



## NEWS LETTER

14 May 2007

### oscoOr.com cares about journalist's safety

Sure you remember the story of Daniel Grandclement, the journalist of "Thalassa" who was rescued in Yemen after having activated his Personal Locator Beacon rented by oscoOr.com. This was in November last year (see the articles in the Maritime Journal, CNES magazine enclosed).

Sierra Echo recently signed an agreement with "Reporters Without Borders" to provide PLBs to the members of this association who are reporting in very unsafe areas.



Reporters Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontières / RSF):

- defends journalists and media assistants jailed or persecuted for doing their job and exposes the mistreatment and torture of them in many countries.
- fights against censorship and laws that undermine press freedom.
- gives financial aid each year to 100 or so journalists or media outlets in difficulty (to pay for lawyers, medical care and equipment) as well to the families of imprisoned journalists.
- works to improve the safety of journalists, especially those reporting in war zones.



oscoOr.com is the PLB rental service proposed by Sierra Echo. We currently own a fleet of 50 ACR Aerofix I/O (with integrated GPS receiver) that we rent to private owners or rally/race organisations.

oscoOr.com gives access to the outstanding and proven efficiency of cospas-sarsat network for less than 10€ a day.

If you want to join our reseller network and become an "oscoOr.com" partner, feel free to contact us.

Some useful links:

[www.oscoor.com](http://www.oscoor.com) (currently in French only)

[www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id\\_rubrique=692](http://www.rsf.org/rubrique.php3?id_rubrique=692) (Reporters Sans Frontières)

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## Reality TV Meets Rescue at Sea

Advances in *Personal Locator Beacon* (PLB) technology have made transmission, location and rescue faster than ever before, a fact which became apparent to French journalist Daniel GrandClement after he was thrown into heavy seas off the coast of Yemen last month.

GrandClement was covering the migration of refugees from the shores of Somalia to neighbouring Yemen for the well known French TV show *Thalassa*. In an effort to bring genuine reality to television, he joined a 12m boat loaded with 8 crew and 120 passengers when it set off from Somalia in conditions so severe that even the crew were distressed.

GrandClement had previously produced a lengthy report about search and rescue at sea, so knew how important it was to be quickly and precisely located in case of distress. Knowing the voyage would be perilous, he had rented an ACR AquaFix 406 I/O PLB. Just as well, for as the boat neared the Yemen coast, the human traffickers capsized it to get rid of the passengers. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some 1,500 refugees died in similar circumstances last year.

GrandClement activated the PLB at 19:14. Within seconds the COSPAS-SARSAT satellite relayed the AquaFix 406 MHz signal to the French Mission Coordination Centre (FMCC) in Toulouse, where GrandClement's rented PLB registration data was maintained. The FMCC routed the alert message to the Foreign Ministry in Paris for verification. The officer on duty called the 'Point of Contact' that GrandClement listed on the PLB registration form. From this moment onward, things happened very quickly. The consul at the French Embassy in Sanaa received the alert message and contacted the Yemeni Coast Guard, which directed a search party to the rescue site. Meanwhile, GrandClement



Daniel GrandClement (third right) is reunited with Philippe Winum of Sierra Echo, who rented the PLB to him; Dominique Flaus, the FMCC operator who responded to his signal; and Dennis London, European sales manager for ACR. Photo taken at FMCC Toulouse, courtesy of CNES.

managed to swim to shore, where he was picked up by the Yemeni rescue party. Yemeni authorities confirmed the reporter's rescue to the consul at the French Embassy in Sanaa. GrandClement's signal resulted in all of the refugees also being rescued and taken into care by the UNHCR.

'Everything worked very well,

said GrandClement. 'All the people to warn were warned. I received total support from the French authorities in Sanaa.'

The episode confirms the value of ACR Electronics' product. The AquaFix 406 PLB broadcasts critical GPS coordinates, providing SAR crews with latitude and longitude to increase emergency response speed by pinpointing

positioning to within 100m. The COSPAS-SARSAT satellites also locate the PLB using a technique based on the Doppler Shift principle for redundancy and reliability.

The COSPAS-SARSAT satellite system has led to the rescue of 20,300 people worldwide since its inception in 1982.

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## Témoignage

### Les bonnes étoiles ont un matricule

**143/7455.** Réalisateur de l'émission *Thalassa* et grand reporter, Daniel Grandclément se souviendra longtemps de ce chiffre. C'est le matricule que portait sa balise de détresse qu'il embarquait au Yémen, en octobre 2006, sur la trace des bateaux de passeurs. Un mois plus tard, à Toulouse, il rencontra au FMCC (*French Mission Control Centre*) hébergé sur le CST, les différentes équipes qui ont contribué à son sauvetage. Lors du déclenchement de sa balise, elle a émis un signal transmis aux centres de mission par une constellation de satellites. Le centre a calculé la localisation de la détresse et envoyé les paramètres de situation aux centres de secours. En 25 ans, 20 000 personnes ont ainsi été secourues. Le 12 octobre 2006, c'était au tour de Daniel Grandclément. « *Vous avez été ma bonne étoile* », a-t-il dit aux opérateurs... Dans le réseau Cospas-Sarsat, les bonnes étoiles ont un matricule. ■



Daniel Grandclément accompagné de l'opératrice qui a reçu son signal de détresse au CST.  
Daniel Grandclément with the operator who received his distress signal at the Toulouse Space Centre.

#### Testimonial

### A lucky star numbered 143/7455

The figure 143/7455 is now engraved in the memory of roving reporter Daniel Grandclément, producer of France's popular *Thalassa* television programme. It is the registration number of his Cospas-Sarsat distress beacon, triggered on 12 October 2006 when he was arrested during an investigation into people smuggling to Yemen. One month later, he visited the French Mission Control Centre (FMCC) at the Toulouse Space Centre to thank all the teams in the chain leading to his release. When his beacon was set off, its signal was picked up by a constellation of satellites. The FMCC calculated its position then sent the alert to emergency services for on-site intervention. In its 25 years of existence, Cospas-Sarsat has rescued 20,000 people in emergency situations. In October, it was Daniel Grandclément's turn. "You were my lucky star," he told the FMCC teams. ■

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## Safety of journalists

### Loan of bulletproof jackets, helmets and personal distress beacons



We lend journalists **bulletproof jackets and helmets** for free. The category 3 jackets, donated by the French defence ministry are black, have "Press" marked on the front and back, come in three sizes and weigh about 14 kg. A €900 deposit is required and the loan is for a maximum two months.

The moulded helmets are white with the word "TV" on them and weigh 1.51 kg. They are lent on the same conditions as the jackets but only carry a €250 deposit. Two of the jackets and two of the helmets have no markings on them.



Two small and light GPS personal distress beacons can also be borrowed. They are made by the firm Sierra Echo and the carrier can be found at once anywhere in the world. More and more journalists are using them when they go to areas that are dangerous or where sat-phones or GSM work poorly.

A €900 deposit is required and journalists must say where exactly they are going, give their home address and that of someone to contact in an emergency.

To obtain any of this safety equipment, e-mail Reporters Without Borders at: [safety@rsf.org](mailto:safety@rsf.org) or [securite@rsf.org](mailto:securite@rsf.org). For the moment, it is only available at our Paris headquarters.

[Download technical description of the helmets and bulletproof jackets](#)

[Download description of the distress beacons](#)