

ISSUE FEATURES



Report on  
**SARSCENE**  
2006

Annual  
SAR Awards

SAR in  
New Zealand

SAR Movie  
Reviews

# SARSCENE

The Canadian Search and Rescue Magazine Online

Winter 2006 Vol. 16, #1



**SARSCENE**  
demonstration  
showcases  
skill and  
cooperation



Government  
of Canada  
National Search  
and Rescue  
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## SARSCENE<sub>online</sub>

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Facts and opinions in SARSCENE are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the Secretariat.



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### Final report on *Ryan's Commander* finds cause of capsizing

The final report on the capsizing of the *Ryan's Commander* off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador in September 2004, reveals that the vessel left port lightly loaded, with its anti-roll tank partially full, and with extra fishing gear stowed high above the water—making it vulnerable to the prevailing wind and seas.

"We found that the weather, the operation and the design of the vessel all contributed to the capsizing of the *Ryan's Commander*," says Wendy Tadros, Chair of the Transportation Safety Board, (TSB).

The report applauds a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Transport Canada (TC) which addresses fishing vessel safety.

The report recommends that TC require all new inspected small fishing vessels of closed construction to submit stability data for approval. Existing inspected small fishing vessels currently without any approved stability data will be subjected to a roll period test.

There are approximately 4500 small fishing vessels, between 15 and 150 gross tons or less than 24.4 metres in length, subject to inspection by TC.

### Inquiry into helicopter crash completed

A military Board of Inquiry is investigating the 13 July crash of Cormorant helicopter CH149914, that killed three Canadian Forces Search and Rescue (SAR) crewmembers and injured four others during a training exercise off Canso, Nova Scotia.

Colonel Grant Smith is leading a team of four investigators and three specialists who to collect and analyze the evidence from the accident to determine its cause.

The Board of Investigation will first submit a report to Major-General Bouchard, Commander of 1 Canadian Air Division, for initial review and then to the Chief of the Defence Staff. The findings and recommendations will then be made public, subject to the limitations by the Privacy Act and the Access to Information Act.

### iPod leads searchers to victim

Oregon—the glow of an iPod screen led searchers to a mushroom picker lost in the underbrush during an all-night search. The lost 25-year-old man used his cell phone to describe the landscape to rescuers as best he could in the darkness. He was finally located at 1:00 a.m. when a member of the search and rescue team spotted the light coming from his iPod.

### Third time's the charm for lost hiker

An unprepared hiker was rescued for the third time by the Coquitlam Search and Rescue Team after spending a cold night in the woods on October 23. Found in the mountains near Buntzen Lake B.C., the hiker was last rescued by the team one month earlier in Golden Ears Park. In both cases, the 50-year-old man was traveling alone and without proper supplies. Ten years ago, he was rescued from the park after breaking some bones in a fall. About 30 people took part in the search which lasted about four hours. The man was found dressed in summer clothing and with no survival gear. After being treated for minor hypothermia, the man was returned to his angry wife. ➤

## Environment Canada launches 511 weather service

Environment Canada has earned approval from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to assign the 511 telephone number for weather and traveler information services.

This decision paves the way for a cross-Canada, 24-hour free telephone service providing Canadians with vital weather and traveler information through one easy-to-remember, three-digit telephone number.

The goal of Canada's 511 service is to provide up-to-date information about weather and travel conditions to Canadians so that they can make informed choices for their travel plans. A similar service already exists in several states in the U.S.

Once Canada's 511 service is in place, Environment Canada, one of the partners in the Canada 511 Consortium, will provide current weather information, including warnings about major weather events. Each province could contribute travel information that may include advisories about congestion, road and lane closures due to construction, winter maintenance and road conditions.

The Canada 511 Consortium is a partnership of government and private agencies that includes Environment Canada, Transport Canada, provincial and territorial governments, the Canadian Urban Transit Association and the Intelligent Transportation Systems Society of Canada (ITS Canada). The consortium's activities are coordinated by ITS Canada. The 511 service is expected to be up and running in 2007.

## Cold water team responds to sinking vessel

The Harbour Grace Volunteer Fire Brigade's Cold Water Rescue Team

was called to respond to a vessel sinking at a wharf owned by Harbour Grace Cold Storage Ltd. The MV Hamilton Banker was sinking at the wharf when Brigade Chief Sonia Williams was meeting with local fishermen to buy lobster for a brigade social.

The cold water rescue team responded swiftly with six officers and a crew of 14. Contact with the ship's owner verified that the vessel was indeed empty. The vessel was later raised and docked in Harbour Grace.

## Decline in maritime boating incidents reported

With the busiest part of the 2006 boating season behind us, Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety reports two boating fatalities on Maritime waterways so far this year. While one boating incident that results in a death is one too many, the notable decrease in the number of fatalities due to recreational boating during the 2006 boating season is encouraging to boating educators and enforcement agencies.

