

Marcel Erkelens: Planning Officer and Car Collector



Marcel Erkelens, Planning Officer, Real Property Operations Detachment Cold Lake, stands in the main switch room at CFB Esquimalt.

What do you do at ADM(IE), and how did you get where you are today?

Currently, I am a Planning Officer for Real Property Operations, Detachment Cold Lake, but I started out with the Department of National Defence back in 1981. My first job was as a mail person for the Ship Repair Unit, Pacific; starting wage was \$5.05/hr.

After competing in several competitions on base for a variety of jobs, I was offered an electrical apprenticeship with Base Construction Engineering. I started as an apprentice in 1982, and then in 1985, with all my trade school complete, I spent six months with the West Coast cell of a unit called Director Base Maintenance 5 (DBM 5) that was responsible for electronic security nationally across the forces.

In 1986, I became a permanent staff member with DBM 5. The West-coast cell of DBM-5 was responsible for design, installation and maintenance of electronic security in BC, Alberta, Yukon and North West Territories at all bases, stations, radar sites and armouries. Yearly travel was an average of four months a year.

In 1990, I started as Acting Alarm Services Supervisor for DBM5. After five years, DBM5 was disbanded and each base became responsible for its own systems. My team remained in a support role for a short period. I was involved with creating the electronic security training aids at Canadian Forces Bases, and, as supervisor, I was responsible for the design of electronic security systems for Esquimalt.

In 1994, I took on the maintenance of all fire alarm systems for CFB Esquimalt along with electronic

security. In 1997, I was appointed as the Electrical Shop Supervisor for the Base Construction Engineering Office. In 1999, my title was changed to Electrical Systems Business Manager, and I've been working in that role ever since. I play a big part in identifying and prioritizing major recapitalization projects at CFB Esquimalt.

What are some special projects you've been involved in?

I've been involved in so many! I provide technical input to most major capital projects, including the building of a new 25 megawatt power source from BC Hydro, submarine power-systems plans, and developments for shore power. I initiated projects to put base utilities underground and dozens of other major projects -- both capital projects and those of my own vision.



Mr. Erkelens and colleagues racking in a 12 470 volt, 350 lb circuit breaker

What does your average day look like?

My daily activities include management of staff and operational issues. I oversee the mandated preventative maintenance programs and training plans for shop personnel, and I maintain schedules for support to capita projects for power shutdowns of primary power systems.

What is a recent professional challenge you've faced at ADM(IE)?

For several years our biggest problem has been understaffing and limited budgets. The result is that prescribed maintenance on many systems cannot be completed, resulting in a higher rate of system failures and trouble calls.

The most frustrating part of my job is the lack of continuity within

government -- frequent changing of personnel, changes to government procedures and policies. In total, I've seen five reorganizations at ADM(IE). I am an advocate of business plans and business cases to address our needs today and into the future. I overcome these challenges through perseverance, as we all do in our personal and professional lives.

What are your interests outside of work?

I am an active collector of hobby cars and I restore muscle cars from the 60s and 70s. I have six of my own cars, two of which I've owned for 32 years. I have been to large shows all over the Canada and United States.

What are your future plans?

Having completed 35 years as of March 2, I am planning my retire-

ment date sometime soon. During my retirement, I plan to expand my automotive restoration business and be a part of the automotive hobby community.



Marcel Erkelens,
Planning Officer, Real Property
Operations Detachment,
Cold Lake



OUR PROJECTS

Massive New Fleet Maintenance Facility at CFB Esquimalt



Fleet Maintenance Facility Cape Breton, CFB Esquimalt, BC

Historically, the ship repair infrastructure of CFB Esquimalt's dock yard consisted of widely scattered, aging buildings, many dating back to the late 19th and early 20th century. This footprint made efficient maintenance on Canada's multi-billion dollar Pacific Naval Fleet a challenge. An oft-heard lament of staff was that, "We spend more time moving material around the dockyard than we do fixing it." To overcome this situation, the Treasury Board of Canada approved the Fleet Maintenance Facility (FMF) Cape Breton Shop Consolidation project.

Meant to be a "One Big Fix" solution, the FMF Cape Breton project is a massive overhaul of CFB Esquimalt's Ship Repair Zone (SRZ). Previously, there were 38

maintenance shops housed in more than 60 buildings, and 55% of the available shop space was located outside the SRZ. Once the ambitious FMF project is complete, virtually the entire operation will be housed in two buildings, allowing tradespeople to be more productive in their work.

The new FMF Cape Breton was named after the HMCS Cape Breton, a cape-class escort maintenance ship, which served for 43 years as a fleet repair and training vessel in the Atlantic and Pacific. Delivering a modern, world-class repair and maintenance facility, with a combined area of over 48,000 m², the project will better enable the repair and overhaul of the Pacific fleet – first, second and some third-line work – by consol-

idating all ship-repair disciplines within the SRZ.

It has been very challenging to construct a modern ship maintenance facility, one of the largest enclosed buildings on North America's west coast, on the same footprint as the pre-existing maintenance buildings, roadways and underground services. Adding to the task, the new FMF is classified as an essential service building, meaning that in the event of an earthquake, the new FMF must remain standing and operational.

The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) must keep its fleet in a state of readiness, therefore, DND must maintain a fully operational dockyard and SRZ, keeping all of the RCN maintenance shops

operational as the FMF is being constructed. One of the FMF's 38 maintenance shops is an engine shop, so they understand very well that this project is much like doing a complete engine overhaul with the engine running; a logistical challenge perfectly suited to DND's and Defence Construction Canada's (DCC's) project management expertise.

To meet these challenges, DND divided the FMF Cape Breton project into five phases. The project is presently in Phase 5, the last and the largest phase, consisting

of the construction of new facilities for central storage, machine shops, life safety systems, sail loft and riggers among others, as well as the installation of new services and roadways. As each new portion of the facility is completed, the work shop destined for that space is disassembled and moved into its new home, the old work shop building is demolished, and the underlying soils are remediated. As each consecutive portion of the FMF is built and connected to the ever-growing FMF building, another shop is moved to its new home, and so on.

The FMF Cape Breton project has been one of DND's most complex and extensive projects to date, and is expected to finish up during the 2018-19 fiscal year, some 24 years after it all began. Supporting operational readiness today and the RCN of the future with modern infrastructure is what ADM(IE) is all about.



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