



Regional Cadet Support Unit (Prairie)

Staff Writing Guide

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Introduction

This section will focus on effective writing and review the basics of military writing policies and procedures. You will use this knowledge daily whenever you are tasked to prepare written correspondence, or when you are called upon to assist your subordinates in the preparation of their written work.

In order to function effectively, a supervisor must know how to write well. A high quality of writing is essential for effective staff work. Clear writing achieves rapid and accurate transmission of information and orders, whereas ambiguous writing may result in confusion and the waste of time, materiel and even lives. The ability to write well is not inborn, it is a skill acquired through the diligent application of rules and procedures. The key to effective writing is to determine what to say, and then to say it clearly and simply by planning, writing and revising. Effective writing has five essential elements. They are:

- Accuracy
- Clarity
- Brevity
- Relevance
- Logic

Accuracy: in facts and figures is essential; exaggeration and over-emphasis are inaccuracies.

Clarity: each word and phrase must have a clear and exact meaning, and the sense of the whole must be easy to understand at first reading.

Brevity: writing must be concise; it must express ideas as briefly as possible, consistent with clarity.

Relevance: writing must be pertinent. Only those ideas that are relevant to the topic need be expressed. Digressive, extraneous, and redundant ideas impede the expression of the subject matter and must be avoided.

Logic: writing must be logical; it must adhere to the principals of correct reasoning. Premises must be clearly stated and deductions must proceed validly from these premises. Ideas must be developed in an orderly sequence so that the facts or premises upon which it is based precede each deduction or conclusion.

These elements must be present in all effective writing, including effective military writing.

I. Military Writing Policy

Military correspondence must be formatted a certain way. When military correspondence is prepared, it goes to either NATO/DND/CF recipients or to recipients in the public sector. When we correspond within the NATO/DND/CF group we must adhere to the rules laid out in NATO Standardization Agreement 2066 (STANAG 2066). When we correspond with the public sector, we must follow the guidelines laid out in the Federal Identity Program Manual (FIP). These sets of rules, both, set a standard of which DND must conform.

STANAG 2066 standardizes the layout for all military correspondence within NATO. It also governs the rules for the use of abbreviations and acronyms.

To ensure that all federal institutions project a standardized, corporate image the government established the Federal Identity Program. FIP standards apply to all correspondence sent to non-DND addressees.

Reference Material

Military writing in the CF is governed by *A-AD-121-C01/FP-000 Staff and Writing Procedures For the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces*. To further support effective military writing *A-AD-121-F01/JX-000 Canadian Forces Manual of Abbreviations and A-AD-D10-001(2)(3)/AX-000 File Classification Manual* (in 3 Volumes) are used.

Official Languages

Where applicable, bilingual correspondence shall be issued simultaneously in both official languages with the English and French versions being of equal quality. The conventions are the same for documents produced in English or French.

Neutralized Language

Language can both reflect and shape the way people are treated. Bias-free language is effective, and shall be used whenever possible. All groups, irrespective of ancestry and ethnic origin, are and must be portrayed as equally productive and contributing members of Canadian society.

Security and Designation Markings

These markings are used to identify the security handling requirements and sensitivity of documents so that proper precautions may be taken. Items that are sensitive to the National Interest are CLASSIFIED, while items sensitive in other than the National Interest are DESIGNATED.

A substantial proportion of documents can and should be unclassified. Where a security classification is required, care shall be taken to ensure that a document is graded according to its own content, and not because of its relationship or reference to another document (e.g., the minutes of a meeting may be SECRET, but an amendment to the attendance list may be UNCLASSIFIED).

II. Rules of Formatting Correspondence

The following formatting rules apply to all types of military correspondence:

Left Justified

The format for administrative correspondence is left justification, with minimum punctuation. All lines begin flush with the left margin.

Margins

When letterhead is used a left margin of 1.5 inches and right margin of 1 inch is recommended. In other documents the margins are at the discretion of the originator, although 1 inch is recommended for top, bottom, left and right.

Vertical Spacing

Leave at least one blank line between each element of the document.

Paragraph Numbering

Paragraphs are numbered. In the event of sub-paragraphs, numbers and letters are alternated. If the body contains only one paragraph, it is not numbered, but any subparagraphs will be.

Example:

1. _____.
2. _____:
 - a. _____; and
 - b. _____:
 - (1) _____:
 - (a) _____ etc

In correspondence with the public, paragraphs are not numbered.

Headings

Headings should stand-alone and not form part of the text. Lengthy documents or documents that require division for clarity may be divided into PARTS followed by CHAPTERS. PARTS are identified by Roman numerals and CHAPTERS are identified by Arabic numerals.

A CHAPTER is further divided by GROUP headings that are not numbered. A GROUP heading introduces one or more paragraphs with the same general subject.

Paragraph and Sub-Paragraph headings are used to cover only the subject contained in the paragraph.

The use of headings is optional, but once started they should be continued until the next superior division is reached. The use of headings does not change the paragraph numbering sequence, which continues throughout the whole text.

Fonts

The style of font is left to the originator. For readability the minimum size is 12 characters per inch or 10 pt. It is the originator's responsibility to ensure that the font style can be read or used by the addressee if the document is transmitted electronically or if the document is to be optically scanned.

Tabular Information

Information can often be presented more clearly in tabular form. Tables are an excellent way of handling agenda items and minutes of meetings. To simplify the precise reference to items in a table, and to allow the insertion of amendments, lines and columns may be identified as follows:

- lines (or where appropriate, individual items containing more than one line) will be identified with a serial number (Arabic numeral) in the left hand column. If serials need to be sub-divided, sub-serials will be identified in the same way as sub-paragraphs; and
- columns (including that containing the serial number) will be identified with lower case letters in parentheses, which should be on a separate line below the column heading. The column heading itself need not be repeated on subsequent pages.

III. The Conventions and Layout of Military Correspondence

This section will discuss the standard conventions and layout for all correspondence in the CF. Written communication is an important means of communication between you and your superiors/subordinates. The higher in rank you progress, the more importance written communication will assume. As a supervisor, it is vital that you be able to produce polished, professional correspondence and teach your subordinates to do the same. You will use this knowledge and the skill you develop throughout your career in the CF to submit requests, observations, and After Action Reports, amongst other correspondence. In addition, you will be required to check the written work of your subordinates for accuracy. This section is broken down into 3 main parts:

- The Heading **(See Annex A)**
- The Body **(See Annex B)**
- The Close **(See Annex C)**

1. The Heading

The Heading is composed of all material preceding the text from the letterhead (if used) to the subject. It normally consists of six components: security markings, the originator's identification, the file number and suffix, the date, the addressee(s) and the subject, however, not all of these components are used in every type of correspondence.

Security Markings

In accordance with (IAW) the National Defence Security Policy the following three security *designations* are used by the CF.

