

DISASTERCOM



DERA Newsletter

41 Years of Service

April 2003



DERA-WCARS Mobile Operations
Emergency Van at Greenville-
Spartanburg Weather Station

Skywarn Recognition Day

DERA participated in the fifth annual Skywarn Recognition Day. Dec. 7 was set up as a "thank you" opportunity for the Weather Service all across the nation to honor the contribution of hams in reporting Weather to the National Weather Service. A group of 4 hams took the jointly owned DERA-WCARS MOE van and set up to work as one of over 100 special event stations participating on all bands.

FOX News featured our own Bob Dockery standing in front of the MOE Van giving a short statement to the press.

Univ. of Richmond Homeland Defense Issues

In November's issue of the DERA newsletter, Univ. of Richmond asked our readership for their reaction as to whether state and local governments should reorganize their public safety functions to create homeland defense organizations.

A summary of comments is available at www.disasters.org/news

FEMF Conference Highlights

This year DERA was represented at the 24th Annual International Disaster Management Conference held at the Rosen Centre in Orlando, Florida. Larry Wilcox of CPTI and Catherine Lawhun, of Many Waters Resource Network (our new editor) were able to attend and serve at our exhibit. We were happy to see a number of our members there.

Attendance provided very high numbers of education credits for nurses, physicians, EMT/Paramedics, Fire Service, Mental Health Professionals and Law Enforcement professionals.

One of the preconference courses of the 3-day event was the Abbottville Simulation, a 6-hour active participation class simulating several different incident scenarios on a tabletop city replication. The "city", is aptly named "Abbottville" after the creators of this exercise. Don and Beverly Abbott (long time DERA members) who sold their creation to an organization called The Command School. The Command School now conducts training simulations all over the country. See the article on the Dirty Bomb Scenario Exercise at right.

One of the concluding presentations at the conference was given by Capt. Ed Blunt who was commander in charge of the Pentagon response on 911. Much of his presentation dealt with the difficulties of recovering and properly handling the remains of victims. Hearing the choke in his voice as he described decisions he was forced to make that day brought the audience both tears and a hardened resolve to unite in the struggle to eradicate the threat of terrorism.

Abbottville Dirty Bomb Scenario

Tabletop Disaster Simulation Exercise Bombs went off, fires broke out and snipers were shooting from the roof of the courthouse (all this complete with sound effects) while participants were tested on how well they handled the ongoing series of disaster incidents. Teamwork proved a crucial role while we kept focus on the Incident Command Structure and followed strategic plans that were being continuously revised. Such was the classroom experience of those in attendance at the Abbottville Dirty Bomb Scenario course presented at the FEMF conference in Orlando, FL.



Three enactments were played out over the course of 6 hours on a very intricate replication of a city. The cityscape encompassed an area of joined tables approximately 10ft x 36ft complete with streets, tiny matchbox cars, people, homes, stores, industry, and even high rises in the downtown area. See photo above. Each participant was interviewed to determine their field of expertise and then roles were assigned. Each player received a handheld radio, vest indicating their functional role and miniature equipment to be used.

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DisasterCom is the quarterly newsletter of DERA International. News items and articles are always welcome.

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Editor: Catherine Lawhun

Membership in this Nonprofit Association is open to all who share our commitment to effective disaster preparedness and response.

See Back Page for Membership Application

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E I I P



Greetings from the Editor

In October, I witnessed firsthand the Florida volunteer disaster response in action when my own home and offices were struck by a Tornado.

Ironically, I had just been introduced to Jodi Hill, director of the Florida Interfaith Network for Disaster, (www.FIND.org). Their mission is to act as a central dispatch for faith based volunteer organizations. One of their most active members is the CCA. Scott Jager, president and founder of CCA and his men were here with heavy equipment the next morning and worked for over a week removing debris, providing repair services and doing most of the heavy work to put our tiny community back together.