Over the past seven years, there has been a concentrated effort to increase safety awareness on the water. In 2006, Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety partnered with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Halifax Regional Police, Cape Breton Regional Police, Fredericton Police Force and Miramichi Police Force in a Joint Enforcement Patrol (JEP) Program designed to educate the boating community on their legal responsibilities when taking to the water.

The campaign resulted in the patrol of over 50 waterways, including lakes, rivers and coastal areas.

If you are unsure of what equipment you require on board your vessel, visit the Office of Boating Safety website at [www.boatingsafety.gc.ca](http://www.boatingsafety.gc.ca).

## SARVAC back online

Having reclaimed its domain name, the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada (SARVAC) has a new website at <http://www.sarvac.ca>. The new site has resources for search team members and excellent downloads such as trip plans and survival cards.

## SAR payload satellite launched

Europe's ultra-advanced weather satellite, MetOp-A went into orbit on October 19th, starting its climate-monitoring mission. Two hours after a Soyuz-Fregat rocket carrying the 4.1-tonne satellite MetOp-A lifted off from the Russian space base at Baikonur, Kazakhstan, the European Space Agency (ESA) announced around that the satellite had been put into its 850-kilometer (531-mile) orbit around the poles. MetOp-A promptly deployed the built-in solar panel by which it will store energy to run itself as it circles the globe.

Five previous attempts to launch the six-metre-long new-generation satellite since July were thwarted by technical hitches and poor weather.

MetOp-A has 13 instruments to record temperature, humidity, wind speed and ozone cover across the globe; monitor the environment in space and listen out for signals from ships and aircraft in distress.

"This SAR payload is truly international," explained Jim King, of the Communications Research Centre. "It was designed and built in Canada, at former EMS Ste Anne, provided to the US under our Sarsat partnership arrangement, transferred to Europe, integrated onto the European satellite (tested at various places in Europe) and launched by Russia from Baikanour, Kazakhstan. It will be tested in orbit by the Sarsat test centre in Ottawa and used by much of the world when the SAR payload becomes operational." ►



## People

It was with deep regret and sadness that we received the news of **LCol Colin Goodman's** untimely death. His passion for and dedication to search and rescue in Canada has been evident throughout his career, from flying front-line missions in the Labrador to coordinating the work of JRCC Victoria in Canada's busiest search and rescue region, to leading the introduction of the Cormorant to Canadian SAR operations at 442 Squadron. Most recently, those working in SAR across Canada have benefited from his experience, his insight, and the genuine care and concern that he brought to his work at 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Air Division. Throughout his career, he inspired many with his leadership.



The search and rescue community in Canada has indeed suffered a great loss. The National Search and Rescue Secretariat offers its sincere condolences to LCol Goodman's family and friends and to the Canadian Forces SAR family of which Colin was such a beloved member.

**Major Mitch Leenders** is the new Officer in Charge of the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre, Victoria.

## Air

**France Bergeron**, Acting Director of Coordination, NSS, will chair the April and October 2007 COSPAS-SARSAT Council meetings, to be held in Turkey.

## Marine

**Bill Nash** has been appointed Director General of Marine Safety, Transport Canada.

**Yves Villemare** has been appointed Director General, Maritime Services, Canadian Coast Guard.

**Peter Garapick** has left the Office of Boating Safety to work on the public consultation undertaking on Aids to Navigation in the Central and Arctic Region for the Canadian Coast Guard. **Mike Taber** will act as Regional Manager of the Office of Boating Safety.

**Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean**, Governor General of Canada, was invested as Honorary Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard at a ceremony in St. John's, Newfoundland. The investiture was the seventh since the title was established in 1976.

**Yvette Myers**, formerly Harbour-master for the Port of Vancouver and a senior manager with the Canadian Coast Guard Pacific Region, has been appointed Director of Marine Investigations with the Transportation Safety Board.

## Ground

**Mike Cook** has retired after 28 years with the Edmonton Police service and has joined the City of Edmonton Office of Emergency Preparedness. Mike's new job will focus on Community Programs and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) safety.

**Tim Charlebois** has taken on new responsibilities with the O.P.P. and has retired from the National Ground SAR Council after serving as both its Chair and Vice-Chair for several years. His support and enthusiasm for the council were greatly appreciated by all. **Jim McAllister** of B.C.'s Provincial Emergency Program will now serve as Chair.

The Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada announces the following new directors: **Walter Parnell**, Nova Scotia, **Laura van Zuylen**, New Brunswick and **Scott Wright**, Saskatchewan. ➤

# SAREX 2006

By Captain Nicole Meszaros

It was raining SAR Techs (Search and Rescue Technicians) as the National Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) 2006 wrapped up at 22 Wing North Bay on September 29 after a week of intense competition involving SAR units from across Canada.



The goal of this year's National SAREX was to help SAR squadrons and units from the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) from across the country work together in a common environment, to allow them to test their standards and evaluate their proficiency amongst each other.

Congratulations to this year's winners!

