
NZLSAR News

Volume 11 Issue 6

December 2005

CONTENTS

Chairman's Christmas message
SAR Coordinators Christmas message
Harris Trophy 2005
An old SAR participant
On line maps problem

SAR Review update
406 beacon public awareness campaign
SI search dog assessment outcomes
Information Management Working Group

Chairman's Christmas Message

It does not seem that long since I wrote last year's Christmas message, but yet another year has rolled by and the Christmas season and holidays will be upon us in a matter of weeks. The past year has again been a busy one for SAR, especially for the members of the National Committee.

The unsuccessful bid for additional funding through the SAR Council earlier this year along with discussions with the Police during the presentation of the NZLSAR Business Case for 2005/2006 has resulted in the National Committee of NZLSAR setting up a review of our organisation and the development of a Strategic Plan for NZLSAR. David Langman and Murray Wilson of Design Torque were engaged to undertake the work to consult with and collect the thoughts and opinions of NZLSAR member SAR Groups, Regional Representatives and the SAR community in general.

The combined meeting with Regional Chairmen and Secretaries held at the Police College at the end of August 2005, the theme of which was "LandSAR – Where to From Here", gave an opportunity for the SAR Groups representatives to review the progress that Design Torque had made to date on the NZLSAR Review. While the project had not been completed at the time of the meeting, it was advanced sufficiently to enable David

Langman and Murray Wilson to make some general comments and to identify a number of key items that had been identified and some that should, at this stage, be taken as "givens". These were discussed and agreed to at this meeting. The aim of the Strategic Plan that is being developed is to make NZLSAR more effective and efficient. The essential outcomes of the Strategic Plan are to provide a better service to the Police and public of New Zealand. This will be achieved by separating the Governance and Management roles in NZLSAR; by providing much better support and funding for local SAR Groups around the country and reducing the administrative burden. See the paper on page 5 for more detail on the NZLSAR Review and Strategic Plan.

The high profile search for the missing Erceg helicopter in November certainly put search and rescue in the spotlight. While this was a Class 3 search controlled by RCCNZ and not directly by the Police, I am sure that that distinction is not understood by the general public and will reflect on the whole SAR community.

Next year the third NZLSAR Conference will be held in Dunedin during the weekend of the 18 and 19 November 2006. I am sure that the papers that will be given by both local and international speakers will be of the same high

standard, and as interesting and thought provoking as those of the previous two conferences. This will definitely be a weekend not to be missed.

On behalf of the National Committee I would like to wish all members of the SAR community and their families' sincere and grateful thanks for the work that they have done during the

past year. I hope that you all have a happy and relaxing Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Enjoy this special time with your family and friends and we look forward to catching up with you in 2006.

Roscoe Tait
Chairman, NZLSAR

National SAR Coordinators Christmas Message

2004 ended with a disaster of international proportions with the Asian Tsunami, which saw a significant response from New Zealand, including Police SAR members in DVI teams. The time since then has passed quickly and has included other major events such as hurricanes and earthquakes. However some significant gains have been made in the environment in which we work.

CIMS for SAR and the Field Guide have been sent to the printers and the strategic review is progressing. Action is being taken to address the recovery of data from the P130 system and accessibility for non-police. Greater accessibility should ensure better capture of data and recording of incidents that occur.

Police are pleased to see the direction training is taking for Managing Land Search Operations as the proposed environment will make the training more accessible, particularly to NZLSAR volunteers.

The SAR Council is committed to seeking the best way forward in progressing a robust business case for sustainable funding for SAR through Government. Police continue to support this initiative, have offered advice and assistance to complete the required work and are exploring possibilities of seeking additional

funding for NZLSAR. If we can achieve this funding a lot of the administrative load can be taken from the discretionary time of volunteers.

Operations Group is seeking full time Police SAR coordinators in each of the 12 Police Districts. If this occurs it will enable greater accessibility of Police personnel in your area by providing a single point of contact at District Level, and reducing the administration load for Police on SAR squads at a local level.

The Year Ahead

With significant changes continuing to occur in the various environments in which we operate 2006 is going to be a busy and rewarding year. Working together on the issues identified we shall be able to continue to make significant advances in the efficiency and effectiveness of our SAR response and assist others in finding safe and enjoyable ways to experience New Zealand.

Thank you for giving of your time and expertise through out the past year. May you and yours have a rewarding Christmas, time for rest and recreation and a prosperous New Year.

Geoff Logan
National Coordinator: Search and Rescue

Harris Trophy 2005

The 2005 annual Harris Cup Canterbury Land SAR competition was held on Mt Alford near Methven on Sunday 30 October.

