



# RCME

# Journal

## The End of an Era



Défense nationale National Defence

Canada

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## On the Cover

Corporal Matthieu Racette signals a stop to the driver of a Canadian Armed Forces recovery vehicle during a vehicle recovery practice as part of Exercise ALLIED SPIRIT IV at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center Training area in Hohenfels, Germany on January 19, 2016 during Operation REASSURANCE.

Photo: Corporal Nathan Moulton, Land Task Force Imagery, Op REASSURANCE





# Directors' RCEME Message



COL. K.J. HAMILTON, CD (RET'D)

As Director RCEME, it has been my honour writing the opening article for the RCEME Journals these past few editions. As such, it is also my honour to announce the new direction and title of the Journal. Starting this summer, the journal will be published under the name “The LEMS Journal: Bringing Horsepower to LEMS”. Unlike the past editions, the new journal will be focusing on LEMS and other technical aspects.

With a Corps community of exceptional leaders at all levels, the LEMS Journal will be the mechanism in continuing the promotion of the importance of an equipment culture and understanding equipment strategies. In addition, it will contain a broader variety of articles aimed at highlighting the extraordinary contributions of our soldier-technicians and DND employees.

The new theme for the journal aligns with the RCEME Corps' Strategic Management Plan which in turn is aligned with Army 2021. We want to ensure that RCEME Officers are the technical experts in any unit. The new journal will help expand and share technical information across the Corps. I would like to thank all Corps members for their contributions and leadership. I hope that you continue to support and read the journal as it goes through its change. I hope it will still bring the quality that you expect from a RCEME Corps publication.

Thank you, and ARTE ET MARTE.



COL J.P.S. MCKENZIE, CD

As the new Director RCEME, it is with mixed emotions that I write introductory comments on what represents the final edition of the RCEME Journal in the form with which we have all been familiar for many years. Change is often challenging, and the RCEME Journal has been with us for a very long time. But as we say goodbye to an old friend, it is with the promise of a new and better journal that better represents the Corps as it is today and who the Corps of RCEME will be in the future.

I would be remiss if I did not begin by thanking my predecessor Col Kelby Hamilton for his hard work and commitment to the Corps of RCEME over his many years of service, and in particular for his dedication to the betterment of the Corps during his years as Director. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank CWO DanyDubuc for his outstanding contributions as Corps Sergeant Major, and to welcome CWO Marty Walhin to the RCEME Corps leadership team.

There are many initiatives currently underway within the RCEME Corps, and I assure you that CWO Walhin and I are actively engaged in ensuring all of these are for the benefit of the RCEME Corps family, Regular Force, Reserve and Retired, across the country, as the RCEME Corps Command Teams have done before us. Our primary focus is to ensure that we build upon the well-known and recognized strengths of the Corps of RCEME, while adapting to an increasingly complex operating environment and embracing irresistible technological change, always with a view to supporting our soldier-technicians in the many small units everywhere from whom we derive our outstanding reputation as a Corps that “gets it done”. One of these initiatives includes the transitioning of the RCEME Journal to the new LEMS Journal where technical articles will be published, focussing on survivability, lethality, mobility, and sustainability in addition to providing updates on key RCEME activities and announcements. Expect to see the new Journal in 2017, and let us know your thoughts on the new format.

Finally, CWO Walhin and I look forward to engaging with the Corps across the country during the upcoming Bluebell series of visits. ARTE ET MARTE

# Corps Sergeants Majors' Message



CWO DUBUC, CD, MSM

As RCEME technicians, we have always been up to any challenges and have always demonstrated the importance of the RCEME trades within the CAF no matter where we are. As we move forward in the future, the army is becoming more and more dependent on technology and equipment. We are drifting further away from the idea of equipping the man, and more towards manning the equipment. As the subject matter experts on the Land Equipment Maintenance System (LEMS), The Corps of RCEME needs to be on the cutting edge of technology and be able to repair and maintain any and all equipment the army wishes to use. This can already be seen as we are currently working towards the repair of UAVs in the very near future just to name an example of this new technology.

To help keep the Corps on the forefront, this journal is taking a new direction. Next year, the first edition will be released under the name “The LEMS Journal: Bringing Horsepower to LEMS”. It will be one avenue in which innovative and unique technical expertise will be discussed and will help inform the Corps on upcoming equipment/projects.

I am sad to say that this will be my last journal message as the Corps Sergeant Major. I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the support you have given me, the director and the Corps secretariat this past year. I have enjoyed my time as your Corps SM, and I will always cherish this time in my career and now look forward to a new chapter in my career. I am sure that the Corps will be in great hands with CWO Marty Walhin as your new Corps SM and I wish him good luck.

Arte et Marte!



CWO M. WALHIN, CD

I would like to start by thanking the Corps of RCEME for appointing me as the 22nd Corps SM; it is an honour, a privilege and a responsibility that I will assume with great interest. I would also like to thank CWO Dany Dubuc for his great work as the Corps SM over the last year and wish him good luck in his new appointment as CF-SU(O) CWO.

I am particularly excited about the ongoing Military Employment Structure (MES) Review for the Officers and NCMs. It is our opportunity to examine the entire training requirement for both RCEME Technicians and Officers, and ensure that our training remains relevant for the Army of Tomorrow.

The Corps will once again be face with many challenges in the upcoming years, but I have full confidence that we will seek these opportunities to further demonstrate our ability to adapt and overcome. Thank you for the excellent support to the CAF.

Arte et Marte.

# Outgoing Colonel Commandant's Message



COL A. NELLESTYN, OSTJ, PHD, PENG, CD (RET'D)

2016 will be a memorable, significant and exciting time in the history of the Corps. The new RCME Corps Fund, which began its stand-up process on 1 January, will result in the creation of a strong, proud, unified, all ranks RCME community comprised of regular force and reserve members and retirees. The Fund structure consists of a National Board of Directors and Light Aid Detachments (LADs) across Canada. New LADs are already active in the National Capital Region and in Western Canada. Others will shortly follow.

The opening in May of the RCME Museum Phase I in Kingston was a tribute to our proud and enduring history and heritage. The RCME Heritage Committee has completed the concept of operations for the 75th Anniversary. Candidate projects and events have been identified with input from across the RCME family. A call for volunteers has been sent to all units which have RCME personnel. The response has been most encouraging. The RCME Journal will be replaced by the LEMS Journal published in digital format. The LEMS Journal marks a timely and important advance in communicating the endeavours of the Corps of Royal Canadian and Electrical and Mechanical Engineers to respond to the rapid and complex changes which impact the environment in which we operate and to leverage our considerable "horsepower". This much anticipated journal emphasizes the critical role of the Land Equipment Management System (LEMS) in all of the Corps' activities and its focus on achieving the highest standards of Land Material Assurance in operational training, readiness and force capability.

Additional information regarding the new RCME Corps Fund, the RCME Museum, and the 75th anniversary can be found on the Corps website.

Communication is the cornerstone to sharing and disseminating information and celebrating our achievements. Every member of the RCME family, military and civilian alike is welcome to contribute and is encouraged to provide technical articles and comments relating to current and future land systems and the support thereof.

As I reflect on the year past, the Corps continued in its tradition of excellence and made significant contributions to domestic and foreign operations. Our esprit de corps and morale remain high and the envy of the CAF. Our men and women are highly respected.

In closing I thank each and every one of you for your professionalism and dedication.

Arte et Marte.



## New Material for the Advanced Welding Course

By MCpl J.L. Brideau, Artisan Company, RCEME School

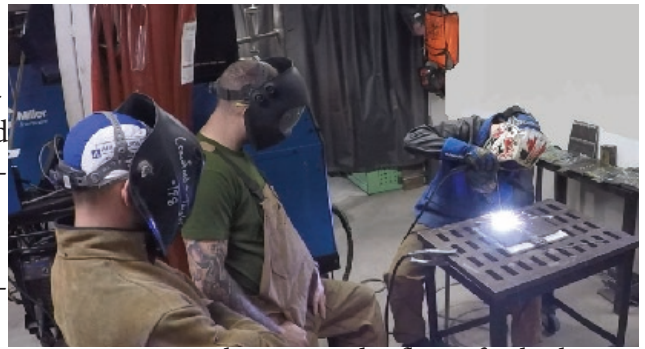
In April 2007, Canada purchased 100 Leopard 2A6M tanks from the Dutch Army and leased 20 Leopard tanks from the German Army. Krauss-Maffei Wegmann GmbH & Co. KG delivered the first of the leased Leopard 2A6M tanks, which were upgraded with improved mine protection and slat armour in August 2007. The 2A6M tank was deployed to Afghanistan later in August 2007 to slowly replace the older generation of Leopard C1A2.

