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RESCUE

**IDAHO MOUNTAIN SEARCH
AND RESCUE UNIT, INC
BOISE, IDAHO**

FOUNDING MEMBER:
**MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASSOCIATION**



SEARCH FOR MISSING PLANE IN BLAINE COUNTY – NOV. 22, 2003 --SUZANNE VENTURA

Our pagers went off on Saturday: The Blaine County Sheriff requested assistance in searching for a small plane that had been missing somewhere between Fairfield and the Hailey Airport since Wednesday. Local teams had been searching since then, and were close to exhaustion. “Meet at the Compound at 5 a.m.” Bright eyed or otherwise, Marc Buursink, Chris Harry, Karen Limani, Bill Lindenau with ATV, Jerry Newland, Phil O’Bryan, Dave Ritzenthaler, Janine Townsend, Suzanne Ventura with Schatz, and Tom Wheless loaded for the trip. Rod Knopp, George Gunn and Charlotte Gunn were there to see them off and clarify communication procedures.

We caravanned to Fairfield, meeting up (by coincidence) with Elmore County members en route to the same mission, and arrived at the staging area, an empty field about 20 miles east of Fairfield. It’s beautiful country, but very cold! Jerry was our O.L. Since we were the team with only one ATV and no motorcycles, Jerry graciously volunteered us as the “goat” team—or was that “grunt”



“Jerry, how come we got the trees to search and they got all that open country?”
This picture gives a sense of the scope of the search confronting Blaine Co.



There was a huge response to Blaine County's request for help.

team? Anyway, our assignment was to cover an area of mountainous, tree-covered terrain that could not be searched by plane or motorized vehicle. Our team of about 10 people was shuttled up on private property, as close as possible to our search area. The roads were icy and snow-covered. Tom, I have a new respect for your driving on hazardous conditions!

At the drop-off point, we split into three teams of three or four people each. To reach the search area we had a 1.5 mile hike in about a foot of snow at an altitude of 7,500 feet—we could have used snowshoes. (Lesson learned: The weather and conditions at base camp are not always what you will find at the search area.)

At the top, my team met up with Dave and his team. Dave thought he saw a “suspicious” object about a mile and two ridges away. He was trying to give the coordinates to the helicopter



Helicopter lands to pick up Dave.

pilot who was flying low overhead...and yes, blowing snow all over. Dave was unable to communicate the location of the suspicious object, so the next thing we knew, the helicopter was landing beside us on the top of the mountain...blowing more snow. Dave, being the great guy he is, volunteered to go with the pilot and show him. The helicopter took off, leaving Dave's backpack with us, flew around the suspicious object several times, and came back to drop Dave off and reload the two passengers it had exchanged for Dave. Dave's first words to us were, "Gee, I hope someone got pictures of that!" The suspicious object had turned out to be a large rock. He was right that the object needed to be checked out from a closer perspective, but that didn't stop us from giving Dave a hard time—especially since Dave's second sentence was, "I have always wanted to ride in a helicopter."

The above incident took place before we even began searching our assigned areas. Our three teams started down different draws and ridges. The terrain was steep, snow-covered, with fallen trees and horrible willowy tree things that would grab our legs and knock us down. Chris, Janine, Tom and I were on the same team; we spread out with about 200 yards between us and worked our way down the draw. As we were getting toward the bottom, word came over the radio that the plane had been found and we were to head back to base camp.

It took us about another hour to make our way to the welcome sight of vehicles waiting on the road. We arrived in base camp about 5:30 p.m., just in time to see it being disassembled, but we were still able to enjoy some warm chili provided by Blaine County. We learned that the plane had been spotted in a canyon on the east side of Bellevue, about one mile from the airport. The search was over; we packed up and headed home, stopping in Fairfield for dinner.

