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### **CIVIL AIR PATROL MEMBERS LOCATE DOWNED AIRCRAFT AND SAVE INJURED PILOT ON RETURN HOME FROM ROUTINE MISSION**

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Two members of the California Wing of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) located a downed aircraft on their way home to Bakersfield from a routine mission Sunday afternoon, August 15, 2004. An official search mission had not yet begun when Capt. Overacker and Lt. Brewster heard the ELT while in flight and decided to DF (Directional Find) the signal.

Civil Air Patrol pilot Capt. Ronny Overacker and observer Lt. Ron Brewster heard the distress beacon of the Grumman AA2 and traced the signal to an open field five miles east of the Palmdale Airport. The CAP pilots spotted the wreckage from the air and immediately reported it to the Palmdale Airport Tower. They then guided a ground crash-rescue team to the crash site, which was actually about a mere half-mile from a paved road.

The impact of the plane wreck caused the pilot to become dazed and confused. The pilot waited by his downed aircraft for about an hour and a half before the rescuers spotted the wreckage. The pilot didn't realize he was only about a quarter mile away from a paved road. This was extremely dangerous for the confused pilot as it was approximately 100 degrees in the afternoon sun. The EMS authority determined that the pilot would most likely have died had the CAP aircrew not taken the time to DF the signal and locate the downed aircraft.

Capt. Bob Kielholtz stated, "There were some great things that occurred on this mission as well as some lessons to be learned. Capt. Overacker and Lt. Brewster were monitoring 121.5 and FM radio, just as they had been trained to do, enabling them to locate the ELT within 20 minutes. The MIOs (Mission Information Officers) covering the mission involved the Press quickly in order to make the evening news.

However, there were actually three CAP aircraft coming home over the same route that Sunday afternoon from the same routine mission, but only one of their aircraft was appropriately monitoring 121.5 on the FM radio, which enable them to hear the ELT signal coming from the troubled aircraft. This is a perfect example of how important it is for every aircrew to be monitoring 121.5 and FM radio at all times. This is also an example of why every ELT signal must be treated as a true distress scenario."

Had the pilot not filed a flight plan it could have taken several hours before the AFRCC would have initiated the mission. Next, an IC (Incident Commander) and an aircrew launch would have to be readied before CAP could even attempt to find a distress signal. As a result of Overacker and Brewster properly monitoring and then tracking the signal to its location, the downed aircraft was quickly located and the pilot's life was saved.

Capt. Kielholtz, the Lead Incident Commander noted, "Special thanks to the air crew that located the downed aircraft for monitoring 121.5 as they had been trained to do

at all time while in flight.” Missions such as this demonstrate the importance of Civil Air Patrol's training and the value received by our fellow citizens.