

SARSCENE - Spring 1999

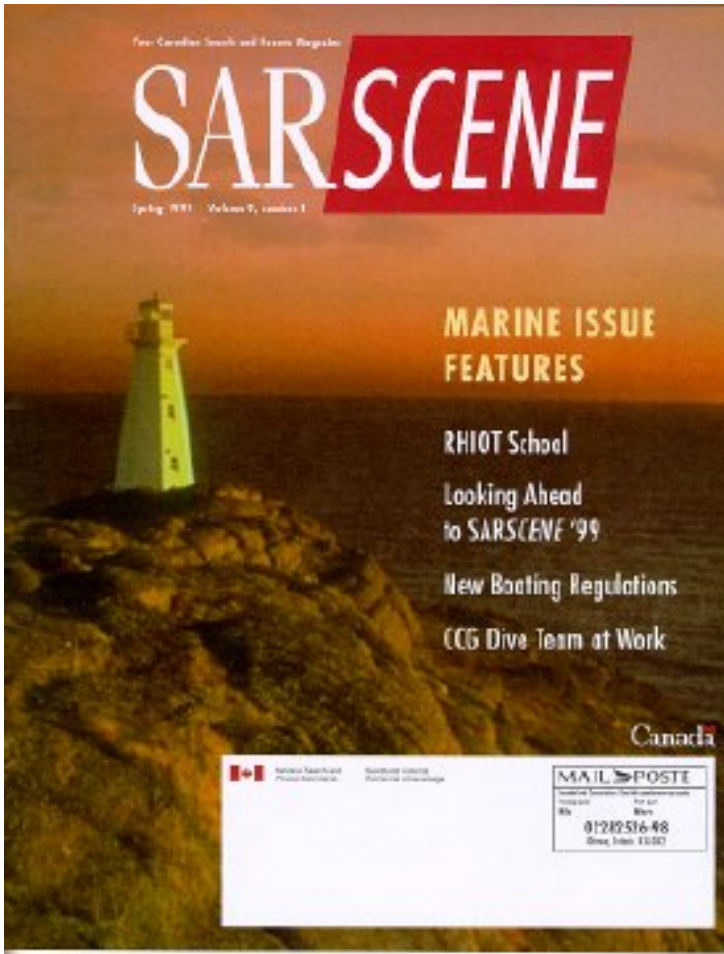


TABLE OF CONTENTS (abridged)

SARSCENE WORKSHOP

[What Do You Want to See at SARSCENE '99?](#)

[Where Will SARSCENE Be in the Next Millennium?](#)

MARINE TRAINING

[The RHIOT School](#)

[Canada's Changing Face of Boating Safety](#)

AWARDS

[BC Resident Recognized by United States Coast Guard](#)

[Ken Hill Honoured by NASAR](#)

[SLDMB Project Wins Gold](#)

MARINE SAR SUCCESS

[Rescue Divers Prove Their Worth One Dive at a Time](#)

[40 Years on the Water](#)

NSS AWARDS PROGRAM

[National Search and Rescue Secretariat's Awards Program](#)

What Do You Want to See at SARSCENE '99?

SARSCENE '99 will feature the usual mix of hands-on presentations, lectures, a trade show, the SARSCENE Games and demonstrations.

Trying to create an exciting program for workshop participants is always a challenge. You can help us by letting us know what information you'd like to see in St. John's. Do you know someone who'd make a great speaker? Is there a particular aspect of search and rescue you think needs addressing? Let us know and we'll do our best to include your input in our program.

SARSCENE '99 is all about co-operation and partnership, so take a few minutes to share your suggestions and ideas!

Send suggestions to:

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[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

Where Will SARSCENE Be in the Next Millennium?

Have you ever wondered how we decide where SARSCENE workshops will be held? The National Search and Rescue Secretariat has criteria which need to be met for each workshop including the ease of transportation, and the availability of meeting space and accommodation.

