

REGA

Issue no. 80, June 2013

Swiss Air-Rescue Patrons' Magazine

rega 

Missions in Switzerland
**Saved by the
rescue hoist**

Partners
Rega's strong partners

Special theme
Canyoning eldorado





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Saved by the rescue hoist

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Rega's strong partners

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Service number for patrons

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The paramedic lowers the flight physician and SAC specialist down to the patient using the rescue hoist

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Dear patrons

Does this sound familiar to you? In many situations a tiny detail can make all the difference between success and failure. We can be ideally prepared, equipped and trained for a mountain hike, yet we stumble in the stupidest place, at the stupidest moment. Some might say it's just sheer bad luck. Others might regard it as destiny – if it's going to happen, then it will.

In more technical terms, we speak of the residual risk, by which we mean those sometimes intangible areas of human action over which we have no influence. We know that we will never succeed in averting every misfortune, so we would do well to think about the possible consequences. Only the incorrigible say, "That will never happen to me!" We hope they're right, but they're more likely to be wrong.

In the field of air rescue, we can't rely on "it" never happening. So we prepare ourselves by training for emergencies, such as at a simulated accident site with our mission partners, or in the new helicopter simulator, where it is possible to train for challenging and dangerous situations in a safe environment. We do this to ensure that in an emergency everything proceeds without a hitch and the mission goes smoothly for the patient, but also to reduce the risk for our crews, our patients and everyone else involved to a minimum.

This issue of our Patrons' Magazine 1414 contains fascinating insights into the diverse work carried out by Swiss Air-Rescue Rega in this and many other fields. I trust you will find it an interesting read and wish you a pleasant, accident-free summer.

Yours sincerely

Ernst Kohler,
 CEO/Chairman of the Management Board

A mission to remember

Saved by the rescue hoist

What people in distress experience as an exceptional situation is all in a normal day's work for the Rega teams. And yet there is always one – the mission that every crew member recalls, and the patient whose fate they still reflect on long after the rescue.

11 August 2012 – a picture-perfect day. Under blue skies and in pleasant temperatures, Raphael Wyss and Peter Hässig set out early in the morning from Linthal (Canton Glarus) in the direction of the Hausstock. Raphael Wyss is in training; he hopes that today's mountain hike will help prepare him for his next major project – the ascent of the 5,642 metre-high Mount Elbrus, in the Caucasus mountain range in Russia. It is not the first project of this kind that the 30-year old outdoor enthusiast has undertaken. In 2010, he scaled South America's highest mountain, the 6,962 metre-high Aconcagua, and in 2011, together with Peter Hässig, he climbed Kilimanjaro.

Raphael Wyss is in peak condition and the two mountain climbers make rapid progress. They reach the 3,158 metre-high summit of the Hausstock just after 1.00pm. Time for a quick breather and a chat with another group, who have tackled the ascent from Elm. The two young Swiss men tell them that they had originally planned to make the descent to Elm, but that they have left their car in Linthal. The members of the other group spontaneously offer to drive the car to Elm. Pleased that they will be able to follow their planned route after all, Wyss and Hässig take up the offer and start making their way down to Elm.



Raphael Wyss (left) and Peter Hässig at the summit

View from the temporary landing site of the scene of the fall



Wyss is already familiar with parts of the route from previous hikes, but the descent turns out to be more difficult than expected. The ground under foot is slippery, with scree everywhere. Wyss and his companion are experienced alpinists and take appropriate precautions. But then it happens – Raphael Wyss slips on the loose shale and falls down the mountainside.

“Rega 12 from Rega: fall on Hausstock”

From his position, Peter Hässig cannot see his colleague and does not know how he is and whether he is still alive. Still in shock, he dials Rega's emergency number. What a good thing he still has reception up here! The alarm call reaches Rega's Operations Centre shortly before 3.30pm. Just minutes later, the rescue helicopter from



the Rega base in Mollis is in the air. Based on the available information, pilot Rick Maurer, paramedic Markus Reichenbach and emergency flight physician Philipp Stein prepare themselves for the worst. “We knew that someone had fallen around 60 metres, and that his companion was still stuck on the mountain,” recalls Rick Maurer. After setting down briefly to take on board a rescue specialist from the Swiss Alpine Club SAC, the helicopter reaches the accident site and the crew locate Peter Hässig, who is still on the ridge. Hässig uses hand signals to indicate the approximate place and direction of his friend’s fall.

After a brief search, the rescuers spot Raphael Wyss. He has not slid under the edge of the glacier, as is often the case, but is lying on the surface, easily visible. What a stroke of luck! “Although at the time we were pleased we had located him, due to the distance he had fallen we had to assume that he had not survived,” says Maurer, describing these moments of apprehension. But it is Raphael Wyss himself who puts an end to the uncertainty by lifting his arm and signalling to the rescuers that he is indeed still alive.

Administering first aid at the temporary landing site

Clouds impede rapid evacuation

At a nearby temporary landing site, the crew prepare for the operation using the rescue hoist. First the helicopter rescue specialist is set down to fix the necessary belay points in the ice for himself, the emergency flight physician and the casualty – an essential security measure, even under time pressure. Then physician Philipp Stein is lowered down to Wyss on the rescue hoist. While he makes an initial assessment of his patient, the pilot and paramedic decide to fly Peter Hässig, who is still stuck on the ridge, to safety in Elm.

Maurer and Reichenbach are already on their way back to the temporary landing site when the emergency flight physician signals that he is ready for Raphael Wyss to be evacuated. “In view of his serious injuries, we had to make sure the patient received medical attention as quickly as possible. We could only do that safely at the temporary landing site, as the spot on the glacier was at significant risk of rock falls,” explains Philipp Stein. But it now seems as though Raphael Wyss’s luck is no longer holding, as the cloud has come down, making it impossible



6 Missions in Switzerland

to evacuate the three people. The crew discuss the options. What about a land evacuation? No, such an operation is a last resort because of the type of injuries and the length of time required. They decide to wait a couple of minutes, hoping a hole will appear in the bank of mist. Aware of their patient's critical condition, the wait tries the patience of even this experienced Rega crew.

Courageous operation with the rescue hoist

“Everyone was mightily relieved when, after a few minutes, the mist cleared right over the accident site. It was also clear to us, though, that we now had to proceed quickly, as conditions could rapidly deteriorate again,” recounts Markus Reichenbach, Head of the Rega base in Mollis. After carefully considering all the facts, the two experienced Rega rescuers, Maurer and Reichenbach, decide to proceed contrary to Rega's standard operating procedures and to evacuate all three people on the rescue hoist at once. This decision proves to be the right one, because shortly after they reach the temporary landing site, the mist closes in again.

The emergency flight physician and the paramedic work at full stretch to stabilise their seriously injured patient. Raphael Wyss is then flown direct to Zurich, where the crew from



Visit to the Rega Centre:
(from left to right) Rick Maurer,
Raphael Wyss and Philipp Stein

Additional motivation for ice-hockey fan Wyss:
visit from Mathias Seger, captain of the ZSC Lions



Mollis hand him over to the specialists at Zurich University Hospital. Minutes later, the Rega rescuers are back in the helicopter and already on their way to the next mission.

The arduous road to recovery

It is a long road back to normal life for Raphael Wyss. Barely four months after the accident – three weeks' intensive care at Zurich University Hospital, twelve weeks in a rehabilitation clinic in Bellikon and seven operations later – he makes his way to the Rega Centre at Zurich Airport. In the intervening weeks, Maurer, Reichenbach and Stein have repeatedly enquired about their patient's condition, so they are delighted to see him back on his feet again, albeit on crutches. Over a coffee, rescuers and patient discuss their recollections of that out-of-the-ordinary mission. For Wyss, one thing is clear: “I owe my life to Rega, my top physical condition and, not least, to numerous strokes of luck!”

The Rega crew are also sure that they will not forget this mission in a hurry. “We all feel it was a special rescue and are pleased everything went so well. You remember such missions, and meeting up with the patient at the Rega Centre again was an emotional experience, too,” concludes Rega pilot Maurer, as he poses for the souvenir photo.

Karin Hörhager

Bis er fliegen gelernt hat,
braucht's die Rega.



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Rome: business trip – Italian hospital – Rega

From fashion show to Rega jet

After being run over by a moped, Helga Leistritz spends a difficult time in an Italian hospital – she understands very little Italian and has to get used to unfamiliar local practices, such as no nursing care or food. So she is extremely relieved when a Rega crew turns up in her hospital room.



