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In recent years, the Canadian Forces have adopted a much more holistic view towards caring for members of the Canadian Forces. One that incorporates their mental, physical and emotional health as well as that of their families.

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"Caring is a priority. We have to care about everything - our missions, our equipment, our domestic operations, recruiting and retention, our family services. Most of all, it's about caring for our people and their families." - Chief of the Defence Staff Walt Natynczyk



Scheduled to open in spring of 2012, the new 4,000 m² state-of-the-art health care facility will better serve military members at 19 Wing Comox.

Making sure that those who serve our country can access quality health care is one of the Government's core priorities. In recent years, the Government of Canada has invested in numerous measures to ensure that CF personnel continue to receive the full spectrum of first-class health care that they so rightly deserve.

Defence Construction Canada is playing a key role in helping the CF to deliver that care as it continues to manage millions of dollars in infrastructure upgrades to health care facilities at military bases across the country.

At 19 Wing Comox, one of the oldest and busiest air bases in Canada with approximately 1,000 military and 300 civilians, DCC is currently managing the construction of a new, state-of-the-art health care facility that will serve military members with out-patient medical and dental care as well as space for medical administrative personnel.

Announced last September, the \$12 million, 4,000 m² facility is already more than 50% complete, according to Construction Services Team Leader, Jordan Semeschuk.

"This is the largest project we have managed during my time in Comox so I am happy to say everything is going very well. We're getting great input and cooperation from the contractors and the various stakeholders at the wing, although it is a challenge sometimes to satisfy everyone's varying requirements at the same time."

The new facility is being built with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards in mind, focusing on metrics such as energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts. Compared to the current health care facility, this one will be light years ahead.

"The health care facility DCC is building here in Comox will definitely have a positive impact on the military community," says Semeschuk. He says with the increased push towards improved services to military families, DCC has been involved in other family-related construction projects over the past year.

"We've built a new day care, a new playground, and a community garden. These projects aren't related to this medical building per se, but they're definitely in the same category of providing better services to military families. It's great that we have the opportunity to be involved in the management of these projects."

Semeschuk says the new facility is slated to open in spring of 2012.



Pictured here (at left) is DCC Construction Services team leader, Jordan Semeschuk, with Ryan Dickman, DCC Electrical Coordinator, addressing custom supports during construction of the 19 Wing health care facility.

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A joint DCC/DND team conducted a staff inspection visit of the SLTCA in Kabul from May 24–29, 2011. Pictured here in green camouflage is Marie-Reine Mereb, ADM(IE) project manager for SLTCA, Mark Jarman, DCC Coordinator Mechanical Construction, Randy McGee, Vice-President Operations, and Kerry Mould, Manager Construction Program, along with CF personnel.

Putting on a flak jacket, helmet and fireproof gloves is not how most Defence Construction Canada employees dress for work every day. Yet for those who volunteer to deploy to Kabul, Afghanistan in support of the Canadian military mission over there, those accoutrements are the essential, lifesaving "dress of the day."

Vice-President, Operations Randy McGee, experienced that first-hand during a recent trip to Kabul to visit employee Mark Jarman, the lone DCC staffer in Kabul on a six-month tour of duty. Jarman is the Coordinator, Mechanical Construction for the new Staff and Language Training Centre, which will be used to house and train junior officers for the Afghan National Army. The US\$7-million project involves building a two-storey 2,500 m² teaching centre, along with dormitories and an extension of a kitchen and dining facility—all on the grounds of the Afghan National Army's Command Staff College.

Unlike staffers at Kandahar Airfield who work in teams inside the wire, Jarman is the lone DCC employee and only civilian working at Kabul. Every morning, he dons his protective gear and leaves the secure area to travel by military convoy outside the gate along the same dry, dusty and dangerous roads that have been hit in the past by suicide bombers. The stress is obvious, said McGee.

As part of his visit, McGee shadowed Jarman for two days and came away with some

profound insights into the sacrifices made by DCC employees who volunteer to go to Afghanistan.

"Our people are not trained soldiers, they are not trained to operate in a warzone, and yet like Mark, they volunteer to put their lives on the line in service to the Canadian Forces and to Canada. The Kabul post is particularly stressful because we have only one civilian working there. "

McGee had high praise for Jarman, and those who served before him.

