

Partnerships in Mountain Rescue

-Lessons Taught: Remembering Mel Nading-

-MedCom: NIMS Resource Typing-

-ICAR: Delegate Distinction and Voting Information-

-Rescuer Spotlight: Dave and Laurie Clarke-





MOUNTAIN
RESCUE
ASSOCIATION

Spring 2016

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Preparing for Coast Guard helicopter training. Tyler Deboodt.

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President's Message Spring 2016

By Dave Clarke, MRA President and Portland Mountain Rescue

As we transition from Winter to Spring my recreational pursuits have changed from resort and backcountry skiing to alpine climbing and skiing high on the Cascade volcanoes. Similarly, for my team the typical SAR mission (if there is such a thing) changes from lost out of bounds skiers and concerns about avalanches and fierce winter storms, to injured climbers and lost hikers. Sure, the skill sets are similar but our missions tend to change with the seasons.

This leads me to reflect on the range of skills that rescuers bring to the table as we are called upon to resolve a wide variety of SAR incidents. MRA members possess world-class talent in many areas. The fact that we volunteer our time and use these skills to help people in need is the end result of what the MRA is all about. But, how can any one rescuer hope to master all of these skill sets? The answer of course is that we teach and learn from each other. Creating a network that encourages and facilitates this sharing of information was the vision of our founders and it remains the greatest value of MRA membership today. Whatever issue your team is struggling with, it is highly likely that another MRA team has dealt with it as well and will be happy to share their perspective. Much like rescuers who must learn a wide variety of skills, the MRA has been active in many areas to support and enhance our network of learning and sharing. It is amazing to me to consider the depth and breadth of excellent work that goes into keeping the MRA at the cutting edge.

This President's Message will be my last as my term in office expires at the Spring meeting when we will elect a new president. So I suppose it's natural to look back and reflect on the accomplishments we've made in the last couple of years. When I do that I see the results of the great work of so many MRA members. I would like to take this opportunity to list some of these achievements and thank the many members who worked so hard to bring them about. I hope that reading about it will inspire fellow members to continue this work. It is the efforts of many rescuers, committed to our cause that makes such a big difference.

The MRA's participation in ICAR has increased in recent years and our delegates: Marc Beverly, Skeet Glatterer, Dan Hourihan, Casey Ping, Tom Wood, and Ken Zafren along with committee chair John Chang have been working hard to find new ways to share the information learned. A notable achievement was the hosting of the 2014 ICAR Congress at Lake Tahoe—the first time ever in the US. It was a huge success thanks to the hard work and dedication of the amazing Douglas County SAR team. This came only two years after they hosted the joint MRA/NASAR conference in 2012. Thank you to George Janson, John Lee, Skeet Glatterer, Woody Woodward and all of their teammates in Colorado who, at the 11th hour, took on the challenge of hosting the 2015 Spring conference in Estes Park, CO. Thank you, also, to our webmaster Mike Oxford, who has done an amazing job of keeping the site updated in spite of numerous technical problems with our host. I am grateful for all the hard work and diligence of your Region Chairs. Thank you to Roger Yensen who volunteered to assist conference host teams and to help create a system to pass on the lessons learned; to Bryan Enberg who keeps our social media presence fresh, to Cindy England who runs our small stores, and to Charley Shimanski who is back in Col-

orado and is reinvigorating our education program, (look for the benefits of our new Learning Management System soon). Thank you, as well, to Monty Bell, John Pedder and everyone who has contributed their mission data on our new statistics collection platform, Arc GIS. Rocky Henderson and Jennifer Baldwin implemented and continue to run our successful corporate sponsorship program. Bill Laxon, Tom Wood and Skeet Glatterer, on our Safety Committee, are implementing ways to share the latest best practices, and MRA officers, Bryan Enberg, Doug McCall, Skeet Glatterer and Art Fortini and team delegates have put in countless hours of research, discussion, follow up, and nose-to-the-grindstone work to tend to the business side of running the MRA. Also, we owe a big thank you to the MRA's Honor Guard who have devoted so much to honoring our fallen colleagues. Thank you, also, to everyone who has contributed articles and announcements to the Meridian. Laurie Clarke has recently stepped down as the editor, so thank you and welcome to Todd Lemein who is taking over. Finally, thanks to Kayley Bell, our long serving Executive Secretary, for her hard work and institutional knowledge that keeps our association running smoothly. Thank you to all!

This is a short list and there isn't space here to mention and thank everyone for all of his or her contributions. So even if I didn't mention you, please know that the association is grateful for all that you do. Finally, I want to say thank you to all MRA members for allowing me to serve as your president. It's been an honor that I will long remember.

Stay safe and keep up the good work.

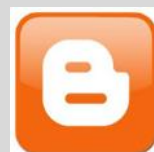
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Partners in Mountain Rescue

By Todd Schechter, Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit

Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit (CMRU), based in Corvallis, Oregon (Benton County), is an accredited member of the Mountain Rescue Association. Our team is activated through the Benton County Sheriff's Office. In Oregon, the Sheriff for each county is responsible for conducting SAR missions with either their own resources or with mutual aid. Unlike some teams, we have no real mountains in our county. Rather, grassy knolls and mushroom hunters are plentiful.

