

## Latest military alliance

Published Tuesday September 15th, 2009

### Manufacturing Miramichi's DEW Engineering inks deal with Swedish defence company

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Telegraph-Journal

TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

The world's second largest defence firm has partnered with Miramichi-based DEW Engineering and Development ULC to manufacture weapons for army vehicles in Canada and the United States.

The landmark deal with Sweden's BAE Systems Bofors allows DEW Engineering to make the LEMUR remote weapons system, an artillery technology mounted on top of armoured military vehicles.

"The remote weapons stations enable the soldiers in battle to not have to expose themselves in order to fire the weapon," said Craig Campbell, DEW Engineering's vice-president of business development. "The gun system is operated by something similar to a joystick for a PlayStation from inside the vehicle so the soldiers are safer."

The agreement comes on the heels of the Canadian Forces plan to invest \$5.2 billion to renew its fleet of land vehicles.

The upgrades to the military vehicles - including light armoured vehicles, close combat vehicles and tactical armoured patrol vehicles - could include enhanced firepower such as the remote weapons system that DEW Engineering can now manufacture.

But the deal with the Swedish arm of the global defence giant BAE Systems has implications beyond the Canadian Forces.

"The agreement applies to all of North America and we do a significant amount of business with the U.S. army," Campbell said during an interview from Ottawa.

"If they were to decide to put our weapons system on top of U.S. army striker vehicles the implications for DEW Engineering would be quite significant," he added.

"Just given the scale you can use the multiplier affect to imagine how important that would be."

The agreement is good news for DEW Engineering's Miramichi-based manufacturing facility - one of the region's largest employers. Although there are no imminent hiring plans, the deal will provide "stability for DEW employees now and in the future," Campbell said.

The deal also signals an expansion of DEW Engineering's manufacturing capabilities, which until now have focused on lightweight armour plating and the restoration of armoured military vehicles

DEW Engineering has supplied the Canadian military with vehicles and shelters since 1978 and has operated in Miramichi since 1994.

In August the firm was awarded a major contract worth \$130 million to supply the Canadian military with hundreds of mobile shelters.

"The first progress review meeting was last week and everything seems to be on track and progressing as expected," Campbell said.

The company will manufacture 895 baseline shelters in a partnership with the British Columbia company Weatherhaven International Ltd.

The shipping container-like modules - which are used as workshops, offices, medical facilities and command posts in overseas operations - can be loaded onto special equipment vehicles and moved. The contract also includes an option for 400 more shelters.