Lifeline

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Virginia Department of Emergency Services

In This Issue

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COVER PHOTO

Mountain rescues often require the use of technical equipment and sophisticated transport systems. Al Baker (foreground) and Bob Koester of Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference use a rope lowering system and a Stokes litter to transport a victim down a cliff. Photo, John Sun, ASRC

Coordinator's Comments

Addison E. Slayton, Jr., State Coordinator

FEMA BUDGET REQUEST LACKS REAL ACCOMPLISHMENT

As the impact of the Gramm-Rudman Deficit Reduction Act intensifies, we in the emergency services field are facing an increasing funding crunch. A significant percentage of Virginia's emergency management funding comes from the federal government.

As the current administration and Congress attempt to trim the mammoth federal deficit, the dollars for emergency management continue to be adversely affected. This in turn will impact the way we do business in the Commonwealth.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is now working on its 1988 fiscal year budget. Hearings with Congressional appropriations committees to fine-tune the budget request are in progress.

For fiscal year 1988, FEMA is requesting $627,941,000. Consistent with deficit reduction mandates, this request is $16,803,000 below the 1987 funding levels.

FEMA's budget request generally maintains most programs fairly close to 1987 levels. Significant policy changes include proposed state and local cost sharing in the areas of student stipends for training programs. This approach is also being applied to several other programs that they feel should be handled below the federal level.

More specifically, most of the funding that supports emergency management activities in the Commonwealth comes from FEMA's Civil Defense appropriation. This includes funding for Emergency Management Assistance (EMA), Population Protection Planning

(PPP), Radiological Protection and Direction, Control and Warning (DC&W).

FUNDING REQUESTS

For 1988, FEMA is requesting $134,806,000 in Civil Defense funding. This is a decrease of $4,585,000 from the 1987 level. FEMA feels that this amount will maintain the Civil Defense programs at essentially the 1987 level. FEMA hopes to expand these programs based on initiatives (as yet unclear) being developed from the National Security Decision Directive. (See the separate budget breakout for NSDD 259.)

In the area of Comprehensive Emergency Preparedness Planning, FEMA has requested $8,737,000, a reduction of $758,000 from the 1987 level. This appropriation funds earthquake and some hurricane preparedness planning in which Virginia does not participate. The request features 50/50 cost sharing by state and local governments in all natural hazard preparedness planning grants.

FEMA has requested $7,592,000 for Radiological Emergency Preparedness Planning. This includes an increase of $205,000 above 1987's level to cover necessary costs. The costs of the program will be offset by revenues proposed to be collected by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission from the utilities serviced in the course of the licensing process. This item is not a pass-through to the states and is used to fund FEMA nuclear power plant off-site emergency planning evaluation activities.

The request for the Federal Preparedness Program also reflects an increase. The 1988 request is for $196,819,000, an increase of $30,005,000 above current funding levels. This program involves various federal level programs and is not passed through to the states.

FEMA has requested $15,576,000 for Training and Fire Programs, a decrease of $4,762,000. This reduction reflects the phasing in of increased cost sharing by state and local governments for training activities at the National Emergency Training Center. In other words it reflects the proposed elimination of student stipends for those attending the Emergency Management Institute.

This is an overview of the appropriation requests in FEMA's 1988 fiscal year budget. Many of these figures could change over the course of the next few months as Congress determines how to dole out the multi-billion dollar federal budget.

We will be monitoring the budget proceedings closely and will keep

you advised as more information becomes available.

NSDD

Now let's talk briefly about the 1988 version of the National Security Decision Directive, known as NSDD 259. FEMA has espoused this document as underscoring a new day for civil defense planning and preparedness. (A copy of this document is available from the DES Public Information Office.)

As I see it, there are two major problems with NSDD 259. First, it does not depart substantially from similar statements signed by President Carter and President Reagan. Secondly, the requested amount to implement the NSDD is $20,000,000. This amount will not go far toward doing real civil defense preparedness.

Another disappointing factor concerning FEMA's new initiative is that funding support for all civil defense related programs (EMA, PPP, Radiological Protection, etc.) is either level for fiscal year 1988 or reduced. So with a reduced base in civil defense funding upon which to build and a weak NSDD budget request, it appears that we can expect more talk, less money at the state/local levels and little real accomplishment. ▲

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DIRECTIVE 259 ON CIVIL DEFENSE

The NSDD is designed to support state and local crisis management capabilities, to assist the population and maintain continuity of government in national security emergencies. The NSDD Budget Amendment provides:

- $8,108,000 in Telecommunications and Warning to complete procurement of high-frequency radios to link states, national and regional locations. This will provide radios for 15 states and 7 regional locations still lacking such equipment.
- $1,350,000 in state and local Direction, Control and Warning to develop fallout-protected state emergency operating centers ($1.25 million) and to develop cost-effective approaches for improving the Emergency Broadcast System.
- $1,100,000 in state and local Emergency Management to double the number of military reservists assigned to support state and local crisis management activities and strengthen assessment systems to improve program management.
- $3,100,000 in Population Protection to initiate programs to support and encourage volunteerism by citizens ($1.5 million); develop plans and capabilities to support survivors ($1 million); and reduce shelter survey costs ($600,000).
- $900,000 in Training and Education to develop emergency information materials for the public.
- $4,542,000 in Radiological Defense to begin development of a base for surge production of instruments during a national security emergency and to provide a radiological officer for approximately eight states.
- $900,000 in Research to develop plans for rapid improvement of civil defense capabilities in time of escalating international tension.

