



SAR SCENE

CANADA'S SEARCH AND RESCUE MAGAZINE

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Celebrating 25 years of evolution in CANADIAN SEARCH AND RESCUE



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SARSCENE

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THE NATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE SECRETARIAT GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE MANY CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS EDITION OF **SARSCENE** MAGAZINE, INCLUDING VANESSA NELSON – WORD4WORD COMMUNICATIONS, PIERRE LEMIEUX, AND MANY MEMBERS OF THE NSS STAFF.
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Géraldine Underdown,
NSS Executive Director

The search and rescue environment often makes headlines because of the numerous SAR events which unfortunately dot our vast Canadian area of response. Such is our reality.

While 2011 has been a year to reflect on our collective challenges, it has also been one to feature our successes. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the National Search and Rescue Program and the National Search and Rescue Secretariat.

Much has happened in the last 25 years during which we have regularly heard that Canadians consider SAR to be an important service which they expect their government to provide. Current political and economic situations have challenged us all to be innovative in our collective efforts to improve SAR across the country through the National Search and Rescue Program – exploring new approaches, leveraging resources, and increasing the need for effective collaboration and cooperation among all of our SAR partners both domestically and now internationally through the newly signed International Arctic Search and Rescue Treaty.

Part of the Secretariat's work involves observing the Canadian SAR landscape and providing advice and guidance to the Lead Minister for Search and Rescue, working with the partners of the National SAR Program and others on issues and areas of opportunity for continued progress, and developing policies and programs that support the two pillars of the National SAR Program: Response and Prevention. In 2011, Op Nanook – the annual Canadian military training exercise in Resolute Bay – included a major air disaster (MAJAID) search and rescue simulation that included a first ever 'whole of government' approach. As we now know, the MAJAID exercise tragically turned out to be a very real major air disaster, and the resulting collaboration between on scene SAR responders from various agencies demonstrated the positive work and whole of government approach that is being accomplished through the dedicated partners of the National SAR Program.

Although many years have passed since the Ocean Ranger disaster that led to the founding of the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, recent incidents, changes and challenges in the Canadian SAR community highlight the need for continued exchanges and communication between us. The NSS' annual search and rescue conference SARscene provides such a venue and opportunity where SAR responders, practitioners and delegates from coast to coast to coast and from abroad come together to share their ideas, best practices, lessons learned and experiences, and further the objectives of the National SAR Program.

The SAR needs of Canada are as immense as its geography and they continue to grow as does our population, increasing pressures on authorities and SAR responders. I can assure you that, despite the challenges, we will continue to actively develop programs and policies that will help foster the most seamless SAR response possible across Canada. We also remain committed to discussing with our stakeholders on the impact of potential changes – political and economic – on SAR in Canada. And we continue to focus on and broaden prevention outreach and awareness, with the intent of reducing the number and severity of SAR incidents.

Much has been accomplished in the last 25 years. Yet much remains to be done. As our country evolves in an era of fiscal constraints and global economic downturn, the National Search and Rescue Secretariat and the stakeholders of the National Search and Rescue Program continue their work to find creative and collaborative opportunities for seamless search and rescue services for Canadians, in keeping with the search and rescue motto "That others may live".

Géraldine Underdown, NSS Executive Director

“No Duff”

Operation Nanook 2011 – an annual northern sovereignty exercise led by the Canadian Forces' Canada Command – was to be different from previous years. From a base in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, Canadian troops would perform their annual sovereignty and training exercises in the North during the first part of the Operation from August 4-20, but Canada Command chose to use the second portion – from August 20 to 26th – to conduct Canada's first whole-of-government simulation search and rescue exercise involving a major air disaster (MAJAID) in the far North.

Seizing the opportunity to conduct a large-scale disaster simulation requiring extensive inter-governmental and inter-agency coordination and cooperation in a very remote location, Canada Command invited participants from across the federal, territorial and provincial governments to participate. The aim was to identify challenges to collaboration in an effort to develop a more seamless approach to SAR response both in the North and across Canada.

NO DUFF

With such a simulation and so many key participants on site, it can only be expected that when word came of a plane crash within minutes of the MAJAID site, it had to be followed with “No Duff” – a military term advising personnel, SAR responders, medical staff and other experts on site that this was in fact a real emergency.

For those on the ground anticipating a simulation, the reality came as quite a shock when a First Air Boeing 737-200 passenger jet arriving from Yellowknife crashed into a hillside near the Resolute Bay airfield. This immediately launched SAR responders into action who put all their training and preparations to practiced use.

Literally within minutes of the crash, a C17 military aircraft inbound from Canadian Forces Base Trenton, was landing at Resolute Bay airfield. On board were participants from the National Search and Rescue Secretariat, the Transportation Safety Board, military medical personnel and SAR technicians from a variety of organizations who were quickly integrated into the operation.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES, EXCEPTIONAL COORDINATION

The Executive Director of Canada's National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS), Ms. Geraldine Underdown, was on the C17 arriving from CFB Trenton. While word of the accident was relayed



DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

by the pilot to passengers on board, none were prepared for the images of the crash site as they came in to land. Despite the shock and horror of the scene, Ms. Underdown was impressed with the efficiency with which resources from the C17 aircraft were quickly mobilized – preparing medical staff and SAR technicians for rapid priority deplaning upon landing. While only the medical personnel was allowed to disembark at first, the Transportation Safety Board personnel were already standing in the aircraft's open doorways, taking photographs of the crash site for their investigation. Remaining passengers were removed to a temporary holding zone while the rescue efforts were underway. It was later learned that there were 12 fatalities in the crash, and miraculously three injured survivors.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

For Ms. Underdown, the experience was a life-altering demonstration of the fragility of life, and underscored her commitment as head of the NSS to overcoming the resource and coordination challenges of SAR in Canada's north. Recognizing the vastness of the North populated with few people and challenged with limited resources, the reality remains for Ms. Underdown that northern Canadians deserve effective SAR response resources.

Despite the success of the First Air crash response in terms of timing and deployment of SAR personnel, this tragic accident underscored the need for improved SAR response in the North,

as many questioned whether there would have been a positive outcome had the MAJAID exercise not been taking place in the area at the time of the incident.

For Canada's National SAR Program, the accident was a demonstration of effective SAR coordination, but also flagged that more needs to be done to leverage SAR resources across a variety of government departments, agencies, private sector companies, and volunteer organizations, to further develop a SAR program that provides northern residents with the best possible chances for survival at all times in case of a major large scale incident.

Parks Canada at 100

THE WORLD'S FIRST NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CELEBRATES ITS CENTENNIAL

Moose cross a hiker's path in Gros Morne National Park. Kayakers paddle across an icy blue lake in Banff. A child explores the ramparts at Fort Louisbourg in Nova Scotia. Around the world, scenes like these have become symbolically Canadian. For over a century, Canadians have been able to enjoy landscapes and experiences like these – and thousands more – thanks to Parks Canada's stewardship of these unrivalled and irreplaceable places.

In 1911, Canada's government was the first in the world to establish a national service dedicated to the preservation and care of parks and cultural sites. For Canadians, this decisive action has led to the ability to enjoy some of the most



stunning landscapes and meticulously maintained historic sites in the world.

Parks Canada's founding in 1911 responded to the desires of Canadians – intrigued and awed by the natural beauty of their country – to have access to Canada's most treasured landscapes and natural wonders. Located along train lines, Canada's first national parks and surrounding areas would quickly become popular with European and Canadian tourists eager to explore Canada's diverse landscapes, from the rugged terrain and stunning vistas of the Rocky Mountains in the west to the ocean vistas of the Maritimes in the east. As tourism grew and Canada's population expanded, Parks Canada recognized a desire amongst Canadians to also explore Canada's cultural landscape and undertook the management of National Historic Sites from coast to coast to coast.

From Signal Hill in Newfoundland and Labrador to the national parks in the Rockies and Canada's North, today Canadians and visitors from around the world are able to enjoy the beauty and richness of Canada's 42 national parks, 167 national historic sites and four national marine conservation areas. From coast to coast to coast, visitors are able to explore Canada's diverse landscape and impressive history, benefitting from Parks Canada's vast interpretive programming which effectively balances conservation and visitation, education and recreation.

Since its inception in 1911, Parks Canada has grown to become Canada's largest provider of historical and natural heritage tourism and managing the country's wealth of historic and natural treasures. To celebrate the agency's centennial,

a series of events have been planned at locations across the country. For more information visit: www.parksCanada.gc.ca.