The most important element of all is a partner! Each year we partner with an organization to host and plan the workshop. If you think your area would be a great venue for a future workshop, take note of the schedule above and contact us for information on how to submit a proposal.

Year	Region	Deadline for Submission
2001	West	1 July, 1999
2002	Central	1 July, 1999
2003	East	1 June, 2000

For more information or to send a submission, please contact:

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[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

The RHIOT School

The Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) responds to thousands of distress calls each year. About 75 per cent of search and rescue (SAR) incidents on the Canadian Pacific coast are responded to by personnel using Rigid-Hull Inflatable (RHI) boats. The CCG offers training at its Rigid Hull Inflatable Operator Training (RHIOT) School. Its course is designed to familiarize students with the use of RHIs in heavy sea conditions.

Located in Bamfield, British Columbia, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, the RHIOT School challenges students with an intense seven-day course. "The course runs every other week and the groups usually comprise two members of the CCG, two from the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA) and two from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Conservation and Protection Office," says the supervisor of the RHIOT School, Kevin Tomsett. About 10 per cent of students are from government departments from Canada and other nations. RHIOT School trains RHI vessel operators working in enforcement, rescue and recovery, and search and rescue. Members of the Vancouver Police Department, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), United States Navy and Coast Guard and SAR personnel have been taking this course since its inception in 1984.

The RHIOT School is equipped with three Zodiac Hurricane RHIs — two 7.3-metre Zodiac Hurricanes and one 5.9-metre Zodiac Hurricane. Across Canada, the CCG has over 100 RHIs from various manufacturers.

"Students learn not only how to handle RHIs in heavy sea conditions but are also taught the importance of protective clothing and how to use the necessary equipment," says Tomsett. "The equipment used during training includes advanced navigation equipment, electronic chart plotters, full radar, differential GPS and integrated systems," adds Tyler Brand, an instructor at the RHIOT School for the past two years.

The unique features of RHI vessels make them suitable for use in marine SAR missions. "An RHI is a huge, fully navigable platform that is really versatile," says Brand. "The RHI we teach with is capable of travelling a maximum range of 150 to 180 miles (240 to 298 kilometres) in a search that may involve complicated navigation. It can reach a maximum speed of 50 knots and can cruise at about 30 knots depending on the conditions." These capabilities make RHIs very useful for SAR personnel trying to reach the scene of a marine emergency.

Because SAR missions can involve shoreline and open water searching, RHIs provide many advantages. "An RHI is inexpensive to operate and maintain, and it reduces the overall cost of a marine SAR operation," says Tomsett. The RHI also has reserve buoyancy which allows it to fend off waves, making what would be a very rough ride on other crafts, a smooth and stable one on the RHI. Other features include heavy weather capability, a self-righting system and self-bailing.

Almost 1400 people have taken the course since the RHIOT School opened in 1984. "Students entering the RHIOT School can expect to gain a level of confidence when operating RHI in adverse conditions, improve their skills with the equipment, and learn leadership and communication styles in small teams," says Brand. "Our aim is to teach the operator the importance of balancing efficiency with safety. Operating an RHI in different conditions requires knowledge and skill. It is extremely dangerous to operate an RHI improperly. Another lesson we try to teach the students is not to rely too much on electronics. We stress using the basics, the eyes and a chart." Students will learn how to tow, use the navigation equipment, recover people who are overboard, as well as manoeuvre in tight spaces, in-shore and in heavy weather conditions.

Half of the 60 hours of training is spent on the water. "Water time training may take place during the night where there will be strenuous elements.

This course is purposely offered from September to March so students can learn effective handling during rough weather," adds Tomsett.

The RHIOT School location provides ample challenge for students. "We train at Barkley Sound; this is one of the

toughest places to navigate in the world," explains Brand. "Here there are all the harsh elements any navigator would have to face: reduced visibility, variable weather, and dense packed islands and rocks."

