
NZLSAR News

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A Tribute to John Tristram

As many of you may be aware, John Tristram has retired from his position as NZLSAR's National Field Officer in early April this year.

John was NZLSAR's first (and to date only) employee. He joined NZLSAR in early 1995, not long after NZLSAR had been formed as a stand alone organisation to represent the Land SAR community around the country.

John has had a long and distinguished service with

LandSAR, starting with the Hutt Valley Tramping Club and then serving as a member of the FMC SAR Subcommittee, where he was Chairman for a period of time, before joining NZLSAR as an employee.



As the first employee of a new organisation, John was responsible for establishing, organising, setting up and then implementing the systems

and process that are necessary for any organisation to run efficiently and effectively. Over the years John, with assistance from Phil Rundle and members of the Committee, has further developed and refined these systems. The effectiveness of John and Phil's efforts is shown by the fact that we are able have our accounts audited in a relatively short time frame in order to meet our constitutional requirements.

With John running the office, NZLSAR was able to dramatically increase the quantity and quality of training that could be delivered to our Land SAR community. In addition, the size of the organisation has increased over the years as NZLSAR has grown and

developed; the number of Subcommittees and Working groups has expanded. John attended many of these meetings, often taking and writing up the minutes for the meeting Chairman.

Applying systems and processes to a volunteer organisation can, at times, be frustrating and John has had more than his fair share of frustration over the years. However, this is the nature of a purely volunteer organisation as members try to balance work, family, leisure and SAR commitments. Despite the occasional grumble John has been very successful in pulling all the strands together and making things happen year in and year out. When one compares what was being achieved in the early 1990s with the huge array of courses, subcommittees, working Groups, etc that we now have today, then the systems that have been put in place are obviously effective and are a credit to John's dedication to the tasks he has undertaken.

John has regularly visited the various regional, district and local SAR organisations around the country to ensure that our member SAR groups are brought up to date with what is happening in LandSAR.

One of John's great innovations was the two-monthly NZLSAR Newsletter, which he has published without missing an issue. From time to time he has struggled to find sufficient copy, sometimes having to write much of an issue himself. It is fitting, therefore, that this tribute to John appears in the first issue since John has retired.

John has always had the best interests of the NZLSAR organisation at heart. He put particular emphasis on what

NZLSAR can do for the grassroots LandSAR members. A very noble and worthwhile trait as it is these grassroots LandSAR members who are the real strength of our organisation.

Another one of John's passions has been the development of the SAR Search Dog group. John has played a hands on role in providing a tremendous amount of administrative assistance to this group in organising venues, food, transport, etc – all those things that go on behind the scenes, but are essential to ensure that the course is well run and successful.

On a personal note, I would like to sincerely thank John his support over the years and for all the work that he went about quietly doing behind the scenes. Without John's input and dedication NZLSAR would not be in the strong position that it is in today. Throughout his tenure as NFO, John has worked closely with the Police national emergency management operations group and it is a fitting tribute to John's character and dedication to SAR that he was accepted as a member of their team.

On behalf of the NZLSAR Committee, the various subcommittees and working groups, and all the LandSAR members around the country, a heartfelt thanks for all your efforts over the years. We are sorry to see you go. We wish you and Pat all the best for your retirement and may there be many happy years of travel together ahead. Enjoy the hills, valleys and streams.

Hope to catch up with you in the hills in the not too distant future.

Roscoe Tait
Chairman

NZ LAND SAR AWARDS

At the May meeting of the National Committee of NZLSAR, NZLSAR Awards and Plaques were presented to John Tristram, Phil Rundle and Gerry Prins in recognition of the contribution and service that these three, have made to NZLSAR over a considerable number of years.

John Tristram recently retired as NZLSAR's National Field Officer after 11 years dedicated and diligent service with NZLSAR (see article on page??)

Phil Rundle has expressed a desire to retire as NZLSAR's Treasurer. Phil, who has been NZLSAR's Treasurer since NZLSAR was formed at the end of 1994, has diligently and quietly worked away behind the scenes keeping the NZLSAR accounts in order. It is a tribute to Phil that we have had relatively few problem with getting our accounts audited in a relatively short time frame.

Gerry Prins served on the NZLSAR Committee for several years as the Police Representative. His behind the scenes support and contribution to John in particular has been extremely He has continued to give his support and assistance to NZLSAR in his new role as Manager, Emergency Management at the Office of the Commissioner.

