



CIVIL AIR PATROL

NEWS

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE AUXILIARY, CALIFORNIA WING, HEADQUARTERS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 17, 2005

Civil Air Patrol locates airplane crash in a grapefruit grove, two survivors.

Members of the United States Air Force Auxiliary, the Civil Air Patrol, started the year 2005 with a spectacular “find”. A certain Cessna 150 airplane, with it’s tail torn to one side and wings destroyed, lay crumpled in a North San Diego County citrus grove, wasn’t quite so lucky. The two fortunate survivors, one student and one instructor, were found to be in fair condition, but dazed after the mishap. The flight originated from Gillespie Field on route to Hemet when the small craft encountered engine trouble and crashed approximately one-quarter mile north of the Pauma Valley private airstrip in northern San Diego County. A civilian pilot reported witnessing the crash.

USAF Search mission 05M0091 was initiated at 3:55pm Sunday with an “all call” for volunteer search team members in the Southern California area. Searches are started when the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC), located in the state of Virginia, determine that their satellites have found an active emergency transmitter signal somewhere in the United States and can estimate an approximate search area. The Civil Air Patrol is contacted to locate the source of the emergency signal and provide the appropriate services on site. Most emergency transmissions (over 95%) are false alarms. All alarms must be searched for by the civilian volunteers 24 hours a day as if they are all real emergencies, and silenced as quickly as possible. The search for Sunday’s signal started just as routinely as so many had in the past. This signal, the first lost aircraft search in California for 2005, was handled no differently.

Within one hour of the alert, a Cessna 150, on a local training flight was located crashed in a grapefruit orchard near SR76 and Cole Grade Road in Pauma Valley. The pilot sustained minor injuries and was later treated at a local hospital. The aircraft appears to have been a total loss. The pilot, dazed, remained with the aircraft until local rescuers were able to locate the crash with the assistance of a civilian pilot that was in the area.

The mission was completed, and volunteer members went back home safely, by 6:45 PM in the evening, barely three hours after they were first called to help.

For further information, contact:

1Lt. Frank Geraty
Director, Public Affairs
California Wing Headquarters
(818) 624-2105 (cell)
frank.geraty@cawg.cap.gov

Civil Air Patrol, the official Air Force Auxiliary, is a nonprofit organization. It performs more than 85% of inland search and rescue missions tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center in the continental United States. Volunteers also take a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to America’s youths through CAP cadet programs. -- On the Web: <http://www.cawg.cap.gov>