

IKAR 2024 Thesaloniki Subcommision Dog Handlers (SDH)

Practical Day Wednesday 16.10.24

Mount Olympus

We were bused to a Sports Stadium near to Mount Olympus where we given a demonstration of training the young dog in the Hellenic Rescue Team (HRT) They had 2 dogs a Malinois and Labrador. They demonstrated run aways into the wind with a barking indication and then returning to handler with a toy. Also using a circle of bodies to teach the dogs direction



After lunch we were moved to the foothills of Mount Olympus where we had competed in ICAR Olympics in mixed country teams going round 10 different activity stations. Marcel led a station timing the two Hellenic dogs against human with transceiver, needless to say the dog won every time against some very efficient transceiver searching.

Report on ICAR Dog Commision 2023-2024

Marcel Meier

Marcel welcomed us all and we introduced ourselves

Minutes of @2023 Conference were approved

Minutes of Walchen /Lizum Workshop held in Spring 2024 were approved. These appear on ICAR website. The meeting was affordable and 18 Dog handlers from 10 countries attended

ICAR Board met 4 times. Topics included

- New Membership and Application overview
- Conflict of Interest
- Executive Board Structure



Technical commission met twice, topics

- Thessaloniki Program
- Job description for Commission presidents
- Budget

It was requested that all presentations are indicated early for future programs

Future Goals

Instructors Workshop (this was planned in 2024 but cancelled due to not enough participants Spring workshop 2/04/25-6/04/25 in Chamonix

Pieps development of Dog Transceiver survey

Discussion Workshops Thursday 17.10.24

We were divided into 4 mixed groups an these are a summary of conclusions. This is a summary of conclusions which you were sent from Marcel

Recruitment of Young Dog Handlers, Training first Steps, What does the prospective dog handlers bring

Recruitment

- Professional or volunteer rescue teams
- Ski Patrol
- Police
- Dog handlers who want to become rescuers

Training first steps

- Fun and developing bond between dog and handler
- Obedience
- Puppy schools
- Bark on command
- Toy obsession
- Livestock avoidance
- Ski area familiarization
- Assisting and bodying for training organisation before starting own dog
- Scent skills



What does prospective handler bring

- Problems
- Challenges to training team
- Wrong breeds
- An empty glass
- Fresh ideas

2 Evaluation of Dogs, regulations for breed type, basic training, who is responsible and what does the dog enter training

Breeds

- Working strain of any breed
- Able to tolerate extremes of temperature
- Handlers choose often with instructor advice
- Smaller dogs for carrying in ski areas
- Use known breeders who will often pair pups with handlers

Delegates Dog breeds

- German Shepherds 6
- Golden retriever 1
- Labrador retriever 8
- Border collies 3
- Malinois 1
- German Pointer 3
- Kelpie 1
- Labradoodle 1

Sex of Dogs Both

Evaluation

- Volhard puppy test at 49 days
- Character observations
- Organization puppy tests



Play drive

Age starting training

- Varies from young pups to 18 months-3years
- Most are expected to be operational by 3 years
- Retirement varies from handlers' decision to organizational guidelines
- All are owned by handlers except in USA ski patrol where resort has a half share where dogs can change handlers if needed

3 Special training for Handler and Dog

- Ski Touring with dog
- Helicopter
- Firearm
- Climbing and belaying with dog
- Cadaver training
- On snow vehicles
- Chairlifts and Gondolas
- Search Strategy
- Dog and Human First Aid
- GPS
- Scent
- Avalanche procedures
- Incident Command
- 1 km path search
- Navigation
- Snow safety +forecasting
- Communication skills
- Night search
- Rubble

A lot of information was also recorded on assessment standards from each country

4 How many training paths are offered

Norway

- Area search, avalanche, rubble
- 22 courses/certs to become avalanche and area search handler
- 10 courses to be able to do rubble searches
- Module 2 Obedience, Indication, Night search with 2 bodies all categories



Module 3 Corridor search with boundaries Week assessment with 4 assessors

Austria

- Obedience
- C, B, A tests all 3 days training plus 1 day assessment

Scotland

- Obedience after 3 months
- Stock test before novice assessment
- Novice assessment after 1 year training
- Full Dog after2 years training
- Both grades have 8 areas with 2 bodies and watched by external assessors
- Reassess every 2 years

