

# Search Theory for FTLs; or What the Hell is Base Doing?

## Some basic questions:

- 1) How are we going to find this guy?
- 2) Who is going to do it?
- 3) What are they going to do to get the job done?

## Some basic answers:

- 1) Search Strategy!
- 2) ICS Structure!
- 3) Information Management!

**Warning:** Up until now we have asked you to keep your nose to the ground, and deal with the gritty, real, dirty side of search. We are going to leave that world now. Instead of seeing field teams, ridges and footprints, we now want you to see resources, search areas, and last known positions. We are going to look at search at the most abstract level possible. In base, *nothing is real; everything is a piece of information*. At the staff level, search is simply **the management of that information**. This is worth repeating: **Search Management is Managing the Flow of Information**.

In the field you are looking for a subject, a body in the woods. In base, you are looking for a single piece of information- the location of the subject. You may get ink on your fingers, be careful out there.

**Second Warning:** This is a brutally condensed version of what usually gets taught in a two-weekend class. I also present some things a little differently. When you go on to MSO, PSO, SOS and ICG, you'll get a more thorough presentation of this material. Hopefully, this class will prepare you for those classes.

# A Crash Course in Search Strategy

Finding a subject in 3 easy steps:

- 1) Establish a search area
- 2) Establish containment
- 3) Deploy resources

## So Easy!

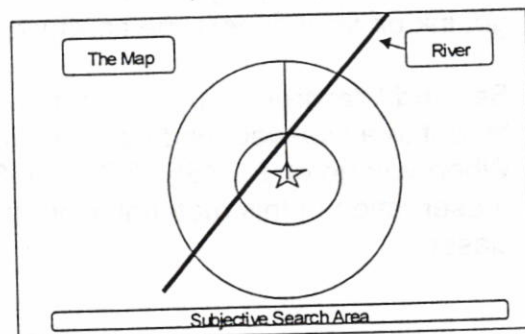
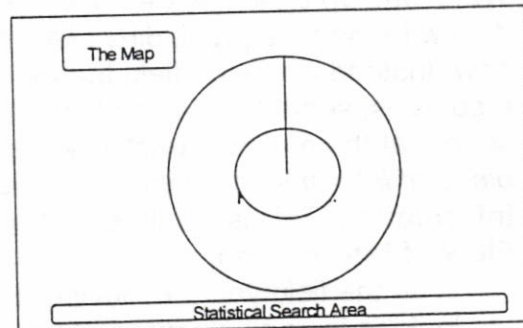
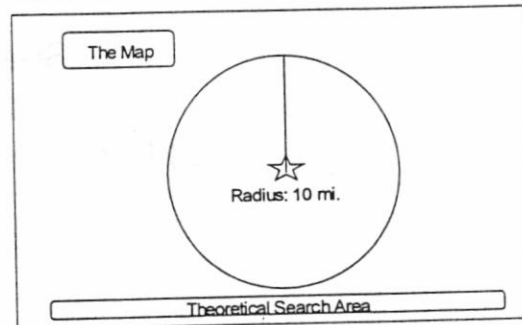
There are three steps to establishing a search area:<sup>1</sup>

1. Theoretical- How far could the subject go in the elapsed time? This is a circle. The center of the circle is the PLS or LKP. The radius of the circle is the distance they can walk in an hour (mph) times hours missing. Lets say he has been gone 10 hours and can walk 1 mph. What's the Theoretical search area? Is this useful?

2. Statistical- How far do similar subjects go? We check out Subject Profiles and usually use a distance where we can find 90% of our subjects. This is a much smaller circle.

3. Subjective/Deductive- Are there places he can't/won't go? Boundaries he can't/won't cross? Cross them off. Are there places he is likely to go? A direction he is likely to travel? Highlight them as your high probability areas.

To play along at home, highlight the search area!!



<sup>1</sup> Justin has bastardized this from ERI's *Search is an Emergency* text.

So you have a search area? Great! Now contain it so the little devil can't get out. And where are you going to deploy your resources? That's a much too practical and useful question! Tune in next week for Search Ops for Staff when we teach you stuff you can actually use.

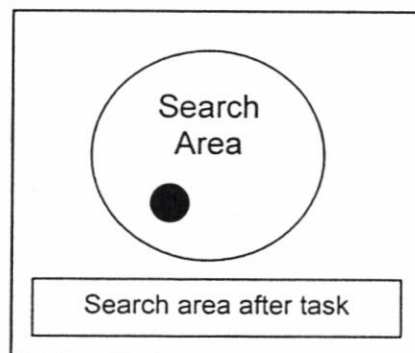
Onwards with more theory! We now move on to an essential question for the sophisticated search manager:

