



# SRRRMN Newsletter

Search Rescue and Recovery Resources of Minnesota

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## Inaugural Issue!

By The SRRRMN Board of Directors

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the SRRRMN Newsletter. Thank you in advance for reading it.

One of the main goals of SRRRMN is to bring together individuals and organizations with search, rescue, and recovery skills to pursue common goals such as forming a more cohesive SAR community, cooperatively addressing common issues, and fostering excellence among members. Since its inception in 2002, SRRRMN has held 21 General Membership Meetings. We discuss a wide range of topics and further the above goal considerably at each of these meetings. However, not everyone can make the meetings, so not everyone benefits from the information shared at them.

Throughout its eight-year history, SRRRMN Directors have been incredibly busy working on behalf of the entire Minnesota SAR community. Yet, how would those who cannot regularly attend the meetings come to know this? We hope that this newsletter will help keep both members and non-members informed of our activities. It will also serve other goals. We hope to introduce those we serve to the various resources available within the SAR community and how to best utilize them. We will introduce new methods and technologies to our readers. We will discuss standards and best practices. And we hope to occasionally entertain you with the lighter side of SAR work. While newsletters are a lot of work to produce, the Directors feel that this is an important way to reach people and further the goals of SRRRMN.

This newsletter is a work in progress. We hope to cover a wide range of topics. The newsletter may take several forms before we settle on a look. To be successful, we need your ideas. Do you have thoughts on a topic of interest to you? Would you like to share something about your organization with the rest of the SAR community? Do you have comments on previous articles? Please share them with everyone. Email your suggestions to [sarmn@comcast.net](mailto:sarmn@comcast.net).

Help us create a stronger SAR community.



# Need a Better Hand Held GPS?

By Ken Anderson,  
Emergency Support Services

Like most technology we see now days, it takes only a year or two and the product you purchased that was state of the art equipment at the time, is now obsolete.

In Search and Rescue, field crews already have years of experience knowing how to navigate and for search teams that regularly work in the same areas, a GPS is just a supporting tool. But more and more search coordinators need better data from the field. When a search turns into a crime or when weapons have been involved, enforcement officials are asking for precise tracks of search teams.

Search coordinators are becoming more high tech as better software and hardware becomes available to correlate the areas searched by search teams and to accurately plot the tracks of these teams and the locations of clues and evidence. The accuracy and the retention of this data become critical as searches progress from hours into days and are passed onto replacement coordinators or overhead teams.

Two common factors for hand held GPS to lose satellite signal is the amount of sky visible and the amount of foliage overhead. If you are in hilly terrain such as deep narrow valleys or areas like the South Dakota badlands where the cut can be very deep, you know that the deeper you go the less sky is visible overhead and that translates to less line of sight to satellites closer to the horizon. A dense tree cover overhead is always a problem when working in forested areas and this will decrease the strength of the

signal getting to the GPS.

Garmin International introduced a high sensitivity receiver and has added the option to a number of its most popular hand held units. I purchased the eTrex Vista HCx and



Karla & Sharolyn set their GPS

I was amazed at its sensitivity. I have used Garmin products for many years and the unit I utilize in my truck is a marine type with upgradeable software maps and the standard on-board antenna. I switched the antenna to an external active type (active antennas typically have a built in amplifier to boost reception but require power). This antenna was so efficient it would lock onto satellites while still inside my shop in less than 30 seconds.

My new eTrex Vista HCx locks onto satellites while also inside my shop in less than 30 seconds. This unit has memory that can be replaced and expanded with standard solid-state memory used in many cameras and cell phones (typically a microSD card). This is much better for the consumer than the proprietary memory that Garmin used to require. This also means that you can load lots of maps into your unit and that can

greatly increase the data stored on the system from just a few counties to just a few states.

I have yet to see a consumer-mapping program that did not support most of the Garmin product line, and updates are typically available from the software manufacture because of the continual changes in the GPS industry.

If you do purchase an newer GPS don't forget to order the interface cable for your unit. This will be required for updates to your unit and for when you need to transfer a track log from the unit to the search manager. Another thing to remember is that laptop computer manufactures have dropped the availability of a serial port from their products. This will leave you with the USB interface as your only option.

