

## 5 Combat Engineer Regiment Open House

By Capt Michael Cheung, Int O, 5 CER

The sun rises on the morning of 4 February over the town of Lac Etchemin. At the municipal arena, the calm is broken by the sound of heavy equipment as a 15-tonne truck roars up the hill toward the arena, pulling a military bridge.



Our sappers are ready to greet visitors.

That scene took place during preparations for the 5 Combat Engineer Regiment Open House as part of Ex RAFALE BLANCHE. The purpose of this outreach activity was to meet and talk with residents, while showing off the equipment we use.



Cpl Gélinas explains to a member of the public what an Engineer LAV can do.

Despite the -11° cold, the Open House was an enormous success and well attended by the young hockey players and their families who visited the arena throughout the day. People were invited to sit at the controls of a multi-role Engineer vehicle and receive a brief lesson on its capabilities. They then went on to the medium bridge display erected over the day. Beside the bridge were

parked a Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) 3 and an Engineer LAV, and a number of curious onlookers were encouraged to climb up and explore the insides. After that, they had an opportunity to handle C7 rifles and 9-mm pistols, detect mines, talk to their friends on personal radio sets and pull a loaded toboggan. For fans of things mechanical, a heavy tow truck and its engine were on display. And let us not forget the stand describing the ice bridge construction and diving activities taking place on Lake Etchemin. The activity sites were open to visitors, and it was much to the surprise of divers returning to the surface that they were greeted not by their dive supervisor, but by citizens who had braved the steady wind over the lake.

At sunset, the quiet of the arena parking lot contrasted with the day's hustle and bustle. It was clear throughout the day, and in saying good-bye to the last visitors, that the people of Des Etchemins RCM are proud of our soldiers and feel for them a reciprocal and gratifying friendship.



Capt Kilburn (left) conducts a leak check on Spr Plourde's system.