Slovakia

- Lots of separate groups with no consistency
- Use IRO standards

WBR USA

- Avalanche work exclusively
- New handlers are made by becoming second or teriary handlers with a primary handler's dog. They can pass B and A tests with another handlers dog and join live rescues then
- C Candidate or puppy up to 12 months of age
- B level dog (in resort only) test is 2 people in 20 minutes
- A level dog (State certified) unknown >3 people in 20 minutes
- Test evaluator
- Resort Coordinator
- Lead coordinator
- Board

Ireland

- Stage 1 Sequence dog going from victim to handler
- Stage 2 How to search
- Stage 3 Operational know how

Switzerland KWRO



- First is testing year
- Entrance test followed by week course
- A level 20 minute test if passed mission ready
- B level 40 minute test with 2 people
- C level 1 hour test with 1 person, articles and transfer
- Callouts C Dogs first the B and A dogs

Slovenia

- Meet every week for training etc
- Summer and winter search strategies
- A level Find 1 person in 20 minutes
- B level 1 person in large search field
- C level 2 people in large search field
- Gradually increase distractions on site
- Start with food reward then switch to toy
- Debrief after every training and test

Sweden

- Initially break into small groups to analyze the team in different ways
- If team is approved, then instructed how to start
- Help the handler understand the dog
- When instructors approve the team will be tested
- C winter avalanche and tracking test people buried by hand and using snow machines
- D Summer in groups with the police assessing
- Retest every year

Croatia

- Area search
- Rubble
- Water
- Avalanche (not as much snow so not as common)

Poland

- Avalanche and area search
- Cadaver search is an option for more experienced handlers



Friday 19th October

Little Amy-really big

Reinhard Hirschmugi (ORDB)

Callout raised at 20.59 for a 33yr old mountain biker who had fallen on a descent on a tour to Happing Alm in Tirol. She made an emergency call but then lost connection

Rescue teams of 20 MR and 7 dog handlers deployed in groups along with police helicopter between 21.15 to 23.20

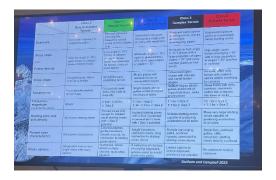
Helicopter could not find missing person (MP)

At 23.44 Amy a 3-year-old Austrian Pinscher found the MP in a steep wooded ditch and indicated by barking. The MP was partially responsive, hypothermic with suspected concussion and broken leg

Amy is a medium small dog who is keen and eager to work. She had already covered 1500m in a training search operation earlier and this was Markus and Amy's first live rescue.

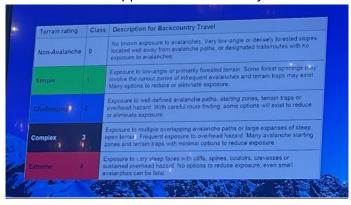
Avalanche Terrain Exposure Scale (ATES) and Public Risk Communication Mike Koppang (CAA)

An introduction to the ATES in the full form and the Public model





The Public model this can be applied for backcountry travel or for ice Climbing.



The Avaluator combining the avalanche forecast and the terrain exposure makes route planning evaluate the risks expected.



There followed examples of maps showing the colours representing the different zones.

Case study of an avalanche that buried 2 Ice climbers in Nov 2023. The terrain above the climb was not visible and the possible risk. All was ok until wind slab destabilised snow above the climb it buried the two climbers who had started their walk out buring them in a terrain trap. One managed to self extricate to raise alarm the other's body was discovered the next day. ATES maps were shown of the risk in this area.

Summary

• Another tool in the box to benefit the public



- Valuable for expeperienced and inexperienced users
- New Federal grant will map westrncanada in next 3 years
- SAR teams in unfamiliar terrain part of risk assessment?
- Colours?

Rescuers and Avalanche Forecasters: Where is the Intersection

Multi-national response

Sud Tirol Bergrettung; High numbers of Ski tourers in area 381 peaks over 3000m. 35 rescue stations, 1072 volunteers and 5 full-time employees. Transnational avalanche report for around with integration of all European forecast 150 days. Showed 3 examples where reporting service helped assessed the avalanche danger through the rescues. MR also supports the Avalanche warning service in accident investigations and give the service First aid courses

Police National Secours en Montagne and Meteo France; The partners are MR team, Helicopter Choucas 05 and Meteo Farnce. A case study was shown about a crazy August day in Erind national park with lots of rescues and bad weather coming in fast. Meteo France was in contact with a Mountain refuge. They were able to forecast a weather window coming in on les Bans around 17.00 with wind dropping from 70/80kmh to 40 at 21.00. Two helicopters tasked to both peaks but still too windy but managed two hours later to rescue two parties of alpinists

Meteo France provide weather forecasts for Mountain refuges, Avalanche forecasts and special weather events. There is real interaction between Meteo France and Mountain rescuers in France

SLF and Alpinerettung Schweiz Switzerland Avalanche forecast published twice a day aimed at anyone exposed to avalanche risk both professional and recreational.149 regions of approx. 200km squared. Responsible for safety in Ski resorts, towns roads and railways including ski guides and clients. Depending on which area in Switzerland Avalanche rescue is handled by alpinerettung Schweitz or OCVS KWRO in conjunction with Rega or Air Zermatt.

