

After Action Report

DATE: 7 September 2007

SUBJECT: After Action Report – High Knoll Search

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 RACES Communications team to the Cochise County Search and Rescue Team on the evening and early morning of 6-7 September. It does not address any SAR specific operational issues.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

At approximately 2200 hours on 6 September, 2007 the RACES team received notification by page of a Swift Water Rescue (SWR) mission in the High Knoll area east of the San Pedro River. The initial report indicated a possible victim had been washed off the road in her vehicle while her daughter successfully got out to safety. The RACES Team went on standby to wait for the SAR Coordinators on scene to make a quick assessment of the situation. In many SWR missions, they are over before the RACES Team can even deploy and we are not an effective part of the effort. While monitoring the SAR frequency it became clear quite quickly that this was more than just a SWR but in reality a search. The vehicle was located but not the driver. The RACES team deployed to the area and established operations. After the ground teams were unsuccessful in locating the victim during the "Hasty Search" phase, the teams were called back and the mission was temporarily shut down about 2:30 AM to allow the teams to rest and re-supply. The effort started again in earnest at daylight and the deceased victim was located at approximately 10:00.

3. LESSONS LEARNED/ISSUES

Command Post Configuration – During the second phase of the operation a decision was made to locate the family of the missing victim in the main command post area under the SAR CP canopy and awning of the MCU. I believe this decision was based on a desire to provide some cover to the family due to the inclement (raining) weather. The RACES team was advised of the close proximity of the family and we kept our van doors closed as much as possible to ensure the family was unable to overhear information that may have been emotionally troubling to them concerning their loved

one and the search progress. The back of the SAR CP vehicle is a little more difficult to secure and their radio could have more easily been overheard. Fortunately we were able to maintain a level of privacy until the Incident Commander was able to provide the family with the news of search result. I was uncomfortable with the decision to locate the family so close to the CP when I thought the DUI van was brought to the scene specifically to house them. We occasionally had to open the door for access of team members and it would have been easy for critical information to be overheard accidentally.

4. COMMENTS

No other specific comments.

5. ACTION ITEMS

Restock the Paper Towel supply, the last roll was placed on the holder.
Clean out the MCU, the conditions were quite muddy and the interior needs a good scrub.

Appendix – Participants

CCSO SAR Unit
AZ DPS Phoenix Ranger
RACES Team
Bob Hollister – Lead MCU Operator/ /Chase
Dale Chidester - MCU Operator
Charles Campbell - MCU Operator

Home Unit Monitors
Barbara Heck
Juanita Portz
Floyd Sharp

Bob
Robert L Hollister