



**TECHNICAL REPORTS**  
of the  
**United States Delegation**  
of the  
**INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR**  
**ALPINE RESCUE**

**Malbun, Liechtenstein**  
**54<sup>th</sup> Conference**  
**16-20 October 2002**

**Brasov, Romania**  
**Terrestrial Session**  
**12-14- June 2002**

## **Background on Liechtenstein:**

The principality of Liechtenstein is just 5 square miles and has a population of around 32,000 people. Nestled in the mountains between Switzerland, Austria and Germany, Liechtenstein has a truly idyllic setting. It is divided into 11 communes and its capital is the hamlet of Vaduz, dominated by the Valduz Castle. Prince Hans-Adam II is the head of state, ruling this tiny country, which was colonized by the Thaelians around 800 BC and conquered by the Romans in 15 BC. The present dynasty took control in 1699. It has close ties with Switzerland, which represents Liechtenstein abroad, and the Swiss franc is Liechtenstein's legal currency. Their borders are open with Switzerland, but there are still guard posts on the border shared with Austria and the European Union.

Vaduz is the geographical and political center and its two main streets contain everything of importance. The 12th-century Valduz Castle is home to the royal family, and while not open to the public, does photograph well from the outside. On the bus ride to Malbun we had a great view of the castle looking back towards Austria on one side, Switzerland on the other and Germany just down the valley. The Prince's private art collection is one of the worlds most valuable and is housed in the Kunstmuseum, a black basalt building. The prince is Europe's wealthiest monarch and is highly regarded by his citizens. Nevertheless, there has been a controversy recently and the prince has threatened to leave unless certain constitutional changes are made in his favor. There are recent reports of some of his art collection being moved to his other palace in Vienna.

Despite being very small, the landscape changes, and the higher you go, the more noticeable the changes are. The day we arrived we had a perfect fall day, with spectacular fall colors and a warm Mountain breeze. The road winds up the mountainsides to tiny villages such as Triesenberg and Malbun, giving spectacular views of the Alps and Rhine Valley. Triesenberg was founded by a group of Swiss immigrants in the 13th century. They were forced to flee their home because of over-population, religious intolerance and natural disaster. Buses run to the village from Vaduz, and walking through low Alpine trees and meadows is a lovely way to spend a day.

The last stop at the end of the valley is Malbun, a resort that literally forms the border with Austria. It is secluded and has plenty of hiking options, and in winter, offers affordable skiing and snowboarding. There are good restaurants serving food typical of the area; the national dish is kase knopfler, which is made of cheese, eggs, flour and milk. During the IKAR 2002 meeting we used hotel and conference facilities at the ski resort, all a short walk from each other.

For the first time at IKAR there was simultaneous translation at this meeting available for most of the presentations, three languages were available over the headphones, German, French and English. This allowed for 200-300% more presentations and work. There was one room at the conference site available for this purpose and it allowed joint meetings of two commissions (such as Terrestrial and Avalanche) to have simultaneous translation. The use of professional translators and the necessary sound booths and equipment is very expensive, but this year a grant was obtained by IKAR from the European Union. IKAR President Toni Grab stated that he hoped that similar funding would be available for future meetings.

2002 had been declared the International Year of the Mountains by the United Nations, and was celebrated by many European nations as well as the American Alpine Club.

The main themes for this conference included:

- Evaluating Risk in mountain and rescue activities. Possible IKAR Recommendations
- Recco/ LVS burial search progress
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)
- IKAR presentation to the EU (European Union) regarding IKAR status as international expertise resource.

US Notes:

- The US Delegation now has a primary and alternate for Air Rescue (Dave Ruhlman and Ken Phillips) and for Avalanche (Jill Fredston and Chris Utzinger)
- US IKAR Terrestrial is seeking additional people as alternate delegates, who would attend in addition to or in place of the primary delegate.
- US IKAR MedCom seeks additional members who are US mountain rescue paramedics.

#### **Final Delegate Meeting and Commissions Summaries;**

- 28/33 member-countries represented.
- Anniversaries: Swiss MR, Slovenia, Poland

Bruno Jelk, Terrestrial Rescue;

- June working group. Canyoning rope rescue, Romania.
- Liechtenstein: cases, accidents of rescuers, risk mgmt, lab visit.
- Simultaneous translations increased time available for presentations by 200-300%.

Gilbert Habringer, Air Rescue

- All flew and tested EC 145
- Reviewed accidents and close calls from around the world.
- Survey: 20 yrs tech developments have shown air accidents can be reduced through better maintenance and technology. Some improvement have been made, but human error caused accidents (80% now) have increased. Will study this more and looks for mitigation methods. Have some human factor specialist slated for next conference, plus cockpit resource management.
- Last year's incidents were not as high in 2001, "but one is still too many".

Dr. Hermann Brugger, MedCom;

- Reviewed several papers and drafts, as listed in MedCom report and have plans for several more.
- Will meet in the Spring in Slovenia

Toni Grab for Avalanche Rescue Commission;

- Had several joint sessions with Terrestrial and visited lab.
- Reviewed risk assessments for avalanche areas and avi rescue
- Will be doing survey and testing within the next year

Managing Committee:

- Finances appear stable
- Translation service: very expensive if they had to pay for it (30k SF, or entire budget), but they will continue to seek solutions.
- EU: is prepared to receive IKAR representatives to the EU. EU has interpreters and logistical support. Armando Poli will be the IKAR representative on 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct.
- Election of Avalanche Commission President: Nominations to be accepted and voted on in Scotland, 2003.
- 2003: Scotland. Terrestrial will meet 2 days prior for field activities, as will Air Rescue 2-3 days early for aircraft visits, cable hoists.
- 2004. Zakopane, Poland.
- 2005, Italy?
- Various requests from additional organizations. Turkish MR, et al, to be determined.
- Canada: NSS (National SAR Secretariat) is OK with transferring membership to Parks Canada. Passed.
- US: NASAR passing membership to MRA. Passed.

Next Year we wish to take with us the following:

- ITRS flyers
- Pendley FOG
- A technical terrestrial presenter

## Photo Essay of Liechtenstein



Chris Utzinger, Ravalli SAR, MT for Avalanche; Rick Lorenz, Tacoma MRU, WA for Terrestrial; Tim Kovacs, Central Az / MCSO MR for Medical; Ken Phillips, Grand Canyon SAR, AZ for Air Rescue



Malbun, Day one



Malbun, Day 2



IKAR Managing Committee: Terrestrial Chair Bruno Jelk (MR Chief of Zermatt, Switzerland); MedCom Chair Dr. Hermann Brugger (Austria); Secretary Roland Meister; President Toni Grab (Swiss); Air Rescue Chair Gilbert Habringer (Austrian OeAMTC); Treasurer Felix Meier (Swiss Alpine Club Rescue).



President Toni Grab presents Honorary Membership to Marion Bielicki, b. 1924, 78 yo, rescuer since 1950, Poland. In 1962 became the first president of GOPR, He became a delegate to the IKAR in 1963 member of IKAR.