A commitment to cooperation in international Arctic SAR

Incidents in the Arctic are amongst the most challenging for SAR personnel. Facing the challenges of shorter days and even round-the-clock darkness, extreme weather and terrain, successful rescues rely on swift responses, efficient operations, and qualified rescue personnel and equipment. But what happens when the incident takes place in international waters, or in a remote location requiring additional resources and support beyond one country's capacity?

In Greenland this past spring, Canada's MP for Nunavut Leona Aglukkaq, U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov joined representatives from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to sign the Arctic Council's first legally binding agreement: an international treaty on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic.

While Council members have cooperated previously on SAR operations in the Arctic, a continued increase in air and marine traffic in the Arctic in recent years and the increased potential for incidents—including the grounding of two cruise ships in Canadian waters alone in the past four years – have brought urgency to the need for enhanced Arctic SAR capabilities across the area. Reviews of past SAR operations have

also highlighted the need for better cooperation and coordination among the eight member states in responding to emergencies in the Arctic.

In the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Report from 2009, the Arctic Council identified existing Arctic SAR capacity to be limited, and resources challenged in responding to the increase in passenger vessel traffic in northern waters – both in Canada and internationally. In fact, the report identified a discrepancy between the pace of growth in Arctic marine tourism and investments being made in SAR equipment and infrastructure across the Arctic states.

Among the report's 2009 recommendations was the need for a binding international agreement for Arctic SAR which would identify SAR resources and infrastructure commitments from Arctic Council countries, and provide a framework for coordinated and collaborative SAR operations across the Arctic.

In theory, the solution was simple: develop a unified, international approach to Arctic SAR which could draw on the resources and expertise of multiple states. In practice, this would require detailed planning and commitments from all eight members of the Arctic Council to ensure its success.

The Council was quick to respond with a treaty in which all member states commit to nominating resources, organizations or institutions with full discretion for SAR in their respective Arctic area. While each country remains responsible for SAR in their territories, the treaty outlines the responsibilities of all Council members towards coordination and cooperation for SAR activities in the region. The treaty also commits members to an open exchange of information on search and rescue facilities, airfields and airports (including their refueling and resupply capacities), and the locations of supplies and medical facilities. For SAR personnel this readily available information is invaluable to ensuring swift SAR response capabilities, is critical to successful coordinated operations, and is vital to ensuring effective, coordinated international SAR operations in the hostile Arctic terrain.

Moving forward, this agreement presents significant opportunities and challenges for SAR in Canada. For Canadians living in the Arctic, the increased SAR capacity made possible through international cooperation will provide a greater sense of security in years to come. That said, as the repository for the Treaty, Canada has responsibility for the management

and oversight of the agreement. This puts added pressure on providers to ensure that the Canadian SAR response capacity in the Arctic is in line with our commitments, as our country will be held to the highest standards of accountability by other member states.

For the Arctic Council, the treaty is the first step towards increased cooperation among its members. While many issues remain for discussion, travelers and workers across the Arctic will now benefit from a coordinated approach to SAR which goes beyond political or social boundaries, to ensure the most effective and efficient rescue operations possible in one of the planet's most challenging regions.

Taking SAR to new heights

PARKS CANADA'S HELICOPTER RESCUE PROGRAM

BY MARC LEDWIDGE, MANAGER, MOUNTAIN SAFETY PROGRAMS, PARKS CANADA

In the Mountain National Parks of Alberta and British Columbia, during the busy rescue season from June to September, rescue crews are involved in operations on a daily basis. This can include everything from medical emergencies, injured hikers, searches for lost persons, water accidents, and technical mountain rescues. Due to the vast extent of the terrain in question and the small rescue crews, Parks Canada often uses light and intermediate helicopters provided by civilian operators to support many of these operations. This is efficient, cost effective, and allows for rapid SAR intervention.

This past summer was no exception as many Canadians followed the story of the "highest sling rescue in the history of the Mountain National Parks". While the story focussed on the incredible helicopter rescue of two climbers from the 3562 metre high summit of the South Goodsirs Tower in Yoho National Park, as is often the case media coverage made it appear as though the helicopter was just flying itself. The reality is that helicopter rescues like this one are only possible because of the exceptional piloting skills of veteran Alpine Helicopters Rescue Pilots like Lance Cooper – the pilot responsible for the sling rescue that day.

Although Parks Canada's SAR operations are led by skilled internationally certified mountain guides, helicopter rescue has become a key component of the Parks Canada SAR program and light and intermediate civilian helicopters

have been used for mountain rescue operations since the 1970's. In fact, as the Canadian pioneer in the use of fixed line Class D operations, Parks Canada has more sling helicopter rescue experience than anyone in the country.

Over the years, this experience and expertise has been demonstrated in even higher sling rescue operations than this summer's rescue on South Goodsirs – albeit outside of the Mountain National Parks. In fact, Rescue Pilot Doug McKonnen completed a higher sling rescue on Mt. Logan in Kluane National Park, and pilots Todd McCready and Dale Brady accomplished other successful rescues on Mt. Robson in Robson Provincial Park – both at altitudes above 3562 metres.

While high altitude rescues are significant accomplishments, many pilots will tell you that with mountain rescues elevation is just a number. Helicopter rescues often face difficulties presented by high angle cliff faces, knife edged summit ridges, dense valley bottoms, forests and canyons. These can also be compounded by challenges of helicopter flight which can be impacted by elevation, available power, air temperature, visibility, and most importantly wind. In fact, sometimes elevation is the least challenging factor in a rescue and many difficult operations have been performed at elevations as low as 1500 metres in the parks.

As key members of any Parks Canada SAR crew, Rescue Pilots are selected for their skill and experience and undergo a rigorous screening and testing process that ensures their ability to perform under extreme conditions and intense pressures. They work an on-call schedule with various operators to provide the helicopter rescue service essential to the safety and wellbeing of millions of visitors to the National Parks. The 2011 roster of Mountain Rescue Pilots working with Parks Canada's SAR operations includes: Lance Cooper, Paul Maloney, Chris Robertson, Todd Cooper, Perry Hirsch, Don McTighe, Craig Ward, Matthew Callaghan, Clay Wilson, Dale Brady, Cathy Moore, and Doug Makkonen; who each and every day are ready to put their knowledge and experience into action to ensure the safe return of lost or injured visitors.

Facing and overcoming these challenges through experience, skill and commitment is what makes these pilots working with Parks Canada's Search and Rescue programme the true heroes of many successful search and rescue operations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PARKS CANADA

A first for international Arctic SAR

2011 ARCTIC SAR TABLE TOP EXERCISE

In the vast Arctic region, SAR operations are often challenged by extreme weather, geography and darkness. When a ship is transiting through the North and runs aground in Arctic waters, or an aircraft goes down, survivors are counting on the training and coordination of SAR responders to overcome these challenges and safeguard their lives. In such a remote region however, SAR operations can expand beyond political boundaries, facing the additional challenges of international cooperation and the complexity of sharing resources and skills.

The newly signed International Arctic SAR Treaty outlines the roles and responsibilities of Arctic Council member states in such cases, ensuring the most effective SAR response. Critical to the success of this treaty and of future operations are the opportunities for

communication and discussions amongst front line SAR providers.

Following the signing of the Arctic SAR Treaty in May 2011, the Canadian Forces' Canada Command led the Arctic Council's first annual Arctic Search and Rescue tabletop exercise from October 4th to 6th of this year. Surrounded by stunning vistas, and offering visitors a northern setting in Whitehorse, YK, this was the first opportunity for SAR specialists from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, and Sweden to meet and discuss the operational and strategic implications of the agreement. Recognizing their important role in SAR programs, Canada Command also invited representatives from a number of key federal departments and other stakeholders to observe the simulation exercise and participate in this important learning and knowledge sharing opportunity.

Bringing experience and expertise to real world scenarios, delegates participated in tabletop exercises, reviewing and responding to potential SAR events requiring international cooperation. Working together, delegates from the Treaty countries identified the challenges of coordinating international resources in the remote and harsh environment of the Arctic and developed plans to effectively overcome these obstacles. Throughout the simulation, delegations showcased their nation's capabilities, offering insight and sharing information and their experiences. They also discussed the challenges of Arctic SAR and identified areas for improved collaboration, cooperation and information sharing.

The Whitehorse tabletop event was an opportunity for SAR specialists from the Council's eight member countries to hold strategic discussions related to the challenges of aeronautical and marine Arctic SAR and identify opportunities for operational cooperation and coordination in responding to SAR events in the often hostile Arctic environment. Sharing knowledge and expertise will help ensure the success of future rescue operations as human activity continues to increase in the North.

THE RESULTS?