SPILL DRILL
Tests Tidewater's Readiness

As the Act 33, a 712-foot container ship, cruised out of the Hampton Roads port, it experienced a steering problem. Moments later, the out-of-control vessel slammed into the side of the Pacific Condor, another large container ship. The collision ruptured a number of barrels onboard the Act 33, releasing deadly chemicals into the waterway.

The tangled ships drifted toward the Interstate 64 Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel and lodged on one of the tunnel entrance islands. Fumes from the leaking chemicals seeped into the tunnel air intake and motorists were quickly overcome. Adding to the problem, winds carried the toxic fumes toward Hampton and threatened many of the city's residents.

Although this incident never occurred, federal, state and local officials say that the potential exists for such a disaster. Representatives from the Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Virginia Department of Emergency Services (DES) and numerous other state and local organizations participated in a tabletop spill drill in Portsmouth. The exercise scenario was designed to prepare those officials and response personnel for an actual incident, should one occur.

John Tomaseski, Hampton's emergency services coordinator, said the exercise increased his awareness of the potential for waterway incidents.

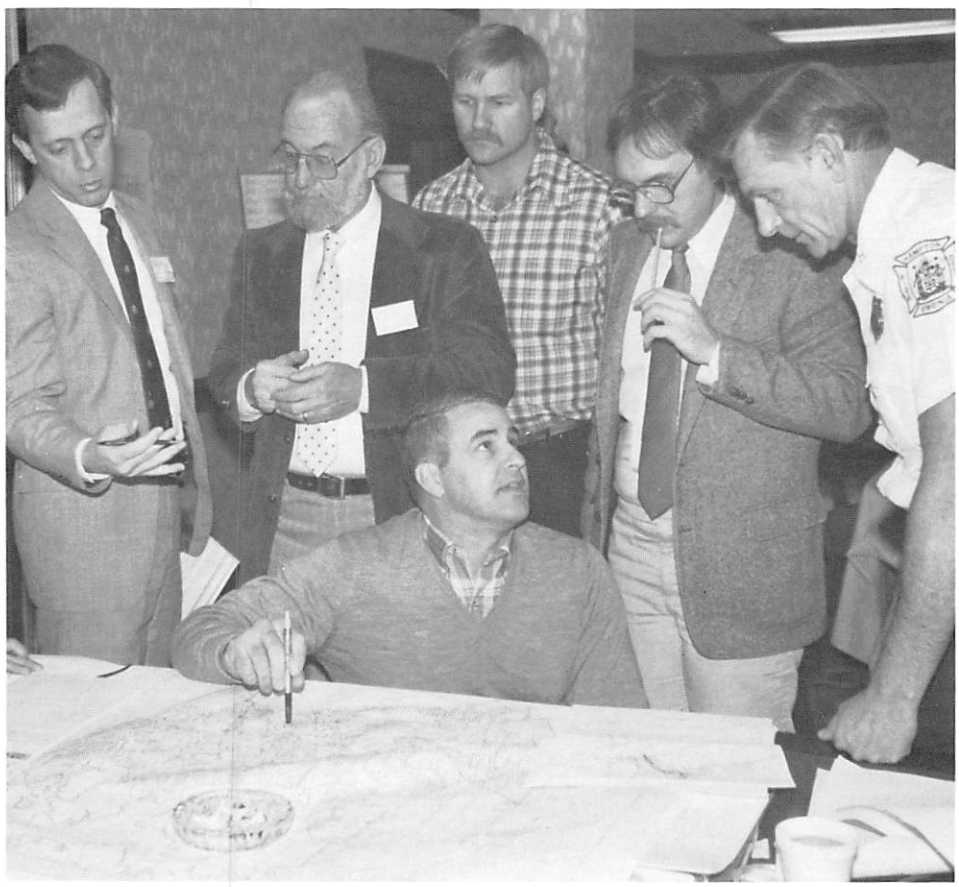
"You traditionally think of hazardous materials incidents occurring on highways or railroads," he said. "Hampton Roads is one of the busiest harbors in the country and there is a real threat of an accident of this type happening. This is something that needs more attention and better preparedness planning."

Tomaseski said the exercise pointed out some communication deficiencies between the federal agencies and local government that he hopes to resolve.

According to Mitzi Saverline, DES training officer involved in the spill drill development, the exercise was particularly important.

"It gave us a rare opportunity to have all levels of government exercising together," she explained. "It's seldom that federal, state and local government can all get together for a tabletop exercise.

"The exercise gave us a chance to work out problems before the real thing happens. I think it was a valuable learning experience for all the participants and a step toward better preparedness for the state."▲



Federal, state and local officials work together to determine the areas in Hampton that need to be evacuated. In the exercise scenario, toxic fumes released during the collision of two ships threatened the city.

You **Can** Make Friends With the Media

by Michael J. La Civita, DES Public Information Director

If you have been in the emergency management field for any length of time, you've probably been exposed to the unrelenting questions of the news media. In this business of emergencies and disasters, there is a good chance that you will be called upon to issue a statement, brief reporters or answer their questions.

This may not be your favorite task, but there are a few simple techniques that can help you work effectively *with* rather than *against* the media.

Media in this instance refers to the members of the fourth estate, better known as newspaper, radio, television or wire service reporters who are quick to respond to any type of emergency situation. Let's face it, emergencies and disasters are newsworthy. Check the front page of the newspaper or the lead story on the evening newscast. If an emergency has occurred, it will likely be the top story.

