



# OLYMPIC MOUNTAIN RESCUE NEWSLETTER

A Volunteer Organization Dedicated to Saving Lives Through Rescue and Mountain Safety Education

September 2002

**The next meeting will be at the Westgate Fire Hall on 10 Sept. at 7:00P.M. Training will be: NAVIGATION/G.P.S.**

**REPORTS** of Chairman, Officers, Coordinators, and Committees:

### TRAINING:

**JUST PAST:** Steve conducted his Crevasse rescue / glacier travel and ice climbing training on the weekend of August 17th-18th. (See Paula's article below)

### UPCOMING:

The upcoming field training set for **September 21<sup>st</sup>** is scheduled as system failures. Depending on the units response, this training may be changed to perform the Steel Bridge raise since a lot of people expressed interest before, but the dates wasn't convent. At the meeting we will decide if we go out and purposely fail some rigging systems to see the outcome, or do a long raise and lower at the Steel Bridge.

Now is also the time that myself and the board are **preparing the training schedule for next year**, if you have any suggestions on training's you would like to have **please let us know**.

### PUBLICITY:

Deb wants to express a big **Thank You** to those people who spent time at the fair getting out the information on OMR

### EQUIPMENT:

The Blue Truck now has a cascade litter with the FastLock system of assembly.

The White Truck Litters will be changed next.

The system is fast and efficient.

### MISSIONS

Mission No: 2002-7 (02-2134)

Date: August 17-18

Location: Mt Cruiser-Needle Pass, Mason



**Mt Cruiser from rescuers perspective**

County

Personnel: (Field team) Patrick McAuliffe ( OL), Tod Lokey, Crystal McAuliffe, Mac Macdowell, Greg Barron, Willie Knoepfle

(In Town) Jim Groh, Dick Waldo Steve Chaffee, ONP ranger from Hoodspport was in contact with Jim Groh at 23:15 on the 17th regarding a climber that

had fallen near Mt Cruiser. As this area is outside Olympic National Park the search responsibility was handed over to Deputy Bill Adams (Mason Co. SAR) . With only six OMR people available and the good possibility of a carry out Groh advised Adams that Tacoma Mtn Rescue should be requested via Washington DEM. Tacoma responded with four people. Waldo

assisted Groh with in-town communications. The fallen climber was identified as Jason Long, 23, from Port Orchard.

McAuliffe's reports: I received the call from Jim Groh at about 23:20 on Saturday August 17<sup>th</sup> pertaining to a report of a fallen/ injured climber on Mt. Cruiser. Groh and I discussed the team to be sent and a rough strategy since Adams was unfamiliar with the immediate area of the search. We were told there was going to be air support provided, and possibly Guardian One to be on scene searching with FLIR during the early morning hours. Groh and I set the rendezvous time of 04:30 at West Gate Fire Hall since we were to be briefed at 06:30 at the SAR base/L.Z., which was located beyond the causeway at Lake Cushman. I informed Crystal of the situation, and decided to try to get some sleep while Groh started his call out which he was going to email to me when he was done.

Groh emailed the team information to me, as well as the fact that Guardian One was unavailable for use, but the King Co. Huey was to be on scene at 0630 and the possibility of other military air support. We (Patrick and Crystal) departed to meet with MacDowell at the fire hall, and then continue up to the SAR base where T. Lokey, G. Barron and W. Knoepfle would be meeting us.

On the road past the resort we came upon three members from Tacoma Mountain Rescue that needed some assistance in locating the SAR base. Upon arriving at SAR base, I informed Adams that we were present and would be ready for the briefing whenever he was ready. Adams indicated that they wanted to do the briefing as soon as possible since MAST was on the way, and wanted to get us on scene as soon as possible. Allan (TMRU's OL) hadn't arrived yet, so another member, Jim, took Allan's place with myself in the briefing. In the briefing, we learned that two climbers had gone up Mt. Cruiser on Saturday morning, were descending when they un-roped and tried to find an easier route down. The reporting party heard his friend slip and guessed that he fell around fifty feet off the West side at approximately 14:00. After trying to reach his friend by voice, he hiked out seven hours to inform the sheriff of the situation. MAST was brought in and flew the reporting party to the general area to try and pinpoint the accident location and

