Military Experience and Perceptions of Parenting: A Narrative Perspective on Work-Family Balance

by

Meghan Michelle Robertson
B.A., University of Victoria, 2008

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies
in the Faculty of Education

Military Experience and Perceptions of Parenting:
A Narrative Perspective on Work-Family Balance

by

Meghan Michelle Robertson
B.A., University of Victoria, 2008

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Timothy G. Black, Supervisor
(Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies)

Dr. David deRosenroll, Departmental Member
(Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies)

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Timothy G. Black, Supervisor
(Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies; University of Victoria)

Dr. David deRosenroll, Departmental Member
(Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies; University of Victoria)

Abstract

This study investigated the subjectively constructed narratives of how veterans' retrospective experiences of trying to balance career and parental roles. Narrative-oriented inquiry (NOI), which has not been used as a framework in previous research within the area of work-family balance in general and within research involving military families more specifically, was the primary orienting methodology in the current study. Five veterans, all male and who currently reside in the area of Victoria BC, participated in the process of co-constructing their individual 1st-person narratives with the primary researcher. The six stages of Arvay's (2002) Collaborative Narrative Method were used as the guiding framework for the creation of these narratives. Implications that came out of these narratives in regards to future research and counselling practice are also discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables Page

Acknowledgments

Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph; a beginning, a struggle and a victory" – Ghandi

When I found myself chuckling at this quote, I knew it was the right one to pick to summarize my experiences writing this thesis. There were many moments when I felt the process was flowing smoothly, moments which were often quickly followed by times when I wondered how everything would come together. As I look back on creating this document, what I consider to be my best piece of written work to date, I stand firm in the belief that it could not have happened without the support from a number people who have been very important to me in this journey.

The first person I would like to thank is my research supervisor, Tim Black. His expertise and passion for this area of research kept me grounded and going during times when I either didn't know what I was doing and/or didn't want to do what I was doing! I also appreciated David deRosenroll's encouragement at various points throughout this process. It was a phenomenal support to have people on my committee who echoed and enhanced my own enthusiasm for the work that was created in this thesis.

I also wish to acknowledge the constant and unconditional love from the incredible 12 people in my cohort as we all went through this MA program together. Without these wonderful ones' words of encouragement, care, and support, it would have been significantly more challenging to get to this point I am at now.

There is one person who was absolutely integral to my preservation of any measure of sanity as I worked to have my own sense of balance in regards to all that was involved in my life these last few years; my husband. I am grateful beyond words for his amazingly never-ending love, gentleness, and patience; particularly during the weeks I spent transcribing. I love you Boo.

Last, I would like to voice my appreciation, gratitude, and huge respect for the individuals who gave their time to participate in this study. There would be no thesis if it was not for their generosity in sharing their experiences with someone who was initially a complete stranger. I felt very honoured to witness their stories, and it is my hope that readers of this document will have that same experience as they too, witness the experiences of these wonderful people.

Military Experience and Perceptions of Parenting:

A Narrative Perspective on Work-Family Balance

Chapter 1

Introduction

"We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are" – The Talmud

Introduction of Topic

"Events do not present themselves as stories, but it is the experience of an event that becomes a story" (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008; p 149). It is in the context of this quote that I began my journey into learning more about how we tell the story of our experiences, and how meaning is created out of those experiences. There are many groups of people in our society from which we could benefit if space was provided for them to tell their own stories, and the work that I engaged in during this study focused specifically on veterans who served in the Canadian Forces (CF). According to the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND), there are currently 62,000 regular and 25,000 Reserve Force members (DND, 2009). As all of these people will eventually become veterans themselves, it is important that research be done that explores issues facing military members in all stages of their military involvement.

When taken together, 4.6% of Regular force, Reserve Forces, and Civilian workers experience life dissatisfaction, 7.8 % experience negative self-perceived mental health, 4.8% report alcohol dependence, and 6.9% meet the criteria for Major Depression (Park, 2008). It is not just men who are impacted by these issues. Applewhite and Mays (1996) reported that 12% of the US army was comprised of female members in 1992, which was an increase from less than 2% in 1972. More recent data reported that 14.7%

of all military personnel were women (Park, 2008). Children are also affected by having military parents. During Operation Desert Storm, almost 37,000 children were separated from their parents due to deployment of either one or both parents (DOD, 1992; as cited in Applewhite & Mays, 1996). Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) reported that there were 589,060 Canadian Forces veterans in 2007, which is a large number of people currently living with the aftermath of having once been actively involved in the Canadian military.

Statement of Problem

A number of gaps in the existing literature became evident when I began looking into how military parents perceive their family life. While the impact of career on family experiences has been discussed in previous studies, this impact had primarily been assessed through quantitative measures and with a focus on how children have been affected by having parents who are in the military (e.g., Dirkzwager, Bramsen, Ader, & van der Ploeg, 2005; Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, Grass & Grass, 2007; Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996); however, the personal stories and depth in meaning-making of the military parents themselves had not been explored. It was also unclear at that time how veterans who had not been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) experience their career impacting them as parents. Research has tended to focus on how PTSD has impacted family life, specifically veterans' relationships with their children and spouses (e.g., Caselli & Motta, 1995), communication and family conflict (e.g., Cook, Riggs, Thompson, Coyne, & Sheikh, 2004), mental health (e.g., Blake, Cook, & Keane, 1992), and social functioning (e.g., Frueh, Turner, Beidel, & Cahill, 2001). While these studies help to increase our understanding of the experiences of the extreme veteran

cases, they do not necessarily address how non-clinically diagnosed veterans have been impacted by their own career experiences.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my work in this study was to explore the relationship between veterans' military work and their experiences of parenting; that is, to better understand how parents' unpack this experience and make meaning of having been involved in holding both military and parental roles simultaneously. This research addressed the experiences of veterans who had at least one child during their involvement in the military, and explored the successes and struggles they experienced in trying to balance their career and family worlds.

The understanding gained by what I have helped give voice to in this study is hoped to be of benefit, not only to the general body of existing research in this area, but also to practitioners in the counselling field who work with military families and veterans. For military families, work-family conflicts are often particularly intense because commitment to a military career involves frequent relocations, and possible exposure to high physical risk (Desiliya & Gal, 2006). Individuals who decide to pursue a military career have the potential to be put in situations where they could risk their lives as they do their part contributing to the protection of their country. While supporting individuals actively involved in the military is important, veterans also often need support as they transition from a military career into "ordinary" civilian life. An increased awareness around how veterans successfully and less successfully balanced their careers with their roles as parents can help inform professionals who are working with veterans to maintain and improve relationships with their children and spouses.

I sought out to answer the following questions in this study: What are the subjectively reported experiences of veterans who have had to balance military career and parental roles? What were some of the successes and struggles that they experienced?

Description and Definitions of Key Constructs

One of the primary constructs of interest in this study is parenting; specifically, parenting within the context of military families. From a social psychological perspective, a family is a small group of people composed of at least two members who have perceptions of their shared situations (Bowen, 1991). A military family then is defined as "relative[s] of a member of the CF, by blood, marriage or adoption, who normally [are] resident with that member and who [are] not member[s] of the CF" (DND, 2009). In order to help guide participants' reflections on how they experienced their work and parenting roles, I explored the concept of parenting as defined by the following: the skills, approaches (i.e., parenting styles), and values (e.g., beliefs and attitudes) as related to the raising of children.

Another important construct in this study is military experience. Interviews focused on the stories of parents who experienced employment in the military and who are currently now considered to be of veteran status. According to the Royal Canadian Legion, the term "veteran" refers to "any person who is serving or who has honourably served in the Armed Forces of Canada, the Commonwealth or its wartime allies; or who has served in the Merchant Navy or Ferry Command during wartime" (Royal Canadian Legion (RCL), 2005).

The last main construct of interest in this study is career and family life; specifically, work-family balance. There are two main concepts to be considered in this

area. First, work-family balance refers to how the demands attached to occupying a certain role at work are balanced with the demands of occupying a family-role (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; p. 5). The relationship between work and family also has potential for "work-family conflict" (WFC), which occurs when conflict arises between work and family from incompatible expectations and demands that exist within each domain (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Heraty, Morely, & Cleaveland, 2008). However, conflict was not assumed to be the only experience discussed by the participants in this study as some parents report experiencing more role satisfaction than role conflict when they feel committed to both their work and family roles (Peronne, Egisdottir, Webb, & Blalock, 2006). In relation to both of these concepts, my work in this study explored parental roles which are part of the roles involved in the general domain of family life.

In summary, the primary constructs in this study are defined as follows:

1) *Parent*: an individual who is currently in an intact, cohabiting marriage or common-law relationship who is the primary or secondary caregiver of his or her child(ren).
2) *Parenting*: skills, approaches, and values as related to the raising of children
3) *Veteran*: any person who is serving or who has honourably served in the Armed Forces of Canada, the Commonwealth or its wartime allies; or who has served in the Merchant Navy or Ferry Command during wartime" (RCL, 2005)

4) *Work-Family Balance*: accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role-related partners in the work and family domains" (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; p. 5).
5) *Work-Family Conflict*: when conflict between work and family arises from incompatible expectations and demands that exist within each domain (Netemeyer et al, 1996; Heraty & Morely, 2008)

Researcher Context

As the primary researcher in this study, the information that was co-constructed with participants has been interpreted through my own personal lens in terms of how I made sense of participants` experiences. My personal interpretation is unavoidable due to the co-constructed nature of narrative story-telling. Stories are dialogues between a particular teller and listener and are products of that particular interview context (Riessman, 1993). Based on this, it is assumed that my presence influenced the conversations in ways that would be different if someone else had engaged in these interviews. Therefore, I will attempt to describe my personal lens through which I made meaning of the stories created during the interview process. This brief discussion will hopefully provide a context regarding the perspective I brought to the way I have presented this research, and give readers the chance to decide for themselves how much of the findings might have come from me, how much might be from the co-construction of the interview process, and how much might be from the participants themselves.

From my own experiences, I have grown to place significant value on family and relationships. These values contributed to my curiosity around how parents involved in particularly demanding careers navigate the interaction of their work and family roles.

My husband`s grandfather was in the Canadian Navy for over 20 years, and his cousin is currently a member of the Canadian Armed Forces. I also have a number of close friends who are involved in various dimensions of the Canadian military and have heard about some of the positive and negative aspects involved in this particular career. My impressions of military life and the particular cultural context of the military before embarking on the background research for this study were that it is unlike any other career. Having heard stories of how my husband`s family coped with the challenges that surrounded having one parent in the Navy (e.g., his grandfather being deployed for years at a time, the family having to move, living on military property, etc), it seemed to me that the military as an organizational entity had far more control over what his grandfather engaged in than most other careers that allow more potential for personal choice. Having said all this, I have not had any direct personal involvement with the military which subsequently makes me an outsider to the military culture. I am also aware that I may have been perceived as such by the participants in my study.

Before deciding on the direction of this research study, I thought back to the stories told in my husband's family. The stories of my husband`s grandfather holding both the challenging roles of an officer in the Canadian Navy as well as being a father of four children were occasionally mentioned, and I wanted to give more stories like these a voice. I also have a personal desire to be able to balance a career with a family and subsequently developed an interest in trying to learn what parents involved in demanding careers have experienced when negotiating their own balance. Primarily driven by my training as a counsellor, as well as having the relative privilege to freely express my own thoughts, I have come to greatly value people being able to voice both their positive and

negative experiences. It is mostly my clinical work which has been in line with narrative approaches to therapy that has guided my selection of a narrative approach to this research. I am passionate about the work that I embarked on and ended up caring a great deal for the individuals who chose to participate in this study. I began this study with the intention of working closely with my primary supervisor, committee members, and participants in order to co-create the experiences presented in Chapter 5 to the best of my ability; and believe I have met this intention.

In terms of what I expected to hear in veterans' stories, I anticipated that participants would describe having struggled to find a balance between the two roles I am curious about in this study; however, in my experience families can cope with and adapt to stressful situations differently so I expected that the specific ways in which veterans found a sense of balance between their career and parental roles might differ. My initial thoughts were that any difference in this regard might be due to individual experiences while involved with the military, how much social support they had while they were active in the military, as well as how they navigated the relationships within their families. I considered the possibility that some of the veterans who chose to participate in this study may not have consciously thought about how they managed this balance. In my experience as an emerging counsellor, people often find it a lot easier to describe challenges and problems; however it seems to be far more difficult for people to consider what went well for them and to reflect on their strengths without being prompted to do so. Even when prompted, it seems to be more difficult for some people to provide rich descriptions of positive aspects of challenging situations that are often given to problematic aspects. I also expected this to be the case with the veterans in my study as

so much of their military-family experience seems to me to be extraordinarily straining on family and personal resources.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the existing problem prompting my interest in this area of family life was explained, main constructs that are relevant to this study were defined, and my own personal context in this study was explored. As is hopefully clear at this point, the intent of my work in this study was to explore how non-clinically diagnosed veterans storied their experiences of trying to balance their military career and parental roles while they were actively involved in the military.

Subsequent sections of this proposals present a summary of the existing literature that is most relevant to the current study; explain methodological procedures, such as the applicable research design, participants, as well as interview and analysis methods; report the experiences expressed during the interviews in the form of first-person narratives; and summarize the results in a more descriptive manner within the context of relevant literature. I also discuss how the stories created within this research have a number of applications in the areas of existing literature and clinical practice. Examples of interview questions, as well as consent forms, are presented in the appendices.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter Introduction

This chapter serves to describe the previous research that pertains to the work I did in this study, as well as to provide the perspectives from which the study is presented. While there are many studies that support the current research, there are a specific few that are particularly relevant to the ideas expressed in this study in regards to general background context, focus of previous research, population and constructs of interest, and trends in methodology

Review of the Literature

Career Theory: Work-Family Balance and Conflict

One of the theoretical frameworks that I drew from in this research is career theory; specifically, work-family balance which was previously described as the negotiation of roles related to work and family domains (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; p. 5). According to Nikandrou, Panayotopoulou, and Apospori (2008), an individual's life is comprised of a number of complex domains, such as personal, family, social, and work, which all involve different demands. As work and home life interact with each other in complimentary or contradictory ways, we are given the task of trying to balance the multiple roles and demands of both domains.

A prevalent issue in our society is how to effectively balance our often busy and demanding work and family lives. Work-family fit suggests that adapting to work and family-related stress can be impacted by how well the work environment matches or adapts to the needs of the family structure and vice versa (Pittman, Kerpelman, &

McFayden, 2004). How well this adaptation occurs, as well as an individual's level of satisfaction with this fit, depends on the balance between the demands and rewards of the work environment and the needs of the family members. According to Pittman et al., situations that result in an individual being exposed to high degrees of stress or trauma can threaten the stability of the family and increase strain in the work-family fit. There are no buffers in the work-family role system to help prevent parents from experiencing permeable boundaries between the demands of their work and family lives (Sekaran, 1983); In North American culture the intrusion of family role demands into work role demands is often more permissible for women than men, whose direction of role-intrusion tends be work demands impacting family demands.

An individual's work and family life are not simply static phenomena; they are constantly changing domains involving different types of challenges and choices (Bhatnagar & Rajadhayaksha, 2001). Collin (2006) described the interaction and connectedness that exists within a family-friendly career system where this system draws "inputs" from the environment and converts them into the "outputs" it needs to sustain itself. For example, cultural norms and the nature of a specific workplace may make up some of the inputs into the system while fulfilling family members' needs, stress level, and maintaining a desired standard of living might be some of the outputs that sustain the system. Collin's primary point, which echoed Sekaran`s (1983) about boundary permeability, is that changes in one system can produce changes in another because one system's outputs are subsequent inputs for other systems in the environment. Ultimately, a career system's ability to function smoothly has strong implications for the nature of family as well as work life.

The dynamics involved in managing career and family roles may result in role conflict as different roles do not always balance effectively. Heraty, Morley, and Cleveland (2008) asserted that explorations around work-family domain interactions have primarily been approached from a conflict perspective on the basis that the respective demands of each system are not frequently compatible. For many employed parents in particular, work and family domains often compete with each other for parents' limited resources, such as energy, physical presence, and time (Williams, 1994). For example, in their interviews of 18 professional working mothers, Grady and McCarthy (2008) found that, although these mothers identified their family and children as their main priority, they also gave significant importance toward their work and careers. Eventually, one role will intrude into the demands of the other and force parents to decide which role to give priority.

Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) described work-family conflict as occurring when expectations and demands from work and family are incompatible which results in inter-domain conflict. Devoting energy to one role necessitates less energy being given to another role. Subsequently, work-family conflict arises when "the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by the job interfere with performing family-related responsibilities" (p. 2). The culture of the surrounding environment and social organization also plays a part in shaping beliefs and expectations around what role demands will entail and how those demands should be met (Nikandrou, Panayotopoulou, & Apospori, 2008). When the organizational culture is not able to meet the individual's work and family-related needs, conflict between competing roles is increased as the individual does not have the necessary resources to meet environmental demands. For

example, in their study looking at the responses of 399 females employed at differing levels of management, Nikandrou et al. found that the more committed these women were to their children and partners, the more strain they experienced in their work which did not support both work and family commitment. This eventually led to an increase in perceived work-family conflict which prompted these women to try to alleviate this strain by becoming less committed to their family and friends.