All went well with the search except when my tracking dog, Schatz, who stayed in base camp under Jerry's supervision, decided to break away and search for me in the IC mobile unit. According to Jerry, she took off "like a bat out of h..." She decided she was in trouble when Jerry made eye contact with her, and then bee-lined straight back to her crate. Sorry, Jerry!

LONG ROAD TO CERTIFICATION **--CHRIS KARNES AND PAM GREEN**

This journey started sixteen months ago at a Human Remains Detection (HRD) seminar in Colorado with instructors Shirley Hammond, Adela Morris and Eva Cecil. We wanted to have certification from someone who had no vested interest in our success or failure; since the state of Idaho does not have a State Standard for HRD, we chose California, and set as goal to test for California's Office of Emergency Services HRD Certification in the spring of 2004.

Our dogs are actually defined as Forensic Dogs. These are canines that have been specifically trained to indicate a scent source as being from decomposed human tissue. Such animals are also trained to exclude the scents of human urine, feces and semen; will not alert on residual scent from a live human; and have never been trained to locate any scent other

than that of decomposed human tissue.

This past June, we made a trip to California to work with Shirley and Adela. We wanted to benchmark where we were in our training, get some help if we needed it and get some suggestions on what to work on next. Encouraged when they said our dogs were almost ready to test, we changed our goal for certification to the end of October, 2003.

We left our cool 65-degree weather here in Boise and ended up in the 88-92 degrees of Mountain View, California on October 26. We stayed at the Moffet Naval Air Station and met with members of CCST, Canine Specialized Search Team, the following morning. Our training partners this time were Adela Morris, Shirley Hammond, Eva Cecil, Warren Kirsch and Bev Peabody. We also had an opportunity to watch Lynn Englebert and her bomb dog, Dale, work some problems.

It is necessary to pass all of the Canine Preliminary Requirements before you can proceed with final testing for the certification; we spent Monday and Tuesday both training and working through these preliminaries. Preliminary testing involves obedience, including off-lead heeling, an emergency stop and an out-of-sight stay; canine social skills; and log books showing at least six months of current, regular training in HRD. The Skill Sets included the following: Item 1-Surface Blood, Item 2-Buried Human Remains, Item 3-Hanging Human Remains, Item 4-Human Remains, Interior Environment.

Animal Distractions, above ground, and a Preservation Demonstration are also part of the pre-test. The latter is to demonstrate that the dog will alert on an accessible human remains scent source. The handler is not allowed to enter the 30-foot-square area until the dog gives the trained alert; only verbal instructions are allowed to keep the dog in the search area, and the dog has five minutes to detect and alert. The team fails if the dog disturbs the scent item (digs up, picks up, rolls on, licks the item), alerts on negative items or does not make the find within five minutes.



Tali doing a desert search.

Test day was October 29, bright and early. Before we began, the testers explained that we had an hour to work the acre and we could call the test at any time before that. The problems had been put out one hour before the test. One problem is buried at 15 inches and the optional problem is either surface blood, hanging human remains or interior human remains.

Pam Green

Rush's buried problem was placenta. He hit on the optional problem first, an autopsy towel placed in the upper branches of some shrubbery. We moved on, sticking to our strategy for working the area. We got to the end, moved across it and started down the opposite side. Rush quartered nicely and at about halfway, he hit a spot under a tree and alerted. We moved on to the other end and started up the center. Rush ran to the spot under the tree again and alerted a second time. I chose to call my test and had to identify the exact locations of the two problems for the evaluators. Waiting for the words "You passed!" seemed like an eternity.

Chris Karnes

Our evaluators were good to the dogs; they set up the test mostly in shade. Our test was in a different area than Pam and Rush's. Tali's buried problem was decomp tissue; she also had an above-ground problem, dried blood under a plastic grate. Our plan was to work the east side of the acre first, as there was at times a slight wind coming from the west. Tali found the buried problem first. We moved on and finished the east side. Tali made the evaluators hold their breath at one point when she caught scent on top of a garbage can: One of the evaluators had put their container of training material on it while getting out items to hide, then took the container away. Tali showed interest but did not alert; had she alerted and I counted that as a find, we would not have passed. We continued and found the above-ground problem as we made our last pass on the west side of the search area. One of the interesting things about this test was that Tali searched through picnic tables while people were sitting there; she kept her focus on searching and ignored the people. The test lasted 22 minutes.

