CAO GUIDE

U.S. ARMY

Casualty Assistance Officer Guide

What You Should Know and Do to Fulfill Your CAO Duties

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Message from the Army Chief of Staff

There is nothing more vital to our Warrior Ethos than honoring the sacrifice of those fellow Soldiers who have died in service to our Nation. And there is no greater way to render that honor than by helping a Soldier's family or loved ones in the aftermath of their loss. Just as we will never leave a fallen comrade behind on the battlefield, we will always do our utmost to assist the families of our fallen comrades in their time of need.

As a Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO), you have the honor and duty to assist the family of someone who has paid the highest price in defense of our Nation. As such, you represent the Secretary of the Army, and our Army itself. Our Army has a covenant with those fallen Soldiers and their families, and we take great pride in keeping faith with that covenant. Keep in mind that your performance as a CAO is likely to shape the family's lasting impression of our Army as an institution that cares for its own. This duty is among the most profound responsibilities we can take on as Soldiers, and for that reason—at every step—you will have available all the resources the Army has to offer to help you carry out this solemn mission.

This Guide is a primary resource for assisting an Army family after the loss of their loved one. Be ready to assume this vital mission as soon as you are placed on the CAO roster. Become familiar with the contents of this Guide immediately so that you are well prepared when selected to assist an Army family. As noted in this Guide, Casualty Assistance Officers will have priority access to all available Army resources at the local level as they carry out their CAO mission—from legal assistance, chaplaincy, finance, retirement services, ACS, to the Casualty Assistance Center. And, if required, the Army's Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center will assist you with special needs that cannot be met at the local level.

As Americans, we all wish to honor the memory of those Soldiers who gave their lives for our country, and to help their families in their time of grief. You have the unique opportunity to do both through your service as a CAO. I know that you will represent our Army with professionalism and compassion as you carry out this most solemn and vital mission.

Peter J. Schoomaker
General, United States Army

Introduction

This introduction is intended as an orientation to CAO duty that will give you a sense of what is required of you, how you can begin to prepare for those requirements, and how long your duty will last. The remainder of this Guide will provide you with detailed information, as well as direct you to resources for additional information. Use these tools. And remember that one of the most important tools you can use in this duty is your highest sense of Army professionalism and discipline. Treat the family you are serving as you would want your family to be served in the same situation.

What is CAO duty?

This is one of the most important, and possibly most challenging, assignments you will ever face. You are the representative of the Secretary of the Army, and the Army itself, for the family of someone who has paid the highest price in defense of this country. General George C. Marshall put the importance of good casualty assistance this way:

"There is no more effective way of creating bitter enemies of the Army than by failing to do everything we can possibly do in a time of bereavement, nor is there a more effective way of making friends for the Army than by showing we are personally interested in every casualty which occurs."

"You *become* the Army to the next of kin."

This assignment is not merely a duty. It is an honor. There are guidelines you will need to know, and many of the specifics can be found in this Guide, on the Army Casualty Assistance Web site (**www.armycasualty.army.mil**), and in the other materials you have or will receive from your Casualty Assistance Center (CAC).

SFC James Campbell
Casualty Assistance Officer

What will you do?

Once assigned, CAO duty becomes your mission. Your CAO duty takes precedence over **ALL** your other duties. During your CAO duty, the family should be able to reach you at all times, and you should respond to the family's requests as soon as possible.

Generally, the CAO assists the eligible next of kin (NOK) in making arrangements for the funeral or memorial service, settling claims, and paying survivor benefits. Your CAC will provide you with all of the paperwork and documentation you will need at the outset of your duty. It is your responsibility to ensure that it is completed, submitted, and received by the CAC or the appropriate agency.

Your duty is to be the essence of Army professionalism, and the degree of your professionalism will reflect on you and on the Army. If you have any questions about any aspect of your duty, do not "wing it." Consult your CAC.

Your relationship with the family

Federal statutes provide different benefits to a Soldier's relatives, and in some situations to non-family members, based on established criteria. Some benefits and entitlements are based upon a person's relationship to the Soldier and the role he or she played in the Soldier's life. Other benefits are based on elections made by the Soldier. It is possible that the Primary Next of Kin (PNOK), the Person Eligible to Receive Personal Effects (PERE), and the Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of Remains (PADD) are the same person, or they could be three different people. The person receiving the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) might not be the person who received the Death Gratuity (DG) or even be a relative of the Soldier. You must follow the instructions and guidance that you receive from the CAC concerning benefits and entitlements due to the person you are assisting. The more entangled the Soldier's family relationships, the more likely it is that competing requests and claims for benefits will be submitted.

The Army cannot become involved in family or other civil disputes. Accordingly, it is important that you do not allow yourself to become involved in a family's internal differences and do not appear to support one relative's position over another's. Do not allow

your own sense of justice or fairness to be used as a basis for deviating from the law or Army regulations concerning receipt of benefits and entitlements. Contact your CAC to resolve any questions or issues that arise concerning eligibility for a benefit or entitlement.

How long will my CAO duty last?

The length of your assignment will vary depending largely on the circumstances of the next of kin. Each CAC has its own geographical area of responsibility. In some cases, you may be a link in a chain of CAOs assisting the next of kin, participating in only one or part of one phase of the process. In other cases, you may be providing all casualty assistance to that next of kin. In all cases, research and preparation will enhance the quality of your assistance, as well as increase your confidence and professionalism.

Casualty assistance concludes when all the claims have been completed; payment of survivor benefits has begun to flow to the NOK; all paperwork has been prepared and properly filed with the appropriate agencies and received; and when you are released from the CAC, subject to special circumstances. Your role concludes either at the end of the casualty assistance process or when another CAO takes over. Whatever preparation you have done and research you have collected should be carefully documented on your **Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) After Action Report** so that it can be passed along to another CAO, if necessary. There may be times when you are called back to provide additional assistance.

"Your CAC is well equipped to help. For emergency and time-sensitive assistance, call CMAOC's toll-free number."

COL Mary Torgersen
Director, Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center

How do I get help?

There are numerous resources available to assist you with all aspects of your duty. Chief among these is your CAC. **Your CAC should be the first place you turn to ask questions and conduct your research**. Your CAC can help you in obtaining assistance from other resources when required. If you cannot reach your CAC and you need time-sensitive assistance, you can contact the Army Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC) at 1-800-626-3317.

Types of Casualty Assistance Officers

Primary Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO):

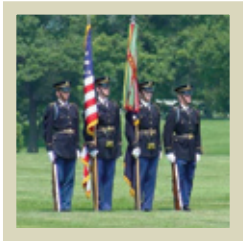
Mature commissioned or enlisted officer appointed to the PNOK of deceased or missing Soldiers to assist settling claims and payment of survivor benefits and preparation for funeral or memorial.

Courtesy CAO:

Interment CAO: When interment and memorial services are held outside the geographical area of the Primary CAO for the PNOK, another CAO will assist in the preparation and coordination of the services and PNOK needs during the stay at the interment location.

Travel CAO: This CAO assists other family members arrange travel and settle claims for memorial and/or interment services.

How to use this Guide



This Guide is designed to give you a clear idea of what you need to know and do to successfully complete your CAO duties. For purposes of this Guide, PNOK may be used to indicate singular or multiple PNOKs, or the guardian of a minor PNOK. The Guide's organization follows the three phases of the casualty assistance process. **Your own experience as a CAO may or may not follow these three phases, or the steps within each phase, in the same order as presented here. It is more important that you respond to the needs of your assigned family whether or not these needs follow the phases outlined in this Guide**.

Phase 1 (Steps 1, 2, and 3) begins with your assignment, often within hours of the Casualty Notification Officer's (CNO's) visit, and includes your initial research on the NOK and their financial and domestic circumstances, as well as an overview of what you need to know—and do—as a CAO. Phase 1 also encompasses the first meeting with the NOK, and subsequent visits. Key issues in Phase 1 are the return of the remains, certification for and delivery of the Army death gratuity (if applicable), and funeral arrangements.

Phase 2 (Step 4) encompasses the funeral and/or memorial service, during which you will work with the family to provide them with the assistance they need (other CAOs may be assigned to help, as may a chaplain or the public affairs officer). The Interment CAO will attend the funeral if it does not occur in the same geographical area, unless the NOK requests otherwise. The Interment CAO may be requested by the NOK to participate in the funeral and/or memorial service.

Phase 3 (Steps 5 and 6) covers all post-funeral assistance, which includes ensuring that the NOK applies for, and receives, all applicable benefits. This phase is time consuming and can last for weeks or months depending on the family situation. Paperwork includes health insurance transfer, life insurance claim forms, change of status forms, return of personal effects, etc. If the Soldier's death was the result of military training or operational accident, your duties may include coordination of a family briefing on the unit's investigation. (For more information, see Special Sections of this Guide, page 48.)

PLEASE NOTE: This Guide is designed to assist you in performing your duties effectively and efficiently. If you have any suggestions, lessons learned, or additional information that would improve this Guide, please contact: Mr. Dan Ruiz, Casualty Assistance Program Manager, CMAOC, at (703) 325-0474.

PHASE ONE

Phase One

Phase One begins with your assignment, often within hours of the Casualty Notification Officer's (CNO's) visit, and includes your initial research on the NOK and their financial and domestic circumstances, as well as an overview of what you need to know—and do—as a CAO. Phase One also encompasses the first meeting with the NOK, and subsequent visits. Key issues in Phase One are the return of the remains, certification for and delivery of the Army death gratuity, if applicable, and funeral arrangements.

Step 1: Research

Overview

Immediately upon your appointment as a Casualty Assistance Officer, you should:

❶ Conduct General Research
- Review Guide and QuickGuide.
- Use your CAC.
- Contact other CAOs for advice.
- Review regulations.
- Read information paper, "Active Duty Death Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Elections".

❷ Conduct Specific Research (as it applies in your case)
- Obtain information from CAC on family structure.
- Contact CNO.
- Verify current status of remains and circumstances of the death.
- Contact the Retirement Services Officer (RSO) to schedule SBP counseling.
- Obtain information on disposition of remains process.
- Obtain information on disposition of personal effects process.
- Review information on dealing with the media.
- Contact legal assistance.
- Verify posthumous citizenship eligibility.

❸ Obtain and Review Forms/Documents (These will be provided by the CAC)
- Review Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report.
- Fill out Casualty Assistance Referral Card.
- Obtain multiple copies of Authorization for Disclosure of Information.
- Obtain a copy of Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302).
- Obtain a copy of Verification of Survivor Annuity (DD Form 2656-7).
- Obtain a copy of Direct Deposit Authorization (DFAS-CL Form 7330/2).
- Obtain a copy of Tax Withholding Certificate (W-4P).

It is not unusual to have a certain degree of reluctance and anxiety during the assignment. Maintain communications with the CAC and use common sense and good judgment.

Do not guess at answers, do not speculate, do not assume facts without verification, and *do not promise anything*. Provide official information only.

Remember that media attention will often fuel the feelings of family members. See further information on obtaining Army Public Affairs assistance should it be requested by the family. (Please refer to **Appendix C** for more information.)