As technologies and demands in the marine trade rapidly develop, the RHIOT School must always keep on top of things and make the appropriate changes when necessary. Tomsett has been with the RHIOT School for all of its 14 years and he says, "The course will change in order to meet operational demands and it changes according to the equipment, too." According to Tomsett, the RHIOT School will offer two courses in the next year.

The first course will be a basic operator-level RHI course covering general topics. The second course will be designed for advanced operators and will be program driven. "Right now, the course is quite general and it deals a lot with basic boat handling and safety. We will try to address more specialized and advanced operations and scenarios in the future," says Brand.

For more information about the RHIOT School, please contact:

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*Helen Kwan, Co-op Student,
University of Calgary, NSS.*

[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

Canada's Changing Face of Boating Safety

Now that the 1999 boating season has begun, it's important to get up-to-date on the latest changes to Canada's boating safety regulations.

Proposed Changes to Small Vessel Regulations

The Small Vessel Regulations are rules that set the minimum safety equipment requirements, construction standards and precautions for small recreational vessels. Changes to these regulations are effective as of 1 April 1999.

Changes Already in Effect:

Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)

Colours and Inflatables

Official as of July 1996:

New standards expand the range of colours and styles, but it is imperative to remember that an old PFD, in

colours other than orange, red or yellow, is still not approved if it doesn't have a Canadian approval label. Look for Transport Canada (DOT), Canadian Coast Guard or Department of Fisheries and Oceans approval on the label.

Only Canadian-tested and approved PFDs meet the safety equipment requirements. Bright colours for PFDs are still highly recommended by the Canadian Coast Guard's Office of Boating Safety. Inflatables are not approved for use with white-water paddling or Personal Water Craft (PWC) operation. Inflatable PFDs with automatic inflators are not to be used by sailboarders.

Proposed New Rules for PWC

Operators of PWC would be exempt from carrying a 5BC fire extinguisher, paddles and a bailer/manual pump if all aboard are wearing a Canadian-approved PFD. Boaters must remember to buy the appropriate size.

Requirements will be limited to a buoyant heaving line, sound signaling device (for example, a pealess whistle will qualify) and a watertight flashlight or three flares.

Carriage Requirements:

Proposed Changes

! Enough PFDs or lifejackets for everyone on board must now be of an appropriate size – adult vests for adults; child sizes for children.

! Lifesaving cushions will no longer be acceptable as PFDs and throwable devices.

! Equipment requirements are generally based on the size of the vessel. The existing under 5.5-metres category becomes under six metres; similarly, the 5.5 to under eight-metres category becomes six to under eight metres.

! Fire extinguishers: Gone is the AI, AII, BI, BII classification. Required capacity will refer to the rating found on the extinguisher (i.e. 5BC, 10BC).

! Distress signals: Powered vessels under six metres and PWC will have the option of carrying a watertight flashlight or three flares of type A, B or C. All vessels from six to under eight metres will have to choose six flares from type A, B, or C – type D flares are no longer an option.

Proposed Regulations:

Age and Horsepower Restrictions

Currently, a child of any age may operate any type of boat regardless of its power or size. The new restrictions, intended to match boat power with level of capability and maturity, include:

! Children: Operators under 12 years of age will be permitted to operate up to 10hp/7.5kW unsupervised/unaccompanied.

! Youth between the ages of 12 and 16 will be permitted to operate up to 40hp/30kW unsupervised/unaccompanied.

! PWC operators must be at least 16 years of age.

Proposed Regulations:

Operator Competency

Proposed regulations require operators of powered boats to have proof of competency:

- As of 15 September 1999, youth under the age of 16 will need to have proof of competency.
- As of 15 September 2002, any person operating a powered recreational vessel measuring less than four metres (including personal watercraft) will need to have proof of competency.
- As of 15 September 2009, all operators of powerboats will need to have proof of competency.
- People aged 55 years and over, when the regulations come into effect, will be exempt.

