



THE TRACKER

Inland Empire
Search & Rescue Council

Monthly Newsletter of the Inland Empire Search and Rescue Council

April/May 2006

Volume 15 Number 4

Horses in the Desert

Dave Nicolet, Morongo Basin Mounted SAR

It was quite a site to see in Joshua Tree, out in the middle of the desert on Sunday, April 30th, 2006.



As you traveled down a dirt road, all of a sudden you thought you had run into a desert oasis. Was it a mirage? No, it really was a quadrangle CP setting in the middle of the desert. Pick-up trucks, motor homes, water buffalo, cook trailer, generators and CP trailer all set up and waiting for the arrivals.

Soon there where people arriving in trucks pulling their horses in trailers. Horses began to be unloaded and members of the various posse units, wearing those bright orange shirts, began preparing for the days events. It had started.

At nine sharp, the idea that had been formed a year before, became a reality. The MOUNTED SEARCH AND RESCUE COUNTYWIDE TRAINING began.

The briefing was held and members from the six county posse teams where mixed to form training teams. At 9:30, riding their horses, they traveled out to the first of six training stations.

For the next seven hours, with a lunch break in between, the teams rotated through their training stations. You had the opportunity to listen to our county's tracking expert, Sgt. Darryl Heller, teach Tracking on Horseback. When the tracking review was over members had the opportunity to do

a tracking exercise for another 30 to 40 minutes. When the exercise was finished they rotated to the next training station.

There you encountered our ever-popular BSAR instructor Bill Fertig. With great expertise he once again taught you how to use a compass and map. Again, another exercise, while on horseback, was conducted. Members traveling to predetermined destinations got to practice their compass skills.

Next was the GPS/Computer class, instructed by the past commander of the Morongo Basin SAR unit, Rich Dexter. Here examples where given on how the computer and the GPS have become such an important tool during SAR missions. After the instruction, the members traveled on horseback to predetermined waypoints.

After the third station was completed, all members come in for a welcomed break and lunch. The hosting unit, the Morongo Basin Mounted SAR, had not realized that this day was going to be the first day of summer. The gentle cooling breezes had now died down, and the shimmering heat waves began to show from the desert floor. However, SAR members are never deterred and the training continued with many water bottles now inside of each members saddlebags.

Station number four was a class on Evidence/Victim handling. Members not only where instructed on what to do when items where found, but, how to keep their mounts away from destroying or stomping on objects when encountered. Mounting up, the members moved out to find these objects. When the victims were found, additional instruction was given on how

In This Issue

Horses in the Desert.....	1
New in VF.....	2
Hansen Search & Rescue.....	2
Note from the Editor.....	2
Atta Boy for VF.....	3
Recovery of Dead Bodies	3
Calendar	7
Classifieds.....	8

See "Horses" on page 4



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What's New in Volunteer Forces?

Lt. Glenn Grabiec, Emergency Operations/Volunteer Forces

Greetings! For those of you who attended the Annual Volunteer Commanders and Coordinators meeting, thank you! The meeting was a great success, even under the threat of heavy weather. We had a great turn out, with approximately 250 in attendance. I received some feedback from the attendees that the meeting was productive and a great opportunity for all of us to get together.

During the meeting, I had the privilege of recognizing some special people. Tom Schneider of the Wrightwood team received the Volunteer Forces Volunteer of the Year award for his over 3300 hours he donated last year. Wes Podboy of the West Valley and SAR Communications teams received a Commanders Award for his commitment in many arenas, and Retired Reserve Deputy Walter Innenberg received his retirement badge for his 10 years of service.

Another award was also presented to Sheriff Gary Penrod. As you know, his support of our volunteer units is unparalleled. Last year, with his approval, we were able to roll out the volunteer badges program. Tom Schneider presented the Sheriff with one of the volunteer badges that was mounted in a shadow box. I know the Sheriff was touched by this unexpected presentation.

Lastly, another reminder about the upcoming biannual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic coming up on May 6th; please attend if you can get away. It should be a great time. All stations should have a flyer. If not, contact Volunteer Forces for information.

Thank you for all you do!