As you prepare for your duties and responsibilities as a CAO, understand that your activities and challenges will vary depending on the type of casualty and the type of casualty incident. For example, with an individual death, your actions are largely independent of the activities of other CAOs. With a Multiple Casualty Event (MCE), however, you may be required to share information with other CAOs assigned to the MCE. Additionally,

your CAO duty may last for an extended period; for example, your duties as a CAO for the family of a missing or captured Soldier may take longer to administer than it would to provide services to the family of a deceased Soldier. For additional information regarding missing Soldiers and media attention to such issues, refer to the Special Section that begins on page 42.

This Guide provides information to assist you in performing your CAO duties. Remember that nothing can substitute for common sense, good judgment, and sensitivity in performing your CAO duties. This Guide is not intended to replace or circumvent existing regulations; however, it should serve as a convenient tool to help you provide casualty assistance.

General CAO Research

Depending on the lead time before your initial meeting with the NOK, you may want to accomplish some, or all, of the following:

Review this Guide. While this Guide does not contain everything you need to know and do, it contains information that will assist you in your CAO role.

Ensure you have a copy of the QuickGuide. This companion piece to the CAO Guide is invaluable in highlighting the immediate actions you will need to take. It will enable you to keep focused on your key activities, especially if there is not enough time to review the entire Guide.

Use your CAC. If the Assistance Center cannot provide certain answers, they will likely be able to provide information on where you can find the answers you need.

Learn from others who have served as CAOs. They are likely to have advice and recommendations that will help you.

Review Chapter 6, AR 600-8-1, Casualty Operations/Assistance/Insurance.

Review Chapters 4, 13, 14, 15 and Table 2-1, AR 638-2, Care and Disposition of Remains and Disposition of Personal Effects.

Review DA PAM 638-2, Procedures for the Care and Disposition of Remains and Disposition of Personal Effects.

The uniform for a CAO is Class A for the initial visit and the memorial or the funeral service. The Class B uniform is appropriate for all other visits. Exceptions to this policy will be approved by Casualty Operations Division, CMAOC.

Specific CAO Research

Learn as much as you can about the deceased Soldier, the family, and the circumstances surrounding the incident. The CAC will provide the name, relationship, and address of the person you will be assisting and any special conditions of which you should be aware. If you are a CAO for a Soldier in anything other than deceased status, review the appropriate instructions in the Special Sections that begin on page 37.

Key Terms to Know

For a complete list of acronyms, visit www.armycasualty.army.mil.

PNOK	Primary Next of Kin
SNOK	Secondary Next of Kin
PADD	Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of Remains
DG	Death Gratuity
PERE	Person Eligible to Receive Personal Effects
CNO	Casualty Notification Officer

Contact the Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) for additional information pertaining to the family members. Obtain a copy of the CNO's Record of Casualty Notification Actions either from the CNO or from the CAC.

Ensure that the CAC tells you who are the PNOK, SNOK, death gratuity recipients, Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) beneficiaries, PADD, and PERE. Depending upon the Soldier's family structure and benefits elections, they may all be the same person or several different people.

Verify with the CAC the current status of the casualty and, as appropriate, the status of the remains as this will be one of the first questions you will be asked by the family. Be prepared to answer questions with care and provide only the information that the CAC has given you. Do not speculate or guess.

Some family members may experience an adverse reaction to the information you provide. Obtain the name and telephone numbers of the local hospital, local ambulance service, and fire department rescue squad in case they are needed.

Contact the servicing legal assistance office. The legal assistance office can advise and assist the CAO regarding potential legal issues and can schedule an appointment for the PNOK. It is important that the will and any estate planning documents (e.g., deeds, insurance policies, IRAs, Thrift Savings Plans, and other beneficiary

Other Potential Sources of Information/Assistance

Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center
1-800-626-3317

Unit Commander

Finance, Transportation and Housing Offices

American Red Cross

Army Emergency Relief

Chaplain

Provost Marshal and Staff Judge Advocate

Veteran's Administration and Social Security Office

Posthumous Citizenship

To determine whether the deceased Soldier is eligible for posthumous citizenship, find out if he or she is a U.S. citizen or resident. Public Law 101-249, as amended, provides that an alien or non-citizen national of the United States who dies as a result of injury or disease incurred by active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces during specified periods of military hostilities may be granted U.S. citizenship. If the application is approved, a Certificate of Citizenship (N-645) will be issued in the name of the decedent (the deceased Soldier). The certificate establishes that the decedent is considered a citizen of the United States as of the date of his or her death.

To qualify for posthumous citizenship, the decedent must have been an alien or non-citizen national of the United States who served honorably in an active-duty status in the military of the United States from September 11, 2001, until terminated by Executive Order of the President and who died because of injury or disease incurred in or was aggravated by that service, and met one of the following enlistment requirements:

- Was enlisted, reenlisted, or inducted in the United States, Panama Canal Zone, American Samoa, or Swain's Island.
- Was admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident at any time.
- Entered the United States, Panama Canal Zone, American Samoa, or Swain's Island pursuant to military orders at some time during such service.

If possible, the Certificate of Citizenship should be presented at the funeral.

designation accounts) be reviewed prior to applying for insurance or other monetary benefits on behalf of the surviving family members. In situations where the decedent may have a taxable estate, there are several post mortem estate planning techniques that can be employed to minimize the impact of estate taxes. Once the beneficiary has received benefits, these techniques may be unavailable. Legal assistance attorneys are in the best position to advise the PNOK on these matters. Additionally, the legal assistance office can offer valuable services to the PNOK. In addition to advising on estate planning matters, the legal assistance office can assist the PNOK regarding any income tax benefits that arise as a result of the death as well as provide information on other available benefits. When you arrive at the legal assistance office, ensure you inform the receptionist that you are a CAO requesting assistance. You should expect to receive preferential treatment.

Be prepared to answer questions concerning the disposition and transportation of the Soldier's property. These questions should be referred to the CAC for an explanation of the summary court martial officer procedures and transportation entitlement.

Be prepared to deal with the media. Review **Appendix C**, "Responding to the Media and Public Affairs." Ensure the NOK has the name, address, and telephone number of the nearest military Public Affairs Officer (PAO). The CAC will provide this information to you.

Learn about the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). Follow the steps outlined in the information paper, "Active Duty Death Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Election." The Retirement Services Officer (RSO), who is trained and experienced in providing survivor benefits counseling, will counsel the Soldier's survivors. At the proper time, you will schedule a counseling appointment and accompany the family to the counseling session. If the RSO is conducting telephonic counseling, you will need to be present with the family.

Familiarize yourself with the Soldier's Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) in order to assist the faimly in settling those accounts.

Forms/Documents You Will Need

Learn as much as you can about the paperwork that is supplied to you by your CAC. Read the forms, and if you have questions yourself, you can assume that the NOK will have questions. Find out the answers ahead of time.

Prepare a **Casualty Assistance Referral Card** to present to the person you are assisting on your first visit. This card will be provided to you by the CAC. Be sure to enter your cell phone number and email contact information. A copy of the card appears on page 14.

Obtain sufficient copies of the **"Authorization for Disclosure of Information"** form and the appropriate cover letter. You will present a copy of this form to each PNOK. Ensure that the CAC briefs you fully on the use of this form. The form is also available at https://143.84.96.35. The Army receives numerous requests from private individuals, organizations, Members of Congress, and other reputable sources asking for information concerning the PNOK in order to make offers of condolences, gifts, grants, scholarships, and other such services as an effort to demonstrate support and condolence to the family. Because of Privacy Act Laws, the Army cannot release this information to third parties

"A lot of people wanted access to the family. Mediating that part of it was challenging."

CPT Nikki Wooten
Casualty Assistance Officer

without the written consent of the individual. Therefore, it is imperative that this disclosure form be completed as soon as possible and returned immediately to the CAC.

Review **Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report**. Your completed report with your chronological log of family requests and your actions taken on **Daily Staff Journal/ Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594)** will be due to your CAC not later than 60 days after your first visit. If your CAO duties extend beyond 60 days, interim reports will be required every 30 days thereafter, or upon completion of activity. Copies of the Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report form and the Daily Staff Journal/Log appear below and on the following pages.

Casualty Assistance Referral Card

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE REFERRAL CARD

Department of the Army

Your Casualty Assistance Officer is: _____
Home Telephone Number: _____
Office Telephone Number: _____
Cell Phone Number: _____
Email Address: _____

Duty Officer Telephone Number: _____

The United States Army is committed to assisting designated beneficiaries of American Soldiers, who have sacrificed so much for their country, in obtaining all Government benefits to which they are entitled. Your Casualty Assistance Officer will help in every way he or she can to lessen the burden of grief on you. Do not hesitate to call for help.

CMAOC / 21 May 2004

DA Form 1594

DAILY STAFF JOURNAL OR DUTY OFFICER'S LOG For use of this form, see AR 220-15; the proponent agency is Office of The Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations & Plans				PAGE NO.	NO. OF PAGES
ORGANIZATION OR INSTALLATION	LOCATION	PERIOD COVERED			
		FROM		TO	
		HOUR	DATE	HOUR	DATE

ITEM NO.	TIME		INCIDENTS, MESSAGES, ORDERS, ETC.	ACTION TAKEN	INL
	IN	OUT			

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER (CAO) AFTER ACTION REPORT (ACTIVE DUTY DECEASED)

Part One

CAO's Name: _____Date briefed by the CAC:_____

Deceased's Rank/Name: _____ Social Security Number _____
Unit and Station: _____Date of Death:_____
Date of Interment: _____ Place of Interment:_____

Next of Kin being assisted:
Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial Relationship Date First Tel Contact/First Visit
/ / /

NOK's Confirmed Mailing 45-day Address:

NOK's Confirmed Residence 45-day Address:

Part Two

The CAO needs to ensure the following benefits and entitlements are applied for and have commenced flowing to the NOK:

Benefit/Entitlement	Date Applied/Signed	Date NOK Received	Comments
Death Gratuity			
Disposition of Remains			
Military Honors (Honors Team/ Flag Case/Lapel Pins)			
Reimbursement of Funeral Expenses			
AER Benefits/briefing			
Unpaid pay & allowance			

Page 1 of 3

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER (CAO) AFTER ACTION REPORT (ACTIVE DUTY DECEASED)

Benefit/Entitlement	Date applied/signed	Date NOK received	Comments
Educational Benefits (VEAP/GI Bill)			
Report of Casualty (DD Form 1300/ DD Form 2064) or Civilian Death Certificate			
Travel of Dependents			
Movement of Household Goods			
Receipt of Personal Effects			
Claims for Loss/Destruction of personal property			
Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and Private Life Insurance			
Settlement of Accounts			
Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)			
Uniformed Services ID Card and TRICARE update			
Social Security Benefits			
Veterans Administration Benefits			
State Benefits			
Legal Assistance/Income Tax Benefits			

Part Three

Please answer the following questions:

What are your recommendations to improve the casualty assistance process?

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER (CAO) AFTER ACTION REPORT
(ACTIVE DUTY DECEASED)

What are your recommendations to improve the casualty assistance training?

What resources or tools were particularly helpful to you? What tools could you use to better support a family?

By signing this form, the Casualty Assistance Officer acknowledges that all benefits/entitlements listed have been applied for and have been received or commenced flowing to the NOK.