- People who have already taken boating safety courses will see their course certificates recognized as proof of competency.
- Experienced boaters will have the option of taking a challenge test without taking a course.
- Foreign visitors who have a pleasure boat in Canada will be granted a grace period of 45 consecutive days.
- People renting a vessel will be required to complete a dockside checklist.
- Operators will be required to carry proof of competency with them at all times while operating a powered boat.

The Canadian Coast Guard Basic Boating Safety Course Standard has been developed with members of boating organizations. A number of these have already received course accreditation and are offering these courses and accredited tests to the boating public.

The New Contraventions Act:

Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba have the new Contraventions Act in place for ticketing offenders.

- Proposed fines for 1 April 1999:
- Insufficient number of PFDs/lifejackets: \$200
- Careless operation of a vessel: \$200
- Speeding in a controlled speed zone: \$100

(Fines are subject to provincial administration fees.)

Keeping up-to-date

For further clarification or to order the new *Safe Boating Guide* call the Office of Boating Safety at 1-800-267-6687.

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[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

BC Resident Recognized by United States Coast Guard

For 17 years, Ken White has kept a listening watch on radio frequencies used by mariners from Alaska to Hawaii in an effort to help respond to calls of distress. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) recently honoured Mr. White with the Pacific Area Core Values Award in recognition of his "outstanding contribution and assistance in furthering the values and mission of Coast Guard Pacific Area."

From his home monitoring system in Powell River, BC, Mr. White has assisted both the USCG and the Canadian Forces in almost 1000 distress calls.

[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

Ken Hill Honoured by NASAR

Dr. Ken Hill was the 1998 recipient of the National Association for Search and Rescue (NASAR) Service Award for his dedication to improving search management and in his contributions to NASAR – producing materials for the Managing the Lost Person Incident training course.

A member of Halifax Regional Ground Search and Rescue and Professor of Psychology at St. Mary's University, Dr. Hill is renowned for his research in lost person behaviour. He used his knowledge to completely revise the NASAR course content and help create a textbook on the subject. Dr. Hill has shared his expertise at SARSCENE and RESPONSE conferences over the years and continues to be actively involved in ground search and rescue.

[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

SLDMB Project Wins Gold

A Canadian-developed Self-Locating Datum Marker Buoy (SLDMB) project was recently awarded a gold medal at the Technology in Government Distinction '98 Awards ceremony. The Department of National Defence (DND), the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) and Seimac Ltd., a Halifax-based company, jointly managed this project. Much project support has been received from the National Search and Rescue Secretariat through the New Search and Rescue (SAR) Initiatives Fund.

The SLDMB has already been credited with saving a life. It was deployed in the search for the M/V Vanessa and her crew in October 1997. The buoy continuously transmitted updated position data to Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RCC) Halifax. This "real-time" information prompted the search and rescue controller to re-orient the search that was originally predicted to be in the opposite direction by historical databases and ocean current charts. This kind of sophisticated technology enabled the Canadian Search and Rescue Planning Program (CANSARP) to relocate the search area more accurately. As a result, one person was rescued who was severely hypothermic after being in the water for 19 hours. This also led to the recovery of four deceased crewmen.

This powerful tool can be an important factor in the crucial hours of maritime search and rescue. Mr. V. Peter Harder, Secretary of the Treasury Board of Canada and Comptroller General of Canada, presented the award to Major Charles Grenkow who accepted it on behalf of the DND, CCG and Seimac Project Team. The SLDMB is currently being used in Canadian search and rescue operations and will soon be used by other countries.

The annual Technology in Government Awards celebration is held to honour the excellence, leadership and innovation in management of information and technology in the public sector.

Joanna Ng

SAR Intern, CCG Headquarters

Editor's Note: For more information about the SLDMB's use in the SAR Vanessa incident, you can consult the April 1998 issue of SARSCENE magazine.

[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

Rescue Divers Prove Their Worth One Dive at a Time

There's quite a variety in the work done at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO),

and some of it is carried out by scuba divers. The Science Branch of DFO Pacific has had divers on staff for roughly 20 years performing a variety of activities – from assessing herring

spawning ground and aquaculture to large-scale science apparatus diving.

