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# NZLSAR News

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Volume 10 Issue 2

April 2004

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## Retirement of Tauranga Police SAR Controller

On Saturday 11 October 2003, after a combined Tauranga Land SAR and Coastguard SAREX during the day, Region Two Tauranga Land SAR group had a Dinner in the evening for members and guests. During the evening the Tauranga Police SAR Coordinator, Senior Sergeant Lyn Manning, was presented with a National SAR Award by the Region Two Representative Bruce Sandford. Lyn was retiring at the end of January 2004 after 38 years in the New Zealand Police Force. For approximately thirty-six of those years he was involved in SAR. Lyn's wife was also retiring after 28 years service to the Police.

Lyn was thanked for his tremendous support of the Tauranga volunteers over the eight years he has been the Area's Police SAR Coordinator. He has during this time encouraged both the Tauranga SAR volunteers and his Police SAR team, to learn the new methods of Track and Clue Awareness, Search Methods etc. now being used throughout New Zealand Land Search and Rescue. Also in recognising these skills he recommended to local Police Detectives to use our TCA trained members to assist in a homicide and again for a person missing for nearly 6 months, using LPB and LKP training.



Lyn Manning being presented with the NZLSAR Award by Bruce Sandford

Lyn is highly respected and liked by all the volunteers within the Tauranga SAR group and during the speech of thanks was invited back to join the group if and when he wished. The Mannings are taking a break away to do a bit of travelling before returning to Tauranga.

Sergeant Dave Thompson will become the Tauranga Police SAR Coordinator having been the SAR Sergeant here for several years and Sergeant Lester Polglass will take over the SAR Sergeant position.

**Bruce Sandford**  
Region Two Representative

## SAR Resource Manual

I am coordinating a project to produce a Manual of training ideas that SAR groups around the country can use to boost their local training programmes. Many SAR groups find their members get a bit bored with the same old courses every year, and without regular SAR operations, start to lose motivation. On the other hand, most groups do run some excellent courses.

The SAR Resource Manual presents an opportunity for SAR groups to share the best of their training exercises with the wider SAR community. We can all benefit from having fresh training ideas that will keep us motivated and up to date with our skills. I am giving every SAR group the opportunity to submit one or two exercises from their local training programme that they think are particularly successful. I will present the training exercises in a folder and on CD-ROM, in a format that sets out:

- The purpose/outcomes of the exercise
- The resources required (personnel, equipment/documents, time)
- Method and Notes for running the course
- Hints / comments / variations
- Opportunity for feedback and improvement

Submissions may be anything from ideas/strategies for running a comprehensive SAREX, to simple one-hour paper exercises, and hopefully we will put together a broad range between these two extremes.

I envisage publishing 20 to 25 items in the Manual (which will be refreshed from time to time) and welcome offers from members to help select a suitable cross-section from the contributions. Apart from specific training exercises, some groups have some other excellent ideas that help them function efficiently. Please feel welcome to contribute any forms, checklists, and so on that you find particularly useful.

Being able to see their own contributions will give "ownership" of the Manual to our grass roots people, rather than it being a "head office" production. For help and encouragement with your contribution, please contact me on:-  
Home phone 04-902 9959  
Work phone 04-913 5939  
Email [laurie.gallagher@wlsar.org.nz](mailto:laurie.gallagher@wlsar.org.nz)

**Laurie Gallagher**  
NZLSAR Training Subcommittee

## Thames training weekend

*Thames is a 50 person progressive SAR organisation who train monthly and are regularly involved operationally. They have identified themselves strongly within their local community and from this has flowed financial and material assistance such that they own a motor vehicle, base, communications and catering caravans and quite a bit of other equipment including 16 SWAZI jackets. The event below followed from the District SAREX being postponed. With the Thames personnel already committed to the weekend, they decided to make it a series of training sessions with the emphasis on team building and fun. The Westpac chopper was quickly arranged and it was all paid for by donation and from the organisations funds. An account of the event is as below, read on! JPT*

Driving up the Thames Coast in torrential rain early on Saturday morning, we had visions of a damp and waterlogged weekend ahead of us. As we arrived on site at Te Kouma Farms near Coromandel the rain stopped, the clouds rolled away, the sun came out and the future looked much brighter.