It is not only mothers who experience work-family balance issues; fathers also share this experience but generally in a slightly different way. While women may perceive their commitments to their jobs and children as being in on-going trade-off to each other and needing to accommodate both worlds, men are more likely to see their commitments as being separate and not necessitating on-going choices between the two (Daly, 1996). Sometimes having the perspective that these domains are connected can prompt women to engage in more consistent management of the work-family balance, but does not negate this experience for men. For example, Daly interviewed 32 fathers and found that the common discourse among them was that a "good" father is one who spends time with his children. This contributed to the dominant theme of fathers experiencing guilt from not having perceived enough time spent with their children. The challenge of producing time for family activities became apparent through the fathers' description that making this time typically occurred after business and social commitments were given necessary time and energy. Even though it seemed like these fathers gave priority to business and social activities, there was still a predominance of guilt regarding not having enough time for family which supports the idea that conflict can occur between these two realms when parents only have so many personal resources.

Understandably, work-family conflict tends to have a negative impact on family satisfaction (Peronne et al., 2006). Inevitably, when parents try to balance the demands of their different roles, one role will eventually interrupt the activities of another resulting in the need for parents to juggle the different demands to try to find a balance between the two (Williams, 1994). In his study involving 41 full-time working parents, Williams found that juggling work and family tasks was related to increased experiences of distress than when this juggling was not occurring. He also found strong evidence, particularly in women, for moods like distress and fatigue to spill over into parents` family roles. Specifically, the level that the family was perceived to interfere with work was related to an increase in distress that parents experienced in their family and work roles. Overall parents indicated that work was more likely to interfere with family than family was to interfere with work.

The connection between one`s career and family life is evident, particularly when viewing this issue from a systems theoretical perspective (e.g., Bowen, Orthner, and Bell, 1997). According to Bowen et al, the process of family adaptation refers to the family`s efforts to balance its members in order to form an integrated and functioning unit that has established a certain level of stability between itself and the surrounding environment. In their 1997 study involving a sample of couples in which husbands were actively involved in the military, Bowen found that perceptions of work stress tended to be associated with the overall levels of function and interdependence of family members. The adjustment to work and family that wives in this study experienced was associated with how well they perceived their family to be able to adapt to both internal (i.e., within the family) and external (i.e., outside the family) pressures. Interestingly, husbands' personal adjustment

(i.e., how they tended to view themselves) was associated with how well they perceived their families to be adjusting to the demands their jobs place on them.

Specifically in regards to parents balancing their careers with family demands, Bronfenbrenner (1984) looked more directly at how working mothers' perceptions of their children differentiated depending on their employment status and level of education. Through the interviews conducted with 152, 2-parent families regarding parents' sources of satisfaction and stress from both their work and family domains, it was found that mothers with post-high school education who were employed full-time tended to make more positive comments about their daughters. These were not the results found for the same mothers who had sons; rather, it was mothers who worked part-time who spoke most favourable about their sons. Mothers with more limited education and who worked full-time described both their daughters and sons the least favourably. The important piece to note about this study in relation to the current research is that although Bronfenbrenner clearly looked at the impact of work on mothers' perceptions of their children, this connection was made through interpretation of the researchers and not resulting from a direct account from participants.

The time pressures that arise from the interplay of demands related to work, domestic chores, and children are major factors that parents have reported as contributing to their perceptions of parenting being stressful (Sidebotham et al., 2001). In Sidebotham's interviews of 16 mothers, a common experience these mothers described was dread towards going home where they anticipated having to sort out their family after experiencing challenges all day at work. Another theme that emerged from these interviews was mothers' expression of guilt from their perceived failure to meet the

cultural expectations regarding what "good" parents should be.

Parenting Styles, Skills, and Attitudes

One of the most commonly discussed theories regarding parenting styles differentiates four specific types of parenting: Authoritative, Authoritarian, Permissive, and Disengaged (Baumrind, 1991, 1996). The type of style is determined by the presence of two specific dimensions of childrearing, which are responsiveness and demandingness. Responsiveness refers to how much parents consciously work to instil a sense of individuality in their children and encourage their children's ability to assert themselves through the manner in which parents attend to and support their children's needs. For example, responsiveness can be expressed through warmth, reciprocity in parent-child interactions, as well as the use of clear communication and reason during discipline. Demandingness refers to parents' behaviour around confronting, monitoring, and engaging in consistent discipline of their children.

Authoritarian and permissive parents exist at opposite polarities in terms of responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1991; 1996). Authoritarian parents are demanding and directive, but tend not to be responsive to their children. They expect obedience from their children without exception, provide an orderly environment with a clear sense of how the household is regulated, monitor their children's activities carefully, and tend to be status-oriented. Conversely, permissive parents tend to be more responsive than demanding. They are more lenient towards their children, do not require mature behaviour, avoid confrontation, and allow their children primary responsibility over their own self-regulation. Authoritative parents fall between these two parenting styles and balance in being both demanding and responsive; that is, they monitor their

children's behaviour, make their standards regarding what is acceptable behaviour clear, assert their parental responsibility but are not overly restrictive, engage in disciplinary behaviour in supportive rather than punitive ways, and encourage their children to self-regulate as well as cooperate with authority figures. Disengaged parents tend to not be demanding or responsive as they do not monitor their children's behaviour, structure the family environment, engage in supportive behaviour, and may in fact completely reject or neglect their responsibilities as parents.

Another aspect of the broad concept of parenting involves the skills that are part of a person's role as a parent. The Separated Parenting Access & Resource Center (SPARC, n.d.) described some of the "core" skills that they believe competent parents have to enable them to properly care for their children and accomplish the various tasks that are involved with raising a child. These skills fall into five broad categories: 1) Clothing and Hygiene (e.g., buying children appropriate clothing; helping children learn how to brush their teeth, wash themselves, dress themselves; putting children to bed and reading bedtime stories); 2) Child Development (e.g., reading to children regularly; taking children to different activities; playing with children; celebrating holidays; teaching children manners and respect for others; providing discipline as necessary in the right amount and at the right time; encouraging socialization; teaching problem-solving skills); 3) Home and Social Life (e.g., buying groceries and supplies for the home; cooking appropriate meals; doing regular household chores to create a healthy and clean environment; setting rules around watching television and playing video games; arranging for social activities for children); 4) Medical Care (e.g., tending to minor cuts and scrapes; caring for sick children; taking children to regular doctor and dentist

appointment; being aware of children's current overall health and managing any long-term care issues); and 5) School (e.g., choosing appropriate school classes; filling out paperwork; engaging with teachers and school staff; arranging for children to get to and from school; attending school events; helping with homework).

The attitudes and beliefs that parents have are also important components of their roles as parents. Often parents' behaviour models their own parents, and can incorporate aspects of what they have learned about what parenting entails from external sources such as books or magazines (Grusec, 2006). Beliefs and attitudes can have a large impact on behaviour, particularly if parents are unaware of the attitudes that they hold. Grusec described child-rearing attitudes as "cognitions that predispose an individual to act either positively or negatively toward a child" (p. 1). Typical parental attitudes involve the level of warmth and acceptance or coldness and rejection that exist in the relationship between a parent and his or her child(ren). Other important parenting attitudes are the extent to which parents are permissive or restrictive towards their children, beliefs around parenting abilities, expectations around children's capabilities, and perspectives towards why children behave in certain ways. Attitudes do not always directly impact parents' behaviour as the situational context also often factors into how someone acts. For example, a parent who values being warm to his or her child may act out in anger at times if that child misbehaves.

Gender, Parenting, and Career Balance

According to Risman (2004), how gender has been constructed creates differing opportunities and constraints for each sex category, and has consequences on three particular dimensions: 1) at the individual level as people come to form a particular sense

of their identity; 2) at the interactional level due to different cultural expectations for men and women; and 3) at the institutional level (i.e., work and home domains). While gender is not a specific area of interest in the current study, it is still important to at least briefly consider this aspect when exploring areas related to social roles, such as those related to work and parenting and particularly because men and women have historically engaged in these roles in different ways. Being informed about the social context behind these roles can guide understanding of how participants in the current study described their own experiences of balancing work and parenting roles.

It is generally understood that women have traditionally been socialized to believe that being a wife and raising a family should be their primary priorities and that career-related activities should be secondary; whereas men have traditionally been socialized into prioritizing financial independence and career advancement (Cinnamon, 2006). Lothaller, Mikula, and Schoebi (2009) discussed how family work is divided depends partially on the extent to which people live according to gender roles; that is, the attitudes that partners hold can determine how traditionally roles are embodied. In general these researchers found that the more couples endorsed traditional attitudes, the more imbalanced the division of family work ended up being between partners; however, this was not necessarily the case in regards to the division of childcare which was found to be less imbalanced than roles like household labour. Similarly, Kendall (2008) discussed how beliefs around the ideals of a breadwinning father and a caretaking mother impact the types of tasks that are performed by partners both at home and at work.

The increase in women's involvement in the workforce and number of dual-earner couples with young children has been reported to be one of the most influential

changes in family life in the last 35 years (Corwyn & Bradley, 2005). With this change in how families are structured, it raises the question of how families might be influenced in terms of their daily lives and parents' gendered identities both at home and in the workplace (Kendall, 2008). Osnowitz's (2005) summary of previous research in this area suggested that men and women organize the work that they do at home in different ways; for example, men have tended to perceive their work and home responsibilities as separate while women have been more likely to consider both areas simultaneously and arrange their work-related schedule to fit with the needs of their home; however, there is conflicting thoughts in more recent research regarding the way that gender roles are evident within working parents.

There have been recent trends in research on work-family-conflict and gender which has indicated that men and women do not always consistently differ in this aspect of their lives. This seems to be particularly relevant when women and men occupy a combination of work and family roles in a balance that both partners view as beneficial (Barnett et al., 1994). In Deater-Deckard and Scarr's (1996) study, few differences were found in mother's and fathers' reports of stress regarding parenting and experience of anxiety around their daily separation from their children. These authors found that an egalitarian division of childcare seemed to be most beneficial for both mothers and fathers. While they did not find gender differences between work involvement and work conflict and family involvement and family conflict, Duxbury and Higgins (1991) did notice a difference between mothers and fathers in how they engaged in meeting the expectations of their work and family roles. For example, it was seen to be more acceptable for career men to satisfy family demands by increasing the amount of time

that they spent in the "breadwinner role" earning money for the family, while home maintenance and child care tended to be viewed as primarily women's roles; however, both men and women seemed to experience the same degree of challenge in trying to balance work and family demands and found work conflict to be an equally important factor in their experiences of work-family conflict.

Military Families

As previously mentioned, the experience of work-family conflict is particularly intense in military families due to the nature of military family life (Desilya & Gall, 2006). The lifestyle of a military family often involves life stressors that other population groups do not experience as often or all at once, such as frequent moves, periods of family separation, geographic isolation from extended family support systems, and the threat of harm to or death of a loved one (Black, 1993). Families of service members deployed to combat areas have demonstrated less cohesiveness than families where service members were deployed to non-combat areas (Kelley, 1994); however, any deployment of a family member (i.e., a spouse or parent) can create disruption in the family. Betz and Thorngren (2006) reported that some of this disruption may be due to the family's experience of ambiguous loss, which occurs when the deployed family member is physically absent yet is still perceived to be a psychological presence. Additionally, they found that the family member may be physically present but psychologically absent when he or she returns due to potentially traumatic experiences during deployment. In either case, according to Betz and Thorngren, family members can get stuck in certain roles or no longer know what their roles entail when one of the

members is taken away from and returned to the family system. If this confusion is not effectively dealt with, the family's experience of stress can be greatly increased.

Desilya and Gal (2006) employed a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of how a sample of 100 families of career servicemen perceive and cope with military and family conflict. Six different family profiles emerged from this research: The "Joint-Coping" family experienced high work and family satisfaction, which included their perceptions of their performance as parents; the "Avoidant Family" did not perceive any military-family conflict, and while they tended to avoid emotional issues they experienced satisfaction with their roles as parents and as workers; the "Traditional Family" also did not report a sense of experiencing military-family conflict as the wives took responsibility over all the house-hold duties while the husbands were solely involved in the work domain; the "Frustrated Family" consisted of both spouses being aware of the conflict between the military and family systems, and experiencing dissatisfaction with their performance as parents, as well as in their family and social life in general; the "Avoidant Husbands/Frustrated Wives" family where the husband was satisfied with both his military and family lives and reported feeling content with his experience as a parent and his overall family life, whereas the wife reported dissatisfaction with their jobs, husbands' performance as a parent, and overall family life; and the "Trapped Family" where both spouses experienced strong military-family conflict, shared household responsibilities, and reported overwhelming stress and marital adjustment challenges.

Parents in the Military

Much of the research thus far in the area of military parents has been on the impact of having a parent in the military on children; specifically, in the context of parent-child separation as well as children's behaviour and affect changes due to that separation. Children with a deployed parent often experience increased levels of depression symptoms and boundary ambiguity in terms of their roles and responsibilities (Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996). There is also a reported increase in familial emotional intensity both when the deployed parent leaves and during the struggle to reintegrate the deployed parent back into the family (Huebner, et al., 2007). While children are clearly affected by having a military parent, they are not the only ones adversely impacted by the nature of a military family lifestyle. Kelley, Herzog-Simmer, and Harris (1994) explored how long-term military-induced separations impacted a sample of 118 deploying Navy women and found that these mothers experienced more challenge in their roles as parents during the time period preceding their deployment. For example, mothers felt more stress in their parenting roles and perceived their children to be more difficult during this time. The participant-specific experiences of the Navy women in this work serves to indicate how parents involved in the Armed Forces are directly impacted by the nature of their work.

Another area of research that is beginning to grow concerns how military spouses (i.e., spouses of individuals who are involved in the military) are affected by having a partner engaged in military involvement. According to Black (1993), approximately 3.5 % of the US population is in the active-duty armed forces, the National Guard or reserve, or is a dependent of someone who is. As of September 2004, there were 1, 414, 198

active members of the US armed forces, 775, 641 spouses, and 1,210, 663 children. Military spouses consider military-induced separation as their major dissatisfaction with military life (Defence Manpower Data Center, as cited in Black, 1993), and subsequently often experience feelings of loneliness, lack of companionship, problems disciplining children, and problems making decisions related to house-hold functioning by themselves (Black, 1993). Spouses experienced great disruption in their family lives when their military partners leave as well as when they return, such as the redistribution of parental roles and responsibilities as the spouses re-learn how to live with each other (Faber, Willerton, Clymer, MacDonald, & Weiss, 2008). From this research, it is clear that having a family member, either a spouse or a parent, impacts the experiences of the other immediate family members.

Military Experience, Parenting, and PTSD

As the majority of the existing literature regarding parents in the military involves veterans who have been diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), it can also be helpful to briefly review this literature in order to gain an understanding of how parents in extreme circumstances may have been affected by their military experience. Caselli and Motta (1995) in particular found that veterans who had been diagnosed with PTSD reported more interpersonal adjustment difficulties, more marital adjustment problems, and perceived their children's behaviour to be more problematic than veterans who were not diagnosed with PTSD. Veterans with PTSD have also reported lower parenting satisfaction, primarily due to the avoidance and emotional numbing symptoms that accompany PTSD (Samper, Taft, King, King, 2004).

Lauterback et al. (2007) examined the effect that the avoidance/numbing

symptom of PTSD had on the quality of the participants' relationships with their children. These researchers found that participants with a PTSD diagnosis had significantly poorer parent-child relationships than people without this diagnosis; however, the interesting thing in this case was that there was a low strength of this association which indicates that there were other aspects influencing this relationship other than PTSD. This prompted the questions for me of what other work-related variables should be explored, and how might non-clinically diagnosed veterans, who do comprise the majority of veterans, experience their relationships with their children?

Connection of Literature to Current Study

All of the studies previously mentioned indicate that while some families may be less negatively affected than others, there is a clear relationship between career and parenting experiences. This relationship seems particularly challenging when a parent is employed in the military. The work I engaged in during this study expands on previous research in that I explicitly asked participants how they experienced trying to balance their work roles with their roles as parents when they were involved in the military. After a thorough search through a variety of databases (i.e., Military and Government Collection (EBSCO); PsycInfo (EBSCO); PsycArticles (EBSCO); Psychology: SAGE Full-Text Collection (CSA); Google Scholar; JSTOR; Academic Search Premier (EBSCO); Web of Science (ISI); and Social Sciences Index (Wilson)), using the following search words: "balance"; "career theory"; "combat"; "family"; "families"; "military"; "parent(s)"; "parenting"; "perception(s)"; "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder"; "PTSD"; "veteran(s)"; and "work", the majority of existing research on the topic of military parents was found to be quantitative in nature. As mentioned, there was also a

tendency to focus on how children have been affected by having parents in the military (e.g., Huebner et al., 2007), as well as specific aspects of family life such as parenting stress, attitudes, behaviours, and family cohesiveness (e.g., Kelley et al, 1994). There was no known research that explicitly asked parents who were involved in the military how they negotiated the balance between the demands of their career and the demands of them as parents, which was the focus of my work.

Additionally, participants in existing related research tended to be veterans (e.g., Ruscio, Weathers, King, & King, 2002), and spouses (e.g., Betz & Thorngren, 2006) who provided responses to quantitative questionnaires as opposed to qualitative interviews (e.g., Goff, Crow, Reisbig, & Hamilton, 2007). The approach in my work involved interviewing veterans in a narrative manner about how they managed to be both military members and parents. The intent of this was to give voice to their perspectives on where they struggled and where they felt successful in balancing these two roles. By presenting them with the opportunity to tell us what we need to know in order to understand what they went through, valuable insight into veterans' experiences can be gained that might be otherwise missed. For example, the detailed profiles in Desiliya and Gal's (2006) work were able to be created because of their qualitative methodology which allowed participants flexibility in their responses.

