



January 2012

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.

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Remembrance...

Rick wrote recently of searches past that he had been on. That got me to thinking about my own past SAR exploits. Every so often I think about reading my old after action reports and log books. This time it was curiosity based upon Ricks writing that got me to dredge up past memories.

It's a good thing to remember their names whether it's those for whom we searched or those team mates that have long since moved on. Looking through my original log book my first seven searches resulted in five of the seven being deceased. Two of them were at the time the largest search in Virginia (circa; 1997, Spotsylvania Co). This however was bested in October 2011 with the Robbie search in Hanover Co. In remembrance of my first few years and the families for whom we search:

*** Clayton Ripley ***

*** James Schneider ***

*** Kristin Lisk ***

*** Kati Lisk ***

*** Mary Morgan ***

*** Tequila Deering ***

*** Virginia Maner ***

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

Ken Steen, TSAR Training Officer

| Date | Activity |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| January 19 | General Membership Meeting |
| January 20-22 | GSAR – Newport News |
| January 28 | Semi-Tech Training |
| February 4 | Human Remains Detection |
| February 16 | General Membership Meeting |
| February 17-19 | GSAR – Newport News |
| February 25 | Land Nav |
| March 3 | Clue Awareness (Subject Scenarios) |
| March 13 | CPR (if needed) |
| March 15 | General Membership Meeting |
| March 28 | Short Term Survival Bivouac |
| March 31 | Black Diamond Competition |

For any additional information on TSAR Training, contact Ken Steen at ironthunder01@gmail.com.



Commander's Commentary

Year Two

For the past two years TSAR has been involved with the National Wreaths Across America program and I've got to say that it is a great honor for me to participate in such a reverent event.

I put out a challenge to all of the SAR teams in Virginia to match or best our effort. Unfortunately I cannot determine if they did, but that doesn't matter as it's not a contest.



This year not only were there more members present to pay their respects to the fallen in a war that was a big part of our area, but there were 100 more wreaths available to be laid on the graves as compared to last year.

Several of us thought that this had been going on for many years at this cemetery. We found out different. The wreath laying ceremony has only been going on at the Yorktown National Cemetery for a handful of years.

As there are over 1500 markers to honor, the 250+ wreaths just don't cover enough. If each year the numbers build, eventually every marker will be honored. Ironically although there are over 1500 markers several graves have two, three or four bodies interred; sadly their names are unknown.

The ceremony is truly uplifting and proper while sorrowful at the same time. The military presence of each branch, the color guard, retired persons representing those 80,000+ individuals listed as MIA, scout troops, the CAP, and TSAR were present.

One of the personally enriching things to do following the event is to Google search the names on the graves that I honored and showed respect to by the laying of the wreath.

After the event and the bulk of the individuals had left, we small band of TSAR members wanted to pay respect to one last grave. This one is not exactly condoned by the National Park Service or others, but we feel that is a mistake and so we walked out to an area in the middle of nothing still within the park to a lone marker and laid a wreath that Ann and I purchased. The marker is for all of the confederate soldiers that died in the Yorktown National Battlefield. I for one being a "Yankee" don't see what's wrong with that.



Kevin Brewer, TSAR Commander

SAR GEAR: Survival Bracelets for SAR Teams and Canines Too!

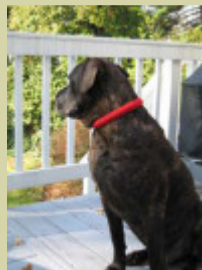
Brad Bennett
TSAR

Have you thought about making a survival bracelet? It is fairly easy and I would say much easier than figuring out how to use your new GPS you got this Christmas. Consider making them in your SAR team colors and use them to make some cash at community events or for donations to your SAR team. Sure you can buy them, but why not make it unique in your colors and styles.



Survival Bracelets or Ranger Bracelets as some know them actually begin with the Rangers in Vietnam. The Rangers would braid them and use a knot or button from their uniform to secure them. Some say this was for survival purposes and other that it was a way to identify other Rangers. Survival Bracelets contain approximately 1.20' of cord for every inch of your wrist measurement. They average about 10' of cord per bracelet. The two-tone bracelets are two 5' pieces spliced together. You can use a 5/8" contoured side release fastex buckle to fasten the bracelet and many found that the contoured fastex buckle is the most secure and comfortable method to fasten the bracelet.

There many videos on You Tube and other directions on the internet teaching how to make many styles – just Google “how to make a survival bracelet. All you need is some 550 cord of your desired colors (lots of new colors today available online), a pair of scissors, tape measure, buckle (many other ways to secure) and time. A 550 paracord survival bracelet can make many applications and may save your life. Make shelters, slings, snares or a fire bow. Use inner strands as fishing lines, stitches, etc. Paracord is used extensively by the U.S. Military and has a minimum breaking strength of 550 lbs. They make great gifts too for SAR members, outdoorsmen, military and police personnel, hunters, campers, etc.