Mrs Leistritz admires Rami Al Ali haute couture, unaware of what is shortly to befall her

Seventy-year old Helga Leistritz tells of her work as a fashion journalist. Twice a year, she travels to Paris and Rome to report on the latest haute couture and the new fashion collections for the Swiss fashion trade association's "Bulletin" magazine. At the end of January 2012, as every year, she attended the "AltaModa", a week of fashion shows, in Rome. The evening before she

returned home, at around 8.30pm when it was already dark, she was walking to an evening gown show when a moped drove through a red light and collided with her.

When she comes round she sees that her right foot is in a pool of blood. How long had she lying there unconscious? There is an ambulance on the scene, a car driver is helping, but the moped rider

Her press pass is in a similar condition to her bones





has disappeared. Her left shoulder and left elbow are painful, not to mention her right lower leg, from which a bone is protruding. The ambulance swiftly takes her to a nearby hospital. She is x-rayed at around 10.30pm; an hour later, the doctors start to perform the emergency operation. They operate on her shoulder, elbow and lower leg until 4.30am.

When in Rome, do as the Romans do

Before she has the x-ray, Mrs Leistriz is able to telephone her husband, and both agree that he should contact Swiss Air-Rescue. While she is being operated on in Rome, he telephones Rega's Operations Centre at Zurich Airport. The staff there deal with him in a very friendly and professional manner, as his wife later recounts.

The repatriation mission quickly gets under way. Mr Leistriz is given helpful information, which he passes on to his wife by telephone. For other countries do some things in a way that is incomprehensible to Swiss people. For example, in Italy it is normal for hospital patients to receive no nursing care, nothing to eat or drink, no towels and no other assistance; it is usually family members who are responsible for these tasks. And if you have no relatives to help, it is just bad luck. Fortunately Helga is looked after by a colleague from Rome. A policeman takes away her jewellery and valuables for safekeeping; everything is returned to her later.

She is lying in a green room, which she shares with three other women. Apart from the doctors, who wear white coats, all the staff are dressed in green. "Everything was green," Helga Leistriz recalls. The time she spent in the Roman hospital was something of an odyssey for Helga, who speaks little Italian.

Rega's arrival sparks emotions and relief

The day after her night-time operations seems to last for ever. Luckily her mobile phone is within reach, and her husband tells her that the Rega jet is already airborne. The Rega medical team reach the hospital early that afternoon. The patient is happy, thankful, emotional and relieved when she sees the jet physician and flight nurse. And she is amazed at how well the Rega doctor speaks Italian and can talk to the surgeon who performed the operation in his

native language. She is transferred to a stretcher and driven to the airport by ambulance. Everything proceeds without a hitch. Helga Leistriz is relieved. After a 1½-hour flight, the Rega jet lands at Zurich-Kloten Airport, where an ambulance is already waiting to transport her to Baden Cantonal Hospital.

Happy to be alive despite a lengthy recuperation

The accident in Rome has serious consequences. Helga is hospitalised for more than five weeks, followed by two months of rehabilitation. Her leg develops gangrene (dead tissue) and she is also very anaemic. The healing process is anything but satisfactory; the final wounds only heal after nine months, and then reopen, and to make things worse, screws from the operation on the lower leg bone break.

However, with her positive outlook on life, Helga Leistriz takes all this in her stride and does not bemoan her fate. For her life-affirming attitude has already helped her to overcome breast cancer, from which she suffered for several years.

Helga Leistriz will need more operations, and for quite some time her days will be ruled by therapy. Yet despite it all, she is grateful and happy, and every day she is thankful to be alive.

Ariane Güngerich



The complex break requires complex immobilisation methods

A good year later: flight physician Benedetta Rei und Helga Leistriz are once again reunited in the Rega jet





During the stopover on Samoa for refuelling, there is enough time to take a souvenir photo: (back, from left) Andy Siegenthaler, Yvonne Horisberger, Anne-Lise Stuby, Knut Griese, Nadine Flückiger; (front, from left) Roland Oberholzer, Marc Bühlmann

From west to east: Rega jet circumnavigates the globe

Around the world in seven days

One week, three patients, seven crew members, twelve stopovers, 43,200 kilometres: accompany a Rega ambulance jet and its crew on a logistically highly complex and out-of-the-ordinary mission.

Night-time on 10 November 2012: at the Rega Centre in Zurich, four pilots, two intensive care flight nurses and one jet flight physician prepare for one of the longest missions in Rega's history. Shortly they will be taking over from the crew currently on the way back from Abu Dhabi in the Rega jet, HB-JRA, and embarking on a journey that will take them all the way around the world. Already on board the aircraft is a patient whom Rega is transporting from the United Arab Emirates to San Jose in California on behalf of a foreign insurance company.

On Samoa, the Rega jet does not just fill its tanks with fuel, but also with a little South Sea sun



At the same time, in Australia, two seriously injured Swiss Rega patrons are waiting to be flown back home. For economic and logistical reasons, Rega has decided to combine the two long-haul flights to the USA and Australia. This allows them to make optimal use of the ambulance jet's capacity and also reduces costs.

Across the Atlantic and Pacific

Once the jet has arrived in Zurich, it is refuelled, takes a new crew on board, and immediately departs again on its journey across the Atlantic. As the Challenger CL-604 has a maximum range of approximately 6,200 kilometres, it needs to stop on the way to California to refuel in Greenland. On the morning of 11 November local time, the crew land in San Jose and accompany their patient to the designated hospital. After the obligatory rest period, they plan the continuation of their flight to Australia, 13,000 kilometres away. The ambulance jet cruises over the deep-blue expanse of the Pacific Ocean, stopping for fuel in Honolulu and on the South Sea island of Samoa. Pilot Andy Siegenthaler recalls this leg of the journey with pleasure: "The flight over this tiny island paradise in Oceania was an unforgettable experience for us all!"

As the Rega jet approaches the Australian mainland, back at the Rega Centre in Zurich, the staff are working tirelessly on all the organisational details. The flight coordinator and dispatcher make sure that the mission goes off without a hitch. They arrange for fuel to be available at the stopover locations, deal with all the necessary formalities, and draw up the optimal flight route. "Without all of

our helpers working behind the scenes, such a complex mission would simply be impossible,” says Siegenthaler.

In Australia, the Rega crew commence the last leg of their long journey. At the hospitals in Newcastle, near Sydney, and Melbourne, the two Swiss are eagerly awaiting their arrival. The patients are taken by ambulance to the Rega jet, with its familiar Swiss cross emblem. Subsequently, the crew, patients and one accompanying person take off on the long flight back to Switzerland. 18,000 kilometres and three stopovers later, the Rega jet finally sets down on the runway at Zurich Airport on 16 November at 7.10am local time. The two casualties, relieved to be back home again, are placed in the care of the Swiss hospital staff. For the crew, this marks the end of a strenuous yet eventful round-the-world trip in the service of their patients.

Wanda Pfeifer

Paradisiacal view of the Fiji Islands from the aircraft window



The new dispatch system enables flight coordinators to work much more efficiently

Coordinating missions more efficiently than ever

On 3 December 2012, Swiss Air-Rescue Rega put its new dispatch system into operation, marking another milestone in its history. As part of a complex, large-scale project, the new system enables integrated, standardised procedures for responding to emergency calls. The flight coordinators see on their four screens not only the various maps and satellite images, but also other useful information, including meteorological and avalanche data or potential obstacles at the accident site. In addition, all mission details are recorded digitally; writing reports by hand is now a thing of the past. The transfer to the new system followed a laborious phase of entering data and undergoing training. At the same time, the offices in the Operations Centre were also modernised and refurbished. During these activities, operations were organised from temporary facilities in the basement of the Rega Centre. In a final project phase, Rega plans to modernise all the over 40 fixed transmitting stations belonging to its countrywide radio network by the end of 2014.

In the next issue of our Patrons' Magazine 1414, we shall be telling you all about the new dispatch system and taking you on a guided tour of our brand new Operations Centre.

Wanda Pfeifer

For and with each other in the interests of the patient

Rega's strong partners



“The whole is more than the sum of its parts.” This wise saying by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, also rings true for Swiss Air-Rescue Rega. In order to provide a person in distress with the best possible emergency assistance, in most cases it requires not only a well-rehearsed team, but also various rescue organisations working together like a well-oiled machine.

Whenever a rescue helicopter lands at the scene of an accident, it invariably attracts attention. The newsflashes usually read, “The patient was flown to hospital by Rega helicopter”, but there is no mention of the other operational teams on site – ambulance services, fire service, police, specialists from the Swiss Alpine Club or ski piste rescuers. All too often, journalists forget that Rega is just one of a number of emergency organisations all working hand in hand. It is precisely this professional collaboration and smooth interaction between everyone involved that are decisive for the success of any Rega mission.

Major operation in Wil

Wednesday evening, 17 October 2012. Two cars have collided at a road junction in Wil, in the canton of St. Gallen, and are badly damaged. The St. Gallen cantonal police, Wil fire service, Fürstenland Toggenburg rescue service and Rega crew from the St. Gallen helicopter base are all on site, attending to the multiple casualties and securing the accident scene. But what appears at first glance to be a serious road traffic accident turns out on closer inspection to be a training exercise for Rega and the various local rescue organisations.

Some distance away from the simulated accident site, Patrick Sieber, Rega’s Head of Partner Training, observes what is happening and makes notes for the subsequent debriefing. “The way in which the various organisations work together is of prime importance for carrying out a speedy, professional rescue operation. It’s important to regularly undergo training in order to achieve the mutual understanding, knowledge of procedures and communication between partners that is vital for everything to run smoothly,” he explains.

Everyone benefits

The fame of Rega’s rescue helicopters and ambulance jets, which day in, day out provide rapid, professional assistance from the air to people in emergency situations, extends far beyond the Swiss borders. What is less well known, however, is that Rega employs a three-strong team that deals exclusively with matters relating to its partners. The list of Rega’s operation partners is long and reflects the broad spectrum of missions handled by Rega crews: land-based rescue services, police and fire services, the Swiss Army and Protection and Support Service (PAS), the Swiss Border Guard and railway police, lake and piste rescue services, forestry associations and agricultural colleges. “It’s essential that our operation partners are familiar with the equipment our rescue helicopters carry on board and with what they can do, but also that they are aware of the limits and risks associated with working with an



Rega’s three partner trainers – above: Daniel Meier; below from left to right: Patrick Sieber and Didier Noyer

aircraft that weighs 3.5 tonnes,” Patrick Sieber explains. Together with his colleagues, Didier Noyer and Daniel Meier, this is precisely what he conveys to Rega’s partners in the course of customised theoretical and practical lessons and training exercises.

However, it is not just the partner organisations that benefit from these joint exercises. Experienced operation partners learn the importance of giving precise, reliable instructions to the pilot when guiding Rega helicopters to a suitable landing site, and know what medical equipment is available. This is helpful for the Rega crews – but also for the patients, who particularly benefit from all the links in the rescue chain functioning perfectly together.

Haven’t we forgotten something?

Many readers will wonder whether it is possible for first responders (first aiders or lay rescue workers – read more about them on page 14) to receive further training in this field. “We do constantly receive enquiries from companies and individuals who want to find out about how to work with our rescue helicopters,” confirms Patrick Sieber, and continues: “Rega’s task is to provide swift medical assistance from the air for people in emergency situations. Consequently, we have to deploy our training resources prudently and give preference to those organisations with which we are in frequent contact due to the nature of their work.” If time permits, Rega’s partner trainers are happy to provide theoretical instruction.

For Rega, one thing is clear: a successful rescue depends on every single person, from first aiders, to professional rescuers, to hospital staff. After all, they all have the same ultimate aim, which focuses on recovering casualties and providing them with emergency medical care as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Helping the rescue helicopter to land

Karin Hörhager



It does not take much for a first aider to do everything correctly

First aiders – an important link in the rescue chain

At any time, any one of us could find ourselves in a situation where we have to give first aid. Honestly now, would you know what to do? You are probably like many other people – it is years since you did a first aid course and you keep putting off your good intentions to take a refresher course. Or maybe you are simply hoping that you will never encounter such a situation, because you are afraid that you will do the wrong thing at the critical moment?

The traffic light system

1.	LOOK Red means "Stop!"
2.	THINK Yellow means "The action phase starts now"
3.	ACT Green means "Now take action"

Look: First get an overview of what has happened. Pay particular attention to whether the injured parties, helpers or bystanders are in danger. Potential hazards include fire, explosion, risk of falling, falling objects, or moving traffic. Already try from a distance to assess the casualty's circumstances, the cause of the accident, the injuries or any signs of an acute illness.

Think: Assess how serious any hazards are. Act accordingly by taking appropriate measures to protect yourself, such as:

- putting on protective gloves
- setting up barriers and signs
- keeping a distance if there is a risk of fire, explosion, falling or falling objects

Consider what is absolutely necessary and what help the person concerned needs.

Act: Respond in accordance with the level of your knowledge and training and only do as much as you feel confident in doing. Start as soon as possible, without delay. Seek other help if you think the person involved needs it or if you feel out of your depth.



First the good news: you cannot do anything wrong if you act with caution and stick to a couple of basic rules. Article 128 of the Swiss Criminal Code even states that within reason, everyone is obliged to help when someone's life is in immediate danger. Without doubt, it takes courage and decisiveness to render first aid in an emergency. But there is a simple concept that can help you to keep a cool head in emergencies – the traffic light system.

Look, think, act

Usually the worst has already happened by the time you get to the scene of the accident to administer first aid. So stay calm and attempt to convey this calmness to the injured person and any bystanders.

First aiders are of key importance

If someone needs medical assistance, you, as a first aider, are of key importance. Your actions form the groundwork for providing the patient

with the best possible care, and contribute towards additional emergency medical measures and subsequent hospital care having the best possible chance of success. Your immediate assistance can save lives, and raising the alarm swiftly means that professional helpers arrive on the scene quickly. Time is often a decisive factor when people are seriously injured or ill. As a first aider, your knowledge and skills ensure that no time is wasted.

If, while you have been reading this, you have decided that now is the time to refresh your first aid skills, you can look on the Internet for the right course in your area that meets your needs – in the hope that you will never have to apply what you have learnt in a real-life emergency.

Karin Hörhager

A success story: Swiss Alpine Rescue

Alpine Rettung Schweiz (Swiss Alpine Rescue, ARS) is an independent, non-profit foundation run by Rega and the Swiss Alpine Club SAC. It acts, among other things, as a point of contact for the cantonal authorities, which – with the exception of Canton

Four-day search operation in the Alpstein region has a happy end

From the air and on the ground

Searching for missing persons also belongs to Rega's broad operational spectrum. The tasks performed by the Rega crews in the air are replicated by the Swiss Alpine Club SAC rescuers on the ground on foot. Clearly structured procedures and good collaboration between all the rescue partners involved are essential for a successful search. This is illustrated in a striking way by a mission that was carried out last spring in the Alpstein region of the Appenzell Alps.

On the afternoon of Sunday, 29 April 2012, the Rega Operations Centre receives an alarm call. During a hiking tour in the Alpstein region, a young woman has fallen down the mountainside. Despite her severe injuries, she is able to raise the alarm, but does not know exactly where she is. Before the Rega mission coordinator can find out more about her whereabouts, the mobile phone connection cuts off. This marks the beginning of one of the air-rescue organisation's longest search operations in recent years.

In collaboration with the Appenzell Rescue Service, the Appenzell Innerrhoden Cantonal Police immediately arrange for a ground search. At the same time, the crew at the Rega helicopter base in St. Gallen set off to search from the air. Initially, they encounter massive problems with the blustery föhn wind; the helicopter cannot fly low enough due to the turbulence and the instructions from the rescuers on the ground are

swallowed up by the wind. Over the next few days, the föhn subsides, but there is still no sign of the injured hiker. Besides the cantonal police, rescuers from the Swiss Alpine Club SAC and Rega, the Swiss Air Force also participates in this multi-day search with a Super Puma. The fact that the woman made the emergency call herself reinforces the rescuers' hope that they will find the woman alive. And on 2 May, after four days of searching, hope becomes certainty – the missing hiker is found, alive and conscious.

This brief outline comes nowhere near reflecting the long and intense search operation that led to this rescue. However, it does demonstrate in an impressive way just how many partners work hand in hand to help people in distress, and also shows the importance of having well-established structures and standards in place.

