Exercise Event Log – Tracking and Scent Detection

19 May, 2017, 11:00 Hrs. WX clear, 76 degrees, wind SSW 5-7 MPH

Injured Rider Down (hidden in a location unknown to the searchers)

Location: 3,000+ acres of volcanic hills and valleys N/O Carson River

Location frequented by equestrians and dozens of wild horses (numerous horse tracks)

Exercise Objectives:

* Organize an ICS compliant search team including mounted scent detection horses
* Locate victim’s tracks and follow over various types of terrain
* Utilize an article of clothing to scent detect the victim
* Administer appropriate basic emergency care and remove victim

Performance Standards:

* Locate victim within 1 hour of notification of incident
* Then treat and remove victim to ambulance accessible location within 30 minutes

Primary Participants:

* IC: Ashe
* Safety Officer: Corbit
* Search Team Henry-1: (Lamm, Chamlee, N. Hastings)

Exercise Results:

* Victim located in 42 minutes of notification (20 minutes from start of search)
* Victim then removed to accessible location in 28 minutes.

Exercise Incident Log:

* 1108 Hrs. Notified of rider down, provided coordinates of pickup and trailer
* 1130 Hrs. Staged, safety check completed, team mounted and rider’s tracks established
* 1142 Hrs. Henry-1 reports solid tracking maintained
* 1145 Hrs. Henry-1 reports now into rocks, having to line search to locate tracks
* 1147 Hrs. Henry-1 reports back on solid tracks
* 1149 Hrs. Reflective vest found along line of tracks, starting scent search
* 1150 Hrs. Scent horses have located victim

Notes:

* Wayside clue observed after 19 minutes of tracking, including multiple locations of lost tracks due to rocks and need for line searching to pick up track trail.
* Scent horses located hidden rider in one minute after smelling reference scent.

Exercise Incident Log, Continued:

* 1155 Hrs. Victim assessed. Snake bitten in right calf while leading horse. Ambulatory (can ride if assistance given mounting.)
* 1155 Hrs. Poor radio reception. Safety reassigned to a location to relay radio messages.
* 1201 Hrs. Lost contact with Safety. (Passed through dead zone to reach relay point.)
* 1208 Hrs. Visual of Henry-1 Team Leader returning. Restored contact with Safety.
* 1213 Hrs. Scent riders report accompanying victim out. Taking short route to Jeep trail.
* 1218 Hrs. (Accountability) Henry-1 team leader back at Staging, scent riders and victim sighted from Staging. (This sighting location met the EMS accessibility time standard however the riders chose to return to staging.)
* 1220 Hrs. Henry-2 (backup team, McCoy and Takahashi) sighted coming from north.
* 1221 Hrs. Henry-1 Team Leader heading back out to meet victim and scent riders.
* 1225 Hrs. Both teams and victim at Staging, victim treated by simulated EMS crew.

Additional notes:

A three person team is more efficient than 2 person teams when tracking where there are literally thousands of hoof prints present. The point rider can maintain optimum familiarity with the subject’s tracks while the flank riders can check for changes of direction when in rocky terrain.

In rocky terrain there may be only a half dozen good tracks in 100 or more feet of distance. Tracking coordination among the riders was critical

When the scent horses were provided with a reference scent, they immediately bee-lined to the victim at a trot and ignored the victim’s horse that was a short distance away. (They were attracted to the hidden victim, not his nearby horse.)

When handheld radio coverage was degraded due to the terrain, establishing a relay point kept the IC current with field reports and briefings.

The Stokes basket and medical gear were deployed in a 4WD pickup, ready for response if the rider was not ambulatory.

No safety or operational issues were noted, except for the need to establish a relay radio operator.