MEDIA FORMATS

During those times of emergency, radio, by its nature becomes the primary source of immediate information. Radio has the responsibility to provide reliable information in a timely manner to those in the community who have been affected by the emergency.

If the media lacks reliable information, that means that someone isn't doing their job. As a result, radio then becomes an uninten-

tional source of confusion. Rumors and false information are your worst enemies during those times of stress.

As an emergency manager, you have the responsibility to provide reliable and factual information in a timely manner to the reporter who happens to be covering the emergency. Radio has an instantaneous reporting capability. Newspapers are published after the fact but report in much more detail. Television brings it all home with face-to-face reporting, often on the scene.

MEDIA/PUBLIC RIGHT TO KNOW

Basic knowledge of how to deal effectively with the media then becomes a benchmark in any emergency manager's public information program. The fact remains that as long as there are disasters, we will have the media poking around. Like it or not, newspeople have the right to seek out that information.

However, the media has a responsibility to abide by the rules set forth by the emergency manager. There must be order and you are in a position to command that order by laying the ground rules.

In covering disasters, reporters should provide calm, clear and specific information free of speculation and sensationalism. Their job is to help people understand what has happened and where they can receive necessary help.

Emergency officials can find themselves thrust in front of television cameras at any time. It pays to be prepared.

When an emergency or disaster occurs, expect the media to be there. Often they play a vital role in alerting and informing the public of potential dangers.

ACCURATE INFORMATION SOURCES

The very nature of a disaster calls for restraint on the part of the reporter and careful, factual verification. The best way for them to verify information is to seek out the person in charge.

Unfortunately, because of the pressures for speed, early media reports of disasters can become fragmentary, speculative and, in too many instances, inaccurate. Inaccuracy can be avoided simply by taking the initiative and making yourself official spokesperson and becoming available to the media for briefings. If you have the luxury of a public information officer, utilize that person. If not, appoint someone in your stead who has the authority and knowledge to perform this important task.

HANDLING MEDIA BRIEFINGS

Media briefings can be called as frequently as every hour on the hour, or as often as information becomes available. Be sure to inform the media when the next briefing will be conducted and where. The briefing can be held in an area as near the disaster site as possible without hindering rescue efforts. This will satisfy the needs of the media for film or photo opportunity.

Wherever you decide to hold the briefings, be sure to inform the media that this is where you will be conducting the briefings from now on. It is then that you lay the ground rules. If additional information is required, indicate that you will get back to them to provide that information.

Ground rules should include the areas where reporters have access, their information sources, times and locations of media briefings and any additional information that may be required.

Never offer a "no comment" to the media in response to any question. That statement ignites their imagination and they immediately think that you are keeping something from them.

THE FIVE "W's"

The media is interested in the who, what, when, where and why of the disaster. During the course of the media briefings, if you can answer those five questions, you will usually satisfy them.

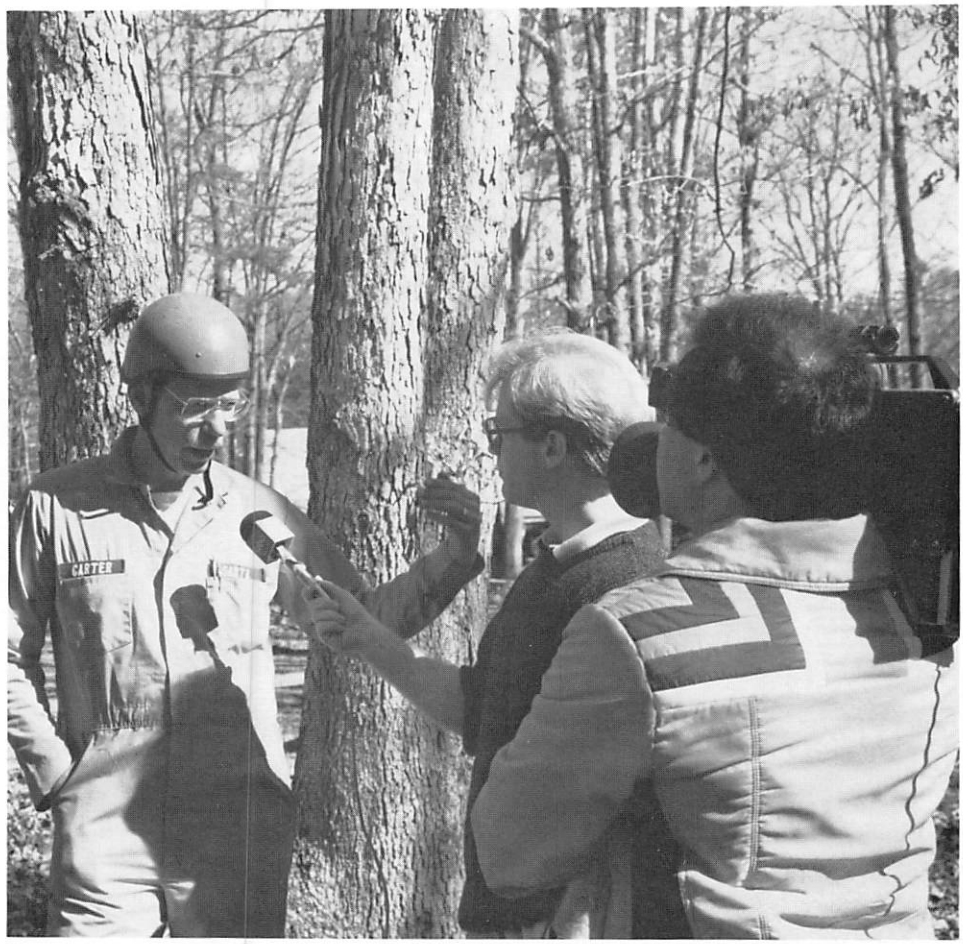
"What if" questions should be avoided, and a simple, "I'd rather not speculate," is acceptable in the eyes of the press. Basic information that reporters want to know includes the extent of the event, loss of life, injuries, damages and the cause of the disaster.