Improved knowledge sharing, greater understanding and a commitment amongst international SAR specialists to work together to improve international Arctic SAR operations through continued cooperation and resource sharing. For those working, travelling and living in the Arctic –whether in Canada or internationally – the result is an added



Sergeant (Sgt) Bruno Lapointe and Master Corporal (MCpl) Steve Delage, Canadian Forces (CF) Search and Rescue (SAR) technicians with assistance from a Jamaican nurse transfer an infant medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) patient from a CH-146 Griffon Helicopter to the University Hospital of the West Indies (UHWI) in Kingston, Jamaica on August 30, 2011 as part of Operation (Op) JAGUAR.

PHOTO BY: CORPORAL ROXANNE SHEWCHUK, IMAGERY SECTION VALCARTIER © 2011 DND-MDN CANADA

sense of security: knowing that in the event of a major incident north of 60, SAR responders will have access to additional resources and equipment they may require to effectively save lives.

Moving forward, exercises such as this one will offer an opportunity to continue sharing critical information and training, and improve planning and coordination for Arctic SAR operations. More importantly, they will encourage continued international collaboration which is critical to the success of the International Arctic SAR Agreement and future Arctic SAR missions.

Canadian SAR heads south

CANADIAN FORCES SAR TECHNICIANS HEAD TO JAMAICA

Jamaica has stunning beaches, ocean breezes and a climate many Canadians long for in the middle of winter. Its geographical location also makes it a target for powerful and destructive hurricanes that often leave residents homeless, cut a path of damage in their wake, and leave the country struggling to recover.

The Jamaica Defense Fund (JDF) is responsible for search and rescue efforts on the island, and is tasked with providing evacuation, humanitarian operations, emergency medical care support and disaster relief. These can

be enormous following a natural disaster but this year, a Canadian military Task Force is being deployed to provide them with additional support and resources.

Currently lacking aircraft – specifically helicopters – suitable for SAR and medical evacuation, Jamaica looked to the Canadian Forces for help in bridging their resource gap.

Following a request from Jamaican Prime Minister Bruce Golding, Canada's Minister of National Defense Peter MacKay, announced that the Canadian Forces would deploy more than 65 aviation personnel and three CH-146 Griffon Tactical Utility helicopters, repainted SAR yellow and red, to Jamaica in support of the JDF throughout the hurricane season.

Task Force Jamaica – the first deployment under a new Canadian Forces initiative "Operation Jaguar" – will undertake critical life-saving activities both inland and over water in support of the JDF, providing expertise and technical support as required. They will also conduct training activities throughout their deployment to develop search and rescue aircrews for operations in Jamaica.

This deployment is anticipated to end once the JDF search and rescue capacity has been developed and aviation capabilities restored. It also confirms Canada's commitment to supporting Jamaica and recognizes the expertise of our SAR resources. 🇨🇦

In memoriam: Sheilah Sweatman

For search-and-rescue practitioners, risk is a fact of life. At any moment, of any day, during any rescue, risk is present: in the form of weather, terrain, and the potential for personal injury and even death and SAR responders will admit to a healthy respect for the risks inherent with their jobs.

As a member of the Kootenay Swift Water Specialists, a combined BC Volunteer Search and Rescue Association team from the West Kootenay region, Sheilah Sweatman was often called out to operate in difficult situations – rescuing individuals in distress or conducting operations in fast moving waters. It was a volunteer job she was passionate about and to which she had committed herself to for the past two years.

When Sweatman and her search and rescue team colleagues were called out to the swollen Goat River near Creston, British Columbia on June 29th, the risks inherent in swift water operations became a sad reality. As she worked with her team to recover a submerged vehicle, Sweatman fell from a rescue

boat into the swollen river and did not surface. In a brief instant, the woman passionate about rescuing those in need herself became a victim.

For her teammates, Sweatman's drowning – and their recovery of her body from the river the next day – was a devastating reminder of the very dangers they may face with each and every rescue.

This tragic accident touched not only those who worked with Sweatman, but also members of the Canadian SAR community from coast to coast to coast. For British Columbia, her death marked the first operational death in the province's history of an on-duty ground SAR volunteer, and was a tragic example of the selfless commitment and bravery demonstrated by SAR responders across Canada and around the world.

The memory of Sheilah Sweatman's passion and dedication to "provide help to other people" – as her father was quoted as saying after her death – continues to underline the commitment made by search and rescue volunteers each and



Sheilah Sweatman

every day. It inspires those who knew her, or of her, to continue their efforts to help those in need and "maybe save a life" as Sweatman was fond of saying.

Her commitment to SAR will also live on; a number of SAR groups in British Columbia are naming boats and facilities in her honour. In addition, her family in Manitoba has taken in a German Shepherd puppy she had recently adopted and intended to train for avalanche search and rescue. With support from local SAR organizations and the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner's K9 coordinator to assist with training, her family hopes to fulfill her wish. 🐾

Appointment



Further to a promotion to Lieutenant General in July, LtGen Tom Lawson, former Assistant Chief of the Air Staff in the Canadian Forces, was appointed to the position of NORAD Deputy Commander in Colorado Springs in August, 2011.



Major-General Yvan Blondin, Commander of 1 Canada Division and the Canadian NORAD Region since 2009, was appointed to replace LtGen Lawson as Assistant Chief of the Air Staff at National Defense Headquarters in Ottawa, in July, 2011.

Retirement

Daniel Lévesque (France) has retired after 24 years as Head of the Cospas-Sarsat Secretariat. Following his retirement, Steven Lett (United States) has taken over as Head of the Secretariat effective August 1, 2011.

Appointment

David Schaffer was named Acting Fire Commissioner for the province of Manitoba on August 2, 2011. Born in Manitoba, Schaffer has been with the Office of the Fire Commissioner for 14 years prior to which he spent 15 years with Manitoba Conservation working in the department's wild fire program.



Tim Jones of North Vancouver (middle), dedicated search and rescue leader, is awarded the Order of British Columbia by Premier Christy Clark and Lieutenant-Governor Steven Point, Chancellor of the Order.

PHOTO: JEFF VINNICK

Awards

Tim Jones, Team Leader with North Shore Rescue (NSR) in British Columbia, was awarded the Order of British Columbia on October 4, 2011 at Government House in Victoria. The award recognized Jones' 24 years of volunteer service as a dedicated Search and Rescue practitioner and team leader during which he has participated in more than 1400 SAR tasks and saved countless lives. Jones' contributions to NSR have been significant: leading the use of helicopter based long-line rescue, developing protocols for the treatment of hypothermia, initiating a kayak team, and implementing an area wide communications system now in use by other SAR teams.



The recipients of the 2010 National SAR Program Awards of Excellence recipients (l to r): Mark Ledwidge on behalf of the Canadian Association of Mountain Guides, (Exemplary Service Award), Yves Girard, Sûreté du Québec – St-Hubert, QC (Innovation Award), Geraldine Underdown, Executive Director, National Search and Rescue Secretariat, Master Warrant Officer Éric Larouche, 424 Transport and Rescue Squadron, 8 Wing Trenton (Leadership Award), Peter Murray, Talon Helicopters – Richmond B.C. (Leadership Award)

PHOTO: KIM FAUTEUX, NSS

National SAR Program Awards of Excellence

Across the country, search and rescue full-time staff and volunteers commit their time and skills to help save the lives of those in need. Each year, a few individual SAR specialists and SAR teams distinguish themselves through their exceptional acts and dedication – contributing above and beyond to the success of prevention and response under the National Search and Rescue Program.

The National Search and Rescue Program Awards of Excellence recognize these exemplary acts. They honour those whose achievements have brought great benefit to the practice of search and rescue in Canada, and celebrate the diversity and successes of award recipient contributions.

Revitalized in 2009, the awards program was modernized to effectively recognize the full spectrum of partners and activities and their contributions to the National SAR Program as a whole. Nominated in one of program's five categories – education, innovation, leadership, research or exemplary service – this year's award recipients exemplify the diversity of skills and activities in SAR and demonstrate excellence and outstanding commitment to improving SAR prevention and response across Canada.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING TED RANKINE AND DR. GORDON GEISBRECHT, PH. D.

Dr. Gordon Geisbrecht and Ted Rankine are receiving the 2011 National Search and Rescue Program Award of Excellence for Education and Training, for their ground-breaking work in developing and implementing *Cold Water Boot Camp* and *Beyond Cold Water Boot Camp*, prevention initiatives that educate, inform, motivate and change behaviour to increase survival in cold water and reduce cold water-related deaths.

These programs reach out to first responders, the boating community and the general public, to inform them about the risks of cold water immersion, encourage lifejacket wear, and provide first responders with the knowledge and tools to deal effectively with severely hypothermic victims and increase their survival rates. These innovative programs build on solid, evidence-based research

into hypothermia and cold water impacts; provide practical and effective education and training, were designed to be widely accessible to target communities through education materials, web content, and hands-on workshops; and extend their reach and impact through partnerships with prevention and outreach organizations.

