

EX OPÉRATEURS AVERTIS

By Lt Elyann Périard-Fournier, EOD Tp Comd, 5^e RGC

On Sunday January 19, nine Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Disposal Operators and Operator Assistants from 5 RGC flew out to Comox, BC, in order to participate to EX OPÉRATEURS AVERTIS with the precious support of 19 Explosives Disposal Flight (EDF). During the span of two weeks, the operators had the opportunity to practice the skills and lessons learned from the operations in Afghanistan during multiple scenarios where they had to neutralize IEDs and to collect evidence from the site of a IED disposal or detonation. With the end of the combat mission in Afghanistan, however, the operators must train for a threat that may be much different, like supporting the RCMP during a motorbike gang war here in Canada. The operators then had to adapt to a more permissive domestic environment where devices were more and more sophisticated.

The members from 19 EDF have more experience in domestic operations, as they are on call at all times to go pick up and dispose of military ordnance found on Vancouver Island and in all of British Columbia. Therefore, the members from 5 RGC had an excellent opportunity to share knowledge and to create bonds within the CF Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) community.

CFB Comox, where 19 Wing operates, was built in 1942 in order to insure a protection of the West coast against the Japanese threat. It is located on the East coast of Vancouver Island and 230 km North of Victoria.

Two operational squadrons use the Aurora, a long-range patrol aircraft in order to patrol over the Pacific Ocean, as well as the CC-115 Buffalo aircraft and the CH-149 Cormorant helicopter for search and rescue. The 19 Wing is also home to the Canadian Forces School of Search and Rescue (CFSSAR) and the 19 Air Maintenance Squadron.

Despite the winter fog, the 5 RGC operators also had the chance to enjoy the sights, including the Vancouver Island Range to the West, as well as the Strait of Georgia and the Rockies to the East. The members not only came back with new knowledge and a renewed confidence, but also with memories of a location that isn't visited by Army personnel often enough.

Thanks to 19 Wing and Chimo!