CAO's Signature:
Received at CAC by (Name/Grade):
Date completed report is turned into the CAC:

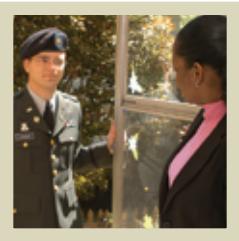
Step 2: Initial Contact and Meeting

Overview

1. Telephone PNOK within 4 hours (between 0600 hours to 2200 hours) of the notification to express condolences and schedule visit. Upon arrival, again express condolences.
2. Uniform for initial visit is Class A.
3. Visit should be brief to complete following actions:
   - Confirm 45-day mailing and residence address (if different).
   - Obtain Soldier's common name.
   - Check on any special titles used by NOK.
   - Advise on status of remains.
   - Explain that the death gratuity entitlement is intended to cover immediate expenses.
   - Discuss benefits if asked by the PNOK.
   - Provide PNOK with a Casualty Assistance Referral Card.
4. Determine family need for PAO support. (Note: In a high-profile case, it may be desirable to have the PAO accompany the CAO on the initial visit. This can be discussed when making the appointment.) Coordinate with CAC.
5. Record completed actions on Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report and Daily Staff Journal/Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594).

Initial Telephone Call

At a minimum, telephone contact with the person you are assisting should be made **within 4 hours** of the notification or as soon as possible thereafter. However, good judgment should prevail. Do not call between the hours of 2200 and 0600, unless directed by the CAC. During the initial call, identify yourself as their Casualty Assistance Officer, express condolences, and tactfully explain that you will be assisting them with a number of matters that will require their personal attention and decision.



For example: "Mrs. Smith, I'm Major John Jones, from 3d Battalion, 71st Field Artillery, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Please accept my deepest condolences on the death of your husband, Master Sergeant Sam Smith. I'm your Casualty Assistance Officer and will be assisting you."

Find out if there are any immediate problems, confirm the address, and arrange your initial visit at the earliest possible time at a location convenient to the PNOK.

The First Visit

Arrive on time and wear your Class A uniform. (Subsequent visits may be in Class B uniform. Class A is required for the funeral.)

Upon arrival, introduce yourself and express condolences. If other persons are present, ask the person you are assisting if you could talk in private.

When you are uncertain about an answer to a question, reply, "I don't know, but I will get an answer for you." Note the question on your log, obtain the answer, and annotate that on your log.

Obtain Information:
Explain that the Government will be sending information to them and reconfirm the mailing address for the next 45 days, as well as the Soldier's common name. Ensure and verify that all of the Soldier's children have been reported. The deceased Soldier might not have listed all children on his or her Record of Emergency Data (DD Form 93.) Even though it is a delicate subject, you must ask if the Soldier was married before and if there are any children from that relationship or any other relationship.

Verify the status of all known dependents, including the marital status of the person you are assisting, including verification of divorce decrees and child custody decrees. You will need to provide copies of final official documents to the CAC. Without certain documents, benefits may be delayed or denied. Documents that may be needed are listed on page 33.

Determine if there were any special titles used by the NOK, such as Dr. or a military rank.

Provide Information:
Provide the person you are assisting with a completed **Casualty Assistance Referral Card**. This form can be downloaded from the Web at: www.armycasualty.army.mil. Make sure you include your cell phone and email contact information on the card prior to presenting it to the NOK.

When instructed by the CAC, advise the person you are assisting about their entitlement to the death gratuity (DG). Inform the recipient that the DG is intended as money to assist them until other benefits begin. The CAC will notify you when the DG payment is ready for you to deliver to the authorized person. The DG is normally paid within 72 hours after the notification of death. NOTE: You may encounter hostility or rejection when you discuss the DG check. Should the recipient decline the payment, contact the CAC immediately.

Determine the immediate needs or concerns of the NOK. If financial assistance is required, make arrangements for the NOK to visit Army Emergency Relief (AER) or the American Red Cross (ARC).

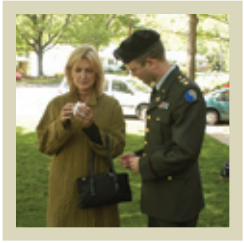
Inform the person you are assisting that benefits may be available from the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), the Social Security Administration (SSA), and others, and that specifics will be discussed during a later visit.

Inform the PNOK or ANOK (adult next of kin) of the potential for offers from private individuals, organizations, Members of Congress, and others. Explain that the Army cannot release privacy information concerning the PNOK(s) to third parties without the written consent of each PNOK. Advise the NOK to consider whether they would be willing to consent to the release of this information, and advise that you will present an "Authorization for Disclosure of Information" form and a letter of explanation on a subsequent visit. In situations where a mother and father do not reside in the same household, ensure that each parent is provided the opportunity to review and sign the form. The guardian or custodial parent of children not living with the Soldier's current spouse must also be afforded the opportunity to review and sign the form. All PNOKs, or their adult guardians, must be allowed to review and sign the form. Advise the NOK

Relationship with the Family

In this time of extreme emotion, some family members may transfer dependency to you. As the CAO, you must maintain a professional relationship with all family members. Do not allow yourself to become personally involved with any family member or in family matters. Some family relationships are complicated and/or non-traditional. Be prepared to handle this appropriately. Call the CAC if you require assistance or guidance.

Remember that anger is part of the grieving process. Although anger is more likely to be directed at the notifier, be prepared. Some anger may be directed toward you. The family may strike out by directing their feelings toward you as the representative of the Army. Anger may be in the form of verbal or physical abuse. If this should occur, remove yourself from the situation and immediately contact the CAC.



that while there may be multiple offers to provide condolences, gifts, and/or monetary assistance to the families of fallen Soldiers, each individual or organization determines independently who will and will not be eligible. Some organizations base assistance on need, some on age of the children, and some have no stipulations other than being the NOK of a fallen Soldier. Receipt of such gifts or assistance is not automatic.

The family may ask specific questions about the casualty incident for which you may not have answers. Inform the family that you will advise them when information becomes available through official sources. Be sure to make the family's requests for information known to the CAC and to CMAOC.

"There are things you can't predict that you have to react to."

SFC James Campbell
Casualty Assistance Officer

If your CAC directs you to do so, inform the family of the Fatal Training/Operational Accident Program. (See page 48.)

Ensure the NOK has the name, address, and telephone number of the nearest military Public Affairs Officer (PAO). The CAC will provide this information to you.

Family funeral travel will be discussed with the PADD at the time disposition of remains instructions are briefed. The PADD will be advised that his or her decision concerning the place of interment may be influenced by the travel entitlement. The Army is allowed to provide travel and per diem expenses only to specific family members and only within the United States. Detailed information concerning the funeral travel entitlement is found in AR 638-2, Chapter 10.

Funeral arrangements should not be made until the medical examiner has completed his or her examination, and the CAC has requested disposition instructions. Usually,

Waiting for the Remains

You should make arrangements to meet the remains when they arrive at the funeral home. When the remains have arrived at the funeral home, make arrangements for the PADD to visit the remains when the funeral director is ready. Ensure a flag was sent by the CAC with the responsibility for preparation of the remains. Also, ensure that the CAC responsible for the funeral honors prepares the flag case(s) to be presented at the interment service.

Depending on the circumstances, the return of remains may be delayed. The remains may be unrecoverable or not readily accessible. The family may become impatient with the process. Provide as much information as possible to explain the process.

Under these circumstances, ensure you contact the PADD regularly to keep him or her informed while awaiting the arrival of the remains. You should check on the status of the remains each day with the CAC. Although a date for the funeral **cannot** be set at this time, preliminary funeral plans can be made by the PADD.

In some cases, situations arise in which the identification and disposition of the remains are complex. Coordinate with your CAC for guidance in such cases.

funeral arrangements are discussed during follow-up visits (Step 3, page 23). However, in some cases the PNOK may want to discuss funeral arrangements during the initial visit. Be prepared to be flexible and respond accordingly.

Once you have departed the person's residence, annotate your log with the information received, family's requests, and the assistance you provided. At the earliest opportunity after leaving the person's residence, provide the CAC with confirmed information.

Identification of Remains and Viewability

The family may want to know how their loved one's remains were identified. You will receive from the CAC or Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC) information regarding the date and method by which the Armed Forces Medical Examiner or other medical examiner identified the remains of their loved one, as well as who identified the remains. You will advise the family of the remains identification date and methods used. For example: "Your loved one was identified on (date) at (place) by the Armed Forces Medical Examiner (or other proper authority). The medical examiner identified your loved one using (fingerprints and/or dental charts, DNA)."

There are three types of remains identification: tentative, positive, and group.

Tentative identification is the mortuary processing status of remains with a name association based on an unscientific evaluation, such as physical evidence and witness statements. A tentative identification is not used to initiate disposition of remains actions, as it may prove to be wrong.

Positive identification is the status of remains after identification has been established by competent legal authority using scientific and other legal standards and criteria. Positive identification occurs when it is definitely concluded that the post-mortem identification data of the remains compares favorably with an individual's ante-mortem records.

Group identified remains is the status of remains when the scientific evidence concludes that the recovered remains consist of two or more individuals who have been commingled and cannot be individually segregated for identification.

The family may ask about the condition of the remains and, specifically, if the remains are viewable. Do not attempt to answer this question until you verify the condition of the remains with the CAC or CMAOC. The preparing mortuary will provide their professional opinion as to the condition of the remains. You will be asked to pass this information to the PADD. The final decision on whether to view the remains always rests with the PADD.

Generally, there are three classifications of viewability: **Viewable** remains are similar to the deceased's normal appearance and should not cause undue additional distress. **Viewable for identification** remains still show identifiable features and characteristics, but may cause additional distress when viewed. **Non-viewable** remains reflects the Army's recommendation (based on professional opinion) that the remains are not suitable for public viewing and are likely to cause additional distress if viewed. In this case, the family should be advised to have the funeral home staff or family physician view the remains first and then advise the family whether viewing the remains is in their best interest.

Partial Remains

Multiple death incidents, such as aircraft crashes and destruction of crew-served vehicles, create severely traumatized and incomplete remains. In addition to the initial violent nature of the incident, ensuing fire or additional destructive forces cause further damage to the remains. Before identification of remains with major portions missing, the geographic combatant commander will provide a statement as to the completeness of the recovery efforts or why further recovery operations could not be performed. Disposition instructions for partial remains will not be requested from the PADD without the express approval of CMAOC.

When additional portions of remains are recovered after the principal remains have been released to the PADD, the PADD may choose to:

- Have the interred remains disinterred, the additional portions placed in the casket with the principal remains, and re-interred, or
- Have the portions placed in an appropriate container and interred in the same grave site above the casket with the principal remains, or
- Have the portions cremated, the ashes placed in an urn, and the urn delivered to the PADD, or
- Have Army dispose of the portions by complete incineration without further contact with the PADD.

Forms/Documents

Casualty Assistance Referral Card – present to PNOK

Step 3: Follow-Up Visit(s)

Overview

1. Limit business to the following:
   - Death gratuity.
   - Preparation for funeral.
   - Discussion of posthumous citizenship (if applicable).
   - Answering other specific questions.
2. Advise PADD on Government entitlements.
   - Preparation and disposition of remains.
   - Reimbursements for incidental burial expenses.
3. Ensure completion of the Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302) (PADD only).
4. Obtain completed Authorization for Disclosure of Information form.
5. Advise PADD regarding use of Government cemeteries.
6. Determine PADD degree of involvement in funeral arrangements.
7. Coordinate military honors.
8. Update information on Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Beneficiary Worksheet.
9. Uniform can be Class B.

