

2 CER Expands Complex Terrain Capabilities

2 Combat Engineer Regiment is widely known for its versatility on the battlefield both on overseas and domestic operations. This versatility comes from well trained sappers with diverse skill sets. Within the last year, the unit has been feeding its hunger for more capabilities expanding its skillsets for operating in complex terrain.

24 Field Squadron deployed on Exercise FROZEN DAGGER 4-7 February 2013 in the Petawawa Training Area. In addition to refreshing its soldiers on basic winter soldier skills in a tactical environment, 24 Field Squadron was tasked with a swift water crossing. The Squadron had multiple objectives during the week, but this specific task was to send a squadron of dismounted troops (approximately 60 personnel) and its integral gear across a water gap. This was a challenging task not only because the crossing site spanned approximately 30 metres of fast moving rapids, but the environmental conditions added ice, deep snow and cold temperatures to the situation.

The plan was to employ a twin track high line to cross the gap combining static ropes, pulleys and rigging gear. The first task, and by far the biggest, was to get the main lines across the swift water rapids. The construction team used an assault boat and motor to ferry the ropes across the rapids so the crew on the far side could construct an anchor and a relay line. With a safety boat and safety tag line in the water, the squadron was ready to open the crossing site for the transfer of troops and equipment to the enemy side.

During the operation of the crossing site, the Commander of 2 CMBG and his Tactical Headquarters group showed up on site, eager to see the soldiers of 2 CER as they developed their skills during this challenging endeavour. The Brigade Commander couldn't resist the opportunity to hook up and experience the thrill of the crossing. The team on the far bank pulled him across the raging rapids as the freezing wind cut through us all.

The squadron overcame minor setbacks, learning valuable lessons as the task progressed. The task took approximately five hours, but the job got done safely and efficiently. Before last light, 24 Field Squadron had ferried approximately 60 personnel across the gap and was ready to continue on with its mission. Fighting and operating in complex terrain isn't easy, but 2 CER, and specifically 24 Field Squadron, will continue to develop its skills in this challenging environment.



Test load prepares to cross the gap



Crooked Rapids on the Petawawa River going full speed!



MWO Mansfield is the first man across.



Sappers begin to flow over the rapids!



The rucksacs follow the Sappers to the far side.