We were all soon erecting tents and marquees, and were ready for the first workshops. These included Track and Clue awareness, coastal searching, de-bugging radios in the field, message handling, quad bike safety, abseiling and GPS. These all progressed smoothly despite the distraction of the magnificent views from the various sites on the farm. There were radio communications back to Base at all times as a safety measure.

Other activities included scuba diving, fishing and preparation of the evening meal. The food that was served from our camp kitchen was almost unbelievable and included smoked marlin, scallops, mussels, snapper, venison steaks, beef steaks, sausages, potatoes, 3 different salads and ample refreshments. There were seconds for all.

After a stormy night, Sunday dawned fine and sunny again. The programme for this morning (after a fine breakfast of leftovers) included more rides on the quad bikes and helicopter safety and winching with the Westpac Helicopter. More delicious leftovers for lunch. The afternoon was spent packing up and breaking camp followed by more fun, – canoeing, boating, jet-ski riding, etc

The weekend was voted as being most successful with votes of thanks to the James family for the use of their magnificent farm. Sergeant Jim Corbett was head chef, but everyone helped in making the weekend so successful. Quad bikes, 4 wheel drive vehicles, jet-skis, canoes and a launch were all made freely available and contributed a great deal to the success of the weekend.



**Jim Rowe**  
Thames SAR Organisation

## SAR Council Consultative Committee

Following the setting up of the SAR Council and the SAR Secretariat (details of which can be found in the NZLSAR February 2004 News) the Consultative Committee met on 27 November. At that meeting the proposed strategic planning process to collect information and provide direction for the SAR Council was discussed. It was agreed that a series of workshops be held with each sector and organisation and basically work through how they saw search and rescue "in an ideal world". On the 3rd February this year such a workshop took place with several Wellington Team Leaders and Advisers in attendance. As well John Tristram the National Field Officer and myself as a Wellington Adviser, Region Four Training Coordinator, Training Subcommittee member and FMC Representative on the NZLSAR Committee also attended to give

a view larger than the Wellington scene. For three hours the meeting went step by step through the many facets of SAR, management, equipment, relationships with other service providers, etc, etc and ultimately how SAR should be run "in the ideal world". There was "homework" and participants were given a series of Vision and Mission statements to critique after the meeting and respond with comments. The information gained will be collated with that gained from the other SAR sectors, and presented to the SAR Council as a picture of where New Zealand SAR is at present, and where it would like to be in the future.

**Laurie Gallagher**  
NZLSAR Committee

### 40 hour MLSO Courses

Two 40 hour MLSO courses are to be held at the Police College Porirua on the weeks 09/13 August and 16/20 August 2004 further sets of courses are planned for the 03/04 financial year. Usually North Island people attend the first week and South Island people the second as it has been found to be very beneficial for Police and volunteers from the same area to attend the same course.

The exact starting and finishing times will be announced nearer the course time but those held previously have started at midday Monday and finished mid-afternoon the following Friday. NZLSAR and Police meet all transport, accommodation, meals and course fees.

The Training Subcommittee believes that the Regional Committees should be the group that determines who from each Region should be attending the courses and a letter is to be sent to each Region Secretary calling for nominations. If you are interested in attending this course please contact your Regional Committee. Regional Committees should also be looking at the strategic distribution of people who have been on this course and perhaps targeting people to attend.

There are at least two places available to each Region. Additional places will be granted on a strategic basis. Regional Committees have been asked to **submit their nominees** to John Tristram **by 02 July** to allow NZLSAR the best opportunity of purchasing "economy" priced tickets. This early purchase of tickets imposes a financial risk as the value of these tickets may be forfeited if the person does not fly. Accordingly, please ensure if you put your name forward you are as certain as possible that you will be able to attend.