Dr. Geisbrecht and Ted Rankine's work has had a significant impact in the first responder and boating safety communities as well as with the public in Canada and internationally. Over 5000 DVD's have been distributed to a wide variety of agencies, organizations and individuals who have used it in outreach and prevention activities. Research has shown that after viewing the program, boaters report that the message has had a lasting effect and have passed the messages on to family, friends and fellow boaters. There are clear improvements in attitudes towards wearing lifejackets and being more informed about ways to improve cold water survivability, and viewers are more likely to always wear a lifejacket after viewing the video that before.

The programs have experienced great success in changing behaviour and are being used extensively for education and outreach. See www.coldwaterbootcamp.com for more information.

EXEMPLARY SERVICE GREG MCCORMICK

Greg McCormick has been committed to Prince Edward Island Ground Search and Rescue (PEIGSAR) for the past 10 years. The volunteer hours that he has contributed have been well above that of other members and of normal expectations. He has attended several SARscene conferences and has earned a very good reputation both at the local

and national levels. Mr. McCormick has been invited to participate on the National Search and Rescue Secretariat's New Initiatives Fund Merit Board, which is strong endorsement to his skills and commitment to ground search and rescue. As a member of PEIGSAR, he has recognized the team's many needs, and felt he could provide assistance by being an elected member of the executive. Outside of his SAR activities, Mr. McCormick is a first aid instructor, a radio communications instructor, a member of the Brookvale Ski Patrol, and is employed as a 911 operator with the RCMP Telecom Centre. He used his skills and resources to assist PEIGSAR with regular first aid training, increasing radio communications for team members, seeking funding for new equipment and training. He spent hundreds of hours researching equipment and funding sources and maintained contact with other ground SAR teams and various government departments. As a result of Mr. McCormick's extensive research, planning and execution, PEIGSAR is now better equipped with radios, computers, mapping technology and logistical equipment (vehicles, trailers, etc.) The Team is also now better equipped for water and shoreline searches, and is well on the way to becoming self-sufficient with training needs. His commitment has been very beneficial for PEI, and is being recognized by his being the 2011 recipient of the 2011 National SAR Program Award of Excellence for Exemplary Service.

INNOVATION SGT. RANDY ANTONIO – WINNIPEG POLICE SERVICE

As a result of his many years of dedicated service and commitment to the development of the Winnipeg Search and Rescue (WINSAR) Chapter, as well as

his commitment to the development of the Search and Rescue Manitoba Volunteer Association (SARMAN), Sgt. Randy Antonio is being awarded the 2011 National Search and Rescue Program Award of Excellence for Innovation. WINSAR was established under the leadership and vision of Sgt. Antonio following a number of high profile missing person files within the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg. These searches required the province to request trained volunteers from the surrounding rural teams in order to provide leadership to the members of the Winnipeg Police Service, as well as the numerous untrained volunteers from within the City of Winnipeg who came out to search. As a trained SAR volunteer with the South Interlake SAR Chapter, Sgt. Antonio was familiar with the SARMAN network established by the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner. Sgt. Antonio took it upon himself as a member of the Winnipeg Police Service to gather support from its executive, and began the development of a Winnipeg Chapter within the SARMAN network. Over the past eight years, Sgt. Antonio has selflessly dedicated himself to the development of the WPS's search and rescue team, recognizing the agency's mandated requirement to lead search efforts for lost or missing persons within the City of Winnipeg. Sgt. Antonio has also focused his efforts on expanding this capacity through the development of the Winnipeg Search and Rescue (WINSAR) Volunteer Chapter of the SARMAN network. Under the leadership and guidance of Sgt. Antonio, the WINSAR program has focused on the development of skills to support ground SAR in an "urban" environment. Prior to the development of the WINSAR program, this capacity did not exist within the City of Winnipeg or the Province of Manitoba. The WINSAR program has since expanded to support the overall provincial SARMAN program.

LEADERSHIP – STAFF SERGEANT DON WEBSTER, ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

S/Sgt. Don Webster is receiving the 2011 National Search and Rescue Program Award of Excellence for Leadership as a result of a career long commitment to search and rescue (SAR), including nine years as the Emergency Response Team (ERT) Coordinator/Search Manager, and nine years as the Provincial Search and Rescue Coordinator for the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) leading volunteers and emergency response team members for ground SAR in Ontario.

S/Sgt. Webster's ERT team was responsible for approximately 50 search operations in Central Ontario. Until 2009, he assumed the role of Provincial SAR Coordinator for

the OPP where he was responsible for coordinating the delivery of the search and rescue program of the Emergency Response Team (250 members) within the OPP. Annually, the OPP responds to approximately 300 – 400 lost person searches. His duties within the unit also included making recommendations to the program manager for efficiencies and changes to policies and procedures where appropriate. S/Sgt. Webster created a data base with statistics gathered from these searches, sharing them with Robert Koester for use in his book "Lost Person Behaviour" allowing this experience to be used in searches around the world. During this period, S/Sgt. Webster was a liaison with representatives from volunteer and federal SAR organizations and other police departments to implement, enhance, monitor and support SAR partnerships, share experimental learning and cooperatively resolve issues of common interest. In addition to his multitude of partnerships with various organizations and levels of government, he is a Project Lifesaver instructor and was instrumental in setting up OPP protocol for chapters across the province, and sits on the Canadian Project Lifesaver Board. His efforts in partnership building with preventative SAR programs for long term care facilities and educating ERT members about missing persons with dementia have enhanced the OPP SAR response when dealing with elderly missing persons. S/Sgt. Webster's involvement with air and ground SAR volunteer associations has resulted in increased partnerships and use of assets to assist with ground and air search operations. All of these projects have provincial impact and will be in place long after S/Sgt. Webster has moved on, allowing citizens to benefit from the 19 years he has dedicated to search and rescue.

In each of the award categories, the recipients share a common commitment to excellence in SAR and a desire to continuously improve SAR for the benefit of others. For the National SAR Program, they represent the commitment and selfless desire to help others that defines SAR practitioners across the country.

The 2011 National Search and Rescue Program Awards of Excellence will be presented to these deserving recipients during a dinner banquet in their honour to be held during the SARscene conference on October 30th, 2011 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

For information on the National Search and Rescue Program Awards of Excellence, or to find how to nominate someone for an award, visit the National Search and Rescue Secretariat's website at www.nss-snrs.gc.ca. 

PHOTO BY: SGT SERGE GOUIN, RIDEAU HALL. © 2011 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA



Governor General's Awards for Bravery

Created in 1972, the Governor General's Decorations for Bravery recognize people who have risked their lives to try to save or to protect the lives of others. Individuals and groups may be nominated for one of three levels of decoration: The Cross of Valour, The Star of Courage, or the Medal of Bravery.

From all walks of life, this year's recipients included police, firefighters, military personnel, SAR specialists, as well as individuals who had been nominated and chosen for having taken extraordinary measures demonstrating bravery and conspicuous courage.

The Governor General presented two Stars of Courage and 42 Medals of Bravery at a ceremony held on May 6th 2011 at Rideau Hall.

Among this year's recipients of the Medal of Bravery were military search and rescue technicians Sergeant André Hotton and Master Corporal Julien Gauthier who, on November 19, 2008, rescued three people from a sinking barge, off the coast of Nova Scotia. Responding to a distress call stating that the barge was in trouble in heavy seas, a military helicopter was sent to the site to evacuate the people on board. Despite several failed rescue attempts and a recommendation that operations cease due to low fuel and approaching darkness, the pilot and crew opted to continue – resulting in the successful rescue of all on board.

For a complete listing of the Decorations for Bravery presented in May 2011 please visit the Governor General's website at www.gg.gc.ca.

SARMAN

A provincial partnership



PHOTOS COURTESY OF: MANITOBA OFFICE OF THE FIRE COMMISSIONER

BY SEARCH AND RESCUE MANITOBA (SARMAN)

HISTORY

Over the past 18 years, the Province of Manitoba Ground Search and Rescue Program has transformed from a virtually untrained group of volunteers, into a highly skilled, multifaceted and dedicated volunteer search and rescue network – a valuable resource to the Province of Manitoba.

In the early 1990's, the Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner of Manitoba (OFC), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) 'D' Division, and the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) recognized the huge gaps in the provincial response system. These agencies partnered to close these gaps and drafted a proposal that would change the face of search and rescue services in Manitoba. Working together, these agencies submitted a joint application for funds to the National Search and Rescue Secretariat's (NSS) New Initiative Fund (NIF) to establish a comprehensive Search and Rescue (SAR) program for the province.

