



# Tahoe Truckee Civil Air Patrol Celebrates 80 Years with Practice Rescue

CAP units from three counties and Nevada County Sheriff Department Search and Rescue Canine Trailing Team joined on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the National Civil Air Patrol to “save” victims of an airplane crash to polish their skills and renew their certifications. In total, this exercise involved over four dozen volunteers in five counties, to execute a successful search and rescue.

The exercise simulated an airplane crash in a mountainous area near Stampede Reservoir. A simulated crash signal reported from the US Air Force Rescue Coordination Center was passed to the Nevada CAP Wing Incident Commander who dispatched flight teams from Truckee, Reno, and Minden CAP Units to search for the Emergency Locator Transmitter signal from the “crashed” airplane using airborne signal direction finders. On identifying the signal, the teams conducted a visual search and relayed the crash coordinates to the Reno CAP Incident HQ staff. The CAP Incident Command Center coordinated the four three-person crews to avoid traffic conflicts.

The Incident Command staff then ordered a ground rescue team of several adult and 10 CAP Cadets to hike into the crash site. There they found the injured pilot. Five other survivors had wandered away from the crash scene. The Cadets on the ground called the IC Base for help from canine tracking teams. Five teams consisting of Nevada Sheriff Search and Rescue Canine Trailers and their handler, and a Cadet then searched for the stragglers while another group of the CAP the CAP ground team secured the accident site and tended to the pilot.

From Cadet SMSgt Giansiracusa:

*“In order to participate in this event, I had to get my GES 116 training, it’s easy and all it takes is a quick read and an online test, and my ICUT (Introduction to Communications course) to operate radios.*

*We started out at a meeting place near the Boca reservoir where we introduced ourselves. Next we had a Mission Brief with the number of people aboard the aircraft. The ground search leader assigned our tasks, team, and call sign. I was Team 2 “Blue Lake 1.” Each dog team had two cadets assigned to be the “Wingers” our job was to trail the dog and owner while radioing back to base when we found the missing person.*

*After that, all the Cadets piled into the van where using a beacon tracker we drove to the site of the crash. Once we got there, we practiced using compasses, Lat and Long measurements and radio communications. Overall, it was a huge learning experience for it was my first training exercise.*

*Everyone worked so hard to make this event one to remember, and the learning opportunities were endless!”*

From CAP Senior Member and Nevada Sheriff’s Dept. Search and Rescue Canine Trailing Teams:

*“It was rewarding to see how all of us came together to make this happen. This was the first time we tried a multi-agency exercise like this, and it was a success thanks to the hard work of everyone that was involved. I would especially like to thank the Civil Air Patrol Cadets for their dedication to make this possible.”*

This Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) allowed several CAP members to add new qualifications and others to update qualifications. This training exercise provided an excellent opportunity for the Nevada County Sheriff Search and Rescue Canine Trailing teams and the Civil Air Patrol to practice search and communication skills as well as teamwork. It provided very realistic conditions and challenges for the individual canine teams. This exercise could not have been possible, without the assistance of our citizen volunteers, residents of Truckee and Lincoln, CA., who participated in the exercise, as the passengers of the simulated aircraft accident. These folks laid out the trails and remained in place for several hours while each of the canine search teams practiced locating them. The communities of Truckee and Lincoln, CA., can be extremely proud of these individuals who volunteered their time to assist.

Through the combined effort of the base planning teams, the air crews from Truckee, Reno and Minden, the CAP ground teams, and Nevada County Sheriff’s Canine teams were able to rescue all survivors. This was the first time that CAP and Nevada County Sheriff had worked together. Communications and coordination were smooth as both groups follow Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) protocols.

The overall exercise required participation of:

- 14 Incident Command Staff
- 12 Ground Team
- 12 Flight Crew Members
- 6 Canines and Handlers from Nevada County Sheriffs Canine Trailing Teams
- 6 Crash Victims
- 6 Logistics personnel

Civil Air Patrol provides Emergency Services throughout the country. In addition to searching for downed aircraft and lost hikers, CAP assists in other disasters from COVID to hurricanes using both ground and air resources.

The Nevada Sheriff’s canine volunteer team provides search and rescue tracking with highly trained dogs.

For more information or to Join CAP, contact Captain Dan Beadle, Tahoe Truckee Civil Air Patrol Composite Squadron at [Dan.Beadle@nvwgcap.org](mailto:Dan.Beadle@nvwgcap.org) or 775-544-6161