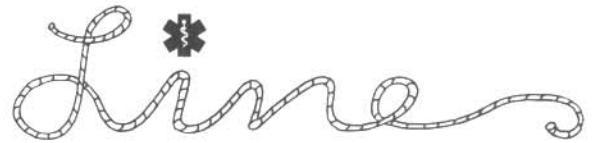




RESCUE



OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TENNESSEE ASSOCIATION OF RESCUE SQUADS

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SPOTLIGHT ON . . .

By Steve Carden

BLOUNT COUNTY RESCUE SQUAD



Let's imagine for a moment that you and your family were moving to Blount County in East Tennessee to live. Blount County . . . home to things like the Twin Cities of Maryville and Alcoa, home to a substantial chunk of the Great Smoky Mountains, including scenic Cades Cove - and let's not forget that it's also home to former Tennessee Governor (and past Presidential hopeful) Lamar Alexander.

O. K. let's also imagine that you have now settled into your new home. Having been a rescue squad member where you previously lived, you decide it's time to visit the Blount County Rescue Squad (BCRS) and see whether this is the place to ply your volunteer skills, because once it's in your blood . . . well, you know. So, you get up one morning, don a red and black plaid shirt (wanting to fit in as a new citizen, of course) and drive to the squad building determined to look things over and ask the right questions to size up this unit.

Your visual survey reveals a good sized building which is in the latter stages of being remodeled and modernized. You are drawn to two crash trucks equipped to support the squad's primary vehicle

extrication mission for the entire County. Additional equipment such as a Dive Van equipped for the unit's nine scuba divers, along with a Zodiac inflatable boat and wave runner, which support the water rescue team, are noticed as well. All of the equipment, while not new, is clean, organized, and well maintained. Your visual impression is positive. This squad shows strong signs of unit pride and organization.

Your questions reveal that the squad was organized in 1957. It has an annual budget which currently tops \$60,000, from sources such as United Way (25%), County Government (25%), and fund raising (50%) and is growing each year. The current membership is approximately 50 members, whose required training includes EVOC, Vehicle Extrication, Bloodborne Pathogens, CPR, and a host of other . . . wait a minute . . . did you say required? Yes, our members are required to complete an application interview, an in-house training academy and be evaluated as to their competency, explains your courteous host who is in a proper uniform and dead serious about their commitment. Before your visit ends you find that the squad sponsors an Explorer post, which has 14 members.

Your visit concludes and you drive away with a positive, can-do impression about this unit.

I would also predict that the vast majority of you would fall into one of two categories on your potential membership interest. Category I: "Excited about the possibility of being part of a well structured unit that's on the move and confident in your abilities and the challenges that await you." or Category II: "Uncertain whether or not you want to make that much of a commitment, you know . . . rules, required training and all of that stuff . . . I may need to think about this a little bit more."

But that's alright because the members of BCRS expect every potential member to look into themselves and determine whether they will make a quality contribution to the squad or not. They figure it's easier for the applicant to decide that up front rather than to find it out later from the system that awaits them. You see all of this is for a good reason . . . and I guess that brings us to the rest of the story.

Everything you have read (with the obvious exception of your imaginary

(See BCRS page 2)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Vernon Debord

Convention time is almost here. I would like to invite each of you to attend this year. There is a lot to see and do in Pigeon Forge. Sevier County has put forth a lot of effort, with co-host Blount County and Morristown, to make this the *Biggest* and *Best* Convention possible. Be sure and attend, it is **YOUR** convention.

I feel this year has been a good year for most squads. I have seen a lot of new equipment, improvement at the squad halls, more training, and new members. Keep up the Good Work!

Thank You for your support and help, without you we would not survive, so I say "THANKS". #

A TRIBUTE TO OUR VOLUNTEER SQUADSMAN

BY DEBRA CASH,
OBION COUNTY CREWETTE

The man lost on the lake,
Someone there not taking a break;
That's a squadsman, searching.

The field on fire all night,
Someone there to conquer the fight;
That's a squadsman, helping.

A wreck involves a man's wife,
Someone using the jaws of life;
That's a squadsman, hoping.

When someone is laid to rest,
Someone wondering,
"Did I do my best?";
That's a squadsman, regretting.

People needing a helping hand,
Someone there to be a friend;
That's a squadsman, committing.

When there is a job to do,
Someone there to see it through;
That's our squadsman,
VOLUNTEERING. #

STATE AND REGIONAL REPORTS

(BCRS con't from page 1)

visit) is pretty much factual. The part that was left out was that the squad has had to rebuild itself from virtually ground zero since 1991. The BCRS was founded 39 years ago and, like most rescue squads, started out with its services focused on water recovery and land search missions. The squad's first twenty-five years were prosperous and saw a great deal of growth. But the decade of the 80's brought problems that mounted a challenge that it is hoped most units will not have to face.

By 1990 the squad had accumulated several thousand dollars of unpaid debts and had lost (over a period of years) virtually every good committed member. It had also lost much of its inventoried equipment and all of its community and government support. Late in 1990 the remaining members of the squad's Board of Directors (many had resigned in frustration) shut the operation down, dismissed the few remaining members and sat down with other community leaders to assess the situation.