On your follow-up visit, which is likely to occur **within 24-48 hours of your initial visit**, deliver the death gratuity check (if available). Obtain the required certification and signature on **Claim Certification and Voucher for Death Gratuity Payment (DD Form 397)** when presenting the check to the payee.

Disposition of Remains

Once the check is delivered, contact the CAC and report when, how much (this amount can be split), and to whom the check was delivered. The CAC will inform CMAOC.

The CAC will provide you with the standard disposition of remains briefing (**DA PAM 638-2**, Appendix B) so that you understand the disposition options. DO NOT request disposition instructions until notified by the CAC that the remains have been identified. When identification has been completed, have the PADD complete and sign **Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302)**. The form will request certain information based on family choice. Essentially, there are six options for disposition of the remains, each providing a different amount of reimbursement, as follows:

1. The remains are prepared, dressed, casketed, and transported to the funeral home named below with subsequent interment in a civilian cemetery.
2. The remains are prepared, dressed, casketed, and transported to the funeral home named below with subsequent interment in a Government cemetery.
3. The remains are prepared, dressed, casketed, and transported directly to the Government cemetery named below.

4. The remains are cremated. The PADD authorizes the U.S. Army to arrange the cremation and escort the inurned cremated remains to a designated funeral home or cemetery.
5. The PADD makes all arrangements.
6. The PADD relinquishes all rights to direct the disposition of the remains. The right to direct disposition then passes to the next person in order of precedence.

"It's important that you have the necessary documentation so that the parents receive the flag and awards."

CPT Nikki Wooten
Casualty Assistance Officer

Please ensure that all criteria below have been answered and checked appropriately:

- If a government cemetery is selected, prior coordination on gravesite availability must be made.
- Ensure the type of casket/urn is properly indicated.
- Ensure coordination with the funeral director has been completed.
- Provide the completed form to the CAC.
- If Option 5 is chosen on DA Form 7302, ensure the PADD fully understands the potential financial obligations, especially in overseas death cases.

Military Honors

Ensure the CAC is coordinating military honors. The NOK will surely ask. Be aware that several CACs may be involved in the process. Take note of the POCs at each CAC so that you can assist in coordination when necessary.

Family Funeral Travel

Certain family members will be authorized to receive travel and per diem expenses to attend the interment service of a deceased Soldier. The benefit also provides for attendance of certain family members at a memorial service when remains are determined to be nonrecoverable. The travel benefit is briefed to the PADD by his or her CAO at the time the disposition instructions are requested. Other family members entitled to the travel must be briefed by their CAO immediately after the PADD provides the disposition instructions.

Other Assistance

There are many Government and private organizations that offer assistance to family members. Some of those organizations are listed in **Appendix B**.

Presentation of the Gold Star Lapel Button

The Gold Star Lapel Button is authorized by Congress for certain family members of *eligible* deceased Soldiers. For family members of eligible deceased Soldiers, inform the NOK about the Gold Star Lapel Button and who is entitled to receive it. After verifying the number of buttons required, make arrangements to obtain the buttons from the CAC. You should schedule an appropriate time prior to the funeral or interment service to present the lapel buttons.

Forms/Documents

- **Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302)** – present to PADD only; obtain signature. A copy of this form appears below.
- **Authorization for Disclosure of Information form and the appropriate cover letter** – present to PNOK and obtain signature(s).
- **Claim Certification and Voucher for Death Gratuity Payment (DD Form 397).** When presenting the check, obtain the signature of the payee.

Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302)

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS STATEMENT

For use of this form, see AR 638-2; the proponent agency is OOCSPER

DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974

AUTHORITY: Title 10 USC, Sections 1481 through 1488; EO 9397.
PRINCIPAL PURPOSE: To record disposition of remains desired by the person authorized to direct disposition of remains *(PADD)*.
ROUTINE USES: By Department of Army to enable PADD to apply for authorized benefits.
DISCLOSURE: Disclosure of requested information is voluntary; however, if not provided, benefits cannot be provided.

1. NAME OF DECEASED *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*	2. RANK OF DECEASED	3. SSN OR SERVICE NUMBER OF DECEASED
4. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PADD		5. RELATIONSHIP TO DECEASED

6. DESIRED DISPOSITION OF REMAINS *(Check and initial appropriate option)*

OPTION 1 ☐	The remains be prepared, dressed, casketed and transported to the funeral home named below with subsequent interment in a civilian cemetery. NAME AND ADDRESS OF FUNERAL HOME AND, IF KNOWN, CIVILIAN CEMETERY: MY CHOICE OF CASKET IS: *(Select one)* ☐ METAL ☐ WOOD *(Initials)* Reimbursement for interment expenses not to exceed $
OPTION 2 ☐	The remains be prepared, dressed, casketed and transported to the funeral home named below with subsequent interment in a Government cemetery. NAME AND ADDRESS OF FUNERAL HOME AND GOVERNMENT CEMETERY: MY CHOICE OF CASKET IS: *(Select one)* ☐ METAL ☐ WOOD *(Initials)* Reimbursement for interment expenses not to exceed $
OPTION 3 ☐	The remains be prepared, dressed, casketed and transported direct to Government cemetery named below. NAME AND ADDRESS OF GOVERNMENT CEMETERY: MY CHOICE OF CASKET IS: *(Select one)* ☐ METAL ☐ WOOD *(Initials)* Reimbursement for interment expenses not to exceed $
OPTION 4 ☐	I desire the remains be cremated. I authorize the U.S. Army to act as my agent in arranging the cremation. I certify that I have the legal right to make this authorization and agree that I will hold the U.S. Army, my agent, harmless against any liability on account of cremation. I also request that the inurned cremated remains be escorted by a military escort to: *(NAME AND ADDRESS OF FUNERAL HOME AND/OR CEMETERY)* MY CHOICE OF URN IS: *(Select one)* ☐ BRONZE ☐ WOOD *(Initials)* Reimbursement for interment expenses not to exceed amounts in options 1, 2, & 3 depending on interment in civilian or government cemetery and use of funeral home or direct consignment to government cemetery.
OPTION 5 ☐	I desire to make all arrangements. Release remains to the following funeral home. NAME AND ADDRESS OF FUNERAL HOME: Reimbursement for casket, preparation of remains, and interment in a private cemetery $ _____. Reimbursement for casket, preparation of remains, and interment in a government cemetery $ _____. *(Initials)* Reimbursement of transportation charges for transportation of remains not to exceed amount it would have cost the Government to transport the remains.
OPTION 6 ☐	I, the undersigned, having the paramount right and responsibility to direct the disposition of the remains, HEREBY RELINQUISH MY RIGHTS to direct the disposition of the remains. I understand that the right to direct disposition of the remains will pass to the next person in order of precedence. I also certify that I have the legal right to make this authorization and release the U.S. Army, its officers, agents and employees from any and all liability which may arise from this relinquishment. *(Initials)*

7. **AUTHORIZATION:** I, the undersigned, authorize the release of remains and desire disposition to be effected as indicated above.	a. DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*
b. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME OF WITNESS	d. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME OF PADD
c. SIGNATURE OF WITNESS	e. SIGNATURE OF PADD

PHASE TWO

Phase Two

Phase Two encompasses the funeral and/or memorial service, during which you will work with the family to provide them with the assistance they need (other CAOs also may be assigned to help, as may a chaplain or public affairs officer). The Interment CAO will attend the funeral unless the NOK requests otherwise.

Step 4: The Funeral and Interment Service

Overview

Funeral Requirements:

1. Military funeral honors entitlements.
2. Military chaplain or civilian clergy?
3. Coordinate with general officer (GO) attendee (if applicable).
4. CAO may attend funeral as representative of the Secretary of the Army when no general officer will attend.
5. Check preparations with funeral honors detail Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC) and monitor detail's performance.
6. Coordinate with funeral honors detail/funeral director on presentation of the flag and flag case.

Coordinate military honors with the CAC. If military funeral honors are to be rendered, coordinate with the funeral honors detail Officer In Charge (OIC)/NCOIC to ensure the team is prepared. Monitor the funeral honor detail's performance during the services. Note anything unusual and pass your comments to the CAC providing honors.

"I made a difference to their family ... they didn't know how much honor there is in the funeral ceremony."

SFC Luz Rodriguez
Casualty Assistance

An interment flag will be sent with the remains. Additional flags, as authorized by law, will be provided by the funeral honors team. Do not offer or promise additional flags or flag cases to anyone other than the surviving spouse or biological parents of the deceased. One flag is authorized for the spouse. One flag is authorized for the parents; however, if the parents are divorced, one flag is authorized for each parent.

Coordinate with the CAC providing the burial honors team to determine your role, if any, in presenting the flag. If the PADD requests that you present the flag, use the following presentation:

"This flag is presented on behalf of a grateful nation and the United States Army in appreciation for your loved one's honorable and faithful service."

The Chief of Staff, Army has directed general officer (GO) attendance at the funeral or memorial service of a Soldier who dies while participating in an ongoing operation. The GO's primary role is providing presence and representing the Chief of Staff, Army. The CAO will be asked to approach the family to see if they have any objections to the GO's attendance at the funeral. If they do, this information is reported immediately to the CAC and CMAOC and no GO will be asked to attend.

If there is no objection from the family, a GO will be asked by the General Officer Management Office (GOMO) to attend. Upon notification of a funeral or memorial service duty, the GO may wish to contact the CAO to gain background information about the family and/or determine if there are any special requests of the GO from the family. The CAO should be prepared to brief the GO on any special requests from the family such as presenting the flag, awards presentation, if applicable, and any other family con-

siderations. CMAOC will facilitate contact with CAOs by providing GOMO and the GO with available family contact information. If necessary, the GO and the CAO may contact CMAOC directly at (703) 325-1882 or DSN 221-1882. CAOs will keep the GO apprised of any changes that may occur with regard to the funeral arrangements or memorial service.

An additional requirement may be the presentation of posthumous awards, posthumous promotion, or posthumous citizenship (if applicable). The NOK may elect to have awards presented at the funeral service or at a time prior to or following the service. The CAO should brief the GO in advance if this is a requirement. The GO should present the awards in a dignified and appropriate manner.

The GO's role when attending the memorial service for a Soldier whose remains have not been recovered is primarily to provide presence. Depending on the family's desires, a flag presentation and posthumous award presentation may also be included in—or follow—the memorial services. The GO should support the family's desires. If a flag presentation is included in the memorial service, the flag will be pre-folded. The detail NCOIC/OIC will present the flag to the GO, who in turn will present the flag to the NOK.

Assistance at Cemeteries

When the remains of an active duty Soldier are to be interred outside the area of responsibility of the CAO, the CAC where the cemetery is located will be notified. This interment CAC will ensure that a CAO of appropriate rank (see AR 600-8-1) will assist in completing the funeral arrangements and meet the NOK or their representatives when they arrive in the city where the cemetery is located.

The Interment CAO will give any needed assistance to the NOK at the interment location. This assistance will include, but will not be limited to, transporting family members, coordinating lodging, and confirming departure arrangements.

PHASE THREE

Phase Three

Phase Three includes all post-funeral assistance, which includes ensuring that the NOK applies for, and receives, all applicable benefits. Paperwork includes health insurance transfer, life insurance claim forms, change of status forms, return of personal effects, etc. This phase is time consuming and can last for weeks or months depending on the family situation.