I also found a predominate focus in existing research on veterans who had been diagnosed with PTSD (e.g., Jacobsen, Sweeny, & Racusin, 1993); however, while not wanting to minimize the importance of this type of research, only around 7.2% of the Regular Forces will meet the diagnostic criteria for PTSD over the course of their lives (DND, 2004). This indicates that the experiences of the majority of veterans have been

relatively unexplored. My intention with the work I did in this study was to increase awareness in this area by focusing on the experiences of non-clinically diagnosed veterans to round out existing ideas related to military veterans.

The understanding gained by the research question I proposed (i.e., what were veterans' experiences of trying to balance their military career and parental roles while they were actively involved in the military?) is of benefit to the general body of existing research and also to practitioners in the counselling field who work with military families and veterans. Many currently available support programs, such as the ones offered by the Military Family Resource Centre of the National Capital Region (MFRC-NCR) are primarily directed towards helping spouses cope at home while their partners are deployed. Similarly, in much of the existing literature regarding counselling military families, the challenges that can arise from having one parent involved in military service tend to be approached from the at-home parent's perspective rather than the military parent or the couple as a unit. For example, Rotter and Boveja (1999) focused on the common experiences of non-military spouses regarding the deployments of their partners (see Table 1).

Betz and Thorngren (2006) recommended that counsellors explore how family members are already coping, give each member a chance to discuss his or her experience and feelings, and openly talk about role shifts that occur within the family. There are also a number of other recommendations around counselling military families that have been expressed in previous research; for example, forming support groups for military spouses, focus on children and their adjustment processes, providing interventions around grief, and planning the family's reunion (Black, 1993); as well as developing programs in

Table 1

Experiences of Military Families in Response to Deployment (Rotter and Boveja, 1999)

Stage	Time Frame	Experiences	Examples
Anticipation	6 – 8 weeks before deployment 1 week before deployment	Expectation of separation Emotional withdrawal	Denial, fear, anger, hurt Confusion, pulling away Loss, disorganization
Separation	1 – 6 weeks after departure Most of deployment 6 – 8 weeks before homecoming	Emotional confusion Adjustment Expectation of reunion	Hope, confidence Apprehension, excitement
Reunion	1 day until first argument 6 – 8 weeks after return	Honeymoon Readjustment	Euphoria Role confusion

response to deployment-related needs and interventions aimed at community practices in family wellness and prevention of domestic violence (Hoshmand & Hoshmand, 2007).

For military families, work-family conflicts are often particularly intense because commitment to a military career involves frequent relocations, and possible exposure to high physical risk (Desiliya & Gal, 2006). It is hoped that the narratives presented in subsequent chapters will suggest additional areas that might benefit from having direct counselling support and/or serve to support current efforts.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described a selection of pertinent research areas in order to establish the context and rationale for why I have chosen this particular path of study. I discussed career theory, specifically work-family balance and conflict, in order to provide a theoretical foundation to my research question of how do veterans perceive their

experiences of trying to balance both their military career and parental roles. I also presented ideas around parenting styles, skills, and attitudes so that the reader is informed of what aspects of the broad construct of "parenting" are of particular interest to me. I touched on previous research in various areas of gender, military families, parents in the military, as well as military parents who have been diagnosed with PTSD to help contextualize my work. The final section in this chapter was intended to explicate why I think research such as mine is helpful in guiding clinical practice and expanding on the existing body of knowledge regarding military parents.

The subsequent chapter provides detail around this study's methodology, and includes a description of the research design, as well as procedures for participant selection, interviews, and analysis.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter Introduction

This chapter discusses my chosen research paradigm, explains the specific research design, and provides information on the interview method to be used in order to provide the theoretical framework for my work in this study. Participants are then described in terms of my selection and recruitment processes, followed by a discussion of narrative construction and analysis procedures.

The Narrative Approach to Research

I chose a research design based in a narrative theoretical perspective to guide my work in this study. Polkinghorne (1988) broadly defined narrative as being a fundamental process of linking individual actions and events into an integrated whole that exists within a particular social context. Narrative processes provide a social and cultural grounding for human experiences and facilitate understanding to allow people to make meaning of actions and events (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). White and Epston (1990) presented the following description of researchers who adopt a narrative perspective, which helps explain my own approach in this particular research study:

> "...they are not concerned with procedures and conventions for the generation of abstract and general theories but with the particulars of experience. They do not establish universal truth conditions but a connectedness of events across time. The narrative mode leads, not to certainties, but to varying perspectives. In this world of narrative, the subjunctive mood prevails rather than the indicative mood..." (p. 78).

Riessman (1993) stated that people construct their past experiences and actions into personal narratives (i.e., talk organized around important events often to make a

point) in order to form their identities and construct a perception of how they see their lives. Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2008) also described the primary function of narrative as being its role in our ability to construct and maintain self-identity. Specifically, we actively form our identities by choosing aspects of our experiences that we find particularly important. We then create stories around those aspects and eventually come to personally identify with them. Narrative methods in research have a wide application because of the presence of narration in discourse and as a foundation of how human experience is organized.

The specific narrative research design I took on in this study was narrative oriented inquiry (NOI). Narrative inquiry has its origin in social constructivism, and considers both descriptions of socio-cultural environment and the individual's lived experience to be important in how we construct our life stories. NOI can be seen as a combination of social constructivism and phenomenology as it considers people to actively create and make meaning of their experiences in the context of particular situations (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Social constructivism is essentially the view that the meaning of our social and cultural experiences is created through human social interaction (Gergen & Gergen, 2004); that is, there is no single truth or objective reality". Any descriptions of "reality" and sense of its truthfulness are subjective and come from particular cultural and social viewpoints. "The stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves become the fabric of our existence and the literal meaning(s) of our lives...a basic assertion of constructivism is that we organize our experience. We make meaning."(Mahoney, 2003; p. 101).

Narrative analysis is a particularly sensitive methodology in regards to making meaning of social processes (Emerson & Frosh, 2004). Stories told during interviews are considered to be placed within a double context; that is, when events are re-told, they exist within the context of the "whole story" as well as the current situation in which the story is being re-told (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008) which fits the assertion in narrative theory that stories are actively re-created as they are re-told. The narrative interview is subsequently seen as a mutual exchange of views and provides a space for narratives to be co-produced by all individuals present at that time.

The intent of this inquiry is to be inclusive and personal rather than to exhaust and define every experience of an entire population. The model of NOI, as depicted by Willig and Stainton-Rogers (2008), starts with a research question which guides the narrative interview and selection of participants. Narrative interviews are ideally co-constructed in ways that allow participants the freedom to talk about the issues that both they and the researcher are interested in (Emerson & Frosh, 2004). As Emerson and Frosh described, the narrative interview is often relatively open-ended, and "aims to target a set of research questions whilst also allowing for flexible and 'rich' talk" (p. 24). It also necessitates making an audio recording of the interview itself which can then be transcribed into the "raw transcript" to begin data analysis (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008).

Considering that my research question addressed the uncertainty about how veterans experienced balancing their military careers with their roles as parents, it was appropriate to use the proposed qualitative research method to help inform this gap for a number of reasons. First, when research participants are asked to discuss aspects of

themselves and their experiences in the context of an unstructured or semi-structured interview, they will regularly provide descriptions in the form of a story (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Narratives dominate human discourse, and are foundational to the cultural processes that organize and structure human action and experience. They offer a sense-making process that is fundamental to understanding human reality; that is, meaning is constructed through social discourse rather than being inherent in the experiences themselves (Josselson, 1995), and this design provided the space for such a construction of meaning. How and what we tell in our stories becomes a way of making meaning, which is facilitated by a narrative interviewing style (Arvay, 2002). Because this approach emphasizes an individual's own agency and imagination, a narrative design tends to be a good fit for studies regarding identity (Riessman, 1993), which is the case in this study exploring social roles. According to Mahoney (2003), human beings are active participants in organizing and making sense of their own lives. Therefore, a narrative approach was considered to be most effective in this study's aim of exploring how military veterans story and make meaning of their experiences of trying to balance their career and parental roles.

Interview Method: The Narrative Interview

Interviews were used as the primary method of seeking out knowledge from participants because this is a qualitative study functioning under a narrative perspective. This perspective views the process of narration to be one in which a person can "author (and re-author) their own meaning-making activities, their lived experience, their understandings of reality, and their own place in that reality" (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2005; p 151). Due to the relative lack of exploration in this study's specific area of

interest, I used a topic-oriented style of interview involving open-ended questions which were specific enough to address the constructs of interest but also flexible to provide opportunities for both me and the person I was interviewing to discuss certain areas in more detail (Hancock, 1998). Additionally, when an interviewee had difficulty answering a question or provided only a brief response, I was able to prompt or clarify as necessary. I could also encourage interviewees to consider questions further, elaborate on their original response, or follow other lines of questioning when they arose.

According to Wilbur's (2006) Integral Theory, interviews are essentially 2nd-person dialogues. In terms of my general process regarding the interviews, I initially experienced my participation from a 1st person perspective in which I was personally involved in the co-construction of the participants' stories. I then attempted to step back and adopt a more objective, 3rd person perspective when recording, analyzing, and reporting what was presented in the transcripts in order to reflect on the overall process. My intent at this time was to try to separate which contributions to the co-constructed interviews came from me and which came from participants. While this is the initial intention, it is acknowledged that I as a researcher, as well as a counsellor who regularly adopts all three perspectives, would undoubtedly shift between them all throughout the entire research process.

Methodological Trustworthiness in the Current Study

Qualitative research is often evaluated against criteria that are more appropriate for quantitative research, which is a faulty method of critique due to the different natures and purposes of qualitative and quantitative research (Krefting, 1991). For example, terms such as "reliability" and "validity" are used in regards to quantitative research

which has the goal of generalizing results found in the research sample to the larger population; however, this is not the case in qualitative approaches (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2005). According to Krefting's (1991) representation of Guba (1981), what is necessary in order to effectively critique the scientific merit and trustworthiness of qualitative studies is to shift language focused around quantitative terms such as internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, to a discussion of the four criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In quantitative research, internal validity refers to how confident the researcher is in the truth of the results obtained by the particular research design and context (Krefting, 1991). Sandelowski (1986), as cited by Krefting (1991), considers *credibility* to be a more appropriate term for qualitative research which sees truth as being subjective rather than assuming that only one reality exists to be measured. A qualitative study is credible if it can present its results in a way that other people who share that experience would recognize the descriptions. Rather than external validity, which refers to how generalizable findings are to larger populations, *transferability* fits better with qualitative research as there is no inherent intent to generalize findings. Transferability refers to the ability of research findings to fit into other contexts based on how similar the situations are, and is accomplished by presenting sufficient descriptions to allow for that comparison to be made by the reader. For results to be reliable, it should be possible to consistently replicate them is subsequent studies; however, because qualitative research expects variability, *dependability* (i.e., variability that can be ascribed to identifiable sources) is a more appropriate term. Finally, while objectivity and freedom from

researcher bias is a goal in quantitative research, qualitative researchers consider *confirmability*, which looks at neutrality of the data rather than the researcher, as being a more appropriate term.

In an effort to establish the ability to assess the trustworthiness within my own work in this study, the four criteria discussed by Krefting (1991) were addressed (i.e., credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability). In terms of credibility, a major threat to this aspect of qualitative research can be the connection between the researcher and participants if this relationship becomes too enmeshed. In order to minimize this threat, reflexivity (i.e., assessment of how the researcher's background, perceptions, and interests may influence various aspects of the research process) can be a helpful strategy (Kefting, 1991). This continuous process of introspection is seen as an integral aspect of NOI because the researcher is present and part of the co-creation of the moment when the story is being re-told (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Because of this personalization, researchers unavoidably influence how the story is presented. As recommended by Kefting (1991) I used a field journal, which is similar to a personal diary, in the form of concept maps after each interview to keep track of the logistics of the study and methods, as well as to reflect on any thoughts, feelings, ideas, and hypotheses that were generated as I came in contact with participants.

I also employed member checking to increase the credibility of this study, which is the process of bringing the research data, interpretations, and conclusions back to participants (Kefting, 1991). Participants were shown the completed first-person narratives resulting from data analysis (described in more detail below) so that they could personally confirm or dispute interpretations and assess credibility of the results (Arvay,

2002; Cano, nd; Riessman, 1993). I made a complete transcribed record of all interviews in order to help establish the ability to judge whether or not my interpretations of participants' experiences are credible; however, because narratives contain social discourses that do not always remain constant, it is possible for an individual's story to be different depending on the setting in which the story is told (Riessman, 1993). Interviews were audio taped in order to capture the entire discussion and provide complete conversations for analysis so that any responses that may have been missed during the interview were caught when listening to the recording during transcription (Hancock, 1998). Finally in this regard, I had the primary supervisor of this research study, who has extensive experience with qualitative methodology, continuously reviewing my research process and findings.

To address transferability of the findings in this study, I have provided as much information about the participants' experiences and the context of the research as is possible and relevant in order to allow readers to assess for themselves whether the findings are indeed transferable (Kefting, 1991). For dependability (i.e., consistency of findings), it can be helpful to have another researcher, or the primary supervisor in the case of this study, audit the research and see if he/she can clearly follow the steps in decision-making that I have made. Similarly, colleagues and research supervisors were used to check the research plan, a process referred to as auditing, in order to establish dependability as well as confirmability. Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited by Kefting (1991), identified a number of types of records that could be used in the auditing process (e.g., field notes, thematic categories and interpretations, process notes, data reduction and analysis products, etc). Reflexive analysis, as described above to increase

researcher's awareness around his or her influence on the data, was done to also help address issues related to confirmability.

A primary assumption under this research design is that any interpretations of data are a joint product of both the participant who supplies the data and the researcher involved in analyzing that data (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). In order to assist in keeping the interpretations as close to the original source as possible, any themes that I found myself pulling from the interviews were related to the specific examples of data sources (i.e., quotes gathered from participants during interviews) from which the interpretation was based on (Gall et al, 2005). Literature reviews also helped guide how I made sense of responses within the wider research area; however, a personal narrative is not meant to be representative of the objective reality surrounding an experience because this objective "truth" is not what narrative interviews aim to discover, and any "facts" are products of interpretation from the particular points-of-view involved in the co-creation (Riessman, 1993).

Participants

My intention in this study was to keep the sample as unrestricted as possible due to its preliminary nature in exploring a relatively unknown aspect of military family life. The population group I was most interested in was parents who have served in the military and who felt that they experienced having to balance their work and parenting roles. The specifics of any successes, challenges, as well as impact of one role on another were discovered during the study itself and not established *a priori* in terms of study inclusion criteria. I was simply looking for people who are currently parenting in some capacity and who are veterans; that is, not currently active in their military service.

In terms of what defined a parent for participation in this study, I considered parents to be cohabiting couples in intact marriages or common-law relationships who are the primary and secondary caregivers of their child(ren). I thought it best to limit participation to people who had children while they were actively serving in the military as the lifestyle of being in the military is very different from being of civilian or veteran status (Park, 2008). Additionally, participants needed to have an adequate sample of their own parenting to be able to reflect on how their parenting might have been impacted by their experience of their military involvement. To this end, I established the necessity for participants to have at least one child who is currently 5 years of age or older. This ensured that parents have had at least five years of parenting experience that includes multiple stages of child development and different demands of parents (Brush, 2000-2009). There was no intention to impose an upper limit on the current age of the child(ren) as my intent was to explore how parents in general balanced their roles as parents with their roles within the military. This aim would be satisfied so long as participants had dependent children during the time of their military service.

I kept participation open to veterans regardless of their experience in combat situations because I believed that it would have been unnecessarily restrictive if participation in the study was contingent on having experienced combat. That would have potentially restricted me to a population that is less likely to participate in research. Participation would also have been unnecessarily limited if I had restricted it to those who have worked in one specific division of the Canadian military (e.g., only army personnel) because of the commonalities that exist between all divisions, such as similar training programs (DND, 2008). Therefore, participation was open to all branches of the

Canadian Forces. While there are differences between commissioned and non-commissioned officers, such as education and pay, this was also not a participation restriction that was deemed necessary to make for the purposes of this study.

In order to select a sample of participants for this study, I approached veterans in the area of Victoria, British Columbia through local branches of the Royal Canadian Legion (e.g., No. 172, Esquimalt branch; No. 292, Trafalgar/Pro Patria branch; and No. 54, Sooke branch). These legions reportedly serve "veterans, ex-service personnel and their families as well as seniors and youth" (Royal Canadian Legion, nd). I therefore expected that, with the assistance of this study's primary supervisor who has been extensively involved with the veteran community for the last 10 years, there would be the potential to obtain a sample from which readers could decide if the findings in this study are reasonably transferrable to other members of this population.

In terms of sample size, I originally intended to recruit five individuals between January and February 2010 to participate in this study, which is a reasonable sample size in studies such as this one involving exploratory qualitative analyses (Creswell, 1994). In order to increase interest and participation, I worked to be accommodating in terms of where interviews take place (e.g., at the participant's home vs. the University of Victoria's campus), and when interview times are scheduled. Twelve individuals in total (11 men, and 1 woman) contacted me expressing interest in participating. Six of these twelve individuals were not eligible to participate for the following reasons: three lived too far away for me to engage in an interview with them, one was currently still active in the Canadian Forces, and two were not able to be contacted. I interviewed an additional male veteran but was not able to include his narrative in the final report as I discovered

during the interview that his first child was born only a few months before he retired from the military. He subsequently could not reflect upon his experience of the research question. This left five veterans who fit this study's participation criteria and who engaged in the interview process. I asked each of the five participants basic demographic information , which is summarized in Table 2.