If you require any further information on this course please feel free to contact either John Tristram or myself.

**Barry Were**  
Chairman, Training Subcommittee

### **NZLSAR Committee meeting**

The NZLSAR Committee met at Wellington on Saturday 21 February with an extensive agenda. A major item was the finalising of the Business Case that will be presented to Police. This document sets out the work that NZLSAR intends to get done over the next financial year and the costs associated with that work. Overall there is confidence that Police will be able to provide the amount requested in the Business Case which added to the amount unspent from last year will mean the work envisaged can be financed. Accordingly even at this early stage it is recommended that Regions think seriously about the courses and other activities each intends to facilitate in the next financial year, agree on types and dates for courses and make bookings with Tai Poutini Polytechnic at the earliest.

### **Regional Seminars**

A number of Regions for financial assistance to hold a Regional Seminar. The Committee agreed that these events have great merit and it is likely that Regions can expect the funding to be available. The Regions may like to consider, even at this early stage, of deciding on a coordinator and month it could be held. Already some Regions, noting the national Conference in October have already decided to hold such an event next year in the first six months before the end of June which is the end of the financial year.

### **Payment of associated training costs.**

The NZLSAR Committee at its November meeting approved a policy for assisting training by paying some of the associated training cost of approved courses. The procedures for the implementation of this policy has been reviewed and simplified. Now, payment will be made to the organising SAR Groups bank account and not as previously to the Regional Committee account. An explanatory letter and new proformas have been sent to the Regional Secretaries. Please throw out the first ones issued and use the new. The policy for the payment was backdated to the start of September 2003 and some Regions have been reluctant to make a claim. As this could leave us with uncertainty as to the exact financial position at the end of the June year the Committee decided that if an application or a reasonable assessment has not been received within two months of the event, no payment will be made.

### **Support for IT**

The desire by the Committee to get IT up and running produced the following resolution. Please, through your Regional Committees make it known if you want to take up this offer.

***Resolved that all NZLSAR organisations through their Regional Committees can apply to NZLSAR to purchase GMan/lman software packages by mid May.***

### **Financial assistance to the Regional Committees**

Supporting the administrations costs and the travel and liaison by the Regional Committee Officers was felt to be vital and so the following system for the next financial year is to be documented as a policy to be put out to the Regions. Note that this is reliant upon the Region producing an approved set of accounts.

- A grant of \$500 for administration costs will be made as in past years.
- A grant of \$500 is to be given to each Region.
- Travel by the Chairman, Representative or other person that the Regional Committee agrees on will be reimbursed by the Region from the \$500.
- The Region will provide evidence signed by two Regional Committee members to the effect that the Region agreed to the expenditure and NZLSAR will make good that expenditure.

### **Conference**

The assistance to people to attend this event was discussed and there seems to be some further clarification or decisions to be made. My understanding is as follows:-

- All NZLSAR Committee members are to have their attendance costs provided.
- NZLSAR has put aside \$7,000 to assist with transport to the Conference. This may have included attendance costs.

- It was decided that the subsidy apply to three people per Region.
- Regions are invited to put in bids for this money.
- The payment will be done on the discretion of the Chairman.
- Efforts will be made to see if chartering an aircraft would provide cheaper travel costs.

Roscoe Tait and I were charged to put together information on this and that will be in the June News. In the mean time note the “flyer” included with this edition.

**John P Tristram**  
National Field Officer

### **Matthew Farrellys questionnaire, some results**

The following article is in two parts. The first establishes the result from, and a discussion of, the SAR Advisers/Police questionnaire that was mailed in October 2003. The second part of the article addresses the needs and process of documentation and recording information in a SAREX/SAR operation.

All of this work is part of the authors Masters of Philosophy thesis and will be expanded on when completed and published (June 2004) and later at the SAR conference in October. This work reflects the authors views as formed after discussions with many people he has encountered in land SAR. SAR involves many different people from all over the country with different experiences and preferences. The goals throughout have been to keep it simple, and to make documentation easier and more productive (**NOT** get carried away with new technology!)