In 1993, the NSS approved the project as submitted, and provided funding to support the initial development and delivery of an education and prevention program for the province, which included the training and development of a volunteer ground SAR network. These efforts resulted in the creation of a

provincial search and rescue association now known as *Search and Rescue Manitoba* or *SARMAN*.

At that time, the Manitoba Municipal Fire Service played an important role in SARMAN's development. Recognized as being well trained, equipped and ready for response to various types of rescue incidents, the Manitoba Municipal Fire Service acted as a model and testing ground for GSAR basic training, and program development and delivery.

The volunteer network has since expanded beyond the Manitoba Fire Service, and is now represented by volunteers with very diverse back grounds, and therefore bringing a wide variety of skills to search and rescue in Manitoba.

Since 1993, more than 1600 volunteers from various backgrounds (e.g., medical, policing, military, firefighting, etc.) have Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) Basic Level training. Additionally, over 150 of these volunteers have GSAR Team Leader Level training under the umbrella of Search and Rescue Manitoba (SARMAN).

Manitoba's volunteer search and rescue network has grown over the years, and presently includes over 550 active volunteers, organized into twenty-one highly trained and mobile volunteer teams, under the umbrella of The Search and Rescue Manitoba (SARMAN) Volunteer Association. The Provincial

Mutual Aid System continues to be the framework for this network.

SEARCH AND RESCUE MANITOBA (SARMAN) ADVISORY COUNCIL

In 2007 the Province of Manitoba formally established The Search and Rescue Manitoba (SARMAN) Advisory Council. The SARMAN Advisory Council represents the policing authorities responsible for search and rescue in Manitoba, the federal and provincial search and rescue authorities within the province, as well as those agencies with a mandated role to support search and rescue efforts in the province including the recognized provincial volunteer network (see lists below). Through this Council, The SARMAN Volunteer Association represents the ground search and rescue volunteers of Manitoba.

The SARMAN Advisory Council provides a forum to discuss common search and rescue issues on a provincial basis and an opportunity to share information regarding search and rescue policies and programs among its members. The Council represents the interests of the Province of Manitoba search and rescue community at the national level in an effort to promote the development of all aspects of search and rescue, including prevention, policies, training standards and search operations.

The Council works to promote and strengthen our most valuable search and

rescue resource – the volunteer search and rescue networks represented by the following volunteer associations:

- **Ground SAR**
Search and Rescue Manitoba (SARMAN) Volunteer Association
- **Air SAR**
Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA)
- **Marine SAR**
Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA)

Above all, the Council works to promote inter-agency cooperation and inter-operability on all search and rescue operations in Manitoba, and to promote a timely, effective and integrated provincial response to all SAR operations.

The SARMAN Advisory Council is represented by the following agencies or associations which have a direct role and/or responsibility in the delivery of search and rescue services in Manitoba:

- Royal Canadian Mounted Police – 'D' Division (RCMP)
- Winnipeg Police Service (WPS)
- Dakota Ojibway Police Service (DOPS)
- Brandon Police Service (BPS)
- Small Communities Police Chief Association of Manitoba
- Parks Canada (PC)
- Department of National Defence – Domestic Operations – MB (DND)
- Canadian Coast Guard (CCG)
- Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA)
- Manitoba Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC)
- Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization (EMO)
- Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA)
- Search and Rescue Manitoba (SARMAN) Volunteer Association (SARMAN VA)

OUR MISSION

To enhance the delivery of search and rescue efforts in Manitoba through the promotion of inter-agency cooperation, interoperability, and the coordinated development of standardized policies, training programs, and search and rescue operations.

OUR VISION

Search and Rescue Manitoba (SARMAN) will excel at providing leadership in the development and delivery of a seamless and comprehensive provincial search and rescue program. 🚁

ARTICLE



PHOTO COURTESY OF COUGAR HELICOPTERS

Cougar Helicopters SAR Program

BY COUGAR HELICOPTERS INC.

Cougar Helicopters has been engaged in search and rescue activities on Canada's east coast since the late 1980's, and has expanded its SAR program to such locations as Louisiana, Alaska, NWT and Greenland, typically under contract and in direct support of the oil and gas industry.

Cougar's aircraft are equipped with Sat Comm and Blue Sky® satellite tracking. The company also utilizes a Transport Canada approved flight dispatching system, a first in North America for a helicopter operator. Licensed dispatchers and flight followers work 24/7 out of Cougar's state of the art Operational Control Centre (OCC) in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, and all of Cougar's operations globally are managed from the OCC.

The company utilizes the latest technology and innovation in its SAR aircraft; they include a dual rescue hoist, FLIR and the recently certified SAR Automatic Flight Control Systems (AFCS). When operational, the SAR AFCS will give Cougar a truly 24/7 all weather response capability. A program to allow the use of night vision goggles by flight crews is also currently under development.

Cougar's SAR program in St. John's has witnessed significant growth and expansion over the past couple of years. It currently employs twelve pilots and twelve rescue specialists who are dedicated to the program. Initially used in first response role only with a response time of 60 minutes, the addition of a dedicated aircraft has allowed response times to be reduced to 30 minutes during daylight flying hours and 45 minutes (after dark).

The company also has a new SAR hangar under construction. When this new dedicated SAR facility opens late in the fourth quarter of 2011 or early in the first quarter of 2012, it will be manned 24/7 and the primary response time will be further reduced. This purpose-built facility will provide training rooms, briefing and operations rooms, fitness facilities, maintenance facilities, sleeping quarters and offices, all in support of Cougar's SAR program.

Cougar's first priority remains its clients, the oil and gas industry, but Cougar is recognized as a taskable asset under Canada's national SAR system, and can and does respond when needed. 🚁

Celebrating 25 years of evolution in
**CANADIAN SEARCH
AND RESCUE**



It is often out of crisis or tragedy that great advances are made.

Such was the case when the Ocean Ranger oil rig capsized off the coast of Newfoundland in 1982 taking the lives of all 84 persons on board – 56 of them from Newfoundland. The sinking was Canada's worst tragedy at sea since the Second World War.

Following the accident, a Royal Commission was called to look into the events surrounding the rig's sinking and the tragic loss of life that ensued. Could the deaths have been prevented? What could be done to ensure such a tragedy never happens again in Canadian waters?

While the accident and the resulting deaths were attributed to a number of issues – life boats inadequate for the conditions, lack of emergency preparedness training for staff on the rig – the Commission noted that the SAR resources dispatched to assist the Ocean Ranger and her crew were ill equipped to work in the rough weather conditions prevalent at that time of year. In fact, responders sent to the site were not properly prepared nor trained, nor were their vessels equipped to rescue hypothermic victims from the cold ocean waters.

When it was tabled in St. John's in August of 1984, the Commission's final report contained 136 recommendations with perhaps the most significant being the need for a National SAR Program that would encompass the efforts of all levels of government, industry and the volunteer community in both response and prevention.

As a result, in 1986, the National Search and Rescue Program and the National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS) were born. United by the common theme of 'working together to save lives', the collective efforts of these partners forms the backbone of the National Search and Rescue Program, and makes Canada a safer place to live, work, and play.

PROGRAM ORIGIN

The Secretariat was mandated to provide central managerial capability for the conduct and coordination of the National SAR Program, and to provide independent

support and advice to the Lead Minister for Search and Rescue. It coordinates and oversees the National SAR Program across Canada, develops SAR related policies and programs, and facilitates collaboration and exchanges between the federal, provincial/territorial/volunteer and other partners of the National SAR Program.

The National SAR Program is built on two pillars: response and prevention.

A NATIONAL RESPONSE

Conceived as a central focal point for SAR activities and organizations, the National Search and Rescue Program (NSP) has been contributing to tremendous growth and positive change in the Canadian SAR community for 25 years.

access to an efficient and effective SAR system wherever they may be in this vast country. In close collaboration with federal, provincial/ territorial SAR authorities, military, law enforcement and first responder services and volunteers, private sector and non-governmental organizations, the NSS has taken important steps to assist in improving the quality of SAR services available across the country. Today, the Secretariat continues to seek new partnerships, opportunities and activities to leverage resources and support continuous progress of the National SAR Program.

Bringing together partners of the NSP and organizations involved in SAR, the Secretariat's activities promote collaboration, knowledge transfer and

Conceived as a central focal point for SAR activities and organizations, the National Search and Rescue Program (NSP) has been contributing to tremendous growth and positive change in the Canadian SAR community for 25 years.