They offered all their services completely free of charge and would not even accept donations from any of the financially strapped retirees that make up the majority of the population here in Inglis. These 8 men had left their wives and children and bore all their own expenses for the entire week in addition to the costs associated with the repairs and clean up. The following week, I ended up in the Florida VOAD meeting only to learn that CCA does not even receive any state funding! Not that they wouldn't like to. The CCA has been providing volunteer service such as this since 1989. Scott originally became involved when he organized a volunteer relief team for the devastation in S.C. in the wake of Hurricane Hugo.

One of the more encouraging stories from this incident was the testimony of Michelle Greer, head of the local youth group. Their group's concrete block building was by far the hardest hit, having totally collapsed in the wind. Their organization was, at the time, right in the middle of constructing a new building. The response from the tornado's destruction resulted in such an outpouring of assistance from the community that they now have all the help they need both in helping hands as well as financially to be able to complete their new building in record time.

It all left a fervent picture of how the members of a community should be there to help each other even in times of peace and not just through times of hardship and disaster.

-Catherine Lawhun

Catherine Lawhun is also President of Many Waters Resource Network, Inc. www.many-waters.com whose non-profit component is currently assisting in recruitment efforts for Registered Engineers in Disaster Response - The International RedR. (Learn more about the RedR in this issue.)

Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness

13th World Conference on Disaster Management Toronto, Canada - June 22-25, 2003

WCDM isn't until June 2003, but don't delay! Time is running out for our Early Bird registration fee of \$700 Cdn (about \$516 US).

Visit www.wcmd.org which is loaded with detailed information on topics and classes with biographies on each speaker.

Teton County Wyoming Project Impact Feedback Requested

Teton County's Project Impact program has launched a new interactive natural hazards website. You're invited to review it at www.bepreparedtc.com. A team of volunteers led by Rich Greenwood of Greenwood Mapping has worked on this for the past year. The site is "mapcentric". It allows you to click on a point on the county map that interests you and the subsequent screens open to reveal natural hazard risks in that area as well mitigation tips. Let them know what you think! They're interested in getting feedback/critique so that they can maximize this site's utility to both residents and visitors.

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Smallpox Planning- What EM's need to know

DERA affiliate organization EIIP holds virtual forums on a variety of topics on a regular basis. December's forum consisted of an on-line open interview with guest speaker:

Dr. Karen M. Becker, DVM, MPH
Senior Health Advisor

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Highlights included clarification and delineation of responsibilities at federal, state and local levels as well as criteria affecting decisions for implementation of ring vaccination plans versus mass vaccination plans. Public health experts believe strongly, based on experience, that we can control outbreaks with expanded and intensified surveillance, rigorous contact tracing, and a good vaccination strategy that reaches those who are vaccinating as well as first responders.

Questions addressing the following issues are answered in detail in the transcript on the EIIP website at <http://www.emforum.org/vforum/lc011218.htm>

- NGO participation and which agencies to plan with
- Criteria for expansion from ring vaccination to mass vaccination
- Supply status of gamma globulin
- Issues with quarantine
- Criteria for Response teams
- Immunity duration
- Ongoing education of general public
- Media considerations
- International coordination
- The practice of vaccinating all exposed regardless of citizen status.

In addition, the CDC broadcast a satellite teleconference on Smallpox Preparedness. Order a copy of the broadcast from the Public Health Foundation by E-mail - info@phf.org Online (CD-ROM) <http://bookstore.phf.org/prod250.htm> Or <http://bookstore.phf.org/prod249.htm> (VHS videotape), Phone 1-877-252-1200 There is no charge for this publication.

220 Capability needed

The DERA Van has the capability to run all radio frequency bands from 160M to 440 but NOT 220.

If anyone has a 220 radio (any size age or condition) that they would like to donate or sell at a "special price" to the MOE Van to fill this gap we would certainly appreciate your offer. Please contact radio@disasters.org.

Thank You

A Mirage B1016G VHF amplifier has been donated in memory of Joe Mullinax, W4CCU, to be installed in the DERA/MOE Van. This unit can be very helpful in those places where "just a little more power" would make the difference in getting the message through.

Mr. S.A. Mercer – K5LLJ of Edna, TX has donated an ICOMFT767GX from the estate of a silent key to the DERA/WCARS MOE Van.

Thank you to both K5LLJ and Bob Dockery for facilitating this transaction.