- **Protected A** - This designation is to be applied to that information sensitive in other than the national interest, where the injury that would result from compromise would be minimal. This information, while safeguarded in Government, is commonly found in the public domain. Examples include personal names, home addresses, personal telephone numbers, exact salary figures, etc;
- **Protected B** - This designation is to be applied to that information which is sensitive in other than the National Interest, where a serious injury could result from compromise. Examples include that large block of non-National Interest information formerly classified Confidential. Broad categories of information would include medical, psychiatric or psychological information; information pertaining to an individual's finances, income, assets, bank balances; personal recommendations or evaluations; character references; an individual's political beliefs, associations or lifestyle; contractual information; information received "in confidence" (except for foreign-source Restricted or NATO Restricted matter, for which separate guidance is provided); and
- **Protected C** - This designation applies to the very limited amount of information that, if compromised could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave injury outside the national interest. Examples include life threatening information, serious criminal intelligence, etc.

The three security *classifications* used by the CF are:

- **Confidential** - Information shall be classified CONFIDENTIAL if compromise of the matter could reasonably be expected to cause injury to the national interest;
- **Secret** - Information shall be classified SECRET if compromise of the matter could reasonably be expected to cause serious injury to the national interest; and
- **Top Secret** - Information shall be classified TOP SECRET when its unauthorized disclosure, destruction, removal, modification or interruption could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave injury to the national interest.

If a security classification or designation is required, it will be typed in UPPER CASE and underlined one inch from the top and bottom of each page. When using MS Word® this can be accomplished by using a Header / Footer.

NOTE: Ensure that the font is the same as the remainder of the document.

Originator's Identification

The unit name and address or the position or the name of the person is required. This is only used in *letters*.

File Number / Suffix

The file reference is an alphanumeric combination assigned by the originator to simplify future identification. Two components make up the file reference, the file number and the file suffix. The file number is composed IAW Volumes 1, 2, and 3 of the File Classification Manual.

The file suffix is the drafter's short title designation, in brackets after the file number, e.g., *1000-1 (DCA 2-2)*.

Date

The date contains the day, month, and year in that order. If the month is abbreviated, the year is also abbreviated. A number never indicates a month. A zero is not indicated before the numbers 1 to 9. If the date of the signature is uncertain then the day may be left blank, and then panned in by the signatory.

Addressee(s)

The addressee(s) is the authority or individual or agency for which the correspondence is intended. If there is more than one addressee a Distribution List or *Dist List* is used. Addressees shall be identified by appointment and not by name.

Subject

The subject is a brief statement of the general content or title of the correspondence. It is always typed in upper case and underlined; if the subject is more than one line, the bottom line is underlined to the length of the longest line in the title.

2. The Body

Reference(s)

The references are documents or publications used to support the text of the correspondence. The reference(s) will be listed immediately below the subject. A colon and two spaces will immediately follow the term *Reference(s)* or *Ref(s)*. Each document is identified by an upper case letter and followed by a period and two spaces. If there is only one reference, it will not be numbered. References included with the document shall be suffixed (enclosed) or (encl). Any reference not available to all addressees will be suffixed by (NOTAL), meaning "not to all".

When referring to another document, the reference(s) will be identified by the file number, suffix and date, e.g., *1000-1 (DCA 2-2) 1 Jun 97*.

A publication is identified by an acronym and / or number, e.g., **QR&O 16.02**. The chapter, article and paragraph number(s), e.g., article 103.1b, will identify an extract of a document (**2**). A message will be identified by acronym and / or number and the date time group, e.g., **CANFORGEN 01/97 151400Z JAN 97**.

Text

The originator shall ensure that the text indicates clearly the reader's responsibility to the written communication. For example, should the written communication prompt the reader to be

informed, take action or provide feedback? In the Staff and Writing Manual you will find a list of references. You can consult these references to ensure you are using proper sentence structure, style, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Use of Abbreviations

An abbreviation is a curtailed (shortened) phrase or word, such as Pte for Private. An acronym is usually created from the initial letters of a group of words, such as NATO for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Organizations use abbreviations in their internal correspondence to save time and space in communications.

General

Abbreviations are used only when their meaning will be unmistakable to the reader and are intended to save space and time and to shorten recurrent terms to ensure a more concise, less repetitive style.

Correspondence

Within the CF, abbreviations may be used in all types of military writing and should be used in messages. During operations and training, the fullest use should be made of abbreviations. Abbreviations will not be used in correspondence to other government agencies or civilian individuals or agencies.

Word Derivatives

Word derivatives are various forms of a single word. The abbreviation *conc* can mean concentrated or concentrating or concentration. It is up to the writer to ensure that the context allows the reader to clearly determine the meaning of the abbreviation used.

Names of the Month

The names of months are abbreviated by using the first three letters of the full spelling. In correspondence other than messages, only the first letter is capitalized. In the date time group of a message, all three letters are capitalized.

Points of the Compass

The cardinal points of the compass are always written in full, i.e., North, South, East and West. Intermediate points, however, may be abbreviated using capital letters, e.g., NE, SW etc.

3. The Close

The Close of all correspondence consists of all the material below the last line of the Body or text. In this stage we will examine the various components – there may be as many as seven depending on the type of correspondence you are preparing.

Signature Blocks

In English correspondence, the signature block usually appears five lines below the last line of text. All DND and CF letters and memoranda shall include signature blocks. A handwritten or stamped signature must always appear on the original document. Signature blocks include the following components:

- name of the sender;
- rank;
- position or title;
- telephone number (optional);
- fax number (optional); and
- authority line (when required).

There are two forms, the Complete, and the Abbreviated. One is used for letters, the other for memoranda.

Annexes and Appendices

Annexes and Appendices are only used in correspondence with NATO/CF/DND addressees.

Annexes are supplementary documents that amplify or explain the parent document. They are used when the inclusion of all the detail in the text would be cumbersome. Annexes are listed in the order they appear in the text and are lettered consecutively in capitals. A single Annex is shown as **Annex A**.

Appendices are "annexes" to an Annex. They are numbered in Arabic numerals (i.e. 1, 2, 3) in the order they appear in the text of the parent Annex. A single Appendix is identified as Appendix 1.

Enclosures

An enclosure is additional material included with the document other than Annexes, Appendices, or References. If a reference is to be included with the document, you are to place the word "enclosed" in brackets immediately after the reference is listed.

Any reference not available to all addressees will have the word "NOTAL" in brackets at the end of the reference.

Distribution List

When there is more than one addressee a Distribution List is used. Addressees are categorized as either Action or Information. The Addressees are listed in a logical sequence - seniority in alphabetical order if of equal rank, or by geographical or functional grouping. Standard Distribution Lists save time and reduce the human error factor when preparing correspondence. The Lists are predetermined and identified alphabetically. *List A* for example could be all the senior appointments in a unit.

Page Number

All pages shall be numbered in sequence using Arabic numerals. The number shall be in the bottom left hand corner of each page two lines above the security marking. The page number will be followed by an oblique mark followed by the number of pages. This can be done easily using the Header/Footer feature of MS Word®. Single page documents need not be numbered. The letter of the Annex and a hyphen prefixes pages of Annexes; the Annex letter followed by the Appendix number followed by a hyphen prefixes pages of Appendices.

