

## **After Action Report**

**DATE:** 22 January 2009

**SUBJECT:** After Action Report – East Cochise Stronghold

**FROM:** Robert Hollister

**TO:** David Noland, CCSO SAR Coordinator

**CC:** Mike Evans, CC Emergency Services  
RACES Team

### **1. PURPOSE:**

This report briefly describes the support provided by the Cochise County RACES Communications Unit to the Cochise County Search and Rescue Unit mission on 21-22 January 2009. It does not address any SAR specific operational issues.

### **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The RACES team was requested to respond to support a Search Mission in the East Cochise Stronghold. The report was that there were two overdue hikers. The MCU was dispatched and set up in the newly designated Heli-spot. After supporting the deployed teams from approximately 8:00 PM until 03:00 AM the team stood down until approximately 06:00 when ground teams were again deployed. The two hikers were quickly located as they had over-nighted in the Stronghold and started walking out when met by the SAR team. A second operational period team was identified and started to deploy when the hikers were located and were turned around at approximately 7:15.

### **3. LESSONS LEARNED/ISSUES:**

Go-Bag additions – two of the RACES team deployed without sleeping bags or blankets. Since this turned into an overnight mission, sleeping bags would have definitely been useful. The addition of at least one folding cot to the MCU basic load might be useful when there are opportunities for one or more of the team to rest while others are working. We should be able to store one in the Antenna Locker. MCU operators should definitely consider bringing sleeping items on any mission beginning in the evening hours. They could be carried in the chase vehicle to

Wall-Mounted Projection Screen – One of the locking screws had vibrated loose and was found on the floor. It was reinserted and tightened down. MCU operators should be aware that these screws (about 10" long" may occasionally work loose and should be reinserted and tightened on the back of the screen.

Water Can – The water can was apparently not refilled after the last mission. It was nearly empty and only supported two pots of coffee. All MCU drivers/co-drivers need to ensure the can is drained and refilled at the completion of all missions. This will ensure fresh water for the next mission.

Vehicle/Satellite Orientation – Driver/Co-Drivers need to be aware of the orientation of the vehicle to ensure that the mast does not obscure the view to the south of the satellite antenna. Although we did not need the satellite on this mission we attempted to put it up to use up one of the satellite days remaining for the month. Unfortunately, the satellite antenna was trying to look directly through the mast and no satellite lock was achieved.

Motorola/Tait Squelch Levels – The squelch levels on the Motorola seems to be set pretty tight. All operators need to be shown how to adjust those levels. In this case, we were hearing SAR Team traffic on the amateur radio by setting the squelch nearly at "0" but nothing on the Motorola. The Motorola was a recent addition to the MCU and not everyone is fully familiar with all of the options/settings, including me.

#### **4. COMMENTS:**

MCU Drivers – We can still use a few more trained volunteer drivers to help out and share the driver responsibilities across a larger population. This would reduce the number of times some of the drivers get tapped to respond.

Heliograph Repeaters – Once again the value of the Heliograph repeaters proved their value while working on the east side of the Dragoon Mountains. We switched over to Heliograph (146.90) about the time we entered Texas Canyon and maintained excellent contact between the Home Unit and the deployed team. All home unit stations should be sure that they have the 146.90 and the 146.86 repeaters entered into their channel load.

#### **5. ACTION ITEMS:**

- Recruit More Drivers.

- Add "Refill Water Jug" to post mission checklist.

- Conduct training on the Motorola/Tait control settings and acquire an operators manual.

#### **Appendix – Participants**

- CCSO SAR Unit

- RACES Team

  - Charles Campbell – MCU Driver/Operator

  - Bill McNab - MCU Co-Driver/Operator

  - Bob Hollister - MCU Operator/ /Chase

Barb Heck – Home Unit  
Dale Chidester - Home Unit  
Roger Peters – Relief Driver/Operator  
Pat Thies – Relief Operator