Infrastructure Protection

Within 10 days of 9/11, 11 founding member organizations, including the American Society of Civil Engineers formed The Infrastructure Security Partnership (TISP). The partnership brings together key public and private sector professionals whose expertise and experience have a direct impact on the future security of America's built environment. In just over a year's time, TISP has grown to a coalition of more than 145 member organizations that represents 1.75 million individuals and firms.

Membership in TISP is free and open to individuals and organizations desiring to collaborate on issues related to the security of the nation's infrastructure.

For more information on TISP and discussion generated at the conference in Washington in November visit www.tisp.org

U.S. Georgia Tornado

Salvation Army emergency disaster services personnel immediately responded after a deadly tornado ripped through Mitchell and Worth Counties in southwest Georgia on March 19. The storm left a path of destruction including the destruction of multiple buildings, taking the lives of six and injuring hundreds of people.

By Thursday afternoon, Salvation Army emergency disaster vehicles (canteens) were roving the streets assisting those in need and aiding in the recovery effort. Salvation Army personnel are feeding approximately 1,000 individuals at each meal and providing pastoral counseling to those affected by the storm.

Welcome New Members

Welcome to DERA!

Our aim is to meet your professional needs as we work together in dedication and service.

Cynthia Heller
W. Orange, NJ

Nickcole Bolden
Garland, TX

Lori D. Davis
Waldorf, MD

Kimberly Bryant
Crestone, CO

Anton V. Kurth
Leesburg, FL

John S. Tomko, Jr.
Alexandria, VA

Jana Champion
Milwaukee, WI

Captain Gayle Wood
Colorado Springs, CO

William J. Muhlfeld
Wauchula, FL

Jerry Flasher
Chambersburg, PA

Robert Barton
Hesperia, CA

Donald Eshleman, Jr.
Chambersburg, PA

David G. Lysy
Chicago, IL

Michael Minieri, II
Denver, CO

Kathy R. Reynolds
Horatio, AR

Theodore A. Wolf, Jr.
Wayne, NJ

John Boyd
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Neftali Carrasquillo, Jr.
Denver, CO

Welcome to DERA!

It is our sincere aim to help you achieve your professional and personal goals

Abbotville...

..... continued from Page 1

Examples of roles included Dispatcher, Sheriff, Ambulance 1, Fire Engine 1 & 2, Ladder Truck, Hazmat Team, Incident Commander, Bomb Squad, Staging area captain, Public Works, Search & Rescue, County Emergency Official, Mayor, Red Cross, FEMA, annoying members of the public, frantic and uncontrollable family members of victims and last, but, not least, persistent members of the press.

The biggest hurdle had to be the communications, for while in actuality we were 20+ persons gathered in a single room around a large table, the rules were such that participants had to communicate via handheld radios, just as they would have to do working a live scene. Truly, 20 separate radio messages were being sent at any one time and only a few could be deciphered amidst the noise.

After each event, a Public Information Officer (PIO) would be appointed to assess what the officials revealed was to be released to the press. Then a press conference was staged, complete with question and answer sessions. We all learned much about what NOT to say from other participants who were veterans in this role.

Sound Commander A Valuable Tool

DERA member Stefan Pollack, has produced a public address system for use in a variety of emergency applications. The small high output, wirelessly operated device was used at the G8 summit last June in Kannanaskis, AB (near Calgary). Here it was deployed to alert and call out the Ready Reaction Forces that were stationed inside trailers in two separate 900 Sq. Meter areas. This application was performed using only 3 of the devices. The 'Sound Commander' device proved to have no trouble penetrating the barracks in which the forces were stationed. Alternate products produced by long standing commercial sound system companies typically cannot penetrate the large crowds, tents and trailers.

Sound Commander is a state of the art, full-featured sound system that delivers clear and articulate commands distances of 1000 meters. It's as portable as a simple bullhorn. Yet it delivers clarity of sound that is as powerful and electrifying as a thunderbolt and as clean and sharp as a new razor's edge. Sound Commander produces crystal clear audio

so loud its wide fidelity voice audio can be clearly understood up to 2/3 of a mile away. It's so penetrating it overcomes the intense noise level of an aircraft. It's so powerful you can speak to and command noisy crowds.



