally focused on what's going on with this case. I have not taken a holiday or a day off in the past five years. All of my vacation time has been scheduled in order to be able to attend inquests, meetings, travel to Kingston, or simply writing more letters to the authorities trying to find information.

The past five years has also had a huge financial impact on myself personally, and my family. I have passed up promotional opportunities at my workplace, in order to be able to stay focused and devote my energy and time to trying to find out what happened to Joe. Retirement plans have had to be altered and delayed as a result of the economic impact this situation has had on our resources. The numerous trips taken to Kingston, hotels, meals and the expenses needed to travel have all been very significant. In addition, the cost of hiring a lawyer and a pathologist to assist us during the exhumation and inquest process has also been very expensive. Also as a result of the Coroner, stopping the first inquest, due to a breach in their procedures (that is my opinion), resulted in a significant increase in my legal bills as a result of having to extend the inquest date and starting all over again with a new jury. Essentially the Grozelle family had to pay for part of the inquest twice, and this did not impact any of the other parties with standing since everyone else was on the public payroll and being paid (salaries and expenses) by the taxpayers of the province of Ontario.

Numerous letters were written to the various agencies involved during the course of this investigation, requesting details and information. More often than not responses were not provided to our questions, and when responses were received they often lacked substance and sufficient details which usually prompted additional letters and more questions. The family was often told that it could receive information by applying through the Freedom

of Information process to get details about our questions. For the most part, this exercise was a waste of time since we often received replies from the

Freedom of Information coordinator's indicating that there were exemptions to the process and that the requested information would not be provided. This just continued to increase the frustration that we felt in dealing with the authorities and the bureaucracy. The Freedom of Information process, which is supposed to assist in providing transparency and information to people requesting data actually was found to be a very frustrating exercise, and only added to the families suspicion that information was being withheld by the authorities regarding this case.

The family has experienced frustration and difficulties with each of the various agencies that we have had to deal with. Initially, everyone is very friendly and receptive, and leads the family to believe that they are there to assist and will communicate with the family. As each agency progresses with their activities, there may be some ongoing communication, but there is always a definite lack of detail information shared with the family.

We have often wondered over the past five years, why the military has not been pushing harder to find out what actually happened to one of their employees at RMC. Every employer has an obligation to determine what the circumstances are whenever there is a death of one of their employees. This would involve providing support to the immediate family of the victim as well as continuing to review and challenge the actions and investigations conducted by various experts and agencies that are involved with the case. The only ones that seem to be constantly reviewing and asking questions at all steps of the way was the Grozelle family!

There doesn't seem to be any answers in this case so far. We need to ask ourselves the question. Why is that? There needs to be a total review of all aspects of this investigation, by all the parties involved, in order to see if there are any items that can yet be investigated that might lead to some of the answers. We have to ask ourselves the

question, what could we have done differently that would have or could have assisted us with the investigation process. All of the agencies involved need to get together and sit down to discuss the pros and cons of their respective investigations in order to identify any pitfalls or deficiencies that may have contributed to our current lack of information. The system needs to be improved so that another family does not have to go through the same process that we have, in trying to find answers to what happened to their loved one.

If Joe's death was the result of an intentional or unintentional act on the part of an individual or individuals then these needs to come to light so that the true circumstances of his death can be identified. One thing we do know for sure is that is that dead people usually don't end up in the water on their own. And if this is the case, then we know that someone knows what happened to Joe. The fact that no one knows anything or saw anything the evening that Joe went missing is unbelievable, someone knows!

During the course past five years, we have discovered that there have been many inconsistencies, errors, and mistakes made during the course of the investigation. This has only led to our frustration as well as disappointment with the performance and results obtained by the agencies to date. The victims, the families, and the people of the province of Ontario, deserve better from these agencies, and hopefully they will all make an effort to not only identify shortcomings in this particular case but actually make an effort to identify areas of improvement for the future.

The impact of the investigations that are currently ongoing in this case will certainly be felt by the family in the future. We are anxiously awaiting the opportunity to receive the details of the BOI findings, as well as attending meetings with the CFNIS and the RCMP to review their investigation findings in detail as they promised. Obviously we are very skeptical that they will be true to their word.....

When people have asked me how things are progressing with the investigation, I've often used the following statement to express what I felt about how the authorities have been handling this:

**“If you don’t want to know that the window is broken behind the barn,
Then don’t go there!”**

In other words, if you don’t really want to find the answers, don’t bother looking for them, don’t follow procedures, don’t worry about details, don’t do things in a timely manner, don’t take photographs, don’t complete all forensic testing, don’t communicate with families, don’t bother providing support, and the list goes on.. This pretty much sums up what we have learned over the past five years about the type of investigation that was done for Joe.

So, we as a family have not only lost our dear son Joe, but have also lost our trust and confidence in the system and the agencies that have been involved in this case. We can’t help but get the sense that authorities attitude is that this situation will simply go away and life goes on. Maybe for the authorities it’s just another day at the job, but for the Grozelle family every day from here on, is another day filled with questions and a deep sorrow on the loss of Joe.

During the upcoming months the family will continue to expand and provide more details and specifics to this impact statement. It remains to be seen whether the Military and the RCMP will follow through with their commitments or if the family will once again be left with even more questions than answers.....

Yours truly,

The Grozelle Family – Ron, Min, Dan, Jim, (Joe), Nikki, and Corri