A complete reorganization was determined to be necessary and the squad reopened in March of 1991 with 17 new members and a revamped Board of Directors. Today no one will place blame on any individuals that served in the past or on any particular endeavor or activity of the unit. But one goal which was set was to devise a system that would insure that only

high caliber applicants will become actual squad members.

Bob Sowders, Captain since 1993, is quick to praise the work and commitment of the squad members. Bob also cites the importance of a supportive Board of Directors made up of community leaders. The current Board Chairman is Bud Allison, who served as an interim Captain during the squad's reorganization and therefore knows firsthand the importance of proper support and guidance. There are many people who are responsible for the squad's successful return, but for continued success most all will acknowledge that the squad's training academy provides the best opportunity to affect the long term future of the squad.

Today, the squad once again enjoys both community and government support and intends to keep it that way. I guess you could say it has truly been a rags to riches to rags and is now well on its way to riches story. Maybe there's a lesson to be learned from all of this. Earlier when you finished your imaginary visit, which category did you place yourself in . . . Category I or Category II?

If you are interested in more information for your squad about the BCRS membership system, I know they would gladly take you on a real tour. You wouldn't even have to move there. But, it wouldn't hurt to wear a red and black checked shirt when you visit. ■

REGION II VICE PRESIDENT

By Paul Potter

An unusually large number of drownings have occurred in Region II this year, four occurring in Roane County. One of the drownings in Roane County resulted in a Region Call-Out for two weekends. On Sunday, April 28, 1996, a call was made to Roane County Rescue Squad at approximately 4:00 a.m., reporting a boating accident. Two men in a boat hit a floating log which caused the boat to capsize. After holding on to the boat for approximately one hour the men attempted to swim to shore. One of the men made it and reported the other one missing.

Roane County Rescue Squad immediately started a search. When the missing man was not located immediately, Region II Vice President Paul Potter was called and a Region call-out was started. This lasted 168 hours with 541 squad members from 21 squads working 7,050 man hours, along with countless other volunteers, who also worked long hours. The body was recovered on May 5 at approximately 9:30 a.m. Captain Alan Ladd and the Roane County Rescue Squad along with Region II Vice President Paul Potter would like to thank everyone who helped in any way. ■

REGION I VICE PRESIDENT

By Ron Smith

I hope everyone is doing fine. We have the June Region travels upon us. I hope every squad will have someone to represent them at the meeting. It's that time of year that we need to check our Water Recovery Equipment to be sure that it is in good condition. Let's hope that we won't need to use it.

Now is the time to be getting ready for competition at this year's convention. Also, be thinking who in your squad you can turn in for the different awards. We all have someone who deserves to win. Remember that the convention will start Thursday, October 3, with some different seminars this year. So, plan on coming early and enjoy the Great Smoky Mountains. I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable summer. If I may be of assistance to any squad, please give me a call. ■

Always do right. This will gratify some people and astonish the rest.

Mark Twain

STATE HISTORIAN

By Bill Sowell

I hope all TARS members are having a enjoyable and safe summer.

We had four good Region meetings in February and March, and they were well attended. Now is the time to look forward to the June Region meetings and TARS Convention in October. The Convention is going to have some new attractions this year so, plan to attend.

All squads are urged to send pictures and newspaper articles to me, to be put in the state scrapbook. Squads that plan to enter the scrapbook competition must have the newspaper article and picture to me by August 15 for 10 extra points when the scrapbooks are judged.

See you at June Region meetings and at the TARS Convention. ■

STATE SECRETARY

By Wayne Cole

I've enjoyed the Region travels in February and June. I've seen a lot of nice equipment and met a lot of people. I've seen parts of Tennessee that I've never seen before.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Directors meeting in July and hope to see everyone at the Convention. I feel we will have a nice Convention and you will have a lot to do and see.

I've enjoyed serving you as State Secretary this year and I hope I've done a good job in serving you. I will be running for re-election this year if you see fit to have me again.

May God Bless you and your family. ■

EVENTS CALENDAR

1996 TARS MEETINGS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JULY 20, MURFREESBORO, TN

1996 ANNUAL CONVENTION
OCT 3,4,5 -PIGEON FORGE, TN

RESCUE COLLEGE

TRENCH RESCUE - JUL 26 - 28
HARDEMAN CO RESCUE

SWIFTWATER I AUG 9 - 11
POLK COUNTY

DIVE RESCUE I - AUG 23 - 25
FRANKLIN COUNTY

SWIFTWATER II - SEPT 6 - 8
POLK COUNTY

SPECIALIZED RESCUE SEMINAR - OCT 3, 1996
@ ANNUAL CONVENTION

Specific information regarding meetings and training will be mailed to each TARS unit usually 30 days in advance. Training classes and dates are subject to cancellations or rescheduling.

TRAINING AND SAFETY

5 WAYS TO SURVIVE A SWIFTWATER RESCUE DON'T BECOME A VICTIM AT WATER INCIDENTS

by Slim Ray

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS ARTICLE WAS REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE MAR/APR 1996 ISSUE OF "RESCUE". THE AUTHOR, SLIM RAY, IS A VETERAN SWIFTWATER RESCUE INSTRUCTOR WHO RESIDES IN ASHEVILLE, NC.