Karin Hörhager

When visibility is extremely poor, a search is only possible on foot

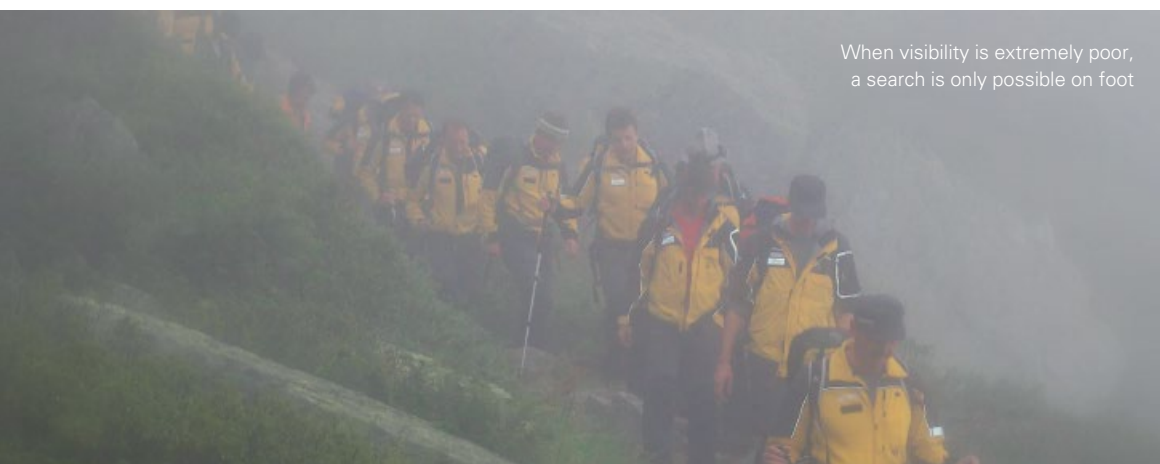


Valais – have all assigned the task of terrestrial mountain rescue in their areas to the ARS.

The 90 rescue stations operated by the ARS's seven regional associations have approximately 2,800 rescuers at their disposal. These stations are distributed throughout the Alps, the foothills, and the Jura mountains in such a way that the scene of an accident can be reached within a very short time.

Further information:
www.alpinerettung.ch

See also the illustration on the following double page.



The search for a

Reports of missing persons are always first passed on to the Cantons for the necessary search measures to be carried out. When searching for missing persons, various search methods are used. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses, but



Swiss Air Force

Operational readiness:	24 hours a day
Reaction time:	1–2 hours
Equipment:	rescue hoist, 75m night-vision goggles for pilots FLIR infrared search device
Speed:	275 km/h
Strengths:	high payload capacity (approx. 4 t) night missions can search for people using FLIR infrared camera
Weaknesses:	dependent on the weather large aircraft with strong downwash

Tips from Swiss Alpine Rescue

- Plan your tour carefully and thoroughly
- Do not go off on your own
- Inform your friends or relatives of your intended route
- Wear conspicuous, colourful clothing
- Attract attention by means of
 - shouting
 - flashing a torch
 - camera flash, mobile phone light
 - blowing a whistle
 - making a fire

Swiss Alpine Rescue (ARS)

Operational readiness:	24 hours a day
Reaction time:	5–15 minutes
Equipment/Rescue aids:	mountaineering equipment eyes, ears, voices particularly in summer: search dogs particularly in winter: avalanche search dogs avalanche victim search device Recco avalanche victim detector mountaineering equipment
Speed:	walking/ driving
Strengths:	not dependent on the weather day and night missions present in all regions, familiar with the area experienced in working in the mountains and rough terrain many rescuers can be deployed transport by helicopter possible
Weaknesses:	time-consuming danger due to falling rocks/ avalanches physical, technical and terrain-related limitations

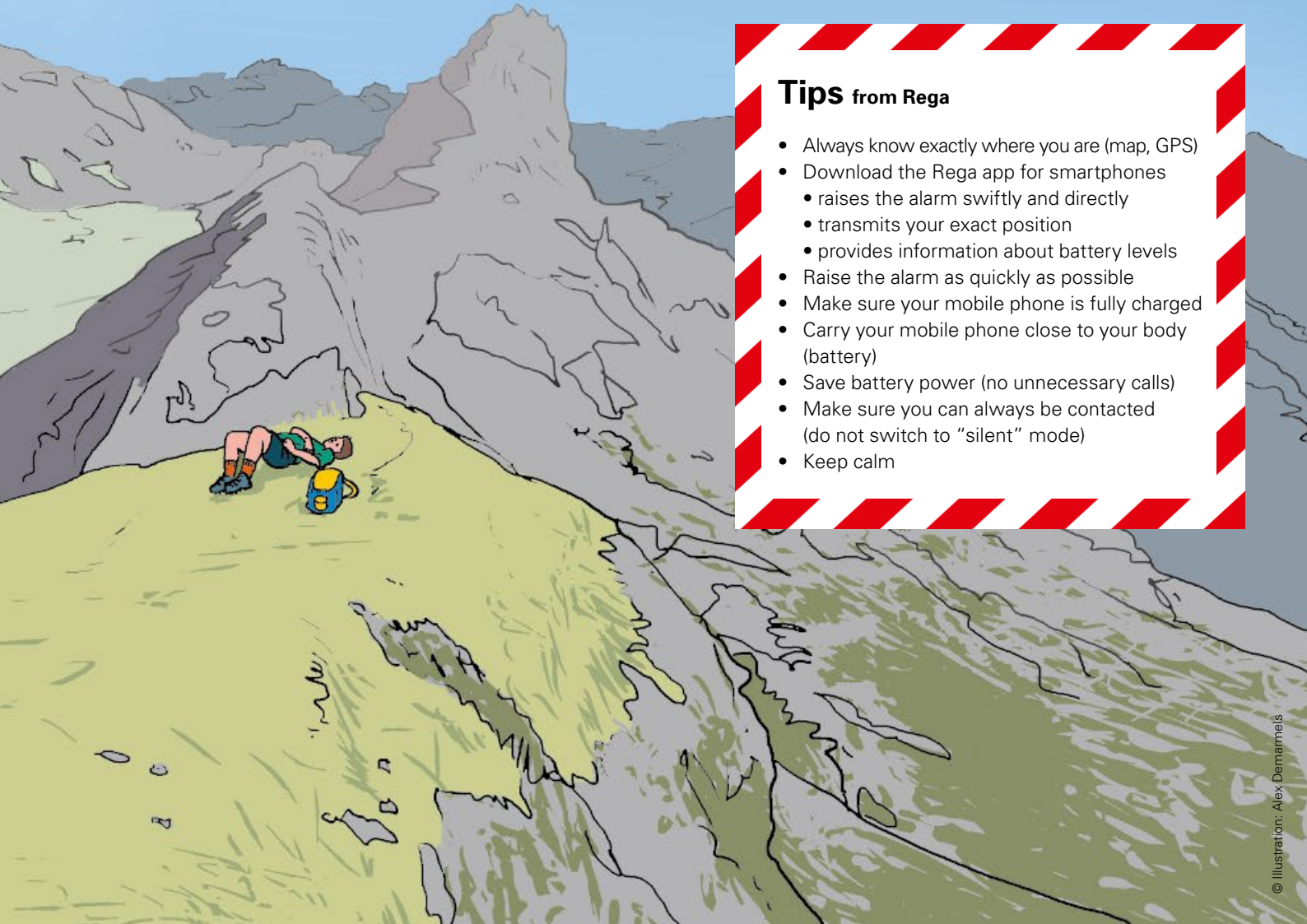


missing person

nal Police. They are responsible for handling such cases and arrange for missing persons in the mountains, various partners work together. t together they complement each other perfectly.

Rega Air-Rescue

- Operational readiness:** 24 hours a day
- Reaction time:** 5–15 minutes
- Equipment:** rescue hoist, 90m
IMS catcher (to localise mobile phones)
night-vision goggles for pilots
search lights (range 1.5km)
- additionally in winter:**
avalanche victim search device
Recco avalanche victim detector
- Speed:** 260 km/h
- Strengths:** operational readiness around the clock
flight physician on board
intensive medical care unit on board
can fly at night
extensive operational experience
- Weaknesses:** dependent on the weather
low transport capacity
can only search globally from the air



Tips from Rega

- Always know exactly where you are (map, GPS)
- Download the Rega app for smartphones
 - raises the alarm swiftly and directly
 - transmits your exact position
 - provides information about battery levels
- Raise the alarm as quickly as possible
- Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged
- Carry your mobile phone close to your body (battery)
- Save battery power (no unnecessary calls)
- Make sure you can always be contacted (do not switch to "silent" mode)
- Keep calm



Rib pierces lung – Tibetan doctor saves patient's life

Fit and happy at 5,300 metres above sea level

Mountain biker narrowly escapes with his life

Walter Staudenmann had long been preparing for a special mountain bike trip to the Far East and had looked forward to it for months. But the high altitude is perfidious. The athletic cyclist falls unconscious, seriously injuring himself in the process.

“Wilting” is how the patient in the military hospital in Shigatse, Tibet appears to Rega’s two flight physicians. Walter Staudenmann broke several ribs when he fell from his mountain bike, one of them piercing his right lung – a life-threatening situation, because the hole has caused a tension pneumothorax. This means that the pierced lung collapses because of the change in pressure and can no longer expand, making it impossible to breathe. Consequently, more and

more air fills the space between the lung and the chest wall (pleural space), where there should be none. This displaces the healthy lung, which seriously restricts the cardiovascular function and places the patient in mortal danger.

The local doctor does the only thing he can: he inserts an emergency drain (tube) into the patient’s chest, thus saving his life. The air in the pleural space can disperse and the lung is able to expand again.



The high altitude takes its toll

Walter Staudenmann is looking forward to his once-in-a-lifetime cycling holiday in the Far East and feels fit and well. He has been preparing for this trip for two years. The members of the group with whom he is touring are aware that the altitude is not to be underestimated, so they frequently spend the night at 4,000 metres above sea level, and even at 5,300 metres. They have now reached Tibet's second biggest city, Shigatse, at 3,800 metres above sea level. Staudenmann does not pay much attention to the breathing problems he is experiencing at night. He thinks it is normal and expects that he will soon become acclimatised.

The group are riding on the only road for miles around, some 50 kilometres outside the city, when it happens. Walter Staudenmann briefly regains consciousness to find himself lying on the ground. He sees lots of people, but he slips in and out of consciousness. This is also the reason why he fell off his mountain bike. An ambulance takes him to hospital in Shigatse. Between bouts of consciousness, he feels a severe pain in his right side. The life-saving cut in his chest wall and the insertion of the drainage tube is carried out without anaesthetic. This is normal local practice – but unthinkable for Westerners, as is also the pain that Staudenmann has to endure. It is only after some time that he begins to realise the extent of his injuries. It could have been a lot worse: after all, he is still alive!

Organisation is complicated

The tour guide informs Staudenmann's insurance company of what has happened. Mobi24 contacts Rega on the same day as the accident. Various options are discussed, because repatriations from this part of the world are rare,



Shigatse in Tibet

complicated and require careful planning. It is a challenge for Rega's flight coordinators, who do an excellent job. Visas and various other permits are required, there are not many flights to and from Shigatse, oxygen cannot be ordered in advance but can only be bought locally, the embassy and authorities have to be contacted.

Finally, Rega flight physicians, Regula Amiet and Alexander Pfister, fly via Amsterdam, Peking and Chengdu to Shigatse. The "willing" patient urgently needs assistance, especially with nursing care and food, because as in many countries, this is the responsibility of family members. Amiet and Pfister obtain cutlery, food, nursing supplies and toiletries, and look after Staudenmann's wellbeing. In the meantime, repatriation arrangements are in full swing.

Journey home takes 24 hours

"I was very relieved when the Rega physicians arrived. I felt as though I was already on my way



Rega jet physician, Alexander Pfister, explains to Staudenmann the incredible x-ray from his accident

home and that I was in safe hands," Walter Staudenmann recalls. Medically, he is well cared for, with drain, oxygen and drip, but Rega brings into the hospital not only an understanding of medical matters, but also a little bit of home. He again feels great relief as they drive along the only road to the airport, 45 kilometres away; now he is definitely on his way back to Switzerland.

During the 24-hour flight home, the patient flourishes, as Rega crews so often find. Thanks to the fact that he received the correct treatment in the Far East, Walter Staudenmann only needs to spend 12 hours in the Inselspital in Berne. Four weeks later, he is fit enough to return to work full time, despite nearly losing his life just weeks before. This constantly goes through his mind – and he is eternally thankful that things turned out the way they did.

Oxygen is widely available

Ariane Güngerich





Ticino: new helicopter base opens

In March, the Rega crew in Ticino were able to move into their brand new helicopter base. During the 1½-year construction phase, operations were organised from temporary facilities. The new building stands on the site of the previous base. It fulfils the most modern of standards and thanks to special constructional measures is protected from flooding. The move was followed by an official inauguration ceremony; from 19–21 April 2013, the opening of the new helicopter base was celebrated in style with Open Days and a variety of attractions. Numerous interested people visited the new Rega base at Locarno Airport.



Off to school with Rega

Calling all up-and-coming young pilots: Rega helicopters and ambulance jets can now accompany you to school. The school satchel, manufactured under the Funki brand and complete with bfu quality seal, is now on sale at specialist shops in two different designs. Also available are a matching pencil case, sports bag, gym bag and kindergarten bag. With these accessories, school lessons are guaranteed to simply fly by.

2013 is Oskar Bider year

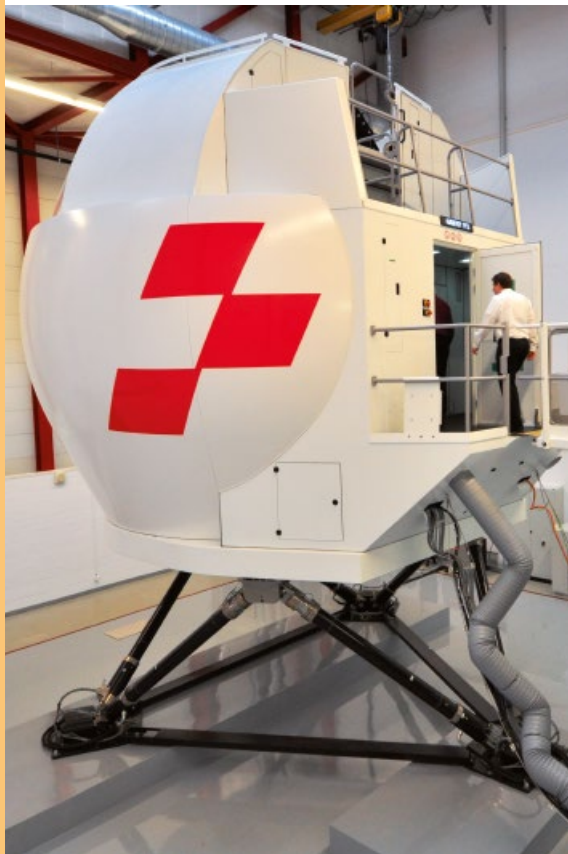
Exactly 100 years ago, on 13 July 1913, the Swiss aviation pioneer, Oskar Bider, took off from the Bern-Beundenfeld airfield to embark on the very first full flight across the Alps. The route in his fragile Bleriot XI monoplane led via the Jungfrauoch (3,457 metres above sea level) and Domodossola to Milan. Bider became renowned throughout the world as a pioneer of Swiss aviation. In 2013, four special events are being held countrywide to commemorate this anniversary. Further information: www.bider-oskar.ch

Rolf Ellwanger



Emergencies can also be practised in the helicopter simulator

Optimum training for Rega pilots



Rega's simulator at SAT in Zurich-Kloten

Rega is setting new standards in helicopter pilot training with its helicopter simulator. Since this winter, it has been possible to realistically and efficiently train emergency scenarios that previously could not be replicated in a real helicopter.

Flight simulation, which has long been an integral part of fixed-wing aircraft training, is not yet a standard component in helicopter training. While the Rega pilots who fly the EC 145 helicopters have been able to train in an appropriate simulator near Cologne, Germany, the pilots of our AgustaWestland Da Vinci mountain helicopter fleet have so far not had the same opportunity. They completed all their training in real helicopters, although certain situations were impossible to recreate.

Rega has now purchased its own simulator so that in future, emergencies such as tail rotor failure can be realistically practised on this helicopter type. The simulator has been in use since February and is operated by Swiss AviationTraining (SAT) in Zurich-Kloten.

Flexible training under realistic conditions

The new acquisition is a certified full-flight simulator. The cockpit is a full-scale reproduction with all the instruments. The training device also has a visual recreation of the view from the cockpit and is positioned on a moving platform, which realistically simulates in-flight movements. "The aim is that during training pilots forget that they are not actually in a real helicopter," explains Willi Simic, who is responsible for the simulator and is himself a Da Vinci helicopter pilot.

The benefits of a simulator are obvious: practising borderline emergency procedures increases crew and patient safety during day-to-day missions and simulator training is cheaper than flying hours in real helicopters – not to mention the resulting reduction in fuel and noise emissions. Sometimes training in real helicopters has to be cancelled due to bad weather, but the weather conditions and time of day are irrelevant in the simulator, so it is possible to practise a night flight in broad daylight, for example. The simulator also provides the optimum training environment for instrument-based approach procedures.



The view from the simulator cockpit

Each pilot will spend around ten to twelve training hours per year in the simulator, in addition to other exercises in real helicopters. In order to optimally utilise its capacity, besides Rega, the simulator is also used by the helicopter manufacturer, AgustaWestland, and is rented out by SAT to third parties.

Take a look inside the simulator by watching our video:

www.simulator.rega.ch

Wanda Pfeifer

Ask Rega

“I love going on hikes in the mountains and am often in Alpine areas close to the Swiss border. How should I proceed in the event of an emergency? Can I also call out Rega from areas bordering on Switzerland? And is this possible using the “I need help from abroad” function on the Rega app?”

Karin Aeschbach, Wettingen

Dear Mrs Aeschbach



Basically speaking, Rega does not fly emergency medical assistance directly to accident sites outside Switzerland. This is the responsibility of the appropriate rescue organisations in the country concerned. There are certain cases where Rega responds to emergencies in areas close to the Swiss border; then, however, it is explicitly called out by the local authorities responsible.

If you find yourself in an emergency situation and are not sure which side of the Swiss border you are on, we recommend that you first contact Rega, either by calling the emergency number 1414 or by activating the “I need help in Switzerland” function on your Rega app. This is particularly advisable if the location is difficult to reach due to rough terrain, if the approach route is too long for emergency services on the ground to get to you quickly, or if you think that the severity of the injury or illness requires a rescue helicopter to be called out.

If, on the other hand, you are sure that you are outside Swiss territory, we recommend that you call the European emergency number 112 or the number 911. Alternatively you can find out in advance the relevant emergency number for the country in question (for example, by consulting a travel guide) and then call that number.

Experience has shown that this is the best and quickest way to deal with emergencies beyond the Swiss border, particularly if the appropriate regional rescue services need to ask you detailed information about the accident site and the local weather conditions. In the event that Rega does need to be called out, the regional operations centre will pass on all the necessary information.

Fundamentally, the Rega app function, “I need help from abroad”, is not intended for raising the alarm in the event of an acute emergency situation abroad. It particularly comes into its own when Rega is requested to repatriate severely ill or injured patients to Switzerland. In such cases, the patients have generally already been hospitalised. With the aid of the data provided via the Rega app, our medical consultants can discuss the case with the doctors on location and make arrangements for the patient to be flown back to Switzerland.

Yours sincerely

Robert Frey
Head of Helicopter Operations Centre

Further information about the Rega app:
www.app.rega.ch



Any
questions?

**What did you always want to know about Rega?
Send your “Ask Rega” question to us at the following address:**

Rega Communication
“Ask Rega”
PO Box 1414
CH-8058 Zurich Airport

Contact form
www.info.rega.ch

For patients in the air, for mammals on the high seas

A life devoted to humans and animals

For ten years, intensive care flight nurse Yvonne Horisberger has cared for patients on board Rega's ambulance jets or accompanied them on scheduled flights. At home, she looks after numerous pets and devotes her spare time to marine mammals.

Yvonne Horisberger is ready, her suitcase packed for a lengthy mission. Suddenly, her mobile phone rings. Two-and-a-half hours before the scheduled departure, the Rega Operations Centre informs the ambulance jet crew that, many miles away, the patient's condition has deteriorated and that he is currently not fit enough to be transported. As a result, the mission has been put on hold. Flexibility is essential when it comes to Rega's worldwide missions.

Around the world

Once again, flexibility is called for. One afternoon in November 2012, Yvonne Horisberger learns that she should check in at 1.15am for a six-day flight around the world. She is happy to give up two days of her free time for this arduous but very unusual mission with several patients on board.

The thermometer reads -20°C during the stop-over in Greenland, and $+28^{\circ}\text{C}$ on the island of Samoa. The flight nurse goes 35 hours without sleep, and the changing time zones also take their toll. But the meaningful work helps her cope with such long, tough missions. The patients' thanks is the best reward. They always joyfully await the crew's arrival, and helplessness and worry are replaced by feelings of relief and thoughts of home.

Surrounded by animals

The animal-lover strikes a balance with her home life, where her free time is taken up with dogs, cats, rabbits, chickens, goats, pigs and donkeys. She is also passionate about marine mammals and their habitat. As a result, she serves on the Board of the Swiss global non-profit organisation, OceanCare, which supports research projects and also carries out some research itself. Yvonne Horisberger can occasionally be found taking part in a course on OceanCare's whale research ship. At least once a year, she revels in the peace and quiet of the high seas, where there are no mobile phones. Sometimes she accompanies passengers on their voyages and tells them more about whales and dolphins. Her aim is to raise awareness of the need to protect the world's oceans, and of the incredible amount of refuse polluting the water and the impact this has on mammals and other sea creatures. She also gives presentations at schools to pass on this knowledge.

Yvonne's professional and private lives are dedicated to people and animals – and she also enthuses: "Being all alone in the Rega hangar at Zurich Airport at the end of a night mission is a mystical experience – and one I wouldn't miss for the world!"

Ariane Güngerich



Intensive care flight nurse, Yvonne Horisberger, goes about her duties in the ambulance jet

Natural gorges are enticing

Ticino – a canyoning eldorado



The casualty is taken on board the rescue helicopter

Equipped with helmets, climbing harnesses, ropes and protective neoprene suits, they throw themselves into gorges formed by raging mountain streams. Canyoning combines elements from the worlds of mountaineering and water sports. Ticino is regarded as an eldorado for this fascinating sport, which, however, is not without its hazards.

Mention canyoning, and many people will recall the tragedy in the Saxetbach on 27 July 1999. Twenty-one young people aged between 19 and 32 years old lost their lives in the Bernese Oberland when they were caught up in and swept away by white water. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to classify canyoning as an extreme sport. The sport is usually practised in groups of four to eight participants and, as for skiing, there are routes with varying degrees of difficulty. “Ticino is a real paradise for canyoning, thanks to the favourable weather conditions, the many natural gorges and rivers, and the countless well-secured routes, especially in the Sopraceneri region,” explains Juanito Ambrosini, helicopter rescue specialist with the Swiss Alpine Club SAC.

Causes of canyoning accidents

The likelihood of accidents is increasing with the growing numbers of canyoning enthusiasts. “The most frequent causes of accidents are tiredness, waning attention at the end of the route and people overestimating their abilities,” says canyoning expert Ambrosini. “It’s frequently the lower limbs that get injured. Spending a long time in cold water leads to hypothermia and thus greater susceptibility to injury, as muscles and joints become stiff. Missing your footing can quickly result in breaks, sprains or joint injuries.” According to Ambrosini, rescues often take place after night has fallen, as the canyoning enthusiasts frequently underestimate how long the route will take.

Preparation is everything

Solid preparation, good health and sufficient experience are essential in order to enjoy a canyoning tour in fantastic, unspoiled scenery. “It’s essential that the participants don’t overrate their abilities and are aware of their limitations,” warns Ambrosini. Without the necessary care and prudence, canyoning accidents are just as inevitable as they are in any other form of outdoor activity. If an accident happens, a laborious air rescue by Rega and SAC specialists is usually required due to the difficult terrain.

