



*"Proudly Serving PA, NJ, DE, and MD since 1979"*

# RESCUE ME

*"That others may learn"*

Spring 2003

2003-1

## Bridgeport Search



Greater Philadelphia Search and Rescue was contacted by the local Police on 2 January 2003 to assist in locating a despondent person in the Bridgeport area.

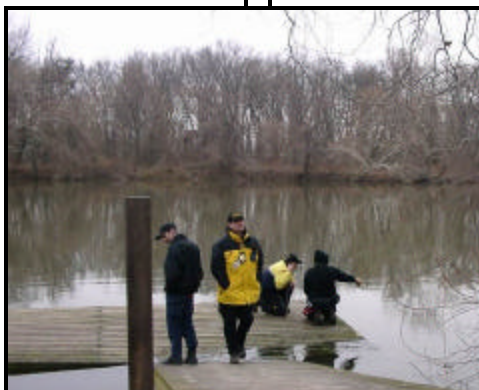
Upon arrival we conferred with Police and reviewed what was already done.

We did several hasty searches along the river and in the area near the subjects pickup truck.

Canine's hit in several locations consistent with the PD's thoughts that the individual had went into the river.

One of the tracking canine's strongest hit was marked and relayed back to the command post.

The scene was shutdown for the night by the PD.



Asst. Chief Wallace explaining scent theory and why the dog hit where it did given the conditions at the time.

GPSAR got permission to return to the location that Sunday for our training. It was at that time that divers retrieved the body at the location that the canine hit strongest at.

The cooperation and coordination between all services allowed this

to have as positive an ending as the situation allowed.

Sometimes we are fortunate enough to be able to be part of a happy ending and sometimes we are able to just provide a grieving family with closure.

Following the find GPSAR continued the with planned training for and had a very full and productive day.

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# Product Review—Quik Steps Ladder



The Quikstep Ladder deploys quickly and quietly to a fully extended position in seconds.

Aluminum alloy and stainless steel construction, give the Quikstep Ladder a very high strength to weight ratio.

The Quikstep Ladder can be folded up to a brief case size. The 10 foot ladder folds up to 23.5 inches wide by 13 inches high by 3 inches thick. The 12 foot ladder has the same width and height with a thickness of 3.5 inches. The ladder can be easily stored in the trunk of a car, or behind the seat of a truck.



Check this great product out at [www.foldableladder.com](http://www.foldableladder.com)

## New Year / New Lessons



Lt. Fornwalt and Sgt. Wright locate Explorer Couchara who was evading teams during a recent training.

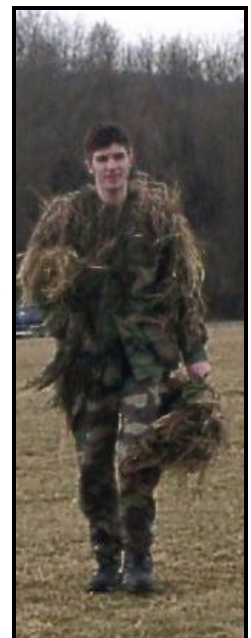
One of the things that we've been seeing is that when the dogs get better it can lead to the groundpounders slacking a little. Now while everyone can sit back and Monday morning quarterback this is merely GPSAR being honest. We've seen it in ourselves and corrected it. If others have this problem they might want to work on it before it goes from problem to an engrained behavior that gets transferred from generation to generation of team member.

What we did was start a series of trainings and tests where we looked for persons that we knew were trying to evade us. This is not unrealistic at all. Many times we see this in runaways, Alzheimer's patients, despondent's, etc. The bottom line is techniques have to be

flexible enough to adjust for these situations.

We had people hide in ghille suits while we did hasty and grid searches (not unrealistic if you're looking for a missing hunter that might have had a medical emergency, etc.). First time out on these series of trainings it took hours to find the people. As of mid February we were knocking them out in 1/2 hour or so. We had gotten more aggressive and observant. We utilized all senses, threw in some technology when needed and came up with a winning combination.

*More on looking for people that might not want to be found in the near future!*



# Updated Training Techniques—Training NEVER Stops

You can have all the people and all the certificates and all the toys but the bottom line is if you DO NOT train you are an accident waiting to happen.

Too many people take classes and come back and think certificates mean they are all knowing for life. This is simply not true.

GPSAR trains hard and often. When we talk with other teams many times they say that they train once a month. This is simply not enough. While you can keep up your individual skills you cannot keep a good field rapport with teammates with those kind of length gaps between trainings.

We've availed ourselves to the excellent opportunity that nature has provided us to train in some excellent snowy and cold weather conditions. We've been out in -6 degree temperatures for 5 hour trainings and have trekked in virgin snow. You can either read about it or you can do it. We chose to do it.

Normally we'd be inside more than outside this time of year training but this opportunity to train in these conditions

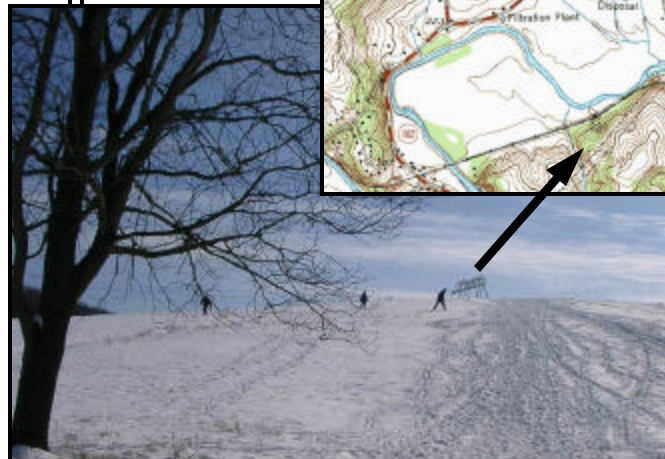
simply couldn't be passed up. The result has been that all equipment and personnel has been tested and outlasted others around us.

One of the things that you have to look for with teams with their long fancy names is what they do with what they have. Do they train when it's harsh out....people do get lost in bad weather too! Can the leadership motivate and empower the membership to perform in these conditions?

We looked, reviewed our weaknesses and systematically are correcting them. Working towards excellence is most of the reward.



Chief showing some of the younger members how hiding is really done. Eventually found by all canines during testing.



We were getting terrain lazy so we located some nice old Pennsylvania rolling hills and threw in some snow for a rough but great day of training.



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## Outreach—Barren Hill, Mont Clare, Brookhaven



We've had searches, standbys, details, and trainings and were able to squeeze a few outreaches pretty early in the year for us. Normally these things start in March.

We filled requests to speak before the local Fire Police Association's meeting at the Barren Hill firehouse as well as meeting with Mont Clare to discuss some future dealings as we have worked together at a problem lowhead dam in their jurisdiction.

Later in the month we met with the authorities in Brookhaven about an upcoming FEMA CERT class we will be running down there with cooperation from the Chester Wallingford Chapter of the American Red Cross, the Brookhaven municipality, FD & PD.

This class will be almost filled to capacity nearly 3 months before it's date.

Hopefully the people that take it will keep their initiative to help and take it back to their respective areas and spread it around and get others interested.

