

39 COMBAT ENGINEER REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Change is a constant in the Army, and change has come to 39 CER with change of Command. 39 CER has new Commanding Officer. A Change of Command is more than a passing of the torch in the Reserves; it is a sign of strength these as there are some units struggling to grow their CO's from within their own unit or from their own corps.

39 CER was well served by LCol Piers and we are looking forward to guidance of LCol Gower.

Chimo,

Bill Wenman
President

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Promotions

On Saturday 12 September 2026 before the change of command parade, LCol Piers had the honour to make the following promotions:

LCol Gower
WO Boechler
Sgt Coombs
MCpl Rodgers
MCpl Aikema
MCpl Giesbrecht
Cpl Wagg

Medals

On Saturday 12 September 2026 before the change of command parade, LCol Piers had the honour to present the following medals:

MCpl Getz – CD
Capt Miklas – CD
MCpl Ha – OSM (Operational Service Medal)

Awards

On Saturday 12 September 2026 before the change of command parade, LCol Piers had the honour to present the CO's Cup to Maj Henry Helmer-Smith



This year's recipient of the CO's Cup is Maj Henry Helmer-Smith

CHANGE OF COMMAND – 12 SEPTEMBER 2026

On Saturday 12 September 2026, 39 CER underwent a change of Command at the Col Roger Kenwood St-John OMM, CD Armoury in Chilliwack.

Biography of Outgoing CO - Lieutenant-Colonel Stephen Piers, CD

Lieutenant-Colonel Stephen Piers was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, on 14 Sept 1979. He enrolled in the Primary Reserve on 12 February 1998 as a Sapper with 6th Field Engineer Squadron (6 FES). He completed Basic Training in Wainwright, Alberta, followed by trades training at the Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering (CFSME) in Gagetown, New Brunswick. During his early service, he paraded part-time with 6 FES while completing a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at the University of Victoria, graduating in 2005.

In the fall of 2006, then-Sergeant Piers was commissioned to Lieutenant and returned to CFSME for officer training. From 2008 to 2013, he served with 6 Engineer Squadron (6 ES)-now part of 39 Combat Engineer Regiment (39 CER) in roles including Troop Commander, Operations Officer, and Second-in-Command. He completed the Army Operations Course in 2014 and was appointed Officer Commanding 6 ES, and promoted to Major in 2015.

LCol Piers was appointed Deputy Commanding Officer of 39 CER in September 2020 and graduated from the Joint Command and Staff Program in June 2022. He was promoted to his current rank and appointed Commanding Officer of 39 CER on September 10th 2022.

His operational experience includes multiple domestic deployments, notably Operation LASER II during the national COVID-19 response. In 2019, he deployed to Ukraine as the Officer/NCO Development Group Commander on Rotation 8 of Operation UNIFIER.

In his civilian career, LCol Piers serves as a Director with the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness. He lives in North Vancouver with his wife, Lucy, and their two sons, William and Matthew.

Biography of Incoming CO - Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Gower, CD

LCol Gower was born in Prince George, British Columbia, on 26 April 1974. He enrolled through the Regular Officer Training Plan in 1991 and was commissioned upon graduation from Royal Military College of Canada with a Bachelor of Civil Engineering in May 1996. He served at 1 CER including deploying on Op ASSISTANCE and Op RECUPERATION and a year as heavy equipment Troop Commander. He also served in RP Ops Roles in both Suffield and Edmonton. Following service as a Combat Engineer Officer, he retired from the Canadian Armed Forces in April 2002 with the rank of Captain before re-enrolling with 39 CER in April 2016.

In his civilian career, LCol Gower is an almost retired partner with Wedler Engineering LLP, a consulting engineering firm where he has led the Courtenay branch office since 2007. He previously worked with the firm in Chilliwack and then Abbotsford from 2005 to 2006.

Since rejoining the Canadian Armed Forces, LCol Gower has served with 39 Combat Engineer Regiment (39 CER), beginning as the Regimental Intelligence Officer, which was the same role he first filled in the regular force at 1 CER. He has subsequently held several key command and staff appointments, including 2IC 6 Engineer Squadron, Officer Commanding 6 Engineer Squadron and Deputy Commanding Officer of 39 CER. In 2025, he deployed as the J1 at Task Force-Middle East Headquarters in Amman, Jordan on R26-01 of Op AMARNA.

LCol Gower resides in British Columbia with his wife Camille, who also works for the Canadian Armed Forces as the managing editor of the 19 Wing Totem Times newspaper. Their son Cole recently joined the Canadian Armed Forces and is posted to 19 Material Support Squadron where he works as a material management technician at 442 Transport and Rescue Squadron, Comox.



