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## **AFRCC aids in search for hiker suffering from hypothermia**

**TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.** – The Air Force Rescue Coordination Center here aided in the search operations with local and state agencies to save a stranded man in the Sonoran Desert, Apache Junction, Ariz. late Tuesday night.

The young man was hiking on Superstition Mountain, became stranded and was suffering from hypothermia. He had placed a call to 911 on his cell phone when his phone battery died. The Pinal County Sherriff's Office contacted the AFRCC to ask for federal assistance to locate the individual in distress.

The AFRCC responded by coordinating with Justin Ogden, a captain in the Civil Air Patrol's Arizona Wing, to utilize his expertise in cell phone forensics. Based on information he gleaned from the hiker's last cell phone hit, he was able to reduce the search area to less than one square mile.

Under federal law, cell phone companies can voluntarily divulge cell phone data to federal agencies such as the AFRCC, when it is being used for lifesaving purposes involving the owner.

"In this case I was able to work with the stranded hiker's cellular provider and use current data to help narrow the search area down to a more defined area," said Captain Ogden.

The hiker was rescued by a Maricopa County Sherriff helicopter and taken to the bottom of Superstition Mountain where he was met by family members.

As the United States' inland search and rescue coordinator, the AFRCC serves as the single agency responsible for coordinating federal SAR activities in the 48 contiguous United States.

"Capt. Ogden's ability to utilize cell phone data to reduce search areas is an invaluable asset to the AFRCC," said Lt. Col. Charles Tomko, AFRCC commander. "By minimizing our search areas we have a greater chance of effectively saving lives."

The AFRCC directly ties in to the FAA's alerting system and the U.S. Mission Control Center. In addition to Search and Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking information, the AFRCC computer system contains resource files that list federal and state organizations which can conduct or assist in SAR efforts throughout North America.

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## **CELLPHONE**

Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with 58,000 members nationwide. CAP performs 90 percent of the continental U.S. inland search and rescue missions as tasked by the AFRCC and was credited with saving 91 lives in fiscal year 2008. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies.