
NZLSAR News

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Millennium preparations

December 1999 is now clearly in sight and Police planning for Y2K and millennium events is "full steam ahead". Our group at National Headquarters (Operations Support) has been tasked with assisting Districts to meet their planning/operations responsibilities. However the ultimate responsibility for planning rests with each District manager. We have broken our efforts into four main areas

1. Y2K Compliance

Ensuring that local equipment, systems and supply will continue after the risk dates.

2. Business Continuity Planning (BCP)

Ensuring that the critical operational services will be supplied under all circumstances.

3. Events Planning

Ensuring that millennium events are policed.

4. Public Safety Contingency Planning

Ensuring that the Emergency Services Coordinating Committee/Emergency Management Group (ESCC/EMG) cover this aspect. The ESCC are District

Committees chaired by Police and include a membership of Fire, Ambulance, Civil Defence, Local Authorities and persons representing individual enterprises with a major disaster potential, such as an oil company with a large petrol farm or a major airport. The task of these District Committees is to meet on a regular basis to ensure discussion and coordination between the emergency services.

Search and rescue is one of the critical operation services that must be maintained under item two above and also impacts on four. Police Districts have been given responsibility for preparing their BCP's and SAR requirements should have been discussed. I ask that Advisers become proactive in discussing this aspect with their local Police SAR contact. I also urge you all to consider the compliance aspect of any equipment you use for SAR purposes. **If all telephone and radio communications collapse the most important tool for contact is then a "walk-in" contact point. Full, up-to-date contact lists including street addresses over the risk periods are absolutely vital for informing and**

collecting personnel. There should also be some indication of priority in contact.

Should you have any queries please feel free to channel them to me, through John.

Inspector Paul Brennan

Manager : Emergency Management

Just West of the Dunsandal Dog Dosing Strip

As members of the Canterbury Regional Council Civil Defence Search Dog Team based in Christchurch we were very interested to read John Tristram's account of the recent dog training weekend he attended in Dunedin. His suggestion of joint training between search dog units and Land SAR teams inspired us to write about our recent experiences in Canterbury.

For a second consecutive year our team was recently invited to attend the annual Methven SAR exercise.

Following a particularly nasty southerly which had the residents of Methven looking expectantly at Mt Hutt ski field, on Friday 7 May 1999 we met the Methven and Rakaia SAR groups at the Methven Headquarters. Our team included Mij, a six year old Labrador, who was first assessed by the Police over two years ago, her handler Linda Pike; Jas, a two year old Labrador, who has been in training for approximately one year, and her handler Emma Pearce. Another trainee dog, Sara a flat coat retriever and her handler Matt Dodd were unavailable. All our dogs are air scenters, i.e. they are looking for human scent in the air rather than following a trail. This technique has the advantages of not requiring a scent item or a confirmed last site seen. It is also an ideal technique for disaster work, another area of training for us.

The scenario for the weekend revolved around a missing Cessna with a pilot and five passengers on board, which was believed to have gone down in the Mt Somers area. Co-ordinates from an intermittent ELB were able to narrow the search to an area on the south side of Mt Somers. The search headquarters was Mt Somers Station.

It was decided by the search controller, in consultation with us, to split the two dogs therefore maximising the area they could cover. As a Standard Operating Procedure each dog - handler pair is accompanied by a back-up person who has basic SAR skills and an understanding of search dog operation. The dog handlers are then able to concentrate on their dogs. For this weekend Linda and Emma were joined by Janelle Mackie and Marg Atkinson, both of whom are members of the larger Rescue Team the dogs are part of. A senior member of the Methven team led each of the dog search teams, making two teams of three plus a dog.

All teams were tasked later that night with instructions to be ready to go at first light the following morning. The general plan was for each team to come into the search area from a different angle until any clues were found. You might think the 0700 briefing time would have had everyone rushing for their sleeping bags but that just wouldn't be social (who did ring the cook's bell at 0100?)

At approximately 1000 on the first day one of the foot teams on the tops surprised everyone, particularly the missing parties, by spotting a campsite in a clearing quite a distance from their own location. They were able to "guide" another team (one of the dog groups) to this location using VHF radios, where an abandoned camp site was found. Further searching using Jas located all the missing parties except the pilot. Training in mass casualty first aid then came into play with Emma, Marg and Richard (Methven team leader) having most injuries sorted out by the time other search teams arrived on the scene. These additional teams then

located the pilot nearby using contact and sound search techniques.

