

“These Things We Do That Others May Live”



# THE SORTIE

FALLBROOK SQUADRON 87

Capt. James Pedersen- Editor

On February 26 & 27 Fallbrook Squadron 87 in conjunction with Sq 57 hosted a Group 7 Search and Rescue Training exercise (SAREX) at Fallbrook Airpark. Squadrons from around Group 7 participated. The Incident Commander for the exercise was 1st Lt. Rich Lovick, the Mission Safety Officer trainee was 1st Lt. Rich Lee, the Air Operations Branch Director was Lt Col Scott Swanson, the Communication Officer was Maj. Joe DiMento, and the Mission Chaplain was Maj. Richard Nelson. Public Affairs information was handled by Capt. James Pedersen. Due to the inclement weather on Saturday classroom instruction replaced the scheduled flight training. On Sunday morning flying resumed and began with the mass crew briefing. Lt.Lovick covered search base procedures, the goals of the mission for the days exercise the upgrading of flight qualifications, Scanner and Observer duties, and airplane preparation. Col.Morrison covered safety procedures and suggestions for the exercise. Maj. DiMento covered base communications and aircraft radio procedures.



2d Lt. Richard Wilsher, 1st Lt. Tim Baskin, 1st Lt. Carol Bennet

Mentor pilots provided training for Mission Pilot, along with Mission Observer and Mission Scanner trainees.

Each sortie began with an individual pre-flight briefing for all the aircrews that highlighted the terrain and expected obstacles that were unique to each area.

The focus of the SAREX was on aircrew training using Direction Finding (DF) equipment for the location of an Emergency Practice Beacon and the use of Grid Search Pattern techniques

in order to simulate a downed aircraft. Photo Reconnaissance missions were also practiced. The in-flight DF crew procedure for the aircraft involved flying toward the Practice Beacon using only the signal strength and direction meters in the front of the DF unit on the aircraft instrument panel to determine the direction of the signal. As the crew flew they changed the airplane heading approximately 5 degrees to the left and right until the needle on the signal direction meter was centered and watched for the needle on the signal strength meter to increase. When the signal strength needle began to decrease they recorded the latitude and longitude of that position. They then began to turn the aircraft identical to the needle on the direction meter and recorded that position in latitude and longitude as the needle bounced left to right and began to get weaker. At that point, they were close to being over the target Practice Beacon and performed a series of aircraft circles to give the aircrew a visual reference on the ground. Any position identification points were noted for discussion at the mission briefing later.

The Grid Search Pattern procedure for the aircraft involved using contour, expanding square, creeping line, and other types of search patterns while flying at approximately 1,500 feet above the highest terrain. Whenever possible, the crew was tasked with noting any hazards in route, plotting a course to the corner of the grid and advising the pilot of a desired heading. Upon reaching that point they changed headings to the north, east, south and west, noting the GPS coordinates and landmark abnormalities at each corner as it was boxed. A suggested high-to-low search first involved a contour of the higher points, dropping down 100 feet at each rotation, and then a creeping-line, back and forth pattern to completely cover the desired lower area. Before flying down the canyon, the wind direction was noted and an emergency route out was determined. A course and heading were then established for the leg back.

Communication with base was at engine start, wheels up, in grid, ops normal on the hour and half hour, target call, out of grid, wheels down, and engine off.

Eight search and rescue sorties were flown in Orange, San Diego, and Riverside Counties on Sunday, with each ending in a post-flight briefing for all aircrews that evaluated the success of their mission. Airplanes from four Civil Air Patrol squadrons were used and just under 50 members participated in the two day exercise.

This was invaluable experience for all aircrews, and the squadron wishes to thank Lt Col. Carl Morrison for the generous use of his hanger for the exercise.



Maj. Roy Knight, Lt Col. Scott Swanson, and 1st Lt. Rich Lovick