



RMC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION INC L'ASSOCIATION DES ANCIEN(NE)S DES CMR

Statement by the Royal Military Colleges of Canada Alumni Association Inc. (RMCAA) on the Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review (Arbour Report) of the Department of National Defence (DND) and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)

Over the past weeks since the Arbour Report was published, the board of directors of the RMCAA have read the report, and we continue to reflect on it. We share a deep concern about the situation it describes. We recognize that systemic and cultural failings enabled abuse to occur and persist.

To the survivors who have been let down by the system, this should not have happened. It has taken courage for you to come forward and discuss what happened. We make a commitment to you to work diligently with the Colleges, the CAF and DND to advance cultural and systemic change so this does not happen again.

Since the report was published, we have heard and read a wide spectrum of opinions. There may be alumni who did not experience the trauma described in the Arbour Report and may have difficulty digesting it. They may ask why incidents were not reported and investigated, and why disciplinary action or administrative responses were inadequate. The answers are varied and complicated, and range from shame, guilt and embarrassment to confidentiality concerns, to “fear of not being believed” and other reasons. We ask all alumni to take a moment and reflect on “what if one of the survivors was your daughter or son, niece or nephew, granddaughter or grandson or close personal friend”? Suffice to say, there are significant problems in the system that need to be fixed.

While we acknowledge the concerns identified in the Arbour Report, we continue to believe strongly in the value of the military colleges at Kingston and Saint-Jean for undergraduate, postgraduate and distance learning. Unlike civilian universities, these colleges require demonstrated capability in academics, leadership, physical fitness, and bilingualism to graduate. They draw students from all provinces and territories of Canada, allowing these young people to learn about the country they have sworn to serve. The Alumni Association will work diligently to advance the cause of military colleges in Canada, and to explain the value to Canada of retaining them.

We know that many proud alumni of the Colleges are distressed to hear criticism of their alma mater and are keen to come to its defence. We ask that all alumni put their energy into finding ways to make the Colleges better in the future, rather than arguing over how good or bad they were in the past. We have assembled an Arbour Report response group within the RMCAA under the leadership of Scott Stevenson, a board director and graduate of Royal Roads Military College Class of 1988. He can be reached at rmcaa.aacmr.iecr.response@gmail.com, and he welcomes your input. This statement marks the beginning of the RMCAA’s response. We will have more to say in the coming months.

Truth Duty Valour,