Our team, though, is the primary mountain rescue asset for a neighboring county, Linn County, that encompasses three dominant central Oregon Cascade mountains: Mount Jefferson (10,495'), Three Fingered Jack (7,844'), and Mount Washington (7,795'). The Pacific Crest Trail ties many of these mountains together. Driving times from Corvallis to the primary trailheads for each of these peaks may range between two and three hours. Trail distances to common accident locations are between 2 and 6 miles when roads are open. Winter conditions may involve closed roads further increasing the necessary trail distance. All of this is to say that reaching our subjects involves a significant amount of travel time and CMRU has worked carefully and closely with our rescue partners to build lasting relationships which has helped to facilitate the rapid extraction of subjects when needed. For our team, the relationships we have built with these partners have meant the difference (literally) between life and death for some of the individuals we have rescued.

CMRU's rescue partners include:

Oregon Army National Guard (Blackhawk helicopters)

US Coast Guard (Jayhawk helicopters)

Private air ambulances (various platforms)

National Weather Service

Neighboring mountain, non-mountain, posse, and communications SAR teams: Mary's Peak Search and Rescue, Eugene Mountain Rescue, Deschutes County Mountain Rescue Unit, Portland Mountain Rescue Unit, Hood River Crag Rats, and Mountain Wave Search and Rescue to name a few.

Our partnerships have facilitated rapid activation, reliable communications in topographically complex and remote terrain and, when possible, a dramatic decrease in approach and extraction time through air assets.

For CMRU, our mission profile might typically look like this (time in hours/minutes from activation):

00:00	Call in to 911 Public Safety Answering Point
00:30	Location and jurisdiction determined, CMRU notification
00:45	CMRU activation page sent
01:45	CMRU team assembled, departing for scene

04:15	CMRU at trail head/command post/briefing
04:45	CMRU departing on foot for scene
10:45	CMRU on scene
12:00	Medical needs complete, subject packaged, ready for transport
17:00	Subject at trail head, transferred to medics

In the typical profile there is a total of 14 hours of travel time (travel to trailhead, travel to subject, extraction). Air assets can significantly reduce our travel time which has resulted in life saving rescues as well as rapidly removing teams that may be facing poor weather on extended deployments. Similarly, partnerships with local non-mountain SAR teams provides much needed trail support for long carry-outs, resupply during extended deployment and communication relays. Developing partnerships has taken time but I think all will agree that rescue efforts are stronger when all available assets are smoothly integrated and working for a common goal. Below are thoughts, lessons learned and considerations that CMRU believes are important when working with partners.

Know and understand the capabilities of your partner

CMRU has used a number of different air resources to help us complete missions. Due to non-competition requirements for the military, we are required to ask private air resources first for assistance. But, they may not be able to take the mission due to weather or not having a hoist. Private air ambulances, however, can be advantageous because they are generally staffed 24/7 and will help search from the air. Using an air ambulance to help verify location of an injured party and scout potential landing zones or hoist locations can be a great benefit for responding field teams.

Oregon Army National Guard (OANG) air resources have been another vitally important asset for CMRU rescue missions. Working with the OANG, we have developed a close relationship where CMRU will help keep OANG personnel safe on the mountain while OANG personnel will keep CMRU members safe around helicopters.

Aside from helicopters and other air assets, working with various neighboring ground teams, such as posse, ATV/snow mobile, or



Linn County Search and Rescue members helping to clear brush for vertical evacuation system. CMRU.

mountain rescue is very helpful. CMRU has worked at fitting these groups together during missions. For example, using posse members to help haul equipment or personnel miles up a single-track trail (where ATVs can not go) or using ground SAR members to help with litter transport after medical or high-angle rope work is complete.

Another partner that plays a role in our rescues is the National Weather Service (NWS). In Oregon, the NWS has a defined structure for requesting a special forecast for each SAR operational period. The forecaster will give very specific information that is helpful to SAR – cloud levels, wind, temperatures, freezing levels, visibility, etc. The ability to check in with the NWS throughout a SAR mission is helpful as we adapt to changing conditions.

Have clear and pre-defined primary and secondary means of communication.

Like any SAR mission, communications can either make or break the efficiency of your operation.

It is important to understand the communication capabilities of your partner. Can they program their radio to your specific SAR frequency? Do they prefer using one of the Federal VTAC channels? Do they need to manually program in private line (PL) tones?

On a recent mission, our rescue aviation partner had mistakenly swapped a transmit tone for a receive tone. This mistake caused problems because our rescue team and base could hear the helicopter on the radio, but the helicopter could not hear us. After a few minutes of trouble shooting, we were able to program a single radio to talk to the helicopter from base. While not ideal, it worked, and we were able to safely carry out our mission.

Speaking of communications, being creative can help your mission. Has SAR Base been placed in a location that is favorable for communications? Do you happen to be operating near a ski area that provides high elevation access where a repeater or relay could easily be placed (or used if pre-existing)? Is there privately owned land nearby that might provide a high elevation communications area? Is there a SAR team that specializes in communication that could be requested to help support your mission?

Conduct trainings and debrief missions with your partner.

This, perhaps, is paramount to building a relationship with any partner. We all must strive to design trainings that parallel our missions as closely as possible.

When it comes to using and training with air assets, this can be difficult. Schedules are hard to align, air assets are not allowed to train in the local mountains since the vast majority are in federal wilderness areas, costs can be prohibitive and political red-tape must be addressed.

The benefits of moving beyond these barriers have far outweighed the upfront coordination work. Training with different air assets familiarize all parties with their specifics of safety, rigging, communication, limitations, regional familiarity, patient packaging, landing zones, hover heights and flight requirements. The end goal is that both sides know what to expect from one another.