Canada Models differ across Canada with 4 forecasting agencies and 3 rescue agencies. tHere is a system of information exchange about snow and avalanche conditions that are vetted by a Canadian Avalanche Association Professional member before submission.

Avalanche forecasting in Sweden and how it is used by the public and rescuers. A graph comparison of avalanche fatalities in Sweden and rest of the world from 2001 -2023 showed that 90% of fatalities were out of Sweden however Swedes ski all over the world. The Swedish avalanche forecasting covers 30% of mountain areas and is done daily replacing previous ski resort reports. The service has around 30 snow and avalanche observers with 6-8 forecasters, season runs mid-December to mid-May. Primary users are skiers snowmobilers mountain guides and rescuers



The avalanche forecasts are used by MR as decision and support in risk management on rescue missions. There is still the need to add more forecasted areas for public and MR safety

Some MR personnel work along observers their competence is of great value to forecasters

Particularly difficult rescue at Tete Blanche Switzerland

Pierre Metrailler (KWRO)

9/03/2023-10/03/2023 6 ski tourers stuck on Cole de La Tete-Blanche at 3500m from 16.00. Tete-Blanche summit is on famous Haute Route from Chamonix to Zermatt

Weather had been good in the day but forecast storm coming in the evening and overnight, winds gusting 120 km/h 30cm snow wind chill at -30 C, avalanche danger 3/Moderate

Timeline

- 16.04 alarm by relative
- No phone signal from ski tourers
- 17.19 One of the parties contacted 144 rescue call centre saying they were stuck as one
 of the party ill
- Police locate signal at 3500m
- 18.20 rescue party set off but turn back at 21.00 and 3000m due to conditions
- Rescue attempts stood down overnight
- 05.00 Major rescue resources called up with 2 HQ's at Cantonal Police and Air Glaciers
 Sion with all available personnel and resources
- Planned to deal with 6 cases of hypothermia, with criteria not to start CPR if body frozen, obstructed airway or livor mortis
- Weather window predicted at 17.00 with major improvement at 22.00
- Helicopters did two rotations to 3200m
- 17.15 Peak rescue team of 2 rescue guides 1 mountain doctor and a mountain policeman
- Victims found at 21.18 buried under snow with few signs of life
- 3 declared dead at site, 1 at intermediate site after transport, 1 in Sion emergency room,
 1 victim not found
- Finally, no need for ground mission to evacuate victims and 5 helicopters were utilized
- 11/03/2023 searched for 6th victim with helicopter DVA, probes, Dogs, and Recco finally found in August

It was a psychologically significant event for all involved and support was given by several agencies.



Take home message -never give up, safety for all priority, logistics and organization essential, care of hypothermic patient

Together Everyone Achieves More

Training of Resilience in PGHM (Professional Military Police) Chamonix France

Core skills develop resilience and Advance skills promote expertise

Crisis-An exceptional avalanche 75 hectares, 2200m long (3400m -1600m), 15 skiers – 7 caught 6 dead 1 injured, Rescue team 2 Helicopters 3 doctors 3 dog teams 25 PGHM rescuers

Phase 1Take stock

Phase 2 Plan rescue

Phase 3 Confusion; avalanche was visible every where with lots of witnesses and 100's of calls

Phase 4 Recovery

It was explained that by developing core skills enabled rescuers to be agile variable using all of the core skills.

They showed how PGHM develop those skills and where they are used in the command structure and in the search management.

