

## Canadian Engineers in Ukraine

By a Canadian Engineer Troop Commander

Royal Canadian Engineers, when compared to all the other trades in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), have the most responsibilities on the battle field.

It was therefore necessary to outfit Operation UNIFIER with a team of these highly qualified, technical experts to help conduct training and mentoring to Ukrainian soldiers. Our assignment is to provide these Ukrainian soldiers with tactical life-saving skills to help them survive on operations.

Our training is three-fold; Explosive Threat Hazard Awareness and Recognition (ETHAR), Urban Breaching and Tactical Search.

ETHAR gives soldiers the training and confidence to react to an explosive threat. These threats can come in the forms of Un-Exploded Ordinances (UXOs), Mines and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). This training is given yearly to every soldier in the CAF and is refreshed again if that soldier deploys. The Ukrainian military has specifically requested this training because these threats are, for the most part, what these soldiers have encountered recently on operations.



Based on our experience we are learning the Ukrainian soldiers are eager to receive this training and we continue to refine our teaching material based on the feedback we are receiving from soldiers who have recently returned from operations where they have encountered explosive threat hazards.

Due to the hybrid nature of recent Ukrainian Armed Forces operations, soldiers are required to operate proficiently in urban environments. When fighting a determined enemy in a complex environment, every skill a soldier possesses is put to the test. Our goal during our urban breaching package is to give each soldier additional techniques and tools in their toolbox so that they can succeed in overcoming the restrictions of the urban battle space.

An additional skill is the requirement to search for weapons, ammo and IED parts that might be deliberately hidden or disguised. The Search training being conducted will give the Ukrainian soldiers enhanced skills to search out any contraband on a person, in a vehicle and likewise find potential caches in houses and fields all the while avoiding potential hazards.

The goal of the engineers is to survive and thrive on the battlefield. With this specialized training, the Ukrainian soldiers are one step closer to doing just that. They have unanimously accepted the training, eagerly seeking more information and steadily improving throughout. We are currently three weeks into training and we have already begun to see their confidence increase as these skills abilities become stronger and stronger.