

## Patrol Pathfinder Course Revamped!

### Capt Max Shields

The Patrol Pathfinder (PPF) Course, long hailed as one of the most challenging and demanding course in the Canadian Army is undergoing a major redesign. For many years, the course had been criticized for its loss of focus and extremely high failure rates. The perceived overlap in skill sets with the Advanced Reconnaissance Patrolman (Adv Recce) Course has further exacerbated the issue. As a result, commanders have been reluctant to send candidates to attend the course, leading to the cancellation of this year's PPF serial.

As the saying goes, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. This adversity has prompted the Canadian Forces Land Advanced Warfare Centre's (CFLAWC) PPF cell, under the keen supervision of Warrant Officer Sebastien Roy, to create a leaner and much more focused program.

Taking the PPF course from its current 12-week format, he has refined the program into an 8-week session concentrating on advanced methods of insertion for land forces. The new program is divided into three distinct phases and was created with a view to being entirely complimentary to the training provided by the Adv Recce Course.



*The PPF Course maintains the army's only submarine-based operations capability.*

The three phases of training see the candidates operating in a wide variety of environments. The first phase has them learning and employing ground-based methods of insertion such as dismounted patrolling, establishing landing zones, drop zones and austere airstrips. The second phase will deal with amphibious operations such as establishing beach heads, swimming from warships and most notably conducting operations from submarines.

Although the current operational context has narrowed our primary target audience to the special operations community, the training remains open to the Regular Force. Indeed, many of the skills instructed remain pertinent to battle group operations in both conventional and unconventional contexts and will be invaluable to an eventual Maritime Amphibious Unit's preparation of the battlefield.



*The PPF are essential to the safe and effective establishment of Drop Zones behind enemy lines.*

As for the course's infamous reputation, we hope to leave it securely in the past by embracing the philosophy that the PPF Course trains a highly-technical skill set. Therefore, training smart is infinitely more important and valuable than training hard. In fact, we aim to achieve a 100% candidate success rate by training smart and hard. Will it still be demanding? Absolutely, as it is the only means by which Pathfinders lead the way!



*The PPF can establish austere airstrips to allow a force to quickly bring substantial forces and supplies into an isolated operations area.*