to search for the subject using night vision goggles at approximately 03:30 Sunday morning. When the MAST crew brought the reporting party back, they informed Adams that the subject would have fallen closer to 700 feet, not the original estimate of fifty. The idea was to fly us into the area SW of Mt Cruiser, have us search, and then fly us out that evening by a second shift of MAST. Adams knew it was a technical area and decided to leave the actual search plan up to us once we were on scene. Adams also let us know this was his second SAR in 24 hours, and may be replaced during the day.

C. McAuliffe, M. Macdowell, W. Knoepfle and myself were on the first flight out which was also the first recon flight in the daytime. We flew into what was thought to be the point of the fall for some aerial searching of the cliffs, shelves and the surrounding area before being put down. While waiting for the remaining teams Crystal and Willie searched the scree and snow slopes with binoculars while I put up some flagging for the landing zone. By the time the second flight arrived Crystal had spotted some unusual tracks in the snow chute on the standard route that we felt could be a probable area. I then briefed Allan (TMRU) on what we knew, and with Greg's input formulated a search plan.

Allan and Tyler (TMRU) were going to head North along the base of the cliffs towards a small un-named lake while Greg and Todd were going to head directly towards the snow chute, Willie and Crystal were going to head South towards Flapjack Lake leaving Jim, Mark (both TMRU), Mac and myself to spread out and search up the scree and snow slopes looking in concealed spots and in moats. About half way up one of the snow slopes ( in the vicinity of Cruiser Route 4) I found a heavily damaged Nalgene bottle without any identification on it, which I then marked with some flagging. I wanted to contact base about the bottle, but I was without radio and out of Mac's earshot, so I climbed up onto the rocks to get Marks attention for his radio. I radioed in the description and base was going to find out if the bottle matched any the subject carried and get back to us, so we continued searching in the area. By the time SAR base had gotten back to us Mac found another

damaged bottle and had to try multiple times to call it in due to poor radio performance even with a relay van being used. At around 10:00 I continued up the rocks and found a heavily scratched Petzl helmet that matched the description of the one the subject had been wearing on the descent. Again we had some trouble relaying the information to base, so the relay was used to notify them of the helmet. Since SAR base was asking for me, Mark stayed close to me so I could hear his radio. We continued up the rocks as Mac started to gain access to a shelf above and to the left of us. The team of Willie and Crystal had completed their search area and had started to come back down to search some of the lower rock areas below us. A few feet further up I encountered some more parts of the subject's helmet as Mark walked up to the moat and noticed the subject's backpack at around 5320 ft. After he informed me he found the backpack, he realized the subject was partially visible under the pack. I verified the body and backpack matched our subjects and radioed base that we had found him, and a second backpack (from the reporting climber) approx. 10 feet away from the subject. Mark was not comfortable with going in to check the subject, so I approached the subject and visually verified that he was in fact deceased at 10:15. SAR base hadn't issued a death code originally, so they had radioed me to find out if the subject was "Code 13". Since I didn't give any information that the subject was found and doing okay, or injured we figured they knew he was deceased and this was the code. My reply of yes he was code 13 evidently didn't make it through relay to the SAR base since they then asked if medics were needed. I let them know that medics were not needed, and asked if an investigation of the scene was needed. SAR base let us know that an investigation wasn't needed and to proceed with the recovery.

