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TOTEM TIMES

Air Force goes green...strives for new heights

By Capt Cynthia Larue

For some people, the Battle Fitness Test (BFT) represents the most challenging physical activity they complete in a year. For others, a BFT is not enough – they thrive on pushing their personal limits to the max, to see just how far they can go.

This is exactly what a few members from the 192 Construction Engineering Flight decided to do this year – push their limits. The 192 Construction Engineering Flight is an Air Reserve Flight of 19 Wing Comox but is located at the Naval Radio Detachment at the former Canadian Forces Station Aldergrove in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. The unit is comprised of skilled construction and engineering personnel who support the Air Force during deployed and non-deployed operations.

Before the sun rose on August 25, 2010, the small group of engineers was already on its way to Cypress Mountain, where they would embark on a journey through the peaks to the North of the City of Vancouver. The Howe Sound Crest Trail is known for its breathtaking views and ever-changing climate, but also for offering a difficult and challenging experience to hikers who are audacious enough to venture through it.

Loaded with food, water, first aid kit, maps, compass and communications sys-



The group from 192 Construction Engineering Flight enjoys a break on its trek on the Howe Sound Crest Trail.

tems, it would take two full days for the group to reach its final destination, where a military van was waiting to take them back to the city.

The hikers started their long and strenuous hike early with the intent of covering the most distance possible before night time. They braved heat, snow, rain, wind, unexpected terrain, discomfort and fatigue with the desire to challenge themselves while attaining a high level of teamwork and friendship within the unit.

A small plateau at 5,000 feet above sea level became an ideal spot to lie down for the night. It is under a clear sky with the sound of the wind in the pine trees that the seven participants recovered for a few hours before leaving again for what would turn out to be



Cpl Setzo uses a rope to help him along the trail.

an even more challenging day due to weather, altitude, and hard-to-find trails that were marked on the map but proved to be a little less obvious in reality.

During the arduous trip, the intrepid group of travelers had a chance to admire mountain goats effortlessly scaling vertical rock faces, as well as a family of bears looking for food and dining on local vegetation.

The small group reached the parking lot just before sunset on the night of the

second day, bruised and tired, but with an incredible feeling of accomplishment and team spirit.

It may still be too early to assess whether they will repeat the experience again, but they will certainly tell you that the time spent climbing and admiring the view from the peaks was worth the effort. What remains to be seen is whether they will convince their chain of command to exempt them for the 2010 BFT...NOT.



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