Core skills were used effectively in the confusion phase while the advanced skills came in at the recovery phase

Questions posed

- What is the main characteristic of an advanced skill
- Is it specific
- Ideally should everyone be specialized and why

Managing crisis requires both resilience and expertise

Core skills promote resilience and specific skills develop expertise

Avalnche Incident Riffleberg Zermatt

Phillip Imboden (KWRO)

April 1, 2024, 15.20 alert to Dog Handlers, Weather-very warm, spring snow





First 30 minutes In closed wildlife area close to ski runs, 2 actual avalanches, unknown number of victims, 4 Helicopters, 1 dog team (6 altogether) 40 helpers, recco Guides, Ski instructors lots of public try to help



After 1hr 1 victim found by recco, 1 victim found by mobile phone tracking, 1 victim found by dog all dead

After 2.5 hr. No missing persons registered, No recco or LVS signals No dog indications, Search commander decided to stop

Next day One more person missing, decided search with technical equipment again to no success

End of May 24 Missing person found by police drone wrapped round a tree

Open Discussion Why could the dogs not find last victim – Trees, Spring snow, too many people on site, stopped too early



- Peter -Was the last victim near the others
- Marcel Did they probe? Where there missing areas, was the temperature rising and Avalanche risk
- Stewart Spring conditions can give a tight wet snowpack with high density which can be a barrier to the dog. The people could be possible but experienced dogs can discriminate between victims and others
- Canadian dogs have been known to search for 5-6 days and still find
- Peter no clear answer Barrier could be low scent and too many people, 5-7 days possible but often not a clear indication
- Marcel Phillip was not allowed to search with dog on 2nd day, we must show what dogs can do.
- Knut in Norway search for 3 days after day 1 assumed searching for dead body and handlers are paid
- Tora In Iceland Dogs are not a priority, a few want to prove attitude wrong and develop a stronger protocol

The Nose -the dogs incredible olfactory organ

Marcel Meier (Alpinerettung Schweiz)



Link to you tube presentation on the dog's nose

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7fXa2Occ_U

The dog can recognize the individual smell of a person from the bacterial laden skin cells we shed and glandular secretions. Dogs are a master at detecting fatty acids that are secreted from us, and they can differentiate between identical twins.



When training the dog use a lot of varied tasks to engage the dog

An example of excellent nose work

Missing person found after 7 days of burial in avalanche, search time was 5 minutes.

The odour intense skin cells remain in the snow, it preserves the smell longer making it easier for the dog.

Building a structured search dog

Rescue International Netherlands Humberto Hinestrosa

Search theory was explained using the equation

$POA \times POD = POS$

Probability of Area/Detection/Search

Sensor's effectiveness depends on operators' skill. Dog search requires more training than others and still performance varies. Standards are set to include or mention structure with examples shown. The dog must be in control, accept direction, efficiently search the area, be able to range while keeping contact with handler, willing to follow an air scent to the find.

The handler must maintain and direct the dog, execute a grid search to systematically search the area and rationally deploy the dog

Myths

- Structure kills the search and independence -Structure steers the dog to cover area
- Commands kill the search and makes the dog dependent- *helps control and contact with dog, obsessive control kills everything*
- Obedience work isn't necessary necessary for functionality and compliment's structure work
- I trust my dog he knows what he is doing- trust him but remember you are a team

Training Sequence

Starting-Drive and Motivation, Search- Game with runaways, vary terrain, and range.

Line work moving on to flank work

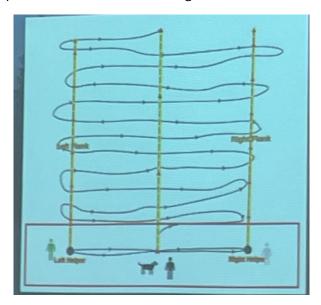
Exchange ritual Important Dog must always win

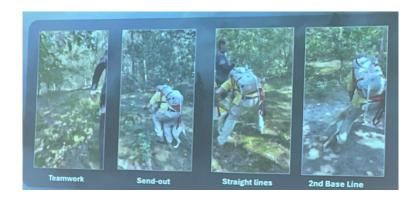
In Practice

- Dog moves fluidly
- Keep within dog's limits
- Dog maintains contact with handler
- Helpers and Coaches must know the task and have good timing
- Communicate via radio



Looked at a lot of examples of searches with flanking work





Variations

- Surprise victims in practice area not on flank, trains dog to use scent cone
- Different types of helpers
- No helpers at all, useful to practice steering

Benefits

- Keeps dogs highly motivated
- Builds a strong team
- Better steering of dog
- Gets rid of orbiting dog
- Increases ranging
- Excellent for indication and shuttling

The Search for the Olfactory Witness

Terroni Marco (SAGF)



A method to improve dogs' capacity under the snow

The smell is made using Human hair wrapped in a towel (Blue or White) like a sausage toy

A hole is dug 440 x 4 cm

Puppies; All into wind

Step 1 Sees helper place towel parcel in open hole

Step 2 Helper covers towel parcel

Step 3 Buried deeper

All dogs

Step 4 Empty hole marked with flag and towel buried downwind

Step 5 Blind search buried beyond empty flagged hole

Step 6 Blind search beyond 2 empty flagged hole

Step 7 Blind search using Snowmobile so no human tracks

This method is very effective in improving precision of dogs detecting buried persons the big advantage is that it can be used with minimum snow cover.