References:

<http://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video?p=how+to+make+a+550+survival+bracelet>

<http://tag.wonderhowto.com/paracord-survival-bracelet/>

http://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images;_ylt=A0PDoX1DFepOOzcAL8uLuLkF?p=550+paracord+bracelets&ei=utf-8&iscqry=&fr=sfp

Managing Hypothermia: What are you carrying in your pack?

Brad L. Bennett
TSAR Medical Officer



It is that time of year again as we transition into cold weather, checking our gear for our own preparation, but what about that 4 year old victim? Are you prepared to be the first responder who finds this missing child and make a difference in their life if they are hypothermic?

Getting a victim to the hospital is essential, but having them walk out is the ultimate goal, and it all begins with the first responders in the field. Hypothermia is a very survivable medical condition with proper treatment.

The hypothermia treatment and procedures described are simply first aid procedures and should be viewed as recommended as self-rescue or emergency procedures to follow until professional aid becomes available.

Under no circumstances should these descriptions be used as substitutes for proper medical treatment. If the body temperature is between 90 degrees F. and 96 degrees F. a full recovery is almost completely assured. From 80 degrees F. to 89.9 degrees F. a recovery is quite possible with proper medical treatment, but there may be some long-term effects. With a body temperature below 80 degrees F., recovery is possible but rare, and medical complications are all but assured.

One of the most important rules of hypothermia treatment, ***no one is dead until they are warm and dead.*** Allow medical authorities to determine death in all cases. When treating a victim of hypothermia all efforts should be made to sustain life until they have been properly warmed by at medical facility. Hypothermia treatment is simple, but the proper treatment needs to be administered during different phases of the medical condition.

Mild Hypothermia Treatment

This is the most common form of hypothermia and one we have all suffered from at one time or another. It is the easiest treated, and the easiest to prevent. Treat mild hypothermia by getting into a warm and dry environment. Windy conditions and wet clothes cause the body to lose heat. Seek shelter from wind and weather

- Insulate from ground – pine branches, leaves, moss, SAR packs or anything to provide insulation will work.

- Change wet clothing for windproof, waterproof gear
- Add heat – if safe, start a fire
- Increase exercise level to generate body heat, if possible
- Get into a pre-warmed sleeping bag or blankets
- Drink hot drinks, followed by candy (glucose) or other high-sugar foods

Remember, victims of mild to moderate hypothermia may be suffering from impaired judgment and not be making rational decisions. They might be more prone to accidents. If you are a victim of mild to moderate hypothermia, be extra cautious! Don't make a bad situation worse!

Moderate Hypothermia Treatment

When a person has moderate hypothermia, in addition to the above listed items, get the person bundled up and out of the cold, covering the neck and head to minimize additional heat loss through the head. Sudden movement and physical activity should be avoided. Rough handling of these victims may cause deadly heart rhythms.

- You can apply warm bottles of water, or warm rocks to the armpits and groin area (not directly on skin; comfortably warm when touched by a hand flat on the stone and held in place).
- Fully conscious victims can sip lukewarm sweetened, non-alcoholic fluids. If their condition is clearly improving then more fluids and warmth can be administered.
- Medical attention should be sought out, even if a full field recovery is achieved.

Severe Hypothermia Treatment

This is an extreme medical emergency and a high priority should be placed on summoning a rescue team immediately to transport the victim to a medical facility as rapidly as possible.

Maintain the body temperature of victims of severe hypothermia. Improper warming can create a condition called metabolic acidosis that can cause shock and heart failure. Warming should only be performed in these states by a medical facility.

The critical thing when a person has severe hypothermia is to be gentle with them. Sudden or rough movements, forcing them to move or walk can pull very cold blood from the extremities into the warmer core that can cause shock. You need to be gentle and supportive. Rubbing the skin, moving of the joints should be avoided. This causes more harm than good.

- You should not administer fluids or make any other attempts to increase body temperature.
- Maintaining temperature and preventing further loss is the most important thing.
- If a person becomes unconscious from hypothermia monitor their breathing and pulse carefully.
- Summon an Emergency Response Team (Call TSAR!)

If you can detect a faint pulse do not do CPR to support their heart. Only start rescue breathing, chest compressions or full CPR if you cannot detect any breathing, any pulse or both (take 60 seconds to assess a pulse since it will be very faint). Check frequently to see if they start breathing on their own, even if it is shallow, the same for a pulse. Administering CPR to someone, even someone with a slight pulse can cause his or her heart to stop.

