

Headline: Dover Airman volunteers with SERE specialists

436th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

By: Airman 1st Class Dedan Dials

DOVER AIR FORCE BASE, Del. - Over the past two months, I've had a somewhat unorthodox volunteer experience with the Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape specialists. I've been hoisted up into a helicopter from the ocean, pulled around on the back of a jet ski, and I've even driven around on an all-terrain vehicle dressed like an adversary.

All of this, of course, is in the name of training ... but man is it fun!

Often times, I think, volunteerism can be seen as a chore or a hoop to jump through just before enlisted performance report season. But when I'm working with SERE, I get to have an absolute blast while also being a useful tool in the training process.

The SERE program specializes in training personnel on various survival tactics to provide Airmen who will be operating in high-risk situations with the tools they need to achieve their mission. Many Airmen who receive this training generally have to be recertified every one to three years. The organization that I'm getting the chance to volunteer with focuses on the recertification part of SERE training.

Most recently, I was able to assist with the water survival training. We spent all day down at Bowers Beach assisting the SERE specialists in educating the Airmen on proper tactics for a distress situation in the water. First, we pulled everyone out into the ocean with jet-skis, onto a raft and waited for a United States Coast Guard helicopter to come in. The Air Force and Coast guard work in close tandem for this training mission to provide a more hands-on, realistic scenario. Once it arrived, we went out one at a time and the Coast Guard rescue diver told us how to get in the basket to be hoisted up. Although it was freezing under the blades of the helicopter, it was an awesome experience to have.

Spending all day in a raft with 12 strangers 200 yards from the shore and getting hoisted up by a rescue helicopter may not appeal to some people, but I think it is one of the most unique and beneficial volunteer opportunities available to me. If the idea of being bored out of your mind or wasting your time is keeping you from getting out there and volunteering, know that there are some truly captivating and unique opportunities out there for you. I absolutely can't wait to go back again and maybe I'll get to drive the jet skis next time!

If you'd like to help volunteer for Evasion Training or Water Survival please contact the SERE shop at DSN 677-3383 or email joseph.monreal@us.af.mil & brett.charity@us.af.mil