



# NEW CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE REORGANIZATION OF SLOVENE MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE



Vladimir Prebilič, PhD

Uroš Svete, PhD

Defense Studies Division, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Ljubljana



# **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SLOVENE MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE (SMR)**

## **1. BIRTH AND EVOLUTION OF ALPINE ASSOCIATION OF SLOVENIA (AAS):**

- the roots of AAS are traced down into year 1872, when first attempts for registration of Slovene mountain society were made (“Triglav friends”)
- 1893 twenty years of efforts were awarded by recognition of the Slovene Alpine Society
- Slovene Alpine Society functioned till the end of II. world war, when political and social changes were introduced
- after turbulent times (in 1948) the Alpine Association of Slovenia (SMCA) was established that we know nowadays
- in 1991 AAS was accepted into UIAA and IKAR



## **BIRTH OF SLOVENE MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE**

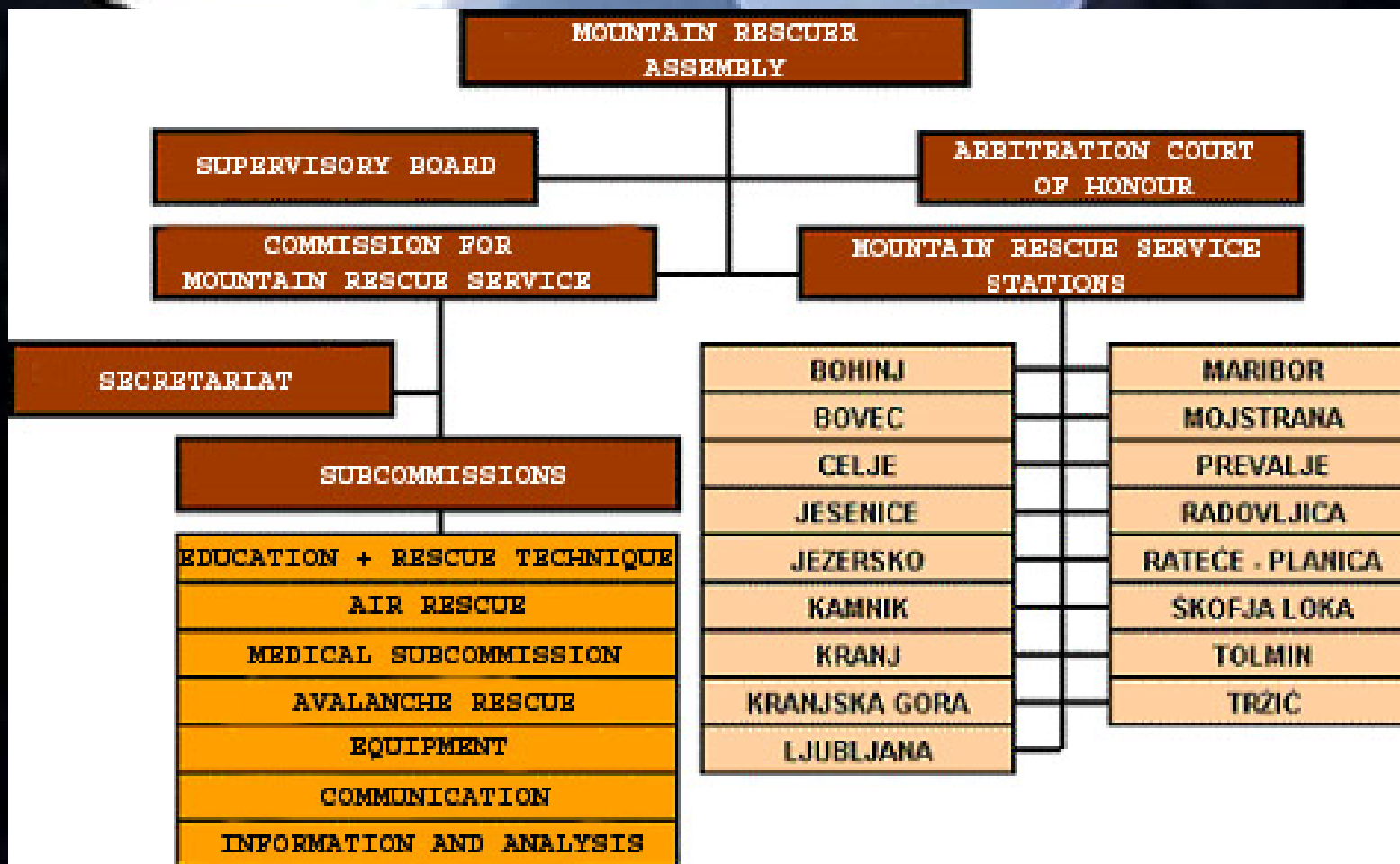
- in year 1912 the Alpine Association of Slovenia (AAS) established Mountain Rescue Service for help to their members if needed
- another attempts of mountain rescue were materialized in the Slovene alpine club named SKALA in 1921
- this service was strongly associated with the Slovenian nationalism and perception of mountains as the Slovene national symbol
- in 1948 when the AAS was established its Mountain Rescue Service became the status of the only mountain rescue service in Slovenia
- Mountain Rescue Service of Slovenia is organizationally still (very important) part of AAS – but not for long



# Organisation

- In 1996 renaming into Mountain Rescue Service of Slovenia (MRSS)
- In accordance with the law on Protection against Natural and Other Disasters MRSS became one of the most important pillars of protection, rescue and relief forces. It has a status of public service, organised in frame of Alpine Association of Slovenia
- Organisational structure

# Organisation



# Organisation

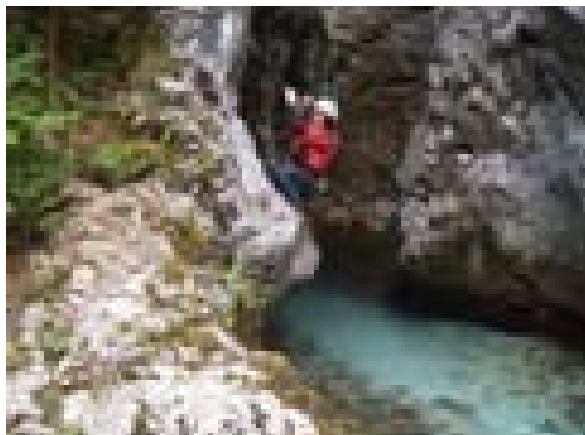


# Accidents and interventions



- Some characteristics of mountain accidents
  - Changing lifestyle of individuals (poor psychophysical condition (a lack of time) leads toward numerous activities in the range of mountains of medium height where the number of rescuers is smallest)
  - High professional qualification, reliability and rapid reaction time ensure frequently interventions out of mountain territory (rescuing from high buildings in the cities, in heavily accessible terrain etc.)
  - More popular adrenalin sport activities (canyoning, skydiving, hang-gliding, rafting) brought new rescue challenges,
  - Opening and availability of mountain region for **mass tourism** (in the mountains we have between 2 and 3 million visitors yearly)→ breakthrough of mountaineering into non-alpine regions



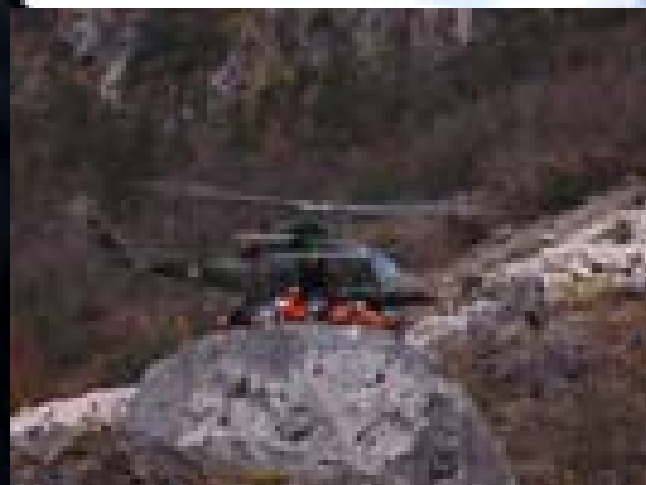


# Accidents and interventions

- Analysis of interventions:
  - 301 interventions in year 2004
  - The part of non-mountain interventions 30 %
  - In Ljubljana MRSS (a half of Slovenian territory) 0,14 interventions per rescuer, Bohinj 0,13 and 0,18 → burdening pretty the same, the problem is dispersion in some stations
  - The number of interventions and injured persons is going up
  - The number of dead persons is stagnating (about 30 person per year).



# Accidents and interventions



MRSS activities 1995-2004

Year	Number of intervent	Nm. of rescuing persons	Nm. of injured persons	Nm. of sick persons	Nm. of dead persons	Rescue hours	Helicopt. interven.	Doctor presence
1995	173	199	105	8	14	6341	41	65
1996	187	191	80	9	37	12034	58	64
1997	203	223	113	11	34	7487	67	108
1998	196	208	96	13	27	6172	75	109
1999	197	211	109	13	29	6005	67	103
2000	238	287	140	19	24	9552	114	156
2001	262	287	139	16	32	8983	121	157
2002	286	310	160	34	30	8525	112	161
2003	277	312	156	34	38	7982	94	165
2004	300		183*		32		104	



## FOUNDING OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE

- after 2004 when the status of humanitarian organization was granted to Mountain Rescue Service continuity of further funding was insured
- the structure of nowadays founding is as followed :
  - 60 % of all funds is provided by Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief
  - 40 % Foundation for Disabled Peoples Organization
- based on that the MRSS is provided around \$ 1 million
- 50 % of collected funds are divided among the mountain rescue stations based on the number of interventions in each station



## PROFESSIONALIZATION VS OCCUPATION OF MRS

### PROFFESIONALIZATION:

- means high educational and training qualification, reliability, rapid reaction capability, exclusiveness of profession, high standards for enter the association
- isn't directly connected to the professionalization – even amateurs can be professionals what is the case in Slovenia
- demands constant training and education, what may represent high burden on the individual

### OCCUPATION:

- in based on full time employees, regardless the rang of professionalization – not all occupations are considered as professions



## **MRS IS VOLUNTEER ORGNIZATION BUT HOW LONG?**

**Main problems of MRS today are:**

- growing number of accidents, spreading area of intervention, new rescue challenges
- huge “time burden” on the individuals who must be in constant training and educational process (all rescuers are employed elsewhere)
- financial insecurity in the future (not determined status of MRS on the state level)

**OCCUPATIONAL MRS IN THE FUTURE  
YES OR NO – THAT IS THE QUESTION?**