- **Team Spirit Award** — for the unit demonstrating the best esprit de corps in all phases of SAREX — Civil Air Search and Rescue Association from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.
- **Search and Rescue Trophy** — for the unit with the best performance in the search event — 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron, 14 Wing Greenwood.
- **Allison Trophy** — for the team with the best performance in the parachuting accuracy event — Combat Support Team 417, 439, 444 Combat Support Squadrons of 4 Wing Cold Lake, 3 Wing Bagotville 5 Wing Goose Bay.
- **Leslie L. Irvin Trophy** — for the individual with the best performance in the parachuting event — Sergeant Kevin Bergquist, ➤

## Awards

The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary presented awards to the following members at their 8<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and Awards Banquet held on Saturday, October 14, 2006.

### Certificate of Appreciation:

**Marcel O'Brien** and **Alma O'Brien** of L'anse au Loup, Labrador received certificates of appreciation for their outstanding work in arranging the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Search and Rescue Competition in L'anse au Loup, Labrador in October 2005.

### Honorary Membership:

**Brian Bishop** of St. John's, President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Civil Air Search and Rescue Association, was presented with a honorary membership for his unwavering support of Coast Guard Auxiliary activities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### Governor-General Recognizes Brave Canadians

At a Rideau Hall ceremony in October 2006, 43 Canadians were recognized for bravery and awarded the Governor-General's Honours.

Search and Rescue Technicians **Sgt. J.C. Steeve Bédard** of Jonquièrre Québec received a Star of Courage and his colleague **MCpl Daniel**



**Villeneuve** of Aylesford, Nova Scotia earned a Medal of Bravery for their 2005 rescue of five stranded seal hunters. The daring rescue amid high seas and winds of 50 knots took several hoists to reach the hunters who clung to their disabled vessel in the ocean near les Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Québec. With winds pitching ice into the air, the hoists were treacherous. The successful rescue earned Sgt. Bédard his second Decoration for Bravery.

**Constable Stephen Knight** of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary earned his second Medal of Bravery for his rescue of a despondent teenaged girl. Responding to the news that a girl had jumped into the frigid Waterford River in St. John's in February, 2004, Cst. Knight climbed down an icy hill to jump in the river and free the girl from the pool in which she was trapped. Battling a fierce current, Cst Knight was able to bring the girl to shore where emergency crews were waiting.

**First Officer Leslie Arthur Palmer**, C.V., Prince Rupert, British Columbia was awarded the Cross of Valour for his role in the rescue of two fishermen during a brutal winter storm in December, 2004. Aboard Coast Guard vessel Point Henry the crew spotted illumination flares set off by the vessel: the two survivors flashed a light in response to show their location. First Officer Palmer got ashore using a small rubber boat but, hindered by waves and wind, had to land half a kilometre from the survivors. He walked for an hour in hip-deep snow, struggling against sheer ice footing on a rocky shore, until he reached the two men huddled inside a life raft. Palmer worked courageously to keep the two fishermen warm and alive as they waited on the beach for another four hours before medical help could reach them. By that time, they had lost all radio contact and had only a flashlight to use as a signal. ■



417 Combat Support Squadron, 4 Wing Cold Lake.

- **Sullivan Trophy** — for the team judged to have performed the best in the medical exercise event — 442 Transport and Rescue Squadron, 19 Wing Comox.
- **Maintenance Trophy** — for the best maintenance team in the maintenance event — 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron, 14 Wing Greenwood.



- **Diamond Trophy** — for the unit with the best overall performance in all five events — 424 Transport and Rescue Squadron, 8 Wing Trenton.
- **Search and Rescue Technician (SAR Tech) SAR Tech of the Year Award** — for the SAR Tech voted best SAR Tech by the Para Rescue Association of Canada — Master Corporal Sean MacEachern, 413 Transport and Rescue Squadron, 14 Wing Greenwood.

Next year's National SAREX will be held at 5 Wing Goose Bay. ■



# SARSCENE 2006 wraps up in Gatineau

**S**trength in Community was the theme for this year's **SARSCENE** workshop, held in Gatineau, Québec in October. This year's event hosted over 650 delegates and offered a bit of everything: from expert instruction in tracking; academic research and international perspectives on marine SAR; to discussions on leadership.

The 15<sup>th</sup> annual workshop got started on Wednesday October 4<sup>th</sup> with 8 teams from across Canada participating in the **SARSCENE** Games. Lac Leamy Park was an excellent setting for a series of competitions which saw teams show their skill at everything from knot tying, scene management, first aid and search management on an incredibly wet and foggy day!

At day's end the competitors gathered for the games awards ceremony and the Toronto Heavy Urban SAR Unit picked up the gold medal, their second. Sûreté du Québec East finished in second place followed by Sûreté du Québec West. Other teams were York Regional Police, Parks Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Volunteer Association,

PEI Ground SAR and Greater Fundy Ground SAR. Congratulations to everyone who participated and to those who found the park in the fog to watch the teams at work.

Presentations were the focus of the workshop and this year's speakers brought a wealth of information to the delegates. Marine SAR was well represented with Small Craft Simulation from Virtual Marine Technology, Environment Canada's Marine Forecast Program and the launching of Parks Canada Agency's new Sea Kayaking safety video.