Remember, make all efforts to keep them alive until help arrives, they have been warmed and declared dead. People have recovered in morgues from hypothermia and have had profoundly low body temperatures and still recover. Never give up hope with a hypothermia victim that does not have any other serious medical complications (like severe injuries from a fall or extreme altitude sickness).



Wilderness First Aid Course for Black Diamond SAR Council (BDSARCO)



On 3-4 Dec 2011, Brad Bennett, TSAR's Medical Officer and SOLO Wilderness medicine instructor, provided a Wilderness First Aid course to members of the Black Diamond Search & Rescue Council at Hungry Mother State Park, Marion, Va. Seventeen members signed up for this 16-hour course, which composed of the following topics:

- *Introduction*
- *What is Wilderness First Aid?*
- *Anatomy of a Wilderness Crisis*
- *Anatomy of the Musculoskeletal System*
- *Universal Precautions*
- *Patient Assessment System*
- *Patient Lifting & Moving*
- *Backcountry Essentials & Survival*
- *The Human Animal*
- *Cold-Related Injuries*
- *Lightning injuries*
- *Heat-Related Injuries*
- *Principles of Fracture Care*
- *Medical Emergencies*
- *Spinal Cord Injury Management*
- *Sprains & Strains*
- *Trauma-Musculoskeletal Injuries*
- *Trauma-Soft Tissue Injuries*
- *Use of Epinephrine pens*
- *Rescue Plan*
- *Response & Assessment*

This WFA course was closely coordinated by Mike Maggard, BDSARCO Training Officer and Bryan Saunders, BDSARCO Coordinator, in which they both provided great support months leading into the course and throughout the 2-day course. Mike Maggard was also a participant in the course and was a great role player throughout both days for individual and group demonstrations. The course went very well due to their consistent support, acquired a great class room, outdoor training environment and great course attendees. A good time was had by all who joined the group for dinner as well.

Brad stated, "I have the highest regard for the officers and members of BDSARCO for their long term commitment, professionalism and demonstrated SAR capabilities that covers the Virginia western region and adjacent states. Furthermore, we all had fun and laughter during the course, sharing our SAR experiences, learning for new skills and improvising proven wilderness medicine techniques, which will certainly prepare BDSARCO members for *good medicine in bad places*, if and when it is needed."

Bryan Saunders showed up each day to lend his support and is already talking about another SOLO WFA course for other BDSARCO members in the summer of 2012. Ken Steen, TSAR Training Officer, is also seeking dates so he can add another SOLO WFA course for our members in 2012. Dates for TSAR's second SOLO WFA course will be out soon.

*** Reprinted from the June 2009 Newsletter ***

Man, That's Cold! By Rick Sylvia

*"If I had no sense of humor, I should long ago have committed suicide.
-- Mohandas K. Gandhi*

My first impressions of the SAR community weren't as flattering as I'd like to remember. I thought the people that I was coming into contact with were.... well..... heartless (sorry, guys... Luv Ya!). Over a period of a few months, stories were told and comments were made that I felt were inappropriate for a group of volunteers who shared the common goal of rescuing lost people. To be clear, I'm not referring solely to TSAR. I'm referring to the many people I met at searches, trainings, and whose blogs and stories I read on the net.

These comments and jokes were particularly offensive to the subjects who were found deceased. "Rude, Crude and Insensitive" was the phrase that came to mind. I was hearing the deceased subjects being called "People Pudding" referring to the initial stages of body decay, or "Forrest Food" for those that had been partially eaten by the critters of the woods. Frankly, I was appalled. These subjects, and the loved ones they left behind, deserve better from us.

On the other hand, I was a newbie who didn't really understand the intent behind the comments. I thought the individuals making the comments were cruel. I would later discover that it was merely a form of "Black Humor" – a necessary phenomenon required to have staying power in the field of first responders, to include volunteer SAR personnel.

There is absolutely no doubt that work of our type can lead to stress and distress. In my year and a half as a SAR resource, I've listened to a number of people throughout the State, recount missions that ended badly, and listened to the tales of what they were asked to do at the missions, and how they coped with it afterwards. As an example, one story involved a downed plane in the mountains where the SAR team was asked to collect body parts in bags and carry them down the mountain and out of the woods. Duty such as this can be emotionally difficult. In one case, the full extent of the emotional impact wasn't realized for some number of years when his emotions suddenly come pouring out for no apparent reason.

So, how do we deal with it? In part.... humor. A century ago, Sigmund Freud pointed out that humor offers us a healthy means of coping with stress. Our particular brand of humor is called "Black" humor or "Macabre" humor. This is a type of humor that some just refer to as "sick" humor. It's humor that deals with the issues of the dead or dying.

