

The Demolition of the Abattoir

The Abattoir slaughterhouse was built in 1935 to control the bison population in Buffalo National Park. Since the park's closure in 1940 and the transfer of the land to DND, the Abattoir has been frequently used as a landmark, a shelter for troops on patrol, as a command post, and as a target. CFB Wainwright declared the building a safety hazard and asked for 1 CER's help in removing the structure in 2014. What better way is there to make a building go away than with copious amounts of C4? So, on 10 March 2015, 4 Troop, from 12 Field Squadron (1 CER) was sent to CFB Wainwright to explosively demolish the Abattoir.

Blessed with unseasonably warm weather, the troop deployed to the task site during the morning of 11 March. The troop initially employed TMHTS trailers, hydraulic breakers, and hand tools to bust up and remove the frozen dirt that had built up inside the building. A Section concurrently marked out the locations of the boreholes in which the explosives would be placed. Two crews then started drilling the boreholes. A friendly competition soon developed, with one of the crews drilling their final 26 holes in less than 26 minutes. Due to the troop's hard work during the first day, the second day was a short one, during which the troop double-checked the charge placement and ran demo cable out to the firing point.

13 March was the day of the demolition. The troop deployed to the Abattoir site early that morning to maximize the available work hours. Two sections started prepping charges for the third section to place. The troop also confirmed the walk-time calculations and started filling boreholes with C4. By the time the CO and OC arrived, all of the charges had been placed and the boreholes filled, and the troop was starting to connect the leads to the maximum firing circuit. The troop then moved to the safety area while the firing party got ready for the demolition. An enormous cloud of dirt and debris erupted as the firer pressed the button. This was followed by a blast that was heard back on CFB Wainwright, which was 35 km away. After getting the all-clear from the RSO, the troop returned to the site to view their handiwork and confirmed that 460 blocks of C4 was sufficient for reducing the Abattoir to a pile of busted concrete.

Although most of the troop headed back to Edmonton on 14 March, the Troop HQ and a section remained in Wainwright to remediate the site with support from 1 CER's Heavy Equipment Troop. The heavy equipment operators made short work of what remained of the Abattoir, hauling away dozens of dump-truck loads of concrete. By Thursday, 19 March, there was no trace left of the structure that had stood in that spot for almost 80 years.



The Abattoir: Before, post-blast, and after remediation



Boreholing



Spr Lelacheur and MCpl Porter attach cutting charges to a support



Filling the boreholes