DECISIVE MOMENT - This was one of those shots seen 'round the world and captures better than words why swiftwater rescue training is so essential. Santa Rosa (California) Fire Department firefighter Don Lopez is shown maneuvering toward Marglyn Paseka, 15, after she and a friend were swept away while playing in a swollen creek February 5. Both of the teen-agers were successfully rescued. This was the first incident in which Lopez was able to use the skills he had learned at a recent swiftwater training session. He said afterward: "I was confident in my ability because I'd done it before in practice and had an idea what to expect." Only prior training and knowledge will give you confidence in your skills during the decisive moment. Photo by Annie Wells/Press Democrat ■

Swiftwater rescue is dangerous, no doubt about it. At least three firefighters died while attempting in-water rescues during flood-filled 1995. Sadly, most swiftwater tragedies are the result of lack of knowledge and training.

Although flooding is one of the most common natural disasters, rescuers often get sucker-punched by swiftwater rescues, which make up a very small portion of the nation's rescue calls. A recent study showed that in the past 20 years, water incidents accounted for 1 percent of firefighter deaths. This figure may not seem significant until you consider that water rescue calls typically account for only 1 to 2 percent of calls for most rescue departments. The message is that while swiftwater incidents may be infrequent, they can be extremely dangerous.

For many agencies, "water rescue" means dragging a lake for a drowning victim. Swiftwater rescue often gets passed off to specialized dive teams or lumped in with generalized water and ice rescue programs. But swiftwater operations are far more complex.

The force of moving water is deceptively strong, and it increases exponentially with the speed and volume of the water. For

example, a 6 mph current pushes against an object with a force of 134 pounds, but a 12 mph current pushes with a force of 538 pounds, four times as much. Things happen very quickly in swiftwater. Rescuers have to think

fast to catch victims who wash down river and flood channels at speeds in excess of 15 mph, often crossing jurisdictional boundaries in the process. Common safety practices, such as lifelines and

safety tethers, are extremely dangerous when used in moving water. In addition, safety gear and personal protective equipment intended for other disciplines can (See Swiftwater page 4)

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(Swiftwater con't from page 3)

do more harm than good during a swiftwater rescue.

Public safety personnel must be able to ensure their own safety before attempting a swiftwater operation. Although nothing can replace a basic knowledge of the dynamics of swiftwater and proper training from certified instructors, here are five rules that may help you survive your next swiftwater incident.

RULE 1. Don't wear turnouts or other bulky service clothing. While other firefighting turnouts protect firefighter from heat and debris, they were never meant to be worn in the water. Although it's a myth that heavy clothing will drag you down, it is hard to swim in and offers little thermal protection. Would-be swiftwater rescuers are strongly advised to wear a wet or dry suit for thermal and physical protection while in the water. Law enforcement personnel should leave firearms and similar equipment on shore.

RULE 2. Do wear a life jacket. A personal flotation device is the most important piece of personal protective equipment for rescues in or near the water. While any PFD is better than none, one designed for swiftwater will offer the best protection. Snug-fitting U.S. Coast Guard Type III or Type V PFD constructed for whitewater boating with 25 to 35 pounds of flotation are most suited to the demands of swiftwater operations. Avoid ski vests, bulky Type I PFDs and Type II "horse collars" that have a nasty habit of coming off over your head. And don't forget to buckle it - an unsecured PFD is no PFD at all.

RULE 3. Don't enter moving water except as a last resort. Any rescuer who enters swiftwater - in a boat or by swimming - greatly increases the risk to his or her own life and the lives of fellow rescuers who might have to save the would-be rescuer if something goes wrong. Consider all

alternatives before entering the water. Use the simple mnemonic RETHROG: Reach, Throw, Row, Go. Unless you have swiftwater-specific training, it's a good idea to stick with the reach and throw. The first step might be to try and talk the victim into self-rescue; obvious routes of escape are often overlooked. Or perhaps you can reach the victim with a pike pole or paddle and pull him or her to safety. You also might be able to throw the victim a rope and pull him or her to shore.

RULE 4. Don't tie yourself to a rope if you do go in the water. A safety tether is never a good idea when entering a flooded stream. A tethered rescuer can be swept off his or her feet, pushed underwater and held there by the current. Remember, the force of the current may be several hundred pounds - far too much

for a rescuer to release the knot or be hauled back upstream. Two firefighters died in 1995 after tying into a rope during swiftwater rescues.

RULE 5. Do get appropriate training before an incident. "Water rescue" is a huge and diverse field and rescuers sometimes make the mistake of thinking that because they are an expert in one area, they are an expert in them all. There is no substitution for hands-on, swiftwater-specific training with competent instructors. The emerging professional standard is that those in public safety should have at least awareness-level swiftwater training in order to protect themselves on scene. Anyone whose duties may include actual swiftwater rescue should have at least technician-level training, and incident commanders should have specialist training. ■

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