MEDIA CONTACTS

A good communications program includes a checklist of media contacts. Be certain to have a complete list of media in your area to include names, addresses and phone numbers. The names and numbers of the Associated Press and United Press International are essential. The wire services are carried by virtually every newspaper (with the exception of some local weeklies), radio and television station.

Get to know the deadlines of your local newspapers, radio and television stations. It's also a good idea to get to know the reporters with whom you come in contact. If you are able to communicate with the media during the good times, then it makes for easier communications during times of emergency and disaster.

The standard for every emergency manager should be to tell the truth, tell it simply, straightforward and as quickly as possible. And remember to say "thank you" whenever the media has helped. These words are remembered and the next time they will be much easier to deal with—take my word for it!▲



Ten Commandments of Good Media Relations

Be Honest
Be Brief
Be Available
Be Timely
Be Fair
Be Flexible
Be Objective
Be Positive
Be Informed
Be Professional

Editor's Note: If you are interested in brushing up on your skills in dealing with the media, the Virginia Department of Emergency Services (DES) offers Public Information Officer seminars several times each year. For more information on these one-day workshops, contact the DES Public Information Office at (804) 323-2899.

TIME FR
MINUTES

Virginia Enhan

The call came around midnight on Friday, in the middle of the staff meeting. A resident of Russell County, Virginia, had seen an explosion and fire on Clinch Mountain late that evening.

Subsequently, an aircraft on a flight from Springfield, Missouri, to Woodbridge, Virginia, was reported overdue. The intended flight path would have taken it over Clinch Mountain at about the time the explosion was reported.

I was part of a group beginning a weekend search and rescue school near Roanoke. The staff included people from the Civil Air Patrol, Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference and the Virginia Department of Emergency Services. We had gotten the students settled for the night and were having a late staff meeting when we received the request for assistance.

Following the reported explosion, local rescue and law enforcement personnel made an initial search near the summit of Clinch Mountain, but were hampered by steep terrain, cold, rain and near zero visibility conditions. A request for assistance was made to the Civil Air Patrol and forwarded to us in Roanoke.

We decided to take several staff members and the advanced level students and respond immediately. The 18 people and 5 vehicles arrived at the Russell County Sheriff's Office at about 4:30 a.m., where we picked up maps and a local guide.

After a strenuous climb in the rain and mud, we reached the top of the mountain around daylight. The temperature was in the thirties and the cloud cover limited visibility to less than 50 feet. We began searching near the area the earlier group had searched the night before. Within about 30 minutes, we located the wreckage.

The crash site was typical of many I've worked. The small plane had impacted the mountain at a steep angle and burned. No one usually survives such a crash. The remains of two people could be seen in the burned-out cabin. But there was one big problem. The flight plan listed three people on board.

Since bodies are sometimes ejected on impact, we began an area search for the third body. But instead of a body, one of our people found a blue sock stuck in the mud, as if someone had stepped into the mud and withdrawn their foot, leaving the sock behind.

Patient evacuation from a remote wooded or mount
port methods are essential for the safety and well-be

AME FOR SURVIVAL:
AND COUNTING

ces Search and Rescue Capabilities

by Ralph E. Wilfong, DES Search and Rescue Programs Officer

nous area can be arduous at times. Proper trans- g of the victim.

One of our mantrackers confirmed that someone had recently walked away from the crash site, barefoot. Unbelievable. We had a mobile victim!

As we began tracking down from the top of the mountain, a follow-up team from the Lebanon Life Saving Crew was coming up the mountain from another direction. Within 15 minutes this group radioed us saying they had found a young woman in a ravine about 400 yards below us. Miraculously, she was alive!

No one will ever know just how she survived the crash. Chances are that she was probably thrown clear prior to the explosion that destroyed the plane. Remarkably, she had no major traumatic injuries but did have second- and third-degree burns over about 30 percent of her body.

Her biggest problem, however, was acute hypothermia. Her temperature was 80 degrees, well below the survival limit for many people. She was semiconscious and only able to tell us her first name.

By this time she had been on the mountain for 14 hours, dressed only in jeans and a tee shirt. She was also wearing one blue sock. We called for our technical rescue team and prepared the patient for evacuation.

The two biggest problems in managing the severely hypothermic patient are stopping the temperature decline and preventing cardiac irregularities. We packaged her as well as possible, carefully placing heat packs in the appropriate places. The evacuation team was instructed to walk slowly and carefully since rough handling or excessive jarring can cause fatal heart problems.

We had radio contact with the Russell County Medical Center and arranged for a medical team to be standing by for our arrival. We also requested that Lifeguard 10, a medical helicopter from Roanoke, be dispatched immediately so that the patient could be transported to a major medical center.

It took several hours in the emergency room to stabilize her enough to make the flight to Roanoke. After about 12 hours there, she was flown to the burn center at the University of Virginia hospital for treatment.

Within several weeks she was transferred to a hospital closer to home. The last word we had was that she was recovering nicely with little permanent damage from the burns or the hypothermia.