Mission debriefs are also invaluable. In discussing what went right and what went wrong corrections are made and successes are reinforced. Team members interact and a broader understanding of the situation is reached. During a recent mission this summer, the air asset beat CMRU members to the scene by literally 5 minutes. The helicopter flight crew decided to use a low hover, take care of medical treatment and hoist the injured subject without mountain rescue assistance. Unfortunately, the low hover was over a scree field and created an amazing dust storm. Because of the dust storm, the air crew was not able to send down their rescue litter, so the injured subject was hoisted using a tandem seat.

While debriefing this operation, we discussed the advantages of having the air asset wait until mountain rescue team members were at the subject (if possible) and doing a hover from a higher elevation. The next week we had a recovery in similar conditions at a similar elevation and our operation went perfectly!

Recognize contributions of partners.

Recognizing the contributions of all teams involved in any rescue mission is important. As volunteers that represent our teams, we like to be recognized and see our teams be recognized.



Oregon Army National Guard Blackhawk hoisting a rescued climber from Mt. Washington, OR. Todd Lemein.

Recognition can take several forms:

- Press releases from the sheriff for the county in which a mission occurred.
- Social media posts (tagging, photos, signs of appreciation).
- Interviews with local news media covering the mission.

We believe that it is important to recognize all contributing agencies, no matter their level of contribution. Even if it is a private air ambulance that helped out or the all volunteer communications team, everyone deserves to be recognized.

At times, groups also deserve higher levels of recognition. In the spring of 2015, the Oregon Region of the Mountain Rescue Association nominated the aviation units of the Oregon Army National Guard for a MRA award for their "Outstanding contribution of an outside agency to mountain SAR." The award was approved by the MRA and presented to our National Guard partners. This award meant a lot coming from one volunteer organization to another, honoring years of partnering together in rescue. Having the MRA President and Oregon Region President present was quite an honor for all involved.

Knowing, training with, planning and recognizing partners in mountain rescue increases the success of our missions. While at times the work may seem difficult, the payoff in collaboration and efficiency can't be underestimated.

Pre-plan how you might best use your partner agency on a rescue.



Linn County Search and Rescue members helping haul. CMRU.

Maybe if the helicopter can't get rescuers to a desired location, it can insert them as close as possible. If communications are anticipated to be difficult due to rugged terrain, a radio group can pre-position relays or repeaters on higher ground. If a long carry-out is anticipated, a non-mountain SAR or posse group can be pre-positioned as close to the rescue as possible so that a smooth transfer can occur.

Hopefully these ideas are helpful in anticipating your team's next rescue mission. Many of us can't do mountain rescue alone, but when teaming up with others, we are able to operate more efficiently which hopefully leads to more successful rescues.

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When Angels Fall

Profiles of Helicopter-related Line of Duty Deaths

By Charley Shimanski, Mountain Rescue Program Coordinator for Flight for Life Colorado, past President and current Education Director for the MRA

Introduction

In each of the past few years, we have experienced at least one mountain rescue or medical helicopter accident that has resulted in multiple fatalities in remote environments. This article is the first in a series of articles profiling several of these accidents. I offer these tragic stories in search of lessons learned by the ultimate sacrifice made by our colleagues who died in the line of duty.

In this edition of the *Meridian*, I profile an accident that claimed the life of a veteran helicopter pilot, with whom I have flown, his spotter, and a rescued snowmobiler. Mel Nading performed hundreds of rescues, including for MRA's own Alaska Mountain Rescue Group (AMRG). In fact, he assisted us when AMRG hosted the MRA Spring meeting many years ago.

Author's Note: When Mel Nading died in 2013, he became the third pilot with whom I have flown to have died in a helicopter accident (sadly, that number rose to four during the summer of 2015).

ACCIDENT PROFILE

On the evening of March 30, 2013, 56 year-old snowmobiler Carl Ober called 9-1-1 and reported that he was stranded and injured near Talkeetna, Alaska—the launching point for climbers attempting to climb Denali, North America's highest peak.

Veteran Alaska State Trooper helicopter pilot Mel Nading, 55, and veteran Alaska State Trooper Tague Toll took off aboard "Helo-1" in an attempt to rescue Ober.

Having flown an impressive 8,000 hours as a helicopter pilot, Mel Nading was no stranger to rescues in the Alaskan wilderness. Nading successfully completed hundreds of backcountry and mountain rescue operations, often with the assistance of MRA member Alaska Mountain Rescue Group (AMRG) as chief helicopter pilot of the Alaska State Troopers. He frequently flew these missions with an AMRG member who had special expertise in serving as a SAR spotter aboard the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS) helicopter.

After successfully locating Ober, DPS pilot Nading and Trooper Toll were able to land near a frozen pond and assist the snowmobiler onboard. Flying while using night vision goggles (NVG), Nading took off and headed on a course towards an awaiting medical team in Talkeetna, AK where a transfer was to take place.

According to the National Traffic Safety Board (NTSB) "The helicopter departed about 2313, and the flight lasted only about 7 minutes before it crashed in a wooded area about 3 miles south of the remote landing site." The aircraft impacted terrain and was destroyed by impact and post-crash fire. All three onboard died in the crash.



