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Family seeks answers at military meeting

By **RENATO GANDIA, SUN MEDIA**

Beth Figley, the mother of a Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan, is searching for the truth behind her son's death and she may find the answer on Wednesday.

Following media reports, including one by the Sun's Michael Platt last week, officials with the National Investigation Service are meeting with the family of Master Cpl. Josh Roberts, 29, killed in a battle last August near Kandahar City.

"I'm hoping that we will be able to reopen the investigation," said Figley in a telephone interview from Dalmeny, Sask., near Saskatoon.

The soldier's father, Calgary resident Brian Roberts, will be at Wednesday's meeting with NIS Major John Kirschner, as well as a warrant officer.

"Hopefully we'll find out what we're looking for," said the older Roberts.

"I hope this meeting is going to clarify everything and this should be the end of it."

Grieving family members of the soldier have been pushed into a whirlwind of doubt when they were told what they say were conflicting reports by military officials.

Roberts was shot by an Afghan insurgent, said a report from the Department of National Defence.

Before the report became public, Figley was told by military top brass that her son was involved in a firefight and was killed by Compass Security, one of the Afghan-run companies used to guard construction sites.

Then, the family got a hold of a news video recorded just after the Aug. 11 battle.

It shows Canadian and U.S. soldiers interrogating the heavily-armed security contingent, with one frustrated American sergeant saying they can't get a straight answer from the evasive guards.

Later on, Roberts' family received an unsolicited call from one of his comrades saying the shooting was recorded on helmet-mounted cameras but the footage was erased because it was too gruesome.

Figley said she's also still waiting to receive an autopsy report. She added the process unnecessarily subjects families of soldiers to Access to Information red tape.

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