Security Marking

In the Heading the Security Marking appears first; in the Close it is last.

IV. Outgoing Mail

Addressing Outgoing Mail

All outgoing mail should be clearly addressed in the correct format, to ensure accurate rate application, handling and delivery. If the envelope is typed, which is preferred, it should be done using a 10 or 12 pitch font. Special pens or ink are not to be used.

On single envelopes and the outer jackets of double envelopes, address in a non-specific manner when possible (e.g. to the Department or Branch mailroom at a facility, or to a position title). This procedure will enhance the anonymity of the material in the general flow of mail and goods in transit. The outer jacket of double envelopes should be tagged with a forwarding or return office address.

Additionally, due to the need-to-know principle, one of the following restrictive caveats should be included where appropriate on a single or an inner envelope:

- "To be opened only by" -- followed by a position title, when only the incumbent of that position is to access the contents; or
- " To be opened only by" -- followed by a name, when only the identified individual is to access the contents, as in the case of personal information.

All outgoing Internal Base mail shall include the unit name and the position/title of the addressee. Again, if originators do feel the contents fall within the corporate record criteria, they may use either "PERSONAL" or "TO BE ONLY OPENED BY", to ensure the Orderly Room (OR) will not open the item for processing. If this information is not included, the OR staff will open the mail in order to identify the recipient. If the recipient cannot be identified, it may be necessary to return the mail to the sender for proper addressing.

Optimum Addressing Standard

Canada Post Corporation (CPC) has a National mail sorting and handling system that implemented a one-drop system for Postal Outlets serving DND Establishments. The requirements to meet the Optimum Standard are:

- addresses are typed or written in upper case or block letters;
- all lines of a postal address formatted with a uniform left margin;

- punctuation marks are not used in the bottom two lines where they are part of a place name that includes the apostrophe e.g. ST JOHN S NF;
- the postal code appears on the same line as the municipality and province name and separated from the two-letter Province/Territory symbol by two spaces;
- only CPC authorized two-letter Province/Territory symbols used e.g. AB, BC, MB, NB, NF, NT, NS, ON, PE, QC, SK and YT; and
- return addresses are formatted in the same manner as the main address.

The following are examples of addresses, both military and civilian, correctly formatted to comply with the CPC Optimum Standard:

CPL R.B. SMITH
 CANADIAN CONTINGENT IN HAITI
 PO BOX 5057 STN FORCES
 BELLEVILLE ON K8N 5W6

BASE SUPPLY OFFICER
 CANADIAN FORCES BASE EDMONTON
 PO BOX 10500 STN FORCES
 EDMONTON AB T5J 4J5

MR. R.B. SMITH
 SENIOR SALES REPRESENTATIVE
 SEARS CANADA LIMITED
 1782 MAIN ST
 MONCTON NB E1C 1B9

MRS. R.B. SMITH
 14 GREENVIEW DR
 APT 103
 KINGSTON ON K7M 7T5

Return Addresses

All mail being shipped out shall bear the originator's complete return address (unit stamp) placed in the top left front corner. In addition to the addressee's full address. (CFAO 57-3, para 2)

Postal Codes

Postal codes are mandatory Canada Post Corporation (CPC) requirements on all mail, or surcharges are applied. Outgoing mail received with the incorrect or missing postal codes will be returned to the originator.

Envelope Size (External Mail)

The smallest envelope possible should be used at all times. Please note that if the item will be bulky (e.g. thickly folded), a larger envelope should be used to permit metering. A larger envelope with the same contents can increase costs up to 100%. When using a large envelope (DND 325, 330mm high X 430mm long) it should be folded to fit the contents whenever possible, to a maximum of 270mm high X 380mm long. Any item larger than this must be sent as a package taking longer for processing and delivery.

Note: A DND 319 or 320 envelope will comfortably contain 5 folded sheets of standard paper and remain at the standard cost of a stamp.

Document Transmittal and Receipt (DND 728)

While the use of the form DND 728, it is not mandatory in the transport of extremely sensitive documents e.g. Protected C, it is strongly recommended for audit purposes. It also ensures that the recipient has received the document.

Mail Transportation

All **Internal Base** mail designated **PROTECTED B** or classified **Confidential** up to and including **SECRET**, shall be enclosed in a single sealed envelope (not a “Thousand Miler”), with a DND 709 affixed and correctly filled out. No other information, handwritten or typed should be included in the envelope. Secret correspondence requires a signature by the receiver. This can be accomplished by utilizing a DND 728 Document Transit and Receipt Form or unit logbook. If a DND 728 is used, senders must ensure that a signed copy is received from the recipient for unit records control.

An authorized user of TOP SECRET and SECRET or PROTECTED C information who must transport this information outside a High-Security or Security Zone is to carry it in a single, gum-sealed, self-addressed envelope without security or sensitivity marking, and ensure that it is received by an authorized recipient.

An authorized user of CONFIDENTIAL or PROTECTED B information who must transport this information outside a High-Security, Security or Operations Zone is to carry it in a single gum-sealed, self-addressed envelope without security or sensitivity marking, and ensure that it is received by an authorized recipient.

An authorized user of PROTECTED A information who must transport this information outside a High-Security, Security or Operations Zone should assess the related risk and threat and, if applicable, place the information in a single, gum-sealed, self-addressed envelope without security or sensitivity marking.

All **External (outgoing)** mail shall be prepared in accordance with current staff and writing procedures and security regulations. External mail designated **PROTECTED B** shall be enclosed in a single sealed envelope (not a “Thousand Miler”), with a DND 709 affixed to the back of the envelope over the closure flap and correctly filled out. This envelope is placed inside another envelope with only the originator’s and the addressee’s full address. No other information, handwritten or typed should be included on this envelope. This correspondence requires a signature by the receiver. This can be accomplished by utilizing a DND 728 Document Transit and Receipt Form or unit logbook. If a DND 728 is used, senders must ensure

that a signed copy is received from the recipient for unit records control. It is also the responsibility of the originator/originating office to ensure that all External classified matter is prepared, packaged and dispatched in accordance with National Defence Security Policy, Chapter 10 for mailing.

V. E-Mail

E-Mail Format

E-Mail that conforms to the definition of a **Corporate Record** shall be formatted using the same staff and writing standards and format as are currently applied to departmental letters and memoranda. Note that the word processor that DND/CF uses (Microsoft WORD) does have DND/CF macros/templates for letters, memos, etc., which could then be attached to the E-Mail.

E-Mail Protocols

E-Mail communication protocol follows the conventions outlined in A-AD-121-C01/FP-000. For example, if it is appropriate to send a memorandum or letter to an addressee, E-Mail may be used. When sending E-Mail that meets corporate record criteria, originators must ensure that the content of the E-Mail is appropriate to their level of authority and/or functional expertise.