Federica Mauri

Having been flown to the accident site, a Rega flight physician attends to an injured canyoning enthusiast





REGA FOR KIDS

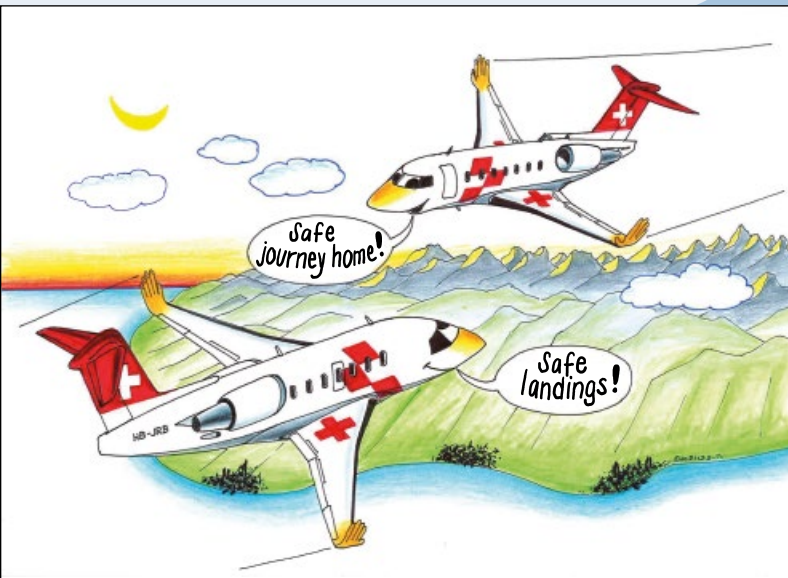
Spot the ten differences

One of Rega's three ambulance jets is flying off into the big wide world to bring a patient back to Switzerland, while the other one is already on its way home with a seriously ill or injured person on board. When our illustrator copied this picture, he made ten mistakes. Can you find them?



Solutions from issue nos. 79 & 80:

You can find the ten mistakes on our website at: www.1414.rega.ch



© Illustration: Joggi / Peter Jost

Competition

Join the dots and answer the following question:

What is this piece of equipment called?

Write the answer on a postcard and send by 20 July 2013 at the very latest to:

Swiss Air-Rescue Rega
 "Quiz" Patrons' Magazine 1414
 PO Box 1414
 CH-8058 Zurich Airport

Ten winners drawn from the correct answers will each receive a rock-grey Rega shoulder bag worth CHF 49.



Good luck!

Solution from issue no. 79: **The ramp belonging to the Rega ambulance jet weighs 42 kilos.** Each of the following have won a remote-controlled model Da Vinci helicopter:

Margrit Burkhalter, Roggwil; Elia Colombini, Cama; Massimiliano Daldini, Geneva; Silvan Andrin Kuster, Altendorf; Luca Nicolo, Zug; Jane Perron, Fribourg; Franca Schmid, Lustdorf; Ewan Siegenthaler, Rivaz; Katja Straumann, Niederbuchsiten; Amelie Zellweger, Tesserete

Congratulations!



© Illustration: Fides Friedenberg

Aviatiktalente gesucht

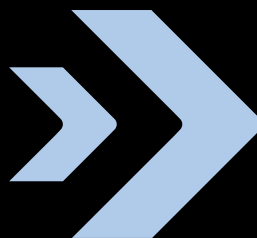


Vom Fliegen träumen – das kann jede(r). Du willst mehr. Du willst Deinen Traum wahr machen, ja mehr noch, Du willst Deinen Traum zum Beruf machen.
SPHAIR ist die Organisation, die Dir hilft das Tor in eine aviatische Zukunft ganz weit zu öffnen und Dir den Weg in die vielfältigen beruflichen Möglichkeiten, die die Fliegerei bietet, zu ebnen. www.sphaire.ch



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SPHAIR

Above the clouds

You feel nothing but your own euphoria, the world passes by, there seem to be no limits, your body feels very light, you could go on like this for ever. Although it may sound like it, this is not how I feel when I fly an aircraft, because unfortunately I've never flown a plane or helicopter myself. No, this is what I feel when I fall into a trance-like state when running. Then, running is almost like flying – or at least that's how I imagine flying to be. This is what's known in running circles as a "runner's high". If I run at the limit of my abilities for long enough, my body becomes flooded with endorphins. This natural substance produced by the body alleviates pain, acts almost like a drug and is highly euphoria-inducing. Its chemical structure and biological effect is very similar to morphine, a powerful analgesic used in medicine. And then I have the feeling that I could keep on running for ever.

If you have never experienced such a high when running, then you must have done so when listening to music! Everyone has a favourite song that makes them tingle all over and feel as though they could take flight. Two songs spring to mind when I think of flying. Do you know "The Green and the Blue" by Amy Macdonald?

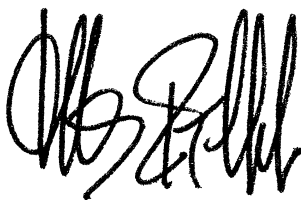
*Well the sky, it always grows
and the lights they never fade.
There's magic in the air,
I can feel it everywhere.*

Or what about German folk singer Reinhard Mey's "Über den Wolken" (Above the clouds)?

*Über den Wolken
Muss die Freiheit wohl grenzenlos sein
Alle Ängste, alle Sorgen
Sagt man
Blieben darunter verborgen
Und dann
Würde was uns gross und wichtig erscheint
Plötzlich nichtig und klein*

*(Translation:)
Above the clouds
freedom surely is boundless
and all fears and worries,
so they say,
remain hidden below
and then
what we consider so big and important
suddenly seems small and insignificant*

Many things that seemed big and important did suddenly become small and insignificant some years ago, when my brother Urs almost died in a cycling accident. He was run over by a lorry at a roundabout on his way to work. Dr Stephan Plaschy, senior orthopaedic consultant at Uster Hospital, believes that Urs only survived this horrific accident and is able to walk today thanks to the superb emergency team at Uster Hospital and the rescuers from Rega, who immediately flew him to Zurich University Hospital once they had stabilised him at the accident site. I am eternally thankful for this miracle that was made possible by the Rega rescue team.



Markus Ryffel



Markus Ryffel

Former Swiss long-distance runner

1978: silver medal in the 5,000 metres at the European Athletics Championships and Swiss Sportsman of the Year

1984: silver medal in the 5,000 metres at the Olympic Summer Games in Los Angeles

2 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze medals at the European Athletics Indoor Championships
19-times Swiss Champion in the 3,000 and 5,000 metres

Still the reigning Swiss record holder in the 5,000 metres

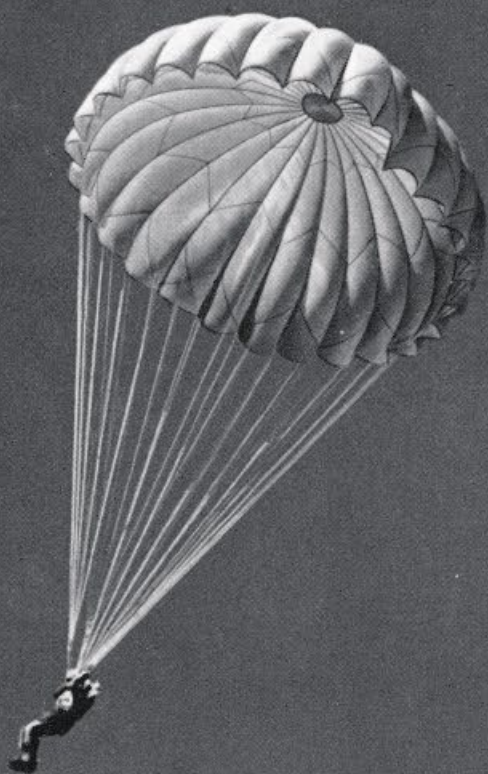
Countless wins at marathon races, such as the Grand Prix von Bern, Greifenseelauf, Murtenlauf, Zürcher Silvesterlauf, Basel Stadtlaf, 25 km race in Berlin



1952–1954: Parachutist training in England

Courageous jumps with the Royal Air Force

Parachutists were among Swiss Air-Rescue's first rescue teams. They were invaluable when it was impossible to land a plane at the accident site in the mountains. They trained with the highly experienced Royal Air Force in England. From 1952–1954, three dozen Swiss mountain rescuers learnt the art of parachute jumping in England.





So how was it possible that Swiss civilians received military training in England just seven years after the end of the Second World War?

