

TECHNIQUES, TRAINING & GEAR REVIEWS.

Chris Curtis. SSS Training Officer (training@sss.org.au).

NSW Cave Rescue Squad - November 9, 2014 Annual Training Exercise - Report.

This year Cave Rescue carried out what was its biggest training exercise in many years. With almost 40 attendees on the day, and a huge day planned, it was set to be a mammoth task.

The plan was to extricate a patient from "Lower River" to "Mammoth Flat" via some very tight passages and a few vertical pitches. This exercise is a full scale simulation.

Members from other squads were invited to attend, as this improves intersquad relations, gives them exposure to underground rescue techniques and the caving environment. On the day, we had members from Police Rescue Squad (PRS), WICEN NSW, Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad (BWRS), Jenolan Caves Guides and Special Casualty Access Team (SCAT) Paramedics.

We met at the fire shed at 8:00 am for briefing, team allocations, etc. We then car pooled and drove down to Mammoth Flat, sorted out all the gear, walked the remaining part to Mammoth Cave and set up a command and communications tent.

The first team was sent into the cave to set up a Michie phone line down to the patient. Soon after, each team was sent into their allocated sections of the cave.

At 1:00 pm, the patient was treated and positioned in a Petzl Nest stretcher. Injuries were: a right broken wrist and ankle.

From Lower River there is lots of long, tight passage that requires a lot of hard work.

Just before "Home Sweet Home," there is a very tight section of rifty passage that we knew the Petzl Nest would not fit through with the patient aboard. The tight bend would compress the patient's legs. We reloaded the patient onto a NEIJ stretcher just for the section into "Home Sweet Home". A NEIJ allows the legs to move freely, making tight bends much easier.

At 4:00 pm in "Home Sweet Home," we swapped patients over. It's actually very tiring and uncomfortable being in a stretcher for hours on end and being strapped in, so we usually swap our patients mid-way out of a cave for this type of training exercise.

After a tight rift, we then lifted the patient up the "40 Foot Pitch". At 4:30 pm, we had the patient at the top of the pitch. At the top there is a very tight bend requiring some clever rope skills and heavy lifting, as the stretcher only just fits in this section of the cave.

Before 6:00 pm, the patient was at the top of the "Jug Handle" section. From here the BWRS team had set up a Skate Block system to the top of the daylight hole.

From the top daylight hole there was a Highline down to the creek level. From the creek we manually carried the patient in the stretcher to "Mammoth Flat," to finish the exercise by 7:30 pm.

During the day, WICEN provided communications back to the fire shed. They also did some propagation testing, both along the Jenolan Creek valley and within Mammoth Cave itself. The knowledge gained from this will be useful in the event of a genuine rescue.

Overall it was a fantastic day. The feedback received from Police Rescue and SCAT Paramedic participants, reported that our ability to perform as an effective rescue squad was exceptional. We are all looking forward to next year's Jenolan exercise.

JSSS

Wombeyan Caves.

SSS Occasional Paper No. 8 (1982).

Edited by *H. Jane Dyson*, et al.

Hard cover, viii + 224pp (Q/to size), 47 colour & 131 b x w photos,

21 figs, 16 tables & 12 maps, many references, index.

Price \$38.00 + \$9.00 post and packaging.

Available from: SSS, c/o Ross Ellis, 11 Arkana Street, TELOPEA, NSW, 2117. Phone: 96305384.

Cheques payable to The Sydney Speleological Society.

The Sydney Speleological Society PO Box 198, BROADWAY, NSW, 2007.

JSSS

Caves and Karst of Wombeyan.

SSS Occasional Paper No. 13 (November 2004).

Editor: *Ross Ellis*.

Paperback, 211pp (A4 size), 79 colour photos,

145 b x w photos, 28 maps, Index, etc.

Price \$48 + \$10.00 post & packaging.

Available from: SSS, c/o Ross Ellis, 11 Arkana Street, TELOPEA, NSW, 2117 (Phone: 96305384).

Cheques payable to The Sydney Speleological Society.

The Sydney Speleological Society PO Box 198, BROADWAY, NSW, 2007.

JSSS