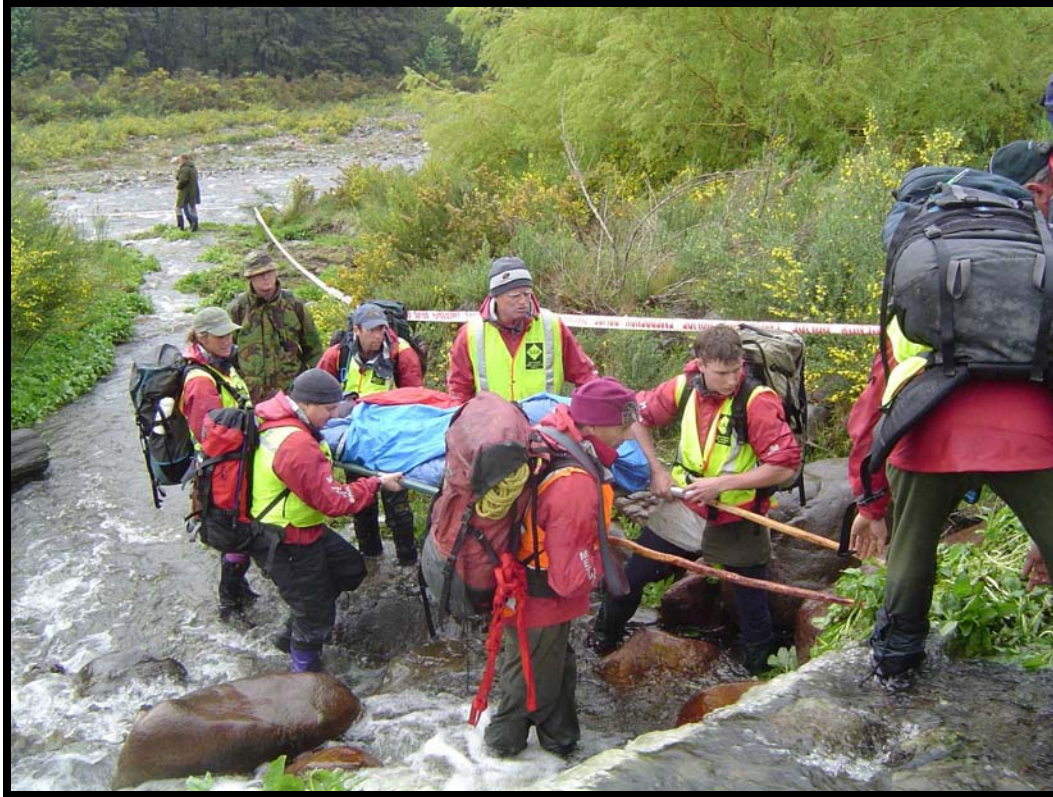
This competition was instigated by Neil Harris 16 years ago and has been instrumental in lifting the skill level of SAR in Canterbury over

that time. It is competed for by Land SAR teams from throughout Canterbury and occasionally invitation teams from further afield have also participated.

The competition has developed over the years to settle on a reasonably standard format in

recent times although it is continually evolving. The orchestrated start is initiated by Neil Harris with his vintage Damascus barrelled shotgun and lots of smoke. At the blast a nominated runner from each team races approximately 100m across a rough area of ground (from the

organisers and spectators point of view hopefully with a bit of swamp and other rough terrain) to pick up one of the packs containing a radio, map and a note with a grid reference and return to his/her team where the grid ref is plotted on the map and the search begins.



In previous years the grid ref has been the general location of the patient but the organisers this year provided the grid ref as the point last seen (PLS) of the lost party. By doing this the teams were forced to use their tracking skills to find the patients. Each PLS was physically marked on the ground with a dinner plate sized disc with the team number marked on it. From here the teams had to commence tracking. The distance from each PLS to patient was generally between 200 – 300 metres through a mix of open country, bush and scrub. If the teams had not located the patient within 1 hr the team assessor accompanying the team had been previously briefed to pass the team a note with another grid ref being the patients general location. Most teams located their patient without having to be given the extra information.

Great care was taken when setting up the courses, and the routes from the PLS to the patients final locations were predetermined and marked on a map, a copy of which was given to each patient when they were deployed. They were briefed that they were to keep as closely as possible to the marked route. This allowed the organisers to ensure that no tracks crossed over tracks from other patients thereby causing contamination of the area with misleading sign. Clues were also dropped by the patients as they were deploying.