The NZLSAR Committee also took the opportunity to present both John and Pat Tristram and Phil and Mary Rundle with Graham Sydney prints as a thank you and a small token of the NZLSAR Committee's appreciation for the contribution that John and Phil have made to NZLSAR but also for the support that Pat and Mary have given to them to enable John and Phil undertaken their roles in NZLSAR over the last eleven years.

NZ Mountain Safety Council training for SAR members

Recently, I have heard comments from the NZ Mountain Safety Council that MSC Branches have been approached by SAR members expecting free training. This article attempts to clarify the conditions under which NZMSC can provide training for SAR members.

NZLSAR members may attend any Mountain Safety Council public courses as paying members of the public. For courses approved by NZLSAR (mainly the Outdoor First Aid course), their Region may claim back course costs from NZLSAR of up to \$30/day on submission of receipts.

Some NZLSAR Regions have had difficulty attracting SAR members with adequate bushcraft skills, and have asked that NZLSAR approve other NZMSC courses that provide a range of bushcraft skills. The NZLSAR Training Subcommittee considers that

such bushcraft skills are equivalent to "personal life skills" and, in general, should be the responsibility of the individual to acquire before applying to join SAR. However, recognising the difficulties some SAR groups are having in regard to attracting new members with suitable bush skills, the Subcommittee approached the NZ Mountain Safety Council to see what other options our members would have.

NZMSC offers a number of stand-alone courses that would be useful to SAR members including:

Bushcraft - for SAR members with a little more experience, a range of more advanced courses is available in various districts.

Above the Bushline - includes advanced navigation and route finding, travel in steep terrain, scree and snow

travel, emergency shelters, weather interpretation.

River Safety - Whether to cross, where to cross, preparing to cross, how to cross, self-recovery techniques

Outdoor First Aid (and *Outdoor First Aid Refresher*) – meets the NZLSAR requirements for team members

Risk management

Alpine – snow and ice travel, basic ropework and belaying

Avalanche Awareness

Abseil

These courses are available through local NZMSC Branches at normal public cost. Costs and availability of the courses vary between districts depending on local resources and demand. Regions wishing to train their members through these courses should negotiate a subsidy with NZLSAR before the course runs, or absorb the cost through their Regional or Local budget.

Free training

In the disciplines of Bush, Alpine, and Abseil, NZMSC will train, assess, and validate NZMSC qualifications for members of other volunteer outdoor organisations (including NZLSAR) at no cost if they become NZMSC Instructors attached to a local NZMSC Branch.

As NZMSC Instructors, they would be expected to repay the cost of their training by providing at least 32 volunteer hours using their skills to lead and/or instruct outdoor (eg SAR) groups, or at least contributing to their community by taking part in SAR operations whenever possible. They are expected to report their instructional and/or SAR work to the local NZMSC Branch, maintain a logbook of their activities and outdoor experience, and update their outdoor skills by attending refresher courses.

NZMSC Instructors maintain their qualifications by being revalidated, usually every three years.

NZLSAR members intending to become NZMSC Instructors would train in outdoor and leadership skills through the *Outdoor Leader* pathway. From the Outdoor Leader pamphlet:

The Outdoor Leader will be expected to demonstrate knowledge and competence in the areas of:

- Environmental care
- Clothing and equipment
- Outdoor skills*
- Leadership
- Instructional techniques
- Risk and crisis management

**Moving with a group, navigation, weather, campcraft, water safety, trip planning*

Instructors work their way through a graduated training scheme, beginning as an Outdoor Member, under the guidance of Branch trainers and assessors. Requirements include: current Outdoor First Aid certificate, attendance on Risk Management and River Safety courses, and personal outdoor experience. Subsequent successful assessment gives them the qualification of Outdoor Leader.

Appointment as a *full instructor* in any of the disciplines (Bush, Alpine, and Abseil) is based on further training, experience, and assessment against National criteria.

SAR members wishing to develop their outdoor skills through the Mountain Safety Council training programme should contact their nearest MSC Branch and become a member. Contact details are available through the MSC website, www.mountainsafety.org.nz.

Laurie Gallagher

Adviser Wellington District

The Wellington Land SAR Group

The Wellington Land SAR group has decided to replace their old and tatty vests which were well past their use-by date. We obtained funding from the Lion Foundation for the vests and looked at the different options that were available to address our requirements.