On the other side of the search area the other dog group was emerging from a 5-6 hour bush bash through some pretty tough terrain, great experience for the dog, and the team when resorting to hands and knees gave them a “dog’s view” on the bush!

All teams converged on the patient campsite in time for tea. Special thanks to our team leader, Ian Craig, who was able to give us rugby updates on his cellphone from Jade Stadium and Chris of the Rakaia SAR team who “donated” his breakfast to a hard working dog. This was a lucky score for the dog while conducting unauthorised night time campsite perimeter patrols. A testimony, I guess, to her thoroughness in the line of duty.

Next morning the patients were stretchered out to a 4WD and delivered to Field Search Headquarters. Overall a very successful weekend where again we learnt more about

search techniques and operating procedures, while the search teams saw more of what dogs can do and how they could be used to complement their resources.

This weekend built on our previous joint training sessions including the Pegasus SAR group exercise last year and previous regional SAREX’s (unfortunately we were not able to attend this year).

Many thanks to the Methven SAR group for their ongoing support both in training and when we have had the opportunity to work together on operations.

Emma Pearce

Search Dog Unit Leader

Contact details:

Rescue and Technical Support Team

Canterbury Regional Council Civil Defence

c/ 51 Hudson Street

CHRISTCHURCH

mcpearce@xtra.co.nz

Office News

As part of the Police updating their communications systems, I along with the rest of Police National Headquarters staff am the proud owner of a new ERICSSON MD110 3213 telephone. The good news about this includes the fact that I now have nine or ten different ring signals with variable volume control to choose from. The downside is while the phone number of Headquarters remains unchanged, my direct dial in phone and fax number has altered so please note the changes if you want to contact me via these mediums.

Phone number 04- 470-7247.

Facsimile 04-498-7406

Other good news is I have been supplied with a replacement computer, which I am very slowly getting to grips with. I haven’t had this on my own as for the first week I had the resident computer specialists in every day until the replacement machine was itself replaced. I am finding the “learning curve” very steep and a major blow was to loose my email address book. I was told (after the loss) that this usually happens and the best thing to do is “ring up all your email contacts, ask them for a message and then copy the details off into the new address book”. Great! Anyway for all those who I have had occasion to have an “espeak” with, please feel free to drop me a note and I can rebuild my address book.

John P Tristram
NFO

West Coast SAREX

A short story on our annual SAREX using a totally different approach in training.

0645 hours Saturday morning everyone met at the Greymouth Police Station in extremely heavy rain, the first rain for several weeks which was needed, but not this weekend. At 0715 we headed off to the Taipo Valley, 48 kilometres from Greymouth where the exercise was to take place.

For the morning we planned to have instruction in the open, but with it still raining when we reached the Field HQ at Griffen Creek, a kilometre south of the Taipo, we put Plan B into action and headed around to the Inchbonnie Hall some 10 kilometres away. There we had instruction which included the performance expected from the volunteers during an operation, patient care and the different techniques required for HF and VHF communications. This also covered their respective limitations, the advantages of using a repeater and general radio protocols. For the weekend we used the recently acquired ICOM VHF radios through the new portable repeater back to FHQ, a system which worked really well even in our mountainous terrain. All teams still carried the HF sets as a backup. Navigation with map and compass was discussed as was the need for track and clue awareness. As the morning passed, the rain eased and by 1130 things were looking brighter and by early afternoon the cloud had lifted to about 700 metres.

In introducing the scenarios prepared for the exercise, only the Field Staff knew that we had helicopter support and even that was doubtful in view of the way the weather was behaving. We kept in touch with the aircrew by cellphone and after lunch they called to say they would arrive at 1530. This they did and upon landing gave a full "safety around helicopters" briefing.

It was planned to have the patient scenarios just below the snowgrass level in the bush and the victim scenarios at a hut site. Each site had a patient or victim plus an observer who would set the scene and wait for the team to arrive. Each observer had a checklist so as the team went through the scenario they were debriefed on each section. For example at the hut site, once they had completed the hut search it was debriefed. They would move to the toilet and the same would happen again, then it was to the track and away from the hut, eventually picking up a sign on the track of someone going off the track into the bush not far from the hut.

The patient scenario had a person coming out of the mountains for help who was able to describe the situation of an injured person and give a rough grid reference of where they would be. The team was flown into the site, searched for the injured person, administered first aid, put the patient into a stretcher and carried them back onto the open tops. The helicopter was then called in, the team was picked up and taken to another site while the observer and patient reset the scene in readiness for the next team.