Interview Procedures

The procedures used in this study were approved by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board before I engaged in any attempts to recruit participants. Potential participants were informed about this study by third party contacts of my primary supervisor. They were given information regarding how to contact the primary researcher if they were interested in participating. I scheduled interview times and locations at participants' convenience once they initiated contact with me. Participants then took part in qualitative, in-person interviews which lasted between one and two hours. Four of these interviews were held in the participants' place of residence at their request and one was held at the University of Victoria. Participants were seen separately with the exception of one interview where the participant's spouse sat in on the interview and offered her perspective at times; however, only the participant's voiced experiences were included in the narrative presented in this study. During the interviews, participants indicated their consent to participate in the first and follow-up interview sessions (see Appendix B), which were audio-taped for the purposes of subsequent transcription. As participants did not express a preference for any particular name, I chose pseudonyms for them that were used throughout the interview.

During the interviews themselves, I asked participants to start their stories of

Table 2

Summary of Participant Demographic Information

	Cliff	Bryan	Don	Craig	Andrew
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	49	65	73	51	60
Number of Children	4	2	2	1	1
Years in the Armed Forces	9	35	24	17	37
Dates Served	1982-1991	1961-1996	1956-1980	1977-1990	1972-2009
Branch of the Armed Forces	Army	Army	Navy	Army	Army
Job Position	Comm	Comm	Chief Engineer	Comm	Comm
Rank upon Retirement	Corporal	Master Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer	Master Corporeal	Chief Warrant Officer
Times/Number of Years Deployed	20+ times	150+ times	100+ times	4 years	100+ times
Examples of Places Deployed	Halifax Kingston Japan Norway Alert Bay Middle East	Germany Middle East Golan Heights	Singapore Thailand Samoa Azores Iceland Brazil Uruguay	Europe Golan Heights	Cyprus Europe Golan Heights
PTSD Diagnosis	Yes	No	No	No	No

Note. Comm = Communications

balancing parent with military roles wherever they felt right to began, asked follow-up questions and prompts as necessary throughout their tellings of their stories (see Appendix A for sample questions). The interview was determined to be over when the participant answered "yes" to my questions of: "Now that we have had some time to talk, have you told me your story? Do I know everything you want me to know so that this story feels finished to you?" Following this confirmation of the story being finished, I asked questions about basic demographic and background information (see Appendix A for sample questions) in a semi-structured format that allowed for open-ended responses. This was instead of using a formal questionnaire in order to keep with the narrative framework being used in this study. I then informed participants that I would be e-mailing them the completed 1st person interviews (described in more detail below) to give them the opportunity to view my interpretation of the interview and to make any alterations that they thought were necessary (process is described in more detail below). All audiotapes and hard data were labelled with participants' chosen pseudonym and kept confidential without any personally identifying information. Audiotapes were erased as soon as transcription and analysis procedures were completed. All audiotapes, interview notes, and signed consent forms were kept in a locked and secure location.

Interview Analysis Procedures

The intent of narrative analysis is to see how participants order their experiences; to make sense of events and actions in their lives" (Riessman, 1993). This approach to analysis examines the story being told in terms of how it is put together (e.g., language used), and why the story might have been told in that particular manner. According to Riessman, interpretation is inevitable because narratives represent a version of the entire

experience through the particular aspects of the experience included in the story, how events are related, and what the meaning of those events were to the story-teller. Additionally, interpretation also depends on having awareness that answers are really responses to how the participant interpreted the questions asked, rather than responses to the original questions themselves (Mischler, 1986). Mischler cautioned that participants can learn what is desired in terms of their answers (e.g., response length and depth) based on how they see interviewers responding to the answers they give.

In terms of analyzing and reporting data in the context of my work, I have no intention of asserting that I reported a completely objective perspective of participants' experiences; rather, I acknowledge that how I described participants' experiences reflects my constructions of their stories and that readers will also form their own constructions of these stories. Researchers can not directly access someone's experience; we are only given representations of the experience presented to us in by way of interaction which leads to an interpretation on the part of the listener (Riessman, 1993). It is also not possible for researchers to remain entirely neutral and objective as they necessarily interpret the world they are exposed to, just as participants do; however, the interview and analysis procedures I have used in this study were intended to provide a structure that enables a sense of trustworthiness within my work. This structure was based on the six stages of Arvay's (2002) Collaborative Narrative Method: 1) Setting the Stage; 2) Performance; 3) Transcription; 4) Four Interpretive Readings; 5) Writing the Narrative; and 6) Sharing the Story.

In the first stage of this process, the primary researcher meets with participants in order to develop rapport, starts a dialogue about the research question, explains the

overall process of the study, describes respective roles and responsibilities, describes his/her own values about the relationship with participants (i.e., participants are seen as co-researchers), and explains the general philosophical foundation of the narrative research design (Arvay, 2002). Arvay asserted that this beginning step is integral in creating the rapport necessary to facilitate subsequent interpretation of interview transcripts.

The interview itself is the second stage (i.e., Performance), and occurs under the assumption that participants are co-investigators or co-actors in the research, rather than individuals who are simply answering questions asked of them. Researchers using this approach need to hold "dual consciousness". This means that they are engaged at both an experiential level as they participate directly in the interview, as well as a reflexive level as they reflect on their experiences as they occur; a process that counsellors engage in frequently throughout sessions with clients.

Transcriptions of the audio-taped interviews comprise the third stage of this process, using a coding method intended to represent the variety of aspects that comprise verbal and non-verbal communication that occur during interactions. Transcriptions themselves are an interpretive process as each researcher makes choices about whether and what to transcribe, as well as how to represent it (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). As per Arvay (2002), the first transcription of each interview in this study is a rough draft that attempts to record all aspects of speech produced during the interview (e.g., laughter, pauses and silences, crying, tone of voice, etc.), and includes anything that may not have been apparent from the audio-tape but that had been recorded in note-form during the interview (e.g., body language, facial expression, movement, etc) in brackets throughout

the text. As tempo and pauses are also important during analysis, speech tempo is shown by putting together highly condensed phrases without spaces between the words, and pauses are approximated by placing one dot for roughly each ½-second pause (Labov & Fanshell, 1977). The final task for transcription is to identify "narrative episodes" (i.e., stories within the larger story), and place these in order to facilitate understand the temporal sequencing of the story line (i.e., 1st Interpretive Reading; Arvay, 2002). The goal of transcription is not to represent the objective reality of the interview, as the process of transcription is partial in nature where certain aspects of speech are included while others are excluded (Mishler, 1986); rather it is an interpretive practice intended to represent our experiences (Riessman, 1992)

The fourth stage involves four interpretive readings of the transcription. The first reading is for content. Because people do not generally relate the stories of their experiences with a beginning, middle, and end, the transcript is organized into a coherent story line with events placed into temporal order. The second reading is to determine "I" positions, which means looking for who is telling the story, and how the narrator situates or presents him/herself in the story. The third reading is done specifically looking for answers to the primary research question posed in this study of how do veterans story their experiences of trying to balance their military and parental roles. The fourth reading is a critical reading intended to facilitate reflexivity whereby any questions, thoughts, and reactions that I experienced as a researcher from reading the transcripts can be acknowledged.

The fifth stage is "Writing the Narrative" and stems from the previously discussed four interpretive readings. The first step in this is to develop clarity on each of the four

interpretive readings, devise a plot line by placing the episodes in order, and then summarize the readings into one text written from a first-person perspective which is a literary devise to help bring life back into the story. It is acknowledged that the stories are not necessarily going to have a clear plotline which builds to a point of crisis and has a sense of closure at the ends. It is more likely that there will be unresolved and contradictory issues indicative of a "real life in process" (Arvay, 2002).

The sixth and final stage is to share the stories (i.e., the completed first-person narratives) with each of the respective co-researchers. This sharing provides them with the opportunity to make any changes or additions that they think would make their stories more fitting with their experiences. Allowing for this space also helps equalize the power that unavoidably exists between researchers and participants. In the case of my work in this study, when I received the first-person narratives from participants the majority of the changes made to my original documents were around factual details (e.g., the number of years the family lived in one city) and speech presentation (e.g., changing "gotta" to "got to"); however, for the most part participants just gave their approval of the narrative as it was written (e.g., "I feel it is pretty good the way it is"; "Everything looks good the way you wrote it up").

Researcher Process During and Following Interviews

As previously mentioned, a primary assertion under using NOI as a research design is that the interviewer is an active part of how the interviewee's story is constructed in that moment it is being told (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). Because of this, engaging in reflexivity throughout the interview and analysis process was an important part of my process as a researcher under this design. While I was engaged in

the interviews themselves, I regularly checked in with how I was responding in the moment to the person I was interviewing (e.g., thoughts, reactions, feelings, questions) and recorded these responses as soon as was possible after the interview was over in the form of a concept map. This preceded and was in addition to the 4th interpretive reading in Arvay's (2002) 4th stage, in which I expanded on the original concept maps and included any further reactions that came up during the transcription and analysis process. All of these steps facilitated discussions with my primary supervisor regarding how I as researcher might have influenced how the stories were represented.

Chapter Summary

The primary focus in this chapter was to increase the reader's awareness around the research design I used in this study to ground my work. I provided an explanation of the nature, theory, and assumptions of a narrative approach to research, as well as how I structured interviews so that they reflected this approach. I discussed potential issues around the trustworthiness of my work, as well as the strategies I used to minimize these issues. I described the participant selection and recruitment methods I adopted, and concluded this chapter with a section on interview analysis procedures.

In the next chapter, the reader will find the stories co-constructed from my interviews with the five individuals who participated in this study. These stories will be presented in the form of the 1st person narrative in line with the fifth stage in Arvay's (2002) Collaborative Narrative Method as outlined above.

Results

Chapter Introduction

This chapter will consist of the five different stories of balancing parental and military career roles as created in the fifth stage of Arvay's (2002) Collaborative Narrative Method. Each of the narratives presented in this chapter followed the four interpretive readings as described in the preceding chapter, and have all been edited and approved by the veterans who participated in this study. All names included in each narrative have been changed in order to protect the confidentiality of the veterans and their families.

1st Person Narratives: Stories of Balance

Cliff

It's hard, you know...trying to be a parent when you're in the military. It's hard because you're not there all the time. And balance? Yeah, there is no balance. Try banging your head on a wall. It feels like that a lot of the time. For the first five years of marriage I was only home about 11 months or so. I joined in '82 and got married to Denise in '84. We had a little one on the way at that point. You know, you miss a lot and you're not there for the activities the kids want to do. When you come home, you want to do things with them but then you find out they're already doing things, so the time isn't there that you'd like to spend with them. You come home and see how small your little ones are, and next time you see them they've grown about a foot! Or, you'll watch your kids call anyone in a green uniform "Daddy!" because they don't recognize the face. They just recognize the uniform, but they don't recognize the face, you know. Ripped my heart out. I was everywhere in the world, except at home. So, it's hard at times. You

don't always have a phone when you're away and mail didn't always get to where you were.

You miss a lot of first things...stuff like that. Hated that. When I was home I think I was a fairly good parent, but like I said, I wasn't there enough. Didn't really have a chance. At the same time though, it's your job to go away. You know, you gotta do it. It's part of why you joined up. You've got to go where you've got to go. It's something you know when you sign the line. And I was proud of my work. You know, I enjoyed it. I just didn't expect to have to go away as much as I did. Exercises and other things going on would come up and they'd need somebody, and you're it. So you pack up and leave in 24 hours sometimes. Sometimes you had lots of notice and other times you didn't.

And it was difficult coming back because Denise would have things set up the way she wanted, and if I tried to change that there'd be a scuffle. I'd come home and end up messing it up. You know, things that I thought or assumed ran a certain way didn't, like the schedules and routines that they had. Couldn't seem to keep up. It'd cause conflict between me Denise, and with the kids too because let's say that I told my boy Jake to take out the garbage. Well, they had certain rules and certain jobs that they'd do. Things that Denise had set things up that I didn't know about. So, I'd sit there thinking, "why isn't he doing this?" It didn't seem like a big thing to me. And I'm just sitting there and the kids would just say "no", but they wouldn't tell me anything else. Like, that it's not Jake's night to take the garbage out and it's actually someone else's turn. But they wouldn't tell me that. They'd just say "no" and that'd piss me off. You don't say "no" to me; that's unacceptable. It's just a chore, you know. It's not like it's the end of the world. So I'd take a step back, feeling like a third foot or something, and wonder what the

heck's going on here...and that would just lead to arguments. Then Denise would speak up and say "it's not his night". Ok. Well, why didn't someone just tell me that? You know, give me a copy of whose schedule it is so I know what's going on. I could see it was hard on the kids too, you know. They'd be looking at each other going, "do I do this or don't I?" They'd want to make me happy but at the same time didn't want to piss their mother off, so what do they do? They'd get stuck in the middle and it was confusing for them too. It got worse as they got older. The rules were set and trying to change things just made more conflict.

It was like I could never keep up with what was going on at home. Always seemed a few steps behind everything and could never seem to find a fit with everyone else. I'd buy gifts in other countries when I was away; things that I thought the kids would have liked. I'd get home and give it to them, and they'd tell me they don't like those things anymore. They haven't liked them in five months. So, yeah. It's hard to be the parent because things change and you don't catch up. I'd try to ask what the latest trend was before I even came home, just trying to find out what's going on now. Didn't always work though. Like my young guy Bryan for instance; I went away for seven months, and when I came back all the things that he liked doing were a hundred percent different. He had quit all the sports he'd been in, but he used to like going to the gym with me so I'd tell him I'd take him there and Denise would pipe in and say that he doesn't do that anymore either. Same with shooting and fishing with my daughter Jenny. Denise would curtail that too. So it was hard.

You know, it's hard to adapt your parenting skills because a lot of the time when you come home you just sit on the back burner and just let things go on the way they

were. You're there, but at the same time, you're not. You'll take them to whatever thing they're doing that day and you'll show interest and ask how it went after, but that's about the extent of it. You've got no true input in what's going on or get any real feedback from them. You know, they'll answer "yeah, this class went good" or "this went good" or whatever. You'll get an answer to your question of "how was it today". You'll sit there and watch a game and tell them "good game"...but it doesn't go any farther than that. They don't really see you as being...they know that you're "Dad"; they know you're the father, but at the same time you just don't get the true bonding and interacting that you would if you were there full time.

There was a difference every time I came home too, so you'd start basically from square one again. Every time you came back they'd be different, but it would never go back to anything you'd seen before. Chores would stay pretty much the same, but you want to interact with what they're doing and can't because you can't keep up with what they're doing and what they're interested in. If you don't have a static posting you just miss too much and it makes it harder on you. And I'm not stupid either. I quit school in grade 7, worked for a couple of years and then decided that school was important when I was 15 so I finished my grades 10, 11, and 12 in one year. You know, lot of us in the military are not stupid, but at the same time we're not that smart that we can always figure out how to adapt to that. Don't think too many people could.

I thought me and Denise did good...but I guess we didn't. You know, we were together until '93. We'd been together almost 10 years. I think sometimes that you shouldn't get married in the military. You can end up growing separate. The more I came home or went away, the more things changed; or for her they did anyway. I didn't seem

to change much because in the third world, I didn't have much else to draw up my mind and change me so I stayed pretty much the same. What you see is what you get. With Denise and the kids though, they were different people every time.

The military can be a good career, depending on your trade and what your job is. If you're in a static posting and are going to be in the same base for 6 or 7 years and you're not going away, then it can be a good thing being a parent and having this type of job. If you're in a field trade, one that has to travel, it's going to be a lot harder because you're just gone too often. It's hard to be a parent in that case, and hard to be a mate to somebody because they change and you change. Your goals aren't necessarily the same anymore. And that's the same with your kids. They think one thing when you're home and the next time you're home that thought's not there anymore. And, yeah, being in the military helps you learn how to adapt to a lot of things, but it doesn't work at home when the kids are always changing on you. Try to figure that one out. I wish I could have been able to keep up, but I just couldn't.

If you're going to get married, you and your partner both have to be strong with the idea that you might be spending a lot of time away, and there has to be enough communication that when you do come home, you know what's going on and you're not stepping on any toes around how things are run in the home. If you don't have kids? I'd say wait until you're far enough in your career that you can get a static posting, because if you have kids right from the get go? I think you're setting yourself up to shoot yourself in the foot. Like I said, you'll be banging your head on the wall at times in frustration because you feel like you're inadequate and not working right.

You know, I just wanted to spend time with them. Take them to any activities they were in. Teach them basic rules and what's right and wrong. Just try to give them the right ideas in life. And yeah, I know that me telling them "no" doesn't mean they're not going to go out and try it anyway, like sneaking out of the house and stuff like that. They all got caught. I did that too, you know. I'd tell them, this isn't something new; it's been done by kids for years. We've all done it, so you're busted. I don't think it was a parenting skill issue for me...it was the way the situation was when you used your parenting skills. I had a connection with them though. I remember, showing them how to work on the vehicles I had. I'm pretty good at stuff like that, and they'd ask me to show them how too. I had my bike and a car, and I'd show the kids how to do what I was doing. The next time I was home they'd remember how to do it and give me a hand. You'd hand them the tools and they'd work with you. They'd hesitate a bit at first, but they'd remember. That was some of the good times with them.