E-Mail Signature Block

E-Mail that conforms to the definition of a **Corporate Record** shall contain a Signature Block. The Signature Block is to be positioned one space below the body of the text, flush left. The term **//Original Signed By//** shall be entered over the original signature block by the releasing/approving authority. A hard copy of the original document shall be signed in **blue ink** until the E-Mail system is upgraded with Secure Certification and Authentication capabilities. The following is an example of a Signature Block:

```
//Original Signed By//  
I.M. Sure  
Maj  
Unit A  
5555
```

An individual signing on behalf of another shall annotate their name and rank above the signature block as follows:

```
//Original Signed By//  
I.M. Sure  
for I.T. Boss  
Col  
WComd  
1212
```

E-Mail that conforms to the definition of a **Transitory Record** shall contain a Signature Block. The Signature Block is to be positioned one space below the body of the text, flush left. The following is an example of a Signature Block:

I.M Sure
Maj
Unit A
5555

E-Mail Attachments

Attachments will follow immediately after the signature block, or as appropriate after the distribution list, and be separated from the preceding block by a blank line. Example:

I.M. Sure
Maj
Unit A
5555



WSO_email.doc

Minutes to E-Mail

All minutes to E-Mail correspondence shall be added using the **Reply** or **Reply to All** button, that is located in the Tool Bar, and they shall follow the A-AD-121-C01/FP-000 convention of numbering.

Distribution Lists

Action Addressees shall be identified in the “To...” header field and the **Information Addressees** in the “Cc...” (Carbon Copy) header field. The “Bcc...” header field may be used to send a Blind Carbon Copy to other individuals **but the other addressees will be unaware that you have done so.**

E-Mail Security

Only material designated “UNCLASSIFIED or PROTECTED A” shall be transmitted by E-Mail on the E-Mail system, and only material UNCLASSIFIED shall be transmitted by E-Mail on the public Internet.

VI. Basic Military Filing System

This section will discuss the CF filing system. You will use this knowledge whenever you deal with reference material held by the Central Registry, such as personnel files. You will use this information at your home units. In order to deal with correspondence effectively it is important to understand the process of document handling.

Types of Military Correspondence

This section is to familiarize you with the preparation of a memorandum and a minute. It is not intended to make you a perfect writer, but rather to give you a better idea of how to prepare your written communications in a logical and clear fashion. As you progress in your military careers, you will be tasked with drafting and submitting written correspondence. It is imperative that you know how to write effectively and develop these skills in your subordinates. First impressions are always important and often that first impression comes from something you have submitted in writing. The memorandum is a form of correspondence widely used in the CF to communicate within a unit. It is also used outside the military in most businesses. The format may differ, but the intent is the same, to pass on information. As such, you will use it regularly whenever you pass on information in writing, both up and down the chain of command.

There are seven types of military correspondence, which are as follows:

- letter
- memorandum (See Annex D)
- minute sheet (See Annex E)
- agenda (See Annex F)
- minutes of a meeting (See Annex G)
- service paper
- synopsis

Memorandum

The purpose of a memorandum is used as a common form of communication within the Originator's establishment (unit). The tone is businesslike, meaning “to the point”. It should answer the questions who, what, where, when and why. In an earlier class you were introduced to the standard formatting of military correspondence. The three components of any military correspondence are as follows:

- the heading;
- the body; and
- the close.

A memorandum follows this same format, with one change. Since the memo is for internal use only, the originator's identification is not required. In its place the heading “Memorandum” can be used. This is optional. In general practice the heading Memorandum is used when there is no security marking.

The Body consists of the references and the text.

The text makes up the majority of the body, depending on the complexity of the subject. It is arranged into paragraphs and sub-paragraphs. The identification of paragraphs alternates between numbers and letters. Paragraphs are indented and sub-paragraphs have a hanging indent.

The Close consists of the signature block, a listing of the annexes and appendices, the enclosures, a distribution list, page number, and security marking. Remember that with the exception of the signature block, these other elements are only used if required.

Minute Sheet (DND 317)

A “Minute” is an addressed comment or reply. It is used when a formal reply by memorandum is not required. Minutes may be written on a DND 317 Minute Sheet and attached to the correspondence, however, the most widely used method is to write them on the free (unused) space of the originator's memorandum, usually after the end of the last paragraph. Minutes may be typed or handwritten.

Format of Typed Minutes

Left Justified: all elements are aligned by the left, whether they follow the left margin or not;

Numbered in Succession: with the original memo being number 1, the first minute number 2, and so on. The first minute number goes in a circle just above the subject heading. The second minute number goes in a circle on the line above the minute addressee.

Identifies who the Minute is Directed To: it does not have to be the person who originated the correspondence. The addressee will normally be a position or appointment. If it is the originator of a memo, the title used must be the same as in the signature block.

The Body of the Minute: is very brief and to the point.

Signature Block: contains the name (signature) rank, appointment and date.

Spacing: there will be a clear line left between the address and the body of the minute. There will also be a clear line between the body and the signature

VII. Military Message

This section is to familiarize you with the preparation of a Military Message. You will employ all of the conventions and concepts of military writing that you have been previously taught during memos and minutes. The Message is a form of correspondence, comparable to a telegram, which is used to transmit information quickly within the military by electronic means. As members of the military, we have continually been exposed to various forms of Messages, from postings to promotions. It is important that you have the background knowledge required to prepare a Message quickly and professionally. As you progress in your military careers, you will be tasked from time to time with preparing a Message for transmission.

Process of Drafting a Military Message

A military Message is drafted in the ‘MCOIN Message Drafter’ program. Upon opening this program the screen will appear as in **Annex H**, according to which page tab is selected. All pertinent fields are to be filled in and the program will build the Message accordingly. When the

body is complete, save the Message as a '.mc3' file. The military Message will need to be printed and sent to the Wing Message Centre. **(Annex I)**

Purpose of Military Message

The specific purpose for military Messages is to transmit information quickly through a secure medium.

Responsibilities of the Drafter and the Reviewing Officer

As with all military forms, there are certain responsibilities of the Drafter and the Reviewing Officer that must be adhered to. The Drafter's responsibility is to compose the Message IAW all the rules and regulations governing Message preparation as contained in A-AD-121-C01/FP-000 Staff and Writing Procedures.

A Releasing Officer is the person who has the authority to release Messages. They sign on behalf of the originator and are responsible for ensuring correct production and distribution.

Therefore, the Drafter and Reviewing Officer cannot be the same.

Types of Messages

There are four different formats of Messages currently used in the CF, which are:

- Bilingual
- Exercise
- General
- Miscellaneous

Bilingual

These messages are identified as "Bilingual Message/Message Bilingue" when English appears first in the text and in reverse order if French appears first in the text. The language in the Head and Close of the Message will concur with the language used in the first subject line. The beginning of the second language text will be identified by English text ends/texte français suit or fin du texte français/English text follows.

Exercise

These are Messages sent during or relating to exercises conducted in the interest of training and readiness. "EXERCISE EXERCISE EXERCISE" shall appear as the last line of text in every exercise Message. The word "EXERCISE", followed by the exercise identification shall appear in the subject line or early in the text.

General

Used to communicate to a large number of addressees: Examples are "CANFORGEN", "MARGEN" and "CANAIRGEN". NDHQ OPIs or Commanders of Commands can only originate these Messages within the scope of their responsibilities.

