
NZLSAR News

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Lou Grant Award



Barry Shepherd, a proud family and the Lou Grant Award

The Office of Commissioner recently announced that Taupo's Constable Barry Shepherd is the 4th Police recipient of the Lou Grant award for excellence in and contribution to Police search and rescue.

The Lou Grant award commemorates the popular Auckland Police officer who died in the Eagle helicopter crash in 1993. The bronze trophy, awarded on a bi-yearly basis, has been donated by Lou Grant's

widow Cath Grant. Lou Grant ran Auckland's search and rescue squad for many years, only leaving SAR to set up the air support unit.

Several nominations were received for the award and all were worthy winners. But Barry Shepherd's all round contribution to SAR, both operational work, administrative and training, stood out.

Barry has a long association with SAR dating back to his Police cadet training in 1976 when he was awarded the Bill Bridge trophy for Bushcraft and Leadership. He joined SAR as a Police Squad member at Auckland in 1977 and has continued his involvement at Kawerau and Taupo.

In September 1986 he was appointed the Police Liaison Officer for Taupo SAR. Since 1986 he has been a Committee member of the Operation Rescue Trust. He is a trained winch operator for the Tranz Rail Rescue Helicopter and has recently taken over

the SAR portfolio for the Taupo sub area.

His efforts have earned him official recognition in the past. In 1990 he was awarded the Commissioner Silver Merit Award for dedication to search and rescue, and again in 1997 when he was awarded the Queens Service Medal for services to Search and Rescue.

Barry is described by the volunteers who work with him on SAR operations as a conscientious and dedicated Police officer who is an asset to the Taupo SAR organisation.

He is known to both Police and civilians involved in SAR as having the knowledge and leadership skills that create excellence and contribute positively to the effective operation of search and rescue in Taupo.

The presentation of the award took place in Taupo Police Station on Thursday 8 February, at 2pm.

Gerard Prins
Police SAR Coordinator

A good find by searchers for a very lucky hunter

A search in the Kaweka Ranges, inland from Napier in early November 2000, made me realise, if any proof was needed, how far Land SAR has come in a very short time in terms of improved techniques and communications.

The situation. The details of the search are not so important, - a 40 year old South Auckland man had been dropped into a hunting area by helicopter and on the first afternoon left his two companions to go for a short hunt. Although later in the afternoon he was in voice contact with his companions and the next morning in rifle shot contact, he did not rejoin them, but became disoriented and decided to follow a creek out to a main river which surely must lead to

civilisation, motorways, modems and McDonalds. While climbing down a waterfall he fell, sustaining serious injuries including a broken back, internal injuries and later developed severe hypothermia. When located by the Air Force just before dusk on the third day. He was close to death, so cold that the digital thermometer did not register, so cold it took 90 minutes of warming to bring his temperature up to where he started shivering. The winch job was quite hair-raising, with 220 feet of wire let out (with only 30 feet left) and very little fuel left in the helicopter. An attempt to fly the patient to hospital was aborted when bad weather forced the helicopter to land on the side of the Napier Taihape road. The patient was transferred to the back of a van belonging to an

AREC member, and later transferred to an ambulance.

Sound attraction. The night before the search commenced, I used cell phone contact with the missing man's companions to begin "sound attraction" to guide him back to the hut. This technique failed, but searchers found a number of pots and pans completely battered out of shape when they arrived at the hut.

Quick recce teams. We used a number of two man "quick recce" teams during this search, using experienced SAR members who had comparable fitness levels, skilled in TCA and search methods and lightly equipped, for fast efficient and effective searching. Without the normal gear carried, these teams travelled further and faster and tracked better. We have used two man teams before to good effect but this technique would not suit every occasion. There are in fact as number of arguments against using two man teams, lightly equipped, but our suggestion for equipment for each person are.

Day pack, light weight sleeping bag, bivy bag, parka, high energy food, torch and basic first aid kit. Weight all up, less than 7kg.

Track and Clue Awareness skills. Our search team which was tracking the missing man down a gorge creek was following the scantiest of signs – nothing for several hundred metres, then a rock slightly out of place or a scrape of moss. In several places the team saw an indentation in the sand underwater where the missing man had jumped off rocks into a pool.