Some modifications were needed to attach the mine roller adapters on the front of the hulls. The troops at the Forward Observation Base (FOB) of Ma'Sum Ghar noticed a huge improvement in the way the new tanks were handling the mine rollers on the road and through the fields. The C1A2's were mainly used as strong points on the camp and did not leave the camp much after that.

When the Leopard tanks were pulled out of Afghanistan and brought back to Canada, the Service Battalions began to notice that some of these tanks were grounded for welding repairs. The composition of the material on the 2A6M, being different than the older generation, created some issues, including a lack of qualified technicians to weld on these vehicles. Therefore, the CAF was in urgent need of having technicians qualified to weld on the tanks, because sub-contracting the welding repairs to civilian companies was just a temporary solution.

The Quality Engineering Test Establishment (QETE) was tasked to conduct additional research into what exactly the new Leopard 2A6M metal was made of. Samples were taken from a tank, sent for analysis and results reviewed to confirm the metal composition. The composition of the base material created the need to test samples of welding coupons with different filler materials, which are being produced by QETE, to determine the best solutions. QETE is presently testing the various solutions in order to confirm the best filler metal; from this the welding engineer will create an approved Welding Procedure Data Sheet. The new Advanced Welding course graduated in July of 2015 with 10 technicians qualified on the procedures. These technicians will be able to commence work on the new Leopard tank 2A6M once the Welding Procedure Data Sheet is available.

The RCEME School Materials Platoon is proud to be running this course and seeing the first candidates qualified to conduct repairs



to the Leopard 2 fleet of vehicles within Canada. This, being the first of many courses to be conducted within the RCEME School, will ensure the availability of highly capable welding technicians to complete the spectrum of services the RCEME Corps provides in maintaining the Leopard fleet for decades to come.



## 2 Service Battalion Body Shop: Preserving our Skills

By MCpl P.J.M Gauthier, Mat Tech, 2 Svc Bn



Like any body shop in the RCME Corps, the 2 Service Battalion (2 Svc Bn) Maintenance Company Body Shop is consistently busy with many work orders and high priority projects. Recently our most skilled and experienced body shop technician, Mr. R.J. Prince, retired after many years, leaving a void that skilled RCME Materials Technicians (Mat Techs) must fill. The IC of the Body Shop, MCpl Gauthier, has been striving to fill this void by introducing the younger generation of Mat Techs to the challenge of working in a body shop. This came with a problem: although they are qualified Development Period (DP) 2 Mat Techs, they did not know anything about body work! This challenge is one faced throughout the RCME Corps as the entire body work portion of the Mat Tech DP 1.2 package, was removed several years ago. The number of Mat Techs who have knowledge of body work is slowly dwindling, and without quick action to remedy this situation, this critical skill in the Mat Tech world would be gone forever.

MCpl Gauthier decided to take matters into his own hands and pass on his knowledge of body work through several initiatives. First, due to the considerable amount of work that the body shop is required to do, the paint



booth over the years had accumulated layer after layer of paint from overspray. The filtration system was overworked and not functioning properly when painting on shiny surfaces such as civilian pattern vehicles or the garrison fire department's trucks, ultimately causing the end result to look worse than when the vehicle came in. This was unacceptable result, along with the number of outstanding work orders adding up, led to the decision to close the shop and spend two weeks removing the inches of dried overspray that covered the walls. After scraping the booth clean, the three body shop Mat Techs (MCpl Gauthier and Cpls Levesque and Pickering) changed all the light-bulbs (over 160) and then sprayed a special coating to protect the booth from having dirt stick to the walls. With the booth cleaned and a new filtration system installed, the work delivered was of significantly better quality and with less time spent reapplying the same paint.

The second step the IC of the body shop took was to ensure the survival of skills by teaching as much as possible. On his own initiative he took the newly trained DP2 technician and gave them some hands-on training. The two Mat Tech Cpls who worked in the body shop learned the base knowledge required to produce quality

results. The hope is to expand this to our RCME On The-Job Training (OJT) Company by implementing an OJT package for body work that is similar to the training that used to be delivered in CFB Kingston, when it was part of the original package. By conducting this training, this skill that is in high demand will be kept alive for future generations to learn and perform. Currently, this has decreased the backlog in our outstanding work orders, and the overall reception amongst the Mat Section has been very positive. I hope that this package will be adopted by the Corps in order to fill the void that unfortunately has been created.

To conclude, the Body Shop has been severely lacking in production due to the absence of skilled technicians; however, with the determination of 2 Svc Bn's Maintenance Company Mat Section, the body shop skills that have started to disappear from the Mat Tech trade will once again be integrated into the core knowledge base of new Mat Techs. Until then, the body shop will continue to grind through the work orders in stride and will ensure that only the highest quality of work will be produced.

Arte et Marte.





## Firing Blanks and Fixing Tanks

By Cpl C.L. Corbett, Weapons Technician, C Sqn RCD Maint Troop

It was a crisp November morning as we rolled out to the Gagetown Range and Training Area (RTA) to support Ex COMMON GROUND II. A full squadron of Leopard 2 tanks complimented by a near-complete echelon of support vehicles marshalled within the K-19 compound was a sight to behold and to hear. We were headed out to the field to provide repair and recovery services to the annual Armoured DP4 Combat Team Commander Course (CTCC), which trains senior Captains and junior Majors, along with student Sergeants Major on both the course and fine elements of commanding a combat team of infantry, tanks, engineers, air support elements, and a support echelon on both offensive and defensive operations.

Being the only Leopard 2 qualified Weapons Tech in the RCD's C Squadron; I was assigned to drive WO Squires (C Sqn Maint WO) in c/s 38A for the duration of the exercise. We were coupled with the fast pack of the A Echelon, comprised of a DP4 student SSM in 39C, 39G TLAV ambulance, and 38E ARV III providing rapid response to Repair/Recovery Requests as far forward as possible. Over the course of the three week exercise, we travelled over 800km in our TLAVs, both on road and cross-country. Coupled with our team of skilled technicians back at Worthington Tank Park, we successfully provided support at a superior level, and were able to field 14 operational Leopard 2 tanks

each day of the exercise, along with two spare tanks back at camp.

Being attached to the fast





pack came with its fair share of excitement and challenges, with a No Duff LAV III rollover with injuries; Cpl. Castillo-Garcia commanded his first rollover recovery using the Taurus ARV and an MTRV for stability. We recovered numerous wheeled vehicles from the soft ground, and also spent more than 10 hours rolling around in knee-deep mud to recover a ditched Leopard 2 A6M that threw a track on the inside of the idler wheel... further proof that not just Vehicle Technicians need to be proficient with recovery techniques. There was so much tension on the track, we resorted to cutting the end connectors with an arc cutter and setting up a 2:1 winch pull (after messing around with a straight cable pull despite advice from our seasoned Maint WO) just to pull the tank out of the muck.

Albeit a challenging and exhausting exercise, Maintenance Troop proved once again that we know our stuff – and can meet any challenge thrown our way.

## Primary Reserve DP2 Common RCME Training

By MCpl Michael Laevens, RCME School

Among the four Non-Commissioned Member trades of the Corps of RCME, Vehicle, Materials, Weapons and Electronic-Optronic Technicians, there is some common ground in the areas of administration and battlefield movement and recovery; technicians from the RCME Reserve are no exception. This common administrative and tactical training has long been the responsibility of Regimental Company at the RCME School. Last summer, Regimental Company's Intermediate Training Platoon (ITP) simultaneously hosted serials 0011A and 0012A over a 10 day training period. This diverse mixture yielded a total of 28 Vehicle and Weapon Technicians, who deployed from armouries and service battalions from all across Canada.