The Sound Commander was also deployed in the Walk for Cancer to assist in tactical operations of over 11,000 individuals over an area the length of 4 football fields.

They are being used by the military for deployment purposes and for embassy evacuations. Law enforcement officials have used them in special operations for Hostage negotiations. The Central Massachusetts Fire Department is yet another pleased client.

Stefan has volunteered to assist DERA in it's membership and publicity initiatives. He was an avid supporter of the DERA display at the FEMF Conference and steered many new members to our table. His enthusiasm for our organization is contagious. DERA wishes to recognize its members who take a proactive role in their organization and contribute of their time and talents for the benefit of us all.

Stefan Pollack's company, IML delivers a number of products that are extremely useful to emergency communications, law enforcement and first responders. Visit them at www.IMLcorp.com for a more comprehensive listing.

Angel Flight West

The mission of Angel Flight West, a tax-exempt, non-profit organization is to facilitate access to health care by arranging free air transportation in private aircraft. Angel Flight links volunteer private pilots with needy people whose health care problems require travel to and from medical facilities throughout the following states: AZ, CO, CA, ID, NV, MT, OR, UT, WA.

Over 35 missions were scheduled between Dec. 23 and Jan 6 with an average of 5 missions per day.

Angel Flight West provides free transportation to medical treatment for people who cannot afford public transportation, or who cannot tolerate it for health reasons. Angel Flight also flies missions in response to other compelling needs. Their volunteer pilots pay all the costs of the missions they fly.

Assistance Offered for Promoting and Mentoring Student Grant Awards

DERA member Guy Corriveau, Director of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, has offered to stand behind and encourage student work along the lines suggested by our

Guidelines for Student Awards. "Perhaps the WRHA could distribute your flyer through the education system here with submissions being vetted through this office. This would be a "beyond-the-call" project for me --- but I think it would have merit and value." Guy recently offered as assistance. Any one wishing to assist in this type of activity would certainly be promoting a notable program. Email editor@disasters.org

Operation Dark Cloud Terrorism Disaster

On March 12 the Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross participated in the multi agency Operation Dark Cloud Terrorism Disaster Exercise hosted by the North Florida Regional Domestic Security Task Force. This day long exercise involved an attack at a Florida State University home football game in Tallahassee as well as an attack on an oil storage site in St Marks 30 miles south of Tallahassee.

To view the photo expose of the exercise activities please visit:
www.tallytown.com/redcross/odc.html

Radio Museum

The **Southern Appalachian Radio Museum (SARM)** has many examples of early radios on display. Donating items for the museum helps to preserve radio history and the donor may also benefit from a tax deduction since the museum is a tax-deductible 501(c)(3) non-profit entity approved by the IRS.

The SARM has an operating amateur radio station, W4AFM. This call was reissued by the FCC at the request of the museum to honor the memory of a well-known and respected amateur operator. At present, the SARM is housed at the Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College in Asheville, North Carolina, not far from the entrance to the Biltmore Estate. It is in Room 315 of the Elm building -more directions to the museum are at www.saradiomuseum.org.

Questions?: Call Carl Smith, N4AA, President, at 828-683-4251

Aviation Fire Asia 2003 CALL FOR SPEAKERS

The INTERNATIONAL AVIATION FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (IAFPA) has issued a Call For Speakers for the IAFPA's 4th ANNUAL "AVIATION FIRE ASIA 2003" CONFERENCE being held in conjunction with the "SAFETY & SECURITY ASIA 2003" associated conference(s) and Exhibition being held on October 8 -10th, 2003 at the SINGAPORE EXPO in SINGAPORE.

For a list of topics and further details please visit www.disasters.org/news

Aviation Fire Europe 2003 CALL FOR PAPERS

The non-profit INTERNATIONAL AVIATION FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (IAFPA) has issued a Call For Papers for an IAFPA "AVIATION FIRE EUROPE 2003" Regional Workshop being held in conjunction with the Chief & Assistant Chief Fire Officers Association (CACFOA) on September 10, 2003 at The Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre (SSEC) in Glasgow, Scotland. **Speakers who wish to present a paper at the conference must submit an abstract by MAY 30th 2003.**

For a list of topics and further details please visit www.disasters.org/news or www.iafpa.org.uk

Europe Tests Satellite System for Disaster Medicine

LONDON (Reuters Health 12NOV02) - The European Space Agency is developing a new satellite system to allow emergency workers in a disaster zone to get expert help treating patients when mobile and land-based communications are struck down.