LCol Andrew Gower assuming command from LCol Stephen Piers under the watchful eyes of the Brigade RSM CWO A. Harris, Brigade Commander Col P.A. Lindsay and 39 CER RSM CWO Shane Batch.

LCol Stephen Piers' Remarks

Colonel Lindsay, Chief Warrant Officer Roberts, MLA's Warbus and Maahs, Councillor Lum, Honoraries, fellow Command Teams, our many honoured guests, friends and family of the Regiment, and of course Sappers of 39 Combat Engineer Regiment—

What an honour and privilege it has been to serve as your Commanding Officer for these past four years.

On 10 September 2022, we gathered here under smoky skies. Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth the second was lying in state. After two burdensome years, the isolation and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic were finally coming to an end. Russia was six months into its failed invasion of Ukraine, reshaping the landscape of rule-based order, peace and security. Despite what could fairly be described as unsettling times, this Regiment persevered. You rose to every challenge—because that is what 39 CER exists to do, trains to do, and stands ready to do: citizen soldiers, Reserve Combat Engineers, committed to serve Canada whenever and wherever the call.

Over these four years, the Regiment has pushed hard and achieved a great deal. Some highlights for me include:

- Re-establishing Exercise Paladin Response, hosting this infamous engineer concentration for three consecutive years and bringing it back stronger than ever after the pandemic.
- Exercise Cougar Castle, conducting rafting operations on the Fraser River alongside the 671st U.S. Engineer Battalion and reinforcing an important relationship with a trusted ally.
- Exercise Fireweed Sapper, Whitehorse, Yukon, firesmarting Camp Boyle—where we cut, limbed, and stacked over one thousand trees in seven days. Early morning views of the Northern lights and experiencing first-hand the vast landscape of our great North. It was a tremendous accomplishment and a unique training opportunity, keeping community and infrastructure safe from the ever-present wildfire threat.
- Our Expeditionary Deployments, with more than 60 personnel deployed across six named operations and ten countries.
- The many individual and team accomplishments from so many of you earning top candidate on your career courses, dominating fitness challenges (to quote the commander), completing Mountain Ram and earning the Expert Soldier Badge.
- And of course - the constant grind - behind the scenes – the work that makes it all happen—the countless hours, weeks, and months spent administering, planning, adjusting, and refining our efforts to meet assigned tasks and ensure the best opportunities for our soldiers.

I want to thank the leadership who supported me throughout my tenure. Colonel Lindsay and Colonel Raesler—your confidence, support, and guidance have been invaluable. You allowed me to remain mission-focused and bring out the best in this Regiment in support of the Brigade, the Division, and the Canadian Army.

To my fellow Command Teams—the COs and RSMs of 39 Brigade—it has been a privilege to serve alongside such a talented and dedicated group. Thank you for your support and camaraderie.

To both of my RSMs, Chief Warrant Officer Batch and Chief Warrant Officer (Ret'd) Rochlow: your candour, counsel, and unwavering commitment to the Regiment and its soldiers were invaluable throughout my command.

RSM Batch, I'll always remember walking into your office in the middle of yet another problem and to see awards, coins, and presentations neatly laid out, each labelled for its recipient. It was a simple but fitting reminder that a little organization can bring calm to most situations.

To my Honorary Colonels, past and present: each of you brought a unique perspective to the role. Your dedication, support, and genuine curiosity enriched our organization and strengthened our connection to the communities we serve. Thank you for your steadfast commitment, wise counsel, and for championing the Regiment at every opportunity.

To the 39 CER Association—Bill Wenman and Directors, Achim for keeping the newsletter alive—and to Museum President Bill Diamond and team: thank you for your continued work strengthening the Regiment and preserving its rich history.

To the incoming Commanding Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Gower—Andrew, you stand at the threshold of command. The Regiment is as ready as ever to face whatever comes next. There will be many challenges, whether personnel or resources, but as the late General Colin Powell famously reminded us, “It ain’t as bad as you think. It will look better in the morning.” His belief that perpetual optimism is a force multiplier will serve you well through the most challenging times. Your preparation, dedication, commitment, and professional acumen will carry you confidently into command. I wish you every success.

To my family—my wife Lucy and our sons William and Matthew, my parents Jim and Sandra, and my sister Christine—what can I say? Missed family events, hours on the phone, late nights, and constant weekends away. Your patience and support have allowed me to serve to the best of my ability, and for that I am profoundly grateful.