When I came home, I'd just sit there and ask them what's new and exciting. What's going on. And I'd listen to them give me all the info. I'd just let them all babble on and on until they were done, and then try to remember it all because you love your kids and want to be there for them. But like I said, that would all change and be different again when I came home the next time so I'd have to do it all over again. I'd spend as much time with them as I could. If they weren't up to anything, I'd get them to help me on my bike. Get an ice cream or something. You know, take them to the store with me. But it was hard. There's only so many hours in the day and you're trying to interact with all 5 of them. I think I did alright though. I mean, I'm still talking to them and they're still talking to me, and that's gotta be a good thing!

Bryan

So, you want to know about being a military parent? Well, I would say that right from the beginning we weren't typical military parents. Emma and I married in Germany and had our first son Josh there while I was in the forces. The military was normally good with births. I should have been on exercise but because Emma was due with Josh, they let me stay behind and so I was there for the birth. But right from the birth it started off a bit atypical because Josh was born in a German hospital rather than a Canadian forces hospital. Also, rather than living in military quarters we lived on the economy, which was what we called the civilian accommodations. I think Emma and I came to an understanding right from day one what military life was like. We knew that it can sometimes be a very hard life, and not just in the field units but even in the static units when work pressure gets to you. I was in field postings the whole 11 years that I spent in Germany. Once we got settled though, it was basically the same routine where you'd spend 3 to 4 months a year out on exercises and training, away from your family. It'd be broken down though and you wouldn't often spend all that time away all at once.

Emma and I came to an agreement that we would like to bring up our children not directly in the military environment but indirectly. We figured it would be best for the children to mix in a more normal society rather than only a military society because if you're in the married quarters, then you're living in a military society where people are all roughly the same age and same upbringing. If you live, as they say in the military, in the economy then you're mixing with different people; older people, younger people, different professions. I think living off-base took off a lot of the pressure if you were having pressure at work. And in the military there quite often is a lot of pressure, so it's

nice to get away from it. If you live in married quarters you're spending your day at work and spending your off hours in a military environment too, even though it's technically the family environment. So we figured right from the start whenever possible we would rather live on the economy than married quarters, which was the best thing for us. Give the kids a regular variety of life to experience. And in the long run you could see that your military career would come to an end. If you spent your whole career living in military quarters and working in the military every day, when your career came to an end there was a bigger break than if you had lived on the economy. And with us living on the economy, we bought property from the beginning and upgraded as we went along so we had something to go to when I retired which was really important to us. We didn't have to start all over again from nothing and we were able to have a home that was ours all along the way.

When we moved back to Canada, Emma, Josh and I were in military quarters in Edmonton for a time and then we went out on our own and bought a house. So, again we weren't in military quarters for very long. Like I said, it was really important to both of us that we have our family time separate from the military. We were living near Edmonton when we had our second son Adam, and soon after that I did a tour for the UN in the Golan Heights so I sort of missed that whole spurt period for both of the kids. Once in the 6 months tour though, you were allowed 2 weeks leave and if you were married you could go from the Golan Heights to Germany and meet your wife there. They would fly her over from Canada and we'd spend almost the full 2 weeks together. With travelling time it'd work out to about 10 – 12 days, which was great for us because Emma had her family in Germany and I got to spend some time with them.

I think the hardest part was this UN posting ‘cause I was away so much. Josh was 3 or 4 and Adam was just a little guy, so I missed that whole growing up period. Missed a lot of what they were doing at the time. And because you’re away in basically an all man atmosphere and you’re working under pressure, you sort of get used to that environment which is not exactly a family-oriented place to be. Then when you come back to your family you have to get used to being with your family again. And it was a slow process sometimes, fitting back in. I think it took a couple of weeks for me. And it was a big shock in some ways because you’d been in this...segregated environment for 6 months, over 6 months really, and you’d come back, be happy to be back, but things are different. It takes you awhile to get back into the rhythm.

I had no worries about my family while I was gone because I knew that the military community would be there to help Emma out if she got into problems. But...like I said, the hardest part for me was being away for that length of time because I just really missed them. I missed being around them. When you’re in a field unit, you’re always out exercising or training for up to 4 months out of the year; but even when you’re in a static unit, you’re still going away on courses. So you’re always going away, which is hard because you’d just get used to being home and then you’d have to go. I think the kids got used to the fact that I would be going away at some point or another, but it wasn’t good for me to be away so much. I missed a lot of what was going on, and then Emma has to become both mother and father when I wasn’t there. I really looked forward to coming home; getting back to my family and getting back into that routine, especially with the kids. That was a good thing for me. And I think they were always looking forward to me coming home too.

The kids would be interested in some of the trips I was on so they'd ask me about where I'd been and what I'd been doing. Like, in Germany it was quite different on a NATO exercise than anything you'd see in Canada so I'd tell the kids about some of my experiences. Quite often you would wind up in a German town with your truck all camouflaged up, and next door to you might be a tank or a self-propelled Howitzer. And that in a town! Can you imagine that in Canada? Like, at 3 o'clock in the morning you wake up and there's a tank in your driveway? Those are the types of stories I'd tell the kids and they just found it fascinating. I'd always save some of my hard rations and bring them home for the kids too. It was so funny to watch how excited they'd get as they opened it all up and see what was in there. They just loved it! These were some of the things I'd do when I was home to help them stay connected with me, especially since I was away so much.

When I came back from the Golan Heights, we figured that we'd be able to settle in and have more of a normal family life, but I was only back to work for a couple weeks when I was posted back to Germany again. So, with two young children we went to Lars, Germany and that was the longest time we spent in military quarters. Four years I believe. And that was definitely a challenging experience. It was far more stressful than our last time there because the building we lived in had 20 families in it. And it was a 5 story building with 4 apartments on each floor so you can imagine the chaos in that place. I remember the whole centre of the building was hollow. Almost reminds me of some of the old prison movies. It was stressful because you had a different mix of cultures which sometimes clashed. Made it difficult for our family to keep on doing things the way we were used to when we were on our own. Like at Christmas time especially. To us it was a

quiet family time and you spent the time together. But for some of the other people, well they'd go out and party. That's what happens when you have 20 families in the same building. It made it a lot harder for me to really leave work behind when I was at home, so balance really didn't happen for me in that time. Especially since I was often responsible for making sure all the families were taking turns looking after the common areas and such.

It was really hard to have a balance between work and my family when we were living in military quarters, so one of the things we did to get some family time separate from the military was to buy a trailer, and that really helped. We put it in a German trailer park and in the summer when we had long weekends or spare time, we'd go down and spend the time in the trailer. The park had a swimming pool and all that so the kids could mix with a lot of German people. It was great 'cause we could go there to get away from the military environment. Same thing as when we visited Emma's parents in Germany. That was a nice break for us too and it kept the family in contact. I have a lot of really good memories from that time. We'd take the trailer and go to the French Riviera as well. Did that 2 or 3 years in a row, and the boys loved it because the camping area we were in was only a short walk to the beach. Believe it or not there was a French hotdog stand where they'd give you the French baguette, cut it into sections about a foot long, hollow it out, and stick the wiener in the centre! The kids just loved it. And then I got to spend quality time with my family too, away from the pressure of military life. Just tried to have about as normal a life as we could under the circumstances.

Then in '82 we went from Germany to Chilliwack and stayed there until '88. And I was away for a year there too, so having to leave my family didn't stop. I was in

Victoria on a French language course during the week, but it wasn't so bad because I could come back on weekends and have more of a consistent presence than in previous postings. Because I spent so much time away, the biggest thing I could do to stay connected with my family was to try to dig in and get involved as much as possible when I was home, especially with the kids. The whole family really, but the kids in particular. My sons wanted to go into Cubs when we lived in Chilliwack, so I became a leader. I was a Cub leader there for 6 years. The military was good that way in letting us go to scouting leadership courses if you put in a letter requesting time off to attend. Same as when the kids wanted to play soccer of baseball, as quite often the team would be short of coaches so I'd become an assistant coach and help out. Kids were Emma's and my top priority. I didn't have that much money to throw around because I was an enlisted man, not an officer. But we tried to do as much as was possible, like when we were in Chilliwack we made a big deal of driving all the way down to Anaheim and spending a couple of days there going to Disneyland. The kids loved that. Even in Germany, quite often we used to go to what we called a gastoff? It's just like a pub in Canada. We'd go there to have a meal together.

You know, I don't know if you'd call them traditions, but something that was really important to us and that helped with this balance was that we'd always try to eat together as a family, especially on weekends. We had family meals where we all expected to sit down and have a complete meal together, and on Sundays we had a more formal dinner. That's the way it always was. And we'd try to treat the kids as much as we could when I was home. I'll always remember when we were in Edmonton the kids

would love to go to Dairy Queen for a hotdog and a soft ice cream. That was a special treat and they loved it. Stuff like that. They'd look forward to that when I came home.

I think balancing my work with my family was a lot easier when the boys were younger, because probably the hardest thing about bringing up kids in the military was every so many years you had to pull up roots and move. The younger the kids were the easier this was. As they got older they started making friends and moves became more difficult, especially when they started getting into their teens. It's hard to leave your friends and go to another area and make new friends. We'd just tried to be there for them. Explain that we had to go to a new area, and that we know it's not nice to leave your friends behind but that they would meet new friends and there would be new interests where we were going. Wherever possible we tried to make the move exciting. Like, if you're moving across Canada, the military gave you so much money and so many days of travelling time. We'd try to stay in the best motels that we could afford and make an experience for the kids of going out to McDonalds for lunch and stuff like that.

If I were to advise anybody in the military now, I would say that the military is going to be your career, but not 24 hours a day. If possible and if you're going to raise a family, live on the economy because if you mix your 8 hour a day job with your family life then you become too military. And I enjoyed the military but like I said, I wouldn't want to raise my family in a total military environment. I mean, my family was used to the military. We accepted that I was in the military and accepted that I would go away. But, outside of the 8 hour work day, as much as was possible, we tried to make what we would consider to be a normal family life.

Andrew

Well, when I joined the military in 1972, it was quite a bit different than it was today. I spent a lot of time away from home. I was away for quite a bit of the up-bringing of our daughter Janine to tell you the truth, especially the first ten years or so. I think I was probably away from home about 200 days a year and that meant a lot of the burden was placed on my wife Kathy in bringing up Janine. We had her three years after I joined the military, and she was barely a year old when I was sent to Cyprus for six months. I changed a lot while I was away on that trip, mostly my physical appearance, 'cause I'd put on a few pounds that I probably shouldn't have! But she didn't really recognize me at first? My daughter didn't recognize me when I first came home, and that was a tough thing for me. She was so young when I left and it took a month or so before she realised, yeah, I belong in the house. The problem was I didn't look exactly as I did when I left, but once I got back into more physical activities and lost the weight again it was ok. That's probably the worst part for the children...me being away a lot. I went away so often that going away for the four, five, six weeks on exercises that we did was, basically nothing. That's just what you were used to doing. It was the longer, six-month deployments that were a lot harder. I was probably a part-time parent more than a parent, because I was away more than I was home.

There was worry too when I was away, more so on Kathy's part for me 'cause we weren't always safe when we went away and she was fairly safe back here in Canada. I thought about them all the time when I was away though. You know, are they getting along alright? Are there any problems? 'Cause a lot of the time, the wives wouldn't mention a lot of the stuff that was going on at home, like, if something was wrong. They

wouldn't mention it because they didn't want to worry us being away. And probably vice versa too when I think of it. There's a lot of stuff going on over there that didn't hit the news that we probably didn't tell our wives about because they'd just worry about it. You just had to do it that way, and when I got back together with Kathy after the six months, you'd say "well, I didn't tell you this because you'd just worry about it..." Stuff like that. You'd have your connection afterwards but not while you were gone because there's nothing you can do. Back then, it just wasn't as easy to get home as it is today. Like, today, you can pretty well get anywhere in the world in 24 hours, so if something was serious enough? The military gets you back home pretty quick today. It just wasn't possible back then. A lot of the time there was only one, maybe two flights a week into the country that would get you out.

We were living away from the base, more or less in the civilian population. And, uh, that was hard for Janine. A lot of the kids she was friends with didn't understand that I was coming back when I left. There were a lot of separations and divorces and the kids kept telling her that when I was gone, I wasn't coming back. It just wasn't feasible for them to think that the military was different from what they were used to. People were just gone for a long time, but they came back. I remember this one time when I came home on a break during a six-month stay Cyprus; Janine was a young teen at this time I think, and she and her mother picked me up from the airport. The first place I had to go was her school, because her schoolmates were saying I wasn't coming back. Before I even when home I went to the school. When we dropped her off, she brought her whole class out and said "see, I told you he was coming home". That was the first thing she wanted to do, and it had to be real tough on her at school to do something that drastic. I

mean, I was flying for probably 36 hours here there and everywhere to get home. I was absolutely exhausted, but first thing, I go to the school. But you do what you have to do when you love your kids, and they left her alone after that about me not coming home.

I would say I was a good parent when I was home, I mean, I did probably everything Kathy did. Probably a bit more actually because I thought that I had to give her a bit of a break while I was home. She basically ran the house and brought up Janine. She had to look after it all. And I was still working when I was home, but I just tried to give her a bit of a break in the evenings and stuff like that. When Janine was younger I'd spend a lot of time helping her with the homework, reading to her at night and stuff. I'd probably make an extra effort with her when I was home to make up for being away so much. She was probably the typical girl growing up. She did the figure skating, the swimming, the Girl Guides, tried karate. Never stayed in anything, more than probably a year though! But we would try to get out to the activities she was involved in when I was home. We would make sure we'd get to the school functions. We always had some time off when we got home so I was able to spend a lot of time with my family. Normally if you go on one of the long deployments you've got two or three weeks where you've gone some true family time when you get back.

I think, um, with trying to work out a balance between work and my family? I probably tried to make up for me being away a little too much. Kind of spoiled Janine! I'd buy her little extra things that maybe I shouldn't have bought. And then when I did go away again, Kathy would have a little bit more of a problem getting her back under control. I guess Janine would say things like "Daddy wouldn't have done this to me but you are!" You know, that kind of attitude. Kathy was the one who did most of the talking

to Janine. Probably the tougher questions and stuff, she always went to Mummy because she was the one that was there 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I wasn't. So, even if I was only gone a day or two, if I came home and Janine got to me before Kathy about something? I would say "wait until your mom gets home". Because she would ask me something that I wasn't sure what Kathy would do about it? Little things, like when she was 15 or 16, she'd ask me if she could go to a party or something the minute I'd walk in the door. I'd find out later, when Kathy walked in the door that she'd already said "no"! So, little stuff like that that she'd probably try to get away with? But never did. Well, I don't think she did anyway.

Some of the more challenging times probably came later on, in her teen years because she was more involved in school activities, sports, stuff like that. And, like I said, I tried to make sure that I got to see the activities she was involved in, but it was hard sometimes, at times, it was hard to get to everything. But Kathy always went so, even if I wasn't there she was. I guess you just get used to not being able to go to everything. Like birthdays and anniversaries? Hardly ever home for them in the first 10 years. After that it got easier though, we weren't away as much and stayed home a little more, so it got a little bit easier towards the end. As I went up in rank, I deployed less so I was able to be involved a lot more of the time instead of just part of the time and that was a lot better for me, and for us as a family. Like, most of her high school and university years? I was around for most of that which was really good. It was a lot easier on both Janine and Kathy 'cause I was able to do what Kathy had been doing all the time by herself when I wasn't there. We could split the responsibilities and all the burden wasn't on one person. And I wasn't in some far away land worried about it all the time.

It takes, probably a strong woman to be a military wife, ‘cause it’s not the same as you going to work Monday to Friday and coming home every night to have supper and seeing them all the time. Because you don’t. And, when you pull up and go away for six months, they have to do everything. They have to pay the bills, look after the kids, look after the house. If something goes wrong, they have to fix it or get it fixed. You know, most of the balancing is on her shoulders, not mine so much. It was hard for me to be away from my family, but knowing Kathy and how she would handle things, I wasn’t really worried about it. Concerned, but not worried because I knew it would be handled. That was probably the biggest life-saver of the whole thing, having a strong wife that was there and knowing that things were being taken care of. I think that was the biggest thing in being able to fit right back in when I did come home.

I think generally, between the two of us, we did a pretty good job of bringing her up. But it took the two of us. I couldn’t fathom a single parent trying to do something like that. It took a lot of trust. You definitely have to have trust in the person you’re married to, and it’s gotta be both ways, totally. When we were separated, we’d come back and we’d talk a lot. Find out what’s going on and get up to speed on everything that happened while I was away. Bring up all the issues that may have happened while I was away and sort them out. I don’t know exactly how to put how I balanced it...if I had to do it all over again, I don’t think I’d do a whole lot different. I mean, I had a good career with the military and I had a good family life growing up. There were times when I thought Janine might not get to university, but eventually she got there and she’s doing well now. No, when you look back at the combination of everything that happened and the way things are today, we’re still happy. Our daughter is very happy where she is. We’ve got a

grandson and, things just turned out good. You know, there's problems along the way of course, but overall, they turned out good. It's just a strong relationship, and the bond and the trust, and everything that goes with it to make it happen.

