

Exercise SAPEUR INVINCIBLE 2014

By Lt Maxime Rivard, Troop 3 Comd, 52 Field Squadron, 5 CER

As others were beginning their daily routine after the Labour Day long weekend, 5 Combat Engineer Regiment (CER) was preparing to deploy personnel and equipment for Exercise SAPEUR INVINCIBLE. From 2 to 12 September 2014, 5 CER was deployed to the 2nd Canadian Division Support Base training areas, Valcartier.

The purpose of the regimental exercise was to train the squadrons on the planning and execution of a number of engineering tasks in a tactical context. For the field squadrons, the exercise began by establishing a defensive position reinforced by obstacles, while the support squadrons set up a camp in a forward operating base (FOB). It was clear from the start of the exercise that Regimental HQ intended to test the squadrons' abilities as the tasks multiplied. According to their respective specialties, the squadrons had to build a non-standard bridge, conduct reserve demolitions (one of them with real explosives) and rappel insertions, build a floating bridge, set up and operate an ROWPU, set up a camp for the Regimental HQ and support squadrons, and more. Some troops also got the chance to take part in ambush scenarios that included battle simulations and live firing overhead.

The exercise was very demanding on the command teams and squadron CPs. The fast pace of the exercise was challenging in many respects, but the way the exercise was planned left enough time to prepare an effective battle procedure for all command teams and sub-units. In addition, the amount of inter-squadron coordination that was required added to the challenge, and alerted everyone to the importance not only of ensuring the accuracy of commands, but also of ensuring that commands were properly understood. The squadrons also had the opportunity to work with other units of the 5 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group, and thus practice combined arms coordination. Members of Royal 22e Régiment's 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions took part in the exercise on more than one occasion, as both a friendly and an enemy force. 5e Régiment d'artillerie légère du Canada, 12 Régiment blindé du Canada, 5th Field Ambulance and 430 Tactical Helicopter Squadron also participated, greatly enhancing the realism of the training exercises.

All in all, Exercise SAPEUR INVINCIBLE 2014, organized by Regimental HQ to train squadron and troop CPs, was a golden opportunity to identify our strengths and weaknesses as a regiment. As a result of the exercise, the squadrons will be able to direct their training over the next few months as part of the build-up of Task Force 1-15 and 2-15.



Main camp of 5 CER at Camp CHIMO in the Support Base Valcartier training areas, 2 Division Valcartier during Exercise SAPEUR INVINCIBLE 2014



The 51 CER Field Squadron assembled a medium floating bridge that could support a vehicle of up to 70 tonnes over the Jacques-Cartier River.



The light infantry troop of 53 CER Squadron, assisted by 430 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, was deployed to secure a helicopter landing site before a mountain operation on Mont Greccio by 52 Field Squadron.



5 CER, assisted by 5 Field Ambulance and 430 Tactical Helicopter Squadron, performed a medical evacuation.