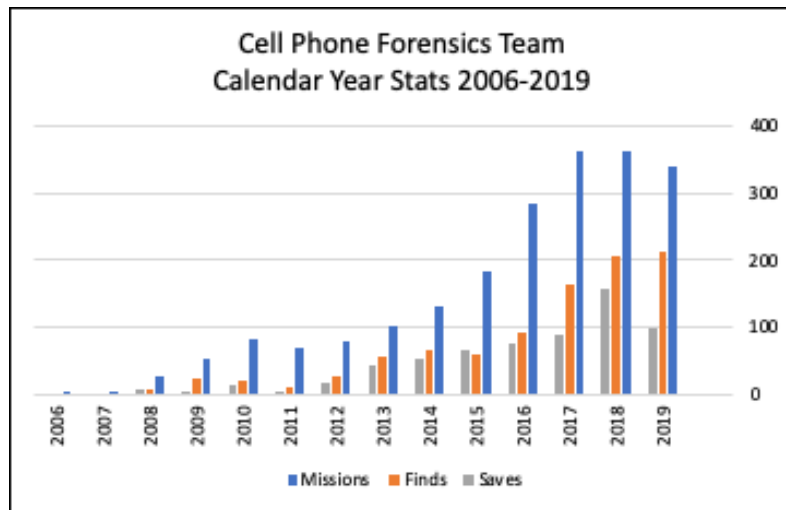




National Cell Phone Forensics Team Fact Sheet



The use of historical cell phone data to support Civil Air Patrol search and rescue (SAR) missions originated in April 2006 when Maj. Justin Ogden, CAP, first used software he developed to help predict the most likely area to search for a missing airplane. Ogden was joined by Col. Brian Ready and Maj. Jerad Hoff, and the three became the core of the National Cell Phone Forensics Team, which was designated a national CAP asset in 2009. As the number of missions has grown, the team now includes eight members, all of whom are members of Arizona Wing. All team members are volunteer professionals.



In 2019, the team completed 341 missions and was credited by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center with 212 finds and 99 saves. From its inception in 2006 through 2019, the team has been assigned 2091 missions, and has been credited with 947 finds and 627 saves.

Our mission: *Collect, Analyze, Present*

- We **collect** raw data from a variety of sources. Our experience helps us recognize what data sources need to be checked for information.
- We **analyze** the raw data - we remove the misleading information and focus the attention on important clues.
- We **present** the data in a manner that is immediately actionable. This may include maps, Google Earth KML files, pictures, and other info that allows a search planner to immediately apply the cell phone clues to their search.

How Does It Work?

- Requests for assistance are made to the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, the single agency responsible for coordinating on-land federal SAR activities in the United States, including Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands.

- Assignments support typical CAP missions such as missing/overdue aircraft, but the Cell Phone Forensics Team also works on appropriate missions from federal, state, and local law enforcement and other agencies, e.g., U.S. Coast Guard and National Park Service. These missions may include missing boaters, overdue hikers, etc.
- Analysis and presentation skills are where the team excels – extracting the most accurate information and presenting it in a way that is actionable. Team members also know places to check for data that are sometimes overlooked.
- Maj. Ogden developed a proprietary tool that allows text message contact with missing persons. A team member can send a link to the missing person which, if they click on it, will relay their position (without the team member needing to contact a cell phone provider). This tool is helpful in cases where the missing person is willing and able to participate (they will click the link you ask them to) as that allows rapid determination of their location. This has to be done before the phone battery dies, and again, only works if the missing person is cooperative.
- The team also has a tool that can monitor a phone to see when it turns back on. This helps resolve many overdue/non-distress situations, if a team member can simply keep tabs on when the phone turns back on.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can you find a phone that is turned off?

A: We can often provide historical analysis to show where a phone was before the battery died, or before it was turned off or left a coverage area. This is usually a helpful clue in search and rescue missions. We can also monitor a phone for the duration of the search to see when/if it turns back on.

Q: Can you track a prepaid phone (like TracPhone)?

A: Yes. A prepaid cell phone provides the same data as a post-paid cell phone.

Q: Can you turn the phone on if it's currently powered off?

A: No.

Q: What information can you provide to search and rescue teams?

A: The emphasis of the Cell Phone Forensics Team is to provide historical and real-time location information. The focus is on location clues. We can also provide supporting information such as call records if necessary for the search. Information is provided to the team by cell phone service providers only with documentation of exigent circumstances.

Q: How do I (an authorized representative of a law enforcement or other agency) request mission support from the cell phone team?

A: Call the AFRCC 24/7 at (800) 851-3051.