Hansen Search & Rescue

Deputy Shannon Kovich, Coordinator, San G and Valley of the Falls SAR

This search and rescue incident started the way they most do, with a call from the Watch Commander of Yucaipa Station. Sgt Zehms received a call from a Sgt with the Simi Valley Police Department. Earlier that day, a Susan Hansen had reported her husband and son overdue from a hike to San Gorgonio Summit. The report was taken by the Simi Valley Police Department at around 1200 hrs on 041506, but it did not get to our department till around 2100 hrs that evening.

The hiker's vehicle was located at the Vivian Creek Trailhead in the Community of Forest Falls. We marked it up real good with notices that we were looking for them, and to call us if they returned. The interview with the RP, Susan Hansen, revealed that the pair had hiking and camping experience, but were unfamiliar with the San Gorgonio Wilderness.

See "Hansen" on page 6

Note from the Editor

Jeremy Thomas, Wrightwood SAR

Hello All! I feel that I need to apologize to all of you that look forward to reading The Tracker every month. I had a catastrophic hard drive failure on my laptop in the middle of April. There is a saying of "When do you need a backup? When you need a backup and then it's too late." Apparently I didn't listen to my

own advise and I had no backup. I lost 3 years worth of information. But, I am up and fully running, so there will be no more delays with releasing The Tracker. Again I apologize for the delay.

Atta Boy for Volunteer Forces

David Schumacher, Valley of the Falls SAR

I always feel it is of the most important to share my appreciation to the department when outstanding performance is recognized. I was recently certified as a SAR Technician II by the BSAR Instructors in the 2006 March training program. I was at every moment tuned into the trainers during the four days training. The training was well planned; the trainers were highly experienced and shared an enormous amount of information and experience with the class.

I want to thank Dave Pichotta for his professional insight for SAR activities and training. The trainers that shared so much

and worked so hard during the written tasks were outstanding, and then to do the technical field tasks was just fantastic. Recognition is deserved to the entire group, from trainers, evaluators, assistants, MOM and her assistant, and anyone else I may have not mentioned that participated in this project. It takes a lot of patients, they showed more dedication than I expected in the rain when both the trainer and trainee were wet from the rain and cold. Any one rescued by any one of these guys/gals should be grateful, I would be. A wonderful experience for me, one that I will never forget.



Recovery of Dead Bodies ~ How to Cope. Part 2

Adapted from a USAMEDCOMM combat stress manual

GUIDELINES FOR HOW TO WORK WITH HUMAN REMAINS:

- Prepare yourself for what you will be seeing and doing as much as time and access to information allows. It is better to be prepared for the worst and not have to face it than to be ill prepared.
- Understand the importance and value of what you are doing.
- Remember that you are helping the deceased to receive a respectful burial. You are saving their remains the indignity of simply being left on the ground to decay.
- In some cases, you are helping survivors know their loved ones have died, rather than lingering in uncertainty. Those relatives or friends can then take the bodies for private burial. This gives them closure so they can move on with their lives.
- Focus on the larger purpose you are serving without attempting to relate to each individual who has died.
- Remember that the body is not the person, but only the remains.
- Some people who have done this important work have found it helpful to think of the remains as wax models or mannequins (as if in a training exercise), or as memorial models to which they

were showing the respect due to the original person who was no longer there.

- If your job requires you to collect personnel effects from the bodies for identification, intelligence or other official purposes, do not let yourself look closely at or read those personal effects. The people who need to examine those effects are advised to do so remote from, and preferably without having seen, the body.
- Do not desecrate or take souvenirs from the bodies. Those are criminal acts.
- Humor, even graveyard humor, is helpful if it remains on a witty and relatively abstract level. It is unhelpful when it becomes too gross, too personal (e.g. comments or practical jokes which pick on members of the team), or too disrespectful of the individual dead. Some members of the team may become upset at excessive graveyard humor, and even the joker may remember it with guilt years later.
- Use screens, partitions, covers, body bags or barriers to block people from seeing the bodies unless it is necessary to their mission.
- Wear gloves and masks if the job calls for touching the bodies.

See "How to Cope" on page 5

Continued from page 1

Horses

to care for them. This class was taught by Coordinator Dep. Tom Boyles of the Morongo team.