Research into avalanche safety was presented by the Canadian Avalanche Association and the Avalanche Centre of Gaspé, Québec, including an exciting new predictor model called the Avaluator.

CASARA celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a tribute at the opening ceremony and the Canadian Forces provided a great presentation on the new Canada Command. The Transportation Safety Board gave information on searcher safety on-scene at air crashes.

Canine SAR expertise was shared by Dave Walker of the Hamilton Police, who offered both pre-workshop and regular presentations to our delegates.

Technology was a highlight, with numerous agencies presenting modeling programs and focusing on interoperability issues for communications and other equipment.

International perspectives from the United Kingdom, Iceland, the United States, New Zealand and South Africa showed how nations can differ in their management of SAR and how Canada's system is perceived worldwide. St. John Ambulance of Canada brought in a delegation from Sri Lanka who have spent over six months in Canada learning about emergency planning and response.

The National Search and Rescue Secretariat presented the SAR New Initiatives Fund application process, and highlighted the changes in its redesign of the program. These presentations were very well attended and numerous NIF-funded projects were highlighted throughout the workshop. ➤



The media showed strong interest in **SARSCENE**, featuring the demonstrations and trade show in national newscasts.



## Trade Show

This year over 50 exhibitors brought their products and services to SARSCENE and enjoyed having such a great crowd of delegates in the trade show hall. With numerous first-time exhibitors, this year's show was a great success and offered everything from satellite communications technologies and all-terrain vehicles to comfortable boots and waterproof gear! The extended hours and lunches in the trade show hall guaranteed lots of shopping time for delegates.

## Joint ICSAR – Ground SAR Council Meeting

SARSCENE 2006 also provided a great opportunity for the Inter-departmental Committee on Search and Rescue and the National Ground SAR Council to hold their first-ever joint meeting. The two groups met to discuss search and rescue issues across Canada. It is planned to hold more joint meetings in the future.

## Prevention Working Group

The NSS also hosted the SAR Prevention Working Group Meeting which featured an open forum discussion on key issues such as data collection and measurement of behavioral change as well as a presentation by Cyndie Jones of B.C.'s successful Adventure Smart. Participants represented a wide range of agencies and departments, such as: the RCMP, Canadian Safe Boating Council, Canadian

Avalanche Centre, Lifesaving Society, CASARA, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary and more. Plans are underway to revamp the prevention presence on the NSS website and to hold a full-day meeting in conjunction with SARSCENE 2007.

## SAR Marine and Air Demonstration

The weather couldn't have been better for the outdoor demonstrations and hundreds of members of the public spent their Saturday afternoon, eyes skyward to take in the sights, sounds and splashes of the Canadian Forces demonstration on Lac Leamy.

A Sûreté du Québec vessel in the water and Canadian Forces aircraft simulated the rescue of a boat in distress. A Canadian Forces Hercules aircraft and parachuting SAR Techs were a great hit with the crowd. A Canadian Forces CH-146 Griffon helicopter then hovered over the boat and hoisted the SAR Tech and the 'victim' up into the helicopter for evacuation.

## They're hoisting what?

Back on land, a Sûreté du Québec Bell 412 helicopter hoisted a K9 unit into the area and search for a handglider who had collided with a tree. After receiving first aid treatment, the victim and dog were hoisted back into the helicopter.

The sunshine, crowd and the opportunity to check out helicopters in the park made for an exciting day in Gatineau. ■

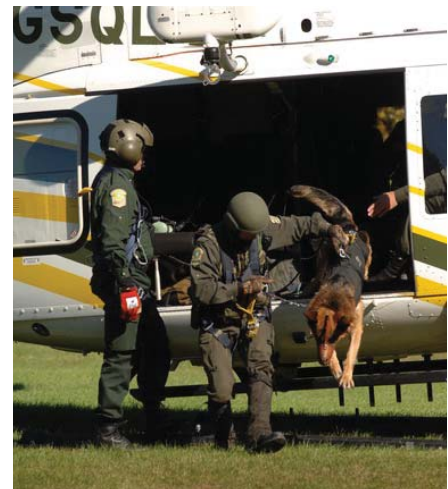


Photo by Ivan Hansen



# SAR Awards

This year, two **Outstanding SAR Achievement Awards** were presented at the annual SARSCENE awards ceremony for outstanding contributions to SAR in Canada.

## Ian Cummings, Coquitlam SAR

Ian Cummings of Coquitlam SAR has earned the respect of B.C.'s SAR community and has taken part in nearly all large-scale operations in south western BC for the last 15 years. From large urban searches for missing children to rescues of



injured hikers from wooded, mountainous or avalanche terrain, Ian's expertise and leadership are a tremendous asset to every search.

## Robert Petitpas, Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary

Robert joined the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary in 1981. In 2004, he became Chief Executive Officer of the CCGA. As CEO he signed a memorandum of understanding with Transport Canada and the Canadian



Coast Guard which demonstrated their common goals of promoting boating safety and protecting the maritime safety interests of Canadians.