From looking around we found there were two options that were best for us (i) the specially designed SAR vests that Swazi could provide and (ii) a new specially designed SAR

vest manufactured by Huntech. While both options were really good, we went with the vest designed by Huntech – it allowed us to have “Wellington Land SAR” written over the front of them and also “team leader” or “team member” also written on them. We felt this ability to



personalise the vests and to have this spelt out helps in situations where we may be operating with other SAR groups outside of Wellington. It means we could be more easily identifiable as a Wellington team (we are very loyal here even if the hurricanes lost the

super 14 final...). We also bought vests in two colours – hi viz orange for team leaders and hi viz yellow for team members.

Anyway we thought we had better

pass on to other SAR groups that there are other options available out there for SAR vests. Swazi certainly provide a good vest but there is now at least one other option that is worth considering.

Wayne Stevens – Wellington Land SAR

Live Tracking and New GPS Units

A trial was held recently near Hamilton with 6 teams in the field for a day.

The tracking worked perfectly until the teams went out of range of the repeater.

It has taken a lot longer than expected to construct a reliable system with the mechanics of connecting the cable to the speaker/mics providing the greatest challenge.

The GPS units definitely perform well in the bush with the lock seldom lost when under the canopy. The same applies even in heavy rain.

The new X series GPS devices from Garmin are now available from some suppliers. These have the same chip set and sensitivity as the live tracking GPS devices. In our field trials

recently we spent a whole day in dense bush during some heavy rain showers. A satellite lock must be gained before entering the bush but then we found that the GPS tracked all day without loss of Satellites. This applies to any orientation of the GPS which means it can be clipped to your belt.

The device tested was a Garmin GPS60Cx.

Good value at \$760 (including GST) with a colour screen and the entire NZ 1:50,000 topo map series preloaded. An extra \$65 was required for a bigger memory card to store all the maps although the one supplied would store enough map area for most SAR Groups. Plus one copy of the map set was purchased at \$135.

They were purchased from Tony in Christchurch (kiwigps@paradise.net.nz, 03-342-1302) who was extremely helpful in

setting them up for us. Tony is a parallel importer.
Barry Were

NZLSAR CONFERENCE NZLSAR CONFERENCE

Draw a big red circle around 17 – 19 November 2006 on your calendar. The third Land SAR conference is being held over the weekend of 18-19th, with a day of optional workshops immediately before on Friday 17th.

We are very pleased to announce that we will have three international guests as keynote speakers. Jean Murray, Executive Director of the Canadian National SAR Secretariat, will give us an overview of Canadian Search and Rescue. Don Webster, Police SAR coordinator for Ontario, will bring an international perspective to practical search and rescue issues, and Bob Koester will bring us up-to-date on the latest advances in SAR research.

For full details of all the speakers and topics, check the conference website: <http://sar.otago.ac.nz>

On-line registration will open in the next few days, and since numbers for some the practical workshops will be limited it'll pay to get in early to secure a place.

The conference venue is the University of Otago in Dunedin. A modern lecture theatre complex, set in the scenic university grounds with the city on one side and student riot zone on the other, will make an ideal setting for lively NZLSAR conference.

We will mail out paper registration forms and programmes for those who prefer not to use computers (and who can blame you?)

If you have an idea for a topic, or would like to present a session yourself, please contact Tric Moller (03) 453 0459. See you there !

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

The Television series based on Land Search and Rescue that has been filmed by Starfish Productions is due

to commence screening on TV1 from Monday 26 June at 8 pm.

Part time National Field Officer and Editor

They say once your in SAR you never really get out even if you retire as I did late last year. I have spent most of my adult life involved with Wellington SAR in pretty much every role retiring as an advisor... until the phone rang enquiring if I had any spare time and would I be able to fill in for a few hours a week after John retired to keep the ball rolling until a new appointment was made, so here I am, un retired. Phone messages and e mails may take a few days to get a response but it will happen.

Over the last few weeks in my communications with people it has been a pretty much standard

conversation. "Where's John," "he's retired," "Oh, who are you," "well I'm filling in etc... and so on, so I thought I would introduce myself by way of this newsletter. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have already made my life easier by making bookings online etc and other little administrative things that all help.

THANKS. Phil Whitelaw (part time NFO)