If you look at the Garmin product lineup, look for the models that have the H after the model name. The H identifies models that have the high sensitivity receiver and the C identifies models that have a color display. I would also suggest getting a copy of Garmin TOPO USA this is topographical map information that can be added to your Garmin GPS (check individual

**“Search coordinators are becoming more high tech....Accuracy and the retention of this data become critical as searches progress..”**

model for compatibility)

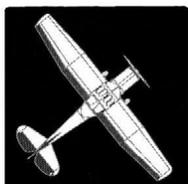
You can always go to [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com) for current product information.



## Ole and Sven to the Rescue...

Minnesota's worst air disaster occurred earlier this week when a Cessna 152, a small two-seater aircraft, crashed into a Norwegian cemetery in northern Minnesota.

Ole and Sven, working as search and rescue workers, have recovered 826 bodies so far, and they expect that number to climb as digging continues.



## What Many Don't Know About the Civil Air Patrol

By Major Richard Sprouse,  
Civil Air Patrol

Civil Air Patrol was born on December 1, 1941, just days before the attack on Pearl Harbor. CAP initially planned only on liaison flying and interdiction of infiltrators on the East Coast and the southern border, but CAP's mission grew when German submarines began to prey on American ships.

During an 18-month span, CAP reported sighting 173 U-boats and was credited with sinking two. Since air search and rescue had also been one of CAP's primary missions during the war, it was obvious there was no other organization with the equipment and training to continue this vital job in the post-war years.

With the attacks of September 11 and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the Air Force made the decision to move CAP from its operations directorate to homeland security. The Air Force believes that CAP is trained, equipped and prepared to support our national security efforts and CAP once again found itself flying the types of missions flown over

60 years ago during WWII, with the exception of looking for submarines.

After the attacks on Sept. 11, the first aircraft to fly over the World Trade Center was the Civil Air Patrol performing photoreconnaissance for emergency officials. CAP aircraft flew 48 sorties in the first 72 hours alone following the tragedy.

Over 8,700 members were mobilized nationwide helping staff Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regional operations centers and state emergency operations centers, as well as support the lead federal agency in response and recovery. CAP volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies.

Closer to home, nearly 200 CAP members assisted with mandatory evacuations, road closure, security, traffic control, road repair and cleanup of debris in the wake of flooding in southern Minnesota in 2007. CAP provided more than 5,600 hours of support to the flood ravaged area.

The Minnesota Wing of the Civil Air Patrol consists of 25 squadrons located in every area of the state, with more than 1,200 senior officer (adult) and cadet members and 17 light aircraft. The Minnesota Wing routinely flies thousands of hours per year of operational flights, and contributes some 10,000+



**Cadets Performing a Search**

hours to search and rescue, counter drug operations, disaster preparedness and relief, homeland security and other humanitarian mission flying.

The Civil Air Patrol is in a constant state of readiness to assist local, state and national emergency providers. With a number of formal ground and air operations schools, and training activities occurring almost monthly across the country and across Minnesota, they stand mission ready

to assist during any search and rescue efforts, disaster relief operations, humanitarian missions. As well as storm damage assessment, radiological monitoring, light transport, communications support, or low-altitude route surveys.

Some of their training also includes safety, air-ground search coordination, ground search, search methodology and aircraft crash site security. Additional classes on first aid, patient transport and use of an emergency locations transmitter for finding downed aircraft are also provided, along with a number of practical training scenarios.

When people think of CAP they usually assume everyone is a pilot, or that you need to become a pilot, but nothing could be further from the truth: the vast majority of its members are NOT pilots and having a pilot's license is not a requirement.



# Mounted Assistance in Call-Outs:

## SRRRMN Proposed Procedures Regarding Non-Posse Member Volunteers

**Editor's Note:** This article is intended to identify certain key issues to be considered when call-outs for mounted SAR resources result in mounted, but non-Posse associated, volunteers arrive on scene. The difficulty in integrating mounted resources with each other, even when they are from different Posses, is substantially more complex when non-posse volunteers present themselves. In this article, SRRRMN identifies the proposed procedures and requirements that are likely to be applied in those situations. SRRRMN is very much interested in the views of the Newsletter's readers on these issues. All comments and suggestions should be addressed to [sarmn@comcast.net](mailto:sarmn@comcast.net) and reference "Mounted SAR Participation."