Miscellaneous

This type of Message is the type most commonly used in the CF. Promotion, housing requests and posting Messages are some of the more common types of miscellaneous Messages we see.

Message Form Header Blocks

NOTE: When using multiple pages you need only show the page number, classification/designation and originator's number on the subsequent pages.

Header Lines

Comparable to the "Head" of a memorandum. The header consists of the following blocks:

Security Classification Block

This will reflect the sensitivity of the contents of the Message. Messages will be marked "PROTECTED A, B, or C" as required. Messages not requiring classification will be marked "UNCLASSIFIED". It is typed in at both the top and bottom of the form. The Drafter is responsible for the correct classification.

File Block

The originator's file number and suffix will appear here.

Page Block

Each page shall be numbered with two digits, i.e., 01, 02 etc. The total number of pages shall be indicated on the first page only.

Date/Time Group

Represents the time the Message was signed by the Releasing Officer. To avoid confusion between different time zones, Universal Coordinated Time (UCT) is used, as indicated by the suffix Z. This is also known as Zulu Time. The group components are:

Date/Time Block

Use the 24 hour clock. This shall appear as six digits followed by "Z". Example: 242135Z.

Month Block

Written in capitals as a three-letter abbreviation, e.g., JUN, SEP, etc.

Year Block

Last two digits of the year, e.g., 01.

Precedence Block

Four precedence categories are used to indicate the urgency and relative order in which messages are handled. Action and Information precedence are assigned independently. The Information precedence is assumed to be routine if not assigned. The four precedence categories are:

- Flash - ZZ
- Immediate - OO
- Priority - PP
- Routine - RR

NOTE: The PROTECTED designations are used by only CANADA. They are not to be used in messages to other countries.

Flash (ZZ) - reserved for initial contact messages or for operational combat messages of extreme urgency. Brevity is mandatory. Flash messages override all other lesser priority messages. These messages must be transmitted within 10 minutes of receipt, e.g. warning of large-scale attack, extremely urgent Intel, etc.

Immediate (OO) - reserved for situations that gravely affect the security of national or allied forces or populace. These must be transmitted within one hour of receipt; e.g. reports of grave natural disasters, aircraft movements/flight plans.

Priority (PP) - may be used for situation reports of impending enemy action, orders to naval, air or ground formations, or administrative matters when it is considered essential that action must be taken and cannot wait for normal delivery. These must be transmitted within six hours of receipt.

Routine (RR) - used for peacetime, stabilized or projected operations, programs or projects, and administrative, logistic or personnel matters. These must be transmitted by the start of the next working day.

These categories indicate to the originator the relative speed of delivery. This would indicate to the communications centre personnel the relative order of processing, transmission and delivery. And it tells the recipients the urgency of the message.

Classification Block

Corresponds to the Security Classification/Designation shown at the top and the bottom of the message form and the first line of the text.

Security Classifications/Designations are indicated by the following codes:

<u>CLASS/DESIGNATION</u>	<u>CODE</u>
TOP SECRET	TTTT
SECRET	SSSS
PROTECTED C	VVVV
CONFIDENTIAL	CCCC

PROTECTED B
PROTECTED A
UNCLASSIFIED

KKKK
GGGG
UUUU

SPECAT BLOCK is left blank.

LMF and CAI - normally left blank – NDHQ assigns these.

Originator's Number Block

Identifies a message and forms the message reference with the "DATE-TIME" group. This number may be abbreviated if the originators' number block space is too short. The originators number is repeated on all pages.

EXAMPLE: ACPDTC 102
CFTDC 46

Message Form Text Block

The next major component of the Message that we will cover is the "TEXT". This area, comparable to the body of a memorandum, covers the following areas:

Addresses

Originator, Action and Info addressees are the first element of information in the text block. Addressee identification is composed of the following parts:

Examples of Message Addresses

FROM-DE MARCOMHQ HALIFAX//COMD//
TO-A NDHQ OTTAWA//CDS//
INFO NDHQ OTTAWA//VCDS/ADM (MAT)//
MARLANTHQ HALIFAX//SSO COM// ZEN

Message Addresses: consists of the Unit (Message addresses are contained in A-AD-133-001/AX-001 CF Addresses) and is followed by the appointment or office designators. The same address may appear as both the Action and Info addressee.

Appointments or Office Designations: shall be separated from the message address by the use of two oblique strokes (//) and end with two strokes. When there is more than one designator for a message address, they shall be separated by a single oblique stroke.

Address Placement: Each address shall be on a separate line. The originator's address shall begin 15 spaces from the left boundary on the "TO" line. The word "INFO" begins 10 spaces from the left boundary. When there is insufficient space to include all office designators on one line, the continuing line will begin on the 20th space.

ZEN Designation: It is the *originator's* responsibility to deliver Messages to appointments that use the same message address. ZEN is placed one space after the address to indicate the Message was forwarded by other than electronic means (usually mail).

Address Indicating Group (AIG): You would use an AIG when there is a predetermined distribution list for frequently occurring groups of Message addresses. AIGs, as listed in A-AD-133-004/AG-000 Address Indicating Groups, are used to reduce the physical size of the address portion of a Message to improve the handling speed.

Text Format

Text is double-spaced and typed in BLOCK (Capital) letters. There shall be no more than 69 characters per line. There shall be no more than 19 double spaced lines per page, including FROM and TO. Blank lines are not permitted. Subsequent pages may have the FROM and TO overwritten.

Brevity

The need for brevity cannot be overstated. All non-essential articles, prepositions, conjunctions and unnecessary words shall be omitted. Unless the full word is essential to the meaning, abbreviations should be used whenever possible. The text should be precise, to avoid subsequent explanatory messages.

Punctuation and Symbols

Accents shall not be used. Punctuation should not be used unless essential to the sense of a message. Only the following punctuation and symbols are permitted in the text:

Punctuation and Symbols

Question Mark ?
Hyphen -
Colon :
Parenthesis Left (
Parenthesis Right)
Period .
Comma ,
Oblique /

Numbers

Should be typed as digits, i.e., 154 etc. Fractions shall be indicated as 3/4.

“Repeat”

A word may be repeated in the text to ensure clarity. For example, "WOCZYNSKI REPEAT WOCZYNSKI".

Sequence of Text Elements

The very first line of message text shall be the Security Classification/Designation followed by the originator's number. Subject Indicator Code (SIC), if applicable, will be on the second line by itself, followed by the subject line and references.

PROTECTED A COMD 035

SIC GKF

SUBJ: RESUMPTION OF 161.08 PROGRAM

REFS: A. YOUR AIRCOM DGSPOPS 099 211443Z FEB 96

B. MY WATCO 022 222037Z FEB 96

Security Classification or Protected Designation

There shall be a space between each letter of the classification, if used. This does not apply for the "Protected" designation.

Originators Number

Should be in full.

Subject Indicator Code (SIC)

SIC must be used for all messages addressed to NATO, Australian, New Zealand, or MARCOM units or formations. Detailed instructions for these codes are contained in A-AD-133-003/AG-000.

