August 10, 2008 - Group leaders participating in the ‘Abbots Way’ walk across Dartmoor, Devon have hailed the SPOT Satellite Messenger as an essential piece of kit, after using the device to save two young walkers suffering from exhaustion and hypothermia.

The rescue is among the first documented rescues initiated by SPOT in the UK. The device, which is rapidly growing in popularity within Europe, is the first of its kind, providing lifesaving communications technology from remote locations.

Andy Hodges, a member of the Dartmoor Rescue Group and volunteer at Edge Hill College, was involved in the rescue. He commented: “Without the SPOT that day, a very difficult position could have become life-threatening. When you have an unmoveable casualty and no mobile signal, which is common in remote areas of the UK, a very difficult decision has to be made; leave the casualty for help or stay without any hope of help arriving. SPOT removes the need to make this decision and allows you to concentrate on helping your mate safe in the knowledge that help is on its way.”

The popular annual walking event, which took place on the 5th October 2008, is undertaken by up to 500 individuals, including groups from schools, cadets and other parties interested in adventurous activities. The route covers remote and difficult terrain Southern Dartmoor.

Andy Hodges and a fellow group leader, encountered two members of a RAF Cadet Team fall ill whilst leading a group of college students along the challenging walk. The two individuals were suffering the repercussions of an earlier incident, in which they had fallen into a river when crossing a tricky wade, and had started to show hypothermia-like symptoms.

No one within the team had mobile signal and therefore utilising the SPOT Sattilete Messenger was essential. Mike was carrying the SPOT unit on his rucksack harness for good signal and accessibility. Their location was remote and difficult to access, and carrying the injured duo would have been extremely difficult. The group leader therefore pressed the help button on their device, alerting emergency services to their exact location. He also pressed the local help button, alerting his pre-programmed contacts by e-mail and text.

Within the hour the two injured individuals were picked up by an RAF Sea King helicopter, and taken to a local hospital for treatment.