

A-JS-007-003/JD-001

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS



OF THE CANADIAN MILITARY ENGINEERS

2003-06-30



National Défense
Defence nationale

A-JS-007-003/JD-001

THE CANADIAN MILITARY ENGINEER'S MANUAL

(BILINGUAL)

(Supersedes A-JS-007-003/JD-001 dated 1993-02-09)

Issued on Authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff

OPI: CME Coord

2003-06-30

Canada 

LIST OF EFFECTIVE PAGES

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Dates of issue for original and changed pages are:

Original..... 0	2003-06-30	Ch..... 3	
Ch..... 1		Ch..... 4	
Ch..... 2		Ch..... 5	

Zero in Change No. column indicates an original page. Total number of pages in this publication is 154 consisting of the following:

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Contact Officer: CME Coord

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FOREWORD

My original “Red Book” is a pocket sized, 56-page booklet small enough to fit in a shirt pocket. It was published in 1948 and was issued to me when I was a new recruit in 1958. My copy was, and remains, very important to me. As a new member of the Engineer Family, my copy introduced me to the rich history and the important contribution of the Military Engineers.

Today our Branch has changed greatly from the Royal Canadian Engineers that I joined in 1958. However, one fact remains unchanged and that is the requirement to inform our members of the rich history, the proud traditions and the many functions of our Branch.

Ours is a very diverse Branch encompassing combat engineers, airfield engineers, geomaticians and firefighters who proudly serve our navy, army and air force. Our members in uniform are joined within our extended Military Engineer Family by retired members, by many veteran associations, by civilian Defence workers and by the youth of our many cadet units. It is not only fitting but essential that we all understand and appreciate the history, the diversity and the customs of our Branch.

Ken Holmes and his many contributors have produced this book for you. It is a “living project” designed to change and be updated as we enter our second century of outstanding service.

Chimo !

T.H.M. Silva
Brigadier General (Retired)
Colonel Commandant
Canadian Military Engineers

Sicamous, BC
June 2003

INTRODUCTION

Military Engineers are people “...of all work of the army and the public: astronomer, geologist, surveyor, draughtsman, artist, architect, traveller, explorer, antiquary, mechanic, diver, soldier and sailor; ready to do anything or go anywhere.”

Capt T.W.J. Connolly (1815 - 1885), Royal Engineer Historian

As Captain Connolly so eloquently stated, military engineers are an assorted bunch. What then binds the members of all these varied vocations together as military engineers? Why are the firefighters serving on board ship, the surveyors at the top of a mountain in the Canadian Arctic, and the sappers clearing a minefield in the desert all part of the same Branch? What makes us all Military Engineers?

The answer is simple: we all help the Canadian Forces live, move and fight – and deny the same to the enemy. We are a diverse crowd, but we take pride in knowing that in every operation, in every sphere and stage of war, and in securing and building the peace after conflict, the military leans on the Military Engineer.

This manual attempts to capture the essence of what it is to be a Military Engineer. For it is through our history and customs that we can truly begin to understand our unique identity. As you read the following pages, take pride in our history and diversity, appreciate the origin of the characteristic quirks that all Engineers share, discover and compete for our most coveted honours and awards, and remember those who came before us.

For the new recruit, this book is required reading. For many, its content is second nature, but definitely worth revisiting if only to remind us of who we are.

We are the Engineers!

Chimo !

J.R.D. Gervais
Colonel
Branch Advisor, Canadian Military Engineers

June 2003

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List of Abbreviations

ADC	Aide de Camp
Adjt	Adjutant
AEF	Airfield Engineering Flight
AES	Airfield Engineering Squadron
ASU	Area Support Unit
CB	Commander, Order of the Bath
CBE	Commander, Order of the British Empire
CD	Canadian Forces Decoration
CE	Construction Engineering/Engineer
CER	Combat Engineer Regiment
CEU	Construction Engineering Unit
CF	Canadian Forces
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CFFA	Canadian Forces Fire Academy
CFFM	Canadian Forces Fire Marshal
CFS	Canadian Forces Station
CFSME	Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering
CME	Canadian Military Engineers
CMEA	Canadian Military Engineers Association
CMU	Construction and Maintenance Unit
Col Cmdt	Colonel Commandant
CRE	Commander Royal (Canadian)Engineer
CWO	Chief Warrant Officer
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal
~DIN	Defence
DND	Department of National Defence
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
Engr	Engineer
GC	George Cross
GM	George Medal
HMCS	Her/His Majesty's Canadian Ship
Hon Col	Honourary Colonel
Hon LCol	Honourary Lieutenant-Colonel
HQ	Headquarters

MBE	Member, Order of the British Empire
MC	Military Cross
MCE	Mapping and Charting Establishment
MEAC	Military Engineers Association of Canada
MEIC	Military Engineers Institute of Canada
MWO	Master Warrant Officer
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCM	Non-Commissioned Member
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters
NORAD	North American Air Defence
OMM	Order of Military Merit
OPI	Office/Officer of Primary Interest
PEng	Professional Engineer
PMC	President of the Mess Committee
QL	Qualification Level
QR & O	Queen's Regulations and Orders
RA	Royal Artillery
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCE	Royal Canadian Engineers
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
RE	Royal Engineers (United Kingdom)
RMC	Royal Military College of Canada
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
SMM	School of Military Mapping
SSM	Special Service Medal
UN	United Nations
V/PMC	Vice President of the Mess Committee
VC	Victoria Cross
VD	Colonial Auxiliary Forces Officers' Decoration
WO	Warrant Officer

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