It may come as a surprise to some people that until recently, Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) rescue teams did not handle underwater rescues requiring scuba divers. This type of emergency was either handled by Department of National Defence dive teams, or commercial

contractors were called in.

There were, however, a number of Coast Guard rescue specialists who had private training as scuba divers. Today, the Coast Guard has its own team of rescue diving specialists involved in a trial program for search and rescue (SAR) services.

It began one quiet summer night in 1992. A Coast Guard hovercraft responded to an incident near Active Pass, BC. A collision resulted in a fishing boat overturning, trapping several people inside the hull. Some survived the impact and were caught inside a dwindling, diesel-contaminated air pocket. The hovercraft crew could hear faint calls through the hull.

The closest trained scuba divers were on their way but would take two hours to arrive. The CCG crew decided not to wait. Borrowing diving gear from a passing boat, they mounted a rescue effort with a commercial diver who had also responded to the scene. The people were rescued from the overturned vessel, but despite heroic efforts, they succumbed to their injuries in the days following the rescue.

In the months following this case, a number of other incidents occurred around Vancouver which could have used rescue divers at the time of first response. With improvements in medical treatment, drowning victims have revived and made full recovery after long periods of submersion. Buoyed by such advances, CCG SAR headquarters examined the feasibility of

rescue diving in 1993. Diver safety and efficient response were prime considerations. In mid-1995, a rescue dive team was set up on a two-year trial basis with the hovercraft unit at CCG Station Sea Island.

Since then, a small group of CCG Rescue Specialists has been responding to search and rescue calls requiring divers in the Strait of Georgia and the Fraser River. To keep their scuba skills at peak performance, they conduct hull surveys for the Operations Branch, assist Science Branch with underwater sensors and recover sunken buoys for Marine Navigation Services.

In 1997, 12 of the 300 incidents handled by the hovercraft unit were requests for rescue divers. From submerged cars and capsized boats to persons overboard, the need for an efficient response to underwater rescue is being met safely and successfully.

For more information about the Rescue Diver project contact:

Captain Brian Wootton
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E-mail: woottonb@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

40 Years on the Water

Ready, willing and able – these words describe the dedicated volunteers of Ontario’s Hamilton Beach Rescue Unit. On 19 September 1998, the unit celebrated its 40th year of volunteer service with an open house. It was a day for past and current Rescue Unit volunteers to celebrate the valuable service they have provided and for their hard work to be recognized by the community.

Currently, the Hamilton Beach Rescue Unit has 38 active volunteer members and about 50 non-active members who share in the efforts to keep the waters of Lake Ontario and Hamilton Bay safe. Located at the west end of Lake Ontario, the Rescue Unit works in co-operation with the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police and the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG). Equipped with two 20-foot rescue boats, the Rescue Unit frequently comes to the aid of stranded boaters and windsurfers who end up too far from shore. Carrying out drag operations and keeping jet skiers under control are also common duties. "This year the Unit has performed 20 rescues," explains Training Officer and Captain Carlo Calligaro, a volunteer with the Rescue Unit for the past 23 years. "The number of incidents is decreasing because the average boater is becoming more knowledgeable about safety. The police are closely monitoring on-board liquor consumption so there is less partying on the boats and therefore fewer accidents. People treasure their boating licence and don't want to lose it."

The Rescue Unit is on call year round and volunteers spend up to 7000 hours training every year. Training is on going and includes St. John's Ambulance First Aid, C.P.R., Canadian Power and Sail Squadron training, as well as navigation and search and rescue training.

It's no surprise that the Rescue Unit receives strong support from the City of Hamilton. Community members recognize the Rescue Unit because they often see the volunteers patrolling the lake. Educating the community about boating safety is a deep concern of the Unit. "We attend all neighbourhood watch meetings where we hand

out pamphlets and answer questions about safe boating," says Calligaro. "We also stress what equipment boaters should have on board."

