



### MISSION STATEMENT

Tidewater Search and Rescue Group, Inc. provides trained personnel who effectively manage, support, and sustain search and rescue operations when requested. This is accomplished through specialized training, constancy of purpose, and continuous improvement.

### VISION STATEMENT

For the search subject, the Tidewater Search and Rescue Group, Inc. will be recognized as the leader in training and management, providing the most professional and effective response to Ground Search and Rescue Incidents.

### Inside this Issue:

Upcoming Training	2
Book Review	2
Commander's Commentary	3
Coach's Corner	4
Chippokes Pics	5
GSAR Weekend 2	6
For Safety's Sake	7
Change of SAR Command	8
New Member Spotlight	9
Can I Get Sued?	10
Christmas Party Info	12

## News from On High...by Kevin Brewer

GPS's are becoming more and more prevalent in the out of doors based in whole upon their affordability. TSAR even owns eight Etrex's which we issue out like radios during a search or training. The state SAR program has taken a position on the use of GPS's and more specifically how the data is displayed.

First and foremost the datum which we now use in SAR operations is WGS 84. This stands for World Geodetic Survey 1984 and is nothing more than the mathematical means by which the world is gridded and where the grid lines cross. Making sure your GPS, or any other that you have in hand and are getting ready to call out coordinates from is set up correctly is extremely important! If it is not, you could be asking others to come to your aid and they can end up a couple hundred yards from where you want them.

Secondly, the next thing you should have set up on your GPS is the format in which you want your position data to display. Yes, we were trained to use UTM, but there is something else out there which is very similar and which the state has adopted and cast into stone as well. USNG or the US National Grid is now the law in Virginia SAR. The really nice part of this requirement is that today's GPS's have the capability to display a position using this grid. If perchance, you have an older GPS and by older I'm only talking about maybe two or three years old, if you set up your device to display in MGRS [Military Grid Reference System] which your device will have, you are golden.

Using the example shown below, set up your GPS accordingly using the USNG format or at least MGRS and here's why:

UTM 18S0380018  
4097461

MGRS 18S UF 80018  
97461

USNG 18S UF 80018  
97461

*Continued on page 9*

**\*\*\* Upcoming Training & Events \*\*\***

Date	Activity
December 12	Sign-line training at Northwest River Park.
Dec 14 & 15	CPR for the Professional Rescuer
December 19	<b>*** TSAR Christmas Party – 6:30pm ***</b>
January 9, 2010	Clue Awareness/Protection & Crime Scene Protection
January 21, 2010	General Membership Meeting
February 10, 2010	Wednesday Night Table Top Training Understanding Dispatch
February 18, 2010	General Membership Meeting
February 20, 2010	Land Nav & Route Picking Training (Indoors)

Rick Sylvia  
TSAR Training Officer

*For any additional information on TSAR Training, contact Rick Sylvia at [rws4184@gmail.com](mailto:rws4184@gmail.com).*

# Book Review

## The Greatest Search and Rescues Stories Ever Told

Excerpt from the book:

Cast in bronze, the German shepherd is more an animal of peace than an instrument of war. During World War I, Red Cross institutions of every country used many canines to aid and comfort the wounded men on the front lines. After a single battle, a French dog named Prusco located more than a hundred wounded men. The dog, wolflike in appearance and nearly all white, dragged unconscious and wounded soldiers into protective craters and trenches before alerting his masters. Several dispatches from different regiments mentioned the heroic efforts of Prusco. Hundreds of other canines performed similar services.

There are many great search and rescue stories in this book, some old, some recent. See Renee if you'd like to borrow a copy to read. Or, pick up a copy as a Christmas gift for the SAR junkie on your list [here](#).

# Commander's Commentary

There are a number of new faces within the clan, which is a very good thing. New blood brings new ideas as well as new vision. TSAR is a very diverse group with people from all eight principal compass points from our geographic center. To all the new faces, it may appear at times to be an overwhelming and daunting task being part of such a group and being involved, getting trained, participating in all of the different things the group may have going at any one time. If you hit that point, just step back and take in a deep breath or two, yes we would like everyone's participation all the time, BUT that's not the reality of life.

