

Guest Opinion

-By OLIVIA LOW, WTX-07 PIO
and PLSAR Member

PRIEST LAKE — Priest Lake Search and Rescue (PLSAR) will once again be hosting our Annual Winter Survival Training and Exercise, January 26-28, 2007, at Camels Prairie, Priest Lake, Idaho.

This is a multi-agency, full scale exercise. Multiple SAR agencies from Idaho, Montana, and Washington, K-9 SAR Teams, Spokane Mountaineers, and several others will attend. Last year there were approximately 50 participants. This year we are expecting around 100.

United States Air Force (USAF) Survival School SERE Instructors will be leading the training exercises. Winter Survival is key to our success. The skills to be learned include but are not limited to: fire starting in deep snow winter wilderness environment, signaling, building shelters, radio communications, avalanche awareness, vectoring a helicopter,

cold weather medical concerns, staying warm, and food and water considerations.

We will spend 3 days and 2 nights camping in the snow approximately 15 miles from Coolin, ID. This sort of training will prepare us for real missions that we will be involved with. After completion of the weekend we will have the confidence and knowledge to care for ourselves and fellow teammates, as well as the victims we are out to help in winter wilderness conditions.

We are very fortunate to have the USAF Survival School SERE Instructors donating their time and efforts to assist in this training. They will extend the same training and demonstrations they teach to their own people. I don't think there is a

PL Search and Rescue training this weekend



better way to receive survival training than to get it from our very best USAF Instructors. We owe a big "thank you" to them for all of their efforts!

Friday the 26th, is the day when all participants will arrive at Base Camp. We will spend the day organizing our gear and setting up camp. Since

we will have so many people attending this will take the majority of the day. All participants will pack their own food and water, tent, sleeping bags and pads, and personal items.

Saturday the 27th, will be Field Training Day. All of the training mentioned above will be demonstrated and learned. This will be a long and intense day. Everyone will certainly want to pay attention because everything taught today will be put

to use on Sunday.

Sunday the 28th, will be a day of Mock Scenes. There will be three different sites with multiple victims. Some of the victims will be above the snow and others will be buried. This is fun for the K-9 teams. The dogs excel in this type of work. They will

assist in finding the victims. Once all victims have been found they will be stabilized and transported by helicopter (weather permitting) to another location for Priest Lake Ambulance.

This will be a wonderful weekend for those people who are involved with Emergency Response Teams and others who are Winter Outdoor Enthusiasts. I attended this same training last year and was completely impressed. The skills that I took with me at the end of the weekend were very practical. These are skills that you want to practice and share with others. If you are interested in attending this training please contact one of our Team Leaders for more information or joining PLSAR:

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Bill Olmo (443-3827)

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