

Inferno at the Speedway International

Written by MCpl Troy Noseworthy, Crew Chief, 17 Wing Fire Service



On 1 Oct 12, at approximately 1730 hrs Speedway International, a racing fuel production facility in Winnipeg, was victim of a significant fire which consumed most of the facility, displaced hundreds of city resident and caused over 15 millions \$ in damage.

At approx 2030 hrs, 17 Wing Fire Service (17 WFS) received a request for assistance. Initially a specialized Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Vehicle (ARFFV), command vehicle, Wing Fire Chief and four military firefighters were dispatched to the scene to assist the Winnipeg Fire Department to combat the blaze. After a general recall of the 17 WFS, additional firefighters and specialized agent were dispatched in reinforcement. In total nine members of the 17 WFS members were dispatched.

Prior to the arrival of the 17 WFS assets, the Winnipeg Fire Department had been subject to several BLEVEs (Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion), extreme fire condition and was unable to gain control of the fire due to the extraordinary composition of the fuel load involved. The uncommon fuel load consisted of several hundred thousand liters of mix type flammable liquid contained in transport vessels of all sizes, tanker truck and railcars. The intense heat generated and constant explosions presented several risks and a complicated fire fighting operation.

The arrival of 17 WFS and its asset on scene was a game changer. On arrival critical tactical priorities were set to minimize the imminent involvement of additional fuel tanker truck, several railcars extension as well as to protect remaining infrastructure. Over the next several hours, the application of specialized extinguishing agents and aggressive attack enabled to regain the control of the fire.

The nine members of 17 WFS, in support of Winnipeg Fire Department, worked tirelessly until 0130 hrs the next day where the scene was brought under control and 17 WFS released from the scene.

Members involved from 17 WFS were: MWO Martin (Wing Fire Chief), Sgt Matthews (Deputy Fire Chief), MCpl Loboz, Cpl Armstrong, Cpl Gilby, Cpl Hopp, Cpl Nelson, Cpl Noseworthy and Cpl Zdrill.