Step 5: Post-Funeral Visits

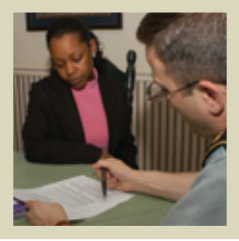
Overview

1. Contact the PNOK two days after the funeral to schedule a visit.
2. Discuss with PNOK setting up Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Counseling Briefing.
3. Accompany PNOK to SBP Briefing with Retirement Services Officer (RSO).
4. Accompany PNOK to Legal Assistance Office Visit.
5. Present information on benefits and entitlements.
6. Assist PNOK in filing for benefits and entitlements.
7. Provide CAC with completed SBP paperwork.
8. Assist PNOK in obtaining a new ID Card, if applicable.
9. Assist PNOK in contacting Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and Social Security Administration.
10. Assist in completing and submitting Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses (DD Form 1375).
11. If PNOK desires, assist in preparing requests for official reports.
12. Ensure that the PERE receives all of the Soldier's personal effects.
13. If applicable, assist in coordination for the Fatal Training/Operational Accident presentation to the NOK.

First Visit After the Funeral

Within 48 hours after the funeral service, contact the person you are assisting to set up an appointment to review military and civilian benefits and entitlements and the application procedures for them.

CAUTION: Do not quote exact sums available from Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) or Social Security Administration (SSA).



Contact the Servicing Legal Assistance Office

The legal assistance office can advise and assist the CAO regarding potential legal issues and can schedule an appointment for the PNOK. It is important that the will and any estate planning documents (e.g., deeds, insurance policies, IRAs, Thrift Savings Plans, and other beneficiary designation accounts) be reviewed **prior** to applying for insurance or other monetary benefits on behalf of the surviving family members. In situations where the decedent may have a taxable estate, there are several post-mortem estate planning techniques that can be employed to minimize the impact of estate taxes. Once the beneficiary has received benefits, these techniques may be unavailable. Legal assistance attorneys are in the best position to advise the PNOK on these matters. Additionally, the legal assistance office can offer valuable services to the PNOK. In addition to advising on estate planning matters, the legal assistance office can assist the PNOK with any income tax benefits that arise as a result of the death as well as provide information on other available benefits.

As CAO, you must not only inform the NOK about benefits and entitlements, you must follow through to ensure the benefits are received. Advise the NOK that some or all of

the documents listed below may be necessary for applying for benefits and settling the estate. The NOK should locate or know the whereabouts of these documents. **Never give the original or a permanent, personal, or family record to another person, even for business purposes.** Certified copies have all the legal status of the original and ensure that if the original is needed again it will be available.

The NOK may also ask you to assist in obtaining investigative reports. Please coordinate this activity with your CAC.

NOTE: Because of new legislation, all requests for any report should have a copy of the ***Report of Casualty (DD Form 1300)*** *and a copy of a government-issued photo ID card or a state-issued driver's license or photo ID card.*

You will assist the NOK in filling out forms for a wide variety of benefits and entitlements. Information on forms preparation and assistance is included below. Make sure you follow up to ensure that the NOK applies for, and receives, all applicable benefits and entitlements.

Before departing from what you believe to be your final visit with the NOK, ask the NOK if there was any part of your performance, or the Army procedures, that could have been done differently to make this difficult time easier on the family. Include any comments on your Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report.

If the NOK would prefer not to address responses directly to you, ask them to please direct their comments to cmaocweb@hoffman.army.mil. The Casualty Assistance Program Action Officer monitors this Web site for responses.

"Volunteer to assist in completing the forms ... You never know if there's a literacy problem."

CPT Nikki Wooten
Casualty Assistance Officer

Important Documents

- ☐ **Birth Certificates** (all family members)
- ☐ **DD Form 1300** (Report of Casualty)
- ☐ **Civilian Death Certificates** can be purchased through the funeral home (at least 12 certified copies are recommended)
- ☐ **DD Form 2064** (Overseas Death Certificate)
- ☐ **Marriage Certificate**
- ☐ **Divorce decree**
- ☐ **Immigration documents**
- ☐ **Naturalization papers**
- ☐ **Adoption and/or custody documents**
- ☐ **DD Form 214** (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty)
- ☐ **Social Security Number/Card** (For all family members)
- ☐ **Wills and Deeds of Trust**
- ☐ **Insurance policies** (life, home, vehicles, boat, etc.)
- ☐ **Income tax records** (Last 3 years recommended)
- ☐ **Copies of deeds, abstracts, mortgages, rental contracts, etc.**
- ☐ **Documents referring to bank accounts** (checking, savings), loans, securities, stocks, bonds, etc.
- ☐ **References to safe deposit boxes**
- ☐ **Any reference to an outstanding debt**
- ☐ **Titles, automobile registrations**

Forms Preparation and Assistance

The following is an all-inclusive list of forms that may be needed when applying for benefits and entitlements. No single case will require all of the forms listed. You will need to select the appropriate forms for your survivor's circumstances. Ensure the forms are available for preparation when you visit the appropriate agency.

DA Form 1594 (Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer Log)

DA Form 2386 (Agreement for Interment)

DA Form 4475-R (Data Required by the Privacy Act of 1974 - Personal Information from the NOK of a Deceased Service Member)

DA Form 7302 (Disposition of Remains Statement) and other appropriate forms

DD Form 149 (Application for Correction of Military Record Under the Provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 1552) (2 pages)
http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/DD149.pdf

DD Form 397 (Claim Certification and Voucher for Death Gratuity Payment)
http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd0397.pdf

DD Form 1172 (Application for Uniformed Services Identification DEERS Enrollment Card)

DD Form 1351-2 (Travel Voucher)

DD Form 1375 (Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses)
http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd1375.pdf

DD Form 1701 (Inventory of Household Goods)

DD Form 2656-7 (Verification for Annuity)
https://134.11.61.26/CD10/Electronic%20Forms/PDF/DD%20Forms/D2656-7-T.pdf

SGLV-8283A (Claim for Death Benefits)
Form to be returned to Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (2 pages)
http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/SGLV8283.pdf

Standard Form 180 (Request Pertaining to Military Records)

Standard Form 1174 (Claim for Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Member of the Uniformed Services)
http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/sf1174.pdf

Standard Form 1199a (Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form)

Standard Form 2800 (Application for Death Benefits - Civil Service Retirement System)

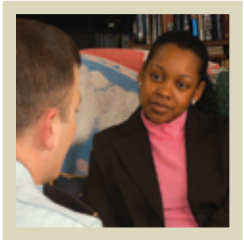
CSF Form FE-6 (Claim for Death Benefits (Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance)

VA Form 21-534 and SSA-24 (Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits by a Surviving Spouse or Child, including SSA Form 24 Application for Death Compensation, 11 pages)
http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/21-534.pdf

VA Form 21-535 and SSA 24 (Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s), including SSA Form 24 Application for Death Compensation, 10 pages)
http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/21-535.pdf

VA Form 21-4138 (Statement in Support of Claim)

VA Form 21-4142 (Authorization for Release of Information) Authorization and Consent to Release Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) (2 pages) http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/21-4142.pdf
VA Form 22-5490 (Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance) (6 pages) http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/22-5490.pdf
VA Form 29-4125 (Claim for One Sum Payment) http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms/29-4125.pdf
VA Form 29-4125A (Claim for Monthly Payments, National Service Life Insurance)
SSA-24 (Application for Survivors Benefits)
FMS Form 2231 (FASTSTART DIRECT/DEPOSIT)
Form N-644 (Application for Posthumous Citizenship)



NOTE: As Web sites are subject to change, if any of the listed Web addresses are broken links or do not provide the form you need, perform a Web search (i.e. http://www.google.com) for that particular form.

Conduct follow-up visits until all applications for benefits, entitlements, and reports have been submitted.

Upon application for benefits and entitlements, complete an **INTERIM** Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report and forward it to the CAC no later than 60 days after case assignment.

After 60 days from the date of case assignment, if the person you are assisting is not receiving the expected benefits or entitlements, ***inform the CAC***. The CAC will follow up with the agency responsible for processing the benefit or entitlement.

Step 6: Conclusion

Although your principal duties as CAO are completed, make sure that before your departure, you have provided the PNOK with complete telephone contact numbers for the CAC. Advise the PNOK to call the CAC for further assistance, if required, and to report any changes in the PNOK's telephone number and address.

When there are no outstanding issues (personal effects have been returned to the PERE, Fatal Training/Operational Accident Presentation, if applicable, has been completed, etc.) file your completed **FINAL** Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report within five working days of your final action.

SPECIAL SECTIONS

Special Sections

DUSTWUN

Missing

Fatal Training/Operational Accident Program

DUSTWUN
(Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown)

Overview

Performing duties as a CAO for the NOK of a Soldier classified as DUSTWUN.

1. Review Section IV and V of Chapter 6, AR 600-8-1.
2. Before the initial visit to the PNOK and/or PADD, review the section titled "Responding to the Media."
3. Provide/arrange to obtain a phone card (if CAC can support).
4. Maintain a log of duties performed on Daily Staff Journal/Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594).

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the family of a Soldier who is classified as DUSTWUN receives assistance from a CAO.

If after 24 hours of being unaccounted for, the Soldier's status is still unknown, the CAC will coordinate by telephone with the CMAOC for permission to submit a DUSTWUN report.

DUSTWUN is a temporary status that is used to allow the responsible commander sufficient time to investigate and determine a Soldier's status. It is important to note that the Soldier's pay and benefits do not change during this temporary status.

When a Soldier has been declared as DUSTWUN, the CAC closest to the PNOK will appoint a CAO to assist the PNOK. The CAO represents the Secretary of the Army in assisting the PNOK in every way possible during the time. The duties and responsibilities of providing assistance to the PNOK are time consuming and slightly different from normal casualty assistance because there are many unknowns that must be resolved. You must prepare yourself for media coverage of high-visibility cases (see **Appendix C** for PAO coordination); your CAO duties may have a significant impact on the image of the Army.

Be as prepared as possible to answer questions and concerns of the NOK and media. Address NOK questions and concerns with the local CAC and the CMAOC case manager. Be prepared for instantaneous media coverage of these high-visibility cases and concerns of the chain of command from the bottom to the top.

From your first visit, you will need to develop trust and rapport with the NOK. Remember, you represent the Secretary of the Army, and you must be the epitome of a professional Soldier in conduct and appearance. Ensure your association with the NOK is kept on a professional level at all times. Be willing to do everything you can within regulatory and statutory limits and do not make promises you cannot keep. When you are uncertain about the answer to a question, say, "I don't know, but I will find out." Always collect the facts before you respond, then follow through. The NOK will have numerous questions and concerns. Remember, they are also watching television. Also keep in mind

that the Soldier's disappearance is under investigation. Do your best to explain what you know to the NOK. For them "not knowing" is the worst part. It is sometimes more difficult and traumatic than a death situation. Emotions will be running high until the Soldier's status is confirmed.

Inform the NOK that there is always the possibility that VIPs, such as members of Congress and/or their staffs, state and local public officials and/or their staffs, and representatives of the media, may ask for permission to call to express concern or seek interviews. Coordinate with the CAC to have a representative from the installation PAO accompany you to assist the NOK in responding to inquiries.

Prepare for the initial visit

Know exactly what is in the text of the initial notification message to the NOK. Talk with the person who made the notification to get valuable information.