*Robert Petitpas passed away in 2006, the award was accepted by his wife Claudette Petitpas. Picture taken at SARSCENE 2004.*

## Certificates Of Achievement

The following people received Certificates of Achievement at the annual SARSCENE awards ceremony for their commitment to search and rescue.

### Rick Holmes

The Pacific Rim National Park Reserve is one of the most dangerous and remote regions of Canada, but that hasn't stopped Rick Holmes, Warden Supervisor of the West Coast Trail Unit, from rising to the area's challenges for over 20 years. Rick has shown exemplary leadership skills through the training and mentoring of countless staff in areas such as rescue management and equipment operation. With an average of 80 to 120 recovery actions



annually in the area, Rick has been instrumental in rescue assessment and coordination, judging volatile weather and sea conditions, and ensuring patients' needs are met in this isolated region.

### Neil Brewer

Neil Brewer is a respected and sound administrator who consistently prepares his team for field operations. His solid leadership skills and meticulous management style have left their mark on search and rescue in British Columbia. With a keen ability to solve problems, implement plans,



and see them through to a successful end, Neil has a passion for making things better for everyone. Neil's Radio Interoperability Program saw 96 SAR teams throughout BC receive radio kits and

upgrades. Neil's impact on SAR in BC is immeasurable — he stands out as an exceptional leader, innovator and mentor.

### Guy Lapointe

Guy Lapointe's commitment to search and rescue is not limited to humans — his love for his four-legged friends, and the incredible skills these dogs are capable of, drove Guy to establish Sauvetage Canin des Laurentides, a non-profit organization and one of the most renowned SAR dog team groups in Québec in 1993. Guy has participated in 42 search and rescue operations in Québec, New Brunswick and the United States. In 2005 alone, he devoted 776 hours to training and supervised over 4,500 hours of instruction to his group.



### Mathieu Bourdon and Martin Desrosiers

Mathieu Bourdon and Martin Desrosiers launched the Awareness and Safety Organization for Sea Kayaking — or l'OPS Kayak de Mer — in 2001. Sponsored by Parks Canada, the organization is the first of its kind in Québec. The organization provides high-quality education and training services to help prevent incidents on the water. More than 2,300 kayakers have received information at its centre.



Only a few months after the organization was launched, kayaking incidents were reduced by 50% in the Mingan Archipelago National Park Reserve. ■



# K9 SAR Training

by Ivan Hansen

The SAR community was well represented with three Police, eight SAR Volunteers, a firefighter, and nine dogs attending Dave Walker's K9 seminar. Assisting lead instructor Walker and K9 Wile E. were Hetty Abma, and Ray Lau with their dogs, Ryker and Ace.

The purpose of the course was to troubleshoot and problem-solve with in-service dogs, and to show new handlers what's required.

Dave spoke from experience, "People may start training a family pet in obedience, and agility, and then ask themselves what else can I do? They may become interested in tracking, and wonder if they could use their dog for SAR. If the dog has a high drive, it may work out, but a lot of the dogs wash out. At that point, people either give up, or find a dog that can do it."

Topics for discussion included selection of handlers and dogs, training equipment, basic and maintenance training, certification, public demonstrations, and deployment with a police agency.



What do they need to do? K9 teams tasks include tracking, area, article, and building searches, obedience, agility, water and cadaver searches. Training is conducted in every season, in rural and urban settings, both on land and on water.

Walker also explained what's required of the two-legged partner. Handlers must be healthy, fit, dedicated, passionate, motivated, positive, and able to follow direction, with good interpersonal skills. They must be clue seekers not glory seekers.

"A strong drive is more important than the specific breed," Dave said. So which breeds are best for SAR? Preferred breeds include German and Dutch Shepherds, Malinois, and mixed breeds.

Night exercises in Lac Leamy Park assessed the dog's drive and article searches were conducted, followed by obedience and agility drills. Building search scenarios were conducted at a nearby Gatineau Public Works building.



On victim searches Walker's team's dogs can go off lead, therefore into areas where it may not be practical for a police dog to go. "The SAR dogs complement the patrol dogs."

In 2003, Walker trained three volunteer dogs to assist Hamilton police officers. Along with Hetty Abma and Ray Lau, Walker founded the Hamilton Police Volunteer SAR K9 teams. Dogs are certified to the Hamilton Police Standard. ■

Ivan Hansen is an acting fire captain and freelance public safety journalist.

**Author's note:** Special thanks to Officers Jean Bourdeau and Francois Brochu of the Gatineau Police who acted as our local guides during SARSCENE.



# New Zealand SAR

New Zealand is a country of rare and rugged beauty. Glacial mountains, fast-flowing rivers and rugged coastlines share the islands with less idyllic features like hissing geysers and boiling mud.

With its diverse terrain, abundant natural hazards and sparse population, New Zealand shares many characteristics with Canada. Bearing these similarities in mind, the New Zealand SAR Council has been look-

ing to Canada's search and rescue program as a model on which to base their management of SAR services.