By Emily Boote and Kenneth Levinson,  
Emergency Response Trained  
Mounted Resources

1. Policy Overview During certain call-outs or requests for SRRRMN assistance, or in cases where local law enforcement manages a search/recovery effort in consultation with SRRRMN, mounted resources may be available to help. This Policy is directed especially to such volunteer mounted resources (hereinafter "Volunteer Mounted Resources") that are NOT on-site as members of a recognized Mounted Posse or Mounted Unit of law enforcement (such as a County or City unit).

### 2. The Over Riding Principles Are:

A. The safety of the volunteers, their horses and their fellow searchers and resources,

B. The most efficient deployment of the best available resources on their most appropriate missions,

C. Adequate and continuing communications (within the search units and with the IC), and

D. The preservation of the search site(s) and evidence.

3. Prerequisites for Volunteer Mounted Resources to be deployed as such (i.e., mounted), rather than as additional ground resources include the following:

A. Evidence of a current satisfactory Coggins Test for the horse.

B. Proper attire, equipment and tack (e.g., helmets, leg wrappings for horse, long sleeves/pants for riders, food/water/hay for horse, field pack for rider (food/water), lead rope, weather-appropriate attire, etc.).

C. Pre-briefing with Search Manager/designee regarding riding experience/limitations, any familiarity

with terrain in search area, confirmation that rider is at least 18 and horse at least 5, disclosure of any first aid/EMS/law enforcement training, confirmation that rider will absolutely adhere to directions from search team leaders/IC (such as, search/mission assignments, riding as part of a search team directed by the designated team leader, formation and spacing matters, speed of advance in-



Mounted Line Search

structions, flexibility in utilization by team leader/IC, ability of horse to work in proximity of dogs or human searchers, etc.), etc.

D. Rider must confirm to Search Manager/designee his/her understanding of and must agree (1) to respect the confidential nature of all information learned as part of search/recovery resources, and (2) to respect the confidentiality and privacy of the family and law enforcement efforts generally involved in the search/recovery effort.

E. Determine if Volunteer Mounted Resources have a cell phone with them. Walkie/talkie sets (2 or more). General radio familiarity.

### 4. Post Search Deployment Obligations

A. Return with search team to IC or staging area, as directed.

B. Participate in de-briefing with IC/Search Manager/Team Leader/designee regarding incidents, observations during search.

C. Return any equipment provided by IC/search team.

D. Complete check-out list, and sign out.

5. Mounted Resource Logistical Needs. Mounted resources have needs and advance logistical requirements that differ materially from other search resources or volunteers. Among the requirements/issues to be considered:

A. Secured and maintained staging area (where rigs can be parked, and horses can be confined, graze/rest, have hay, water, shelter, etc.). This site needs to be monitored continually, under the direction of the IC or law enforcement, as appropriate. Note that there may be more than one staging area or there may be segregated staging areas limited to units representing official mounted units (provided by city, county or other law enforcement mounted posse units); in these situations, Volunteer Mounted Resources will be expected to stage themselves since they have arrived at the site on their own.

B. May have to divide up larger mounted resource teams into smaller ones (depending on search assignments, terrain, or other matters requiring the on-site judgment of the team leaders or IC); each team MUST have at least one radio, so possibility of small team work must be anticipated when radios are handed out by IC.

C. Logistics complications need to be considered (e.g., ability of horses/rigs to get to or change assigned search areas, based on terrain, lack of passable roads, water, etc.). Flexibility is important, but moving a rig from one area to a distant one takes time, which needs to be factored in by IC and Search Manager.

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D. While even regular mounted Posse units may benefit from rotations into and out of the field, Volunteer Mounted Resources must be used with maximum 4-hour field rotations in mind. Those Volunteers who arrive late should be held at IC staging area (and vetted first, per paragraph 3 above and these Procedures), then rotated in as necessary to take relieve or supplement other mounted units or Volunteer Mounted Resources, as required.

E. Recommended minimum ratio of officers for all mounted units (Posses and Volunteer Mounted Resources) to conform as near as possible to standard SAR/R guidelines (i.e., one officer or team leader to a maximum of 5-7 mounted Search team participants, with no less than two officers per deployment group).

F. Getting the rigs/horses to the right search areas may well require a knowledgeable escort/guide

from IC, or the staging area, as appropriate.