Finally, to the members of 39 Combat Engineer Regiment: your accomplishments have been exceptional. As your shepherd over these past four years, it has been an honour to serve with you and to help create opportunities for each of you to master your trade, grow as leaders, and push beyond your comfort zone. I could not have asked for a better team.

To my full-time staff—your discipline, endurance, and absolute commitment keep this Regiment moving. The race never ends, and neither do you.

As I’ve said many times: you will only get out of the Army Reserve what you put into it. Get after it. Continue to better yourselves and each other. Master your trade. Seek and accept leadership opportunities. And to those high-mileage sappers—pass on your knowledge relentlessly. May your bridges always stand and your charges never fail.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

CHIMO.

CO’s Gift To The Regiment



LCol Piers presented a sword and a case to hold and display the CO's Sword. The sword is new and his gift to the regiment with the inscription "*Commanding Officer's Sword - 39 Combat Engineer Regiment*" with adjacent cap badges at the base (forte) of the sword.

LCol Andrew Gower's Remarks

Good afternoon. Colonel Lindsay; Chief Wallace, MLAs Warbus and Maahs, Councillor Lum; distinguished guests; members of the Regimental family; fellow commanders; sappers and friends of sappers, thank you for joining us today.

First, I would like to thank Colonel Lindsay for presiding over this Change of Command ceremony. Sir, your presence today means a great deal, and I am grateful for your leadership and support.

It is a tremendous honour and privilege to assume command of 39 Combat Engineer Regiment.

I do so with a deep appreciation for the generations of leaders and sappers who have built this Regiment over the years. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the former CO's, OC's, RSM, and SSM with us today. Your leadership, vision, and stewardship have shaped the Regiment we inherit and the Regiment we will continue to build.

Before looking ahead, I would like to recognize Lieutenant-Colonel Stephen Piers. For nearly twenty-nine years, he has served this Regiment with distinction, progressing from private to Lieutenant-Colonel, commanding at every level from section to regiment.

Steve, today is a proud occasion, but I expect it is also a somewhat bittersweet one. After nearly three decades of service to 39 CER, you are moving on. I know this Regiment has been central to Steve's military career and to many of the friendships, challenges, and accomplishments that have defined it.

On behalf of the members of 39 Combat Engineer Regiment, thank you for your leadership, mentorship, and unwavering dedication to the Regiment. The foundation you leave behind is a strong one, and we wish you every success as you move on to your next chapter.

To the soldiers, Sappers, NCOs, and officers of 39 CER: it is a tremendous privilege to stand before you today and assume command of this Regiment. Over the past ten years, I have had the opportunity to serve alongside many of you and to witness firsthand the professionalism, technical excellence, and dedication that define this unit. Whether supporting domestic operations, contributing to Canadian Armed Forces missions at home and abroad, or executing individual and collective training, you consistently demonstrate the highest standards of our profession.

As citizen-soldiers, you balance military service with civilian careers, education, family responsibilities, and community commitments. Yet, whenever called upon, you step forward to serve. That dedication is remarkable, and it is one of the defining strengths of both this Regiment and the Primary Reserve.

I would also like to recognize the families, loved ones, and employers who support the members of 39 CER. Your encouragement, flexibility, and dedication make our service possible. While our members wear the uniform, they do not serve alone.

As I assume command today, I do so with humility and with confidence in the strength of this Regiment. My commitment to you is simple: to support your development, to uphold our standards, and to ensure we remain ready to meet whatever challenges lie ahead.

En terminant, j'aimerais remercier ma famille.

Camille, merci pour ton amour, ton soutien et ta patience. Au fil des années, tu as partagé les exigences du service militaire, les nombreux déplacements, les longues soirées et les absences. Tu as toujours été à mes côtés et je n'aurais pas atteint cette étape sans toi.

Je suis également profondément reconnaissant envers mes parents, Ean et Jane, ainsi qu'envers ma belle-mère, Tina (qui n'est pas ici au jour d'hui à cause d'un Alaska Cruise), pour leur amour, leurs encouragements et leur soutien constant envers notre famille.

Et à mon fils, Cole, je veux dire à quel point je suis fier de toi. Voir que tu as choisi de servir à ton tour dans les Forces armées canadiennes est une immense source de fierté pour moi.

Merci à vous tous d'être ici aujourd'hui, sauf Tina, et de partager ce moment avec moi.

To all the sappers and friends of sappers gathered here today, thank you for your confidence and trust. I look forward to continuing to serve alongside the members of 39 Combat Engineer Regiment as we build on our proud history and continue to serve Canada and British Columbia with distinction.

CHIMO!

