

The Warlords of Winter

Jan 19, 2011

Author: Dan Kostrzewski | Photo: Jordan Manley | Issue 10.3

Like 8

British Columbia's avalanche professionals work like dogs on a shoestring budget to have your back in the backcountry, motivated and united, it seems, by an old skier's bumper-sticker: The Worst Day of Skiing is Better than the Best Day in the Office.



British Columbia's avalanche professionals work like dogs on a shoestring budget to have your back in the backcountry, motivated and united, it seems, by an old skier's bumper-sticker: The Worst Day of Skiing is Better than the Best Day in the Office.

TEXT: DAN KOSTRZEWSKI PHOTO: JORDAN MANLEY

"We are closing at this time," squawks Eric Dafoe's radio, as the flashing sweep vehicle passes us. We watch the lights roll onward to the summit, where a backup of semis, tour buses and sled trucks will be clogging Canada's million-dollar-a-day artery for at least the next hour.

"Rogers Pass Highway: west closure off, east closure on," comes the reply from the Parks Canada complex at the summit— location of Dafoe's desk and base for the Glacier National Park ACS (Avalanche Control Section), the biggest mobile control program in North America.



Avalanche Road, On Assignment

from Jordan Manley Photography PLUS

06:17

HD vimeo

Dafoe works the extended weekend shift as a senior avalanche technician, spending most days on skis but sharing office space with a busy crew of snow-savvy professionals that include forecasters, technicians, safety specialists and visiting grad students. The complex—across Highway One from the pack of stalled travelers, now sipping cafeteria coffee and buying souvenir beaver hats in the Glacier Park Lodge— also houses a Canadian army barrack for the artillery detachment stationed here as part of this avalanche mission. And right now, these fatigued military reservists, on their final day of a six-week rotation, are lined up on a start zone after drinking their own bar—Snowpunchers Lounge— dry the night before. They're ready to lob a live 105mm howitzer round into one of 144 avalanche paths that threaten this critical national corridor, as soon as the tech holding the target book gives the green light.

His radio crackles.



GUNNERS LAUNCH A SHELL ACROSS THE HIGHWAY

Search bar and TELUS WORLD SKI & SNOWBOARD FESTIVAL APRIL 13 - 22, 2012 WHISTLER, BC / wssf.com

PRESENTED BY BEACH TRAVELLERS logo

THE TOP 11 REASONS WHY YOU NEED The TOP 11 Reasons TO COME TO CAMP THIS SUMMER! Windells logo

HEADLINES

- Copper Supports Local Patroller...
SIKWAM at Tremblant: Last...
Vail Resorts Announces Free...
Multi-Million Dollar Investment...
BRODY LEVEN: AN OVERALL NICE GUY
2012-2013 WHISTLER BLACKCOMB...
TELUS World Ski and Snowboard...
Athletes confirmed for Swatch...

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] >

SUBSCRIBE SKIER THE PHOTO ISSUE

SBC SKIER - THE LATEST

- Video Lucas Stål-Madison Wins... April 16, 2012
Video Drop In: Episode 1 - Bloody... April 16, 2012
Video Pipedreams - Episode 4 April 16, 2012
Video Voleurz: Heli Yeah! April 16, 2012
Video 20under20 April 12, 2012

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] >

FOLLOW US ON twitter

Like Colin Wiseman, Grant Gunderson and 4,380 others like this.