

After Action Report

DATE: 22 March 2009

SUBJECT: After Action Report –Turkey Pen Canyon

FROM: Robert Hollister

TO: David Noland, CCSO SAR Coordinator

CC: Randy Haws CCSO IC

Ursula Ritchie, CCSO POC

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 17-18 March 2009. It does not address any SAR specific operational issues.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At approximately 23:45 The RACES team was requested to respond to support a Rescue Mission in the Turkey Creek area of the Chiricahua Mountains. The mission brief I received indicated that there was an injured hiker who had fallen about 20 feet with unknown injuries. The MCU was dispatched and set up at mile post 2 of Turkey Canyon Rd. This location was about 4 miles west of the CP and was suggested to have better communications than actually deploying to the CP site. The victim had been located in Turkey Pen Canyon by the AZ DPS helicopter about five miles from the initial report. The helicopter was unable to land and departed. A SAR ground team with a medic proceeded by foot to the reported coordinate and located the patient. The patient was stabilized and decision was made to wait for the helicopter return at daybreak to do a short haul. The DPS helicopter returned in the morning and the patient was extracted and transported to an LZ at Sunglow Ranch where he was transferred to a ground ambulance and further transported to the hospital.

3. LESSONS LEARNED/ISSUES:

Call out – Due to early morning commitments/appointments, illnesses and St. Patrick Day celebrations it was difficult getting a full team together for this mission. An MCU driver and Chase Driver were finally identified and deployed.

Site Assignment – The MCU was unable to establish line of sight communications with the ground team at the victim location due to terrain. A relay was required up the canyon. After the fact terrain analysis indicated a better location would have been at mile post 6.5 and should have allowed LOS to the victim.

4. COMMENTS:

Mission Brief – Due to separation from the main CP, the MCU operators did not receive a full mission brief. Only after we were there awhile did the RACES team learn through radio traffic that there were actually 23 hikers in the group. They were escorted out at daybreak by a SAR member. They were definitely lost.

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.

Repeater- The 147.02 repeater worked well at that location for relay to the Home Unit.

Motorola/Tait Channel Load – We used some of the slow time to complete capturing the channel/zone loads. Copies were printed and put in the file on the wall for reference.

All mission equipment functioned well during this assignment.

5. ACTION ITEMS:

Recruit More Drivers.

Appendix – Participants

CCSO SAR Unit
Sunsites Pearce EMS
AZ DPS Ranger
RACES Team
Charles Campbell – MCU Driver/Operator
Bob Hollister - MCU Operator/ /Chase
Barb Heck – Home Unit

Bob

Robert L Hollister

Thought for the day:

"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty."

Mahatma Gandhi