

New bridge built in time for key Wainwright exercise

Newsletter, DCC at Work, Issue August 2016, vol 15, No 3

When 7,000 people are coming over, you pull out all the stops. For a Defence Construction Canada team at CFB Wainwright, that included building a new bridge almost a year ahead of schedule and in the middle of winter.

“It was a big effort on everybody’s part to get this done,” said Peter Burgess, DCC Site Manager, Wainwright.

Accessible crossings at Wainwright are critical because the Battle River cuts off one-third of Wainwright’s 600-km² training area—and the bridges need to accommodate the heavier weight of the new Main Battle Tanks.

In fall 2015, it became clear that one new bridge would need to be complete for the annual MAPLE RESOLVE exercise in April 2016 that brings 7,000 troops to the base.

“The base absolutely had to have the river crossing by the spring, so that’s when it became urgent,” said Burgess.

The timing was tricky and so was the planning. There was no design for construction, so a unique process was needed. A standing offer was posted for the bridge manufacturer who would supply the bridge. A design consultant would then coordinate with the bridge manufacturer to finalize design only once the tender for bridge purchase was awarded.

Then, there were the challenges of winter construction. The frozen ground broke the bucket on an excavator and the contractors had to ‘heat-and-hoard’ concrete. A warm spring gave them the boost they needed to meet the deadline.

When equipment and personnel arrived at Wainwright, the new Purple Bridge (named for its route, not its colour) was ready – and now the project team is looking ahead to the other three bridges that need replacement.



Battling winter conditions, contractors prepare for the installation of the first circular pile that secures the bridge.



The new bridge is launched across the Battle River.



The Purple Bridge, a 40-metre modular steel equipment structure, was completed in time for the 2016 MAPLE RESOLVE exercise.



Aerial view of the Purple Bridge at CFB Wainwright.