

Top engineering officers speak to future leaders at Ex UBIQUE 2013

Author: Lt Mitchell Hargreaves

Photo Credit: Mr. Shannon Randall

CFB GAGETOWN—The theme of the capstone training activity for Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering (CFSME) this year was “The Future of the Canadian Military Engineers”. Over 150 people attended the Exercise UBIQUE 2013 from February 27-28 at CFB Gagetown, Oromocto. Intended to be a training venue for CEOC 1.2 (Construction Engineering Officer Course), BEOC (Basic Engineering Officer Course) 1.2, CE Superintendent Course and Combat Engineer Troop WO Course, the exercise provided a forum for discussions on current challenges and issues for the Canadian Military Engineers (CME). Nearly 20 top officers and SNCO delivered presentations on their units, general advice for surviving as a leader, and CF strategic direction.



Major General Whitecross presents a strategic overview and introduces the CME.

Career advice

Exercise OPI, Maj Lehoux, with the Commandant of CFSME, LCol Carrier, launched Ex UBIQUE with the first presentation by the CF Chief Military Engineer, MGen Whitecross. The General spoke to the newly graduating classes: “You need to figure out what you want to do in your career.” She emphasized that in a first posting, making decisions and learning about the organization and its capabilities are keys for success.

Keys to successful relationships among SNCOs and officers were provided by several presenters. “The next thing you know, you’ll be living in a cubicle,” advised CWO Patterson, while emphasizing to those graduating from courses to make the most of their time in troop and flight-level leadership roles. He also recommended that SNCOs avoid becoming “mother hens” to their junior officers, who in turn must be receptive and have enough humility to take advice.

A technical perspective

X-ray systems, bomb locators, micro UAV, and remote weapon systems are coming, according to Maj Reynders of Directorate of Land Requirements. Heavy equipment replacement had both construction and combat engineers excited.

“Deployable consultants” are what LCol MacEwen, CO of 1 ESU, considers a role of his unit. “We come in with big brains,” he said, referring to his unit’s design and project management functions. The future of the unit is in rebuilding technical expertise, with particular focus on the arctic.

Fight fires and show the way

New developments at Fire Services including solar powered pull alarm systems, live fire training towers, and product research on deployable firefighting units, compressible air foam and armoured vehicle extraction were highlighted by Maj Anderson as some of the ways that Fire Services has changed. LCol Vandenberg, CO of Mapping and Charting Establishment, intrigued new graduates with a promise that they can “show the way” in a rewarding career in the production, acquisition and management of geospatial data.

For all in attendance at the briefings, BGen DesLauriers, Colonel Commandant of the CME Branch, the last speaker to address the four courses, offered his advice on the theme of preparing graduating students for their careers: “Study the engineering history and you’ll have a great insight into our future.”

Clean finish at the mess

Mess culture was present throughout the event, with a meet and greet on the eve of the exercise at the Gagetown Officer’s Mess and a full mess dinner as the finale. For many students, this was their first opportunity to practice and experience the rules and traditions of the mess dinner. Afterwards, the graduating classes of officers relaxed with their superiors, CE Supt & Tp WO course, and classmates to complete their welcome into the CME.



BGen DesLauriers offers his wisdom to the graduating students.