It's not often in the search and

In advanced search and rescue training, students learn to scale a vertical cliff. In this case Frank Chinn, a full-time paramedic for the city of Richmond, uses a tree branch to practice the difficult technique.

rescue business that we get the opportunity to effect such a dramatic rescue. Light plane crashes are often fatal to all on board. Lost people often are not found in time and die from "exposure," another word sometimes used for hypothermia. For this girl, time had run out. Her time frame for survival was down to minutes and counting.

THE STATE'S ROLE IN SAR

Since that time, a lot of work has been done to enhance the state's search and rescue capability. The Virginia Department of Emergency Services (DES), the state search and rescue (SAR) coordinating agency, has responsibility for ensuring that state-of-the-art search and rescue services are provided to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

In 1986, the DES Operations Division upgraded the agency's SAR capability in both coordination and training. A new incident management system was introduced that utilized selected Operations Division personnel to handle all requests for SAR assistance and created a new record keeping and statistical data base system. The agency's interface with resource groups was reviewed and formalized. Training programs were developed and implemented.

In the past, the DES Emergency Operations Center (EOC) served primarily as an information clearinghouse for state and local agencies requesting SAR resources. In reality, the EOC is considered to be the state's Rescue Coordination Center.

This designation is made by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center, the federal SAR coordination center for the inland region of the United States. The Coast Guard handles all SAR activity in the maritime region and the EOC serves as the state's contact point for both inland and maritime SAR incidents.

VOLUNTEERS LEAD RESOURCE LIST

Resources used for search and rescue incidents in Virginia are mostly volunteer. At the local level, these resources include local law enforcement K-9 units, other law enforcement personnel, volunteer fire departments and rescue squads and civilian volunteers.

At the state level, there are four primary volunteer groups: Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference, DOGS-East, Blue and Gray Search and Rescue Dogs and the Civil Air Patrol. In addition, there are several other search dog groups and individual dog handlers and several smaller SAR teams that provide assistance.

SAR TRAINING

DES also provides SAR training statewide and has developed several new training programs to supplement programs already in existence. SAR training programs are available ranging from the 6-hour "Search and Rescue Orientation" to the 40-hour "Managing the Search Function."

Courses are available for the local coordinator, the search manager and the field team member. The most extensive training program currently being offered is for field team personnel. This multi-level program requires over 200 hours of training.

The demand for coordination and training will increase as more localities become aware of the specialized assistance available to them.

Search *is* an emergency. Incidents such as the plane crash in Russell County prove that timely and professional intervention can significantly reduce the death and disability rate among the victims of SAR incidents.

The creed of the SAR professional is best stated in the motto of the international SAR community, "That Others May Live."▲

Editor's note: Ralph Wilfong, contributor of this article, has been involved in search and rescue for over ten years. Wilfong serves as search and rescue coordinator for the Virginia Department of Emergency Services. He is a member of the Appalachian Search and Rescue Conference, the National Association for Search and Rescue and the Civil Air Patrol. Wilfong is also a nationally registered paramedic and serves as a flight paramedic for the Virginia State Police Med-Flight helicopter.

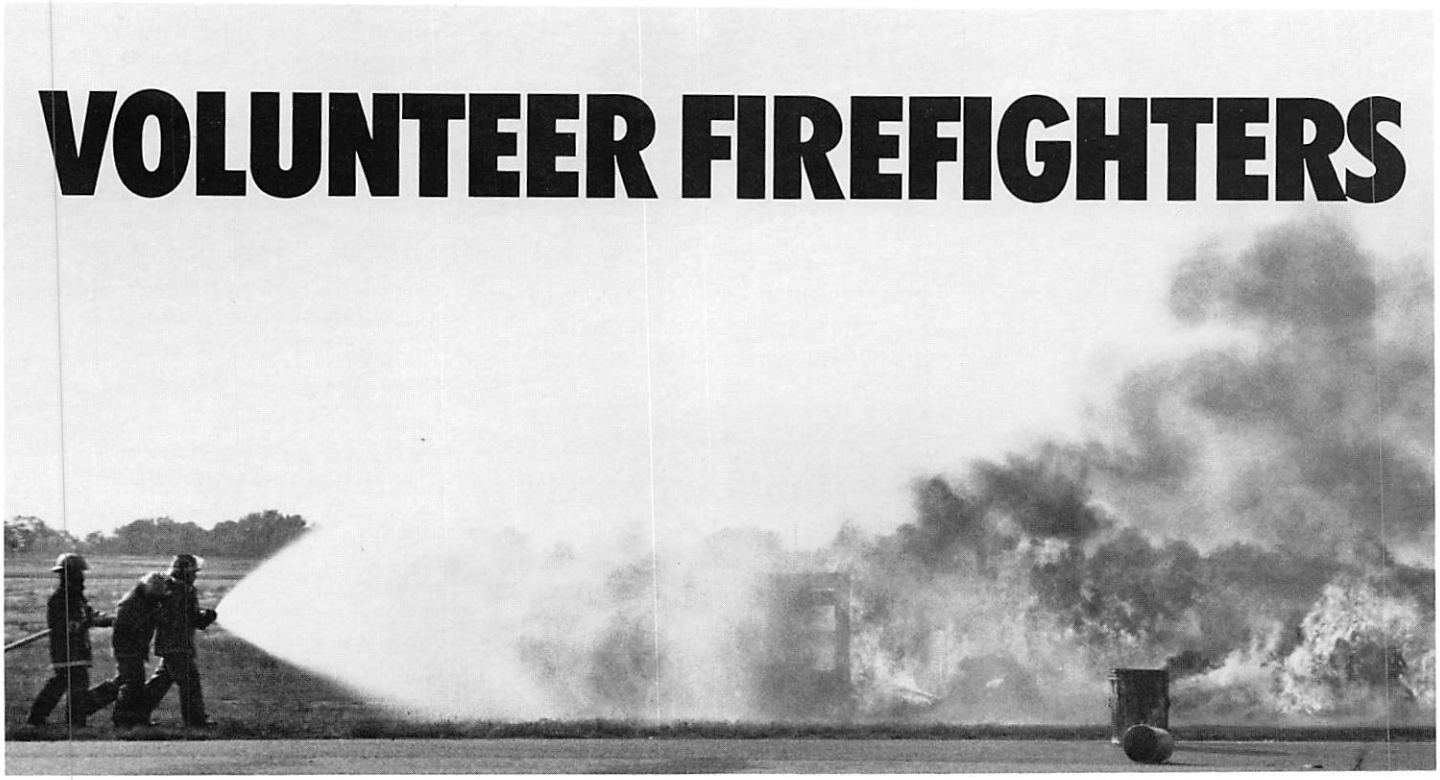
SAR Incidents Reported to Virginia EOC in 1986

