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Unexploded Explosive Ordnance (UXO) used during WWII are collected and piled along a trail before removal from the former Camp Debert site.

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The Government of Canada is one of the largest public buyers of goods and services in Canada, purchasing approximately \$16 billion worth every year on behalf of all federal departments and agencies. As a contracting authority for the largest federal department (National Defence), DCC is responsible for much of that procurement, contracting out almost a billion dollars in infrastructure projects every year.

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A white board is used to identify the description and location of UXO found during the removal of flame floats at Camp Debert.

Flash forward to today where a flatbed trailer slowly makes its way along the roads of Nova Scotia and southern New Brunswick carrying a direct link to this history. On board, 370 small tightly packed crates that contain more than 3,500 Mark 2 Flame Floats from the former Camp Debert. The flame floats were used during the Second World War to mark the sea and guide aircraft, and are on their way to CFB Gagetown where they will be safely disposed of by qualified personnel.

The flame floats were found in a 40 metre x 60 metre area of the former Camp Debert, crisscrossed by ATV and hiking trails. Over the years, the flame floats had migrated to the surface, "likely because they had only been buried 18 inches down when they were disposed of after the war," explains Chuck Wilson, a DCC Environmental Coordinator. "The floats contain potassium chloride, that when exposed to water, produces flame and smoke," he goes on to explain.

Acting as the Unexploded Explosive Ordnance (UXO) DCC Site Representative for the DND UXO and Legacy Sites Program, which is comprised of DND and DCC personnel, Chuck Wilson played an important role in the investigation of the former camp lands to



determine the UXO risk for current and intended land use. During the removal of the flame floats, he monitored the team of contractors as the UXO was excavated, deemed safe to move, and then securely loaded into purpose-built crates for transportation. M. Wilson, who worked with UXO as a former member of the Canadian Forces, is one of only a few UXO experts in Canada with the qualifications necessary to act in this role.

Contractors prepare a shipment of crates containing Mark 2 Flame Floats from the former Camp Debert. The flame floats are transported to CFB Gagetown for safe disposal.

Camp Debert served as the launching point for units all across Canada; therefore, the area is a legacy of our proud Canadian military history. Limitations of current technologies to address locating and clearance of UXO makes it impossible to guarantee a 100% clearance of UXO from the affected area. Consequently, the residual UXO risk in the area will need to be managed through continued UXO risk management/mitigation measures. Members of the UXO and Legacy Sites team, such as Chuck Wilson, continue to play an important role in ensuring public safety at legacy sites across Canada.

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In order to uphold the three pillars of the federal procurement process - fairness, openness and transparency - organizations such as DCC are under increasing pressure to provide impeccable oversight, and deliver the best value for money to the Canadian taxpayer.

Mélima Nycholat knows all too well why such accountability is so important. As the former Director of Contract Services, and the incoming Vice-President, Operations – Procurement, Ms. Nycholat is well aware of the importance of getting it right.

"Procurement is not black and white, cookie cutter type of work. There are principles and guidelines that have to be followed and from there we have to develop approaches and processes that will meet those principles and uphold the procurement values for us. It's a challenging area to work in for sure, but it's very rewarding as well."

Reporting to DCC's President and CEO, James Paul, Ms. Nycholat will be accountable for leadership and oversight of the procurement function across DCC. Working with the Vice-President, Operations for corporate planning and delivery, and with the Vice-President, Operations for business management issues, Ms. Nycholat "will play an important role in the transformation of the contract services delivery model for the Corporation," says Mr. Paul. "Our goal is to adopt innovative approaches to contracting – such as new procurement methods – that will enable us to deliver projects quickly and with optimal value for money."

For example, says Ms. Nycholat, the organization has begun to risk-manage contracts using a more principles-based approach, which in turn has meant authorizing regional managers to take a more active role in the process. Ultimately, it will be the client who will benefit.

"We used to do all of our procurement and contracting activities from Head Office, so all the knowledge was held in the core. Because we have been doing a greater number and bigger variety of contracts over the past few years at bases across the country, often the person doing the contracting was located in Ottawa, separated from the client. Communication was more challenging and we would have people feeling overloaded trying to do a high number of small contracts, while at the same time doing complex contracts that required more time.

“Over time, we’ve worked to bring the knowledge closer to the client and closer to where the contracts will be implemented at the regional and site offices. I would like to see that trend continue, although we still have work to do.”

Clearly, Ms. Nycholat is charting a new course for DCC both professionally, and on a personal level, using her more than 20 years with the company as her guide.

“It’s really exciting to be at the executive table and have a voice in how we can mold our procurement services as we continue into the future. I also try to be very active in the industry and my new position will help me to contribute more strongly to that goal.”

Additionally, as the first woman vice-president in the 60-year history of DCC, Ms. Nycholat is looking forward to mentoring other women within the organization, especially, she says, given that only roughly 10 percent of all new engineering graduates in Canada are female.

