

The Journal of Search and Rescue (JSAR) is an open access peer-reviewed electronic journal for the collation and distribution of original scholarly material on search and rescue (SAR).

It is being supported by the in-kind work and contributions of the Editorial Board. There is still the need for a dedicated journal serving those with a direct interest in all disciplines of search and rescue including: rope rescue, water (flat, swift and marine), ice rescue, wilderness search and rescue, structural collapse rescue, trench collapse rescue, cave rescue, dive rescue, motor vehicle extrication, canine search, technical animal rescue, air rescue, search theory, search management, and mines rescue. JSAR exists to fulfil that need.

Article submissions from these and other SAR disciplines are welcome. Launching this journal on the internet offers a relatively cost-effective means of sharing this invaluable content. It affords the prompt publication of articles and the dissemination of information to those with an interest in SAR.

JSAR will provide a forum for the publication of original research, reviews and commentaries which will consolidate and expand the theoretical and professional basis of the area. The Journal is interested in theoretical, strategic, tactical, operational and technical matters.

Advertising within JSAR will be considered in the future to ensure sustainable funding is available to enhance and continue the work of the journal. The publication of an article in the Journal of Search and Rescue does not necessarily imply that JSAR or its Editorial Board accepts or endorses the views or opinions expressed in it.

Editors: Dr Elizabeth Cuevas, Dr Ian Greatbatch, Dr Scott Hammond & Dr Robert Koester

Editorial Team: Ian Allen, Robert Rovetto, Chris Thompson, Ben Weedon

Additional Materials Editor: Andy MacAuley

Cover Image: USAR technicians prepare a flying raker.

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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 1 of the 5th Volume of the Journal of Search and Rescue. This issue is shorter than normal, due in some ways to the nature of the Journal, with an entirely voluntary staff, all of whom work in the emergency services and so have to find time to review and edit amongst their other numerous duties. It is also due to the circumstances we find ourselves in as SAR responders wherever we are. As the global pandemic moves through its phases, our colleagues have found themselves called upon more than ever to use their expertise to aid those in need. The world of SAR continues apace, and beyond the pandemic this month we have seen devastating floods across Europe, Wildfires in North America and in Africa, as well as an earthquake in the Pacific. It seems clear to me that the challenges facing the world mean that our skills, knowledge and expertise has never been more needed. The good news is that we have a number of papers in review already, which should mean that Issue 2 is hot on the heels of this issue, meaning we can release two issues for 2021, as normal.

This issue contains work concerning object recognition and detection, which is of course the bread and butter of SAR: the ability to recognise specific objects in space is fundamental to all of the subsequent operations that might be needed to save a life. The second article is a non-peer-reviewed technical work, that proposes a multihazard risk assessment tool for swiftwater and flood rescue. Finally, we have a book review considering a recent work on voluntary mountain and wilderness rescue.

We have received some positive feedback from the sector during the creation of this issue, from law enforcement and humanitarian agencies across the world. I mention this not merely as an idle brag, but for two reasons. The first is that to my knowledge this is the first unsolicited communication from the sector complementing the Journal on its work for no reason other than it has had a positive impact. The second speaks to my earlier points at the beginning of this editorial, and I believe it demonstrates the impact of our work as a community as a whole and the importance of that work.

There is an increasing momentum towards professionalism and accreditation at an international level with at least three professional institutions providing training accreditation, support, and networking. I have been greatly impressed with the way that these organisations have presented themselves and the positive impact they have had on training, research, and operations in the short time they have been in existence. This has meant that, despite the workload and pressures of work, family, research, and the journal competing this last six months has been an enjoyable one. That said, it is time for a break and so I'll be taking a year's sabbatical after this issue and handing the reins over to Dr Koester and Dr Hammond until the Summer of 2022. I definitely have a backlog of research to catch up with, so maybe I will be able to submit a paper to the journal myself and see the workings of the Journal from the other side.

Enjoy this Issue, keep saving lives and contributing to your communities, keep researching and most importantly keep safe.

Dr Ian Greatbatch

London