Start collecting human hair!!!!

New challenges for teaching avalanche rescuers and dog handlers in the Fench Mountains

Fabrice Huot (GSM)

Avalanche training began in 1956 in France and the development of helicopters and equipment was shown

https://www.ina.fr/ina-eclaire-actu/video/cac08015003/les-crs-sauveteurs-en-montagne

New Challenges to Mountain Rescuers

- New Air transport means
- Changing ways of shoveling and probing
- New avalanche beacons and their evolution
- Multi Victim Avalanches
- Doctor support module and hypothermia
- Legal investigation



All of the above must be integrated in to training of MR crew and team leaders

The process of becoming a Mountain Rescuer in France was shown and the training implications of introducing new equipment and procedures

New Challenges for teaching Avalanche Dog handlers

- The challenge of dual qualification in dog selection
- New organisation for our dog avalanche handlers' program which joins CRS and PGHM
- New scientific advances about stress on dogs
- New scientific advances on how olfactive cells are moving through the snowpack
- New training for avalanche dogs in landslides
- Search for cadavers

To become a dog handler they do 12 weeks man trailing course then followed by 3 weeks in Avalanche in Chamonix.

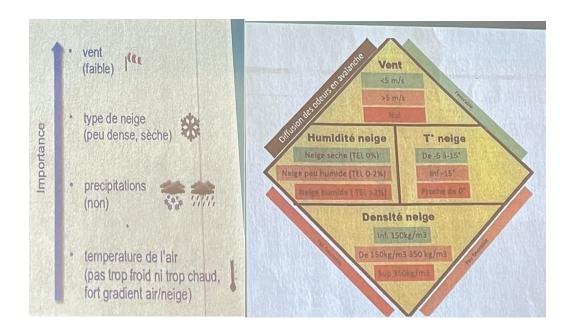
Dog selection

- Adults or puppies (puppies get a program to follow)
- Dog or bitch (bitches new)
- Not too big for carrying
- GS, Malinois, Labradors

Since 2017 CRS(Police) and PGHM (Gendarmerie) have joined into new organisation and structured program with Avalanche program for UIISC. Standardizing the program with the Ski Patrol Rescue dog handlers and sharing knowledge between organizations.

Developing exchange programs with different countries

Scientific contributions to teaching methods





Landside searching integrated into training programs from the start and for operational dogs Cadaver Search notice attitude of dogs and become more efficient in finding dead people.

SAR Dogs in Greece

Katerina Batisoud(HRT)

Organizations; Hellenic Rescue Team, Fire service Rescue dogs and other professional and voluntary organizations

Types of SAR Dogs; Air scenting for wilderness and Disasters, cadaver dogs

Roles: Natural disasters landslides earthquakes and fires, Missing persons

Common situations; Unpredictable movement and dangerous terrain

Dementia patients; Special training: Calming the patient, non-aggressive search behavior, non-barking indication. Tractive tracker worn by dog and handler follows using tracker information. The advantages of this training is speed, adaptability and non-invasive

Training Protocol

- Selection of Air Scenting dog
- Start at 8 months
- Basic training obedience and agility
- Novice and advanced search training
- Handlers' standard and equipment
- Responding to a search
- Conducting a search
- Disaster training
- First Aid
- Lost person behavior

Training Challenges.

- Greece is a big country so training difficult because of big distances There are 15 dog teams in HRT and 15 in fire service
- Volunteering is complex due to legal permits and liability issues, in building collapse need Government permission and a surveyor present.
- External funding limited
- Lack of training and professional support HRT use international protocols

The Value of young Dogs as trained in Utah USA



Tracy Christenson (WBR)

Watstch Backcountry Rescue operates in the Watstch mountains in Utah. The primary purpose is rapid response for avalanche and winter mountain rescue.

In the 23/24 season there were 902 reported avalanches, 63 people caught and 2 fatalities.

Dog teams are based at Ski resorts and are part of the Ski Patrol and dogs are joint owned by handler and the resort. Puppies start off early at ski patrol bases.