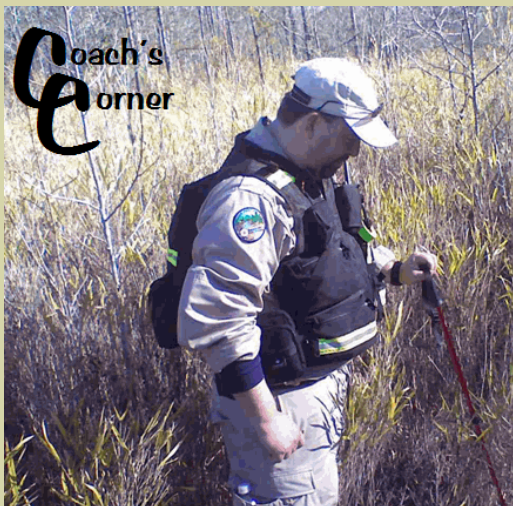


TSAR always has something going on so there will be plenty of opportunities to get to a training and improve upon your skills. We want you to be your best and achieve the goals which you've put upon yourself when you joined the group. We have plenty of persons in the group who want to help you achieve those goals.

Wilderness SAR is serious work and as such we try and provide you with the necessary core element training opportunities and a lot of them through out the year. As with everything else in life, you'll get out of it the same amount as what you put into it. There are opportunities for continuing ed classes around the area as well as across the state that you'll get notified of from time to time. With such diverse professional backgrounds, if you feel you have something to offer the group which you have not seen us offer and it may be of interest to the group as a whole, bring it on. We live for diversity and learning something completely new. So in closing, to all the new people, Welcome and to all those who, for lack of a better term, "have been around for a while" avail yourselves as I know you will to those new faces. Make them feel at home and make sure they feel they are a part of a very unique and close organization.

Happy Holidays and have a safe and prosperous New Year.

Kevin Brewer, TSAR Commander



## Practice Like You Play

While we in SAR never really get an “off” season to recharge our batteries and refocus the reason why we spend these hours together away from our families. It is for only a brief time in our training where we are on task or preparing for task where we get to develop a skill set in our tool box.

“No coach has ever won a game by what he knows-it’s what his players know that counts.” - Unknown

When we get the call to go look for the missing child or the Adult, everything becomes serious and if you haven’t prepared yourself a self doubt may occur and our Subjects can’t afford us to have self doubt in their time of need. So NOW we must train and practice like its game day to help remove any self doubt you may have.

### Plan -

From the time we get the alert of a search or a training we must Plan for the event mentally and physically. Lack of planning will not allow you to achieve optimum performance for the task at hand be it learning new skill sets, polishing the skill sets you have or using these skills sets on task during a search.

### Do –

Then it comes time to Do and if we are focused during our trainings it will be second nature to us come Search Time. If we are not focused at the task at hand when we train then you may not be prepared come game day. You can’t afford that nor can the Subject, They depend on us.

### Check –

Check your actions of the day, debrief the actions of the day with a teammate in your self assessment; what did you learn? Where you focused in your task? Did you contribute to the team or to the event, what could I have done differently for the betterment of the subject? What do I need to better my skills toolbox? What gear is really needed for these types of task?

### Advice –

Lend your learning points to the team good and/or bad for the betterment of the team. Seek the knowledge and ask the questions to the trainers and veterans of the group to help you for the betterment of the subject.

### Remember –

We walk a fine line when we are together, learning from each other and the tasks/situations we are put into. Focus on the tasks at hand and help those around you become better at what we do. We are in a growing era of our group and we all lean on each other with our life’s experiences to help each other grow. When it comes time for learning, Please do not take away from these learning experiences with negative vibes or over the top needless pranks and jokes. Others around you are at different levels of their SAR Career and your professionalism in these times is most needed. We will all have time together to unwind and enjoy each other after our trainings and learning points are completed.

Remember it’s what you the players know that makes this group go.

Train like you play on game day,

**Coach**



## Chippokes Car Parking Fun



## GSAR - Weekend 2



Congratulations to these TSAR members for completing the following certifications:

Bart Drummond - MLSO

Nathan Brown - MLSO

Theresa Crossland - MLSO

Mason Copeland - MLSO

Nathan Alley - FTL

Brandon Hartfiel - FTM

Braeden Miller - FTM



# For Safety's Sake *by Bart Drummond*

## Winter Driving Safety

It is almost that time of year again, where just a few snow flurries send the drivers in the Hampton Roads area into complete panic mode. While we do not typically experience large accumulations of snow in our area, we do often experience poor road conditions as well as black ice conditions and we may be called to respond to searches in areas that do receive significant amounts of snowfall. In this month's article I would like to offer a few tips to keep you and your families safe as you travel our roads.