COORDINATION, COLLABORATION AND PROMOTION

While departments and jurisdictions retain control over their SAR resources, the NSS works collaboratively with partners bringing a systems approach to improving SAR in Canada. As such, it strives to enhance interoperability through supporting common protocols and procedures, standardizing or utilizing compatible equipment and building relationships and sharing best practices. Under the umbrella of the National SAR Program, partners and stakeholders have developed a number of tools and initiatives for SAR response such as a national criteria for ground search and rescue, the Marine Institute's training program for off-shore oil and gas workers, thermal imaging products, personal locator beacon (PLB) protocol, roundtables and MOUs for volunteer use across jurisdictions, and many others.

Since its creation, the NSS has remained committed to enhancing SAR resources across the country so that Canadians have

resource sharing, all with the aim of enhancing SAR and reducing the severity of incidents and loss of life nationwide. Supporting the NSP organizations from coast to coast to coast, the NSS publishes **SARSCENE** – a magazine dedicated to search and rescue, hosts an annual national search and rescue conference called SARscene, produces a variety of SAR prevention information materials, and participates in a number of search and rescue related outreach events.

NATIONAL PREVENTION STRATEGY

In addition to the response pillar of the NSP, there is an emphasis on SAR prevention including investigative, regulatory and legislative, enforcement and education initiatives. Prevention activities span a range from changes to safety management under the Canada Shipping Act or Aeronautics Act, to enforcement action under the Criminal Code regarding impaired operations, to education outreach to specific industries such as fishers or off-shore workers.

A major undertaking has been the development of a coordinated approach to prevention awareness and outreach targeting land, marine and air activities. The focus is on changing behaviour, encouraging better risk management, and enabling people to make effective decisions for the protection for their own and others' lives and physical safety.

With its partners, the Secretariat nationalized the AdventureSmart™ program – a national awareness and prevention program dedicated to

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over a quarter of a century, the NSS and NSP have seen incredible growth and accomplishments. The Secretariat is internationally recognized for its SAR leadership and the creation of an integrated and responsive search and rescue program through leveraging of resources and through strong partnerships. The impact is proven through enhanced resource, knowledge sharing, and response capacity across the Canadian SAR community.

The NSS is also contributing to the future of the program. Our country is building on Canadian know-how and technology to contribute to the development of the next generation of MEOSTAR (mid-earth orbit) satellites currently underway by COSPAS-SARSAT.

CHALLENGING TIMES, INNOVATIVE SAR SOLUTIONS

SAR practitioners are adept and using innovation to solve complex challenges, all the while relying on an integrated approach to accomplish their goals. Current political and economic situations have challenged the NSS to take this approach to improving the National SAR Program.

With 25 years of experience to build on, the NSS is looking forward and exploring new approaches to ensure the viability and effectiveness of Canada's crucial SAR program for many years to come.

With 25 years of experience to build on, the NSS is looking forward and exploring new approaches to ensure the viability and effectiveness of Canada's crucial SAR program for many years to come.

encouraging Canadians and visitors to Canada to "get informed and go outdoors". AdventureSmart emphasizes trip planning, training, and carrying the 10 essential items for survival. In addition to its outreach programs components – Snow Safety Education, Survive Outside, Survive Outside Snowmobile and Hug-A-Tree initiatives that leverage volunteer expertise and experience to deliver targeted outreach – AdventureSmart combines online and on-site awareness to try and reduce the number and severity of search and rescue incidents from coast to coast to coast. AdventureSmart has gained international attention and is being adapted for use in other countries. The NSS is currently working with its partners to develop the marine and air portions of the National Prevention Strategy.

THE SEARCH AND RESCUE NEW INITIATIVES FUND (SAR NIF)

To enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and innovation of search and rescue activities related to the response and prevention objectives of the National Search and Rescue Program, the NSS manages the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF). The fund was created in 1988 and provides annual financing for new projects or initiatives that will improve the National Search and Rescue Program. Past initiatives have ranged from outdoor prevention and awareness programs aimed at school-aged children, to cutting-edge research such as developing SAR tools for underwater operations. SAR NIF supports both the response and prevention pillars of the National SAR Program.

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Beyond our borders, the NSS represents Canada and has been a key player in developing the COSPAS-SARSAT International Search and Rescue Satellite Program, which is a key resource that provides worldwide reliable distress alert and location data to help search and rescue authorities assist persons in distress.

Since the program's launch in 1979, Canada – a founding member with France, the United States and Russia – has maintained an important and active leadership role in the development and management of the program that today counts 43 member countries and organizations worldwide. Today the system manages and maintains an international network of 11 low earth orbit and geostationary orbit satellites which contribute to the detection distress alert transmissions from locations around the globe.

Testament to the strength of the leadership of the founding countries, the COSPAS-SARSAT system is credited with approximately five rescues each and every day around the world.

COSPAS-SARSAT international headquarters are located in Montreal, Canada. Our country has a critical role to play in its future and indeed in the future of SAR satellites more generally. Led by the NSS, Canadian delegates to the program are actively involved in contributing to the research and development of new standards for emergency beacon technologies, and identifying protocols and practices for the sharing of information in the case of a SAR event.

THE NEXT 25

Twenty-five years later, Canada's National SAR Program is fulfilling its mandate: encompassing air, ground and marine SAR planning and activities from all levels of government, corporate and volunteer sectors, and a vast array of organizations and programs.

The coming years will see efforts continue towards enhancing SAR integration across the country and across multiple organizations – national, provincial, territorial, volunteer. They will also see the development and implementation of new approaches to supporting SAR event prevention through education and engagement. Finally, within the next 10 years, Canada's involvement in the international SAR satellite network program will result in enhanced SAR satellite capacity – benefitting SAR around the world and here in Canada.

For the Secretariat's Executive Director Geraldine Underdown, the future looks positive. While there is still much work to be done, the goal for the future is to continue to draw upon the commitment, passion and expertise of SAR organizations across the country to develop the most seamless SAR system possible. While some might see this as a challenge, Ms. Underdown and her colleagues at the NSS are confident and committed to making it a reality.

Based on the accomplishments of the past 25 years, the commitments made by the NSS and the support of the National SAR Program stakeholders for the years ahead, the objective is well within reach. 🌟

WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

BY JACQUI BANNACH, NSS

I firmly believe that people spend more time checking their astrology forecast than they do looking at trail signs, and while one may guide the way you live your life, the other may just save it!

Take for example, the number of skiers each year who go out of bounds. Whether for extreme skiing, on a dare, and occasionally by mistake, many recreationalists disregard the "closed/ out of bounds" signs and end up in dangerous situations.

And what about those who climb over safety barriers in their quest for the perfect picture? While standing on a rocky outcrop in the midst of swirling water, leaning out over an escarpment for the perfect photo moment, or feeding the wildlife in a national park, they are often only thinking of the potential reward: a great photo, a memorable experience, an encounter with nature. They are definitely not thinking about the potential for drowning, falling over the edge of the escarpment, or being the victim of an animal attack. All clearly identified hazards, too often disregarded. As any SAR responder will tell you the results can be, well, disastrous.

So why do so many people do it? People enjoy taking risks. For many, there is a sense that ignoring a warning sign may bring them greater enjoyment or excitement in an activity.

Based on these all too familiar examples, it is safe to say that signage alone is not a deterrent for those seeking adventure or a once in a lifetime experience. So what does it take to change people's behaviours? How can individuals be encouraged to take greater responsibility for their actions and pay more attention to posted signage to avoid consequences?

While a combination of regulation, education and enforcement may be the most effective approach to encouraging visitors to pay attention to signage, it may not always be economical or feasible in all locations. Increasing awareness and individual responsibility for safety is therefore paramount. The reality is that to increase an individual's desire to follow signage, they must be made aware of – and understand – the very real risks and dangers involved in their behaviours, and become personally engaged in taking responsibility for



PHOTO: PARKS CANADA – BRAD WHITE

SO WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE DO IT?

PEOPLE ENJOY TAKING RISKS. FOR MANY, THERE IS A SENSE THAT IGNORING A WARNING SIGN MAY BRING THEM GREATER ENJOYMENT OR EXCITEMENT IN AN ACTIVITY.

their own safety. This is something that everyone can undertake and which can have a direct impact on the effectiveness of signage.

Audiences will vary from location to location – a visitor to a historical site in Nova Scotia will not require the same safety and signage education and awareness as a back-country hiker in the Rockies. While the outreach tools and activities may change, experts agree that education and engagement are key to changing behaviours.