Duncan Ferner, the SAR Secretariat Manager for the New Zealand SAR Council, outlined his country's system at SARSCENE 2006. Explaining the weather challenges that face Kiwi searchers, Ferner explained, "Because we don't have a continental weather pattern, you can quite literally experience all four seasons in one day. Combine that with cold fronts originating in the Antarctic ice shelf and you end up with dramatic shifts in conditions that leave adventurers and searchers in dangerous territory."

The nation's government has also shifted dramatically in that after a period of very liberal governance, the nation's administration became quite conservative and in so doing, contracted agencies to deal with search and rescue and emphasized personal responsibility for outdoor safety. Marine, air and land-based SAR services were all under separate funding and administered in isolation.

Delivering search and rescue (SAR) response in a country such as ➤



Jean Murray, NSS Executive Director presents the Canada Post search and rescue stamps to Duncan Ferner, the SAR Secretariat Manager for the New Zealand SAR Council.



this is a challenge. In 2003, after a review of the governance of New Zealand SAR, the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council was formed and after further review the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) was established. The RCCNZ coordinates all major aviation and marine incidents in the region.

New Zealand's SAR Region stretches from the mid-Tasmanian Sea to halfway to Chile; from Antarctica almost to the Equator and includes Niue, Tonga, Samoa, Tokelau and the Cook Islands. In its first year of operation (2004-2005) the RCCNZ coordinated 871 SAR incidents. Their area of responsibility is the one of the three largest in the world, covering  $\frac{1}{12}$ th of the earth's waters.

In addition to the SAR Council, New Zealand uses a SAR Consultative Committee to address technical issues and provide advice. Members represent wide range of interests: Department of Conservation (National Parks); Coast Guard (volunteers) Land SAR Association; Aviation Industry Association; Amateur Radio Emergency Communications; and Surf Lifesaving organizations.



### Royal New Zealand Coast Guard Federation

The Royal New Zealand Coast Guard is entirely voluntary. While units are spread throughout New Zealand, because no funding is provided for the Coast Guard, the government cannot direct where units need to be. Relying solely on funds raised through annual lotteries, the Coast Guard has over 1800 trained members who donate their time, boats and personal equipment to provide response.

### Aviation

Currently, there is no dedicated air SAR service in New Zealand. The New Zealand Air Force no longer provides SAR service. While six government-owned aircraft (P3K Orions) are available 95% of the time, there are only four crews and operational commitments in the Arabian Gulf. Duncan Ferner reports that the government has signed off on a very large electronics upgrade and improved radios so they can cover a larger sweep of the Ocean. Two Huey helicopters are also available on standby but have no winch capabilities.

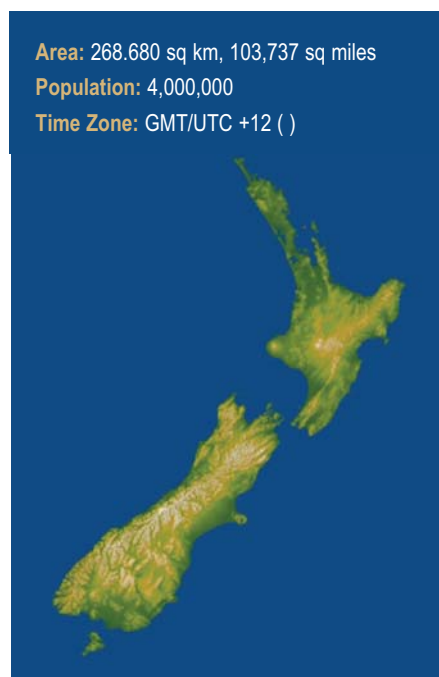
The RCC uses a suite of ambulance helicopters owned and operated by a private company, which means the helicopters are based close to their pilots and not necessarily close to areas of high activity.

"This is one of the larger frustration points," said Ferner. "Whatever's flying in the region is deployed to effect the rescue while other helicopters are in transit. We are trying to get new service level agreements in place and we do perform reviews after every incident, but right now, there's no strategic plan for locating SAR resources."

### Land SAR

The New Zealand Police coordinate ground SAR. With trained SAR coordinators in each district, the police annually respond to over 1100 land and marine SAR incidents, often working with volunteer groups like the Royal NZ Coast Guard Federation and the New Zealand Land SAR teams. Responding to calls about overdue hikers, hunters, boaters, the police are usually the first point of contact for SAR incidents not involving aircraft or coastal waters.