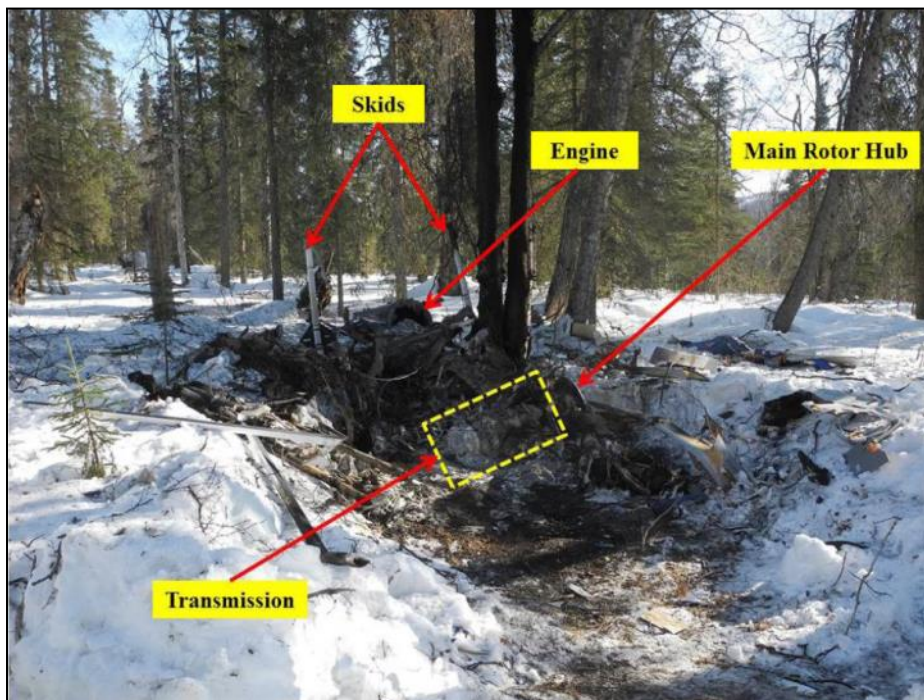
Alaska State Trooper "Helo-1" pilot Mel Nading. Alaska State Troopers.

Information from the aircraft's flight data recorder indicates that shortly after takeoff, pilot Nading likely encountered instrument meteorological conditions (IMC), meaning that visibility was reduced and flying under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) became impossible. The NTSB further concluded, "the helicopter likely encountered very low clouds and near-zero visibility conditions near the accident site, and these conditions likely degraded the pilot's NVG image to the point where continued flight under VFR was impossible."

The NTSB created a dramatic video recreation of the final minutes of the flight, which can be seen at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeDHVZBEy88&feature=player_embedded.

The video is based on data from the flight recorder and demonstrates that Nading's flight path became erratic, including a series of rapid ascents and descents, "consistent with the pilot's spatial



Crash site. NTSB Aviation Accident Report.

disorientation, a loss of control in flight, and his inability to recover the helicopter because of his lack of instrument experience and the lack of accurate altitude information.”

Lessons Taught vs. Lessons Learned.

Throughout my study of rescue accidents, I have determined that we use the term “lessons learned” far too often. Lessons are not necessarily learned by accident reviews, those lessons are merely taught. Whether the “lessons taught” become “lessons learned” is up to each of us... how much do we study those lessons, and determine their applicability to our unique environment.

There are several lessons taught by this accident and the subsequent death of a distinguished pilot with an exceptional number of hours as Pilot in Command. Many of those lessons are called out in the NTSB report on the accident:

“Instrument meteorological conditions (IMC) prevailed in the area at the time of the accident... [sic] After picking up the stranded, hypothermic snowmobiler at a remote rescue location in dark night conditions, the pilot, who was wearing night vision goggles (NVG) during the flight, encountered IMC in snow showers within a few minutes of departure. Although the pilot was highly experienced with SAR missions, he was flying a helicopter that was not equipped or certified for flight under instrument flight rules (IFR). The pilot was not IFR current, had very little helicopter IFR experience, and had no recent inadvertent IMC training. Therefore, conducting the flight under IFR was not an option, and conducting the night flight under visual flight rules in the vicinity of forecast IFR conditions presented high risks. After the helicopter encountered IMC, the pilot became spatially disoriented and lost control of the helicopter.”

One key lesson for all of us to consider is that Nading’s experience, according to the NTSB, might have in fact been a factor in the accident:

“At the time the pilot was notified of the mission and decided to accept it, sufficient weather information was available for him to have determined that the weather and low lighting conditions presented a high risk. The pilot was known to be highly motivated to accomplish SAR missions and had successfully completed SAR missions in high-risk weather situations in the past.

The investigation also identified that the Alaska DPS lacked organizational policies and procedures to ensure that operational risk was appropriately managed both before and during the mission.”

The NTSB determined the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows:

“The pilot's decision to continue flight under visual flight rules into deteriorating weather conditions, which resulted in the pilot's spatial disorientation and loss of control.

Contributing to the accident was the pilot's exceptionally high motivation to complete search and rescue missions, which increased his risk tolerance and adversely affected his decision-making.”

One lesson taught by this tragic accident is that highly experienced veterans may be likely to unknowingly raise their risk tolerance as



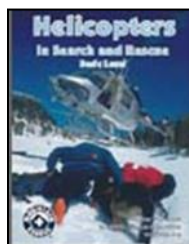
Erratic flight path after the snowmobiler was picked up by Helo-1.
NTSB Aviation Accident Report.

a result of many successful high-risk operations.

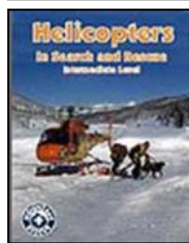
During his distinguished career as Alaska State Troopers’ Chief Pilot, Mel Nading saved an immeasurable number of lives. It is incumbent upon us to make sure that the “lesson taught” from his death becomes a “lesson learned.”