The critique after the tests was extremely valuable. They gave us an assessment of the handlers' skill level, the dogs' work ethic, use of the test area and recommendations they thought would be helpful in the future. We also appreciated the chance during this visit to discuss search strategy, set up scenarios and problem-solve. Our instructors have the advantage of years of experience, including such events as the Mexico City Earthquake, the Oklahoma City Bombing, the World Trade Center, the Space Shuttle Columbia, and many prominent individual crime cases. We thank them for their time, their insight, their friendship, and for being there for us whenever we need them. We look forward to working with them in the future.

CATCH UP WITH BILL, MARK AND JUNE!

Bill Lindenau, Mark Westerdoll and June Lee have already paid their 2004 dues. That leaves only about 45 of you who need to pull out your wallet or checkbook. Dues are for the calendar year. Continuing members pay \$30, which covers our fees to MRA, ISSAR and NASAR plus most of the cost of your newsletters. New members pay \$50, which covers the same things plus orange shirt, first set of patches, and other first-time materials. Give your cash or check to Charlotte, and get a receipt.

THE CHRISTOPHER LAPPING CASE, 2000-2003
--DETECTIVE KELLEY ANDREWS, COOS CO. SHERIFF'S OFFICE (OREGON)

Late summer and fall on the southern Oregon coast begins archery and rifle hunting seasons for elk, bear, blacktail deer, turkey, cougar and waterfowl. This time of the year sends many people into the public and private lands in search of the fair chase hunt and socializing with friends and family. Each year, the Coos County Sheriff's Office and their partner, the Coos County Search and Rescue, investigate and search for hunters who become lost, stay overnight after downing an animal, or are injured.

But in September of 2000, what began as merely a missing hunter case turned into a three-year ordeal for the family of Christopher Lapping and members of the Coos Co. S.O., both puzzled by clues left behind and by searches with no tangible results to solve the mystery of where the hunter might have gone. The criminal investigation into the disappearance of Lapping would show how a search and parallel investigation should go, and how they should not go. Lessons were learned by members of the S.O. and the SAR community, and in particular me, the case officer assigned the investigation.

On September 10, 2003, Christopher left his home in the Rogue Valley of Oregon and traveled to Coos County. According to his girlfriend, he had gone to hunt elk during archery season. Christopher stopped at a small restaurant in Douglas County, near the Coos County boundary, and ate breakfast, in the shadow of the BLM lands he would soon be in.

Before entering the Tioga Hunting Unit, Christopher stopped at a local bank and withdrew several hundred dollars for a reason that would baffle investigators to this day. The bank stop was at 7:30 a.m. and daylight was upon him. He was later seen, at about 10 a.m., along a paved road leading up into the mountains. The person who saw him was fascinated by the camouflage he wore like mosquito netting.

Christopher's girlfriend reported him missing the next day and, although it was initially unknown where he had gone hunting (whether Coos County or another location,) checks made by family members of bank records showed his transaction on the Sunday morning.

Family, friends, sheriff's deputies and SAR members converged on the Tioga area in search of clues. On September 17, 2000, Christopher's 2000 Dodge pickup was located about 325 feet off a logging road on a clearcut that had reprod timber growing on it. The search focused in on the drainage.

Upon inspection of the vehicle by law enforcement, it was determined the vehicle had left the logging road at a very slow speed with the seatbelt tied around the steering wheel. No photographs were taken of the seatbelt at the scene, causing later conclusions of foul play by family and friends. The search area was directly above a BLM improved campground, and it was a location Christopher had taken elk out of before.