#### **Part I**

#### **The Questionnaire and the Future of SAR Search Management**



The Planning and Intelligence Manger Consults With the Information Manager, Tasman SAREX, St. Arnaud, May 2003. Will we see this more often in the future ?

The questionnaire was circulated among Land SAR Advisers, Police SAR personnel and SAR HQ/governing Committees around the country. Two hundred and thirty one questionnaires were mailed and eighty-eight replies received. This represents a response rate of 38%. Responses were received from the SAR Regions all over the country.

There is not room to reprint the questionnaire here in the newsletter. Suffice to say that the questions centered on the use of computers, software and technology in the documentation of land SAR operations in NZ. A variety of viewpoints were noted and the following general conclusions were expressed: (1 for each set of questions)

1. Use of computers quite strong, no so for PDA's, less for the GPS;
2. Use of MS Word and Excel quite strong, not so for other software;
3. Generally strong support for computers and software aiding SAR operations;
4. Optimism that computers will be of benefit and not a hindrance;
5. Optimism for using computers to record information (with back-ups);
6. Strong support for advanced software features and their benefits in planning;
7. Computers can play a role in addressing search areas/segmentation/patterns;
8. Computers can be used to produce maps and to brief team leaders; and
9. People, generally, are happy with printed 260 series maps and supportive of the potential to use digital maps to account for local changes and conditions.

Overall, the support for a careful, well developed role for computers in Land SAR was expressed. Many of the new technologies like mapping software, PDA's, and even GPS to some extent had not been used by many or most respondents.

Each of these points will be expanded on as part of the discussion in Part II. In *italics* are anonymous quotes from the questionnaires and they illustrate a variety of differing viewpoints at times or more numerous, a careful consideration of the use of computers based on SAR experiences.

## **Part II**

The second part of the article addresses the needs and process of documentation and recording information in a SAREX/SAR operation.

**Observations from: Levin SAREX 2003; Tasman SAREX 2003; and Dannevirke SAREX 2004.**

### **Documenting Search and Rescue Operations**

"Accurate documentation of all aspects of a search effort in a retrievable form is essential and may prove a godsend if legal complications arise....the SAR Office can never collect too much information about an operation ...it is almost impossible to generate accurate records after the fact." (Setnicka, 1980, pp ).

There is no doubt about the functionality and success of a paper-based documentation system in SAR. After all, its been used for the last 50 years(?) with success. However, as one respondent commented "*In this day and age we are required to have a more comprehensive paper trail in SAR and with a computer(s) and the appropriate programmes, I am 100% certain that this can be achieved.*"

Why document a search in much detail? What does it provide for searchers? After all, everyone in a search is too busy trying to find the lost party to record anything in detail, right?

Documentation aids the following: (After (Stoffel, Jones, Cooper, Swombow & Andrew, 1998). ):

1. Pre-plan reconstruction;
2. The on-going planning effort (see below);
3. Accurate dissemination of information to searchers;

4. Reconstruction of past events
5. Post-event critiquing;
6. Improvements in technique;
7. Coronal enquires; and
8. Developing a local and national subject-behaviour database.



The resources, time and effort that could be saved if “lost partys” are found considerably quicker could be substantial before resources like helicopters and search teams are deployed to the field in greater numbers. This will not only lessen the depth of their unpleasant experience but has the very real potential to save lives and money. Information such as local trouble spots, areas where trampers have been regularly misplaced and potential helicopter landing sites could all be recorded visually on digital maps. Most if not all of this information exists in the minds of SAR personnel but it is not collated and some of it is lost when people with draw their time for voluntary SAR work.

**Matthew Farrelly**  
Researcher

**Editors Comments.** A very big thank you to **Bruce, Ian Simpson for the picture of Lyn, Laurie, Jim Barry and** for your articles and photos. Copy for the **June News** is most welcome and the close-off date is **Monday 24 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.  
**John P Tristram, National Field Officer**