Communications. It is not too many years since almost every search had communications problems. This search

proved the value of the new ICOM VHF radios and repeaters. A helicopter drop of the repeater onto the highest spot in the area provided excellent comms, the only problem being its recovery after weather conditions deteriorated considerably for the following week. The teams had instant effective communications with base, the Iroquois was given the frequency and we had the previously unthinkable – a search team unable to move forwards or backwards in a gorge, radioing in the helicopter to their position

Use of RNZAF. There have been years when I found the Air Force difficult to deal with when trying to arrange a helicopter for a search. The air crew were always obliging and dedicated, but there was a considerable amount of red tape to cut through when ordering a chopper, the tape designed to save money I suppose. On this occasion I found nothing but the utmost support at every level of the Air Force and I have nothing but admiration for their efforts. The helicopter crew in fact saved the life of the missing man and that buzz will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

In summary I am of an age when I sometimes have a hankering for the "good old days". In terms of search and rescue however, the old days were not as good as today and in a short time frame we have improved so much with our search techniques and communications. Credit must go to NZLSAR for providing the impetus, Police for providing the money, Ross Gordon and other trainers for the new techniques and the volunteers for their continued efforts.

John Lovatt

Eastern Police District SAR Coordinator

Graham Thorp

Adviser Eastern District

Canterbury SAR Volunteers Receive Plaques

2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer, a United Nations Initiative that the New Zealand Government has agreed to support. Martin O'Neill, SAR Inspector in the Canterbury District presented Police plaques to SAR

volunteers at a function on 5 December 2000. He opened the formalities with an acknowledgement of the contribution made by volunteers and their families and then presented a plaque engraved as follows:

RECIPIENT'S NAME

"IN APPRECIATION FOR xx YEARS VOLUNTARY SERVICE TO SEARCH AND RESCUE
FROM 19xx TO 2000"

MARTIN O'NEILL
INSPECTOR SAR

Noting the organisation they are associated with, the individual years of service and with a total of 642 years of service to search and rescue the following volunteers received a plaque.

Walter Baguley	Sumner Lifeboat	45 years
Dave Saunders	SAR Adviser	40
Gareth Bradshaw	AREC	35
Ted Robinson	SAR Adviser	35
Alan Hepburn	Methven SAR	33
Harvey Grieve	Methven SAR	33
Paul Dixon	Methven SAR	33
Murray Cullen	ACR	32
Ron Boocock	Oxford SAR	32
Brian Judson	Oxford SAR	32
Arch Fidler	Oxford SAR	32

Des Wood	Christchurch	30
Rod Lawrence	SAR Adviser	29
Ron Ealam	Oxford SAR	26
Brent Dalzell	Hurunui SAR	25
John McMillan	Hurunui SAR	25
Kelvin Earl	Hurunui SAR	25
Sandy Begbie	Rakaia SAR	25
Russell Currie	Methven SAR	25
Don Geddes	Methven SAR	25
Geoff Chapman	AREC	25

The function concluded over drinks and supper in the Christchurch Police Club. Canterbury Police intend to continue the presentation of plaques to volunteers who attain 25 years voluntary service to search and rescue.

Martin O'Neil

Inspector, SAR, Canterbury

Peter Summerfield

SAR Coordinator, Canterbury

Mt Moehau Search

On Monday 04 September 2000 two males aged 28 and 43 left Stony Bay Camp at around 1230 hours to walk to the top of Moehau Mountain. The summit altitude is around 3000

feet at the north end of the Coromandel Peninsular and was felt by the two to have spiritual meaning. They faced a four hour walk to the summit and so were advised by the

local Department of Conservation person that it was too late to start the climb. The weather at the time was fine, the pair were warmly dressed although not in bush clothing and they decided to set off.

On the way to the summit the younger person removed most of his clothing as he was hot and it was believed they were close to the summit. They continued the climb for another few hours until they reached an area of spiritual significance to them where they prayed for some time.

As they went to leave, darkness had fallen accompanied by strong winds and rain. Clouds had also formed on the mountain reducing visibility to virtually nothing. They walked all through the night attempting to find a way off the mountain but it is now believed they had pretty much gone round and round the summit area. During this time the older person gave the other his shirt which left him with just a tee shirt and singlet on his upper body.

Around 1130 hours on Tuesday the older person told his friend that he was very cold and had to sleep and despite efforts to the contrary he lay down and refused to move. His eyes were rolling and he said he felt that this was the end. His friend covered him in ferns in an attempt to keep him warm and then continued on.

A search was commenced on Tuesday which involved goat cullers walking the track from Stony Bay to Moehau Creek. En route several items of clothing were located approximately half way up the mountain. These clothes were later identified by the DoC person as being those worn by the pair on Monday when they left.

No sign of the pair was found by the cullers so a full scale operation was mounted. Eddie Murphy from the DoC Coromandel who had a good knowledge of the area acted as Adviser. Brian

Connors of Thames Land SAR was appointed as Field Controller and Fin Buchanan, Assistant Field Controller. Rob Duncan filled this last role on Thursday.