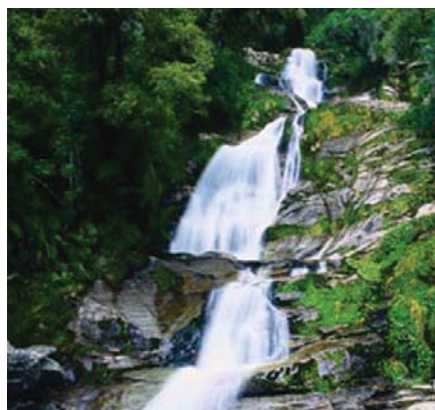
"We're really still evolving," says Ferner. "But now that some of the basic reporting and structural aspects have been established, we can look at key issues like where SAR ➤





## Prevention and Outreach

One of the great success stories in New Zealand has been their campaign to raise awareness of the impending transition from 121.5 to 406 MHz distress radio beacons in 2009. Their ad campaign has been aggressively launched in order to reach users. "While you can't make it illegal to own a 121.5 MHz beacon, you can stop them from flying," explained Ferner. By July 1, 2008, aircraft with the old beacons will be prohibited from flying in New Zealand.



resources need to be, clearing up roles and responsibilities in all jurisdictions and making sure we're able to provide efficient SAR response throughout the region."

At the November New Zealand Land SAR conference, Ms. Jean Murray, Executive Director of the NSS, Dr. Bob Koester of Virginia, USA, lost person behaviour expert and Sgt. Don Webster, Ontario Provincial Police, were invited to provide insight into how SAR is managed and delivered in North America. The conference was attended by 200 volunteers and provided an opportunity to explain why Canada has been so successful with its SAR program. "The key to Canada's success has been the seamless collaboration

between all agencies involved in search and rescue," said Ms Murray. "Collaboration and coordination have been the foundation of our success."

## Tourism

With Tolkien fans descending in great numbers on New Zealand, the increased perception of the country as a green outdoor paradise has led to an increase in SAR incidents. In the past three years, the number of land SAR incidents has increased by 61%; marine incidents have increased by 9%. It is expected that these numbers will continue to increase as tourism levels grow and more of New Zealand's rugged territory is explored. ■



# “The Guardian”: a movie review by rescue swimmers

*Reviewed by Master Chief Aviation Survivalman Larry Farmer, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired) and  
Commander Hugh O'Doherty, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)*

The recently-released film, “The Guardian,” directed by Andrew Davis, and starring Kevin Costner, and Ashton Kutcher, should be essential viewing for those involved with SAR, and for the people in their lives.

“The Guardian” tells its story, with its cast, crew, and script dedicated to getting the details right. With state-of-the-art special effects, a musical score that substitutes well for adrenalin, and a massive loan of hardware, hangar space, and pool time from the USCG and USAF, the movie immerses the viewer into the lives of SAR professionals.

In the past, some fine movies (such as “Island in the Sky,” “Flight from Ashiya,” “Ordeal in the Arctic,” and “The Perfect Storm”) have attempted to capture the feel of actual rescue operations, but “The Guardian” succeeds where they have not. Using the framework of USCG Aviation, and specifically, helicopter rescue swimmers, the screenwriter (Ron Brinkerhoff) has taken the nuts and bolts of SAR operations, elements of actual maritime rescues and mishaps, and sewn them together to support his fictional story about a rescue specialist at the end of his career, passing his experience and baton to a capable (but initially unfocused) rookie.

This is not a docudrama or a training film. This is an action movie. There are obligatory “soap opera” subplots, scenes of inter-service rivalry, and a contrived myth in the script. Yet, through five rescue sequences and the middle portion of the film where eager volunteers attempt to become

rescue swimmers, the story rises well above its predecessors by providing the viewer more than just glimpses of:

- The value of crew coordination
- The importance of confidence and endurance to a swimmer, when he or she is alone, in the open sea, or in the surf.
- The challenges of hovering over water at night, hoisting personnel and/or rescue equipment to and from rolling vessels that bristle with obstructions, and handling multiple drowning people.
- The hard decisions facing crews, including whether or not to deploy one of their crew to the hazards of a debris-covered, cold, ocean; to what may be “bodies” or “fathers and sons.”

- The dangers involved in entering a sinking or submerged object.
- The effects of hypothermia on the patient AND the rescuer.
- The importance of continuing CPR.
- The reality and toll of traumatic stress and survivor's guilt.
- The inevitability of the need to retire from your life's vocation.
- That's a lot of SAR biz in a 2 hour and 15 minute movie!

Costner and Kutcher's respective characters are believable as the older quiet professional and the cocky, know-it-all, newbie. Characters like these do exist in real life! We've all worked with people like these two. The film is 90% accurate; that's a

## About our reviewers:

Larry Farmer was a career Aviation Survivalman (ASM). He flew as a C-130 dropmaster and loadmaster and a helicopter flight mechanic, from units on the Pacific, Gulf, and Atlantic coasts. After tours of running the ASM “A” School and subject matter specialist desk at the Coast Guard Institute, Larry was assigned in 1985 to be part of the team that put together the helicopter rescue swimmer program. At age 36, Larry graduated from the USN Rescue Swimmer School. For the next six years, he ran the standardization team, guiding units into integrating the use of rescue swimmers into their helicopter operations, and returning to these units to audit and evaluate their operations and continuing training. Larry now works in the rescue and survival equipment industry.