Next was the popular Grid Search Type II and Type III training. Members who have done this on horseback know that practice, practice and more practice make this search technique easier. Before going out and practicing once again, Past Commander of the MBMSAR, Jack Dugan, gave the instructions on the purpose, techniques, spacing and communications that are needed to be successful.

The heat was now becoming very intense. All wondered how it could be 94 degrees when just two days before it was 68 degrees. Those of us who live in the desert know how the weather can be so unkind, but, had forgotten how fast it can

change. Personnel and mounts came into the CP for more water and to prepare for the last class of the day.

Station 6, was known as the Surprise Station. Members were to be prepared for anything. Upon arrival they got to meet the Vice

Commander, Gavin Jordan, of the hosting unit. He was mounted and told his people to mount up for a ride, off through the hot desert they traveled. Suddenly, he stopped. Gavin gave them a scenario. He told the members that they now had to spend the night in the desert. From their 24-hour SAR Pack, they had to use items to set up an overnight camp for their selves and their horses. The members, as they had done all-day, performed this task with great gusto and enthusiasm.

After their completion of their sixth station, the training was over. It was 4:30 in the afternoon. Seven hours had been spent in the heat, reviewing, receiving instructions, riding horses and drinking a lot of water. It

was time to head for the CP where awnings were out and dinner was cooking.

After tying up the mounts, unsaddling and getting out of uniforms the members



migrated to the CP. Cold water and sodas were waiting. After a few minutes, enough time to cool down, dinner was ready. A BBQ of tri-tip was served along with corn on the cob, potatoes and tossed green salad. After dinner, large helpings of cake were served. This fine meal was sponsored by the Inland Empire SAR Council and prepared by members of the Morongo team. Thanks to Director Mike Ward, who helped and was on hand all day to offer his support and encouragement for this event.

Before finishing dinner, all participants had the opportunity to applaud the instructors and their observers. Members Sally Ellis, Darla Bonem, Sue Lund, Missy Neely and Ron Scraggs had accompanied all of the teams during the day. They worked very hard to observe and add additional instructions when needed to complete the assigned exercises.

Also, Certificates of Participation were given out to all of the members who attended before they finished dinner and headed home.

It was great to see an idea become a reality. Last April 05, the members of the SAR Councils MSAR Committee decided that this was a training that was needed. The committee is made up of the commanders and vice commanders of the 6 posse units in SBDO County. It is their common goal to make sure that all



See "Horses" on page 6

How to Cope

- Take care of yourself and each other.
- When the mission allows, take frequent short breaks away from the immediate recovery area and the temporary mortuary.
- Hold team after-action debriefings frequently to talk out the worst and the best things about what has occurred, sharing thoughts, feelings and reactions with your teammates.
- A mental health/stress control team or chaplain may be able to lead a Critical Event Debriefing after a particularly bad event or at the end of the operation.
- Plan team as well as individual activities to relax and get your mind off of the recovery operation. Don't feel guilty about this, or about not being able to fix the tragedy immediately. **YOU MUST PACE YOURSELF FOR THE TASK, AND DO WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE, ONE STEP AT A TIME.**
- Stay physically fit.
- Within security guidelines, keep your family and significant others fully informed about what is happening.
- Take special care of new unit members, and those with recent changes or special problems back home.
- If your a coworker, subordinate or superior shows signs of distress, give support and encouragement, and try to get the other person to talk through the problems or feelings that they are having. By working with each other, you both will be better able to cope with the situation in which you must work.
- If the stress caused by working with the remains begins to interfere with your performance, your ability to relax, or if you feel that you are becoming overwhelmed, **TAKE ACTION**. Do not ignore the stress.
- Do not withdraw from others and become isolated.
- Seek out someone to talk with about how you are feeling. This might be a buddy, a family member, a chaplain, a medic, or a combat stress control/mental health team member. Chances are, other people are feeling the same things you are.
- After you have completed your mission and are no longer working around the bodies, you may experience a variety of feelings. These may include feeling bad about not treating each body as an individual, and needing to express the emotions that were pent up while you were doing the work of body recovery. **DO NOT KEEP THESE EMOTIONS INSIDE.** They are normal, and are best worked through by talking with your fellow unit members.
- Take part in end-of-operation debriefings and prehomecoming briefings.
- If you are in a leadership role, ensure that the team and its members are appropriately recognized and honored for their efforts. Be sure to include the families, and recognize their prayers, patience, and fortitude during the operation.
- Don't be surprised if being at home brings back upsetting memories from the operation. You may find it hard to talk about the memories with family or friends who weren't there. This is very common. Try to talk about them anyway. Also stay in touch with your teammates from the operation.
- If you still find yourself upset, don't hesitate to talk with a chaplain or with a mental health provider in your area. This is just wise preventive maintenance. 