The foundation to winter driving safety is to first ensure that your vehicle is prepared for winter conditions. Ensure that your battery and charging system are in good shape. Ensure that all belts and hoses are in good shape with no cracks and that belts are under the correct tension. Check the antifreeze level in your radiator with an antifreeze tester. Check and/ or replace the wiper blades and ensure that the washer fluid is filled. It is a good idea to carry a spare gallon of washer fluid in the trunk in case the reservoir empties while on the road.

In addition, ensure that the tires are in good condition with at least 6/32" of an inch of tread for driving in snow. This will allow the snow to be compressed into the tread and allow the tire to grip more. This depth can quickly be checked with a penny. If the penny is inserted with the Lincoln Memorial upside down and the tread covers at least the top of the memorial, then the tread depth is sufficient. Also check the inflation and tread depth of the spare tire and ensure that the jack is in good working order. Make sure that the fuel tank is always over ½ full. This provides more weight, and with it, increased traction, but will also allow more time for the engine to be run to stay warm in case of an emergency.

Pack your vehicle to handle winter emergencies. Always carry a small tool kit with some basic tools, jumper cables and a small bag of cat litter to use for traction if needed. Other items that should be carried are a flashlight and extra batteries, a small first aid kit, blankets, extra clothing, boots, bottled water, food, brightly colored flagging material, a small folding shovel, an ice scraper and a small broom for clearing snow from the vehicle.

If you happen to get stuck, open the hood and use the bright flagging material on the outside of the car for signaling purposes. Try to only run the car 10 minutes per hour to stay warm. If it is snowing hard, stay with the car as you could become lost and not be able to find your way back if needed. You are more likely to be found quickly if you stay with the car.

Some tips on driving in snow and ice are to first and foremost, SLOW DOWN! Pay attention to vehicles far ahead of you and watch for any skidding or sliding. This will allow you time to start braking or adjust your route of travel. It is also helpful to downshift as this will force the car to slow. If you do start to skid, take your foot off of the gas immediately and turn the wheel in the direction of the skid. Do not slam on the brakes.

Black ice is a very dangerous condition to encounter. While a shiny road surface may indicate a wet or icy road, a road covered with black ice will look slightly different. Watch for pavement that is slightly darker and a little duller looking than the rest of the road surface as this may indicate that black ice is present. While we think of ice forming at temperatures below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, temperatures can be near freezing or just a few degrees above for the formation of black ice.

Just a few extra moments of your time and a few extra precautions can make all the difference in arriving safely at your destination. Please be safe and arrive alive.

**Thanks for all that you do and for a great 2009! Happy Holidays to all!**

## Change of SAR Command

On November 4th, 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates signed a memorandum transferring Inland SAR Coordinator responsibility for the contiguous 48 states from the Secretary of the Air Force to the Commander of the US Northern Command (COMUSNORTHCOM). In addition,

COMUSNORTHCOM is designated as the Inland SAR Coordinator effective immediately and DoD policy will be updated to reflect the new designation.

COMUSNORTHCOM will designate a civil SAR expert to provide operational advice to the National SAR Committee, in close coordination with the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs.

Pursuant to DoD Directive 3003.01 - DoD Support to Civil SAR, paragraph 5.6.2, the Secretary of the Air Force will continue to designate an aeronautical civil SAR expert to serve as a member of the Joint SAR Working Group that the International Civil Aviation Organization and International Maritime Organization jointly sponsor.

Pursuant to DoD Directive 3003.01, paragraph 5.6.4, the Secretary of the Air Force will continue to fund and operate the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC).