Hugh O'Doherty was a career Coast Guard Aviator. In addition to flying C-130s and three types of helicopters, Hugh served three years, flying on exchange with a Canadian Forces rescue squadron, on Prince Edward Island. He returned to the CG, in 1984. Because of his experience working with and deploying Canadian pararescue personnel, Hugh was also assigned to the team forming the helicopter rescue swimmer program. Hugh was the Chief, Aviation Life Support Section from 1987 to 1990, supervising the implementation of the swimmer program at more than half of the Coast Guard's helicopter units. Hugh now works in corporate aviation.

lot for any movie! However some ► elements of the 10% can drive a detail-oriented-insider crazy: Night free-fall deployments into water laced with debris, hoisting to a fishing vessel without using a guideline, igniting pyrotechnics in enclosed spaces, placing a patient with a broken leg into a basket instead of a stokes litter, the commanding officer of the "A" School allowing "free lance training" of students.

Some film critics have slammed "The Guardian" because of its similarities to "An Officer and a Gentleman" and "Top Gun." They also seem to believe that there is no way USCG crews could make rescues in these conditions. Critics are both short-sighted and misinformed. In this instance, they don't seem to remember that some human experiences (rescue swimmer training) often parallel other human experiences (officer and

fighter pilot training). Yet, they don't turn around and hammer the latest cinematic love story as a clone of "Romeo and Juliet!"

Our families and friends have an idea of the work we and our colleagues do or have done. This film vividly fills in a lot of blanks. It is the closest we'll ever see of what maritime rescue work is like, on the big screen. In their respect for this honourable profession and their diligence with the details, Davis, Brinkerhoff, cast, and crew have also given to those of us who participate or have participated in the SAR business, a gift. It is a wonderful vehicle for the people in our lives to more fully understand rescue. ■

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**Note:** In the 21-year history of the program, no USCG helicopter rescue swimmer has ever died while

## SAR on the Small Screen

Another SAR film was debuted during SARSCENE 2006 and while it doesn't feature big name stars, the subject matter is one of interest to anyone who has ever acted as a team leader (or wondered why their leader made the decisions they did!) "Ground Search Team Leader" is the film made by Don Blakely and Jim Elderton for the Justice Institute of B.C. (JIBC). The training film is in a mock documentary format and focuses on the often neglected topic of how a team leader prepares and organizes his/her team after orders are received from the search manager. The film, which was funded by the SAR New Initiatives Fund, is available for free download in English or French on the JIBC website: [www.jibc.ca/emergency/programs/SAR/filesLibrary.htm](http://www.jibc.ca/emergency/programs/SAR/filesLibrary.htm)

The film and its supporting materials are part of the JIBC download library which features resources on a wide range of subjects. ■

## A SARSCENE 2007 preview

The Province of British Columbia's Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) in cooperation with the B.C. Search and Rescue Association (BCSARA) are co-hosting SARSCENE 2007 with the National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS) in Victoria from October 17 to 20, 2007.

The theme for SARSCENE 2007 is "The spirit of search and rescue", which embodies the cooperation between agencies in responding to air, ground, and marine incidents in British Columbia and across Canada. Building on the successes of past conferences, SARSCENE 2007 will provide an excellent forum for SAR personnel to highlight and share best practices.



Please join us for SARSCENE 2007 at the Victoria Conference Centre, adjacent to the world-renowned Empress Hotel on the Victoria harbour.

Come early or extend your stay to take in the sights and many activities in the Victoria area, Vancouver Island and throughout the Province.

Jim McAllister, B.C. Provincial Emergency Program ■







# Quebec SAR volunteers hold first province-wide training

Photo courtesy of the Association Québécoise des Bénévoles en Recherche et Sauvetage

In the days leading up to SARSCENE 2006, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) and the Québec Association of Search and Rescue Volunteers held a training weekend at the Tim Horton's Children's Foundation Camp in Quyon, Québec.

With an outstanding facility and a great lineup of trainers, the event attracted hundreds of Québec volunteers.

A full weekend of speakers from the SQ, Parks Canada, SERABEC and others gave the Québec volunteers an opportunity to share their skills and experiences.

The SQ also used this training weekend as a chance to honour volunteers who have made significant contributions to the search and rescue in Québec. Mr. Yves Duguay-Gagné of SAR Québec-Metro was presented with a commemorative Canada Post SAR stamp in recognition of his dedication to SAR.

A second gift was given to Mrs. Claudette Petitpas in honour of the work of her late husband, Robert Petitpas, former Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary.

This was the first provincial training weekend held in Québec and its success demonstrates that the demand is there. Organizers Yves Nadeau of the volunteer association and Capt. René Marchand of the SQ brought together an impressive lineup of instructors to make the most of this training opportunity.

For more information on the weekend, please visit the website:

[http://www.aqbrs.com/index\\_AQBRS\\_2006.htm](http://www.aqbrs.com/index_AQBRS_2006.htm) ■



Photo courtesy of the Association Québécoise des Bénévoles en Recherche et Sauvetage