About the Author

Charley Shimanski is Mountain Rescue Program Coordinator for *Flight For Life Colorado*, the nation’s first hospital-based medical helicopter program. A 25 year veteran of Alpine Rescue Team, he is also Past President and current Education Director for the MRA. He is author of the MRA’s two helicopter rescue manuals as well as “Accidents in Mountain Rescue Operations” – all available at the links below and on the MRA web site.



[Helicopters in Search and Rescue, Basic Level](#)



[Helicopters in Search and Rescue, Intermediate Level](#)



[Accidents in Mountain Rescue Operations](#)

Rescuer Spotlight

An interview with Dave Clarke, MRA President

To suggest someone for an interview, submit his or her name to [Meridian Editor](#).

What was your introduction to climbing?

I got into camping and backpacking as a Boy Scout and have enjoyed that ever since. I began rock climbing with the Outing Club in college back in the 70's where I majored in Park Administration. Following that I worked in various Wilderness Areas for the US Forest Service in the 70's and 80's and that set me on a lifelong path of recreating in wild areas but also working to manage these areas as well as people's recreational experience in them. When I moved to Oregon in the late 80's a co-worker got me hooked on telemark skiing and mountaineering which has been a passion ever since.

Looking back on it, I suppose that my early background in wildland recreation management predisposed me, not only to climbing and skiing but also to sharing these activities with others and being there to help when things didn't go quite the way they had been planned; which of course was the gateway drug to mountain rescue.

Can you tell us what it was that attracted you to mountain rescue in the first place?

I was the leader of the technical rescue team in the fire department where I worked and met several members of Portland Mountain Rescue (PMR) while recreating on Mt. Hood. I knew that I would enjoy volunteering for PMR but made a decision to wait until my kids were out of high school so I could devote adequate time to it. That happened in 2000 and I've been increasingly involved ever since. Apparently it's addictive.

As president of the MRA where do you hope to see the organization go?

I hope that we'll get more active in recruiting new member teams both in areas where we're not well represented and in new disciplines like cave rescue. The founding vision of the MRA was sharing knowledge and making us all better rescuers to benefit those in



Dave Clarke sitting atop Gunsight Butte at Anthony Lakes, Oregon. Douglas Clarke

need. That's still true today and there are plenty of non-MRA rescue teams out there that could take part in our Association, teach us what they've learned and share in our wealth of experience as well.

Can you share a story about an event that involved you and the MRA that was a game changer for you?

In 2009, my team, PMR, hosted the annual conference at Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood, OR. It was the 50th anniversary of the MRA's founding, which also occurred at Mt Hood. It was a ton of work but also a very successful conference. The highlight for me was the focus on our history, and hearing stories from our founders like Dick Pooley and

Wolf Bauer. These gentlemen and their peers essentially invented techniques and procedures for mountain rescue teams, as this was still quite new in North America.

Then they sought out other mountaineers who were organizing rescue teams and brought them all together for mutual benefit. Finally, they recognized how important this was and formalized it by creating the MRA.

This vision and hard work is paying all of us dividends today. They showed me the huge impact that a few volunteers can have by working together. A year after the conference, I ran for and was



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elected to the member at large position. Since then, I've been fortunate to serve as both vice president and president. In these positions I've witnessed first hand, the benefits of our association when an enthusiastic volunteer steps up with a new idea and gets involved to share it with other teams. And, I've heard second hand from members when a new technique, gained at one of our conferences, is put to use to save a life or to make our rescuers safer.

So the lesson for me is that the grand vision of the MRA really lives on in a whole bunch of individual efforts of dedicated rescuers. We all make a difference and together, we make a big difference.

Member education has been a strategic thrust in your time as MRA President. How do you think this effort is going, and have MRA members been receptive to this delivery path?

Our education program has certainly evolved in recent years and that continues. We recognize that having a bunch of PDF's on our website just doesn't cut it anymore no matter how good the information in them is. Our attempt at interactive, online tutorials produced one great product, "Helicopters in Search and Rescue." However it was extremely time consuming to produce. Further, after it was up and running the delivery system was plagued with a variety of technical issues. This has understandably caused some frustration among our members. On the other hand, our webinar program, in cooperation with PMI has been very successful.

At this year's winter meeting the board approved significant funding for a new website server which will also host the online learning program. Additionally, we approved funds to invest in a learning management system (LMS) to serve as a modern platform for future education programs and to share the ones we've already developed.

So, to answer your question, I think that our initial efforts stalled and members certainly weren't receptive to that. However, we've regrouped and invested in technology to fix our current issues and are developing a modern and effective delivery system for our education programs. But we're not relying solely on technology. We have dedicated and talented members like Shaun Roundy, Charley Shimanski and Bryan Enberg who are hard at work developing content and overseeing this new technology. I'm confident that our education offerings will continue to evolve and these recent efforts are building a great foundation for good things to come.

You have been a big proponent and attendee at both the MRA and ITRS conferences. What do you think the membership of the MRA can learn from these activities?

Well, tons of tips and tricks and techniques can be learned, but I think the biggest common theme would have to be critical thinking. The presenters at these events have often conducted their own research and many have been at it for years. They've learned the hard way that relying on dogma and doing it that way because that's the way we've always done it may not be the safest or most effective way to operate.

When you hear folks with years of rescue experience talk about

how and why they changed their methods it gets you thinking about your own team's techniques and what you could do, not just differently, but better and safer. When you're at one of these events and thinking about these potential changes you're surrounded by like-minded rescuers. The resulting free flowing exchange of knowledge and enthusiasm is fantastic and totally worth the price of admission.

As newer members enter the MRA, what is the single nugget of wisdom that you would pass on?

