

## Miramichi workers DEW great job!

*By Sgt Todd Berry, Army News*

Miramichi, NB - With military precision, DEW Engineering and Development Limited handed the Army Health Services Group its first Bison Re-Role Ambulance, November 26.

The Bison is a 13-ton eight-wheeled armoured vehicle originally designed as an infantry section carrier.



Major-General Lise Mathieu (Director General Hospital Services/Comd CF Hosp Services Group) addresses the visitors at the Roll-out of the first Bison Ambulance variant. (Photographer: Sgt Jerry Kean)

With tensions running high around the world, it was decided in the 1990's that the Army required a wheeled armoured ambulance for foreign operations. Land Engineering Test Establishment (LETE) in Ottawa took up the task and designed and delivered eight prototype Bison Ambulances to the Somalia mission. Base Maintenance in Petawawa, Ontario reconfigured an additional fourteen Bison Ambulances for Bosnia.



Corporal Cecil Plamondon of CFB Gagetown "2 Royal Canadian Regiment" (2RCR) Medics Branch shows off the many new features and improvements to the new first Bison Ambulance. (Photographer: Sgt Jerry Kean)

It was feedback from these two operations that identified the potential for more ambulances with additional enhanced equipment. Armed with lessons learned and systems requirements, Dew Engineering forged ahead with the latest and best Bison re-role vehicle ambulance platform to date.

"As this is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of health services in the Canadian Forces, it gives me great pleasure to present to you the first Bison Ambulance," Mr. Bill Brewer, DEW Vice-President Defence Systems, said.

"It [Bison] is truly an impressive vehicle, equipped with the latest technology that will enable us to provide the support necessary to meet the health care needs of the Canadian Forces for years to come," said Major-General (MGen) Lise Mathieu, Commander, Canadian Forces Health Services Group (CF Health Svcs Gp) upon officially receiving the Bison Re-Role Ambulance.

The good news for troops in Afghanistan is "the first six ambulances would be delivered to Kabul in February 2005," said BGen Holt.



Louis Chaisson (Top), a mechanics helper and Eric Richard, Head Mechanic for the Bison Ambulance project take the new Bison Ambulance for a spin in the parking lot of their employers company, DEW Engineering and Development Limited in Mirimichi New Brunswick. (Photographer: Sgt Jerry Kean)

“In step with the evolving Army doctrine, the refurbished Bison Ambulance meets the goal of Army Transformation based on a medium weight, rapidly deployable force. It [Bison] has the power and speed to move with the Army’s fast-wheeled armour vehicle fleet in order to provide close support to units on operation. Further more, it is air transportable allowing for rapid deployment in support of Canadian Forces operations,” explained MGen Mathieu.

“Soldiers first. This was a priority for us to look after our troops on operations,” Brigadier General (BGen) Peter Holt, Director General Land Equipment Program Management (DGLPEM), said. Explaining to the audience that it was not luck that the first vehicle out of 199 Bison’s awaiting re-role was in fact an ambulance.

The vehicle has an upgraded engine power pack, new torsion bars, fittings for add-on armour, air conditioning, and a vehicle respirator system (VRS) for nuclear biological chemical (NBC) defence as well as upgraded medical equipment.

In addition to the ambulance the remaining Bison’s will be converted into the following variants: Mortar, electronic warfare, mobile repair team, maintenance and recovery and NBC reconnaissance.

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