Craig

My story about trying to balance this parenting thing when I was in the army, probably starts right from the birth of our son Ben. Before that it was just my wife and I, and it was very difficult for me when Ben came along. It was a heck of a lot easier for Sarah. She was the baby of seven kids herself and had five older sisters who all had kids way before she did. She knew how to change diapers and feed babies when she was 15. I had no idea. I had absolutely no idea what to do with Ben when he came along. I think the hardest thing for me was when he cried. I can't stand to hear a baby cry, and it doesn't really matter for what reason. It could have stubbed its toe or be hungry or have a full diaper, whatever. But you know that uncontrollable crying that babies do sometimes? Yeah, drives me right off the deep end and I have to just get the hell out of there. I don't know it if moves me or what. I think it just makes me very angry really quickly. It's like somebody taking their nails a dragging them along a chalkboard. So that was really difficult for me to adjust to, mainly because I wasn't used to being around that noise before then. Even today though, believe it or not, I have a grandson and sometimes when crying it's just about all I can do to handle the noise even though my heart goes out to him.

So anyways, Ben was born when we'd been living in Germany for two years and in the first two years after that, basically Sarah worked Saturdays through Wednesdays and I worked Mondays through Fridays. So I actually got to look after Ben on the

weekends. We kind of had our own little routine where we'd watch cartoons and stuff like that, you know, after he was nine months old. You know, it was...it was different taking care of Ben because I never had to be responsible for somebody that small and who can't do anything for themselves before. You gotta change them and make sure they eat. Entertain them more than anything really. But, you know, we got into a routine after awhile where every Saturday afternoon we'd watch a movie, then he'd go down for his nap and so would I! And that's the way it was, you know, I'd make him things to eat, we'd go for walks, play in the backyard, kick the ball around, that sort of stuff. That was after he started walking really well of course. It was a huge learning curve for me. Big time. But, you know, I got through it. That's why we only have one child though. We both decided that it wasn't worth me losing my mind over. I'm not saying I have mental issues or anything like that, it was just that one thing about babies crying that drives me crazy. You know, I don't have a problem with looking at dead bodies or decapitations or stuff like that, but babies crying just drives me off the deep end.

Anyways, this was what my time with Ben would look like when I wasn't on deployments, which actually happened pretty regularly especially in the summer. We'd have August and September concentration where we were gone for four to six weeks. Even when I was home though, I'd get yanked away for some reason or another. Like, there were times where they would like to see how many people they could call back from being off-duty on a really strange day. Friday night at seven o'clock or something like that. They'd do a complete, what we used to call a "bug-out" and they'd like to see how many people would actually respond in case there was ever a major offensive that happened. So, they'd pull stuff like that on a Friday night at seven o'clock. Sarah is

working and I'm looking after the baby, so I'd dress him up in air force blue and take him in to the base with me. I mean, we knew we weren't actually going to deploy and she was only five buildings away, so if I ever did have to deploy I could have just dropped the baby off with her. We only had the one car though, and I didn't want to have to drop Ben off when I knew it was just a stupid exercise. You don't deploy on a Friday night unless, you know, you see glowing skies.

I was army, so I was either deployed a lot or had to go to the training areas. There'd be a two week stretch here or a week stretch here where you'd go on a course. I was on one course, I think Ben wasn't even 9 months old yet, and it was a 13 week combat leader's course. For the first eight weeks I never saw them. We were confined to the barracks, which we called "C-B'd". I remember noticing a huge change in Ben during the time away 'cause I didn't see him, other than maybe a minute here and there when I caught sight of Sarah walking across the parking lot with him. But we weren't allowed to break ranks so I couldn't go see them. And that was really tough. I could see he was growing you know. His hair was getting longer. He was looking more talkative. Stuff like that.

Oh, one of the craziest things about me going away so much was that Ben used to get sick every time I left. After awhile, it was getting so bad that Sarah told me I couldn't come home if it was only for a short time and I had to leave again soon. Like, sometimes you'd get an hour off and nobody would wonder where you were? I could come home on weekends sometimes for a few hours. Sarah said that Ben was great while I was there but he got sick after I left. And every time after that, when I deployed he got sick. I'm not sure if it was kind of a response like "What, are you leaving me"? Who knows what's in

the mind of a kid, but I couldn't come home for a day and then go away again because it wasn't enough time and he'd get sick again. One time I was only going to be able to come home for a night so I had to come back when he was sleeping and wouldn't see me, and leave before he woke up the next morning so that he wouldn't know I'd been home and get sick again. That was really hard. To be that close and not be able to see him. If he knew that I wouldn't be leaving for another two, three weeks or whatever, it would be fine. And that's the way it was for a lot of the time before I got out when Ben was 8 years old.

You know, I'm sure that he loved his mother more than he loved me. When he was growing up and I was there, he'd spend most of his time with his mom and just basically acknowledged the fact that I lived. Didn't really feel that good at the time. I'm not sure if that was because I was gone a lot, but it could be. That was just kind of the way it was though. Even with Sarah. When Ben came along I became...extra. It was hard to deal with at first, but you learn to accept it and move on. You know, so you're not number one anymore. Big deal! Maybe I just grew into that acceptance after realizing that there was nothing I could do to change it.

I wasn't there a lot, but I was the enforcer. That I could do. Sarah would always use the line "You wait 'til your Dad gets home!" I could always play the bad cop and that's a lot of what I did. Believe it or not, I sometimes even did the enforcing over the phone or a radio while I was deployed. I was the communications specialist so I could have access to phone lines or radio traffic, pretty much any time to speak to him. And I did that fairly often when I was deployed for long periods of time, not always for discipline though. Ben thought that was pretty decent sometimes. That it was pretty cool

to be talking on the phone on his end, but knowing that it was going over a radio and that I'd be receiving it miles and miles and miles away. It was nice for me too, to be able to still be a parent even when I was so far away from home.

Did I mind being the enforcer? The bad cop? Well, if that's what it took to keep him in line, I was all for it. I mean, I wasn't a bad kid myself, but there were times where I didn't want to see certain, things happen to him. I didn't mind being the enforcer, but he didn't always like it of course. Haven't met a kid who enjoyed getting in trouble though! You know, being from the army side of things I used to yell and scream a lot. And sometimes that was enough just to put the fear of, we'll say God into him. And, from a discipline perspective that's the way we did it in the military too. They didn't give a shit about anybody. They had a job to do and if you didn't like it, you were history. So, by being exposed to that kind of atmosphere I guess that kind of rubbed off on me. It was about taking control and if you had to scream at somebody in front of a bunch of other people to get their ass moving, then that's what you needed to do. You had to get your task completed at all costs because at that point, it's life or death, and if you're not listening to me, then you're gonna get killed or get me killed.

I can honestly say I never beat him though. And that was really important to me, not to repeat certain things that happened when I was a kid with my own kids. I would scream at him and would be about an inch from his face and be screaming at him. I saw him looking pretty terrified at times, and it sort of made me take a step back afterwards and say, well, maybe I should adjust that tone or something which might be what I was used to in the military, but I couldn't use at home. So, another learning curve for me. But, you know, I don't think he was scared. He was more...well, I guess he might have been

scared. Not scared to disappoint me, but scared to get in trouble to the point where I'd have to deal with it. Sarah and I tried to have a team effort with parenting. If she said "no" I had to say "no". Even if I didn't want to say "no" I had to say "no" anyway. And when I wasn't there, she'd say "Wait 'til the next time I talk to your Dad. I'm gonna tell him what you did". Then the next time I was on the phone, she would tell me on the side before passing the phone over to him. So, I would just basically tell him "Look, don't do this anymore. 'Cause if you do, I'm gonna have to come home and if I have to come home, I'm going to be very, very mad". That was my balance.

And there was usually an adjustment for me when I came home too, 'cause there' be new rules or something that she'd come up with that I didn't know about so I'd have to be introduced to those. She'd have to tell me "Oh, you can't do that now" or "You can't say this now". So, it was difficult. If I was already home for five months and went away for a day or two, it's no big deal. But if I was home for three days, gone for four, back for a day, gone for five; that was very difficult. Not only to re-introduce me, but also to make me the enforcer again because for that period of time I was away, I wasn't there to do the enforcing so she had to take that role on. She would take the lead on what we would do in terms of parenting, and I was fine with that. You know, you wouldn't get a flooring estimate from somebody who did roofs. Somebody with no experience so to speak, and she had all the experience.

I really don't know how I did it, towards the end. It was just one of those things that you're thrust into and you just basically fly by the seat of your pants sometimes. I don't know how I managed it. I just did. I mean, there was a time when Ben was only at school half days, and I was going to school full-time and working for the military. When

I wasn't at school I was doing shift-work or renovating the house when I was home. So, I'd go to school from eight o'clock in the morning until 1:00, and this was high school by the way, come home, go to sleep for a couple of hours, pick Ben up from the baby sitters, take him to see my wife, and then go to work in the later afternoon. So I wasn't home very much then either, which made balancing work and familya lot more difficult.

So why did I leave the military when I was only 31? I needed to establish roots, we'll say, with my family and as an actual part of my family. 'Cause all that deploying, well it was just one of those things you did and you did it a lot. You know, the military's saying "hey, it's time to deploy". So you went. "0-Dark-Thirty" came every couple of weeks. That's what we called it by the way. The alarm went in the morning; it's dark out and it's something-thirty. Didn't matter really what time it was when it was that early. You just got yourself in gear and went. The US Marines had a really good saying: "Adapt and Overcome". So that's basically what you do at home or at work. You're thrown into a situation. You have to adapt to the situation, and you have to overcome its areas of influence we'll say. You know, you gotta do something, whether it's looking after a baby or fixing people because they've been hurt in an earthquake or something like that. You have to overcome. The nature of the job was to deploy. And it's not like I was a salesman for Dominion or something. I was serving my country.

You know, I just wanted to be a civilian when I came home after work, and in those days you couldn't be. I mean, you weren't even allowed to walk off the base in combats. You had to juggle between being a service person and, not a service person. And it was a hard juggle 'cause back then, when somebody in the army yelled, you had to jump. But I was just done with travelling and kind of pissed off at the military too. I was

doing a job that was written more for a junior corporal not a senior master corporal, and I wasn't home for any period of time longer than two months before I'd be deployed for another four weeks. I wanted to establish roots with my family. I was getting pissed off with the fact that I was deployed a lot, and then I wasn't home. I think that out of my last five years, I was home for maybe two of them.

Having an actual balance didn't really happen that much because I was essentially an absent parent. Very much absent, to the point where it was starting to bother me especially near the end. So, I guess that maybe the amount of deployment I did in that five years made it very easy for me to make the decision to finally retire from the military. And the fact that I was treated like shit for the whole year after I let them know I would be retiring. That definitely made the decision a lot more eatable 'cause I was basically throwing a career out the window, but I don't know where I would have been if I had kept on. What do I think about the experience overall? I guess it's one of them things that you have to learn to deal with. It's not always going to be pretty. Some people aren't going to be able to deal with it. I mean, I think we're still doing ok. We're gonna celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary in May, so at least we're still married! I would have been in my thirty-fourth year if I was still in the military, but who knows where else I would have been. I probably wouldn't still be married. When I sit back and think about what would have happened if I didn't get out, I wonder, would my son be an asshole? Would he be in and out of jail or whatever? Would I still be married? I don't know that. But I know that, as a result of what I did do? None of that happened. By getting out and establishing the roots, everything turned out well. He's a good kid. I've got a great grandson, a good daughter-in-law. Everything worked out well.

Don

Balancing being a parent when you're in the military? In those days we were not in the military, we were "Navy" men. Being married with a family, there was no problem really. It was fine for me, but I guess of course it was different for my wife Tessa. She has to put up with doing all those things that you would normally do if you were home. She had the children to look after all by herself, so the whole load is on her shoulders. It's quite a responsibility for the women, and Tessa is one of the ones who did extremely well at it. So it worked out fine. Our oldest son Matthew was born in July of 1962, and then Daniel was born in April, '63. Hardest part for Tessa was when we already had the one child and she was pregnant with the second, and I was posted to Halifax and ended up disappearing for 11 months. They sent me down around the end of January, and that meant I couldn't come home on leave and wasn't able to get home at Christmas time. Now this is the only time that things went wrong. A few days before I was about to leave Halifax for home I phoned to see what train they were sending me home on. It seems they had forgotten about me at the transport office. I was most upset and went to see the "Old Man" (the captain). He got me on an RCAF plane and I got home two days before Christmas. He passed away in Victoria early this year, he was a fine officer.

It was kind of a stupid thing the navy did really, but they did things like that in those days. We did ok though. When I got back, Matthew of course, he didn't recognize me. He didn't remember me, so that was hard I guess. It took awhile for him to get used to me because he'd been with his mother all the time. I was a stranger coming in the house and he'd had his mother's affections all the time I was away. So, me coming in I was sort of an intruder you might say, which wasn't that great. Imagine, feeling like an

intruder in your own home? But it didn't take long for him to come around. I guess it was about 6 weeks really before he was fine. He realized who Daddy was and what Daddy did, so it was ok. It was fine after that.

We used to go on three month cruises. Usually one big three month cruise a year, and then there were smaller ones. I don't even know anymore how many times. I've lost track of them. But you wrote lots of letters during those periods. This was in the days before internet and e-mail and all that, so you wrote letters and you wrote often. Two or three times a week actually. It wasn't as good as if I was there all the time, but it helped me have some sort of presence at home. Some sort of balance I supposed. And it was great too, 'cause when you got into port you'd have all these letters to read, and you'd have to open them in the sequence in which they were written so that they'd make sense. Towards the end they got radio communications so you could talk, you know. But, letter writing seemed much better actually. The kids were really small at the time, but we all wrote. They sent pictures and little things like that. It was really good to get those letters from them while I was away. Something that I thought was pretty important though, was I made the habit of, whenever I came back, never bringing a lot of presents home because I saw a lot of people do that and then Daddy was secondary to the trinkets he brought home. I'd bring them something very small, but nothing elaborate. And that was a good thing to do I thought. Kept them excited to see me and not just focus on the things they'd be getting.

Coming home? It was fine. You soon adapted, and the kids would tell me what they'd been doing while I was gone and what they'd like to do while I was home. The first few days after I came back were kind of hard on me and the boys though, because I

wasn't always that friendly. After spending all that time on a submarine you can imagine how I just wanted to get the heck away from human beings and just sit on a tree or something. I made sure not to be aggressive with the kids, and it didn't usually last for very long. One of the things that really helped me to have a kind of balance is that we did a lot of things together. Actually, as a family we did an awful lot of things. We used to make a lot of kites and fly kites. Matthew, Daniel, and I would sit down and put them together. We didn't go and buy a kite because where's the fun in that? We made them on the kitchen table from scratch. And that was an awful lot of fun. We made a lot of paper-mache work too, like masks, and Halloween costumes. All sorts of things really. Working together on these things helped created a close bond and we could just pick them right back up again when I came home. It helped too that when I was away Tessa would do the same things with them that I did when I was home. They would make things together too and carry on with the things that I was doing with them. There wasn't set "mom" and "dad" stuff and that was a good thing I thought. We would go camping with the tent and that was great fun.

One of the great things in those days too, was if you were a Navy non-commissioned officer you could take your sons with you on a trip so I didn't always have to leave them behind. I could be a Dad and a Navy man all at the same time, and we had a great time. I remember one time I took them to sea with me up the coast to Bella Coola on the surface ship. I have a great picture of the two boys sitting on the rock that Alexander MacKenzie chiselled his name on right where he came across Canada. And then another time, Matthew went to San Diego with me. You just had to keep them busy

and make sure they didn't get into any trouble. But they were good and behaved themselves. They wandered around and were given jobs to do.

I guess between the 3 month cruises and the shorter, maybe about one- month trips, I was gone about half the year. 6 months of the year. I know that sounds like a lot of time away, but you just adapt to it I guess. You have to have a certain mindset, and it never really bothered me too much. It never bothered Tessa that much either. She accepted it and it worked out really good. We had a very good life actually. I know it sounds odd but we never had any great calamities that I can think of. No times of panic. No problems. Everything worked. But then Tessa could have looked after anything that came up at home anyways. She quit work in December, 1961 and was a stay-at-home-mom after that so that made balancing on my part a heck of a lot easier. We knew what it was going to look like, me being in the navy. We talked about it at the very beginning and it worked out ok. I didn't worry while I was away because my wife was very capable you know. She'd cope with anything just about. There was no panics when I came home. We were both very family oriented so I think that was a reason why we didn't have some of the problems that I saw a lot of other people having in their marriages. She had a lot of the same beliefs as I do, and that was the main thing that kept things going for us. We got along together very well and had the same interests, which also really helped me to fit back in with things when I came home too. We did an awful lot together, and she wasn't just the housewife while I was the husband-wage-earner either. I helped out and we worked together on just about everything.

I mean it...I'm not going to say it didn't bother me at all. It bothers you a bit, you know because you miss a lot of the things that the boys do. That the children do. Birthday

parties and things. You miss a lot of that. I was away for both of the births actually and that was tough for Tessa. It would have been nice to be there. You missed just being with them in general too, just the day to day things. But you just have to accept that you've chosen that life and that's it. You can't sit and mope and complain that you've made the wrong decision. It's part of the job needing to go away. You have to go into it, you know, with the mindset. I grew up on a farm the youngest of four boys. You just learned to do what you had to do there too. No use complaining. And it's alright. I always loved going home to my family and seeing everyone. Especially after some of the longer times I was away cooped on a sub.