The subsequent searches of the next few weeks, months and years turned up no more clues to the disappearance. The case began to stagnate. Although several sheriff's deputies made it a point to go into the drainage during their hunting seasons, timber patrol deputies patrolled there constantly, and logging companies performed surveys, no sign of the missing hunter was found.

In January of 2003, I was assigned the case from the original investigator, who is nearing retirement. During the following five months I followed a couple of leads but nothing new was found. I reorgan-

ized the three-ring binder casebook and studied the case. In May of 2003, I attended a conference in Bend, OR, where a demonstration of Human Remains Detection (HRD) dogs was conducted. I spoke with the coordinator and set up to talk to him further about bringing his dogs down for a search.

On July 19, 2003, two HRD dogs, together with SAR members and deputies, searched the Park Creek Drainage. We did three searches based off of probability of regress points. If Mr. Lapping had headed to the nearest campground, there were three direct routes to take. Search teams worked in these three areas.

All three areas were searched and nothing reported found. A timber deputy, with years of hunting experience, was with one dog team when they discovered a bone. Proper flagging of the site and radioing the command post was not done, and the bone was brought back to base camp. Luckily, photographing of the bone in place was done. Upon the team's return to base camp, the bone, thought to be animal, was almost discarded. As it happened, the president of SAR asked for the bone and, within the next two weeks, met with a bone doctor and an anatomy professor at the local college. The bone was indeed human.

Two more searches were conducted, locating the area where the bone had been and the surrounding area. The initial case officer, a lieutenant with over 25 years of experience in law enforcement, a tracker, a SAR instructor at the community college, broke the case wide open. Lt. Larry Leader returned to the area to search and came upon the remains of Christopher Lapping. What drew his attention to the spot was a weathered rifle leaning against some vegetation.

The medical examiner's office, investigators, and a forensic anthropologist searched the scene and recovered items such as the rifle, clothing, identification, credit cards, skeletal remains and the metal strip out of a \$100 bill. With the investigation of the scene, the rifle and the remains, it was determined he had died a suicide.

Lessons Learned:

1. Forensic Anthropologists and some doctors can determine whether a bone is human or not. Don't make the decision yourself if you do not have the training. If we had properly identified, tagged, flagged and known the area where the bone was found, then we could possibly have discovered the remains sooner.
2. Don't rely on one theory to investigate a disappearance. Many in our department had thought Christopher had just left his girlfriend and fled the area. This turned out to be not so.
3. Run parallel investigations. While conducting search operations, have trained interviewers (detectives) speaking with witnesses, suspects, and people with tips. If there is no foul play, then no harm is done. If there is foul play, then the investigation is not playing catch-up.
4. Keep the family informed. A family liaison is very helpful, and it was a serious complaint of this victim's family that they knew nothing of the searches going on over the three years.

As case officer, these are the lessons I learned this investigation and I violated three of the four. I hope this story can help with other missing person cases and their investigation.

[Editor's Note: Thanks to Detective Andrews for offering to share this experience with us. His comment to me was: "I just want to inform other law enforcement and SAR that we all make mistakes but there can be good outcomes to it."]

TRAINING THE SAR DOG LINDA KEARNEY

The story is real; the names have been changed to protect the innocent , especially the dog.

This past weekend, I had my first chance to watch a SAR dog work. It was a gray overcast day with light wind and raindrops falling now and then. We were out past Kuna, in terrain of rolling hills, high desert, and mud. An article of the “victim’s” clothing was placed in a plastic bag without being touched by anyone else. The “victim” was dropped off perhaps a quarter mile away from base camp. She was given a 20-30 minute head start. I then got to meet the SAR dog, a GSD named King. The owner, Jean, explained what she was doing to get ready. She placed a ribbon around her wrist to check the direction of the wind, and found the area we were to search.