Subject Line

The Message should contain a concise subject heading. The subject line may be omitted if it causes an unclassified Message to be classified, if it will increase noticeably the length of a short Message or if the subject is readily apparent in the first line of the text.

References

Reference identifies documents referenced in the text. References shall consist of YOUR or MY or the short title or origination of a third party followed by the originator's number and the date/time group or file number and date as per the previous slide. There is one blank line between this and the previous line.

Closure

In the final section of the message form there are three sections to complete. They are the Drafter, Releasing Officer, and security classification.

Drafter Block

Shall contain the Drafter's initials, name, rank, appointment, and telephone local in that order.

Note: periods after initials and a comma after the last name shall be used.

Releasing Officer Block

Shall contain the Releasing Officer's initials, name, rank, appointment, telephone local and signature, in that order.

Note: periods after initials and a comma after the last name shall be used.

The Drafter and the Releasing Officer cannot be the same person.

Security Classification Block

Contains the same classification as used at the top of the message.

VIII. Conclusion

As you progress in your military careers, not only will you be tasked to prepare more written work yourself, but you will also have to check the written work of your subordinates to ensure that it meets the standards set by your superiors.

Applying the proper conventions of military writing helps us to produce professional correspondence. Remember, written communication is an important means of communication between you and your superiors/subordinates. As a supervisor, it is vital that you be able to produce polished, professional correspondence and teach your subordinates to do the same.

This document describes the military writing policy and rules of formatting for effective writing. This is a reference guide for you when writing correspondence. In addition to this document, the Commanding Officer (CO) of Regional Cadet Support Unit (Prairie) (RCSU (Pra)), has some preferences that may also be referred to (**Annex J**).

Remember that the ability to write well is not inborn. It is a skill acquired through the diligent application of rules and procedures. The key to effective writing is to determine what to say, and then format the correspondence while saying it clearly and simply. First impressions are important. Often, that first impression comes from something that you or one of your subordinates submits in writing.

Annex A – Sample Letter Heading

Military Writing

March 2008

PROTECTED A

One-inch margin

Canadian Forces School of
Administration and Logistics
PO Box 1000 Stn Main
Borden ON L0M 1C0

Date in Full

1000-1 (Position of Drafter)

For single addressees, the full address and position (never name) is identified. For multiple addressees, use a Distribution List.

25 December 2001

Commanding Officer
Canadian Forces Base Halifax
PO Box 99000 Stn Forces
Halifax NS B3K 5X5

The subject line shall not extend past the centre of the page and only the bottom line is underlined.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT CLERK
QUALIFICATION LEVEL THREE
A11 222 333 CORPORAL JOHNSON JL

BODY

THE CLOSE

Annex B – Sample Letter Body

Military Writing

March 2008

THE HEADING

References: A. NDHQ OTTAWA D MIL C 234 241901Z FEB 01

B. CFB Halifax 5600-1 (Adm O) 5 June 2001(enclosed)

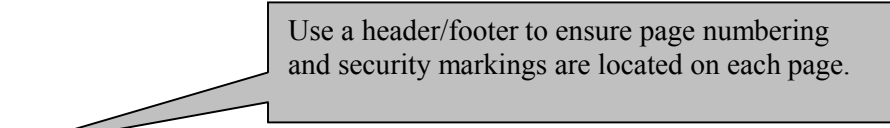
C. CFB Halifax 5600-1 (CC) 6 Jul 01

1. A letter is a common form of correspondence within the Department of National Defence (DND). The tone is formal and can cover topics ranging from business and operations to congratulatory and welcome greetings. Abbreviations will not be used and the numbers one to nine will be written out. Two spaces follow each period (.) and colon (:). All other punctuation shall be separated by one space.

2. The following formatting rules apply to a letter:

- a. the document is left justified;
- b. a one inch margin is set for letters without letterhead, and a one and a half inch margin for those with letterhead; and
- c. if a letter contains a service number the designation PROTECTED A will appear one inch from the top and bottom of the page. It is not necessary to number a single page, however if you have more than one page they must be numbered with page numbers appearing two spaces above the security designation or at one inch from bottom of page without a designation.

3. All DND correspondence shall follow a logical sequence including an introduction, development of the subject matter and a conclusion. The text should be accurate, brief in description and clear in direction. All information included in a piece of correspondence should



Use a header/footer to ensure page numbering and security markings are located on each page.

1/2

PROTECTED A

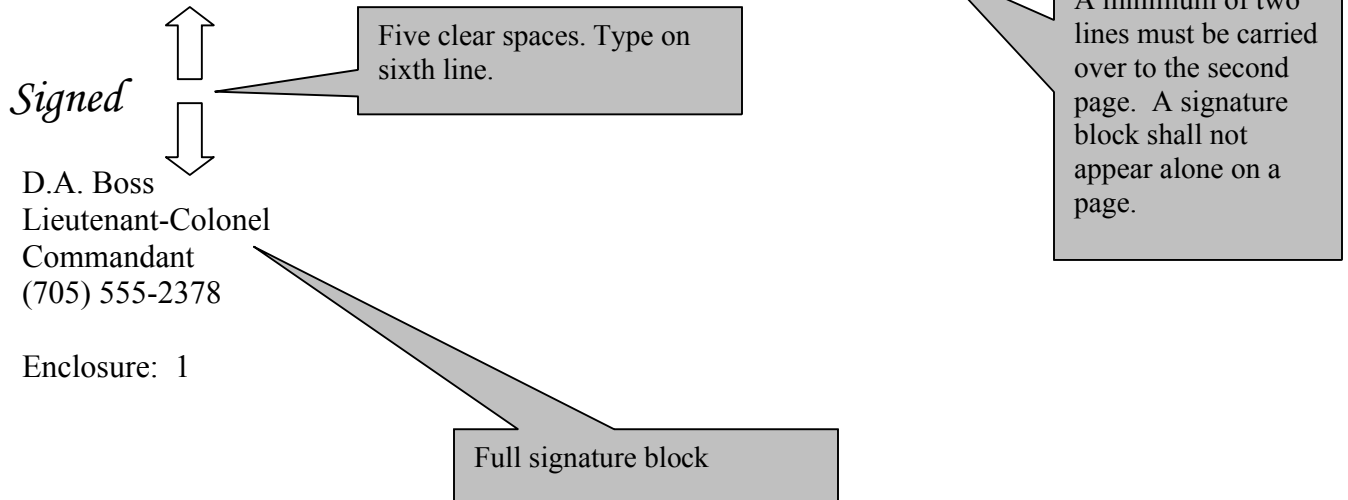
Annex C – Sample Letter Close

Military Writing

March 2008

PROTECTED A

be relevant to the subject matter identifying who, what, where and when and why. Annexes and appendices are an excellent way to include large amounts of organized information that is pertinent to the subject of the document. Lastly, the document shall be free of spelling and typographical errors.



