

Mulrooney, Marcella

From: Gullage, Cheryl
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To: Samson, Mike; Hollett, Fred G.; McCormack, David; Rodgers, Pamela; McCormack, Marilyn
Subject: DND Newser-- Transcription
Attachments: DND Newser-- Transcription February 8 2012.doc

FYI Folks—please see the attached document for reference on the DND newser held earlier this month. Thanks to Kevin for transcribing the details for s—it should serve us well if needed as reference points at a later time.

Cheers,
Cheryl

**DND Press Conference (Re: Makkovik rescue efforts)
February 8, 2012
Officer's Mess Hall, Pleasantville**

(RCMP) Andrew Boland: Good Morning, on the morning of Monday, January 30th, the ground search efforts continued. The existing weather conditions, early in the morning, precluded the use of air support from provincial Fire and Emergency Services. Search planning did continue and air support was requested. At 9:40am, provincial FES-NL advised, the RCMP, that the Joint Rescue coordination centre had been contacted however; the resources were not available at this time.

A change in the weather later that morning, at approximately 10:30 allowed for air support to join the search effort providing air support by universal helicopters. Also, as is normal practice in a ground search, local air traffic was advised of this search in the event any aircraft was flying in the area for any reason. A Woodward's helicopters working in the Postville area arrived in Makkovik and took part in the search. The air support detected snowmobile tracks heading towards open water, this lead to the area being examined by searchers using a boat however, nothing was discovered.

The search continued until later that afternoon until weather deteriorated further and the search was stopped that night with an understanding it would resume the following morning. On Tuesday, January 31st, the ground search resumed. Later that afternoon, RCMP air services, discovered a snowmobile on the ice approximately 2.5 km from open water. This area was too dangerous to search by land, there was no sign of Winters. This information allowed for further requests for further air support through provincial fire and emergency services, which resulted in support from 444 squadron from Goose Bay.

This resulted in searching through the night by an aura aircraft using forward looking infrared equipment, commonly known as "flur." The search continued late into the night, until early morning hours, when it was concluded with the understanding it would continue in the morning with further air support.

On the morning of Wednesday, February 1st, the search continued supported by provincial fire and emergency services air support. Mid-day the body of Burton Winters was discovered, on the ice, by the universal helicopters crew, hired by fire and emergency services approximately 12km from the snowmobile and 22-23 km from the community of Makkovik. His body was recovered and transported to the local medical clinic where he was pronounced dead that afternoon. The RCMP and its community SAR partners and volunteers made every effort to locate Burton Winters as soon as possible. And as soon as he was reported missing. Unfortunately, hazardous weather, rough terrain, and remoteness of the search area combined to present significant challenges to the rescue efforts.

This is a tragedy and our thoughts and prayers go out to Burton Winters family. At this time I would like to acknowledge and thank the many people and organizations who took part in the search, in particular our thanks to the community volunteers who made up the search teams, our provincial fire and emergency services, the Canadian forces and our detachment members, everyone's efforts were commendable. Thank you.

(DND) Rear Admiral David Gardem:

Good Afternoon Everyone,

By way of introduction I am Rear admiral Dave Gardem, the commander of Joint Task Force Atlantic. So you understand my role in this particular search and rescue case, as the Commander Joint Force Atlantic, part of my responsibility include air and maritime search and rescue operators in the Atlantic region and to the Canadian Arctic. Just before coming to this press conference I talked to the Winters family for about 40 minutes to give them an opportunity to ask me questions about this tragic event. So what I am about to share with you, is what I shared with them.

First and foremost on behalf of all members of the Canadian Forces I wish to once again, express our sincere condolences as they go through this tragic event. Our thoughts remain with them and the friends for Burton winters.

Today, I am here to clarify the Canadian forces involvement in the coordinated efforts put forth, to locate Burton Winters, after he was reported missing in the Makkovik area. This information I am presenting to you today, is a result of the investigation of the military's role in the coordinated SAR effort. The Canadian Forces conduct, SAR activities in a coordinated fashion with numerous partners, including the RCMP, Province NL, and each partner has a role to play in SAR. Although, I cannot speak to every SAR question you may have, I can speak to chronology of events of this particular search from a CF perspective, and that is my intent today.

The initial response by FES-NL was to call for a ground SAR. Operations lead by the RCMP, in the local community. The Canadian Forces first notification of the incident occurred on 30th January, at 09:12 Atlantic standard time. Almost 20 hours after Burton Winters was last seen and 13 hours since he was reported missing. At that time, weather conditions in Makkovik did not permit CF aircraft to respond to the request for search assistance. When the weather improved later that day, FES-NL elected to secure civilian air resources in accordance with normal procedures for ground SAR.

On the 30th January, the RCMP effort shifted from search operations to recovery operations focusing on the prospect that Burton Winters had fallen into the ocean at the open patch of water in the ice cover. It was during the attempted landing of a civilian aircraft, with an underwater camera to search, under the ice that the snowmobile was located some distance from the open water and the search operation was resumed.