Swiss Federal Councillor opens military doors

Dr Rudolf Bucher, at that time head of the newly-founded Swiss Air-Rescue, was not afraid of directly approaching influential people. Firmly convinced of the wisdom of his idea, he turned to the Swiss government. In summer 1952, he sat in the office of Federal Councillor Max Petitpierre, the Foreign Minister of the day, and explained his plans. The otherwise somewhat distanced Petitpierre was soon won over. A quick call to the British Embassy secured Britain's fundamental agreement. At the same time, the Federal Council gave the Swiss men permission to carry out what was judged to be military service abroad. When Bucher made personal contact with the authorities, his charisma quickly worked its magic.

On 24 September 1952, just five months after Swiss Air-Rescue was founded, the first 12 rescuers were standing at Zurich-Kloten

Airport with their luggage, ready to catch the flight to London, the cost of which was generously covered by Swissair.

The start of the English adventure

So there they were, 12 Swiss mountain rescuers, with no idea of what to expect. They soon got used to the ways of their English instructors at the world-famous parachute training school in Abingdon, Oxfordshire. After a breakfast of ham & eggs, porridge and tea, they marched out into the bracing wind for training. The aim was to learn the art of parachute jumping from scratch in four weeks and to perfect it to the point that they would be able to put their skills to good use for difficult missions in the Swiss mountains.

It was a period of intense learning – relieved by occasional evening get-togethers with the English officers. Still today, the veterans enthuse about the weeks of hard training and international comradeship.

Four-stage training

During the first stage of their training, the men were drilled in the correct way to roll their body on landing. After practising in the gymnasium, the second stage involved jumping from a swivelling crane at a height of 30 metres. The forward motion produced as the crane swivelled round simulated landing in a strong wind.

The third phase required participants to jump from a tethered hot-air balloon. Eight men were positioned in a basket beneath the balloon at a height of 250 metres and had to draw on every drop of courage to make their first jump. Ripcord in hand, they stepped out into the void – an unforgettable experience, and a huge relief when the canopy opened and they floated down to the ground! They had now completed their first jumps, which instilled them with courage.

The 12 Swiss parachute trainees with their RAF instructor 1st, 5th & 6th from the right: Dolf Wiler, Walter Odermatt and Paul Lenzlinger in September 1954 ...

... and in 2013 at the Rega Centre at Zurich Airport



The instructor uses a mobile loudspeaker to give instructions to the Swiss parachute trainees in the hot-air balloon basket

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Linda Fäh



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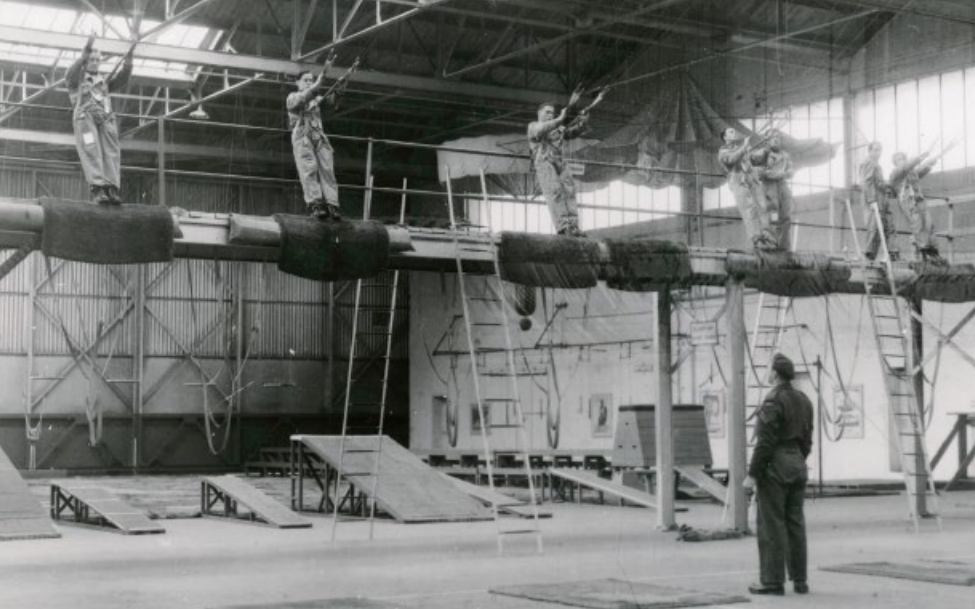
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For just a short time

However, the parachuting technique was quite laborious and had a limited range of uses, and, more importantly, helicopter operations were becoming increasingly reliable. When Swiss Air-Rescue commenced operations with its own helicopter in 1957, it sealed the fate of parachute jumps as a means of rescue. The intense period of parachute rescue, which now sounds rather exotic, was brief, ending in 1959. However, the courage and pioneering spirit of all those who engaged in it still deserve our utmost respect today.

Walter Stünzi



Dry run in the gymnasium of the Royal Air Force in Abingdon, England

The fourth stage incorporated the airplane's speed. Most of the Swiss thought that things were happening rather too quickly! They sat in a massive, four-engined Hastings, equipped with a felt helmet, boots for jumping and parachute. Apprehensively, they waited for the engines to throttle back and for the green light to show above the airplane door. One after the other, they leaped out into the tailwind at 220km/h. In groups they floated to the ground and, after landing, they hugged each other with relief. They repeated the jumps countless times and, to round things off, completed a night jump, too.

After four weeks of rigorous training the participants were fully trained parachutists. They proudly took receipt of their certificates, signed by Wing Commander Kilkenny, commander of the RAF's No. 1 Parachute Training School. They now had to put into action and apply what they had learnt in the harsh environment of the Swiss mountains.

It is all completely different at home

Once back in Switzerland, the newly qualified parachutists had to sit all their exams again – although the Swiss Federal Air Ministry learned much itself about this new discipline from the examinees.

As it turned out, parachute jumps in the mountains entailed new and different challenges. The thin air, smaller airplanes, unpredictable wind conditions and, not least, landing on rough terrain demanded a completely new approach, but the Swiss developed their own methods and equipment for use in rocks, ice and snow.

In 1955, the British made an exchange visit to Switzerland; they were amazed at the Swiss men's courage and the very free and independent way they applied what they had learnt in England. Today our veterans proudly report that the British even made a note of some things for their instructor and subsequently made use of this "feedback" themselves.



30-metre jump from the arm of a crane



First jump out of the RAF's four-engined Hastings aircraft



Rega's patronage system is absolutely unique

Rega is not something that can be taken for granted. Although it receives no subsidies from the State, it is able to provide emergency medical assistance from the air around the clock thanks to the financial support of its over 2.4 million patrons.

Without you, dear patrons, Rega would not exist. Patronage is worthwhile – whether you end up needing it or not. Insurance policies do not always cover all the costs of a rescue mission or repatriation from abroad. If you, as a Rega patron, ever need to call on Rega for assistance, it shows its appreciation for your financial support by waiving the cost of the Rega mission. When everything else fails, Rega patronage acts as a safety net. And above all, you are helping others – for your annual patronage contribution helps keep Swiss Air-Rescue in the air.

We constantly receive questions about Rega patronage, particularly regarding Family Patronage. Here are a few useful answers.

Our daughter will be 18 years old this year. Is she still included in our Family Patronage during 2013?

Yes. If we know the birth dates of your family members, from 2014 your daughter will automatically be listed under your Family Patronage as an additional Individual patron.

Do we need to be married to qualify for Family Patronage?

No. The Family Patronage category applies to both married and cohabiting couples with children under 18 years of age.

You can find answers to these and other questions about your Rega patronage at:

www.rega.ch

> Support Rega > FAQ

You can inform us of or amend your family data, or notify us of any other changes, at:

www.info.rega.ch

> Amend patronage details

Call up your patronage details:

www.admin.rega.ch

> Patronage number > PIN code

(Here you can only view your patronage details; online updates are not possible. You can find your patronage number and PIN code on your annual invoice.)

How to contact Rega

Emergency number in Switzerland 1414

Emergency number abroad

+41 333 333 333

Patronage Centre

Monday–Friday

8.30–12.00am, 1.00–4.30pm

Tel. 0844 834 844 (in Switzerland)

Tel. +41 44 654 32 22 (abroad)

www.rega.ch

Website address for all queries

www.info.rega.ch

Switchboard +41 44 654 33 11

Rega Newsletter

www.newsletter.rega.ch

Rega Shop

Tel. 0848 514 514 (in Switzerland)

www.shop.rega.ch