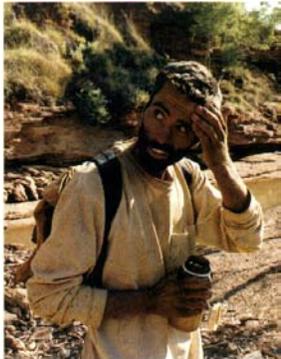




1st Special Response Group

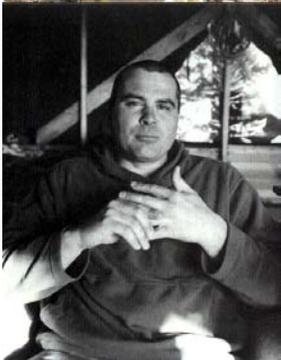
Anytime
Anywhere

Lost in the Desert



In 1999, Robert Bogucki, a volunteer fireman from Fairbanks, Alaska, set out on a bicycle trip across Australia's Great Sandy Desert. When his bicycle was found bogged down in a sandy track, Australian authorities expended enormous energy searching for him, giving up only after two weeks had passed. Unwilling to abandon their son without at least one more effort, Bogucki's family called in 1SRG for help.

Interviews with Bogucki's family and girlfriend revealed that Robert had the skills and spirit to stay alive in hostile conditions for an extended period. His personality and quest suggested that he might actively avoid anyone searching for him, further complicating the problem. Based on this, it made sense to dispatch our search team to the desert, although by then Robert had been missing for almost three weeks.



Starting from where the aboriginal trackers left off, the search team continued following Robert's track into 40,000 square miles of desert. Within hours, additional signs of Robert's passage were located over 100km north, allowing the team to leapfrog over distance, and more importantly, time. Using a combination of tactics - dog teams and trackers to follow his sign on the ground, and trackers in helicopters to attempt to cut ahead along his estimated path - we rapidly narrowed our gap to two days and 100 square miles.

For most of his journey, Robert stayed in remarkable shape. He traveled 10 to 20 miles a day, walking up to 125mi between water sources. His strength flagged only towards the end of his ordeal, shortly before he was found.

Robert when he was found and a year later

Three days after starting our search, the team located a cache of Robert's gear. The fourth day Robert was located, alive.

The story of Robert's adventure and the search effort was the subject of many articles and cartoons in the Australian press, received good coverage in the US, and was the subject of a 45 minute segment on NBC's Dateline.

Robert Bogucki survived nearly 40 days on faith and the food and water he managed to gather from the desert.