39 CER Regimental Mess Dinner

On September 12, 2026 the 39 CER Regimental family gathered for the Regimental Mess Dinner. There were 64 guests, which included both current and retired members. The dinner was a success, with members of the mess gracefully volunteering to make several presentations and performances during the dinner service. The dinner concluded with the Loyal Toast, a Toast

to the Regiment, and the Toast to the Fallen. Of note, the first time the Regiment toasted His Majesty was on September 10th, 2022, 2 days after Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II passed. It's likely that on that occasion, 39 CER was the first unit to formally give The Loyal Toast to His Majesty King Charles III, a proud moment in 39 CER's history. With the high tempo of training, operations, civilian employment, and life, it's always a blessing to have the opportunity to gather as a regimental family. Shown below is the Regimental Photo for the 39 CER Regimental Mess Dinner. Chimo!



COMMAND POSITIONS

CO: LCol Piers (until 12 Sept), LCol A.R. Gower (12 Sept onwards)

DCO: LCol A.R. Gower (until 12 Sept), Maj C.A. Scott (12 Sept onwards)

RSM: CWO S.R.C Batch

Adjutant: Captain C. Bonnett (until 30 Sept), Capt L. Starratt (30 Sept onwards)

Chaplain: Capt L. Bae

OC 6 ES: Maj P. Kwok

OC 54 ES: Maj P. Kwok

SSM 54 ES: MWO J.C. Mader

SSM 6 ES: MWO H. Park

OC 44 ES: Maj H.S. Helmer-Smith

SSM 44 ES: MWO M.J.P. Gagnon

OC Admin Sqn: Maj N. French

SSM Admin Sqn: TBD

Regt Ops / 54 ES Ops WO: WO A.B. Trowbridge

6 ES Op: WO M. Evans

44 ES Ops: Sgt A. Hunt

CHRA: PO1 K. Morrison

HCol: Aleem Bandali

HLCol: Rebecca Weatherford

HONORARY-COLONEL – ALEEM BANDALI



Mr. Aleem Bandali leads the MNP Corporate Finance team in Vancouver, British Columbia, advising clients on divestitures, mergers, acquisitions, equity and debt financing, and capital restructuring.

He has worked on transactions valued up to \$13 billion in Canada, the U.S., and internationally.

Mr. Bandali holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Oregon College of Business, a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Oregon School of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of British Columbia. He has also completed the Harvard Business School Mergers and Acquisitions Program for Executives and Managers.

He is actively involved in the community as Treasurer and Director of Alumni UBC and serves on the advisory committee of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

Previously, he served as a board member of the BC Paraplegic Foundation, contributed to the KidSafe fundraising committee, and mentored emerging leaders through the UBC Executive Mentorship Program.

In October 2015, Mr. Bandali was recognized by Business in Vancouver as one of the Top Forty Under 40 for his professional achievements and community contributions.

Outside of work Mr. Bandali manages his family's farms, one of the largest chicken and egg operations in BC, and enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons, attending sporting events, and travelling.

DEPUTY COMMANDING OFFICER - MAJ CHRIS SCOTT



Maj Chris Scott is an Infantry Officer who comes to us after a recent tour in Iraq advising their Armed Forces. He has served in the PPCLI, Calgary Highlanders and Canadian Scottish Regiment since 1991. Having previously attended Ex Paladin Response as an OC Admin Squadron, he is now taking on the role of lead planner, as well as more routine unit duties include Non Public Funds. He very much looks forward to closer experience with Combat Engineers, who have long fascinated him for their diabolical creativity, resourcefulness, and determination to get the job done.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

This summer was a busy period for the Regiment. Below is a list of the courses that members undertook, taskings members filled, and deployments served in.

Courses

BMQ Chilliwack - 27 Apr – 28 May 2026	1 x student
BMQ Chilliwack - 2 Jul – 1 Aug 2026	3 x students
BEOC 1.1 Gagetown - 20 May – 22 Aug	1 x student
RQ Corporal – DL, Mods 1&3 20 May – 28 Aug 2026	2 x students
RQ Corporal All Mods Gagetown 20 May – 28 Aug 2026	2 x students
BMOQ-A Gagetown - 19 May – 28 Jul 2026	3 x students
RQ Sapper 2601 As Gagetown - 25 May – 14 Jul 2026	6 x students
RQ Sapper 2601 Bs + Mod 6 Gagetown - 15 Jul – 31 Aug 2026	2 x students
RQ Sapper 2601 Mod 6 Gagetown - 1-3 Sep 2026	3 x students
CMD-B Gagetown - 3 Jul – 11 Aug 2026	1 x student
CMD-A Florida - 25 June 2026 – 4 Feb 2027	3 x student
RQ Sapper 2604 As Gagetown - 16 Jul – 7 Sep 2026	2 full, 9 partial students
RQ SAPPER 2605 Bs Gagetown - 8 Sep – 26 Oct 2026	5 x students
RQ SAPPER 2605 Mod 6 Gagetown - 27-29 Oct	9 x students
RQ Sgt Gagetown - Oct - May 2026	4 x student
ISCC Shilo - Apr – 12 Jun 2026	1 x student
PLQ Mod 2 Chilliwack - 04 - 14 May 2026	4 x students
PLQ Mod 3 Shilo/Wainwright/Edmonton- 19 May – 10 June 2026	4 x students
EJLC Shilo - 11 Jun – 6 Jul 2026	7 x students