Developmental Periods (DP) foster varying degrees of competency, skill sets and responsibilities. At DP2, soldier technicians gain insight on work order processing, technical inspections and equipment serviceability reporting. Most of the initial training was done within the classroom as they learned all about the relevant maintenance policies and procedures. The later class time was devoted to the basics of commanding a Mobile Repair Team. Students received sample orders and planned their

best course of action to repair or recover army vehicles located in hostile environments. Staff members provided demonstrations and explained basic convoy orders and routines.

This was followed later by a night convoy that included the performance of a delivery point. As any experienced soldier would know, good preparation, planning, drills and rehearsals are paramount to the success of any Repair Recovery Requests (RRR), known in the RCME world as triple R's or Romeos. A dry run gave the DP2 candidates exposure to the stress levels encountered while under the duress of enemy attack or hostile actions. Deficiencies or areas for improvement were then addressed by thorough After Action Review. When the staff felt the candidate to be competent, students were then given a final assessment through another "triple R" scenario. As an added "training bonus", students were well prepared and able to respond quickly to brush fires sparked by the use of pyrotechnics.

In just three short days, the tempo had all but depleted their energy as the exercise was drawn to a close. As a former Reserve Force soldier myself and now a Regular Force member, I can attest to the hard work and dedication of Reserve soldiers. Now as qualified MRT commanders, they will take these newly acquired skills back to their home units and will likely be employed in this capacity on future field training exercises.

Arte et Marte.



## Ex UNDERHORSED RIDER 2015

By Capt Charles Grenier-Chalifoux, Vehicle Company, RCEME School

“0 this is SpecPay, CA-SEVAQ; prepare to copy, over.” The radio crackled in the middle of the swamp where the Vehicle Company team, led by Captain Lebel, Call Sign Scrapyard, was located. Just then, Craftsman Carr exclaimed: “I found it-it’s here!” and pointed to the C6 ammunition box containing the next clue.

This scene is only a few seconds of Ex UNHORSED RIDER, conducted by the Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME) School on 16 October 2015. It was the first exercise of its kind led by the school in which each company had to prepare a team of “patrollers” who had to cover 25 km following cartographic principles and react to various scenarios. The Exercise Control (EXCON) group was made up of 28 members with the support of PSP personnel and a first aid instructor.

The patrols were each required to have an officer, a senior NCO, an NCM instructor and an apprentice. In addition, each patrol had to choose a fifth member. This structure enabled the team members to relay information back to the base in the face of adversity. As they travelled the 25 km, the patrols had to find ammunition boxes some placed in harder-to-find spots than others using the coordinates provided. During their journey, they encountered a vehicle and aircraft identification station, simulated an engagement with Carl Gustav and the C 16, responded to a LAV 6.0 accident with numerous casualties, reacted to a gas attack,

and demonstrated their adaptability when they had to cross the Buell Centre pool fully clothed and then tackle the climbing wall and the obstacle course. For each of those challenges, the patrols were awarded points towards the final score. The teams completed their objectives in 11 hours 30 minutes on average, making the exercise about 15 hours long, including the battle procedure.

What the patrols really liked about this event was the secrecy surrounding all the planning. The patrol commanders received their warning orders on 10 September, giving them just enough information to allow them to create a one-month training program to review their theory and get in shape. When they reported for orders on 16 October at 0100 hrs, they were surprised by the complexity of the task, but they knew that they had received the necessary tools.

The intent of this exercise

was to reinvigorate the “Marte” component at the school and to foster pride and cohesion at the company and unit levels. The success of this exercise shows that the RCEME members are proud of all aspects of their Corps, both “Arte” and “Marte.” The commander has declared this an annual event, and someone has already been appointed to take charge of the 2016 exercise. As the 75th anniversary of the Corps approaches, perhaps a bit of inter-unit rivalry could be resolved by participating in an exercise like this.





## Ex TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2015 - 5 CER's MRV Storms the Banks of Portugal

By Cpl Ainslie and Cpl Borne

During Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2015, held in Portugal, we were deployed in a Bison MRV with 5 CER's, 52 Field Squadron. Our task was to provide the squadron with a first-line repair and recovery support element, which mainly consisted of LAV IIIs, engineer LAV IIIs and Bisons. We also had to be very flexible in order to help decrease the second-line workload as needed.

The exercise had five phases: preparation, deployment, outreach activities, the exercise itself, and re-deployment. Before we got deployed, we had to get 10 vehicles into serviceable condition in order to meet the inspection criteria of EFD and the AEFC. Then, we had to send our vehicles to Montreal, so they could be deployed by ship to the Port of Setúbal in Portugal. When we arrived in Portugal several weeks later at the base in Santa Margarida, the 5 CER vehicles had already arrived via civilian flat-bed trailer. We conducted one last

mechanical check to all vehicles to ensure that they were all in perfect working condition after the long ocean voyage. We then participated in a number of outreach activities with other countries, including Germany, Italy and Portugal, in order to familiarize them with our equipment.

During the exercise, we took part in the reconnaissance of two bridge sites in order to cross two rivers with the German army. At the first site, the Germans asked for our help in levelling the river-bank with our Bison dozer blade. That was necessary so that they could set up the mat that they were using to prevent vehicles from getting stuck on the bank when they are embarking and disembarking from the pontoon. We were therefore the first ones to cross and test the bridge after it was built. The CJOO (combined joint offensive operation) exercise was held next for seven days, with our main task to support vehicle recovery/mainte-



nance. During the exercise, we were with Portuguese Leopard C2A6 tanks, Italian amphibious armoured crafts (which look like a big floating TLAVs) and our fleet of Canadian vehicles. During the advance to contact, we had Pandurs with us, which are Portuguese vehicles with the same characteristics as our LAV IIIs.

When the exercise was over, it was time to clean all of the vehicles from top to bottom and sort out the inventory before shipping them back to Canada. This exercise was a unique experience that gave Canadians and, more specifically, the maintenance troop, a chance to showcase our resourcefulness and professionalism.



## Ex TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2015

By Capt Ghyslin Gagné, Ops O, Forward Logistics Group (FLG)



The LIVEX portion of Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2015, which was the largest NATO exercise of the last 10 years, was held from 21 October to 6 November 2015 in Spain, Portugal and Italy. This exercise brought together a total of 36,000 soldiers, 140 aircraft and 60 ships from over 30 countries. 5 Service Battalion was tasked with generating a Forward Logistics Group (FLG) to support the Canadian units of the Multinational Brigade (Canadian) in the Santa Margarida region of Portugal. Our technicians had the opportunity to work with and talk to representatives of seven different nations (Canada, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Germany, Bulgaria and the U.S.). They were in charge of implementing the multinational brigade recovery plan.

The first part of the exercise took place at the unit level. Technicians practised battle procedures to act as a Mobile Repair Team (MRT) in addition to providing Canadian units with real-time maintenance support. They also escorted convoys and delivery points put in place by the Transport Platoon in addition to familiarizing themselves with FLG procedures, which were much more specific than the

ones they are used to. It was complicated to properly balance training and actual support, however, the technicians were well trained to carry out their tasks during the brigade's offensive.

To move into attack position, the brigade advanced 40 km on Portugal's very narrow roads toward Tancos. This may sound trivial, but given the seven different nationalities and the resulting communication difficulties, the recovery plan was critical for the operation's success. Despite the short distance covered, we had to position two heavy logistic vehicles wheeled (HLVW) trucks along the route, because the roads were narrow, in addition to deploying the Tru-hitch and the Bison maintenance and recovery vehicle (MRV) as the brigade's cable clamp. The Transport platoon also provided a flatbed trailer to transport vehicles from Tancos. Our technicians thus supported the road movement for 16 hours by freeing the roads of VOR (vehicle off road) vehicles, without slowing the brigade's progress.