I think Tessa and I planned things very well. We didn't do anything that was, well, basically stupid. We watched our money closely. We never got into debt other than house payments. There were no real problems financially. Neither of us drank, smoked, or gambled, so we didn't waste any money that way. We didn't go on any great long holidays. Neither one of us had expensive taste. We were both used to simple things. I don't know why the kids were so good really. Just their mental make-up I guess, I don't know. But they were never a discipline problem. They were never in trouble. And we weren't always strict with them either. They just didn't have tempers. Neither of them drank or smoked and they didn't go off the deep end either when they were 19 or 20. Actually they were both very placid children really, so there were no problems there. I think I did a pretty good job as a parent in that respect. Guess we taught them to be honest and to be kind to people. Good all around citizens. The 4H sheep club that they were involved in was a great thing for that. It taught them responsibility, and they learned to accept not always getting first prize too. You don't always win in life. It's part of

growing up. But they'd do it all in good fun and the kids enjoyed it. It kept them occupied and gave them goals to work towards. So I think, all told, we did a good job of raising them.

Early on we got tired of living in town, so we bought a 40-acre place in '67. We always had our own house. When you own your own home, you set down roots in the community. We had horses and they gave the boys and understanding of the bond between horses and man. I never brought my work problems home, and that was a good thing too. I would tell people now, that I guess you and your wife maybe have to have the same interests and the same temperament really. That's what Tessa and I found anyway. It's important for a young couple to sit down and discuss things, what they're doing to do and how they want to live their lives. So we did that and there weren't any huge surprises for either of us along the way. And take an interest in what the children are doing. How they're doing in school and things like that. Keep them occupied and be involved in what they're doing as much as you can. I got a lot of enjoyment from keeping up with what Matthew and Daniel were doing. They were great kids.

We were in Ottawa from two years, from 1970 to '72, and I had a Cub pack there. Tessa was a Brownie leader, and we had a great time. The boys were very much involved in Cubs. Quite often we'd have these weekend hikes and different things. We kept busy with a lot of other things besides raising a family, but family was our main priority. We lived out east of Ottawa and there was a great big hill behind us, and I remember how we used to toboggan on it. I'd take the dog, both boys, and myself on this big long toboggan we had and away we'd go. Just imagine that! It was great. On a moonlit night, it was just beautiful to go out tobogganing. No, it was a good time actually. I was on a submarine

desk at the time so for those two years and I was home every day. It was a lot easier to work and be a Dad when I wasn't going away so much!

Another thing we did to help with this balance was we didn't have any friends in the navy. We had very few friends in the navy and they weren't close friends. I always kept my family life, my home life, separate from the navy. It was a lot better that way. I saw a lot of people go through a tremendous amount of shock when they retire because everything they ever did was tied up in the navy. It was, almost like a mental meltdown, you know? I mean, their whole life and everything had been in the navy and then, bang, you're outside the main gate and the whole world is out there. And it's different. Whereas if you've established a home, then you're part of the community. It was a policy we had right from day one, that we'd keep our friends away from the job. Outside the job.

Oh it was a great adventure. It was amazing you know. I saw a tremendous amount of the world you know. I wouldn't join the army for any amount of money. You gotta be crazy! Get shot at! I didn't have to worry about anything like that in my job with the navy. I haven't had so much as an empty beer can thrown at me. I'm sure it helped that my work was very uneventful as far as combat goes. You know, even though I was away from home a lot, all around, it was a great life. I wouldn't trade it for anything else.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Chapter Introduction

This chapter will include a summary of the current study in terms of its purpose, intent, and process; a discussion of how the findings from this study relate to the reviewed body of literature within the area of military parents and families; a description of the strengths and limitations of the current research; a discussion of the relevance that the results from this study have in regards to the field of counselling; a brief mention of the implications that this study has for future research in this area; and finally, some concluding remarks.

Summary of the Current Study

The current study sought to explore and examine the personal narratives of veterans regarding their experiences of what it was like to balance their career and parent roles while they were actively serving in the military. Because narratives (i.e., the stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves and our lives) dominate human discourse and seem to be an intrinsic way for people to make sense of their experiences, Narrative Oriented Inquiry was chosen for the methodological framework in this study. Qualitative narrative interviews were done to allow for meaning of experiences to be co-constructed between the participant and researcher, primarily because a narrative perspective views interviews to be mutual exchanges of views between all individuals present (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). More specifically, this involved a topic-oriented style of interview with open-ended questions which were specific enough to address the constructs of interest,

but also flexible to provide opportunities for both the interviewer and interviewee to discuss certain areas in more detail (Hancock, 1998).

Five veterans, all men ranging in age from 49 to 73 who presently reside in the Victoria area, self-selected to participate in these interviews and shared their stories related to this study's primary research question. It has been openly acknowledged and emphasized throughout this study that researchers interpret their experiences just as participants do, and therefore do not maintain a stance of objectivity during the interview and analysis process. The six stages of Arvay's (2002) Collaborative Narrative Method were adopted in order to help make my own part as researcher as transparent as possible within the co-construction of participants' stories. Additionally, as per the sixth stage of Arvay's method, the 1st person narratives in Chapter 4 were reviewed by participants before being included in this document to give them the opportunity to verify that the stories presented are representative of their experiences. Each narrative was presented as an individual story, rather than drawing themes across all of the narratives in terms of how these veterans balanced being parents when they were actively serving in the military; however, because the reader also makes meaning of his or her own experiences, it is expected that the readers will likely see patterns of their own upon reviewing these stories.

Relation of Findings to Relevant Literature

Even though it was previously mentioned that developing formal themes was not a specific intent of the current research, there were a number of aspects within the veterans' stories that support existing literature in the area of military parents; particularly

in the areas of work-family fit and work family conflict, ideas around the role of a father, gender roles and parenting, and military families.

In terms of work-family fit, Pittman et al. (2004) discuss that the degree to which the work environment can adapt to the needs of the family environment (and vice-versa) has a large impact on how well someone can adapt to work and family-related stress. More specifically, whether an individual can find this fit or not depends on the balance between rewards and demands of the work and family environments. Cliff's story in particular described the challenges he faced from the lack of adaptation between the needs of both his work and family roles. Although he said he loved his job and found it rewarding, an intrinsic part of his job involved him having to frequently leave his family. The problems at home that stemmed from deployment seemed to increase the difficulty he faced in trying to balance these two roles. On the other hand, Bryan also enjoyed his job and was deployed often but experienced more flexibility within his work environment which seemed to make it easier for him to meet the needs of his family. This accommodation on behalf of his career also seemed to help him experience an easier process of balance in comparison to Cliff who did not have the same level of flexibility in his own career context.

Pittman et al., (2004) expand on this idea of work-family fit to say that when the person trying to find this fit is exposed to high degrees of stress or trauma, as is often the case in military contexts, it can be much more challenging to experience a satisfactory balance between the two environments. Consider Craig and Don's stories for example: Although they were both frequently deployed, Craig was sent to areas where there was more potential for combat and described a fair amount of difficulty in finding a balance

between his role as a parent and his military role. Conversely, Don went through his entire military career without, as he said, so much as having an empty beer can thrown at him and repeatedly emphasized his lack of problems in working to find a balance between his work and family roles.

Similarly, work-family conflict can arise when the demands created by the job interfere with how someone can perform family-related roles (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). It is often the case that employed parents find work and family environments often compete for their limited energy, physical presence, and time (Williams, 1994). This stretching of a person's resources was quite clear in Craig's story, particularly in his description of the time in his life when his day would consist of going to school for most of the morning, coming home to look after his son in the afternoon, and then going to work at the base every evening. Andrew also found this to be the case, for example, when he came home from being deployed and went immediately to his daughter's school. After the long flight he had been on, it was extremely challenging for him to find the energy to do anything other than go home and sleep; however, he wanted to be there for his daughter and fulfill the current needs of his role as a parent.

A commonality among participants in this study that paralleled Daly's (1996) qualitative interviews of working fathers was the idea that a "good" father is one who spends time with his children, and often report feeling guilty when they didn't they were spending enough time at home. Every veteran who participated in this study echoed this notion of wanting to spend as much time with their children as was possible when they came back from being deployed, and said they regretted missing out on many of the special events and day-to-day activities while they were away. Time seemed to be critical

in their efforts to reconnect with their families after they had been away, and allowed them the opportunities to have a physical, concrete presence in their homes again. For example, Cliff would work on his motorcycle with his children, run errands with them, let them talk away to him as much as they wanted to, and go to their sporting events. Similarly, Bryan and his wife established a tradition of having family meals together and would often go on trips when he came home. When Andrew was asked what kinds of things he did to help him re-establish his role as a parent when he got home, he explicitly said that he would spend time with his daughter and would read to her, help her with her homework, go to her school activities, etc.

These ideas around the role of a father connect to how gender can impact how parental roles are performed. For example, men have traditionally been socialized into putting more energy into their work environment than the home (Cinnamon, 2006), and subsequently tend to see their work and home responsibilities as separate from each other (Osnowitz, 2005). Additionally, although the division of family work generally ends up being more imbalanced when couples endorse more traditional attitudes around dividing household and work roles (Lothaller, Mikula, & Schoebi, 2009), often a more egalitarian division of this family work seems to be most beneficial for mothers and fathers (Deater-Deckard & Scarr, 1996). In his story, Don was explicit around there not being "mom" and "dad" roles in his family. He and his wife shared all of the household roles when he was home and he found this to be quite important in being able to maintain a satisfactory balance between home and work. This equitable sharing of roles meant that there was no real transition period when he came home and he could quite easily slip into doing whatever was needed at the time. Andrew also described taking on almost more than his

equitable share of the needs of the family environment in order to give his wife a bit of a break when he was home. His description of the less traditional attitudes he and his wife also seemed to help ease his experience of balance.

A common finding among research related to military families is that deployment, which is frequently a factor involved in military service, often creates disruption in the family (Kelley, 1994). Not only is that family member's safety potentially at risk, but there is often significant confusion regarding how roles are to be adopted by the deployed family member and the rest of the family (Betz & Thorngren, 2006). Spouses in particular experience this disruption when their military partners leave and return as both partners have to redistribute parental roles, responsibilities, and find a balance in their own relationships again (Faber, Willerton, Clymer, MacDonald, & Weiss, 2008). This frequently described experience within the existing body of literature was also found in the current study across all of the veterans' narratives regardless of the degree of difficulty they perceived in trying to balance their parental and military roles. Being pulled away from their family, sometimes in less than 24 hours as Cliff described, seemed to make it significantly more challenging for these veterans to find this balance. All five of them described at least some period of difficult transition before they found their places in their families again, and for Cliff and Craig in particular, sometimes this place was never really found before they were uprooted and deployed again.

While there were aspects within the veterans' narratives that support previous research, there were also a number of aspects within this particular study that have provided unique contributions to this body of knowledge. This study explicitly asked participants what it was like for them to go through the process of trying to balance their

parental and military roles, which as far as is known by this researcher has not been previously studied. Specific aspects of parenting have been isolated and explored (e.g., Kelley et al., 1994), often quantitatively, but the experience of balancing itself has not been addressed. Another major contribution of this study is regarding methodology. To the knowledge of this researcher, adopting a narrative theoretical orientation was a unique way to approach research within the area of military parents that has not been previously used. This approach allowed for participants to provide greater personal meaning behind their responses to the posed research question than in the context of more traditional and common quantitative methodological frameworks.

Strengths of the Study

There were a number of particular strengths within the current study. First, the narrative approach allowed for greater flexibility in terms of responses which helped facilitate an in-depth understanding of experiences and the meaning that had been made around those experiences. It is this researcher's opinion that this flexibility is particularly important when talking with military members as it is often in line within military culture for people to answer the question asked of them as directly as possible without expanding beyond what is necessary to answer the question. Therefore, the data constructed in this study was encouraged to be personalized, meaningful, and contextual in a way that is far more challenging to do within quantitative frameworks that have been more commonly used in military family research. The manner in which participants' responses are presented in narrative-oriented research (i.e., first-person accounts) allows the reader to notice similarities between individual stories without explicitly having to draw the parallels. This maintains the integrity and uniqueness of each person's experience while

still allowing for commonalities and differences between stories to be seen if they so exist, as was the case in this study. Additionally, because the first-person narratives were constructed in the context of an interview style that is similar to a natural conversation, participants had the opportunity to actively engage in the process of giving voice to their story to whatever level of detail they felt to be necessary. One last particular point of strength within this study was in the research question itself, which posed to inquire about perceived challenges and successes, rather than only challenges. It was the opinion of this researcher that it is important to look at what went well in addition to what did not in order to highlight things that might make this balance easier in terms of informing support of veterans.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations within the current study involve limitations that are inherent within most qualitative research, particularly when research is viewed from a modernist perspective. For example, the findings in this study are not necessarily generalizable to the larger veteran population primarily because of the relatively small sample size. Although a sample size of five participants is sufficient for qualitative research, it is not large enough to say with certainty that the stories presented in this study are representative of all military personnel. Additionally, participants were sampled from a relatively small pool of individuals (i.e., veterans within the Greater Victoria area) and were primarily contacted by an associate of the primary supervisor for this study. This makes it more likely that participants may have had similar experiences, particularly given the similarity between their positions in the military which may also have exaggerated the patterns found across narratives. The sample was also fairly homogenous

in terms of gender, age, current veteran status, and ethnicity; and experiences of balancing parental and military roles might be different if any of these variables were different. Responses were also retrospective in nature, and accounts of this experience might be different again if this question were asked of people who are currently active in their military service. This reflection over a relatively large time span seemed to be of particular challenge for participants, more so than if they had been asked to reflect on one specific and memorable event.

Relevance to the Counselling Field

One of the intended purposes of this research was to help inform the field of counselling. Given what I learned from the veterans who shared their stories in my study, there are a few points that I would recommend to counsellors who work with military members trying to balance work and family roles. The strongest and most common point of emphasis among these veterans was how integral having a solid marriage with their spouse was to their ability to identify with a more successful balance between their military and parental roles. When both partners shared an understanding regarding their respective roles and the inherent challenges of being involved in the military, it was an easier transition when they came home and subsequently an easier sense of balance. This was clearly evident in Don, Andrew, and Bryan's stories. Conversely, Cliff experienced relatively more challenges in his marriage and did not really seem to ever find that sense of balance. As previously discussed, many support programs for military families are directed towards helping spouses cope at home. Often the focus of counselling in this context is on the at-home spouse regarding the challenges that can arise from military involvement (e.g., Rotter and Boveja, 1999). Although it is important to support the at-

home partner and make space for their experiences in therapy, the narratives from the current study seem to emphasize the importance of addressing the experiences of the couple together to help increase awareness and understanding of each partner's perspectives and facilitate communication between them.

Support focused on providing regular couples' counselling before and after deployment would likely be helpful if offered in addition to the support that is currently available to military spouses. Some of the veterans in this study specifically talk about having open communication with their partners to be an important component to their positive experiences within their relationships. Considering the narratives presented in the current study, having a space to talk freely allowed for these veterans to reflect on what worked during their active military service and what was more challenging. The way that veterans in the current study described the various challenges they experienced when they came home after deployment support a number of recommendations around counselling military families expressed in previous research (e.g., Black, 1993; and Hoshmand & Hoshmand, 2007). However, what the narratives in this study suggest and that is not emphasized in existing literature is the additional benefit that would likely come from collaboratively addressing these potential problems with both partners present.

Another recommendation I would make to professionals working within the military community in light of the findings from this study is to pay attention to where the military family is living; that is, whether they live in military housing or in the general community. In this study, four of the five veterans did not live in military housing and described that physical separation from their work environments to be an important

aspect to helping them maintain a balance between their work and family roles. This was something that they emphasized as a piece of advice they would give to people who are currently in similar situations, and also something that has not appeared as explicitly in previous research. They felt that it was extremely important to live off of military housing so they could try to have as normal a work-family life as possible, which was far more challenging when both their work and home lives were all within a military environment.

Implications for Future Research

Primarily because this study was exploratory in nature within the area of balancing military and parental roles, it would be beneficial for future research to follow up on a few specific areas that the current study began to highlight. For example, most of the veterans in this study expressed the benefit they experienced of living off of military family living quarters and instead having their own places of residence that was not affiliated with military culture. They said that this allowed them to maintain a certain degree of separation between their work life and their family life, which in turn helped them to find an easier sense of balance between these two environments. To this end, it might be useful to interview currently active military members as well as veterans who live on and off military quarters and compare their respective descriptions regarding how they perceive where either situation impacted their ability to balance their military career roles and parental roles. If living off of military quarters is found to be instrumental in helping military members find a balance between work and parenting roles, then that might help inform current practice regarding military housing.

Given the importance of the marital relationship emphasized by the veterans in the current study, it would also be useful to explore this same question of balance in the context of couple interviews. Including perspectives from both partners, even if the central question is still on the military member's experience of balance, would likely provide further insight around what was helpful and what made finding this balance more challenging. It is likely that one spouse might remember things that the other one might not, particularly when engaging in retrospective interviews, and trigger other thoughts and memories that the other spouse had forgotten about but that might be quite important to his or her experience.

One other idea for future research would be to intentionally seek out a broader range of positions and ranks within the military, ages, genders, and ethnicities among participants. Although it was not the intent of the current study to find themes within stories that could be generalized to the larger population of veterans and military members, it was curious to this researcher that most of the participants had very similar demographic backgrounds. It might therefore be interesting to look at how stories are told regarding this idea of balance when participants come from a more diverse background and to see if some of the commonalities between stories are still present given other contextual factors.

Concluding Remarks

Military members are faced with unique challenges in regards to balancing their careers and family roles in comparison to civilian parents. Being both a parent and a military member draws heavily on the resources of that member, as well as their spouse and family, as they struggle and figure out ways to find a sense of balancing work and

parenting roles. As discovered in the narratives constructed within this study, sometimes military members are able to find that balance and sometimes that balance seems to be far more elusive and unsteady. However, the love that these veterans had for their children was undeniable and serves to emphasize the importance of having supports in place, both within military and civilian communities, to help military members find this balance in ways that ease them in having the family lives they hope for as they sacrifice so much to serve their country.

