

Armoured DP 4 SSM 2013

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As part of its mandate to deliver individual training for the Armoured Corps, the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps School (RCACS) conducts the Armoured DP 4 SSM course for Armoured Warrant Officers from both the Regular and Reserve Force. The RCACS utilizes various techniques and capabilities in order to accomplish this task, comprising of classroom instruction, simulation, TEWTs, field demos and field traces. This approach enables the RCACS to deliver a balanced, comprehensive and dynamic course package. This in turn gives students the tools needed to tackle the assessed field trace portion of the course in order to effectively command an armoured echelon in operations.

The initial portion of the course consisted of classroom instruction on the echelon system, duties of a Squadron Sergeant Major, and the command team relationship among other topics. A written test was issued, resulting in various humorous responses to questions which, due to the nature of this article, must unfortunately be redacted.

Following the theoretical aspect, the course moved into simulation, using the Combat Training Center's (CTC), Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulation (JCATS) to replicate tactical scenarios. These scenarios enabled the DP4 students to implement advice, experiences and knowledge gained during the theoretical portion, as well as try out new ideas and concepts. The use of simulation provided visual as well as conceptual tools, resulting in real time, recordable data for use by staff and students.



WO Kevin Theriault (left) lays out the plan, with (from left to right) MWO Mike Paquet, WO Richard Spratley and WO Marcel Chenier look on.

On the completion of the garrison portion of the course, it was time to move to the training area to conduct the assessed traces and put the newfound knowledge into practice. In order to ensure the widest possible

dissemination of the following information, it is necessary to provide a relay to enhance communications with our audience..."18A move to the top of the 220 feature, move now, out". With our lines of communications fully open, the field portion was really the "bread and butter" of the course, giving the students the opportunity to deal with various tasks and unforeseen events arising during the conduct of a recce and tank operations. Events included issues and challenges such as communications failures behind the Line of Departure (LD), broken down vehicles and vehicles getting bogged in rough terrain (take a breath 11, we're coming). Add the friction points of weather, tempo and real time vehicle issues, these traces provided both a challenge and a positive learning outcome for the student being assessed. The traces also provided the opportunity for the other students to learn and consider what they may have done differently. Perhaps the

biggest facilitator of the learning and mentoring process was the midday soup provided at the conclusion of the day's first trace. As

the first step of the After Action Review (AAR) process, nothing could begin until everyone had a cup of soup.



The A Echelon waiting for tasks from the student SSM, WO Kevin King (in vehicle).

The end of the field portion saw all the students having completed 2 traces, and surprisingly enough for a combined age of 337 years of experience, only one heart attack (exercise, exercise, exercise). In the immortal words of one of my course mates...“that’s a big Echo, November, Delta”.



The A Echelon ready to move forward.