

## Net Notes for March 24, 2010

### News and Announcements

#### 1) Upcoming Events

3/27-28 SAR overnighiter at the Cochise Stronghold

4/24-25 La Vuelta de Bisbee Bike Race

5/1 CARA Hamfest

7/4 Bisbee Coaster Race

7/16-17 Williams Hamfest

2) Search And Rescue (SAR) Overnighiter – The SAR team has scheduled an overnight training event for this weekend, 27-28 March, in the East Stronghold of the Dragoon Mountains. This is a great opportunity to deploy the MCU and provide some hands-on training of all MCU systems to our RACES members. They will emphasize operations using the Incident Command System (ICS) and conduct a mock search for a lost subject. The RACES team will depart from Green Acres at 0730 on Saturday morning. Individuals may return as needed, at the end of the daylight training, after supper, or spend the night and return on Sunday morning after breakfast. RACES training will consist primarily of maintaining radio contact with all deployed SAR teams, keeping accurate logs, and MCU system operations. By systems I mean, using the Satellite Internet, familiarization with the computer maps, ICS Form 309 communications logs, Winlink, and possibly the ACU 1000. If you have never participated in this type of training before, it is a great opportunity to really get your hands dirty. I need a final headcount tonight of those attending and for how long. Donations are accepted to defray the cost of the Saturday supper & Sunday breakfast if you are staying. You are responsible for your own lunch on Saturday.

3) La Vuelta de Bisbee – We are only 5 weeks away from the annual Bisbee Bike Race. Please sign up with RB (K7HVV) so we can finish filling in assignments. This is always a fun event and is scheduled this year on the weekend of 24 & 25 April. We need 2-3 volunteers in the MCU and at least six, preferably eight support vehicles and drivers for each day. Support vehicles generally carry either a Race official and or a medic. We also provide a SWEEP vehicle to pick up stragglers and their bicycles if necessary. Pickups or vans are best for that duty. If you have an APRS tracker, that is also good so we can watch your progress at the finish line on the map. If you can work either or both days, please let RB know. Email: rb\_rice@cox.net

#### Training –

Since the bulk of our support missions involve working with the Search and Rescue team, tonight I am going to repeat some notes submitted by Tom Huntoon a couple years ago. After observing recent events, I think it important to review some of those tips. I want to give my thanks to Tom for this information.

Come fully prepared to work your shift. This includes, but is not limited to, appropriate weather dictated clothing, an initial supply of water, food, personal necessities, flashlight/batteries, pens and paper. I personally endorse the headlight band as one option, but certainly always bring at least a two-cell hand flashlight.

Check in promptly with the Search Incident Command staff. Remember to sign in and sign out on the Volunteer Log. If arriving with the MCU, review the chosen location for communications with the Search Team leader. If it is unsuitable for any radio transmission/receiving reasons, make suggestions to Command staff through the Communications Unit Leader.

Once the MCU is parked in its assigned area, proceed with a complete setup (unless directed otherwise). Activate and test all radio equipment. Advise the Incident Command staff of the status of communications equipment. Report any malfunctions or limitations discovered during setup so it can be incorporated into the final Communications Plan.

A representative of the incident command staff should provide the MCU team with a copy of the communications plan (ICS 205) shortly after your arrival. Review the Communications Plan and ask questions if you do not understand anything. If you do not ask questions, the command staff will assume you understand all the instructions and will comply with them. Set the radios on all required frequencies. This will usually mean setting the Public Service Radio (Motorola) on Cochise County SAR but this may vary according to the mission. Advise Command through the Communications Unit Leader of any compliance problems with the Communications Plan. Inform Command when the MCU is fully operational. Open a station communication log (ICS 309) to record activities of the MCU in support of the mission. Your initial entry should include time arrived on station and when the MCU became operational. To avoid potential confusion as to who is the primary person on a mission, on future missions, I or the person doing the callout if I am absent, will ensure that a RACES member is designated as the Communications Unit Leader for each mission. That individual will be the person primarily responsible for interaction with the overhead team, the Communications Unit Log (ICS Form 214) and the After Action Report.

Whenever possible, three people, a primary radio operator, a message logging radio operator and a team leader to aid and direct, should handle MCU operations. At no time should there be less than two operators in attendance. The second operator in the MCU should also be copying information simultaneously when messages come into the MCU. This will aid in ensuring that all messages are copied completely and accurately. If taking a "potty or food break" will leave the MCU "under-manned" request assistance. Keep distractions and noise at a minimum in the MCU. Insure that the units calling are not missed or misunderstood. Prompt response, comprehension and clarity should be the highest priority of the Communications Unit. Keep accurate, legible and complete message logs. This may be the only written record of key events of the search and times they occurred and may be used later by the IC staff as part of their after action report. Logging negative contacts may be as important as positive contacts when trying to establish later when we last had contact with a team. Don't forget to turn in the Communications Log and Unit Log into the IC staff before leaving upon completion of the mission.

Radio transmissions should be concise, orderly and comprehensible. The initial call to the field should also include a prompt of what is expected, such as, "Team 1, this is Command; Advise when you are ready to copy new map coordinates" or, "All Teams, Command; Be advised a roll call for Code 900 status will commence in 30 seconds." Organize your thoughts prior to transmission with who, what, when, why where. Here is an example: **WHO:** Team 1, Command, advise when you are ready to copy new coordinates. (Team 1 responds) **WHAT:** Command advises that you are to discontinue your current search area and join Team 2 **When:** in 30 minutes **WHY:** to assist in a carry out. **WHERE:** Proceed to the Abyss Trail Head at coordinates 58 123 E; 38 762 N.

Always remember who is in charge of the Mission, the Incident Commander. Ensure that the communications team receives important information, such as permission to break down, only from the Incident Commander. On one mission, the helicopter had brought the victim in and some of the ground team members. Unfortunately, there was still a ground team in the field returning through some very rugged terrain when the communications team began tearing down. This was a serious breach in protocol. If we are doing our job correctly, that critical piece of information should have been on the white board in the MCU reflecting the status of all teams. It is up to the MCU team leader to ensure all search team members in the field are accounted for and that we receive the appropriate approval of the IC before we begin tearing down. If things are winding down, you may be able to start putting some things away but be sure that the main radios are still fully operational and able to hear teams call in.

When you are not on a mission, listen to the style of the Sheriff's Department dispatchers. Do they give out information that is organized and clearly communicated? If not, how would you do it better and more concise? You should practice organizing typical SAR transmissions in your best "dispatcher voice". You should also practice logging or copying these transmissions in your spare time to become more proficient in keeping accurate station communications logs. Develop a usable short hand that works for you. Just be sure that what you transcribe to the log is complete. When practicing logging, I frequently leave out vowels to take notes faster and then put them back in when transcribing to the official log. I frequently use a note pad to take notes and then transcribe more fully onto the Official Communications log. Get

used to including time hacks on your logs. Each entry on the official log should include the time of transmission or receipt.

Don't forget our next Net will be on April 14 at 2000 Hrs. Don't forget the CARA net on Thursday evenings at 1900 hours on the 146.76 repeater. This is N7INK and the net is closed.

Bob

Robert L Hollister

Thought for the day:

***"Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness. Kindness in giving creates love."***

***Lao Tzu***