A trial run of the system in southern Germany late last week showed the DELTASS (Disaster Emergency Logistics Telemedicine Advanced Satellites System) works well, and negotiations are under way to get it into use, the agency said.

DELTASS uses geostationary and low earth orbit satellites. It allows central management of emergency workers scattered around a disaster zone and lets medical experts hundreds of miles away help with the diagnosis of casualties.

Engineers in RedR

By Idros Ismail (idros@nstp.com.my)

The International RedR - acronym for 'Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief', volunteers its members to complement the duties of personnel from the international humanitarian aid agencies.

In practice, RedR is an organization dedicated to relieving suffering in disaster areas by selecting and training competent engineering personnel and placing them with humanitarian relief agencies.

It is basically a registry of carefully selected engineers who could be called upon to work for a period with frontline relief agencies on secondment from their regular employers.

That was the basic premise upon which Peter Guthrie, a British engineer who had worked in the Vietnamese refugee camps in Malaysia, founded RedR in the United Kingdom in 1979.

Under the aegis of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Guthrie saw how difficult it was for the relief agencies to identify and recruit engineers who had an important role to play in reducing human sufferings in emergencies.

Since then, RedR has been established in Australia (1992), New Zealand (1994) and Canada (2002).

Its volunteer database covers the entire spectrum of essential personnel needed to initiate and manage a camp set-up. It presently numbers about 2,000 of which 80 percent are engineers while the rest are administration, finance, logistics and programme management personnel.

"RedR works on humanitarian assignments worldwide. In order to provide competent personnel for the relief agencies such as the International Red Cross or Oxfam, we carefully select people from the register and subsequently send them for training. "That's basically the central core of RedR's mission - to select, register and train technical personnel who will be competent and effective in their given tasks," roving director Koen Versavel stresses.

Basically any aid agency can approach RedR and request for the appropriate and competent personnel. "We have resources available - people who are not fully employed but are in the RedR database. We contact them on behalf of the agencies and ask them if they can avail themselves for, say two to six

weeks or more to work abroad for a particular assignment.

"If they are agreeable, they sign a direct contract of employment with the agency concerned," explains Versavel,

He reveals statistics over the five-year period between 1997-2001, which shows that RedR is hard pressed to meet requests for placements. For example, the best fill-request ratio is only 1:2 (in 2001), which is still an improvement over the less than 1:3 ratios of the previous four years

Hence the need for increased membership of RedR, for which Versavel is now actively pursuing.

Disaster relief work is both challenging and stimulating. Many who have volunteered their services want to do it again and again. But Versavel is under no illusions about the hardship and danger that prevail, especially in war torn surroundings.

In the face of violence and atrocities that may occur in a conflict, relief workers are also confronted with the issue of dealing with something very personal - their conscience. It's an issue that RedR addresses before its volunteers are deployed to the aid agencies.

Training RedR for action

"We hire engineers for their technical skills; and we fire them for their social skills," says Koen Versavel gleefully.

It emphasises not only engineering skills but also personal behaviour, team-building and cross-cultural interaction skills. In short the training relates to everything that may happen in real emergencies.

RedR stresses much on training to improve the competence of personnel working in relief programmes. Every volunteer has to undergo the RedR training regime before he can be hired by the relief agencies.

"From experience, RedR realises that the vast majority of risks that one runs in to in a war zone is directly related to one's actions," says Versavel.

In 2000, it organised security training in 11 locations worldwide. It is a continuous programme that will keep RedR on its toes to respond to any emergencies.

On a broader level, RedR also organises courses in project management, finance, administration, human resources and IT. RedR also trains the trainers that it employs in its six offices worldwide to ensure capacity-building and continued support of the organization.

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