
NZLSAR News

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A welcome to the new National Police SAR Coordinator

NZLSAR is very pleased to welcome and congratulate Senior Sergeant Gerard Prins to the position of National SAR Coordinator at Police Headquarters in Wellington. This is a key position with nationwide responsibilities for SAR and NRCC. Gerry has a strong background in training and all aspects of operational and non-operational search and rescue work. His experience will be an invaluable asset to both the Police and NZLSAR and we look forward to a long, warm and fruitful association with Gerry in the new millennium.

NZLSAR appreciated the opportunity to be included in the selection process for the National SAR Co-ordinator. As a member of the three-person selection panel, I undertook

a review of the resumes of the applicants and participated in the panel discussion in Wellington. I was impressed by the standard of the applicants and found the experience gave me a much deeper understanding of the skills required by members of the Police outside the normal sphere of SAR. It is clear that we are well served by the people who have the responsibility for coordinating SAR in New Zealand and the outlook for continued progress is very good.

Gerry, again congratulations and welcome.

Graham Thorp
Chairman NZLSAR

Gerard Prins - National Police SAR Coordinator

John Tristram asked me to pen a few words about myself and my work background.

On the domestic front I am married with children, three of them in fact, 2 teenage daughters and an 11-year-old son. We live in Tawa and yes, my wife is called Lynne. Lynne is a nurse and works at Wellington outpatients. In 1992 I became involved with the local volunteer fire brigade. Working as a volunteer fire fighter gave me a valuable insight into the relationships that volunteers have with professional bodies.

I have been in the Police now for 23 years, after graduating as a cadet in 1976. In the early 1980s I worked with Ross Gordon in the

Wellington Inquiry office before he moved into Youth Aid and then SAR. I was promoted to Sergeant in 1986 and worked as a trainer in Wellington before spending two years in Hastings. In 1991 I transferred back to Porirua as the Administration Sergeant for the District. One of the portfolios I held was that of SAR Coordinator for the District. This position required that I monitor SAR, attend SAREX's as the District representative and liaise with the Region SAR Coordinator, a younger Rod Herd.

I was interested in getting more involved in SAR and in 1992 I applied to join the Wellington Police SAR squad. For some reason Rod appointed me, and gleefully gave

me a pager to carry. Little did Lynne or I know that a pager was to become a part of my life for the next seven years. After attending a couple of SAR training days and meeting some of the volunteers, I was paged in February 1993 and ended up coordinating the search for Renee Fisher who was found the next day. The Adviser was Jack McConchie and the Field Controller was Ian Bunckenburg.

Finding Renee alive was a real buzz, and when Rod decided to go to Police Headquarters I was offered the position of Regional SAR Coordinator, which I held from March 1993 to October 1995. There were a number of highlights for me during that time, but what always amazed me was the rapid turn out of volunteers at any time of the day or night.

From October 1995 to the present I have been working as a research officer at the Police College. I have also remained a member of the Wellington Police SAR squad, and assisted where I could at exercises and searches. As a research officer I specialized in training design and policy matters. One project I completed was a review of Police SAR training. As a result a new course for

Police SAR Coordinators was developed, based on international best practice principles.

When John Meads retired I expressed my interest in the position and was pleasantly surprised to be appointed.

Search and Rescue is, in my opinion, the most valuable relationship that the Police currently have with any of the volunteer groups. This has been demonstrated by the many skilled volunteers who give their time to attend searches and training. In my role as National SAR Coordinator I would like to see the relationship with NZLSAR strengthened and built on. I aim to ensure that when a search is mounted anywhere in the country it will proceed smoothly. To achieve this, a focus will be working with NZLSAR and Police SAR Coordinators to make sure the necessary policies and procedures are in place and up to date.

I look forward to meeting and working with the members of NZLSAR.

Gerry Prins

Senior Sergeant, National SAR Coordinator

Situations Vacant, Vacant Situations, Situations Vacant, Vacant Situations

Wanted

- Persons to chair the NZLSAR Communications and Specialist Subcommittees.

Personal Requirements

- The ability to manage their respective Subcommittees and work together as a team
- To have a good working relationship with other members of the NZLSAR Committee team

Minimum Skills

- Have had SAR experience, over the last five years, at a level of Adviser or Field Controller
- Ability to draw up agendas, chair meetings and manage projects to completion.
- As Specialist Subcommittee Chairman you must have had a close association with an ACR Team

Highly Desirable

- Have a vision as to what each of the Subcommittees can contribute to the betterment of SAR

If you are interested in either of these two positions please contact either myself or the NFO for further details.

Graham Thorp

Chairman NZLSAR

Some Highlights from the last National Meeting and 5th Annual General Meeting

The last National Meeting and 5th Annual General Meeting of NZLSAR was held on 21 August 1999. Covered were a range of very important issues that will impact on the direction of NZLSAR over the next few years and will be critical to the proper functioning of the organisation at all levels. The purpose of this report is to highlight some of these issues to the membership so they can be discussed at District and Regional level prior to the next National Meeting. This meeting will be held over a full weekend and will include attendance by all Regional Chairmen and Secretaries. It will be a chance for the membership at all levels to have their say and assist in formulating the structure and direction of NZLSAR and SAR in general into the new millennium.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The key subject on the agenda is the progress of the review panel who are looking at the structure of NZLSAR and its relationship with the Police. Several meetings have now been held including two with our Police representatives and very good progress is being made. The recommendations from the panel centered on an undertaking to set up a fully detailed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NZLSAR and the Police. The MoU will be an important document that will cover the relationships and responsibilities at all levels between NZLSAR personnel and the Police. It will identify the levels of response from both parties, the training requirements and levels of funding required to achieve the agreed skills and training needs.

The MoU itself is a very complex document and its preparation could take up to 12 months to establish and mould into a document that meets the needs of both parties. A base document has been provided by the Police and this is currently being modified by all National Committee members to align it to the requirements of a SAR organisation working alongside the Police. The initial aim is to develop a working draft that can be discussed in detail at the combined National meeting in November.

Regional Representatives will have copies of the base documents and will be able to advise Regions and Districts of the issues

relating to the development of the MoU. If you want to participate in the development process get hold of your District and/or Regional Representatives and pass any suggestions and recommendations through the normal channels. Alternatively, you can pass information directly to the National Committee through the National Field Officer, John Tristram, in Wellington.

Workload. Workloads on many of our people undertaking non-operational work continues to rise and as with many organisations the bulk of the work tends to be undertaken by a few dedicated people. Needless to say this is a very undesirable situation as the organisation can become inward looking and if health or other problems take key people out of circulation for even a short period, things can start to come unstuck. Then our ability to keep things rolling becomes more and more difficult.

The National Committee will be looking at ways of spreading this workload around and where possible arranging for people around the country to actively participate in development programmes. The main problem is the identification of the people who are interested in this work and the areas they are most suited to. Programmes are being identified all the time so if you have an interest in undertaking some of this work, please make contact with the NFO and we will try and fit you into a programme that will be in keeping with your interests.

Vacancies. After a review of the demands upon his time by a young family, work, and his numerous volunteer activities, Don Bogie decided a "bit of rationalisation" was required and has stepped down as Chairman of the Specialist Subcommittee. With myself acting as Chairman of the Communications Subcommittee (CSC) and keen to devote more time to being the NZLSAR Committee Chairman, this leaves two vacancies on the national Committee. These are key positions in the organisation and while there are minimum standards of experience that must be met, it is clear there are plenty of people in SAR who could successfully fill these positions. We need people to provide a positive contribution to the management and development of SAR in New Zealand. If you

have the skills and would like to work in SAR management, forward an expression of interest to the NFO and we will get in contact with you to see where we can best fit you into the organisation. Alternatively, make a formal application to the advertised vacancies shown elsewhere in the newsletter.

Affiliation. Affiliation is a subject that appears to be interesting a few people in some parts of the country. There are advantages and disadvantages to all types of membership of a National Organisation and these are explored in an article elsewhere in this newsletter.

The 'Way Ahead'. The NFO has prepared a paper entitled "The Way Ahead" and Roscoe Tait has spent some time updating our Mission statement. These documents along with the notes from the NZLSAR Review Panel meetings have been incorporated into a planning file that the Review Panel is using

to establish our direction for the next five years. They will also provide useful background material which will support our approach to the development of the MoU.

The National Committee again discussed funding and the way it is being managed at the last National meeting and as a result of this discussion I have been checking our progress over our first five years. It is interesting to note that over the last three years the National Committee in conjunction with the standing Sub Committees, has been successful in generating funding for the development of SAR throughout the country in the order of \$609,750. Since the inception of NZLSAR the figure exceeds \$800,000 which is an outstanding result when you consider the financial climate we are operating in at this time.

Graham Thorp
Chairman NZLSAR

NZLSAR supports Search Dog and Handler Training Course

The NZLSAR budget for the 99/00 financial year has made provision to assist the holding of a course for handlers and search dogs, similar to that which I attended and reported on in the April 1999 News. Below is some information from **Course Organiser, Marcus Milne**, on the event.
JPT

This project is a three and one half days residential training course for volunteer search dog handlers from Dunedin and the rest of the South Island. The course is being organised by myself, Andrew Pealing, Training Officer of the Dunedin Group of New Zealand Alpine Search Dogs and several others from the Dunedin Group. It will be based at **Waiora Scout Camp, Whare Flat (Dunedin) from 8-12 December 1999**. This is the third such course held. The two previous courses, partly funded by the Hillary Commission, were extremely successful and we would like to continue to build on that success.

We expect 18 to 20 dog handlers will spend three and a half days in search dog training using a variety of exercises and simulated bush/wilderness search problems. In particular, a major objective of this course is for the more experienced search dog handlers to pass on training and advice to those dog handlers with less experience or just starting out. All instructors will be giving their time as volunteers.

In addition to search dog training and assessment, the course will also involve the course participants receiving instruction in Track and Clue Awareness, the Operational Context of Search and Rescue, Essential First Aid for Dogs, Navigation and Skills for Self Sufficiency in the Bush Environment. Again, the instructors and guest lecturers for these course elements shall be providing their time as volunteers.

Aside from the direct training benefits this course will provide to the participants, it will also provide an invaluable opportunity for operational search dog handlers and trainees from different groups to familiarise themselves with each other. In the event of a major problem (e.g. an Abbotsford disaster) such familiarity is essential to enhancing the operational capability of our resource to the people of New Zealand. Two operations outside our District this year have seen dogs from Dunedin travel to another area. In one case we travelled through the night to be involved in a search north of Christchurch.

Without previous cross-training and familiarity with the local resources, provided on courses like this, this would not have occurred.

Places on this course are limited, and those wishing to attend need to contact me before November 5. Given we anticipate this course will be fully funded, first time intending participants from outside Dunedin will also

need the written support of their District SAR committee. **For further information, please phone 03-479-8120 (wk), 03-482-1558 (hm), fax: 03-479-8450, or email: mmilne@commerce.otago.ac.nz**

Marcus Milne
Southern District

NZLSAR Awards

The NZLSAR Committee at its August meeting had much pleasure approving a NZLSAR Award to Ernie Hagger, Mel Knauf, Don Morrison, John Cassidy, Don Bogie and Ray Anstis. The years of volunteer contribution if totalled up for these six people would beggar belief. We are the richer for their efforts and applaud their contribution to those in need of assistance in the outdoors. May they relax for a while and with their peers, celebrate well and not necessarily wisely at appropriate presentation ceremonies.

John P Tristram, National Field Officer

NZLSAR Committee members Regional Committee Chairmen and Secretaries meeting

As announced previously the meeting of the NZLSAR Committee members is to be held on Saturday 13 November and to continue on Sunday to discuss aspects of national SAR management. Important items have surfaced and I would like to touch on a couple.

Regional Boundaries. The selection of volunteer representation on NZLSAR was begun by defining six geographical areas coinciding with the then existing six Police Regional Boundaries. The only criteria placed upon the Representatives selection was that they had in the preceding five years, a high level of SAR involvement at either Adviser or Field Controller level. The boundaries and personnel requirements was done with the following thoughts in mind:-

- The responses to the questionnaire sent out in 1993 indicated a desire that there be a national body for land search and rescue. This wish became NZLSAR.
- For the views and participation in the management by the "grass roots", national SAR, NZLSAR must operate under some form of "regional representation" of the volunteers.
- To be truly representative, the Regional Representative must take instruction from and report to some democratically

selected body. These are the Regional Committees.

- There had to be a fair and democratic selection method for Regions to select their Representatives.
- The Regional Representative must have current in depth experience in SAR at a high level.
- Regional Committees would have within them a number of Police Districts which may alleviate any inter District frictions within that Region.
- It was realised that there is no ideal carve up of the country to give completely acceptable geographically areas. There will always be some points that grate and allowance should be made for special local adaptation.
- There must be a limit to the number of Representatives, otherwise the Committee would become too large, unwieldy and expensive to service.
- That NZLSAR would give a title, name or number to each of its Regions and not necessarily be bound by the Police nomenclature.

This was done, six Regional Committees were formed and went about their business. After nearly five years it is interesting to see how this process has evolved especially with the multiple changes the Police have made to their organisational structure. Region Five

Otago/Southland and Region Five Canterbury/West Coast have each found that meeting from time to time has solved a number of problems and has provided a platform to work on away from the meetings. In the North Island, Region Two and Three have also pulled people out from “behind the village wall” and obliged participants to view SAR as a larger picture than they may have previously done. Even Region One Auckland/Northland with less than ten Advisers communicates better within itself.

The one Region that clearly did not come together was Region Four. There was a lack of commonality of search boundaries and the meeting impediment imposed by Cook Strait meant that the Wellington and Nelson/Marlborough SAR participants, while committed to their respective SAR organisations, saw little benefit with a Regional Committee. This is to be overcome by a resolution passed at the August Committee meeting to create a seventh Region, comprising Kaikoura, Blenheim, Murchison and north to include Nelson Motueka and Takaka. With these towns already developing a Committee to oversee and integrate their activities and with the adoption of the Regional Rules and the selection of a Regional Representative, they are well on the way to being a NZLSAR Regional Committee. Help has been offered to them to work through the issues.

At the risk of sounding unkind, this leaves Wellington somewhat orphan-like relative to the rest of the Regional Committees. This then raises the question whether to put Wellington up into Region Three or in view of the changes in Police boundaries, should the whole of the North Island NZLSAR geographical representative areas be reassessed. I include maps and invite anybody with a view to get it to a someone who is attending the November meeting.

Affiliation. Another area that raises questions is affiliation or membership of NZLSAR by the SAR Organisations around the country. When first raised 18 months ago, the Training Subcommittee researched how such groups as Mountain Safety Council, Federated Mountain Clubs, Deerstalkers and the Red Cross were structured. While enlightening, this did not produce any clear model for NZLSAR.

Reading the Constitution and the “Objects” also offers little guidance. It mentions the provision of an effective and efficient SAR capability throughout the country (3a) It also mentions the need to “establish appropriate systems for representation and liaisons with other SAR related bodies” (3b xiii). Can it be said that this is achieved by the Local Committee to the District to Regional to National and all under the umbrella of the Police as the government department responsible for SAR?

National SAR Register. Finally NZLSAR has been taken to task for “not having a national register of SAR personnel” and as was also said, “we are not sure how many members we have at this stage”. NZLSAR does have good information for contacting its key people. A directory is circulated of the NZLSAR “owners”, its Committee and Subcommittee members. It also circulates a Land and Underground Advisers, Air and Communications List and has details of those who have attended an Advisers, Field Controllers or ACR Standards Workshops. For all the Workshops attendees, it should be noted that it only knows those who attended. It doesn’t know if they are fit to do the job as there was no examination or assessment. The individual’s ability to do the job is left to that person peers.

And so how would a national register of SAR personnel work. Do we keep a record of the shepherd working for a couple of years on a farm behind Methven who goes on a couple of SAR training events before taking off to Australia or the university student in Wellington who changes flats every couple of weeks. Is he or she a “member” such that they need to be on a national register?

All this and much more to think about. So if you have any thoughts on any of the above, please contact your Representative or myself with as much time before the meeting as possible. We need your the thoughts, preferably in writing in plenty of time to allow for circulation and consideration by the persons attending.

John P Tristram
National Field Officer

Possible Regional Boundaries

Below and with the maps over the page indicates a number of District combination to arrive at Regions for the selection of Representatives to be members of NZLSAR. Any ideas are welcome.

Region One – Northland, North Shore/Waitakari, Auckland City, Counties/Manakau Districts.

Region Two – Waikato, Bay of Plenty Districts.

Region Three – Eastern District.

Region Four – Central, Wellington District.

Region Five – Tasman District north of a line Kaikoura, Murchison and to the Coast

Region Six – Canterbury, Tasman south of and including Karamea

Region Seven - Southern

Another “mix” which would give us six Regions again would be for Region One to include Waikato, Region Two to be BoP and Eastern which would make Central and Wellington, Region Three.

Another consideration is the perception of a few people that the South Island is being discriminated in numbers on the Committee. Is this concern genuine and if so how do we address it?

Editors Comments

To **Graham and Marcus** a big thank you for your articles. To those who proof read and check the spelling and grammar, thank you also.

Copy for the **November News** would be appreciated and the close-off date is **Friday 26 November**. 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** This is your newsletter so **articles pleeeeeeassse**. Regards **John P Tristram** National Field Officer