We walked up the road to the middle of the hill. Jean checked the wind, put the orange vest on King, then took out the scent article, opened the bag and let King sniff it. Jean then told King to find our “victim,” Doris. We followed King as he sniffed the air and criss-crossed the hill. We worked very slowly and Jean kept checking the wind direction. Each time the direction of the wind would change, we changed the way King was searching the area. She kept talking to King, telling him to find Doris.

The radio from base camp told us about where to head. About 45 minutes later we were still looking for Doris. King was having a hard time, as the wind would stop or swirl in one place. It was getting late in the afternoon; darkness was upon us. We asked Doris via radio if we were near her. She replied that she could hear us without the radio, so we knew we were close. We went back up the hill to get the best wind direction. There was sagebrush not far from us and we figured that was where Doris went to hide. It was then we caught sight of a patch of baby blue—the color of Doris’ raincoat. We had found her! Now Jean wanted King to go to her. She moved him all around the spot where Doris was hiding. King didn’t seem to get it. And I was starting to wonder about the worth of a SAR dog.

Mind you, during this time, the radio was telling us they didn’t think we were in the right area. We could hear someone yelling down the hill. But we knew we were right. After all, we could see the blue raincoat that Doris was wearing. Finally King gave the “I found her” response his handler obviously wanted and headed up the hill. Now we knew that King was nuts and must be after a bunny. So we walked in to tell Doris she could come out now. Doris didn’t move. We went closer. Much to our surprise we found a baby blue 5 gallon paint can—of the same color as Doris’ raincoat! It was time to call it a day. We radioed to base camp and started walking down the hill. About 100 yards down the hill, King got all excited. He gave the real “I found her” with much joy. (Ours, too) Doris, by the way, was sheltered from the rain under a *red* space blanket.

I learned a lot that day. I learned to trust the dog. He knows what he is doing. Trust the radio when they tell you that you are in the wrong area. They, too, know what they are doing. Follow voices that yell at you. They know where they are. And you probably will find the person you are looking for in a lot shorter time.

[Editor’s note: Did this incident ruin the search dog? No. Did it embarrass the handler? Of course. How many of us SAR folks, dog handlers or others, have similarly been so intent on what we “know” that we don’t recognize reality? If we are honest, at least 90%. Some of us are making a New Year’s resolution to keep our minds open and our senses alert, regardless of what we “know.”]

SAFETY EDUCATION, 2003
--DAN SCOVEL

This has been a positive and busy year for Safety Education, and thanks go to many people who made it happen and continue to make it happen. The total number of people who attended classes in the last twelve months is estimated at 850, not counting general information sessions at booths. Topics included ten essentials, what to do if you get lost, winter shelters, what SAR and IMSARU are, navigation, mantracking, dog handlers and skills, search management and more.

Some of the organizations we had opportunities to talk with are:

4H Clubs	Boy Scouts of America	Idaho Transportation Dept.
BLM	Good Sams	Kiwanis
Boise Community Educ.	Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game	Riverstone Community Sch.
Boise Public Schools	Idaho Div. of Aeronautics	Women in the Outdoors
Boise State University		Young Marines

The following people donated their time and expertise to help our community and IMSARU with this part of our mission:

Brad Acker, Kit Brown, Marc Buursink, Wendy Campbell, Joey Clements with Heidi, Richard Clements, Pam Green with Inca, Charlotte Gunn with Xena, George Gunn, Aimee Hastriter, Chris Harry, Kris Hoffman, Chris Karnes with A.J., Rod Knopp, Diane Mathews, Leslie Robertson with Mingo, Ron Moomey, Jeff Munn, Ken Murry, Jerry Newland, Dan Scovel, Martha Vandivort with Angie, Suzanne Ventura with Schatz.

Other events may have occurred that I did not get recorded, so if I have omitted your name or organization, my apologies for not listing it. 2004 will be another year of opportunities to work with our community, and we look forward to our members continuing to volunteer time and experience, as well as to suggestions for safety education programs or organizations that would want our services.