Missing person	60
Missing or overdue aircraft	12
Aircraft distress, sighting reports	8
ELT/EPIRB activations	39
Missing or overdue boats	1
Cave rescue	3
TOTAL	**123**

Search Resources Used in 1986

Appalachian Search & Rescue Conference	26
Civil Air Patrol	44
Search Dogs (volunteer)	51
State Police Aviation	25
Coast Guard Aviation	2
Coast Guard Marine	1
Cave Rescue	3
Other Aviation Units	7
Baywood Search & Rescue	1
National Park Service	2

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS



Commitment, Community and Teamwork Mark Century-Old Institution

Volunteer fire departments have been around as long as our country has. George Washington, Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and Paul Revere were among our country's first volunteer firefighters.

Since that time, literally thousands of people from all walks of life have worked together to create and maintain these vital organizations. Close to 80 percent of the nation's firefighting force is made up of volunteers.

Dr. Kenneth Perkins, a Longwood College sociology professor, wants to know why these organizations are so appealing and how they fit into communities and the lives of the volunteers.

A volunteer firefighter himself, Dr. Perkins is a member of the Prospect Volunteer Fire Department and has been interested in firefighting as long as he can remember.

He has recently completed a study on volunteer firefighters in Virginia and is expanding his research to the national level. His goals are simply to discover what makes participation in volunteer fire departments attractive.

According to the Virginia study, the typical rural volunteer firefighter stays active in the department for a long time, forms close friendships there and considers firefighting one of the most important parts of his or her life.

"I knew how committed my fellow firefighters were, but it surprised me to see it come up so clearly in the numbers," Dr. Perkins noted.

In the Virginia study, 372 rural volunteer firefighters from 15 departments returned the questionnaires distributed by Dr. Perkins. The average years of service by these volunteers was 10. The ages of those surveyed ranged from 17 to 74, with the average age being 35.

Seventy-five percent indicated that at least half of their close friends were fellow firefighters. The survey also pointed out that these volunteers stick with their organization. Only a small percentage of the respondents indicated that they had ever seriously considered quitting volunteer firefighting.

On a four-point scale, 82 percent ranked their involvement as a volunteer firefighter of highest importance. The questionnaire asked respondents to compare being a firefighter with being a member of a church. About 67 percent of church member firefighters indicated that being a firefighter was of equal or greater importance than church membership.

"It makes you wonder if there is something almost sacred about volunteer fire departments since it seems to function similarly to the church for some members," Dr. Perkins said.

Dr. Perkins says that his findings indicate that volunteer fire departments are created with a strong sense of community. He believes

that a combination of creative development, bonding between the volunteers and strong ties with the community makes many of these organizations so successful.

"We as humans have very little opportunity to create anything," noted Dr. Perkins. "Volunteer fire departments are in fact a creation that takes time, energy and commitment to construct."

Dr. Perkins pointed out that the sense of belonging is intense in these organizations. He says that volunteer fire departments are somewhat like fraternal organizations.

"Human beings need groups and other organizations to help them know who they are. We can realize our essence through participation in groups, particularly small ones," he added.

According to Dr. Perkins, the role of the firefighter is based upon the team concept. In addition, the threat of danger is a constant consideration.

"Entry into a burning building for a search and rescue or an aggressive attack on a raging fire has few, if any, equivalents in terms of potential danger," he said. "There is an absolute necessity for trust and teamwork."

This dependence upon others for one's own performance and safety helps develop a bond between firefighters that may be difficult to achieve in much of our society, Dr. Perkins contends.

"Organizational life, such as in the occupational world, leaves a lot to be desired for most people," he said. "You ordinarily don't get to develop strong bonds of friendship and loyalty and you don't have such an unlimited opportunity to contribute as in a volunteer fire department."

"Entry into a burning building for a search and rescue or an aggressive attack on a raging fire has few, if any, equivalents in terms of potential danger."

With his research, Dr. Perkins is pioneering new territory, in many ways. In the past there has been very little sociological study of volunteer fire departments. His research is attracting attention from firefighters and sociologists alike.

A summary of the Virginia study has been accepted for publication in *Sociological Inquiry,* a quarterly

The risk of entering a burning building has few, if any, more dangerous parallels. Photo: Chesterfield County Training Division

journal. Dr. Perkins has been invited to present his findings this summer at the Southern Sociological Society's annual meeting in Atlanta.

