Search and Rescue (SAR) Overview

Dedicated to Rick and Mike

This is a tough story to write. The Search and Rescue story embodies so much humanity and courage in its seventy four year history that I cannot do it justice, it is also a personal story for me as I knew two of these brave technicians, both deceased. While serving in Trenton I participated in a number of SAR scenarios including an actual mission for a downed aircraft and pilot in the Thunder Bay and Sault area, so I became very familiar with what the SAR was all about.

If there's any organization within the Canadian Armed Forces that truly represents high adventure and commitment to preserving lives it's the Search and Rescue organization. Any of its thousand and one operations over its history would match or exceed the best thriller ever published. In the course of its mandate, SAR personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice while on duty in the service of others.

The birthday of the Search and Rescue organization is set at 18 June 1947, when cabinet directive number 18 was signed making the RCAF responsible for the provision and coordination of air rescue in Canada.

Over its history many aircraft from the rotary tandem H-21 to the CH-146 Griffin and the fixed wing aircraft such as SA-16 Albatross and C-130 aircraft have served with distinction. Some of you would be more familiar with names like Voyageur, Labrador, Huey, Buffalo, twin/single Otter while others will recall Hudson, Lancaster, Dakota, and Canso flying boats. All of these aircraft serviced the SAR organization throughout its history in all kinds of environments and missions. Common in service today is the CC-295 Kingfisher, CH 146 Griffon, CH 149 Cormorant and CP 140 Aurora. The personnel makeup of a SAR team consist of Pilots, Navigators, load masters, flight engineers, AVN,

AVS technicians, spotters both civilian and military and a host of others notably the most visible of all the SAR tech. SAR techs are first and foremost volunteers and must have at least four years experience in another military occupation. Their training is extensive and incorporates specialized facets to enable them to provide highly skilled assistance regardless of the situation. There are approximately 150 SAR techs spread amongst five primary SAR squadrons, training schools and various administrative positions across Canada.

Numerous awards for courage, bravery and dedication to duty have been awarded to SAR crews over the years. The SAR organization is easily recognizable to Canadians by their distinctive Orange and yellow paint scheme on aircraft and similar patterned operational uniforms worn by personnel. The following pictures from the author's collection show a photo spread from SAREX 2007 held at Goose Bay, Labrador, the SAR qualification badge, a SAR tech on a mission circa 1984 in northern Ontario, a plaque dedicated to the crash of rescue 312 in 1980, (Rick Cocks, my good friend was a fatality), typical SAR air crew in front of a CH-115 Buffalo aircraft (note the flying boots), a Labrador SAR a/c over water during a demonstration, SAR techs inside a C-130 holding streamers (from Ottawa Citizen 8 December 1979) and SAR Tech Corporal Power assisting a civilian spotter 1984 mission. Another good friend Mike Kobayashi was awarded the CDS commendation for his participation in the rescue of personnel as a result of a C-130 crash near Alert in 1991. I had served with Mike in Petawawa before his re-muster to SAR.

Today the mandate of the RCAF 's SAR remains unchanged and continues to provide assistance at sea, in the air, or on land, wherever, whenever, and whatever the need.

AIR FORCE

SAREX 2007

By Holly Bridges

Search and rescue personnel from across Canada, Portland, Oregon and Brunei gathered at 5 Wing Goose Bay in late September for the annual National Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX). The goal of SAREX is to help SAR squadrons and units from the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) work together in a common environment, to allow them to test their standards and evaluate their proficiency amongst each other.

For more on the exercise and a complete list of competition winners visit the SAREX Web site at **www.airforce.forces.gc.ca/site/opdocs/sarex/index_e.asp**.

Par Holly Bridges

Des membres du personnel de recherche et de sauvetage de partout au Canada, de Portland, de l'Oregon et du Brunei Darussalam se sont réunis à la 5e Escadre Goose Bay, à la fin septembre, à l'occasion de l'Exercice annuel national de recherche et sauvetage (SAREX). L'objectif de ce dernier est de permettre aux escadrons de SAR et aux unités de l'Association civile de recherche et sauvetage aériens (ACRSA) de travailler ensemble dans un milieu commun, d'éprouver leurs normes et de comparer leurs niveaux de compétences.

Pour en connaître plus sur l'exercice et pour consulter la liste des gagnants de la compétition, visitez le : **www.forceaerienne. forces.gc.ca/site/opdocs/sarex/ index_f.asp**.

Sgt Gus Ryan wins the Bell Ringer Event in the Over-40 precision parachute category. The SAR tech with the fastest time from landing to ringing the bell at the target zone, while carrying his equipment, wins.

Le Sgt Gus Ryan a remporté l'épreuve du « sonneur », dans la catégorie du parachutisme de précision de 40 ans et plus. Le Tech SAR qui réalise le meilleur temps entre l'atterrissage et le moment où il sonne la cloche de la cible, tout en transportant son équipement, remporte l'épreuve.

WG/ADJ RANDOLPH RICE

MCpl Brian Decaire, SAR tech from 435 Sqn, administers a transfusion to a simulated casualty during the medical competition event.

Le Cplc Brian Decaire, Tech SAR du 435e Escadron, fait une transfusion à un blessé lors de la compétition médicale.

WG/ADJ RANDOLPH RICE

A SAR tech descends towards the target circle during the accuracy event.

Un Tech SAR descend vers une cible au sol lors de l'épreuve de parachutage de précision.

WG/ADJ RANDOLPH RICE

Rick O'Neill, a civilian pilot and searcher, flies a CASARA seaplane during the search event at SAREX 2007.

Rick O'Neill, pilote et sauveteur civil, était aux commandes de l'hydravion de l'ACRSA pendant l'épreuve de recherche du SAREX 2007.

MCPL/CPLC STEPHEN PHILLIPS

MWO Brad Gough, SAR tech with the CF School of Search and Rescue, takes a wind speed indicator reading during the parachute accuracy event.

L'Adjum Brad Gough, Tech SAR de l'École de recherche et sauvetage des FC, détermine la vitesse du vent lors de l'épreuve de parachutisme de précision.

WG/ADJ RANDOLPH RICE

Sgt Réjean Martel (left), a SAR tech with 439 SAR Sqn, 3 Wing Bagotville, assists fellow SAR tech Sgt Steeve Bedard, in preparing a simulated casualty for evacuation.

Le Sgt Réjean Martel (à gauche), Tech SAR du 439e Esc SAR, 3e Escadre Bagotville, aide son collègue, le Sgt Steeve Bedard, lui aussi Tech SAR, à préparer une victime en vue de l'évacuation.

WG/ADJ RANDOLPH RICE

IN MEMORY OF
RESCUE 312
15 OCT. 1980

PARA RESCUE   CREW
SERGEANT J.R.O'NEILL   CAPTAIN   M.D.SALMONS
CORPORAL R.W.FISHER   CAPTAIN   R.K.KAVANAGH
CORPORAL R.J.COCKS   M/CORPORAL   A.A.WOODHAM

SPOTTERS
M/CORPORAL   R.TAYLOR
PRIVATE   W.D.MINNIS

"THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE"

SEARCH AND RESCUE EXERCISE

Photo by WO Vic Johnson

ISC 86-173

EXERCICE DE RECHERCHE ET SAUVETAGE

Photo : Adj Vic Johnson

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