The high point of the operation was the crossing of the Rio Tejo. Engineers from three different countries worked collaboratively on setting

up two floating bridges. This was followed by a deliberate brigade attack in which seven countries synchronized their efforts to create the conditions required for the operation's success. Representatives of the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME) Corps played a crucial role during this phase by carrying out the brigade's recovery plan. They established an equipment collection point (ECP) on ally river banks, which was also responsible for identifying any vehicles that broke down and were blocking access to the bridges and then for repairing them in an austere environment. An FLG MTRV had the honour of leading the brigade during the crossing as the first vehicle before the tanks to cross the bridges to ensure that vehicles that became stuck on enemy banks were freed as soon as possible and did not block the brigade's forward movement. Despite the rain, the mud and the steep slope at the bridge exit, no vehicles were stuck at the crossing site. Our officers also played a key role in organizing the control of movement by providing brigade staff with expert advice on recovery. Access to a maintenance bay within the Portuguese maintenance company gave our technicians an opportunity to interact with the Portuguese. They discussed various recovery methods that they use. They were particularly impressed by the Mobile Repair Team (MRT) version of Pandore II, which is a light armoured vehicle similar to a Bison. The MRT version comes with all the tools required to make repairs on site, but it also has a limited towing capacity (10 T). A commemorative plaque from 5 Svc Bn was presented to the commander of the Portuguese maintenance



company to thank them for their warm welcome and for allowing us to use their facilities.

The RCEME members had an unforgettable adventure in Portugal and took the opportunity to share their experiences with representatives of other countries. This exercise exemplified the strength of our alliance as shown by the success of our establishment and execution of a complex operation in which our technicians were instrumental in clearing all the stalled vehicles from the access roads and bridges and thus protecting the brigade's freedom of movement. Colonel St-Louis, Cmdt of the multinational brigade, presented the Commandant's coins in the Exercise Trident



Juncture. Three of our soldier-technicians distinguished themselves during the exercise and earned the Commandant's coin. These includ-

ed Cpl Borne (5 CER), Cpl Ainslie (5 CER) and Sgt Morissette (5 Svc Bn).

## The 1959 Ferret Scout Car

By Cpl John Peel

In September 2015, the Transport and EME Section with the RCEME Workshop at Base Logistics in Esquimalt were asked to assist the Lieutenant General EC Ashton Armoury Rolling Museum with repairs to a piece of Canadian military history. The Ferret Liaison 4x4 Scout Car was used by Canada from 1954 to 1981; it is an Armoured Fighting Vehicle designed and built for reconnaissance purposes. Cpl Dylan Lafeber and Cpl John Peel (Vehicle Technicians) removed the power pack and made some minor repairs while Cpl Seth Brayton (Materials Technician) repaired the hull. While the power pack and supporting systems were out of the hull, volunteers took the opportunity to clean and paint all the components prior to reassembly. Cooperation between the RCEME Workshop team and the volunteers who participated ensured the project was complet-

ed correctly while giving the CAF members exposure to working on a rolling monument and a museum piece.





## RCEME In Kuwait

By Sgt D.M. Cairns, Op IMPACT, Roto 2, RCEME Section Comd.

The journey started during the Field Training Exercise in Cold Lake, Alberta for Roto 2 OP IMPACT during October and November 2015. On the December 15th, the RCEME deployed from Edmonton airport on a flight destined for Kuwait International Airport. On December 16th at 0230 local time, Roto 2 arrived at ASAB Air Base. The team being jet lagged, the AFT-I commander gave us 24 hours of mandatory rest. The RCEME Section didn't take long to kick start things off into high gear, by first completing a 100% SCA verification. Next was to get familiar with the routes to and from several bases within the AOR. Maintenance supported all AMSE equipment and weapons at the AJAB, ASAB, and AMAB Air Bases. The first two months of the mission included supporting the F18 fighter jets under the command of Colonel Elder. The AMSE equipment maintainers were very busy with ongoing strike missions all the way up to February 13th, 2016, when the government changed the role of the mission which saw RCEME section contribute to a number of skilled trades involved supporting the mission transition.

On March 20th, the RCEME section stood up with the mission transition team from 3 CSU to facilitate the return of equipment back to Canada. A TAV (Technical Assistance Visit) team was generated to bring three Mat techs for Sea container inspections/repairs and one Veh tech to assist the RCEME team already on the ground. The MTT

(Mission Transition Team) greatly relied on the RCEME maintainers: Sgt Cairns as Section Comd, MCpl Beausoleil as 2IC (Veh tech), MCpl Underhill (Wpns tech), Cpl Cromwell (Veh tech), Cpl Karding (Veh tech), MCpl Fortin (Mat tech), Cpl Grandy (Mat tech), and Cpl Roy (Mat tech). Through many various extra-curricular activities, the RCEME Section ensured a high level of morale, often including other sections which increased morale and cohesion. The Esprit de Corps from RCEME section influenced ATF-I and MSE pers. The values of RCEME facilitated strong working relationships throughout the Task Force and the MTT.

This being a first deployment for several techs, Sgt Cairns tried to uphold the proud RCEME heritage and had the team build a buggy for the Colonel Elder's last parade. The RCEME buggy was built to honour Cpl Nathan Cirillo,

who died guarding the National War Memorial in Ottawa on October 22nd, 2014. Maintenance section used their man power to help other sections as well such as Traffic, Transport and Supply during peak workloads. As a bonus, being embedded with the transition team saw our RCEME folks gain a lot of valuable knowledge and experience; this encouraged all levels of command to take part. RCEME section will go on supporting the new mission at ASAB Air Base specifically looking after the AMSE equipment under the direction of both MCpl Beausoleil and Cpl Karding whom are superb maintainers, the section will continue to provide outstanding support to Kuwait Air Bases.





## Order of Military Merit

Founded on July 1, 1972, the Order of Military Merit recognizes distinctive merit and exceptional service displayed by the men and women of the Canadian Forces, both Regular and Reserve. Many have demonstrated dedication and devotion beyond the call of duty, and the Order honours them for their commitment to Canada. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the Order's Sovereign, the governor general is its Chancellor and a Commander, and the chief of the Defence Staff is its Principal Commander. The Officer of Military Merit recognizes outstanding meritorious service in duties of responsibility. The badge of the Order is a blue enamelled, straight-end cross (four arms, narrow at the centre, wider at the ends) with an annulus in red surmounted by St. Edward's Crown. The annulus bears the inscription MERIT. MÉRITE. CANADA. The insignia is worn around the neck, suspended from a blue ribbon, 1.5 inches wide, with gold edges (0.1875). The lapel badge, a blue cross with a red maple leaf centre, is worn on the undress ribbon. Elevations within the order are indicated by the wearing of the lapel badge of the current and previous levels on a single ribbon.

### Recipients :

Capt G.B Biggar, CD  
Maj (ret'd) M. Litalien, CD  
MCpl C.J.C Wells, CD  
MCpl C. Lejeune, CD  
Cpl D. Drolet, CD

## Sgt Short Congratulated for Earning the Meritorious Service Medal

By Capt S.T. Zhang, RCEME, 19 Wing Comox, Wing Logistic and Engineering Officer

On 21 September 2013, 0500 hrs, Sgt Short's Ground Search and Rescue Team (GSAR) was called to assist the Port Alberni Rescue Squad with a rescue off the summit of Mount Arrowsmith. A hiker had fallen the previous day and suffered a compound fracture in his left fibula. Upon arrival, Sgt Short, as a GSAR team leader, was assigned an eight member team. He and his team immediately started up the mountain to relieve the Port Alberni members that had stayed overnight with the injured hiker.

Once on scene, they continued providing pre-ambulatory care and waited for a 19 Wing Search and Rescue (SAR) Cormorant helicopter to come in and attempt a hoist. This proved unsuccessful as the weather was not in their favour since the ceiling was low and the winds were high near the summit. As team leader, Sgt Short decided they needed to package the casualty and move him to a lower elevation, so the helicopter could make another attempt. Working with members from Comox, Tofino, Port Alberni, Arrowsmith, and Nanimo's SAR groups, they conducted several high-angle lowers using rope rescue techniques until they descended to terrain that allowed them to start carrying out the hiker.