G. Preservation of evidence, scene security or perimeter protection may be among the missions in which mounted units could be asked to participate. The benefits and the limitations of mounted units for these types of missions must be understood by the IC/Search Manager.

Do you have a comment or suggestion?

Email us at [sarmn@comcast.net](mailto:sarmn@comcast.net) and reference "Mounted SAR Participation".

**“...to respect the confidential nature of all information learned as part of search /recovery resources...”**



## In Cadaver Dog Training, Size Does Matter

*By Wendy Deane, HRD K-9*

My teammates and I have been working several old cases lately where our dogs have been alerting on the target scent, but we have been unable to pinpoint the source. We have to do our best to try to figure out why scent is pooling in certain places so we can determine where the actual scent source (the body) is located. Too many times we've said "I don't know," or "My best educated guess is..."

We train hard and nearly on a daily basis for cases like these. We want to help "bring people home," even if they are deceased. We want to help law enforcement to bring those responsible forward to face the legal process as a result of the heinous acts that they have committed.

Due to the fact that we usually only have the ability to train on small amounts of human cadaver material,

this is difficult to do. Rarely is this material the full picture of human decomposition which consists of bone, blood, hair and tissue. We get a vial of donated blood, add a bit of hair from the salon floor, and buy some bleached bones from "The Bone Room." Occasionally we can get some teeth from the dentist or even a placenta from a willing donor, however, most expectant mothers are rather squeamish about the idea.

Although all of this helps, it doesn't give the dogs the full representation of what a whole decomposing body smells like. The first time a dog team finds an actual body they rarely give their trained indication; frequently they are hesitant to even go all the way up to the body the first time. They tend to fringe the body several yards away at the point where the

scent level is what they are more used to in training, and indicate there.

There is a lively discussion among SAR dog handlers all over the country right now about this very issue and several Yahoo group lists discuss this topic. Handlers desperately want to be able to train on larger sources. Those that have been training SAR



**Author with her K-9 Partner**

dogs for many years understand this problem well. We've been on the searches and have managed to work through the issue with our operational

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dogs. But we would have been an even better resource had we not had to work out these problems on actual searches. We would likely find the missing person faster because the dogs would know exactly what they were looking for.

Here is an excerpt from an e-mail that Renee Utley, a law enforcement dog handler from TX, sent to the K-9Forensics Yahoo group (reprinted with permission):

*“On a large source say 70+ pounds dogs that were routinely trained on tiny amounts, fringed. Continued to work back and forth in the area of odor that they were accustomed to. Once led to the aid, exposed and rewarded for a solicited alert, the amount was “added” to their database and they improved every scenario every day. Some dogs (very few) would work it out to source without assistance. The other thing that occurs is that when exposed to very fresh aid, several pounds of burned tissue, or any type of aid that the dog was not trained on, the dogs would approach, check and move on. Now, some dogs would “comparison shop” and come back and subsequently alert. I call this playing odd man out. In other words, IF the new odor was anomalous to the area, the seasoned dogs would shop around and ultimately come back to it as it “must be it” because nothing else was around. Very good for handlers to see this reaction. Helps in the field Here is another example. A few weeks ago, we bomb dog handlers were allowed to work our dogs on 100lbs of a high explosive. Out of 25 dogs, 50% fringed and never approached without assistance, the other 50% worked it out and alerted.”*

Renee Utley  
Port Authority Police  
President 2005  
[www.nndda.org](http://www.nndda.org)  
Certifying Official

Renee has over 20 years of experience as a well-known and respected K-9

handler of bomb, narcotics and cadaver dogs.

In her seminars in Texas, she does utilize sources of a realistic size (100-200 lbs) and type: recently deceased to aged skeletal remains, burned, mummified.



**Training Scent Tube**

This is the type of training that law enforcement would like to see us maintain on our dogs. But as volunteer search and rescue handlers without the ability to receive and maintain training aids, we simply have to limp along as we always have.

Cadaver dog handlers attempt to make it to seminars as often as possible, however we are volunteers and all those expenses of travel, lodging, and seminar fees come directly out of our pockets. Traveling to someplace like Texas is usually out of the budget. We are also paying for our dog's care (food, vet, etc.), gas to get to searches, time off of work, equipment for ourselves and our dogs; and anything else that comes up.

As a way to help volunteer SAR dog handlers accomplish the goal of helping law enforcement to bring people home, we need to allow legitimate search dog units to train realistically.