Like many of the best things in life, you will gain from the MRA in proportion to what you put into it. All of our member teams provide great training to their members and service to their community. However, if you want to grow as a rescuer, attend a conference to see how other teams do things and share lessons learned with like-minded rescuers. Mountain rescuers are some of the best people in the world. The MRA is all about sharing our experiences and helping each other to be the best rescuers that we can be.

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Editor Spotlight

An interview with Laurie Clarke, outgoing Meridian Editor

How did you get involved with the MRA?

A friend warned me about raising my hand to volunteer when I retired. She said, "Give your self some time, you already volunteer elsewhere; see how you like your free time." Then I noticed that (then president) Neil Van Dyke had put out three requests for a replacement for Anna DeBattiste, the previous Meridian editor. (She was moving onto greener pastures.) I had happily ignored the first two requests, but succumbed to the third.

As soon as my new role was announced, three people approached me to say that they had been waiting in the wings hoping that someone else would step up to the plate. All three of them are, or were, REAL editors. They were so grateful. Lesson learned: The significance of patience. You three, you know who you are.

What team are you associated with?

Portland (Oregon) Mountain Rescue is my home team. I'm an associate member who coordinates prodeals, and helps out wherever I can.

What do you do for fun?

Homemade pizza and movie night with my family is fun. Camping with Dave is a blast. Walks in the Columbia Gorge with friends are fun. I play at writing, when the spirit moves me, and taking pictures makes me giddy—when they come out well. I also make jewelry, though less of that these days, it's still fun. Planting flowers and tending to garden beds is a lot of fun. Visiting friends and traveling all over is a way to stay connected, learn new things, and be wowed by the beauty of this little blue marble spinning in space.

What are you going to do now that you're not editing the Meridian?

There are two remodeling projects on our house that are about to happen, so that will be hectic. We're planning for a week of sailing with Fran and Jeff Sharp, in the Misty Fjords National Monument in Alaska; and I'm headed to Australia in July to visit a dear old friend.

Favorite Meridian article?

Even though it was not a happy subject, I think Tom Wood's article on SAR members responding to suicide was my favorite. He is such a good writer, and it is such an important topic. Yes, the MRA is all about sharing and learning from each other. In so many ways we are a big family. That includes learning ways to support each other when things get tough.

What is your beverage of choice that people can buy you at the MRA conference in June?

Yes!



Laurie Clarke. Dave Clarke



Columbine buds.
Laurie Clarke.



NIMS Resource Typing and Credentialing for Mountain Rescue

By Mike Vorachek, Bonneville County SAR, Idaho

Resource typing and credentialing is a component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) which is the framework that is used to prepare for and respond to major incidents. Virtually every public safety jurisdiction in the US has agreed to use NIMS. Teams have their own internal qualification system, and when they respond to assist other jurisdictions the NIMS Incident Command System (ICS) principles provide a common framework. The resource management component of NIMS further classifies responders and may be used by the providing and/or receiving jurisdiction.

Kind and Type

Under NIMS, resources are established by kind and type. For SAR we have a FEMA designation: Mountain SAR Team. The team is typed, based upon its capabilities, into further categories, I to IV. A Type I team is the most capable. A FEMA typed Mountain SAR team does not require any medical capability beyond basic life support. However, many MRA teams have the ability to incorporate additional field care capabilities at the EMT, Paramedic, and in some teams, physician level. Importantly, Type I-IV Mountain SAR teams all have navigation and survival skills. The highest level, Type I, is proficient in technical rope rescue systems including anchors, highlines, vertical evacuation systems and such.

Credentialing

Should these teams be called upon to respond to a disaster event, it is important that the responding team members, including augmenting medical personnel, be properly credentialed by federal, state, tribal, or local jurisdictions. The goal is to ensure that resources sent to a major incident are capable of doing what the requesting jurisdiction needs. Examples of credentials include MRA certification, state SAR certification, medical certification with CPR and first aid, higher level of medical credentials, rope rescue technician, snow cat driver, and such.

It is important for teams and personnel who desire to respond to out-of-state events to have some form of credential that they can carry with them to be able to identify their affiliation with a team, and in the case of medical professionals, some form of documentation attesting to the licenses they possess within their home state. This may be a state SAR card, medical license, and similar documents.

Most states maintain a database of various resource types. Your local and state emergency management agency may be able to provide assistance in entering your team kind and type. Checking the FEMA link regarding resource typing for SAR can help guide typing for your team (https://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nims/508-8_search_and_rescue_resources.pdf).

The most important aspect to all of this is that individuals and teams should be involved in both resource typing and creden-

ting activities long before any event occurs. Overall, the NIMS system is designed to prepare and then allow teams to respond to not only small local events, but also integrate easily as events grow larger, potentially reaching the national scale. Make sure your team is versed in NIMS and individual members carry credentials. This will make responders more organized and capable to respond and help others in need.

All medical articles for the Meridian are reviewed and endorsed by the MRA Medical Committee; however, this article is for general information only. The MedCom makes no representation regarding the medical or legal information provided, and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the MRA.

As always, your suggestions and comments are encouraged—either directly to the author, to me, or via the ListServ to the MedCom.

Skeet Glatterer, MD, FAWM

Alpine Rescue Team, Evergreen, Colorado

Chairman, MRA Medical Committee

At-Large Member, MRA

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ICAR Delegation Serves with Distinction

By John Chang, Tom Woods, Dan Hourihan, Ken Zafren

The US participation with the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR), as represented by the delegation managed and selected by the Mountain Rescue Association, continues to make a strong impact in helping to identify and mold the evolving best practices to the community of alpine search and rescue. ICAR is divided into four distinct commissions (Air Rescue, Medical, Avalanche Rescue and Terrestrial Rescue), and has various categories of membership. This year's October ICAR Congress will take place in Borovets, Bulgaria.