Longwood College has appropriated two grants for the fire department studies and the Center for Volunteer Development at Virginia Tech has provided a grant. The National Volunteer Fire Council has been working with Dr. Perkins on the nationwide study, now in progress. He says their assistance has been invaluable in establishing contacts in other states to distribute the questionnaires.

Dr. Perkins' study has also stirred interest in other volunteer organizations. The Old Dominion Emergency Medical Services Alliance has asked him to conduct a study about volunteer rescue squads across Virginia along the same lines as the fire department study.

In conducting the surveys of

Carole Metz (left), Robert Weiderhold (center) and Dr. Kenneth Perkins (right) review survey results. Over 10,000 questionnaires were distributed to volunteer firefighters throughout the country.

What makes participation in volunteer fire departments so appealing? Professor/firefighter Kenneth Perkins is using academic research methods to find the answers.

volunteer firefighters, Dr. Perkins has relied heavily on the assistance of student researchers. Carole W. Metz, a senior sociology major from Richmond, is the co-author of the paper to be published about the Virginia research.

In addition, Robert Weiderhold, along with Ms. Metz, is working on the national study. Also a senior sociology major, Weiderhold is from Springfield and is a lieutenant in the volunteer fire department there. He is also a member of the Prince Edward County Rescue Squad.

In the national study, Dr. Perkins and his assistants are surveying volunteer fire departments in Alabama, Delaware, Minnesota, Oregon, Texas and Virginia.

Dr. Perkins says he is basically trying to come up with baseline information that the National Volunteer Fire Council can use to better understand the organization and to find out where the problems are.

"One of the things I'm most excited about are the occupations of the volunteers," he said. "Our findings in this area may help with recruitment."

The National Volunteer Fire Council is interested in why some volunteers quit.

"We may discover that people quit not because of the danger or anything like that, but because of personality conflicts or management problems," Dr. Perkins noted. "If we find that to be the case, then the national council has some justification, for instance, for applying for grant funds to set up leadership training."

The questionnaires from the national study are due back in early September. Dr. Perkins is scheduled to present his findings before the annual convention of the National Volunteer Fire Council this year. He plans to eventually publish his findings, perhaps in book form.

Dr. Perkins says he hopes to make discoveries that will enhance volunteer fire departments.

"We're not out to answer why people volunteer. We're looking at what makes the organization appealing. There is a difference between the two," he explained.

"Whether it's the pride in being able to get up on a fire call in the middle of the night or the *esprit de corps* of the department, there are many factors that make volunteer firefighting popular," he said.

Dr. Perkins says the analysis of the data can be complex or it can be as simplistic as the reply to the question, "Why did you join the fire department?"

In the Virginia study, the number one response to that question was "to serve the community." At a close second was the reply, "I always wanted to be a firefighter."

According to Dr. Perkins, "There just aren't that many organizations that allow you to help society while doing something you've always wanted to do."▲

The need for complete trust and teamwork is vital among firefighters. Photo: Chesterfield County Training Division

MED FLIGHT II
Takes Off in Southwest Virginia

For many residents of Southwest Virginia, an ambulance ride to the nearest critical-care hospital takes well over two hours. The obstacle is not always distance. The narrow roads that snake around some of Virginia's most rugged mountains make ground transportation slow and arduous.

But what if that two-hour drive could be shortened to 20 minutes? A pie in the sky? Not quite, it's just modern technology in the form of a medical evacuation helicopter.

Med-Flight II began flying medical missions in Southwest Virginia on March 1, 1987. The primary coverage area is a 60-mile radius of Bristol. In addition to the coverage area in Virginia, the helicopter will respond to calls from eastern Tennessee and portions of West Virginia and Kentucky.

Patterned after the state-sponsored air medical evacuation program in Richmond, the Med-Flight II helicopter is owned and piloted by the Virginia State Police. Flight paramedics are predominantly members of the Bristol Volunteer Life Saving Crew, although at least one paramedic is from the Norton Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Sgt. T. W. Timberlake of the Virginia State Police says the program has gotten great support from area residents. Timberlake is in charge of the Southwest Virginia aviation unit and piloted the first Med-Flight mission in the Richmond area.

"The time savings is phenomenal!"

