

After Action Report

DATE: 27 October 2008

SUBJECT: After Action Report – Paradise Mission # 09-219

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 25 October 2008. It does not address any SAR specific operational issues.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The RACES team was requested to support a rescue mission for an injured hiker in the vicinity of Paradise, Arizona. Upon leaving Green Acres, we were directed to rally in a well-known field adjacent to the Paradise Cemetery, as this was the closest spot capable of supporting helicopters. The SAR frequency was monitored from the time we drove through Silver Creek, and we attempted contact with the CP several times after turning off Highway 80 on to Portal Road. No contact was achieved until the MCU was within a mile of the CP, at which point we were directed to turn around and wait at the Portal Fire Station. The injured hiker was picked up by Tucson Ranger (assisted by a CCSO deputy) and airlifted to the Portal Fire Station, and then transferred to a medical helicopter for transport to TMC. After a short AAR with the IC and other responders, the MCU departed for Sierra Vista, refueled at Gas City, and parked at Green Acres.

3. LESSONS LEARNED/ISSUES

- a. Douglas Refuel: The MCU attempted to refuel at the county maintenance yard in Douglas en route to Paradise. Although pump #1 sounded like it was powered up, it refused to dispense any fuel, so the team continued without refueling.
- b. Lack of Repeater Coverage Beyond Douglas: Neither the Mule Mountain or Heliograph repeaters provide any coverage on the southeast side of the Chiricahua Mountains. If the mission had been terminated any time after we passed Silver Creek, we would not have known about it until we arrived in Paradise, resulting in up to an additional 60 mile drive each way. It is essential that we get the 147.34 Mount Bernardino repeater back on the air to cover this gap and ensure we have reliable communications with the home units. We have all of the equipment required for this repeater – we just need to coordinate a date for access to

the site and conduct the installation. It is recommended that this be done sometime in November as the winter snows normally make the road almost impassable from December until March.

4. COMMENTS

Possible Portal Relay: We were advised that Dennis McAvoy (KE7KRE) would be monitoring 146.52 in the Portal area if we needed to pass any messages via telephone (there is no cell phone service in Paradise, nor is there any reliable repeater coverage). Although we were using 146.52 simplex for inter-vehicle communication in the Rodeo/Portal/Paradise area, we did not make contact.

5. ACTION ITEMS

Contact Fleet to inquire about Douglas yard fuel status
Install the 147.34 Repeater on Bernardino Peak

Appendix – Participants

CCSO SAR Unit
RACES Team
Lee Ilse – MCU Driver
Jim Lewis – MCU Operator
RB Rice - MCU Operator/ /Chase
Barb Heck – Home Unit
Bob Hollister – Home Unit/Standby for 2nd Shift
Charles Campbell – Standby For 2nd Shift
Mike Bales – Standby for 2nd Shift

Bob
Robert L Hollister

Thought for the day:

"Perhaps the most delightful friendships are those in which there is much agreement, much disputation, and yet more personal liking."

George Eliot