Every morning handlers practice obedience. Handlers and dogs assessed separately but only pass as a team

Validation

- To remain on program a candidate team must pass obedience and search test every 18 months after acceptance
- To remain on callout list dog teams must pass WBR certification biennially
- If dog over 10 years must renew annually
- Levels A+B held during winter and handlers must keep up with validations and can ask to be tested at any time
- Tests are early season with everyone helping to prepare test site.
- The test site is 100m x 100m with > 3 burials number not known to handler, the whole area disturbed by ski and shovel no hands. Bodies buried 3-5 m deep. No surface clues.
 Two properly scented articles (sweaters or backpack size are placed 20cm deep in line with bodies and one outside test site for reward
- All tests start from top of slide path
- No toys or articles in hole and bodies unknown to dogs
- Bodies and shovelers enter from above and to windward to avoid tracking
- Shovelers only do what told and must not advise. Handlers must probe and bodies protected from this
- Site prep done a day before and only new sites used for validation
- Witness can give vague information
- No more than 2 failures per season

When starting a new dog it is important to get the three R's

- 1. The right Dog
- 2. The right Handler
- 3. The right Program

The story of the 3 Black labrador litter mates

The 3 pups were bought from a known breeder (Blue ribbon hunting dogs) and allocated to 3 prospective handlers advised by the dog committee. The handlers had all different levels of experience and were mentored by the dog committee. Much to everyone's 'surprise, all three passed their validation at 10 months.

From this the dog committee are considering the minimum age for validation. It is important to note that the dog's health must be a priority



Rescue in difficult environment Turkey Earquake 2023

HSZM Slovakia

Mobilization

- Standby mode
- Callout 12.00 noon
- Equipment sorting
- Aircraft landed19.00
- Departure 20.00

Arrival Tuesday 07.02.2023

- Arrival 02.00
- RDC 03.00
- Black Hawk transport 06.00
- Support group transport 08.00
- 09.00-17.00 3 teams of SAR
- 17.00-18.00 transport to BoO Sports centre
- 18.00-23.00 SAR in dark smoking rubble

Wednesday 08.02.2023

- 06.00-08.00 info meeting division into teams
- 09.00-10.00 SAR with complications of information
- 09.00-18.00 Transport to new BoO

Thursday 09.02.2023

- 06.00-22.00 SAR
- New transport partner
- Cooperation with Hungarian and Turkish GEA teams
- Successful finds

Friday 10.02.2023

- 08.00-16.00 SAR hostile environment
- 16.00-17.00 GPS data collection
- 17.00-18.00 meeting considering demobilization
- BoO

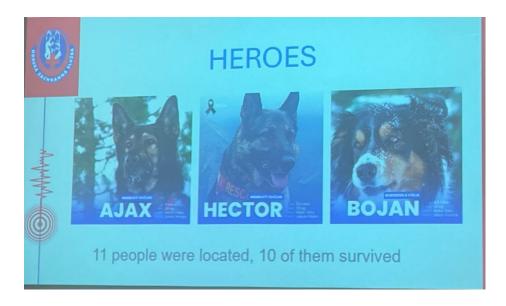
Saturday 11.02.2023

- 06.00-08.00 Demobilization
- 8.00-10.00Humanitarian AID handover
- 10.00-14.00 Transport
- RDC Adana



Sunday 12.02.2023

- Medical and Vet check
- Equipment check
- Media briefing
- Bravery Awards



Avalanche accident near Borovels ski resort Bulgaria 12.02.2024 14.10h

- 4 Snowboarders and 1 skier caught
- 3 partial burials 1 completely buried at 145 cm
- 4 dog teams and 15 MR personnel and 10 volunteers
- 19.18 dog indicated 10 m higher than victim. Located by Recco on bank card
- 19.40 Transport of victim

Saturday October 19th

The Dog commission joined the main body of ICAR for the following lectures

- Avalanche rescue and safety of the rescuers- Risk Management Paul Metrailler
- Rescue at very High-Altitude John Ellerton (Medicom president)
- How we train Mountain Rescue in Scotland Paul Russel (SMR)



- Simulation-The future of Training starts now Sebastian schneider and Jorg Redetzky(DRF)
- Education and support for the psychosocial health and SAR practitioner wellbeing *Peter Zimmer (NZLSAR)*
- Enhancing First responder training: EU project innovative Approaches to skill development and Mixed Reality Simulations *Alexander Giordanis (HRT)*
- Helicopter rescue at very high altitude *Dr Kyle McLaughlin (PC) and Charley Shimanski(Aircom President)*

Kate Hunter, 29.11.2024