

Divers go under the ice at Lac Des Roche

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Children from Lac Des Roche, in the interior of B.C., got a rare glimpse into the ice diving tactics of clearance divers and port inspection divers from Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific) in early March.

Military divers spent five days ice diving to train in the Light Weight Surface Supply Diving Ensemble and review ice diving procedures.

On the third day the local school came out to observe them. The team greeted a school bus full of 30 children ranging from five to 12 years of age. The area rarely sees military activity, never mind diving under the ice.

Due to the snowy conditions, the bus was unable to drive the children directly to the ice diving site. To solve this dilemma, the children were taxied four at a time in sleds behind snowmobiles. Once everyone was at the site divers demonstrated how they are able to dive under two and a half feet of ice.

The five-day ice diving exercise consisted of a series of increasingly complex drills and exercises designed to test the unit's capability to safely deploy divers through an ice-covered body of water to conduct search related tasks.

To maintain diving proficiency in extreme weather and under ice conditions, the divers collectively conducted 30 no-decompression dives throughout the week.

While only one diver was in the water at a time, eight support crew were required on the surface to supervise, and tend and operate the surface supplied air panel. As well, a second diver was dressed and ready to be deployed during all diving operations in case of an emergency.



ABOVE: LS Straarup explains to Georgia Lanzoni, a resident of Lac Des Roch, about diving under the ice.

LEFT: LS Straarup gets a pre-dive check from LS McConnell. Clearance and port inspection divers were in the interior of B.C. community to practice there skills.

photos courtesy Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific)