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# NZLSAR News

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### Not all that it seemed

It all began with a phone call at 0207 hours which is very early in the morning. From then it was all on. Meet at the Police Station for a briefing, head to the Rest Home, get more information, put into Teams, grab a SAR vest and the searching begins.

An old man has disappeared from the Home. He was last seen in his room at 1530 and the Police had received notification he was missing at 2300.

Before any of the searchers arrived a police dog was used to carry out an initial search of the area around the Rest Home. Unfortunately no luck in picking up a scent.

On our arrival at the Home we were told that the man had Parkinsons Disease and walked with a walker, which was still in at the Home. It was felt without it he could not travel very far as he would need to hold onto something and rest every few metres. It was explained that in moving around the front of the Home he needed to hold onto a wall or fence and then did so with small shuffling steps. We were also told he used to walk to the nearby shops with his walker to get a Lotto ticket but this had been stopped two months ago because it took him too long. Whenever he did leave the Home he always made sure he told somebody before he left.

Field Controllers Brent Martin and Bruce Sandford having taken TCA and MSO courses felt the best area to search was within the 300 metre radius of the Home. So that is were the Search Teams spread out. Along the roads surrounding the Home and in

properties that bordered it, following the tracks in the Park, and checking the steep banks and drains that were about. Two Teams went to search around the shops where he used to go and which were within the 300 metre radius. One of the searchers had his dog with him, a black Labrador bitch and after obtaining a scent article, was used to scour the area as well.

No clues were found and after meeting back at base (the Rest Home) it was decided to have a couple of hours sleep and meet again at 0800 to continue in the daylight.

Back at the Police Station a few hours later. The Police at this stage had put out word via the local radio stations asking members of the public to come forward if they had any information on the whereabouts of the lost man. A number of calls were received and the Police were following up these leads. Two in particular seemed worth a closer investigation in terms of ground searches. One caller said they had seen a man who fitted the description step over a chain fence and head off into a gully by the Park. The other lead was the sighting of a man stumbling around in a road construction site about 3 kms away. These two sightings were made about the same time, seemed to contradict each other and from what we had been told about the missing man, the second seemed not possible. However both areas needed to be searched and in the case of the area of the first sighting, re-searched.

Back at the Rest Home, fitted with VHF radios and NZLSAR vests, the Teams formed

and went out to search. A helicopter was used to do an aerial search of the construction site. It is amazing that there was not a car accident on nearby roads as people focused on the low flying helicopter instead of their driving.

The searcher with the dog was in the Team searching the edge of the construction site. After noticing the dog getting excited, he followed her away and there sat the man we were looking for. The report from the member of the public, which did not seem possible according to the information given by the Home, was in fact the missing person.

By the way, he was alive – just cold and wet (lucky the night was still and clear) and no the helicopter had not sighted him, but yes – he was outside the 300metre radius of home.

An amazing part of this story is that this man had to cross a three lane main artery into town during rush hour (and we had been told he usually just stepped out into the road regardless of cars).

So. the morals of this search are:-

- Don't believe everything you are told about a person. If the will is strong enough, people can do anything and what we were told, proved not to be true.
- Eliminate the 300 metre radius first.
- Have communications with the helicopter.
- Dogs are of use in searches, especially air scenting dogs.

**Brent Martin**

Adviser Bay Of Plenty District

### Annual General Meeting

On Saturday 19 August NZLSAR had its sixth Annual General Meeting. The Annual Report was presented, a copy of which has been placed on the NZLSAR website or can be obtained upon request to this office. A change was made to the Constitution altering some of the Regional boundaries and creating a new Region for

Gisborne, Wairoa and Napier (Region Three) and one for the top of the South Island (Region Five). As well the organisation's Officers and the Subcommittee Chairmen positions were due for election. The Committee membership and their respective roles are:-

Graham Thorp from Napier. Chairman and Region Three Representative	Phil Rundle from Lower Hutt. Treasurer
Paul Dale from Christchurch. DoC Representative and Secretary	Roscoe Tait from Auckland. Region One Representative and Training Subcommittee Chairman
Charlie Smart from Te Kuiti. Region Two Representative	Stewart Davies from Palmerston North. Region Four Representative
Steve Marshall from Takaka. Region Five Representative	Terry Sweetman from Greymouth. Region Six Representative
Roger Barrowclough from Dunedin. Region Seven Representative	Gerard Prins from Tawa. Police Representative and Chairman Aviation Subcommittee
Steve Davies from Christchurch. Chairman Communications Subcommittee	Peter Cameron from Christchurch. Chairman Specialist Subcommittee
Barry Were from Hamilton. NZSS Representative as Chairman Underground Subcommittee	Laurie Gallagher from Raumati South. FMC Representative

A highlight was the approval and signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between NZLSAR and Police. Signed by the Chairman of NZLSAR Graham Thorp, and the Commissioner of Police, Robert Robinson, and with several other senior Police in attendance, this was the culmination of a lot of work by a number of people.



The document has undergone extensive vetting by Police legal section, District Commanders and NZLSAR representatives throughout the country. It is important because it formalises, for the first time, the responsibilities and relationships between the volunteers and the Police.

The document has been forwarded directly to NZLSAR Regional and District Committees, and all Advisers, as these are the key people who have accepted the responsibility for managing the volunteer input

for Search and Rescue nation-wide. Regional Secretaries should ensure their District Representatives have received copies and provide a copy to anyone that may have been missed.

NZLSAR and the Police have been working hard to strengthen the partnership between the two organisations and for this reason it is important that the MoU is read carefully and people become familiar with its aims and objectives. Sections 3 to 5, in particular, are critical to the partnership and an effective SAR organisation. A key feature of the MoU is the way it spreads responsibilities to all levels of the organisation.

their needs and requirements in respect to the maintenance of an operational SAR organisation in their area. Representatives in each area should be meeting with their respective Police SAR Co-ordinators during the annual budget round and working through the needs of the District for the coming year. This will no doubt require a period of negotiation and it will be necessary to use tools like the Adviser Standards to identify and justify items such as the level of training and support needed to maintain the organisation.

An emphasis has been placed on the Regional and District committees to identify

Similar negotiations will be undertaken at Regional and National level and it is expected that once these processes are up and working we should eliminate many of the problems that have been experienced at District level. It is acknowledged that there will be a learning curve to develop an understanding of the MoU and it will take a little time for Advisers and Committee members to come up to speed with its content. Many of the systems that are required under the MoU are not new and should already be undertaken in your area. Hence, it is not necessarily a case of introducing new functions, but a matter of formalising what is already occurring. If on the other hand planning meetings are not being held in your area then

the MoU will form a base document that will provide a guide to establishing the procedures to set in place an effective local organisation

**Graham Thorp**  
Chairman NZLSAR



**Naseby Emergency Evacuation Plan**

*I gleaned the following article while recently attending the Region Five Otago/Southland Regional Committee meeting. For years it has been realised that for a major emergency such as a big earthquake in Wellington, SAR personnel with their ability to live outdoors, first aid/rescue skills and group organisation would be a useful component of the Civil Defence response. In view of the horrendous fires in the Western States of North America the "pre planning" below shows timely good sense as well as highlighting a useful contribution by the skilled SAR volunteers.*

### **Background**

Naseby township encompasses 250 residential and commercial buildings. It has a year round population of about 100 and swells to over 2500 during the summer months. With dry Central Otago air, weeks without rain, 30 plus degree temperatures, the exotic pines of Naseby Forest which surround the township pose a real threat.

Over the summer months, there is a very high fire risk in the Naseby area. It was therefore decided, after consultation with NZ Fire, Police, Central Otago District Council, Earnslaw Forest (Forest managers) that a formalised Emergency Evacuation Plan should be developed to deal with any major fire within the Naseby area.

### **Problems Arising**

Naseby is situated one and a half hours drive from Dunedin and one hours drive from Alexandra. The combined resources of Ranfurly and Naseby Fire Brigades are two x pumps, two water tankers and one crash tender. Ranfurly has a Sole Charge Police Officer. In the event of a major fire, it would be some time to get further resources to assist local emergency services.

After consultation with Maniototo SAR members, it was decided that the best method to obtain a disciplined body of manpower to assist in the initial stages of the Evacuation Plan at short notice, was to utilise SAR members.

### **Procedure**

It is to be determined by the Senior Fire Officer attending as to whether an Evacuation is necessary. If it is deemed appropriate to evacuate the township, the management of the evacuation is coordinated by the Evacuation Officer. In the initial stages this will be a representative of the Fire Service. As the evacuation progresses, this role will be transferred to a Police Officer or a Civil Defence Controller should a civil defence emergency be declared.

Evacuation Wardens have been written into the plan to assist in the physical checking of each address. These persons will be made up of members of the Maniototo SAR and will be under the control of the senior Police officer in attendance (the Evacuation Officer).

### **Foot Note**

Any call-out of SAR members to assist in this Plan has to come from Police. The management and welfare of SAR members involved in the plan is the responsibility of the most senior Police officer in attendance. To date the plan has not been used in a "live" run (thankfully) but it is good to know that in the event of an emergency, there is an excellent plan to deal with the evacuation.

I believe that by utilising SAR members for this particular plan, although it may fall slightly outside their "core business" it is the best method for our community to deal with the issue of a lack of manpower in a short time frame

**Lane Todd**

Sole Constable, Ranfurly

## **SAR Library**

**M**ore information on the library.

- It will be managed by Gerard Prins and myself. To borrow an item, please contact either of us.
- If an article is borrowed, Police/NZLSAR will pay for it to be mailed out. We will include an envelope with the article for its return. This may be done by giving the envelope to your Police SAR Officer who can return it via the internal Police mail system.

- The issue period is four weeks.
- People who fail to return an article will be charged the replacement fee.
- If the system does not work then it may fold.

Finally please let us know of worthwhile books that we can purchase. The library as an information source needs to grow and develop. An updated list is at the back of the News.

**John P Tristram**  
NFO

## Bibs and bobs

**Advisers ID Cards.** As mentioned previously NZLSAR has ID cards for its Advisers. To get one the following is required:-

- The person be an Adviser and have attended an Advisers Standard Workshop.
- Complete the Advisers Application Form obtainable from the website or this office.
- With two passport type photos attached, send the form to **PO Box 1208,1 Wellington.**

Don't forget the Field Guides, Work Books and SAR member ID cards, certificates of attendance and service and if you are putting on a public display, the display boards with photos of SAR activities. All are available upon request from the office

**NZLSAR Award.** A form has been introduced to assist and guide those nominating a person for this Award.. This will also give greater clarity and understanding to the Committee when considering the contribution of those being nominated. As for Adviser ID cards, the form can be had either from the website or this office.

**SAR Dog Course.** In what has become an annual event a bush/wilderness SAR training

course for dogs and handlers will be held in Dunedin on **November 22-26.** This is supported by NZLSAR funding and will be free to participants except for travel costs. It will be run at the Scout camp outside Dunedin, and places will be limited to no more than 20 handlers and dogs. Initial enquires should be made to **Marcus Milne,** (ph) 03-479-8120, (ph) 03-482-1558 or by email either to MarkusM@sar-dog.org.nz or to their group training officer at training.officer@sar-dog.org.nz

**Communication equipment.** The Police Executive (PEC) have approved the expenditure of \$65,800 to complete the VHF equipment renewal. This is great news in view of how well received the previously purchased radios, repeaters and base sets have been. The Communications Subcommittee are to be complimented on the business case they presented to Police. The exact make up of the purchase and the siting has yet to be finalised, but it is hoped to have made some good progress by Christmas.

**John P Tristram**  
NFO

## A Doghandlers view of the Search at Poolburn 1999

“A local man in his fifties went up to Poolburn dam three days ago to do some lake fishing. He was due back at his digs two nights ago. Yesterday, the local Police, several local search and rescue volunteers, and several others who have fishing huts at the lake spent the day looking for him. Grave fears are held for his life since it snowed lightly the other night, and the temperatures have been below freezing the last couple of nights. He knows the area well

and frequently goes fishing at the lake. His car is still in the carpark, locked, where he left it.”

Brian the SAR Sergeant continues “He'll be carrying a small backpack, a fishing rod and a small white bait bucket. He'll be in a woollen shirt and wearing gumboots”. A photo is circulated which, unusually, matches the description perfectly. “These are the search areas” Brian says as maps are circulated,

“but you’ll get a better feel for them when we get up to the lake”.

Arriving at the lake we’re in fog, and I realise getting a better idea of the search areas is going to be more than a little difficult. The fog, however, is expected to lift once the sun gets up. As we get out of the Rover the biting cold comes as a bit of shock with more than a few mumbles about rather being somewhere else as we get geared up. The Field Controller gives a final few comments about being extra diligent in checking out the rock tors and not necessarily expecting a vocal response to sound sweeps. About six field teams are deployed, three of them with air scent dogs from Dunedin and Roxburgh.

Rene, a local Police SAR team member from my District is assigned to my team. It’ll be just the two of us. Our first assigned area is roughly 800m square being bounded on one of the sides by the lakeside, and the other parallel side by a wire fence and track through the tussock grass. Another of the sides is bounded by the road we used to enter the lake area. Checking the wind, which is running parallel to the lake and track and towards us standing on the entry road, I tell Rene we’ll start from the corner of the road and the track, which necessitates a 500m walk back down the road. I explain to him that to use the wind efficiently for the dog we’ll have to make sweeps between the track and the lakeside (about 800m) across the face of the wind. We’ll move up into the wind about 150-200m each time we complete a leg. The dog will range back and forth from us as we move through the area.

As we begin our first sweep, the fog is beginning to break up and the sky lightens a little. The air movement however still reveals a cold wind. I’m careful to ensure the dog moves on the downwind side of each rock tor as we move towards the lakeside. I explain to Rene that I’m not sure how, or even if my dog will indicate on a dead person and so we should spend a little time checking out each rock tor as we move towards the lake. To start with, the tors loom up on us out of the gloom, as does the dog as it disappears into and reappears out of the fog, but it’s definitely improving all the time.

It takes about 20 minutes to move the 800m to the lakeside, where upon we check out the mud for tracks as we move along it for 150m

before turning to head back towards the track on our next sweep. The only difficulty with this search pattern was ensuring we didn’t miss any of the rock tors as we moved from one sweep to the next. We made the fence and the track about another 20 minutes later and then repeated the move along the fence before turning back towards the lake. Just before the lake we decided to take a break out of the wind behind a tor. The dog had been running largely continuously since we began almost an hour ago and she looked fine. The cold wind and lack of direct sun was obviously keeping her cool. As we snacked on some chocolate and hot coffee I gave the dog a few dog biscuits, a bit of the chocolate, and some water although she had been finding water in puddles anyway.

Ten minutes later we were cooling down, so it was off again, the same pattern repeated between the lake and the track. Although the dog would occasionally lift its nose and head and move up wind about 100m or so she never really moved off like I had seen her do before in training when she had caught scent in the air. In conditions like these, which were fairly open with short tussock grassland apart from the rock tors I would have expected her to go 400m plus if she had caught scent. This never happened, so even though I was worried she might not indicate on a body, I was fairly confident I hadn’t seen her take off after scent yet, an indication in itself.

Just before we reached the fence line for the third time, about two and a half hours after starting out that morning, the dog lifted her head at the base of a large tor as if she had caught scent of something. The scent alert was subtle, but I had seen similar behaviour before when doing building searches, and wanted to check it out. I told Rene I’d have a look up on the tor, and looked for somewhere to be able to scramble on to it with the dog.

As I scrambled on to the top I could see down on Rene who had moved off behind it. Looking further out I looked towards the fence line, and there, to my astonishment, in full stride with fishing rod and bait bucket in hand was our lost subject heading down the fence line towards the road. I yelled to Rene, and pointed to the old man.

Once down I quickly made for Rene who was now with the old guy. While we briefly explained we were with search and rescue and looking for him, we all moved into the shelter of

one of the tors. Out of the wind, we quickly ascertained that he wasn't injured and wasn't too cold, although he was pretty hungry having not eaten for two days. I wrapped him in a parka, while we unpacked some hot soup. Rene radioed base with the good news. They'd send a truck out up the track to pick us up.

Between slurps of soup, he told us what had happened. Three days ago he'd been fishing at the other end of the lake when the fog came down. Thinking he was heading back to his car he headed off in the opposite direction and became lost. The fog didn't lift the next day and he wandered around some more. One night it had snowed lightly and he had found some shelter under a rock. He told us he'd cuddled up for the night with an old sheep carcass. The warmth of the wool may well have saved him, although it was clear he was quite resilient. When we ran into him he was on his way back to the road and car. He knew the fence line would take him to the road, and somehow had managed to stumble upon it. It turned out he still had a fair sized trout in his backpack,

which, while tempted, he had chosen not to eat raw.

Whether Kinsey had caught his scent by the rock tor as we approached the fence line I shall never know, but I do know given the wind direction, most of his scent would have been going right down the fence line on the boundary of our area. In the two and one half hours of that morning we had only been on that upper boundary three times, at about 40 minute intervals, and each time for less than 5 minutes. That we had been lucky, and that he could have walked right back to his car without our noticing did not escape us. When we got back to field base we also realised base had moved from his car to one of the fishing huts to get better communications with several of the other field teams. It turns out he could have happily driven home without anyone immediately realising!

This search took place June 1999 when Kinsey my dog was 3½ years old.

**Markus J. Milne**  
Dunedin District SAR

## NZLSAR/POLICE LIBRARY

ABC of Avalanche Safety	LaCHAPELLE Edward
Advanced Search and Rescue	NASAR
Alpine Rescue Techniques	BOOGIE Don
Avalanche handbook	McCLUNG David
Avalanche safety for skiers and climbers	DAFFERN Tony
Commission if Inquiry into Cave Creek	Department Internal Affairs
First Aid Manual: Emergency procedures	Red Cross
Fundamentals of Mantracking	TAYLOR AB
Fundamentals of Mantracking	TAYLOR AB
Grid Search Techniques	SYROTUCK William
Grid Search Techniques	SYROTUCK William
Info Video on changes to Mapping	LINZ
Intro to Land SAR Probabilities	SYROTUCK William
It was just a tramp in the bush	Mountain Safety Council (VIDEO)
Land Search Operations - Handbook	Emergency Management Australia
Land Search Operations - Handbook	Emergency Management Australia
Lost Person Behaviour	SYROTUCK William
Lost Person Behaviour	SYROTUCK William
Managing The Lost Person Incident	NASAR
National SAR Manual	Australia
NZLSAR Field Guide	CURL Roger
NZ Guidelines for Avalanche Observations	Mountain Safety Council
NZ Guidelines for Avalanche Observations	Mountain Safety Council
Orienteering, a way of learning navigation	Mountain Safety Council

Outdoor First Aid	Mountain Safety Council
Probability of Detection (POD)	PERKINS Dave
Risk Management in Outdoor Activities	Mountain Safety Council
River Rescue - Manual for whitewater safety	BECHEL Les
Scent and the scenting dog	SYROTUCK William
Search is An Emergency - a Text	STOFFELL Skip
Search is an Emergency - Handbook	STOFFELL Skip
Search is an Emergency - Handbook	STOFFELL Skip
Search Management Training Kit (2 sets)	Spectra Communications
Snow Sense, evaluating avalanche hazard	FREDSTON Jill
Sound Sweep	COLWELL Martin
Standards for SAR Tech & Crew Leader	NASAR
Stress, managing after traumatic incidents	TUNNECLIFFE Micheal
Swiftwater Rescue Field Guide	RAY Slim
Tracking, a blueprint for learning how	KEARNEY Jack
Water Rescue, Basic Skills for responders	SMITH David
Wilderness Search and Rescue	SETNICKA Tim

**Editors Comments** A big thank you to **Brent, Graham, Lane and Marcus** for your articles. To those who proof read and check the spelling and grammar, thank you also. Copy for the **December News** is most welcome and the close-off date is **Monday 27 November 2000**. 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