

## **Ex ROGUISH BUOY: CAF Combat Divers Unite**

On a dark and cold night in the Comox Valley of British Columbia, the wind blew with fierce intentions. Snow uncommon to this elevation was beating down upon the land that had been carved by time. While all wild things were seeking refuge in whatever cover they could find, a force was moving through the water. Many would expect this force to be out of its element in this situation, but it is in these conditions, in the dead of night, that the Canadian Forces Combat Divers used their steadfast discipline and specialized training to prove their worth.



Members of the 2 CER Combat Dive Team approach the beach tactically by kayak

Photo: Cpl Burler

### **Annual Exercise**

The Canadian Forces Combat Divers come from the various Combat Engineer Regiments across Canada and meet annually for Exercise ROGUISH BUOY. The exercise has historically been an occasion to unite the dispersed dive teams, bringing them together to share learned experience and build cohesion amongst those with this highly specialized skill set. This year's main focus was on developing new and enhancing old tactics, techniques, and procedures, and on testing new ways to enable the divers to accomplish their missions. Each unit was assigned a subject and given two days to conduct their training stand for the dive teams. The training stands covered underwater navigation, underwater demolitions, insertion and extraction techniques, and water to land transitions from swimming, diving, and kayaking.

### **Army Dive Centre – Central Hub**

The Army Dive Centre (ADC) which is stationed at the Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering at CFB Gagetown acts as the central hub of the dive teams. For this exercise they developed a unique scenario that involved diverse tasks designed to stymie the advance of a notional enemy's conventional army. Each team on the exercise was given similar combat engineer missions, involving covert waterborne tasks such as establishing a beach landing site, bridge reconnaissance, pier attacks for bridge demolition, and capturing enemy shoreline observation posts. These missions were accomplished using specialist resources such as collapsible two-man kayaks, diver propulsion vehicles, compressed air breathing apparatus, Zodiac inflatable boats, as well as underwater navigation boards and other common diving equipment. Each team completed the given missions and then conducted thorough after action reviews where good and bad points were consolidated to be learned by all. From these points ADC is rewriting the Canadian Forces Combat Diving publication to keep it up-to-date with modern equipment and tactics.

After three weeks of trial and error, the combat divers learned a great deal. The complexity of tactical diving is a test to the most skilled soldier, developing the required skills is a daunting task from the beginning, done in a dark and cold environment where solitude is a regular feeling. However in the final days of Ex ROGUISH BUOY, it was

apparent that the divers had mastered their newly learned skills and were incredibly confident in the new tactics they developed.

This year's ROGUSH BUOY proved to continue to be a vital part of Combat Diving, allowing Combat Dive Teams to share lessons, work together, and push the boundaries to further develop their capabilities.