Following the resumption of the search the CF received a second request at 1645 on the 31st January. Fifty one hours after Burton Winters was last seen and immediately responded by reopening the case and deploying 2 secondary SAR aircraft. First, a CH146 Griffin helicopter from Goose Bay was tasked and then a CP140 Aura, already airborne near Labrador, was retasked to participate in the search. Both aircrafts searched their assigned areas using night search capability that was not otherwise available. The CH146 Griffin was the first to discover Mr. Winters foot print departing from the snowmobile.

Throughout the entire search twelve members of five Canadian ranger patrol group assisted in the ground search efforts. They acted in their capacity as local volunteers assisting both the search itself and coordinating the large search effort. Their contribution also assisted in the conduct of the search and helped local official's secure CF air resources when needed to replace civilian ones. Despite the very tragic outcome of this event the CF responded to this event in accordance with current practices for ground SAR. When weather permitted and when FES-NL requested assistance the joint rescue coordination center tasks CF resources to participate. In closing, I wish to express my profound sympathy to the Winter's family. The CF conducted the SAR activity in accordance with our numerous partners including the RCMP and the province of NL. Thank you for your attendance, I will now take a few questions.

Question: Distorted Audio.

Gardem: That's the same question I received from the winters family. And the practice we have, I think I should explain that practice. I deal with about 30 SAR's a week, marine. So, on the water, as I explained earlier I do nautical, aeronautical, and maritime SAR. We use a call back system, when we do ground SAR. What that means is, because we have a number of other events going on at anyone time, and this system is Canada wide, its not just in Atlantic Canada. When a call for requests for services is given, if for some reason that request is not available at the time, or for example in this case, the weather did not permit us to fly the call back is on behalf of the organization conducting the search. And if our services are required, they call back again and we look at providing those services. In the case with this SAR, we asked to be called back if we were required, no subsequent call was received until the second call which was on the 31st of January. The reason we do that is to make sure that with the numerous SAR's that happen in Canada; efforts are concentrated and coordinated when resources are required. So, I think the short answer is that's the process we use and that's the reason we have it in place, this may be something we look at in the future. Thank you.

Question: Distorted Audio.

Boland: The request, the ground SAR folks, whenever have a ground SAR in a community, it, the search unfolds in phases or steps when the request came from the community based ground SAR, it was close to 11 o'clock Sunday evening and the process then is to have aircraft available for soon as we can the next light. So the request went out for aircraft the next morning and we also in this case knew we were experiencing weather problems and weather conditions so the request went out within the

procedure that would normally unfold for a SAR, went out the next, came in from the community that night and the next morning we called for resources.

Question: Something about searching at night and hours are precious. (Distorted Audio)

Boland: It was done two nights later because we had some more information to work with, we had a snowmobile found, we knew it was the young mans snowmobile, in the early stages of a search the SAR people on the ground make the decisions about when they are going to call out, and at that point we were still in the smaller part of the search I guess, and when you look at it like a circle and how a search spreads out, the search was still very much community based so the air support was called upon as soon as the searchers indicated it was going to be needed and the search planning carries on throughout the entire process.

Question: Decision was already made Sunday night that your search was required why wasn't it decided that it would happen the next morning? (Distorted Audio)

Boland: Generally, that's any type of SAR that's what we do, at the end of the day, we examine what our next steps and processes are and that time late Sunday evening it was determined the call and logging and planning for the search equipment would take place the next day.

Question: Something about recovery and could it be done differently? (Distorted Audio)

Boland: I don't think we used the terminology of declaring it a recovery. At one point, during the search the tracks we believe belonged to the snowmobile and at that point we still weren't even sure if it was the same snowmobile and we were following some tracks on the advice of the SAR people, the tracks lead to the edge of the water, and we were operating with part of the search believing that the snowmobile could have gone into the water, or gone into the ocean, so the search or phase of the search did focus on perhaps he did go into the water which isn't uncommon for situations like this. At the same time the search was continuing in other parts of the area for the young man.

Question: When assumption was made that he had gone into the water, would then that rule out the search because you didn't know he was in the water? (Distorted Audio)

Boland: No, not at all. The search continued with the ground SAR group in the community.

Question: A question around the time frames. (Distorted Audio)

Boland: Of course.

Gardem: Steps in to answer the question. On the night of the 30th, ah the 29th, the weather would have precluded any flight operations. There was a storm going through and even our infrared would not have worked in cold weather with that snow. So that

certainly would have hampered any air opportunity which is why we still had the same problem the next morning.

Question: Can't comprehend question. (Distorted Audio)

Gardem: No, that's right.

Boland: And that night, the evening of the 29th, the SAR people in the community were working with that information. They knew they had poor weather conditions, they knew the call for air support was going to be challenging, faced with those challenges.

Question: Weather specifics. (Distorted Audio)

Gardem: I'll get to a pilot to answer that question. He is an expert in this field.