Nine teams were put into the field on Wednesday morning using the Eagle helicopter to ferry TCA teams up onto the mountain. About 1030 hours the younger person was located in the area of the trig at the top of the mountain. He was brought out and spoken to but could not offer a lot of information due to his tiredness, moderate hypothermia and wanting to sleep. He was held at the base where he slept in the SAR caravan and his condition monitored by Brian Connors who has ambulance training. A total of 40 searchers were used the first day including Thames and Coromandel Land SAR members, Hamilton Police SAR Squad members and DoC staff.

On Thursday the search recommenced at first light. Some teams had stayed on the mountain overnight, others had been able to come out to their homes for the night and returned to continue their searching. With Land SAR volunteers from Thames, Waihi and Raglan there were again 40 searchers in the field. The operation, assisted by members of both the missing persons families, continued through the day in very cold conditions on the mountain.

Late on Thursday afternoon the weather clouded right in and heavy rain started and searchers were brought off the mountain. In light of the information received from the found person as to what his friend was wearing when last seen, it was agreed that the missing person would not have survived the extremely cold weather conditions from Tuesday through to Thursday night on the mountain. Further factors in suspending the search were indications found by search teams that the missing person had made the top and the terrain described by the

found person meant he was still on the upper reaches of the mountain.

A further search was commenced on Tuesday 12 September with a briefing at 0800 hours. With the addition of members of the Auckland SAR Squad as well as from Hamilton, five teams of five and two teams of seven were formed. Fin Buchanan Adviser, John Cassidy Field Controller and Jim Rowe as Radio Operator were all from Thames. The Iroquois helicopter from 3 Squadron was used to ferry teams with overnight gear to the top of the mountain. Six members of the family also assisted in the search but were taken off the mountain as they were not prepared for an overnight stay.

At about 0945 on Wednesday 13 September the body of the missing person was located by team 13 which included two SAR Squad members and

a relative. They froze the scene until more senior Police arrived and were able to ascertain that the deceased had died of natural causes. The body was then brought by the helicopter to base where iwi and family members gathered to pay their respects to the deceased before he was transported to Waikato Hospital for an autopsy.

The helicopter managed to get back to the top to remove one other team before the weather closed in requiring the rest to walk out with their overnight gear.

I wish to thank all those involved in this operation. I thought the Coromandel was a warm and sunny place. The circumstances behind this search show how quick conditions can change.

Jim Corbett
Sergeant, Thames Police

Automatic Vehicle Location System

Taranaki Land SAR has just completed an upgrade of their computerised mapping system to enable the location of the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter to be monitored when engaged on search and rescue tasks

The system uses **Trackwatch** mapping software developed by **Worker Systems** in Auckland plus **Message Master Automatic Vehicle Location System** and **Gateway** software pioneered by Auckland based firm **Communication Developments Ltd.** **Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust** uses the same system.

The helicopter receives satellite positional information from the Global Positioning System (GPS). This is sent from the radio in the aircraft, for onward transmission to the base radio located in the operations room at the New Plymouth Police Station. From there, it is downloaded via the software into files that the monitoring computer can use. The position of the helicopter can be displayed as a

moving icon on the **MapMaster** mapping programme on both land maps and marine charts.

Radio transmission between the helicopter and the base radio, are carried on a **Trunked Radio Network** called "**Teamtalk**" which is a subfleet of the network operated by the Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust. During monitoring operations, the radio is used for data transmission only but can cater for text messaging both ways. Voice communication with the helicopter and crew can be by either Police radio, SAR VHF radio, aeronautical frequency, Ambulance emergency frequency or cellphone.

While the helicopter is engaged in non search and rescue activities such as ambulance or medical flights, it will be monitored by the Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust.

The total cost of the system inclusive of GST is over \$12,500, of which

Fletcher Challenge Energy has contributed \$6,000. We are very grateful for this assistance.

Up until now, the mapping system has been limited to plotting the position and progress of the search teams out in the field, from GPS information radioed in by them to the operations room.

The new system will facilitate the more effective deployment of the rescue

helicopter and provide the search management at special operations, with up to date information as to the location of the helicopter at all times, an important safety feature when flying SAR tasks such as medivacs on Mt Egmont and close to shore coastal searches.

Derek Quickfall

Chairman Taranaki Land Search and Rescue Advisory Committee

London Search

The search for Keith London in July 2000 in Auckland's Waitakere Ranges was one of the longest we have had for many years. London disappeared after his partner was shot in New Lynn and his vehicle was found in the Spragg Bush area on the Scenic Drive on Wednesday 28th June. There were two highly likely sightings of him late on the Tuesday night and three .22 rifle shots were heard the next day, leading Police to believe that he had done away with himself. Police and the AOS searched the area for three of days without success.

On Sat 1st July, the search was upgraded to a Class II and the Auckland FIRST Group became involved. With a number of possible scenarios, we searched all the most likely areas surrounding the car park, the Scenic Drive and the road leading to the Waitakere dam. The area is in many places virtually impenetrable and searchers had great difficulty maintaining an ordered search, but the list of items that were found led us to believe that the

searching was of a very high standard. Searching continued until the next Wednesday.

