



Biography – Colonel Erik Esselaar, CD, MDS, MASc Director Land Command Systems Program Management

Colonel Esselaar joined the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) in 1993 as a Combat Engineer soldier in the Army Reserves, and transferred to the Regular Force in 1994, taking his commission as a field Artillery officer. Colonel Esselaar re-classified as a Signal officer in 2006 to better pursue his passion for technology.

In 2012, Colonel Esselaar was appointed Officer Commanding Support Squadron, Canadian Forces School of Communications and Electronics (CFSCE), and in 2014 he was appointed the Chief Instructor of CFSCE. In 2017 he was posted to the Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC), overseeing the operations and development of Canadian Armed Forces Communications and Information Systems, globally. In 2019 he began serving as the Executive Officer of the NATO Cyber Security Centre in Belgium, until he was re-assigned to the NATO Cyber Adaptation Task Force at NATO HQ. He contributed to significant reforms improving NATO's cyber resilience, earning the NATO Meritorious Service Medal (MSM). In 2022, Colonel Esselaar was appointed Commanding Officer of CJOC Headquarters in Ottawa, and in 2024 he was promoted to his current rank and appointed Director, Corporate Management within CJOC. He was later appointed Director Land Command Systems Program Management within the Assistant Deputy Minister for Materiel group in 2024.

Colonel Esselaar holds a Baccalaureate of Science in Mathematics and Computer Sciences from McGill University, a Master of Applied Sciences from Carleton University in Technology Innovation Management Engineering, and a Master of Defence Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada.

Colonel Esselaar's operational deployments include serving on the inaugural deployment of Canada's Disaster Assistance Response Team to Honduras in 1998, serving in Bosnia-Herzegovina with NATO's Stabilization Force in 2001, and serving with the Canadian Joint Task Force – Iraq Headquarters in 2015.

Colonel Esselaar strongly believes that technology can make the world a better place and remains enthusiastic about Digital Transformation, Cyber Resilience, C5ISR, Modelling and Simulation, Information and Knowledge Management. Colonel Esselaar is married and is a proud parent of twin sons.

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