With a commitment to improving awareness, everyone will benefit from the results through improved attention

to signage, fewer accidents, and perhaps most importantly a reduction in SAR events.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

There are many ways to reach your audience. Choosing the right audience is as important as having the right message. This year's SARscene conference offers information sessions on identifying your audience and improving signage awareness through the development of effective education and engagement programs. Visit www.sarscene.ca for tips and techniques on reaching those you want to influence. 📍



SAR New Initiatives Fund supports Ontario volunteer GSAR training

BY TERRENCE A. YAHN, OSARVA

Volunteer ground search and rescue groups in Ontario will be busy for the next two years getting better at what they do. A new grant recently approved under the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund (SARNIF) program will allow members of the Ontario Search and Rescue Volunteer Association (OSARVA) to enhance their roles as searchers, trainers and community educators in search and rescue (SAR). This all encompassing project will also assist with the acquisition of training and search equipment needed to ensure the safety, efficiency, accuracy and interoperability of member teams.

The project examines and tests best practices for search techniques for ground search and rescue (GSAR) teams in Ontario and other provinces/territories and also from published SAR standards. In addition to sharing the most relevant of this information with volunteer teams, it establishes a series of field training techniques that upgrade volunteer skills (for both team training and active searches), and provide volunteers with the tools to share their knowledge with the public as advocates of community based awareness programs. The program draws talent from across the province by using OSARVA's existing network of qualified SAR trainers to evaluate and develop the training aspect of the program and volunteer team representatives to establish and develop the public awareness programs.

GSAR searchers are activated by the Ontario Provincial Police and municipal police services. These specially trained volunteers bring a variety of skills that assist in finding lost persons. Perfecting these skills is paramount to their confidence and

enthusiasm, and encourages volunteers to remain involved with GSAR longer and pass on their skills to new volunteers who are eager to get involved.

Search techniques are complex. The ability to effectively search is affected by many personal factors and outside influences as well as by environmental elements. Searching requires training, confidence, commitment, and concentration. Basic tracking skills, good equipment, leadership, teamwork, proper briefing and direction and much more, are needed to develop someone into an effective searcher. Field exercises and new search patterns must be designed to account for all hindrances to effective searching, and include training awareness of basic cognitive vision errors. The NIF project allows OSARVA to bring together seasoned SAR volunteers and trainers to pull all of these elements together, design a training program to address them, and create field exercises which will further develop volunteer skills. The end results will be a comprehensive training manual and field training exercises that will include a photo gallery of search situations.

In their roles as trainers – whether it be for the improvement of their own teams or perhaps more importantly for the education of the general public in the form of public awareness programs (PAP) within their own communities – GSAR volunteers must look at a collection of programs that will have the most impact upon those they train.

OSARVA wants to establish a unified approach to community based public awareness programming as it relates to SAR for its member teams in the province. Teams will be provided with a template for providing PAP community programs, be assisted with a library of PAP information

and links through its website, be guided to best practices used by other Ontario teams, and be provided with brochures and posters with a common Ontario theme for safe PAP practices for use within their communities. The program will be created by using SAR team representatives to bring together a variety of ideas that will be incorporated into a working document which will be used to establish the material and information they will then have at their disposal in their role as SAR Advocates. Initiatives such as these will further enhance the teams' profile and effectiveness within their own communities.

There are several components to this NIF project and all are very important to the support and development of GSAR volunteers. OSARVA's appreciation goes out to the members of the NIF Merit Board for recognizing the impact, importance and overall merit of this funding request. 📌

OSARVA is a non profit organization. It operates under a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ontario Provincial Police and acts as the umbrella agency for Ontario volunteer SAR teams. OSARVA provides guidance, certification training, SAR training, identification and record keeping, and is the liaison with the OPP. OSARVA's main focus is to ensure that all volunteer teams are properly trained to do the job that they are being tasked to do – "find the lost person".

Terrence A. Yahn is the vice president of OSARVA, the administrator for the OSARVA NIF project, a certified SAR trainer in the province of Ontario, a master trainer with SARVAC's AdventureSmart program, an area commander and search manager with Lakehead Search and Rescue, and is a dedicated SAR volunteer.



PHOTOS BY: JOHN VELLA

Celebrating successes in **SAR** innovation

Introduced by the federal government in 1988, the SAR New Initiatives Fund (SAR NIF) provides funding for new projects and initiatives which aim to improve the National Search and Rescue Program. The program is administered by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS), on behalf of the Lead Minister for Search and Rescue in partnership with other federal, provincial and territorial SAR organizations.

The intent of the SAR NIF program is to support projects within federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions which enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and innovation of search and rescue activities as they relate to the response and prevention objectives of the National Search and Rescue Program. Proposals for projects are submitted to the federal, provincial or territorial SAR NIF partner or a recognized national, provincial or territorial SAR volunteer association, who then select the proposals that best support their own SAR priorities for submission to the NSS.

Since its inception, the program has supported a variety of projects across Canada that have addressed program and partner priorities, and supported

at least one of the National SAR Program priorities:

- Support the organization and sustainability of the ground search and rescue sector
- Protect and support volunteers
- Deliver public education
- Promote interoperability through common platforms and protocols
- Build local SAR capacity in the North and in remote areas

To date, the SAR NIF program has provided support to a wide variety of projects, all of which have had a positive effect on Canadian SAR activities. However, as with any program of this kind, a few projects have demonstrated a significant impact on improving SAR – making them true SAR NIF success stories.

BOBBIE THE SAFETY BOAT – MAKING BOATING SAFETY EDUCATION FUN

As a result of an increase in recreational boating in Canada, the need for boating safety education rose dramatically. While there were a number of resources available to promote education and awareness to adult boaters, the Canadian Coast Guard Auxillary – Pacific (CCGA-P) recognized a gap in resources targeting children.

The CCGAs response was to develop a new approach to promoting boating safety awareness and education to children – one that was interactive and informative. It developed “Bobbie the Safety Boat” in 2003, in collaboration with Transport Canada and with support funding from the SAR NIF, and developed support materials



and activities for children to further promote Bobbie's message.

Using an animatronics remote-controlled robot named Bobbie, the program offers a fun and educational way to engage children in learning about boating safety. Bobbie the Safety Boat teaches children about water safety by captivating their attention and allowing them to make effective decisions regarding personal safety and the protection of their own life and that of others.

Today, Bobbie the Safety Boat is in high demand to participate in boat shows, parades, fairs, marine festivals and other water related events across the country. Plans are currently underway to expand the project in coming years.

To learn more about Bobbie the Safety Boat, please visit: www.ccg-pacific.org.

NOVA SCOTIA GROUND SAR ASSOCIATION – USING SEARCH MANAGEMENT AND REPORTS TRACKING (SMART) TO SUPPORT GSAR

In order to enhance the effectiveness of their SAR response, Nova Scotia Ground SAR (GSAR) Association recognized the potential to use technology to support improvements to their operations. They identified two key areas in which digital technologies would have a demonstrable impact on GSAR: the development of a system which could effectively register and track searchers and equipment during search missions, and an input and tracking system capable of logging



searcher training and volunteer hours in a standardized format across the province.

With funding from the SAR NIF program in 2007, Nova Scotia GSAR was able to accomplish its goals. Today, the province's Search Management and Reports Tracking (SMART) program links all local ground search and rescue teams in the province by satellite and remote laptops. The SMART platform allows for real time information on the number of volunteer searchers in Nova Scotia, the number of volunteer hours committed by each individual/team/organization, and the particulars of a specific search mission. The platform can also set up system parameters to analyse data collected from past events with the intent identifying common factors leading up to people becoming lost. This valuable data is key to developing more effective and targeted education and awareness efforts in support of prevention outreach.

The successful implementation of these technologies has assisted in more efficient planning and execution of searches and in the coordination of training and personnel deployment province wide. In addition, this project is now looked at as a model for other provinces and territories interested in adopting a similar platform for their own GSAR communities.

For more information on Nova Scotia GSAR SMART project, please contact the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office at <http://emo.gov.ns.ca>.

COLD WATER BOOT CAMP – TEACHING THE COLD HARD FACTS ABOUT COLD WATER IMMERSION

In Canada, most lakes, ponds and other waters remain cold year round. Cold enough to be a dangerous and major contributor to recreational drowning deaths every year. Many of these deaths occur sometimes within metres of shore, involving people in boats that have capsized, and who – more often than not – were not wearing proper safety equipment (PFD, immersion suits or other).

Knowing these facts, the Cold Water Boot Camp project team recognized that education was key to prevention and, in 2007, set out to develop a comprehensive program intended to inform, motivate and change behaviours. Specifically, the project aimed to communicate a key message: that the key to surviving in cold water was wearing a lifejacket.