2/2

PROTECTED A

Annex D – Sample Memorandum

Military Writing
March 2008

PROTECTED A

Memorandum

1000-1 (Posn of Drafter)

6 Nov 01

Dist List

SAMPLE MEMO FOR RMS QL3
A11 222 333 CPL JOHNSON JL

Refs: A. NDHQ OTTAWA D MIL C 234 241901Z FEB 01
B. CFB Halifax 5600-1 (Adm O) 6 June 2001
C. CFB Halifax 5600-1 (CC) 6 Jul 01

1. A memorandum is a common form of correspondence within an originators establishment/unit. The tone is business like and to the point. Numbers used in the text from one to nine will be written out. Two spaces fol the colon (:) and a period (.), all other punctuation shall be separated by one space.

2. The fol formatting rules apply to a memo:

- a. the document is left justified;
- b. all margins are set at one inch from the top, bottom, and one inch on the sides; and
- c. if the memo contains a SN the designation PROTECTED A will appear one inch from the top and bottom of the page. It is not necessary to number a single page, however if you have more than one page they must be numbered.

1/2

PROTECTED A

No "0" prior to single digit date Month and year abbreviated.

Only used if there is more than one addressee.

Last line of the subject shall be underlined
The subject should not extend past the middle of the page.

Refers to a Message

Refers to a memo

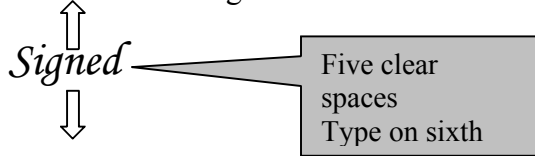
Refers to a letter

If more than one page it must be numbered

Annex D – Sample Memorandum
Cont'd

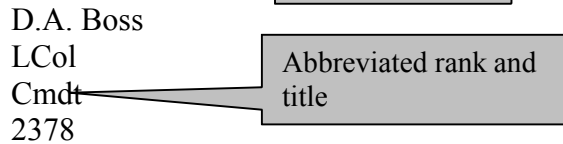
3. The full use of official abbreviations and acronyms is required. Keep ranks and names/dates together on the same line of text.

Signed ↑
↓



Five clear spaces
Type on sixth

D.A. Boss
LCol
Cmde
2378

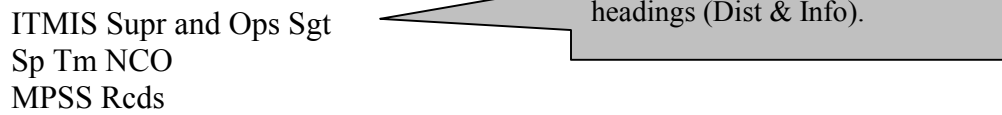


Abbreviated rank and title

Dist List

Action

ITMIS Supr and Ops Sgt
Sp Tm NCO
MPSS Rcds



Addressed to a position not personally addressed.
Abbreviated posn titles and headings (Dist & Info).

Info

G3 MASM

Annex E – Sample Minute Sheet (DND 317)

Military Writing

March 2008

 National Defence Institute		Circulation - Distribution		EEO, Affirmative Action - 001 01 00000	
MINUTE SHEET - HERE		Part No. - 0000000000		71 - 01	
ISSUED TO UNIT		DATE - TIME			
REFERRED TO NAVY/NAVY 4		REFERRED - REMARKS (To be signed by all steering committee members, number and date) (Make signature legible, include date/time if date)			
DND 317 (2-00) 1300 01-000 0000		Printed on recycled paper - 100% post consumer waste		Group - 0000 7-0 Class - 0000 P-0	

Annex F – Sample Agenda

Military Writing
March 2008

PROTECTED A



File Number (Originator)

Date

Dist List

SUBJECT LINE FOR AGENDA TO INCLUDE REASON
LOCATION OF MTG/CONF TIME AND DATE

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
Name	
Rank	
Position	
Telephone Number	
Dist List	

PROTECTED A



Annex G – Sample Minutes of a Meeting

Military Writing

March 2008

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Classification/Designation if required

File Number (Originator)

July 2008

Dist List

Minutes of a Meeting -
SUBJECT LINE

Chairperson

Members: List by rank, name and appointment. Those of equal rank are listed alphabetically.

Recording Secretary

1. Administrative Details
2. Introduction
3. Old Business
4. New Business
5. Conclusion

Signature Block

Dist List

Annex: If included, annexes are to be listed at the bottom of the Minutes to Meeting notes. Extraneous documents not referred to in the minutes should not be included.