The usual patient assessment, treatment, stretcher carry and some flowing water to make things a bit more interesting followed. A team pack assessment followed the completion of this stage of the competition. This was then followed by a static and a walk through observation module to conclude the competition. A barbecue and refreshments

followed while the scores were collated. The results are shown on the accompanying table.

Despite the drizzle (which had the advantage of keeping most of the bees from nearby beehives at home) all those attending enjoyed

the day, and congratulations must go to the Timaru Red Cross team, which won the cup by 0.1 of a point from second placed Oxford 2. Only 15 points separated the entire field and a complete breakdown of the results is below.

Team Number	Organisation	First Aid		Radio	SAR assess		Observation		Equipment		Total
		Mark	Score	Score	Mark	Score	Mark	Score	Mark	Score	
4	Red Cross Timaru	171	19.11	17	87	18.32	26.5	12.93	19.5	19.5	86.85
7	Oxford 2	173	19.33	15	93	19.58	26.5	12.93	20	20	86.84
12	Police Chch.	179	20.00	14	95	20	23.5	11.46	20	20	85.46
14	Methven	154	17.21	14.5	86	18.11	28	13.66	20	20	83.47
2	Rakaia	167	18.66	14.5	81	17.05	24	11.71	20	20	81.92
13	Red Cross Chch.	148	16.54	12.5	92	19.37	22.5	10.98	19.5	19.5	78.88
6	Hurunui	56	6.26	14.5	94	19.79	33	16.10	20	20	76.64
1	Pegasus	101	11.28	14	87	18.32	24	11.71	19	19	74.31
3	Oxford 1	97	10.84	13.5	66	13.89	30	14.63	20	20	72.87
18	Police Timaru	72	8.04	11.5	88	18.53	29	14.15	19.5	19.5	71.72
	Average	1318	14.73	14.10	86.9	18.29	26.7	13.024	19.7	19.7	79.89
						5			5	5	5

Don Geddes
 Adviser
 Canterbury District

An old SAR participant and a good one

On 17/10/05 the Waikouaiti police (40 minutes north of Dunedin) received a report of a missing depressed 40 year old man from Karitane. The local police officer did a great job carrying out a wide range of enquiries and put in some long hours. Initially, the point last seen was the Palmerton hotel and the search area was the rest of the world.

It was established the missing person was an agricultural contractor and may return to properties that he had previously worked on. On day two of the search rural properties were searched and a fixed wing aircraft was used to cover as much of the large search area as possible.

The missing person had told friends "you will never find me" he had also sent text messages saying "good bye". He was believed to be in his vehicle. His bank account had not been

used. A check with the cell phone provider was able to show which cell phone repeater the text messages went through and this was helpful in narrowing down the search area. Friends, family and local farmers (3F's) did a great job searching rural properties.

On the morning of Day 3 a local farmer was searching his own property when he located the missing person's vehicle in a remote river valley. The vehicle had been driven off a bluff high above the north branch of the Waikouaiti River. The missing person was deceased in the vehicle. At the time of this information getting to Dunedin Police. Dunedin SAR Advisor Trevor Pullar was at the station discussing options for the incident. (Trevor is 65 years young and is slightly bionic after having a few bits replaced.)

The nature of the incident had now changed from a search to a body recovery from a known location. Trevor could well of headed home for a cup of tea and a sticky bun but decided instead to offer his services and accompanied Police SAR squad members to the scene.

The site could only be accessed by foot and a stretcher carry of about a kilometer down the river was required to extricate the body. In and out of the creek, up the bank and down the other side and back through the creek. I told Trevor that he really didn't need to be involved

in the stretcher carry but once he got hold of the stretcher he just wouldn't let go until the job was done.

When the job was completed I asked Trevor when he did his last stretcher carry and he said he couldn't remember. My guess is that it's been a couple of decades anyway. Thanks for your help and enthusiasm Trevor, you're a real inspiration.

Brian Benn
Dunedin Police SAR

Online Maps

As most of you should be aware the LINZ Topo Map Vector data is online as an online mapping system at NZTopoOnline. See <http://www.nztopoonline.linz.govt.nz>

Recently it has been found that NZTopoOnline is displaying Power-lines as fences. This could be a problem for anyone that is using NZTopoOnline as a mapping system for flying. So for all SAR Groups, you should be aware of this issue, and make sure that any air operators that you work with are also aware of it.

Another new online mapping system is TUMONZ Live, which will look very familiar to those that are used to working with TUMONZ. See <http://www.tumonz.co.nz/mapplet.php>

Steve Davis
Chairman, NZLSAR Communications Subcommittee

SAR Review update

Most members of the LandSAR community should be aware by now the NZLSAR is undergoing a review with the aim of developing a Strategic Plan to take NZLSAR through the next five to ten years.

