



(C) Combat Search and Rescue: Menwith Hill Station's Role in Saving Lives

FROM: [REDACTED]
MHS Operations Staff (F770)
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MHS picks up radio transmissions from downed aircrews, informs rescuers of location (S//SI)

(S//SI) Menwith Hill Station (MHS) operators and analysts know that they have made significant contributions to saving lives! That's because they have been involved in Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) events since 1999. During a search and rescue event, MHS processes radio transmissions from downed pilots and soldiers and provides locational information to the rescue efforts. This, of course, must be done in a matter of minutes to be effective in a combat situation. The following article describes the CSAR program at MHS, gives some real examples, and takes a look into the future.



(S//SI) Although the CSAR program started in 1999 as a fledgling engineering-oriented program, MHS achieved some noteworthy successes during and after Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. The first time came in November 2001 when a U.S. MH-53 helicopter crashed near Kabul, Afghanistan. MHS found the crew's radio signals and the rescue personnel used this information to locate the downed aircrew and fly them to Pakistan. That same year, a B1-B aircraft issued a distress call before crashing approximately 80 miles north of Diego Garcia. MHS monitored the distress frequency and issued 21 Klieglights before the aircraft personnel were recovered.

(S//SI) In Iraq, MHS supported the rescue of crews of several aircraft. MHS was able to quickly locate the area where two pilots ejected out of the F-14 over southern Iraq. The pilots were recovered within 90 minutes of the incident. When a U.S. CH-47 CHINOOK helicopter went down 60 miles southeast of Baghdad during an in-flight emergency in April 2004, MHS operators again supported the rescue efforts to recover all five personnel.

(S//SI) MHS is able to respond so quickly to actual rescue events because it participates in exercises such as the Desert Rescue XI, a joint CSAR exercise run by the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center in Nevada. These exercises not only train the MHS operators but also ensure the pilots and crew understand proper procedures in a crisis situation. In September 2003, MHS also successfully supported a UK SAS* general exercise/training scenario that allowed the UK Special Forces to practice recovery of a simulated distressed element in a real world environment. The exercise consisted of a combat search and rescue test in the vicinity of Thumrait airfield in Oman. The MHS operators were able to pinpoint the crew's position from 15 seconds of a one-watt voice transmission, an incredible feat.

(C) Because of its remarkable success in CSAR events and exercises, MHS has become a center of excellence for CSAR within the intelligence community. This is due to our high standards in training and evaluation, processing, and reporting procedures. Indeed, each new successful rescue has fueled increased support requirements from the Combat Commands and Service training communities.

(C) MHS has also seen an increased liaison, marketing, and training role with the UK and US military in Europe. Menwith Hill will continue to improve the technology and procedures to meet the growing technical and training challenges of a CSAR environment that now includes five different radios with vastly different capabilities and processing requirements, the expansion of mission to include our Allies, and near continuous operations since 9/11.

(U//FOUO) Because of classification restrictions, this article could not go into greater detail. If

you are interested in more information on the CSAR program, please contact [REDACTED]
at [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

* (U) Notes:
SAS = Special Air Service

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