Mark Chinnan: My name is cornel Mark Chinnan, I'm in charge of the air component coordination element Atlantic, in other words I help the admiral out with the air side of the joint task force Atlantic. The specific weather requirements for rotary wing CFR in uncontrolled air space that is in this instance would be 1 mile poor visibility, 500 feet above ground or water and clear of clouds. Once again, I should make absolutely clear the weather in Goose Bay is not a factor at this point in time the reported weather was from Makkovik airfield and that is a little bit different but not exactly but a little bit different from the actual search site which is why the air force and JRCC depends so heavily on the on scene commander for reports of that weather. The weather did improve that morning above those limits, and as soon as that weather improved the universal helicopter was contracted and on its way to Makkovik search site. Later that day another helicopter that Woodward aviation helicopters that was assisted as well. So during that first day, that the CF did not respond there was two other helicopters in the search area helping out the search. Later that night, the weather decreased again to below flight visibility and ceiling limits, for the search and because of the fact of the light snow and precipitation the infrared was useless. Since the search was suspended, with no search team on the ground it makes very little sense to have a night search capability even if it does have infrared. The next day, as everyone knows, the weather improved immensely and it was during that night, only after the universal helicopters had been searching all day the CF helicopters were called in with the night vision capabilities with both the Griffin and the Aura.

Question: Available on Monday when the first call came in, and if there were none available, (Aircraft) what about the weather issue then is meaningful? (Distorted Audio)

Chinnan: There are actually two Griffin helicopters in Goose Bay, one right now is under long term maintenance, the aircraft today is serviceable, at that morning it was thought to be serviceable when the first call came in, the flight engineer did a walk around of that aircraft and found a problem with the oil line and started repairing it that day. Immediately upon the first call, that work continued on throughout the day on that helicopter. So no, there was not a serviceable Griffin able to respond to that search.

Question: What about the second one?

Chinnan: The second one was under long term maintenance, so it was being worked on.

Question: So two of them were under maintenance?

Chinnan: One was thought to be serviceable but when they did the pre flight audit it was found to need work, the other one was out of the schedule because of long term maintenance.

Question: What does that say about the condition of the fleet?

Chinnan: You have to realize that the Griffin helicopter is a secondary SAR asset to be used when the primary SAR assets are not available or when it makes sense to use those. So, would I like to have more helicopters? I'm sure every body would, but that's not the reality.

David Gardem tells pilot to sit down now.

Asking and answering a question in French. Someone (reporter) asks what was the question?

Gardem: Gardem says the question was "Why would civilian aircraft have a different standard than military?" The issue is for local helicopters companies they have a local knowledge. They have knowledge of the mountain range, knowledge of the terrain. Whereas, for the helicopters that we have in Goose Bay they are training operators primarily, as stated earlier their secondary role is SAR, their primarily role is to conduct training. So they don't have the same local knowledge as the companies that fly out of Makkovik. And the other, so we follow, we have set guidelines when it comes to ceiling and visibility and where that search was would have been deemed unsafe to fly.

Question: SAR response. (Distorted Audio)

Gardem: I wouldn't say that is a standard rule one way or another. We assess every case on its own merit. Over sea, we fly in terrible conditions, but we are not going to fly into a mountain.

Question: Something about Sunday night? (Distorted Audio)

Gardem: We would not have flown. The visibility was the same as it was Monday morning, we would have asked to be called back if visibility improved if resources were required.

Question: To clarify, Monday a civilian helicopter did fly but are you saying you didn't get that second call to respond until actually January 31st? (Distorted Audio)

Gardem: To be clear the local commander obviously accessed what he had and what he needed, he had air assets that were flying, there was no need to call us until that night time on the 31st when it was an issue of dark and the requirement to use flur to actually search. So there were aircraft on scene but there was no need for military aircraft at that time because civilian aircrafts were being used.

Question: When you spoke with the family, the family has said that they do not feel this is good enough, how did you? (Distorted Audio)

Gardem: No one can imagine what it feels like, to talk to a family in a grief stricken state, and say that nothing I can do, or could have done, would bring Burton back. This is a tragic loss and was one of the most difficult things I had to do in my career. Thank you.

Question: What's the primary SAR aircrafts?

Chinnan: The primary SAR asset is a cormorant in Greenwood or Gander with a C130 Hercules in Greenwood as well. Those are your primary assets. Your secondary assets are your Auras in Greenwood, the sheking in Sharewater, and the Griffins in Goose Bay.

Question: Why weren't the primaries deployed?

Chinnan: The primaries deployed, it made more sense to use the aircraft from Goose Bay at that point in time, as I said before, they had helicopter assets on the scene, they had two helicopters that day and when the CF forces.

David Gardem steps in. Says he will answer that question.

Gardem: As the commander of the Joint Task Force Atlantic and the commander for SAR I make decisions everyday on where I need to place assets, how I need to move them around based on threat. For example, during lobster season I move cormorant from one place to another because I know there are going to be SAR events. In the case of using a cormorant helicopter, given that my primary mission is marine and aeronautic SAR if I take that helicopter off my primary mission to do this event when I know there are already helicopters there and I get an event at sea, I cannot respond to that event at sea. These are decisions I make everyday, I don't make them lightly. It is an issue of managing resources carefully in order to meet the needs of a very large area. Thank you. And that is it for questions.

Report asks: Sir, do you need more resources though?

David Gardem replies that is it for questions.