♪ THIS WAS A ♪ REAL NICE ♪ CLAMBAKE – DECEMBER 6, 2003
--CHARLOTTE GUNN

Food, fellowship, lots of laughter, emotional memories, recognition of service....What more could you ask of a Christmas party?

Special thanks go to those who made it possible: Judy and Woody Hart again hosted the party at the Western Village social center. Jennifer and Jerry Newland coordinated our efforts, and Jennifer joined Christy Karnes in decorating tables. Jeff Munn and Richard Clements made sure tables and chairs got transported and set up. Christy arranged the supplies and made sure logistics went smoothly. Some 65 members, family and friends filled our plates with great food and used the time to socialize. Jerry and Jennifer presented a DVD show of scenes from the year's activities, complete with music. (There are hopeful expectations that this will become an annual part of our celebration.) Diane Mathews and I had our usual fun of presenting non-serious awards to commemorate moments people might rather forget. Kris Walker presented participation medals to members who took part in at least three missions plus teaching field training and/or fund-raising work. And Rod Knopp had us misty-eyed and cheering with pertinent quotes and awards to members who contributed more than their share to IMSARU in 2003:

Chuck Bricker got our vehicles through another year, despite broken battery mount and failed catalytic converters.

Pam Green continued her work as new member coordinator and also qualified her dog in HRD.

Chris Karnes worked behind the scenes to fill out and submit reimbursement requests, and also qualified her dog in HRD.

Bob Meredith has spent ten years as Technical Director, and oversaw the updating of our technical manual.

Jeff Munn has spent two years as President, following eight years as Facilities Manager, and again did major work on several aspects of our Corn Booth fundraiser.

Jerry Newland did outstanding field work, including performance as SAR Manager on some major missions.

Tony Rockwell kept our web site in operation for another year, as well as working to forward our Mantracking program.

Dave Sorenson has completed eleven years of professional service as our Treasurer.

Suzanne Ventura has responded to a large number of missions, field-qualified her tracking dog Schatz, and worked with many activities as Public Relations Director.

Kris Walker has responded to almost all missions, been active as a training instructor, and shared personal equipment for unit activities.

Rod presented three “special” awards to members who have contributed even more than “more than their share”:

Kris Hoffman has served as Secretary, kept track of by-laws revisions and other changes in our manual, worked to strengthen our Mantracking program, and responded to missions—even when it meant driving half the night to use her skills for a few hours in the field before having to return home for family obligations.

Martha Vandivort has responded to missions and worked with the technical team; she has also volunteered for many behind-the-scenes projects such as organizing our presentation at the Good Sams jamboree, scheduling workers for the Corn Booth, doing logistics for last year’s Christmas Party.

Charlotte Gunn has continued to publish the newsletter, volunteered as financial liaison, field-qualified her air-scent dog Xena, responded to missions, and worked on fundraising and public relations projects.

IMSARU’s highest honor is our Distinguished Service Award, commonly known as “The Rock.” It has not been awarded for the past three or four years, but this year two people earned and received this honor.

Dan Scovel has served as Vice President, which includes responsibility for our safety education program. Dan has also been very active in public relations, the Mantracking program, training and mission response. He has used his professional knowledge to help IMSARU arrange facilities and equipment for our needs.

George Gunn has completed thirty years with the unit, including terms as President and Training Director. In the latter capacity this year, George has not only organized our unit training and coordinated the medical with the SAR training, but has worked to emphasize inter-agency training such as our Mantracking course, training with Custer County, climbing at the City of Rocks with Bonneville County, and our SAR Manager course.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE AWARD WINNERS!

“The 🎵 vittles we et were good, you bet, 🎵 The company was the same. Our 🎵 hearts are warm.... This was a real 🎵 nice clambake, and we all had a 🎵 real good time.”

OFFICERS FOR 2004

Thanks to the Nominations Committee of Kris Hoffman, Karen Limani and Martha Vandivort for insuring a full slate of nominees. IMSARU elected officers in October, and they took office on December 1. An asterisk by a name indicates the same officer is continuing in the same position as in 2003.