Obtain the casualty report information from the CAC. This information will help expand the report to the NOK and establish the rapport required to carry out your duties as CAO.

"The next of kin will be looking for strength, comfort, and guidance."

Mr. Daniel Ruiz
Casualty Assistance Officer

Do not speak on subjects of which you have little knowledge or understanding. When you don't know an answer, simply say so and advise the NOK that an answer will be forthcoming. Then get the answer from someone who does know and inform the NOK. Never answer a question without knowing the answer. Never promise anything unless you are sure it can be carried out. Otherwise, the credibility and value of the CAO is diminished.

Keep notes of the initial visit and all later visits; a journal will prove valuable as the case continues. Record only the most important items in the presence of the NOK. Other impressions and minor items can be recorded as soon as possible after the visit with the NOK; never sit in the car in front of the house making notes. Fill out the Casualty Assisitance Officer After Action Report. This form is a checklist of things to be done, serves as a record of completed actions, and identifies problem areas and actions taken.

Your overall duties as CAO will continue until the Soldier is recovered alive, determined missing, or found deceased, at which time you would assume both CAO and CNO responsibilities.

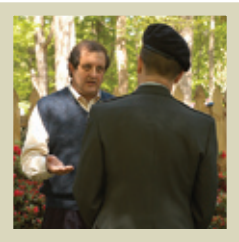
Initial Visit

The initial visit should occur **within 4** hours after the NOK is notified of a Soldier's DUSTWUN status.

The initial visit will be difficult for both the NOK and the CAO. Try not to show any fear or misgivings because the NOK will be looking for strength, comfort, and guidance. Be careful not to be too pessimistic. Remain objective in whatever is said or done during the visit.

One of the challenges will be meeting the NOK's need for information. Keep in close touch with the CAC and the CMAOC case manager to inform the NOK of any new

information. Emphasize the information that you have, and note that more specific information has not been received. Impress on the NOK that the U.S. Army is doing everything possible to learn the fate of the unaccounted for Soldier and that, as the CAO, you will immediately notify the NOK of any further information. There is not much more to say after discussing the DUSTWUN report. Because the NOK will probably still be in a state of dismay over the news, he or she may be unable "to discuss business." After a few days, when the NOK has had a chance to regain composure, it will be easier to explain what must be done.



Make sure you provide the NOK with a **Casualty Assistance Referral Card** before you conclude the initial visit. This card will provide the NOK with the CAO's name and telephone numbers. Note: The Casualty Assistance Referral Card should be typed or neatly printed in black or blue ink.

Determine if the NOK needs any immediate financial assistance. Most will not, but if the NOK does, explain the services available through Army Emergency Relief (AER) and the American Red Cross (ARC).

Visit or be available to the NOK as much as necessary. Between visits, call the NOK daily to assure him or her of continuing interest and relate any additional information. Before each visit, call the CAC or CMAOC to get the latest status. Usually there will be no change, but by checking on the status you can assure that the NOK is receiving the latest information available.

The NOK may appear to be in a better emotional state, but still apprehensive about the uncertain situation. Be prepared to provide a comprehensive briefing of what will occur if or when the Soldier is found, whether alive or deceased. Your CMAOC case manager will assist you in obtaining this information.

Although the NOK has two concerns (the Soldier's fate and his or her own position), it is wise to discuss the Soldier's fate first. Relate the fact that an investigation is ongoing to determine the status of the unaccounted for Soldier. Being mindful of the impact this will have on the NOK, point out that there are four possible outcomes of the investigation: AWOL, Deserter, Missing, or Deceased. Each can be addressed as appropriate.

The NOK should be provided with information on financial matters. Reiterate that the Soldier's financial situation does not change when he or she is DUSTWUN. Remind the NOK that emergency financial assistance may be available from AER or ARC. In this instance, the CAO should provide help to the NOK in requesting such assistance.

The Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)-enrolled NOK should be told that they are entitled to the same medical care as they were entitled to before the Soldier was classified DUSTWUN. Continued enrollment in DEERS is required.

Legal assistance is available to the PNOK through the Staff Judge Advocate's office. It consists of advice on such matters as estate planning, income taxes, powers of attorney, wills, property damage/loss claims, the Soldiers and Sailors' Civil Relief Act, and naturalization and citizenship. If the NOK needs this service, arrange an appointment.

Investigation Complete

After the investigation is complete, the CAO should visit the NOK to explain what will happen next. Refer to your CMAOC case manager for guidelines.

Subsequent Visits

Maintain contact with the families as long as the Soldier is in a DUSTWUN status. It may be a personal visit or a telephone contact. In any case, a periodic telephone call allows the family an opportunity to "chat." Always keep the CAC and your CMAOC case manager informed of visits and contact with the NOK.

Missing

Overview

Performing duties as a CAO for the NOK of beleaguered, besieged, captured, detained, interred, missing, or missing in action personnel.

1. Review Section IV and V of Chapter 6, AR 600-8-1.
2. Review Chapter 8, AR 600-8-1.
3. Before the initial visit to the PNOK and/or PADD, review Appendix C, "Responding to the Media and Public Affairs."
4. Secure extra copies of "Entitlement to Pay and Allowances While in a Missing Status."
5. Maintain log of duties performed on your Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594).

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the family of a Soldier who has been declared missing by The Adjutant General (TAG) receives assistance from a CAO.

The CAO represents the Secretary of the Army in assisting the NOK in every way possible during the time a Soldier is missing, captured, or other casualty status. The duties and responsibilities of providing assistance to the NOK of a missing Soldier are time consuming and complicated. Although "missing status" is the term generally used, a missing Soldier may actually be one who is missing, missing in action, interred in a foreign country, captured, beleaguered, besieged by a hostile force, or detained in a foreign country against his or her will. You must prepare yourself for media coverage on high-visibility cases (see **Appendix C** for PAO coordination) and responding to the media; your CAO duties may have a significant impact on the image of the Army.

Be prepared to answer questions and concerns of the NOK. Questions from the media should be referred to the PAO. Provide daily reports on the questions and concerns of the NOK to your CMAOC case manager, CAC, and the local commander. Be prepared for instantaneous media coverage of these high-visibility cases and the concerns of the chain of command from the bottom to the top.

The first visit to the NOK will be the most difficult. Remember, you represent the Secretary of the Army, and you must be the epitome of a professional Soldier in conduct and appearance. Ensure your association with the NOK is kept on a professional level at all times. Be willing to do everything you can within regulatory and statutory limits. Do not make promises you cannot keep. When you are uncertain about the answer to a question, say, "I don't know, but I will find out." Collect factual information before you respond. Always follow through. The NOK will have numerous questions and concerns. Remember, they are also watching the television. If the action is under investigation, explain that these investigations are thorough and often time consuming. For the

NOK, not knowing the status of their loved one is the worst of all. It is sometimes more difficult and traumatic than a death situation. Emotions will run high until the Soldier's status has been confirmed.

If appropriate and available, have the CAC provide you (and the PNOK, if necessary) with a cell phone or pre-paid telephone calling card. In high-visibility cases, the cell phone will be very useful for your communications with the NOK. Advise the NOK that the cell phone is for official use only.

Inform the NOK that there is always the possibility that VIPs, such as members of Congress and/or their staffs, state and local public officials and/or their staffs, and representatives of the media, may ask for permission to call to express concern or seek interviews. Coordinate with the CAC to have a representative from the installation PAO accompany you on the initial visit to provide guidance to the PNOK on media/external inquiries.

"Make sure to emphasize that the Army is doing everything it can to learn about the missing Soldier's fate."

MSG Harold Henderson
Casualty Assistance Officer

Prepare for the Initial Visit

Know exactly what is in the text of the initial notification message to the NOK. Talk with the person who made the notification to get valuable information.

Obtain the casualty report information from the CAC. This information will help expand the report to the NOK and establish the rapport required to carry out your duties as CAO.

Do not speak on subjects of which you have little knowledge or understanding. When you don't know an answer, simply say so and advise the NOK that an answer will be forthcoming. Then get the answer from someone who does know and inform the NOK. Your CAC and your CMAOC case manager can assist you with obtaining answers. Never answer a question without knowing the answer. Never promise anything unless it can be carried out. Otherwise, the credibility and value of the CAO is diminished.

Keep notes of the initial visit and all later visits; a journal will prove valuable as the case continues. Record only the most important items in the presence of the NOK. Other impressions and minor items can be recorded as soon as possible after the visit with the NOK; never sit in the car in front of the house making notes. Fill out the relevant sections of the Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report. This report serves as a record of completed actions and identifies problem areas and actions taken.

The visits outlined below are only a guide to the frequency of your visits to the PNOK. Each PNOK will respond differently and may require more contact with the CAO (particularly in the case of a Soldier who is captured). The seven-day and 60-day visits are tied to events that take place as a result of a board convening to determine the Soldier's status. The timelines for the visit are not always followed, because sometimes the information needed to conduct the boards/hearings is not available in the timeline described. The boards are conducted if a hostile action caused the Soldier to be declared missing. In a non-hostile case, a hearing officer would be appointed rather than a board, but the

timeline would generally be the same. Further information on the hostile/non-hostile process can be provided to you by the CAC or your CMAOC case manager.

The anticipated timeline for visits is:

Initial Visit

The initial visit will be difficult for both the CAO and the NOK. Try not to show any fear or misgivings because the NOK will be looking for strength, comfort, and guidance. Be careful not to be too pessimistic. Remain objective in whatever is said or done during the visit.

"The NOK is also likely to be concerned about his/her own welfare. Be prepared to answer a wide variety of financial questions."

MAJ George Antone
Casualty Assistance Officer

One of the challenges will be meeting the NOK's need for information. Keep in close touch with the CAC and your CMAOC case manager and inform the NOK of any new information. Emphasize the information that you have, and note that more specific information has not yet been received. Impress on the NOK that the U.S. Army is doing everything possible to learn of the missing Soldier's fate, and that, as the CAO, you will immediately notify them of any further information. There is not much more to say after discussing the initial report. Since the NOK will probably still be in a state of dismay over the news, he or she may be unable "to discuss business." During the next few days the NOK will have a chance to regain composure; then, it will be easier to explain what must be done.

Make sure you provide that the NOK with a **Casualty Assistance Referral Card** prior to leaving on this visit. This card will provide the NOK with a written reference for the CAO's name and telephone numbers. Note: The casualty assistance referral card should be completed by typewriter or by neatly printing in black or blue ink.

Find out if the NOK needs any immediate financial assistance. Most will not, but if the NOK does, explain the services available through Army Emergency Relief (AER) and the American Red Cross (ARC) and how these services may be obtained.

Four-Day Visit

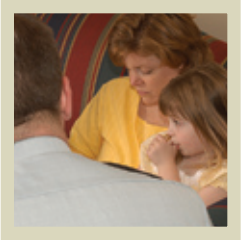
This visit should occur within four days of the first visit.

Between the two visits, call the NOK daily to assure him or her of continuing interest and relate any additional information. Before the second visit, call the CAC and your CMAOC case manager to get the Soldier's latest status. Usually there will be no change, but by checking on the status the NOK can be assured of receiving the latest information available.

