

EX HOLDFAST SAPPER

By Capt Pat Reid, 42 Sqn 2I/C, 4 ESR

Approximately 380 soldiers from 4 Engineer Support Regiment (ESR) deployed to the 5 CDSB Gagetown Training Area from 30 September to 6 October 2014 for the Regiment's annual level two and three training exercise, Exercise Holdfast Sapper (HS). Each of the four squadrons (sqn) within 4 ESR were given the opportunity to plan and conduct their own training while Regimental Headquarters exercised their ability to act as a command element. The intent of the training was to be challenging and realistic, placing section and troop leadership outside of their comfort zones in order to prepare for the next level of training.



Source: WO Stephen Scott, 42 Fd Sqn

42 Field (Fd) Sqn's training scenario focused on disaster relief as well as support to local law enforcement in a fictional nation where the population was struggling to recuperate from a natural disaster. The Sqn concentrated on mobility support by constructing a medium girder bridge and conducting rafting operations, as well as, counter mobility tasks by emplacing route denial obstacles and minefields. Search training with 43 Counter Improvised Explosive Device (CIED) Sqn also played a significant role in the scenario.



Source: Lt Michael Robinson, 43 CIED Sqn

43 CIED Sqn took advantage of the exercise to conduct a variety of training for both the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Troop and the Expedient Route Opening Capability (EROC) Troop. EOD Troop responded to multiple improvised explosive device scenarios as well as advanced combat engineer search,

which culminated in the search training with 42 Fd Sqn. This involved an area search, and both an occupied building and unoccupied building search. The EROC Troop trained in a variety of environments and situations in which they haven't historically been employed in. This included testing new tactics, techniques and procedures in order to be able to adjust to changing scenarios.



Source Lt Neil Sinclair, 45 Sp Sqn Preparing the Pad

For 45 Support Sqn, their primary focus was to conduct field employment tests on Relocatable Temporary Camp assets. This included the wiring of the Mobile Incinerator Unit, setup of several Mobile Expandable Container Configuration shelters, and employment of the Deployable Firefighting Unit (DFFU). Part of the DFFU employment was committed to training selected personnel within the Regiment so that this asset could be used on future exercises. The Resource Troop deployed the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit and maintained a water point, which provided potable water to the Regiment for the duration of the exercise.



Source Lt Neil Sinclair, 45 Sp Sqn Final Product

48 Combat Service Support Sqn participated in Ex Holdfast Sapper by conducting 9mm and C-7 ranges for the Regiment while also practicing various forms of resupply and providing maintenance support to the

other sqns. During evenings, Maintenance and Logistics Troop conducted night navigation and blackout driving before practicing harbour occupation, harbour routine, and crash harbour drills. The cooks from 48 Sqn also played a crucial role in the exercise by ensuring that morale remained high amongst the soldiers. They provided all personnel with a delicious breakfast every morning and a hot late night supplement for those working into the evenings.



Source: MCpl Leighton Harris, 48 CSS Sqn

Throughout the exercise, valuable experience was gained by soldiers of every rank level, and 4 ESR is now ready to take on the challenge of their upcoming theatre opening exercise, Nihilo Sapper, in November.