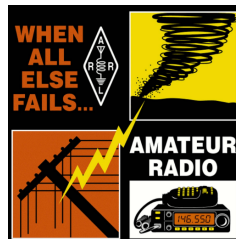


# Amateurs in Action

*Recounts of ham radio operators who have used their time and skills to help others in a time of need*



## CW to the rescue

It was a terrific September Sunday for a QSO in 2008. Around 1 pm, Bob Williams N7ODM of Bozeman, Montana, got on 40 meters to get his rig ready for a scheduled CW contact with his brother in Spokane, Washington. While Bob was tuning and testing, he heard a faint but solid station tap out Bob's call sign: *N7ODM DE W7AU/7*

600 miles away, Russ Ruby W7AU of Corvallis, Oregon, was hiking near [Buck Creek Pass](#) in the Cascade Mountains of Washington. Things were going well until Russ slipped on a wet rock, fell, and broke his leg. Fortunately, Russ was carrying his tent, an [Elecraft KX1](#), a wire antenna, and plenty of battery power. It was raining, so Russ set up his tent, climbed in, changed into some warm clothes, and snacked on some sunflower seeds and dried apricots. Afterwards, he strung up his wire antenna, set up his rig, and started tuning around.

*He identified himself as Russ, provided information as to his GPS coordinates, the shelter, food, and water on hand, as well as his detailed physical condition. He told me exactly who I needed to contact for assistance, Bob reported. Russ really had his act together.*

Russ and Bob kept in contact until around 8 pm, when Russ' signal started fading. Meanwhile, Bob had relayed Russ' condition, location, tent color, and other vitals to Snohomish County Search and Rescue (SAR). It was the first time Bob had ever helped somebody in danger by using radio. When SAR had finally reached Russ, they couldn't call in a chopper, due to inclement weather. It had snowed all night, and by the next morning, Russ' tent was covered. Russ and Bob made contact once more around 9 o'clock Monday morning, and SAR was able to get Russ off the mountain by horseback around 10:35 am.



*I just happened to be at the same frequency, Bob said. It's just a stroke of luck that turned out great. It was quite an experience. I'm just glad that he was a ham radio operator, and that I was able to talk to him. It made the difference for him. What I did was nothing special. I'd like to think that any ham...would've done the same thing.*

Also, *It isn't the first time amateur radio operators have helped out with an emergency situation, said Allen Pitts, ARRL spokesman. Still, it's rare that Morse code is used to initiate a rescue. Knowing Morse code was dropped years ago, as a requirement, yet it's actually gained popularity since then.*

View the story on [the ARRL website](#), on the Everett, Washington, [Herald Net website](#), and on the [Seattle PI website](#).

Glenn Russell Ruby Jr, W7AU, of Corvallis, Oregon, broke his leg while hiking in the Buck Creek Pass area of the Cascade Mountains. His call for assistance was heard 600 miles away by Bob Williams, N7ODM, of Bozeman, Montana.