Terry Fleck, a retired law enforcement K-9 handler and K-9 legal expert wrote this article about **Possession of Contraband for K9 Training Purposes**:

[http://www.k9fleck.org/articles/training\\_contraband.html](http://www.k9fleck.org/articles/training_contraband.html)

This is an excerpt of this article in regards to the California code:

**Possession of Cadaver: California Government Code Section 27491.45:**

**Retention of tissues removed at autopsy; Removal of parts for trans-**

**plant, or therapeutic, or scientific purposes.**

*(a) (1) The coroner shall have the right to retain parts of the body, as defined in subdivision (g) of [Section 7150.1 of the Health and Safety Code](#), removed at the time of autopsy or acquired during a coroner's investigation as may, in the opinion of the coroner, be necessary or advisable for scientific investigation and training. The coroner may employ or use outside laboratories, hospitals, or research institutions in the conduct of the coroner's scientific investigation or training.*

*(2) **Parts of the body retained pursuant to paragraph (1) may be released by the coroner to hospitals, medical educational research institutions, and law enforcement agencies for non-coroner training, educational, and research purposes, either upon consent of the decedent or other person, as specified in [Section 7151 of the Health and Safety Code](#), or after a reasonable effort has been made to locate and inform persons listed in subdivision (a) of [Section 7151 of the Health and Safety Code](#) of their option to consent or object to the release, and the appropriate person consents or that effort has been unsuccessful. A reasonable effort shall be deemed to have been made when a search for the persons has been underway for at least 12 hours. The search shall include a check of local police missing persons records, examination of personal effects, and the questioning of any persons visiting the decedent before his or her death or in the hospital, accompanying the decedent's body, or reporting the death, in order to obtain information that might lead to the location of any persons listed in subdivision (a) of [Section 7151 of the Health and Safety Code](#).***

And finally, SWGDOG (Scientific Working Group on Dog and Orthogonal Detector Guidelines) which is a collaboratively funded

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effort of the FBI, NIJ and DHS writes the following in the proposed standards:

4. Training Aids

4.1. Training shall be done on actual human remains in various stages of decomposition.

4.2. The source of the training aids shall be reliable and documented.

4.3. The training aids shall be labeled and packaged in a manner safe for both the handler and canine throughout training.

Go to [www.swgdog.org](http://www.swgdog.org) to see more.

Search, Rescue and Recovery Resources of MN and Northern States Search Dog Network (NSSDN) have strict standards as well as a code of conduct policy. It is our intent to maintain the highest professionalism and credibility in our training and deployment with law enforcement.

By having a paper trail documenting the donation of a training aid by an agency/person and having two people within each member unit of NSSDN serving as the primary and secondary personnel responsible for the training aids and their storage, we would insure

the safety and legality of all concerned.

SRRRMN and NSSDN members respond only to requests from official user agencies for searches. Based on the above standards and protocol, SRRRMN and NSSDN would be working within the spirit of the law in regards to acquiring, storage and utilizing human remains for the sole purpose of training human remains detection dogs in MN.

Contact the author at:  
[hrd\\_k9@yahoo.com](mailto:hrd_k9@yahoo.com)



## Organization

## Search Rescue and Recovery Resources of Minnesota

[srrrmn.org](http://srrrmn.org)

SRRRMN is a non-profit confederation of autonomous groups and individuals who are dedicated to providing quality search, rescue, and recovery services to assist and support public, private, and/or governmental agencies. The purposes of this organization are to promote and develop search, rescue, and recovery capabilities and resources in the State of Minnesota with the underlying principle of saving lives and reducing suffering.

### SRRRMN Organizational and affiliate Members:

- ◆ Lake County Rescue / Finland Unit
- ◆ Washington County Sheriff's Posse
- ◆ Emergency Food Support Services
- ◆ Canine Search Solutions



### NORTHSTAR



Search and Rescue Dog Association



## Check out our upcoming events:

### SRRRMN Events

December 9, 2010

Map and Compass Training

January 7-9, 2011

Winter Survival Weekend

January 22, 2011

MNWG Operations Meeting

February 26, 2011

General Membership Meeting

April 9, 2011

General Membership Meeting



SRRRMN  
341 Perch Lane  
Winsted, MN 55395

TO: