

## **Meridian Recovers Body of Canadian First Nations Elder**

(Newport, R.I. – February 8) – Meridian Ocean Services recovered the body of Canadian First Nations Elder Solomon Roberts from the icy waters of Otter Lake in northern Saskatchewan. After searching more than 450 acres underwater, Meridian is honored to have helped return Elder Roberts, of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, to his family.

In November, 66-year old Elder Roberts, from the town of Grandmother’s Bay, fell through the ice on his snowmobile. Members of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band located Elder Roberts’ snowmobile but as temperatures dropped in the days after, thick ice quickly covered vast sections of the lake, hindering traditional search techniques.

With the support of Lac La Ronge Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, Grandmother’s Bay Councilman Leon Charles contacted Meridian about an alternative method – using Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) to search under the ice. Meridian deployed a 4-member team and 2 ROVs to Otter Lake, approximately 560 miles north of the U.S.-Canada border.

The ROVs, equipped with high definition underwater live-feed video cameras and imaging sonars, were able to travel 200-300 feet in any direction, enabling Meridian’s operators to methodically scan the lake floor from the ice above, efficiently ruling-out large areas of the lake each day.

“The search represents a great example of the effective use of this technology,” said Patrick Donovan of the Meridian team. “The ROVs provide eyes on the lake floor to continue such an important mission in the most efficient way possible.”

The Meridian team was impressed and moved by the devotion of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band volunteers, from Grandmother’s Bay and neighboring towns, who tirelessly worked alongside Meridian to manage the harsh surface conditions where air temperatures reached -40 degrees Fahrenheit. Daily, volunteers drilled holes in the ice for the ROVs to enter the water and maintained a ‘camp’ on the shore of tents and huts for warming and providing hot food.

The Meridian team was composed of Donovan, Craig Thorngren, Kenny Nevor, Steve Wilkey, and Lucas Shuler.

Meridian was humbled by the experience and is privileged in this somber situation to help give peace to the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Elder Roberts’ family.

Meridian Ocean Services, founded in Newport, R.I. in 2012, provides subsea inspection and support services using remote and autonomous underwater vehicles. Meridian operates out of Newport, R.I., Houston, T.X., and Nassau, Bahamas.

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