I alerted all the other teams to report to our location so we could extricate the subject and prepare him to be flown out. Even though we were told no investigation was going to occur, Mac had brought a disposable camera with



him, so we took some photos of the scene just in case they were needed later on. We then proceeded to remove the subject, his gear and the second pack to be able to be picked up. By 11:30 we had the subject ready and requested a fly over to find out if MAST could retrieve him from our location, or if we would need to move him lower. We waited for a response, which we never received, so since we had time, we lowered the subject approximately 400 feet down slope on the snow to a better LZ. Once we were at the new LZ, Greg contacted base to let them know he was ready and we were also ready to be flown out. SAR base informed us that MAST wouldn't be able to perform the requested task. Greg discussed with Base that we were told that morning that they would fly in all circumstances and that it was putting the rescuers in danger if we had to carry him out the ten miles. After some coercing on both sides, and some technical problems at Ft. Lewis, MAST was allowed to fly in and pick everyone up. While waiting, we sent part of the team over to our original LZ, and kept a minimal group with the subject to assist MAST with the hoist. During this time the ranger that is stationed over at Flapjack (Justin) had approached and explained that he had been notified of the mission and was directing people away from Cruiser

all morning, and that MAST had been flying over the camp at 03:30 that morning.

Once MAST arrived on scene, we assisted the medic in loading the subject and gear into the litter for the hoist operation. Once they were on board, they flew over to the other LZ and picked up the group there. As the helicopter was taking the first group back, we started back over to the LZ to get some remaining gear and upon it's return had to ask the helicopter crew to circle a few times since we weren't totally ready to go yet.

Once we made it back to the SAR base, we shed our gear, turned the camera over to the Sheriff and had a group debriefing that covered the mission as well as talking to everyone about attending a CISD. The Sheriff was very thankful that we were able to complete the required task professionally and on our own without having to be continually instructed on how to proceed. We packed up and

were on the road home at around 15:30, with a call into Jim at around 16:00. We stopped and gassed up the truck, unpacked and were home at 17:30.

*Prepared by Roger Beckett with input by Jim Groh and Patrick McAuliffe*

Total Personnel: 8

Total Hours: 89

Total Mileage: 480

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### ONP THANK YOU

Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank Olympic Mountain Rescue (OMR) team for capably responding to our request for assistance in the Sean Izzarone Search over the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend. Rangers Simonds, Leite, and I appreciated the excellent, ready response from OMR.

I am reminded that search is a mystery; it's also an emergency. Mr. Izzarone was traveling alone; in a wilderness environment he was unfamiliar with; and perhaps not adequately prepared to negotiate. In an emergency search managers look to those individuals and organizations that can take this emergency situation and effect the best possible outcome. Olympic Mountain Rescue is just such an organization. The OMR team responded as requested. You were on time for the initial search briefing; asked good

questions; and willingly and capably assumed the search tasks assigned. Equally important, searchers were prepared for the flights into the remote search area and well prepared to negotiate the rugged terrain for an extended period. This incident certainly had the makings of a lengthy search; you were prepared for this distinct possibility.

As you're aware Mr. Izzarone was lost and out of food and sufficient water. Mr Izzarone's apparent desperation exit from the O'Neil Pass area could easily have been life threatening. Fortunately for him it ended when he walked into the containment searcher at O'Neil Camp.

During the exit interview with ranger Snure, Mr. Izzarone did express his heartfelt appreciation to the searchers. Thank you all once again for taking the time out of your personal lives to train, and train, and train some more so that maybe, just maybe, a life might be saved. Sincerely,  
Steve Chaffee  
Park Ranger

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### ICE/GLACIER PRACTICE

Steve L. eslie led us on the class in Aug. and did a great job. There were four of us total on Aug 17 & 18 on the Nisqually Glacier at Mt. Rainier. It was perfect weather...sunny and beautiful. Tacoma Mtn. Rescue was practicing there in the ice falls below us, that same weekend. We saw plenty of rock fall and heard rock and ice crumbling and crashing through the night into Sunday. Saturday we hiked up to about 7,500 ft. where we made a nice camp and practiced duck walking and some different techniques with our ice axes. Sunday we found a fairly solid wall of ice and all of us ascended it. Steve showed us how to place the anchors and instructed us on improving our technique while climbing on three short pitches. We packed up around 1 PM and hiked out to a refreshing milkshake and hefty burger at Scale Burger in Elbe. I think we all learned quite a bit and I would like to do it again maybe in the winter.

*Paula Engborg*