After lowering the casualty 500 feet in elevation, the weather foiled another attempt at a hoist. At this point, Sgt Short was coordinating about 40 volunteers on scene. They built a fire and sheltered the casualty, enabling him to sit up and get some hydration; he had been



strapped to a stretcher for approximately four hours at this point. His vitals were taken and he was then 'repackaged.' Once Tofino's Advanced Wilderness First Responder arrived, Sgt Short was able to hand direct control of the casualty over to him, enabling him to give his full attention to coordinating the continued rope rescue off the mountain.

As day progressed into night, they stopped several times to allow SAR Techs to make attempts at hoisting the hiker; all were unsuccessful due to darkness and inclement weather. A running belay system was set up to ensure the safety of the casualty.

As time progressed, there were more and more volunteers making their way up the trail to render aid to the injured hiker. Sgt Short didn't take a head count, as people were coming and going all night. It was at the end of the operation he was told he had more than 120 volunteers on the mountain. "I knew it was big, I just didn't know how big."

As a result of the numbers

of volunteers, and all the moving parts that needed to be coordinated, Sgt Short's role slowly moved from actual hands-on rescue to managing all the resources, people, aircraft and gear. It was extremely important to ensure that everything ran smoothly and none of the rescuers were injured or lost. "Once I saw how big it was getting, I treated it like I would any other military operation and broke it down into manageable pieces and assigned leaders to different roles. There was so much going on; it was hard to actually remember it all as it happened. The SAR Techs were dropping flares, loggers coming up to knock down trees to try and make room to hoist, ongoing rope rescue, continual updates to command, constant monitoring of my section leaders... I actually lost complete sense of time."

Sgt Short is an extremely active member of the North Island Ground Search and Rescue organization, and he dedicates numerous weekends and annual leave to attend training and rescue operations throughout Vancouver Island. The rescue on Mount Arrowsmith took 25 hours with an elevation drop of over 1,100 metres start to finish. They were finally able to hand over a very appreciative hiker to BC Ambulance. It is unconfirmed, but in the opinion of the participating rescue agencies, this was the largest rope rescue operation on Vancouver Island to date. In recognition of Sgt Short's exceptional contribution to the success of this rescue, he is being awarded with the Meritorious Service Medal.

## WO Gallant is Awarded the CDS Coin

Since he first arrived at 5 Service Battalion (Svc Bn), WO Gallant has won praise for his dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism on the Maintenance Platoon (Pl). Following his arrival, he totally changed his platoon's structure and the 1st-line maintenance procedures and cleaned up DRMIS, which, after 2 months, resulted in a 15% drop in VORs.

During the buildup of 5 Svc Bn, he worked to maintain a balanced focus on the production and training of his soldiers. Thanks to his tactical knowledge, he was able to arrange for excellent professional development and training in the areas of reconnaissance and company siting, and this knowledge assumed great importance in his role as Comd of FIR during Ex RB 15. During Ex MR 15, he maintained high standards in his Pl on the defence, playing the roles of Pl

WO and ETQMS. He provided for the excellent and thorough preparation of the equipment for all the Bn exercises (Ex MR 15, Ex TJ 15); each and every vehicle was sent with its inspection completed and in operating condition.

Since July 2015, WO Gallant has continued in his role as production WO and also serves as ETQMS and Bn Maint O. He performs these 3 tasks with extraordinary rigor and ensures that analysis, administration, technical liaison and production within the Pl are expertly carried out. He takes the well-being of his personnel to heart and supports them while at the same time ensuring that the Bn priorities are met. He is also very active within the coy; he is the sports OPI for the coy, the sports A/OPI for the unit and a member of the Bn hockey team.





## Director RCEME's Award Winners 2016

Director RCEME National Award Winner / Regional Award Winner for Central Region – Cpl J.S. Lourenco

NCR / Northern / Op Comds Regions – TEME Section of ASU North

Training Systems – MCpl F. Ferland

Atlantic Region – MCpl T. King

Western Region – 2PPCLI Maintenance Platoon

RCAF/RCN Regions – Cpl M. Harnois

Quebec Region – Sgt D. Desjardins

D RCEME's National Cadet Award – C/WO C. Dicks

D RCEME's National Cadet Award runner up – C/CWO V. Banks

D RCEME's Reserve Craftsman Award – Cfn C. Gilmore

D RCEME's Retiree Award – WO Tex Leugner (ret'd)

## Director RCEME's Coin of Excellence

Coin #092 – MCpl B. Walter

Coin #098 – Capt I. Zymberi

Coin #104 – MCpl C.P. Ingram

Coin #093 – J.Chabot

Coin #099 – Sgt J.B.G. Lapratte

Coin #105 - Cpl M.J. Wright

Coin #094 – T.D. Dubois

Coin #100 – B.D. Logan

Coin #106 – C.J. Flaro

Coin #095 – Cpl M.G.S. Ainslie

Coin #101 – MCpl D.N. Hurley

Coin #107 – C.J. Cleary

Coin #096 – M. Naltachayan

Coin #102 – Mr. F. St. Francis

Coin #108 – Maj D.W. Atkinson

Coin #097 – Sgt S. McIntyre

Coin #103 – Cpl K.W. Currie

# CANSOFCOM RCEME Employment : Challenging Opportunities

By LCol C.C. Moyle, RCEME, CANSOFCOM

Those who have enjoyed and reviewed the RCEME Journal over the years will surely note that limited but informative articles regarding RCEME accomplishments and employment opportunities within CANSOFCOM have been provided to celebrate RCEME's Arte et Marte spirit within this unique Command. Specifically, I draw your recollection to Issue 2-2013 with "CANSOFCOM Equipment Management" and "Jack of All Trades with CANSOFCOM". While these articles may have 'wet your whistle', the aim of this correspondence is to provide a 'tune-up' or even a mind 'engine timing adjustment' as to the breadth of employment opportunities and challenges that CANSOFCOM presents in terms of soldiering skills, ingenuity and technical expertise, and leadership excellence...

To set the stage, CANSOFCOM is comprised of an Operational Headquarters located within the National Capital Region (NCR), a Special Operations School/Training Center (CSOTC) in Petawawa, and four operational units – Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) in the NCR, Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) and 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (427 SOAS) in Petawawa, as well as the Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit (CJIRU) in Trenton.

This unique operational nexus provides a substantial opportunity for RCEME technicians looking for something different, keen, and challenging. As the articles referred to above illustrate in their own way, the applicability

of RCEME employment spans the spectrum of In-Service Equipment Management (EMT/ LCMM), Project Management and Procurement in a Force Development construct, Equipment Trials and Evaluation, Operational Support from a J4 stand-point, Core RCEME Technician employment (Weapons, Vehicle, Material, and Electro- Optical), to specialized training found only within CANSOFCOM. Certainly, within all of these areas that form the base of training and experience excellence of our Corps' model, the opportunities exist for all rank levels and extend to leadership and command opportunities to the sub-unit level for both officers and non-commissioned members. The relatively small size of the organization compared to its standing high readiness remit and real-time operational tempo cannot be overstated or underestimated. What does this mean? Quite simply, CANSOFCOM relies on the excellence of its people. This implies that CANSOFCOM actively seeks inherent qualities in its members which include leadership and ready acceptance of responsibility above and beyond, initiative, ingenuity and drive, intellect and critical thinking, dedication to purpose and mission, and physical and mental toughness.

I urge anyone looking for a challenge or something exceptionally different to visit the CANSOFCOM website or to reach out to senior RCEME folks within the command. As the author of this short article, I am proud of my Army background and education, proud to be RCEME, and very privileged to be in CANSOFCOM – as

such my personal door, e-mail, and phone line are always open to queries from anyone at any rank within the Corps.

