

Dear Carson family,

My name is Renata D'Aliesio and I'm a reporter with The Globe and Mail. Please forgive the intrusion at this difficult time. We are truly sorry for the loss of your son, Christopher, and our deepest sympathies go out to you and your family. I'm reaching out because I want to let you know about an important project that we are working on at The Globe to commemorate military members who served on the Afghanistan mission and later took their lives.

We have published several stories in the past few months examining the issue of suicide among soldiers and veterans who had deployed on the Afghanistan operation. One concern we kept hearing from families that we interviewed was the worry that their loved one's service and sacrifices would be forgotten by Canadians. Their names and photos are not included alongside the 158 military members who died in theatre, including six who took their lives. Nor are they formally recognized in most of our nation's Remembrance Day ceremonies.

The Globe and Mail believes it is crucial to remember these brave men and women. We want to tell Canadians about them – about their passions and accomplishments, about their military service and struggles. We believe this commemoration project will increase awareness about mental-health issues and help spur further improvements to the military and health-care system to aid other vulnerable soldiers and veterans. The Globe consulted with several veterans' advocates, mental-health specialists and suicide-prevention groups. All of them agreed on the importance of telling these soldiers' stories.

We would like to talk with you about our project and answer any questions you might have. The phone conversation does not commit you to participating. Participation is voluntary, but we want to make sure all families have the opportunity to take part. There are varying degrees of participation available, ranging from simple confirmation of the facts to sharing stories and photographs and other insights.

You can take a look at the work we have done on military suicides on our website: <http://tgam.ca/unremembered>. Thanks very much for your time. We sincerely appreciate your consideration of our project and Master Corporal Carson's service for Canada. Please touch base and let us know when would be a good time to talk further. Roméo Dallaire, the retired lieutenant-general and senator, and Globe and Mail editor-in-chief David Walmsley have a few words to say about our project. Please read their attached letters.

Sincerely,

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*The Globe and Mail is following through with its campaign to raise awareness with the Canadian people that military operations against enemy forces not only create casualties in the theatre of operations, but also back home afterward.*

*Those injured from operational stress who die from their wounds must be counted in the tally of the fallen in the Afghanistan campaign or any other campaign that produces such casualties. The recognition should match any casualty repatriated due to severe physical injuries who does not survive immediate care.*

*Our peacekeeper monument has all the UN missions listed, but not all the names of the casualties of those missions.*

*It is a terrible shame that the suffering and agony of having your loved one come home and ultimately die because of the war should not be counted just because they did not take their lives in theatre.*

*Your own suffering – having experienced the trauma of your loved one taking his or her life back home, often because OSI care was not sufficient and the injury simply got worse and became gangrenous – should not be discounted.*

Roméo Dallaire  
Retired Senator  
Retired Lieutenant-General

*Canadians must confront the ongoing consequences of our military engagement in Afghanistan and elsewhere, conflicts that continue at home long after the war has formally ended. As family members who have lost a loved one to suicide, you have witnessed this tragedy first-hand. The Globe and Mail is deeply committed to ensuring Canadian casualties are remembered justly and with dignity, whether death or injury happened on the battlefield or at home.*

*Please accept my personal gratitude for considering our request to participate in The Globe's memorial project. Soldiers who have died by suicide deserve recognition – of their sacrifices, their triumphs, their tragedies. Families and friends deserve a forum to remember these soldiers publicly and without shame. As a country, we must not shy away from remembering even the most troubled among us. This has been a guiding principle of our coverage of mental illness and suicide, and it is part of the bedrock of The Globe as an institution.*

*Although journalism cannot change history, it can change the way Canadians think about it. We understand this process could be difficult for you, but allow me to offer you one humble promise: The Globe and Mail will treat you with compassion, respect and fairness, with fidelity to the truth. You deserve nothing less.*

David Walmsley  
Editor-in-Chief  
The Globe and Mail