

SATELLITES & SEARCHES



Handheld devices that work without cell signals proved their value earlier this week in the snowy Wallowa Mountains

Union County Search and Rescue/Contributed Photo

Volunteers donned snowshoes to reach a man stranded in the Wallowa Mountains on Monday, Oct. 25.

By **JAYSON JACOBY**
Baker City Herald

A search and rescue operation tends to be considerably simpler when you take away the search part.

The handheld devices that link to satellites orbiting Earth, and allow people to communicate even in places where cell signals can't penetrate, make it increasingly likely that rescue crews, before they start, will know precisely where they need to go, Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash said.

"They're becoming more common to have them out there," Ash said on Wednesday, Oct. 27.

While describing one such recent episode, the sheriff, who has been involved in many searches since joining the Sheriff's Office in 2005, was still deficient on sleep after going 36 hours without so much as a nap.

Ash coordinated the rescue of Robert Derald Borders, a 67-year-old Baker City man who was stranded by an unusually potent autumn storm in the Wallowa Mountains earlier this week that brought two feet of snow followed by torrential rain and winds strong enough to topple trees.

Rescuers from Baker and Union County search and rescue teams reached Borders about 2 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 25.

He didn't need medical treatment and was able to ride his



Union County Search and Rescue/Contributed Photo

Deep snow made it difficult to use vehicles during a rescue operation in the Wallowa Mountains on Monday, Oct. 25.

horse back to the trailhead, guided by the rescuers.

Although the operation was severely hampered by weather that in its severity shocked even Ash, an experienced outdoorsman, the sheriff said Borders' use of a Garmin inReach satellite device helped immensely.

The unit allowed Borders to send text messages to friends, who then alerted the Sheriff's Office to his plight about noon on Sunday, Oct. 24.

Equally important, the device pinpointed his location, so rescuers didn't waste any time in potentially fruitless searching.

"If we didn't know where he was, and had to search all that area, that's a multi-day event," Ash said. "Having that precise location, we just had to figure out how to safely get to him."

Chris Galiszewski, coordinator for the Baker County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue team,

said the devices, which generally cost between about \$300 and \$600, can truly be life-savers.

"We're not guessing where people are," he said. "We know where people are."

Galiszewski said the satellite devices are especially useful in places such as Northeastern Oregon where cell service is limited, or completely absent, in many places.

The southern Wallowa Mountains, where Borders was overtaken by the storm, is one such region.

Ash said he had only marginal service on his phone even when it was plugged into a signal booster in his vehicle.

But the Garmin inReach and similar devices sold by other manufacturers use satellites, which cover pretty much every patch of ground on Earth.

With such a device, users can send brief text messages — usually limited to 160 characters — to a predetermined list of cell-phone numbers, Galiszewski said.

The units also have an emergency button that will send a signal to a dispatch center, he said.

In addition to the cost of the device, users pay a monthly fee for the satellite service.

Garmin, for instance, charges, \$11.95 per month for its basic plan, which includes 10 text messages.

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Handgun training class creates a new pistol fan

TOM CLAYCOMB
BASE CAMP

Kerry LaFramboise, who owns Watchmen Tactical Training, offers Handgun Training, Rifle/Shotgun Training, Defensive Training and Business/Church Training. The other day my wife, Katy, signed up to take his Handgun Training class. She wanted me to take it with her but I was going to be out of state.

I'd told her to take a .357 Magnum since a revolver is simpler and more dependable. Well, Friday night she called me to tell me about the class. She was super excited and told me about the day and all that she had learned. Then she told me how all of the other women in class were shooting Sig Sauer 9 mm's. She was



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

On the first trip in to Stockpile Defense Zach is showing Katy how to properly clean her pistol.

excited to the max, then she blurts out: "Tom, I just bought a new pistol" and proceeded to tell me about it.

Like I said above, when I left I'd told her she ought to use her .357 Magnum. But that advice got thrown out the window before the wheels of the plane I was

in got off the ground. But it didn't end there. If she bought a new pistol, she needed a new holster, didn't she? Of course. Then she needed a stout belt so it wouldn't twist when she pulled out her pistol and of course she'd need a black belt and a brown belt to go with her different outfits.

Then of course what good is a new pistol if you don't have any ammo so she had to buy plenty of that, didn't she?

Katy always tells me that I'm the eternal tightwad but we all want our wife to jump off the deep end with us and buy guns, fishing rods and 4-wheelers, don't we? So I couldn't say a word to discourage delinquent behavior.

I was flying home Friday night about midnight and she informed me that we had to run to Stockpile Defense which is where she bought her pistol so she could learn how to tear down her pistol and clean it, and then we had to go shooting. (I think I'm going to like this new Katy). I had plane problems and spent the night in Minneapolis and didn't get home until Saturday midafternoon. Didn't matter, she picked me up at

the airport and it was off to the gun shop.

I was freshly reminded of why you want to deal with local privately owned businesses instead of big box stores. The crew at Stockpile Defense is over the top on their service. Zach took us in the backroom and demo'd everything she needed to know about disassembling and cleaning her pistol. They made her feel like the only customer in the world.

In the meantime, I just got a Mantis X10 Elite Shooting Performance System. It is a cool deal and would take a whole article to explain. But in a nutshell, you can attach it to your pistol, rifle or bow and using an app, it can be used for dry firing or live firing to show where your shot hit and how much you're wobbling, etc. It's a cool deal. I'm going back to Stockpile Defense today after I get

in a few articles and have one of their experts on the Mantis system teach me the ropes.

Now the downside to all of this. On the Mantis System Katy shot a 94% and me ... well, it was a lot lower. I've had pistols since the seventh grade but I'm still a horrible shot with a pistol. Maybe I better go take one of Kerry's classes. Not only can my wife outshoot me, now I'm scared to come home. Or at least I may have to straighten up a lot!

(This was a light-hearted article but you need to be proficient with your pistol. Just this afternoon after school my daughter was going to stop by the Boise mall to grab a birthday gift for a friend. Thankfully she had forgotten something and had to run by home first. At that very time the shooting at the Boise mall occurred.)