

Product Profile **The Button**

Phil Campbell Rescue Squad uses
The Button to save lives!



Over the years, Falcon Direct has specialized in *servicing the needs of those who serve others*. In this capacity, we have noted that money trickles down with law enforcement traditionally receiving the most, then paid fire departments and ambulance services followed by volunteer fire departments, and dead last – rescue squads!

We have always had a great deal of respect for those who give their time as rescue squad volunteers and marveled at the resourcefulness that allows them to do so much with so little. Some exhibit high levels of administrative capabilities coupled with operational skills, community interaction, and innovation. One of those deserving special recognition is the Phil Campbell Rescue Squad, and in particular the implementation of a new system called *The Button*!

Historically, volunteer rescue squads have been formed in rural communities where patient transport and medical treatment facilities are lacking. The people who make up these organizations rarely receive the recognition of other *Public Safety* agencies but they are typically more involved in life and death situations than either law enforcement or fire fighting.

Unfortunately, the operations cost for rescue activities is often equal to or greater than that of other public safety activities. This means that to maintain effectiveness, there have to be financial resources. Grants have historically been all but non-existent, public support has been minimal, and there is only so much that can be done with traditional fund raising. The conclusion is that the money must come from PAID transport activities.

The Phil Campbell Rescue Squad (PCRS) provides the fastest response to medical calls of any provider in their area. Why? Because they are there! Unlike public commercial ambulance services that may not have a transport vehicle within 30 miles, PCRS has the ability to typically be on the scene within 5 minutes or less. With this capability, you would think that anyone needing medical transport services would first call PCRS. Unfortunately, that has not always been the case.

Barry Pounders, President of PCRS decided he would do something to change the situation. Barry recognized that one of the primary delays in obtaining prompt medical response were the procedures involved with processing a call through 911. While these procedures are necessary to properly handle calls from the general public, they can delay response times from those who have some medical knowledge and simply need help in a hurry.

Armed with this information, Barry contacted Dr. Keith Morrow of the Phil Campbell Medical Clinic with a proposal to provide *The Button* as a means of INSTANTLY contacting the PCRS in the event of an emergency. With *The Button* installed in the clinic treatment room, the clinic staff could summon transport service by simply pressing a button.



The Button, shown at the left, is a battery powered voice annunciating transmitter that operates completely independently of the clinic AC power. In simple terms, pressing the button instantly transmits a voice message to all PCRS squad members via their two-way radios. The message is transmitted twice automatically.

The message can be changed by the PCRS as desired with no special tools required. Currently the message is programmed to broadcast *Emergency Medical at PCM Clinic*.

Upon receipt, available members respond within minutes. Two of the PCRS squad members, Melissa Moore and Barbara King live nearby and respond with Rescue 76, normally parked between their homes! If a larger vehicle is required, Rescue 75, lovingly known as Barry's Box is sent from the PCRS Operations Center.

Speaking of an Operations Center, the PCRS operations center is generally manned by volunteers during the day. It goes without saying that the folks of PCRS have put a lot of work into their squad and they have been doing it for a long time. Barbara King has been a member since 1988 and she is still going strong. Her husband, now deceased, was involved with the squad since the beginning.



Anyway – Barry's idea was that PCRS would place *The Button* in the clinic at no charge to the clinic. Instead of dialing an out of town ambulance service, or 911, the clinic staff would only need to push the red button to summon transport service. In many cases the patient is picked up and transported to nearby hospitals in Haleyville or Russellville quicker than a commercial transport vehicle can arrive at the clinic!

To say that *The Button* has been a success would be a mild understatement. Within just a short time after being installed, PCRS received an ALS (Advanced Life Support) call. This one run more than paid for the cost of *The Button*. When personnel at the clinic need medical transport service, they know they can get it quickly at the push of a button. This is a win-win situation for the patient (faster transport to an advanced treatment facility), for the clinic with more efficient procedures, and for PCRS who can generate the vitally needed income for providing rescue services in rural northwest Alabama.

Installation of *The Button* has now been made at the local High School with plans to add another unit at the elementary school. Who knows? In time, everyone in Phil Campbell may have *The Button*! Is the Phil Campbell Rescue Squad a little different? You bet it is! Can others do the same thing? You bet they can, and we hope they do!

For additional information on the button, contact
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About the author

Burch Falkner has been involved in serving the needs of public safety users for over 40 years. As a former City of Birmingham fireman, and advisor to a number of fire and rescue departments, he specializes in working with volunteer agencies throughout the United States

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