

## DP 3 Armour Reconnaissance Patrol Commander 0038

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On 14 Jan 13, 24 soldiers from across the Armour Corps found themselves assembled together for what is arguably the most important course an armour crewman will undergo in their careers. The Armour Reconnaissance Patrol Commander (ARPC) qualification was the common goal for all candidates to achieve over the next month. The aim and end state of holding such an important and valuable qualification seemed daunting, yet exciting to all the candidates.



On the first week of course, the candidates quickly realized that there was little time for easing into the training plan. The learning curve was a straight incline with the main effort focused on the responsibilities and duties of a Patrol Commander. The first few days in the classroom were long and the evenings were spent studying and rehearsing battle procedure and all of the encompassed complexities. It was only five days into the course that every student on the course was ready to challenge the final written exam with all of their new found knowledge. After a successful week in garrison, it was time for the troops to head out to the field in order to test their theoretical abilities with a practical exercise.

The field portion of this course is something that the seasoned instructors of the ARPC are quite passionate about. Collectively, their previous consensus was that there was room for improving the curriculum. As a result, a new training plan was developed and adopted in order to maximize the students' opportunity to command and control an armour reconnaissance patrol. With the mentorship, direction and guidance from the

instructors, the course was to culminate with each student receiving eight traces to include two daunting ten hour evaluations.



During the field portion, the course experienced extreme weather, vehicle breakdowns, some minor injuries and the restrictive terrain of CFB Gagetown. It had become obvious to all the candidates how critical it was to have a solid plan and a few

additional courses of actions in their back pocket. Frustration was a huge factor for many candidates during the first few traces, however, it quickly faded away as they realised how to become effective in their own way. It was during the third week of course when the sound of laughter echoed throughout the barracks in the evening, which was a clear indication that candidates were beginning to enjoy and understand what was unfolding on the battlefield.

Now that the candidates understood what was expected of them as an armour reconnaissance Patrol Commander, it was time to glue the pieces together in order to pass their final traces. The final assessments were complex, yet realistic of what any given armour patrol may be expected to perform on operations; whether it be in a hostile environment or in a peacekeeping setting. The candidates were up before sunrise preparing their crews and vehicles for what was going to be a very intense day. Long before sunrise, a full set of orders was issued by their respective Troop Leaders. It was now time for each prospective Patrol Commander to develop and execute his own plan using the tools and experiences acquired over the last few weeks. Progress was made, respective routes had been tracked, known enemies had been engaged or killed, local infrastructure had been assessed, various combat assets had been employed and the main effort was almost accomplished before the Patrol Commanders received a hasty set of fragmentation orders over the radio. At this point, the Patrol Commander had to quickly re-evaluate their plan and develop a new course of action for their series of ensuing tasks. Towards the end of the trace all patrols found themselves in a screen overlooking a known area of interest. Thankfully, the candidates were all relieved after what felt like a never ending day was finally over and they found themselves in the Squadron Sergeant Major's running resupply in order to consolidate with the other patrols.

After accomplishing what seemed to be insurmountable just a few weeks ago, the candidates were proud and confident after completing their last trace. There is no doubt that the Armour School and its instructors have prepared, developed and moulded a new batch of Armour Reconnaissance Patrol Commanders that are professional, competent, reliable and eager to perform their future missions.