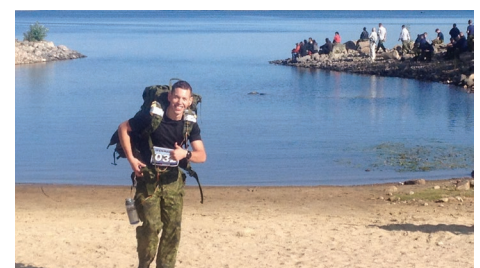
## The Ultimate Fulfillment

By Cpl Alie

It's not easy to stay in shape, but it's even more difficult to get into shape. It all started in 2008. I was not really in top physical condition, and I planned to enlist in the Army the following year. I decided to take charge of my fitness and lost 50 lbs in one year.

When I was a recruit, I weighed the lightest I had in years: 143 lbs. To reach my goal I ate well, but above all I did physical activities. I started to love sports and it was then that I gave myself challenges to continue improving. Since then, I have participated in many races including the 2 CMBG Ironman competition. I completed this Ironman in 6:45:38 and placed 7th out of 198 on the completer day.

I want to thank my chain of command for allowing me to do this activity as well thank my friends at Maintenance Company who have supported me as well as covered for me at work during my absences. Finally, I must not forget David Laroche (PSP). I could never have achieved this without the training I received from the team.





## Your Career Managers at Work

By MWO Francois Yargeau, MMM, CD

Recently, the RCEME career managers crew underwent significant changes. First off, we would like to say a big thanks to Maj Daniel Robichaud, CM for the RCEME Officers, CWO Yves Guertin and Daniel David, CM for senior vehicle technicians, WO Paul Rhodes, Corps Training coordinator and now CWO Stéphane Bouffard CM for junior 00129 for their utmost dedication for the past years in keeping the right people employed at the right place with the right skills. The new members of the team are now fully integrated after going through a cycle of selection boards and preparing the posting plot for APS 2016. The CM team is now composed of, Maj Shaun D'Souza (Lt to Maj), CWO Alain Beaudry, CM for all Ancil trades (all ranks), CWO Matthew Taylor, CM for vehicle technicians (MCpl to MWO), MWO Francois Yargeau CM for vehicle technicians (Cpls) and WO Steve Tremblay, Corps training coordinator and CM for DP 1 Craftsman.

In order to clarify the question “what do they do in Ottawa?”, our job is not only to post technicians across Canada, but it also includes, staffing all administrative reviews (AR), for example, postings to JPSU units, contingency cost moves (CCM), and postings for compassionate reasons. Also, we have to ensure that the proper technicians with the right qualifications are employed at the right place answering the needs and priorities of the CAF with little impact on military families. There are many reasons to post members to different areas. I would argue



that in order to develop our officers and technicians who wish to be employed in senior ranks later in their careers, we need to expose those members to different ideologies, challenges and ways to apply the policies and directives given to us working in different positions, environments and commands.

Of course, the shift in lifestyle of Canadians in general, either financial or demographic is a reality that we career managers have to deal with as well and, at times, it can be a challenge that is hard to manage. Our officers and technicians of the future now live in social situations where some have spouses whose employment makes the military member the second income of the family. Therefore, our technicians are willing to relinquish promotions to avoid postings and some will even leave the service. Every year, we always try to balance

both requirements of the service and families in order to avoid issues.

In closing, it is an everyday challenge to be employed with DGMC as a CM but very rewarding as well. Please do not hesitate to convey to your CM through EMMA or supervisors, your wishes and ensure that your personal information (MPRR) is always up to date.

## OP ZEUS 2015: Meeting of the Land Electronic and Optronic Technicians (EO)

By WO J.F Sevigny, EO Sect Comd, Maint Coy, 5 Svc Bn

On November 26th 2015, many EO techs from 2 Div were reunited at the Sgts' and WOs' mess at CFB Valcartier for the third edition of OP ZEUS. In addition to having the goal of increasing tech cohesion, developing and solidifying bonds between EO techs by exchanging information of a variety of topics. This particular meeting also had the goal of increasing awareness of issues few are aware of as they pertain to the evolution of EO techs, their work environment and challenges they are and will continue to face.

Even with all the tasks, deployments and exercises that 2 Div was part of, a good number of approximately 60 EO techs managed to participate in the event. We also had the opportunity to host the Director RCME, Col Hamilton and Corps SM, CWO Dubuc. Upon their arrival after welcoming them, we had a coffee break and a group photo. D RCME and Corps SM presented the current Corps state and provided guidance on the implications of succession planning. Our guests also answered

many questions, notably about the LAV 6.0, and they finally presented the "Blackjack" project, one for an unmanned aerial vehicle (commonly referred to as UAV), which is already in use in the United States and which will be the responsibility of the Royal Canadian Artillery to employ and the EO Techs to maintain.

The day then moved forward with presentations from various units starting with 202 Wksp Depot, presented by MCpl Lula who took this opportunity to educate the audience about the myriad of capabilities the unit can employ and the advantages of its geographical location in Montreal. Following this, Cpl Tourigny from 2 Wing Bagotville gave a presentation about their unit's multiple responsibilities regarding expeditionary operations. That followed up with a team lunch after which a return to the conference room saw WO Pipia talk about changes to what is commonly referred to as "QETE Det Uplands" or "MTD – Maintenance Techniques Detachment", which has now changed command structure to report to 202 WD as

the Land Engineer Support Centre (LESC), however is still located at CFB Uplands in the National Capital Region. He explained where the units' tasks come from as well as showed examples of the equipment they use to develop prototypes and procedures. MCpl Gendron then explained the role of the CMSEA in Montreal and gave examples of equipment that is always ready to be deployed. Finally, the day presentations ended with MCpl Bourget giving an overview of the EO Section at the Maintenance unit of 34 Canadian Brigade Group in Montreal.

All of these presentations educated the audience in the challenges faced by different units that the Corps supports; units we had little to no knowledge about previously. They identified the importance, extraordinary capabilities, and high level of notice to move (deployability) of some of these units. In addition to learning about operational capabilities, members were intrigued by certain units which opened their minds to a variety of posting opportunities. Everyone enjoyed the day and appreciated the effort put into organizing this event.





## Ernie Wallace, Another Forgotten RCEME Hero

By Tex Leugner and Murray Johnston

The early 1970s were a low point for Canada's Craftsmen. Their Corps of RCEME had been disbanded and they had been rebadged to the LORE badge. The RCEME name was no longer in use and worse still, there was no Association for retired RCEME NCMs to join in order to have reunions, meet old friends and keep up the camaraderie they had enjoyed from 1944 to 1968 while serving in The Corps of RCEME.

It was at this point that CWO (Ret'd) Ernie Wallace, who at that time lived in Vancouver, stepped up to the plate and formed the RCEME Club with the objective of keeping the RCEME name alive by organizing and hosting annual reunions on the West coast that alternated between Victoria and Vancouver. These annual reunions were highly successful and became so popular that many retired RCEME members attended from across Canada.

The word was out and what soon followed was the formation of other local Associations and groups with the same aim, for example, the RCEME Association in Kingston and its LADs in Ontario, Que-

bec and Atlantic Canada and the RCEME Association of Alberta. In fact, it was Ernie Wallace who was the inspiration for the formation of the RCEME Apprentice Association and its organized reunions, a total of 9 which were held every two years in cities across Canada between 1995 and 2011. It was the beginning of the long process of rebuilding RCEME esprit de corps via dedication and, most importantly, self-help.

When Ernie wound up his RCEME Club due to age, he offered his membership list to the RCEME Association of Alberta who's Executive immediately expanded the Alberta group into the new RCEME Association of Western Canada that began to hold an annual reunion in Kelowna BC in Ernie's memory. In the late 1980s Ernie heard about the lack of a RCEME badge on the hull of the memorial tank at Juno Beach. The tank featured the badges of many units that landed on D-Day. In 1992, at his own expense, he had a 10-inch copy of the 1944 RCEME badge cast in bronze and arranged to have it sent to the LORE workshop in Lahr, Germany. From there, two of the workshop's welders, Cpl (later MWO) Ken Osborne and MCpl (now CWO) Bob



Thompson, mounted the badge on the turret of the tank, where today it prominently reminds everyone that RCEME tradesmen were part of the front wave of the assaulting troops on D-Day.