"I give kudos to our people who go for that length of time. I know the stress my family felt with me going over just for five days. The military over there does a great job looking after our people and making sure they get to and from the job site safely every day. They treat DCC employees as part of the team, part of the Canadian Forces if you will, on and off the job. They are very inclusive of DCC staff."

McGee says the fact some employees volunteer to go back says something positive about DCC's deployed operations.

"We must be doing something right because so many of our folks want to go back. I am a big fan of sending people over to these kinds of remote locations because they have to act and make decisions much more independently than they would over here, so we always get better employees when they come back. They are way more committed to our company and to our country. The experience moves them forward both professionally and personally."

So far, 65 DCC employees have volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan. Currently, DCC is assisting the Canadian Forces with the drawdown in Afghanistan and will respond to services it is asked to provide.

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Danny Gruner, Environmental Project Coordinator, puts in "the fish have landed" call, as the truck with 540 grass carp arrives and the driver gets set to discharge the cargo through plastic tubes into the lake.

When the folks at CFB/ASU Wainwright were looking to recruit some help to clean nearby Betty Lake they turned to DCC. And, DCC delivered, arranging for 540 grass carp to take up residence in the lake, which supplies water for the 7,000 people on the base and in the town of Wainwright, Alberta.

The job of the carp, one of the largest members of the minnow family and native to Siberia and various parts of East Asia, is to eat the algae and excess vegetation in the lake. "This lessens the amount of organics in the water," says Environmental Project Coordinator Danny Gruner. That means the water is cleaner than it otherwise would be going into the base's water treatment plant.

Gruner arranged to purchase the fish from the University of Lethbridge through a fish farm. Being larger than the fish DND had previously stocked for the lake and being sterile, they were a perfect fit for the Wainwright job. Larger fish are less likely to be scooped up by birds and other predators. Sterile ones are essential so they won't overpopulate the 1.5-km² man-made lake, which is landlocked and fed by water pumped in from the nearby Battle River.

The fish, which ranged from 0.4-1.4 kg (0.8 to 3 lbs) and 30-46 cm (12 to 18 in.) and arrived by truck on June 7, 2011. They were put into a dormant state for the 375 km journey from Lethbridge, AB to limit the potentially lethal stress on them. "Part of my work was to coordinate the delivery so the fish could be picked up and brought to us on the same day. It all had to happen very quickly," Gruner says.

As soon as the truck arrived, plastic tubes were hooked up to the

eight tanks, the valves opened and—whoosh—the water and fish emptied into the lake. It took just a few minutes for the fish to wake up and start swimming about in their new home. “Everyone made the journey safely.”

By being experts at cleaning up the water, the fish are helping DND use low-impact approaches rather than chemicals or mechanical solutions to deal with the algae and vegetation in the lake, Gruner notes.



Danny Gruner, Environmental Project Coordinator, with summer student Breanne O’Grady and some of the sluggish fish after they had gone down the chute from the truck to the lake.

Getting fish for the lake, while an unusual request, is just one of the environmental services DCC provides to DND in Wainwright. Currently, Gruner, who has a background in sustainable agriculture, is involved in a study to improve storm water drainage on the base. Another project will see lagoons designed and installed to handle the effluent from the water treatment plant.

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As part of a project to identify and protect the egg-laying sites of the Serpentine tortoise, which is itself a species of special concern, Larouche and his colleague Martin Buteau identified two nesting couples of Bobolink in a firing range. DND had planned to clear the range for fire safety reasons.

After discussions with METC managers and officials in Ottawa, the cutting was postponed until this month. By now, the young birds have grown up and left their nests.



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Ross Welsman, Director,
National Capital Region

Replacing Ross Welsman in the Atlantic, **George Theoharopoulos**, has been promoted to Director, Atlantic Region. George joined DCC in 2004 and has held a variety of positions with the organization including Manager of Environmental Services and Manager of Business Operations in the Atlantic. He earned his Bachelor of Engineering degree from the Technical University of Nova Scotia and worked for more than 14 years in both the public and private sectors including the oil and gas sector in Alberta and the environmental and real property sectors throughout Canada and the United States.



George Theoharopoulos
Director, Atlantic Region

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