## Is There a Point to Field Resources?

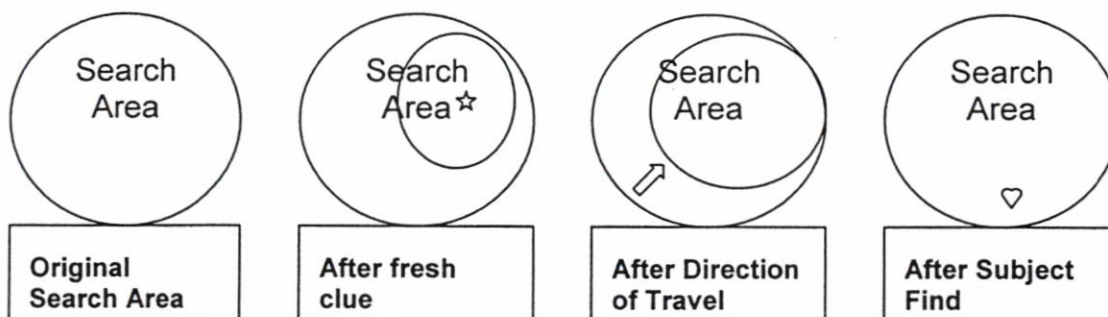
The overwhelming response here is: YES! While field resources are notoriously known for dealing in reality, they can be awfully useful to base types for one reason: FIELD TEAMS GATHER INFORMATION. Rumor has it they have to go into non-air conditioned places to do it.

Field teams can tell us two things about the area they searched.

- 1) Your Field Team did NOT find useful information.  
This is a useful piece of information. We can now mark their task off our search area (well, after we search it a few times).



- 2) Your Field Team did find useful information.  
Good for them. This is even more useful. We can now adjust our search area.



And who is the other person who can do this neat stuff? That's right: **Investigations!** She gathers information just like a field team!

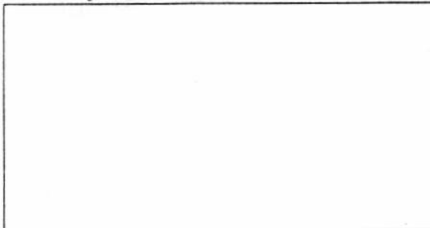
## A Crash Course in ICS Structure

No notes here, you are on your own to pay attention. Here are some boxes to organize your thoughts:

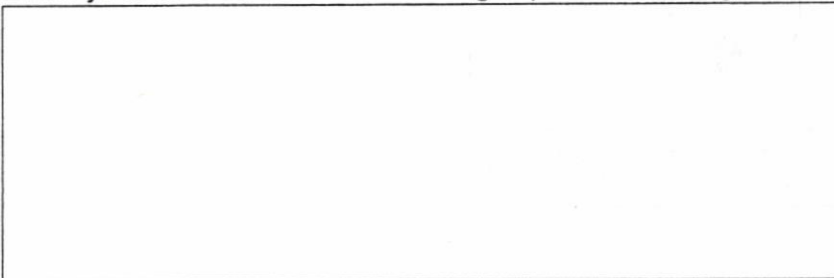
List every ICS position you can think of here:

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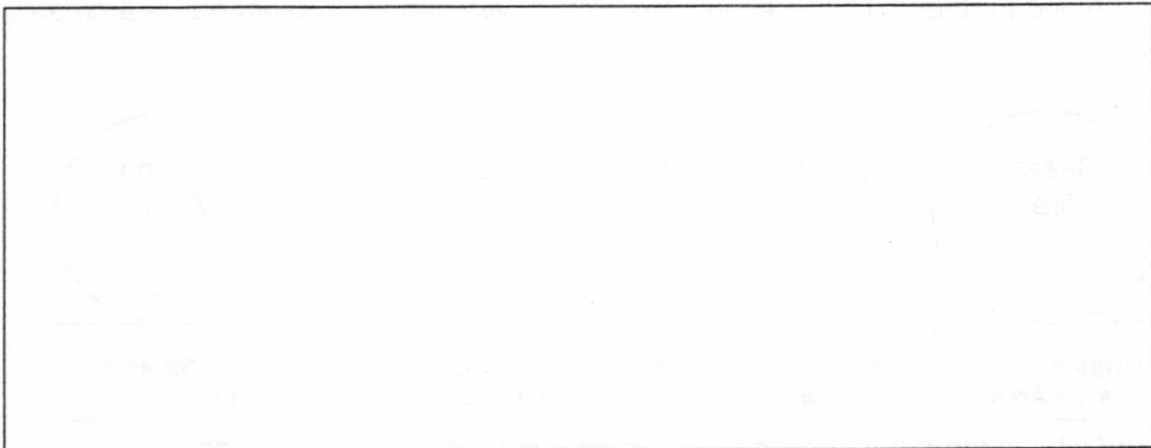
Draw your ICS structure for a two-person OHT:



Draw your ICS structure for an eight-person management team here:



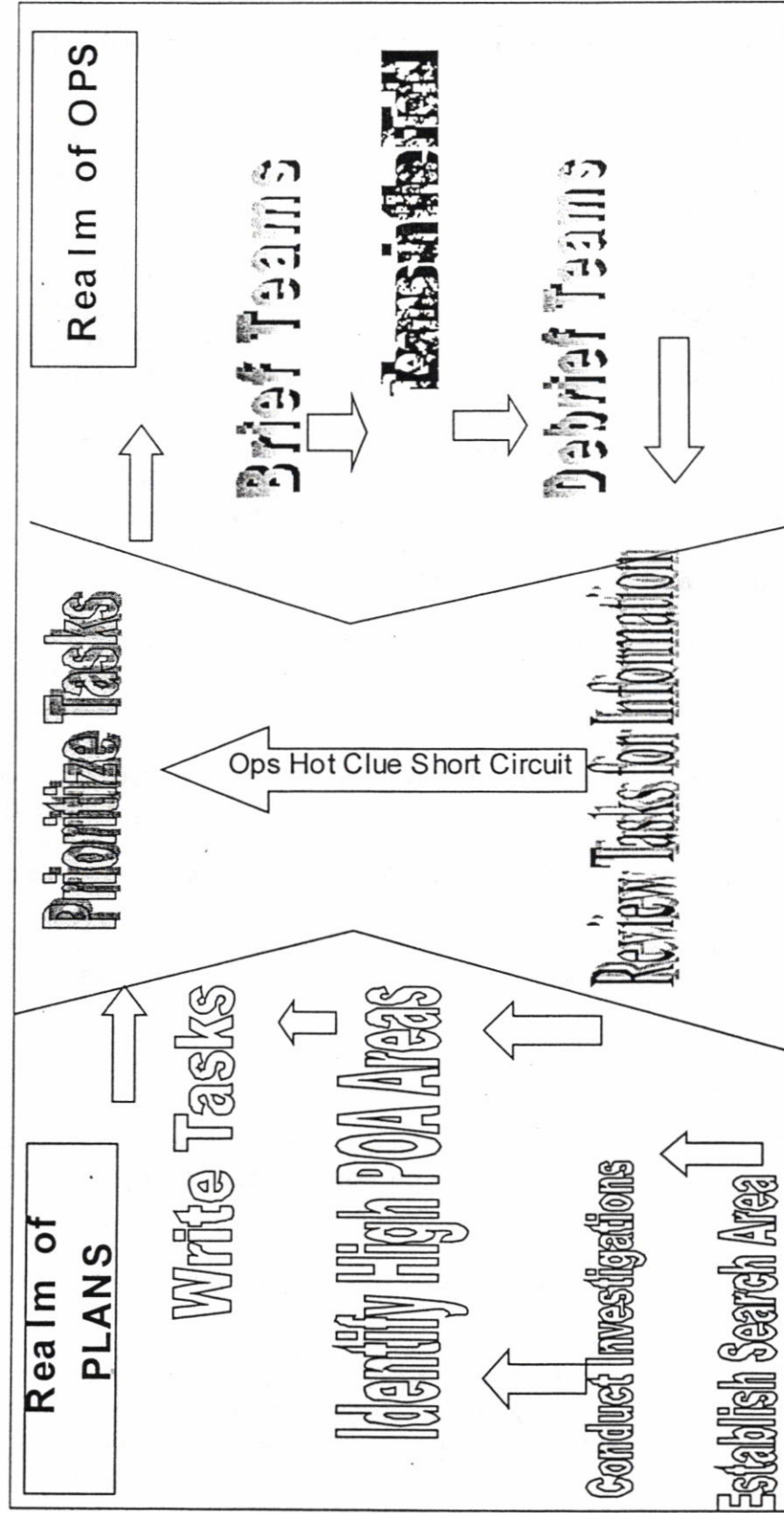
Now draw the fifteen-person, five-day, downed aircraft mission from Hell here:





So what do all these people do? Manage Information!

## A Crash Course in Information Management, Or the Life of a Task Assignment Form



# So Have We Taught You Anything Useful?

This theory stuff isn't for everyone; some of you are now more ready than ever to go back in the field. Is anything you learned today going to help you do that? Hopefully, yes.

- 1) **Field Teams Gather Information.** Everything you do in the field will be translated into a piece of information. Usually this is in the form of a clue or a POD. But hazards, terrain conditions, new construction, tips from members of your team, areas you think should be searched—all of these can be key pieces of information. **BE AWARE!**
- 2) **Figure out what information Base wants when you talk to your Briefer.** Get as much info about your task and subject as you possibly can. Who is he/she? What were they doing? Why does base want me to go here? Have there been clues in the area? What POD should I be aiming for? The more you know about what information you are supposed to gather, the better you will be at getting it.
- 3) **Be prepared to give the Debriefers the important information from your task.** Know exactly where you searched and where you didn't. Know the precise locations of important clues or hazards. Anything you gather that might be important, pass on.
- 4) **Make sure your important information gets heard!** If you told your debriefer something important while she was falling asleep, don't let that information fall through the cracks. Find your nearest friendly Blue shirt and say, "Hey! I have an important piece of information." Be professional, but make sure you are heard.
- 5) **Be ready to step up at any time.** When things are tight, field resources become base resources fast. Try to understand the system so you can be a part of it.

## PARTING SHOTS

For those ready to stay in the field, good on ya! Now I don't have to get my boots wet. But remember that you are part of a system, and you need to understand that system to function effectively in it.

For those who think they might be ready to move up, good on ya! Let me wish you well:

### Ancient Irish Staff Prayer

May your tasks planned folders be full,  
May your staging areas be empty,  
May your fingers be stained with Vis-à-vis ink  
And May your RA's ALWAYS be happy!!