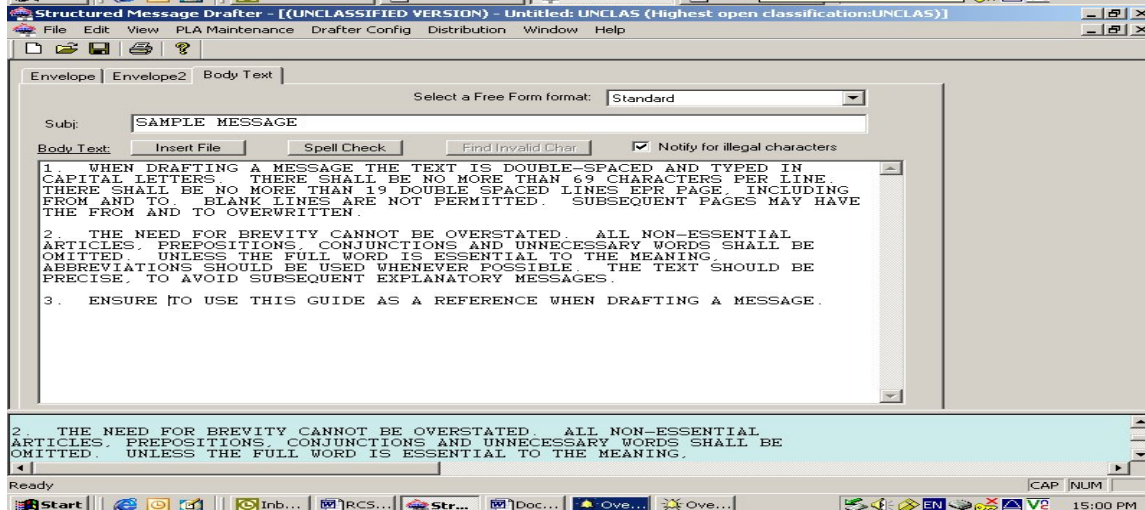
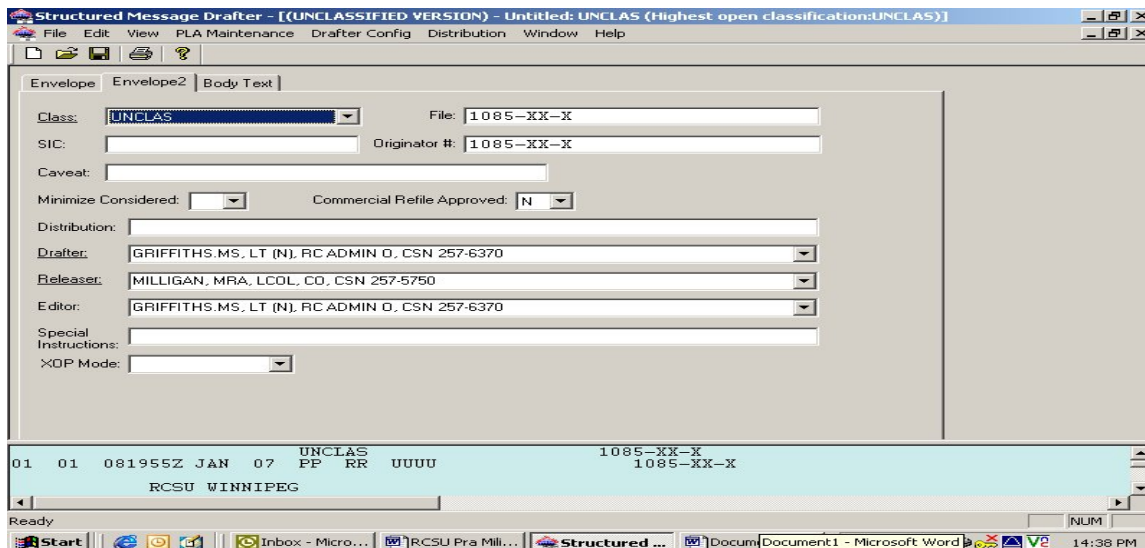
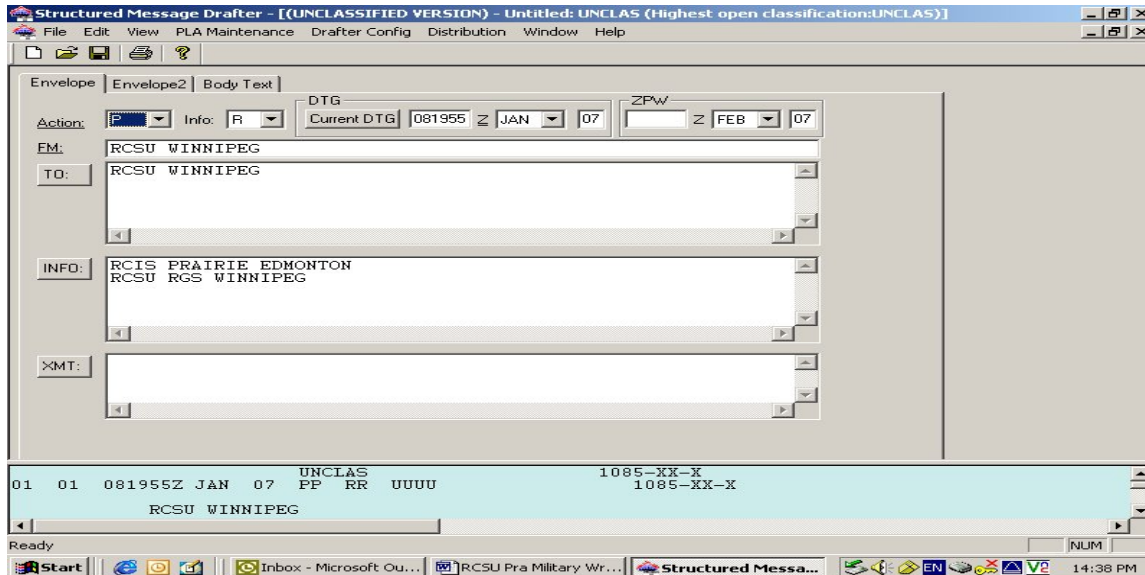
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Classification/Designation if required

Annex H – Sample Military Message Drafter

Military Writing

March 2008



Annex I – Sample Military Message

Military Writing

March 2008

UNCLAS

1085-XX-X

01 01 081955Z JAN 07 PP RR UUUU

RC ADMIN O 8001

RCSU WINNIPEG

RCSU WINNIPEG

INFO RCIS PRAIRIE EDMONTON

RCSU RGS WINNIPEG

UNCLAS RC ADMIN O 8001

SUBJ: SAMPLE MILITARY MESSAGE

1. WHEN DRAFTING A MILITARY MESSAGE THE TEXT IS DOUBLE-SPACED AND TYPED IN CAPITAL LETTERS. THERE SHALL BE NO MORE THAN 69 CHARACTERS PER LINE. THERE SHALL BE NO MORE THAN 19 DOUBLE SPACED LINES PER PAGE, INCLUDING FROM AND TO. BLANK LINES ARE NOT PERMITTED.

SUBSEQUENT PAGES MAY HAVE THE FROM AND TO OVERWRITTE

2. THE NEED FOR BREVITY CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. ALL NON-ESSENTIAL ARTICLES, PREPOSITIONS, CONJUNCTIONS AND UNNECESSARY WORDS SHALL BE OMITTED. UNLESS THE FULL WORD IS ESSENTIAL TO THE MEANING, ABBREVIATIONS SHOULD BE USED WHENEVER POSSIBLE. THE TEXT SHOULD BE PRECISE, TO AVOID SUBSEQUENT EXPLANATORY MESSAGES

3. ENSURE TO USE THIS GUIDE AS A REFERENCE WHEN DRAFTING A MESSAGE

GRIFFITHS, MS, LT (N), RC ADMIN O, CSN 257-6370

MILLIGAN, MRA, LCOL, CO, CSN 257-5750

UNCLAS

Annex J – RCSU (Pra) Conventions

Military Writing

March 2007

The Heading

Letter Head: If using the electronic letterhead ensure that the same style and size of font is used as the remainder of the document.

Date: Date is written in full.

Addressees: For single addressees, the full address and position (name only used in specific documents) is identified.

Subject Line: The subject line shall not extend past the centre of the page and only the bottom line is underlined. The underline must extend the full length of the longest line.

References: When referring to more than one reference within a document, the references are to be listed in the order that they will be referred to within the document. List sequentially, in accordance with the text.

If you are referring to a reference within a document the word reference is to be spelled in full and the “R” is capitalized.

The Body

Additional Pages: If the correspondence extends to additional pages, there must be a minimum of one line carried over on the last page. The signature block shall not appear alone on a page.

The Close

Signature Block: The signature block shall be written in full.

Distribution List: All shall be addressed to a position not personally addressed.

Annex K – Sample Texts

Military Writing

March 2008

Introductory Statements:

- “In accordance with Reference....”
- “As requested/stated/identified at Reference....”
- “It has come to the attention of....”
- “On behalf of all the personnel....”
- “Subject member has requested....”

Referring to Subject:

- “You are invited to attend the subject event.”
- “Request approved for the subject member.”

Invitation/Request Attendance:

- “You are cordially invited to attend....”
- “Your presence is requested....”
- “This memo/letter serves to request your attendance....”
- “It would be greatly appreciated of you to deliver a presentation on....”

Commencing sub-paragraphs:

- “This request is made for the following reasons:”
- “Equipment required is as follows:”
- “The following topics will be discussed:”

Closing Statements:

- “Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.”
- “Should you require further assistance/information, please contact....”
- “For your information/approval, Sir/Ma’am.”
- “This unit supports the member’s request.”