This way all members learnt in the field, they all had a patient or victim to look after at some stage of the weekend. The old way of tramping around the hills on a SAREX is over. They were great but really for the majority of participants they were nothing more than an extra weekend's tramping. Little was learnt.

Being a new type of exercise and with all the different scenarios one can plan this style of training to be set up anywhere with tents or bush huts close to home even for one day training exercises. If a helicopter is available good use of it may be made by carrying out the training in the more distant hills or heavy bush country.

Our members were impressed with the exercise and enjoyed the new more intense method of training. Everyone learnt something instead of just tramping around the hills.

Inchbonnie. This name was derived when a couple of young gold prospectors who were passing through this area saw a beautiful

young woman from a short distance. One said to the other "look at that, every inch is bonnie. This remark was overheard by a prospective landowner in a field nearby who presumably took it as an omen, bought the land and gave it the name he had heard.

Terry Sweetman

Adviser Tasman District

Search Dogs – Questions and Answers

1Q Is a search dog's tracking ability seriously impaired by fumes such as kerosene in helicopters or petrol and diesel in road transport.

1A The dog may be affected during travel the same way people are affected. Long term exposure will obviously pose a health risk and carelessness in transporting a dog could cause carbon-monoxide poisoning resulting in death. Standard methods of transportation has no effect on tracking ability.

2Q Can a Police search dog be deployed in an area that has had a recent 1080 poison drop.

2A While a Police dog is trained to ignore food unless given by the handler, 1080 poses a serious risk as dogs are ten times more susceptible to this poison than possums. The extreme sensitivity of dogs to the poison means that ingestion of small amounts of poison by eating or licking a bait will nearly always be fatal. Dogs may also die from secondary poisoning by eating or licking part of a carcass. While the Police will be reluctant to use the dog in such an area, if the circumstances are of such seriousness and the chances of a find reasonable, the dog/handler unit will be deployed but the management of the dog will be stricter to minimize risk.

3Q Is the best search dog one that follows by ground scenting.

3A Search dogs are trained in either tracking (following ground scent left by a person) or searching (detecting air scent of people) or both. The best dog is the one that best meets the need of the search. Both types of dog can be deployed effectively during a search. Where information or signs suggest a missing person has moved through a particular area, the tracking dog can be deployed to track. If there is no track then the search team will deploy in a planned direction. Tracking dogs can continue to deploy looking for a track. Searching dogs will be deployed while a search team is moving or clearing a specific area searching for air scent. Once a dog detects scent, whether ground or air, the dog will follow the scent to the source (either the missing person or property dropped by the missing person)

4Q Depending on the breed, nature and training, all dogs in following a trail are either an air or ground scenting animal.

4A All dogs have a natural instinct and capability to track and search. Their potential to become a search dog is influenced, amongst other things, by their nature, drive and trainability. The role that the dog is going to be deployed in and training needs will determine whether the dog is trained to track, search or both.

5Q Will a dog coming across a trail have any difficulty in knowing which way the person came from and which way they have gone.

5A Dogs have an inherent instinct to follow the track in the correct direction. 75% of the mental qualities and drives in our domestic dogs come from its wild forebears. Instincts to feed including hunting and tracking instincts are what we harness in search dogs.

6Q Is a dog only good for a few hours of search

6A A well trained and fit dog should be expected to deploy throughout the day with the search team. The type of activity will determine how quickly a dog become fatigued and how often it need a rest. The dogs natural inclination is to trot long

distances and to run at maximum speed in short burst. The type of activity (tracking, searching) and the terrain that the dog is moving in (flat, hilly, rocky) will affect search times and required rest periods. When deployed to search, dogs can work for forty to fifty minutes in the hour for extended periods. Like humans the dog is most effective when fresh and therefore insertion into the search should be by the least tiring method to maximise the deployment potential. .

Brendon Gibson
O/C Dog Training Section
RNZPC

Annual General Meeting and the Annual Report

The NZLSAR fifth AGM will be held in the upstairs conference room at the Kilbirnie Police Station on Saturday 21 August starting at 1100 hours. It will be preceded by a meeting of the Committee which will start at 0830 and continue afterwards. People are welcome to attend but I would appreciate an indication if you intend doing so for catering purposes. Neither meeting seems to have anything contentious on their respective agendas.

