

Search set to resume for last victim

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GLOBE AND MAIL UPDATE
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FERNIE, B.C. — The father-in-law of the only snowmobiler unaccounted for in the avalanche tragedy that killed seven men in south-eastern British Columbia said the backcountry sledders were all experienced and well-prepared for an emergency.

An emotional Randy Roberts choked back tears as he spoke to reporters in Fernie, B.C., saying the eleven men who set out on their snowmobiles were dressed proper winter clothing and were equipped with shovels, probes and “peeps”—transmitting devices designed to locate them in case of an avalanche.

“Safety meant a lot to them,” said Mr. Roberts as he spoke on behalf of the families affected. “They knew the area.”

Three snowmobilers survived Sunday's slide: Jeff Adams, Jeremy Rusnak and Jordan Drake. Seven of the eight men found in the snow were Michael Stier, 20, Kurt Kabel, 28, Kane Rusnak, 30, Thomas Talarico, 32, Warren Rothel, 33, Blaine Wilson, 36 and Leonard Stier who was in his 40s.



Staff Sgt. Lorne Craig, with Fernie, B.C. RCMP speaks to the media about eight missing snowmobilers Monday. (Jeff McIntosh/The Canadian Press)

Videos

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Eight B.C. snowmobilers trapped in avalanche

There are an unknown number of fatalities in connection with an slide that occurred near Fernie, B.C. Sunday night, according to the RCMP

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Search resumes for missing snowmobilers

More than 15 avalanche technicians are being transported by helicopter to the scene

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One man still missing

CTV Newsnet: The search for the last man missing after two avalanches will resume Tuesday morning, ahead of another storm expected in the area

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RCMP on the six confirmed dead

The bodies of six people have been dug out from underneath an avalanche in Fernie, B.C. Two others are still missing.

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Search and rescue teams are returning to the site of the multiple avalanches today to search for Danny Bjarnason, 28, who is presumed to be dead.

But Mr. Roberts said his family is still hoping Mr. Bjarnason may have somehow dug himself out of the snow.

"There's hope and my prayer is Danny's out there and he's still okay," said a grieving Mr. Roberts. "He will be found today."

The RCMP will be using probes, metal detectors and dogs to locate Mr. Bjarnason.

Avalanche survivor Mr. Adams is at the site helping rescuers this morning to recover the body of his friend.

He was going to speak to the media today about his ordeal, but was too overwhelmed with emotion to talk.

"Jeff's doing good. He's a trooper," said Sparwood mayor David Wilks. "He wants to get his last buddy back."

According to Mr. Roberts, Sparwood's tight-knit community of 4,000 people will help the devastated families of those killed in the avalanche to cope with their losses.

"We watched these kids grow up and everyone of them is just super," he said. "What we have to do here is keep our chins up."

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