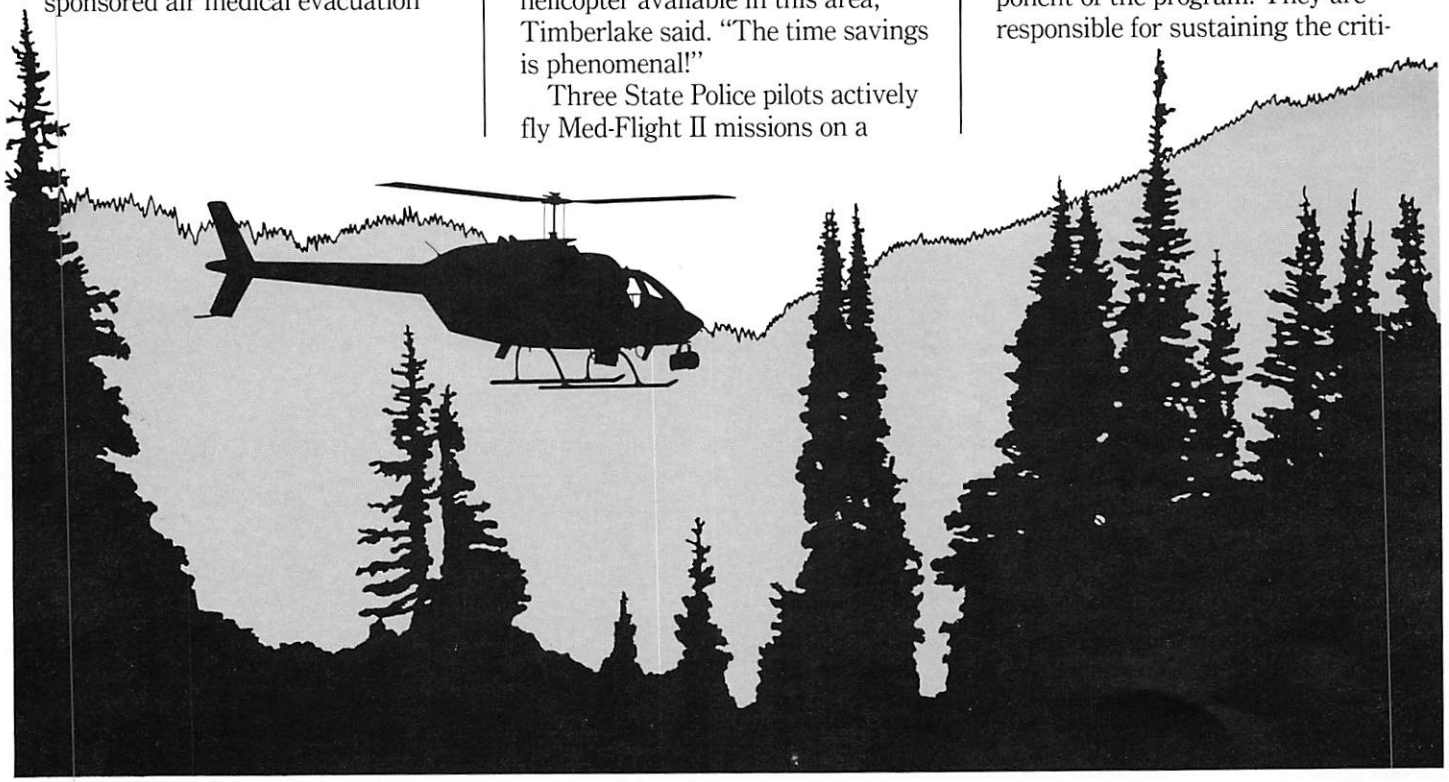
"Everybody is so glad to have the helicopter available in this area," Timberlake said. "The time savings is phenomenal!"

Three State Police pilots actively fly Med-Flight II missions on a rotating basis. Presently, the helicopter is responding to medical emergencies only during daylight hours. Timberlake explained that safety is the factor in limiting the service hours.

"Flying a helicopter in the mountains presents quite a few more problems than flying it over flat terrain," he noted. "You can't see the mountains at night, especially with fog and a low cloud ceiling. The power lines that swing from mountaintop to mountaintop add yet another hazard to nighttime flight."

Timberlake indicated that flight hours may be extended when the pilots become more familiar with the area and its terrain.

Like the Richmond-based Med-Flight, the Southwest Virginia program is a coordinated effort of several different organizations. The flight paramedics are a vital component of the program. They are responsible for sustaining the criti-



The specially trained paramedics who fly aboard Med-Flight II are all volunteers from area rescue squads. Photo: Virginia State Police

cally ill or injured patients that the helicopter transports.

Kathy Fleenor is the head paramedic for Med-Flight II. She is also the head nurse at Bristol Memorial Hospital's Medical ICU and is an active member of the Bristol Volunteer Life Saving Crew. She says the Southwest Virginia program is unique in some respects.

"Unlike other medical evacuation helicopters, Med-Flight II is staffed solely by volunteer paramedics. These volunteers have given a lot of their free time to participate in the program," she said. "Everyone has worked together very well to get this thing going and I'm very pleased with their dedication and support."

Fleenor explained that in addition to the normal rotation of duty on the helicopter, the 14 flight paramedics must participate in 24 hours of refresher training at the hospital each month.

Bristol Memorial Hospital is an integral part of the program. A Level II Trauma Center, the hospital is the destination of most of the trauma injury and medical cases transported by the helicopter. Bristol Memorial also provides the ongoing training that is necessary for the flight paramedics.

Dr. Jim Kirksey is the medical director for the program. He has served for many years as medical director for the Bristol Volunteer Life Saving Crew. According to Dr. Kirksey, flight paramedics are authorized to perform several invasive medical techniques that other paramedics are not allowed to perform. Dr. Kirksey works with the paramedics regularly to help develop and refine their skills.

Another member of the Med-Flight II team is the Bristol, Virginia Police Department. Their communications division dispatches the helicopter. Thomas Stone, Bristol Police Chief, says that things have worked out well so far.

"We modified our communications system and provided special training for our communications personnel to handle the Med-Flight II calls," he explained. Stone says his personnel will eventually be giving navigational assistance to the helicopter.

Vassie Vaught, executive director of the Southwest Virginia EMS Council, says the area rescue squads are thrilled.

"We've always been dealing with many minutes and miles to a hospital," he said. Often these hospitals weren't equipped to handle the emergency. We lost a lot of patients because of the time factor."

"Suddenly, we are looking at anywhere in the region being less than 30 minutes to the Level II Trauma Center in Bristol. It's a tremendous service. We're extremely pleased."▲

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