

# Rescue exercise a test in real life conditions

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due to liability issues. Ray McFadgen never blinked an eye. Disasters never go smoothly he said, although he was disappointed that the big drama portion of the exercise, the airlifts and the SKAD, was canceled. Nonetheless, everyone immediately moved to the fall back positions already within the plan.

The casualties were split into 4 teams, dressed in dry suits. These are really cool looking one piece outfits with boots attached, neoprene cuffs and turtle necks, shock orange, and Corvette red, one size does not fit all, and life vests on top. Loaded into our

delivery boats, we were taken to our castaway locations. Due to deteriorating weather conditions and reduction in equipment and personnel, changes were made to some of these locations. The capsized vessel was moved farther down the bay, across from Inlet Baddeck, and the survivors deposited on Sheep Point, Burnt Point, and

ground and settled in to wait. Out of the storm, the conversation moved casually through everyday issues like the latest movies, what's for supper, pets, then on to beaver dams, explosives, a short lesson for me on flares, EPRBS, and hydrostatic transponders that search for radar.

This shore time gained me per-

accounted for and in good shape. They sped away with a promise to return after taking the casualties they had already retrieved to another vessel. About 15 minutes later, a second boat arrived and came in close to the beach to talk to us. They also left advising the big boat would be back for us shortly. We tugged on our dry suits and packed up our gear. It was going to be a wet ride home.

When the big FRC (that's Fast Rescue Craft) was sighted near the point, we set off the hand flare and doused the signal fire. The FRC came in on shore. Confirming there were no injuries among us, they tossed us in the boat. We found ways to brace ourselves, then sped out into the wild wind and water. I heard someone say the FRC could do speeds up to 60 knots. Lord. About half way up the bay we were transferred to a smaller FRC which took us the rest of the way in. I sat on the windward side so at least I had my back to the waves that crashed over the side of the boat with relentless regularity. The water was warm but the cold wind was painful, like when you drink a milk shake too fast kind of painful. We were the last team to come ashore. The boats and equipment were already being packed up and heading out.

The Coast Guard puts on 12 to 15 training exercises each year but this was the worst weather on record in recent history. Some boats broke down or were overwhelmed by the weather conditions, which could certainly be the case in an actual disaster. The crews were seriously tested during the exercise but in terms of real life conditions, the weather was a plus. It became clear very quickly were the shortfalls lay, who needed assistance to complete their tasks, and where better equipment and communications were required.

For my part, I was glad to play a role. And I have been enlightened. A tough morning filled with excitement, sometimes bordering on terror, left me feeling a whole lot better about the state of the world in general, knowing that dedicated and level headed people are out there, willing to train, willing to help when disaster strikes. I am also heartened to know that a fine group of cadets are getting ready to take their place in the service of the Canadian Coast Guard.



Team 3 starts their signal fire alerting rescuers of their location.

## RCMP Report

Cape Breton Crime Stoppers is seeking assistance from the public in solving an incident of theft in Baddeck.

RCMP Baddeck are investigating a break, enter and theft from the Nova Scotia Power Complex on Shore Road in Baddeck. The theft occurred between September 12 and September 13, 2010. There were items taken from the power truck and shed of the facility.

If you have any information about this crime you are asked to call the Baddeck RCMP 295-2350. If you wish to remain anonymous please call Crime Stoppers at 562-8477. Crime Stoppers does not subscribe to caller ID; calls are not taped or traced and you never have to reveal your identity. Crime Stoppers wants your information, not your name. You can earn a cash award if your information helps solve this or any other crime.

To read about crimes in your community check our web site: [www.capebretoncrimestoppers.ca](http://www.capebretoncrimestoppers.ca).

behind Cranberry Point in Indian Cove. We were equipped with VHF radios and flares to help our rescuers find us.

Teams were to stay out of sight initially, so the search vessels wouldn't spot us. Ground Search & Rescue teams were also on the move trying to find us.

Team 3, five cadets plus myself, were dropped in Indian Cove at 0900 hrs. We waded ashore with our backpacks. The drop boat (USS Never Dry) dashed away. We stripped off our brilliant costumes, stashed them in the bushes then headed into the trees out of sight. We made temporary camp on some dead fall on higher

sonal insights into the cadets I was with, and the Canadian Coast Guard College. They were all 4th year cadets, all well educated, extremely smart, with a sense of purpose uncommon amongst young people that I normally meet. They have already spent 7 months at sea, and most of them will become officers once they leave college.

We were signaled on our VHF and directed to set off our parachute flare then return to the beach to make ourselves visible. The parachute flare, even in the brilliant sunshine, threw off intense white light, hanging overhead for the better part of a minute. Back on the beach, the cadets built a signal fire with an efficiency that would make *Survivor's* Jeff Probst proud. They used one of the brilliant orange jackets on a stick for a signal flag. Just beyond the point we could see the wind on the water. Spindrift from the cresting waves filled the air.

Around 1100 hrs the first rescue boat arrived in the cove and sat off shore while a brief radio conversation took place confirming we were all

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## In the Blood

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BY GARY SAMSON AND LINDSEY VLADYKA

*A photographic exhibit based on the book by Burt Feintuch*

**CONVERSATIONS ON CULTURE**

BY BURT FEINTUCH, PHOTOGRAPHS BY GARY SAMSON

*From Cape Breton University Press and Utah State University Press*

Sydney

Tuesday, October 12, 4-6 p.m.

Cape Breton University Art Gallery

A Celtic Colours 2010 event

*Mabou (Book Launch)*

Wednesday, October 13, 4-6 p.m.

An Drochaid/The Bridge Museum



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