Cpl Crane on left won the esprit de corps award and Cpl Nicolson on the right top candidate on their DP2 course CFSME RETS at CTC Gagetown

Course Taskings

BEOC 1.1 Gagetown - 20 May – 22 Aug 2026 1 x Instructor
RQ Sapper 2601 As Gagetown - 25 May – 14 Jul 2026 5 x Instructors
RQ Sapper 2601 Bs + Mod 6 Gagetown - 15 Jul – 31 Aug + 1-3 Sep 2026 1 x Instructor
BMQ Chilliwack - 2 Jul – 1 Aug 2026 1 Instructor
RQ Sapper 2604 As Gagetown - 16 Jul – 7 Sep 202 11 – 2 full, 9 partial Instructors
RQ SAPPER 2605 Bs + Mod 6 Gagetown - 8 Sep – 26 Oct +27-29 Oct 1 x Instructors
RQ Sgt Gagetown - Oct 2025 - May 2026 1 x Instructor
EJLC Shilo - 11 Jun – 6 Jul 1 x Instructor

Deployments

Op UNIFIER - Europe	1 Jan – 30 Jun 2026	8 x pers
Op REASSURANCE PDT - Latvia	15 Dec 2025 – 15 Jun 2026	1 pers
Op AMARNA - Kuwait	29 Dec 2025 – 15 Apr 2026	1 pers



A whole bunch of the Op Amarna team that deployed last year. Left to right – Maj Henry Helmer-Smith, Maj Chris Scott, MCpl Diana Tai, Capt Ryan DiFine, LCol Andrew Gower, Capt Stephen Stamp, Sgt Alden Heslip.

Exercises

Ex MOUNTAIN RAM - Edmonton - 2-5 Jun	2 pers
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Ex COUGAR EXPERT - Ft Lewis, WA - 14-28 Jun
Ex WESTERN SABRE 26 - Wainwright - 21-30 Aug

4 pers
15 pers

EXERCISES

Ex COUGAR EXPERT – 14-28 June 2006 – 39 CER Participation

39 CBG sent seven members to Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) in Washington State to train with 81st Stryker Bde Combat Team (Washington Army National Army Guard) for seven days intensive work up training before the exercise. There were 651 candidates who trained and attempted to obtain either the Expert Infantry Badge or the Expert Soldier Badge. Due to task conditions/standards a candidate could only receive 2X “no go”s on a lane and then were removed from being eligible for the badge. Only approximately 80 were successful including two members from 39 CER (Capt Murseli from 6 ES and Cpl Cole from 54 ES) along with two members of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, and two from the Seaforth Highlanders. 39 CER represented the regiment, brigade, division, but also Canada and well throughout the event.



Capt Murseli (L) and Cpl Cole (R)

ROBBIE BURNS DINNER 2027

Save the date. The J.P Fell Pipes and Drums will hold their annual Robbie Burns dinner on 30 January 2027 in the 6 ES Armouries. This is a major fundraiser for the band that is integral to 39 CER events and parades.

VETERAN AFFAIRS

Our Board member David Blake-Knox Maj (Ret'd) (blake_knoxd@hotmail.com) has offered his services to assist individuals in submitting claims to Veterans Affairs. David has had success in navigating the bureaucracy in submitting his own claims and those of others.

MEMBERSHIP

For those wishing to become members of 39 CER Association, a membership form can be acquired from: membership@39cer.ca

39 CER ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

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The 39 CER Museum website can be accessed at: <http://www.39cer-museum.net/>

Recent editions of the 39 CER Newsletter can be accessed at: [39 CER Association \(39cer-museum.net\)](http://www.39cer-museum.net/). Earlier editions can be obtained from the Secretary or Editor.

For more Engineer news please visit the Canadian Military Engineer Association website at: <https://cmea-agmc.ca>