President – Jerry Newland	Coordinator – Rod Knopp *
Vice President – Dan Scovel *	Secretary – Kris Hoffman *
Treasurer – Phil O’Bryan	Logistics Director – Chris Harry
Technical Rescue Dir. – Bob Meredith *	Public Relations Dir. – Suzanne Ventura *
Facilities Dir. – Marc Buursink	Medical Dir. – Ron Moomey
Training Dir. – George Gunn *	

As always, there is far more to be done than the Board of Directors can do themselves. Election means these individuals are responsible for seeing that certain tasks get done—*not* for doing it all. The rest of us need to support our elected officials, and to volunteer for projects. Just like search and rescue missions, keeping the organization healthy requires a team effort.

WRAP IT UP! DECEMBER 12-24, 2003

Sue Brian is coordinating our gift-wrapping project at R.E.I. this year. She and Lance, Pam and Troy Green, Susan and Terry Read, and Rose Wood have made hundreds of bows for the packages. There are wrapping paper, boxes, tissue paper, tape and even Xena’s picture on posters. This is a busy time of year for all of us, but it is also an enjoyable project, a good fund-raiser, and a good PR opportunity. If you don’t already have your name on the schedule, there are a few spots left. Call Sue at 362-5564 and offer to take a turn.

HAM RADIO CLASS – FREE! – JAN. 15-FEB. 7, 2004

Dave Ritzenthaler is teaching an “accelerated” version of the ham radio class, and we hope several of our members will take advantage of this opportunity to expand our communications options. Classes will meet at the Compound on the following schedule:

Thursday, Jan. 15 at 7-9 p.m. (Intro/warm up)
Saturday, Jan. 24 at 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Grind through it.) There will be a lunch break, but you are responsible for your own lunch.
Thursday, Jan. 29 at 7-9 p.m. (Wrap up)
Thursday, Feb. 5 at 7-8 p.m. (Review)
Saturday, Feb. 7 at 9 a.m. EXAM Note that the exam will be in a different location.

The class is free. The optional textbook is \$20. (You do not have to buy the book. All the questions that will be on the exam are online.) There is a fee of \$12 to take the exam.

Questions? Contact Dave at david.ritzenthaler@hp.com or phone him at 396-3618 (office) or page him at 685-0933 and leave your phone number.

MOCK MISSION-E.L.T. TRAINING-RADIO DROP TEST – OCT. 18, 2003 **--DAN SCOVEL**

Having Jerry Newland organize and set up a mock mission to practice multiple areas of our skill sets created an interesting, challenging, great learning experience. The day began with sketchy information about an airplane reported missing, with last contact over the area of the Sheriff's Office in Idaho City and suspected to be in the Pilot Peak area. The flight plan indicated it was flying from Idaho Falls to the Landmark airstrip; four people were on board. With everyone heading toward More's Creek Summit to practice with the ELT units, George radioed to see if both units were loaded for the mission. That is like asking if you remembered to unplug the iron and turn out the light; you have to stop and check it out. Discovering we had not loaded the second ELT unit, a few of us returned to the Compound for it.

Upon arrival at More's Creek Summit, we had a small amount of time to set up equipment and try to pick up a signal from the downed aircraft. We picked up no ELT signal and received instructions to move to Pilot Peak to help with a radio drop from the airplanes and set up base camp. (I had seen the radios at the Compound but had not registered that we were going to help test the packaging Tony Barrett had devised for getting Family Service radios to subjects in the field so SAR teams can communicate with them.) GREAT IDEA! The ground team used traffic cones to put together a target area for the pilots; they did multiple flyovers and drops, and all were successful. The pilots' skill in judging wind and speed, the packaging design and communications, all were impressive.