It is the leadership of such Canadian Craftsmen as The Late Ernie Wallace in the dark days of the 1970s that began the efforts to keep the flame of the RCEME name and esprit de corps alive and flickering. The result is that today we enjoy the strong regimental esprit de corps that is RCEME. It makes us all the more ready and willing to fix kit and keep it in operation. They are all heroes. Arte et Marte semper.



# The Story of One of Our Own at War

By His Family

Birdsall (Bert) Melick grew up in a mechanical environment, in a small Ontario village. His father was an auto mechanic and had his own business. It seemed only natural that when Bert volunteered, signing up on his birthday, he ended up serving with RCEME, as did his older brother Bobby. After basic training in Toronto, London and Barriefield, Bert was certified as an Artificer and shipped out for Europe. His brother went to England and spent his entire overseas service there. Bobby passed away in 1973, unfortunately having left little information about his military service.

Bert shipped out, along with several thousand others, from Montreal, on Christmas Day. He recalls that Christmas dinner on the boat consisted of his regular Army rations plus a piece of turkey drumstick, sliced crossways and approximately half an inch thick. Suffice to say that the Atlantic crossing did not rank as a career highlight.

After a short indoctrination period in England, he was moved to Holland. He was there for several months, billeted with Dutch families in Apeldoorn and Hengelo. The Dutch families were quite welcoming and Bert kept in touch with the family from Hengelo for some time after the war. One of his more memorable reactions in Holland was his shock at how difficult things were for the Dutch. The rationing and shortages in Canada at the time certainly seemed much less of an imposition. He remembered sharing his rations with the family and they shared their portions of



Birdsall Melick Bobby Melick

tulip bulbs with him. He never did acquire a taste for the bulbs though. His menu was often supplemented by care packages from home; however, he most eagerly awaited the ones containing Lorna Doone shortbread cookies. They not only tasted good but lasted a long time in primitive storage. Lorna rapidly became one of his favourite people. If he thought his brother was having an easy time of it in England, those thoughts were dashed quickly. On a weekend leave, he went to London to visit Bobby. The two went out to a movie and when they returned, found that a bomb had penetrated the wall of their accommodation. Fortunately, it was a dud and was removed safely.

After Holland, Bert went to France, Belgium and eventually Germany. His stories of life in the European war zone were repetitious in telling of ration shortages, lack of spare parts, the discomfort of sleeping on the ground under the tanks, seeking shelter from the artillery from both sides, and hoping the machines would not sink into the mud during the night. Bert was an excellent mechanic and proud of his skills as well as those of his comrades.

He often spoke of the difficulty in trying to replace tank

treads or a drive sprocket without proper tools, and in abominable weather and ground conditions. One of his most vivid memories occurred during the battle at Hochwald Forest in Germany, in 1945. This was primarily a Canadian- German battle. It was a vicious battle fought at close quarters. The call went out for volunteers to go out between the lines and effect repairs to damaged Canadian tanks.

Bert and seven of his comrades volunteered. With artillery and tank fire from both sides whistling overhead, over the course of several days they managed to scavenge parts and make repairs, successfully returning 18 of 23 damaged tanks back into the fray.

This battle is credited, on some fronts, with opening the gates to Berlin and hastening the end of the war substantially. When Bert returned to camp he found that his billet had been struck by an artillery shell. Word went out that the seven volunteers would receive a commendation for their efforts, but that did not happen.





## A Soldier's Story: Spencer Wood

Bert came through the war physically unscathed, apart from a broken arm received when a large wrench slipped. Not all were so fortunate. In his words, "I lost a lot of good friends over there". When Bert returned to Canada and left the service, he opened his own mechanical business and married his high school sweetheart. He obtained a retired Bren carrier which was converted to use as a tow truck which he used until into the late 1950s. For several years he kept in contact with some of his RCEME buddies. He became very involved in his community serving on numerous boards, councils and committees. He was also Fire Chief for over 30 years. As time passed, his war service became more and more important to him. He was a life-long member of the Royal Canadian Legion and rarely missed a Remembrance Day service. Bert Melick passed away in February 2011, just three months after his last Remembrance Day cenotaph parade. Throughout his life he was proud to have served with the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

World War II Veteran and RCEME Association of Western Canada member Spencer Wood, L/Cpl (Ret'd) was born in Malta Montana in 1920. In 1941, he joined the Canadian Army as his older brother was already wearing Canada's uniform. Spencer attended Anderson Technical School in London Ontario and was trained as a tank mechanic in the RCOC.

In 1943, after additional training in England, Spencer was sent to 56 LAD as part of the 5th Division in Naples Italy, where he was responsible for maintaining ammunition trucks. Later at Altona in 1944, he was attached to the Governor General's Horse Guards where he was re-badged in the newly formed Royal Canadian Electrical Mechanical Engineers.

In 1945, Spencer served in France, Belgium and Holland maintaining equipment, including tanks powered by an unusual arrangement of 5, 6 cylinder engines, mounted around a single crankcase with one power output. Spencer described the experience of timing all 5 engines and replacing 30 spark plugs during tune-up operations that took a mechanic all day and where the tradesman would literally "stand on his head" to replace the bottom spark plugs! He remained in Europe as a member of the occupational force until 1946, when he returned to Canada and was released in Winnipeg with Army certification as a Motor Mechanic.

For over 25 years, Spencer operated his own Company, where he worked throughout Western Canada, the NWT and the North

Central American States servicing and maintaining oil field equipment. At the age of 73, Spencer engaged in a 3 year project as a maintenance engineer in the Siberian oil fields in Russia, maintaining, servicing and in many cases, redesigning equipment, including oil rig air heaters.

Later, at the young age of 80 years, he spent several months in Alaska maintaining oil field equipment. Throughout his many years of very productive work, he was well known and respected in the oil patch, particularly for his attitude that no job was too tough or difficult for him to undertake, the typical attitude of an old soldier who wore the RCEME Regimental badge!

Spencer attended the July 2013 reception, workshop tour and special Mixed Mess Dinner hosted by 1 Service Battalion in Edmonton Alberta. When he was introduced during dinner as our Association's only WWII Alberta member, he received a standing ovation and spent the remainder of the evening surrounded by young serving members and their wives, who couldn't hear enough of his "real" war stories.

Spencer Wood was and is a credit to the Royal Canadian Electrical Mechanical Engineers and remains a most remarkable Canadian Veteran of whom we should all be proud.

# WWII Armourer, A Craftsman's Story

By MWO Shawn McNicholl (ret'd) and WO Dan Ferland



Mel Laverne was born 30 September 1923, in Haileybury Ontario, though he called Ottawa his hometown. In March 1942 at the age of 18, Mel joined the local Combat Engineer militia reserve unit in Ottawa. However, a month later, 30 April 1942, he enlisted for active service with the Canadian Army. His first assignment was at the Ottawa Armouries (Cartier Drill Hall) as a technician servicing telescopes in the electrical department's instrumentation repair shop. He also performed armourer duties engraving serial numbers and nomenclature on Vickers Machine Guns. A few months later Mel was accepted into the armourer trade and went to the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps (RCOC) School at Kingston Ontario for trades training, 15 July 1942. Mel then took his basic training at Cornwall, Ontario #31 C.A. (B) T.C. (Canadian Army Basic Training Center) 19 December 1942 - 23 February 1943. In April 1943, he was stationed to Halifax as an armourer,

tasked with servicing and preparing weapons equipment for shipment overseas. On 25 August 1943, Mel received his overseas orders and was shipped off to England, on the Queen Elizabeth 1 troopship. With less than a month in England, Mel was deployed to the Italy Theater of operations, and set sail 14 November 1943. To dodge persistent enemy threats in the Mediterranean, they staged out of Algiers prior to heading into Naples 14 December 1943.