During the second visit, the NOK may appear to be in a better emotional state, but still apprehensive about the uncertain situation. The NOK may express deep concern not only for the Soldier's well-being, but may also have doubts and fears for their own well-being. Be prepared to allay these concerns with a smooth, forceful, and comprehensive briefing of what will occur during the next 60 days. Your CMAOC case manager can assist you in this effort.

Although the NOK has two concerns (Soldier's fate and his or her own position), it is wise to discuss the Soldier's fate first. Relate the fact that an investigation is

ongoing and that a board of officers will convene at Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) to make a recommendation on the facts surrounding the Soldier's missing status. Carefully explain that this board reviews all the evidence presented for the sole purpose of making a recommendation. Being mindful of the impact this will have on the NOK, point out that there are four possibilities—AWOL, Deserter, Missing, or Deceased. A change in status from missing to deceased can occur only with supportive evidence. Inform the NOK that this investigation and board will take approximately 60 days, and that the results will be made available to them.



Seven-Day Visit

This visit should coincide with the NOK's receipt of the definitive notification letter from The Adjutant General (TAG), advising the NOK that a Missing Persons Board is being convened. However, if the letter isn't received by day seven from CMAOC, still discuss the financial concerns the family may have. Discuss the board process when the letter is received.

Review the procedures outlined in the letter that the board will follow, the recommendations it may make, and the final action that may be taken. Be especially sympathetic to the needs of the NOK, because this letter will advise that a report of death may be a possibility. The NOK will have to wait approximately 60 days for the board's decision.

The NOK's second concern is his or her welfare, particularly regarding financial matters. You should provide the NOK with information on the financial matters that will affect him or her during the period the Soldier is classified as missing. Information given to the NOK will include:

Continuation of financial support—

- All pay and allowances being earned before an absence continue to be credited to the Soldier's account.
- All allotments remain in effect and Federal income tax relief continues if such relief was already in existence.

Whether the Soldier specified on his or her Record of Emergency Data (DD Form 93) the percentage of monthly pay entitlements to be paid and to whom. The NOK will be informed that:

- The Secretary of the Army may alter the designated allotment in the best interests of the Soldier. These allotments are paid by check from Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) until the Soldier is returned to military control or declared deceased.
- Provisions exist whereby this allotment may be increased if satisfactory evidence shows that the NOK need additional financial support.

The CAO should discuss finances with the NOK again after the Soldier has been missing for 30 days, because that is when DFAS will begin making payments stipulated by the Soldier.

The CAO should remind the NOK that emergency financial assistance may be available from AER or ARC. In this instance, the CAO should provide help to the NOK in requesting such assistance.

The CAO should inform the NOK that when the Soldier has been carried in a missing status for more than 29 days, the law provides for movement of the Soldier's personal property. If the Soldier is carried in a missing status for more than one year, the NOK may request authorization for an additional movement of the personal property. If the NOK intends to relocate or needs additional information, you should schedule a visit to the installation transportation office.

If the NOK is living in Government-controlled quarters and the Soldier is missing in action, the family will be allowed to continue to live in the quarters. At the end of one year and one day, a determination will be made on the Soldier's status. If the Soldier remains in a Missing In Action (MIA) status, the family will be allowed to remain in the quarters until the Soldier's status changes due to further review or final determination.

If the Soldier is a POW, the family will be permitted to continue to live in Government quarters until the Soldier's status changes. At that time, it will be determined whether the family is entitled to such quarters.

Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS)-enrolled NOK should be told that they are entitled to the same medical care as they were entitled to before the Soldier was classified as missing. Continued enrollment in DEERS is required.

Legal assistance is available to NOK through the Staff Judge Advocate's office. It consists of advice on matters such as estate planning, income taxes, powers of attorney, wills, property damage/loss claims, the Soldiers and Sailors' Civil Relief Act, and naturalization and citizenship. If the NOK needs this service, arrange an appointment.

Finally, assist the NOK with the local Department of Veterans Affairs regional office. Their experts will explain the entitlements and benefits that may accrue to a NOK while the Soldier is in a missing status.

No Social Security benefits are applicable to NOK when the sponsor is in a missing status.

Thirty-Day Visit

This visit is conducted after the Soldier has been missing for 30 days. The purpose of this visit is to review the financial status of the NOK to determine whether the first check from DFAS has been received and to assist in applying for a change in allotment authorization if the situation warrants.

Sixty-Day Visit

This visit should occur after the results of the Missing Persons Board are made and the letter from the TAG has been provided to the NOK. The visit may not occur on day 60; it should occur whatever day the PNOK receives the TAG letter.

This letter will review all circumstances leading up to the Soldier's disappearance. It will summarize the Missing Persons Board proceedings and state of official status (AWOL, Deserter, Missing, or Deceased) of the Soldier by HQDA. This letter will stipulate that the Soldier's status is subject to review when more information is uncovered; or, if nothing is uncovered, the Soldier's status will have a mandatory review after one year.

The 60-day visit is very important for the NOK because it may mean that the Soldier will be retained in a missing status rather than declared dead. If so, the NOK's reaction will most likely be relief and hope—relief, due to the passage of an important milestone for which waiting was almost unbearable; and hope, because the Missing Persons Board could not uncover sufficient evidence to support a conclusion that the Soldier is dead. The visit is important to the CAO because it could mean assisting the NOK for an indefinite period.

If there is evidence that supports the conclusion that the Soldier could not still be alive, a presumptive finding of death may be rendered at that time.

Subsequent Visits

Maintain contact with the family as long as the Soldier is in a missing status, either through personal visits or by telephone. In any case, a periodic telephone call can allow the family an opportunity to "chat." Always keep the CAC and your CMAOC case manager informed of visits and contact with the NOK.

Fatal Training/Operational Accident Presentations to Next of Kin

Overview

1. Review AR 600-34 for a full explanation of the program.
2. Present formal offer of presentation to the PNOK. Ensure that the PNOK chooses one of four options and signs the offer.
3. Fax the signed offer back to CMAOC.
4. Prepare a "PNOK Report" with information about the family.
5. Coordinate family participation at the briefing, including attendance by clergy.
6. Attend the rehearsal presentation with the briefer and Department of the Army representative, if applicable.
7. Attend the presentation as liaison between the Army and family. Uniform is Class A.

If you are assigned as the CAO to the NOK of a Soldier killed in a training or operational accident, CMAOC will contact you within the first week to familiarize you with the Fatal Training/Operational Accident Program.

"If needed, the Army will provide an interpreter or briefer who is bilingual."

Mr. Daniel Ruiz
Casualty Assistance Officer

When a Soldier dies as a result of a military training accident, operational accident, or friendly fire, the Army will appoint an investigator to conduct a collateral investigation (AR 15-6 investigation) into the accident. When that report is completed and approved by the General Court Martial Convening Authority (usually a General Officer or MACOM commander), the PNOK will be offered an opportunity to have a face-to-face presentation on the facts and findings of the investigation. It is the Army's intent to provide the report of the investigation to the family before it is released to the general public. The PNOK also may ask for a copy of the report, if desired.

The program is fully explained in AR 600-34. The regulation can be found on the Army Publishing Directorate Web site, http://www.apd.army.mil. It will give you an understanding of the presentation program.

Because the program relates ONLY to military-related training and operational accidents and friendly fire incidents, this offer is NOT extended to families whose loved one died from hostile fire, homicide, self-inflicted wounds, or natural causes nor is it extended to retirees who die as a result of injuries well after the accident. (OFF DUTY accidents and reports other than the AR 15-6 investigation are NOT covered by this section).

The Soldier's unit (or CMAOC, if the unit is engaged in combat operations) will update the PNOK on the status of the investigation approximately 30 days after the casualty incident, explaining any delays or giving an estimated time frame for the conclusion and signature by the approval authority. As the liaison between the U.S. Army and the family, you should pass these updates to the PNOK either in person or by telephone.

Your CMAOC case manager will keep you apprised. A hard copy of the letter from the approval authority will be sent through the U.S. Postal Service to the PNOK, or to the guardian if the PNOK is a minor child.

Once the report of finding from the investigation is signed by the approval authority, you will present a formal offer to the family to determine whether they would like to receive a personal presentation, a copy of the investigative report, or both. The PNOK will initial his/her choices and sign the bottom of the letter. You will fax the signed page back to CMAOC.

Should the family accept the presentation, the Army will provide a briefer (usually COL or higher) to give a thorough explanation of the releasable results of the accident to the surviving family members. You will coordinate a date and time for the presentation. Usually the presentation is done in a family home where the NOK are most comfortable, but some families prefer a chapel or a conference room on the nearest military installation or Reserve Center/National Guard Armory. It is up to the family to choose the location. Please stress to the NOK that any coordination will be done AFTER the investigation is signed. You as the CAO will attend the presentation, as you are the liaison between the Army and the family.

After the family accepts the offer, you will provide to the CMAOC case manager a "PNOK report." This report is an email from you outlining basic information about the family. You should address their likes, dislikes, jobs, hobbies, children, grandchildren, religious preferences, current emotional state, any outstanding issues that need to be resolved, etc. General observations are also welcomed. This is a tool for the briefer to gauge how to approach the family. Each family is different and will have different reactions to the presentation. What makes one family happy may infuriate another family. This report can be bullets, paragraph form, or a coherent "stream of consciousness." The goal is to gather family information and observations of their well-being. Your CMAOC case manager will send you an email with further guidance regarding the PNOK report. Remember, this is a separate report from the checklist provided by the CAC.

The family can invite whomever they choose to attend this presentation. No travel funds are authorized for family members. This is strictly at their own expense if they choose to attend. The DA representative, the CAO, the briefer, and a chaplain may also attend the presentation. If the family wishes to have their family pastor, rabbi, or priest attend, they may request it. One of your duties as CAO is to coordinate attendance, if possible. Advance notice is requested if members of the press or a lawyer will be present. In extreme cases, the Army needs to know if an elected official will attend.

Many of our Army families do not speak English as their primary language. If possible, we will provide an interpreter or a briefer that is bilingual in the required language. The report can be translated as needed. Translator services will be coordinated by the affected CAC with CMAOC.

The presentation may last only 45 minutes or it can go as long as needed. Average length of the presentation is about 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Rehearsals for the presentation are normally conducted the day prior or morning before the actual presentation with the briefer, the DA representative (if applicable), and the CAO. Uniform for rehearsal is casual. **Uniform for the family presentation will be Class A**. This is to honor the deceased Soldier; how-

ever, if the family is uncomfortable with uniforms, appropriate civilian attire is permitted. At the end of the presentation, a question and answer session takes place. Questions can be asked all through the presentation, but most are left until the end. A redacted copy of the investigation will be given to the family members at the end of the presentation. The briefer will explain that the "black outs" and missing data are in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act restrictions. Federal law prohibits the release of personal information without written permission from the individual person(s). In addition to these restrictions, other information may be withheld based on security or classification reasons.

In a multiple casualty incident, a Soldier's family will be asked not to discuss the investigation publicly until ALL the families involved have been given the opportunity to be briefed and receive the report. This is particularly important when the media has requested details of the incident. We owe it to our Army families to hear this information from us first, not from the media.

Should the family decline the presentation but wish to receive a redacted copy of the investigation, the unit Staff Judge Advocate will mail it with a letter explaining the redactions, and will include a letter of endorsement from the brigade commander. This package will be double wrapped. The first wrapping will be addressed to you, and the second envelope will be addressed to the family. You will take the second envelope containing the investigation to the family and present it to them.