This review has been brought about due to a number of reasons. The combined Regional Chairs and Secretaries meeting in August 2004 identified administration requirements and funding as two key issues. From that meeting a working group was set up to explore funding options to address these two issues. A funding case was prepared in conjunction with the SAR Secretariat and presented to the SAR Council. Unfortunately, along with funding cases from other SAR sectors, the funding case was unsuccessful. The basic issue was the (perceived) lack of a cohesive and robust strategic plan. The same issue arose when the

NZLSAR Business Case for the 2005/2006 financial year was presented to the Police early this year.

The NZLSAR Committee realised that to reduce the administrative pressure on LandSAR volunteers would require additional resources and thus an increase in funding and that this was very unlikely to come directly from the Police budget.

There was an enormous step change in LandSAR when NZLSAR was formed just over ten years ago. The NZLSAR Committee is of the view that, to make the changes that it believes are now needed to take the organisation forward, another step change is required. To achieve this NZLSAR needs to have a well defined strategic plan for the next five to ten years. Design Torque was engaged

to undertake a review of NZLSAR. Their brief was to tour the country consulting and talking with local LandSAR groups; the wider SAR community; emergency services, etc to find out what the issues, concerns and aspirations are and from that assist with the development of a strategic plan for NZLSAR.

The combined Regional Chairs and Secretaries meeting in August 2005 reviewed the work that had been done to that date and agreed on some of the givens:-

- Land focus
- Police provide IC
- Support Police
- CIMS model will be used
- Continuously maintain and improve OPS capability
- Safety of SAR volunteers

Following this consultation phase with the regions and their representatives, 12 key items had been identified by Design Torque. These were reviewed and prioritised by a Strategic Plan Development Group at a meeting held at the Police College at the end of October 2005. Some items were “parked” so the group could concentrate on the significant issues that were required to develop a draft strategic plan for presentation to the NZLSAR Committee at its November meeting. It is recognised and accepted that these “parked” items are important and need to be addressed in the near future.

At the November NZLSAR Committee meeting the proposed draft strategic plan was thoroughly discussed and the committee approved the general concept of the proposed strategic plan that was presented with some modifications.

The main elements of the draft strategic plan are:

1. To reduce the administration work load on LandSAR volunteers by providing administrative support and additional funding for this additional resource. This will allow SAR volunteers to concentrate on LandSAR matters and not get bound up and ground down with administration.
2. Separating the Governance and Management roles of NZLSAR while still

ensuring that the LandSAR organisations retain control of NZLSAR.

3. Produce a Business Case supported by the strategic plan to gain additional funding to meet the goals of the strategic plan.
4. To employ more staff, including a Business Manager and Field Support staff to provide the management and administrative support that is now required.

Essentially the aim is to provide sufficient resources and funding to allow LandSAR people to get on with and deal with LandSAR matters and not get bogged down in administration.

In my view, NZLSAR has a simple choice to make. We can continue as we are with the real possibility of our funding base being reduced and the numbers of LandSAR volunteers decreasing due to the administrative workload OR we can take the initiative and make a step change that will improve the organisation and provide some real benefits and assistance to the LandSAR volunteers across the country OR we can keep talking about it for the next 5 years!

Design Torque did identify that there is a strong mandate from the grass-roots Land SAR community for a change that is of real benefit to the LandSAR volunteers. Consequently the NZLSAR National Committee has decided to take the initiative and create an environment for change by developing a strategic plan for NZLSAR. While the development of the strategic plan is still in its early stages, the current NZLSAR structure of regional representatives is an important element in the process to facilitate the development and refinement of the strategic plan. As this process develops and the strategic plan is refined, these will be communicated to the Land SAR groups.

A paper outlining the NZLSAR Strategic Plan is being prepared and will be available shortly.

Roscoe Tait
Chairman, NZLSAR

A personal snippet

Hi All,
Just a brief note to advise the next NZLSAR Conference will be hosted in Dunedin November 17-19.

The venue will be Otago University.

Looking forward to seeing you all there.

If you have ideas for presentations/speakers please feel free to let us know.

Regards **Tric Moller**

South Island Search Dog Assessment course 24/27 November 2005

All in all the course was a huge success, a fabulous venue, awesome caterers and a dedicated team of handlers and support crew. Following a tragic year for dog losses and health related retirements, the following people were re certified:-

Ian Lambie and Nala Airscent with article endorsement, Matthew Dodd and Sara airscents, Larry Charles and both Mishka and Wulfe – Tracking. (Tasman Search Dogs). Brenda Wooley was recertified with her dogs Milo and Easy – Airscent. Two new teams joined the list, Dave Krehic and Stig Airscent with article endorsement, and Shawn Rothwell and his dog Chinook airscents.