Hansen

With the completed Lost Person Questionnaire, I started to plan for the next operational period, which was set to start



at 0600 hrs the next morning, which at this point in time were just a few hours away. Contact with our Volunteer Forces was made to order Sheriff's Aviation and the Central Mountain Rescue Team for the next morning. San G and Valley of the Falls SAR were also paged for deployment.

The next OPS period started with teams preparing for deployment into the various trails. The plan was to have two teams inserted by Sheriff's Aviation near the summit of San G, they would work the Vivian Creek Trail down to the trailhead.

Continued from page 4

Horses

of our units are standardized in training, equipment, HARMS certification and evaluation procedures. The purpose of this is to make sure that our MSAR units are a professional and knowledgeable resource while engaged in SAR missions.

It can be truly said, that despite the heat, all members had an excellent day. Each and every member learned, had fun and made new friends. All of our units are looking forward to searching together and possibly training together again some day soon. A big

The other team would start the long and strenuous task of hiking up the trail towards the summit. Before any of the teams got started, Sheriff's Aviation spotted the hikers tent near High Creek Camp. Both of the subjects were injured and required medical treatment.

Sheriff's Aviation returned to their station and switched to the rescue ship, then returned and lowered their air medic to the injured party. The juvenile was hoisted out first then flown to the Momyer Trailhead for medical treatment. The father came out second and was flown directly to the Loma Linda Medical Center.

The father sustained a fractured collar bone, dislocated shoulder, and many cuts and scrapes on his hands and face. The son received a large laceration to his leg. The two hikers stated that on Friday 041406, while en route down from the summit, the father fell off the trail and tumbled down around 300 feet, losing his equipment on the way down. The son soon went after his father, leaving his equipment on the trail. They both spent the night on the side of the mountain with no equipment Friday night, and then worked to get their packs on Saturday. They set up their tent and waited for help.

Both parties are doing well, and they are very thankful for the many members of the search and rescue teams who responded to their aid, especially the Aviation Division.

That others may live... NASAR



thanks to our team, MBMSAR, for the work they put in to hosting this event. Also, from MBMSAR, a thank you to all of the units and their members who participated.



Calendar

For information or to submit an event, contact the editor at editor@thetracker.info. Appearance of items in this section does not necessarily imply endorsement by the SAR Council or the County of San Bernardino. Call if you have any questions about a particular listing. To save space, persons to contact and numbers for multiple listings of *Department approved training providers* are consolidated in one place at the bottom of this page.

2006

April

29 — West Valley SAR's 10th Annual Run for Rescue & Safety Fair
Call 909-221-5119 for more information.

30 — County Wide Mounted SAR Training. Host by Morongo Mounted
Call Dave Nicolet @ 760-363-7475 or 760-831-5743 for more information.

May

6 — Volunteer Appreciation Picnic
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

6, 7, 20, & 21 — BSAR (Basic Search and Rescue)
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

8-12 — Direction & Control of Search Function, SAR Course
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

16 — CERT Training Conference
Visit www.certconference2006.com for more information

17 — IESARC Meeting
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

17-18 — Sgt. Heller's Tracking
Call 909-473-2695 for more information.

June

3, 4, 10, & 11 — TRBC (Technical Rope Basic Course)
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

10 — Human Remains Detection for Dog Handlers
Email Christine @ chrisstueh@aol.com for more information

4-5 — Sgt. Heller's Tracking
Call 909-473-2695 for more information.

15-18 — 2006 MRA Conference
Visit www.marinsar.org for more information.

