



# CENTRALIA AMATEUR RADIO EMERGENCY SERVICE TEAM

July 2020

*Amateur Radio is a hobby ... Amateur Radio Emergency Service is a commitment!*

## Missing Person Search - Robert Gerard



Robert Gerard

When 93 year old Robert Gerard walked away from his children's home in north Centralia on the afternoon of Monday, July 6th, everyone expected he would return later as he had done before. Six feet tall, 185 pounds with blue eyes and white hair, Mr. Gerard was last seen wearing a brown jacket, blue jeans and a white baseball hat. He was carrying his gold colored cane. A prior resident of Tenino, Mr. Gerard had once decided to walk the 13 or so miles to visit his wife's gravesite so this was nothing new. On his walk to Tenino, he was picked up by a friendly passerby and given a ride the rest of the way.

When Mr. Gerard hadn't returned as expected, Centralia Police were called and the official search began. Early morning on July 7th, our Amateur Radio Emergency Service team was asked to help. A forward command post had been established at the Oakview Grange and an AlertSense message began our deployment. CPD and Riverside Fire Authority, augmented by RFA volunteers and ARES team members were briefed by CPD's Sgt. Croy, the Incident Commander and then divided into two person mobile search teams. Each team consisted of one ARES team member and one volunteer with amateur radio being the main form of communications. Some initial communications difficulties arose but were quickly overcome by using the more powerful radio systems in each ARES volunteer's vehicle and by switching base comms to our ARES Comm II truck.



CPD Sergeant Buddy Croy

Search teams worked their way through the area street by street, house by house, checking each yard and out building with the homeowner's permission. By mid afternoon, searchers still had not found Mr. Gerard and the search area was expanded even further. Throughout the day,

sighting reports would filter in but all of these proved to be unfounded. Late in the day, a tip came in from someone who said he had given Gerard a ride across town. The search was relocated to the west side of Interstate 5 near Fort Borst Park. Unfortunately, by dark, no trace of our missing person had been found and the search was called off.

In the days since the initial search, flyers and photos were distributed throughout the area as the search was expanded outside the Centralia city limits, but Robert Gerard continues to be listed as a missing person.



The search for Mr. Gerard was our team's first search request and there were lessons to be learned by everyone. Since July 7th, our ARES team has conducted a debrief and some follow up meetings with the Centralia Police Department. As stated earlier, Robert Gerard is still listed as a missing person. Should you see Mr. Gerard, please call 911 or the Centralia Police Department immediately.

# COVID-19 coronavirus

It has been five months since the Covid-19 pandemic changed the way our ARES team trains, meets and conducts business. No Summerfest activities, no July 4th parade and no amateur radio swap meet this year. We have been able to conduct only one field training exercise and that only because we can, with our radios, social distance to a point. While Zoom meetings have been helpful, the active, hands on type of training is what we do best.

This is potentially a very busy time of the year for our team as we make sure we are ready to respond to possible Riverside Fire Authority requests for wildfire assistance. Take the time, now to make sure your go bag is ready and your radios function properly. While we don't know when life will return to normal, we need to be prepared for anything.

## WSP Trooper Justin Schaffer Memorial

As this month's newsletter is being written, the Centralia ARES team is also preparing to take part in a memorial gathering to be held at Fort Borst Park for slain Washington State Patrol Trooper Justin Schaffer on Wednesday, August 5th. Trooper Schaffer was killed May 15th when the suspect he was trying to stop on Interstate 5 ran over him.

As currently planned, family and first responders from throughout Washington State will hold the memorial at the Sports Hub as it can hold the expected 400 people who will be attending. A procession of law enforcement vehicles will also be arriving to take part in the event. Early estimates expect over 250 vehicles. Centralia ARES team members will assist with parking at Borst Park. A complete report will be made available in our August ARES newsletter. Please keep Trooper Schaffer's family in your thoughts and prayers.

## Go-Bags For Short Deployment - August 2020



If you are an ARRL member and receive the monthly QST magazine you will find an article in the August 2020 edition under the Public Service section titled "Go Bags for Short Deployment". Written by Centralia EC Bob Willey, KD7OWN, the article discusses a team contest conducted a year or so ago.

All ARES teams use go-bags. Many, or maybe most, are heavy, bulky and not very useful to the point they are usually left behind in the vehicle. Our idea was to create a small go-bag with a total weight of 10 pounds that had everything needed for a short deployment of 2-6 hours. Most of the deployments our team deals with things like parades, or community events and certainly are not the kind of deployments that require a large go-bag. We decided to see how creative our group could be. With a prize of \$25 on the line, who could create the best short deployment go-bag under 10 pounds.

The winner was Skip Kingman, K1HEK. His go-bag included: HT and spare battery, headset mic, coax connectors & cables, flashlights, car charger for the HT, headlamp, GPS, compass and whistle, personal protective equipment, first aid kit & rescue blanket, multitool, matches and lighter, water bottle & snacks, 100' paracord, map and field resource manual, tape, zip ties and bungee cords, gloves, sun/rain hat, thermal shirt, notepad, pen, pencil and markers.

Congratulations to Skip. Maybe it is time for us all to reconsider our personal go-bag supply list.



- The Centralia, Washington, ARES group's Short Deployment Go-Bag Challenge winner, Skip Kingman, K1HEK.
- The contest winner for the Centralia, Washington, ARES group's Short Deployment Go-Bag Challenge chose a smaller to pack, and added the following items:
- Handheld radio and spare
  - Headset microphone
  - Coax connectors and cables
  - Car charger for the radio
  - Headlamp with spare batteries
  - GPS, compass, and whistle
  - Personal protective equipment
  - First-aid kit and rescue blanket
  - Personal medical kit
  - Multitool, matches
  - Water bottle and snacks
  - 100-foot paracord
  - Map and field resource manual
  - Tape, zip ties and bungee cords
  - Gloves, sun hat
  - Notepad, pen, pencil and markers