Key to the success of this project was the use of real-life volunteers who completed a gruelling swim in the frigid waters of Lake Simcoe in April, to demonstrate the very real effects of cold water immersion. Through captured video and the development of a multi-faceted collection of educational resources based on observations during their in-lake session, the project team was able to make a significant contribution to educating the general public on the dangers of cold water and the importance of wearing a personal flotation device at all times when on board a boat. In addition, the training materials have been used to support the teaching of first responders and professionals in responding to cold water SAR situations.

For more information on the Coldwater Boot Camp program visit: www.coldwaterbootcamp.com.

CANADIAN COAST GUARD AUXILIARY'S MARINE SIMULATION PROGRAM

With the rising costs and decreasing budgets, it is becoming harder to efficiently train search and rescue (SAR) personnel.

The Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) in the Pacific region has found a solution: develop a new volunteer SAR training program that uses emerging technology to improve the safety, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the existing training program.

Sponsored by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and funded through the New Search and Rescue Initiatives Fund, CCGA Pacific purchased a marine

simulator and integrated it into the existing training program, which improves the quality and quantity of training that takes place. In turn, this increases the SAR effectiveness and safety of crew members.

The CCGA has 1,400 volunteers, but each receives only a limited amount of on-water training – between 40 and 48 hours per year. Depending on the crew member's skill and experience, a large portion of this time is devoted to familiarization and navigation lessons, with a smaller portion dedicated to SAR techniques.

Funding restraints mean crew members may spend as little as two hours a month on the water in dedicated training time, and they may never encounter the dangerous conditions they are likely to face during a SAR incident.

The CCGA's marine simulator software is currently used to train ship's captains and crew members in non-emergency and emergency situations. Developed by the Centre for Marine Simulation and Virtual Marine Technology Inc., the software uses real marine charts to simulate accurate real-life marine environments and a wide-variety of marine conditions can be easily created and manipulated by trained instructors.

The initiative decreased on-water training by at least 20 hours, while crew members become more experienced, more knowledgeable and more effective on the water after training with the marine simulator.

Not only did this increase the effectiveness and efficiency of marine SAR training, but it enhanced boating safety education.

The CCGA Pacific has a well-established boating safety program in many coastal

and inland communities and members attend hundreds of boating safety events each year. These events are already an opportune time for members to distribute safety information, but the added marine simulation component adds a dynamic element to the training for all involved.

HANDHELD ACTIVE IMAGER FOR UNDERWATER SAR OPS

The Department of National Defence (DND), in partnership with Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC), and with funds received from SAR NIF, developed a handheld underwater imager that enhances the safety and response-time of underwater SAR operations. The device improves on, adapts, miniaturizes and makes more rugged a handheld version of the larger Laser Underwater Camera Image Enhancer (LUCIE) active imaging system.

Use of LUCIE in search, rescue, and recovery operations increases visibility by a factor of five in coastal waters, and allows the operators of underwater search vehicles to cover approximately 10 times more area in the same time as with a conventional system. The system also allows the operator to see five times deeper when used from a surface vehicle. The addition of the geo-positioning capability renders the system relatively independent of the remotely operated vehicle (ROV) or boat used to carry it. The built-in geo-positioning capability enables the system to relay precise directions and effectively cooperate with other maritime rescue and recovery units. Because the system is relatively independent, its use can be called upon in relatively short notice with

small surface boats and underwater ROV. The combination of flexibility in the choice of ROV, absolute location capability and reduced search time provided improved performance for underwater search, rescue and recovery operations.

DND/DRDC built and tested a compact battery powered handheld version of the LUCIE active imager with a helmet-mounted viewer for underwater SAR operations such as those involving capsized boats. The compact handheld imager is operable by a single SAR diver. This device considerably improves the range (depending on turbidity of the water) at which a SAR diver can identify obstacles. It allows the diver to gauge distance to such obstacles, see the environment more clearly, and avoid potentially dangerous manoeuvres in hazardous and time-critical operations. In the case of capsized vessels, the ability to see more clearly and to gauge accurately the distance to both trapped victims and potentially dangerous hazards helps prevent diver entanglement and misdirection, and accelerates this very time-critical operation, which improves the victim's survival chances.

The enhanced portability and ease of use of the underwater handheld imager shortens search time and improve the accuracy of underwater search, rescue and recovery operations. It is also credited with increased SAR diver safety and optimal use of response time for underwater SAR operations.

While these projects represent only a handful of the important and innovative search and rescue related projects underway across Canada, they are significant in that they demonstrate the exceptional commitment of SAR practitioners to improving education and prevention.

SAR NIF provides funding on an annual basis to projects submitted and selected based on their merits and contribution to the objectives of the National Search and Rescue Program. While there is a deadline for submission of proposals to the NSS, each SAR NIF federal, territorial and provincial partner establishes their own deadline for receiving proposals for consideration. Therefore, prospective applicants must contact the federal, territorial or provincial partner that will be supporting their initiative to indicate their interest in submitting a proposal, and to ensure they meet any established deadlines.

To find out more about the SAR NIF program, or to learn how to apply for funding, please visit the National Search and Rescue Secretariat website at www.nss-snrs.gc.ca.



Implementing an interoperable **ALL HAZARDS APPROACH** to incident management

COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN INTERAGENCY
FOREST FIRE CENTRE (CIFFC)

The response to emergency incidents in Canada, including ground search and rescue (GSAR) incidents, has frequently been a command and control challenge when crossing jurisdictional boundaries and/or when working with multiple cooperating and supporting agencies and organizations. A standardized pan-Canadian incident management system will address interoperability issues, deficiencies and incompatibility between competing management systems.

Many jurisdictions have acknowledged their support for the Incident Command System (ICS) as the standard command and control structure for emergency management across Canada and internationally. ICS is a proven management system built on best practices and is the result of decades of lessons learned in the organization and management of emergency incidents and planned events. ICS has been tested through more than 30 years of application, by all levels of government and in the private sector.

Although there had not been a recognized standard Canadian version of ICS, many organizations within Canada have adopted the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre (CIFFC) version over the last ten years.

The CIFFC version had been developed primarily for the wild land fire management community. But as challenges arose when delivering ICS material to other emergency response audiences, CIFFC recognized the need to update the training curriculum to meet the needs of an all hazard/all risk audience. It also mirrored some of the changes to the base training materials that had occurred in the United States as a result of the US Department of Homeland Security directive mandating the use of ICS in their country.

In cooperation with a group of project partners including The Ground Search and Rescue Council of Canada, The Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada, The Royal Canadian Mounted

Police, Alberta Emergency Management Agency, and Parks Canada Agency, the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre was successful in receiving funding from the Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund. The financing allowed the revision and update of the CIFFC ICS version to an all hazard/all risk model. The project "Incident Command System for Search and Rescue: Implementing an Interoperable All Hazards Approach to Incident Management" has a number of objectives including:

- Revision and updating of the Canadian (CIFFC ICS) doctrine to an all hazard/risk approach
- Develop student and trainer classroom materials for the four "system" courses (I-100 through I-400) in an all hazard/all risk approach
- Develop "I-100 Introduction to ICS" as an online course for GSAR and other emergency responders
- Establish core competencies, certification criteria and database for ICS positions
- Establish ICS instructor certification criteria, train the trainer programs and a database for instructors
- Provide mentoring opportunities for GSAR individuals to increase their depth and experience in implementing ICS
- Promote ICS as the national command and control system for GSAR and other emergency incidents and planned events
- Develop an organization (ICS Canada) to maintain the integrity of a revised all hazard/all risk ICS system.
- Provide all training materials in both official languages.

The project is now in the second of its three year duration with significant progress made to date. The ICS Canada doctrine has been updated to reflect an all hazard/all risk approach. The classroom versions of both the I-100 and I-200 courses have been completed and are available for delivery by qualified instructors. The I-100 introductory course is also available as a self study workbook with the expectation of online conversion



PHOTO BY: DON BLAKELY, VERNON SAR

in early 2012. The first I-200 Train the Trainer course for GSAR will be offered in October 2011. Both the I-100 and I-200 course materials are currently being translated into French.

The suite of I-300 and I-400 course materials have been drafted and will be test delivered and finalized in the fall of 2011. Work progresses on instructor certification processes as well as ICS position core competencies and tracking systems.

On a strategic level, the SAR NIF project has been a catalyst in bringing together a much larger emergency management community interested in managing an ICS system for Canada going forward. This ICS Canada initiative continues to gain momentum and will ensure the viability of a relevant Canadian Incident Command System long after the SARNIF project has been completed.

The project is on track to meet its objectives and provide a standard all hazard/all risk ICS doctrine and training regime to GSAR and other emergency response organizations. The increased interoperability both within the GSAR community and with strategic co-operators and assisting agencies will increase the effectiveness, efficiency and safety of GSAR incidents and other emergency response operations. 🚀