Work-site fatality robs man of military career

18-year-old run over by tractor trailer

- Edmonton Journal
- 4 Nov 2011
- Mariam Ibrahim Journal Staff Writer

An 18-year-old Bon Accord man who was killed Wednesday evening while working at a CN Rail yard in Fort Saskatchewan was looking to follow his father into the Canadian military, his family says.

Cody Demary, an employee of International Bulk Services, was working in a supply yard when he was struck by a tractor trailer, Strathcona RCMP said. A crane had to be used to lift the vehicle off him, but he was pronounced dead at the scene.

The 18-year-old graduated from Sturgeon Composite High School in June and had recently signed up to join the military, just as his father had done.

“Cody had signed up and was just waiting to get in. He was so excited about his future in the army. He was going to do what his dad did,” his grandmother, Jean Demary, said from her home in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., on Thursday.

Brett Demary, Cody’s father, spent 20 years in the military as a mechanic.

He said his son had been working full time as a labourer while waiting to be accepted into the military.

“He planned on going in as an engineer because he liked that sort of stuff,” his father said. “He was just waiting for a call.”

He recalled fondly the many hours the pair spent working on Cody’s 1999 Honda Accord.
“We spent quite a bit of time working on it together. We’d sit in the shop for hours, just have a beer together. We’d talk, and I’d teach him how things work,” his father said.

“He really loved cars. We had that passion together. We were in the process of teaching him everything and how to work on things himself, but we were robbed of that.”

Since she heard the news from her son late Wednesday night, Cody’s grandmother said her eyes have been drawn to his graduation photo, which hangs in her hallway.

“I just keep looking at it. I’m still in shock. It’s been so terrible,” she said.

Cody had a 16-year-old brother, along with two stepbrothers and one stepsister, his father said.

He loved being outdoors and spent a lot of time hunting in the bush with his brother and father.

“We’re kind of a backwoods family — we like to be in the bush and go hunting,” he said.

His son’s many friends have flooded his Facebook page with condolence messages, he added.

“He was smart and very friendly. He loved to be around people. “He had a ton of friends.” The accident has left the family with many questions, he said, adding they haven’t been given any details beyond what was released publicly by the province and police.

The province’s Occupational Health and Safety branch is investigating the death.

Investigators have seized the truck for mechanical inspection and issued a stop-work order at the site.

OHS says there have been 24 workplace fatalities in 2011, compared with 25 at the same time last year.


Questions raised in county death

By Benjamin Proulx, Sherwood Park News

Thursday, November 10, 2011 6:28:41 MST PM
Certain questions have yet to be answered in a workplace fatality that took the life of an 18 year old man on Nov. 2.

The father of Cody Demary, who was killed when he was struck and run over by a tractor-trailer at a yard site owned by Canadian National Railway in northern Strathcona County, said he had urged his son to quit the job prior to the incident.

The tractor trailer was lifted off Demary by a crane, at which point he was pronounced dead on scene.

Brett Demary, Cody's father, said he had told his son that the safety training given to new employees left him worried, as his son had described working conditions to him that left him uneasy.

"From what I could gather, there was no safe work procedures for them when they're out working in the yard, stuff like that," he told the CBC. "And I had actually told him, I said, 'Cody, I don't feel safe with you working there with all this that I know and my background.' And I said, 'I think you should quit and find another job.'"

Brett is an emergency services official for Thorhild County, located north of Edmonton, and a safety expert.

Demary worked as a labourer for International Bulk Services, a subsidiary of CN Rail.

Since the workplace fatality took place, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) has issued a stop-work order, as they continue the ongoing investigation into the scene at the rail yard.

The tractor trailer involved has also been seized by OHS for a mechanical inspection.

"We'll be looking at everything including the workplace training that has taken part," Barrie Harrison with OHS told the Canadian Press. "That is regardless of whether a worker is 18 or 80."

"This dreadful accident is a harsh reminder that our industry can be unforgiving," International Bulk Services said in a statement. "We are committed to safety and determined to get to the bottom of what happened in an effort to prevent this type of tragic accident in the future."

Demary was from Bon Accord.

His death was the province's 24th workplace fatality of the year. With one more occurring in Fort McMurray last Friday when a 31-year-old man got his arm caught in a conveyer belt, the workplace death toll has reached 25 - the same as it was at this time last year.