This is another unique duty that involves casualty assistance. It is important for you to realize that even though months have passed, the family will most likely still be in the grieving process. Each family has a different reaction to death and heals at a different rate. Based on the outcome of the investigation, be prepared for any reaction. Anger, denial, and disbelief are common reactions. Other families heal faster and have a different outlook and accept that what happened cannot be changed, and once they hear all the circumstances, they feel they can complete the healing process.

Remember that you represent the Army. You might be the last contact a family has with the Army. It is important to maintain a professional demeanor at all times during the presentation process.

Appendix A: Casualty Assistance Officer Briefing Checklist

Step 1: Research

1) Conduct General Research
- Review Guide and Quickguide.
- Use your CAC.
- Contact other CAOs for advice.
- Review regulations.
- Read information paper, "Active Duty Death Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Elections".

2) Conduct Specific Research (as it applies in your case)
- Obtain information from CAC on family structure.
- Contact CNO.
- Verify current status of remains and circumstances of the death.
- Contact the Retirement Services Officer (RSO) to schedule SBP counseling.
- Obtain information on disposition of remains process.
- Obtain information on disposition of personal effects process.
- Review information on dealing with the media.
- Contact legal assistance.
- Verify posthumous citizenship eligibility.

3) Obtain and Review Forms/Documents (These will be provided by the CAC)
- Review Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report.
- Fill out Casualty Assistance Referral Card.
- Obtain multiple copies of Authorization for Disclosure of Information.
- Obtain a copy of Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302).
- Obtain a copy of Verification of Survivor Annuity (DD Form 2656-7).
- Obtain a copy of Direct Deposit Authorization (DFAS-CL Form 7330/2).
- Obtain a copy of Tax Withholding Certificate (W-4P).

Step 2: Initial Contact and Meeting

1) Telephone PNOK within 4 hours (between 0600 hours to 2200 hours) of the notification to schedule visit. Upon arrival, express condolences.

2) Uniform for initial visit is Class A

3) Visit should be brief to complete following actions:
- Confirm 45-day mailing and residence address (if different).
- Obtain Soldier's common name.
- Check on any special titles used by NOK.
- Advise on status of remains.
- Explain that the death gratuity entitlement is intended to cover emergency expenses.
- Discuss benefits if asked by the PNOK.
- Provide PNOK with a Casualty Assistance Referral Card.

4) Determine family need for PAO support. (Note: In a high-profile case, it may be desirable to have the PAO accompany the CAO on the initial visit. This can be discussed when making the appointment.) Coordinate with CAC.

5) Record completed actions on Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report and Daily Staff Journal/Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594).

Step 3: Follow-Up Visit(s)

1) Limit business to the following:
   - Death gratuity.
   - Preparation for funeral.
   - Discussion of posthumous citizenship (if applicable).
   - Answering other specific questions.
2) Advise PADD on Government entitlements.
   - Preparation and disposition of remains.
   - Reimbursements for incidental burial expenses.
3) Ensure completion of the Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302) (PADD only).
4) Obtain completed Authorization for Disclosure of Information form.
5) Advise PADD regarding use of Government cemeteries.
6) Determine PADD degree of involvement in funeral arrangements.
7) Coordinate military honors.
8) Update information on Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Beneficiary Worksheet.
9) Uniform can be Class B.

Step 4: The Funeral and Interment Service

Funeral Requirements:

1) Military funeral honors entitlements.
2) Military chaplain or civilian clergy?
3) Coordinate with general officer (GO) attendee (if applicable).
4) CAO may attend funeral as representative of the Secretary of the Army when no general officer will attend.
5) Check preparations with funeral honors detail Non-Commissioned Officer In Charge (NCOIC) and monitor detail's performance.
6) Coordinate with funeral honors detail/funeral director on presentation of the flag and flag case.

Step 5: Post Funeral Visits

1) Contact the PNOK two days after the funeral to schedule a visit.
2) Discuss with PNOK setting up Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Counseling Briefing.
3) Accompany PNOK to SBP Briefing with Retirement Services Officer (RSO).
4) Accompany PNOK to Legal Assistance Office Visit.
5) Present information on benefits and entitlements.
6) Assist PNOK in filing for benefits and entitlements.
7) Provide CAC with completed SBP paperwork.
8) Assist PNOK in obtaining a new ID Card, if applicable.
9) Assist PNOK in contacting Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and Social Security Administration.
10) Assist in completing and submitting Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses (DD Form 1375).
11) If PNOK desires, assist in preparing requests for official reports.
12) Ensure that the PERE receives all of the Soldier's personal effects.
13) If applicable, assist in coordination for the Fatal Training/Operational Accident Presentation to the NOK.

Step 6: Conclusion

1) File completed FINAL Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report, within five working days of final action

DUSTWUN (Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown)

Performing duties as a CAO for the NOK of a Soldier classified as DUSTWUN.

1) Review Section IV and V of Chapter 6, AR 600-8-1.
2) Before the initial visit to the PNOK and/or PADD, review the section titled "Responding to the Media and Public Affairs."
3) Provide/arrange to obtain a phone card (if CAC can support).
4) Maintain a log of duties performed on Daily Staff Journal/Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594).

MISSING (Performing Duties as a CAO for the NOK of Beleaguered, Besieged, Captured, Detained, Missing, or Missing in Action Personnel)

Performing duties as a CAO for the NOK of beleaguered, besieged, captured, detained, missing, or missing in action personnel.

1) Review Section IV and V of Chapter 6, AR 600-8-1.
2) Review Chapter 8, AR 600-8-1.
3) Before the initial visit to the PNOK and/or PADD, review Appendix C, "Responding to the Media and Public Affairs."
4) Secure extra copies of "Entitlement to Pay and Allowances While in a Missing Status."
5) Maintain log of duties performed on your Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594).

Fatal Training/Operational Accident Presentations to Next of Kin

1) Review AR 600-34 for a full explanation of the program.
2) Present formal offer of presentation to the PNOK. Ensure that the PNOK chooses one of four options and signs the offer.
3) Fax the signed offer back to CMAOC.
4) Prepare a "PNOK Report" with information about the family.
5) Coordinate family participation at the briefing, including attendance by clergy.
6) Attend the rehearsal presentation with the briefer and Department of the Army representative, if applicable.
7) Attend the presentation as liaison between the Army and family. Uniform is Class A.

CAO Signature	Briefer Signature
Date	Date

Appendix B: Resources

Directory of Telephone Numbers – Casualty Assistance

Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC)
Casualty Operations 24-hour Hotline 1-800-626-3317

Armed Forces Services Corporation
Customer Service 1-800-336-4538
(703) 522-3060

Defense Finance Accounting System (DFAS)

DFAS-Indianapolis — Arrears of Pay . . . . . (317) 510-0237 / 8
DSN 699-0237 / 8

Death Travel Claims. . . . . (317) 510-4258
DSN 699-4258

DFAS-Cleveland — Customer Service. 1-800-321-1080
Customer Service FAX. 1-800-469-6559
Casualty. 1-800-269-5170
DSN 580-5170

Gold Star Wives Organization 1-888-479-9788
Membership Services 1-888-751-6350

TRICARE For Life Information 1-888-363-5433
TRICARE Plus MTF Capacity Information 1-888-363-5433
TRICARE Family Member Dental Plan (TFMDP). 1-800-866-8499
TRICARE Senior Pharmacy 1-877-363-6337
Delta Dental - Retiree Dental Plan 1-888-336-3260
For Enrollment 1-888-838-8737

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, INC. (TAPS) 1-800-368-TAPS
1-800-959-TAPS

Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)
Information on VA Benefits. 1-800-827-1000
State VA Commissioner . . . . . Check Local Listing
State VA Regional Office . . . . . Check Local Listing
Life Insurance 1-800-669-8477
Education Loan 1-800-326-8276
State VA Medical Centers . . . . . Check Local Listing
Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance 1-800-419-1473
Veterans Group Life Insurance 1-800-419-1473

***State Bureau of Vital Statistics**
To obtain certified copies of State Death Certificate, check with Funeral Director, who can assist in obtaining Death Certificate. There may be a fee for extra state Death Certificates.

DEERS Updates, Defense Manpower Data Center 1-800-538-9552
FAX 1-831-655-8317

Social Security Administration
Social Security 1-866-777-7887

Directory of World Wide Web Links – Casualty Assistance

Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC):
http://www.armycasualty.army.mil

Other Important Links

Defense Finance and Accounting System: http://www.dod.mil/dfas/

Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits Homepage: http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/index.htm

Department of Veterans Affairs: http://www.va.gov/

DOD ID Card Centers: http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home

Medicare Part B: http://www.medicare.gov/

National Personnel Records Center: http://www.archives.gov/facilities/mo/st_louis/military_personnel_records/standard_form_180.html

Presidential Memorial Certificate: http://www.cem.va.gov/pmc.htm

Social Security Administration: http://www.ssa.gov/

Social Security Survivor Benefits: http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/10084.html

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP): http://www.defenselink.mil/militarypay/survivor/sbp/index.html

TRICARE: http://www.tricare.osd.mil/

TRICARE for Life: http://www.tricare.osd.mil/tfl/

TRICARE Senior Pharmacy: http://www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/seniorpharmacy.cfm

TRICARE Plus: http://www.mytricare.com/internet/tric/tri/tricare.nsf/PGS/TRCRBscs_Prgrms_7?OpenDocument

United Concordial Company Incorporated: http://www.ucci.com/

Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits for Survivors: http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/dependents/index.htm

Survivor Assistance Centers

Grief and Healing Homepage: http://www.webhealing.com/cgi-bin/main.pl

Gold Star Wives: http://www.goldstarwives.org/

Society of Military Widows: http://www.militarywidows.org/

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors: http://www.taps.org/

The Compassionate Friends: http://www.compassionatefriends.org/

Understanding Grief: http://www.hsc.edu/stu/counseling/selfhelp/grief.html

Appendix C: Responding to the Media and Public Affairs

Dealing with the media can be very challenging. Unless you are trained as a Public Affairs Officer (PAO), do not assume anything regarding public affairs or anything regarding the media. **A Public Affairs Office officer can and will be assigned to you if the situation calls for it**. They are trained to deal with the media. Let them assist you as needed. Call the CAC for a PAO. They have the means of getting you the guidance and personal assistance you need.

Media representatives seeking interviews or information may approach you, as the CAO, or the NOK directly. The following are some suggestions to help should this situation arise:

1) **If approached by the media, ensure you refer the reporter to the local installation PAO.** If the PAO approves your participation in an interview, discuss only your role as a CAO, i.e., that you are there to assist the NOK; you may explain your duties in that capacity.
2) If the PNOK or other NOK are approached by media desiring to interview them, **ensure that the NOK are aware that they have the right to choose whether or not to speak to reporters**. Should they do so, the NOK also have the right to terminate the interview at any time. The choice is the NOK's, not the reporter's. PAO officers can assist with this.
3) If the family members are approached by media desiring attendance at the funeral or memorial service, ensure that the family members understand that it is solely their decision whether to allow the media at the service.
4) In the event the family will be interviewed by the media or the family permits the media to attend the service, **ensure the family is informed that an Army PAO representative can provide assistance**. If the family desires PAO assistance, contact the PAO at the installation responsible for providing support to the family. If the family declines PAO assistance, contact the PAO to inform them of anticipated media involvement.

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