While the above was going on, a few on the team were working on ELT signals, which seemed to be faint at best. It was time to get the search under way. Team assignments included two ELT teams, one hasty medical team, one canine and mantracker team, and two airplanes with spotters. Even with this many people, we could have used more. The medical hasty team was first out on assignment, and found the "crash site" before others got far from base camp. (Eagle-eye Ron spotted it within ten minutes.) At the crash site, the team determined that one person in the plane was deceased and another was critically injured. But where were the other two? They requested a technical rescue team to help remove the patient from the plane and get him to the road for evacuation to a hospital. This proved to be a big job, setting up a rope system to get the patient up a 100' hill. From all reports, including from the live patient, it went very well. During the evacuation, it was determined that the other two subjects were young girls, wearing dark clothes and heading for the lookout. Everett and Phil continued to work on ATV's to contain the area, watching for our two missing subjects during the evacuation.

While the technical phase was going on, the airplane spotters had practiced finding the crash site as well as flying over someone on the hill wearing orange but not flagging us down. It seems it is much more difficult to spot someone from the air than people believe, and bright colors make a huge difference. After completing the evacuation, and taking a break for food and water, jobs changed again. Martha with Angie and Kris started the process of getting a scent trail for the subject, and footprints to follow. Within 90 minutes, Angie had followed the scent to one of the missing girls, and fortunately the girls had stayed together just like good lost subjects should. (I think Martha was just as excited as Angie when they found the subjects.) All teams then returned to base.

This mission tested many skills, which we use in many combinations on missions. Many of us were put into jobs that we had never done or where we had very little experience. It was the perfect



This plane has just released a cushiony case that contains a Family Service Radio for use by a “victim” on the ground. The streamer makes the package visible to the person who needs it.

time to practice and learn. At base camp, life was never dull, and I cannot thank Tony and Karen enough for all the logistics work they did. (Karen may think twice about staying in base camp next time.) Again, everyone did a great job of adjusting to the mission needs as they changed throughout the exercise.

A huge thank-you goes out to Jerry, his family and friend, for giving us a real search scenario. This took hours of work and coordination to pull off, and it was fantastic.

Participants included Brad Acker, Tony Barrett, Marc Buursink, Wendy Campbell, George Gunn, Chris Harry, Tim Henning, Kris Hoffman, Tom Kearney, Karen Limani, Ron Moomey, Phil O’Bryan, Leslie Robertson, Sabrina Scheri, Dan Scovel, Janine Townsend, Martha Vandivort with Angie, Tom Wheless and Everett Wood. Pilots were Bill Miller and Skip Johnson; aerial observers were Wendy Campbell and Leslie Robertson.



Typical discussion at base camp before heading into the field.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

After eleven long years of service, our long-time Treasurer, Dave Sorenson, has passed the baton to newly-elected Phil O’Bryan. We thank Dave for making such a huge donation of his professional time, and we thank Phil for being willing to take on the duty.

While Phil is getting a handle on this job, Charlotte Gunn will continue to handle some of the minor tasks—dues and membership list, reimbursement requests from members, donations and thanks for same, income and expenses from fundraisers, and income from grants. So, continue dealing with finances the same way we did in 2003. If you have a question, talk to either Phil or Charlotte.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Thanks to a **Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation** grant this past year, we now have a laptop computer for field use during missions and training. This allows us to print maps of specific areas, download search tracks to verify that we have searched where we intended, keep legible field notes, etc.

Thanks to the **Grass family** for their generous donation after our search for and successful rescue of a missing family member.

Thanks to the **Behrens family** for their generous donation, again after our search for a missing member of the family.

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. None of our members are paid; all volunteer their time, skills and personal equipment to serve the public. Since we spend a lot of volunteer time raising enough funds to keep the organization going, we especially appreciate the donations that help make that possible.



REI Gift Wrap December 12-24

Hours:

M-F 11-9

Sat. 10-9 Sun. 12-6

“My people get all their gifts wrapped by Mountain Rescue. You should too.”

XENA, search and rescue dog

