

State Desk

By Percy Hamilton

Santa Rosa law officers were impressed by the efficiency of the Escambia County Search and Rescue Unit in finding two fishermen lost on a river Monday night.

Reporter C. H. Phillips said the volunteer search unit rescued John E. Hawley, 34, and his sister, Mrs. Juanita I. Massingill, 39, of Pensacola after their boat went aground on a sandbar in Simpson River in Santa Rosa County.

Deputy Bill Stephens said the hunt began when the Santa Rosa Sheriff's department received a phone call that Hawley and Mrs. Massingill went up the river fishing and had not returned by nightfall.



W. L. Massingill, the woman's husband went up the river earlier but failed to find a trace of the boat or its occupants.

Stephens called E. E. McGovern, head of the Escambia search unit.

He said the group responded quickly, moved in a truck with two-way radio equipment as headquarters for communications and dispatched eight boats that fanned out in a search.

The boats located Hawley's craft on the sandbar around 2 a.m. Tuesday morning with Hawley still aboard.

Mrs. Massingill was located a short time later ashore where a passing fisherman had carried her.

Stephens said the well-organized communications system directing the boats shortened the search.

The unit has 80 boats, all manned by volunteers.

Hawley and the Massingills reside at 7707 Latham St. in Pensacola.