References

Applewhite, L. W., & Mays, R. A. (1996). Parent-child separation: A comparison of maternally and paternally separated children in military families. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 13*(1), 23 – 39.

Arvay, M. J. (2002). Putting the heart back into constructivist research. In J. D Raskin & S. K. Bridges (Eds.), *Studies in meaning: Exploring constructivist psychology* (pp. 201 – 223). New York, NY: Pace University Press.

Barnett, R. C., Brennan, R. T., Raudenbush, S. W., & Marshall, N. L. (1994). Gender and the relationship between marital-role quality and psychological distress: a study of women and men in dual-earner couples. *Psychological of Women Quarterly, 18*, 105 – 127.

Baumrind, (1991). The influence of parenting style on adolescent competence and substance use. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 11*(1), 56 – 95.

Baumrind, D (1996). The discipline controversy revisited. *Family Relations, 45*(4), 405 – 414.

Betz, G., & Thorngren, J. M. (2006). Ambiguous loss and the family grieving process. *The Family Journal: Counselling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 14*(4), 359 – 365.

Bhatnagar, D., & Rajadhyaksha, U. (2002). Attitudes towards work and family roles and their implications for career growth of women: A report from India. *Sex Roles, 45*(7,8), 549 – 565.

Black, W. G. (1993). Military-induced family separation: A stress reduction intervention. *Social Work, 38*(3), 273 – 280.

Blake, D. D., Cook, J. D., & Keane, T. M. (1992). Post-traumatic stress disorder and coping in veterans who are seeking medical treatment. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 48*(6), 695 – 704.

Bowen, G. L., Orthner, D. K., & Bell, D. B. (1997). Differences in spouses' perceptions of family adaptation. *Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality, 12*(1), 53 – 72.

Bronfenbrenner, U., Alvarez, W. F., & Henderson, C. R. (1984). Working and watching: Maternal employment status and parents' perceptions of their three-year-old children. *Child Development, 55*, 1362 – 1378.

Brush, J. (2009). Good kids, bad behaviour. *Family Education*. Retrieved on March 06, 2009, from http://life. familyeducation.com/behavior/parenting/29732.html

Cano, V. (nd). *Study notes: Reliability & validity in qualitative research*. Retrieved February 15, 2009, from http://www.qmu.ac.uk/psych/RTrek/study_notes/web/sn5.htm

Caselli, L. T., & Motta, R. W. (1995). The effect of PTSD and combat level on Vietnam veterans' perceptions of child behaviour and marital adjustment. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 51*(1), 4 – 12.

Cinamon, R. G. (2006). Anticipated work-family conflict: Effects of gender, self-efficacy, and family background. *The Career Development Quarterly, 54,* 202 – 215.

Collin, A. (2006). Conceptualizing the family-friendly career: the contribution of career theories and a systems approach. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 34(3), 295-307.

Corwyn, R. F. C., & Bradley, R. H. (2005). The cross-gender equivalence of strains and gains from occupying multiple roles among dual-earner couples. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 5*(1), 1 – 27.

Creswell, J.W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Daly, K. T. (1996). Spending time with the kids: Meanings of family time for fathers. *Family Relations, 45*(4), 466 – 476.

Deater-Deckard, K., & Scarr, S. (1996). Parenting stress among dual-earner mothers and fathers: are there gender differences? *Journal of Family Psychology, 10*(1), 45 – 59.

Department of National Defence. (2009). National defence and the Canadian forces. Retrieved February 23, 2009, from www.forces.gc.ca

Department of National Defence. (2004). *Backgrounder: Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).* Retrieved February 23, 2009, from http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/news-nouvelles/view-news-afficher-nouvelles-eng.asp?id= 1514

Desiliya, H. S., & Gal, R. (2006). Coping with stress in families of servicemen: Searching for "win-win "solutions to a conflict between the family and the military organization. *Family Processes, 35,* 211 – 225.

Dirkzwager, A. J. E., Bramsen, I., Ader, H., & van der Ploeg, H. M. (2005). Secondary traumatization in partners and parents of dutch peacekeeping soldiers. *Journal of Family Psychology, 19*(2), 217 – 226.

Duxbury, L. E., & Higgins, C. A. (1991). Gender differences in work-family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 76* (1), 60 – 74.

Emerson, P., & Frosh, S. (2004). Critical narrative analysis in psychology. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Faber, A. J., Willerton, E., Clymer, S. R., MacDonald, S. M., & Weiss, H. M. (2008). Ambiguous absence, ambiguous presence: A qualitative study of military reserve families in wartime. *Journal of Family Psychology, 22*(2), 222 – 230.

Frueh, B. C., Turner, S. M., Beidel, D. C., & Cahil, S. P. (2001). Assessment of social functioning in combat veterans with PTSD. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour, 6,* 79 – 90.

Gall, J. P., Gall, M. D., & Borg, W. R. (2005). *Applying educational research: A practical guide* (5th ed.). USA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Gergen, K., & Gergen, M. (2004). Social construction: Entering the dialogue. Chagrin Falls, Ohio: Taos Institute Publications.

Goff, B. S. N., Crow, J. R., Reisbig, A. M. J., & Hamilton, S. (2007). The impact of individual trauma symptoms of deployed soldiers on relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Family Psychology, 21*(3), 344 – 353.

Grady, G., & McCarthy, A. M. (2008). Work-life integration: Experiences of mid-career professional working mothers. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 23*(5), 599 – 622.

Grusec, J. E. (2006). Parents' attitudes and beliefs: Their impact on children's development. In: R. E. Tremblay, R. G. Barr & R. DeV. Peters (Eds). *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development [online]* (pp. 1 – 5). Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development.

Grzywacz, J. G., & Carlson, D. S. (2007). Conceptualizing work-family balance: Implications for practice and research. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 9*(4), 455 – 471.

Hancock, B. (1998). Trent Focus for Research and Development in Primary Health Care: An introduction to Qualitative Research. Trent Focus.

Heraty, N., Morley, M. J., & Cleveland, J. (2008). The work-family dyad: Multi-level perspectives. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 23*(5), 477 – 483.

Huebner, A, J., Mancini, J. A., Wilcox, R. M., Grass, S. R., & Grass, G. A. (2007). Parental deployment and youth in military families: exploring uncertainty and ambiguous loss. *Family Relations, 56, 112 – 122.*

Jacobsen, L. K., Sweeny, C. G., Racusin, G. R. (1993). Group psychotherapy for children of fathers with PTSD: Evidence of psychopathology emerging in the group process. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Group Therapy, 3*(2). 103 – 120.

Jensen, P. S., Martin, D., & Watanabe, H. (1996). Children's response to parental separation during operation desert storm. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 35*(4), 433 – 441.

Josselson, R. (1995). Imagining the Real: Empathy, narrative, and the dialogic self. In: R. Josselson & A. Lieblich (Eds.). *Interpreting experience:The narrative study of lives* (Vol. 1). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kelley, M. (1994). The effects of military-induced separation on family factors and child behaviour. *Orthopsychiatrist, 64*(1), 103 – 111.

Kelley, M. L., Herzog-Simmer, P. A., & Harris, M. A. (1994). Effects of military-induced separation on the parenting stress and family function of deploying mothers. *Military Psychology, 6*(2), 125 – 138.

Kendall, S. (2008). The balancing act: Framing gendered parental identities at dinnertime. *Language in Society, 37*, 539 – 568.

Krefting, L. (1991). Rigour in qualitative research: the assessment of trustworthiness. The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 45(3), 214 – 222.

Labov, W. & Fanshell, D. (1997). *Therapeutic discourse: Psychotherapy as conversation*. New York, NY: Academic Press, Inc.

Lapadat, J. C., & Lindsay, A. C. (1999). Transcription in research and practice: From standardization of technique to interpretive positionings. *Qualitative Inquiry, 5*(1), 64 – 86.

Lauterback, D., Bak, C., Reiland, S., Mason, S., Lute, M. R., & Earls, L. (2007). Quality of parental relationships among persons with a lifetime history of posttraumatic stress disorder. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 20*(2), 161 – 172.

Lothaller, H., Mikula, G., Schoebi, D. (2009). What contributes to the (im)balanced division of family work between the sexes? *Swiss Journal of Psychology, 68*(3), 143-152.

Mahoney, M. (2003). *Constructive psychotherapy: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Mishler, E. G. (1986) *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*(4), 400 – 410.

Nikandrou, I., Panayotopoulou, L., & Apospori, E. (2008). The impact of individual and organizational characteristics on work-family conflict and career outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 23*(5), 576 – 598.

Osnowitz, D. (2005). Managing time in domestic space: Home-based contractors and household work. *Gender & Society, 19*(1), 83 – 103.

Park, J. (2008). A profile of the Canadian forces. *Statistics Canada Perspectives*, *Catalogue no. 75-001-X*, 1 – 14.

Perrone, K. M., Egisdottir, S., Webb, L. K., & Blalock, R. H. (2006). Work-family interface: Commitment, conflict, coping, and satisfaction. *Journal of Career Development, 32*(3), 286 – 300.

Pittman, J. F., Kerpelman, J. L., & McFadyen, J. M. (2004). Internal and external adaptation in army families: Lessons from operations desert shield and desert storm. *Family Relations, 53,* 249 – 260.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). Narrative knowing and the human sciences. Albany: NY; State University of New York Press.

Royal Canadian Legion. (nd). Branch 54 Sooke, BC, Retrieved March 22, 2009 from http://www.sookelegion. org/

Royal Canadian Legion. (2005). The royal Canadian legion's definition of a veteran. Retrieved August 15, 2009 from http://legion.ca/Home/SiteHome_e.cfm.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Risman, B. J. (2004). Gender as a social structure: Theory wrestling with activism. *Gender & Society, 18*(4), 429 – 450.

Ruscio, A. M., Weathers, F. W., King, L. A., & King, D. W. (2002). Male war-zone veterans' perceived relationships with their children: The importance of emotional numbing. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 15*(5), 351 – 357.

Samper, R. E., Taft, C. T., King, D. W., King, L. A. (2004). Posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms and parenting satisfaction among a national sample of male Vietnam veterans. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 17*(4), 311 – 315.

Sekaran, U. (1983). How husbands and wives in dual-career families perceive their family and work worlds. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 22*, 288 – 302.

S.P.A.R.C (n.d). Competency with basic parenting skills and tasks. Retrieved April 15, 2009, from http://www.deltabravo.net/custody/parentingskills.php.

Sidebotham, P. (2001). Culture, stress and the parent-child relationship: A qualitative study of parents' perceptions of parenting. *Child Care, Health, and Development, 27*(6), 469 – 485.

White, M. & Epston, D. (1990). Narrative means to therapeutic ends. Adelaide, South Australia: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data.

Wilber, K. (2006). Integral spirituality: A startling new role for religion in the modern and postmodern world. Boston, MA: Integral Books.

Williams, K. J., & Alliger, G. M. (1994). Role stressors, mood spillover, and perceptions of work-family conflict in employed parents. *Academy of Management Journal, 37(4), 837 – 868.*

Willig, C., & Stainton-Rogers, W. (2008). The sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

Appendix A

Draft Sample Interview Questions

Initial Background Questions
Where did you serve?
When did you serve?
Who did you serve with? (i.e., army, navy)
How many times were you sent away for military-related duties?
Where were you sent?
How old were you when you left the military?
What was your rank when you left? (NCO/CO)
How long has it been since you have been out?
At what point during your military career did you have children?
How many children do you have?
Have you ever been diagnosed with PTSD?
Have you ever been screened for PTSD?
What should I know about your background that would help me understand your story?

Preamble:
Throughout this interview I'm going to be asking you to tell me your story about your experience of trying to balance your military career role with your role as a parent during the time when you were actively involved in the military. I would like to ask you to start your story at whatever point in your life that you think your story of this experience begins. Wherever you choose to start is great, and I will be asking clarification and prompting questions along the way to make sure that you have said all you would like to and if you need help in telling your story. We can trust that we will know when we're done, and I will check with you about this before we end here today.

Potential prompts and clarifiers:
Do you mind telling me a bit more about…
How was it for you when…
Is this what you meant by …
Do you mind repeating…

Additional questions to ask as necessary:
What about military culture? Do you think that impacted your experience?
Who else is involved in the story?
What other thoughts/feelings/behaviours were present in the story?
How does _____ fit into the larger story?

At the end of the interview:
Now that we have had some time to talk, have you told me your story? Do I know everything you want me to know so that this story feels finished to you?

Appendix B

Department of Educational Psychology and
Leadership Studies
PO Box 3010
Victoria British Columbia V8W 3N4 Canada
Tel (250) 721-7799, Fax (250) 721-6190
E-mail eplsgrad@uvic.ca
http://www.educ.uvic.ca/epls/

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: **Military Experience and Perceptions of Parenting: A Narrative Perspective on Work-Family Balance**

Researcher(s): Meghan Robertson, Graduate Student
Faculty of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies
University of Victoria
(250) 818-4470; meghans@uvic.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Tim Black
Faculty of Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies
University of Victoria
(250) 721-7829; tblack@uvic.ca.

Purpose(s) and Objective(s) of the Research:

- Learn and understand more about how veterans experienced holding both military and parental roles at the same time
- This research will be personally asking veterans, who had at least one child while they were actively involved in the military, to describe this time in their lives and what successes and challenges they experienced in trying to balance these roles

This Research is Important Because:

- To help better inform how professionals work to help support veterans and active military personnel, who are balancing military and family roles

Participation:

- You are being asked to participate in this study because you were a parent of a child for a minimum of 3 years while you were in the military, and are currently a veteran (i.e., no longer actively serving in the Canadian military)
- Participation in this project is entirely voluntary.
- Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your position [e.g. employment, class standing] or how you will be treated.

Procedures:

- You will be asked to think back and describe your experiences during the time in your life when you were a parent and actively involved in your military duties
- The interview will consist of a few pre-scripted questions; however, the majority of the interview will be more open-ended to allow for freedom in responses.
- Interviews will be audio-taped for transcription purposes, and written notes may also be taken

- After this first interview, you will be asked to meet with me a second time when you will be given the opportunity to review how I interpreted what was said during the interview, and may add or change anything that does not fit with your experiences.
- **Duration: 1 ½ - 2 hours for initial interview; 1 hour for follow-up; 2 ½ - 3 hours total**
- **Location: University of Victoria or private residence (participant specific)**
- **Inconvenience: the time that you will be investing into coming and travelling to both interview sessions, and depending on your family situation, there may be a need to arrange child-care.**

Benefits:

- Furthering understanding of what military personnel experience while they are actively involved in their service.
- Help better inform how current support services might work more effectively in supporting veterans and military personnel.
- The opportunity to have your experiences heard and validated as important in themselves

Risks:

- It is anticipated that there will be minimal risks to you by participating in this research; however, due to the personal nature of the interviews, you may feel fatigued or stressed and/or experience emotional responses when discussing this time in your life
- **Risk(s) will be addressed by:** The primary researcher is a counsellor-in-training and will be as sensitive as possible throughout the interview process. Additionally, interviews may be stopped at any time by either the participant or the researcher if it becomes clear that proceeding with the interview may be harmful. In the event that your emotional responses are intense enough that further support might be helpful, the primary researcher will help participants connect with appropriate services:

Researcher's Relationship with Participants:

- While it is not anticipated that you will have had a prior relationship with Meghan Robertson, it is possible that you may know the supervisor for this study, Dr. Tim Black. As he is a practicing psychologist and has worked in the veteran community, it is possible that you have been one of his past clients. If you do happen to know Dr. Black, please do not feel that you have to participate in this study out of any sense of obligation and would otherwise not participate.
- To help prevent this relationship from influencing your decision to participate, the following steps to prevent coercion have been taken: Pseudonyms will be used by all participants on all audio and hard records of interviews, and Dr. Black will not be informed as to the true identities of participants.

Withdrawal of Participation:

- You may withdraw at any time without explanation or consequence.
- Should you withdraw, your data will not be used and any record of your participation (e.g., audio-tape, field note, etc.) will be destroyed.

Continued or On-going Consent:

- You will be asked to participate in a follow-up interview intended to give you an opportunity to confirm and/or alter my interpretation of our interview.
- You will be asked to initial and date your original consent for at that time to indicate your on-going consent.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

- The principal researcher will be conducting the interviews and therefore your identity and your individual responses will be known to her; however, as previously mentioned, a pseudonym of your choice will be used throughout the interview and on all other records
- Because of the initial information session intended to find potential participants, your attendance at that session may be known by others; however, attendance at that session does not necessitate participation and therefore knowledge of your participation in this study should be protected.
- We will be also be asking, if you are comfortable doing so, to tell others who might want to participate about this study. If you choose to do this it, the people you talk to will subsequently know of your own participation.
- All records (e.g., audio-tapes, transcripts) will be labelled with participants' pseudonyms and kept in secure locations, either in locked filing cabinets for hard-copies or password-protected personal computers for digital records, to which only the principal researcher and research supervisor will have access to. Any personally identifying information will also be removed from the transcripts and formal documents

Research Results May be Used/Disseminated in the Following Ways:

- Directly to participants for confirmation of interview analysis
- As a published article
- In a Masters-level thesis & class presentations
- In presentations at professional meetings.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher(s) using the information at the top of page 1;
- Contact the Human Research Ethics Office, University of Victoria, (250) 472-4545 ethics@uvic.ca

Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.