The Rescue Unit and its volunteers have undergone many changes in the past 40 years. "The young people coming are very knowledgeable about new technologies," says Calligaro. "Because the recreational boater is better trained today, our volunteers work very hard to maintain a high level of skills."

One particular mission stands out in Calligaro's memory. About 15 years ago, the Rescue Unit responded to a distress call and found two men, both about 18 years old, drowned. "We carried out the dragging operation to recover the bodies," recalls Calligaro. "The men were fooling around with the canoe and diving into the lake.

One of them was wearing jeans and loose clothing and he got caught at the bottom of the lake in old trees and branches. The other man went to get him and they both got stuck. We try to educate people about the dangers of swimming in uncertain waters."

Members of the Rescue Unit encounter all kinds of emergency situations and weather is always a factor. Swells measuring six to seven feet (about two metres) create a challenge for the Rescue Unit.

Every time the Rescue Unit is called out, the lives of the volunteers are at risk. "About six years ago, while one of our boats was responding to a call, it was hit by lightning," recalls Calligaro. "Our volunteers were shaken up but fortunately, no one on the boat was seriously injured."

Volunteering for the Rescue Unit is rewarding and meaningful for each member in different ways. Calligaro finds it rewarding when he sees his crew carrying out an emergency call properly and successfully. "I have lots of confidence and respect for them," says Calligaro.

The 40th anniversary reaffirmed that the Rescue Unit has a future in search and rescue and will continue to evolve with the boating community it serves.

*Helen Kwan
Co-op Student, University of Calgary, NSS.*

[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

National Search and Rescue Secretariat's Awards Program

The National Search and Rescue Secretariat (NSS) Awards Program was introduced in 1995 to acknowledge outstanding work by search and rescue volunteers, professionals and organizations and to raise awareness of search and rescue efforts across the country. The Outstanding SAR Achievement Award recognizes the most exceptional contribution to SAR in Canada by an individual or organization. The Certificates of Achievement recognize individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to search and rescue efforts in their respective regions.

In 1995, the Outstanding SAR Achievement Award went to Kevin George of Edmonton, Alberta, for his achievements in raising the profile of search and rescue dogs throughout Canada. Kevin pioneered SAR dog handling and established the Search and Rescue Dog Association of Alberta.

In 1996, Michael Daniels of the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA) was recognized with the Award for his 25 years of commitment to improving air SAR in Ontario and Canada. Thanks to Daniels' hard work, not only does Ontario have province-wide air SAR services and an association but, in conjunction with the Department of National Defence (DND), a national association has been established.

In 1997, LCol (ret'd) Keith Gathercole, a former Canadian Forces SAR helicopter pilot, was the Outstanding SAR Achievement winner. Gathercole was a dedicated SAR officer with more than 7000 hours of flying behind him. Keith served in nearly every SAR squadron in Canada, and was Commanding Officer of both the 103 Rescue Unit and 424 Transport and Rescue Squadron.

In 1998, Harry Strong, CEO of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (CCGA), received the Award in recognition of his role in developing the CCGA into one of the most capable and cost-effective lifesaving organizations in Canada. A CCGA volunteer since 1979, Mr. Strong has dedicated countless hours and immeasurable energy to improving the CCGA and acting as its spokesperson in national and international arenas.

Award recipients are chosen for their courage, determination and extraordinary contributions to SAR. If someone you know has made an outstanding contribution to SAR, you can nominate him or her for the Achievement Award and Certificate of Achievement. Nominations will be received up to 1 July 1999 and should be forwarded to the NSS by mail, fax (613) 996-3746 or e-mail (isabelle@nss.gc.ca). The Award and certificates will be presented during the Awards Banquet at SARSCENE '99 in St. John's, Newfoundland, on 16 October 1999.

For additional information, contact Isabelle Beaumont-Frenette at 1 800 727-9414 or (613) 992-8215 or e-mail isabelle@nss.gc.ca

[[Top](#) | [SARSCENE Homepage](#)]

[Return](#)