On behalf of the course organisers I would like to thank the various landowners especially the Mapp family for their assistance. The Department of Conservation, and especially the New Zealand Police - Chris Best and Alan MacRae for providing high quality training, support and assessment alongside the volunteers.

Ian Lambie
Search Dog Handler Tasman District

A public awareness campaign: Change in distress beacons to the new life saving 406MHz

Media release 16-11-05

The New Zealand Search and Rescue Council (NZSAR) have this week launched a three year educational campaign to switch distress beacon users to the new digital international standard frequency – 406MHz.

In 2000 a global decision was made to phase-out international satellite monitoring of the 121.5MHz frequency by February 2009, from when the widely used 121.5MHz beacons, sometimes known as ELTs, EPIRBs or PLBs, will not be monitored at all, making them obsolete.

Chair of the NZSAR Council and Secretary for Transport, Dr Robin Dunlop says “Not only will the new standard 406MHz beacons be the only beacons monitored, they are vastly superior. They are faster and cut down the search area substantially. This means the search area for persons in distress will be considerably reduced.

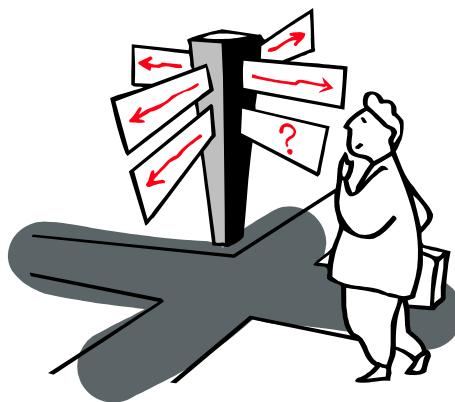
And through a New Zealand digital registration we can quickly rule out false alarms. Changing to 406MHz beacons will save lives.”

The SAR Council says a long campaign is important as the change has a significant impact throughout the ownership and supply chains in the marine, outdoor, aviation and emergency

service sectors. “It is critical that the changeover starts now. The phase-out of 121.5MHz monitoring, and the advantages of 406MHz mean that the sooner users make the switch, the safer they will be”, said Dr Dunlop. Currently, 95% of all distress beacon activations are false alarms. Given that New Zealand’s search and rescue area covers one twelfth (1/12th) of the planet, that’s a large avoidable cost to the public”, Dr Dunlop added, “By switching now to a New Zealand registered 406 users will help save lives, possibly their own”. The awareness and education campaign will advise all distress beacon users in boating, fishing, outdoor recreation, aviation and emergency services communities that they must switch to the smarter, faster and safer 406MHz digital beacons as soon as possible. 406MHz will soon be the only way to alert search and rescue services. Switch now.

For further information go to the website www.beacons.org.nz or free phone 0800 406 111, or for ongoing media enquiry phone Chris Raley of Rescue Coordination Centre +4 914 8381

Robin Dunlop
Secretary for Transport



Information Management Working Group

The first meeting of the Information Management Working Group was held on 5 November 2005 at the Hamilton Police Station. The working group was established by the executive committee of New Zealand Land SAR in response to requests by members of Land SAR for better management of information and communications technology in SAR. In the past computers in SAR were driven by a few enthusiasts who expended considerable time and effort to develop a workable system. These systems are limited to a few districts and in order to make better use of these systems on a national basis a structured organisation is required.

The working group agreed that the purpose of Information Management in SAR was –

The collection, recording, analysis and dissemination of search related information.

The responsibilities of the Information Management Working Group were identified as providing:

- Tools and systems to assist search teams
- Tools and systems to assist management
- Tools and systems for managing training records

Current projects include developing a framework for the standardisation of processes when using information management in SAR operations, implementing live tracking for the reporting of team locations, investigating use of information technology in the field and implementing training for search assistants.

Anyone interested in contributing to the Information Management Working Group should contact its convenor, John King, via email john@sar.org.nz.

John King

Editors Comments. A very big thank you to **Roscoe, Geoff, Don, Brian, Steve, Ian, Robin and John** for their articles and comments.

Copy for the **February News** is really difficult to come by so articles will be most welcome. Feel free to put pen to paper, bash the word processor or even etch a stone tablet but please have it to me by **Thursday 26 January**. 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.

Finally all the best for the holiday break, may the New Year festivities treat you well and see you next year.

John P Tristram, National Field Officer