

Biography – Major Nils French, P.Eng, CD



Major Nils French enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1997. After preparatory studies in St-Jean, Quebec, Major French attended the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario, graduating in 2002. He was commissioned as a Combat Engineer Officer in the Canadian Army and then completed a year of training at the Canadian Forces School of Military Engineering in Gagetown, New Brunswick.

Major French served as a Troop Commander and Squadron Second-in-Command at 5e Régiment du génie de combat (5 Combat Engineer Regiment) in Valcartier, Quebec from 2004 to 2006. Major French then served as an Exchange Instructor at the US Army Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri from 2006 to 2008. In 2009, Major French deployed as the Engineer Planning Officer for the Canadian Task Force Headquarters in Kandahar, Afghanistan. In 2010 and 2011, Major French commanded 13 Armoured Engineer Squadron at 1 Combat Engineer Regiment in Edmonton, Alberta and also served temporarily as the unit's Deputy Commanding Officer. Major French then completed a sponsored postgraduate degree in Monterey, California. Upon completion of his studies in 2013, he served as a strategic analyst and planner at Canadian Special Operations Forces Command in Ottawa where also spent several months as the Executive Assistant to the Commander. In 2016, Major French attended the Australian Command and Staff College in Canberra. After his time in Australia, Major French returned to 1 Combat Engineer Regiment as the unit's Deputy Commanding Officer.

After 21 years of full-time regular force service with the Canadian Armed Forces, Major French transitioned to the reserve force in summer of 2018. In April of 2019 he assumed command of 44 Engineer Squadron. Major French also works remotely as a strategic analyst for the Canadian Joint Operations Command.

Major French holds a degree in Civil Engineering from the Royal Military College of Canada and is a licensed Professional Engineer in the Province of BC. From 2005 to 2012 he completed a Masters of Arts in Military Studies – Unconventional Warfare by distance education from the American Military University. In 2013 he completed Masters of Science in Defense Analysis – Special Operations and Irregular Warfare at the US Naval Postgraduate School, earning an outstanding thesis designation. In 2016, Major French completed a Master of Military and Defence Studies – Advanced, Art of War from the Australian National University. He also holds a graduate certificate in Counter-Terrorism Studies from the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya, Israel. He is the recipient of the Canadian Chief of Defence Staff Commendation and two US Army Commendation Medals.

In addition to his time in Afghanistan, Major French deployed on domestic operations for the Quebec ice storm of 1998 and the Manitoba floods of 2011. He was also heavily involved in the deployment of troops to British Columbia for the 2017 and 2018 wildfires and the floods of spring 2018.

Nils lives in Rossland with his wife, Kaylene, a pediatric speech-language pathologist, and their two-year-old son Ross. Nils enjoys mountain biking, trail running, downhill and Nordic skiing, freediving, and open water swimming.