Over the years, the U.S. delegates have not only served with distinction as voting members, but have given many presentations to the Congress and taken on leadership roles beyond the delegate requirements. They have served in senior commission roles such as Dr. Ken Zafren, the current Vice-President of the ICAR Mountain Emergency Medicine Commission and Dale Atkins as the past Vice-President of the Avalanche Rescue Commission. In 2014, the MRA Past President and long-time delegate on the Terrestrial Rescue Commission, Dan Hourihan, was selected to serve as one of twelve distinguished members on the ICAR Executive Board (EB) for a 4 year term as an ICAR Assessor. This marked the first time a non-European was elected to the ICAR EB.

"The years serving as the MRA delegate to the Terrestrial Rescue Commission of the ICAR (2003-2016) have been incredibly enriching. Meeting mountain rescuers from around the world and representing the MRA and the United States through the presentation of operational topics and techniques was very personally fulfilling. I had been a member of the Alaska Mountain Rescue Group (AMRG) for 26 years in 2003 and attendance at my first ICAR Congress in Scotland impressed upon me that 'High in the mountains, where the trees do not grow, we all speak the same language.' We truly do and the MRA's participation in this worldwide organization is both invaluable to MRA traditions and very important to the mountain rescue community throughout the world. It has been a great privilege to serve the MRA in this capacity. I am very grateful. Now, as a member of the ICAR EB, I represent the MRA and the United States in a different way." -Dan Hourihan

Delegates from MRA member teams select the ICAR delegates at the June MRA business meetings for four year terms. Financial support necessary for the US ICAR delegates to serve their term, as described by the MRA policy and procedures have historically been provided by three different means. The first is the approval of the MRA-ICAR annual budget projecting the cost to support the delegates. The second is corporate sponsorship and donation that stipulates restricted funding specific to ICAR activities or particular delegate/commission. One example has been generous donations by the Raintree Foundation. The third is individual delegates contributing out-of-pocket personal funds. As stipulated by ICAR policies, EB members such as Dan Hourihan, while still serving U.S. representation at a more senior level, are not allowed to be voting members. In return, all expenses to serve on the role are paid by ICAR directly.

In addition to providing world-class subject matter experts to ICAR from the U.S., the MRA ICAR Committee continues to identify methods, means, and ideas to increase the information flow between ICAR activities and alpine search and rescue best practices to MRA member teams, as well as the overall search and rescue community, throughout the U.S. The MRA ICAR committee welcomes inquiries and ideas. John Chang, the MRA ICAR Committee Chair, is appointed by the MRA President and he welcomes any ICAR questions or suggestions. He can be reached at chang_john@sbcglobal.net.



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MRA Elections for Officers and International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR) Delegates

By Dave Clarke, MRA President and Portland Mountain Rescue

Just in case you haven't had it up to your eyeballs with Trump, Hillary and all of the other candidates seeking your vote the MRA will be holding some elections of our own this spring. But don't look for super PACs or bogus campaign promises, just some hard-working volunteers willing to step up and keep our organization running smoothly.

Our officers' election committee chaired by past president Doug Wessen, will be presenting nominees for the President, Vice President and one Member at Large position. These are to fill vacancies due to the end of existing terms. Per our policies, nominations can be submitted any time up to the actual vote and it is not uncommon to have nominations from the floor during the meeting. You can learn about the election rules and other particulars in policy 304 of our [MRA official policies](#).

The International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR) is perhaps the most prominent organization representing mountain rescuers around the world. The MRA has been authorized by ICAR to select US delegates to each of the four commissions. Several years ago, then ICAR committee chair, Fran Sharp, wrote ICAR policy (502-15) which was approved by the Board. This policy stipulates that we elect our delegates and alternates when the positions become vacant. This is typically due to the end of a delegate's four-year term and elections take place during the spring business meeting.

This year at the business meeting in Port Angeles, WA, we will be voting for delegates for five positions: the terrestrial commission primary and alternate delegate, the air rescue commission primary and alternate delegate, and the avalanche commission alternate delegate. The purpose of this article is to inform members about the process so that voting delegates and teams sending proxies will be prepared to cast an informed ballot.

One issue in particular stands out that I want to make voters aware of. Several of the applicants have told me that they are only interested in the alternate delegate position. However, the delegate election policy reads, *"At the Spring MRA Conference, the ICAR committee chair, or his or her representative, will present all the completed applications and conduct a*

ballot vote by the BOD (Board of Directors). An alternate will also be chosen. The applicant who receives the second highest amount of votes will be the alternate." So based on this, it is not possible to run for the alternate positions. Further, there will only be one election for each commission; the applicant with the most votes will be our delegate and the applicant with the second most votes will be our alternate.

Applicants have until May 15, 2016 to submit their names to our current ICAR committee chair John Chang. After this date we will announce all of the applicants and share their bios by email with all members. Again, the goal is to have an informed electorate regarding both the process and the applicants. If you have any questions please get in touch with me at president@mra.org or ICAR committee chair [John Chang](#).



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ITRS 2016 Call for Papers

It is time to submit your proposals for the **2016 International Technical Rescue Symposium**! This year's event is occurring *November 3-6, in Albuquerque, New Mexico*. Details can be found at <http://itrsonline.org/>.