July

8 — County-wide Rope Skills Recertification/TRBC Remediation
Call Volunteer Forces for more information.

19 — IESARC Meeting
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

August

7-11 — Direction & Control of Search Function, SAR Course
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

September

8-10 — SAREX 2006 Sponsored by Butte County SAR
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

20 — IESARC Meeting
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

October

7 — Morongo Basin SAR's 27th Annual Desert Run
Call 760-365-8185 for more information

7, 8, 21, & 22 — BSAR (Basic Search and Rescue)
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

13-15 — SAR City
Visit www.sarcity.org for more information.

November

15 — IESARC Meeting
Call Volunteer Forces for more information

December

*Course / Provider

Contact Name

Phone

email/URL

BSAR / Vol Forces	Dave Pichotta	(909) 387-0678	dpichotta@sbcisd.org
CMC Rescue School	John McKently	(800) 235-5741	www.cmcrescue.com
On Rope1	Bruce Smith	(423) 344-4716	www.onrope1.com
Rigging For Rescue	Mike & Joanie Gibbs	(970) 325-4474	www.riggingforrescue.com
Ropes That Rescue	Reed & Jayne Thorne	(520) 282-7299	www.ropesthatrescue.com
TRBC, PVSC, NCRC / Vol Forces	Don Welch	(760) 244-7340	ww26sar5@aol.com
Mountaineering / Vol Forces	Frank Hester	(760) 242-0855	f1hester@aol.com
West Valley SAR Training	Bob Gattas	(909) 980-8820	boobali@gte.net

Classifieds

Contact the Editor to place or remove any item.



SBSD Commuter cups with star and motto. \$16. Features generous 16 oz. capacity, stainless steel construction, double-walled insulation and fits virtually all auto cup or mug holders.



SBSD Search and Rescue decals. \$5. The decals are 3.5" X 3.5" and can be stuck on the outside of just about anything or on the inside of a window. The price is \$5.00 each and can be purchased by contacting SarDesertRun@aol.com or calling 760-369-9999.



Earrings (1/2") \$10 and **Lapel Pin/Tie Tacks (5/8")** \$8. Fund-raiser for Morongo Mounted SAR Team. For ordering info contact Kim Miller at millerkm@29palms.usmc.mil or call Kim at (760) 367-1148 or (760) 367-1148 evenings.

SBSD Coffee cups \$5. High-gloss ivory coffee cups with gold-colored SBSD star on the side is microwavable. Available at Volunteer Forces.

SBSD SAR Pens \$10. High-quality, refillable ink pens with SBSD star and "Search & Rescue" on side. Great gift idea! Available at Volunteer Forces.

Garmin Offers NASAR Members Discounts. NASAR has an agreement with Garmin to distribute its entire line of consumer GPS products and a handful of its aviation products to the SAR community. Join NASAR at www.nasar.org, and shop the store at www.nasar.org/garmin/default.php.

Air Rescue Team. The Air Rescue Team is selling T-shirts and baseball caps. To purchase them contact Diana at VFU (909-387-0641) or Kathy at Aviation (909-356-3800). Go to www.cafepress.com/helicopter2 to purchase these items.

Rescue Net

If you are a HAM radio operator, IESARC has started a Rescue Net on Keller Peak every Tuesday at 2000 hrs. The frequency is 146.985 with standard offset and the PL Tone is 146.2. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Ward at:

rockywinds@aol.com

Hug-A-Tree

NASAR has taken over the Hug-A-Tree program, and they are in the process of updating the program. They are interested in contacting any past presenters. If you are a past presenter, or are interested in becoming a presenter please contact NASAR at :

hugatree@nasar.org

Articles Wanted!

The Tracker needs you! Please send articles to share with your colleagues. Send in a mission report or a trip report. Write an article about a team training. The Tracker has a wide national audience. Anything related to search and rescue is worthy of publication. Please send submissions to:

editor@thetracker.info

Join the SAR Email List

To improve communication in the county, there is a new email list called SARInfo. This email list will facilitate county-wide discussions for those who subscribe. To subscribe, send an email to:

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When you are ready to post to the list send email to SARInfo@sbsar.org.

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