

Armed man goes on rampage with bulldozer

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+ GRAND COUNTY - An armed man, driving a piece of heavy equipment, destroyed several buildings in the town of Granby Friday afternoon. Witnesses said he was using the re-tooled Caterpillar bulldozer like an armored vehicle, crashing into buildings.

Watch the latest on this story on 9NEWS at 10 p.m. and on 9NEWS Saturday morning.

County Emergency Manager Jim Holahan said the rampage started around 2:00 p.m. at a local concrete plant. After tearing down the concrete plant, the Caterpillar moved down U.S. 40, or Main Street Granby, plowing into a an electrical cooperative owned by Xcel Energy, a building that houses the town hall and library, the Sky-Hi newspaper building and Gamble's store. There were no reports of injuries.

About three hours after the first assault, the armored vehicle finally got stuck halfway inside a corrugated metal warehouse. Holahan said another large piece of equipment was used to block its escape. Police and sharpshooters surrounded the vehicle.

Holahan identified the man driving the Caterpillar as 52-year-old Marvin Heemeyer. Authorities did not say whether he was still alive.

Another source told 9NEWS that Heemeyer was involved in a zoning dispute with the city about three years ago.

Holahan said that the Jefferson County bomb squad was on scene. A Granby radio station was reporting that there were concerns that the vehicle might be booby-trapped.

Lurline Curran, Grand County manager, said the Caterpillar moved methodically from west to east, demolishing, or trying to demolish certain structures. Holahan said the driver was also firing from the vehicle with a 50-calibre weapon. He said several propane tanks were hit with bullets, but didn't explode.

Holahan said the Caterpillar had been re-tooled with steel and concrete to make it virtually impenetrable.

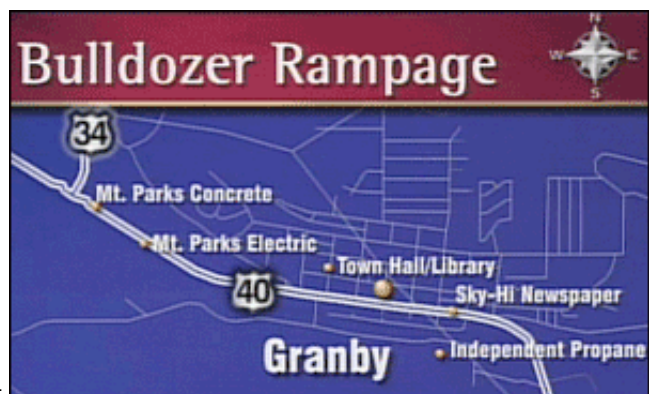
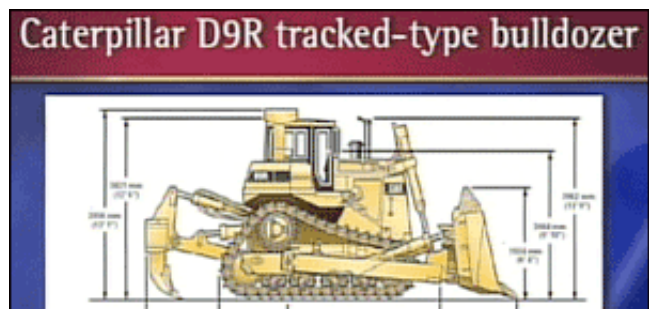
Scott Schaffer spoke by cell phone to 9NEWS when the armored vehicle was just a block away.

"He drove through a cement plant, wiped out town hall, took out the newspaper office," said Schaffer. Schaffer said that the town hall building didn't completely collapse, but the other two buildings did.

William Hertel, owner of High Altitude Audio, on Main Street saw the drama unfold from the roof of his building. "When he came this way, I really panicked," said Hertel. "I've never seen anything quite like this."

Another witness said that at one point an officer jumped on top of the vehicle and fired shot after shot against it, without any effect.

Video from Sky 9 showed several collapsed buildings that looked like they'd been hit by a tornado.



Tom Hale, Granby Town Manager, said the zoning dispute dated back to when Heemeyer owned a muffler business located next to the concrete plant. Hale said town trustees ruled in favor of the plant, and when Heemeyer appealed the decision to district court, the judge sided with the town.

He said that at a later point, Heemeyer was fined \$2,500 for violations at his muffler shop.

Hale said that Heemeyer was clearly targeting buildings on Friday. "They were all properties where there were people who either worked there, that were affiliated with this decision, or the town itself," said Hale.

Police evacuated residents in the area as the rampage began. A detour was set up around town.

Granby is a town of 1,500, north of Winter Park, near Rocky Mountain National Park.

Gov. Bill Owens was planning to visit the town Friday night to help assess the damage and see what other help was needed.



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