Fortunately, studies have shown that people who have access to their sense of humor in the midst of stress are much more resilient than the rest of us. They are emotionally more flexible, and can bend without breaking in the midst of the most difficult circumstances. It's this that allows them to handle some of the situations that could otherwise cut their careers short and send them to the head shrinks couch.

The key thing to remember if your humor takes you down this path is that you are not really laughing at others and their misfortunes. You are laughing at the situations and events that arise in the midst of these misfortunes. You are seizing the opportunity (and sometimes creating it) to let go of the difficult emotions that inevitably accumulate over time.

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For instance, in the research for this article, I read an account of a first responder who was working the wreckage of a tremendous commuter train accident. As they were searching the rubble for body parts, one worker held up an arm (less the hand) and called to his buddy just a few yards away “hey, can you lend me a hand”? Seems cold and callous, but at the time, that stress relief was probably what was allowing him to keep from breaking down altogether. While it would seem heartless to an observer, it’s crucial to the stress reduction and healing process for the long haul.

Unexpressed negative emotions cumulate and can become poisonous if you allow them to build up. They sour your attitude toward your mission and your life in general. These built up tensions can gradually kill your ability to experience joy, spontaneity, and aliveness in general. This is sometimes referred to as The Law of Psychological Gravity.

This law states that if you’re already angry, anxious or depressed, then any new anger-arousing, anxiety-arousing or depressing event that occurs will have much more of an impact because you’re already in a negative emotional state. The new event will seem heavier than it would if you were starting in a “happy” state.

But, how does this apply to SAR? It would be easier to understand if I were talking in terms of an emergency room, or a rescue squad. But in our field, the incidents are fewer and farther between. That’s a double edged sword. On the one side, the stressful events happen much less frequently allowing time to recoup after such an event. On the other hand, we don’t acclimate to the stress as well due to the sporadic nature of the events, and therefore, it can affect us harder when it does occur.

The reality is that many SAR resources can go years without encountering “people pudding” or “forest food”. And truthfully, they may not recognize any immediate affect on their emotional states. Using myself as an example, I’ve responded to 11 searches and have yet to even see the subject in person, much less encounter a horrific scene that can create instant stress. But for some people, all it takes is the *possibility* of encountering these situations that create stress any time that they respond to a mission.

Speaking on a personal level, I dread the day that I encounter a deceased child that has been in the woods for a week or more. For me, that will create instant stress and a flood of emotions. Sure, I’ll “buck up” and “be a man about it”. But that won’t mean that I’m not in turmoil on the inside. As such, Black humor can be used as a preventative of sorts. It allows the person to pre-build a stash of mental stress release, so that if and when the real situation arises, they have actually been dealing with the effects for some period of time in advance.

Of course, there’s always the possibility that some SAR resource somewhere is simply cold and callous. But I’d like to think that, for the most part, the Black humor that we encounter and/or participate in is a coping method for stress. So, as you talk to SAR people at missions or elsewhere, give them the benefit of the doubt. Some of these folks have witnessed some terrible things, and humans are naturally wired to deal with it (in part) thru Black humor.

See you in the Woods!

TSAR January Anniversaries

Ann Brewer – January 22, 2004

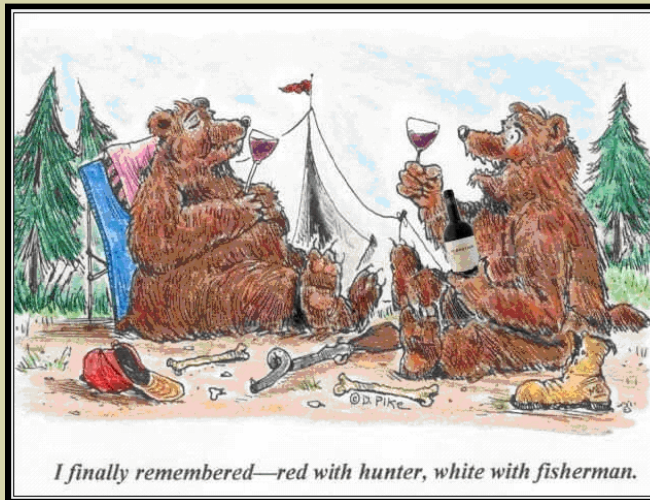
Brad Bennett – January 17, 2008

Rick Sylvia – January 18, 2008

Bill Henry – January 9, 2010

Ken Steen – January 30, 2010

Congrats!!!



For questions or comments regarding this newsletter, email renee083@gmail.com.

To care for anyone else enough to make their problems one's own, is ever the beginning of one's real ethical development.

Felix Adler

Search
And
Rescue