A total of eight beer cans and a folding stool believed to have been discarded by London were found close to the car park, but no other trace was found. 50mm of rain had fallen the night he disappeared and the AOS had crashed around in the area for three days, so there was little chance of finding any other clues.

The search was abandoned on the afternoon of 30th July after a further weekend of intensive searching by Police, FIRST and members of the local tramping clubs, so we donned our kaftans and headed to the nearest café for a latté.

The Waitakere Police were very impressed by the standards set by searchers and were very grateful for their assistance. Below are some of the statistics from the search which extended for 8 days. Most of them are accurate, but as you know, 21.67% of statistics are just plucked out of thin air.

Area searched	2.36 km ²
Lake periphery searched by boat	5.6 km
Time spent searching	8 days
Time taken: Police - 786hrs, civilians - 1323hrs	2109 person hours
Time spent on planning, phone calls etc.	32 hrs
Toilet paper used for boundary marking	6.2 km
Weight lost by searchers in field	50 kg
Weight gained by FHQ staff eating biscuits	50 kg
Portaloos filled	2
Long drops filled	1

Finds:

Marijuana plots	4
Beer cans relevant to search	8
Beer cans not relevant to search	*
Miscellaneous appliances	*
Cars	3
Car batteries	*
Porno videos	12
Porno mags	4
Bread knife in tree	1
Condoms	*
Too numerous to mention. (Hey, this is West Auckland we're talking about here)	
P.S.	

London's body was found mid January, 100m outside the search boundary, 4m into the bush by a trumper

Roger Curl
Auckland Land SAR

Inaugural North Island Search Dog and Handler assessment course

The first NZLSAR sponsored search dog and handler assessment course will be held over the weekend **18/19/20 May 2001**. The venue is Te Kauri Lodge owned by the Hamilton Junior Naturalist Club. The Lodge is situated near Oparau, not far from Kawhia Harbour on State Highway 31 and about an hours drive from Hamilton.

Invitations have been sent to all Police SAR Coordinators, O/C SARS, SAR Organisations and a number of individuals. If you have not received an invite or have any questions about the course please contact either one of those mentioned or the NFO before **April 17 2001**. Shortly after this date a comprehensive package of course details will be sent to each attendee.

While the actual content has not yet been finalised, it is thought that it will

be similar to the four courses that have been run so very successfully in the South Island. It will cover a variety of exercises and simulated bush/wilderness search problems. There may also be some instruction in Track and Clue Awareness, hand held GPS, Radio Procedures and essential First Aid for Dogs.

The course will be adopting as a minimum standard for assessment those laid out by NZLSAR. These Standards are currently in draft form and will be included in the package sent out to attendees. (They have been circulated around New Zealand and are getting close to gaining approval by both NZLSAR and Police Dog Handler Section).

Peter Cameron
Chairman, NZLSAR Specialist
Subcommittee

Bibs and Bobs

Committee News.

- Region One has a new Representative in John Walsh. John has been a long time Auckland Adviser (an AAA and do you know the hand signal)? Welcome John to national SAR politics.
- The Committee at its meeting 16/17 March 2001 decided to increase the meetings to four a year. The additional meeting will be held in May starting this

year on 26 May at Kilbirnie Police Station Conference Room. An updated meeting and papers timetable will be circulated shortly.

- With the aid of an OHP, the Committee reviewed the work it wants to do in the next financial year and set budgeted amounts against each activity. These budget figures will now be worked into a "business case" and be presented to the Police in early April.
- The Committee again considered the value of holding a national SAR conference. A majority view was that there was value in the concept and people would attend. Steve Davis has been tasked with co-ordinating such an event in 2002 and funding in the next two financial years has been tagged.

SAR Library.

Partly due to the heavy demand for some books our system for lending has developed a few cracks, some like fairly big crevasses. If you have ordered a book and not received it then please contact the office and restate your requirements. Apologies for the delays or oversights.

JPT

Editors Comments A big thank you to **Gerard, John, Graham, Martin, Peter, Jim, Derek, Roger, and Peter** for your articles. To those who proof read and check the spelling and grammar, thank you also. Copy for the **June News** is most welcome and the close-off date is **Friday 25 May**. Articles on gear, SAR training or operations are most welcome. Please either mail as neatly hand-written, printed hard copy or on a disc to **NZLSAR, PO Box 12081, Thorndon, Wellington**. Alternatively email it to **tristram.nzlsar@xtra.co.nz** Even if you have some thoughts on an article but are diffident in putting pen to paper, feel free to give me a ring on **04-470-7247** and we can talk it through. Regards **John P Tristram**, National Field Officer