

OP LENTUS 15-02

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While walking your dog, playing with your kids, or mid-set of your workout, you receive a call from work. "Be ready in "X" amount of hours!" Plans must change, dates are pushed, and your course or leave is put on hold. The country needs your help, and it's your duty to support it.



A large contingent of soldiers and airmen/women from the 3rd Canadian Division are spooled up to aid the province of Saskatchewan in fighting over 100 wildfires threatening the safety and infrastructure of its citizens. All trades pack their kit and move with urgency, carrying the kit and stores deemed necessary for this domestic operation, Op Lentus 15-02. Our own Royal Canadian Engineers bring twice the kit in half the vehicles, yet bring ten times the experience and expertise in the form of Sapper skills.

On 05 July 2015, 11 Fd Sqn received their warning order as 1 CER's IRU component. The following day, two sections, a heavy equipment det, and a construction engineer det depart from Edmonton to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Once on ground, they commenced fire and safety training provided by the local authorities. Nomex suits, hard hats, and breathing masks are issued, and troops are out the door to their respective A/O's that evening. Along with our engineers, and technical know-how, they met up with B-Coy, C-Coy, and D-Coy of the PPCLI for a little extra muscle and multitude of hands.



With sharpened axes, chainsaws, and various firefighting equipment, our sappers make quick work of every hot spot, brush fire, and piece of forestry daring to cross their path. While creating fire guards, safe lanes, and corduroyed roads, our busy and tired troops found the time to mentor our infantry peers on proper tool use, technique and safety issues.

The following week, on the 12th of July, members of 12 Fd Sqn received their warning order to depart the following day. The way out the door was plagued with speedbumps from the start. Vehicles of every sort showed their aversion to leaving the Edmonton area. A few batteries, a new tire, and a new turbo later, all members joined up with the main body by the 13th of July and were in the fight with the rest of the group. Between two sections of 11 Fd Sqn, two sections of 12 Fd Sqn, and augmentation by local reservists from 38 CER of Saskatoon, a total of 61 engineers were spread across northern Saskatchewan.



The areas of Pinehouse Lake, La Ronge, Wayakwin, and surrounding areas all had the benefit of engineer expertise and Infantry muscle. While members worked away at the Wayakwin Fire Center, the gracious cooks and volunteers provided lunches made from traditional recipes of the local Native-Canadian bands and tribes. The homemade chili's, salads, and bannock fed not only the stomachs of our workers, but also the morale of our sections.

After two and a half days of rain, the province re-assessed its need for military support. Having imported help from other provinces, countries, and continents, it was deemed that our stint in Saskatchewan was complete. The remediation phase took far less time than anticipated and in the blink of an eye, cots were packed, vehicles fuelled, floors swept, and convoys marshalled. The last sleep of our stay was cut short at 04:45, but not a single complaint could be heard amongst the crowd of groggy eyes. As the last of the kit was hurled into vehicles, the grounds roared to life with the rumble of horsepower and smell of diesel..."Mount up boys, we're Alberta bound!"