“In our company I think this is significant, not so much for me, but for the other women who come behind me. I know I see a lot of women with a lot of leadership potential in our organization, and in a way I like to think that perhaps I’ll be able to inspire them or help them to reach for this kind of goal and achieve it in the future.”

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The \$2.5-million Joint Personnel Support Unit houses staff and facilities to provide support and care to ill and injured Canadian Forces personnel and their families. It was also the first building in the area to achieve Green Globes certification for its environmentally friendly design.

“The project went super smooth,” says Doug Turner, Coordinator, Construction Services. “We had an excellent contractor to run the project, who was very easy to work with.” Communication was regular and open, he says. A number of the key players, Turner among them, were Newfoundlanders. “When we got into trouble, we knew how to talk to one another,” Turner says with a laugh.



The Joint Personnel Support Unit (JPSU) is the first building in the Halifax area to achieve Green Globes certification for its environmentally friendly design. JPSU delivers casualty support services to Canadian Forces members.

Another factor in the success was “tilt-up construction.” This involved assembling all the wall panels on the ground, including insulation sandwiched between concrete, door and window openings, and electrical conduits, and then hoisting them into place with a crane. Three-quarters of the building was up and assembled in one day, Turner recalls.

The [Green Globes requirements](#) didn’t present any challenges, Turner adds. There were knowledgeable contractors as part of the team and the tasks involved largely amounted, in Turner’s view, to upgrading standard systems in order to help reduce the building’s environmental footprint. Foundation planting, sun shades, a white roof and motion sensors that turn off lights in unoccupied spaces are among the building’s other green features.

Green Globes is well suited to smaller building projects, such as this, adds Jeff Kempton, Coordinator, Commissioning. The program concentrates on achieving similar results to those of the widely used Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program but has a streamlined process and lower cost, since much of the documentation can be provided online. The Department of National Defence, in fact, has a [policy](#) that it will seek

LEED Silver certification for facilities valued at more than \$10 million and Green Globes rating of three for those less than that.

The Halifax project gave DND and DCC a chance to test-drive Green Globes, Kempton notes. "There was a lot of interest in how it measured up against LEED." With comparative data, it will now be possible to see how Green Globes might be adapted to work on larger projects.

LEED and Green Globes both stress the role of commissioning—ensuring from the design stage forward that the building systems (such as heating and air conditioning) will work as intended throughout the lifecycle of the facility. For the Halifax project, Kempton directed the work of a commissioning manager provided by the contractor. With more buildings being constructed to these heightened environmental standards—and requiring computerized building controls to meet them—commissioning will become increasingly important, he says.



Defence Minister Peter MacKay was in Halifax on May 28, 2012, for the official opening of the JPSU facility at Windsor Park. Pictured here are Kenda Hudson, Manager, Operations, Minister MacKay, Dan Benjamin, Vice-President, Operations, and George Theoharopoulos, Atlantic Regional Director, who were all on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

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Scott Carruthers, DCC Officer, Contracts Services, arrives at Barbados Defence Force Base to help DND prepare for Exercise Tradewinds.

There were a number of challenges along the way in providing what DND needed to renovate barracks and upgrade and build other necessary facilities in advance of the exercise. Among them was trying to become familiar with local suppliers and the Barbadian (or locally, "Bajan") terms for the needed materials. The Internet only takes you so far, notes Kerry Mould, Manager, Construction Program.

Another challenge was actually buying the materials. DCC contracting officials attempted to use conventional procurement methods without success. The local suppliers did not respond to the tender calls, largely, Mould says, because they were unfamiliar with DCC and uncertain about being paid.

These difficulties, and others—including that the requirements for the exercise changed mid-stream—sent Mould and Scott Carruthers, Contracting Officer, back to the drawing board. How could DCC meet DND's needs, allow for flexibility, and still meet 11th-hour deadlines in a foreign country?

Faced with a looming deadline, Carruthers, and later Mould, went to the island to solicit bids from suppliers, recommend awards to the contracting authority back in Ottawa and arrange payment for the immediately needed materials by corporate credit card. "This approach was an overwhelming success," Carruthers says. "There is no substitute for boots on the ground to make direct contact with suppliers," Mould adds.

With the Exercise Tradewinds experience fresh in their minds, DCC executives met with the client to discuss applying the lessons learned there to other,

similar situations. As a result, on future missions, DCC will send contracting representatives to not only solicit bids with local suppliers, recommend awards, and pay them immediately for necessary materials; but also make contract awards in theatre to meet time-sensitive needs.



Military personnel work to renovate and upgrade a water reservoir in advance of Exercise Tradewinds in Barbados.

“This will help build trust with the suppliers and encourage them to bid on our contracts,” Carruthers says. It will allow the military engineers to get started with construction right away, thus contributing to mission success, while still ensuring the proper checks and balances for procurement and giving DCC a window to set up supply and services contracts for the longer term.

DND was so pleased with DCC’s efforts, Mould concludes with satisfaction in his voice, that it has asked DCC to have the contracting representatives on standby to be part of any future advance teams (Roto Zero) for operations or exercises.

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