Please consider sharing your latest research, experiences, and testing with others – just like you - in the rescue field. If you know someone willing to present a topic that the ITRS community would enjoy, please share this information with them *now*. ITRS is gathering persons from across the spectrum of rescue disciplines to share theoretical and practical news and views on:

- Controversial Issues
- New Equipment
- New Developments in Gear Technology
- Research and Testing Results
- Technique and Systems Discussions
- Medical Considerations in Rescue
- Analysis of High Angle Accidents
- Development in Helicopter Rescue

ITRS 2016 Presentations Proposals

Anyone interested in presenting at ITRS 2016 can access the required submission forms at <http://itrsonline.org/> or request it by email at program@itrsonline.org. The deadline for submitting a presentation proposal is **August 12th, 2016**. Once the completed paperwork has been received, the ITRS Program Committee will review and respond to proposals by September 1. Final Proceedings Papers (2-8 pages total in length) will be due by **October 1, 2016**.

ITRS 2016 Presentation Awards

To encourage and reward excellence in presentations, the Symposium offers a "Presenter Award" program. The program is intended to award and acknowledge presenters who give presentations which reflect experience in facts and data (rather than opinion or conclusion); choice of topic (applicable to field work); and state of the art technical rescue. After the final presentation, attendees will have opportunity to vote on the presentations based on seven categories, with one award going to each category. Each winner will receive a \$200 honorarium.

Limited Enrollment

In order to encourage the informal free flow of information involving all participants, enrollment has been limited to 150 persons. If necessary, a waiting list will be available.

ITRS Sponsors

The International Technical Rescue Symposium is presented jointly by Pigeon Mountain Industries (PMI), Inc. and CMC Rescue, Inc.

ITRS 2016 is co-sponsored by the Mountain Rescue Association (MRA), National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR), Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians (SPRAT), National Cave Rescue Commission (NCRC) of the National Speleological Society, and the Helicopter Rescue & Response Association (HRRRA).

Thank you for your consideration in presenting your topic at the International Technical Rescue Symposium in 2016. We look forward to your participation and for contributing to the ITRS community!

2016 Mountain Rescue Association National Spring Conference Hosted by Olympic Mountain Rescue

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- Social events including vendor happy hour and BBQ -
- Pacific Northwest Banquet & MRA Awards Ceremony -
- National SAR Memorial Service & Honor Guard Dedication Ceremony -
- MRA Business Meeting -

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Photo Gallery



Members of Corvallis Mountain Rescue during recent snow training exercises. Tyler Deboodt.

Beginning of raise operations near Sweet Home, OR. CMRU.



Rocky SAR, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, CA. Team members smiling at the end of their successful reaccreditation. Laurie Clarke.

Photo Gallery

Rocky SAR, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, CA. Ernst Bergmann, Rocky SAR Team Leader observes the edge transition of a litter raise during reaccréditation. Laurie Clarke.



Probe line. Rocky SAR, Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, CA. Laurie Clarke.

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Photo Gallery



California Region reaccreditation briefing. John Chang.



California Region Mountain Rescue Association reaccreditation group shot. John Chang.




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From the Outgoing Editor—

I've enjoyed editing *Meridian* these last four years, and feel bittersweet about moving on. Just as my predecessor, Anna De-Battiste shared, my deepest gratitude goes to the contributors who have made *Meridian* a great resource for MRA members.

There are so many ways to contribute: you can write an article that informs or entertains, you can share photography that illustrates a point or inspires, and you can keep members up to date about webinars, conferences, and techniques. *Meridian* is your newsletter, be a part of it! Teamwork is central to the values and structure of the MRA. You don't have to be a rescue-level member to have a positive impact on the MRA. We're all in this together.

Please welcome Todd Lemein as *Meridian's* new editor. He is a member of Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit, in Oregon, and he's a really good editor!

What's next? Family, friends, and travel, travel, travel—in that order. I hope to see many of you on my travels. Happy trails!

Laurie Clarke

From the Incoming Editor—

Hello all. I think a huge round of applause is deserved for Laurie Clarke, the *Meridian's* outgoing editor. I first met Laurie after our winter reaccreditation last year in Bend, OR. She was asking for help editing the *Meridian* which I felt would be a nice way to be involved with the MRA community in addition to being a member of the Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit (CMRU). I hope that I can continue to produce the *Meridian* as well as Laurie did and help to grow it further. During my relatively short time involved with the MRA, and the *Meridian*, it has become apparent that Laurie has devoted many, many hours to the MRA and cares deeply about its mission and success. She has been one of the driving forces generating content for the *Meridian* and has built lasting relationships within the community. I know she will miss the work but I'm sure she will enjoy the increased peace and quiet.

I've been a member of the Corvallis Mountain Rescue Unit (CMRU) in Oregon for several years now. I came to CMRU through friends I made in graduate school at Oregon State University that shared a love of the outdoors. From rock climbing to mountaineering to backcountry skiing, Oregon is a fantastic place. My original motivation for exploring mountain search and rescue was to be able to help people that enjoyed the outdoors who found themselves in a bad situation in need of help. People who could be, and are, friends and family to all of us who enjoy the outdoors. My time with CMRU and the MRA has been rewarding in that sense and I hope that as editor of the *Meridian* I can continue to contribute to the community.

We are always looking for content! Please contact me with ideas and suggestions. Contributions can be submitted via email at the [Meridian Editor](#). Deadlines for sending in articles, photos, and announcements are:

April 1

July 1

October 1

January 1

Todd Lemein

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