For more information, check on the links below:

US NORTHERN COMMAND

<http://www.northcom.mil/>

AFNORTH – AFRCC

<http://www.1af.acc.af.mil/units/afrc/>

National SAR Committee (NSARC)

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg534/NSARC.asp>

National SAR Plan of the United States – 2007

[http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg534/manuals/Natl\\_SAR\\_Plan\(2007\).pdf](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg534/manuals/Natl_SAR_Plan(2007).pdf)

National SAR School - Yorktown, Virginia

<http://www.uscg.mil/tcyorktown/Ops/SAR/default.asp>

DoD Directive 3003.01 - DOD Support to Civil SAR – 2006

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300301p.pdf>

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs

<http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/>

Office of the Secretary of the Air Force

<http://www.af.mil/information/secaf/index.asp>



## TSAR New Team Member Spotlight

### Aaron D'Angelo

#### **1. *Where were you born and where did you grow up?***

I was born and grew up in the Midwest in Janesville, Wisconsin near Madison, WI, Milwaukee, WI and Chicago, IL. Lived there until I was a few months to 19 years old, then came to Virginia. I've been here for 16 yrs now, living in Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Hampton, NN, and now Williamsburg.

#### **2. *Any military service and/or college?***

I joined the Navy just a little bit out of high school, in Jan of '93, served 4 years, between NAB and NOB. I started with a short tour in Desert Storm; I've been all over the Caribbean doing drug ops and a Med Cruise before getting out. I have taken some college through TCC in Virginia Beach, completing my EMT - Intermediate and Advance Life Support (ALS) related classes. I currently work for Northrop Grumman Fire Dept as a Firefighter/Medic.

#### **3. *Where do you currently live?***

After getting sick of renting for so long, we've just bought a house in Williamsburg, the Norge area on just about two acres. We really like it as it is just far enough away to be quiet and dark at night so you can see the stars, and close enough that you can get in the city and anything you need in just a couple of minutes.

#### **4. *Any family you want to claim? Husband, wife, boy/girlfriend, kids, parents, etc....***

I have a beautiful woman that I am proud to say is my fiancé, named Jennifer, but she goes by Shadow which is part of her Cherokee name, and her 15 yr old son, Trais, who is now also a member and looking forward to getting COQ qualified.

#### **5. *How did you hear about TSAR and why did you join?***

I searched out a search and rescue group in the area and found TSAR. It started with a strong interest in wilderness medicine, investigating things like, NOLS, and OWLS and developing into an interest in search and rescue, doing some work in both the Navy and Fire Dept. I got in contact with Kevin, Nathan, and Theresa in April, but because of my work schedule, I wasn't able to make a meeting until June or July, so I immediately signed up! I took my FTM in July, with Bart, Karen, and Elizabeth and just finished my FTS recently with Alfredo.

#### **6. *Have you been on a search yet?***

I have been to the search in lower King and Queen County for the downed parachutist, but only got to see the base camp and the organization of that, they were starting to get word of a possible find not too long after I got there so was not sent out on task at that time. I met up with Bart there, and got to meet Peter, Rick, Butch and a few others. My work schedule makes it difficult to make meetings, events, and respond to searches as it always rotates. Though I am always hoping to help.

**Welcome Aaron!!!**

*Continued from front page...*

Using the above example, it's much easier to look at the screen and know without having to figure out which number do I truncate when I call in my position. Those highlighted in yellow are unnecessary and detrimental to calling in a location on a SAR mission. So calling in 8001 / 9746 which is already separated using the better data formats will give base, or any other team, your location to a 10 meter accuracy. If you call in 80018 / 97461 you've just given your position to within 1 meter. 10 meter accuracy is just fine for what we do and as long as you can get personnel to within a whistle blast of your location you're doing just fine.

## **Can I Get Sued or Go to Jail for That?** *by Rick Sylvia*

Anybody who pays even a little bit of attention to the world around them can tell you that the United States is a very litigious society. Our citizens will sue anybody, for any thing, at the drop of a hat if they think they can make a buck doing it. And, unfortunately, that creates an attitude of excessive caution in many people and groups - sometimes justified, sometimes not.

SAR groups are no exception. There are many things that we do, or don't do, with legal protection in mind. One of the more common examples would be the simple act of documenting everything we do, in the unlikely event that we'll end up in court as either a defendant or a witness. It's reasonably rare, but it can and does happen from time to time.

Another example would be that of another SAR group in Virginia who has instituted a policy of disallowing its members from wearing their group's shirts, hats, jackets etc as "casual wear". They are only permitted to wear them during official functions because there are documented cases of innocent by-standers wearing SAR or EMS clothing who have been sued for not coming to the aid of someone in need, even though the defendant was unqualified to provide aide. Wearing the apparel created an expectation that they "could" provide aide and simply didn't. So, it's thought to be safer to simply not advertise your group affiliation.