In Italy, Mel was stationed at a re-enforcement holding unit in Avellino. This unit moved around regularly to various locations as reinforcements were drawn. At this time, the Canadian Corps and the allies were still dealing with a very stubborn German defensive line to the extent that service support RCME soldiers were also taking a good number of casualties. Mel even recalled two armourers being killed in action just prior to him being called forward on 26 February 1944. Mel was posted to the 5th Canadian Armoured Brigade Workshop, which supported the 5th Canadian Armoured Division. He linked up with his new unit in a town west of Ortona. As an armourer, he worked extensively on Enfield No4 Rifles, pistols, Projector Infantry Anti-Tank (PIAT) launchers, 2 inch mortars, Sten guns, Bren guns, as well as the Browning medium machine guns and .50 calibre machine guns on the tanks. He recalled performing plenty of first level repairs, cannibalization and battle damage repairs, and of course doing the odd guard duty. That year Mel's

Workshop moved with the brigade all the way up through Italy until they reached Leghorn (near Pisa). While on operations, Mel, a RCOC technician, became a member of the RCME 15 May 1944.

On 25 February 1945, with Italy behind them, his unit ferried from Leghorn on large tank landing ships (LST) into Marseille France. The Corps then moved north to link up with the rest of the 1st Canadian Army, where they took



some well-deserved rest in Paris while their Division was held in reserve. On 7 March 1945, their Division moved up through Belgium and finally took up a position in Canadian held Holland on 4 April 1945.

After VE Day, Mel stayed on in Europe and was stationed in Groningen, Netherlands (NL) as a part of the stabilization force. There, he spent his time upgrading his education; however, during that time, Mel became very ill and was evacuated back through a number of hospitals in theater, and ending up in a UK hospital for treatment. Mel returned to Groningen, but was eventually repatriated to Canada via England in February 1946 on the Queen Mary troopship. Craftsman Mel Laverne then took



his discharge from the Canadian Army on 25 February 1946. Anecdote: Mel described some of the conditions in Italy as a bit austere and recalled how the issued hard rations were less than desirable and that it took a bit of local red wine to wash it down. They learned the many ways to «savour» bully beef rations (boiled, fried, cold, hot, etc.). So it was no surprise when Mel told us that his fondest memory in Italy was when one day their group was treated to a nice meal by the locals in exchange for cigarettes. The villagers served them up an enjoyable cuisine of a homemade pasta dinner with roast pigeon and of course, red wine.

After the Army, Mel stayed in Ottawa where in 1949 he met his wife Doris. They now have two daughters, five grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Mel and Doris currently reside just outside of the National Capital Region, nestled in a very rural part of Lanark County, along the Mississippi Lake (between Perth and Carleton Place).

Mel is one of our senior veteran armourers; so we sure did appreciate Mel taking the time to share with us his war stories, pictures and this great piece of RCEME and Weapons Technician history.

Arte et Marte  
To The Warrior His Arms



## RCEME Museum Grand Opening

In military operations, preparations, logistical support, command and control are essential to a mission's success. The opening of the RCEME Museum in Kingston is no exception. A small but determined group coordinated and handled all the activities required to take the museum from idea to realization. Significant effort was expended to obtain the necessary funding, granted in September 2013.

Thanks to a separate fund for the C&E Museum expansion, joint teams led by BGen Pep Frazer (Ret'd)—the C & E team (Mike Denoble, Lloyd Tien, Maj Craig Coish, Sylvain Bouffard, Tony Fequet and Dan Potvin) and the RCEME team (Andrew Nellestyn, Tom Temple and Gilles Nappert)—worked tirelessly to develop the Statement of Requirement (SOR) for the expansion. In consultation with base engineering personnel and Scott Babcock of Defence Construction Canada (DCC), they finalized the SOR, which initiated the contracting process. In March 2014, the contractor started construction, finishing in December 2014.

Once the expansion had been completed, the RCEME team, along with Yves Lessieur and Gary Dzeoba, developed another SOR, this time to produce and implement the layout for the RCEME Museum. They completed the SOR in May 2015 and chose the concept proposed by Groupe GID shortly thereafter. Groupe GID then developed the overall plan for the Museum, including the mix of artifacts to fill the 3,000 square feet of exhibition space. After more than ten months of research, identification and selection of artifacts, the plan came together. While Groupe GID started construction, the Museum team coordinated with numerous RCEME and supporting elements to fill in gaps by preparing the “right” artifacts for movement and collected them in Kingston, with tremendous support from C&E Museum staff. Although



not finished, work on the RCEME Museum was far enough along that it could be opened on the eve of the 72nd anniversary of the RCEME Corps.



Over 100 people, including dignitaries, guests, serving and retired RCEME members and their families, attended the long-awaited event. The list of dignitaries included MGen Alex Patch, MGen Creber (Ret'd), BGen Pep Fraser (Ret'd), Col Kelby Hamilton (ret'd), Col Stephen Kelsey (BComd Kingston), Col Rob Dundon (RCEME Heritage Committee chair), CWO Dan Dubuc, CWO Terry Garand (Base CWO), Francoise Gagnon (ADGA Group CEO) and John Jarvis (ADGA Group chair). The event started around 11 a.m. with a reception in the Mercury Room, with refreshments courtesy of the ADGA Group.

In their speeches, colonels Temple and Nellestyn thanked the museum, RCCEME and C&E teams for their excellent work in making the RCEME Museum a reality. They also underscored the achievements and contributions of two very special guests in atten-

dance at the event, Maj Dwayne Atkinson, who was mentioned in dispatches and received a commendation for his actions in Somalia, and Sgt Erik Poelzer, who received the Medal of Military Valour for his courage under enemy fire in Afghanistan. Both had agreed to let their experiences be part of the five stories featured in the museum's honours and awards section. Their actions, and the actions of those serving with them, illustrate the dedication of all CAF soldiers in situations of conflict.

Following the speeches, the dignitaries and attendees moved to the new wing for the highly anticipated opening. Col Nellestyn, assisted by Col Hamilton, cut the chain painted in RCEME colours to officially open the museum. For the event, the RCEME community had responded to the call to produce a craft piece, showcasing the skill of RCEME technicians, for display in a prominent location at the entrance to the RCEME Museum. Further to a selection process, RCEME personnel at Valcartier received the very special honour of having their piece placed at the museum entrance. LCol Devon Matsella (OPI Craft Artifact Process) and WO Sévigny (a Valcartier team member) were in attendance for the unveiling of the piece.

The RCEME Museum welcomes all those who would like to see a marvelous collection of artifacts that represent the technological advancements in military equipment and the RCEME technicians who have been handling maintenance since World War I. The impressive exhibit features graphic art, videos, real armaments and computerized stories of the

RCEME Corps, from its beginnings to the present.





## Last Call

28 June 2015: Benjamin C. Mathers

18 July 2015: Lorne George Garbet

19 August 2015: Robert E. Tellenbach

28 August 2015: Douglas Gordon Wilson

29 August 2015: Major Cliff Churchill (ret'd)

2 October 2015: Maurice James Drysdale

13 October 2015: MCpl Joseph Bilocq (ret'd)

26 October 2015: Col Robert Gorgon Kelly (ret'd)

4 November 2015: WO Brian Shail (ret'd)

12 November 2015: MWO Gerald Gordon Bellefontaine (ret'd)

16 November 2015: James Brown Hedley

21 November 2015: LCol Walter Ratz (ret'd)

26 November 2015: WO Paul Blanchette (ret'd)

6 December 2015: WO Edward "Ted" Richards (ret'd)

13 December 2015: George Perley Lindsay

7 January 2016: CWO Donald Vincent Grantham (ret'd)

11 January 2016: Sgt Warren Burke (ret'd)

11 January 2016: CWO Carl "Perry" MacDonald (ret'd)

7 April 2016: CWO Barry Mooney (ret'd)

28 April 2016: Maurice "Gerry" Gerald Gagne

01 May 2016: MCpl Alain D'Anjou (ret'd)

23 May 2016: Donald Thomas MacLean

1 June 2016: Wayne Rowen

3 June 2016: Capt James Lawrence (ret'd)

3 June 2016: Iris Halfpenny

14 June 2016: MWO José Vaillancourt (ret'd)

5 August 2016: MCpl Colin McDonald (ret'd)