The Annual Report, Financial and Performance Audit Reports has been printed and circulated. Copies have been sent to all Police SAR Coordinators and O/C SAR's, Regional Committee Secretaries and Chairmen, as well as the NZLSAR Committee and Subcommittee members. A copy can be obtained from this office as I have a limited number left. It can also be viewed on the NZLSAR web site at <http://www.nzlsar.org.nz> Possibly the best news contained in the document is the announcement by the Chairman that the Police have approved the Communications Subcommittee business case for the purchase of further VHF radios, repeaters and base sets. The CSC has yet to firm up its recommendation for the placement of this equipment, but it is hoped to have these purchased and distributed "in time for the Christmas rush".

John P Tristram
NFO

SAR REPEATER OPERATION

GENERAL:

This 5 Watt radio repeater is designed for operation in the VHF ESB band 138 -144 MHz. The duplexer has been optimised for operation on channels ES-57 (Ch1) and ES-58 (Ch2). The power source is a 12V / 17AH SLA battery. The repeater is for remote stand-alone use only and is not approved for use at sites shared by other fixed commercial services.

BATTERY SAVE:

The battery save function of the radios is enabled. The average continuous current drain is 45 mA. Fast battery save mode (96 samples per minute) commences 25 seconds after the last transmission, and after a further 2 minutes goes into slow battery save mode (36 samples per minute).

BATTERY MONITORING:

When the battery discharges to 11.5 Volts, short beeps at 1 second intervals will be heard on the transmissions. When the battery discharges to 10.5 Volts, the battery will permanently disconnect.

BATTERY CHARGING:

Battery charging is carried out using an IE12/02SC 'Smartcharger'. This has a 2 Amp boost cycle followed by a continuous float charge. The battery should be maintained on float charge when not in use.

ALTERNATIVE POWER SUPPLY:

With the use of a fused (3A Delay) accessory lead the repeater can be powered from a 3.0 Amp / 12 Volt dc power supply or external battery. Resetting of the low voltage disconnect circuit is done automatically when the power switch is operated.

OPERATING THE REPEATER:

1. Assemble and erect the aerial and connect to repeater *
2. Turn on the power switch
3. Open the case and select the channel to be used on both radios **
4. Check the repeater operation with a remote station before leaving site

LOCAL OPERATION:

The repeater can be used to communicate directly with other stations. The radio mounting plate has the receiver volume control and the transmitter PTT labelled. Press PTT and speak about 150mm from the front of the transmitter. Turn the receiver volume to minimum when finished.

CAUTIONS:

- *1. Never operate or test the repeater without an aerial or damage to the transmitter could occur.
- **2. Avoid opening the repeater in conditions where moisture or dust could enter the enclosure.

Always set up the radio channel before going on site. Prior to taking the repeater on site it should be set to the required channel, have the aerial connected and tested between two handheld radios. (Note: It is important always to operate the repeater with the supplied aerial connected, or to a 50 Ohm dummy load).

AERIAL DEPLOYMENT

GENERAL:

The aerial kit supplied should be complete with the following items:

1. One yellow PVC carry bag
2. A five section, 5 metre aerial mast consisting of one top section with aerial fitting, 7m of coaxial cable and 'N' conn, one bottom section with ground spike, three intermediate sections
3. One guy ring with three guy rope assemblies attached
4. One RFI end-fed halfwave dipole
5. One rubber mallet
6. Three steel guy rope pegs
7. Four plastic cable clips

QUICK-RIG DEPLOYMENT:

A docking sleeve is provided at one end of the case to attach the top aerial mast section when no great coverage range is required. With the weight of the internal battery it may be possible to use one or two additional lengths of unguyed mast in ideal wind conditions.

RECOMMENDED DEPLOYMENT:

Erect the aerial using all five aerial sections, placing the guy ring between the top and second aerial sections. Evenly space three guy pegs or tie off guys to other suitable anchor points. Wind the coaxial cable around the mast, or if the aerial is to be sited for some time, use the plastic cable clips to hold the cable against the mast.

AERIAL POSITIONING:

The aerial should be sited to give the best oversight of the required coverage area. Where coverage is required mainly in one direction, the aerial should be placed in a position where there is minimum foreground, and a steep fall away to give best results. Where omni-directional coverage is required, a site should be chosen to give, wherever possible, minimum foreground all around.

CAUTION: BEWARE OF ERECTING THE AERIAL NEAR OVERHEAD POWER LINES

Murray Stevenson

Halswell Technical Services

Christchurch

Editors Comments

To **Paul, Emma, Terry, Brendon and Murray** a big thank you for your articles. To those who proof read and check the spelling and grammar, thank you also.

Copy for the **October News** would be appreciated and the close-off date is **Friday 24 September**. 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** Regards **John P Tristram**
National Field Officer