Due to the litigious attitudes of those we strive to serve, some of the things we do or don't do to protect ourselves is very justified, while others are rooted in misinterpretations and misunderstandings. But, following the principle of "better safe than sorry", we act upon them and to some degree let them guide our actions. A case in point is the HIPAA law. HIPAA refers to the Health Insurance Portability and Accounting Act which was passed into law in 1996 and went into affect in 2003.

Using myself as an example, in a previous newsletter article, I mentioned a subject's name and the fact that he was found deceased. Shortly thereafter, I received notes from two people in our group telling me not to use the subject's name in newsletter articles. They cited HIPAA as the reason for their caution. While that's an understandable thought, it's also incorrect. There may very well be other reasons not to use a subject's name, but HIPAA isn't one of them.

A common interpretation of this law is that nobody can discuss any health related topics pertaining to another individual without their consent. However, that is far from the truth. The key factor is that the law only applies to "covered entities". Here, "covered" doesn't imply that they are protected - it refers to those that are legally bound to abide by the laws.

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Those covered entities are health plans and insurance companies, health care clearinghouses and medical billing companies, health care providers and all of the employees or business partners of the above, such as their law firms. It does not apply to most other government service providers, such as law enforcement and fire departments. Nor does it apply to the media, although it does make it more difficult to gather some information for the purpose of reporting, simply because people are afraid to release information due to HIPAA misunderstandings. Most importantly, it does not apply to SAR teams.

There is, however, the potential for grayness in the event that a SAR resource provides some degree of medical treatment to a subject. That remains a bit unclear to me at the time of this writing due to a variety of conflicting pieces of information (HIPAA can be very confusing). But in the example above, stating that the subject was deceased is acceptable. After all, death notices and certificates are a part of the public record and are available to everyone, and the media is permitted to report it with or without other consent.

So, what's the point of HIPAA? Once you wade through all of the confusion that this law has generated, it boils down to the regulation of "covered entities" and the manner in which they can disseminate individual's health information. As an example of the confusion according to information found at <http://www.rcfp.org/hipaa/main.html>, HIPAA may apply to an ambulance service in one county that bills electronically, but not to a neighboring ambulance service that bills manually, due to sections of the HIPAA verbiage that pertain to the "electronic" dissemination of information.

It can also apply in one State, whereas in another State it may not necessarily apply due to that State's "public records" laws, depending on how that law is written. This is true because the courts have ruled that neither Congress nor the Department of Health and Human Services intended to preempt state disclosure laws.

Practically speaking, what does this mean for TSAR? It means that we can't be taken to court, fined or jailed for releasing information about the subject on a SAR mission as part of HIPAA. Simply, we are not one of the covered entities that fall under the protection that HIPAA provides a patient.

That's certainly not permission to be careless or callous with the information we sometimes possess. We still have our personal ethics and codes of conduct to take into consideration. While it's permissible to tell a reporter that John Doe was found deceased after several days of being lost in the woods, we shouldn't add that the animals of the forest really did a bang-up job of tearing his body to shreds. While it's not illegal, it's in poor taste and should be avoided. Better yet, just refer inquiring people to the IC or his appointed Public Information Officer if one exists.

The bottom line is that we in SAR deal with human lives and the emotions of the families, friends and loved ones whom we're trying to save. By nature, that exposes us to a host of legal issues that need to be studied and considered, and we need to understand as a SAR resource what we should be concerned with, and what we shouldn't. Of course, that's easier said than done!

**See you in the Woods!**



It's time to take a break from trainings and meetings and get together for some good ole relaxation, fun, and food.

When: December 19, 2009 – 6:30 pm

Where: Rick and Renee's (Directions to be emailed)

What to bring: A covered dish to share. Meats will be provided by TSAR. *(Bring your dish in a disposable container so you don't have to worry about remembering to take the dish home.)*

We'll also play a game involving a gift exchange. \$20 limit on gifts.

Much fun is sure to be had, including the handing out of awards (both funny and serious).

See you there!

**RSVP to Renee by December 10<sup>th</sup>.**

For questions or comments regarding this newsletter, email [renee083@gmail.com](mailto:renee083@gmail.com).

*Kings and cabbages go back to compost, but good deeds stay green forever.*

Rick de Marinis

**Search  
And  
Rescue**